



# The Stafford Newsletter

KEEP OUR  
COMMUNITY  
CLEAN



April 21

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**Prime Corporate Property for Sale: 45-Year Legacy Ending**

## TI CLOSING STAFFORD FACILITY

Two days before the City's annual Town Meeting in January, Mayor Leonard Scarcella received shocking news from a spokeswoman at Texas Instruments. The message, in a nutshell, was that TI would be closing its facility in Stafford and selling its property here. As the most prominent corporate citizen of this City for the past 45 years, the far-reaching implications of this announcement commenced an avalanche of speculation.

Immediately, the City was besieged with interview requests from the television and print media as to the potential impact the shuttering of this well-recognized plant would have on the future of Stafford. In a phrase, the Mayor described it as a "severe body blow" to the City. However, he was quick to point out that it was far less dramatic now than it would have been a couple of decades ago when TI comprised over a quarter of the City's economy and tax base. In that regard, he pointed out that today it was approximately one-tenth or two-and-a-half percent of its prior prominence.

One of the most interested and influential entities with concerns about this matter was Standard & Poor's, the financial rating entity which several months ago had shaken the global economy with its downgrading of the credit rating of the U.S.A. That very afternoon after the announcement, the Mayor and financial director contacted S&P to provide the best assessment of the closing and to address numerous probing questions this most influential entity had about its impact. Fortunately, a few weeks later S&P

reaffirmed the current rating of the City, in spite of this most substantial event.

As for the basic details provided by TI, at least one half of the 1,000 workers at the plant would be either transferred or laid off while some 500 engineers on the staff were to be retained "in the Houston area." A month later, Congressman Pete Olson hosted a meeting to address this decision. In addition to the Congressman and the Mayor, in attendance were several representatives from TI, as well as County Judge Robert Hebert and Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council President Jeff Wiley. While quite constructive, the meeting left the major question of what TI intended to do with this prime 192-acre tract which fronts on US 59 unanswered. As of the writing of this Newsletter, it appears that the layoffs and transfers of the hundreds of workers will occur by the end of June, and TI will curtail all operations on the Stafford property by the year's end. Also, TI appears to be aggressively pursuing a program to sell the property.

As the Mayor has stressed to the media and the many inquiries he has received, this unsuspected development, while placing a significant challenge on Stafford, could, with proper planning, result in new development of this highly prized real estate area which could be transformative to the future of Stafford. In spite of this, it must be fully recognized that the ultimate decisions on virtually all of the pertinent aspects of this transaction are under the control of TI, and not the City.

## Charter Provisions Remain Issues to Be Decided

### **COUNCILMEMBER ELECTIONS CANCELLED**

When the City elections were called for this May, it appeared that they would focus on contests for three Council seats. Added to that was an election on two proposed changes to the Home Rule Charter. When the smoke cleared and the deadline for filing in early March passed, there were no challengers to the three incumbent Councilmembers seeking reelection, namely Ken Mathew, Robert Sorbet and Cecil Willis. As a result, City Council took the appropriate legal action to cancel the Council election and declare the three incumbents reelected. Remaining to be decided by the voters were the two proposed Charter amendments.

Also envisioned to be voted on were two positions for School Board Trustees and three positions for Directors of Fort Bend County W.C. & I.D. No. 2. There were no opponents to the incumbents Etienne Zak

and Virginia Rosas for the Trustee positions which each held on the SMSD Board. There have been, however, five candidates who have filed for the three Director positions on the Water District Board.

When voters go the poles at City Hall on May 12, or at early-voting locations, they will receive a ballot with the two City Charter provisions and the contest for the Director positions on the W.C. & I.D. No. 2 Board.

The two Charter amendments which will appear on the ballot, if approved, would allow the following:

1. Officers elected or appointed shall be allowed to be seated immediately after taking their Oath; and
2. Every five years, City Council shall appoint a committee of not less than four qualified voters to review the Home Rule Charter.

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### **MAY ELECTION SCHEDULES**

**Note:** Any registered voter in Stafford can vote early at any early-voting location.

For a list of the locations, contact the Fort Bend County Elections Office  
at 281-341-8670 or visit [www.co.fort-bend.tx.us](http://www.co.fort-bend.tx.us).

#### **EARLY VOTING**

**at Stafford City Hall**

2610 South Main, Stafford

Monday, April 30–Friday, May 4, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

Monday, May 7–Tuesday, May 8, 7 a.m.–7 p.m.

#### **ELECTION DAY VOTING**

**at Stafford City Hall**

2610 South Main, Stafford

Saturday, May 12

7 a.m.-7 p.m.

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## Commuter Rail Strangled by Freight Upgrade

### **UPRR AGGRESSIVELY PURSUES DOUBLE TRACK**

Flushed out by a series of ping pong like media reports, Union Pacific Railroad has acknowledged unequivocally that it is double tracking its freight operations through the City while foreclosing any potential for commuter rail on the company's right-of-way.

