



# The Stafford Newsletter



Volume 29, Issue 1

January 2008

## TOWN MEETING SET AT CIVIC CENTER FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, AT 7 P.M.

Each year City Council and staff take pride in presenting the status of the City, accomplishments during the previous year, expectations for the new year and hearing from Staffordians on matters of public interest affecting the City. This year's annual meeting has been set for Wednesday, January 23, 2008, at 7 p.m. at the Stafford Civic Center, 1415 Constitution Avenue.

As is the tradition, it will commence with the State of the City and Goals for 2008 Message by the Mayor, followed by presentations by Department Heads and advisors and concluding with comments and questions from the public. This year's meeting will focus attention on new zoning proposals under consideration, the newly passed burglar and fire alarm regulations and recommended enhancements and monuments along US 59 for better identification and an improved image.

Topics which will be discussed

include the following:

- a. City's economy, zero property tax, sales and other taxes, and fiscal responsibility;
- b. Zoning, enhanced building standards and new regulations for the US 90A and FM 1092 corridors;
- c. Police and fire protection, emergency management program, homeland security and new alarm regulations;
- d. Stafford Municipal School District, Houston Community College, educational opportunities and potential City/SMSD annexations;
- e. Stafford Centre and Stafford Civic Center;
- f. Municipal Court facilities;
- g. Parks;
- h. US 90A, Stafford/Staffordshire Road improvements, highways, streets, mobility, drainage and water;
- i. Garbage collection;
- j. Stafford Municipal Educational Television Station; and
- k. Other matters of interest affecting the City.

The meeting will be televised live on S-METV, Channel 16, Comcast Cable, with subsequent rebroadcasts.

City Council encourages you to attend and participate in this informative and interesting event.

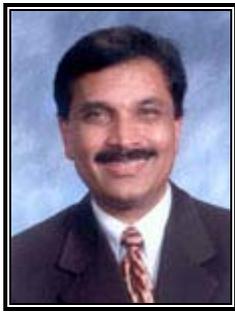
## NEW ZONING REGULATIONS FOR US 90A AND FM 1092 CORRIDORS UNVEILED

With the \$100 million of improvements on US 90A and this project's significant impact on FM 1092, City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission and Stafford Economic Development Corporation Board are endeavoring in a collaborative effort with the Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council and Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC), a consulting firm specializing in zoning matters, to establish enhanced building standards and improved zoning regulations for what has been designated as the US 90A and FM 1092 Corridors. About \$69,000 in contracts has been entered into with KKC to address these specific and highly visible areas of the City.

Virtually everyone involved in this process recognizes that much of Stafford's future depends upon the improvements made in these corridors.

A presentation at the Town Meeting (see story above) will focus on these new standards. In the words of Mayor Leonard Scarcella, "If Stafford is going to be the best it can be, it is imperative that City Council enact the necessary regulations and standards to maximize the City's potential."

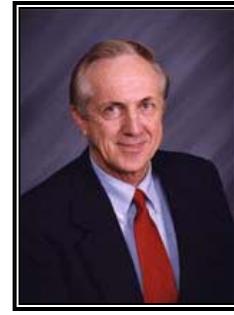
# JOINT CITY/STAFFORD MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTION SET FOR MAY 10, 2008



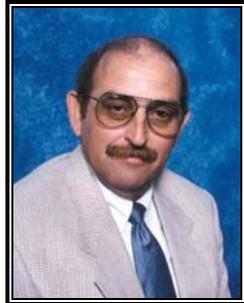
*Councilman Ken Mathew*



*Councilman Mike Sachs*



*Councilman Cecil Willis*



*Trustee Hector Acevedo*



*Trustee Cindy Hoelscher*

After a lawsuit, much debate and eventual reconciliation, the City and SMSD will hold a joint election on May 10, 2008, for the election of three City Councilmembers and two School Board Trustees. This May, the two-year Council terms of Ken Mathew, Mike Sachs and Cecil Willis will expire while the three-year terms for sitting Board Trustees Hector Acevedo and Cindy Hoelscher will be on the ballot.

All Election Day voting will be at City Hall. Early voting for both Council and School Board positions will be at the SMSD Administration Building this year as well as at City Hall.

