

TARRANT COUNTY

NEWS & INFORMATION



January 2013



www.tarrantcounty.com

Wildfire Risk Prompts Fire Marshal Precautions

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.

On December 4, 2012, the Tarrant County Commissioners Court declared that a Burn Ban is in effect for 90 days.

The Fire Marshal's Office recommends that home owners take the following 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.

Farm and ranch families and citizens living in rural areas can help protect their property during potentially severe wildfire seasons by taking precautions before wildland fires break out. Fire experts advise clearing a 30-to-50-foot space around homes and other buildings. Keep grass mowed down whether it is dormant or still green.

Brush should be cleared from areas between trees and the branches pruned. Make sure the areas beneath utility lines are clear of brush, tall grass and trees in order to protect essential services.

Other wildland fire safety tips include the following:

- Clear vegetation between buildings and nearby fields or woodlands to create an area that does not feed the fire. Clear areas along roadways.
- Keep mufflers and spark arresters on agricultural equipment in proper working order.
- Watch out for sparks when using welding equipment to build fences or repair equipment.
- Avoid driving or parking vehicles in grassy areas where tall, dry grass can come into contact with hot pollution control equipment under your vehicle.

For tips on cooking outdoors and welding during a burn ban, go to www.tarrantcounty.com and click on the "Burn Ban" logo.

Swartz Photographs Sought

Some of the best early photographic portraits we have in Tarrant County were taken by a couple of brothers with the last name of Swartz. From portraits of what was then the new Courthouse completed in 1895 to portraits of Lina Franke Guenther and two other little girl cousins sporting Mexican hats to the most famous picture of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, the Swartz brothers' (David, John, and Charles) cameras have given us rare glimpses into the past. The images shown are Swartz photographs. Perhaps you have some Swartz photographs in your business or family collection. If so, several researchers at the Tarrant County Archives would be interested in learning of their existence.



Do you have a bit of history that needs saving and celebrating?

Contact the Tarrant County Archivist:
Dr. Dawn Youngblood 817-884-3272
dayoungblood@tarrantcounty.com,
and visit us online at:
www.tarrantcounty.com/e-archives

Make a No-Flu Resolution

The beginning of each year provides the opportunity to reinforce good habits and to put aside bad ones. If one of your bad habits is not getting a flu shot, it's not too late to get one and there are locations everywhere.

In Texas, flu usually peaks in January and February. If you are thinking that you are healthy and that you made it to 2013 without getting sick, you need to think again. Flu is contagious; it usually comes on suddenly. Even healthy people can get it and spread it. People infected with the flu may be able to spread it from one day before getting sick to about 5-7 days after getting sick. That's why it is so important for you to get a flu shot as soon as possible. In about two weeks, you will have the full benefit of protection. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get an annual flu shot.

Today, you can resolve to get your annual flu shot and to reinforce other healthy habits such as getting enough rest and sleep, practicing proper nutrition, exercising regularly and getting enough fluids.

Students Invited to Enter Annual Poster Contest

Tarrant County students in grades 1 – 8 are invited to enter Tarrant County Public Health's annual Public Health Week poster contest. Students who enter will produce original artwork that highlights this year's theme: "Public Health: Save Lives, Save Money." Entries must be mailed to or dropped off at Tarrant County Public Health's main location, 1101 S. Main Street, Fort Worth, by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 8, 2013.

A winning entry will be chosen from each grade level that is submitted. The winning artists will receive prizes that include note cards personalized with their artwork and a framed certificate. In addition, they will be invited to a Tarrant County Commissioners Court meeting where they will be recognized for their creativity. Winners also will have their artwork added to a display at Tarrant County Public Health's main location.

Tarrant County Public Health sponsors this contest as part of National Public Health Week (April 1 – 7, 2013). For more details about entering the contest, and to look at entries from previous poster contests, visit the Tarrant County Public Health Web site: (<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>) or call 817-321-5313.