



Oakridge News

<http://www.oakridgena.com>



Vol. 16, No. 07

September 2008

President's Letter

By Mark Monroe, ONA President

Hello Friends and Neighbors,

Well here we are at the beginning of a new school year and I have to admit we are excited for Hunter to go to his first day of school. It also reminds me how careful we need to be in our neighborhoods. Kids do the darnedest things! So just be prepared especially when you are driving into that east sun in the mornings.

The ONA has several key dates that you need to be aware of. First we will be having a **general membership meeting on September 11th** at the Oakridge Country Club. This is an important meeting because we will be presenting thoughts and ideas that will take us through the next year. Also Mike Dollar will provide us with an update on the

progress of the Neighborhood Vitality Grant. Finally, Dr. James Chanez has invited a guest speaker to come and share his knowledge on private home care and the importance of knowing the different options including how those options can impact the entire family.

Then, on **October 7th**, the ONA, COP, Women's Group, Daytimers and the Oakridge Country Club will be hosting the **Texas National Night Out**. I am truly excited about this event. Each organization has put in a great deal of effort to have the best event in North Texas. We will have special guests including the Police and Fire Departments, Careflight, CERT Teams, High School Bands, Cheer-

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Vitality Grant Update

By Mike Dollar

It takes a lot of work to plant an entrance. Somehow I thought pulling out plants, mixing soil, and digging holes would pretty much sum up the procedure. Oh no, that just scratches the surface. One must first kill the grass and weeds, remove old plants (or create a whole new planting bed if none was there to begin with), then grind any old stumps to smithereens, fix any broken brickwork on the planters, and finally dig holes and plant. Did I mention reposition and even run additional sprinklers to water the new plants during our recent summer heat-fest?



If you use the Big Oaks, Richland, or Richoak entrances, we are meeting the requirements for obtaining a license from the City of Garland before proceeding. You see our new design is larger than the current one, so we need to get permission first. No problems are anticipated. We have submitted the requested information and I estimate that we'll probably have started on these entrances by the time you read this article.

If you have been using any other entrance, they're done! I think they look very good now and I can imagine them a few years from now. Dave Collins, of DLS Landscape and Maintenance, has been an excellent choice for us. He has planted

Check out these Oakridge Services!

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several other neighborhoods in Garland and is familiar with the Garland Neighborhood Vitality Grant Program. He has been so cooperative, and has gone out of his way more than once to create a showplace of our neighborhood's entrances. (Dave: If you're reading this, it does NOT mean you're getting a bonus.)

Upon Dave's suggestion, we have purposely waited until this fall to plant around our perimeter wall. Experience has shown tree survival rates are better when planted then. This also works with

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Don't Be a Victim

Garland Police August News Release

Don't be a Victim

Garland Police are proactively trying to prevent robberies of individuals by educating Garland residents on how not to become a victim. With today's down-turn in the economy Police have seen a rise in reports for robberies of individuals.

Officers are asking for Garland citizens to follow eight simple steps;

- ◆ *Do not carry large amounts of money on your person.*
- ◆ *Be observant and aware of your surroundings.*
- ◆ *Pay attention to suspicious people and vehicles.*
- ◆ *Try not to walk alone.*
- ◆ Help yourself and your neighbors by *being watchful.*
- ◆ If approached by a person with a weapon, *do not fight or resist.*
- ◆ Call 911 to *report a crime or suspicious activity.*
- ◆ Call **Garland Crime Stoppers** with crime information **972-272-TIPS (8477).**



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NO JOB IS TOO SMALL

Oakridge Women's Club (OWC)

By Libby Morse

The Oakridge Women's Club is open to all women in the Oakridge neighborhood who share a strong and common bond in the love of our children and families. We welcome prospective new members at all meetings! Annual dues are \$30.00, which pays for holiday parties and sunshine fund. Come join the fun! We would love to meet you and your family!

We meet the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. New member game night will be on October 2nd at Tami Monroe's house. Call for directions!



In August, we held our annual officer elections. Sheila Wange is our new President and Vice President is Tami Monroe. The 2008-2009 calendar was planned and is packed with fun events including holiday parties, a progressive dinner and game night just to name a few! Thanks to all of our great volunteers!

If you would like more details about the upcoming events or joining the OWC, please contact Libby Morse at tomlib@tx.rr.com or 972-523-3069.

President's Letter

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leaders, etc. There will be food and drinks as well as door prizes from our local vendors. Plus, I will be cooking some brisket and sausage. I am going to invite some of our local media to cover the event—including Steve Blow. I want to show him how Neighborhood Associations can benefit the community.

Now all we need is YOU!

I hope to see you soon at both events!

Mark Monroe

ONA Tech Tip

If you have a desktop computer, make it a point never to move your computer tower (i.e.. computer 'box') while the computer is running. Desktop computers dislike being jostled around and will often retaliate with nasty little error messages.

Need a Tech Tip answer?
Email "TechDoc" at norwegia42@gmail.com.



