



# City of Irving *City Manager's Report*

November 19, 2008

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

**Corridor Litter Abatement** – Since the formation of the city's corridor team seven months ago, the Parks and Recreation Department has collected more than 43 tons of litter from city street medians and rights-of-way. Litter abatement is performed daily on 51 miles of primary city corridors and 31 miles of medians and rights-of-way are addressed on a weekly basis. The corridor team also collects abandoned shopping carts in public rights-of-way and has removed more than 600 since April. In addition, the team has addressed 478 employee Eyes on Irving inquiries, Code Enforcement requests and other service calls, and has achieved a 100 percent response rate.

**Pilot Homeownership Program** – The Housing and Human Services Department has started a pilot program to help displaced multifamily residents prepare for homeownership. The first homebuyer class was held Nov. 15 for former residents of the Vista Del Lago Apartments. These classes educate residents on how to create a family budget, save money, review and repair credit history, and how to work with lenders and real estate agents once they are mortgage ready. If the pilot program is successful, classes will be offered to low- and moderate-income multifamily residents throughout the year.

**Keep Irving Beautiful Liaison** – The Code Enforcement Department will serve as the liaison for Keep Irving Beautiful (KIB) effective Nov. 30. The department will host a workshop with the KIB Board to develop an action plan that will align KIB efforts with the city's Strategic Plan, to strengthen efforts and produce measurable results.

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

**Heritage Crossing Development Informational Meeting** – Residents have the opportunity to review the recommended design guidelines for the Heritage Crossing development project, formerly called Olde Towne, during an informational meeting on Dec. 8. It will begin at 7 p.m. in the Central Library Auditorium, 801 W. Irving Blvd. City staff will review the design guidelines and will answer attendee questions. The Heritage Crossing Citizens Advisory Committee already has reviewed the guidelines and recommended changes that have been incorporated into the final documents. A public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission is set for Jan. 5, followed by final approval by the City Council. The design guidelines will serve as the standard for all future development in the old downtown area.

**RIM Award** – Irving-based Research In Motion (RIM), the BlackBerry company, was recognized by the Dallas Regional Chamber with a Momentum Award for the relocation of its U.S. headquarters to Las Colinas. RIM, which is bringing approximately 1,000 jobs to Irving, is a leading designer, manufacturer and marketer of innovative wireless solutions for the worldwide mobile communications market.

**Skills Development Fund Grant** – With a \$400,000 job training grant from the Texas Workforce Commission's Skills Development Fund, HMS Inc. (Health Management Systems) and North Lake College have partnered to provide training for 528 new or upgraded jobs, including computer operations support, database administrators, executives and program analysts. Upon completion of training, workers will earn an average wage of \$18.80 per hour.

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

**Take-Home Patrol Car Program** – The Police Department issued its first two take-home patrol cars on Nov. 14 as part of a new pilot program to enhance police presence and visibility in Irving neighborhoods. It also is intended to encourage public safety personnel to reside in the city. Ten patrol cars were authorized in the new fiscal year budget for officers who live in Irving. The pilot program is one of several police initiatives to help continue Irving's significant crime rate reduction.

**Secure Communities Program** – The Texas Department of Public Safety has asked the Irving Police Department to participate in a pilot program for a new initiative by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) called Secure Communities. The project allows Irving to establish a permanent link to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's IDENT fingerprint database. The IDENT database is the information system used by ICE to record fingerprint images. This database will provide immediate identification of suspects who have previously been deported and have re-entered the United States. It also will be useful for identifying a person who has entered the country legally, but has an expired visa.

**New Fire Boat** – The city's new fire boat arrived and is being outfitted with equipment. Training will be provided to crew members assigned to the unit. The new equipment will perform water rescues and assist with fires to buildings along Lake Carolyn. The dual-role craft will enhance the Fire Department's ability to handle fires and life safety issues as the population along the shore of the lake continues to grow.

**Jail Internship Program** – Detention Supervisors Clark Nethers and Kristin Spivey made a presentation at the National Careers Pathways Network 2008 Annual Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. The conference provided both formal and informal opportunities to discuss the success and benefits of the Irving Police Department's internship program and the American Correctional Association Provisional Correctional Officer Certification Pilot Project.

**Explorer Award** – School Resource Officer Curtis Kaloi was presented the statewide Explorer Leadership Advisor Award for 2008 by the Boy Scouts of America. This award is given to individuals who show exceptional dedication in helping develop young people and who provide outstanding leadership to explorer troops throughout the state.

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

**Community Information Wiki** – To enable the Irving Public Library to provide unique and specialized information about Irving to residents, visitors and businesses 24 hours a day, the Information Technology Department recently implemented a software solution that allows library patrons to search for answers online from a database of nearly 100 topics. The Wiki, available via the library Web site, contains information on Irving culture, history and civic organizations that has been compiled by library staff.

