

City Beat

City Wraps Up 150th Celebration

The City of Valdosta has been celebrating its 150th year throughout 2010, although the actual sesquicentennial anniversary takes place on Dec. 7. Members of the Valdosta Sesquicentennial Planning



Committee have successfully planned monthly events and activities that have educated, informed and entertained citizens of all ages. The side bar to the right lists the events for the remainder of the year.

The City of Valdosta thanks the following committee members for their commitment in making this a wonderful 150th celebration: Myrna Ballard, Steve Barnes, Donald Davis, Paige Dukes, Nikki Forman, Emily Foster, Mary Gooding, Joanne Griner, Kay Harris, Ellen Hill, Tyra Howard, Sementa Mathews, Christina Moore, Cheryl Oliver, Jennifer Steedley, Jeff Stubbs and Lu Williams.

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

Dec. 3-5: The Valdosta Symphony Orchestra, in conjunction with Dance Arts Inc. and Artistic Director Linda C. Chase, will produce the first ever “live” version of the Nutcracker in Valdosta in celebration of the city’s 150th. All four performances will take place at Mathis Auditorium: Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 4 at 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Dec. 5 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets cost \$10 each. Call (229) 333-2150 for more information.

Dec. 4: The Downtown Holiday Open House, the Winterfest 5K Run/Walk, and the Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade will provide an entire day of holiday celebration. See page 6 for details or call (229) 259-3577 for more information.

Dec. 5: A Historic Valdosta Tour, the last in a series of tours that have taken place throughout the year, will begin at the Lowndes County Museum (at 305 W. Central Avenue) at 2 p.m. and will feature a visit inside the Crescent. Call the Rainwater Conference Center for information at (229) 245-0513.

Dec. 7: Happy Birthday Valdosta! Citizens are invited to an Open House from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Valdosta City Hall (at 216 E. Central Avenue) for cake, punch and an educational slide show to celebrate 150 years since legislation first chartered Valdosta as a town.

City Assists Local Homeowners with \$306K Grant

The City of Valdosta recently received a \$306,000 grant for homeowner rehabilitation from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)—part of over \$5.1 million in grants to local communities and nonprofit organizations under the state’s FY 2011 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP). The grant is also part of the \$16.8 million in grant funding that the city has received over the past three years for community improvements.

The city’s CHIP program will use the funds to continue the current program and to provide 24 income-eligible, owner-occupied households within the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA) with rehabilitation/reconstruction assistance. The city is pleased to once again receive the support from DCA through these CHIP funds to continue its focus on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing owner-occupied homes with the city’s DRA. Valdosta has an outstanding track record of securing and administering these funding resources in support of our state and national award winning housing initiatives.

Since the city began receiving CHIP funding in 1998, the program has assisted 158 families with funding to purchase their first homes or complete much-needed home

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Sanitation Schedule for the Holiday Season



The City of Valdosta will be closed for the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s holidays.

The Sanitation Division will collect **residential garbage only** on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 25. Citizens should place their green rollouts at the curbside by 6 a.m. on this day to ensure their garbage is collected. Recyclables and yard waste for Thursday and Friday routes will resume on Friday, Nov. 26.

The Sanitation Division will **NOT** collect residential garbage, recyclables or yard waste on Friday, Dec. 24 or Friday, Dec. 31. Citizens who normally have their sanitation collection scheduled for Friday should place their garbage, recyclables and yard waste at the curbside by 6 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 23 and Thursday, Dec. 30 for both Thursday and Friday pick up.

