

2019

A City Without

# LIMITS

City of Valdosta

ANNUAL REPORT







# FROM THE *City Manager*

It is my pleasure to present the 2019 City of Valdosta Annual Report, our 24th consecutive report, designed to inform our citizens, elected officials and other interested individuals of our city's activities, progress, challenges and accomplishments last year.

As we enter a new decade, I am excited to look back on all we accomplished in 2019 and all the great things to come in 2020.

In 2019, the city continued to operate in a fiscally challenged economy, and our employees continued to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate rising costs of running a city, while maintaining quality services for our citizens. Even so, Valdosta—Georgia's 14th largest city—continued to have one of the lowest millage rates among its peer cities in the state. Through the dedicated work of the Finance Department staff, the city was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 33rd consecutive year by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The city also received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 23rd consecutive year--the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting.

Throughout 2019, city employees continued to provide top-notch municipal government, public safety and quality-of-life services to our citizens and visitors through our customer-centered departments. I invite you to take the time to view the department pages to read their accomplishments.

The city fully utilized all its resources to provide more transparency and accessibility to local government through modern technology. An strategic effort was made to communicate more effectively with elected officials, citizens and media via our website, social media tools, Valdosta Click 'N Fix mobile app, Metro Valdosta Channel 17, timely publications and E-News blasts, citizen engagement programs and events.

Furthermore, the "City Without Limits" continues to be a great place for business, and we look forward to positive economic and community development that will continue to move us forward.

Thank you for taking the time to review this report. I'd also like to thank the 650 dedicated city employees for the tremendous service each provides to the citizens of Valdosta, to our elected officials who provide us with leadership and direction, and to the citizens of the Valdosta community to whom we are privileged to serve.



**MARK BARBER**  
**CITY MANAGER**

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## DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA

On Friday, June 7, 2019, City officials along with the Public Art Advisory Committee unveiled a new mural downtown. The mural is the first of its kind in downtown Valdosta. The mural was placed on the side of a downtown building owned by TC Brown. The mural is located at 136 N. Ashley Street.





