



The Neighborhood Navigator

A Quarterly Publication of the Neighborhood Services Division

January 2009

Happy New Year!

God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it's me.
 ~Author Unknown

Take Your Money-You Earned It

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) sometimes called the Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. Congress originally approved the tax credit legislation in 1975 in part to offset the burden of social security taxes and to provide an incentive to work. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit.

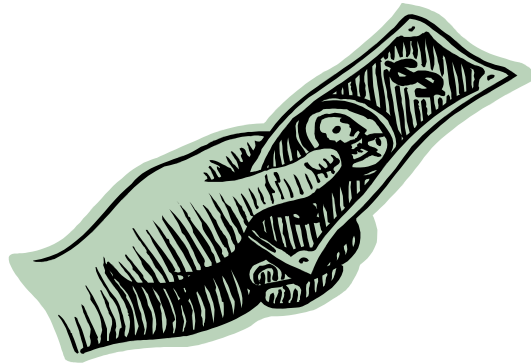
If you're like millions of Americans, you work hard but you don't earn a high income, and want to keep more of what you earn. The Earned Income Tax Credit

(EITC) is a credit for people who earn low-to-moderate incomes. EITC can reduce your taxes, and can mean a refund. In simple terms, working families and individuals may keep more of what they work for.

Facts about the Earned Income Tax Credit:

1. It's a hand up, not a handout. EITC gives working people and families tax money back through a tax credit program that Congress passed in 1975.
2. It lifts families and children out of poverty-nearly 5 million each year. But millions of eligible families don't know how to get it.
3. You must have earned income and need to file taxes to receive your credit.

Find out if you are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by answering some questions and providing basic income information using the [EITC Assistant](#), available in English and Spanish at <http://www.irs.gov> or call the IRS toll free at 1-800-829-1040.



INFORMATION

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Timely Advice from the Kansas City Fire Department

The Fire Department recommends that to be safe, you replace the batteries twice a year and your smoke alarms before they are ten years old. Missing or dead batteries are the main reasons smoke alarms do not sound in response to a fire. After ten years, your smoke alarm has worked over 87,000 hours! A smoke alarm has a limited life—like any household appliance that works 24 hours a day. If you don't know exactly how old your smoke alarms are, you should replace them just to be safe.

The City's Fire Department provides free smoke alarms to residents through its Fire Prevention Division as part of its education efforts and to help save lives. For more information about Smoke Alarm Program, call the Fire Prevention Division at (816) 784-9100.



SERVICES

A Simple Home Audit Could Save You Money

- Check for holes or cracks around walls, ceilings, windows, doors, light and plumbing fixtures. These openings can leak air in or out of your home.
- Check if your appliances and heating and cooling systems are properly maintained. Replace or clean filters as needed.
- Check the chimney. If you have a fireplace or wood stove, keep the flue damper closed when it is not in use.
- Check and clean warm-air registers and cold-air returns. Make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.

Energy Savings Tips

- \$ Don't constantly move the thermostats up or down throughout the day because this will waste money and energy.
- \$ Use ceiling fans to assist in cooling in the summer. Blades should rotate counter-clockwise when viewed from below.
- \$ Make sure furniture and drapes are not blocking vents in your home or apartment.
- \$ Turn down the temperature on the water heater to 120 degrees to save energy costs.
- \$ Close off rooms that are not in use to save on heating and cooling bills.
- \$ Do not use extension cords when operating appliances. This could cause a fire hazard.
- \$ Clean or replace filters on your air conditioner and/or furnace as needed.
- \$ Turn off the lights when they are not needed. Consider replacing burned out bulbs with fluorescent bulbs.



It's not to late to get a TV Converter Box Coupon

Reprint from www.dtv2009.gov website

Are you ready for the digital television transition?

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders.



What is the TV Converter Box Coupon Program?

Congress created the TV Converter Box Coupon Program for households wishing to keep using their analog TV sets after February 17, 2009. The Program allows U.S. households to obtain up to two coupons, each worth \$40, which can be applied toward the cost of eligible converter boxes.

