



**Roger Galatas | 17**

Woodlands pioneer ensures community's early vision remains

# Holiday shopping creates sales tax windfall for The Woodlands

## Lower taxes, seasonal jobs result from increases in revenue

By Brian Walzel

Through a combination of highly successful shopping districts, strong tourism, and popular holiday family events and attractions, The Woodlands Township has created a holiday shopping and entertainment environment that has led to a windfall of revenue.

Sherry Burton, marketing manager for The Woodlands Mall, said the mall annually sees its strongest sales during the two-month holiday shopping period of November and December.

"From a percentage standpoint, we're probably doing 25 percent [of annual business] during those two months, and some retailers do 30 percent of their business," she said.

### Holiday attractions

The draw of quality shopping options such as The Woodlands Mall, Market Street and The Woodlands Waterway, combined with family holiday attractions such as the Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center,

The Woodlands Winter Wonderland, the International Winter on the Waterway Festival and the annual Lighting of the Doves Festival has led to strong spending, high levels of participation from residents, as well as strong tourism.

Since its first year of operation in 1999, the Ice Rink, which is typically open during the holiday season from mid-November to early January, has seen its number of skaters more than double.

In its first year the paid admission at the Ice Rink was 19,625, according to The Woodlands Visitor and Convention Bureau. That number increased to 47,862 in 2010.

"You have the mall and you have Market Street, Portofino and the village centers. I think variety is a big issue," said Karen Hoylman, president of the South Montgomery County Woodlands Chamber of Commerce. "There are enough chains and quality stores to make it interesting for our tourists, and we do have a huge tourism influence. Those two things, the variety and the tourism, are what keep our sales tax up."



Rebecca Wood and Cindy Travis prepare holiday decorations at Wickander Works in the Indian Springs Village Center.

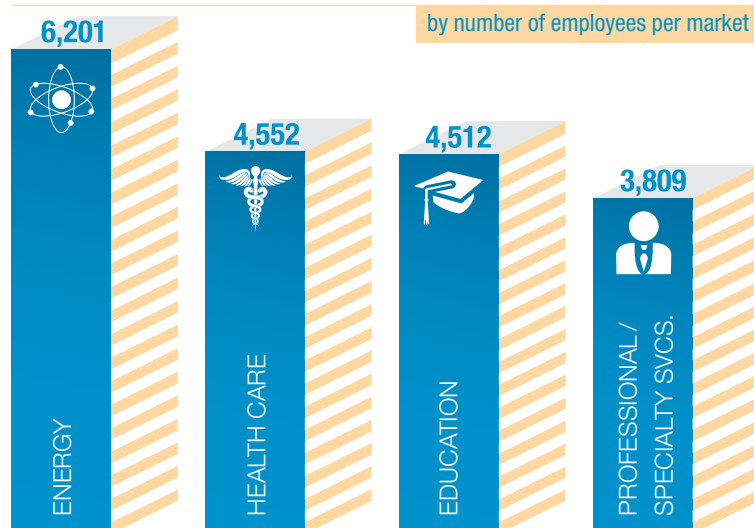
### Shopping destination

Hoylman said the chamber tracks shoppers at The Woodlands Mall and Market Street to determine from where they have traveled and the results have shown that

people travel to The Woodlands from all over the world, often for vacations. She said people from various parts of Texas, Louisiana, Europe, Mexico and South America

See **Holiday shopping** | 11

## The Woodlands Jobs by the Numbers



Source: The Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership

## Energy, health care industries lead job growth

### Interest remains strong for potential relocations

By Jemimah Noonoo

The economic outlook for The Woodlands and South Montgomery County remains an encouraging one, and employment numbers in some of the community's leading industries are expected to grow.

About 23,435 people work for major, non-retail employers, according to data from the Woodlands Area Economic Development Partnership. That number has increased by 402 employees

from January 2010. The greatest job gains were in energy and professional or specialty services.

"In what's been termed a down economy, to have job growth in our area is definitely positive," said Laura Lea Palmer, vice president of Business Retention and Expansion for the EDP.

### Relocation interests

A Praxair regional office relocated to South Montgomery County in December 2010, which represented roughly 150 jobs. The Connecticut-based engineering company supplies atmospheric,

process and specialty gases. ExxonMobil announced plans in June to relocate many of its Houston area offices to a new campus in North Harris County where it will bring about 8,000 employees. The new facility will be just south of The Woodlands near I-45 and the Hardy Toll Road.

Over the past two years the EDP has responded to more than a dozen requests from businesses looking to relocate to The Woodlands and South Montgomery County areas. According to the

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### Children's Festival | 6

The Children's Festival returns to The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion for its 16th year



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Market shopping with culture at The Woodlands Waterway

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Integral nonprofit agency offers variety of programs and services



### impactnews.com

### Montgomery County lifts burn ban

Recent rains prompt fire marshal to temporarily suspend ban

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This complimentary event is open to the community.

Over 200 pieces of art will be featured in a variety of mediums. Artist demonstrations and children's activities make this an event you won't want to miss.

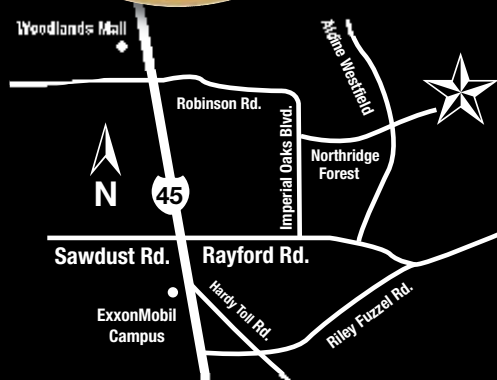
10% of the event proceeds benefit CASA Montgomery County ([www.casaspeaks4kids.com](http://www.casaspeaks4kids.com)).

If you are interested in exhibiting as an artist, please contact [Gallery@WoodlandsArtLeague.org](mailto:Gallery@WoodlandsArtLeague.org)

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**About us**

John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005, in Pflugerville, Texas, with a mission to provide intelligent, unbiased news coverage with a hyperlocal focus. Now, with 12 markets in the Austin, Houston and Dallas/Fort Worth metro areas, the paper is distributed to more than 750,000 homes and businesses.

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**Market Publisher's Note**



Getting caught off guard by holiday advertisements appearing earlier and earlier seems to be something I comment to my wife about each year. The push

by retailers trying to get you in the holiday frame of mind so early makes sense. In most cases, one-third of retailers' annual sales come during the November and December holiday shopping months.

The importance of capturing these sales taxes within The Woodlands was something recognized early on by key leaders and has become an incredible benefit to homeowners living in the community. Playing a crucial role in keeping property taxes low while providing what seems to be endless shopping opportunities makes perfect sense as to why The Woodlands continues to be a sought-after community in which to live, work and play.

**Who We Are**



**What is Community Impact Newspaper?**

Publisher John Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 after realizing the need for news with a hyperlocal focus in the North Austin area. It has grown to include eight editions in Central Texas, two in Northwest Houston and one in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Now this same intelligent and nonbiased coverage is being distributed to residents in The Woodlands.

**Why is it free?**

Readers will not be billed because the paper is ad supported. Editorial content is never paid for and has a journalistic integrity uncommon for a free publication.

**Who gets it?**

The paper is mailed monthly to all homes and businesses in the coverage area. We do not mail to post office boxes, but copies are available at the South Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, at the *Community Impact Newspaper* office in Cy-Fair and online at [www.impactnews.com](http://www.impactnews.com).

You may have discussed the local job market with neighbors recently and were curious about what employment sectors are seeing the most growth and what industries make up the more than 47,000 jobs in The Woodlands.

This month, we're providing updates on which industries these are. No surprise, energy and healthcare continue to be the employment leaders and look to be for the near future. A quick review of the "impacts" on pages 4 and 5 gives you a snapshot of job creation and businesses looking to capitalize on these increased numbers; several are opening their "first" Woodlands location soon.

Give thanks this month for the blessings you have been provided just by living in The Woodlands.

**Jason Culpepper**  
[jculpepper@impactnews.com](mailto:jculpepper@impactnews.com)

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**September employment trends**

Houston/Sugar Land/Baytown unemployment—**8.6%**  
No change from August

State unemployment—**8.5%\***, \*\*  
No change from August

National unemployment—**9.1%\***  
No change from August

In the Houston area, the government sector added 16,100 jobs; education and health services added 5,000 jobs; leisure and hospitality lost 7,200 jobs; and trade, transportation and utilities lost 3,300 jobs.\*\*

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Texas Workforce Commission  
\*Seasonally adjusted numbers \*\*Preliminary data

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**Correction** — Volume 1, Issue 2

On Page 9, former Oak Ridge North Mayor Joe Michels' name was misspelled.

On Page 9, the incorrect number of Montgomery County Precincts were reported, as were the amount they were to be allocated should a \$200 million bond issue pass on Nov. 9. There are four Montgomery County precincts and they were to receive \$50 million each.



