

# Temple Terrace Awards Facade Upgrade Grant

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TEMPLE TERRACE - Thanks to a city-sponsored program, Alan White is delighted that his potential customers will no longer be turned off by his business's shabby-looking surroundings.

On June 3, the Temple Terrace City Council awarded a \$3,793.30 commercial facade improvement grant to White and Raymond Proch, co-owners of TWA Firestone Tire, Wheel and Automotive Services at the southwest corner of Busch Boulevard and North 56th Street.

That amounts to half the cost of \$7,586.60 to remove four sickly oak trees and replace them with four palm trees, as well as adding an assortment of drought-tolerant flowering plants that will front both thoroughfares.

"When the city does all of its improvements, we don't want to be the sore thumb," said White, who manages the business's day-to-day operations. "We want people to say, 'That's the place we want to do business.' You know, those first impressions can be very long-lasting."

The grant is part of \$50,000 the city set aside this year to help businesses improve their storefronts in the community's 225-acre redevelopment area. Eligible improvements include enhancements such as facade reconstruction, painting, landscaping, improved exterior lighting, wall repair and installation of awnings.

Under the program, the city will reimburse a business 50 percent of its cost for improvements totaling \$10,000 or less, with a maximum of \$5,000 for projects costing more than \$10,000. Applicants are required to obtain two bids for their projected improvements, and in most instances the grant will be based on the lower of the two.

"We were the first to apply, and I suggest other businesses do the same. It was the impetus behind our landscaping improvements," Proch said. "This city of Temple Terrace is really being helpful in providing this program in keeping with the plans of the 56th Street and Busch Boulevard improvements."

White concurred.

"Hopefully our neighbors will see our landscaping project unfold and they'll want to do the same thing," White said. "It will benefit everybody."

According to Michael Marshall, the city's redevelopment director, approval for all grant applications must be made by Sept. 30, the end of the city's 2007-08 fiscal year.

"I'd like to see more applicants come forth because we're hoping to get a least a total of 10 businesses involved," Marshall said. "We've put the grant program in our budget request for next year, but who knows? If the funds are available, we'll continue with the program."

