

Fourth Quarter 2023

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PHOTO CREDIT: KEVIN RUSSBACH
LOCATION: SYCAMORE BEND PARK

A LETTER FROM YOUR MAYOR

Dear Fellow Citizens,

Summer is gone and fall has arrived, at least that's what the calendar says! Our Council and town staff have had a busy summer planning for the coming budget year, which started October 1.

Over the past dozen years, property values in Hickory Creek have risen, and we have seen continued increases this year. Denton Central Appraisal District's certified property total for this year is \$1.056 billion, an increase of approximately 17.6% over last year's total of \$898.2 million. Last year, the property tax rate for Hickory Creek was 0.270317 per \$100 of value. For 2023, our Council once again *lowered our tax rate to 0.236686 per \$100*, adopting the "No-New-Revenue Tax Rate," meaning the town will raise approximately the same amount of revenue as in the prior year (except for new properties added to the tax roll). New properties which were added to the tax roll in 2023 provide an additional \$90,476 in property tax.

I am pleased to announce that we have presented a balanced budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. In addition to providing all regular town services, the budget includes the following:

- Beginning development of a "Leisure/Recreation Center"
 - Addition of an Amphitheater at Town Hall Pond & Dock
 - Funding for road projects that were approved under the Denton County TRIP 22 Bonds
 - Addition of a Celestron 14" Schmidt-Cassegrain Telescope and Viewing Platform in partnership with The University of North Texas (in Sycamore Bend-Pratt property)
 - Denton County Master Naturalists & Gardeners will help with development of a nature center (Sycamore Bend-Pratt property)
- Last January, we began the process of updating our Hickory Creek Comprehensive Plan. This is a policy document that provides the vision for development going forward, outlines target goals, and provides guidance for implementation. Halff Engineering held Focus Group Listening Sessions, Vision Committee meetings, and two Public Workshops throughout the spring, and we are currently in the final stages of adoption of the plan. Thanks to all our citizens who provided input!

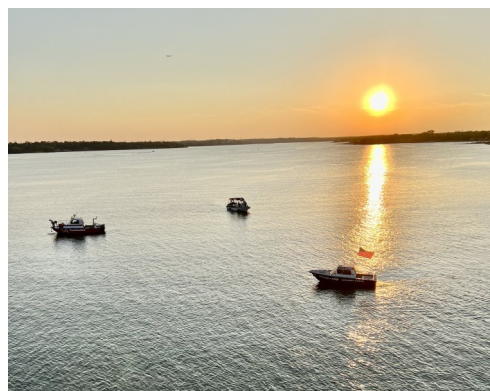
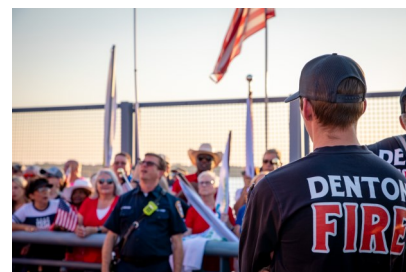
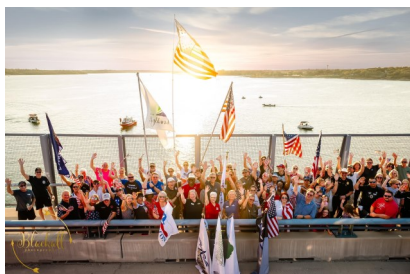
For the third year in a row, our citizens participated in the "Red, White & Blue Freedom Walk" across the Lewisville Lake Bridge, in memory of first responders and all who perished on 9/11. Special thanks to all our citizens who participated, along with the following: Mayors and Councilmembers from Denton, Hickory Creek, Lake Dallas, Shady Shores, Corinth, Highland Village & Lewisville; State Representative Kronda Thimesch; County Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell; Police & Fire Departments from Lake Cities, Hickory Creek, Lake Dallas, Denton, Lewisville, Highland Village, Denton County Sheriff's Deputies, and the Denton County Fire Marshal Investigator. Inside the newsletter, you'll see a photo of 3 boats that participated: Hickory Creek Police/Fire boat, Lewisville Fire Rescue boat, and the red "Tow Boat USA" boat. This boat was originally used to help evacuate people from lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001.

I look forward to all we will accomplish in the coming year. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your mayor!

Lynn Clark



RED, WHITE & BLUE FREEDOM WALK



WRITE YOUR LEGACY

Richard (Coach Rich) Lox lives in Hickory Creek, but his Legacy Boxing is located in Lake Dallas. It's where he found available space when he opened the gym in 2017.

Coach Rich grew up in Iowa with several strikes against him. His dad was in and out of prison due to drugs, along with several other family members who followed the same path. It was a culture that his mother and a couple uncles didn't want him to experience. Their solution was to create a boxing gym environment, where he began punching a bag when he was just six years old.

"It worked," said the 50-year-old Lox. "It kept me out of trouble, and by the time I was 19, people asked me to go pro. It was tempting but I wanted to play football and get at least one year of college."

