



Spring 2016 Progress Report

Keeping You Informed About Your City

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Denison Streets Soon to Become Smoother



2015: New Housing Sets Stage for Possible Record 2016

### Parks & Recreation: New Park Announced

## New 80-Acre Multi-use Health & Wellness Park Result of Collaborative Partnership

### City Partners with Health Foundation and Developer

**O**n November 6, 2015 the City of Denison, in partnership with the Texoma Health Foundation and Gateway Village, announced plans to build Texoma Health Foundation Park, an 80-acre multi-use health and wellness park.

For more than a decade, the City of Denison has been exploring opportunities to create more space for outdoor physical activity. Citizen surveys conducted over the years have indicated a need and desire for increased recreational opportunities. After looking at many different options and possible locations, the City of Denison identified an opportunity to finally meet this need.

#### Premium Amenities

The park will feature a number of amenities such as hiking and biking trails, exercise stations, a splash pad, playgrounds, soccer fields, baseball/softball fields, sand



volleyball courts, pavilions and open green space.

The new park will be located west of the Spur 503/U.S. 75 interchange on land adjacent to Iron Ore Creek within the Gateway Village development.

#### Quality-of-Life Benefit

“Texoma Health Foundation Park provides a tremendous opportunity to bring together all aspects of outdoor health and wellness for people of all ages,” said City of Denison Mayor, Jared Johnson. “This is an exceptional regional amenity that will impact the community for generations to come.”

#### Public/Private Partnership

The \$14 million project is a public-private partnership

between the City of Denison, Texoma Health Foundation, and Gateway Village developer, Covenant Development.

Texoma Health Foundation will contribute \$8.0 million toward the project; Covenant Development will contribute \$3.0 million in infrastructure and land; and the City of Denison putting in an additional \$3.0 million in funding.

La Terra Studio has been contracted for the design of the park, which is at 30% completion. Ground breaking is expected to be in the summer of 2016 with the first playing season expected in spring 2018.



## FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

**Jared Johnson**  
Mayor, City of Denison

# “2016: Moving Forward with Quality of Life”

**A**s you'll read throughout this newsletter, we are continually striving to improve the quality of life in the City of Denison.

While we continue to attract both new industry and retail business by fostering a pro-business environment, we are taking a proactive approach to all of our current initiatives such as housing, street maintenance, and keeping our neighborhoods clean.

The City is attracting more quality housing to Denison by offering new incentives. We are improving our existing neighborhoods by tearing down dangerous structures and enforcing minimum property standards.

Finally, we are ramping up our efforts to maintain a quality park and street system. The City's strategic approach to improving quality of life will be the hallmark of 2016 in the City of Denison.

### **Q: What is the City doing to clean up dilapidated properties and substandard housing?**

**A:** In 2015, the City demolished over 50 dangerous, unsightly structures throughout the community. The City then maintains the vacant lots and, when possible, makes them available to builders under the Affordable Housing Program.

Most of these were old homes that had not been maintained to minimum standards.

The City's code enforcement officers also inspect properties to ensure they comply with Minimum Property Standards. These standards require that homes be painted, protected from the weather, and be structurally sound.

Yards must also be kept free from trash, debris, junk, and other nuisance items. City staff is currently focusing enforcement efforts on the major corridors in Denison, but will inspect any property on a complaint-driven basis.

In an effort to crackdown on substandard rental housing, recently adopted minimum standards for the interior of structures were put in place. Upon receiving a complaint, the City can inspect rental housing for electrical, plumbing, or other life-safety issues.

If you know of a property that needs inspecting, please contact Code Enforcement at 903-465-2720 or file a complaint at [www.cityofdenison.com](http://www.cityofdenison.com).

### **Q: What's being done to deal with stray dogs and cats?**

**A:** Two full-time Animal Control officers respond to stray or dangerous animal complaints. Citizens can call 903-465-2422 or visit [www.cityofdenison.com](http://www.cityofdenison.com) to report a stray or dangerous animal.

Stray dogs and cats are taken to the City's animal shelter on Morton Street where they are held for 72 hours.

