Large vacancy leases give development directors hope

Leasing of ‘big box’ spaces signals economic recovery for region

By Rachel Slade

When Julie Poteet opened Enigma Salon 12 years ago, customers bustled among the shops surrounding hers on Colleyville Boulevard between trips to the nearby Kroger, and Poteet and her stylists had to turn down walk-ins throughout the day. Fast forward, and For Lease signs pave every window from her storefront to the end of the strip.

“I think us and the cleaners are the only ones who have been able to stick it out,” Poteet said. “Some tenants moved immediately, and other tenants lasted about a year or two and then moved or closed.”

What Poteet is referring to is the closing of the Kroger, her shopping center’s anchor, like this create momentum, and that begins to build on itself.”

Big box, big challenge

Many of the vacancies in Southlake, Colleyville and Grapevine were the result of national corporations scaling back operations. Especially in the past few years, companies nationwide have downsized their footprints and been hesitant to add new stores, officials said. Add in the fact that thousands of square footage — and those that do want to locate in booming areas — and brokers and building owners are left with a real challenge, Southlake Economic Development Director Greg Last said.

“There’s a reason they call them ‘anchors,’” but bigger tenants don’t want to go in areas that are struggling either,” he said. “There needs to be a balance.”

Nationally, 6.6 percent of official “big-box” spaces sat vacant this summer, according to CoStar, a commercial real estate research and information company. That is down from a 2009 high of 7.9 percent, but CoStar predicts the number of large vacant spaces will increase by the end of the year as more companies scale back.

See Vacancy | 8

FY 2013 budgets: big projects, stable taxes

Councils approve plans to reward employees, improve quality of life

By Rachel Slade

The local economy has improved some in the past year, bringing with it the slow return of higher sales tax revenues, modest increases in property values and a bump in new construction, but area communities continued their conservative approaches to budgeting in their FY 2013 proposals.

Often described by Colleyville leaders as the “new normal,” city officials throughout the region have spent the past several months crafting budgets that succeed in maintaining service levels, offering new projects to residents and giving small rewards to employees while keeping property tax rates stable — or even lowering them, in the case of Grapevine — and advancing the goals of elected leaders and longterm plans.

“We want to keep service at the high levels we have, but … this is basically a maintenance budget,” Grapevine Budget Manager Gary Livingston said, mirroring the comments of many in regional leadership. “We’re not adding a lot of bells and whistles, but we are focusing on our core services that we provide to our people in terms of public safety and upgrades to our parks and roadways.”

The cities of Grapevine, Colleyville and Southlake were all scheduled to adopt their FY 2013 budgets this week during regular Tuesday night council meetings. The Town of Westlake is expected to adopt its budget next Monday. All four cities’ fiscal years will begin Oct. 1.

See individual cities | 9–11
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Elections 2012

Just weeks remain to get registered for the fall election

Tarrant County voters can find local voting and elections information on the Tarrant County elections website at www.tarrantcounty.com/evote, by calling 817-831-VOTE (8683) or in person at 2700 Premier St., Fort Worth.

Denton County voters can find information at elections.dentoncounty.com, by calling 940-349-3200 or in person at 401 W. Hickory St., Denton.

Important election dates
Last day to register to vote: Oct. 9

First day of early voting: Oct. 22

Last day to apply for ballot by mail: Oct. 30 (received, not postmarked)

Last day of early voting: Nov. 2

Election Day: Nov. 6

The temperatures have cooled, football is back in full swing and students have settled into their class schedules. That can only mean one thing: budget season.

Sitting on the couch the other night flanked by stacks of paper and a calculator, and focused on computer documents with page counts in the triple-digits, I couldn’t help but think about how many hours were spent in their creation.

City budgets take staff members hours upon hours of time to research, analyze and compile, then the projects are whittled down by city leadership before being fine-tooth-combed by city councils in what ultimately is a months-long venture. The whole process is painstaking, and in recent years, cities have faced the same issues that many of their residents have: needs, wants and only so many dollars.

That is why I love budgets: they tell a story about priorities. Just like you could size up a person’s budget and discover they enjoy wine or traveling or new clothes, city budgets show commitments to roads, parks, trails, economic development, tourism and more.

They break down, line for line, what it takes to keep a city running, to keep water clean, to keep traffic moving.

And they spell out goals both large and small, projects that can be eagerly awaited and surveys that will speak to longterm endeavors.

I encourage you to take a look not only at some highlights of your own city’s budget this month, but at your neighboring cities’ as well. Altogether, I think you will find a lot for which to look forward.

Rachel Slade
Editor
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2. Providing health plans, employer groups, insurance carriers, and trust funds with a wide range of health and wellness programs, an office of American Specialty Health recently opened at 950 E. Hwy. 114, Ste. 200, in Southlake. 800-848-3555, www.ashcompanies.com

3. **Allied Oil & Gas Services**, an oil and gas company providing pressure pumping services, recently opened at 950 E. Hwy. 114, Ste. 110, in Southlake. 817-546-3358, www.alliedservices.com


5. **Crowned by Grace**, a boutique offering clothing, jewelry and handbags, opened this month at 601 S. Main St., Ste. 103, in Grapevine. www.jakesburgers.net

Coming Soon

6. Serving up a variety of burgers, hot dogs, milkshakes, breakfast and more, a **Bottlecap Alley** offering drive-through service has opened at 2150 E. State Hwy 114, Ste. 101 in Southlake. www.bottlecapalley.com

