

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • December 2019/January 2020

A joint publication of the City of Vestavia Hills, Vestavia Hills City Schools & Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

December 2019

- 3 **Tree Lighting Festival**, City Hall, 6 p.m.
- 5 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 7 **Breakfast with Santa**, Civic Center Dogwood Room, 7:30 a.m.
- 8 **Christmas Parade & Celebration**, Liberty Park, 2 p.m.
- 9 **Senior Citizens Luncheon**, Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 9 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 10 **Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 12 **Planning & Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 16 **Council Work Session**, Executive Conference Room, 5 p.m.
- 16 **City Council Meeting** (*rescheduled from Dec. 23*), Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 19 **Friends of the Library**, Library in the Forest, 10 a.m.
- 19 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 24 **Municipal Offices Closed**, Christmas Eve
- 25 **Municipal Offices Closed**, Christmas Day, *No trash service*
- 31 **Municipal Offices Closed**, New Year's Eve

Republic Services will pick up your Christmas tree if it is placed on the curb near your waste receptacle. Be sure to remove trimmings from trees before placing at the curb.

– *Calendar, continued on page 4*



MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Ashley C. Curry, Vestavia Hills Mayor

We have completed the bicentennial year for the state of Alabama. Like many cities across the state, we recognized two hundred years of statehood by hosting numerous events. An exhibit commemorating the state's history, as well as the history of our city, was on display at City Hall. The Library in the Forest sponsored events, such as the Summer Reading program, that concentrated on Alabama history. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) offered a series of programs focused on Alabama history. One of these programs featured Steve Flowers, renowned author and former State Representative, who shared the very colorful history of our state politicians. During a

subsequent program, I was honored to speak about some of the significant FBI cases in Alabama in which I participated. Thanks to all who made these events possible, including Beautification Board, Historical Society and Senior Citizen Association volunteers.

The Infrastructure and Community Spaces Plan, the largest expenditure in the City's history, is coming to fruition. At this time last year, we were seeing the beginnings of construction activity at Wald Park. We have come a long way since then, as evidenced by the ongoing infrastructure projects (roadways and sidewalks) throughout Vestavia Hills, as well as the Cahaba Heights Park and Wald Park

– *Mayor's Message continued on page 3*



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Jeff Downes, Vestavia Hills City Manager

Having served in municipal administration for my entire adult life, it is so refreshing to work in an environment like Vestavia Hills. We are blessed with thoughtful and introspective elected leadership, well intentioned staff and an active citizenry. As City Manager, I am charged with implementing the will of the elected body utilizing City employees who specialize in the varied aspects of city government. These joint efforts are not completed on a whim. They are strategically focused on the collective will of those who live in Vestavia Hills as interpreted by the Mayor and City Council. One of the main guiding principles in this decision-making process is to do what's in the best interest of the entire community of Vestavia Hills, not that of one individual or interest.

flows. Your elected leadership truly understands that challenge; and as such, they embrace strategic planning. Every year, around January, the Mayor and Council huddle up to formally deliberate and understand, at a deep level, what issues are paramount for the continued success of our community. The result of these efforts then becomes a measuring stick of success, failure or a means to alter the energies of the Vestavia Hills organization. Once again, the City desires to truly understand the thoughts and priorities of the residents and are utilizing the "Vestavia Hills Listens" portal to gather stakeholder input, process the responses and utilize the data as a basis for the 2020 action plan.

While not all encompassing, there are a few issues that will receive a large amount of focus this year. Those issues are prompted by contractual terms, available resources and other such windows of opportunity. The sanitation

Without a focused plan, the City's efforts could be riddled with fits and starts, and ebbs and

– *Manager's Report continued on page 3*



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Todd Freeman, Ed.D., Vestavia Hills City Schools Superintendent

I've always enjoyed sports and singing, even though I'm neither the greatest athlete nor musician. Participating in sports as a kid was great fun for me. Singing in different choirs and ensembles was of equal value and something I still enjoy. More importantly, though, is that arts and athletics greatly influence my belief in the importance of working together to accomplish big goals.

Teamwork was a word my coaches and music instructors often used. The lesson for me was simple: No athletic team ever successfully executed a play because of one player, and no choir ever made beautiful harmonies with a solo voice. While there are isolated times when greatness occurs because of the efforts of one individual, a team almost always accomplishes more together.

