

DE SOTO

KANSAS

A QUESTION COMING YOUR WAY

Has it been almost ten years? Yes it has; De Soto voters approved a ¾% special sales tax that went into effect in 2002. That approval carried with it a “sunset provision,” which means the special sales tax expires at the end of ten years, in 2012.

The City Council will once again put a question to the De Soto voters—should the special ¾% special sales tax be continued for another ten years or not? This is not a new or increased tax; it is a question about continuing with the existing tax that is currently in place.

You might be wondering what was the purpose of the special sales tax and how much did it raise? Those are excellent “need-to-know” questions.

The purpose of the tax is to provide revenue to help pay for capital improvement projects, many of which are funded with 10 to 20 year bonds. None of the money pays for employee salaries or any other normal operating expenses of the City. Since 2002, the sales tax revenue is helping to pay for the new aquatic center that opened in 2006, the new sewer treatment plant that opened in 2006, improvements to the City’s water and sewer systems, and annual road paving projects including the 2009 repaving of 83rd Street.

And how much money has been raised? Since the tax went into effect in 2002, it has generated \$2,556,357. We estimate that the total to be raised by 2012 is \$3,064,036. Figure 1 provides you with an annual breakdown of the actual yearly revenue plus projections to the end of 2010 and estimates for 2011 and 2012 when the current tax authorization expires.

Why did the City Council pursue

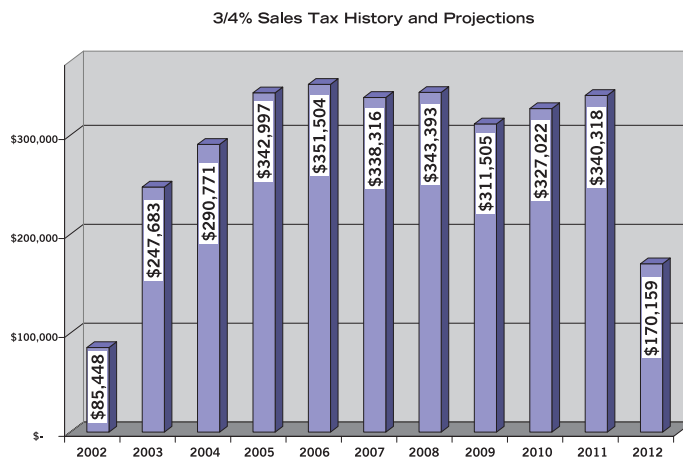


Figure 1

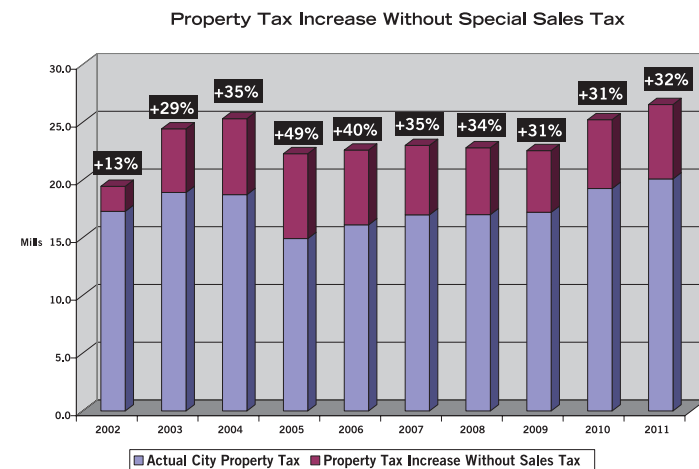


Figure 2

the sales tax in 2002 anyway? That is another good question. In order to provide for a reliable source of revenue to pay for bonded projects that require 10 to 20 year funding commitments, the City basically has two choices—either the special sales tax or added property taxes. One of the reasons that the City Council chose to pursue the sales tax option lies in the fact that the tax is paid by both De Soto residents who shop here as well as people who don’t live here but spend money in the community’s retail stores. Since property taxes are paid by De Soto property owners only, the cost of long-term capital projects is spread out over a greater number of people.

If the sales tax had to be replaced by property taxes, figure 2 identifies how much of a tax increase would have been

required to produce the same dollars.

Here is another way of looking at the sales tax and its impact on some frequent, common purchases.

	Cost	¾% Sales Tax
Pizza	\$14 =	10¢
Gallon of Milk	\$4 =	3¢
6-Pack of Beer	\$6 =	4¢

The following is the ballot question that will be delivered by mail to De Soto voters on January 12, 2011.

Shall the following be adopted?

