



City Visions

October/November 2009

Take 3 Steps To Fight the Flu

Flu seasons are unpredictable in a number of ways, including the timing of the beginning, severity and length of the flu season. This flu season there are more uncertainties than usual because of the emergence of the H1N1 flu virus. There are three steps we can all take, however, according to the Centers for Disease Control, that will lessen our risk and fight the flu.

1. Take time to get a flu vaccine. The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting yourself against the flu. This is especially important for people at high risk for serious flu complications, including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart or lung disease, and people 65 and older.
2. Take everyday preventive actions. These are things we should be doing anyway that will help to avoid the flu. Of prime importance is staying home from work or school if you get the flu so you won't infect others. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneeze into the inside of your elbow in lieu of a tissue. Did you know that the average speed of your sneeze is 90 miles per hour? That means that fluids are being expelled out of your body faster than a speeding car. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Finally, don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. Although they are no substitute for vaccination, antivirals can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They work best if started within two days of symptoms. Symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and muscle aches.

Flu is a serious, contagious disease. But there's no need to panic if everyone will follow the CDC's recommendations. For more information, log on to www.flu.gov.

City Website Official Web Portal for Information, Services

Boynton-Beach.org is the City's official web portal for news and information about city services and programs. It also provides you with direct online access to a number of services that make it easy and convenient for you to conduct your business with the City. These include Utility Bill Pay; Automated Permitting, which allows you to schedule, reschedule or cancel an inspection; view permit status, view plan check status and check inspection results; and renew Business Tax licenses. You can apply for a job online (no more paper applications accepted) and you can even schedule a tee time at The Links Golf Course. Beginning in December, you'll also be able to sign up online for Recreation & Parks programs.

Also available on the City's website are the City's Code of Ordinances and public records, including City Commission agendas and meeting minutes. We've recently added the audio portion from City Commission meetings, which is generally available within 24-48 hours following the meeting. Bids, Requests for Proposals and Requests for Qualifications may all be found on the website, too. Starting in September, you'll be able to take advantage of our interactive mapping service.

We believe in delivering information and services in ways that are convenient to you. You can sign up for *Boynton eNews* and have the information you want delivered to your inbox. Using *Boynton QA*, you can find the answers to common questions, ask new questions or request services. You can also check the status of existing issues and provide feedback to staff. Complementing the website, are our blog, Twitter, Flickr, Vimeo and YouTube sites. There are links from the City's website to those sites.

H.E.L.P. Is Available for City's Fire Rescue Assessment

A provision of the City of Boynton Beach's recently reenacted Fire Rescue Assessment provides for financial assistance to qualified individuals who may have difficulty in paying all or part of the assessment. The H.E.L.P. program – Hardship Extension Loan Program - offers the following types of assistance, based on need: Relief from all payments of the annual assessment; relief from a portion of payments; deferral of payments; or deferral of a portion of payments. Individuals who are eligible for H.E.L.P. assistance include: residential property owners who meet 2008 U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services Poverty Guidelines; residential property owners who are exempt from ad valorem taxation because they are totally disabled veterans or surviving spouses of veterans, disabled veterans confined to wheelchairs or totally and permanently disabled persons; residential property owners that qualify for the additional homestead exemption for persons 65 and over; and residential property owners that are qualified under the Florida Homestead Property Tax Deferral Act.

An application for a waiver or deferral must be filed with the City on or before Nov. 1, 2009, to be considered. Applications are available at all City facilities, by calling (561) 742-6060 or at www.boynton-beach.org. The applicant must provide documentation showing eligibility for the waiver or deferral through one of the above criteria and also include a copy of the tax bill for the subject property and describe the facts and circumstances of the hardship.

Once received, the application will be reviewed by a Hardship Waiver Review Committee. The committee will provide a written decision to the applicant and if a partial or total waiver of the assessment is granted, the City will provide proper documentation to the Tax Collector's office.

For more information, call (561) 742-6310.

Homestead Exemption Assistance Available at Boynton Library

A representative from the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser's Office will be on hand at the Boynton Beach City Library, 208 S. Seacrest Blvd., on Wednesday, Oct. 21, and Wednesday, Nov. 18, 11:00 A.M.- Noon to assist homeowners in registering for a Homestead Exemption. Every person who has legal title on Jan. 1 to a residential property and lives there permanently qualifies for this exemption. You must be a permanent resident of Florida on Jan. 1 of the initial application year. The deadline is March 1 of the qualifying year.

A copy of your deed and proof of residency is required. You may submit a copy of your Florida driver's license, voter's registration or permanent residency card. In lieu of a pending permanent resident alien card, the Property Appraiser's Office will accept Federal Form I485, "Approval Notice for application to adjust to permanent resident status."

Certain seniors who are 65 or older may be eligible for an additional \$25,000 property tax exemption on their home's assessed value in the City of Boynton Beach. To qualify, your adjusted gross income must meet a maximum level that is adjusted annually by Florida's Department of Revenue.

For more information on Florida's Homestead Exemption program, visit the Palm Beach County Property Appraiser's website at www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/papa or call (561) 355-2866

Accurate Census Count Means Money For the City



The U.S. Census Bureau can't conduct the 2010 Census alone, nor can the City of Boynton Beach, which is why we're seeking volunteers to serve on a Complete Count Committee. Why should that concern you?

It should concern you because the census population totals determine which states gain or lose representation in Congress. Perhaps more immediate, though, to the City of Boynton Beach is that the census also helps determine the amount of state and federal funding communities receive over the course of the decade. Anyone who attended this week's first public budget hearing in which commissioners grappled with maintaining an acceptable level of services in a downturned economy will immediately appreciate the importance of the City receiving its full share of the more than \$3 trillion that will be allocated over the next 10 years. To accomplish this, the goal of the census is to count everybody, count them only once and count them in the right place. The facts gathered in the census also help shape decisions for the rest of the decade about public health, neighborhood improvements, transportation, education, senior services and much more.

The City has a lot at stake, and a fundamental part of achieving a complete and accurate count in the 2010 Census is to identify, communicate and inspire hard-to-count groups to participate. One of the most strategic and effective ways is through the Complete Count Committee. Committee members are community leaders that speak the language of their community, and utilize local knowledge, expertise and influence to design and implement a census awareness campaign that is targeted to inspire others to take action and participate in the 2010 Census. They have the local knowledge and the ability to focus on potential problem areas such as people who speak languages other than English, low response rates, high number of renters and other hard-to-count groups. It is important that Complete Count volunteers are able to point out that while responses to the census questionnaire are required by law, all responses are used for statistical purposes only, and all are strictly confidential. Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census.

If you are interested in serving on the City's Complete Count Committee, please call me at 742-6025. By participating in the census, you can help create a better future for you and those important to you.

City of Boynton Beach
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Jerry Taylor, Mayor
Woodrow Hay, Vice Mayor, District II
Jose Rodriguez, Commissioner, District III
Marlene Ross, Commissioner, District IV
Ron Weiland, Commissioner, District I