

Friday, July 7, 2023

49th Annual
Progress
Issue

**Growth and
Change**

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Krugerville | Cross Roads
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THE **POST-SIGNAL.**

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TxDOT works toward roadway projects



A truck turns off of the extension of the Dallas North Tollway, the Dallas Parkway, near the Denton County-Collin County border between Pilot Point and Celina on FM 455. The current two-lane road goes north into Grayson County and connects up with the Dallas North Tollway south in Celina.

Basil Gist/The Post-Signal

By Basil Gist
Staff Writer

As more and more people move to North Texas, the area's roadways will continue to shift and grow to accommodate the increased traffic.

The Texas Department of Transportation has its eyes on several roadways along and throughout the Ranch Cities, with projects at varying stages from conceptual to construction to, in the case of the tollway feeder on FM 455, completed.

At the earliest stage, the Outer Loop project, which includes Aubrey and Krugerville among its possible route areas, is still taking public comment and nailing down where the final route will go.

"At this point we don't know what the alignment is going to be absolute-

ly," Aubrey City Manager Charles Kreidler said. "We are still waiting on the studies to be done, so it's yet to be seen what the final impact is going to be on Aubrey."

As such, the city, though it expects to be affected, is waiting to see to what degree.

"I do believe the Outer Loop is going to come through Aubrey," Kreidler said. "Once we have an alignment in place and know, we can start looking at what we need to do on our end to prepare for that."

Other projects, such as the expansions of U.S. 377 as well as FM 2931 near Providence Village, are still at the stage of right of way acquisition.

The 2931 project will take the two-lane roadway and expand it to four divided lanes with an impact of 0.49

acres of additional ROW required.

The 377 project, which had its first public meeting held in 2020, stretches through the Ranch Cities from Pilot Point to Cross Roads and will see the two-lane highway pushed out to six lanes along the entire stretch.

This undertaking requires 54.7 acres of additional ROW, purchased from landowners along the road.

Each of the projects' pages on the TxDOT website state construction is expected to begin in 2024.

"It's going to have a huge impact on safety and the flow of traffic as far as moving people goes," Pilot Point City Manager Britt Lusk said. "I'm excited about the opportunity it's going to bring as far as the ability to move people, and the commercial opportunities along those heavily traf-

ficked roadways."

Other projects, such as the U.S. 380, and FM 455, FM 1385 and FM 428 expansions, are already seeing construction.

"I would ask people to use caution and be safe," Lusk said. "With the 455 bridge expansions right now, those lights are there for your safety, they aren't there to be ignored and it happens all the time. Plan your trips around the construction, realize it's going to take longer and exercise caution."

The tollway feeder road is an example of a completed project to accommodate the growth and has since seen daily use from Ranch Cities residents looking to shorten their trips to and from cities like Prosper and Dallas.

Chambers strive to help small businesses grow

By Joe Fragano
Staff Writer

As more businesses pop up in the Ranch Cities area, local chambers of commerce find themselves playing bigger roles as connectors of local businesses and people in the towns that they serve.

The increased responsibility is new to local chambers, but the chambers themselves are not. Aubrey and Pilot Point have had chambers of commerce for years, and Tioga is in the process of reorganizing its chamber.

Jimerson Adkins is the president of the Pilot Point Chamber of Commerce and the owner of multiple small businesses, including the Pilot Point Coffee House.

“The purpose of a chamber of commerce is to take the local businesses and organizations, nonprofits, and even individuals and ... connect them to each other,” Adkins said. “... It’s been my goal both personally and with my local business to bring the community together through social events.”

Adkins pointed to the years of the COVID-19 pandemic as a prime example of why connection between neighbors is so important.

“It’s more important than ever now to bring people together because the opposite of that is division,” Adkins said. “We got a taste of what division can do to a community, to a society when people are divided [when they] were forced apart by the pandemic. The more we bring people together, the better it is for both local commerce and for the community. Businesses need people, and people need people.”

Fostering those connections between people is at the core of a chamber’s responsibilities, Adkins said, which is why the Chamber has focused on events beyond luncheons, namely the golf tournament, an upcoming bass fishing tournament and community event pairings including the Mimosa Mosey, Mint Julep Roundup and renewed Saturday drawings.

The result of Pilot Point’s ever-growing population is an



Evon Lusk, the executive director of the Pilot Point Chamber of Commerce, introduces herself to Jana Temple, the executive director of the Aubrey 380 Area Chamber of Commerce, at a social at Prairie House in Cross Roads on June 30.

“That’s why I love doing this, and, again, just having a good crowd like we did tonight, again that’s a pride thing for me,” she said. “Just seeing everybody network and being able to share their thoughts and ideas and plans and grow,” she said.

Capitalizing on that wave of growth is just what the group interested in reforming a chamber in Tioga want to do.

On June 29, Paula Byler, Shawn and Heather Nesmith, and Rick Staples led a group of a little over 10 people in discussing the possible formation of a new Tioga Chamber.

Byler shared the history of the original Tioga Chamber of Commerce, which was founded in 1991 by a group including Charlene “Char” Brown and Herman Brown, and of the attempt to re-form the chamber as the Tioga Area Chamber of Commerce in early 2011 after the original was disbanded by the board in place in the early 2000s.

Although the four who led the discussion want to help support and grow the Chamber, they are hoping other people will be willing to step up to lead the organization.

“The town is definitely growing, and we definitely need it as a positive thing,” Byler said.

For more information, follow Tioga Chamber on Facebook.

One big goal the fledgling group discussed was building up the Gene Autry Days celebration that used to draw thousands to Tioga each year in conjunction with the Tioga Museum and Heritage Association.

“We’re talking, I would say, probably 10,000 people—5,000 to 10,000 people—within two to three days in the town,” Byler said. “It was a very big event.”

