HOUSTON LAKER

Since March 1957 – Edition 69 October 2026

A Houston Lake Use Tax Question Appears On the November 3, 2026 Ballot.

A History of the Question Can Be Found

on Page 2.



OFFICIAL BALLOT
General Election
Platte County, Missouri
November 3, 2026

Sample Ballot

JUDGES' INITIALS

5

Instructions

Completely fill in the target next to the candidate or question response of your choice like this: ●

If you do not see the name of the candidate for whom you wish to vote, darken the target opposite the write-in line and print the name of the candidate on the write-in line provided.

If you are in favor of the question, completely fill in the target opposite "YES". If you are opposed to the question, completely fill in the target opposite "NO".

NOTE: The ballot reading device in use is designed to only record votes cast as a filled in target. There can be no erasures, stray marks, check marks, or cross outs on the ballot. If you make an error marking the ballot, see an Election Judge to receive a replacement ballot.

State

For State Auditor

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Scott Fitzpatrick — Republican
- ○ Quentin Wilson — Democratic
- ○ Dustin Coffell — Libertarian
- ○ Write-in

Congressional

For United States Representative 6th District

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Chris Stigall — Republican
- ○ Josh Smead — Democratic
- ○ Andy Maidment — Libertarian
- ○ Write-in

Official Judicial Ballot

Submitting to the voters whether the Judges named below, whose terms expire December 31, 2026, shall be retained in office for new terms.

VOTE ON EACH JUDGE

Missouri Supreme Court Judge

Shall Judge Paul C. Wilson of the Missouri Supreme Court be retained in office?

- ○ YES
- ○ NO

Missouri Court of Appeals Judge, Western District

Shall Judge Lisa White Hardwick of the Western District Court of Appeals be retained in office?

- ○ YES
- ○ NO

Circuit Judge 6th Judicial Circuit

Division No. 1

Shall Judge Myles A. Perry, Circuit Judge of Judicial Circuit No. 6, be retained in office?

- ○ YES
- ○ NO

Associate Circuit Judge 6th Judicial Circuit

Division No. 4

Shall Judge Susan M. Casey, Associate

For Recorder of Deeds

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Christopher L. Wright — Republican
- ○ Write-in

For Prosecuting Attorney

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Tony Luetkemeyer — Republican
- ○ Write-in

For County Auditor

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Laura Waldon — Republican
- ○ Kevin Robinson — Independent
- ○ Write-in

For County Collector

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Jim Bosch — Republican
- ○ Holly Cayer — Independent
- ○ Write-in

For County Treasurer

(Vote for ONE)

- ○ Krysten Jury — Republican
- ○ Chris Kendall — Independent
- ○ Write-in

Village of Houston Lake

Question

Shall the City of Houston Lake, Missouri impose a local use tax at the same rate as the total local sales tax rate, provided that if the local sales tax rate is reduced or raised by voter approval, the local use tax rate shall also be reduced or raised by the same action?

SAMPLE

To apply for absentee ballot: print this application form, complete and mail to Platte County Board of Elections, PO Box 560, Platte City, MO 64079 or FAX to 816-858-3387 or e-mail to platte@sos.mo.gov

REQUEST FOR PLATTE COUNTY ABSENTEE BALLOT

I, _____, do hereby request an absentee ballot for the

_____ (date) Election.

For identification purposes, the last four digits of my social security number are _____.
If the election is a primary election, please print the name of the political party ballot you wish to receive _____.

NOTE: If you registered by mail or online, and this is your first time voting you must provide a copy of one of the following: nonexpired Missouri driver's license; Nonexpired or nonexpiring Missouri nondriver's license; a document issued by the United States or State of Missouri which contains the name matching the most recent signature on voter record **and** shows a photograph of the voter, **and** includes an expiration date and is not expired, or, if expired, the document expired after the date of the most recent general election; or any id with a photograph issued by MO National Guard, the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Space Force, or the US Dept of Veteran Affairs to a member or former member of the MO National Guard, the U.S. Armed Forces, including the Space Force, and that this does not have an expiration date.

Reason for requesting an absentee ballot:

_____ (1) Absence on Election Day from the jurisdiction of the election authority in which registered to vote;
_____ (2) Incapacity or confinement due to illness or physical disability **on election day**, including a person who is primarily responsible for the physical care of a person who is incapacitated or confined due to illness or disability **and resides at the same address;**
_____ (3) Religious belief or practice;
_____ (4) Employment as:
(a) An election authority, as a member of an election authority, or by an election authority at a location other than your polling place; or
(b) A first responder; or
(c) A health care worker; or
(d) A member of law enforcement;
_____ (5) Incarceration, provided all qualifications for voting are retained
_____ (6) Certified participation in the address confidentiality program established under sections 589.660 to 589.681 because of safety concerns.

Current Residential Address:

_____

_____

Address where ballot is to be mailed, if different than Residential address:

_____

_____

Daytime Telephone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

I do solemnly swear that all statements made on this application are true to the best of my knowledge and belief:

_____ _____
Signature of Voter Date

All requests **must be received** by the Board of Election's office
no later that 5:00 p.m., the second Wednesday prior to election day.

Effective August 28, 2022

Preparing for the November 3, 2026 Ballot Use Tax Question

Shall the City of Houston Lake, Missouri impose a local use tax at the same rate as the total local sales tax rate, provided that if the local sales tax rate is reduced or raised by voter approval, the local use tax rate shall also be reduced or raised by the same action?

You will be asked to approve or oppose this question.

History of this Question Appearing on the Ballot

In recent months/years, the Houston Lake City Council has been concerned about the impact on the city's roads due to the increase in traffic from heavy delivery vehicles. Especially regarding how to fund the upkeep of the pavements.

In consulting other same-sized cities, and seeking legal advice, it was determined that a **Use Tax** would be a good revenue source - way to obtain additional funding to support the maintenance of Houston Lake's roadways.

It was further explained to Council, before placing a Use Tax question on the ballot for residents to consider - a **Sales Tax** would need to be established. On April 7, 2026, the residents of Houston Lake approved a 1% Sales Tax for Houston Lake. This approval has paved the way for a Use Tax vote on November 3, 2026.

Both a Houston Lake Sales Tax, and a Use Tax, benefit our community directly.

