

City Beat



People's Choice Photo Contest Voting June 7 - July 7

All the entries are in and the judging has begun for the 2010 Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest.

Citizens are invited to visit the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, at 527 N. Patterson Street, where all of the Photo Contest entries are displayed in the Tillman Gallery and where citizens can vote for their favorite in four categories as well as Best in Show overall. The people's choice voting will take place from June 7 through July 7.

Citizens will also enjoy the Warhol Handcolored Flowers and the Old Master's Drawings from the Shaffer Collection--both on loan from the Albany Museum of Art.

On Monday, July 12, the art center will host a reception, from 5-7 p.m., to announce the winners of the photo contest and to celebrate the city's 150th year. For more information, contact the art center at (229) 247-ARTS.

Tune In For Information

Tune into Metro Valdosta Channel 17, the City's Government Access Channel, for the biweekly news magazine City Focus, which showcases community events, public information and City of Valdosta news.



www.valdostacity.com

Citizens Graduate from City's Inaugural Gov't 101 Class

The inaugural City Government 101 Class of 2010 graduated 22 citizens on May 10, at a ceremony held in the Valdosta Council Chambers, at City Hall.

The program stems from a Mayor and City Council goal adopted last year to "initiate a program for citizen education and to engage citizen involvement to be known as the Valdosta City Government 101 Program."

Applications for the program were accepted from December 2009 through January 2010. The program was divided into six Monday sessions, from April 5 to May 10, which included presentations on the following topics and departments: program orientation, public safety, municipal court, engineering, public works, utilities, financial administration, industrial and economic development, community development, planning and zoning, neighborhood development, a facilities tour and class graduation.



Inaugural Class Graduates

The participants in the 2010 inaugural class were Steve Barnes, Pastor Anthony Bellamy, Kevin Conrad, Sharon Dianne Davis, Gail Green, Bessie Evans, W.K. George, Andrew Gibbs, Edna D. Jones, Dr. Mark J. Kasper, Reba G. Leggett, Devonde Miller, Scott Orenstein, Quillian Peeler, Sheba M. Phillips, James L. Smith, Jr., Amy Stevenson, Kelly Strozier, Harriett Lenora Taswell, Lyndle Thomas, Jr., Dorothy Ann West and Charles B. Willis.

Local Youth Behind the Anti-Litter Slogan, Campaign



City Councilman James Wright stands next to Jediah Grey, admiring the sign that features an anti-litter slogan created by Grey in a 4th grade contest. Grey, now a junior at Valdosta High School, is proud that the slogan is helping to decrease litter in the city limits.

Nearly 100 signs promoting the "Please Don't Litter, Make Valdosta Glitter" campaign have been strategically posted around the city limits and, according to Deputy City Manager for Operations John Whitehead, are partly responsible for reducing crime and litter in the areas they are posted. The signs, paid for with a Deep South Regional Municipal Solid Waste Management Authority grant, support the Mayor and Council's goal of educating the public on the environmental harm that litter has on our community.

"Most people do not realize that litter is an environmental hazard," said Whitehead.

As a 4th grader, Jediah Grey entered her slogan in a local contest. "I wanted to be involved in keeping the city clean and encouraging others to do the same," she said. Grey, now a student at Valdosta High School, said she is proud to know her slogan is making a difference in her community.

For more information about the anti-littering campaign, contact the Public Works Department at (229) 259-3588.



(From left): Robert Mercer, Jordan Washington, Isaac Harris, Wade Briggs, Carolyn McMillan, Anthony Solberg, Marcus Haynes, Tyler Shoemake and Nathan Huffmaster proudly pose after being promoted.

VFD Promotes Nine

Nine Valdosta Fire Department personnel were promoted on May 17 at a ceremony held at Fire Station #1. To be eligible for promotion, the firefighters received credit for training, experience, education, a series of tests, and a promotion assessment.