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*Our Purpose*





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**COUNCIL WOMAN**

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**COUNCILWOMAN**

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**MAYOR PRO-TEM**

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**COUNCILMAN**

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**COUNCILMAN**

*Andy Gibbs*

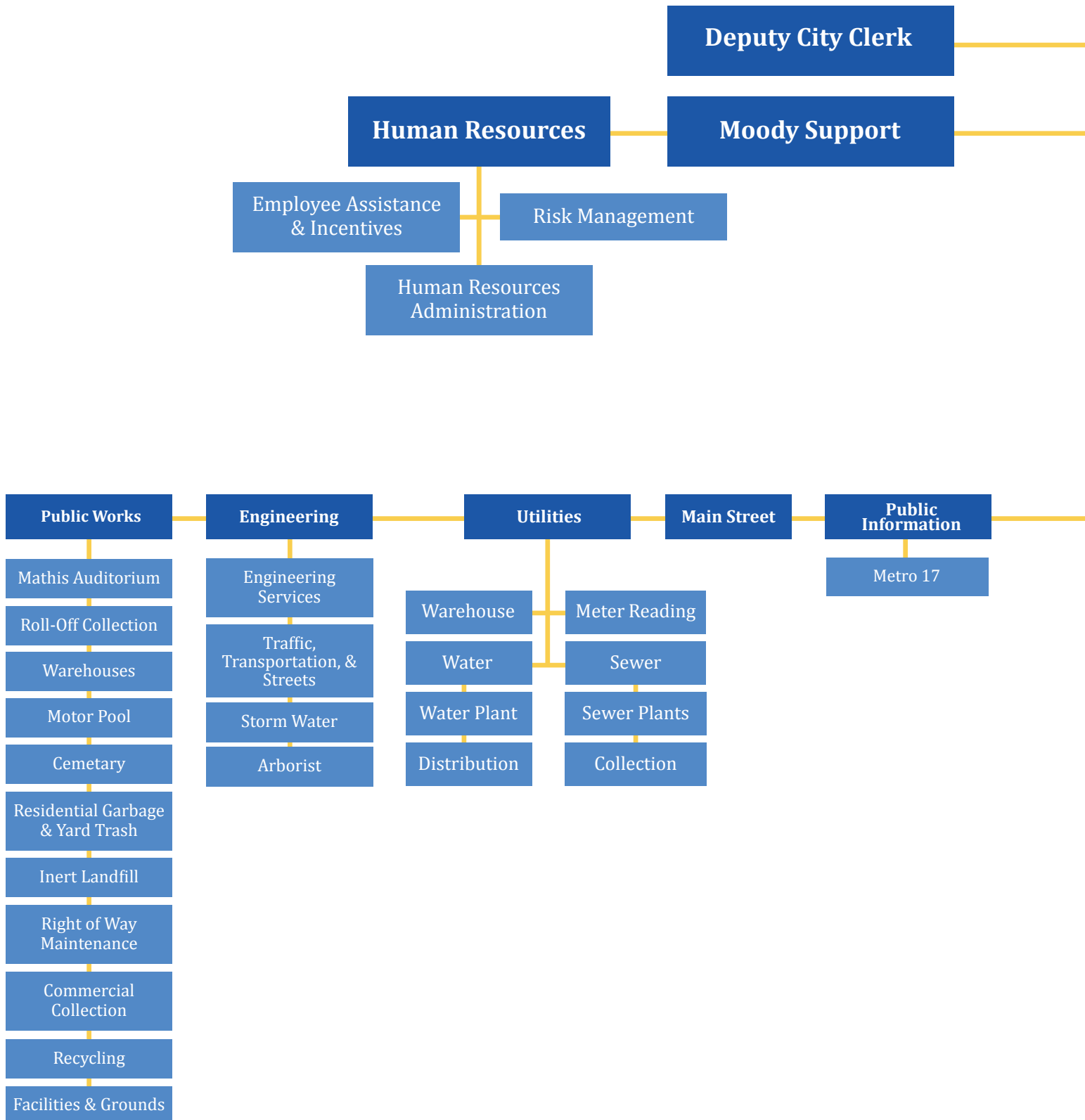
District 6

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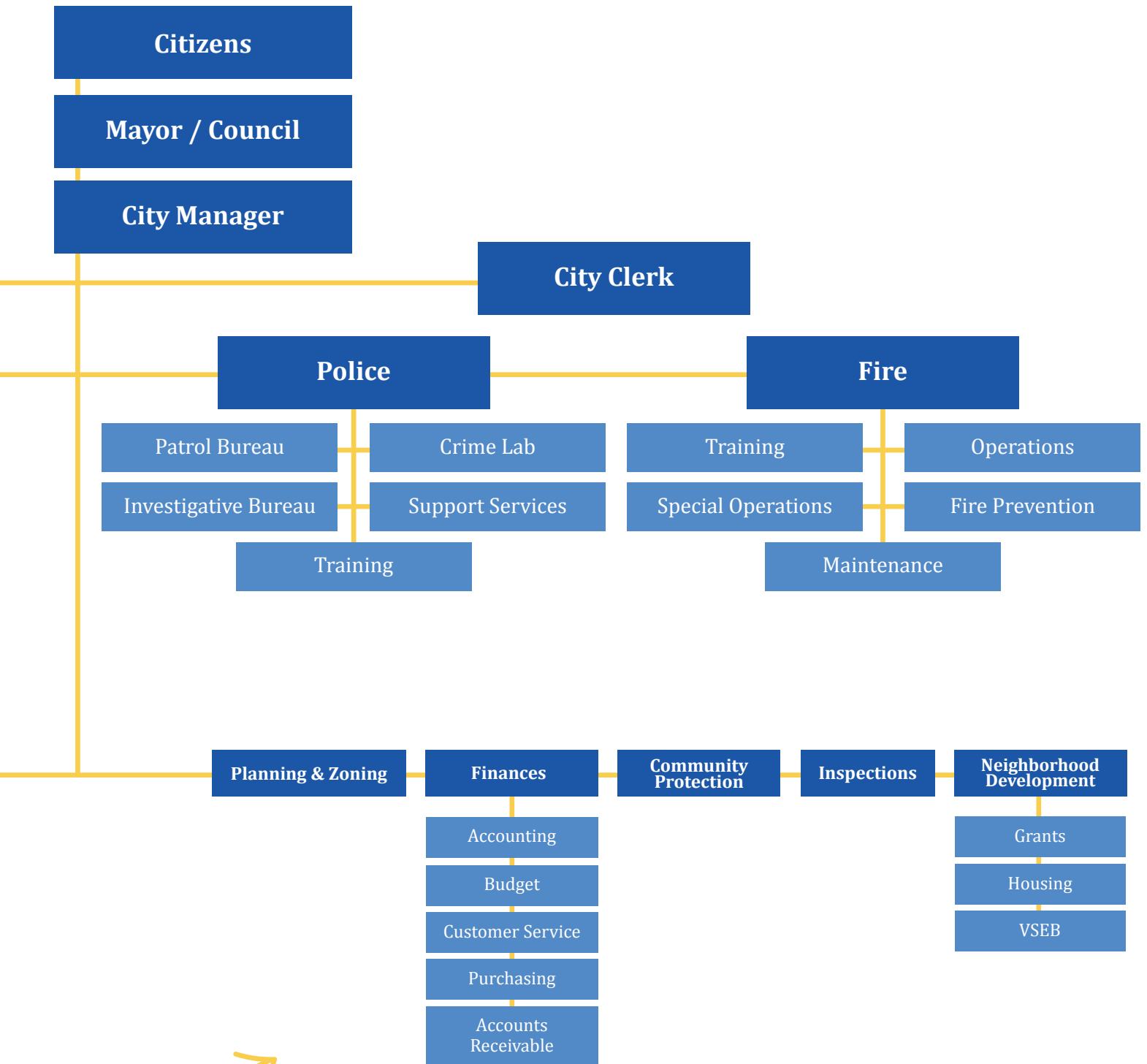
To provide public services that meet or exceed the expectations of citizens. To improve the quality of life in the community by a sincere commitment to the ideals of public service. To be creative and innovative in our approach to the needs of citizens, recognizing the trust and confidence that our citizens place in us as caretakers of governmental services. To be efficient and effective and use wisely the public resources we are entrusted to manage.



# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART







*Contact Us!*

Questions about a department? Go to [www.valdostacity.com](http://www.valdostacity.com) to view each department's contact information.

# ECONOMIC *Development*



## Better Way Products

On March 19, 2019 the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority (VLCDA) announced Better Way Products, a subsidiary of Patrick Industries, Inc., an Indiana-based company that designs, engineers, and manufactures fiberglass parts will be relocating in the Azalea City Business Park. Better Way Products, a leader in original equipment manufacturer (OEM) has occupied and leasing the former Robalo building, which remained vacant for over 10 years. With an initial capital investment of \$750,000 in equipment and personal property, Better Way renovated the 217,000-square-foot facility and became operational in Valdosta in April 2019. According to representatives with Better Way Products, approximately 86 employees will be hired within three years. Job opportunities include general labor of fiberglass fabrication, assembling, packaging and administrative support.

- 86 Total Jobs Created
- \$750,000 Total Capital Invested

## Arglass Yamamura

Arglass Yamamura, LLC, a glass container manufacturing company, announced on August 8, 2019 it will create more than 150 jobs and invest \$123 million to build its first U.S. glass container manufacturing plant in Valdosta-Lowndes County. Arglass Yamamura noted Valdosta's highly-skilled workforce, affordability, educational infrastructure, and close proximity to markets along the East Coast as determining factors for its specialty manufacturing operations. The Valdosta facility will serve as the company's first U.S. plant, creating glass products based on the company's founding principles of flexibility, efficiency, and sustainability. To learn more about Arglass Yamamura, LLC or career opportunities, visit [www.arglass.us](http://www.arglass.us).

• 150  
NEW JOBS CREATED  
BY ARGGLASS

• \$120  
MILLION  
TOTAL CAPITAL  
INVESTMENT BY  
ARGGLASS



ARGGLASS  
YAMAMURA



10 NEW JOBS CREATED  
BY CJB IN 2019



On November 19, 2019, CJB Applied Technologies, LLC, an affiliate of CJB Industries, Inc. recently held an expansion ceremony with a blessing of the grounds and foundation.



\$2.5 MILLION INVESTMENT  
BY CJB IN 2019

### CJB Applied Technologies

CJB Applied Technologies, LLC, an affiliate of CJB Industries, Inc. held an expansion ceremony with a blessing of the grounds and foundation on Tuesday, November 12, 2019. In 2018, CJB Applied Technologies announced they were moving out from under the umbrella of CJB Industries into a standalone facility to support continued growth in applied research and development in chemical and biological markets. The new facility will be approximately 10,000 square feet and house labs, small greenhouse for testing and a nature walk. The construction is expended to be complete in summer of 2020 with a master plan to allow for 3 additional buildings in the future. This project represents a capital investment of \$2,500,000 into the local community. CJB plans to create up to 10 new jobs with the addition of CJB Applied Technologies, LLC. CJB Applied Technologies, LLC, will be located at 1105 Innovation Way located inside Miller Business Park.

### Ace Electric, Inc.

At the December 2019 Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority (VLCDA) Board of Directors meeting, the board voted and approved the development agreement that benefits the growth and expansion of Ace Electric, Inc. Ace Electric, Inc. will expand their footprint in Valdosta-Lowndes County with additional capital investment and new jobs. Ace Electric, Inc. will build a new fabrication facility located in Westside Business Park to support their industrial and commercial customers. Construction on the 70,000 square foot facility is schedule to begin in March of 2020. Newly created jobs will consist of a shop manager, electrical material assemblers, electrical design detailers, BIM technicians, senior BIM operators, truck drivers and laborers. Positions will be posted on the Ace Electric, Inc. website at [www.aceelectric.net/employment.com](http://www.aceelectric.net/employment.com) in October 2020. The new facility will create 15 new jobs in Valdosta-Lowndes County, with an average wage of 18 to 20 dollars an hour. They will invest \$5.5 million into the facility.

