

TALKING TRASH

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2009 EDITION

CITY OF HOUSTON, BILL WHITE MAYOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT, HARRY HAYES DIRECTOR

SWMD Collects Cheers at the 2009 MLK, Jr. Day Parade.

The heavy trucks and spirited smiles of your SWMD rolled through the streets of Downtown Houston on January 19, 2009 to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Thanks to the Solid Waste team members who took the time to participate in the festivities of the day.



FISCAL YEAR 2010 BUDGET PROCESS

I want to communicate with all department employees on the upcoming budget process for our next fiscal year. Many of you have expressed concerns to me and others in the leadership team about the city's financial future and how you and your family may be impacted. Believe me, I understand your concerns. It is difficult to watch the news, listen to the radio or read the newspaper without hearing bad economic news: layoffs, bankruptcies, etc. These are trying economic times and noted economists and business leaders expect them to get worse before they get better.

I am pleased to say that the City of Houston has shown discipline in its budgets and foresight in its management and we do not expect at this time that we'd have to resort to such drastic steps as layoffs or furloughs as some other communities have. The Mayor and City Council have cut the tax rates for the past several years and saved money to invest in a wide variety of services for our customers such as Fire, Police, drainage and Health Services. The City has also undertaken smart management of resources such as energy conservation, traffic control and Solid Waste Services to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent prudently. In our department alone, we have and will reduce costs through our expanded recycling programs which include Tree Waste, Biodegradable bags for yard waste, and the

creation of the recycling revenue fund. As Mayor White has indicated to the community at large, Houston will not be exempt from the forces that are affecting the nation as a whole. However, the national and local economies will recover as they have from past economic downturns. As we work through this difficult period, it is absolutely necessary that everyone, regardless of his or her rank or position, contributes their full knowledge, skills and abilities to attain our mission while working with what may be fewer resources at some future period.

As a start to saving, where we may have taken a resource or resources for granted, I have directed the following:

1. All department copiers are to be set automatic two-sided printing.
2. Facility Managers are to strictly manage energy usage beginning with the elimination of desktop radios, TVs, or other power consuming devices. Employees may enjoy radios/tvs on break in the facility breakroom.
3. Facility Maintenance is directed to purchase/install motion detectors and automatic timing devices to turn off lights.
4. When and where applicable, high energy efficient light bulbs should be used.
5. Gasoline consumption will be strictly managed at each facility/workgroup. Mileage/fuel usage trends will be reviewed by the appropriate chain of command.

6. Employees who do not have curbside recycling collection are to be encouraged to bring their recyclables to work or a department neighborhood drop-off. In doing so, the revenue generated will come back to the department's recycling revenue fund.

7. Encouraging all employees to actively use the Employee Suggestion Awards Program with your ideas on how we can improve our equipment and processes.

I can't say enough how easily I believe we will work through this issue. I have seen the hard work, determination, teamwork and commitment to duty from all areas in the department. In pulling together as a team, we have successfully tackled Hurricanes Rita, Katrina and Ike, setting records that may only be beaten by ourselves.

Thank you for your commitment to this department and the City of Houston.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry J. Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harry J. Hayes, Director
Solid Waste Management Dept.

SWMD CELEBRATES THE ENVIRONMENT AT DISCOVERY GREEN

On Saturday, January 17th, the Solid Waste Management Department, in conjunction with the Honey Brown Hope Foundation and the Houston Texans YMCA introduced the 2009 Environmental and Diversity Calendar, America: Healthy, Clean and Green at Discovery Green in Downtown Houston. We were also joined by our friends, the Houston Texans, the Phillis Wheatley High School Ensemble signing "America the Beautiful", Houston's Breakdance and Hip Hop Sensations, the "Brown Kings". Park visitors had the chance to meet our very own Resurette Wisely, and Lucky the Ladybug from Keep Houston Beautiful as well as Houston Texans Defensive Tackle Frank Okam, Cheerleaders Maxy and Nicole as well as TORO!



Lucky, Resurette, and Toro



Phillis Wheatley High School Ensemble



Brown Kings Breakdance Crew



Houston Texans Cheerleaders
Nicole and Maxy



Houston Texans DT Frank Okam, Toro, Nicole
and Maxy. Wheatley Ensemble in rear row.



Group Photo

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

The Employee Suggestion Program (ESP) provides an opportunity to put constructive ideas to work. The program aims to recognize and reward employee creativity and initiative in relation to the benefit received by the City. ESP forms were recently placed in employee mailboxes at 611 Walker and distributed to all off-site SWMD facilities. If you have any ideas that may help the City, please submit your suggestion on the ESP form, sign it and forward it to the Employee Suggestion Program, Human Resources Department, E.B. Cape Training Center, 4501 Leeland.