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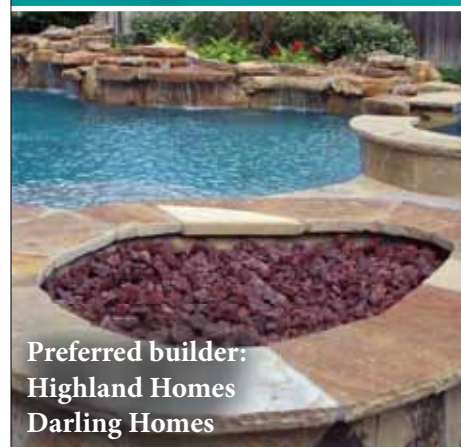
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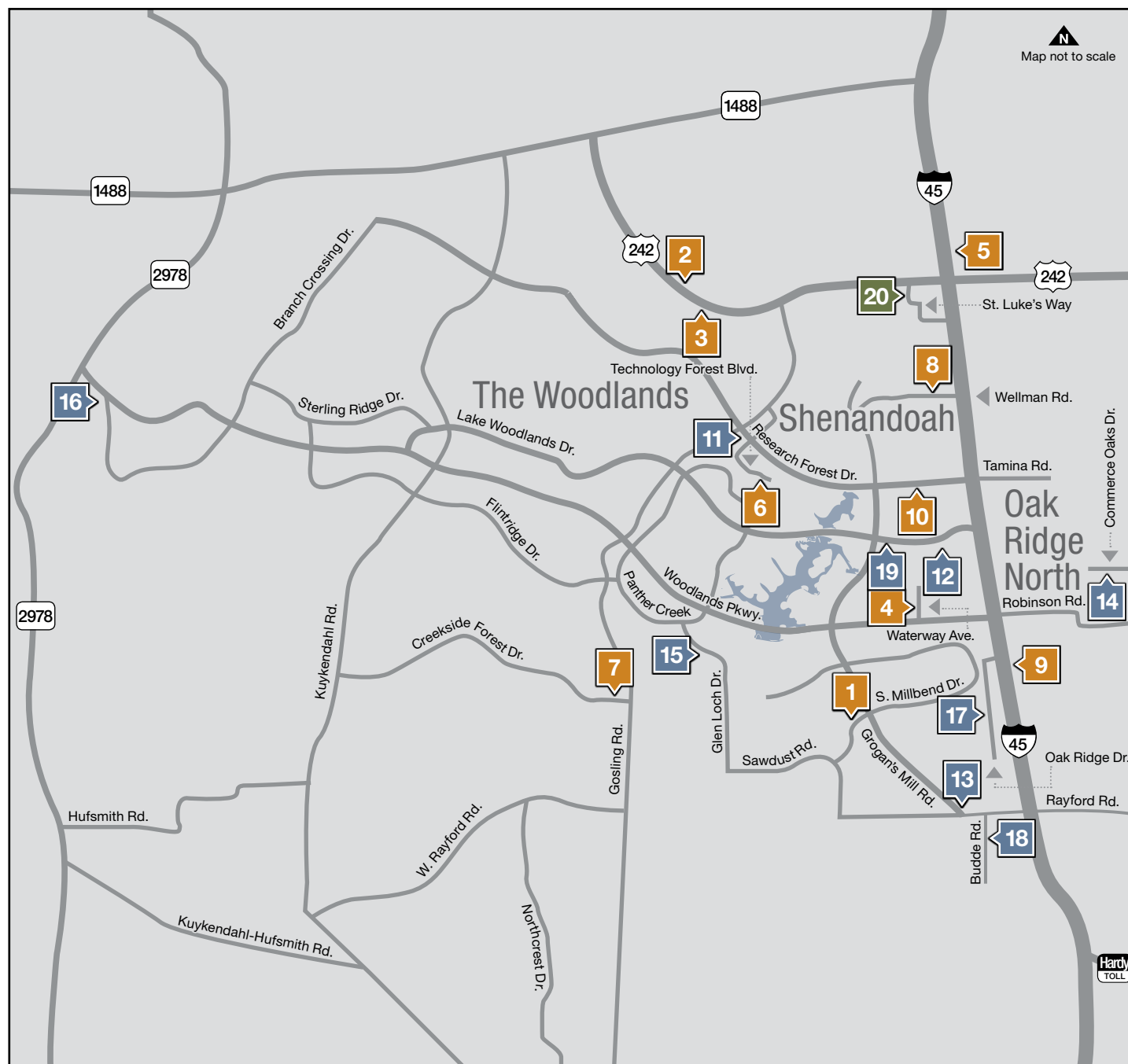
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## IMPACTS



### Coming Soon

**1** Under construction at the corner of Grogan's Mill Road and South Millbend, **Dairy Queen** is opening its first franchise in The Woodlands. The eatery offers its famous ice cream Blizzards and frozen treats, made-to-order hamburgers, chicken strip, steak finger baskets and Texas-style menu selections. [www.dairyqueen.com](http://www.dairyqueen.com)

**2** Allied Realty is developing a new 240-unit luxury apartment facility, **The Retreat**, on 10 acres of land at 4400 College Park Drive with an expected opening of summer 2012. The Retreat will offer floor plans of one to three bedrooms, fitness center, cyber cafe with WiFi access, a picnic arbor with outdoor grilling and resort-style swimming pool. [www.alliedrealty.com](http://www.alliedrealty.com)

**3** With an expected opening in December, D'Agostino Companies is constructing a **Panera Bread** restaurant at 3313 College Park Drive. Panera specializes in serving bakery fresh bread and sweets, sandwiches, soups and salads.

This will be the second Panera Bread located in The Woodlands. [www.panerabread.com](http://www.panerabread.com)

**4** Scheduled to open in December at 25 Waterway Avenue is **Frost Bake Shoppe**, a gourmet cupcake bakery. Owner Terese Yates serves custom decorated cookies and cupcakes, brownies, cakes, candy and signature merchandise. All baked goods and merchandise can be ordered either in store or online. [www.frostbakeshoppe.com](http://www.frostbakeshoppe.com)

**5** Bayway Companies has purchased a 5-acre site in The Woodlands Trade Center for construction of a 25,000-square-foot **Volkswagen of The Woodlands** dealership with a mid-2012 opening planned. The dealership will offer new and certified pre-owned cars. [www.vw.com](http://www.vw.com)

**6** **RPC, Inc.** an oil and gas services company has reached a long-term lease agreement with Black Forest Ventures to occupy the single-tenant, 79,000-square foot office building at 2828 Technology Forest Blvd. The property consists of 61,000 square feet of office space on two

floors and 18,000 square feet of warehouse space. The building was constructed in 1987 and was recently fully renovated. 404-321-2140, [www.rpc.net](http://www.rpc.net)

**7** Scheduled to begin construction in the third quarter of 2012 is a 66,000-square foot, 112-bed skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility in the Village of Creekside Park. The facility, developed by **Cantex Continuing Care Network**, is located on Creekside Forest Drive near Gosling Road and features a formal living area with fireplace, a library with computer and Internet access, a chapel, amenities shop, and salon. [www.cantexsc.com](http://www.cantexsc.com)

**8** The City of Shenandoah will soon be home to a new neighborhood, **Malaga Forest**. Located off I-45 and Wellman Road, Malaga Forest is a gated community on 10 acres of 36 home sites. The development features Mediterranean style garden homes with expanded outdoor living options, such as covered loggias, courtyards and atriums all highlighted with tile roofs, stucco and stone elevations. Their floor plans range



Compiled by Brian Walzel

from 2,400–3,300 square feet.  
832-794-9792, [www.malaga-homes.com](http://www.malaga-homes.com)

**9** Located in the Oak Ridge North Business Park, **Quality Care Services**, 26460 I-45 N. opens its third Houston area location Nov. 16. Quality Care Services provides in-home to seniors such as light housekeeping, grocery shopping, personal assistance and meal preparation and serving, as well as post-medical treatment care. 281-362-1155, [www.qualitycares.com](http://www.qualitycares.com)

**10** Projected to open in late November, **Valero Corner Store** will open at 1625 Research Forest Drive. The store will be a large-format offering of 5,650 square feet of retail space and offer a variety of food and beverages. There will be eight fueling stations offering gasoline, diesel and E-85, as well as a car wash. [www.valero.com](http://www.valero.com)

## Now Open

**11** **New Sound Hearing Aid Center**, 4223 Research Forest Drive, Ste. 400, offers products to enhance hearing ability for its clients. New Sound provides diagnostic services and offers Auidel hearing aid products, as well as assisted listening devices such as telephones, Bluetooth devices, ear plugs and telephones. 281-465-9133, [www.newsoundhearing.com](http://www.newsoundhearing.com)

**12** **The Container Store** celebrates its grand opening Nov. 19 and 20 in the site formerly occupied by Circuit City across from The Woodlands Mall. The store, at 1455 Lake Woodlands Drive, offers storage products and tools for customers to get more organized. [www.containerstore.com](http://www.containerstore.com)

**13** **Baskin Robbins'** second ice cream shop in The Woodlands is at 25114 Grogan's Mill Road. Baskin Robbins serves 31 flavors of ice cream daily, with classic, seasonal and regional flavors, as well as cakes, soft serve, beverages and other frozen treats. 281-298-3443, [www.baskinrobbins.com](http://www.baskinrobbins.com)

**14** With a variety of activities for puppies and dogs of all ages, **Camp Bow Wow** is now open at 27616 Commerce Oaks Drive in Oak Ridge North. Camp Bow Wow provides day camp and overnight stay opportunities for those looking for a safe, fun environment for their dogs. Dogs will enjoy their own overnight cabin, as well as training and grooming. 832-482-2299, [www.campbowwow.com](http://www.campbowwow.com)

**15** Offering a variety of dance classes to children and adults, including ballet, tap and jazz, **Performing Arts Center of The Woodlands** is now open at 27220 Glen Loch Drive. Director Caroline Batson is enrolling students for classes on Mondays through Thursdays. Family, individual



