

“Straight from City Hall”  
January 2010

It is a new year and the City is moving at a fast pace! It has been an honor for me to have had the opportunity to lead our beautiful City for another year with all its challenges and opportunities.

There is a vision in all that we are planning, everything that we have undertaken and all that we plan to do, it is rebuilding the foundation of our City. We are creating conditions that will allow our City to prosper and grow by planning and conducting studies. The planning and studies provide the data that is necessary for the development of future projects and continued growth of our City. The projects that I discuss below are the beginning stages of a much larger vision.

**Planning & Capacity Building Fund:** The City of Del Rio entered into a contract with the team of Esser & Company, from Uvalde, Texas and TRC Engineers, Inc. from Austin, Texas for professional planning services. These services will include; Base Mapping, Housing Inventory, Analysis, and Plan, Population, Land Use Inventory, Analysis and Plan, Street System Inventory, Analysis, and Plan, Recreation and Open Space Inventory, Analysis and Plan, Capital Improvements Program, and Zoning Information and Map. The total estimated project cost is \$58,900. The City of Del Rio was awarded \$48,900 for planning studies from appropriations for the Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Program of the United States Department of Housing & Urban Development. The City of Del Rio will be responsible for a \$10,000 local match contribution toward the cost of the project. This study will greatly benefit the City of Del Rio by providing much needed data that can be used in seeking funding and planning for projects that will allow us to address the needs of the City. The project studies are expected to be completed during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2010.

**Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant:** The City of Del Rio was awarded \$156,300 as a direct formula grant as part of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program, with no local match contribution toward the cost of the project required. This grant was part of the President’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The program empowers local communities to make strategic investments to meet the nation’s long-term goals for energy independence and leadership on climate change.

The City of Del Rio’s energy and conservation strategy is currently in development but focuses on improving and revitalizing aging infrastructure with new energy efficient systems throughout City facilities. The \$156,300 EECBG funding will be used for the following energy and conservation strategies in our community:

- *Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory, Climate Action Plan, & Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy:* This project will be used to further move the City toward the final development of our energy efficiency and conservation strategy to improve energy efficiency to our existing facilities. The estimated completion date of this project is February 2010.
- *Recycling Awareness & Education Program:* This program introduces an award winning environmental program as recognized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as the winner of the 2005 Texas Environmental Excellence Award in the Environmental Education category. This program features ‘Toby Globy’ the program’s earth loving mascot that teaches simple environmental and ecological awareness and solutions to students grades Pre-kinder through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. ‘Toby Globy’ was introduced to City Council during the January 12,

2010 meeting and is scheduled to make appearances throughout our school district beginning in February 2010.

- *Traffic and Street Light Retrofit:* This project will retrofit 128 incandescent traffic lighting bulbs and fixtures to low energy LED traffic lights and 16 pedestrian crossing lights to LED. By doing this our energy savings will be at least 50% and will drastically reduce CO2 emissions. The estimated completion date of retrofit is June 2010.
- *Civic Center Marquee Retrofit:* The fluorescent bulb Civic Center marquee will be replaced with an energy saving LED display. The new Civic Center Marquee is expected to be installed and operating by April 2010.

**Master Drainage Study:** The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program's FY 2008 annual grant cycle was funded under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 (the Act). The Joint Explanatory Statement to the Act included non-binding recommendations regarding the funding of projects in Texas that were identified by location, activity type and funding level. Through this Program the City of Del Rio received a Congressional earmark in the amount of \$600,000 for a Flood Mitigation Study. The City of Del Rio will be responsible for a \$200,000 local match contribution toward the cost of the study.

The Master Drainage Study will allow us to identify flood/drainage hazards and to then prioritize projects based on information presented in the study. Lacking a comprehensive flood/drainage study, we cannot be certain that we are moving to solve our current and future flood/drainage in the most effective and cost efficient manner. The City advertised a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from Engineering Firms to conduct the Master Drainage Study. Currently the City of Del Rio Engineering Department is evaluating the RFQ's that were submitted prior to the December 2009 close date and will make a recommendation to City Council by the end of March 2010.

To complete the projects that are identified by the studies mentioned above requires the next step to be followed; securing proper funding for the development of the recommended projects. The data that is derived from the studies is critical supporting information needed in securing funding from Federal and State agencies.

Our City under the leadership of our City Council is moving in a direction to improve practices that help further sustainable goals for our City. I welcome the challenge of planning adequate infrastructure and resources for a growing population — all while improving quality of life for current and future residents.