



News Release

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Mayor's State of the City & 2009 Year-End Report to the Citizens of Seagoville

To the Citizens of Seagoville:

In spite of the recession, for the City of Seagoville, 2009 marked another productive year ending a challenging 12 months and a decade of great growth and change. Our City continues to improve and progress in the areas of economic development, technology, community appearance, public safety, infrastructure, planning, and financial stability.

As we move into the new year, I'd like to share with you some of the 2009 accomplishments as well as some of the Council's goals set at its Annual Council Retreat for the period 2009 through 2014. The City Council and management staff met in July to update the strategic plan. From this effort comes the next year's action items intended to move the City towards this vision.

Five high priority actions for 2009 and 2010 were identified, including improving the governance process through the revision of the City's charter, improving communications methods for interacting with our citizens, examining and revising current business development procedures to facilitate future businesses locating or re-locating to Seagoville, revising the City's Code of Ordinances to promote higher standards for residential construction and to encourage desirable development, and finally to identify additional revenue sources to strengthen the City's operating and financial position.

Economic Development & Public Park Improvements

A strong tax base is the life blood of any city and the City Council continued to work aggressively with the Seagoville Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), the Chamber of Commerce, and the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) to promote our City in order to attract quality residential, retail, and commercial development. This effort is, by its very nature, a slow and deliberate process, but essential to providing needed services at a low tax rate.

One of the Council's goals is to market the Town Center District. This project is being developed with the assistance and guidance of the SEDC staff. Another long range project of significant importance to the City is the marketing and development of an approximately 150 acre commercial tract. City and SEDC staffs are developing a strategy to make this site more attractive to developers. The largest economic generator on the horizon is the development of Loop 9. This transportation project, which will cut through the eastern part of the City, will provide additional tax base and jobs.

A key ingredient to economic development is the perception of a community's schools. The Council has focused on communicating with the DISD elected officials and administration on opportunities where the City can participate and share information. In September, the Council participated in Principal for a Day visiting students and encouraging them to enroll for school. In October, the City hosted a meeting with DISD Board of Trustee Nancy Bingham and Dr. Hinojosa, DISD Superintendent and other DISD Staff to gain greater perspective and communicate Community concerns regarding educational and administrative challenges facing DISD.

Financial Oversight & Management

In 2009, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded the City of Seagoville the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The receipt of this Award marks the 15th consecutive year the City of Seagoville's CAFRS have been recognized.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental account and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

The City's executive management team is responsible for establishing and maintaining an internal control structure designed to ensure that the assets of the City are protected from loss, theft or misuse. Moreover, an ad-hoc committee, the Task Force on Economic and Financial Sustainability, comprised of the executive team managers with the largest cost centers, worked with our City Manager for a period prior to the budget development to identify potential actions to respond to the uncertain economic climate. As a City, we wound up 2009 actually improving the City's financial condition based on the early intervention actions taken by the City's executive staff. Both the General Fund and the Water and Sewer Fund demonstrated the City's excellent fiscal responsibility and oversight; each maintaining healthy fund balances.

Technology – Communications, Code Enforcement, Finance, and Public Library Technology Changes

Technological improvements in 2009 saw the fruition of a number of projects which had been in the works for some time. Technology changes include completing the City's website re-design. Our new web design greatly enhances the City's ability to establish and maintain the content current with ease and frequency so the information exchange is ongoing and meaningful in a timely manner. The design is fresh and inviting. The Council believes it to be reflective of a City whose future continues to brighten. The Seagoville Public Library implemented a wireless network for laptop users within close proximity to the library. In order

to secure and safeguard the City Library's computer system, a new security software plan was implemented on all public access computers. The Library received over \$6,000 in grants specific to technology.

The City's accounting system has been upgraded and replaces the outdated 15 year old system. Upgrades to the copier equipment in use by all City departments resulted in a 40 percent cost savings with greatly improved functionality including public access to a business-sized copier in the Public Library for making copies at nominal cost. Our City staff started working on acquiring a new Code Enforcement / Permitting Case Management and Customer Service Software System to improve the efficiency of following through on code-related cases and to increase the capacity of our Code Enforcement Officers.