Terese Yates is opening her second **Frost Bake Shoppe** location at 25 Waterway Avenue in December. The first location is in the Indian Springs Village Center.

and private lessons are also available.  
281-298-8709, [www.thepactw.com](http://www.thepactw.com)

**16** At 9955 Woodlands Parkway, Ste. 4, **Swim Shops** offers competitive clothing and accessories for competitive aquatics such as swimming, diving and water polo, as well as life guarding. The store can also provide commercial aquatic equipment such as lane ropes and record boards. The Woodlands shop is the fourth Houston area location. 281-298-3255, [www.swimshops.com](http://www.swimshops.com)

**17** With more than 12 of years child care experience, Dawynelle Morgan has opened **Mighty Kids University** at 26315 Oak Ridge Drive. Might Kids provides an educational curriculum, as well as music and Spanish classes. Child care is provided during weekdays, as well as some nights and weekends. Morgan also holds special parent nights and family fun days once a month. 281-292-5439, [www.mightkidsuniversity.com](http://www.mightkidsuniversity.com)

**18** Offering traditional and original barbecue lunch and dinner items, **CorkScrew BBQ** is open at 24930 Budde Road. CorkScrew offers daily specials featuring pulled pork tacos, boudain stuffed pork loin, poblano cheese stuffed turkey breast and more. The restaurant also offers catering and delivery services. 832-592-1184, [www.corkscrewbbq.com](http://www.corkscrewbbq.com)

**19** With its first concept store in Texas, **Ann Taylor** is now open at 1201 Lake Woodlands Drive, Ste. 218 in Market Street. The store features a broader assortment of product in a new, upscale shopping environment, fashion books, framed images, distinctive jewelry and private shopping lounges. 281-298-6394, [www.annataylor.com](http://www.annataylor.com)



**Cantex Continuing Care Network** is opening a 112-bed facility in the Village of Creekside Park in 2012.



The Woodlands' first **Dairy Queen** restaurant is under construction in Grogan's Mill Village Center.

## Relocation

**20** **Tektonic Athletic Development and Rehabilitation** is now at Medical Arts Center II building, 17350 St. Luke's Way, Ste. 390. It was previously located at 602 Pruitt Road in Spring. Tektonic is an outpatient sports medicine department of St. Luke's The Woodlands Hospital and is a physical rehabilitation, human performance testing and training facility with specialization in sports medicine and performance training. 936-266-3130, [www.stlukeswoodlands.com](http://www.stlukeswoodlands.com)

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Benefiting the Montgomery County Food Bank, the 2nd Annual Feeding the Frontier features a 1-mile Family Hunger Walk, pioneer-themed events, live demonstrations, live music and children's activities. A live western band will perform throughout the day on the main stage, while cowboy poets and musicians with fiddles and dulcimers will perform on the back porch. Among those in attendance will be representatives from Sons of the Republic, Daughters of the Republic and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Speakers Committee. Free, \$15 (Family Hunger Walk), \$40 (per family) 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Fernland Historical Park, Montgomery 936-539-6686, [www.montgomerycountyfoodbank.com](http://www.montgomerycountyfoodbank.com)





## 19-Jan. 16 The Woodlands Ice Rink

The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center is open daily for ice skating. A kids' and beginners ice rink is available. • \$9.50 (Monday-Friday, 2 hours of skating), \$10.50 (Saturday and Sunday, 2 hours of skating); \$5 (Monday-Friday, 2 hours of skating ages 5 and under), \$6 (Saturday and Sunday, 2 hours of skating ages 5 and under) • 3-9 p.m. (Monday-Thursday), 3-11 p.m. (Friday), 10 a.m.-11 p.m. (Saturday), noon-7 p.m. (Sunday); special holiday hours • Northeast corner of Lake Robbins Drive and Six Pines Drive • 281-419-5630, [www.thewoodlandscvb.com](http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com)

## Christmas in the Woods Christmas Market

More than 20 vendors offering jewelry, home accessories, clothing, bath and body goods, arts and crafts will be featured at The Woodlands Christian Academy Christmas in the Woods Christmas Market. Snacks will be available for purchase during the market. Strollers are welcome. • 9 a.m.-4 p.m. • Free The Woodlands Christian Academy, 5800 Academy Way • 936-273-2555, [www.twca.net](http://www.twca.net)

## Lighting of the Doves Festival

The Woodlands' longest-running holiday event, the Lighting of the Doves Festival, returns for its 29th year at Town Green Park. The festival features the arrival of Santa Claus, ice carvers, snow, children's activities and more. • Free • 3-9 p.m. • Town Green Park, 2099 Lake Robbins Drive • 281-363-2447, [www.thewoodlandscvb.com](http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com)

## Live music in Nov. / Dec.

### Dosey Doe

**25911 Interstate 45 North**  
**The Woodlands • 281-367-3774**  
**[www.doseydoe.com](http://www.doseydoe.com)**

- Nov. 12** David Benoit • 5:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 15** Darrell Scott • 8 p.m.
- Nov. 16** Blind Boys of Alabama • 8 p.m.
- Nov. 17** Danny Schmidt, Sam Baker, Carrie Elkin • 8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 18** Gary Nicholson, Kevin Welch, Shake Russell • 8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 19** Larry Joe Taylor • 8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 20** Crystal Gayle • 4:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 22** Stoney LaRue • 8:00 p.m.
- Nov. 23** Micky and the Motorcars • 8 p.m.
- Nov. 25** Bellamy Brothers • 8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 26** Bugs Henderson, Mike Zito • 8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 1** John Carney and Band • 8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 2** Tab Benoit • 8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 3** Stanley Jordan Trio • 5:30 p.m., 9 p.m.
- Dec. 6** David Ball • 8 p.m.
- Dec. 7** Charlie Montague Band • 8 p.m.
- Dec. 8** Paul Thorn • 8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 9** Cecil Shaw • 8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 10** Moonlighting • 8:30 p.m.

## Winter on the Waterway

The 5th Annual International Winter on the Waterway celebrates the holiday season by providing attendees an opportunity to learn about countries around the world and their holiday traditions. The event includes foods, arts and crafts, music and entertainment. Free • 3-9 p.m. • The Woodlands Waterway, adjacent to Town Green Park, 2099 Lake Robbins Drive • 281-363-2447, [www.thewoodlandscvb.com](http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com)

## 24 Run Thru the Woods

The 2011 GE Run Thru the Woods is an annual charity event designed for all ages and levels of fitness. The race includes a 1-mile children's race for ages 12 and under, a 5-mile run, a 3-mile Teen Run for ages 12-17 and a 3-mile walk. Proceeds benefit the South Montgomery County YMCA Partners Program, Operation Graduation, Conroe ISD Air Force JROTC, the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion Education Outreach Program and the Montgomery County Humane Society. 7:45 a.m. (first race begins) • \$30-\$45 Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, 2005 Lake Robbins Drive • 281-363-3300, [www.woodlandscenter.org](http://www.woodlandscenter.org)

## 29 Lighting of the Angels

The City of Shenandoah presents its annual Lighting of the Angels featuring lights, treats, pictures with Santa Claus and children's activities. The event also includes a holiday toy drive at the city pool benefiting the Montgomery County Women's Shelter • Free 6-8 p.m. • Shenandoah City Park, 281-298-5522, [www.shenandoah.tx.com](http://www.shenandoah.tx.com)

## December

### 1 Information Fair

Lone Star College-University Center's Information Fair provides an opportunity to hear from faculty and advisors from the Center's partner universities. Staff members will answer questions and provide information regarding registration for the spring 2012 semester. • Free • 4-7 p.m. • 3232 College Park Drive • 936-273-7510, [www.lonestar.edu](http://www.lonestar.edu)

### 2, 3 St. Nick's Market

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School's St. Nick's Market features more than 50 exhibitors with holiday gifts including personalized children's gifts, handmade jewelry, religious items and more. The holiday market event also features Christmas music, cookies and coffee. • Free • 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (Dec. 2), 11 a.m.-7 p.m. (Dec. 3) • 7901 Bay Branch Drive • 281-296-0300, [www.staopcs.org](http://www.staopcs.org)

### 2-18 "A Christmas Story"

Stage Right Theater in Conroe presents "A Christmas Story." The play tells the story of Ralphie Parker, a young boy living in 1940s Indiana who hopes for a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas, despite the protests from his mother. • \$12-17 • 8 p.m. (Dec. 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17), 2 p.m. (Dec. 11, 18) • Crighton Theater, 234 N. Main Street, Conroe • 936-441-7469, [www.stage-right.org](http://www.stage-right.org)

### 3 The Woodlands Art Affair

The Woodlands Art Affair is a collaboration between VillaSport and The Woodlands Art League and features more than 30 local artists who have been invited to display and sell more than 200 pieces of art in a variety of mediums. The event includes artist demonstrations and children's activities. The show is open to Art League members and

non-members. • Free • 10 a.m.-4 p.m. VillaSport Athletic Club and Spa, 4141 Technology Forest Blvd. • 832-585-0822, [www.woodlandsartleague.org](http://www.woodlandsartleague.org)

## Holiday Gift and Craft Fair

The South Montgomery County YMCA presents its inaugural Holiday Gift and Craft Fair in conjunction with photos with Santa Claus and holiday open house. The event features local vendors offering gifts, jewelry, holiday décor, crafts, homemade items and accessories. Free • 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Creekside YMCA, 6464 Creekside Forest Drive • 281-681-6723, [www.ymcahouston.org/creekside](http://www.ymcahouston.org/creekside)

