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a monthly newsletter for the Rowlett community

# Rowlett

## On the Move

**Give Us Your 2¢ Rowlett!**



### Citizen input sought about the future of City services no longer sustainable at the current tax rate

The programs and services provided to Rowlett citizens on a daily basis are outstanding. However, *this is the ninth (9th) straight year that Rowlett residents have paid the same tax rate. In fact, citizens are paying on average \$118 less in property taxes today than in 2007* for a much higher level of service than was offered at that time! This level of service is a testament to City employees, who truly make a difference in the lives of those we serve. And, it is a testament to the level of financial stewardship provided by your Mayor and City Council. Unfortunately, this level of service is no longer financially sustainable at the current tax rate and some realistic decisions must be made this year.

As we take the journey in the coming months to determine how to best implement our community's vision, the City Council and Rowlett citizens will angst over what is the right answer – higher taxes and fees or reduced services. We owe it to you, the citizens of Rowlett, to have an honest conversation about what our future looks like, and you will have that opportunity with the series of *Rowlett! My Community. My Money. My Choice* meetings coming in April.

Please take an hour to attend a meeting and *Give Us Your 2¢!*

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ISSUE NO. 1403

MARCH, 2014

City Park Gets Needed Repairs

## LAKESIDE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

**Lakeside Park is on Lake Ray Hubbard, just off Miller Road between Chiesa and the President George Bush Turnpike service road.**

This is a very unique park because of its waterside location and extra amenities, which encourage families to gather, picnic, fish, play and exercise together. The park's attractions include a sand volleyball court, fishing pier, walking trail, playground and many opportunities for in-lake fishing. Eclipsing all of these features is the fact that Lakeside is currently one of two of our community's only public parks



with direct access to Lake Ray Hubbard. Hundreds of people visit the park every week to experience the natural beauty and enjoy the scenery and amenities all year long. Its sister park, Paddle Point, located just across Miller Road, complements Lakeside as it lake accessibility as well, along with a ramp, for those who enjoy kayaking on Lake Ray Hubbard.

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For **\$2.73 per day**, less than the cost of a tall cappuccino, Rowlett citizens receive incredible value for their tax dollars. Unfortunately, these services are no longer sustainable at the current tax rate.



### Police - .58¢ per day

*Priority One* calls are answered within **10 seconds** with emergency services dispatched within **45 seconds** to provide a **six minute response time**.

**91.5% code enforcement compliance rate** keeps Rowlett clean and helps protect home values.

The Animal Shelter has a **93.7% live release rate**, well above the national average of 30%.

**26 Crime Watch partnerships** keep neighborhoods safer.



### Fire Rescue - .44¢ per day

*Hazard mitigation strategies* include annual fire inspections, pre-fire planning for existing homes and businesses, fire code enforcement and smoke detector checks. **10 outdoor sirens** provide advance warning in case of weather-related or other emergencies.

**72 Firefighters** working **24 hours** a day, **seven days** a week, **365 days a year** provide life and property saving services to the **57,000 citizens** in the **21 square mile** area that Rowlett encompasses.



### Public Works - .24¢ per day

**636 miles of street and alley** infrastructure that support all facets of transportation is built, maintained and repaired, along with managing the **daily "24/7" safe and efficient movement of traffic** throughout the City.

**255 miles of pipeline** delivering **2.65 billion gallons** of clean and safe water to the community annually is built, maintained and repaired.



### Parks and Recreation - .19¢ per day

**30 current and future parks, trails and green spaces**, including Paddle Point Park - #29 on the Texas Parks & Wildlife's Paddling Trail list and the American Heart Association designated Heart Healthy Trail in Pecan Grove Park.

**Free** year-round downtown special events.

**Full-service** fitness center and dozens of convenient classes at the **Community Centre**.



### Library - .6¢ per day

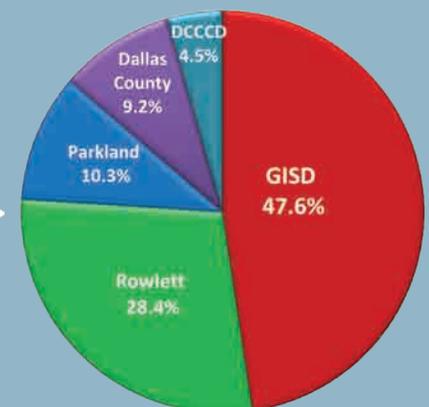
**96,036 books, audiobooks, eBooks, DVD's, CD's, magazines and newspapers** are available to borrow.

**Promoting literacy** through programming such as weekly storytimes and the **Summer Reading Program**, which had **2,000 participants** in 2013.

**GED and English as a Second Language** tutoring programs contribute to the **community's economic stability**, giving citizens the **tools necessary** to qualify for **employment opportunities**.

**Did You Know?**  
Only **28.4%** of your property taxes go to the **City of Rowlett!**

Taxing Entity	FY2013 Tax Rate
GISD	\$1.2533
<b>City of Rowlett</b>	<b>\$0.7471</b>
Parkland Hospital	\$0.2710
Dallas County	\$0.2431
Dallas County Community College	\$0.1194



*Rowlett has had the same tax rate for NINE years!  
So, why is a change necessary now?  
What's Wrong with Just Getting By?*

**As a community, Rowlett is now aging.**

Subdivisions built in the 1990's now have infrastructure that needs significant repair. These repairs require funding for on-going maintenance, not currently funded in the tax rate.

Playgrounds built 20 – 30 years ago in the height of our growth cycle have reached the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. Replacements of these playgrounds require funding, which is not currently funded in the tax rate.