The next meeting of the Tioga Chamber is set for 7 p.m. July 27.

“Hopefully everybody can go tell and bring a friend with them next time, and we can get this thing going [again],” Byler said.

Editor Abigail Allen contributed to this report.



Shawn Nesmith, left, Rick Staples, Paula Byler and Heather Nesmith lead a meeting regarding the formation of the Tioga Chamber to fill the void of the dissolved Tioga Area Chamber of Commerce.

Photos by Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

even faster growing business directory, Adkins said.

“[We’ve grown] leaps and bounds,” Adkins said. “Our membership has jumped in the past couple of years. ... It’s growing at a rate faster than what our population is growing.”

With more businesses joining the Chamber than ever before, it is becoming harder and harder for everybody to share the spotlight.

“The only real challenge with more people and more businesses is giving everybody their [fair share] of attention,” Adkins said. “The more businesses we have, the harder it’s going to be to give everyone a fair shot.”

The Chamber will do everything they can to increase visibility to all the local businesses in its community, Adkins said.

“I want more opportunities to bring people together,” Adkins said. “I want more opportunities for people to get out into the community to see these local businesses, to know they even exist. A lot of times I meet people that don’t even know that [some] businesses exist. We’ve just gone out there and waved the flag around and said ‘Hey, look at this.’”

The Aubrey 380 Area Chamber of Commerce hired Jana Temple as its executive director in the spring. Since March, the chamber has seen around 20% increase in memberships.

“It’s something that makes me proud to be a citizen and community member of Aubrey and our surrounding neighborhoods to see your businesses growing and being successful and that we can partner ... and network with each other,” Tem-

ple said.

Like the Pilot Point Chamber, the Aubrey Chamber has worked on developing different opportunities for members and prospective members to connect and network with one another, and those ideas will keep flowing to keep up with the area’s influx of businesses and people.

“There’s so many new ones because our area is growing so fast,” Temple said.

She strives to coordinate opportunities for all her members to connect, and she also encourages them to put in that effort as well.

“You have to market yourself as a business,” Temple said.

Temple was enthusiastic about the way the social at Prairie House on June 30 went, which more than 30 people attended.

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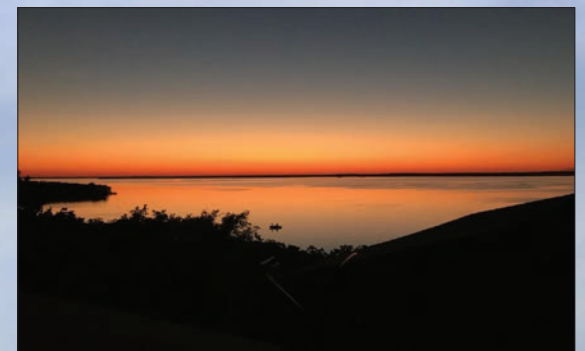
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Stations on horizon for Pilot Point, Aubrey

By Abigail Allen
Editor

Nearly exponential growth within the service areas of the Pilot Point and Aubrey first responders has both cities looking ahead to their next stations.

In Pilot Point, the next station will be a joint venture between the police and fire departments that tweaks the design of the new fire station slightly, including removing two bays that are in the current station.

“The [administrative] offices turn into police offices, plus a little extra,” City Manager Britt Lusk said. “The overall square footage of the building will be about the same that it is now.”

Trucks and ambulances to equip the new station have been ordered, Lusk said.

“We’re moving along,” he added.

That work will be done again through Kirkpatrick Architecture Studio, which was the contractor for the new fire station on Washington Street.

“You probably will see that referred to as Station 3 occasionally,” he said. “That’s because that will be-



Pilot Point has chosen to adapt the footprint used for the new fire station to create a combined police and fire station within the Creekview Meadows development.

Graphic Courtesy of City of Pilot Point

come Station 3. ... The station we have now will become Station 2, and eventually, down the road, we’ll have a central station, which will be Station 1.”

The growth in Aubrey has the

city’s new police and fire chiefs designing a third station to share between the organizations.

“We have Fire Station 3 already in the design phase, and that should

start construction this year,” Aubrey Fire Department Chief Eric Schlotter said. “Our architect has told us he believes we’ll go out for bid this summer and we hope to turn dirt in the fall.”



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Plans form for stations



Aubrey plans to create a combined police and fire station on the land donated by DR Horton within the Silverado development.

Graphic Courtesy of City of Aubrey

That station began development with previous Aubrey Police Department chief, now-City Manager, Charles Kreidler.

“Station 3 was already underway when I got here; it was already basically designed,” APD Chief Richard Brooks said. “They were starting the architectural process, so we’ve had some forward-looking direction on

planning for our future already.”

In light of the growth pace of the city’s service area, the chiefs are also already looking ahead to the community’s fourth station.

“We are working on a few elements for where Fire Station 4 might go,” Schlotter said.

Staff Writer Basil Gist contributed to this report.

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Growing up

Pilot Point continues to grow in population

By Abigail Allen
Editor

Pilot Point's population is projected to grow to almost 60,000 in a decade.

Meeting the needs that come with such explosive growth while caring for the current residents is the goal of the city.

"[The infrastructure projects] will make everything better for our current customers, all the way to anybody who moves in here and some of the newer developments, even," City Manager Britt Lusk said. "We'll just have a better product as far as water and wastewater [are concerned]."

Some of those projects include a 1 million gallon elevated storage tank, well and ground storage tank on Burks Street; watermain improvements in the city; a new wastewater treatment plant that can handle 1.5 million gallons per day; a new force main and gravity main that will bring wastewater to the plant; and an upgrade to the Berend Well.

The city has a project schedule that shows the projected dates related to those developments and their estimated construction timelines.