This is a simplified history of this Question appearing for residents' consideration on the ballot in November. There have been many months of consideration accomplished by the City Council prior to these Questions being placed on the ballots in April and coming up in November. The City Council welcomes your specific questions, should you have any, ahead of November 3. Please email the Houston Lake City Council at **city-council@houstonlake.gov**

BILL NO. 070826 ORDINANCE NO._____

AN ORDINANCE IMPOSING A LOCAL USE TAX ON IN-STATE OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS AND OUT-OF-STATE PURCHASES, AT A RATE EQUAL TO THE RATE OF LOCAL SALES TAXES IN EFFECT IN THE CITY, FOR GENERAL REVENUE PURPOSES; AND PROVIDING FOR SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL TO THE QUALIFIED VOTERS OF THE CITY FOR APPROVAL AT AN ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026.

WHEREAS, the City of Houston Lake, Missouri, with voter approval, currently levies local sales taxes, pursuant to R.S.Mo. 94.500 to 94.550, at the rate of One Percent (1%); and

WHEREAS, the City is authorized under R.S.Mo. 144.757 to 144.761, to levy a local use tax at a rate equal to the rate of the local sales taxes in effect in the City; and

WHEREAS, a local use tax requires the same tax rate to be charged on purchases made from businesses located outside the City of Houston Lake, and outside Missouri as charged by businesses located in Houston Lake, eliminating an inequity between local businesses and non-local businesses that provides a competitive advantage for non-local businesses; and

WHEREAS, the proposed local use tax requires a majority approval by the qualified voters voting thereon in favor of the proposal at an election.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERPERSONS OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON LAKE, PLATTE COUNTY, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: Pursuant to the authority granted by R.S.Mo. 144.757 to 144.761, a use tax for general revenue purposes is imposed for storing, using, or consuming within Houston Lake, Missouri, any article of tangible personal property. This tax does not apply with respect to the storage, use, or consumption of any article of tangible personal property purchased, produced, or manufactured outside Houston Lake, Missouri and outside the state of Missouri, until the transportation of the article has finally come to rest within the City or until the article has become commingled with the general mass of the property of the City.

SECTION 2: The rate of the tax shall be one percent (1%). If any local sales tax of Houston Lake, Missouri is repealed or the rate thereof is reduced or raised by voter approval, the local use tax rate of Houston Lake, Missouri shall also be deemed to be repealed, reduced, or raised by the same action repealing, reducing, or raising the local sales tax.

SECTION 3: This tax shall be submitted to the qualified voters of Houston Lake, Missouri, as required by R.S.Mo. 144.757 to 144.761, at the election hereby called and to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. The ballot of submission shall contain substantially the following language:

Shall the City of Houston Lake, Missouri impose a local use tax at the same rate as the total local sales tax rate, provided that if the local sales tax rate is reduced or raised by voter approval, the local use tax rate shall also be reduced or raised by the same action?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If you are in favor of the question, place an "X" in the circle opposite "YES".
If you are opposed to the question, place an "X" in the circle opposite "NO".

SECTION 4: The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to give notice to the Platte County, Missouri Board of Elections of the calling of the election no later than 5:00 p.m. on August 25, 2026. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to perform such other tasks as may be necessary and required by law to place this proposal on the ballot at the election to be held on November 3, 2026.

SECTION 5: If a majority of the votes cast on the proposal of the qualified voters voting thereof are in favor of the proposal, then the local use tax shall become effective on the first day of the calendar quarter which begins at least forty-five (45) days after the Director of Revenue of the State of Missouri receives notice of adoption of the local use tax.

SECTION 6: Within ten (10) days following approval by the qualified voters of Houston Lake, Missouri, of the local use tax proposal, the City Clerk shall forward to the Director of Revenue of the State of Missouri, by registered mail, a certified copy of this Ordinance together with certifications of the election returns, accompanied by a map of the Houston Lake, Missouri, clearly showing the boundaries thereof.

SECTION 7: This Ordinance shall become effective upon its passage and approval subject to the provisions herein contained which provide for voter approval.

PASSED THIS 8TH DAY OF JULY, 2026.

Sarah Schofield, Mayor

ATTEST:

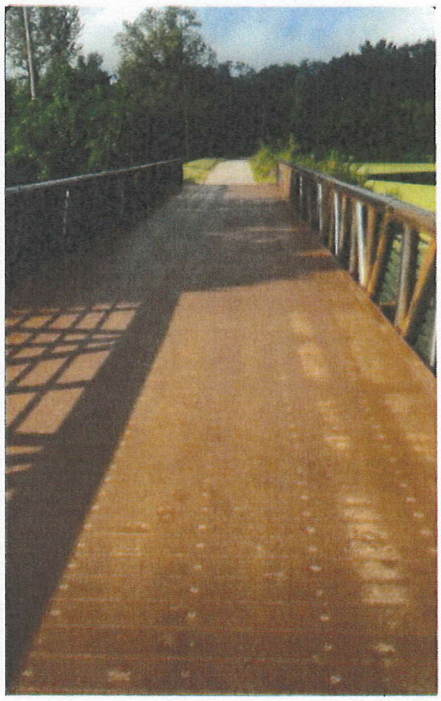
Lisa A. Shepard, City Clerk

APPROVED THIS 8TH DAY OF JULY, 2026.

Sarah Schofield, Mayor

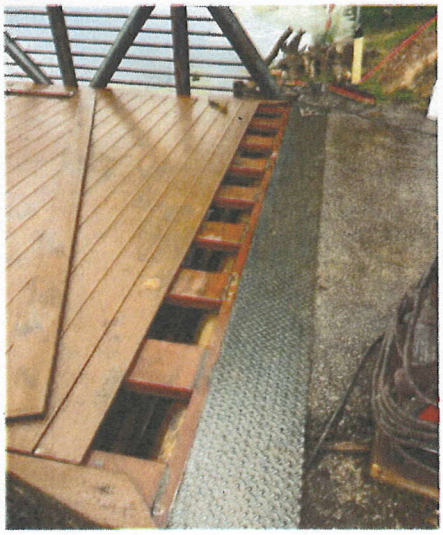
NEW Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge on Houston Drive.

