

will listen and try our best to send you in a

Next, we have good news and bad news

on the transportation front. Good news

first: Public hearings have taken place on

the financial portion of both the North Tarrant Expressway and the DFW Connector

projects. All public comments were positive on both projects. Construction should

start in early 2010 on both projects. Bad

news: The North Texas effort to give the

voters of our region the opportunity and

option to select needed transportation pro-

jects and select a funding source failed to

pass in the Legislative session that ended

June 1. What does this mean for our area?

It means that the traffic congestion and

transportation problems will not go away,

and in the future will only cost more

money to solve. The DFW region has the

worst traffic congestion in the United

States and NETC has the worst traffic in

the Metroplex! What do you think? What

would be your suggestions as to resolving

the traffic issues? I would like to hear

And now...You are invited to "<u>Coffee with</u> the Commissioner" on Friday, June 26,

7:30-9:00 a.m. at our office in Hurst; the

Northeast Sub-Courthouse at 645 Grapevine Hwy, Hurst. Come visit and bring a

friend, your thoughts and questions.

direction for help and assistance.

### COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

The Northeast Newsletter is one year old.

It's been our pleasure to bring you into the somewhat confusing and unknown world of County Government. The question I get asked more than anything is: What does a County Commissioner do?" We have tried to answer that question this past year.

Let me share with you what a Commissioner Doesn't Do or Can't Do...based on actual requests....

- -No authority concerning school districts -No authority over any action by a City Council.
- -We don't set property appraisals.
- -We don't become involved in homeowner association disputes.
- -We can't make your neighbor move his pigeon coop away from the fence separating your property.
- -We can't remove the raccoon from your attic.
- -We can't re-zone your property, your neighbor's property or any property.
- -We don't remove beehives from your home or property.
- -We can't get your traffic ticket fixed in any of our cities
- -We can't get the District Attorney's office to remove your brother's DWI.
- -We don't provide trash collection service.

**<u>BUT</u>**, if you have problems or situations in which you cannot find help, call us. We



your input.

Gary Fickes

## 🤾 🤾 🔉 🥇 Question of the Month ?

In 1849, a fort was built on the bluffs overlooking the confluence of the West Fork and Clear Fork of the Trinity River. It was named Fort Worth. Who built the historic fort?

Answer found on page 6)



Commissioner Gary Fickes

### **Inside this issue:**

Employee Spotlight - G.K. Maenius	2
ARTSNET	2
Tarrant County Public Health - H1N1 Influenza Virus (Swine Flu)	3
Keller Fire Station No. 4	3
Northeast Tarrant County - City by City Event Contacts	3
Economic Development - North Richland Hills	4
Precinct 3 Maintenance News	4
Proclamation - Older Americans Month	4
An Historical Moment In Time - Historic Smithfield	5
A Tribute to District Attorney Tim Curry	5
Dr. Jim McDermott Recognized	5
Westlake Decoration Day	5
Northwest ISD	6
Team Fickes	6
MetroPort Meals on Wheels	6
Answer to "Question of the Month"	6
Bulletin Board	7
Transportation - Helpful Websites	7
Contact Information	7





TARRANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

G. K. Maenius has served as County Administrator for over 21 years. Prior to joining the County in 1988, G.K. was the Senior Vice President for Governmental Affairs for the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce. In that role, he also served as the Executive Director of the Fort Worth Crime Commission. Prior to coming to the Fort Worth area in 1982, G.K. worked in the Governor's Office as Program Director of the Texas Organized Crime Prevention While working towards his Council. Bachelors and Masters degrees, he worked for the Texas Crime Prevention Institute and was a police officer.

G.K. is married to Lynda and has two sons – Chase and Ross. He has a grandson (William) who lives with his father and mother (Chase and Shannon) in Los Angeles, CA. G.K. was born and raised in the Texas Hill Country around the Fredericksburg area. His father and mother still run their ranch which is close to the LBJ Ranch. He states that his eventual goal is to go back to that area and enjoy the hills.

