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FROM THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP



Mayor Saleh Eules



Mid-March is here and we should be looking forward to seeing the wonderful wild flowers of Texas. Did you know that Texas has more varieties of wildflowers than any other state? Now is the time to take your Texas Wildflower book along on some daytime trips and see how many you can identify. Because of the cold and wet winter weather we have had, we should have an abundance of wildflowers this spring. Mid-March also means the closing of the sign-up dates for elections. We now know who is running for city council and school board positions. Get to know your candidates and support the person you feel is right for the position. And, please vote! We are fortunate in

Texas to have early voting, so there is no excuse for not voting. Many states do not have early voting. Spring weather brings everyone outdoors and especially children after school. Do watch out for children playing in the streets and darting in and out of parked vehicles. Drive with extra care.

Our annual Easter Egg hunt will be a special nighttime event on Saturday, March 31, from 6 - 9 pm at the Parks at Texas Star, 1501 South Pipeline Road. Bring your flashlights because the event will be held in the dark with glow-in-the-dark eggs and special prizes. Each Scramble will be separated into four different age groups. There will be bounce houses and a lot of Easter treats. For more information, call 817-685-1666.

Eules will be continuing our "Healthy New You" this spring with more exercise opportunities, more walking programs, nutrition programs, and lots more opportunities to get involved. We will even have a family walk at Arbor Daze this year.

Yes, Eules will have Arbor Daze in April. It will not be as large as before, but will concentrate on families and

local entertainment. And, we will have something for everyone. This year's Arbor Daze will be held April 28-29, on the grounds of the City Hall Campus. Our Town Hall meetings were very successful and our citizens shared many good ideas to improve our city. It's always a joy to have our citizens come and participate in an informal setting and get to know the council and staff.

Our library continues to be a busy place for all age groups but it's sad to hear that some citizens have never been inside our beautiful library filled with all sorts of interesting information, programs and art work. It is truly one of the showcases of Eules, and it is a free service for our citizens.

The Raven's Grille continues to be the most popular spot at lunchtime and on Sunday for brunch.

There are several new items on the menu and plenty of the old favorites. Our chef still serves the best chicken fried steak anywhere.

We also have several new restaurants in Eules. The Chili's at the new shopping center on Glade Road is always busy and additional restaurants are on the way... there's a new Starbucks on Main Street. They really have made it beautiful. We are fortunate to have such a variety of foods offered in our city.

There are so many good things happening in Eules and we encourage you to check our website and read the "Eules Today" along with other communications to find out all that is going on. The city council meetings are open to the public as well. Council meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers at city hall. I look forward to seeing you there.

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LAKES OF BIRD'S FORT

Homes and mixed retail are planned

■ A developer is working to rehabilitate about 1,200 acres of wetlands that help define its planned community in north Arlington.

By **SUSAN SCHROCK**
 STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

ARLINGTON — Multifamily mansions, a town square, offices with apartments above them, and even a passenger rail terminal are all proposed for the undeveloped Lakes of Bird's Fort area in North Arlington, according to a plan filed with the city Friday.

Huffines Communities bought the 2,000-acre parcel, which lies east of Farm Road 157 and north of Northeast Green Oaks Boulevard — near River Legacy Park — last year for an undisclosed amount.

The master-planned community, called Viridian, is to include 800 acres of residential and commercial development and amenities such as miles of bike trails and public green spaces.

The community will surround the historic Lakes of Bird's Fort site,

which was the first Anglo settlement in Tarrant County.

Other developers have unsuccessfully attempted over the past 25 years to build on the land, which lies in the Trinity River flood plain.

The city plans to establish a tax increment financing district or use other types of public financing to help Huffines build infrastructure such as streets and sewer lines that would allow the development to happen, Mayor Robert Cluck said.

Huffines Communities of Dallas is known for developing master-planned communities with resort-like amenities, such as Savannah near The Colony and the Cape-Cod-style Providence development between Frisco and Denton.