He did quite well in both college and football until he was diagnosed with cancer after his 20th birthday. Surgery, chemotherapy, and the full scale of cancer protocol followed.

"I tried to just roll with it," he said, "and it wasn't until several years later that I could look back and see God in everything. He gave me those experiences so I could eventually help others."

"I won a Tough Man contest when I was 24 and used the money to move to Texas. By then, I knew I wanted to return to boxing full time. Besides, my bosses at any other jobs I had were tired of me coming in to work with black eyes."

Lox researched Texas prior to his move and found there were more pro boxing matches here than any other state. He boxed professionally for seven years, appearing on HBO, Fox Sports, and Telemundo. He hung up his gloves at the end of those seven years, retiring with a 10-8-1 record.

Then what? Answer: It was time to give back.

"Right now, I'm exactly where I need to be," he said. "I'm Coach Rich with a

gym where, according to 'old-timers' in the area, the hardware store used to be. I also took over the adjoining two spaces because I needed more room to spread out.

"My mission is to reach as deeply into the community as possible, which is why I have gym members from seven to 65-years-old. I also have women's boxing classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

"I chose the name 'Legacy' because I want people, especially young people, to realize they have the tools to write their own legacies. It doesn't matter if they come from drugs or any other form of abuses. They can get above it and beyond it, while learning they don't need it.

Coach Rich



One young boxer said he was making his second visit to Legacy. He learned so much the first time, he said, that he returned to learn more.



I have kids come in here thinking they can't do something and, eventually, they do it. Their self confidence soars! One of the critical things they learn is bullies don't pick on self-confident individuals."

As far as Lox is concerned, Legacy is still in its infancy. He nurtures a sweeping vision of his future menu.

"I want a program for veterans," he said. "If nothing else, they can come in and punch a bag to release frustrations. It's an important form of therapy. I want weight rooms, and a program designed for people with illnesses such as Parkinson's. I want women's self-defense. I want the community to have access to more and more programs for physical, emotional, and mental wellness.

"I get to know most of my boxers quite well. I know what they're going through. I see their determination, their tenacity, their growing confidence. I call a kid at home if he or she doesn't show up. Are they sick? In some kind of trouble? A financial hardship that popped up? I want to know so I can help. This is a gym family with Christian principles, and family helps family – especially when it comes to a Legacy."

Coach Rich completed college after retirement. He married Reigen in 2004 and they have four children. He currently counts approximately 75 members in his gym family and is considering adding space. Check it out. Everybody's welcome. Right where the ol' hardware store used to be.



NO LONGER A SECRET

Most small towns are notorious for hiding secrets, and Hickory Creek is no exception. Most people, especially long-time residents, think they know pretty much everything about the snug little community sheltered by a huge variety of oak trees. For those people, the following information will probably come as a surprise.

The late Linda Pratt of Hickory Creek owned eight acres of land located at the end of Sycamore Bend Road and sharing borders with the Corps of Engineers. Mrs. Pratt sold those eight acres to the town of HC shortly before her death.

The town had no definitive plans for the land at the time of purchase in 2014. It simply sat there, unoccupied and silent, until 2020. During those six years, there were signs of the original ecosystem returning very slowly to the area.

It was 2020 when Dinah Stults joined HC's Parks and Recreation Committee. She was a valuable addition, with certification as a Master Naturalist. After hearing about the former Pratt property, Stults asked town administrator John Smith if she could look at it.

"As soon as I saw it, I knew it could become a wonderful nature preserve," Stults said. "We could bring it back to its natural ecosystem and offer a place where people could experience nature and see, firsthand, how it works.

"I showed the property to other Master Naturalists in the Elm Fork Chapter of Texas. They all said it was perfect, and they could envision it as an educational center for kids and adults. It could also be a place where people come to just relax and decompress from hectic, everyday life."

An especially interesting element of the eight acres is that it is a part of the highly endangered Eastern Cross Timbers. And what, you ask, is that?

Cross Timbers, also known as Ecoregion 29, is a narrow strip of land that runs from southeastern Kansas across Central Oklahoma to Central Texas. Its path extends into Denton County and the eight acres of land formerly owned by Linda Pratt. Was Mrs. Pratt aware of the Eastern Cross Timbers' geological importance? We don't know

the answer, but HC was not.

American author Washington Irving, in 1835, said the Cross Timbers "was like struggling through forests of cast iron." Rachel Plummer, a white captive of the Comanche, referred to it as "the purest atmosphere I ever breathed."

Early travelers through North Texas christened the area as "Cross Timbers" because they crossed the timbered areas repeatedly. They became well-known as a dense barrier to east and west travel on the open prairies.

"One of the key factors is it's surrounded by Corps of Engineers property on three sides," Stults said. "A problem for our wildlife is fragmentation of its habitat. These eight acres provide some alleviation because they tie in perfectly with the Corps."

