

the **A**train
MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2014

A photograph showing a light rail train on tracks next to a multi-lane highway. On the highway, there is heavy traffic including several cars and a large green semi-truck. In the foreground, the train's front is visible, featuring a yellow and teal design with the word "DENTON" on the digital display above the windshield. To the left, a speed limit sign indicates "SPEED LIMIT 60".

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A PUBLICATION OF THE *DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE*

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A-train provides easy commute during road construction

By Bj Lewis
Staff Writer

Ready or not Denton County, the 35Express is coming through.

Construction will soon begin in earnest for the long gestating expansion project, set to bring added capacity and traffic relief to Interstate 35-E. But until the project is done and that relief is a reality motorist will have to deal with headaches and delays while navigating construction zones.

Or, they can sit back in the calm and comfort that is the A-train.

"The more cars (and motorists) we can assist in moving off highway to the A-train, the better for individuals who don't have the option to take the train to get to and from Dallas," said Kristina Brevard, vice president of marketing and commun-

nications.

Traffic will be affected by construction, there is no question. Gearing up for that, Agency officials plan on a large advertising push to get motorists both coming and going to Denton County to see the A-train as an affordable alternative to the highway.

The agency will also ramp up a billboard campaign in January focusing on avoiding the construction, use advertisements at area gas stations and their social media outlets to reach the masses.

Kimberly Sims, spokesperson for the 35Express project, said the 35Express team has been proactively meeting with the DCTA and staff from the eight cities along the project corridor to discuss maintenance of traffic during construction and that coordination will continue throughout the duration of the



project.

Brevard said in some ways the agency will serve as an extension to AGL's communications arm, keeping DCTA riders and potential riders aware of any issues with getting to the train due to road work.

"As of right now, there are no access issues. At the Highland Village station, there will be many changes with the bridge overpass," Brevard said. "We

don't expect there to be denied station access but there could be some potential detours.

"That's one of the things we will continue to work on with the contractors. AGL will be communicating to the public and we will be sharing the same information through our e-mail Rider Alerts and signage at the station."

See CONSTRUCTION on Page 7

From Page 6 Construction

The \$4 billion expansion project will add general-purpose lanes to I-35E, managed toll lanes and frontage road improvements from Interstate 635 in Dallas County to U.S. Highway 380 in Denton. During Phase 1 of the project, which is set to be completed by mid-2017, an additional free lane will be added each way from State Highway 121 to U.S. 380, as well as two reversible managed lanes from I-635 to an area around Swisher and Turbeville roads. Phase 1 also includes the expansion of the Lewisville Lake Bridge.

Longtime DCTA board president Charles Emery said addressing the issues Denton

County was going to face with I-35 construction has been a priority for years.

"We're at the expansion stage," he said.

Emery noted that the current expansion scope is about a third of the anticipated work to be done. And since officials spent so much time planning the construction, there is an uncertainty on just how long it will take to finish the whole expansion project.

Emery and other agency officials are expecting a ridership boom once the roadways really start to be torn up, but also expect to be ready for the increase "the first time they shut down a lane on I-35."



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GoPass app allows passengers to purchase tickets with their mobile devices

By Bj Lewis
Staff Writer

These days everyone does everything on their smart phones, so why not use those same smart phones to purchase bus and rail passes for the Denton County Transportation Authority?

Launching this past September, the GoPass app gives passengers a way to cut out the paper trail by digitally planning their routes and purchasing their tickets from their iPhone or Android mobile device of choice.

"We really see this



mobile app as a regional tool for our passengers, especially now that we have regional connectivity," said Kristina Brevard, vice president of marketing and communication.

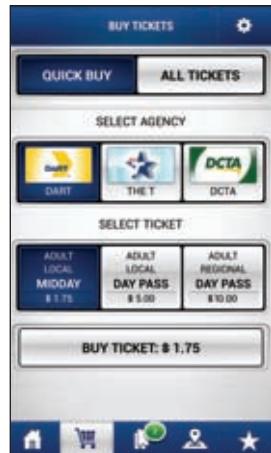
"DCTA, DART and the T

share the same passengers so it was important to develop an app for the region for passengers to use across all three transit systems."

The three agencies have seen a little over 75,400 downloads of the app as of mid-December 2013.

It was developed by Unwire with Dallas Area Rapid Transit managing the project.

Brevard said the number of downloads may be slowing down, but agency is seeing growth in the number of people who are using the app to purchase their tickets.



As with any new technical launch, Brevard said there were some hiccups. With the GoPass, one recent issue was due to the effects of a recent iPhone system update. But the developer was

able to fix the issue, she said.

The agency also has a few safeguards in place against anyone who would try and cheat the digital system.

One measure is the fact that it takes a minute or two for the pass to activate. A person could not just try and activate it quickly when they see a fare enforcement official coming their way. Another safeguard is to prevent people who may try to get away with using a screen shot of a pass. Brevard said the passes have a slight visual animation to them.

