

COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills | October · November · December 2025

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

From Mayor Ashley Curry

Celebrating Progress & Welcoming Change

The ballots have been cast and counted from our August 26 municipal elections and we are looking ahead with excitement. By the time you read this, the runoff election for Council Place 3 will have concluded, and our city will have officially welcomed two new members to the City Council. I look forward to partnering with them as we continue to enhance the quality of life for every resident in our community.

I want to extend heartfelt thanks to my fellow Council members – Kimberly Cook, George Pierce, Rusty Weaver and Paul Head – who served alongside me for two terms. Together, we faced a city in need of vital updates and tackled those challenges head-on. In 2016, we inherited an outdated civic center, a pool facility in desperate need of renovation and parks that had seen better days. Today, thanks to vision, planning and collaboration, we proudly enjoy a new civic center, a state-of-the-art aquatic complex and amazing parks citywide.

A special thank you to outgoing Council members George Pierce and Paul Head. Your leadership and dedication to the residents of Vestavia Hills will be deeply missed.

This progress did not happen by chance. It was the result of intentional, strategic planning and sound financial management. When we took office in 2016, our City budget stood at around \$40 million. We knew the challenges we faced and launched the “Community Spaces and Infrastructure Plan” to address them head-on. Thanks to these planning efforts, we acquired the building that now houses our civic center. What a blessing that was!

Today, our budget has grown to \$80 million. I am proud of our strong and stable economy. It allows us to continue addressing the needs of our residents in amazing ways. I am optimistic that our new Council members will steward the progress we have made with care and dedication and keep our city moving forward.

The final quarter of 2025 brings several exciting events that remind us why we’re proud to call this city home.

We begin with a very special occasion: our city’s 75th Anniversary Celebration. From humble beginnings in 1950 as a small community atop Shades Mountain, we have grown into a vibrant city of nearly 40,000 residents spread across more than 20 square miles. Join us for an evening of celebration on Thursday, October 2 at City Hall.

Next, we honor those who have served with our annual Salute to Veterans on Monday, November 10 at the Civic Center. This year’s

event includes a Health and Wellness Resource Fair tailored for both our veterans and senior citizens. Keep an eye out for more details as the date approaches.

The holiday season begins with our beloved Tree Lighting Ceremony on November 20, a tradition that brings joy to all ages and officially kicks off the season of gratitude and giving.

As we approach Thanksgiving, let us reflect and be thankful for the blessings that have been bestowed upon us including our shared history, the quality of life in our community and the excellence of our schools. In the spirit of the season, I encourage you to look for ways to give back. Whether through donating to your favorite charity, volunteering your time or simply performing a small act of kindness, your generosity can make a meaningful difference. I have long been inspired by this quote from Winston Churchill: “You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.”

Salute to Veterans

Honoring Those Who Served

Monday, November 10, 2025

Vestavia Hills Civic Center | 1090 Montgomery Highway, 35216

12pm Senior Luncheon (ages 55+)

1-5pm 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 Commissioner Jeff Newton of the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs.** We hope you will join us to celebrate and remember those who have served our country!

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 eamerson@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.*

From City Manager Jeff Downes

First Impressions Matter

We have all heard the saying, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” It rings true in job interviews, on first dates and, believe it or not, when someone drives into our city for the very first time.

That’s why I believe our city gateways deserve to be in top-notch shape. These entry points are the spots where people first lay eyes on our community and they quietly tell everyone what kind of city we are. Are we proud of who we are? Are we welcoming? Are we a place people want to be? A clean, well-kept gateway says yes to all of those.

Take the Sybil Temple, for example. It’s not just a beautiful landmark – it is a symbol of our city’s history and heart. With its nod to Vesta, the Roman goddess of hearth and home, it reminds us of the warmth and comfort of home. And thanks to the Sybil Temple Foundation, this icon continues to shine for all who enter from the north along Highway 31. Their dedication keeps the area looking its best, and that pride is something we can all get behind.

But it doesn’t stop there. And it shouldn’t. Every gateway into our city deserves that same attention. And the good news? We’re making great strides.



Over the past year, the City and the Cahaba Heights Merchants’ Association teamed up for a major beautification project at the entrance to the Cahaba Heights

business district. Think better walkways, native plantings and brand-new gateway signage coming soon. If you are driving down Pumphouse Road, you will most assuredly notice the improvement!

Meanwhile, at the intersection of Highway 31 and I-65, we have had another exciting partnership. Local business owner, Steve Issis, generously provided an easement at his retail property to literally pave the way for new signage, landscaping and drainage upgrades at our southern gateway. These improvements are being considered for completion in early

2026 to offer a fresh, welcoming look for anyone heading into town from that direction.

