

January, 2009



www.ci.desoto.tx.us
972 230-9600

City Lights DeSoto, Texas



A publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department

Council Corner, A Message From Sandy Respass, City Council - Place 5



Much has changed in our world since I last had the opportunity to write a column for the City Lights. And much of that change has not been for the better. On a national level, the economy has moved into an ugly recession. Business failures, government bailouts, major corporate fraud and mismanagement make headline news almost daily. Here in DeSoto foreclosures are

epidemic in our neighborhoods; our property values are declining; our retirement savings and 401k plans have lost much of their value; and many of us are unemployed or now find our jobs at risk.

Your City Council and City Staff are keenly aware that you are deeply concerned about how this economic downturn will affect your City, your city services, your neighborhood, and the quality of life that you have come to expect. For now and for the immediate future, you can rest assured that the City of DeSoto is financially sound and secure. Your City services will continue just as they have in the past. And the City of DeSoto will not be facing a financial crisis as many of other North Texas cities and school districts currently face.

Long term, our future is highly dependent on the course of national and international developments largely beyond our control. Charting the course for the future of our City in these uncertain times will not be easy, but we are all up to the challenge. DeSoto was named an All-American City in 2006 in recognition of our ability as a community to face problems and work together for solutions. We have proven that we have the will and commitment as a community to face difficulties, meet challenges, and overcome obstacles that an uncertain future may place in our path. Our method for finding solutions to past problems using awareness, reflection, and dialogue should serve us well as we face an uncertain future.

Going forward into the New Year, your City Council and City Staff will be undertaking an ambitious communications initiative to heighten our awareness of the conditions and

concerns shared by our citizens and our City government. This initiative will allow us an opportunity to understand and reflect on those conditions and concerns. And it will provide an opportunity for dialogue about how to best address those conditions and concerns. Now more than ever, we must work together as a community to address the issues before us, in doing so we will emerge a stronger more vibrant community.

Sandy Respass
City Council, Place 5

Residents Are Beginning to Occupy the New Apartments at Town Center

Pre-leasing on both residential buildings at DeSoto Town Center is underway, and residents began occupying Building One in late November, 2008. The one and two bedroom units, which range from 700 to over 1,300 square feet, feature nine foot ceilings, modern kitchen cabinetry, GE® appliances, contemporary color schemes and an outdoor space for each unit. Building amenities include a Cyber Café, intimate courtyards with a swimming pool, water features, and grilling and gathering areas, controlled access entry and covered parking. A leasing office for the complex is located in the Library Assembly Hall.

Construction is also progressing on two buildings of retail space totaling 25,700 square feet, including 14,700 square feet of office space. These buildings are could be ready for occupancy as early as February, 2009 and the entire complex is expected to be completed by June, 2009.



Are You Worried About the Current Economic Situation? Join Us For a Week of Awareness, Reflection and Dialogue

The DeSoto City Council is sponsoring a week of awareness, reflection and dialogue...

- To help you realize you are not alone in your concern for how current economic conditions are affecting DeSoto
- To let you know that city officials share your concern
- To allow you to share your ideas with city officials on how to address growing needs with shrinking resources
- To share information with you that may help you through the difficult times ahead

With the focus on the economic downturn, foreclosures, government bailouts and the slump in the housing market, you can't help but be concerned about what it all means for you personally as well as how it is affecting your neighborhood and the community. The DeSoto City Council shares your concern and wants to provide forums to discuss and reflect on the issues facing us all.

During the last week in February, the City of DeSoto will provide several opportunities for citizens to do just that. On Monday, February 23, 2009, city officials will post a blog on the city's website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us sharing thoughts, observations and ideas about current economic conditions and you are invited to respond and comment. This interactive dialogue will continue throughout the week.

If blogging is not your thing, the city will host a Town Hall Meeting from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 28, 2009, at City Hall. This meeting is intended to be an open forum for citizens to share concerns, reflect on the situation and offer comments on how the community should react to this difficult economic situation. The Town Hall Meeting will begin with a general session to set the tone of the day and continue with breakout sessions hosted by city staff and others to allow for more detailed discussion on topics relevant to the economic situation. This week of awareness, reflection and dialogue will be topped off by a DeSoto Dining & Dialogue Dinner event on Saturday night. DeSoto Dining & Dialogue has agreed to add a couple of questions to their program intended to spur discussion on these serious issues facing our community.

