

# COMMUNITY NEWS

News & Events for the City of Vestavia Hills • March 2022

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



*Pictured L to R: Lt. Peyton Allen, Deputy Chief Ryan Farrell, Lt. Steven Michael, Chief Marvin Green, Mayor Ashley Curry, City Manager Jeff Downes, Battalion Chief Scott Ferrell and Deputy Chief Shawn Jackson*

## VESTAVIA HILLS FIRE DEPARTMENT EARNS CLASS 1 ISO RATING

The Vestavia Hills Fire Department has earned a Class 1 Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating by Insurance Services Office (ISO) and received the official designation on February 7, 2022 at The Wynfrey Hotel in Hoover, Ala. Nearly 40,000 fire departments were evaluated, and VHFD is one of the only 388 departments to receive a Class 1 rating this year. This places VHFD in the top 1% of all fire departments nationwide. A Class 1 rating is the best rating that can be achieved and represents exemplary fire protection. VHFD is proud to be in this select group.

ISO is an organization that independently measures and evaluates the ability of fire departments nationwide to respond to and suppress structure fires. Upon completion of their assessment, ISO assigns a PPC code ranging from 1 to 10, with Class 1 representing exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicating that the fire-suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. Insurance companies utilize ISO information, along with other factors, to establish local commercial and residential property coverage rates – generally offering lower premiums in communities with a high ISO rating.

ISO grades are earned in four major areas:

- Fire Department – ability to respond to structure fires (with adequate staffing), appropriately equipped apparatus, training and annual pre-fire planning inspections
- Water System – hydrant locations, pressures and inspections
- Emergency Communications – internal and external communications processes and procedures
- Community Risk Reduction – fire prevention and fire safety education in the community

The improvement in the rating reflects the commitment from our City administration, and the dedication and hard work of all Vestavia Hills Fire Department personnel. The department would also like to thank the Birmingham Water Works and Shelby 911 for their assistance in achieving this high ranking.

Congratulations to Chief Green and all of our Vestavia Hills Fire Department personnel.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The events and dates below are subject to change. Please refer to the calendar on the City of Vestavia Hills website for the most up-to-date event information.

- 3 Design Review Board,**  
Executive Conference Room, 6 p.m.
- 4 Spring Sports Kick-off Celebration,**  
Wald Park, 5 p.m.
- 4 City of Vestavia Hills Concert Series: Jenni's Mixtape,**  
Wald Park, 7:30 p.m.
- 5 VHHS Superhero Fun Run,**  
VHHS, 8:30 a.m.
- 5 VHHS Rebel 5K Color Run,**  
VHHS, 10 a.m.
- 8 Chamber Luncheon,** Vestavia Country Club, 11:30 a.m.
- 10 Planning and Zoning Commission,** Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 13 Daylight Saving Time Begins**
- 14 Senior Citizens Luncheon,**  
Dogwood Room, 11:30 a.m.
- 14 City Council Meeting,**  
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 15 Parks and Recreation Board,**  
Executive Conference Room, 7 a.m.
- 17 St. Patrick's Day**
- 17 Board of Zoning Adjustment,**  
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 19 VHHS RISE Kids Day,**  
VHHS, 9 a.m.
- 21 Council Work Session,**  
Council Chamber, 5 p.m.
- 28 City Council Meeting,**  
Council Chamber, 6 p.m.
- 28 Spring Break Begins,**  
Vestavia Hills City Schools



Ashley Curry,  
Mayor  
City of  
Vestavia Hills

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to March! It is the time of year to say goodbye to winter and hello to spring. However, this may not be the case this year. On February 2, the noted groundhog meteorologist, Punxsutawney Phil, emerged from his burrow and promptly saw his shadow. According to legend, if he sees his shadow, we are in for six more weeks of winter.

