



February 2013

City Happenings

An eNewsletter from the City of Lexington, Nebraska

“Flushable” vs. “Dispersible”



It's a Toilet, Not a Trash Can
by Doug Glaze, Superintendent
Lexington Wastewater Treatment Plant

At times it seems as though we live in a disposable world. Consumers today demand convenience. Manufacturers exploit this demand by creating more items tagged with the label “disposable.” Common household goods such as cleaners and personal hygiene products are packaged as single sheets or wipes, suggesting they are not only *disposable* items, but *flushable* items, which may not be true.

Companies often market their products as flushable or biodegradable. This does not necessarily mean that these items are safe for sewers and septic systems. In order for an item to be safe for sanitary sewers it must not only be flushable, it must also be *dispersible*. A dispersible product such as toilet paper is a product that readily disperses or dissolves in water. Unlike toilet paper, some of these items that are labeled flushable contain plastic other non-dispersible components.

Instead of dispersing when flushed, these items settle in sewer mains or lift stations, or get lodged in one of the dozens of pumps in the sewage chain. The need to continually unclog or fix these ultimately results in increased utility costs to the consumer. In a worse case scenario for residents, the clog may cause sewer backups into a building, which is unpleasant and costly to clean. If the clog occurs inside the property lines, the responsibility belongs to the owner, not the city.

Studies indicate that more than 70% of household cleaning wipes and personal hygiene products are non-dispersible and should not be flushed to the sanitary sewer system. And flushing these items or putting them through the garbage disposal does not necessarily keep them out of the landfill. Solid items that arrive at the wastewater treatment facility often have to be separated, collected and transported to – you guessed it: *the landfill*.

Knowing what is safe to flush and what is not can help in reducing utilities cost and help prevent unnecessary failures in the sanitary sewer system.



The above photo show a sample of non-dispersible solids that arrive daily at the Wastewater Treatment Plant

To Flush or Not to Flush . . .

Knowing what is safe to flush and what is not can help in reducing utility cost and help prevent unnecessary failures in the sanitary sewer system.

Examples of what can be flushed:

- Human waste (urine and feces)
- Pet feces (e.g., removed from a cat's box)
- Toilet paper
- Products labeled as “dispersible”

Examples of what should not be flushed:

- Household cleaning wipes and paper towels
- Personal hygiene wipes, baby wipes or diapers
- Feminine hygiene products and their packaging
- Plastic packaging, wrappers or bottles
- Prophylactic devices
- Cat litter (e.g., clumped balls of urine)
- Medicines (they're just bad for the environment)



Don't export destructive insects in firewood



pincer-like appendages on the last segment.

Nebraskans who use firewood are being asked to buy locally harvested wood to keep plant diseases and insects from spreading. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture says plant pests that can travel through firewood could damage the state's trees. State officials are trying to prevent the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer, a destructive beetle species, and Thousand Cankers Disease, which threatens some walnut trees. Nebraska state entomologist Julie Van Meter said the Emerald Ash Borer has been found in Iowa, Missouri and Kansas.

Adult EABs are emerald green beetles that are approximately 1/2 inch long with slender, elongated bodies. EAB larvae can grow up to 1-1/2 inches long and are white or cream colored. They have a brown head and a 10-segmented body with a pair of brown,



Downtown Revitalization: installation started Jan. 30 on new light poles in the new downtown south parking lot., 5th & Washington

STUDENTS!
NOW is the time to apply for summer City jobs: concessions, lifeguards, & lawn mowers.
 Go to www.cityoflex.com/index.aspx?page=40 for more information and to download a blank application form. Send completed application to address below or email to pberke@cityoflex.com.
Don't delay — do it today!

WE ASK OUR CUSTOMERS

DO NOT DEPOSIT IN TRASH DUMPSTERS:

- yard waste • tree branches • wood
- cement • iron • batteries and tires . . .
- . . . as the landfill will not accept these items.

YOUR DUMPSTER IS FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD TRASH ONLY

If you have a curbside trash container, DO NOT place trash in large alley dumpsters. These are for alley customers only.

If your curbside trash container fills before the weekly pickup, please call for additional containers.

DO NOT under any circumstances put hot BBQ coals or fireplace ashes in your dumpster. If you are caught doing this you will have to pay to replace the dumpster if fire occurs.

If you see someone using alley containers for construction materials, yard waste, or other unaccepted items please call us right away and we will take care of it.

Dan's Sanitation
 324-6693 • Lexington

EnergyWise Tip: **Energy Efficiency for Valentine's Day**

How about a different idea this Valentine's season? Rather than running to the floral shop or greeting card section, why not impress your Valentine with a gift that says you care while reducing the energy used at home?

▶ Have you considered buying a programmable thermostat and properly setting it for winter and summer use? This could reduce heating and cooling costs by more than 10 percent. Today's models are simple enough for most homeowners to install themselves and offer up to hour-by-hour programming for the home's temperature. One rule of thumb is that each degree in Fahrenheit the thermostat is set back over an eight-hour period translates to a 1 percent savings in heating costs.

