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Fort Worth faring better than most

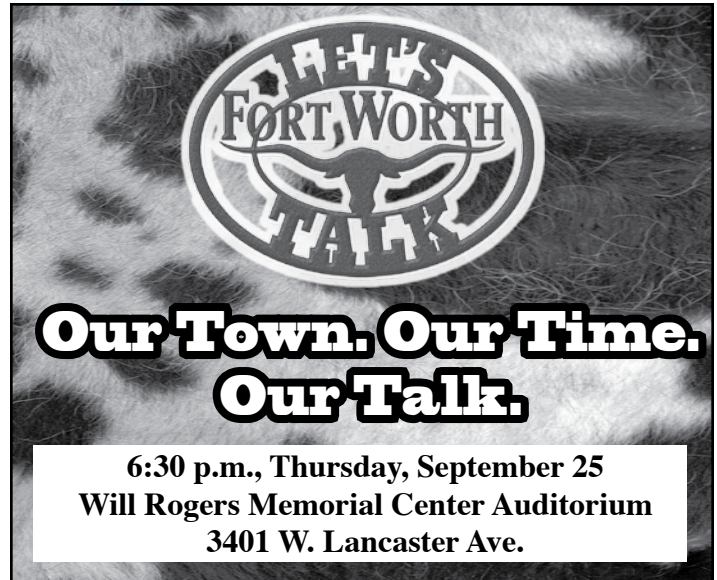
Dear Neighbors,

As the “dog days” of summer wind down and the cooler fall weather is anticipated, the City Council is finalizing the 2008-2009 budget. We are fortunate that Texas and Fort Worth are faring far better than many municipalities and states in this current economic slow down.

Still, some effects are being felt such as slower growth in real estate values and sales tax. The City Council will make required adjustments in the budget while we maintain our commitment to public safety and good customer service.

In May, you voted on and passed a \$150 million bond package focused strictly on streets and roads. The city’s population is now more than 700,000 and more roads are badly needed. We will continue seeking ways to build more capacity.

Perhaps one of the most difficult issues the city faces is how best to reduce homelessness



Our Town. Our Time. Our Talk.

6:30 p.m., Thursday, September 25
Will Rogers Memorial Center Auditorium
3401 W. Lancaster Ave.

and to reduce the effects of homelessness on our neighborhoods and our businesses. The Mayor’s Committee on Homelessness has completed, and the City Council subsequently approved, a comprehensive 10-year plan to end chronic homelessness in Fort Worth. Tarrant County also adopted this plan and intends to work with our city to expand the plan’s reach to the entire county. Inside you will find an article on this plan.

Please make plans to join us for *Let’s Talk Fort Worth* at 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 25 at Will Rogers

Auditorium. A series of neighborhood meetings has been held gathering input for this long-held tradition in Fort Worth. I look forward to hearing your hopes and dreams for our town as we gather together.

Tough economic times, unprecedented growth and homelessness—these are just a few of the tough challenges we continue to face. Nevertheless, I am grateful to be in Fort Worth where together we can find solutions.

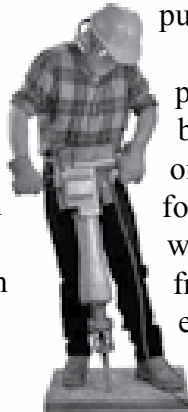
Thanks for all you do,


 Danny Scarth

Voters approve \$150 million bond program

Fort Worth voters approved a \$150 million bond program in May that will be dedicated to street improvements across the city.

The 2008 bond program provides \$81 million for arterial streets, \$33 million for neighborhood streets, \$22.2 million for bridges, \$7.5 million for traffic lights and other intersections improvements and \$6.3 million for



transportation grants and the city's public art program.

A detailed description of the projects identified for the 2008 bond program can be viewed on the city's Web site at www.fortworthgov.org. The projects were chosen using feedback from residents, need, cost effectiveness and other criteria.

Additionally, parity among council districts was taken into consideration.

The 2008 bond program is a

response to citizen requests for new and improved roadways. \$150 million was the amount available for the 2008 bond program without raising taxes.

Although city staff has begun work to implement 2008 bond program projects, it will take about a year before actual construction begins and several years for completion.