As the County Administrator, G.K. serves as the chief administrative officer for the Commissioners Court. He supervises all departments that are under the control of the Court. Additionally, the Administrator's Office serves as the planning and management arm of the Court. Other areas included within his Office are economic development, community development, criminal justice management, communications and marketing, public information, re-entry programs, legislative coordination, grant administration and emergency management.

Besides county activities, G.K. is currently focusing on two additional things. First (and foremost), is to figure out a way to get his grandson to Texas. He says that it doesn't matter if Chase and Shannon move or not, just send William. Second, he is trying to improve his golf game. He may be the worst golfer currently employed by the county. He loves the game and actually believes that he will eventually become a better player. We'll see. By the way, he thinks that Tarrant County is the best place in the world to work.

On a more personal note ~

What do you do for fun? "Golf "

Favorite Movie? *Comedies like "What Hap*pens In Vegas"

Favorite Restaurant? "The Original"

Last Book Read? "Outliers" by Malcolm Gladwell

Vacation spot? "The Texas Gulf Coast and New Mexico"

People would be surprised to know... "That I sometimes exaggerate the size of fish I catch!"





Founded in 1975 as the Trinity Arts Foundation, ARTSNET evolved from the Trinity Arts Guild. ARTSNET formally received its nonprofit status in 1978, and was recognized by the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) in 1997 as the official arts council of Northeast Tarrant County. With the addition of the City of Saginaw in 2004 ARTSNET is now recognized by the TCA as the arts council representing North Tarrant County. Over the past 32 years, ARTSNET has consistently and tirelessly worked in partnership with many of the cities, School Districts, Eight Chambers, PTAs, Summer Santa, Christ Haven, Women's clubs and businesses in North Tarrant County to develop a better understanding of the value of the Arts.

ARTSNET has brought the Arts to North Tarrant County for over 34 years.

Programs encompass:

-K.E.Y.S. (Knowledge, Education, Youth, Success!) to Art – A visual arts program -Summer Arts College –serves over 500 children ages 6-11, including one teen camp ages 12-15 -Art for Veterans - the first art program in the state of Texas geared specifically towards veterans -MasterWorks Concert Series –reaches more than 20,000 people and is free and open to the public -Classes - including drama, voice, dance, piano, multi-media art, porcelain and guitar are taught by experienced teachers and artists.

-Grants- for schools, non-profit organizations, and cities to bring the arts to their communities. In partnership with the Texas Commission on the Arts, ARTNSET has generated over \$1.3 million in grants.



A group having fun in Summer Arts College camps for kids.

ARTSNET also holds an annual fundraiser called Taste of Northeast where local restaurants and eateries come together to show off their many flavors. This fundraiser includes a silent auction, raffle drawing and big board. (See below)



To be held August 20, 2009 at NYTEX Sports Centre at 8851 Ice House Dr. in North Richland Hills

Enjoy a "Happy Days" Celebration, awesome food, entertainment, auctions and so much more.

Tickets for Taste of Northeast can be obtained on the ARTSNET website after July 1st at www.artsnetc.org

Art camp for kids 6 - 11

ARTSNET Summer Arts College For information call 817-283-3406 4-one week camps starting June 15th 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Page 2

Volume 2, Issue 3

Prevent - Promote - Protect

# H1N1 Influenza Virus (Swine Flu)

"I never know when it will happen, and I never know what it will be. But as I gathered with other members of the Tarrant County Public Health team on Sunday, April 26 to meet about our new nemesis, H1N1 (swine) flu, it had a familiar feel," recalls Tarrant County Public Health Director Lou Brewer. "Most recently, we had dealt with a CRYPTO outbreak, a *Salmonella* Saintpaul outbreak and hurricane evacuees."

