



The Lancaster Connection



CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS, NEIGHBORHOODS AND BUSINESSES.



Mayor Joe Tillotson

Action Lancaster: the Mayor's State of the City Address

At the January 13, 2005 Lancaster Chamber of Commerce luncheon, Mayor Joe Tillotson delivered his annual State of the City address in which he informed members that Lancaster is charting its course to a great future. Through hard work and solid partnerships, community and economic development efforts, quality infrastructure and a commitment to public safety and quality of life, Mayor Tillotson believes that we are building a city that everyone can call home.

Mayor Tillotson stated that good planning, public input and a strong team has laid the groundwork for smart growth, but we must continue these efforts if we want to continue to raise the bar for Lancaster. Businesses such as Home Depot, Chili's, Argent and Brenntag will help us build our tax base and attract other businesses to our city. Continued growth at our airport and higher development standards will help make Lancaster a premier city in the Metroplex.

"As we continue to grow Lancaster, we are building a community of choice for businesses and residents, for artists and entrepreneurs and most of all for our children," stated Mayor Tillotson. "We want Lancaster to be home—a welcoming city that embraces diversity and stimulates creativity, a city whose population is actively engaged in community life," he added.

For more information on the Mayor's State of the city Address, please check the City Council page on the City of Lancaster's web site at www.ci.lancaster.tx.us.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration

In his famous speech delivered on August 28, 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.' This nation now has a federal holiday to honor the life and legacy of this noble man, and our nation is coming together to live up to its creed.

On Saturday, January 15, 2005 at 11:00 a.m., the city of Lancaster, the Lancaster

Independent School District and the MLK Day Citizen Committee will host the 2nd Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day parade. The parade will begin at the Elsie Robertson High School located at 822 West Pleasant Run Road, travel east on Pleasant Run and South on Dallas Avenue to Lancaster's Historic Town Square.

For additional information regarding the parade, please contact the Community Relations Department at 972-218-1134 or the Citizen Committee President, Roosevelt Nichols, at 214-417-8487.

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Will you qualify for Tax Credits?



2004 has come and gone, so it is time to begin gathering information for filing income tax returns. There are numerous myths regarding income tax credits and eligibility. The following information is intended to provide you with resources to determine whether or not you qualify for reductions in your income tax. You might be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit or other life cycle credits, review enclosed brochure regarding 2004 requirements.

According to Internal Revenue Service representatives, residents affected by the heavy rains earlier this summer may be eligible for tax reductions under casualty and theft losses. The IRS defines a casualty as "the damage, destruction, or loss of property resulting from an identifiable event that is sudden, unexpected and unusual." To claim a casualty or theft loss, an individual must complete IRS Form 4684. Additional definitions and instructions regarding this option may be obtained at www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc507.html.

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The City of Lancaster
Post Office Box 940
Lancaster, Texas 75146

Postal Customer

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
LANCASTER, TX
Permit No. 4

Holiday Closings

Martin Luther King Birthday
Monday, January 17, 2005

Good Friday
Friday March 25, 2005



Mark your calendars, annual Trash Off!



Keep Lancaster Beautiful and the city of Lancaster will again join together to participate in the annual Keep America Beautiful, Great American Cleanup for this year's trash-off. This is the nation's largest annual community improvement program.

Trash-Off is an opportunity for the community to do some "spring cleaning" not only on their property, but to clean-up litter and trash from the streets and roadways.

This year's event will be Friday and Saturday, April 1st and 2nd, 2005. More information will be available on the city's website in the up coming months at: www.ci.lancaster.tx.us or you may call Neighborhood Services Division at 972-218-1101.

tax credits...continued from page 1

Did you know the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has a Mortgage Credit Certificate Program? This program for Texas residents is designed to make homeownership of new or existing homes more affordable for low to moderate income households, especially first time buyers, by increasing a family's disposable income by reducing its federal income tax liability. For additional information on the Mortgage Credit Certificate Program visit www.tdhca.state.tx.us or call 800-792-1119.

There is also an IRS Optional Sales Tax deduction available to residents of Texas and other states that do not have a state income tax. This new deduction is an option as a result of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 and is available to those who itemize deductions.

Information regarding this and other deductions and credits can be obtained from the IRS at www.irs.gov or call 800-TAX-1040.

NEED ASSISTANCE? DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO CALL?