7. **Gourmet Apples & More**, serving a selection of hand-dipped caramel apples, sweets and gourmet popcorn, is now open at 503 W. Northwest Hwy. in Grapevine. 817-251-0800, www.gourmetaples.com

8. **FootJoy**, which offers a range of reflexology therapy services, recently opened at 2125 W. Southlake Blvd., Ste. 365. 817-310-0599, www.footjoytx.com

9. A music and movement program for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and young children, **Kindermusik with Kat** is now open at Christ Our King Church at 2221 E. Southlake Blvd. 817-251-0476, www.kindermusikwithkat.com

10. **Jakes Burgers**, along with sandwiches, hot dogs and fried sides, appetizers and desserts, are now available at 520 Main St. in Grapevine. www.jakesburgers.net

Grapevine resident Kathy Tatum in August launched **A Better Life Personal Concierge and Lifestyle Management**. Services include errands, chores, appointment scheduling, pet services, house sitting, travel and relocation services, non-medical home visits, and more. 817-251-8182, www.abetterlifeconcierge.com

Offering a variety of tacos, burritos, and more, **Fuzzy’s Taco Shop** will soon open at 3100 Grapevine Mills Blvd., Ste. 101. www.fuzzystacoshop.com

**Golf Galaxy**, a golf and general sporting goods store featuring two indoor driving ranges and more, is expected to open this fall, filling the old Albertsons at 2100 W. Northwest Hwy. in Grapevine. www.golfgalaxy.com
Raylee Archer serves up **Bottlecap Alley** favorites at the new location in Southlake. Archer said the new location is the only one so far to offer a breakfast menu and a drive-through option.

A variety of sweets and treats await customers at **Gourmet Apples & More**.

817-329-9300, www.comfortinn.com

**Anniversary**

**Providence Bank** at 325 E. Southlake Blvd. celebrated its fifth anniversary in August. 817-912-3444, www.providencebanktx.com

**Closed**

**Zeytin Mediterranean Grill** at 3105 Ira E. Woods Ave. in Grapevine has closed. The Las Colinas location remains open.

**Butterfly Restaurant** at 2777 E. Southlake Blvd., Ste. C-100, has closed.

**Downtown Grapevine shop Blessed Boutiques** closed this summer at 201 E. Franklin St.

**The Colleyville location of Sushi Nikko** at 3930 Glade Road has closed.

817-778-4695, www.dr2marketing.com

**New Ownership**

**The Baymont Inn & Suites** at 301 Capitol St. in Grapevine recently completed renovations and transitioned to being a **Comfort Inn** in August.

817-912-9520

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**Raylee Archer**

**Pho Xpress** has brought a full Vietnamese menu to the Grapevine Mills area.

A variety of sweets and treats await customers at **Gourmet Apples & More**.

817-329-9300, www.comfortinn.com

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**Expansion**

**Gypsy Lane** at 603 S. Main St., Ste. 300 in Grapevine has recently expanded to include **Scentchips**, which offers jewelry, accessories, gifts and a little clothing. 817-421-3414, www.grapevine.scentchips.com

**Relocation**

**El Paisa Mexican Restaurant** has relocated to the old Tivoli Wines and Spirits space at 62 Main St., Ste. 110, in Colleyville. 817-778-4695, www.dr2marketing.com

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22 North Texas Walk for PKD
Area activists celebrate the annual North Texas Walk for PKD/Run the Square 5K in Southlake. Children’s Walk in memory of Jace Glenn. Also features a free pancake breakfast, music and prizes. Children’s Walk and 1-Mile Walk for PKD, free; Run the Square 5K, $10 for children, $20 for adults. 5K start time, 8:30 a.m.; Memory Walk, 9 a.m.; 1-Mile Walk, 9:30 a.m. Rustin Park, 1400 Main St. www.walkforpkd.org/northtexas

27 B&B Student Short Film Fest
Aspiring filmmakers in ninth grade through college show off short films of 15 minutes or less on the big screen. Free. 7 p.m. B&B Colleyville Cinema Grille and IMAX, 5655 Colleyville Blvd. www.colleyvillecinema.com

October
2 Be Proud, Texas Rally
Several area school districts host a Be Proud rally supporting public education funding. Event is co-sponsored by Friends of Texas Public Schools and Be Proud, Texas, and includes information about school funding in Texas and how residents can help encourage change. 7 p.m. Free. Verizon Theatre, 1001 Performance Place, Grand Prairie. www.fotps.org/beproud

5-7 Oktoberfest
The Southlake Chamber of Commerce hosts the 11th Annual Southlake Oktoberfest featuring food, a variety of booths selling arts and crafts, entertainment, children’s activities and Weiner dog races. 5-11 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m.-11 p.m. Saturday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Weiner dog registration, 9 a.m.; parade, 10:15 a.m.; races, 10:30 a.m. Free. Southlake Town Square, 1400 Main St. www.oktoberfestsouthlake.com

6 Art for the Cure
The Support the War in My Rack Susan G. Komen team hosts its third annual Art for the Cure fundraiser in downtown Grapevine. Event includes silent auction of art, spa and sport packages, local merchant gift baskets, and more, live music, a wine pull, and light refreshments. All proceeds benefit Susan G. Komen for the Cure. 6-9 p.m. A Touch of Paris, 202 W. Wall St., Grapevine. 817-975-6168, glennamail@gmail.com