## 10 Oak Ridge Christmas Parade

The City of Oak Ridge North kicks off the holiday season with its annual Christmas Parade. The parade begins on Patsy Lane where it will travel south to Woodson Road, then left back onto Patsy Lane, left on Westwood Lane, right on Hillside Lane and ending at approximately 9:45 a.m. At Marilyn Edgar Park, where Santa Claus will arrive for pictures. • Free • 8 a.m. (lineup for participants begins), 9 a.m. (parade begins) • 281-292-4648, [www.oakridgenorth.com](http://www.oakridgenorth.com)



## 10 Human Rights Festival

"Human Rights: A Walk in the Park" is a festival celebrating the natural born human rights and is designed to inform attendees of their 30 rights. The festival is being held in conjunction with International Human Rights Day and is being hosted by Demme Durant (pictured), a local Girl Scout and student at John Cooper School. The event features information booths, face-painting, live music, photos with Santa Claus, arts and crafts, local mascots, bounce houses, a car show, prizes and food. • Free • 9:30 a.m.-noon Town Green Park, 2099 Lake Robbins Drive • 281-638-3577, [www.humanrightswalk.org](http://www.humanrightswalk.org)

## Chili Cook-Off

The Woodlands Creekside Park Village Association presents the 3rd Annual Chili Cook-Off and Winter Festival. The festival features fun for the whole family, including a chili cook-off, snow sledding hill, face painting, kids' crafts, a snowman building contest, food and a holiday market. • Free • 1-5 p.m. • The Lodge at Rob Fleming Park, 6055 Creekside Forest Drive [www.creeksideparkvillage.com](http://www.creeksideparkvillage.com)

## Online Calendar

Find more or submit The Woodlands events at [www.impactnews.com/the-woodlands/calendar](http://www.impactnews.com/the-woodlands/calendar).

For a full list of Houston Metro events visit [www.impactnews.com/houston-metro/calendar](http://www.impactnews.com/houston-metro/calendar).

To have The Woodlands events included in the print edition, they must be submitted online by the fourth Friday of the month.



## Pancakes with Santa

Fundraiser  
**December 17th**  
**8am - 11am**  
At The Woodlands United Methodist Church



## 3rd annual Gingerbread House workshop

**December 10th & 21st**  
**\$5 per child, (Adults are free)**

## December 31st 2011 New Year's High Noon Countdown

**10:00am to 12:00pm**  
**Wrap it up**  
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The Woodlands, TX 77381  
[www.woodlandschildrensmuseum.org](http://www.woodlandschildrensmuseum.org)



## WATER

# Oak Ridge North springs for citywide water, sewer rehab projects

By Brian Walzel

The City of Oak Ridge North is in the midst of a \$8.1 million rehabilitation project of its water distribution and sewer systems with an eye toward tax savings. At a cost of about \$3.5 million, the city is undertaking a plan to replace its two existing water storage tanks with larger tanks that will expand capacity, City Manager Vicky Rudy said.

The construction of the two tanks are at least a few years off, Rudy said. The City Council recently authorized \$500,000 for design and engineering research for the two storage tanks and demolition of a metal building near the proposed tanks.

"It's a long process," Rudy said. "It's going to take a couple of years."

The current storage tank "has reached the end of its life," she said, and now is the time to have them replaced. Much of the city's infrastructure is aging and in need of repair.

"Our infrastructure is all about 40 years old, including water, sewer, roads, various things," Rudy said. "All at one time our infrastructure is starting to age out. And we're now undergoing an intensive campaign to update and upgrade the infrastructure that is beginning to age out."

The city is facing a deadline of 2014 to have its water system revamped. That's

when the city enters into an agreement with the San Jacinto River Authority for a groundwater reduction plan. As part of the agreement, Oak Ridge North will receive surface water from Lake Conroe beginning in either 2014 or 2015.

"We have to be ready when that comes," Rudy said.


The city is also working to rehabilitate its sewage system, at a cost of about \$4.6 million. The project includes replacing and repairing aging and damaged sewage pipes throughout the city. Phase 2 of the project was recently completed and Phase 3 will be underway soon. Phase 3 rehabilitation includes the areas between Robinson and Woodson roads. Phase 4, the final portion of the project, includes "a few odd projects that require special handling," Rudy said.

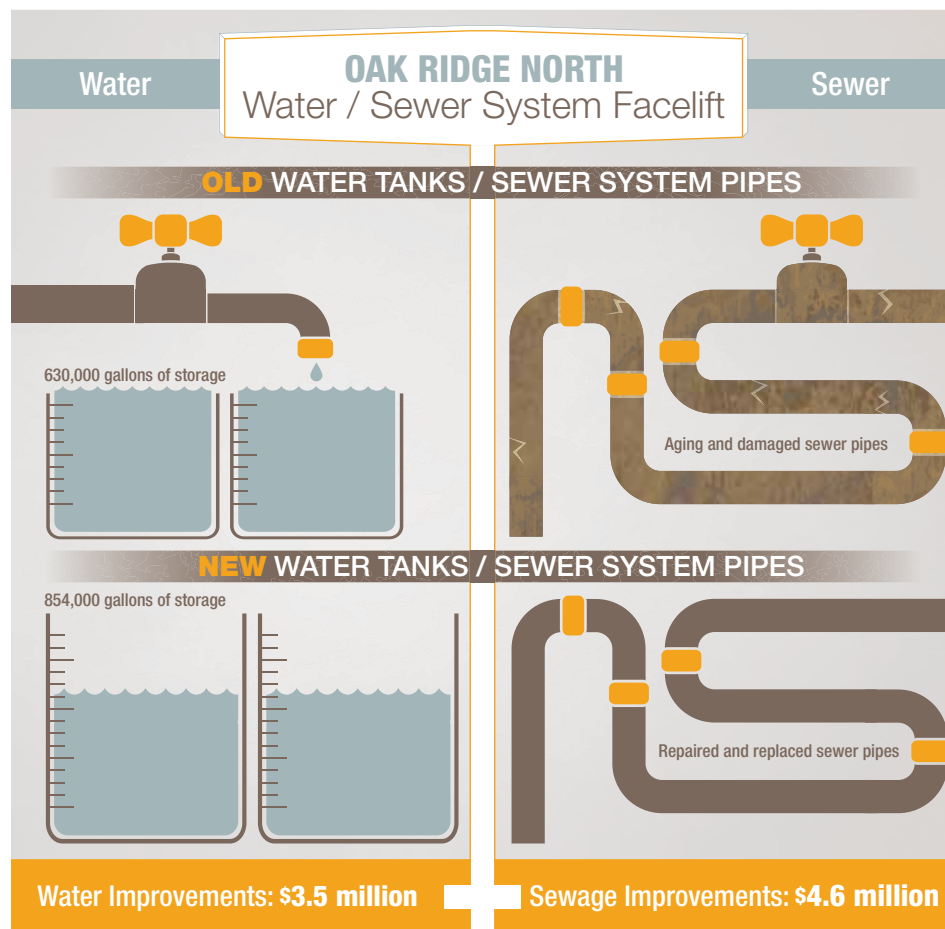
An improved sewer system could mean lower water and sewer tax rates for Oak Ridge citizens.

"We have a permanent amount of sewer we can deliver to the sewer plant," Rudy said. "We can be fined when we deliver more than we're contracted for."

She said those fine amounts get passed on to sewer rates and by increasing storage, the city would no longer face fines.

"There's a cost savings in that regard," Rudy said.

 Comment at [impactnews.com](http://impactnews.com)



**Total cost of water and sewage rehabilitation projects = \$8.1 million**

Source: City of Oak Ridge North

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TRANSPORTATION

# Township considering expanding Town Center trolley service to villages

By Marie Leonard

The shops, restaurants and entertainment venues in The Woodlands Town Center could become more accessible for some residents in the coming years if The Woodlands Waterway Trolley route is expanded to include village center stops.

Although in May The Woodlands Township board of directors approved an expansion of the trolley route crossing Grogan's Mill Road on Lake Robbins Drive, talk of expanding services into the different villages is not likely to continue until next year, said Miles McKinney, manager of legislative relations and transportation services for The Woodlands Township.

The trolley system, which became operational in 2007, runs based on points of interest surrounding The Woodlands Waterway, and it is used by residents and visitors who want to explore Town Center without driving to each destination.

"The trolley averages 12–15,000 riders a month," said Nick Wolda, director of community relations for The Woodlands Township. "It's a free service, paid for half by The Woodlands Township and half by transportation grant money."

If trolley services are expanded to the village centers in the future, township officials and the board of directors will need to decide on issues such as where to

expand, how many stops there will be and how often the trolleys will run, McKinney said.

"[In the past] we looked at instances in which we might do a Holiday Express trolley service from a village center into the Town Center, but we weren't able to get permission from the village centers to park cars there so people could access the trolley service," he said.

The Woodlands Township board of directors will make the final decision about whether to expand the services, but the township would need to purchase the additional trolleys, which typically requires federal or state funding. Additionally, the selected route needs to be one that will be heavily used.

"We would need to figure out which village would be best for a test case," McKinney said.

Over the years, owners of hotels and other businesses outside the current trolley route have asked township officials about expanding the trolley service.

"I think there has been long-range thinking over time that there will be additional trolley services added," McKinney said.

