

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 11, Issue 3
December 2014
Calendar

December 2014

- 2 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 3 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 4 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12 p.m.
- 10 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 16 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 17 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 18 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 25 - Christmas Day - City offices closed
- 26 - City offices closed
- 31 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection

January 2015

- 1 - New Year's Day - City offices closed
- 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.

**Learn more about
City events at
www.huntsvilletx.gov**

City partners with HGAC in Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery program

Several Walker County homes are currently being reconstructed as part of the Houston Galveston Area Council's Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery Program, an initiative made possible through cooperation between City and HGAC staff.

According to Zelia Brown, HGAC Housing Administrator over Walker County, a total of 11 county families will be assisted through the program by either having their homes reconstructed or being moved to another home.

"We are currently working on five homes in Walker County as part of the HGAC Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery program, and we anticipate having all 11 qualifying homes completed by spring 2015," Brown said. "Once we have the required documentation from each family, a construction company inspects the home, and then it takes about 45 days to rebuild a home or relocate the homeowner to another property."

Long-term partnership

After the Houston-Galveston Area Council received an additional round of funding to assist citizens from eight areas including Walker County, the City of Huntsville Neighborhood Resources division successfully connected applicants for previous programs with Brown.

Through their cooperation, the 11 homeowners were approved for assistance.

"When HGAC received funding from the Texas General Land Office to repair and replace homes in Walker County that were damaged or destroyed during Hurricane Ike, we were contacted by Zelia to see if we had any applicants who might be eligible for assistance," said Dr. Sherry McKibben, Neighborhood Resources Director. "[Program Administrator] Lindsey Owings and I contacted several people on our waiting list for the HOME program, scheduled interviews and helped with application intake.

"Since many of the individuals had filed for HGAC assistance in November 2013, much of the documentation had already been collected, so it was really just a matter of facilitating individual consultations."

In May, when Brown spent a day at City Hall meeting with applicants, an additional eight applicants were approved for assistance within a matter of hours.

Brown said the most critical part of the project - working with each of the homeowners to collect the required documentation - was alleviated greatly by collaborating with McKibben and Owings.

"Sherry and Lindsey have just been wonderful throughout this entire process," Brown said. "They have been a huge factor in helping us find qualifying families, assisting us in setting up appointments and making sure this was a smooth project and partnership with the residents in Huntsville and Walker County.

"They are both very humble, but they have both been wonderful to carry out this collaboration with."

For more information, visit the City's Web site at www.huntsvilletx.gov, or visit the HGAC Hurricane Ike Recovery site, <http://www.h-gac.com/community/community/ike/>.

Sign up for our digital newsletter, "This Week in Huntsville!"

The City's new bi-monthly, digital newsletter is really taking off, with new residents signing up and new features to keep everyone informed. Never miss an event again - sign up for your free **This Week in Huntsville** newsletter!

Did you notice the 2014 holiday special issue on our Web site?

Check it out! To subscribe, log onto the City's Web site, 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!

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

The results are in!

Following the 11/18 canvass, all four Council members who appeared on the November 4 ballot have retained their at-large positions:

Andy Brauning, Position 1 At-Large
Lydia Montgomery, Position 2 At-Large
Don Johnson, Position 3 At-Large
Keith Olson, Position 4 At-Large

At-Large Council members are elected by the entire City of Huntsville.

Want to reach out to one of your Council members? Visit the City's Web site at www.huntsvilletx.gov, scroll over City Government and select "Mayor & City Council."

The resulting page provides biographies of all current Council members as well as their email addresses, phone numbers and photos.

For more information, contact the City Secretary's office at (936) 291-5403.

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.

Solid waste customers: Look for "Greener Huntsville" Twitter posts

Citizens are encouraged to follow the City of Huntsville Twitter feed, @HuntsvilleTexas, for updates on the City's curbside recycling and solid waste efforts.

According to Carol Reed, Public Works Director, additional material is being made available for residents via the City's existing Twitter page as part of the "Greener Huntsville: Easy Recycling" initiative.

"Now that we have activated curbside recycling in all eight areas of the City, we want to provide our residents with as much information as possible about how to take advantage of this service correctly and easily," Reed said. "By providing how-to guides, tips and reminders about curbside recycling and important dates to remember, our hope is to make recycling a quick and convenient part of our citizens' daily lives."

The tweets address not only recycling, Reed said, but also assist customers in pinpointing Heavy Trash, Yard Waste and regular garbage pickup dates and requirements. Specific items which are accepted for recycling are also listed.

"We are using Twitter to remind people to put their blue or green carts at the street's edge both at the right time and on the right day," Reed said. "For example, for customers in Areas 1, 3, 5 and 7, we actually plan to send a tweet out on Sunday evening to remind them their garbage pickup is the next day, Monday."

"That way, they have plenty of time to get their carts out before the next morning at 6 a.m. when pickup begins. We do the same thing for recycling later in the week; our plan is to send these messages on a set schedule so citizens always have an extra reminder."

Reed said the "Greener Huntsville" Twitter initiative will also include energy conservation tips for residential and commercial entities, methods for saving water and more. For more information, contact Reed at [\(936\) 294-5768](tel:936-294-5768) or Solid Waste Superintendent Esther Herklotz at [\(936\) 294-5724](tel:936-294-5724). The City's Twitter feed can be viewed at <https://twitter.com/Huntsvilletexas>.

Solid Waste/Recycling holiday closures

Residential and commercial users affected

Christmas holiday

The City of Huntsville Solid Waste Transfer Station will observe the Christmas holiday on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014. Due to closure for the Christmas holiday, there will be no regularly scheduled heavy trash pick-up on Wednesday, December 24, 2014. There will be commercial garbage pickup for that date.

There will be **no collection residentially or commercially** on Thursday, December 25, 2014. Only on the following Monday or Tuesday collection days will excess bagged garbage outside of the residential garbage carts be collected. Customers with collection on Thursday, December 25, 2014 will have recycling collected on the following Thursday, January 1, 2014.

Businesses (commercial customers) with a Thursday, December 25, 2014 collection day and with commercial dumpsters, roll-offs or compactors will be collected on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 or Friday, December 26, 2014.

The Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facility will be closed to the public on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014.

The Recycling Drop-Off Center, located at 590 IH-45 North, will be closed to the public on Wednesday, December 24, 2014 and Thursday, December 25, 2014.

New Year's Day

The City of Huntsville Solid Waste Transfer Station will be open for business on New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1, 2015. There **will be** regularly scheduled collection both residentially and commercially. The Recycling Facility will be closed.

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.



Christmas tree disposal - January 5

The Streets Department will pick up Christmas trees (not artificial) at the street's edge from Monday, January 5, 2015 through Friday, January 9, 2015 only. All trees must be on the curb by Monday, January 5, 2015.

"Our Streets Department will drive down every street in Huntsville once between January 5 and January 9 to collect non-artificial Christmas trees, so it is important that if anyone wants their tree removed, they have it outside by the morning of January 5," said Esther Herklotz, Solid Waste Services superintendent. "When preparing a tree for pick-up, make sure all ornaments, tinsel and foil are removed because the trees will be going into a green composting pile."

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.

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.

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, 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 antifreeze.

Visit www.huntsvilletx.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 bagged, canned or bundled yard waste 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 (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.

The yard trimmings must not be bagged when unloaded.

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