

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 9, Issue 2

November 2012

Calendar

November 2012

- 1 Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 6 Regular General and Special
Election**
- 7 Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 13 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 14 Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 15 Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 19 Special Session -
Canvass 11-6 Election
- 21 Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 27 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 28 Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste

December 2012

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

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

Please note irregular City Council
meeting schedule for November and
December, to include meeting to
canvass the November 6, 2012
General and Special Election.

www.huntsvilletx.gov

Huntsville Municipal Court

Services, functions the staff provides the public

The City of Huntsville celebrates Municipal Court Week November 4 through 10, and as part of the annual recognition, below is a brief overview of the functions and responsibilities of the court.

According to Susan McGilberry, Court Administrator, the Municipal Court is responsible for the collection of fines, fees, and State costs which stem from class C misdemeanor violations that occur within the City limits.

The court also handles the filing of citations and/or complaints; court scheduling; issuing, tracking, and clearing warrants; maintaining court records and reporting collection, conviction, and data to the appropriate State agencies.

"In general, the Municipal Court handles class C misdemeanor criminal offenses committed by both juveniles and adults," McGilberry said. "The court also has exclusive jurisdiction over violations of the City of Huntsville Code of Ordinances. The cases we typically see the most are parking and traffic citations, minors (under 21 years old) charged with alcohol violations, simple assault, theft under \$50, and public intoxication. We also handle cases of students failing to attend school as well as parents who are charged due to their child's attendance deficits."

Cases are filed against juvenile and adult offenders, and most non-juvenile cases can be processed and handled at the court clerk window. Juvenile cases, filed against persons who are under 17, require court appearance by the juvenile and the parent or legal guardian.

For non-compliant adult cases, the Municipal Court issues two types of warrants: (1) Arrest warrants, which are filed when a person fails to appear or violates their promise to appear, and (2) Capias Pro Fine, filed when a person fails to pay a fine, fees and/or court costs according to judicial order.

"In the last fiscal year, more than 310 warrants were issued each month on delinquent cases in our court," McGilberry said.

The Municipal Court Judge John Gaines presides over the court. The court staff includes McGilberry, City Marshal Byron Bush, Deputy Court Clerk and Spanish interpreter Flor Santos, Deputy Court Clerk and Juvenile Case Manager Ben Gibbs, Deputy Court Clerk Paula Dugas, Data Entry Clerk Virginia Van Velkinburgh and Prosecutor Theresa O'Brien.

Online services

The City's Web site, www.huntsvilletx.gov, features a wide range of information on court services, contact information and citation payment options on the Municipal Court page, which can be accessed by scrolling over "Departments."

Online users also have the option to make payments on their cases through the "Online Payments and Services" link on the left side of the page.

According to McGilberry, the court is also working on expanding its online services in the near future. When the changes are complete, citizens will be able to request deferred disposition, and driver safety course options.

Additional functions

The Municipal Court page on the City's Web site also includes informational links for the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, the Texas Department of Public Safety, Walker County and other entities.

"We're happy to help our citizens get where they need to go - we take a lot of pride in that," McGilberry said. "However, there are some misconceptions about the types of documents we can provide. We get a lot of requests for police reports, which are actually handled through the law enforcement agency that investigated the incident, such as the Huntsville Police Department or the SHSU Police Department. We also get a lot of questions about documents maintained by Walker County Clerk's Office, like marriage licenses or child support documentation."

The Municipal Court is located at 717 FM 2821 West, Suite 200. The main phone number is (936) 291-5476.

Hurricane Season 2012: Are You Prepared?

Huntsville residents are encouraged to continue to be mindful of hurricane season, anticipated to last through November.

According to John Waldo, City of Huntsville EMC, family and household preparation are important parts of getting through the hurricane season safely.

“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.

“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.”

Waldo said individual preparedness can include developing or updating a personal disaster plan as well as assembling an emergency supply kit.

Typically, emergency supply kits will allow individuals to sustain themselves for three to seven days. Families are also advised to store enough water to provide each family member with one gallon of water per day.

“Having an emergency plan and a disaster kit will help you manage in almost every kind of crisis, and there are numerous web sites which will assist individuals in the development of a personal disaster plan and emergency kit,” Waldo said. “The American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency both have excellent information to offer online.