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FARE INFORMATION

Local System Valid on A-train, Connect, Connect RSVP and UNT Shuttle

Regional System

Valid on Connect, UNT Shuttle, Connect RSVP and A-train ◆ Required for trips taken outside of DCTA service area ◆ Includes access to fixed route bus and rail services operated by DART, TRE and The T, excluding paratransit

Fare Type	Local System		Regional System	
	Reduced Rate	Fare Rate	Reduced Rate	Fare Rate
2-Hour Pass	\$1.25*	\$3.00	\$1.25*	\$5.00
Day Pass	\$2.50*	\$6.00	\$2.50*	\$10.00
7-Day Pass	-	\$25.00	-	\$50.00
10-Day Pack of Day Pass	-	\$40.00	-	\$70.00
Monthly/31-Day Pass	\$40.00*	\$90.00	\$40.00*	\$160.00
Annual Pass	\$480.00*	\$650.00	\$480.00*	\$1,600.00
Summer Youth Pass	-	\$30.00	-	-

University & College Fares

Student	Full Semester Pass	\$125.00**	\$250.00**
	Summer Semester Pass	\$80.00**	\$160.00**
	Annual Pass	\$300.00**	\$600.00**
Faculty/ Staff	Full Semester Pass	\$170.00***	\$340.00***
	Annual Pass	\$420.00***	\$840.00***

Connect & UNT Shuttle

Fare Type	Reduced Rate	Fare Rate
One-Way Trip	\$0.75*	\$1.50
Ten Ride Book	-	\$13.00
Monthly/31-Day Pass	\$25.00*	\$45.00
Annual Pass	-	\$450.00

Demand Response Access

Fare Type	Reduced Rate	Fare Rate
One-Way Trip	\$0.75*	\$1.50
Ten Ride Book	-	\$13.00

NCTC Shuttle

Fare Type	Reduced Rate	Fare Rate
One-Way Trip	\$1.50*	\$3.00

Transfer Buy-up

Fare Type	Fare Rate
Connect to Local System 2-Hour Pass	\$1.50
Connect to Regional System 2-Hour Pass	\$3.50
DCTA Local System 2-Hour Pass to Regional System 2-Hour Pass	\$2.00

* Reduced = Seniors (65+), disabled, Medicare cardholders and students (Ages 5-18, students over the age of 14 require a valid high school or DCTA issued ID).

** Students attending colleges with physical campuses within Denton County are eligible to participate in the University Pass Program. Proof of enrollment is required.

*** Faculty and staff working at colleges with physical campuses within Denton County are eligible to participate in the University Pass Program. Proof of employment is required.

† Passes purchased in a ten pack must be validated by a DCTA bus operator or passengers can self-validate the pass by using a hole punch to mark the month and day.

Free Fares

- Sworn peace officer in uniform or with visible badge
- Children under five with fare paying adult
- ADA certified riders with valid IDs
- NCTC IDs accepted on NCTC Shuttle and Connect in lieu of fare
- UNT IDs accepted on Connect and UNT Shuttle in lieu of fare

Effective 1/13/14

New app will give real-time location information

By Bj Lewis
Staff Writer

At some point in time a Denton County Authority passenger has been sitting at a stop, diligently checking the time and wondering where their bus or train is.

The transit agency is working to fix that with a new program and soon-to-be app that will give passengers real-time information on the location of their particular bus or train through text messaging, automated phone messages, the DCTA website and eventually through a mobile application.

"We're really getting more into the digital passenger

amenities. That's what many of our passengers want," said Kristina Brevard, vice president of marketing and communication. The feature would be similar to Dallas Area Rapid Transit's "Where's My Bus" and "Where's My Train" programs, she said.

DCTA's real time passenger information will use location data provided by a global positioning device mounted inside each DCTA Connect bus and A-train railcar. That information will be integrated with the operator login information (including the route, run and destination sign code) and will then be transmitted wirelessly to a server using onboard cellular equipment.

ment.

This server will integrate location and login information with schedules and map files to give predictive arrival information to riders. Passengers can subscribe to specific routes through the system so that alerts can be automatically generated based on individual preferences.

The project was last estimated at about \$940,000, with a good portion of the funding coming from federal funds including American Reinvestment Recovery Act money and a local match from sales tax revenue.

This predictive arrival system will eventually work in sync with the regional Go Pass mobile

ticketing application.

The initial push was for the program to launch in 2013, but Brevard said the developer is about to undergo a software update and it would benefit the agency and the passengers for DCTA to wait until that update is made. Even though passengers can still make use of paper information and passes, Brevard said that number is shrinking.

"We will always have print schedules for those passengers who are not into using digital technology, but as we move toward the future I really see us reducing the number of printed materials and really focusing on the digital passenger information," she said.

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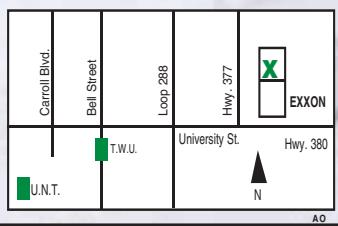
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DCTA offers picturesque trail for bicyclists, pedestrians

By Bj Lewis
Staff Writer

Getting to Lewisville from Denton or to Denton from Lewisville has never been easier with the Denton County Transportation Authority's A-train.

But what if on one of the days you want to travel, it is a sunny day outside and you want to enjoy it rather than being closed inside the train car. That answer has never been easier with DCTA's bicycle pedestrian trail.