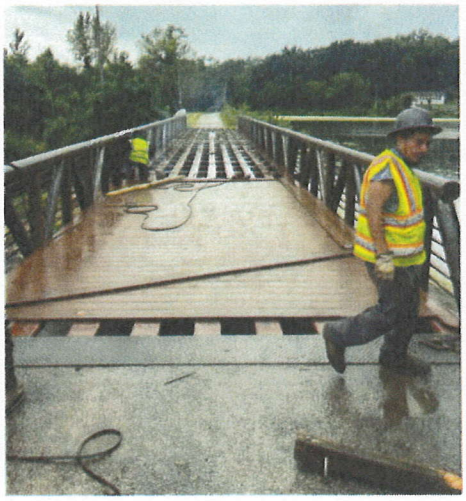
September 9, 2026

















Photos by Todd Lagessie



The City and VGHA will not be hosting a Halloween party this year.

In lieu of traditional trick-or-treating, the City of Houston Lake and the Venetian Gardens Homes Association invite residents to use the City Hall parking lot for a "Trunk or Treat" location. Residents are also welcome to pass out candy from the front porch of City Hall or from their own home.

Halloween is on Saturday, October 31, 2026. Stay safe!

Story by "Gene" Charles

This incident happened many years ago. One night as we were going home from Linda's folk's home in KCK, we saw a couple of rather large dogs by the street and one had its head in a paper bag. As it tried to get the bag off its head, we saw it fall in a window well. At first, we thought that wasn't our problem, so we drove on. Then we decided it was our problem because, we were the only ones that knew the dog was in that hole at 5' deep. So we drove back and tried to decide who we could report that to. I walked over and looked down at the dog that was trying to get out but couldn't. I decided to chance it wouldn't attack me if I tried to get it out. I jumped down and boosted it up, then as soon as I crawled out, its mate came and liked my hand. I guess that was my reward for rescuing its mate.

It seems to me that a grate should have covered that window well, as well as others just as deep.

* * * * * * *

Here is a riddle I heard from my mom: As I was going to Saint Ives I met a man with seven wives, each wife had a sack. In each sack there was a cat. The man, cats, and wives-how many were going to Saint Ives?

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES AND PHOTOS the 24th of each month

Dear Residents,

The Houston Laker is always looking for content from our community! Please consider submitting interesting articles, upcoming events, useful local information, recipes, book reviews, or other engaging material. We are also open to considering recurring columns for aspiring writers.

To help make planning easier and encourage more submissions, we are establishing the 24th of each month as our regular submission deadline for all articles, photos, and advertisements.

If you have content to submit or have any questions, please email me at maryjewel40@gmail.com or call me 816-741-5639 and leave a message.

Thank you Mary Head, Editor

Venetian Gardens Homes Association

2026 Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday October 24, 2026

1:00pm – City Hall

5417 N. Adrian Ave., Houston Lake, Mo. 64151

- **Voting on approval of 2026/2027 Budget**
- **Voting on Lake Assessment dues**
- **Voting on 3 new Board Members**
- **Voting for President and Vice President**

The Homes Association fiscal year starts October 1, 2026 and ends September 30, 2027

"FREE Boards from the old Bridge"

Free boards from the old bridge available across the street from the beach and at Mayor's Park.



Dear Neighbors,

LET'S SAVE OUR LAKE

Would you like our lake to look like this? Without sufficient funds for dredging, vegetation will continue to overgrow, as shown in the photos below.

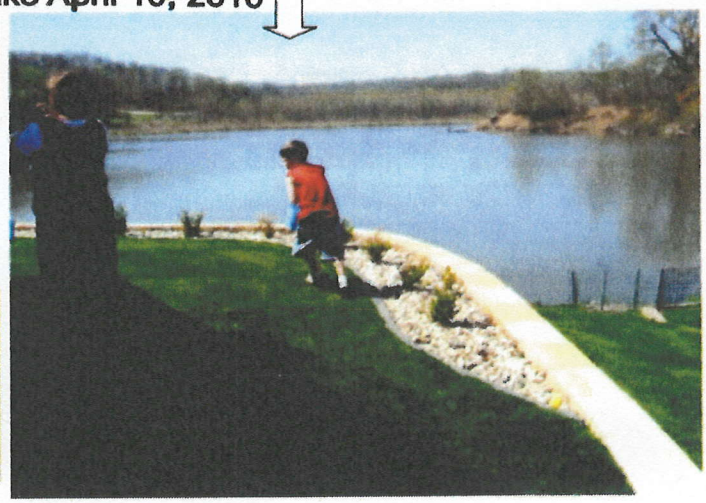
To help prevent this, please vote in favor of higher lake dues on Saturday, October 24, 2026, at 1:00 PM. The vote will be held at City Hall, 5417 N Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151.

THANK YOU

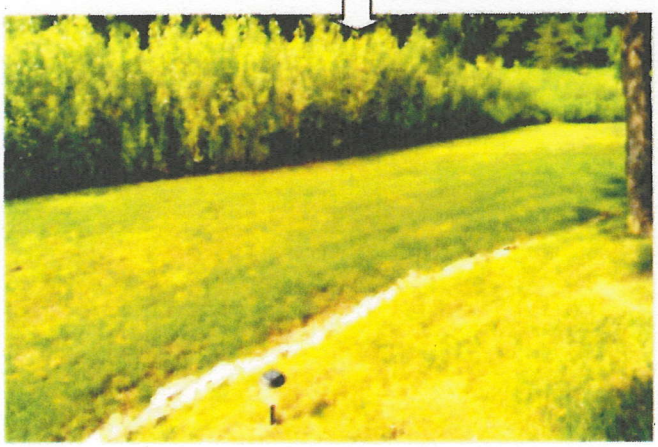
Submitted/photos by Mary Head, HOA Board Member

Walnut Creek Lake April 10, 2010





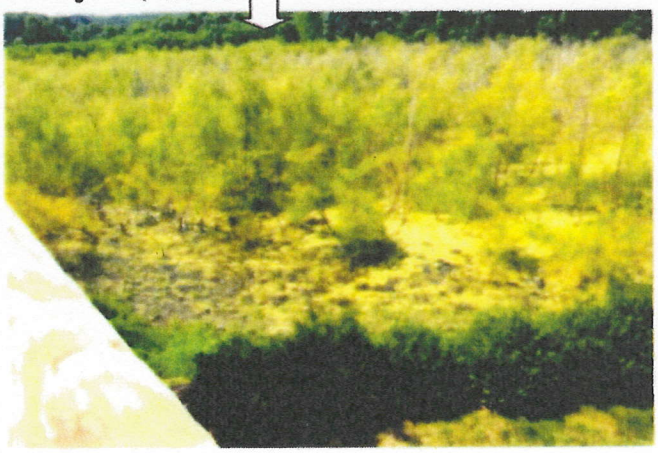
Walnut Creek Lake August 20, 2013





Walnut Creek Lake July 27, 2016





Walnut Creek Lake is just West of Parkville here in Platte County.

VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION

As our annual Homeowners meeting approaches, I want to take a closer look at why the board is proposing a significant increase in dues.

Right now, about $300 of each homeowner's dues goes toward operating expenses and lawn mowing.That leaves $150 per home owner for lake restoration, including deepening the lake. At that level, it is nearly impossible to make meaningful progress. If dues increase to $800, that would provide about $500 per homeowner per year for lake rejuvenation.

It has now been six years since dues were last raised. Compared with nearby communities, this proposal is not out of step. Hills of Walden charges $1,300 in dues to support its clubhouse and community pool. Weatherby Lake and Lake Waukomis charge between $600 and $800 per year, along with additional fees for docks, boats, and tiers.

We have also heard concerns about the bio-pods and whether they are effective. None of this increase would go towards adding any new pods while we gather more data. Its purpose is much narrower: to fund essential work such as fixing the spillway, dredging, or responding to another emergency. Just as important, any change to the budget requires a special meeting and approval by a two-thirds majority vote. That means the money you pay in must be spent as promised.

I know this is a significant ask, especially at a time when many household budgets are already stretched, and the board did not arrive at this proposal lightly. But at current funding levels, we can only slow the lake's decline, not reverse it. The question before us is whether we are willing to invest now to keep the lake a healthy part of our community for years to come. Please join us to ask questions and share your views on October 8th at 6:30pm or October 17th at 1:00pm. The annual meeting is held on October 25 at 1:00pm. Whatever the community decides, the board will follow that direction.

Warmly,
Pam Freese

2026 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION
Saturday October 24, 2026, 1:00pm City Hall
5417 N Adrian Ave, Houston Lake, Mo. 64151

The Venetian Gardens Board of Directors invites you to attend the annual meeting. The purpose of the meeting is as follows:

1. Present and approve the annual audit report.
2. Present and approve the Annual Operating Budget for 2026/2027.
3. Discuss the Board's plan to establish a Restricted Fund to be used only for spillway repairs, dredging and emergencies.
4. Vote on new directors.
5. Elect president and vice president.
6. Vote on 2026/2027 member dues assessment: $50.00, $450.00 or $800.00
   $300.00 will be utilized for Annual Operating Expenses. The remainder will go into the Restricted Fund to be used only for spillway repairs, dredging and emergencies.

There are three vacancies on the Board of Directors. The candidates and the terms of office are:

Candidate:	Term
Monica Beshears	2 years
Pam Freese	2 years
Mary Head	2 years

Voting

Only members in good standing may vote. A member in good standing is one who has paid all annual assessments, special assessments, or installments of special assessments due for the current year and who is not delinquent in payment for any previous year and whose use privilege has not been suspended by the Board of Directors.

Absentee Ballots

A member may vote by absentee ballot. To submit an absentee ballot contact Don Miller at (918)633-4109 or email him at drmiller5@icloud.com. The ballots will be assigned a random identifier. Ballots having an incorrect identifier or a duplicate identifier will be considered invalid and will not be counted. The ballot must be received by 12:00pm (noon) on October 24, 2025 by delivery to a board member or the HOA mailbox at City Hall.

Proxy Vote Information

For those of you who may not be able to attend the meeting, you may give your proxy vote to a member of your choice. The member of choice must be in good standing, both parties must sign the proxy document in the presence of a current board member and the proxy must be received by the HOA Secretary or Treasurer of the Board no later than the day before the annual meeting.

Thank you in advance for your attendance,

Venetian Gardens Homes Association Board of Directors

Venetian Gardens Homes Association
Proposed Annual Operating Budget
Fiscal Year 2026-2027

	Per Member
Member dues utilized for Annual Operating Expenses	$ 300
Member dues Restricted to spillway repairs, dredging & emergencies	500
Total proposed annual dues for 2026-2027	$ 800

	Total
Portion of member dues utilized for Annual Operating Expenses ($300 per member)	$ 31,500
Income tax expense	$ 1,000
Insurance expense (5.1% increase over last year)	3,933
Total lake grounds & beach maintenance	13,257
Mowing	4,800
Total office G&A expenses	3,990
Legal & tax prep	2,000
Total utilities	2,520
Total Annual Operating Expense Budget	$ 31,500
Annual Breakeven (estimated operating expenses are equal to $300 per member)	$ -

Funds Restricted for Spillway Repair/Dredging/Emergencies

Estimated beginning cash balance (10/01/2026)		$ 125,000
Portion of member dues to be placed in Restricted Fund	($500 per member)	$ 52,500
Estimated balance in Restricted Fund for spillway repairs, dredging and emergencies		$ 177,500

Five year and Ten year cash forecast (assumes 3% inflation rate)

	Total Dues	General Funds	Revenue	Expense	Balance
2027	$ 800	$ 300	$ 31,500	$ (31,500)	$ -
2028	$ 824	$ 309	$ 32,445	$ (32,445)	$ -
2029	$ 849	$ 318	$ 33,418	$ (33,418)	$ -
2030	$ 874	$ 328	$ 34,421	$ (34,421)	$ -
2031 Five-year plan - Repair spillway and 3 dredges	$ 900	$ 338	$ 35,454	$ (35,454)	$ -
2032	$ 927	$ 348	$ 36,518	$ (36,518)	$ -
2033	$ 955	$ 358	$ 37,614	$ (37,614)	$ -
2034	$ 984	$ 369	$ 38,742	$ (38,742)	$ -
2035	$ 1,013	$ 380	$ 39,904	$ (39,904)	$ -
2036 Ten-year plan - Repair spillway and 6 dredges	$ 1,044	$ 391	$ 41,101	$ (41,101)	$ -

