



City news,
features,
and
updates

This Week in Huntsville

There's a New Mayor in Town! Andy Brauninger wins runoff election

The December 12 Mayoral Runoff Election allowed the voters of Huntsville to decide on their new Mayor, and they have chosen Councilmember Andy Brauninger. From November 25 to December 12, 1780 ballots were cast at the Walker County Annex.

Mayor Mac Woodward led a Special Session of the City Council on Sunday, December 20, at 2 p.m., to formally canvass the election and hand over the reins. Judge Tracy Sorensen then conducted the swearing in of Mayor Brauninger, taking him through the Statement of an Elected Official and his Oath of Office. Mayor Woodward congratulated the new Mayor and presented his Certificate of Election.

Judge Janie Farris will conduct the same swearing in procedure at the next regular City Council meeting, on January 5, at 6 p.m. The public is encouraged to come early for a light reception and opportunity to visit with both the old and new Mayors and the Council, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1212 Avenue M.



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Tree Sale!

Saturday, February 6, 2016
7:30 am to 11:30 am

Walker County Storm Shelter 455 Hwy 75 North, Huntsville, TX

1,250 Hardwood and Softwood Trees \$1.00 Donation per Tree



\$1.00 Bluebonnet Seeds

\$2.00 Pecan
Limit 5

Wood Chips-\$1.00 per bag or 1
Bag Free with Each 5 Trees

Sponsored by **Walker County Proud Communities**

Trees Donated by **Texas Forest Service**

Educational Materials Furnished by **Walker County Master Gardeners &
City of Huntsville Solid Waste and Recycling**

Holiday Solid Waste Schedules

The Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling facility will be open Saturday, December 26, 2015 and Saturday, January 2, 2016, from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon (they will be closed on Jan. 1).

For questions about the garbage collection, the Solid Waste Transfer Facility, or the Recycling Drop-Off Center, please call the Solid Waste Division at 936-294-5712.

The Streets Division will pick up live Christmas trees (not artificial) at the street's edge from Monday, January 4, 2016 through Friday, January 8, 2016 .

Trees must be on the curb no later than Monday, January 4, 2016 for these pick ups.

The Solid Waste Division will make additional pick ups of live Christmas trees (not artificial) at the street's edge on Wednesday, January 6, 2016, and Wednesday January 20, 2016, only.

City residents may also take their Christmas trees (not artificial) to the Solid Waste Disposal Facility, free of charge with their current City of Huntsville residential utility bill, during regular business hours. Live Christmas trees (not artificial) must be unloaded at the brush pile only. For questions about garbage collection, the Solid Waste Transfer Facility, or the Recycling Drop-Off Center, please call the Solid Waste Division at 936-294-5712.

NEW YEAR'S DAY HOLIDAY		RESIDENTIAL SERVICE CHANGES
Friday, January 1, 2016	CLOSED	Residential Curbside Recycling Collection will be picked up on the following Friday, January 8, 2016 ; Extra recycling on side of blue cart will be picked up
NEW YEAR'S DAY HOLIDAY		COMMERCIAL SERVICE CHANGES
Friday, January 1, 2016	CLOSED	Commercial Garbage Collection customers with a scheduled Friday dumpster/rolloff/compactor pickup will be serviced on Thursday, December 31, 2015.

JOB WELL DONE!

City of Huntsville Aquatic Center Manager Jay Miller shared these shots of a City crew out on a late night repair recently. It is sometimes easy to forget that City employees work all days, all hours, and in all weather conditions.



Having just come through another holiday season, it's a good time to thank them all, from maintenance and repair staff and crews to first responders with HPD and Fire.

Your City is at work for you!



Bill Wavra, Interim IT Director

Bill Wavra was recently named Interim IT Director for the City, following former Director Chris Vasquez' move to the City of The Colony. Wavra is an excellent choice for the role, based on his knowledge and experience.