Upon completion, the trail will let any person walk or ride a bike the entire length of the 21-mile A-train corridor with a connection to every station along the way.

"We're seeing more demand



for more bike/pedestrian services in our community," said Dee Leggett, chief operating officer.

She recalled that when DCTA took over the corridor, a portion of it was already converted to a trail.

"We knew we were committed to doing 8 miles, why not do the whole corridor?" Leggett said. A simultaneous effort was going on between the Texas

Department of Transportation and Denton County officials to factor in a bike/pedestrian path across the lake to the Interstate 35E expansion plans, she said.

With the A-train project, about \$4 million went to pay for the 8-mile section from the Eulene Brock Downtown Denton Transit Center to Swisher Road, minus the bike/pedestrian bridge the city

of Denton built over Loop 288.

Both the city and DCTA work together to keep the trail maintained.

And soon the agency will be adding some enhancements to the trail including trees, fencing and monuments with community significance.

See TRAIL on Page 16

Sharon K. Lowry Attorney at Law

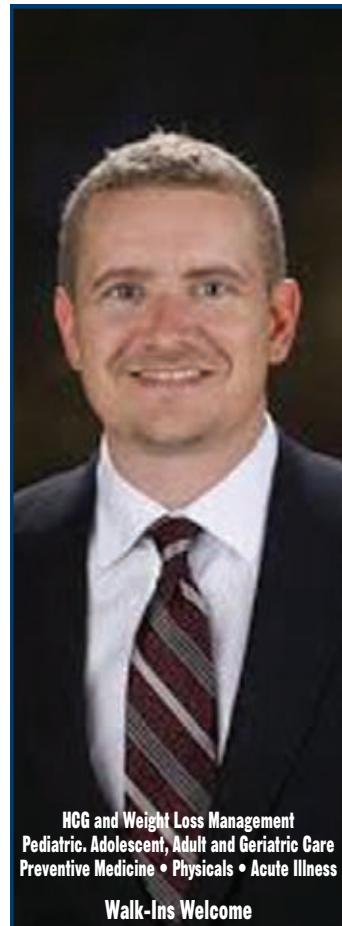


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A-train provides stress-free trip for loyal rider

By Bj Lewis
Staff Writer

The A-train has been one of the best things to happen to Tom Nelson.

The Highland Village resident has been riding the A-train since its inception and enjoys the savings in his automobile and his wallet.

"I get on at Highland Village at 5:20 a.m. in the morning and I am in the office by 6:30 a.m., he said. "At 4:30 p.m., I do it the other way."

Nelson noted his usual travel tab included around \$3 dollars a gallon in gas, a pickup truck where he would need two gallons a day minimum, \$5 in parking fees and general wear and tear on him and his personal vehicle.

"All that goes away," he said. "It's great. It's always on time

and it's either warm in the winter or cool in the summer."

Using the service as long as he did, Nelson rode in both the older cars leased from Dallas Area Rapid Transit and the newer Swiss-made Stadler cars.

"The old cars had the really nice tall seats with a lot of padding. They also had a single point of access so everybody got in at the same place," Nelson recalled.

"The new cars have doors all down the sides so there aren't any lines. They also have a group of seats at each end that are raised up and face each other, good for families with children."

Nelson noted the fact the new cars accommodate bicycles where the old cars just had some extra space in the aisle towards the doors.

"These cars are a very nice improvement overall. (But) the seats could use a bit more padding for an old guy," he joked.

Nelson said some afternoons he will just stay on the train and ride it up to Denton.

"I get to read, listen to music, maybe take a nap," He said. "They don't like you doing that when you're driving."

Nelson, an IT supervisor for the Environmental Protection Agency in Dallas, said he always sees other EPA and federal employees using the train of both DCTA and Dallas Area Rapid Transit and he sees the number of federal employees and other riders growing very soon.

"I think it's going to get more and more apparent that the train is effective and efficient,"

he said. "If you get to it on time, it will get you to where you are supposed to be, when you expect to be there."

Nelson noted that in the early morning hours, a person driving may be able to make fairly good time, but those days are numbered,

"You can't deny that in the morning, it's the 5:20 a.m. It's an hour-long trip at that time of the morning ... so I am giving up some time to sit in the train but it's worth it in my mind," Nelson said.

He said in the evening, driving is too awful not to ride the rail and reap some benefits closer to home.

"My family says it makes me a whole lot easier to deal with when I get home," he joked. "I don't have the stress of the traffic."

For information on DCTA services, trip planning assistance or disability services, please call 940-243-0077 Monday through Friday 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A-TRAIN SCHEDULE

Informaciòn sobre A-train

Effective January 13, 2014

Please note: schedule subject to change.
Check website for latest schedule information.