**School Involvement** – Staff from Corporate Communications, Real Estate and Development, Code Enforcement, Housing and Human Services, Library, Engineering, and Municipal Court participated in a career day for eighth-grade students at Austin Middle School on Nov. 14. More than 370 students attended. In October, the Fire Department conducted a total of 24 programs involving 2,622 students. The department also conducted 68 school fire drills and distributed fire prevention materials to more than 20,000 students attending Irving ISD, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD and private schools.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters** – Currently, 18 city employees are participating in the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) School-Based Mentoring program at Gilbert Elementary and Austin Middle schools. BBBS is working to get city volunteers matched with little brothers or sisters. Administrative Services/External Relations is still accepting applications for this city-sponsored activity.

**Communications Projects Highlighted Nationally** – Several of the city's communications programs were shared with public information professionals from across the nation by Corporate Communications Director Laurie Kunke. The presentation was made during the 20<sup>th</sup> annual City-County Communications and Marketing Association conference held in Reno, Nev. Highlighted programs included Irving in Focus cards, Employee Town Hall meetings, Eyes on Irving program, special video programming, and video on demand.

**Fats, Oils and Grease Presentations** – Water Utilities is working to keep the city's wastewater system clean through the teaching of residents about the proper disposal of fats, oils and grease. The most-recent presentation was conducted during a PTA meeting for nearly 1,000 attendees at Stipes Elementary School.

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

**Aquatic Center Informational Meeting** – A community meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Nov. 25 at Georgia Farrow Recreation Center at West Park for residents to review the proposed schematic design plans for the West Irving Aquatic Center. Proposed plans have been developed based on input from residents around West Park. The plans include a zero-depth entry pool, water slides, lap lanes, splash playground, toddler pool, current channel and spray jets. The meeting will provide interested residents with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed plans. Construction on the \$4.5 million project will begin next summer and is scheduled to open in summer 2010. Georgia Farrow Recreation Center is located at 530 Davis Drive.

**Holiday Extravaganza** – Celebrate the holiday season with the city's Holiday Extravaganza on Dec. 1. The free event will kick off at 4 p.m. with a Christmas parade in the Heritage District, followed by a tree lighting ceremony at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 825 W. Irving Blvd. Additional entertainment includes holiday music by the Irving Symphonic Band, a fireworks show, Nimitz High Madrigal Choir, Santa Claus visits, outdoor games, a petting zoo, pony rides and food. An added feature to this year's holiday festivities is the holiday lights at Centennial Park, which will be on display during Holiday Extravaganza and will continue through the month of December. Centennial Park is located at 444 W. Second St. For more information, call (972) 721-2501.

**Tim Markwood Park Construction** – Construction has begun on Tim Markwood Park, an 8.09-acre neighborhood park located between MacArthur Boulevard and Rogers Road along West Irving Creek. The grading work has been completed and the install of concrete trail and sidewalks has begun. The \$800,000 project will include a playground, picnic pavilion, walking trail, picnic pads and two meadows, and is scheduled to be completed by next spring.

**North Lake Aquatic Center Roof** – The City of Irving has collaborated with the Dallas County Community College District and Irving ISD to purchase a new fabric roof for the North Lake Aquatic Center, 5001 N. MacArthur Blvd. The structure is approximately 20,000 square feet and covers the aquatic center from October-April. The city's share of the project is approximately \$93,000. Funding for this project comes from existing bond funds. The estimated life of the fabric is eight to 10 years.

**Boxing Tournament** – Senter Park Recreation Center will host the Texas Select Amateur Boxing Tournament from 1 to 9 p.m. Nov. 22-23. The bouts include participants from age 6 to adult. Cost is \$5 per person for spectators. For more information, call (972) 721-2641. Senter Park Recreation Center is located at 901 S. Senter Road.

**Heritage Senior Center Intergenerational Partnership** – The Heritage Senior Center has established an intergenerational partnership with Pierce Early Childhood School. Heritage members collected 60 books and donated them to the school for the United Through Reading program. Books are mailed by the school to soldiers abroad. Pierce School students decorated 100 tray liners for the seniors during Halloween. Heritage will put up an angel tree to provide holiday gifts for Pierce School children in need. A canned food drive also will benefit the families of these needy children.

**Parks and Recreation Partnership** – The Parks and Recreation Department is collaborating with RISE Adventures Inc. to develop programs for physically challenged adults and children. The Georgia Farrow Recreation Center currently hosts a quad rugby program on Friday nights. In addition, the program provides a hand-cycling program at Campión Trails on Saturdays. The department is working with RISE to initiate a disability golf program at Campión Trails. It will have a professional disability instructor and will use driving nets and plastic balls for instruction tools. The goal is to expand the program to a traditional golf course in the spring. All RISE programs are free and open to all ages of persons with physical disabilities.

