



Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney Foundation
400 West Louisiana St, McKinney, Texas 75069

December 11, 2013

City Council
City of McKinney

Distinguished Members of McKinney City Council,

We the Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney Foundation Board are asking for a City resolution of support for our application to the U.S. Patent Office for the registration of the name "America's Crape Myrtle City."

A brief (not precisely chronological) history of our foundation and its endeavors to contribute to the welfare and positive image of McKinney is as follows:

- The Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney Foundation was established in 1998 for the purpose of elevating the beauty and appeal of McKinney with strategic plantings of the crape myrtle plant. Crape myrtles, with their incredible sustainability and breathtaking seasonal color, are recognized as the premier flowering plant of the South.
- The IRS approved the Foundation's Not-For-Profit 501C-3 status in September of 1999.
- In a "handshake deal" with then Mayor Bill Whitfield, the City of McKinney and the Foundation established the goal of planting 50,000 crape myrtles throughout the city in medians, parks, public spaces, business landscapes and schools.
- The first major plantings of crape myrtles were made in September 2000 and April 2001 along Eldorado Parkway from Highway 5 (MacDonald Street) west to Hardin Boulevard, and along U.S. 380 just west of U.S. 75.
- Subsequent plantings were made from Hardin Road to Stonebridge Drive and along Virginia Parkway. Plantings on Stonebridge Drive between Virginia and University, Ridge between Eldorado and McKinney Ranch Parkway, and McKinney Ranch Parkway between Ridge and Hardin have all been completed.
- Additional plantings have been completed at several McKinney schools, including Johnson Middle School and McClure Elementary School in 2013.
- As of 2013, almost 22,000 crape myrtles have been planted by the Foundation and its partners.
- In partnership with the City of McKinney and with substantial help from McKinney Community Development Corporation, the Foundation established the World Collection Park on 7 acres of City park land to feature each of the known varieties of crape myrtles. The World Collection Park opened in 2011. The partnership with the city enabled the



Crape Myrtle Trails Board to step up its activity at the park in 2013 with pruning, fertilization, mowing and watering enhancements. These measures and additional ones will contribute to the park being a recognized showplace (and horticultural laboratory) that will draw thousands to our city! We are working with McKinney Visitors and Convention Bureau to develop promotional plans for the region and beyond.

- In 2012, the Foundation and McKinney Independent School District established the “**McKinney Crape Myrtles and Me – Watch Us Grow!**” annual Science and Art contests, with winners honored at the June MISD School Board meeting. The students apply science principles to illustrate the concepts of how cities, trees and people grow.
- In 2006, the Foundation started the tradition of providing crape myrtle plants to McKinney 5th grade students the Friday prior to Mother’s Day in several elementary schools. Since its inception the Mother’s Day project has grown from providing Mother’s Day plants for 5th grade students at four elementary schools to plants for all 5th grade students in all 20 MISD elementary schools (2,500-plus students) in 2013.
- In 2011, the Foundation changed its annual fund-raising run event from runner-centered to family-fun centered. The **Run The Trails** Fun Run and Festival has become a part of the city’s culture, with such sophisticated group spectacles as PE coaches kissing Myrtle the Pig and, of course, the very participative Chicken Dance Contest!
- In 2013, we greatly enhanced our website to increase our ability to be a “piece in the puzzle” of promoting our city as the most livable city in the nation.

Funding for the Crape Myrtle Trails Foundation is provided through World Collection Park donors, through sponsors and runner fees for the Annual Run the Trails of McKinney Fun Run, through the McKinney Community Development Corporation, and through Mother’s Day project sponsors, including individuals, corporations, and McKinney service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions.

Our board feels the registering of **America’s Crape Myrtle City** will help us better pursue our McKinney-centered mission:

The mission of the Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney Board is to be an integral part of elevating the beauty and appeal of our great city to the highest levels by showcasing the premier flowering plant of the South throughout our community in a thoughtful and meaningful manner and by promoting McKinney, Texas, as America’s crape myrtle city.

U.S. Representative Sam Johnson expects to have America’s Crape Myrtle City recognition read into the Congressional Record on or before Dec. 13. State Representative Scott Sanford and State Senator Ken Paxton are sending support proclamations, which should arrive this week or next.



With all of this in mind, we appreciate the Council's consideration of a resolution of support for our application to the U.S. Patent Office for the registration of the name "America's Crape Myrtle City."

Sincerely yours,

Phil Wheat

Board President,

Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney Foundation