

February 2010

## **Savannah and Artesia to Receive Improved Law Enforcement Services With Faster Response Times and Additional Patrols**

**Savannah, Texas** - Residents of Savannah and Artesia will soon welcome an added level of law enforcement protection to their neighborhoods. The Little Elm Police Department will begin providing both communities with supplemental law enforcement patrol services in March. In response to resident requests, the Denton County Fresh Water Supply District (DCFWS) #10 Board of Directors recently contracted with the Town of Little Elm to provide dedicated patrols from 3 p.m. to 3 a.m., seven days a week. Funded through the current district budget, the additional law enforcement services will provide an added level of protection without requiring an additional resident fee or impacting the current tax rate.

### **History**

Fresh water Supply Districts in Texas are typically unincorporated communities that reside within a specific county. As such, the residents of these districts are entitled to receive basic law enforcement services through their county sheriff's office. These services are funded through county taxes levied against each property owner. Created to serve primarily rural environments, sheriff's offices are often too underfunded and understaffed to respond to the law enforcement needs of a water district. Due to the high number of residents in a relatively limited space, water districts often resemble municipal environments that require a higher-level of services than their rural counterparts.

A majority of the fresh water supply district communities along the U.S. 380 corridor have historically been provided supplemental law enforcement patrol services by the Denton County Sheriff's Office (DCSO) through a contract established by that agency and several residential developers prior to most of the current residents moving to the area. After receiving numerous complaints by Savannah and Artesia residents regarding law enforcement services, the Denton County Fresh water Supply District Board of Directors created a Law Enforcement Committee in February 2009.

Comprised of two board members, several residents with law enforcement backgrounds, and members of the Savannah Safety Committee and Savannah Crime Watch; the committee was charged with reviewing the current law enforcement service levels and making recommendations to the board of directors. After reviewing statistical data related to calls for service and patrol levels, the committee recommended to the board that the Denton County Sheriff's office be provided a 90-day review period to improve service levels.

The board of directors officially issued a notification letter to the DCSO in May 2009 outlining (eight) service level deficiencies and defining a 90-day review period through August 15. In August 2009, the committee concluded the review period, evaluated the services levels again, and determined that insufficient improvements had occurred. The committee recommended to the board of directors that the current contract not be renewed in October 2009 and alternative law enforcement services be pursued. Members of the Savannah Safety Committee volunteered for additional Crime Watch Patrols during this time.

### **Law Enforcement Service Options**

The DCFWD Board of Directors and Law Enforcement Committee researched a variety of alternative law enforcement service providers from October to December 2009. The Denton County Constable's office, the Prosper Police Department, the Little Elm Police Department, and several private entity options were considered. The Denton County Sheriff's Office continued to respond to 9-1-1 calls and provide supplemental service patrols on a month-to-month basis during this time. After considering all of the available options, The Board of Directors authorized the District's legal representation in December 2009 to negotiate with the Town of Little Elm to provide supplemental law enforcement services.

### **District #10 Welcomes the Little Elm Police Department**

The Little Elm Police Department will provide two dedicated officers to provide supplemental patrol to the designated service areas beginning on March 1, 2010. The supplemental patrols will occur between the hours of 3 p.m. and 3 a.m., seven days a week. The Denton County Sheriff's Office will continue to be responsible under state law to provide basic law enforcement services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The District's Board of Directors and Law enforcement Committee will continually evaluate and monitor the new law enforcement contract and service levels in order to ensure residents receive the highest-level of service possible.

For additional information regarding the DCFWSD #10 law enforcement contract or service provider, please visit [www.380districts.com](http://www.380districts.com) and contact any board member.

## **DCFWSD #10 Law Enforcement Services Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who should I call in the event of an emergency?**

In the event of an emergency, Savannah and Artesia residents should always call 9-1-1. The call will be answered by Denton County Sheriff's office dispatchers. A Little Elm police officer will respond between 3 p.m. and 3 a.m., and the Denton County Sheriff's office is responsible for responding between 3 a.m. and 3 p.m. In the event of a large scale emergency, county-wide mutual aid law enforcement agreements will provide for the response of numerous law enforcement agencies.

### **Who should I call in the event of a non-emergency 9-1-1 call?**

In the event of a non-emergency law enforcement-related issue, please call the Denton County Sheriff's office at 940.349.1600. The call will be answered by Denton County Sheriff's office dispatchers and will most likely be provided to the Districts' new dedicated Little Elm patrol officers for a response between the hours of 3 p.m. and 3 a.m.

### **What is the Service Area?**

The new law enforcement supplemental patrol contract has a defined service area that includes the communities of Artesia, Frisco Ranch, Paloma Creek, and Savannah. As the community of Providence Village will not be participating in the contract, the service area will be reduced by approximately 461 acres and about 5,100 residents. In addition, the DCSO deputies provided by the previous contract were also charged with servicing other calls throughout Denton County if necessary. With fewer miles to cover and fewer residents per officer to serve, it is projected that the new contract will allow for faster response times and improved customer service levels.

**Why Change Supplemental Service Providers?**

A change in service providers for supplemental law enforcement patrols was sought in response to residents concerns and requests related to the service levels provided by the previous contract. The change in service providers was endorsed by members of Savannah Crime Watch, the Savannah Safety Committee, the DCFWSD #10 Law Enforcement Committee, and the DCFWSD#10 Board of Directors.

**What are the specific service times for each law enforcement provider?**

According to state law, the Denton County Sheriff's office is charged with providing basic law enforcement services to Denton County residents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Little Elm Police Department will provide supplemental patrol services to Savannah and Artesia from 3 p.m. to 3 a.m., and the Denton County Sheriff's office is responsible for responding to all emergency calls between the hours of 3 a.m. and 3 p.m. In addition, the Savannah crime watch, an organization of resident volunteers, will work closely with the Little Elm Police department and continue to conduct their own neighborhood patrols.

**Who is paying for the supplemental patrol services?**

The improved supplemental patrol services will not require an additional fee for homeowners and will not affect the current tax rate. The expenditure for the new service levels is the same amount paid for previous service levels, and is already funded through the current DCFWSD #10 budget.

**What are the benefits of the new law enforcement service enhancement?**

The new contract and service provider will allow the districts to transition from rural, county law enforcement service levels to a more dedicated, municipal level that is better suited to the residential water district environment. Through the new contract and supplemental patrol service provider, residents can expect to realize improved response times, more visible patrols, increased accountability, and additional community involvement from the dedicated officers.

**Is the Town of Little Elm annexing Savannah/Artesia or is District #10 incorporating?**

No and No. Denton County Fresh water Supply District #10 will remain an independent, governmental subdivision of the State of Texas for the immediate future. The 2010 agreement with the Town of Little Elm is simply a contract solely to provide supplemental law enforcement services.