Arlington city officials have not yet reviewed Huffines' concept plan, which must be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

Among the highlights:

Unique housing: Plans call for up to six condominiums to be housed inside buildings that look like large mansions.

Villages: Residential areas would be divided into villages, each with unique architecture that would reflect the various regions of Texas. Some homes would be clustered around open green spaces instead of lining streets to create more of a community feel.

Rail transit: The area is a prime location for a terminal

on the Trinity Railway Expressway, said Robert Kembel, Huffines Communities president. The rail line runs right by Bird's Fort, and Arlington does not have a TRE terminal.

The project would need the approval and financial support of the city, the Fort Worth Transit Authority, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, and the North Central Texas Council of Governments. Arlington taxpayers have historically resisted public transportation.

"We would like to see this become a transit-oriented development, but we have a lot of political work ahead of us," Kembel said.

Cluck said he believes that a rail terminal would be extremely beneficial to the city but doesn't expect it to happen anytime soon.

"It's a very popular route that would help our citizens get to and from work," said Cluck, who believes that Arlington residents would vote to financially support a depot.

"About 40 percent of residents who work leave the city to get to their jobs. A large majority of them would be able to use the TRE if we had a stop."

Mixed use: Residents could live above shops and offices that would line Collins Street.

Curb appeal: Many homes would have garages out of sight from the street. Access would be from alleys.

Wetlands: The name Viridian comes from a shade of green, which plays on the 1,200 acres of wetlands and lakes

Planned development



STAR-TELEGRAM

near the Trinity River the developer is working to restore with the help of the Army Corps of Engineers and environmental groups, Kembel said.

"We are going to totally rebuild the ecosystem out there. There has been a lot of damage done out there by the previous development that went broke. It's like a real sick piece of land that needs to be treated. We're working with the city to figure out the best way to do that," Kembel said.

It could take 18 to 24 months to recontour the land and begin repairs to the natural habitat, he said.

This report includes material from the Star-Telegram archives.

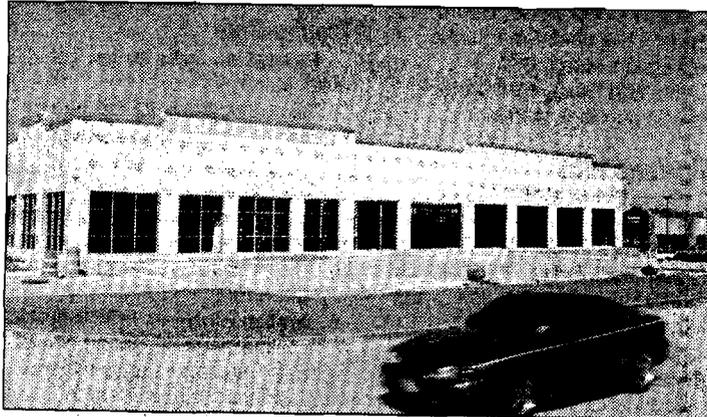
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WHAT'S NEW



STAR-TELEGRAM/LAURIE L. WARD

LA Fitness

A 45,000-square-foot LA Fitness center is under construction in Euless at 2600 Texas 121 and should open this spring, according to city officials. The centers offer fitness classes, a lap pool, spa, basketball court, racquetball court, indoor cycling and personal trainers.

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EULESS

Apartment owner expected in court today

■ The new management at Timber Creek Apartments has been making repairs to comply with city codes.

By JESSICA DeLEÓN
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

EULESS — The owner of Timber Creek Apartments is expected to appear in court today to answer a city citation for failing to maintain the property. The problems include code violations such as water damage, broken stairways and the lack of outside lighting, according to the city.

Timber Creek's management is working to make repairs to meet a Friday deadline. Last week, a crew painted the gray units with bright yellow and reds.

"It's just a real big difference to see paint," manager Donna Hicks said.

