

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

August 2018

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Excellent bond rating means better use of citizen tax dollars

At the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Ross Street, the foundation is being laid for the new Public Safety Complex that will house the City of Auburn's police, fire and judicial services. This 70,502-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will serve the Auburn community into the next century.

Before a single shovel full of dirt could be turned, the City of Auburn had to issue bonds to pay for the \$33 million project. We received a very favorable interest rate of 3.7 percent for this issuance, thanks to our excellent credit rating, helping ensure more money goes toward projects and less money goes into interest payments.

This spring, the City of Auburn's credit worthiness was determined by Standard & Poor (S&P) and Moody's Investors Service, the top two bond rating agencies in the nation. We received an Aa2 rating from Moody's, only two steps from the top of Moody's scale, and an AA+ rating from S&P, just one step from the top.

These ratings are a tool outside investors, who often know little about Auburn or our area, use to determine whether we're reliable and worth the investment. High ratings show that our local government is financially stable, well-managed and has a solid trajectory. Because of these factors, investors consider us less of a risk and offer us lower interest rates.

"It is important to maintain strong ratings," said Finance Director Penny Smith. "We want to have the best rating that we possibly can because that means more money back into the pocketbooks of the City. We also have lots of banks that invest in us locally, and they look to this rating to decide whether we're a good investment."

Rating agencies determine ratings using metrics such as an organization's debt ratio, liquidity and financial management. They also take into account presentations from City officials, which we make each time we're seeking a large issuance, that help convey the City's overall financial picture. Regularly, the City of Auburn returns from presentations with high reviews from our raters, and other municipalities often call asking for tips on creating great presentations.

"The high ratings we get from our raters come from the fact that we're prepared," Smith said. "What I always say is, we make a plan, and we do what we say we're going to do. The rating agencies like to see stability—they don't want to see surprises. We are very well thought of nationally from that standpoint."

These high bond ratings aren't new for the City of Auburn. We've remained in the top tier of rating agencies' scales for decades thanks to the work that City of Auburn employees do every day. From keeping track of monthly records and producing annual reports to receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for 30 years—it all plays a part in making sure rating agencies can see that the City of Auburn's finances are well-managed.



Open Line is produced by the Office of the City Manager
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City of Auburn

What you need to know about the 2018 Municipal Election

The City of Auburn's 2018 Municipal Election is coming up on Aug. 28, 2018. All positions on the Auburn City Council are up for election, including mayor. All registered and qualified electors of the state who reside within Auburn City limits, and who have resided within City limits for 30 days or more immediately preceding the election date, are authorized to vote in the election.

Polling locations

Please note that **all Ward 2 residents will now vote at the Boykin Community Center** rather than the National Guard Armory. On June 5, the Council approved an ordinance changing the polling location for Ward 2 since the armory is unavailable during renovations. This will make the City's polling locations more consistent since Ward 1 and Ward 2 were the only wards without a combined voting location.

Lee County already took action to move from the armory to Boykin for the June 5 primary election, so this change will be consistent for Municipal elections and elections held by the County. While the facility was busy during the June 5 election, there was sufficient parking at the facility, which has as much or more parking than some of our other polling locations.

Polls will be open at the following locations from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 28:

- Ward 1 (District 1, Post 1): Boykin Community Center, 400 Boykin St.
- Ward 2 (District 1, Post 2): Boykin Community Center, 400 Boykin St.
- Ward 3 (District 2, Post 1): Frank Brown Recreation Center, 235 Opelika Road
- Ward 4 (District 2, Post 2): Frank Brown Recreation Center, 235 Opelika Road
- Ward 5 (District 3, Post 1): Dean Road Recreation Center, 307 S. Dean Road
- Ward 6 (District 3, Post 2): Dean Road Recreation Center, 307 S. Dean Road
- Ward 7 (District 4, Post 1): Clarion Inn and Suites, 1577 S. College St.
- Ward 8 (District 4, Post 2): Clarion Inn and Suites, 1577 S. College St.
- Absentee Box: Auburn City Hall

To find your voting ward, enter your address in the City Services bar at the bottom of the City's homepage at auburnalabama.org or at webgis.auburnalabama.org/coamap.