In his book, *The Collaboration Challenge*, James Austin emphasized the value of strategic alliances for organizations seeking the best way to accomplish their goals. Austin said this type of teamwork, or collaboration, works best "when the partners' missions, people and activities begin to experience more collective action and organizational integration."

There are numerous examples of collaborative partnerships with Vestavia Hills City Schools that are aligned with our mission of providing students the opportunity to learn without limits. These partnerships make meaningful differences in the lives of our students. One example of this is the Help the Hills Coalition. The mission of the coalition is "to end the use and abuse of harmful substances among youth in Vestavia Hills and to promote healthy living."

Help the Hills is committed to offering parents educational forums to learn practical ways to support the social and emotional needs of children. In the past year, topics have included the dangers of vaping, understanding teen culture, promoting safe driving and coping with anxiety. Juniors and seniors at VHHS can be a part of Help the Hills by joining their Student Team and committing to healthy lifestyle choices. You can learn more about their important work by visiting helphills.org or following Help the Hills on Facebook.

Teamwork, collaboration and alliance are all words that describe the unparalleled community support our school system receives. It is this trademark that continues to propel our system forward.



VESTAVIA HILLS
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Christmas Season

at Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church

Service of Lessons and Carols
December 15 / 8:30, 9:45 & 11:00 am

Sounds of the Season
December 15 / 5:00 pm

Service of Healing and Light
December 21 / 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve Services
December 24 / 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, 8pm, 11pm

**Catch each service online by
visiting Facebook or Youtube!**



www.vhumc.org

Mayor's Message *continued from page 1*

projects. As it stands now and weather permitting, we are on track to have the Wald Park ballfields ready for the beginning of baseball season and the pools ready for swimming season. Additionally, the City Council is reviewing the complete preliminary plans for the build-out of the Community Building. I think you will be very pleased with the enhancements to our parks and roadways, all of which are long overdue. These projects will contribute to the quality of life for our residents keeping Vestavia Hills as a choice location in which to raise a family.

Our "Salute to Veterans" event held on November 7 was well received and was a fitting tribute to all who have served in our armed forces. I would like to recognize the Vestavia Hills High School band ensemble and the Honor Choir for their participation. We must never forget the contribution that these veterans made on our behalf. We live in the greatest country in the world because of them. Thank you to all of our veterans.

Hopefully you were able to participate in the "Deck the Heights" event on November 14. During December, join the City and the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce by participating in the numerous "Holiday in the Hills" events taking place:

- Tree Lighting Festival, 12/3
- Breakfast with Santa, 12/7
- Christmas Parade, 12/8

In this holiday season I am very impressed with the generosity of our City employees. They demonstrate their concern for others who are less fortunate by supporting the United Way. This year's contributions have surpassed last year's giving which, in itself, was 35% more than the previous year. Our City employees are setting a great example for all of us to follow. Additionally, they continue to support the Greater Birmingham Big Brothers/Big Sisters program for inner city youth. This is the fifth year that they have made a difference in the lives of these young people.

On behalf of the City Council and our City employees, I wish all of you a joyous holiday season.

Manager's Message *continued from page 1*

services that Vestavia Hills residents receive "touch" your household more frequently than any other City service. On average, a resident will experience three to four services per week. What that service looks like in terms of the frequency and type of service provided are extremely important. Our contract to provide these services will be up for competitive bidding in 2020. Should we continue with twice weekly household garbage pickup or not? Is the current recycling program viable? Are the provider's efforts adequate? Are there reasonable alternatives to other methods of collection? Could savings in sanitation services be redirected to other high priority areas? The City wants to know your thoughts on this issue along with your thoughts on capital needs such as road improvements and sidewalks. Furthermore, we want to know how you think we are doing in our routine tasks. We do not want to leave any important City-related conversation without its proper due diligence.

While the holiday season is upon us and demands great attention to our faith, family and friendships, it's also the time of reflection and a focus on the next year. I encourage all residents to weigh in on these issues and more amidst the worship, parties and visits of the season. Let your voice be heard by visiting <https://vhal.org/vestavia-hills-listens> and clicking on "Citizen Survey – 2020 Priorities." The feedback from this survey will be utilized to guide the future of services that are the foundations of our experience in this wonderful place we call home.