Nathan Huffmaster and Ronald Shoemake were promoted to the rank of lieutenant. The following VFD personnel were promoted to the rank of sergeant: Carolyn McMillan, Isaac Harris, Wade Briggs, Anthony Solberg, Robert Mercer, Jordan Washington and Marcus Haynes.

Currently, there are 106 personnel in the Valdosta Fire Department, which is made up of seven fire stations strategically placed throughout the city limits. For more information, contact the Valdosta Fire Department at (229) 333-1835.

Mosquito Control: Everyone Should Play a Part



The City of Valdosta is committed to doing everything in its power to help decrease the mosquito population in the area. However, the city can only spray in public areas and on public streets, so it's important for citizens to help keep the mosquito population under control. You can reduce the mosquito populations in your area by removing standing water, where mosquitoes can breed, from around your home and worksite.

Here are some general guidelines to follow to minimize the incidence of mosquitoes and our exposure to the diseases they transmit.

 Remove all standing water from your yard by bringing indoors or emptying and cleaning all containers, even very small ones. For example, do not leave toys that can retain water outside; remove saucers from under flower pots; clean or remove pool covers; clean pools and add chlorinated water; cover rain barrels with mosquito proof netting; and clean rain gutters and rain spouts.

 If you have standing water in your yard, you may apply larvicide to control mosquitoes in the larval stage. Free larvicide tablets are available to all residents of the City of Valdosta and can be picked up at the Public Works Department, located at 1017 Myrtle Street, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

 Organize or participate in clean-up activities to pick up garbage from parks and other public spaces. By helping to limit potential breeding grounds for mosquitoes, every resident can contribute to reducing the nuisance caused by mosquitoes and stop the transmission of vector-borne diseases.

As always, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when you are outdoors during times that mosquitoes are most active, though it is best to avoid outdoor activities during these times. Also, be sure to use insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors. Please read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully, and do not use on infants or pregnant women.

If you have any questions about mosquito safety, please call the South Health District at (229) 333-5290. Additional information is also available at the city's web site at www.valdostacity.com.

Keep Contaminants Out of Our Water

If you're planning to do some yard improvements this summer, you should remember that stormwater runoff from yard maintenance has been found to contain high concentrations of fertilizers and pesticides. When pesticides wash into local waters, they can harm fish and contaminate the water. Fertilizers contain nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that can cause aquatic algae blooms and promote bacterial growth which can degrade water quality.

Here are some tips on how you can help keep contaminants out of our water.

- Schedule landscape projects for dry weather. If it begins to rain, store material under plastic tarps to protect them from washing away.
- Store pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals in a secure and covered area.
- Don't blow or rake leaves into the street or storm drain.
- Don't over fertilize or apply chemicals near ditches, streams, or water bodies.

For more information on how to help prevent stormwater pollution in our area, contact Stormwater Superintendent Emily Davenport at (229) 259-3592.



Council Wrap Up

The Valdosta City Council approved a number of important matters in recent Council meetings, such as:

- ❖ a request to allow the Valdosta Housing Authority to construct angle parking spaces on city streets in the Hudson Docket area;
- ❖ a donation of the property and building of the South Georgia Regional Library located on Woodrow Wilson Drive to the Library Board of Directors;
- ❖ a Resolution to establish an annual schedule for amendments to the Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan;
- ❖ an ordinance to amend the Municipal Utilities Ordinance for implementation of a Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) Control Program;
- ❖ an ordinance to amend the Stormwater Management Utility Ordinance;
- ❖ a resolution authorizing the filing of an application with the U. S. Department of Justice to fund the purchase of bullet proof vests for the Police Department;
- ❖ a resolution authorizing the filing of an application with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U. S. Fire Administration to fund expansion of the Fire Operations and Firefighter Safety Program;
- ❖ a request for on-street parking on Boone Drive;
- ❖ and several zoning cases, bids and board appointments.

