



The Stafford Newsletter



SPECIAL EDITION

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STAFFORD SURVIVES HISTORY MAKING NATURAL DISASTER

STAFFORD SURVIVES HISTORIC HURRICANE HARVEY



Damage to a residence in Stafford

Governor Greg Abbott declared that Hurricane Harvey was “the worst disaster in Texas History” The National Weather Service and the National Hurricane Center have both agreed that Hurricane Harvey produced the heaviest rainstorm in the U.S. history. Others have labeled it as an 800 year storm that flooded more than tens of thousands of homes in the region. John Sharpe, The Chancellor of Texas A & M, was

appointed as the Commissioner to oversee all of Texas recovery efforts in this most costly storm with \$200 billion of damages.

Coming ashore just before midnight on Friday, August 25, 2017 this epic tropical depression continued to vacillate between dumping dozens of inches of rain on shore, bouncing back into the Gulf of Mexico and moving eastwardly through Houston and into Louisiana. So great was the damage that homes and businesses were inundated to an extent that had never before been experienced.

Despite Stafford having come through this disastrous event, as well as any city, by surviving the over 39 inches of rain, two tornadoes and very high winds, the ultimate amount of damage was most substantive. By comparison to our neighboring cities, which evacuated thousands of families and saw homes and businesses completely inundated by the tremendous flooding, we did very well. When the waters receded we in Stafford had to acknowledge how fortunate we were to have overcome this most epic of events and how much better we were than so many others.

Mayor Leonard Scarcella signed a Declaration of Disaster, shortly before the storm made landfall. In response, the City took a most aggressive approach in its efforts to protect the citizens and their property. All City personnel, first responders as well as other staff members, remained on duty throughout the nine day ordeal to assist our residents with their needs.

Missouri City Estates, portions of Vaccaro Manor and some other areas of the City had some water in their homes, while the Woodland West /Crestmont area was heavily damaged by the two tornadoes which hit on Saturday night. When President Donald Trump came to the NRG Stadium in Houston with representatives of FEMA, Congressman Al Green delivered to the President’s staff a detailed list of damages incurred by our City.

Fort Bend County Judge Robert Hebert declared the opening of a shelter at the Stafford Municipal School District. This shelter was managed mainly by Fort Bend County and the National Guard. It provided refuge for many in the area who had substantial losses seeking the benefits of this facility. Only a few Stafford residents sought this assistance.

During this episode the City remained crime free and there was no looting of homes or businesses, in fact the outpouring of appreciation for the City from local businesses and the community was overwhelming. Deliveries by many Stafford residents of food, hygiene supplies, and other helpful items to our staff in appreciation of their outstanding efforts for the duration of the storm was most gratifying.



SMSD Campus

BUDGET FOR FY 2017-2018 ADOPTED

By a 4-3 vote the City Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 budget for the City and the Stafford Economic Development Corporation which provides for \$44 million in spending. Again as has been the case for the past 23 years, the highly recognized beneficial attributes of a **zero property tax** has set Stafford clearly apart from other cities in the State.

Council made significant additions of over \$2 million to the Mayor's proposed budget, including numerous personnel and equipment outlays. In the end four new Police Officers, two new Fire Marshals, three new Firefighters and substantial equipment and facilities got City Council approval. The Mayor's budget provided for drainage improvements in Missouri City Estates, Vaccaro Manor section 4 as well as an important drainage upgrade in the Sugar Creek subdivision. Other components addressed contained was construction of a new fire station on Mula Road and a police facility expansion next to the existing station. These major projects will require debt funding established from Certificates of Obligation. A major move towards quality of life is the introduction by City Council of a Residential Rental Program, which will be administered by the Building and Zoning Department. These new regulations will necessitate two persons to coordinate inspections of residential rental units in the City. The purpose is to prevent blight, ensure tenants are living in safe conditions and the maintenance and enhancement of rental homes in our City.

Concerned with assuring adequate fund balances, City Council placed a moratorium on hiring new employees and purchasing major equipment pending a careful review of our cash reserves.

TWO BUSINESSES OPEN THEIR DOORS ON US 90A

DAIRY QUEEN



In August of this year, two new businesses launched along US90A Island Corridor. The businesses are Dairy Queen and Circle K Convenience Store.

Both of these businesses were constructed with facades which provide for a classv. eleoquent look in what is known as the Island Corridor.

CIRCLE K



Each business has reported good customer traffic, which not only enhances the City's revenues, but also provides for noticeable business activity in the area.

