

Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan



CITY OF VERNON, TEXAS

April 2009

Prepared by:

Monica Wilkinson

Community Development Director

City of Vernon, Texas

Acknowledgements

CITY COMMISSION

JEFF BEARDEN – MAYOR

PHIL MCCUISTION

JIMMY DENNIS

TRA CARDWELL

RUSSELL BROWNLOW

CITY STAFF

MITCH GRANT – CITY MANAGER

LINDA BYERS – CITY SECRETARY

ANNE GARMON – FINANCE DIRECTOR

MONICA WILKINSON – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

BOB COCHRAN – PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

RICHARD GUGGISBURG – PARKS DEPARTMENT SUPERINTENDENT

SPECIAL APPRECIATION TO DR. JAMIE RAY WALKER & DR. SCOTT SHAFER OF THE RECREATION, PARK, AND TOURISM SCIENCES DEPARTMENT, TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AT COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS FOR THEIR GUIDANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
List of Figures.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Community Profile.....	6
Goals & Objectives.....	9
Plan Development Process.....	10
Inventory of Areas & Facilities.....	12
City Facilities.....	15
Other Publicly-Owned Facilities.....	22
Private Facilities.....	22
Needs Assessment & Identification	23
Public Hearings.....	24
Focus Groups.....	25
Standard-Based Analysis.....	33
Resource-Based Analysis.....	35
Future Park Improvement Recommendations & Plan Implementation.....	36
Prioritization of Needs.....	36
Existing Park Improvement Recommendations.....	36
Future Projects & Acquisition Recommendations.....	43
Implementation of Park Plan.....	45
Appendices.....	49
Appendix A – Focus Group Handouts.....	50
Appendix B – Master Plan Newsprint.....	53
Appendix C – Additional Existing Park Photos.....	59
Appendix D – Focus Group Priority Sheets.....	60
Appendix E – Top Priorities of Focus Groups.....	71

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Regional Location Map.....	6
Figure 1.2: Vernon Ethnic Composition.....	7
Figure 1.3: Median Family Income Comparison.....	8
Figure 2.1: Location of City of Vernon Parks.....	13
Figure 2.2: City of Vernon Parks Facility Summary.....	14
Figure 4.1: List of Community Focus Groups.....	26
Figure 4.2: Focus Group Ethnic Composition.....	27
Figure 4.3: Priorities from the Wrap-up Group.....	32
Figure 4.4: Standard-based Analysis of Park Acreage.....	33
Figure 4.5: Standard-based Analysis of Park Facilities.....	34
Figure 5.1: Top Community Park System Priorities.....	36
Figure 5.2: Immediate Plan of Action.....	46
Figure 5.3: 5 Year Plan of Action.....	47
Figure 5.4: 10 Year Plan of Action.....	48

INTRODUCTION

This plan outlines the methods, results and recommendations of the parks master plan research project. The plan is intended to be used by elected city officials and staff as a guideline for the improvement and development of parks, recreation and open space within the City of Vernon over the next 10 years. The introductory section of the plan will introduce the community, present goals and objectives for the city park system, and discuss the creation of the park master plan.

I. Community Profile

The City of Vernon is located in rural north central Texas and is the county seat of Wilbarger County (Figure 1.1). It is a home-ruled city with a mayor/manager form of government.

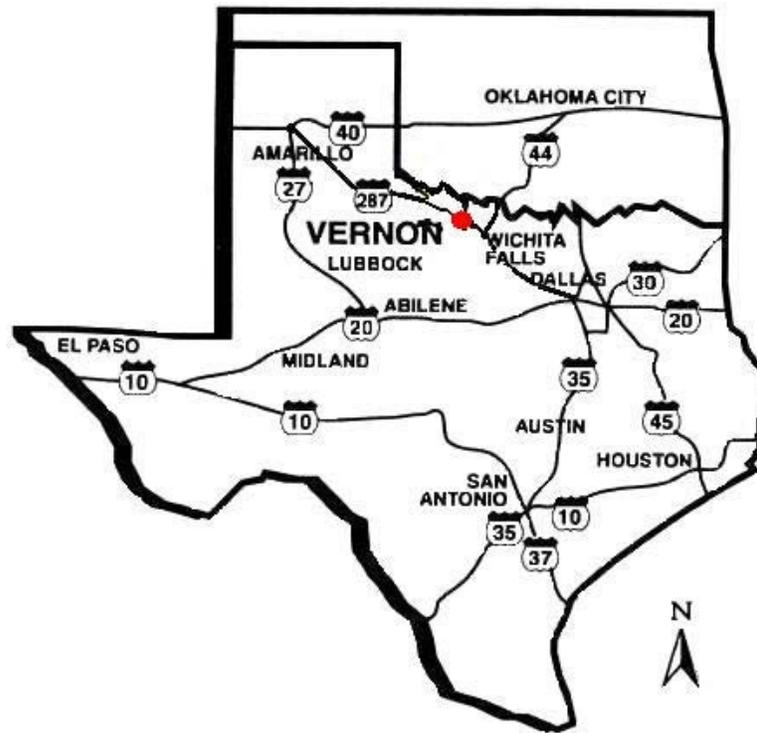


Figure 1.1: Regional Location Map

Vernon is regional center of commerce, banking, and recreation located 180 miles west of the Dallas / Ft.Worth metroplex and 60 miles west of Wichita Falls, cities that are both expanding into undeveloped areas on the fringe. Using population projections from the Texas State Data Center, Vernon is positioned as a City that could grow in coming years as urban and suburban residents migrate to rural communities near larger urban centers such as Wichita Falls. Additionally, Vernon is expected to follow the state ethnic trend with an increase in those claiming Hispanic ethnicity.

The 2000 Census listed the population of Vernon as 11,660 and the population of Wilbarger County as 14,676. The Texas State Data Center estimated the population of Vernon to be 11,579 as of January 2008. According to 2000 census data, Vernon is 48% male and 52% female with a median age of 36.4. Seventy-six percentage of the population is categorized as white, 10% black or African American, and 14% as other (Figure 1.2). Twenty-five percent of Vernon claim Hispanic ethnicity.

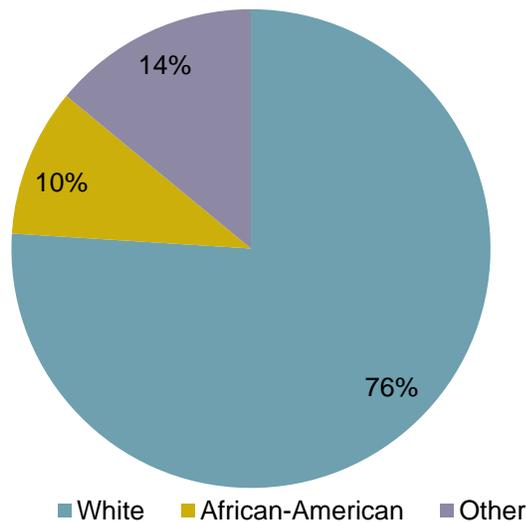


Figure 1.2: Vernon Racial Composition

The median family income in 1999 was \$36,913; well below the national median of \$50,046 (Figure 1.3). Also according to the 2000 U.S. Census, 14.1% of Vernon residents live below the poverty level as compared to 12.4% of the total U.S. population. Seventy-one percent of Vernon residents have at least a high school diploma but only 15%, as compared to 24% nationally, have obtained a college degree. In a nutshell, Vernon residents are predominantly white, middle-class citizens who are less educated and subsequently receive less income than the majority of U.S. citizens.

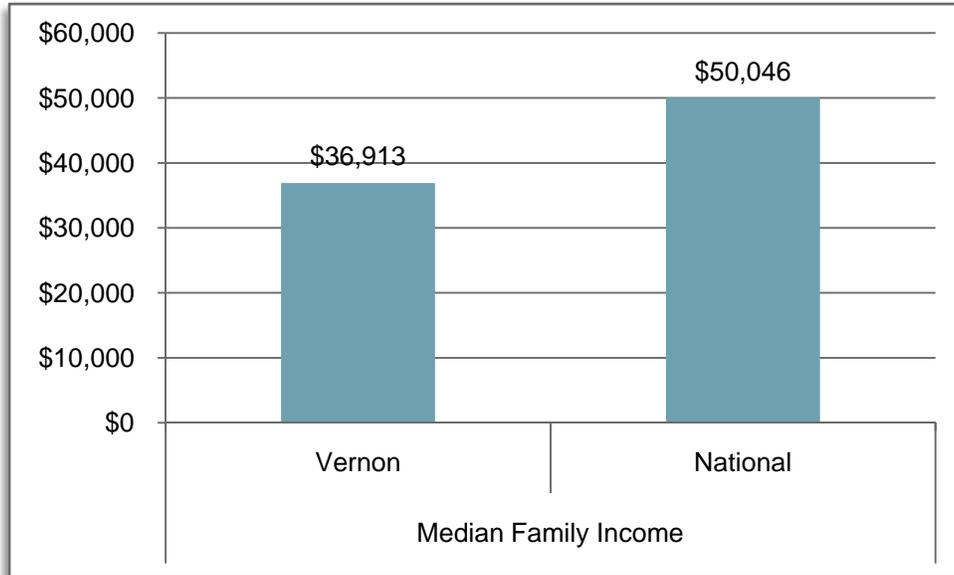


Figure 1.3: Median Family Income Comparison

The Parks and Cemetery Department is responsible for maintaining city parks. The department consists of a departmental superintendant, one full time employee and several seasonal employees. The Parks Department is under direction of the Public Works Division. Historically, the City has worked closely with area schools, civic organizations, and the local Boys and Girls Club in providing and supporting recreational opportunities within the city. Recent park projects have focused on updating outdated and hazardous playground equipment and adding new facilities such as a multi-purpose trail and volleyball court to existing parks. The community has been planning to construct a new swimming pool / aquatics center for the past several years and has recently been working with a local civic group to build a skate park.



II. Goals & Objectives

The following goals and objectives allow the City of Vernon to measure their success of accomplishing the *Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan*. The goals and objectives listed are a reflection of the community's needs and values as expressed through the needs assessment process. Cognizant that goals and priorities change; this plan is to be reviewed and updated every five years.

Goal 1: *Enhance the quality of recreational facilities within the City's existing park system.*

Objectives

- 1.1 To renovate and upgrade existing parks, fields, and playgrounds.
- 1.2 To improve the safety of existing parks within the City of Vernon.
- 1.3 To improve the maintenance of existing parks within the City of Vernon.

Goal 2: *Create an equitable park system with a variety of facilities and parks that meet the needs of a diverse population.*

Objectives

- 2.1 To ensure that all new and existing neighborhood parks are consistent in the quality of facilities, maintenance, and service provided by the City.
- 2.2 To recognize the special needs of youth, teens, senior citizens & the handicapped when designing and improving facilities.
- 2.3 To recognize diversity in ethnicity and cultural heritage (especially in regards to prevailing demographic trends) when designing and improving facilities.

Goal 3: *Provide a full spectrum of recreational facilities, parks, and opportunities for the City and region which are sensitive to the local environment and economy.*

Objectives

- 3.1 To consider local ecosystems and the environment; especially in regards to soil and water conservation, groundwater protection, and habitat preservation, when improving the City park system.
- 3.2 To consider the economic limits/constraints of the community and act with fiscal responsibility when improving the City park system.
- 3.3 To provide an adequate amount of park, recreation, and open space acres and facilities to support a quality standard of living for community residents.

III. Plan Development Process

The City of Vernon has been in need of a master park plan for some time. Recently a number of events have aligned allowing the City to properly plan for the future of their parks system via the commissioning of a master park plan.

In 2005, cracks in the old swimming pool became too costly to repair and as a result the City's only public pool closed. For the past four years residents have been forced to drive to public swimming pools in neighboring communities, some over an hour away, to gain respite from the unyielding heat of West Texas summers. In 2002, the City Commission appointed an ad hoc swimming pool committee charged with the task of planning for the construction of a new pool or aquatics center. After some time and turnover in city administration the old committee disbanded and a new one was appointed (with many of the original members) in July 2008 with the same task.

All the while, the success of a 2008-09 park improvement project fueled a renewed interest in the City's park and recreational facilities. Local volunteer and grant writer, Meg Filbey Heatly obtained a \$50,000 small community matching grant from Texas Park and Wildlife Department (TPWD) which enabled the City to install a multi-purpose trail, new playground equipment, fitness equipment, a grass volleyball court, and a community xeriscaped garden at one of their oldest and most centrally-located parks. The response from the public was overwhelming as usage at the park increased dramatically. As a result, City staff, commissioners and residents were reminded of the importance of park and recreational opportunities in improving a community's morale and quality of living.

In 2008, the predominantly new City Commission set out to respond to the park and recreation concerns of the community and directed Community Development Director Monica Wilkinson to undertake an in-house study of the community's park and recreation needs. This master park plan is a result of the community park system needs assessment.

A public hearing was held in January 2009 to hear a location report from the swimming pool committee and for Community Development Director Monica Wilkinson to introduce the park planning process. Focus group meetings were facilitated with representative community groups throughout the months of February and March. At second public hearing in April, focus group data results

were presented to the community for comment. The plan was presented to the City of Vernon City Commission for comment and approval on April 28, 2009.

Inventory of Areas & Facilities

One of the first steps of the master plan process was to take inventory of current park and recreation facilities within the City (Figure 2.1). The areas and facilities are categorized into city facilities, other publicly-owned facilities and private facilities. A summary of City parks and other publicly-owned and accessible facilities are listed in Figure 2.2.