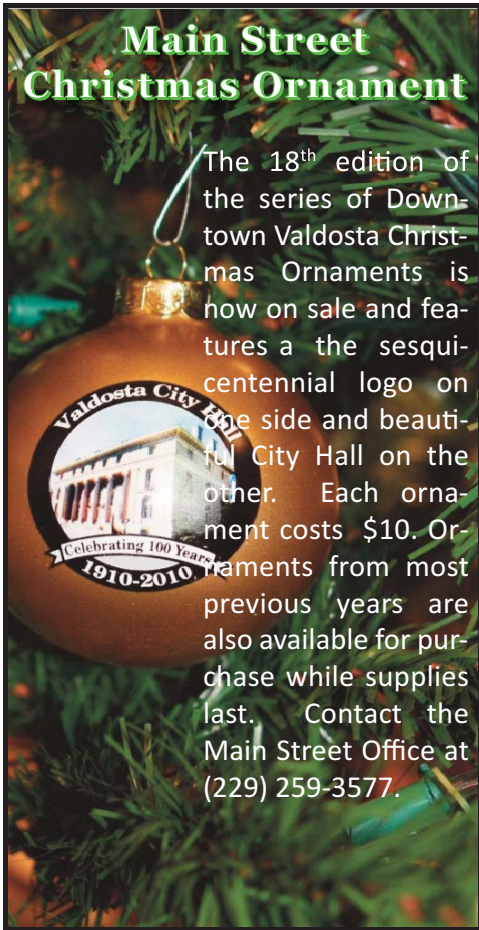
Call (229) 259-3590 for more information.

The City of Valdosta wishes all citizens a safe and Happy Holiday



Main Street Christmas Ornament

The 18th edition of the series of Downtown Valdosta Christmas Ornaments is now on sale and features a the sesquicentennial logo on one side and beautiful City Hall on the other. Each ornament costs \$10. Ornaments from most previous years are also available for purchase while supplies last. Contact the Main Street Office at (229) 259-3577.



Bringing News to You



Metro Valdosta 17 on the Mediacom dial has been a voice for the City of Valdosta since 2003, reporting 24/7 on local city government and the services it provides to citizens. Several programming improvements made recently seek to expose citizens to various government issues and relevant information to engage citizens in their community.

A new program added to the lineup, called *Bid Opportunities*, runs at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily and features opportunities available for area businesses to compete for city contracts. Viewers can expect updates to *Bid Opportunities* every Monday. Several other new segments have been added to Metro Valdosta 17—such as local weather updates, news, interesting trivia, and sports—which run randomly throughout the day for the viewers' enjoyment.

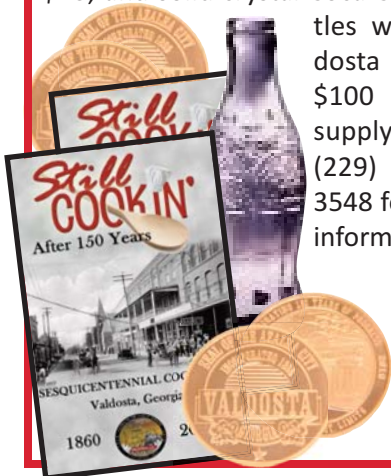
Existing programs have also had a facelift. The *Community Calendar*, which runs daily, attractively lists quick bits of information about services and events within the city. *City Focus*, a news magazine which runs several times daily, also features creative and more indepth news stories.

Haven't tuned in for a while? Why not take a look at the educational and interesting lineup of programs? Simply visit www.valdostacity.com, then click on the Metro 17 logo at the bottom of the screen. For more information or to provide a news tip, contact Metro 17 Media Coordinator Nikki Forman at (229) 671-3615 or at nforman@valdostacity.com.

Sesquicentennial Keepsakes

Make Great Holiday Gifts

Need a solution for your hard-to-shop friends or family members? Celebrate the City of Valdosta's 150th and the spirit of giving at the same time! Commemorative items available are: Sesquicentennial coins for \$10; Still Cookin' After 150 Years cookbooks for \$10; and solid crystal Coca Cola bottles with Valdosta seal for \$100 (limited supply). Call (229) 259-3548 for more information.



Make a Difference All Year Long

The City of Valdosta, in partnership with Keep Lowndes Valdosta Beautiful, hosts several clean up events each year to help beautify our city. In 2010, over 20 tons of debris was removed from our city streets and neighborhoods—which includes the 8,660 pounds of trash picked up by area volunteers at the Oct. 23 Make a Difference Day.

However, citizens do not have to wait for a scheduled event to clean up their neighborhoods and have a positive impact on the environment and community. To host a neighborhood clean up, simply call the city's Public Works Department and request to have a roll off container delivered to your neighborhood event for free. City crews will pick up the filled container when your clean up event is complete and will properly dispose of the garbage at no cost.

