

# City Beat

## Progress at Five Points



Lunch & Learn attendees view various conceptals of the Five Points project. The final design is expected to be revealed in late summer 2012.

Citizens gathered at a Lunch and Learn on Oct. 25 to hear the progress of development at the Five Points Shopping Center property acquired by the city, where plans for a new city auditorium are being coordinated by the Five Points and Municipal Auditorium Steering Committee. The committee, reflecting a cross-community representation and tasked with guiding the 22.15-acre development, has made substantial progress since it began meeting earlier this year, as explained by Assistant to the City Manager Mara Register at the Oct. 25 event.

"This is truly a legacy project for the design team and the steering committee," said Register. "Most

importantly, we want to design and develop a facility that is both accessible and affordable and that will serve this community and the region for the next 50 years."

Purchased with Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) dollars in 2010, the Five Points property was determined by the Strategic Planning Group, Inc. as the ideal site for the new development according to several factors such as population density, transportation, multiple use and community growth patterns.

Formed in 2011, the steering committee divided itself into two subcommittees—the Request For Qualifications (RFQ) Selection Subcommittee and the Funding and

*Continued on page 2*

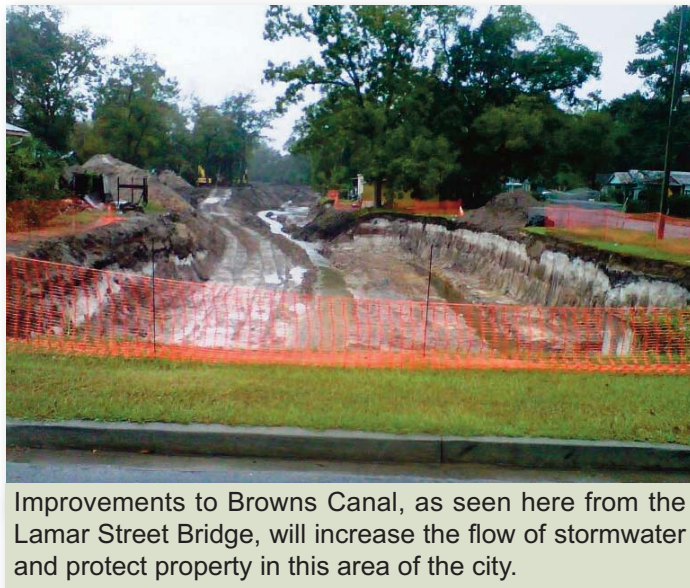
## Extreme Makeover for Browns Canal

Browns Canal—once an eyesore, as well as a growing erosion problem that threatened neighborhood properties—is receiving an extreme makeover as part of a Natural Resources Conservation Service cost-share program. This is a reimbursable program where the city is eligible to receive up to 75% of the cost, with a 25% match from in-kind or local funding.

The project is located in the portion of Browns Canal in the block bordered by Lamar, West Adair, West, and Oliver Streets. The canal itself actually starts near Ashley Street, flows just west of Hightower Street, where it then joins into Sugar Creek. Sugar Creek flows northwest along the City of Remerton, Park Lane, and a portion of Meadowbrook Drive and then joins into the Withlacoochee River.

The upgrade includes the removal of excess sediment and falling trees that has blocked the proper flow of water through the canal and the stabilization of the bank with rock-filled wire walls called gabions. Upon completion in early to mid December, the final product will be an approximately 35-foot wide channel that will reduce sediment from flowing into Sugar Creek and the Withlacoochee River, stabilize the banks to protect lives and property, provide more storage for water during a storm, and provide a more efficient flow of stormwater through the city's existing waterways.

For more information, call the city's Stormwater Division at (229) 259-3530.

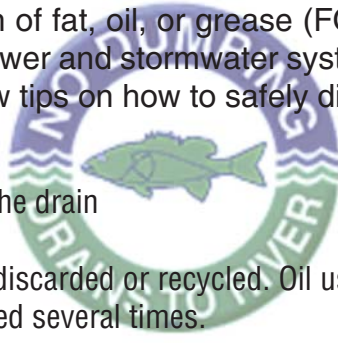


Improvements to Browns Canal, as seen here from the Lamar Street Bridge, will increase the flow of stormwater and protect property in this area of the city.

# Stormwater Tip:

**Don't let holiday food stick to your ribs...or 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 about the city's FOG program, contact the Stormwater Division at (229) 259-3530 or visit [www.valdostacity.com/stormwater](http://www.valdostacity.com/stormwater).

## Five Points *Continued from page 1*



Assistant to the City Manager Mara Register presents a Five Points project presentation at an Oct. 25 Lunch & Learn event, one of many events the city hosted in observance of National Community Planning Month.

Operations Subcommittee—to efficiently tackle the most important functions of the committee.

