

Willow Creek Estates News and Views

March 2012

<http://willowcreekestatetx.com>

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Message from the President:

I hope this newsletter finds all members of our Homeowners Association (HOA) in good health and preparing for another beautiful spring and summer season. Spring is upon us and thank God for the rain we have received and hope that the rain continues so our aquifer and lake levels will return to normal.

The WCHOA Board has been busy this winter preparing for spring events:

- We have our annual neighborhood garage sale on March 30 & 31. The date was moved back from the usual first weekend in April because that is Easter weekend. Additional information about the garage sale can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.
- The annual spring cleanup sponsored in cooperation with the City of San Marcos will be held on Saturday morning, April 14th. The City brings dumpsters to our area and residents can drive by and drop off rubbish, recycling, and lawn & tree trimmings. They will also have a chipper on-site that day. Additional details will be posted on our website as soon as they are available or you may contact Bob Mooney with your questions.
- Start thinking about it now. It is not a life sentence.....it is only a year commitment. We will be asking for volunteers to serve on our Board this spring. Our annual meeting and election of officers will be held on Sunday, June 3rd.
- Plans are being made to begin the construction of the other two entrance signs in the near future. Want to contribute to this cause? It's not too late to send your sign donation to the WCHOA Treasurer.

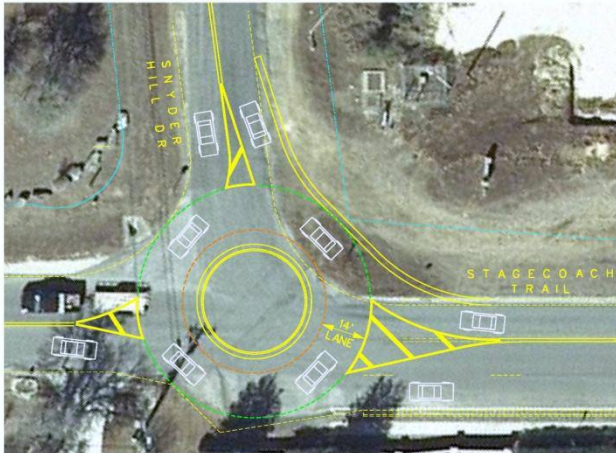
The Board has also been communicating with City officials regarding the traffic backups that occur during drop off and pick up times at Hernandez school. Please see the article on page 2 to learn about the interim solution that is being proposed to deal with the problem until such time as a permanent solution can be implemented.

As I complete my second year as President of our HOA, I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to serve and to thank everyone for being such good neighbors and being part of a great neighborhood. Please contact any Board member with your recommendations or suggestions for improvements. And if you see any violations of our deed restrictions, please report them to one of the three Directors and plan to attend the annual meeting in June.

Finally, I want to thank all those who serve as board members, committee members and officers of the HOA. They are a dedicated group of individuals who volunteer their time and efforts on our behalf.

Jeff Sones, President

Traffic Flow on Stagecoach Trail:



Several residents have expressed to WCHOA board members and San Marcos city officials that traffic delays are regularly occurring on Stagecoach Trail during school days. These traffic problems occur on school day mornings and afternoons due to parent's dropping off and picking up students at the Hernandez Elementary School. Some members of your Board have met with city officials to resolve this traffic flow difficulty, since it could have serious implications for emergency vehicles in addition to the inconvenience of our residents.

After considering several possible options, we came to agreement that one of two ideas have merit. Thus, we are now canvassing our neighborhood residents to find out which alternative is most acceptable to you:

Option 1: First, is to use immediate available funds and realize minimal cost, the Stagecoach Trail and Snyder Hill Drive intersection could be converted to a generic roundabout by using signage, paint, and asphalt curbing. Some of the Stagecoach Trail curbing near the school will be trimmed to street level so emergency vehicles can proceed regardless of traffic conditions. The city staff will contact Hernandez School officials so that they can encourage their parents/guardians to use the roundabout to form an east bound line for drop off or pick up rather than making U-turns or left turns which block west bound traffic. Such a roundabout can be constructed very soon and may or may not alleviate much of the problem. Then, for the long run, the city staff will request funding for a new CIP project to modify the roundabout to a more permanent structure that would extend the westbound double lane of Stagecoach Trail to Snyder Hill Drive. This funding is likely to take 3 to 4 years before the work can be done.