Progress on the Preserve is in its infancy. Wildlife (mammals, birds, etc.) have been identified and documented. Trails are being established. There are even plans for a small observatory.

"The property has a well and a nice pond," Stults added. "It's incredibly exciting to move forward with our chance to create something people can enjoy and learn from; where kids can get in the dirt and learn how things used to be. Do you know there are actually kids who have never touched the bark of a tree? Is that not incredible?

"I'm so proud of our town leadership. They've been very protective of the project and supportive of all our efforts. I'm sure they've probably had offers from developers to buy those eight acres, but this can be worth so much more than money – a place to breathe fresh air, to slow down, to teach kids to use their phones to identify plants and insects.

"The project will never be finished. It will always be a work in progress with constant and correct management. If we lose this opportunity, it will be gone forever."

The Preserve is not open to the public yet, but November 4 is scheduled as HC's Arbor Day at Sycamore Bend Park. There will be a Master Naturalist booth. Stop by and learn more about what used to be a secret.

For more information regarding the Pratt Farm:

<https://txmn.org/elmfork/>.

<https://www.facebook.com/PrattNP>

<https://txmn.org/elmfork/projects/elm-fork-chapter-projects/>.

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/pratt-nature-preserve-at-hickory-creek>

Contact Dinah Stults at dinahstults@gmail.com

SAFETY FIRST: A HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHIEF OF POLICE



Greetings to the wonderful residents of our Town!

As the Chief of Police, it's my duty—and privilege—to ensure that everyone in our community enjoys the festive season without the unnecessary stress of criminal activity. But, as we know, safety is a team effort. So, let's join forces to ensure our holiday season is not only jolly but safe!

Halloween Hijinks and How to Handle Them Halloween is the time when ghouls, goblins, and superheroes roam the streets. While we expect some harmless tricks, here's how to avoid the real-life terrors:

1. **Be Visible:** Ensure your kids wear reflective clothing. If the little vampire or princess insists on darker outfits, use reflective tape.
2. **Travel in Groups:** It's not only more fun but also safer. Encourage your kids to buddy up.
3. **Inspect Candy:** We've all heard the tales. While tampered candy is rare, a quick check never hurts.



Thanksgiving Day Delight: Food, Family, and Fraud: Ah, Thanksgiving! The season of gratitude, turkey, and unfortunately, financial scams.



1. **Beware of 'Too Good to Be True' Offers:** If your second cousin, twice removed, suddenly emails you about an exciting investment, be wary. Always double-check such claims, especially during the festive season.
2. **Safe Online Shopping:** Use trusted sites and always double-check URLs. If you see a website selling turkeys with rocket engines for 90% off, maybe give that a miss.

Black Friday: The Perils of Digital Scams: This holiday season, a major concern is digital scams. Fraudsters are getting crafty, but you can outwit them:

1. **Phishing Attempts:** Those deceptive emails from your "bank" asking for verification? Be cautious. Avoid suspicious links and always verify the source independently.
2. **Text Message Traps:** Beware of "smishing." These text message scams might claim you've won something or owe money. Always reach out to the claimed source using official contact methods, bypassing the message's details.
3. **Unsolicited Money Requests:** Messages from long-lost "friends" or distant relatives needing cash? Always double-check directly before sending money.
4. **Fake Charities:** The holiday season is for giving, but some try to take more than give. Beware of unsolicited emails from charities and always verify their legitimacy.



Christmas Conundrums: Santa, Sleighs, and Stolen Packages Ah, Christmas! The tree, the lights, the... missing packages? Porch pirates are on the rise, but we have strategies to thwart them:



1. **Scheduled Deliveries:** Opt for a specific delivery time or utilize package tracking.
2. **Neighborly Love:** If you're away, ask a trusted neighbor to collect your parcels.

3. **Safe Spaces:** Secure delivery options, such as Amazon Prime's Key, offer peace of mind. This service and similar ones let deliveries be made in your garage or other safe spots. It's worth exploring the best fit for you.

New Year's Notes: Countdowns, Cheers, and... Cheats? Celebrating the New Year should be about joy and fresh starts. But stay savvy with these pointers:

1. **Don't Drink and Drive:** Overindulged in the bubbly? Call a cab, a friend, or use a rideshare service.
2. **Beware of New Year's Deals:** Scammers thrive on New Year resolutions. Whether it's miraculous weight-loss promises, unmatched investment opportunities, or incredible bargains, remember the Golden Rule: If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.



Final Festive Thoughts: Sure, safety tips might not be as delightful as holiday cookies, but a little awareness goes a long way. Together, we'll ensure our festive season is both merry and secure.

And remember, while we cherish festive cheer, our police station's doors remain open for all concerns. Here's to a season where the only stealing is by Grinches in films!

