

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 9, Issue 11

August 2013

Calendar

August 2013

- 1 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 6 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 7 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 14 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 15 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 20 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 21 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 28 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste

September 2013

- 3 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 4 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 5 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 11 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 17 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 18 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 19 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 25 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste

Submit requests for Heavy Trash pick-up before noon on Monday, the week of the pick-up at (936) 294-5796.

Visit us online at
www.huntsvilletx.gov for
more information!

November 5 general and special election ballot to include local option liquor measure

City residents in voting precincts 201, 205, 206 eligible to participate

On the November 5 general and special election ballot, City residents in three voting precincts, along with County residents in two voting precincts, will have an opportunity to vote on a local option liquor measure affecting dry areas in Justice Precinct 2.

Registered voters of Justice Precinct 2, which consists of voting precincts 201, 203, 204, 205 and 206, will be eligible to vote on the ballot measure for or against "the legal sale of all alcoholic beverages including mixed beverages."

General election information

The last day to register to vote for the November 5 general and special election, as well as to make any address changes or updates, is October 7.

All voters across the State of Texas will have the opportunity to vote on constitutional amendments and possibly other jurisdiction-specific elections as we approach the August 26 deadline to order elections.

The "Current Election(s)" tab on Walker County's home page will continue to be updated as information is announced and available at www.co.walker.tx.us for all elections effecting Walker County's registered voters.

Sample ballots are expected to be available for review both on the site and at the Walker County Annex, located at 1301 Sam Houston Avenue Rm 114, around October 1.

Photo ID is now required for voting. Please visit www.votetexas.gov, an informational Web site created by the Texas Secretary of State's office, for details and for additional voting information.

The City of Huntsville Election information will also be available at the City's Web site, www.huntsvilletx.gov. The City will also make copies of sample ballots available at their facilities, including City Hall, the Service Center, the Huntsville Police Department and others.

City offering free E-Bill service for utility customers

The City of Huntsville is pleased to offer a new, fast, efficient, and eco-friendly service for its water customers called E-Bill.

Utility Billing customers may now sign up to receive an E-Bill, an electronic bill viewed online. E-Bills replace paper bills, saving resources and reducing waste, and are sent via email to Utilities customers.

Customers may sign up for E-Bill and still continue to pay for their bill through the City's online payment service, by mailing in payment or in person.

"We have a considerable number of our residents show interest in E-Bills, and we would like to see that number increase," said Jerri Weaver, Revenue Manager at the City of Huntsville. "We currently have two apartment complexes with multiple accounts as well as residential customers signed up."

Another option customers have in paying their bill is to sign up for automatic bank or credit card draft. Funds will automatically be withdrawn from the customer's checking or savings account or charged to customer's credit card each billing

period.

The City hopes citizens will find E-Bill a valuable tool in managing utility accounts.

