

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 10, Issue 7

April 2014

Calendar

April 2014

- 1 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 2 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 3 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 9 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 15 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 16 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 17 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 23 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 30 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection

May 2014

- 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

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

**Visit us online at
www.huntsvilletx.gov to
learn more about City
programs!**

City receives positive debt comparison report

The City of Huntsville recently received an extremely positive report comparing its debt levels to peer cities throughout Texas, and citizens are encouraged to attend the April 1 Council meeting to hear more.

During the meeting, Boyd London of independent financial firm First Southwest will present a study comparing Huntsville to nine Texas cities of similar size and population. The data indicates Huntsville's comparative debt levels are far below area peers with respect to general obligation debt per capita as well as total debt per capita.

"We are very proud to present the results of the general obligation debt 'per capita' peer comparison report," said City Manager Matt Benoit. "Compared to cities of similar size and population, we are by far the lowest with respect to the amount of City-issued debt per capita.

"Right now, our general obligation debt per capita is only \$687, as compared to smaller cities which currently carry over \$3,000 in debt per person. As compared to our total net taxable assessed valuation, our general obligation debt represents only 1.52 percent, which again is much, much lower than the other evaluated cities."

In the long-term, Benoit said the low levels of debt would allow the City Council to consider taking on new bonded developments and projects without affecting the tax rate.

"Our debt levels are already low, but in the next five years, much of the debt we do have will be paid off," he said.

Visit the City's Web site, www.huntsvilletx.gov for more information. Updated documents including the 2013 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the FY 2013-14 Annual Budget Book are available for viewing.

Outdoor explorer classes to begin April 19 - Bring the whole family!

The City of Huntsville Recreation Services division has partnered up with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department to offer another season of the Outdoor Explorer program at the Huntsville State Park.

Citizens who are interested in learning to hike, bike or kayak are encouraged to attend the first session, scheduled for Saturday, April 19, or any of the five monthly sessions to follow. Park entrance is \$5 for adults and free for those 12 and under.

"Come on out to the Huntsville State Park for a fun day of outdoor activities completely free of charge," said Natalie Reid, Recreation Services coordinator. "Participants will learn the basics of hiking, biking and kayaking and will be able to use equipment maintained and provided by the City.

"Class will start off with a 30-minute safety session, just to make sure everyone is prepared, and then participants will get to spend the rest of the session using their new skills."

Participants should arrive just before 9 a.m. and plan to take part in Outdoor Explorer activities until 1 p.m. Classes will be held on April 19, May 24, June 21, July 19, August 23, and September 20.

For more information or to pre-register, contact Reid at (936) 294-5725 or nreid@huntsvilletx.gov.

City establishes new digital publication

Frequently asked questions about “This Week in Huntsville”

The City of Huntsville has added a new outreach method to its communication platform: the bi-monthly, digital newsletter entitled “This Week in Huntsville.” By now, residents have likely seen notices about the publication, but may still have some questions about it, especially as it relates to - and differs from - the City Connection.

We collected some of the most frequently asked questions from residents who attended the 2014 Trade Expo and have compiled their answers below. We hope this article is helpful for all of our readers.

Why is the City distributing an additional newsletter?

The City Connection, distributed monthly along with customer utility bills, has endured as a method of communication because it ends up in the hands of our residents. However, not every resident in the City receives a utility bill – such as those living in apartment complexes whose utility costs are integrated into rental fees. “This Week in Huntsville” allows any Huntsville resident – or anyone interested in what’s happening locally – to sign up via email subscription and stay informed about City news and events.

Why distribute “This Week in Huntsville” in a digital format?

The significant benefits of creating and distributing “This Week in Huntsville” as a digital publication include cost effectiveness, accessibility for a much larger audience, and the ability to design the publication in color. This attribute supports the use of crisp, high-quality photos and color-based graphics.

Is the material in the digital newsletter the same as what I receive in my utility bill?

No, there is very little overlap between the material found in “This Week in Huntsville” and the City Connection. While some “evergreen” City news can be included in the City Connection and read at any time, many of the news items reported to our citizens are time-sensitive and are thereby more appropriate for “This Week in Huntsville.” The publication schedule of the digital newsletter allows the City to release news items as they occur and with enough advanced notice for citizens to mark their calendars and stay involved in local events.

What are some of the special features of “This Week in Huntsville”?

In the digital newsletter, residents will enjoy up-to-date, comprehensive coverage of City news, features pertaining to City initiatives, program information and follow-up articles, photos from City events and information about ongoing training efforts. A special feature of the newsletter is a dual series under the headings “Expert in Every Office” or “Expert in the Field” – these brief profiles provide information on City staff members including their educational backgrounds, job requirements, and insight from individuals outside of the City about their work ethic. City Manager Matt Benoit also contributes his perspective on City action in a column called “The Way I See It.”

Since the publication was established in June 2013, two special issues (which provided in-depth coverage on one general subject) have also been released. For example, in March, an issue diagramming the two-year Texas Department of Transportation construction project at the Interstate 45/State Highway 75 interchange was released.

Where can I find previous issues of “This Week in Huntsville”?

The digital newsletter is archived on the City’s Web site for one year, and the most recent issues are available from the front page of the site in the “City News” section.

How do I sign up to receive the newsletter?

Signing up is easy! Just visit the City’s Web site, www.huntsvilletx.gov, and click on “e-News Subscriptions” on the left side of the page. From there, enter a valid email address, select “This Week in Huntsville” and click on “Subscribe.”

With any questions about the newsletter, how to sign up or to suggest story ideas for any of the City’s publications, contact the City Secretary’s office at (936) 291-5403 or (936) 291-5413.

Just a reminder!

Applications for Hotel Occupancy Tax funding and non-profit organization funding are due to the City of Huntsville by May 2.

