



January/February 2016

City Beat

BIRD SUPPER 2016

Tickets on sale now

Tickets are on sale for the 2016 Bird Supper, scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2016, at the historic Georgia Railroad Depot in Atlanta, beginning at 5 p.m. The traditional event, sponsored by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners and the City of Valdosta, brings together hundreds of state officials and local business, professional and government personnel for a dinner of quail and important conversations.

Since the 1950s, the Bird Supper has been providing a venue for local professionals to be a catalyst for impacting legislative issues by keeping Valdosta and Lowndes County in the minds of the state officials during a half-way point of the legislative session.

Tickets may be purchased for \$50 each at the Lowndes County Judicial Administrative Complex, located at 327 N. Ashley Street, First Floor-Utility Payment Window. Tickets are also available for purchase from the City Clerk at Valdosta City Hall, located at 216 E. Central Avenue.

For more information, contact Lowndes County Public Information Officer Paige Dukes at (229) 671-2400 or City of Valdosta Public Information Officer Sementa Mathews at (229) 259-3548. Information can also be found at the Lowndes County Bird Supper Facebook page, and requests may be sent to BirdSupper@lowndescounty.com.

Mayor and Council Take Oaths of Office

The Mayor and four City Councilmembers will take their oaths of office during the first City Council meeting of the New Year, on Thursday, Jan. 7, beginning at 5:30 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, located at 216 E. Central Avenue. The Honorable James G. Tunison, Jr., Superior Court Judge of the Southern Judicial Circuit, will preside over the swearing in ceremony.

Those taking office include John Gayle, re-elected to his second term as the City of Valdosta Mayor; City Councilman Ben Norton, re-elected to serve At-Large; City Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody, elected to her first term to serve District 1; City Councilman Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, re-elected to serve District 3; and City Councilman Tim Carroll, re-elected to serve District 5.

Following the induction of these councilmembers, the Mayor and Council by majority vote will elect a member of the City Council to serve as Mayor Pro Tem, who serves in the Mayor's absence. The elected Mayor Pro Tem will also be sworn in at the Jan. 7 City Council meeting.

Citizens Invited

Mayor/Council Reception

Thursday, Jan. 7
City Hall Annex
Multi-Purpose Room

Immediately following
the 5:30 p.m.
City Council meeting

Citizens are invited to a special reception for the Mayor and Council that will take place in the Valdosta City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room immediately following the City Council meeting. The annex is located at 300 N. Lee Street, across the street from City Hall.

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

New Year's Resolution: **GET A JOB!**

Searching for job opportunities in Valdosta and across our region is as easy as tuning into Georgia Job TV, produced by the Georgia Department of Labor and aired on Metro Valdosta Channel 17 (Mediacom). Businesses in Valdosta and Lowndes County who want to post their jobs on this site may contact the DOL Valdosta Career Center at (229) 333-5211. For more information, visit www.DOL.state.ga.us.



Partnership Provides

More Access to

Job Search Tools




The City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Division is partnering with Goodwill of Southern Rivers to expand community access to job training and connections services through a series of workshops and a new Job Connections Kiosk in the city's Customer Service Center.

Goodwill regularly provides free workshops at its Job Connections Center (located at 1000 St. Augustine Rd) to help local citizens find employment and advance their careers. This city partnership will add a second location for these meetings.

Throughout the year, free workshops will be held the third Wednesday of every month in the City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room, located at 300 N. Lee St. These sessions will be taught by career professionals from Goodwill and will cover topics such as resume writing, job searching tips and interview essentials. The workshops for the pre-registered participants will take place from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., and light refreshments will be provided.

In addition, a Goodwill Job Connections Kiosk is now located in the City of Valdosta's Customer Service Center, located at 102 N. Lee Street. This terminal allows people to search and apply for jobs and work on a resume for up to 30 minutes at a time.

To register or for more information, call Neighborhood Development at (229) 671-3617, go online to www.goodwill-sr.org, or visit the new kiosk in the Customer Service Center. Space is limited to 25 participants per workshop, so reserve your spot today!



Valdosta Remembers MLK, Jr.

The City of Valdosta will be closed Monday, Jan. 18, 2016, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Citizens are encouraged to participate in local events hosted by the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Association.

The schedule of events, which mark the Association's 31st annual remembrance of the life and legacy of Dr. King, is as follows:

Founders' Banquet
Saturday, Jan. 9, 6 p.m.
James H. Rainwater Conference Center

Commemoration Program
Sunday, Jan. 17, 3 p.m.
Saint Paul A.M.E. Church

Youth Showcase
Monday, Jan. 18, 11 a.m.
Mathis City Auditorium

This theme of this year's celebration is "The Man, The Moment, The Message." For more information, contact Councilman Sonny Vickers at (229) 242-1520.