▶ Though it is certainly not traditional for this time of year, look at buying a new high-efficiency refrigerator/freezer. When compared to units made 30 years ago, today's units only use a third as much energy. That can translate to saving well over \$100 per year in energy costs.

▶ Have you looked at the new, high-efficiency clothes washers lately? About 90 percent of the energy used to wash clothes is used heating the water. So if you purchase a unit that makes the most out of cold water washing, you can realize some significant savings. Remember, the simplest way to ensure your buying quality, energy efficient appliances is to purchase those with the ENERGYSTAR® on their label.

▶ Rather than considering the purchase of a throw blanket, blanket the attic in insulation! Since attics are fairly easy to get into, they are often the most cost-effective insulation project you can do in your home. In Nebraska, you should have at least enough insulation to provide a R38 value. If you are not sure if you have adequate insulation in your

home, visit with Lexington Utilities System. You might be eligible for an incentive, too!

▶ Energy efficient Valentine's giving does not have to come with a larger price tag. There are lots of things you can give or do that will not break the bank.

▶ It may sound crazy, but how about a new pleated furnace filter? A clean filter helps your heating and cooling system maintain its efficiency. Note that pleated filters have more surface area than the cheaper fiberglass filters. While you may not need to replace your filter monthly, you should check it on a regular basis to ensure it is clean enough to function properly. Dirty filters reduce airflow, which causes your system to run longer and consume more energy.

▶ Here is a bright idea! An LED light bulb will usually last more than 20 years! Over the course of its lifetime, you will save more than \$100 when compared to using standard light bulbs. Most LED light bulbs are fully dimmable and many screw into your existing light sockets.

▶ How about a simple idea; a tube of caulk? Most tubes cost less than the average Valentine's card! More importantly, the money saved in heating and cooling costs usually pays for the caulk in less than one year. Some types of caulk have rated lifetimes of over 25 years, which means energy savings for years to come!

For more great ideas on how to make you and your Valentine EnergyWiseSM, contact Lexington Utilities System or visit www.nppd.com.





Library News

Lexington Public Library
907 North Washington St.

by Kathy Thomsen
Library Director

On Sunday,
February 24 at
2:00 p.m.,
storyteller
Pippa White



will present *Straight on Till Morning*. Her performance will take you to delightful kingdoms of fantasy, as well as surprising realms of non-fiction. You will be entertained by authors you know and authors you've never heard of. You'll hear oral histories from World War II, alongside the true story of a 10 year old girl, who saved her father's life. You will laugh, you will possibly shed a tear and you will remember how wonderful it is to be told a story.



On Thursday,
March 7 at 7:00
p.m., **Chris Short**
Puppet

Personalities will delight children with entertaining marionette and Muppet type puppets. The figures are 3 foot tall and completely animated with movable eyes, mouth, and many other clever effects. The routines are choreographed to music ranging from the Big Band Era to '50s Rock and Roll to Nashville's Country Music. The Puppet Personalities are presented under spectacular Black Light effects, which create an illusion of mystical animation.

On Sunday, March 10, at 2:00 p.m., Kearney's **Habitat 4**

Harmony will entertain with "Good Ol' Barbershop," comedy, parodies, country western and inspirational numbers. The rest of their repertoire has no known category, but is simply fun to sing. If you've heard some of their songs before, please refrain from singing along—they're embarrassed when you remember them better than they do!



On Sunday,
March 24 at 2:00
p.m., Nebraska's
Daughter, **Pat**
Boilesen, will
return to the

Lexington Public Library to perform country, traditional western and gospel music. Singer, songwriter, piano player, and poet - a good share of what she writes is taken from history and the rest from her own experiences living on the plains of Nebraska.

All of these programs are funded by the **Lexington Library Memorial Fund** and the **Lexington Community Foundation**.

Beginning Computer offered in February and March are funded by the **Library Broadband Builds Nebraska Communities Grant**.

Beginning Computer will cover the components of a computer, making,

renaming, moving and deleting files and folders as well as saving, printing and searching for documents.



Beginning Internet will explore menu and toolbars and how to use a search engine to find information or websites, as well as navigating e-mail and attachments.



Beginning Facebook will cover what Facebook is, how you can use it and user and privacy settings.

Class size is limited. To preregister, call the library at 324-2151.

Kindle One on One Sessions are also being offered at the library during the month of February. If you have a Kindle or other device and would like one on one help learning to operate that device, call the library at 324-2151 to schedule a session.

The **Dawson County Children's Museum**

will meet at the Lexington Public Library on Saturday, February 9, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.. The program will be *Happy Hearts*, which will include fun zumba dancing and Valentine activities.



In past February newsletters . . .



2011

Phase 3 of the Dawson County Opportunity Center was completed, new tenants moved in: Chamber of Commerce, Nebraska Dept. of Labor, Dawson Area Development, and a new call center for Nebraska Health & Human Services.

