

THE
**CITY
BEAT**
MAGAZINE

Oct - Dec 2022



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Goodbye Mark Barber



Anetra Riley,
Neighborhood
Development &
Community
Protections
Manager,
graduates with a
M.S. of Public
Administration

UNVEILING CELEBRATION



Valdosta's Wild Adventures Theme Park constantly surprises the community with fabulous additions to its park!

City Manager Mark Barber was honored to be a guest speaker at the unveiling of the new Oasis Outpost Site Plan. Other City Officials were also excited to be in attendance. Afterward, everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch and interacted with the animals.





BATTLE OF THE BADGES

The Valdosta Fire and Police Departments hosted their Annual Battle of the Badges Blood Drive on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, in the Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room, along with two LifeSouth Bloodmobiles in the parking lot.

The friendly inter-departmental competition was open to the public to aid the LifeSouth Community Blood Centers in its life-saving efforts. LifeSouth Community Blood Centers is the sole supplier of blood products to South Georgia Medical Center and has served the Valdosta community for over five years.

When blood donors arrived, they were asked which team they supported for the competition, team Firefighters or team Police. The team that attracted the most donors earned the coveted trophy and bragging rights. The other team was required to wash several safety vehicles.

The Police Department overtook the Fire Department in the final hours, but the entire community was the actual winner. This year's donations impacted 165 lives making LifeSouth and the recipients of the donations the true winners. A big thank you to everyone who donated!



GREAT MORNING AT OLYMPIC PARK



Students from Scintilla Charter Academy's sixth grade visited Mayor Scott James Matheson and City Manager Mark Barber. The kids were asked to provide the Mayor with input and suggestions for revitalizing the area around Olympic Park in downtown. The Mayor and City Manager then joined everyone for lunch.

Valdosta's City Engineer

The City of Valdosta's City Engineer, Ben O'Dowd, is not only an incredible Engineer, he is also a fantastic role model for children. He has always been passionate about giving back to his community. Ben participated in Sallas Mahone's STEAM night, which provided students and their parents a chance to test out a water pipe so they could see the difference between clean water and stormwater. During Christmas, he also read a Christmas story to Sallas Mahone Elementary School students and passed out gifts and snacks.





NEIGHBORHOOD WALK



The Valdosta Police and Fire Departments joined forces to conduct a neighborhood walk to visit with community members, ask if they had any concerns in their area, and passed out educational materials.



NEIGHBORHOOD

The City Of Valdosta loves seeing what the Neighborhood Development Division does for its citizens through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The program provides the City opportunities to help citizens bring their properties up to code to ensure that all citizens have a safe and sanitary home. Several ribbon cuttings were held to honor Ms. Edna Moore, Ms. Christine Clarkson, and Mr. Alfred Frazier, whose homes were made safe through rehab or reconstruction.



Development



UTILITIES LEROY PAULO

Leroy Paulo, Central Maintenance Supervisor with the Utilities Department, was named November 2022 Employee of the Month!

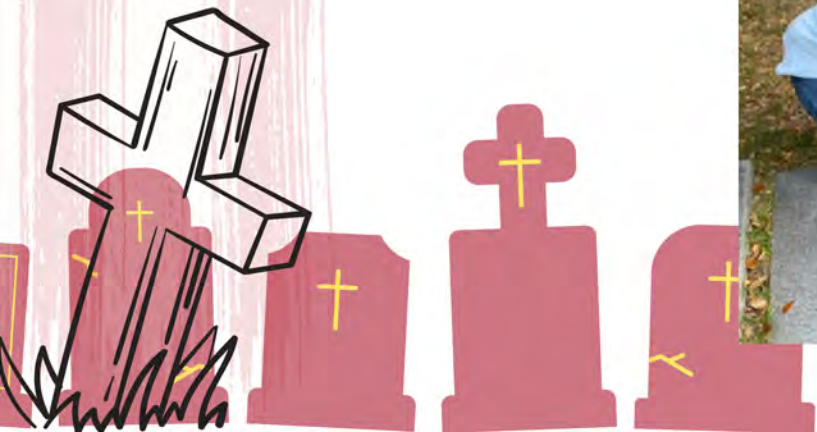
He excels as a Master Technician and Supervisor. The latest example of Leroy's knowledge and expertise was evident during his installation of a new influent bar-screen system for the City of Valdosta's Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. This was an extremely challenging Project requiring the removal of the old bar-screen system, modifying the mounting system for the new machinery, and working closely with a local Electrical Contractor for the new electrical wiring and controls. The complexity and cost of \$525,000 for this Project typically require contracting the Project to a firm specializing in this equipment. Leroy consulted with the equipment manufacturer, evaluated the Project requirements, and then designed, planned, and managed the entire Project. Accomplishing this in-house saved the City of Valdosta tens of thousands of dollars.

