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## 2008: A Preview

### Changes Are On the Horizon for Flower Mound

By Stephanie A. Miller

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Construction on the new Flower Mound Community Activities Center is moving along. The center is scheduled to open in May.

*Editor's Note:* In the final issue of *The Messenger* for 2007, we look back on some of the news events that were of importance to our local communities.

In this first issue of 2008, *The Messenger* turns its crystal ball on what may affect the coming year. Good or bad, our tomorrows will be controlled by past events and the action taken today.

We asked Flower Mound leaders and officials to share their projections on some major upcoming projects for the year 2008.

#### Flower Mound

Flower Mound Mayor Jody Smith has an optimistic outlook for the town this coming year.

"With numerous municipal, recreational, transportation and development and projects in the pipeline, we're looking forward to 2008 also being a landmark year for Flower Mound," Smith responded in a statement.

In November, voters gave their nod of approval for a four quarter-cent dedicated sales tax to be used to fund a crime control district, a fire and emergency medical services district, street maintenance and park projects. The new sales tax increase raises the town's sales tax from 7.25 percent to the 8.25 percent state maximum, which is in line with most of the town's neighboring cities. Town projections are that the tax increase will generate about \$2 million annually.

April will be the start date to collect the new sales tax, said Flower Mound Director of Community Affairs Michael Ryan.

"A key component to all of these projects will be resident input," Ryan said. "There are some obvious needs that will be addressed immediately in relation to streets and infrastructure, but the larger communitywide projects will take a little longer to build and to construct and will require a significant amount of residential input."

Town officials have not yet decided how they will obtain public input, but it typically has been received via the town's Web site, town forums and community surveys, Ryan said. To that end, a new Web site will welcome online visitors in 2008.

"It has been about five years since we redesigned the Web site, and we recognize the need to incorporate new technology and utilize current trends," Ryan said. "Our goal with the redesign was to provide more efficient navigation, additional information and generally make town hall more accessible."

The largest development proposal presented to Flower Mound officials in 2007 was the new town center plan for The Forums' area 158 acres by Parker Square developer Cole McDowell .

"That's a key property for the entire town and we are excited to see it develop with a quality project that will serve the residents for years to come," said Ryan. He added that the town anticipates McDowell to begin the development process — consisting of a staff review and appearing before the Planning & Zoning Commission and Town Council — sometime this spring.

Town officials are anticipating the opening of the Community Activity Center (CAC) this summer. The 61,000-square-foot facility is about 65 percent complete, Flower Mound Director of Parks and Recreation Jack Jones said.

"It's a major investment for our community, and it's designed to bring the community together because it will have programs, activities, special events for everyone," Jones said.

Groundbreaking for the center, at 1200 Gerault Road, took place in early 2007.

Some features of the facility include an indoor pool, an outdoor family water park and a gym with a basketball court, Jones said. There will also be a large multipurpose room, a senior citizen room, a teen room and a small fitness area complete with circuit weight lifting machines, treadmills, stationary bikes and an indoor jogging track.

Thanks to the voter-approved quarter-cent dedicated sales tax, the Flower Mound Police Department will be authorized to hire 16 additional police officers and two jailers, Lt. Wendell Mitchell of the Flower Mound Police Department said.

"It's going to allow us to create two new beats in town and, with the creation of two new beats, it puts more officers on the street. It will enhance our ability to respond quicker to calls of service and will allow more time for preventable crime patrols," Mitchell said. "We're very optimistic that we'll be able to hire these 16 police officers because of all the town of Flower Mound has to offer." The hiring procedure will begin Jan. 19 with a police applicant test administered to create an applicant pool, Mitchell continued.

Further testing will be administered, along with a complete physical exam and a background check. On average, it typically takes about three to four weeks to screen an applicant applying to the Police Department, Mitchell said.

Officials said some other projects Flower Mound residents can look forward to this year include a design for the Western Pump Station and the Wild about Flower Mound Festival.

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