The complex, on Airport Freeway near the split of Texas 121 and Texas 183, is owned by MBS Properties in Metairie, La. The company owns other complexes around the Metroplex, including Sterling Falls Apartments in Bedford,

Timber Creek Apartments

Repairs completed

- Replaced damaged or weathered wood on building and fencing.
- Readied the exteriors for painting.
- Painted and trimmed the exteriors of three buildings and the main office.
- Replaced most of the exterior lighting.
- Replaced electric meter covers.
- Corrected code violations inside four buildings.
- Repaired swimming pool, cracked and broken stairways.
- Trimmed trees.

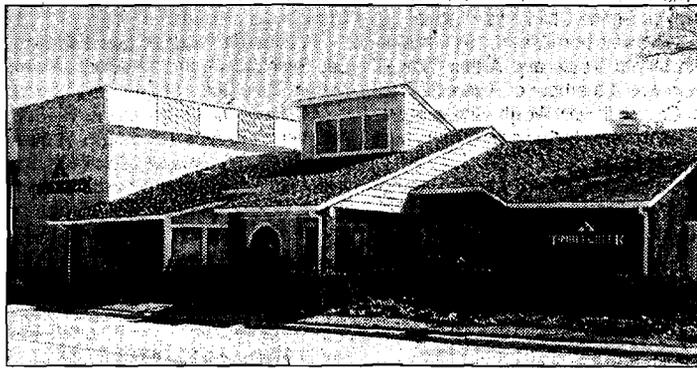
In progress

- Preparing installation of sprinkler system for two buildings.
- Repairing and painting wood decking around pool.
- Painting remaining buildings.
- Replacing air conditioning units.
- Replacing glass and screens.

To be done

- Pool will be drained, painted.
- Staff must receive pool certification.

SOURCES: City of Euless, Timber Creek Apartments



SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM/EMILY HUGHES

The management of Timber Creek Apartments in Euless is working to repair the complex by a Friday deadline.

which has been cited for hundreds of code violations.

Today's court hearing is meant to resolve an August citation in which the city contended that MBS owner Michael B. Smuck violated a city ordinance regarding the owner's responsibility to maintain his premises. In January, the city set a March 23 deadline for all repairs.

The most likely outcome of today's hearing is that the owner could be fined, Euless Planning and Development Manager Chris Barker said.

Because the complex racked up four citations, only 39 of Timber Creek's 164 units can be occupied. If MBS corrects all the code violations, the city could restore Timber Creek's certificate of occupancy and let the company lease the other apartments. The occupied units were leased before the certificate was revoked in October 2005.

Barker said that the complex probably won't make Friday's deadline, but that the property owners are making progress.

"Now that they're doing some work, we're going to work with them," Barker said.

Other repairs are being made under the new managers.

"I'm really excited," said Amy Shinsky, supervisor for the area properties.

Hicks, the apartment manager, would not allow a Star-Telegram reporter to interview tenants.

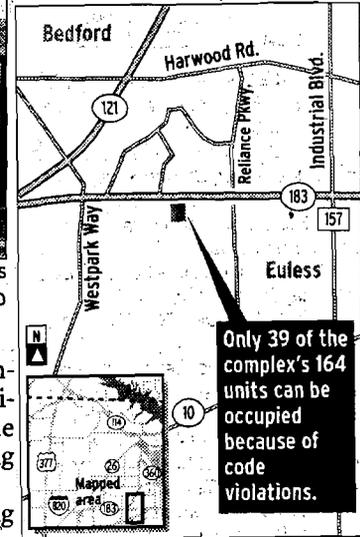
Euless officials noticed problems at the complex in 2004, when the city received a complaint about water damage in three units. City inspectors asked to see other units and later found roof damage.

The units were fixed, but subsequent inspections found other violations.

