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City Council to Meet Thursday February 26, 2009

The Joshua City Council Meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2009 will include a Public Hearing for citizen input on an ordinance for Sexually Oriented Businesses in the City of Joshua. Any person who wishes to express a concern for or against, are encouraged to attend. Several additional items of interest on the Agenda are the establishment of and appointments to the Park Design Committee, awarding of the bid for construction for bridge repairs on Country Club Drive, the drainage improvement project on Cofield Drive, a new Fence Ordinance, Ordinance for Regulation of Outdoor Burning, and Garage Sale Ordinance. For more information on these or additional Agenda items, please visit the City web site at www.cityofjoshuatx.us

City Sign Ordinance Information

It is illegal to erect or affix a sign in the right-of-way (the area from the curb to the sidewalk,) in the median (the area in the middle of a street,) on trees, public fences, buildings or utility/telephone poles. Any signs located in these areas are subject to be removed by a code enforcement officer, or other City employee.

Garage sales are allowed to run for three consecutive days and can be held two times per calendar year. A permit must be obtained 24 hours prior to beginning your sale. Garage sale permits can be obtained at City Hall located at 101 S. Main Street. The city requires all residents who have a garage sale permit to place one sign in their front yard advertising the sale. Two additional signs may be placed at the end of the block with the owner's permission. However, signs **cannot** be placed in medians, on utility poles or in rights-of way.

Portable sign and temporary signs are allowed by permit. A sign permit may be obtained from the Building Inspections Department. Portable signs may only be in place for a **maximum of 60 days no more than 2 times per year. All portable signs must be at least 300 feet from another Portable sign.** No off-premise advertising is allowed on a portable sign.

The purpose of these regulations is to promote the use of signs in the City of Joshua that are safe, legible in the circumstances in which they are seen, compatible with their surroundings, and aesthetically pleasing. The intent is to balance the need for a well maintained and attractive physical appearance of the community with the need for adequate business identification for the conduct of competitive commerce. These regulations are also intended to reduce sign and advertising distractions for drivers, which might otherwise create public health and safety hazards. Finally, these regulations seek to reduce the visual clutter that may arise over time due to excessive signage.

City Emergency Management Officials Warn of Wildfires

The current wildfire season is shaping up to be dangerous, deadly and destructive. Prolonged drought conditions and unseasonably warm weather are contributing to a very serious wildfire

situation. Many homes and property have already been threatened, and thousands of acres have been scarred by flames. The Texas Forest Service and local fire departments including our dedicated Joshua volunteer firefighters are working very hard to protect lives and property. But, they cannot win this fight without your help.

Many wildfires begin as a result of human carelessness. In addition, many Texans are simply unaware of how fast fires can spread and how fast they can travel, destroying everything in their path. Here are some things you can do or avoid doing to prevent wildfires ...

WILDFIRE AWARENESS: SUBURBAN AREAS

Few Texans believe their homes would ever be at risk from wildfires. But whether you live near the forested areas of East Texas or the grasslands of the west, suburban areas in Texas are also at risk during severe fire seasons.

Recommended precautions to protect their homes and yards.

If possible in dry seasons, keep your grass well watered, with grass and weeds mowed to no more than two inches in height.

- Remove ladders, trellises or any other object that might serve as a path for fire to travel from ground level to the roof of a building, or from the ground into canopies of trees.
- Avoid planting shrubs and trees that catch fire easily, such as juniper, yaupon holly, pine, evergreen, eucalyptus and fir trees. Instead, plant hardwoods, crepe myrtle, red yucca, forsythia, China rose and Texas sage.
- Remove any tree limbs located within ten feet of your chimney and roof.
- Prune tree limbs from ground level to six feet up.
- Regularly rake up leaves, dead limbs and other dead vegetation.
- Remove branches, twigs and leaves from roof and gutter areas.
- Prune limbs of trees and shrubs that are near the ground.
- Ask power companies to clear branches away from power lines.
- Stack firewood at least 100 feet away and uphill from the house.
- Store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved safety containers.

An estimated 90 percent of all Texas wildfires are caused by human activity. The greatest single cause is when burning debris is not properly contained and sparks or burning trash are blown into the air. Texans can help prevent fires if they:

- Avoid burning trash. Even a barrel covered with a screen can allow a spark to escape, igniting nearby vegetation.
- Do not use fireworks during holidays.
- If you smoke in your car, extinguish cigarettes in vehicle ashtrays. Never toss a cigarette out of a car window, and don't put cigarettes out on the ground.
- Be careful when pulling off a road or driving into a field. Hot catalytic converters can ignite vegetation.
- Keep a fire extinguisher and water handy when working outdoors with equipment that gets hot, or involves sparks, such as welding equipment. Water down outdoor work areas in advance if possible.

Never drive into dense smoke. You could become a fire fatality.

High winds may cause wildfires to spread rapidly and jump across natural barriers such as roads and even waterways. Strong winds can force smoke to stay low to the ground, obscuring roadways and traffic signs. Texas wildfires have been propelled by wind gusts as high as 60 mph.

During severe fire seasons, pay attention to TV and radio broadcasts BEFORE you travel. Be aware of fire and weather conditions along your route. Avoid traveling into areas where wildfire activity has been reported. Delaying your trip could save your life.

As you travel, monitor local radio and TV news broadcasts – and watch for highway signs providing information on fire danger.

Watch for traffic control personnel, fire fighters and law enforcement officers. Slow down and be prepared to stop if they signal you to do so.

If you encounter dense smoke – slow down as you prepare to stop and turn around.

Activate your emergency flashers to warn vehicles behind you that you have decreased your speed or stopped. Do not turn around until you have checked for oncoming traffic and can turn safely.

For more information, check the Governor's Division of Emergency Management Web site for wildfire awareness at www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem

Joshua Police Solve Motor Vehicle Burglaries

Joshua Police have been involved in investigating burglaries involving 12 separate vehicles. This investigation has resulted in confessions and recovery of all stolen property valued at more than \$2,500. Confessions were received from one adult and one juvenile. The juvenile suspect has been referred to juvenile services located in Hood County. The adult suspect remains at large with a warrant for their arrest.

Residents can minimize their chances of being a victim of vehicle burglary by taking a few simple steps:

- Keep all car doors and windows closed and locked. This sounds like common sense, but about 30% of vehicle burglaries are from unlocked vehicles.

- Do not leave valuables or packages in plain sight in your vehicle. If you must leave valuables in the car, put them in the trunk or conceal them in some way.
- If your vehicle has a built in security system, use it.
- Park your vehicle in an area that is visible to the public and well lit at night. If possible, park your car in the garage.
- Never leave an electronic garage opener in the car. It can provide a thief easy access to your home.
- Keep a list of serial numbers (include make and model information) for commonly used electronic equipment you may keep in the car, including CD players, stereo faceplates, MP3 players, etc. Keep a copy of this inventory in a safe place such as a safe deposit box. We also suggest that you engrave your driver's license number on your valuables to aid in their recovery, should they be lost or stolen.
- If your car is burglarized, please report it to the police department immediately.

Upcoming Meetings

Joshua Planning and Zoning Commission March 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Joshua 4A Economic Development Corporation March 10, 2009 at 5:30 p.m.

Joshua 4B Economic Development Corporation March 10, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Joshua City Council Regular Meeting March 19, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.

Welcome New Residents Breakfast March 28, 2009 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the McPherson House.