



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

SUMMER 2015

DR. ELBA GARCIA  
DALLAS COUNTY  
COMMISSIONER

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Dallas County in Disrepair 2
- Un-Incorporated Area Code Update 2
- Blood Donation Challenge 2
- Girls' Residential Treatment Center 3
- Elder Financial Safety Center: One Year Later 3
- Road & Bridge 4 Update 3

## Message from Dr. Elba Garcia



Dr. Elba Garcia & her Colleagues at the New Parkland Dedication

### Friends and Neighbors,

Things are moving quickly at Dallas County. We are set to approve the FY2016 Dallas County Budget in late September. We have hired Mr. Daniel Garza as our new Purchasing Director and are in the process of updating our purchasing rules and ethics policies. We have also expanded MWBE certification for better access for minority-owned enterprises, the new Parkland Hospital

is up and running, and we are finally beginning to address our ongoing facility problems. In addition, our District 4 Road & Bridge continues to make strides and has, for four straight years, budgeted in-the-black after years of debt and deficit. We are not done and there is still plenty of work ahead. We have known for years that our County facilities are crumbling beneath us. We have \$61 million in deferred

maintenance and yet only budget \$5.4 million annually for maintenance. Dallas County has been "just making due" for long enough. The biggest risk we face is doing nothing. At this rate, we are not catching up and we will never catch up with our maintenance needs. We have to have a vision to develop the County's infrastructure to meet the needs of our residents for the next 15, 20, 25 years from now. The best part is that we can utilize our AAA bond rating to address these needed fixes without raising taxes and without long-term debt. Kudos to Jonathon Bazan, our Assistant County Administrator, for his shared urgency to address these fundamental needs. I am committed to making our County government work better by adding efficiencies in a way that builds services, rather than kicking the can down the road or simply cutting. It is possible, so let's get this done. *Dr. Elba Garcia*

## New Parkland Facilities Improve Health Services



The new 2.1 million sq. ft., 862 bed Parkland Hospital opened August 20th at 6 a.m. and staff transported 626 patients to the facility using the 923 ft. Mike A. Myers Sky Bridge. The transport

was a logistical feat, beginning with the Rees-Jones Trauma Center, Emergency Department (ED), Urgent Care Department and Labor & Delivery services. Less than 20 minutes after the opening, the first outside patient arrived via ambulance. Within an hour the first CareFlite landed with a trauma patient who was whisked to the Rees-Jones Trauma Center. At 9:40 a.m. the first baby was delivered. The move was completed a day ahead of schedule.

Last year, over 159,000 patients received care in the ED and another 69,366 patients were treated in the Urgent Care ED. In May, Parkland opened its \$50

million medical facility inside the Lew Sterrett Justice Center. The Medical Center, referred to as the "Med Mod," takes up 139,657 sq. ft. and 3 floors previously used as storage space. This new facility has already set the standard for jail health attracting visiting government officials from around the country and even internationally. The Dallas County Jail typically books 100,000 inmates annually with over 6,500 receiving medical and/or psychiatric care. Over 13,000 medical procedures are performed monthly and 2,700 inmates need medicine daily. 55% have an acute or chronic condition at intake and 25% of inmates have diagnosed mental health conditions.

## Dallas County Facilities - Records Building Project



**Dallas County Records Building Complex**

In an effort spearheaded by Dr. Garcia, the Dallas County Building Study Committee presented their recommendation to the Commissioners Court to re-vamp the Records Building Complex. The committee was tasked with assessing Dallas County's space needs, evaluating existing facilities, maintenance, costs and county resources to determine how best to address Dallas County's existing facility issues. Current-

ly, Dallas County has a \$5.4 million annual budget for ongoing facilities maintenance operations, yet the County also has \$61 million in deferred maintenance, deemed as "priority needs" repairs and replacements. The existing Dallas County Records Building Complex is an amalgamation of three buildings: the old criminal courts building, built in 1915 with 6 floors of historic but unusable jail space; the original Records Building, built in 1928; and the Records Building Annex, built in 1955. Lead paint removal and asbestos abate-

ment will be necessary during the renovation. Some of the buildings' hallways have ramps connecting floors that are not level. Dallas County Commissioners Court approved a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) for interested potential project managers. County officials will be evaluating options as the process progresses. While the project is estimated at over \$100 million, Commissioners expressed interest in the option to seek a 7-year loan and no property tax hike. Dallas County currently has the 3rd lowest property tax rate in Texas and a AAA bond rating.

## Unincorporated Area Cleanup



**Unincorporated Areas in Dallas County do not have codes to enforce**

Dallas County is assessing the need for a new county code that would allow for the Dallas County Fire Marshall to enforce building regulations in unincorporated areas of Dallas County.

Unincorporated areas are different because, typically, city code includes land use, health and fire safety regulation. Sponsored by Commissioner Garcia, Dallas County fire code was updated, in congruence with international fire code standards. Later, the code would expand to include land use, health, safety and environmental mitigation; includ-

ing consideration of adding positions for enforcement. Earlier this year, a property in an unincorporated area in Dallas County made the news due to various public safety, health, and environmental issues. This effort is meant to address the Dallas County Fire Marshall's limited authority for enforcement due to the lack of a codified policy in unincorporated areas.

