

GUEST COMMENTARY

Near Northwest District: prosperity forged through partnerships

Editor's note: Today, the Near Northwest Management District's Roy Millmore begins the first of his monthly columns written especially for readers of The Leader. His columns that update residents on NNWMD happenings and other news will appear in the first issue of every month.

By Roy A. Millmore

As the executive director for the Near Northwest Management District for the past two years, I have seen significant changes for the better in the near northwest area. Almost all of these can be attributed to partnerships between government, law enforcement, business and residents.

One of the most exciting changes in the area is the significant decrease in crime. The combined efforts of Harris County Precinct One Constables Office, Houston Police Department and community policing initiatives have brought about a 20 percent drop in crime. When I first began working in the area, there were many streets that simply weren't safe to walk at night and graffiti was everywhere. Now, residents report that they often feel safe outside their homes in the evening and there has been a reduction in calls for service from law enforcement. Also, as I drive the area, I see very little graffiti and instances of gang tagging are rare.

The district has worked hard to facilitate these changes in our area by contracting seven Harris County Precinct One Constables to patrol the 16 square miles inside District boundaries. We also provide graffiti abatement services, available through partnerships with the Greater East End Management District and International Paint who generously donated 1,000 gallons of paint, so that any business in the District can simply report instances of graffiti and we will send a graffiti abatement team to paint over it at no charge to the business.

This is a great start in developing the area into a better place to live and do business. We are proud that our efforts have brought us this far, but we have more to do.

Plans for the Future

Now that we have made significant strides in reducing crime, it is time to move forward with other initiatives to promote economic growth of the area including marketing and image campaigns to attract new business to the area

as well as putting in place increased member communications and small business development services. Of course we can only do so much on our own and will be looking to partner with local property and business owner to make this happen.

Another example of partnerships at work in our area, are the multiple efforts to improve the area at Antoine and DeSoto. Area apartment owners, businesses and home owners associations have come together to form Super-Block One, a coalition to identify issues and find joint solutions to improve the area and make it a desirable place to live. One such initiative is the effort to encourage the city to demolish Candlelight Trails Condominiums. This vacant building is in ruin and is a prime location for illicit activity as well as an attractive hazard, with numerous broken windows and broken down stair banisters were young people who live in the area like to play. The property has declined beyond the point of rehabilitation and should be removed to make way for new buildings and green space that will enhance the area. SuperBlock members have joined forces with the Greater Inwood Partnership to conduct a letter writing campaign to our Mayor and City Council Members to demolish Candlelight Trails for the well-being of not only local residents and businesses but for the betterment of the entire city and we encourage area residents and property owners to join in that effort. More information is available at www.nearnorthwestdistrict.com.

While you are there, we would ask area property owners to go to also review our 15-Year Service Plan and then download, sign and send us a Petition for Service so that we can continue to serve this area.

Near Northwest Management District

While on our Web site, www.nearnorthwestdistrict.com, I hope you will take a moment to learn more about us. Briefly, the Near Northwest Management District was created by the Texas Legislature to promote and coordinate economic growth for businesses and improve the quality of life for everyone in Northwest Houston. The District, which covers an area bounded by T.C. Jester Boulevard on the east, Pinemont Drive on the south, Hollister Drive projected to State Highway 249 on the west and 249 on the north. The District is currently operating under a five-year service plan address issues important to commercial property owners in the area including security and public safety, planning,

urban design and development and marketing for the area.

Funding for the District comes from a commercial property assessment of .11 cents for each \$100 of valuation. Unlike other assessments, all money raised within the District stays in the District and our staff works diligently to partner with community members and other organizations to provide the greatest possible value to the community by returning these assessments to area property owners in the form of higher property values, improved public safety, higher occupancy rates, greater mobility and better aesthetics.

Roy A. Millmore can be reached at 713-893-8021 or roy@nearnorthwestdistrict.com.

LSC-North Harris to host Hurricane Basketball Camp

Lone Star College-North Harris will host its annual Summer Hurricane Basketball Camp for boys and girls ages 7 to 14, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday during the week of July 7 through 11.

Area college and high school coaches will direct the camp, which is a well-rounded program focusing on fundamentals and skill development.

Campers will participate in station work, attend lectures, play full-court games and compete for awards.

Cost of the camp is \$150 (\$120 for returning players) and includes superb instruction, lunch and a camp T-shirt.

To register or for more camp information, contact Shirley Ennis, LSC-North

Harris' department of recreational sports director at 281-618-5659 or e-mail shirley.ennis@lonestar.edu.

Lone Star College-North Harris is located at 2700 W.W. Thorne Drive, one-half mile south of FM 1960 East.

Washington High class of '58 hosts 50-year reunion

The Booker T. Washington High School class of 1958 is celebrating its Golden Anniversary this year.

Class members will celebrate their 50-year reunion Saturday, Aug. 16, at the Sheraton Brookhollow Hotel, 3000 N. Loop West.

Call 713-738-1396 for information.