

# City Beat



## Valdosta Christmas Tree Lighting, Dec. 5

Light Equipment Operator Joey Jasinski puts the star atop the Christmas Tree that adorns the Valdosta City Hall front lawn, at 216 E. Central Avenue, where the Christmas Tree Lighting will take place on Friday, Dec. 5, at 5:30 p.m. Mayor John Gayle and Valdosta First Lady Peggy Gayle invite the community to kick off the holiday season with a tribute to our local military families, as Moody youth provide the entertainment. Santa Claus will be present to take requests, and the the Main Street office will provide hot cocoa and cookies. Following the event, attendees are encouraged to stay downtown for the regularly scheduled First Friday festivities.

## 3 Ways to Make the Holidays Happier for Others This Season

The City of Valdosta is doing its part to make this holiday season special for selected participants of three city programs: the Shop with a Cop Program, the Shop with a Firefighter Program and the Mayor's special visit to the Parkwood Developmental Center.

**Shop with a Cop and Shop with a Firefighter Programs.** 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.

These programs rely solely on monetary donations. Donations can be made payable by check to the Valdosta Shop with a Cop Program or the Valdosta 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).

Recipients of these programs are children who live and attend school in the City of Valdosta and are recommended by a police officer, firefighter, teacher or school

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## SHOP SMALL

### On Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday is Nov. 29. Since 2010, it has been a day dedicated to showcasing and supporting local small businesses throughout the country.

The Valdosta Main Street office encourages citizens to observe the importance of supporting our locally-owned businesses with our wallets. These businesses give our downtown area a distinct personality that makes shopping and visiting here a unique and special experience. Throughout the city limits, Valdosta also has a variety of businesses that provide all our shopping needs. Remember, SHOP SMALL on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 29. Shop local!





## Downtown Valdosta Unveils 22nd Edition Christmas Ornament

The Valdosta Main Street office has released its 22nd edition in the series of the Downtown Valdosta Christmas Ornaments, which makes the perfect holiday gift for that special someone. The pearlescent white ornament was designed by the Main Street staff and features the Cranford Building located at 110-114 West Hill Avenue.

Ornaments from most previous years are also available for purchase while supplies last. Ornaments from years 2010 through 2014 cost \$10 each, and all other ornaments cost \$6 each.

Citizens may purchase these collectibles at the Main Street office, located on the first floor of the Valdosta City Hall Annex, at 300 N. Lee Street. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. For more information, call (229) 259-3577.

### STORMWATER TIP

#### Don't be a Turkey This Thanksgiving!

The Thanksgiving holiday is just around the corner, and the city's Stormwater Division wants to remind citizens that practices in the kitchen may have an environmental impact on our local rivers and streams.

Consider our 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



### Holiday Sanitation Schedule

The City of Valdosta will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 27, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. The Sanitation Division will collect residential garbage only on Thanksgiving Day. Recyclables and yard waste for Thursday and Friday routes will both be collected on Friday, Nov. 28.

Residential garbage, recyclables or yard waste will NOT be collected on Dec. 25 or Jan. 1 for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Citizens who normally have their sanitation collected on Thursdays should place their garbage, recyclables and yard waste at the curbside by 5 a.m. on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 for both Thursday and Friday pickups.

Call the Public Works Department at (229) 259-3590 for more information or visit the Public Works page at [www.valdostacity.com](http://www.valdostacity.com).



## Making the Holidays Happier

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principal. Contact VPD Officer Vernotis Williams at (229) 293-3099 or VFD Sgt. Chris Staples at (229) 333-1835 for more information or to donate.

**Mayor's Visit to Parkwood Developmental Center.** Mayor John Gayle and members of the Valdosta Fire Department are collecting gifts for 110 patients with developmental disabilities and behavioral health needs who reside at the Parkwood Developmental Center. These gifts will be delivered on Monday, Dec. 22, at 10 a.m., in time for the Christmas holiday.

Local businesses, civic organizations, churches, schools, scout troops, and other interested groups or individuals are encouraged to help

with the collection of items such as clothing for men and women, hair dryers, small radios and clock radios, matchbox cars and trucks, small musical instruments, and toiletries such as solid deodorant, body wash, body spray and cologne/perfume.

Monetary donations are also welcomed and will be used to purchase uncollected items on the list. Unwrapped donations and checks made payable to the Valdosta Fire Department may be accepted through Monday, Dec. 22, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., at the Fire Department's Administrative Office, located at 106 S Oak Street.

For more information, contact VFD Lt. Dereck Willis at (229) 333-1835.



### A New Look on Metro 17

In October, Michael Hokanson joined the City of Valdosta as the Media Coordinator for Metro Valdosta 17—the city's government access channel on Mediacom. In coordination with the city's Public Information Office, Hokanson is responsible for the broadcast of quality and timely media productions and for all technical operations of the channel.

Since it was established in 2003, Metro Valdosta 17 has provided 24/7 news and information about city government and the services it provides to citizens, supplementing other information vehicles—website, publications, programs and events, etc.—offered by the city's Public Information Division.

Call (229) 671-3615 for more information, or tune into Metro Valdosta 17 on Mediacom Channel 17--and now also on demand at [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com).



### VFD Participates in Hungry at Home Charity Event

The VFD participated in the Stocked Cart Race, sponsored by the Valdosta-Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority, on Nov. 15. Participating teams decorated shopping carts filled with donated food, then raced each other. All proceeds benefited "Hungry at Home." The VFD entered two carts in the race, one of which won the award for best decorated cart (third cart above). Kudos to the graduates of the 2015 Citizens Fire Academy, who also entered a cart for the event (middle cart in photo above).