Human Resources & Municipal Court

In 2009, the Municipal Court was re-structured under the Human Resources Department. The Council authorized a new collection service for the Court to work towards re-capturing revenue previously considered "uncollectable."

The City received reimbursement of over \$37,000 from the Texas Municipal League for effective management of property losses and worker's compensation claims. The year ended with another successful negotiated level benefits package for City Employees resulting in improved employee retention and satisfaction resulting in service improvement to you, the taxpayers. The City's HR Department conducted the second Employee Health Fair with the focus on each Employee accepting responsibility for better personal health management. In 2009, the Human Resources Department was able to reduce the increase for the City's benefits from a proposed 20 plus percent to a manageable 7 percent.

Community Appearance & Cleanliness

The 3rd Annual Keep Seagoville Beautiful (KSB) 'Don't Mess with Texas Trash Off' was successful with 141 KSB volunteers who hit the streets to pick up litter. The day of work finished a weeklong "City Wide Clean Up" in which Seagoville residents were provided access to dumpsters at the City's Service Center. Residents disposed of 327 loads of trash and debris that filled 27 roll-off dumpsters. Seagoville Public Works personnel worked with residents, helping them unload their trucks and trailers into the dumpsters. Each year more residents are taking part in the program to clean up our city. 2009 was a record breaking year for the program.

Public Safety

The Police Department has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for the citizens of Seagoville. The Seagoville Police Department continues with its aggressive approach to crime enforcement focusing on eradicating drugs in and around the City. The Police K-9 Program was implemented, and is estimated to be fully functional in mid-2010. The Citizens on Patrol Program (COP) was initiated in 2008 and COP Program volunteers have been utilized at community events such as SeagoFest and the 4th of July celebration.

In an effort to keep our officers on patrol and reduce overtime, the Dallas County Sheriff's Office agreed to investigate all accidents occurring within Dallas County on US Highway 175. In addition to the Council adding five sworn positions to the Police Department in the previous six fiscal years, the Department has implemented a 12 hour shift program. These two things together have made additional officers available to respond to calls for service and maintain excellent response times to emergency calls. The Police Department successfully applied for and obtained approval of 2 Justice Assistance Grants totaling \$107,895 to be used for replacing in-car digital camera systems and to pay for a new crime scene vehicle including supplies and acquiring new rifle weaponry.

The Fire Department commissioned an Insurance Service Office (ISO) evaluation of the City that resulted in a significantly lower fire protection rating (lower is better) and subsequently lowered our residents' insurance premiums. A Fire Station Location Study was also completed to determine the need and possible locations of future fire stations. The Fire Department applied for and received a Homeland Security grant in the total amount of \$835,385 for three new personnel. Homeland Security Administration will pay a large portion of these firefighters salary for four years. The new personnel will provide additional staffing now, but will also offset the initial cost of opening an additional fire station. The Texas Forest Service provided over \$7,000 in grants to purchase much needed equipment for the Fire Department.

City departments again hosted a successful Kid Safe Day on the City Hall lawn. The children were provided with safety information and visited with firefighters and police officers.

Public Work & Parks

The Public Works Department had another productive year with many of the water, sewer and street replacements and improvements being brought to a close. Avenues A, B, & C Sewer Replacement was completed and Street Replacement work should be complete this summer. Avalon Street had water and sewer lines replaced prior to being reconstructed with concrete. Seagoville Road was repaired by replacing damaged concrete sections involving major reconstruction.

The construction of the new City water tower is completed and the tower is operational. The City's water tower capacity will enable the City to meet our population's need of fresh, potable water through build out which is expected in 2025.

The City has continued its affirmative partnership with the Seagoville Economic Development Corporation and acquired funding for park projects including upgrades to park materials, which greatly improve playground safety, and installation of Xeriscape plants in the Bruce Park Playground area. Through a generous donation to the Keep Seagoville Beautiful Arbor Day Program trees were planted between City Hall and the housing area immediately adjacent. Finally, a partnership was established with Texas A & M / Agrilife to conduct a survey of park users.

