



# City of Irving *City Manager's Report*

**June 11, 2008**

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

**Gateway Projects** – Gateway entry monuments designed for the MacArthur Boulevard corridor are out for bidding through June 20. The two monuments are being bid together to allow one contractor to construct both to provide a consistent, high-quality project while saving on contractor overhead costs. The two gateway entry monuments will be located at MacArthur Boulevard and Shady Grove Road, and MacArthur Boulevard and Weathered Street. Both gateways include equine bronze sculptures, which are currently being created. Both gateways are projected to be completed by the end of the year.

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

**Outside Display Prohibited** – Due to potential health risks, tires and auto parts are prohibited from being stored outside. Irving tire and auto repair businesses were notified in May that they needed to come into compliance regarding outside display of such items by June 2. Several businesses have voluntarily complied. Code Enforcement will take necessary action against properties that fail to comply.

**Public Comment Period for Annual Action Plan** – The public comment period for the Housing and Human Services Department's 2008-09 Action Plan is open until July 14. Draft copies of the Action Plan are available for review at City Hall, 825 W. Irving Blvd.; Irving Central Library, 801 W. Irving Blvd.; and the Housing and Human Services Department, 2520 W. Irving Blvd, Suite 300. The document also is available electronically on the city Web site at [www.cityofirving.org](http://www.cityofirving.org). This 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. Residents who have questions or comments concerning the use of these funds are encouraged to attend a public input hearing at 6 p.m. June 26 at the Housing and Human Services Department.

**Townsell Court Block Party** – The Irving Housing Finance Corporation will host an open house and block party from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 21 to celebrate the completion of four homes on Townsell Court. A ceremony will begin at noon at the Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center on the corner of Jackson Street and Gilbert Road. The homes were constructed with the assistance of federal funding and were made available as workforce housing to qualified families in Irving. The event and tour of the homes are open to the public.

**New Neighborhood Groups** – The Corporate Communications Department is assisting in the formation of two new neighborhood associations. The Heritage District Neighborhood Association was formed on June 10, while High Point Estates Neighborhood Association will have its formation meeting on June 14. The Heritage District consists of 251 homes bounded by Britain Road to Centennial Park, and from Rock Island Road to Sixth Street. High Point Estates will consist of 36 homes on High Crest Court and High Crest Drive, between West Pioneer Drive to the north and Compton Avenue to the east.

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

**Minority Business Leader Awards** – The *Dallas Business Journal* has recognized four Irving business executives with Minority Business Leader Awards for 2008. They are Rene Castilla, executive dean and director of the South Irving Center for North Lake College; Richard Stewart, assistant general counsel for Verizon Communications; Al Zapanta, chairman of PAZ Energy; and Abid Abdei, chairman of Adea Inc. Castilla leads the Mayor's Human Relations Advisory Council, Stewart is chairman of the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau Board, and Zapanta serves on the city's Planning and Zoning Commission. The *Dallas Business Journal* will host a celebration luncheon June 19 at the Westin Galleria to honor these and other recipients.

**New Hotels Planned for Las Colinas** – InterContinental Hotels Group, one of the world's largest hotel groups by number of rooms, has announced plans for a project incorporating a new-build, 150-room Crowne Plaza and a new-build, 85-room Hotel Indigo in Las Colinas near the intersection of Interstate 635 and the George Bush Turnpike. The hotels will be owned by Platinum Hospitality LLC, and managed by Patriot Hospitality, under a license agreement with a company in the InterContinental Hotels Group. The adjoining hotels will each have separate entrances, but will share public areas including the fitness center and swimming pool. Both hotels are expected to open in 2010.

**Handango Relocation to Las Colinas** – Handango Inc., the online retailer of software for "smartphones," has announced its headquarters relocation from Hurst to Las Colinas beginning in August. The company stated that the relocation will allow the expansion of its current 150-employee workforce by 25 percent. They also acknowledged that the central location of Irving within the Dallas/Fort Worth area will allow them to secure a wider geographic area to recruit employees.

**New Construction on Regent Boulevard** – Twinrose Development Company has started construction on two industrial buildings in the D/FW International Commerce Park on Regent Boulevard. Regent I will consist of a 256,000-square-foot, cross-dock facility that can be divided between three users. Regent II will be a 60,000-square-foot facility that can accommodate two users. The buildings are scheduled to be completed and ready for occupancy in December.

