

June, 2007



City Lights DeSoto, Texas

A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department



Council Corner - A Message from Mayor Bobby Waddle



I am very pleased to address you for the first time as Mayor of DeSoto. Thank you

for your

support. I will work hard to earn the trust and confidence you have placed with me.

It is awesome to have the opportunity to lead a city facing exciting times as well as some challenges which are achievable. At a recent Council Meeting, we

approved one of the documents needed to establish the formal structure for the agreement with Trammel Crow/CBRE High Street Residential for the development of the acreage in front of Town Center as a mixed use project. This brings us one step closer to reaching our goal of the revitalization of the Hampton Road corridor. Hopefully, you'll see dirt flying on this project after the first of the year signaling the beginning of a new wave of commercial/retail

development in DeSoto.

In 2006, we were recognized by the National Civic League with the All-America City Award which honors cities for their grassroots efforts to address community issues. We have spent the past year enjoying this honor but we can't rest on our laurels, there is so much more to do.

We have always prided ourselves on community involvement. We give our citizens the opportunity to have a say in how their city operates and we listen to and

respond to what they say. We encourage citizen participation in all that we do.

If you have not taken advantage of the many ways you can serve DeSoto, I urge you to do so. You can attend the next Civic Academy, adopt a street in your neighborhood or serve on one of our boards or commissions. Please take some time to investigate the opportunities and get involved for it takes us all to.....**soar for excellence.**

**Bobby Waddle
Mayor**

Council will Consider Changes to City's Animal Ordinance

DeSoto, much like other suburban cities in the Metroplex, is experiencing a growing concern over dangerous or aggressive dogs in our neighborhoods. In DeSoto, this is manifested by dogs running at large without proper I.D. Animal control and police officers have experienced difficulty restraining these animals which prompted the City to hold a public meeting last winter to discuss the issue. Over 100 people expressed their opinion with the recurring theme being owner responsibility.

As a result, staff will present changes in the City's Animal Ordinance to the City Council that are intended to require citizens to take responsibility for their animals. Specifically, the changes will:

- Amend the current Animal Ordinance to include a definition for "Dangerous Dog" which is defined by the Texas Health & Safety Code 822.041(2); or (2) as any dog that makes an unprovoked attack on a domestic
- animal or person causing serious bodily injury or death and occurring in a place other than an enclosure in which the dog was being kept and that was reasonably certain to prevent the dog from leaving the enclosure on its own or "running at large". By including the definition of "Dangerous Dog" in our Animal Ordinance, we will require that any dog found to be "running at large" who seriously injures another person or domesticated animal will be immediately removed from the City.
- Impose fines for dogs found to be "running at large" as defined above. The first conviction will subject the dog's owner to a \$100 fine, the second conviction will result in a \$200 fine, there will be a \$500 fine for the third conviction and all other subsequent convictions will be subject to a \$1,000 fine.
- Require that any dog found by Animal

Control to be "running at large" and impounded, will be implanted with a microchip, vaccinated and registered at the owner's expense before the dog is released to the owner. This will aid Animal Control officers in identifying the dog should it be found "running at large" again in the future.

Over the last two decades, DeSoto's population has doubled. With that huge increase in population, we have gone from a rural community to one that is much more urban. People are living much closer together and as a result, the actions of our pets can affect those around us. The proposed changes are intended to make dog owners take responsibility for their pets thus making our community safer for everyone.

The City Council will vote on the proposed changes early this summer.

Did You Know.....?

That the Southwest Regional Communications Center (SWRCC) has been operating continuously, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year as the 9-1-1 dispatch center for the cities of DeSoto, Cedar Hill and Duncanville since 1999 offering alarm monitoring of government buildings and some homes. Now the SWRCC, in cooperation with the City of DeSoto, is expanding its residential alarm monitoring service. This "city service" is offered as a fee-based service, available to every household in DeSoto.

Currently, when your alarm is triggered, the alarm panel uses the public telephone system to call a commercial monitoring center. This commercial monitoring center can be located almost anywhere in the nation. The alarm panel identifies you automatically and provides instructions relative to your immediate need. The monitoring center then must call the local 9-1-1 center serving your area on an administrative phone line and verbally pass your information to the 9-1-1 call taker, who in turn will dispatch the appropriate police, fire or medical unit to your home.

Imagine how much time could be saved if your residential alarm was attached directly to your 9-1-1 dispatch center. That service is available to DeSoto residents through the Southwest Regional Communications Center.