Animal Control	972-227-1342
Birth Certificates	972-227-8125
Building Inspections	972-218-1101
Cable (Comcast)	972-445-5555
Chamber of Commerce	972-227-2579
City Hall	972-227-2111
Neighborhood Svcs (Code Compliance)	972-218-1101
Community House (Seniors)	972-227-2650
Constable Derick Evans	972-227-6015
Country View Golf Course	972-227-0995
County Health Department (Immun.)	214-819-2100
County Tax	214-653-7811
Driver's License	469-272-9301
Economic Development Corporation	972-218-7036
Employment - City Job Line	972-218-1140
Fire (Non-emergency)	972-227-1813
Police (Non-emergency)	972-227-4006
Housing	972-227-4991
Lancaster Municipal Airport	972-227-5721
Lancaster Today (Newspaper)	972-298-4211
Library	972-227-1080
LISD Administration	972-227-4141
Medical Center at Lancaster	972-223-9600
Motor Vehicle Registration	214-653-7811
Municipal Court	972-227-4900
Outreach Center	972-227-0138
Parks & Recreation Center	972-227-1112
Planning & Zoning	972-218-1101
Post Office	972-227-6089
Public Works	972-227-6075
SBC (Telephone Service)	800-464-7928
Trinity Waste	972-225-8151
TXU (Customer Service)	800-460-3030
Utility Billing	972-227-7941
Voter Registration (Co. Elections Dept)	214-637-7937
Water/Sewer	972-218-5927



Rebuy, Reuse, Reduce & Recycle What can I recycle?

Paper - Magazines, cardboard, newspapers

Glass - clear, brown & green glass, food & beverage containers

Aluminum & Metal Cans-food & beverage containers

Plastic-all plastic bottles labeled 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 on bottom

Where can I get a recycle bin?

City Hall
Utility Billing Department
211 N Henry St
Lancaster, Texas
972-227-7941



Brush/Bulky collection instructions

Here are some helpful facts to remember about your brush and bulky collection items:

- * Brush/bulky collection is provided once per month.
- * The city is divided into four sections. A list of streets is available from Utility Billing that notes the collection week for each street.
- * The week of collection is determined by the Wednesdays of the month. First Wednesday is first week, second Wednesday is second week and so on. Please see the list of pickup weeks for FY 04-05 at the bottom of this page.
- * Our current ordinance requires that brush/bulky items be placed at the curb no later than 7:00 AM on the Monday of the collection week.
- * Trinity will pick up items between 7:00 AM Monday and 7:00 PM Friday of the pickup week.
- * Trinity may make two trips down each street, using two different types of equipment, based on the type of items to be collected. Just because they make a run through and don't pick up items does not mean they will not be back with other equipment.
- * Since brush/bulky items are to be set out by Monday morning, if Trinity picks up on Monday or Tuesday and the items are set out later in the week, those are considered late set-outs and will not be picked up. Those late set-outs are subject to notices and/or citations from Neighborhood Services.
- * Residents may call Trinity at any time for a quote for a special pickup at 972-225-8151.

bulky/brush pickup schedule

Month	First Week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week
January	Jan 3-7	Jan 10-14	Jan 17-21	Jan 24-28
February	Jan 31-Feb 4	Feb 7-11	Feb 14-18	Feb 21-25
March	Feb 28-Mar 4	Mar 7-11	Mar 14-18	Mar 21-25
April	Apr 4-8	Apr 11-15	Apr 18-22	Apr 25-29
May	May 2-6	May 9-13	May 16-20	May 23-27
June	May 30-Jun 3	Jun 6-10	Jun 13-17	Jun 20-24
July	July 4-8	Jul 11-15	Jul 18-22	Jul 25-29
August	Aug 1-5	Aug 8-12	Aug 15-19	Aug 22-26
September	Sep 5-9	Sep 12-16	Sep 19-23	Sep 26-30



Airport master plan process begins

The Texas Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, recently approved a grant to update the 1999 master plan for the Lancaster Municipal Airport. The year-long planning process will determine the future of the airport and its place as an economic development tool for the city. The Airport Advisory Board will work with airport consultants from GRW Willis, Inc. to study the required aspects of the master plan, and will conduct a series of meetings to provide information to the public during the process. The following meetings will be held at the James R. Williams pump station training room at the corner of Wintergreen and Jefferson at 7:00 PM: **February 24, April 21, June 23 and July 7**. Once the study is complete, the draft master plan will be presented to City Council for review, public hearings and adoption. For more information about the airport master plan meetings or process, please contact Jan Belcher, Assistant City Manager, at 972-218-1132.

