



City of Irving *City Manager's Report*

June 27, 2007

Goal No. 1: Land Use

Vacant Buildings – The City of Irving is better equipped to address buildings that have been vacated and abandoned on a long-term basis, thanks to a city code amendment approved by City Council on June 14. The amendment added to the definition of dangerous buildings “those structures which, although structurally sound, are nevertheless inadequately secured from unauthorized entry by children, vagrants and others.” This change will allow the Building and Standards Commission to utilize the full range of options authorized by Chapter 54 of the Texas Local Government Code to vacant buildings. The options include requiring an owner to demolish a building; authorizing the city to demolish the building if the owner fails to do so; and applying a lien to the property to recover associated costs.

Goal No. 2: Vibrant Neighborhoods

Housing Fair – The Irving Housing and Human Services Department and the Irving Housing Finance Corporation will host a 2007 Housing Fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. July 14 at the Irving Mall. This year’s event will include local real estate agents, mortgage lenders, builders, contractors, title companies and other community activists involved in providing home repairs and the promotion of home ownership in Irving. Attendees can obtain information about purchasing a home, first-time home buyer programs, housing rehabilitation and restoration programs, and mortgage information. There will be prize drawings for participants and activities for children. There is no cost to attend.

Alan-A-Dale Property – The property at 2616 Alan-A-Dale has been cleaned up and now complies with the city’s code requirements. This action follows a May 24 City Council action that authorized the city attorney to file a suit and take legal action, following the failure of the property owner to remove the salvage parts, vehicle bodies and inoperative vehicles, and other trash/debris from the property. On June 5, Attorney Brenda McDonald and Environmental Services Manager Teresa Adrian met with the property owner and reached an agreement that the property was to be in full compliance by June 17, or city staff was authorized to contract for clean up of the property. Because there was significant progress observed during follow-up visits, the owner was granted an extension until June 20 to complete the removal of items. On June 21, a follow-up inspection was conducted and the property was found to be in compliance.

New Code Enforcement Procedures for Violators – Earlier this month, the code enforcement marshal began executing initial and follow-up citations within two working days as part of a more aggressive approach to resolving code violations. A follow-up inspection is scheduled 10 days following the issuance of the citation. If the violation still exists after 10 days, the marshal will issue a second citation and schedule another 10-day inspection. If the violation still exists after the third inspection, another citation is issued and a fourth 10-day inspection is scheduled. If the violation exists after the fourth inspection, the violation will be referred back to Code Enforcement for consideration of other legal options. This more aggressive approach still allows violators multiple opportunities to voluntarily comply prior to involving the code enforcement marshal.

Goal No. 3: Economic Development

Irving Residents Survey – After the City Council set a long-term vision and strategic plan for the City of Irving, the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau (ICVB) was called upon to define an identity to complement that plan by developing a citywide “brand strategy.” One component of that effort is assessing perceptions of the community from Irving residents. The ICVB is encouraging all Irving residents to participate in an easy online survey, which can be accessed by logging on to www.irvingtexas.com and selecting the “Irving Residents Survey” icon located on the right side of the homepage. The survey will be conducted through July 23; all responses will be kept confidential. Through other methodology and surveys, the bureau also is collecting perceptions of non-residents, including CEOs, media, meeting planners, visitors and city employees.

National Topical Stamp Show – The Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau welcomed attendees to the National Topical Stamp Show, held June 15-17 at the Sheraton Grand Hotel.

ICVB Dallas Cowboys Promotion – The Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau has created a Dallas Cowboys Getaway package promotion for the upcoming football season. Primarily targeted for outer market consumers, the ICVB provides information on all 35 packages available at Irving hotels on the bureau’s Web site, in a promotional brochure and through targeted media outreach. Log on to www.irvingtexas.com for the ICVB Web site.

Financial Empowerment – The Southwest Branch Library is working with the YWCA to bring another round of free financial workshops to Irving on Tuesdays, June 26-Aug. 14. The series, “Financial Empowerment,” teaches residents how to get their personal finances in shape. Topics include financial planning, reducing debt, rebuilding credit, developing a budget and saving money.

Goal No. 4: Safe and Secure City

Certificate of Occupancy Revocation – On June 14, the City Council amended the city code to set new requirements for owners of apartment buildings. If an apartment building’s certificate of occupancy is revoked, the building owner will be required to make life-safety upgrades before a new certificate of occupancy is issued. These upgrades include compliance with current code requirements for electrical systems and the installation of fire protection systems such as fire alarms and fire sprinklers.

West Nile in Mosquito Sample – Irving has received notification that a mosquito sample collected in the La Villita neighborhood, near the Elm Fork of the Trinity River, has tested positive for West Nile virus. City staff will be spraying residential areas where the mosquito was collected to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus to people. The spraying normally takes place in the early morning hours when wind speeds are less than 12 mph. Residents are encouraged to take sensible precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The “Four Ds” should be practiced as follows:

- Dusk/Dawn – be cautious about outdoor activities at sunrise and sunset. Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Dress – consider wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors.
- DEET – use insect repellants that contain the active ingredient DEET.
- Drain – be certain to drain any types of outside containers that hold water. Bird baths should be dumped and refilled twice weekly.