Regardless of the weather, construction of the new Vestavia Hills Civic Center continues. We are optimistic that it will be completed by early summer. As I mentioned in a previous article, this will be one the most exciting additions to our parks and recreation facilities. You will be impressed with this facility. We are told by the Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau that our 10,000 square foot ballroom will be the third largest banquet facility in the Birmingham metropolitan area. Located on the second floor of the building, it offers a panoramic view of the Highway 280 valley and Double Oak Mountain to the southeast of our city.

In the meantime, phase three of the Wald Park improvements is underway and will be completed soon. You can follow these improvements on the City's website.

There are a couple of achievements to mention:

First, the Vestavia Hills Fire Department has received an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Class 1 rating. ISO is an organization that independently measures and evaluates the ability of fire departments nationwide to respond to and suppress structure fires. Upon completion of their assessment, ISO assigns a Public Protection Classification code ranging from 1 to 10, with Class 1 representing exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicating that the fire-suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria. Insurance companies utilize ISO information, along with other factors, to establish local commercial and residential property coverage rates – generally offering lower premiums in communities with a high ISO rating. This is a significant accomplishment by Fire Chief Marvin Green and his staff. Of the nearly 40,000 fire departments nationwide, VHFD is one of the only 388 departments that received a Class 1 rating, placing VHFD in the top 1% for fire departments. This is the highest rating you can receive. Thank you to Chief Green and his department for this accomplishment.

Secondly, Sandi Wilson of our Parks and Recreation Department, received the Jim Spain Professional of the Year award at the recent Alabama Recreation and Parks Association conference. This award honors individuals who have rendered outstanding service or accomplishments to the leisure service, recreation, parks and/or conservation professions through leadership and/or active involvement. This is the highest award given by the state association.

City Manager Jeff Downes moderated two town hall meetings last month to discuss The Bray – a large, mixed-use city center concept proposed for the 800 acres yet to be developed by the Liberty Park Joint Venture, LLP. The goal of the meetings was to provide information and allow stakeholders to ask questions about the proposed development. There will be more to come as the Council reviews what the Liberty Park Joint Venture describes as the “ultimate live, work and play lifestyle – all in Liberty Park.”

Don't forget to “spring forward” when daylight saving time begins on March 13!

### DOGWOOD LUNCHEON

Make plans to join us for the annual Vestavia Hills Beautification Board Dogwood Luncheon to be held April 6, 2022 at Vestavia Country Club.



This year's event will feature a silent auction, along with guest speaker Whitney Miller. Whitney is a chef, cookbook author, recipe and menu developer, food stylist and more! Tickets are \$30 and are available for purchase at <https://2022vestaviahillsdogwoodluncheon.eventbrite.com>.

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

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Everything learned in school is not exclusively from a textbook. In fact, character traits like perseverance, respecting others and empathy are honed when students are in school interacting in classrooms, hallways, concert venues or athletic fields. The Vestavia Hills City

Schools strategic plan goals prioritize learning at a profound level while supporting the growth of students' social and emotional skills. I would like to highlight one shining example of how these priorities are intertwined in programs throughout our system.

This year, kindergarten through fifth grade students at Vestavia Hills Elementary Liberty Park have been experiencing learning in a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) lab. They attend the class once a week throughout the year and participate in hands-on STEM learning activities. The system is piloting the class at VHELP with a vision of eventually expanding it to every elementary school in our system. The class weaves academic rigor and character education into an engaging and dynamic class.

Principal, Dr. Blair Inabinet, describes it this way: "STEM is a safe place to foster growth mindsets in our children, wherein they utilize higher-order thinking skills to solve relevant, real-world problems and collaborate with peers in inquiry-based learning." STEM Lab teacher Martha Martin adds that "students in the STEM class ask questions, explore ideas, model solutions, evaluate outcomes and explain everything learned in the process."

Mrs. Martin threads the school's "R.E.B.E.L.S." core values into her lessons. She explains, "While most STEM programs focus solely on engineering skills, I believe it is vital that we model and practice the life skills that will empower our children to thrive no matter what career path they choose. I want our students to see the connections between engineering skills and life skills, between solving problems in the classroom and solving problems in the world.