As a necessary component to enticing businesses to locate on this highly travelled route, the City has focused on the revitalization of the Island Corridor. Citizens and travelers alike will be provided with more shopping and eating opportunities as the Island Corridor develops.

Dairy Queen is situated on the Southwest corner of US90A and the Promenade, and the Circle K Convenience Store is located on the Southeast corner of US90A and Avenue E

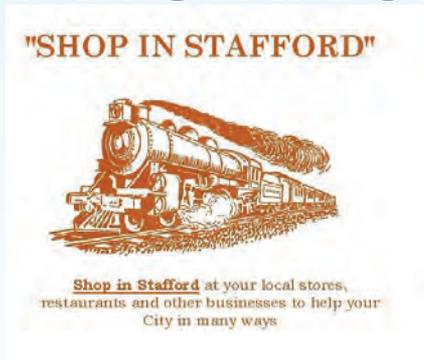
NEWSLETTER NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

With technology exploding in the communication of news, City Council is of the opinion that the old hard copy newsletters, such as this one, and which have been mailed to residents and businesses of the City for the past 38 years, should now take on an added dimension.

All who desire to view their Newsletter which you have in your hand, supplanted by an electronic version may be accomplished by going to the City's website: staffordtx.gov and calling **Nici Browe (281) 261 3903** and requesting that you be deleted from the hard copy mailing list.

SHOP IN STAFFORD

The City of Stafford does not assess or levy a property tax. The sales tax is the major source of City revenues, which allows the City to continue to deliver the outstanding services our citizens deserve.



Therefore we are encouraging all citizens to consider purchasing from at our local stores, restaurants and other businesses. This will keep the funds working for you. With the holiday season upon us, this is great time to think "Shop in Stafford".



SPOTLIGHT

"Best little school district in Texas"

Fall 2017



FROM THE DESK OF SUPERINTENDENT BOSTIC

We are extremely proud of our academic achievement in Stafford MSD! The classrooms of our four distinguished school buildings are full of students who are ready to learn. We are already off to a great start this year!

As you all know, the end of August and beginning of September was an extremely challenging time for the Stafford community, and for our neighbors throughout Southeast Texas. Hurricane Harvey wreaked havoc on the area, and many of our students and employees were directly affected. I was humbled by the selfless response by our School District employees, especially SMSD Operations Director Jaci Phenix. We opened our doors as a Red Cross shelter and later, we held donation drives for students, families and employees directly affected.

When classes resumed on September 7, our teachers and staff didn't miss a beat as they prepared our students for success in the first semester.

Just prior to Hurricane Harvey, the Stafford MSD Board of Trustees and Stafford City Council unanimously passed a \$30 Million Budget for 2017-18 that has the District on a path to further academic success. I am pleased that the public officials in this community have such a strong commitment to Public Education.

Our Stafford 20/20 Vision is very clear about our goals. They include having all third graders reading at or above grade level, 100 percent of seventh graders taking the ACT Exam, 100 percent of eighth graders taking the SAT Exam, and 100 percent of eighth graders passing Algebra I.

We would like to thank the community for exercising their right to vote. The decision to approve the \$62 Million Bond signals an investment in the future of the Stafford Municipal School District. We will begin construction in 2018 on a new Stafford Middle School. We will be adding a STEM Magnet that will become the first of its kind in Fort Bend County. We will regularly send out updates on the progress of the 2017 Bond Projects.

Dr. Robert Bostic, Superintendent of Schools



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- Thanksgiving Holidays.....Nov 20-24
- School Board Meeting.....Dec 12
- District-Wide Early Dismissal.....Dec 15
- Winter Holiday.....Dec 17-Jan 1
- 2nd Semester Begins.....Jan 4
- School Board Meeting..... Jan 8
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday.....Jan 15

Please visit www.staffordmsd.org for an updated calendar of events.





Spartans in Action

STAFFORD HIGH'S WEIR EXCELS AS AN ACTOR



Stafford native Blake Weir is an outstanding actor. He made a decision to give back to the community by becoming a Theater Teacher at Stafford High.

Weir, who attended Stafford MSD schools for more than a decade, is dedicated to his craft – whether that means instructing students or performing in Houston’s thriving Theater Scene.

In August, Weir was selected as one of six finalists in the Houston Press Entertainment Awards for Best Supporting Actor in a Theater Production. The role was Henry VIII in the production of Main Street Theater’s “Wolf Hall.”

“To be on the same list with some of those actors means a lot,” Weir said.

Weir, who just began his fourth year teaching at Stafford High, introduces students to Theater as freshmen and coaches a team of actors in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) One Act Play.

