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Who to Follow on Twitter

@MiraLagosHOA Association Information and Neighborly News

> @GrandPrairiePD Grand Prairie Police Department



@gp_tx City of Grand Prairie, Texas

@GrandFunGP City Parks, Arts and Recreation Department

@mansfieldisd Mansfield Independent School District

@Gpscanner Grand Prairie Scanner, local Police, Fire, EMS

@DFWscanner DFW Scanner, area Fire, Police, EMS

Who's your favorite? Tweet to @MiraLagosHOA with



hashtag #MLMessenger! Find us online at: www.facebook.com/MiraLagosHOA www.twitter.com/MiraLagosHOA



www.edwardjones.com

Happy **New Year!**

New Year's is a time to reflect on the year past. It is also a time to set goals for the future, and Edward Jones can help you do just that. We're in your neighborhood and available to help you take steps now to help meet your long-term financial goals.

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Edward **Jones**



Association Contact Information www.miralagoshoa.com www.texas.fsrconnect.com/miralagos

On-Site Management Stacy McGrath, General Manager manager@miralagoshoa.com

Matt Urbaniak, Assistant Manager Matt.Urbaniak@fsresidential.com

817-473-6787 (office) 817-473-4978 (fax)

South Pool Office "Veranda" 3025 S. Camino Lagos Grand Prairie, TX 75054

Office Hours Tuesday-Saturday 8:30 am-4:30 pm Closed Sunday and Monday FirstService Residential Customer Service (877) 378-2388

Mail Payments to: Mira Lagos Homeowners Association Inc. c/o FirstService Residential PO Box 678065 Dallas, TX 75267-8065



Relationships based on respect, trust and effective communication are the cornerstone of our success.



Committee Chairs



Chair Meetings: Bi-monthly

Communications

Open

communications@miralagoshoa.com Meetings: monthly

Landscape

Pam Downs and Lisa Watkins, Co-Chairs landscape@miralagoshoa.com Meetings: 1st Wednesday monthly

Pool and Sports

Mike Joffrion poolsandsports@miralagoshoa.com 3rd Tuesday (Apr-Sept)

Safety

J. Hughes, Chairman Robert McLain, Co-Chairman safety@miralagoshoa.com Meetings:

1st Tuesday monthly

Social

Deirdre Garrett Cecelia White, Co-Chair social@miralagoshoa.com Meetings: 2nd Wednesday monthly

Welcome

Elissa Sherlock welcome@miralagoshoa.com Meetings: monthly/electronically

> **New Members welcome** on all committees!

Board of Directors

Dick LeBlanc, President Walter Damon, Vice President Ben Luedtke, Board Member Joshua Spare, Resident Member Jessica Cafferata, Resident Member board@miralagoshoa.com

Mira Lagos Messenger

Is the only authorized and official monthly publication for the residents of the Mira Lagos Community with news and calendar of community events endorsed by the Mira Lagos HOA & its members.

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The association's annual meeting is the best opportunity for you to learn about this year's events and get caught up on everything happening in our community. Here are a few agenda items and meeting activities you won't want to miss:

- Meet board and committee members and the manager.
- Learn about the association's mission statement.
- Get an update on all current and future scheduled projects.
- Review the proposed budget, and hear the association treasurer explain how your assessments are being used and reserves are being invested.

Be an active community resident and attend the annual meeting. Come introduce yourself to the board, the manager and your neighbors and find a wealth of information about your community!

If you are new to Mira Lagos and haven't been received a visit from a Welcome Committee Volunteer, we need to hear from you!! A volunteer will be at your door with a bag of goodies, willing to answer any questions or direct you to someone that will have the answers.

If you're interested in any evening groups, we have those too! Ladies game nights are the 1st & 2nd Mondays of the month, BunKo & LCR (Left, Center, Right). It's a great way to meet new friends.

Come early March, we hope to see you at our Welcome Reception ~ information on the Reception will be available in the Messenger's February issue.

