



F a l l Weekly

Reader

Volume 294, Issue 359, November 14th, 2019

The Plano Rotary Club
www.PlanoRotary.com

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

November 14th
Genesis Regeneration
Center

Dr. Andrew Shepard

November 21st
Miss Texas

Chandler Foreman

November 28th
NO NOON MEETING

Happy Thanksgiving

December 5th
NO NOON MEETING

(1st Thursday of the Month)



NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Olin Jaye	Nov 05
Martin Jackson	Nov 12
Tamara Dreger	Nov 28



NTTA = North Texas Tollway Aeternal

LANELL volunteered for photo duty today, but ~~Sainted Editor~~ had already foisted his sort-of-functional point-n-shoot off on **Rick Horne**, and so he was obliged to decline the offer. Since photography is her profession, ~~SE~~ should hold off on such choices until LaNell shows up.

JOEFFRY THE MAGNIFICENT called for silence at 12:18, commanding an Invocation from **Blair Ritchey** and a Pledge from Visiting Rotarian **Bob Epstein**. He credited **Emma Smith** with Greeting and called **SERGEANT HORNE** to announce non-members. Rick turned the camera over to **Nancy Humphrey** for the duration, asking, “using a wide angle for a skinny guy?”

Pledger Bob was the sole Visiting Rotarian (Richardson). **Maria Mott** introduced our newest candidate, **Allen Shahan**. And LaNell fed husband (and “prominent guy”) **Karl**.



Rick turned the **3 Minutes of Torture** on **Mark Johnson**. Mark was born in Monroe, LA, but hasn't a Louisiana accent due to his 3 month tenure there. He moved to Plano in 1989. He is a periodontist, but **Mark Geller** claimed that he wishes he was an orthodontist. “And if you don't floss, you will come to me,” Mark (Johnson) warned. If he had followed his dreams, he'd have been a coach.



He favors **m&ms**, cherry pie, dogs, beaches, and golf, although he cautioned us against the latter as a “bad hobby to start.” Someone explained that “it's called that because all of the other four-letter words were taken.”

Johnny Lewis demurred the Rotary International Foundation minute.

Allen Shahan announced that his *Candlewood Suites—Plano North* is open for business for churches to put up families in need. His literature, passed out upon our tables, refers to saving the church “a ton of money” for long-term stays. As Director of Sales, his email is

dos@candlewoodplanonorth.com

Jeff announced the *Bubba's Bucket* funds go to the *Hendrick Scholarship Fund* and turned the mic over to **Rutledge Haggard**. Rutledge noted our past participation in the Hendrick Golf Tournament which has now been “called off” for low attendance. Hendrick has also “lost the tennis tournament.” It has, however, retained **TASTE** “coming up on February 27.” Rutledge dropped \$100 in the *Bucket* to start off our contributions in lieu of golf.

JOEFF chastised his court for failure to attend last week's **WORLD POLIO DAY**. He was “embarrassed” by the 7-8 Rotarian turnout. “Service is what we're about. It's why we do what we do. And we failed miserably.” **Janis Allman** (an attendee) mentioned that none of the other clubs did any better, but ours had the advantage of a canceled meeting that day. “Hopefully we find the time in the future,” he concluded.



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JOEFF also talked about our canceling the first Thursday meetings in lieu of service events. The Club has been chatting with *Gleneagles* and has negotiated a new contract with lower rates. So the Board recommends to members that we return to an every week schedule in the new year. **Nancy Humphrey** was ecstatic; that will keep her from pigging out once a month. **Kelly Palmer** pointed out that we can still schedule sweat equity projects.

The new contract will save us \$800-1000 each month. And the minimum number of diners drops from 45 to 35 (below which we lose the spacious double room). The proposal was passed unanimously.

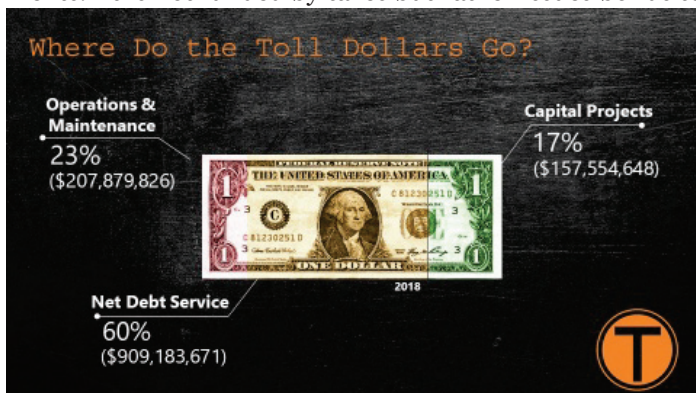
Buoyed by such success, **JOEFF** touted the **Holiday Party** for Wednesday, **4 December**, at the **Haggard Party Barn**. The event will subsume **Angel Tree**, and it counts as a meeting make-up. Someone asked if we can be rowdy and stay up all night, and Rutledge responded, “*You can stay if you be quiet!*”

Past Program Chair, **Olin Jaye**, introduced our speaker, **Michael Rey**, Media Relations Director for **NTTA**, the **North Texas Tollway Authority**. Olin began his remarks with “*Ladies and Gentlemen and Kelly Palmer*,” and mentioned that, in a past life, Michael had been a traffic reporter with the *Texas Cable News Network*.