Since Weir arrived at SHS in 2014, the Spartans have won acting awards ranging from Honorable Mention, to All Star Cast, multiple tech awards, and a Mighty Heart Cast award during UIL Competition. The team advanced to the second round in two of the past three years.

“We’re going to have a more dramatic One Act Play this year,” Weir said. “The students ready for a change, and we’re going to bring it. Weir became involved in theater in high school and studied it in college at Stephen F. Austin in Nacogdoches. He said becoming involved in theater helped him overcome his shyness as a teenager.

SPARTAN ATHLETIC SUCCESS

The Stafford High Girls Cross Country Team took first place in the Sweeny Meet and went on to qualify for the Regional Meet.

The Stafford High Volleyball Team opened the season with a 6-1 record.

To keep track of all Stafford High Athletic News, log on to www.facebook.com/SMSD82 or www.twitter.com/Stafford_Sports



Stafford MSD Trustees, City Council approve 2017-18 Budget



By Stafford MSD Communications

The Stafford Municipal School District Board of Trustees and Stafford City Council made history on Aug. 23 by unanimously approving the 2017-18 Stafford MSD Budget.

It’s the fourth consecutive year that the SMSD Budget was passed by a unanimous vote. That has never happened in the 36-year-history of the School District.

The \$30 Million Budget, which goes into effect next Friday (September 1), had a strong emphasis on Academic Achievement. In addition to a balanced budget, the District also has increased its reserves in its Fund Balance.

SMSD Board President Auturo Jackson and Stafford Mayor Leonard Scarcella attributed the unanimous approval to the attention to detail, frank discussions and close working relationship between the City and the School District.

SMSD Superintendent Dr. Robert Bostic was proud of the joint efforts of the City Council and School Board.

“We are delighted, yet not surprised, that all of our elected officials made a conscious decision to ensure that Stafford MSD students have a bright future focused on academic success,” Bostic said.



SMMSD
School



Auturo Jackson
Holsapple
Trustee



Chris Caldwell
President



Xavier Herrera
Vice-President



Jacquelyn Jean-Baptiste
Secretary



Alicia Lacy-Castille
Trustee



Greg
Trustee



Manuel Hinojosa
Trustee

The Board meets monthly on the second Monday at 6:30 PM in the SMMSD Administration Building Board Room. School Board meetings are open to the public. Upcoming scheduled meetings are: December 11 and January 8. Meeting agenda, information about each agenda item, and past meeting videos are linked to the district website under the "About Us" tab.

HUNTING ENERGY HIRES STAFFORD GRAD

Daniel Ponce is a Stafford College & Career Center Success Story.

Ponce, a 19-year-old 2016 Stafford High School Graduate, was one of the first student in Jesus Puentes' Welding Class. The partnership between Stafford Municipal School District and Houston Community College gives students the opportunity to earn college credit, and upon graduation, a Welding Certificate.

Earlier this year, Hunting Energy Services' Stafford location – located four-tenths of a mile away from Stafford High School – hired Ponce to work in its Welding operation.

Ponce is the first graduate from the College & Career Center's new Welding Program to be hired by Hunting, but certainly there will be many more.

"We are very excited," Stafford College & Career Center Director Debbie Nordt said. "Once we start the proverbial pipeline, we will be communicating with Hunting whenever there are entry level positions available."

Ponce is one of 126 employees at Hunting's Stafford-based location. Hunting has been a longtime supporter of Stafford MSD, sponsoring the Engineering Division of the College & Career Center and regularly donating school supplies to the District.

Ponce works in a division that does welding for Hydraulics that operate in underwater Energy operations in the Gulf of Mexico.

Ponce's Supervisor, Jared Kiser, is pleased with the smooth transition he's made.

"He's a good, fast learner," Kiser said. "He has a great attitude, and he's everything you can ask for in an employee. He's also a wonderful diplomat for the Stafford College & Career Center's Welding Program."

The sixth of eight children, Ponce took the Welding class as a senior and immediately became interested in it.

"After that class, it's all I wanted to do," said Ponce, who earned As and Bs and played both football and soccer for the Spartans.

Upon graduation from SHS, Ponce briefly worked in retail before the opportunity to chase his career goals opened up. He's grateful for the position at Hunting and credits his colleagues with helping him become acclimated to the position.

The Stafford Municipal School District's Mission is "For Every Student to Graduate College or Career Ready, without Remediation."