For more information, call the Public Works Department at (229) 259- 3590.

GRANT, Continued from page 1

repairs to make their homes decent, safe and sanitary. Inclusive of the recent awarded grant, the city has received nearly \$2.8 million to date in CHIP funding for these housing improvements.

In 2001, the city was designated by Habitat for Humanity International as a 21st Century Challenge Community and has set the year 2020 as the goal for eliminating all substandard housing within the city limits. CHIP funding, along with our Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement funding, will continue to be instrumental in helping the city achieve this goal.

For more information on housing improvements in the City of Valdosta, contact the Neighborhood Development Division at (229) 671-3617.

Council Wrap Up

The Valdosta City Council approved a number of ordinances and resolutions, bids and contracts, and local funding requests at recent Council meetings, such as the:

- Establishment of the 2010 Tax Millage Rate at 4.112 mils;
- Lease agreement with the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority for a two-acre tract of land located at the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant;
- New Permit Fee Schedule for the City of Valdosta;
- Urban Redevelopment Agency Policies and Procedures;
- Memorandum of Understanding with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for the Main Street Program;
- Resolution to file an application for grant funds with the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to fund forensic improvements in the Valdosta Regional Crime Lab;
- Resolution amending the Valdosta Economic Development Commission;
- Agreement with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission for Mobile Reporting Software for the Police Department;
- Request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to accept and execute the Federal Aviation Administration's Grant Agreement for airfield drainage improvements at the Airport;
- Amendments to the Land Development Regulations (LDR);
- Primary Care Clinic for city employees and their family members;
- Contract services to design the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant pump station and force main routing;
- Repairs at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant;
- Bids for solar powered recycling bins for the Public Works Department;
- Bids for Phase 1A of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor and Streetscape Project;
- Right-of-way acquisitions for the Tucker Road Bridge Project; and
- Georgia DOT Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant Program street resurfacing list.

Meeting agendas and minutes are available at valdostacity.com.



Don't FOG Up the Holidays

The holidays are here so remember 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. 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 of old grease in the future.

Remember, only rain goes down the storm drain. For information on how to help prevent pollution, contact the Utilities Department at (229) 259-3592.

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

www.ValdostaCity.com Top City Website

Valdostacity.com has been recognized as a 2010 Top Government Website Award recipient by online encyclopedia and reference resource Juggle.com for its e-government and communication initiatives. The City of Valdosta's website is one of nine municipal websites in Georgia recognized for a variety of site features and functionalities, including usability, timely content, access to online government services and technological innovation.

As an award recipient, Valdosta received a feature page on Juggle.com, located at <http://www.juggle.com/valdosta-georgia-top-city-government-website>. Other featured Georgia cities are Albany, Alpharetta, East Point, Griffin, Marietta, Peachtree City, Savannah and Smyrna.

For more information, contact the Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548 or sign up for E-News at www.valdostacity.com/publicinformation.

Citizens Register for Government 101

Applications are now being accepted for the second annual Government 101 Citizens Orientation Program, which begins April 4, 2011. The program will meet on Mondays, from 6 – 8 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 Feb. 18, 2011 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.

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 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 Assistant to the City Manager's office located on the second floor of the City Hall Annex, 300 N. Lee Street. 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: _____
E-mail: _____ Phone: _____
Occupation: _____

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 Other _____

Are you a City of Valdosta resident? Yes / No

By signing this form 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: February 18, 2011

Return this form to: Assistant to the City Manager's Office, City Hall Annex, 300 N. Lee Street, Valdosta, GA 31603.

City Briefs

Free Tax-Preparation Services

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) provides free tax-preparation services for qualifying individuals and/or households with incomes of less than \$49,000. The VITA site in Valdosta opens January 15 through April 15, 2011.

The program is also looking for volunteers to assist with preparing and filing tax returns or as a site greeter.

For more information and for a list of the items citizens should bring to their visits with VITA, contact JaTaryia Thomas with Georgia Legal Services Program at (229) 333-5232 or at jthomas.valdosta@glsp.org.

