



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Volunteers stock the Dallas Food Bank on Thursday. The food bank recently completed renovations.

Food bank renovation complete

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Clients of Dallas Food Bank can now shop for items in their food boxes, thanks to a recently completed renovation.

Paid for mostly with grants, the remodel took out part of a wall, installed new shelving, carpet and paint.

The food bank is organized into food categories such as rice and pasta; tomato products and sauces; canned meats and chili; canned vegetables; fruit and bottled fruit juices; peanut butter; milk, eggs, and dairy; frozen or refrigerated meats; and bread and baked goods.

Clients take a shopping cart and select items with the help of a food bank volunteer.

The new process eliminates the need for clients to fill out a check list when signing in.

Now the food bank uses guidelines based on family size that tell clients and their volunteer "personal shoppers" how many items of each category they can take.

Food bank volunteer Gary Medsker said that after the

Dallas Food Bank

When: 9 to 11 a.m., Monday through Friday. Lobby hours 8:45 to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday.

Where: 322 Main St., suite 180, Dallas.

Contact: 503-623-3578.

Of note: Clients can receive a full food box once per month. Bread and fresh fruit and vegetables are available in the food bank lobby for people to take on any day. More volunteers are needed. To sign up to help, call 503-623-3578.

renovations, service is faster, more personable and less wasteful.

"As soon as they sign in, we get a little information and they are ready to shop," Medsker said.

He said the changes give the food bank an opportunity to serve more clients each day.

"I'm guessing that we won't have any trouble filling up to 25 orders between 9 and 11 under the new system," Medsker said. "What we hope to do is not to tell people that we've reached the maximum and they have to come back tomorrow."

He added telling people to come back a different day means they use time and resources they can ill afford to spare.

"Some of these people live as far away as Falls City

or Salem ... tell them to come back tomorrow, there's another few gallons of gas," Medsker said. "They could have spent that money buying food instead of gas for an extra trip."

Volunteer Sue Goin said another benefit is people can select what they take, making it more likely they will use everything in the box instead of throwing away unwanted or unfamiliar items.

Goin, who has volunteered at the food bank for about a year, was working the "cold room" Thursday. She makes a habit of showing items to people so they can choose what they want.

"Before, we had a bunch of something that we were giving to everybody," she said. "This way they just pick

out what they want. I think it makes them feel good to be able to pick out food instead of just getting what we give them."

Medsker said he's been surprised at some of the selections people make, but is happy to see the food isn't going to waste.

"Since we started, we've given away sauerkraut, we've given away beef tongue," he said. "Some of the things you'd think no one would ever want, somebody does."

Grants came from the Oregon Food Bank, \$2,000, Marion-Polk Food Share, \$500. Money from the Dave McGuffey Memorial Fund, which was set up to benefit the Dallas Food Bank, covering some expenses. Volunteers painted and re-organized the food bank after the work was completed.

Medsker said people using the food bank have noticed the changes.

"The clients love it. They like how it looks, how neat things are, how fast it is, that they get to choose their own food," he said. "The other big advantage is we get acquainted with people a little better."

Polk Fire District No. 1 to upgrade loaders

By Stephanie Blair
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — On Thursday, the Board of Directors for Polk County Fire District No. 1 approved Fire Chief Ben Stange's request to purchase two E-Z Load systems and one new gurney to reduce the risk of injury for both patients and paramedics.

The installation of these systems would replace the last remaining mechanical load systems and move the station to all electric loading.

This item was brought before the board because of the district's policy to gain approval from the board before making a purchase more than \$20,000 — regardless of whether the purchase has been budgeted for, such as in this case or not.

The chief's report followed, which included information about a second water leak which recently occurred at Fire Station No. 90, a smoke detector PSA which is running on Minnet and at Independence Cinema 8, the near drowning which occurred at Riverview Park in June, the events and fires that occurred on July 4 and the Polk County burn ban.

The Board of Directors also swore in two new members to take the place of outgoing directors Terri Gregory and Joost Vanderhave.

The directors inducted that evening were Dennis King and Freeman Stutzman, who swore "to support the constitution of the United States and the State of Oregon, laws thereof and the policies of Polk County Fire District No. 1, and that (they) will faithfully discharge (their) duties as a board of director according to the best of (their) ability."

Following the induction, the board elected new board leaders. Tom Snair and Joe Franko retained their positions as president and secretary, respectively, and Mike Lippsmeyer was elected to the position of vice president.

The board then proceeded to decide the regular meeting date, time and location. Meetings will carry on as usual, on the second Thursday of each month at the Central Fire Station in Independence, beginning at 6 p.m.

Board of Directors meetings occur monthly and are open to the public. The next meeting will be on Aug. 10.

Watershed purchase complete

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The city may finally have the last piece of the Mercer Reservoir watershed property purchase completed.

City Manager Ron Foggin said property line adjustments required before the sale could be final took longer than expected, but are now finished.

"All of the property line agreements and adjustments have been made and have been submitted to the county," Foggin said. "The huge hurdle has been overcome and now it is in the hands of the county to finalized. Based on

where we are, as soon as the county work is done, we should be ready to close on the property."

The city has been pursuing the purchase for years and approved financing for the approximately \$1.9 million purchase in January. About 400 acres are part of the purchase.

The purchase price will be divided among three land owners: Golden Pond Timberlands — \$975,000; John Hancock Life Insurance Company USA — \$621,000; and Hancock Timberland XI Inc. — \$303,000.

"It been a difficult haul on the property adjustment," Foggin said Monday.



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