

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills

October · November · December 2024

A joint publication of the City of Vestavia Hills & Vestavia Hills City Schools

From Mayor Ashley Curry Happy Fall!

In this season of change, I would like to share some of the great things happening in Vestavia Hills:

October:

- The Vestavia Hills Arts Council will present its annual ARTStober event beginning September 29 at City Hall. As in the past, art will be displayed on the first and second floors of City Hall. This exciting showcase of talents will be on display during regular business hours through November 1.
- Construction of the Highway 31 pedestrian bridge is well underway. This project was conceived some 20 years ago and has gone through several design phases prior to the current plan approved by the Alabama Department of Transportation.
- Development of the new Waldo's Chicken, Big Bad Breakfast, Guthrie's and other retail businesses is in progress on the south end of Highway 31.
- Significant construction is ongoing at the Bray in Liberty Park and the headquarters for Medical Properties Trust.

November:

- Mark your calendar for two events to honor our veterans: "Salute to Veterans" will be Thursday, November 7, at the Vestavia Hills Civic Center. This event will feature patriotic music performed by groups from multiple Vestavia Hills City Schools, veteran support groups, vendors and guest speaker Rear Admiral W. Kent Davis, USN (Retired), the current Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Veteran Affairs. A second event will be held on Friday, November 9, at New Merkel House in Cahaba Heights. The NMH event is a smaller, more intimate event but both are a wonderful tribute to the men and women who have served our country in all branches of the military, Coast Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine. Without the freedoms they fought for, we would not be able to live in a country that allows the quality of life we enjoy. We should never forget the sacrifices made by our veterans. We must remember and honor the service of our current and past military members.
- In my State of the City address to the Chamber of Commerce on November 12, I will reference a report by AreaVibes, an online service that rates cities across the country. According to this service, a city's livability is based on the quality of life the city offers. The higher the livability score, the better the city. Vestavia Hills has again been listed as the #1 city for livability in Alabama.
- On November 16, the annual Deck the Heights event will be held in Cahaba Heights. This event, held at the Heights Village, will feature arts, crafts, pop-up shops, food and activities.
- As always, November is the month that we will celebrate Thanksgiving. We are thankful for the blessings bestowed upon us. This Thanksgiving, we should celebrate our storied history, our city's quality of life and our school system's continued excellence.

(Continued on page 2)

Salute to Veterans

Honoring Those Who Served ★★☆☆

Thursday, November 7, 2024

Vestavia Hills Civic Center
1090 Montgomery Highway, 35216

1pm Open House & Resource Fair

2pm Program & Keynote Address

Mayor Ashley Curry and the City of Vestavia Hills are proud to host a celebration honoring veterans from all service branches. Enjoy light refreshments, entertainment and patriotic-themed programming, booths featuring information and services for veterans, antique military vehicles and more. This year's keynote speaker is Rear Admiral W. Kent Davis, USN, (Retired). Local World War II veterans, Joe Hicks and Malcolm Miller, will also be recognized.

Send us your artwork! The Vestavia Hills Arts Council is hosting an artwork competition in partnership with Salute to Veterans. For more information, including art contest details, visit <https://vhal.org/community/city-events>.

Share your photos! We would love to include veteran photos of you or a family member in our event video. To participate, email a scanned photo of yourself, family members or friends who have served or are currently serving in any branch of the military to eanderson@vhal.org. Please include: (1) service member's first & last name; (2) military rank; (3) branch of service; (4) military conflict/ theater of operation; and (5) dates of military service (if available).

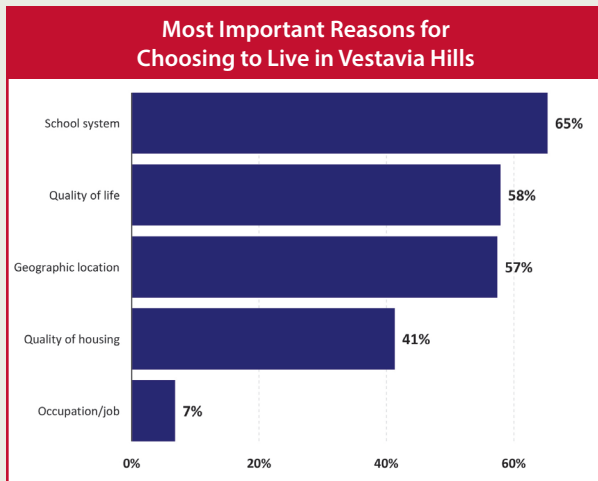
If you previously submitted a photo, no need to resubmit.