By following a few simple steps, you can easily transfer your monitoring service.

- First, you must obtain a City Alarm Permit if you don't already have one. All residences that are equipped with an intrusion detection system are required to have a permit from the City of DeSoto. The annual cost is \$25. Senior citizens aged 65 or over are exempt from paying the permit fee but must obtain a permit.
- With your permit in place, you can sign a one-year alarm monitoring contract with the City of DeSoto for a monthly fee of \$25.
- Next, contact any licensed alarm monitoring service technician and advise them you would like to be monitored by the SWRCC, DeSoto's 9-1-1 dispatch center. Most alarm systems can be easily reprogrammed to report directly to the SWRCC. Your service technician can make the necessary modifications.

For more information on the residential alarm monitoring program offered by Southwest Regional Communications Center (SWRCC), please call 972 223-6111 or check out their website at www.swrcc.net/alarm. To secure an alarm permit or register for alarm monitoring, please call the City of DeSoto at 972 230-9628 or stop by the Utility Billing window in City Hall.

This year's National Night Out event is scheduled for Tuesday, August 7, 2007 from 7 to 9 p.m. Crime watch groups, homeowner's associations and neighborhood groups are encouraged to come outside their homes that evening and join together for a show of community support. This year, why not help "take a bite out of crime" by joining your neighbors in planning a block party on National Night Out?

If your neighborhood group would like to organize a block party and would like to schedule a visit by a City official or police officers, please contact Officer Cindy Mendez at 469-658-3055 or Tracie Hlavinka at 972-230-9689.

CITY CALENDAR

June

- 2 Toad Holler Creekfest - Town Center 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- 4 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 5 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 7 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 12 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 16 BSW Juneteenth Celebration - Cedar Hill 4p.m. to 10 p.m.
- 19 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 23 Gun Buy-Back & Hip Hop Summit - Community Missionary Baptist Church & Civic Center
- 25 Mavs Youth Basketball Camp - Rec. Center 972 230-9650
- 26 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall

July

- 2 Park Development Corp. Meeting 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 3 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 City Offices & Facilities Closed for July 4th Holiday
- 4 Old Fashioned 4th Fireworks Show at Grimes Park
- 5 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 17 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 24 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 24 FY 07-08 Budget Workshop - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall

Local Ministers to Host Gun Buy-Back Program

At a May 11th press conference, members of the DeSoto Ministerial Alliance announced that they will partner with Dallas Common and the City of DeSoto to host a Gun Buy Back program on Saturday, June 23rd at Community Missionary Baptist Church, 115 W. Belt Line Road from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

By sponsoring the Gun Buy-Back, it is their desire to encourage responsible gun ownership. If you can't securely lock up your guns, sell them to Dallas Common. They don't expect to disarm street gangs even though that is certainly possible with the this program. It is more likely that most of those who choose to participate will be housewives or grandparents who are worried about the safety of their children. They



may have a gun in their household that they have wanted to get rid of but just didn't know how.

"The purpose of the program is to make guns safer for children and reduce gun-related accidents," said Mayor Michael Hurtt. "When I heard about the program, I just knew it was something that DeSoto should support."

Please bring unwanted guns and ammunition to the event on June 23rd. The group will pay \$200 for an assault rifle and \$50 for handguns. Dallas Common is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and is also accepting monetary donations in support of the Gun Buy-Back. Your \$100 donation can take two Saturday Night Specials out of circulation. For more information or to make a donation, please call Dallas Common at 972 934-1163.



Economic Development Corner

The DeSoto Economic Development Corporation has been exceptionally busy since the first of the year working with active projects

interested in development opportunities in our City and engaging in various activities to promote DeSoto as a great place to do business. In support of DeSoto's existing industries, the DEDC partnered with the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce on the recent Business Needs and Assessment Survey and the April 2007 Corporate Roundtable. With regard to new business attraction, the DEDC continues to work with several active projects seeking available buildings and/or sites for manufacturing, assembly or distribution operations. Staff also routinely responds to inquiries from companies interested in expanding their operations into this area, as well as responding to leads originating from state and regional allies and brokers representing clients. Additionally, the DEDC has continued working closely with Hunt properties on the potential retail power center at I-35E & Belt Line Road and has also responded to numerous requests for demographics and growth projections relative to other potential retail development in key areas in the City.

With so much current interest in DeSoto, we wanted to provide an overview of just what the DeSoto Economic Development Corporation is, how it is funded, and more importantly, how the funds can be spent to promote economic development in our City.