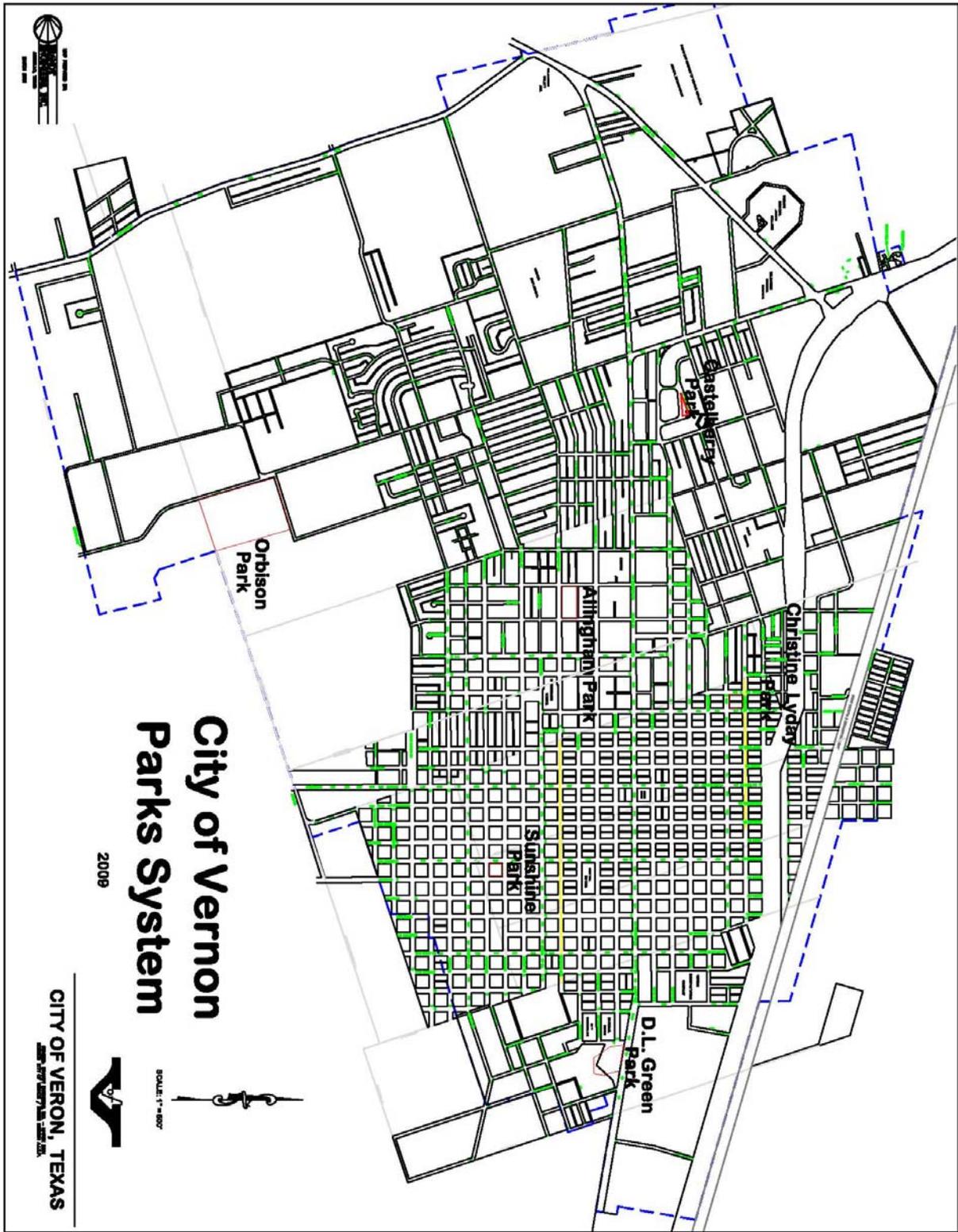


Figure 2.1: Location of City of Vernon Parks

City of Vernon Publicly-Accessible Parks Facility Summary

	Restrooms	Picnic Area	Multi-purpose Trail	Playground	Toddler Playground	Fitness Equipment	Volleyball Court	Basketball Court	Soccer Field	Baseball/Softball Field	Tennis Courts	Gazebo	Clubhouse	Bird watching Area
City-Owned Parks														
Allingham	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
Castelberry														•
D.L. Green	•	•		•	•									
Christine Lyday	•	•		•				•						
Orbison	•	•		•	•				•			•	•	•
Sunshine										•				
School Parks/Facilities														
Vernon High School			•						•	•	•			
Central Elementary School				•				•						
McCord Elementary School				•				•						
Shive Elementary School				•				•						
Vernon Middle School								•	•					
Other Publicly Accessible Parks														
Booker T. Washington Gym	•						•	•						
Vernon Boys and Girls Club	•			•			•	•						

Figure 2.2: City of Vernon Parks Facility Summary

I. City Facilities

The City of Vernon manages and maintains six (6) city parks totaling approximately 20 acres. Five of the six parks are considered neighborhood parks. Orbison is the largest at approximately 8 acres and is the only community park with the City.

The City of Vernon also owns 21.77 acres of land near the Pease River of which 18.05 are leased to the Wilbarger County Council of Campfire Girls for their summer camp and programs. The remaining 3.72 acres are used as a fire training ground for our local fire department. The City's old swimming pool is also located on the 3.72 acre parcel. Each of the six city-owned and operated parks is highlighted in the following pages. Additional photographs of existing parks can be found in Appendix C.



Allingham Park

Allingham Park is one of the oldest parks in the city. The construction of a multi-purpose trail and installation of a volleyball court, fitness equipment, and new playground equipment in 2007-08 has increased usage of the park tremendously. Recent participation rates are estimated to be 500 per week in the spring, summer, and fall and 50 per week during the winter months. Families, individuals, civic groups and area daycares and schools come to the centrally-located neighborhood park for reunions, play-dates, field trips, and to exercise and walk their pets. Park usage is particularly high on weekends.

Size:	4 acres
Location:	Corner of Tolar and Yamparika
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Multi-purpose trail, playground, toddler playground, fitness equipment, volleyball court, picnic areas, and restrooms.



Castelberry Park

Castelberry Park is a small neighborhood nature park consisting primarily of trees and turf. The park does not have constructed facilities and is used mostly as a greenspace for aesthetics, relaxing and birding.

Size:	< 1 acre
Location:	Corner of Park Lane and Buffalo Street
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	None



D.L. Green Park

Constructed within the last twenty years, D.L. Green is a relatively new park on the eastside of town. Although participation rates are low at an estimated 5 per week, the completion of a multi-purpose event center adjacent to the park will undoubtedly increase usage in the months and years to come. The space currently acts as a pleasant picnic and rest area for participants in equine events held at the bordering Bradley 4-H Arena. The new event center coupled with a proposed skate park facility at D.L. Green will help users make better use of new and existing facilities.

Size:	3 acres
Location:	300 block of East Wilbarger
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Playground, toddler playground, picnic areas, and restrooms



Christine Lyday Park

Christine Lyday Park is located in the north-central part of Vernon. It too is a relatively new park which is made up of an entire city block. The park offers restroom facilities, playground equipment, picnic tables, and a lighted basketball court. The City estimates that the park is used by approximately 70 individuals per week and as other parks within the city, is used much more frequently in the spring, summer, and fall than in the winter. In particular, the park is used frequently for neighborhood celebrations, picnicking, and reunions.

Size:	2 acres
Location:	Corner of Wanderer and Houston
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Playground, basketball court, picnic area, baseball/softball practice field and restrooms



Orbison Park

Orbison Park is the largest park in Vernon. Located in the southern most part of the City, Orbison Park provides playground equipment, covered picnic areas, BBQ grills, fields for organized sports such as soccer, softball and baseball, as well as a gazebo and clubhouse available for rent. The clubhouse is equipped with restrooms, heating and air conditioning, a full kitchen, a covered pavilion space and ample parking. It is used for everything from meetings, training sessions, and community events to reunions, receptions, and dances. The community's very popular Summer's Last Blast car show takes place at Orbison Park in August of each year. It is estimated that Orbison Park is used by an average of 70 persons per week during most of the year and by 250 per week during the summer soccer and little league season. The Lion's Club operates 8-10 baseball fields for the summer Little League baseball program at Kid League Ball Park.

Size:	7-8 acres
Location:	4400 block of Sand Road
Park Classification:	Community Park
Amenities:	Playground, toddler playground, picnic area, soccer fields, baseball and softball fields, gazebo, clubhouse, bird watching area, and restrooms



Sunshine Park

Sunshine Park is comprised of a city block in the southeast part of town and is mostly utilized as a practice field for kid league baseball and softball. The largely undeveloped space was home to the former Sunshine Orphan Home. It is occasionally used for soccer practice and walking pets as well.

Size:	2 acres
Location:	Corner of Indian and Eagle
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Baseball and softball fields

II. Other Publicly-Owned Facilities

(*Publicly accessible facilities at no cost)

- Vernon College..... Memberships or fees offer access to an indoor pool, gymnasium, and exercise/workout facilities.
- Hillcrest Country Club.....Memberships or fees offer access to tennis courts, a swimming pool, and a 9-hole golf course.
- Vernon High School* Walking track circling football stadium and tennis courts are accessible to public; softball / baseball / football fields not accessible without permission.
- Vernon Middle School* Basketball and soccer fields
- Shive Elementary* Playground and basketball goals
- Central Elementary* Playground and basketball goals
- McCord Elementary* Playground and basketball goals
- Booker T. Washington Gym*Publicly available and for rent.
- Boys & Girls Club*Facilities including game, craft, cooking, sewing, and art rooms, playground, and gymnasiums available at free or reduced rates.
- Wilbarger County Events Center...Covered events center is available for rent.
- Bradley 4-H Arena & Exhibit Bldg..Available for rent.
- Wilbarger County Auditorium..... Meeting rooms, full-service kitchen, and production stage facilities for rent.

III. Private Facilities

Plaza Theatre

Mr. Jim’s Pizza and gameroom

Various church organization provide playgrounds, gyms, and gamerooms for church members and the community

Needs Assessment & Identification

Data for the Parks Master Plan was collected using various methods. The needs assessment is informed primarily from demand-based data in the form of public hearings and citizen focus groups. A standard-based and resource-based analysis is also utilized in the predominantly grassroots and community-centered needs identification effort.

I. Public Hearings

Open public forums were held before and after the citizen focus group sessions. Both public hearings were part of special meetings of the City of Vernon City Commission. They were advertised in the local newspaper and held at the Wilbarger County Auditorium. Approximately 25-35 individuals ranging in age attended each of the meetings.

The first public hearing was held on the evening of Thursday, January 22, 2009. Community Development Director Monica Wilkinson introduced the City's master park planning process and welcomed input on the focus group research method and proposed focus group categories. Public comment was minimal. Those in attendance generally agreed that the City needed a park master plan and spoke in favor of the citizen focus group method.

Data from the focus groups were presented at a second public hearing on Monday, April 6, 2009. Several citizens emphasized that the City needed to place a higher priority on the parks system and that parks and recreational greenspace, especially trails, were needed and very important to the community. One commented that trails were needed along Sand Road connecting parks and businesses. Some complimented the City's efforts on the Allingham Park improvement project and said that all of the parks needed the same type of improvements and care. Everyone generally agreed that the community was in need of a swimming pool / aquatic center. The idea of creating a lake on Paradise Creek with walking trails was also discussed. Someone also mentioned the idea of building a fishing pond that the Texas Park and Wildlife Department would stock for free. There was some discussion from focus group participants on the way in which priorities were categorized at the wrap-up session.

II. Focus Groups

Citizen focus groups were the key method of data collection for the City parks needs assessment. The nominal group technique (NGT) was utilized and is a unique and effective method of collecting in-depth data from small (5-15 people) and cohesive groups within a community.

The technique encourages like-minded groups to meet with a facilitator on their own terms and in locations where the group is at ease. It seeks collaboration, consensus building and usually provides rich detail beyond that of simple surveys or questionnaires. Special effort was taken to

minimize intimidation and barriers to discussion and participation. Meetings were held when and where group members were the most at ease and available. An



interpreter was used with one church group where Spanish was predominantly spoken. Small, similarly-minded discussion groups are invaluable in that needs of the neighborhood or user-group are quickly identified and easily elaborated upon. The method lends itself to brainstorming, group consensus building, and getting to the root of matter in a short

amount of time. It is collaborative, inclusive and most importantly, an effective grassroots means of getting to the heart of a community's needs and concerns.

Meetings were organized with nine groups from a cross-section of the community [Figure 4.1]. A great amount of time and consideration was put into the selection of the focus groups. Effort was taken to guarantee that the groups selected represented a variety of ages, ethnicities,



economic statuses, and geographic locations. The focus groups were also reviewed and approved by AgriLife Extension Urban Park Specialists from Texas A&M University to ensure adequate and impartial representation of the community. The focus group sessions were facilitated by Community Development Director Monica Wilkinson; some with the assistance of city employee David Pilcher.



Most of the meetings were in the evening and lasted anywhere from one to three hours in duration. Preparation paperwork was usually sent to the organizer or lead contact of the group to distribute before the actual session. These information handout sheets can be found in Appendix A. At the beginning of each session, the facilitator would introduce herself and the project. The participants were asked to sign a participation sheet and fill out a name tag.

Focus Group	# of Participants	Location	Date/Time
Community Leaders (Economic Development Allies)	5	Norman's Catfish	Feb. 4, 2009 7am
Mothers Group	6	Presbyterian Church	Feb. 5, 2009 10am
Seniors Group	11	Chaparral Senior Center	Feb. 10, 2009 10:30am
Holy Family Catholic Church	6	Holy Family Catholic Church	Feb. 11, 2009 5pm
Wood Street Baptist Church	14	Wood Street Baptist Church	Feb. 12, 2009 6pm
Youth Group	12	Mr. Jim's Pizza	Feb. 19, 2009 6pm
Educators Group	6	City Hall	March 2, 2009 5pm
Workers Group (Tyson Employees)	4	Private Residence	March 12, 2009 5pm
Templo Ebenezer	17	Templo Ebenezer	March 31, 2009 7pm
Wrap-up Group	14	City Hall	April 2, 2009 5:30pm

Figure 4.1: List of Community Focus Groups

Each group session was divided into five phases.

1. Individual brainstorming (5-10 minutes) on the input question, ***“What park and recreation facilities and services are needed in Vernon with the next 10 years?”***
2. Facilitator placement of each participant’s ideas (one at a time) on large sheets at the front of the room. (30 minutes to 2 hours)
3. Consolidation of similar ideas by facilitator with group consensus. (10-20 minutes)
4. Prioritization and ranking of consolidated needs. Each participant is given 5 sticky dots to distribute 10 points to the needs listed upon the wall sheets.
5. Further discussion of top priorities when time allowed.

A total of 81 individuals participated in the community focus groups and wrap-up sessions. Forty-six percent were male and 54% were female. Fifty-two percent were white or Anglo while 26% were of Hispanic origin and 22% were African-American (Figure 4.2).

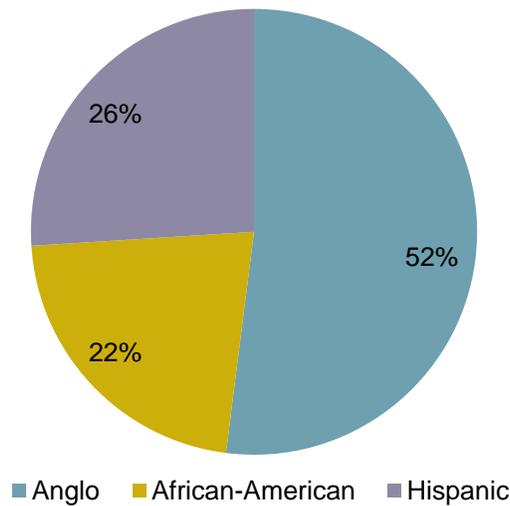


Figure 4.2: Focus Group Ethnic Composition

Group dynamics varied but in general all in attendance participated in the process. Resulting priorities and comments varied from group to group. Please refer to Appendix D for a complete list of priorities from each group.

The first focus group meeting was held with **community leaders** from the Economic Development Allies. The group meets once a month for breakfast so scheduling was not a problem. The City Mayor, Chamber of Commerce Director, County Judge, Business Development Director, and Chamber of Commerce Board President were all in attendance. The group overwhelmingly felt that the community's top need was a swimming pool / aquatic center which they later elaborated upon as needing to be composed of slides, a spray park, wading pool, competition lanes, a lazy river, be handicap accessible and for all ages. They felt a summer use or outdoor pool was needed before an indoor facility. Secondly the group felt that each of the existing

parks needed to be upgraded to offer a full range of recreational and picnic areas. Ranking as number three on their list of priorities, the group stated that improvements such as new playground equipment, trees, landscaping, and paved roads were needed around the existing Christine Lyday Park.

The **mothers** group met on a Thursday morning during one of their playdates at the First Presbyterian Church nursery. Six mothers and their young children participated in the process. Again, the top priority was that of a kid-friendly pool / spray park. They felt that Orbison Park would be an adequate place for the pool but had concern over parking and that it could be hard to find for those who were not from the community. Overall, they want the pool to be well thought out by the City and a safe place for families to recreate. Secondly, the group expressed concern over the condition and care of current parks. They felt that existing playgrounds needed to be updated with safer equipment including fall material. They also noted that the playground equipment is always wet from watering in the morning when they take their children to the park and suggested that maybe a night watering schedule would be better. Equally as important to the mother's group were trails. They felt as if they currently have no place to go and walk or be in nature with their children and families. They would prefer more natural dirt trails, with native landscaping, trees, some benches and diversity.