**New Stores at Irving Mall** – Irving Mall has announced two new stores that will be opening in conjunction with its remodeling later this year. Steve & Barry's, which stocks fashions from Sarah Jessica Parker and other celebrity lines, and Rack Room Shoes will join the mall.

**Former Albertsons to Become Retail Business Condo** – The new owner of the former Albertsons store on Airport Freeway at O'Connor Boulevard is investing approximately \$2 million to convert the 60,000-square-foot vacant property into a retail business condo. Remodeling plans have been approved by the City of Irving and construction is expected to begin this month. According to the developer, three potential occupants are in the works.

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

**Vial of L.I.F.E. Program** – More than 1,200 residents have registered for the Vial of L.I.F.E. program. Vial of Lifesaving Information for Emergencies (L.I.F.E.) is a place for Irving residents age 60 or older to store important medical information that emergency personnel needs during a time of crisis. The kit is offered as a free public service from the Irving Fire Department. To sign up, residents can call (972) 721-2651 or visit [www.cityofirving.org/fire](http://www.cityofirving.org/fire).

**Fire Team Wins First Place at Event** – An Irving Fire Department team took first place at the Dragon Boat Races that were held during the 2008 DFW Dragon Boat, Kite and Lantern Festival in Las Colinas. The races pit teams against one another along a 250-meter course. The 500-pound boats are crewed by 20 paddlers, one drummer and one person steering.

**Animal Services Update** – Animal Services placed 312 animals in homes during its adopt-a-thon period from April 15-May 15. In addition, pet registration is progressing. More than 700 pets have been registered since the inception of the city's pet registration guidelines. A six-month grace period follows the June 1 effective date to provide residents with ample time to complete the registration process. A public input meeting will be held prior to the City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m. June 26 at City Hall, 825 W. Irving Blvd. For details, call Animal Services at (972) 721-2256.

**Dog Virus** – Four animals brought into the Animal Shelter had Parvovirus. To ensure that no other animals have been exposed or are carriers of the virus, public animal adoptions have been suspended until June 16. This is a viral disease of dogs, especially puppies, and is a common occurrence at shelters this time of year. This virus mostly affects unvaccinated animals that arrive at the facility already exposed. Residents are encouraged to vaccinate their animals to avoid this viral disease.

**Pooch Fest** – Approximately 500 dog owners and 250 dogs attended Pooch Fest, which took place at the Irving Soccer Complex on May 31. Participants enjoyed specialty contests, pet demonstrations and vendors who specialized in pet services and products. A performance by Whip Lash, a monkey and dog show, highlighted the day's events. In addition, more than 100 dogs received microchips.

**Memorial Weekend "No Refusal" Initiative** – Nineteen suspects were arrested and charged with Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) in Irving on May 23-24. The Police Department stepped up its DWI enforcement efforts with a "no refusal" initiative in which violators who were stopped were only offered blood tests. If violators refused, an on-site judge signed affidavits and search warrants for the blood draw, and medical personnel were available to perform the draws.

**Arrest of Scarecrow Bandits** – The Irving Police Department provided vital assistance to the FBI and area police departments, which aided in the capture and arrest of the "scarecrow bandits" on June 2. The suspects are believed to be responsible for three bank robberies in Irving and 21 other bank robberies in the North Texas region.

**Gang Roundup** – The Irving Police Gang Unit, in cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, participated in a gang roundup called Operation Community Shield. Officers visited several Irving locations on June 4, and three gang members were arrested for warrants and other charges. Some of the charges to be filed include theft, probation violation burglary, possession of stolen firearms, illegal re-entry into the United States, and discharging a firearm. The suspects will answer to their local charges and then face deportation proceedings.

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

**Vendor Open House** – More than 300 interested vendors attended the Minority- and Women-owned Business Open House held May 29 at City Hall. Information on upcoming projects was provided by staff from several city departments.

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

**School Involvement** – The end of the school year brought a variety of career fairs and truck days to Irving school students. City employees from 12 city departments attended activities at two Irving ISD schools, one Coppell ISD school, and a charter school during the last two weeks of May. Representatives from the City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Parks and Recreation, Library, Fire, Police, Public Works, Corporate Communications, Solid Waste Services, Municipal Court, Planning and Inspections, and Code Enforcement spoke with students at Farine Elementary, J.O. Davis Elementary, Valley Ranch Elementary and University School on professions and job opportunities with the City of Irving. In May, the city also had staff working at an IISD-sponsored job fair held at the South Irving Church of Christ.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters** – Seventeen city employee volunteers were recognized by the Irving ISD and Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas for mentoring at Gilbert Elementary and Austin Middle School. A reception was held to honor those who participated in the program.