	Spillway & Dredging Fund	Revenue	Expense	$ 125,000 Balance	Beginning balance
2027	$ 500	$ 52,500	(99,000)	78,500	Repair spillway
2028	$ 515	$ 54,075	(103,000)	29,575	Dredge
2029	$ 530	$ 55,697		85,272	
2030	$ 546	$ 57,368	(109,000)	33,640	Dredge
2031 Five-year plan - Repair spillway and 3 dredges	$ 563	$ 59,089	(92,000)	730	Dredge
2032	$ 580	$ 60,862		61,592	
2033	$ 597	$ 62,688	(115,000)	9,279	Dredge
2034	$ 615	$ 64,568		73,848	
2035	$ 633	$ 66,505	(118,000)	22,353	Dredge
2036 Ten-year plan - Repair spillway and 6 dredges	$ 652	$ 68,501	(90,000)	854	Dredge

Venetian Gardens Home Owners Association

Open Meeting Minutes **Date: August 17, 2026**

Call to Order:

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

Roll Call: Attendees: Pam Freese, Don Miller, Mary Head, Monica Beshears

- Absent: Josh Williams

Financial Statement Review:

- Bank Account: $131,258.64 in an interest earning account.
- Accounts Receivable: $36,131.01
- Accounts Payable $1,060.37

Invoice Approvals:

The board reviewed and approved the following invoices:

- Edwards Construction for mowings in July: $900.00
- Port a Potty monthly $115.00

Business Items:

- Houston Lake Delivery: Sylvester Briones has been hired to deliver the Houston Laker for a fee of $50.00 a month. Gage Hass will serve as the backup delivery person for Sylvester.

- Tree Removal at Kerry Hallowell: Edwards Construction submitted the winning bid for the tree removal project. Work is scheduled to begin on August 18th or 19th.

- Bio Pod Installation: Bio Pods have not yet been changed for the year. Jess Beshears is scheduled to change the pods this weekend, August 22, 2026. Additionally, Pam Freese and Chuck Stone will measure.

- Spillway Update & Engineering Proposals: The HOA is seeking three engineering proposals for the spillway project. Trek submitted a bid for $45,000.00, and Snyder submitted a bid for $35,000.00. The board is currently awaiting the final quote from Rynearson.

- Project Debrief (Spillway): A brief overview was conducted regarding the spillway project, including the tree removal required from the spillway area. The board noted a need for resident volunteers to help clear and remove debris from the lake following heavy rain events.

Collection of Past Due Accounts:

The board held a discussion regarding strategies to address delinquent accounts, considering the following options:

- Initiating foreclosure processes on properties with past-due balances exceeding $5,000.00.
- Offering an amnesty program for delinquent residents, allowing them to clear their account balances by paying what they owe by the end of the calendar year.
- Pursuing balances through Small Claims Court.
- Garnishing bank accounts of non-compliant accounts.

Public Discussion:

- Overgrowth on Shorelines: Residents and board members discussed the overgrowth of brush on the shorelines of potential HOA properties that border resident property lines.

- Enforcement & Management: The board discussed methods for handling residents who fail to clear their designated areas. A proposal was made for the HOA to clear these areas using volunteers, regardless of the resident's yard boundaries.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

- Next Regular Meeting: September 21, 2026, at 6:30 PM
- Annual Members Meeting: October 24, 2026, at 1:00 PM

Minutes approve September 3, 2026

City Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, the 8th day of July, 2026
Location: Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 N Adrian Ave, Houston Lake, MO 64151-3389

The regular meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Wednesday, July 8, 2026 at 6:38 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Schofield.

On roll call, the following members were present: Mayor Sarah Schofield, Alderman Jesse Beshears, Alderman Jennifer Heese, Alderman Sarah Loring, and Alderman Teresa Olson (attended virtually). A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Olson moved to approve the 05/13/26 City Council Meeting minutes, the 06/04/26 Working City Council Meeting minutes, the 06/10/26 City Council Meeting minutes, and the 06/25/26 Working City Council Meeting minutes. Heese 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval with Loring abstaining.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Riverside Fire Department Report - no representative present and no report given.
Platte Co Sheriff's Department Report - Sgt Jessica Duda reported six calls for service in June for a total of 44.98 hours: 1 pedestrian check, 1 suspicious person-vehicle, 1 traffic obstruction, 2 traffic stops, and 1 trespass. Sgt Duda indicated the Platte County Sheriff's Dept should be called directly when any suspicious activity is noticed in the area.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Daphne Posadas asked to have her previously submitted fence permit reconsidered. It was recommended she submit a new permit that represents a permanent fence in the next 30 days. Linda Kramer mentioned the tree between City Hall and her property needs to be cut back.

VENETIAN GARDENS HOMES ASSOCIATION (VGHA) REPORT

Mary Head reported the special public VGHA meeting will be Saturday, July 11 at 1:00 PM.
Don Miller reported VGHA is attempting to receive 3 bids for fixing the spillway.

PERMIT

5304 NW Wagon Trail - permit was not received by the time of the meeting. Owners have a septic tank and want to consider a grinder pump.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Reports dated 06/30/26 were reviewed and accepted as presented. Approval of

Annual Financial Report to be Published - a condensed statement of Income and Expenditures from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 20206 was presented for review. Beshears moved to approve this statement for publication in the Houston Laker. Olson 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval. Grinder Pump Fund - Update - June 30 GP Fund Balance is $9,660.33. We have just received another pump replacement invoice for $3,764 which will be paid shortly. $5,896.33 will be the current balance in the fund. A Grinder Pump Residents meeting was set for Tuesday, July 21 to discuss grinder pump fund activity. A notice of this meeting will go out to all residents with Grinder Pumps. Two council members discussed needing to attend that meeting virtually. An Ordinance Imposing a Local Use Tax On-In-State Outside City Limits and Out-Of-State Purchases, at a Rate Equal to the Rate of Local Sales Taxes in Effect in the City, for General Revenue Purposes, and Providing for Submission of the Proposal to the Qualified Voters of the City for Approval at an Election to be Held on November 3, 2026 - Shepard read the title of the ordinance twice as required. Beshears moved to approve the Use Tax ordinance. Loring 2nd. A voice vote resulted in approval. 2026-2027 Budget Discussion It was pointed out, while we are waiting for the 2026 tax calculations from Platte County to amend the budget, we should be aware that no consideration has been given to put any funds into reserve and we are operating the City on a bare bones budget. More ideas for revenue were discussed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Sales Tax - new Sales Tax will go into effect October 1. The booklet, describing how to implement the Sales Tax, has not yet been provided by the MDOR. Why a Lodging Tax is not Applicable to Houston Lake - the City's attorney presented research in an email regarding Transient Guest Tax. In this research, a specific line was highlighted "any city having more than three hundred fifty hotel and motel rooms inside such city or county" may impose a transient tax. Since Houston Lake does not have this many rooms available, a tax cannot be imposed. Schofield suggested Short-Term Rentals are different and the Missouri Statutes should be reviewed and then we can get back to our attorney.