- 15 Total Jobs Created
- \$5.5 Million Total Capital Invested











## **ARGLASS YAMAMURA**

Construction is well underway for a \$123 million glass container manufacturing plant that is going to revolutionize the American glass industry. Arglass Southeast, a subsidiary of new holding company Arglass Yamamura, will cater to the spirits, wine and food & beverage industries using the latest technology for efficient glassmaking in what will become the world's most modern glass plant to date.





# THE NUMBERS ARE IN, AND THEY'RE GOOD.

OUR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCED SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC GROWTH IN 2019.  
HERE IS A SNAPSHOT:



**JOBS**  
CREATED

**389**



**PROJECTS**  
COMPLETED

**15**



**CAPITAL**  
INVESTMENT

**\$181,050,000**

Investments from companies such as Arglass, Ace Electric, Inc., Betterway Products  
and CJB Applied Technologies made 2019 a stellar year.



# Balanced GROWTH

- City of Valdosta currently has an estimated 23,500 customer service accounts.
- Average water bill is 7 units of usage for \$74.12.

• **12,568**  
INSPECTIONS IN 2019

• **8,208**  
PERMITS ISSUED  
IN 2019



## BUSINESS LICENSES RENEWED



**217**  
Professional



**177**  
Alcohol



**3,339**  
Regular



**105**  
Miscellaneous

# PAVING THE WAY *for a Great Future*

The Engineering Services Division had a busy year, completing the resurfacing of 19 streets (5.33 miles) and addition of 5540 feet of new sidewalks.

## Patterson Street Streetscape

The Project extends from Magnolia Street to Gordon Street and consisted of beautification and revitalization of the public right-of-way along North Patterson Street to match other areas of Downtown. The work included sidewalks, curb ramps, sod, trees, shrubs, waste receptacles, pedestrian benches, and decorative brick pavers.

“Patterson is one of the welcoming corridors into the city and this project helped with our goal of connecting downtown to VSU and making this connection pedestrian friendly,” says Project Manager Kevin Tolliver.

## Williams Street Sidewalk Improvements

This project consists of adding 1,000 feet of 10-foot wide sidewalk between Park and Woodrow Wilson. The sidewalk completed the Azalea City Multipurpose Trail. In addition curb and gutter and drainage pipe was installed on each side replacing ditches. The new paving and striping completed the project.

## Baytee & Alden Intersection Improvements

This intersection had a shared lane for vehicles proceeding straight into Remerton and turning right towards the mall. This caused delays for traffic who were there to turn right towards the mall. The project widened Alden, and striped it for a sole right turn lane. It was lengthened as well to serve more cars. The intersection was repaved and the striping was refreshed.



# 830

POTHoles & ROAD  
CUTS REPAIRED

# 19

NEW WHEELCHAIR  
RAMPS

# 5,540

FEET OF NEW  
SIDEWALKS





## High-Tech Assessment of City Streets

Residents of Valdosta will soon have an accurate and objective assessment of the city's pavement infrastructure. In 2019, The City of Valdosta worked with a professional third-party contractor, Infrastructure Management Services (IMS), to optimize the taxpayer funds dedicated to infrastructure management. MS was responsible for completing an objective pavement condition survey. The IMS survey team operated their state-of-the-art "Road Surface Tester" in Valdosta. This vehicle is outfitted with a suite of lasers, cameras, computers, and GIS tracking technology that allowed the IMS team to accurately and objectively measure the surface conditions on Valdosta's roadways.







## VALDOSTA CITY HALL

An aerial view of City Hall in Downtown Valdosta captured by Photographer Jay Blanton



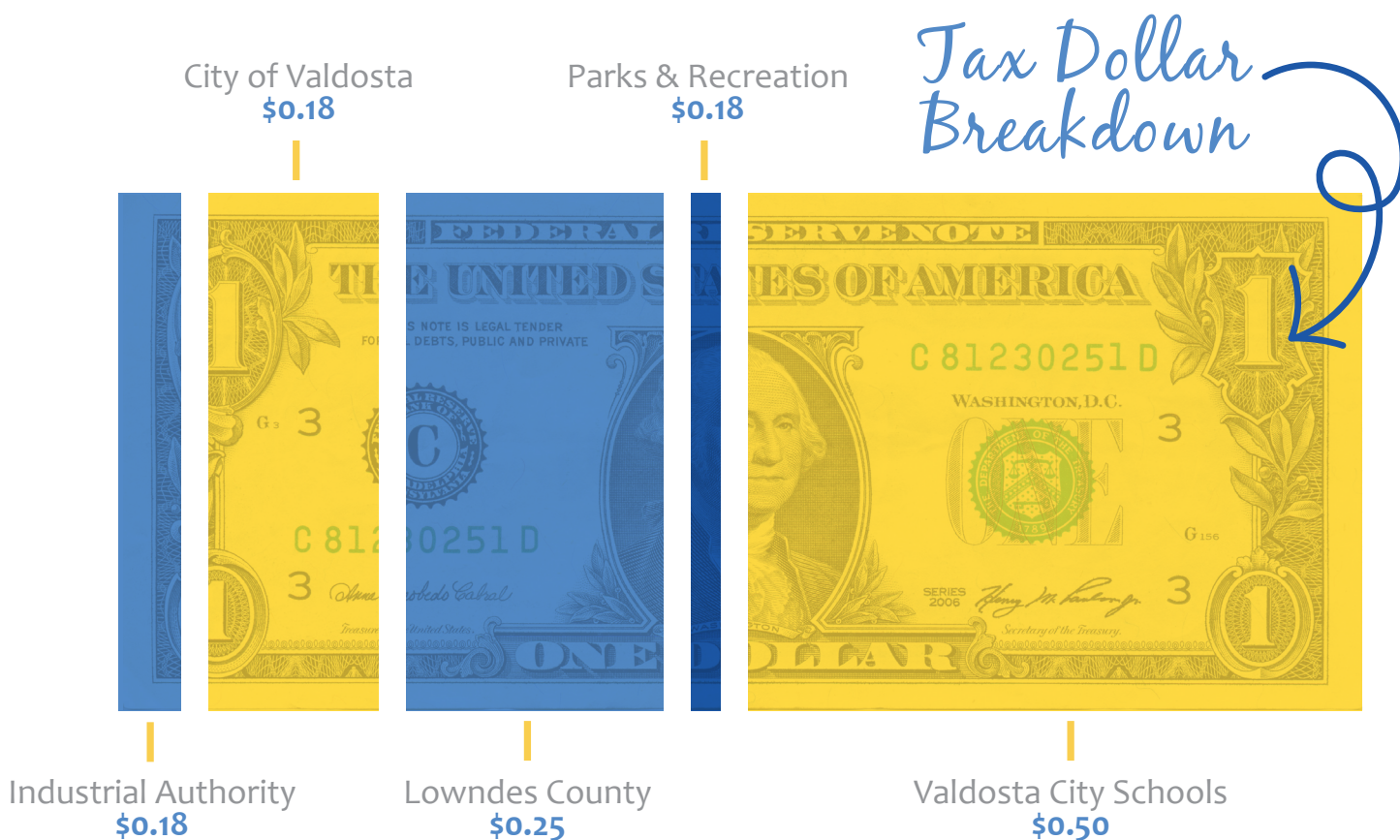


# DEPARTMENT OF *Finance*

Although the city's FY 2020 budget was approximately \$99 million, approximately \$11.8 million of it was generated from property taxes. The largest sources of revenue in the city are sales taxes, water and sewer fees, sanitation fees, franchise fees and property taxes.

