

# LAKESIDE NEWS

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**First Quarter 2026**

# A LETTER FROM YOUR MAYOR



Dear Fellow Citizens,

I am pleased to announce that the Town of Hickory Creek has once again received an excellent audit by Carl Deaton of Hankins, Eastup, Deaton, Tonn, Seay and Scarborough Accounting Firm. The town's financial statements of governmental activities and all accounting activities are audited annually to ensure compliance with standards contained in the Governmental Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The following statements can be found in the 2025 Town of Hickory Creek Financial Statements and Accountant's Opinion:

## Financial Highlights

- The assets and deferred outflows of resources of the Town of Hickory Creek exceeded its liabilities and deferred inflows at September 30, 2025 by \$25,891,341. Of this amount, \$9,175,611 may be used to meet the government's ongoing obligations to citizens and creditors.
- The Town's total net position increased by \$783,236 during the fiscal year from the results of current year operations.
- As of September 30, 2025, the Town of Hickory Creek's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$11,654,722, a decrease of \$1,961,672 in comparison with the beginning of the period. Approximately 85 percent of this total amount, \$9,893,417 is available for spending at the government's discretion (*unassigned fund balance*).
- At the end of the current period, unassigned fund balance for the general fund of \$9,893,417 was 122 percent of total general fund expenditures.

The fund balance of the Town's general fund decreased by \$870,120 during the current year compared to a \$1,170,631 increase in the prior year. Key factors are as follows:

- Revenues decreased \$163,257 or 2.25% from the previous year, primarily due to a decrease of \$533,877 in building permit and other fees but mostly offset by a \$282,217 increase in sales tax and a \$127,636 increase in drug seizure/forfeiture revenue.
- Expenditures increased \$2,054,381 or 33.80% from the previous year. The vast majority of the increase was a \$2,005,677 increase in capital outlay expenditures, due primarily to street and road improvements and the construction of the amphitheater.
- The fund balance of the Town's debt service fund remained unchanged from the prior year. Revenues and expenditures were comparable to the prior year and \$11,411 was transferred from the general fund to cover the excess of expenditures over revenues.
- The fund balance of the capital projects decreased \$1,087,738 during the year primarily due to \$98,001 capital outlay costs on pavement repair and the sidewalk extension project.

On the next page, you will find graphs indicating how the Hickory Creek property tax rate compares to prior years (starting in 2008) and to other municipalities in Denton County.

