

# CITY

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## CONNECTION

Volume 10, Issue 3  
December 2013  
Calendar

### December 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.
- 7 - Downtown Christmas Fair -  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- 7 - Winter in the Park (Rather Park) -  
12 p.m. to 5 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.
- 24 - City facilities closed
- 25 - City facilities closed

### January 2014

- 1 - City facilities closed
- 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 Trimming Collection
- 16 - Planning & Zoning Commission -  
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 21 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 22 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 29 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection

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

[www.huntsvilletx.gov](http://www.huntsvilletx.gov)

## TxDOT begins construction at State Highway 75, Interstate 45 interchange

The Texas Department of Transportation has broken ground on a major reconfiguration of the Interstate 45 and State Highway 75 interchange. The \$8.8 million project, contracted to Smith and Company, includes a \$16,410 contribution from the City of Huntsville for aesthetic elements and is scheduled for completion in November 2015.

According to David Stephens, Area Engineer for TxDOT's Bryan District, the end result of the project will be a faster transition for drivers through the area near exit 118 of the interstate.

"We as an organization are grateful to take on this challenging, large-scale project, and we're very thankful for the partnership of the City on the contribution of aesthetics," Stephens said. "While traffic flow may be affected during the construction process, we are confident that the reconfigured interchange will be much more efficient, and congestion from all directions will be greatly reduced."

The construction project begins after five years of design and over 15 years of planning. Upon completion, the interchange will feature a new connector road from the east Interstate 45 frontage road to SH 75 North, a repositioned ramp for the southbound exit 118, as well as several new lanes for the most utilized traffic movements.

Stephens said the project will include a total of five phases, three of which are primary, and six major focus areas. Taken as a group, they will impact every roadway which feeds into the I-45 and State Highway 75 intersection.

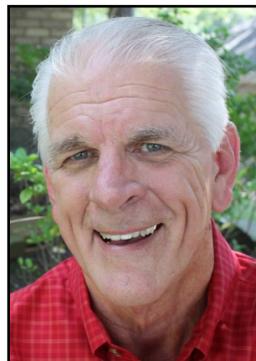
"The way we organized the project allowed us to focus first on new construction, building everything we could with only a minimal effect on traffic," Stephens said. "By the time we get to phase three, which will impact the existing SH 75 lanes, we'll have more pavement available for traffic to utilize and be able to focus on expanding what is in place currently."

The first phase of the project, Stephens said, will include several work areas throughout the interchange being completed simultaneously.

See CONSTRUCTION, page 3

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## Welcome, new City Council members!



The results are in! Following the November 5 Regular and Special Election, the City Council welcomed two new members including Andy Brauning, who will fill the Position 1 at-large seat, and Joe Rodriguez, who will fill the Ward 4 position. The new members were officially sworn in during the November 19 City Council meeting. In the weeks following the election, Brauning and Rodriguez met with Charter officers and Directors to gain insight on the City Charter, Council Rules of Procedure, various elements of City protocol, staffing, departmental goals and other areas.

# HPD achieves “Recognized Status” in state-level Best Practices program

The Huntsville Police Department has achieved “Recognized Status” for compliance with the Texas Law Enforcement Agency Best Practices Recognition Program.

The recognition, earned after over two years of intensive departmental effort, makes HPD one of only 87 agencies statewide to earn this honor.

“I am incredibly proud of our entire department for reaching this milestone achievement – it is truly a testament to the hard work, professionalism and abilities of the men and women of the Huntsville Police Department,” Chief Kevin Lunsford said. “A special thank you is owed to Lt. Curt Landrum who has diligently worked for over two years as the program administrator to help us achieve this goal.”

The Law Enforcement Recognition Program is a voluntary process where police agencies in Texas demonstrate their compliance with over 160 best practices. Being “Recognized” means the agency meets or exceeds all of the best practices.

In the near future, the Texas Police Chief Association Foundation will make a special presentation in recognition of the department’s efforts and recognition

“The Huntsville Police Department is to be commended for the commitment made to this process,” said Chief Scott D. Rubin, Chairman of the TPCAF Recognition Program Committee. “This Recognition Program is raising the bar for Law Enforcement in Texas and The Huntsville Police Department is part of it!”

Landrum, who addressed over 160 areas of HPD policy and procedure over more than two years, said the process involved in earning “Recognized Status” involved compiling policy manuals, procedures and ordinances pertaining to virtually every facet of the department.

“Around two and a half years ago, Chief Lunsford attended a conference and heard from cities who had achieved this status,” Landrum said. “When he came back, he said this was something he wanted to look at doing, and he asked me to begin reviewing our policies to see if it was feasible.

“I created a spreadsheet of all the standards they have and what we had that met those, and since we had a very comprehensive policy manual, it looked like we had around half of their standards addressed at the beginning of the process.

Nevertheless, the process was very intensive, and we ended up having to edit and compose a large number of policies to meet all of the qualifications.”

Landrum said communication with TPCA was critical to achieving “Recognized Status.”

