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COLLIN COUNTY

Collin County Connection

"YOUR SOURCE FOR EMPLOYEE INFORMATION"

Medical Reserve Corps volunteers and Collin County staff team together to provide vaccine to the public at Wylie H1N1 Vaccination Clinic held earlier this year at Wylie High School.

County, volunteers join forces to fight historical outbreak of Swine Flu (H1N1)

By Pamela NISHIMOTO

Homeland Security and Health Care Services worked together to respond to the H1N1 (swine flu) global pandemic, the world's first flu pandemic in over 40 years.

Partnerships with local hospitals, urgent care centers, non-profit health providers and pharmacies enabled the public to access the H1N1 vaccine at more than 68 rural and urban Collin County locations.

In addition, three clinics targeting the rural communities around Anna, Farmersville and Wylie, provided the public with free H1N1 vaccinations.

Government and community outreach partners included 17 cities and towns, 12 school districts, 10 Chamber of Commerce and business trade groups, 5 college campuses, multiple county agencies, community service groups, non-profits, and regional news media outlets.

More than 100 Collin County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, ranging from nurses, health care executives and Boy Scouts to retirees, college students, and bilingual translators, served at the local vaccination clinics.

The clinics assisted Collin County in assessing the capabilities of the MRC to respond to a public health emergency.

The outreach clinics were the first time MRC volunteers provided mass vaccination to the public. For information on joining the MRC, which includes both medical and non-medical volunteers, contact the Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator, Maria Stephens at mstephens@co.collin.tx.us or (972) 548-5539.

In this Issue ...

… We have a large group of folks who retired from Collin County after long runs of public service. Check out their track records on pages 3, 6 and 7. Plus, there are quite a few others celebrating their work anniversaries who have earned mention.

County lauded for financial prowess

County Auditor **Jeff MAY** holds the latest Award of Financial Reporting Achievement (AFRA) from the Government Finance Officers Association, the 31st consecutive year Collin County has received the award.

The award arrived here just recently, but was for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Fiscal Year 2008.

The AFRA is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its presentation to a county represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Mr. May says the award was earned by the County, not just the Auditor's Office.

"Our external auditors must certify the report and it takes the work of all departments in the county to accomplish this," he said.

This award was also earned under the direction of **Don COZAD,** who retired last year, and his hard-working staff.

Collin joins the 'Gold Circle'

Collin County has earned a Gold Leadership Circle Award by scoring 15 of fifteen possible points on ratings criteria for open government by the Texas Comptroller.

In March, the Comptroller's Office recognized the county for leading the way for the government transparency in the recent past.

The Comptroller spotlights local governments that:

- Open their books to the public;
- Provide clear, consistent pictures of spending;
- Share information in a user-friendly format that lets taxpayers easily drill down for more information.

Seven consecutive years of excellence

For the seventh straight year, the Texas Historical Commission has presented the Collin County Historical Commission with a Distinguished Service Award, recognizing the county commission's level and quality of commitment and activity in historical preservation and education. A handful of the 17-member, all-volunteer commission were on hand in Commissioners Court in late March for the award presentation. From left, **Erma BEESON**, **Carole LOWE**, **Rita ROOSE**, **Larry COLLINS**, **Pamela NISHIMOTO**, **Loydell SEWARD** (chair), and **Bruce McFADDEN**.

The **Collin County** ***Connection*** is published six times a year for county employees by the Public Information Office, with a lot of technical assistance from the good people in Information Technology's GIS Department. Please submit your articles, anniversaries, announcements, classified ads, good deeds and atta–boys (and girls) in plain text email to: publicrelations@collincountytx.gov. Please send in your material by email, in plain text, and attach photos or art to the email. Classified ads and announcements are published on a space-available basis for county employees only.

30 years of county work

County Clerk **Stacey KEMP** (l.) stands with **Carol WARDEN** during Carol's retirement reception in late March in the Commissioners Courtroom, as she formally ended a 30-year run with Collin County. Enjoy your retirement, Carol!

After 24 years, a little time off

Justice of the Peace Pct. 3-2 **John PAYTON** reads a resolution honoring Velda WILLIAMS (r.) during a Commissioners Court meeting on March 29. Velda's coworkers threw her another party a few days later in appreciation for her contributions to the Justice Courts for almost a quarter of a century.