Voter registration

The deadline to register to vote is Friday, Aug. 17. Voters may register with the Lee County Board of Registrars at the Lee County Courthouse, 215 S. 9th St. in Opelika, or online at alabamavotes.gov. Voters may also print a registration form at alabamavotes.gov, fill it out and mail it to the Lee County Board of Registrars at PO Box 1530, Opelika, AL, 36803. To find out whether you're registered to vote, visit myinfo.alabamavotes.gov and click on "Registration Information."

Absentee voting

If you are unable to vote at the polls on Election Day, you may apply for an absentee ballot if:

- You will be out of the county on Election Day;
- You have a physical illness or disability that prevents a trip to the polling place;

- You are a registered voter living outside of the county, such as a member of the armed forces, a voter employed outside the United States, a college student or a spouse or child of such a person;
- You are an appointed election official or poll watcher at a polling place other than your regular polling place;
- You work a required shift of at least 10 hours that coincides with polling hours.

Applying for absentee voting

The City will accept applications for absentee ballots through Thursday, Aug. 23. Applications may be obtained from City Hall. Applications must be made in writing to the City Manager and either hand delivered by the voter or mailed to Auburn City Hall, Attn: Absentee Ballots, 144 Tichenor Ave., Suite 1, Auburn, AL, 36830.

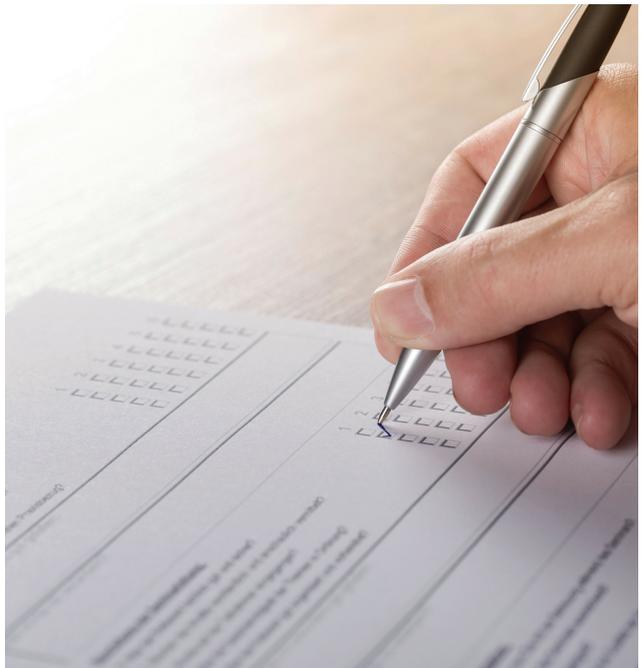
The application must be signed by the applicant and state the applicant's name, address, information necessary to verify the applicant as a registered voter and the address to which the ballot should be mailed. Absentee ballots will be mailed to those persons who have made a proper application.

Business Emergency or Medical Emergency applications may be made after the absentee deadline but no later than 5 p.m. on the day before the election if the voter:

- Is required by an employer under unforeseen circumstances to be out of the county on election day for an emergency business trip, or
- Has a medical emergency requiring treatment from a licensed physician.

Absentee voting deadlines

Absentee ballots returned by mail must be postmarked no later than the day prior to the election and received by the absentee election manager no later than noon on Election Day. If hand delivered by the voter, the ballot must be in the office of the absentee election manager at 144 Tichenor Ave. in Auburn by the close of business at 5 p.m. on the day before the election.



Megan McGowen Crouch appointed executive director of Development Services Business Unit



With nearly 21 years' worth of experience with the City of Auburn's development processes and economic development efforts, Megan McGowen Crouch has taken on a new role as the first executive director of the City's new Development Services Business Unit. Megan first joined the City of Auburn as an intern in summer 1997 while pursuing a master's in community planning from Auburn

University. She came on full-time as a planner after graduating in December 1997 and transitioned to the City's Economic Development Department a year later as an economic development officer. Megan most recently served as the deputy economic development director, a position she held for 14 years.

Early in her career, Megan collaborated with departments throughout the City to coordinate the design, construction and maintenance of Auburn Technology Park North and Auburn Technology Park West. She worked with teams on a variety of industrial projects, such as the creation of the GE Aviation facility that opened in 2012, and played a part in the City's efforts to ramp up commercial recruitment and retention, including the mall expansion, recruitment of Sam's Club and efforts to improve Opelika Road.