IPG, Inc. was selected by the RFQ Subcommittee and announced in a presentation to the Valdosta City Council at their Oct. 20 council meeting. The firm expects to have a conceptual plan for the project by late summer of 2012. In

the meantime, the steering committee members plan to visit four facilities in December 2011 to observe examples of architecture, acoustics and lighting, accommodation of multiple uses within a single facility, and the funding and operation of the facilities.

The Five Points site will not only be the home of the new municipal auditorium, but it will also contain an outdoor amphitheater and provide a site for the new regional library.

For more information on the project, contact Register at (229) 259-3571.



### 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

- Joseph "Sonny" Vickers .....Mayor
- James R. Wright.....Councilman, District 1
- Deidra White.....Councilwoman, District 2
- Hoke Hampton.....Councilman, District 3
- Alvin Payton, Jr.....Councilman, District 4
- Mayor Pro Tem
- Tim Carroll.....Councilman, District 5
- Robert Yost.....Councilman, District 6
- Ben H. Norton.....Councilman, At Large

#### Editorial Staff

- Larry H. Hanson.....City Manager
- Sementa Mathews.....Public Information Officer

The *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 Sementa Mathews at (229) 259-3548.



# Bird Supper

## 2012

*Over 55 Years  
of Tradition*

For nearly 55 years, 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. Tickets will go on sale on Dec. 1 for the 2012 Bird Supper, scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2012, 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 make some very important decisions impacting our local area and entire state.

Tickets may be purchased for \$50 each at the Lowndes County Judicial Building, located at 325 N. Patterson Street, at the Occupational Tax Window on the first floor. 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 or send your request to [Bird-Supper2012@lowndescounty.com](mailto:Bird-Supper2012@lowndescounty.com)



## Public Service Opportunities

Three vacancies on the Historic Preservation Commission provide Valdosta citizens with opportunities to serve the community. The Mayor and City Council will evaluate the applicants and appoint individuals to the vacancies at the Feb. 9 City Council meeting.

Qualified citizens who have the desire and ability to serve in local government may obtain an application form from City Clerk Teresa Bolden at City Hall, located at 216 E. Central Avenue, or download one from [www.valdostacity.com](http://www.valdostacity.com).

To be considered for appointment to the HPC positions, citizens should review the membership requirements and return their completed application and signed Code of Ethics forms to the City Clerk by Feb. 1. For more information, call (229) 259-3503 or send an email to [tbolden@valdostacity.com](mailto:tbolden@valdostacity.com).

## Averaging \$\$

**Winter  
\$\$**

Citizens looking for ways to save money on their utilities bill may participate in Winter Averaging. The city determines the normal sewer use for its residential customers during the months of January, February and March. Winter Averaging is the normal average sewer use for the first three months of the year. That number sets the cut-off point for billing wastewater charges for the remainder of the year.

To make the most of Winter Averaging, citizens should cut off all automatic irrigation systems and pool filling systems, and be careful to use only the amount necessary for outside water use.

By doing this, water customers only have to pay sewer charges for the amount of water from uses that are connected to the sewer, and thus will have lower monthly bills throughout the remainder of the year. For more information, contact the Utilities Department at (229) 259-3592.

## Making a Difference



Citizens participated in collecting nearly 11 tons of garbage and debris at the Oct. 22 Make a Difference Day, hosted by the City of Valdosta and Keep Lowndes Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB). Volunteers assisted city and KLVB staff in picking up litter and cleaning up city neighborhoods. The city expresses its appreciation to all who made a difference!

For information on other community clean up projects, call (229) 671-3698.

**Members from Boys Scout Troop 415 turned out to help make a difference on Oct. 22.**

# Holiday Safety Tips

## *from the Fire Chief*

The days before the Christmas and New Year's holidays are filled with many distractions—from holiday cooking to spectacular decorations to family visits around the Christmas tree. In the midst of the excitement, Valdosta Fire Chief J.D. Rice wants to remind citizens to practice some simple safety tips to ensure a safe and enjoyable holiday season for all.

### Christmas Tree Care

- Water your Christmas tree daily to keep it fresh and safe.
- Never put candles on or near a tree, and keep trees at least 3 feet away from any heat source or direct flames.
- Do not block exits with a tree or other decorations.

### Lighting

- Be sure your lights are UL, ETL, or CSA tested for safety.
- Check and replace lights found to have cracks, frayed wires and general damage.
- Put only as many light strings together as manufacturer's directions say is safe.
- Do not to overload outlets.
- Never run extension cords under rugs, across areas where there is a lot of foot traffic, or near furniture.
  - Unplug all lights before leaving the house or going to sleep.

### Decorations

- Use flame-retardant or nonflammable decorations whenever possible.
- Keep decorations 3 feet away from any heat source or direct flame.
- Do not hang decorations on, from or above stoves and fireplaces.
- Remember to dispose of your tree promptly and properly.
- Do not leave a dry tree inside the house, in the garage or leaned up against the house.