Shall a retailers’ sales tax in the amount of three quarters of one percent (.75%) be levied in the City of De Soto, Kansas (the “City”), for the purpose of financing capital improvement projects, including but not limited to, improving the

City’s streets and sidewalks, as well as the City’s water, sewer, and drainage systems, and all things necessary and related to such improvements, with the collection of such sales tax to commence on April 1, 2012 upon the expiration of a current three quarters of one percent (.75%) city-wide retailers’ sales tax, and shall terminate ten years from the date of imposition, all pursuant to K.S.A. 12-187 et seq., and K.S.A. 12-195?

You will be able to cast your ballot by return mail between that date and February 1. The City will begin developing its 2012 budget in March. With the referendum calendar, the City will have ample time to adjust its property tax budget for the 2012 budget year, depending upon the outcome of this majority-rule voting.

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SURVEY RESULTS

WHAT YOU SAID...

In the last newsletter we asked you about Riverfest Park. We were interested in knowing what kind of concert events would interest you. We wanted to know what other festivals and events would appeal to you. We did not get much response; nine readers responded to the survey. If you can count on the reliability of those nine responses, however, it appears that the past events have been on the right track for the most part.

What did you have to say? The top vote-getter for a repeat event is the City-sponsored July 4 community picnic and fireworks show. As popular as the event is, one respondent suggested that we add a spring and fall City picnic event as well.

An equally popular event is one that has not occurred; but almost everyone voiced their interest in a Friday evening movie and popcorn series. I guess it would be the next best thing to a drive-in theater, which many of us baby boomers remember quite well. The idea would be simple enough to make happen except for the

initial problem, which is the \$16,000-\$20,000 investment in the outdoor movie equipment. Who knows?... no promises here, but we will keep working on the money challenge and see if we can make it happen.

There is a strong sentiment voiced about the Chamber of Commerce's Blues and BBQ Festival and its Country Western concerts. It is obvious that they are becoming annual events that the community anticipates and enjoys.

Surprisingly, a big favorite in the vote-getting is the idea of a wine and cheese tasting event. I guess it should not be too surprising since the top "Other Suggestions" idea was to provide more beer selling or allowance to bring in coolers for otherwise alcohol-free events. With that in mind, it might seem logical that the second most common "Other Suggestion" was to provide for permanent restroom facilities. I guess the beer and bathroom go together.

Interestingly, there is almost an equal sentiment for "yes" and "no"

feelings about having Golden Oldies rock-n-roll and current top 40 musical groups. Same can be said for both jazz and big band music. Neither event sparked a lot of positive support.

There were other suggestions possessing merit, including more seating in the Park and a more "finished park look." The City would not argue that the Park does not have a finished look with desirable amenities in place. What you see today is simply phase 1 of 5 phases in the Park's overall master plan. In addition to playground equipment and more seating and sheltered buildings, future Park enhancements include permanent restrooms. But until revenue opportunities become more plentiful, those future improvements will simply have to wait.

Some readers suggested that the Park take advantage of its natural surroundings and that organized outdoor activities such as nature walks, bird watching and canoe trips be offered. At least one of these suggestions is available right now. Canoe float trips are made throughout the year from April through October. If you're interested, check out float

trip schedules and other "how to" information on the Friends of the Kaw website at www.kansasriver.org/river-access. The canoe trip organizers use Riverfest Park regularly as a put-in and take-out point for their organized trips.

Three dissenters noted their displeasure with the new Park. They recommended that De Soto Days and other events should be held in Miller Park. There continues to be some confusion surrounding the De Soto Days Festival, some people reflecting an impression that the City controls the event, including the choice of its location. The City does not organize or make decisions involving this event. De Soto Days is a privately sponsored event run by a group of local volunteers who work extremely hard. The volunteer group is constantly looking for fellow De Soto residents to join its ranks and help make decisions about the event (including where and when to have the event). If you would like to get involved and contribute your energy to the event's success, reach out to the chairpersons, Jeff and Alesa Miller, at the De Soto Days website at www.desotodays.com. They would love to have more help.

CITY CONTACTS & HELPFUL NUMBERS

MAYOR

David R. Anderson
913-583-3362 Home
816-985-0342 Cell

CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Pat Guilfoyle
913-583-1182 x 120
913-689-8740 Cell

CITY CLERK

Lana McPherson
913-583-1182 x 110
913-689-8733 Cell

CITY BUILDING OFFICIAL

Steve Chick, Sr.
913-583-1182 x 130
913-208-4526 Cell

CITY CODES OFFICER

Pam Graff
913-583-1182 x 114
913-238-0435 Cell

CITY ENGINEER

Mike Brungardt, P.E.
913-583-1182 x 116
913-689-8737 Cell

CITY PLANNER

Linda Bohnsack
913-583-1182 x 115

STREET SUPERINTENDENT

Ron Creason
913-583-1182 x 126
913-238-0437 Cell

City Shop
913-583-3379

UTILITIES

Nancy Steele
913-583-1182 x 112

WASTEWATER SUPERINTENDENT

Doug Smith
913-238-0434 Cell
Wastewater Plant
913-585-9956

WATER SUPERINTENDENT

Clarence Brunk
913-583-1182 x 119
913-238-0436 Cell

Water Plant
913-583-1749

CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Mitra M. Templin
913-583-3183

