

# Times-Register

## 2011 brings growth and change to Westlake

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WESTLAKE- From more than \$50 million in road improvements to discussions of doubling the size of its municipally run charter school, 2011 will be remembered as a year of growth for Westlake.

But what would one expect from a town dubbed one of the nation's most affluent neighborhoods in January 2011 by Forbes magazine?

Here are some of the highlights:

### **Westlake Academy**

In 2011, winter weather showed no mercy to Westlake Academy, the state's only municipally owned charter school. Early in the year the academy's gym was declared a total loss after water damage from an ice-storm.

Late Feb. 4, frozen pipes caused a sprinkler system to leak in a northern closet of the second-story gymnasium causing damage to the gym floor and areas beneath including portions of the dining and performance halls.

The school made modifications to the gym floor allowing for some usage but not athletic type activities such as basketball practices and games, which were moved to The Solona Club in Westlake and other area schools.

The school's website, phone and Internet connections were also disrupted because the main computer system was affected.

Despite the disruption, all 32 students in the class of 2011 were accepted into four-year colleges and more than \$4 million in scholarships and grants were awarded to the graduates. The graduating class also had one National Merit Finalist and five National Merit Commended Scholars.

Twin sisters Casey and Corey Timmerman earned valedictorian and salutatorian spots for the class of 2011, which was only the second class to graduate at Westlake Academy.

The class also exceeded the 2010 International Baccalaureate world average pass rate by eight percent and increased the school's IB diploma exam results by 29 percent over last year. The IB program fosters global thinking and offers an internationally recognized diploma.

In August, academy trustees unanimously adopted a \$5.3 million budget for fiscal 2011-12, a 16 percent increase over last year's budget.

Despite lay-offs in other districts, eight full-time positions were added including teachers in theater arts, humanities, math and English and a counselor, IT worker, maintenance engineer and technology integration specialist.

At the end of the year, trustees held discussions for future expansion including doubling enrollment, building new high school and middle school buildings, a media center, cafeteria and primary school addition. The \$15 million construction projects could take 28 months to complete and will likely be funded by increased enrollment.

Westlake Academy Foundation donated more than a half a million dollars to the academy during the 2010-2011 school year. The foundation directs the Blacksmith Annual Fund Campaign, which raised \$555,585 from parents and corporate matching gifts to support Westlake Academy's school operations. Program and equipment grants, funded partly by corporate sponsors, topped nearly \$100,000.

Personnel changes in 2011 included the addition of the academy's new secondary principal, Clint Calzini. Before coming to Westlake, Calzini served as a middle and high school science teacher in Scotland, Russia and Brazil and also taught both the IB Middle Years Program and Diploma Program.

His previous middle and high school principal positions were at the International School of Belgrade, Serbia.

Other personnel issues included an agreement by the town in November to pay \$63,474.38 to settle a lawsuit filed by the fired head of Westlake Academy and his wife.

Mark A. Rosevear filed the breach-of-contract suit after he was fired in August 2009 after leading the academy for one year. He had a year left on his contract. His wife, Claudia Simonetti, joined the suit because her contract to teach Spanish was not renewed.

### **Town of Westlake**

After outlining its capital plan in December 2010, Westlake began the New Year planning several projects including drainage improvements, road reconstruction and an expanded Westlake Academy dining hall.

More than \$50 million in road improvements were underway to improve mobility for residents and the 10,000 to 12,000 weekday commuters and motorists from surrounding communities.

Projects include improvements on the Texas 114/170 interchange, Farm Road 1938, Dove and Ottinger roads, Mahotea Boone Trail and Aspen Lane.

In April, the town council drafted an agreement Hillwood Alliance Services for improvements on Dove and Ottinger roads.

The agreement allows for Hillwood to invest about \$4.6 million in the projects, including improvements to the entrance to the new Deloitte University on Ottinger Road and the north entry to Westlake Academy.

Deloitte University serves as a training center for employees of Deloitte LLP. The accounting firm and its affiliates have 45,000 professionals working in four key business areas-auditing, financial advising, taxes and consulting.

In September, Deloitte began testing its \$300 million learning center by operating in "soft mode."

Official opening was in October for the 750,000 square-foot center, expected to attract 45,000 visitors a year.

Town council added a section to the code of ordinances Oct. 24 requiring residential developers to donate one acre for every 30 dwelling units; nonresidential requirements are 1 acre for every 50 gross acres of development.

The amendment gives the council flexibility to accept the dedication as submitted, refuse and require cash payment instead of land, allow a developer to build recreation areas or improve parks, or permit a combination to meet the requirements.

Changes will let the council use the land dedication and fee ordinance as a tool to provide recreation areas, open space, trails, and private and public parks.

Also in October, Westlake-based Animal Health International, which was acquired in the summer by a Colorado competitor, laid off 140 workers at its headquarters. Privately held Lextron Inc. bought Animal Health for \$251 million on June 13.

In December, the town unveiled its newly designed website, with the makeover giving users a fresh, new look and easier to use features.

The website remains a work in progress with staff members fixing problems that arise and adding features along the way including the ability for residents to pay their water/sewer bill on-line.

Other town highlights included Westlake Historical Preservation Society pursuing a historical-marker plan for eight significant locations.

The Town Council unanimously approved a historical-marker master plan at the June 13 meeting to identify the sites and place markers at the locations, which are in the heart of Westlake and on highly traveled roads.

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