“Waiting until a storm enters the Gulf of Mexico may be too late to make adequate preparations. The time is now to start making preparations to ensure you, and your family, are ready if a disaster should occur.”

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

Additional information on emergency supply kits is also available at www.redcross.org or www.fema.gov.

It's Winter Time...Let's Recycle Antifreeze!

Like many other residential customers, do you plan on replacing the antifreeze in your vehicle this winter? Do you plan on disposing of other kinds of liquids, including motor oil, peanut oil or cooking oil?

Don't run those materials down the drain – **recycle them!**

The City of Huntsville Solid Waste Services Department offers free, year-round recycling for these liquids as well as other items for residential customers at the Recycling Drop-Off Center, located at 590 I-45 North from 7:30 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Other items, including oil filters, are recycled in specifically marked collection barrels. As they are flammable, neither gasoline or diesel from lawn equipment nor vehicles will be accepted for disposal or recycling.

Unfortunately, due to disposal restrictions, the Solid Waste Services Department is not able to pick up liquids on a curbside basis. If you have any questions, please call 936-294-5743.

City of Huntsville residential customers: It's time to “winterize” your sewer charge

Water meter usage for the months of November through February is used to calculate your new sewer average charge for the next year.

Consciously reducing your water usage during these months could lower your sewer charge. Methods to reduce usage include limiting or completely eliminating outside watering. The new sewer average charge will be effective with the April billing (due in May).

“Basically, the City of Huntsville would just like to advise residents to curtail any kind of outdoor watering, such as washing cars, in order to keep water consumption down during winter months,” said Jerri Weaver, City of Huntsville Billing and Revenue Manager. “Also, residents should be aware of any water leaks and make sure to have those repaired.”

For more information, contact City of Huntsville Utility Billing at (936) 291-5431.

Downtown Christmas Fair

Saturday, December 1, 2012

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.



Arts, crafts, food, a wide range of
family-oriented entertainment and more!

For information contact the Main Street Program:
(936) 291-5920 or www.huntsvillemainstreet.com

Holiday Donation Ideas

Every year around the holidays, organizations throughout Huntsville collect food, toys, monetary donations and clothing essentials for families in need. The City encourages residents to work with local churches, service organizations, school groups or private organizations to do whatever possible to help out.

Below, we have included information about organizations who will be accepting various donations this holiday season. If you would like your organization featured in the December City Connection, please contact the City Secretary's Office at (936) 291-5403 or (936) 291-5413.

The Good Shepherd Mission

1005 Avenue F (MLK Blvd) -
(936) 291-8156

Walkercountyonline.com/org/mission
gsmission@suddenlink.net

According to Dave Smith, Executive Director of the Good Shepherd Mission, several food items are needed in preparation for Thanksgiving including:

- ~ Frozen turkeys ~Frozen hams
- ~Dry beans and rice ~Canned goods
- ~Other holiday meal items

Volunteers are also needed, especially in the food bank, to help sort donations and prepare meal bags for local families.

The Good Shepherd Mission also works with Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church each year to collect toys for the

Santa's Helpers program, benefitting 350 local families with 485 - 515 children.

Santa's Helpers is held every year on the second Saturday in December - this year it will be held on December 10th.

Coat and blanket drives will also be conducted throughout the holiday season.

Huntsville Head Start

Maria H. Dooley - Social Services Coordinator
125 FM 980 - P.O. Box 719
Phone: 936-291-9190

Huntsville Head Start is looking for businesses or individuals to "adopt" local families for the Thanksgiving holiday. Adoption would entail providing a Thanksgiving meal to families of various sizes.

Contact Dooley for more information.

Boys & Girls Club of Walker County

119 FM 980 - (936) 291-6054
info@bgcwc.org

Cookbook Fundraiser

As part of a special fundraising effort for the Boys & Girls Club. Local restaurant legend Ginny Renfro will release her long-awaited cookbook, "Momma Ginny's Journey," on November 15.

All proceeds will be donated to the Boys & Girls Club. According to Michelle Spencer, Executive Director, the book will include some of Renfro's favorite personal recipes, catering recipes and recipes from her various restaurants.