"We show ourselves and others **R**espect as we share ideas. We will listen with **E**mpathy to the needs of others so that we can help solve their problems. We will fail, but we will face our failures with **B**ravery and focus on how those failures lead to our success. We will strive for **E**xcellence in all that we do and say. We will create solutions that leave a **L**egacy for those who follow in our footsteps. We will look for creative ways to **S**erve others and make a difference."

You can learn more about this class and other exciting learning opportunities by listening to *The Intentional Pursuit* podcast on Spotify and Google Podcasts.

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# MARCH

events

Children (Birth-Gr. 1) | Tweens (Gr. 2-6) | Teens (Gr. 6-12) | Adults (Ages 18+)  
Tech (Ages 18+) | Makerspace (All ages, unless noted)



- 1 **Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 9:30am, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 10:30am, Community Room  
**Teardown Tuesday**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 2 **Story Friends**, 10:30am, Children's Program Room  
**Handmade with Holly: Magazine Bowl Art**, 11am, Community Room  
**Picking Up STEAM: Craft Stick/Clothespin Build-it Challenge**, 3:30pm, Children's Program Room  
**Writing Group**, 4pm, Historical Room
- 3 **Open Maker Lab**, 2-6pm, Makerspace  
**Chess Club**, 4:30pm, Historical Room  
**Read & Feed Book Group: The Dictionary of Lost Words**, 6pm, Zoom
- 4 **Open Gaming**, 4pm, Community Room  
**Spring Kickoff at Wald Park: Rock Painting (all ages)**, 5pm, Wald Park
- 5 **Ms. Courtney's Library Stop!**, 10:30am, Community Room
- 7 **Intro to 3D Printing**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 8 **Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 9:30am, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 10:30am, Community Room  
**Escape Zombies**, 4pm, Historical Room  
**Family Night: Lego Family Olympics**, 6pm, Community Room
- 9 **Story Friends**, 10:30am, Children's Program Room  
**Picking Up STEAM: Puffy Paint Art**, 3:30pm, Children's Program Room  
**Art Group**, 4pm, Treehouse  
**Intermediate Microsoft Excel Part I**, 4pm, Electronic Classroom
- 10 **Open Maker Lab**, 2-6pm, Makerspace
- 11 **Open Gaming**, 4pm, Community Room
- 12 **Dungeons and Dragons: The Journey Continues**, 10am, Historical Room
- 14 **Luck o' the Irish! Hallmark Movie & Bingo**, 6pm, Community Room
- 15 **Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 9:30am, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 10:30am, Community Room  
**Google Drive**, 4pm, Electronic Classroom  
**St. Patrick's Day Scavenger Hunt**, 4pm, Treehouse  
**Soldering 101**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 16 **Story Friends**, 10:30am, Children's Program Room  
**Picking Up STEAM: Lucky Charms Catapult Launch**, 3:30pm, Children's Program Room  
**Among Us**, 4pm, Discord
- 17 **More Than Words Book Group: The Lost and Found Bookshop**, 11:30am, Treehouse  
**Open Maker Lab**, 2-6pm, Makerspace
- 18 **Open Gaming**, 4pm, Community Room  
**Craft\*Lab: Spring Wreaths**, 7pm, Community Room
- 19 **Ms. Courtney's Library Stop!**, 10:30am, Community Room
- 21 **Heat Transfer Vinyl**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 22 **Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 9:30am, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 10:30am, Community Room  
**Anime Night**, 4pm, Community Room
- 23 **Story Friends**, 10:30am, Children's Program Room  
**Picking Up STEAM: Mosaics**, 3:30pm, Children's Program Room  
**Teen Family Feud**, 4pm, Treehouse
- 24 **Friends of the Library Fundraiser Featuring Dolores Hydock: Soldiers in Hoop Skirts**, 10:30am, Community Room  
**Open Maker Lab**, 2-6pm, Makerspace  
**iPad Basics Part II**, 4pm, Electronic Classroom
- 25 **Super Smash Bros Tournament**, 4pm, Community Room
- 28 **Staycation Craft Time: Metal Planters**, 2pm, Community Room  
**LinkedIn**, 5pm, Electronic Classroom
- 29 **Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 9:30am, Community Room  
**Toddler-a-Go-Go**, 10:30am, Community Room  
**Staycation Entertainer Tommy Johns**, 2pm, Community Room  
**3D Modeling with Tinkercad**, 4:30pm, Makerspace
- 30 **Story Friends**, 10:30am, Children's Program Room  
**Staycation Ventriloquist Gene Cordova**, 2pm, Community Room  
**D&D Miniature Painting**, 4pm, Community Room
- 31 **Staycation Craft Time: Wind Chimes & Funny Hanging Llama**, 2pm, Community Room