Hope to hear from you. Elissa Sherlock Welcome Chair welcome@miralagoshoa.com



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Position Yourself to Buy in 2016

- · Before you sell, make sure you are financially ready to buy!
- Ask your realtor to recommend a great lender, and get fully preapproved, not just prequalified.
- Make your lender a trusted part of your home buying team. Consult with them before making purchases.
- Make sure credit cards are not maxed out. Cards with a balance above 50% can hurt your credit scores. Check with your lender before paying off debt, because not all debt affects you the same.
- Do not change jobs without understanding the impact on your loan process. Talk to your lender about it first!
- Gather all the documents you will need right away, including tax returns. Do not delay filing your taxes!
- Pay your bills on time, and talk to your lender before filing any credit disputes. They can prevent you from getting a loan.

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What's Happening





Upcoming Events

School Holiday - Mansfield ISD 12/21/2015 - 01/01/2016

Martin Luther King Jr. Day - City Holiday 01/18/2016

Jeff Foxworthy and Larry the Cable Guy

01/23/2016 7:30 PM Verizon Theatre 1001 Performance Place Grand Prairie, Texas 75050

Trash Reminder



- Trash is picked up every Monday and Thursday.
- Recycle is picked up every Monday.
- Use any color plastic bags except blue or red for trash.
- Use 18-gallon green bin or blue bags for recycling.
- Set out by 7am but no earlier than 8pm the night before pick up day.

Anything other than the above is a violation with the HOA and the City.

Something is Hidden. Can you find it?



We have hidden in the Mira Lagos Messenger, a SNOWMAN! Please email manager@miralagoshoa.com in the subject line put "I FOUND IT", a random drawing, WINS! Provide page item is on, name, address and phone number in the email.

> Good Luck and have fun! If you find it there is a \$20.00 random gift card waiting for you.



Warm Sweet Potato Salad with **Toasted Pecans, Spinach** and Cranberry Vinaigrette

Recipe courtesy of Michael Weinstein, Dread Head Chef. featured Grand Prairie Farmers Market chef.

Cranberry Vinaigrette

1 cup Cranberries ½ Tablespoon ginger minced 2 Tablespoon Brown sugar 2 Tablespoon Rice wine vinegar ½ cup Orange juice 1/8 cup water 1/3 cup Grape seed oil Kosher salt and black pepper

Sweet Potatoes 2 lbs sweet potatoes-peeled and diced in 1" cubes 1 tablespoon Grape seed oil Kosher salt and black pepper

Pecans 1/4 cup Pecan Pieces

Spinach or Kale 11/2 cups baby spinach/ kale

For the vinaigrette: In a 1 quart pot add the cranberries, ginger, 1 tablespoon of the vinegar, orange juice and brown sugar. Bring to a boil, turn down the heat and reduce by half. Re-

move from the heat and let cool completely. In a blender add the cranberry mix, water and the other tablespoon of vinegar. While pureeing slowly pour all of the oil in then strain through a fine mesh strainer and season with salt and pepper to taste.

For the sweet potatoes and pecans: Toss the sweet potatoes with the oil, salt and pepper and place on a baking sheet. Place in a preheated 300-degree oven and cook for approximately 20-25 minutes until tender. When ready keep warm. For the pecans place them on a baking sheet and cook for about 7 minutes in the oven, remove and set aside.

To complete: In a bowl add the spinach or kale, warm sweet potatoes, pecans and some of the vinaigrette just to lightly coat. Toss the salad and place on a serving platter. Drizzle a little extra vinaigrette on top to finish. Bon appétit.

Grand Prairie Farmers Market gptx.org/farmersmarket

Did you know ... Farmer's Market has recipes' for you to try? http://www.qptx.org/businesses/farmers-market/recipes

PAGE 5

Public Improvement Districts Explained

What is a PID?

How can a PID be of assistance to residential communities and developers?

A PID (Public Improvement District) is a defined geographical area established to provide specific types of improvements or maintenance within the area which are financed by assessments against the property owners within the area.

Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes the creation of PIDs by cities.

What improvements can be provided in a Public Improvement District?

A PID improvement may include:

- landscaping and irrigation;
- erecting fountains, distinctive lighting, and signs;
- constructing or improving perimeter fencing;
- constructing or improving sidewalks;
- acquiring and installing pieces of art or decorations;
- acquiring, constructing, or improving entry features;
- establishing or improving parks;
- projects similar to those listed previously;
- acquiring, by purchase or otherwise, real property in connection with an authorized improvement;
- using special supplemental services for improving and promoting the district, including services relating to advertising, promotion, public safety, security, business recruitment, development, recreation, and cultural enhancement; and
- paying expenses incurred in establishing, administering, and operating the district.

