

Mayor Maxton's Message

Back to School on the Ranch

The summer heat continues to bear down on us, and we are still consistently seeing days over 100 degrees. A reminder to all, we are still in a severe drought condition and water is a precious resource that we must conserve.

In the City of Fair Oaks Ranch, by the City Ordinance, we are limited to watering our yards to only one day a week with sprinkler systems. You can hand water your plants, bushes, and trees on any day. The grass is taking a beating though in these hot sunny days and for now, having brown spots in your yard is a way of life for us.

Even though the hot summer heat continues, the summer vacation for our children is coming to an end. Boerne Independent School District began classes last week and within a week, all other school districts will be back in class.

With school starting back up, we will see an increase in the number of cars traveling around the area. The surge in traffic not only increases driving times within our City, but also when driving to San Antonio or to Boerne. After a summer of lower traffic congestion, please remember that now that school has started back up, you may need to leave earlier to make your destination on time.

Safety on our City roadways is always a concern, but I have a few reminders as we begin the new school year.

Fair Oaks Ranch Elementary and Van Raub Elementary are the two schools that are within the city limits of Fair Oaks Ranch. Both are located on Dietz Elkhorn Road. The start time for each is 7:35 am and both schools end each day at 3:00 pm. During these times, you may experience backups on Dietz Elkhorn near the schools due to parents dropping off or picking up their children. The afternoons seem to have more of a backup, and on some days cars line up on Dietz Elkhorn as family members wait in line to pick up their children.

The cars lining up on Dietz Elkhorn in the afternoon do occasionally stop traffic for a short time. If you are wanting to pass through the area, I recommend that you find a different route during the time that school gets out or ensure you pass through the area at an earlier or later time. These areas along Dietz Elkhorn are no passing zones. In the past, cars have entered into the opposite travel lane and attempted to go around the line of cars. This is extremely dangerous with cars moving in multiple directions and with kids running around the area. If you get caught in the line of traffic, you just need to wait in line with everyone else until you can pass through the area.

Many families use golf carts to take their children to school. The use of a golf cart is permitted on all City streets with a speed limit of 35 mph or lower, which includes Dietz Elkhorn. This does create another area of safety awareness. Golf carts are motor vehicles and have the right to occupy a lane of

travel and should drive in the lane of travel just like a car. A reminder to golf cart drivers - you are operating a motor vehicle and should abide by all the same traffic rules that a car follows.

For those driving cars, please be aware that there will be increased golf cart traffic on our City streets in the time frames that school is starting and getting out.

In addition to the increased traffic around the schools, we also see an increase in traffic around the bus stops throughout the City. At many of the bus stops, you will see parents in their vehicles waiting for the bus to pick up or drop off their children. This is another area to be aware of and be cautious as you drive by.

Passing school buses during the times that they are loading or unloading has been an issue in past years. When the yellow flashing lights come on, we all know that the bus is about to stop and the red flashing lights and stop sign are coming out. Whether the bus is at an intersection or just at a stop on the street, we all need to recognize the situation, stop and wait for the bus to finish its loading or unloading. A lot of the children are super excited during this time, probably more so in the afternoons when getting off the bus. Just assume that they are not paying attention and it would be too easy to put yourself in a bad situation. Injuring a child would be horrific. Stopping and waiting may make you a couple minutes late to wherever you are going, but that is a far better situation than taking a chance and hitting a child with your vehicle.

It is hard to believe that summer vacation is coming to an end. We have more people living in our City now than we did at this time last year. With more residents in and around our City, there is more traffic related to the start and end of each school day. The intent of this article is to provide some safety related areas to be aware of as individuals drive on our streets. Bottomline, we don't want to see anyone get hurt. By being more aware of situations and taking proper actions, we can prevent any accidents from happening on our streets.