

**AN OPEN LETTER FROM FARMERS BRANCH  
DEPUTY MAYOR PRO TEM BEN ROBINSON and  
PLACE 1 CITY COUNCILMAN TIM SCOTT**

Dear Neighbor:

It is election time in Farmers Branch and **misstatements of fact and misrepresentations of the truth** are **running rampant from Gene Bledsoe**. You may remember Mr. Bledsoe from last year as **the spokesperson of a political action committee against the city's efforts to address illegal immigration**. Last year, he held a press conference where he **overstated** the budget for illegal immigration-related legal fees **by almost \$500,000**. This year, he claims to be "strongly against illegal immigration."

Contrary to what Mr. Bledsoe wants you to believe, **the city is in outstanding financial shape**, and is on the verge of experiencing the kind of growth and stability we haven't seen in many years. **We have prepared this letter to get you the facts.**

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*In a flyer being passed around, Mr. Bledsoe says: Farmers Branch is "projected to end the year with a \$4 million budget deficit."*

**FACT: Our General fund '07-'08 budget has a projected year-end surplus of \$8,863,718.**

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*In the same flyer, Mr. Bledsoe says: "The City continues to borrow more. This year 11% of city revenue will go to debt service."*

**FACT: Mr. Bledsoe grossly overstates this figure** The General Fund '07-'08 revenues for fiscal year 2007-08 are \$44,531,200, and debt service for property tax supported debt is \$2,190,000 or **4.9%** of revenue, far lower than the 11% Mr. Bledsoe is claiming. **Over the last three years, the total debt owed by our city has actually decreased.** We are **on pace** to have **zero property tax supported debt by 2012.**

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*Bledsoe flyer: "The new City logo estimated at \$1 million."*

**FACT: The new logo will actually cost just under \$178,000 over three years, or a little less than \$60,000 per year.** That's a **difference of over \$800,000** between Mr. Bledsoe's number and the truth.

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*Bledsoe flyer: "\$1 million for rebates to rich home buyers and revitalization marketing."*

**FACT: \$1 million of designated surplus from an Enterprise Fund was dedicated to multiple purposes including the Revitalization program.** This amount did not come from the General Operating budget. To date, less than \$400,000.00 has been spent on home incentive programs and city marketing efforts. **These revitalization dollars have been used by citizens of all income levels to invest in their homes, which helps restore our neighborhoods.**

You may not know that Gene Bledsoe was a voting member of a city revitalization committee that recommended the above activities. Tim Scott served on this committee with Mr. Bledsoe and knows firsthand that **he was for this, before he was against this!**

*Bledsoe flyer: City is spending "New street signs, \$1 million for just 900 signs."*

**FACT:** Many citizens love our new street signs! We are replacing them in high-traffic areas along Josey Lane, Webb Chapel, and Marsh Lane in 2008, with a **total cost of approximately \$100,000**. Mr. Bledsoe **overstates the total by \$900,000!** Also, while on the revitalization committee, Mr. Bledsoe suggested the city pay for and install similar signs in his neighborhood.

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*Bledsoe flyer: City is spending "\$350,000 on a park on I35 where no one lives."*

**FACT:** Residential construction is scheduled to commence in the DART Rail Station Area before the year is over, and current plans **include a much needed Senior Citizen Living Center**. This park – which is located in a flood plain, and therefore cannot be built on – will be a signature entry point into the city, and **will continue the tradition of providing world-class parks for our residents**, including those who will be moving into the new developments around the Rail Station. This park will also serve as a **memorial to those who have served our country in the Armed Forces** and especially to those **Veterans** who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

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*Bledsoe flyer: "The City paid \$175,000 for home at Valley View and Webb Chapel. Currently no plans for use of lot."*

**FACT:** The city purchased a long vacant home in poor repair at the corner of one of our busiest intersections in order to convert it into a signature "**pocket park**" that will be visible to the thousands of motorists who drive through our city, and will further **reinforce our position as a city in a park**. Cities across the Metroplex have used a similar strategy for years. **The plan to turn it into a park has been in place since before it was purchased.**

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*Bledsoe flyer: "Stop the council from making unilateral decisions behind closed doors."*

**FACT:** This is probably the most telling comment that could be made to reflect the lack of knowledge about the Open Meetings Act that a person could utter. The City of Farmers Branch has followed state law concerning the purchase of property, including appropriate public meetings and approvals. In addition, the City has followed all state laws regarding open meetings concerning legal issues. The budget goes through several public hearings before being adopted. Most of Gene Bledsoe's misstatements relate to budgeted expenditures that were made available to the public for comment.

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This is an important election in our city. Redevelopment is taking off in many parts of our city, neighborhoods are being revitalized, **total debt is down** and our **property tax rate has not increased** during the last three years. **We cannot afford to have a leader who either doesn't understand financial statements and budgets, or worse, chooses to make misleading comments and misrepresentations of the truth.**

We need a leader who has been an integral part in moving our city into the strong position it is in today. We need a leader like Tim O'Hare. **On May 10<sup>th</sup>, please join us in voting for Mayor Pro Tem Tim O'Hare for Mayor of Farmers Branch.**



Ben Robinson  
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem



Tim Scott  
City Council, Place 1