



HOUSTON LAKER

Since March 1957 – Edition 69 June 2026

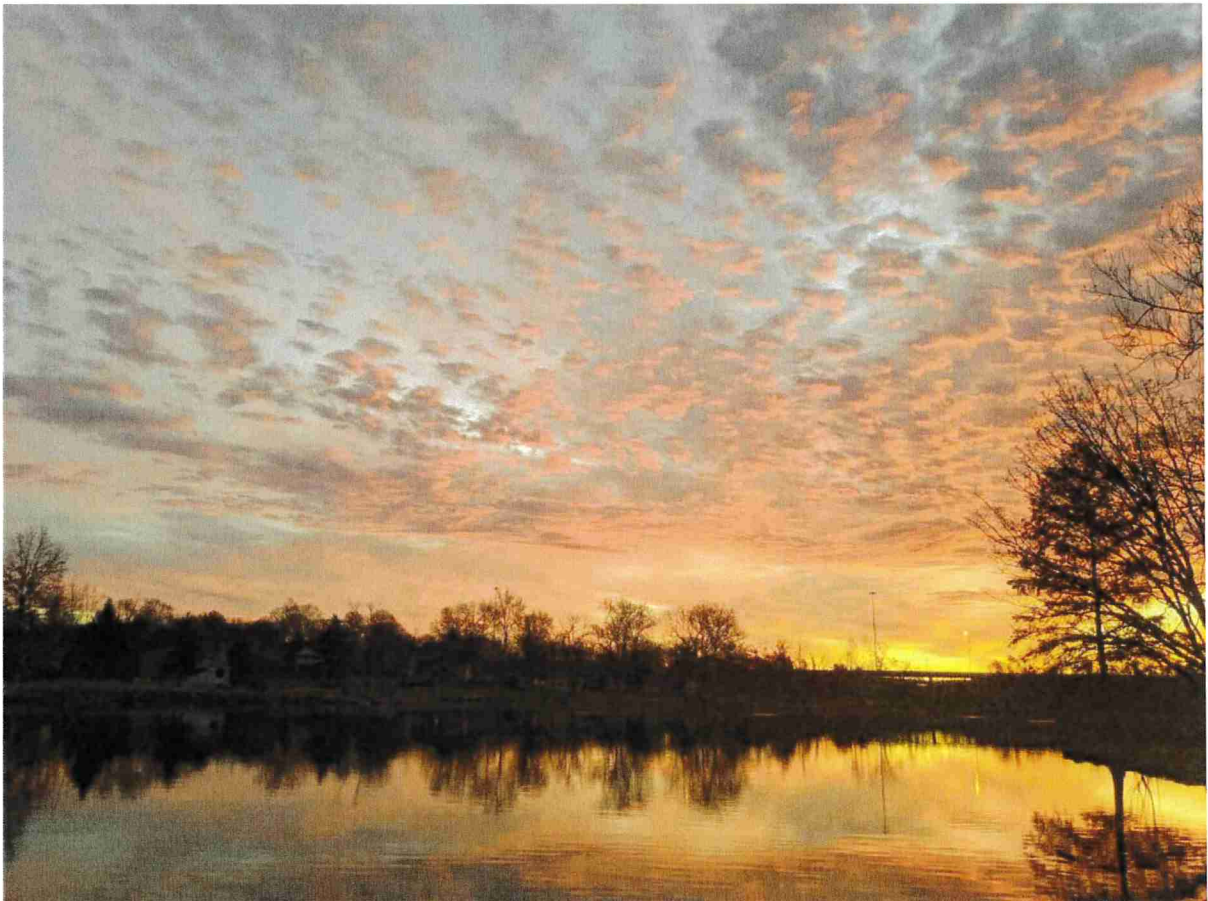


Photo by Brendan Brousseau

Congratulations to
Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Celebrating 80 YEARS
June 4th, 1946 to June 4th, 2026

**Congratulations to
Venetian Gardens
Homes Association.
Celebrating
80 YEARS
June 4th, 2026**

A Bit of History

Charles & Emma Houston, owners of the land and the lake since 1928, developed the property for recreation and rented cabins to anglers. To protect the lake and his investment the Houston's substantially rebuilt the dam to prevent wash-outs. Now a popular location for fishing, people wanted to buy cabins on the lake so the Houston's plotted and subdivided the property and on June 4, 1946 formed the Venetian Gardens Home's Association and deeded the Lake to it.