CSCD welcomes new officers

Collin County's Community Supervision and Corrections Department recently welcomed two new community supervision officers to its Plano staff.

Dustin HENSON comes to us from Harris County Pre-Trial Services, where he worked for the past three years. Dustin graduated from the University of Houston with a B.S. in Criminal Justice. He is a native Texan, born and raised in the Houston area. He's a football and baseball fan and, in his spare time, enjoys working out and spending time with his family.

Terra MEADORS is an experienced officer who comes to us from Tarrant County CSCD, where she worked for three years in Court, Bonds and Pre-Trial Services during her tenure. Terra is a native Texan, born and raised in Gatesville. She has a B.A. and M.A. in Criminal Justice from The University of Texas at Arlington. Terra enjoys playing softball and is a big fan of baseball and football. She is also active with the Live Strong Foundation and the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

New Employee in Facilities

Rickee HARRIS, Tech II HVAC Controls Specialist, started in the Facilities Maintenance Department last fall. Rickee maintains, installs, and performs preventive maintenance on the Energy Management System (EMS). He also installs and maintains the software and hardware, so that the control room can monitor the system's automation.

Rickee holds an Associates Degree in *Applied Science & Construction Management Technology*. He has a wide range of experience from construction to oil field work, but the majority of his experience is building automation controls at Texas Instruments and Raytheon.

Hunting, fishing, woodworking, welding-western crafts are among Rickee's hobbies and interests. He has coached little league football and baseball, and has three grown children: Brandon, 27, a student at the University of Texas; Tanner, 23, an Emergency Medical Technician; and Kari, 20, a student at Texas A&M. Originally from Sweetwater, Rickee considers Gunter home now.

Facilities Spotlight: Mark Crull

An important facet of Facilities Management is the Control Room, supervised by Planner/Scheduler **Mark CRULL.**

Mark has been employed with the County for 20 years, and began his career in the mailroom. Later, he was hired by Facilities Maintenance as a Control Room Operator and in 1996 Mark was promoted to the Management Team as a Planner/Scheduler.

The Planner/Scheduler position was created 20 years ago to keep up with maintenance work orders, and watch over the Facilities Maintenance Control Room, which is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Since the creation of the Planner/Scheduler, the duties have changed dramatically. Facilities Maintenance is regulated by sundry state statutes, city codes, Life Safety Codes and Senate Bills. Mark supervises six Control Room Operators who work in two 12-hour shifts. Mark is also on-call 24 hours a day for all Control Room issues or equipment failures. His team also provides coverage for the Parts and Tool Room when needed.

But his duties don't stop there. Overseeing utility billing, monitoring the fire alarm system, generators, elevators, emergency management system are some more of this responsibilities. His team also monitors and records the security camera information that feeds from the Bloomdale Courthouse, University Drive Courts Facility, Administration Building, Myers Park and Central Plant.

He even oversees pest control and, handles complaints about vending machines. Additionally, Mark ensures that the Control Room equipment is functioning correctly, such as security cameras, fire systems, heating and cooling systems, and water-treatment monitoring.

Under Mark's direction, the Facilities Maintenance Control Room also sets in motion the proper procedures emergencies like security breeches, inclement weather, flooding within a building, or fire.

Mark is married to **Marie CHACON**, who is an employee in the Budget Department. They have four (4) daughters, Jade (6), Cadence (4), Ashley (26) and Lindsey (23). Mark is from Indiana but has called Texas home for 25 years. Mark's family is his number one priority and spends as much quality time with them as possible. He enjoys sports and sailing, and has a big interest in motorcycles.

Join us in saying "thank you" for all that Mark does to help the county run a bit smoother.

— Patty HLADIK

Honduras

Probation officer takes leave for a mission of mercy

BY Leigh RILEY

This was my second year to be chosen as a missionary to Honduras, supported by the mangers and staff of the Community Services and Corrections Department, who take on many of my duties so that I can make the weeklong effort.

Each year the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration goes about the task of coordinating travel, finances, medicines, and tools needed for the trip, and is joined by missionaries from four other local churches.

Each missionary commits to raising the money for their own travel, food, and housing, and Feb. 6-13 we headed *Le Ceiba* (Hint: If you G*oogle* the map, it's on the east coast).

We based our work out of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The church tells mission leaders each year what they need done.