"Since 1970, Renfro has exercised her dedication to good food and good times through restaurants including The Lamplighter, Texan Café, Casa Tomas, Geppetots, Renfreauz's, Farmhouse Café and Farmhouse Sweets & Eats," Spencer said.

Operation Santa

Businesses and individuals are encouraged to participate in the Boys & Girls Club's annual "Operation Santa" program. Children involved in the club provide "Wish Lists" including clothing sizes and toys, and those who wish to "adopt" a child

receive a list and purchase the items included.

Lists will be available beginning November 7, and the gifts should be returned by December 14.

As well, volunteers will be needed to help package, tag and sort the gifts between December 14 and the club's Christmas party on December 19.

For more information, to adopt a child or to volunteer, contact Diane Balderas, Director of Operations, at dbalderas@bgcwc.org or (936) 291-6054.

Solid Waste/Recycling holiday closures: Residential and commercial users affected

The City of Huntsville Solid Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Facility will observe Thanksgiving Day on both **Thursday, November 22 and Friday, November 23**. Due to the closure for the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no garbage or recycling collected residentially on those dates. **Only** on the following Monday or Tuesday garbage collection days following Thanksgiving will excess bagged garbage outside of the residential garbage cart be collected.

Commercial dumpster collection will not run on Thursday, November 22 but will run on Friday, November 23. Businesses with a scheduled dumpster collection on November 22 will be collected either Wednesday, November 21 or November 23. Commercial roll-off and compactor collection will not run on November 22 or November 23. Businesses with scheduled roll-off or compactor collection on November 22 or November 23 will be collected on November 21.

The Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling facility will open Saturday, November 24.

As well, the City of Huntsville Solid Waste Transfer Station will observe Christmas on **Tuesday, December 25**. Due to closure for the Christmas holiday, there will be no garbage collected residentially or commercially on that date. **Only** on the following Monday or Tuesday collection days will excess bagged garbage outside of the residential garbage carts be collected. Customers with Tuesday, December 25, garbage collection will instead be collected on Friday, December 28, with recycling collection postponed until the following Friday, January 4, 2013.

Businesses with a Tuesday, December 25 collection day and with commercial dumpsters, roll-offs or compactors will be collected on Monday, December 24, or Wednesday, December 26.

The Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facility will be closed to the public on Tuesday, December 25. The Recycling Drop-Off Center, located at 590 IH-45 North, will be closed to the public on Monday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 25.

Finally, the Solid Waste Transfer Station will be open for business on New Year's Day, Tuesday, January 1, 2013. There will be garbage collected both residentially and commercially. The Recycling Facility will be closed.

The Streets Department will pick up Christmas trees (not artificial) at the street's edge from Monday, January 7, 2013 through Friday, January 11, 2013 only. Your trees must be on the curb by Monday, January 7, 2013.

The Solid Waste Department will pickup up Christmas trees (not artificial) at the street's edge on Wednesday, January 2, 2013 and Wednesday, January 9, 2013 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. Christmas trees (not artificial) must be unloaded at the brush pile only.

If you have any questions about the garbage collection, the Solid Waste Transfer Facility, or the Recycling Drop-Off Center, please call the Solid Waste Division at 936-294-5743.

Please refer to the calendar below, or cut it out for use at home!



**Change your clock,
change your
batteries -**

November 4, 2012

At 2 a.m. on November 4, 2012, Daylight Savings Time will come to a close. Huntsville residents are reminded to make sure to set all clocks back one hour to 1 a.m. at that time.

The fall back of Daylight Saving Time will be "corrected" at 2 a.m. on March 10, 2013.

The Huntsville Fire Department also encourages residents to change their smoke alarm batteries - most of which are 9-volt alkaline - at the same time.



Thursday, November 22, 2012	No residential garbage or recycling collection; No Commercial garbage collection; Facility closed
Friday, November 23, 2012	No residential garbage or recycling collection; <u>Commercial garbage collection will run</u>; Facility closed
Monday, December 24, 2012	Both residential and commercial collection will run; Facility open
Tuesday, December 25, 2012	No residential or commercial garbage collection; Facility closed
Tuesday, January 1, 2013	Both residential and commercial collection will run; Facility open