Fireworks

Section 210.680 of the Houston Lake Municipal Code states:

It shall be unlawful for any person to use or discharge any "bottle rockets".

It shall be unlawful for any person to use, ignite or discharge any fireworks within the public right of way of any public street.

Fireworks may only be used, ignited or discharged at the following times and dates:

1. From 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. each day during the period of June twenty-sixth (26) until July second (2nd) and on July fifth (5th); and

2. From 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 a.m. (midnight) each day on July third (3rd) and July fourth (4th).

No person shall have in his/her possession Division 1.3 (formerly class "B") fireworks.

Division 1.4 (formerly class "C") fireworks may be possessed during periods herein provided.

**DISCHARGING
AIR GUN, ETC.**

Any person within the limits of this City who shall discharge any BB gun, spring gun, paint gun or air gun or shall shoot any pebble, bullet, slug, arrow or other hard substance by means of a sling, crossbow, rubber band or bow or any other means shall be deemed guilty of an ordinance violation; provided however, that this Section shall not apply to any person or organization authorized by the City of Houston Lake to possess and discharge such devices for the purpose of waterfowl pest control. **(Ord. No. 303, 9-12-05 (Section 210.285))**

Letter from the Mayor

Thank you to the residents who attended the April meeting. It was wonderful to see both new neighbors and familiar faces returning after some time away. City meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, and all residents are welcome to attend.

Recently, the City Council approved an ordinance for short-term rentals and authorized permits for five property owners to operate within the city.

The sales tax for the City of Houston Lake has passed, and work has already begun on the use tax, which has been our long-term goal. Both taxes will be set at a rate of 1%, and the use tax will appear on the November ballot for residents to consider.

The recent rains have once again highlighted the need for attention to the city's ditches and culverts. The city is currently accepting bids for ditch repairs on the high side of the streets, and inspections of culverts are underway and will continue on a regular basis.

Thank you to Alderman Teresa Olsen for bringing the Planning and Zoning Board together to review fence permit exception requests and begin reviewing the city's building ordinances. If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact tolsen@houstonlake.gov.

Please watch for flyers about summer celebrations taking place in July, including the 80th anniversary of the Venetian Gardens Homes Association and a 4th of July picnic with family-friendly activities.

Thank you,

Sarah Schofield

Mayor of the City of Houston Lake

2026 TRASH & RECYCLING

DATES

City Trash and Recycling Service are handled by Republic Services. For assistance with your receptacles, issues with pick-up, or questions about large items contact customer service at 816-254-1470 or republicservices.com.

One Trash bin and **one** Recycling bin is picked up every Thursday. (If you require more than one trash bin and/or more than one recycling bin, you need to contact Republic Services directly at 816-254-1470 to set up any additional service you require for your residence.)

They need to be at the curb/edge of street by 6am. Place carts 1 foot from the curb/edge of the street. Leave room for the arm of the truck to pick up and return the receptacles without causing damage to vehicles, fences, etc. **Place the cart at least 5 feet from any object – like a car, tree, pole, fire hydrant, mailbox, electrical box, or cable box – so the automated arm can reach your cart.**

Trash & Recycling pickup is every Thursday.

Please maintain this same distance of 5 feet between recycling and waste carts.

Remember only one of each bin is allowed.

A \$10.00 charge per bin, per month, if you need additional bins.

2026 Holidays:

May 25 Memorial Day – Pick up Changed to Friday May 29.

July 4 Independence Day – No Change pick up will be on Thursday July 2.

September 7 Labor Day – Pick up changed to Friday September 11.

November 26 Thanksgiving Day - Pick up changed to Friday November 27.

December 25 Christmas Day – No Change pickup will be on Thursday December 24.

Lake Life

June 2026 Events

Trash and Recycling pick up change to Thursday

4 – Congratulations to Venetian Gardens Homes Association. Celebrating 80 years. June 4, 1946 to June 4, 2026

10 – Wednesday - City of Houston Lake Meeting – City Hall 6:30pm.