**Increased ICTN Viewership** – Irving Community Television Network (ICTN) increased viewership on the Web site in April and May, thanks to help from the Information Technology Department. The ICTN 1 and ICTN 2 video streams averaged 308 viewers a day in April and jumped to 507 in May. The Web site also averaged 112 downloads of ICTN programs a day. A “City Source” story on the April storm damage in North Irving was watched 552 times. The number of ICTN shows available on the city Web site will increase this summer with the use of a private company to host the videos.

**Tami Award Nominations** – The Corporate Communications Department has been named a finalist for five Tami Awards from the Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers (TAMIO) under the categories of External Newsletter, Internal Newsletter, Special One-Time Program, Regular Recurring Program, and Marketing: Best Use of a Promotional Item. Winners will be announced at the 2008 Annual TAMIO Conference in San Antonio on June 13.

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

**Annual Juneteenth Festival** – The city's annual Juneteenth Festival, hosted by the Georgia Farrow Recreation Center, will be held from 4 to 8 p.m. June 14 at the Jackie Townsell Bear Creek Heritage Center, 3935 Jackson St. The day's festivities will include free food, a live disc jockey, a children's area, museum tours and various booths. For details, call (972) 721-2519.

**Free Lunch Program** – The free children's summer lunch program sponsored by Touch of Faith Inc., in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department, will kick off June 9. Free lunches will be provided daily for youths ages 1-18 at Senter, Georgia Farrow and Lee Park recreation centers. The lunches will consist of a sandwich, milk, fruit and a vegetable.

**Summer Recreation Programs** – The Parks and Recreation summer programs began June 9. Recreation programs include daily classes for all ages, summer day camps, summer games and one-act play activities at all recreation centers. In addition, the neighborhood swimming pools began their regular weekday pool schedules.

**Therapeutic Basketball Team** – The Parks and Recreation Department-sponsored basketball team competed in the Special Olympics Basketball Tournament on May 21-25 and won a bronze medal for third place. There were 78 teams that competed in the tournament. The therapeutic program is currently available at the Georgia Farrow Recreation Center, 530 Davis St.

**Irving Chautauqua** – The Irving Central Library, 801 W. Irving Blvd., offers the Irving Chautauqua series on the second Saturday of each month at 2 p.m. The program series continues on June 14 with magician Jeff Lee and juggler David Slick. Performances are free, open to the public and suitable for all ages. Visit [www.cityofirving.org/library](http://www.cityofirving.org/library) for upcoming performances or call (972) 721-2606.

**Employee Appreciation** – The Irving Arts Center rolled out a new employee appreciation program this spring. Employee of the Quarter will be announced in March, June, September and December during a special employee get-together. The new program encourages employees to nominate each other for everyday good deeds using an online submission form. Clients and patrons are invited to nominate staff members as well using the same nomination process.

**Summer Camp and Shows** – The Arts Center's summer camp program began June 9. Patrons can choose from 11 different art, theater and teen camps. The Arts Center also will host four family friendly performances this summer, including "Beauty and the Beast" on June 19; "Animalia" on June 24; "Ball in the House" on July 18; and "The Lion's Whiskers" on July 24-25. In 2007, the Arts Center recorded 562 registrants for summer camp and more than 2,900 performance attendees.

**Summer Reading Club Programs** – To promote the Irving Public Library's Summer Reading Club and the Reading with Ringling Bros.! program, the Ringling Bros. clowns will present a storytime for children of all ages up to eighth grade at the following locations:

- June 14, 2:30 p.m., Irving Central Library, 801 W. Irving Blvd.
- June 18, 2:30 p.m., Valley Ranch Library, 401 Cimarron Trail
- June 19, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Bookmobile: The Dream Machine (Kids R Kids, 2990 Regent Blvd.)

For more information call (972) 721-2458 or visit [www.readingwithringling.com](http://www.readingwithringling.com).

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

**On-the-Spot Awards** – Kendall Dickerman (Police) and Tim Taylor (Public Works/Engineering) received On-the-Spot Awards from City Manager Tommy Gonzalez for providing outstanding service to their customers.