Vestavia Hills  
**DOGWOOD  
FESTIVAL**

*Escape winter hibernation ...  
Spring into fun!*

The 2022 Dogwood Festival features a variety of activities celebrating all of the incredible things Vestavia Hills has to offer!

**There is something for everyone at the Dogwood Festival!**

*Scan for detailed event info*  
or visit [https://bit.ly/Dogwood\\_Fest](https://bit.ly/Dogwood_Fest)



*Share your fun on social!*

Don't forget to tag us  
in your event pics!

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## PARKS & RECREATION



**Summer camp registration is open NOW!** Check out the full list of awesome camps and register online at <https://vhal.org/camps-rec/#camps>. For more information contact Melinda Burnett (205.978.0153; [mburnett@vhal.org](mailto:mburnett@vhal.org)).

## SENIOR ADULT ACTIVITIES (55+)

**Monday Night Dance**, Dogwood Room  
(Vestavia Hills Civic Center)  
Every Monday | 6-9pm

**Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras Brunch**, Dogwood Room  
(Vestavia Hills Civic Center)  
March 1 | 10am

**Senior Luncheon**, Dogwood Room  
(Vestavia Hills Civic Center)  
March 14 | 11:30am  
For reservations contact Ms. Ruby at 205.822.8788

**Lunch Bunch**, Costa's Mediterranean Cafe (Hoover)  
March 17 | 10:45am  
Meet at Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex; transportation provided; meal not provided; reservations required – 205.978.0166.

For more information on any senior adult activities, contact Melinda Burnett (205.978.0166; [mburnett@vhal.org](mailto:mburnett@vhal.org)).

## NEW MERKEL HOUSE

Now serving hot meals Monday through Friday at New Merkel House! Coffee & Conversations start at 10am and lunch is served daily beginning at 11:45am. Open Monday-Friday from 9am-4pm; closed Saturday and Sunday.

## PART-TIME JOB OPPORTUNITIES!

Want to work outdoors, enjoy the sun and get paid at the same time? Don't miss this opportunity to lifeguard this summer at the Vestavia Hills Aquatic Complex! Informational meetings for anyone interested will be held on February 13 and February 20 at 6:00pm in Meeting Room 1 at the Rec Center, 1973 Merryvale Rd. For more information, contact William Laatsch (205.978.0166; [wlaatsch@vhal.org](mailto:wlaatsch@vhal.org)).



*Parks and Recreation staff pictured L to R: Doug Rogers, Mike Procinke, Brian Davis, Sandi Wilson, Hailey Thompson and Melinda Burnett*

## CONGRATULATIONS!

The Vestavia Hills Parks and Recreation staff recently attended the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association Conference in Huntsville, AL. The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce received the Community Service Award and Sandi Wilson, Superintendent of Seniors and Programming, was honored with the Jim Spain Professional of the Year Award. The Jim Spain Award is given to a person who exemplifies the characteristics of its namesake who passed away in 2009 – integrity, character, class and leadership. Spain was considered the Father of Parks and Recreation in the state of Alabama with over 30 years of service. Congratulations to the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce and Sandi Wilson!