Also, work continues on the six-year 2004 Bond Program, scheduled to be complete in 2010.

So, where's all that Barnett Shale money going?

Members of the Fort Worth City Council are often asked, "Why is the city facing tight budgets with all of the money generated from the Barnett Shale?"

The answer is simple: Roughly 95 percent of the revenue generated from publicly owned gas wells is restricted. This money, according to current federal, state and local statutes, must be saved or used only to improve the properties under which the revenues were generated. That's why, for example, we've seen a great many improvements to local parks.

Only about 4.7 percent of the money expected to come from these gas leases is unrestricted under current policies. Over the next four years, that 4.7 percent is projected to be about \$15 million, and the City Council has dedicated these funds to greatly needed street improvements.

Because the vast majority of gas well revenues are restricted,



this money cannot be used to fill gaps in the city's General Fund budget, for example.

Another factor to keep in mind is that gas well revenues won't last forever. Gas production will diminish and so will royalty payments. Eventually, the money stream will run dry. With that in mind, the City Council and others believe the best use of these dollars is to spend it on one-time, long-term capital needs,

like improvements to parks, streets and other city facilities and save the rest in a permanent fund to leave a legacy for future generations.

Hiring additional city staff or supporting important city services with gas well revenues could pose a problem in the future. That's because these people or programs would eventually have to be cut or reduced once gas well revenues decline.

The Barnett Shale is expected to provide the city with opportunities related to specific, one-time capital improvements. But, as Mayor Mike Moncrief often says, "The Barnett Shale is not a panacea or a cure-all."

Nevertheless, the Fort Worth City Council and city staff continue to look for innovative ways to use the Barnett Shale to support greatly needed capital improvements throughout the city while protecting our neighborhoods through a balanced well-crafted gas well drilling ordinance.

Incentive agreements spur growth

Companies with the potential to create thousands of jobs and support greatly needed city services with tax revenue have a choice where to locate their business. The competition between various cities to lure and retain business is fierce.

However, thanks to a business friendly environment and a comprehensive economic incentive program, Fort Worth continues to be recognized as one of the best places in the country to build or relocate a business.

A lot of local employers are thriving because of economic incentives, and the latest audit findings showed that companies receiving general tax abatements and economic development program grants are meeting and exceeding the conditions set by the Fort Worth City Council.

Although the city will abate and grant \$6.9 million in tax revenue this year — less than 1.5 percent of total ad valorem taxes — from 27 companies, the benefits to the local economy are significantly greater.

In 2007, companies with active incentive agreements created 7,807 jobs, exceeding contract goals. They also generated \$433.1 million in construction and supply/service contracts to Fort Worth companies — \$225.9 million more than stipulated in their tax abatement agreements. And they awarded \$228.8 million in contracts to Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), exceeding contract goals by \$114.7 million.

Economic incentives are awarded on a case-by-case basis to companies that add value to the city's property



tax roll and are for a specified period of time, if they follow guidelines set forth by the city. The guidelines for incentives include:

- new full-time jobs for Fort Worth and Central City residents
- development with little or no additional cost to the city, while producing a positive economic impact
- positive impact for Fort Worth companies and Fort Worth-MWBE certified companies
- promotion of quality affordable housing and/or mixed-income development.

While many cities expect a “good faith effort” in the same areas, Fort Worth is one of the few cities in the country to mandate these conditions and provide strict oversight. Many of the agreements are performance based. That is, the more investment with capital or job creation, the more economic incentives the company will receive. If a company under agreement does not meet its performance goals, the economic incentive is reduced

For more information on the City of Fort Worth's General Tax Abatement Policy, visit the Fort Worth Economic and Community Development Department online at www.fortworthgov.org/ecodev.

Special needs assistant program available to residents

When seconds count, critical information makes a difference in a rescue mission.

The Special Needs Assistant Program (SNAP), historically used to provide data for evacuation purposes, now allows residents with special needs or permanent disabilities to register online and provide critical information for emergency responders.

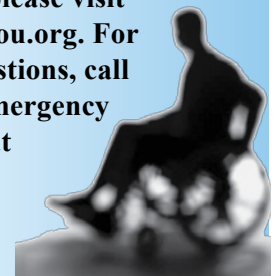
Planners are working to link SNAP information with the 911 system, allowing first responders to obtain critical information before they get to a scene.