13 Run, Walk & Roll
Central Market presents the 4th annual Run Walk & Roll benefitting the Neuro Assistance Foundation. Event includes 5K & 1 Mile for all ages and a pancake breakfast. Dogs welcome. Adult 5K, $30 through Oct. 6, $35 through Oct. 12 and $40 race day; Youth 5K/1 Mile, $20; Adult 1 Mile, $25 through Oct. 12 and $30 race day; Registration/Check-in, 7:30 a.m.; 5K handcycle start, 8:25 a.m.; 5K run/walk & 1 Mile run, walk & roll, 8:30 a.m. Central Market, 1425 E. Southlake Blvd. www.neuroassistance.org

Westlake Baja at Vaquero
Area golfers are put to the test with a game unlike any other during the annual Westlake Baja at Vaquero fundraiser.

Online Calendar
Find more or submit Grapevine, Colleyville, Southlake & Westlake events at www.impactnews.com/gcs/calendar. To have Grapevine, Colleyville, Southlake & Westlake events included in the monthly print edition, they must be submitted online by the fourth Friday of the month.

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We can also provide that perfect landscape for your perfect tree.

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Colleyville scores high on Dallas suburb ranking

Colleyville was recently named the fifth best Dallas suburb by the biennial Best Dallas Suburbs issue of D Magazine. Celebrating its third consecutive issue in the top five, Colleyville remains the highest ranked city in Tarrant County. D Magazine ranked 63 area cities based on safety, education, housing values and ambiance. Colleyville’s ranking was in part because of its mature trees, the abundance of athletic fields and its proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport, without the sounds of planes flying overhead. Southlake ranked sixth on this year’s list and Grapevine came in at No. 27. 

Beating out Colleyville were Parker, Highland Village, Highland Park and University Park, which scored first through fourth, respectively. For a full list of rankings, visit www3.dmagazine.com/content/best-dallas-suburbs-2012.

Grapevine Program guides move online

In an effort to save money and reduce paper waste, Grapevine has stopped printing physical copies of its program guides from the Parks and Recreation department. The fall/winter 2012-13 Playbook Activities Guide, featuring schedules and registration options for athletic, dance, health and fitness programs, Botanical Gardens programs, Senior programs, special events and more, is now online at www.playgrapevine.com.

Southlake City joins in on Vial of Life

Southlake Fire Services is now offering the Vial of Life program free to residents. The national program, which has already been picked up by neighboring Colleyville, provides important medical information to first responders in the event of an at-home emergency.

Residents who pick up a Vial of Life kit will be asked to complete medical information forms for everyone in the home. Program users will then place those forms, in a container marked “Vial of Life,” inside their refrigerator and mark the fridge door or front door with the program decal alerting first-responders to look for the medical information.

Vial of Life kits are available at the fire services division of the city’s DPS Headquarters, 600 State St. For more information, call EMS Lt. Ryan Arthur at 817-748-8328.

Westlake

Town Council gets top honors

The Westlake Town Council in late August was awarded the City Council of the Year Award by the Texas City Managers Association. The award was presented to Mayor Laura Wheat by TCMA President Bert Lumberas, who works as an assistant city manager for the City of Austin. The new award recognizes outstanding city councils that have made significant contributions to local government in Texas. Lumberas said Westlake stood out because of council members’ work both for the city and Westlake Academy, and their 2010 decision to approve the town’s first-ever property tax.

Meetings

- **Colleyville City Council**
  100 Main St., Colleyville
  817-503-1000
  Oct. 2 & 16, 7:30 p.m.
  Meetings broadcast live on city cable channel 16. Replays air at 6 p.m. on the Thursdays and Sundays of meeting weeks. www.colleyville.com.

- **Grapevine City Council**
  250 S. Main St., Grapevine
  817-410-3000
  Oct. 2 & 16, 7:30 p.m.
  Audio recordings available on the city’s website by noon the following day. www.grapevinetexas.gov

- **Southlake City Council**
  1400 Main St., Southlake
  817-749-4400
  Oct. 2 & 16
  Public work sessions often begin at 5:30 p.m. followed by a private executive session and public meeting. Forum times vary. Meetings are broadcast live on city cable channels 27 and 34. Live streams and recordings also available at www.ci.southlake.tx.us

- **Westlake Town Council**
  3 Village Circle, Westlake
  www.westlake-tx.com
  Sept. 24 & Oct. 22, 7 p.m.

- **Tarrant County Commissioners Court**
  100 E. Weatherford St., Fort Worth
  817-884-1111, www.tarrantcounty.com
  Meetings are Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

**Compiles by Rachel Slade**

**Colleyville**

**Southlake**

**Grapevine**

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Vacancy
Continued from 1

Northeast Tarrant County dipped into the recession later than other U.S. communities, though, Last said, and pulled out quicker, helping area communities buck the trend.

Shopping center fuel

The Albertsons on Northwest Highway near the Grapevine/Southlake border was already closed when Ali Merchant took over the shopping center’s Pack ‘N’ Mail. He did not like having an empty neighbor, but he said the shop had a loyal customer base and was well placed for residents’ errand runs, in a strip with a Blockbuster, dry cleaners and tanning salon. Like Poteet, though, he has watched tenants who helped fuel his business close. He hopes the fall opening of Golf Galaxy in the Albertsons space will drive customers and entrepreneurs back into the center.