March 4	Jenni's Mixtape in conjunction with Spring Sports Kick-off Celebration	7pm
April 22	Sean Michael Ray	7pm
May 20	Ashten Akins	8pm
June 18	Walker Burroughs	8pm
June 23	Shades Mountain Baptist Orchestra in conjunction with I Love America Day	



**Karen Odle,  
President**  
Vestavia Hills  
Chamber of Commerce

## CHAMBER NEWS

As I write this letter, the sun is shining, however it is extremely cold. Since it is the first week of February, I suspect that we still have some winter weather coming! We have a lot of things happening in our city so please make note of some upcoming dates by checking our website often at [www.vestaviahills.org](http://www.vestaviahills.org) and be part of making

Vestavia Hills a great place to shop, dine and play. We have several ribbon cuttings upcoming where we will celebrate with the new businesses opening in Vestavia Hills. We would love to see you there!

Stories for the 2022 Vestavia Hills Living will be finalized within the next few weeks. If you have an idea for an interesting story that you would like to be considered, please send it to me at [kareno@vestaviahills.org](mailto:kareno@vestaviahills.org) along with your contact information.

Please join me in thanking the following Chamber members that were recognized in January for their commitment and contributions to the Vestavia Hills Chamber, as well as the Vestavia Hills community:

- **Board Member of the Year:** Clabe Dobbs, Progress Bank
- **Dr. Charles A. “Scotty” McCallum Leadership Award:** Linda Parker, Dream Vacations
- **Ambassador of the Year:** Christina Babineaux, First US Bank
- **Member of the Year:** Hollywood Pools/  
Alabama Gaslight & Grill
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Becky Padgett, Community Volunteer
- **Chair’s Choice:** James Robinson, Spire
- **President’s Choice:** Linda Parker, Dream Vacations

In addition to the individuals above, please join me in recognizing McDonald’s as our **2021 Business of the Year – Retail**. Owners Jim Black and his daughter Jamie Black are an incredible asset to our business community. McDonald’s stands out for many reasons, but their sense of community and dedication to the City of Vestavia Hills makes this local restaurant such a staple in our community. They will be celebrating 50 years in Vestavia Hills this year! Be sure to visit their restaurant and thank them for their continued support over the years. Their partnership with the school system and involvement in community events, such as serving as title sponsor for last year’s I Love America Night and their partnership with local first responders, are just a few things that were considered when choosing McDonald’s for this award.

We also want to recognize Shades Mountain Baptist Church as our **2021 Community Partner of the Year – Service**. Shades Mountain Baptist Church has done so many wonderful things to serve the Vestavia Hills community, and strive to look for ways to be of service – partnership with the Vestavia Hills Police Department, Community

Night Out, serving several of the schools in Vestavia Hills and surrounding areas and I Love America Night, where they have entertained the community with their wonderful orchestra for over 17 years. They also helped put on last year’s inaugural fireworks show at the conclusion of I Love America Night. They truly make service a key part of their overall mission. Thank you for being such a vital part of Vestavia Hills!

It is gratifying to have businesses helping others make Vestavia Hills a great place to have a business! Our doors are always open at the Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce. Feel free to drop by and see us or email us thoughts or ideas you may have as we continue to strive for “A Life Above” in Vestavia Hills.



## VESTAVIA HILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### WHO DESIGNED VESTAVIA HILLS?

Historical documents archived in the Library of Congress indicate that Vestavia Hills was designed by Olmsted Brothers, the amazing landscape architecture firm established in 1898 by brothers John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., sons of landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. Their firm designed major cities and projects nationwide, including Central Park, Washington D.C. and Biltmore Estate.

Join the Vestavia Hills Historical Society as Alan Coshatt presents the famous Olmsted Brothers and their early influence on Vestavia Hills. The meeting will be held April 18 at 2pm at Vestavia Hills City Hall. We hope to see you there!

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