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

**Digital Cities Award** – The city has received a Digital Cities Award, placing sixth in the population category of 125,000-249,999 out of more than 300 entries. The Center for Digital Government established the award in 2001 to recognize cities that use technology to provide excellent service to their residents. The City of Irving is the only city in the state that has been listed among the Top 10 Digital Cities for four consecutive years.

**Certificate of Achievement** – For the 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the city has received the Government Finance Officer Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Fiscal Year 2007 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The GFOA established the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program (CAFR Program) in 1945 to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure and then to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal.

**On-the-Spot Awards** – City of Irving employees continue in their provision of excellent customer service and willingness to go above and beyond their individual job responsibilities. City Manager Tommy Gonzalez recognized the following employees with On-the-Spot Awards: Miriam Baker (Information Technology), Jan Bentley (Construction and Building Services), Hugh Card (Water Utilities), Sherry Copeland (Planning and Inspections), Leticia Gonzalez (Planning and Inspections), Jim Holland (Construction and Building Services), Lisa McNamara (Parks and Recreation), Glenn Ritchey (Construction and Building Services) and Nancy Webb (Financial Services).

**Employee Toastmasters Club** – The City of Irving has formed a Toastmasters Club to enhance employee presentation skills. Toastmasters provides the tools that allow employees to become effective presenters and leaders, enabling them to better connect and share their ideas with residents and customers.

**Online Building Permitting** – The Planning and Inspections Department will soon offer online building permitting services, which will save customers time and money by eliminating the need for them to come to City Hall. The Information Technology Department is in the final phase of the software install, and the service should be available for public use by the end of the year.

**Driver Trainer Certification** – The City of Irving hosted a five-day driver trainer certification course for city personnel. The following departments sent a representative to become a trainer to improve on-the-road driving skills for employees who drive city vehicles: Fire, Police, Solid Waste Services, Water Utilities, Street, and Risk Management. The course was coordinated by Risk Management staff.

**Irving University Training Web Site** – The Information Technology Department has launched the city's new training Web site, a strategic initiative that provides city employees with tools to improve their skills and knowledge. This program offers city staff more than 100 classes in a variety of formats from instructor-led to online learning/video technology. Course topics cover a range of interests that include personal growth, leadership skills, policy and procedures, wellness, safety and technical training.

**New Service Desk Management Software** – To improve the efficiency in providing solutions to daily computer problems, the Information Technology Department has completed the installation of new service management software. This software automates the Service Desk's business processes of managing and servicing network-based endpoints—from mobile devices, laptops and desktops to servers and storage assets. The software keeps track of service calls, assists in following up and presents quick reports on service performance, which frees up staff to better service clients.

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

**Project Update** – Construction and Building Services staff has completed several projects for the Police Department. The North Police Station parking lot light fixtures were upgraded to provide better lighting for employees and residents. The new fixtures result in better visibility and improved safety. The repainting of the bollards at the Criminal Justice Center and several areas at the North Police Station has been completed. The hallways, classrooms, various offices and the report writing room at the North Station were repainted by in-house staff.

**Transportation Department Project Completions** – Traffic staff has completed re-lamping all streetlights in the La Villita subdivision in accordance with the developer's agreement, and completed October's preventative maintenance on schedule.

**Water Supply Initiative** – The City of Irving continues to work with the City of Paris and the Lake Pat Mayse Study Committee in an effort to acquire an additional water supply. The Study Committee has been meeting with consultants each month to determine how much water could be available and the conditions required for potential sale. The committee also is evaluating options to increase the amount of water that could be available for sale. Both cities are working together to extend the existing exclusive agreement to allow additional time to negotiate a water sale next year.

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

**Water Conservation Symposium** – Three members of the city's water conservation group attended the annual Water Conservation Symposium on Nov. 7 at Texas Motor Speedway. Speakers from across the nation presented information on marketing water conservation, leak detection and management, new irrigation rules from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, automated meter reading, and staffing, sustaining and enforcing water conservation.

**Tour of Hunter Ferrell Landfill** – Solid Waste Services conducted a tour of the Hunter Ferrell Landfill on Oct. 30 for approximately 20 North Lake College students studying environmental science.

**Landfill Permit Modification** – The Hunter Ferrell Landfill received a permit modification for its ground water monitoring program. The changes increase the groundwater protection features already in place at the landfill by adding five new monitoring wells and 12 piezometers to measure pressure at the site.