“Businesses like us depend on other businesses in order to get visibility and traffic,” he said. “I have hopes that with this and the [DFW Connector] construction ending, we’ll start to get busier.”

That is exactly what should happen, city officials say. When massive vacancies fill in, especially because so many anchor properties are prominently displayed on major thoroughfares, property managers tend to see an influx of interest in the center from tenants large and small. It is a phenomenon born of herd mentality, Last said, and in its most refined state it is sometimes referred to as cotenancy, in which companies make deals to open near each other to the advantage of both. Whether predetermined or organic, the filling of shopping centers that occurs once an anchor arrives means more customers to fuel surrounding businesses, an increase in sales tax revenue, and a general look of health to the center that encourages activity and revitalization.

“I signed another five-year lease two years ago, but I had decided if they hadn’t done something with the Kroger by 2015, I would be moving,” Poteet said. “Now I think I want to remodel.”

The big picture

Poteet’s plans are exactly what area development officials hope for, that the backfilling will create a momentum that builds up occupancy in the cities’ older shopping centers and helps create a local economy with enough strength to spur on new development.

“We don’t want to be a pass-through, we want to be a go-to, and backfilling vacant spaces creates a stickiness,” Wieder said. “To have a space be filled, to have a parking lot with cars creates a buzz that can draw people in, that creates a moth-to-the-flame effect, and that can be good for Colleyville.”

Even the addition of new jobs — hundreds from the businesses that have been filled in the last year and more to come in the next few months — creates a ripple effect. Those employees are likely to spend money in their work cities during the week, helping support surrounding restaurants and retailers, and they are likely to help strengthen the community intangibly with their time and talents. Ultimately, Last said, the goal is to kickstart a feeling, and a reality, of prosperity.

“The occupancy’s coming, the tenants seem optimistic, the brokers seem optimistic,” Last said. “I think the economy’s coming back.”

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FILLING UP VACANCIES

As the economy has recovered, several large vacancies that were empty for years have been filled. Now among these three cities, only two large retail spaces remain vacant: a long-abandoned Albertsons on Colleyville Boulevard and the old Robb & Stucky space near the center of Southlake Town Square.
The proposed budget scheduled for approval by the Colleyville City council this week totals $39.5 million and focuses dollars on improving infrastructure, investing in public safety, stirring economic activity and development, and enhancing the city’s identity.

Colleyville has seen a small rebound in its property values this year and is anticipating small progress in economy-driven revenues such as sales tax. But FY 2013 goals will be accomplished while maintaining one of the smallest city employee-to-resident ratios in the area and one of the lowest city tax rates in Northeast Tarrant County: 35.59 cents per $100 of valuation.

Planning ahead
Line items for FY 2013, which is coming in with about $3.8 million more in expenditures compared to FY 2012, include a number of projects that will benefit residents in the coming year with the goal of branding the city and improving upon Colleyville’s quality of life.

That includes $1.8 million for improvements at the intersection of Cheek Sparger and Jackson roads, street maintenance and reconstruction projects totaling more than $2.4 million, roughly $651,300 for the design and construction of two trails — Pleasant Run and Webb House — and nearly $144,000 for enhancements at the senior center and Colleyville’s quality of life.

The city also plans to invest $100,000 in a new playground at LD Lockett Park and pay a little more than $100,000 to replace tables, chairs and the roof of the Colleyville Center, which.

The budget also looks ahead to the future, with a $200,000 expenditure for a comprehensive update to the city’s master plan that will inform City Council decisions on land use, budget allocation, economic development activity and service delivery.

“As Colleyville moves further through its community life stage and with open parcels of land becoming rarer, planning is paramount,” City Manager Jennifer Fadden said in a letter to council.

Consolidation savings
Part of that planning lately has involved joining forces with neighboring cities in the interest of efficiency and financial savings. This year’s budget continues the city’s interlocal contract with the cities of Keller and Southlake for regional public safety communication and jail services, which was first approved in 2010. And Colleyville and Keller will become the first Texas cities to consolidate their municipal court operations this year, a move made possible by legislation approved during the 2011 Legislative session and expected to save the city more than $57,000 annually.

The city will also consolidate animal control and shelter services with Keller and Southlake this year for a first-year savings of nearly $7,000.

Employee impact
Apart from Colleyville police, who are receiving salary adjustments to fix a compression issue blamed for attraction and retention problems within the department, city employees’ salaries will remain unchanged for a fourth year in FY 2013. Instead, they will receive a one-time lump sum payment of 2.5 percent of their regular salary. With the hope that the city will be able to offer raises again soon, this year’s budget includes a $66,000 line item for a comprehensive job classification and compensation study.

Grapevine
Continued from 1

In Grapevine, plans for FY 2013 include upgrades to city facilities, a variety of quality of life projects and a number of new employees.

City officials have crafted a $154.7 million budget, a nearly 13 percent increase over the current year’s estimated expenditures of $137.26 million. But in the tradition of Grapevine’s financial conservatism, it does so while suggesting yet another small decrease to the city’s property tax rate.

Tax rate dip
Grapevine residents have not seen an increase in their city tax rate since 1971, largely thanks to sales tax revenues — a majority of which are collected from nonresidents — that provide the city with a strong economic foundation.

