

# ***Willow Creek News & Views***

**September 2017**

A publication of



***WCHOA ~ Willow Creek Homeowners Association, Inc.***

***"Deed Restricted Single-Family Neighborhood" — [www.wchoatx.com](http://www.wchoatx.com)***

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### ***President's Message—Being Prepared:***

If we've learned nothing else from the late summer of 2017, it's the importance of being prepared—something so many of us first learned from our childhood involvement in scouting and other youth groups. It's been a difficult month for so many of our friends, relatives, and colleagues in the Houston and Texas gulf areas, in Florida, in the Caribbean, and in Mexico. And it isn't over yet, as new hurricanes continue to threaten those in their path. The combination of hurricanes and earthquakes is a tremendous example of the awesome power of nature and the need to be well prepared for destructive weather and geologic disturbances.

Many of our own neighbors right here in Willow Creek have experienced the wrath of Hurricane Harvey on vacation and retirement properties that were in the path of the storm. While our community was spared most of what Hurricane Harvey had to offer, we recognize, through our own experience with record-flooding over the last



several years, just how devastating and disruptive such events can be. We send our thoughts prayers to those who have been

affected, and offer special thanks to those who contributed to what will be a very long recovery, through their time, skills, effort, and resources. Times like these make us realize what community is all about.

The State of Texas Emergency Preparedness website, <https://emergency.portal.texas.gov/>, contains valuable and helpful information about how you can help in the Hurricane Harvey efforts, how to avoid relief-related scams, and how to prepare, plan, and stay informed about future emergencies that can affect each of us and our community. Many of our local churches are also involved in helping those who were affected and can provide you with more information.

Remember, Hurricane Season does not officially end until November 30—some two months from now. Daily news coverage continues to focus on the extraordinary strength and frequency of this year's storms—and the devastation they can bring. The fact that Mother Nature has spared us the worst so far, does not mean that will continue to be the case. So, here's a link to a clear, simple, illustrated guide that can help you and your family prepare for a weather emergency should it be necessary:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Prepare-for-a-Hurricane>.

A good source of local weather and related information is a part of the Hays County government's website, <http://www.haysinformed.com/>. This site also gives you the opportunity to enroll in Code Red, maintained by the Capital Area Council of Governments, which provides real-time information from your local emergency response team in the event of emergency situations or critical community alerts. Examples include: evacuation notices, bioterrorism alerts, boil water notices, and missing child reports.

—Becky Dobbins, WCHOA President

### **Local Flood Plain Map Revisions:**

As you are aware, the City of San Marcos, Hays County, and other jurisdictions have worked closely with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and local residents, to update flood-plain maps and information since the devastating floods of 2015 and 2016. As part of your preparation efforts to respond to future weather emergencies which can result in flooding, it's a good idea to become familiar with whether your property may be affected by flooding. A good review of the activities and proposals, including proposed maps, is available through the City of San Marcos website:

<http://sanmarcostx.gov/Search?searchPhrase=flood+plain+maps>,

When the maps are finalized, they will contain good information about the flooding potential for your property and they will affect flood-insurance rates. As so many property owners sadly learned during Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, regular home insurance generally does not cover flood losses. This is a good time to learn more about the National Flood Insurance Program, administered by FEMA. You can get more information about the program right here:

<https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>.

### **Annual Meeting:**

The WCHOA Annual Meeting was held on June 25 and attendees heard informative and timely reports about architectural "control" status, which is so important to helping guide residents regarding construction and other issues affecting their properties, the treasurer's report, ongoing improvements to our website and other communications, and an overview of the year's activities and progress from our President, Becky Dobbins.

