



Media Release City of Temple

February 17, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Temple Ranks as Top Texas City in National Well-Being Index

TEMPLE, TX – February 17, 2010– Folks in the City of Temple are feeling pretty happy and healthy these days. At least that is what the results of a new national study have found.

The Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX Metro Area ranks #13 nationwide in the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, according to a massive 2009 study of Americans' attitudes. More than 353,000 Americans were interviewed during the last year in which they were asked to assess their work environment quality, finances, physical and emotional health, healthy behaviors, and the overall view of life in the present and future. The next Texas cities that follow Killeen-Temple in the study are San Antonio and Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington at #42 and #50 respectively.

The study is lauded to be a tool for policy makers. "The City of Temple has recognized the value of these quality of life and wellness issues by incorporating them into our Strategic Plan and Comprehensive Plan," states Kim Foutz, Assistant City Manager. "Some of the policies and initiatives that the City is focusing on are development of parks and trails, providing quality of place that contributes to the community's economic vitality, and establishing community and employee wellness programs."

Trails play a crucial role in the well being of an individual by providing meaningful and satisfying outdoor activity for all ages, income brackets and cultures. The City has recently received two grants totaling \$620,000 to install approximately 8,800 linear feet of trails in the City. In addition, the City has three pending grant requests totaling \$4,250,000 for an additional 2.75 miles. These trails create a critical interconnected network of trails throughout the City that link employers, parks, schools, and

other destinations. The American Trails Organization notes that that trails make the community more livable; improve the economy through tourism and civic improvement; preserve and restore open space; and provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health.

The City has engaged in multiple wellness initiatives over the past three years. The Temple Parks and Leisure Services Department, in partnership with Scott & White Hospital and Kings Daughters Clinic, is wrapping up a year long community wellness initiative entitled “Commit 2 Fit.” The program consists of special events, recreation programs and wellness seminars promoting active and healthy lifestyles. “Quality of life is an important part of our mission in the Temple Parks & Leisure Services,” Director Ken Cicora said. “What better way to contribute to that than to get folks thinking healthy and living healthy.” Activities within the program are designed for all ages. For example, elementary age children learn about wellness in the City’s after school programs by being given healthy choices for after-school snacks and engaging in physical activity.

The City of Temple’s 700 plus employees are engaged in a wellness program of their own, “Fit For Duty,” which encourages well doctor visits, smoking cessation, healthy eating, weight loss and physical activity. These programs are designed to increase productivity, reduce stress and decrease overall healthcare costs to the employee as well as the employer.

The City’s most recent initiative is the creation of the Mayor’s Physical Fitness Council. Thanks to a grant from the Governor’s Advisory Council on Physical Fitness, a Fitness council will be formed that consists of business and community leaders that will analyze fitness and wellness opportunities in Temple, market those opportunities, and develop new fitness programs. “Temple was one of only seven communities chosen in Texas this year for this grant. In each of the communities that have participated so far, there has been an increase in community awareness and participation in wellness activities. We believe that will happen in Temple too,” Cicora said. Mayor Bill Jones will be the honorary chair of this Council.

“No doubt, the overall wellness of our community, and just as importantly, how the community feels about itself, is a significant factor for success across a wide spectrum of issues, to include economic development and education,” states City Manager David Blackburn.

For further details about the rankings, please visit www.well-beingindex.com/

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