

From the Desk of Bobbie Mitchell, Denton County Commissioner Pct. 3 – October 2017

Want to stay connected to Denton County? Watch for my column each month for updates and events happening in Precinct 3 and around the county.

Valley Ridge Extension Ribbon Cutting October 9

The City of Lewisville will open the Valley Ridge Drive extension on Monday, October 9, weather permitting, at a 10:00 a.m. ribbon cutting ceremony.

The purpose of the 1.6-mile extension is to provide a direct connection between I-35E and SH 121 Business and to reduce the amount of cut-through commuter traffic and big-rig truck traffic in Old Town Lewisville.

The new roadway, which cost about \$19 million to build, will feature two lanes in both directions. The original funding for construction of this extension was approved as part of the City's 2003 bond program. Denton County funded its portion in the TRIP 2004 bond program. Design started in 2010 and construction started in January 2015.

Ribbon Cutting Celebrates I35 Phase 1 Completion

The grand opening celebration of the completion of the I35 Phase 1 project is set for Wednesday, November 8, at 10:30 a.m. adjacent to the Lewisville Lake Bridge in Highland Village. The is the culmination of many months of work on the 35Express project.

County Finalizes Adoption of New Lower Tax Rate

The Denton County Commissioners Court officially adopted the new, lower tax rate of \$0.237812 per \$100 for the tax year 2017.

This new tax rate will generate approximately \$204.4 million in tax year 2017 and will provide funds for the increase for mandatory debt service payments for voter approved road and facility projects. In addition, the funds generated from new property added to the tax roll, which amounts to \$8,675,101, will be used to help fund employee-related costs and operating expenses.

The decreased rate of \$0.237812 (cents) represents a decrease of \$0.010597 (cents) from the 2016 tax rate of \$0.248409.

Central Counting Station at Denton County Election Office

Commissioners Court approved a Central Counting Station at Denton County Elections Administration office where ballots will be tabulated at a central location.

The Elections Administrator was named as the Central Counting Station Manager, responsible for the overall administration of the station and supervision of personnel. The Technology Resources Coordinator was named as the Tabulation Supervisor and will operate automatic tabulating equipment. The Elections Manager will serve as the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor and the Presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board will serve as the Presiding Judge to maintain order at the Central Counting Station, administer oaths, and receive ballots to be counted.

Personal Protective Equipment Safety Program For Road and Bridge Employees

Employee safety is a priority for the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool (TAC RMP). During July and August 2017, TAC RMP distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Safety Kits to members participating in the Workers' Compensation Program, which included Denton County's Road & Bridge crews.

The kits are made available at no cost by approval of the TAC RMP Board and are intended to supplement members' existing supply stock used for ongoing employee safety efforts.

D.I.R.E.C.T. Adult Drug Court Receives Governor's Office Grant

The Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$148,645 for the D.I.R.E.C.T. Adult Drug Court (Veterans Court.)

The purpose of this grant is to identify active duty military and/or veterans within the Denton County Criminal Justice System who may be expedited through the system and ultimately diverted from further involvement in criminal behavior through the use of alternative sentencing practices supported by treatment and services available through the Veterans Administration, community partners and other individuals/agencies.

The program targets adult male and female offenders who are active duty military or those who have separated from military service and have been charged with misdemeanors or low level felonies. In lieu of prosecution and a criminal record, participants are allowed to complete a 9- to 24-month court supervised treatment program. Upon successfully completing all treatment phases, participants are allowed to graduate, and charges against them are dismissed.

Our statistics verify that graduates of the Veterans Treatment court program are less likely to be re-arrested than individuals not participating in the program and not receiving the intensive supervision, treatment and judicial monitoring afforded veteran court participants.

Grant funds will provide for various screening expenses of potential participants, psychological and mental health evaluations, counseling sessions, family studies, monitoring devices to ensure participant's treatment compliance, etc. Funds are also included for necessary training and supplies for the veteran court team members.

Did You Know?

Denton County and its municipal partners have preplanned with each other to respond quickly by joining emergency units together for a quick response to emergencies within the county, and that same philosophy works when fellow Texans need our help outside of Denton County.

In the heart of devastation and insurmountable loss brought by Hurricane Harvey, some of the most memorable images were those of our fellow Texans helping each other. The attitude of Texans helping Texans makes me proud to live and call Texas my home, and that pride starts here in Denton County with our very own first responders who deployed without hesitation to serve their fellow Texans. Denton County and its municipalities have a unique family of first responders who are the first to stand proudly together and ask, “When do we leave to help?”

Fire service agencies within Denton County sent multiple task forces to support and help Texans during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. In addition, ambulance crews from many Denton County cities left days before hurricane landfall to assist in evacuation of those in hospitals and nursing homes that were in the projected path.

Over 100 firefighters and EMS personnel from Denton County agencies responded to the call for help. In addition, many of our county and city agencies sent police, public works and animal control personnel to assist with the broad mission to simply support fellow Texans in need.