What is the benefit of a Public Improvement District?

A PID allows for improvements and a higher degree of maintenance within the PID area which presumably enhances the property values.

What is the difference between a PID and	an HOA?	
	PID	HOA
Type of Property Maintained	Public	Private
Governed by City Council	Yes	No
Deals with Deed Restrictions	No	Yes
Enhances Public Property Maintenance	Yes	No
Collect through Mortgage Payment	Yes	No
Cash Held in Separate City Fund	Yes	No
PID Expenses Exempt from Sales Taxes	Yes	No

With the establishment of an advisory body, the property owners within the PID have control over the types of improvements, level of maintenance, and amount of assessments to be levied against the property owners.

Assessments are usually collected by the city's tax collecting agent and are deposited into a specific PID fund. Revenue collection is simple since a homeowner's association does not have to perform fee collection. Also, the PID allows for an interest charge and lien on unpaid assessments. This ensures a dependable revenue source for the PID. In most instances, mortgage companies include PID assessments within the property owner's escrow payment and pay the assessment at the same time that ad valorem taxes are paid.

How does a PID function after establishment?

The PID advisory board is responsible for the preparation of a service plan that is presented to the city. The service plan must cover a period of at least five years and must also define the annual indebtedness and the projected costs for improvements. This service plan shall be reviewed and updated annually for the purpose of determining the annual budget for improvements.

The yearly assessments are based on the annual budget. The City Council must hold a public hearing each year prior to the adoption of the service plan, the assessment rate, and approval of the assessment roll.

New owners must sign a statement before purchasing the property acknowledging that they will pay PID assessments with their property taxes.

The PID Advisory Board is then directly responsible for managing the improvements outlined in their petition. The board can hire contractors, maintenance personnel, or purchase materials necessary to develop and/or maintain their improvements. The level of quality of the improvements rests with the PID Board and is managed based on the assessment rate adopted annually.

What are Public Improvement Districts doing in Grand Prairie?

Currently the approved PID's are performing landscape improvements and maintenance functions along right-of-ways, landscape irrigation services, maintenance of common property decorative fencing, sign maintenance, funding decorative street lighting, and park and playground maintenance services.

How do they operate?

- Governed by City Council.
- Resident advisory board appointed annually.
- Annual budget/five year plan/assessment rate prepared by advisory board and approved by Council in September.
- Property owners are notified of proposed assessment and invited to public hearing before the Council before rate is set.
- City pays PID for base level maintenance.
- PID reimburses City for the cost of collections.
- Assessments may be collected through the mortgage escrow process just like property taxes.
- Contracts are negotiated by PID advisory board or property manager, and contracts over \$50,000 are approved by City Council.

Other Questions?

Please contact the City of Grand Prairie Finance Department at (972) 237-8091 or e-mail LHarriss@gptx.org or Charles. Wray@fsresidential.com for additional information.

MAKING ANY CHANGES?



Don't Forget To Obtain Approval First!

Our governing documents require that the Association approve all proposed architectural changes before any work is started. The importance of this requirement cannot be overstated when you consider the reason for such a restriction.

Membership in a community association requires compliance to pre-existing conditions and regulations. One of the biggest advantages of these conditions is the protection of our property values. The value of your home is directly related to the condition, appearances and aesthetics of our community as a whole. By regulating the kind and types of architectural

changes that can be done, our Association is better able to maintain our property values.

Getting our Association to approve all proposed architectural changes is not just a good idea to protect your investment, it is a requirement!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Association Manager, manager@miralagoshoa.com.

There is an ACC Request form on the Mira Lagos website, under association documents. www.miralagoshoa.com.