In view of the extraordinary amount of discussion that occurred over the previous year surrounding this election, this joint election promises to attract significant public interest. Important election dates are:

**February 9** – First day for filing application for place on ballot. First day for filing declaration of write-in candidacy.

**March 10** – Last day for filing application for place on ballot. Must be received by 5 p.m.

**March 11** – First day to accept application for voting by mail ballot.

**March 17** – Last day for a write-in candidate to declare candidacy by 5 p.m.

**April 10** – Last day for submitting voter registration application in time to vote at the election.

**April 28** – First day for early voting by personal appearance at either City Hall or SMSD Administration Building.

**May 2** – Last day to receive application by mail for ballot to be voted by mail by 5 p.m.

**May 6** – Last day of regular early voting by personal appearance at either City Hall or SMSD Administration Building.

**May 10** – Election Day. Polls are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. All voting at City Hall.

The election will be called by both the City Council and the School Board at one of their respective meetings in February.

Any registered voter of Stafford interested in serving as an election worker on Election Day, for early voting April 28 – May 6, or both, is urged to contact Ms. Bonnie Baiamonte, the Election Official, at 281-261-3902 for more information.

## TREE LIMB PICKUP

Monday, February 4

Monday, April 7



## CITY OFFICES CLOSED

Monday, February 18



Fri day, March 21

# STAFFORD CENTRE HAS EXCITING ARRAY OF COMING ATTRACTIONS



Mayor Scarcella presented Ray Price with a key to the City of Stafford at his performance on December 1, 2007, and thanked him for being the Stafford Centre's first three-peat performer to grace the Theatre.

As the Stafford Centre continues to present an outstanding array of performances and functions, Staffordians as well as people throughout the entire area have come to look to the forthcoming schedule. Much can be gleaned from the diversity of the schedule being presented. Nothing could better illustrate this than the forthcoming attractions:

Country music legend **Mickey Gilley**, with 17 No. 1 hits, on Friday, January 18, 2008.

**Kansas**, one of the most musically distinctive rock and roll bands in America, on Saturday, January 19, 2008, is celebrating the 30-year anniversary of their popular classic *Point of No Return*.

"Follow the Yellow Brick Road".....all the way to the Stafford Centre on February 1-3, 2008, as the Stafford High School and Middle School Choirs present the all-time favorite musical ***The Wizard of Oz***. This production is under the direction of Ms. Ladricca Price, Stafford Choir Director. (See related story on the next page.)

**The UP Experience** is a premier program designed for people who want to stay abreast of key developments shaping our world. This program will be presented at the Theatre on Thursday, February 7, 2008. The

program will feature 20 presentations by 20 renowned experts all being 20 minutes in length. Among some of the more notable presenters will be Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple, and Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Blink* and *Tipping Point*, among others. This star studded program is designed to educate, inspire, entertain and challenge. Tickets for the all-day event are \$1,000 per person. This includes a catered meal at the Stafford Centre.

Grammy winner **B J Thomas**, along with The Original Triumphs, on Saturday, February 16, 2008.

Fort Bend Theatre's production of ***Beauty and the Beast***, an outstanding classic which has thrilled audiences for generations, will be presented by the award-winning Fort Bend Theatre's group. There will be performances on Friday evening, February 28, and Saturday evening, March 1, and a matinee on Sunday, March 2. Free tickets for up to 300 Staffordians for each performance will be available at City Hall or at the Fort Bend Theatre's office located at 2815 North Main in Stafford.

The legendary two-time Grammy winner **Dionne Warwick** on Thursday, April 10, 2008.

Call the Stafford Centre at 281-208-6900, or access their website, [www.staffordcentre.com](http://www.staffordcentre.com), for more information.

# **SMSD BOARD AND CITY COUNCIL BEGIN DISCUSSION ON SMSD 2008-2009 BUDGET**

Over the past three years, a strong bone of contention in the SMSD Board of Trustees and City Council working together for approval of the Superintendent's annual budget has been the late start of the process. In prior years, nearly 80% of the budget funds especially in the area of personnel have been committed before the initial discussions began. In order to avoid that circumstance and to get a head start on the budget process for the next school year, the SMSD Board and City Council will be meeting in joint session to discuss comments and

proposals from Superintendent H. D. Chambers and Business Manager Lucas Janda on the components of the 2008-2009 budget and tax rates.

