

# JERSEY VILLAGE STAR

January 2002

Early voting and election day voting will be held at City Hall, 16501 Jersey Drive

**Early Voting times are:**

**8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

Wednesday, January 16-

Friday, January 18

Monday, January 21-

Friday, January 25

**8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

Monday, January 28

Tuesday, January 29

**February 2, 2002**

**Election day polls are open**

**7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Plan to attend the January 21st Council Meeting to hear an update from the Harris County Flood Control District.**

Visit us online at our new web site: [www.jerseyvillage.info](http://www.jerseyvillage.info)

## **Residents have an opportunity to vote on some critical community improvements**

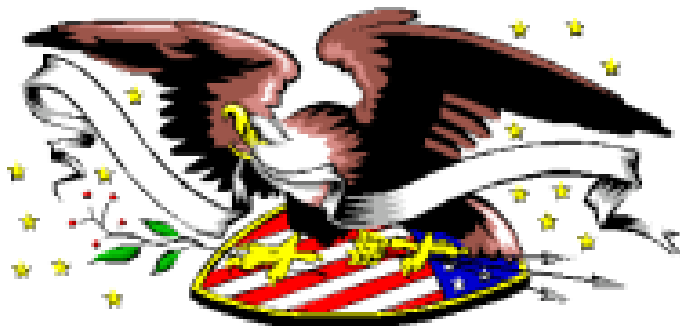
On February 2, 2002, Jersey Village residents will have the opportunity to go to the polls and vote on three Bond issues that will accomplish much needed improvements to city streets, the Fire Department and rehousing City Hall offices.

These projects have been years in the planning stages, and are ready to proceed with voters' approval. According to City Manager, Dale Brown, "In a City the size and age of Jersey Village, no project ever stands alone. Everything is somehow connected and interrelated in the infrastructure, and the continued growth and development of our community depend upon our ability to keep everything running at maximum efficiency. City Council and my of-

fice are committed to making decisions that are not only cost-effective for our residents, but fit into a comprehensive long range capital improvement plan, as well."

"We have just completed a year packed with everything from natural disasters to a national tragedy. And, like people all over the country, we have managed to dust ourselves off and continue on," Brown continued. "We reached deep into our pockets to help the victims of the September 11th terrorist attack, and marveled at the heroism of New York's emergency service personnel. Now, it is necessary to reach into our pockets again. This time to help our own Fire and EMS heroes in constructing their home away from home

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# Message from the Mayor

On Saturday, February 2, 2002, Jersey Village residents will have some critical decisions to make in a very important bond election. There are three specific projects that require your attention and support:



Mayor Ed Heathcott

- 1. Street and Drainage Repair:** The first proposition is for a **\$5 million bond** to fund the City's five year plan to reconstruct Jersey Drive from Rio Grande to Equador and Lakeview Drive from Acapulco Drive to Honolulu Drive. The scope of work not only includes the replacement of the visible road surface, but also all utilities under the road -- the water lines, sewer lines, and storm sewer. These bonds will be sold at several different times over approximately three years as needed to fund the construction projects.
- 2. Fire Station:** The second proposition is for a **\$2.5 million bond** to fund the construction of a Fire Station. This is a project that has been studied over the past 10 years, with many different locations and scenarios considered. When it comes to maintaining our excellent response time, the existing location at the corner of Lakeview and Jersey Drive provides JV's Emergency Services (Fire and EMS) with *the best location*. Under this plan, the existing fire station will be removed and rebuilt at the same location. To provide the additional space required for a larger fire station, the existing City Hall building will be renovated and incorporated into the fire station complex. The completed building will provide a total of 12,719 square feet to house fire trucks, the ambulance and other emergency equipment, offices, training facilities and dormitory space. Included in the cost is construction of additional parking behind the building and behind the police station.
- 3. City Hall Complex:** The third proposition is for a **\$2.8 million bond** to fund the construction of a City Hall at the site of the old Church of Christ, now referred to as the "Civic Center." The existing auditorium will be renovated to serve as a civic center and City Council meeting room. The other parts of the building will be demolished, as it would cost far more to renovate them than for new construction. The new construction will consist of 12,623 square feet of office space which will be connected to the 6,950 square foot renovated Civic Center. Included in the cost of construction are parking lots and drainage improvements, a sanitary sewer line extension, a masonry wall to separate the residential lots from the facility and landscaping to enhance the beauty of the facility and reduce its impact of the adjacent residential area.

JV's City Council has discussed alternative plans for accomplishing the improvements provided in the bond election, and we have concluded that *these proposals offer the best choice for our residents*. Renovating the old "Church of Christ" offices that do not meet current city building codes, for example, was not considered to be cost-effective. Renting trailers to be located by the Civic Center, or to lease office space at another location might give the appearance of saving money; however, delaying the construction of the City Hall Complex will only cost the City more money in the long term. From a practical economic standpoint, current interest rates are low and it is a good time to sell bonds. The bonds are proposed to be sold separately to take advantage of the best interest rates and timing of debt payments to minimize the affect of the debt on the tax rate.

We encourage our area residents to attend one of the public forums planned during January to discuss the issues related to these three bond propositions. The meetings will be held at the Civic Center Auditorium (see *dates and times listed on page 4*).