Eleven **seniors** met at the Chaparral Senior Center at Vernon College. The main concern of seniors in the community is the lack of facilities focused on their particular needs. They were very interested in the possibility of expanding the Chaparral Senior Center to include a waist-deep pool and hot tub facility and even a new exercise room and game/community room. The current center is one large room where with little partition and privacy for various activities. A treadmill is placed next to a reading nook next to tables used for the lunch meal. They agreed that a swimming pool was a community need for the town's youth and young people but really felt that they would greatly benefit from a separate facility geared toward seniors. As a whole, the seniors did not think a swimming pool should be built at at Orbison Park as recommended by the swimming pool committee because according to them, Orbison is too sandy, has poor access, is congested, unsafe in regards to parking and is too far for children to travel on their bicycles. They suggested the pool be placed by the High School or off of Highway 70 where it was more visible and easier to access. Trails were also identified as lacking in the community. They spoke about how nice it would be for the City to install walking trails around a body of water like the facility in the neighboring community of Iowa Park.

Six men met as part of the **Holy Family Catholic Church** group. Most of the women were teaching instructional classes to the youth or cleaning the kitchen during the session. Several of the women were encouraged to join but commented that it was something the men should do. The top priority for this group was lighting. Overall, they felt that all the parks needed to be more adequately lit to make them safer in the evenings. The second highest score was an idea for the City to purchase the local Santa Rosa rodeo grounds outside the city limits. It must be noted that one



participant allocated all of his ten points to this idea giving it a higher ranking yet it is not representative of the group's priorities as a whole. Next, the group really liked the idea of having an outdoor facility for concerts and performances. In line with the other groups, their next highest rank need was that of an aquatics center.

Fourteen citizens from **Wood Street Baptist Church** participated in the focus group process. Wood Street Baptist Church is located on the north side of town in a predominantly African-American neighborhood. This group was very excited about the process and seemed very appreciative of the City's efforts to get input from all sectors of the community. Participants in this group placed a swimming pool/spray park and the community's top need. Secondly, they wanted safer parks, especially better patrolling and enforcement by the City Police Department around their neighborhood park. They discussed the possibility of using security cameras and the posting of rules to help control some of the crime and littering that takes place at various parks. Overall, they expressed over and over their desire to have a safe and clean place for their children to play. They also ranked wanted paved roads and parking lots around current parks. They talked about the idea of having an amphitheatre or pavilion somewhere in the city for outdoor concerts. A reoccurring theme from this group was the desire to have safe parks. For this group a safe park was not a slide with fall material but a place where they could relax and play with their children without the fear of violence or crime.



A group of 10-15 **youth** between the ages of eight and fourteen along with their parents met in the Mr. Jim's gameroom over pizza. The youth were very excited to participate and were overflowing with ideas. Their top priority was a paintball

course. This was a bit surprising as it was expected that they would place a swimming pool at the top of their list. Interesting enough, the paintball idea grew in



popularity the more it was discussed by the youth. It could be that a paintball course is truly needed and desired or perhaps the dynamics of the group influenced the ranking of the idea. Nonetheless, a paintball course was found to be the youth group's top priority. A practice football field came in as number two followed by tie between a swimming pool and walking trails.

A small group of teachers and administrators met at City Hall as part of the **educator's** focus group. This group is important as teachers often have an inside view of the concerns true needs of teens and youth within a community. They were also there representing their demographic as working adults and parents. Topping the educators' list with far more points than competing ideas was that of an aquatic center. When the aquatic center idea was talked about in more detail, many of the teachers expressed the need to have a kid and family friendly pool or spray park. They stated that it should have a separate area for toddlers and small children, slides, a lazy river, and volleyball net. In regards to location, the group felt that the pool should be easy to find and accessible. They suggested building it next to Highway 70 or even at the old pool location. Orbison Park was also discussed as a place to build the pool. Some felt that it was too sandy and were concerned with parking problems at the park. In the end, the group did not come to consensus on a location. In addition to a swimming pool, the group concluded that Vernon is also in need of an adult softball field, improvements of playground equipment at current parks, scenic nature trails, and a city-owned golf course.

One of the last groups to meet was a group of shift **workers** from the Tyson plant in town. This was another small group that met at a private residence. The majority of the group was African-American and female. This group too placed a swimming pool at the top of their list of needs. When asked about the location of the pool they felt that Orbison Park, the old Gibson's store location, or the old pants factory would all be good places for it to be built. They would like to see a pool be built that was safe, kid and family friendly with slides, diving boards and a large, well-trained staff of lifeguards. Secondly, they would like to see improvements such as water fountains, updated playground equipment, better lighting, benches, pavilions, BBQ grills, gazebos, and cleaner restrooms at all of the City's existing parks. Like the Wood Street Baptist Church, the workers group was concerned about the safety of all

parks. They wanted better patrolling of the parks by the Police Department and more enforcement of rules (such as no alcohol, fireworks, drugs, etc.).

The last of the community focus groups to meet was a group from the **Templo Ebenezer** church. This was a large group from the predominantly Hispanic east side of town which required a Spanish interpreter (the local pastor). Most participants understood and spoke English but the pastor felt that it would be a good idea to translate to make sure that all of the ideas were communicated without too much confusion. Seventeen citizens agreed that for them, hiking/biking/walking/nature trails were most needed in the community. Secondly, they want to



see more trees and scenic water elements (fountains) at existing parks. A swimming pool was number three on their final list of priorities. Additionally, they felt that improvements such as newer and safer playground equipment, gazebos, water fountains, trashcans, benches, BBQ grills, bike racks, covered picnic tables, cleaner restrooms, better park maintenance, and better signage was needed at all city parks. In regards to the swimming pool, the church group felt that a new pool facility should be built at either the old pool location or at Orbison park. The facility should include diving boards, slides for small children, safety signs, a lazy river and have adequate lighting.

Representatives from each of the focus groups met in a **wrap-up** session. Fourteen citizens participated in the wrap-up group process. Holy Family Catholic Church was the only group without a representative at the wrap-up session. The wrap-up was more difficult to facilitate as most of those in attendance did not know one another. Additionally, the meeting was held at City Hall which can at times be intimidating and to some extent threatening to those not familiar with the building or commission chambers. The top three to five priorities, depending on their points, were prelisted on wall sheets before the meeting (Appendix E). The group went through the same process of individually brainstorming then listing, consolidating, editing and ranking ideas. The top priorities and points assigned by the wrap-up group are listed in Figure 4.3.

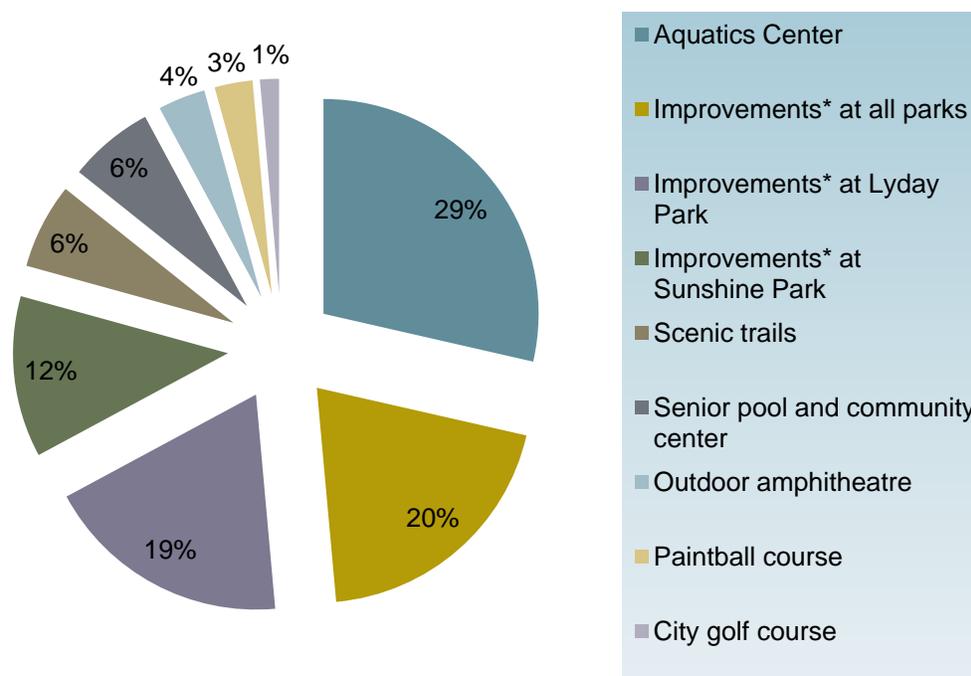


Figure 4.3: Priorities from the wrap-up group

*Generally meaning updating and adding playground equipment, trees, benches, trashcans, covered picnic areas, paving, better lighting, safety, and maintenance.

As a whole, the representative wrap-up group concluded that an aquatics center is the highest ranking need for the City of Vernon. Secondly, current parks, especially Christine Lyday and Sunshine Parks are in need of updates and improvements. Had Lyday and Sunshine Parks not been listed as individual entries prior to ranking, it is expected that the third ranking scenic trails would have received more points as they came out in the top priorities of many of the individual groups. Listing park improvements at specific parks separately was a benefit in that it became apparent which parks needed the most urgent attention within the current system. The top-ranking aquatic center was discussed in further detail at the wrap-up session as well. Generally, participants agreed that the community was in immediate need of a pool. The group discussed possible locations of the pool suggesting the old Gibson’s site, somewhere off of Highway 70, by the High School, Orbison Park and redevelopment of the old pool location. The group did not agree on the best location for a new pool but expressed the need for it to be safe, accessible, visible, and spacious. Some cited the spay park in Iowa Park as a nice example for the city to follow. Components of the proposed pool should include a lap pool, sloping or wading pool, lazy river, waist-deep exercise pool for seniors, slides, and above all be safe and clean for the whole family.

III. Standard-Based Analysis

The identification of standards helps establish a local baseline for park development. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed standards to help guide communities when planning their park systems in their *1995 Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines* publication. It is generally accepted that the old NRPA standard of x number of acres of parkland or facilities needed per 1,000 in population is deficient and outdated. All the while, the old standards are a reasonable place to start for communities such as Vernon with little history in park planning.

The old accepted NRPA standard suggests that a City devote anywhere between 6.5 and 10.5 acres of combined parkland per 1,000 in population. Using this standard, the City of Vernon would roughly need between 80 and 125 acres of total parkland. Using the NRPA guidelines per park type the City would need 210 acres of parkland (Figure 4.4). The City of Vernon currently has 20 acres of parkland which falls well below even the minimum requirement of 80 acres. It is clear that the city needs to devote more acreage to parkland and open space in the years to come.

<i>Analysis of Park Acreage</i> <i>City of Vernon, Texas</i>			
Park Type	Recommended Acres per 1,000 persons	Existing Acres of Vernon Parks	Acreage needed for Current 12,000 Population
Neighborhood	2.5 acres	12 acres	30 acres
Community	5 acres	8 acres	60 acres
Special	2 acres	0 acres	24 acres
Open Space/ Greenbelts	6-8 acres	0 acres	96 acres
Total Acres	17.5 acres	20 acres	210 acres

Figure 4.4: Standard-based analysis of park acreage

The standards also guide the number and type of facilities required to meet the needs of a given population (Figure 4.5). A population figure of 12,000 is used as the population of Vernon is not expected to grow dramatically over the next ten years.

Analysis of Facilities Based on Population of 12,000
City of Vernon, Texas

Facility	NRPA Standard	Existing in Vernon	Needed in Vernon
Basketball	1/5,000	1	3
Tennis courts	1/2,000	0	6
Youth baseball	1/20,000	1	0
Youth softball	1/5,000	3	3
Adult softball	1/5,000	0	3
Football	1/20,000	0	1
Youth soccer	1/10,000	1	1
Swimming pool	1/20,000	0	1
Volleyball	NS	1	0
Trails	NS	0	System needed
Recreation center	1/20,000	0	1

Figure 4.5: Standard-based analysis of park facilities

These standards suggest that the City consider additional basketball courts, tennis courts, a swimming pool, recreation center, adult and youth softball fields, a football field, and additional soccer fields. The problem again with placing too much emphasis on cookie-cutter standards is that they do not reflect a community's individuality or expressed needs. Again, this plan is predominantly demand-based. While these standards are useful baseline tool, they should not be used as the sole basis of decision making.

IV. Resource-Based Analysis

An analysis of natural resources in Vernon and the surround area shows some potential in park or open space development while protecting riparian areas. Vernon is relatively flat aside from some relief on the north side of town near the Hillcrest Country Club and the Pease River. Additionally, Paradise Creek runs north-south on the east side of town towards the Pease and eventually Red Rivers. The City owns approximately 4 acres near the Pease River bluffs on the north side of town east of Highway 287 which is currently used by the City Fire Department as a training area. It is also home of the old City swimming pool which has been inoperable since 2005. Both of these natural areas could be potentially utilized by the City as part of its park system to include a diversity of ecosystems, terrain and water elements to the existing park system.

Future Park Improvement Recommendations & Plan Implementation

I. Prioritization of Needs

The following three need assessment approaches were used to determine the top priorities needed in the City of Vernon park system.

1. Demand-Based (Focus Groups and Public Hearings) - 90%
2. Standard-Based (NRPA Standards) - 5%
3. Resource-Based (Available Resources) – 5%

Priorities are ranked from highest to lowest priority.

Ranking	Priority/Need	Type	Timeframe
1	Aquatic Center	Outdoor	2009-2011
2	Existing Park Improvements	Outdoor	2009-2019
3	Trail System	Outdoor	2009-2019
4	Senior Recreation Facility	Indoor	2011-2014
5	Amphitheatre	Outdoor	2009-2011
6	Paintball Course	Outdoor or Indoor	2009-2019
7	City Golf Course	Outdoor	2009-2014

Figure 5.1: Top community park system priorities.

To reiterate, the philosophy behind this plan is grassroots and community-based. The priorities recommended herein are not top-down directives from staff, external consultants, or based on national park standards. It is unconditionally derived from the hearts and minds of the citizens who work, play and pay taxes in Vernon, Texas.

II. Existing Park Improvement Recommendations

General recommendations stemming predominantly from the focus group input is presented in the following easy to reference, individual park format.



Allingham Park

Size:	4 acres
Location:	Corner of Tolar and Yamparika
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Multi-purpose trail, playground, toddler playground, fitness equipment, volleyball court, picnic areas, and restrooms.

Recommended Improvements:

- Addition of benches by playground equipment
- Additional trashcans
- Improved lighting.
- Drinking fountain
- Improved grounds maintenance and security



Castelberry Park

Size: < 1 acre

Location: Corner of Park Lane and Buffalo Street

Park Classification: Neighborhood Park

Amenities: None

Recommended Improvements:

- Consider the addition of a bench



D.L. Green Park

Size:	3 acres
Location:	300 block of East Wilbarger
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Playground, toddler playground, picnic areas, and restrooms

Recommended Improvements:

- Addition of previously planned skate park facility
- Safe perimeter fencing
- Toddler play structure in existing toddler area to be renovated
- Additional trash receptacles
- Improved lighting



Christine Lyday Park

Size: 2 acres

Location: Corner of Wanderer and Houston

Park Classification: Neighborhood Park

Amenities: Playground, basketball court, picnic area, baseball/softball practice field and restrooms

Recommended Improvements:

- Addition of large play structure
- Improved grounds maintenance and security
- Improved lighting
- Paved parking area and perimeter of park
- Addition of landscaping (trees/flowering shrubs)
- Consider installing isolated, spray-park type water feature



Orbison Park

Size:	7-8 acres
Location:	4400 block of Sand Road
Park Classification:	Community Park
Amenities:	Playground, toddler playground, picnic area, soccer fields, baseball and softball fields, gazebo, clubhouse, bird watching area, and restrooms

Recommended Improvements:

- Aquatic center
- Renovation and addition of playground equipment
- Addition of trail to be linked with eventual city-wide trail system
- Outdoor grass amphitheatre
- Improved lighting
- Improved grounds maintenance and security
- Addition of trash receptacles



Sunshine Park

Size:	2 acres
Location:	Corner of Indian and Eagle
Park Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Amenities:	Baseball and softball fields

Recommended Improvements:

- Renovate and improve baseball/softball practice fields
- Build parking area
- Improved grounds maintenance and security
- Addition of covered picnic areas (1-2)
- Improved lighting
- Addition of trash receptacles
- Consider adding small play structure

Future Projects & Acquisition Recommendations

Aquatic Center

The community overwhelming expressed the desire and need for a new aquatic center / swimming pool complex. This project should be the City's first priority. The community is need of a family-friendly, safe water complex for summer recreation. While there is some debate surrounding the location of the pool, the community has less than more objections to it being placed at Orbison Park. The benefits of the Orbison location include the clustering of other facilities such as the clubhouse, soccer fields, and baseball fields. There is also ample space to fully develop and improve the park in regards to trails and needed park playground needs.