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Betty Cannon
913-583-1500

Mike Drennon
913-583-1389

Ron McDaniel
913-585-1902

Rick Walker
913-538-5655

MUNICIPAL COURT CLERK

Boots Linden
913-583-1182 x 122

PARK & RECREATION DIRECTOR

Jay Garvin
913-583-1182 x 127
913-544-8073 Cell

AQUATICS MANAGER

Justin Huslig
913-583-1182 x 131
913-620-6629 Cell

ANIMAL CONTROL

Jo. Co. Sheriff
913-782-0720

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Sara Ritter
913-583-1585
913-238-2206 Cell

JOHNSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.

Dispatch
913-782-0720

NORTHWEST JOHNSON COUNTY CONS. FIRE DISTRICT - SERVING DE SOTO

De Soto Station
913-583-1595

NW Jo Co Station
913-583-3886

WELDON-HONEY CREEK SANITATION (Trash Service)

Kevin Weldon
785-423-8999 cell

Randy Weldon
785-423-1809 cell

OTHER HELPFUL NUMBERS

Cable-Time Warner
913-451-6464

DigSafe Kansas
1-800-344-7233

Electricity-Westar Energy
1-800-383-1183

Fire Dept. De Soto Station
913-583-1595

Natural Gas-Atmos Energy
1-888-442-1313

Post Office De Soto Branch
913-583-1543

Schools USD #232
913-667-6200

Senior Center De Soto Branch
913-585-1762

Johnson Co. Courthouse
913-715-5000

Johnson Co. Election Office
913-782-3441

Johnson Co. Environmental
913-492-0402

Johnson Co. Hazardous Waste
913-715-6900

Johnson Co. Library-De Soto
913-583-3106

Johnson Co. Motor Vehicle
913-826-1800

Johnson Co. Multi-Service Ctr
913-583-1152

Johnson Co. Sheriff Dispatch
913-782-0720

De Soto City Council meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

De Soto Planning Commission meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

De Soto Municipal Court is held the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.



www.desotoks.us
Check us out on Facebook!

CHECK WITH CHICK... YOUR BUILDING OFFICIAL



In our first newsletter, I touched on the importance of getting building permits before you start a building project. This month I want to cover the next step after you get a permit, selecting a contractor to do the work. More specifically, I'll cover the importance and requirement to use licensed contractors for certain types of contracting work in De Soto.

In 2002, the City became one of the metropolitan area's charter cities to adopt the Contractor Licensing Program (CLP). The program requires contractors to become licensed and insured in order to perform a wide range of construction functions including general construction, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire protection, roofing, swimming pools, and framing. De Soto

is an active member of the program; in fact, I currently serve as a member of the Contractor Licensing Review Board which oversees the program.

Insurance, as we are all aware, is a very important protection for you as a homeowner or property owner. The CLP requires all participating contractors to carry a minimum of one million dollars general liability coverage per single occurrence and finished project. In addition, contractors must also maintain workman's compensation coverage. Another significant benefit of the licensing program is the testing and continuing education programs offered to participating contractors. Those programs help ensure quality, informed and code compliant work for our citizens.

When you apply for a building permit you are asked to list the contractors you are using; that allows me to verify that the contractors doing the work are licensed for your protection. However, when work is done outside of the permit process, you run the risk of using unlicensed and potentially unqualified, uninsured contractors.

Please heed this advice--never contract to do work with someone who comes to your door soliciting discounted work without first checking them out. Never pay for work up front from unknown companies without having them provide a written contract and completing the agreed-upon work first. ALWAYS apply for permits and ask if your contractors have applied for permits for their work. A good example of this are "Storm Chasers" who prey upon citizen's following wind storms or tornados. They'll knock on your door and offer cheap repairs and roofing, often overcharging for doing shoddy work or leaving the job incomplete. The homeowner is often left "holding the bag" to finish or have additional work done.

I have recently seen several HVAC and hot water heater replacements that were completed by unlicensed contractors without permits or inspections; they were not installed to the building code standards, which are designed to insure residents' safety and protection. Hot water heaters are

required to have a thermal expansion tank installed; often when unlicensed, improperly trained contractors perform the replacements, they fail to meet this requirement correctly. The money homeowners think they have saved by avoiding the permit and using an unlicensed contractor proves to be costly in the end when the manufacturer will not honor its warranty should you have a failure.