This meeting will be held in the SMSD Boardroom on Thursday, January 31, 2008, at 7 p.m. It will be televised live, with rebroadcasts on S-METV, Channel 16, Comcast.

The public is encouraged to attend for a first-hand insight into the development of this budget and related tax rates as well as the process and timetables which will be established.

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# **CITY EXPANDS FUNDING FOR SAT AND ACT COLLEGE PREPARATORY COURSES**

Upon the request of SMSD Superintendent H. D. Chambers, City Council has agreed to expand its funding from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year for courses preparing prospective college students for the SAT and ACT exams. In the past, the City employed an online system with Kaplan for this process. The program was originally recommended several years ago by Councilman Mike Sachs.

At the final meeting of 2007, Mr. Chambers presented Ms. Megan Dorsey who will be teaching 64 students in two class sections at SMSD to elevate their understanding of the test and the most effective way of

approaching it. This program not only is available to SMSD students but to all students who are citizens of Stafford desirous of taking this course. Any student who is not enrolled at SMSD should contact either the SMSD administration office or City Hall for information to begin taking this course.

The course will begin in January and run through March. It will consist of seven sessions. City Council is very pleased to be able to provide this funding to enhance the educational opportunities of our young people by affording them the best chance of gaining acceptance to the college of their choice.

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# **CITY CO-SPONSORS SMSD CHOIR PRODUCTION OF WIZARD OF OZ**

Once again, the City will be co-sponsoring and providing substantial funding for the SMSD Choir's annual theatrical production. This year the Choir, which includes grades K-12, will present the delightful musical classic, *Wizard of Oz*. Ms. Ladicca Price will direct more than 150 SMSD students in this enchanting play.

City Council has authorized \$17,450 for use of the Stafford Centre/

Performing Arts Theatre for rehearsals and performances January 28 through February 3. Also, the Stafford Choir Boosters will contribute \$15,000, and SMSD has appropriated \$6,000.

You are strongly encouraged to support these talented youngsters through your attendance. Stafford citizens can get free tickets, while they last, to performances February 1-3, by calling City Hall at 281-261-3900.



# SMSD SPOTLIGHT

Winter 2007-08

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25 YEARS

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

**A**s we enter the second semester of the 2007-08 school year, I want to address a very critical time for every SMSD student. Though we stress to our staff and students that every day we have with our students is important, the state assessments, such as the TAKS and other forms of testing, will begin during the spring semester and occupy a great deal of instructional time. Please know that SMSD teaches the instructional objectives under the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and by doing so, prepares our students for various TAKS tests. However, I want to strongly encourage all parents of an SMSD student to talk to their child about the importance of each TAKS test. It is usually not difficult to convince a high school junior how important the Exit Level TAKS tests are but students in lower grades sometimes do not comprehend the significance of the TAKS test they are taking.

In order to assist parents in discussing the relevance and importance of the TAKS tests, please use the following points as a guide:

1. The TAKS assessment provides an opportunity for every student to be measured and to determine where each student needs additional instruction or support.
2. The TAKS assessment provides an opportunity for the teacher and campus staff to determine which subject areas, instructional skills, and specific content skills must be improved. If the results are an accurate reflection of our students' knowledge and skills, then that data is used to help every teacher and staff member improve.

3. In Grades 3, 5 and 8 students must demonstrate mastery in reading or math to be considered for promotion to the next grade level. Grade 11 students must pass the Exit Level TAKS test in English, math, science, and social studies in order to be graduated from high school.
4. Each TAKS test closely mirrors the higher order thinking skills required on college entrance exams such as the SAT, ACT, etc.
5. The results of each TAKS assessment on every campus is used by the State of Texas and federal government to determine if campuses (and overall district) are performing at the levels required by each entity. (While I have serious concerns with the process used to determine a campus or district's ranking by both the state and federal government, I do not discount the significance these rankings have when campuses or districts are being judged by the local community.)