Option 2: Or second, do not convert the Stagecoach Trail and Snyder Hill Drive intersection to a roundabout. Request that the city still trim the curbing and obtain funding for a project to extend the westbound double lane of Stagecoach Trail further to Snyder Hill Drive, understanding that the latter is likely to still take 3 to 4 years before the work can be completed.

We need to hear from our residents. As a board we take our responsibility very seriously and want to do what is best. Please send us an email to wchoa99@gmail.com to tell us what you think and what you would like to see happen in our beautiful neighborhood. This information is also posted on our WCHOA website bulletin board. If you would like to have the comments that you send to us regarding this issue posted on the website bulletin board, please tell us so when you send your comments.

Tom Taber, GMB



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Saturday, March 31, 2012
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
San Marcos Conference Center



GOING GREEN HELPS SAVE THE GREEN

There is so much more to 'going green' that many of us, myself included, find it difficult to wrap my head around. Green is more than recycling...green is more than energy efficiency...green is more than organic products...green is all of these things and much more. But, there is one common denominator in all things green; saving money is the key to making green work for you.

At the 3rd Annual Texas Green Home & Living Show on March 31st, there will be speakers addressing cost saving ideas including weatherproofing, sustainable living, green thumb gardening, water catchment, use of native plants in landscaping and much more. Each topic area is designed to provide specific information to those in attendance with plenty of time for questions and answers. The show, held at the City of San Marcos Conference Center, runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and admission is free to the public.

Something new to grab your attention is the HEB Kid's Go Green area where there will be live performances from area school groups, a poster contest and special 'make and take' projects for kids of all ages. The show is designed to be family friendly and is a great way to learn as a family about ways to save money by doing some easy things around your home. In fact, one of the workshops, presented by the Net Impact Team from Texas State University will be an internationally awarded program on a home energy audit created by these students.

San Marcos is fast becoming the center of the state for green living and business practices; the Texas Green Home & Living Show presents an opportunity to bring to your home.

Submitted by San Marcos Chamber of Commerce

SAN MARCOS' ONLY ONLINE NEWSPAPER



I started the San Marcos Mercury nearly four years ago as a hobby because San Marcos suffers, maybe above all, from not having a reliable quality news source, until now.

I was a reporter at the San Marcos Daily Record for three years and don't have anything bad to say about my former colleagues there, many of whom have given decades in the service of that newspaper. That paper is owned by Community Newspaper Holdings Inc., and Community Newspaper Holdings Inc. is owned by the Alabama public employees' pension fund. Their hands are tied by their corporate ownership and the result hasn't been pretty — for the Daily Record or for the community it serves.

About six months ago, the Mercury bought our chief online competitor, Newstreamz (later renamed San Marcos Local News) and I started doing this fulltime. We brought on an accomplished advertising director, Melissa Jewett, and just added a second account executive.

Please check out our website at www.smmercury.com and let us know how it sits with you. Input from a critical segment of the community like the residents of Willow Creek is important for us to shape our program to meet the needs of our readers.

We still have miles to go before we get where we need to be, but we are confident we're on our way and welcome your input and ideas. You can send your feedback to melissa@smmercury.com

Brad Rollins, Publisher

WCHOA Annual Spring Garage Sale – March 30th & 31st:

Make your plans now for the annual Willow Creek Neighborhood Garage Sale to be held on Friday, March 30th and Saturday, March 31st. This year instead of having the neighborhood garage sale event the first weekend in April, we have moved the date back to the last weekend in March because we don't want to have our sale on Easter weekend.