Replacements of furnace and air conditioners (HVAC) are other expensive projects that need to be correctly installed by licensed professionals. The correct sizing and installation of these units is an important factor in energy consumption and directly impacts your utility costs. Starting in 2011, HVAC contractors will have to size these replacement units in accordance with ACCA Manual J requirements to meet the energy requirements of the state, federal and local building codes.

I cannot emphasize enough about the importance of obtaining a building permit and using a licensed contractor to do work on your home or business. If you have any questions relating to your mechanical or electrical replacement plans, construction projects or contractors, remember to: "Check with Chick," your De Soto Building Official. Additional information is also available on the Building Inspection pages on the City of De Soto website. (www.desotoks.us)

THE OLD BUILDING GETS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

The De Soto City Council recently approved some much needed structural repairs to the old Memorial Hall Building. The building currently is home to the De Soto Chamber of Commerce; it also serves as a fire station for the Northwest Consolidated Fire District.

The Memorial Hall building was originally built in 1943 and the Fire

Station addition was completed in 1978. The exterior concrete block walls had deteriorated over the years and the structure was in need of repairs to prevent further deterioration.

The City retained John Krudwig & Associates Inc. of De Soto as the project's structural engineering firm. Krudwig completed a structural review of the

building and developed the recommended improvements and repair specifications.

Jacor Contracting of Kansas City, Mo. was awarded the \$36,677 contract for the repairs. The De Soto Street Department assisted in the excavation, drainage work and backfilling in an effort to keep down the out-of-pocket expenses for the project. In addition to

the foundation work, new lintels were installed over several of the old window and door openings and a structural reinforcement was completed on the interior of the concrete block walls. A new concrete wall, railing and sidewalk improvements are also part of the project.

These repairs, once completed, will help maintain the Memorial Hall/Fire Station building for future generations' use and as a reminder of De Soto's past.

T.E.A.M.

DE SOTO & JOHNSON COUNTY DO IT

You know the old management spelling gimmick about “team work”? “T.E.A.M....Together Everyone Achieves More.” That can apply to the way the City of De Soto and Johnson County approach doing the public’s business. Whenever it makes any sense to cooperate and join forces, we try to do it.

De Soto and Johnson County have a rich history of joint service arrangements, all of which leads to less government by virtue of less duplication of employees, bureaucracy, and money.

The most recent example is the creation of the Northwest Consolidated Fire District (NCFD). For years, the City and Johnson County Rural Fire District #3 divided De Soto fire protection between themselves. If you can envision De Soto as a donut, then the center of the City, or the hole in the donut, was served by the De Soto Fire Department. The ring of the donut, plus surrounding unincorporated Johnson County, were served by JoCo #3. Wouldn’t it make more sense to combine the two entities and share equipment, buildings, and reduce

duplicated administrative costs such as employees, insurance, etc.? Because it makes sense, the two separate fire agencies were dissolved and the City of De Soto and Johnson County teamed up to create the new NCFD which started business on January 1 of 2010.

The other traditional public safety function of government--police services--also serves as an example of intergovernmental cooperation. De Soto and Johnson County teamed up years ago to provide De Soto police services, thus avoiding costly ancillary aspects of a police department. For example, the contract arrangement with Johnson County’s Sheriff’s Department provides 5 assigned deputies to De Soto 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For that service, De Soto simply covers the cost of the assigned deputies’ personnel costs, vehicle expenses, a \$38,000 annual administrative cost, and a single office in City Hall. Compare that to the added costs the City would have to absorb if we had our own police department. We would have to provide added employees which would include a police chief, supervisory positions for each shift, added police officers

beyond our 5 County-assigned deputies to give coverage for officers off duty for vacation/sick time/court appearances/initial police academy and on-going training and re-certifications, added clerical personnel for records and police administration. The single City Hall office currently provided would have to be supplemented with added office space for police chief and supervisors, police records and evidence keeping, a holding cell, interview room, secured weapons room and evidence room, a police records room, and locker/ready room for police officers. Add to that the special police services we currently receive at no added cost such as narcotics, detectives, animal control, and 24/7 radio dispatching. There is no doubt that the City is served well through our annual \$458,000 cooperative police arrangement.

We enjoy the benefit of the County’s social service programs as well, none of which costs the City any out-of-pocket expense. The daily senior citizen lunch program operated by County staff in our Community Center provides a free location to the County and a much appreciated

County-staffed program at no cost to the City. Down the hallway in City Hall is the County’s Multi Service Center, staffed by the County’s much loved Jodi Hitchcock. The service provides staffing free to the City and office and program space free to the County.

Elsewhere in this newsletter is an article that details the working arrangement between the City and Johnson County’s Transportation Department in providing the FlexRide program to De Soto residents. This scheduled and on-demand service is dedicated to De Soto residents who have no private means of transportation.

Our Recreation program shares in the benefits of cooperation as well. The County’s Sunflower Park on 103rd St. provides baseball fields for De Soto use. The County provides all of the park’s capital improvements and maintenance of the new toilet facility while the City, in turn, receives exclusive rights to manage the use and reservations for the baseball field.