At our meeting that Sunday, we pulled together information about what was going on nationally and regionally; we referred to our pandemic influenza response plan, and we talked about what we might need to communicate locally to our medical partners, the community and others. Among the first things we do is share information with the medical community so that they will know which symptoms to look for. We determined the need for a bilingual hotline, which was up and running by Monday, and we posted information on our Web site and distributed it to the media. Our weekend team accomplished the tasks at hand. Just to give you an idea of the team's makeup: health director, medical director/health authority, public information officers, chief epidemiologist, associate director of prevention and public health planning and our

associate director of community health. By Monday, we were investigating our first probable H1N1 (swine) flu case in Tarrant County.

By May 1, there was a local school closure. In situations such as this, our role in school closures begins by working closely with school officials, using the most current local data and any related state or federal guidelines to help us make a recommendation. Rapid changes locally and nationally precipitated the addition of daily media briefings to help get info to the public.

As of June 5, we were still confirming H1N1 (swine) flu cases in Tarrant County. One important change is that our North Texas Regional Laboratory was certified on May 18 to perform confirmatory testing for H1N1 (swine) flu. This change was a newly authorized capability. Previously all samples had to be sent to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. Beyond that, our process since the event started has been to test the samples, investigate each case, make contact with the people affected and report the information to the public. The chart below, which is posted on our Web site, displays the status of H1N1 (swine) flu in Tarrant County as of June 5. The Web address is:

H1N1 Influenza Virus Infections by Cities in Tarrant County 4/25/09 through 6/05/09

Cities	Tarrant County Confirmed Cases
Arlington	31
Bedford	3
Benbrook	3
Euless	3
Fort Worth	76
Grand Prairie	3
Grapevine	1
Haltom City	4
Keller	1
Mansfield	3
North Richland Hills	2
Unincorporated Area	0
TOTAL	130

For more information: http://health.tarrantcounty.com

Keller Fire Station No. 4

Commissioner Fickes congratulated the City of Keller at the Grand Opening and Hose Uncoupling Ceremony of their new Keller Fire Station No. 4 on April 3rd.

Pictured left to right: Fire Chief, Dan Gaumont, Commissioner Fickes, Mayor Pat McGrail, and Division Chief, Chuck Blankenship. http://health.tarrantcounty.com

NE Tarrant County

**City by City Event Contacts** 

Arlington www.ci.arlington.tx.us Bedford www.ci.bedford.tx.us Colleyville www.colleyville.com Euless www.ci.euless.tx.us

Flower Mound www.flower-mound.com Fort Worth www.fortworth.com

www.willrogersmemorialcenter.com www.fortworthconventioncenter.com

Grand Prairie www.gptx.org Grapevine www.grapevinetexas.gov Haltom City www.haltomcitytx.com Haslet www.haslet.org Hurst www.ci.hurst.tx.us Keller www.cityofkeller.com N. Richland Hills www.nrhtx.com Richland Hills www.richlandhills.com Roanoke www.roanoketexas.com Southlake www.ci.southlake.tx.us Trophy Club www.trophyclub.org Watauga www.ci.watauga.tx.us Westlake www.westlake-tx.org

Also see <u>www.artsnetc.org</u> for the surrounding area.



#### Northeast Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - NORTH RICHLAND HILLS**

### **Crossroads Redevelopment**

The City of North Richland Hills is proud to welcome the redevelopment of the former Crossroads Village located on the northeast corner of Rufe Snow Drive and NE Loop 820. The newly named Shoppes at Crown Point has an up to date contemporary feel that is already driving economic growth in the area.



### **Business Improvement & Growth Program**

The Business Improvement & Growth Program, otherwise known as B.I.G., is a City funded program that provides technical and financial assistance to independent businesses seeking to renovate and restore their exterior appearance.

- B.I.G. Coverage Area and Business Eligibility:
  - -Located in North Richland Hills
  - -Located south of Mid Cities Boulevard -Storefronts facing Boulevard 26, Davis Boulevard, or Rufe Snow Drive

The Program Provides for:

-A matching grant for storefront improvements up to \$10,000

-A matching grant for a new monument sign up to \$3,000

- -Provides up to \$2,000 for removal of non-conforming pole sign
- -Technical and design assistance for *FREE*
- This adds up to a possible value of \$15,000

The City is proud to announce that two businesses have completed construction on their projects, while three are under construction and four are in the bidding process. There has been an extreme interest in the program and the department has sent out over 30 applications.





