



DR. ELBA GARCIA
DALLAS COUNTY
COMMISSIONER

Dr. Elba Garcia, Dallas County Commissioner, District 4

SUMMER 2016

Message from Dr. Elba Garcia

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**Dr. Garcia Presenting at the
State of the County 2016**

Friends and Neighbors,

This past year has been another busy and productive one for Dallas County and District 4 in particular. Our taxpayers remain our top priority and our momentum has not slowed down a single day in reaching out to you, joining you at community gatherings and giving informational presentations on County updates and events. We continue to embark on exciting projects in District 4 such as public trails and improvements to road infrastruc-

ture. Since I was elected as County Commissioner in 2011, District 4 has seen \$63.9 million in completed projects and over \$363 million in ongoing and planned projects. We also continue to roll out policies that will benefit Dallas County residents in the long-run. With my colleague’s support on the Commissioners Court, I proposed and have “banned the box” from the job applications in Dallas County, which will result in a more robust job applicant pool for our organization. We also continue to move forward with the largest renovation project in Dallas County history. The Records Buildings Complex Project will see interior demolition begin this year and will replace current inefficient and unsafe buildings with a modern,

resourceful office building all while preserving its historical façade. Because of our prudent budget and fiscal policies, we will be able to pay for this project without a tax increase. The new Parkland Hospital continues to provide even greater service and commitment to its constituents. Zika is the newest threat to Dallas County, DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson and his team have formulated a strategy to combat this virus and are in the process of implementing preventive measures to ensure Dallas County residents are in the least possible danger of contracting Zika. Sadly, over the course of this past year we have seen many tragedies. Tragedies that have not only affected our country, but have also brought violence and loss to those who serve and protect us. We will continue to persevere with courage aligned with purpose and direction. Let’s continue to support each other and work together!

Dr. Elba Garcia

Gill-Hernandez Medical Facility



For the first time in its 170-year history, Dallas County has seen its first county government building named after a Latino and African-American together. On Monday, June 13, 2016, the ribbon-cutting

for the Jesse Everett Gill - Dr. Onésimo Hernández Medical Facility took place. Through Commissioner Elba Garcia and Commissioner John Wiley Price’s efforts, the new \$39-million medical facility will share the names of two Dallas minority leaders. The 139,000-square-foot medical center includes clinic space, a pharmacy and staff offices to serve patients from the county jail. Both Jesse Everett Gill and Dr. Onésimo Hernández were minority leaders within their own communities. Mr. Gill was the county’s first African-American deputy sheriff, starting in 1954. Upon

leaving the Dallas County Sheriff’s Department, Mr. Gill became a Dallas educator and taught for nearly 40 years. He retired in 2000 and passed away in January of this year at the age of 85. Dr. Hernández was the first Mexican-American to attend Southwestern Medical School and the first Mexican-American to work for Parkland Hospital. Dr. Hernández went from being born in an old farmhouse that once stood on the land that became home to Texas Stadium, to working in beet fields in Michigan as an adolescent boy, to becoming a respected surgeon and community leader in Dallas.

Records Building Project-Update



Dallas County Records Building Complex

Last year, through Dr. Garcia's efforts, the Dallas County Building Study Committee analyzed the Records Building Complex along with other County facilities to determine how to best move forward with existing facility issues. Given that it needs over \$20 million in repairs just to remain functional, the Records Building Complex, will be renovated surgically from the interior. The \$138 million renovation will preserve its historic façade but will completely modernize its interior after necessary asbestos and lead paint removal is complete. The renovated facility will

utilize the former-jail space to office the county clerk, human resources, tax office, public works, etc. When completed, Dallas County taxpayers will have a modern efficient office building in which to conduct business. Also, upon completion, the Commissioners Court and staff will relocate from its current location in the Administration Building to the renovated facility. The new project is expected to be completed in 2020, Until then the existing Records Building County offices will be tempo-

rarily relocated to the Renaissance Tower in downtown Dallas just a few blocks eastward. The Commissioners Court recently approved the construction cost and moved to finance the project through a 7-year loan, which will not obligate the County to raise taxes. The Records Building Complex project is one of the largest governmental projects currently underway in North Texas. While some county offices have already moved to the Renaissance Tower, all remaining departments will vacate the Records Complex by September.