Between about $33 million in new construction that was added to the tax rolls this year and a slight uptick in property valuations in the city, officials were able to ease tax rates down even further for FY 2013, to 34.5694 cents per $100 of valuation.

A tiny decrease from the FY 2012 rate of 34.8 cents, the new rate is what is known as the “effective” tax rate, or the rate at which a city brings in as much revenue from property taxes as it did the year before.

Big plans
Although the presented budget may not have a lot of bells and whistles, it includes a number of projects meant to make living and working in Grapevine easier, including nearly $5.76 million in suggested projects as part of the city’s quality of life fund.

Most expensive among the city’s plans for the fund are a $2.39 million renovation to Dove Pool and its bathhouse; $1.25 million of work on Casey’s Clubhouse, the city’s playground for children with special needs; $700,000 for median landscaping design and construction on Hwy. 26; and $499,000 to finish equipping the city’s public safety vehicles with transmitters that would allow first responders to change street lights ahead of them.

Smaller projects include the creation of a master plan for Meadowmere Park ($50,000), the building of a playground beside the DPS Outreach Center on Mustang Drive ($125,000), pedestrian enhancements along Hudgins Street ($141,750), the formulation of a citywide on-road bike plan ($50,000), and the design and construction of a new hiking trail ($225,000).

Employee effects
A majority of the budget’s increase this year can be attributed to payroll changes. The budget includes a 5 percent step pay increase for public safety employees and a 3 percent merit pay increase for employees of other departments that go into effect on employees’ anniversaries.

Those numbers were derived from a study of 18 comparable cities in the market undertaken this year at the request of the City Council. The new budget also includes funding for eight new full-time positions and one new part-time position spread across a variety of departments, including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety and the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Westlake
Continued from 1

Westlake drafted a $24.35 million budget this year, making commitments to invest in employees, town infrastructure and programs that will help maintain and progress the town’s reputation in service delivery and commitment to knowledge.

Revenue streams
This will be only the third year that Westlake assesses a property tax on its residents, and ad valorem revenues will account for about 21 percent of the general fund. Town Council members chose to keep taxes steady for FY 2013, at 15.6840 cents per $100 of valuation. Officials said the decision, which will bring in less revenue overall, was based on how new ad valorem taxes are to residents, surveys showing that residents are not interested in “a lot of fluff” and the pride the town has in taxing residents as little as possible.

“It was a measure of accomplishment to provide services without having a property tax ... but we outgrew it,” Assistant Town Manager Amanda DeGan said. “Still, we maintain a very conservative approach.”

While residential and commercial property values went up this year, Finance Director Debbie Piper said, the net taxable value of Westlake properties dropped because of tax abatements on key corporate residents, the result of economic development agreement measures being met.

Project plans
In accordance with the Town Council’s five-year capital improvement program, a number of road projects are on the docket for funding this year, including streetscaping along FM 1938/Davis Boulevard, the last of improvements to J.T. Ottinger/Dove Road; enhancement projects planned along Hwy. 114/170; and the start of reconstruction and drainage work on Dove Road east of FM 1938. The town will also continue to look for ways to grow connectivity through public-private partnerships, and through agreements with neighboring cities.

Additional money will support building maintenance at Westlake Academy, trail repairs, and equipment and infrastructure upgrades, particularly in the public safety and public works realms.

Salary bumps
Although the Town Council has not decided an amount yet, Westlake employees are likely to see improved salaries this year. The budget includes $100,000 for pay and benefit adjustments that will be determined by a survey of comparable towns. Finding comparable towns is not easy, DeGan said, because so few have a staff conducting both municipal and academic functions, but the ultimate goal is to move salaries to within 3 percent of the median.

Westlake Academy
While Westlake Academy receives operational funding from federal, state and local sources, academy property is owned and maintained by the city.

The Town Council has been in discussions for months now on future expansions at the school and is considering about $8.5 million worth of projects. DeGan said it remains unclear whether those projects will come before the public as a bond election and whether construction will start during FY 2013.
Southlake

Continued from 1

... City Manager Shana Yelverton describes Southlake’s proposed budget of $79.9 million as healthy and indicative not only of proper tax rate management, but also of the city’s commitment to high-quality, high-value public service.

“This is a results-oriented budget designed to get you the results you’d like to see,” Yelverton told City Council members in August.

Upcoming projects

Among this year’s expenditures are plans for public safety investments, road work and park enhancements.

More than $17 million will go into the construction and equipping of the new DPS North Training Facility that broke ground this summer as well as the hiring of 12 new firefighters to man its operation.

Other funding will go toward future public art installations ($100,000), Phase III of the city’s wayfinding plan ($50,000) to help oversee the city’s parks and open spaces, and take on employee safety programs and staff succession planning with the awareness that many of the city’s leaders are already eligible for retirement.

Tax impact

Southlake’s proposal keeps the tax rate steady for a 10th consecutive year at 46.2 cents per $100 of assessed value, and, in addition to the over-65 tax freeze and other longstanding homestead exemptions, it offers a homestead exemption of $15,000.

Although the tax rate will be the same this year, its allocation will shift as the city’s debt service needs decrease. Southlake has worked hard in recent years to pay for certain capital projects in cash and aggressively pay down bond debts, so the FY 2013 proposal to move one cent from the debt service tax rate to the general fund operations tax rate will mean more flexibility for city needs in the future.

Shifts like that have been part of the city’s strategy for years now, Yelverton said, as part of its multi-year financial analysis that first pays for new programs and facilities, and then tackles their ongoing operational impacts.