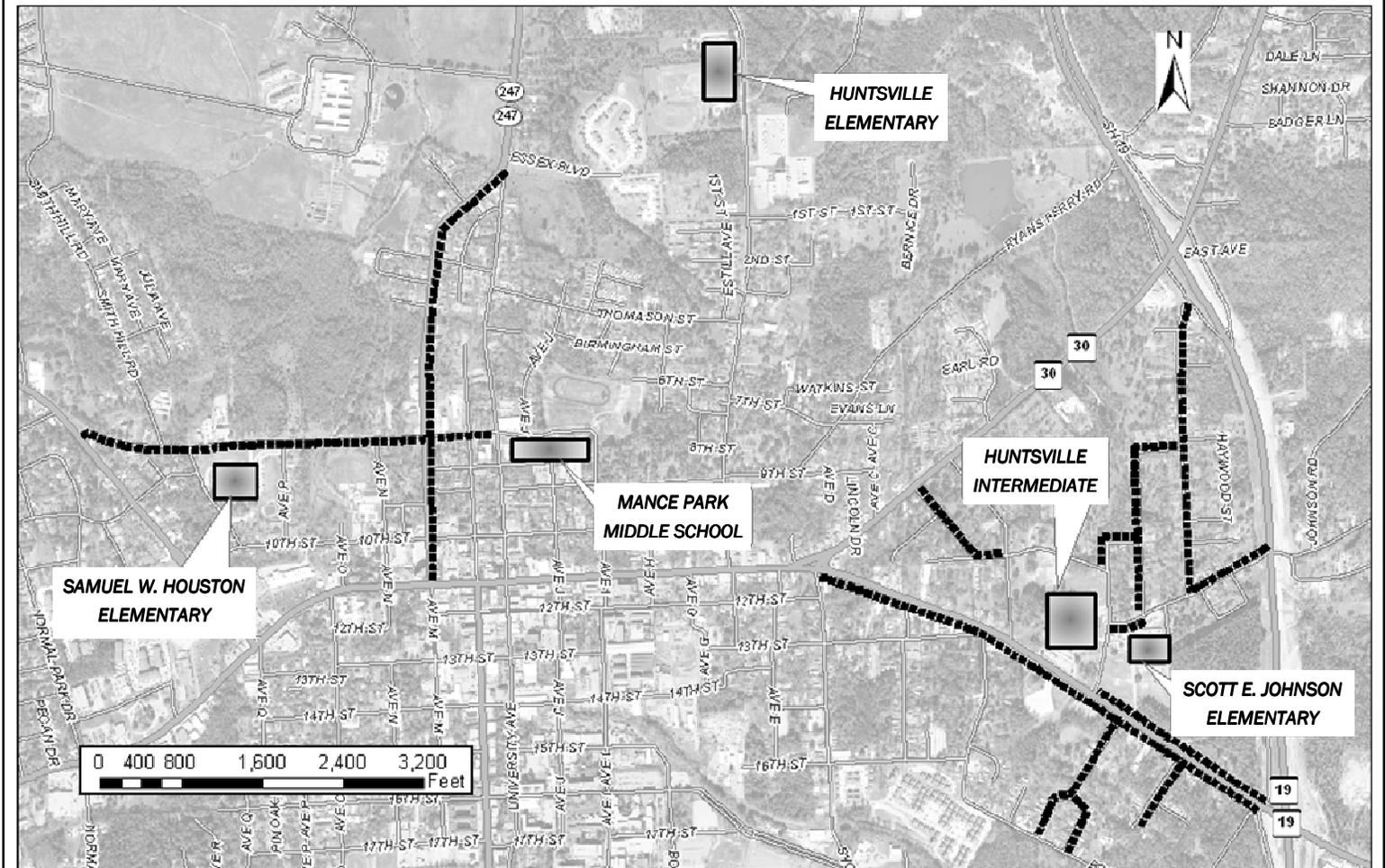
"Not only will our customers be able to receive their utility bills electronically, they will also have the ability to sign up for electronic funds transfers (EFT) or make a payment with Visa, Master Card, Discover, or American Express," Weaver said.

To sign up for this new feature, a request form (located on the City website at www.huntsvilletx.gov/E-Bill) must be completed and signed. Citizens may subsequently visit the page to make payments. The completed form can then be mailed, faxed, scanned and e-mailed, or dropped off at the City Hall Utility Billing office, located at 1212 Avenue M.

The office may be reached by fax at (936) 291-5489, or by e-mail at utilitybillingemail@huntsvilletx.gov.

For more information regarding E-Billing or any other billing options such as online payments, please contact the Utility Billing office at 936-291-5431.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL - PROJECT LOCATIONS



Safe Routes to School sidewalk project - Construction to begin near five schools

In May 2013, the City Council awarded a construction contract to Legends Landscape, LLC in the amount of \$1,342,072.75, for the construction of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project.

The project, which the City has been working to complete since 2009, will fund construction of sidewalks in the vicinities of Scott Johnson Elementary, Huntsville Intermediate, Mance Park Middle, and Sam Houston Elementary schools.

According to Aron Kulhavy, Director of Community and Economic Development, the contracts for all five projects have been signed, and preconstruction meetings and mobilization will take place within 30 to 45 days.

“The contractor, Legends Landscape, LLC out of Lexington, Texas, has 420 days under contract to get construction completed,” he said. “The contractor will consult with the City and determine the order of how they work on the projects.”

Project history - Estimated and final costs

“In the fall of 2009, the City Council passed a resolution authorizing City staff to apply for five Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program grants offered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the Texas Department of Transportation,” Kulhavy said. “The City accepted the grants and executed five Advance Funding Agreements with TxDOT, one for each of the accepted grants, in January 2011.

