

# City CURRENTS

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SUMMER 2013

## Access to More Services Now Available On-Line

E-government, e-gov, digital government, on-line government, connected government—the use of the Internet to deliver government services and information is on the rise. The City of West University Place understands that time is valuable and continuously seeks to meet the demand for services through online portals. Recently, the City expanded the number of online services available to residents, further embracing the digital government movement.

Now using the City's website ([www.westutx.gov/onlineservices](http://www.westutx.gov/onlineservices)), residents and visitors can access city records, submit service requests, and securely pay utility bills and traffic tickets.

### On-line Utility Payments

Residents can choose to pay their utility bills on-line with either Visa or MasterCard. Registration with a third party vendor is required, which includes providing the account number printed on your bill. As of press time, payments are subject to a 2.75% convenience fee.

### On-line Municipal Court Payments

Residents and city visitors who receive a traffic citation can now pay their fines online in lieu of in-person payment. Payments can be made with either Visa or MasterCard and are subject to a 3% convenience fee. To pay online, but you must enter your full name, driver's license number and birth date; the case number is not necessary. Only payments for the full amount due will be accepted using the on-line payment service. Parking citations and code enforcement citations (including animal citations) cannot be paid online.

### Laserfiche WebLink for Public Documents

In the City's effort to become transparent, we now offer residents a quick and easy way to access the City's most requested public documents. WebLink allows the public to search, retrieve and review City ordinances, resolutions, budgets, financial reports, minutes and other documents. After finding the document they're looking for, citizens can scroll, pan and zoom in on the document in their Web browser—no plug-ins or installations are required. If desired, documents can be downloaded and printed. It acts as a customizable, searchable portal for public access to important information—while still keeping sensitive information secure.

### Click West U

In November 2012, the City launched Click West U, a new citizen request system. Click West U is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and allows residents to contact the City with service requests, questions and concerns. Click West U is available through the following methods:

- Computer users can reach us on the Web at [www.westutx.gov/clickwestu](http://www.westutx.gov/clickwestu).
- iPhone, iPad and Android users can download a free app for submitting requests. Links to the apps and instructions for their use can be found at [www.westutx.gov/clickwestu-info](http://www.westutx.gov/clickwestu-info).

These new e-government services will not replace the traditional in-person or over-the-phone services provided during normal City operating hours. The City welcomes residents and visitors to pay their utility bills and court fines in person at the Municipal Building customer service desk at 3800 University Boulevard. And City staff will still be available to take service and information requests in person and over the phone. West U's new e-gov components simply provide access to information and services to residents who prefer alternate avenues.



A NEIGHBORHOOD  
CITY INCORPORATED  
IN 1925

# From The Mayor's Desk



by Mayor Bob Fry

After each City election, the new Mayor and City Council select the members of the City's boards and commissions to serve for the next two years beginning September 1

following the election. However, sometimes it is a difficult task to reach people in our City during summer vacation season, so the selection process usually is not completed until early-mid September. Therefore, incumbents on the boards and commissions continue to serve until relieved by the incoming appointees.

I cannot express strongly enough the importance of the work these volunteers do on your behalf. Council may set policy and be responsible to the voters, but members of these boards and commissions, working with our profes-

sional staff, are the ones that do the in-depth study and analysis of what goes on in our fair city. The Building and Standards Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment Commission even have quasi-judicial authority granted by our code of ordinances. Fortunately West U is blessed with civic-minded residents of excellent qualifications willing to serve.

Even so, every two years there are always vacancies to be filled; people move or just no longer have the time to serve. Soon, Council will be asking for volunteers and a short interview will be conducted of those who answer the call. I strongly urge those of you with an interest in serving the City to apply for a board or commission. You will find it interesting, perhaps challenging, and usually not too time-consuming. You will begin to understand the inner workings of how our City operates while meeting other dedicated citizens who help make serving as well as living here a pleasure.

Keep in touch with Mayor Fry as he shares news and comments with residents.

Visit [www.westutx.gov/mayors-message](http://www.westutx.gov/mayors-message) for regular updates.

