

OVIEDO CROSSROADS

“Keeping Our Citizens Informed”

September 2011

Volume 6, Issue 2



2009 - 2011



★ **TOP 100** ★
Places To Live

Award Winning City

THE CITY OF OVIEDO SELECTED AS ONE OF FAMILY CIRCLE MAGAZINE'S TEN BEST TOWNS FOR FAMILIES

Mayor Persampiere and the City Council proudly announced on June 30, 2011, that Family Circle magazine selected Oviedo to be one of the **TEN BEST TOWNS FOR FAMILIES**. Oviedo was chosen as a perfect place to call home because of our top-notch schools, affordable housing, green-space, access to health care, low crime rates, financial stability and our giving and helping spirit.

Family Circle magazine with the help of Onboard Informatics, a New York City research firm that provides real estate, demographic and other data, initially assembled a list of 2,500 cities and towns with populations between 15,000 and 150,000. They narrowed that down to nearly 1,000 localities, all of which had a high concentration of households with median incomes between \$55,000 and \$95,000. From these 1,000 localities, Family Circle magazine selected the 10 winners from among the highest-rated towns.

Each of the 10 cities received a Great Schools rating, (Oviedo scored a 10), which is based on the performance on standardized tests by local elementary, middle and high schools relative to other schools in the state, rated on a scale of 1 to 10. A rating of 10 means that overall test scores are as good as, or better than 90% of scores elsewhere. The ratings are provided by GreatSchools.net, a nonprofit website with a mission to improve education by inspiring parents to get involved.

*Ten Best Towns
For Families – 2011*

FamilyCircle
Where Family Comes First



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Citizens Give High Marks for City Services & Quality of Life

In a collaborative effort with the National Research Center (NCR) and the International City Management Association (ICMA), Oviedo contracted to conduct a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community services provided by the City. NCR conducted similar surveys on the City's behalf in 2005 and 2007.

Of the 1,200 households who were selected at random by NCR and mailed a survey, 392 residents completed the survey and returned it to NCR. The City's 33% response rate compared favorably with the typical response rate for this type of survey. Responses of Oviedo residents were also compared to other participating jurisdictions with populations of equal size..



Survey respondents favorably identified Oviedo as a city with an excellent quality of life, residents who plan on staying for the next five years, and would recommend Oviedo to others as a place to live. The overall quality of life in the City of Oviedo was rated as “excellent” or “good” by 92% of respondents.

Almost all residents highly rated Oviedo as a great place to raise kids as well as a place to retire. They also felt that the local sense of community received high marks as well as feeling Oviedo was open and accepting towards people of diverse backgrounds. Other highly favorable ratings included the overall image or reputation of the city, air quality, ease of bicycle travel, the availability of paths and walking trails, and the City's cleanliness.

Residents also gave high marks to Oviedo as a community that is safe from crime, as evidenced by the ratings given the City's Police and Fire Departments. Survey respondents demonstrated a strong trust in their local government indicating they like the direction being taken by City leaders. More impressive is that Oviedo's survey results scored higher in most areas when compared to other cities of similar size throughout the nation!

To read the entire survey report and related results, paste the following link into your internet browser: <http://www.cityofoviedo.net/node/781>.



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| Councilman Stephen Schenck 407-971-5603 sschenck@cityofoviedo.net | Councilman Keith Britton 407-971-5604 kbritton@cityofoviedo.net | Mayor Dominic Persampiere 407-971-5602 dpersampiere@cityofoviedo.net | Deputy Mayor Steve Henken 407-971-5605 shenken@cityofoviedo.net | Councilwoman Cindy Drago 407-971-5601 cdrago@cityofoviedo.net |
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“News You Can Use”

- **Future Council Meeting Dates:**
 October 3, 2011 6:30 PM (Monday)
 October 17, 2011 6:30 PM (Monday)
- **Utility Billing and Customer Service is moving!** By mid-to late October, the Utility Billing and Payment Center will be relocated from City Hall to the Annex building, adjacent to City Hall. The new Billing and Payment center will be a one stop location to make all your payments for City services including building permit fees and fees charged by the Police Department. If you are setting up new utility services for a residential or commercial account come to the new Payment Center.
- The **Zoning** office will be relocated to the second floor of the Annex building and co-located with Planning and Development Review staff. Besides processing permits, reviewing final surveys for compliance with the Land Development Code and issuing Certificates of Occupancy, you can continue to obtain and renew your Business Tax Receipt from the Zoning Division.
- **Is there a Garage Sale in your future?** You will need to stop by Development Services and fill out a Special Event Permit/Temporary Signage application for your signs. You may put up 1 sign on your property and 2 signs offsite. For more information call 407-971-5781.

