

Hurricane Season:

June 1 to Nov. 30

“Hurricanes never hit here,” some may say. But, the National Weather Service wants to remind people that “It only takes one.”

Hurricane season runs June 1 through Nov. 30. Predictions for the 2014 season are forecasting a lower probability for a major hurricane making landfall on the U.S. due to cooler than average Atlantic surface temperatures.

These predictions should not prevent households from preparing for the season. Visit www.ready.ga.gov to learn about disaster prevention, which includes developing a family plan, securing your home, having a pet plan, having 72 hours of supplies, and knowing where to go for the latest information, as well as other helpful information.

Citizens are also urged to [click here](#) to sign up for the Code Red local emergency alerts. Be prepared.

City Awards \$32 Million Wastewater Contract

The Valdosta City Council approved a \$32 million construction contract on April 24 that is expected to resolve the majority of sanitary sewer overflows that occur in flood-prone areas of the city during heavy rain events. The contract includes the construction of a 6.2-mile force main that will replace the existing 54-inch gravity sewer main that runs alongside the Withlacoochee River, a new series of new pump stations, a new headworks structure and a 6-million gallon flow equalization basin. This project will also provide the first groundwork for the relocation of a new wastewater treatment plant at the same location. Construction on this project, which is funded by a low-interest GEFA loan, is expected to start in June 2014 and take about 18 months to complete. [Click here](#) to view full story.



A new link has been added to the City of Valdosta’s website at www.valdostacity.com that will inform citizens on the progress of these improvement projects. Simply click on the sanitary sewer system icon on the left side of the homepage and it will take you directly to the progress page. City leadership is committed to providing adequate water and wastewater treatment services to its citizens, maintaining a functioning sewer collection system and discharging treated water in an environmentally responsible manner.

For more information, call the Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548.

Drinking Water Week Celebrated in Valdosta

Mayor John Gayle kicked off National Drinking Water Week in Valdosta on May 6 with a proclamation and a tour of the city’s Water Treatment Plant. The plant, located at 3863 Guest Road, was named the 2013 Water Treatment Plant of the Year by the Georgia Association of Water Professionals in the category for groundwater systems that pump over 10 million gallons daily.

The City of Valdosta treats over 3.9 billion gallons of safe, clean and good-tasting drinking water for its residential, business and industrial customers annually, remaining in compliance with all drinking water standards set by the EPD. In July, Valdosta water customers will receive the 2013 Water Quality Report by mail, containing information about where city water is obtained, how it is treated and how it compares to the standards set by regulatory agencies.

For more information or to schedule a tour of the plant, call (229) 259-3548.

On left: Water Treatment Plant Assistant Superintendent Jason Barnes demonstrates water quality testing for plant tour participants during National Drinking Water Week.



WANTED: Photos by May 30 Deadline

The deadline for entries into the 6th Annual People’s Choice Photo Contest is quickly approaching. Entries must be mailed or hand delivered to the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson Street, Valdosta GA 31601, by the May 30, 2014 deadline. The five categories are **People, Places, Pets, Nature, and Sports Action**.

Citizens are invited to the reception on Monday, June 9, from 5-7 p.m., at the arts center, to kick off the People’s Choice voting, which will continue through July 11. All entries will be displayed in the Tillman Gallery for the public to enjoy through July 30.

For more information, contact the city’s Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548, the arts center at (229) 247-ARTS, or [click here](#) to download an application and contest rules.

Farm Days Open Every Saturday in June

The 4th season of Downtown Valdosta Farm Days opened May 3, filling the sidewalks around the historic Lowndes County Courthouse with locals seeking fresh healthy food options. The popular market, which is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., on the **first and third Saturday of each month**, rain or shine, through October 18, will also be open every Saturday during the month of June.

In addition to providing healthy food choices—such as locally-grown, locally-raised, locally-produced fruits and vegetables, plants, herbs, meats, farm-fresh eggs and dairy products—Farm Days also significantly impacts our local economy. Patrons can feel good knowing that they are supporting local farmers and businesses. And, there’s more than just food at Farm Days. Patrons will also find a variety of artisan and natural products including products made from recycled goods, birdhouses, handmade soaps and body products, candles, and honey products. Those who arrive early to shop have the advantage of beating the heat and getting the best picks of the season.