The only thing we are to bring is a servant's heart, and the flexibility to switch assignments at the last second based on local needs.

Honduras is an incredibly beautiful land, full of mountains, jungle and ocean views. It is also poor. One Honduran member of our mission team earns $7.50 in U.S. Dollars weekly for the same hours you and I work each week.

Last year I worked in construction, finishing an 11th-grade classroom for the church school, doing repairs around the campus, and building units for the children to store there belongings in during the day. My long-lapsed wood working skills got dusted off – as did my nickname from last year -- "*Chopsaw*".

(Continued on page 5)

Leigh "Chopsaw" RILEY, second from left, and her fellow missionaries in Honduras.

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This year I worked on the medical team, returning to the first job I ever held as a pharmacy technician. Standing on my feet for long hours each day at age 54 is a different experience than when I did it as a teenager. The medical team worked three different sites, the most significant of which, to me, was the tiny community of *La Linea*, where 17 families built a small village along the remains of a railroad track on a palm plantation.

They are essentially squatters and everything they have developed could be razed without warning. While our medical team did triage under a grove of palm trees, the Christian Education team did a wonderful job of entertaining the children and keeping them out of the bags of medicines and other thrilling supply bags to explore.

The eye-glass team helped fit people for glasses at *La Linea* and two other locations. Imagine not being able to see clearly until you are in your 40's. The people of *La Linea* cross the local river on the dangerous remains of an ancient railway trestle, but a construction project helped them rebuild the bridge to almost new status.

I have to stress that we assist the Honduran people, and no one stands by and watches us work. It is a side-by-side process and a profoundly humbling one. I hope next year that a friend from the Sheriff's Office will be joining us on the journey. I've been invited to work a few "extra" days on the island of *Roatan* which, despite its glossy reputation as a cruise ship port, is in many ways in deeper need of services than the mainland.

I've been asked many times why I go to Honduras to help instead of doing good deeds here. I'm involved in several projects here in McKinney. But in Honduras, there are so many constant reminders for me to be humble, and to do as I've been instructed to do by God.

For me, that is to leave the places where I am most comfortable and seek to share the many blessings and gifts I've been granted. I can think of no better way to demonstrate what is the true heart of the United States.

Leigh RILEY is a program administrator for CSCD in Plano.

Keeping SCORE at Myers Park

Left to Right: Officer **Mark LEWIS**, Lt. **Amy LANIER**, Officer **Ella EVEN**, Myers Park Manager **Judy FLORENCE**, and Officer **Tommy GILBERT**. These officers oversee the SCORE workers who assisted the Collin County Master Gardeners (not pictured) with several garden projects at Myers Park & Event Center. Over the past year they have assisted Dr. **Greg CHURCH** of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and **Dave SPADONI** of the Collin County Master Gardener Association with the completion of multiple projects at the park. Through the cooperative efforts of these groups, the County saved more than $41,400 in design, labor, funding assistance and donations.

Recognition

Retirement after 24 yrs

Judy MERVICKER of the Tax Office gives a big smile to well-wishers during her retirement reception in late March. Judy worked in motor vehicle, property tax, accounting and administration in the tax office, and even took the time to help the County Clerk for a couple of years as bookkeeper. **Ken MAUN**, Tax Assessor Collector said Judy has been working with the cities and schools on Truth in Taxation issues and on the office budget.

30-Year Anniversary

▲ **Pam REYNOLDS** receives her 30-year service pin to Collin County from Constable **Paul ELKINS**. Pam, who is currently Constable Elkins' administrative secretary, spent time in the law library and with the district clerk's office before coming to Precinct 1 almost 27 years ago.

▸ **District Clerk Anniversaries:** (l-r) **Laura AKINS,** 10 years; District Clerk **Hannah KUNKLE; Sylvia GREER**, 15 years; and Chief Deputy Clerk **Patricia CRIGGER.**

Ashley GIDNEY ▸ received her 5-year service pin from Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 **Paul RALEEH**.

▸ **Public Works Anniversaries** (l-r)**: Donnie PATE**, 15 years; **Gary CHRISTIAN**, 10 years; Commissioner **Joe JAYNES**; **Rex REAGAN**, 10 years; **Donald RAGSDALE**, 10 years; AND, **Jimmie FEAGINS**, 10 years.