OVIEDO SELECTED BY RELOCATE AMERICA.COM AS A TOP 100 CITY FOR THE 3rd CONSECUTIVE YEAR!



Each year RelocateAmerica researches, identifies and shares the best places to live in America. Over several months at the beginning of each year, their research & editorial team begin the process based on site nominations and issues most important to relocating consumers and homeowners for the year ahead.

For 2011, the Relocate America team found the best communities that are well positioned for economic recovery, already experiencing strong economic recovery or have proven overall economic stability. Factors such as employment, education, community leadership and overall quality of life are strongly considered and all the data is examined to determine the Top 100. Once again, Oviedo met or exceeded these criteria and for the third consecutive year was selected as a Top 100 City!



City Council Approves FY 2011-12 Budget and Property Tax Rates

At two public hearings held on September 8th and 19th the Oviedo City Council adopted the City's budget and tax rates for the 2011-12 fiscal year that begins on October 1st. The City Council's approval represented the culmination of a challenging and arduous budget process that began last March when City Council was presented with the FY 11-12 budget outlook that projected a \$700,000 budget shortfall. In the April issue of *CROSSROADS*, I discussed the challenges and difficult decisions that awaited the FY 11-12 budget due to the continued economic downturn we are all experiencing. These challenges were once again met as City Council and staff crafted a budget that allows the City to live within its means (i.e. less property taxes and other revenues), and keep the tax rate constant while maintaining City services at current levels. The property tax rate for the upcoming budget year that will support most General Government operations was set at 4.8626 mills (1 mill = \$1 per 1000 of assessed valuation). This millage rate is unchanged from the current fiscal year and represents the fourth consecutive year at this tax rate and represents a **tax decrease of 6.9%** compared to the rolled back or tax neutral tax rate of 5.222 mills (1 mill = \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation).

Tax Rate and Taxable Value

For the most part, the decline in the City's tax base has been the driving force behind the budget and declining revenues. For 2011, the City's tax base or gross taxable value is \$1.8 billion, which is **\$103 million or 5.3% less** than the 2010 tax base. Excluding growth from new construction of \$30.2 million, the citywide taxable value for existing properties declined by \$70.7 million or 3.9%. *Since 2007, the City's gross taxable value declined by almost \$606 million or 25%.*

When including the voted debt service millage rate of .3071 mills for the new town center infrastructure, the combined City tax rate would be 5.1697 mills. How will this tax rate affect the average City taxpayer? A residential property owner in Oviedo with an assessed taxable value of \$175,000 less the \$50,000 homestead exemption would pay \$646 in City property taxes compared to \$644 in 2010. However, according to the Seminole County Property Appraiser, about one-third of all residential property owners in Oviedo will see a 1.5% statewide Save Our Homes inflation adjustment, which would result in a \$16 increase in City property taxes under the previous example compared to 2010 ($\$175,000 \times 1.5\% - \$50,000$ homestead exemption or $\$127,625$ taxable value/1000 x 5.1697(millage rate) = \$660). Virtually all other residential and commercial property owners will pay lower City property taxes than last year.