“We think about the budget in terms of multi-year,” Yelverton said, “and what we like to say is that today’s decisions impact tomorrow’s budget.”

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### Grapevine High School Football Schedule

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### Colleyville Heritage High School Football Schedule

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### Southlake Carroll High School Football Schedule

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A lexia Bui wasn’t expecting to be hired herself the day she went along with a friend to a job interview for moral support, but within three years she was the top recruiter for the DFW office of Butler staffing.

“I brought her lunch every day because I didn’t want her to leave for lunch — I wanted her to recruit for me,” remembers Betty Odeneal, who had started on the sales side of the company the year before Bui, in 1999.

The two clicked immediately, and Odeneal would take Bui along on sales calls to help her learn more about the other side of the business. Butler handles a wide range of industries’ staffing needs all over the world, but the two soon found that their synergy worked best in aerospace: Odeneal worked the companies while Bui found the perfect contractor for the job.

“We always had a little private joke that all we needed was a bank, a cell phone and a computer, and we could do this on our own,” Odeneal said.

The two decide in 2008 to strike out on their own and build a boutique agency together, working out of their homes. By the fall, they had eight clients using their services and about 40 contracted engineers on payroll across the country. Then 2009 arrived, and everything changed.

“In 2009 we lost every person on our payroll, went down to literally nothing,” Odeneal said. “By the summer of 2009, we started rebuilding one by one.”

They shifted gears, Bui said, focusing their efforts on military employers and swapping from fixed-wing aircraft to rotary because the helicopter business had been hurt less in the recession. And because engineering had all but stopped, they hired direct aircraft technicians instead of engineering contractors.

By 2010, there was an upturn and they moved into their first office in Bedford.

The two describe their work with smiles on their faces. It is a job all about timing, Bui says, like a giant chess match in which they align their contractors with the right companies and the right projects, whether that be designing new avionics on commercial aircraft or building $200 million interiors for private jets.

“What Betty and I have done is we’ve taken aerospace staffing to a new level,” Bui said. “I can lure an 80-year-old man out of retirement for the right project.”

Success is found in a simple equation: Make the contract engineer happy with their pay rate and make the customer — companies such as Dassault Falcon Jet, Gulfstream Aerospace and Sikorsky Aircraft — happy with the bill rate. Against large staffing companies and a “good ol’ boy” system of male-dominated industries, Bui and Odeneal say it is their style of treating their contractors like rockstars that has kept them in the game.

Today, Agenté Technical is based in Colleyville, the team includes five support staffers and the company supports 21 clients nationwide with more than 100 contractors.

“There is some chemistry that has clicked between Alexa and these engineers, and me and these clients that makes stuff happen,” Odeneal said. “This job is just like taking money and going to Vegas; it’s a gamble; it’s highly competitive. So it’s what you’ve got inside that sets you apart.”
Waffle Way
Landmark Grapevine eatery dishes it out

By Rachel Slade

Stop by Waffle Way any morning, and you're likely to see a tableful of men just to the right of the entrance sharing food and stories. They are known to the servers who see them once, sometimes twice a day as the “Coffee Critters” or, more recently, as the ROMEOs.

“Retired Old Men Eating Out,” Owner Lynda Hawkins explains with a hearty laugh. “My customers are what have kept me going all these years. Especially with the economy as bad as it’s been, we’ve gone through some bleak times, but we’ve struggled and kept on.”

Hawkins has owned Waffle Way since Sept. 28, 2001, but her history with the Northwest Highway diner serving up breakfast and lunch six days a week started 14 years before, when Arlene and Doyle Dickerson built the restaurant where a gas station once stood.

Hawkins knew the Dickersons growing up because back then, she says, “everybody knew everybody,” so she was not surprised when Arlene asked her at church one day whether she wanted to help out with the new venture. Hawkins had been working at the Burger Box, where Burritos Locos now stands, and decided about a week before Waffle Way’s opening in August 1987 to join the team.

“I had never waitressed before and I wasn’t sure about that, but they only needed a cook one day a week, so Arlene said why don’t you try it?” Hawkins said. “I liked it real well.”

There were not many restaurants in town at the time, and Waffle Way was one of the only places in the area to eat breakfast out. Thus, the restaurant — open 24 hours daily at the time — became a microcosm of Grapevine itself. Neighbors, longtime friends, former teachers that Hawkins had trouble learning to call by their first name; she knew nearly all the customers, and she loved her job, serving the people who made Grapevine, Grapevine.

“The restaurant was a huge success,” she said. “Back in 1987 in Grapevine, IHOP wasn’t here, Waffle House wasn’t here. … She opened this and it took off. Everyone came.”

The restaurant evolved over the years as the menu changed with the times, and hours condensed as more and more restaurants came to town. But 25 years later and on the second generation of owners, Hawkins’ restaurant still buzzes with customers served by Hawkins’ daughters and several staff members who have been there for years.

Waffle Way’s menu includes the regular spread of breakfast favorites, from omelets and pancakes to breakfast meats, biscuits and French toast. Servers make sure to ask customers not only how they want their eggs or which bread they want for toast, but how crispy they like their bacon and which of a variety of syrup flavors they enjoy. The menu’s flip side offers a selection of sandwiches, burgers, salads, chicken fried steak and more, and homemade pies finish out the home-cooking experience.

