



The Neighborhood Insider

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City of El Paso's Community & Human Development Department – Neighborhood Services Program
Quarterly Newsletter for Recognized Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhood Services Mission Statement:

To build strong leadership at the neighborhood level and facilitate opportunities for citizens to be involved in local government.

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We're on the Web!

www.elpasotexas.gov

News and Updates from Neighborhood Services

To start the spring, Neighborhood Services is revamping its quarterly newsletter, which is produced for neighborhood associations that are registered with the City of El Paso. Neighborhood Services aims to keep neighborhood associations informed and we hope you find the new format and sections useful in meeting your neighborhood needs.

The Times They are a-Changin'

Farewell to Community Development Director

In March, the Department of Community and Human Development said a wistful "goodbye" to Bill Lilly, our fearless leader for the last seven years. Mr. Lilly started with the City of El Paso in 2005 and played a vital role in creating the Neighborhood Services Program. We wish Bill a happy and healthy retirement.

Welcome to New Community Development Director

Also in March, the Department welcomed Verónica Soto, AICP as our new Director. Ms. Soto was selected from five finalists from a national search and has considerable experience in planning, economic development and community development. She is a native El Pasoan and a graduate of Bowie High School. She went on to graduate from Harvard College and the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, where she earned dual Masters Degrees in public affairs and urban and regional planning. Her career has included positions with the U.S. Department of Commerce in Washington, D.C., the City of New York Housing Preservation and Development Department, the City of El Paso Planning Department, and the City of El Paso Economic Development Department. She was Director of the Community Development Department at the City of Sunland Park, New Mexico and most recently was the executive director of the Downtown Management District. Above all she is a devoted wife and mother of two. We welcome Ms. Soto to the Department and look forward to



advancing under her leadership.

Relocation in Spring

Yes, it looks like it is REALLY going to happen, folks. Watch for the announcement sometime in May when Neighborhood Services and the rest of Community Development will be moving to our new digs at 801 Texas, 3rd Floor.

We will be sharing the newly renovated four-level building with other city employees from Parks and Recreation, City Development, and Economic/International Development.





The renovation and remodeling of the five-story Mulligan Building at 218 N. Campbell, right across the street from the new City Hall, has been completed and departments are moving in. The building was originally built in the early 1900s by an Irish immigrant, John P. Mulligan, as a storage dispensary for the U.S. Military. Over the decades the building has been remodeled several times for various uses. Now it's the home of the Information Technology (IT), Engineering and Construction Management, Financial Services, and Human Resources Training and Testing.

Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP)

The voter-approved 2012 Quality of Life Bond issuance secured funding for the NIP over the next 10 years and the first round is underway with over 30 recognized neighborhood associations submitting their neighborhood improvement proposals. Staff is currently reviewing the cost estimates for feasible projects and will then convene a staff review committee to complete the scoring. Neighborhood associations will have an opportunity to present and speak on behalf of their projects during this process. We anticipate presenting the recommended NIP projects to City Council in late May or early June 2014.

The second round of NIP will open up for project requests near the end of summer 2014. We will send notice to all the neighborhood associations when the applications become available. Please remember that each representative district has \$100,000 available for project requests, which are competitive among registered neighborhood associations within each District. Neighborhood associations whose feasible projects weren't selected during the first round process are encouraged to resubmit their project in the second round.



Neighborhood Leadership Academy (NLA)

On February 25, 2014, the City of El Paso recognized the 43 participants who completed the 8th Annual Neighborhood Leadership Academy, which is an 18-week program that teaches residents about the function and operations of local government. These El Paso residents heard presentations and participated in discussions with over 20 City departments as well as the Mayor, City Manager and County Judge. Participants had an opportunity to visit 10 different sites including participating in guided tours to the El Paso Zoo, History Museum, Main Downtown Library, Desalinization Plant, a recreation center and the Plaza Theater.

One of the goals of the NLA program is to encourage participants to become active in their local government by joining/starting neighborhood associations and serving on City boards and committees. From this class, Sylvia Carreon from the Lomaland Neighborhood Association was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and David Hensley from the Las Palmas Neighborhood Association is serving on an advisory committee for the selection of a new City Manager.



