



**DR. ELBA GARCIA**  
DALLAS COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER

# Dr. Elba Garcia, Dallas County Commissioner, District 4

SUMMER 2017

## Message from Dr. Elba Garcia

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**Dr. Garcia Giving the Commencement Address at Mountain View College**

**Friends and Neighbors,** as I wrap up my seventh year as County Commissioner for District 4, excitement still lingers about all that we have accomplished and all the opportunities that the future holds for us in Dallas County. In the Commissioners Court, we kicked off the 2017 fiscal year tackling critical infrastructure needs

and pay disparities for County employees. This allows us to take care of our most valuable asset – our workforce. These items were addressed with no increase to the Dallas County tax rate, which remains unchanged at 24.3 cents per \$100 valuation, one of the lowest in Texas. Trails continue to grow as popular recreational amenities here in Dallas County with a few in the works for District 4. Our Road & Bridge 4 crew has been busy with various road projects, such as the Cockrell Hill Street Program. I'm also very excited to have helped bring the Home for Hounds program to fruition in Dallas County. It's a fantastic project that allows inmates to gain a vocational skill and boosts adoption rates of animals. Finally, the Records Building is currently undergoing the largest

renovation in the history of Dallas County. Its historical façade will stay intact, while its interior will be modernized to house the Commissioners Court and other departments. In addition to this project, Dallas County has spent \$80 million over the past six years catching up with long overdue deferred maintenance in all County facilities. There is still much to do and with your support we can accomplish anything here in Dallas County. We will remain a community that welcomes all and discriminates against none. Dallas County continues to be at the forefront of county government leadership and we will continue to make decisions with the best interests of our constituents in mind. ¡Adelante!

*Dr. Elba Garcia*

## Wildlife Parkway Project



This summer, Commissioner Garcia and Grand Prairie City Council Member Jorja Clemson hosted a public meeting with property owners to discuss planned improvements for Wildlife Parkway. The \$33 million, 1.8-mile long project will widen existing Wildlife Parkway to four lanes beginning from Belt Line Road to Hardrock Road and will extend the road across the West Fork Trinity River with a new bridge to connect to SH 161. The improvement project will consist of widening from a two lane road to a four-lane newly paved roadway, traffic signal improve-

ments at Belt Line Road, sidewalk improvements, street lighting, water line relocations and storm drain improvements. The newly constructed highway will alleviate traffic congestion for commuters who traverse the surrounding area and will allow them to easily connect to SH 161 once completed. Additionally, another project objective is to provide a trail connection between the Good Link Trail and the planned Ruthe Jackson Trail, adding to the growing network of trails in Dallas County. In addition to enhancing property values and creating economic growth, the

trail connections will allow users to better enjoy their exercise routines such as cycling and jogging. This exciting new project will be made possible with revenue contributions from Dallas County and the City of Grand Prairie. As of June 2017, the final project design is 95% complete and is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2017 with construction anticipated to begin late 2018. Once completed, this thoroughfare will further increase connectivity and mobility in the area along with the recently completed Hunter-Ferrell Roadway and MacArthur Blvd., which is currently underway.

## District 4 Trails—Update



All across America we're seeing a boom in trail demand and usage. They facilitate connections between housing, employment and entertainment and enhance mobility for entire communities.

Apart from enhancing local property values they stimulate economic growth in their immediate surroundings. Additionally, trails serve to reduce air contamination from motorized vehicles, make cities more attractive for businesses and complement the region's roadway and passenger rail transit network effectively reducing traffic for residents. There is a lot of excitement around the trails that are underway and the proposed connections from one trail to the next, including the

much talked about Metroplex trail superhighway connecting Fort Worth to Dallas that aims to pull the North Texas region together. One recent highlight is the Lone Star-Campión Trail connection spearheaded by Commissioner Garcia, which linked Grand Prairie and Irving. Most recently, Commissioner Garcia secured \$6 million for the Campión Trail to link the north and south portions and eventually create a 25-mile continuous trail from Coppell to Grand Prairie, and secured \$7 million for the Coombs

Creek Trail in Dallas. Also, as mentioned previously, Grand Prairie will be extending the Good Link Trail east along the new Wildlife Parkway and across the Trinity River. West Oak Cliff will see its first major trail, the Chalk Hill Trail, which is currently in the design phase. Dallas County currently offers 150 miles of paved trails, and we are in the process of constructing another 25 miles of trail.. For more information on Dallas County's trails, please visit our Trails & Preserves page at [www.dallascounty.org/departments/plandev/trails/](http://www.dallascounty.org/departments/plandev/trails/).