We hope to see you there!

Healthy Tension

Collaboration and sharing of best practices are keys to any successful venture from my perspective. I am proud to share a collaborative spirit with my colleague, Vestavia Hills City Schools Superintendent Dr. Todd Freeman. Dr. Freeman and I have a standing meeting every two weeks. Our collaboration is all about a mutual respect for each other's organization. We don't step on each other's toes in the process. Instead, we use this time to share thoughts on how to make our city a better place.

It often amazes me when I am approached by residents with certain misunderstandings about the City of Vestavia Hills and Vestavia Hills City Schools. Some people think we are a joint entity. The fact is that we are totally separate entities with no authority over one another. Regardless of this reinforced fact, we both acknowledge that we have to work together, while taking direction from our governing bodies, to achieve the most ideal community for our residents.

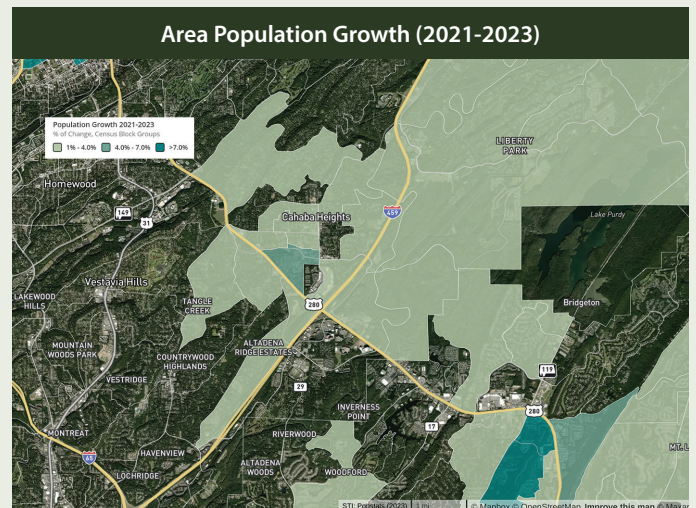


In this issue, Dr. Freeman shares a philosophical principle that guides him regarding the term “tension.” He elaborately explains this concept from pastor and author Andy Stanley’s recent podcast. In my words, the presence of tension within or between organizations is a good thing. The word tension generally denotes a negative presence of disagreement. In this instance, I agree with Dr. Freeman and Pastor Stanley, that tension is simply the healthy pressure between competing interests that, when coupled with open and transparent discussions, results in a positive outcome. Dr. Freeman and I talk frequently about the healthy tensions between certain City objectives and the ability of the Vestavia Hills City Schools to accomplish its primary goal of educating our children. We are both keenly aware that the parents of these students chose to live in Vestavia Hills primarily due to the strength of the school system.

Just as Dr. Freeman references the tension involved in our entities’ budgets, tension

also exists in many ongoing situations within our treasured community. While schools are the primary reason residents choose to live in Vestavia Hills, quality of life is a very close second. If our residents want both of these characteristics for their community, schools and city government have to both succeed and be supported by the community. Several facets of this tension are:

- The eastern areas of our city are growing more rapidly than the western areas of our city.
 - How do the City and School System manage demands for services in an equitable manner for all aspects – education, public safety, quality of life and infrastructure?
 - Is the population growth manageable for City and School System facilities?



