

Walking in the City

Longer afternoons of daylight translates into hours of outdoor recreation and fun. Citizens are reminded to visit www.vlpra.com for information on a variety of outdoor recreation options to increase your health and fitness levels within the city limits.

Walking, for example, is a moderate form of exercise that is enjoyable and relatively inexpensive to pursue, and can take place at the following:

- Enjoy the outside walking tracks at the Wood Valley Community Center, Scott Park, Freedom Park or Payton Park.
 - The Valdosta Middle School track is available after school operating hours and on the weekends. NOTE: VMS has announced that it will install a fence around the track from March 17 through April 30 to ensure student safety. During school hours of operations (weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.), citizens may instead utilize the sidewalk system around McKey Park (across from VMS) for another safe walking option.
 - In addition to walking and jogging, the 3.1-mile Azalea City Trail—which extends from Vallotton Park to the Craig Center—allows citizens to enjoy bike riding, skating and other forms of recreation.
- Call (229) 259-3507 for information.

Freddie Broome Named Fire Chief

On March 10, the city of Valdosta welcomed Fire Chief Freddie Broome. The new chief replaces Fire Chief J.D. Rice, who recently retired after a successful 35-year fire services career--21 of them with the City of Valdosta. Fire Chief Broome, formerly the Assistant Fire Chief for Winston Salem, N.C., said he is anxious to get to work.

Chief Broome has held numerous job responsibilities with the Winston Salem Fire Department since 1996, joining the department as a Firefighter and advancing through the ranks.

Valdosta City Manager Larry Hanson said the feedback he received from Chief Broome's references, co-workers and supervisors during the selection process all described him as an impressive individual who is calm under pressure, team oriented, honest and dependable, an effective listener, trustworthy, impeccable personal and professional ethics, with an inclusive and participatory management style.

"Chief Broome will build upon the strong foundation that Chief Rice and his team has built, and I know the dedicated professionals in our VFD will welcome him and together take the department to new heights," said City Manager Hanson.

Just days into his new job, Chief Broome expressed his gratitude to the city for his new role.

"I am honored to serve as the Fire Chief for the City of Valdosta. I am grateful for the opportunity presented to me and the confidence expressed in me by Mr. Hanson. I accept this tremendous responsibility, and I look forward to serving alongside the men and women of the Valdosta Fire Department."



Valdosta Police Officer of the Year

Lt. Tomas Chavarria Jr. was honored as the Rotary Club Officer of the Year for the City of Valdosta at the 7th Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner, on Feb. 20.

Lt. Chavarria, employed with the Valdosta Police Department since August 1992, has worked with the VPD Power Squad team and the Tactical Operation Unit. He has received Top Gun Awards at the police department for his outstanding physical and firearms skills, and numerous accolades from supervisors and citizens alike. Recently, Lt. Chavarria was promoted to lieutenant of a road patrol shift.

His training encompasses a wide range of law enforcement specialties to include training in gang investigations, supervision, defensive tactics, narcotics investigations, tactical operations, tactical firearms, traffic investigations, etc.

Congratulations Lt. Chavarria for representing the City of Valdosta and the Valdosta Police Department as the 2014 Rotary Club Officer of the Year.

Tree City USA

for 28th Consecutive Year

The City of Valdosta was honored by the Georgia Forestry Commission as a Tree City USA community for the 28th consecutive year, at a ceremony on Feb. 21. Of Georgia's 536 cities, only 138 are Tree Cities and only nine cities—including Valdosta—have received this designation for 28 consecutive years.

In order to be designated as a Tree City USA community, Valdosta met four standards established by the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters. 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.

At the event, VSU also received its second designation as Tree Campus USA, making it one of nine universities in Georgia to have this designation.

The Tree City USA and Tree Campus USA programs were established by the Arbor Day Foundation, along with the National Association of State Foresters and the USDA Forest Service, to improve community forestry.

For more information, call (229) 259-3530.



(From left) Kevin Conrad, Chairman of the Valdosta Tree Commission; Mayor Gayle, City of Valdosta; and Chuck Norvell, Georgia Forestry Commission—as well as a crowd of local community leaders and citizens—celebrated the city's 28th year as Tree City USA at the Feb. 21 event.

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
- Semantha 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 Semantha Mathews at (229) 259-3548.

City Hosts Spring E-Recycling Event



The City of Valdosta and Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB) will provide residents and businesses the opportunity to dispose of electronic devices in a safe and convenient manner at the Spring Electronic Recycling Event, on Saturday, Apr. 12. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the parking lot of Mathis City Auditorium, located at 2300 North Ashley Street.

Citizens may drop off a number of electronic items at the event, such as

cell phones, computer monitors, laptops, disk and floppy drives, test equipment, modems, circuit boards, typewriters, cables, eight-tracks, computer accessories, video machines, stereos, video cassette recorders (VCRs), CB radios, scanners, speakers, camcorders and cameras. Volunteers will be available at the event to help remove items from citizens' vehicles.