It is recommended that the pool complex be family-friendly and centered around enjoyable summer recreation. The focus group identified desired components to be slides, a toddler and small child spray park type area, a lazy river, a leisure pool with a volleyball net or basketball goal, a lap pool, and perhaps a warmer, waist-deep area or hot-tub specifically for therapeutic use and/or seniors.

Other suggestions included grouping the pool complex with a grassy outdoor amphitheatre to bring music and performances in the park. It the idea of having movies projected on the side of the pool house facilities for special screenings and parties was also suggested.

Ideally, the pool complex will be a safe place where residents from Vernon and surrounding communities will congregate in the summer. Conceivably, the pool complex could be a pull and support for the community's tourism sector.

City-wide Trail System

Almost every focus group expressed the need to have trails within the community. The city is lacking in trails, connectors, open space and green space. It is recommended that a comprehensive trail study be commissioned to help the city plan on connecting its parks and public areas via a city-wide trail system. As phase I a trail can be constructed at Orbison Park and later connected to the system in Phase II.

Use of Old Swimming Pool Location

The old swimming pool location is unique in its location, topographical relief, and plant and wildlife species. The city should consider development of the property in a fashion that will protect the riparian area. A feasibility study would help the city decide if they would like to use the area as an outdoor paintball course.

Hillcrest Country Club Cooperative Use

The City should explore the potential cooperative relationship with the Hillcrest Country Club to potentially offer it services (golf, tennis, nature, swimming) to the community. At the very least, the club should be linked to the city-wide trail system.

Senior Center

The seniors of the community were very strong and persistent in communicating that their segment of the community was in need of expanded facilities. Cooperative cost sharing opportunities between the city, county, and Vernon College for a senior recreation center or addition to the Chaparral center should be explored.

Land Acquisition for Community Park and Open Space

With a total of 20 acres, the City of Vernon is more than lacking in the amount of public park and open space provided to the community and area. Serious consideration and planning should be devoted to reducing this deficiency. Many groups lamented for access to bodies of water and large, uninterrupted green spaces. Effort should be made to acquire a minimum of 20-30 acres on the periphery of the city for the addition of a new community park that would support activities such as dog walking, running, primitive picnicking, Frisbee golf and perhaps an adult softball field.

III. Implementation of Park Plan

This is a 10 year plan which needs to be updated every 5 years and the process repeated every 10 years. Work towards accomplishing the plan can be started immediately as many of the community-identified needs or suggestions require minimal expenditure of funds or mid-range budgetary planning as they are service or knowledge-based. The following plan of action is separated into three stages; immediate, 5 year, and 10 year, and is broken into task, location, and funding source possibilities.

Immediate Action Plan				
Goal	Task	Timeframe	Location	Potential Funding
New Park/Facility - Aquatics Center	Develop concept plan, decide on location, apply for upcoming grants, obtain estimates on concepts plan, continue private fundraising efforts.	Immediate	Orbinson Park	NA
Park Safety	Increase aggressive police enforcement and patrolling of parks	Immediate	All parks, concentration on Lyday and Orbinson	NA
Park Quality	Improve frequency and carefulness in maintenance of park grounds, restrooms, and facilities	Immediate	All parks	NA
Park Safety	Research lighting concerns and coordinate with AEP regarding the placement of additional street lights	Immediate	All parks as needed	NA
Park Quality	Consider adding seasonal help to parks department or hiring grounds person to oversee landscaping, care of trees, annuals, and lawns of all city property	Immediate to 1 year	City-wide	General Fund
Park Quality	Mindfully add trashcans and benches to parks where needed	Immediate to 1 year	All parks as needed	General Fund, Donations
Park Quality	Add signage to thoroughfares to aid in access of parks	Immediate to 1 year	City-wide	In-Kind, Donations
New Park/Facility - Trail System	Conduct trail system analysis/study to research potential for city-wide trail system	Immediate to 1 year	City-wide	Grants
Park Quality	Proceed with skate park plans if funding provides*	Immediate to 1 year	D.L. Green	NA

Figure 5.2: Immediate plan of action

5 Year Action Plan				
Goal	Task	Timeframe	Location	Potential Funding
Park Quality	Add park improvements (playscape, covered picnic areas, trees/flowering bushes, and perhaps isolated spray-park type water feature)	2009-2012	Christine Lyday Park	Grants, Private Donations
New Park/Facility - Aquatics Center	Construct aquatic center	2009-2011	Orbison Park	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
New Park/Facility - Trail System	Add Phase I trail at Orbison Park to spearhead trail system project	2009-2011	Orbison Park	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
Park Quality	Add park improvements (replace or add to playground with new playscape)	2009-2011	Orbison Park	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
Park Quality	Add outdoor grass only amphitheatre area adjacent to aquatics center	2009-2011	Orbison Park	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
Park Quality	Add park improvements (Renovate & improve current baseball practice fields, add covered picnic tables, parking area, trashcans, and possibly small playscape)	2011-2014	Sunshine Park	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
New Park/Facility - Golf/Trails	Explore cooperative relationship with Hillcrest Country Club for public use or arrangement of facilities and connection to trail network	2009-2014	Hillcrest Country Club	NA

Figure 5.3: 5 year plan of action

10 Year Action Plan				
Goal	Task	Timeframe	Location	Potential Funding
New Park/Facility - Paintball Course	Conduct feasibility study for placement of paintball course at the old pool location or in an existing indoor facility	2009-2019	Old pool location or unknown	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
New Park/Facility - Senior Center	Conduct feasibility study for addition to senior center and explore potential of cooperative partnership between entities.	2011-2014	Unknown	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations, Cost Sharing
New Park/Facility - Trails System	Phase II - Implement trail system study recommendations for city-wide trail system	2011-2019	City-wide	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
New Park/Facility - Community Park / Open Space	Consider purchasing large 10-30 acre tract with potential water feature development for new community park and/or open space (dog park, frisbee golf, driving range, tie to city trail system).	2014-2019	City periphery	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations
New Park/Facility - Adult Softball Field	Consider purchasing land within the city limits for new adult softball field/s.	2014-2019	Unknown	Bonds, Grants, Private Donations

Figure 5.4: 10 year plan of action

Appendices

Appendix A – Focus Group Handouts



VERNON, TEXAS

Master Parks Plan Purpose and Components

What is a master parks plan?

A master parks plan is a document which provides direction to the City Commission and city staff for future development and improvement of city parks, recreational facilities, and open space (or greenspace). Ideally, a new plan is written every 10 years. The plan should be reviewed and updated every 5 years.

Why does our community need a master parks plan?

Our community needs a master parks plan for several reasons. First, cities with a current master park plan are eligible for numerous state park grants. The City of Vernon does not have a current plan in place. Secondly and more importantly, the master plan process solicits public input on the development of new parks and recreational facilities. A well-researched and written park plan helps elected officials and city staff understand their community's recreational needs and desires.

Why are city parks important?

City parks and recreational facilities are important for a number of reasons. First, they increase the quality of living by providing and promoting healthful activities. Parks also improve the physical appearance of communities and encourage new residents and businesses to relocate into the community. Next, they build social cohesion, and develop a sense of community and community pride among residents. Parks are a good indicator of the overall vitality (physical, economic, and civic) of a community.

What are the components of the master parks plan?

Our master parks plan will be composed of three main components; 1) inventory of current facilities, 2) needs assessment, and 3) prioritization of needs and plan implementation strategy.

How will the public be involved?

The public will have several opportunities to be involved in the planning process. At least two public hearings will be conducted to receive public comment on the planning process and completed plan. Additionally, city staff will be facilitating a number of focus group meetings to receive input from a cross-section of the community. A survey might also be administered.



City of Vernon
1725 Wilbarger Street
Vernon, TX 76384 - 5623
940-552-2581
fax 940-552-0569

January 29, 2009

Dear Economic Development Allies:

The City of Vernon would like to invite you to participate in the City's long-term park planning process.

As part of the City's ten-year master park plan, we are conducting a series of small group meetings (focus groups) to help us understand the recreation needs of citizens within our community. City staff has put together a list of various park user groups within the community. You have been identified as part of the **Community Leaders** user group. (If you do not identify with this group or are unable to participate, please contact me at 552-2581.)

Each focus group meeting will consist of approximately 10-20 citizens. The meetings will be very informal and will only consist of invited group members and myself as the facilitator. First I will ask members of the group to individually list their answers to the following question:

“What park and recreation facilities and services are needed in Vernon within the next ten (10) years?”

Answers will be listed on large sheets of paper by the facilitator. The group will then have the opportunity to rank and prioritize the answers. At the end of the session two to three participants will be identified to represent their focus group in a wrap-up session. The meeting shouldn't take more than 1 hour to complete.

Thank you in advance for your time and assistance in helping us plan for our community's future park and recreation needs. Again, please feel free to call with any concerns or questions you may have. We look forward to your participation!

Regards,

Monica Wilkinson
Special Services Director

Enclosures



Park, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan
Needs Assessment
January 2009

Nominal Group Technique (NGT) Input Statement for
Community Focus Group Meetings

“What park and recreation facilities and services are needed in Vernon
within the next 10 years?”

Appendix B – Master Plan Newsprint

■ **Sports:** Rodeo great enjoys watching sons compete, Page 6 ■ **Profile:** Exhibit building manager enjoys job, Page 12



January 23, 2009 Vol. 83 No. 72 Vernon, Tx. 76384 12 Pages 50¢ Daily/\$1 Sunday Friday

Back to square one Committee recommends original site for new pool

By MIKE CHACANA
The Vernon Record Staff

It could be back to where it all started as far as a new swimming pool for Vernon is concerned, as the swimming pool committee recommended Orbison Park as the site of a new municipal aquatic center during a public hearing and special meeting of the City of Vernon commission Thursday evening at the Wilbarger Auditorium.

Orbison Park was the original site proposed for a new swimming pool over two years ago, however a new pool committee was formed last year to take another look at possible sites for the aquatic center.

Committee chairman and city commissioner Russell Brownlow explained to the commission and the public audience of about 22 Vernon residents that the committee's first choice for a swimming pool site had been a triangular piece of land belonging to Wilbarger General Hospital. However, the hospital elect-

ed not to lease the property to the city.

Brownlow said the committee, over a course of eight to 12 meetings, considered a number of locations including behind the high school football stadium, near Vernon College, off of Expressway 287 behind the strip mall on Hillcrest and a piece of property owned by the city near Wilbarger and Una.

The committee, according to Brownlow, arrived at their decision to recommend Orbison Park as the pool's location by a unanimous vote during their last meeting.

The reasons for that decision, Brownlow stated, included the fact that approximately \$26,000 had previously been spent on preparatory work for building the pool at the park, and the city already owned the land.

Brownlow described the committee's vision for the aquatic center as a 25-yard, six-lane pool, with an additional five pool, pool with a slide and volleyball net, and a spray park.

Committee member Susan Couch told the commission and

audience that the former swimming pool committee and current committee, "...two really non-biased groups of citizens..." had both reached unanimous decisions to put the pool at Orbison Park.

Couch also said the committee felt that the new pool needed to be located in an existing park with other amenities. At Orbison Park, Couch noted, there was already a clubhouse, soccer fields, baseball and softball fields, and children in the community were already used to going there for outdoor activities.

"We made what we thought was the best choice for children, the community and cost for the city," Couch said.

Another committee member, Kim Macklin, commented that she was initially opposed to Orbison Park being the site for a new pool, citing problems with parking and kids' safety during Kid League games. After lengthy discussions within the committee on where to locate the pool,



Pool discussion

Swimming pool committee member Beverly Campsey speaks before the City of Vernon commission and an audience of citizens during Thursday evening's special meeting and public hearing on the location of the new municipal swimming pool facility. The committee's recom-

mendation was to place the pool at Orbison Park. Approximately 22 people were present at the meeting with several members of the audience expressing opinions for and against the new pool being located at the park. (Vernon Daily Record Photo)

Firehouse designated as safe site

A second "Safe Baby Site" as designated under state law has been approved in Wilbarger County, according to a local official.

Vernon Fire Department Chief Kent Smead announced earlier this week that the central fire station has joined Wilbarger General Hospital as a "Safe Baby Site" under the "Baby Moses" law passed by the Texas legislature in 2001. Under the "Baby Moses" law, unharmed infants up to 60 days of age can be dropped off by a mother with no questions asked and no possibility of any criminal charges.

Smead pointed out that any infant brought to the central fire station must be handed over directly to fire department personnel and cannot be left unattended at the door. If, and when, a baby is received at the fire department, Smead explained that the infant will be transported to Wilbarger Hospital for immediate medical attention and the Department of Family and Protective Services would be notified to take custody of the child.

Since the "Baby Moses" law went into effect in 2001 one baby has been reported to have been



Designated site

Vernon Fire Department Capt. Paul Miller looks for a place to install a new sign at the central fire station identifying the location as a Safe Baby Site. The fire department joins Wilbarger General Hospital as a second location

in Wilbarger County where an unharmed baby up to 60 days of age can be surrendered, under the "Baby Moses Law", by the mother without fear of any criminal charges. (Vernon Daily Record Photo)

Obama set to reverse abortion policy

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama plans to sign an executive order ending the ban on federal funding for international groups that promote or perform abortions, officials told The Associated Press on Friday.

The move, long expected in the Democratic president's first week in office, will be welcomed by liberals and criticized by abortion rights foes.

The policy bans U.S. taxpayer money, usually in the form of U.S. Agency for International Development funds, from going to international family planning groups that either offer abortions or provide information, counseling or referrals about abortion. It is also known as the "global gag rule," because it pro-

hibits taxpayer funding for groups that even talk about abortion if there is an unplanned pregnancy.

Also known as the "Mexico City policy," it has been reinstated and then reversed by Republican and Democratic presidents since GOP President Ronald Reagan established it in 1984. President Bill Clinton ended the ban in 1993, but President George W. Bush reinstated it in 2001 as one of his first acts in office.

The Democratic official and senior U.S. officials who disclosed the plans did so on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to pre-empt Obama's announcement.

Obama was expected to sign the executive order at a low-key

event, one day after the 36th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court ruling in Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion.

The move was not a surprise as both Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who will oversee foreign aid, had promised to do away with the gag rule during the presidential campaign. Clinton is to visit the U.S. Agency for International Development, through which much U.S. foreign aid is disbursed, later on Friday.

Obama has spent his first days in office systematically signing executive orders reversing Bush administration policies on issues ranging from foreign policy to government operations. But, save for ending the ban, Obama has largely refrained from wad-

ing into ideological issues, perhaps to avoid being tagged a traditional partisan from the outset after his campaign promises to change "business as usual" in the often partisan-gridlocked capital.

Rather, Obama has chosen to focus initially on issues in which there is consensus across the political spectrum and support from the public, such as closing the prison camp for suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to making government documents more accessible.

Organizations that had pressed Obama to make the abortion ban change were jubilant.