Housing values continue to decline. This decline further exacerbates the continuing reduction in property tax revenue generated for ongoing operations and maintenance.



Thornhill alley



Herfurth Park

*Rowlett residents are paying an average of \$118 LESS per year in property taxes today than just seven years ago!*

**So, How Did We Get Here?**

There are several noteworthy events that have set in motion a chain reaction of sorts that has impacted the City's ability to deliver services at its current rate. These include:

**1 Great Recession of 2007 – 2012**

The global economy suffered what has become known as the Great Recession, the single biggest economic decline to impact the United States since the 1930's Great Depression. Rowlett felt the impact when property valuations started to decline in 2007, and continue to decline today, *resulting in a \$1.9 million annual reduction in property tax revenue* and necessitating further staff and program level reductions.

This was accomplished with no measurable decline in service to citizens, in order to avoid raising taxes. *The City of Rowlett's workforce is currently 373, about the same level as in 2004, a full decade ago.*



**2 Lack of Housing Options**

Market analysis has shown that the decline in Rowlett property valuations is being driven not only by the overall decline in national home prices, but the lack of diversity in housing options. *The only offering is a typical suburban house, all with similar home values.* The empty nesters or up and coming professionals, who want a choice, have to move elsewhere. Diversity of housing stock brings a level of stability so choices are offered as a part of Realize Rowlett 2020 and the adoption of form based codes.



*So here is our dilemma, Rowlett.*

*If nothing changes between now and Fiscal Year 2015, what happens?*

*To what level will citizens tolerate raising taxes and fees?*

*If we do not diversify our development, we may not be able to stabilize or grow our tax base.*

*The vision of Realize Rowlett 2020 is important to help the City realize its potential and grow its tax base.*



*If we cut services and amenities - Who will build here? Who will move here? Who will visit here?*

*We are approaching the point where price sensitivity will cause citizens to resist any changes.*

*All services are at risk. We no longer have room for 'sacred cows'.*

As we take the journey this year to determine what kind of community we want Rowlett to be, the City Council and Rowlett citizens will angst over what is the right answer – higher taxes and fees or a reduction in the services residents currently enjoy and have become used to. Rowlett cannot continue to “make-do” waiting for PGBT and DART Light-rail to arrive. They are now here and the ability to “bridge” the financial gap no longer exists. As a result, the City Council and you, the Rowlett citizen, now have to make strategic decisions to determine what our community’s future will be.

Unfortunately, even with some very exciting economic development projects on the horizon, the financial benefit to our community won’t be instant, it takes about three years for a city to begin to see property tax revenues from new development.

Consequently, we would need to begin approving projects in the coming year to see those revenues by Fiscal Year 2016.

Therefore, because economic conditions are likely to be challenging for the next couple of years or so, it is important to continue to make decisions utilizing a multi-year plan that addresses the City’s current and future needs and the ability to fund those decisions currently and in the future. To some extent, timing is critical – wait too long and we miss an important window of opportunity, strike too soon and the investment we make may fall flat.

*The Rowlett, My Community, My Money, My Choice meetings are your opportunity to engage and provide feedback with these decisions.*

*It's time to have an honest conversation about what our future looks like.*



**We Need You!**

**Attend a meeting and offer your input...give us your 2¢!**

# Rowlett<sup>TX</sup>



**Thursday, April 3**  
Rowlett Community Centre  
5300 Main Street  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**Monday, April 7**  
Fire Station 1  
3900 Miller Road  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**Thursday, April 10**  
Fire Station 2  
5100 Dalrock Road  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**Thursday, April 17**  
Fire Station 3  
8000 Princeton Road  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**Monday, April 21**  
Fire Station 4  
6800 Rowlett Road  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**Thursday, April 24**  
City Hall  
4000 Main Street  
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

*Questions? Email us!*  
[myrowlett@rowlett.com](mailto:myrowlett@rowlett.com)

## Lakeside Park Repairs and Improvements



**Unfortunately, with all of its unique features, Lakeside Park is now suffering.**

It is the victim of extreme soil erosion due to improper drainage over the past several years, which has now been exacerbated by the intense drought conditions north Texas is experiencing.

If not addressed, these drainage issues will continue to threaten the longevity of this park's most-utilized amenities, causing safety hazards for park visitors, including the playground and the walking trail. However, the City is determined to save this wonderful community asset. Recently, City staff developed a short-term plan and strategy to shore up Lakeside Park and correct these safety issues!



The Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments will begin work on this project in early March, depending on weather. Repairs include shoring up the walking trail, removing dead and/or damaged trees from the water line and making drainage improvements. The materials utilized will include boulders, erosion fabric, drains, playground safety surface, grass seed and plants.



### WANT TO HELP?

KEEP ROWLETT BEAUTIFUL IS PARTNERING WITH THE CITY IN SUPPORT OF THE PROJECT AND WILL HOLD A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER DAY THE MORNING OF SATURDAY, APRIL 5 TO DO THE SHORELINE PLANTINGS AND THE INSTALLATION OF THE PLAYGROUND SAFETY MATERIAL. EMAIL [INFO@KEEPROWLETTBEAUTIFUL.ORG](mailto:INFO@KEEPROWLETTBEAUTIFUL.ORG) OR CALL 972-463-3929 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

## **\$2.5 Million North Central Texas Council of Governments Downtown Sustainability Grant Project Breaks Ground!**



CONSTRUCTION ON THE SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENTS TAKING PLACE IN DOWNTOWN ROWLETT BEGAN ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14.

ALL IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING CONNECTING MARTIN DRIVE THROUGH TO MAIN STREET, ARE PLANNED TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE 2014 FIREWORKS ON MAIN COMMUNITY 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION.