NEW BUSINESS

Chuck Stone, Chair of P&Z Commission, asked if there was anything the City wanted the Commission to consider at its next meeting. Keep reviewing the building codes.

REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

Honeycutt - thanked everyone on the council and staff for all they do for the City. Schofield asked how long Honeycutt has served the City - about 20 years. Shepard - thanked Brendan Brousseau for the work he has performed at City Hall, especially regarding keeping bugs out. It was agreed he should receive a gift card from the City for his efforts. She thanked everyone around the City who has been helping to clean up after all the storms we have been experiencing lately. Shepard presented Houston Lake Code Chapters 110, 115 & 130 which regard the duties of the elected members of the city as well as those serving as paid staff, and information about taxation and finance. She pointed out, we don't currently have a Codes Enforcement Officer or a City Administrator but both of these positions have significant functions to perform for the City. There are lots of functions, as outlined, that all the elected and paid staff need to accomplish in order to run the city. When she agreed to serve as City Clerk, the clerk position was presented as 20 to 30 hours per month. She works significantly more hours than that and believes this is partially attributable to not having a full complement of staff

serving in Houston Lake. She is aware the City's budget is tight in regards to affording a full staff as outlined in the City's codes. She loves being the city's clerk but does not wish to work more than 40 hours a month. She would like to resign her position. Schofield moved to take up the rest of this discussion in a closed meeting immediately following the adjournment of this meeting since it regards employment.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Beshears - thanked Schofield and Heese for all their efforts in planning the 4th holiday event. He thanked Brendan Brousseau for all the work he has done around the city. We've been working with three engineers for bids to address stormwater issues throughout the City. The City's funds are tight but obtaining the bids will help us to learn what funding we need and perhaps seek grants. Olson - thanked everyone for their work on the 4th holiday event and thanked Beshears for working on obtaining bids from engineers and his work on the bridge. She thanked Schofield and Shepard for their help with getting P&ZC reactivated. She appreciates Chuck Stone and Linda Kramer serving as officers of P&ZC. Loring - appreciates the addressing of vegetation on the dam. She thanked Schofield & Heese for their work on the 4th holiday event. She noticed we had an active 4th of July and appreciated the City was free of debris the next day. Heese thanked Beshears and her niece for help with the engineers. She thanked Schofield for her efforts for the 4th holiday event.

REPORT FROM MAYOR

Schofield thanked everyone who participated in the 4th event. She appreciates Heese's niece, Jessica, for her input with engineers, and her help with the holiday decorations, and wants her to receive a gift card from the City. She would like to survey the community for ideas for future events and things they would like to do at these events. Loring suggested forming a Social Committee. She thanked Keith Carey for taking care of the displaying of the City's flag. Used desks are available for free at City Hall. Dirt will begin to be moved out of the spillway soon. Road repair will take place July 13th - July 18. Beshears alerted the community that AT&T reps have been in the community soliciting and they have been told not to solicit here.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

The next City Council meeting will be Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Schofield adjourned the meeting at 8:09 PM and the Council moved into closed session.

Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

Approved 08/12/2026

Sarah Schofield

Mayor, Sarah Schofield

Public Meeting Minutes
Grinder Pump Residents

Date: Tuesday, the 21st day of July, 2026
Location: Houston Lake City Hall, 5417 N Adrian Ave, Houston Lake, MO 64151

A special Grinder Pump Residents public meeting was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 6:38 PM.

Those present were: Mayor Sarah Schofield, City Clerk Lisa Shepard, and Houston Lake residents: Bobbie Baker-Hughes (virtual), Sharron delaFuente, Chuck Burger, Larry Colle, David Cliburn, Monica Beshears, Jesse Beshears, Juan Jaime, Don Mackey, and Teri Deister. A number of City Council members have grinder pumps but there was not a quorum of Council Members present at this meeting.

The meeting consisted of a discussion of past, current, and potential future grinder pump fees to be paid by those residents whose homes at Houston Lake include grinder pumps. It was suggested that insurance might be researched as regards insuring the Grinder Pumps. Those present recommend to the City Council that the 2026 annual assessment be raised to $600.

Schofield adjourned the meeting at 7:18 PM.

Minutes submitted by: City Clerk, Lisa A. Shepard

Houston Lake City Council Meeting Minutes

The 2026 City Council Meeting for the City of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 6:31 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sylvester and Sigmund Briones.

On Roll call the following members were present: Alderman Jess Beshears, Alderman Teresa Olsen, Alderman Jennifer Heese, Alderman Sarah Loring and Mayor Sarah Schofield. A quorum was established.

Staffing Updates

- **City Clerk Resignation:** The council accepted the resignation of city clerk Lisa A. Shepard. A formal job description has been printed to help find a replacement. One candidate who currently works as a temporary administrator for a smaller lake city has expressed interest and is expected to submit a resume.
- **Codes Enforcement Officer:** The council is actively seeking a codes enforcement officer. A resident has expressed interest but has not yet committed.
- **Maintenance & Landscaping:** The city is advertising for a part-time, as-needed maintenance and landscaping worker to help with city gardens, handyman tasks, and managing park trash. No applications have been received yet.

Approval of Minutes

- **July 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes:** Approved as drafted.
- **July Closed Meeting Minutes:** Approved as drafted.
- **Grinder Pump Residents Meeting Minutes:** Discussed a question regarding grinder pump failure insurance brought up by resident Bobby Baker. The board noted it was raised as a potential option, and a council member agreed to research specialized insurance providers further.