Road & Bridge 4 Crew Clearing Debris

Road and Bridge District 4 staff continues to provide its customer cities with the highest level of responsive customer service, high quality workmanship, competitive pricing, and a safe work-zone environment for employees, motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians alike. Recent rain events have caused some minor production delays. However, due the recently purchased asphalt paver, milling machine,

## Road & Bridge 4-Update

street sweeper, asphalt roller, skid steer loader, and various other new road construction equipment, delays due to equipment failures have been almost non-existent. Over these last 12 months, Road & Bridge District 4 has completed milling and overlay on nine streets located in the City of Cockrell Hill as part of the \$1.8m of milling & overlay bond program. Similarly, we completed over 29,340

square yards of overlay and milling in the City of Carrollton as part of their maintenance program, and are currently performing milling and overlay on 1000-1100 Study Ln. We are looking forward to begin milling and overlaying in the City of Irving on 600-1200 MacArthur Blvd. Additionally, early Fall we will perform overlaying work on 103 – 635 Airline Dr. and 900 – 1400 Beltline Rd. in the City of Coppell.



Tonya Stafford Thanking Comm. Garcia For Her Support of the 5K Run

Award,” to Commissioner Elba Garcia for her hard work and efforts in favor of the North Texas Community. The award was presented to Commissioner Garcia at its “Hope & Pearls Inaugural Gala.” The gala's main objective is to create awareness in educating and

## It's Going To Be Ok, Inc.

On Saturday January 28, 2017, the non-profit organization, It's Going To Be OK, Inc. (IGTBOK) bestowed its first ever, “Shaniya Davis Human Rights

stopping human trafficking. Most recently, IGTBOK hosted its first ever Stop The Traffick 5K Walk/Run in Dallas to raise funding for this important cause. IGTBOK was founded in 2014 by its CEO, Ms. Tonya Stafford, with the purpose of working towards the eradication of trafficking of persons, particularly women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Tonya is a human trafficking survivor,

and beginning in her childhood endured a traumatic life of sexual molestation, physical abuse, rape and was ultimately sold. She now dedicates her life to advocating as a voice for women and children against human trafficking. If you're interested in helping or donating to the organization, you can reach out to VanDella Menifee, Director of Marketing & Communications for IGTBOK, by email: [vandella.menifeeIGTBOK@yahoo.com](mailto:vandella.menifeeIGTBOK@yahoo.com) or by phone: (678) 570-0845.

# Catastrophic Sick Leave Pool



As mentioned before, one of our greatest assets here at Dallas County is our workforce and our leadership continues to roll out policies to help protect our assets. Earlier this year, the Dallas County Commissioners Court adopted a policy that would provide for a sick and vacation leave pool. What is it? Per the request of County Departments and Employees,

this was established to allow Dallas County employees to contribute accrued vacation and sick leave hours to a pool that will alleviate the financial hardship of fellow employees as a result of catastrophic illness or injury, e.g., cancers and treatment, unexpected surgeries. You can imagine how this might be extremely helpful in the event that a catastrophic illness or injury forces the employee to exhaust all their paid leave, subsequently leading to loss of compensation from the County. Since its inception in late spring of 2017, county employees have voluntarily donated over 5,300 total hours for employees in need by more than 340 employees equating to \$140,609 of employee time. Every employee and every hour matters. In addition to the sick leave pool, Commissioner Garcia spearheaded a policy that

was passed by the Commissioners Court earlier this year that established the additional language incentive. This policy assures that those employees who are required to use their additional language skills in order to perform their daily duties will have additional language pay after demonstrating that they can effectively communicate through language proficiency (speak, read, and write) in a language other than English. This in turn will provide additional value to constituents and customers with regards to County related business by ensuring that transactions regarding speaking, reading and/or written communication to non-English speaking constituents is coherent and precise. Eligible employees are required to demonstrate proficiency by means of satisfactorily completing a Language Skills Proficiency Test.



