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COMMUNITY NEWS

EULESS FIRE CHIEF ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

EULESS, TEXAS —Fire Chief Lee Koontz announced today that he will retire on March 1, 2008 after 26 years with the city. During his tenure Chief Koontz emphasized the need for education and safety in the fire service. Chief Koontz joined the City of Euless in 1981. He has served as Fire Chief for 20 years and has dedicated a total of 26 years to Euless. He is one of the longest tenured Fire Chiefs in Tarrant County.

Under his leadership, Koontz oversaw many aspects of firefighting including Search & Rescue, Inspections, Investigations, Suppression and Rescue but also Hazardous Materials Response, Vehicle Rescue (extrication) and ALS Emergency Medical Service on both first response vehicles and Mo-

bile Intensive Care Units (MICU). This is in addition to promoting public education of fire safety at every opportunity.

Koontz was personally responsible for leading his department through the transition to EMS response in 1988 and provided cross training for all personnel to provide both Fire and EMS response. He now ensures that the latest training is provided to his staff on a weekly basis.

In addition, the Euless Citizen's Fire Academy began under Chief Koontz's guidance, as well as the Alumni Association that supports the Fire Department in many capacities. The ECFAAA members play a vital role in helping to build better citizen involvement and participation as well as public education in Euless.

Most currently, Koontz has led the charge of reclassifying Euless' Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. This was accomplished through his firm understanding of the evaluation

process and his work to assure that fire infrastructure was in place to support fire protection in the community. Currently rated at a three, the ISO visited Euless in December and we have high expectations of receiving a higher rating in the summer. This will lower insurance costs for residents on the fire portion of their insurance premium. With his announcement, City Manager Gary McKamie stated, "Lee has been the Fire Chief for an amazing 20 years. He built the Euless Fire Department into what I believe to be the best Fire Department anywhere. He started the Paramedic service in the late 80's and directed our recent ISO rating which we think will result in a significant rating upgrade. His commitment and dedication is greatly appreciated and his impact on emergency services has been extremely valuable." Koontz, 58, began his

career in the fire service in 1965 as a volunteer firefighter before making it a career. Koontz served as a Captain for the City of Leon Valley prior to coming to Euless. He is a Master Firefighter, Licensed Paramedic and Level II Certified Instructor and has taught for 15 years at the Texas A&M Municipal Fire School.

He is a member of the Society of Executive Fire Officers, National Fire Protection Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Tarrant County Fire Chiefs Association, Texas Fire Chiefs Association and serves on the Tarrant County College EMS Advisory Board.

Koontz holds a Bachelors of Science from Southwest Texas State University. He and his wife Lark, or as they're better know around Euless "Chief and Sparky," have been married for 37 years. They have a daughter Tamara. She and husband Ken Beavers have one son, K.J.

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FROM THE LOCAL LEADERSHIP

Mayor Saleh

Euless



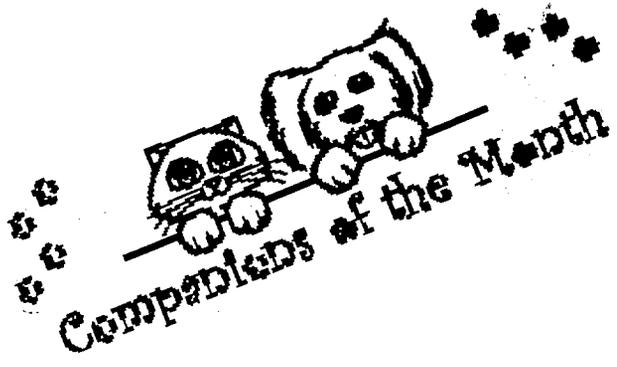
The annual Town Hall meetings in the City of Euleess were well attended and discussion was lively and informative. Euleess has hosted sixteen years of Town Hall meetings, and each year more citizens get involved and we have great attendance. February will be another active month as the City of Euleess welcomes the troops for their R & R programs. We furnish a bus for volunteers who participate and each volunteer receives a patriotic t-shirt. It is surely one of the most rewarding events anyone can attend. Once again, the city will be hosting a community garage sale at the Midway Recreation Center on Saturday, February 23, from 8 a.m. until noon. Anyone interested in purchasing a table please call the Recreation Center at 817-685-1666 for details. The city council and staff held an all day worksession to set goals for the coming year and review the accomplishments of the past year. It has been a good year for Euleess with housing and

