

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

August 2006

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City of Auburn

City to Hold Municipal Election on August 22

The City of Auburn's Regular Municipal Election will be held on Tuesday, August 22. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Voters will elect a Mayor at-large and five Council members in five voting wards. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast in the race for City Council members, a runoff election will be held on Tuesday, September 19.

City's Election Web Site - www.auburnalabama.org/elections

Any registered and qualified voter unable to vote at the polls on Election Day may apply for an absentee ballot if any of the following criteria is met:

- If you will be out of the county or the State on election day;
- If you have a physical illness or infirmity which prevents you from getting to the polls;
- If an elector works on a shift which has at least 10 hours which coincide with the hours the polls are open at his or her regular polling place;
- If you are enrolled as a student at an educational institution located outside Lee County and cannot get to the polls on election day
- If you are a member, spouse or dependent of a member of the armed forces of the United States in which case you may apply under the provisions of "The Federal Voting Assistance Act;" or
- If you are appointed as an election officer or named as a poll watcher at a polling place other than your regular polling place.

The City will accept applications for absentee ballots through Thursday, August 17. Applications for absentee ballots must be made in writing to the Acting City Manager and either hand-delivered or mailed to:

Auburn City Hall
Attn: Absentee Ballots
144 Tichenor Avenue, Suite 1
Auburn, AL 36830

The application form must be signed by the applicant. Applications may be obtained from City Hall and must state the applicant's name, residence 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 as soon as the ballots are printed. The completed ballot may be filed with the Acting City Manager and either hand-delivered or mailed to Auburn City Hall up to and including Election Day on Tuesday, August 22.

The candidates for Mayor and City Council are as follows:

Mayor (elected at-large)

William F. "Bill" Ham, Jr.

William McLaurine

City Council

Ward 1 Christine Berry Bradshaw

Arthur L. Dowdell, Sr.

Verlinda J. White

Ward 2 Sheila H. Eckman

Tracie West

Ward 3 John T. Braswell

Thomas Worden

Ward 5 Christopher Robin Kelley

Teresa "Terry" Rodriguez

Ward 8 James A. "Jay" Conner, Jr.

Robert "Bob" Norman

Councilmen Brent Beard, Dick Phelan and Gene Dulaney did not have opposition. The City Council will declare them the winners of Wards 4, 6, and 7, respectively, at the first City Council meeting in August.

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Continued on page 2

City to Hold Municipal Election on August 22 Continued from page 1

The designated polling places for voters that reside within the City limits of Auburn are as follows:



Frank Brown Recreation Center

- Ward 1 Boykin Center Gymnasium
400 Boykin Street
- Ward 2 National Guard Armory
1455 Shug Jordan Parkway
- Ward 3 Frank Brown Recreation Center
235 Opelika Road
- Ward 4 Frank Brown Recreation Center
235 Opelika Road
- Ward 5 Dean Road Recreation Center
307 South Dean Road
- Ward 6 Dean Road Recreation Center
307 South Dean Road
- Ward 7 Best Western University
Convention Center
1577 South College Street
- Ward 8 Best Western University
Convention Center
1577 South College Street
- Absentee Auburn City Hall
Box 144 Tichenor Avenue



Dean Road Recreation Center

Maps highlighting the new single member wards are on display now at City Hall, 144 Tichenor Avenue; the Auburn Public Library, 749 East Thach Avenue; Boykin Center Gymnasium, 400 Boykin Street; the Frank Brown Recreation Center, 235 Opelika Road; the Dean Road Recreation Center, 307 South Dean Road; the Development Services Building, 171 North Ross Street; and the Bailey-Alexander Complex, 1501 West Samford Avenue. A ward map is also available on the City's web site at www.auburnalabama.org/wards.

For questions concerning your polling location, please contact the Election Manager at City Hall at 501-7260. Citizens are also encouraged to visit the City of Auburn's 2006 Election web site at www.auburnalabama.org/elections for information regarding polling locations. Results of the 2006 Regular Municipal Election will be posted online the night of the returns.

Do you have any suggestions, feedback, or story ideas that you would like to share? If so, please contact us at openline@auburnalabama.org.