## Home for Hounds

Earlier this year, through Commissioner Garcia, Sheriff Lupe Valdez and Jail Inmate Programs Director Yolanda Lara's efforts, the Dallas County Jail embarked on a partnership with the City of Grand Prairie's Prairie Paws Adoption Center and local SPCA to kick off the Home-for-Hounds program. Dog-training programs have sprouted up across the country, and last fall the Commissioners Court approved this first of its kind program for a county jail within the State of Texas. This program is unique in that unlike most jail programs that teach inmates a vocational skill, this program also teaches inmates empathy. The program consists of a five-week course, 1 dog assigned per 2 inmates and 10 inmates total with no history of violence, who will train dogs picked from the euthaniza-

tion line at the Grand Prairie Animal Shelter. The inmates will train dogs in basic commands such as sit, stay and walking on a leash in a secure area within the Dallas County Jail that has been converted into a mini dog park. The SPCA is donating collars, leashes and dog beds to the program and the course will be run by an instructor from El Centro Community College. It's an incredible opportunity for inmates to pick up a vocational skill whilst learning compassion towards an animal. Upon completion of the program, inmates will receive a dog-handling certification increasing their chances of receiving job offers upon release, facilitating their integration back into society with gainful employment. The second goal the program hopes to accomplish is boosting adoption rates.

Dogs will be more "adoptable" thanks to their newly learned skills and will benefit from the socialization and one-on-one training. Home for Hounds recently graduated its first group of dogs, all of whom have been adopted. For more information on how to adopt please contact the Prairie Paws Adoption Center in Grand Prairie at (972) 237-8575.





## Dr. Elba Garcia

Dallas County Commissioner  
District 4

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Check Out Our  
Website!

[www.DallasCounty.org/departament/comcrt/district4/home.php](http://www.DallasCounty.org/departament/comcrt/district4/home.php)

## Annual Donations for 2017

Over the last six years, Commissioner Garcia has contributed over \$100,000 in donations from her personal annual salary to local organizations serving the Dallas County Community, and has not taken a salary increase nor car allowance as a County Commissioner. So far this year, Dr. Garcia has chosen to support 15 organizations by donating over \$20,000 of her Commissioner's salary.

## Dallas County Health & Human Services

Among the numerous services that Dallas County Health & Human Services (DCHHS) offers to Dallas County residents, one particular service that targets income eligible households in need of home repair or weatherization is the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). The program assists households that are in need of basic weatherization to conserve energy use thereby reducing high utility costs and decreasing the burden on these households. Once applicants are considered for assessments, DCHHS will conduct an assessment and audit of each dwelling before any work begins. In addition to weather stripping and caulking, the weatherization process consists of equipping homes with insulation, repairing or providing new doors and windows, solar screens, repaired or retrofitted heating and cooling units and duct work. DCHHS wants to assure that eligible house-

holds receive the opportunity to submit an application and be considered for assessment. To be eligible, household members must show proof of all income earned in the previous 30 days and identification is required from the head of the household. Dallas County residents interested in applying for WAP should call DCHHS at (214) 819-1909.

Another valuable source of assistance for Dallas County constituents is the Home Loan Counseling Center. In hopes of advancing its goal of increasing homeownership opportunities in Dallas County for low-to-moderate income families, DCHHS provides several services to make this a reality by partnering with local municipalities, home builders, mortgage lenders and non-profit housing agencies. One service worth mentioning is the first time homebuyer seminars. These seminars are bro-

ken up into three parts and cover the essentials of the home buying process, including the mortgage financing process, property taxes, homeowner insurance, rights and responsibilities of home ownership, budgeting/consumer awareness and predatory lending. First time homebuyer seminars are free and held monthly at the DCHHS building located at 2377 N. Stemmons Freeway, Room 751, Dallas, Texas 75207. For additional information, please contact the Home Loan Counseling Center at (214) 819-6060 or visit [www.dallascounty.org/hhs/](http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs/).



**DCHHS**  
*Safe families, healthy lives.*

Dallas County Health and Human Services