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Eules Apartment Residents Told To Vacate

July 4, 2012 6:42 AM



EULESS (CBSDFW.COM) – Thirteen families in Eules said that they are being pushed out of their homes by a church-backed college.

Some of the residents at Vienna Terrace received notices on Saturday that they must be out of their apartments by the end of the month. The city issued notices saying that their water will be shut off by Thursday, for an unpaid bill of \$1,690.

They were even more surprised to find a rendering online of what appears to be their homes rebuilt as a college dorm. The website for Messenger College portrays the building as the new student housing when it makes its move from Joplin, Missouri to Eules.

“We’re being treated unfairly,” said Laura Lecher, a resident at Vienna Terrace.

“Everybody’s on a fixed income and they can’t just move out in two weeks,” added April Hines.

The two were sitting with other residents in a breezeway on Tuesday afternoon. They were waiting for a property manager who they expected to return with more information. The first notices on Saturday said that the building had a new owner, and they had to leave by the end of July.

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For most of the families here, including Daniel and Ashley Muzolf and their two young daughters, moving isn't as easy as it sounds. "We're not going to have any money to go and get another place," said Ashley.

Many residents echoed those concerns. They are on fixed incomes and have no money for security deposits. Building management said that no one will end up on the street, and it is possible that the new owners will help residents move — but moving is inevitable. "We have to go about what the others want," said Joel Delgado, a manager for Wehner MultiFamily. "It's their property and they want it 100 percent vacated."

Despite the notice that the water would be cut off, Delgado said that utilities will not be turned off and that unpaid bills will be taken care of. The company has also offered to move residents into one of its other properties. The closest building is in Irving.

Delgado could not say for certain whether the college in Missouri is the new owner. Messages left for the college late Tuesday were not immediately returned.

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College's planned dorm in Euless may displace apartment residents

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Residents at a Euless apartment complex are being told to get out -- or be put out -- in three days so that a Pentecostal college can turn the units into a dorm.

The residents, some disabled, are being expelled from the Vienna Terrace Apartments, 150 S. Main St., despite being told earlier that they had weeks to leave.

"Most everybody here is on a low income, fixed income, people are on oxygen, handicapped, or they have kids," resident Donald Hines said. If parents "move out of the apartment, the kids have to move to another school."

An attorney working pro bono for at least seven residents says the management company overseeing the forced exodus is violating state and federal law by not giving residents enough notice.

Precious Atlas, a Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas staff attorney, said Dallas property management company Wehner Multifamily is disobeying state and federal laws in an attempt "to put pressure on" residents.

"Most of these individuals don't understand the eviction process in Texas, and they're scared," she said. "They're afraid they're going to be homeless."

No one responded to messages seeking comment from the management company, college or Pentecostal Church of God in Bedford, with which the college is affiliated. A woman at the church would not give the name of its attorney. Wehner's website says part of its philosophy is to "offer our residents the finest in affordable apartment living with excellent comfort, value, convenience and service."

Nevertheless, it's been a topsy-turvy ride for the apartment dwellers.

The complex, with a value of \$478,525, was deeded to the college June 20, according to Tarrant Appraisal District records.

Residents said they received notices June 30 that the complex had a new owner and that they had to vacate by July 31. On Monday, they were told they did not have to pay rent.

But on Thursday, Wehner sent letters telling residents to pay rent by 11:59 p.m. or "evictions will be" filed. Residents who paid would get \$600 toward rent at another apartment. More incentives were available for those who moved out sooner.

The next day, after most residents did not pay their previously forgiven rent, they received a notice that they would be evicted in three days, residents said.

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Atlas said that conflicting information is a sore spot but that the complex was in foreclosure when it was sold to Messenger College, formerly of Joplin, Mo. That triggers protections for the residents. Atlas said that under the Texas Property Code, residents living in a foreclosure must be given 30 days' notice.