Although some of the bigger projects have construction timelines that run off the chart, the Burks Street projects should wrap up the summer of 2024, as should the watermain projects and work to improve the wastewater collection system.



A framer works on the construction of one of the newest homes within the Mobblerly Farms development in late June. The development has rapidly been building out lots.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

One of the biggest undertakings, the new wastewater treatment plant, is in the design stage right now.

"We'll close on the funding for it in August," Lusk said. "It's in de-

sign, and we'll go out to bid and then construction will likely start, if we stay on schedule, in January of '24."

In addition to meeting immediate needs because of the aged and

undersized infrastructure in place throughout the city, Pilot Point must gear up before the growth it is promised to have fully materializes, Lusk said.



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Pilot Point set to grow by 10 times in 10 years

For the most part, the developments set to come into the city have stayed static for a couple of years, but those developments alone would bring the city's population to around 59,700.

A couple of other developments—Shelby Ranch, which would be an addition to Mustang Ranch, and Broken Rock Ranch—would only increase that population count if they were to come into the city as well.

"We've been talking to [those], but we don't have anything certain with them yet," he said. "We're still working with Pecan Creek to get them going and annexed. We're really getting closer."

That development was previously referred to as The 926 along Berend Road.

"We are anticipating a development agreement soon," Lusk said.

Mustang Ranch, Tall-



A roofer attempts to beat the heat and race the sun on a late June evening in the Windrose development north of Washington Street along U.S. 377.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

ey Ranch and Bryson Ranch have been quiet so far. However, all three include hundreds of homes as well as commercial development components near the Dallas Parkway extension and FM 455.

With the current, active developments, the city is releasing lots for development regularly as the developers hit the required steps.

"In the next two years, we could be 12,000 people with the number of lots we're releasing," Lusk said.

Mobberly Farms along FM 1385 is a major driver of that growth, with additional developments in town that include Windrose, Yarbrough Farms and The Hills adding more residents as well.

"If you just drive around town, the in-fill lots are really falling off the shelf, too," Lusk said.

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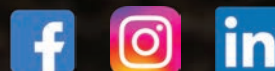
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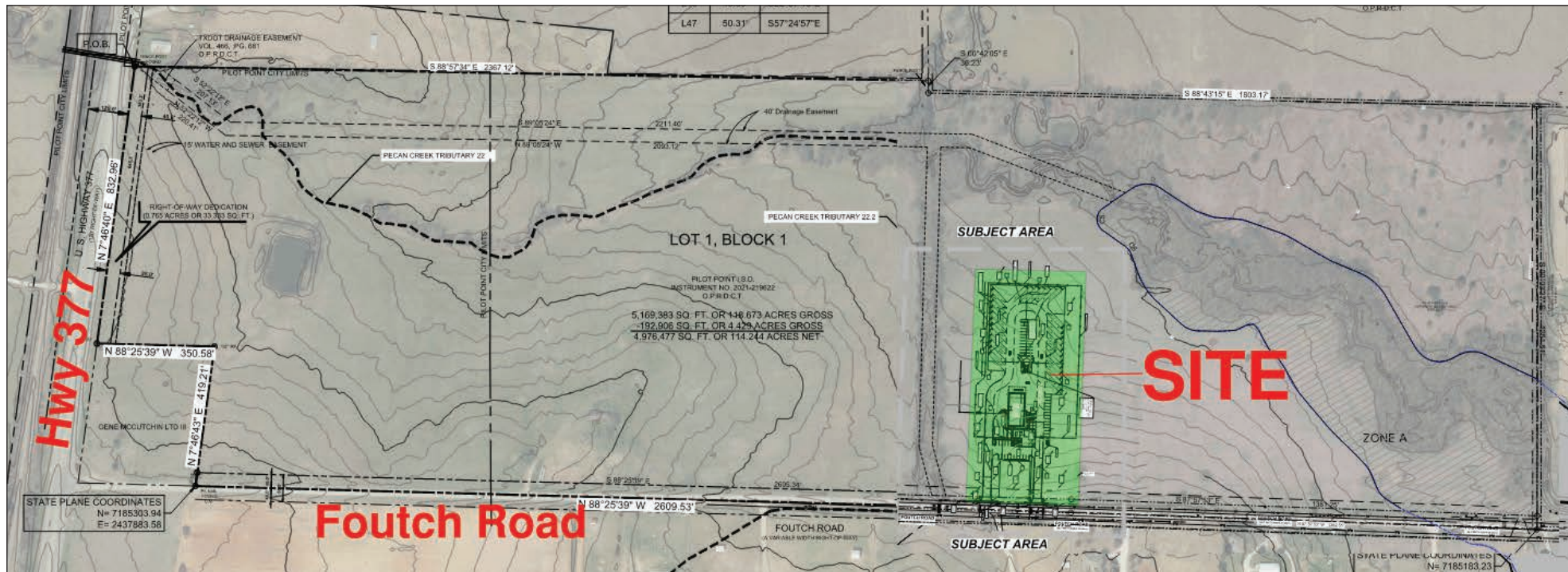


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PPISD nears finish on 2021 bond projects



Pilot Point ISD has set aside a portion of the 117-acre high school site at U.S. 377 and Foutch Road as the location of the district's new transportation center, indicated on the map in green.

Graphic Courtesy of Pilot Point ISD

By Abigail Allen
Editor

One more key component of the 2021 bond issue approved by Pilot Point ISD voters needs to be finished, and that project is underway.

The district approved an overall bid from JC Commercial Inc. of \$3,025,777 for the transportation center, which will be built on the 117-acre property the district purchased at U.S. 377 and Foutch Road for a high school site.

"It is planned right now to be done about mid-March," Superintendent Todd Southard said.