Animals considered adoptable are then released to the Denison Animal Welfare Group (DAWG) where they are placed for adoption. The City has a strong relationship with DAWG, which houses stray animals at the former southside fire station on Eisenhower Parkway. You can find out more about DAWG by visiting [www.denisonanimalwelfaregroup.org](http://www.denisonanimalwelfaregroup.org).

### **Q: What is the City doing to maintain the quality of its parks?**

**A:** The City Council has adopted a Park Implementation Plan that outlines improvements to be made over time at all of the City's parks. These improvements are funded through the General Park Maintenance fund to which most residents contribute. The recent enhancements to Forest Park are an example of the improvements the City is making to its parks.

In addition, the Park Maintenance crew, which includes 12 full-time staff members, performs regular maintenance on the parks such as mowing, cleaning, painting, and repairs.



This crew recently completed improvements to the Mini Park located at the corner of Morton and Fannin Streets. The City is committed to maintaining a high-quality park system that will help continue enhancing the quality of life in Denison.

If you see an opportunity for improvement in one of the City's parks, please contact the Parks & Recreation Department at 903-465-1676 or visit [www.cityofdenison.com](http://www.cityofdenison.com).

## Stay Connected to Us Online, too!

Check out our newly designed City of Denison webpage, “MyConnection” – there for you 24/7 – giving you access to even more information. It's updated frequently with the latest news and information about your city. You can even pay your water bill online!



[www.CityOfDenison.com](http://www.CityOfDenison.com)

# Focused on Building a Foundation for the Future

With all the new jobs and investments provided by both small and large businesses in the area, Denison and Grayson County are currently at a record low unemployment rate of 3.7% – commonly referred to as “full employment”.

While that rate will fluctuate as our business climate ebbs and flows based on what’s going on with the state, national and global economies, Denison is riding a wave of success which we fully intend to continue.

## Economic Success Has Ripple Effect

When the economy heats up this much, it creates a ripple effect that shows up in an increased demand for additional housing and more skilled workers. Denison leadership has been extremely focused and engaged this past year developing programs to address both of these needs.

In regard to housing, announced new housing developments priced from affordable to mid-range set a new record in Denison in 2015. It appears the forecast for 2016 will be even better.

Workforce development programs were the most pressing topics in 2015. In order for industries and business to be sustainable they must be able to hire employees qualified for middle-skilled jobs. Middle-skill jobs are those that require more education and training than a high school diploma but less than a four-year college degree, pay higher competitive wages, and offer a tangible career path.

## Major Employment Sectors

The two sectors in Grayson County that produce the largest amount of quality jobs for local residents are Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing. In 2014, The Denison Development Alliance initiated the discussion on ways to encourage interest

and training for these careers. This culminated in a study commissioned by the Denison Development Alliance, Sherman Economic Development Corp. and Workforce Solutions Texoma.

## Study Results in Strategies

The purpose of the study was to research and identify best-practices for a workforce supply chain model, beginning in middle-school and continuing through post-secondary education, which can be implemented in the Texoma region. A number of recommendations were made including the following:

- **Create a comprehensive Strategy Steering Committee and two Sector Councils: one for Advanced Manufacturing and one for Healthcare.**
- **Offer the high school programs through a Dual Credit model, leading to one or more Level I College Certificates, which then articulate more easily into Associate degrees.**
- **Incorporate nationally recognized industry certifications into the high school curriculum and encourage employers to utilize these in their hiring practices.**
- **Designate individuals whose sole responsibility is career awareness among middle school and high school students across the region, including engagement of counselors, teachers, and parents.**

All of the above strategies were implemented in 2015. The framework of a “pipeline for middle-skilled workers” is now in place at the Denison ISD and other schools in the area.

## Key to Future Success

The last and most important part of the process is to encourage parents and students to enroll in the manufacturing



The focus on advanced manufacturing jobs has also led to the launch of a manufacturing dual-credit program across many local districts, which will start in the fall of 2016. The program will allow students, beginning in the 10th grade, to take classes aimed at helping them earn industrial certification and professional internships by graduation.

career cluster that has been developed. Two special events were launched to help inform parents and students of the new programs – Manufacturing Day and Parents Night.