**\$99** MILLION 2020  
ANNUAL BUDGET

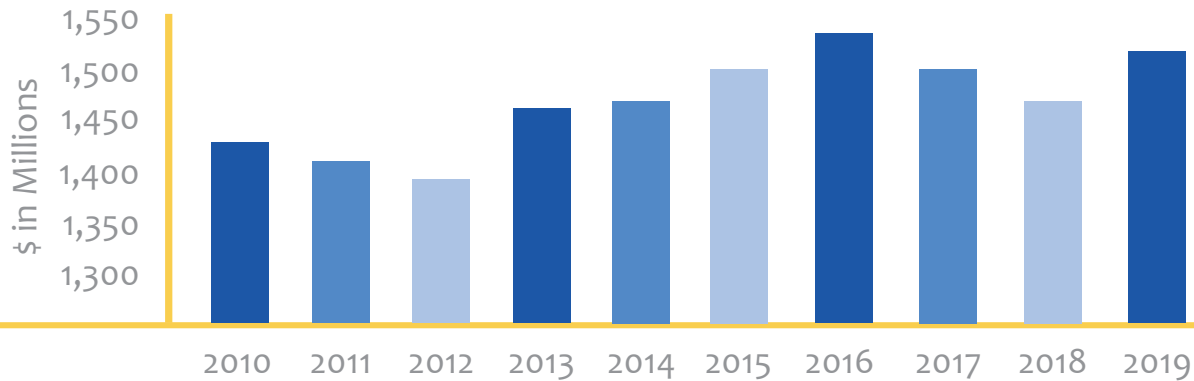
**\$11.8** MILLION IN  
PROPERTY TAXES



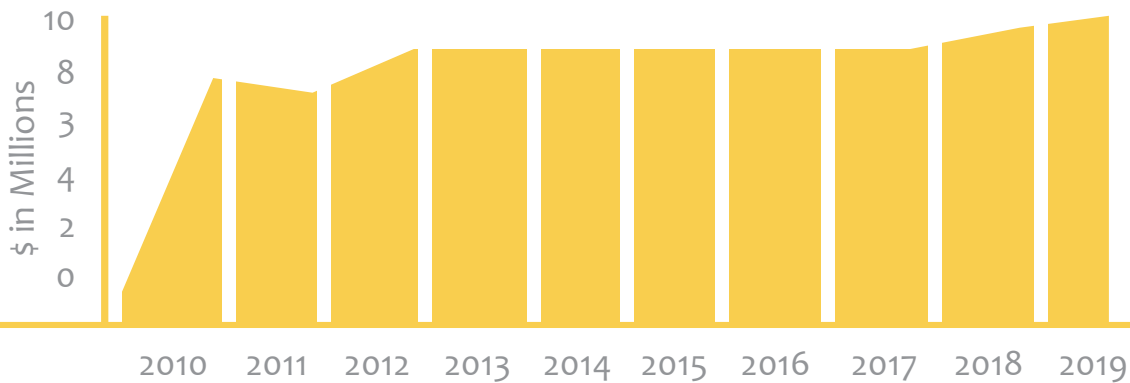
*Where Does Your City of Valdosta  
Property Tax Dollars Go?*



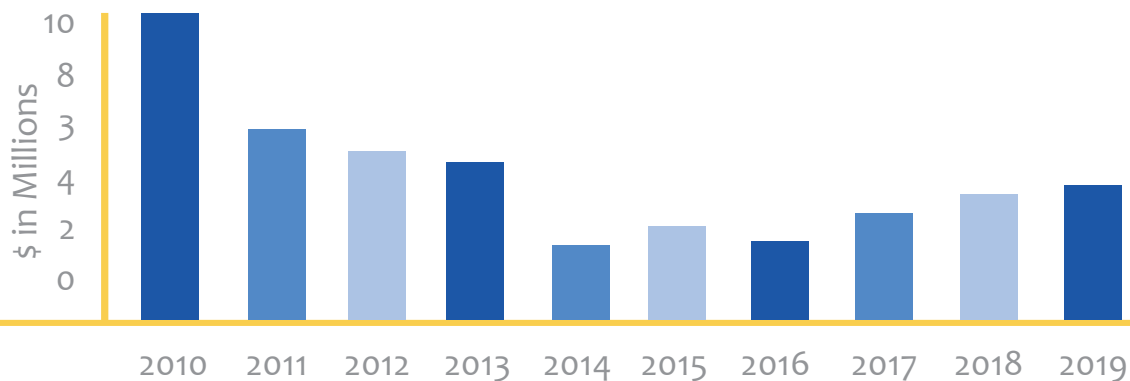
# BY THE NUMBERS



Ad-Valorem Tax Base Each Fiscal Year



Growth in Business Gross Receipts Taxes



General Fund Ending Balance



# Public Safety

## Fire Department

In 2019, VFD offered its first nationally certified Apparatus Operator course. Twenty four Emergency Medical Technicians recertified in 2019 keeping the department at approximately 75% medically trained. A car seat technician class was delivered, adding 6 new technicians to the department.

The Fire Prevention Division conducted 1059 Fire Inspections, 61 CO (Certificate of Occupancy) Inspections and 36 building sprinkler plan reviews; while finding over 218 fire and life safety violations. The division is also responsible for conducting and coordinating over 102 pre-incident surveys, installed over 128 smoke detectors and over 100 community educational programs.

The training division reached its goal of ensuring 100% of all members were Firefighter II Certified. This will help with maintaining the Class 1 ISO rating. Firefighters participated in over 28,000 hours of training locally and through the partnership with Georgia Fire Academy, 12 employees received their Fire Officer Certifications.

## Police Department

In 2019 the department revamped our recruitment process. The team was changed up to show a more diverse group, to include addressing the department's tattoo and facial hair policy. The department added different job fairs to the list that were previously attended, as well as getting officers to attend Moody AFB TAP program, where members of our recruitment team speak with Moody personnel who are leaving the military. The department worked with the City of Valdosta PIO and developed new and updated hiring pamphlets.

This year our department received an upgrade with the previous body cameras. This upgrade allowed for not only software improvements, but also hardware improvements. These cameras have a longer battery life and they are more user friendly.

The department received replacement in-car computers for half of the patrol fleet. The previous computers were no longer under warranty and there was a lot of the computers that were failing. These new computers have the most current software options. They are also covered under complete warranty for the next three years. These computers have improved our officers' workstations.