A TV connected to cable, satellite or other pay TV service does not require a TV converter box from this program.

Consumers have a variety of options. Options to explore include:

1. Keep your existing analog TV and purchase a TV converter box. A converter box plugs into your TV and will keep it working after Feb. 17, 2009, or
2. Connect to cable, satellite or other pay service, or
3. Purchase a television with a digital tuner.

Apply online: www.DTV2009.gov

Apply by phone: 188 DTV 2009 (1-88-388-2009)

All applications must be submitted by March 31, 2009.

TECHNOLOGY

Attention Homeowners: Do you have a Beneficiary Deed?

Reprint from *Urban Core Estate Planning Project flyer*

A Beneficiary deed:

- Transfers title to the owner's property at the owner's death to the beneficiary that owner chooses
- Allows the owner's family to avoid probate (and court fees and costs)
- Allows the owner to retain full control of the property for the owner's life (because it is revocable)
- Keeps the family home in the family
- Preserves tax benefits for the owner and the beneficiary
- Clears title (without Probate) to enhance the marketability and loan value of the home

Preserves homeownership and preserves neighborhoods

For more information call:

Legal Aid of Western Missouri

1125 Grand Ave., Suite 1900

Kansas City, Mo 64106

816-474-6750

<http://www.lawmo.org>

*Providing free legal help to elders & low-income people
in Western Missouri*

Co-sponsored by legal aid of Western Missouri, the Volunteer Attorney Project and the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association. The project is funded in part through the Jackson County, Missouri, Housing Resources Commission

SERVICE

Safety Message About Natural Gas

Natural gas is safe, reliable and efficient when used properly.

Maintaining your natural gas appliances is the best way to safeguard your home from a natural gas accident. Please use the following checklist to help make your home a safer place and ensure that you protect the ones you love.

SAFETY

- The flame on your natural gas range is steady and blue. Yellow or orange flames indicate incomplete gas combustion.
- Clutter and flammable objects are stored away from natural gas appliances.
- Natural gas appliances are installed and serviced by qualified repair people.
- Appliances and appliance connectors are inspected or replaced periodically.
- All appliance vents are kept clean and in good repair.
- The natural gas oven or gas range is used only for cooking, not to heat the room or dry clothes.
- Your furnace air filters are replaced monthly throughout the heating season.
- Everyone in your household knows how to identify the [smell of natural gas](#).
- Check for leaking or cracked heat exchangers in furnaces to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

If you smell gas:

MGE Emergency number 1-800-582-000

Leave the building immediately.

SAFETY

- **Do not activate your electric garage door opener to leave your house.** The internal circuitry of the motor in the door opener could ignite the leaking natural gas.
- **Do not use your cellular phone to call MGE unless you are outside and away from your house.** Using any type of telephone could ignite the leaking gas.
- **Do not turn any light switches or other electrical switches on or off.** Anything electrical could cause a spark and ignite leaking gas.

Do not try to re-light a pilot light or strike a match.

Leave gas furnaces, water heaters and other gas appliances alone. Get out of the house immediately and call MGE.

Southeast Community Center is now open

December 13, 2008 Southeast Community Center was opened to the public. The ideal of bringing families and friends together is the goal of the new center located in Swope Park. The 46,755-square-foot center replaced the Southeast Community Center at 3601 E. 63rd St. The new center is located a few blocks east of the old center in the north edge of Swope Park.

It has a full-sized basketball court, meeting rooms, a game room, a tot drop-off room, a craft room, a therapy pool, a recreation pool with play features and fitness area with weights and cardiovascular equipment. A variety of aerobics classes are offered, and a track above the gym so members can walk or run. For more information please contact the center during hours of operation.



Southeast Community Center
4201 East 63rd Street
Kansas City, Mo 64130
816-513-0630

Hours of operation:
Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday 9 am. to 6 pm
Sunday 10 am to 6pm

Support School Uniform Exchange

Neighborhood Services is asking area residents to donate school uniforms that are clean and in good condition for students attending school within the Kansas City School District.