14 – Sunday Flag Day

15- Monday - VGHA meeting - 6:30pm City Hall. VGHA Treasurer Don Miller will be distributing 2026 Lake Wristbands from 6pm to 6:30pm.

21 – Sunday Father's Day & First Day of Summer.

24 – Wednesday Houston Laker Article Deadline

July 3 - Friday, Celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the VGHA. 5pm – Bingo, potluck, & activities.

July 4 – Saturday, Picnic. Beginning 9am, Community Events at the Mayors Park and yard games at City Hall. 12 Noon, Burgers and Hotdogs.

Hello fellow Lakers,

As I write this update on Memorial Day, I would like to take a moment to thank all Service Members who have served our country. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who fought to protect the freedoms we enjoy every day.

I would also like to address the breakage on the spillway bottom piece. Don and I have been busy working toward a solution by investigating whether a temporary fix is necessary, meeting with engineers and contractors, and advocating with Platte County to encourage MoDOT to address the issues with their flume.

I'd also like to give a special shout out to Jewel Head, who explained at the last HOA meeting that this is not the first time this has happened and shared how he addressed it during his time as mayor. His insight was both helpful and appreciated.

The bottom line is that your HOA Board is actively working on this issue. All spending projects have been placed on hold until we have a better understanding of the costs associated with the repair. Please feel free to reach out to any Board member with questions or concerns.

We are still looking for someone to assist with maintaining the beach dock and swim dock, as well as emptying trash and dog waste containers during the summer season. If you are interested, please contact me at 816-726-4455.

Thank you again for your continued support and commitment to our lake community.

Monday June 15, Venetian Gardens Homes Association Meeting 6:30pm-City Hall

Paid Members can pick up 2026 wristband from 6:00pm to 6:30pm at City Hall just before the meeting.

Warmest regards,

Pam

Don't Forget Your Missouri Fishing and a Houston Lake "2026 Wristband" when fishing!!

Lake Residents from the age of 16 through 64 need a Missouri Fishing License and a Houston Lake 2026 Wristband in order to fish in Houston Lake. Residents 65 and over need only a 2026 Wristband. No Fishing in the Beach Area.

To get your 2026 Wristbands call VGHA Treasurer, Don Miller 918-633-4109 or email drmiller5@icloud.com. The Wristbands are FREE if your Homes Association dues are paid.

Guests of Residents must have that Residents 2026 Wristband with them when they are on or around the lake and Homes Association property.

No trout lines, jug lines, seine net, gillnetting or unattended fishing lines. No FISHING anywhere beyond the gate at the swim beach.

VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION (VGHA)

OFFICIAL REGULATIONS – May 2026

These regulations have been adopted by the Venetian Gardens Homes Association (VGHA) for the benefit of Houston Lake owners, residents, and their guests. Following these regulations ensures the utmost enjoyment and safety of our facilities by eligible persons and their guests. These regulations may be changed anytime as reasonably deemed necessary by the VGHA Board of Directors.

ID Bracelets for Houston Lake Lot Owners, Residents, and Guests

- Only lot owners who are not delinquent on maintenance assessments are issued ID bracelets annually. Two (2) ID bracelets are issued to each lot owner regardless of the number of lots owned, except for those owners who have developed additional lots for rental property, in which case two additional ID bracelets are issued for each house. Owners are responsible for all ID bracelets issued for their property.
- ID bracelets are color coded and the color changes annually. A current ID bracelet is required to use the lake, or its facilities. Previous year's ID bracelets are obsolete and void.
- An ID bracelet must be worn by the resident, lot owner or the lot owner's guest at all times when using any HOA property including HOA parks, beach area, and water activities including boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, fishing, and swimming. This ensures anyone using the lake is readily identifiable.
- Lot owners are responsible for the conduct and actions of their guests at all times.