The FY 2011-12 Budget

Earlier this year, our financial projections indicated the General Fund would face a budget shortfall of approximately \$700,000. Similar to last year, the shortfall resulted from declining property values and continued declines in other revenues that support City government. Compared to the current fiscal year (FY 10-11), property tax revenues will be \$433,000 **less** whereas revenues from other sources such as sales tax, and electric franchise fees and utility taxes are estimated to decline by \$184,000 or 1.4%. The magnitude of the budget shortfall demanded that we once again undertake a comprehensive review of all departments and programs. This review, known as a "service level inventory", required all departments to "take stock" of all existing services and to propose reductions, consolidation of services or positions and potential outsourcing of existing services. All departments were directed to submit their budget at operating expense levels that were "equal to or less" than the adopted FY 10-11 budget although exceptions were made for costs such as fuel, utilities and liability insurance. The result of this process was lower operating expenses totaling \$131,000 in virtually all operating expense line items.

This process also led to a variety of expenditure reductions such as restructuring and cross-training of crews in Streets and Stormwater Maintenance, revamping the supervisory structure of the Police Department that resulted in one less (vacant) Lieutenant position while maintaining the current level of sworn positions in the Department, and the proposed contracting of Police dispatch services with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office (a decision on this proposal has not yet been made and will be addressed by City Council in the near future).

Although some of the budget decisions were difficult, I am confident that the current level of City services will not be affected and the City's financial condition will remain strong.

Please take a moment to review the City's award-winning budget document that can be found on the City's web site by pasting the following link into your web browser: [http://www.cityofoviedo.net/files/FY11-12/Budget\(Proposed\).pdf](http://www.cityofoviedo.net/files/FY11-12/Budget(Proposed).pdf)

Sincerely,



Richard Gestrich,
City Manager

City of Oviedo - Back Pack Program Food Drive

On Sunday March 6, 2011 the CBS 60 Minutes television program featured a story on homeless children in Central Florida. Many local viewers were shocked to learn about the number of Seminole County students that are homeless. It was even more surprising to learn that in the group of children interviewed, four (4) of those students attend an elementary school right here in the City of Oviedo.



Stenstrom Elementary School Guidance Counselor Terri Koepsell (wife of our own Fire Division Chief Tim Koepsell) runs the "Back Pack Program" out of her Stenstrom Elementary guidance office, which now doubles as a food pantry. Her office has identified approximately 80 students/families that are in need of food over the weekends. During the school week these students are able to get a free breakfast and lunch from the school. But on the weekends they don't have that option. So, the backpack program was initiated.



Every Friday Mrs. Koepsell fills a back pack with enough food for 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 dinners for the student's ENTIRE FAMILY. In April 2011, the employees of the City of Oviedo began a food drive among the staff and various departments to aide in this effort. To date we have been able to donate over 500 pounds of food to our local families in need. We are now asking the citizens of our "Top 10 Community" to also assist us in this effort as the school year comes back into session.

Let's start taking care of the kids in our community that are hungry.

Please consider donating any of the items on the list below. When donating items think of easy open containers (pull tab etc...)

Cereal /Oatmeal
Breakfast /Granola Bars
Pop Tarts

Macaroni and Cheese
Peanut Butter and Jelly
Canned Tuna and Chicken
Boxed Dinners (Tuna Helper etc)
Applesauce cups

Skillet Dinner Packets
Mashed Potatoes (instant)
Rice/Pasta
Prepared Sauces (no glass jars)
Canned Vegetables and Fruit
Canned Soup
Fruit Snack packs & cups



Our goal is to provide meals to our community's children who find themselves hungry on the weekend.

Donation Drop Boxes are located at the following places:

City Hall (lobby), Development Services, Fire Admin & All Stations, Riverside & Aquatic Center, Public Works Engineering and Operations

For more information on the City of Oviedo food drive, contact:

Erica Berezcki, HR Analyst at eberezcki@cityofoviedo.net or 407-971-5524

Debbie Pope, Code Enforcement Staff Assistant at dpope@cityofoviedo.net or 407-971-5785

December will be here before you know it, and so will

Snow Mountain

On **December 10, 2011** the weather forecast will call for a 100% chance of Snow! Join us to play in 60 tons of fresh snow shipped in straight from the North Pole as we transform the **Oviedo Mall** into a winter wonderland to create.... *Snow Mountain!*

Everyone will enjoy sled rides down the mountain, a snow play area, great entertainment, carnival games, bounce houses, craft & food vendors, pictures with **Santa**, and much more.