Mayor Leonard Scarcella has taken strong issue with UPRR's announcement that it intends to increase freight rail activity in the City. This will result primarily from its double tracking on the UPRR 100-foot right-of-way that traverses through the heart of Stafford. In articles, pursued by local journalists as well as a television story, UPRR spokespersons have made it abundantly clear that this huge rail company will take all necessary action to preclude any passenger rail to our town along this corridor. A minor gain has occurred in that the originally announced plans for the second track construction to begin this year have been delayed until next year.

The Mayor in his fervent comments has emphasized the significant detriments, including disruption to responses of emergency vehicles, increased inconvenience to the motoring public,

damages to the future development of the City and impairment of the quality of life of our citizens. The Mayor went on to strongly challenge the tepid assertions from the company's officials that the expanded freight service would provide benefits to the motoring public.

Federal law, which UPRR and other freight carriers have carefully nurtured through their extensive access to federal officials, controls virtually all aspects of operations within the City while leaving the City with virtually no remedies to challenge the freight companies. These regulations even go so far as to force cities, rather than the freight train companies, to expend millions of dollars to try to mitigate the disturbing and incessant noises at all hours generated by the train horns.

While left with few options, the City will continue to pursue what limited opportunities there may be to mitigate the very disruptive impacts that this will have on our town, as well as denying us one of the most vital resources for our future - - passenger rail.



# ALL INDEPENDENCE DAY FESTIVITIES TO BE HELD AT STAFFORD CENTRE



*Lawrence Vaccaro, 2011 Parade Marshal, proudly holding granddaughter Logan Elizabeth*

All the Independence Day celebration festivities will be held at the Stafford Centre, starting on Tuesday, July 3, with a parade and followed with carnival rides and games. A street dance and hay ride are scheduled later in the evening. On Wednesday, July 4, the Fort Bend Symphony will perform its annual Patriotic Concert. The festivities will end with the fireworks display that night.

## CITY POOL SUMMER SCHEDULE ANNOUNCED



The City of Stafford again will offer the City Pool to our citizens beginning on Saturday, May 26.

For \$10 per person, Stafford residents have access to the pool the entire swim season.

The cost of daily passes for non-residents is as follows:

- 5 years-adult, \$4
- 2-4 years, \$2
- Under 2 years, free

A four-hour pool party costs \$75.

Pool Schedule	Swim Lessons	Stafford Swim Team
Opens: Saturday, May 26 Last Day: Monday, September 3 Open weekends: Mid-August - September 3 Closed: Monday (non-holidays) Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Saturday, 12 noon – 8 p.m. Sunday, 1 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Morning and evening Ages 4 and up  Sign up begins May 26.  For information, call 281-499-5763 or 281-499-8783.	Mid-May – Mid-July  Early registration is in April.  For information, call Leanne Mazoch at 281-413-3093.





**City of Stafford**  
2610 South Main  
Stafford, TX 77477

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## **PARTICIPANTS SIGN UP FOR CITY WIDE PRIDE SPRING CLEAN UP ON APRIL 21**



The City of Stafford will hold its 19<sup>th</sup> annual City Wide Pride Spring Clean Up on Saturday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WCA Waste Corporation trucks will pick up heavy trash on that day. To ensure all items are picked up, they should be by the curb no later than 7 a.m.

Please note: no paint, chemicals, batteries, normal household waste or car parts will be collected. Lumber, plywood or similar materials must be cut in four-foot lengths and tied in bundles in order to be picked up that day. Only refrigerators and freezers with the doors removed and drained of coolant will be accepted.

Also, rimless tires placed at the curb and separated from heavy trash will be picked up. Anyone wishing to dispose of a large number of tires must call 281-261-3941 for permission from the City of Stafford. Automobile batteries may be dropped off at Stafford Auto Supply at 2424 South Main.

A certified contractor will be stationed on the north side of City Hall in front of the Police Station to shred sensitive paper documents for those who would like to take advantage of this service.

Participants of the City Wide Pride Spring Clean Up will get a free t-shirt and supplies to assist them in cleaning up the designated streets. Clear plastic bottles containing a mock \$10 bill will be located in each area, and those found can be returned for a real \$10 bill.

Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the courtyard at City Hall, and trophies will be awarded to the winners.

Anyone wishing to join in cleaning the City rights-of-way, or for information, should contact Marcia Fouts at 281-261-3941. Complete details and a registration form can be found at [www.cityofstafford.com](http://www.cityofstafford.com).

The City of Stafford wishes to thank the businesses supporting this event.

***CITY OFFICES CLOSED:***  
***Monday, May 28, Memorial Day***  
***Wednesday, July 4, Independence Day***

***TREE LIMB PICK UP:***  
***Monday, June 4***