

July/August 2017

# City Beat



## Right-of-Way Responsibilities Explained

One of the civic responsibilities we all share is keeping our city attractive and well maintained. Attractive neighborhoods add to home values, encourage business investments, and positively influence the behaviors of others.

When property is developed, the portion of property adjacent to the street is dedicated as part of the public "right-of-way". Such right-of-way is not only for the street itself, but it may also include sidewalks, drainage facilities, utilities and similar public uses.

With nearly 600 miles of right-of-way in our city, it would be impossible for any local government to adequately maintain this without significant added expense to all the taxpayers.

This is why the city's ordinance requires property owners to maintain the portion of public right-of-way that is adjacent to their own properties (Ordinance No. 2011-37).

For example, this includes keeping the grass cut and free of litter between the property line and the sidewalk or street curb.

Read more about right-of-way responsibilities [here](#).

## Workcamp Returns for 11th Year

Approximately 136 youth and adult volunteers from around the country spent a week of their summer vacations serving the citizens of Valdosta through the Southern Hospitality Workcamp.

These "campers" repaired 12 homes in our community. The 2017 camp marks the 11th year the city has hosted this event, which brings in youth to perform basic home repairs, painting and minor construction, at no cost to elderly or disabled homeowners.

To date, the event is credited with repairing 313 substandard local homes (inclusive of the 2017 sites) and yielding an over \$2 million economic investment in our community through capital improvements to housing stock, the value of volunteer housing, their spending in our community and the value of their labor.

Learn more about the Southern Hospitality Workcamp [here](#).

## City Delivers Balanced Budget

The Fiscal Year 2018 Valdosta Budget was approved by the Mayor and City Council at their June 22 City Council meeting. The budget was presented to the council as a balanced budget, as required by the City Charter, importantly with no property tax increase.

Council approved the \$97 million budget, following nearly six hours of presentations at the June 14, 15 and 22 public hearings. The document specifically outlines the revenue and expenditures for FY 2018, and city leaders have carefully weighed every decision based upon expected revenue flow and an assessment of need-based expenditures.

"The City of Valdosta has managed its finances through the slowly recovering economy in a measured and responsible way, while maintaining—and even in some cases, increasing—our service delivery," said Mayor John Gayle. "We will remain vigilant, and we are optimistic about future growth and the economic health and vibrancy of the city."

The FY 2018 Valdosta Budget provides the necessary resources to ensure the city continues to operate reasonably in a fiscally responsible manner. View the FY 2018 Valdosta Budget [here](#).



## Citizens Graduate from Govt. 101

"I recommend this program to every citizen, especially if you want to serve as a volunteer or run for office," Michael Noll, one of the local citizens who graduated from the 8th annual Valdosta Government 101 Citizens Orientation, said at a ceremony on May 8.

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 2017 class graduates are Susan Bailey, Des'Jorie Brown, Frances Butler, Maranda Cleland, George Cleland, Christina Col-

ter, Ed Doherty, Wanda Halter, C.E. (Ed) Hightower Jr., Joe Ed Holt, Daniel Jansen, Denise Kinsey, Harriet Messcher, Robert Moore, Charles Nettles, Michael Noll, Emily Smith, Ryan Smith, Elly Steed, and Kurt Stoltz.

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 Citizens Orientation, which begins in April 2018.

## Citizens Graduate from Police Academy

A ceremony on Thursday, June 15 at the Valdosta Police Department, recognized the following citizens who completed the 10-week Citizens Police Academy: Ben Pitchford, Lori A. McFadden, Frances E. Butler, Brenda Kay Montgomery, Shelby Gibbs, Michael Hobbs, Kathryn Hoylman, Cieria Bassett, Brianna Taggart, Kayla Webber, Dolores Jill Bohannon, William Hooks, Kavon Lowe, Cornelia Smithwick, Bobby Flowers, Robert Rice, Joseph Elan Reaves, Sally Querin, Dominic Henry, Haley Whiddon, Chuck Holzworth, Sherry Stranahan, Debra Cook, and Omaid Gavelek.

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





## VYC Seeks Local Representatives

Started in 2015 as a Mayor & Council initiative, the Valdosta Youth Council inspires local 7th-9th grade students to build leadership and civic responsibility, to gain a better understanding of municipal government, and to prepare themselves for a lifetime of public and community service.