# Once Every Two Week Landscape Watering *Still in Effect!*



## North Texas Municipal Water District Continues Stage 3 Water Restrictions

### ANOTHER DRY WINTER RESULTS IN CRITICALLY LOW LAKE LEVELS

The City of Rowlett is a customer city of the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD), meaning the City purchases its water from the District and is subject to their implementation of water restrictions and the rules each level brings. Last April, the NTMWD Board of Directors voted to implement Stage 3 of its Drought Plan, and we remain there today due to below average rainfall and low lake levels.

The goal of Stage 3 is a 10% reduction in water use and increased awareness in ongoing water conservation efforts.

*As of February 21, Lake Lavon was only 48.5% full.* Lake Chapman, another NTMWD water source, was down to 38% full. In addition, the water district still cannot use water from Lake Texoma due to the presence of invasive zebra mussels. Lake Texoma normally provides 28% of NTMWD's total raw water supply.

A new pipeline is being constructed to transport water from Lake Texoma directly to the Wylie water treatment plant, bypassing Lake Lavon, but the first phase of that project will not be online until June of this year.

### STAGE 3 RESTRICTIONS INCLUDE:

PROHIBIT  
OPERATION OF  
ALL ORNAMENTAL  
FOUNTAINS TO THE  
EXTENT THEY USE  
TREATED WATER.

PROHIBIT WASHING  
OR RINSING OF  
VEHICLES BY HOSE  
EXCEPT WITH A  
HOSE END CUTOFF  
NOZZLE.

EXISTING SWIMMING  
POOLS MAY NOT  
BE DRAINED AND  
REFILLED (EXCEPT  
TO REPLACE  
NORMAL WATER  
LOSS).

PROHIBIT USING  
WATER IN SUCH  
A MANNER AS TO  
ALLOW RUNOFF OR  
OTHER WASTE.

PROHIBIT  
HYDRO-  
SEEDING,  
HYDRO-  
MULCHING, OVER-  
SEEDING, AND  
SPRIGGING.

## WHEN CAN I WATER?

*Landscape watering is allowed once every fourteen days based on the last number of your physical address.*

*No landscape watering is allowed between 10:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.*

### Exceptions to this Schedule

Foundations, new landscaping, new plantings (first year) of shrubs, and trees may be watered for up to 2 hours on any day by a hand-held hose, a soaker hose, or a dedicated zone using a drip/bubbler irrigation system.

Registered and properly functioning ET/Smart irrigation systems and drip/bubbler irrigation systems may irrigate without restrictions.

Golf courses, using NTMWD water, may water greens and tee boxes without restrictions.

Locations using other water sources such as well water, water reuse, or reclaimed water for irrigation may irrigate without restrictions.

Public athletic fields used for competition may be watered twice per week.

### MARCH 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 5
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
NO WATERING						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
0	3 & 4	1	6 & 7	2	8 & 9	5
NO WATERING						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
0	3 & 4	1	6 & 7	2	8 & 9	5
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
0	3 & 4	1	6 & 7	2	8 & 9	5
30	31					
NO WATERING						Watering Day: Use Last Digit In Address



View the [NTMWD Water Plan](#).  
For More Information call the City of Rowlett  
Action Center at 972-412-6100.

## MARCH IS TEXAS SMARTSCAPE MONTH

**IT'S PLANTING SEASON AGAIN! TO USE WATER RESPONSIBLY AND BE ECOLOGICALLY FRIENDLY WE HAVE SOME ADVICE FROM TEXAS SMARTSCAPE.**

**T**exas SmartScape's goal is to conserve local water and improve water quality by reducing the amount of water, fertilizer and pesticides used in landscaping. Their interactive website, [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com), walks property owners step-by-step through designing

a beautiful garden using over 200 landscaping plants, shrubs, grasses and trees that are native or adapted to our regional climate and local conditions.

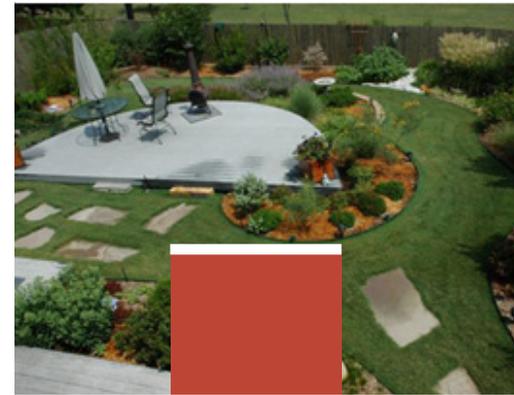
*SmartScape is a regionally coordinated effort to promote water conservation, pollution prevention, recycling, composting, and waste reduction.*

and they look great with less effort. They also attract the hummingbirds and butterflies that call North Central Texas their home.

County Health Department, Texas Extension Service, Tarrant Regional Water District, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Weston Gardens.

**T**hese plants will stand up to the hot dry summer much better than many species commonly planted. Using these plants keeps your water bill down, conserves water during drought conditions

**S**martScape was specifically designed for this region by a collaboration of organizations including the North Central Texas Council of Governments, Tarrant



## TOOLS

### **D**esign

While the site can't design your backyard for you, it will point out aspects such as sun and drainage to consider. Most importantly, it lays out the steps to take to ensure a successful garden.



### **P**lant Selection

The site has a robust plant database that is searchable by plant type, water needs, size, color and/or light requirement. All the plants are native or adaptive species and more likely to thrive in the hot, dry north Texas summer!