Again, I encourage all parents to continue stressing the importance of preparing for the TAKS exams that each of your children may take. If you do not have students in school, I encourage you to provide your resources or services to a campus or student. If you are interested in becoming a student mentor, please contact my office. Thank you for the opportunity to serve Stafford Municipal School District as superintendent.



**H.D. CHAMBERS**

## Texas Education Agency and Testing

The Student Assessment Division of the Texas Education Agency manages and oversees the development, administration, scoring, and analysis of the statewide assessment program which includes the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the State-Development Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II), the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE), and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

As mandated by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999, the TAKS, administered beginning in the 2002-03 school year, measures the statewide curriculum in reading at Grades 3-9; in writing at Grades 4 and 7; in English Language Arts (ELA) at Grades 10 and 11; in mathematics at Grades 3-11; in science at Grades 5, 10, and 11; and social studies at Grades 8, 10, and 11. The Spanish TAKS is administered at Grades 3 through 6. Satisfactory performance on the TAKS at Grade 11 is prerequisite to a high school diploma.

The RPTE was field tested in Spring 1999 and implemented in Spring 2000. These tests are designed to measure annual growth in the English reading proficiency of second language learners, and are used along with English and Spanish TAKS to provide a comprehensive assessment system for limited English proficient (LEP) students. LEP students in Grades 3-12 are required to take the RPTE until they achieve a rating of advanced.

TAKS-M is an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards designed for students receiving special education services who meet participation requirements. TAKS-M has been designed to meet federal requirements mandated under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. According to federal regulations, all students will be assessed on grade-level curriculum which includes those students receiving special education services. TAKS-M covers the same grade-level content as TAKS, but TAKS-M tests have been modified in format (larger font, fewer items per page, etc.) and test design (fewer answer choices, simpler vocabulary and sentence structure, etc.). Two percent of the tested population can count as proficient for Adequate Yearly Progress calculations beginning in 2007-08. The SDAA II or Locally Determined Alternate Assessment (LDAA) will no longer be

## In This Issue

Today's students must pass many tests throughout their education career. From the time they reach third grade until they are graduated from high school, SMSD students are administered state standardized assessments that hold them and the school district accountable on the local, state, and national level. In order to leave our public education environment, students must undergo another set of assessments to enter college. It is important to know that our students are competing against other students from across the United States for admission to college, financial scholarships, financial aid, etc. This issue of the Spotlight is dedicated to providing information and support to all parents as we prepare students for whatever assessment they may take.

Also in this issue we are providing an update on the 2006 Bond Referendum construction. Our projects are moving along and our students are benefiting from the results. As you will see, many of the projects have been completed below the projected budget. A tremendous amount of credit goes to Daniel Munoz, Director of Maintenance and Transportation and Jimmy Webster, Maintenance and Facilities Supervisor.

administered. TAKS-M may be an appropriate assessment for some students who previously took those assessments. Standards for TAKS-M are set by the state based on the Spring 2008 test data.

The TAAS measures the statewide curriculum in reading, mathematics and writing at the exit level. TAAS will remain the graduation requirement for students who were enrolled in Grade 9 or higher on January 1, 2001.

Source: [www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/about/overview.html](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/about/overview.html)

## Getting Ready - Being Prepared

SMSD expects all students to be successful and to achieve all their goals. To help them meet their expectations in the many assessments they encounter, we offer tutorials or preparatory classes focused on the appropriate area. For instance, Middle School offers after-school tutorials four days a week. High School students may get an extra boost in subject areas, for assignments, or for TAKS assessments from individual teachers and tutoring sessions. Juniors who are preparing to take the SAT assessment may enroll in a series of preparatory classes for the March administration.

The following is additional student support for assessments. We encourage students to take advantage of these offerings. Please contact your child's campus administrator or counselor for

specific information on these offerings.

- In-school tutorials
- After-school group tutorials
- Teacher-student tutorials
- Mentoring tutorials
- Web-based SAT/ACT preparatory program
- College Prep LLC

The City of Stafford funds an SAT/ACT preparatory course for high school juniors. This is an intense 8-1/2 week classroom preparatory course for the March 1 administration provided by a reputable SAT/ACT instructor. Contact Ms. Rebecca Benedict (281-261-9200 x3220) for more information.

