

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

May 2017

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City of Auburn



19th Annual Mayor's Memorial Day Breakfast



Auburn Mayor Bill Ham, Jr. and the Auburn Veterans Committee invite you to attend the 19th Annual Mayor's Memorial Day Breakfast on Monday, May 29 at 8 a.m. at the Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center Marquee. This annual event is held to honor the United States Military and those soldiers who have made the supreme sacrifice. Tickets for the breakfast will be available starting April 25 at City Hall for \$25 each or \$250 for a table of 10. Proceeds from ticket sales go to the Auburn Veterans Memorial Fund.

Specialist E-5 Carey Owen will be the guest of honor and recipient of the 2017 Distinguished Veteran Award. This will mark the sixth year the Auburn Heroes Remembered Award will be presented to the family of a local distinguished veteran who has passed away. The 2017 Auburn Heroes Remembered Award will be in honor of Lance Corporal Billy Stelplflug.

At 10 a.m., the City of Auburn will hold a memorial wreath laying ceremony at the Auburn Veterans Memorial Monument, located at the northeast corner of Ross Street and Glenn Avenue. Ceremony attendees are encouraged to park at the Douglas J. Watson Municipal Complex and Felton Little Park. During the ceremony, Ross Street will be closed from Glenn Avenue to Harper Avenue to provide accessible parking on Ross Street. Glenn Avenue will close between Burton Street and North Debardeleben Street during the event.

Please join us on Monday, May 29, as we honor the men and women who have courageously served our country. For more information, please visit auburnalabama.org/veterans or contact City Hall at (334) 501-7260.

State of the City: Mayor Ham's Annual Speech to the Auburn Chamber of Commerce

The following is an abridged version of the original text of Auburn Mayor Bill Ham's speech at the annual meeting of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce:

It is a great pleasure for me to speak to the Chamber each year. The Chamber is such an important part of the success of Auburn. Its 937 members employ over 25,000 East Alabamians from small mom and pop operations to major international industries. Each is important to Auburn's success, and I want to be sure that you understand how your Mayor and City government feel about you. Thank you for what you do.

The City is facing a change this year because of the retirement of City Manager Charlie Duggan. Charlie served the City in a number of capacities for 28 years, including the last 10 as city manager. Fortunately for us, the City has a very able replacement to serve as interim city manager- Jim Buston. Jim has been an integral part of the City's management team for many years and is well-known to most of you as a very smart, very conscientious, and caring leader.

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Let me turn to one of my favorite topics - economic development. We are in the middle of an excellent period in Auburn's history with both manufacturing and commercial expansion underway. On the manufacturing side, we had four industries to expand this past year with an investment of \$44 million and the creation of approximately 80 jobs. In addition, Berghoff Precision Machining located in Auburn, creating 51 highly-skilled jobs. Auburn now has 48 manufacturers in our industrial and technology parks with 5,640 employees. These companies are headquartered in eight foreign countries in addition to the United States. With the commitments we have from companies already located here, we will add another 1,000 jobs in the next three years.

I hope all of you saw in December the front page story in the print edition of the *Wall Street Journal* that featured Auburn and our Economic Development efforts, including some of our major recruitment successes such as GE Aviation. The article touches on the City's long-term economic development strategy of recruiting a diversity of small to mid-size, higher-paying, and technology-based companies to enhance economic stability. We are proud of Phillip Dunlap and his highly-skilled staff of professionals. Most projects that I have mentioned today have Phillip's fingerprints on them somewhere.

One of the exciting projects that we are working on with AU Engineering is an advanced manufacturing training center. In all the years that we have been involved in industrial development, we have discovered that one of the great needs of manufacturers is to have highly skilled workers who can maintain the increasingly sophisticated equipment used in the industries of the 21st century. At a recent meeting at the White House, CEOs of America's largest manufacturing companies told the President that there are 340,000 job openings in manufacturing in the US. The problem is that there are not enough qualified workers to fill the jobs. With the help of the State of Alabama and Southern Union, the City and the University are planning the creation of a training center that will give us a great advantage in recruiting and maintaining high tech companies. We will have more on this exciting new venture in the coming months.

On a national level, Auburn continues to gain recognition. There are at least 14 major awards or recognitions that the City of Auburn received this past year. I won't go over all of them here, but there is one recognition that I do want to mention. Auburn moved up four spots to number 6 on the Milken Institute's 2016 list of Best Performing Small Cities. Milken Institute's annual Best Performing Cities report provides "an objective benchmark for examining the underlying factors and identifying unique characteristics of economic growth in metropolitan areas." Milken's criteria include job creation, wage gains, and technology developments. In keeping with the message of the *Wall Street Journal* article, four of Milken's top ten small cities



in America are college towns. We all should be proud to receive this prestigious recognition.

On the commercial side, we are enjoying a renewal and expansion of our commercial base. Several years ago, we made renewing Opelika Road a top priority. Over the past year, the City completed the Opelika Road and East University Drive intersection improvements along with sidewalks

and lighting in front of the Auburn Mall. While we are not finished with the infrastructure we have planned for the next decade on Opelika Road, significant improvements have been made to the Mall and other businesses on this important commercial strip including the opening of Krispy Kreme and the location of Stein Mart in the Mall. Stein Mart will open March 23, by the way.