Multiple rainy weeks at the start of the summer, however, delayed the start of the project a bit.

In the bond proposition itself, the district asked voters to provide \$5.5 million in funding for the project. However, value engineering helped bring down the overall cost.

"There were a few things that we cut back on," Southard said. "We cut back on the road, which was a huge savings. We didn't put it back on the back northeast corner of the property. ... That right there was \$800,000 to \$1 million."



The wiring in the entrance of the Pilot Point Middle School building sits exposed after the removal of the school's ceiling tiles.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

Having it in the furthest corner of the property "was just cost-prohibitive," Southard said.

"We decided to go out as a district to get our own fueling station," he added. "That saved us some money."

Another small difference was to have concrete floors instead of tile as a way to save another small amount of money.

"That wasn't a ton of money, though," Southard said.

In addition to getting the transportation center in progress this summer, the district has been working on its second half of renovation projects at three of the four campuses.

At the high school, that work included the air conditioning units as well as ceiling and lighting work. The middle school has those same types of projects as well as roof repair and drainage work happening over the summer. At the Early Childhood Center, the roof, air



The hallways throughout the school sit ready for bond-funded renovation work in early June.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

conditioning and drainage are also being worked on.

"We should be done with everything, as far as the buildings go, by the end of the summer," Southard said.

The start of the school year was pushed later to help ensure the construction projects are completed before students return to the classrooms.

"I think we'll have somewhere between three and three-and-one-half million dollars left," Southard said.

That might be able to fund more AC projects or other needs that had been identified

by the bond committee that determined what the priorities of the district should be with the bond money.

The district has also purchased multiple large tracts for future school sites using the 2021 bond election proceeds.

"Our goal has always been to get bigger sites first, because we feel like in the end that's going to save us more money," Southard said. "... We are good for the next several years as far as land is concerned."

Preparing for the

Berend Property: 40 Acres

Future Middle School Site - Located on Berend Rd.
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McCutchin Property: 117 Acres

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- Secured entry vestibule installation
- Roof replacement
- Upgrade HVAC system
- Replace doors & hardware
- Renovate locker rooms
- Renovate toilet rooms
- Improve building systems and site drainage

High School

- Secured entry vestibule installation
- Renovate toilet rooms
- Roof replacement
- Upgrade HVAC system
- Improve building systems and site drainage
- Renovate plumbing in Field House area
- Replace doors in Field House area

Additional

- Transportation Facility: Bond 2021 included the construction of a new facility that will allow additional space for buses to enter and exit, refuel, and maintenance.
- Land Acquisition: Purchasing land for multiple future school sites to accommodate district growth.

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Aubrey grows at fast clip

By Basil Gist
Staff Writer

Population is on the rise in the Ranch Cities, and Aubrey is no exception.

City Manager Charles Kreidler spoke to the growth both in and out of the city limits, with developments in both spheres.

“We’ve seen a little bit of a slow-down on growth [in the city] over the last year, which is picking up again, but we are still adding homes every month in the extraterritorial jurisdiction,” Kreidler said. “It’s been our ETJ that’s really big.”

The Silverado subdivision continues to be source to a lot of that growth, with 860 homes over the last year and is joined by Sandbrock Ranch.

Developments inside the city limits are more numerous, if less large-scale. They include Ribbon Wood, Belmont Saratoga, Keenland, High Point and Aubrey Meadows.

“We have others that are still in talks; we can’t go into detail on them right now,” Kreidler said. “We have people every day that are looking, calling, asking us questions about property.”

Presently, Kreidler said, there are still several large-scale investor-type landowners who have not yet begun the development process but are expected to.

Rooftops are not the only measure of growth for a city. The city manager also spoke to commercial growth which, for Aubrey, seems largely to be preceded by population.

“We have had a few new businesses that have opened up, like the new strip center in front of Aubrey Creek Estates,” Kreidler said. “We get a lot of questions about the 377 expansion and the Outer Loop, and what you’re



Crews work to clear the space that is set to become the High Point development at Spring Hill Road and U.S. 377.

Basil Gist/
The Post-Signal

going to see is when those two get some more solid dates, ... that would cause some of the speedier growth on the commercial side.”

He also spoke to the commercial aspects of the High Point subdivision across from the high school, which is still in its early stages.

“There is approximately 50 acres over there; two sections of that land have been sold and closed on, and I believe we may see some commercial growth over there soon,” Kreidler said. “That was always part of that subdivision, to have that commercial component on the corner of 377 and Spring Hill.”

The city manager said there is further opportunity for development along the U.S. 377 commercial corridor for additional development.

“There is commercial going north outside of what we think of as Aubrey proper as you get past Blackjack,” Kreidler said. “As High Point and Keenland come in, you’re talking 1,700 homes between the two. That’s going to give opportunity for northern exposure for commercial development.”

Kreidler concluded the conversation on development with some estimated population numbers.

“In 2020, we were at 5,600 in the Aubrey city limits; right now, it’s estimated at 8,500,” Kreidler said. “It’s growing quickly; I couldn’t even start to give you an estimate. When you go from 5,600 to 8,500, that’s a good clip.”

Fire Chief Eric Schlotter and Police Chief Richard Brooks, both hired

this year, spoke to the states of their departments in reference to this rapid influx of citizenry.

“It’s a constant evaluation of available resources and the need that comes with it,” Schlotter said. “Because we have static stations, it’s more about where the stations are at and how well the roads are built, because that speeds up our response time.”

The chief spoke favorably about the department’s ability to service the current population and was optimistic about its rate of growth as it relates to the growth in population.

“We’re in a great position,” Schlotter said. “The city council blessed us with some additional personnel this year.”

The department added two more battalion chiefs, an EMS captain, an

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Aubrey works on services to support growth

administrative coordinator and a full-time chief and assistant chief.