We strongly encourage you to refer to the web site which has been streamlined and has the most recent information posted. If you need to update your email addresses or phone numbers, there is a form on the website to do this. You may also contact us by email or phone. For the upcoming year, directors Marianne Moore and Gordy Love continue in those roles, joined by a new director, Fred Davis. Becky Dobbins continues as our president, Debbie Harvey as our vice president, Jon Leonard as our Secretary, and Carol Short as our Treasurer. The board, officers, and members gave special thanks to Kathy Galinger who served as director for two terms and is now a director emeritus. Her experience and knowledge will

continue to contribute to the success our organization, as measured by our efforts to maintain Willow Creek Estates as one of the finest and most desirable single-family residential communities in the San Marcos area. Thanks to those who attended and participated in the meeting. Several received some really cool door prizes.

If you'd like to volunteer and assist us in preserving the specialness of our neighborhood, please contact any member of the board. We could always use more help to serve you better. Contact information is listed on the first page of this newsletter.



### **Stagecoach Speeding:**

There may be debate in some quarters about whether a stagecoach is capable of actual speeding, but there's certainly no disagreement that some drivers of more modern vehicles are speeding on Stagecoach Trail. WCHOA has been working with San Marcos city officials over the last several months to better manage compliance with the 30-m.p.h. speed limit on Stagecoach Trail. Perhaps the most visible result of the efforts has been the flashing speed-indicator signs, which let drivers know how fast they're driving and if they're exceeding the speed limit. The City also sponsored a well-attended August meeting at Hernandez School to gather input from our community's residents about the issue and to present information about various methods of "calming" traffic on Stagecoach Trail. While there was consensus about the very real danger of speeding to children, joggers, walkers, and pets on Stagecoach, the traffic patterns, narrowness of the road, and its lack of shoulders present impediments to traffic-slowing efforts that have been used in other areas of San Marcos. While no

final, long-term solution has been proposed, most residents at the meeting indicated that their preferred approach is increased police enforcement of the existing speed limit. This has resulted in a greater law-enforcement presence along Stagecoach Trail. So, please, respect your neighbors—and prevent a ticket, points, and increased car-insurance rates—by observing the speed limit, not only on Stagecoach, but all throughout our community.

And it's definitely worth pointing out—no matter where you're driving—that on September 1, texting while driving became illegal in Texas. A first offense is punishable by a fine of up to \$99, with higher fines for subsequent offenses. And, as a timely reminder, since driving on Stagecoach Trail generally involves driving past Hernandez School, Texas law also bans the use of hand-held cellular devices while driving in school zones. For drivers under 18, cell-phone use is prohibited at all times.



### **Other Police Matters:**

Residents have informed us of several thefts involving loss of property from their vehicles over the last several months, particularly in the Willow Creek Circle area. We have contacted both the San Marcos Police Department and the Hays County Sheriff's Office. Both have contributed to investigations and raised law-enforcement visibility throughout the Willow Creek area. This is important and will increase security. But our police can't do it alone, they need our help. These few simple preventive steps can go a long way to deterring thieves and increasing security on our streets and homes:

- Make sure you turn outdoor lights on after sundown;
- Keep your home and vehicle locked at all times;

- Keep your garage door closed and locked. It can be a signal to a burglar or thief that no one's home when you leave your garage door partially raised to provide a pet with access;
- Don't keep valuables in your vehicle;
- Don't leave valuables (such as tools, computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices) outdoors when you're not using them;
- If you'll be away for a few days or weeks, temporarily stop newspaper and mail delivery, and use timers on a few inside lights to signal there is activity inside your house after dark; and ask a trusted neighbor to regular check on your property;
- Don't leave a spare key outside;
- If you see someone acting suspiciously, report it to law enforcement officials. If it's an emergency, dial 911. For other situations, here are the numbers:
  - San Marcos Police Department: (512) 753-2108
  - Hays County Sheriff's Department: (512) 393-7800

### **Neighborhood (National) Night Out: Tuesday, October 3**

The Neighborhood Night Out is almost here—Tuesday, October 3, at Dick's Classic Garage at the corner of Stagecoach Trail and Hunter Road. The gathering starts at 5:30 p.m. and we'll be enjoying our get together through 7:30 p.m. Come join us! Hot dogs, chips, drinks, and cookies are available. Come meet your neighbors and our local firefighters, police personnel, and first responders. And don't forget to pay your annual dues at NNO. Dues are a deal at \$20 and this money is used to support you by supporting our neighborhood! If your dues are paid up, you'll get a ticket for a door prize. And if you pay next year's, too, you'll get a second door-prize ticket! We'll have drawing prizes—gift cards from our wonderful local businesses, some wonderful Texas wine, and free annual memberships.