Road & Bridge 4-Update



Dr. Garcia and Members of the Road & Bridge 4 Crew

The Dallas County Road & Bridge 4 team has continued to move forward with the completion of several projects over this past year. In Cockrell Hill, the Road & Bridge 4 crew is completing the milling and overlay of several

residential streets, including Red Bud Lane, Rosemary Lane and Garfield Avenue. The City of Cockrell Hill is also installing curbs and gutters, a big improvement for these streets. In addition to performing road work within our own district, the team also performs road work in cities outside of District 4, such as Carrollton, where Road & Bridge 4 crews have completed milling and overlay work

and have several ongoing projects. We are also very happy to announce that our very own Road & Bridge 4 Michael Gonzales was awarded the Foreman of the Year award at the Regional Hispanic Contractors Association's Day of the Construction Worker event. Alexis Guzman was this year's recipient of the 2016 Field Construction Worker of the Year award. I am very proud of the work and accomplishments we have had thus far.

“Ban the Box”



Commissioners Court in Session

Last November, Dallas County along with other large cities, corporations and counties joined a nationwide trend in “Banning the Box.” In adopting these fair hiring policies, we as an organization provide applicants a fair chance for employment by removing the “box” containing conviction or felony questions on the job application and postponing the background check inquiry until later in the hiring process. Millions are often dis-

couraged from seeking employment due to past records. With momentum growing nationwide and bipartisan support, Dallas County understands that this is an opportunity to give former offenders a chance for a fresh start. For individuals seeking to work for Dallas County, this new policy will lead to a higher probability of gainful employment and has also been shown to reduce recidivism,

reduce childhood poverty and facilitate community reintegration, all while allowing these individuals to sustain themselves and their families by being positive economic contributors in the community. Additionally, it will prevent managers from preemptively disqualifying an applicant purely based on the checking of a box indicating a criminal history, therefore giving applicants the fair opportunity to move forward in the interview process.



Chalk Hill Trail

tional amenities used for exercise, cycling, and not surprisingly, they enhance property values and create economic growth. Chalk Hill Trail will be the first trail system to serve West Dallas and the Oak Cliff area, and with its scenic routes it is expected to be one of the most attractive in the County. The trail will utilize an abandoned four-mile rail corridor

originally cut by the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railroad, which will run alongside and connect with City parks, Mountain View College, businesses, neighborhoods, the Westmoreland DART station

and the rapidly developing Pinnacle Park area. Much of the 3.7 mile long, 12 ft. wide trail will run through an undeveloped wooded area that will offer a rare combination of elevation changes, rock escarpments and picturesque views that will leave its visitors in awe. Through an inter-local agreement, the City of Dallas will be paying for environmental testing and remediation. Dallas County has approved \$6.2 million for the trail and will take the lead on the project. Construction was slated to begin in the winter of 2017. However, due to a mandate for further environmental testing, construction will be delayed a year until tests can be completed. But rest assured that this project will continue to move forward.

With the Lonestar – Campión Trail Connection complete, District 4 now has its sights set on beginning the Chalk Hill Trail. Trails serve as popular recrea-

