



May/June 2016

City Beat

Valdosta, A City Without Litter

Adopt a Street to Keep our City Clean

Although litter is a challenge all cities face, Valdosta citizens have the opportunity to play a key role in keeping our city clean and beautiful by adopting a street in the community.

Adopt-A-Street is an anti-litter program sponsored by the Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB) Commission, in collaboration with the city of Valdosta, that is used to attract public involvement in picking up litter on both county roads and city streets. The program's goal is to create public awareness of litter along Georgia's roads and highways by making the adopted section an example of community involvement that improves the beauty of the area through volunteer efforts.

Keeping our roadways clear of litter is time consuming and can be extremely expensive for Lowndes and Valdosta. Thankfully, nearly 100 groups, organizations and businesses have already committed to eliminating litter in the community by adopting a road

or street.

Through their one-year commitment, an organization would have the responsibility of preventing litter within that section of roadway. The organization will be asked to plan and complete monthly general cleanups on the adopted site, and report back to KLVB after each cleanup.

In return, KLVB will furnish and erect two road signs indicating the section under adoption and the organization responsible.

All organizations will conduct safety meetings with the KLVB Director to discuss the dangers of working along the side of the roadway. KLVB will provide safety vests to all volunteers as needed during cleanups and assist with the cleanups when necessary.

The Adopt-A-Street program is voluntary. For more information, visit klvb.net or call KLVB's Executive Director Aaron Strickland at 229-671-2499.



City hosts record-breaking Bulk Trash Amnesty Day

The City of Valdosta's Neighborhood Development Division hosted its second city-wide Bulk Trash Amnesty Day in April, which resulted in the collection of more than 40 tons of trash—nearly four times what was collected at the first Bulk Trash Amnesty Day held last fall.

The next Bulk Trash Amnesty Day will take place on Oct. 22. For more information on this event, contact Neighborhood Development at 229-671-3617.

Learn the Basics of

MOSQUITO PREVENTION

The City 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. Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites by following these simple steps:

- ❖ It is extremely important to eliminate mosquito breeding areas around your house. Dispose of tin cans, old tires, bottles, jars, buckets, drums, ceramic pots and other containers or make sure that they contain no standing water. Screen rain barrels and openings to water tanks. Empty and clean your pets watering pan daily.
- ❖ Use larvicides where standing water cannot be removed, or fill the holes. Free larvicide tablets are available to all Valdosta residents and can be picked up at the City of Valdosta Public Works Department, located at 1017 Myrtle Street, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- ❖ Drain improperly installed and sagging swimming pool covers. Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly. Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas, saunas and hot tubs; if they are not in use, empty and keep them covered. Stock ornamental ponds with mosquito eating fish.
- ❖ Check to see that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens that are in good repair. Clean out clogged gutters and/or slope to downspouts. Repair leaky pipes and faucets.
- ❖ Eliminate weeds, tall grass and other mosquito breeding places.
- ❖ Remind neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their property.
- ❖ Use insect repellent, such as those containing DEET, when outdoors. Please read and follow manufacturer's instructions carefully, and do not use on infants or pregnant women.
- ❖ The CDC also recommends repellents that contain the chemical Picaridin, a chemical that has been proven to be effective in repelling mosquitoes, as well as repellents that contain oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- ❖ Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and socks when you are outdoors during times that mosquitoes are most active; however, it is best to try and avoid outdoor activities during these times.

If you have any questions about mosquito safety, please call the South Health District at 229-333-5290 or toll free at 866-801-5360. For more information and tips, visit www.cdc.gov/StopMosquitoes.



Come for the freshness and stay for the fun at Downtown Valdosta Farm Days!

On market Saturdays, vendors offer a variety of goods for sale such as locally-grown, locally-raised, locally-produced fruits and vegetables, plants, herbs, meats, farm-fresh eggs and dairy products, organic produce, baked and prepared foods and snacks. 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. Cooking demonstrations and nutritional information will also be available.

The market is located around the Historic County Courthouse Square, 100 W. Central Avenue, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. EBT, credit and debit cards are accepted.

2016 Market Days

June 4

June 11

June 25

July 9

July 23

August 20

September 3

September 17

For more information, contact Main Street at 229-259-3577.

Hurricane Preparation

Keep all trees and shrubs well trimmed.

Place valuables and personal papers in a waterproof container on the highest level of your home.

Cover windows with hurricane shutters or pre-cut plywood.

Create a Ready kit with enough supplies for at least three days, consider needs of children, pets and elderly.

Develop an evacuation plan and where to reconnect with family.

Bring in all outdoor furniture and anything else that is not secured.

ready.ga.gov

Set refrigerator to the coldest setting.

Fill gas tank.

