

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills

July · August · September 2025

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

From Mayor Ashley Curry

Fireworks, Fun & Community Spirit

I hope you had the chance to attend the 43rd annual I Love America Night on Thursday, June 26 at Wald Park! This beloved event, sponsored by the City and the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce, is the largest gathering of the year. It's a fun-filled evening with free swimming at the Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex, exciting activities for kids, a variety of food vendors, live music on the lawn, and, of course, a spectacular fireworks show to end the night. This event is typically attended by 5,000+ people and is a wonderful community celebration.

In other exciting news, we're seeing new development on the south end of town. Recently, Big Bad Breakfast, Waldo's Chicken and Beer, and Guthrie's Chicken have all opened on Highway 31. Stay tuned for more updates on the ongoing growth and development in this area!

As we celebrate our nation's independence, it's important to keep safety top of mind. Here are a few reminders:

- **Fireworks:** This holiday sees a significant spike in fireworks-related injuries. Be careful and remember ... Fireworks are illegal in Vestavia Hills!
- **Vehicle Accidents:** Drive safely! July 4 is one of the deadliest days on the road. Increased travel raises the potential for accidents.
- **Water-related Incidents:** Boating and swimming accidents tend to rise during this time of year, so always be cautious on the water.

Looking ahead, I want to share some exciting news from the Vestavia Hills Historical Society. As mentioned in our previous *Community News*, we are gearing up for the city's 75th anniversary celebration, which will take place on October 2, 2025. As part of the preparations, we're recruiting new members to help document and preserve the rich history of our city. Volunteers from every area of Vestavia Hills are encouraged to join, and we are particularly seeking individuals from Liberty Park and Cahaba Heights. These areas, which were annexed in 1992 and 2002 respectively, have played a vital role in our city's growth. Your historical knowledge will be invaluable in helping us tell the full story of Vestavia Hills. If you'd like to get involved, please reach out to the Historical Society or apply online at <https://vhal.org/vh-historical-society>.

One of the most important events coming up is our Patriot Day 9/11 Ceremony in September. This year, we will honor the nearly 3,000 victims of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93, which tragically crashed in Pennsylvania. We will also remember the 4,000 additional victims who have died in the years since, many as a result of their service during the recovery efforts and cleanup.

For many of our younger citizens, 9/11 is something they've only learned about through history books or videos. They didn't witness the horror of that day—the dark smoke against the clear blue sky, the sound of sirens echoing through the streets, or the heartbreaking images of people leaping from the towers. I, for one, will never forget that day, and I'm sure many of you feel the same.

We must also remember the incredible sacrifices made by first responders who rushed into the chaos, selflessly putting their own lives at risk to save others. Their bravery and compassion are qualities that should never be forgotten.



Meet Engine 3

The Vestavia Hills Fire Department is excited to introduce the newest member of our fleet – Engine 3 – now actively responding to calls and serving the community. Housed at Station 3, right next to Vestavia Hills High School, this state-of-the-art fire engine replaces a 2008 model, which will now serve in a reserve capacity.

Engine 3 is the first of three new engines we'll receive this year, all custom-built to meet our department's high standards. A dedicated team from VHFD worked tirelessly on the design to ensure each engine is fully equipped to handle the demands of emergency response.

We're especially proud to showcase the "VH" logo on the back of the truck. Thank you to the Vestavia Hills school system for allowing us to honor our community's school spirit. **We are incredibly proud of our community and its students – this engine rides in your honor!**

From City Manager Jeff Downes

Finish!

As a longtime City Manager, I take great pride in seeing projects through to completion. Despite the noise of social media rants and public skepticism about government efficiency, I believe Vestavia Hills has consistently demonstrated its ability to tackle complex projects and deliver results. At the same time, we move decisively on simpler initiatives to keep our community thriving.

I often hold back when I hear criticism from those who may not fully understand the institutional barriers that impact delivery of government projects. These barriers include lengthy competitive bidding processes that require accepting the lowest bid – sometimes at the expense of quality – as well as the complexities of working across multiple jurisdictions, navigating cultural differences between agencies, and dealing with legacy issues like incomplete site infrastructure records. Yet, in every case, we stay focused on doing what's best for our community.

As City Manager, my job is to turn the vision and priorities of our elected officials into reality. That means implementing capital projects that help create an exceptional community and ensure high-quality city services.