Violations

- Guests violating these guidelines may be directed to vacate the premises and return with a current HOA wristband by any homeowner or HOA representative.
 - Failure or refusal to comply with such a directive shall constitute grounds for escalation to local law enforcement. **Please report suspicious activity directly to the Platte County Sheriff's Department by calling 816-858-2424.**
 - Any incident requiring law enforcement involvement shall be deemed a violation of HOA regulations and may result in HOA enforcement action and/or fines against the homeowner in accordance with these regulations.
-

Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

- Short term rentals are approved by the City of Houston Lake. STR occupants do not have permission from the VGHA to access the private lake and no wrist bands should be provided to short term rental occupants.
- No boating, swimming, fishing or use of the swim beach is allowed for STR occupants.
- STR owners must post notice of these restrictions within their property.

Swim Beach Use

- All use of HOA property, including any swimming, is at the sole risk of the resident or guest.
- For reasons of health and safety, it is recommended that swimming be confined to the designated swim beach area. Swimmers are reminded that fishermen have equal rights past the floating dock.
- For the residents' safety, swimming in the beach area is permitted from dawn to dusk.
- Fishing is not allowed within the swim beach area.
- Dogs are not allowed in the swim beach area.

Additional Swim Beach Guidelines

- If you expect more than six (6) guests at the swim beach at any one time, it is required that you get permission from two (2) members of the VGHA Board of Directors.
- All lot owners and their guests are expected to keep the swim beach, lake, and shoreline free of trash, bottles, cans, etc.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted at the swim beach.
- Please avoid the use of profane language and the playing of loud music.
- Nudity is prohibited by the City of Houston Lake Municipal Code, Section 210.480 Public Indecency.
- All those using the swim beach should observe and be aware of any suspicious activity. Please report suspicious activity directly to the **Platte County Sheriff's Department by calling 816-858-2424.**

Use of Houston Lake

- All watercraft, whether electric or gas, and other non-self-propelled watercraft must be registered with the VGHA. A number will be assigned. That number will be permanently displayed on the stern of the watercraft.
- Any watercraft introduced to the lake must be dry docked for two weeks prior to being launched. If a previously inspected watercraft has been used in any other body of water, it must be dry docked for two weeks prior to being re-launched into Houston Lake.
- Operators of watercraft are to keep away from swimmers and fishermen who would be endangered by the watercraft or disturbed by its action.
- All regulations of the Missouri State Conservation Commission apply to the entire lake and its shoreline.

Boating Regulations

- Outboard motors may only be used on the lake between sunrise and sunset.
- Maximum horsepower permissible on the lake will be 7 ½ HP. This regulation is subject to change at the discretion of the VGHA Board of Directors without prior notice.
- Boat owners must operate vessels in a manner that respects other lake users. A no-wake rule applies whenever more than three watercraft are on the lake at any time. This regulation is subject to change at the discretion of the VGHA Board of Directors without prior notice.
- Owners of boat motors are reminded that Missouri State Laws require all motors to be licensed with the State of Missouri.
- Only registered watercraft and motors owned by HOA members in good standing may be used on the lake.

Fishing

- No fishing is permitted within the swim beach area.
- No trot lines, jug lines, unattended fishing lines, or net fishing of any kind are permitted.
- Lot owners and their guests must follow all current Missouri state regulations and laws for fishing in the lake, unless otherwise posted. The Missouri state regulations are located at www.mdc.mo.gov/fishing/regulations.

General Use

- All-terrain vehicles (ATV), motor bikes, motorcycles, motor scooters, and all similar vehicles are prohibited from operating on VGHA property.
- All lot owners and their guests are expected to keep all VGHA property free of trash, bottles, cans, fishing equipment and other debris. VGHA property includes and is not limited to the swim beach, parks, lake, and shoreline.
- Lot owners delinquent in their assessments, or their renters, may not use the lake.

Houston Lake Community Garden Update

The 2026 Community Garden has officially begun. After having fertilized the 3 beds, Heidi and Vox planted the veggies and the marigolds to start it out.

The first bed is just starting to peak through. We may have to replant some of the lettuce and spinach because of the torrential rain we had the very next day. Cucumbers will be planted this weekend in that same bed.

The green beans have started to grow but we may have to replant a row or so because of the rain. The zucchini seeds will be planted in front of the green beans in the next few days.

The middle bed has 6 tomato and 6 pepper and 2 ground cherry plants. They also planted the pole beans seeds around each support beam.

Please feel free to help with the maintenance of your garden if you're able. We need all the weed pickers we can get!

