



The Stafford Newsletter



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Extinguishes General Obligation Debt to Go with a Zero Property Tax

CITY OBTAINS HISTORIC STATUS

On August 26, the City made its final bonded indebtedness payment making it one of the few municipalities in the Nation to have a zero property tax and having eliminated this debt.

The City incurred its first such indebtedness more than 45 years ago. During the past 15 years, there has

been a concerted effort to reduce and eliminate all of this debt and attain this very selective status.

With this final payment, Stafford projects itself onto a very elite list of fiscally responsible municipalities that have no city property taxes and no such debt.



Bonds are set afire to illustrate this historic achievement

Extensive Enhancements Included

CITY COUNCIL ADOPTS 2014-2015 BUDGET

On September 3, Mayor Leonard Scarcella presented his proposed 2014-2015 budget which will run from this October to the end of next September. This nearly \$26 million budget included three major principles: *living within its means; maintaining a zero property tax; and elevating the Stafford Municipal School District.* Added to those principles was the elimination of General Obligation Debt.

Primary among the goals was enhancing the efficiency and productivity of the various City departments.

The Police and Fire Departments will cost approximately \$8 million. Public Works, including major street projects, will tally \$6 million. All other departments and the services they provide were retained and, in most instances, elevated. The City prides itself on a lean and efficient staff, which will cost about \$11.5 million.

Notable projects will be the reconstruction of Brand Lane, plans for the West Airport/FM 1092 intersection, proposed information technology improvements, and significant amenities to the Stafford Centre.

STAFFORD CENTRE CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Since its opening in March 2004 with a premiere performance by the Moscow Ballet, the Stafford Centre has attracted more than three million visitors through its doors. Over the next ten weeks, it will host a variety of events to emphasize the phenomenal success of this most unique and stylish entertainment/commercial venue.

The celebration kicks off with a free and combined performance by the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra and members of the SMSD Band on Thursday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m. On Friday, October 24, at 7:30 p.m., there



The second annual Santa's Village Comes to Stafford will be at the Stafford Centre on Tuesday, December 2, beginning at 5:30 p.m. This exciting event is free and open to the public and is a very special way to start your children's holiday season.

Finally, the annual Rockin' New Year's Eve Bash returns to the Stafford Centre on December 31, at 7 p.m. In celebration of the Centre's ten-year anniversary, tickets for Stafford

will be a gourmet dinner and a program in the ballrooms followed by a performance by The Drifters in the theatre. Tickets are \$25 a person or \$250 for a table of ten.

Speaking of unique, the Stafford Centre will be the site for a drive-in picture showing of the movie, *Blended*, starring Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore, on Saturday, November 8. Gates will open at 6:30 p.m., and show time is at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$3 for adults and \$2 for children. Each ticket includes a gourmet hot dog, popcorn, and a soda or bottled water.



residents are only \$25 a person (discount deadline is at 4 p.m., Friday, December 26).

Admission includes an upscale dinner, dancing to Houston's premier cover band Nobody's Fool, party favors, and a champagne toast at midnight.

Please join us for one, two, or all five events as we commemorate and celebrate ten great years of Stafford Centre achievements.



BRAND LANE IS REVAMPED

Construction started this month on Brand Lane from US 90A to Avenue E. The estimated completion is in late 2016.

This street reconstruction will consist of three lanes of pavement, drainage improvements, sidewalks, storm sewers, and water and sanitary sewer enhancements, all of which will transform the two-lane asphalt roadway to a three-lane concrete curb-and-gutter section. There will be a center left turn lane for vehicular mobility.

Digital message signs will alert motorists of traffic changes in the

upcoming months, while detour signs, traffic cones, and barrels will be utilized. During construction, motorists can expect segments of Brand Lane to be one-way and traffic to be slow.

Although mailboxes will be relocated, mail service will not be disrupted for the duration of the project.

This endeavor is a partnership between the City of Stafford, Fort Bend County, and Fort Bend County Water Control & Improvement District No. 2. The total cost is approximately \$7 million, with the City of Stafford incurring almost \$2.5 million of that tally.

2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROGRESSES

In August, the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) met with our consultants, Freese and Nichols, to address the Goals and Strategies of this blueprint which will take the City to 2040. Most important of these goals were: living within our means, maintaining a zero city property tax, and elevating SMSD.