The donated uniforms will help alleviate some of the financial pressure that parents and caregivers encounter when purchasing school uniforms for the growing child. Accepted are school uniform items in good condition that meet the current Kansas City Public School dress code guidelines; khaki pants, white and/or navy button downs shirts or polo knit tops. Please help recycle gently-used or new uniforms within our school community.

Those interested in helping in this effort can drop off the uniforms to the designated clothes closet or meeting place for your neighborhood's organization.

The deadline to donate uniforms for the schools is February 13, 2009. Please call 816-513-3200 for more information.



"Hey look! It's my old school uniform!"

Unscramble the New Year!

1. PYAHP WEN RAEY =
2. EIEAORRNZG =
3. ODEC ETCERNENOMF =
4. MOIUMTNYC =
5. RWNZTHEITAEIOA =
6. HKFUURSON =
7. ETAITCRGS GPLNINAN =
8. NODWWNOT =
9. OGHEOBDNISROH =
10. ACORBN EMOXNODI =
11. REMIC OENIRNTEVP =
12. UARMOR =
13. NEGEAG =
14. SFTAYE =
15. ELEADRHSPI =
16. MOEH LASON =
17. OFTOPRINN =
18. WSEDSEIT =
19. SPEAO =
20. TNIWGO
21. ADTORLNHN =
22. ROTTOS =
23. RNAEELW =
24. ESCVIERS =
25. ERSPTNRA =
26. TCOEHTLRA =
27. WIONTDM =
28. SURIMOT =
29. UTOWTOHNS =
30. XAT DRTCEI =
31. NAIIRNTG =
32. USCESSC =

1. HAPPY NEW YEAR
2. REORGANIZE
3. CODE ENFORCEMENT
4. COMMUNITY
5. WEATHERIZATION
6. FURNITURE
7. STRATEGIC PLANNING
8. DOWNTOWN
9. NEIGHBORHOODS
10. CARBON MONOXIDE
11. CRIME PREVENTION
12. ARMOUR
13. ENGAGE
14. SAFETY
15. LEADERSHIP
16. HOME LOANS
17. NONPROFIT
18. WESTSIDE
19. PARSIP
20. TOWING
21. NORTHLAND
22. TROOST
23. RENWAL
24. SERVICES
25. PARTNERS
26. CHARLOTTE
27. MIDTOWN
28. TOURISM
29. SOUTHTOWN
30. TAX CREDIT
31. TRAINING
32. SUCCESS

Top 10 Complaints in Area Neighborhoods

Here is a list of the top 10 common complaints that affect a residential neighborhoods quality of life and property values.

1. Barking Dogs
2. Abandoned/inoperable vehicles
3. Speeding
4. Zoning violations (sheds, buildings, Commercial sales)
5. Vehicles parked on grass or dirt.
6. Overgrown vegetation (weeds and right of way vegetation.
7. Loud noises (parties, boom boxes etc.)
8. Graffiti
9. Bulk trash put out too early and on sidewalks/streets.
10. Posting of signs on public property/utility poles.

If you see a violation or have concerns dial **3-1-1** to call in a complaint. Callers can remain anonymous!



COMMUNITY

Crime Prevention Tips

Good Neighbors watch out for . .

- ★ Someone screaming or shouting for help
- ★ Someone looking into windows or parked cars
- ★ Unusual noises
- ★ A stranger sitting in a car or stopping to talk to a child
- ★ Anyone being forced into a vehicle
- ★ Vehicles moving slowly with no apparent destination
- ★ Report any crime or suspicious activities to the police department.
- ★ Ask for photo identification from service or delivery people before letting them in. If you are the least bit worried, call the company to verify.
- ★ Be sure your street address number is large, clear of obstruction, and well-lighted so police and other emergency personnel can find your home quickly. . .

T.I.F. Funding Available

Rehabilitation Assistance for Midtown Properties (RAMP) is the City of Kansas City, Missouri Tax Increment Financing (TIF) housing program for midtown neighborhoods.