Thank you ~ Management



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Contact Community News Connection for more information:

972-396-8855 info@communitynewsconnection.com



Plant: Daffodils, narcissus, jonquils, grape hyacinths can all be planted any time in month. Plant chilled tulip, hyacinth bulbs late December. Pansies, pinks (dianthus), snapdragons and other cool-season annuals early in month. Living Christmas trees, including Arizona cypress, junipers, deodar cedar (South Texas) and, in East Texas, Virginia pine. Avoid types not adapted to your area. Texans have reported ongoing problems in recent years with Eldarica pines and Leyland cypress. Those two are no longer suggested in most situations. You could also use a pyramidal Oakland holly for an alternative to conifers. Choose only recommended varieties of fruit, pecan trees, grape vines, and plant late in month as nursery stock arrives. Transplant established trees, shrubs within landscape and from nature once they have been exposed to at least one hard freeze.

Prune: Shade trees as needed to maintain good shape, proper branching. Remove dead, damaged wood. Evergreens as needed -- prune carefully to maintain natural shape of plants. Remove mistletoe from tree limbs. Clip off new clumps and the small twigs on which they start. For mature clumps of the parasite, cut deeply enough into limb to remove all the mistletoe's roots. Remove heavily infested limbs entirely. There are no safe and effective chemical controls.

Fertilize: Spring-flowering annuals with high-nitrogen, watersoluble fertilizer early in December. Houseplants with same plant food every 4 to 6 waterings.

On the Lookout: Spray broad-leafed weeds with herbicide early in month to stop any further development. (See related story this issue of e-gardens.) Pick up and compost all fallen leaves, also twigs and other garden debris. Have soil test run by laboratory at Texas A&M to be ready for earliest spring plantings. Tender houseplant sprays as needed to eliminate pests from delicate foliage, flowering plants indoors.

Thanks for participating in the Mira Lagos Halloween Decorating Contest

Here are some photos of our winners.

2883 S. Serrano, 2927 Bahia, 2944 Bahia, B2951 Bahia, 3016 Rosina, 3028 S. Camino Lagos, 3011 Meseta, 3008 Pamplona, 2823 England, 2963 Montalbo, 3215 Serpis, 7032 Miramar, 6929 Nava ~ Landscape Committee



















Christmas Tree Recycling Drop Off Locations

Recycling drop-off locations for your tree (beginning Saturday, Dec. 26, 2015 - Thursday, Jan. 14, 2016) will be at:

- Charley Taylor Recreation Center 601 E Grand Prairie Rd.
- Parkhill Park 5100 Block of S. Robinson Rd.
- Grand Prairie Landfill 1102 MacArthur Blvd.

Please remove all ornaments, stands and plastic bags. Artificial trees or trees sprayed with artificial snow cannot be accepted for recycling. Acceptable trees will be recycled into mulch. Free mulch is available at the landfill to all Grand Prairie residents. Trees may also be left at curbside on your normal garbage collection day. However, these trees will not be recycled into mulch and will be collected as garbage. For more information, please call 972-237-4566.



We Want You!

You're committed to bettering our community, so why not put that passion to work and run for a spot on the association board.

The association will soon be holding elections for board

members, and we're looking for dedicated homeowners like you to help us shape and implement our governing rules, handle association finances, make important decisions that affect the entire community and much more. If you're interested in running for the board, please speak with a board member to find out more information, including responsibilities of the open positions and how to get your name on the ballot.

Working on the board can be an enriching experience and can help you make lasting, positive changes to the community. So start campaigning today for a chance to earn a seat on the association board.

Library E-Card Now Available!



The Grand Prairie Libraries now offer an "online access card" - a free library card that may be applied for online, without visiting a branch. Visit us at www.gptx.org/library, and fill out a short form. The card number and PIN of your "virtual card" will be emailed to you, usually within 24 hours. This online card can be used to download ebooks and eaudiobooks.

You can also use it to log in to our digital services, like job search help, language learning, online tutoring, test prep, research, and more. When you're ready to visit a library and check out some books or dvds, you can upgrade your card for a free to a traditional, physical library card. Your closest Grand Prairie library is the Warmack Library, at the corner of Bardin & Robinson, but your card will be good at any Grand Prairie location.



The project is 10 miles of roadway with two tolled lanes north and two tolled lanes south. Access roads will not be tolled. Construction began in October 2015 and is scheduled to be complete by late 2017.