This very special event offers families the opportunity to experience real snow in Central Florida just in time to get into the Holiday Spirit! This is the event the kids will never forget! For more information please call the Recreation & Parks Department at 407-971-5575.



Oviedo Recreation & Parks Fun for Everyone!

Basketball or Volleyball for anyone? How about keeping your swimming technique up to par?

Youth Basketball: Registration for the Spring Youth Basketball League at the Oviedo Gymnasium and Aquatics Facility will be from October 8th through January 12, 2012 (or until full). The season will begin February 4th and run through April 7th, 2012.



Youth Volleyball: Registration for the Spring Youth Volleyball League at Oviedo Gymnasium and Aquatics Facility will be from October 8th through January 12, 2012 (or until full). The season will begin February 6th and run through April 17, 2012.

Training Cudas Swim Team: The Training Cudas swim September through May at the Aquatic Facility. This team is designed to maintain endurance and technique during the school year. Practices are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 to 7 pm or 7 to 8 pm and combine stroke technique and endurance sets. Swimmers must be at least six years old and pass a swim test prior to registration. Registration will be accepted until the team is full. Please contact Lori Hickey for more information at 407-971-5584 or email to lhickey@cityofoviedo.net.



As always, more information for these leagues and all the Recreation & Parks programming can be found on the City website at: <http://www.cityofoviedo.net/node/1440>. Or you can call 407-971-5568.

So, who's afraid of a haunted house? I'll bet you're not!



The Recreation & Parks Department will be hosting the **Annual Halloween Carnival of Screams** event at **Riverside Park**, 1600 Lockwood Blvd, on **Friday, October 28, 2011 at 6 to 10 pm**. (Haunted House only) & **Saturday, October 29, 2011 at 5 to 10 pm**. (Carnival of Screams & Haunted House).

This event is a family friendly event and will include costume contests, carnival games, children's activities, food, music, hay ride and of course a frightening haunted house! For more information call 407-971-5575.

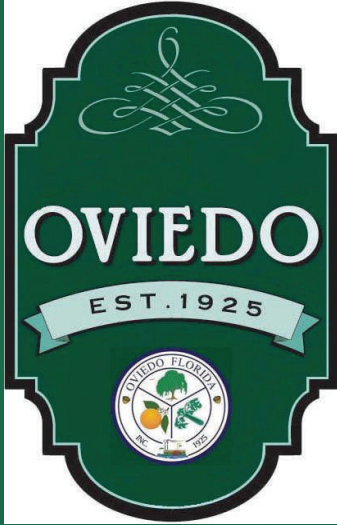
Pre-sale tickets for the Haunted House only, before October 28th are \$4 for either night, or \$5 for both nights with a donation of a non perishable food item. On the day of the event, tickets will be \$5 with a non perishable food item or \$7 without. All pre-sale tickets require a non-perishable food donation to benefit the **Hope Foundation Food Bank** in Oviedo. Other outdoor activities are free to all.

City of Oviedo

400 Alexandria Boulevard
Oviedo, Florida 32765

www.cityofoviedo.net

Phone: 407-971-5555



Questions or comments related to **Crossroads** may be directed to the City Offices at 407-971-5507 or via e-mail, gbigelow@cityofoviedo.net.



Are You Ready?

The official hurricane season ends November 30th but September is typically the busiest month of the storm season. If you haven't done so already, now is a good time to evaluate your Family Hurricane Plan.

A few simple steps can assure your family is well prepared for a hurricane and make your family's recovery from the storm much easier. The City of Oviedo Emergency Management Division wants you to ask yourself: ***Am I ready in the event of a hurricane or other significant storm event?***

Before the Storm: Make preparations to your home, address your medical needs and acquire supplies for a 7 day period. If you live in a mobile home, evacuate to a shelter or stay with friends.

During the Storm: Monitor weather updates, stay in a secure area of your home, do not attempt repairs of your home during the storm, do not attempt to evacuate at this point.

After the Storm: Monitor weather updates, avoid going outside due to possible hazards of downed power lines or trees, stay off the roads, document damage to your home, contact your insurance carrier and be patient.

For more information, visit our website at: <http://www.cityofoviedo.net/node/671>