large commercial developments. In a very short time you will see construction begin on the Glade Parks development on State Highway 121 between Glade Road and Cheek-Sparger Road. This will be a multi-use development with small and large businesses, park-like walkways and residential uses. One of the goals of the city council and staff is revitalization of the southern portion of our city. There are many beautiful older homes and businesses and some that need special attention. We especially want to show off some of the lovely large older trees in the landscape. The Texas Star Sunday Brunches are a real treat, and Chef John really knows how to make an omelet. Brunch is served from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. On nice weather days, you can sit on the porch and watch the golfers play the 18th hole while sipping coffee or tea. The Euleess Library Foundation has a new art project they are just beginning to initiate. It will be a large group of tiles in a picture frame that represent the history of Euleess. If you go by

the library now you can see the first tile that depicts the log cabin house in our Heritage Park. It is so beautiful! All citizens can donate to the project, and you can get more information at the library. As you plan to celebrate Valentine's Day, think of the activities in the library and the Texas Star restaurant facility. Great things are happening in Euleess. It's the place to be for entertainment, good food and great volunteers!

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FAITH HILL



I am a 2 yr poodle/terrier mix. I came to DFW Tzus with my Shih Tzu friend Tim McGraw. We had been very neglected at our previous home but we are now getting all of the care that we deserve. I love activity and love to run and play with my new toys. As you can see in my pictures, I had to have my coat cut very short. My curly coat is growing out and in a few weeks I will be even more beautiful. My baths are great and I am house trained.

Eules Animal Services
1517 Westpark Way
Eules, TX 76040
(817)685-1594

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AREA BRIEFS

NE Tarrant Relay for Life scheduled for April

The American Cancer Society's Northeast Tarrant County Relay for Life will be April 18-19 on the football field at Trinity High School in Euless. The 12-hour event is open to participants from Bedford, Colleyville, Euless, Grapevine, Haltom City, Hurst, North Richland Hills, Richland Hills and Watauga. The event honors cancer survivors, cancer patients and caregivers. The relay involves teams walking on a track to raise funds to combat cancer. Volunteers also can participate in a luminaria ceremony that will honor cancer patients and those who have died from the disease. For registration information, visit www.netarrantrelay.com.

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COMMISSIONERS COURT

Fickes in good shape following liver transplant

By JOHN KIRSCH

jkirsch@star-telegram.com

Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes underwent liver transplant surgery Sunday morning in a Dallas hospital, his wife said Monday.

Fickes, 58, had a "very successful" transplant and is having a smooth recovery, Cathey Fickes said. The surgery took just under three hours, she said.



"He's elated. He realizes he's been given a second chance," she said.

The Precinct 3 commissioner, who represents Northeast Tarrant County, has a blood disorder called hemochromatosis that causes iron to build up in the body's tissues and organs.

Cathey Fickes said her husband will remain in the Dallas hospital for several days before returning to the couple's Southlake home to recover for several weeks.

During that time, the family cannot receive visitors, flowers or food because Fickes will be in a sterile environment, Cathey Fickes said.

But Gary Fickes will be in touch by phone and Internet, she said.

Fickes, 58, is seeking re-election to Precinct 3 this year. He is unopposed in the March 4 Republican primary.

