

LOST Certificate Agreement Signed

The Valdosta Mayor and City Council met in executive session on Oct. 10 and authorized Mayor John Gayle to agree to keep the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) distribution the same as the certificate that has been on file since 2002. The mayors of all five cities also signed the certificate, which Mayor Gayle presented on behalf of the cities to Chairman Bill Slaughter on Oct. 11. On Oct. 15, the Lowndes County Commission met and agreed, as well, to leave the distribution percentages the same. In a Special Called Meeting on Oct. 17, the Valdosta Mayor and City Council met briefly to ratify the agreement that prevents the LOST revenues from lapsing for the benefit of citizens and the continuation of local government services.

"Our first responsibility is to the taxpayers of the city and the community as a whole. We feel, with so much at risk, we have made the right decision in the position we were put," said Mayor Gayle. "While none of us like taxes, they are necessary. The LOST is perhaps the best and most fair tax for taxpayers, because for each dollar of sales tax collected property owners get a dollar for dollar rollback in their property taxes."

Although the cities of Valdosta, Hahira, Lake Park, Dasher and Remerton had hoped to reach a more favorable agreement through good faith negotiations, the LOST Certificate agreement has been signed by all five mayors. As a result of the agreement, Lowndes County will retain 58 percent of the LOST proceeds, and the five cities will split the remaining 42 percent.

The five cities have committed to the agreement and will abide by the action taken by the General Assembly next year.



Improvements to WWTP Underway

The City of Valdosta Utilities Department has been working diligently to complete approximately \$2.5 million in short-term projects to address issues at its Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), which treats nearly 8 million gallons of wastewater daily. The city is working closely with its consultant and contractor who have been on site at the WWTP since August implementing several projects that are expected to be in place by year end. These plant improvements will help keep the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant in compliance with the NPDES permit until the relocation of the plant is completed in November 2015. Furthermore, these projects have been designed so that the equipment, as much as possible, can be reused at the new plant.

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Gornto Road Ext. Opens with Ribbon Cutting

General public invited to Oct. 18 event

The City of Valdosta is hosting a ribbon cutting event to celebrate the opening of the new Gornto Road Extension, on Friday, Oct. 18, 2013, at 1 p.m., at the intersection of Woodrow Wilson Drive and N. Patterson Street.

The Gornto Road Extension joins Woodrow Wilson Drive to Gornto Road and provides a new east-west thoroughfare that will positively impact the traffic flow throughout the city.

Identified in the city's adopted Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan in 2008, the \$1.9 million project included drainage improvements, utility adjustments, right of way acquisitions and intersection alignment. The completed three-lane road features a center turn lane, sidewalks and bike lanes, a new access road to the four existing businesses on Woodrow Wilson Drive, pedestrian lighting and LED crosswalks. In addition, the realigned intersection features mast arms with suspended signal heads that are more resilient in storms and require less maintenance. Modern detection technology has also been installed that senses when vehicles and motorcycles are present to change the traffic lights accordingly.

The project—which was designed by LPA, the intersection and signal permit obtained by Innovate, Inc. and construction provided by Reames and Son—was completed nearly a half million dollars under the city's project estimates.

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New East-West Connector Road

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The new road, which was funded by SPLOST VI revenue, will ease traffic congestion on Northside Drive and Jerry Jones Road and will provide citizens with a primary, major east/west route to and from the large commercial area near the Valdosta Mall. The city also expects



Gornto Road Extension near ready for Oct. 18 Ribbon Cutting event and traveling public's use on Tuesday, Oct. 22.

it to reduce emergency response times for South Georgia Medical Center staff and other City of Valdosta first responders, as well as improve traffic efficiency for those using the SGMC medical campus facilities, the VSU North Campus and the Castle Park area.

The Valdosta Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce has provided 35 Live Oak trees from their Centennial Tree Project, purchased by chamber supporters, to beautify the newly asphalted area. The Live Oaks will contribute to the city's beautiful tree canopy.

Call the Engineering Department at (229) 259-3530 for more information.

