



Department of Community Development

City of Duncan, Oklahoma - June 2017

From the Director's Desk:

I want to personally thank all of the citizens that assisting in providing information to my Department so that we could submit our CDBG Small Cities grant application. I appreciate their willingness to answer a few questions that will assist the City of Duncan for the next three years - these surveys are good for grant use for a maximum of three years then a new survey will need to be conducted. The information provided shows that the City of Duncan has several neighborhoods that need some assistance to which the officials of our city want to begin addressing.



As noted in prior publications of this newsletter, if this grant is awarded to our community we will begin using the funds to remove blight in the form of dilapidated and unsecure/unsafe structures as well as improve the overall fire protection infrastructure. It is the hope of myself, and my staff, that we will be awarded these funds and have opportunities to apply for future grants that will continue the efforts to achieve our overall goal of providing a community that is safe and vibrant.

The grant application has officially been submitted, and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce has begun their review process. Their staff at the Department of Commerce has already requested some additional information that helps clarify our overall objectives to improve the designated neighborhood.

In addition to our citizens, I want to send a thank you out to the other departments that represent the City of Duncan. The Fire Department and Public Works assisted greatly in providing data pertaining to our fire hydrant infrastructure. The staff working in Customer Service and Utility Billing made our work easier by gather contact information to those residents that my Department needed to survey - without their efforts we would not have been able to complete our survey. I want to thank our City Administration and their staffs as they made this possible by pushing to see that we had updated audits and funding available to use as a potential match for this grant opportunity.

I was taught early in life that T.E.A.M. means "Together Everyone Achieve More!" While working on this grant proposal, I truly believe that the City of Duncan has a team that wants to work together to improve the quality of life for our citizens. Again, thank you all that played an important part in putting this grant application together.

Department Activity - July 2017

For the month of July, the Department sent out 103 violations notices to property owners for tall grass/weeds, dilapidated structures, and abandoned vehicles. This number is down slightly from previous years as well as to prior months due to other Department workloads picking up in hopes of making Duncan a more attractive place to live and conduct business. During this same period, the Department issued 23 permits and collected \$817.10 in permit fees.

The Department was able to submit an application for the CDBG Small Cities grant and a huge thank you goes out to all of our Duncan citizens that assisted in this process. Since submittal, the Department has been working closely with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce on providing additional information that might assist our ability to receive this funding. The Department remains hopeful, as always, while working towards securing outside funding that might be available.

The Department is also looking at new ways to make Duncan more attractive for commercial establishments to locate to our great community. Continuing to balance residential, commercial, and industrial inventories and opportunities is important to our success as a community.

Can I trim My Neighbor's Tree That Hangs Over My Property?

The Department of Community Development receives several calls each month from property owners concerned about the overgrown tree in a neighbor's yard and ask, "can I trim the limbs that hang over into my property?" The short answer is yes, but the Department asks that you consider several things before you go outside with a chainsaw and start removing branches.