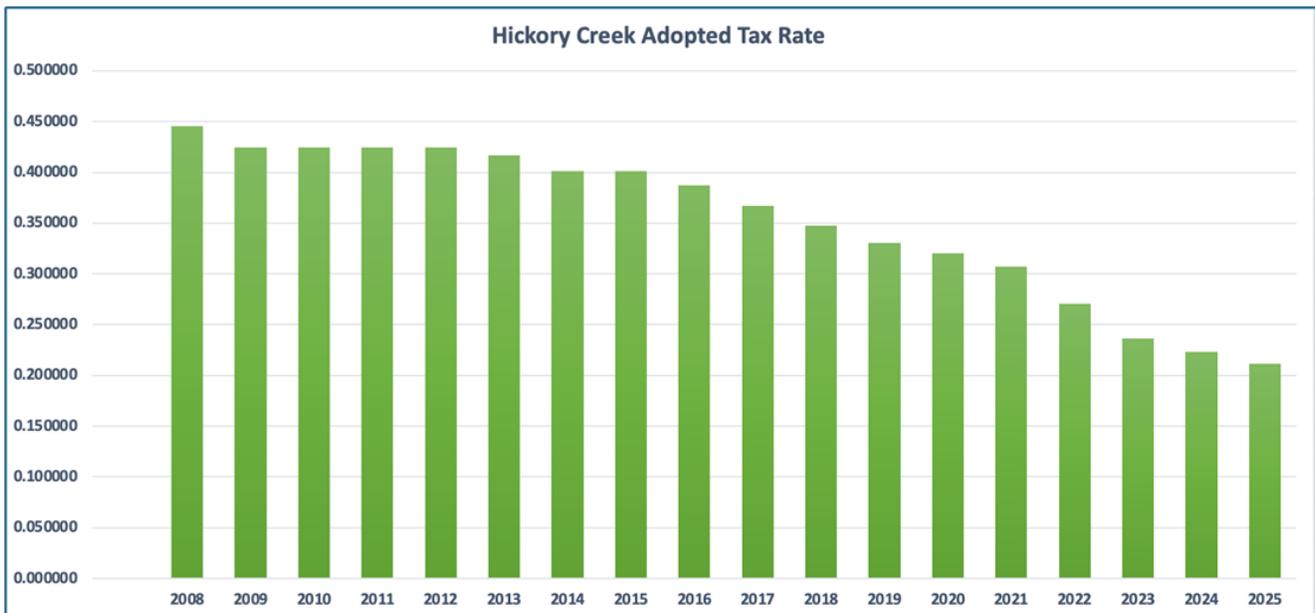
**Facilities Update:** For the past year, the Town Council and staff have been working on a long-term plan for a recreation-focused community facility on the land across from Town Hall. Phase 1 of that plan includes outdoor pickleball courts, with Phase 2 envisioned as an adjoining indoor facility for community gatherings, classes, or training. As estimates came in significantly higher than expected in today's construction market, the Town was presented with an unexpected opportunity when the Olana stable property (Turbeville Road) became available for purchase. The Council determined that acquiring the stables would provide a valuable head start on delivering a future community facility, rather than building a new structure adjacent to the planned courts. The current plan moves forward with constructing the pickleball courts across from Town Hall while remodeling a portion of the stables for the indoor community space. The stable property also includes additional covered areas and a third building for future use, along with existing landscaping and irrigation already in place, creating both immediate and long-term benefits for the Town. The purchase of the property was made with cash reserves and did not require a loan.

I look forward to seeing you around town!