“We’re sitting very well to expand in the future,” Schlotter said.

The question of equipment, with the current state of supply chains, garnered a more complicated though no less optimistic answer.

“They take forever to get now thanks to COVID and a lot of other factors,” Schlotter said. “Ladder trucks are taking roughly 30 to 35 months; fire trucks, engines and plumbers are 14 to 18 months; and ambulances are right at a year.”

This requires substantial forward planning, the fire chief said, and creative thinking in the instance of unforeseen issues.

“We’ve added an ancillary vehicle; these vehicles are being built much quicker,” Schlotter said. “They don’t have all the abilities of either a pumper or ladder truck, but they bridge the gap and build out in about six to nine months and can be used as a stopgap.”

The Aubrey Police Department chief spoke to the unique environment Aubrey presents for a police force.

“The size of the ETJ and disjoint-

edness of the city limits ... is a complicated thing I’m getting my head around,” Brooks said.

Brooks said he’s done his own estimations for departmental need over the next five years which are most subject to change based on demand as time passes.

“If we start having a lot of motor vehicle accidents, we might have to look at bringing on personnel to address that in a different way than we’re looking at now,” Brooks said as an example. “The demand out in the field could change. All of that is driven by the need.”

As need rises and personnel grows to accommodate it, officers will need vehicles, an issue as prevalent to the police force as it is to fire.

“Currently in this year’s budget, we’ve had to move money in to fund two years’ worth of cars, which is unheard of,” Brooks said. “We’ve been able, I believe, to think outside the box, and the city administration has been very supportive of those changes.”

Brooks shared statistics on the types of issues APD responds to based

on percentages.

“I’m proud to announce that we have a very low crime rate,” Brooks said. “About 6% of what we did was crime, and 75% was service. That’s extremely encouraging for a police department to be getting to serve the citizens in that role.”

With reference to the rapidly increasing residency in the city, Brooks spoke to maintaining the low crime rate.

“The biggest thing is partnership with the citizens,” Brooks said. “We hope to pass that on to new citizens. We’ve got beautiful squad cars, and that’s for a reason. We want people to know that we’re there in their neighborhoods.”

Kreidler spoke highly not just of the city’s two new chiefs, but also of the several new departmental heads the city has brought on in the last year or two and the work they’ve done for the city in this time of growth.

“We have a director of public works and development services with Lianne Wilson who is doing a phenomenal job maintaining communication with our strategic partners about

our growth,” Kreidler said. “We have a fantastic finance director and HR manager. I mean we have a great staff here.”

The staff, Kreidler shared, is growing in tandem with the city.

“In 2020, the city had 67 employees. In 2021, we had 77. In 2022, we had 88. And this year, we have 101,” Kreidler said. “Next year, with the addition of the fire station, we’re adding 31 people, so we’ll be at 132 for 2024.”

As the scale continues to blossom, Kreidler said the city will require more concrete direction than what it currently has, direction which it looks to find with a comprehensive plan.

“It’s going to take us a year to 18 months to get the plan in place, but once we have that, a lot of questions will be answered,” Kreidler said. “I think it will ease a lot of concerns.”

“We’re going to seek input from the community, and ... we’ll have multiple meetings with the community and boards and commissions. And they’ll determine what is best for the city and how we move forward.”

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Aubrey, Denton ISDs prep for growth

By Basil Gist
Staff Writer

With substantial bonds fresh out of the polls, Aubrey and Denton ISDs are in the early stages of adding several facilities and renovating others.

Several members of the Ranch Cities fall under the two school's purview, with DISD housing students from Cross Roads, Aubrey and Providence Village and AISD similarly counting Cross Roads, Krugerville, Providence Village and Aubrey residents among their number.

"We're looking at a lot of enrollment projections right now," AISD Superintendent Dr. David Belding said. "We're working on a projected enrollment of between 3,950 to over 4,000 students during the year."

That is an additional 13-14% growth, which is coming off a year of 18% growth.

"The board has approved staffing at that enrollment level, so we're really trying to stay ahead of that trajectory," Belding said. "We're really looking at our facilities, trying to build them as quickly as we can. We think we've avoided portable buildings for this coming school year."

The district broke ground on Elementary School No. 4, one of three projects encompassed in the first stage of the May bond, in June.

"We're trying to deliver that building in August of '24," Belding said. "It will have a capacity of 750 students with pre-K through fifth grade there. It is a prototype design, so the next three elementaries will follow it with some tweaks for each."

For AISD, the growth, though it has necessitated building a new elementary and middle school with haste, isn't just at the younger grades. The high school, which housed over 900 students at the end of the year, is expected to broach 1,000 in the coming school year.

"That is about the capac-



A conceptual plan of the expansion project at Aubrey High School shows the footprint of the updated school, which will be able to hold a capacity of around double its current capacity.

Graphic Courtesy of Aubrey ISD



Denton ISD has an advanced technology center planned as part of its 2023 bond projects, which will look similar to the LaGrone Academy.

Graphic Courtesy of Denton ISD

ity of the current building," Belding said. "If we stay on schedule, the plan is to break ground on the high school additions this winter."

Those additions will dou-

ble the school's capacity, Belding said.

"When we started the design with the architects, I said, 'I really want the additions to flow with the existing

architecture,'" Belding said.

The additions include a two-story academic section, a library section where the breezeway is now, three art classrooms stretching

between the gym and the C wing of the school, as well as a dance and wrestling area for future programs.

"We wanted to design not only from what we have right

Bonds provide space for growing districts

now but for when we have 2,100 students,” Belding said. “We’re trying to have a nice tight footprint that will accommodate that many kids.”

To assist with visualization, Belding said, there will be animated models available on the AISD website in coming months.