### 2007-08 Testing Calendar - remaining dates

<b>Grade 3</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS and TAKS-M Reading; TAKS Sp Reading
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 28:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 29:	TAKS Math, Sp Math and TAKS-M; TAKS LAT Reading
Apr 30:	TAKS Reading and Sp Reading Retest
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests
<b>Grade 4</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS Writing, Sp Writing; TAKS-M Writing Field Test
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 28:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 29:	TAKS Math, Sp Math and TAKS-M; TAKS LAT Reading
Apr 30:	TAKS Reading, Sp Reading; TAKS-M Reading
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests
<b>Grade 5</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS and TAKS-M Reading; TAKS Sp Reading
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 07:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 08:	TAKS and TAKS-M Math; TAKS Sp Math
Apr 10:	Makeup for Apr 07 and Apr 08 tests
Apr 29:	TAKS LAT Reading
Apr 30:	TAKS Reading and Sp Reading Retest
May 01:	TAKS Science and Sp Science; TAKS-M Science
May 02:	TAKS LAT Science
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests
May 13:	TAKS Math and Sp Math Retest
May 15:	Makeup for May 13 tests
<b>Grade 6</b>	
Apr 28:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 29:	TAKS Math, Sp Math and TAKS-M; TAKS LAT Reading
Apr 30:	TAKS Reading, Sp Reading; TAKS-M Reading
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests
<b>Grade 7</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS Writing; TAKS-M Writing Field Test
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 28:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 29:	TAKS and TAKS-M Math; TAKS LAT Reading
Apr 30:	TAKS Reading; TAKS-M Reading
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests

<b>Grade 8</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS and TAKS-M Reading
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 07:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 08:	TAKS and TAKS-M Math
Apr 10:	Makeup for Apr 07 and Apr 08 tests
Apr 29:	TAKS LAT Reading
Apr 30:	TAKS Reading Retest
May 01:	TAKS Science; TAKS-M Science
May 02:	TAKS Social Studies, LAT Science; TAKS-M Social Studies Field Tests
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests
May 13:	TAKS Math Retest
May 15:	Makeup for May 13 tests
<b>Grade 9</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS Reading; TAKS-M Writing Field Test
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
May 01:	TAKS Math; TAKS-M Math Field Test
<b>Grade 10</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS and TAKS-M ELA
Mar 06:	TAKS ELA Makeup
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 28:	TAKS LAT Math
Apr 29:	TAKS and TAKS-M Math; TAKS LAT ELA
May 01:	TAKS Science; TAKS-M Science
May 02:	TAKS and TAKS-M Social Studies, LAT Science; TAKS-M Social Studies Field Tests
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests
<b>Exit Level</b>	
Mar 04:	TAKS ELA; TAKS-M ELA Field Test
Mar 08:	Makeup for Mar 04 tests
Apr 29:	TAKS ELA Retest
Apr 30:	TAKS Math; TAKS-M Field Test; TAKS Math Retest
May 01:	TAKS Science; TAKS-M Science Field Test; TAKS Science Retest
May 02:	TAKS Social Studies; TAKS-M Social Studies Field Tests; TAKS Social Studies Retest
May 03:	TAKS Makeup for Apr 28-30 tests