She also said federal law mandates at least 90 days' notice to vacate when someone buys a foreclosed property that had been used as a rental.

"They're essentially choosing to disregard the Texas Property Code and federal legislation," she said.

Atlas said she has had no response to requests to speak to the college or its affiliated church.

The college itself was displaced by tornadoes that hit Joplin last year. Messenger is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools and says its students are eligible for federal loans. The college had revenue of \$1.5 million and expenses totaling about \$9,000 less, according to its most recent tax filings.

Classes will be held at 400 S. Industrial Blvd. in Euless, according to the school's website.

Darren Barbee, 817-390-7126

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Couple celebrates a long history in Euless

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EULESS -- When Robert and Iva Nail renewed their wedding vows in front of the Fuller House fireplace recently, they wrote another paragraph in the history of a city that exemplifies their idea of paradise.

"I love Euless, and anything I can do to project the good parts, I'll do it," Robert Nail said.

To hear Mayor Mary Lib Saleh tell it, the Nails, who married in June 1942, exemplify "the kind of people you want in your community. Anyone who's been married 70 years is surely an example for all of us."

For most of 70 years they have stepped up to the plate whenever Euless, and especially its First United Methodist Church, needed doers as much as leaders, Saleh said. "If you need something, they're there," she said. "Both of them served on the altar guild, and you could count on them coming in to fix a pew, cut the grass, serve on committees."

These days Robert Nail, 90, doesn't cut his own grass and Iva Nail, 88, isn't tempted to join a committee. But they are so woven into the city's evolution that Saleh described them as legacies.

Iva Nail was born in the Fuller House, now the crown jewel of an antique building collection in Euless' Heritage Park.

"Mine was the front bedroom," she said.

A disputed distinction

Her father, Homer Fuller, and her uncle Warren Fuller each claimed to be the town's first mayor. Wait for it; the explanation's coming.

The two were among the earliest entrepreneurs in Euless. Homer Fuller opened a store in the late 1920s at what would become Texas 10 and Main Street, and when his brother joined him it became Fuller Brothers General Merchandise.

Robert Nail joined them about 1949 to make it the Fuller Brothers and Nail grocery. Soon after, he became the town's first postmaster.

The Nails' daughter, Linda Pool, said her father tells how a government representative walked into the grocery one day and asked whether anyone was interested in becoming postmaster.

"He agreed, built a kiosk inside the store to serve as the post office and would work selling groceries until someone came in wanting to mail something or buy stamps," Pool said.

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A Lewisville native who grew up in Denton, Robert Nail loves to tell about his chosen hometown.

He says Euless' 1951 birth was painful, midwifed by Warren Fuller, who was elected mayor.

"It was a big political fight," Robert Nail said. "There were lots of arguments."

Naysayers used a looming property tax of 25 cents per \$100 of valuation to generate a recall election that Nail said undid the incorporation.

But the Fuller brothers and their cohorts weren't to be denied.

Another drive for incorporation succeeded in 1953. Then Iva Nail's father became mayor of the new Euless, creating a dispute between the brothers over who deserved the title of the city's first mayor.

"They kind of argued about that," Iva Nail said.

Bedroom community

The next big thing was the water system, Robert Nail said. A property tax was levied after all, and residents began to enjoy a municipal utility.

The Nails are optimistic about their city's future, though it hasn't grown as fast as a prediction Robert Nail remembers.

"Back in the mid-'50s the city hired someone to do forecasting for Euless," he said. "I think it was Freese and Nichols who projected such growth that the population would be about 65,000 in 2000. I thought at the time that it was too far advanced, and I couldn't believe it."

Nail's disbelief was justified. The 2010 Census found 51,277 Euless residents, and Nail isn't too happy with how they've been accommodated.

"They keep building apartments, and I hate to see that," he said.

Euless is a bedroom community "and always will be," Nail said. "We're fortunate to have the airport and a few other tax generators besides residents."

