

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 11, Issue 6
March 2015
Calendar

March 2015

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

April 2015

- 1 - Yard Waste Trimmings Collection
- 2 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 7 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 8 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 15 - Yard Waste Trimmings Collection
- 16 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
(this meeting subject to change)
- 21 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 22 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 29 - Yard Waste Trimmings Collection

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

Learn more about
City events at
www.huntsvilletx.gov

New Heavy Trash Fee and Yard Waste changes take effect April 3

On February 3, the City Council conducted a second reading and adopted the City's updated guidelines for heavy trash pick up charges and yard waste bagging requirements (fee schedule changes for Solid Waste were approved on January 20).

Heavy Trash Pick Up

Effective April 3, 2015, customers who call in for Heavy Trash Pick Up Service will have a \$25.00 charge added to their City of Huntsville utility account bill each time the service is used.

This service is for residential customers only with an active utility account and a call-in is required. Requestors call 936-294-5796 to leave information on the voice mail in order to be added to the pick up list. They must leave a name, service address, account number, contact number, and a description of the item or items to be picked up.

Heavy Trash Pick Up Service is for furniture, appliances, piles of brush not to exceed 4 feet high, 10 feet in length, and 5 feet in depth, or limbs no larger than 12 inches in diameter and cut to 5 feet in length.

Natalie Mimms, Assistant Superintendent for Solid Waste and Recycling Services, said the changes were brought to the City Council for consideration to help recover and reduce costs of tonnage hauled, vehicle replacement, and staff time.

"Residents inside the City limits will still be able to bring heavy trash and their ID to the Transfer Station and pay just over three cents a pound, with a \$5.00 minimum, if that's a more affordable option for the items they need to dispose of," Mimms added. "For non-residents, it's about four cents per pound, with a \$6.25 minimum."

Yard Waste

Beginning April 3, plastic yard waste bags at the street's edge will no longer be collected. Yard waste must be placed at the street's edge for pick up in one of the following acceptable manners:

- In paper compostable yard bags which can be purchased from local retailers
- In personal trash cans not to exceed 30 gallons
- Limbs no larger than 4 inches in diameter, cut to four feet in length, must be tied securely in bundles no larger than 2 feet in diameter, and not weigh more than 50 pounds

All yard waste must be placed at the street's edge on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesdays of each month by 6:00 a.m. The total number of bagged, canned, or bundles of yard waste is limited to 12 per household per collection day. The Solid Waste Division asks residents to please consider these alternatives to having yard waste picked up by the City:

- Use a mulching blade on lawn mowers and compost leaves and other yard debris
- Bring yard waste directly to the Transfer Station facility with a current utility bill and identification with a matching address to dispose of yard waste at no charge
- Require personal lawn services to either use compostable bags, or haul away yard debris

Solid Waste Superintendent Esther Herklotz said the change in bagging requirements will help keep green waste out of landfills. "Last year, over 500 tons of leaves, grass clippings, and small limbs went in with the City's garbage due to insufficient manpower to remove materials from non-recyclable bagging. Anyone can dispose of yard waste for a disposal fee. Residential customers with current City Utility bill and matching drivers license can dispose of yard waste at no cost."

For more information and specifics, please go to the City of Huntsville web page under Departments/Public Works/Solid Waste /Recycling. Citizens are also welcome to contact the office at (936) 294-5724 or eherklotz@huntsvilletx.gov. (Find additional information on page 4.)

Meter Reading FAQs

Your water and sewer bills are based on the amount of water you use. Every customer has a water meter that separates the City's water system from his/her private plumbing system. Once the water passes through the meter, the customer has purchased it and it no longer belongs to the City. Meters are read monthly to determine the amount of water that has been used and the amount that needs to be billed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is my water meter read every month?

Yes. Your meter is read about the same time each month, give or take a few days depending on weekends and holidays. Meter Readers can be identified by wearing a shirt with the City logo on it.

Can I change my due date?

No. The due date is automatically set by the computer system based on address.

