

## ***Proud 2009 Showing for the “Show Me City”***

The *Show Me City* continued to build on its past successes this year, stacking up more achievements, strengthening the budget, standing proud with citizens and steering a course toward an even stronger future.

“Missouri City has a legacy of strength and success,” said Mayor Allen Owen. “This year was no exception.”

### **“SHOW ME” WINNERS...**

The following achievements allowed the area to continue to stand out and shine:

- **BEST BUDGET.** For the 21<sup>st</sup> year in a row, the Finance Department earned a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for fiscal responsibility and sound financial management. The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada presented the award to the City, which ranks among a select few in the Gulf Coast region that have successively received this award for more than two decades.
- **TOP COPS.** The Missouri City Police Department joined an elite group of 18 police forces across the State to attain “Recognized Law Enforcement Agency” status in Texas. The Department was evaluated on 161 Best Practices standards to achieve this prestigious award.
- **SAFETY FIRST.** For the second year, Congressional Quarterly recognized Missouri City as one of the safest in America. The City ranked as the eighth safest in Texas and in the top 100 in the United States.
- **PRISTINE PARKS.** The Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments recognized two parks in their Natural Area Awards program: the Hunter’s Glen sprayground funded by the Blue Ridge West Municipal Utility District and Buffalo Run Park, which emerged from a water detention project to a beautiful 95-acre City park.
- **PERFECT PUTT.** Ten months and an inaugural tee time later, the El Dorado Golf Course is back! The course is the dynamic design of Golf Architect Jeff Blume, who oversaw workers moving 200,000 cubic tons of dirt, installing a complete irrigation system, building 78 sand traps and five different tee boxes and the shaping of 18 Greens. The result: An exciting El Dorado.
- **PREMIER PREMIUMS.** After meeting the high prevention standards of the National Flood Insurance Program, Missouri City received a “very good” Community Rating System Score of 7, placing residents in a strong position to secure lower flood insurance premiums.

### **“SHOW ME” GOOD CENTS...**

The economic turbulence hitting the nation hit home here, but fortunately it was not nearly as jolting for Missouri City. The following actions helped the City maintain its stability:

- **FISCAL FITNESS.** Ever mindful of using tax dollars to provide excellent customer service to citizens, City officials streamlined the 2010 budget to reduce spending by almost 5 percent from the previous year and to maintain stability. The blueprint also includes a \$950,000 fund for contingencies.

- **TAX TIME.** To generate the same amount of revenue from existing property as last year, City Council adopted a tax rate of 52.84 cents per \$100 valuation that cut spending for maintenance and operations and devoted more tax revenue to voter-approved capital improvement projects to take advantage of the current low construction costs and interest rates. The tax-rate change was necessary because the City's total taxable value last year for both residential and commercial property was almost flat. Coupled with strong fiscal management, the decision allows the City to maintain its AA credit rating while tightening its spending belt and to assure the continuation of quality City services.

"It is never easy to increase taxes without showing the citizens why it is necessary. Taking care of an aging infrastructure, continuing to put Public Safety at the very top of our priorities, and yet tighten our belts in other areas, was our goal," Mayor Owen said. "I think we have done that and will continue to look for ways to reduce our taxes. Hopefully property values will continue to move upward, and the economy will make a rebound in 2010."

### **SHOW ME" PLANNING**

The updated Comprehensive Plan and Trails Master Plan both were approved by City Council, following extensive citizen involvement. Both outline realistic goals and strategies to manage the needs and development of Missouri City. The comprehensive plan sets the foundation of what the city will look like in the next 20 years and beyond, with the plan being updated every five years. A citizen survey this past fall validated the Plan's primary points, elements and direction. Survey respondents rated the top three most important quality of life factors to be: focus on crime prevention and security, limitations on the amount of rental housing, and community beautification.

### **"SHOW ME" FUN...**

Annual traditions were honored again this year in the Show Me City. Funtastic celebrations that brought City officials and citizens together were the Dad and Daughter dance, the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Bunny Hop, the 25<sup>th</sup> annual July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration, National Night Out, Boo in the Run and Snowfest.