I can't think of anything better than being in the garden, early in the morning, and listening to the sounds of wildlife that makes this community so wonderful to live in.

Thanks for all your help!
Marsha Duncan
816-419-5051



**Houston Lake Missouri
Community Garden >**



**Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Minutes of Public meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, February 16, 2026**

The meeting was called to order by President, Pam Freese at 6:30 pm

Roll call was taken:

Board members present: Pam Freese, Mary Head, Don Miller

Board members absent: Monica Beshears, Josh Williams

A quorum was present.

The minutes of the January 28, 2026 working meeting of the Board of Directors were approved.

**Financial statements as of January 31, 2026 were presented by
Treasurer, Don Miller**

Available cash: \$91,730

Accounts receivable from members: \$80,357. \$26,813 past due; \$53,544 due March 1

Accounts payable: \$319. \$147.45 for utilities; \$171.60 to Don Miller

Operating expenses and major expenditures are in line with the approved budget.

Oversight Committee report: The Oversight Committee has received The Board's feedback on proposed changes to the Rules & Regulations. They will hold a meeting February 17, 2026 to review Board feedback and present final recommendations for the Rules & Regulations.

Regular business:

Reimbursement to Don Miller for postage costs of mailing October 2025 meeting notices and January 2026 member dues invoices.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to reimburse \$171.60 to Don Miller for postage costs.

Reimbursement for Bio-Pod units powered by personal residents' electrical system:

The Board reviewed estimated daily electrical usage provided by Rigerio and peak electrical rates charged by Evergy. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to reimburse \$120 per year to the four residents providing power to the Bio-Pod units.

Lake clean-up plan: After discussion among the Board and with input from the residents in attendance, it was determined that instead of a designated day for lake clean-up, we would announce March as Lake Clean-up month and provide a list of projects involving brush and trash removal for which residents could volunteer and put together a team to accomplish. This will occur prior to the city's spring brush pick-up to provide haul-off services. Pam Freese will prepare an article for the March Houston Laker.

Semi-Annual Meeting of the Venetian Gardens Homes Association is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15 at 6:30 pm at the Houston Lake City Hall.

Public discussion:

If anyone is interested in Neighborhood Watch materials, they are available at City Hall.

Please observe speed limits and no parking on streets. Call Platte Co Sherrif to enforce.

There is a grant/volunteer program called Evergy Green Space which we should investigate

A land survey by MoDot has been made near the spillway. Does the City have an update?

Wish Linda Charles Happy 90th Birthday on February 20!

Minutes approved on May 4, 2026

**Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Board of Directors
Monday, April 15, 2026**



The meeting was called to order by President Pam Freese at 6:32 PM.

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Pam Freese, Mary Head, Don Miller, Monica Beshears

Board Members Absent: Josh Williams

Financial Report

Treasurer Don Miller presented financial statements as of March 31, 2026:

- Available Cash: \$130,000.00
- Accounts Receivable:
 - Past Due: \$38,457.16
 - Current Dues: \$26,000.00
- Accounts Payable: \$504.68
- Current Profit & Loss: \$27,014.00

- Operating Expenses: \$9,838.43
- Installation of 4 Rigero Bio Pods: \$19,995.00

A formal in-person approval was made for a \$2,659.00 payment to Rigero for the four annual Bio Pods previously approved via email.

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to charge a 10% late fee to residents who have not yet paid this year's dues.

Don Miller reported that the HOA's 2025 income tax returns have been filed:

- Federal Taxes Owed: \$821.65
- Missouri State Taxes Owed: \$97.00

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to reimburse \$120.00 to three residents for electricity.

Regular Business

Lake Clean-Up:

The lake clean-up month resulted in several completed projects in and around the lake. These efforts were carried out by residents and HOA board members. Pam Freese thanked all participants.

Dredging:

Dredging is currently on hold pending approval of a Watershed Grant applied for by Mayor Schofield (as a private citizen). If approved:

- The HOA would donate 36,000 cubic yards of dirt to the ravine at her property.
- A permit would be filed by Mayor Schofield.

Pam Freese also offered excess dirt to residents, with delivery available at an estimated cost upon request.