Keep in Touch  
with Mayor Fry



**“Fortunately West U is blessed with civic-minded residents of excellent qualifications willing to serve... I strongly urge those of you with an interest in serving the City to apply for a board or commission... You will begin to understand the inner workings of how our City operates while meeting other dedicated citizens who help make serving as well as living here a pleasure.”**

## From Council Member Dick Yehle



I am writing this article shortly after the May City Council election. As part of the campaign, I and most other candidates did some “block walking,” which was not only a good physical fitness regime, but also useful for gaining

valuable insight into the thoughts and priorities of West U voters.

I found the opinions of the people I met to be a helpful reminder of what is right in the City and what things could use some work. I also used the opportunity of walking every street in West U to make observations about the status of our neighborhoods. I tried out the new Click West U app on my iPhone to report 65 instances of substandard sidewalks for remedial action by Public Works. Click West U is an easy-to-use feature, available through the City's website, for notifying City staff of the GPS location of a problem. I encourage everyone to take advantage of it.

Approaching so many front doors made me aware that some homeowners may not be

aware that they don't comply with the City code with respect to having suitably visible house numbers. West U has an ordinance that calls for all houses to have numbers that are of an adequate size, contrasting color and placement to be easily visible from the street when looking at a front door. Large, bold numbers placed on or within two feet of the front door satisfy the ordinance. It is a requirement designed to help fire and police personnel quickly find the right house. In the interest of public safety, homeowner action is needed if the numbers are not on or near the door and easily readable from the street.

I will be considering all of my observations about the state of West U neighborhoods when City Council's priorities are reset this fall. In the interim, it would be good if all residents consider the role they can play in terms of tending to simple things like pruning overgrown vegetation along sidewalks and driveways, not parking across sidewalks and improving the visibility of house numbers. More information on the house number requirement is available through the Public Works Department.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP CHANGES



Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal James Novak and Fire Chief Aaron Taylor.

Many changes have occurred in the West U Fire Department leadership structure over the past few months. In April, Fire Chief

Steve Ralls announced his retirement after 39 years with the West U Fire Department (including serving the last 10 years as Fire Chief). Ralls was succeeded by Aaron Taylor, an eight-year department veteran, who most recently served as the Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal. Lieutenant James Novak, a 17-year department veteran, has been promoted to the Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal position. A new Lieutenant will be named after a review of internal applicants. For additional information about the Fire Department, visit [www.westutx.gov/fire](http://www.westutx.gov/fire).

# Community Message Board

## 2013 Garbage / Recycling Holiday Schedule

### Independence Day, Thursday, July 4:

No curbside collection. Normal collection will resume on your next scheduled day.

### Labor Day, Monday, September 2:

No curbside collection. Normal collection will resume on your next scheduled day.

### Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 28:

No curbside collection. Trash regularly scheduled for this day will be picked up on Friday (November 29). Please hold your recyclables until your next schedule recycle day.

### Day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 29:

Normal collection of trash and recycling will be provided. City offices will be closed.

### Additional Christmas Holiday, Tuesday, December 24:

Normal collection of trash and recycling will be provided. City offices will be closed.

### Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25:

No curbside collection. Recycling regularly scheduled for this day will be picked up on Tuesday (December 24).

### New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1, 2014:

No curbside collection. Recycling regularly scheduled for this day will be picked up on Tuesday (December 31).

## Keep in touch!

### Choose how you get information from the City:

- Receive news alerts, meeting agendas and event info via email – sign up at [www.westutx.gov/enotify](http://www.westutx.gov/enotify)
- Receive emergency notifications via phone, text or email – register at [www.westutx.gov/codered](http://www.westutx.gov/codered)
- “Like” the City of West University Place, TX, on Facebook
- Follow @CityofWestU on Twitter
- Bookmark [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov) on your smart phone for access on the go

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

## Keep Cool at Colonial Park Pool Summer & Fall Public Swim Schedule

### SUMMER SCHEDULE, June 7 – August 25

**Mondays:** 4:00 – 8:30 PM

**Tuesdays through Fridays:** 10:00 AM – 8:30 PM

**Saturdays:** 9:00 AM – 7:00 PM

**Sundays:** 12:00 – 7:00 PM

### FALL SCHEDULE, AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 2

**August 31:** 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM

**September 1:** 12:00 – 8:00 PM

**September 2:** 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

**September 3:** Pool closed for the season

## Splash Blast to the Past for Colonial Park Pool Members!

Missing that “two kids ago” spark? Join us at Colonial Park Pool from 7:30 – 10:00 PM on Saturday, July 20, for a movie, dinner, swimming and more to help you relive that first date-night experience. Don't have a sitter? Not a problem! We'll watch the kids, too! We will entertain, feed and surprise your kids at the Recreation Center while you enjoy the evening. Just plan on having a good time and we'll take care of the rest! Register at the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire Boulevard. You must be a current member of Colonial Park Pool to register. Space is limited, so register today to hold your space in the first annual Splash Blast to the Past! For more information, contact the Parks & Recreation Department at (713) 662-7420.