We hope you'll agree and support these three improvement bonds. As always, we welcome your input and comments. If you have comments on this subject or others, my email address is [edh1@ev1.net](mailto:edh1@ev1.net).

Ed Heathcott

## ACTIONS BY CITY COUNCIL ~ December

### 1. Flood buyout Program:

The City's application for buyout of flooded homes is still being processed. The City has reaffirmed to FEMA, the State of Texas and the Flood Control District its support of the desires of our citizens. At this point, FEMA and the state will not provide a date when a final resolution to the application will be known.

### 2. North Harris County Regional Water Authority:

At the December 11, 2001 meeting, the Authority voted to impose an import fee on water brought from

outside the Authority's boundaries to entities inside the Authority. At its December 28, 2001 meeting, the Authority voted to postpone assessment of the import fee for six (6) months. This fee will directly affect the City of Jersey Village by increasing the City's cost of water purchased from the City of Houston by \$0.25 per 1,000 gallons.

### 3. Homestead Exemption:

The City Council enacted a Homestead Exemption of 4% of assessed value, with a minimum amount of \$5,000.00 beginning in 2002. This is the first time the City has

been able to provide such tax relief and it is hoped that in the future the amount can be increased.

Adoption of this new Exemption is feasible to a great extent, because of the increased value of commercial properties in the city. Just five years ago, a single family residential value was about 70% of the assessed value of the city; today, the ratio between commercial and residential is nearing 50:50. In the future, it is hoped commercial values will continue to increase in relation to residential values. ■

## Fire Department Takes Delivery of New Special Operations Vehicle

There was lots of excitement around the old Fire House at the end of December when a brand new, shiny, white custom-constructed Special Operations Vehicle was delivered. This Pierce truck replaces the 1982 E-1 Chevrolet that will be sold to another department. According to Fire Chief, Kathy Hutchens, "This magnificent piece of equipment is like a giant tool box capable of carrying six firefighters along with all our rescue equipment and foam. It is ready for some serious firefighting. Getting this truck was a three year process," the chief explained. We had to develop the specifications for one that would exactly meet our needs, get it funded and then ordered, which we did over a year ago."

The problem is that there isn't a fire truck being made today that will fit in JV's outdated fire station which was originally built in the 1960's to house garbage trucks. The Fire Department took over the structure in the 1970's and there have been at least two additions to the old facility since then. The Department is also anticipating the addition of a new Pumper, provided for in the City's 2001-2002 budget, to be delivered after the new station is built sometime in 2003.

"This new equipment allows us to maintain the level and quality of protection expected by our residents," Hutchens said. "This is one of the reasons why passing the bond issue for the new station is so important. We are a volunteer department, and we have to be able to provide state of the art equipment and facilities in order to attract and retain a good complement of trained and experienced firefighters."



Chief Hutchens in the driver's seat with Frank Maher and City Manager, Dale Brown.

## ***Opportunity to Vote...***

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where they volunteer to protect the rest of us in fire and health emergencies.”

The expansion of the Fire Department was predicted in an analysis of future needs of the City completed in April 1990, which prompted City Council to contract for the development of a master plan for the development of the City’s municipal complex. The new 8500 square foot police facility, completed in 1995, was the first of the major expansion projects.

“Once the Police Services Building was underway,” Brown explained, “the Mueller study of 1990 was revisited, and Council determined that a new fire station would need to be built before the year 2000. Accordingly, in 1997 the City began moving toward this goal by hiring an architect to update the needs analysis, and to consider the location and costs for a new station.”

In the following two years, Cobourn Linseisen & Ratcliff, Inc. (CLR) assisted the city in evaluating 10 different sites and at least four different scenarios for locating and constructing a new station. The field was subsequently narrowed to two sites, and finally evolved into the proposal to relocate City Hall offices and turn the existing facility into new fire department offices and training rooms, and to build an apparatus building adjacent to the old City Hall to house the fire and EMS equipment.

Originally the City considered relocating City Hall to Senate Avenue. Then, out of the blue, the Church of Christ property went up for sale. The City bought the property to keep all City operations at one site. The bonus was that



*Computer drawing of City Hall ▲ Proposed new Fire Station ▼*



we acquired an auditorium for multiple purposes with the land.

“It is the need for modernizing the fire department in the most cost-effective, space-efficient way that is driving the City Hall relocation,” the City Manager said. “This current City Hall building was constructed in the 1970’s and it has served us well for almost 30 years.”

“We are proud of our extremely low emergency response time, and we want to make sure that this continues well into the future. This won’t happen by accident, however. We have to maintain our roads and thoroughfares and fund the necessary improvements not only for the convenience of our residents, but to sustain mobility and access for emer-

gency and service vehicles, as well,” Brown said.

Anticipating that residents may have questions about the Bond Election, Brown has announced a series of public forums to discuss the proposals coming up for a vote on February 2.

All of the sessions will be held at **7:00 p.m.** in the Civic Center Auditorium, 16327 Lakeview Drive.

**Wednesday, January 16, 2002**  
**Tuesday, January 22, 2002**  
**Monday, January 28, 2002**  
**Tuesday, January 31, 2002**  
**Friday, February 1, 2002.**

For more information about the forums, please call the City Manager’s office, 713-466-2109. For election information, call the City Secretary, 713-466-2102.