



Oakridge News

<http://www.oakridgena.com>



Vol. 17, No. 07

July 2009

Observations

By Mike Rose, ONA President

We are all the eyes and ears of our Oakridge community, as you may have read in last month's newsletter. Lives may very well have been saved by the quick action of folks who live in our neighborhood. It is extremely important to be continually aware of your surroundings. What looks out of place, unfamiliar or not right please make that call – it may save a life or someone's property. See the important phone numbers in this newsletter.

If you take advantage of the many communication tools that our city of-

fers to its citizens you would have received the following early notice: "Starting this Friday, Garland Police will have additional officers patrolling Garland streets for drunk drivers. The timing of the extra patrols coincides with the dates leading up to and following the Independence Day holiday. The two weeks of added enforcement will start Friday, June 26 and run through Sunday, July 5." Of

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Check out these Oakridge Services!

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District 7 Council Report

By Rick Williams, District 7 City Councilman

At the June 15 City Council work session, we came to consensus that we would amend the current ordinance (which may have happened by the time this article is read) requiring convenience stores to have high resolution cameras, a drop safe, a panic button, etc. This was modeled after an ordinance recently passed in Dallas. I personally had some difficulties with requiring "mom and pop" stores to purchase drop safes and incur a monthly expense for a burglar alarm systems with panic button, but the majority felt otherwise. Perhaps this will help fight crime.

Approximately 85% of the homes in Garland receive their electricity from Garland Power & Light, and the other 15% have a choice of electric

provider although all repairs/maintenance is done by Oncor regardless of provider. The *Garland City Press* (a city produced newspaper sent every other month) always show a little electricity comparison chart. Even though GP&L customers do not have a choice of providers (it would take pages of complicated writing to explain why), GP&L rates in the little comparison choice have looked very good over the last year, but in recent months not as good. GP&L has not changed residential rates in about 3 ½ years, so movement in the chart is a function of other providers changing their rates. In recent months, the price of natural gas (a fuel that is used by many turbines to generate electricity) has been low, so other provid-

ers' electricity prices have been going down while GP&L has remained constant. However, price isn't everything. During the huge storms of June 10/11, GP&L had only a few short outages. However, Oncor described the storm as the third worst in history, and I received many calls from Oncor customers in Garland who had no electricity for 2 or 3 days. I know many of them would have loved to have been a GP&L customer while they were sweltering in the heat and humidity sans electricity.

Many of you have driven by a sign on Arapaho which says Chambers Brothers. That sign is located on a gate to the 140 acres of Chambers

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Oakridge Women's Club (OWC)

By Libby Morse

The **Oakridge Women's Club** is changing its meeting night- Yet again! Please join us on the Second Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. (starting in August)

If you are not a member of the OWC- this is what you have recently missed: A lovely sunset cruise over Lake Ray Hubbard, Rich French desserts, Wine tasting to awesome jazz music under the stars and the world's best Mojitos on the veranda!

Coming up: We take a break in July for the official meeting, but keep your eyes on your e-mails for special get-togethers!

The next official meeting will be at Joy's for officer elections. It will be Thursday August 13th at 7pm.

September 10th will be a hot tub party at Maryannes!

NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME- Call Libby for directions and dates! 972-523-3069

If you would like more details about the upcoming events or joining the OWC, please contact our President, Sheila Wange at 972-496-3161 Or you may e-mail Libby Morse at TOM-LIB@tx.rr.com

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.

Observations Continued from page 1

course, by the time you read this issue the added patrol time will be over, however the notice was issued well in advance of the start date. This is just another benefit of being connected.

Your Board met the third week of June as announced and had a productive agenda. Great things are anticipated in the coming year with a strong emphasis on membership growth. This growth will only be achieved if we **ALL** make every effort towards the goal of surpassing 50% of the approximately 1,200 homes in Oakridge. Talk to your neighbors and friends to make sure they are members. Some may say they do not desire to get involved, but that is just an excuse. Folks may become a member and not ever get involved, while others like to assist in any way they are able. The choice of involvement is up to each individual.

Just a reminder – school vacation has started so we'll be seeing the kids out and about. One must be ever watchful while behind the steering wheel. We have additional stop signs in place; however we have had fatalities in and around our community over the years. An extra few minutes of travel time is worth saving a life.

Enjoy your summertime and stay cool.

Let Sue Do It

The repairman is coming, but you have a meeting?