Happy Holidays and Warm Wishes,
Carey Dunn, Chief of Police

LAKE CITIES ON THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

By Ian Theodore, Councilmember Place 5

Imagine your town was next to an interstate highway, but there were no on or off ramps for you to get on. That's what happened to the Lake Cities with broadband. We straddled the information superhighway that runs from Dallas to Oklahoma City, but we did not have an on-ramp to it. Broadband is high speed internet access via multiple types of technologies including fiber optics, wireless, cable, DSL, and satellite. It is an essential service in order to work from home, to play online games, and to stream videos, etc. Some of us remember the days of dial-up modems. We don't long to return to that time-consuming and inconvenient method for accessing the information highway, yet some areas of our community were barely able to attain those speeds, even with DSL.



In 2019, a group of interested citizens started meeting to discuss the issue. After getting support from the local governments, a joint committee was formed to see why/how broadband could be improved for our area. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), maps, Lake Cities had up to ten (10) internet providers per residence. We knew this wasn't inaccurate. The FCC was using census blocks so if a provider served one home in a block, they could claim they served the whole census block. The committee also found out that due to the FCC maps, we were not considered rural enough to be able to apply for grants to improve our services. After several meetings, the three incumbent providers (phone, cable, and hybrid) told us that they had no interest in providing additional or upgraded service to the area. One said to call for new subdivisions only.

Then COVID struck and we were all working from home, meeting via Zoom, and kids were home-schooling and the deficiencies of our community (like many others) was laid bare. The internet became a utility akin to water and electricity. In conjunction with our elected officials and city managers, we started to see what we could do. We looked at municipal-owned services and Public-Private-Partnerships only to find out that the Texas legislators had passed laws preventing municipalities from providing internet service to their citizens themselves. We determined that our community needed to be future proof,

Fiber vs Cable vs Cellular wireless vs Satellite. Which service should you get?

- *Fiber - Fiber optics carry lots of data using pulses of light through strands of fiber at the fastest speeds.*
- *Cable - Cable delivers high speed internet over the same coaxial cables that deliver pictures and sound to your TV set. Companies now offering 1gig downloads but is very limited on the upload to 25mbps max.*
- *Wireless - Wireless broadband (Wi-Fi) over cellular connects a home or business to the internet using radio signals instead of cables. While newer technology it is very dependent on cellular towers ring upgraded. Top speeds are about 300mbps which is impacted by line of sight, distance from the transmitter and structures just like cellular service.*
- *Satellite - internet connectivity via satellite is provided by communication satellites and is often the best option in rural areas. Top speeds are limited by terrain, weather, satellite coverage and density of users in a particular area.*

with fiber to the home. All the other methodologies would one day be maxed out and obsolete. Fiber has unlimited potential for upgrading without having to run new lines. At the time of our initial meetings, the top speed being offered for fiber was 1gig up and down. Data travels at the speed of light.

Internet Speeds Lingo

DIAL-UP MODEM Kilobits or Kbps (thousands of bits or kilobits per second)

DSL AND CABLE Megabits or Mbps (millions of bits or megabits per second)

FIBER Gigabits or Gbps (*billions of bits per second*)

TO PUT THIS IN PERSPECTIVE OF YOUR OWN HOUSEHOLD, ACCORDING TO CENTURY LINK, THE LIST BELOW IS HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE DIFFERENT INTERNET PROVIDERS, ON AVERAGE, TO DOWNLOAD A LARGE MEDIA FILE SUCH AS A CD (SOME OF YOU REMEMBER THOSE) WHICH IS AROUND 6.5 GB:

- **DIAL-UP** **11 DAYS**
- **DSL** **1 – 14 HOURS**
- **CABLE** **1 MINUTE – 14 HOURS**
- **FIBER** **ABOUT 1 MINUTE**

After hiring a consultant, we determined to put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) and, at the same time, the federal government passed the CARES Act, which provided funding for municipalities to provide services due to the impacts that COVID had inflicted on the country at large. The Lake Cities agreed to pool their funds into a municipal fiber ring that would provide the backbone to propel our community into the future.

After evaluations of the respondents to the RFP, Pavlov Media was chosen as the most experienced with what we were wanting to do. They have a track record of providing service to apartment complexes (MDU), college campuses, single family subdivisions as well as municipalities. Unfortunately, during final negotiations with Pavlov, one of the Lake Cities pulled out, leaving Corinth, Hickory Creek, and Shady Shores, to continue forward.

Under the contract, Pavlov is building the fiber ring that will connect Corinth, Hickory Creek, and Shady Shores

municipal facilities to the information superhighway. There are additional fiber strands in this ring that will allow for connections to every home in every neighborhood in the three cities. Pavlov committed they would not cherry-pick neighborhoods to serve, unlike the incumbents. Since the signing of the contract, the technology has already advanced so the infrastructure in place will have 10 gig service rather than 1gig.