JOHN KIRSCH, 817-685-3805

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REGIONAL ROUNDUP

TARRANT COUNTY

County commissioner in hospital after transplant

Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes is expected to spend the next week to 10 days in a Dallas hospital while recovering from a liver transplant, his wife, Cathey Fickes, said Monday. Mr. Fickes, 58, had the surgery Sunday morning to correct hemochromatosis, a hereditary disease that affects the liver. Mrs. Fickes said the transplant was a success, and her husband was improving quickly. Mr. Fickes, a former Southlake mayor, was elected to commissioner Precinct 3 in 2006 and is running for re-election. He is unopposed in the March Republican primary and will face Democrat Jerry Lee Phillips in November.

Jeff Mosier

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AREA BRIEFS

Masked gunman robs check-cashing business

EULESS — A masked gunman robbed a check-cashing business Tuesday afternoon and herded two female employees into a bathroom before he fled the store, police said. The employees waited several minutes before leaving the bathroom and alerting police shortly after 3 p.m. at Check 'n Go in the 1200 block of North Main Street. No one was injured. Anyone with information should call Euless police at 817-685-1538.

— Domingo Ramirez Jr.

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EULESS

Face-lift planned for conference center

The expansion will provide more space for the center, which is booked up every weekend.

By JESSICA DeLEÓN
jdeleon@star-telegram.com

EULESS — Texas Star Conference Centre is being renovated.

The City Council has approved a construction contract with Lewisville-based JC Commercial. The total cost is \$2.9 million and will be paid for by car-rental tax revenues.

Construction on the 10-year-old building, at 1400 Texas Star Parkway, should be completed by January or February 2009. The Texas Star complex includes a golf course that will not be affected by the renovations.

Phase 1:

The first phase, which should be finished by September or October, will include:

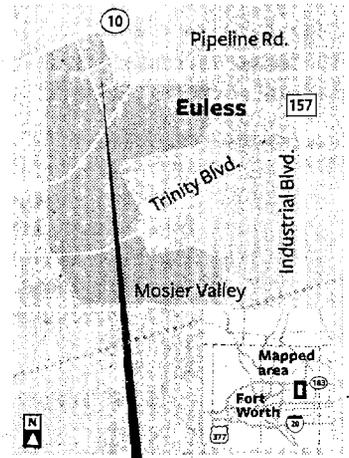
- Extending the south side of building to increase banquet room capacity to 350 from 200.
- Adding a full catering kitchen.
- Adding two breakout rooms to fit 10 to 25 people.
- Improving the audio/visual system in the building.

Phase 2:

The second phase will focus on the north side and include:

- A complete renovation of the kitchen, enabling Raven's Grille restaurant to add more items, such as baked goods, to its menu.
- Adding tile floors and granite countertops to the bathrooms.
- Adding four offices for the staff. Currently, five workers work in one office with four desks.
- Expanding the Treaty Room, the private dining room for about 20 people, to include new carpet, fixtures and sound-deadening panels to reduce echo.
- Adding a dining area to the patio.
- Redoing the air conditioning and heating system to bring it up to current energy code stan-

Texas Star renovations



Renovations to the Texas Star Conference Centre, off Texas 10, should be completed next year.

STAR-TELEGRAM/TIM BEDISON

dards.

- Adding furniture.

Why needed?

Texas Star is maxed out every weekend with wedding receptions, parties and banquets.

"The place stays constantly busy," said Kyle McAdams, the city's fleet and facility operations administrator.

The construction contract was approved by the City Council last week.

The new space will allow for varying room sizes, with three rooms large enough for 50 to 60 people and one room large enough for 150 people, Texas Star general manager Glenda Hartsell-Shelton said. If all three rooms are put together, 300 people could fit in. "It gives us a lot more options," she said.

Last year, the conference center and Raven's Grille made a combined net revenue of \$283,000. The city has no predictions about how much money the improvements might generate.

The work is more renovation than expansion, city spokeswoman Betsy Deck said.

"It will allow us to offer a quality facility with more amenities to our existing clientele," Deck said.

www.texasstargolf.com

JESSICA DeLEÓN, 817-685-3932