Historic properties

The city's also fortunate to have rescued his wife's birthplace when commercial progress threatened the Fuller House, Robert Nail said. He laments that few other historic properties have survived.

"There's one house on Vine Street that's the oldest frame house in Euless," he said. "It used to be on land where [Texas] 183 is now."

The Nails, who are founding members of the Euless Historical Society and have been recognized by the city as Volunteers of the Year, live together independently in the home they built in 1964.

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Almost 200 people attended their 70th-anniversary party last month at Texas Star Conference Center, and Saleh said the guest list was a testament to how far their influence has been felt during those seven decades.

"They came from miles around," she said. "I saw people there I hadn't seen in 15 years."

This report includes material from the Star-Telegram archives.

Terry Evans, 817-390-7620



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Greek Orthodox congregants in Euless to celebrate opening of new church

Posted Thursday, Jul. 12, 2012 Updated Friday, Jul. 13, 2012 1 Comment Print Reprints

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EULESS -- With a copper dome, curved roof, bell tower and columns, the new St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church would be right at home in many Eastern European countries.

The Byzantine-style architecture links the congregation's heritage, ethnicity and faith with the Greek Orthodox Church's earliest beginnings, the Rev. Vasile Tudora said. It's also a little piece of home for Vasile and his wife, Mirela, who grew up in Romania.

"We're just going back to the very roots," he said.

The congregation will celebrate the opening of the 8,000-square-foot church, 303 Cullum Drive, with a ribbon-cutting and Thyranixia ceremony at 9:30 a.m. Saturday. It will include a procession from the old church to the new.

Highlighting the new church is the dome -- 65 feet high, 30 feet in diameter and 30,000 pounds, said Nick Mourton, who co-owns Ashton Wynne Commercial, the project manager and contractor.

The church is the culmination of years of fundraising within the congregation and from the public through the popular Mid-Cities Greek Fest, held every October. Vasile Tudora, who has been with the church since 2007, said all proceeds from the last five or six festivals helped fund the new church.

Mirela Tudora used her experience as an architect in Romania to design the building.

"I'm excited to bring some traditional Byzantine architecture to the United States," she said. "You should walk into an Orthodox church anywhere in the world and feel at home because it's the same."

