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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Officials encourage self-protection against mosquitos

LITTLE ELM (April 14, 2016) Little Elm officials are strongly encouraging residents to become mindful of the impending mosquito season and take steps now to diminish the potential for infection with mosquito-borne diseases, says Little Elm Assistant Town Manager Joe Florentino.

“It is incumbent on all of us to be prepared, and to take the necessary steps to protect ourselves,” he said. “The recent announcement by Denton County of a positive Zika virus infection should be an immediate call to action.”

Florentino, the former fire chief, has overall responsibility for health and safety within Little Elm, overseeing public safety and disaster preparedness departments.

This week, Denton County announced the discovery of the first case of Zika virus within its jurisdiction. While not pinpointing the location of the individual, they verified that the infected female had recently traveled to a country with active transmission in late January. “While this particular case was related to a person who traveled internationally, that should not be seen as an excuse to disregard the danger,” said Florentino.

The Town has already dealt with the introduction of West Nile Virus within its limits in the past, and some experts are warning that the Zika virus may spread to the United States as soon as this year. Unfortunately, officials warn that, unlike the mosquitos that carry the West Nile Virus, the ones that carry the Zika virus are apt to bite during the daylight hours.

Residents who expect to travel internationally are cautioned to ward against being bitten by mosquitos by taking the recommended actions. Especially vulnerable are pregnant women and those who plan to become pregnant.

The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The illness is typically mild with symptoms lasting no more than seven days

“As with our annual campaign against mosquito infestation, we are again asking people to put into practice those steps that have proven to be the most effective with the West Nile Virus mosquitos,” he said.

These include the “Four Ds” of prevention, namely:

- Drain all standing water and prevent water from pooling;
- Dress in long pants and sleeves outdoors;
- DEET-based insect repellent should be used when outdoors;
- Dawn and dusk are the times of day when mosquitoes are most active.

“Children and the elderly, as well as those with weakened immune systems are most at risk,” he added. “The more we prepare and the more aware we are, the better our chances of avoiding infection.”

Little Elm has had a Mosquito Management Plan in place for several years and has already begun implementation of the preventive steps in the plan. That program, however, does not diminish or replace the steps that residents should undertake individually.

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**ABOUT LITTLE ELM** – Little Elm is one of the state’s fastest growing communities. Nestled on the shores of Lake Lewisville, the Town was incorporated in 1966, adopting the Council/Manager form of government. The population increased dramatically over the last several years, growing from under 4,000 in 2000 to over 30,000 today. Little Elm’s population exceeds the state average in education and income, and is increasingly trending younger and technologically proficient. The Town’s footprint is just over 21 square miles and boasts some 66 linear miles of shoreline within its boundaries.