Emergency Management

- Sergeant Hanway reported on a motor vehicle accident that occurred due to speeding on the corner of Northwest 56th Street and North Adrian. No serious injuries were reported.

Public Discussion

- **Fence Ordinances:** Resident Sharron DeLaFuente expressed opposition to proposed changes to the city fence code (Section 500.190), citing concerns over privacy fences, increased height restrictions (60-inch limits impacting deer), and legal fees associated with rewriting ordinances.
- **Laker Delivery Position:** Resident Sylvester Briones (11) presented his qualifications to take over the consistent "Laker" paper delivery route formerly handled by Lilly Gay. The council agreed he should present his case to the Homes Association (HOA) since the city and HOA split the delivery costs.
- **Nuisance and Safety Concerns:** Residents raised concerns regarding a problematic property experiencing alleged drug activity, code violations (unmoving cars with a flat tire and broken windshield, trash, pit bulls), and electricity theft. The council advised residents to call the Platte County Sheriff for immediate illegal activities, noting that code enforcement is currently restricted due to the vacant officer role.

Permits & Property Infrastructure

- **3601 Northwest 56th Street (Fence Permit):** Daphne Posadas submitted a plan to replace a temporary fence with a permanent black chain-link fence. The permit was approved with the condition that the temporary fence must be removed by September 30, 2026.
- **5304 Northwest Wagon Trail (Grinder Pump Integration):** The Egger family at 5304 Wagon

Trail, requested to transition from a septic tank to a city grinder pump. H&H plumbing quoted the project at $21,130 (with an additional $5,000 required if the street must be cut open).

- **Decision:** The council approved executing the project through the city's tax-exempt vendor account with H&H to save the residents money, mapping the transaction through the Grinder Pump Fund. The project requires a signed promissory note for any overages and full prepayment before work begins. Motion by Alderman Beshears, 2nd by Alderman Olson, unanimously approved.

Financials & Budget Planning

- **July Financial Reports:** Accepted and approved for publication. Delayed tax payments are from homeowners who pay independently of mortgages have started arriving.

Business Discussions

- **Fiscal Year Change Ordinance:** The council dropped a proposal to align the fiscal year with the calendar year (January start) following the city treasurer's recommendation that the change would cause excessive paperwork and holiday-season stress. The fiscal year will remain from July to June.
- **Upcoming Tax Rate and Budget Meeting:** A specialized working meeting to finalize the 2026–2027 budget and set the tax levy rate was scheduled for Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- **Mill and Overlay of Edgewater and Edgewood Trail Sinkhole Repair:** A sinkhole discovered at Edgewood and Wagon Trail was traced to a separating storm water pipe seam caused by vehicle weight. Edwards Construction quoted the repair at approximately $7,500. Work will begin next week, requiring a 24- to 48-hour road closure notice to residents. The $28,730 mill and overlay project for Edgewater will proceed in tandem as road funds are sufficient.

Reports from City Alderman and Mayor:

- **Bridge Construction Update from Alderman Jess Beshears:** Prefabrication is underway off-site. Two of three sections are mostly complete. Once the third section finishes, installation will take roughly a week. The new 16-foot-wide steel and composite pedestrian bridge will feature bollards instead of gates.
- **Cameras from Alderman Jess Beshears:** Would like cameras like game and trail not Flock.
- **Codes Enforcement on North Side of Lake from Jennifer Heese:** Can assist with documenting codes enforcement on the North side of the lake.
- **Unlicensed Vehicles from Alderman Sarah Loring:** Reminded the public that unlicensed side-by-sides, four-wheelers, and golf carts are not street-legal and cannot be driven on city roads.
- **Silt Pond Damage from Mayor Sarah Schofield:** The city is working with Republic's insurance department to fund repairs for HOA property damaged when a Republic trash truck backed up and became stuck.
- **All Aldermen and Mayor thanked Lisa for her time as City Clerk and expressed gratitude for her service.**

Next Regular Meeting: Wednesday, September 9, 2026

Adjournment: 8:19 p.m.

City of Houston Lake Missouri - 2026 Tax Levy Meeting
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2026
Location: City Hall, 5417 N Adrian, Houston Lake, MO 64151-3389

The 2026 Tax Levy meeting of the City Council of Houston Lake, MO, was called to order by Mayor Sarah Schofield on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at 6:34 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Schofield.

On roll call, the following members were present: Alderman Sarah Loring, Alderman Jennifer Heese, Alderman Teresa Olson, Alderman Jess Beshears and Mayor Sarah Schofield. A quorum was established.

Lisa A. Shepard, former City Clerk, was invited back and present to assist the board with the tax paperwork and ensure proper filing.

Discussions & Corrections:

- It was noted that the public meeting notice was posted six days in advance rather than the required seven. The board agreed to document this error and its correction directly in the minutes.
- Under general revenue, the board discussed utilizing the current year tax rate ceiling of 0.4910, yielding an estimated revenue of $26,297.

Ordinance Reading & Approval:

Bill Number 082626: An ordinance setting forth the tax levy for the City of Houston Lake for tax year 2026.

The ordinance establishes a general fund tax rate of 0.4910 per $100 evaluation on real estate and personal property. It also accounts for the voter-approved fire protection rate of 0.5257 (voted on April 8, 2025, for a duration of four years). Taxes unpaid after December 31, 2026, will be considered delinquent.

Mayor Pro Tem Sarah Loring was tapped to attest to the ordinance due to the current vacancy of the City Clerk position.

The bill was read aloud twice. Alderman Beshears motioned to approve the bill, followed by a second.

Roll Call Vote. Alderman Heese (Yes), Alderman Loring (Aye), Alderman Olsen (Aye), Alderman Beshears (Aye). The ordinance officially passed.

Adjournment: The tax levy meeting closed at 6:56 p.m.