Mayor Ashley Curry’s Message (Continued from page 1)

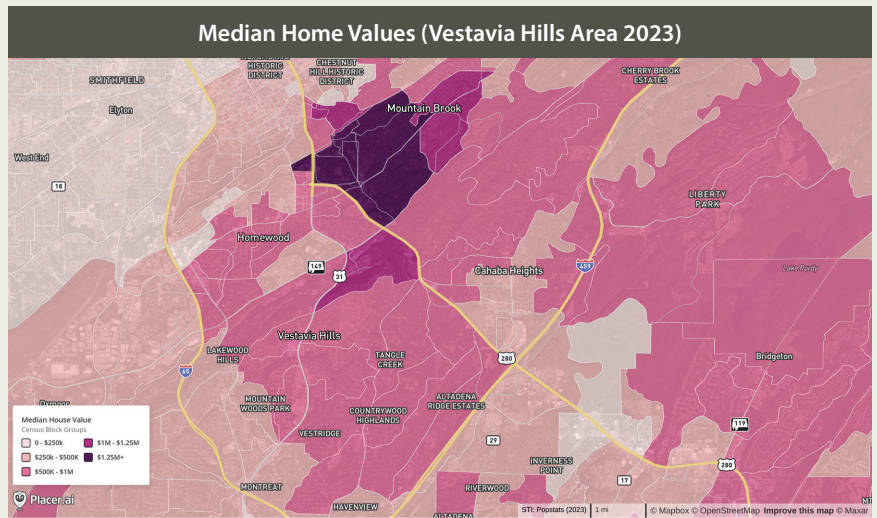
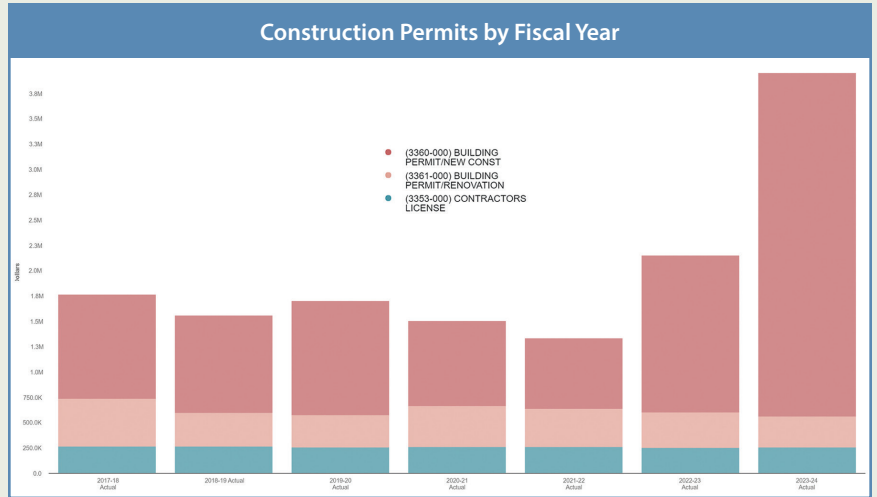
December:

- In December, join the City and the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce by participating in the numerous Holiday in the Hills events, including the Tree Lighting Festival, Holiday Parade and Breakfast with Santa. For more information, including the complete list of events, dates, times and locations, visit <https://vhal.org/community/city-events>.

I wish you all good health and a safe and prosperous holiday season as you celebrate with family and friends. I ask that you remember those that are less fortunate by supporting any of the many agencies that care for these individuals.

Our city is on the right track for continued improvement. But as Will Rogers said, “even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.” I fully expect our city to keep moving forward and maintain the excellence we all expect.

- Significant revenues are being generated from new construction activity.
 - Does this increased revenue source significantly inform long-term capital plans?
 - Can the anticipated new long-term revenues support City and School System strategic plans?
- The strong and stable real estate values in Vestavia Hills are superior to other areas of our geographic region.
 - This is the result of our outstanding and enviable education system. How do we sustain such a valuable asset?
 - As a beneficiary of the strong real estate values stemming from the education system, how does the City effectively collaborate with the City School System while sustaining our quality-of-service provision?



These statements and questions do present tension. However, it is a healthy tension informed by collaboration and clear communication and will result in a positive outcome. I contend that these types of efforts are dynamic and will continue to be a hallmark of our community, city government and education system.

Tension and pressure create diamonds and the future is bright for Vestavia Hills!