For more information about HOT applications, contact Kimm Thomas at (936) 291-5932.

For additional information about non-profit applications, contact Lee Woodward at (936) 291-5403.

Save the Date!

City to offer special events during Texas Tourism Week, May 3-11

Join the City Council on Tuesday, May 6 for a special proclamation reading in honor of National Tourism Week, which has been set for May 3-11!

The annual tradition acknowledges the significant benefits which travel within the United States provides with respect to personal growth, education, cultural understanding and enhancement of America's image around the world.

In its own rite, the City of Huntsville has several exciting events, guest speakers and opportunities lined up for tourists and residents alike.

"We're still working on a final schedule of community events, but we know this year's Tourism Week will be fun and educational for all involved," said Kimm Thomas, Director of Tourism and Cultural Services. "We are especially looking forward to the Tourism Workshop on May 6, which will provide information for those interested in Hotel Occupancy Tax funding."

Check huntsvilletexas.com for event updates as they become available.

Long-standing tradition

According to the U.S. Travel Association, National Travel and Tourism Week was established in 1983 by a Congressional joint resolution, and has since represented an opportunity to recognize the significant role the travel industry plays in both economic and personal development.

This year, the theme is centered on the benefits of travel and the research conducted which supports travel's positive effect on relationships, health, education, meetings and more.

Local impact

According to Proclamation 2014-31, which will be presented to Kimm Thomas, Director of Tourism and Cultural Services, during the May 6 Council meeting, the travel industry is among the largest private-sector employers in the U.S.

In Huntsville and Walker County alone, the direct travel impact for visitor spending is \$96,110.00; local tax receipts equal \$1,080.00; and travel generates 940 jobs for the area.

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, shredded paper, glass/oil/filters, batteries, cell phones, electronics, Styrofoam or aluminum foil.

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, place in plastic trash bags. 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. Put the cans in plastic trash bags. 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 or brown only: Throw away lids, rinse out. You can leave the label on. Place clear glass and brown 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, 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. Place these items in plastic trash bags by themselves. 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

Plastic bags - Must have recycling symbol visible on the bag. These can be some grocery bags, shopping bags, dry cleaning bags, etc. Place all plastic bags into one and tie shut.

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

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

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

Main Street events for spring and summer months

Music Series, Wine Down, Farmer's Market

The Huntsville Main Street Program is gearing up for a busy spring and summer, and citizens are encouraged to take part in the many events scheduled from April to July.

According to Main Street Coordinator Lindsay Lauher, the season will begin with the Main Street Music Series and continue with the annual Farmer's Market. As well, the Downtown Business Alliance's annual Wine Down, Shop Small event will be held right in the middle of the season on May 1.

Main Street Music Series

"We are so excited to bring the Downtown Music Series to our residents this year," Lauher said. "As in previous music series, we plan to feature two bands each night that will represent several musical genres. We hope to see many Huntsville residents and families take part in this one-of-a-kind series."

On four Fridays during April and May, two musical acts per night will perform in Rather Park from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The April 4 concert will feature JB Barnett, an acoustic performer comparable to John Mayer, and on April 11, Logan McCune and Mary Brett will take the stage.

Musical acts Singlewide and Billy May will perform on April 25, and the series will conclude with performances by The Pickets and Zachary Keane Croker on May 2.

To add variety to the event, Lauher said several food vendors have been integrated into the event, as compared to previous years where only light refreshments were available.

"We have invited food trucks and vendors from around the city to provide snacks for the music series," Lauher said. "We'd like to create a kind of neighborhood block party feel for the event, where guests can enjoy great music, delicious local food choices and a fun atmosphere."

Wine Down, Shop Small

The Main Street Program will also participate in the annual Wine Down, Shop Small event, hosted by the Downtown Business Alliance. The event is scheduled for May 1 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and will feature eight wineries and six food vendors from throughout Texas.

"Tickets are available now for the Wine Down, Shop Small event, and we look forward to seeing our residents come to the downtown area for a fun, unique chance to shop and sample various wines," Lauher said. "By no means do attendees have to drink to enjoy the event - there will be delicious foods to sample, special sales at many of our downtown businesses and hundreds of attendees from Huntsville and surrounding cities."

Pre-sale tickets are available for \$20 in the Main Street office and at several downtown business locations.

Farmer's Market

Finally, the annual Downtown Farmer's Market will begin on May 3 and continue through July 26, and the Main Street program is still accepting applications from vendors with home-grown or homemade goods to sell.

"The Downtown Farmer's Market has become a Huntsville favorite, and we're really looking forward to the opportunity to spotlight our local vendors," Lauher said. "The market will be open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon, and potential vendors are encouraged to visit our Web site, www.huntsvillemainstreet.com, for more information."

For more information about any of the events above, contact Lauher at (936) 291-5920.



Nearly 400 residents attended the many events included in the 2014 Rock 'N the Arts celebration. The week included a variety of classes and live performances

Busy spring, summer for Wynne Home Arts Center

The Wynne Home Arts Center saw great attendance at March's "Rock 'N the Arts" events and is preparing for a busy month during April.

According to Linda Pease, Cultural Services Coordinator, the facility will offer Spring Art Classes throughout the month, will be the site for the annual Herb Festival on April 5 and will hold an Easter Egg Hunt on April 11.

Also during April and May, local organizations will have the opportunity to apply for funding from the Huntsville Arts Commission for projects that benefit the community and are designed to bring visitors to the City.

"We will accept applications for Huntsville Arts Commission through May 1, and organizations will make their presentations on May 15," Pease said. "We would encourage any interested organizations to contact us for more information."

Later in the year, the Wynne Home will release information on Summer Classes, which are tentatively scheduled for the month of July.

For more information, contact Pease at [\(936\) 291-5422](tel:9362915422).