Students who are enrolled in a public or private middle school located within the Valdosta city limits, have a minimum 2.5 grade point average and meet other requirements, are encouraged to apply for the VYC 2017-2018 program year.

Download a VYC application [here](#) or call 229-259-3548 for more information.

## City Provides First Step

Starting a business is exciting; however, it can also be challenging. The city's First Step program was designed to be one of the "first steps" in establishing a successful business by providing the information needed in one location--minimizing frustration and challenges.

The meetings are informal discussions that give potential developers a chance to meet with representatives from city departments such as Engineering, Fire, Inspections, Arbor Division, Planning/Zoning, Public Works, Utilities and outside agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Health Department.

First Step meetings are held every Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. and last approximately 45 minutes. Citizens must reserve a spot at the meeting in advance.

For more information call 229-259-3563 or [view](#) other programs offered by the city to help local businesses succeed.



## Award Ceremony Features Local Photos and Musicians

The public is invited to attend a community reception on Monday, July 17, from 5-7 p.m., located at the Turner Center for the Arts, as Mayor John Gayle awards the winners in the 9th annual Valdosta People's Choice Photo Contest.

The Johnson family trio, who was featured on the June 7 airing of Steve Harvey's "Little' Big Shots," will open the awards ceremony with the song they sang for their na-

tionwide debut. The event will celebrate the diverse talent within our community.

Citizens have until July 12 to vote for their favorites in five categories. All voting takes place at the Turner Center for the arts during their normal operating hours, and only one ballot per person is permitted.

The photos will remain on display at the center through Wednesday, July 26.

View the 2017 photo contest entries [here](#).

## APPLY NOW FOR Citizens Fire Academy

Citizens have the opportunity to go behind-the-scenes with the Valdosta Fire Department via the annual VFD Citizens Fire Academy. Since 2014, the program has educated citizens and the business community about the services provided by the ISO Class 1 Rated department.

The next annual Citizens Fire Academy will run Aug. 29 through Oct. 24. Participants are exposed to all aspects of the department's operations and witness demonstrations on search and rescue, extrication,

and fire prevention; participate in the Ride-Along Program, a live burn, high-angle rescue, and how firefighters' personal protective equipment works; visit the 911 Emergency Center and VFD Training Center; and all participants receive their CPR certifications.

Applications are available at [www.valdostacity.com/fire](http://www.valdostacity.com/fire) and may be submitted in person or online.

For more information, call 229-333-1835.



## Congratulations to the following winners of the 2017 Valdosta Historic Preservation Awards:

**Albert Slone**

Outstanding Achievement

**Keira Moritz-Johnson**

Outstanding Achievement

**Dr. Alex Alvarez and Joel Grimes**

Distinguished Merit

**Langdale Ford Motor Company**

Distinguished Merit

**Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce**

Distinguished Merit

**The Wesley Foundation**

Excellence in New Construction

**Bruce Green**

Harold M. Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award

Conserve

Water

This Summer

As part of continuing efforts to reduce stormwater runoff, here are a few simple ways to save money and water while on vacation this summer:

- Adjust sprinklers so they don't water paved surfaces.
- Use slow watering techniques such as drip irrigation or soaker hoses.
- Turn off automatic sprinklers before you leave. Think of all the water that would be wasted if it rained the entire time you were gone!

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

Seven Local

Board

Opportunities

Citizens who seek a rewarding public service role in the community are encouraged to apply for the seven positions currently vacant on two local boards. The following positions available are:

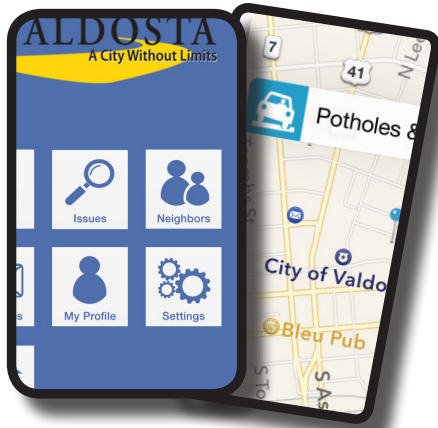
- Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments & Appeal: Five Appointments
- Valdosta-Lowndes Construction Board of Adjustments & Appeals: Two Appointments (Note: Applicants must have construction experience, and one of these appointments must be a general contractor.)