Another area that has occupied a lot of the Mayor's and Council's time this last year is that of Transportation. Transportation and environmental concerns are at the top of the regional agenda. In August, your mayor, Council Members, and staff were in Irving for the Annual Transportation Summit. Numerous meetings and sessions with TxDOT and the North Central

Texas Council of Governments have been attended to receive and provide input on the proposed Loop 9 project. The Mayor and staff are regular attendees at the Southeast Area Transportation Association, a consortium of neighboring cities in partnership with Dallas County.

Planning

In order improve the City's planning process, the Council funded an update to the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This plan, which was last updated in 2002, forms the basis for all other master planning activities.

Mayor and Council 2009 Activity

Representing the City and having a voice at the table as various issues affecting the City are discussed is an important major focus for the Mayor, Council, and staff. Last spring the Council hosted a Meeting for Voters on DISD's Bond Proposals. The meeting was chaired by DISD Board Trustee Nancy Bingham. In June, in preparation for the 2009 Texas Legislative Session, the Mayor and City Manager attended a Legislative Outlook briefing sponsored by the Texas Municipal League. October saw the Council at the Annual Texas Municipal League Conference and the Mayor and City Manager at the Annual NCTCOG Awards Luncheon. The Council has been in regular attendance at the TML Region 13 Quarterly Meetings where local officials from North Texas discuss various municipal issues.

The City has been represented by the Mayor and various members of the Council as our local military personnel are mobilized, deployed and arrive home. As mentioned earlier, the City Council has partnered with the DISD to lend their support and they have had a presence at the 2008 Seagoville High School Graduating Class Candlelight Service, the 2008 Seagoville High School Graduation Ceremony, the Veterans Ceremony at Central School Stadium and have lunched with Central Elementary School staff.

Our active schedule didn't end during the summer as the Mayor and Council again participated in the City's July 4th Celebration, and represented the City at the monthly Chamber of Commerce Luncheons. The Council continued to participate in the SeagoFest Community Parade and events. The Holiday Season also always promises to be a busy time for the City Council with the annual tree lighting ceremony, Chamber of Commerce sponsored Employee Appreciation Luncheon, the Seagoville Economic Development Corporation Holiday Dinner, and the Seagoville Schools Cluster Christmas Program

In closing this year's report to you and what has been nearly a decade of unprecedented growth and prosperity, let me turn to the condition of the national economy and the effect it is having or going to have on our personal lives and the City. Your city government, not unlike all cities across the country, is making adjustments. Included in this year's budget the City Council and staff developed a series of measured responses to adjust the City's operations to meet the demands of declining economy and municipal revenues. For example:

- All tax supported capital projects were delayed for at least one year
- No general fund replacement equipment was purchased, including police vehicles
- Reduction in street maintenance budget

These and other budgetary reductions for Fiscal Year 2010 total \$213,499. As we look ahead, many economists are forecasting a bottoming out of this economic decline and slow, modest improvement toward the end of this year.

As individual households and businesses adjust to the current economic environment, so does your City government. Staff will continue to monitor revenues and expenditures and provide this information to the Council. Budget adjustments will be made on a regular basis. Our goal is to maintain an adequate level of essential services while maintaining a low tax rate.

The City of Seagoville has been strategically positioned for this economic downturn more so than many other cities. For several years now the City has been in a strong financial position. That, however, does not mean that the task at hand will be easy. Depending on how the numbers roll out, there may be some difficult decisions ahead. We have already seen a slowdown in property tax collections and anticipate another three to five percent decline in residential property values this year. While sales tax revenue was flat a few months ago, the City is currently experiencing a 5.2 % decline the first six months of this fiscal year compared to the first six months of last year. As we work our way through the shrinking economy, one of our challenges will be to sustain some of the momentum that has been created the last few years, while maintaining service levels and avoiding any additional burden on you the taxpayer. All things considered, however, the North Texas region, Dallas County, and the City of Seagoville are well positioned to capitalize on the momentum that has been created and take advantage of an improved economy.

As always, we hope to see you at our Council meetings and encourage you to join us in volunteering to serve our great City.

Sidney M. Sexton, Jr., Mayor
Seagoville, Texas