

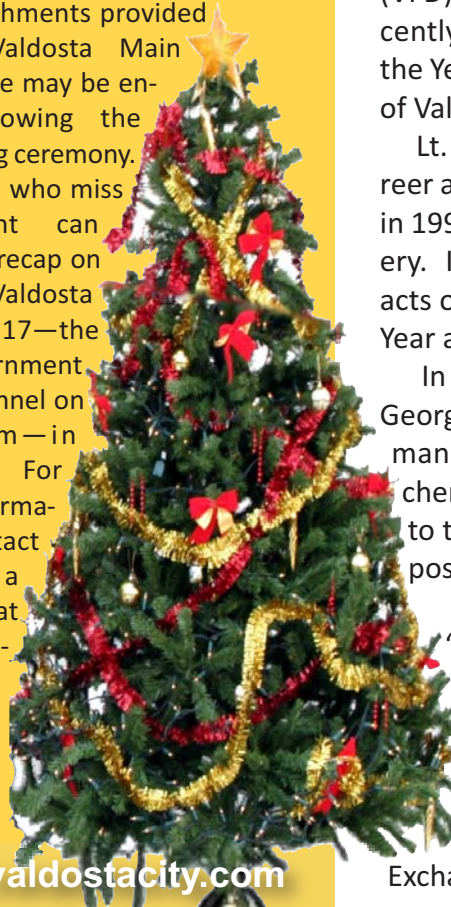
Tree Lighting Kicks Off Holiday Season in City

Mayor John Gayle invites citizens to officially kick off the holiday season in Valdosta at the annual Christmas Tree Lighting, on Wednesday, Dec. 4, at 5:30 p.m. Attendees will enjoy a special visit from Santa Claus, as he assists with the lighting of the 30-ft tree on the front lawn of City Hall, at 216 E. Central Avenue.

This year's event will again feature the children from the Moody Air Force Base Youth Programs, who will provide entertainment with the singing of some holiday favorites. Spouses of deployed military personnel are invited to attend as the mayor's personal guests, and event participants may sign greeting cards at the event that will be mailed to deployed military personnel in time for the Christmas holiday.

Hot cocoa, hot apple cider and other light refreshments provided by the Valdosta Main Street office may be enjoyed following the tree lighting ceremony.

Citizens who miss this event can watch the recap on Metro Valdosta Channel 17—the city's government access channel on Mediacom—in December. For more information, contact Sementha Mathews at (229) 259-3548.



www.valdostacity.com

City Receives \$36.7 Million GEFA Loan To Move Forward with Force Main Project

The City of Valdosta was recently awarded a \$36.7 million Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). The city will use the low-interest loan to finance the construction of two major pump stations, two minor pump stations, a 6-mile 32-inch and 40-inch force main, a headworks structure with grit removal and bar screens, and a 6-million gallon equalization basin. Wastewater will be gravity fed to the existing site of the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) for final treatment and discharged utilizing the existing plant outfall, until the relocation of the plant is completed in November 2015. For more information, call the Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548.

Lt. Chad Roe: Firefighter of the Year

Valdosta Fire Department (VFD) Lt. Chad Roe was recently named Firefighter of the Year by the Exchange Club of Valdosta.

Lt. Roe, who started his career as a firefighter at the VFD in 1999, is known for his bravery. In 2013, Lt. Roe has particularly stood out among his peers with several acts of courage, which made him the ideal candidate for the Firefighter of the Year award.

In one recent incident, Lt. Roe worked tirelessly around the clock with the Georgia Search and Rescue (GSAR) Task Force 2 team in an attempt to save a man who was buried under his own well in Douglas, Georgia. In a recent chemical fire at PermaFix, in Valdosta, Lt. Roe volunteered to turn off the gas to the facility—an extremely dangerous but critical assignment that made it possible for firefighters to continue the task of putting out the large fire.

According to Lt. Roe's supervisor, VFD Battalion Chief Frank McMillan, "The VFD can always count on Lt. Chad Roe for the most dangerous assignments and rescues. He always sets a positive example for the other firefighters on his shift and in his department. He deserves the recognition and honor of being named Firefighter of the Year."

The City of Valdosta applauds Lt. Roe for his acts of bravery, for his dedication to the Valdosta Fire Department, and for being recognized by the Exchange Club of Valdosta as the 2013 Firefighter of the Year for Valdosta.



Downtown Valdosta Unveils 21st Edition Christmas Ornament



The Valdosta Main Street office has released its 21st edition in the series of the Downtown Valdosta Christmas ornaments. The 2013 ornament is green and features the Dosta Playhouse, home of the Theatre Guild Valdosta located at 122 N. Ashley Street. The ornament commemorates the 25th Anniversary Season for the Theatre Guild. Ryan Swains, Publicity Chair for the Theatre Guild, drew the rendition of the building that appears on this year's ornament.

Ornaments from most previous years are also available for purchase while supplies last. Ornaments from years

2009 through 2013 cost \$10 each, and all other ornaments cost \$6 each.