As summer winds down, I'm proud to share that many of our most complex and challenging projects are nearing completion. These milestones reflect the hard work of our team and the leadership of our Mayor and City Council – and they deserve to be celebrated. While this isn't a complete list, I'd like to highlight a few of the key projects we're bringing across the finish line:

Altadena Valley Park

Annexed on September 28, 2015, this property serves as a 70-acre passive park bordered by a 22-acre subdivision. Improvements include a restroom facility, pavilion and parking lot.

Crosshaven Drive

Work included road widening, turn lane installation, utility relocation, drainage improvement, signal modification and sidewalk installation to improve traffic flow and promote pedestrian connectivity.

Pedestrian Bridge

Spanning across Highway 31 in the vicinity of Wald Park and the Library in the Forest to provide a link to the existing sidewalk system that connects existing community features/amenities, and to improve the overall mobility and safety of pedestrians crossing Highway 31.

Police Vehicles

VHPD's 1:1 vehicle policy was adopted in FY 2022. The fleet is now complete and allows officers to take their squad car home, improving response time and reducing the amount of wear and tear on the fleet.



Celebrating 75 Years!

Vestavia Hills was officially incorporated on November 8, 1950, with a population of just under 600 residents. Now, 75 years later, the City has grown and evolved in remarkable ways. But how did it all get started?

George Ward was the mayor of Birmingham in the early 1900s and made frequent trips to Italy and Greece. He was particularly impressed by the Temple of Vesta in Rome and, after purchasing 20 acres of wooded property on the summit of Shades Mountain, Mr. Ward commissioned an architect to design a home for him that resembled the temple. Upon completion in 1925, Mr. Ward called his home "Vestavia" – named after Vesta, the Roman goddess of hearth, and "via," meaning "by the roadway." The area around his home later developed into a thriving suburban city known today as Vestavia Hills.

Following construction of his home, Mr. Ward commissioned a garden gazebo that resembled the Temple of Sibyl at Tivoli. This gazebo, now known as Sibyl Temple, overlooked the valley below and served as the entrance to his bird sanctuary. Following George Ward's death in 1940, Vestavia Hills Baptist Church purchased the property



Blue Lake Roundabout

Located at the intersection of Sicard Hollow Road and Blue Lake Drive; built in partnership with Jefferson County to improve the overall safety and operations of the intersection.



Fire Engines

The first of three new engines to be delivered this year, this state-of-the-art fire engine replaces a 2008 model, which will now serve in a reserve capacity.



Pine Ridge Mine Reclamation at SHAC

Former mine site surrounding SHAC; redeveloped and revitalized as a part of the Pine Ridge Mine Reclamation Project funded by the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization program; various capital projects are being considered for this property to meet the service demands of this growing area.



Wald Park

Renovations included an Aquatic Complex with leisure & competition pools; baseball complex with turfed baseball fields, adjacent batting cages & field house; Miracle League Field; two inclusive playgrounds; multi-purpose Grand Lawn; tennis courts; pickleball courts; dog park; and walking trails.

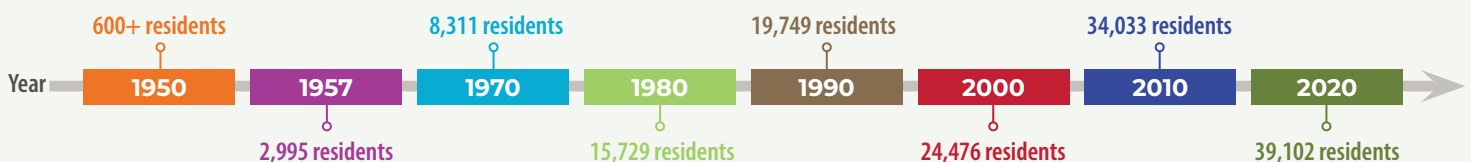
in 1958. The house was demolished in 1971, but the temple was spared. In 1976, the Vestavia Hills Garden Club relocated the temple to its current location near the intersection of U.S. Highway 31 and Shades Crest Road. This iconic landmark serves as a gateway to the northern entrance of the City and its image appears in the official seal of Vestavia Hills along with the words, “Unity, Prosperity, Family.”

In 1946, Charles Byrd planned and initiated the development of Vestavia Hills as a subdivision. It was originally designed to accommodate approximately 1,000 residents. The City was incorporated on November 8, 1950 with a population of just over 600 residents. From 1956 to 1966, commercial development sprang

up along the Montgomery Highway corridor and annexations were made to the south of the City’s boundaries. By 1970, the City of Vestavia Hills had reached a total of 8,311 residents.

