

# COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills | August 2023

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



**Jeff Downes,**  
City Manager  
City of  
Vestavia Hills

## CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

For those pop culture junkies, you may remember Colonel John “Hannibal” Smith who was the leader of the fictional group in the NBC series, *The A-Team*. He had a catchphrase – “I love it when a plan comes together!”

For those more refined and studious of you, author and Adobe Chief Strategy Officer, Scott Belsky, writes in his book “Making Ideas Happen” about the art of action. He writes, “Ideas don’t happen in isolation. You must embrace opportunities to broadcast and then refine your ideas through the energy of those around you.” Regardless of your source of inspiration,

I want to celebrate a plan coming to reality and the completion of desires crafted collaboratively by capturing the energies of many Vestavia Hills leaders and residents. After many meetings and discussions, the Mayor and City Council launched the Community Spaces and Infrastructure Plan in 2017. This ambitious plan would become the largest capital improvement effort ever seen in the City of Vestavia Hills. Its focus was to improve the recreational and transportation infrastructure in Vestavia Hills in a transformational way. With the soon to be complete Wald Park Phase III (tennis, pickleball and dog park), the installation of sidewalks on Rocky Ridge Road and the final touches to the roadwork on Crosshaven Drive, the plan will be wrapped up late this summer. Our residents have and will enjoy a state-of-the-art aquatics complex, a civic center that provides capacity for the strong demand for quality-of-life activities, multiple athletic fields to support an ever-growing number of participants, and roads and sidewalks that make it easier for vehicles and pedestrians to navigate to their chosen destinations. While this celebration can be had by observing the tangible results associated with idea/plan completion, I want to highlight that our “field of dreams” has translated into quantifiable engagement with these assets in a way many may not see as clearly.

This morning, I drove the Crosshaven corridor only to observe numerous individuals running on the Crosshaven sidewalks while dogs were being walked and senior citizens were getting in a morning stroll. The nearly 11,000 cars that utilize the Crosshaven corridor every day are not inconvenienced by a delay from left-hand turners. The new asphalt from major street resurfacing efforts, the like Vestavia Hills has never seen before, provided a smooth ride (admittedly many more miles of resurfacing are on the books) as I ultimately passed the Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex with a full parking lot. It has become the home of over 3,000 members. The new Vestavia Hills Civic Center has become the home of over 2,000 members and hosted approximately 120 events since its opening last December. Countless senior activities are scheduled daily at the New Merkel Senior Center and are a regular part of activities at the Civic Center. Dog lovers have the opportunity to share outdoor venues at SHAC, Cahaba Heights and soon will have that opportunity at Wald Park. The numbers participating in athletic team engagement at the new and upgraded diamonds, rectangles and courts are very noteworthy. At this point in the program year, there have been 5,453 athletic participants on approximately 600 different sports teams. The field usage varies by asset; however, some are approaching an incredible 75% usage rate.

Obviously, we have something special cooking in Vestavia Hills. We should be proud of the accomplishments seen since 2017. These accomplishments were made despite COVID-related difficulties and a challenging construction environment. Let’s celebrate these successes and embrace Hannibal Smith’s catchphrase, it truly is great to see a plan come together! Thank you, Vestavia Hills Mayor and City Council, community stakeholders and believers of the concept that ideas can become reality.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### August 2023

- 3 Design Review Board,**  
Executive Conference Room,  
6 p.m.
- 8 Chamber Luncheon,**  
Vestavia Country Club,  
11:30 a.m.
- 9 First Day of School**  
VHCS Secondary Students
- 10 First Day of School**  
VHCS Elementary Students
- 10 Planning and Zoning Commission, Council Chamber,** 6 p.m.
- 14 Senior Citizens Association Luncheon,** Civic Center, Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 14 City Council Meeting,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 Parks and Recreation Board,** Civic Center, 7:30 a.m.
- 17 Board of Zoning Adjustment,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 21 National Senior Citizen Celebration,** Civic Center, 3 p.m.
- 21 Council Work Session,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 28 City Council Meeting,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.