If the township's board of directors decides to expand trolley services to the village centers, it could help reduce traffic



The Woodlands Township is exploring the possibility of expanding the trolley system that currently serves Town Center to the some of the village centers. The current route makes 13 stops around Town Center, including at The Woodlands Mall, Market Street, The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, Town Green Park and Landry's Restaurant.

- Cochran's Crossing
- Alden Bridge
- Sterling Ridge
- Panther Creek
- Indian Springs
- Grogan's Mill

Source: The Woodlands Township

congestion and air pollution, he said.

"I doubt it would impact visitors, only because routes would be directed to allow residents into Town Center. It would be most helpful in reducing traffic from residents going into the Town Center, which means [fewer] automobiles and less demand for parking, which opens up spaces to visitors," McKinney said. "Also,

with [fewer] automobiles in the Town Center, you have less pollution."

Overall, the township has seen an increase in trolley ridership every year.

"The trolley serves a great purpose in this high density area we call The Woodlands Town Center," Wolda said.

[Comment at impactnews.com](#)

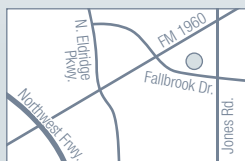


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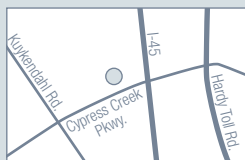
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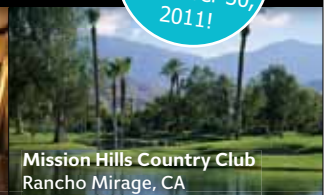
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## The Woodlands Township

### Woodlands staffing, taxes could go up under incorporation

Should The Woodlands transform its governance to a city in 2014, or at any point beyond, it may need to add nearly 200 employees that likely could be paid by increased taxes.

The Woodlands Township is conducting studies so residents will be informed of the consequences of the different forms of governance. The results of one of those studies was presented to the Township Board of Directors by Economic and Planning Systems, Inc.

The study focused on staffing levels based on the 2012 budget. Under incorporation, ESP said The Woodlands may need to employ 741 full-time equivalent employees to maintain the level of services the township provides. Should The Woodlands remain a township, that number of employees could be 546, 195 fewer than under incorporation.

By incorporating, The Woodlands would need to create its own police department rather than rely on coverage from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office and Harris County constables. Currently, The Woodlands has about

115 full-time police officers on its payroll. That number could increase to 195 under incorporation.

The Woodlands would also need to hire an additional 57 employees to maintain services such as traffic control, streets and roads, community facilities, and planning and development.

Dan Guimond, principal for EDP, said to fund the additional personnel, The Woodlands could either increase the sales tax by up to 2 cents or increase property taxes. The Woodlands could choose among several sales tax options, including levying an additional 1.5-cent sales tax for general purposes and levying another 0.5-cent tax for a specially created economic development corporation, Guimond said.

He also raised the possibility of increasing property taxes to fund higher employment levels.

"Short of identifying other revenue sources, the only other way to pay for additional costs in terms of incorporation is raising property taxes," Guimond said.

## Oak Ridge North

### Oak Ridge North ordinance allows golf carts on city streets

Residents of the City of Oak Ridge North are now allowed to drive golf carts on city streets after the City Council approved a new ordinance in October permitting the vehicles. The new law allows any legal driver with a valid driver's license to operate a golf cart on city streets, permitting that the golf cart meets certain safety requirements established by the new mandate.

The carts may only be driven on city streets and not pathways already designated for golf cart travel. Drivers operating carts "in a negligent manner" could be charged with a felony and fined up to \$200. The ordinance defines a negligent manner as the use or operation of a golf cart in such a manner as to endanger any person or property, or to instruct, hinder or impede the lawful course of travel of any motor vehicle or the lawful use by any pedestrian of public streets, sidewalks, paths, trails, walkways or parks.

At least one family in Oak Ridge North has been using a golf cart to transport their children and neighbors to and from a nearby bus stop. Concerns over the use of the cart and the safety of the children gave

rise to the creation of the ordinance.

"There have been some apparent near misses, reports of children, someone driving with a baby in it, that's what brings us to that point," Mayor Jim Kuykendall said. "The worst that happens is that if someone gets hurt."

#### Golf cart must-have's for driving in Oak Ridge North

- Can only travel on roads with posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour or less
- Valid driver's license
- Headlights
- Taillights
- Reflectors
- Mirrors
- Parking brake



Andrew Walters, Oak Ridge North police chief, said he was in favor of ensuring safety measures if the carts were to be allowed in the city.

"It's not a golf cart issue, it's the baby being held with one hand, and 13- and 14-year-olds weaving back and forth with tires off the road," he said. "I am for regulations. If they're driven responsibly, I'm all for them."

## The Woodlands Township

### Construction underway for newest Waterway office building

Construction on 3 Waterway Square Place is underway in The Waterway Square District of The Woodlands Town Center. At the corner of Lake Robbins Drive and Woodloch Forest drive, 3 Waterway Square Place is a Class A, nine-story office complex that includes 192,000 square feet of office space.

The building will be completed in early 2013. One tenant has already been announced. Nexeo Solutions LLC, an independent global, chemicals, plastics, composites and environmental services distribution company, signed a lease to occupy the top three floors.

Nexeo is relocating its offices from the

midwest and greater Houston areas to 9303 New Trails Drive and 1400 Woodloch Forest Drive until construction of 3 Waterway Square Place is completed.

The building is a project of The Woodlands Development Company and the Howard Hughes Corporation. Alex Sutton, president of the WDC, said Waterway Square has become an attractive location for commercial development.

"The Waterway Square District has over 1 million square feet of Class A office space plus 127,000 square feet of retail that is fully leased, so there is a strong demand for new construction in this urban hub of The Woodlands Town Center," Sutton said.



An architectural rendering of 3 Waterway Square, which is currently under construction.

## Meetings

#### City of Oak Ridge North

Bob Williams Memorial Council Chambers  
27424 Robinson Road  
281-292-4648  
www.oakridgenorth.com

**Nov. 14, 28, 7 p.m.**

#### Montgomery County Commissioners Court

Alan B. Sadler Commissioners Court Bldg.  
510 N. Thompson, Ste. 402  
936-539-7812  
www.mctx.org

**Nov. 21, 9:30 a.m.**

#### The Woodlands Township

Township Service Center  
2201 Lake Woodlands Drive  
281-210-3800  
www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov

**Nov. 16, 6 p.m.**



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# Holiday shopping

Continued from I 1

are among the most frequent visitors.

"We're a destination, and I think a lot of it is visiting families," Hoylman said. "People bring in their families during the holidays."

But sales tax revenue is not the only benefit the economy sees as a direct result of such strong holiday sales, Burton said.

"Not even just the mall, any type of retail activity, it's bringing in more jobs," she said. "If you look around at our stores right now, they're looking for all kinds of seasonal help, anywhere from 10 to 50 people. That's a lot of extra money pumping up the economy."

## Role of village centers

The village centers throughout The Woodlands play an important role in the holiday shopping economy.

"Obviously The Woodlands Mall is a regional attraction, but that's not the only retail establishment," said township Finance Director Monique Sharp. "It's further supported by Market Street and The Waterway and the different retail amenities there. But we also have our villages. Those village centers are a very important part of our sales tax base."

Village centers are designed primarily to serve the needs of the residents of their respective villages with essential needs and amenities, but Alden Bridge Village Association President Steve Leakey said they also offer alternatives to Town Center shopping.

"[The village centers] have specialty toy stores and children's stores, health stores, barber shops, beauty shops," Leakey said. "There are some classic retail outlets. Each of these centers do have a few specialty retail outlets where Christmas is their biggest [season]."

## Property tax impact

The result of years of high sales tax revenues has created a positive effect on property tax numbers. With increasing sales, the township has been able to rely more heavily on sales tax revenue to fund its services than property tax revenue.

"We do see steady growth in our sales tax base when we look at it in a year over year basis," Sharp said. "Why that's important is that a significant portion of our sales tax dollars are paid by people who do not live in The Woodlands. That strong sales tax base supports our overall economic environment in terms of keeping our property tax lower."

In 2010, the township earned a high of \$30.8 million in sales tax revenue, according to the township. That amount, at least in part, led to the passing of a 2012 budget that included a 0.24-cent decrease in its property tax. Sales tax revenue helps fund the fire department, regional participation agreements with the cities of Conroe and Houston, debt service, law enforcement contracts, parks and recreation, and community services.

Comment at [impactnews.com](http://impactnews.com)

## The Woodlands Holiday Events



Winter Wonderland features lighted displays.

- The 29th Annual **Lighting of the Doves Festival** on Nov. 19 celebrates the arrival of Santa Claus, features ice carvers, snow, children's activities and a ceremony to illuminating the doves around Town Center. This event is free and held at Town Green Park, 2099 Lake Robbins Drive. • 3-9 p.m.
- The 5th Annual **International Winter on the Waterway** on Nov. 19 celebrates holiday cultures from around the world. This free event at Town Green Park includes foods, arts and crafts, music, and entertainment. • 3-9 p.m.
- **The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center** at the corner of Lake Robbins Drive and Six Pines Drive is open daily from Nov. 19 to Jan. 16. Hours and operation hours vary according to day of the week, so call 281-419-5630 for details. Discount tickets are available online at [www.thewoodlandscvb.com](http://www.thewoodlandscvb.com)
- While skaters enjoy the The Ice Rink at The Woodlands Town Center, take a stroll around the **Winter Wonderland**, which features dozens of lighted displays of toy soldiers, elves, doves, music angels and snowmen.