CPAC met with the consultants earlier this month to address revisions

and propose further modifications. This meeting was the first opportunity for the CPAC to work together in a workshop format with maps and markers to begin shaping the prescription for the future of the City.

The next meeting will be on November 11, and the public is encouraged to attend and make comments at the conclusion of the session.

Stafford Centre Events

In October: Clint Black Concert, 16; NPC State Bodybuilding & Fitness Competition, 18; Fort Bend Family Expo 18-19; Southwest Wedding Show, 19; Venezuelan Comedian, Luis Chatain, 19; Heart Concert, 22; Women's Health & Fitness Expo, 25; Golden Icon Movie Awards, 25; Latino Woman's Expo, 26; Fort Bend Symphony's "Hauntcert", 26

November: Houston Mini Maker Faire, 1; FBJSL's Sugar Plum Market, 6-8; Olivia Newton-John Concert, 9; Don Williams Concert, 13; Venezuelan Comedian, Laureano Marquez, 14; Fort Bend Collectible Market, 22; Missouri City Ballet's "The Nutcracker", 29-30

In December: Trace Adkins Concert, 4; SMSD Band Concert, 9; SMSD Athletic Booster Banquet, 10; Ballet Forte's "The Nutcracker", 12-14

In January: Houston Chinese Traditional Music Group Orchestra, 10; Sugar Land Home & Garden Show, 24-25

City Offices Closed

Thursday-Friday, November 27-28 – Thanksgiving

Thursday-Friday, December 25-26 – Christmas

Alarm Permits Expire December 31, 2014

Renew Alarm Permits by January 31, 2015, for \$15. The fee is \$25 on or after February 1, 2015. Alarm Permits are available at the Stafford Police Department. For questions, call 281-261-3955. The Alarm Permit Application can be found at www.cityofstafford.com under the section "Forms, Instructions, Fees" on the front page.

Christmas Tree Disposal

The City of Stafford will be accepting Christmas trees for disposal Monday, December 29, 2014, through Monday, January 5, 2015. Trees may be dropped off at the Street Department located at 1014 Staffordshire Road. For more information, please contact the Street Department at 281-499-2626.

Stafford Centre 10th Anniversary Celebration Events

Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra & SMSD Student Showcase, October 23, 7:30 p.m.

Dinner & The Drifters in Concert, October 24, 7:30 p.m.

Family Drive-In Movie Night, November 8, 8:00 p.m.

Santa's Village Comes to Stafford, December 2, 5:30 p.m.

New Year's Rockin' Eve Bash, December 31, 7:00 p.m.

TRANSFORMATION OF TEXAS INSTRUMENTS PROPERTY TAKES CENTER STAGE

The City Council, Stafford Economic Development Corporation Board, and Planning & Zoning Commission all continue to put the transformation of the Texas Instruments 192-acre tract on US 59 in the center of their radar screens. Numerous meetings addressing the property's rezoning, possible incentives to the developer, and the many uses under consideration have highlighted the lengthy discussions which have transpired since May. And, many expedited conferences will follow.

So far, the emphasis has been on a high-quality outlet center,

apartments, light manufacturing facilities, hotels, restaurants, and several cultural and popular amenities. The developer, Street Level Investments of Dallas, working with the City and Texas Instruments, is aggressively pursuing an agreement which they are hopeful will be concluded by year's end. Considering the significant impact of this substantial project on the future of the City, representatives of the municipality and much of the community are focused on the ultimate agreements and requirements which result from the negotiations.



City of Stafford
2610 South Main
Stafford, TX 77477

UNION PACIFIC RR BEGINS DOUBLE TRACKING

A highly contentious proposal two decades ago by, at that time, Southern Pacific RR saw the City of Stafford oppose, in a face off before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, allowing the freight rail carrier to double track its existing track through our community. Although SPRR won the court case, the project has been stymied since then.

Union Pacific RR, which now owns the right-of-way, has announced and worked with the City to allow a second track abutting its current one. Construction on this installation will begin shortly resulting in undesirable interruptions in mobility for the motoring public, including intersection closures and detours. Completion by UPRR is projected for mid-2015.

Tree Limb Service

The next tree limb service will be conducted beginning Monday, January 5.