WINTER WATER DEPARTMENT TIPS



Notice it’s that time of the year when we realize Old Man Winter is on the way. Be prepared for freezing temperatures and protect your water service by following these tips:

- Ensure all sprinklers and hoses are disconnected from the outside faucet. Failure to disconnect hoses can cause freezing and pipes bursting.
- Ensure all skirting and crawl spaces are closed tightly.
- A heat tape should be used on all outside weather exposed pipes and it should be checked regularly.

- If temperatures drop below “0”, open cabinet doors on outside walls so the interior heat is available to warm pipes on the outside walls.
- Allow faucets to trickle if weather is below freezing to prevent piping from freezing.
- If possible, insulate interior walls to avoid freeze damage to piping.

If you have questions or concerns, contact the Water Superintendent, Clarence Brunk, at (913) 238-0436. We’ll be happy to help you with answers to your winter-prep questions.

JUSTICE IS HANDED OUT TWICE A MONTH

If you are looking for justice, you do not have to travel far; you can find it right here in De Soto at City Hall. Twice a month, at 6PM on the second and fourth Monday of every month, the De Soto Municipal Court is in session. In Kansas, municipal courts have jurisdiction over all violations of the Standard Traffic Ordinance and the laws (ordinances) of the City of De Soto.

The City Council organized the current framework for the De Soto Municipal Court in 1974. Heading up the Court is the municipal judge; the major requirement being that the judge is an attorney. As part of the local court team, the City Council also established the positions of a prosecutor and a court clerk. And is pretty much the way the court has operated for the past 36 years.

Times have changed, though; the Court has grown in its "popularity" from its earlier days. In 1974, the Court team handled about a dozen cases in a year. Zip forward to 1996 and that volume increased to 259 cases. That was quite an increase; but it didn't stop there. In 2009, the ticket count totaled 1,683. The advent of K-10 highway in its current 4-lane configuration has contributed to ticket activity, including the 73 DUI's issued last year.

Our current judge is Randy McCalla, appointed by the Mayor/City Council in May of this year. Amy Mitchell serves as our Prosecutor, a role she has handled for about the last ten years. Amy also provides a bonus for our Court; she is fluent in Spanish. That skill helps us avoid the need to hire an interpreter for those instances when one is necessary. Our most senior Court official is our Court Clerk,

Boots Linden. Boots is not only the most senior Court official, she is also the longest tenured employee with the City of De Soto. Boots came on board as the part-time Court Clerk in 1971 after responding to a phone call from the then City Clerk Bill Johnson; he asked Boots to help out "for a month or two at the most." 39 years later, Boots is still "helping out."

And helping out is a good way to describe how Boots views her job. As she says, "The only contact that 95% of the public has with the justice system is through the municipal courts." Boots goes on to explain that "we are very aware that how they are treated will impact their impression of the justice system for the rest of their lives. We work at being user friendly and have had many good comments." Boots is pleased to conclude that over her 39 years, "I can only think of a handful of defendants who were really unhappy."

Boots has seen quite a lot of changes in our Court with the passage of her 39 years on the job. That also includes the seven judges she has called "boss." Our judges have served the community well. Boots is proud to point out that two of our seven judges, Pete Ruddick and Chuck Droege, went on to receive appointments as judges with the Johnson County District Court system.

Boots is quick to point out that she needs help at times. "Once a month we have our big court night when I need extra help." To handle the extra volume of people and cases involves the assistance of Nancy Steele, who manages City Hall's front desk as her "day job." Pam Doran, the assistant court clerk in Bonner Springs, provides added help to round out the team

for those busy court sessions.

When asked about some of her court memories, Boots chuckled about one trial. The defendants were brought into Court as a result of an alleged violation of the City's animal control ordinance. The issue before the Court was whether the owner's dog was a pit bull or not. The defendants brought the dog into Court; "I suppose they brought their seven year old child with them because they didn't want to leave him at home alone." "Anyway," continued Boots, "when I asked the judge how he felt the trial went, he commented 'I must say the dog was much better behaved than the kid they brought with them.'" By the way, Boots concluded the story by saying the owners were able to successfully prove that the dog was not a pit bull.

A large number of cases that appear before our Court are traffic tickets originating from the 50,000 cars that travel the De Soto segment of K-10, a roadway often referred to as the "Autobahn of Kansas." Needless to say, many speeders see the inside of the De Soto court room. Boots observes that many people assume the worst offenders are the "college kids" going to and from KU. But that isn't always the case. Boots recalls that the two speeders who claim the prize for the fastest ticketed-speed were two "kids" in their mid-50s. These two "teenagers" earned the top-speeders award from our local Court after they were caught on a Saturday afternoon racing a BMW and a Mustang at 119 mph. Although he can only claim "second-fastest," a 50 year-old speedster had his day in court recently after posting 113 mph on the radar gun.