"Women's health has been severely impacted by the cutoff

News Points

Contractor blamed for soldier's death

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Army investigation called the electrocution death of a U.S. soldier in Iraq a "negligent homicide" caused by military contractor KBR Inc. and two of its supervisors, according to a document obtained by The Associated Press.

An Army criminal investigator said the manner of death for Staff Sgt. Ryan Maseth, 24, of Pittsburgh, has been changed from accidental to negligent homicide because the contractor failed to ensure that "qualified electricians and plumbers" worked on the barracks where Maseth died, according to the document.

Heather L. Browne, a spokeswoman for Houston-based KBR, said in a statement that the company cannot comment on the report because the company has not seen it.

"KBR's investigation has produced no evidence that KBR was responsible for Sgt. Maseth's death," Browne said. "We have cooperated fully with all government agencies investigating this matter and will do so in the future."

The Green Beret died of cardiac arrest on Jan. 2, 2008. He was electrocuted while taking a shower in his barracks in Baghdad. He was assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Ex-guard admits slashing painting

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A former guard at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh has pleaded guilty to slashing a \$1.2 million painting with a key.

James Sheets, the attorney for 27-year-old Timur Serberykov (tsh-MOOR' say-eh-BREE'kov), says his client is getting mental health treatment and is hoping for probation.

The bigger question may be how much restitution he is ordered to pay. Sentencing is set for April 7.

Serberykov slashed "Night Sky 2" by Latvian-born artist Vija Celmins (VYuh SELL-mins) last May because he didn't like it. It was on loan from the Art Institute of Chicago. He entered the vandalism plea Thursday.

Sheets says it cost \$5,000 to repair the painting. But he says prosecutors estimate it's worth \$240,000 less than before.

Rescuers try to save beached whales

HOBART, Australia (AP) — Rescuers trying to keep seven stranded sperm whales alive in Australia said they were having difficulty navigating numerous sandbars Friday but hoped to move the animals out to sea at the next high tide.

A team of six wildlife rangers continued to pour water on the parched skin of the whales, the only ones left alive from a pool of 45 whales that beached Thursday on a remote sand bank off Australia's southern coast.

Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service spokeswoman Liz Wren said the many sandbars off the beach hindered efforts to move the whales back to sea. She said rescuers would attempt to save the remaining whales at high tide Saturday morning, depending on weather conditions.

Your Local Weather				
Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
1/24	1/25	1/26	1/27	1/28
47/25	61/41	54/30	44/37	69/41
Partly cloudy. Skies. High in the low 50s and lows in the low 20s.	Mainly sunny. High in the mid 60s and lows in the low 40s.	Showers. Highs in the mid 50s and lows in the low 30s.	Few showers. Highs in the mid 40s and lows in the upper 30s.	Mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the low 40s.

Bulletin Board

Garden Club will meet Saturday

The Garden Club will meet at 10 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 24, at Grace Episcopal Church...

BIRTHDAY greetings to:

- Jan. 23: Mickie Edwards, Michael Dean Edwards, Ariel Boelen... Jan. 24: Eason Andrew, Hope Rushing, Harry Thompson, Revell Cherry

Pool

(Continued From Page 1)

MacKlin said she realized that Orbsion Park was "really the best place." Committee member and city commissioner Tra Cardwell noted that neither himself, Brownlow, nor any city staff serving on the swimming pool committee participated in voting for a pool location...

Police, fire report: Local officers make two arrests

Local law enforcement officials made two arrests and investigated two traffic accidents among other calls reported on Thursday. A traffic accident occurred at 9:41 a.m. on the northbound frontage road of Expressway 287...

Fire personnel responded to a controlled burn at 5:27 p.m., at 2808 15th. The fire was out when firefighters arrived and the responsible party was advised of the existing burn ban. Ambulance personnel made a transfer at 7:06 p.m. from Wilbarger General to United Regional Health Care System 11th Street Campus in Wichita Falls...

Western forests dying at increasing rate

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) — Trees in old growth forests across the West are dying at a small, but increasing rate that scientists conclude is probably caused by longer and hotter summers from a changing climate. While not noticeable to someone walking through the forests, the death rate is doubling every 17 to 29 years, according to a 52-year study published in the Friday edition of the journal Science...

Old growth forests, particularly those in the Northwest, store large amounts of carbon, making them a resource in combating global warming, said Jerry Franklin, a professor of forest ecology at the University of Washington. But as trees die, they decompose and give off carbon, contributing to the amount of greenhouse gases. Young forests store very little carbon, and it takes hundreds of years to replace old growth, he said.

The likely cause, they concluded, was warmer average temperatures across the West, about 1 degree over the study period. An enormous amount of additional work would have to be done before any rational scientist would draw some cause and effect, she said. The geological survey paid for the study, which examined data between 1955 and 2007 in 76 research plots in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Colorado and Arizona...

Security tape show's jet's splashdown

NEW YORK (AP) — A newly released security camera tape shows the emergency ditching of US Airways Flight 1549 in the Hudson River. The jet's stunning drama — from seconds after the jetliner splashed into the frigid water until well after the last of the 155 passengers and crew members were rescued. The tape, made available to news media on Thursday by the Consolidated Edison utility, runs 47 minutes and 5 seconds — by far the longest video account of what Gov. David Paterson said was "a miracle on the Hudson."

The plane, along with two police helicopters, two police and fire department emergency boats apace, a U.S. Coast Guard cutter, a Circle Line sightseeing boat and a private boat whose owner, Scott Green, rescues six people and helps them aboard a ferry. By then, the survivors are safely away from the plane, which is sinking as it drifts down stream at about 3 mph, with the rescue fleet fighting the current to stay with it. Only the aircraft's dark blue vertical tail fin, cockpit windows and left wing tip are visible as the tape ends at 4:32 p.m.

Sullenberger told federal investigators that in deciding the river was his only choice, he looked for an area where boats were nearby and could get to the plane in a hurry. The camera position indicates that the plane landed in mid-river at approximately 58th Street. O'Leary said the tape initially was turned over to the National Transportation Safety Board, which is investigating the crash landing. He said the NTSB approved its release to the media on Wednesday.

Lottery: LOTTO TEXAS PICK 3, CASH 5, TEXAS TWO STEP. Weather: 24 Hour Temperature, High 48, Low 40, Noon 41, Rainfall, Last 24 hrs, 0.00, 2009, 0.00, 2008, 0.00, Sunrise/Sunset, 6:03, 7:34

VERNON DAILY RECORD. The Vernon Daily Record is published daily except Saturdays, July 4th & Christmas Day. 214 Wilbarger St., Vernon, TX 75684. Periodicals postage paid at Vernon, TX 75684. All rights reserved for republication or broadcast.

Subscription Rates: Home delivery by carrier in Wilbarger and adjacent counties. 1 Year: \$110, 3 Mos: \$35, 6 Mos: \$70, 12 Mos: \$130. Single copy: 50¢. Payment in advance. Payment by check or money order.

Additional opposition to putting a pool at Orbsion Park came from Ronnie Ritchie, who told the commission that the pool was very dangerous because of the parking situation along Sand. He also said a pool there would quickly fill up with debris and sand storms in the area would not be conducive to an aquatic center. Macklin addressed some of the concerns expressed during the public hearing saying the committee really did look at a wide variety of things regarding where to put a new pool and that by putting it at Orbsion Park the city does not have to start from scratch and does not have to purchase land for the project. Macklin added that people are already going to the park for soccer and baseball. Commissioner Brownlow followed up by saying the committee had addressed every question brought up by the public during the meeting and looked at all the problem areas, but the time had come to get things moving along in order to meet a timeline for applying for a grant that could help finance the cost of constructing a new pool. The commission is set to take possible action on site selection during their regular business meeting scheduled to begin at 10 p.m., Tuesday, in the commission chamber at City Hall.

surrendered at Wilbarger General. That occurred in May 2008 when a Caucasian baby girl believed to be only a few hours old was dropped off at the hospital by an individual believed to have been the mother. According to a Dallas based organization dedicated to educating the public about the law, more than 100 babies are abandoned each year in Texas with about 16 of those infants found dead.

Gaza edges back to normal during cease-fire

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Gazans filled mosques for Friday prayers without fear of Israeli strikes for the first time since the war against Hamas ended, feeling a mixture of grief, shock and relief. Israeli naval guns were largely silent after weeks of nonstop fire along the Palestinian territory's coast, as the cease-fire declared by both sides last weekend held. Near two destroyed Gaza City mosques, men spread carpets on sandy ground to prepare for open-air prayers. In the main market of the Jebelya refugee camp, large crowds shopped ahead of prayers

and restaurants fired up huge vats with meat, cooking on wood fires because of a shortage of gas. Fruit merchants boasted shipments of apples and bananas from Israel. One owner said it was the first time in five months he had been able to sell fresh apples. The three-week Israeli air and ground offensive that began on Dec. 27 killed 1,285 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. Thirteen Israelis were also killed during the fighting, aimed at stopping militant rocket fire from Gaza across the border into southern Israel. Israel opened its passenger crossing into Gaza, allowing free access for international reporters and humanitarian workers for the first time since before the offensive began. The restrictions on journalists had been condemned as a serious infringement on press freedom. Michael Bailey of Oxfam International, one of the aid groups allowed through the Erez crossing on Friday, called the Israeli move "long overdue."

All 221 of the Gaza schools run by the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees will reopen Saturday, said Christopher Gunness, a spokesman for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency. Some 200,000 children study in the schools, which have been closed since the offensive began. Thirty of the schools were damaged in the fighting, he said. Despite some signs that the six-weekly returning to normal, the six-day-old truce remained fragile. A Palestinian farmer was wounded by Israeli gunfire along the border, said Gaza health official Dr. Mostafa Hassam. The military said it had no information on the incident. Still there was little sign of progress on the goal of a durable cease-fire. Israel insists on guarantees that the Islamic militant Hamas rulers of Gaza will stop smuggling weapons into the strip and halt rocket fire on southern Israel. Hamas demands that Gaza's borders be opened to allow vital supplies in. Gaza-based Hamas officials returned to Egypt for a new round of talks with Egyptian mediators on Sunday that they said would focus on a "working paper" to consolidate the cease-fire. One official said the talks will also address the fate of Israeli soldier Sgt. Gilad Shalit who was captured by Gaza militants in June 2006. The Hamas officials all spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the negotiations. President Barack Obama said Thursday his administration supported implementation of a "credible" system for stopping smuggling and called for Gaza's borders to be "appropriately monitored."

Abortion

assured at Wilbarger General. That occurred in May 2008 when a Caucasian baby girl believed to be only a few hours old was dropped off at the hospital by an individual believed to have been the mother. According to a Dallas based organization dedicated to educating the public about the law, more than 100 babies are abandoned each year in Texas with about 16 of those infants found dead.

Assured at Wilbarger General. That occurred in May 2008 when a Caucasian baby girl believed to be only a few hours old was dropped off at the hospital by an individual believed to have been the mother. According to a Dallas based organization dedicated to educating the public about the law, more than 100 babies are abandoned each year in Texas with about 16 of those infants found dead.

THE VERNON DAILY RECORD



\$1 Sunday

April 5, 2009

Vol. 83 No. 134

Vernon, Tx. 76384

2 Sections, 22 Pages

50¢ Daily/\$1 Sunday

Sunday

Holy Week Various community activities scheduled

By JOYCE ANN ASHLEY
Vernon Record Staff Writer

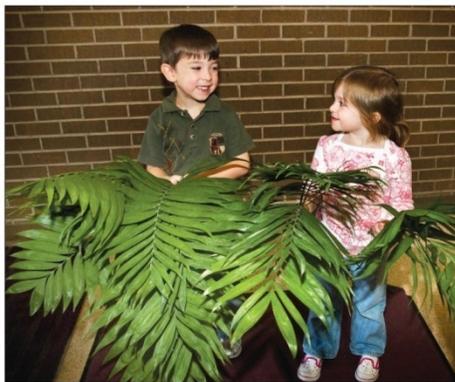
A number of community events and activities are on tap during the coming week leading up to and including Easter Sunday. These will include the traditional Holy Week men's prayer breakfasts, a community Good Friday service and a dramatic live Easter pageant.

The annual community service, traditionally held on the evening of Palm Sunday, is scheduled this year for Good Friday, April 10, according to Bill Ivins, president of the Vernon Ministerial Alliance and pastor of First United Methodist Church. The service will be held at 7 p.m., at the First Assembly of God.

"There are several reasons

for the change," Ivins said. "In the past, the community service has been held on Palm Sunday. This year, we wanted to do something to emphasize that there is no celebration of Easter morning without the suffering of Christ on Good Friday. We want to help people encounter more fully the cross before they experience the joy of the resurrection. There is no resurrection without the cross." Ivins said that while most people attend church on Easter, by coming together as a community on Good Friday, they are able to encounter the cross. "It was Paul who said that we find our unity around the cross in Ephesians 2:11. That's one reason why we felt it was more appropriate to have the community service on Good Friday,"

he explained. Ministerial Alliance Palm Sunday services of previous years have rotated between a number of churches and have featured worship conducted by the member congregations of the Alliance. This year, however, the worship service will be much more subdued. "We want to create an atmosphere in the worship service that really gets people focused on the cross," Tommy Spencer, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, said. "If the service goes as planned, people will leave the service sensing the full weight of what Christ has endured for us." The service, entitled "Teacher, A Service of Darkness," will feature music and scripture that set a somber, introspective tone. (See ACTIVITIES, Page 2A)



Practicing with the palms

Josh Hendrix, age 5, and little sister, Gracie, 3, practice their palm-waving moves in preparation for celebrating Palm Sunday today. Christians around the world will today celebrate the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, which marks the beginning of Holy Week. A number of local church activities are scheduled during the week leading up to Easter. The youngsters are children of Lauren Hendrix and Aaron Hendrix. (VDR Photo by Joyce Ann Ashley)



Going over data

City of Vernon Director of Community Development Monica Wilkinson met Thursday evening at City Hall with representatives from nine focus groups to discuss data collected for drafting a master park plan for the city. Wilkinson, along with the representatives, discussed the top suggestions made by each of the nine groups to identify what the community felt was the most important park and recreation needs. A special

meeting of the city commission will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, in the Forum Room of the Wilbarger Auditorium during which a public hearing will be conducted to allow community members to discuss the city's Master Park Plan before it is submitted to the commission at a later date for approval. (VDR Photo by Mike Chacanaca)

Groups provide ideas for park plan

By MIKE CHACANACA
The Vernon Daily Record

A public hearing on the research process and data collection that has been undertaken for the City of Vernon's Master Park Plan will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, in the Forum Room of the Wilbarger Auditorium.

Director of Community Development, Monica Wilkinson, said the public hearing is being held as part of the park planning process to allow members of the public to give their input on how they would like to see city parks developed.

Wilkinson said so far in the planning process she has met with nine focus groups representing a cross section of the community and listened to their suggestions for the future of Vernon parks. Thursday night, Wilkinson held a meeting with representatives from each of the (See PARKS, Page 2A)

2 men lose their probation

Probation was revoked for two men and a third man pled to information during a 46th District Court session Friday morning in the courtroom of the Wilbarger County Courthouse.

Hearty filed a motion to revoke the probation of Alexander Phillips on the grounds that he did not report, Phillips, 19, was a cadet at Victory Field when he was charged with assault against a public District Attorney Staley (See PLEAS, Page 2A)

News Points

WGH directors meet with physician

Directors and officials of Wilbarger General Hospital held a meeting with a potential candidate for the hospital's medical staff during a special session of hospital directors Friday.

The potential candidate is Dr. Chantal Culpepper, M.D. No action was taken at Friday's meeting. Directors plan to consider action concerning a possible contract with Culpepper during their regular monthly business meeting later this month.