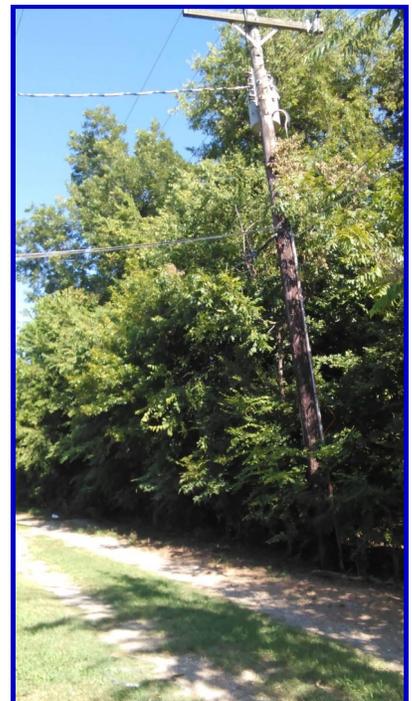
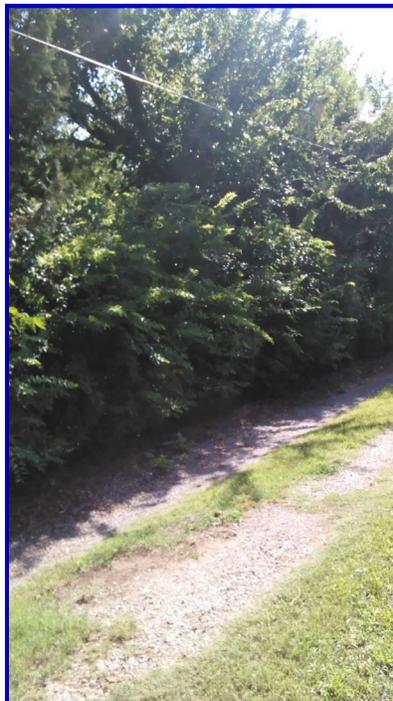
First, the Department of Community Development strongly encourages you to contact your neighbor and discuss the situation. Explain that you are concerned about the limbs as they might cause damage to your personal property. A limb could break and land on your car and/or home. Or if the limb is against one of your structures, the movement of the limb in the wind could cause damage to your structure by creating holes in the siding or roof. By talking this over with your neighbor, while being polite, you might find that your neighbor just did not realize there was a problem and they may be willing to take care of the problem for you. If they are unable to assist, let them know that you plan on trimming the tree back away from your personal property, reducing the risk of damage to your property, but will be done without the intention of damaging or killing the tree.

If your neighbor does not want to have this conversation with you about the tree and the limbs that encroach into your property, you do have a right to protect your property from damage. And this includes taking preventive measures that would include trimming limbs back. In the event that your neighbor does not want to be involved and does not want you on their property, then you are restricted in only removing those branches that you can reach from your side of the property line without crossing into their property. In this situation, you are responsible for any limb that you cut - meaning you must dispose of it properly. Disposing of it properly does NOT mean throwing it back into your neighbor's yard.

It is also important to note that you cannot damage the tree in anyway. For example, you may not cause harm to the trunk of the tree that could result in the tree dying. If you cause irreparable damage to the tree you are legally liable for the replacement of the tree. This is why it is important to at least discuss the issues with your neighbor prior to doing any trimming or cutting. It is also wise to consider hiring a professional tree service to do this type of work. Tree trimming professionals should be able to trim back limbs without causing harm to the tree itself.

It is extremely important to let professionals cut limbs away from areas where there are electrical lines, as shown in the photos below. Your safety is more important than protecting your property.

If you have any other questions about trees, or if there is a tree in your neighborhood that appears dead and you are concerned about it falling, please do not hesitate to contact the Department of Community Development at 580-251-7715. We are always happy to meet with you and discuss what can potentially be done to make our neighborhoods safer while keeping them



How Are Code Violations Processed?

Each month the Department of Community Development, through the Code Enforcement arm, processes about 150 violations each month - these are actual properties that are processed as they have been determined by staff to be in violation with City Codes and Ordinance. The Department typically receives an additional 50 or so calls and emails about properties that citizens feel need to be looked at, but upon an inspection or review have been determined not to be in violation. These non-violation cases could be the result of the zoning classification, the land might be outside city limits, or the property was taken care of by the owner prior to the Department being able to complete a site inspection.

Once a property has been determined to be in violation with City Codes, the Department must document the property and the violations that exist. This is typically done through taking a series of photographs documenting the property from the street or other public right-of-way/easement. Depending on the situation, one or more photos might be required to properly document the violation. These photos are important as the Department moves towards a "Declaration of Nuisance" or ultimately an appearance in Municipal Court.

After properly documenting the violations, a notice must be prepared and sent to the property owner of record. State Statute requires that this notice be sent either by Certified Mail or to be posted on the property in question. Per City Ordinances, the Department is required to do both of these in hopes that we are able to reach the property owner and corrective action can occur with additional city involvement. The only time this notification process does not occur is if the property has been declared by these steps for the same violation in the last six months - then the property can be declared a nuisance and be sent through the bidding process to bring the property into compliance. The State obviously feels that once you have been noticed the local municipality does not have the duty to serve as a property management company for the owners.