Megan now oversees the Planning, Engineering, Inspection Services, Commercial Development and Community Development

departments, which were grouped together during the City's reorganization process earlier this year to help create more cohesive services for the City's development community. The unit aims to encourage quality developments, protect neighborhoods and promote sustainable growth.

"Our development department staff members have always worked closely together, and cross-departmental cooperation has always been strong," Megan said. "Our systems and processes have evolved over time and need to continue to evolve with better use of technology and faster reaction to changing development patterns. Staff members are out there every day doing an excellent job handling the details, and my job is to think big picture and take all of these moving parts and bring them under one umbrella."

One key part of her new role will be serving as the primary liaison between the City and the development community. Developers or residents with concerns or questions about departments in the business unit or the City of Auburn's policies or procedures for development may contact Megan at mmcgowen@auburnalabama.org or (334) 501-7380.

"We rely heavily on the users of our processes to provide feedback about what works well and what doesn't work well so we can continue to refine them," Megan said.

2018 Sales Tax Holiday set for July 20-22

As families and children get ready to stock up on loose-leaf paper and pencils, remember the 2018 Back to School Sales Tax Holiday is set for July 20-22. On April 17, the Auburn City Council approved an ordinance exempting specific items from the City's 4 percent sales tax, including clothing less than \$100 per article; computers, computer software and school computer supplies \$750 or less; school supplies less than \$50; textbooks with a sales price of more than \$30 and less than \$50; and books less than \$30. A full list of exempt school supplies may be found in the April 17 Council ePacket at auburnalabama.org/agenda.



FIND MORE INFO ABOUT AUBURN PARKS AND RECREATION'S **ITTY BITTY AUBURN SCAVENGER HUNT** AND THE AUBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY'S **AUTHOR TALK AND BOOK SIGNING WITH BECKY ALBERTALLI AT AUBURNALABAMA.ORG!**

AUBURN PARKS & REC PRESENTS

ITTY BITTY AUBURN 2018

August 1 - 31
Pine Hill Cemetery



Details at auburnalabama.org/parks and on Facebook beginning Wednesday, July 18.

AUGUST

up COMING EVENTS

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Due to space considerations, we are unable to publicize events that are not directly affiliated with a City department.

View our online edition of Open Line at auburnalabama.org/opeline

City Meeting Schedule
auburnalabama.org
(334) 501-7260

Auburn Public Library
auburnalabama.org/library
(334) 501-3198

Parks and Recreation
auburnalabama.org/parks
(334) 501-2930



City of Auburn

Toddler Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Board of Zoning Adjustments
4:30 p.m.

Itty Bitty Auburn Scavenger Hunt begins

Preschool Storytime
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Games & Society
4 p.m.

Online Fall Sports Registration begins

Teen Commission
11:30 a.m.

STEIN Storytime
10 a.m.

Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
End of the summer movie Duck Summer! Park

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Back to School Swim Party
1-6 p.m.

Samford Pool fall hours begin

Baby Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
11:45 a.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Committee of the Whole
6:55 p.m.

City Council
7 p.m.

Toddler Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Preschool Storytime
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Games & Society
4 p.m.

Planning Commission
5 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Auditions for AACT Junior Performers Fall Production

Auditions for AACT Junior Performers Fall Production

STEIN Storytime
10 a.m.

Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

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Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Baby Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
GreenSpace Advisory Board
noon

Historic Preservation Commission
4 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Board of Education
6 p.m.

Toddler Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

Preschool Storytime
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Games & Society
4 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

STEIN Storytime
10 a.m.

Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

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Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

Baby Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Library Board
4 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Committee of the Whole
6:55 p.m.

City Council
7 p.m.

Toddler Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

Preschool Storytime
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Games & Society
4 p.m.

Water Works Board
4 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

STEIN Storytime
10 a.m.

Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

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Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Author talk and Book Signing with Becky Albertalli
3 p.m.

2018 Municipal Election
Polls open 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Baby Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Toddler Time
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Preschool Storytime
9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
Games & Society
4 p.m.

Fall Rec. Swim
5-7 p.m.

Itty Bitty Auburn Scavenger Hunt Ends

STEIN Storytime
10 a.m.

Weekend Rec. Swim
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

ACT performance "Silent Sky"

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