Scooter Safety

Scooters are everywhere these days. **Help keep your child safe by sharing these safety tips:**

- > **Wear a Helmet**
A helmet is essential for head protecting in case of a fall or collision. Make sure it fits correctly and is secured firmly.
- > **Wear Protective Clothing**
Long sleeves and pants, as well as knee and elbow pads, can help protect from cuts and scrapes.
- > **Follow Traffic Laws**
Obey traffic signs, stay below the speed limit and yield to pedestrians – give pedestrians the right of way and slow down or stop if necessary.
- > **Check Your Ride**
Regularly check the tire pressure, tighten loose bolts and make sure the battery is charged.
- > **Keep Your Eyes on the Road**
Avoid looking at the deck, your foot or the handles while riding.
- > **Ride Solo**
Never ride tandem.
- > **Stay Off the Phone**
Don't use your phone while driving.
- > **Slow Down!**
Slow down before looking back or turning.

From School Superintendent Dr. Todd Freeman

Learning Without Limits

The Vestavia Hills City Schools Board of Education recently approved its budget for fiscal year 2025, which begins October 1. It is said that a budget is the “financial expression of the philosophy of a school system.” The 2024-25 budget reflects the commitment to our mission to provide every student the opportunity to learn without limits. You can learn more about our budget at www.vhcs.us/finance.

Author and Pastor Andy Stanley says, “Tension is a natural and necessary part of successful organizations.” While the word tension typically has a negative connotation, in this case it is viewed as a positive. The idea of “healthy tension” is no more evident than in the development of a budget where there are competing needs. The VHCS budget, for example, prioritizes having excellent staff and premium education experiences for our students. Conversely, other needs, such as improvements to facilities, are not funded at the level we know is necessary.

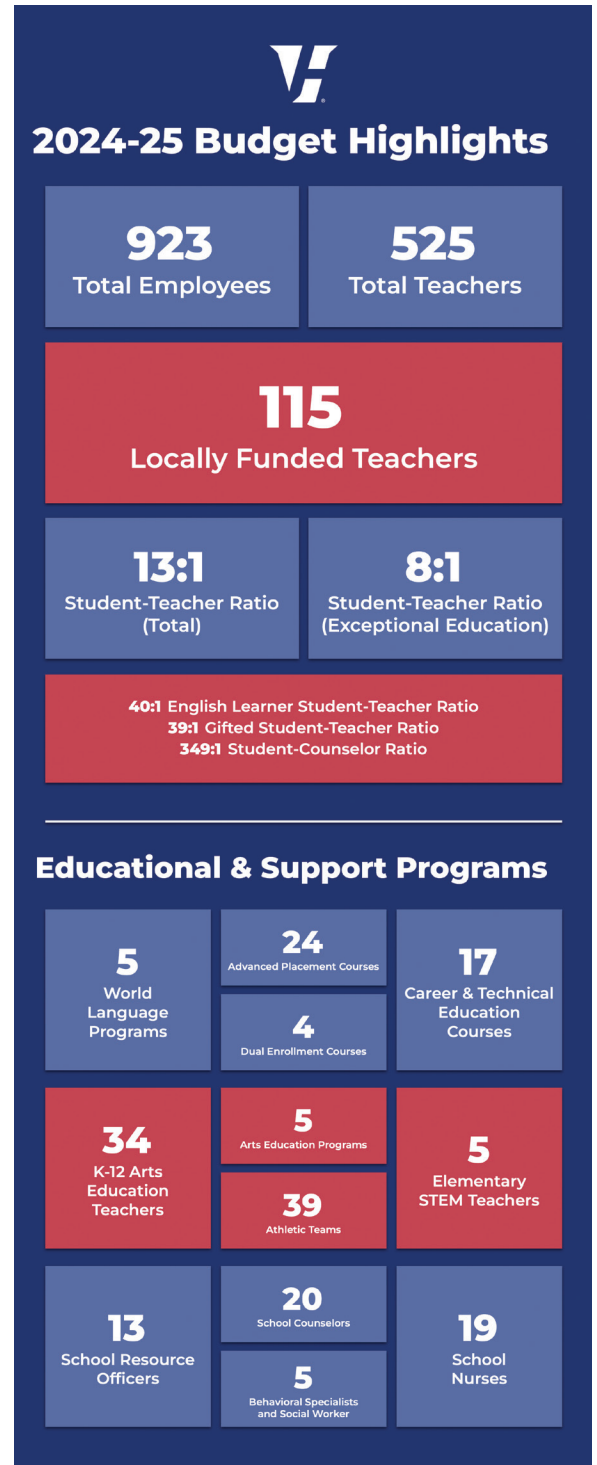
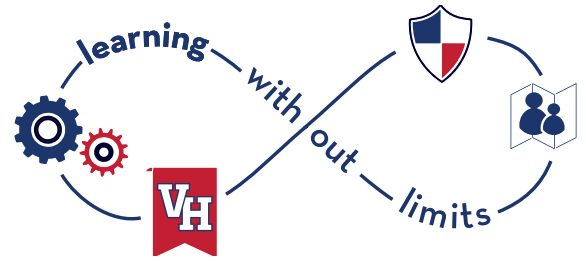
This year, the state is providing supplemental funds to help with a few of our facility needs. In addition, the Vestavia Hills City Council recently appropriated funding over three years for improvements to some of our school facilities which are also used for Parks and Recreation programming. The school system also benefits from this Shared Spaces agreement by having the ability to use the Aquatic Complex and Civic Center.