**Financial Statement Audit** – The city is requesting proposals from qualified certified public accounting firms to audit its financial statements starting with this fiscal year ending Sept. 30. Proposals are due June 25.

**Building Safety Week** – Field Operations Manager Lawrence Crow visited the Texas congressional delegation at their offices in Washington, D.C. He traveled to Washington in his role as president of the North Texas Chapter of the International Code Council during Building Safety Week to lobby for financial support for construction code-related safety initiatives for Texas cities.

**Golf Tournament** – Planning and Inspections employees planned and managed the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Building Professional Institute/North Texas ICC Chapter golf tournament, which raised \$7,000 in scholarship money. Special guest players included actor Burton Gilliam and from the junior circuit, Sagen Gonzalez.

**Library NEA Big Read Grant** – The Irving Public Library is one of only 126 recipients nationwide to receive the highly competitive and widely coveted National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read award. The library's Big Read will feature a monthlong series of events developed around Dashiell Hammett's classic mystery, *The Maltese Falcon*, in October. The NEA presents the Big Read in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and in cooperation with Arts Midwest.

**Records Management System** – The City of Irving is in the process of evaluating potential vendors for a new records management system to handle both physical and electronic records. The new solution will replace the current outdated records management software. Information Technology and the City Secretary's Office are planning to start the project during the month of August.

**Quarterly Executive Leadership Forum** – Strategic Resources and Budget, in conjunction with the City Manager's Office, hosted the quarterly Executive Leadership Forum on May 30. This program, facilitated by the city's training consultant Carlos Sanchez, provided an interactive leadership session for department directors and senior management. During this forum, the topic of complacency and its impact on organizational performance was a central theme.

**Certified Public Manager Program Graduates** – Three city employees—Jonathan Bazan, Sheila Hupp and Shannon Phillips—completed the yearlong Certified Public Manager coursework. A graduation ceremony for graduates throughout the state was held in Austin at the LBJ School for Public Policy on June 2.

**Distinguished Budget Presentation Award** – The City of Irving received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the fiscal year 2007-08 budget, which received grades of outstanding in several categories. The city has been a recipient of this award for 19 consecutive years.

**Streamline of Injury and Incident Reporting Forms** – The Strategic Resources and Budget Department has revised its injury and incident forms. This revision has streamlined the reporting instruments, allowing for efficiency and focus on preventative actions to improve effectiveness in risk mitigation. Training sessions with city departments are ongoing through June 17.

### **Strategic Goal No. 9: Infrastructure**

**Replacement of Radio Units** – The City of Irving and Nextel have reached an agreement to replace radio units. The Nextel Rebanding Frequency Reconfiguration Agreement (FRA) calls for replacement of 794 radio units. Per the agreement, Nextel will pay for the cost of replacement of these units and the communication systems infrastructure at an estimated value of \$2.4 million.

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

**Community Outreach** – Solid Waste Services has distributed 20 information kits with literature about recycling and the benefits of recycling. In addition, information also was included about the services provided by the Solid Waste Services Department to Britain Elementary School's Migrant Program participants. Teachers in this program will educate 20 families about Irving's recycling opportunities. The teachers have been asked to encourage the families to teach others about recycling opportunities in Irving.

**City Event** – Solid Waste Services had a presence at the May 31 Pooch Fest at the Soccer Complex. City employee Fran Witte and six Irving Master Composter volunteers distributed information about recycling, backyard composting and other services offered by the Solid Waste Services Department. The department also set up recycling bins for the collection of plastics bottles from event attendees.

**Water Utilities Green Initiative** – In an effort to become a more environmentally friendly organization, Public Works/Water Utilities will purchase two sport utility vehicle hybrids. These two hybrids, 2008 Ford Escapes, will be used by Environmental Compliance and Water Conservation. This purchase is tentatively scheduled to be approved by the Irving City Council on June 12. With this approval, the city saves approximately \$10,000 by using an interlocal purchasing agreement, as well as the savings in fuel costs over the life of the vehicle.

**41<sup>st</sup> Annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference** – Keep Irving Beautiful will be the host affiliate for the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Keep Texas Beautiful Conference at Irving's Omni Mandalay Hotel from June 24-27. Attendance is expected to exceed 1,000 at this year's event.