

# DeSoto City Lights

*A Publication of the City of DeSoto Community Relations Department*

## **THREE-PEAT FOR DESOTO: CITY WINS 3<sup>RD</sup> STRAIGHT DIGITAL CITIES AWARD Digital Efforts Now Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> Among US Cities With Populations Up To 75,000**

The influential Center for Digital Government (CDG) announced recently that the City of DeSoto (Texas) has been awarded the coveted Digital Cities Survey Award for the third consecutive year, moving up on the national top ten list from 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> place among all US cities with populations of up to 75,000. Only ten cities across the nation in each population category receive this award, which is earned by demonstrating the successful use of technology to facilitate citizen interaction, enhance service delivery, and increase transparency.

“I am incredibly proud to see that DeSoto’s ongoing efforts to use the newest technology to connect with our residents and enhance our service delivery have put us even closer to the top of all US cities recognized for providing the best in service,” said DeSoto Mayor Curtistene McCowan. “In addition to recognizing the effectiveness of our customer service, Digital Cities confirms that our efforts at transparency are not only working, but a model for other cities.”

In addition to acknowledging that DeSoto’s sustained improvement in digital operations advanced the city from 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> place in the top ten of American cities up to 75,000 people, DeSoto was singled-out for digital achievements with customer service and service delivery, for online transparency efforts and for vastly increasing available technology to the users of our library system.

Specifically, here is what Digital Cities had to say about DeSoto’s 2018 recognition

[4th, CITY OF DESOTO, TEXAS](#) (via Govtech.com)

“DeSoto, Texas, has a well-established customer relationship management program, GOResponse from GOGovApps, and uses it to track issues in the community, create reports for city administration and improve services for citizens. After an issue closes, the requestor is automatically notified via email and asked for feedback, which is used to improve service. This citizen feedback is also used in reporting performance measures, to establish trends, to support budget purposes and in customer service training.

The Dallas suburb of 52,870 residents prioritizes transparency. The city budget is published on the transparency website, as are reports and charts to help interpret the numbers, a searchable check register, a downloadable check register including payroll, debt transparency information, pension information, and investment policy and tax rates.

This year, the library extended its offerings of digital services programs aimed to attract citizens and increase their involvement in technology. Patrons can check out a GoPro Hero5 camera kit and shoot still photos or videos, then come and edit them at the Sound + Vision Digital Creation Multimedia Station; attend a 3-D printing class and then use the 3-D printer; learn with the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) kit for Nintendo lab; use a virtual reality headset; or make an appointment for Tech Help, where they can get assistance on personal devices from experts.”

*(story continued on page two)*



## City Calendar

### December

3 Arts Commission Mtg. - City Hall - 6pm  
3 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr. 6:30 pm  
5 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm  
6 Historical Foundation Mtg. - 6 pm  
6 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm  
6 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm  
11 Planning & Zoning Mtg. -City Hall -7 pm  
18 City Council Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm  
17 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall 9 am  
24 City offices closed - Christmas Eve  
25 City offices closed - Christmas Day  
25 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - Canceled  
28 4th Friday Concert- Corner Theatre 8pm

### January

1 City offices closed - New Year's Day  
3 Library Board Mtg. Library - 7 pm  
3 KDB Mtg. Civic Ctr. - 6:30 pm  
3 Historical Foundation Mtg.- 6 pm  
7 Arts Commission Mtg. Civic Ctr. 6pm  
7 Park Board Mtg. - Civic Ctr. 6:30 pm  
15 City Council Mtg. - City Hall 7 pm  
19 DeSoto Dining & Dialogue Dinner  
21 MLK Holiday - City Offices Closed  
22 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall -7 pm  
26 4th Friday Concert Corner Theatre 7pm  
28 DEDC Board Mtg. - City Hall - 9 am  
29 Planning & Zoning Mtg. - City Hall - 7 pm

### A Message from Code Enforcement...

Code3.1101(c)

No person shall place, construct or erect any temporary or permanent object or structure within, upon, along, or across any public street, alley, right-of-way or any public easement in the city, including the land located between the property line of a lot, tract or parcel and the adjacent curb, and if no curb exist, then to a line ten feet (10') from the edge of the street pavement toward the property line, without the consent of the city unless otherwise allowed by law.