In addition to the Mall, consider the following changes in our commercial base just over the past year:

- Two Wal-Mart Neighborhood Markets opened in early 2016. One at the site of the former K-Mart at the intersection of Opelika Road and East University Drive, and the other at the intersection of North Donahue and Shug Jordan Parkway
- Kroger completed the renovation and expansion of its store at the Corner Village Shopping Center. The remainder of the shopping center also expanded and received façade, landscaping and parking lot enhancements.
- Michaels will locate at Flint's Crossing next to Earth Fare. Construction is anticipated to begin soon. Flint's Crossing shopping center will also undergo a complete façade renovation
- Starbucks on South College and South Donahue Drive will open this Spring
- Façade Improvements are underway at Market Square Shopping Center (Pier One) on Opelika Road
- Façade improvements are nearly complete at Auburn Wholesale Mattress on Opelika Road next to Hyundai of Auburn

In addition to the good economic news, the City Council and staff have an ambitious work plan for this next year. One of the real challenges that we have faced for several decades is expanding our infrastructure to keep pace with our growth. Streets, water, sewer and storm drainage facilities all have to be improved to handle a population that has more than doubled since the 1980s. Projects such as the Moore's Mill bridge over the Interstate will be completed this year. Other projects include widening with other improvements to Wright Street, widening and improvements to North Donahue Drive, and the Samford/College intersection. Of course, one project that we are all excited about is the opening of the new Auburn High School facility. I think it is something that will serve our community well for many decades.

One sacrifice the City Council made to pay for the new high school and other school projects was to hand over the City's five-mill tax fund to the Schools. The five-mill tax fund historically has paid for many of the City's major projects, such as the Library. With the five-mill tax fund and revenue growth in excess of what we expected, thanks to economic development, we were able to move ahead with the improvements to the schools. Not having that revenue for City projects will make it more difficult to fund recreation and other improvements, but we will continue to keep our spending under control in an attempt to make money available for capital improvements. For many years, the City Council has identified the Schools as our number one priority. Because it is our top priority, we had to shift funds from other priorities to the Schools. Even though we have built numerous parks and recreation projects over the past 30 years, we are at a point where we need to build new facilities for our growing programs.

Parks and Recreation has two major projects this year. One is the renovations at Westview, Memorial Park, and Pine Hill cemeteries that will begin this year. The other is the completion of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan and designation of top priorities for a bond issue for recreation projects this year. This has been a citizen-driven project that will lay the foundation for improvements to our parks and recreation facilities for many years. You noticed in the news media recently that we are buying a large parcel of property on the north side of town that will help us meet the needs outlined in the Plan.

As I mentioned, one of the challenges of a growing city like Auburn is keeping the infrastructure in line with the growth. For several decades, we have been good at doing that because of our planning efforts. Over the next year, we will have underway a downtown parking study and plan, a citywide traffic and transportation study, the five-year update to the Comprehensive Plan, a Northwest Auburn Neighborhood Plan, and the North College Streetscape Plan. You will see many improvements to roads, sidewalks, bridges, and other infrastructure this next year that result from our planning efforts.

Before I finish, I would be remiss if I did not point out that Jay Gogue, a great friend to the City and the Chamber, is retiring this year. I have enjoyed working with Jay over many years and appreciate the great relationship that the University and the City have. The City of Auburn and AU have a model relationship and I credit that to the openness and support that Jay has given the City and the Chamber during his tenure. Several major projects, such as the Auburn Research Park, would not have taken place without Jay. He has been the major proponent of the Performing Arts Center that will become a reality in the next couple years.

The Performing Arts Center will enhance our cultural life considerably, but it will also be a major economic generator. We all know what AU Athletics means to our economy, and the Performing Arts Center will have a similar impact.

Please remember if you have any suggestions to improve how we handle the public's business at the City, I am always available. Just give me a call.

Thank you.

Household Hazardous Waste 2017

The City of Auburn Environmental Services Department will host the 15th Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection and Document Shredding Day on Saturday, April 15th from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Environmental Services Complex, located at 365-A North Donahue Drive. Last year, 306 Auburn citizens participated in recycling or disposing of various chemicals and materials including computers and related equipment. Citizens may bring up to 20 pounds of HHW material and/or 10 boxes of documents per household for disposal. Participation is limited to Auburn residents. Proof of residency can be shown by bringing a recent water bill. No farm, commercial, or industrial waste is permitted. For more information, visit auburnalabama.org/es or call (334) 501-3080.



City Holiday Schedule

On Monday, May 29, Auburn City Hall will be closed in observance of Memorial Day. Police, Fire, and Communications will remain on their regular schedules. Collection of garbage, trash, and recycling for the week of May 29- June 2 will be delayed by one day for all customers:

May

Monday, May 29
Tuesday, May 30
Wednesday, May 31
Thursday, June 1
Friday, June 2

Memorial Day Holiday

HOLIDAY
Monday's route
Tuesday's route
Wednesday's route
Thursday's route

Collection carts and recycled materials should be placed at the curb by 6 a.m. on your scheduled collection day. Please avoid placing items on or near poles or other fixed objects which would inhibit safe collection. All items should be properly contained or bundled so they do not fall into the street or down storm drains. All carts and collection bins must be removed from the curb by 6 a.m. the following day.

Free Parking

Downtown Parking is free between Auburn University semesters. As Spring semester ends, parking will be free beginning May 8, 2017 through Wednesday, May 17, 2017.

In addition to on-street parking available throughout downtown, parking can be found on and surrounding the first floor of the Auburn Municipal Parking Deck, including the Gay Street parking lot and parking accessible from Tichenor Avenue.

Enjoy free parking as you shop, dine and enjoy all that downtown Auburn has to offer.

MAY

upCOMING EVENTS

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

	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby Storytime 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board 11:45 a.m. Committee of the Whole 6 p.m. City Council 7 p.m. Open Mic Night 6:30 p.m. 	3	4	5	6
	7	8	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25th Annual Fishing Rodeo sponsored by Evans Realty 8-11 a.m. Samford Pool Open House 11 a.m.-2 p.m. STEM Storytime 10 a.m.
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For more information on meetings and events listed here, please visit auburnalabama.org/openline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	 <p>City of Auburn</p>

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