Progress on WWTP Projects

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The following is an update on the progress of these WWTP projects:

- Installation of the mobile belt filter press will begin in November.
- New bar screens were installed on influent flow to remove rags, plastics and other larger solids from downstream treatment processes and are functioning as desired.
- New Return Activated Sludge (RAS) piping to improve solids handling and removal are currently being installed.
- Air piping to nitrification tanks for ammonia removal has installed.
- Two new blowers for the aerobic digester to improve solids digestion and thickening are being installed.
- The removal of hydraulic bottlenecks in the process is ongoing.
- Currently converting old primary clarifiers to storage basins for flow equalization during heavy rain events.

Four additional projects are expected to be completed by November 2014 at a cost of \$32 million and will remove over 50 percent of sewer flow from the Meadowbrook sewer trunk line. These projects include: Two new major pump stations (Gornto Road and Remer Lane) and two minor pump stations; a new force main system, including 6 miles of 30" and 42" mains; a new headworks and flow equalization basin; and the removal of three elevated sewer trunks lines that are approaching the end of their useful service life.

If SPLOST VII is approved by voters on Nov. 5, it is expected to generate about \$150 million, of which Valdosta will receive \$80 million. Nearly 70 percent of the funding will be dedicated to wastewater projects.

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
- Semantha Mathews.....Public Info. 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 Semantha Mathews at (229) 259-3548.



The Facts About SPLOST

- FACT** Approximately 50 percent of SPLOST revenue is collected from non-residents, meaning they help to pay for improvements to our infrastructure.
- FACT** SPLOST is an investment in our community. Our roads, bridges, water facilities, parks, drainage improvements, fire stations, sidewalks, sanitation, vehicles and other capital needs are paid by SPLOST.
- FACT** SPLOST invests in local projects, creating local jobs, and the majority of the funds are spent in this community--meaning local builders, contractors, workers and businesses perform much of the work.
- FACT** Many of the projects **MUST** be done--the choice we have is **HOW** do we pay for these necessary projects?
- FACT** SPLOST is not a new tax but a continuation of a one-penny tax that has been in place since 1987.
- FACT** To generate the same amount of revenue, property taxes would **MORE THAN DOUBLE** for some local governments.
- FACT** SPLOST benefits **ALL RESIDENTS** of Lowndes County, including those in unincorporated Lowndes, Valdosta, Hahira, Remerton, Lake Park and Dasher. **ALL** local governments and **ALL** local citizens benefit from the investment in our community.
- FACT** As voters, we have a choice: do we keep the one-penny SPLOST--with much of it paid by visitors and travelers along I-75--or do we raise property taxes, water rates and other fees that are all paid by local residents?

Remember to base your SPLOST decision according to the facts, and please vote responsibly on Nov. 5. For more information about City of Valdosta SPLOST projects, visit www.valdostacity.com.



Future Journalists Meet With Mayor

Mayor John Gayle welcomed Ted Geltner's News Writing Class from Valdosta State University for a mock press conference, on Oct. 7, at Valdosta City Hall. The students toured City Hall and participated in the SPLOST VII mock press conference, which was held in the second floor City Council Chambers. The city hosts the event each semester to provide the students with practical application for their future news writing careers and to introduce them to local government. For more information on similar educational opportunities in local government, contact the Public Information Office at (229) 259-3548.



Stay in the Loop

Tune into City Focus and other local government programming on Mediacom Channel 17 or on the web daily. City Focus airs six times a day at 4 a.m., 7 a.m., noon, 5 p.m., 7 p.m. and 11 p.m., and can be enjoyed any time of day via www.vimeo.com/metro17valdosta.

Citizens may also sign up for the city's E-News by visiting the Public Information page on the city's website and selecting the type of news they want to receive on a regular basis.

www.valdostacity.com



City Sets Hours for Trick-or-Treating

The Valdosta Police Department has announced the hours for the city's annual trick-or-treat activity for Thursday, Oct. 31, from 6 to 9 p.m. Extra police patrol will be scheduled during this time to ensure the evening is both safe and enjoyable. The city offers the following practical tips for citizens and their family members to enjoy the traditional event:



- Children should walk in pairs and always stay on the sidewalk.
- Adults should accompany children under 12.
- Children should wear reflective clothing.
- Adults should pin a slip of paper on their children with their child's name, address and phone number inside a pocket in case he or she gets separated from the group.
- In addition to selecting a safe route with good lighting, children should also be equipped with flashlights with fresh batteries or glow sticks to increase visibility.
- Children who eat a meal before they trick-or-treat may be less likely to eat the candy before an adult can approve it.
- Adults should inspect treats before children are allowed to eat them.