### **C**are and Maintenance Guidelines

This includes information on pruning, watering and fertilizer needs. With a SmartScape plant, the need for water and fertilizer is reduced so time and money are saved while benefiting the environment. It's a win-win!



## SOLUTIONS

**I**nstead of Red-Tip Photinias try American Beauty Berry. It's a native plant that flowers in the summer and does well in sunny to shady conditions!

**F**or a shade tree try a native Pecan or Shumard Oak.



**F**or some color try Mexican Dwarf Petunia or Black Eyed Susan's!

**T**here are many gorgeous and native plant species from which to choose. Reducing water consumption and poisons from runoff fertilizers benefits everyone. So before heading to the garden store, take a look at [www.txsmartscape.com](http://www.txsmartscape.com) for some great planting tips!

*March is Clean-up Month in Rowlett!*

## **MARCH CLEAN-UP CAMPAIGN**



**March 1 - 31, 2014**

Dumpsters located at Kirby and the PGBT frontage road at the elevated storage tank between Industrial Street and Miller Road.

**Open Daily 10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.**

Trim those trees and bushes, increase your property value and get a jump on spring cleaning! The annual March Clean-up Campaign allows Rowlett residents to dispose of brush and non-hazardous bulk items free of charge and without limits on the number of visits.

The program runs every day in March, including weekends, weather permitting. The site will be closed if it is raining. A driver's license or ID is required as proof of residence. Those with a Wylie address and an East Fork water bill are acceptable.

### **Hazardous Waste Disposal**

*Dispose of household chemical products the responsible way:*

Bring them to the [Dallas County Home Chemical Collection Center](#), located at [11234 Plano Road in Dallas](#). ALL residents of Rowlett, including those residing in Rockwall County, may use this facility at no charge. Driver's license AND a current utility bill are required as proof of residence.

#### ***Hazardous and Unacceptable Materials Include:***

- Televisions, computer components or monitors
- Tires, batteries or automobile parts
- Any chemicals or liquids such as paint, motor oil or solvents
- Dirt, rock or concrete
- Construction, demolition or roofing materials
- Herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers or pool chemicals
- Freon or Freon-containing appliances (such as air conditioners, freezers, or refrigerators)
- Commercial contractor discards



### ***DID YOU KNOW...***



If the urge to spring clean hits you in April (or any other month of the year!), instead of during the March Clean-up Campaign, **unlimited brush and bulky waste pickup is included at no extra charge in your weekly trash service!** Simply place brush and bulky items next to trash and recycling polycarts and they will be picked up on the normal trash day. If it is an extraordinarily

large pile of brush, a second truck may be required and the pickup will occur within the same week. This service has significantly improved customer service to our citizens and aids in reducing the amount of time Code Enforcement Officers must engage to manage piles of junk and debris throughout our community.

*For more information on the March Clean-up Campaign, please call the City of Rowlett Action Center at 972-412-6100*

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## Eggstaordinary Egg Hunt!

Saturday, April 12

10:00 A.M. - Noon

Main Street

Free!



Kids, grab your Easter basket and hippity-hop on over to hunt for 20,000 treat-filled Easter eggs! Enjoy face painting, bounce houses, music, photos with the Easter Bunny and much more.

**Dress up your stroller or wagon for the Best Decorated contest.**

The hunt is divided by age group so everyone has a chance to get as many eggs as their baskets can hold!

## Pup-a-Palooza!

Sunday, April 13

2:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Herfurth Park

\$10 per dog



This is an Easter egg hunt for dogs of all sizes. There will be fun games and awesome prizes.

**Dress your dog up as someone famous for the chance to win “the best look-a-like contest” or in a bonnet to win the “best-bonnet” contest.**

Please remember to bring an Easter basket, leash and proof of rabies vaccination.

## SENIOR ACTIVITIES



### Silver Cinema

Monday, March 3 -

“Rebecca”

Monday, April 7 -

“Harvey”

2:00 P.M.

Rowlett Library

Relive the glitz and glamour that was the Golden Age of Hollywood

with this series of free, monthly showings of classic, old Hollywood productions. Free popcorn, too!



### Senior Computer Class -

#### Intro to Email

Tuesday thru Thursday,

March 4-6

8:30 A.M.

Rowlett Library

The library offers free computer classes for Rowlett Seniors in

conjunction with the Rowlett Senior Advisory Board. This class is limited to 18 participants. Call 972-412-6161 to register.



### Senior Trip - Dallas Arboretum

Thursday, March 20

10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

Rowlett Community Centre

\$10

Visit one of the most beautiful locations in Dallas, featuring 66 acres of gardens, flowers, shrubs,

trees and plants! Call 972-412-6170 for reservations.



### Senior Health Fair

Tuesday, April 8

9:00 A.M. – Noon

Rowlett Community Centre

Free annual event presented by the Senior Advisory Board features door prizes and free screenings plus over 40 vendors, all with a focus on senior health.

These may include home health care, retirement communities, doctors, pharmacies, and specialty organizations with the latest information on different diseases.

# Monthly Financial Update

The City of Rowlett's monthly financial report is provided as one element in the City's effort to ensure financial transparency for its citizens and policy makers.

The Finance Department prepares the report and presents it to the City Council at a regular City Council meeting each month. While the presentation made at the Council meeting usually provides a high level overview, the report itself is very detailed, providing information on each of the City's funds, key local, state and national economic indicators, and "dashboard" information about the City's primary operating funds, major revenue sources and overall fund performance.