**Ashley Curry,**  
Mayor  
City of  
Vestavia Hills

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

I hope you had an enjoyable July. Our 41st annual "I Love America" event was a resounding success and, based on the citizen comments, clearly was a crowd favorite for our city with a record number of attendees. Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce, the many sponsors and all the City personnel that made this event possible.

August events include "National Senior Citizens Day" to be celebrated on August 21. The purpose of this nationally-recognized day, as proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan in 1988, is to increase awareness of the issues that affect older adults. We are fortunate in Vestavia Hills to have a new Civic Center that hosts very active senior citizen groups. Some senior activities include: group exercise classes, gardening clubs, bridge clubs, dance groups, monthly lunch meetings and day-trips lunches, among other activities.

In Cahaba Heights, the New Merkel House (NMH) has offered seniors activities since opening in 1994. NMH offers weekday morning coffee and snacks, games, sing-a-longs, guest speakers and exercise classes. And lunch is provided most week days. For more information, visit [www.vhparksandrec.com](http://www.vhparksandrec.com) and search New Merkel House contact NMH Manager Melanie Perry at 205.967.5977.

Throughout our history, there have been senior citizens that have contributed greatly to our community. One such citizen is Ruby



*Pictured (left to right): Mayor Ashley Curry, Ruby Denson & Vestavia Hills Parks and Recreation Program Superintendent Sandi Wilson*

Landis Denson. Miss Ruby, as she is affectionately known, has participated in coordinating senior events for over 30 years. Earlier this year, former Mayor Sara Wuska nominated Ruby for induction into the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. On June 21, the City received a letter from the State of Alabama Department of Senior Services stating that Ruby had been selected for induction as a permanent member of the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. She is one of 10 individuals

selected annually and will be inducted on Sunday, August 20 during the annual awards ceremony in Montgomery, Alabama. As Mayor and a longtime friend, I have seen her impact on the lives of our senior citizens. Congratulations to Ruby for this recognition and for her continued work with our seniors.

We also want to recognize State Senator J.T. "Jabo" Waggoner and his wife, Marilyn. They are longtime residents of Vestavia Hills and

have contributed so much to our community. Marilyn has served on numerous boards and committees, including the Sybil Temple Foundation, the Vestavia Hills Historical Society and the Vestavia Hills Garden Club.

Jabo was recently recognized for 50 years of service in the State Legislature as both a State Representative and a State Senator. He is now the longest serving Legislator in Alabama history. We will soon officially recognize Jabo's many years of service to our city and state with a special display in City Hall. In addition, we are coordinating with the State of Alabama Department of Archives and History, as they will also recognize his service to the State of Alabama.

This month, let the seniors in your life know that you appreciate them by spending time in fellowship with them. Remember that they have contributed so much for our families, our community and our country.



## LOVE YOUR DOG. LEASH YOUR DOG!

As a responsible dog owner, it's important to keep your furry friend on a leash when out in public. This helps to ensure the safety and well-being of not only your pup but also the community around you. Remember, it's still important to keep your dog under your control when on private property. You're doing your part to create a safe and happy environment for all by keeping your dog on a leash.

- On a leash your dog can't run into the path of a moving car.
- A leash keeps your dog close so you can see what he may sniff or pick up in his mouth. He has less opportunity to eat something harmful.
- A leash helps you control him around other dogs or people.
- A leash ensures your dog returns home safely with you instead of wandering off.
- It's the law!

**For more information, visit <https://vhal.org/animal-control>.**



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

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

The mission of Vestavia Hills City Schools is to ensure each student learns without limits by pursuing knowledge and igniting curiosity about the world through a system distinguished by a safe and nurturing environment, the courage to be creative, appreciation of diversity and multiple paths to a bold future. There is one remaining

pillar of our success that cannot be understated: the need for unparalleled community support.