“Construction amounts were approved at 100 percent of estimated costs that were available at that time. Subsequently, TxDOT approved additional 15% over initially approved construction amounts - the limit of funding they could approve - for projects

that were later determined to cost more than the initial estimates, bringing the total approved construction amount to \$1,232,909 for all projects.”

The design of the proposed sidewalk included in the State Highway 190 portion of the project was already in progress when funding agreements were signed. Jones & Carter was hired in December 2009 to design this segment of sidewalk in conjunction with the design of a waterline replacement.

Following the solicitation of design proposals, Schaumburg & Polk were tasked with designing the remaining four projects in January 2012.

After design was completed on all five projects and review and approval was completed through TxDOT, the City solicited bids for one “Combined Project” in order to simplify the construction administration and receive competitive bid prices. When bids were opened on March 28, 2013, the lowest responsible bidder was Legends Landscape, LLC.

Construction benefits

As pictured above, the SRTS project will culminate with the construction of sidewalks in the vicinities of Scott Johnson Elementary, Huntsville Intermediate, Mance Park Middle, and Sam Houston Elementary schools.

“The Safe Routes to School projects will provide local children with safer and more complete sidewalks to get to and from school each day,” Kulhavy said. “We’re very grateful to take on a project that will have such a tangible benefit for the youth and families of Huntsville.”

Hurricane Season: Strategies for coping with disaster-related stress

The 2013 Hurricane Season will continue through November, and all residents are encouraged to review their emergency preparedness, family and household preparation and other safety measures.

According to John Waldo, City of Huntsville EMC, many of the efforts made to prepare for hurricane season can be applied to a host of other hazards and natural disasters, and there is ample information available to residents who choose to prepare.

“Hurricane season takes place from June through November, and you need to be prepared,” Waldo said. “Knowing the steps to take during a disaster – whether that disaster is flooding, tornadoes or hurricanes – can greatly reduce the danger and distress your family may face.

“Residents have a lot to consider during storm season – having money set aside, maintaining food and water storage, keeping the car full of fuel, having an escape plan, knowing what to do with elderly family members and taking care of pets.

“Above all, having a plan is one of the most important steps you can take in disaster preparedness. Knowing what to do and how to do it can help your family manage disasters with less worry, fear and uncertainty. Citizens should make sure their own preparations for hurricane season are complete.”

Coping with disaster

The Federal Emergency Management Agency provides helpful information on the emotional effects of dealing with disaster events, and how adults can assist not only their children but also elderly members of the family with coping with the emotional toll.

FEMA’s disaster survivor assistance Web site, <http://www.fema.gov/coping-disaster>, discusses the signs of disaster-related stress in adults as well as risk factors to look for in children of various ages.

According to the site, adults showing the following signs or symptoms may be in need of crisis counseling or stress management assistance: difficulty communicating thoughts; difficulty sleeping; difficulty maintaining balance in their lives; low threshold of frustration; increased use of drugs/alcohol; limited attention span; poor work performance; headaches/stomach problems; tunnel vision/muffled hearing; colds or flu-like symptoms; disorientation or confusion; difficulty concentrating; reluctance to leave home;

depression, sadness; feelings of hopelessness; mood-swings and easy bouts of crying; overwhelming guilt and self-doubt; or fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone.

For many children, reactions to disasters are brief and represent normal reactions to “abnormal events.” A smaller number of children can be at risk for more enduring psychological distress as a function of three major risk factors:

- Direct exposure to the disaster, such as being evacuated, observing injuries or death of others, or experiencing injury along with fearing one’s life is in danger.
- Loss/grief related to the death or serious injury of family or friends.
- Ongoing stress from the secondary effects of disaster, such as temporarily living elsewhere, loss of friends and social networks, loss of personal property, parental unemployment, and costs incurred during recovery to return the family to pre-disaster life and living conditions.

Suggestions to help reassure children include the following:

- Personal contact is reassuring. Hug and touch your children.
- Calmly provide factual information about the recent disaster and current plans for insuring their safety along with recovery plans.
- Re-establish your daily routine .
- Encourage your children to help update your a family disaster plan.

