



# The Stafford Newsletter



Volume 30, Issue 2

April 2009

## Motorists Fascinated with New Underpasses and Interior Island Streets

# FINALLY!!! US 90A OFFICIALLY OPENS



Mayor, City Council, City staff, TxDOT representatives and other dignitaries cut ribbon to officially open new Stafford/Staffordshire Road underpass on March 10

After 10 years of planning, negotiating, constructing and \$100 million, the much acclaimed US 90A highway - with underpasses at FM 1092 and Stafford/Staffordshire Road, an overpass above Dulles/Kirkwood and realignment of the railroad track - is a reality. An anticipated 120,000 vehicles a day will be traveling along and traversing this new mobility gem.

The interior streets surrounding the Island add an impressive dimension to the project. In spite of the significant landscaping that has been

done, the City will expend another \$4 million for additional landscaping along this corridor with funds to be furnished by the Stafford Economic Development Corporation.

The Mayor and City Council wish to express their deep appreciation to the citizens of Stafford and other motorists for their patience and endurance while this TxDOT and City project was being constructed.

Based on comments from the public, the wait and inconvenience were well worth it.



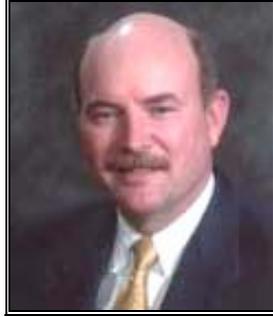
Mayor Scarcella addresses gathering. Shown left to right: Gabe Johnson, TxDOT coordinator for the project; Lawrence Vaccaro, director of the City's efforts; Mayor; Councilman Jeff Smith; Councilman Ken Mathew; Councilman Wen Guerra; Councilwoman-Designate Felecia Evans-Smith in background.

**Felecia Evans-Smith to Assume Seat of Retiring John Rose**

**CITY COUNCIL ELECTION CANCELED**



Mayor Leonard Scarcella



Councilman Jeff Smith



Councilman Wen Guerra



Councilwoman-Designate  
Felecia Evans-Smith

Mayor Pro Tem John Rose chose not to seek re-election and will retire from City Council. This opened the likelihood of a contest for his vacant position. However, only Felecia Evans-Smith, who sought a seat on City Council previously, chose to file. Thus, with the passing of the deadlines for filing as a candidate, incumbents Jeff Smith and Wen Guerra together with Ms. Evans-Smith became entitled to the three Councilmen positions.

Mayor Leonard Scarcella also filed for re-election. No one chose to challenge him so he, too, will be granted another two-year term.

The election set for May 9, 2009, will be officially canceled by City Council clearing the way for Scarcella, Smith, Guerra and Evans-Smith to be

sworn in to their respective offices in mid-May.

John Rose, who has served as a Councilman since 1997, leaves with



numerous accomplishments. Most notable has been his untiring effort to promote the parks system for the City, serving more than a decade as

Chair of the Parks Committee. As a result, Gordon Fountain Lake Park, Rubin Park and Vaccaro Manor Park were built.

Additionally, John is recognized for his expertise in sales tax matters and has been invaluable in advocating and protecting the sales tax revenues of the City.

**AD HOC COMMITTEE ASSISTS WITH ZONING**

An Ad Hoc Committee consisting of seven citizens has been working with City Council since February to address non-conforming site improvements within the newly designated Island and Primary Corridor zones.

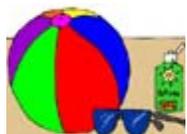
A consulting firm, Bureau Veritas, has been retained to assist the group

with their studies on this complex issue. Progress has been slow, but the dialogue has been constructive.

The Committee and Council meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 4:30 p.m. The meetings are being televised live, with rebroadcasts, on S-METV.

**CITY POOL SETS NEW RATES AND SCHEDULE**

For the entire 2009 season, Stafford residents can swim for just \$10. Daily passes for non-residents are: 5 years–adult, \$4; 2–4 years, \$2; under 2 years, free. Pool parties cost only \$75 for 4 hours. For more information, call 281-499-5763.

POOL SCHEDULE	SWIM LESSONS	STINGRAYS SWIM TEAM
<p>Opens: Saturday, May 23                      Closes: Tuesday, September 8                      Open weekends only from:                      Mid-August – September 7                      Closed Mondays (non-holidays)                      Tuesday – Friday, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.                      Saturday, 12 noon – 8 p.m.                      Sunday, 1 p.m. – 8 p.m.</p>	<p>Morning and evening                      Ages 4 and up                      Sign up begins:                      Saturday, May 23                      For information, call:                      281-499-5763                      281-499-8783                      281-208-6902</p>	<p>May 1 until mid-July                      Early registration in April                      For information, call:                      Leanne Mazoch                      281-413-3093</p> 

# CITY SUPPORTING MAJOR LEGISLATION

The City in conjunction with SMSD is promoting a bill sponsored by Representative Rob Eissler in the House and Senator Dan Patrick in the Senate which would exempt SMSD from Robin Hood payments to the State of Texas.