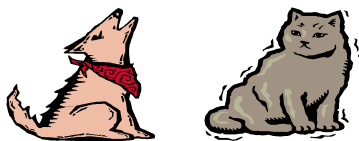
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Kitty and Rover won't go to the kennel?

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NO JOB IS TOO SMALL

Crime & Safety Report

By Bill Olive

Incidents from June 7 through June 20

- ◆ Burglary-Vehicle 6/17/09---2009 Hearthside.
- ◆ Theft >\$1,500<\$20,000 3101 Ridge Oak 6/19/09.
- ◆ Burglary-Habitation (attempt) 6/20/09 2108 Over-view.

Graffiti Cleanup:

As of today (6/23) the city code department has taken care of the removal of most of the graffiti in Oakridge. There are a couple spots which may require a second cleaning. We thank Garland Code Enforcement for their prompt action. In an effort to curb this activity, we will be speaking with the Oakcrest HOA to request that they secure an opening in their fence which allows people to pass from Oakcrest into Oakridge. There is, of course, the possibility that the graffiti was done by Oakridge residents and we are stepping up our patrols in an effort to prevent any reoccurrences. Residents living along the wall areas, regardless whether it is Oakridge's walls or the wall surrounding the electrical station, should be on the lookout for anyone who may be spray painting graffiti and report the activity immediately to the police. Graffiti is one of the quickest ways to lower home values in a neighborhood.

Wheels:

Perhaps you saw an SUV on bricks in the driveway along

Diamond Oaks (second incident above). In the middle of the night someone (or group) removed all four wheels from the vehicle, leaving it lodged on the bricks removed from a neighbor's yard. In 2008 we had a similar incident along Bending Oaks. Last week a local TV station did a report about this type crime; it's been occurring throughout North Texas. The manager at the Auto Zone store at Shiloh and Beltline suggests a relatively inexpensive way called "wheel locks" to help prevent this type of crime. Wheel locks are similar to lug nuts and can be easily installed. A set of wheel locks generally costs between \$10 and \$20 and are specific to the type of vehicle and the year it was manufactured. Auto Zone advised that you simply need to come in, provide the information needed and they will assist you in matching the wheel lock with your vehicle. They actually have some in color! If you have fancy or special wheels on your vehicle, the best option to prevent theft is parking your vehicle in the garage, the next best option is getting a set of wheel locks to protect your investment.

Flu Outbreak Plan being prepared:

The city is working on a plan to be enacted should we have an outbreak of "swine flu" this fall. Let's all hope and pray we don't need it.

Philip Hanas
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District 7 Council Report

Continued from page 1

Brothers. That sign is located on a gate to the 140 acres of Chambers Brothers property that used to be used to mine gravel along with a few other enterprises inside the fence. Recently, they have been letting companies dump fill dirt in the many large holes on that property, but from what I've been told, it may take a long time to get that property level again. Eventually, it will be sold, but it may be a while before that property is in a condition to make it marketable.

The Scofflaw Program is a rarely used collection tool which blocks vehicle registration at county offices for offenders who have outstanding fines (e.g., traffic tickets) with the city. Garland was recently selected by County Commissioner Mike Cantrell to be the first city in north Texas to pilot this program. Once again it is good to see Garland being a leader in law enforcement, plus the city can certainly use the extra money generated by this program..

About 3 months ago I spoke at an Oakridge Neighborhood Association quarterly meeting regarding a proposed change in the Garland ordinance about where green trash bins can be stored for those individuals who have front pick up. Currently, for a typical L-shaped house with a front garage, they can be placed on the concrete driveway in front of the front-facing portion of the home. I took a survey of the ONA residents at the meeting, and by a vote of 35-3, residents were in favor of a change which would require the trash bins to go behind or at least to the side of the house (i.e., no longer sitting in the drive way in plain view of the front street). After much debate, and I mean MUCH debate, we decided at the June 15 work session to change the ordinance. Essentially the new ordinance (which may have passed by the time this article is being read) says for front pick up houses, the green trash bin must be placed (1) out of view, or (2) to the side of the house. The *Garland City Press* will run a little article plus diagram to explain this change.

I have not witness any evictions in District 7, but I'm sure some have occurred. Often when this happens, the persons being evicted from a home will have their possessions put on the front lawn by the home's owner. All this is done while the constable watches the process. Such an occurrence is not only stressful to the person being evicted, but also to neighbors who see clothes, furniture, etc. strewn over the front yard of a nearby home. The Council recently met with Constable Mike Gothard, and we worked out a procedure where the home's owner can call the City of Garland to have a container placed on the street. Then items taken from the home will be placed in the container. If not claimed by the owner, these possessions will be hauled off by the City. .