### **"SHOW ME" WHAT'S NEW...**

The City also ushered in new property and programs. The recreational options available to residents will expand with the purchase last November of eight acres of land at the site of the former Quail Valley Tennis and Fitness Center.

In January, the City will receive statements of qualifications from interested firms to renovate or construct a new facility there that will serve the entire community's fitness, leisure and recreation needs. Firms also will be submitting qualifications to replace the current Quail Valley Golf clubhouse and add a community center.

A mid-year partnership took shape with 19 municipal utility districts in City limits and in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction agreeing to participate with Missouri City in a state-mandated groundwater reduction program. Because of subsidence in the region, by 2025 these

jurisdictions must reduce the groundwater they pump by 60 percent. Design of the \$58 million surface water treatment facility is complete and bids go out for construction early in 2010. This cost-effective partnership minimizes the infrastructure that otherwise would be needed. This will ensure Missouri City water users have competitively lower water rates.

And another important bridge of communication was established with residents through the initiation of City-sponsored Homeowner's Association meetings. The meetings have been a successful forum for staff, officials and HOA board members to discuss issues and share ideas.

#### **“SHOW ME” NEW BUSINESS...**

Though the U.S. Economy was dealt a bust, our bottom line was balanced by a business boom, supported by national and international companies opening their doors here: Lowe's opened a new store, building on the strong retail corridor along Highway 6. Lufkin Automation signed as the first tenant for the new Lakeview Business Park, with several more on the horizon; Global Geophysical opened its corporate headquarters on Gessner Road; and business flourished in the commercial corridor in the northern part of the City. Additionally, Councilmembers approved a resolution in May to establish the nonprofit Missouri City Recreation and Leisure Local Government Corporation, which helps the City acquire, improve, maintain and operate parks and recreation facilities, including the Quail Valley Golf Course.

#### **“SHOW ME” GOING GREEN...**

The City also continued to enhance the quality-of-life for residents with these efforts: Partnering with CenterPoint in January to plant more than 30 power line-friendly trees in Ridgeview Park; planting more than 200 trees donated by the Apache Foundation at Independence and Sta-Mo Parks to control erosion and flooding and provide a habitat for wildlife; designing a plan to transform the Texas Parkway/Cartwright Road Corridor into safe, navigable “green areas” complete with sidewalks and landscaping and additional features in the future; and upgrading and maintaining its many parks and recreation areas through a continuation of the Mulch Madness and Junior Arborist volunteer programs and through Spring Clean-up, Arbor Day and Earth Week programs. The City also built the state-of-the-art sprayground at Hunter's Glen Park that uses an efficient recycled water system for irrigation; a similar process is used at the Quail Valley Golf Course.

#### **“SHOW ME” MILESTONES...**

Many other memorable moments took place throughout the year, including the retirement of Police Chief Ron Echols, a 28-year veteran of the force. During his five years as Chief he took the department to a higher standard. To continue that existing excellence, the City was fortunate to hire Joel Fitzgerald Sr., a veteran law-enforcement official who has fostered a close collaboration between police and community, initiating a popular neighborhood policing program that ensures officers and residents are always in contact. Fitzgerald is a respected leader who has made it clear that his department is committed to serving residents, reducing crime and keeping Missouri City one of the safest cities in the nation. Another moment streamed through in July, when the City launched programming from the municipal cable station on the City website, featuring City News, Council and Planning and Zoning meetings and

other vital information for residents.

**“SHOW ME” THE FUTURE...**

Overall, 2009 was a good year for Missouri City. “There were so many positive things that happened in 2009 for our City,” Mayor Owen said. And the City has great expectations for 2010, he added: “We are on the edge of being an even greater place to live, work, and play. We begin 2010 with new prospects of large companies relocating to our City, which will bring new employment opportunities as well as other development around those projects. Economics will control the pace of growth in 2010. We are confident that we are working with companies and retail establishments that are somewhat less impacted by the economy. Housing starts in our newer subdivisions seem to be on pace at a rate better than other areas of the country. This is key to future retail development.”