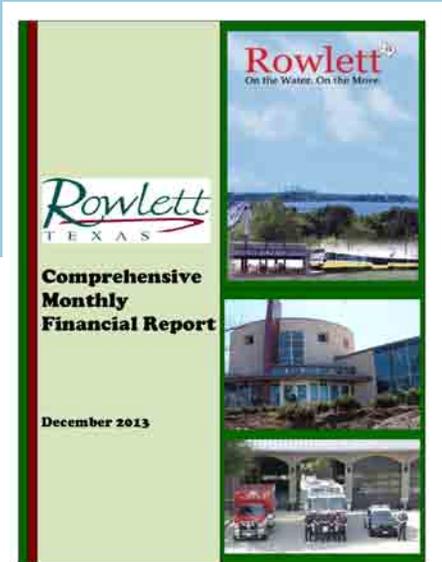
This report is prepared in a way as to provide financially relevant information that is easy to read and understand. Staff uses a forecasting model based on historical data in order to provide a framework for comparing projected performance to actual performance. The purpose of this effort is two-fold. First,

the report informs the City Council and public regarding the status of the City's financial position. In other words, where are we versus where did we project we would be at this time of the fiscal year. Second, it informs the staff and City Council about significant variances in projected versus actual revenues and expenditures. This allows the Council to monitor and make adjustments, and to make decisions appropriately for future budgets. You could say that this report serves as an early warning system!

The report provided to Council in February includes financial information through December, the third month of the City's fiscal year. *On the revenue side* of the equation, across all funds, the City has earned or received

*"The net surplus from operations is \$12.3 million. This is \$1.1million better than expected at this point in the year. The figures for December project a positive trend so far this fiscal year"*

*Alan Guard  
Director of Financial Services*



\$28.4 million in FY 2014. This amount is 34.9% of the approved operating budget of \$81.4 million and is 0.3% more than the forecast projected through the month of December.

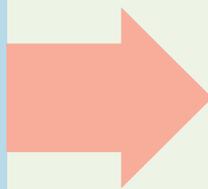
*Expenditures* have totaled \$16.1 million through the same time period. This amount is 19.5% of the approved operating budget of \$82.7 million and is 5.9% lower than forecast. Based on these figures, the net surplus from operations is \$12.3 million, which is \$1.1 million better than expected at this point in the fiscal year

View the [December Monthly Financial Report](#).

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

**Accounts for the operations, maintenance and debt service payments related to the City's water and sewer system.**

## The Utility Fund



*Water Line Replacements  
Lift Station Repairs and Pump Replacements  
Manhole Replacements  
Sewer Line Replacements*

This year's budget included an increase to water and sewer rates. These increases were needed in order to address increases in the cost of water from the North Texas Municipal Water District, the cost of sewer service, which is provided by the City of Garland, and to begin to address deferred maintenance to the water and sewer infrastructure throughout the City. By making these upgrades to the water and sewer systems, the citizens of Rowlett can be assured of superior water quality when they turn on the faucet.

*After the first three months of this fiscal year, Utility Fund revenues are \$6.5 million, which is \$343,640, or 5% lower than expected. This is directly attributable to Stage 3 water restrictions imposed by the North Texas Municipal Water District.*

*Utility Fund expenditures total \$5.7 million, which is \$67,477 more than projected, or 1.2% higher.*



## Spring Break!



Make Plans Now to Attend Rowlett Parks and Recreation Activities at the Community Centre!

**March 10 – 14**  
**7:30 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.**  
**Kids ages 6-12**  
**\$15 per day**

Looking for fun, safe Spring Break activities? Get the kids up and active this spring break! Drop them off at the Rowlett Community Centre (RCC) where Parks and Recreation staff will be providing entertaining, theme based activities to keep them up and moving all day long. Games, gym time, fitness activities and cultural activities including paper airplane folding and origami and more! Kids need to bring water bottles, snacks and a sack lunch.

In addition to all of the physical activities kids will have “free play” every afternoon when they can choose an activity for 30-45 minutes. Choose from game room activities including pool, ping pong and air hockey, Wii mini-tournaments, cup stacking, crafts or reading time.

**Different activities every day will keep kids active and entertained!**

*For more information or to register your child, stop by the **Rowlett Community Centre** or call **972-412-6170**.*



# 5

## Days of Spring Break Activities!

### Manic Monday

Teamwork activities with themes such as “Survivor”, “Surf’s Up”, “Amazing Race” and others are featured. Participants work to build huts for stuffed animals, learn cooperation by crossing a hot chocolate river, thawing a frozen t-shirt, untangling a human knot and other team-related activities.

### Rookie Tuesday

Participants are taught the basics of sports such as basketball, golf, volleyball, floor hockey, tennis, whiffle ball, softball, football and Frisbee golf. After the participants are exposed to game basics, the sports will then be played indoors and outdoors!

### Crafts and Art

Craft sessions will take place throughout the week to foster creativity. Art will include paint, sand, pipe cleaners, balloons, origami, wooden clothes pins, and paper bags and plates. Kids will take home a variety of projects they complete throughout the week.

### Tidal Wave Thursday

Water is the name of the game! Kids will play individual and team water-related games using water balloons, water buckets and shaving cream.

### Fantastic Fun Friday

Prepare for adventure, challenges, laughter and teamwork on Fun Friday. Game shows, nature exploration, arts and crafts, and gym games are all entertaining ingredients of this recreational program.

# LIBRARY NEWS

## Library Receives Excellence Award 9th Year for this Designation!

The Rowlett Public Library was awarded the 2013 Achievement of Library Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association (TMLDA). This is the ninth consecutive year your Library has received this distinction, recognizing the quality programs and services offered in furthering the continued education and personal enrichment of community residents.