Establishment of the Vestavia Hills City Schools system in 1970, as well as the opening of the Red Mountain Expressway in 1977, spurred continued growth. The significant annexation of the Rocky Ridge and Altadena areas in the 1980s, Liberty Park in 1992 and Cahaba Heights in 2002 expanded both the population base, now numbering approximately 39,000 residents, and the commercial base of the City of Vestavia Hills.

**We hope to see you at the 75th anniversary celebration
Thursday, October 2, 2025 at 5pm at City Hall!**



EXCELLENCE *in City Schools*

The Vestavia Hills High School Class of 2025 concluded their high school careers with exceptional achievements across academics, arts and community service. The distinguished graduating class has built upon the school's tradition of excellence while setting new records in scholarship awards and academic recognition.

Community Service & Philanthropy Lead the Way

The Class of 2025 demonstrated remarkable commitment to community service throughout their senior year. 36 graduates earned AP with WE Service recognition from the College Board after collecting more than 6,000 books for the Alabama Books for the Black Belt Campaign. Additionally, Youth Leadership students contributed over 5,000 service hours to various community initiatives. In one of their most significant philanthropic efforts, 1,328 students participated in RISE (Rebels Inspiring Service and Excellence) and raised an impressive \$216,870 for the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB.

Arts Excellence Recognized Statewide

The creative talents of the Class of 2025 earned widespread recognition, with 110 graduates earning the Arts Achievement Seal on their diplomas. The class' artistic accomplishments include 42 students earning All-State music honors and seven students receiving state visual arts awards. Theatre students also garnered recognition at both state and national levels for their exceptional performances. Adding to their impressive arts legacy, the Rebelettes dance team captured both state and national championship titles, representing the pinnacle of performance excellence.

Academic Dominance Across Multiple Disciplines

Vestavia Hills High School students continued the school's tradition of academic excellence with outstanding performances in competitive academic programs. 29 students participated in Youth Legislature, where they were collectively recognized as the Most Outstanding Delegation. The school's Mock Trial program sent three teams to the state tournament, achieving both second place and state champion finishes. The Math Team maintained its dominance by repeating as state champions while also winning additional out-of-state and international competitions. The Speech and Debate team extended their remarkable winning streak, capturing their fourth consecutive state championship. Individual students also earned state championships in Future Business Leaders of Alabama and Personal Finance competitions.



Graduation Statistics Reflect High Achievement

The academic preparation of the Class of 2025 is reflected in their post-graduation plans and recognition. An impressive 271 graduates will receive the Advanced Academic with Honors Endorsement on their diplomas, demonstrating their commitment to rigorous coursework.

Looking ahead, 87% of graduates plan to attend four-year colleges, while 7% will attend two-year institutions. The remaining 6% will enter military service, begin full-time employment, or take gap years. The class will be represented at 65 different colleges and universities across 24 states and the District of Columbia, with those remaining in Alabama enrolling in 23 different in-state institutions.

The Class of 2025 achieved unprecedented recognition in the National Merit Scholarship Program, with 23 students named National Merit Finalists – the highest number from any individual high school in Alabama this year. Twelve (12) graduates also earned National Merit Commended Student recognition.

Record-Breaking Scholarship Awards

Capping off an exceptional year, 77% of the graduating class received scholarship offers totaling more than \$46 million — a new school record. The total amount of scholarships accepted by graduates exceeds \$18 million.

The Vestavia Hills High School Class of 2025's comprehensive achievements in academics, arts and community service establish them as one of the most accomplished graduating classes in the school's history, continuing a longstanding legacy of excellence.

CHAMPIONS *in Athletics*



The Vestavia Hills High School Rebels capped off one of the most successful athletic seasons in school history, capturing multiple state championships and sending 23 student-athletes to compete at the collegiate level. With 27 different athletic teams competing across various sports, the Rebels demonstrated exceptional depth and talent throughout the 2024-25 academic year.

Vestavia Hills claimed an impressive eight state championships during the season, showcasing the program's comprehensive excellence. The championship teams included Boys Bowling, Boys Golf, Boys Outdoor Track, Girls Soccer, Boys Tennis and Girls Tennis.

The cheerleading program also delivered outstanding results, with the varsity squad earning state championship honors while finishing as national runners-up. The JV cheerleading team achieved the ultimate prize by capturing both state and national championship titles.