### New Economic Development Website

The Economic Development department is excited to announce it's redesigned and enhanced website <u>www.nrhed.com</u>. The following are some of the new features available to visitors:

- -Find information on how to start your business, along with business counseling resources and business tips and advice
- -Get all the latest economic news for the area and check the calendar for local news and events
- -Find information on business incentives, such as the Business Improvement & Growth Program

-Take advantage of the interactive maps that show information on major properties located in the City, as well as zoning and strategic planning areas

-Read about the City's strategic planning areas, including information on Loop 820 Corridor, South Boulevard 26, Home Town, Smithfield, and Regional Rail

-Subscribe to the site to get notices when important information is updated on the site

We encourage you to explore the new and improved website to see why so many call The City of North Richland Hills home.



For more information on the City of N. Richland Hills: <u>www.nrhtx.com</u> or <u>www.nrhed.com</u>

### Precinct 3 Maintenance News



Commissioner Fickes and Staff with Precinct 3 Maintenance Center group. Photo taken at their annual Employee Appreciation Day Luncheon. On May the 18th our team was treated to an Employee Appreciation Lunch to show our gratitude for the hard work and dedication they provide for the citizens in Precinct Three. As a team, we strive to keep our roads in good condition, for a safe driving environment. We have completed the crack sealing operation for the year and have started mowing the right-of-ways and improving storm water drainage ditches for the summer.

Since the beginning of our fiscal year on October 1<sup>st</sup> we have completed numerous city and county projects. Some of our projects were asphalt overlays to prevent deterioration of the road, and others have included total rehabilitation of the road to strengthen the road base and improve the driving surface. We are currently working on road rehabilitation in the City of Colleyville and the City of Keller, with many other roads and cities planned for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Neal Welch, Director of Field Operations



Commissioner Fickes presents Bobbi Arthur, President of the Texas Association of Aging Programs with a Proclamation recognizing May as Older Americans Month.

#### Northeast Newsletter

#### Page 5

### An Historical Moment In Time

### Historic Smithfield

First settled in the mid-1800's, the area known as Smithfield was largely a farming community producing cotton, wheat, oats, berries, grapes, plums, peaches, corn and cattle. One of the grandest events in Smithfield's history was the arrival of the Cotton Belt Railroad in 1887. The tracks bypassed the Smithfield business district by about a quarter mile. Undaunted, storekeepers and others moved their buildings southward, and a new business district was established near the train depot.

The railroad fare from Smithfield to Fort Worth was 35 cents and the trip took about an hour to cover the 18 or 19 miles in good weather. The train stopped twice a day, at 10:10 in the morning going southwest to Fort Worth and at 10:10 at night going to points east such as Plano and Greenville. The morning stop in particular attracted townsfolk who would gossip and collect news from the conductor. The railroad opened up potential for commercial development and in the late 1880s Smithfield received its first real industry - the Smithfield Canning Factory. The factory employed 20 to 30 women and children who canned tomatoes, corn, peaches and peas grown by area farmers.



The Smithfield area flourished after the Cotton Belt Railroad arrived in 1887. Today, the City of North Richland Hills is working to bring a new commuter rail service to the community.

Today, Smithfield is part of the City of North Richland Hills. The rail line is still there and the City is working to bring a new commuter rail service to the community as part of the Southwest-to-Northeast Rail Corridor. This service would run from southwest Fort Worth, through downtown Fort Worth, Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Colleyville and Grapevine to the Dallas Fort Worth Airport. Two stops are planned in North Richland Hills: one on Iron Horse Boulevard near Loop 820, and one near Main Street and Davis Boulevard in Smithfield. In addition to providing alternate transportation for commuters, City leaders believe the rail stations will help stimulate economic development in both areas. New transit oriented development codes will govern future development around the rail station sites and will help in preserving the historic nature of the Smithfield area.