Each year, the TMLDA confers awards in recognition of outstanding contributions made by public libraries. To successfully receive this award, applicants must provide documentation in each of ten categories which span the library service spectrum. Award criteria ranges from marketing and collaborative efforts, to demonstrated literacy support and a summer reading program.



Of 560 public libraries and library systems in the State of Texas,  
the Rowlett Public Library was among only 28 libraries receiving the award this year.

## Arts and Humanities Commission 2014 Grant Awards

2014 Cultural Arts Grants awards went to three deserving organizations. All the recipients share opportunities to involve citizens and exhibit and perform in Rowlett and surrounding communities, emphasizing the talents of local artists.

The Cultural Grants program is an annual program funded by the Rowlett City Council.

**\$500** - Artists 'Round Texas  
*in support of their visual artist programs and classes.*

**\$750** - Lakeshore Symphonic Winds  
*to support its public performance music and venue expenses.*

**\$750** - Lake Cities Chorale  
*to help with vocal music and performance venue expenses.*



## Arts and Humanities Commission 13th Annual Young Artists Contest and Exhibit Attention Young Artists: It's Time to Get Busy!

One of the goals of the Arts and Humanities Commission is to encourage area students to become more active in their communities through the visual arts. With that in mind, all talented young artists, Kindergarten through 12th grade, are invited to participate in this exciting contest. Three age divisions and two categories, 2D and 3D works, ensure that each child participating has a chance to shine!

Submissions run the gamut of 2D and 3D visual arts and might include paintings, drawings, sculpture or ceramics. This event gives children the positive reinforcement and encouragement that they need

to validate and further their development as young artists. It also encourages parents and community members to be more aware of the visual arts programs in our schools.

**Submit all entries to the Rowlett Library on Wednesday, April 2 between 6:00 and 8:00 P.M.** for judging at the exhibit, all entries will be on display during the month of April.

For more information and contest rules, please visit the [Arts and Humanities Commission webpage](#) at [www.rowlett.com](http://www.rowlett.com)!

# SPRING BREAK AT THE LIBRARY

Come to the Rowlett Public Library during the break from school for free, fun activities! Programs are based on the *STEM* principles of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

## **Magic Tree House**

**Monday, March 10**  
**2:00 P.M.**

Monday will be devoted to READING. Join us to make your own tree house based on *The Magic Tree House* series by Mary Pope Osborne.

## **Scary Weather**

**Tuesday, March 11**  
**2:00 P.M.**

The library explores scary weather with the G-rated movie *Night Of The Twisters* based on the book by Ivy Ruckman. One night in Nebraska in 1980, seven tornadoes hit the same small town, and one of the twisters was an F4.

## **Faster than a Locomotive!**

**Wednesday, March 12**  
**2:00 P.M.**

Come learn about the technology of transportation with an expert from DART.

## **Engineering with Legos!**

**Thursday, March 13**  
**2:00 P.M.**

Practice your engineering skills by building magnificent structures with over 3000 Legos!

## **International Pi Day**

**Friday, March 14**  
**2:00 P.M.**

Celebrate Einstein's Birthday on International Pi Day, the famous irrational number.



# STORY TIME!

## **The Young & the Restless Baby Story Time**

**Every Monday @ 10:00 & 10:30 A.M.**

**For babies up to age 2**

**March 3 - Puppies and Kittens**

**March 10 - What's in the Water?**

**March 17 - To the Zoo**

**March 24 - On the Go**

**March 31 - Time for Bed**

An interactive story time between baby and caregiver, which includes board books, songs, nursery rhymes, baby sign language, peekaboo, bubbles and parachute play.

## **Giggle, Wiggle Toddler Story Time**

**Every Wednesday @ 10:00 & 10:30 A.M.**

**March 5 - Bath Time & Bubbles**

**March 12 - Things that Go**

**March 19 - Creepy, Crawly Bugs**

**March 26 - Spring Time!**

Toddlers will have lots of fun learning as they are introduced to letters of the alphabet and new words to build their vocabulary. Ages 18 months to 3 years.

## **Shake, Rattle and Read Preschool Story Time**

**Every Friday @ 10:00 & 10:30 A.M.**

**March 7 - Up, Up and Away**

**March 14 - Lots of Spots**

**March 21 - Here a Moo, There a Moo**

**March 28 - Messy Mud**

Continue your child's introduction to letters and words through stories, books, rhymes and much more!

For children 3 years of age and older.

## **Prime Time Book Club**

**Thursdays @ 4:00 P.M.**

**Ages 6-11**

**Mar 6 - 4:00 - Ziggy And The Black Dinosaurs**

**Mar 20 - 4:00 - Katie Kazoo Switcheroo**

**Mar 27 - 4:00 - Jigsaw Jones**

Weekly after-school reading club for elementary school students in grades 1 to 5. Each week, a book series or favorite book will be read and discussed, with a take-home activity to do relating to the books.

## **Pajama Story Time**

**Thursday, March 20**

**7:00 P.M.**

Families are invited to wind down the day with a blankie, pillow, lullaby and bedtime story. Yes, kids are encouraged to wear their jammies and parents should wear their slippers!

# ROWLETT LIBRARY OFFERS TECH ASSISTANCE!

## Phil's Technology Corner

### Protect Mobile Devices from Malware!

Phil Barott, Technical Services Supervisor with the Rowlett Public Library, offers a useful technology tip each month.



Tablets and smart phones may not have as many problems with malware as regular personal computers and laptops do, but they are computers and therefore have some of the same vulnerabilities. So, as we protect our home computer or laptop, it's important to do the same for our mobile devices.

