



CITY OF DALLAS

Memorandum

Date: October 15, 2008
To: City Councilmembers
From: Tom Leppert, Mayor
Subject: Towing Allegations

Council Colleagues:

Last Saturday during the Texas-OU game, Dallas was able to showcase the State Fair and the new renovations at the Cotton Bowl. But I am highly disturbed by reports that some visitors to Fair Park were tricked into paying a fee to park their cars on private property, then returning to find that their cars had been towed. According to press reports and complaints to my office, this scam apparently went on for hours. And at least one press account stated that the towing firm tacked on an allegedly unlawful fee on top of the bill. What a sour message for visitors to our City.

I am asking the City Manager and City Attorney to fully investigate these claims. If they determine this is true, I request that they fully explore all legal options. In addition the City is working in partnership with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and the Texas Attorney General. To assist with this, we are asking persons who believe their vehicles were improperly towed, or those who believe they were charged potentially unlawful fees, to contact the City by calling 3-1-1 or 214-670-3358.

I will also ask the Park Department, the Police Department, Public Works and Transportation and the State Fair of Texas to develop a strategy to detect, curtail and deter this activity quickly at events in the future.

Colleagues, I understand that State law divides oversight of towing firms between the City and the State and that this has made it difficult to rein in those towing firms who mistreat consumers. This is the key reason we added

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this to our legislative agenda. And after the events of this past weekend, we will want to work hard to ensure that visitors and citizens are not abused in the future by renegade towing companies.

Thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom', with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Mayor Tom Leppert

cc: Mary Suhm
Tom Perkins
Deborah Watkins
Craig Kinton
Judge C. Victor Lander