Various Tax Increment Financing Plans include housing rehabilitation components designed to sustain home ownership, which is instrumental in stabilizing individual neighborhoods. TIF housing programs provide financial assistance through self-amortizing loan/grants to qualified single-family homeowners for primarily exterior improvements to residential properties. Post-grant award residency of five (5) years is required, and the loan/grant funds are written off 20% per year for five years. Repayment is required for the prorated period if the residency period is not achieved. Loan/grants may require matching funds, dependant upon applicant's income.

Housing program budgets are funded through the increased tax increment portion of local property taxes and 50% of the economic activity taxes. The Midtown R.A.M.P. program is a TIF sponsored program.

Boundaries:

From 27th Street (north) to 31st Street (south),
and from Troost (west) to Paseo (east)
From 31st Street (north) to Armour (south),
and from Charlotte (west) to Paseo (east)

Repair guidelines

- Code and non-code items
- Interior repairs can utilize up to 30% of the TIF funds
 - (\$3,000 maximum per single family home,
\$1,500 maximum per multi-family unit)
- **Exterior repairs must be addressed first**

How much you may apply for:

Up to \$10,000 for improvements for single-family, owner occupied homes

Up to \$75,000 for improvements to multi-family apartment building with 2-12 units per structure (\$7,500 per unit) if matched dollar for dollar by the owner(s).

Up to \$15,000 per single-family rental conversion properties. Rental ownership cannot extend past 18 months of loan/grant closing. If property is not sold to an owner-occupant within that period; the note will become due and payable. All rental conversion owners must match TIF funding on a dollar for dollar basis

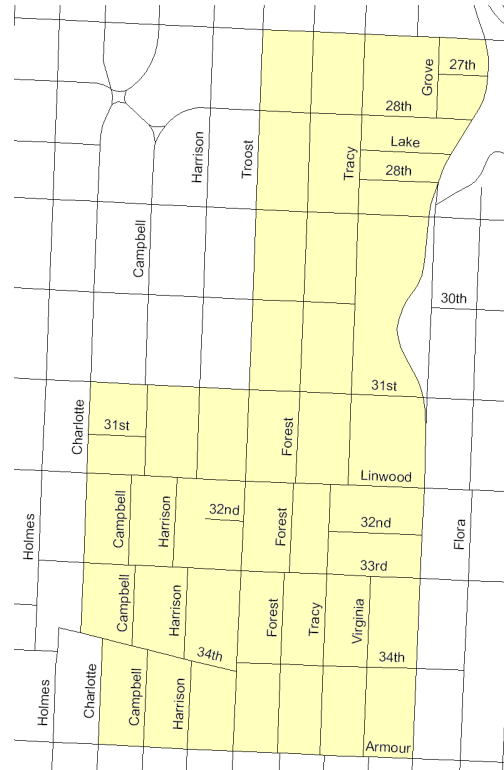
Eligibility:

All single family owner occupied and multi-family owners are eligible to participate regardless of income. However, there are match requirements which are income based.

How the program works:

Funds are available as a loan, which is then converted to a grant at 20% per year. If you live in the home for 5 years after the repairs have been made, the loan then converts to a full grant and no funds have to be paid back.

For applications and questions please contact Westside Housing Organization, Steve Reynolds or Magda Manriquez, 816- 221-0286.



Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

Following a major disaster, first responders who provide fire and medical services may be temporarily overwhelmed and may not be able to meet the demand for these services. Factors as number of victims, communication failures, and road blockages will prevent people from accessing emergency services they have come to expect at a moment's notice through 911. People will have to rely on each other for help in order to meet their immediate life saving and life sustaining needs. One also expects that under these kinds of conditions, family members, fellow employees, and neighbors will spontaneously try to help each other.

If we can predict that emergency services will not meet immediate needs following a major disaster, as in snow storm, tornado or flash flooding, and people will spontaneously volunteer, what can government do to prepare citizens for this eventuality?

First, present citizens the facts about what to expect following a major disaster in terms of immediate services. **Second**, give the message about their responsibility for mitigation and preparedness. **Third**, train them in needed life saving skills with emphasis on decision making skills, rescuer safety, and doing the greatest good for the greatest number. **Fourth**, organize teams so that they are an extension of first responder services offering immediate help to victims until professional services arrive.