## QUIET HOURS

**Weekdays (Mon – Fri), except holidays**  
Before 7:00 AM or after 8:00 PM

**Saturdays, except holidays**  
Before 8:00 AM or after 8:00 PM

**Sundays and on New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the corresponding Friday or Monday on which the city observes that holiday**  
Before 12 Noon or after 8:00 PM

## Independence Day Bike Parade

Families and kids of all ages are invited to participate in the Independence Day Bike Parade on Thursday, July 4. Decorate bicycles, tricycles and wagons! The parade lines up on University Boulevard in front of West U Elementary at 8:45 AM. The parade begins promptly at 9:00 AM, proceeding west on University, turning south on Academy, then heading west on Byron and ending at Colonial Park, 4130 Byron Street. There will be plenty of food, fun and festivities for everyone to enjoy. Games take place from 9:15 AM – 12:00 PM.

For more information, contact the Parks & Recreation Department at (713) 662-7420.

## DIVE-IN MOVIE SERIES

Join us at Colonial Park Pool from 7:30 – 9:30 PM on Fridays, August 2 and 16, for this year's Dive-in Movie Series. Enjoy a family-friendly movie from the grass or pool. Concessions will be available. Admission to the movie will be complimentary; however, if you or your children would like to enjoy the movie from the pool, regular pool admission fees will apply. For more information about scheduled movies, fees and event details, visit [www.westutx.gov/events](http://www.westutx.gov/events) or call Colonial Park Pool at (713) 662-7460 or the West U Recreation Center at (713) 662-7420.

**\*\*Note:** The August 16 movie will be geared toward teens and may not be appropriate for children under the age of 13.\*\*

## CLICK WEST U

Have a service request for the City? Submit it on-line through Click West U! Submit questions, comments and complaints: [www.westutx.gov/clickwestu](http://www.westutx.gov/clickwestu).

# Parks & Recreation

## Friends of West U Parks

### Fathers & Flashlights 2013



Saturday and Sunday, October 5 – 6, is the weekend for the next highly anticipated fun family campout “Fathers & Flashlights.” This will be the seventh year for the campout, which helps raise funds for the continued improvement and development of West U parks. Campers can look forward to an afternoon of fun activities such as live catch and release fishing, pony rides, an obstacle course, a rock wall, the ever popular Camp Russo and much more, including some new activities. Thank you to Friends 2012 – 2013 Corporate Sponsor Direct Energy and the other underwriters and sponsors who make this event possible. Judy and Comfort Cheng, Dee Dee and Jamie Gilder, and Ashley and Sam Gumbert are the event chairs for this year’s campout. “We are grateful to these couples for stepping up to chair one of the neighborhood’s most popular events,” says Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond. For more information on being an underwriter or sponsor, contact the Friends office at (713) 662-7430 or email Donna LaMond at [DLaMond@WestUTX.gov](mailto:DLaMond@WestUTX.gov).

Star Citizen Awards were presented at the May 1 Friends board meeting and appreciation luncheon hosted by the City of West University Place at The Union Kitchen. Awards were presented to Sara and Chip Edgecomb and to Amanda and J.R. McGee for chairing “Fathers & Flashlights” in October 2012, and to Kristine and Joaquin Martinez for chairing the Park Lovers’ Ball held last February. Together these events raised \$286,000 (net) for our parks. A Star Citizen Award was also presented to Steven Murray of Direct Energy for the company’s contributions to Friends as the organization’s 2012 – 2013 Corporate Sponsor. Additionally, May 1 was proclaimed as Direct Energy Day in West U, with a proclamation presented to Steven Murray and Monte Beck.

Mark your calendars for February 8, 2014, when next year’s Park Lovers’ Ball will be held at the Royal Sonesta Houston Hotel. The gala will be co-chaired by Megan and Drew Morris, Nancy Kate and Mark Prescott, and Kara and Dax Sanders. Cece McCann will be the event honorary chair.