Information provided by citizens is voluntary and all the information is kept confidential. In the past, citizens filled out forms to provide data that was entered manually into spreadsheets.

Residents can now submit information to SNAP over the Web through an ADA compliant Web site. In less than five minutes, residents can provide detailed information, which will be made available to public safety agencies.

Once an account is open, citizens can manage their information at any time using their username and password. The system keeps accounts active for 12 months. After that, residents must reactivate and/or update the information annually in their accounts.

To register, please visit www.snapforyou.org. For additional questions, call Fort Worth Emergency Management at 817-392-6170.



Animal Care and Control officers begin neighborhood sweeps

The Fort Worth Animal Care and Control Division recently began conducting sweeps as part of the Safe Neighborhoods for People and Pets campaign. Animal Care and Control officers hope this effort will help residents understand the importance of being responsible pet owners.



in May, and officers are focusing on finding pet owners not in compliance with Animal Care and Control ordinances.

During the first pilot run of the program in north Fort Worth, officers picked up 13 stray dogs and two stray cats. They also left 27 door hangers

and issued nine citations to out-of-compliance pet owners.

The sweep took place after residents in the area were sent postcards to make them aware of the campaign. Residents also were notified using the city's reverse 911 telephone messaging system.

Animal Care and Control officials hope soon to expand the program to other parts of the city. For more information about how you can make sure your pets are in compliance with Animal Care and Control laws, call 817-392-3737.

What it means to be a responsible pet owner

1. Select the right pet to fit your particular situation.
2. Spay or neuter your pet.
3. Vaccinate your pet for rabies and make sure your dog or cat wears proper rabies vaccination identification at all times.
4. Make sure your pet has a city license and wears it at all times. A city license costs \$7 and may be obtained by visiting a participating local veterinarian or from the Animal Care and Control Center, 4900 Martin St.
5. Provide clean food, water, shelter and regular caring human interaction.
6. Provide access to medical care when needed.
7. Train and socialize your pets.
8. Ensure your pets are behind a secure enclosure, such as a fence, at all times.

You can be a part of city boards or commissions

Fort Worth has several boards or commissions that are tasked with various issues from zoning, to transportation, to historic preservation...you name it.

These are volunteer roles, mostly appointed by city council members. Unfortunately, there simply aren't enough volunteers to fill current open seats.

To see a full listing of boards and commissions, visit www.fortworthgov.org/government. And, to find out how to sign up for your new role in public service, contact the District 4 Office at 817-392-8804.

Roadside sale of animals banned

Looking for a new pet once was as easy as taking a drive down the street, but a new city ordinance now prohibits the roadside sale of animals — and for good reason.

The ordinance was recently approved by the Fort Worth City Council to curb the public health and safety risks associated with the sale of animals by unregulated vendors operating at roadside or other temporary outdoor venues.

Each year, the Animal Care and Control Division receives numerous complaints from residents who have purchased an animal sold as a specific breed or pedigree and who

have no way to contact the seller after learning that the information provided was not factual.

And if an animal is sold with a disease such as distemper or rabies, there is no way to trace the origin of the pet or notify people who might have been exposed to the diseased animal.

Also, traffic and other hazards posed by roadside vendors are a concern.

Anyone violating the ban on roadside sales could face a fine as high as \$2,000 for each offense. For more information regarding the ban, call the Animal Care and Control Division at 817-392-3737.

City Council approves plan to end chronic homelessness

For more than two years, the Mayor and City Council have rallied for the development of a plan to end chronic homelessness in Fort Worth. In response, the Fort Worth Mayor's Advisory Commission on Homelessness was created in October 2005 and given the charge to create a plan that would end chronic homelessness. The Commission used the experiences of service providers, the homeless and best practices across the country to develop a plan that best fits the needs of Fort Worth. The Commission heard public comment during the month of May and incorporated the feedback into the final version of the plan and submitted it to the City Council and the public in June.