The CERT course will benefit any citizen who takes it. This individual will be better prepared to respond to and cope with the aftermath of a disaster. The participation in KCMO CERT conveys no official status and CERT members are not obligated to respond to an emergency.

The CERT course is delivered to the community by a team of first responders who have the requisite knowledge and skills to instruct the sessions. The CERT training class is limited to groups of 12 to 20 individuals. The classroom instruction takes about 20 hours, which includes the practical experience using emergency equipment and a disaster simulation exercise. It's open at no cost to adults of all ages and capabilities.

All classes must be scheduled in advance. Classes may be scheduled to meet the needs of participants, including nights and weekends.

To request training for your community or neighborhood organization, please contact Jennifer Fales, Emergency Management Coordinator at 635 Woodland Avenue suite 2107 KCMO 64106 or call 816 784-9040 or email Jennifer_Fales@kcmo.org.



Parking Ordinances Enforced by KCPD Parking Control

The Kansas City Police Department's Special Operations Division, consists of several specialized units, the Patrol Support Unit has the Helicopter Section and the Canine (K-9) Section, Traffic Investigation Unit has the Accident investigation Section, the Traffic Investigation Section, The Commercial Vehicle Investigation Section and the Driving Under the Influence Section, the Traffic Enforcement Unit, consisting of Motorcycle and Radar Enforcement Squads, a Traffic related Complainant Squad and the Parking Control Section. Their responsibility is city wide, meaning they cover the entire city (318 square miles) of Kansas City, Missouri.

This year, KCPD directed staff to begin **enforcing parking ordinance in residential areas**, using the City of Kansas City's parking ordinance as a model to address parking-related concerns in the community. Feedback from the community is to be an integral component in the development of the ordinance.

The benefits of the KCPD enforcing parking ordinances in residential areas are:

- Suspicious, stolen, abandoned and disabled vehicles are easily checked, identified and removed.
- Less overnight crime by reducing suspect and possible victim vehicles.
- Officers patrolling many residential streets deter some crimes.
- Street cleaning and maintenance is assured.
- Easier access to residences during nighttime emergencies.
- A cleaner and better-looking city.



This action is in compliance with the City of Kansas City's goal of preserving and enhancing existing neighborhoods.

The following are the parking situations citizens may receive a citation for:

Parking to the curb

Double parked, wrong way or parallel in angle parking

License Plate violation

Expired or no license plates, plates belonging to another vehicle

Prohibited parking-general

Blocking sidewalk, crosswalk, on a bridge, 5 feet of a hydrant

Prohibited parking-by sign

Emergency snow route, bus/taxi zone, no parking, standing or stopping

Handicap parking

Parking without a valid disable permit

Time limit parking

Expired meter, parked on street over 48 hours in same spot

Yard Parking

Typically enforced by code officers but KCPD is authorized to enforce the zoning code.

For more information or questions regarding any parking situation, please contact KCPD Supervisor Rita Garcia at (816) 482-8837 or rgarcia@kcpd.org

Use Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund (NTDF) to Celebrate your Neighborhood Success

Did you know that Pendleton Heights Neighborhood Association and Volker Neighborhood Association received grant monies from the City of Kansas City's Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund for 2007-2008? Or did you know that East 23rd PAC, Hyde Park Neighborhood, Old Northeast and Volker Neighborhood Association received grant funding for 2008-2009?

Your neighborhood association can too receive grant monies for any event that is open to the public and appeals to local residents, tourists or visitors. This activity may be a one-time event, a series of events, an annual event or a capital project. The City Council and the Neighborhood Tourist Committee support any application that includes funding to supplement the request.

You will find on the website that the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund is a reimbursement grant program available to local not-for-profit organizations for the purpose of promoting Kansas City's neighborhoods through cultural, social, ethnic, historic, educational and recreational activities, while promoting our city as a premier convention, visitor and tourist center.