The Friends Donor Wall will be installed toward the end of August at the West University Recreation Center in the downstairs lobby; a special reception and media event will be held for the unveiling. “We are very grateful to our donors and are excited to be able to show our appreciation by listing them on the donor wall. The wall will include both individual and corporate donors,” stated Friends Donor Wall Chair Amanda McGee.

Friends fundraising continues year-round with the stork program, community and business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, and paver, bench and tree sales. For more information, please visit the Friends website at [www.westuparks.org](http://www.westuparks.org), call (713) 662-7430 or stop by the Friends of West U Parks office located in the West U Rec Center, 4210 Bellaire Boulevard.

## Fall 2013 Class Registration

Discover a new craft or polish an old skill without investing a lot of time or money. Most fall classes begin in September. They include dance, tennis, Pilates, yoga for adults and kids, swimming, gymnastics, CPR and so much more!

**Priority Registration** (for those currently enrolled in classes within the past 30 days): Tuesday, July 30 – Monday, August 5

**Resident Registration:** Begins Tuesday, August 6

**Non-Resident Registration:** Begins Thursday, August 8

To register on-line at [www.westutx.gov/reg](http://www.westutx.gov/reg), you need a user name and password. (If you don’t already have a username and password, please allow three to five business days to receive this information once you have created an account.) Just log in to your account, choose your activity and click “register.” Pay with a credit card to complete your registration, and you will receive an instant email confirmation of your enrollment. Remember, on-line registration is not available for Priority Registration. You can also register in person by coming to the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire Boulevard, to sign up. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, personal checks and cash are accepted. To view a copy of the fall edition of the “West U at Your Leisure” guide, visit [www.westutx.gov/parks](http://www.westutx.gov/parks) or call (713) 662-7420 for more information.

## Facility Maintenance

The West University Place Recreation Center will be closed Sunday, August 25 – Thursday, August 29 for annual maintenance.

During the closure, Recreation Center swimming pool users may use the UTHHealth Auxiliary Enterprises Recreation Center swimming pool, located at 7779 Knight Road in Houston, per our exchange agreement with the facility. You must show your valid Recreation Center membership card for entry. Visit [www.uthouston.edu/recreation-center](http://www.uthouston.edu/recreation-center) or call (713) 500-8420 for hours and updated pool schedule information. Please note this exchange is for pool and locker room use only, and is not valid for weight room, cardio room, racquetball membership or other areas of use.

Recreation Center staff will be temporarily relocated on-site at Colonial Park Pool, 4130 Byron, to conduct day-to-day business during the closure week. West U residents may call or visit Colonial Park Pool to sign up for Recreation Center classes, make tennis/racquetball/pavilion reservations, purchase memberships or get general Parks & Recreation information.

The West University Place Recreation Center will resume its normal operational schedule at 5:00 AM on Friday, August 30.

For more information, please visit [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov) or call:

- West U Rec Center at (713) 662-7420 (this number will be rolled over to Colonial Park Pool during the closure)
- Colonial Park Pool at (713) 662-7460

# Public Safety

## HEAT WAVE SAFETY



In recent years, excessive heat has caused more deaths than all other adverse weather events, including floods. A heat wave is defined as a prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity. Generally temperatures are 10 degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region during summer months, last for a long period of time and occur with high humidity as well.

### How can I prepare?

Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of upcoming temperature changes.

Discuss heat safety precautions with members of your household.

Check the contents of your emergency preparedness kit in case a power outage occurs.

If you do not have air-conditioning, find places you could go to for relief from the heat during the warmest part of the day (libraries, movie theaters, malls, etc.).

Be aware that people living in urban areas may be at greater risk from a prolonged heat wave than people in rural areas.

Get trained in first aid to learn how to treat heat-related emergencies.

Ensure that your animals' needs for water and shade are met.

### What should I do during a heat wave?

Listen to a NOAA Weather Radio for critical updates from the National Weather Service.

Never leave children or pets alone in enclosed vehicles.

Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.

Eat small meals and eat more often.

Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors that absorb the sun's rays.

Slow down, stay indoors, and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day.

Postpone outdoor games and activities.

Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat; take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors.

Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air-conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.

Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.

### How can I recognize and care for heat-related emergencies?

**Heat cramps** are muscular pains and spasms that usually occur in the legs or abdomen; these are caused by exposure to high heat and humidity and by loss of fluids and electrolytes. Heat cramps are often an early sign that the body is having trouble with the heat.