Another complex Project that Leroy planned and accomplished was to upgrade all four of the Plant's Sequencing Batch Reactors (SBR). This upgrade replaced 12 complex and unreliable floating mixer tether cable assemblies with heavy-duty booms for all four SBRs. The booms now maintain the mixers in optimal positions, eliminating frequent cable failures in the original design. Leroy demonstrates technical expertise and outstanding leadership in guiding his teams to accomplish complex Projects in minimal time. Leroy Paulo deserves to be selected as the City of Valdosta Employee of the Month.

ANNUAL VETERAN'S DAY HEADSTONE

Cleaning

The City of Valdosta's Public Works Department held its Fall Veteran's Day Headstone cleaning to show appreciation for the courageous veterans who served in the Armed Services. Over time, headstones can become grimy from their constant outdoor exposure. Rain and humidity cause mold to accumulate on the stones, making it difficult to read. The volunteers for this event scrub the headstones so people can read the inscriptions. Many brave men and women fight for our freedom every day, and it is vital to show our gratitude for their sacrifice, which continues long after these real-life superheroes are no longer with us.



JESSICA STOWE



EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Jessica Stowe was named December 2022 Employee of the Month. She has been employed as the Purchasing Technician for almost ten years. She has an incredible work ethic, and her attendance and attention to detail are outstanding. She is very knowledgeable about her duties and takes them very seriously. The reasons above demonstrate why she is an exceptional employee for the City of Valdosta. She goes above and beyond her duties, making her a worthy employee of the month nominee.

Jessica has been in college for the past four years and is graduating at the end of the semester in December with an Accounting Degree. She wants to further her career and make a more significant difference. Her career is important to her, so this will take her to the next level. She does this while maintaining her 40-hour work schedule.

Recently several Administrative people left the City's employment in the Utilities Department and the Public Works Department. These were mostly Admins who were responsible for entering purchasing information about the day-to-day function of the Departments as well as major construction projects. Jessica took it upon herself to run a training class for the new Admins in the Departments about the New World System purchasing and accounts payable module. Since Jessica and the Admins interact daily, she felt a strong need to train them so that errors could be minimized and they would not have to spend more time making corrections.

Some upper Managers also attended to familiarize themselves with the system process of purchasing, signing off on the purchases, and learning the process of what it takes to pay for the purchase since some of them were new. Everyone who attended said that it helped them understand the process better and that attending benefited them. Jessica deals not only with the new Admins but with every Department at some point during the purchasing process. She is always helpful and goes the extra mile to provide solutions.

The Purchasing Office, located on the second floor of City Hall, has many local citizens and out-of-town visitors during the work day. Purchasing is also responsible for answering the City Hall general phone line. Jessica goes above and beyond directing visitors physically in the building who knock on the door to ensure they are directed to the correct office, building, or even another off-site location, such as the County building. Likewise, she does the same for helping phone customers, even to the extent of looking up phone numbers or addresses on the Internet for phone callers for both local and out-of-town callers. She helps solve any possible problems so they can take care of their business instead of ending the call with no assistance.



Valdosta Fire Department

The Valdosta Fire Department (VFD) celebrated bravery and skill to honor firefighters who recently graduated from the Fire Academy, earned promotions, and received Life Save Awards. The Life Save Award is presented to firefighters who were instrumental in helping save a life from fire or medical events. The City is proud of the hard work, dedication, and professionalism the Fire Department continues to provide to its citizens. VFD appreciates South Georgia Medical Center's Trauma Program Manager, Emily Brown, and SGMC Emergency Services' Training Captain, Todd Daniel, for assisting in training and continuing their partnership in emergency medical services.