Meeting agendas and minutes are available at www.valdostacity.com.

Mission

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

Purpose

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.

Quality Service by Quality People

City Residency Requirement Removed for Appointments

An amendment to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Appointment Policy, approved by the Mayor and Council at the April 8 City Council meeting, removes the residency requirement for applicants. Section 7 of the policy now allows any Lowndes County resident who desires to serve the City of Valdosta to be considered for an appointment. The recent change opens these public service opportunities to a larger pool of individuals who are interested in the welfare of our community as a whole.

Three appointments will be considered at the August 5 Council meeting. Applications for these appointments must be received by July 28:

Valdosta Tree Commission – 2 vacancies

Valdosta/Lowndes Zoning Board of Adjustments & Appeals – 1 vacancy

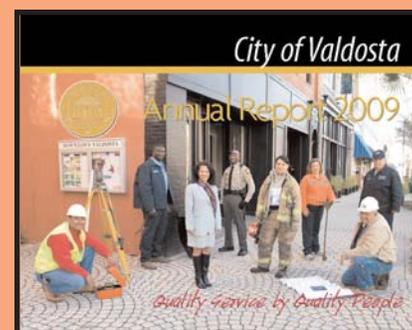
Public Art Advisory Committee – 1 vacancy

Citizens seeking appointment should first review the membership requirements and the Code of Ethics booklet, complete an application, and sign a Code of Ethics form, all of which are available at City Hall, at 216 East Central Avenue. All of this information can also be conveniently downloaded at www.valdostacity.com.

Appointments are made by the City Council from the pool of qualified applications and are typically for two years. Citizens may choose an area to serve based on individual interests and work experiences.

To learn more about getting involved with your local government by serving on one of these entities, contact City Clerk Teresa Bolden at (229) 259-3503 or at tbolden@valdostacity.com.

City of Valdosta 2009 Annual Report



Report Available Online

Produced by the City of Valdosta Public Information Office, the 2009 Annual Report features city programs, services, financial information, and accomplishments for 2009. Citizens, elected officials and other interested individuals may obtain an online copy at www.valdostacity.com/publicinformation.

For more information, contact the Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548, or sign up for e-news at www.valdostacity.com.



Workcamp Helps Eliminate Substandard Homes in City

Over 100 youth from around the country will spend part of their summer vacation serving the citizens of Valdosta through the Southern Hospitality Group Workcamp, June 13-19. These “campers” will be repairing over 20 substandard houses in just five days. This will be the city’s fifth year of hosting this event, which brings in youth to perform basic home repairs, painting and minor construction at no cost to elderly or disabled homeowners. Lowe’s Distribution Center is the official project co-sponsor.

The home sites were selected by the City of Valdosta and each meet the qualifying criteria, which include: owner occupied; elderly homeowner (62 years of age or older); income meets HUD low/moderate income criteria; if not elderly, then disabled and meets income criteria; home needs minor repairs and it is in one of the focus areas identified by the City of Valdosta.

The annual Workcamp supports the city’s goal to eliminate substandard housing in our community by year 2020. In addition to the City of Valdosta and Lowe’s, sponsors include the the Valdosta City School System and Group Workcamp Foundations, Inc. Local Habitat for Humanity staff members will be on site as coaches for the event.

For more information about the Group Workcamps Foundation go to www.group-workcamps.com or contact the Public Involvement Department at (229) 259-3522.

City Continues Recycling Efforts with Grant Funding

The City of Valdosta continues to expand its efforts to reduce the amount of recyclables being disposed of in the landfill, with funding from a Solid Waste Trust Fund Grant received in 2008. The city provides a variety of recycling opportunities for residents in the city, in the unincorporated areas of Lowndes County and in surrounding communities within a 50-mile radius.

Operating a single-stream or co-mingled recycle process for its customers, the City of Valdosta is the only municipality in South Georgia to offer curbside recycling services and is the only transfer hub or host hub in the region.