The bill is predicated on the following: 20% or more of the students in pre-K through 5 are classified as students of limited English proficiency; 50% or more of the total students are economically disadvantaged and have family incomes below the federal poverty level; 65% or more of the students in pre-K through 5 are economically disadvantaged; the district has a student mobility rate of 25% or higher; 75% or more of the total students are minority students; and all or a portion of the district is in a county with more than 1½ million residents. SMSD meets all of these criteria.

It would allow SMSD to spend the money that it receives from local property taxes exclusively on Stafford students rather than sending an estimated \$6 million to the State this year alone. The City is funding the cost of the lobbyist for this effort.

A second piece of legislation the City is advocating pertains to protecting sales tax revenues.

Representative Charlie Howard is sponsoring a bill that is aimed at preventing the type of reallocation by the State Comptroller in recent years which resulted in the City having to pay back over \$3 million in previously received taxes. This would greatly assist Stafford and other cities that have the many burdens associated with shipping inventory to purchasers throughout the state and nation.

Furthermore, it would make it a crime for anyone filing a sales tax return with major errors in the return.

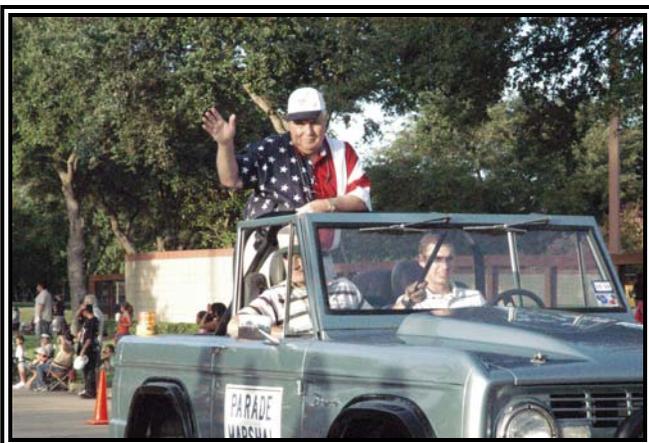
Another critical facet of this bill is limiting the time that a company can be awarded a refund to one year. In the event the Comptroller would propose a refund on an amount exceeding \$100,000, the City would be entitled to all pertinent details of the claim and, if the City disagreed, would be able to challenge the refund in court.

Both bills are likely to meet stiff resistance but are very important to the City, its citizens and especially our children.

The legislative session ends in May. Assuming passage of these bills, they would then come under the scrutiny of Governor Rick Perry.

You will be apprised of the outcome of these legislative efforts in the July issue of the *Newsletter*.

## JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> ACTIVITIES ARE BEING PLANNED



2008 Parade Marshal John Ferro waves to the crowd

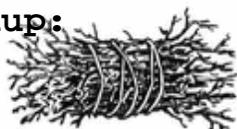
Preparations for the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Independence Day celebration have begun. Favorite among the activities are the children's rides, street dance and hayride which will be the major events initiated as always by the parade on Friday, July 3.

An impressive fireworks display beginning at 9 p.m. on Saturday, July 4, will wrap up the big event.

If you would like to be involved, call 281-499-5763 for information.

### Tree limb pickup:

Monday, April 6  
Monday, June 1



### City offices will be:

Good Friday, Friday, April 10  
Memorial Day, Monday, May 25





City of Stafford  
2610 South Main  
Stafford, TX 77477

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**Event Begins at 9 a.m. on that Saturday**

## **ANNUAL SPRING CLEAN UP SET FOR APRIL 18**

The City of Stafford, along with Keep Texas Beautiful, will hold its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual City Wide Pride Spring Clean Up, a part of the Great American Clean Up, on Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. The event is sponsored by the City and many local businesses. More than 300 volunteers will participate by walking the streets picking up trash.



Trophy awarded to celebrants for outstanding effort

Participants will receive t-shirts and be treated to lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the courtyard at City Hall. Trophies will be awarded in various categories. A few lucky persons will find money hidden along the streets.

Residents will be able to place heavy trash at their curbside for pickup that day.

The City's waste collector, WCA, will send their trucks throughout the neighborhoods. Residents should have heavy trash placed by the curb no later than 7 a.m. on Saturday. WCA will NOT accept paint, chemicals batteries or car parts. Refrigerators and freezers will be accepted, but must be drained of coolants.

Lumber, plywood, small tree limbs and other such material must be cut into four-foot lengths and tied into bundles. The City will pick up trees and limbs.

Old automobile batteries can be dropped off at Stafford Auto Supply located at 2424 South Main.

City crews will canvass the neighborhoods and pick up rimless tires, which should be placed at the curb early Saturday morning separate from other heavy trash. Anyone with a large number of tires should call 281-261-3941 to make special arrangements for disposal. Firestone Tire & Service Center, located at 515 FM 1092, again will serve as the depository for these tires. However, they will not accept tires without the City's prior approval.

Join us in brightening up Stafford. If you would like to volunteer for the clean up or to assist City staff with the effort, please call 281-261-3940.