Michael thanked us for our invitation and worried that this could be “*a tough room*.” He recognized **Randy Brodhead** and marveled that the Club was founded in 1945.

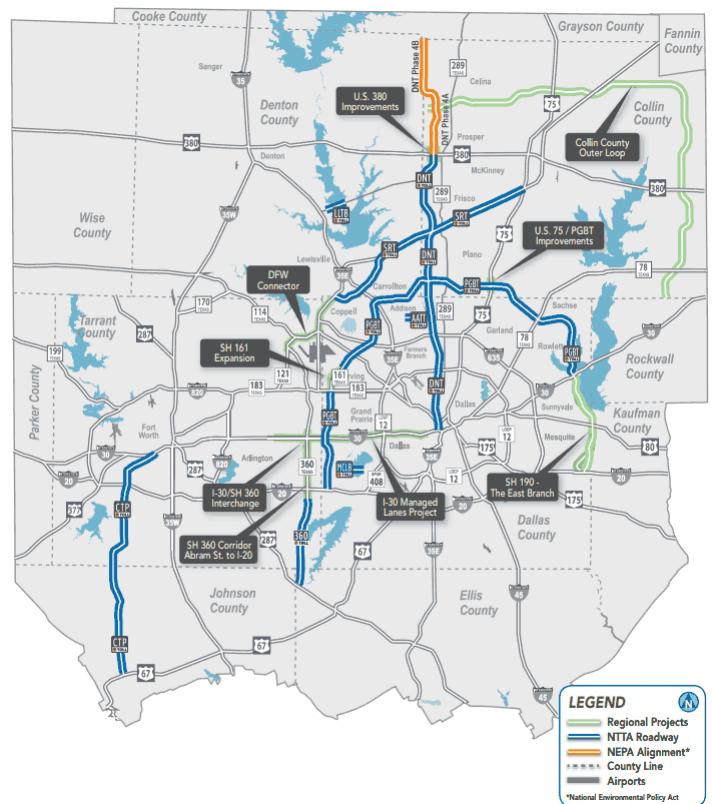
He told us that **NTTA**, created in 1997, was tasked with acquiring right of way for, construction and management of DFW’s tollways. It has a Board of Directors with representatives of each county in which **NTTA** operates plus one from Austin. Its Vice Chair is from Collin County.

In contrast to expectations, **NTTA** isn’t in the private sector but rather a subdivision of governance in the State of Texas. It doesn’t decide on the number and placement of tollways; rather it takes direction from regional governments. It is not funded by taxes but rather issues bonds to

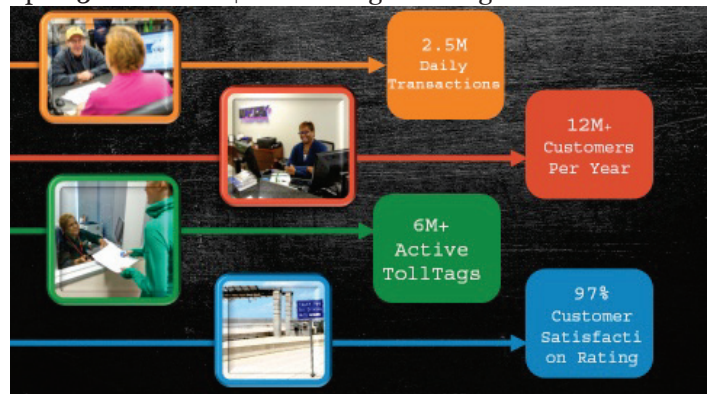


be repaid from tolls. Indeed 60% of tolls go to service the bond debt. The remainder goes to operations and capital projects such as widening corridors to cut congestion.

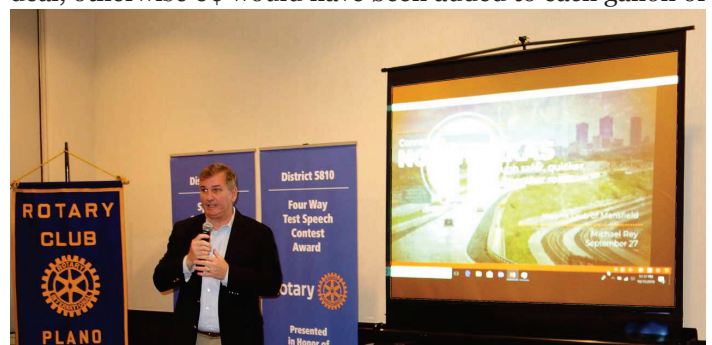
And tollways add to the economic growth of the community. Studies find an 83% increase in valuation to properties within 5 miles on either side of a tollway. But only 30% of capital projects are new development. 70% goes to augmenting already existing roadway as with the widening of the corridors mentioned above.



