



Branch REVIEW

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Safe Zones

FBPD creates common ground for safe exchanges of online business or child custody



FARMERS BRANCH ~ In an effort to further the safety of the community, the Farmers Branch Police Department has initiated a "Safe Exchange Zone" program for the exchange of items that have been bought, sold or traded or for child custody exchanges.

The designated area in front of the parking lot at the Farmers Branch Justice Center, 3723 Valley View Lane, will enable divorced parents to make child custody handoffs and will give buyers and sellers of online items, from sites like Craigslist and Ebay, a safe location to transact further business.

The practice mirrors programs established in other cities and states across the country in response to the need for safe online transactions.

"The Farmers Branch Police Department is committed to safety of the community," said Police Chief Sidney Fuller. "Now there is a dedicated, safe area for online buyers, sellers and par-



Chief Fuller

ents with visitation rights to make the exchanges."

Chief Fuller added that although his department encourages use of these areas for exchanges, online buyers should always exercise good judgment, as there is no guarantee to the legitimacy of any transaction.

For more information on the "Safe Exchange Zone" program please contact Detective David Laisure at 972.919.9354.

Property values trending upward in 2015

DALLAS ~ Increases in commercial, residential and business personal property values have resulted in taxable property values in Farmers Branch increasing 7.7 percent, according to figures released this week by the Dallas Central Appraisal District.

The DCAD placed Farmers Branch total values for the 2015 tax year at \$4.5 billion. Commercial values were up 9.7 percent. Residential rose by 6 percent while business personal property saw an increase of 4.4 percent.

The total taxable value increase of \$323.3 million includes \$78.2 million in new construction (\$10.3 for residential and \$67.9 for the commercial sector).

Farmers Branch Managing Director Charles S. Cox said the new information confirms the positive trend seen in Farmers Branch taxable values in recent years.

Encounters from the Past returns to Keenan Cemetery

Back for another year, Encounters from the Past is an interactive, guided tour of historic Keenan Cemetery, complete with costumed re-enactors portraying various characters from Farmers Branch's past, set September 18 & 19 at the cemetery.

"You and your family will have a chance to meet everyone from our first female postmistress to a mother who fought for better schooling for her children," said the Historical Park's Danielle Brissette.

Tours leave every 15 minutes from 7 until 9 p.m. Tickets are \$5 per person with kids six and under admitted free. Call 972.406.0184.



Date Night returns for second date on September 26

By popular demand, 'Date Night in the Park' returns for a second date in 2015 on Saturday, September 26 at the Farmers Branch Historical Park.

Once again, a selection of food trucks will be available along with outdoor music from 'Prophets & Outlaws.' The outdoor movie will start at dusk and will feature the comedy "Aloha," starring Bradley Cooper, Emma Stone and Rachel McAdams.

Admission and parking are free. Child-care is available at the Farmers Branch Community Recreation Center for \$10 per child. Call 972.247.4607.



Library plans outdoor movies

Continuing their tradition from recent years, the Farmers Branch Manske Library will feature two outdoor movies in the Library's amphitheater this month.

First, on Saturday, September 5, the contemporary classic, "E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial" will grace the screen.

Then, on Saturday, September 19, the 2015 inspirational Kevin Costner film "McFarland, USA" will be shown in the amphitheater. Admission is free with blankets and lawn chairs recommended. Showtime is dusk.



Check Out the New Aquatics Center @ fbh2o.com

West Nile threat persists with warm weather

Even though autumn is approaching, the threat of West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases persists for as long as the weather stays warm.

Both the City of Farmers Branch and Dallas County have seen an overall rise in mosquitoes infected with West Nile Virus, as is typical for this time of year.

Despite this increase, the city's Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM) program has been successful. Mosquito populations have decreased overall and the number of resident complaints is less than what it was at this time last year.

Resident participation and involvement have been key factors in these results.

Environmental Health staff continues to focus on prevention through education, surveillance, and use of larvicide. Each week, the Environmental Health Division puts out traps to collect mosquitoes that are then tested by Dallas County for West Nile Virus. These sample pools are then used to determine if and when the city will be sprayed.

