

Willow Creek Estates News and Views

November 2010

<http://willowcreekestatestx.com>

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Greetings

Your WCHOA has been working hard for you. At our last Annual General Membership Meeting we elected some new officers, which are listed above. The National Night Out was a huge success. The board members and volunteers did a great job. We want to thank Dick Burdick for allowing us the use of the Antique Car Museum parking lot for the National Neighborhood Night Out. If you missed it this year, hopefully you are able to attend next year.

There have also been some board members working on some new signs at the entrances into the subdivision. Hopefully you will be seeing these new additions soon. Don't forget the Christmas decorating contest this year, there will be awards handed out in various categories.

Also coming up is our annual Garage Sale held in April, the Spring Cleanup in May, and the Annual General Membership Meeting on June 5th 2011. If your WCHOA can be of any assistance or have any questions feel free to contact anyone on the board.

-- Jeff Sones, President

WCHOA: Our Website – Your Website

Don't know if you've had a chance to visit the Willow Creek Homeowners Association web site lately, but it's getting better all the time. We've added a few ads from local business to help us pay the cost of the website. By clicking on the ads, vendors may supply links to coupons and special offers for Willow Creek residents. If anyone is interested in advertising on our web-site please give Melissa Stevens a call @ 512-787-3501.

You'll also find the latest news and updates for Willow Creek residents, a bulletin board to let folks know what you may have lost or found – from pets to, well, you name it. Find links to the City, the County, and the County Tax Appraisal Office. Not only does it list all of your officers, it has some history about Willow Creek and it even lists the deed restrictions for each section of Willow Creek – that's very helpful information if you're planning a project, because restrictions for all sections are not identical.

Our website is only as good as we make it. It's all about us and what's important to us. So send us photos. Got your house done up for the holidays? Give us a peek and we'll share it. Got a great recipe for the holidays? No better time to turn other neighborhood chefs onto your secret. Your kid's team took home a trophy? Ditto! Give us a chance to help you brag about what is important to you. You may email post information to ashort@centurytel.net.

So, check it out. We want our website to be your website. And if you've got ideas about what you'd like to see posted, we're all ears. Take a minute to go to your browser and type in WillowCreekEstatesTX.com. Then add it to your bookmarks. Easy!

Christmas Outdoor Lighting Display

Many of our neighbors put up beautiful outdoor lighting displays during the Christmas holiday season which certainly enhance our celebration of this special time. Members of your WCHOA Board will be judging the displays and recognizing those which are considered "the best efforts" in the following categories:

- (1) Best Overall Display
- (2) Best Theme
- (3) Best Children's Theme
- (4) Best Religious Display
- (5) Most Elegant Display

Are you being charged "city sales tax" while not living inside city limits?

Some of Willow Creek Estates is not with-in the city limits, and some of those residents are being charged "city sales tax" and "franchise tax" on their utility bills and cell phone bills. The City of San Marcos Planning & Development Services Department can give you documentation to verify that your address does NOT reside inside the city limits. You can then present that documentation to those companies that are incorrectly billing you to remove the taxes from your bills and give you reimbursement of past charges. Some of the utility companies are great with the removal and reimbursement but some companies are harder to deal with. The San Marcos Planning & Development Services Department can be reach at 393-8230.

Below is a letter that one of our Directors, Dave Bethancourt recently sent to our state Comptroller, Susan Combs, requesting they fix a map on their web-site that most of these companies follow for whom to charge city tax and franchise fees. The Comptroller's office has stated their map will be fixed and updated by 11/25/2010.

Susan,

I own my home at 715 Willow Creek Circle, San Marcos, TX. According to your Tax Rate Locator website (<https://ourcpa.cpa.state.tx.us/atj/addresslookup.jsp>) I am within the city limits of San Marcos. This came to light after I noticed I was billed for city sales and franchise taxes on my IESI garbage bill. I spoke with Nicole and she was nice enough to correct their mistake and when I mentioned I would put a note about this on our homeowners website called back to correct all the addresses in the neighborhood.

We have not been in the city since we were disannexed in 2003. I live in the Willow Creek Subdivision half of which was disannexed. I didn't check every address but of the ones I checked that are not in the city all are shown to be. I also checked the three other subdivisions that were disannexed, Laurel Estates, Turkey Hollow, and Quarry Springs. Every address I checked showed to be in the city. Those three subdivisions were disannexed in their entirety.

I would appreciate it if you would correct your website as this is imposing an illegitimate tax on these individuals along with a lot of work in correcting billing amounts. After a little research I found that many of the corporations are not as easy to correct your and their mistake as IESI.