Houston Lake City Officials

City Hall – (816) 741-0644

Mayor – Sarah Schofield
mayor@houstonlake.gov

City Clerk –
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

2026 TRASH & RECYCLING

City Trash and Recycling Service are handled by **Republic Services**. For questions regarding large item pickup contact Republic's customer service at **816-254-1470** or **republicservices.com**. For assistance with your receptacles and/or issues with pick-up, contact city-council@houstonlake.gov

One Trash bin and **one** Recycling bin are 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.)**

Bins need to be at the cub/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 bin 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:

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

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

January 1, 2027 New Years Day. No Change pickup will be on Thursday December 31, 2026.

Lake Life

October 2026 Events

Thursdays - Trash/Recycle

8 – Thursday VGHA meeting to ask questions at City Hall, 6:30pm

14 - Wednesday City of Houston Lake meeting – City Hall, 6:30pm.

17 – Saturday VGHA meeting to ask questions at City Hall, 1:00pm

24 - Saturday
Venetian Gardens Homes Association Annual meeting At 1:00pm – City Hall.

24 - Saturday Houston Laker articles/pictures deadline.

31 - Saturday



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November 3, 2026, Tuesday
General Election
Houston Lake Residents vote at Hills of Walden Clubhouse, 5858 North Polk Drive, Kansas City, Missouri 64151. Open between 6am and 7pm. on Election Day.

* * * *

The answer to Gene Charles riddle is one

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:

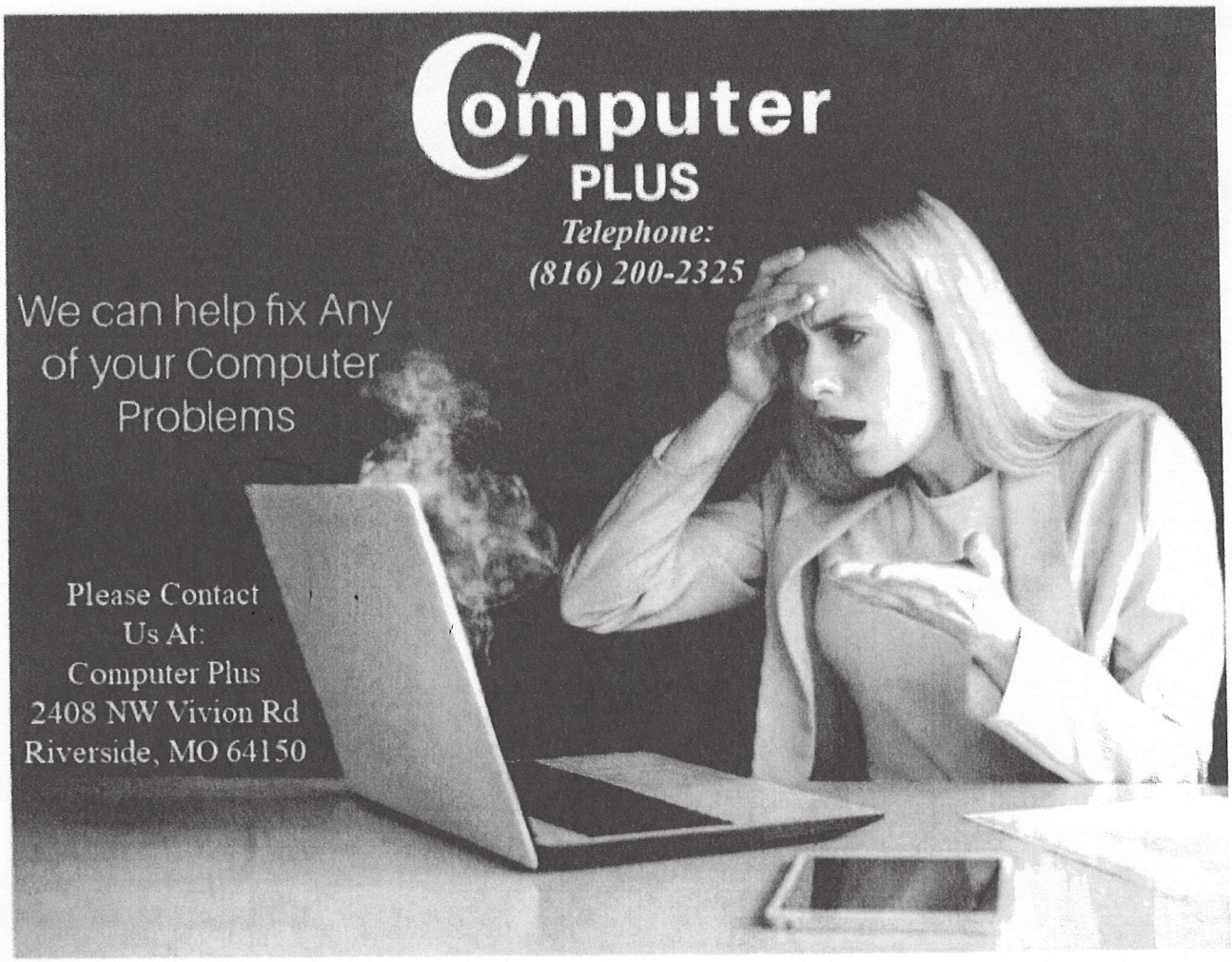
www.houstonlake.gov then select **Houston Laker**

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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Fall

BRUSH PICK-UP

The City of Houston Lake has scheduled a Fall Brush Pick-Up with Crawford Climbers. This will take place in

Mid November

Residents can start clearing and cutting now, as long as the brush/trees/limbs are kept in a neat and tidy pile near the street, with the following guidelines:

Limbs & logs less than 10 inches in diameter to fit through the chipper. Do not tie them together and keep the lengths short enough so that they do not reach into the streets. Any shifting or movement of the brush/ limbs/ logs needs to be maintained by the resident. **PLEASE** keep the streets clear. Leaves placed in biodegradable bags will be collected again. Keep these in an area that will stay dry until the pick-up date so that the bags do not break open when they are picked up or moved.

Additionally, prior to pickup, the City be clearing overhanging limbs from the streets. . If you have trees on your property that require attention, we recommend contacting a professional soon for the most affordable pricing and to get on their schedule.

The City cannot recommend or endorse any company. Ask your neighbors who they recommend. The following have done work for residents:

Crawford Climbers - Gary Crawford 816-935-0186
Whitley Wood & Tree Service - Luke Whitley 816-468-8733
Tree & Home Services - Jason Lindsey 816-291-2130 or 816-835-5486