Source: The Woodlands Convention and Visitors Bureau



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## 'Tis the season to be spending

The Woodlands Township sales tax receipts by month for 2010

The Woodlands Township imposes a 2 percent sales tax on purchases made within the township boundaries. The money accumulated by the township through sales tax dollars goes to fund services such as the fire department, law enforcement, parks and recreation and community services. During the months of November and December for the past four years, the township earned \$26.5 million in sales tax revenue.



December 2010 sales tax revenue nearly \$2 million more than next highest month



## Industry

Continued from I 1

EDP, it has had discussions with representatives from businesses in such industries as software and medical technology, customer service and technical support, oil and gas, chemical distribution, software development, biotechnology, and medical device manufacturing.

Gil Staley, chief executive officer of the EDP, isn't surprised that such companies are eyeing the area for expansion.

"We truly feel we have an unmatched quality of life and the amenities that go with world-class dining and shopping, first-class healthcare amenities, and our school system," Staley said. "We have a wonderful quality of life that brings companies that want to do business."

### Large-scale expansions

In addition to new businesses looking to relocate to the area, companies that already have locations in The Woodlands, many of which are corporate facilities and company headquarters, are looking to expand and hire.

Anadarko Petroleum, which employs about 2,750 employees, is considering

expanding its headquarters in The Woodlands, said John Christiansen, director of external communications for Anadarko. Companies such as Woodforest National Bank, Chevron Phillips Chemical and McKesson Specialty Health, formerly known as US Oncology, have at least 500 employees each.

*"There are a lot of companies that are looking for good, qualified employees, especially engineers that specialize in a certain field. The trend is that people are hiring."*

—Mona Tucker  
Director of Human Resources,  
St. Luke's Hospital

specializes in health care services and information technology.

Over the last few years, The Woodlands office hired more than 100 employees, said Kathleen Avery, senior director of Human Resources Shared Services.

"We will continue to hire; we have grown every year," Avery said. "Our largest three areas of demand are technology, finance and accounting and research."

### Health care industry

Health care also remains a growing industry in the area. Steve Sanders, CEO of Memorial Hermann The Woodlands, said there are 50 job openings for full and part-time staff at the hospital on any given

McKesson Corp. acquired US Oncology in January and formed McKesson Specialty Health. The combined business is now headquartered in The Woodlands with continuing operations nationwide. The company



Anadarko Petroleum Corporation is considering expanding its Woodlands headquarters.

day because of staffing needs and turnover.

With the hospital's \$80 million, 240,000-square-foot expansion project underway, an increase in hiring is expected. The project, expected to be complete by late 2012, will add eight large surgical suites for high acuity cases, such as cardiovascular and neurosurgery and expand pre-op and recovery beds.

St. Luke's The Woodlands Hospital also plans to expand within the next two years. Hiring is up by 20 percent compared to last

year during this time period, said Mona Tucker, director of human resources at St. Luke's. The change is because of hiring supplemental staff to support an increase in overall volume, she said.

"There are a lot of companies that are looking for good, qualified employees, especially engineers that specialize in a certain field," Palmer said. "The trend is that people are hiring."

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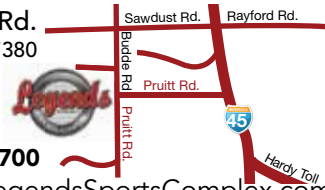
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General Manager Fortino Godinez and CEO Cary Attar opened Hubbell & Hudson in 2008. The market and bistro sells distinctive products from around the world.

## BUSINESS

# Hubbell & Hudson

Upscale market, bistro offers selections for all tastes

By Kimberly Morgan

Walking along Waterway Avenue, the aroma of herbs, spices and expertly-prepared dishes wafts in, enticing you to follow your nose.

Turning the corner and continuing along Lake Robbins Drive, the scent changes. Now it's fresh-ground coffee, straight-from-the-oven pastries and homemade bread.

It wasn't planned that way, it's just how the vents flow at Hubbell & Hudson, an upscale market and bistro where people can shop, eat and learn.

Upstairs, the Viking Cooking School offers a wide variety of classes. On the main floor, a dine-in bistro, a market infused with everyday and specialty foods, butchers in the meat shop, bakers in the kitchen and chefs behind the counter.

That's a lot going on under one roof, but everything flows smoothly and seamlessly in a friendly, cozy setting.

"This is a lifestyle store," said Hubbell & Hudson CEO Cary Attar. "A social meeting place for our guests."

At Hubbell & Hudson, customers are called guests. Staffers—all 170 of them—are called partners.

"We call them guests because a customer is someone you take money from, but a guest is someone you offer services to," General Manager Fortino Godinez said. "And because we like to build relationships with people, we don't call our staff 'employees.' We call them 'partners.'"

There are other interesting terms floating around the store. Take, for example, the charcuterie — a "sexier name for the deli," Godinez said.

At the cold juice bar, an array of bright colors greets guests looking for freshly-squeezed juice in a bottle. Not your standard juice fare, though, but rather watermelon basil, jalapeno lemonade, and even a

carrot/orange/beet blend.

In the chef's case, it's not just clam chowder that is offered. It's vanilla clam chowder. Among beverages, it's not just root beer. It's root beer that is micro-brewed the same way as beer.

Hubbell & Hudson opened in 2008. In 2010, a smaller version called the "kitchen" opened on Research Forest Drive. Attar said people always want to know about its namesakes.

Alida Hubbell and Fielding Hudson, cattle ranchers and farmers from Missouri, married in 1880. The family tree branches out to eventually include the birth of Attar's son, Hudson. What began as Hubbell & Hudson in marriage is now Hubbell & Hudson in business.

"Hopefully," Attar said, "history will continue to be kind to us."

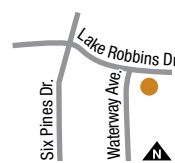
## Fun finds at Hubbell & Hudson



Hubbell & Hudson offers a variety dried meats.

- Chupacabra red wine (\$14.99)
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- Fairytale pumpkin soup, 16 ounces, (\$4.50) (available Oct.-Dec.)

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**BUSINESS**

# The Perfect Light

Bright idea turns lighting company into success

By Kimberly Morgan

**T**here is often a moment during the holiday season when, after all the lights have been strung, someone hits the switch, and everybody gasps.

Tom Ovaitt, owner of The Perfect Light, feels that same sense of awe every time he finishes a job.

About 60 percent of The Perfect Light's business occurs during a 10-week period over the holiday season.

"Even if it's been a tough year financially, when it gets to Christmas, people want to celebrate," Ovaitt said.

Most people want an elegant look with clear lights lining their roofs, doors, windows and driveways, Ovaitt said, but when it comes to wreaths, garland and trees, he suggests bursts of color.

"I especially encourage it for wrapping trees that break out into several branches," Ovaitt said. "It's spectacular."

Holiday lighting is priced per foot but starts at a \$1,000

minimum, Ovaitt said. The cost includes lights, timers, extension cords, installation, bulb-replacement service if needed, tear down, box up and storage until the following year. The cost drops 50 percent after the first year since the homeowner bought and paid for materials the previous year.

Ovaitt uses LED for miniature holiday lights but is waiting for a better, brighter product when it comes to LED for larger projects.

He's also working to convert all of his landscape lighting from incandescent to LED, which uses less electricity, lasts longer but costs more to purchase.

"Landscape lighting is mood lighting," Ovaitt said. "We can use light to emphasize the beautiful things, but that also means we can use darkness to hide the functional things."

Ovaitt decided to go into business for himself after working for a company that mostly worked

in commercial landscaping but dabbled in lighting.

He came up with the name The Perfect Light, a reference to his faith in God, and his wife, Sara, suggested making the "t" in Perfect into a cross.

The business launched in 2002, with Ovaitt working from home and using his garage as a warehouse. Business grew by 50 percent the first year, and he moved the office to a larger location.

Soon after, the business expanded beyond The Woodlands, with six additional offices in the Houston area and stores in Dallas and San Antonio.

The company soon hit a peak of \$5 million in sales per year.

"I had a plan," Ovaitt said. "I figured if we could reach \$1 million in sales, I could live happily ever after, send my kids to college, the wife and I could be comfortable. We have been more blessed than the plan. I never dreamed of anything like this."

Tom Ovaitt started his outdoor landscape and holiday lighting company, The Perfect Light, in 2002. ►



Brian Weiser

## Holiday lighting design tips from The Perfect Light



Courtesy The Perfect Light

Rooftop and flower bed lighting create a frame.

- Light high (roof) and light low (flower beds) to create a frame
- Put greenery, such as garland, inside the frame
- Use small, colored LED lights on trees and garland to create a burst of color
- Hide extension cords behind gutters
- Avoid putting lights along driveways and sidewalks. It's too hard to see them during the day and people might step or drive on them

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DINING

# The Olive Oil

Greek culture and food in a lively atmosphere

By Dustin Hall

At The Olive Oil, owners Toula and Yanni Huliaris have brought a little bit of Greece to The Woodlands. From the authentic Greek food to the Saturday night dining room parties that feature live bouzouki music, belly dancers and traditional Greek plate-smashing, a meal at The Olive Oil is a distinctive dining experience.

“We offer fun,” said Nick Kritikos, general manager. “The food is Greek and American, and we’ve been looking to expose people in The Woodlands area to our Greek culture through our Greek food and our celebrations and things.”