"We remind residents to drain standing water, wear insect repellent with DEET, and avoid going outside at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active," said Environmental Health Manager Katy Evans. "Report standing water to 972-919-2536 and learn more about the city's mosquito program at farmersbranchtx.gov/mosquito."

City offices closed Labor Day

Most City of Farmers Branch offices and facilities will be closed on Monday, September 7 in observance of Labor Day.

Exceptions are the Farmers Branch Historical Park and the Farmers Branch Community Recreation Center, both open from 8 am until 5 pm and the Frog Pond, closing for the season that day, but open from 12 noon until 6 pm. The fitness area at the Rec Center opens at 6 am.

There will be no garbage pickup on Monday, September 7.

Senior Dances set Mondays

The Senior Dance Club hosts dances most Monday nights at the Farmers Branch Senior Center, 14055 Dennis Lane, between Josey and Valwood. Admission is \$5. Featured entertainment for upcoming dances include:

- Sep 7 Labor Day - No Dance**
- Sep 14 Blue Champagne**
- Sep 21 Southern Pride**
- Sep 28 JC Tippett**

West Nile
Watch

Water/sewer rate increase proposed to offset pass-through costs

FARMERS BRANCH ~ The record rainfall of 2015 in addition to a legal battle over the source for local drinking water, is combining for a perfect storm the will likely result in higher water and sewer rates for the new fiscal year.

Most costs associated with water service come from Dallas Water Utilities, the City's water provider, and the Trinity River Authority, the City's wastewater service provider.

"About 80 percent of our water and sewer expenses come from fixed costs that are passed along to us by the Trinity River Authority and Dallas Water Utilities," said Farmers Branch Managing Director of Finance and Administration Charles Cox. "In addition to that, local water sales are down 15 percent, or about \$3 million, because of the record rainfall this spring.

"When it rains, people don't buy water, but when it rains a lot, those numbers become even more pronounced."

In addition, because of the record rains, the Trinity River Authority has been processing approximately twice as much wastewater as normal, resulting in additional costs for pumping operations and chemicals.

If that weren't enough, the TRA is also reporting infrastructure damage from all the water that totals \$2 million.

Finally, Dallas Water Utilities has said that it's protracted legal battle with the Sabine River Authority over access to the Lake Fork water supply will result in \$10 million in costs being passed down to its customers of treated and raw water, including the City of Farmers Branch.

"At this time, in order to answer those additional costs, we have proposed a 15 percent increase in water and sewer rates for the 2015-2016 fiscal year budget," Mr. Cox explained. "For water customers with average consumption, that translates to \$11.43 per month."

The City Council will vote on the new budget in September, in advance of the new fiscal year, which will begin October 1.



"Brighton Beach Memoirs" planned September 10-17

FARMERS BRANCH ~ Neil Simon's semi-autobiographical account of his youth in the Brighton Beach neighborhood of Brooklyn is coming to town on select nights in September as The Firehouse Theatre presents, "Brighton Beach Memoirs."

Described as both "poignant" and "laugh-out-loud funny," the show is told through the eyes of young Eugene Jerome as he experiences life in 1937 New York.

Call 972.620.3747 or visit thefirehousetheatre.com.



Farmers Branch called out as fifth-best place in Texas to start a business

FARMERS BRANCH ~ Crunching numbers from the U.S. Census bureau on business climate and economic health of the area, the financial analysis site NerdWallet.com has ranked Farmers Branch as the fifth best place to start a business in Texas.

One of only two north Texas cities at the top of the list of 220 communities on the survey, Farmers Branch was called out for the second highest number of businesses in the top 10 and for second place in the top 10 for the largest number of businesses with paid employees. Among the corporations with headquarters here, NerdWallet quoted Taco Bueno and Ironclad Performance Wear.

Rounding out the top five were Katy at number four, Stafford at number three, Webster was ranked the second and the Town of Addison, received the top billing on the list.

"It's always gratifying when outside agencies take note of our excellent business climate, location and access to transportation," said Farmers Branch Managing Director John Land. "We're honored to be mentioned on the same list as so many other dynamic and progressive business locations in Texas."

According to NerdWallet.com, their analysts looked at 220 cities in Texas with a population of at least 10,000. They calculated the overall score for every location based on the City's business climate and economic health using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Find out more at nerdwallet.com.

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