 Ready.Georgia

Hurricane season runs June 1-Nov. 30, and it's important to prepare for these natural disasters. To learn what to do before, during and after a hurricane to keep you and your family safe, visit ready.ga.gov/be-informed/hurricanes/.

Conserve Water (and money) this summer

The month of May signals the end of the school year and the start of summer vacations. As part of continuing efforts to reduce storm-water runoff, here are a few simple ways to save money and water while on vacation:

- ✦ Adjust sprinklers so they don't water paved surfaces.
- ✦ Water early in the morning or late in the evening to minimize the water lost to evaporation.
- ✦ Try using slow watering techniques such as drip irrigation or soaker hoses.
- ✦ Consider turning off automatic sprinklers before you leave. Think of all the water that would be wasted if it rained the entire time you were gone! Most established lawns are satisfied with one inch of water per week, so chances are that your lawn will be just fine while you're away.

Pet Safety Matters

Did you know that it's recommended for all pet owners to have a pet preparedness kit in the case of an emergency or natural disaster? This kit should include items such as a photo of you and your dog, medication your pet needs, vet records, a First Aid Kit, a pet carrier, sanitation bags and a contact list of pet-friendly hotels.

To see a full list of recommended items, visit: <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/programs/emergency-services/pet-preparedness-month.html>.

June is pet preparedness month, and a full guide to pet emergency planning can be found at www.ready.gov/animals.

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



Citizens complete 10-week Citizens Police Academy

A ceremony on Thursday, May 19, at the Valdosta Police Department, recognized the following citizens who have completed the 10-week Citizens Police Academy: Dan Jansen, Susan Barden, Janice Hancock, Rusty Wetherington, Nicholas Anderson, Steven Bristow, Thomas Gibson, Jeff Highman, Bonnie Highman, Tage France, Gerald Williams, Cheryl Acree, Birdgette Unger, Kamil Cook, Teresa Worley, Angela Penn and Bryant Kim.

Call 229-293-3099 for more information or to get an application for the fall class.

Check out the
City's latest
Annual Report

@

[www.valdostacity.com/
annual-report](http://www.valdostacity.com/annual-report)

CITY OF VALDOSTA ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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VALDOSTA
A City Without Limits

VSU Students Help City Engage Millennials

Mayor John Gayle recently honored the winners of the 2016 Valdosta Social Media Contest, an educational partnership between the City of Valdosta and Valdosta State University to propose the best social media strategy for its local government.

The VSU students each received a framed certificate, an official city coin and a professional letter of recommendation from the Mayor for their innovative ideas for reaching and engaging citizens between ages 20-36. The plan includes creatively building upon the city's current social media strategy, producing engaging messages, photos and social media "events," and utilizing a VSU campus representative and student/citizen spotlights.

The team's ideas are being implemented, which demonstrates the city's continued efforts to provide applicable experiences to our local university students while engaging all citizens in local government.



In photo (clockwise): Kaitlyn Linginfelter, Christian Flick, Mayor John Gayle, Anthony Stone, Brian Donaldson and VSU Social Media Theory Professor Dr. David Nelson. Not pictured is VSU student Rachel Elsey.



Citizens Graduate from Valdosta 101

"It was a great way to get to know the government and community I have lived in for over 25 years," said Rajendra Patel, one of the local citizens who graduated from the 7th annual Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation, at a ceremony on May 9.

The seven-week program, an initiative of the Valdosta Mayor and City Council, attracted citizens from all walks of life—from student to educator, professional to retired, and all in between—who wanted to learn more about the programs and services of their city government.

The 2016 class graduates are Diana Angel, Debra Bell, Greg Brown, Juan Chow-Kai, Morris H. Dukes, Vinus Floyd, David

Hanna, Mikki Hudson, Kisha Middlebrooks, Rajendra Patel, Bonnie Rumphol, Stanley Rumphol, Lori Simpson, Thomas Simpson, Jimmy C. Sirmans, Joadele L. Sirmans, Celia Strickland, Miguel Vicente, Darlene Wilson and James Wright.

The Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation is one of three volunteer programs in the City of Valdosta available to citizens—the other two are the Citizens Police Academy and Citizens Fire Academy—designed to give citizens valuable knowledge of resources through a behind-the-scenes view inside local government. Applications are available online for the next Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation, which begins April 3, 2017.



2016 Essay Contest Winners Named

The city congratulates the winners of the 2016 "If I Were Mayor" 6th Grade Essay Contest, who are (in photo from left): 1st Place, Toni Salami; 2nd Place, Kaightlyn Jowers; and 3rd Place, Deeya Patel. The contest, sponsored by the Valdosta Youth Council, encourages local 6th graders each year to creatively use their language art skills and civics knowledge to express, in 350 words or less, how they would make a difference if they held the city's top elected position.