WE CAN HELP WITH THAT NEW YEARS RESOLUTION

With each changing season, our park and recreation activities change, too. Here are some great opportunities to help get you out of the house during those cold, dark winter days. And why not use some of our programs as a way to meet that New Year's resolution to get fit?

Check the Park & Recreation Department's link on the City website at www.desotoks.us for more information about available programming.

De Soto Parks and Recreation 2011 Winter/Spring Activities:

YOUTH DANCE – SESSION 3

- Approximate start date: Beginning of January
- Amanda's Dance Academy
785-691-6314
amandadanceacademy@gmail.com
www.amandadanceacademy.com

ADULT CO-ED VOLLEYBALL – SESSION 3

- Fee: \$110.00
- Approximate start date: January 3

ADULT FITNESS – SESSION 3

- Approximate start date: January 3

YOUTH SOCCER – SPRING

- Fee: \$30
- Registration Deadline: Friday February 4
- Game Start Date: March 26

YOUTH BASEBALL/SOFTBALL/T-BALL

- Fee Individual Entry Ages 7-14: \$75
- Fee T-Ball: \$50
- Fee Team Entry: \$850

WATER TREATMENT PLANT AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

De Soto has begun implementation of a multi-year program to upgrade the City's water supply, treatment, and distribution systems. The U.S. Army once owned De Soto's water treatment plant and used it to provide treated water to its former 9,000 acre Sunflower Ordinance Works property. The treatment facility is located in the center portion of the Sunflower property, approximately 1½ miles south of 103rd Street. Not quite sure where that is?...just look for the 4 water towers in the south end of the City. The water plant is close by.

All of the City's potable water comes from a well field northwest of town adjacent to the Kansas River. All of our water comes from deep wells, none of it from surface water. The well water is pumped to the treatment facility where it is treated and pumped into the City's water distribution system.

The treatment facility and well field have a production capacity that far exceeds the needs of De Soto. It has long been recognized that this excess capacity could be utilized in a cooperative effort with other water suppliers in the region. We are continuing our efforts to foster partnering relationships that will capitalize on the potential excess capacity of the treatment works. In the meantime, we are moving forward with necessary upgrades to the facilities. The first phase of these upgrades is currently underway; it includes improvements to the water supply lines for treated water and electrical systems at the treatment facility. More specifically, the following work is planned:

- The construction of 9,400 feet of 24" water distribution main that will replace an existing 12" main. This main currently links the treatment plant to the four white water towers on the Sunflower property and the rest of the City's distribution system.
- The construction of 5,500 feet of overhead electrical line to replace the existing electrical feed to the treatment plant building.
- The purchase and installation of a 350 kW back-up generator at the treatment plant facility. If electrical power in the area is lost, water won't be.
- The installation of a new electrical motor control center within the treatment plant building including new wire and conduit to 21 separate sub-panels.

The Army built the existing 12" distribution line in the 1940's and is today the source of frequent breaks and loss of service (thus the



▲ New lighting system at the water plant is first step in overhauling some of the plant's electrical service.

Water Department's affectionate nickname of "water break alley"). Replacing this line will greatly enhance the system's reliability and reduce water loss, thus lowering the cost of water to our patrons and eliminating water outages and potential contamination risks from low pressures during repairs. The increased line size will provide adequate supply to De Soto and potentially to other regional water systems in the future.

The electrical improvements are needed for similar reasons. Currently the only electrical feed to the treatment plant is on poles and conductors that are owned and maintained by the City and are approximately 60 years old. These lines have caused several power outages in the past few years. Westar Energy, De Soto's electrical service provider, will construct the new power service to the plant and will own and operate the new line after construction, thus relieving the City of a maintenance burden. The back-up generator will provide redundancy in the event of a power outage.

The total project costs for this phase of system improvements is \$1,700,000. This cost

will be partly offset by a \$500,000 EPA grant for the waterline construction portion of the project. In addition, De Soto was awarded special bond financing through the Kansas Department of Commerce which will allow us to receive a subsidized interest rate on the bonds. This financing is projected to save the City approximately \$365,000 over the 30-year term of the bonds.

The City took bids for the generator and interior electrical work in July, and subsequently awarded a contract for that portion of the project to Ace Electrical of Topeka, Kansas in the amount of \$273,641. Ace has begun its work at the plant, scheduled to be complete in April, 2011. Westar Energy estimated a price of approximately \$67,000 for their work on the overhead electrical supply line, which is expected to be installed by the end of 2010. The replacement plans for the water distribution main are currently awaiting permit approvals from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. We expect to distribute the plans for bidding this fall, with a springtime construction schedule.