The City of DeSoto ordinance referenced above requires that obstructions such as PODs or temporary or portable storage buildings should not be placed in city road way. If you would like more information or would like to report a code violation, please call 469.658.3075.

## The City's Fraud Hotline is Available 24/7

BKD Integra Report operates an anonymous fraud hotline for the City of DeSoto. This hotline should be used to report suspected fraud, waste or abuse against the City which can take many forms, including:

- Theft or Forgery
- Tampering with a government record
- Securing execution of document by deception
- Conversion of funds
- Abuse of office capacity
- Gift to public servant by a person subject to his or her jurisdiction
- Breach of computer security
- Bribery



To **anonymously** submit information on potential City policy violation or unethical or fraudulent behavior, please visit:

[www.DeSotoTexas.gov/hotline](http://www.DeSotoTexas.gov/hotline)

You can also call our automated phone hotline **24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

**Anonymous**  
**855.858.3344**

**BKD** INTEGRA  
REPORT

Members of the public, City employees, contractors, and service providers are encouraged, when aware of a situation, to report suspicious activities or fraudulent acts against the City to the Fraud Hotline at 855.858.3344. More information on the fraud hotline including an informational video is available on the City website at [www.DeSotoTexas.gov/hotline](http://www.DeSotoTexas.gov/hotline).

### THREE-PEAT FOR DESOTO: CITY WINS 3<sup>RD</sup> STRAIGHT DIGITAL CITIES AWARD (cont. from page one)

Other highlights from DeSoto's 2018 digital accomplishments submitted to Digital Cities included a regional emergency management plan and training, enhanced city cybersecurity, WiFi in the parks, expanded use of smart technology, and improved visibility and transparency in our City Council chambers by use of extra-large screens.

Mayor McCowan noted that DeSoto's neighboring city of Dallas also came up a winner in the survey, but wasn't ranked as high in their category as DeSoto was in theirs. This elicited a good-natured observation from the Mayor who commented, "We are often overshadowed by the big city to our North, but Dallas came in 10th in their population category and DeSoto came in 4th in ours. So while congrats go out to our good friend and neighbor, when it comes to government making excellent use of 'digital' technology, DeSoto is really the 'Big D' in our region."

The Digital Cities Survey is now in its 18th year and issues awards annually to the top ten cities in multiple population categories for use of technology to tackle social challenges, enhance cybersecurity, improve transparency and much more.

"This year's Digital Cities Survey winners are leading the nation when it comes to leveraging data to improve a wide range of city services and initiatives," said Teri Takai, executive director of the Center for Digital Government. "Thanks to the efforts of these innovative cities, citizens now benefit from enhanced services as well as improved transparency and privacy protection efforts. Congratulations to the winners!"

The Center for Digital Government is a national research and advisory institute on information technology policies and best practices in state and local government. It is also a division of e.Republic, the nation's only media and research company focused exclusively on state and local government and education.

## City Launches Free Online Water Conservation Tool For Customers

The City of DeSoto Public Utilities Department will soon launch a new water conservation and budgeting tool for customers.

AquaHawk Alerting is a free online Web portal that enables DeSoto water customers to see their water usage and an estimate of their bill anytime during the billing cycle. After registering and providing up-to-date contact information, customers may opt to receive a text message, e-mail, or phone call alert if their consumption indicates a potential leak or abnormal usage. This tool will be available to customers whose water meters have been replaced over the past four years. As the department continues to replace meters annually, more customers will have access to detailed consumption data.

AquaHawk helps customers save money and more efficiently manage water usage, by encouraging customers to set thresholds for usage (e.g., 5,000 gals.) or dollar amounts (\$150). If the consumption or bill is trending to exceed, or surpasses the threshold, AquaHawk will send an automatic alert which will allow the customer to modify usage or check for a possible leak.