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Vitality Grant Update

(Continued from Page 1)

our schedule, since all the entrances should be completed by then.

Also this fall our "Black-is-Back" streetlight installations should begin. All the white "space-ships" will soon be gone, replaced with our original-looking black carriage lamps and poles. The materials have been ordered and GP&L expects to receive our new poles and lights next month. I have been assured that they will all be installed before our Grant deadline in December. With all the changes, it should look pretty good around here for the holiday season!



Speaking of the holiday season, Thanksgiving and Christmas are peaking around the corner. I want to show my appreciation by taking this opportunity to remind everyone of the overwhelming generosity that accompanied our neighborhood's Vitality Grant Matching Fund. You may remember that we needed cash in the amount of at least 15% of our roughly \$125,000 grant in order to use any of it. We received cash donations totaling 15.4%. We had over \$15,000 in donated labor and materials and have five very special neighbors who have committed to regularly watering the entrance plants where we have no sprinklers. We had many, many volunteers who put forth great effort and many hours of their time to make this endeavor a success. Including our beautification dollars, the final tally of cash and other donations given to beautify and renovate Oakridge through the City of Garland Neighborhood Vitality Grant can be estimated in the range of \$37,000 (and this from less than 45% of the neighborhood!). I warned you it was overwhelming! Thank you all so very much!

Please let your neighbors know that we depend on them to maintain the Oakridge they enjoy so much. Please ask them to become a member of the Oakridge Neighborhood (Volunteer) Association.

Council Report

By Rick Williams, District 7 Councilman

If you read the Metro section of the *Dallas Morning News*, you have read where many cities and counties in this area have been experiencing budget deficits as they prepare to pass the budget for fiscal year 2009 (i.e., 10/01/08 – 09/30/09). Garland was certainly no different, and August is the month each year we hold special meetings to hear presentations by city staff, and there are also two meetings for public testimony. In the past, the public meetings often had very few speakers, but not this year. There were probably close to 75 people in the council chambers both nights and about 25 speakers each night due to several emotional budget cut items.

The first was shutting down Ridgewood library in south Garland and, understandably, many people were not happy with decision. Additionally, two fire engines are going to be taken out of service and replaced by 3 ambulances. Since 78% of all calls to the fire department involve ambulance needs, adding 3 ambulances for 2 fire engines made sense to me. Previously, there was not an ambulance at the fire stations on Holford road or the new station on Jupiter Road just south of Buckingham. Now all 11 fire stations in Garland will have an ambulance in addition to one large engine and one smaller engine.

Originally on the City Manager's proposed budget was the elimination of a Code Compliance presence on the weekend. However, several of us, including me, reversed that proposal even though Code on the weekend only responds to limited issues. Nonetheless, of all the constituent calls and emails I get, Code complaints are the biggest number by far.

Also hitting the cutting room floor was Garland's Star Spangled 4th which has been held at Firewheel Town Center the last two years. That saved the City about \$250,000, but efforts are cur-

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Council Report

(Continued from Page 5)

rently underway to get the private sector to fund some sort of 4th of July festival in 2009.

One cut was really painful, and that was the elimination of cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for current and future City of Garland retirees. There's a long and complicated story leading to this decision, but in general the Texas Municipal Retirement System was mismanaged out of Austin for many years. Now that TMRS has new and competent leadership, they have told cities what the funding must be to keep COLAs and that cost is absolutely prohibitive. Consequently, Garland had to tell current retirees (as well as future retirees) that what you are receiving now is what you will be receiving in the future. They were understandably upset by this announcement and the City is looking into ways of periodically providing them some extra retirement funds.

You may also notice small things as a result of other budget cuts. For example, next year the Parks Department will not be putting pre-emergent on road medians, and cutting will be every 10 days instead of 7. So, expect the medians not to look as nice as they have in the past. The City has a number of color flower beds throughout the City, and they will be replaced with

native grasses and other perennials to save money. Other money saving changes included having most city employees pay \$0.20 per mile (to and from work) for take-home vehicles

When the smoke cleared for FY 2009, the tax rate for the City of Garland increased from 68.86 cents per \$100.00 in assessed value to 69.96. When taking into consideration the increase in the homestead exemption from 7% to 8% a few months back, this change means for a \$150,000 home, the owner will be paying \$0.40 per month more than this year. For an individual age 65 or older or disabled, they will be paying \$0.06 per month less in 2009. Typically, one's City tax is less than 30% of the total tax bill, as the school district, DCCCD, Parkland, and the county account for the rest. There were also small increases in the water rate, waste water rate, and solid waste pick up.

Finally, kudos to Neighborhood Police Officer John Capers who caught two thieves in an alley in the Camelot neighborhood. There had been a rash of home burglaries in recent weeks in that neighborhood, and these two lowlifes, I'm sure, accounted for many of them.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to call me (214-535-2648) or e-mail me at rickwilli@gmail.com.



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For the latest news in Garland:
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