

CITY

CONNECTION

Volume 13, Issue 6

May 2017

Calendar

May 2017

- 2 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 3 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 4 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 12:00 p.m.
- 10 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 16 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 17 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 18 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 24 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 29 - Memorial Day - All City Facilities Closed

June 2017

- 1 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 12:00 p.m.
- 6 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 7 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection
- 14 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 15 - Planning Commission -
City Hall at 5:30 p.m.
- 20 - City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- 21 - Heavy Trash & Large Yard Waste
- 28 - Yard Waste Trimming Collection

Submit requests for Heavy Trash pick up before noon on Wednesday, the week prior to pick-up, at 294-5796.

Learn more about
City events at
www.huntsvilletx.gov

City Council Adopts Comprehensive Smoking Ordinance

During the 2017 City Council Strategic Planning session, the Council identified their desire to focus on improving overall City appearance. Goal #1, City Appearance - Provide policies, amenities, and events that enhance the City's already beautiful and historic natural environment. Within that goal was Objective #2 - Review and consider various proposals for an updated smoking ordinance.

After the adoption of the Strategic Plan, City staff began reviewing ordinances from 10 cities that are similar in size, budget, and demographics to Huntsville. Before presenting a new ordinance for Council consideration, the City invited 30 local businesses and restaurants to attend meetings to share their input regarding a new comprehensive smoking ordinance. The businesses were those that might be the most impacted by a more restrictive ordinance.

The current ordinance that is in place was adopted in 1987. The new updated ordinance proposes restricting smoking in workplaces, bars, restaurant patios, bowling alleys, indoor restaurants and various other places defined within the ordinance.

At the April 18 City Council meeting, the updated comprehensive ordinance was on the agenda for a first reading, meaning Council heard the item and allowed for public comment but no action was taken. The ordinance was on the agenda May 2 and was adopted by the Council. Visit <http://huntsvilletx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8617> to view the ordinance on page 137 of the packet.

Please visit www.huntsvilletx.gov and our various social media pages to see more updates regarding public education and enforcement. We encourage you to speak with your City Council members via email, their emails can be found at <http://huntsvilletx.gov/343/Mayor-City-Council>. For businesses wanting more information on the changes that may have to be made at your establishment, please reach out to the City Health Inspector at 936-294-5771 and the City's Building Official at 936-294-5771.

Memorial Day Solid Waste Changes

All City facilities including the Solid Waste and Recycling facility will be closed on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29.

Residential Service -

If your cart is normally picked up on Monday, it will be picked up on Wednesday for that week. There will be no yard waste services that week. The rest of the pickups for the remainder of the week will remain the same.

Commercial Service -

If your dumpster is normally serviced on Monday, you will be serviced on Tuesday. Additional trucks will be running this day, so if you are normally picked up on Tuesday, you will still be serviced on Tuesday. The rest of the servicing for the remainder of the week will remain the same.

Summer Reading Program!

Have fun this summer while preventing the “summer slide” by signing up for the Huntsville Public Library’s *Texas Summer Reading Program* for all ages. Kick off your reading at our Summer Reading Kick Off Party from 1-3:30 p.m. Saturday, June 3rd. Sign up at the library, print your Book Bingo Reading Log, and start enriching your summer. Turn in your completed Log between July 17th and July 21st.

Children (ages 0-12) and Teens (ages 13-17) who turn in their completed logs will receive a prize pack of coupons to local Huntsville restaurants, a free book, and a ticket to enter our raffle to win even more exciting prizes. Adults (ages 18+) can also participate by playing Bingo to receive a chocolate bar and a raffle ticket for the Adult Summer Reading grand prize.

While you are at the Huntsville Public Library Kick Off Party to register for the Summer Reading Program, join us for a special presentation by *Texas Snakes & More* from 1-2 p.m. Saturday, June 3rd. See exotic live animals and learn about animal habits. All ages are welcome and sign up for the animal presentation is not required. The Kickoff Party is generously sponsored by the Helen Wheat Fund. Can’t make it to the Kick Off Party? You can still sign up at the library website www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com.

Town Creek Drainage Project

Fun Dates

University Avenue, Midway Plaza parking lot and Avenue J are all in the forecast for closures in the coming months.

University Avenue is scheduled to be closed the week of June 5th. As excavation moves through the parking lot at Midway Plaza, the contractors will backfill each section to allow for parking. Entry into the parking lot will be from Avenue J.

As the construction progresses through the parking lot, University Avenue will be reopened and Avenue J will be closed. As that time, entry will be made from University Avenue. It is anticipated this section will be reopened the week of August 14th.

Between August 14th and September 1, finishing touches will be completed (asphalt, sidewalk, curbs) and all roads will be open.

Sam Houston Avenue is scheduled to reopen fully in early June.

Thank you for your patience throughout this project. We can’t wait to share the finished improvements with you!

**JUNK
-A-
PALOOZA**
COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE
SATURDAY JUNE 17
8 AM- 12 PM
DOWNTOWN HUNTSVILLE
VENDORS
WANTED

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: CITY OF HUNTSVILLE MAIN STREET PROGRAM
936.291.5920 MAINSTREET@HUNTSVILLE.ORG 1203 UNIVERSITY AVE HUNTSVILLE TX, 77340

Flick & Float

Join the Parks and Leisure Department on Friday, May 19 from 8 - 10 p.m. for an evening Flick and Float at the Huntsville Aquatic Center. The movie *The Secret Life of Pets* will be shown while you float in the pool!

Be sure to bring your pool floats or camping chairs; no open swimming will be allowed. There will be concessions available for purchase at the Aquatic Center. No coolers will be allowed inside the gates.