And let’s not forget Liberty Park. This vibrant community on our eastern edge has had its share of wear and tear from construction, but that is changing. In 2026, residents and visitors can look forward to fresh pavement, improved signage, better traffic flow and spruced-up entryways along Overton Road and



Liberty Parkway. It’s the kind of facelift that brings smiles to those who live, work and play there every day.

None of this would be possible without our Mayor and City Council, who thoughtfully consider citywide projects and the partnerships behind them. They understand that investments do more than just improve roads and plant flowers. They shape how people feel about our city the moment they arrive.

And when all is said and done, those first impressions will speak volumes: **This is a city that cares. This is a city with pride. This is a city we love!**

Have a Plan BEFORE You Need It!

If a fire starts in your home, that is not the time to figure out what to do. **The Vestavia Hills Fire Department urges you to prepare a fire safety plan before an emergency happens.** A good plan protects you, your family



and your home. Here’s what it should include:

- 1. Install smoke detectors:** Place smoke detectors on every level of your home, including inside and outside all sleeping areas.
 - Test them monthly.
 - Replace batteries twice a year (when the clocks change).
 - Replace any detector that is 10 years old or older.
- 2. Be careful with candles & fireplaces**
 - Keep flammable items away.
 - Never leave open flames unattended.
 - Use a screen on fireplaces to contain sparks and embers.
- 3. Store flammable materials safely**
 - Use approved containers.
 - Keep them away from heat sources and exits.
- 4. Teach your children the escape plan**
 - Don’t assume they know what to do – teach them.
 - Practice the plan regularly.
 - Explain fire dangers in age-appropriate ways.
- 5. Keep fire extinguishers handy**
 - Place them in key areas like the kitchen.
 - Make sure everyone in the home knows how to use them.

Every dollar. Every detail. All online.

View our full 2025-26 budget
online, powered by ClearGov.



vhcs.us/finance

The Vestavia Way: A New Strategic Plan for a United School System

Vestavia Hills City Schools has unveiled its new strategic plan, titled The Vestavia Way. It is a plan that honors both the lasting legacy of our 55 year history and our vision for the future. VHCS has had a longstanding commitment to continuous improvement and academic excellence. This new strategic plan is designed to align the system’s long-term priorities with the daily work of its teachers and staff, ensuring every student has the opportunity to learn without limits.

The development of The Vestavia Way began during the 2024–25 school year. A key principle guiding this effort was ensuring the new goals would reflect the values and expectations of our community. A team of dozens of parents, students, teachers, community leaders and administrators worked throughout the spring of 2025 to evaluate how effectively the school system was meeting its high standards and draft new values, goals and pictures of success. School administrators spent the summer developing prioritized actions to support each new goal.

The new plan is anchored by a mission to ensure each student learns without limits. This mission is supported by four core values: excellence, character, community and safety. The Vestavia Way outlines four key strategic goals to guide the system’s future efforts.

The first goal, **Student Experience**, aims to create a student-centered environment that fosters academic achievement and personal growth through excellence, curiosity and resilience. This includes a commitment to high-quality teaching, a safe environment and a robust support system for students to reach their full potential.

The second goal focuses on **Employee Engagement**, striving for a culture of elite professionalism and collaboration. The plan emphasizes a shared vision and purpose, ensuring that all employees

are safe, supported and valued. It also commits to investing in continuous improvement and employee well-being.

The third goal, **Family & Community Partnerships**,

is built on trust and a shared commitment to an exceptional student experience. This involves clear and consistent communication with parents, community leaders and businesses, as well as opportunities for feedback and mutual support.

Finally, the **Stewardship & Support** goal is centered on responsible resource management and operational effectiveness. This includes aligning financial decisions and staffing to support the other three goals, investing in facilities that help students learn and thrive and making results-oriented decisions that respond to the unique needs of each student.

The Board of Education, families, staff and community will receive regular updates on the progress of these goals through multiple forms of communication. The Vestavia Way represents the culmination of a collaborative effort involving many individuals dedicated to the continued success of Vestavia Hills City Schools.



EXCELLENCE
Commit to learning and engagement



CHARACTER
Embody integrity and respect



COMMUNITY
Build relationships and appreciate diversity



SAFETY
Protect and care for every person

Mark your calendar!