City Clerk Lisa Shepard requested that Pam Freese complete a building permit outlining the HOA's planned activities.

Aquatic Plant Life:

Aquatic plants are ready for pickup and will be placed where the three tributaries meet the lake, particularly along the Venetian shoreline where dredging occurred.

Lake Measurements:

Chuck Stone will assist Pam Freese in recording lake measurements at the beginning and end of the season.

Public Discussion

- City Clerk Lisa Shepard reiterated the request for a building permit detailing HOA plans.
- Lisa Shepard requested a meeting with the HOA Board to discuss insights from the KC Lakes meeting attended with Jennifer Heese. This will occur at the next Board Meeting on May 18.
- Concerns were raised about trash being dumped in the creek and possible solutions were discussed.
- Erosion issues along the creek bed, including areas near Charles and Whitton's property, were discussed.
- Sarah Loring emphasized the need for continued maintenance of brush along the dam.
- Chuck Stone reported on goose egg addling efforts: 9 nests were visited and approximately 40–50 eggs were collected.

Rules & Regulations:

- Updates will be published in next month's *Houston Laker*.
- Rules may be revised annually as needed.

Short-Term Rentals:

- Lisa Shepard will provide the necessary application to the HOA Board via email.
- Further discussion will take place at the working meeting on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:30 PM.

Next Meetings

- **Working Meeting:** May 4, 2026 at 6:30 PM
- **Next Public Board Meeting:** May 18, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Minutes approved on May 18, 2026

Houston Lake City Officials

City Hall – (816) 741-0644

Mayor – Sarah Schofield
mayor@houstonlake.gov

City Clerk – Lisa A. Shepard
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

City Collector – Kathryn Kreider
citycollector@houstonlake.gov

City Bookkeeper – Kay Honeycutt
khoneycutt@houstonlake.gov

Custodian of Records –
cityclerk@houstonlake.gov

Board of Aldermen

Mayor Pro Tem - Sarah Loring
sloring@houstonlake.gov

Jesse Beshears
jbeshears@houstonlake.gov

Teresa Olson
tolson@houstonlake.gov

Jennifer Heese
jheese@houstonlake.gov

As most of the City Officials and VGHA Officers have full-time jobs, phone calls may not be answered/returned as quickly as a text or email.

City Hall is open during meetings, events, and by appointment.

Venetian Gardens Homes

Association Officers

President – Pam Freese – (816) 726-4455
venetian.gardens.homes.assoc@gmail.com

Vice President/Treasurer/Lake Tags -
Don Miller = (918) 633-4109
drmiller5@icloud.com

Secretary – Monica Beshears
(573) 356-4118
weety30@gmail.com

Board Member at Large – Mary Head
(816) 741-5639
maryjewel40@gmail.com

Board Member at Large – Josh Williams
(816) 560-6433
jwil6872@gmail.com

Houston Laker Newspaper Editor
Mary Head – 816-741-5639
maryjewel40@gmail.com

**In case of a Police, Fire, or Medical
Emergency – Call 911**

**Police Non-Emergency & Animal
Control Platte County Sheriff
(816) 858-3521**

**Fire Non-Emergency Riverside Fire
Department (816) 372-9024**

**Grinder Pump Haynes Equipment
Services (913) 782-5013**

**Looking for News and information about Houston Lake and/or
the Venetian Gardens Homes Association (VGHA)?**

Check out the City's newly updated website: **www.houstonlake.gov**

Follow the City on Facebook: **Houston Lake, Mo**

Contact the Mayor and City Council members at: **city-council@houstonlake.gov**

Current and past issues of the Houston Laker:

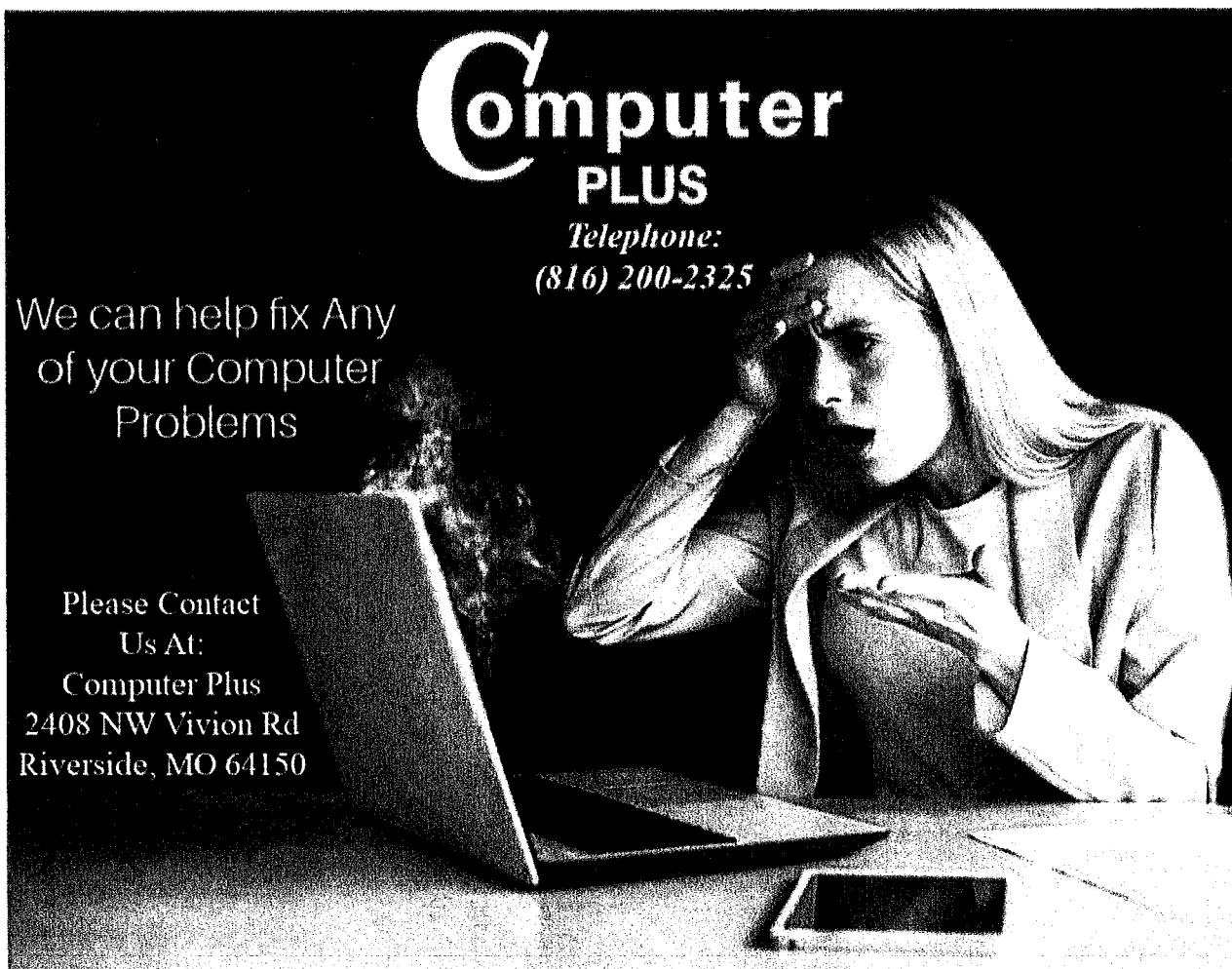
www.houstonlake.gov then select **Houston Laker**

Check out the VGHA's newly updated website: **www.vgha.community**

Follow the VGHA on Facebook: **Venetian Gardens Homes Association**

Contact the VGHA at: **pamelafreese@gmail.com**

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**Computer
PLUS**

Telephone:
(816) 200-2325

We can help fix Any
of your Computer
Problems

Please Contact
Us At:
Computer Plus
2408 NW Vivion Rd
Riverside, MO 64150

IS YOUR HOUSE NUMBER VISIBLE FROM THE STREET -

please take time to walk out to the street in front of your house. If you can't see your house number in daylight, and at night, from the street - PLEASE take time this month to refurbish the street numbers on your home. The City thanks you, the VGHA thanks you, and Emergency Services thanks you - especially if they need to locate your home to help protect you!!!