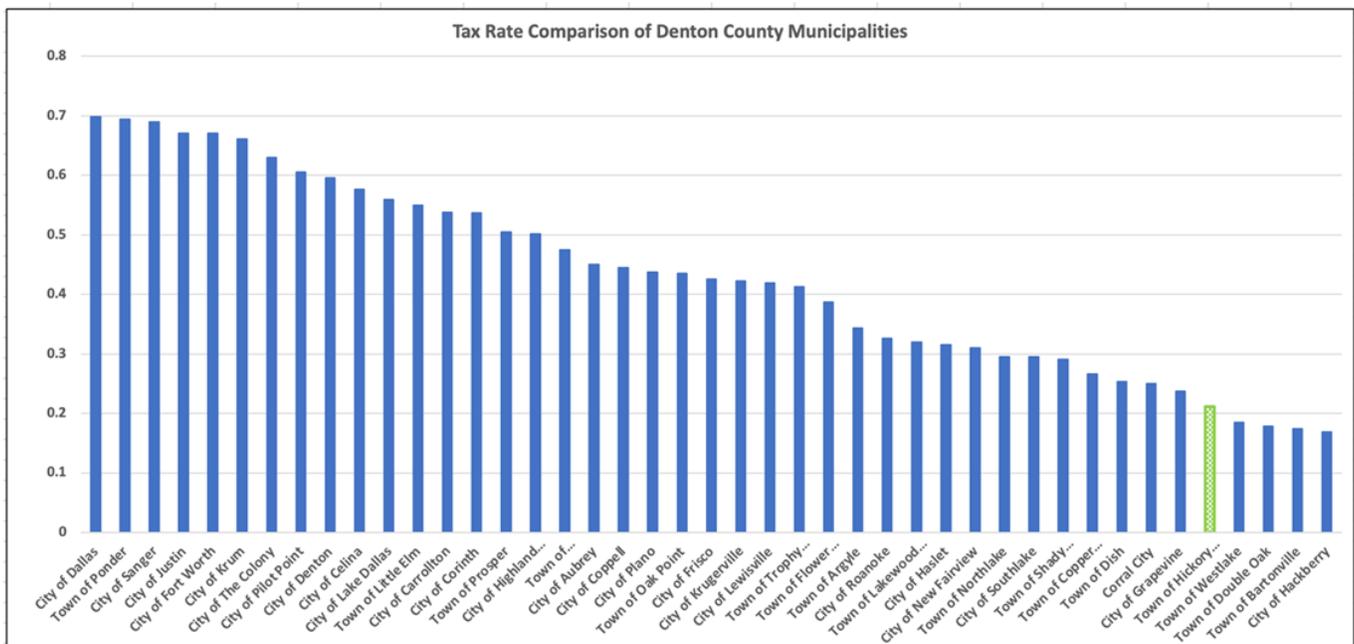
- Mayor Lynn Clark

# HICKORY CREEK PROPERTY TAX RATE (2008—2025)

Hickory Creek’s property tax rate has steadily declined—from \$0.445620 per \$100 of assessed value in 2008 to \$0.211205 per \$100 in 2025. The Town Council remains focused on keeping taxes low while responsibly managing Town operations. As property values have risen, the Council has lowered the tax rate each year by approving the No-New-Revenue rate. The chart below shows this ongoing reduction.



The chart below indicates that Hickory Creek has the **5<sup>th</sup> lowest** property tax rate out of 42 cities/towns in Denton County, and the lowest of the Lake Cities.



## 2025 TREE LIGHTING

The 2025 Tree Lighting was a *huge* success, and we are incredibly grateful to everyone who came out to celebrate the magic of the season with us! From sipping hot cocoa and enjoying fresh burgers to rides, face painting, and capturing special moments with Santa, the evening was filled with laughter, lights, and holiday spirit. We think it's safe to say the big man himself had a wonderful time spreading cheer—and he even took a joyful ride down the slide!



## Arbor Day 2026



In November, the Parks and Recreation Board hosted its annual Arbor Day event. We sincerely appreciate the guest speakers who shared their knowledge and the residents who joined us to celebrate the importance of trees, environmental stewardship, and community. Events like this help strengthen our connection to nature while bringing our community together.

## Amphitheater Ribbon Cutting



December 5, 2025 marked the official opening of the Town Hall Amphitheater, an exciting new addition to the Town of Hickory Creek. The Arts and Culture Board looks forward to hosting a wide variety of community events in this new space, including performances, cultural programs, and family-friendly activities designed to bring residents together. Information about all upcoming events will be shared on social media, so be sure to follow the Town of Hickory Creek on Facebook, Nextdoor, Instagram, and X to stay informed and engaged.

## JOE BEAVER: THE LUCKIEST MAN IN THE WORLD

By: Diane Ciarloni

Today, Hickory Creek resident and Texas native Joe Beaver talks, laughs, and cracks a stream of jokes (which he refers to as “messing with you”) but that was not the case on Christmas Eve, 1965, on night patrol in Phu Bai, Viet Nam.

The 19-year-old, and his fellow Marines, moved cautiously through the jungle that hid a long list of terrors in bright daylight. Imagine how those terrors grew at night. They were 24 hours into a Christmas Truce, but no one was lulled into a false sense of confidence. Beaver thought he saw movement in a bush. He moved closer, quietly, and nudged the foliage with his rifle. The response from the bush was a grenade rolled to the front of his feet, coming to rest just as the hiding Viet Cong rose to flee into the jungle’s shadows. Beaver lifted his rifle and rapid-fired, taking down the enemy. Unfortunately, his action also shaved precious seconds from his time to take cover from the grenade. It exploded, sending a cloud of shrapnel into his chest and left leg.

The next part of this Christmas tale serves to define why Beaver describes himself as the luckiest man in the world. The blast from the grenade catapulted Beaver 10 feet through the air. His landing was softened by the body of another Viet Cong enemy, who was very much alive. Beaver plopped down on top of him, facing a second grenade. The pin was yanked and another hail of shrapnel hit Beaver in his chest and right leg.