Vestavia Hills City Schools Fall Art Showcases

03 October	Vestavia Hills High School Homecoming Performances begin at 6 p.m.	Vestavia Hills High School Jazz Band 6 p.m.	17 November
Vestavia Hills High School Fall Play, "The Play That Goes Wrong" Shows at 7 p.m. nightly		20 November	City of Vestavia Hills Christmas Tree Lighting 6 p.m. at Vestavia Hills Civic Center
28 October	Vestavia Hills High School Fall Choral Concert	Celebrate the Season at Vestavia Hills High School 6 p.m.	09 December

2025–26 Budget Highlights

942

Total Employees

526

Total Teachers

114

Locally Funded Teachers

13:1

Student-Teacher Ratio
(Total)

7:1

Student-Teacher Ratio
(Exceptional Education)

33:1 English Learner Student-Teacher Ratio
45:1 Gifted Student-Teacher Ratio
349:1 Student-Counselor Ratio

Educational & Support Programs

5

World Language
Programs

26

Advanced Placement Courses

2

Dual Enrollment Courses

16

Career & Technical
Education
Courses

34

K-12 Arts Education
Teachers

5

Arts Education Programs

39

Athletic Teams

5

Elementary
STEM Teachers

13

School Resource
Officers

21

School Counselors

8

Behavioral Specialists
and Social Workers

17

School
Nurses

Investing in The Vestavia Way: A Look at the 2025-26 School Budget

A school system's budget is more than just a list of numbers; it's a financial reflection of its core philosophy. The 2025-26 Vestavia Hills City Schools budget is no exception, demonstrating a clear commitment to the system's mission: to ensure every student has the opportunity to **learn without limits**. This budget aligns directly with the four strategic goals of *The Vestavia Way* – focusing on student experience, employee engagement, community partnerships and stewardship.

Vestavia Hills City Schools is committed to providing a student-centered environment that fosters excellence, curiosity and resilience. A well-rounded educational experience prepares students for the future by offering opportunities that align with their interests. This begins with an exciting exploration of STEM fields for students in K-5 and continues with advanced academic, career and technical programs in middle and high school. In a world increasingly shaped by AI, the arts and humanities are also vital. The budget supports robust fine arts, world language and library programs that nurture critical thinking and creativity.

Just as important as academics is the emotional and physical well-being of students. The budget supports a comprehensive network of support staff, including 22 guidance counselors, five behavioral analysts, three student assistance counselors and 12 nurses, ensuring every student has what they need to thrive.

The quality of a school system is directly linked to the quality of its employees. With 942 employees serving over 6,800 students, every role is critical. The budget prioritizes a culture of elite professionalism by investing in our staff. This includes updating the employee salary schedule to remain competitive, providing incentives for additional credentials like National Board Certification and offering professional development opportunities.

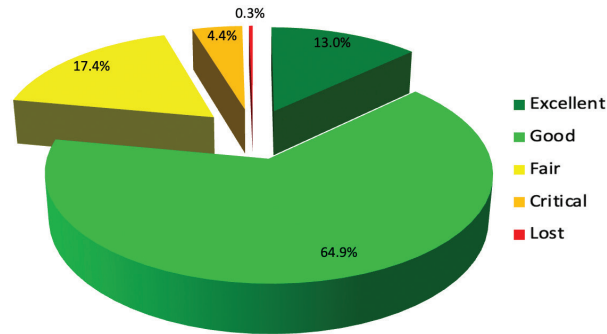
The 2025-26 budget also reflects new state mandates, including paid parental leave and a new workers' compensation fund for school employees. These investments, alongside increased contributions for health insurance and retirement, demonstrate a deep commitment to supporting the professionals who educate our children.

The Vestavia Way also emphasizes sound financial management and operational effectiveness. The budget prioritizes the maintenance and improvement of school facilities, with planned upgrades to HVAC systems, replacement of outdated theater equipment and other critical building improvements. Thanks to the Shared Spaces Agreement, the City of Vestavia Hills is also funding the replacement of five gymnasium floors.

Infrastructure Insights: Public Services Q&A

1. How are streets chosen for resurfacing?

The City of Vestavia Hills uses First Step Pavement Management to assess all publicly owned and maintained streets on a three-year cycle. This assessment includes identifying surface issues such as distresses, potholes and other surface level issues. The data collected is used to calculate a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) — a score from 0 to 100, with 100 representing “Excellent” and anything below 50 considered “Lost.” This PCI score, along with visual inspections by City staff, helps determine which streets are prioritized for resurfacing. Following is the breakdown of our overall City paving network based on the most recent assessment:



Based on the latest assessment, the City’s Engineering Department has created a three- to five-year resurfacing plan, which is regularly reviewed and adjusted based on available funding, unexpected road deterioration and development. It is important to note that these assessments are focused on maintaining roads for motorized vehicle safety and are not intended to assess pedestrian conditions.