If you have questions about the event, please contact the Parks and Leisure Department at 936-294-5708. The Frank D. "Poncho" Roberts Aquatic Center is located at 912 Avenue N.



Staying Prepared

City of Huntsville staff is always planning for the unexpected, especially as hurricane season approaches. City personnel joined their counterparts from Walker County at a recent Texas Division of Emergency Management *Hurricane Evacuation Tabletop Exercise*.

Representatives of FEMA, a number of state agencies, and cities and counties across the gulf coast and southeast Texas regions conducted a preparatory day of evaluation for an imaginary high level hurricane hitting the coast. Issues were varied and complicated, including animal health, evacuation, jurisdictional responsibilities, resource staging and support, feeding and refueling capacity, and many more. Of special concern was timing for the end of contraflow and evacuation efforts to shelter remaining responders and equipment during landfall and the primary inland impact, and then handling the restart of emergency services and start of recovery activities as soon as is practicable. TDEM will be holding a full size exercise this summer.

It has been a few years since the coast has suffered such a situation as was conceived for the practice. As always, situational exercises such as these bring to light unanticipated concerns. For example, late evacuees should not expect to shelter in hospitals, as many have downsized in general over recent decades and health facilities would be on minimal staffing and not necessarily have resources for members of the public who don't meet admissions requirements. Residents with special needs family members, mobility issues, or large animals should make contingency plans.

Over the next few months, City emergency management staff will use what they have learned to improve disaster response plans, and Emergency Management Coordinator John Waldo hopes citizens do the same.

"Everyone should have household plans for disasters or emergencies discussed in advance," said Waldo. Think about the "what ifs", review planning documents, and be ready for the unexpected."

The City annually provides resources for disaster planning; find more at <http://huntsvilletx.gov/298/Emergency-Management> and <http://huntsvilletx.gov/Archive.aspx?ADID=507>. For more information, contact Waldo at 936-291-5945 or jwaldo@huntsvilletx.gov.



Expert in Every Office

Meet Kevin Byal, your new Building Official. Kevin began working for the City of Huntsville in late March.

Kevin grew up and spent most his life in Thornton, Colorado (just north of Denver) before he found his way to Texas in 2000. He has been employed in municipal government for over 24 years, working in building permitting and inspection departments. Prior to that Kevin owned an electrical contracting business.

"I am most excited about getting to know fellow employees and the citizens of Huntsville," Kevin told us about his new role in the City.

If you see Kevin working in the field, be sure to welcome him to *Home Sweet Huntsville!*

Composting with an Expert

City of Huntsville Solid Waste and Recycling Assistant Superintendent Natalie Mimms is a veteran composter, and hopes to convince you to become one, too! Contact her at 936-294-5743 or nmimms@huntsvilletx.gov.

Don't bag it-compost it! With a little time and ingenuity you can create your own safe and nutrient-rich compost to nourish your lawn and landscape plants, as well as reduce your need for watering. When you have yard waste, consider putting it in a compost pile instead of a bag that will be hauled off to the landfill. It's simple, and if you ask any avid gardener, it is worth the effort. There are six major ingredients in a compost pile:

- Nitrogen - all the green waste, like grass clippings, leaf trimmings, and kitchen scraps (no protein-rich meat or dairy scraps, they can stink and attract critters)
- Carbon - brown waste like leaves, chipped limbs, and lawn thatch
- Micro-organisms - the bugs that will turn your pile into a dark fertile resource. They are found in soil and water and on plant surfaces; everywhere, really.
- Water - every living organism needs water to grow
- Air - the type of micro-organisms that will turn a pile of yard waste into a pile of compost quickly need air
- TIME!

There are many different styles for developing a pile, and all of them will eventually lead to compost. You can go with the less structured route of putting everything in a heap in one spot to walk away and forget, or use more advanced systems with cages, boxes, or tumblers. No matter what type of system you go with, the principles of decomposition are all the same. You have to have a balance of the six ingredients in order for the magic to happen! The better your balance is, the faster it happens. Don't worry about getting it exactly right, no matter what you do, it will eventually break down.

You need equal weight of carbon ingredients and nitrogen ingredients. This is where it seems a little complicated, but it really isn't so bad. Dried leaves are very light, so you need a lot more dried leaves than you need green leaves, kitchen scraps, or grass clippings. This is great news when fall brings lots of source material. You need your pile to stay damp all the way through. Not sopping wet or you will drown your organisms, but not dry or the organisms won't be happy either. Like a wrung-out sponge.

Your pile needs to be fluffy, so air can reach to the organisms. Often this is done by turning over your pile once every couple of weeks with a pitchfork or rake. Having different types of items in your pile will keep things from matting down. Shredded leaves, tiny sticks and pine needles, kitchen scraps like lettuce, apple peels, old flower stems, and grass clippings will all allow air to flow through the pile. The smaller the items in your pile, the faster they will decompose, so put items in a chipper or blender if you want to have a fast pile. A great way to shred bags of dried leaves quickly is to put them inside an old trash can and (carefully) stick a yard string trimmer/weed-eater in the can. It's like a giant blender and turns the leaves into tiny bits in seconds!

Finally, just wait. If you are very diligent with your pile and keep everything about it perfect, you can have fresh compost in a couple of months. If you are the type of person who prefers a more laid back method of putting it all in a pile and walking away from it, you can have compost in about a year or two. There's not really a wrong way to do it, and it keeps the green waste out of the landfill.

Once your compost is ready, spread it around! Sprinkle it in your lawn, lay it down around the base of your bushes and trees, and put it in all your flower beds. The compost will deter weeds, add organic matter to your soil (which will help with water retention and a more even ground temperature), and will slowly release nutrients to the plants and surrounding soil that will help make everything healthy and strong.