## Construction Bond Update

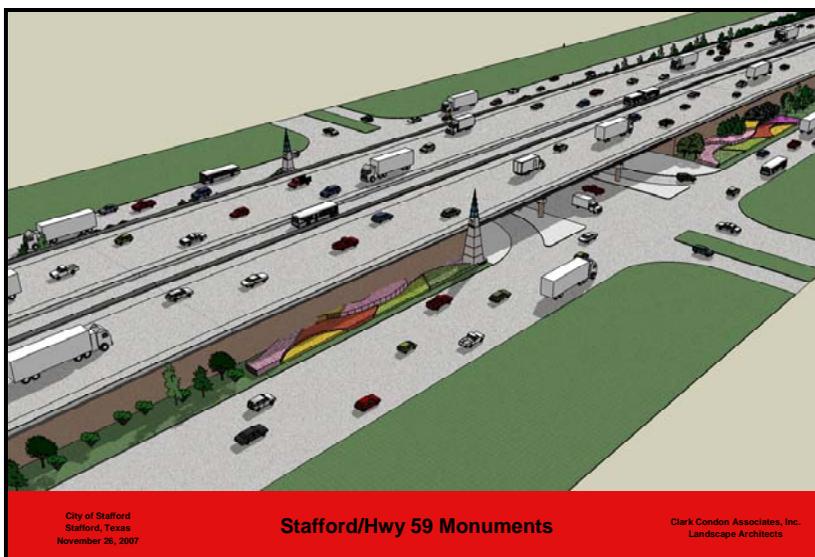
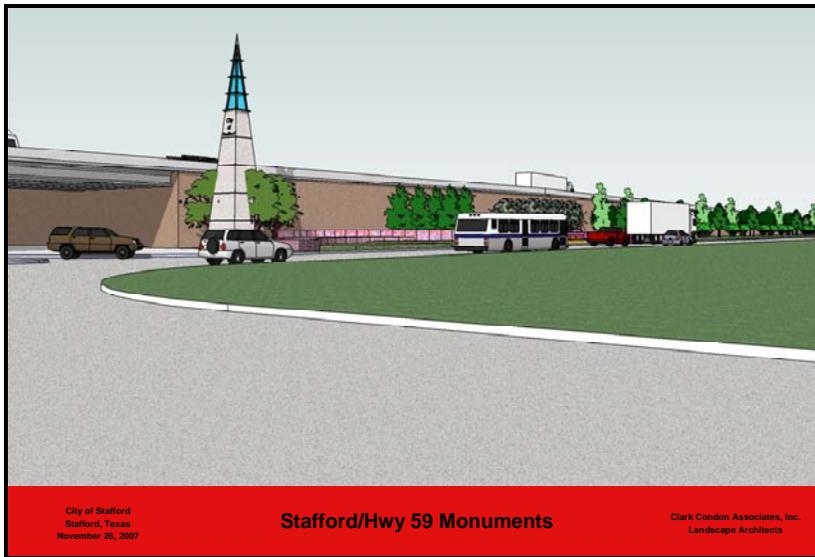
In November 2006, Stafford voters approved a \$15,050,000 bond referendum for multiple SMSD facility renovations, repairs, and upgrades. It also included the possibility of a new cafeteria for Primary and Middle Schools, contingent upon the availability of funds after other projects are complete. At this time, the funds necessary for the additional cafeteria are in place. The following information is an update on the projects, original approved budgeted amounts, actual costs, and balance of budgeted amount (saved or loss). With the exception of

technology costs, every project approved through the 2006 Bond Referendum is either at or below original budget estimates. Through thorough value engineering and paying attention to only those facility needs that are truly required, the district projects to enjoy a balance of approximately \$2 million to be used on additional facility and capital needs. The district will be evaluating those needs and making the appropriate recommendations to the Board of Trustees for future expenditures. More information will be available in the future.

Project	Original Budget	Actual Cost	Balance Saved	Update
Central Plant Renovation	\$3,200,000	\$3,017,437	\$182,563	Complete
Primary and Elementary Foundation Repair	\$2,938,557	\$2,770,000	\$168,557	Complete
High School Gym Foundation Repairs	\$247,577	\$147,577	\$100,000	Complete
Elementary Science Labs	\$45,000	\$28,000	\$17,000	Complete
Primary and Elementary Playground	\$241,500	\$191,500	\$50,000	Complete; additional playground equipment to be provided
Primary, Elementary, Middle, High Schools' Fire Alarm Retrofit	\$569,000	\$523,000	\$46,000	In progress: completion date August 2008.
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,241,634</b>	<b>\$6,727,514</b>	<b>\$514,120</b>	
Technology	\$320,000	\$329,000	\$(9,000)	Complete
Roof Repairs	\$348,203	\$269,500	\$78,703	In progress
Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$200,000	85% complete
Primary, Elementary, Middle, High Interior Repairs	\$1,600,000	*	**\$600,000	Primary complete; remainder complete by August 2008
High School Science Lab Conversions	\$150,000	Unknown	Unknown	To be complete by August 2008
Cafeteria	\$3,500,000	Unknown	Unknown	Currently in design
Professional Fees	\$898,144	\$438,000	**\$150,000	Architectural Consultant Fees
Contingency	\$492,019	\$0	\$492,019	Estimated savings
<b>AGGREGATE PROJECT TOTALS</b>	<b>\$15,050,000</b>	<b>\$13,024,158</b>	<b>\$2,025,842</b>	