“As we encountered policies that needed to be addressed, we were able to work directly with TPCA through phone calls and their extensive Web site,” he said. “If we hit an area we were unsure about, we were able to reference existing policies that met their requirements and make those new concepts fit into what would meet our standards.

“Some were very simple, some were extravagant, and some were just easier because of good timing. We just happened to have revamped our evidence section and spent time on inventory and inspections right before this process started, so all we had to do was document work we had just completed.”

Admittedly, the process was not completely seamless, as the integration of the City Marshall into the police department was carried out during the recognition process.

“The City Marshall was operating out of Municipal Court when we began this process, so we were able to refer to their policies for all sections pertaining to his office,” Landrum said. “However, when that position was absorbed back into the police department in 2013, we had to go back and make sure all those areas were covered.”

Overall, Landrum said the entire department handled the process with professionalism and offered their support as necessary.

“This accomplishment was truly a team effort,” he said. “I’m so pleased that we received ‘Recognized Status,’ and I know we couldn’t have done this without all of our supervisors and staff pitching in and making sure their responsibilities were addressed.

“Even if we hadn’t achieved this recognition, the process alone would still have made us a more comprehensive and advanced department. Learning what other departments are doing, as well as familiarizing our staff with accepted TPCA standards, has absolutely improved our department.”

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## If four pages isn’t enough for you, either, check out “This Week in Huntsville”!

We had several events in early December that our Connection readers would have missed, but luckily, an issue of This Week in Huntsville was ready in time for citizens to put them on their calendars.

Never miss an event again - sign up for your free This Week in Huntsville newsletter!

To subscribe, log onto the City’s Web site, [www.huntsvilletx.gov](http://www.huntsvilletx.gov), click “e-news Subscriptions” on the left-hand side of the page, enter your email address and select “This Week in Huntsville.” You’ll automatically receive a free, digital newsletter twice each month!

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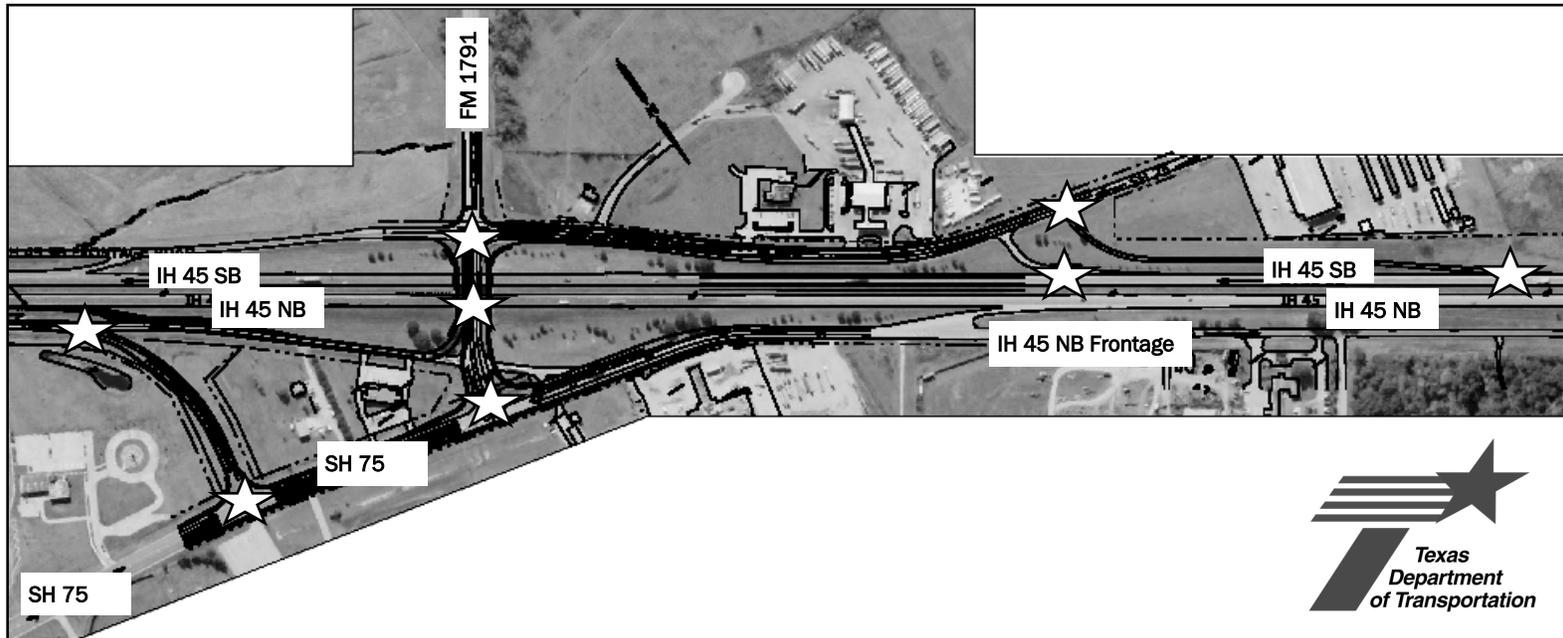
## Holiday Charity opportunity

### 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 Christmas holiday.

For Christmas, whoever adopts the family has the option of buying toys or gifts for the family or giving them a gift card.