Krista GANNON ▲ receives her 5-year service pin from **Mike COMBEST** of Juvenile Probation.

▸ **Dianna SHINE** (l), Deputy Clerk II in the County Court at Law Clerks, receives her 5-year service pin from **Kellie McCLELLAN** in February.

CSCD Anniversaries:

Denise AYRES, Secretary, 15 years; **Mona NEEDHAM**, Caseworker, 5 years.

80 Years of Service?

Combined, yes. Four Sheriff's office employees were recognized for 20 years of service in January: Deputy **Bruce FERGUSON**, Lt. **Raymond McNEME**, Lt. **William PONDER**, and Capt. **Becky BORTON**. Sheriff **Terry BOX** presented 20-Year Plaques to each one individually and thanked them for their dedicated service with the Collin County Sheriff's Office.

Palmisano Signs with Oklahoma Wesleyan Univ.

Congratulations to **Steffanie PALMISANO** who recently signed with Oklahoma Wesleyan University on both softball and academic scholarships. Steffanie is the daughter of Major **Pam PALMISANO** and husband, **Mike**. She is currently a senior at McKinney Boyd High School and is a member of the National Honor Society, McKinney HOSA and Teen Leadership. She is a pitcher for the select team, Texas Pirettes, and also plays left field and second base positions. The Pirettes are competitors in State, National and Gold Tournaments. Steffanie's career goal is to earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing while enrolled at Oklahoma Wesleyan.

Retirement after 17 years

◂ Congratulations and best wishes are extended to Detention Officer **Clifford DICKERSON**, who retired in February, with 17 years of service with the Collin County Sheriff's Office. Friends and family were on hand as Sheriff Box congratulated Officer Dickerson and presented him with a Retirement Plaque and a commemorative Challenge Coin.

A Swearing In

▴ Transfer Deputy **Tim PATTERSON** was recently sworn in as a Deputy by Sheriff Box.

20 years as a SO Negotiator

Deputy **Fred EDWARDS** ▴ recently retired from the Crisis Negotiator Team, and was honored by Sheriff Box with a plaque commemorating 20 years of service on the team. Deputy Edwards is one of the charter members of the negotiator team with 22 years of service with the Collin County Sheriff's Office. His experience and wisdom in crisis negotiations made him a great asset to the team.

Announcements/Etc.

She's Snow Angel

Oh, sure, it's Spring now — but it hasn't been that long since Marie CHACON of Budget & Finance took a morning break to make a snow angel on the lawn of the Administration Building. Unfortunately, our camera didn't catch the random snowball attacks that broke out among employees in the parking lot as more than eight inches of the white stuff blanketed this part of North Texas.

Nabbed 'em

County Judge **Keith SELF** commends **Richard DOAN** of Public Works for his role in catching two men dumping refuse illegally on County Road 588 recently. Richard called authorities, confronted the suspects, and waited for police to show up to press charges.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ryan James MEEHAN ▸ : Born Feb. 5, 2010 at Baylor Hospital in Dallas; nine pounds, eight ounces; 21 inches long. Parents: Sgt. **Chris MEEHAN**, Sheriff's Office and wife **Kelly MEEHAN**, Mesquite Police Dept.

Emelyn Effie Frances JOHNSON ▸ : Born Dec. 1, 2009; seven pounds, 10 ounces; 19 inches long. Parents: **Josh** and **Erica JOHNSON** (Human Resources).

Joseph Bryan YOUNG: Graduated Dec. 19, 2009 from Texas A&M at Galveston with a Bachelor's Degree in Maritime Administration. His proud Mom is **Tele YOUNG** of Healthcare Services. Gig'em Aggies!

LOST & FOUND

FOUND: a ladies necklace in the parking lot of the 380 Courts Facility. If you have lost one you can call me at Ext. 6472 and identify the necklace to claim it.

FOR SALE

LAND FOR SALE: One Acre in *Thoroughbred Estates* in Bells. Professional Survey comes with land. Electric and water already set up. No buyer agent fees paid. Please contact Janna at 214-733-9215.

WASHER & DRYER: Maytag Centennial Washer & Dryer Set, $450. Bought 2009 New. Please bring your own Truck. Call: 214-585-221.

WANTED: Running or non-running riding lawn mowers and tillers. Please call Chuck, 214-726-5780.