In 1995, and in accordance with the Texas Development Corporation Act of 1979, the citizens of DeSoto voted to pledge a 4A local sales and use tax of 3/8% to help

finance the City's economic development efforts. The Texas Development Corporation Act has a unique provision that requires cities to establish a corporation to administer the 4A sales and use tax funds and the circumstances under which the funds may be used to promote economic development. In compliance with this statute, the DeSoto City Council appoints an unpaid five (5) member board to oversee and administer the sales and use tax funds received by the DEDC.

The use of the 4A sales tax, as outlined in the statute, is somewhat restrictive, as it is primarily targeted for manufacturing and industrial development through the acquisition of land, buildings, equipment, facilities, expenditures, targeted infrastructure and improvements for purposes related to:

- manufacturing and industrial facilities, recycling facilities, distribution centers, small warehouse facilities;
- research and development facilities, regional or national corporate headquarters facilities, primary job training facilities for use by institutions of higher education, job training classes;
- a general aviation business service airport that is an integral part of an industrial park;
- certain infrastructure improvements, which promote or develop new or expanded business enterprises;
- port-related facilities to support waterborne commerce; and maintenance and operating costs associated with projects.

Furthermore, the qualifying manufacturing and industrial projects must result in the creation of 'primary jobs', which are those that infuse new dollars into the local economy by creating or selling a product or service that is ultimately exported to regional, statewide, national, or international markets, and which fall into a

certain enumerated sector within the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Specific to retail development, the DEDC is quite restricted in what it can do to assist a new project, as it can use funds *only* for infrastructure, job training or promotional purposes. The definition of infrastructure as it relates to retail projects is limited to streets and roads, site improvements, rail spurs, water and electric utilities, gas utilities, site grading, drainage and related improvements, and telecommunications and internet improvements.

While working within the confines of the above statutory restrictions and requirements for the use of 4A sales tax funds, the DEDC closely examines the impact of spending a portion of the funds on specific qualifying projects to ensure that DeSoto is receiving the highest rate of return and benefit for public funds used to bring new industry and growth into the City.

In summary, while the DEDC supports in spirit all beneficial and desired growth in the City, there are statutory and internal limitations on actual financial contributions the Corporation can make to certain projects. The DEDC provides a report quarterly to the DeSoto City Council outlining the public funds dedicated to assist expanding existing businesses and bringing new qualified projects into our community. The DEDC provided an Annual Report to all citizens that outlined funds committed during 2006, as well as progress made to date on the DEDC Five Year Strategic Plan.

The DEDC exists to plan, promote, finance, and create opportunities for the retention, growth, and attraction of enterprises that enhance the tax base, quality of life, and level of employment for the citizens of DeSoto – WE ARE WORKING FOR YOU! If you have any questions related to economic development in the City of DeSoto, please contact the DeSoto Economic Development Corporation at 972-230-9611.

It's the Season for High Weed Complaints

With the summer growing season in full swing, neighborhoods are starting to experience problems with high weeds at vacant houses. We encourage you to report such problems in your neighborhood and would like to make you aware of the process for resolving them.

City Ordinances require that weeds and grass be kept below 12 inches in height. As the owner or occupant of the property, you are required to maintain the property from the street in the front to the middle of the alley in the back (or the property line). This includes the front, back, side yards, the right-of-way (the area between the sidewalk and the curb) and the alley and easement.

When a high grass complaint at a vacant house is reported, a Code Enforcement Officer verifies that a violation exists and confirms with the City's Water Department that the property is vacant. A high grass sign is placed in the yard of the vacant property (pictured at right) and digital photos are taken of the property for documentation purposes including the date and time of the photo. The property owner is then notified and has seven (7) days to mow the property. On the eighth day, the Code Enforcement Officer will re-inspect the property and if it has not been mowed, the City takes steps to have the property mowed at the owner's expense.

If you have a vacant house in your neighborhood that is need of attention, we urge you to report it by calling the City of DeSoto Code Enforcement

Department at 469-658-3075 or by logging on to the City's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us, and clicking on the red Citizen Assistance button on the left hand side. There you will be prompted to enter your concern or complaint directly into the City's computerized tracking system.



Moseley Pool is Open for the Summer!!

Moseley Pool located at 1300 Honor Dr. next door to Northside Elementary is open for the summer. Operating hours are Monday through Thursday, Noon to 7 p.m., Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Sundays. Moseley is more than a pool, it's a mini water park featuring spiral slides, a zero entry and a kid's zone. Special swim rates are available for DeSoto Residents with a valid ID card, adults aged 18 to 54 are \$4 and kids aged 3 to 17 are \$2. The fee for non resident adults is \$5 and kids are \$4. A yearly pool pass is \$65.