### **Election Day: Tuesday, November 7; Voter Registration Deadline: Tuesday, October 10**

It's getting to be that time again—Election Day is Tuesday, November 7. Voters in the City of San Marcos will be casting ballots for City Council members for Place 3 and Place 4. Both races are

contested— and all council members are elected citywide, so voters will be weighing in on each position. City voters will also be voting



“yes” or “no” on each of 22 proposed City Charter revisions. All other voters in Willow Creek (those who do not live within the San Marcos City limits) will be voting on each of seven propositions to amend the Constitution of the State of Texas.

Here are links to the list of all candidates, charter revisions, and propositions on the ballots that will be voted by Willow Creek residents:

- City of San Marcos ballot:  
<http://www.co.hays.tx.us/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=620&mid=905&fileid=8709>
- Non-City of San Marcos ballot:  
<http://www.co.hays.tx.us/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=620&mid=905&fileid=8708>

To be eligible to vote in the November 7 election:

- you must be registered to vote by 5 pm on Tuesday, October 10
- you must be 18 years of age by November 7<sup>th</sup>
- you must be a United States citizen
- you must be a resident of the jurisdiction in which you will be voting

You can obtain a voter registration form on the Hays County Elections Office website,  
[http://www.co.hays.tx.us/Data/Sites/1/media/pdf/departments/elections/voter\\_reg\\_app1.pdf](http://www.co.hays.tx.us/Data/Sites/1/media/pdf/departments/elections/voter_reg_app1.pdf).

If you have moved since the last election, you should complete and submit a registration form to make sure you are registered to vote at your current address.

Early voting begins on October 23 and ends on Friday, November 3. Any Hays County resident can cast an early ballot, in person, at any early voting site in Hays County. Use the link below to see a list of the early voting locations and schedule:

<http://www.co.hays.tx.us/Data/Sites/1/media/pdf/departments/elections/2017-1107-early-voting-schedule---combined-final.pdf>

Election day voting in Willow Creek will be at the First Baptist Church, 325 W. McCarty Lane, in San Marcos. Polls will be open on election day from 7 am to 7 pm.

Voter Identification: There has been a great deal of court activity regarding a Texas law that requires identification in order to vote in person. While a court has altered the requirements of the

law, most voters are still required to present an acceptable form of identification when voting in person. This information, from the Texas Secretary of State, provides a clear overview of the requirement:

<http://www.co.hays.tx.us/Data/Sites/1/media/pdf/departments/elections/id-poster-8.5x14---10-12-16-english.pdf>

### **Shred It, Don't Dread It! — Free Community Shred Day: Saturday, October 21**

A free Community Shred Day, sponsored by the City of San Marcos, is being held on Saturday, October 21, from 9 am through 12 noon at San Marcos City Hall parking lot. It's open to both San Marcos city residents and Hays County residents.

Identity theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes and it can affect each of us. As we've learned from recent data breaches, we can't always control the security of our personal data that we've entrusted to others, but we can act to protect ourselves by handling our own data safely and wisely. Taking advantage of Shred Day can be a big help.

The only limitations: Three boxes per vehicle (and commercial businesses are excluded). Your empty boxes and bags will be returned to you. Have questions or need more info? Call 512-393-8090. And we'll see you on October 21.



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This is a new service! If you are not receiving our email communications, a quick and simple way to start receiving them is to go to our website and subscribe. Just click on the “[Subscribe](#)” button. You may also use this option to add another household member to our email distribution list,