We are doing things basically the same way that we did them last year. Residents who participated in the sale last year liked the idea of having the sale on two days and they could decide which days they wanted to participate. Our residents and shoppers also liked the idea of having lists at the entrances showing where the sales were located as well as having the sale locations posted on our website. The week of the sale, ads will be placed in the ***San Marcos Daily Record*** and on ***Craig's List*** and these ads will direct shoppers to check out the website to see where and when residents will be holding their sales.

As in past years, it is up to you to decide if you want to participate and the hours that you want to have your sale.

We want all of the bargain hunters to know that you're having a garage and/or yard sale, so please email your information to Carol (cshort101@gmail.com) or call Kathy at [860-798-9367](tel:860-798-9367) and leave a message so we can include your information on the website and on the sale locations placed at the entrances. Please include the following information:

- Street address
- Days you plan to be open (i.e., Friday, Saturday, or both days)
- Time you plan to be start your sale and optionally an end time
- Optional – you may list a few of the types of items you will have (such as children's clothing, holiday decorations, toys, adult clothing, lawn furniture, etc.)

Simplifying the Dues Year:

Many of our residents have asked that we consider making our dues year the same as the calendar year. The Board listened and at the December 2011 WCHOA Board meeting, our Board approved a change in the annual dues year.

- ***What does this simplification really mean?*** Well, rather than having that crazy June 1st thru May 31st dues year – which confused all of us including the Treasurer who had to keep track of the mid-year stuff – our dues are now collected on a calendar year basis. This change went into effect beginning in 2012.
- ***How will this affect me?*** For those of you who have already paid your dues for the current year, this means that you are paid through December 31st and you won't have to pay again until January. What a bargain! You are getting an extra half of year at no additional cost.
- ***What if I have paid for future years?*** If you were one of the residents who paid ahead to beat the dues increase that went into effect on January 1st, your dues will be paid through December 31st of whatever year(s) you paid for.
- ***What if I haven't paid my current year dues yet?*** You will also be getting a bargain! In the past, if you paid your dues right now, you would have only been paid through May 31st, but if you pay now, you will be paid through the end of the calendar year.

As you can see, there are no losers with this change and there will be a lot less confusion. The members of the Board think that everyone will be pleased with the change.

We Need You:

For the current year to date, we have a total of 195 paid households -- that's 41% of the 475 property owners in Willow Creek. **WCHOA really needs every homeowner's support....and this means YOU.** Our collective efforts with the potential for over 475 households working together can continue to make our neighborhood the prettiest and safest in San Marcos. We need to stand together to enhance property values, limit criminal activities, and make the neighborhood pleasing for all our inhabitants. By joining the association you will have a direct say in decisions that affect our roads, how and where we erect new signs, and such annual activities such as the Christmas decorating contest and the Neighborhood Night Out program. Remember, the more members, the more political clout we will have.

We want to thank our residents who have already made donations to the sign fund and also to the residents who have paid their current year HOA dues. If an invoice is NOT included with this newsletter, you have paid your dues for the current year. And, on that same note....if there is an invoice included with this newsletter; your annual dues should be paid at this time.



PAID POLITICAL AD

Hays County's Formula for Success is Working

As we begin the New Year, I am pleased to report on the progress that Hays County made during 2011. Our county government has developed a simple formula for success, informed by time-tested principles of commonsense and responsibility. We must keep taxes low, manage our money wisely, and have the foresight to prepare for the future. Over the past year, we have adhered to these principles and they are producing good results.

In 2011, we balanced the county budget without raising taxes and placed Hays County on its strongest financial footing in history. Our county's savings account continues to grow, now topping \$30 million. Our credit rating has improved to "AA," one of the highest ratings available to county governments.

We also made important improvements to roads and transportation. In 2008, our citizens voted to make a \$207 million long-term investment to improve our county's outdated and increasingly unsafe road system. This marks our first major road improvement initiative in more than half a century. This investment is making our roads safer and more efficient, and protecting our quality of life for future generations. In the past year, we moved forward on many road projects and secured state and federal approval for others. Through good management practices, we are accomplishing these projects under budget. I was also able to negotiate a \$133 million reimbursement from the State of Texas to Hays County taxpayers to further offset the cost of these projects. As we look forward to 2012, we will continue to make Hays County's roads among the safest and most efficient in Texas.