NTTA has 10.5M customers making 2.5M transactions with the system daily. Approximately \$2B go into additional lanes from Garland to Grand Prairie. The Sam Rayburn is getting an extra lane in each direction. And “*everybody’s favorite*” Dallas North Tollway is being widened up to 380 where a \$100M bridge is being built.



Maintenance is never-ending. Pavement and bridges require rehabilitation. And, Michael maintains, it’s a good deal, otherwise 6¢ would have been added to each gallon of



gas in order to construct the 1000 miles of lanes that **NTTA** has put into operation since its inception. And even then, the rescue service that **NTTA** provides free to stranded mo



torists would not have happened. Some 30K folks have been helped in 2018 alone by calling #999 on **NTTA** roadways.

Bowing to pressure from some objecting to the **T**, **NTTA** is offering (at additional cost) specialty and team spirit tolltags on its website. And there's an APP for that with TollMate. **NTTA** also dolls it up with perks and rewards like discounts.

Michael then, reluctantly, opened himself up to questions. The first was a softball from **Larry Bisno** asking about interoperability. Much relieved, Michael said that many non-**NTTA** entities use its tags, including DFW airport and tollways in Oklahoma and Kansas. The goal is to use (something like) it nationwide, but that will be a long time coming (if at all).

Kelly Palmer asked about revenue sharing with these entities. Feeling that he'd dodged yet another bullet, Michael told him "*revenue sharing is not the main aspect. It mainly is to enhance value.*" While there is a small fee at DFW Airport, it would lower the cost for all were tolltags ubiquitous.

Johnny Lewis asked about the "*rate of recovery for non-tolltag users.*" Michael, beginning to suspect that "*tough Rotary*" questions were a myth, said that it was 75-80% compliance and that tolltag scofflaws were prohibited from registering, forcing compliance. Johnny extended his question to users from other states and was told that it's easy to find LA and OK drivers. Other states involve look-up tables.

Rick Horne asked about bond debt. A jubilant Michael explained that the \$9B debt yet to repay is being paid with interest. The bonds have "*fallen out of favor*" but still have value.

Jerry Aris asked about HOV pay lanes. Confidence fully restored, Michael said that

"*TEXpress gets the money,*" and that drivers who want discounts can find them at driveontexpress.com

Randy Brodhead said that he had a farm out in Dorchester (SW of Sherman), and when might he expect development there? North construction has yet to be scheduled, according to Michael. Eventually, it will get into Grayson County. After all, "*30 families per day are moving into Prosper.*"

The body blow came from light heavy-weight champion, Rutledge Haggard, who wanted to know when the rest of the tollways will go the way of I-30, be sunsetted and turned freeways? Michael staggered; this was the question he had been dreading! Apologetically, he explained that I-30 had been build with a sundown law in place to cease to be a tollway when the bonds were paid off. The 1979 Legislature didn't "think" that far ahead (why are we not surprised?), so there **IS NO SUCH MANDATE** for **NTTA**! To his credit, he didn't follow that up with a maniacal laugh worthy of the meeting's date. (*Hallowe'en.*)

Toady **JOEFF** piped up to say that TxDOT had no funds for such roadways. Michael tossed him a cookie. Jeff's comment was specious; TxDOT had no funds for I-30 either. They raised them just as **NTTA** did. But that toll authority was unsuccessful lobbying Austin.

Kelly, not to be outdone in currying favor and wanting his own cookie, said that, now that it's free, nobody is maintaining I-30. Kelly's comment is more laudable but only serves to point out the venality of the legislature in turning gas taxes over to pork projects rather than roadway maintenance.

JOEFFRY told us that the *Bucket Challenge* had raised \$658 for Hendrick, and **Mary Jo Dean**, Hendrick CEO, praised us saying that the Club had single-handedly put one student through one semester in only one meeting.

Jeff then led us in the 5-Way Test and bade us begone at 1:01.



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Thank you Kenny Wilson

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Guests & Visiting Rotarians

Guest

Alan Shahan
Karl Morold

Guest of

Maria Mott
LaNell Morold

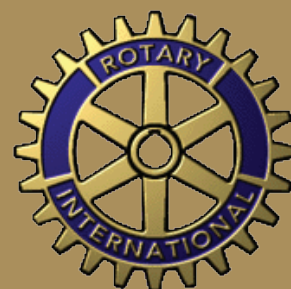
Visiting Rotarians

Visiting Rotarian

Robert Epstein

Home Club

Richardson





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