



# City of Irving *City Manager's Report*

**April 30, 2008**

## **Strategic Goal No. 1: Land Use**

**MacArthur Boulevard Beautification** – The installation of landscaping and turf improvements on MacArthur Boulevard (along the west side from State Highway 183 to Rochelle Road) is nearing completion. The pocket park at Grauwlyer Road and MacArthur Boulevard also is complete with the installation of the new plaza and planter with bronze sculpture. The gateway entry structure planned for the corner of Weathered Street and MacArthur Boulevard will be bid in May, with construction to begin later this summer.

**Dumpster Survey** – Keep Irving Beautiful (KIB) volunteer teams conducted a survey of commercial waste collection dumpsters on April 19. Five teams took more than 300 photos of a 7 to 8 percent sample of Irving's dumpster sites. This is the first step in analyzing opportunities for KIB to influence an improvement in dumpster-related waste collection behavior across Irving.

## **Strategic Goal No. 2: Vibrant Neighborhoods**

**Pole Sign Demolition** – To help enhance the overall aesthetics of the State Highway 183 (Airport Freeway) corridor, the oversized pole signs at the former Airport Inn and Knights Inn were demolished the week of April 21-25. Building demolition will take place in the near future.

**Annual Action Plan** – The Housing and Human Services Department conducted a public hearing on April 17 at Northwest Park to solicit input on the 2008-09 Annual Action Plan. The Action Plan outlines the use of grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides a framework for addressing housing and public service needs in Irving. Another public hearing will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. June 26 at the Housing and Human Services Department, 2520 W. Irving Blvd, Ste. 300.

**Austin Heights Neighborhood Project Meeting** – The Public Works Department/Engineering Division hosted a neighborhood project meeting on April 29 at City Hall for residents and property owners who live along the following streets within the Austin Heights neighborhood:

- Elwood Road - Britain Road to Nursery Road
- Joffre Drive - Pioneer Drive to Elwood Road
- Mimosa Street - Pioneer Drive to Elwood Road
- Willow Road - Pioneer Drive to Elwood Road

Staff presented the proposed street improvements and sequence of events associated with this project to the property owners.

**Neighborhood Roundtable** – More than 60 neighbors participated in the Go Green! Neighborhood Roundtable meeting on April 29 at City Hall. Residents were encouraged to take the "Think Green ... Be Green" pledge to improve the environment by recycling and conserving water and energy. Featured speakers included Fran Witte, solid waste services program and marketing supervisor; Ramiro Lopez, contracts and fuel administration director; and Chris Michalski, parks and recreation director. All neighborhood officers in attendance received a "Guide to Planting Native Texas Plants" produced by the Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Strategic Goal No. 3: Economic Development**

**Omega Environmental Technologies Moving Back to Irving** – Irving residents Grace and Thom Davis, owners of Omega Environmental Technologies, have announced that they will be relocating their company back to Irving. Omega is a fast-growing distributor of automobile air conditioning parts to 87 countries worldwide. The company will occupy 120,000 square feet in the Valley View Business Center when the new facility is completed in December. The move to Irving will double Omega's current space and provide for increased employment and future growth.

**Best Kept Secrets Café Opens** – Best Kept Secrets Café has opened in the 135 Antiques store at 1800 N. Story Road. Owner Tom Buell is open daily for lunch serving deli sandwiches in an eclectic setting.

**Meritage Homes Chooses Irving** – Meritage Homes, one of the largest home builders in the southwest and ranked 11<sup>th</sup> nationally, has selected Las Colinas' MacArthur Ridge II as the site for its consolidated design center, title company and mortgage brokerage services. The seven-year lease is for 42,000 square feet on the street level and fourth floor.

**Surplus Warehouse Relocates** – Surplus Warehouse has relocated its retail facility from Dallas to the former Wal-Mart store at 555 W. Airport Freeway. The nationally known chain sells a variety of building material products including cabinets, flooring, doors, windows, tubs, showers, vanities and molding.

**Groups in Irving** – The Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau welcomed the following groups to Irving: Texas Council of Engineering Companies (April 3-4); Tour-Rific of Texas (April 3-6); Christ Chapel (April 4-6); International Mission Board Southern Baptist Convention (April 5-12); U.S. Department of Homeland Security (April 7-18); Church of God International Office (April 10-13); Toronto Blue Jays (April 10-13); Tour-Rific of Texas (April 10-14); Microsoft Corporation (April 14-24); Tour-Rific of Texas (April 18-20); Salesmanship Club of Dallas (April 19-30); U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Command (April 19-20); Federal Aviation Administration (April 21-25); The International Association Foundation Drilling (April 22-25); National Roofing Partners (April 22-24); AJ Pageant Productions (April 24-27); Vision Sports (April 24-27); EPN Travel Services (April 25-26); U.S. Department of Homeland Security (April 28-May 1); and T-System (April 29-May 1).