You're probably familiar with some of the signs that your computer is infected with malware. It may run more slowly, or programs may work erratically. Similar signs exist for malware on smart phones and tablets. If it isn't working as fast as you're used to, or if the battery is draining faster than it should, it may be infected. Similarly, if your data or text message usage goes up, a shifty third party has used malware to hijack your phone.

Malware gets on phones and tablets in a variety

of ways. Sometimes it comes from a suspicious link sent through an email or text message. It can also come from installing bad apps on your device. These bad apps may just gather personal information, such as location history or websites visited. Others try to hijack your phone and use it for some suspicious purpose.

The best way to avoid malware is to approach websites and programs with a healthy dose of skepticism. Never download files if you're not confident in the source. **Don't click on links that come from unfamiliar email addresses or phone numbers.** Furthermore, be careful of apps. Only download them from the approved app store for your device. Apple has been very good about keeping malware out of its store. Google has been less successful at keeping out bad apps, but you're still better off getting apps through the Play store than just off the Internet. When you find an app you want, always take a minute to read some of the app's user reviews. You'll be able to see some of the problems other people

have had and can also check if the developer has created anything else, and what kind of reviews those other apps have received.

Similar to products for home computers, there are also malware protection programs for mobile devices. **Malwarebytes** and **Avast** have been making free, well regarded antivirus and antimalware programs for computers for a while. Now they both have mobile versions of their software available to download. **Avast** has apps for both Android and IOS, but **Malwarebytes Anti Malware** is only on Android. **Lookout Mobile Security** is another option that has received a lot of positive attention. It is available on both Android and IOS devices. These programs offer different features, but the upshot is they provide an extra layer of protection for your mobile device.

To learn more about this, or other technology topics, please visit us at the Rowlett Public Library. In addition to materials to help you learn, we offer a variety of Tech Ed programs, and even one on one sessions to help you out.

## TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION SERIES

FREE classes at the Rowlett Library to educate Rowlett residents on the various ways technology can save time, money and generally make lives easier!

### Basic Computer Security

Tuesday, March 4  
10:30 A.M. & 2:00 P.M.

Security measures are important to keep your computer safe from hackers and various forms of malware!

### Linked In

Tuesday, March 11  
10:30 A.M. & 2:00 P.M.

Linked In is a popular social media website. In contrast to FaceBook, which many people use primarily for fun, Linked In is more concerned with making business connections.

### Free Software Alternatives

Tuesday, March 18  
10:30 A.M. & 2:00 P.M.

Come learn about free options for photo editing and word processing, along with options for several other popular programs.

### Online Job Searching

Tuesday, March 25  
10:30 A.M. & 2:00 P.M.

Learn about online tools that can make this task easier, as well as assist with writing cover letters and resumes to make your presentation as effective as possible.

The library also offers **FREE** one on one sessions to help you get the most from your computers and personal devices such as cell phones or tablets.



## One on One Tech Help

Every Friday  
Rowlett Library  
Flexible times

Did you get a new iPad and aren't sure how to use it? Would you like to learn the basics of Microsoft Office? Two 30 minute sessions are available every Friday for reservation. Contact Technical Services Supervisor Phil Barott at 972-412-6161 or via [email](#). Reservations are on a first come first served basis so call today!

# March 23 - 29, 2014 National Flood Awareness Week

Floods are the most common and widespread of all natural disasters, except fire. As we move into the spring storm season here are some tips to assist you in developing a family plan and ensuring you are ready to act in the case of flooding in our community.



Floods can be slow or fast rising but generally develop over a period of days. Flash floods usually result from intense storms dropping large amounts of rain within a brief period. They occur with little or no warning and can reach full peak in only a few minutes.

Neighborhoods located in low-lying areas are especially at risk for flooding, those near creeks, lakes and other bodies of water are vulnerable, too. If it has rained hard for several hours or rained steadily for several days, prepare for the possibility of flooding.

Closely monitor a local radio station, television or NOAA Weather Radio for flood information.

- A flood or flash flood **watch** means a flood is possible in your area.
- A flood or flash flood **warning** means flooding is already occurring or will occur soon in your area. If told to evacuate, do so immediately.

Flash floods can take only a few minutes or a few hours to develop. Be alert to signs of flash flooding and be ready to evacuate on a moment's notice. If you think flooding has begun, evacuate immediately. You may have only seconds to escape. Act quickly!



Springfield Park

**Get  
Prepared!**

Flood Awareness Web Resources  
[National Weather Service Preparedness](#)  
FEMA: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)  
Red Cross: [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

## TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!

Do not drive through water running across the road ... you have no way of knowing how deep it is. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.



Miller Road

## Prepare a Family Disaster Plan

Keep insurance policies, documents and other valuables in a safe-deposit box.

Identify where you could go if told to evacuate. Choose several places - a friend's home in another town, a motel or a shelter.

Assemble a disaster supplies kit containing:

First aid kit and essential medications.

Canned food and can opener.

At least three gallons of water per person per day.

Protective clothing, rainwear and bedding or sleeping bags.

Battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries.

Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members.

Written instructions for how to turn off electricity, gas and water if authorities advise you to do so (remember, you'll need a professional to turn them back on).

For more information contact Fire Marshal Bryan Beckner at 972-463-3940 or via [email](#).

## Community Services Officer Chad Caldwell Offers Advice on Dealing with Door to Door Solicitation



# Door to Door Scams

The City of Rowlett has a solicitation ordinance to protect residents from scam artists, but we need your assistance and vigilance in recognizing those with criminal intentions.