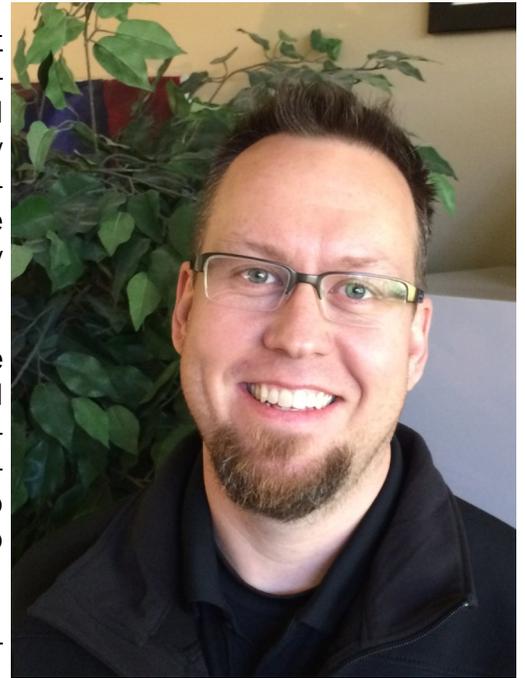
Wavra has been with the City of Huntsville in the IT Department for nine and a half years, serving until this month as the Network Administrator. Primarily self-taught, he worked for several years with Tax Services of America as their Lead Technician, deploying and retrieving 360 computers and 130 printers annually, before entering municipal government.

With the City, Wavra has significant experience with project management on infrastructure and fiber projects, and worked with the Huntsville Public Library expansion from the planning stages. He has also used VMware, creating a virtual environment for servers and allowing the City to remove a number of physical servers. Wavra worked with former Director Vasquez in evaluating and implementing ways to better protect the City's information, both on a regular basis and in the case of emergency and disaster, of which the virtual server moves were a part.

"Redundancy in case of equipment failure, going virtual to reduce the number of pieces of equipment, and hardening facilities to withstand weather events are all ways in which the IT Department attempts to better serve the City," Wavra said. "We want to ensure City staff has the resources they need to work efficiently and well every day. IT's goal is to guarantee our end users are happy and know we're available, but also that they feel empowered to make things happen themselves."

Wavra said that to meet these needs, his goal has been to have IT at every meeting that involves infrastructure.

"When the ground is open, that's when we need to be putting conduit in, so we can expand our communications framework," Wavra noted. "We need to think about what's required for new sites, and where the fiber will run. It's not so much the case anymore, but in the past, IT was often an afterthought."



The City of Huntsville, Texas Veterans Affairs Advisory Board took a moment after their December meeting to take a holiday picture with the Christmas tree at City Hall.

The Board usually meets at 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at City Hall (but will meet next on January 14, due to the Wounded Warrior dinner scheduled for January 21). The meetings are open to the public and the members welcome anyone who wants to come hear what's going on with veterans and veteran services throughout the community.

Pictured from left are Bill Gibson, Chair Wayne Keen, Bill Butler, Fernando Chavez, Ashley Taylor, Santa, Stephen Bright, Leta Reiner, Johnny Holland, and Mark Robinson.

Holiday happenings at the Statue!

Each December, the Sam Houston Statue Visitor Center invites the public to join them to celebrate the season and help them thank all who have volunteered at the Statue and promoted Tourism in our community. This year was no exception and a festive time was had by all. Some special recognitions were made by Mayor Woodward and City Tourism and Cultural Services Director Kimm Thomas, so read on to learn more!

Tourism Partner Award (*photo at right*) - For always promoting Huntsville to their clients, who come from across the state and nation and around the world, the Center presented Rita Watkins, Executive Director of the SHSU Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas (LEMIT), with this special award. LEMIT regularly hosts groups from Poland and China, and law enforcement officers all over Texas know it well. "While their guests are in town, they create tours to make sure they see all that Huntsville has to offer and take visitors to various events and happenings around town," said Thomas. "We are very appreciative of the way they consistently help tell our story and let the world know what's special in our city."



Warm Welcome Award (*photo at left*) - This year's award, honoring Nancy Gaertner, was given in recognition of her tireless support of local tourism and cultural events. "Nancy is so deserving," explained Thomas. "She serves on boards, fund raises and is always willing to lend a hand in any way needed. Linda [Pease, Wynne Home Coordinator] and I are so very thankful for her!" Gaertner also served on the City's Harnessing Huntsville project and is a frequent attendee at Wynne home events.

Sugar Roberts Walkway (*photos below*) - A very special surprise was in store for longtime volunteer Sugar Roberts this year. She had emphasized the need for a sidewalk from the parking lot to the Statue Visitor Center to ensure that visitors, especially children, had a safe place to walk as they made their way to the building. Thus, the Sugar Roberts Walkway was initiated and installed in her honor. The unveiling was held on November 25, with public recognition at the annual Statue Open House. Sugar and her husband Poncho (pictured below with family and friends) have been very special to the Statue for longer than they care to say, and are there on a regular basis, sharing the warm welcome for which Huntsville is known.



SHARING THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS!

City employees raised \$8,400 to donate to charity at this year's bowling tournament. SAAFE House, the Senior Center of Walker County, the COME Center, and the Rita B. Huff Humane Society each received a check for \$2,100 on December 14, during a reception at City Hall. Along with this, staff made a significant donation of non-perishable food items and \$250 of meat for the Good Shepherd Mission.