DeSoto was named an All-America City in 2006. At the time, the judges recognized DeSoto for our ability to face community problems and work together for solutions. We want to continue to do that as we face the future. We hope that the information gleaned from this Week of Awareness, Reflection and Dialogue will help us continue to move forward as the All-America City that we all continue to strive to be.

CITY CALENDAR

January

- 5 Park Development Corp. Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - Recreation Center
- 6 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 8 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 8 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - 7 p.m. - Library Conference Room
- 13 Planning & Zoning Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 19 MLK Holiday - City Offices & facilities closed
- 20 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 26 DEDC Board Meeting - noon - City Hall
- 27 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. City Hall

February

- 2 Park Development Corp. Meeting - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 3 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 4 Keep DeSoto Beautiful Board Mtg. - 6:30 p.m. - City Hall
- 6 Library Advisory Board Mtg. - 7 p.m. - Library Conference Room
- 8 Corner Theatre Reception Sponsored by the Arts Commission 3 to 5 p.m.
- 10 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 17 City Council Meeting - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 22 DEDC Board Meeting - noon - City Hall
- 24 Planning & Zoning Commission Mtg. - 7 p.m. - City Hall
- 28 Town Hall Meeting on Awareness, Reflection & Dialogue - City Hall 9 to noon
- 28 DeSoto Dining & Dialogue Dinner Event - call 972.230.9648 to attend

Important Information Regarding our Upcoming City Election

The DeSoto General Election is scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2009. **Available council positions for the May 9th ballot are Place 6 and Place 7.** If you are interested in running for Place 6 or 7 on the City Council, please contact the Office of the City Secretary to request a City Council Candidate Guide, which contains all the information needed to file. They will be available beginning February 2, 2009. The first day for candidate filing is Monday, February 9, 2009 at 8 a.m. Filing continues during normal business hours until Monday, March 9, 2009 at 5 p.m.

The DeSoto City Charter, Article II, City Council, Section 3 outlines these qualifications for City Council candidates :

- U.S. Citizen at least 18 years of age.
- Registered DeSoto voter.
- Resident of the geographical district of Place 6 or 7 for one year prior to Election Day on May 9, 2009. Councilmembers are elected "at large" by voters of the entire city.
- Not in arrears in the payment of any taxes or other liability due the City.

For more information on the City Election, please call DeSoto City Secretary, Laura Hallmark at 972.230.9664.

Code Enforcement Steps Up Enforcement Measures On Downed Fences

City Ordinance requires that the fence on your property be maintained at all times. It is unlawful to allow your fence to lean or to have missing, loose or broken slats or panels. The fence is not allowed to have any symbols, writings or other graffiti except for signs which pertain to the address or occupancy of the property. It is prohibited to have barbed wire, hog wire, or chicken wire or to have an electric fence.

If you have a swimming pool, a fence, structure or gate is required to completely surround the swimming pool to prevent small children from inadvertently wandering into the pool. This fence, structure or gate shall not be lower than (6) six feet in height, and not have any openings that will allow a four-inch diameter sphere to pass through. All such gates should have a self-closing and self-latching device designed to keep gates closed and locked at all times.

A permit is required to build any fence on your property and can be obtained from the Building Inspection Department at City Hall, 211 E. Pleasant Run Rd. or by calling 972.230.9610.



If you would like to report a problem fence in your neighborhood, please call the Code Enforcement Department at 469.658.3075.

Would You Like To Be A Guest At The Next DeSoto Dining & Dialogue Dinner Event?

If so, we invite you to join us!! The next dinner event is scheduled for Saturday, February 28, 2009. It's easy to register, just go to the website at desotodininganddialogue.org and fill out the guest registration form before February 9, 2009 or call Kathy (Maples) Jones at 972.230.9648. Once registered, you will be assigned to a dinner table and you'll receive an invitation to your dinner table during the week of February 16th. All you have to do is agree to attend the dinner and engage in the discussion.

DeSoto Dining & Dialogue is a volunteer-run organization that provides individuals of all ages including high school students who live or work in DeSoto, the opportunity to get to know one another at dinner events with 8 to 10 participants. These dinners are held twice a year in private homes, churches or restaurants all over town on the same night. The discussion is lead by a trained facilitator who guides participants through questions designed to elicit thoughts and opinions on issues facing our community. The focus for the discussion on February 28, 2009 will be the current economic conditions. Facilitators will ask participants to share concerns, reflect on

the situation and offer comments on how the community should react to the difficult economic situation facing us all.

This program is primarily successful because families are willing to open their homes and host, at their own expense, a dinner for a diverse group of citizens. Facilitators and other volunteers willingly give of their time and expertise because they believe in the program. However, we need continuing community participation to keep the program strong which means that we need committed citizens like you, to participate in the program as guests. Join us in building a strong community by attending the dinner on February 28th. For more information on DeSoto Dining & Dialogue, please call Kathy (Maples) Jones at 972.230.9648.



City Councilman, Sandy Respass (center) and DeSoto Police Captain, Gary Perkins talk with residents during Churchill Estates 2008 National Night Out Celebration.

Churchill Estates Receives National Night Out Award

Congratulations are in order for the Churchill Estates Homeowners Association. They were recently awarded the National Night Out 2008 All Stars Award by the National Association of Town Watch. The National Night Out "All Star" Awards are selected annually by NATW to honor individuals, organizations or programs for outstanding participation, leadership and/or assistance during the National Night Out campaign. Churchill Estates was recognized for a video they submitted of their National Night Out Celebration in August which illustrated their efforts to bring residents, city officials, the police and local merchants together to "take a bite out of crime." **Good Job Churchill Estates!!**

If you are interested in participating in your local neighborhood or homeowners association, check out the My Neighborhood tab on the home page of the city website at www.ci.desoto.tx.us for more information.

*Daddy & Daughter
Valentine Dance*
Saturday, February 7th 6 to 9 p.m.
at the DeSoto Civic Center



Parks & Leisure Services invites all young ladies to get dressed up, bring your dad or favorite guy, and dance the night away at the 15th Annual Daddy & Daughter Valentine Dance. This year's theme is "Little Princess." For an added touch of elegance everyone walks "the Red Carpet" just like the stars at the Oscars. The Red Carpet event and pictures begin at 6 p.m. followed by the dance from 7 to 9 p.m.

Dads, make plans now for a special evening with your "Little Princess". Tickets are \$30 per couple and \$15 for each additional child. The ticket price includes a photo of Dad and his Little Princess and refreshments. Space is limited. All tickets are sold in advance at the DeSoto Recreation Center beginning January 14, 2009. No tickets will be sold at the door.

For more information on the Daddy & Daughter Valentine Dance, please contact Parks & Leisure Services at 972.230.9651.



Have you seen what's happening at the DeSoto Public Library?

Our library is undergoing some renovations. It just received a new coat of paint and will get new carpet in January.

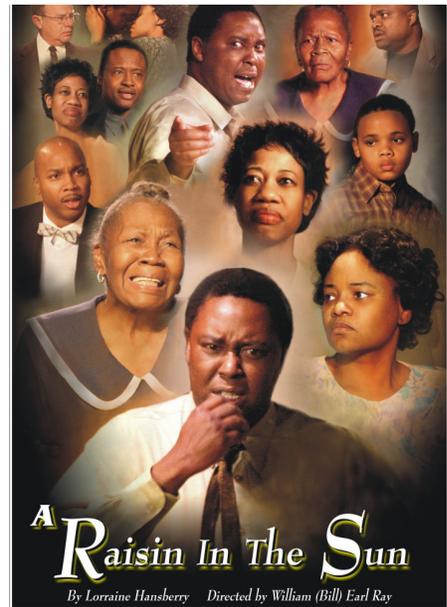
This is a picture of the new mural in the Children's Area. Bring your kids for Story Time on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. and see it for yourself.

Coming Attractions at:



Concerned DeSoto Citizens 11th Annual Gospel Concert on Sunday, February 15th 4 p.m. Featuring the WWW Singers, and a performance by the McCowan Middle School Music & Drama Departments. Tickets are \$10. For more information, call 972.230.4243.

"A Raisin In The Sun" March 11th through April 12th. The African American Repertory Theater is bringing back, by popular demand, a full run engagement of "A Raisin In The Sun" featuring Irma P. Hall. Mark your calendars to attend. Tickets will be available online at aareptheater.com or by calling 972.572.0998.



The Corner Theatre is located at 211 E. Pleasant Run in Town Center next door to the Recreation Center. The construction of the Town Center project will eliminate access to the Corner Theatre as well as other facilities at Town Center from the west side of the complex until June 2009. However, the show must go on!!! Parking for Corner Theatre patrons will be in the east parking lot off Pleasant Run Road. You will enter the facility on the east side of the Recreation Center near the racquet ball courts and follow the signs through the Recreation Center and out to the front entrance of the Corner Theatre.