But the crowning glory, literally appearing at the top of the menu, are the waffles. Flavors include original, pecan, banana pecan and chocolate chip; toppings include blueberries, strawberries, cherries, whipped cream — even fried chicken — and that is all before choosing one of several syrups. There are times Hawkins misses the old Grapevine, she says, but she has photos of all the old greats tucked into booths at Waffle Way. Now her mission has switched to serving newcomers good food and good stories.

“They say it takes a village to raise a child, and this was my village,” she said. “This restaurant has been a part of Grapevine since it opened its doors, and as new people have come in, they’ve just joined the crowd.”

Customer Favorites

Western Omelet – Justin Kendrick, “I’ve eaten here almost every day since I was born, so 23 years! I also like the fiesta salad.”

Chicken Fried Chicken – Charles Steapp

Monterrey Chicken – Jim Tuggey, “We’ve been coming here just about every day for six or seven years. It’s Lynda and her two daughters that make it what it is.”

Key Lime Pie – Janet Tuggey

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Darrell Huffman
Incoming constable is lawman by day, farmer by night

By Rachel Slade

After a second-place finish in the Republican primary, Darrell Huffman rallied his supporters and came out victorious in this summer’s runoff election with nearly 56 percent of the vote against challenger Jason McCaffity. With no Democratic rival this fall, Huffman will take on the responsibilities of the county’s largest and second-most populated constable precinct, Precinct 3, in January.

“[Constable] Zane Hilger has such a good reputation that I hope I’m able to continue that and possibly improve,” said Huffman, the county’s delinquent tax specialist who currently serves as a sergeant overseeing the Southlake office. “We’ll have a newer face for this constable’s office, but really we’ve just got to keep on with what we’re doing and try to do it more efficiently as the workload grows.”

Huffman, a 47-year-old Mount Pleasant native who moved to Grapevine in 1990, committed himself to public service and attended the police academy in 2004. After a stint with the Crowley Police Department cut short by an off-the-job injury, he began working for the constable’s office in 2006, first as a reserve deputy and then as a part-timer before taking on a full-time job in 2008. He and his wife, Mendi Hall, married in 1997, and they and their children, 8-year-old Halli and 3-year-old Wren, live on a 45-acre farm at the corner of Pool and Hall Johnson roads best known for its corn maze and pumpkin patch open to the public each fall.

In addition to raising a family, working the farm and serving in the constable’s office, Huffman has also returned to school and hopes to earn a degree in criminal justice from the University of Texas at Arlington by the time he’s 52.

What attracted you to law enforcement?
When the space shuttle crashed over Nacogdoches, a friend of mine and I went down there to volunteer. Just seeing all the different agencies working together and the work they were doing, it really appealed to me and I decided public service was something I really wanted to do.

I had a friend who was a police officer here in Southlake, and I rode out nights with him to see what it was like doing the job. In 2004, I decided that I was going to go to the academy.

Why did you decide to run for office?
Zane approached me about running for this position to take his place — somebody he could trust that already knew how the office runs, what the county officials expected out of this office.

He knew that I’d been around long enough to know how everything functioned, and he trusted me to handle the things he’d built up for this office and its reputation.

My wife and I both thought about it long and hard, and when it came time, we decided I’d gone as far as I could in this office and the next step would be … to take this on.

What are your goals as constable?
My goals are to see that this office runs day to day like it should, like it has. The only change that people will see for sure is that we’re going to mark our cars like the rest of the constables in the county.

That means you will no longer see a white unmarked crown vic with a constable in it, you will see “constable” in big black letters down both sides so there’s no question about who it is in the car.

The face of the constable’s office is changing as more and more guys in their prime choose to work for the constable’s office instead of going into police work, and we want the public to see and recognize us for what we are, as law enforcement officials.

What does the constable’s office handle?
Constables’ duties are civil in nature, meaning our main responsibilities are serving papers — lawsuit papers, writs of execution, child support papers, warrants. We do evictions, mostly for apartment complexes, but here lately the foreclosure rate has gotten so high we’re doing move-outs on houses. We seize cars, we seize land; we are the arms and legs of anything that comes out of the court system.

And this office, Precinct 3, takes care of all the delinquent tax sales for the county. In fact, I’m the one who handles the auctions on the courthouse steps the first Tuesday of every month.

How does a constable’s deputy differ from a police officer or sheriff’s deputy?
Police officers focus on criminal aspects of the law — traffic violations, crime, arrests — and their jurisdiction is within their own city. Sheriff’s deputies also focus on crime, mostly in the unincorporated parts of the county or in cities that don’t have their own police departments, and their other main responsibility is for the jails, for inmate care.

We receive all the same academy training as police officers and more, so we will also help out the police and sheriff’s offices when we’re asked or when we’re the closest to the scene when a call comes in. We can arrest people, we can do traffic stops … but the difference is we don’t sit on the side of the road looking for traffic violators. I’ll be meeting with all of the police chiefs in the precinct once my duties begin to remind them we’re here to help.

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Westlake
Town balances rural roots and modern luxury

By Rachel Slade

S
tately homes tucked away in alcoves of gated communities, lush green links, and an eclectic mix of business professionals, sports heavyweights and other stars are often the first images North Texans conjure when they think of Westlake. But this small town, now a magnet for big business as much as for residents, has a past dappled with challenges and successes as varied as its inhabitants.