**Heat exhaustion** typically involves the loss of body fluids through heavy sweating during strenuous exercise or physical labor in high heat and humidity. Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist skin that is either pale or flushed, heavy sweating, headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness and exhaustion.

When you notice symptoms of heat cramps or heat exhaustion:

- Move the person to a cooler place and fan them.
- Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths to the skin.
- If the person is conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly.
- If the person refuses water, vomits or begins to lose consciousness, **call 911**.

**Heat stroke** (also known as sunstroke) is a life-threatening condition in which a person's temperature control system stops working and the body is unable to cool itself. Signs of heat stroke include hot, red skin, which may be dry or moist; changes in consciousness; vomiting; and high body temperature.

When you see signs of heat stroke:

- **Call 911** immediately.
- Move the person to a cooler place and quickly apply cooling methods as you would for heat exhaustion. If symptoms persist, apply ice or cold packs wrapped in a cloth to the wrists, ankles, groin, neck and armpits.

Adapted from an article by the American Red Cross, [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

## Prevention tips for Burglaries

One of the most prevalent and growing crimes facing law enforcement today is burglary. The majority of burglaries reported in West U are the result of residents failing to lock homes, garages and vehicles. The West U Police Department asks for your help in reducing the number of these crimes committed against unsecured property. Following several basic crime prevention tips will prevent many burglaries:

- Never leave a vehicle running or with keys in the ignition.
- Don't leave vehicles open and unlocked.
- Always roll up the windows and lock the car, even when you are away from it "for just a minute."
- Never leave valuables in plain view, even if you lock your car. At a minimum put them in your trunk; remove them from the car if they are not needed.
- Install a vehicle security alarm system and actively use it.
- Never leave personal items, such as purses, with personal documentation and especially credit cards in your vehicle.
- Park in driveways and garages instead of on the street.

All of the listed tips are recommended even if you are parking "for just a minute" in front of your home or while dropping off or picking up your children at school or a day care facility.

These small steps will assist the police in making West U a less attractive place to commit criminal acts and **in turn reduce crime**. We need your collaboration, so please help us help you by securing your property. Be sure to report any suspicious activity to our non-emergency number (713) 668-0330; call 911 if the matter is urgent, a crime is in progress, or an emergency condition exists.

We also encourage reporting any potential crime information or tips to [crime@westutx.gov](mailto:crime@westutx.gov).

For additional information on preventing burglaries, contact Sgt. A.E. Gomez at (713) 662-5869 or by email at [agomez@westutx.gov](mailto:agomez@westutx.gov).

# Public Works

## Common Items That Could Poison Your Pet

Last year, veterinarians responded to over 100,000 cases of pet poisoning in the U.S. Many of these poisonings involved items commonly found in homes. By learning what common foods and plants may be toxic to your pets, you can keep your furry, four-legged family members out of harm's way.

Sharing what's on your plate with your pets is never a good idea. What may be delicious to you can be deadly to them:

**Chocolate**—Large amounts can induce seizures, respiratory failure and cardiac arrest.

**Avocados**—This fruit contains persin, which is toxic to many domestic animals.

**Grapes/raisins**—These are known to cause kidney failure in some animals.

**Macadamia nuts**—These can cause vomiting, tremors and hyperthermia in dogs.

**Xylitol**—This sweetener (found in candy and baked goods) can cause liver failure.

**Onions/garlic/chives**—Large quantities can cause gastrointestinal issues.

**Yeast in dough**—Rising dough can lead to stomach or intestinal ruptures.

Also, decorating your home with certain flowers and plants can be dangerous for your pets. More than 700 plants have been identified as being harmful to animals, including these common household plants:

**Lilies**

**Daffodils**

**Azaleas**

**Poinsettias**

If you believe your pet has been poisoned by food or plants, first and foremost stay calm. Every second counts, but it's more important to make sure you have the information you need to help a vet make a quick diagnosis.

1. Remove your pet from the area.
2. Collect a sample of the material ingested, preferably in the original packaging.
3. Contact your vet or an emergency veterinary clinic.

Make sure you keep your furry little family members as safe as possible. They rely on you. For more information, contact the Animal Control Officer at (713) 662-5831.