Red Cross certified swim lessons are available at Moseley Pool Monday through Thursday mornings. The pool is also available for rental for private and semi-private parties on Friday and Saturday evenings from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

To register for swim lessons or for more information on Moseley Pool, please call 972 230-9650.



Special Events at Moseley Pool

- May 28th - Summer Splash Bash
- June 8th - East/West Jr. High Party
- June 22nd - Movie Night
- July 13th - A Night In Hawaii
- July 20th - Gospel Family Fun Night
- August 10th - DeSoto Stomp Competition
- August 18th - Back to School Bash

For more information on admission prices and times for Special Events, please call 972 230-9655.

**Changin' Da Game
Teen Hip Hop Summit
Saturday, June 23rd 3 to 11 p.m.
For info call 972 230-9650**

Summer Activities at the DeSoto Recreation Center

Catch, Bounce & Kick:

Ages 3 - 5
Dates: Tuesday & Thursday
Session I: June 19, 21, 26 & 28
Session II: July 10, 12, 17 & 19
Times: 11:30am - 12:00pm
Fee: \$25

Dallas Mavericks Basketball Camp:

June 25th-June 29th
Cost: \$235
Time: 9:00am - 4:00pm
Register @: Mavs.com or fill out registration form with credit card information & fax form to (214)-752-3860 Contact: (214) 747-MAVS for all inquiries

Just for Kicks - Aikia Karate:

Days: Tuesdays & Thursdays (Every month)
Times: 7:00 - 8:00pm
Ages: 5-16 *Maximum of 30 students per class time!
Fee: \$30 per month
Master Lloyd Ploeger (972) 223-6359

First Start Sports:

Lil Hoopers & Sidekicks Soccer (Ages 3-6)
Days: Wednesday 6:00pm - 6:30pm
Session 1 - June 6, 13, 20, 27
Session 2 - July 11, 18, 28, Aug 1
Cost: \$25 per session, per month

T-Ball For Tots (Ages 3-6)

Days: Wednesday 6:30pm - 7:00pm
Session 1 - June 6, 13, 20, 27
Session 2 - July 11, 18, 28, Aug 1
Cost: \$25 per session, per month

Tai Chi - Health & Self Defense:

Days: Tuesdays (monthly)
Time: 8:00-10:00pm
Grandmaster: Dr. Doug F. Hale
Sensei: Hassan Karriem
***Cost To Be Determined

Jump Start Science:

Days: Monday - Friday
Time: 10:00am - 11:30am or 2:00pm - 3:30pm
Session: June 15th - June 22nd
Cost: \$75 per child *Maximum of 10 participants per session
Participants: Children entering the 3rd, 4th & 5th grades.
Contact: Paula Johnson (972) 223-8203

All classes will take place at the DeSoto Recreation Center located in DeSoto Town Center, 211 E. Pleasant Run Road. To register or for more information, please call 972 230-9655.

On July 4th the Cities of DeSoto & Lancaster will Hold a Joint Fireworks Show at Grimes Park

Expanding on the partnerships formed when DeSoto joined the cities of Lancaster, Duncanville and Cedar Hill to host the Best Southwest Juneteenth Celebration, the cities of DeSoto and Lancaster are combining resources to host a spectacular fireworks show on July 4th. Both cities budgeted \$15,000 for separate fireworks programs and they have combined these funds to host the largest fireworks show south of the Trinity River. Both City Councils also agreed to rotate the show between the two cities each year and this is DeSoto's year.

The July 4, 2007 Fireworks Show will take place in DeSoto at the Youth Soccer Complex at Grimes Park located on the corner of Wintergreen Road and Polk Street. DeSoto and Lancaster residents and anyone who loves a great fireworks show are invited to come to Grimes Park. Gates will open at 6:30 p.m. and a free concert featuring the smooth Jazz sounds of Freddie Jones will start at 7:30 p.m. The fireworks spectacular will begin at 9:30 p.m. or as soon as it's good and dark.



Join us July 4th at the Youth Soccer Complex at Grimes Park for a Spectacular Fireworks Show & Concert

Gates open at 6:30pm
Concert at 7:30 p.m.
featuring:
Freddie Jones
Huge Fireworks to Music Show at 9:30 p.m.
Admission Free - Parking \$1 per vehicle