“Our goal is to offer a better customer experience and the peace of mind that comes from knowing that the Public Utilities Department is working towards early identification and notification of potential water usage problems,” commented Isom Cameron, Public Utilities Director. “Customers will not be surprised by expensive and unexpected water bills since they can login anytime, see an estimate of what they’ve already



spent, and view a projected end-of-period bill amount.”

The new web portal will provide our customers the information they need to use water more efficiently, save money, and prevent the property damage that can result when leaks run undetected.

Customers with multiple water accounts will have the ability to access all of their water accounts with a single user name and password. Customers can also provide access to other parties - property managers, caretakers, landscaping companies, etc. – who might benefit from the information or want to receive alerts as well.

When water customers are traveling, AquaHawk enables users to monitor unauthorized water use in their homes. Consumption, rainfall, and temperature data are displayed in easy-to-understand graphs that help pinpoint when an account may be using water inefficiently, such as watering landscape during or shortly after a rain event.

The AquaHawk registration page will be available on homepage of the City of DeSoto website mid-January, 2019. For more information, please call 972.230.9627.

## Holiday Trash Schedule

Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Years Day are three of the five holidays observed by the City of DeSoto's solid waste contractor, Republic Waste. There will be no trash service on these holidays.

On a holiday, regular service shifts one day. For example there will be no trash service on Thursday, November 22nd. Regular Thursday service moves to Friday that week and the Friday collection will be made on Saturday. The regular schedule resumes on Monday, November 26th.

In observance of the Christmas Holiday there will be no solid waste service on Tuesday, December 25th. Regular Tuesday trash will be collected on Wednesday, December 26th, recycling moves to Thursday, December 27th, Thursday's trash service shifts to Friday and Friday's trash will be picked up on Saturday, December 29th. Similarly, there will be no trash service on Tuesday January 1st in observance of New Year's Day moving regular Tuesday collections to Wednesday, January 2nd. Recycling will shift to January 3rd and Thursday solid waste service moves to Friday, January 4th that week. Regular Friday collections will be made on Saturday January 5th and the normal cycle resumes on Monday, January 7th.

If you'd like to receive reminders about changes in our trash service, download the free Recycle Coach app from the app store.

The advertisement for the Recycle Coach app has a red background. At the top, it says 'Never miss another collection day!' in white text. Below this is a graphic of a blue alarm clock with a white face and black hands, set against a white cloud. The clock is on a yellow and orange rocket. To the left of the clock, it says 'Download our Waste &amp; Recycling App to set custom collection reminders.' in small white text. At the bottom left, the 'recyclecoach' logo is displayed in white and green.

# Holly Palooza

HOLIDAY MUSIC  
PICTURES WITH SANTA  
GRINCH VISIT & STORY TIME  
HOLIDAY BOOTHS  
HOLIDAY SNACKS & REFRESHMENTS

— SATURDAY —  
**DEC 1 2018**  
12:00 PM - 6:00 PM

SPECTACULAR TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY  
THE FLIP OF THE SWITCH AT 6PM  
DeSoto Town Center Plaza  
211 E. Pleasant Run Road

DeSoto Public Library  
Friendly Service. Empowered Futures.

DeSoto Parks & Recreation

DESOTO ARTS COMMISSION  
**FOURTH** MUSIC SERIES *fridays*  
PRESENTED BY THE DESOTO ARTS COMMISSION

# BIFF BAND

RSVP AT [ARTSDESOTO.COM](http://ARTSDESOTO.COM)

Friday, December 28, 2018  
8 pm  
DeSoto Corner Theatre  
211 E. Pleasant Run Road

The DeSoto Arts Commission's Fourth Friday Concert series resumes on December 28, 2018 at 8 pm with a free concert featuring the BIFF (Back In Full Force) Band. Back by popular demand, BIFF is a high-energy jazz band known for their dynamic concepts and crowd pleasing performances. Specializing in smooth jazz and funk, BIFF has shared the stage with Kirk Whalum, Will Downing, Spyro Gyra, Wayman Tisdale, KEM and Morris Day the Time, just to name a few.

Bring your holiday guests and join us at The DeSoto Corner Theatre for an evening of great entertainment. For more information, call 972.230.9648.