

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 9, Issue 5

February 2013

Calendar

February 2013

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

March 2013

- 5 City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 6 Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 7 Planning & Zoning Commission -
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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 for
more information!

City receives 2012 SAFER Grant

FEMA allocation to fund four full-time firefighters

The City of Huntsville has officially received grant funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's 2012 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.

The allocation, an award of \$464,084, will be used to fund two years of salaries and benefits for four new firefighters.

Huntsville Fire Chief Tom Grisham said his department plans to move quickly to hire the new personnel and to get each of them licensed through the Texas Commission on Fire Protection.

"Our hope is to bring in four individuals from our volunteer fire department into the career fire department, and we're looking at hiring firefighters who are either already licensed or are very close to being licensed," Grisham said. "The plan is that all four firefighters will be licensed within 60 days of being hired.

"Additionally, since we hope to hire from our group of volunteer firefighters, no additional equipment or training will be necessary, and the individuals will already be familiar with how we operate."

With a total of 16 full-time firefighters on staff, Grisham said the department will reach a goal he has been working toward since he became chief.

"My goal since I started was that we have staffing at our fire stations 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and with these new firefighters, we believe we'll be able to do that at Fire Station #2 by the first week of March," Grisham said. "When I came on in 1996, I thought that would never happen in my career, and I'm very grateful to both my full-time and volunteer firefighters for making this a reality."

According to Dr. Sherry McKibben, Community Development Specialist with the City of Huntsville, the City has applied for the grant for the last three years - during 2010, 2011 and 2012 - and this is the first time the City has received funding during that time.

The City also received SAFER grant funding for two firefighters in 2006 and again in 2007.

"We are one of only four Texas cities that have received 2012 funding to date," McKibben said in January. "While we have had success in the past, we broadened our focus this year and made sure the priorities reflected in our application matched FEMA's funding priorities."

Grisham said while the SAFER Grant covers only two years of salaries and benefits for the four positions, he will continue working to keep the new firefighters on staff.

"This program is fully funded for two years, so our goal is to get everything implemented within the time constraints and find a way to keep these individuals on staff," he said. "As a department, we are extremely low-staffed, and there is no question in my mind that we need these positions."

HPD Chief and Director of Public Safety Kevin Lunsford said he was very optimistic about the positive impact having four additional firefighters could create for the City.

"The City of Huntsville is certainly proud to receive this funding, and we feel the Fire Department will be able to provide better and more comprehensive coverage with additional full-time employees," HPD Chief Kevin Lunsford said. "This is an exciting time for us, and we're looking forward to seeing the complete effect of this grant award."

10th Annual Huntsville Beautification Golf Tournament

It's time to hit the greens at the 10th Annual Huntsville Beautification Golf Tournament, starting at 1 p.m. on February 22nd at the Raven Nest Golf Course.

Teams of 4 players are signing up now for \$260. Individual registration is also welcome at only \$65 a person. The golf package includes green fees, cart, range balls, dinner, and awards! Sponsorships are available!

The money raised helps buy wildflower seeds, drought recovery initiatives, and new trees!

Join us in our efforts to help keep Huntsville beautiful. For more information call Penny Joiner 936-294-5708.

Yard Waste Specifics

Residential yard waste collection service is provided two to three times per month: The 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesday of each month.

This is automatic and there is no call-in required.

Yard waste is classified as leaves, grass, pine needles, yard clippings and small brush (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 2 feet of street's edge no later than 6:00 AM on the morning of the scheduled pick-up.

Yard waste such as leaves, grass, pine needles or small clippings must be: (1) Bagged or placed in 30 gallon container garbage cans, (2) Can not exceed 50 pounds each, and (3) City-issued garbage carts cannot be filled with yard waste.

Tree limbs and brush must be: (1) No longer than 4 feet in length, (2) Limbs no larger than 4 inches in diameter, (3) Must be tied securely in bundles which cannot exceed 2 feet in diameter and can't exceed 50 pounds each.

The following items and locations DO NOT qualify for Yard Waste pickup:

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

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

The yard trimmings must not be bagged.

For more information, contact the Solid Waste Services Division at 936-294-5723.

City Connection timeliness *Coverage to focus on late-month events*

The City Connection is produced each month for dissemination in the following month's water bills. The bills are mailed in two cycles, which arrive at the homes of residents during the first full week of the month and the third full week of the month.

For example, the February 2013 City Connection was actually prepared near the end of January, approved by the Communications Committee on the last day of the month, and sent to print. Customers then receive that newsletter with their water bills during either the first or third week in February.

The City has found this method of delivering news to be the most cost efficient. As a result, this means those customers who receive their water bill in the third week of the month must read information composed almost a month prior. As a new policy in 2013, material to be included in the newsletter is chosen with those residents in mind. This means although residents who receive their bills at the beginning of the month might benefit from month-long news, only events in the second half of the month - relevant for all City water customers - will be included

News which is not included in the Connection due to early occurrence within a given month will not be ignored. Rather, the City will make every effort to either: (1) Include those items in the previous month's City Connection, and/or (2) Issue press releases about the events to supplement inclusion in the newsletter.

Please contact the City Secretary's office with any questions or concerns at (936) 291-5413.

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.



Get your tickets now for

LEADERCAST®

May 10, 2013

Sam Houston State University
Performing Arts Center
1900 Avenue I, Suite 200

Registration: 7 a.m. • Event: 8 a.m.

Chick-fil-A Leadercast is a one-day leadership event broadcast live from Atlanta directly to your community.

Join us for an unforgettable day of inspiration, learning, connecting and more.