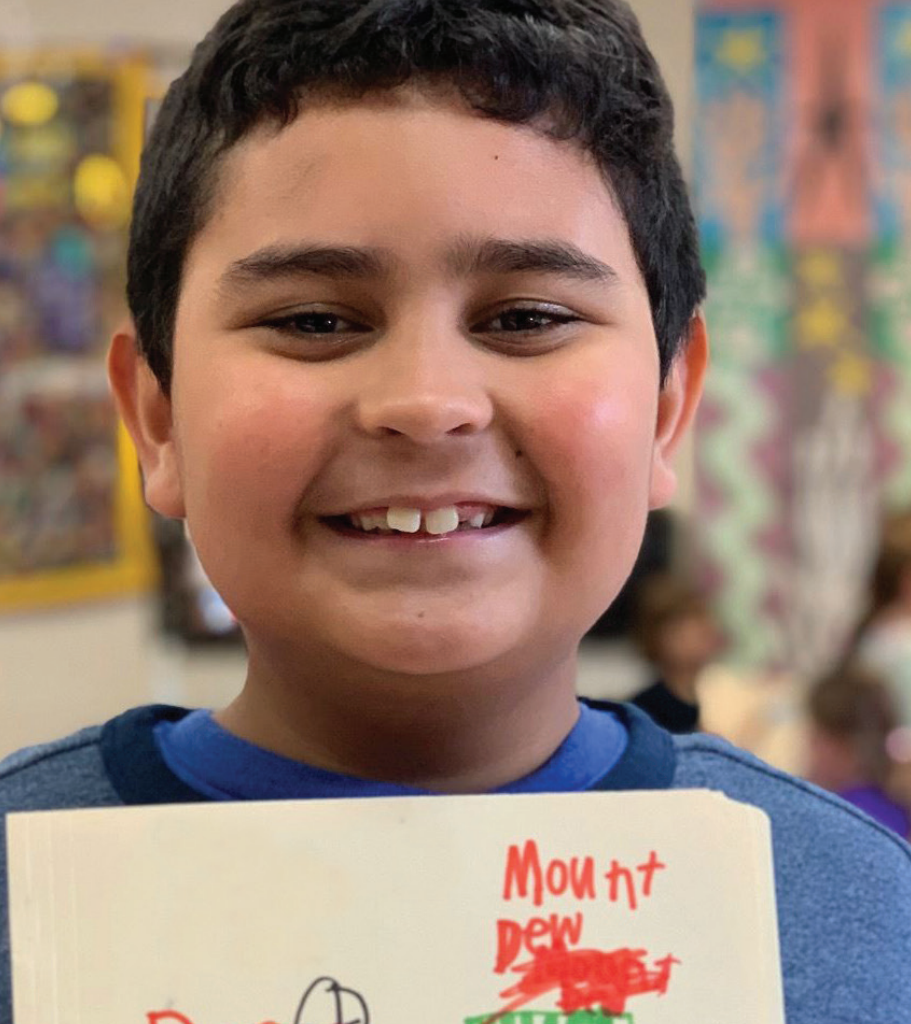
While the City of Vestavia Hills and VHCS are separate government bodies, both are intricately linked. The success of one contributes to the success of the other. Our united mission is to make Vestavia Hills a desirable place to live and learn. Because the goals we are expected to accomplish are very different, we must be intentional to manage healthy tensions. One example is the conundrum of economic development: High quality schools are an economic driver for the city, and a robust economy affords premium learning opportunities in our schools.