CITY OBSERVES LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

The City of Valdosta will observe Law Enforcement Appreciation Day (L.E.A.D.) on Thursday, Jan. 7, at 10 a.m., at the Valdosta Police Department to recognize the 149 sworn personnel, 24 non-sworn support personnel and 14 part-time employees and their commitment to serve and protect the citizens of this community. Mayor John Gayle will present a L.E.A.D. proclamation to Chief of Police Brian Childress at the event.

The national observance takes place annually on Jan. 9 and was created by the Federal Bureau of Investigation National

Academy Associates (FBINAA) to showcase the rewarding—yet often challenging—career field of law enforcement. The local event is taking place a few days earlier in the week to allow city staff and citizens the opportunity to participate.

Citizens may show their appreciation of law enforcement on Law Enforcement Appreciation Day in a number of ways, such as wearing blue clothing in support of law enforcement, sending a card of support to your local police department, writing a positive letter to the editor of the newspaper to share a positive law enforcement experience,

or simply thanking a police officer that day.

Tickets are also on sale for the annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner, which takes place on Thursday, Feb. 18, at the Rainwater Conference Center to honor the services of local law enforcement personnel. To purchase tickets to the dinner, contact James Dominey of the Valdosta Rotary Club, at jtdominey@bellsouth.net or (229) 242-0752.

For more information about the Jan. 7 proclamation event, contact Public Information Officer Sementha Mathews at (229) 259-3548 or visit www.valdostacity.com.

Your Guide to Going Green in 2016

Protect Your Water While You Clean

It's hard to think about the New Year without considering a New Year's resolution. If you don't have a resolution in mind, consider this one: Go green when you clean!

A simple way to do this is to say goodbye to conventional cleaning products. Green cleaners are easy to find, but you could also save money by making your own cleaners. It's sur-

prisingly simple: vinegar, lemon juice, baking soda and borax are great substitutes. You also might find that these non-toxic cleaners are not only easier on the environment but also easier on your wallet.

Remember, only rain goes down the storm drain! For more information, contact the Stormwater Division at (229) 259-3530.

Celebrate Valdosta's 30th Year as a Tree City USA

On Feb. 19, 2016, the city will celebrate Arbor Day as well as Valdosta's outstanding milestone of 30 consecutive years as a Tree City USA. The festivities will take place at 10 a.m. at American Legion Post 13, located at 1302 Williams Street.

For three decades Valdosta has met the four standards established by the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters that qualify a community as a Tree City USA. These include designating a Tree Commission, passing a tree care ordinance, establishing a comprehensive community forestry program, and proclaiming and hosting an Arbor Day celebration.

For more information about the local Arbor Day observance, visit www.valdostacity.com.

8 Ways to Save the Environment...and Your Cash

1 Change your light bulb.

A compact fluorescent bulb uses 75 percent less energy than an incandescent bulb and also lasts up to 10 times longer.

2 Use both sides of the paper when printing documents.

And don't forget to recycle the paper when you're finished with it.

3 Turn off the water when brushing your teeth.

You'll conserve up to five gallons per day--and save some money, too!--if you do.

4 Receive and pay bills online.

Save the trees by visiting www.valdostacity.com to pay your city utilities bill.

5 Use rechargeable batteries.

Though more expensive up front, these batteries will pay off in convenience and cost in the long run.

6 Recycle your old electronics.

Keep the electronics out of landfills and bring them to one of the city's E-Recycling events, held every spring and fall (April 9 and Nov. 12, 2016).

7 Buy local.

Buying food from local farmers supports the community and eliminates the pollution of trucks transporting food over long distances.

8 Maintain your vehicle.

Taking care of your car cuts down on pollution and extends the life of your vehicle.

For a list of 50 simple things you can do to help the environment, visit www.50waystohelp.com.



The above photos were featured in the 2015 Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest. From left to right, they are Minerva Martinez's *Flower Camelia*, Aaron Strickland's *Southern Silhouette*, and Carolyn McMillan's *Day is Done*.

8th Annual Photo Contest Returns

The City of Valdosta is proud to partner again with the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts to host the Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest. This is the city's 8th annual photo contest designed to inspire citizens to capture on camera the best of living in Valdosta. Whether photography is your passion, your hobby or just an occasional pastime, we invite you to participate.