Promotions:

Deputy Chief Marcus Haynes
Lieutenant Melissa Roe
Lieutenant Benjamin Wainwright
Sergeant Matthew Bridges
Sergeant Jacob Coleman
Sergeant William Sumner
Sergeant Hudson Tanner

Graduates:

Firefighter Garrett Blake
Firefighter Jacob Browning
Firefighter Austin Camp
Firefighter Charity Crump
Firefighter Jeffrey Frier
Firefighter Jayme Parsons

Life Save Awards:

Michael Walden
Charles Phillips
William Sumner
Wade Briggs
Allen Carter
Jacob Coleman
Heath Couch
Joshua Knight
Shelley Miller
Jordan Washington
Isaac Deloach
Jacob Browning



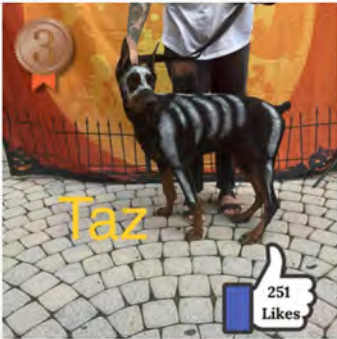
It's Fall Y'all

in Valdosta





Valdosta Main Street's first **Puptober** was a huge success! Citizens were invited to bring their dogs for the pup parade. There was a pup costume contest on the Valdosta Main Street Facebook page, which intended to announce 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners, but the pups were so cute that DOWNTOWN announced eight winners on Halloween. A professional photographer was there to take pet pictures for \$10. The USA Rescue Team was onsite for adoption and was available for potential donations.



Witches took over Downtown Valdosta for a fun spooky night and they didn't forget their brooms!



Witches Night Out

dwn
DOWNTOWN
VALDOSTA



FESTI-FALL

The third annual Festi-Fall event was a fun-filled evening that brought the community together to celebrate autumn and Halloween! Everyone enjoyed interactive kids' games, fall-themed music, and candy booths spread throughout Unity Park featuring City departments. All booths had a fall/Halloween theme where attendees trick-or-treated with a free tote bag sponsored by the City of Valdosta and Valdosta Main Street.



Holidays

in Valdosta



Christmas Tree

LIGHTING CEREMONY



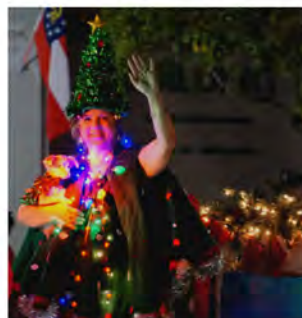
The community united to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year and kick off the 2022 Christmas season! The kids were excited to have a special visit from Santa and listen to a reading of *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies. The Valdosta Middle School Chorus graced the event with beautiful carols.