Because VHCS is funded mostly by local property taxes, residential and commercial developments financially benefit the school system. That benefit can lead to expanding educational experiences that students need and desire; broadening the level of support to confront the challenges our students face; and keeping the best teachers and staff to carry out the work of the schools. Our budget highlights examples of this.

Property developments, on the other hand, can impact the number of children that will attend the school system. This can lead to the need for more staff and additional facilities. Careful, intentional planning can manage this tension. One such example of this is how the City of Vestavia Hills and VHCS worked together to plan for the impacts of The Bray in Liberty Park. Should there be a future need for an additional elementary school, the master plan includes space for it. The revenues generated from The Bray, in turn, will provide the school system with opportunities to continue increasing value in the education our students receive.

In this newsletter, you will find other ways to support VHCS and its partners in the many important ways we seek to provide every student the opportunity to learn without limits.





LEGACY

Introducing 1Legacy: A Network for Vestavia Hills City Schools

1Legacy is a dedicated network of Vestavia Hills City Schools alumni and community members committed to supporting our schools. Through fostering connections within the community and investing in school programs, 1Legacy offers a unique way to give back to the district that has given so much to your family—past and future.

Community engagement can take many forms, including contributing time, sharing talents or providing financial support.

Stay tuned for more information coming in early 2025.

For any questions about this innovative approach to community engagement, please reach out to the 1Legacy coordinator, Ali Pilcher, at 1legacy@vhcs.us.

Investing in Arts Education


Vestavia Hills City Schools (VHCS) continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to arts education in the 2024-2025 school year. With an investment of over \$650,000 in facilities, operations and program supports, the district is nurturing the creative talents of 5,010 K-12 students engaged in various art programs.

The arts program in VHCS is robust, featuring 34 dedicated K-12 arts education teachers and offering 40 distinct arts courses at the middle and high school levels. Some 50% of 6th-12th grade students in Vestavia Hills participate in arts programs.

Recent improvements to arts facilities have been significant. The 2023-2024 school year saw upgrades to band rooms, theatre facilities and the addition of choir risers. Looking ahead to 2024-2025, plans include theatre rigging enhancements, more choir risers, and kiln upgrades. These improvements, coupled with operational funding for instruments, travel and professional development, ensure that students will have access to quality resources and experiences.

Learning without limits is possible when we experience the level of unparalleled community support that we have here in Vestavia Hills. Our arts education and athletics programs are funded almost exclusively through event ticket sales, participation fees and fundraising efforts. You can learn more about budgets for these programs by visiting our website at www.vhcs.us.

For those interested in supporting the arts in Vestavia Hills City Schools, Director of Arts Education Faith Lenhart (lenhartfc@vhcs.us) is available to discuss contribution opportunities.



2024-25 Arts Education Funding

\$650,000+

Board Funding for Arts Facility Maintenance, Operations, and Program Supports in 2024-25

<h3 style="margin: 0;">5,010</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">K-12 Students in the Arts</p>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">34</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">K-12 Arts Education Teachers</p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">40</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">Middle & High School Arts Courses</p>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">50%</h3> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">Percentage of 6th-12th Graders in Arts Programs</p>

2023-24 Improvements
Band Room Upgrades
Theatre Upgrades
Choir Risers

2024-25 Improvements
Theatre Rigging
Choir Risers
Kiln Upgrades



Rebels helping Rebels

Need a little help?

Financial assistance is available for school-related costs.