This is a People's Choice Contest. A first-place winner and an honorable mention will be selected in each category. Our citizens will also vote on the overall Best in Show Award, for both the adult and youth (ages 14 and under) participants.

An opening reception will be held at the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts on Monday, June 13, and the public is invited to attend and to vote on the entries. Voting will continue at the arts center from June 13 through July 13, 2016.

Winners will be announced on Monday, July 18, from 5 - 7 p.m. at a reception at the center. The photos will remain on display at the center through Saturday, July 22. Winning photos will become part of a traveling

display that may be viewed from August until December in various city locations.

Anyone may submit up to five entries (a maximum of one entry per category), and categories are open to the photographer's interpretation. All photographs must be taken within the Valdosta city limits, and entries must be mailed or hand-delivered to the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts by Tuesday, May 31, 2016, where they will be displayed in the center's Tillman Gallery beginning on June 13.

No professional skills, special equipment or fees are required to enter. For more information, call the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts at (229) 247-2787 or the City of Valdosta Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548 or download the 2016 Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest Application from www.valdostacity.com.

Prizes will be awarded in five categories:

- Planes & Trains**
(and other transportation in the city)
- Paws & Claws**
(for animal lovers)
- Trees & Bees**
(and other nature wonders)
- Faces & Places**
(Photographers' favorites)
- Sites & Lights**
(potential film & movie locations in the city)

Students Consider 'If I Were Mayor'

Local sixth grade students can dream about being the city's top elected official by participating in the "If I Were Mayor, I Would..." essay contest, sponsored by the Valdosta Youth Council. The contest gives 6th grade students—from public, private or homeschooled—a chance to express, in 350 words or less, how they would make a difference if they were Mayor.

Every essay must begin with the sentence, "If I were mayor, I would," it may be either typed or neatly handwritten, and it must clearly display the student's name, teacher and school at the top of the page(s).

1st, 2nd and 3rd place local winners will be selected and recognized by Mayor John Gayle at the April 21 City Council meeting. All essays entered will be displayed at Valdosta City Hall during Georgia Cities Week, April 18-22, 2016.

The entries may be mailed or hand-delivered by Friday, March 4, 2016 to: Public Information Office, Attention: Essay Contest, 300 N. Lee Street, #102, Valdosta, GA 31601. For more information, contact Public Information Officer Sementha Mathews at (229) 259-3548 or visit www.Facebook.com/ValdostaYouthCouncil.



REGISTRATION FORM

Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation April 4 – May 16, 2016

Applications are now being accepted for the 7th Annual Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation. Twenty-five participants will meet for seven consecutive Mondays, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., beginning April 4, 2016. Valdosta 101 is designed to give Valdostans and other local citizens a deeper understanding and appreciation of their local government by exposing them to all city departments and other community leaders. The program, an initiative of the Valdosta Mayor and City Council, also includes the participation of up to five high school seniors who have a parent or legal guardian also enrolled in the program.

An applicant for Valdosta 101 must be a legal resident of the United States, complete a separate Criminal History Form and undergo a background investigation as part of the application process. Please be aware that a felony conviction or recent serious misdemeanor conviction may result in an applicant's exclusion from participation. Personal information given will be kept strictly confidential. All forms and additional information may be obtained from the Public Information Office located on the first floor of the City Hall Annex, 300 N. Lee Street, Room #102.

PERSONAL INFORMATION (please print):

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State/Zip Code _____

Occupation: _____

Are you a City of Valdosta resident? Yes / No

Will you be able to attend all scheduled class times? Yes / No (If "No" you may not be able to graduate.)

How did you hear about Valdosta 101? (Circle all that apply)

- Metro Valdosta Channel 17
- Valdosta Daily Times
- City of Valdosta Publications
- Social Media
- Valdosta 101 graduate
- www.valdostacity.com
- E-News
- Radio _____
- Television _____
- Other _____

I understand that I am required to complete and submit this application form AND a VPD Criminal History Form, which may be picked up in the Public Information Office. By signing these forms, I give the VPD permission to obtain any criminal history record information pertaining to me, which may be in the files of any state or local criminal justice agency in Georgia. I understand that a felony conviction or recent serious misdemeanor conviction may result in my exclusion from participation. I also understand that the class is limited to 25 participants selected from all of the applicants.

Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Signature of Parent, if participant is under age 18 _____

FORM DUE BY: March 18, 2016, to the Public Information Office, Valdosta City Hall Annex, 300 N. Lee St., Room #102, Valdosta, GA 31601. For more information, visit www.valdostacity.com/publicinformation or call (229) 259-3548.