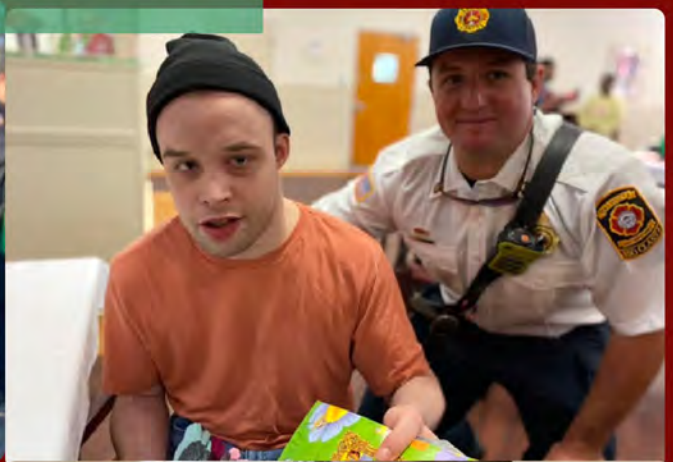


Greater Valdosta Christmas Parade

The streets were lined with twinkling lights and people, and the air was filled with the sound of laughter. People were decked out in their holiday attire, and even the animals seemed to know something special was happening. Holiday magic filled the City as everyone celebrated the Holiday Season at the annual Greater Valdosta Christmas Parade that was held on Saturday, December 3, 2022! The Christmas parade is a staple at that time of year—it's more than just a celebration of Christmas, it's a celebration of all things festive. It is also an opportunity for businesses to show off their creativity and impress the community and judges. The high school marching bands played holiday music as they marched down the street. The City of Valdosta appreciates the judges, announcer, Public Works Department, Engineering Department, Downtown Valdosta Main Street, Ossipe Temple, and Valdosta Police Department for their time and commitment to making the parade a success!



Mayor's Motorcade



The Mayor's Motorcade is an annual tradition where everyone comes together to ensure the Parkwood Development Center residents have a Merry Christmas. Fire Chief Brian Boutwell, Mayor Scott James Matheson, and members of the Valdosta Fire Department delivered Christmas gifts donated by the community on December 8, 2022.



SHOP *with a* FIREFIGHTER

Thanks to the community's support, this year's Shop with a Firefighter event which was held on December 3, 2022, was a huge success. This event was memorable for firefighters, The Citizens Fire Academy Alumni, Sigma Delta Theta Sorority members, and sponsored families. It is an excellent way for everyone to interact with kids needing extra holiday cheer. The Valdosta Fire Department appreciates Walmart Super Center on Norman Drive for their generous support in helping make this event possible. With them and other sponsors, this event was amazing for everyone involved.





SHOP *with a* FIREFIGHTER





SHOP
with a
COP



Valdosta Police Department is proud of the success of its Shop with a Cop program which provides families with a brighter Christmas. It was made possible with the help of gracious community partners!

Walmart on Norman Drive hosted the event, which was held on December 19, 2022, Zaxby's on North Saint Augustine Road provided meals for all participants, and Kona Ice of Lowndes gave treats before the shopping experience.

Thank you to the following agencies for participating as shopping buddies:

- Lowndes County Sheriff's Office
- Georgia State Patrol
- Motor Carrier Compliance Division
- Valdosta State University Police Department
- Remerton Police Department
- 23rd Security Forces Squadron of Moody AFB
- 824th Base Defense Squadron of Moody AFB
- Department of Community Supervision





SHOP
with a
COP



PUBLIC SAFETY SANTA

Santa Claus came to town, bringing the Valdosta Police and Fire Department with him! As fire and police vehicles arrived with lights and sirens activated, children rushed out to meet Santa and the first responders, who gave them gifts! It was a meaningful way to connect with the community and an opportunity to show how much they care about the people they are honored to serve.



READING *to* *the* CHILDREN



Various City Departments enjoyed spreading the Holiday spirit at local schools. Getting out into the community is one of their favorite things, and the students were delighted to have these special Christmas visits. City employees read books aloud and passed out snacks and gifts to excited children.









CITY MANAGERS READ TO KIDS



Brookfield Academy invited City Manager Mark Barber and Deputy City Managers Richard Hardy and Catherine Ammons for a special Christmas visit! The City Managers enjoyed reading books to the students and were grateful for the invitation to inspire young minds!



GOODBYE MARK BARBER

Mark Barber has worked for the City of Valdosta for over thirty-four years and enjoyed every minute of his career. Under his leadership, the City was able to accomplish the following projects:

- Unity Park Amphitheater
- Valdosta On Demand
- Lee Street Amphitheater
- Georgia Smart Cities Grant – one of the finalists for the award in Barcelona, Spain, in 2021 – Won a \$100,000.00 grant for Georgia Smart Cities
- 2022 Smart Fifty Award Winner – Columbus, OH
- The first city in Georgia to implement the TIMMS Connectivity System with all 128 intersections and the Traffic Management Center
- The largest street renaming petition of N. Forrest St to Barack Obama Blvd
- Numerous road and sidewalk constructions and improvements
- Various improvements to City Parks









City Manager Mark Barber,

You will be missed!