Street Renaming

Honors lifelong public servant

Valdosta citizens gathered on May 14 to officially rename Laurel Avenue, which runs from the entrance to the west end of Sunset Hill Cemetery, to “Melvin Nelson Way.” The street was named after Nelson who worked at Sunset Hill Cemetery for over four decades. Nelson is credited with managing the 72-acre facility and developing an accurate inventory of people, property and available land. He also discovered numerous unmarked slave graves, and his efforts played a large part in the construction and dedication of the Sunset Hill Cemetery’s Unknown Slaves Memorial in 1996. Nelson was a respected member of the Valdosta and Lowndes County communities, was a friend to all who visited Sunset Hill, and his faithfulness as a public servant will forever be remembered. Melvin Nelson Way is now a permanent memorial for a man who showed the “way” for each of us to live our lives...with kindness, respect, honor and service.

Mark your calendar:
June 17 is National
Garbage Man Day



The City of Valdosta expresses appreciation to its trash collectors, dumpster haulers, sewage workers, street cleaners and all the “unsung heroes” who are dedicated to keeping our environment clean year-round. In addition to removing our unwanted trash, the City of Valdosta Public Works Department encourages citizens on ways to reduce, recycle and reuse the things being thrown in the garbage from their homes. Visit www.valdostacity.com/public-works for more information about city sanitation services.

2016 Historic Preservation Award Winners

Congratulations to the following winners of the 2016 Valdosta Historic Preservation Awards:

West Hill Properties, LLC.

Outstanding Achievement

.....

Dr.’s Alex & Jennifer Alvarez

Outstanding Achievement

.....

Rise, A Real Estate Company

Outstanding Achievement

.....

Rhode’s Family Properties

Distinguished Merit

.....

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Cribbs

Stewardship Award

.....

First Baptist Church

Excellence in Compatible
New Construction

.....

Donald O. Davis

Harold M. Bennett Lifetime Historic
Preservation Achievement Award

For more information on historic preservation in the city, visit www.valdostacity.com/historic-preservation.

Call to Artists for Dumpster Art

The City of Valdosta and the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts invite artists and artist teams to submit their conceptual designs to be considered for a public Dumpster Art project taking place this September. Selected artists will have the opportunity to paint designs that celebrate life in the city on three dumpsters located in the downtown area.

The Dumpster Art project was originally scheduled to take place in April during Georgia Cities Week 2016, but the event was delayed to allow for greater community participation.

Artistic work will be accomplished onsite on Saturday, Sept. 17. The Dumpster Art will be displayed for a full year, providing beautiful visuals for downtown visitors and significant exposure for

the artists. The artists will oversee the fabrication of the public art. Completion of the project is expected by Sept. 17 at 5 p.m.

The deadline to apply is Aug. 31, 2016, by 5 p.m. There is no artist fee. Paints and some supplies provided. Dumpsters will be steam cleaned and will receive a coat of primer and blue base paint prior to the start of artists' work. Experience creating work on life-sized canvases is recommended, but not mandatory.

More information and an application form are available at www.valdostacity.com/dumpster-art. Interested individuals may also contact Valdosta Main Street by calling 229-259-3548 or emailing ehill@valdostacity.com. Please mention "Dumpster Art" in the subject line.



In Photo (from left): Mayor John Gayle, Budget Manager Amy Hall and Budget Analyst Carolyn Sampson-Burgess.

Finance Department receives Distinguished Budget Award

The City of Valdosta Finance Department received the 2015 Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for meeting nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. This is the 20th consecutive year that the city has achieved the significant award, which also recognized Assistant City Manager Mark Barber for his instrumental role in preparing the city's budget that adheres to GFOA's high standards.

Citizens are invited to Budget Hearings taking place Wednesday, June 1, and Thursday, June 2. On both days the hearings begin at 3 p.m. in the City Council chambers, located at 216 E. Central Avenue

your vote COUNTS

In the midst of the political elections, there's another kind of voting underway in the City of Valdosta... Valdosta People's Choice Voting.

The City of Valdosta is proud to partner again with the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts to host the 8th Annual Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest. This special event is designed to inspire citizens to capture on camera the best of living in Valdosta.

Here's where your vote counts: Citizens are invited to the contest's Opening Reception on Monday, June 13, 5-7 p.m., at the Turner Arts Center. At this event, citizens can view all of the 2016 entries on display in the Tillman Gallery and begin voting for their favorite photos in five categories, as well as a Best of Show. People's Choice Voting runs through July 13.

The deadline to enter the contest is Tuesday, May 31, and all photographs must be taken within the Valdosta City limits. For an application as well as full contest rules and information, visit www.valdostacity.com/valdosta-peoples-choice-photo-contest or call 229-259-3548.