2010

Phase one of the Legend Oaks (18th & Adams) housing project was finished, all 21 townhome units were occupied as soon as each was completed.



2008

The main stretch of the 2.4-mile hike/bike trail along the west side of Plum Creek Parkway was completed.

2007

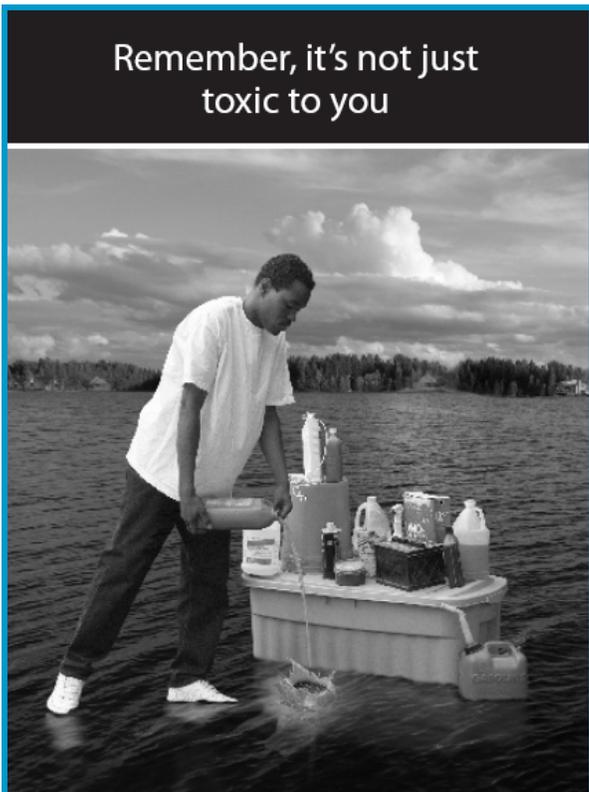


A ground-breaking ceremony was held for the CED Addition, a new housing

development on west side of South Adams Street.

2006

The City's Skate Park was moved from a former concrete basketball pad at Oak Park, to a new concrete skate pad at the southeast corner of Arbor Park (Maple & Plum Creek Pkwy).



Remember, it's not just toxic to you

Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals and oil.

Did you know that many household products are dangerous to our kids, pets, and the environment?

These materials pollute our waterways if washed or dumped into storm drains or roadside ditches that lead directly to our lakes and rivers. Household cleaners, pesticides, gasoline, antifreeze, used motor oil, and other hazardous products need to be labeled, stored, and disposed of properly.

So what can you do? Simple.

Be aware of household products that can harm children, pets, and the environment. Pay attention to words such as "warning" or "caution" on product labels. Reduce waste and save money by purchasing only the materials you need.

Keep unused products in their original containers with labels.

Never dump hazardous products down storm drains, roadside ditches, sinks, or on the ground—take them to your local community's hazardous waste collection day.

Help keep our homes and the environment safe.



Support provided by NDEQ



Lexington snow and ice removal

According to the calendar, it's winter again. In the event of a serious winter storm, the City would like to remind citizens of the following points related to snow removal. There is also an Emergency Snow Route map on the next page, and is also found on the Maps link at the City's website.

Property owners are required to remove snow and ice from sidewalks abutting their property, within 48 hours of the snowfall. Removal of snow and ice from sidewalks not only ensures safe passage for pedestrians (including school children), but also limits liability. Someone who sustains injuries from slipping on ice might claim their injuries resulted from property owner neglect.

Please remember that snow and ice removed from your property is not to be placed into the street, instead move it to non-paved areas.

The City needs the cooperation of all citizens as we work to remove

snow and ice from the streets. Citizens are encouraged to listen to local radio stations or read the local newspaper for announcements of possible Snow Emergency situations where substantial snowfall is



experienced or anticipated.

In times of a declared Snow Emergency, parking along streets in the designated Snow Emergency Route is prohibited. Commercial Areas may also be

included (see Snow Route map). Citizens living along these routes are encouraged to comply with the prohibition and move their vehicles from the street.

In addition, during a Snow Emergency, parking in the Downtown area is prohibited.

In non-emergency times, citizens are still encouraged to move their parked vehicles off of the street in a reasonable period of time after snowfall to allow City crews access to remove the snow and ice. Information regarding the removal of snow in your area of the City can be obtained by contacting Glenn Hawks, Community Services Director, at 308-324-5995.

The City of Lexington would like to reiterate that snow and ice removal is important for vehicular traffic as well as pedestrian traffic.

Please take the time to do your part to keep our streets and sidewalks safe.



801 West
Vine Street
308-324-5995

Winter Hours

Mon. - Fri.
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

- dispose of furniture, appliances, and other large items
- pick up free wood chips, dirt or compost
- dispose of tree limbs.



REVISED: At the November 13, 2012, City Council meeting, the City Council approved minor changes to the City's Emergency Snow Routes (below). 20th Street was added in the northwest, and a couple blocks of West Walnut was removed west of Adams Street.