The market also serves as a venue to educate the community on healthy local options. Cooking demonstrations and information promoting healthy eating habits are available on site for market patrons and emphasize the correlation between food choices and the impact they have on the general health and environment. In addition, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants can use their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to purchase goods.

For more information, contact the Valdosta Main Street office at (229) 259-3577, or visit www.valdostamainstreet.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 Council

- John Gayle.....Mayor
- James R. Wright.....Councilman, District 1
- Sandra Tooley.....Councilwoman, District 2
- Joseph Vickers.....Councilman, District 3
- Alvin Payton, Jr.....Councilman, District 4
- Mayor Pro Tem
- Tim Carroll.....Councilman, District 5
- Robert Yost.....Councilman, District 6
- Ben Norton.....Councilman At Large

Editorial Staff

- Larry H. Hanson.....City Manager
- Sementha Mathews...Public Information Officer
- Erin Dobbins.....Public Information Intern

City Beat is a quarterly newsletter for the citizens of Valdosta and is written and published by the City of Valdosta Public Information Office. For more information, contact Sementha Mathews at (229) 259-3548.

City Measures Rainfall Across the Area

The City of Valdosta's Stormwater Division has seven strategically placed rain gauges throughout the city limits to monitor rainfall levels. Environmental Technician Quillian Peeler (in photo on right) collects data at each of these gauges on weekday mornings, and occasionally on weekends during rain events, and enters this information into the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow (CoCoRaHS) website sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Weather activity can vary within the city and can be documented by the collection of rainfall at the different rain gauges across the city. For example, one gauge on the east side of the city may read 1.4 inches of rain, while another gauge on the west side of the city may receive over 2 inches of rain. By entering actual rainfall collected locally into CoCoRaHS, this information can be used by the National Weather Service, emergency managers, insurance adjusters, engineers, etc. Citizens may also access this information at www.cocorahs.org.



National Garbage Man Day-June 17

Most Americans stop thinking about garbage the moment our trash hits the curb. National Garbage Man Day, on June 17, 2014, recognizes the often thankless job of maintaining safe and clean communities through municipal sanitation services.

According to John D. Arwood, founder of National Garbage Man Day, the observance calls for all to appreciate what waste management workers do for our cities on a daily basis. More than simply moving trash from one place to another, Arwood says they are also pioneers in advancing technologies such as recycling, renewable and sustainable energy, and reduction of our dependence on fossil fuels.

On a local level, the City of Valdosta Public Works Department meets the daily operation demands of sanitary services for 20,808 residential sanitation customers and an additional 1,343 commercial sanitation customers. Last year alone, city crews collected 25,633 tons of residential and commercial solid waste, collected and mulched 9,496 tons yard trash, collected 4,176 tons of recyclable materials, and responded to 5,585 calls for special pickups. As part of a regional recycling program, the department also hosted two Electronics Recycling events last year and saved nearly 30,000 pounds of electronic garbage from being disposed of into the landfill. Since the first event in March 2006, over 482,073 pounds—or 241.04 tons—of electronics have been collected.

The National Garbage Man Day theme for 2014 is "Keeping you and the environment safe." Take a moment on June 17 to thank your sanitation workers for the important role they play in keeping our city clean and safe.

It's That Time of Year: Mosquito Season

The City of Valdosta is committed to doing everything in its power to control the mosquito population in the area. However, the city can only spray in public areas and along public streets- which is only 1-3 percent of city land- so it's important for citizens to do their part in keeping mosquito populations under control.

The most efficient way for citizens to control mosquito populations is to eliminate breeding sources:

- Drain items around your property that collect and hold water.
- Breeding sites may not be obvious. Check places like bird baths, flower pots, or water bowls.
- Use larvicide in areas of standing water that cannot be drained.
- Clean out clogged rain gutters.
- Eliminate weeds and tall grass, and keep grass cut short.

In addition, the CDC recommends the use of repellents that contain DEET, the chemical Picaridin, and oil of lemon eucalyptus.

The Public Works staff will continue to monitor mosquito activity throughout the city limits and maintain its targeted spraying and larvicide efforts to control the mosquito population. Larvicide tablets are available for free from the Public Works Department, at 1017 Myrtle Street, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (229) 259-3588.

For more information about Valdosta mosquito control, [click here](#).

Remember, anything that holds water for more than a few days can breed mosquitoes!