The Stafford College & Career Center is a state-of-the-art component of Stafford High School. Students who apply to the College & Career Center and/or Stafford High are not required to live in Stafford. To schedule a tour, e-mail College & Career Center Director Debbie Nordt at dnordt@staffordmsd.org.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: CRAIG ROBERTSON

The 2006 Stafford High graduate spearheaded a truck full of donations to his hometown of Stafford after Hurricane Harvey struck the area



Members of the Cleveland Browns NFL Franchise helped in the donation of a 26-foot truck full of clothes, bottled water, non-perishable food, baby items and more to the community of Stafford, Texas.

There was a very specific reason why Clevelanders chose the small city just south of Houston and more than 1,300 miles southwest of the Browns' FirstEnergy Stadium.

Craig Robertson, a 2006 Stafford High School graduate who's currently a linebacker with the New Orleans Saints, spent his first five seasons in the NFL with Cleveland.

He called his Cleveland-based manager, Lisa Hahner, who worked day and night for 48 hours to fill three 26-foot trucks, including one that was delivered to Stafford.

"It really says a lot about Craig that he's not on the team anymore, and this many Clevelanders came out and filled the truck because he asked for help," Hahner said. "Clevelanders love him that much."

Browns players Joshua Cribbs and Christian Kirksey helped in the relief drive as did several Browns employees with the donations, which were collected at Cleveland's I-X Center (the Ohio equivalent of Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center). Hahner said the truck was filled to maximum capacity. She communicated directly with Stafford Mayor Pro Tem A.J. Honore on the logistics of the delivery, and Robertson paid for the trucks to be delivered to Stafford. Once the donations arrived, the Stafford MSD Administration Team unloaded and organized them at the District Maintenance Building.





STAFFORD MSD HISTORICAL MARKER DONATION

The Stafford Municipal School District celebrated its unique history on Oct. 8 with the unveiling of a State of Texas Historical Marker in front of the District Administration Building.

Stafford became – and remains – the only Municipal School District in the State of Texas. Citizens started Stafford MSD in 1977, because neighboring school districts declined to provide adequate transportation to students.

“Because Stafford citizens in the 1970s and 1980s were there to set the foundation, I’m proud to say that we have a School District that includes an Elementary Campus ranked in the Top 1 percent of the State,” Stafford MSD Superintendent Dr. Robert Bostic said. “We have received more than 25 TEA Academic Distinctions over the past two academics years.”

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Stafford Municipal School District was proud to partner with the City of Stafford and the Stafford Police Department for National Night Out on Tuesday, October 3.

National Night Out is an excellent opportunity for neighbors to get to know one another, and for elected officials to interact with the citizens that they serve.

The 2017 edition of National Night Out was a great success for Stafford residents, and we were proud to see several neighborhoods participate in the event this year.



Drivers Education Offered Online

The Stafford MSD Education Foundation sponsors an online Driver’s Education program which benefits students. The Driver’s Education Course for Teens ages 15-17 is approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and is the only 32-hour online education course that includes an online instructor who answers student’s technical and course material questions. The total cost of the online driving program is \$129.95 and a portion of the fee is

donated to the SMSD Education Foundation.

A Driver’s Education course is available for ages 18-25 years old and also Online Defensive Driving courses. Successful completion of the online Defensive Driving course can dismiss tickets or reduce insurance premiums. All courses can be accessed at smsd.drivethefoundation.com.

Call 800-227-7509 for more information.



SUPER SENIOR 55+ BREAKFAST

The Stafford College & Career Center Culinary Program prepares a delicious breakfast each month at the College & Career Center for the Senior 55+ Community.



Attendees have the chance to listen to speeches and information from various clubs and organizations at Stafford MSD.

The Next Super Senior 55+ Breakfasts: Friday, December 8



NOW HIRING BUS DRIVERS AND CUSTODIANS

Stafford MSD is looking for Bus Drivers and Custodians.

Log on to www.staffordmsd.org or call Director of Personnel Services Teresa Sazedj at 281-261-9250.



Stafford MSD is extremely proud of its Transportation Department. Students have the opportunity to travel to and from school in air-conditioned, well-maintained buses. Each bus has a camera on it.

The buses stop on each child’s street near their home, with drop off and pick up locations at the school monitored by SMSD teachers and staff.

All of our bus drivers go through Comprehensive Background Checks, as do all of our employees.

For more information on SMSD Transportation, log on to <http://www.staffordmsd.org/departments/transportation/>



Stafford Municipal School District

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ANNUAL SANTA'S VILLAGE EVENT



One of the most anticipated events each year, is Santa's Village comes to Stafford which is held at the **Stafford Centre**. This activity signals the initiation of the Holiday Season. This year it will be held: **Tuesday, November 28, 2017 from 5:30 pm. until 8:00 pm.**

Children and parents alike will be delighted when Santa Claus rides up to the Stafford Centre on the back of a fire truck. Inside, the village program includes holiday songs by the SMSD Choir with hotdogs, cookies and drinks for attendees. The best part:- **Everything is FREE.**



'**Stuff a Police Car**' will be one of the features of the evening. Attendees are asked to bring non-perishable food items to brighten the holidays for local families in need. This year due to Hurricane Harvey, there are more families that need assistance.