● 23  
NEW POLICE  
OFFICERS HIRED

● 13  
DIFFERENT  
COMMUNITY  
POLICING  
PROGRAMS HELD

● 1,325  
CRIME LAB CASES

● 1,059  
FIRE INSPECTIONS

● 128  
SMOKE DETECTORS  
INSTALLED

● 28,000  
HOURS OF FIRE  
TRAINING





# Fire Calls By The Numbers

## By City Council District



### Council 01

148	Fire Alarms
201	Medical Emergencies
22	Other Fires
87	Other Hazards
5	Natural Disasters
8	Special Incidents
36	Structure Fires
17	Vehicles Accidents



### Council 02

230	Fire Alarms
332	Medical Emergencies
33	Other Fires
179	Other Hazards
0	Natural Disasters
4	Special Incidents
19	Structure Fires
72	Vehicles Accidents

### Council 03

144	Fire Alarms
284	Medical Emergencies
55	Other Fires
179	Other Hazards
4	Natural Disasters
7	Special Incidents
29	Structure Fires
49	Vehicles Accidents



### Council 04

87	Fire Alarms
218	Medical Emergencies
26	Other Fires
105	Other Hazards
3	Natural Disasters
5	Special Incidents
22	Structure Fires
32	Vehicles Accidents

### Council 05

165	Fire Alarms
194	Medical Emergencies
15	Other Fires
114	Other Hazards
5	Natural Disasters
2	Special Incidents
9	Structure Fires
42	Vehicles Accidents

### Council 06

218	Fire Alarms
156	Medical Emergencies
25	Other Fires
116	Other Hazards
7	Natural Disasters
7	Special Incidents
11	Structure Fires
50	Vehicles Accidents

\*\*51 TOTAL MUTUAL AID CALLS\*\*

# Crime Reports By The Numbers

## By City Council District

### Council 01

28	Aggravated Assault
1	Arson
40	Auto-Theft
78	Burglary
0	Homicide
197	Larceny
4	Rape
7	Robbery
	<b>355</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>CRIMES</b>



### Council 04

16	Aggravated Assault
2	Arson
36	Auto-Theft
65	Burglary
0	Homicide
274	Larceny
3	Rape
20	Robbery
	<b>416</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>CRIMES</b>

### Council 02

45	Aggravated Assault
1	Arson
70	Auto-Theft
127	Burglary
2	Homicide
532	Larceny
5	Rape
30	Robbery
	<b>812</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>CRIMES</b>

### Council 05

4	Aggravated Assault
0	Arson
18	Auto-Theft
22	Burglary
1	Homicide
226	Larceny
3	Rape
3	Robbery
	<b>277</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>CRIMES</b>

### Council 03

29	Aggravated Assault
3	Arson
48	Auto-Theft
84	Burglary
0	Homicide
423	Larceny
7	Rape
23	Robbery
	<b>617</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>CRIMES</b>

### Council 06

15	Aggravated Assault
0	Arson
26	Auto-Theft
46	Burglary
1	Homicide
438	Larceny
3	Rape
7	Robbery
	<b>536</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>CRIMES</b>

\*\*NUMBERS BASED ON 2019 REPORTS\*\*









## VALDOSTA POLICE DEPARTMENT

VPD is an internationally accredited law enforcement agency. The department employs approximately 159 certified police officers and 41 civilians in administrative, record, and police aide positions.



# Water Matters!

The Utilities Department would like to thank the Valdosta, Lowndes County community for allowing us to serve the potable needs of our customers, provide essential firefighting infrastructure, as well as protect and preserve the community's eco-system. Working together, Valdosta has rebuilt from the forces of major rain events, controlled floodwaters, and withstood extended power outages. Throughout these events, the women and men of the department maintained, without interruption, water, sewer, and fire prevention services. These investments include power generation through emergency generators, as well as enough on-site solar power to sustain operations at both wastewater treatment facilities. Together, the seven divisions comprising the Utilities Department stand ready to meet the uncompromising expectations our community deserves.

In 2019, the sewer rehabilitation program continued with over 3,000 linear feet of sewer main being completed utilizing Cured-In-Place-Pipe (CIPP). This process renews old terra-cotta pipe which has cracked or collapsed, thus

## 2020 Goals & Objectives

- **Rehabilitate & Upgrade Sewer Collection System**
- **Upgrade Systems & Facilities Processes**
- **Implement Advanced Technologies**
- **Expand Water Quality Initiatives**

## 2019 Administration Accomplishments

- Established a water conservation program
- Started the Waterfirst application process
- Introduced Willie the Water Guy during the National Drinking Water Week event
- Supplied 2 water monsters for the citizens of Valdosta during City events, such as Food Truck Thursday and Water week.

restricting sewer flow. The renewal extends the life of the pipe for an estimated 30 years and is a fraction of removal and replacement costs.

Also, 2,844 feet of sewer main was replaced and upsized as part of the Supplemental Environmental Program (SEP). This project identified six high-priority problem areas and bottlenecks in the sewer system. To date, five of those projects have been completed with the sixth currently underway.

The department continued the Wireless SCADA System project which allows secure, real-time remote monitoring and control using cellular data transmission. All three plants have been upgraded with this new SCADA. All lift stations are scheduled for completion by May 2020. Additionally, emergency generators have been installed at ten additional lift stations in case of utility power grid failure.

## WITHLACOOCHEE SEWER PLANT 2019 Accomplishments

- The injection point for the sodium bisulfite solution application at the effluent monitoring station was moved from the original location buried 6 feet below ground level to a more accessible location to accommodate maintenance and repairs as needed. Also, we can now monitor the chemical feed location for proper operation and adjust as needed.
- Replaced filtration cloths on all disc filters in the (3) filter chambers. We are seeing improved backwash/cleaning of the filters for increased flow handling capability. Replaced all 6-inch check valves on the waste activated sludge lines of the sequencing batch reactor basins. This eliminated the backflow issues into the basins and the inconsistent flows during the waste cycles of each basin.
- Installed new VT SCADA system in the plant control room for improved plant operations control and monitoring.
- All plant operators are now certified with a minimum GA Class 3 Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator license.



# 2,844

## FEET OF SEWER MAIN REPLACED



## MUD CREEK SEWER PLANT 2019 Accomplishments

- Installed new state-of-the-art SCADA system provides comprehensive monitoring and control capabilities.
- Completed NPDES permit renewal application
- All plant operators are now certified with a minimum GA Class 3 Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator license.



## 2019 WATER PLANT

- Cleaned both ozone generators and replaced with new glass; greatly increased efficiency; lowered chlorine demand and chemical costs.
- Replaced the nitrogen boost compressor with a new PLC unit using pure nitrogen instead of ambient air from compressors; eliminates formation of nitric acid inside the ozone generators; increased efficiency; extends cleaning cycle from five years to over seven years.
- Cleaned interior of all three elevated storage tanks; lowered chlorine demand, improved overall water quality.
- Pressure washed exterior of all three elevated storage tanks



30  
MANHOLES  
REHABILITATED IN 2019



## WITHLACOOCHEE WATER PLANT

The Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant provides the city with state-of-the-art wastewater treatment for an average daily flow of 4.2 million gallons per day, with the capability to treat peak flows of 18 million gallons per day.