CrimeWeb – The Police and Information Technology departments are initiating a new crime prevention tool called CrimeWeb. This Web service will attach to the Irving Police Department Web site where crime alerts can be posted, such as missing persons, burglaries, and notices of crime watch meetings, as well as severe weather alerts and neighborhood meetings. Starting in July, residents can subscribe to receive these crime alerts directly to their e-mail. The program is nationwide and officers can target the messages they send out by zip code. The Police Department also will receive numerous alerts from this service, regarding homeland and community security, missing children and adults, and major crime. CrimeWeb training for police officers will begin on July 10.

Employee Article Published – Animal Services Officer Ryan Steele had an article published in the Texas Animal Control Association's quarterly newsletter. The article, "Exotic Reptiles Safety and Management," examined the importance of safe handling of native Texas reptile species in the field of animal services. Through the article, the city employee was able to share his vast expertise in herpetology with fellow animal services operations throughout Texas.

Certified Animal Shelter Volunteer Class – The next certified animal shelter volunteer class is set for June 30. During the class, city staff will educate volunteers on the proper care of animals and facility operations. Since last fall, 14 volunteers have been certified to assist the animal services staff.

Joint Extrication – The Irving and Coppell fire departments have had the opportunity to work together on some emergencies. Most recently, the two departments worked a vehicle extrication call on Interstate 635. According to Irving Fire Chief Mario Molina, the two departments worked so well together that it was hard to tell which department an individual worked for. This type of cooperation is due to mutual training, communication, and the desire to put the patient first.

Special Olympics – Several Irving Fire Department members volunteered their time to work at this year's Special Olympics events. There were a number of minor injuries during the events, and having trained EMS personnel on location provided a great benefit to the athletes. Assistant Fire Chief Russell Wilson was in charge of the program and volunteered many off-duty hours to coordinate the event.

Family Advocacy Center – The Family Advocacy Center was recognized by the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) as a model for collaboration and victim advocacy for law enforcement agencies. Staff at the Advocacy Center has been asked to speak at the 2007 OAG Conference in November regarding the services that Irving provides and the collaboration with outside agencies.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Program – The Police Department conducted a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program training program from June 20-22. The first day of class was the standard phase one training for apartment complex personnel and area law enforcement agency personnel. The next two days were attended by law enforcement personnel who want to become certified in the program. There were 17 people from 16 different apartment communities, and 16 officers from nine different jurisdictions who attended the session. The class will perform a phase two inspection on the Bridgeport Apartments.

Irving Mental Health Collaboration – The first planning meeting of the newly formed Irving Mental Health Collaboration was held June 22 with more than 10 agencies in attendance. This interagency collaboration is focusing on mental health services in Dallas County, specifically Irving. The group goal is to assist individuals with mental health problems to ensure that appropriate care is received. Agencies participating in the collaboration include Early Childhood Intervention, Dallas Metro Care, Irving Interfaith Clinic, Irving Health Clinic, UT Southwestern Medical School, and the Irving Police, Fire and Corporate Communications departments. The next meeting is scheduled for July 20.

Police Explorers – The Irving Police Explorers Post #252 competed in the State Explorers Competition and took home three trophies: first in felony traffic stops, third in crime-scene search and third in unknown call for police. These Irving Police Explorers will be recognized at the City Council meeting on June 28. Approximately 80 teams from Texas and surrounding states gathered to compete in events such as felony traffic stops, domestic disturbances, accident investigation and several other events directly related to day-to-day police duties.

Goal No. 5: Diversity

M/WBE Program – The city's new Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises Program (M/WBE) will formally begin next month. All departments doing procurements will use forms soliciting a "good faith effort" from bidders to reach the city's overall goal of 26 percent M/WBE participation. On July 12, the city will host a kick-off meeting for vendors from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at City Hall. At the meeting, the city will share its new policies and procedures, and provide details on more than \$1.2 billion in planned projects.

Spanish Health Series – The East Branch Library, in collaboration with the City of Irving's Public Health Education Outreach Program, is offering a summer program series to educate Spanish-speakers on a variety of health topics, including depression, heart health, cancer prevention and diabetes. Programs take place on selected Saturdays through July 28.

Goal No. 6: Effective Communications

Fourth of July Events on ICTN – Irving Community Television Network (ICTN) will showcase the city's special Fourth of July events. The day will kick off with the live cablecast of the Independence Day Parade at 9 a.m. The show will air on ICTN 1 (Channel 16 -Time Warner and Channel 30 - Verizon) and on the Internet at www.ictn.tv. Repeats will air on the same channels at: 5 p.m. July 4, 7 p.m. July 5, 6:30 p.m. July 8; 5:30 p.m. July 9, and 8 p.m. July 10. On the evening of July 4, ICTN will tape the Irving Symphony Orchestra's patriotic music, followed by the fireworks display. The special will air on ICTN 1 at 8:30 p.m. July 5, 9:15 p.m. July 8, 9 p.m. July 10, and 8:30 p.m. July 16.