For more information, contact VPD Commander Bernard Robinson at (229) 293-3104. The city wishes you a safe Trick-or-Treating activity.



The last Farm Days of the 2013 season will take place on Saturday, Oct. 19, on the sidewalks around the historic Lowndes County Courthouse in downtown Valdosta, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Valdosta Main staff would like to thank all vendors and patrons for their support in making the 3rd annual season another success.

The month of October puts the Main Street office in planning mode for the upcoming holiday activities, which includes the Holiday Open House and Greater Valdosta Christmas Parade, on Saturday, Dec. 7. Citizens and businesses interested in reserving a booth at the Open House or a place in the parade should contact the Main Street office at (229) 259-3577 or visit www.valdosta-mainstreet.com for additional information.



Citizens have enjoyed a variety of locally-grown produce at Farm Days throughout the season. Vendors and patrons can expect the popular farmers market to begin again in April 2014.

Stormwater Permit Renewed Through 2017



The City of Valdosta's Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) permit for 2012 – 2017 has officially been approved by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

On Dec. 6, 2012 the EPD reissued the General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. GAG610000 for Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) to waters of the State. This five-year permit is in accordance with the Federal Clean Water Act and the Georgia Water Quality Control Act and requires each MS4 to submit to EPD a new SWMP, which addresses six minimum control measures:

1. Public Education and Outreach on Stormwater Impacts
2. Public Involvement and Participation
3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
4. Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control
5. Post – Construction Stormwater Management in New Development and Redevelopment
6. Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations

The city has worked diligently on the SWMP to establish a successful stormwater program that reduces pollution through education, policy and procedures, inspection and maintenance. To learn more, please contact the Stormwater Division at (229) 259-3530 or visit www.valdostacity.com/stormwater.

Making a Difference Day in Valdosta

Cleanup scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 26

Dozens are expected to turn out for the 2013 Make a Difference Day, hosted by the City of Valdosta and Keep Lowndes Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB), on Saturday, Oct. 26, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Volunteers are still needed and should meet at the Greater Saint James Missionary Baptist Church, located at 104-1/2 Wisenbaker Lane, at 8:30 a.m. Their help is needed to clean up the neighborhood bordered by Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Dasher Lane, Wisenbaker Lane, Griffin Avenue and South Patterson Street.

During the event, city marshals and other city and KLVB staff will coordinate the clean up of the area. The Valdosta Fire Department will be also be out visiting homes in the cleanup area to check the working condition of their smoke detectors.

Make a Difference Day, and other efforts in the city throughout the year, are responsible for cleaning up literally tons of garbage from our city neighborhoods. For more information or to volunteer for the cleanup, call KLVB at (229) 671-3698.



Keeping the Rivers Alive

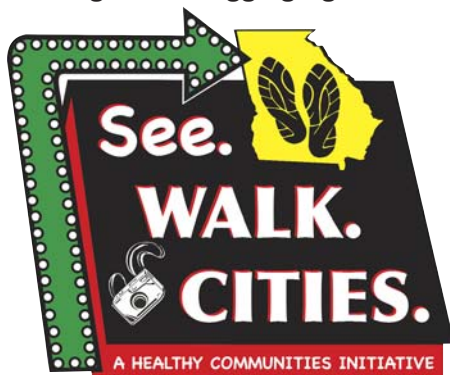
The Oct. 5 Rivers Alive clean up, sponsored by Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful, saw a turnout of over 140 volunteers, like the ones pictured above, at seven different sites around the city and county. These volunteers were able to gather enough trash to fill 99 bags, --an estimated 2,200 pounds of litter--from local waterways such as the Withlacoochee & Little Rivers, Mud Creek, and One & Two Mile Branches. Rivers Alive is a continuing statewide campaign to preserve and beautify Georgia's 70,150 miles of rivers and streams.