PICNIC ON THE (RIVER) BANK THANKS TO... GREAT AMERICAN BANK & HONEY CREEK DISPOSAL SERVICES

Thank you Great American Bank and Honey Creek Disposal Services!

The Great American Bank continues to demonstrate that it is indeed our local De Soto bank. Bank Manager Travis Hicks called up City Hall recently and said “We’d like to help make picnicking possible at Riverfest Park. Count us in as a sponsor for one of the picnic areas.” With the Bank’s civic contribution of \$3,150, the City is putting the final touches on the second picnic area along the banks of the Kansas River

And right before the deadline for this newsletter, Honey Creek Disposal Services (formerly Weldon Industries) called up and said they want to sponsor a picnic site as well. Honey Creek’s Kevin Weldon said that “people in De Soto have been great customers for us; we’d like to recognize that and give back in a way that people can enjoy.”

If you’re looking for a quiet spot for a family picnic or a peaceful place to hang out with a sandwich and a book, a local option is now available atop the Kansas River.

The Bank and Honey Creek responded to the City’s hopeful plan to partner up with the private sector to make three picnic and four bench areas possible along the River. The Bank and Honey Creek financed the purchase of the material and the City’s Parks & Recreation employees provided the labor to convert the River-bank site into a picnic area.

With the equal generosity of the De Soto Rotary Club, the public can take advantage of three picnic



▲ The completed picnic area provided by Great American Bank is now available for public use, along with the picnic area provided by De Soto Rotary.

areas at Riverfest. “But don’t despair,” says City Administrator Patrick Guilfoyle, “if the Bank, Honey Creek, and Rotary beat you to sponsorship; we still have four bench areas that await a partnership between private finances and public labor. We might be able to switch out a bench area with another picnic area if the sponsor so wishes.”

A picnic area can happen with a \$3,150 donation

while a bench area carries a price tag of \$2,850. The City will then clear an area along the River bank and improve it with a mulch bed, perimeter fencing, a picnic table or a park bench, and a plaque letting the public know who to thank for its civic pride and contribution. If you want to learn more about the program, give Guilfoyle a call at 913-583-1182, ext 120 or email him at pguilfoyle@desotoks.us.

WINTER WEATHER & SNOW PLOWS – HELPFUL HINTS

It’s not too early to begin thinking about the coming winter season and the driving challenges it will undoubtedly present to us all. With that in mind our Street Department snow removal team offers some helpful suggestions to make everyone safer during snow removal events.

Street snow removal is performed by priority, in the following order:

- Arterial Roadways
- Collector Streets
- Residential Streets

Residential streets are important; however, arterial and collector streets must be cleared first as they are where

the majority of the traffic travels.

Please do not park vehicles in roadways when snow accumulation is forecast. Vehicles parked in emergency snow routes are subject to tow when snow accumulation reaches two (2) inches. Snow plow trucks cannot drive through streets or effectively plow streets when vehicles are parked on the roadways.

Shovel the end of your driveways where they meet the street to the “downstream direction” of where snow plows will be travelling. This helps to minimize the amount of snow being plowed back onto driveways.

Do not shovel snow into the roadway. This becomes a driving safety hazard for everyone.

Give snow plows/salt trucks sufficient space on the roadway to maneuver; please stay back a minimum of 300 ft. Do not follow too closely. No one enjoys getting pelted by flying sand/salt that the trucks disperse on the roadways.

Please be reminded that landscaping within road right-of-ways is not permitted. This is dangerous to snow plow operations and the travelling public in hazardous weather conditions. On top of that, that

plowed snow is not going to help your landscaping’s survivability much either.

Trash cans should be kept back from the road edge so as not to be struck or knocked over by snow plows. That plowed snow has to go somewhere—trash cans set too close to the road edge will become easy victims.

Mailboxes should be adequately maintained to U.S. Postal regulation standards. If in doubt about those regulations, check with our local post master.

*Ron Creason
Street Superintendent*

FIDDLIN' AROUND AT CITY HALL

Looking for something to do on a Friday night, more specifically the third Friday of every month? Better yet, want to do something close to home that is FREE?

You may not realize it, but De Soto City Hall plays host to a monthly "jam session" of the De Soto chapter of the Kansas Oldtime Fiddlers, Pickers, and Singers (KOFPS). According to De Soto chapter President Doug Danner, "The purpose of KOFPS is to promote, encourage, and preserve old time music of all types. We accomplish our purpose by holding regular monthly programs where members exhibit their skills to the general public and each other." Music styles range from country to bluegrass, rock-and-roll, jazz and gospel. Bottom line, we are talking about guitars, violins, amplifiers, singers, and music of all kinds that produce foot-tapping pleasure.