Examples of eligible events this fund sponsors are; music events, art festivals, neighborhood festivals, exhibits, homes tours, tournaments and parades. Culture defines us, fuels our differences and highlights our similarities. Local arts and cultural groups have the unique ability to create neutral space for different groups to openly express our concerns. Our neighborhood organizations can become the voice for Kansas City to share our neighborhoods assets.

Your not-for profit organization application for funding to bring tourist to Kansas City, Missouri will be reviewed by the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund committee on an annual and quarterly basis. The quarterly applications are due on or before the first day of the quarter in which the application is submitted. Quarterly meetings are held in February, May, August and November.

For more information please call (816) 513-3200 or go to http://www.kcmo.org/neigh.nsf/web/ntdf_main

MARC Offers Neighborhood Leadership Academy

The Neighborhood and Community Services Department has selected Mid-America Regional Council's Government Training Institute (GTI) to assist with the creation of a community leadership development program for the City's nearly 300 neighborhood associations and their members. This Leadership Program will be an integrated citywide system that builds the capacity of individuals and organizations so that they can better respond to community change in proactive ways.

Plans are well underway to launch this timely program in the early spring 2009. MARC has been in contact with a number of community leaders to seek input as to the top priorities for the personal development and skill building curriculum. City staff has been consulted to further define the program parameters. In addition, research has been conducted to benchmark against national and international community leadership models. The training curriculum will consist of a series of 2-hour workshops that combine into a number of certificate programs that build upon one another. Self development techniques will be combined with specific skill building methods to enhance participants' current capabilities and to promote further relationship and community building opportunities. The workshops will be hosted in a variety of settings and times located throughout the City.



The full curriculum and a calendar of events will be announced in February 2009. Additionally, a website will be created to promote the classes and provide registration information. More details to follow soon. Until then, please contact Deletta Dean at 816-513-3200 for more information.



The City of Kansas City, MO
Neighborhood and Community
Services Department

Neighborhood Services Division

City Hall, 414 East 12th Street, Fourth Floor,
 west side, Kansas City, MO 64106
 Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am– 5:00 pm

Email: Solutions_NCSD@kcmo.org

Fax: (816) 513-3201

Neighborhood Services Division staff:

Deletta Dean, Division Manager

816-513-3220, deletta_dean@kcmo.org

David Reynolds, Community Safety Coordinator

816-513-3235, david_reynolds@kcmo.org

Venessa Huskey Wates, Community Liaison

816-513-3019, venessa_wates@kcmo.org

TaWana Woodard, Community Liaison

816-513-3229, tawana_woodard@kcmo.org

“Winter is the season in which people try to keep the house as warm as it was in the summer, when they complained about the heat.” ~Author Unknown



Call the 3-1-1 Action Center to report pot holes, missed trash, street light out, malfunction traffic signals, water main breaks and to nominate your “good neighbors”. You can also fill out a service request online at <http://www.kcmo.org/action>.



9-1-1 is the phone number for police, fire, and medical emergencies; everyone seems to know that by now. But what you may not know is what *constitutes* an emergency, and what doesn't.

- If it will make **any** difference how fast help gets there, don't hesitate to call 9-1-1! A crime in progress or a dangerous situation always calls for the fastest possible response.
- Different types of emergency calls will receive different prioritization, depending on what the risk is to people or property. Don't panic if the dispatcher is asking you lots of questions; they will often have started routing someone your way and then continue to pass on information while they talk to you.



Do you have what it takes to volunteer?

Invest your time with UNITED WAY'S Ready to Serve Volunteer Program.

A nationwide volunteer program, RSVP invites you to use your life experience and skills to answer the call of your neighbors in need. Giving anywhere from four to 40 hours per week, RSVP volunteers help solve serious problems in the community.

For more information please visit <http://uwgkc.org> or call Betsy Phillips at 816-559-4668.



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

Building a deck? Planting a tree? Installing a mailbox? 811 is the new number you should call before you begin any digging project.

811 was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. Every digging job – even small projects like planting trees or shrubs.

If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service, and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs. Visit <http://www.call811.com/> for more information on this new service.

SERVICES