The Texas Department of Transportation has commenced construction at the interchange of Interstate 45 and State Highway 75. Areas of planned change, to be addressed during the two-year project, are starred above. *(Graphic generated by Kendall Gore, TxDOT Transportation Engineer)*

## Construction, continued from page 1

“Phase one, which began on November 14, will include the construction of a new connector road which will run from the east I-45 frontage road and come out right in front of Kate Barr Ross Park on State Highway 75,” he said. “The road will run through what was the field between the Texas Prison Museum and the Texas Forest Service Office.

“The phase will also include the construction of a new southbound exit 118 ramp after the first of the year, as well as work on the retaining walls beneath interstate 45 where SH 75 currently runs. We have to move those walls back to allow for additional lanes.”

When the retaining walls are in their new position, the City’s contribution will be applied to add to the aesthetic appeal of the intersection.

“Thanks to approved City funding, the retaining walls are going to be treated with a kind of artificial stone look, and they’ll also include Texas stars on either side,” Stephens said. “That feature will give the whole interchange a more polished appearance.”

Phase two, Stephens said, will bring additional lanes onto SH 75 near the Pilot as well as the Shell station at the intersection with 1791.

“The widening of that portion of SH 75 will reduce traffic delays in front of the Pilot,” Stephens said. “As of today, that portion of the roadway is only two lanes, so if you wanted to turn left into the Pilot, you’d have to hold up all the traffic behind you. After phase two, there will be a continuous left-turn lane in that

location, and traffic continuing on SH 75 will not have to wait.”

Finally, the third phase of the project will address the portion of SH 75 located right by the Department of Public Safety office, adding additional lanes and widening the entire curve.

“The portion of roadway beneath Interstate 45 will change dramatically,” he said. “Not only will there be an independent U-Turn lane which will run from the east frontage road to the west frontage road, but we will also have two left-turn lanes for drivers taking SH 75 underneath I-45.

“One of the left-hand turn lanes will continue onto 1791 toward the Fairgrounds, while the other will allow travelers to stay on 75 North toward the Pilot station. This will cut congestion and divide traffic based on direction.”

Stephens said the project was largely conceptualized by six members of the Bryan District Design office, including Allison Kurwitz, David Bruno, Kendall Gore, Stephen Kasberg, Paul Hammons, and Bradley Peikert.

“Since work began on this project, we have run a tremendous amount of scenarios and used several computerized models to find the best way to handle the amount of traffic that passes through this area,” he said. “What we’ve chosen to construct is the best model we came up with, and we look forward to providing citizens with a more fluid and efficient interchange.”

Check back with the City of Huntsville for more information on the ongoing project. TxDOT Public Information Officer Bobby Colwell may also be reached at (979) 778-9764.



## Need us to pick up your Christmas tree? Make sure it’s out by January 6

The City of Huntsville Streets Department will make one round through the City during the week of January 6-10 to pick up discarded, natural Christmas trees. Residents who wish to have their trees picked up should place them on the curb by 1/6/14 with all ornaments removed.

# Preventing, managing frozen water pipes

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

First, insulate pipes located on outside walls or in crawl spaces. According to information on the State Farm insurance Web site, 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. According to State Farm, "A trickle of hot and cold water might be all it takes to keep your pipes from freezing. Let warm water drip overnight, preferably from

a faucet on an outside wall."

As well, 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 your family 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. The State Farm Web site may be accessed at [www.learningcenter.statefarm.com](http://www.learningcenter.statefarm.com)

# Shop safely!

The Huntsville Police Department would like to remind all citizens to exercise caution while taking part in holiday shopping, be it online or at local retailers.

According to HPD Sgt. Jim Barnes, it is especially important during busy shopping seasons to stay alert and aware of personal surroundings.

"When you go shopping, travel in numbers, try to go during less-crowded, daylight hours, and keep your valuables close," he said. "You always want to carry your purse close to your body, keep your wallet in a front pocket or inside coat pocket, and always try to keep at least one hand free.

"Do not overload yourself - try to consolidate your purchases into one or two bags. Park in a well-lit area, and when walking to or from your car, scan the area before proceeding."

For the full story, which also includes tips for credit card safety, check out the holiday issue of "This Week in Huntsville" via the City's Web site, [huntsvilletx.gov](http://huntsvilletx.gov).

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

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS		SERVICE CHANGES
<b>Tuesday, December 24, 2013</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>	Residential Garbage Collection will be picked up on Friday, 12/27/13; Recycling collection scheduled for 12/27/13 will be picked up on following Friday, 1/3/14. Extra recycling on side of blue cart will be picked up.
		Commercial Garbage Collection will run regular scheduled routes.
<b>Wednesday, December 25, 2013</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>	Residential Heavy Trash Collection will be cancelled.
		Commercial Garbage Collection scheduled for Wednesday, 12/25/13 will be picked up on Tuesday, 12/24/13 or Thursday, 12/26/13.

### Remember - Recycle Grease and 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 nor diesel from lawn equipment or 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.