## Carter BloodCare Donation Challenge



**Dr. Garcia Donates Blood**

In conjunction with Carter BloodCare, Dr. Garcia issued a friendly challenge to the Irving and Grand Prairie communities in an effort to boost blood donation and awareness about the need

for increased blood supplies. By a slim margin, Grand Prairie produced more donors. In total, the blood drive resulted

in 525 donors. 153 donors or 29% were first-time donors, which is significantly higher than normal. In June, Dr. Garcia sponsored a resolution in Dallas County Commissioners Court to recognize June 14th as World Blood Donor Day. Carter BloodCare supplies blood and transfusion services to more than 150 hospitals in over 50 counties in the North Texas region, including Dallas County. In Dallas County

alone, there is a need for 1,100 blood donations each day in order to fulfill hospital and patient needs. There is no substitute for human blood. About one in seven hospital patients need blood and 4.5 million lives are saved each year by blood donations; that's 3 lives for each pint of donated blood. Remember to give blood often! Many thanks and congratulations to Grand Prairie and Irving for helping to save lives in our community! Visit: [www.carterbloodcare.org](http://www.carterbloodcare.org)

# Letot Girls Residential Treatment Center Opening

In July, the Dallas County Juvenile Board inspected and approved the facility for the new Letot Girls' Residential Treatment Center located in District 4. In March, Dallas County officials joined private and non-profit donors to celebrate the completion of the new Letot Girls' Center in northwest Dallas. The Letot Girls' Center mission is to empower neglected and exploited girls ages 13-17 to be productive, caring & responsible citizens by provid-

ing them a safe environment for long-term residential, gender-responsive treatment involving their families and supported by community partners. The \$9.4 million, 55,000 sq. ft. facility was funded through private donations, but was transferred to and is run by the Dallas County Juvenile Department. Dallas County will provide public funding for the \$2.25 million annual operating budget. The Dallas Women's Foundation pledged an additional \$500,000 for three years to pay for spe-

cialized programming that will provide long-term benefits to clients and help them transition out of the system.



## Elder Financial Safety Center: One Year Later

Since opening a year ago, the Elder Financial Safety Center has served 2,700 clients. The most frequent cases handled have involved identity theft, credit card abuse and the abuse of the power of attorney. The establishment of the center came as financial abuse of the elderly has shown no sign of abating and is in fact expected to grow. Over 10,000 baby-boomers reach the age of 65 every single day. As these seniors already represent the fastest growing population segment in the country, life expectancy has risen to a record high of

78.7 years. One quarter of today's 65 year olds will live past the age of 90. The 13 person Elder Financial Safety Center, funded by a \$3.9 million, five year grant from the W.W. Caruth Jr. Foundation at Communities Foundation of Texas, is a collaboration of three key entities: The Senior Source, a Dallas nonprofit for aging services, the Dallas County Probate Courts and the District Attorney's Office. By partnering and using a shared database, they team up to address el-

der financial abuse through three key methods: Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution. The center offers victims financial counseling, benefits and insurance counseling, money-management services, employment services and debt management. It also helps find appropriate guardians, trains law enforcement to better identify potential elder abuse and refers cases for investigation by the District Attorney's Office via the new Elder Abuse Unit.

## Road & Bridge 4 Update

Road & Bridge 4 has had a busy year making improvements all around. For the past several years the R&B 4 crew has continued to complete projects on time and under budget and for the fourth straight year has budgeted in-the-black after years of debt and deficit. Travis Spurgin, promoted last year to a leadership position, was the recipient of the Regional Hispanic Contractors Association 2015 Construction Worker of the Year Award. Road & Bridge 4

Superintendent Gilbert Aguilar was nominated for Superintendent of the year. Because of budgeting efficiencies, a growing reputation and a renewed sense of purpose R&B 4 was able to make some crucial equipment upgrades that will ensure efficiency and quality for the coming years. This year has seen several new hires, as the demand for work increases.

So far this year, the crew has had projects in Irving, Carroll-



ton, Grand Prairie and is currently working on major infrastructure improvements in Cockrell Hill.



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## Annual Donations for 2015

For the past four years, Dr. Elba Garcia has fulfilled her pledge to donate a portion of her annual salary to local organizations serving the Dallas County Community. This year Dr. Garcia has chosen to support 16 organizations by donating over \$13,800 of her commissioner's salary.

## CSCD South Satellite Office Opening

In April, Dr. Garcia was joined by Community Supervision Corrections Division (CSCD - Adult Probation) officials and community representatives to celebrate the opening of a new South Satellite Office in Oak Cliff. The event included a ribbon cutting and tour. The new 14,282 sq. ft. building is located on a seven acre site and houses 48 Probation Officers serving approximately 4,200 probation clients per month. The new CSCD South Satellite Office is located at 2716 Coombs Creek, Dallas, TX 75211 and the office hours are 7 a.m. to 6 a.m. Monday - Thursday and 8 a.m. to 5 a.m. on Fridays.

## Lone Star - Campi3n Trail Connection Dedication



On Wednesday, September 9, 2015 a joint dedication ceremony will be hosted by Dallas County, the City of Grand Prairie and the City of Irving celebrating the completion of the Lone Star-Campi3n Trail Connection. The new 2.4-mile pathway connects the City of Grand Prairie's 3.2-mile Lone Star Trail and the City of Irving's 4-mile Campi3n Trail South, creating a continuous 10.9 mile trail. This will make Irving and Grand Prairie the first two cities to connect along the Trinity Trail System, a regional trail system linking the cities in the Metroplex.

## DWI Taskforce Press Conference with Dallas, Tarrant & Denton Counties

This November, in anticipation of the upcoming holiday season, the Dallas County DWI Taskforce will once again team up with Tarrant County to hold a Joint DWI Taskforce Press Conference. For the first time, Denton County will also be joining in our efforts. To visit the new DWI Taskforce Facebook page search for **DWI Task Force**.