## VISIBILITY TRIANGLES

Now that the growing season for plants and foliage is under way, please take some time to observe if any plants, leaves or branches are blocking your line of sight around your driveway or encroaching onto the City's public sidewalks. The City's zoning regulations have established a driveway "visibility triangle." The triangle begins at the intersection of the driveway and public sidewalk, extending five feet to the right and left along the public sidewalk and up the driveway. Objects/plants higher than two feet are not allowed within this triangle. Keeping this area open and unobstructed allows you to easily see pedestrians, small children and vehicles when exiting your driveway. The sidewalk system also must be clear and free of all obstructions, including plants and branches. This allows for safe and open passage when making use of the walkway.

For additional information or questions, contact the Planning Division at (713) 662-5893.



Now that the growing season for plants and foliage is under way, please take some time to observe if any plants, leaves or branches are blocking your line of sight around your driveway or encroaching onto the City's public sidewalks.

## Pet Reminders

Beautiful weather encourages us to enjoy the outdoors with our pets. Help keep your pet and our City safe by walking your pet on a leash. While out walking, you also need to be sure to clean up after your pet to avoid spreading disease and waste.

All residents are required to register pets with the City's Animal Control Officer. The cost is \$20 for a lifetime registration. You will receive a tag to keep as proof of this registration. Your pet should wear the tag along with the rabies tag. It will help Animal Control identify your pet should it leave your yard or become lost.

To avoid losing your pet, periodically check your enclosures to make sure that they are secure. For added protection, check into getting a microchip for identifying your pet. It will help identify who he or she belongs to so that he can be promptly returned to his home. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the Animal Control Officer at (713) 662-5831.



# Public Works

## How Do I Make Recycling a Habit?

Are you putting items in your trash that could be recycled? Approximately 75% of our household trash is recyclable. We talked to a couple of our residents about recycling to give you some ideas on how to start or increase your recycling.

### Why do you recycle?

**Maureen Pflugfelder, Science Teacher, West U Elementary:** I want to do my bit to reduce my impact on the environment. It's a normal thing to do—my parents recycled, so I grew up recycling.

**Yvonne Jacobs, Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board Member:** The Earth has limited resources. Our present course is not sustainable. We must reduce consumption, reuse what we can and recycle the rest.

### How do you make recycling a habit?

**MP:** I sort the mail as I go through it. Anything not needed goes straight into a paper bag for recycling. Empty bottles, cans and plastic containers are rinsed and put outside in the recycling bins. Light bulbs and batteries go to Lowes or Home Depot, and lawn clippings and coffee grounds are put on the garden. We bring anything that can be recycled to RecycleExpress after weekend trips away. I try to buy products with minimal packaging, especially Styrofoam, and I reuse bags. My class recycles paper at school, too.

**YJ:** I'm aiming for zero waste through thoughtful consumption, reusing, recycling and composting. My weekly trash is usually one grocery bag, apart from excessive yard waste. I try not to waste any food. I have a compost bin in my yard and recycling bins in my garage. I sort through the mail for items to keep; the rest I recycle. When cooking, I accumulate all recyclable containers and packaging to place in the bins, and I put food scraps in the compost. I check my wastepaper baskets and remove anything recyclable. The City gets a better price for sorted items, so I use RecycleExpress regularly since I sort my recycling. Styrofoam and #6 plastics go to the City of Houston Consumer Recycling Center, plastic bags and packaging (#4 plastics) go to the supermarket for recycling, hangers go to the cleaners, and I check [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com) for other items.

### Some people complain that recycling takes up room in their house. Does it?

**MP:** Our recycling never gets in the way or causes us any problems.

**YJ:** It doesn't get in the way at all and takes minimal time.

### Is there anything West U could do to improve recycling?

**MP:** Keep encouraging people to recycle. Keep RecycleExpress open. It's great to see how popular it is and the positive buzz there when people come to offload their recycling.

**YJ:** Make recycling mandatory, limit trash collection to once a week, reinstate yard waste pickup (rather than send it to landfill), and keep RecycleExpress open.

### What do you say to residents who don't recycle?

**MP:** Give it a go! It is not hard. Get your kids to be responsible for it.

**YJ:** We have a moral responsibility to minimize our impact on the environment for future generations. Every little bit you can do makes a difference.