All solicitors are required to apply for a permit at the police department, including solicitors that only leave a handbill on your door. This process allows the police to check out the company and the individuals they are sending into our neighborhoods to solicit. If you doubt the legitimacy of a solicitor that has come to your door, ask to see their permit. This is a letter with the Rowlett logo on top and is signed by Chief Brodnax. The city of Rowlett does not give out any type of ID badges for solicitors. If you see a solicitor in your neighborhood and you have a strange feeling, immediately contact the Rowlett Police Department.

Be on the lookout for these tactics to separate you from your money!

### Reduce Your Chances of Falling Victim to a Scam:

- Never make a buying decision when you have just heard the sales pitch. Give yourself 24 hours to think about it. This gives time for the emotional effects of the salesman to subside and time for you to do some research.
- Do not share personal information about your family or your worries with a salesman.
- Ask yourself “What’s in it for them?” and “Why are they approaching me with it?”
- Most importantly, when in doubt, keep strangers out. You have no obligation to answer any personal questions or even answer the door. It is better to be rude than scammed. Ask the salesman to leave a brochure at the door and you will review it later.

For more information, visit [FBI: Scams and Fraud](#) or contact [Officer Caldwell](#) at 972-412-6242 or via [email](#).



# 5

## Common Door to Door Scams

### Magazine subscription sales

You are told by a charming young person it’s a bargain and it is for a good cause, he’s earning points for a trip or college, etc. Often the rates are three times what you would normally pay and/or the magazine never arrives. Many times, the young salesperson does not even know it is a rip-off, they are being scammed by their boss as well!

### Medical Wellness Checks

This is a tactic used by thieves to gain access into your home. They will ask to see your medication then steal your valuables while your back is turned digging through your medicine cabinet.

### Voter Registration

This is a scam if they ask for your social security number or your financial information. Legitimate voter registration companies do not ask for this information, they leave the forms with you to be completed and mailed.

### Home Repairs

A slick handyman knocks at your door and tells you your roof needs a repair or your driveway needs recoating. They offer you a great deal. They wind up doing substandard work that you did not need in the first place. Remember, professional contractors are usually backed up with work orders and do not solicit work by going door to door.

### Free Energy Audits

An “energy company representative” knocks at your door unannounced and says they are there to see how much energy your house is wasting. This is either another tactic to get inside your house and rob you or you get stuck with a bill for repairs you did not need.

# Construction Corner

## Public Works Update



### Skyline/Osage Drive

The project will include: reconstruction of alley paving, alley drainage improvements (including two curb inlets for additional drainage), replacing the existing failed wastewater line with new PVC pipe, and the installation of property line cleanouts. The alley reconstruction was originally part of the 2012 Alley Improvements, but the wastewater line was found to be failing. The decision was made to install a new wastewater line with the alley paving and storm water drainage improvements on a separate contract.

“Notice to Proceed” was granted on January 15, 2014.



### Schrade Lift Station Refurbish

The wet wells, dry well piping, and discharge header had deteriorated to critical condition. Two pumps and the northerly wet well had to be taken out of service due to extreme leaking and near failure. This resulted in the lift station pumping capacity to be cut in half. The walls had deteriorated to nearly 10% with exposed steel, which requires mortar build-up before any protective coating can be applied.

Crews removed the existing failed discharge header/piping and installed the new discharge header. Liquid was removed from the wet wells. Crews then installed build up mortar on walls up to 4” and an epoxy coat was applied. The discharge header had to be replaced due to piping deterioration from gasses.



### Sand Pine Drive Detention Pond

The detention pond at Sand Pine Drive has been leveled. A storm pipe and drainage inlet have been installed. The existing drainage channel was at least 6’ to 8’ deep and has been filled in after the 48” RCP, reinforced concrete pipe, was installed.

Substantial completion for the contract is March 6, 2014.

*Plan Ahead and Be Prepared*

## **“Time” to Change Batteries!**



### Daylight Savings Begins March 9

**Rowlett Fire Rescue urges homeowners to change smoke detector batteries when you ‘Spring Forward’!**

Smoke is responsible for three out of four fire-related deaths. One of the best ways you can protect your family from fire is to make sure you have good working smoke detectors inside your home for early smoke and fire detection. Change your batteries when you set your clocks forward each spring and back in the fall!

Do you or someone you know need assistance with changing smoke detector batteries?  
Call Fire Administration at 972-412-6230.

# Rowlett

## City Calendar

# March

						1 <b>Free Movie &amp; Popcorn:</b> <i>Legend of the Guardian</i> 10:30am @ Library <b>Beginning Golf</b> 10am @ RCC
2	3	4 <b>Senior Computer Class - Intro to Email (thru Thursday)</b> 8:30 am @ Library <b>Computer Security</b> 10:30am & 2pm @ Library <b>City Council Meeting</b> 7:30 pm @ City Hall	5	6	7 <b>One on One Tech Help</b> @ Library	8
9	10 <b>Spring Break activities at the Library and RCC begin</b>	11 <b>Linked In</b> 10:30am & 2pm @ Library <b>Planning &amp; Zoning Meeting</b> 7:30 pm @ City Hall	12	13	14 <b>One on One Tech Help</b> @ Library	15 <b>Free Movie &amp; Popcorn:</b> <i>Darby O’Gill and the Little People</i> 10:30am @ Library
16	17	18 <b>Free Software Alternatives</b> 10:30am & 2pm @ Library <b>City Council Meeting</b> 7:30 pm @ City Hall	19	20 <b>Senior Trip - Dallas Arboretum</b>	21 <b>One on One Tech Help</b> @ Library	22
23	24	25 <b>Online Job Searching</b> 10:30am & 2pm @ Library <b>Planning &amp; Zoning Meeting</b> 7:30 pm @ City Hall	26	27	28	28
29	30	31				