Once the notice has been sent and posted (more pictures are taken showing that the posting to the property actually took place) then the Department is obligated in providing at least ten (10) days for the property owner to take corrective steps on their own. This is considered to be the "due process" that has to be given to bring a property into compliance. After that period has expired, a public hearing is conducted (typically on a Monday) to hear from owners of those properties that corrective action has not yet occurred. These meetings are poorly attended, maybe 5% show up to ask for an extension of time prior to having their property declared a public nuisance and sent to the bidding process.

For those properties that end up in a bid packet, the local contractors are typically selected on lowest and best bid and have about one week to complete bringing the property into compliance. Some jobs are too big for contractors and there are instances where no bids are submitted for the work necessary to bring the property into compliance. Once work is done, liens are then placed on the property and citation are issued if applicable.

When Contacting the Department about Potential Violations to City Code...

The Department of Community Development greatly appreciates our citizens efforts to let the City of Duncan know about potential code violations. We take each of these calls and emails very seriously and would like to process them as quickly as possible! Addressing violations in a timely manner helps make our community more attractive and shows that we care about our image to the rest of the world.

When calling the Department, sometimes you may need to leave a voice message as we might be out of the office conducting inspections or following up on other violations. When you leave a message it is extremely important to leave a detailed description of the property in questions. Each week the Department receives anywhere from one to five calls where a person will say they need someone from the Department to look at the property. If the Department is lucky, they might say a street name but not provide any address. Nor will these calls leave a callback number for the staff of Community Development to follow up on to make sure we are providing proper service to our community.

The Department sends out as many as 75 to 85 notices each week during the peak growing season, so we may not know what property you are referring to without detailed information. Help us make Duncan a better place to live by providing detailed information that we can use to process a potential violations!

Have a Seat with Main Street Duncan!

Main Street Duncan is kicking off a fundraising event to purchase new commemorative benches that will be placed throughout the downtown district! Each bench will have a distinctive custom plaque with your name, family name, organization, company name or in memory of a special person or event!

These benches will be placed along Main Street where you will be able to see your bench each time you shop local! Main Street Duncan is the heart of our community and we all appreciate the wonderful stores and businesses located downtown!

Main Street Duncan works hard to make your shopping and business experience one to remember! Their staff, the businesses that they serve, and the volunteer team are making great strides to creating an environment that we all should be proud of! And here is a great opportunity to be part of that improvement process that will leave a long lasting and vibrant impact on our great community!

So help show your support for our historic downtown district by contacting Main Street Duncan at 580-252-8696 to inquire about purchasing a bench!



MAIN STREET DUNCAN

For a limited time, Main Street Duncan is offering these beautiful, commemorative benches. Each bench will have a distinctive, custom plaque with your name, family name, organization, company name or in memory of a special person or event.

This is a fundraising event for MSD. The benches will be placed along Main Street where you'll be able to see your bench each time you shop on Main Street! There are several "preferred locations" still available. Get yours today before they're all gone!

Contact Main Street Duncan, 580-252-8696.

Buy Your Commemorative Bench Today!

MAIN STREET DUNCAN, INC.
Your Street to Success!

For only \$500 you can be a part of the revitalization of Main Street Duncan! Help keep your town beautiful and vibrant. Be part of the solution!

Blue Zones - Making Our Community Healthier One Step at a Time!