These volunteer positions are designed to give citizens a voice in their local government. Anyone who has been a resident of Lowndes County for at least six months prior to the nomination is eligible to apply.

The closing date for submitting the General Board Application and Code of Ethics form to the City Clerk is Wednesday, Aug. 2 at 5 p.m.

To obtain necessary forms, call 229-259-3500 or visit [here](#).





## Don't forget to CLICK 'N FIX

The Valdosta Click 'N Fix app makes it easier than ever before for citizens to report non-emergency issues to city staff. Since its creation in March 2016, several hundred incidents have been reported and successfully addressed through the app, which has proven to be an efficient and cost-effective tool in pinpointing and eliminating problems in the city.

The mobile app may be used for a variety of other commonly reported issues such as street maintenance, broken street lights, damaged trees, overgrown lots and others.

Once an issue is reported, the user receives an email message acknowledging that the service request has been received by the appropriate city staff. Citizens may opt to track their reported concerns, comment on the issue, and view and comment on issues submitted by other users.

Citizens should note that Valdosta Click 'N Fix should NOT be used for emergencies. For urgent matters that require immediate attention or a police response, call 9-1-1.

The Valdosta Click 'N Fix app is available at [www.valdostacity.com/report-a-concern](http://www.valdostacity.com/report-a-concern) and may also be downloaded from the Android and iPhone mobile app stores.

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



## Valdosta Blazes Trail

Valdosta City was honored on July 26, 2017 at the Georgia Municipal Association's Annual Convention for being a leader in Georgia in the implementation of Great Promise Partnership (GPP).

GPP is a public-private partnership that empowers and equips at-risk students to complete high school while gaining real-world job skills and experience, creating a path to personal success and the workforce of the future.

Pictured from left to right: Mark Barber, Assistant City Manager; Alvin Payton Jr., Valdosta Mayor Pro Tem; Dorothy Hubbard, GMA President and Albany Mayor; Vivian Miller-Cody, Councilwoman; John Gayle, Valdosta Mayor; Sandra Tooley, Councilwoman; Mike Beatty, GPP Executive Director; Larry Hanson, City Manager; Vanassa Flucas, Neighborhood Development Manager.



## VHS Students Graduate from GPP

The City of Valdosta recognized 12 Valdosta High School (VHS) seniors who graduated from the city's inaugural Great Promise Partnership (GPP) program, on May 17.

"It was a great experience, and I learned a lot. Among other things, I learned how to use various software programs, improved my time management and organization

skills, and learned how to work with other adults," said Raneka Frazier, who worked as an intern in the Valdosta Main Street and Public Information Offices.

Sixteen new students will participate in the GPP program for the 2017-18 academic year, along with four returning graduates.

## Main Street News:

### Main Street Hosts Restaurant Week



Don't miss out on the exciting tastes and sensations of Downtown Valdosta's Restaurant Week 2017, which will take place July 18-22 at The Patterson. Citizens can add flavor and fun to their summer by participating in the following events:

#### *Taste of Downtown:* July 17, 5-9 p.m.

Buying a \$20 wristband at The Patterson (101 N. Patterson St.) will get you a pour of a signature drink and a taste of a meal from each restaurant's prix fixe (fixed price) menu for the week. Live music from Naturally Southern will provide entertainment to those who explore the downtown culinary scene.

#### *Restaurant Week:* July 18-22, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Come out for lunch and dinner each day to discover the delicious eats downtown restaurants have to offer. No tickets required; just bring a healthy appetite! Ask for the Restaurant Week menu, and enjoy a three-course prix fixe meal.

Post your experience during Restaurant Week 2017 by using the hashtag #restaurantweekdvid on social media. For more information on this event, contact Main Street at 229-259-3577.



Valdosta Main Street would like to remind residents that Farm Days will not take place during the months of July and August due to the heat and lack of product.

During the fall, the market will reopen again from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturday, every month from Sept. 9 until Nov. 25.

The market is located in the 100 block of E. Valley Street, located behind the historic courthouse in downtown Valdosta.

EBT, credit and debit cards are accepted.