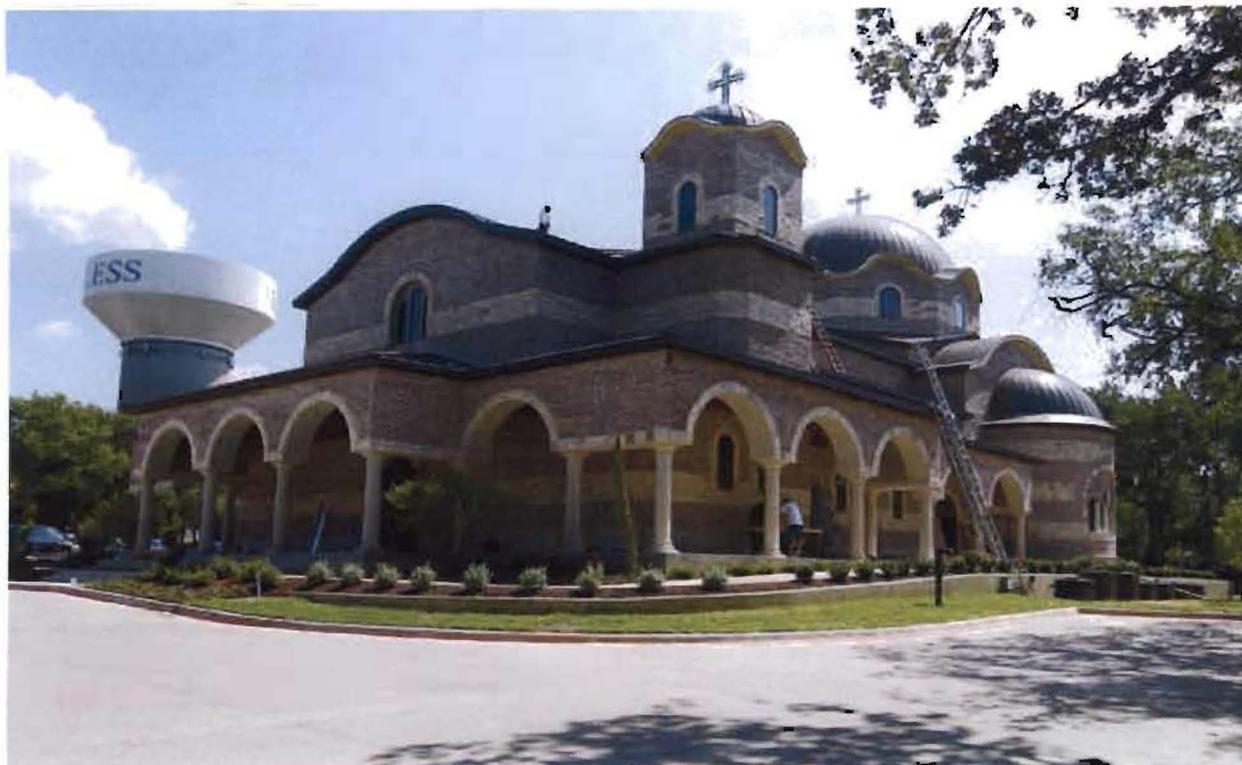
Barbara Vittas, president of the parish council, has been at St. John the Baptist since 1979, when she, husband George and other Orthodox Christians founded the first Greek church in the Mid-Cities. They worshipped at another church for a few years before buying 4 acres on Cullum. The first services were held in the living room of a three-bedroom ranch house until the Paulos multipurpose building was constructed in 1988.

It was meant to be used only until a proper church could be built. But it has served the congregation for more than two decades.

"It's a 30-year dream come true," she said. "We couldn't be happier. This church has been everything to us. We've raised our children here. The best friends we've made in life have been through the church, and now to see this beautiful Byzantine structure rising on our property -- we have a place for our children and their children."