### CENTRAL MAINTENANCE 2019 Accomplishments

- Installed standby diesel generators at 11 lift station; ensures critical backup power; reduces likelihood of station failure during storms and power outages.
- Purchased a 4" portable diesel diaphragm pump for Withlacoochee Wastewater Plant maintenance; increases maintenance & repair capabilities and reduces downtime; can be used at both wastewater plants and anywhere else the City requires high solids content water removal.
- Purchased one towable 34' boom manlift for use at all plants and lift stations; cuts contracting costs while expediting repair and maintenance procedures

**30**  
YEARS EXTENDED LIFE  
OF DRAINAGE PIPES



• 240 EMPLOYEE TRAINING  
HOURS COMPLETED



#### 2019 CENTRAL LINES

- Implemented the inhouse Manhole Lining Program
- Completed CIPP sewer rehabilitation project (CIPP #9)
- Collected data and identified I&I areas for next CIPP sewer rehab project (CIPP #10)
- Completed phase 7 of the Manhole Rehabilitation Program (30 manholes)
- Upgraded water system on Crawford Lane; upsized main from 2" to 6"; installed valves, fire hydrants, new services, and meter boxes

# Main Street DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA

A record number of new businesses opened their doors during 2019 in the heart of our City. From food to fun, downtown has something new and exciting for everyone. When potential businesses owners start looking around for locations throughout our city, the downtown community shines brightly for not only being a hub for local entrepreneurs but also the added value of a Georgia Exceptional Main Street Program as partner in helping them reach their business goals.

## Birdies Events & Catering

Specializing in special event catering. From a small gathering of friends to a large cooperate event, Birdies not only has the space to host but also the team in place to pull off a special evening for you and your guests.

## Georgia Beer Co.

Valdosta's first brewery - opened their doors in early January 2019 and took the Southeast by storm. Not only is Georgia Beer Company known for their amazing atmosphere and location inside the 100 year old Water Works building but Georgia's southernmost brewery are currently canning four different varieties of their handcrafted specialty brews that can be found all over Georgia and North Florida!

## Livi & Company

Known as one of the top French Markets in southern GA, Livi & Company decided to open their second location in the heart of Valdosta! With their flagship store in Albany, Livi & Company was a business the community got excited about! They offer the best in furniture, home decor, boutique clothing, jewelry & vintage items!

## Kreamkles

Kreamkles is a small down town gem converting cream into ice cream. They offer a wide variety of flavors and toppings but Kreamkles is not just another ice cream shop. Kreamkles is an experience. They take cold cream and hand mix and roll cream turning it into the best ice cream around!

## El Camino

This Tex-Mex eatery offers a unique menu and great bar selections. From tacos to pizza and everything in between, El Camino has something for everyone.

## Studio 112 Salon

An empowering salon experience in historic downtown Valdosta. This full service salon is located on the first floor if the Cranford Building on Hill Ave.

## Just Rent Me Boutique

Opened in February of 2019, Just Rent Me & More is an affordable women's boutique offering trendy, chic and fun looks for ladies of all sizes! Shop the traditional way or ask about their rental options! Check out JUST RENT ME & MORE on Ashley Street!

## Southern Grace Boutique & Southern Grace Gifts

Southern Grace Boutique Southern Grace Gifts was an exciting addition to Central Ave in late 2019. They are an apparel and gift shop specializing in lovely gift items and friendly customer service. It is their goal to create a wonderful shopping experience through a peaceful, warm environment and a variety of unique, inspiring products.

## Downtown Spa & Wellness

Located in the historic and well known Varnedoe building on the corner of Central Ave & Patterson St, Downtown Spa & Wellness offers a wide variety of services from massages and acupuncture to services addressing incontinence and urinary health.

## True North Companies

Opened in the Fall of 2019, True North is a development, finance, and construction company that helps Charter Schools achieve their mission and growth objectives through investments in real estate. True North utilizes agile project management and Lean construction techniques to help Charter Schools plan, design, and build new facilities.



# 796

## TOTAL DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES IN 2019



# GEORGIA

*Beer Co.*

109

HOURS  
MON - THU  
FRI  
SAT  
SUN  
12:00 - 10:00  
12:00 - 10:00  
12:00 - 10:00  
12:00 - 10:00  
12:00 - 10:00









## FOOD TRUCK FRENZY

In 2019, More than 3,000 people attended the first ever food truck event in Downtown Valdosta – mark your calendars as this popular event will be returning each month from March to October in 2020!





## Valdosta Love Lock Fence

This fence was installed in Bennie's Alley. The free public art project is an opportunity in which citizens can add a lock to signify their unbreakable love for their partner, children, or even pets. "Anybody can come down and participate in this, so it's couples, friends, you love your dog, bring down a lock and put a lock on for you and your dog, it doesn't matter. We just want people to come downtown and visit and see what we're all about," said Valdosta Main Street Director Ellen Hill.

## Food Truck Frenzy

Good food and good music are proven incentives to bring hundreds of people downtown. In 2019, the City of Valdosta and Valdosta Main Street rolled out the Food Truck Thursday event. Each month, the event was held on the Lee Street grass lot across from city hall featuring an array of food trucks and local music groups. For most people, it's a chance to visit downtown. See what businesses are there and what they have to offer. A reminder of restaurants to visit for dinner on other evenings. A look at events coming soon at The Dosta Playhouse and other venues. We can't wait to see what crowds 2020 brings to this now annual event series. Bring your appetite!

# 8,200 DOWNTOWN JOBS IN 2019

## Business & Investment

Since completion of the streetscape project in 1998 downtown has seen over \$80 million in private investment.

In 2019 we welcomed 7 net new businesses that brought approximately 42 net new jobs and \$4.2 million of investment to our downtown.

These businesses either relocated within downtown or expanded in downtown:

- Miller Hardware
- Jessie's Restaurant & Catering
- Georgia Beer Company

Downtown Valdosta is the home to an estimated 796 businesses with approximately 8,200 jobs, representing 20% of the city's total jobs. The average downtown business has 10 jobs per establishment

In the downtown core, we are home to approximately 138 businesses

12 cafés/restaurants	12 government
25 shopping	50 professional services
14 arts & entertainment services and venues	11 Financial Services
7 churches	7 Auto Repair & sales

## 1,124 Total Parking Spaces Downtown

- 2 Hour Times Parking
- On Street Parking = 342 Spaces
- Toombs Street Lot = 51 Spaces
- McKey St. Lot = 15 Spaces
- Remainder are 24 Hour Zones

## Parks & Greenspace

- Olympic Park (1996)
- Mack's Park (2000)
- MLK Memorial Park (2010)

# 26 IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

# \$4,787,049 TOTAL INVESTMENTS



115 DOWNTOWN  
LOFT APARTMENTS

88,000 EVENT  
ATTENDANCE

920 DOWNTOWN  
EVENTS IN 2019

First Fridays

Brown Bag Lunch  
Concert Series

Build a Bouquet

Super Dad 5K

Taste of Downtown

100 Black Men BBQ

12 Days of Christmas

Greater Valdosta Christmas  
Parade

Small Business Saturday

Christmas Tree lighting

Girls Night Out

Flower Gallery's Christmas

Open House

3,375 VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

\$4,205,150  
IN REHAB INVESTMENTS

\$399,000  
IN PROPERTY SALES





# DEPARTMENT *Highlights*



## Valdosta Firefighters Partner With Local Humane Society

The Valdosta Fire Department partnered with the Humane Society of Valdosta to start #VFDRescueMe, a social media campaign aimed at increasing adoption rates for rescue animals. Every Month, several Valdosta firefighters visit the Humane Society and interact with an adoptable animal. Photos are taken with the pets and posted to the VFD Facebook Page.