A complete list of items accepted at the event is available at www.valdostacity.com or by calling at (229) 671-3640.

People's Choice Photo Contest Kicks Off

The City of Valdosta and the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts invite citizens to submit their original photos in the 2014 Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest, by the May 30 deadline.

The five categories are:

People
Places
Pets
Nature
Sports Action

Entries may be mailed or hand-delivered to: Annette Howell Turner center for the Arts, 527 N. Patterson Street, Valdosta GA 31601.

People's Choice Voting will take place from June 9 - July 11, but 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 download an application at www.valdosta.city.com.

WANTED: Local Farmers for the 2014 Downtown Valdosta Farm Days Season



The 5th annual Downtown Valdosta Farm Days, hosted by the Valdosta Main Street office, will kick off the 2014 season on May 3. The market, which takes place on the first and third Saturday from May until October, will once again showcase locally-grown produce and foods on the sidewalks around the historic Lowndes County Courthouse.

By popular demand, Farm Days will also take place every Saturday during the month of June, during the peak growing season for South Georgia farmers.

The event also seeks to inspire all citizens to grow local. It's interesting to note that many Valdosta residents

here in the City limits grow produce on less than an acre of land, in pots, or even plastic swimming pools.

The Gardens in the Community Program is a community sponsored program that offers citizens and civic groups guidance and start-up supplies for gardening. This program assists in planting gardens by helping till the soil and providing seeds, plants, and soil amendments where needed.

For more information on Valdosta Farm Days, call the Main Street office at (229) 259-3577. To learn more about starting a garden, contact Diane Howard at (229) 560-5692.

Stormwater Tip

Trees play an important role in Stormwater.



Trees are a vital part of an urban environment. By planting trees in neighborhoods, parking lots and streetscapes, it not only enhances our municipal infrastructure, but it also assists with stormwater management.

Stormwater runoff can be reduced, for example, when rain is captured by tree leaves and bark or absorbed into the ground, which then enters the root system. Additional benefits of trees when incorporated into stormwater can include creating new habitat, reduction in pollutants from entering our local waterways, and site stabilization.

To learn more about the city's tree and stormwater programs, contact the Engineering Department at (229) 259 -3530.



Fifteen Reasons to Serve Your Community

Fifteen vacancies will provide Valdosta citizens with opportunities to serve the community. The vacancies range across ten of the city's boards, commissions, authorities, and advisory committees. If you've ever wanted to get more involved in public service, now is the time to do so. Upcoming vacancies are listed below:

Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (1)
Hospital Authority of Valdosta & Lowndes County (1)
Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful (2)
Valdosta Housing Authority - Resident Appointment (1)
Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments & Appeals (3)
Valdosta-Lowndes Co. Zoning Board of Appeals (1)
Valdosta Airport Authority (1)
Valdosta-Lowndes Co. Parks & Recreation Authority (1)
Historic Preservation Commission (1)
Public Art Advisory Committee - LVAC Member At Large (1) & Community At Large (2)

The city's appointment process ensures that all citizens have the opportunity to serve. To be considered for any of the above appointments, citizens should review the membership requirements and return a completed application and signed Code of Ethics form to the City Clerk by April 30 at 5 p.m. The Mayor and City council will evaluate the applicants and appoint individuals to the vacancies listed at the May 8 City Council meeting. Contact Valdosta City Clerk Teresa Bolden at (229) 259-3503 or at tbolden@valdostacity.com for required forms and complete details.

Mayor and City Council Set Goals for FY 2015

The Valdosta Mayor and City Council held their annual retreat in January to develop the following goals for Fiscal Year 2015. The information below is also available at www.valdostacity.com, along with more information about the Mayor and Council's work in the city.



1. Bid, award contract and begin construction of the Force Main Project.
2. Bid, award contract and begin construction of the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.
3. Implement the SPLOST VII projects as approved.
4. Develop a Request for Proposal and secure software/hardware for technology upgrades for the Municipal Court and the Valdosta Police Department to assist in more efficiency in operation.
5. Work with the Industrial Authority and other appropriate entities to address the need for improvement and enhancement of broadband throughout the county.
6. Develop a plan for improvement to the gateways and entrances into the city and begin implementation.
7. Broaden City Government 101 to include up to five slots for high school seniors from the local schools who have a parent in the program.
8. Identify additional revenue sources and/or expense reductions in order for the City to continue to operate in a fiscally responsible manner.
9. Collaborate with community and regional leaders to continue advocacy efforts on behalf of Moody Air Force Base in support of its value to national defense and our community and seek opportunities for base growth and expansion in preparation for future Base Realignment and Closure Commissions.
10. Work with the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority and the Regional Economic Development Authority to host a regional economic development summit to bring recognition, awareness and opportunities to our city and region.
11. Continue collaboration with the US Army Corps of Engineers and work with state and federal officials to seek funding and identify solutions to address regional flooding issues.
12. Adopt a new Code of Ordinances.