Potholes and minor road defects are handled by the Public Works crews on an as-needed basis. Residents can report issues through the VH Connect system (app or <https://vhal.org/vestavia-hills-connect>) for review by Engineering and Public Works.

2. What sidewalks are currently planned for construction and how are new projects planned?

In early 2025, the City adopted an updated Sidewalk Masterplan. This plan was developed based on input from the public, City boards and commissions and City staff. Plans were vetted by the Engineering department and prioritized based on feasibility, public impact and community interest. The resulting masterplan serves as a guiding document for future sidewalk construction as funding becomes available. Following are the **current and upcoming sidewalk projects**:

- **Asbury Road:** Construction is budgeted for FY2026, in alignment with the masterplan.
- **Greendale Road (Cahaba Heights):** The City received a \$767,004 Transportation Alternatives grant from the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to build sidewalks and add traffic calming features. Design work is underway on this project that will connect sidewalks from Crosshaven Drive to East Street.

- **Highway 31 South:** A \$120,000 Jefferson County Grant will help complete a missing section of sidewalk between Baumhower’s and Dunkin’ and link this area to the new pedestrian bridge.
- **Massey Road & Highway 31 Pedestrian Bridge:** Both are scheduled for completion in FY2026.

In addition to these projects, the City is actively working on other sidewalk planning efforts as outlined in the masterplan. The Engineering Department continues to pursue grants, in-house projects and alternative funding to expand pedestrian infrastructure.

Additional Opportunity: The City passed Resolution No. 5122, allowing neighborhoods to contribute financially toward sidewalk construction. This program gives residents a way to move forward with projects that are a priority for the residents in that area but may not currently be on the sidewalk masterplan.



VESTAVIA HILLS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

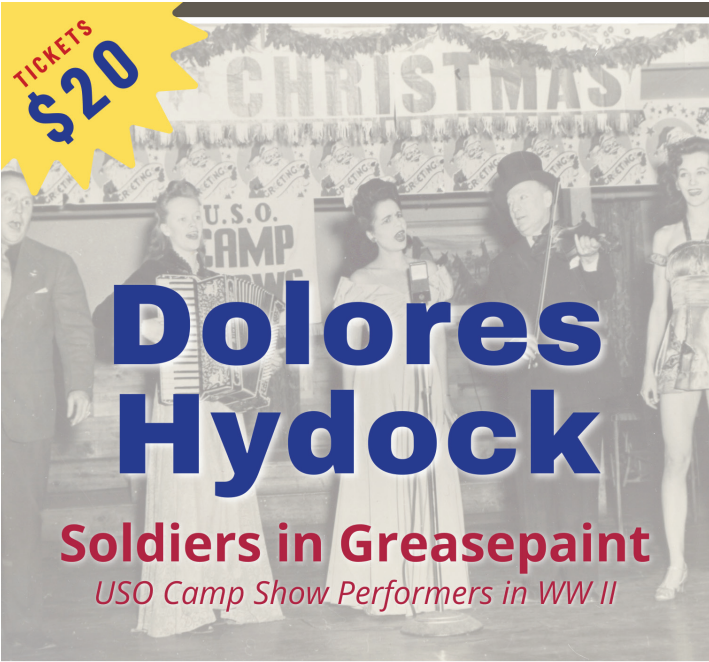
presents

Guest Speaker, Mayor Ashley Curry

Monday, October 20 at 2pm – Vestavia Hills City Hall

All are invited to attend Mayor Ashley Curry’s State of the City presentation. We hope to see you there!

TICKETS
\$20



Dolores Hydock

Soldiers in Greasepaint

USO Camp Show Performers in WW II

OCT. 23 • 10:30 AM

Tickets online at vestavialibrary.org

Sponsored by Friends of the Library

Community Calendar

October

- 1-31 ARTStober Art Exhibit, City Hall, during regular business hours
- 2 City of Vestavia Hills 75th Anniversary Celebration, City Hall, 5pm
- 7 Design Review Board, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 9 Planning & Zoning Commission, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 13 Senior Citizens Association Luncheon, Civic Center, 11:30am
- 13 City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 14 Chamber Luncheon, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 16 Board of Zoning Adjustment, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 17 Haunt the Hills, Wald Park, 4:30pm
- 20 Vestavia Hills Historical Society, Council Chamber, 2pm
- 21 Parks & Recreation Board, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 27 City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6pm