The experience starts with the food, and The Olive Oil offers a menu that includes well-known Greek items such as gyro sandwiches and hummus to entrees that may be less familiar to Americans, such as the casserole-style dishes known as pastichio and moussaka. A Greek salad with homemade dressing is also a popular choice, Kritikos said.

“Everyone always wants to buy the dressing and take it home because we make it fresh every day,” he said. “Our dips, our hummus and eggplant dip and caviar dips, as well as our tzatziki yogurt sauce, are all made right here.”

The dishes are served in an open dining area with Mediterranean décor and ocean-blue walls. Large window-style paintings of Greece are designed to transport diners back to the owners’ homeland.

“We try to treat our guests as if they were coming into our living room and eating,” Kritikos said. “We like to let the

people come in and feel like they got away from work.”

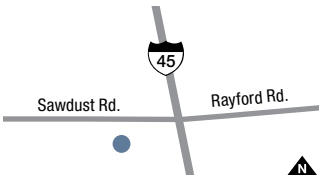
Although Kritikos said The Olive Oil has large lunch crowds throughout the week, the restaurant is transformed on the weekends to allow guests to get a deeper sense of Greek culture. Live classical Greek music is performed on Friday nights, but it is the festival-style Saturday night entertainment with traditional Greek folk dancers and a belly dancer that has attracted the most attention.

“Everybody loves to get involved,” Kritikos said of the belly dancer’s performance. “She goes to every single table in the restaurant and dances. After that, we have the folk dancers come back on and they’ll get participation from the audience. So people get up and dance, they’ll learn a couple of steps and then they’re dancing all around the restaurant, through the tables and everything.”

The Saturday crowds have grown so large that the restaurant has sometimes had to turn away potential customers, Kritikos said. To help alleviate the congestion, the restaurant is in the process of expanding into an adjoining shopping center space. As The Olive Oil grows, Kritikos said he wants to ensure it retains the relaxed atmosphere diners have come to appreciate.

“It’s changing all the time for our employees – systems are changing, menus are changing, positions are changing,” he said. “There’s a lot of change on our end, but we want none of that to be reflected back to the customer.”

**The Olive Oil**  
373 Sawdust Road  
The Woodlands • 281-367-0114  
Mon.–Thurs. 11 a.m.–9 p.m.  
Fri. 11 a.m.–10 p.m.  
Sat. 11 a.m.–11 p.m.  
Sun. 11 a.m.–8 p.m.



The Olive Oil, owned by Yanni and Toula Huliaris, offers a unique dining experience in The Woodlands.

### Customer comments

*“It’s casual and the food is good. The gyro and the salads are always good. I haven’t tried too many things because I always come back to the same things.”*

–Connie Landgraf, Montgomery

*“The chicken dish that I got was delicious. It was chicken that had squash with it. It was one of their lunch specials. It had wonderful flavor.”*

–Biddy Scharnberg, Montgomery



The Traditional Greek Salad (\$6–9) features fresh Mediterranean ingredients.

### Owner recommendations

- **Pastichio**–“Pastichio has pasta, beef, cheeses and a béchamel sauce on top. It is a cream sauce that is baked on in lieu of the extra cheeses. Nice, lightly, fluffy cream sauce. It’s absolutely delicious.” (\$7.95–\$12.95)
- **Gyro**–“To make our cucumber sauce on the gyro, we get Greek yogurt by the buckets, and we make it with yogurt, cucumbers, lemon, dill and a little bit of garlic.” (\$5.95–\$9)
- **Orzo chicken salad**–“The pasta is actually marinated in homemade Greek dressing, and it has olives, feta cheese and tomatoes, topped with grilled chicken.” (\$7.95–\$12)



The Greek Sampler (\$20) features fresh pita bread, moussaka, roasted potatoes and gyro beef.

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PEOPLE

# Roger Galatas

## Woodlands pioneer continues community's early vision

By Kimberly Morgan

Roger Galatas is a 76-year old grandfather of four, but he still isn't sure what he wants to be when he grows up.

"Does anybody really ever know?" Galatas said. "One lesson I've learned over the years is you need to be prepared to take advantage of opportunities. The saddest thing in life is to have an opportunity come along and not be prepared to grab it."

Galatas knows of what he speaks. If it weren't for opportunity, his willingness to seize the day and put in ample amounts of elbow grease, the engineer-turned-developer and author-turned-historian wouldn't be where he is today.

He earned a degree in geology and took a job with Humble Oil & Refining Company, where he was hired for a salary of \$420 a month.

He was only there a short time when he was called to duty with the U.S. Air Force. He finished his tour and returned to the oil company, where he discovered he'd received a raise while he was gone — to \$440 a month.

Galatas later became involved in an Exxon project to develop the 14,000-acre master-planned community now known as Kingwood. That's when the headhunter called.

Would Galatas be interested in working with George Mitchell, helping develop a 28,000-acre master-planned community called The Woodlands?

Galatas was. For one, he would be much closer to home, which at the time was Conroe. Two, he would be working with Mitchell. Galatas has never regretted the decision.

"The thing that has impressed me the most is following George Mitchell's vision from the outset," Galatas said. "A community where people live, work, play and learn was not just a slogan. It was our mission."

In fact, Galatas was the one who named the Village of Alden Bridge in The Woodlands. He grew up close to a town of the same name in Louisiana, a town where folks lived, worked and played.

"That's where the name came from: my memories," Galatas said. "A guy named Alden built a sawmill and a bridge across the creek so the workers could get to the mill. He built houses for the workers and their families. He created a village."

Indeed, during the 20-year career that followed, Galatas has watched The Woodlands bloom to its current population of 97,000, a community in which 47,000 jobs have been provided by 1,700 employers.

"I just happened to be part of a good team that had a great leader named George Mitchell," said Galatas, a father of two who lives with his wife in the Village of Panther Creek.

As a trustee on the Conroe ISD school board, Galatas was dedicated to a variety of school activities as the community continued its growth. In 1994, the board voted in favor of naming an elementary school in his honor, a career high that Galatas remains humbled by.

Galatas Elementary School in the Village of Cochran's Crossing opened in 1994. It has consistently earned Exemplary ratings from the Texas Education Agency.

"It's really an honor to have a school named after you," Galatas said. "You appreciate it but you also realize you're not as worthy of that as someone else might be."

In 2004, Galatas, along with Jim Barlow, released a book titled "The Woodlands: The Inside Story of Creating a Better Hometown." Published by The Urban Land Institute, the book details the events leading up to the formation of The Woodlands and the history behind it.



Courtesy Roger Galatas

Roger Galatas, along with George Mitchell, was one of The Woodlands' visionaries who helped get the community up and running.

"I remember almost every street and every business that came along," Galatas said.

The book is now in its second printing. "People ask me how long it took to write the book," Galatas said. "I tell them 30 years, because I had to live it first."

These days, Galatas is in business for himself, the chief behind Roger Galatas Interests, a company that provides advisory and development services to real estate companies — ones with a focus on master-planned communities.

"Just work hard," Galatas said, "and you'll probably be okay."

### Galatas at a glance

- Member and former officer of the Urban Land Institute
- Center for Houston's Future advisory council
- Board member of Greater Houston Health Exchange Information
- Involved in the creation of the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion
- Founding director of The John Cooper School
- Former president and board member of Conroe ISD Board of Trustees
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NONPROFIT

# Interfaith of The Woodlands

## Service agency offers full scope of assistance

By Brian Walzel

More than 35 years ago when George Mitchell was developing his concept for The Woodlands, part of the initial plan were the basic needs of a community: schools, churches and medical facilities. But Mitchell also knew a need would exist for a place for people to go when they were in need. Based on that vision and need, Interfaith of The Woodlands was born.

In the 38 years since its inception, Interfaith has grown to provide a variety of services to those from infants to senior citizens and every age group, race, socioeconomic class and religion in between. From child care to financial assistance, school supplies, counseling services and even a comprehensive phone directory, Interfaith has established itself as the most successful nonprofit agency in The Woodlands with more than 100,000 “service contacts” and 300 full-time employees in six offices.

“Our mission from the very beginning was to build a more loving, caring community,” said Dr. Ann Snyder, president and CEO of Interfaith. “If you need food, information, rent assistance, you need a job, we have the tools to provide the opportunity to become self-sufficient.”

Snyder said Interfaith was founded in 1973 by Mitchell, who sought to bring together different religious congregations for the betterment of the community. That premise still exists today. More than 40 churches are members of Interfaith.

One of the most established and successful Interfaith services is its Child Development Center. Established in 1976, the Interfaith Child Development Center provides child care year round from toddlers ages 12 months to children enrolled in fourth grade. Snyder said there are about 370 children enrolled in the Child Development Center.

In the 1980s, when the economy began to decline from the oil boom, many companies were forced to lay off large numbers of employees, including Mitchell’s own Mitchell Oil and Gas. Mitchell turned to the same agency he established to assist those who were now out of a job, Snyder said. Today, Interfaith partners with Workforce Solutions to provide employment services in nine offices in six counties.

Snyder said that all of Interfaith’s services have grown from requests from the community. She attributes the agency’s success to its many volunteers. “[The community support] has been tremendous,” she said. “It’s why we are so successful. If there’s a disaster, if the food pantry is empty, we put a call out to our community and they always come through. Always. The community has made Interfaith what it is today.”