Can I turn my meter off?

No. Only City employees are allowed to perform services inside the meter box. The water meter is the property of the City and damages to the meter could be charged to you.

Do I need to notify the City when I move out?

Yes, in advance. It is necessary that you contact Utility Services to close your account. You are responsible for payment of services through the date of your closing.

How are meters read?

The City is divided into three geographical cycles for meter reading purposes. Meters are normally read Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Meter Readers may occasionally need to work Saturdays as well.

The Meter Readers use a hand-held computer to capture the readings. When the Meter Reader enters the reading, the computer compares the amount of water used with usage for the previous month. If the current water usage exceeds the previous water usage by more than expected, the computer alerts the Meter Reader who must re-read the meter and re-enter the meter reading. This is the first audit of the meter reading.

What does a meter reading look like?

All meters have a register that looks like the odometer in a car. The meter readings used for billing purposes are read in hundredths. This simply means the last two numbers are dropped. For example, on your bill you will see consumption and the number might read 45. If you added the two zeros, you would see that your consumption is 4,500 gallons.

What if I feel my bill is too high?

You can easily check for an error in the meter reading used to calculate your bill. Simply read your water meter to see if the reading is higher or lower than the present reading on your bill. If it is lower, call Utility Billing to have it checked out and the proper credit issued. Customers are encouraged to read their meters monthly.

For a fee schedule of meters, water rates, sewer rates, and sewer average months, please stop in at City Hall and pick up a brochure. For further assistance, please call Utility Services at 291-5431. Hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Huntsville Public Library Gets Technical

Check out what's new at your Huntsville Public Library – Facebook, Twitter, and an App!

The Huntsville Public Library has redesigned its web page at <http://www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com> to make finding information about programs and services quicker and more efficient, as well as adding a calendar of events on the front page. The news and announcements are constantly updated to highlight the latest information.

Anne Sparks, Assistant City Librarian, says, "We are always looking for new ways to embrace and offer our patrons new technology and make using the library both easy and fun!"

Their Facebook page, Huntsville Public Library, provides clips about programs and events along with pictures, news, and information relevant to the Huntsville community. The Library's Twitter page, @HuntsvilleLib, shares the latest Tweets about what's going on at the Library.

Additionally, their new app, Bookmyne, can be downloaded to access accounts directly from all devices to see which items are checked out to an account, renew books, make or delete a hold, search the catalog, and much more.

For more information, contact Anne-Frances Sparks at 291-5481.

Severe Weather Awareness

The Texas Division of Emergency Management, the National Weather Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) used the first week of March to kick off their annual campaign urging all citizens to prepare for severe weather events and to educate themselves on safety strategies.

City of Huntsville Emergency Management Coordinator John Waldo encourages the public to plan for early spring weather, which may change without much notice.

"I hope citizens will take time to consider their options and preparations in the event of severe weather," Waldo said. "We think about hurricane season a lot, but planning for these spring events is just as important."

Mayor Woodward will issued the City's annual proclamation to EMC Waldo at the March 3rd City Council meeting.

A variety of resources and documents are available from the National Weather Service

(<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/brochures.shtml>) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency

(<https://www.fema.gov/plan-prepare-mitigate>).

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

Preventing and managing frozen water pipes

Every winter, many homes are damaged when frozen water pipes break. This danger can be greatly reduced by taking a few simple actions.

First, insulate pipes located on outside walls or in crawl spaces. The more insulation you use, the better protected your pipes will be, and materials such as heat tape or thermostatically controlled heat cables can be used to wrap pipes.

Second, seal holes or gaps around pipes and electrical wiring on outside walls to prevent cold air from blowing on pipes.

Finally, remember to allow faucets to drip when freezes occur. A trickle or drip of water overnight might be enough to keep pipes from freezing. Consider leaving cabinet doors open under sinks to allow warm air to circulate.