In the summer of 2005, the city cited the complex three times: once for failure to repair a unit and twice for failure to maintain the complex's exteri-

or. Code enforcement officers in Euless visit properties to seek voluntary compliance for code violations. If the owner doesn't comply voluntarily, the city sends a service-request

Timber Creek Apartments



STAR-TELEGRAM/TIM BEDISON

letter. If the violation is not corrected, the city sends a notice of violation before issuing a citation.

"By the time you get to citation, we've worked with you as well as we possibly can," Barker said.

The city dismissed one violation after Timber Creek made repairs. But the company pleaded guilty to another violation and paid \$1,340 in fines when it failed to comply.

In October 2005, Oncor removed 125 electric meters at the city's request, and the city revoked the certificate of occupancy.

The court date was set for today after being delayed from September.

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The city staff is monitoring work at the complex, which has had seven on-site managers since November 2004.

"We feel the new management team is putting new life into the repairs," Barker said.

Sterling Falls has also been cited for hundreds of code violations. Last year, the city sought an injunction asking that the 168-unit complex, at L. Don Dodson Drive and Park Place Boulevard, be repaired immediately or be demolished.

A temporary injunction hearing has been set for April 25. The hearing could be postponed if Sterling Falls provides the city with a detailed engineering report for repairs by April 20, Bedford City Attorney Stan Lowry said.

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APARTMENTS

Owner pleads guilty to violations

By **JESSICA DeLEÓN**
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

EULESS — The owner of Timber Creek Apartments pleaded guilty Tuesday to failure to maintain property at the complex on Airport Freeway and will pay a fine and work with the city to resolve problems.

What was wrong? The city received complaints in 2004 of water damage in three units. Later inspections found other violations.

City officials revoked the property's certificate of occupancy in 2005.

Only 39 of Timber Creek's 164 units are occupied because they were leased before the certificate was revoked.

The complex has replaced damaged and weathered wood on buildings and fencing,

repaired the swimming pool and broken stairways, and corrected code violations inside four buildings, among other things. Crews are also painting.

If the owner, MBS Properties, completes all the repairs, the city could restore Timber Creek's certificate of occupancy and let the company lease the other apartments.

What was the resolution? MBS, of Metairie, La., paid \$510 for two citations issued last year. The citations, each for \$255, were for failure to maintain the interiors and exteriors of the complex.

The complex's management, which is repairing the problems, received two other citations in 2006, but the complex either corrected the problems or paid the fines.

Why did the property plead guilty? Robert O. Jenkins, the Dallas-based attorney for MBS, said the company wants to work with the city.

"We are wanting to be in compliance," Jenkins said. "We are hoping to get that done as soon as possible."

What was the city's reaction? Chris Barker, the Eules Planning and Development manager, said the city doesn't intend to issue citations as long as management makes progress on the repairs.

"We are pleased the apartment's making progress," he said.

What's next? Timber Creek has until Friday to meet a deadline for repairs. City officials don't think the property will make all the repairs by then, but officials said they will work with the complex because its management is making progress.

MBS is scheduled back in municipal court April 11 to address three citations that were issued this month for failure to maintain building exteriors.

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Eules offers settlement in Santeria case

But priest says he'll reject it because ban on goat sacrifice would stay

By MICHAEL GRABELL
Staff Writer
mgrabell@dallasnews.com

A Santeria priest who is suing Eules over his religious practice of animal sacrifice would be allowed to kill chickens and hold small weekly gatherings at his home under a settlement offered by city attorneys.

But the proposal would continue to prohibit the sacrifice of goats — a practice that Jose Merced says is as essential to Santeria as communion is to Catholics. And it would limit the gatherings to 25 people.

Mr. Merced said he will reject the city's offer as a restriction on his religious freedom.

"You cannot do initiations without an animal with four legs. You cannot do it with just chickens," he said. "Without that, the religion ceases to exist."

Eules' attorney, William McKamie, did not return a call for comment. But the settlement letter said the remedies had been made to remove any substantial burden on Mr. Merced's free exercise of religion.