If your idea is implemented, you are eligible to receive a certificate of award signed by the Mayor and may also be eligible to receive a monetary award. The following are not eligible for the monetary award:

- You have the authority or responsibility to make the suggested change,
- The suggestion is something you would be expected to make as part of your normal duties or as part of assigned research or study, or you are a Director, Deputy or Assistant Director, elected city official or are part of the ESP staff or committee.

Please be aware copies of the ESP form may also be obtained from our website www.houstonsolidwaste.org under the SWD Employees' page. If you have any questions, please contact Sandra Jackson, Assistant Public Information Officer at (713) 837-9152 or Sandra.jackson2@cityofhouston.net.

CMC HONORS GENEROUS EMPLOYEES

This photo is from the CMC Above and Beyond Club breakfast. This breakfast is for employees who donated 1% or more of their salary to CMC. This breakfast is for employees who donated 1% or more of their salary to CMC. Thank you to Lionel Deshotel, Laquesia Amboree-Hill, Andrew Contreras, Maria Brown, Teresa Swinney, Michael Jones, Julane Curry, Michael Creegan, Cheryl Bobb, Chester McGowen, Roger Jones, Frank Brown, Nadine Huff, Vernon Wright, Tanya Brown, Harry Hayes, Lisa Lenzy, Derek Mebane, Chastity Ringo, and Carolyn Wright for your generous support of CMC.



2009 - YEAR OF BIRTHING

BY MARINA JOSEPH

Wow! We've just closed out January and the Solid Waste Management Department is already off to a whirlwind year. If dealing with the over 5.4 million cubic yards of Hurricane Ike storm debris from cleanup to recycling wasn't enough to close out 2008, SWMD also implemented its annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program which carried over into the New Year. Simultaneously, with the kickoff for the Christmas Tree Recycling Program, so too came the announcement for the beginning of the new Tree Waste/Junk Waste Program (which was delayed due to Ike).



The Solid Waste Management team should be proud of what was accomplished as a department. However, it's no time to rest on our laurels! The number nine has been associated with "birth or giving birth"...and our 2009 will definitely be a year of birthing many new programs and projects. Here's a quick look at some of our known 2009 projects.



- Tree Waste Recycling/Junk Waste Program
- Single Stream Recycling Pilot Program
- Biodegradable Bags Program (with Council passage of ordinance)
- Composting Education
- Revisions to Chapter 39 in regards to Sponsorships (with Council passage)
- Opening of the new permanent Environmental Service Center (south) Facility
- Rerouting and Automated Garbage Service Day Changes in north Houston

All of the items mentioned above are before our fiscal year ends (our financial year which is July-June)! Wipe the sweat off your brow!!! It's a lot, but together we can accomplish these goals.

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2009 - YEAR OF BIRTHING

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SW Rebels 2009 Solid Waste CMC Tournament Champions

One of my goals for the Public Information Section is to help provide you with the informational support you need to do your job. We will continue to educate the community through mail outs, flyers, door hangers, signs, press releases, radio announcements, our HTV show "Wasting No Time" and our website. The Public Information Office staff will partner with the SWMD's Community Outreach Division in attending civic club meetings to educate and answer questions about all of these new programs.

Additionally, the other goal is to hear your ideas, praises and simply "toot the horn" about what the SWMD is doing. Don't be shy! We want to hear from you!

Please let me take the liberty to formally introduce the two new members of the Public Information Office, Sandra Jackson and Daniel Hinojosa!!!!

Sandra Jackson comes to Solid Waste Management after spending 18 years in the Houston Police Department, the last three of which were spent in the Public Affairs Division, Open Records Unit (ORU). Sandra's primary concentration was handling open records requests submitted to the ORU, which historically receives close to 5,000 requests a year. Currently, she serves as the Assistant Public Information Officer and her responsibilities include TPIA requests, the Employee Suggestion Program, Employee Recognition from citizen letters, PIO Service Requests (SRs), helping me out with advertising buys and other sundry responsibilities.



Daniel came to the SWMD last year as a temporary employee to help with redesigning the website. In the aftermath of the storm, he was my right hand in creating the attractive graphics on our website and flyers to inform the community about storm debris placement and more. He is now a full-time employee with Solid Waste Management Department and serves as our department's Webmaster. He brings a wealth of outside experience in graphic art and doing multi-media presentations as well as a background in custom home construction project management, Human Resources benefits technology administration, marketing and promotions experience including service with the Houston Rockets, Texas Copperheads, and Houston Astros.

As for me, I will be working to foster stronger media relationships, strategize communications, craft messages and coordinate the multiple mail pieces and advertisements that will be going out this year while supporting my staff to bring you the best for the best! It's a joy to represent you, such an exceptional group of people. The Public Information Office will serve as "mid-wives" to help with safe, smooth delivery of our 2009 babies (projects)! We look forward to our 2009 together!!!