Valdosta-Lowndes Competes for Most Active Community in Ga.

GMA Initiative is helping cities across Georgia get healthier

A new Georgia Municipal Agency (GMA) initiative is encouraging communities across the state to join a fun challenge to determine the most active community through social connections and highlighting everything active. Community teams--such as the Valdosta-Lowndes County Team--earn points when participants share how far they walked, ran or cycled. Participants also earn points by entering events online, such as road races, cycling events, etc. Points add up for the community team through Dec. 31, 2013. The winning team will be announced at the GMA Mayor's Conference in Savannah, Ga., on Jan. 25, 2014.

The goal?...Bragging rights for being the "Most Active Community" in Georgia and a FREE outdoor fitness station.



How to get started:

1. Create a profile at www.cmecompete.com/communities/see-walk-cities.
2. Join the See-Walk-Cities community.
3. Join the **Valdosta-Lowndes County Team**.
4. Add events to the calendar.
5. Join events and participate in them.
6. Log workouts (walking, running, cycling by miles) into your activity feed.

Join the Valdosta-Lowndes County team today for a healthier community. Call (229) 259-3548 for more information.



Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries



Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m., on Sunday, Nov. 3, and citizens should turn their clocks backward one hour to 1 a.m. The purpose of daylight saving time—observed by the United States and Canada—is to provide more hours of daylight during the evenings and less in the mornings.

Valdosta Fire Chief J.D. Rice says Daylight Saving Time is also a great bi-annual reminder to change the batteries in smoke detectors. More than 70 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in homes where the smoke detector did not work.

On Nov. 3, remember to take an extra minute to change your smoke detector batteries while setting your clocks backward.

Opportunities to Serve Community

The deadline is quickly approaching to apply for several vacant city board positions. The City of Valdosta has announced the following openings:

Valdosta Housing Authority (1)

Valdosta Tree Commission (1)

MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (2)

Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority (1)

Central Valdosta Develop. Authority/Downtown Develop. Authority (3)

Citizens interested in serving the community this way should apply by first reviewing the Membership Requirements and Code of Ethics Booklet, completing a General Board Application and then signing a Code of Ethics form. Contact City Clerk Teresa Bolden at (229) 259-3503 or download this information at www.valdostacity.com. The closing date for submitting the General Board Application and Code of Ethics form to the City Clerk is Oct. 30, by 5 p.m.

Role of Planners Celebrated

The City of Valdosta is observing National Community Planning Month in October with a variety of events recognizing the efforts of professional and citizen planners committed to creating great places to live and work. Visit www.valdostacity.com/planning for a list of events during the month.



City and County Present CPM Proclamations

From left: County Planner Jason Davenport, Lowndes County Chairman Bill Slaughter, MPO Coordinator Corey Hull, Valdosta Mayor John Gayle, Historic Preservation Planner Emily Foster and Planning & Zoning Tech. Alexandra Arzayus.

NOV. 9 **recycle**

Your Electronics

Citizens who are wondering what to do with their outdated or unwanted electronics are urged to attend a community e-recycling event that will properly dispose of their unwanted electronics, while reducing unnecessary clutter in time for the holiday season. The City of Valdosta Public Works Department, in partnership with Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful (KLVB) and Atlanta Recycling Solutions, will host the Electronic Recycling event on Saturday, Nov. 9, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the parking lot of Mathis Auditorium, located at 2300 N. Ashley Street.

Citizens may drop off a number of electronic items at the event, such as cell phones, computer monitors, laptops, disk and floppy drives, test equipment, modems, circuit boards, typewriters, cables, eight-tracks, computer accessories, video machines, stereos, video cassette recorders (VCRs), CB radios, scanners, speakers, camcorders and cameras. Volunteers will be available at the event to help remove items from vehicles. Televisions will be accepted at the event; however, there is a \$10 charge per television to cover the costs of disassembling the televisions for the recyclable parts.

A number of items will NOT be accepted at the Nov. 9 event—such as vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, washers, dryers, gas-powered equipment, non-electronic equipment, and other non-recyclable items.

This event is one of two annual e-recycling events and other year-round efforts that support the city's recycling program. Citizens may call the Public Works Department at (229) 671-3640 for more information.