360 South is a partnership between the Texas Department of Transportation, North Texas Tollway Authority and the North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The cities of Grand Prairie, Mansfield and Arlington will pay for intersection and bridge improvements.

360 South Project Website: www.drive360south.com



When most of us decided to buy our home and live within our community association, the last thing that probably came to mind were the possibilities that community association living presented. After all, anytime a group of homeowners work together for a common goal, practically anything is possible. From increasing our community's aesthetic appeal and eliminating neighborhood crime, to creating a more influential voice in regional issues, the opportunities to benefit from being a part of a community association lie waiting to be seized. The possibilities are limited only by our ability to work together.

Unfortunately, without a clear understanding of how and why our community association operates, those possibilities will elude us. When we can grasp the theory that underlies our governing documents and the reasons that our Board and management company must, at times, do what they do, then we take a giant step towards realizing the potential of our community.

Our community association is no different than any other organization. In order to succeed and reach its potential, it needs the support and involvement of its members. Just think of the goals that can be achieved when we all work together for the betterment of our community. Instead of perceiving our association as an obstacle to overcome, try thinking of it a tool to help us create a more comfortable life-style. But, like any tool, we need to learn how to use it effectively before it can do any good. Get involved, stay informed and do your part. You won't be sorry!

We are currently seeking assistance in the Communication Committee, Social Committee, Landscape Committee. Please email your management team at Manager@MiraLagosHOA.com.

> We have a page check it out!

Grand Prairie Snap & Send!



Grand Prairie residents using the city's new "Snap and Send" app can now report issues, such as street light outages and code violations, using their smartphones. The app, currently compatible with iPhone, iPad and iPod touch, allows users to specify the location of an issue and attach a photo to send directly to city staff as well as track the status of their service requests.

Search "Snap and Send Grand Prairie TX" in the Apple App Store and download for free. The city plans to make the app available for Android users in the future.

Residents can also report issues directly through the city's website at gptx.org/report or call city offices at 972-237-8000.





Looking to meet new people with your same interests and have fun doing it? Look no further, Mira Lagos has many Activity Groups to choose from.

Lucky River Poker Club for ML Men Contact Mike Watkins, Watkins9111@att.net

Lucky River Poker Club for ML Women Contact Lisa Watkins at watkins9111@att.net

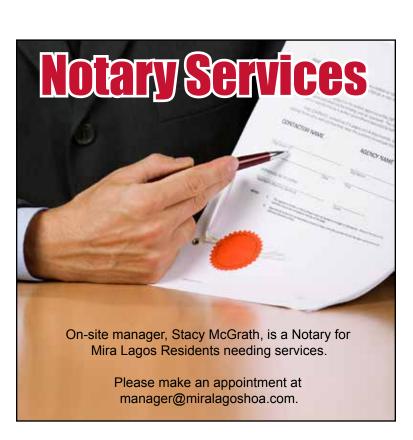
LCR for ML Ladies
Contact Elissa Sherlock, Esherlock@me.com

Bunco for ML Ladies Contact Julie Jordon, jordanjules@gmail.com

> Singles Group Adventurous Events@gmail.com

Wine Down Wednesdays
Winedownwednesdays@hotmail.com

Have an organized group not listed? Please contact communications@miralagoshoa.com.





Considering Running for the Board?

If you're considering running for the board, we ask that you take a few moments to ask yourself the following three questions:

Do I have the time?: As a board member, you will need to devote at least several hours of your time each month to association business. In addition to regular monthly board meetings, you will need to be active in email discussions and occasional special meetings. During special projects, you may need to spend a little extra time on association business. Some board members may also spend a little more time than others if they work with a committee.

Can I make tough decisions when it's required?: The primary role of the board is to conduct the business of the association. This doesn't just mean approving the budget, but also developing and enforcing policies. Board members are required to step outside their immediate circle of family and neighbors and make decisions based on the greater good of the community.

Can I do all this and have fun, too?: It isn't all about policies and tough decisions. Our community is only as good as we make it, and establishing and maintaining a sense of community is a part of a board member's responsibility. Planning and attending functions such as our picnics and being a presence in the community are as important as any policy decisions you may make.

Being a board member can be frustrating at times, but it may also be one of the most rewarding ways you'll find to volunteer your time. If you're interested in running for the board or would like more details about board's responsibilities, please contact the manager or a current board member.