Are you blocking mail delivery?

Most mailboxes in the city are located at the curb. The mail carriers don't get out of their trucks, so they need access from the curb to deliver your mail. Please don't block mailboxes with cars, bulky trash, or anything else to assure that your mail will be delivered on time.



Ever wondered how your city government works?

Lancaster has a council-manager form of city government. The seven-member City Council includes six members elected from single-member districts; and the mayor, elected at large. City Council sets public policy and hires the city manager, city secretary and city attorney. The city manager is responsible for the day to day activities and administration of the city.



Lancaster has a staff of 200 plus employees, forming the basis for one of the best-managed cities in Texas. City employees work in an organizational culture that is passionately committed to outstanding customer friendly service, combining teamwork and creativity to provide assistance and services to residents.

City Council meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at the Lancaster Municipal Center located 211 N. Henry. At the two regularly scheduled meetings, council members hear citizen comments, review and take formal action on items in their prepared agenda. Actions are approved by majority vote.

The Mayor conducts the meetings; however, each council member has a vote and is allowed to comment or discuss items on the agenda following Robert's Rules Order and the Council Code of Conduct.

For questions regarding council meeting procedures you may contact the city secretary at 972-218-1112.

LEDC 2005 Outlook!

Your quarter cent sales tax-funded Lancaster Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) had another banner year in partnership with our City Council, staff and the local business community. Take a look at a few of the recent projects:



- * Home Depot and collector road (it really will be named someday - soon!)
- * Argent - Lancaster Business Park - 205 acre distribution campus
- * Brenntag Southwest - 215,000 square foot Distribution facility and rail siding
- * CMOP - 60,000 square foot expansion
- * WNA Cups Illustrated - 70,000 square foot expansion
- * Bailey Tool and Manufacturing (Refurbishment of old Hyco plant)

And you can look for more activity in 2005 with the opening of Home Depot (late February '05), Chili's (look for a June '05 opening), Lancaster Municipal Airport (70,000+ square feet of new hangar expansions)! Likewise, the level on interest in doing business in Lancaster continues to gain momentum.

The LEDC is the entity that administers the approximately \$550,000/year proceeds from the quarter-cent local option sales tax for funding economic development activities and projects within our city. The LEDC is managed by a five-member city council-appointed board of directors. These Directors are local citizen volunteers who give of their time and experience to oversee LEDC's activities. The corporation has an executive director who reports to the board and one additional full-time staff person. LEDC's staff handles the day-to-day operations and administration.

The LEDC directors and staff work hard at supporting and implementing our council's community-wide goals and priorities. In September city council appointed two of its members to the LEDC Board to further enhance these lines of communication. The directors look to build on the recent successes and encourage continued business expansion and recruitment. Our targets continue to be light manufacturing, logistics & distribution facilities - with a special emphasis given to aviation-related projects, expanded retail opportunities, healthcare-related industries and services, and business service operations.

The directors consistently face the challenges of responding to our community's desire (more restaurants and retail) and balancing the EDC's efforts within the parameters of state law governing these types of "4(A)" corporations. Examples include a 10 percent cap on marketing and promotional expenditures and incentives tied to "primary job creation" (this means manufacturing-type jobs, etc.). State law does permit providing information, recruitment, job training (in specific cases), and infrastructure assistance to new or expanding commercial enterprises. LEDC also "looks for ways to say yes" in assisting these sorts of projects, too.

The LEDC directors and staff are justifiably proud of the 2004 accomplishments and pledge to build on this record of success in 2005. For more information about the LEDC, visit our website at www.ledctexas.com. **3**

Lancaster Outreach Holiday Toy and Food Drive



The City of Lancaster teamed with the State Representative Helen Giddings, District 109, Dallas Telco Federal Credit Union and the Lancaster Police and Firefighters Associations to raise awareness and funds for the Lancaster Outreach Center. Annually, the outreach center assists families in Lancaster, Wilmer and Hutchins with toys and food during the holiday season. This dedicated team of organizations assisted the outreach by collecting over \$3,000 in financial contributions as well as toys and food.

Thanks TEAM for your contribution to the children and families serviced by the Lancaster Outreach Center!