“Our community wants our children to be in first class facilities—not Taj Mahals, but nice facilities for learning that everyone can be proud of,” Belding said. “It’s been a big focus for us to deliver a good balance, really nice, but not overboard.”

DISD, with a May 6 bond of \$1.4 billion, the largest in Denton ISD history, included a campus, high school and advanced technology building in Cross Roads.

“We purchase property based on growth and the need to serve students in a more direct fashion,” DISD Chief Communications Officer Julie Zwahr said. “Several of our schools along the U.S. 380 corridor are overcrowded.”

The bond committee, consisting of 85 community members and 15 DISD students, met for six months prior to the May vote. The inclusion of students in the conversation was a first for the district.

“It was important to us to have the perspective of the students as part of the process,” Zwahr said. “They were not the majority, but we wanted their voices at the table.”

As the Cross Roads campus is one project among several, Zwahr said movement as far as breaking ground would not be seen presently.

“We can’t build 1.5 billion dollars’ worth of projects in a year,” Zwahr said. “They will be built over a five-

year period. What is happening is that we have a group of parents and community leaders from the Cross Roads area where the property is who started ... meeting [in June] to conceptualize what that high school will look like and what amenities will be included.”

This community involvement stems from a desire to give the town of Cross Roads something they will feel ownership of, Zwahr said.

“High schools become such an identifying building for the community, which is why we’re meeting with the people of the town where this school will be,” Zwahr said. “We really want to work with the community to make sure that what we’re putting out there is reflective of their wants and needs.”

The bond includes not only the high school campus but also an advanced technology center.

“This will be a place for high school students and community members to receive certifications in all types of focuses,” Zwahr said, likening the facility to the LaGrone Academy.

Further information on the DISD bond and the status of its projects is available at dentonisd.org/2023bond, with project status available at dentonisd.org/construction in coming months.

Information on the Aubrey ISD bond is available at aubreyisd-bond2022.net.

“We’re building schools that are going to last generations where that building is going to stand the test of time,” Belding said. “In 50 years, [our schools are] still going to be a building that kids are proud to be learning in.”



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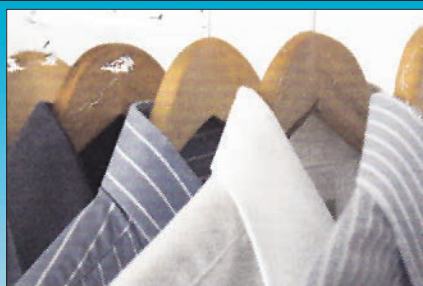


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Filling out the space



The Woodlands Phase 5 adds 80 homes to the city of Krugerville.

Basil Gist/The Post-Signal

Krugerville grows residential, commercial options within borders

By Basil Gist
Staff Writer

Krugerville has gotten a little bigger thanks to the Woodlands, now on Phase 5 of an original three.

Eighty new homes will make up this fifth phase of the project, with homes featuring between 2,693 and 4,046 square feet of living space.

“There are other things in the works, but they are just in the beginning,” Krugerville Mayor Jeff Parrent said.

With all the dirt continuing to move and new homes being filled, the city has seen more involvement from volunteers

in the way of city charter participation.

“We haven’t had [a Planning and Zoning board] in probably five years, and now it’s full,” Parrent said. “Economic Development Corporation and Community Development Corporation are full. We’ve had a couple of changes recently but everyone is full.”

The CDC, which resides over parks, will soon get a new one added to their purview by way of Woodlands Phase 5.

“A lot of times you either get land or money in lieu of that, but we got both,” Parrent said. “Kristen Kromer, our mayor pro tem, is the one who was leading that; that money has been set aside to equip that park with playground equipment.

“Phase 5 will also give the EDC something new to sink its teeth into with a new commercial section built into the

phase. Right now, they really don’t have anything to market, but when this gets out there, they’ll have some retail locations,” Parrent said. “Even if they don’t reach out, interview and find the best deal or hire a marketing firm, that’s something they can take on.”

Krugerville additionally, thanks to sales tax mistakes and a pair of long-term audits from the state, recently received a substantial windfall of \$935,981.70, which the mayor and council have until now opted to place in an interest-bearing account to confirm its legitimacy.

“We’ve gone back and forth with them for the last several months, questioning, wondering if it’s accurate,” Parrent said. “Every time we do that, they tell us, ‘Yes, this is the city’s money and you can spend it as you please.’”

The caution, Parrent said, stems from the impact this money could have on the city’s budget if it retroactively shifts from expenses to debt.

“Our budget won’t allow for it,” Parrent said. “We chose to sit on it and draw interest until we know for sure.”

The mayor continued saying that the city is also not in a hurry or immediate need for the excess funds.

“We weren’t expecting it; we don’t have anything urgent we have to use it for,” Parrent said. “Wisdom says to just sit on it. We don’t have a necessity today. We’ve already received more income than we planned.”

Regarding changes to the landscape of the town in the coming year, Parrent said they would likely be minimal, though he said the central park, along U.S. 377, may be sporting some addi-

Krugerville growth continues near Woodlands

tions.

"I don't think we'll look very different as you're driving through," Parrent said. "We have one of the nicest parks in the area, 27 acres and 10 to 12 acres of water."

Phase 5, with its additional homes, commercial section and new park space, being in its earlier stages, is where much of the city's major growth will happen but not in the next year, Parrent said.

He additionally spoke about an expansion to the commercial buildings on the south end of town.

"There is an 11,200 square foot spec building as well as 10 5,500 square foot [buildings] that are north of Hooves and Paws," Parrent said. "It used to be an old barn, but they've taken it down and cleaned it up. It's all under engineer review and should be kicked off within 60 days."

He explained those buildings could be used for any number of service and retail-based tenants, like plumbing, electrical, HVAC and flooring.