Dave Bethancourt
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San Marcos, TX. 78666
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Willow Creek Estates Second Annual National Neighborhood Night Out

Willow Creek Estates held their second annual National Neighborhood Night Out on October 5th. It was a big success and a great time was had by all. Our event was held at Dick's Classic Garage. Not only was it attended by our neighbors, we were also able to bring together representatives from the San Marcos Police and Fire Departments, the Hays County Sheriffs Department, and many political office candidates, and even some musicians, including Paula Stiles and Stan Harlan (thanks guys!). There was face painting and snow-cones for the kids, as well as soft drinks, hot dogs and popcorn for all. The feedback we received was that our neighbors enjoyed the chance to get out and meet one another, and to build on existing friendships

We want to extend a special thanks to those who made this event possible including Dick's Classic Garage for allowing us to hold this event there for the second year running, the volunteers that worked to bring everything together for a successful event: Kathleen Dial, Bud & June Holland, Mellie Nicholas, Carol Short, Christine Hardy, Myra Habbit, Lee & Linda Porterfield, and Bob & Jean Mooney. We also want to send out a "Thank You" to all the local businesses, City and County officials, and the individuals who donated items and gift certificates for our drawings. If you were unable to attend this year, we hope to see all of you next year.

National Neighborhood Night Out is an annual event that encourages neighborhoods to stage block parties, for the purpose of fighting neighborhood crime and getting to know and to look out after each other. There is a Neighborhood Watch Program in Willow Creek and this event is planned and organized by these residents. Willow Creek is broken up into many different "blocks" and each has a block captain to help get the word out if there is a concern for the group, or to bring any concerns to the attention of law enforcement or the HOA. If you are not sure who your block captain is please contact Jay Stiles at 512-353-4182 or Kathleen Dial at 860-798-9367.

Do you have a dispute with one of your neighbors?

In January, the new Hays County Dispute Resolution Center (HCDRC), a non-profit organization, opened in San Marcos. The purpose of the center is to facilitate problem-solving for individuals and organizations in Hays County by providing, promoting and teaching effective methods of conflict resolution through mediation.

The center is working with the San Marcos Police Department, the Hays County Sheriff's Office, and Animal Control to offer free mediation services to private parties who are in dispute and are referred to the HCDRC by a law enforcement agency, Animal Control, or a neighborhood association.

If you have a dispute with a neighbor over such things as, barking dogs, fences, trees, lights, loud noise or any other issue that police or Animal Control is unable to resolve, you may want to try mediation (free of charge) to help.

Mediation is a proven process to allow parties to sit down in a safe environment and communicate to promote reconciliation, settlement or understanding. It's fast, it's convenient, it's informal, it's confidential, and the parties are in charge of the outcome.

Mediators are carefully trained and screened. They come from a variety of backgrounds including law, business, psychology, religion, education and social services. All of them are certified by the Texas Mediators Credentialing Association and volunteer their services to the HCDRC.

Many cities in Texas, including Austin, San Antonio and Houston have Dispute Resolution Centers. Approximately 75%-85% of all the cases that are mediated at Texas Dispute Resolution Centers are resolved with a mutually satisfactory agreement. Many of those cases are referred by the courts.

So if you have a problem with a neighbor, call any board member and ask for a referral to the HCDRC. The HCDRC will discuss the problem discretely with you and advise whether or not mediation is right for your situation. They will also make the effort to get the other party involved in the process. Since it is confidential, no one will discuss your issue with any one else without your consent.

Residential Free Bulky Items Waste Pick-Up Tips

The City of San Marcos provides this service for city residents. Free bulky waste pick-up (furniture, appliances, yard waste) may be scheduled for your collection day the 1st and 3rd full weeks of the month by calling 512-393-8026 by 2:00 p.m. the previous business day. Branches must be cut to 4-foot lengths, tied and bundled, weighing no more than 35 pounds; branches that are not tied and bundled will NOT be picked up. Bulky waste includes old furniture, hot water tanks, mattresses, etc. (Try to donate to a charity if your unwanted items are still usable.) Trees, shrub and brush will also be picked up. Bulky items that will NOT be picked up:

- *Tires, rocks, bricks, and dirt.
- *Tree stumps or branches larger than 5 inches in diameter or longer than 5 foot.
- *Appliances containing Freon not tagged by a licensed technician.
- *Hazardous waste.
- *Construction debris generated from commercial remodel or demolition.

*For any assistance please call 512-393-8026

Membership: Thank you for your support!

We know you may have heard this before, but a strong financial position is based on strong membership numbers. And in the 2009-2010 year, WCHOA had 191 paid members – 40 percent of eligible households. **We want to do better in the 2010-2011 year.** Nearly 40% of us have paid our dues for the current year, but to provide even more and better services and events such as the website and National Neighborhood Night Out, we need the support of more of our residents. Just 45 more paid members will bring us over the tipping point where a majority of Willow Creek residents are paid members. ***Please help us by making sure that your neighbors know about the WCHOA and why you consider your membership an important investment.***

Thanks again for supporting our HOA. WCHOA records show that your membership is paid through May 31, 2012.