SPCA & the Spay-Neuter Network

Commissioner Garcia continues to support the excellent work being carried out by our friends at the SPCA and the Spay Neuter Network. The SPCA and Spay Neuter Network individually collaborate with the Dallas community to offer numerous services that are designed to reduce the stray animal population in the long-run. In light of recent events, both of these organization's services are needed now more than ever in order to reduce a grow-

ing stray dog population. With nearly 9,000 loose dogs roaming Dallas County, dog incidents have continued to rise these past few years. Per the Spay Neuter Network, in six years, one female dog and her offspring can theoretically produce 67,000 dogs. In seven years a female cat can produce up to 420,000 kittens, and the majority of these animals will end up killed on roadways or homeless. Spaying and neutering drastically reduces a growing loose dog and cat population and curbs the chances that a pet will escape to the streets to

search for a mating partner. Additionally, sterilization is a healthy choice for pets; it lessens the probability they will develop reproductive diseases or cancers. Most recently at an SPCA event held in Oak Cliff, 180 dogs and cats attended and received rabies and distemper vaccines, flea and tick prevention and spay and neuter services. For more information on spay and neuter services from the SPCA or the Spay Neuter Network, please visit www.sPCA.org or www.spayneuternet.org.

MacArthur Blvd. Widening

This past, January 23, Dr. Elba Garcia, along with leaders from the cities of Irving and Grand Prairie, broke ground to begin construction on MacArthur Blvd. The \$15 million project will consist of widening and reconstruction, which will improve accessibility, ease traffic congestion and will help prevent future issues with flooding. A portion of MacArthur Blvd. runs across the Trinity River floodplain, which leads to a higher propensity of the road becoming inundated. The improvement project will involve the construction of two 700-foot bridges and the widening of MacArthur from a 2-lane roadway to a 4-lane divided concrete

thoroughfare stretching from I-30 to north of the Trinity River. Furthermore, the renovation will consist of adding retaining walls, new traffic signals, street lighting, railings, upgraded storm drainage and a drainage overflow channel. The widened 4-lane road will alleviate traffic congestion for daily commuters who currently use the narrow roadway and traffic from events at Lone Star Park and the Verizon Theatre. Also, included will be sidewalks and bike lanes that will serve as connections to both the Grand Prairie and Irving trail system. The widening and reconstruction project is scheduled to be completed in January of 2018, and will be made possible through revenue from Dallas County, the City of Grand Prairie and the North Central Texas Council of Govern-

ments, who respectively contributed \$1.5 million, \$1.5 million and \$12 million in regional toll revenue. Once completed, MacArthur Blvd. will make a great connection with the recently completed Hunter-Ferrell Roadway.





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www.DallasCounty.org/department/comcrt/district4/home.php

Annual Donations for 2016

Over the last five years, Commissioner Garcia has contributed over \$79,000 in donations from her personal annual salary to local organizations serving the Dallas County Community. So far this year, Dr. Garcia has chosen to support 23 organizations by donating nearly \$12,000 of her Commissioner's salary.

Dallas County Health & Human Services-Zika Virus

The summer season is upon us and with it come the mosquitos. Over the past decade mosquitos have introduced new threats into our environment, and this year along with Chikungunya and West Nile Virus, they threaten to spread the Zika Virus. Zika virus is transmitted to people by *Aedes* species mosquitoes and through sexual activity with a person infected with Zika. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting several days to a week, including fever, rash, joint pain, muscle pain and headache. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon and deaths are rare. To date, there have been 35 confirmed cases in Dallas County; all individuals contracted the virus while abroad except for one sexually transmitted case.

Dallas County has implemented its

strategic efforts to reduce the spread of viruses by mosquitoes through the use of trapping, testing and limited spraying throughout the County. Although there are currently no cases of Zika being



locally-transmitted by mosquitoes, it is strongly advised that recent travelers and those diagnosed with Zika protect themselves from further bites because local mosquitos will quickly spread the virus.

Currently, there is no vaccine available or specific medication to pre-

vent from contracting Zika, but avoiding mosquito bites is the key. DCHHS recommends following the 4Ds:

- Use insect repellents with **DEET**
- **Dress:** Wear long, loose and light-colored clothing outside.
- **Drain** standing water or treat with EPA-approved larvicides.
- Limit outdoor **Dusk & Dawn** activities

For more information, please call (214) 819-2000 or visit www.DallasCounty.org/department/hhs/zika.html