Present at the meeting were Hospital Administrator Jonathon Voelkel, board chairman Curtis Johnson and directors Dr. Susan Couch and Dr. Reynaldo Talentinos. Also present were Dr. Rosario Carrson, Dr. Randall Schaffner, Dr. Francis Awassi and Dr. Reynaldo Maniango, Milton Brownlow and Chad Brownlow.

Voter registration deadline this week

Thursday, April 9, is the last day for new voters to register in order to cast ballots in the May 9 general election.

In Wilbarger County, the registration site is the tax assessor/collector's office on the first floor of the courthouse during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays.

In Foard County, the voter registration site is at the sheriff's office, from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., weekdays.

The voter registration site in Hardeman County is at the tax assessor/collector's office in Quanah, which is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays.

Four contested races are on the ballot across the area for the general election including city commission and school board seats in Vernon, city council and mayoral seats in Crowell, and school board seats in Quanah.

City to hold special meeting Monday

A special meeting of the City of Vernon commission, which will include a public hearing on the master park plan research process, will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, in the Forum Room of the Wilbarger Auditorium.

Also, the commissioners will consider for approval the reappointment of Gary McWilliams to the board of adjustments with Bobby Burruss as an alternate member; and reappointment of planning and zoning board members Gene Tyra, Bob Bousley Jr., and Jim Gunn.

Other items on the meeting's agenda include a presentation of data from the master park plan research process; and discussion and consideration of placing the City of Vernon Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan on the agenda for the April 28 regular city commission meeting.

VC students honored at convocation

Three Students of the Year and outstanding students in various programs were recognized during the annual Vernon College Honors Convocation held Friday in the Empire Room of the Wilbarger Auditorium.

Students honored at the event were chosen by the college's faculty and administrators for their academic achievement and leadership abilities.

The Special Awards Honorees were:

—Student of the Year, Vernon campus: Megann Lewis.

—Student of the Year, Century City Center: Christopher S. Hill.

—Student of the Year, Skills Training Center: Marco A. Cisneros.

Scholastic Awards honorees were:

—Accounting: Christopher S. Hill.

—Agriculture: Megan Lewis.

—Associate Degree Nursing: Generice Lori Pugh.

—Associate Degree Nursing Transition: Kimberly Graves. (See HONORS, Page 2A)



VC Students of the Year

Vernon College President Dr. Dusty Johnson (second from right) is shown with three Students of the Year who were recognized during the college's annual Honors Convocation held Friday in the Empire Room of the Wilbarger Auditorium. The top honorees included (from left) Christo-

pher S. Hill, Student of the Year Century City Center, Marco A. Cisneros, Student of the Year, Skills Training Center, and Megann Lewis, Student of the Year, Vernon campus. (VDR Photo by Mike Chacanaca)

Local Weather

Tue 4/7 75/44	Wed 4/8 87/57	Thu 4/9 71/41
Sunny. Highs in the mid 70s and lows in the mid 40s.	Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 80s and lows in the upper 50s.	Windy with a mix of sun and clouds.

Sun 60/34

Windy with a few clouds from time to time. High near 60F.

Obituaries

Clare Sims, Chillicothe
See Obituaries, Page 2A

© American Public Relations & Social Services

Bulletin Board

Council of Arts open meeting set

The Vernon Council of the Arts will hold an open meeting on at 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 7, in the Carnegie City-County Library board room. Those interested in continuing the work of the Council are encouraged to attend this meeting in order to voice their support. While some members of the Council represent community organizations, an individual may also elect to join as an "at-large" member.

BIRTHDAY greetings to:

Micah Edwards, 9, daughter of Michael Edwards and Rhonda Pryor

Honors

(Continued From Page 1A)

- Associate of Arts in Teaching: Stephanie R. Zamora.
- Biology: Jeremy McLean.
- Business Management: Christopher S. Hill.
- Chemistry: Justin L. Cooper.
- Computer and Information Sciences: Donna L. Turvey.
- Cosmetology: Cayleigh Ezzell Wills.
- Drama: Timothy Moore.
- Emergency Medical Services: Billy E. Skinner.
- English: Megan Lewis.
- Farm and Ranch Management: Tate Owens.
- Government: Brittany Walker.
- Health Information Technology: Ruth Rascon.
- History: Christina Caston.
- Kinesiology: Samantha Baird.
- Math: Jeremy McLean.
- Music: Jeremy McLean.
- Office Technology: Sarah M. Goodknecht.
- Pharmacy Technician: Stephanie Brown.
- Psychology: Christina Caston.
- Sociology: Christina Caston.
- Vocational Nursing: Donald P. Hibbus.
- Wedding: Edward Martinez.
- Non-Scholastic Awards honorees were:
 - Chaparral Christian Fellowship: Tanna Rush.
 - Chaparral Singers: Holly Aitkins.
 - Student Forum: Adriana G. Prieto.
 - Student Government Association: Megann Lewis.
 - Student Nursing Association: Lois Garza.
 - Phi Theta Kappa: Kassandra Valencia.
 - Faculty Choice Awards honorees were:
 - Farm and Ranch Management: Lelecia Acevedo.
 - History: Matthew Blalock.
 - Machining: Bert Cerveny.
 - Business: Jennifer Coble.
 - Sociology: Bryson Dishman.
 - Pharmacy Technician: Natalie Dominguez.
 - History: Judy Elliott.
 - Biology: Mona Faul.
 - Health Information Technology: Roxanne Hill.
 - Business: Christopher S. Hill.
 - Biology: Lauren Leal.
 - Math: Amber LeCroy.
 - Cosmetology: Miracle Lightly.
 - Automotive Technology: Luis M. Lopez.
 - Government: Jody McCall.
 - Math: Melanie McAllister.
 - Music: Melanie McAllister.
 - Kinesiology: Elizabeth Milligan.
 - Nursing: Anthony Mugambi.
 - Cosmetology: Paige Leane Newsom.
 - Cosmetology: Devon Perkins.
 - Welding: Jason Pruett.
 - Nursing: Lori Pugh.
 - Electronics: Christopher Ramos.
 - English: Chris Reimels.
 - English: Richard C. Reynolds.
 - Computer Technology: William Scott.
 - Math: Jamie Garcia Shahan.
 - English: Cody Sholey.
 - Nursing: Brice Turner.
 - Office Technology: Anna Vasquez.
 - Biology: Bailey Watkins.
 - Nursing: Angela Wilkinson.
 - Government: Kerrisa Woodard.

Police, fire report:

Officers check theft incidents

Local law enforcement officials investigated incidents of theft and burglary Friday and Saturday.

A theft under \$50 was reported at 7:20 a.m., Friday, in the 2700 block of Main. No information was available concerning descriptions of items taken or loss value.

The 4300 block of College Drive was the scene of a theft over \$50 and under \$500 reported at 6:10 p.m., Friday. No information was available concerning descriptions of items taken or loss value.

A burglary of a habitation was reported at 12:52 p.m., Friday, in the 2300 block of Herbert. No information was available concerning point of entry, estimated property damage or possible items stolen.

Officers also investigated sexual assault incidents reported Friday at 7:31 a.m., in the 900 block of Hillcrest and at 9:28 a.m., in the 1800 block of Antelope. Reports were incomplete on those incidents.

Reports were also incomplete on an unauthorized use of a motor vehicle reported at 4:14 a.m., Saturday, in the 2300 block of Herbert and a traffic acci-

dent that occurred at 3:22 a.m., Saturday, on Wichita Street in which officers also investigated a related incident of driving while intoxicated.

Friday calls to officers include: -9:49 a.m., disorderly conduct reported in the 2200 block of Yamparika.

- 10:25 a.m., disturbance reported in the 2800 block of Maiden.
- 2:13 p.m., reckless driving reported on Indian Street.
- 5:05 p.m., civil matter reported in the 2000 block of Lamar.
- 5:14 p.m., loud music reported in the 2000 block of Lamar.
- 6:10 p.m., interference with child custody reported in person to the Vernon Police Department.
- 9:10 p.m., possession of marijuana under two ounces reported in the 1800 block of Fannin.
- 9:11 p.m., suspicious person reported in the 3600 block of Indian.
- 10:46 p.m., loud music reported in the 2000 block of Lamar.
- 11:08 p.m., public intoxication reported in the 2300 block of Herbert.

- 11:23 p.m., loud music reported in the 2000 block of Lamar.
- Saturday calls to officers include: -12:56 a.m., DWI reported in the 1100 block of Main.
- 2:08 a.m., DWI reported in the 2300 block of 12th Street.
- 5:39 a.m., suspicious person reported at the intersection of Main and Paradise.
- 11:42 a.m., loud music reported in the 4400 block of College Drive.
- 1:21 p.m., possession of a controlled substance reported in the 2800 block of Bacon.
- 1:40 p.m., suspicious person reported in the 4100 block of Augusta.
- Vernon Fire Department personnel responded to two calls Friday including a possible downed power line in the 3700 block of Texas at 9:59 a.m., and a report of ashes smoldering in roadway in the 500 block of Marshall at 9:22 p.m.
- No ambulance calls were reported Friday. At 3:25 a.m., Saturday, ambulance personnel responded to a call to the 800 block of Bismarck. No transport was made from the scene.

Parks

(Continued From Page 1A)

focus groups and presented them with the top suggestions from each of the focus groups.

The top suggestions from the Economic Development Allies group included a swimming pool/water park, full range of recreational and picnic areas at all parks, and improving such as new playground equipment, paved roads, trees, and landscaping at Lydy Park.

The top three suggestions from the Mothers group included a kid-friendly pool/spray park, updated playgrounds at current parks with fall material and activities for younger children with added benches, trash cans, and landscaping, a night time watering schedule so play equipment is water dur-

ing the day, and walking/nature trails with native plants, benches and signs.

Suggestions from the Seniors group included waist deep warm exercise pool and hot tub facility for seniors, exercise room, game room, community center type area/building, public swimming pool, and a walking trail in park.

Members of the Holy Family Catholic Church group suggested better lighting in all parks, purchase of the Santa Rosa Rodeo Grounds to be used as a recreation area, facility for outdoor concerts, and an aquatic center.

The Wood Street Baptist Church group suggested a swimming pool/spray park, better

patrolling of current parks by the police department and enforcement of rules, paved parking and roads around all parks, and an outdoor amphitheater/pavilion for outdoor concerts, etc.

The Youth group suggested a paintball course, football field, swimming pool/spray park, and lighted walking trail.

From the Educators group, the suggestions included an aquatic center, adult softball facility, playground equipment improvements at Orbison Park, scenic hiking trail, outdoor recreation and nature area, and a city golf course.

The Workers group suggested a swimming pool, improvements at all parks such as water foun-

tains, new playground equipment, better lighting, benches, pavilions, BBQ grills, gazebos, cleaner restrooms, etc., better patrolling of current parks by the police department and enforcement of rules.

The Youth group members of the Temple Ebenezer Church group included hiking/biking/nature trails, more trees and scenic water fountains with, and a swimming pool.

Wilkinson said she feels comfortable that she has reached a significant cross section of the Vernon community, but that anyone who wishes to express their opinions on park related matters should make a point of coming to Monday's meeting and voice their ideas.

Activities

(Continued From Page 1A)

Portions of the service will be in English and Spanish.

"So many times, we jump right from Palm Sunday to Easter morning," Philip Weimer, pastor of the First Assembly of God, said. "If we don't draw attention to Christ's suffering for us, then we miss the full impact of His sacrifice and dedication that really does demonstrate His love for us and the true meaning of the cross."

Services will begin at 7 p.m., Friday, with the community encouraged to attend. An offering will be taken to benefit the bene-

volence ministries of the United Samaritan Services of Vernon.

The traditional men's prayer breakfasts will also be held during Holy Week, April 6-10, leading up to Good Friday. This year, churches who have not previously participated in the breakfasts will be among hosts for the event.

"The change in the schedule reflects our desire to include churches and Christians who aren't normally a part of community church events in general and Holy Week in particular," Irits said. "It is just our effort to reflect the diversity of the body of Christ

here in Vernon and to bring together the entire body."

The prayer breakfast schedule for the week will be as follows: 7 a.m., Monday, April 6, Second Baptist Church; 7 a.m., Tuesday, April 7, Templo Ebenezer; 7 a.m., Wednesday, April 8, First Presbyterian Church; 7 a.m., Thursday, April 9, Prince of Peace Church, and 7 a.m., Friday, April 10, First Baptist Church.

Also as part of the coming week's activities, the traditional Easter Pageant will be presented by the First Baptist Church, Entitled "The Third Day," the pageant

will be presented in three performances at the church, including at 3 p.m., and at 7 p.m., on Saturday, April 11, and at 7 p.m., on Easter Sunday, April 12.

Of Tanner is director of the pageant which will include some 150 participants.

"It is a dramatic depiction of the life and ministry of Jesus, including His sacrifice and resurrection," Tanner said of the pageant, which will include dramatic script and music with actors in full costumes.

The public is invited to attend any of the three performances.

Bus accident kills 1, injures 27 in Sierra Nevada

RENO, Nev. (AP) — A ski resort's employee shuttle bus crashed on the main highway through California's Sierra Nevada on Saturday, killing a passenger and injuring 27 others, authorities said.

The bus operated by the Resort at Squaw Creek veered off the road that it had occurred on Aug. 28, 2006. On March 28, 2007, Phillips died and was given three years probation.

After his probation was revoked, Phillips was sentenced to two years in the Texas Department of Corrections for the third-degree felony. His attorney was Earl Griffin of Chidress.

A motion to revoke the probation of Dennis Ray Goss was filed on the grounds that he failed a urinalysis test. Goss, 55, of Quanah, was charged with possession of a controlled substance on May 23, 2008, and on Aug. 18, 2008, he took a guilty plea and received three years probation. After his probation was revoked, Goss was sentenced to 15 months in the state jail for the state-jail felony. His attorney was Michael Valverde of Wichita Falls.

Joe Angel Casiano, 44, of Vernon, pled to information on a charge of possession of a controlled substance that occurred on March 25, 2009, and received 350 days in state jail for the state-jail felony. His attorney was John Weigert of Altus, Okla.

Healy was the prosecutor for all three District Judges Dan Mike Bird.

Clare Sims

Clare Sims, 88, of Chillicothe, died Friday, April 3, 2009, in Wichita Falls.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m., Monday, at the First Baptist Church in Chillicothe with the Rev. Wallace Clay and the Rev. Troy Strickland officiating. Interment will be in the Chillicothe Cemetery under the direction of Sullivan Funeral Home.

Sims was born Dec. 18, 1920, in Chillicothe, a daughter of the late Harvey and Lena Frith Kerr. She married Francis Sims on Jan. 17, 1947, in Vernon. He preceded her in death on Jan. 25, 1997. A lifetime resident of Chillicothe, Sims worked with her husband at the Chillicothe Independent Gin, and also

Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$500 for information that leads to the arrest and grand jury indictment of the person or persons responsible for this crime. Similar rewards are also offered for information concerning other felony crimes committed in Vernon and Wilbarger County. To report information, call 552-5011 or toll-free at 1-800-322-9888, or log on to the Crime Stoppers website at www.crimestoppers.com/vernon. Callers do not have to give their names and all information reported is confidential.

Lottery	Weather
PICK 3 Friday Night 1-5-9 Saturday Day 5-1	36 Hour Temperature High: 84 Low: 57 6 PM Sat: 84
CASH 5 12-19-15-21-24	Rainfall Last 30 Days: 0.00 2009: 2.48 2008: 1.10
Mega Millions 16-22-38-39-48 MB 42 Megaplier 4	Sunrise/Sunset Sunrise Sun: 6:02 Sunset Mon: 7:17

Vernon Daily RECORD
(6359 658-160)

The Vernon Daily Record is published daily except Saturdays, July 4th & Christmas Day. 3214 Wilbarger St., Vernon, TX 75684. Periodicals postage paid at Vernon, TX 75684. All rights reserved for reproduction or broadcast.