The City of Huntsville employees were excited to share their cheer with children during this holiday season. They have an Angel Tree that allows all to share in the joy of giving and the surprise of opening something from Santa on Christmas morning. Nearly two dozen children of City staff received Christmas presents donated by other employees.



Left: Presentation to Rita B. Huff Humane Society

Below: Presentation to SAAFE House



Left: Presentation to the Senior Center of Walker County

(Not pictured, COME Center check presentation.)



Winter Break at the Library!

Holiday closure at 5:00 p.m. on December 31, and closed on New Year's Day, January 1, 2016

Movie Afternoons: The library will show kid-friendly movies Dec. 28 & 30 at 3:00 p.m.

Wii Tournament: Show off your Wii video game skills on December 29 at 3:00 p.m.

(The Wii Tournament, and Movie Afternoons above are special Winter Break editions for elementary and junior high students.)

Regular Library Events & Classes

Mother Goose Lapsit - This new program is designed for parents and infants aged birth to 24 months, and features songs, toys, and stories on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. - Dec. 28; Jan. 4, 11, 18, & 25

Story Time - Every Wednesday and Friday at 10:45 a.m. Parents and their children are invited to enjoy songs, stories, and crafts with a new theme each session. Dec. 30; Jan. 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, & 29

Lego Club - An elementary-aged building program on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Legos are supplied and participants are encouraged to build themed creations. Jan. 7 & 21

Family Movie Night - Doors to the Community Room open at 5:00 p.m., with the movie beginning promptly at 5:30 p.m. Family Movie Night is sponsored by the Texas Children's Health Plan Program. Complimentary drinks and popcorn are served and all viewers are encouraged to bring a pillow or blanket. Jan. 8

Wii Friday - An exciting new program for elementary through high school-age students to enjoy the library's Wii system. From 4:00-6:00 p.m. Jan. 22 & 29 (Tournament on December 29 at 3 - see top of page!)

Read with the Dogs - The monthly Read with the Dogs program is held with help from Huntsville Pets Helping People. Children are invited to read to trained therapy dogs in 15-minute segments. Participants also receive a sticker with a picture of the dog they read to. Sign up for a session is available beforehand, but not required. 4:00-5:30 p.m. Jan. 18

For more information about any Children's programs at the Huntsville Public Library, please contact Children's Coordinator Rachel McPhail at 936-291-5910; for adult programs, contact Adult Services Coordinator Mary Kokot at 936-291-5471; for teen programs, contact Teen Services Coordinator Ashley Newsome at 936-291-5912.

Yoga Class at the Library

Are you looking for a convenient way to try yoga for the first time? Try attending our free Adult Yoga Program for Beginners at the Huntsville Public Library each Thursday from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. It's the perfect opportunity to learn and practice yoga techniques with other enthusiasts. All we ask is for you to bring your own mat or towel. The program will take place in the Library's Community Room will continue after the holidays on January 7, 14, and 21. Please consult your doctor before starting any new exercise program. Sign up at the library, online at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com, or call Mary Kokot at 936-291-5471.

JOB WELL DONE!

The City of Huntsville was pleased to honor employees' length of service at its annual holiday banquet. These are just some of the people who provide the service and knowledge that keep our community at its best.

Five Years of Service

Keith Sarraf
Richard Roberts
Kevin Hammond
Mark Jenkins
Thomas Dawson
Kathryn Comeaux
Jamie Matthews
Janet Ridley
Joe Shepherd
Anthony Smith
Desmaine Alexander
James Ferguson
Mike Clouds
Y. S. Ram Ramachandra
Kimm Thomas

Ten or Eleven Years of Service

Lance Schulz
Kyle Chase Wood
Jeff Cross
Deven Merchant
Keith Merchant
John Gaines
Flor Santos
Rachel Kulhavy
Laurie O'Brien
Kerri Avritt
Donnie Lawson
Jay Miller
Billy Irwin
Wesley Steven Birks
Stacy Lawler
Anita Bilnoski

Fifteen Years of Service

Autrey Hamilton, Jr.
Alonzo Hightower
David Lewis
Billy Carrington

Twenty Years of Service

Mike Legerski
Ken Foulch
Mark Spivey

Twenty-five Years of Service

Curt Landrum
Greg Mathis
David Collins

Drum roll, please, for two exemplary and tireless individuals...

Marvin Hyvl has served for 35 years

Linda Pease has served for 40 years

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication!