

# TOWN OF HIGHLAND PARK MONARCH HERALD



Monthly Newsletter for the Residents of the Town of Highland Park

## IN A PECAN SHELL:

- Assistance for Winter Storm Recovery and Repairs
- Water Utility Bill Credit
- COVID-19 Update
- Town Response to the Winter Storm
- Now Hiring Swimming Pool Staff
- Thank You
- What to Read Next
- Avoid Utility Scams
- Avoid Contractor Scams
- Your Trees and the Winter Storm
- March Events

This newsletter is a service to the residents of the Town of Highland Park to keep you informed of new services, events, activities, and other important information. If there is anything you would like to see covered in the newsletter, please let us know! Contact Holly Russell, Management Assistant at [hrussell@hptx.org](mailto:h russell@hptx.org), or call (214) 559-9308 with your recommendations.



## Winter Storm Recovery Assistance

The Town staff have created a web page, <https://www.hptx.org/Recovery>, for anyone needing any information on assistance, repairs, and updates concerning recovery from the February winter storm.

- **Recovery Assistance Programs** from State and Federal organizations and Health organizations.
- **Residential Property Recovery** assistance information from State organizations, and tips on how to avoid contractor scams.
- **Business Property Recovery** assistance information from Federal organizations.
- **Trash & Recycling** information for disposing of damaged property and architectural materials.
- **Utilities** information for assistance with Water, Electricity, and Natural Gas services; as well as tips on avoiding imposter utility scams.

If you have any further questions about recovery assistance, you may call Holly Russell, Management Assistant, at (214) 559-9308.

## Water Utility Bill Credit Approved

At their March 2, 2021, Town Council Meeting, Council Members unanimously voted to allow a \$10 credit on water utility bills for running water to prevent pipes from freezing and approved an exception to the leak adjustment policy to allow for freeze-related leaks that occurred in February. The credit will be included on the March water bill and does not apply to irrigation meters. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Town would not charge a permit fee or require inspections on minor repairs of water lines that broke during the winter storm due to freezing temperatures. For questions or more information please call Utility Customer Service, 214-521-4161, during normal business hours of Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

# COVID-19 UPDATE



Governor Abbott, on March 2, 2021, issued Executive Order GA-34 rescinding a requirement that persons wear a face covering. The Executive Order continues authority by the Town to require the public to social distance, take body temperatures, and to wear a face covering while in a Town-owned building.

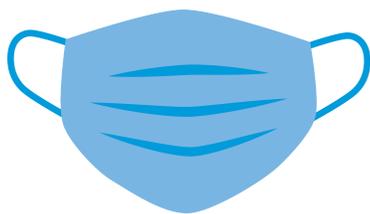
Town staff and the public, regardless of having received a COVID-19 vaccination, must wear a face covering over their nose and mouth while in a Town-owned building. This requirement does not apply when a person is receiving a service where the wearing of a mask would impair the performance of the service. Persons with disabilities or religious beliefs may be able to request a reasonable accommodation under the ADA or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

Even with the use of face coverings, the Governor, County Judge and Health Experts advise individuals should maintain social distancing, regardless of having received a COVID-19 vaccination, whenever possible when around others not of the same household. Based on this recommendation, the public when in a Town-owned building should maintain at least six (6) feet of separation from other individuals outside their household, to the extent feasible. We encourage the public to visit [www.hptx.org/OnlineAvenue](http://www.hptx.org/OnlineAvenue) for a variety of opportunities for the public to access Town personnel and services remotely.

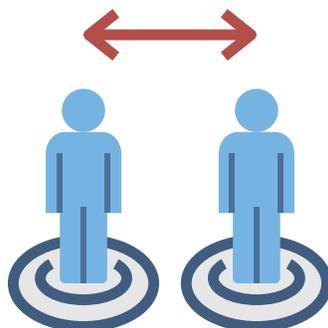
The public is required to self-check their body temperature upon entering a Town-owned building. Following completion of the touch-less temperature scan, the person shall visibly display the sticker indicating the person not having a fever.

We encourage the public to visit [www.hptx.org/OnlineAvenue](http://www.hptx.org/OnlineAvenue) for persons opting to not adhere to social distancing, take a temperature check, and or wear a face covering while in a Town-owned building. In addition, the Library offers both online services and curbside receipt/drop-off of materials for library patrons.

## Required in all Town-owned buildings.



Wear a mask over mouth and nose.



Social-distance of 6 ft.



Get a temperature check when you enter the building.