“They did a great job of patching me up,” Beaver said with a certain sense of pride. “I still have about 100 pieces of shrapnel in me today.” He makes that statement in the same casual voice that one of us might use to say our bunions are hurting!

One important thing you must remember about Beaver. That is, when he refers to himself as the luckiest man in the world, it means he escaped death but not the hardships that would probably kill a lesser man. It so happens this Texan is tougher than old boot leather. He didn’t crack and he sure as heck didn’t die, even though there were times when dying may have been less painful.

“Christmas Eve is my parents’ wedding anniversary,” Beaver revealed. “On Christmas Eve, 1965, they were eating their holiday dinner when they received the news that I was blown up in Viet Nam. I hated doing that to them.”

Less than a month later – 24 days to be exact – a tank Beaver was riding on made the mistake of rolling across an invisible mine. It exploded and Joe found himself, once again, sailing through the air. By then, it was sort of a familiar feeling. He was thrown clear but the Marine next to him was wounded. The two of them rolled to their feet and faced the next challenge.

“We had to walk up a hill to get to safety,” Beaver explained. “That made me mad because that was one steep hill. Neither of us felt like doing it but there was no other option.”

Beaver was Special Ops in the Marines. He was identified as a crack shot, which made him prime material for the Sniper Platoon. He was asked if he would have a problem killing someone. "That was a hard question to answer," Beaver recalls. "I'd never come close to killing anyone, or even thinking about killing someone, before that question. To me, it was my job as service to my country. That's how I looked at it."

Beaver spent a total of 40 years in the military, serving under nine presidents. The first eight years were in the Marines, following his father's footsteps. He was in Viet Nam four years, along with a two-year stint in the hospital due to injuries. He received three Purple Hearts.

"I was one of the first 36 Marines to go to Viet Nam," Beaver recounted. "Only three of us came back. I think the other two have passed on, which leaves just me."

"I decided to leave the Marines. For one thing, I was seasick all the time (as if that's worse than being blown up three times!) I decided I wanted to join the army and go to flight school. I made the necessary contacts and, basically, they said I was perfect for the job."

"I joined up and they sent me to flight school. I lost an ear drum during training but that was a small price to pay. I came out of school as an officer, flying airplanes, jets, and helicopters. I felt like I had it made as an officer and a pilot. I'll admit it felt good to walk around base and have people say 'Hello, Sir' or 'Have a good day, Sir.'"

Beaver racked up a super impressive list of adventures. The jaws of death opened in front of him at least three times. He inhaled the smells of war in Viet Nam and Iraq, among others. His chest was distinguished by shards of shrapnel and covered by three Purple Hearts. And there were other things...unanticipated...random things.

"For example," Beaver continued, "I found out Lady Bird Johnson was my cousin. I think it's fifth cousin. Anyway, I served in the Marines with her daughter Lucy's brother-in-law. We were back-to-back on the same hill."

"I don't regret anything but I did see a lot of my friends die. There was nothing easy about that part. I was also sad about the way those of us who served in Viet Nam were treated when we returned home. There definitely were no parades and no cheering. Things were so bad that we weren't allowed to wear our uniforms off base. A lot of guys came back and landed in San Francisco, putting on civilian clothes before getting off the plane. That hurt because we were proud of those uniforms. We wore them while serving our country and having to take them off before we faced the public just didn't seem right."

Beaver has plenty of legitimate reasons to feel he's the luckiest guy in the world. Other than still being alive at a robust 81, he's been married 25 years to the ultimate love of his life –Devona or Dee for short. Their love story is, indeed, one for the ages.

Born and raised in Arlington, Texas, Beaver saw his future wife for the first time at the Addison airport. "I was there because I sometimes did radio traffic reports. I saw her and, I'm not kidding, I fell in love right then and there." The soaring emotion of that love-at-first-sight experience must have made their 18-year courtship extremely frustrating!

## CONTINUED— JOE BEAVER

“I felt the same way,” Dee said, “but we were just on different pages. He was in the military. I was a single mom of one son and worked in the dental profession. He was always gone and I had a son to support and raise.”