The Town of Westlake was first settled in 1847, when Missourians Charles and Matilda Medlin moved to the area with about 20 other families. The community grew under the shade of the Cross Timbers, as stagecoaches, trains and eventually cars crisscrossed the landscape. But in the 1950s, big changes came to the region, including the creation of Lake Grapevine and the arrival of Dallas lawyer J. Glenn Turner, who eventually purchased 2,500 acres of land along Hwy. 114, naming it the Circle T Ranch. It was Turner and some neighbors who, on Dec. 27, 1956, made the decision to incorporate as Westlake.

About two decades later, oil millionaire Nelson Bunker Hunt purchased the Circle T Ranch and continued its reputation for lavish parties and prominent guests. His fun was short-lived, though; by 1989 the ranch was for sale, and in 1993, Ross Perot Jr. took up residence.

If Turner was the most important person in Westlake’s founding, Perot may be the most important in its recent history, for after purchasing about 2,300 acres of the Circle T, he went on to amass 17,000 acres that he has since turned into the master-planned, mixed-used community of Alliance.Texas. Westlake to this day is affected by the Circle T Ranch projects under the Perot company Hillwood Development, its ventures having included Fidelity Investments and the exclusive housing and golfing community of Vaquero. And it was Perot’s development plans that were largely blamed for the most controversial period of the town’s history, played out in court battles and newspaper headlines at the end of the ’90s.

A 1997 article from the Fort Worth Star-Telegram lays out the basics: Perot presented grand plans for development on Circle T land and asked the town to waive zoning rules and filing fees and commit nearly $100 million in tax revenues to pay for road and water infrastructure. But differences of opinion lead to a battle among town aldermen, who deposed Mayor Scott Bradley and appointed Dale White in his place. By early May, the aldermen had disannexed the Circle T and other properties, and parcels of Westlake land had been claimed by the cities of Southlake, Fort Worth and Roanoke.

Eventually the Tarrant County District Attorney’s Office filed a quo warranto to determine the rightful mayor (Bradley), and though it took years, various judges eventually struck down the disannexations. In 1998, Perot decided to develop Circle T under Westlake jurisdiction, cutting a $22 million deal with Fort Worth to settle the land dispute and secure a campus for Fidelity Investments.

Hillwood has not been the only business to make an impact on Westlake, however. IBM Corporation built the distinctive Solana office complex along Hwy. 114 in the mid-80s in partnership with Maguire Thomas Partnership, paving the way for future interest in the town from corporations. And though IBM only maintained a presence there for about a decade, Westlake is now home to companies like Wells Fargo, Deloitte, First American and more.

The town is also home to the only municipally owned charter school in the state; the award-winning Westlake Academy opened in 2003.

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Overview

Build-out year: 2002
Number of homes (estimated): 150
Average square footage: 4,039
Home values: $126-$159 (prices per square foot)
HOA dues (estimated): $650/year
Amenities: Community pool, bike trail, park, playground, lake
Nearby attractions: DFW Airport, Lake Grapevine, Grapevine Main Street, Southlake Town Center, Gaylord Texan.

Property taxes:
City of Southlake 0.4620
Tarrant County 0.2640
Tarrant County College 0.1490
Tarrant County Hospital 0.2279
Carroll ISD 1.4150
Total (per $100 value) 2.5160

Carroll ISD Schools:
Old Union Elementary School
1050 S. Carroll Ave., Southlake, TX 76092
Eubanks Intermediate School
500 S. Kimball Ave., Southlake, TX 76092
Dawson Middle School
400 S. Kimball Ave., Southlake, TX 76092
Carroll High School
1501 W. Southlake Blvd., Southlake, TX 76092

Featured homes

1106 Fontaine Dr.
4 Bedroom / 3.1 Bath
3,865 sq. ft.
Agent: Tim Hayes
817-239-7255

1204 Lorraine Court
5 Bedroom / 4 Bath
4,342 sq. ft.
Agent: Kimberly McCarty
972-747-5100

1120 Merlot Dr.
4 Bedroom / 2.1 Bath
4,676 sq. ft.
Agent: Chip Reid
817-706-8610

1111 Fontaine Dr.
4 Bedroom / 3 Bath
3,872 sq. ft.
Agent: Joe Iiley
210-833-8137

Market Data

Grapevine, Colleyville, Southlake

On the market (as of Aug. 31, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of homes for sale</th>
<th>No. of homes under contract</th>
<th>Avg. days on the market</th>
<th>No. of homes sold in the last year</th>
<th>Square footage Low/High</th>
<th>Selling price Low/High</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5,118/3,252</td>
<td>$455,000/$722,500</td>
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On the market (as of Sept. 5th)

<table>
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<th>Price Range</th>
<th>Number of homes for sale</th>
<th>Average days on the market</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $100,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>$100,000–$149,900</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>$150,000–$199,900</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>$200,000–$299,900</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>$300,000–$399,900</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$400,000–$499,900</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500,000–$749,900</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>$750,000–$999,900</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>287</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1 million +</td>
<td>1</td>
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Monthly home sales

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of homes sold</th>
<th>Average price</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Aug. 2012</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>$271,565</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2012</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>$238,552</td>
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<td>June 2012</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>$240,291</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Apr. 2012</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>$291,574</td>
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<td>Mar. 2012</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$265,425</td>
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<td>Feb. 2012</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$233,485</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 2012</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$237,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$231,215</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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