Crews have already begun work throughout Corinth, Hickory Creek, and Shady Shores along FM2181. First, they are installing the duct that will carry the fiber. This is what the drilling rigs are doing in your neighborhoods. Then they will install the actual fiber. Once they get power to the equipment building from Oncor, the ring will be essentially complete and lit up. Per Pavlov, they are planning to complete that portion of the project early in Q1 of 2024. Be patient with them as they drill, understanding that the maps they are working with are not always very accurate as to what is in the ground. When they start hooking up customers, we will leapfrog to the forefront of internet access, which is a far better position than almost last.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE— EVEN FOR THE ANIMAL SHELTER

There are a lot of “not good” things happening in the world of animal welfare these days. At the top of the “not good” list is the overwhelming number of pet owners who simply refuse to spay/neuter, despite knowing this is the *single* most effective way to bring pet population growth to nearly zero. These owners, in one word, are irresponsible. They are also some of the first people to load a mama dog and her litter of puppies into a truck, drive to a seldom-traveled area, and shove mama and pups out to fend for themselves. It’s called dumping.

Thousands of dogs and cats were adopted during the pandemic. Shelters jumped for joy. Eventually, COVID moved to the back burner and, for many, the adopted pets became an inconvenience. The lucky ones were returned to the shelters or advertised for re-homing, but too many others were dumped.

Inflation has removed pet ownership and its numerous benefits from the grasp of many people. Even the most basic brands of pet food have doubled (or tripled) in cost during the last two years, and common medicines for flea and heartworm control have done the same.

Statistics show veterinary services have tripled in less than five years. The technological advances of the vet med world are about as mind-blowing as the near-miraculous cures and treatments in the realm of human medicine. But all the advancement is useless if it’s unaffordable. Today’s pets, just like their owners, need insurance. Without it, all pet guardians, apart from the ones who are financially

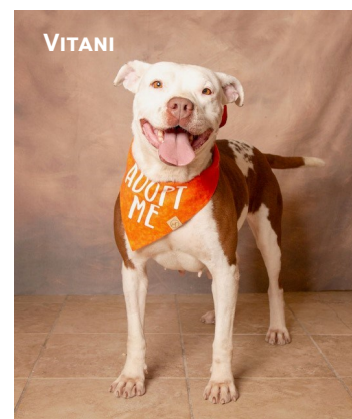
comfortable, risk the heartbreak of euthanizing their dog or cat because of their inability to afford medical care. But, for many, even the insurance is too expensive.

Perhaps some of the most profoundly sad situations are those involving senior citizens. How many times is a dog or a cat a senior’s only family? Only source of affection? Only companion? Only reason for old eyes to light up?

Shelters nationwide are crammed with strays, with owner-surrenders, with dump-offs, and with rescues from abusive situations. There’s no room for more. So, shelters resort to “euthanizing for space.” Innocent dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens are taken to a room where they’re injected with a substance to stop their hearts. That leaves empty kennels for new strays, new surrenders, new abandoned pets. And the cycle repeats.

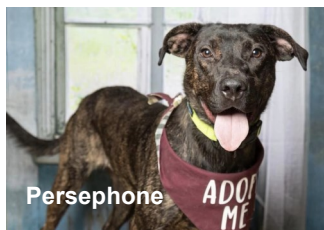
Approximately one million dogs and cats are killed every year. In 2023, the kill-rate is 10 percent across the land – the highest in three years.

Shelters in several states have decided to do whatever they can to keep pets



with their families by offering free food and reduced rates on vet services. Some go so far as to help owners repair, or even to build, fences to keep pets contained.

Help with vet bills is available through CareCredit, VetBilling.com, Pawp/Charity



Paws. Yourdogsfriend.org provides a long list of available resources, such as Help-A-Pet, Hearts United for Animals, Brown Dog Foundation, and many more. Best Friends

Organization in Utah offers a gold mine of help information.

The SPCA of Texas' Russell H. Perry Resource Center provides temporary support for families faced with the possibility of surrendering their pets, including drive-through pet pantries the third Sunday of the month, spay/neuter services, and other medical care. (spca@spca.org 214.742.7722).

Texas Coalition for Animal Protection (TCAP) has excellent low-cost spay/neuter, vaccinations, and other basic services. There are eight locations, including one in Denton.

The Hickory Creek Animal Shelter, located at 970 Main St., is designated as a "no-kill. This means animals aren't euthanized unless they have incurable illnesses or behavioral problems that stand little-to-no chance of rehabilitation.

In October of last year, Hickory Creek entered a partnership to extend its services to Corinth and Shady Shores. That meant the schedule picked up for officers Hannah Breaux and Robert Paterson (formerly with Public Works).

The HC shelter, built a few years ago, is filled with amenities, compassion, heart, and...animals. "We're considered a small shelter," Breaux said. "We don't receive a lot of publicity, and we're not widely known. Shelters across the country are in a crisis. Everyone

is full. We (HC) currently have a waiting list of owner surrenders."