**Irving's Gondola/Scouting Expedition** – The Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau (ICVB) partnered with Gondola Adventures for an expedition down Buffalo Bayou in Houston on April 18 to honor the Boy Scouts of America. The expedition was planned to generate summer traffic to Irving's National Scouting Museum, and raise awareness of the country's largest Scouting Fair that was held April 19 in Houston's Reliant Arena. The ICVB and Gondola Adventures—along with the actual gondola used for the expedition—were exhibitors at the Scout Fair, which was attended by more than 40,000 people. News coverage included segments on local Fox and CBS news, as well as a feature in the *Houston Chronicle*.

**EDS Byron Nelson Championship** – The Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau (ICVB) played a pivotal role in last week's EDS Byron Nelson Championship. In addition to sponsoring the tournament's media center, the ICVB hosted meeting planners from around the country during the tournament. The group of more than 30 planners toured area hotels, attractions and entertainment venues.

### **Strategic Goal No. 4: Safe and Secure City**

**National Telecommunicator Week** – The Communications Section of the Police Department celebrated National Telecommunicator Week from April 13-19. The Tarrant County 911 District also recognized all of the local dispatchers at a Texas Rangers baseball game on April 13. National Telecommunicator Week is dedicated to celebrating the hard work and dedication of dispatchers and acknowledging the difficult job they do every day for the officers and residents of Irving.

**Hispanic Citizens' Police Academy** – The next Hispanic Citizens' Police Academy will begin June 3 at the Irving Police Training Academy. This educational program is designed to provide the Spanish-speaking public with a working knowledge of the Irving Police Department and how it serves the community. Classes meet from 7 to 10 p.m. Tuesdays, and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. one Saturday through Aug. 12. For more information, call Officer Lance Peikert at (972) 721-3557.

**MADD Walk Update** – The "Zero Tolerance" Irving police team raised more than \$3,000 in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) Walk held April 19 in Irving. The team exceeded its goal of \$2,500 to support MADD victims' assistance in memory of fallen Officer Glenn Homs.

**Fire Personnel Training** – All 11 of the city's fire engine companies are now equipped with life-saving rescue tools purchased through a grant from the Department of Homeland Security. Fire Department staff completed a series of extrication classes that provided training on how to use the new tools to help remove victims from auto accidents.

**New Police Equipment** – The Police Department has received new personal protective equipment for use during emergency situations, thanks to federal grant funding. This includes gas masks, gas mask cartridges, boots, gloves, jet guard suits and duffel bags.

**Mental Wellness Coalition Meeting** – In an effort to reduce the number of residents who use the 911 system for mental and emotional needs, Mental Wellness Coalition members met at the Family Advocacy Center on April 18 to explore joint initiatives. The group will create a local referral brochure that responders can distribute to residents in need. This resource would put residents in touch with the health and human services agency that can provide them with assistance, which could possibly reduce the number of non-emergency 911 calls.

**Irving Animal Services Adopt-a-thon** – Irving Animal Services will host its annual Adopt-a-thon from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. May 2-3. Participants can register for hourly drawings to receive a free microchip or a free spay/neuter for their animals. Residents ages 60 and older can adopt a pet through the Irving Senior Citizen Adoption program—designed to help animals three years of age or older find a loving home. Those interested also can participate in the Lone Star Pet Adopt-a-thon Weekend from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 3 at the Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, 1000 Ballpark Way. The Irving Animal Services and DFW Humane Society will operate a joint booth along with many other animal welfare organizations.

**Animal Registration** – Beginning June 1, Irving residents will need to register any cat or dog over the age of 4 months. The new guidelines will help reduce the number of pets held at the Animal Shelter by ensuring the quick return of lost pets to their owners. Registration will be available beginning May 15. Call Animal Services at (972) 721-2256 or visit [www.petdata.com](http://www.petdata.com) for additional information.

### **Strategic Goal No. 5: Diversity**

**The Great Irving Forum** – More than 40 city employees participated in The Great Irving Forum on April 18, which featured a panel discussion on the traditions and cultures of the Asian community. The event was hosted by the Strategic Resources and Budget Department. It was videotaped by Irving Community Television Network.