Rebels Helping Rebels

A grace fund that helps financially support Vestavia Hills students in grades K-12. The fund primarily pays for school-related fees for various activities. The goal of Rebels Helping Rebels is to ensure that cost is not a reason why a student would not participate in a school activity or has the supplies they need to be successful.

DONATE NOW

www.vhcs.us/RebelsHelpingRebels

Don't Invite VHFD to Dinner!

Attention will soon turn to families and food for the holidays. How many people are coming for dinner? How many sweet potatoes do I need? While these are all good questions, the Vestavia Hills Fire Department wants you to ask yourself ... How can I safely cook my meal for a "kitchen-fire-free" holiday?

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and injuries. Keep these tips in mind while cooking this holiday season:

- Always stay in the kitchen when frying, broiling, grilling or boiling food. If you leave the kitchen for any reason, turn the stove off.
- Use a timer as a reminder to check cooking food regularly.
- Keep all flammable materials away from your stove, including oven mitts, towels, clothing, food packaging, etc.
- Do not cook when sleepy. Many kitchen fires start when people start cooking and then fall asleep while planning to "just rest for a few minutes."
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove top to avoid bumping or pulling them over.

If you have a small fire on a stove, cover the pan with a lid and turn off the burner. **DO NOT put water on a grease fire.** If you have a small fire in the oven, turn it off and leave the door closed. If all else fails, get out of the house, close the door behind you and call 911 from outside!

Stay safe, Vestavia Hills!



Mark your calendar for this year's
Holiday in the Hills events!

For more information, visit
<https://vhal.org/community/city-events>.

Monday, November 18 Holiday Photo Booth Opens

Regular library hours

Reservation required: [appt.link/holidaystudio](https://vhal.org/community/city-events)

Library in the Forest

1021 Montgomery Highway

(Open until January 4, 2025)

Tuesday, December 3 Tree Lighting Festival

6pm

City Hall Complex

1032 Montgomery Highway

Thursday, December 5 All is Bright

6-8pm

Vestavia City Center

700 Montgomery Highway

Sunday, December 8 Holiday Parade & Party in the Park

2pm

Liberty Park (Rain Date: December 15)

Tuesday, December 10 Family Night with Santa

6pm

Library in the Forest

1021 Montgomery Highway

Saturday, December 14 Breakfast with Santa

7:30-10am

Civic Center

1090 Montgomery Highway

Thursday, December 19 Gingerbread House Contest

4pm

Library in the Forest

1021 Montgomery Highway

Monday, December 30 Menorah Lighting

5:30pm

City Hall

1032 Montgomery Highway

Calendar of Events

October 2024

- 1-31 ARTStober Art Exhibit**, City Hall, during regular business hours
- 1 Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm *(rescheduled from 10/3)*
- 2 Health Fair**, Civic Center, 9am
- 3 Community Night Out**, City Hall, 5pm *(rain date 10/24)*
- 8 Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 10 Planning and Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 14 Columbus Day**
- 14 Senior Citizens Association Luncheon**, Civic Center, Dogwood Room, 11:30am
- 14 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 15 Parks and Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 17 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 19 Haunt the Hills**, Wald Park, 4:30pm
- 21 Vestavia Hills Historical Society**, Council Chamber, 2pm
- 21 Council Work Session**, Council Chamber 6pm
- 26 Halloween in the Heights**, Cahaba Heights, 10am
- 27 Carnival in the Forest**, Library in the Forest, 3-5pm
- 28 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 31 Halloween**

November 2024

- 3 Daylight Savings Time Ends**
- 4 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm *(rescheduled from 11/11)*
- 7 Salute to Veterans Celebration**, Civic Center, 1pm
- 7 Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 8 City of Vestavia Hills Incorporation Anniversary (1950)**
- 8 Veterans Day Celebration**, New Merkel House, 11am
- 11 Municipal Offices Closed** in observance of Veterans Day
- 12 Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 14 Planning and Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 16 Deck the Heights**, Cahaba Heights, 2pm
- 18 Council Work Session**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 19 Parks and Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 21 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 25 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 28-29 Municipal Offices Closed** in observance of Thanksgiving*
* *Sanitation holiday – Amwaste closed Thursday ONLY; Thursday and Friday routes will be serviced on a one-day delay*