We look forward to hearing from everyone, and I hope you have a blessed holiday season and prosperous new year.

NEW MERKEL SENIOR CENTER

**Monthly programs, events and guest speakers;
Games EVERYDAY!**

Monday-Friday: Fun, Fellowship & Lunch (served at 11:45 a.m.)

Tuesday: Tai Chi & Table Games, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Students from VHECH visit New Merkel House for "Getting to Know You" lunches

Thursday: Tech Talk Thursdays

December 10: Tuesday Art with Tina Chaffin

December 20: Christmas Celebration

December 24-January 1: Closed, Happy Holidays

January 14: Tuesday Art with Tina Chaffin

January 20: Closed, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

More information, including the **full calendar of Senior Programming activities**, can be found on the City website at <https://vhal.org/community/senior-living/> or by contacting Melanie Perry at 205.967.5977.

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January 2020

- 1 **Municipal Offices Closed**, New Year's Day, No trash service
- 2 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 9 **Planning & Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 13 **Senior Citizens Luncheon**, Civic Center Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 13 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 14 **Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 16 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 20 **Municipal Offices Closed**, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
No trash service
- 21 **Parks & Recreation Board**, Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 23 **Friends of the Library**, Library in the Forest, 10 a.m.
- 27 **Vestavia Hills Historical Society**, Library in the Forest, 2 p.m.
- 27 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- TBD Council Work Session**, 2020 Strategic Planning



CHRISTMAS YARD JUDGING

December 9-16, 2019

Vestavia Hills Beautification Board members will conduct the annual Christmas yard judging December 9-16, 2019. Yards are judged on appearance in both daytime and evening time periods. Winners in each of the areas will be awarded a certificate of thanks from the Mayor's office and will host a "Winning Yard" sign until the end of the month. Happy decorating!

RECYCLE RIGHT

to avoid contamination



INTER-CITY RECYCLING CHALLENGE

Vestavia Hills is competing with Homewood, Mountain Brook and Hoover to reduce contamination in our recyclables! **For info on how YOU can help Vestavia Hills come out on top, visit <https://vhal.org/inter-city-recycling-challenge>.**

Save the Date!

**Casino Royale
Saturday, March 7, 2020
at the Library in the Forest**

**For more information
or to buy tickets,
visit vhlibraryfoundation.org.**



CHAMBER NEWS

Karen J. Odle, Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce President

As we come to the close of another year, I want to take this opportunity to thank the many wonderful people that spend countless hours making our community a better place for all. Our citizens continue to amaze me with their energy and focus on making Vestavia Hills a great place to work, play and live as we strive for “A Life Above” for every member of our community.

We also have some incredible businesses in Vestavia Hills! In fact, three of them were just recognized as Alabama Retailers of the Year:

- **Leaf & Petal and owner Jamie Pursell** won Gold Level Alabama Retailer of the Year in the \$5 million to \$20 million category. Jamie now owns four locations with two of them being in Vestavia Hills. He was recognized for hiring veterans, people with disabilities and high school students.
- **Domino’s Pizza and owner David Dawoud** won Silver Alabama Retailer of the Year in the \$5 million to \$20 million category. David has nine locations, with two of the locations in the Cahaba Heights and Liberty Park neighborhoods, and is a strong supporter of the Police and Fire departments as well as the schools, Chamber, athletic groups and many other organizations in our city.
- **New York Butcher and owner Jim Moeller** won Silver Alabama Retailer of the Year in the \$1 million to \$5 million category. Jim opened a second location in the Greystone community shortly after his nomination. Jim and his team at New York Butcher are strong supporters of many organizations in Vestavia Hills and beyond. In fact his application listed more than 50 different community groups and charities that his store supports in some way.

These businesses are representative of the many businesses that make a difference in Vestavia Hills. Their strong support of this community enables our City to do many of the things that may not be possible otherwise, as our businesses are assessed at double the ad valorem tax that a residence is taxed.