The next NLA class will begin at the end of September 2014 with applications available starting in August. We are planning to make the next NLA bi-lingual by making Spanish interpretation and translation available for participants.

Meet Your City Department

There are over 20 different City Departments that provide an array of services and programs to the local community. We would like to use this section to highlight a City department and to let the neighborhood associations know what additional programs are available for them to utilize.

Environmental Services Department

Phone: (915) 621-6700 | **Location:** 7968 San Paulo Dr. | **Website:** www.elpasotexas.gov/environmental-services

The Environmental Services Department (ESD) is committed to providing a clean, safe, healthy and beautiful environment for all El Paso residents to enjoy. As part of their mission, the Environmental Services team strives to maintain top quality code enforcement, environmental health and integrated solid waste management services that have a direct impact on the future of our community.

Ellen Smyth, a native El Pasoan, has been the director of ESD since 2005. She oversees an operating budget of \$53 million and has over 450 employees that serve the residents of El Paso. The ESD divisions are:

• Training and Public Programs

- Provides educational speakers to schools and community organizations on recycling, common code violations, Citizens Collection Stations, and other ESD topics
- Provides skill development services to ESD employees
- Provides partnership programs to help promote a better environment (i.e. Bags to Benches, Great American Cleanup, Neighborhood Cleanups)
 - Additional programs that are “coming soon” include Neighborhood Aesthetics, Community Gardens, and Adopt a Spot/Ditch Beautification

• Code Compliance: (call 311 or report online)

- Enforces City ordinances and nuisance codes and inspects residential and commercial properties
- Division is composed of four programs:
 - Building and Zoning – enforces building standards and property maintenance.
 - Environmental Nuisances – investigates code violations (i.e. auto repairs in residential areas, construction without a permit, garage and yard sales, domestic storage, prohibited signs, maintenance of walls and fences, off-street parking, junked vehicles, maintenance and/or obstruction of sidewalks, and illegal dumping).
 - Health and Safety – protects the health and safety of the general public through facility inspections, solid waste enforcement and vector control activities.
 - Air Quality – provides air quality monitoring and enforcement within El Paso County.

• Collections:

- Provides the curbside collection program that services over 195,000 garbage and recycling containers on a weekly basis (collections start at 5am and are conducted Tue-Fri)
- This past year they achieved a 99.6% success rate for bins emptied on first attempt (Recognized for national and state awards for excellence in collections systems and exceptional performance).

• Clean El Paso:

- Operates the five Citizen Collection Stations (CCS) or “drop-off sites” for household materials (not for commercial material) (Open: Tue-Sat | 8am-4pm)
 - Central – 2492 Harrison
 - Eastside – 1034 Pendale
 - Northeast – 4501 Hondo Pass
 - Westside – 121 Atlantic
 - Southside – 4200 Delta
- CCS provides free mulch and paint and residents can borrow tools for cleanup projects.
- CCS provides special collection pickups and dead animal pick-up for a fee.

• Landfill: (915-851-3194)

- Operates the Greater El Paso Landfill.

• Animal Services: (5001 Fred Wilson Rd. | 915-842-1000)

- Operates the City’s animal shelter.
- Animal Services provides information on pet vaccinations, registration, animal-related permits, adoptions, reclaiming lost pets, volunteer opportunities and spaying/neutering opportunities
- Newly created V.I.P. (virtually irresistible pets) program for \$60 adoptions
- Enforce laws related to animals and investigate reports about loose, stray, sick/injured animals, and animal cruelty



Upcoming City Events

Great American Cleanup – Saturday, April 26, 2014 (8 a.m. till noon)

Keep America Beautiful's Great American Cleanup is the nation's largest annual community improvement program that focuses volunteer efforts on creating vibrant communities through cleanup efforts, recycling collections and beautification projects. The City's Environmental Services Department has been busy assisting neighborhood associations with registering their neighborhood cleanup site.

The following neighborhood associations are hosting neighborhood cleanups:

- Castner Heights Neighborhood Association
- Chihuahueta Neighborhood Association
- Cielo Vista Neighborhood Association
- Borderland Neighborhood Association
- Golden Hills Neighborhood Association
- Lomaland Neighborhood Association
- Montoya Heights Community Improvement Association
- Mountain View Neighborhood Association
- Thomas Manor Neighborhood Association
- Save the Valley Neighborhood Association
- Sherman Park Neighborhood Association
- Stiles Neighborhood Association

(This is not the complete list of Great American Cleanup projects; other community organizations and high schools are also participating.)