Mr. Merced filed a federal discrimination lawsuit against Eules in December after police and permit officials told him he couldn't kill goats for a ceremony initiating new members.

Followers of the African-Caribbean religion believe that the energy contained in blood from animal sacrifice opens a channel of direct communication with the spirits, known as *orishas*.

In January, the city asked the judge to dismiss the lawsuit, saying that the city's slaughter ban applies to everybody and that making an exception for Mr. Merced would force the city to become

entangled in religion.

The case could call into question a federal land-use law that requires local governments to have a compelling public interest before enforcing an ordinance that could limit the practice of religion.

Eules attorneys have argued that the land-use law is unconstitutional because it intrudes on a local government's right to regulate the health and welfare of its residents.

But Mr. Merced and his supporters say that the U.S. Supreme Court has already settled the issue of Santeria animal sacrifice.

In 1993, the court struck down an ordinance adopted by Hialeah, Fla., which prohibited animal sacrifice but made exceptions for hunting, fishing and the euthanasia of pets.

Eules' ordinance, on the books since 1974, makes exceptions for the killing of chickens and turkeys for meals. The city also allows fishing and euthanasia at animal shelters.

Eules' settlement offer would allow Mr. Merced to hold gatherings at his house. But they must not be visible to the general public, include more than 25 people or occur more than five times a month.

The city said in the letter that the restrictions would comply with ordinances regulating assemblies in residential neighborhoods.

Mr. Merced called the offer "ignorant," saying he doesn't hold regular gatherings. When he does have a gathering, he usually has about 15 people, he said, though once he hosted 200 people for a drum-playing ceremony for the *orishas*.

"They probably think I'm holding Masses or church every Sunday," he said. "They just don't understand."

"What if you have a barbecue or a birthday party? And what about Thanksgiving?"

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EULESS

Santeria priest balks at deal

By JESSICA DELEÓN
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

EULESS — The city has offered a compromise to help settle a lawsuit filed by a local Santeria priest after Euless refused to give him a permit to sacrifice animals: The priest may kill chickens but not goats.

The offer was among several proposed remedies that attorney Mick McKamie included in a letter dated Wednesday to Jose Merced, who filed the suit. McKamie, of San Antonio, is representing the city.

Merced is not pleased with the proposed rules, vowing to take the case to the U.S. Supreme Court if it comes to that.

"I think they're blocking me from my freedom of religion," he said. "We're going to battle."

What happened

Merced filed his federal lawsuit in December against Euless and three city officials. He said the city would not give him a permit to slaughter chickens and goats for a religious ritual.

Merced, who is president of Templo Yoruba Omo Orisha Texas, said the sacrifice is done to initiate new members and for healing. In his lawsuit, he said the animals are killed quickly and humanely, and the meat is used for food.

City law

■ Animals, except chickens and turkeys, cannot be slaughtered or kept for slaughtering.

■ Goats and other livestock must be kept 100 feet from residences.

■ Livestock cannot be kept on less than half an acre.

What's new

In the city's letter, McKamie notes that the city allows the killing of chickens for consumption. The attorney agreed that the city would not consider any zoning violations at Merced's home, as long as:

■ No more than 25 people gather there.

■ The gatherings take place inside the house and are not visible to the public.

■ The gatherings occur no more than five times per calendar month.

But the attorney also wrote that the city will continue to enforce its animal cruelty ordinance without regard to motivation. It will also enforce its ban against killing livestock.

"We think this is a very reasonable remedy," McKamie said.

Merced, however, said he doesn't think the city is being fair. He doesn't have animals at his house; instead, they arrive when they're about to be used, he said. Nor has he ever had more than 25 people at his house, except once when he had 200.

Merced said he wondered whether other residences will be cited for Bible studies.

"Is that just for me?" he said.

What's next

Several motions are pending in federal court. No dates have been set.

This report includes material from Star-Telegram archives.

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Tarrant County cities ranked by size

Cities are listed from largest to smallest based on their estimated Jan. 1, 2007, populations.