December 2024

- 3 Tree Lighting Festival**, City Hall Complex, 6pm
- 5 Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 8 Holiday Parade & Party in the Park**, Liberty Park, 2pm *(rain date 15)*
- 9 Senior Citizens Association Luncheon**, Civic Center, Dogwood Room, 11:30am
- 9 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 10 Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 12 Planning and Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 14 Breakfast with Santa**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 16 Council Work Session**, Council Chamber 5pm
- 16 City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm *(rescheduled from 12/23)*
- 17 Parks and Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 19 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 24-25 Municipal Offices Closed** in observance of Christmas
- 30 Menorah Lighting**, City Hall, 5:30pm
- 12/31-1/1 Municipal Offices Closed** in observance of New Year's

For additional event dates or to subscribe to the City calendar, visit vhal.org/calendar.



Health Fair & Wellness Expo:

Wednesday, 10/2 – 9am-noon

Join us at the Civic Center – FREE flu shots from Publix, Medicare advisors, VHFD checking blood pressure, door prizes and more!

Senior Luncheon: Monday, 10/14 – 12pm

Enjoy a delicious lunch for only \$8 per person. Bring your friends!

Lunch Bunch & Trip: Lake Guntersville: Thursday, 10/17 – 8am

Tour and shop in the area, then eat lunch at Pinecrest Dining Room. Meet at the Civic Center at 8am. Transportation provided.

Active Adults Fall Festival at New Merkel House: Thursday, 10/31 – 10am

Join us for a spooky day of Halloween-themed games and snacks. Be sure to wear your best costume!

Salute to Veterans Celebration: Thursday, 11/7 – 1pm

All are invited to attend this celebration honoring veterans from

all service branches. Enjoy patriotic-themed entertainment, visit booths with information and services for veterans, check out the antique military vehicles and more.

Veterans Day Celebration at New Merkel House: Friday, 11/8 – 10am

Enjoy a celebration of veterans followed by refreshments.

Senior Luncheon & Christmas Party: Monday, 12/9 – 12pm

Enjoy a delicious lunch for only \$8 per person. Bring your friends!

Active Adults Christmas Lights & Dessert Tour: Tuesday, 12/17 – 4:30pm

Enjoy a festive tour of local Christmas light displays followed by hot chocolate and dessert by the fire at New Merkel House. Transportation provided – pickup at the Civic Center at 4:30pm and New Merkel House at 5pm.

Active Adults Christmas Party at New Merkel House: Friday, 12/20 – 10am

New Merkel House is the place to be for a jolly day of holiday-themed games and snacks. Be sure to wear your best holiday attire!

For more information about any of these programs or events, call 205.978.0166 or visit www.vhparksandrec.com



Marked
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024
WALD PARK

PRESENTED BY



TRICK-OR-TREAT ON THE GRAND LAWN WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES & ENJOY GAMES & INFLATABLES FROM 4:30-6:00 PM!

DRESS IN YOUR BEST FAMILY-FRIENDLY COSTUME FOR A COSTUME CONTEST. BRING YOUR CARVED PUMPKIN TO ENTER IN THE PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST. CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT 6:15 PM.

DON'T FORGET A CHAIR OR BLANKET TO WATCH A FAMILY HALLOWEEN MOVIE AT 6:30 PM.

VISIT VESTAVIAHILLS.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION



VESTAVIA HILLS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

presents

History of a Historical Home:

413 Sunset Drive

Monday, October 21 at 2pm – Vestavia Hills City Hall

Speaker Ben Burford will share the history of his home. The home, built in 1951, is Vestavia Hills' newest historical site.



COMMUNITY NEWS

1032 Montgomery Highway
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

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VESTAVIA HILLS LIBRARY IN THE FOREST

Friends of the Library
present

DOLORES HYDOCK
The Storytelling of Norman Rockwell

OCTOBER 24, 2024 | 10:30 AM

TICKETS \$20

BUY ONLINE: VHLIBRARYFOUNDATION.ORG OR AT THE LIBRARY

**HOLIDAY
PHOTO
STUDIO**

RETURNS NOVEMBER 18, 2024

APPT.LINK/HOLIDAYSTUDIO