BULLETIN BOARD

STAFFORD CENTRE EVENTS: NOVEMBER - JANUARY

NOVEMBER: 28th – SEWA International Fundraiser
28th - City of Stafford 'Children's Holiday Spirit Festival' Annual Santa's Village **FREE ADMISSION**

DECEMBER: 3rd – Fort Bend Symphony "Deck the Hall" Concert
5th – SMSD Band Concert
8th – Grady Prestage's "Commissioners Black Tie Gala"
31st – City of Stafford's "Rockin New Year's Eve Bash"



COFFEE WITH A COP & COMMUNITY FOOT PATROL – Please watch the Stafford Police Departments social media for time and dates for this very popular program with our citizens.

Burglar/Fire Alarm Fees

Residential Alarm Registration - \$30.00
Commercial Burglar Alarm Registration - \$100.00
Commercial Fire Alarm Registration - \$100.00

False Alarm Fees

3 free allowed per calendar year
PD 4-7: \$50 each: Fire: 4-7 \$175 each
PD 8+: \$100 each: Fire: 8+ \$250 each

Pet Registrations

City Ordinance # 1065 states that any dog or cat kept, over four months of age harbored or maintained by their owner in the City, shall be licensed and registered.
Fees: \$2.00 per dog or cat. Bring the animal's current vaccination documentation to City Hall. All pet registrations expire December 31st.

Tree Limb Pick-Up: First Monday of January, April and July

Residential Trash Pick-up: Monday & Thursday, or, Tuesday & Friday. There will be **NO** trash pick-up on a Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Your trash will be collected on your **next scheduled** pick up day.

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

This summer was most eventful in Stafford. Without question, Hurricane Harvey, deemed “the most devastating storm in the history of the State”, which destroyed thousands of homes in the region and caused up to \$200 billion in damages was the headliner. (See Front Page story). Not to be overlooked were the substantive flood control improvements made by the City in the past four decades. This was a large reason why no Stafford residence or business suffered damages substantial enough to qualify for FEMA assistance.

After fervent debate, City Council adopted its 2017-2018 fiscal year budget by a 4 to 3 vote (See story on page 2). Once more the center piece of this budget is continuing for the twenty third year, the **zero property tax.**

The event that got the most attention was switching garbage collectors. Once more the vote was 4-3. The ability of the new operator to make an efficient transition was the issue. The first

week of operations by Texan Environmental Waste (TEW) was a debacle, resulting in hundreds of citizens calling to complain. A Special Called City Council meeting was held on the following Saturday afternoon. Over 90 people showed up to address their strong concerns with 19 expressing their dismay for the totally inept collections which occurred in the first week. An intense debate ensued including a “race-card reference”, resulting in a resounding admonishment. Council by a 5-2 vote authorized a hearing for a termination of contract. Surprisingly and to everyone’s delight the following week the new owner completely turned around his operation even to the point of receiving accolades from several residents. Have a most Happy Holidays.

Respectfully,

Leonard Scarcella, Mayor



City of Stafford
2610 South Main
Stafford, TX 77477

SEDC MESSAGE

Great things continue to be happening in Stafford! We are so grateful that Stafford fared well during Hurricane Harvey and that our community was able to serve as a resource to our neighboring communities.

The holidays are coming up quickly and we hope you will do as much of your holiday shopping as possible in Stafford! When you spend your money here, we all reap the benefits of keeping that money in our own community. We are working hard to bring new and exciting places to shop and eat and we hope that you will help us keep these businesses here by patronizing them when you can. Several new businesses will be open in The Fountains in the coming months and several new ones have come in to the Stafford area in recent months.

The TI Redevelopment site continues to progress with underground infrastructure being installed along the Highway 59 and West Airport corner. Once the infrastructure is in place, we will begin to see new activity with new businesses and restaurants! Once that side is complete, the next phase should see similar happenings along the Kirkwood side.

Sales tax is down across the state and the devastation is being felt in many places. We will continue to work to bring new business and in turn, new sales tax to Stafford to help continue the legacy of “no property tax” here in our town!

Many blessings to you and yours this holiday season and may 2018 hold great promise for us all.

Wen Guerra, SEDC President.