### Miscellaneous Tips

- Be sure all smoke detectors are properly working.
- Keep all matches and lighters out of sight and out of reach.
- Be sure candles are away from decorations, kids, pets and trees. Never leave them unattended.
- Never leave the kitchen when using the stove top. If you must leave, turn the heat off first.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers to use outside. Keep all smoking materials in your pockets.

"Fire safety is a matter of common sense," said Chief Rice. "Citizens who follow these general fire safety precautions can prevent potential fires, injuries or deaths this holiday season." For more information, please call the Valdosta Fire Department at (229) 333-1835.

2011  
**MAYORS'**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**MOTORCADE**

A program of the  
 Georgia Municipal Association

For 53 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 Valdosta Fire Department is collecting donated items—such as board games, music, stationery, movies, toiletries, etc.—to deliver to the Southwestern State Hospital, on Thursday, Dec. 8.

Civic organizations, businesses, churches, schools, scout troops, and individual citizens are encouraged to help with the collection of these gifts, as many patients at the hospital would not receive gifts or be recognized without the Mayors' Christmas Motorcade. For more information on how to participate, contact VFD Capt. John Wisenbaker at (229) 333-1835.

## City Programs Help Kids During the Holidays

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. 19, 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. 14, 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. Children recommended for the Shop with a Firefighter program must also be a victim of a home fire.



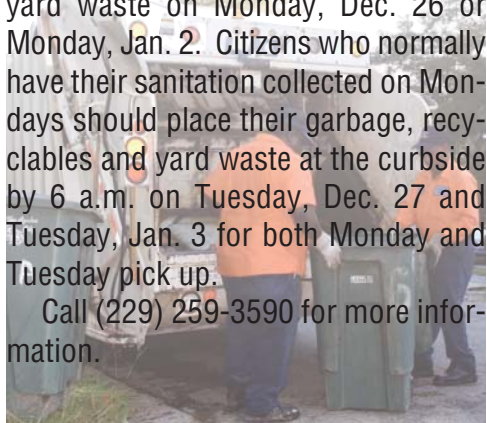
## Sanitation Schedule for Holidays

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

The Sanitation Division will collect residential garbage ONLY on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 24. 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 be collected on Friday, Nov. 25.

The Sanitation Division will NOT collect residential garbage, recyclables or yard waste on Monday, Dec. 26 or Monday, Jan. 2. Citizens who normally have their sanitation collected on Mondays should place their garbage, recyclables and yard waste at the curbside by 6 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 27 and Tuesday, Jan. 3 for both Monday and Tuesday pick up.

Call (229) 259-3590 for more information.



## 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, 2011 through Jan. 7, 2012: 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. 7, 2012 only, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call (229) 671-3698 for more information.



## Don't Let Your Guard Down

The 2011 Hurricane Season is officially over Nov. 30, but citizens should not let their guard down. Emergencies can happen any time of the year, and the same principles observed during Hurricane Season should be practiced all year long.

Visit [www.ready.ga.gov](http://www.ready.ga.gov) for tips on how to maintain your emergency plan for the safety of you and your family.



# Downtown HOLIDAY Open House & Festival

Valdosta Main Street will host its annual Holiday Open House & Festival, on Saturday, Dec. 3.

## Holiday Open House

Stroll through the unique shops and restaurants downtown and visit a variety of arts and crafts street vendors, 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.

## WinterFest 5K

Valdosta Main Street and A Course/Line—Finish Line Service 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 finish in Downtown Valdosta in front of Bennie's Alley. To register, call (229) 219-0010 or visit [www.runningintheusa.com](http://www.runningintheusa.com) for a race application.

## Christmas Parade

The Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade will begin 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 "Celebrating our Heroes." Creative holiday floats will be judged on overall appearance, special effects, creativity, workmanship and use of the theme.

For more information on how to participate in the above activities, visit [www.valdostamainstreet.com](http://www.valdostamainstreet.com) for event information or call (229) 259-3577.

## Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony



The Valdosta community is invited to the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, to help Mayor Joseph "Sonny" Vickers and city employees officially kick off the holiday season. The event will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 23, at 2 p.m., at City Hall, located at 216 E. Central Avenue.

City employees from the Fire, Public Works and Engineering Departments decorate City Hall and assemble the 30-foot tree located on the City Hall front lawn in preparation for the traditional event. The ceremony includes a special presentation from children in the Moody Youth Programs and some holiday refreshments for all attendees.

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

## 2011 Main Street Christmas Ornament on Sale



The 19th edition of the series of Downtown Valdosta Christmas Ornaments features the Historic Liberty Theater, located at 115 E. Florida Avenue—current home to the Quality of Life Association (QuOLA).

Designed by our very own Valdosta Main Street staff, the 2011 ornament illustration features the historic building on a navy blue ornament with white and silver printing. The coveted ornaments will go on sale on Dec. 1 and cost \$10 each. Ornaments from most previous years are also available for purchase while supplies last. Contact the Main Street office at (229) 259-3577.