## “Tip Line” Helps Solve Crimes



crime tips that have helped solve past and present crimes and that may also help prevent future criminal activity. It is important to remember that crime prevention is a two-way street between law enforcement and the community.

The Valdosta Police Department Investigative Bureau welcomes the assistance from the general public in keeping the community safe during the holidays. Citizens have played a vital role in crime prevention by providing

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, such as the people involved, the location, the time and date that the crime occurred, as well as any other information to effectively help solve the crime.

To report criminal activity, call the VPD “Tip Line” at (229) 293-3091 or email crime tips to [crimetips@valdostacity.com](mailto:crimetips@valdostacity.com).

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

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## Holiday Safety Tips from the VFD

The Valdosta Fire Department wants citizens to be aware of common safety hazards that the holiday season can bring. Holiday cooking is one of the leading safety concerns in residential homes during this time of year. When it comes to being safe in the kitchen, here’s what the VFD has to say.

- **Have working smoke detectors in or near the kitchen. Test them!**
- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop, so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home when cooking your turkey and check on it frequently.
- Keep children at least 3-feet away from the stove, as the steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Be sure electric cords are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- Keep matches and utility lighters up high and out of the reach of children —preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Remember to set timers when cooking multiple items at once.



If you choose to use a turkey fryer this holiday season, here are some safety tips you should follow:

- Be mindful that hot oil may splash or spill during the cooking, resulting in serious injury.
- Turkeys must be completely thawed before being placed into the fryer. A partially-thawed turkey will cause the oil to splatter which could result in serious burns.
- Fryers use a lot of oil--about five gallons. Consider the size and weight of the turkey and use extreme caution when placing and removing the turkey from the fryer to be sure it is not dropped back into the fryer, splattering the oil on those nearby.

For more information regarding these and any other holiday safety tips, please call the VFD at (229) 333-1835, or visit [www.valdostacity.com/fire](http://www.valdostacity.com/fire). The Valdosta Fire Department wishes you a fire-free holiday season.



# Annual Holiday Events in Downtown Valdosta

## Saturday, December 6

### Holiday Open House

Citizens are invited to stroll through the unique shops, restaurants, arts & crafts booths at the Holiday Open House on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A variety of activities are listed below that include something for people of all ages:

- Breakfast with Santa at the Bleu Café will take place at 8:30, 9:45 and 11 a.m. The cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids. Call (229) 244-2248 for reservations.
- Visits and photo opportunities with Santa will begin at 11 a.m. on the front lawn of the historic Lowndes County Courthouse.
- Stuff Your Stocking (children's activity) when you visit downtown merchants.
- Bounce houses and a "Snow" Zone provide fun for kids.
- Musical entertainment will be provided.
- Cruise in by the South Georgia Classic Car Club from 1-3 p.m.
- Pet adoptions will be available on the courthouse lawn
- First Presbyterian Church will host a Bazaar and Bake Sale. Call (229) 242-8376 for more information.
- The Camellia Show at First United Methodist Church will be open to the public from 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. Call (229) 242-6416 for more information.



### Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade

The Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade—one of Valdosta's most popular holiday traditions—will begin at 5 p.m. following the Holiday Open House event.

The parade will start at Woodrow Wilson Drive, proceed down N. Patterson Street, and end at the Bank of America Building. This year's parade theme is "Candy Canes and Christmas Carols," and participating floats will be judged on appearance, special effects, creativity, workmanship and their overall use of the theme.

### Street Closures

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

The city urges all motorists and pedestrians to be extra cautious during the busy festivities and offers the following event 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.

**For more information on any of these activities, call (229) 259-3577 or visit [www.valdostamainstreet.com](http://www.valdostamainstreet.com).**

## Save the Date: Bird Supper Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2015

For over five decades, the Lowndes County 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. The 2015 Bird Supper is scheduled for Wed., Jan 28, at the Georgia Railroad Depot, in Atlanta, at 5 p.m.



VSU Faculty Jazz Ensemble performs for Bird Supper guests.

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

Tickets may be purchased for \$50 each on the first floor of the Lowndes County Judicial Building or at Valdosta City Hall. Don't miss this opportunity to meet on an informal basis with top 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. You may also send your request to [birdsupper@lowndescounty.com](mailto:birdsupper@lowndescounty.com).

## Stay Informed With E-News

If you'd like to know what's going on in the city each week, it's as easy as signing up for the weekly E-News blasts. The Public Information Office sends these E-news blasts out each Monday to keep citizens informed of city events, programs, meetings and services.

Citizens are invited to visit the city website at [www.valdostacity.com](http://www.valdostacity.com) to sign up for this free service. While there, take a moment to view information about the various departments, minutes from city council meetings, public safety tips, and more.

Citizens may also follow us conveniently on Twitter @CityofValdosta.

Call the Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548 for more information.

## Bring One for the Chipper

The City of Valdosta and Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB) will again host this year's "Bring one for the Chipper" event—a Christmas tree recycling event designed to help citizens dispose of their used trees in an environmentally friendly manner. Holiday trees will be recycled by chipping, a process that has a variety of benefits for our community. 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, 2014 through Jan. 10, 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. 10, from 9 a.m.—2 p.m. at any of the above sites will receive a free tree seedling (while supplies last). Call KLVB at (229) 671-3698 for more information.