Santa Claus visited students in Lancaster ISD wishing them "lots of reading" on their holiday break.

**City Administration
Introducing The Executive Team**

Lancaster City Council has aggressive yet achievable goals and objectives for the growth and development of the community. To accomplish these goals, a little over two years ago city council hired Mr. Jim Landon (center seated) as city manager. Since that time, Mr. Landon has progressively worked to put a professional management team in place that understands the opportunities and challenges that affect a community the size of Lancaster with growth and economic development in action. The team is made up of the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Secretary and Directors for each of the City departments. Members of the executive team are from left: (seated) Jim Smith, Public Works; Dick Knopf, Fire Chief; Jim Landon, City Manager; Dan Shiner, Police Chief; Gary Sims, Parks and Recreation; (standing) Dolle Shane, City Secretary; Marva Pritchett, Community Development; Jan Belcher, Assistant City Manager; Dori Lee, Human Resources; and Maria Joyner, Finance.



Dear Parents:

MGT of America, a national educational consulting firm, is on contract with the Texas Legislative Budget Board to conduct a Management and Performance Review of the Lancaster Independent School District (LISD). As part of the project, MGT of America is requesting that you participate in this survey in order to identify the opinions and concerns of parents regarding the review.

We thank you for your input. We encourage you to participate in the survey because your perceptions and opinions are greatly valued.

DIRECTIONS:

To access the survey, please follow the directions below.

1. Enter the address www.mgtamer.com/surveys
2. Enter the survey number 2586PAR
3. When you have reached the "thank you for participating" page at the end of the survey, exit and close your browser.

Directions and step-by-step instructions for the survey are provided at the link. You will have a one-hour time limit to complete the survey although it will probably take less than an hour. Your responses are kept completely confidential and sent directly to MGT of America.

The survey will be online starting Friday, January 7, 2005.

Sincerely,
Teri Wilson
Director of Community Relations
Lancaster ISD

October Yard of the Month
1234 Oakbluff
Councilman Clyde Hairston &
property owner Jack McCauley



November Yard of the Month
1421 Sunny Meadows
Property Owner Daryle Clewis

Garage Sale Information

City Council has amended the Occasional Sale Ordinance effective October 22, 2004.

The following is a list of the changes that City Council has made to the ordinance governing garage sales:

1. No fee is required. However, a license must be obtained and posted on the property where the sale is located.
2. The sale may only be held for three (3) consecutive days.
3. You may only hold a sale once every six (6) months.
4. Garage sales may only be held at a person's place of residence. Garage sales may not be held at commercial properties.
5. One sign is permitted on the property where the sale is located. Maximum size is 2 square feet.
6. No other signs are allowed. Signs found to be in violation will be removed and discarded by city staff.

Garage Sale licenses may be obtained at the Community Development Building located at 700 E. Main Street, or for more information you may call 972-218-1101.

Meet Your Neighborhood Services Division:

Pictured in front
 Cindy Hayward,
 Animal Shelter
 Assistant, Kim
 P e k o f s k e ,
 Manager, and
 Niki Atherton,
 Neighborhood



Services Officer. In the back row, Jason Brown, Joseph Maddox (Our newest member), and Thomas Hail, all Neighborhood Services Officers.

Neighborhood Services Division is responsible for animal control, animal shelter and code compliance issues. Some of the typical issues that this department addresses are: high grass & weeds, trash/debris, unsightly matter, fences in disrepair, parking on unimproved surfaces, illegal signs, junk vehicles, commercial vehicles in a residential area, animals at large, stray animals, and excessive animals. These are just a few of the most common violations that we address.

If you have a concern in your neighborhood and would like an officer to inspect the problem you may enter a request 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on the city's website at www.ci.lancaster.tx.us and select "Request a City Service." When you enter a request, select the appropriate department and describe the problem in your area. Please be as detailed as possible and provide contact (phone or e-mail) information.

You may also call the Neighborhood Services Division at 972-218-1101 during regular business hours Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Officers are available in the field from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. All other hours are emergency calls only.

Looking for a furry friend to adopt? Come by our shelter to view our adoptable pets.

Lancaster Animal Shelter
 690 E Main Street
 Lancaster, TX



Adoption hours are :

Monday Through Friday 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Saturday 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Fees for adoptions:

Cats - \$10.00
 Puppy and Small dogs - \$10.00
 Dogs - \$20.00



Rabies vaccinations and spaying or neutering is required on all pets adopted from shelter.