Deadline Extended for 5th Annual Government 101

Applications are now being accepted for the 5th annual Government 101 Citizens Orientation Program. Participants will meet for six consecutive Mondays, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., beginning April 7. Government 101 is designed to give Valdosta and other local citizens age 21 and older a deeper understanding and appreciation of their local government. The program, an initiative of the Mayor and City Council, has recently been modified to include up to five high school seniors who have a parent or legal guardian also enrolled in the program.

Participants will be exposed to all city departments--such as Fire, Police, Municipal Court, Engineering and Finance--and will get an inside look at how the city operates daily. A maximum of 25 people will be selected for the class from citizens who submit a completed application by the **March 21, 2014 deadline** and pass the required background checks. If more than 25 people apply, the city will give preference to applicants on a first-come, first-served-basis.

Citizens may receive more information at www.valdostacity.com or by calling (229) 259-3548.



The City of Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation Program

Registration Form

Applicants for the Government 101 Citizens Orientation Program must be at least 21 years of age (or a high school senior with a parent/legal guardian in the program) and be a legal resident of the United States. Applicants will undergo a background investigation as part of the application process. Applicants must complete a separate Criminal History form that may be obtained from the Public Information Office located on the first floor of the City Hall Annex, 300 N. Lee Street, Room #102. 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.

Name: _____ SSN _____ - _____ - _____
Address: _____ City _____ State/Zip Code _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____
Occupation: _____

Are you a City of Valdosta resident? Yes / No

Why do you want to participate in the Citizens Orientation Program?

Will you be able to attend all classes (if not, you will not graduate)? Yes / No

How did you hear about the Citizens Orientation Program? (Circle One)

Metro Valdosta 17 Publications Radio/TV
Newspaper www.valdostacity.com/E-news Other _____

I understand that I am required to complete and submit this application form AND a Valdosta Police Department Criminal History Form, which may be picked up in the Public Information Office. By signing these forms, I give the Valdosta Police Department 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 ____/____/____

Closing Date: March 21, 2014

Return this form to: Public Information Office, Valdosta City Hall Annex, Room #102, 300 N. Lee Street, Valdosta, GA 31601.

Call for Valdosta Historic Preservation Nominations

The City of Valdosta is accepting nominations for the 6th annual Valdosta Preservation Awards, which recognizes significant historic preservation projects that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings in the local Valdosta Historic District.

Nominations for Preservation Awards may be submitted in five categories:



Outstanding Achievement Award
Distinguished Merit Award
Stewardship Award
Excellence in Compatible New Construction Award
Harold M. Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award

Buildings nominated for the Outstanding Achievement Award and Distinguished Merit Award categories must be at least 50 years old and located in the Valdosta Historic District. Nominations will be considered for projects completed within the last three years and will be reviewed by the Valdosta Preservation Awards Committee, comprised of members of the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission, the Lowndes County Historical Society and the Valdosta Heritage Foundation. Award decisions will be based on the contributions of the projects to the architectural and historical character of the Valdosta Historic District.

The Valdosta Preservation Awards will be presented at the May 22, 2014 Valdosta City Council meeting, during National Historic Preservation Month. Award nominees and winners will be notified the first week of May 2014.

Nomination forms and a complete list of award rules are available at www.valdostacity.com or at the city's Planning and Zoning Division. Completed forms may be hand-delivered or mailed to the City of Valdosta Planning and Zoning Division, at 300 N. Lee Street, Valdosta, GA 31601, or emailed to efoster@valdostacity.com, by Friday, April 25. For more information, contact Emily Foster at (229) 259-3563.

HomeSafeGeorgia

**Helping People
 Get Back on Their Feet**

A statewide unemployment mortgage payment assistance program is made possible through a Georgia Department of Community Affairs partnership, which is helping to prevent foreclosures, under the name HomeSafe Georgia. This program helps citizens by providing "bridge" mortgage assistance to many Georgians who are unemployed or have seen a dramatic decrease in their income due to national economic conditions.

The Mortgage Payment Assistance program provides temporary mortgage assistance for eligible applicants who have a qualifying unemployment or underemployment hardship that began in the last 36 months. The applicant's monthly mortgage payments are paid to the lender for up to 24 months for first and some second mortgages until the recipients can get back on their feet. For additional information on this program, call (229) 444-2614 or visit www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com.

Essay Contest Winners Recognized on April 10

Recently, local 6th graders had the opportunity to think long and hard about what they would do if they were the Mayor of our city, as part of the "If I were Mayor, I Would..." Essay Contest. The annual contest is sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association and the City of Valdosta and challenges youth to consider a future career in public service.

The essays will be judged for creativity, civic knowledge and originality. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners of the popular contest will be recognized at the April 10 Valdosta City Council meeting. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

Call (229) 259-3548 for more information.

Stay Tuned In

Stay involved with your local government by tuning into Metro Channel 17 on Mediacom. City Focus, a Valdosta news show, can be viewed anytime online at www.vimeo.com/metro17valdosta. Citizens may also get valuable information by visiting the city website for updates and by signing up for regular E-News blasts at www.valdostacity.com/publicinformation.

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