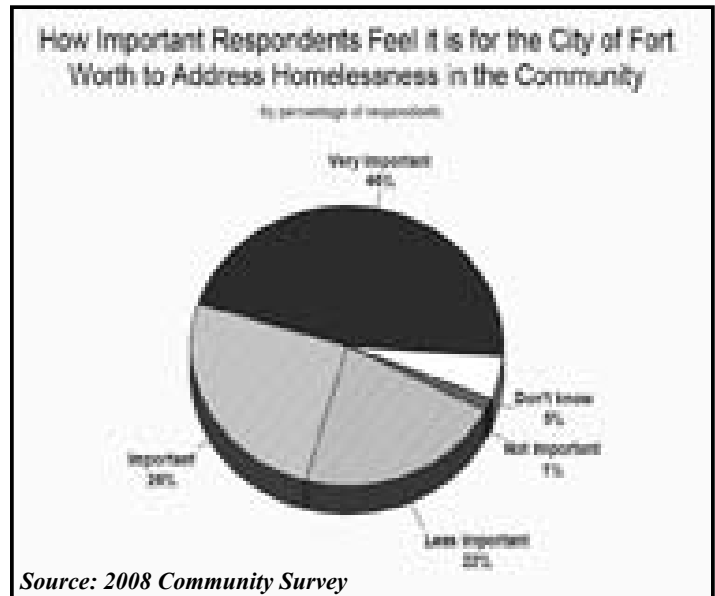
After receiving overwhelming support from the public and various homelessness service providers, the plan was adopted by the City Council on June 17.

The plan, entitled *Directions Home: Making Homelessness Rare, Short-term and Non-recurring in Fort Worth, Texas within Ten Years*, has seven main strategies that will be implemented in the coming years. The strategies include:

1. Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing.
2. Expand opportunities and services linked with accountability.
3. Develop and operate a Central Resource Facility.
4. Coordinate and expand homelessness prevention initiatives.
5. Support and strengthen existing public, private and faith-based efforts.
6. Mitigate the negative community impacts of homelessness.
7. Lead, educate and advocate for change.

The vision is that homelessness will be a *rare, short-term and non-recurring* experience in Fort Worth, Texas by the year 2018.

More than 6,300 people experience homelessness in Tarrant



County each year—more than 4,000 at any point in time. Combined, the public and private sectors spent more than \$30 million responding to homelessness issues in fiscal year 2007 in Tarrant County; unfortunately, only 33 percent of these dollars were spent on programs to end homelessness. The new plan aims to replace those services that only *manage* homelessness with supportive services that *end* homelessness such as housing, rental assistance, case management, life skills development and counseling.

To review the plan or to find out how you, your neighborhood or congregation can get involved, visit the City of Fort Worth online at www.fortworthgov.org/homelessness or contact the Homelessness Office at 817-392-7552.

Residents have a say in Fort Worth's future

It happened in 1963 and '92. Now, it's happening again — a citywide conversation to stimulate dialogue among Fort Worth residents.

Appropriately called *Let's Talk Fort Worth*, the citizen-driven event has included a series of planning and discussion meetings, culminating this fall in a big town hall meeting that will generate ideas, suggestions and dreams to help shape the city's future for the next 20 years. And you're invited!

The big event starts at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 25 at the Will Rogers Memorial Center Auditorium, 3401 W. Lancaster Ave.

Let's Talk Fort Worth is an opportunity for each of the more than 700,000 residents to tell the mayor and City Council how we can work together to make Fort Worth even better. Mayor Mike Moncrief and City Council members are invited to attend the citywide conversation on Sept. 25 to hear residents' comments.

"We want to hear the concerns, observations and suggestions of our residents as to how we can make the best city in the country even better for future generations," Moncrief said.

Today, Fort Worth boasts a population of more than 700,000 and

is the 17th largest city in the country, with more people moving in every day. Still, Fort Worth has a few challenges including expansive growth, traffic congestion and air quality, just to name a few. And, just as they did in 1963 and 1992, city leaders believe it's time to talk again.

You'll have the opportunity to share your vision for Fort Worth's future in person at the Sept. 25 event or in writing via e-mail or regular U.S. mail. You also can submit ideas, suggestions and dreams for Fort Worth's future by calling the TalkLine at 817-392-2008.