Mayor's Motorcade

For 52 years, cities across Georgia have brought the joy of the holiday season to patients at seven regional mental health and retardation hospitals through the Mayor's Christmas Motorcade. The City of Valdosta will once again participate by delivering locally donated items—such as board games, music, stationery, movies, toiletries, etc.—to the Southwestern State Hospital on Thursday, Dec. 9., at 10 a.m.

The Mayor's Motorcade program relies heavily on donated gifts for the patients, many who would not receive gifts or be recognized without the Mayors' Christmas Motorcade. Civic organ-

izations, businesses, churches, schools, scout troops, and individual citizens are encouraged to help with the collection of these gifts. For more information on how to participate or for a complete list of gift ideas, please contact Capt. John Wisenbaker at the Valdosta Fire Department, at (229) 333-1835.

Home Owners Education

Make your homeowner dreams come true with a variety of educational classes offered in December. The following Financial and Homeownership Skills classes are free and open to the public:

- Dec. 7, at 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 9, at 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 16, at 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 18, at 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 20, at 10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

A First-Time Homebuyer Education Workshop will also be offered on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 9a.m. to 3 p.m. To pre-register for these classes, call Carolyn at (229) 245-1330, ext. 22.

Holiday Programs Helps Kids

The City of Valdosta Police and Fire Departments 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 during a time when there should be joy and happiness.

- *Shop with a Cop* will take place on Monday, Dec. 20, at 7 p.m., at the Wal-Mart Super Center located at 3274 Inner Perimeter Road. Contact VPD Officer Vernotis Williams at (229) 293-3099 for information or to donate.
- *Shop with a Firefighter* will take place on Wednesday, Dec. 15, at 7 p.m., at the Wal-Mart Super Center located at 340 Norman Drive. Contact VFD Sergeant Chris Feuerstein at (229) 333-1835 for more information or to donate.

These programs rely on monetary donations. Children must live and attend school in the City of Valdosta and be recommended by a police officer, firefighter, teacher or school principal.



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, 2010 through Jan. 8, 2011: The Home Depot, at 1825 Norman Drive; Wal-Mart Super Center, at 3274 Inner Perimeter Road; and Mathis Auditorium, at 2300 N. Ashley Street. In return for their used holiday trees, citizens will receive a tree seedling while supplies last, on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2011 only, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call (229) 671-3698 for more information.

Downtown HOLIDAY Open House & Festival

Valdosta Main Street will host a Holiday Open House & Festival on Saturday, Dec. 4, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Stroll through the unique shops and restaurants downtown and visit a variety of arts and crafts street vendors, in addition to a host of kids' activities, entertainment, and visits with Santa that will take place on Lowndes County Courthouse front lawn. The event will also kick off the opening of the **Ice Skating Rink** in the Toombs Street parking lot, which will remain open from Dec. 4-19, weekdays from 5-10 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. -10 p.m. Downtown Valdosta is the place to be this holiday season. For more information, contact Ellen Hill at (229) 259-3577 or at ehill@valdostacity.com.

Christmas Parade

The Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade will begin on Dec. 4, at 5 p.m., at Woodrow Wilson Drive, proceed down N. Patterson Street, and end at the Department of Health Building. This year's parade theme is "An Anniversary Christmas--Celebrating 150 years." Creative holiday floats will be judged on overall appearance, special effects, creativity, workmanship and use of the theme.

WinterFest 5K

Main Street and Get Active Running & More are hosting the WinterFest 5k Fun Run/Walk, on Dec. 4, beginning at 4:30 p.m., prior to the Christmas Parade. The race route will begin at the Get Active store parking lot, at 3200 N. Ashley Street, proceed down N. Patterson Street, and finish in Downtown Valdosta in front of Bennie's Alley. To register, contact Get Active at (229) 219-0010 or visit runningintheusa.com.

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Mayor John. J. Fretti and his family will officially kick off the holiday season with the traditional lighting of the City Christmas Tree, on Wednesday, Nov. 24, at 2 p.m., at City Hall located at 216 E. Central Avenue.

City employees from the Fire, Public Works and Engineering Departments decorated City Hall and assembled the 30-foot tree located on the City Hall front lawn.

The community is invited to the lighting ceremony, which includes a special presentation from children in the Moody Youth Programs and some holiday refreshments.

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



City Council

- John J. Fretti.....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

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