Larry Crabtree Publisher

Jimmy Suter Ad. Sales Director
John Gibbs Retail Sales

Jimmy Carr News Editor
Kathy McCallan Managing Editor
Joyce Kiker Family Life Editor
Miss Chappas Reporter/Photographer
News Writer
Thomas Nigro Page Editor
Denise Thompson Sports Editor

Jovita McGeorge Classified Advertising
Jane Fennel Classified Advertising

Dann Myers Graphic Arts
Joel Joast Graphic Arts

Alpha Hynes Bookkeeper
Beverly Carney Bookkeeper/Correction

Charles Ashley Production/Offit
Stephen Brown Printer
Chris Hells Designer
James Collier Distro/Distribution
Ryan Lassus Distro/Distribution
Jerry Eubaker Distro/Distribution
Robert Vincent Distro/Distribution

Phone: 940-552-5454
Out-of-town: 800-234-9014
FAX: 940-553-4823
e-mail: info@vernonrecord.com

Business office hours: Mon. thru Fri. 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Paper not delivered? 552-5454
Your newspaper should be delivered by 5:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 7 a.m. each Sunday. If you do not receive it, call between 5:30 p.m. & 9:30 p.m. weekdays and Sunday morning 7:30 a.m. inside the city limits your paper will be delivered.

Subscription Rates:
Home delivery by carrier in Wilbarger and adjacent counties:
1 Month 3 Mths. 6 Mths. 12 Mths.
\$10. \$20.10 \$37.10 \$74.10
By Mail: \$12. \$24. \$40. \$80.10
By Mail out of Texas: \$14.00 \$28.00 \$46.00 \$92.00

Meeting your expectations...

SULLIVAN FUNERAL HOME
1801 Honston 532-6234
Service, Experience, Dignity

THE VERNON DAILY RECORD



April 7, 2009

Vol. 83 No. 136

Vernon, Tx. 76384

10 Pages

50¢ Daily/\$1 Sunday

Tuesday

Schools may apply for food service stimulus funds

By MARK POTTER
The Vernon Daily Record

Officials of area school districts report they are looking at a plan that would allow them to apply for federal stimulus funding that was recently awarded to the Texas Department of Agriculture to be allocated to districts around the state for use in school cafeterias.

Eligible school districts must participate in the national school lunch program with priority to be given to schools and districts that have a majority of students eligible for free or reduced-cost meals. The funds must be used to improve the quality, safety and efficiency of delivering meals. Schools and districts can use the funds, if awarded, to replace, upgrade and update food service equipment.

Vernon ISD Supt. Tom Woody stated the district is examining

the plan before deciding whether or not to apply for the funding and is waiting for the Texas Education Agency to release information to the district concerning the program.

"Once the process is completed, we'll decide on applying for the funds," he said. "There may be some equipment in our food service to be replaced."

Woody stated approximately 50 percent of VISD students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches with the percentage rate at some individual campuses higher than the district's overall rate, and lower at other campuses.

Harrold ISD Supt. David Thweatt stated the district is reviewing the proposal and will consider applying for funding from the program.

"We're going to possibly apply for those funds in order to buy a new convection oven," he stated.

Thweatt stated 70 percent of Harrold ISD students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

Thweatt reported the district needs to purchase a new oven to replace an existing unit estimated to be 15 to 20 years old. He stated the current oven has recently needed many repairs.

Crowell ISD Supt. Charles Hundley reported his district is currently reviewing the proposal and plans to consider applying for the funds after receiving information concerning guidelines on how the funding can be used and how much the district could receive.

"We're probably going to apply for the funding once we analyze the guidelines on how the funding can be used," he said. "We don't see anything that Crowell ISD doesn't have a need for."

(See SCHOOLS, Page 2)



Moving picnic shelter

City of Vernon Parks Department employees work on placing a picnic table shelter at a new location inside Orison Park Tuesday morning after moving the shelter from another area of the park. The shelter was moved to accommodate a

new parking area along the south side of Kid League Ball Park. The new parking area is being added at the park as part of a city plan that eliminated parking along Sand Road. (VDR Photo by Mike Chacanaca)

CHS play qualifies for area

CHILLICOTHE — The Chillicothe High School one-act play "Harvey" and eight members of the cast received top honors during the UIL District One-Act Play Contest that was held last weekend in Paducah.

The play has now qualified for the UIL Area Contest, which will be held Wednesday, in Munday.

Nick Fuentes was named Best Actor at the district competition, while Kayla Allen made the All-Star Cast. Earning honorable mention All-Star Cast honors from Chillicothe were J.R. Young, Andru Freeman, Elora Granados, Gloria Vidauri, Ana Lora and Marlee Biddy.

Chillicothe's one-act play is based on the 1950 movie of the same name that starred James Stewart.

Other cast and crew members include Josh Reagan, Clarissa Lora, Shelby Brown, Kristin (See CHS, Page 2)



Advancing to area

Chillicothe High School's one-act play "Harvey" claimed a district title in UIL competition over the weekend in Paducah. The one-act play had previously won a zone title and will now advance to the UIL Area Contest, which will be held Wednesday in Munday. Members of the cast and crew of the play include (front row, from left) Kayla

Allen, Elora Granados, Gloria Vidauri, Ana Lora and Marlee Biddy. (middle row) Kristin Hendrix, Haley Thacker, director Gwen Merner, Heather Johnston and Clarissa Lora; and (back row) Travis Garrett, Tanner Vaden, Felicia Vanzant, Crystal Nutter, Shelby Brown and April Vanzant. (VDR Photo by Mark Potter)

News Points

Woman mauled by chimp blind for life

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Doctors say a Connecticut woman who was nearly killed by a chimpanzee suffered such damage to her eyes that she will be blind for life.

Doctors say Charla Nash is improving, but faces two years of surgical procedures.

Nash is at Ohio's Cleveland Clinic and is listed in critical, but stable condition. She lost her hands, nose, lips and eyelids in the Feb. 16 attack in Stamford. The 200-pound chimp was kept as a pet by Nash's friend.

Doctors at the clinic say she has made significant neurological and psychological improvement and is awake and able to communicate with her family and caregivers.

Family members are talking to doctors about reconstructive surgery. Doctors say initial surgery will be focused on her facial injuries.

Vermont legalizes gay marriage

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Vermont has become the fourth state to legalize gay marriage — and the first to do so with a legislature's vote.

The Legislature voted Tuesday to override Gov. Jim Douglas' veto of a bill allowing gays and lesbians to marry. The vote was 23-5 to override in the state Senate and 100-49 to override in the House. Under Vermont law, two-thirds of each chamber had to vote for override.

The vote came nine years after Vermont adopted its first-in-the-nation civil union law.

It's now the fourth state to permit same-sex marriage. Massachusetts, Connecticut and Iowa are the others. Their approval of gay marriage came from the courts.

Court cuts shoe thrower's sentence

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's highest court on Tuesday reduced the prison sentence for an Iraqi journalist who hurled his shoes at former President George W. Bush from three years to one, a court spokesman said.

Abdul-Sattar Bayrkedar, the spokesman, said the decision was taken because the journalist had no prior criminal history.

The defense appealed the original ruling to the Federal Appeals Court citing an Iraqi law stipulating a maximum sentence of only two years for publicly insulting a visiting foreign leader.

The decision came as Barack Obama made his first official visit to Iraq as U.S. president.

Muntadhar al-Zaidi was sentenced to three years in March after pleading not guilty to a charge of assaulting a foreign leader. He described his action as a "natural response to the occupation."

The journalist's act during Bush's last visit to Iraq as president turned the 30-year-old reporter into a folk hero across the Arab world, where the former U.S. president is reviled for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Defense attorneys have long argued that al-Zaidi's act was an expression of freedom and not a crime, and his lawyer on Tuesday said he should be freed immediately.



Prep work for resurfacing

City of Vernon Street Department employees work on preparing Lewis Road for resurfacing Tuesday morning as part of a project to alleviate drainage problems along the street. Public

Works Director Bob Cochran said the city was installing two French drains along the road to keep rainwater from collecting on the roadway. (VDR Photo by Mike Chacanaca)

Pool tops list of park projects

By MIKE CHACANACA
The Vernon Daily Record

After compiling information from 10 focus group meetings, Monica Wilkinson, community development director for the City of Vernon, told city commissions that the item topping the overall list of what residents would like to see added to the city's parks was an aquatic center.

Wilkinson, who met with the focus groups, which represented a cross section of the Vernon community, in March, presented her results during a special meeting of the city commissions Monday in the Forum Room of the Wilbarger Auditorium.

The list of improvements and additions to the city's parks in order of importance according to the focus groups included the aquatic center, followed by improvements at all parks, improvements at Lyday Park, improvements at Sunshine Park, scenic trails, a senior pool and

Local Weather

Thu 4/9	Fri 4/10	Sat 4/11
83/44	74/41	74/52
Windy with traces of rain and clouds.	Mainly sunny. Highs in the mid 70s and lows in the low 40s.	Scattered showers. Highs in the mid 70s and lows in the low 50s.

Wed 4/8 89/61

Mainly sunny. Very warm. High 89F. Winds shifting to SE at 10 to 15 mph.

Obituaries

Charles Lowell Slaton, Quannah John McGee Sr., Wichita Falls

See Obituaries, Page 2

Bulletin Board

Allen receives honor from OU

Shai Allen, a 2005 graduate of Vernon High School, was recognized as the Outstanding Senior in Mathematics Education, during the University of Oklahoma Campus Awards Program, which was held Friday, April 3. Allen is the daughter of Patrick and Tonya Allen of Vernon, and Carla Diaz of Midland.

Project Celebration bake sale set

The annual Easter bake sale to raise funds for Project Celebration will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 11, on the parking lot of First United Methodist Church.

Immunizations slated Wednesday

The Texas Department of State Health Services will be sponsoring the Vernon Immunization Clinic from 10 a.m. to noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday, at 5020 Wilburg.

Vaccinations for children and adults will be available during the clinic including Hepatitis A, pneumococcal, conjugate, polio, MMR, Hib, Tetanus Diphtheria Pertussis, Hepatitis B, HPV, meningitis and chicken pox.

A parent, adult family member or guardian must accompany minors under 18 years of age. A copy of the child's immunization record, Social Security card and Medicaid letter, if applicable, must be provided.

Services at the TDSHS are offered on a sliding scale but no one is denied services.

Other immunization clinics will be held in Vernon from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday, April 20. For further information about the clinic or immunizations, call the local TDSHS office at 552-8770.

Hospital to sponsor blood drive

Wilburger General Hospital will be sponsoring a Texas Blood Institute blood drive on Thursday, April 9. The bloodmobile will be at the hospital from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Along with free health screenings and Members for Life points to redeem at OBI's online store, donors will also receive a countdown key chain set to flash 56 days later as a reminder that the donor is eligible to give blood again.

Healthy, area residents who are 17 years old or older are encouraged to donate blood. The Texas Blood Institute is a non-profit, regional blood center and the only organization providing blood to eight hospitals in the north central Texas counties of Baylor, Wichita, Clay, Hardeman and Wilburger.

The Texas Blood Institute is an affiliate of the Oklahoma Blood Institute, the 10th largest, regional, non-profit blood center in the U.S. For more information on the Texas Blood Institute, visit www.txbi.org.

BIRTHDAY greetings to:

Mary L. Boatman
T'Siera White, 17, daughter of Tasha Lee and Colby White

WEDDING anniversaries:

Michael and Any Booth, 2nd

Police, fire report: Officers investigate 2 accidents

Local law enforcement officials made two arrests and investigated two traffic accidents among other calls reported Monday.

Officers investigated a traffic accident at 8:33 a.m., on Paradise and at 5:08 p.m., at the intersection of Indian and Bowie. Reports on both accidents were incomplete.

Taquela Dumonyell Richardson-Upshaw, 25, of Lawton, Okla., was arrested by local authorities on a Comanche County, Okla., warrant for larceny of merchandise from a retailer. A 39-year-old Vernon man was arrested for public intoxication.

Other calls to officers included:

-6:48 a.m., assault reported in person at the police department.

-12:21 p.m., burglar alarm at a business reported in the 1700 block of Hillcrest.

-3:51 p.m., found property reported in person at the police department.

-7:12 p.m., harassment reported in the 2400 block of Wilburg.

-10:39 p.m., suspicious vehicle reported in the 2800 block of Bacon.

-11:47 p.m., unwanted guest reported in the 3100 block of Bacon.

-11:17 p.m., suspicious person reported in the 1200 block of Bentley.

-11:22 p.m., suspicious vehicle reported in the 3400 block of 1st.



Damaged vehicle

A 1998 Subaru driven by Ramon J. Braceron-Bowie and Indian. There were no apparent injuries from the collision. (Stewart Studio pickup driven by Jeffrey Allen Quisenberry, 24, Photo)

Vernon Fire Department personnel responded to the report of a possible truck fire on U.S. 287 near Harrold. Firefighters did not find anything along the highway between Vernon and the truck stop south of Harrold.

Ambulance personnel responded to three calls. The first call was a transfer at 8:56 a.m., from the 2000 block of

at 5:08 p.m., Monday, at the intersection of Indian and Bowie for a traffic accident. No transfer was made.

at 12:12 p.m., ambulance personnel made a transfer from Wilburger General to United Regional Health Care System 11th Street Campus in Wichita Falls. The third call was at 5:09 p.m., at the intersection of Indian and Bowie for a traffic accident. No transfer was made.

City

(Continued From Page 1)

community center, outdoor amphitheater, paintball course and a city golf course.

During a public hearing held following Wilkinson's presentation, one member of the audience praised the city for what had been accomplished at Allingham Park and said she wished they would go farther with making a pond with a walking trail around it. She pointed out that

Vernon needs something scenic that provides something for citizens to do that does not cost money.

Wilkinson noted all of the focus groups had indicated that walking trails were something they would like to see developed. Commissioner Tra Cardwell suggested the city look at a 100-acre parcel of land along Paradise Creek where it crosses Business 287 as a possible location for a pond and trail. Commissioner Phil McCuiston added a walking trail could be added around the entire perimeter of Orbsbon Park at minimal cost.

Mayor Jeff Bearden said walking trails could be added at any of the parks, but that the devel-

opment of scenic walking trails might be something for down the road.

"We need to prepare for our needs first, before beginning to work on desires," Bearden said.

Following the public hearing on the park master plan, the commission voted to approve that the master plan be placed on the commission's regular business meeting agenda for April 28, at which time they would consider approval of the master plan being prepared by Wilkinson.

Meanwhile, the commissioners voted to reappoint Gary McWilliams to the board of adjustments and Bobby Burrus as an alternate member. Also, the commission approved the reappointment of Gene Tyra, Bob Beasley Jr. and Jim Gunn to the planning and zoning commission.

Following the public hearing on the park master plan, the commission voted to approve that the master plan be placed on the commission's regular business meeting agenda for April 28, at which time they would consider approval of the master plan being prepared by Wilkinson.

Following the public hearing on the park master plan, the commission voted to approve that the master plan be placed on the commission's regular business meeting agenda for April 28, at which time they would consider approval of the master plan being prepared by Wilkinson.

Obituary information

Information on obituaries is published free of charge in The Vernon Daily Record. Obituaries follow a standard form and any deviation from this form requires payment for publishing.

It is the policy of The Record not to list by name survivors beyond the immediate family - spouses, children parents, brothers and sisters. Inclusion of any other survivors will require payment for the obituary.

Schools

(Continued From Page 1)

Hundley stated 76 percent of Crowell ISD students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

Quannah ISD Supt. Terry Allen said his district is reviewing the program and plans to apply for funding.

"We will apply for the funds," he said. "We're just waiting for a final breakdown on how the funds can be used."