**Cinco de Mayo** – A multicultural entertainment event will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 3 at Senter Park Recreation Center, 901 S. Senter Road. This community event will feature local entertainers, a health fair, information on higher education opportunities, and vendors offering a variety of ethnic foods. Event organizers are Parks and Recreation, Corporate Communications and DCET (Debes de Creer en Ti). The annual event is expected to draw more than 1,800 residents.

## **Strategic Goal No. 6: Effective Communications**

**City Spectrum Summer Parks Issue** – The May issue of *City Spectrum* features the Summer Parks and Recreation Guide. The 20-page newsletter, which is mailed to each Irving household, provides a pull-out parks guide in addition to four pages of other city information. The special issue was produced by the Corporate Communications and Parks and Recreation departments.

**Public Input Opportunities Online** – The Corporate Communications Department has added a new feature to the city Web site that allows residents to submit public input online. This new initiative provides residents who are unable to attend the city's various public input meetings with an opportunity to voice their thoughts and opinions via the Internet in an easy and timely manner. It further enhances two-way communications with Irving residents. The public input opportunities section is located at the top of the home page at [www.cityofirving.org](http://www.cityofirving.org).

**School Involvement** – City staff continues to build strong relationships with area students to educate them about city government programs and opportunities. Diana Soto, teen court coordinator, conducted 11 presentations to eighth grade classes in the Irving Independent School District (IISD) to recruit volunteers for Teen Court spring training on May 17. Recruitment packets also were distributed to all Irving public schools, as well as the Universal Academy and North Hills Charter schools. On April 25, the city hosted 28 international students and their professors from the University of Dallas for an overview of city operations. Councilman Rick Stopfer welcomed the students prior to presentations by Managing Director Nancy Bartlett, Deputy City Attorney/TOD Director Brenda McDonald, Parks and Recreation Director Chris Michalski, and Victim Services Supervisor Cindy Penn. In March, the Fire Department conducted an IISD program attended by 100 students and attended a health fair in conjunction with Irving High School.

## **Strategic Goal No. 7: Cultural, Recreational and Educational Environments**

**Spring Showcase Basketball Tournament** – Irving's parks and recreation centers hosted the 14 and under boys and girls division for the Spring Showcase Basketball Tournament on April 25-27. The Irving event included approximately 65 teams made up of 700 players from across the state, and attracted an estimated 1,800 to 2,000 spectators. Older age groups played in Carrollton and Arlington. Many Irving hotels were listed in the promotional materials.

**West Irving Aquatic Center** – Two public input meetings to begin the site selection process for the West Irving Aquatic Center will be held at 7 p.m. May 13 and 19 at Georgia Farrow Recreation Center, 530 Davis St., in West Park. The meetings will gather public input of the site evaluation criteria and potential locations. The input will help prepare the site selection recommendation, which will be presented during a community meeting at 7 p.m. June 3 at the Georgia Farrow Recreation Center. Upon completion of the site selection process, future public input opportunities will be held in regard to the facility design.

**Irving Chautauqua** – The Irving Chautauqua series continues at 2 p.m. May 10 featuring the oratory skills of Texas author and KERA commentator Tom Dodge. Dodge will talk about life in small towns and the truths that are hard to avoid. Irving Public Library offers the Irving Chautauqua series at 2 p.m. the second Saturday of each month in the Central Library Auditorium, 801 W. Irving Blvd.

**Texas Book Festival Grants** – The Texas Book Festival has awarded three grants totaling \$10,000 to the Irving Public Library—one for literacy and two for collection development. State Representative Kirk England visited the library last week to read to preschoolers and present one of the checks to the library. AT&T is the sponsoring organization for the Texas Book Festival grant awards program.

**Library Helps National Guard** – The Irving Central Library offered its computer lab to 70 Texas National Guard men and women from the 56th Brigade Special Troops Battalion on April 4, assisting them in completing vital computer-based training before their deployment to Iraq next month.

**Friends Annual Meeting** – The Friends of the Irving Public Library, a nonprofit group dedicated to promoting and supporting the library, will feature a talk with former NBC sports anchor and author Scott Murray at its annual membership meeting at 7 p.m. May 13 at the Irving Arts Center's Dupree Theater, 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd. The meeting will provide information and outline activities of the organization. Membership is not required to attend. Additional information is available online at [www.friendsofipl.org](http://www.friendsofipl.org).

