

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 11, Issue 4
January 2015
Calendar

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

February 2015

- 3 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 4 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 5 - Planning & Zoning Commission -
City Hall at 12:00 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.
- 25 - 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 employees take part in SHSU Leadership Academy

City employees Chris Vasquez and Marla Diers are currently taking part in a nine-month leadership academy sponsored by Sam Houston State University, working with representatives from several major Walker County entities.

The High Potential Employee Leadership Academy - which is in its second year - involves a series of monthly development sessions that address key leadership topics and specific focus groups.

The program, which began in August 2014, will continue through May 2015.

"This leadership academy has been a wonderful experience - I really feel like I've grown," said Vasquez, who serves as the Information Technology Director for the City. "The best part for me has been building a relationship with the mentor you're assigned as part of the program.

"My mentor - Bill Dawley, a senior Vice President with Amegy Bank - has given me a lot of great insight on how to handle a large workload, be less stressed and just be a better person overall."

Diers, whose program mentor is Huntsville attorney Hope Knight, also said the opportunity to learn from a seasoned professional is highly valuable.

"Hope and I meet on a regular basis to discuss leadership topics and styles," said Diers, who serves as the Human Resources Manager for the City. "I feel I've gained valuable knowledge and perspective from getting to know her."

The program, which includes nine unique leadership experiences, brings individuals from a range of major entities together for courses on development, organizational culture, decision making and more.

"Being a part of this experience has allowed me to meet people I would never have known otherwise," Vasquez said. "I've had the opportunity to meet and work with leaders from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Huntsville Independent School District, Sam Houston and many more."

Diers said she has also enjoyed the diversity of the classes, with respect to both the range of experiences afforded to participants and the guest speakers who work with the program.

"Leadership Academy participants interact as a team to work through 'mock' real life experiences while hearing from individuals who have weathered similar challenges," she said. "From City Manager Matt Benoit to TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston, these speakers have shown us the true nature of leading, supporting and impacting an organization."

For more information on the leadership academy, visit <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/leadership/>.



**City employees
Marla Diers and
Chris Vasquez
began the High
Potential Employee
Leadership
Academy in August
2014.**



Human Resources Director Julie O'Connell speaks to participants of the High Potential Employee Leadership Academy during a mock City Council meeting on December 11. Several of the City's Directors participated in the exercise, taking on the roles of concerned citizens.

City staff raises over \$10,000 for local charities during second annual bowling tournament



The City of Huntsville's second annual charity bowling tournament was a huge success, with more than \$10,000 raised for five local entities. A check presentation and reception for the receiving entities was held at City Hall in November.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be able to present the Rita B. Huff Animal Shelter, the SAAFE House, the Senior Center of Walker County, the COME Center and the Good Shepherd Mission with a combined total of over \$10,000 and hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food items," said Dr. Sherry McKibben, Neighborhood

Resources Director. "In addition to donating their time and effort, many of our staff made the decision to donate their City-issued 'Turkey Bucks' vouchers for use at Brookshire Brothers to the effort.

"The vouchers were used to purchase over \$400 worth of meat, enough to feed the individuals utilizing the Good Shepherd Mission for about two weeks, including the Thanksgiving holiday."

Find the City online via various Web sites and Facebook

City of Huntsville Web site -
www.huntsvilletx.gov

Tourism Web site -
www.huntsvilletexas.com

Huntsville Public Library Web site -
www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com

Main Street Program -
www.huntsvillemainstreet.com



Check out our departmental Facebook pages!

- Primary page - "City of Huntsville, TX - Government"
- Huntsville PD/Public Safety - "Huntsville Police Department"
- Tourism and Cultural Services - "Sam Houston Statue"
- Huntsville Main Street - "City of Huntsville, TX - Main Street"
- Parks and Leisure - "City of Huntsville - Recreation Services"
- Wynne Home - "The Wynne Home Arts Center"
- Public Library - "Huntsville Public Library"

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>.

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

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. Plastics 1-7 stamped with number and symbol accepted
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, full list of acceptable curbside items and more recycling information.

Yard Waste Limit 12 Bags, Bundles or Cans



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.