Fees for Impoundment:

1st Offense \$35.00 plus proof of Rabies Vaccination
 2nd Offense \$50.00 plus proof of Rabies Vaccination and Court Citation
 3rd Offense \$75.00 same as above
 4th Offense \$100.00 same as above

Make sure all of your pets have an I.D. tag and rabies tag on their collar. Tags are your pet's ticket home! For more information you may call 972-218-1101.



Help ensure quality of public drinking water

Does the potential exist for contaminated water to enter the public drinking water? The answer is—**probably "yes"**, especially if your home was built during the first part of the 20th century. The increased likelihood of potential problems created by amateur plumbing practices and other plumbing nightmares make favorable conditions for the potential contamination of the public water system.

These conditions are commonly called "**cross-connections**" and occur whenever a safe and potable water source comes into direct contact or "**physical connection**" with an unknown source of water.

Negative Pressure

Under the right conditions contaminants can enter the plumbing system by the process of back-flow, **back-siphonage** or negative pressure. Negative pressure can be caused when the pressure in a customer's water system is increased above that of the city's water distribution system.

Example: when a customer uses a pump to increase his water pressure and it malfunctions, or the customer has a well for irrigation that is connected to the potable water plumbing. Pressures from the unknown quality water sources can exceed the public water system pressure and force the unknown quality of water into the public water system.



Back Siphonage

By far the major condition that causes back-flow in the average home would be back-siphonage. Back-siphonage back-flow begins when the normal flow of liquid is reversed by the introduction of a vacuum or partial vacuum. A water main break, during which the water flows in a direction different from its usual course, or a fire engine pulling water from a fire hydrant can create the back-siphonage or back-flow process. Although this alone won't contaminate the public water supply, it may if someone has an active cross-connection inside their home.

Example; A common cross-connection in the home is when a faucet (spigot) is lower than the overflow drain in a sink, bathtub or laundry basin. This potential cross-connection can be created with kitchen sink vegetable sprayers and handheld shower heads such as shower massagers, if the tube is long enough for the sprayer head to drop into bath or sink water. With these conditions present, a negative pressure could develop in the water main during a fire or water main break and the sink/tub/basin could fill with contaminated water, and if the spigot was open, the contaminated water could be sucked back into the potable water supply.



Back Flow

Intentional cross-connections are prohibited by most plumbing codes however where there are no other reasonable alternatives, cross-connections to the potable plumbing system are allowed with the use of an approved protective device. These protective devices are called "**back-flow preventers**".

Example: an intentional cross connection would be a lawn irrigation system or sprinkler system. Under backflow or back siphonage conditions herbicides, pesticides and bacteria from animal feces have the potential of entering the irrigation piping through the irrigation heads. The only protection from potential contamination is the back flow preventer.

The back flow device is a mechanical device and the question is not if it will fail but rather when will it fail? This is why it is important to have this device checked annually.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has outlined mandates that require the public water system to:

- * Not allow any water connection to the public drinking water supply system by any residence or establishment where an actual or potential contamination hazard exists unless the public water facilities are protected from contamination.
- * Implement an adequate internal cross-connection control program shall include an annual inspection and testing by a certified backflow prevention assembly tester on all backflow prevention assemblies used for health hazard protection.
- * Keep on file obtained copies of all such inspection and test reports.

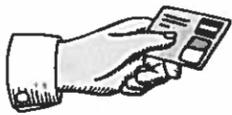
The Lancaster Water Department as a purveyor is responsible for protecting the public water system and health of its customers. As the owner or lessee of the premises, TCEQ requires that the customer have all backflow assemblies, anti-siphon, or double-check valves on your property tested annually by a certified tester and deliver the test results to the City of Lancaster for TCEQ's review.

Since assuming the responsibilities of the backflow flow/Cross connection program in October of 2003 the water department has surveyed 1944 service connections out of approximately 10,000 connections. There were 99 identified locations with back flow devices that are in need of registration with the program and also in need of testing. Notices were sent to those locations in August 2004 and to date we have received about a 25% response. The water department is now in the process of following up to ensure the back flow preventers are tested from the non responsive locations. Any cost incurred by the city will be the responsibility of the property owners and/or lessees.