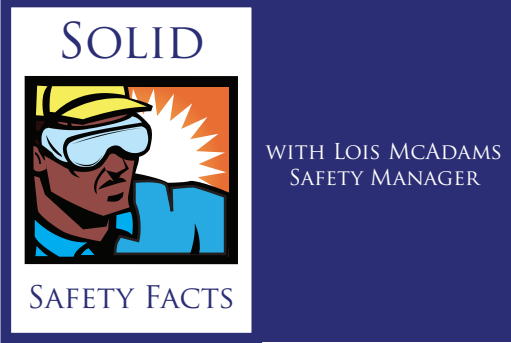
Blessings,

Marina A. Joseph, Public Information Manager
Solid Waste Management Department

P.S. Don't forget to look at our website,
www.houstonsolidwaste.org
- it has an entirely new look for the New Year!



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SPACE HEATERS USED FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ROOM HEATING



How to Avoid Electrical Accidents

ELECTRICITY HAS THE POWER TO SHOCK, BURN, AND CAUSE FIRES OR EXPLOSIONS

Protect Yourself from Shock

- Inspect electrical equipment before you use it. Check plugs for good, tight connections.
- Never bend a 3-prong plug or force it into a 2-prong outlet. (Don't remove the ground plug so it will fit.)
- Don't touch anything electrical with wet hands or while in a wet area.
- Don't contact anything electrical with anything metal.

- Don't wear metal jewelry or metal hard hat around electricity.
- Don't use metal tools, including metal ladders around electricity.
- Don't reach blindly into an area that could contain electrical equipment.
- Avoid using extension cords whenever possible.
- If you must use one, don't exceed its recommended rating or plug it into another extension cord. Be sure to unplug it from the wall after use.

Prevent Electrical Fires

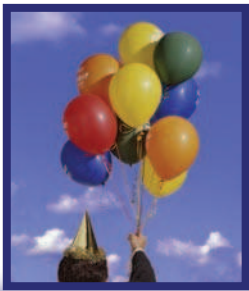
- Don't overload outlets, circuits, or motors.
- Don't let grease, dust, or dirt buildup on machinery.
- Dispose properly of oily rags, paper, sawdust, etc. Don't let them contact electrical lights or equipment.
- Don't let combustible materials contact electrical equipment.
- Use only approved cords and tools that are in good condition.

Obey Restrictions on Electrical Circuit Access

- Control panels and circuit breaker boxes must be in approved cabinets or enclosures

- or in a separate room.
- Obey warning signs; keep out unless authorized.
- Keep breaker box doors closed.
- The area around the breaker box must be clear and accessible.

Remember: Only specific qualified employees may perform certain tasks involving live power. Your actions can help you avoid electrical accident. Avoid direct contact and take proper precautions to prevent shock, burns and fire.



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



TRI NGUYEN 2/2 NE	THOMAS LOCKETT 2/7 DP	LESLIE PORTER 2/13 SW	CRAIG FERRAND 2/20 SW
BONNIE VITAL 2/2 DT	LEO WILLIAMS 2/8 SW	RODNEY HUDSON 2/13 NE	REGINALD MARKS 2/20 SW
HILARIO NETRO 2/3 SE	JOSE HERNANDEZ 2/10 NW	LIONEL DESHOTEL 2/14 NE	HIRAM NIMMONS 2/21 SE
LYNN GRANT 2/3 SE	JESUS GARCIA 2/10 SE	RALPH SANCHEZ 2/15 SW	TONYA JACKSON 2/22 NE
COURTNEY OSBORNE 2/3 NW	DANA WILTZ-CAIN 2/10 DT	MICHAEL PALMER 2/16 NW	DAMON LEWIS 2/23 SE
DANNY BROWN 2/3 SE	LISA WALKER 2/10 NW	REX WALKER 2/16 SE	TOMMIE FOOTE-GATES 2/24 NE
SHIRLEY COLEMAN 2/4 SW	OSCAR GARZA 2/10 SW	JOSE HIGAREDA 2/16 SW	BERTHA TAYLOR 2/25 DEP
COZELL TAYLOR 2/4 SW	JOHN LOUIS II 2/12 SW	DANIEL GUTIERREZ 2/18 SW	MARCLOS JACOBS 2/25 SW
BRYAN WALKER 2/5 NE	GRAYLON JONES 2/13 SW	WALTER COOPER 2/18 DEP	AARON CRUMP 2/27 NE
LARRY JOHNSON 2/5 NE	MARCUS LITTLETON 2/13 SW	THOMAS EDISON 2/20 NE	DAVID GRANT 2/27 SE
CHRISTOPHER CLEVELAND 2/7 NE			