\* Expected to be under budget due to current market. \*\* Projected

# MONUMENTS AND LANDSCAPING APPROVED TO ENHANCE US 59



The erection of the proposed US 59 City Identity Monuments is progressing. At the November and December 2007 meetings, both the SEDC Board and City Council approved the preliminary concept and design for the new monuments.

The design calls for a 55-foot tall pyramid structure that will include the City's name and a glowing lantern cap, which will comprise the top 20 feet of the structure. It will be made of metal and polycarbonate panels and will be illuminated by a special LED lighting system. The monument height was established so that the lantern cap and City name will be visible from the freeway overpasses and frontage roads. The approximate cost of each monument is \$100,000. At this time, the City is considering installing four monuments along the US 59 corridor. The plan is to locate a pair of monuments at both ends of the City limits along the thoroughfare. The monuments will help identify the City

limits of Stafford while adding an aesthetic design element to the area. Final design details and exact locations are still being developed and coordinated with the Texas Department of Transportation.

Additionally, a landscape plantings contract was recently awarded to Westco Grounds Maintenance Company. These improvements will include the installation of decorative landscape plantings and an irrigation system at the West Airport and Kirkwood Road intersections as well as the median areas in front of the Fountains Shopping Center and Techniplex Drive. The Texas Department of Transportation will also be installing various trees along the medians in between the major intersections as part of its reforestation program. This program should begin this spring.

When complete, this project will add a new dynamic to the image and identification of Stafford along US 59.



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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

## **COUNCIL APPROVES NEW BURGLAR AND FIRE ALARM ORDINANCE**



Chief Bonny Krahn, who is the Director over the Police and Fire Departments, presented City Council with information illustrating the inordinate amount of false alarms for both fire and police calls in the City and the significant cost associated with them. He further furnished information illustrating fees and charges of neighboring cities for alarm permit fees and false alarm charges. The most compelling fact in the discussion was that over \$6 million is spent annually for police and fire protection in the City and that more than two out of every three calls for both police and fire protection are the result of false alarms.

Before the adoption of the new ordinance, both the initial registration and annual renewal fees were \$1. Property owners were allowed six false burglar alarms and six false fire alarms each year before penalty fees were assessed. After six false burglar alarms, the penalty fee was \$35 for each while after six false fire alarms, the penalty fee was \$200 for each.

After extensive discussion and thorough review of the information and proposed new ordinance, Mayor Leonard Scarcella urged Council to consider adoption and, thus, reduce the tremendous amount of time and

expense incurred by police officers and firefighters in dealing with false alarms.

Councilman John Rose placed his recommendation in the form of a motion, which Council approved. Under the new ordinance initial registration of a home or business alarm is \$25. Annual renewals are \$15. False alarms for police and fire response will allow three each year at no charge. In the event that a home or business has four to seven false police alarms, the charge will be \$50 per call while four or more false fire alarms would cost the property owner \$175 per call. After seven false alarm calls for the police, the charge would be \$100 while any false alarm fire calls exceeding seven will result in a charge of \$250.

False alarm calls may be challenged in a two-step process.

This ordinance takes effect immediately. Home and business owners will have until the end of January in which to register their alarms or, as the case may be, to renew the alarm. Under the ordinance, all burglar and/or fire alarms must be registered.

The Burglary/Fire Alarm Registration and Renewal Application and Fee Schedule can be obtained by calling 281-261-3950 or from the City's website, [www.cityofstafford.com](http://www.cityofstafford.com).