The Christmas ornaments may be purchased at the Valdosta Main Street Office, located on the first floor of the Valdosta City Hall Annex, at 300 N. Lee Street. Contact the Valdosta Main Street office at (229) 259-3577.

Bring One for the Chipper

The City of Valdosta and Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful will again sponsor this year's "Bring one for the Chipper" Christmas tree recycling event designed to help citizens dispose of their trees in a productive and environmentally friendly way. Holiday trees will be recycled by chipping, which has a variety of benefits for our community and environment.

Chipping trees for mulch also helps our local government comply with Georgia's yard trimmings ban which prohibits the disposal of yard trimmings in municipal solid waste landfills.

Residents can drop trees off at any of these three locations from Dec. 26, 2013 through Jan. 4, 2014: The Home Depot, at 1825 Norman Drive; Wal-Mart Super Center, at 3274 Inner Perimeter Road; and Mathis Auditorium, at 2300 N. Ashley Street.

Trees may be dropped off at any of these sites beginning on Thursday, Dec. 26; however, citizens who drop their trees off on Saturday, Jan. 4, from 9 a.m.—2 p.m., at the above sites will receive a free tree seedling while supplies last.

Call KLVB at (229) 671-3698 for more details.



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
 Deidra White.....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

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.



Public Safety Personnel Provide Some with Happier Holidays

The Valdosta Police Department (VPD) and the Valdosta Fire Department (VFD) are collecting donations for their annual Shop with a Cop and Shop with a Firefighter programs. The purpose of these programs is to brighten the holiday season for Valdosta children and their families by providing selected youth with some holiday shopping money.

- The Shop with a Firefighter program will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m., at the Wal-Mart Supercenter located at 340 Norman Drive.
- The Shop with a Cop program will take place on Monday, Dec. 16, at 7 p.m., at the Wal-Mart Supercenter located at 3274 Inner Perimeter Road.

These programs rely solely on monetary donations. Donations can be made payable to the City of Valdosta Shop with a Cop or Shop with a Firefighter program and may be dropped off at either the Valdosta Police Department (500 N. Toombs Street) or the Valdosta Fire Department (106 S. Oak Street).

These programs rely on monetary donations. Children participants must live and attend school in the City of Valdosta and be recommended by a police officer, firefighter, teacher or school principal. Children recommended for the Shop with a Firefighter program must also be a victim of a home fire.

Contact VPD Officer Vernotis Williams at (229) 293-3099 or VFD Capt. John Wisenbaker at (229) 333-1835 for more information or to donate.

Sanitation Schedule for Upcoming Holidays

The City of Valdosta will be closed for the Christmas and New Year's Day holidays.

The Sanitation Division will NOT collect residential garbage, recyclables or yard waste on Wednesday, Dec. 25 or Wednesday, Jan. 1. Citizens who normally have their sanitation collected on Wednesdays should place their garbage, recyclables and yard waste at the curbside by 5 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 26 and Thursday, Jan. 2 for both Wednesday and Thursday pick ups.

Call (229) 259-3590 for more information.



Stormwater Tip



Holiday dinners stick to your ribs...and your pipes

Consider your environment as you prepare for all your holiday meals. Many of the foods today have some form of fat, oil, or grease (FOG) in them that can impact both the sanitary sewer and stormwater systems if not disposed of correctly. Here are a few tips on how to safely dispose of FOGs:

- Never pour fat, oil or grease down the drain.
- Allow the oil to cool completely.
- Decide whether the oil needs to be discarded or recycled. Oil used for deep-frying can usually be reused several times.
- To properly discard oil, carefully place it into a strong sealable container, and then place it in the trash. Save sealable plastic jars or old coffee cans for disposing the old grease in the future.

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

Fun Downtown Annual Holiday Events

Saturday, December 7

Holiday Open House

Stroll through the unique shops and restaurants downtown and visit a variety of arts and crafts street vendors, on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A variety of children's activities, entertainment and visits with Santa will also take place on the historic Lowndes County Courthouse front lawn. In addition to the variety of restaurants and specialty shops open all day, activities going on during the Holiday Open House are as follows:

- Breakfast with Santa at the Bleu Cafe will take place at 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids. Call Bleu Café at (229) 244-2248 for reservations.
- A Kids Play area complete with bounce houses and a "snow" zone.
- Musical entertainment.
- Cruise in by the South Georgia Classic Car Club, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.
- Pet adoptions on the Courthouse Lawn.
- First Presbyterian Church will host a Bazaar and Bake Sale.
- The Camellia Show at First United Methodist Church will be open to the public, from 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.
- Visits and photo opportunities with Santa will begin at 11 a.m. on the front lawn of the historic Lowndes County Courthouse.
- Downtown Merchants will be participating in a Window Decorating Contest. Winners will be selected and announced during the Christmas parade.



Street Closures

Some streets will be closed downtown during the celebration. Central Avenue and Valley Street, between N. Patterson and Ashley Streets, will be closed from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. N. Patterson Street, beginning at Woodrow Wilson Drive through Hill Avenue, will be closed during the 5K race and the Christmas parade.