For further information concerning back flow devices or testing please contact Phillip Curtis, Utility Superintendent at 972-218-5927. Your cooperation in protecting the public water system and the health and safety of our customers is greatly appreciated. Thank you for helping to protect our water system.

LANCASTER CONNECTION is a quarterly publication produced by staff of the City of Lancaster. It is designed to inform citizens about programs, services, policies and events. There is no cost to residents for this publication and it is printed by Dallas Offset, Inc. If you have any suggestions or comments regarding this publication, please contact the following:

City of Lancaster
Attn: Community Relations
Post Office Box 940
Lancaster, Texas 75146
<http://lancaster.city-crm.com>



Are you a victim of identity theft?

Do you write a check at the grocery store, charge a meal at a restaurant, order new checks, rent a car, or simply toss all of those credit offers in the trash? Everyday we, as consumers, are susceptible to the fastest growing crime our nation currently faces.

A study conducted in July 2003 concluded that approximately 7 million people became victims of identity theft in the previous 12 month period. Break that down and you have 19,178 victims per day, 799 victims per hour, and 13.3 victims per minute. Approximately 85% of victims do not even know they have been victimized until they are denied credit or employment or have been notified by collection agencies or even the police. Victims spend an average of 600 hours, often over a period of years, and \$1,400 recovering from this crime.

What is identity theft?

Identity theft occurs when someone obtains a key piece of personal identifying information and uses it to gain some form of benefit. This information could include:

1. name
2. address
3. date of birth
4. social security number
5. mother's maiden name
6. employer name



This personal identifying information is then used to open new credit or bank accounts, apply for loans, buy cars, rent apartments and even buy houses.

Identity thieves use several methods to gain your personal information. These methods may range from hi-tech to low-tech. Some of these methods may include, but certainly are not limited to:

1. using personal information shared on the internet
2. email scams
3. stealing wallets and purses
4. stealing mail
5. rummaging through your trash or the trash of a business
6. bribing employees of businesses where you may be a customer for your personal information



Can I Minimize my risk?

Unfortunately you can't completely prevent identity theft. However, you can take measures to minimize your risk. Managing your personal identifying information wisely is the first line of defense in protecting your good name and credit. Here are steps that you can and should take:

1. Order a copy of your credit report from the three major credit bureaus. Make sure the information is accurate. The three major credit bureaus are Equifax 800-685-1111, www.equifax.com; Experian 888-EXPERIAN, www.experian.com; and TransUnion 800-888-4213, www.transunion.com. Order your credit report yearly.

2. Place passwords on all of your credit card, phone and bank accounts. Do not use readily available information such as mother's maiden name, dates of birth, social security numbers, etc. Make the passwords unique.

3. Shred your mail before throwing it away, especially those pre-approved credit card offers. Paper shredders can be purchased for as low as \$10 at your local office supply store. This is a small price to pay for a lot of piece of mind.



4. Do not let mail sit in your mailbox overnight or over a weekend. If you are going out of town, contact your post office and have your mail held until you return. If you mail your bills, take the extra time to drop your outgoing mail in the box at the post office.

5. When online, use a firewall and surf the internet on a secure browser (one that encrypts or scrambles information sent over the internet). Try not to store financial information on a laptop or your work computer. If you must, use a strong password (a combination of letters and numbers) and change it often.



What can I do if it happens to me?

Even the most vigilant of us can fall victim to an identity thief. If this happens to you, there are some steps you should take. Most importantly, take action immediately and keep a detailed record of your conversations and correspondences. Exactly what actions you take depend on the circumstances of how your identity has been used fraudulently. There are three basic steps that are consistent in almost every case.

1. Contact one of the three major credit bureaus listed above and tell them that you have become a victim of identity theft. Request that they place a fraud alert on your file. This can help prevent any additional occurrences. If you contact one of the bureaus, they will contact the other two for you.
2. Close any credit or bank accounts that you know or suspect may have fraudulent activity. If you are closing an account, remember to use a new Personal Identification Number (PIN) with the new account. If you are disputing charges on an account, ask the company to provide you with the company's fraud dispute form.
3. File a police report. This may be done with your local police department or a department in the location where the identity theft occurred. Obtain a copy, or at the very least, a police report number. Many banks, credit card companies, or others require this as proof of the crime and may be necessary to erase the debts incurred by the identity thief.