## Town Report Concerning Winter Weather Storm

Town Administration has compiled an extensive report concerning the Winter Storm and the Town's response to issues caused by the freezing weather. To view this report, visit [hptx.org/recovery](http://hptx.org/recovery). The Winter Storm Recovery web page has useful information that residents can easily find to apply for aid and assistance programs, as well find contact information for the various organizations that are offering programs to the public.



## Now Hiring: Swimming Pool Staff

If you would like a fun-in-the-sun summer job, the Highland Park Swimming Pool is seeking qualified applicants to fill several positions as Pool Lifeguards and Concession Attendants for the 2021 Summer swim season. For details about each position, qualifications desired, and to apply, please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/hpdpstx>.

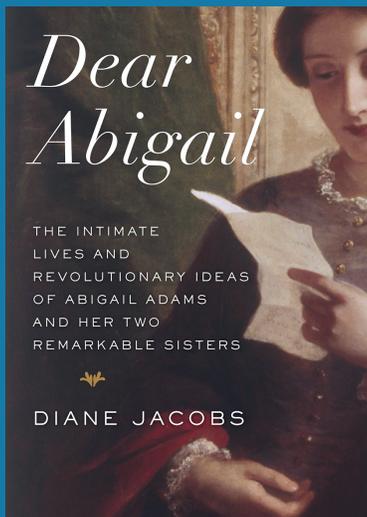


*thank  
you* ❤️

## Thank You from Town and DPS Employees

The Town's Utilities staff and HP DPS employees would like to thank the many residents that provided warm meals during the harsh winter work of February 13-19. All employees are very grateful for the kindness and appreciation shown by the many residents of the Town of Highland Park. We are honored to work for such a wonderful municipality, and strive to make your hometown one of the best places to live, work, and play. Together, we make Highland Park "an All-American Community Making A Difference."

## HP Library: What to Read Next



March is Women's History Month. For readers who enjoy the works of David McCullough and Alison Weir, Diane Jacobs' *Dear Abigail: The Intimate Lives and Revolutionary Ideas of Abigail Adams and Her Two Remarkable Sisters* draws on personal letters, never-before-published diaries, and archival research to trace the sisters' lives from their childhood sibling rivalries to

their eyewitness roles during the American Revolution and their adulthood.

Would you like additional reading recommendations? Visit the Library's website, <https://www.hptx.org/106/Library> to access online resources, video book talks, or use the Library's Book Coach service to receive personalized reading recommendations.

## **HP DPS: Be Aware of Utility Scams**

---

Be on the lookout for scammers – especially utility imposter scams - trying to take advantage of the severe winter weather event. Further, if you are in doubt about the legitimacy of someone wanting access to your property for a utility repair, contact the utility company directly to confirm.

- Legitimate utility companies will not threaten to shut off services and demand immediate payment with prepaid cards. Verify any billing information by calling your utility company directly. Do not use any phone numbers or email address the person who contacted you gives you.
- Scammers will often promise to restore services faster if a fee is paid. This is a tactic to steal fast money.
- Scammers may call or email you to say that you have overpaid a bill and need your bank or credit card information to refund the overage. Most utility companies will not call you about overpayment but may credit the amount toward your next bill.
- If someone tells you that they need to replace metering and you need to leave your home for several hours or days, call your utility company directly to verify. In most cases, you should have received advanced notice through the mail concerning any dangerous work that would have to be complete by the utility company.
- Be very wary of anyone that is knocking on doors and posing as a utility worker. Make sure you can see the company's logo clearly marked on their uniform, their truck, and ID. If you are still uncertain, call the utility company directly to verify anything the person is telling you.

Further, if you are in doubt about the legitimacy of someone wanting access to your property for a utility repair, call HPDPS at 214-521-5000 for assistance.

## **HP DPS: Be Aware of Home Improvement Scams**

---

The Texas Department of Insurance and the Office of the Texas Attorney General have information on their websites on how to avoid being scammed when you need your property repaired. We highly recommend you educate yourself on these scams so that you will not fall prey to them. Some important points to remember are:

- Never sign a contract that has blanks. Every field should be completed so that you know exactly what work will be done, and how much it will cost.
- Never give money upfront. It is against the law for out-of-town contractors to ask for a down payment.
- Make sure you are signing an estimate or a contract. Do not go by what the person giving it to you calls it. Some scams are called estimates when you are signing a legal contract.
- It is against the law for a contractor to offer to waive an insurance deductible or work it into the insurance amount.

If you suspect a contractor that you are not familiar with is scamming or breaking state law, please report them to the Texas Attorney General's Office at 1-800-621-0508.