RideDCTA.net



Northbound to Denton Norte a Denton

STATION estaciones	READ DOWN	Monday - Friday Junes - viernes																				Friday Night Viernes por la noche									
		5302 AM	5304 AM	5306 AM	5308 AM	5910 AM	5912 AM	5914 AM	5916 AM	5918 AM	5920 AM	5922 AM	5924 AM	5928 PM	5930 PM	5934 PM	5936 PM	5338 PM	5940 PM	5942 PM	5944 PM	5946 PM	5948 PM	5950 PM	5952 PM	5954 PM	5956 PM	5958 PM	5960 PM	5962 PM	5964 PM
Green Line Arrives ▼	—	—	—	—	—	5:40	5:55	6:18	6:43	7:03	7:48	8:18	9:03	10:24	11:44	1:04	2:04	—	3:04	3:44	4:04	4:24	4:44	4:59	5:29	5:44	6:14	6:29	7:24	8:04	10:24
Trinity Mills	▼	—	—	—	—	5:48	6:10	6:32	6:54	7:16	7:59	8:21	9:05	10:26	11:50	1:20	2:15	—	3:24	3:46	4:06	4:28	4:50	5:12	5:34	5:56	6:18	6:40	7:26	8:10	10:30
Hebron	▼	—	—	—	—	5:53	6:15	6:37	6:59	7:21	8:04	8:26	9:10	10:31	11:55	1:25	2:20	—	3:29	3:51	4:11	4:33	4:55	5:17	5:39	6:01	6:23	6:45	7:31	8:15	10:35
Old Town	▼	4:30	4:52	5:14	5:36	5:58	6:20	6:42	7:04	7:26	8:09	8:31	9:15	10:36	12:00	1:30	2:25	3:12	3:34	3:56	4:16	4:38	5:00	5:22	5:44	6:06	6:28	6:50	7:36	8:20	10:40
HV/LL	▼	4:36	4:58	5:20	5:42	6:04	6:26	6:48	7:10	7:32	8:15	8:37	9:21	10:42	12:06	1:36	2:31	3:18	3:40	4:02	4:22	4:44	5:06	5:28	5:50	6:12	6:34	6:56	7:42	8:26	10:46
MedPark	▼	4:47	5:09	5:31	5:53	6:15	6:37	6:59	7:21	7:43	8:26	8:48	9:32	10:53	12:17	1:47	2:42	3:29	3:51	4:13	4:33	4:55	5:17	5:39	6:01	6:23	6:45	7:07	7:53	8:37	10:57
DDTC	▼	4:52	5:14	5:36	5:58	6:20	6:42	7:04	7:26	7:48	8:31	8:53	9:37	10:58	12:22	1:52	2:47	3:34	3:56	4:18	4:38	5:00	5:22	5:44	6:06	6:28	6:50	7:12	7:58	8:42	11:02

Southbound to Carrollton Sur a Carrollton

STATION estaciones	READ DOWN	Monday - Friday Junes - viernes																				Friday Night Viernes por la noche									
		5901 AM	5903 AM	5905 AM	5907 AM	5909 AM	5911 AM	5913 AM	5915 AM	5917 AM	5919 AM	5921 AM	5923 AM	5927 PM	5931 PM	5933 PM	5935 PM	5937 PM	5939 PM	5941 PM	5943 PM	5945 PM	5947 PM	5949 PM	5951 PM	5953 PM	5955 PM	5957 PM	5359 PM	5961 PM	5963 PM
DDTC	▼	5:04	5:25	5:48	6:10	6:32	6:54	7:16	7:38	7:57	8:43	9:05	10:26	11:50	1:30	2:15	3:02	3:46	4:06	4:28	4:50	5:12	5:34	5:56	6:17	6:38	7:02	7:48	8:30	9:20	11:15
MedPark Denton	▼	5:09	5:30	5:53	6:15	6:37	6:59	7:21	7:43	8:02	8:48	9:10	10:31	11:55	1:25	2:20	3:07	3:51	4:11	4:33	4:55	5:17	5:39	6:01	6:22	6:43	7:07	7:53	8:35	9:25	11:20
HV/LL	▼	5:20	5:41	6:04	6:26	6:48	7:10	7:32	7:54	8:13	8:59	9:21	10:42	12:06	1:36	2:31	3:18	4:02	4:22	4:44	5:06	5:28	5:50	6:12	6:33	6:54	7:18	8:04	8:46	9:36	11:31
Old Town	▼	5:26	5:47	6:10	6:32	6:54	7:16	7:38	8:00	8:19	9:05	9:27	10:48	12:12	1:42	2:37	3:24	4:08	4:28	4:50	5:12	5:34	5:56	6:18	6:39	7:00	7:24	8:10	8:52	9:42	11:37
Hebron	▼	5:31	5:52	6:15	6:37	6:59	7:21	7:43	8:05	8:24	9:10	—	10:53	12:17	1:47	2:42	3:29	4:13	4:33	4:55	5:17	5:39	6:01	6:23	6:44	7:05	7:29	8:15	—	9:47	11:42
Trinity Mills	▼	5:36	5:57	6:20	6:42	7:04	7:26	7:46	8:10	8:29	9:15	—	10:58	12:22	1:52	2:47	3:34	4:18	4:38	5:00	5:22	5:44	6:06	6:28	6:49	7:10	7:34	8:20	—	9:52	11:47
Green Line Departs ▼	—	5:43	5:58	6:28	6:43	7:14	7:28	7:58	8:15	8:30	9:18	—	11:10	12:30	2:10	2:50	3:41	4:26	4:41	5:11	5:30	5:48	6:10	6:30	6:50	7:30	7:50	8:30	—	9:57	11:59