The Interfaith Food Pantry offers a variety of goods such as non-perishable food, infant and personal hygiene products. ▶



Courtesy Interfaith of The Woodlands

### Programs and Services

- Child Development Center
- Interfaith Community Clinic
- Financial Assistance
- Prescription Drug Assistance
- Gas Assistance
- Clothing Vouchers
- Food Pantry
- Emergency Transitional Shelters
- School Supplies
- Holiday Gift Assistance
- Counseling Services
- Senior Services
- Interfaith of The Woodlands Directory
- Workforce and Employment Services

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HISTORY

# The Lighting of the Doves

## Festival is Woodlands' oldest holiday tradition

By Susan VanDeWater

In the early 1980s, Ed Lee was vacationing in Hong Kong when a lighted display caught his eye.

What impressed then President and CEO of the Woodlands Development Company were displays of lights in the shapes of different animals.

One in particular struck him – the image of a bird soaring through the sky. When Lee returned from his trip, he began making his vision a reality. He acquired three doves outlined in white lights. The large doves were placed high atop a wall of trees in the wide median that once existed on Woodlands Parkway, and in 1982 the first Lighting of the Doves ceremony took place.

“It was a fine event,” recalls Roger Galatas, who was the senior vice president responsible for residential development under Lee. “We sang Christmas carols, and Santa Claus rode in on an antique fire truck. It was a community-building event that became an institution.”

Susan Vreeland-Wendt, Director of Marketing for The Woodlands Development Company, said a few hundred people attended the first Lighting of the Doves.

“It was a hometown event. Shop owners

at the original Village Shopping Center dressed in [Charles] Dickens-era costumes — it was our own mini-Dickens on the Strand,” she said. “There were hay rides from the Village Shopping Center to Grogan’s Mill Road and Woodlands Parkway, which is where the ceremony took place.”

Lee passed away in 1986, but his vision lived on. Galatas became president of the Development Company and continued the tradition. The torch was passed to The Woodlands Township in 1996, but the key elements remain, including Santa and, of course, the doves.

Over the years, the event, like The Woodlands, has grown. It has moved from a median in the road to the Town Center with 15,000 of people attending. The doves can be found throughout the community and have become a symbol of the holidays in The Woodlands.

In fact, the doves have come to represent more than just the holidays. Commonly seen as a symbol of peace, the doves symbolize the peaceful celebration of many different cultures in one place.

“The Woodlands is a dynamic and culturally-diverse town. Our population



The Lighting of the Doves was previously held along Grogan’s Mill Road and Woodlands Parkway.

represents more than 100 different countries,” said Nick Wolda, Director of Community Relations for The Woodlands Township.

Five years ago, residents of The Woodlands began celebrating their differences together at the International Winter on the Waterway (iWOW) Festival. The festival, which is held in conjunction with the Lighting of the Doves, gives attendees the opportunity to learn about different cultures and how they celebrate the holidays.

As the Lighting of the Doves approaches its 30 anniversary, Galatas is amazed to see how the event has grown,

and he thinks Lee would be too.

“I think he would be pleased,” he said. “I think inside him would be a good, warm feeling.”

### The Lighting of the Doves—2011

- 29th Annual Event
- Nov. 19, 3–9 p.m., Town Green Park
- Santa Claus
- Live music
- Ice carvings
- Snow
- Children’s activities
- Held in conjunction with the iWOW Festival

Source: The Woodlands Township

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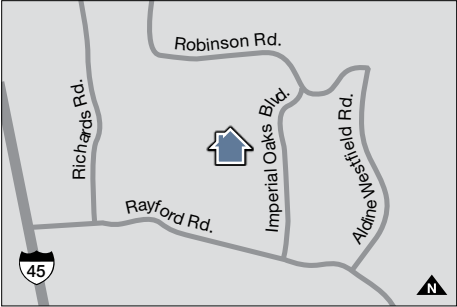
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Overview



**Build-out year:** 2011  
**Number of homes:** 3,959  
**Square footage:** 800-5,170  
**Home values:** \$22,110–\$342,530  
**HOA Dues (est.):** \$400–\$800  
**Amenities:** Over 100 acres devoted to recreational amenities, resort style swimming pool, playgrounds and pavilions  
**Property taxes:**  
Conroe ISD 1.2850000  
Montgomery CO 0.4838000  
Montgomery CO Hospital 0.0755000  
Rayford Rd. MUD 0.592000 \*  
Lone Star College System 0.1101000  
Montgomery CO Drainage Dist. 10 0.4470000  
Montgomery CO Emergency Dist. 8 0.0762000  
**Total (per \$100 value)** **3.069600**  
\*MUD 115 applies to certain sections of neighborhood 1.3500000  
\*Montgomery County DD 6 applies to certain sections of neighborhood 0.2641000  
**Schools:**  
Kaufman Elementary School (K-4)  
Vogel Intermediate School (5-6)  
York Junior High School (7-8)  
Oak Ridge High 9th Grade Campus (9)  
Oak Ridge High School (10-12)

On the market (As of Oct. 31, 2011)

No. of homes for sale	No. of homes under contract	Avg. days on the market
65	15	62

Home sales (September 30, 2010–Oct. 31, 2011)

No. of homes sold in the last year	Square footage Low/High	Selling price Low/High
193	1,344/4,952	\$43,560/\$394,000

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**1631 Welsford Drive \$193,500**  
4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath 2,554 sq. ft.  
Sharron Hensley, Champions Real Estate Group  
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**2115 Westover Park Drive \$168,000**  
4 Bedroom / 2 Bath 2,372 sq. ft.  
Daisy McVay, Realty Associates  
281-955-5350



**26302 Richards Road \$215,000**  
3-4 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath 2,716 sq.ft.  
Michael Seder, RE/MAX  
The Woodlands & Spring 713-806-6796



**31202 Deerwood Park Lane \$247,900**  
4-5 Bedroom / 2.5 Bath 3,144 sq. ft.  
Justin McClung, Coldwell Banker United, Realtors  
281-728-7970

Market Data The Woodlands

On the market (October 1–31)

Price Range	Number of homes for sale/Average days on the market						
	77380	77381	77382	77384	77385	77386	77389
Less than \$149,999	26/60	10/106	—	1/29	36/87	81/104	27/127
\$150,000–\$199,999	12/180	23/88	14/120	15/120	31/91	67/98	34/83
\$200,000–\$299,999	10/98	29/85	66/91	49/92	21/122	18/109	72/120
\$300,000–\$399,999	7/165	30/107	37/75	14/72	2/116	25/159	44/113
\$400,000–\$499,999	5/128	18/74	14/111	14/109	4/193	8/108	28/112
\$500,000–\$599,999	6/161	11/108	18/79	2/124	1/160	17/109	22/158
\$600,000–\$799,999	12/133	9/110	25/219	1/191	1/98	8/141	30/117
\$800,000–\$999,999	11/137	5/127	24/171	—	—	4/247	9/198
\$1 million +	20/164	19/204	51/159	1/196	2/87	2/93	17/186

Monthly home sales

Month	Number of homes sold/Average Price						
	77380	77381	77382	77384	77385	77386	77389
Oct. 2010	11/\$339,625	35/\$395,775	44/\$458,358	17/\$235,494	22/\$164,645	57/\$233,141	35/\$296,030
Oct. 2011	13/\$193,875	35/\$295,240	46/\$418,755	18/\$253,548	22/\$177,171	41/\$184,460	37/\$269,400
Sep. 2011	20/\$443,194	47/\$297,602	65/\$502,254	23/\$239,980	16/\$165,687	74/\$196,194	40/\$271,451
Aug. 2011	22/\$402,399	62/\$319,909	85/\$434,301	21/\$207,993	17/\$152,427	70/\$206,705	51/\$333,781
July 2011	18/\$241,463	62/\$294,546	98/\$372,758	21/\$227,566	30/\$162,286	80/\$200,626	50/\$330,376
June 2011	21/\$277,228	60/\$321,929	100/\$47,185	23/\$262,001	36/\$153,462	93/\$181,857	50/\$305,985
May 2011	24/\$480,214	62/\$363,148	63/\$427,020	19/\$261/168	22/\$152,958	71/\$181,820	44/\$292,776
April 2011	16/\$286,834	50/\$323,327	61/\$380,175	24/\$237,895	22/\$171,610	74/\$198,298	32/\$306,066
Mar. 2011	25/\$233,562	39/\$388,044	51/\$617,020	19/\$247,531	19/\$155,272	73/\$199,459	42/\$298,982

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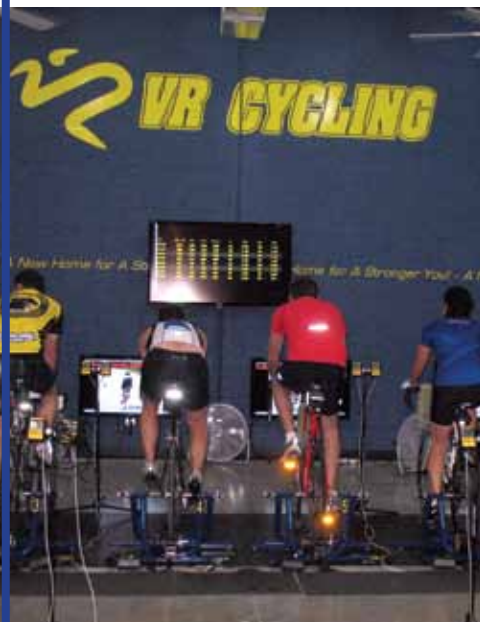
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