Meet and Greet the Troops – City staff will welcome troops home from Iraq as they arrive at DFW International Airport on July 5-6 as part of the military's Rest & Recuperation Program. Greeting during the week of July 1 is a joint effort between the city and the Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce. The Rest & Recuperation Program is sponsored by the North Texas Commission.

Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring – City staff will participate in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas (BBBS) School-Based Mentoring program beginning with the 2007-08 school year. Upon approval of their supervisors, employees will be interviewed by BBBS for placement with a student at either Austin Middle School or Gilbert Elementary. Both schools are located in the South Irving Heights area. These volunteers will work with their students at the schools for 30-60 minutes a week, two to four times a month. The City of Irving is working on this project in cooperation with the Irving Independent School District.

Special City Recognition – The Office of the Mayor and Council, along with the Corporate Communications Department, has redesigned the city proclamations, special recognitions and certificates used to honor employees, residents, organizations and businesses. Many of these awards are presented during City Council meetings and receptions, which gives Mayor Herbert Gears and council members the opportunity to recognize the many great people and organizations who call Irving home.

Goal No. 7: Cultural, Recreational and Educational Environments

Independence Day Parade – The City of Irving will host its Independence Day Parade at 9 a.m. July 4. The 2007 Grand Marshal is Mayor Herbert Gears. Immediately following the parade, there will be a patriotic program in Heritage Park. The program will feature the Boy Scouts of America 100th Year World History Anniversary. Robert J. Mazzuca, chief scouting executive designee, will be the keynote speaker. A host of park exhibits will include outdoor games, Boy Scout demonstrations and historical artifacts. In addition, free watermelon, ice cream, root beer and cobbler will be available.

KidsArts Summer Camp Program – The Irving Arts Board awarded 17 scholarships to local youth to participate in the 2007 KidsArts Summer Camp program. The scholarship recipients have the opportunity to attend one of the Arts Center's weeklong summer camps free of charge. Summer camps include Multi-Arts for children ages 6-14; ArtElements for teens ages 13-16; and theater camp for children ages 6-18. Scholarships were valued at \$191 each.

Goal No. 8: Sound Governance

Human Resources Performance Plan – The Human Resources Department is in the process of meeting with department directors to obtain feedback on its services, past experiences and future performance expectations. The information provided during the meetings will be used to develop a department performance plan.

Employee Walking Campaign Results – Another employee wellness initiative has resulted in more than 6,800 miles walked to promote a healthier lifestyle. Forty-five teams, consisting of 408 employees, participated in the American Heart Association's "Start!" four-week walking campaign. The first-place "Skinny Minnies" team, which walked 815.86 miles, consisted of Kay Corrales, April Egan, Wayne Lee, Dave Springob and Dan Vedral. The Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Corporate Communications departments coordinated the walking campaign. The city will continue to offer wellness programs that engage employees in physical activities and ultimately help promote good health and reduce medical costs.

Goal No. 9: Infrastructure Network

Lake Chapman Update – Continued rains have helped to offset the low-water level at Lake Chapman, which is the city's primary source of water. The water surface elevation in Lake Chapman increased to 433.64 feet as of June 26, which is 5.3 feet below conservation level. This compares to the water surface elevation on June 6, which was 432.83 feet or 7.17 feet below conservation level.

Traffic Projects – The Texas Department of Transportation is proceeding with the overlay project on Irving Boulevard with expected completion by the end of the month. In addition, Irving traffic operations made pavement markings on the recently completed section of Shady Grove Road between MacArthur Boulevard and Story Road.

Network Monitoring Software – The Information Technology (IT) Department is recommending the purchase of network monitoring software. This software will provide real-time and historical statistical data and graphical reporting of network performance. It also will automate routine and redundant tasks while increasing efficiency and greater control of network resources. The graphical reporting will give the network systems division the ability to present a network operation center, "heads-up display," at the entrance of the department. This software also will allow IT staff to recognize and solve problems before users are directly affected and require IT support.

Briery Road Municipal Center – Construction began on June 4 at the Briery Road Municipal Center. The construction project will add 5,000 square feet of work space to the Building Maintenance Facility. This phase of construction will expand the HVAC shop area and create offices and storage for the custodial division. Employees will have an improved work environment, upgraded equipment and much needed space. Once the custodial division relocates to its new site, office space will be available to renovate for other departmental use at City Hall. The project is scheduled to be completed at the end of November. The total project cost is \$516,700.

Goal No. 10: Environmentally Sustainable Community

Waste Characterization Study – Solid Waste Services will be conducting a waste characterization study at the Hunter Ferrell Landfill. The purpose of the study is to determine the specific characteristics of the waste being delivered to the city landfill to allow staff to develop programs that target the specific waste stream. In an effort to address seasonal variations, multiple sampling events will be conducted. The first sample is set for a two-day period at the end of June, while the second event is tentatively scheduled for September.