For more information contact: Romie Ruiz, ESD Partnerships at (915) 621-6709 or RuizAR@elpasotexas.gov

Día de Los Niños/Día de Los Libros – Saturday, April 26, 2014 Washington Park, 4201 E. Paisano (11 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

The El Paso Public Library, Parks and Recreation and their partners stage this celebration to promote the importance of literacy, health and education. The event is free to attend and every child that attends will get a free book plus many other goodies. There will be live entertainment throughout the day and lots of fun activities. There will be food booths available to purchase snacks plus a fun, family atmosphere. Families and children of all ages are welcome to attend. Organizers have given away more than 150,000 books to children since the event began in 1997.

For more information contact: Jack Galindo, Marketing/Customer Relations Coordinator at (915)543-5468 or galindojw@elpasotexas.gov

Community Development Week – April 21-26, 2014

The Department of Community and Human Development is celebrating National Community Development Week, which highlights Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) improvement projects. CDBG is a formula grant awarded to the City of El Paso annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to improve the quality-of-life for low-to-moderate income families and neighborhoods in El Paso. There will be ribbon cutting events for the Barker Road Improvements, John R. Karr Park Improvements, and the Project Vida Affordable Housing Units. Over \$369 million dollars have been allocated to El Paso since 1975. Go to the following website for CDBG Week details: <http://home.elpasotexas.gov/community-development/>

For more information contact: Soraya Ayub Palacios, Neighborhood Relations Coordinator at (915) 541-4019 or ayubsx@elpasotexas.gov

In Other City News

Your Tax Dollars at Work

The City has a new website to inform the public about how tax dollars are being spent. You can follow City activities under four categories:

- Quality of Life Bond Projects
- Street Resurfacing Projects
- Public Art Projects
- Public Transit Projects

For more information visit: www.epatwork.com

Calling the Wrong Number?

Many City departments have transitioned to new telephone numbers as a result of the implementation of a new communications system. The new City prefix will be (915) 212-XXXX. Additionally, to allow for a smooth transition, old phone numbers will continue to be active for the next 5-6 months. The new numbers can be found on the city website www.elpasotexas.gov as they come online.

Reminder: You can always dial “311” and ask the helpful operators to assist you in directing your call.

A Letter from the El Paso Neighborhood Coalition

A Community Service Experience

By: Ceci Herrera, EPNC Chair



It has been eight months since I accepted the position of Chairperson of the El Paso Neighborhood Coalition. As a former social worker and counselor in the field of substance abuse prevention, rehabilitation and treatment, I had the opportunity of being part of different boards within social services organizations. Serving the community and providing awareness of available resources have been some of my responsibilities. At the EPNC, I focused my attention to promote cooperation and sharing of expertise among neighborhood associations and other community resources.

I have found that my position as chair of the Coalition gives me the opportunity to serve as a bridge to connect the experience and services that exist in our great city with the different neighborhood associations. During our monthly meetings we bring in community leaders representing organizations that provide awareness and guidance on how to utilize their services to cover any gaps that may exist.

I congratulate the active community leaders who attend our meetings and take advantage of the offered services. At the same time, I encourage community leaders who are not attending our monthly meetings to join us once in a while. We recognize that you are very active in your neighborhoods but we would like to hear from you and share your experiences too. This way, we will celebrate our accomplishments collectively. As this is a volunteer effort, I have a lot of respect for all the community leaders whose proactive contributions result in an empowered community with pride in its accomplishments. For me, I feel that contributing to the community has been a very rewarding experience.

Neighborhood Association Highlights

Neighborhood Services wants to recognize the accomplishments of neighborhood associations within the community. Whether it is a cleanup, food drive, block party or forming a new community partnership, let us know what your neighborhood association is doing to address a need or celebrate an event. This is a great way to inform and inspire other neighborhood associations.

Please contact Neighborhood Services to highlight your neighborhood events and/or accomplishments.