The city urges all motorists and pedestrians to be extra cautious during the busy festivities. The city offers the following parking options for citizens to consider:

- Toombs Street parking lot has several dozen parking spaces.
- Ample parking is available in the McKey Street parking lot, located on E. Central Avenue, across from the Valdosta City Hall.
- Public parking lots are also available on Savannah Avenue, between Lee and N. Oak Streets.
- Following the Greater Valdosta Christmas Parade, the reopening of N. Patterson Street will once again open up these street parking options to downtown patrons.

WinterFest 5K

Valdosta Main Street and A Course/Line are hosting the WinterFest 5k Fun Run/Walk, beginning at 4:30 p.m., prior to the Christmas Parade. The race route will begin at the Winn Dixie parking lot, at 3200 N. Ashley Street, proceed down N. Patterson Street, and will finish in Downtown Valdosta in front of Bennie's Alley. To register, call (229) 219-0010, or visit www.runningintheusa.com to download a race application.

Christmas Parade

The Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade—one of Valdosta's most popular holiday traditions—will begin at 5 p.m., at Woodrow Wilson Drive, proceed down N. Patterson Street, and end at the Bank of America Building. This year's parade theme is "Inside Santa's Workshop." Creative holiday floats will be judged on overall appearance, special effects, creativity, workmanship and use of the theme.

Citizens Register for 5th Annual Government 101

Applications are now being accepted for the 5th annual Government 101 Citizens Orientation Program, which begins April 7, 2014. The program will meet on Mondays, from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., for six weeks, and is designed to give Valdostans age 21 and older a deeper understanding and appreciation of their local government. 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 14, 2014 deadline and pass the required background checks. If more than 25 people apply, the city will give preference to the applications on a first-come, first-served-basis. **You MUST be a City of Valdosta resident in order to apply.**

Government 101 Citizens Orientation is an initiative of the Mayor and City Council. Citizens can receive more information at www.valdostacity.com or by calling (229) 259-3522.



The City of Valdosta Government 101 Citizen Orientation Program

Registration Form

Applicants for the Government 101 Citizen Orientation Program must be at least 21 years of age, be a legal resident of the United States and a resident of the City of Valdosta. 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 Citizen Orientation Program?

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

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

Metro Valdosta 17 Publications Radio
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 Involvement Department. By signing these forms, I give the City of 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 14, 2014

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

Vehicle Break In: Entering Auto to Commit Theft

The Valdosta Police Department (VPD) receives reports of increased vehicle break-ins each year around the Christmas holidays. The reports generally reflect citizens leaving their vehicle doors unlocked and high-value items (to include recently purchased gifts) in their vehicles, visible from outside their vehicle.

Here are some basic tips to help prevent vehicle owners/operators from becoming a victim of a vehicle break-in:

- Make sure all vehicle doors are locked when left unattended.
- Make sure you leave no high-value items to include jewelry and money in vehicles unattended.
- Make sure you take your purses, handbags, and wallets with you and do not leave inside your vehicle.
- If you must leave belongings inside a parked vehicle, put them in a location like a trunk where they are out-of-view from outside the vehicle.

The Valdosta Police Department wants to remind citizens that crime prevention is a two-way street between law enforcement and the community. It is vital that citizens help law enforcement by providing information that will help solve crimes and that will prevent planned criminal activity. Those who are willing to provide these tips have the option to remain anonymous. When providing information about criminal activity, please be as detailed as possible. Give as much information about the crime, the people involved, the location, the time the crime occurred and the date and any other information that you can provide.

Citizens may report criminal activity by calling 911, the Bureau of Investigative Services at (229) 293-3145, or the Valdosta Police Crime Tip Line at 293-3091. Crime tips may also be shared via email at crimetips@valdostacity.com or by visiting the Valdosta Police Department webpage at www.valdostacity.com.

The Valdosta Police Department wishes you a safe and happy holiday season.



Crime Tip Line
(229) 293-3091

Save the Date: Bird Supper 2014



Tickets will go on sale on Dec. 1 for the 2014 Lowndes County Bird Supper. The Bird Supper has been bringing together hundreds of state officials and local business, professional and government personnel for a dinner of quail and important conversation for over five decades. The 2014 event will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 12, at the Georgia Railroad Depot, in Atlanta, beginning at 5 p.m.

The event, sponsored by the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County, allows local professionals the opportunity to have an impact on the legislative agenda with face-to-face conversations with those who will be making some very important decisions impacting our local area and entire state.

Tickets may be purchased for \$50 each at Valdosta City Hall or at the Lowndes County Judicial Building, located at 327 N. Ashley Street, at the Occupational Tax Window on the first floor. Don't miss this opportunity to meet on an informal basis with state leadership and to have a voice on issues affecting our area.

For more information about tickets or the event, 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.

Stay Tuned In

Stay involved with your local government by tuning into Metro Channel 17 on Mediacom, 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.