20 of Vestavia Hills' 27 teams qualified for postseason competition. Beyond the championship teams, several squads achieved notable state tournament finishes, including state runner-up performances by Boys Cross Country, Boys Indoor Track, Girls Indoor Track, Boys Swimming and Diving and Boys Wrestling teams.

The football team advanced to the quarterfinals, placing among the top eight teams in the state, while both basketball programs reached the Sweet 16. The volleyball team made an impressive run to the Final Four and Flag Football advanced to the third round of state competition.

Reflecting the school's commitment to excellence on the field and in the classroom, eight varsity athletes were also named National Merit Finalists. In addition, 23 graduating seniors will continue their athletic careers at the collegiate level, representing a wide range of sports and institutions.

Two Vestavia Hills coaches received prestigious statewide recognition for their exceptional work. Coach Todd Evans was named Alabama Bowling Coach of the Year, and Coach Chris Cournoyer earned Alabama Strength Coach of the Year honors.

The 2024-25 athletic season represents the culmination of years of dedicated training, coaching excellence and student-athlete commitment. With broad success on the field of play and in the classroom, Vestavia Hills High School has furthered its legacy as one of Alabama's premier athletic programs.



Three Vestavia Hills City Schools are ending the year on a high note for their emphasis on character education and development.

Character.org, a national organization advocating for character education in schools, announced today that **Vestavia Hills Elementary Cahaba Heights, Vestavia Hills Elementary Dolly Ridge and Louis Pizitz Middle School are now 2025 National Schools of Character.**

The three Vestavia Hills schools are among just 71 schools in the U.S. to receive the National School of Character designation this year.

Each of the National Schools of Character was chosen based on excellence in eleven principles of character education and development. Cahaba Heights, Dolly Ridge and Pizitz have each focused for several years on development of core values which students and staff commit to living out, both inside and outside of school.

"This prestigious designation epitomizes the commitment in VHCS to partner with our families to instill core values of virtuous character into our next generation," said Todd Freeman, Ed.D., Vestavia Hills City Schools superintendent.

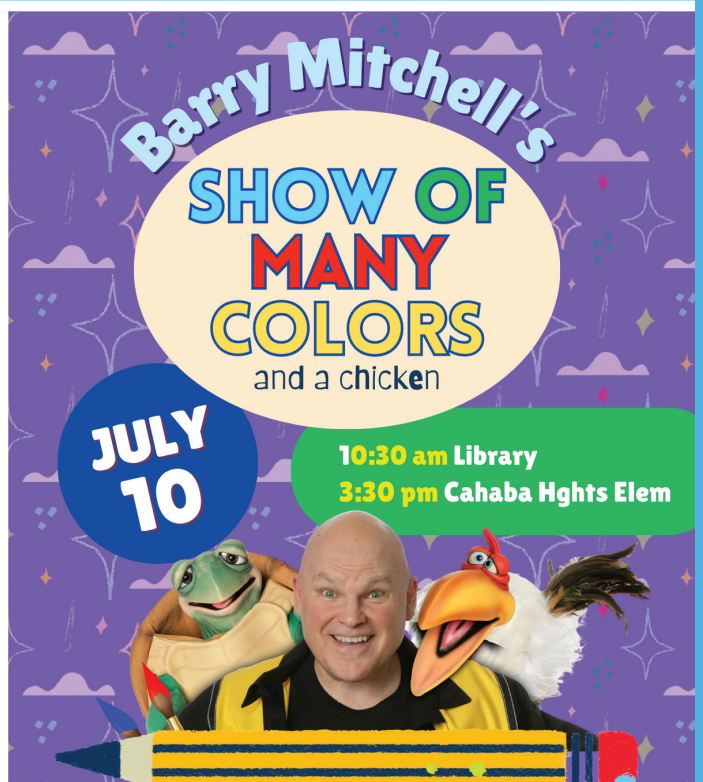
Cahaba Heights, Dolly Ridge and Pizitz join three other Vestavia Hills schools named National Schools of Character this decade: Vestavia Hills Elementary Liberty Park (2024), Vestavia Hills Elementary East (2022) and Vestavia Hills Elementary West (2021). This is the second National School of Character award for Vestavia Hills Elementary Cahaba Heights, which previously earned the designation in 2020.