Support for our schools is galvanized when the community sees excellent results. Each year, VHCS publishes an Annual Report that highlights academic, arts and athletic accomplishments of our students. It also features some of the impressive philanthropic work our students did as part of their commitment to give back to the community. You can learn more about the success in our schools on our website at [www.vhcs.us](http://www.vhcs.us). You may also pick up a copy of the Annual Report at any of our schools, the Board of Education office, City Hall and Chamber of Commerce.

In August, we will welcome more than 7,000 VHCS students from more than 4,000 homes — which is less than 30% of the total number of residences in the city. That small percentage of our residents directly experiences the value of a VHCS education, but the entire community benefits when it has vibrant schools. Our quality of life, economic vitality and value of property are directly linked to the success of our schools. And, most importantly, education is a moral imperative for preparing our next generation of leaders, professionals and philanthropists.

While our school system already enjoys the benefits of strong support, there are opportunities to make our partnerships even more impactful. PTO, the VHCS Foundation, Help the Hills and booster organizations are a few organized ways that parents provide support for our schools. Another opportunity, Community Partners (formerly Partners in Education), was born from a Leadership Vestavia Hills class that wanted to strengthen connections of businesses and schools. You can learn more about this great opportunity by reaching out to Ali Pilcher, PTO Vice President for Fundraising and Community Partners, at [alipilcher@me.com](mailto:alipilcher@me.com).

Horace Mann once said, “No community should rest contented with being superior to other communities, while it is inferior to its own capabilities.” Imagine the possibilities for our students when there is unparalleled support from organizations, service clubs and businesses in the community! Throughout the year, we will highlight in this newsletter some of the partnerships that are providing unique experiences for our students. I’m hopeful that this will be an encouragement for you to join us this year in raising the bar of excellence in Vestavia Hills City Schools.



## STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER!

Summertime is a great time to light up the grill and throw on some burgers, hot dogs or whatever meal your taste buds desire. Though it can be fun to grill while relaxing with family and friends, caution should be taken to prevent any accidents.

House fires are an unfortunate result when grills are not properly used. According to the National Fire Protection Association, U.S. fire departments responded to 11,421 fires involving grills from 2017-2021.



The Vestavia Hills Fire Department wants to offer the following tips so everyone stays safe:

1. Propane and charcoal grills should only be used outside of a structure.
2. Place all grills at least 10 feet away from any building, eaves or overhanging branches.
3. Keep your grill clean by removing excess grease or fat buildup from the grates.
4. Never leave your grill unattended.
5. Only use charcoal starter fluid to start a fire. Never add any charcoal starter fluid (or any flammable liquid) to an ongoing fire. This could lead to serious burns.
6. If you have a gas grill, make sure the lid is open before lighting it. If the lid is closed, gas can build up, which can create a fireball and lead to serious burns.
7. When you are finished grilling, let the coals cool completely for 24 hours before placing in a metal container. Do not put ashes in a plastic trash can before allowing them to completely cool.
8. Always have a multi-purpose extinguisher close by, just in case the fire becomes too big. Do not put water on a grease fire.



**Michelle Hawkins,**  
President  
Vestavia Hills  
Chamber of Commerce

## CHAMBER NEWS

Our 41st I Love America event was incredible with a record-breaking attendance of around 5,500 people. What an amazing night! The rain stayed away, and the temperature was very pleasant. Children were in heaven with all the activities – swimming at the Aquatic Complex, games and inflatables on the ballfield and patriotic face painting and tattoos

by VHHS volunteers and Vestavia Belles. Wald Park was the PERFECT venue for the event! We have so much to celebrate and so much to be thankful for here in Vestavia Hills. On behalf of the Chamber, and along with my fabulous staff, we want to thank all the Chamber businesses who sponsored this event and a special thank you to our Platinum Sponsor, McDonalds The Black Family Restaurants, and our Presenting Sponsors: Royal Automotive, Standard Heating Cooling Plumbing, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, United Community Bank and Vestavia Hills Methodist Church.

An event this size requires tremendous preparation, planning and time. A big shout-out to everyone on the ILA committee of volunteers and to my staff – Tracy Thornton, Annilyn Warner, and especially Katie Woodruff who Chairs the ILA committee.

The evening would not have been possible without the support and partnership of the City of Vestavia Hills, including our elected officials and City staff, especially Parks and Rec and our Police and Fire departments.

We had a terrific evening of musical performances starting with a marvelous rendition of our National Anthem sung by Katherine Arnold followed by a local crowd-pleaser, Lucky LaRue. Jeff and Caitlin Caulk harmonized ideally together as they performed the Armed Forces Medley before the headliner, Chevy 6, took the stage. Then at 8:45pm the lights went out and BOOM – the fireworks show began! And what a fantastic show it was! I believe it is the BEST in Birmingham!

As the summer is wrapping up August brings excitement to Vestavia Hills. With school back in session, the activities are abundant. Here at the Chamber, after skipping our July Luncheon, we will resume on August 8 at 11:30am. We are super excited to have VHCS superintendent, Dr. Todd Freeman. He will present the State of the School System and introduce a special guest from the counseling department of Vestavia Hills Elementary West – Merlin. What a treat this will be! If you are interested in attending, please visit our website [www.vestaviiahills.org](http://www.vestaviiahills.org) ; click on events; then click on Register.

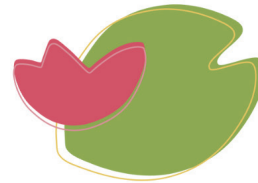
We also just wrapped up our fun summer activity – SHOP. DINE. PLAY. Pig Bingo 2023. The Shop, Dine, and Play pigs are placed around Vestavia Hills at businesses in the community. When you see a pig, remember . . . when you spend your money in Vestavia Hills you are putting your dollars back into the city's piggy bank and that money goes back into improving our streets, parks, schools and other city spaces. Most of these pigs were painted by local school art classes and artists. The game started June 1 and ended on July 31. Visit our website or check us out on Instagram or Facebook @vhchamber to see who won the grand prize valued at over \$1,000! When you follow us remember to like or love our posts, comment and share. Your interaction helps our Vestavia Hills businesses and will drive more traffic into restaurants, retail, professional and service industry establishments, resulting in more dollars back into our City!

When looking for a restaurant, salon, physician, oil and tire service, clothing store, bank, landscaper, etc., be sure to check out all of our Vestavia Hills businesses. We have it here! And I am honored to live and work in this wonderful city we all love!

**Thank You!**  
**19 Years of Dressing Vestavia Hills**



**3140 Heights Village**



**the lili pad**

children's boutique

**3138 Heights Village**

**"where being a Mom just got a little easier."**

## 2023 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TRUSTEES

We would like to gratefully acknowledge our 2023 Chamber Trustees. These businesses and individuals support our Chamber and city at a high level of membership which enables us to support events and projects city-wide. Please let them know how much they are appreciated by visiting/using their products and services and thanking them for their support of Vestavia Hills.



VESTAVIA HILLS  
CHAMBER of COMMERCE  
A LIFE ABOVE

Alabama Power Company, Kimberly Jackson	Harbert Realty Services, Charlie Norton	Senator Dan Roberts	Standard Heating, Cooling & Plumbing, Tyler Kime
America's First Federal Credit Union, Chris Thomas	Hollywood Outdoor Living, Steve Mote	Senator J. T. 'Jabo' Waggoner	Starnes Media, Dan Starnes
ARC Realty - Angela Stevens, Angela Stevens	Jackson, Howard & Whatley, CPAs, Mike Jackson	Sentry Heating, Air Conditioning, Plumbing, Electrical and Generators, Lauren Conklin Trim	Taylor Burton Co., Inc., Taylor Burton
Ascension St. Vincent's, Tommy Cannon	John Henley State Farm Insurance, John Henley	Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Tommy DeRamus	The Welch Group, Beth Moody
Avadian Credit Union, Ashley Wilbanks	KPR - Vestavia City Center, Stan Glantz	Shoe Station, Maury Molyneux	Truist, Steve Vickery
B.L. Harbert International, Ben Nevins	Leaf & Petal, Jamie Pursell	Southern States Bank, Scott Jenkins	United Community Bank, Sean Johnson
BCR Wealth Strategies, LLC, Sandra Cleveland	Liberty Park Joint Venture, LLP, John Bonanno	SouthPoint Bank, Steve Smith	Vestavia Hills Methodist Church, Dr. Bill Brunson
Birmingham Business Alliance, Steve Ammons	Mark W. Macoy, LLC, Mark W. Macoy	SpeedPro Direct, Rob Dowda	Williams Blackstock Architects, PC, Stephen Allen
Birmingham Business Journal, Ginger Gardner Aarons	Mark Yanosky Orthodontics, Dr. Mark R. Yanosky, DMD	Spire, Kelvin Johnson	
Butler Snow LLP, Angie McEwen	McCallum Hoaglund & McCallum LLP, Chip McCallum		
Cahaba Benefits Group, Chad Gay	McDonald's, Jim Black		
Cahaba Mountain Brook Animal Clinic, Dr. Darcy Schofill, DVM	Medicare Advisors of Alabama, Eric Smith		
Cameron Travis & Company, CPAs, Gerry Travis	Method Mortgage, LLC, Roger Steur		
Carr, Riggs & Ingram, CPA, Brian Barksdale	Morgan Properties, LLC, Robin Morgan		
Cellular Sales Authorized Agent of Verizon Wireless, David Surber	Newk's Eatery, Todd Jackson		
Children's of Alabama, Doug Dean	OnTime Service, Kerry Adkins		
Dog U, Calvin Brown	Over the Mountain Journal, Maury Wald		
Eco Three, Jonathan Handey	Overture Tributary, Lisa Bearden		
First Horizon Bank, Donnie Dobbins	Ray & Poynor Properties, Lacey Alford		
First US Bank, Dan Bundy	RealtySouth - Scott Perry, Scott Perry		
Frank S. Buck, PC, Frank Buck	Regions Bank, Daniel Gordon		
Grandview Medical Center, Ashley Mathews	Representative Jim Carns		

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CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITALS  
US News  
2022-23

## PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES

### > Activities for Active Adults (55+)

- **District Masters Games – August 15-17:** The Masters Games of Alabama is a non-profit that promotes seniors' health and engagement through activities. Their annual event is a fun way to make friends and participate. Register at the Civic Center or, to learn more about the organizer, visit <http://www.mastersgamesalabama.org>.
- **National Senior Day Celebration, August 21, 3pm:** Celebrate National Senior Day at the Civic Center! The event will be filled with exciting activities such as live music, dancing and opportunities for fellowship. Join us for a fun-filled day!
- **Health Fair and Wellness Expo – September 7, 9am-1pm:** This year's Health Fair and Wellness Expo will be held at the Civic Center. Take advantage of free flu shots from Publix and speak with Medicare Advisors. The Vestavia Hills Police Department will provide safety information, and the Fire Department will check your blood pressure. Additionally, there will be door prizes available. Don't miss this exciting and educational event!

### > Register NOW for Fall Rec Sports!

Additional information, including season dates, game locations, cost, etc. is available online at [vhparksandrec.com](http://vhparksandrec.com). **To register, visit [https://bit.ly/pr\\_sportsman](https://bit.ly/pr_sportsman).**

#### Youth Softball

- **Registration:** Open now through August 20.
- **More Information:** Contact Bevia Robinson at 205.978.0177 or [brobenson@vhal.org](mailto:brobenson@vhal.org)

#### Youth Baseball

- **Registration:** Open now through August 20.
- **More Information:** Contact Will Harrington at 205.834.5295 or [wharrington@vhal.org](mailto:wharrington@vhal.org)

#### Miracle League

- **Registration:** Open now through August 31.
- **More Information:** Contact Bevia Robinson at 205.978.0177 or [brobenson@vhal.org](mailto:brobenson@vhal.org)

#### Adult Soccer

- **Registration:** Open now through August 10.
- **More Information:** Contact Doug Rogers at 205.978.0178 or [drogers@vhal.org](mailto:drogers@vhal.org)

#### Adult Flag Football

- **Registration:** Open August 17 through September 7.
- **More Information:** Contact Doug Rogers at 205.978.0178 or [drogers@vhal.org](mailto:drogers@vhal.org)

#### Adult Kickball

- **Registration:** Open August 28 through September 18.
- **More Information:** Contact Doug Rogers at 205.978.0178 or [drogers@vhal.org](mailto:drogers@vhal.org)

## SHRED & RECYCLE DAY

**Saturday, September 9, 2023**

**8am-Noon**

**Vestavia Hills Civic Center**

**1090 Montgomery Highway, 35216**



The Vestavia Hills Shred & Recycle Day drop off will be in the parking lot at the Vestavia Hills Civic Center (adjacent to City Hall). Items will be collected from 8am to noon (or until capacity is reached).

**Items available to be collected include:** electronics and household hazardous waste. (Proof of Vestavia Hills residency is required for hazardous waste disposal.) Paper shredding services will also be available and Vestavia Hills police officers will be on-site to collect unneeded or expired medications for disposal. (Needles will NOT be accepted.)

**Electronic items to be accepted include:** PCs and laptops; servers; cell phones and tablets; satellite and cable boxes; gaming systems and components; stereos and radios; switches and firewalls; printers and fax machines; VCRs and DVD players; remote controls; MP3 players; A/C adapters and other cables; LCD monitors; CRT monitors\*; ink and toner cartridges; rechargeable batteries; hard drives, including external drives\*; speakers; cameras; modems and routers; CD players; small kitchen appliances; consumer electronics; battery backups; keyboards and mice; stand-alone copiers\*; and TVs\* (\*Fee required for the disposal of these items: hard drive and CRT monitors: \$10 each; televisions: \$20 each)

**Household hazardous waste items to be accepted include:** paint; batteries (household and automotive); light bulbs; and pesticides. Paint and pesticides MUST be in their original containers or they will NOT be accepted. Proof of Vestavia Hills residency required for hazardous waste disposal.

**Not accepted:** large appliances; wooden console TVs; gas; gas cans\*; paint/pesticides NOT in their original container

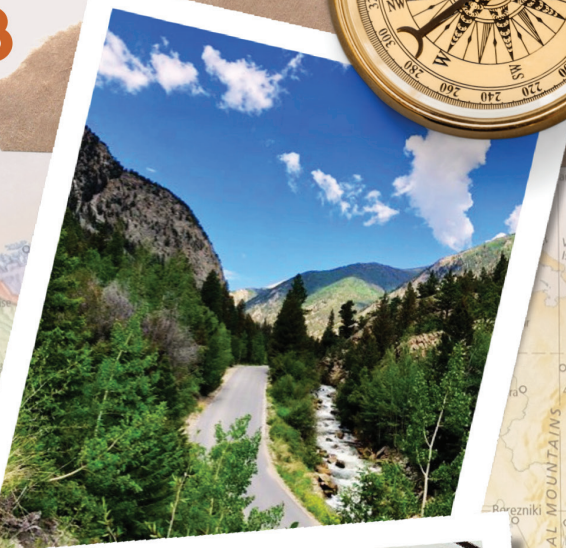
\*Empty gas cans will be collected with your household trash. Be sure to remove the lid/nozzle and place the items in your trash cart. Unemptied gas cans may be left open until the gas evaporates. Be sure the can is open in a well-ventilated area. If you are unsure about how to safely allow the gas to evaporate, contact VHFD at 205.978.0225.

**Special thanks to: PROTEC Recycling; Amwaste; Gone for Good (a program of United Ability); and the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce.**

# SOLO TRAVEL FOR WOMEN

## Explore the World

Sea **August 8**  
**6:30 PM**



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**Ages 18+**

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*Vestavia Methodist*

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**8:30 & 11:00 (TRADITIONAL)**

**11:00 (CONTEMPORARY)**

**9:45 (WORD & TABLE SERVICE)**