



NEWS RELEASE

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Hazardous Tree Removal Status Update *Tree Removals Will Pause From December 22 - January 2 For The Holidays*

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department, which stewards and manages parkland, greenspace and the urban forest for the City of Houston, released a December status update on the removal of hazardous trees killed by this summer's unrelenting drought. The hazardous tree removal process began on October 16, 2011, when DRC Emergency Services Company, overseen by HPARD Urban Forestry staff, began the removal of hazardous city trees across Houston. The \$4.5 million dollar contract was approved by Houston City Council in October.

The removal process began the week of October 16th across the city. Crews have worked 7 days a week across the city with the exception of a break for the Thanksgiving holiday and weather related stoppages. To date, over 7,000 hazardous trees have been removed from COH parkland, greenspace and esplanades maintained by the Houston Parks and Recreation Department.

All hazardous trees that are being removed have first been inspected and marked for removal by HPARD's Forestry/Greenspace Section. A Forestry/Greenspace team member accompanies the DRC crew to supervise removals and insure only those trees marked by HPARD Forestry/Greenspace staff are removed.

December Hazardous Tree Removal Project Status Report As Of December 19, 2011

Trees Cut	Cubic Yards Collected	Estimated Project Cost
7,817 Trees	99,355 cu. Yd.	\$1,662,630.41

Keeping safety first in mind, hazardous trees have been and will continue to be removed in the following order:

- 1) Dead street trees and right-of-way trees that could pose a hazard to traffic and the public
- 2) Dead park trees that could pose a hazard to people using parks, park trails, and facilities
- 3) Dead trees within forested parks which could pose a fire danger

The hazardous tree debris will be recycled. Four different products could be produced from the debris, including:

- 1) Lumber
- 2) Pulp wood
- 3) Paper mill chips
- 4) Biomass – this would produce compost or boiler fuel

All tree removal information will be collected in accordance with F.E.M.A. guidelines in case the opportunity for filing for retrieval of disaster recovery funding becomes available. In addition, DRC will donate 20,000 seedlings at a future date to begin the process of reforesting city greenspace and parkland.

The **DRC removal crews will be off in observance of the holidays Thursday, December 22, 2011, through Monday, January 2, 2012.** Work will resume across the city on Tuesday, January 3, 2012. **Citizens are advised to report any tree issues during this time frame by calling 311 or online at <http://hfdapp.houstontx.gov/311/index.php>. HPARD Forestry crews will be on duty to respond to these calls.**

About DRC Emergency Services

DRC Emergency Services is an over 20-year-old disaster response company that has done work all over the world, including Haiti and Iraq, as well as the recent Joplin tornados and Nashville floods. After Hurricane Ike, DRC ES operated over twenty contracts in Texas, with the City of Houston being the largest. That project broke F.E.M.A. records for the amount of debris removed in one day (223,000 cubic yards) and received national recognition for the speed in which the job was completed.

About the Houston Parks and Recreation Department

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (H.P.A.R.D.) stewards and manages over 38,992 acres of parkland and greenspace for the City of Houston and develops and implements recreational programming for citizens of all abilities. For more information on the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call (832) 395-7022 or visit www.houstonparks.org.