For more information, go to www.LetsTalkFortWorth.org.

City unveils new health inspection search tool

View restaurant scores, daycare and pool inspections online

Visitors to the City of Fort Worth Web site (www.fortworthgov.org) can now use a convenient and user-friendly tool to search for restaurant scores, daycare and pool inspection reports. This new tool was officially unveiled to City Council members at a recent council meeting.

The new Online Health Inspection Reports tool provides users an easy way to view complete inspections and related details. Users can now search eating establishments (such as restaurants, convenience stores, delis, cafes, bakeries, grocery stores and bars), daycare centers

and pools by name, ZIP code and keyword. Eating establishments can also be searched by scores (called demerits).

The tool enables users to view a two-year history of health inspection reports and search through inspections by a particular date range or radius from a certain location. Another feature that residents will find very useful enables them to map their destination.

Residents can also utilize the frequently asked questions section to get answers regarding the health inspection process, file a complaint online and link directly to similar sites for other

surrounding communities.

“We are excited about the launch of this new tool and believe our residents as well as visitors will find it very useful,” said Public Health Assistant Director Scott Hanlan. “Both the Public Health and IT Solutions departments worked very hard in developing this tool and are proud that it is now available on our city’s Web site for everyone’s use. This new resource will allow for more informed consumer decisions.”

Users can view the new tool and provide their feedback by visiting www.fortworthgov.org.

City Council launches modern streetcar study

The modern-day street car may prove to be another opportunity to move commuters, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in Fort Worth. Knowing this, the City Council recently appointed a 15-member committee charged with determining the feasibility of developing a modern streetcar network.



The network would be a part of the overall public transit system under development and would be connected to commuter rail and other modes of public transportation here in the city.

The members of the newly formed committee will review Fort Worth’s previous streetcar studies; take a look at successful light rail

and streetcar systems in other cities (like Portland, Seattle and Tacoma); and conduct a preliminary assessment of costs and benefits.

While the benefits of a new streetcar system are obvious, there are many challenges to such a system, not the least of which is the cost associated with

installing various streetcar stations and the required overhead electric power supply.

The City Council, officials with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, along with the members of the Streetcar Committee recently began their work with a trip to Dallas via the Trinity Railway Express to ride the DART transit system and tour Mockingbird

Station, one of the country’s foremost examples of transit-oriented developments. Other discovery trips to Portland, Seattle and Tacoma will take place in the coming months.

The committee is expected to present their findings to the city council by December.

If the study committee determines that a streetcar system is desirable for Fort Worth, they will work with the City Council and city staff to identify a pilot corridor, potential funding sources and prepare a preliminary funding strategy.

In 2002, the city approved a streetcar proposal but was unable to acquire the needed funding for the system. At the time, the plan was for the proposed streetcar system to connect downtown with the Cultural District, the Stockyards, and the near south and southeast portions of the city.

Helpful Numbers

This section is included to help residents find direct access to some of the most needed services.
If additional assistance is needed, please contact District 4 Office.

Report crime or non-emergency requests	Police	817-335-4222
Trash, recycling, brush, bulky waste	Environmental Management	817-392-3279
Barking dogs, animal abuse, dead animal, lost or found pet	Animal Care and Control.....	817-392-3737
High weeds and grass, junk vehicles, debris, open and vacant structures	Code Compliance	817-392-1234 www.fortworthgov.org/codecompliance
Sidewalks, speed bumps, school zones, curbs	Transportation and Public Works.....	817-392-8100
Water service, billing, sewer issues	Water	817-392-4477
Permits, inspections, licensing	Development.....	817-392-7820
Construction services, engineering	Engineering.....	817-392-8306
Housing services, concerns, complaints	Housing.....	817-392-7546

We want to hear from you!



Please use this form to send your comments about pressing issues in our District. You can remain anonymous if you choose. Once you have completed this form, place it in a stamped envelope and mail it to: **The City of Fort Worth, Council District 4, 1000 Throckmorton St., Fort Worth, TX 76102.** You can also submit comments or suggestions by e-mail at district4newsletter@fortworthgov.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Comments: _____

Neighborhood Association Name: _____



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Councilmember District 4
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