If you wonder what’s in it for you; remember that small businesses:

- Are the life blood of any community.
- There are 30.2 million small businesses in the U.S. (SBA, 2018)
- Account for 99.7% of all businesses in the US. (SBA, 2018)
- Unemployment rate is at an all-time low causing severe hiring issues for small businesses trying to grow their business.
- Make up 47.5 % of the private workforce and are responsible for 66% of net new jobs created. (SBA, 2018)
- Donate 250% more than larger businesses to non-profits and community causes (Source: Seattle Good Business Network).

I quote all of these statistics to help our residents understand what a wonderful opportunity we have to help our Vestavia Hills small business owners thrive and grow by supporting them before we leave and go to the stores outside of our city with our purchases. Please support our local businesses ... YOU can make a difference!

As this is the last issue for 2019, my family and I would like to wish you and your family a blessed holiday season, abundant peace and joy and may 2020 be a year blessed with good health and prosperity for each of you. As always our doors are always open at the Chamber office. We look forward to working with you as we strive for “A Life Above.”

PARKS & RECREATION NEWS

SPRING SPORTS

Baseball – www.vhyb.com

VHYB provides recreational baseball opportunities for youth living in Vestavia Hills and the surrounding areas. Registration is open December 16 through January 12, 2020. Practices begin in February with league games beginning in March through May. For more information or to register, visit www.vhyb.com.

Lacrosse – www.GBYLA.com

Registration for Vestavia Lacrosse spring season is open now through December 15 for boys and girls in grades K-12. For more information or to register, visit www.GBYLA.com.

Soccer – www.vestaviasoccer.com

Vestavia Hills Soccer Club offers programs for all levels of play for boys and girls ages 3 and up. Registration open January 1, 2020. To register, visit www.vestaviasoccer.com. For more information, contact VHSC at info@vestaviasoccer.com or call 205.978.0182.

Softball – www.vhgsa.com

VHGSA is open to all girls ages 4-12. Evaluations will be held February 1 and opening day will be March 14. Registration is open now through January 20. For more information or to register, visit www.vhgsa.com.



VHFD ACCEPTING DONATIONS

The Vestavia Hills Fire Department has once again partnered with the United States Marine Corps Reserve and the Toys for Tots program this Christmas season. The mission of the Toys for Tots program is to collect new unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children at Christmas. Off-duty VHFD fire fighters will handle all of the logistics required to get your donation to the Toys for Tots distribution center so that it reaches a deserving child on Christmas morning. **If you wish to donate, simply drop a new unwrapped toy by any VHFD fire station by December 12, and we will take care of the rest.** As always, we thank you for your support! Merry Christmas!

FIRE SAFETY

Every fall, the Vestavia Hills Fire Department recognizes Fire Prevention month, a time when we should all be aware of ways to enhance fire safety and prevention. Most of us underestimate the risk for fire and either lack an emergency response plan or simply fail to practice the plan regularly. Therefore, VHFD takes this opportunity to educate the public regarding fire safety by discussing smoke alarms, portable heaters and preventing all types of fires. VHFD personnel spent a great deal of time discussing fire safety with students at all of the Vestavia Hills elementary schools earlier this fall. The smoke trailer was used to educate children on what to do in case of a fire. They are taught how to exit a house with smoke in a room, as well as the importance of having a plan to reunite with family members following an emergency and to never re-enter any structure once they have escaped. These are fire safety tips that VHFD encourages all citizens to practice every day – at home, work and school.



Tree Lighting Festival

December 3

**Vestavia Hills City Hall, 6:00 pm
1032 Montgomery Highway**

Enjoy entertainment, merchant give-aways, a visit with Santa and the lighting of the tree!

Breakfast with Santa

December 7

**Vestavia Hills Civic Center, 7:30-10:00 am
1975 Merryvale Road**

Bring the whole family for a pancake breakfast with Santa! Free to attend-Breakfast courtesy of the City of Vestavia Hills.

Vestavia Hills Christmas Parade & Celebration

December 8

**Liberty Park Sports Complex
to Alston Meadows, 2:00-4:00 pm**

Enjoy the city's official parade followed by the Liberty Park Christmas Celebration with kids' activities, refreshments, music, pictures with Santa and more!