The site also suggests limiting a child’s exposure to news and media coverage related to a disaster. Particularly for younger children, repeated images of an event may cause them to believe the event is recurring over and over.

If parents allow children to watch television or use the Internet where images or news about the disaster are shown, parents should be with them to encourage communication and provide explanations.

Check back in future City Connections for more detailed information on hurricane preparedness topics including family care, food and water storage and supply, and pet care.

For more information, contact Waldo at (936) 291-5945.

Police/Fire: Stats for June 2013

Police:

Calls for service: **4505**
Accidents investigated: **68**
Animal Control
complaints investigated: **63**

Fire:

Calls for service: **116**
Main alarm calls: **15**

Stay current on City news! Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter, “This Week in Huntsville”

If you’d like more information, sign up to receive our new bi-weekly e-newsletter, “This Week in Huntsville.” You’ll receive regular updates, information about ongoing projects and special event dates.

Just visit www.huntsvilletx.gov, click on “e-News Subscriptions” in the left column, and register with an active email account.

Youth Advisory Board summit sets pace for year of activities

Citizens encouraged to apply for all open board, commission seats

The Youth Advisory Board gathered for a special summit meeting on Monday, July 15 at the Huntsville Aquatic Center to build momentum for the coming year of activities, programs and community involvement.

According to YAB Chair Rachel Willeford, a total of 22 youth attended the event, as well as special guest speakers including Mayor Mac Woodward, City Manager Matt Benoit, City Council member Tish Humphrey, YMCA Director Sandra Clifton and Elaine Smith with Emerging Youth Leaders AKAdemy.

"This meeting today was to talk about how we can work with other

organizations that provide youth services like YMCA and the Emerging Youth Leaders AKAdemy," Willeford said. "We had several incredible guest speakers who gave our members and potential members a keen insight into what it means to serve the community, and we're excited for the year to come."

Willeford said the board is currently planning a nine-month youth leadership institute in conjunction with the Huntsville-Walker County Chamber of Commerce to take place over the coming school year.

"We would encourage all young people in the high school age range to get involved – you really can make a difference in your community at the local level," she said. "Young people in this community are very lucky to serve on the Youth Advisory Board because they have a voice and can share what they see is needed, programs they would like to have implemented and their insight on programs that need improvement or aren't working."

Citizens encouraged to apply for all boards/commissions

Applications are available for Huntsville residents interested in serving on a City board or commission or to be considered for re-appointment to current positions ending August 31, 2013.

Residents may submit applications to the City Secretary at City Hall, or online at <https://www.huntsvillex.gov/egov/apps/action/center.egov?action=form&item=25&fDD=> in the "Volunteer" section. The City anticipates the Council will handle most nominations in August.

The City Charter stipulates that all nominations are made by the Mayor for consideration by the Council. Individuals interested in appointment or reappointments are required to complete an application so that the Council has an opportunity to review it prior to approval.

According to Mayor Mac Woodward, serving on a City board or commission is an exciting chance open to citizens of all ages and experience levels.

"I think it's very important for the City Council and the City of Huntsville to have citizens serve on advisory boards and commissions," Woodward said. "It provides an excellent oppor-



The YAB Summit at the Huntsville Aquatic Center included 22 board members, sponsors and guests.

tunity for citizen input into all areas of the City's reach."

City boards and commissions are in place to address the major facets of the Huntsville community, including public works, housing, fine arts, recreational activities and athletics, and other areas. The Mayor said volunteers for boards or commissions may be of virtually any age or experience level, so long as they have a willingness to serve.

"Volunteers are needed from our community at all levels, from students to senior citizens," he said. "The most important quality for serving on a board is the sincere hope to improve the City for all our citizens."

For more information, contact City Secretary Lee Woodward at (936) 291-5403.

Consider serving on the City's boards and commissions!

- Arts Commission
- Beautification Advisory Committee
- Board of Adjustments & Appeals
- Cemetery Advisory Board
- Economic Development Council
- Hotel Occupancy Tax Board
- Huntsville Housing Authority
- Huntsville Public Library Board
- Main Street Advisory Board
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone Board
- Veterans Affairs Advisory Board
- Youth Advisory Board
- Zoning Board of Adjustments