Northbound to Denton Norte a Denton

STATION estaciones	READ DOWN	Saturday s醉ado											
		5370 AM	5972 AM	5974 AM	5976 PM	5978 PM	5980 PM	5982 PM	5984 PM	5986 PM			
Green Line Arrives ▼	—	—	9:14	11:04	1:24	3:04	5:24	7:04	9:04	11:04			
Trinity Mills	▼	—	9:17	11:06	1:30	3:06	5:26	7:06	9:06	11:06			
Hebron	▼	—	9:22	11:11	1:35	3:11	5:31	7:11	9:11	11:11			
Old Town	▼	7:40	9										

From Page 12 Trail

DCTA president Jim Cline said in his mind the rail trail does two things.

"It brings a recreational asset to the community and it also facilitates some of the last mile connections."

Cline said a big challenge to the rail at times was making sure people can get from the train station to the buses or to

their homes if they are nearby and the rail trail helps.

The remaining part of the trail has been divided into two sections from Swisher Road south to Kelton in Hickory Creek and the Garden Ridge/Lewisville Lake/Highland Village station south to the Hebron station.

The estimated cost of work on these sections was about \$8 million, which is funded in part by grants.

"The Lake Cities' portion of

Denton County Transportation Authority

the design is being coordinated with TxDOT and Denton County in conjunction with the I-35E expansion while DCTA is overseeing the design of the Lewisville section.

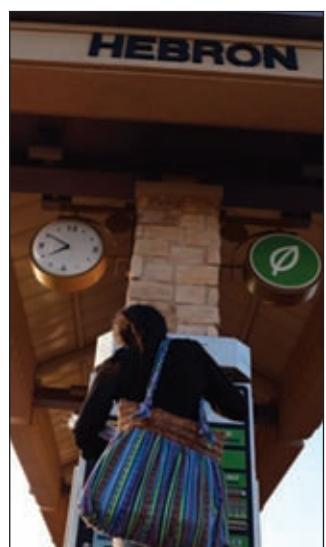
"It's probably still 12 months out because of the design effort," Leggett said. "We hope to have those implemented and open at the same time TxDOT is opening the trail across the lake."

Leggett said the agency has gotten a lot of interest south of the lake about the trail and

when it opens, Lake Cities residents see it as a way to have a safe route to walk to school when historically they used the rail corridor.

DCTA will be working with local agencies and municipalities with their own trail projects that will be able to connect to DCTA's own trails, including Highland Village and Lewisville.

"This will be the backbone for future trails to feed into," Leggett said.



Upcoming festivals for the region

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a list of festivals from Denton to Highland Village to Lewisville from March through June.

April — Annual Denton Redbud Festival. In observance of Arbor Day, this free festival, hosted by Keep Denton Beautiful, Inc., features a home and garden show with emphasis on native and adapted plants and trees, and 'green' technologies. The event boasts vendors, local entertainment, festival foods, environmental education booths, and a Kids Zone.

March and April — Texas Storytelling Festival. World-class storytellers gather in Denton Quakertown Park to tell stories and teach others why it's important for us to do the same — and to listen. The festival features folklore, ghost tales, workshops and much more. For more information, visit www.tejasstorytelling.com.

April — North Texas Book Festival at the Center for Visual Arts in Denton. This free festival brings authors and books together to raise money for libraries and literacy programs in North Texas. It features a book sale, silent auction, author talks and children's story times. For information, visit www.NTBF.org

April — Arts & Jazz Festival. This free, three-day event is held in the heart of the city at Quakertown Park. More than 2,200 performers and artists on six stages, fine arts and crafts, children's art activities and food. This annual event takes place on the last full weekend in April. Proceeds from concession booths benefit the arts in a community where arts and

music are nurtured at every level, every day. For more information, visit www.dentonjazzfest.com/.

May — Cinco De Mayo. This cultural festival centered around Quakertown Park kicks off with a morning parade. Activities include live bands, concession stands, picnic areas and fun for all. For information, visit www.dentoncinco.org.

May — Keep Tradition Alive Jam Session. More than 300 firefighter bagpipers and drummers from across the country are expected to participate in the annual KTA Jam Session in Old Town Lewisville. For information visit ldpipesanddrums.com.

May — "Chalk This Way" Festival. "Chalk This Way" family festival is held in May in and around the city-owned Medical Center of Lewisville Grand Theater. Planned activities include professional chalk artists, amateur sidewalk chalk competitions, a children's gallery for on-site chalk creations, arts and crafts vendors, festival food, sidewalk games, and live entertainment. Entry to the festival is free, although participating in some activities will carry a nominal charge. For more information, visit lakesidearts.org

May and June - Thursday Night Twilight Tunes Concert Series. Local musicians perform every Thursday evening from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on the lawn of the historic Denton County Courthouse on the Square, 110 W. Hickory St., near the corner of Oak and Elm Streets. Free.

May through October - Acoustic Lawn Jam. An open acoustic jam session for musicians of all levels. Come to listen



or bring your fiddle, spoons or your best singing voice to join in the fun. Every Saturday morning from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. weather permitting, on the Courthouse lawn on the Hickory Street side of the Square. Free.

June — Juneteenth. The celebration starts with a mayoral proclamation. Events include a Miss Juneteenth Pageant, live band, a parade, softball and basketball tournaments, a barbecue cook-off and games for the entire family. Located at Fred Moore Park, Bradshaw and East Prairie streets. Visit <http://www.dentonjuneteenth.org/> for more information.

June-July — Sounds of Lewisville. The popular "Sounds of Lewisville" concert series, a free family favorite since 1991, is held in Old Town Lewisville. Concerts start at 7 p.m. every Tuesday night in June and July. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for their comfort. Well-behaved pets on a leash are allowed at the shows. For more information visit SoundsofLewisville.com.

June — The Best Little Brewfest in Texas. The Best

Little Brewfest in Texas is a Craft Beer Festival that will be held in Old Town Lewisville. The Brewfest exists to provide an opportunity to sample and learn about a variety of craft beer from Texas while making an impact in the local community. More than 50 craft breweries from all over Texas will be present with 100-plus hand-crafted brews to serve thousands of beer lovers at this event. For more information, visit bestlittlebrewfestintexas.com.

June — Celebrate Highland Village. Building on the success of previous events in the city, Celebrate Highland Village is an opportunity for the community to welcome summer with festivities for all ages. The event begins in the heart of Highland Village at the community gathering place, Unity Park, with a 1K/5K run through the city and a family fish-out. Attendees will spend the evening at Highland Village's hidden gem, Pilot Knoll Park, where they'll enjoy music, food, drink and activities for the kids. The event finishes with a spectacular fireworks show from the shores of Lewisville Lake. This event is free to the public.

Indie rockers Sebadoh to anchor Thin Line festival in February

By Lucinda Breeding
Features Editor

Bryan Denny worked carefully to select the headliner for the upcoming Denton festival, Thin Line. Massachusetts lo-fi trio Sebadoh has hitched itself to the festival - an announcement that's bound to prick up the ears of all kinds in Denton's music scene.

Thin Line is the only documentary film festival in Texas, and for the new year, the event has a new name and a new vision.

What was a 10-day film festival, called Thin Line Film Fest, is becoming a four-day film and music festival called Thin Line. The event could fill the void left

by 35 Denton, a four-day music festival that is generally presented in March but is on hiatus in 2014. Denny said the programming will be broad, musically speaking.

"It pretty much goes from jazz and neo-soul to Americana and folk," said Denny, a longtime talent buyer for Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios and CEO of DHS Entertainment, a Denton production and booking company. "We're going to have some Latin music, too. I think what we're going for is the music programming to be organic." Festival organizers announced Sebadoh's Feb. 15 performance a few weeks ago on the event website.

The band is a smart score for

Thin Line. The band, made up of Dinosaur Jr. founding member and bassist Lou Barlow, guitarist Jason Lowenstein and drummer Bob D'Amico, alternates between lo-fi alt-rock and noise rock.

The approach is rooted in the early days when Sebadoh was a home recording project of Barlow and drummer Eric Gaffney. The band's 2013 release, *Defend Yourself* on Joyful Noise Recordings, shows a fair amount of evolution from the early days, but the band hasn't wandered too far afield to lose fans of Denton acts like noise-rockers Shiny Around the Edges and singer-songwriter Isaac Hoskins.

Sebadoh makes tuneful



melodies that could easily be built into ear worms by current pop performers. (The melody from *Defend Yourself*'s opening track, "I Will," could easily be a slick, synth-heavy, dancefloor hit for the likes of Selena Gomez if it weren't embedded in easy alt-rock guitar and bass.) In fact, much of *Defend Yourself* is so singable, pitched in a mid-range, mid-tempo voice range that it could be a Matthew Sweet B-side.

See FESTIVAL on Page 19

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From Page 18
Festival

Echoes of Barlow's Folk Implosion make themselves heard throughout Defend in Barlow's velvet croon, which is something to enjoy in the present-day abundance of baroque-deluxe R&B stylings. There's no ornamentation in Barlow's vocals, or in the instrumentation, really. And isn't that the point of lo-fi music?

Sebadoh is a standard bearer for songwriting and performance without the gloss and

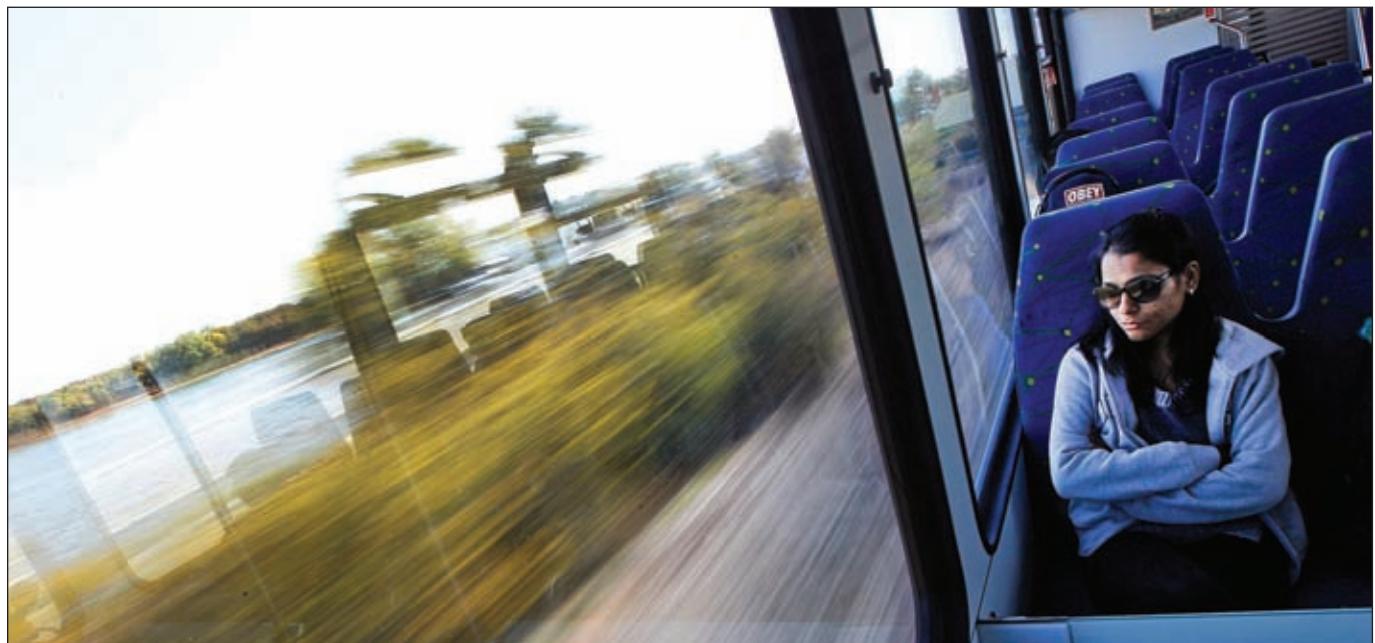
glaze. Even if Defend Yourself is a smoother, more radio-ready project than its antecedents, the songs are built on formulas that don't layer on sound to embellish or compensate. Even guitar bridges are without frills.

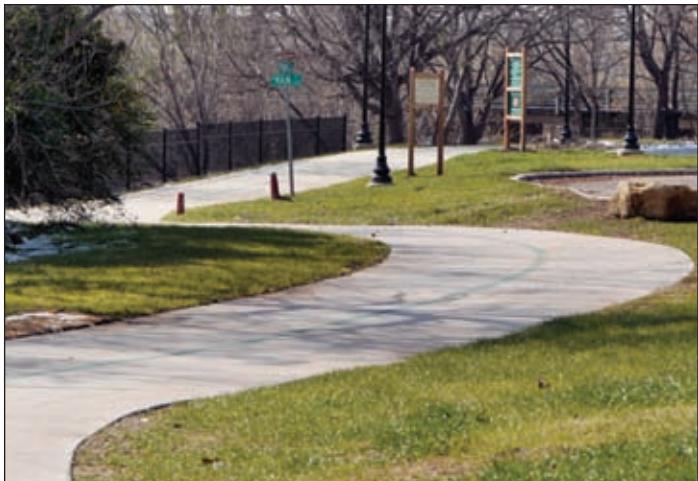
Thin Line founder and director Joshua Butler said he and collaborators have deliberately steered clear of bigger-name bands and artists.

"Right now, our goal is to grow, but we want this to stay manageable," Butler said. "But right now, our vision is for Thin Line to be a film and music festival from here on out."

Thin Line festival facts

- Four-day film and music festival, screening more than 60 documentary films and presenting about 130 bands
- Feb. 12-16
- Downtown Denton, with films at the Campus Theatre and the Fine Arts Theatre, and music at Dan's Silverleaf, Hailey's Club, Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios and the Thin Line Tent, on the lot across the street from Oak Street Draft House & Cocktail Parlor.
- An all-access pass costs \$150; film pass, \$75; music pass, \$75. Tickets to Sebadoh's Feb. 15 show on the Thin Line Stage cost \$15.





Carrollton's Hutton Branch Trail contains a total of 2.5 miles. The trail begins at Ward Steenson Park, crosses at Keller Springs Road, and then runs parallel to Hutton Branch Creek and LeMans Street. Much of the trail is in open meadow, and the portion of the trail that is south of Keller Springs Road is adjacent to a very popular Frisbee golf course. Design work is presently under way to extend the trail past Josey Lane so that it can connect with other City parks and the City's DART station.



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Lewisville looks forward to Old Town revitalization

By Nika Reinecke

For many decades, both before and after Lewisville incorporated as a city in 1925, the area currently known as Old Town was the area's civic and commercial center. But by the early part of this century, natural aging of the city and a population shift to the west and southwest left Old Town seeking a new identity.

Revitalizing the historic Old Town district was a priority identified during development of the Lewisville 2010 plan. That plan and the energy it generated contributed to such improvements as opening a new City Hall in 2003 and the Medical Center of Lewisville Grand Theater in 2011, the

addition of commuter rail access through Denton County Transportation Authority, plus extensive streetscaping and pedestrian amenities.

The next 12 to 24 months hold even more promise.

Construction started in July on Old Town Park Plaza, a 1.5-acre urban park and community gathering place under construction across the street from City Hall and the MCL, and adjacent to the historic Main Street commercial district. The plaza is expected to open late next spring.

Inspired by the sculptural manner in which water carves the landscape of the North Texas Tall Grass Prairie, the design takes on a contemporary

sweeping gesture using water as a link east to west and unites the plaza with the arts center. A linear water feature will run parallel to a boardwalk, guiding residents and guests throughout a garden filled with swathes of native grasses and wildflowers. The water feature is designed as a cooling amenity and a gathering place surrounding the central stage and lawn terraces.

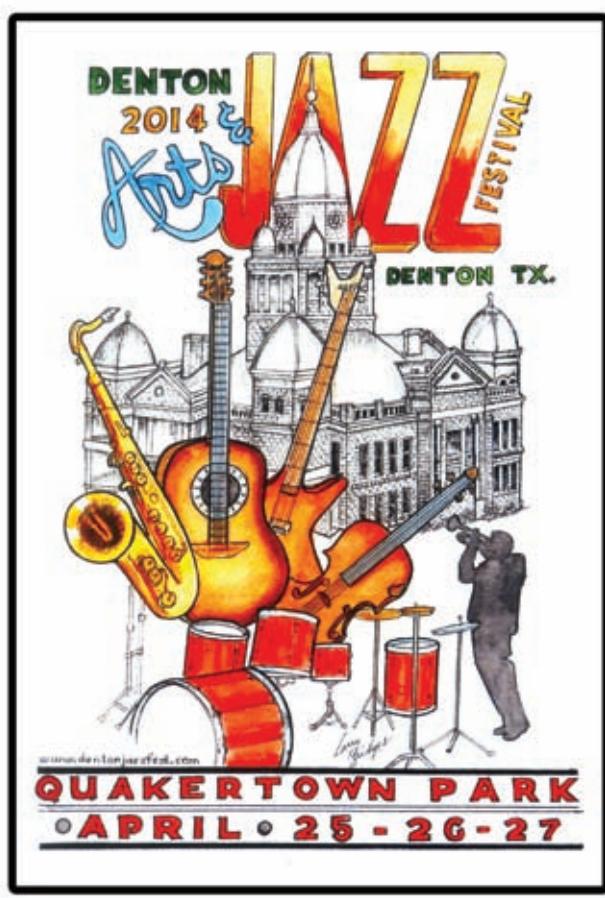
At the eastern end of the plaza, water will terminate at an interactive fountain. A dual waterfall/projection wall will serve as a dramatic backdrop and screen for outdoor movies, concerts and other performances.

A central grass lawn will be used for event seating in front of

the stage, as open space for community events and for informal enjoyment of the park. An entry portal on the west end of the park will provide a sense of arrival and lead down a historic promenade with interpretive timeline bands featuring highlights from Lewisville's past.

With the combination of these elements, the plaza will provide a timeless, highly utilized attraction that can be enjoyed by Lewisville residents and visitors for decades to come. The park was designed by Design Workshop.

- Nika Reinecke is the director of economic development and planning for the city of Lewisville



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Three million riders surpass DCTA goal

By Bj Lewis

Staff Writer

The number crunchers at the Denton County Transportation Authority keep setting ridership benchmarks and passengers keep shattering them.

Riders for both the bus service and the rail service exceeded the 3 million mark during the 2013 fiscal and agency officials are working to keep that number growing in the year.

DCTA board president Charles Emery has been tracking the ridership numbers closely for years and especially with the agency's A-train service addition.

"I know what we expected way back in our early Regional Transportation Council days when we were prioritizing rail corridors, the A-train bubbled to the top due to ridership and cost," Emery said. "I have tracked those numbers we said we would shoot for, year by year and we're ahead of

that schedule. We're doing better than the region expected us to do giving us priority." Emery expects the first time a lane is shut down, that number will grow even more.

"I am optimistic about ridership and we will see where it goes," he said. "We have done what we anticipated we would do if not better at the outset."

The A-train alone carried 45,415 passengers during the month of November, an increase of a little over 4 percent compared to November 2012.

DCTA officials and staff are not going to sit back and just assume ridership will keep growing on its own in 2014. DCTA president Jim Cline said the agency will continue to be aggressive about marketing services and communicating all the good DCTA is doing.

"We're looking to improve the service and respond to what we're hearing from the

public," Cline said.

A change to be added that was born out of that very same public feedback is to add a northbound trip and southbound trip to the A-train schedule with the Jan. 13 schedule change.

"We're trying to do two things. In addition to expanding service during the mid-day, we're trying to make sure our buses tie very well into the train schedule," Cline said. "We're trying to continuously improve our system so we can make it a better alternative for people."

Cline said a lot of 2014 would be about providing reliable alternative to Interstate-35E.

"We will be setting it up and providing those services so we can give commuters and students and everyone who wants a ride a great alternative to waiting in traffic during construction."



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