**Presented by the City of Vestavia Hills & the
Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce
Visit www.vestaviahills.org for an extended
list of events.**

LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

Full descriptions, including location and online registration, are available on the Library in the Forest website at www.vestavialibrary.org.

CHILDREN & TWEENS:

205.978.0158 (*Children: Birth-Grade 2;*
Tweens: Grades 3-5)

- 2 Toddler A-Go-Go, 9:30 & 10:30am
- 3 Pick Up S.T.E.A.M. @ the Library: Bubble Science, 3:30pm
- 4 Story Friends, 10:30am
- 4 Tween Scene: Holiday Trivia & Ornament Workshop, 3:30pm
- 7 Ms. Casey's Marvelous Music & Movement, 10:30am
- 9 Toddler A-Go-Go, 9:30 & 10:30am
- 10 Pick Up S.T.E.A.M. @ the Library: Snow Crafts, 3:30pm
- 11 Story Friends, 10:30am
- 11 Tween Scene: Gingerbread House Competition, 3:30pm
- 12 L.I.F.T., 9:30am
- 12 Book Babies, 10am
- 16 Toddler A-Go-Go, 9:30 & 10:30am
- 17 Pick Up S.T.E.A.M. @ the Library: STEAM Challenge, 3:30pm
- 17 Family Night: "The Santa Show," 6pm
- 18 Story Friends, 10:30am
- 18 Tween Scene: Holiday Movie Party, 3:30pm
- 19 L.I.F.T., 9:30am
- 19 Book Babies, 10am
- 21 Ms. Casey's Marvelous Music & Movement, 10:30am
- 28 Lego Wars, 11am

TECHNOLOGY: 205.978.4679

- 4 Basic Microsoft Word, 2pm
- 10 Apple Mobile Devices with Connect It, 2pm
- 12 Basic Microsoft Excel, 4pm

TEENS: 205.978.3683 (Grades 6-12)

- 3 Star Wars Movie Night, 4pm
- 4 Writing Group, 4pm
- 6 Open Gaming, 4pm
- 10 DIY: Deck-It-Yourself, 4pm
- 11 Mana Pool, 4pm
- 12 Extended Library Hours, 9am-9pm
Exam Study Breaks, 3, 5, & 7pm
- 13 Open Gaming, 4pm
- 16 Extended Library Hours, 9am-9pm
Exam Study Breaks, 3, 5, & 7pm
- 17 Extended Library Hours, 9am-9pm
Exam Study Breaks, 3, 5, & 7pm
- 18 Writing Group, 4pm
- 20 Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Tournament, 4pm
- 27 Open Gaming, 4pm

MAKERSPACE: 205.978.3683

(All ages, unless otherwise noted)

- 2 Open Maker Lab, 10am-6pm
- 7 Open Maker Lab, 1-5pm
- 9 Open Maker Lab, 10am-6pm
- 10 Tear-Down Tuesday, 4pm
- 14 Open Maker Lab, 1-5pm
- 16 Open Maker Lab, 10am-6pm
- 19 Photography Workshop, 4:30pm
- 23 Open Maker Lab, 10am-5:30pm

ADULTS: 205.978.4678 (Ages 18+)

- 2 Knit Night in the Forest, 6pm
- 4 Makerspace for Adults: The Art of the Cookie, 6:30pm
- 6 First Friday Fiber Arts, 10am
- 6 Upcycle City: Holiday Crafts, 7pm
- 9 Tai Chi for Beginners, 6pm
- 11 ABCs of Medicare, 1pm

NEED SOME EXTRA TIME?

Do you need extra time to study for exams? The library will be open until 9 p.m. on December 12, 16 and 17.

Need a break from studying on these days? The Teen Department is offering 30 minute study breaks at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. with snacks and games!

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN!



Santa Claus will be at the Library in the Forest on Tuesday, December 17.

Make plans to visit Santa as he shares his favorite stories from the North Pole! Children are invited to visit with Santa after the program, so bring your camera! Dinner will start at 6 p.m. and the show will begin at 6:30 p.m.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Dec. 5: Staff Training

Dec. 19-23: Early Close, Daily at 6pm

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve

Dec. 25: Christmas

Dec. 31: New Year's Eve

Jan. 1: New Year's Day

Jan. 2-3: Early Close, Daily at 6pm





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