An additional 15 lots for spec or build to use are also available on the north side of town.

"When you marry those two spots,



then include 80 homes that are anywhere from \$825,000 on the high end and \$550,000 on the low end, ... in 12 months, there's no way it will all be done, but in the next four years, Krugerville is going to look totally different," Parrent said.

Sandwiched between Aubrey and Cross Roads as it is, the mayor explained any further growth for the city beyond current projects will have to happen

"I think that's a question for another mayor," Parrent said. "If you go to

the back of Phase 4 and look east, there is nothing but land; that's in our ETJ. There is a man who owns that land, however, and he'd have to be willing to sell."

The U.S. 377 frontage that leads into The Woodlands Phase 5 is being primed for commercial development, which the city of Krugerville hopes will fill with sales tax-generating businesses.

Basil Gist/
The Post-Signal



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Providence Village on track for 17K



The Woodstone development within Providence Village adds new homes regularly.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

By Abigail Allen
Editor

Providence Village's continuous, steady growth is set to maintain pace, bringing the city to roughly 17,000 people within 10 years.

Town Manager Brian Roberson values keeping the school districts that serve Providence Village—Aubrey ISD and Denton ISD—informed of the fluctuations in population.

"I have a spreadsheet that we keep track of, and I send it to the school districts," Roberson said. "... And it kind of gives them an idea of what stage of development they're under."

When the town accepts a development's water, sewer and street infrastructure and ensures the utilities have all been accounted for, "they can start building lots."

"Once it hits accepted, they know, 'OK, in 90 days, we're going to have students coming from those homes,'" Roberson said.

One of the developments in pro-

cess right now—Foree Ranch—is projected to construct 1,429 homes.

The second phase is outpacing the first phase because a water and wastewater hang-up caused the delay, Roberson said.

The Foree Ranch development is not within the town's CCN, but it is inside the Mustang Special Utility District.

Two developments—The Landing and Liberty at Providence—are nearing all of the lots being available to sell or sold.

When another, The Enclave at Pecan Creek, got its acceptance, it dropped more than 100 permits to the town within its first week to build.

All of the lots in its first phase have permits out, with 111 of 139 of the second phase out as well.

Its neighboring development, Woodstone, is moving at a slower pace than the Enclave, but it is still progressing quickly and with a different look than the typical Cape

Cod style seen in most other Providence Village developments.

Residential growth isn't the only type of activity happening within Providence Village.

The Chatham Reserve, is a long-awaited project, previously called the Lakes at Running Branch. Like the Foree Ranch Phase 1 development, the Lakes hit a snag on utility work that delayed the development for years.

Now, the development, which will further diversify the types of homes available in Providence Village, is in the process of obtaining a final plat.

"They're going to have quite a bit of commercial on the front of that," Roberson said.

The Brazos transmission overhead powerline will be the dividing line between commercial and residential development there.

"It's a slightly higher density than they were originally positioning for the back of that thing, but there still are some very large lots

back there, and it opens up more commercial," Roberson said.

Providence Commons will have a blend of residential and commercial development at the corner of Main Street and Fishtrap Road, including 110 townhomes.

"They're getting ready to start," Roberson said of that development. "They're going to have to do a bunch of dirt work."

There will also be a large commercial development at the corner of U.S. 380 and Main Street called Providence Crossing.

"They have a convenience store on the hard corner, and they're going to have electric vehicle charging stations," Roberson said. "It's not your traditional convenience store. It will have a couple different shops off of it down 380, and then more shops—five to seven, maybe—down 2931."

One of the tracts included is owned by Turbo Restaurants.

"If you'll Google that, you'll see that they have the meats," Roberson

Providence looks for balance in growth

said.

There will also be office condos available in that development.

In addition, there have been multiple businesses to come in along U.S. 380 on the lots near Aldi, such as HTeaO.

“Healthy Crown Dental, Hotworx, Great Clips, Little Caesars and Pastelito’s Hugo have all submitted [their permits],” Roberson said. “... There’s a couple others that are looking in there.”

One of them is something distinctive in the area.

“It’s a unique thing that there are very few of in the Metroplex, as far as I know, and I think that would be kind of cool to have something new and different in the 380-377 corridor area that, from what I’ve been told, is worth the drive, but we shall see,” Roberson said.



The Enclave in Providence Village has been filling out steadily over the last two years.

Abigail Allen/The Post-Signal

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Town's businesses push through construction



Part of the U.S. 380 expansion project has opened in Cross Roads, with the east-bound traffic shifted to the new section of roadway at the intersection of the highway and FM 720.

Photos by
Joe Fragano/
The Post-Signal

The highway expansion project underway in Cross Roads in 2022 led to the construction of a new traffic pattern.

By Joe Fragano
Staff Writer

After more new vendors, highway construction and traffic than ever before visited the U.S. 380 corridor over the last year, businesses in the area are adapting to new problems and capitalizing on new opportunities at the same time.

The last year has been a busy one for commerce along U.S. 380 in Cross Roads. After franchises like Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, Dunkin' Donuts, and Salad and Go appeared over a year ago, development of the Cross Roads commercial hotspot has not slowed down.

A Dutch Bros Coffee shop opened June 30, and Cross Roads Town Administrator Kristi Gilbert announced The Brass Tap, a high-capacity craft beer bar, is in the process of constructing their newest location in town at the June Town Council meeting.

"[I] went by [an existing] Brass Tap, and we had a great time," Cross Roads Mayor T. Lynn Tompkins Jr. said at the town's June 19 council meeting. "There's great food, a wide selection of beverages, and we're looking forward to them coming here."

The growth to businesses in Cross Roads has not been limited to new and different businesses. Chick-fil-A installed an extended awning along their drive-thru lane to accommodate workers during summer heat and inclement weather.