FINISH SUMMER STRONG



THE STORY SHIP

July 3
10:30 AM
& 3:30 PM



Barry Mitchell's
SHOW OF MANY COLORS
and a chicken

JULY 10

10:30 am Library
3:30 pm Cahaba Hghts Elem



MUSICIAN ANDREW BEST

JULY 17
10:30 AM
LIBRARY
3:30 PM
LIBERTY PARK ELEM



MICHELLE'S MAGICAL POODLES

JULY 24

10:30 AM
& 3:30 PM
ALL AGES

VESTAVALIBRARY.ORG/SUMMER

Community Calendar

July 2025

- 4 **Municipal Offices Closed**, Independence Day
- 8 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 10 **Planning & Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 14 **Senior Citizens Association Luncheon**, Civic Center, 12pm
- 14 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 15 **Parks & Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 17 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 18-20 **Back to School Sales Tax Holiday**
- 21 **Council Work Session**, Council Chamber 6pm
- 28 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm

August 2025

- 7 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 11 **Senior Citizens Association Luncheon**, Civic Center, 12pm
- 11 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 12 **Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 14 **Planning & Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 18 **Council Work Session**, Council Chamber 6pm
- 19 **Parks & Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 21 **National Senior Day Celebration**, Civic Center, 4-7pm
- 21 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 25 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 26 **Municipal Election Day**, 7am-7pm

September 2025

- 1 **Municipal Offices Closed**, Labor Day*
- 4 **Design Review Board**, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 6 **Vestavia Hills Shred & Recycle Day**, City Hall & Civic Center, 8am-12pm
- 8 **Senior Citizens Association Luncheon**, Civic Center, 12pm
- 8 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 9 **Chamber Luncheon**, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 11 **Patriot Day Ceremony**, Civic Center, 8:30am
- 11 **Planning & Zoning Commission**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 15 **Council Work Session**, Council Chamber 6pm
- 16 **Parks & Recreation Board**, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 18 **Board of Zoning Adjustment**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 22 **City Council Meeting**, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 30 **Splash Pad Closes**

*Sanitation holiday. Routes serviced on a one-day delay.

Staying Safe on Electric Bikes & Scooters



Avoid Damp Roads

Wet roads will make the small tires lose traction faster than a vehicle would. Avoid riding on damp roads or during a rainstorm.

Stay Off Sidewalks

Sidewalks are intended for pedestrians and pets only. Therefore, scooters and bikes not allowed on City sidewalks.



... And Busy Roads



When riding in the street, you're going to be mingling with vehicles much larger and faster than you. If there is a bike lane, stay in it. If you are passing a row of parked cars, be careful of any driver who may be opening their car door or backing out of a parking space.

Watch Out for Grates

Unlike cars that can ride over sewer grates with ease, electric bikes and scooters have smaller tires that can get caught in the spaces. If it gets caught, you could very well end up flying over the handlebars!

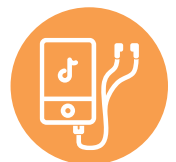


Wear a Helmet

Invest in a good helmet, keep it with your scooter or bike and wear it every time you ride! Be sure to wear shoes too!

Stay Aware

As always, stay aware of your surroundings; put your phone in your pocket and don't wear earbuds. Practice the art of watching the ground in front of you while looking ahead of you ... It's a delicate balance!



Know the Law



Because Alabama law classifies electric bikes and scooters as motor vehicles, the following laws apply:

- Scooters may not be ridden on sidewalks.
- Riding on public street requires a tag and a valid driver's license (typically a Class M).
- Riders must wear both a helmet and shoes.
- The scooter must have functioning brakes.
- If you're riding on the street, all traffic laws apply.

Parents: Note that the law holds parents responsible if minors operate scooters without proper safety gear or in violation of traffic laws.



**AUGUST
21**

**4-7
PM**

**LET'S
CELEBRATE!**

**National
Senior
Citizens
Day**

**VESTAVIA HILLS CIVIC CENTER
1090 MONTGOMERY HIGHWAY, 35216**



**MUSICAL GUEST:
RAZZ MA TAZZ**

**GUEST SPEAKER:
BOBBY
HUMPHREY**


Vestavia Belles

Applications for Vestavia Belles open August 11!

For more information and the link to apply, visit
<https://vhal.org/community/vestavia-belles>.



COMMUNITY NEWS

1032 Montgomery Highway
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

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Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
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Permit No. 17

SINK OR SAIL
CARDBOARD BOAT RACE



Join us at the Vestavia Hills
Aquatic Complex to see whose
cardboard boat will carry them
across our competition
pool or sink trying...

**Contact Robby Dellinger at
rdellinger@vhal.org for
additional information.**



 **720 Waldrige Rd, 35216**

Saturday, July 19