Speakers include:

Jack Welch, Andy Stanley,
Mike Krzyzewski, John C. Maxwell,
Dr. Henry Cloud, LCDR Rorke Denver,
Sanya Richards-Ross, David Allen,
Condoleezza Rice - Video Interview

Tickets are available for the 2012 rate of \$50 for a limited time only!

Price will increase to the 2013 rate of \$65 on March 16 - order today!

Tickets are available online at www.chickfilaleadercast.com.

From the home page, click "Attend" in the top menu, search "Huntsville, TX" and select the Performing Arts Center site. From there, a link will appear to allow ticket purchases.

For more information, or to purchase tickets in person, contact Dr. Kristy Vienne, Assistant Vice President for Student Services, at (936) 294-2600 or klv002@shsu.edu.

Winter Planting

How to combat frosts, freezes

Looking for ways to combat the damage of frosts and freezes on plants? The Texas AgriLife Extension Service can help. Skip Richter, Travis County Extension Director, offers a detailed technical article online at: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/travis/docs/FrostsandFreezes.pdf>.

The article outlines several basic methods of protecting plants from cool temperatures and freezes including:

1. Watering techniques, like watering right before a freeze or sprinkling plants on cold nights;
2. Covering plants, laying material over the top of the plant and allowing it to drape down;
3. Adding heat, using either a mechanic's light or large Christmas lights beneath the plant cover; and
4. The use of soil and mulch, such as hay or composted bark to insulate and provide protection.

Richter also provides a brief segment of advice on protecting container plants.

View the full article online for more detailed information!

What to plant in cooler months

Bek Akin, Walker County Master Gardener, offers her advice on plants which can thrive in cooler temperatures:

"There are plenty of vegetables that are referred to as 'cool-season vegetables,' and they are the ones that thrive when temperatures are in the 50's, 40's, 30's or even cooler. In fact, cabbage can easily handle temperatures that dip into the high teens, such as 18 degrees.

"Here is a partial list of cool-season vegetables and planting dates that are recommended for Walker County: Broccoli and Cauliflower 2/8-2/21; Cabbage and Carrots 1/21-2/21; Collard Greens 2/7-3/6; Lettuce, Beets, and Mustard Greens 2/21-4/7; Radishes 2/7-4/21; Turnips 1/21-3/21. These dates are simply guidelines and suggested planting dates. You can start a week or so earlier or later and it is certainly possible to have a successful garden.

"There is one early Spring garden vegetable that I have purposely not included in the list above, and that is potatoes.

Potatoes can be planted eight weeks before the last freeze of the season, so for 2013, the first two weeks of February would be the ideal time to plant potatoes."

Additional information is also available through the Texas Forest Service "Texas Tree Planting Guide" at <http://TexasTreePlanting.tamu.edu>.

Huntsville Public Library upgrades Internet connection

Customers gain greater access to education, entertainment, communication and more

In the fall of 2011, the library upgraded its Internet connection from 6 mbps to 12 mbps. This was made possible by the Schools and Libraries program of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), commonly called e-rate. USAC is an independent, non-profit corporation that brings steep Internet discounts to schools and libraries under the oversight of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Based on Huntsville's location and poverty level, the library was able to receive an 80% discount on its Internet connection, thereby making it possible to vastly increase its speed. Without this discount, this heightened speed would not have been affordable.

This increase in Internet speed allows library customers to do much more online than they could before. It is the library's mission to provide opportunities and resources for educational and cultural enrichment for citizens of all ages and economic levels. With this change, customers will reap the benefits in the areas of job searching and applying, collaboration, research, education, literacy, communication, and much more.

Customers who visit the library to search and apply for jobs online have found that long job descriptions and applications load much more quickly. Uploading resumes and other files has been simplified. In addition, customers can visit the library to take online job training and certification tests, even those which include streaming videos, something not possible on the older, much slower connection.

The increased speed allows customers to communicate in real-time via chat, Skype, or other methods with people in other cities, states, or countries. Customers taking online classes can stream educational videos, talk with their classmates and teachers, and download all class materials quickly and easily.

Research and information-gathering have also been improved. Customers can collaborate with researchers far and wide, sharing information and expertise. Sites that have large image files, such as Ancestry.com for genealogy research and Digital Sanborn Maps for historical maps, now load quickly and easily.

The online resources the library provides, such as Learning Express for taking practice tests and Gale Legal Forms for downloading free legal forms, are easier and faster to use due to the increased speed. Many of these resources

have large audio, video, or image files that require a fast connection to function. The faster connection also makes possible programs such as Rosetta Stone for language-learning and Aztec Learning Essentials for workforce and non-traditional education.

Children who visit the library also benefit. Where it was impossible on the slower connection, children can now view educational videos and large image files, such as those at National Geographic Kids, thereby enriching their lives and assisting with school assignments and projects. Teens can also exercise their creative juices by using the library's iPad apps to create their own short films and digital art.

Customers using library desktop computers are not the only ones who benefit. The faster wireless connection allows customers to use their own personal devices at the library to access all the online resources the library offers, including downloading e-books and audiobooks.

These are just a few examples of the many benefits brought to Huntsville Public Library customers by the e-rate program. For more information on the Schools and Libraries program, visit their website at www.usac.org/sl. For more information on the library and its resources, visit www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com or call 936-291-5472.

HPL has nine Rosetta Stone languages available:

Arabic	Italian
Chinese	Japanese
English (US)	Portuguese
French	Spanish (LA)
German	

Contact the Library at (936) 291-5472 to learn more!



Have you recently received excellent service from a City employee?
Tell us about it! Please contact the City Secretary's office at
(936) 291-5403 or (936) 291-5413.