Manufacturing Day consisted of 16 local companies hosting over 400 students from Denison and Sherman, providing them a tour of their plants and discussion on the benefits of choosing manufacturing as a career path.

Parent’s Night provided a similar opportunity for parents of 8th and 9th graders who were interested in touring local production facilities and discovering and discussing future career opportunities for their children.

Denison ISD has recently started a dedicated program to offer students a career cluster in Advanced Manufacturing. The



The tour for parents of area school children was aimed at increasing awareness of local manufacturing careers. Area school districts partnered with industry stakeholders to offer the tour to the parents of eighth and ninth graders. It was a chance for parents to see production facilities that may hire their children in the future.

career cluster for Healthcare is set to launch in the fall of 2017.

## Present and Future Looks Bright

All economic indicators point to an extremely healthy and growing economy in Denison. In fact, it’s being regarded as one of the best economic environments in Denison’s history. Moving forward will require creative methods of dealing with the reality of a new economy. Plans and efforts addressing housing and educational needs are a great start.

# Stable Growth: Denison Sees Significant Uptick in Construction

For the City of Denison, 2015 was a great year for new home construction. Permits reached levels not seen in over a decade and 2016 looks to be equally impressive.

"In the last couple of years, Denison has had remarkable employment growth which has helped to boost home sales," Judson Rex, Denison City Manager said.

## Affordable Housing Program

The City of Denison's award-winning Affordable Housing Program has reached new heights.

Over 45 lots have now been committed to the program with 10 homes completed and sold since the program's inception in 2014. Another 15 homes are under construction and many more ready to pull permits.



These completed homes are helping to revitalize the City's neighborhoods and provide an affordable path to home-ownership for Denison's residents.

## Multi-family Housing

The new year brought with it a new project, the likes of which

have not been started in the City in decades.

Construction began in February on the Residences at Gateway Village, a high-quality, market-rate apartment complex that features 180 apartment homes with an impressive amenity package.

The City also approved an age-restricted (55 and up) development, The Arbors at Park, will include around 200 cottage-style apartments and will be constructed at the southeast corner of Park Avenue and Highland Park Drive.

## A Trio of Single-Family Options

Construction has been completed on the infrastructure for the first phases in three Gateway Village single-family developments.

Saddle Creek, Greenway Parks, and Fawn Meadow will include over 250 homes at build-out with varying prices and sizes. Residents can expect to see homes being built starting in April 2016.

All three developments can be accessed via Loy Lake Road west of U.S. 75.

## City Infrastructure Plans

# City Releases Street Repair 'Blitz' Plans

Street maintenance once again emerged in the most recent citizen survey as the top challenge for the City of Denison.

"We're making street repair a top infrastructure priority," City Manager, Judson Rex said. "We're pumping up the amount of street repair we do annually as we tackle head-on what is a major concern of Denison residents."

Fortunately, the City has a three-fold approach for pumping new life into its street system.

## Pavement Management Program

In 2015, the City Council approved the use of over \$1.0 million in street bond funds to go toward a new maintenance program.

The program includes the purchase of much needed equipment and new staff

to broaden the reach of maintenance activities.

City of Denison Public Works staff will be crack sealing, slurry sealing, and micro-paving city streets during the next 2 to 3 years, with a goal to touch every street during that time.

## CDBG Program Changes

The City is looking to tap its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for more heavy-duty street repairs.

This program will make available over \$1.5 million in funding for overlay and pavement reconstruction activities in the City's low- to moderate-income neighborhoods.

## Increased Budget Funding

In the current budget year, City Council has approved the use of a percentage of the franchise fees the



City collects from utility companies (gas, electric, cable, etc.) to go toward street maintenance.

This amounts to \$150,000 in FY2016 and it is hoped to increase this amount in future years.

If you would like to report a pothole or other street damage, please contact the Public Works Department at 903-465-2720 x2451 or visit [www.cityofdenison.com](http://www.cityofdenison.com).