Rank		Population Jan. 1, 2006	Population Jan. 1, 2007	Growth rate 2006-07
1	Fort Worth	664,100	686,850	3.43%
2	Arlington	363,550	364,300	0.21%
3	North Richland Hills	63,400	64,050	1.03%
4	Euless	53,200	53,400	0.38%
5	Mansfield	48,750	51,300	5.23%
6	Unincorporated areas	48,200	50,150	4.05%
7	Bedford	48,850	49,050	0.41%
8	Grapevine	45,350	45,550	0.44%
9	Haltom City	39,400	39,400	0.00%
10	Hurst	38,450	38,500	0.13%
11	Keller	36,500	37,700	3.29%
12	Southlake	25,350	25,700	1.38%
13	Watauga	24,100	24,150	0.21%
14	Benbrook	22,650	22,850	0.88%
15	Colleyville	21,700	22,150	2.07%
16	Saginaw	18,400	18,950	2.99%
17	White Settlement	15,750	15,900	0.95%
18	Forest Hill	11,750	11,950	1.70%
19	Crowley	10,350	11,250	8.70%
20	Azle	10,450	10,600	1.44%
21	Richland Hills	8,300	8,300	0.00%
22	River Oaks	7,050	7,200	2.13%
23	Kennedale	6,150	6,350	3.25%
24	Everman	5,800	5,800	0.00%
25	Lake Worth	4,800	4,850	1.04%
26	Sansom Park	4,200	4,250	1.19%
27	Westworth Village	3,000	3,000	0.00%
28	Pantego	2,700	2,700	0.00%
29	Edgecliff Village	2,550	2,550	0.00%
30	Blue Mound	2,400	2,400	0.00%
31	Dalworthington Gardens	2,300	2,300	0.00%
32	Pelican Bay	1,750	1,800	2.86%
33	Haslet	1,400	1,400	0.00%
34	Lakeside	1,250	1,250	0.00%

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ARREST

Teacher facing drug charges

STAR-TELEGRAM

ARLINGTON — A Seguin High School reading teacher was placed on administrative leave Wednesday and faces drug charges after authorities raided his Euless home Tuesday.

Erick Daniels, 36, a teacher in the Arlington school district for five years, was suspended with pay, district spokeswoman Michelle Clark said Thursday.

She said a decision on his

employment would be made after police and district investigations.

Daniels was arrested about 8:15 p.m. Tuesday at his residence in the 200 block of Revolution Lane, said Lt. Wayne Pavlik, a spokesman for the Euless Police Department.

Pavlik said the Tarrant County Organized Crime Unit served a search warrant after getting a tip from a confidential informant.

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Boy suffers burns from touching transformer box

BY DOMINGO RAMIREZ JR.
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

EULESS — An 8-year-old boy was burned over half of his body when he touched a transformer box at an apartment complex, a fire official said Friday.

The boy, who was not identified, was taken late Wednesday to Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas where doctors were treating him for burns over 50 percent of his body. His condition was unavailable Friday morning.

The incident happened shortly after 6:30 p.m. Wednesday in the 600 block of Del Paso Street at the Bear Creek Apartments.

Initially, fire officials received a call that a boy had been injured when he fell off a bicycle in an apartment complex parking lot.

But when emergency crews arrived they discovered that the boy had been shocked by the transformer and knocked into the parking lot, said Euleless Assistant Fire Chief Robert Isbell.

"Usually, those transformer boxes are padlocked," Isbell said.

Authorities continued on Friday to investigate the incident.

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2007 Golf Guide: Top Public in Texas: Pine Dunes

Twice in the past eight years, the USGA has conducted the U.S. Open at the famous No. 2 course at Pinehurst in North Carolina.

To get a feel for that golf course without leaving the state of Texas, Shannon Glidwell would say drive to a place not far from Tyler.