## Coffee With The Chiefs

Valdosta Police & Valdosta Fire had the opportunity to meet residents over hot coffee at numerous local businesses last year. It was such a popular event! This event gives citizens a comfortable setting to talk to the officers and firefighters.

## They're Back! Join a Neighborhood Action Association

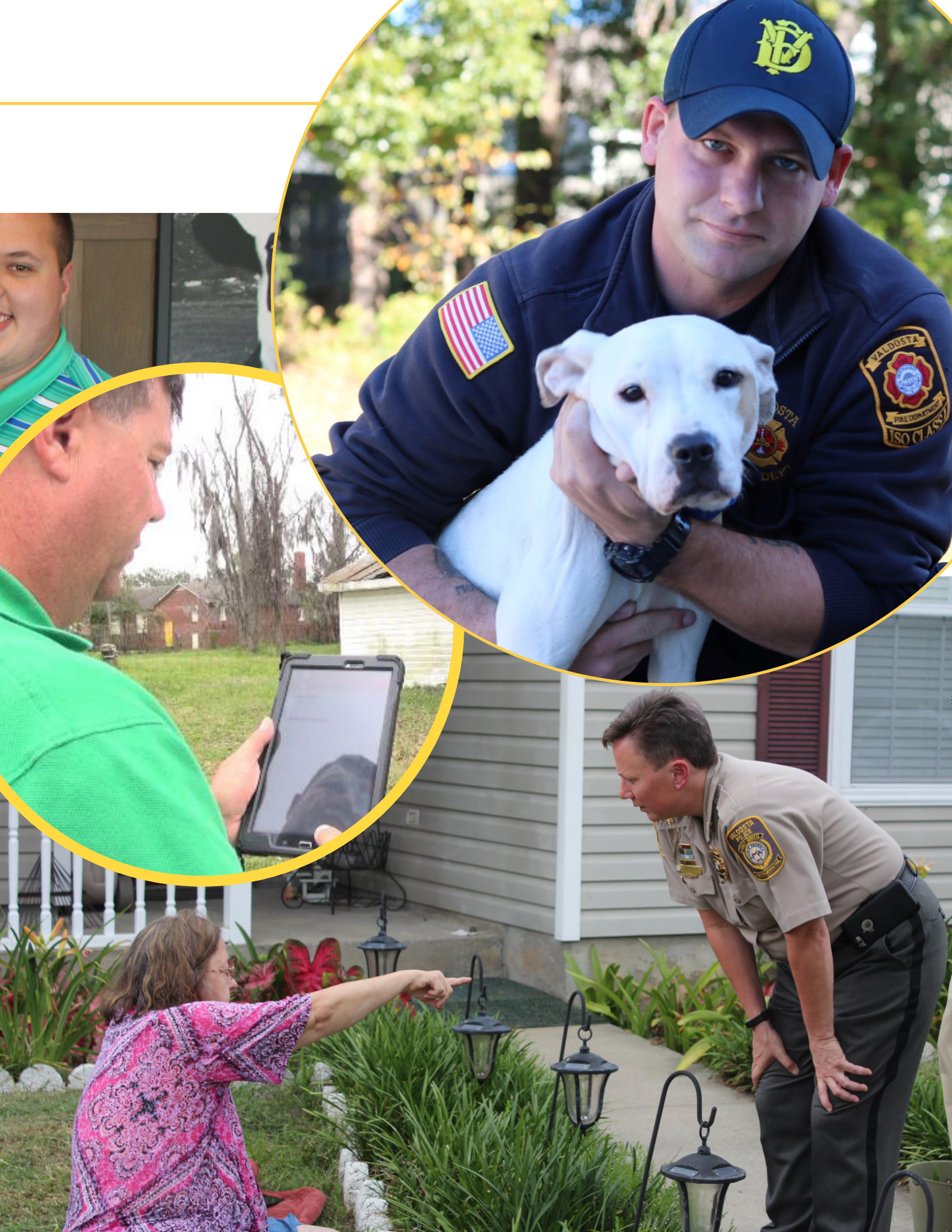
The Devonwood Community was the first to participate in the neighborhood revitalization program, which is a city program that seeks to put residents in charge of their community. The Neighborhood Information Boards are part of that new initiative. The city has a person who will work as the liaison for the NAA. The liaison will act as connective tissue between the city and neighborhoods. This will ensure the NAAs have access to city resources and that the city is kept aware of activities happening in the neighborhoods.

● 20+  
PETS  
PHOTOGRAPHED  
IN #VFDRESCUEME  
CAMPAIGN



● 1  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ACTION  
ASSOCIATION  
STARTED











## CITY COUNCIL

City Council meetings are held on the first and third Thursday following the first Sunday of the month, although changes may be necessary to avoid conflict with holidays. All City Council meetings are open to the general public.







# MAKERS SECOND SATURDAY MARKET

ARTISANS | FARMERS | GROWERS

DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA, GA  
HISTORIC LOWNDES COUNTY COURTHOUSE LAWN

APRIL-DECEMBER | 9AM - 1PM  
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE SQUARE  
DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA



Make a Payment



Find a Form



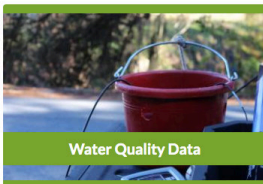
Report a Concern



Apply for a Job



Search for Bids



Water Quality Data



Census 2020

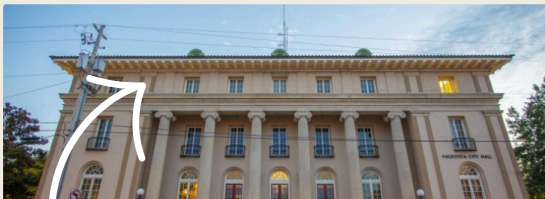


Smart Utility Meter Launch FAQ



Sign Up For Govt 101

## Upcoming Events



MONDAY  
MAR 02

Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission Meeting  
City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room  
5:30 pm to 6:00 pm

TUESDAY  
MAR 03

Valdosta-Lowndes Co. Zoning Board of Appeals  
City Hall Annex Building, Multi-Purpose Room  
2:30 pm

## Recents News



# New Website Launched

Check Out Our New Site at [www.valdostacity.org](http://www.valdostacity.org)



## 315 DIGITAL PLANS IN NEW SYSTEM

### Modern and Mobile!

The City brought a new, modern digital experience to residents when it launched its new website in May 2019. Making it easier to find information from any desktop, tablet, or phone, the site features a mobile friendly, responsive design as well as improved navigation, quick links on popular topics, and a clean attractive appearance. The site was designed by the Public Information Office. Additionally, City staff were consulted through the re-design process.