#### 2017 Market Days

Sept. 9

Sept. 23

Oct. 14

Oct. 28

Nov. 11

Nov. 25

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



## Art Walk

The First Friday event on Aug. 4 will feature live music, dining specials, shopping, as well as Art Walk.

Come Downtown and experience art in the most specialized, eclectic shops Valdosta has to offer.

From 5-8 p.m., participants can also experience wine and beer tasting at all participating Art Walk locations with a wristband that costs \$20. All proceeds will go toward downtown beautification projects.

The final Art Walk for 2017 will take place on Dec. 1, from 5-8 p.m. [Read more.](#)

### 100 Black Men BBQ

Downtown Valdosta has been the site of the 100 Black Men BBQ each August since 1995, and the event takes place once again on Saturday, Aug. 5, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Attendees at the cook-off can expect a family-oriented atmosphere, full of food, fun and laughter. Musical entertainment is also provided.

For more information, call 229-251-6134.



# 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 pet's watering pan daily.
- 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.
- Remind neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their property.
- The CDC also recommends repellents that contain the chemical Pircaridin, a chemical that has been proven to be effective in repelling mosquitoes, as well as repellents that contain oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Use larvicide tablets 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 Valdosta Public Works Department, located at 1017 Myrtle Street, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 229-259-3588. [Read more.](#)



# PROTECT YOUR HOME DURING HURRICANE SEASON

Hurricane season runs through June 1-Nov. 30. By being proactive, residents can protect themselves and their property this season.

The time to prepare is before the storm, followed by periodic maintenance to keep stormwater flowing off your property and into the stormwater system.

Property owners can endure the hurricane season by:

- Report clogged ditches and culverts.
- Clean out gutters and extending downspouts.
- Remove all yard items/debris from obstructing storm drains and ditches.

Visit [ready.ga.gov](http://ready.ga.gov) to learn more.

## 2016 Water Quality Report Available

Click on the graphic below to download the 2016 Water Quality Report:



### Providing Safe Water

During 2016, the City of Valdosta Utilities Department treated 3.9 billion gallons of water and provided safe, clean, high-quality water for all our customers. The purpose of this Water Quality Report is to address our customers' concern about where their water is obtained, how it is treated and how it compares to the standards set by regulatory agencies. Test results for water samples collected and analyzed are provided in the Water Quality Data Table, located on page 3. The Data Table provides information only for those tests that are required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and whose presence was detected in representative system samples. For example, the federal provision recommends that fluoride levels of water be 1.0 ppm (part per million) for dental health, and the Valdosta Water Treatment Plant adds fluoride to achieve the recommended level in about 100 gallons. However, EPA requires fluoride and requires that the concentration of fluoride in drinking water not exceed 4.0 ppm. The list of parameters and their concentrations in the table is not an indication of a problem unless a violation is noted. The city analyzes hundreds of samples for many parameters—some hourly, some daily, and others on a quarterly basis. These samples are collected throughout the system as part of quality control of the treatment process. Ground water will always contain trace amounts of dissolved inorganic or calcium, as well as iron and other elements. The city's finished water contains some sodium, phosphates, fluoride and chlorine that have been added to improve the water quality. The report also includes required health effects information regarding the use of water.

The city's Water Treatment Plant continues to receive recognition each year for its efforts to provide safe water to its customers and has received numerous Excellence in Operations Awards from the US EPA, the Georgia Environmental Protection Department and the Georgia Association of Water Professionals (GAWP). In 2011, it received the Water Treatment Plant of the Year Award by the GAWP recognizing this facility as the best in its category. Furthermore, the city's water and sewer rates remain lower than more than 100 other systems of all sizes in Georgia, despite the cost of the state-of-the-art treatment facility.

In 2016, the department continued to upgrade and improve its critical water facilities and infrastructure by implementing specific strategies to expand its wellfield system and improve its treatment and distribution systems. Construction was completed to construct two additional raw water wells to the existing wellfield. These two new production wells have increased available capacity for the next several years. Likewise, further redundancy was added to the disinfection process with the installation of a new backup hypochlorite feed system.

In addition to plant tours, city staff often provides speakers and public education programs to the community concerning water and other environmental subjects. For more information concerning your water supply or this report, call 229-259-3582.