



# City of Hitchcock

Newsletter December 2021

## FREE VESSEL TURN IN PROGRAM



The Texas General Land Office, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Galveston County is sponsoring a Free vessel turn in program. Reservations must be made by January 26, 2022.

In order to qualify, Vessels must be less than 26 feet in length, preapproved, evaluated prior to the event, and transported by the owner on the day of the event. Boat trailers and trach will NOT be accepted.

Call (409) 766-4512 or (409) 766-4516 to reserve your spot.

## HOLIDAY SAFETY

The holiday season is always a special time of year. It is also a time when busy people become careless and vulnerable to theft and other holiday crime. We can never be too careful, too prepared or too aware. The Hitchcock Police Department wishes you a safe, happy and peaceful holiday season.

### Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips

(Safety Tips for the Holiday Season)

- **At Home**
  - ◇ Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
  - ◇ Keep your garage door closed and locked.
  - ◇ Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes or planters, or under doormats.
  - ◇ Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are activated by sensors.
  - ◇ Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
  - ◇ Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.
  - ◇ Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom-worn jewelry, stock bonds, etc.
  - ◇ Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or at a blue U.S. Postal Service collection box.
  - ◇ Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.
- **Strangers at your Door**
  - ◇ Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
  - ◇ Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
  - ◇ Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.
  - ◇ Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips Continued Pg. 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Free Vessel Turn In Project.....1  
 Holiday Safety.....1  
 Holiday Safety (Cont.).....2  
 Holiday Pet Safety.....2  
 Winter Weatherizing.....3  
 North MLK Ave Sidewalk Project.....3  
 Highway 6 Sidewalk Project.....3  
 Good Fences Make Good Neighbors..4  
 Contact Us.....4



### DATES TO REMEMBER

- 12/13/2021 Special Called City Council Workshop Meeting on Redistricting at 6:00 p.m.
- 12/23/2021 and 12/24/2021 City Hall Closed for the Christmas Holiday
- 1/10/2022 Special Called City Council Meeting at 6:00 p.m.



## HOLIDAY SAFETY (CONTINUED)

- **Leaving for the Holidays**
  - ◇ Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to watch your home.
  - ◇ Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
  - ◇ Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.
- **After the Holidays**
  - ◇ Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics, or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
  - ◇ Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number and other information.
  - ◇ Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.
- **Tips to Avoid Package Theft**
  - ◇ Get a P.O. Box as Your Local Post Office
  - ◇ Set Up Notifications to Track Your Packages
  - ◇ Install a Security Camera
  - ◇ Require a Signature on Delivery
  - ◇ Reschedule Delivery or Ask for a Package Hold When on Vacation
  - ◇ Insure Your Packages
  - ◇ Ask Your Neighbors to Grab Your Packages
- **What to do if you've become a victim of a porch pirate**
  - ◇ Check with your delivery company to make sure your package was actually delivered.
  - ◇ Know exactly what's in the missing box.
  - ◇ If you see the thief, pay attention to the make, model and color of the vehicle and the license plate number. Second to that, get the thief's physical description – gender, approximate height and weight and what they're wearing – so you can tell an officer.
  - ◇ Call 911 and ask for an officer to come to your home. If you have a security camera on your home, get a copy of the video to police. Ask your neighbors if their cameras captured the thief in action.
- **Where to Report Stolen Packages**
  - ◇ **USPS:** <https://www.usps.com/help/claims.htm>
  - ◇ **UPS:** <https://www.ups.com/us/en/support/file-a-claim.page?>
  - ◇ **FedEx:** <https://www.fedex.com/en-us/customer-support/claims.html?kbid=62548>
  - ◇ **Amazon:** <https://www.amazon.com/gp/help/customer/display.html?nodeId=201910830>



## HOLIDAY PET SAFETY

Now that the holidays are on the way, people will be spending more time indoors entertaining which could mean trouble for those who want to include their pets in the merrymaking. Some simple tips to keep pets and their people safe as we get ready for holidays.

1. Holiday goodies of any sort should be kept away from your pet. Chocolate and raisins can actually be toxic to many animals. Candies and gums with the artificial sweetener Xylitol can also be toxic to pets.
2. It may be tempting, but don't give your pet food off of the table. The rich foods we eat typically during the holidays eat can be hard on your animal's stomach and may lead to intestinal upset and diarrhea.
3. Remember, poultry bones, including turkey, are a choking hazard.
4. Unsure how your pet will react to all the new faces in the house? Create a safe, comfortable place for your pet to relax. Make sure you put out plenty of fresh food, water and toys.
5. Pay attention to your companion animal. Pets are often ignored in the rush and excitement of the holidays. This can lead to destructive boredom and mischief.
6. Traveling with your pet during the holiday? Make sure you bring all your pet's supplies including food, dishes, leash and collar, toys as well as any medications your pet may be need.

Think your pet may have ingested something toxic? Call the Pet Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 (there may be a charge) or dial the nearest pet emergency clinic.

## HOW TO WEATHERIZE YOUR HOME FOR WINTER

The time to weatherize your home for winter is before the winds start to blow and the thermometer drops. Small steps can help make a cumulative difference on your monthly energy bills.