Danner extends a hearty invitation to anyone curious about the monthly performances. Danner adds, "We appreciate being in such a great building for music programs. Each month we begin with a jam session at 3:00 PM, snacks or a meal at 5:00 PM and the program at 6:00 PM. There is no charge to listen and all are welcome." It's hard to find a friendlier and more tempting invitation to an afternoon and evening's entertainment. And be reminded that admission is not costly at all—it's FREE.

If you find yourself becoming a fan, Danner says that anyone can join KOFPS. A membership is only \$12 per year, \$1 for youth under 18. KOFPS is composed of 17 chapters across the state. The meeting schedule, location, and contact information for each chapter can be found at www.kofps.org as well as photos of various events. Danner

encourages you to call him at (913) 441-2713 for more information.

You may not realize the popularity of the KOFPS. The local De Soto chapter grew out of the growing pains of the organization. Back in the day, the Wyandotte chapter in Kansas City, Kansas started looking around for a new home. What they found was De Soto. However, those monthly sessions soon outgrew the clock; the 120 members played and sang well into the late hours of the night. Something had to give. That "something" turned about to be a new chapter spinning off in the form of the Leavenworth First City chapter in 2001. That outgrowth was soon followed by another spin-off with the Spring Hill chapter. The remaining group using De Soto City Hall's Community Center and gym became the De Soto chapter in 2001. The De Soto

chapter remains a strong and vibrant collection of 42 music-loving members.

The De Soto Community Center remains a popular place for KOFPS. De Soto has a strong connection to the KOFPS world. The De Soto chapter and the Community Center have served as hosts to the statewide KOFPS conventions not once, not twice, but three times—in 2004, 2007, and 2010.

But the KOFPS members don't always confine themselves to playing at the Community Center. As Danner points out, "Members of several local chapters performed at the De Soto Artfest in July of this year and will also be performing at Applefest in Kansas City, Kansas on September 25th."

Keep the third Friday of the month open to a new experience, Danner wants you to "come enjoy music, bring your friends, and make new friends."

HOP ON BOARD —IT'S EASY AND CHEAP

Have you seen The JO bus in De Soto? You might be wondering who can ride this bus, how much it costs and where it goes. Introducing the De Soto FlexRide. The De Soto FlexRide is a public bus service which began in 2006. This service is open to the public and provided by Johnson County Transit (JCT). The service is funded by JCT, the City of De Soto and a state grant. The De Soto FlexRide operates on Tuesday and Wednesday and costs \$1.00 per trip!

De Soto FlexRide will serve anyone in De Soto who needs a lift. If your car is broken down, you don't have a car, you are disabled and need a vehicle with a wheelchair lift or if you just want to save gas and mileage, let The JO pick you up! All JO vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts.

It's so easy to catch a ride. If you are at a designated bus stop – the driver will stop to pick you up. If you want to be picked up at a place other than a designated bus stop location, call 913-397-7300 to reserve your ride. Please be ready to give the dispatcher your starting address and the address of your destination. That's

right, the bus will come to the curb of your residence to pick you up or drop you off.

Tuesday travel destinations—the City of De Soto, Monticello Shops at K-7 & Shawnee Mission Parkway, Shawnee Station at I-435 & Shawnee Mission Parkway and Shawnee Mission Outpatient Pavilion at Prairie Star Parkway.

Wednesday travel destinations—the City of De Soto, College Point Medical Plaza at K-7 & College, Wal-Mart at K-7 & Santa Fe in Olathe, and Price Chopper at I-435 & Shawnee Mission Parkway.

For more information, check out the De Soto FlexRide brochure posted on the City's website at www.desotoks.us. Don't have a computer? No problem—call Nancy at 913-583-1182 and ask for the brochure. We will be happy to put one in the mail for you.

Can't wait for the mail and want an immediate answer to a question? Call Johnson County Transit at 913-782-2210.

Why not give The JO a try? For information all bus routes – visit their website at www.thejo.com. Happy riding – Getting you there is our BUSINESS!

*Annual Mayor's
Tree Lighting Event
& Visit from Santa*

Keep your eyes and ears open for exciting news concerning this year's lighting of the Mayor's Christmas tree and a visit from Santa during the Chamber of Commerce's annual event. This year the event will be held on Saturday, December 4th, 2010, at the De Soto Community Center at City Hall. The evening's festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. with the De Soto High School band and Madrigals musical performances.

An added attraction this year will be a Holiday Gift Bazaar which will open at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Center Gym. This will be a grand opportunity for you to do some holiday shopping. Also, if you are interested in being one of our holiday gift vendors, please contact Jennifer Marrs at 785.218.4941. There are limited spaces available, so don't wait to reserve your FREE vendor space.

Watch the Chamber of Commerce website at www.desotoks.org and the City of De Soto website at www.desotoks.us and the City's Facebook site for more information on this special holiday event.