### The Municipal Court Work Alternative Program

The Municipal Court had approximately 5 Work Alternative Program (WAP) participants. Since the WAP implementation in June 2001, approximately 112,328 work hours have been completed on various municipal projects, saving the city \$767,700 in jail housing fees.

### Recruiting & Retaining the Best

The City of Valdosta created a new video series in 2019 titled 'Next-Gen Valdosta'. The videos will be produced by the city's Metro 17 staff. The video series is aimed at educating citizens about the next generation workforce for the City of Valdosta. 'Next-Gen Valdosta' is showcased on the city's website and on social media. The goal is to reach citizens and bring awareness to the different positions and career paths shown in the videos.

### New! Plan Review Goes Digital

In January 2019, the Building Inspections Department implemented a digital plans review process. So far it has been a great success! The Department reviewed 315 plans in 2019 with the new system.

### City Marshals Go High Tech

Valdosta City Marshals revamped how they oversee the community by going high tech. All city marshals are now working off tablets, nearly eliminating their time in the office. The new system allows marshals to get on the ground and in the community, allowing for more time working with citizens, and ultimately making Valdosta a safer, cleaner place for everyone. City marshals are now spending eight hours of their day in the field, responding to complaints and patrolling communities.

## 8 HOURS IN FIELD A DAY BY CITY MARSHALLS

### Neighborhood Walks with VPD

The Valdosta Police Department is knocking on doors in an attempt to knock down barriers as the department hosted a new neighborhood walk initiative in 2019. There have been a number of new initiatives over the last year to get the police department more involved in the community, and to get people within the community working with each other more. The neighborhood walk is the newest installment of the effort to make communities a little bit safer.

### Love Where You Live program expands to Valdosta City Schools!

The Public Works Department installed 12 trash receptacles throughout the City last year to help provide an avenue for pedestrians to dispose of their litter. Litter still continues to be a major problem today. This year, the Public works Department focused its efforts towards educating the communities youth on the benefits of clean surroundings. To continue our efforts, The Public Works Department and Neighborhood Development Department partnered together to kick off the "Love Where You Live" campaign at S. L. Mason Elementary School. Staff from both departments performed a small skit of what littering can do to the environment and educated them on the benefits of keeping their surroundings clean. Two trash receptacles painted with Wildcat themes were installed at the entrance of the school to help motivate the students to pitch in and promote the "Love Where You Live" campaign.









## VALDOSTA BY THE NUMBERS



51,041

Feet of Storm Pipe Cleaned



38

Land Use Cases



8,564

Cases Docketed in Valdosta Municipal Court



5,500

Code Enforcement Cases



750

Trees Given Away During Arbor Week



7,728

Tons of Recyclable Material Collected



5,912

Appointments at the City Carehere Clinic



8,623

Tons of Solid Waste Collected



400

Employees Attended Annual City Thanksgiving Luncheon



790

Street Miles Swept



23,500

Customer Service Accounts



17,492

Probation Community Service Hours



145

Historic Reviews



790

Mathis City Auditorium Rentals





**VALDOSTA NAMED LIVE  
WORK PLAY COMMUNITY!**

**LIVE • WORK • PLAY**

**CITIES**



## 2019 ACCOLADES & AWARDS



### Downtown is a GEM!

Valdosta was once again designated as a Georgia Exceptional Main Street (GEMS) program by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and National Main Street Center.

The Valdosta Main Street office and Coleman Talley received an award from the Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) for its rehabilitation of 109 South Ashley Street in Downtown Valdosta. The building project was granted Best Adaptive Reuse over 10,000 square feet in the economic development category, noting the historic buildings' return to productive use while maintaining architectural integrity.

### Live Work Play, VALDOSTA!

The city of Valdosta is one of nine recipients of the 2019 Live, Work, Play Award given by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and Georgia Trend magazine. Valdosta was highlighted for constantly restoring its downtown and continuing to move forward in all things Live, Work, Play. Judges noted the city has done a successful job with historic tax credits, creating industry jobs, and employment opportunities. Judges also credited the city's collaboration efforts and schools.

### Other Accolades

- Maintained one of the lowest millage rates in the state for the citizens of Valdosta, currently 7.809 mills.
- Awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting in 2019 for 33 consecutive years and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 22 consecutive years.
- Maintained the VPD's "Triple Crown Accreditation" for attaining three voluntary accreditations, two for law enforcement and one for the crime laboratory.
- Received national accreditation for the Valdosta Main Street Program for the 33rd consecutive year for meeting commercial district revitalization standards set by the National Trust Main Street.
- Designated a Tree City USA community by the National Arbor Day Foundation for its 33 consecutive years.

• \$99

MILLION BUDGET  
FOR FY2019

• #1

ISO CLASS RATING:  
HIGHEST FIRE  
insurance rating in the nation

• 7.809

CURRENT MILLS  
one of the lowest in GA

• 33

YEAR  
CONSECUTIVE  
AWARD for excellence in  
financial reporting



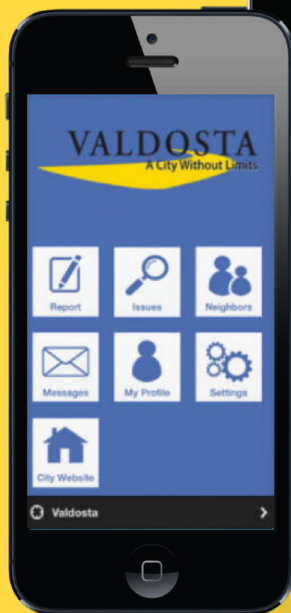


# There's An App For That!

To download the app, search Valdosta Click N Fix through the Google Play or the App Store

902

NEW APP  
REQUESTS  
OPENED IN  
2019



- Pay Utility Bill
- Read City News
- Contact VPD for non-emergency calls
- Visit City's Website
- Report Potholes & Overgrown Grass
- Report Street Sign Issues
- Report Parking Violations

The Valdosta Click 'N Fix app makes reporting local service requests - such as potholes, damaged street signs and other issues that need attention - easier than ever.

Free to download on any iOS and Android device, the app is an online reporting system that allows residents to report issues in real time and see the progress as city staff work to fix it.

The app also features buttons on the home page where users can pay their utility bill online, read city news, visit the city's website, and contact VPD for non-emergency calls.



# Questions?

Questions about the content of this publication or use of the content may be directed to the Public Information Office at 229-259-3548.



**ASHLYN JOHNSON**  
**PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**  
ajohnson@valdostacity.com

## Social Communication 2019 IN REVIEW



6,991

Facebook Followers

28%

Follower Growth

972

Post in 2019

1,500

Twitter Followers

172

Follower Growth

97

Tweets in 2019



208

Youtube Subscribers

53%

Subscriber Growth

285

Videos Produced

1,456

Instagram Followers

60%

Follwers Age 25-44

66

Post in 2019



#LoveWhereYouLive





To be  
known by our  
customers and  
others for high  
quality municipal  
services.