Surrenders seem to be the name of the game these days. Look at Facebook or the Nextdoor app. They're filled with people rehoming pets. They have various reasons for their decisions but, for Breaux, the reasons don't matter. She doesn't judge.



"Our focus is to do what's best for the animals," she insists.

Breaux does an outstanding job of increasing Hickory Creek's exposure by posting available pets on social media. This is also an area where HC citizens can be very helpful. Make sure you "friend" the shelter on Facebook. Then share all of Hannah's postings, thereby increasing the viewing area. Adoptions can come from anywhere, and that one share you make could be the magic one that reaches the perfect person.

Most of the dogs at most of the shelters, including HC, are the larger breeds – the ones that make people back away and say, "Oh, no! I don't want a Pit Bull." First, not every large, muscular dog with a "block-style" head is a Pit and, second, the vast majority of Pits and Pit-mixes are loyal, affectionate, fun-loving individuals who will quickly lay down their own lives to protect yours. Go down to the shelter when you have a spare hour, and pitch a ball for one of those so-called bully breeds. You'll return home feeling better than you have in a long time!

Be a part of the village that helps our shelter and the animals living there. If you know someone facing a financial hardship that may separate them from their pet, hand them this newsletter with the available resources. Your quick, easy contribution could make an enormous difference to your community.

www.hickorycreek-tx.gov/animal. 940.465.7444

WINTERY WEATHER

Every winter, on days with freezing temperatures, multiple complaints are received about water from sprinkler systems and other sources creating icy conditions around town. The Town of Hickory Creek's Drought and Water Usage Plan States: "A person commits an offense if he knowingly or recklessly irrigates, waters, or causes or permits the irrigation or watering of a lawn or landscape located on premises owned, leased, or managed by the person in a manner that causes....the formation of ice or any other hazardous condition." If you have a sprinkler system, disable the system anytime the forecast calls for freezing temperatures or install a rain/freeze sensor to prevent future problems. Also, eliminate any other ways that ice may form and create a hazard. Violations can result in the issuance of citations.



THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE!

BY DIANE CIARLONI

How can the holidays be right around the ol' corner when we were recently hitting 100-degree days?

Regardless of what the thermometer registers, we're there. Stores share stacks of pumpkins. Gold, crimson, and white mums crowd shelves at nurseries, and ghoulish costumes flutter from hangers in Walmart. Bundle all those clues and it **must** mean Halloween is very close.

Have fun, be safe, and try to avoid the zombies and werewolves.

You can put away the skeletons but keep the pumpkins and mums front and center because, less than a month later, friends and family will share dining tables that sag with the weight of delicious food. Old traditions will be shared, and new ones made. Many tables will welcome new faces....smiling babies and maybe a newlywed or two. Other tables will offer a loving tribute to someone who was there last year but is a treasured memory this year. Afterwards, tight waistbands, maybe a discreet burp or two, the unmistakable sound of a snore, and a raucous touchdown coming from the football game on the television will dominate. It's all a part of the sights, sounds, and smells that define Thanksgiving.

And maybe a gentle reminder is in order, just a little tap on the shoulder, a whisper that not everyone is so blessed. The homeless. The hungry children. The elderly without family. The disabled veterans. Even the abandoned animals with skin stretched tightly over bones. Extend a hand and a heart to as many as possible.

And then, less than another month out, replace the mums with the bleeding beauty of a red poinsettia, or maybe the purity of a delicate white one, or even the softness of a pink variety. Fluff the bow on the wreath for the front door. Shop, in brick-and-mortar stores or hours with Amazon on-line. Hide the packages when they arrive and sneak them out later for wrapping.

There are dinners to plan and guest rooms to prepare. And the cookies and candies and cakes and breads and pies!

And the TREE! Unpack it from a box or tie it on top of the car or slide it into the bed of a truck. Untangle the lights or, if you're lucky, it's a member of the pre-lit family. It makes a grand appearance in some houses immediately after Thanksgiving. Others wait until closer to the big day.

Perhaps church attendance is part of your tradition. Perhaps reading the biblical presentation of the Nativity. Each step you take reminds you of a step you took last year or a decade ago. Each year, when I put the stable in its place, I remember my first Christmas in Texas.

The tree was up and gloriously decorated. The stable was underneath. It was all breathtakingly lovely, and I went to bed feeling pleased. I walked barefoot into the dim living room the following morning and....OUCH! I stepped on something painful. I turned on the light, looked down, and saw an indentation on the sole of my foot. I had stepped on the Baby Jesus from the stable. Then I saw Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men, and all the shepherds and angels and animals. They were scattered across the floor. Sleeping peacefully in the stable was Bubba, my cat. He'd obviously made room for himself at the inn.

It simply is not possible to have a better time than Christmas. We're nicer. We're happier. We're so filled with the joy of love that we even hug ourselves! It just can't be contained. Can you even imagine what the world would be like if the Christmas spirit could live throughout the year, snuggled deep in our hearts?