Identity theft is a complex and ever-changing crime. With a little vigilance and closer management of your personal identifying information, you can help reduce the chances that you will fall victim to this growing crime trend.



January

- School Board Appreciation Month
- 15th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade
- 15th - LGS mtg - Migration Routes & Settlement Patterns
- 17th - Martin Luther king, Jr's Birthday - City offices closed, No School
- 20th - 7 pm LISD Spelling Bee K-3, LHS Auditorium
- 25th - 6 pm Texas Scholars Parent Mtg, LJH
- 27th - 7 pm LISD Spelling Bee 4-8, LHS Auditorium
- 29th - Lancaster Outreach Gala

February

- Black History Month
- 2nd - Groundhog Day
- 8th - LGS mtg - Missing Heirs
- 9th-13th LISD Support Staff Appreciation Week
- 12th - Chamber of Commerce - Chili Cook Off
- 12th - Lincoln's Birthday
- 14th - Valentines Day
- 17th - National PTA Founders Day Observance
- 21st - President's Day
- 22nd - Washington's Birthday
- 22nd - TAKS Testing
- 23rd - TAKS/SDAA Testing
- 25th - Ash Wednesday



March

- American Red Cross Month
- McGruff's 25th Birthday Celebration
- Music in our Schools Month
- Read Across America
- 7th-11th Texas Public School Week
- 8th - LGS mtg - Making your Washington re search trip work
- 8th - International Women's Day
- 8th-12th High School Evening Orientations (incoming grade 8 students & parents)
- 14th-18th Spring Break
- 17th - St. Patrick's day
- 20th - Palm Sunday
- 25th - Good Friday - City offices closed, Student/Teacher Holiday
- 27th - Easter



April

- Keep American Beautiful Month
- School Library Media Month
- 1st - April Fool's Day
- 1st-2nd Trash Off
- 2nd - International Children's Book Day
- 4th - Daylight Savings Time (clocks up 1 hr)
- 9th - PTA End of the Year Celebration Chamber of Commerce - Lancaster in Bloom
- 11th-12th Young People's Poetry Week
- 18th-24th Administrative Professionals Week Public Schools Volunteer Week National Library Week
- 22nd-23rd The Best Southwest Bookfest
- 22nd - Earth Day
- 23rd - Senior Prom
- 27th - Academic Achievement Celebration and Banquet, Parks & Rec. Center
- 30th - Chamber of Commerce Gala



Siren testing 1st Wednesday of every month



April 22nd and 23rd, 2005 2nd Annual BEST SOUTHWEST BOOKFEST 2005!

Authors, writers, storytellers, illustrators, book and audiobook lovers... There's something special for ALL ages and interests at this year's Best Southwest Bookfest!

Friday's events are especially devoted to schoolchildren. Young people meet your favorite authors, and participate in workshops. Saturday's schedule is filled with author's talks, panel discussions, book signings, and illustrators talks. Some authors who have appeared in previous festivals are: Carlton Stowers, Paula LaRouque, and Jane Roberts Wood. Exhibitors will be on hand to acquaint you with best selling books, forthcoming books, and independent publishers books.

A hotly contested writing contest will be held for High School students in Lancaster, DeSoto, Cedar Hill, Duncanville, and Midlothian, sponsored by TODAYNEWSPAPERS, with cash prizes awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place at each of these schools.

The Best Southwest Book Fest is a non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging reading and the love of books and dedicated to improving the cultural opportunities of the Best Southwest area.

The Book Fest, presented by the public libraries of Lancaster, DeSoto, Duncanville, Cedar Hill, and the University of North Texas Dallas Campus Library is the area's largest literary event. Proceeds from the Bookfest are used for the promotion of literacy in our community through the Best Southwest Book Fest Foundation. Free of charge!

The 2005 Best Southwest Bookfest event held in DeSoto at the UNT South Dallas Campus Hampton Rd. and I-20. Contact your Public Library for details, or visit our website at <http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/bookfest/>

Artist Demonstrations

Sponsored by The ART CLUB, first Tuesday of each month from September to June at 7:00 pm

Basic Computer User

training classes - January- FREE -see details on library's website <http://www.lancastertxlib.org>

Friends of the Library

Sponsors adult programs, the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm. Potluck supper at 7:00 pm. Also, visit our Job Center & Contemplative Garden by the Lake.

Lancaster Genealogical Society

second Tuesday of each month, except December which is the first Saturday.