On June 20, I attended the Garland Neighborhood Management Academy graduation ceremony at the Central Library as District 7's Ruth LeGrow, with the Brentwood Village HOA, was one of the graduates. GNMA is a series of educational classes conducted by the City of Garland on a variety of topics important to neighborhood vitality. The GNMA exists to provide neighborhood residents with the tools to actively engage in the municipal government process and to manage neighborhood growth and change. The program is an important educational and empowerment component of the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods by providing planning, education, management tools, and technical assistance to enable neighborhoods to reach their goals. To learn more about GNMA and possibly register for the academy, go to Garland's home page at www.ci.garland.tx.us, click "Departments" and "Community Services." On the Community Services page, click "Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods" where you will find information on GNMA.

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

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City of Garland Information – Easy Access

By Dorothy White - Public and Media Affairs Manager

The City of Garland is committed to open and transparent government functions and having a fully informed and engaged citizenry. The City utilizes many tools to give citizens ready access to news and information about the City government functions. Here are some examples:

The *Garland City Press* is published bi-monthly and mailed to every residential address in the city. The *City Press* contains news about important City Council actions, Neighborhood Vitality activities, and a wide range of City services, programs and events. It is also available on the City's website at www.ci.garland.tx.us. Look under the "News" tab at the top of the page and select "Garland City Press"

CGTV is the City's government access cable channel. CGTV broadcasts City Council and Plan Commission meetings live and as re-broadcasts during the weeks between meetings. Other programs feature news and information about such items as pet adoptions at the City animal shelter, energy and water conservation, crime prevention tips and much more. CGTV is available on Time Warner Cable channel 16 and Verizon FIOS-TV channel 44. CGTV is available via video streaming (live and video-on-demand) on the City's website at www.ci.garland.tx.us. Click on the "CGTV Video Streaming" icon on the left side of the page.

The City's website contains a wealth of information, forms, and documents related to City government functions including meet-

ing agendas, contact information for City Council and City Departments, online payment options for utilities, City taxes and City citations, and much more.

Also on the City's website, is a link to subscribe to "Garland E-News" to receive City news releases and other announcements via email. Subscription options include general news releases, notification of City Council agenda postings and much more. Look for the "Garland E-News" icon on the left side of the City's home page.

Another online option is the Citizen's Request Center. This portal contains hundreds of FAQs about almost every City department. The Request Center also offers you the opportunity to submit a new question or a request for a specific service. A log-in is required for questions and most requests. Look for the "Citizen's Request Center" icon on the left side of the City's home page.

In the case of an emergency or urgent notification, the City of Garland now has the capability to notify residents via the telephone through **CodeRED**. The system is geographical-based and allows the City to alert citizens based on their location and telephone numbers. A pre-recorded message tells a live person or an answering machine about the specific situation

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City of Garland Information - Easy Access

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and if any action is necessary. The City of Garland has added new automated severe weather warnings to its CodeRED telephone notification system. These notification calls will be launched as soon as the National Weather Service issues a severe weather warning, providing critical preparation time when severe weather threatens. Whether you have already registered for CodeRED or are registering for the first time, **you must "opt-in" for the automatic weather warnings.** To register, go to the City's website and click on the "CodeRED" icon on the left side of the home page.

Have you ever noticed brochures or flyers in your City of Garland utility bill? Those notices are reserved specifically for City government news and information such as your Recycling Schedule, Energy Conservation news, and other timely City sponsored programs.

Various City department representatives are available to speak to neighborhood and community groups or host information booths for neighborhood events. Speakers can be requested through the Citizen's Request Center or by contacting the department directly.

The City continues to explore additional means for reaching out to its citizens. For more information about how to access City information and services, contact Dorothy White, Public & Media Affairs Manager at 972-205-2879 or dwhite@ci.garland.tx.us

The Oakridge News is a publication of the Oakridge Neighborhood Association

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The ONA Board meets the Third Wednesday of each month to conduct the business of the ONA.

The ONA Board set the dates for the General Membership meetings.

Mark your calendars:

September 24, 2009

March 4, 2010

May 27, 2010

Check the ONA web site for current information

www.oakridgena.com