And as it is with Thanksgiving, remember all those "others," the ones who may not have the same blessings. We know what Jesus would do. Shouldn't we do the same?

Have a spooky Halloween. Enjoy a bountiful Thanksgiving. And wrap yourselves in the indescribable blessing that is Christmas. Wishes for an amazing holiday season to each and every one.

NEW PRICES FOR REPUBLIC SERVICES EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2023

Republic Services of Lewisville

FRANCHISED CITY RATES

(includes 10% on residential, commercial and industrial)

TOWN OF HICKORY CREEK

COMMERCIAL FRONT-LOAD RATES

PICKUPS PER WEEK

SIZE	TYPE	1 X	2 X	3 X	4 X	5 X	6 X	EXTRA PU
2	YD	\$76.70	\$131.15	\$170.51	\$219.30	\$266.33	N/A	\$38.78
3	YD	\$116.14	\$154.15	\$214.47	\$279.68	\$337.28	N/A	\$44.81
4	YD	\$153.54	\$249.92	\$340.96	\$439.55	\$532.69	N/A	\$50.84
6	YD	\$193.13	\$308.34	\$430.88	\$559.35	\$674.53	N/A	\$56.87
8	YD	\$220.82	\$377.90	\$550.03	\$771.74	\$851.46	\$930.01	\$62.89

COMMERCIAL PACKERS

SIZE	TYPE	1 X	2 X	3 X	4 X
6	YD	\$433.08	\$638.10	\$926.39	\$1,195.65
8	YD	\$495.87	\$818.76	\$1,210.05	n/a

COMMERCIAL SERVICE FEES

CASTERS	\$42.98	Set of 4/month	EXTRA YARDS -	\$ 38.78
GATES	\$3.63	PER LIFT	DELIVERY - \$0.00	\$ -
LOCK BAR	\$10.74	MONTHLY	REDELIVERY AFTER NON-PAYMENT	\$ 111.18
			REMOVAL - \$0.00	\$ -
			DRY RUN - \$0.00	\$ -

INDUSTRIAL ROLLOFF RATES

SIZE		TYPE	DELIVERY	RENTAL/D ay	RENTAL/ Month	Per Haul	DEPOSIT/RO
20	YD	Open Top	\$ 116.72	\$ 8.14	\$ 244.55	\$ 367.63	Per credit check
30	YD	Open Top	\$ 116.72	\$ 8.14	\$ 244.55	\$ 386.50	Per credit check
40	YD	Open Top	\$ 116.72	\$ 8.14	\$ 244.55	\$ 433.62	Per credit check
20C	YD	Compactor	NEGO	NEGO	NEGO	\$ 416.39	Per credit check
30C	YD	Compactor	NEGO	NEGO	NEGO	\$ 465.89	Per credit check
40C	YD	Compactor	NEGO	NEGO	NEGO	\$ 540.29	Per credit check
EXTRA YARDS				\$ 38.78			
REDELIVERY AFTER NON-PAYMENT				\$ 107.48			
REMOVAL				\$ 110.81			
DRY RUN				\$ 110.81			

COMMERCIAL HAND COLLECT*: Monthly rate -1 CART 1x/WEEK \$32.83

*No charge for cart

MONTHLY

TRASH & RECYCLING CURBSIDE TOTAL: \$18.87
SR CITIZEN TRASH & RECYCLING TOTAL: \$13.21

ADDITIONAL TRASH CART \$8.81
ADDITIONAL RECYCLE CART \$6.26

CAMELOT LANDFILL - RESIDENT DROP-OFF - 1x/month - 3 cubic yard limit - No charge
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS ONLY: 25% off of Roll Off Haul rates

EFFECTIVE DATE 10/1/2023 CITY HALL PHONE (940) 497-2528

WINTER TREE WATERING



Although trees remain dormant during the winter, they are not immune to cold and dry conditions. Trees experience the stress of harsh winter weather-though they might not show it-and it's usually a lack of water that does the most damage. Heading into the winter with dry roots can mean major trouble for trees in the spring.

Though it may be gray and wintry outside, your trees still need you. Long, dry periods without supplemental water can damage root systems and kill your trees. Although they may look normal in the spring, trees that have been weakened over the winter will usually die back later in the summer.

Follow these tips to help the trees on your property survive the winter and remain healthy all year long.

WATERING DURING THE WINTER

Keep watering trees on a regular schedule through the fall and until the ground begins to freeze (usually late October or November). Once the ground freezes, continue to monitor weather conditions throughout the winter months.



WHEN TO WATER

Water acts like an insulator, both to a tree and the soil. Soil that stays moist will be warmer; likewise plant cells that are plump with water will be less

susceptible to damage from the cold.

Trees which are dormant don't need to be watered as frequently as during the growing season. When there is little to no snow cover and little perception, plan on watering your trees one to two times per month until they begin leafing out in the spring. If the site is particularly windy, your trees may need more water. Once the ground thaws in the spring, you can resume your regular watering schedule.