With a good system for sorting recyclable items as you go, it will become a habit. Plastic and glass bottles, jars, cans, tins, aluminum trays, plastics (#1-5, 7-8), bottle and jar lids, paper and cardboard can go in the same bin for weekly curbside collection. Alternatively, RecycleExpress on Dincans Street is open 24/7. Recycle!! It makes good sense economically and environmentally.

## Plan ahead for these two fall events!

### West U Recycles Day

#### It's Your World—Recycle

Come enjoy an afternoon with your family and friends at the second annual West U Recycles Day. Learn how better care for your community while having a great time! There will be door prizes, food, music, a recycled art contest, eco-friendly vendors and charities on-site to handle donations of clothing, shoes, household items, electronics, books and much more.

Location: Colonial Park, 4130 Byron  
Date: Saturday, November 2  
Time: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

For more information, please visit [www.westutx.gov/recycle](http://www.westutx.gov/recycle)

### Fall Shred-It Event

#### New Location

The regular Shred-It Event will be moving this fall to Colonial Park at 4130 Byron, where it will be held in conjunction with the West U Recycles Day on Saturday, November 2. The time will be the same as last year: from 9:00 AM – 12 noon. There is a limit of five banker boxes per vehicle, and no business shredding is accepted.

For more information, please visit [www.westutx.gov/recycle](http://www.westutx.gov/recycle)



# City CURRENTS

A Newsletter for  
the citizens of  
West University Place  
Summer 2013

## CITY OF WEST U OFFICIALS

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS** Mayor Bob Fry  
Mayor Pro-Tem Susan Sample  
Ed Heathcott  
Joan Johnson  
Dick Yehle

**CITY MANAGER** Michael Ross (713) 662-5810  
or [mross@westutx.gov](mailto:mross@westutx.gov)

**GENERAL INFORMATION** (713) 668-4441

**CITY WEBSITE** [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov)

City Currents is a quarterly publication  
and is printed on recycled paper.

**City of West University Place**  
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## Residents have new adjustment options for utility bills

The West U City Council passed an ordinance in late February that gives residents an option once every 24 months to request a waiver for utility bill late fees.

The original ordinance mandated that late fees become effective on the 21st day after the mailing of utility statements; staff had recourse to waive fees if they occurred as the result of staff error but not for other reasons. The newly updated ordinance allows a resident who is assessed a late fee to ask for a waiver through a written request to the City Manager and Finance Director. Upon its approval, the waiver adjustment will be applied to the next utility billing. Requests can be made by emailing [financedept@westutx.gov](mailto:financedept@westutx.gov), by faxing your letter to (713) 662-5804, by mailing it to 3800 University Boulevard, West University Place, TX 77005, or by dropping it off at the Finance office or in the West U utility drop box located behind the Municipal Building on Amherst.

In addition to late fee adjustments, residents may also apply for other adjustments of their utility statements. The City offers two adjustments for unusually large bills. The process for making each of these adjustments is very simple, as described below. Regardless of which adjustment is chosen, both require the resident to pay the billed amount as due; any adjustments appear on the next billing statement. In addition, only ONE of these large bill adjustments can occur in a 12-month period:

• Unusually large bill: If you have a bill greater than 160% of your average water usage, you may request an adjustment to your water and sewer costs. This cannot be the result of a leak, new equipment or new facilities that use water. You will be required to complete and send in the "Request for Unusually Large Bill Adjustment" form furnished by the City and available at [www.westutx.gov/financeforms](http://www.westutx.gov/financeforms).

• Unusually large bill due to defect: if you have a leak, have it repaired as soon as possible and then request an adjustment. The adjustment may be for a period not to exceed six consecutive monthly billing periods preceding the application for the adjustment. No adjustment can be made before a repair is completed or if the repair is not made. The adjustment is determined by calculating the account's average water usage PLUS one-half of the actual usage in excess of the average for those claimed billing periods. You will be required to complete and send in the "Request for Bill Adjustment Due to Defect" form furnished by the City and available at [www.westutx.gov/financeforms](http://www.westutx.gov/financeforms) and attach a copy of the repair bill.

## It's budget season again!

This summer, the city will begin the process of compiling the 2014 budget for presentation to City Council in September 2013. The proposed budget will be available on the City's website in late September. Watch for the notices of public hearings at [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov) for dates and times when Council will hear comments from the public regarding the proposed budget and tax rate for the 2014 fiscal year.