After waiting a time, Joe took his first shot. “I was stationed in California, and she was in Kansas City. I called her and said, ‘Let’s get married.’ She didn’t lose a second telling me no. That upset me pretty bad so I told her to leave me alone. Don’t call or contact me in any way.”

It took some time, but she did call.

“I was getting ready to ship out for Iraq. She was watching the television news and saw the USS Cole blown up. She called and said, ‘I’m ready.’ I left for Iraq 16 hours after we were married, and it was two months before I saw her again.”

“About the only thing that changed for me was my last name,” Dee chimed in. “He was still gone all the time but, after seeing all those people killed on the USS Cole, I realized how important it was to spend whatever time we had together.”

There’s been a lot of “together time” since Joe retired from the military in 2003. The couple owned a motor home and Joe, who’d seen plenty of foreign countries, decided he wanted to explore the land he served for 40 years. That’s what they did. Then, in 2004, they placed an offer on what would become their Hickory Creek home. They received a phone call, while at Dee’s birthday dinner, telling them their offer was accepted. That puts their Hickory Creek residency at 21 years.

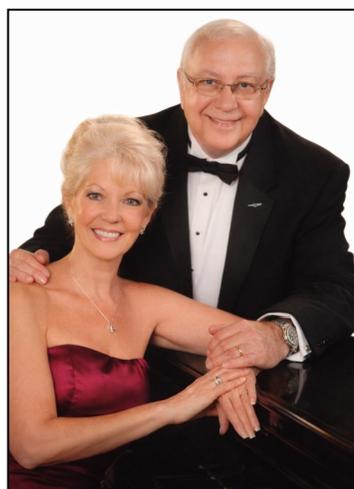
Life is full for Joe and Dee, with plenty of love and joy ahead of them. There is, however, one word that does not have a place in Joe’s vocabulary. The word is “hero.” He was simply a Marine, and then an Army pilot, carrying out the responsibilities of his job to the best of his ability. That pretty much condenses everything to its lowest common denominator.

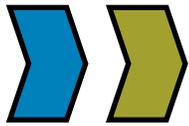
Have a good life, Sir. You deserve it





**On behalf of the Town Council and staff, we sincerely thank you for your dedication and the sacrifices you made for our great nation. We truly enjoy hearing your stories, value your continued support, and are always grateful for the sweet treats you and Dee so thoughtfully surprise us with. Your family's kindness and presence mean a great deal to all of us.**





# New Around Town



## New Facilities

We invite all residents to keep an eye on the town website for upcoming details on how you can take part in naming two exciting new facilities opening in 2026. You'll have the chance to vote on names for the new stables and the outdoor recreation facility across the street. The website will share easy, step-by-step information on when and how to vote, so everyone can join in and help put a personal touch on these new community spaces.



## New Face



Officer Meyer is currently assigned to day shift patrol and is completing field training with the Hickory Creek Police Department. She is a graduate of the North Central Texas Council of Governments Police Academy.

Her path into law enforcement was driven by a strong interest in public safety, service, and meaningful community engagement. She values clear communication and enjoys building positive relationships with community members, recognizing the importance of trust and approachability in effective policing.

# 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.

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## 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.

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## BOAT RAMP & DAY USE PASSES

Boat ramp and day use passes for 2026 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](mailto:HickoryCreekHHW@republicservices.com) to schedule a pick-up.

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## 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.

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## 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 drivers 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 - 5:00 PM**

**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 - 5 PM**

**Saturday & Sunday  
By Appointment Only**

## **VISIT YOUR TOWN HALL**

**Parks & Recreation Board—Third Monday  
Planning & Zoning Commission—Third Tuesday  
Arts and Culture Board—Third Wednesday  
Economic Development Corporation—Third Thursday  
Town Council—Fourth Monday**

**ALL MEETINGS BEGIN AT 6 PM**



## **UPCOMING TOWN CLOSURES**

**Monday, February 16**

**Presidents Day**

**Monday, May 25**

**Memorial Day**

**Thursday, June 18**

**Juneteenth**