For more information about the city’s recycling efforts, visit the Public Works web page at www.valdostacity.com, or contact the department at (229) 259-3599.



Properly Dispose of “Toxic Trash”

Since 2007, the city has partnered with Care Environmental Corporation to secure a clean and healthy environment for future generations by helping citizens properly dispose of hazardous household waste. As a result of this partnership, City of Valdosta citizens may bring their “toxic trash”--such as paint cans, aerosol cans, chemicals, oil, batteries of any kind, etc.--to Care Environmental, each Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The hazardous waste transfer, storage and processing facility will basically accept almost anything that should not typically be thrown in the city garbage bins.

Care Environmental is located at 714 Gil Harbin Industrial Blvd. For more information about how to properly dispose of your hazardous household waste, contact the company at (229) 242-6565.



Have you been dreaming about owning your own home but don’t know where to get started? Homeownership workshops and classes are offered each month throughout the year, provided by the City of Valdosta, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Valdosta-Lowndes Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

A comprehensive home buyer education workshop is held on the third Saturday of every month, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Georgia Department of Labor, located at 221 S. Ashley Street. The presentation covers topics such as financial and credit preparation, purchase process, loan options, first-time homebuyer programs, and much more. Participants may also qualify for financial assistance on the purchase of a first home.

Skills classes are also available throughout the month and are designed to help new homeowners make the transition from renting to owning. Classes meet once a week for six weeks and discuss topics such as budgeting concerns, debt management, insurance coverage and home maintenance.

Pre-registration is required for all workshops and classes. For more information or to register, call (229) 245-1330, ext. 22.



City Briefs

Valdosta--One of America's Top 100



What makes the City of Valdosta one of America's best places to live? How about the low taxes, excellent healthcare, diversity, quality of life, mild climate, friendly community, shopping and dining pleasures, prime location with a variety of travel possibilities, and entertainment options, just to name a few.

For the second consecutive year, Relocate America has named Valdosta as one of the 100 Top Places To Live. Relocate America compiles an annual list of the best communities in the United States using statistics and feedback of the people who actually live, work and play in these communities. The organization has been showcasing great places to live for over 10 years.

Citizens can go to Relocate America, at <http://www.relocateamerica.com/top-100-cities/> to view the 2010 list of the Top 100 Places to Live in America.

Bill Paying Convenience

Save some time this summer by paying your city utility bill with one of several convenient payment methods. While the Customer Service Center, located at 102 N. Lee Street is open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the drive-through window is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., consider one of several *other* free payment options that may also give you a little free extra time:

- ✓ City web site at www.valdostacity.com
- ✓ Your bank's online banking program
- ✓ Credit or debit card payments by phone
- ✓ Auto Debit Program
- ✓ After-hour drop-boxes on site

Contact the Customer Service Center at (229) 259-3556 to learn the best payment method for you.

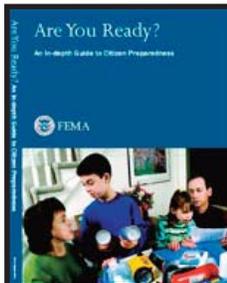
Roll out the Rollout by 6 a.m.

If you want your garbage picked up regularly each week on your scheduled day, be sure to have your rollout container provided by the city placed by the curbside by 6 a.m. Remember that you can place your rollout at the curbside as early as noon the day prior to your pick up day. However, these rollouts must be removed from the curbside by 12 noon on the day after collection.

The Sanitation Division will collect residential garbage ONLY on the Fourth of July holiday. Sanitation pick up services for recyclables and yard waste WILL NOT be available on July 4, but will resume on Tuesday, July 5, for both Monday and Tuesday routes.

For more information, contact the Public Works Department at (229) 259-3590.

Are You Ready?



National Hurricane Season runs June 1 through Nov. 30. Although the South Georgia topography protects Valdosta from the brunt of most storms, there are several other concerns that you should be prepared for during this time of the year.