Texas Department of Insurance: "[How to Avoid Contracting Scams](#)"

Texas Attorney General: "[How to Avoid Home Improvement Scams](#)"

## HP Parks: Your Trees and the Winter Storm

---

According to Texas Plant expert, Neil Sperry, many trees and shrubs should start showing any freeze damage from February's winter storm. Many of the hardier trees should be able to recover in a few weeks' time, but monitor them closely in any case. Here are a few tips from some of the more common landscape vegetation that you may have at your home:

- **Live Oaks** - Live Oaks usually start to shed their leaves about this time of year, so you will see this happen anyway. Give your lawn and tree some nitrogen fertilizer, and about three (3) or four (4) weeks to recover.
- **Italian Cypress** - Trees like this species may have developed freeze cracks, but they may not be noticeable until next spring or summer.
- **Crepe Myrtles, Oleander, Gardenias, Palms, and Rosemary** - These plants are all very fragile when it comes to freezing temperatures. It is common to see partial to complete dieback, and may require replacement.



*Photo from the Texas A&M Forest Service. Limb showing green under bark with a scrape test.*

The Texas A&M Forest Service is another helpful resource in knowing how to care for your landscape trees and shrubs. They state that most trees will shed their leaves, and some smaller limbs may experience dieback, but the key is to be patient. The leaf will return and the tree will continue to grow new limbs. If you are uncertain if a limb is dead or not, a simple test is to scrape the bark of a twig and check for a green coloring. If there is green, the limb is still flourishing. If it is a dull brown, then the twig has died and you can check other places on the limb to see what may have survived or died.

When in doubt, you can always consult a certified arborist to look at your trees. They are a great resource for diagnosing sick or diseased trees, and recommending a treatment to save and restore these giants back to health.

The HP Library has a large collection of Neil Sperry's books, which focus solely on Texas plants, trees, and gardening. He has long been revered as an expert on Texas plants. He also has a very lively Facebook page where you can ask questions and get great tips to keep your home lawn and garden looking beautiful.

The Texas A&M Forest Service is always publishing helpful tips on their Facebook page, Twitter page, and website. If you have a tree that is showing signs of stress, infestation, or sickness, they have a very easy app you can access to diagnose what the cause may be. You can access that tool, TreeMD, here: <https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/treemd/>



# MARCH CALENDAR



**Every Month** Every **Thursday at 10 AM:** Baby Bounce Story Time, Library  
Every **Friday at 10 AM:** Pawsome Tales Story Time, Library  
Watch live on the Friends of the Highland Park Library Facebook Page

**March 9, Tuesday** Finding Summer Jobs: A Virtual Teen Workshop - Library  
**6:00 - 7:00 p.m.** This online presentation is led by Jonathan Butler from the Texas Workforce Commission. Email [info@uptexas.org](mailto:info@uptexas.org) by Saturday, March 6 to receive the meeting code and password.

**March 10, Wednesday** No Passport Required: Westminster Abbey - Library  
**2:00 - 3:00 p.m.** Get a private tour of Great Britain's iconic architectural masterpiece by one of London's finest guides, John Gowing. This is an online event using GoToMeeting. Email [smilberger@hplibrary.info](mailto:smilberger@hplibrary.info) to register.

**March 13, Saturday** Virtual Crafternoon – Chick Plates - Library  
**3:00 - 4:00 p.m.** Make your own hatching chicks in this live, hands-on Zoom presentation. Reserve and pick up a To-Go Craft Kit by emailing [lcollins@hplibrary.info](mailto:lcollins@hplibrary.info) by Friday, March 5, to receive the meeting code and password. This program is limited to 20 Zoom participants.

**March 17, Wednesday** Make Your Own Magic - Library  
**3:00 - 4:00 p.m.** Learn from magician Brett Roberts on how make your own magic show from paper and household items in this virtual presentation. Email [lcollins@hplibrary.info](mailto:lcollins@hplibrary.info) to register and receive the link and magic activity booklet to the online program.

**March 27, Saturday** Spin Science virtual presentation - Library  
**3:00 - 4:00 p.m.** Discover science with yo-yos and a variety of spinning objects with Yo-Yo Champion Val Oliver. Email [lcollins@hplibrary.info](mailto:lcollins@hplibrary.info) to register and receive the link to the online program.

**April 6, Tuesday** Town Council Meeting & Study Session  
**8:00 a.m.** To get the link to watch live stream, see the Agenda, or send an email to submit a public comment, please visit: <https://www.hptx.org/914/Public-Meetings-During-COVID-19-Pandemic>



@HP\_Texas



@HPDPS\_TX



[hptx.org](http://www.hptx.org)



(214) 521-4161