Assessment News

Association Members:

As managing agent for Mira Lagos Homeowners Association, First-Service Residential hereby notifies you that the Board of Directors has approved the 2016 Operating Budget. Due to the increasing landscape contract costs, utilities, and our desire to continue to make Mira Lagos an outstanding community, the assessment rate for 2016 has increased 10% per the governing documents.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your assessment, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at stacy.mcgrath@ fsresidential.com.

Sincerely, Stacy McGrath Onsite General Manager

Timely Assessment Payment Saves Us All Money!

In order to meet its financial obligations, our association depends upon the timely receipt of our monthly assessments from the owners.

When our community's budget is approved by the Board, it assumes two things: the amount of income must equal the amount of expenses, and, that each homeowner will pay his or her maintenance assessment in a timely manner. If one or the other fails to happen, we have a cash-flow problem and it usually results in costing all of us more money in the long run.

Our community depends entirely upon the monthly assessments to pay its bills (insurance, landscapers, water, electricity, gas, management, etc.). Whenever homeowners are delinquent in paying their assessments it creates a "cash-flow shortage" that may prevent the association from paying it's bills in a timely manner. There is no other source of income available to make up for the shortage. If we "borrow" money from the reserves to pay for operating expenses, we are required to pay it back, thus we create even more expenses. Ultimately, when even a few homeowners fail to pay their assessments on time it ends up costing us all more. That is because since most of our expenses are pre-determined, the only way to make up for a cash-flow problem is to increase the amount of money coming in, or in other words, raise our monthly assessment amount. We can all take part in keeping our community's expenses down, and one of the best ways is to make sure that your monthly assessment check is sent on time!

Who to Call



Non-emergency Police	(972)-237-8700
Fire Department	(972)-237-8300
Animal Services	
Loose animals, barking dogs	(972)-237-8575
City Code Enforcement	
storing vehicles, unkempt yards	(972)-237-8049
	.or (972)-237-8296
Oncor - Street lights out	(888)-313-4747
https://www.oncorstreetlight.com	
Grand Prairie Peninsula PID	(972)-237-8091
Garbage and Recycling	(972) 237 8151
Survage and recepting	(712)-231-0131
Water Department	

REPORT STREET LIGHT ISSUES



Street lights are vital to our everyday lives, lighting the way for drivers and pedestrians. Oncor has approximately 400,000 street lights in its service area, and we always appreciate your help identifying lights that are in need of repair. The sooner our Oncor teams know lights are out, the sooner we can get them fixed!

Standard repairs can take up to three weeks, but we try to get the job done in five days or less.

Also, don't forget—safety first! Never put yourself in harm's way when noting street light outages.

WWW.ONCOR.COM

Street light outages can also be reported by calling 888-313-4747.

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*1 revision allowed. All content must be provided.

Campbell's Soup in Your Keurig?



Yes, it is true! This new product from Keurig Hot delivers fresh brewed soup with the convenience of your Keurig!

Purchase Campbell K-cups at your favorite grocery store or online at Keurig.com. Two fla-

vors are available at this time, Homestyle Chicken Broth & Noodle Soup Mix and Southwest Style Chicken Broth & Noodle Soup Mix. Each Campbell's Soup box includes pods and noodle packets made especially for Keurig coffee makers. Follow a few simple instructions and in minutes you have a steaming hot cup of soup!

We tried the Southwest Style Chicken Broth and Noodle. Our taste test concluded...this K- Cup soup is a success with wonderfully flavored slightly spicy broth, a good amount of noodles and vegetables.

All we need now is some cooler weather for a perfect soup experience!





Fighting Auto Theft With Awareness A REMINDER FROM YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

> **Hide Lock Take** What is Hide Lock Take? **Hide your things** Take your keys Lock your car

This is a proactive crime prevention program that was created between the Texas Auto Burglary & Theft Prevention Authority and the Central Business District (Dallas).

As the Holidays approach, we would like to remind you that theft tends to increase during this time of year. We point this out, not to scare you, but to better prepare you to take preventative action. Happy Holidays,

Mira Lagos HOA Safety Committee



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