Water only when the temperature is above 40 degrees F and there is no snow or ice on the ground near your trees. Water early in the day, so the plants have time to absorb it before the temperature drops at night.

Trees like their water slow and deep. Newly planted trees will require more frequent watering. You can check soil moisture by using a garden trowel and inserting it into the ground to a depth of 2", and then move the blade of the trowel back

and forth to create a small narrow trench. Then use your finger to touch the soil. If it is moist to the touch, then they do not need water.

Be careful to apply water all the way out to the edge of the tree's root spread. Most established trees have a root spread equal to their height. Water deeply with a soaker hose, if possible, and avoid spraying on foliage if watering an evergreen tree.

MULCH

Mulch is one of the best things you can do for your trees heading into the winter. Adding a layer of organic mulch in the fall protects the soil from moisture loss and helps regulate soil temperature throughout the winter.



Planting sites which are more exposed to freezing and thawing are prone to cracks in the soil, which can dry out a tree's roots. Mulch acts as a blanket and can prevent this kind of damage.

WATERING YOUNG TREES

Young or newly planted trees are much more susceptible to drought injury during the winter months. Make sure they are well watered through the summer and fall up until the ground freezes, and water every couple of weeks during the winter when there is no snow cover.

EVERGREENS



Evergreen trees lose water through their needles in the dry winter air, so they need more stored-up water going into the winter season to

make up for it. Cold, dry winds can actually strip water from Evergreens faster than their roots can absorb it. That's why it's especially important to provide a sufficient water supply in the fall, and water during dry spells during the winter.

While it may seem counterintuitive to get out the hose when everything around you is brown and gray, it's critical to keep your trees alive and healthy. Don't ignore your trees this winter. Keep watering them and see how they thank you with a beautiful show in the spring.

COMMUNITY REMINDERS

ANIMAL REGISTRATION

Residents are required to register all cats and dogs with Animal Services. There is no charge to register but you must have a valid copy of their rabies vaccination certificate. Residents may register animals at the animal shelter, town hall or online.

ALARM PERMITS

All commercial and residential alarm systems are required to register every January. Renewals are free. Applications may be found online or at Town Hall.

BOAT RAMP & DAY USE PASSES

Boat ramp and day use passes for 2024 are now available at Town Hall. Hickory Creek residents receive a FREE day use and boat ramp pass. Residents must come by Town Hall to pick up the passes. Passes are good in all Hickory Creek town parks-Arrowhead, Leg 1 and Leg 2, Point Vista, and Sycamore Bend. Please place all passes in the front windshield so they may be seen easily by an officer. Failure to properly display current year passes may result in a citation. Nonresidents may purchase boat ramp and day use passes at Town Hall, online or at pay stations located in Arrowhead, Point Vista, and Sycamore Bend. Pass holders require a code to access the parks. Codes will be given when passes are picked up.

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

Curbside Household Hazardous Waste Republic Services will collect electronic waste and hazardous chemicals from your home on an on-call basis. Call 469.451.3713 or email HickoryCreekHHW@republicservices.com to schedule a pick-up.

REPUBLIC SERVICES SENIOR DISCOUNT

Hickory Creek provides a 30% senior discount on trash and recycling services for our residents over 65. To receive the discount, bring your trash bill and driver's license to Town Hall and let us know you're eligible for the discount. The Town will contact Republic Services for your discount on future bills. Once your information has been submitted, there is no need to reapply each year.

LIBRARY CARD REIMBURSEMENT

The Town of Hickory Creek offers our residents Denton and Lake Dallas library card reimbursements! The Town will reimburse residents up to \$50 per household. To receive the refund, bring the receipt from the Denton or Lake Dallas Library and a copy of your driver's license with your Hickory Creek address (or a utility bill with your address) and we will send a check to you in the mail for reimbursement.

**HICKORY CREEK
TOWN HALL**

1075 Ronald Reagan
Avenue

940-497-2528

Monday - Thursday

7:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Friday

7 AM - 11 AM

POLICE DEPARTMENT

1075 Ronald Reagan
Avenue

940-497-3520

Police/Fire Emergency 911

Non Emergency

940-349-1600

**HICKORY CREEK
ANIMAL SHELTER**

970 Main Street

940-349-1600

Monday - Friday

7 AM - 6 PM

Friday

Saturday - Sunday

7 AM - 11 AM

VISIT YOUR TOWN HALL

Parks & Recreation Board—Third Monday

Planning & Zoning Commission—Third Tuesday

Town Council—Fourth Monday

Economic Development Corporation—Third Thursday

ALL MEETINGS BEGIN AT 6 PM



UPCOMING TOWN CLOSURES

Friday, November 10

Veteran's Day

Thursday, November 23

Thanksgiving Day

Friday, November 24

Day after Thanksgiving

Friday, December 22

Christmas Eve Observed

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day

Monday, January 1

New Year's Day