The men and women that make up first responders throughout Denton County are not required to respond outside of their city or county, but are asked by their supervisor “Who wants to help?” Fire Chiefs are never surprised by the overwhelming response of their personnel that raise their hand and say “I am ready.” The call for assistance to Hurricane Harvey came with little time for deploying first responders to ready themselves with personal preparations for what could be a 14-day deployment into devastating and life-threatening conditions.

As the events of Hurricane Harvey unfolded and we watched the actions of our first responders on the news or social media outlets. A sincere thank you to those Denton County first responders and military personnel that served, and to the families that carried the extra load during their dedicated absence.

Upcoming Nonprofit Events:

Journey to Dream Gala October 14

For the past 13-years, the Lewisville-based youth-support nonprofit, Journey to Dream, has positively impacted hundreds of thousands of young people in North Texas, providing community outreach, support services and homeless programs, including their new emergency youth shelter for unaccompanied teens, Kyle’s Place, which opened this summer.

Kyle's Place is the first and only homeless shelter in Denton County to house and care for unaccompanied youth ages 14-18. Aside from giving teens a safe place to sleep and basic necessities, Kyle's Place offers the programs and support homeless youth need to get back on their feet and succeed.

To help raise money and continue their efforts to serve the homeless teens in our area, they will hold the Dream Big Gala on Saturday, October 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lewisville.

In addition to silent and live auctions, this year's event features award-winning country music artist and NY Times bestselling author, Jimmy Wayne, as the keynote speaker! Log onto their web site at www.journeytodream.com for more details and ticket purchase and sponsorship information.

Lewisville Education Foundation and Denton Public School Foundation First Annual Jim Collin & Steve Allen Memorial Golf Tournament October 16

Join the Lewisville ISD Education Foundation and the Denton Public School Foundation on October 16 at Denton Country Club for a great day of golf paying tribute to two of our community's finest – Jim Collin and Steve Allen. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. The proceeds from this event will support the missions of both foundations.

Jim Collin graduated from the University of Florida after serving two years in the US Air Force. He began his career in the glass industry with PPG where he worked for 28 years. Jim loved his family, maintaining his yard, traveling, and playing golf and cards with his friends. He never met a stranger, loved being with people, and always enjoyed a good party. He loved life!

Steve Allen worked hard for his community by serving on the LISD school board from 1986-1998 and by sponsoring numerous fundraising drives and charity events in the area. Sign up today to continue his legacy of giving.

There are just a few sponsorships left but plenty of room for players. Don't miss out!

10th Annual Fallen Officers Bike Race and 5K October 21, 2017

An officer is killed in the line of duty every 61 hours. Throughout history, there have been more line of duty deaths in the State of Texas than any other state or territory. The Texas Police Chiefs Association's Fallen Officer Fund ("the Fund") provides monetary assistance to Texas families of fallen heroes within 24 hours following an officer's line of duty death.

The Fallen Officers Bike Race is a community event that takes place at The Shops at Highland Village on Saturday, October 21, and activities include a 5K run, civilian bike race, and a police team bike race. In addition, enjoy live music, demonstrations, raffle prizes, a silent auction, kids zone, food, and drinks throughout the day. The 5K run begins at 8:00 a.m. and the bike races begin at 5:00 p.m.

Since 2008, the group has raised over \$150,000 for the Fallen Officer Fund but needs your help to reach their goal of \$30,000 this year!

CISNT Golf Tournament October 23

The mission of Communities In Schools of North Texas (CISNT) is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. To raise money for these programs, CISNT is hosting its largest fundraiser of the year, the 2017 “Link'd 2 Kids” Golf Tournament, on Monday, October 23, at the Lantana Golf Club.

Funding from this event will help keep 4,000 North Texas kids – including Bridgeport ISD, Denton ISD, Lake Dallas ISD, Lewisville ISD, Little Elm ISD, and Northwest ISD – in school and on track for graduation.

Go to their web site at www.cisnt.org for more information and sponsorship details. Or email golf@cisnt.org to RSVP and to secure your sponsorship!

Children’s Advocacy Center 20th Anniversary Breakfast November 2

The Children’s Advocacy Center for Denton County’s (CACDC) empowers child abuse victims, their families and our community through education, healing and justice. Their vision is to break the cycle of child abuse by educating families and our community to proactively protect children.

Jenna Quinn will join State Representative Tan Parker at the Children’s Advocacy Center for Denton County’s (CACDC) 20th Anniversary Breakfast being held at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 2, at the University of North Texas Gateway Center.

This event will be a celebration of CACDC’s 20 years of providing healing and justice to child abuse victims in Denton County. Since their opening in 1997, the CACDC has assisted more than 10,000 abused children in their road to recovery.

Just click the link to register: <http://cacdc.org/breakfastregistration/>

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If you have any questions or comments, please let me hear from you. My email is bobbie.mitchell@dentoncounty.com and my office number is 972-434-4780.