Tips for weatherizing your home for winter

- **Install — and set! — programmable thermostats.** Programmable thermostats are one example of easy home weatherization tips that can make your heating (and cooling) system operate more efficiently. Why heat a home — or cool it for that matter — at the same temperature when no one is in it? Programmable thermostats are easy to install and ENERGY STAR estimates you can save as much as 10% on heating and cooling costs by properly using one. The critical piece is actually using the thermostat once you have it.
- **Change ceiling fans to rotate clockwise.** Many only think of ceiling fans as a summer tool for cooling. But a ceiling fan can be an important tool in your home weatherization tips toolbox year-round. In the winter, it can also be used to rotate air flow so that heat rising into a high ceiling is blown back down to where it can do the most good — where the people are. That can only happen if it's blowing the right way.
- **Check, clean or replace central heating filters.** Check filters monthly and change them every three months, at least. A dirty air filter slows down air flow and makes a system work harder, thereby wasting energy.
- **Flush your water heater.** Sediment inevitably gathers inside your water heater (unless you have a tankless one) and impedes the water flow.

Windows and doors top the list of culprits for air leaks and other issues that can lower the energy efficiency of your house. Paying attention to window weatherization and weatherizing doors, then, are among the smartest ways you can weatherize your home for winter. Here are some home weatherization tips to get you started.

- **Install window film:** A window film— literally, a plastic film that is placed over window glass— can keep up to 70% of your heat from leaking out your windows. They work especially well for weatherizing old windows because you don't need to worry about any cracks or loose areas often found in older windows. Just place the film on the glass.
- **Install weatherstrip.** Adding weatherstripping is a great weatherizing windows tip that can help keep the outside air where it belongs.
- **Add caulk.** Caulking works best for weatherizing old windows with cracks that are less than ¼ inch in width on non-moveable window parts.
- **Install draft stoppers.** Like the draft guards or door sweepers attached to the bottom of doors, window draft stoppers placed at the bottom of a window frame can also be an effective window weatherization strategy. Just place the stopper at the bottom of the window and shut it tight. Voila! No more air leak.

Knowing how to weatherize a door may seem as if it will take a lot of time and effort. However, as these tips will show, weatherizing doors is easier than you may think.

- **Install draft guards.** Draft guards, the guards that attach to the bottom of your door, work well for weatherizing doors by preventing heat from escaping under the door. If you don't want to pay the \$10-15 for a guard, a rolled towel is a decent substitute. Don't use the towel substitute for a door that gets a lot of traffic, though.
- **Caulk it.** As with windows, weatherizing doors with caulk should only be done around non-moveable parts or places where the door might have a crack.
- **Weatherstrip.** Weatherstripping can also be effective for weatherizing doors. See below for details on how to weatherize a door with weatherstripping.

## NORTH MARTIN LUTHER KING AVE SIDEWALK PROJECT

The Hitchcock Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and City staff have begun a long-term project to help revitalize our Downtown district. This began in 2018 with the creation of the city's 2020 – 2040 Comprehensive Plan and remains a focal point as our community quickly grows. To increase the walkability of Hitchcock's downtown, the city was awarded the Rural Community Development Block Grant through the Texas Department of Agriculture's Downtown Revitalization and Main Street Programs. With matching funds provided by the Hitchcock EDC, the project will install sidewalks along N Martin Luther King Ave between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Streets as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> St between N Martin Luther King Ave & Hwy 6. The city expects construction to begin early 2022.

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## HIGHWAY 6 SIDEWALK PROJECT

As an addition to the goal of increasing walkability and safety within Hitchcock's downtown district, the City and EDC sought grant funds from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) earlier this year. We are fortunate to announce that Hitchcock was selected as a grant recipient of nearly \$2 million for the installation of sidewalks, trails, and crosswalks within the downtown district. With these funds, crosswalks will be installed on Highway 6 at 2<sup>nd</sup> St and Delany Rd. Sidewalks will extend from Delaney Rd to 2<sup>nd</sup> St along both sides of Highway 6. A sidewalk will also extend down Delany Rd to Palmetto St on the West side of the road. That sidewalk will connect to a 10 ft trail that leads through the Hitchcock Chamber of Commerce's Good Ole Days fairgrounds to Highway 6 and Prosperity Bank.

These projects are just some of the first in a growing list of developments that will enhance our historic downtown. Please look forward to more announcements over the coming year as the city and EDC continue to help build a community and commercial hub befitting our wonderful town.

## GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

In May 2020, the Hitchcock City Council adopted City Ordinance Title XV, Chapter 150, Article IX, entitled “Fences and Walls”. This ordinance controls the design, placement and construction details of fences and barrier walls within the city limits. A City Building Permit and payment of permit fee are required if you plan to **construct or repair any** residential or commercial fence or barrier wall.

Before you begin construction of any fence or barrier wall, please review the ordinance referenced above on the city website or come to city hall and we can help you understand these requirements. You can pick up a Building Permit Application and understand the fee structure for this activity as we help you build the fence you desire.



### HOW TO CONTACT

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