He's talking about Pine Dunes Golf Course near the East Texas community of Frankston, a layout deemed to be the top public course in the state by a panel of Express-News voters.

"It's out of character for Texas," said Glidwell, high school golf coach at Frisco Liberty. "It looks like a golf course you'd play in North Carolina. It's really a great golf course."

San Antonio's terrain isn't at all like the pine trees of North Carolina. But the city did have a golf course that stuck in the minds of voters who participated in the Express-News survey. Pecan Valley on the Southeast Side ranked fourth.

Horseshoe Bay, less than an hour and a half away from San Antonio on Lake LBJ, checked in at No. 2 in the survey with its Ram Rock course. Cypresswood Traditions north of Houston (No. 3) and Tribute Golf Club on Lake Lewisville in North Texas rounded out the top five.

Here's the rest of the top 10, in order: Barton Creek Foothills in Austin, Memorial Park in Houston, Texas Star Golf Course in Euless (midway between Dallas and Fort Worth), Crown Colony Golf Club in Lufkin and a tie at No. 10 between Cowboys Golf Club in Grapevine and Waterwood National near Huntsville.

The intimidation factor at Pine Dunes contributed to its spot on the top of the list. But it doesn't really hold the standard pitfalls that cause problems at most public courses. For example, none of the water hazards at Pine Dunes fronts or abuts a putting green.

"And there's not a lot of rough," Glidwell said. "There are waste areas, and big pine trees. Areas around the greens are cut pretty close, so if you miss a shot into the green, you could be looking at your ball rolling down a slope and setting up a tough chip.

"You have to have a lot of imagination around that place. It's really not a cookie-cutter course."

A lot of imagination is what put the course on the map. Jodi Lutz developed the land in time for the course opening in 2001. She originally bought a nine-hole course at the site in 1994.

But after an accidental meeting with PGA Tour veteran David Frost, things got moving. Frost looked at the land and called course designer Jay Morrish so he could take a look. They convinced Lutz that tearing up the nine holes and starting anew would make her the owner of a championship-quality 18 holes. Apparently, they were right.

- Tim Price

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DATE DISTRIBUTED 3/23/07 DATE OF ARTICLE 3/03/07 NEWSPAPER San Antonio Express-News

2007 Golf Guide: Top Municipal in Texas: Memorial Park

Memorial Park in Houston and Tenison Park in Dallas are not old golf courses. Well, not quite.

Yes, both opened before World War II. Both have suffered through their eras of neglect as a pair of municipally owned facilities that became largely forgotten once better-funded, privately owned daily-fee courses sprang up.

But they have been reborn within the past dozen years, both remodeled with a rededication to maintenance.

The results are increased play and increased awareness in the golfing public. They are the top two municipal courses in the state, according to voters empanelled by the Express-News.

Memorial, located in the huge wooded park of the same name west of downtown Houston, was a clear winner with seven first-place votes. Tenison, in the east Dallas neighborhood where Lee Trevino and Lee Elder famously played in high-stakes matches, also had a comfortable margin in second.

Texas Star in Euless, Morris Williams Golf Course in Austin and Painted Dunes in El Paso round out the top five, leaving San Antonio without widespread recognition in the muni golf world.

Memorial was remodeled in 1995 at a cost of about \$7 million. Tenison was redone by a D.A. Weibring design team. The city of Dallas liked what it saw because Weibring was invited to redesign another city-owned course three years ago.

Memorial is especially popular with its high-profile location in Houston.

"It's located in the middle of the city, and I like the setup," said Houston investment banker Michael Stuart, a member of the Express-News panel. "The routing of the course is good, and it's not like a lot of other municipals that are neglected."

Jim Hearn, a real-estate executive in Houston who voted on the panel this year, said he never hears horror stories of Memorial falling into disrepair.

"It's not River Oaks," Hearn said, noting the posh country club in Houston, "but they do keep it in really good shape."

Apparently good enough to make it the panel's favorite.

- Tim Price