We also made important advances in consolidating county facilities to improve efficiency while meeting the needs of a growing county. The Commissioners Court worked together with newly elected Sheriff Cutler to make important repairs to our jail facilities. We are also completing the new government center project well under budget. This will save taxpayers millions of dollars by consolidating many county departments under one roof while also preparing for the county's future growth.

These accomplishments highlight a busy year that also saw important advances in public safety and securing a long-term water supply. Together with our cities, state university, and local employers, Hays County's star is rising. Our thrift and fiscal responsibility, along with investments in roads and infrastructure, make Hays County a great place to live, raise a family, and start a business. In fact, *CNN Money* recently honored Hays County for the third highest rate of job growth in the nation.

Our federal government would do well to follow the Hays County model of low taxes, sound management, and preparation for the future. This has been our formula for success in the past and it will continue to work into the future.

Will Conley, Your Hays County Commissioner

WCHOA Annual Spring Cleanup:

Mark your calendars now. The annual spring cleanup will be held on Saturday morning, April 14th. Details will be emailed and posted on the website as soon as they become available. You may contact Bob Mooney with your questions.

Engaging Citizens in City Budgeting and Planning

By Jim Nuse, City Manager

We were delighted to see so many Willow Creek residents turn out on Feb. 2 at the Activity Center for the City's Open House to evaluate City services. Your views on essential city services such as Police, Fire, Transportation (Streets, Roads, Sidewalks, Etc), Library, Parks & Recreation and our Future Water Supply will help guide the direction of the City of San Marcos as we plan future budgets and programs.

We are holding nine "Level of Service" open houses in January and February as a way to inform our citizens about the features and quality of our services—and how we compare with other communities. We are confronted by the reality that spending growth is outpacing revenues. So we have to investigate cost controls, efficiencies and if necessary, ways to increase revenues to meet community needs.

At the open houses, citizens are able to review poster boards with summary information, visit with and question staff about services, and then fill out a survey that will show you how various levels of services will affect your pocketbook. You may also add your comments and suggestions.

We will also put the survey online for two weeks following the last public Open House in mid-February for those who haven't been able to attend a session. We have all of our poster board presentations available now at www.sanmarcostx.gov for you to review.

At the end of the process, this information will be summarized and utilized as the City Council begins its budget process and long range planning.

Thank you for staying involved in community issues. The City Council and staff depend on your active participation as we strive to meet your expectations for strengthening the San Marcos community for the future.

Capital Area Council of Governments Emergency Notification System

Overview:

The CAPCOG Homeland Security and Emergency Communications Divisions are working together to implement the Emergency Notification System (ENS). ENS is an automated phone-dialing tool that enables authorized public safety personnel in the CAPCOG region to notify residents in an emergency situation. Residents are called only when property or human life is in jeopardy. The ENS system calls a small number of area homes and businesses (hundreds to low thousands) using the telephone numbers and addresses maintained by the 9-1-1 system. The ENS system can be used to contact citizens by cell phone if they register their phone number on the CAPCOG ENS Cellular Phone registry. The ENS system is also used to notify emergency response groups, disaster recovery planners, and other contact groups in the event of an emergency. Messages are distributed to people via phone and email. ENS is PC-based and uses multiple phone lines to notify people. The system was implemented using Homeland Security Grant Program funds and funds from participating local governments.

Cellular Phone Registry:

Through a web-based application, residents may enter their name, cellular telephone number, and attach one or more locations to that number in order to get important public safety messages. Residents can go to the website at <http://wireless.capcog.org> and follow the instructions to add their information into the ENS cell phone registry.

If you do not have access to computer or need assistance registering, please call 512-916-6013 and CAPCOG staff will help to complete your registration. If you need more information you can call Ed Schaefer or email him at eschaefer@capcog.org.