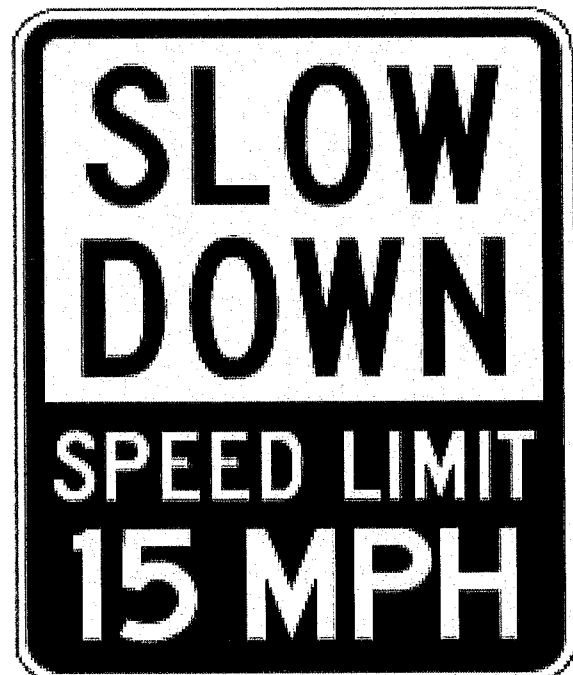


**There is no parking
on the streets
throughout
Houston Lake.**

**Public parking is
available on the gravel
lot next to CITY HALL.**

**Reminder: Houston
Lake's speed limit,
throughout the entire
city, is 15 miles per
hour. For everyone's
safety,**

PLEASE SLOW DOWN!





CELEBRATE THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY

*of the
Venetian Gardens Homes Association
1946 - 2026*

FRIDAY, JULY 3RD
AT CITY HALL
BEGINNING AT 5PM

5PM - GARAGE SALE BINGO
6PM - SPAGHETTI DINNER POTLUCK
FOLLOWED BY A PIE TASTING CONTEST
ENJOY FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES
OUTSIDE INTO THE EVENING

*Look for an email invite to sign up
for the potluck and pie contest*

Sign up at

<https://www.PerfectPotluck.com/EVS2243>



FOURTH OF JULY



PICNIC



**SATURDAY, JULY 4TH
BEGINNING AT 9AM**



**9AM - COMMUNITY EVENT AT MAYORS PARK
FOLLOWED BY YARD GAMES AT CITY HALL
12 NOON - BURGERS & HOT DOG POTLUCK**



**BRING A SIDE DISH, SALAD, CHIPS,
CONDIMENTS, DRINKS OR DESSERT
TO SHARE. SIGN UP AT**

[HTTPS://WWW.PERFECTPOTLUCK.COM/HHYL8769](https://www.perfectpotluck.com/HHYL8769)

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM

Reaching Residents of Houston Lake **QUICKLY** and the Delivery of the Houston Laker

The City of Houston Lake and the Venetian Garden's Homes Association are looking at ways to streamline processes AND we want to be able to reach residents quickly when important matters arise in between the monthly publication of the Houston Laker.

We would like to hear from every resident regarding how you can be contacted. Even if you **think** we already have your cell phone number and email address, PLEASE complete this survey and return it to City Hall. Please put it in a sealed envelope and drop it through the slot in the City Hall front door. OR, you may scan and email your form to **cityclerk@houstonlake.gov** (Your City Clerk and Treasurer of VGHA will coordinate the "sharing" of this information for both organizations.)

Name _____

Address _____

Cell Phone Number (for texts) _____

Email address _____

The Houston Laker is now online at **www.houstonlake.gov** - everyone has access to it when it is posted at the beginning of each month. In recent months, more and more Houston Lakers are found in the bushes and blowing around the City. Both the City and the VGHA have decided we want to know exactly who in the neighborhood would like to continue to receive a hard copy of the Houston Laker hung on their front door monthly.

Please mark one choice with an "X"

_____ I would like a hard copy of the Houston Laker delivered to my door monthly.

_____ I will access the Houston Laker on line at **www.houstonlake.gov**

NOTE: With technology advances changing rapidly, the City and the VGHA are looking into electronic notification that the Houston Laker is ready to be viewed. We will keep you posted when this service becomes available.