If a pipe does freeze, never try to thaw it with an open flame or torch. Instead, you may be able to thaw a frozen pipe with the warm air from a hair dryer. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible, working toward the coldest section of pipe. If water pipes have already burst, turn off the water at the main shutoff valve in the house. Make sure everyone in the home knows where the water shutoff valve is and how to open and close it.

For more information, contact the City of Huntsville Service Center at (936) 294-5700.

Citizenship Preparation Courses Thursdays in April

The Huntsville Public Library, in conjunction with the Sam Houston State University (SHSU) Law, Engagement, and Politics (LEAP) Center, will present a free five-week Citizenship Preparation Course on Thursdays in April from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., in the Huntsville Public Library Community Room.

The course is designed to prepare immigrants for the U. S. Naturalization Test and will cover the application process, oral interview, and exam. All materials will be provided. The classes are taught by Mike Yawn, Political Science Professor at SHSU. Space is limited and registration is required, so sign up at the library early.

For more information, questions, or to register for the class, please contact Mary Kokot, at mkokot@huntsvilletx.gov or 936-291-5912, or Mike Yawn at 936-294-1456.

Think you have a leak at your home? Here are a few ways to check!

The City of Huntsville Utility Billing division has worked with many customers who have experienced a variety of leaks both inside and outside of their homes. Fortunately, they have also compiled several easy ways to check for leaks.

"We always encourage our customers to keep an eye out for dripping faucets or pipes, as small leaks can really add up over time and should be fixed as soon as possible," said Sabrina Friederich with Utility Billing. "Customers are also encouraged to find the location of their meter and look for a triangular dial that will spin if there is water running inside. This can show you have a leak if you have turned all of your water off and are still seeing movement."

Finally, Friederich recommended using the dye test to determine if a toilet is leaking.

"By placing a few drops of regular food coloring in the back part of the toilet and monitoring the color in the toilet bowl for about an hour, you can easily tell if your toilet is experiencing a leak," she said.

For more information, contact Utility Billing at (936) 291-5431, or visit the City's Web site, www.huntsvilletx.gov.

**Saturday
April 4, 2015**

**8th Annual
Electronic
Recycling
Day**



City of Huntsville
Disposal - Recycling
Facility

**9:00AM
to 12:00noon**

**City of Huntsville
Solid Waste-Recycling Services**

Acceptable Items:

- Laptops/Notebooks
- Printers / Scanners
- Copiers / Projectors
- Plasma Screens / LCD/ LED Screens
- Computer Accessories
- Telecommunication /Networking Equipment
- Stereos, radios
- Cell Phones / Pagers / Cameras
- PDA / Palm Pilots
- Rechargeable Batteries
- Vehicle Batteries

For Information, please call
Solid Waste & Recycling
Services at 936-294-5743

Upcoming Solid Waste- Recycling Events - Don't miss!

**Saturday
April 4, 2015**

**Household
Hazardous Waste
Event**



City of Huntsville
Disposal - Recycling
Facility
590 I-45 North

**9:00AM
to 12:00noon**

**City of Huntsville
Solid Waste-Recycling Services**

Acceptable Items:

- Aerosols
- Batteries- Alkaline
- Corrosives
- Flammables
- Florescent bulbs
- Oxidizers
- Paint-Latex and Oil
- Poisons-Solids and Liquids
- Propane
- Reactives

For Information, please call
Solid Waste & Recycling
Services at 936-294-5743



Funding for this event is provided by the H-GAC and the TCEQ through a Solid Waste Management Grant



City of Huntsville Recycling Guidelines

Direct questions to (936) 294-5743

Curbside recycling guidelines:

1. Rinse all plastics and cans to remove residue
2. Only plastics 1-7 stamped with number and symbol
3. Flatten items to save room inside of cart
4. Keep cart five (5) feet from all other objects including vehicles
5. Carts must be placed at the curb or street's edge no later than 6:00 a.m. on the day of collection. Carts must be removed from the street's edge by the end of the collection day (*carts cannot be stored at the street's edge*)

Items that cannot be placed in the City cart:

Garbage, food waste, yard waste, loose shredded paper, glass/oil/filters, batteries, cell phones, electronics, Styrofoam, aluminum foil, or plastic bags of any kind.