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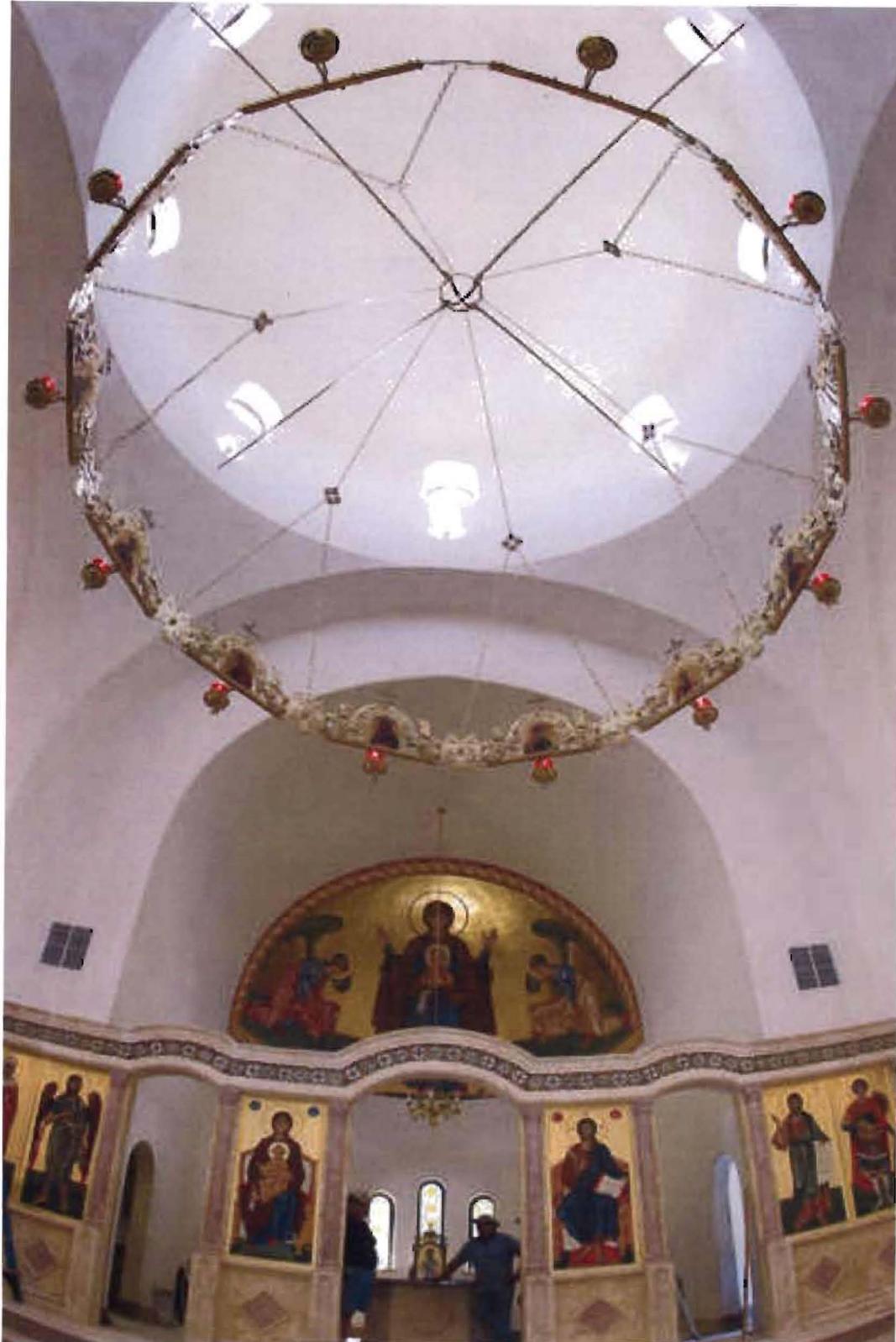


The St. John Greek Orthodox Church is almost finished in Euless, Texas on Thursday, July 12, 2012.



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A large chandelier hangs beneath a dome above the pulpit in the St. John Greek Orthodox Church in Euless, Texas on Thursday July 12, 2012.

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15 Acre Grassfire Near DFW Airport

By Omar Villafranca

NBCDFW.com

7/20/2012 1:15:50 AM ET

A grassfire near Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport sent columns of smoke into the airspace near the airport Thursday evening.

The smoke was so high, planes approaching the landing strips at DFW Airport were flying through the smoke.

Fire crews from Hurst, Euless, Grapevine, Colleyville and DFW Airport worked more than five hours to contain the fire that burned roughly 15 acres.

Grapevine Fire Chief Mark Ashmead said the fire jumped the feeder road of State Highway 121 near Mustang Drive and kept burning in a wooded area.

"It's impossible to walk through. It's impossible to drive through with the brush trucks. We have to get heavy equipment in here to push down the small trees and saplings so we can get more equipment back in there to get to the scene of the fire," Ashmead said.

One Grapevine firefighter was taken to Baylor Grapevine for heat exhaustion, but will be fine.

The fire did burn through some power lines, but Oncor crews were working to restore power. As of 11 p.m. Thursday Oncor's website reported less than 50 customers were still without power.

Crews plan to spend the night near the fire to put out any hot spots.

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Firefighters Battle Grass Fire Near DFW Airport

By Omar Villafranca | Friday, Jul 20, 2012 | Updated 4:07 PM CDT



Omar Villafranca, NBC 5 News

Fire crews from Hurst, Euless, Grapevine, Colleyville and DFW Airport worked more than five hours to contain the fire that burned roughly 15 acres near Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport Thursday evening

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