------For more information, please visit the City of North Richland Hills online at www.nrhtx.com or call the NRH Planning & Development Department at 817-427-6330. Article courtesy of Mary Peters, Public Informations Officer, City of NRH. .

### Tarrant County District Attorney



TIM CURRY

1938 - 2009

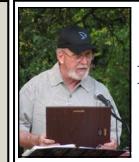
On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Commissioners Court renamed the Tarrant County Justice Center the Tim Curry Criminal Justice Center to provide a lasting tribute to District Attorney Tim Curry.

First elected in November 1972, he was re-elected to nine consecutive terms and was the second longest serving District Attorney in the State of Texas—an office he served with honor and distinction. Mr. Curry passed away on April 24th leaving a long legacy of public service and integrity.



DR. JIM MCDERMOTT **CEO OF MHMR ~ TARRANT COUNTY** 

Commissioners Court recognized Dr. Jim McDermott, CEO of MHMR of Tarrant County, on being selected by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare to receive the 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award for Staff Leadership



Westlake Decoration Day

Commissioner Fickes joined with the citizens of the Town of Westlake in commemorating Decoration Day on May 25th. This is an annual event held to preserve the tradition of cleaning and decorating the gravesites on Memorial Day.

#### Northeast Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3 Page 6

# Northwest ISD: In the Business of Building Futures

With a vision of becoming the best and most sought-after school district in Texas, the fast-growth Northwest ISD is investing in the future to meet its goal. Located north of Fort Worth and west of the Dallas metroplex, the district covers 234 square miles and serves 14 communities, spanning Denton, Wise, and Tarrant counties. With more than 13,000 students in 19 campuses, the district is expected to continue to experience significant growth in future years.

With the guidance of a united Board of Trustees and the leadership of Superintendent Karen G. Rue, Northwest ISD is a recognized district, dedicated to preparing for the future while keeping kids first. Despite current economic conditions, the district remains financially secure and student enrollment continues to rise.



Clara Love Elementary School is scheduled to open this August in Justin, Texas.

To help accommodate student growth, Northwest ISD will open two new schools

in August - Byron Nelson High School, a similar benefit in the fall of 2008 as conducive to learning and feature many "green" initiatives.



The district's first Outdoor Learning Center was dedicated at Lakeview Elementary in April.

Northwest ISD strives to provide students a premier education, and, in a world greatly influenced by technology, high school students will be provided a great advantage this fall in the form of mini laptop computers. In an effort to increase student engagement and provide equal opportunities, students will be issued a netbook for use at school and home. District officials expect to extend this initiative to middle school students in the fall of 2010.

All NISD professional employees received

the district's second high school, and Clara teachers and other employees received Love Elementary, the fourteenth elemen- laptops. In addition, the district continues tary campus. More than just schools, these to pay one of the top starting teacher salastate-of-the-art facilities have been devel- ries in Texas. Keeping the philosophy that oped to provide students an environment Northwest must retain the best teachers in order to become the best district, the NISD Board has steadily increased salaries over the last 10 years, raising the beginning salary from \$30,000 to \$47,500.

Northwest ISD is committed to being the best. In preparing students for a successful future and carefully planning for the district's future, NISD is building success.



Northwest ISD offers students hands-on learning opportunities. .....

For more information please visit: www.nisdtx.org





Team Fickes, over 160 strong, participated in the LifeGift "Second Chance Run" on a rainy Saturday morning to bring awareness of the need for organ donation. Team Fickes received the award for the largest team in the event. Commissioner Fickes A great time was had by all! Thank you everyone!



with largest team award.

For more information on organ donation www.lifegift.org

MetroPort Meals on Wheels Dinner ~ Auction ~ Golf Tournament June 14th and 15th



For more information please call 817-491-1141 or visit www.metroportmow.org

The most wasted of all days is one without laughter. - Cummings



manding officer of F Company, 2nd U.S. Dragoons.