21 Citizens Graduate from Gov't 101

The Valdosta Mayor and Council initiated the Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation Program in 2010 in an effort to educate and engage citizens ages 21 and older in their local government and community. This year, the council approved up to five high school seniors into the program who also have a parent or guardian in the program. Over the course of six consecutive Monday sessions, citizens were able to get a closer look at the services and functions of all city departments.

At a May 12 ceremony at City Hall, 21 citizens graduated from the 5th annual program, including the first-ever high school participant, Whiddon Henry. Graduates of the 2014 program are: Penelope Conrad, Rob Dazey, Lynne Feldman, Sondra Hampton, Carolyn Adams Hawkins, Anne Henry, Whiddon Henry, Terri Jenkins, Carol Lynn Jennings, Arrie Locks, Mona McMillan, Lawrence Mathews, Marilyn E. Miller, Ronnie Pierce, Angela Penn, Lindsay Ray, Carrie Ryan, Cedric Small, Cynthia Scurry-Brooklin, Donald Thieme and Stacey Whatley.

For more information about the program or how to sign up for the 2015 class, contact Public Information Officer Sementa Mathews at (229) 259-3548.



Resources Available for Job Seekers

Metro Valdosta 17, the city's government access channel on Media-com channel 17, features Georgia Job TV and important job information provided by the Georgia Department of Labor. Georgia Job TV airs each day from **2 - 4 a.m.** and **1 - 4 p.m.** The job postings are updated daily by the Georgia Department of Labor and are available to local citizens exclusively on Metro 17.

Georgia Job TV is one of many informative programs featured on Metro 17. Tune in today, or call Media Coordinator Shemeeka Johnson at (229) 671-3615 for information.



Student Honored as Junior Fire Marshal of the Year



Valdosta Fire Chief Freddie Broome and Ms. Betty Baty, widow of the late Valdosta Fire Marshal John H. Baty, presented J.L. Lomax student Arianna Booker with the 2014 Junior Fire Marshal of the Year award at a May 13 banquet.

Arianna is one of over 150 city youth who participated in the John H. Baty Junior Fire Marshals program this year and served as fire safety role models in their homes, schools and in the community. J.L. Lomax Elementary School also won Fire Marshal School of the Year for executing an exemplary 2014 program for their students.

For more information on the program, call Sgt. Chris Staples at (229) 333-1836.

Congratulations to “If I Were Mayor...” Essay Contest Winners

Three Valdosta Early College Academy students were honored at the April 10 City Council meeting for their winning “If I Were Mayor” essays. From left: VECA Teacher Jessica LeFiles, Nia Scott (1st place), Cayla Rowland (2nd place), Da’Jai Thomas (3rd place) and VECA Principal Ingrid Hall. The annual “If I Were Mayor” essay contest allows students to use their language art skills and civic knowledge to describe what they would do as mayor of our city.

Nia Scott was also selected as the first place winner for GMA’s District 11 out of over 1,050 entries and is Valdosta’s first statewide winner since 2010. Congratulations to all!



Brown Bag Lunch Concerts Draw Crowds

The 2014 Brown Bag Lunch Concert Series drew in hundreds of citizens daily, May 5-9, to enjoy local food and music in Downtown Valdosta. The annual event, sponsored by the Central Valdosta Development Authority and the City of Valdosta, is held in observance of National Historical Preservation Month and celebrates the historical and cultural gathering place that our downtown provides for local citizens to enjoy.

During the free concert series, attendees were able to purchase food and beverages from several local restaurant booths or bring their own to enjoy on the Lowndes County Courthouse front lawn while listening to the live musical performances. To learn about other activities downtown, contact the Valdosta Main Street office at (229) 259-3577.



VFD Receives Grant for Fire Safety

The Valdosta Fire Department is the recipient of the 2014 Chesney Fallen Firefighters Memorial Grant awarded by the Georgia Burn Foundation in the amount of \$2,620 to support local fire safety and burn prevention efforts in the Valdosta community.

The funds will specifically be used for the purchase of smoke alarms, a smoke generator for the fire safety house, fire prevention videos for kids and senior citizens in our area, and a video projector for educational and training purposes.

The grant is named in memory of Brant Chesney a career firefighter with the Gwinnett County Fire Department. Chesney died in the line of duty while volunteering with Forsyth County Fire Department in 1996. The grant program in his name also seeks to honor the memory of all Fallen Firefighters who have paid the ultimate price in service to the State of Georgia.