The new businesses are both a result and a driver of new traffic in the area. The byproduct is more cars driving through the area than the Texas



Department of Transportation deemed U.S. 380 capable of handling in its current state.

The long-term construction project underway on the highway is both disrupting and alleviating traffic issues in Cross Roads. Some of the businesses in the area have found themselves taking steps to deal with an increased customer base but decreased mobility.

Vanessa Santiago characterized herself as one of the staffing solutions enlisted by Pooky's Famous Yogurt in Cross Roads as the business braces for an increase in customer base over the next few years. After starting as manager of the store in March, Santiago said it has been a positive experience so far.

"I love working here," Santiago said. "I absolutely love it. There's not very many employees, so we're very close.

We all live here locally. ... We're very proud of the store for being a small business."

Even as the number of prospective customers in the area increases, Santiago said, Pooky's is finding itself less busy during the summer than previously anticipated. Pooky's used to be accessible from both sides of U.S. 380. After the construction project began, the shop became accessible only from one side of the highway.

"It's been a little slower in the summer than we thought it would be," Santiago said. "Not too bad, but we can tell it's a little slower than we'd like it to be. We're already kind of offset from the highway, and it can be hard to see us. ... At least you used to be able to turn in from 380. ... Hopefully, it will be a positive thing. I'm hoping more people will be able to see us. I really do hope that it

makes it easier to access the store."

Even though patronship is being negatively affected by the construction in the short term, Santiago said, Pooky's is taking steps to appeal to more and more customers as the population and daily traffic through Cross Roads increases.

Santiago is part of a recently expanded staff, a staff she said has been charged with reaching more customers with new and different temptations.

"Since I've been here, we've been bringing in new products; I've been trying to rotate the flavors constantly. We have all these deals and promotions we've been regularly promoting on our Facebook page," Santiago said. "We had an arcade event here. We've just been trying to do stuff like that hoping that it can offer more options for people."

Tioga ISD re-locates grades for repairs

In April, Superintendent Josh Ballinger and the Tioga ISD board of trustees discussed temporarily moving the seventh and eighth grade students to the high school campus to allow for repair work to be done on the elementary and middle school building.

Abigail Allen/
The Post-Signal




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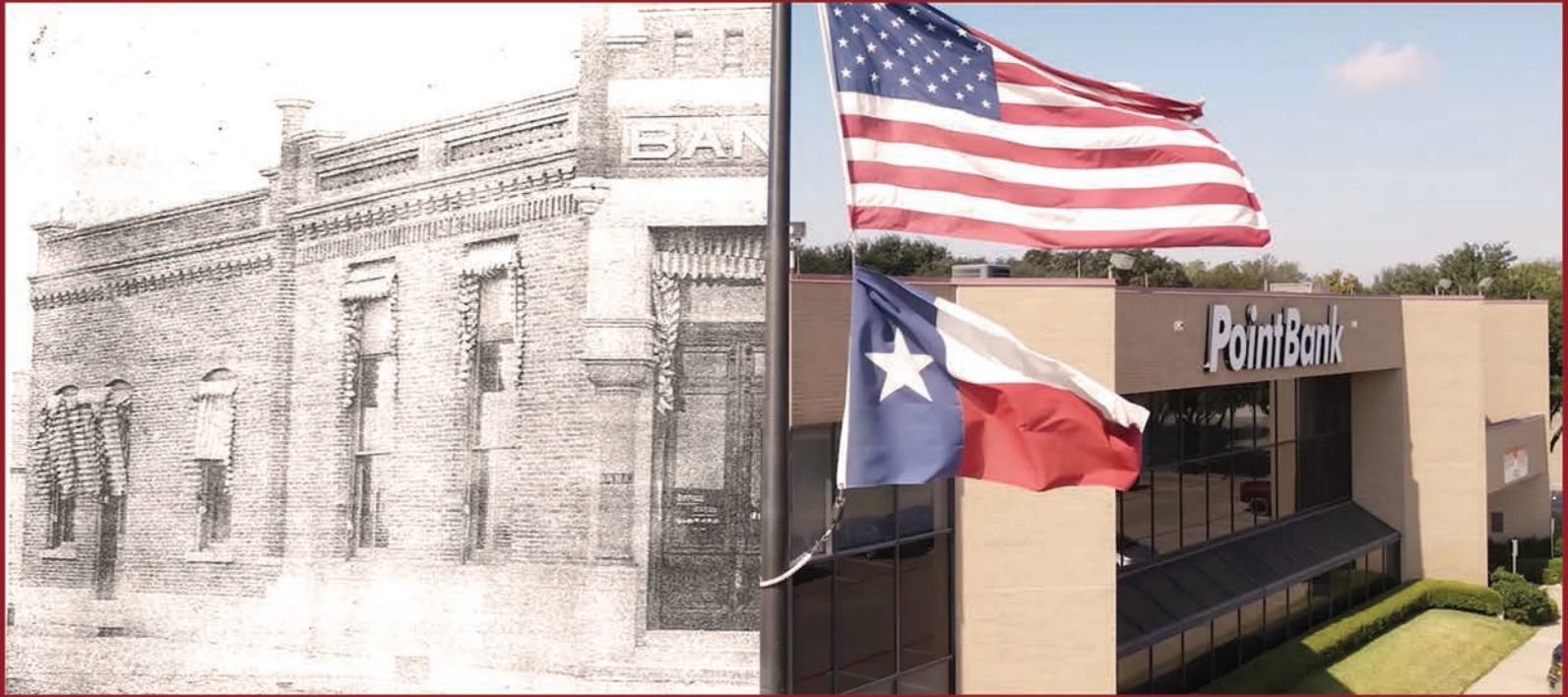
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