**New Bookmobile Design Reception** – The Irving Central Library will host a public reception at 2 p.m. May 9 to unveil the Bookmobile's new design. Its colorful new wrap befits its mission and new name, "The Dream Machine." All are welcome to participate in the reception at 801 W. Irving Blvd. The Dream Machine's spring schedule is available at [www.cityofirving.org/library/bookmobile.html](http://www.cityofirving.org/library/bookmobile.html).

**The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley** – The Irving Arts Center has sold out both shows of "The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley." The theatrical production is based on the popular children's books *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown, and will be performed at the Arts Center on May 1. A total of 1,367 tickets were sold, the majority of which went to 19 different private and public schools, daycares and church groups. The groups represent 18 Texas zip codes, as far away as Rising Star, between Fort Worth and Abilene. Irving elementary schools attending the show include Farine, Brandenburg and Elliott.

### **Strategic Goal No. 8: Sound Governance**

**Police Entrance Examinations** – The Strategic Resources and Budget Department helped to facilitate a multi-site police entrance examination process. The exam was given to 150 police recruits in three locations: Irving; Clinton Township, MI; and Muskegon, MI. A total of 120 people passed the written exam and will move on to the next step in the recruiting process.

**National Start Walking Day** – To increase employee awareness of the importance of exercise, the City of Irving proclaimed April 16 as National Start! Walking Day, in conjunction with the American Heart Association's annual walking campaign. The Strategic Resources and Budget Department kicked off its wellness initiative with this event. Approximately 100 employees participated in the reading of the proclamation and the associated walking event.

**Agenda Management System** – To streamline the City Council agenda preparation process, the roll out of a new agenda management system is scheduled for May 22. The agenda management system will increase accountability by providing electronic tracking of agenda items, boost productivity with increased availability of information throughout the city, decrease the time it takes to retrieve agenda items and minutes, and reduce the cycle time by eliminating the need for internal signatures. Overall, the new system is expected to save about \$24,000 a year in reduced cost for labor and paper. Team members working on the project are from the Information Technology Department, City Manager's Office, City Secretary's Office and City Attorney's Office.

**AAA Bond Ratings** – The city's AAA ratings have been reaffirmed by Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's. As a result, 13 bidders proposed on the city's general obligation bonds, which sold at a true interest cost of 4.149 percent. The city's continued AAA is attributed to its large tax base, strong financial management policies, formal investment and reserve policies, strong general fund reserves and conservative debt profile. The \$32.5 million in bonds will fund a variety of capital improvement projects, including a new animal shelter and dog park, Veterans Memorial Park expansion, new Fire Station No. 4 and various street improvements.

**Early Voting** – Early voting for the City Council positions of mayor and Places 3 and 5 continues through May 6. Early voting hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through May 3, 1 to 6 p.m. May 4, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. May 5-6. Early voting locations are: City Hall, 825 W. Irving Blvd.; Irving Arts Center, 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd.; Barbara Bush Middle School, 505 Cowboys Parkway. Election day is 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. May 10. Call (972) 721-2493 or visit [www.cityofirving.org/city-secretary](http://www.cityofirving.org/city-secretary) for more information.

**Texas Municipal Retirement System** – Irving has entered into contractual agreements with Gabriel, Roeder, Smith and Company (through the North Central Texas Council of Government) for actuarial valuations of its Texas Municipal Retirement System contributions and other post-employment benefits. The TMRS study will aid in determining the city's future contribution requirements and the OPEB study will provide the amount the city will be required to record in fiscal year 2008-09 for implicit retiree contributions for health benefits.

### **Strategic Goal No. 10: Environmentally Sustainable Community**

**Go Green! Initiatives** – The city employee Green Team made a presentation at the city's first Green Advisory Committee meeting held April 1. The team has attended several training/presentations related to green buildings. In addition, the team is reviewing a proposed City of Irving Environmental Policy, which will be presented to the Green Advisory Committee for consideration. As part of the city's green initiatives, the city will transition its janitorial paper products to 100 percent recycled content. The new products also cost less than the current products.

**Environmental Compliance Section Workshops** – The Environmental Compliance Section of Public Works/Water Utilities hosted two meetings during the month of March. The first meeting addressed protocols and efficient procedures used to protect the public while responding to hazardous spills. Participants included members from the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, AMX Hazmat Training and Response Contractor, and Irving Public Works. The second meeting recognized approximately 42 of Irving's industry representatives for being in regulatory compliance with city ordinances and state regulations. The workshop also discussed new upcoming rules, regulations and different ideas toward going green. Participants included groups from the Region VI Environmental Protection Agency, personnel from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Irving's regulatory industries and customers such as Dr Pepper and McCormick.