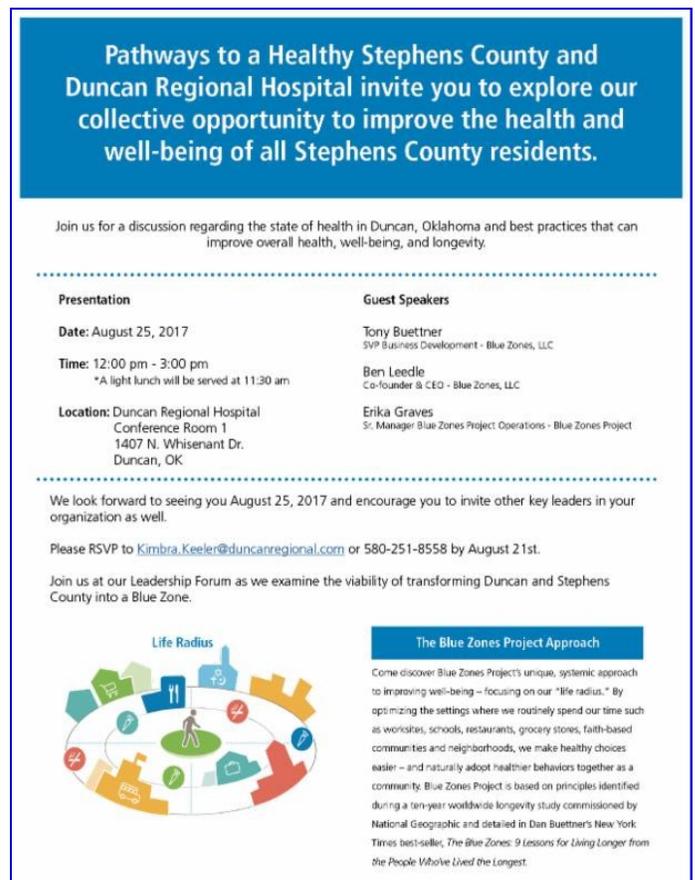
The term "Blue Zone" is a concept that first appeared as an international concept that covers the secrets to living a longer and healthier life. Five geographical areas, where people live statistically longer than averages, were identified and studied. These included:

- Okinawa, Japan
- Sardinia, Italy
- Nicoya, Costa Rica
- Icaria, Greece
- The Seventh-day Adventists in Loma Linda, CA

Citizens living in these designated "Blue Zones" shared several common lifestyle characteristics, with the following six items being highlighted in the studies:

- Family units more important than other concerns
- Less smoking
- Semi-vegetarian where most food consumed derived from plants
- Constant moderate physical activity part of daily life
- Social engagement community wide
- Legumes are commonly consumed

Want to learn more? RSVP with Kimbra Keeler at DRH and attend the event in the flyer to the right.



Pathways to a Healthy Stephens County and Duncan Regional Hospital invite you to explore our collective opportunity to improve the health and well-being of all Stephens County residents.

Join us for a discussion regarding the state of health in Duncan, Oklahoma and best practices that can improve overall health, well-being, and longevity.

Presentation	Guest Speakers
Date: August 25, 2017	Tony Buettner SVP Business Development - Blue Zones, LLC
Time: 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm *A light lunch will be served at 11:30 am	Ben Leedle Co-founder & CEO - Blue Zones, LLC
Location: Duncan Regional Hospital Conference Room 1 1407 N. Whisenant Dr. Duncan, OK	Erika Graves Sr. Manager Blue Zones Project Operations - Blue Zones Project

We look forward to seeing you August 25, 2017 and encourage you to invite other key leaders in your organization as well.

Please RSVP to Kimbra.Keeler@duncanregional.com or 580-251-8558 by August 21st.

Join us at our Leadership Forum as we examine the viability of transforming Duncan and Stephens County into a Blue Zone.

Life Radius



The Blue Zones Project Approach

Come discover Blue Zones Project's unique, systemic approach to improving well-being – focusing on our "life radius." By optimizing the settings where we routinely spend our time such as workplaces, schools, restaurants, grocery stores, faith-based communities and neighborhoods, we make healthy choices easier – and naturally adopt healthier behaviors together as a community. Blue Zones Project is based on principles identified during a ten-year worldwide longevity study commissioned by National Geographic and detailed in Dan Buettner's New York Times best-seller, *The Blue Zones: 9 Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who Live the Longest*.