Are You Ready? An In-Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness is a comprehensive source on individual, family, and community preparedness and provides the public with the most current and up-to-date disaster preparedness information available.

To download "Are You Ready?" in English or Spanish, log on to www.fema.gov/areyouready/ or call FEMA toll-free at (800) 480-2520. For more tips, stay tuned to Metro Valdosta 17 or visit www.valdostacity.com.

Happy Birthday America!

The annual Spirit of America fireworks show will take place on Sunday, July 4, beginning at 9:30 p.m., for the Valdosta-Lowndes County community. The best location to view the firework display is on the east side of I-75 around the Valdosta Mall/Norman Drive area.

For more information, call the Parks and Recreation Authority at (229) 259-3507.

Get Interactive with Sunset Hill

The Sunset Hill Cemetery Interactive web site is live, made possible by a Georgia Historic Preservation Fund grant awarded to the City of Valdosta by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in April 2009. The City of Valdosta produced this Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-enabled web site to be used by family members, historians, genealogists, and anyone interested in learning about the generations of Valdostans laid to rest at the city-owned Sunset Hill Cemetery.

Simply visit the web site at www.valdostacity.com/Index.aspx?page=421. Citizens may also learn about the history of Sunset Hill Cemetery, brush up on cemetery etiquette, and may access a cemetery records link that enables visitors to search the burial database and map.

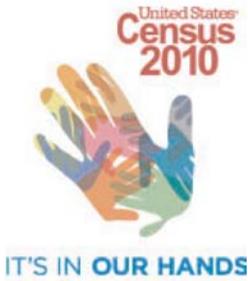
For more information, contact Emily Foster at (229) 259-3563.

Sign Up For E-News

Getting your city news is easier than ever, now with E-News. To sign up for the news service, visit the city web site at www.valdostacity.com, click on the "Resident" tab, and then click on the "Sign up for E-News." Citizens may select the type of news they want to receive on a regular basis.

For more information, contact Public Information Officer Sementha Mathews at (229) 259-3548 or at smathews@valdostacity.com.

Open the Door to a Census Taker and Open Doors for your Community



By being counted, you are standing up for your community's needs. That's why census takers are so important. A census taker is a person from your community who is hired by the U.S. Census Bureau to make sure that your neighborhood gets represented as accurately as possible.

Door-to-door census taking occurs in May, June and early July 2010. Local census takers will visit households that did not mail back a census form. All census takers carry an official badge and a shoulder bag — both with the Department of Commerce seal — and a binder. During a visit, census takers will show ID and hand respondents an information sheet explaining that their answers are confidential. The census taker will complete the questionnaire, which should take about 10 minutes. If no one is home, a "notice of visit" will be left at the door inviting the resident to call the census taker to complete the form over the phone.

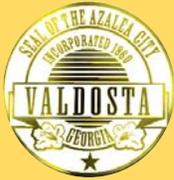
Open your door to the census taker, and help move our community forward.

Back to the Future

The Valdosta Sesquicentennial Planning Committee (VSPC) has partnered with the Valdosta City Schools for a Back to the Future event at Drexel Park, Friday, Aug. 27, at 6 p.m., in celebration of the City of Valdosta's 150th year.

This event, which will involve the burial of a time capsule filled with significant pieces of information for the future generations, will take place prior to the first Valdosta High Wildcat home football game of the season.

For more information on how you can be involved, please contact Public Information Officer Sementha Mathews at (229) 259-3548 or at smathews@valdostacity.com.



City Council

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| Deidra White | Councilwoman, District 2 |
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| Robert Yost | Councilman, District 6 |
| John A. Eunice | Councilman, At Large |
| | Mayor Pro-Tem |

Editorial Staff

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Larry H. Hanson | City Manager |
| Sementha Mathews | Public Information Officer |

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