He added the district is also looking into seeking stimulus funding from other programs it may qualify for. Allen stated 76 percent of Quannah ISD students qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

Northside ISD is the only area school district unsure about whether or not it will

CHS

(Continued From Page 1)

apply for the funding. Supt. Ed Donahue stated he plans to discuss the proposal with the board of trustees for guidance before considering a decision.

He said he is concerned, however, about possible regulations concerning the use of federal funding.

"Personally, I don't want to take any federal money because of the potential strings that may be attached," he stated.

Donahue reported that 44 percent of Northside ISD qualify for free or reduced-cost lunches.

Chillicothe ISD Supt. James Rice was unavailable for comment Monday on district plans concerning applying for the stimulus funding.

Obituaries

John H. McGee Sr.

CROWELL - Former Crowell resident John H. (Bob) McGee Sr., 79, of Wichita Falls, died Sunday, April 5, 2009, in Wichita Falls.

Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m., Friday, in the First Baptist Church of Crowell with the Rev. Angus Thompson, pastor of New Jerusalem Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, officiating. He will be assisted by John Henry McGee Jr., pastor of The House of Prayer of Wichita Falls. Interment will be in the Crowell Cemetery under the direction of Womack-Manard Funeral Home.

Charles L. Slaton

QUANNAH - Charles Lowell Slaton, 78, of Quannah, died Tuesday, April 7, 2009, in Crowell. Funeral services are pending with Smith Funeral Home.

Correction

Phone number left out in the story on Yesterday, which appeared on Page 3 of Monday's edition of The Record, the phone number for the business should have been listed as 886-6327.

The Vernon Daily Record would like to correct any error appearing in the newspaper. If you feel an error has been made, please call 552-5454 during regular business hours.

Lottery
LOTTO TEXAS
PICK 3
 Mon. Day 9-2-1
 Mon. Night 0-4-8
CASH 5
 3-24-45-52
 2008
TEXAS TWO STEP
 9-12-34-35 BB 13

Weather
 24 Hour
 Temperature 76
 High 76
 Low 62
 Noon Temp. 70
Rainfall
 Last 24 hrs. 0.00
 2009 2.48
Summer Sunbelt
 Sunset Tue. 8:01
 Sunrise Wed. 7:17

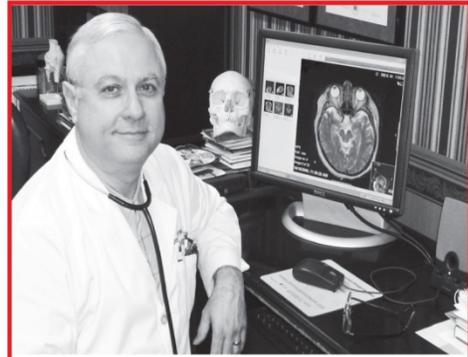
The Vernon Daily Record
 (ISSN 055-105)

The Vernon Daily Record is published daily except Saturdays, July 4th & Christmas Day. 2014 Wilburger St., Vernon, TX 75784. Periodicals postage paid at Vernon, TX 75784. All rights reserved for reproduction or broadcast.

Larry Crabtree Publisher
 Jimmy Surber Adv. Sales Director
 John Golden Retail Sales
 Jimmy Carr News Editor
 Kathy McCallan Managing Editor
 Jackie Kelly Family Life Editor
 Mike Chacabaca Reporter/Photographer
 Mark Potter News Writer
 Thomas Nagao Page Editor
 Demetrius Thompson Sports Editor
 Jovita McFadden Classified Advertising
 Julie Fennell Classified Advertising
 Dawn Myers Graphic Arts
 Chris Joust Graphic Arts
 Alpha Haynes Bookkeeper
 Beverly Carmody Bookkeeper/Circulation
 Charice Ashley Production/IT
 Stephen Brown Program
 Cirion Hollis Pressman
 Jimmie Carter Drive/Distribution
 Ryan Lott Drive/Distribution
 Jerry Brubaker Drive/Distribution
 Robert Stewart Drive/Distribution
 Phone: 940-552-5454
 Out-of-town: 800-234-9014
 FAX: 940-553-4823
 e-mail: info@vernonrecord.com

Business office hours:
 Mon. thru Fri. 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 Paper not delivered? 552-5454
 Your newspaper should be delivered by 5:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 7 a.m. each Sunday. If you do not receive it, call between 5:30 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. weekdays and Sunday morning 7 to 9 a.m. inside the city limits your paper will be delivered.

Subscription Rates:
 Home delivery by carrier in Wilburger and adjacent counties:
 1 Month 3 Mths. 6 Mths. 12 Mths.
 \$10.00 \$28.00 \$57.00 \$104.00
 By mail in Texas: \$40.00 \$88.00 \$160.00
 By mail out of Texas: \$54.00 \$92.00 \$162.00



DR. BARTEL
Specializing in:
 • Adult and Pediatric Neurology
 • Pain Management
 • Evaluation and Management of
 - Epilepsy - Multiple Sclerosis
 - Stroke - Neuropathy
 - Parkinsons - Muscle Disorders
Dr. Danny Bartel sees patients at the Doctor's Clinic in Vernon.
940-322-1075
4301 College Dr. Ste. 400

Appendix C – Additional Existing Park Photos



Appendix D – Focus Group Priority Sheets

Economic Development Allies

24-09 7:00am Norman's Catfish

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
20	Swimming pool / waterpark
10	Full range of recreational and picnic areas at all parks.
7	Improvements such as new playground equipment, paved roads, trees, and landscaping at Lyday Park.
5	Improvements at D.L. Green Park such as RV hookups, BBQ grills, etc.
3	Skate park
2	Nature / fitness / exercise trail
2	Full-fledged park and recreation programs
1	Public golf course
0	Outdoor amphitheatre
0	Frisbee golf course
0	Fishing park
0	Ropes course
0	More staff to maintain parks
0	Pave all roads around all parks.
0	Dog park
0	Let people know where parks are... website, etc.
0	New, large city park for camping, horseback riding, etc.

Pool ideas: Slides, spray park, wading pool, competition lanes, ADA, lazy river, picnic areas and bathrooms, diving boards, for all ages, summer use pool a priority...indoor pool if there is money.

Wrap-up reps: Jeff Bearden & Sheri Morris

Stay-@-Home Mothers Group
25-09 10:00am First Presbyterian Church

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
22	Kid-friendly pool / spray park
14	Update playscapes at current parks with fall material and activities for younger children; add benches, trashcans, landscaping, and better watering schedule (not in am....but at night) equipment wet when wanting to play.
14	walking/nature trails with native plants, trees, benches, signs (dirt trail ok)
6	Skate park
4	Outdoor space for movies/music etc. in the park

Pool ideas: Orbison ok for pool location but parking is a problem currently and it can be hard to find. The pool needs to have a separate area for small children that is safe...separate from the pool area. Activities need to be grouped by age/activity. Iowa Park spray park is very nice. The City of Vernon needs to do it right...plan well. Slides would be good.

Wrap-up reps: Meg Heatly & Tarah Nyberg

Seniors Group

2-10-09 10:30am Chaparral Senior Center

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
11	waist deep warm exercise pool & hot tub facility for seniors with exercise room, game room, community center type area/building (for dances reunions, etc.)
3	public swimming pool
2	walking trail in park (like Iowa Park)

* Group expressed concerns about maintenance costs of new facilities.

Pool location ideas:

Not at Orbison – too sandy, parking issues, road too small, too congested, too far for kids to go.....maybe around High School or off of Hwy 70 or by Wal-Mart because more visible and easier to get to. Senior pool could be added on to existing Chaparral Center if approved by Vernon College.

Wrap-up reps: Iva Belew & Mae Belle Belew

Holy Family Catholic Church Group
2-11-09 5:00pm Holy Family Church

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
14	Better lighting in all parks
10	Purchase Santa Rosa Rodeo grounds for recreation area
8	Facility for outdoor concerts
7	Aquatic center
6	Trees/landscaping to help beautify parks and city (i.e. screen city piles of dirt, etc.)
5	Beautify abandoned buildings (i.e. paintball in old Gibson's bldg)
4	More walking/biking trails connected throughout the city
2	Improvements at Orbison; addition of boys baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields, more restrooms, make larger and add drainage ditch to help drain area
2	Build larger football stadium for playoff games (enclosed)
0	Exercise facilities/places for elderly, parents, etc (i.e. handball courts, dog park)
0	Mudbog event separate from Summer's Last Blast
0	Improve bathrooms at existing parks
0	Better maintenance at parks & cemetery...no stickers, better watering.
0	More city-sponsored events
0	Cooperative baseball / softball events (VISD/COVVC)

Wrap-up reps: David Hernandez & Gary Tatyrek – Lupe Guzman (alt.)

Wood St. Baptist Church Group

2-12-09 6:00pm Wood St. Baptist Church

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
24	Swimming pool/spray park
15	Better patrolling of current parks by Police Dept. and enforcement of rules. Safer parks (i.e. cameras, patrolling, enforcement of rules)
12	Paved parking and roads around all parks
11	Outdoor amphitheatre /pavilion for outdoor concerts, etc.
10	Employ workers from north Vernon to maintain parks
6	Better lighting at all parks
6	Gazebos at parks
6	Parks committee to help organize recreational activities
6	Covered picnic tables, grills, and benches at parks
6	Better landscaping, more trees at park and maintain.
5	Volunteers to run concession stands at parks and help with landscaping, etc.
2	Walking trails at parks
2	More and newer playground equipment at parks
2	Bowling alley
2	More tennis courts
2	Waterfalls and ponds; water elements at current parks
2	Sand volleyball court
0	New clubhouse
0	Water taps and irrigation at Lyday and Green parks

- 0 New basketball goals
- 0 Trampolines at parks
- 0 More activities in parks for all ages (i.e. petting zoo)
- 0 More trashcans and dumpsters at parks
- 0 Scenic bridge

Wrap-up reps: Chanell Hurd & Curtis Sims

Youth Group

2.19.09 6:00pm Mr. Jim's Pizza

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
19	Paintball course
6	Football field
5	Swimming pool / Spray park
5	Walking trail (lighted)
4	Go cart track
3	Dirt bike track and rental
3	Better baseball and softball fields
3	Public golf course
3	Fitness/workout facility
3	Teen room
3	Updated playground equipment at existing parks
2	Concessions stands at parks
2	Shaded benches at parks
2	Volleyball courts
1	Hockey rink
1	Ponds for fishing
1	Shooting range
1	Mall
1	Campsites
1	Petting zoo
1	Nicer restrooms
0	Additional basketball courts
0	Additional tennis courts

0	Skate park
0	Internet café
0	Bowling alley
0	Ice skating rink
0	Rollercoaster
0	Football cage
0	Picnic areas
0	Rails on trails
0	Outdoor theatre

Wrap-up reps: Undetermined at meeting

Educators Group

3-2-09 5pm City Hall

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
20	Aquatic Center
7	Adult Softball Facility
6	Park improvements (playground equipment) at Orbison
6	Scenic hiking trails; outdoor recreation & nature area
6	City golf course
4	Skate/bike park accessible via bike/walking
3	Improve current facilities (i.e. police current usage, clean up parks, add trashcans, add benches, better time watering and mowing.)
3	Bowling alley or skating rink
2	Better lighting at all parks
2	City-sponsored youth team sports/leagues (free or subsidized) via the Boys and Girls Club
0	Better park signage to direct people off of 287
0	Add basketball courts to existing parks (esp. Sunshine)

Pool ideas: Like the high school or off of Hwy 70 locations, Orbison ok but might have too much sand, also parking / safety problems. Maybe even the Old Hawkins School site (more accessible and centrally located) or the old pool location. Next to Wynwood is nice b/c close to places to eat, accessible. Needs to include separate small kids area (spray park area), slides, volleyball net area and lazy river.

Wrap-up reps: Tracey Goodrum, Kendra Pierce, & Sara McDuff (Alt.)

Workers Group

3-12-09 5:00pm 2601 Denton (Tyson shift)

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
11	swimming pool
8	Improvements at all parks (i.e. water fountains, new playground equipment, better lighting, benches, pavilions, BBQ grills, gazebos, cleaner restrooms, etc.)
7	Better patrolling of current parks by Police Dept. and enforcement of rules... don't just drive by (i.e. no fireworks, alcohol, trash, etc.)
3	Rules of conduct posted at current parks
1	Skating rink
0	Skate park
0	Paved roads around all parks
0	More outdoor volleyball courts
0	More shade trees & landscaping at all parks

Pool location ideas:

Old Gibson's location good (but better for bowling alley or skating rink); Orbison or old pants factory location ok too.

Pool needs to have slides, diving boards, little kid-friendly / safe area, shallow and deep end; and plenty of trained, good lifeguards who pay attention and don't talk with friends all day.

Wrap-up reps: Pam Rasberry & Gwen Jones

Templo Ebenezer Church Group
3-31-09 7:00pm Templo Ebenezer Church

<u>Points</u>	<u>Recreational Need</u>
17	Hike/walking/biking/nature trails
15	More trees and scenic water fountains (with fish) at parks
11	Swimming pool
7	Improvements at all parks: newer and safer playground equipment, gazebos, water fountains, trashcans, benches, BBQ grills, bike racks, covered picnic tables, cleaner restrooms, better maintenance of lawns, and better signage
3	Outdoor amphitheatre
2	Outdoor volleyball, tennis, soccer, complex open for young people year-round
1	camping and RV areas
1	Public golf course
0	bowling/skating areas

Pool ideas: Old pool location, close to high school or at Orbison all ok.
Pool should have diving board, slides from small children, safety signs, lazy river idea very good, and good lighting.

Wrap-up reps: Issac and Ben

Appendix E – Top Priorities of Focus Groups

Top Needs/Priorities of Community Focus Groups

Economic Development Allies

1. Swimming pool / waterpark
2. Full range of recreational and picnic areas at all parks.
3. Improvements such as new playground equipment, paved roads, trees, and landscaping at Lyday Park.

Mothers Group

1. Kid-friendly pool / spray park
2. Update playscapes at current parks with fall material and activities for younger children; add benches, trashcans, landscaping, and better watering schedule (not in am....but at night) equipment wet when wanting to play.
3. Walking/nature trails with native plants, trees, benches, signs (dirt trail ok)

Seniors Group

1. Waist deep warm exercise pool & hot tub facility for seniors with exercise room, game room, community center type area/building (for dances reunions, etc.)
2. Public swimming pool
3. Walking trail in park (like Iowa Park)

Holy Family Catholic Church Group

1. Better lighting in all parks
2. Purchase Santa Rosa Rodeo grounds for recreation area
3. Facility for outdoor concerts
4. Aquatic center

Wood St. Baptist Church Group

1. Swimming pool/spray park
2. Better patrolling of current parks by Police Dept. and enforcement of rules. Safer parks (i.e. cameras, patrolling, enforcement of rules)
3. Paved parking and roads around all parks
4. Outdoor amphitheatre /pavilion for outdoor concerts, etc.

Youth Group

1. Paintball course
2. Football field
3. Swimming pool / Spray park
4. Walking trail (lighted)

Educators Group

1. Aquatic Center
2. Adult Softball Facility
3. Park improvements (playground equipment) at Orbison
4. Scenic hiking trails; outdoor recreation & nature area
5. City golf course

Workers Group

1. Swimming pool
2. Improvements at all parks (i.e. water fountains, new playground equipment, better lighting, benches, pavilions, BBQ grills, gazebos, cleaner restrooms, etc.)
3. Better patrolling of current parks by Police Dept. and enforcement of rules... don't just drive by (i.e. no fireworks, alcohol, trash, etc.)

Templo Ebenezer Church Group

1. Hike/walking/biking/nature trails
2. More trees and scenic water fountains (with fish) at parks
3. Swimming pool