



4900 River Oaks Boulevard  River Oaks, Texas  76114

January 28, 2010

## Good Housekeeping Means Cleaner Waters



At first, it might feel like *one more thing*. A business owner's daily to-do list is so long, that news of a local ordinance targeting businesses seems like just one more responsibility. But buried within those requirements is a motivation to keep our local water resources clean. And businesses, as pillars of our community, offer a public face that makes them ideal to help lead the movement toward a cleaner River Oaks.

Chapter 13, Article 13.10 of the River Oaks Code of Ordinances revised the City's Storm Water Management Plan that **includes an updated and revised Storm Water Management Plan designed to develop a watershed-wide approach to storm water management.** In an effort to promote community wide cooperation we are asking owners of local businesses to observe a set of rules that in essence are just good housekeeping practices, most of which businesses are already practicing. But these practices have the opportunity to significantly reduce water pollution that occurs through the storm drain system when everyone does their part.

The majority of us are probably most familiar with the "front end" of the storm drain system: the grates in the street or the cuts in the curb that seem to lead to nowhere. In fact, those pipes lead directly to local waters. There are no filters and no treatment. Whatever enters a storm drain is transported directly to the Trinity River.

The storm drain system is designed to channel storm water (the water you see flowing down the street when it rains) away from our sidewalks and streets, but the reality is that the water being channeled away is polluted. As it flows over pavement, storm water picks up and mixes with what's there, including, but certainly not limited to: oil from leaking cars; litter and debris; lawn chemicals from yards; bacteria from pet waste; and soap from car washing.

The ordinance asks businesses to take steps such as: checking to make sure that they don't have *direct* connections that pipe dirty water to a storm drain; keeping hazardous materials stored properly so that in the event of a spill, they wouldn't flow to the storm drain; and keeping the business site free of trash that could wash into a storm drain.

Of course, all of us, not just businesses, contribute these pollutants. As with the businesses, many of the good housekeeping measures that we residents can practice are as simple as fertilizing more sparingly and sweeping any spilled lawn chemicals off the sidewalk and back onto the lawn. Keeping our water clean is something we *all* can help achieve, and our local businesses are simply pioneering the way.

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Storm Water Task Force**

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**Joe Crews**

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