No plastic wrap, shrink wrap, or bubble wrap. No Styrofoam, even if it has a recycling number and symbol on item.

Recycling Drop-Off Center Information:

The Recycling Center accepts self-hauled recyclable items and is located at 590 I-45 North. The Recycling Center Attendant will be onsite to assist customers from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. Drop-offs can still be made Monday - Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and holiday closings are posted.

Recycling Drop-off Center Guidelines:

Aluminum - Soda cans, beer cans: Flattened/unflattened. Keep aluminum cans separate from steel cans. NO FOIL, BAKING PANS OR FOOD TRAYS.

Steel Cans - Food cans, pet food cans, aerosol cans: Rinse out the can, you can leave the label on. Aerosol cans must be empty.

Newspaper - Whatever comes inside the newspaper can be recycled. Stack and put in paper bags or cardboard boxes. Throw away plastic rain sleeves and rubber bands.

Magazines - catalogs, phone books: Keep separate from newspaper. Place in brown bags or small cardboard boxes. DO NOT place in plastic bags.

Paper - White or colored paper, remove paper clips, rubber bands and staples if possible. Put in small boxes or paper stacks.

Glass - Clear, green or brown only: Throw away lids, rinse out. You can leave the label on. Place glass in separate containers. NO window panes, light bulbs or dishware.

Cardboard - Toilet/paper towel cores, food boxes, medicine boxes, shoe boxes, shipping/moving boxes, sugar bags, dog/cat food bags which include a recycling logo, paper bags. NO packing materials, plastic liners or foam.

Plastics - Numbered 1-7: Recycling symbol and number are required.

Milk Jugs and Water Jugs - Throw away cap/lid. Rinse with warm water and try to flatten. Keep these jugs separate from soda bottles or colored plastic.

Other #1 and #2 Plastic Containers - Examples of other recyclable containers: syrup bottles #3, snap-on coffee lids #4, cottage cheese containers #5, yogurt containers #6, and ketchup bottles #7

Drop-off Center Also Accepts: Used motor oil, oil filters, cooking oil and anti-freeze.

Visit www.huntsville.tx.gov for Area curbside recycling schedules and more recycling information.



Yard Waste Specifics

Collection Service: 1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesday of each month - No call-in required!

Yard waste is classified as leaves, grass, pine needles, yard clippings and small brush, items referred to as "green waste."

The total number of compostable-bagged, canned, or bundled yard waste items is limited to twelve (12) per household per collection day. All yard waste materials must be placed within two (2) feet of street's edge no later than 6:00 a.m. on the morning of the scheduled pick-up.

Yard waste such as leaves, grass, pine needles or small clippings must be:

- (1) Bagged in compostable bags (not to exceed 30 gallons) or placed in personal garbage can;
- (2) Cannot exceed 50 pounds each;
- (3) City-issued garbage and recycling carts cannot be filled with yard waste.

Tree limbs and brush must be:

- (1) No longer than four (4) feet in length;
- (2) Limbs no larger than four (4) inches in diameter;
- (3) Must be tied securely in bundles which cannot exceed two (2) feet in diameter and can't exceed 50 pounds each.

The following items and locations DO NOT qualify for Yard Waste pick-up:

- (1) Household garbage of any kind;
- (2) Anything other than green waste: NO flower pots, fertilizer, mulch, bags, dirt, potting soil, sand, rock, gravel, etc.
- (3) Commercial businesses or commercially generated yard waste.

Bring your City utility bill showing that you pay for garbage service and dispose of your yard waste at the City Transfer Station free of charge. This excludes commercial customers, yard waste contractors, and any lawn service providers. The customer must be present with their current City garbage bill at the time of disposal.

For more information on yard waste trimming collection services, contact the Solid Waste Services Division at (936) 294-5743.