



CITY OF DRIPPING SPRINGS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ribbon Cutting and Dedication for Rob Shelton Boulevard
Set for September 29**

Date: September 18, 2008

Editors Note: If you have any questions regarding this press release, please call City Administrator Michelle Fischer or Deputy City Administrator Ginger Faught at 512-858-4725.

DRIPPING SPRINGS, TEXAS – City of Dripping Springs Council Members and staff will host a ribbon cutting and dedication to mark the opening of Rob Shelton Boulevard on Monday, September 29 at 9 a.m. The public is invited to attend.

The celebration will be held at the intersection of Sports Park Road and Rob Shelton Boulevard. Parking for the ceremony will be provided in Sports and Recreation Park, which is located on Sports Park Road, off of Ranch Road 12 just south of Highway 290.

Dripping Springs City Administrator Michelle Fischer said the Mayor and City Council Members will proudly pay tribute to Rob Shelton, a beloved past Dripping Springs Independent School District superintendent, as well as acknowledge some visionary landowners and community leaders for their role in the project.

Adjacently located to the Home Depot and a future HEB site, Rob Shelton Boulevard will transform the area with its aesthetically beautiful features and pedestrian trails that is a first ever for the community.

Greatly improving conditions for citizens and visitors alike, the new boulevard includes a grassy median extending down the completed road segment, magnificent landscaped granite walking trails, and safety lighting for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. This new roadway will provide a picturesque and alternative connection to Sports Park Road and Ranch Road 12.

Built in 1998, Sports and Recreation Park is home to University Interscholastic League (UIL) baseball and softball leagues and Dripping Springs Youth Sports Association (DSYSA) soccer. On many given weekends, thousands of youth and adults utilize the park located off of Ranch Road 12. Many of the visitors to the park had reported congestion and safety issues because the park had only one entrance and exit.

In order to meet the growing community's needs and make the roadway a reality, two individual land donations and a property exchange had to be negotiated first.

Realizing the community's benefit from the project, several local landowners made significant land donations which allowed the project to move forward.

"With the Shelton family's 2.801 acre land acquisition, property owner Stan Booth's generous land contribution, and Stephen Hurd's land exchange to the project, as well as city-owned property, we were one step closer," Fischer said.

Longtime resident and landowner Poe Shelton said his family, including two sisters and two brothers, made the decision to offer the land to the community in honor of their father Rob Shelton.

Rob Shelton, who passed away 18 years ago at the age of 74, served in World War II, graduated from UT with honors, and then went on to serve the Dripping Springs school system for 26 years. In his career, he worked as a high school principal and ultimately led the school district as school superintendent. Even after his retirement, Rob Shelton came back to fill a leadership role as an elementary school principal.

Clarence Cobb, a retired resident who was born and raised in the area has known the Shelton family as long as he can remember. "By 1953, Rob Shelton was responsible for leading the District to modernize our education system," Cobb said. "Because of his efforts, our schools finally had their first gymnasium and a permanent lunch room."

"You could really call him 'Mr. Education' because he was the one who turned the program around. Now everyone wants their kids to go to Dripping Springs Independent School District and he helped pave the way," Cobb said.

"It's that community spirit that Rob Shelton exemplified and all of the landowners involved in the project should be commended," Mayor Todd Purcell said. "Without their generous donations and willingness to cooperate with the community, this project would not have been completed," he said.

Another step in the process was the creation of an Economic Development Agreement between the City of Dripping Springs, Barshop and Oles Company, HEB and Home Depot.

Fischer said Austin and San Antonio retail developer Barshop and Oles Co., who had attracted Home Depot and HEB to the property, was also instrumental in helping create a configuration to provide better access and circulation to the park as well as to their retail area.

"Barshop and Oles Vice President Milo Burdette really spearheaded the discussions with HEB and Home Depot. Burdette's role was important because we needed to secure the funding for the improvements to move forward," Fischer said.

"Through our partnership, we were able to fund the cost of the road improvements and sewer lines," Barshop and Oles Co. Vice President Milo Burdette said. "Our agreement was that repayment will occur with a portion of the sales tax based on sales generated from the property."

Also working for more than two years on the negotiations, planning and land design was a group of community leaders and a very involved City Council Person Joe Volpe. Through their civic

dedication and hard work, planning and design for drainage, irrigation, erosion and sedimentation control, landscaping, street lighting, fencing, granite trails, pavement and traffic controls (for a future traffic signal) for the project were all completed.

“We wanted to create more of a park entrance rather than a city street,” Council Member Volpe said. “Our goal was to preserve as much of our small town country feel as we could,” he added.

Volpe said the committee really worked to use native plants to create an authentic hill country setting. With such careful consideration and planning, 59 existing trees were preserved and after a future phase of landscaping and granite trail are complete, 59 shade trees, 173 ornamental trees, 1,072 large shrubs and 2,518 small shrubs will be planted.

Future phases for the project include an HEB-funded construction of a granite trail and landscaping on the east side of Rob Shelton Boulevard, as well as plans for the roadway to cross Highway 290 with a traffic light and tie into the Founders Memorial Park system in north Dripping Springs.

“The impact of the development has raised the bar on any developments in the future,” Mayor Purcell said. “This project will certainly enhance the quality of life for our residents and visitors,” he said.

Rob Shelton Boulevard is set to open September 29, 2008. The total cost for the project is approximately 1.8 million dollars.