November

- 3 Investiture of Elected Officials, Council Chamber, 10am
- 6 Design Review Board, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 7 Veterans Day Celebration, New Merkel House, 11am
- 8 City of Vestavia Hills Incorporation Anniversary (1950)
- 10 Salute to Veterans Celebration, Civic Center, 12pm Senior Lunch; 1pm Resource Fair; 2pm Program & Keynote Address
- 10 City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 11 Municipal Offices Closed, Veterans Day
- 13 Planning & Zoning Commission, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 15 Deck the Heights, The Heights Village, Cahaba Heights, 2pm
- 18 Chamber Luncheon, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 18 Parks & Recreation Board, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 18 Board of Zoning Adjustment, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 20 Tree Lighting Festival, City Hall Complex, 6pm
- 24 City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 27-28 Municipal Offices Closed, Thanksgiving*

December

- 4 Design Review Board, Executive Conference Room, 6pm
- 7 Holiday Parade & Party in the Park, Liberty Park, 2pm (Rain date: 12/14)
- 8 Senior Citizens Association Luncheon, Civic Center, 11:30am
- 8 City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 9 Chamber Luncheon, Vestavia Country Club, 11:30am
- 11 Planning & Zoning Commission, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 13 Breakfast with Santa, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 16 Parks & Recreation Board, Civic Center, 7:30am
- 18 Board of Zoning Adjustment, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 21 Menorah Lighting, City Hall, 5:30pm
- 22 City Council Meeting, Council Chamber, 6pm
- 24-25 Municipal Offices Closed, Christmas*
- 31-1/1 Municipal Offices Closed, New Year's*

* Sanitation holiday. Amwaste closed Thursday ONLY; all Thursday and Friday routes will be serviced on a one-day delay.



For more information,
call 205.978.0166 or
visit www.vhparksandrec.com

YOUTH SPORTS REGISTRATION

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/vhpr-registration>.

Lacrosse: Nov. 1-Dec. 31;
Cost: \$100-125, depending on age

Girls Basketball: Sept. 1-Oct. 25;
Cost: TBD

Boys Basketball: Sept. 1-Oct. 25;
Cost: \$160 (resident)/\$210 (non-resident)

High School Basketball League:
Sept. 1-Oct. 25; Cost: \$600
per team

Girls Developmental Basketball (Skills Clinic): Sept. 1-Oct. 25;
Cost: \$100

SENIOR PROGRAMS

New Merkel House Fall Festival:
October 31, 10:30am

Halloween-themed games, snacks
and even a hay ride! Dress up in
your best costume!

**Veterans Day Celebration
at New Merkel House:**
November 7, 11am

A celebration of our veterans
followed by refreshments.

Salute to Veterans Celebration:
November 10, 12-5pm

An afternoon dedicated to
honoring veterans: senior
luncheon at 12pm; health fair
(offering free screenings & flu
shots) from 1-5pm; and patriotic
presentation hosted by Mayor
Ashley Curry at 2pm.

**ASO Coffee Concert: Mozart/
Tchaikovsky: November 21, 9am**

A trip to the Alys Stephens Center
to see the Alabama Symphony
Orchestra perform "A Touch of
Mozart, A Dash of Tchaikovsky"!
Lunch at Irondale Cafe after the
concert. Transportation is

provided. Meet at the Civic Center
at 9am.

**Family Thanksgiving Lunch at
New Merkel House: November
26, 11:30am**

Join us at New Merkel House to
celebrate Thanksgiving! Enjoy a
family-style lunch at a festively
decorated table, where we can
share good food, laughter, and
gratitude.

Christmas Lights & Dessert Tour:
December 16, 4pm

Join us for a festive tour of local
Christmas light displays followed
by hot chocolate and dessert at
New Merkel House. Transportation
is provided, with pickup at the
Civic Center at 4pm.

**New Merkel House Christmas
Party: December 19, 10:30am**

Join us for a festive day filled with
holiday-themed games
and snacks. Wear your best
Christmas outfit and try your luck
at a gift during the White Elephant
gift exchange!

CAMPS

Christmas Craft Day Camp:
December 22, 8:30am-12pm

Parents, let us give you a well-
deserved break this holiday
season! This camp is for children
aged 5 to 11 years old. Campers
will have a great time making
festive ornaments and holiday
crafts while getting into the
Christmas spirit. The cost is \$40
per camper. Don't miss out on this
fun-filled morning!

Visit https://vhrecreation.activityreg.com/selectactivity_t2.wcs to register today!



COMMUNITY NEWS

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