City Launches e-Notifier E-mail Subscription Service

The City of Auburn has launched a new e-mail subscription service, the e-Notifier. The e-Notifier was created and designed by the City of Auburn's Information Technology Department to keep Auburn citizens up-to-date on City of Auburn news, information, events, and services. The e-Notifier will be used to notify subscribers of press releases, City Council and Planning Commission packet postings, Parks and Recreation information and announcements, City job vacancies, and much more.

To subscribe to the e-Notifier, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/e-Notifier, read the instructions, click on the Subscription Form link, and complete the information requested on the form, including your name, e-mail address, and confirmation of your e-mail address. Next, click subscribe and then check the boxes next to the items for which you wish to receive notifications. For your protection, a confirmation e-mail with instructions on how to confirm your subscription will be sent to your e-mail address. Subscriptions will not be activated without your confirmation.

For more information on the e-Notifier, please contact the City of Auburn's Information Technology Department by phone at 501-7200 or by e-mail at webit@auburnalabama.org.

City to Host Softball Tournament

The City of Auburn will host the 2006 Independent Softball Association (ISA) Men's B World Softball Championship Friday, August 25-Sunday, August 27 at the Auburn Softball Complex on South College Street. Teams from across the US will compete for the championship title. Admission is \$4 for adults and \$3 for students. Children 6 years and under are free.

The Auburn Softball Complex has been honored as Softball Complex of the Year by the ISA. Last month, the City hosted the 2006 Amateur Softball Association's (ASA) Girl's 14 & Under B East Fast Pitch National Championship at the Auburn Softball Complex. More than 30 teams from across the US competed for the championship title during four days of competition.

For more information on softball tournaments or the Auburn Softball Complex, please contact the Auburn Softball Complex at 501-2976.



Auburn's Finances at a Glance



One of the most visible indicators of a city's financial health is its bond ratings. The City of Auburn's bond ratings are Aa3 from Moody's and AA- from Standard & Poor's. What does a bond rating mean and how does it affect Auburn citizens and taxpayers?

A bond rating is similar to an individual's credit score, though it is determined in a different manner. Bond ratings are on an alphabetical scale, with C being the lowest and Aaa or AAA being the highest. A high rating indicates very strong credit-worthiness. Just as in personal finance, a good rating leads to lower interest rates, which in turn saves taxpayer money. Monies saved through paying lower interest rates may be used for other worthwhile City projects for Auburn residents. Cities normally request a review of their bond rating before borrowing money in the national bond market. Auburn received its most recent bond rating in 2005 prior to a \$33 million bond issuance for school purposes.

Rating agencies look at a myriad of factors to determine credit-worthiness, including revenue trends, spending trends, reserve levels, debt levels, audited financial statements, the budget, long-term financial plans and management. In the most recent review of the City's bond ratings, the rating agencies reports cited their reasons for assigning the Aa3 and AA- ratings:

"The Aa3 rating reflects continued diversification and growth of the city's economic base which derives a significant degree of stability from the presence of Auburn University. The rating is also based upon the city's strong financial position and manageable debt burden. The city's unemployment rate is consistently low as the city's economy continues to diversify. Economic activity has helped increase the size of the tax base, which has grown an average of 16% annually over the past five years. Moody's expects the city to maintain a sound financial position given conservative budgeting, strong financial management and the maintenance of ample levels of fund equity." ~Moody's Investor's Service

"The [AA-] rating reflects the city's economic base, which is dominated by the stable presence of Auburn University and the city's recent success in broadening the base beyond opportunities presented by the university; strong financial performance, coupled with sound reserve levels; and low overall debt burden, net of self-supporting school debt. Compared to other Alabama municipalities, Auburn relies on a diversified revenue stream. With only 50% of its budget dedicated to wages, the city has sound expenditure flexibility. Strong revenue growth and expenditure control have allowed the city to maintain strong reserve levels. Debt levels are low and amortization costs are moderate." ~ Standard & Poor's

Auburn's bond ratings are among the highest in the state of Alabama, a signal that the City's finances are in good shape. Both rating agencies cited Auburn's economic development efforts as part of the reason for affirming the excellent ratings. The City of Auburn, together with the Industrial Development Board (IDB) and the Commercial Development Authority (CDA), have undertaken dedicated economic development efforts over the past 20 years in order to accomplish two main goals:

- to provide good jobs for the region
- to grow the City's revenue base

Since 1994, more than 3,900 jobs have been created through the City's industrial recruitment efforts. Such jobs provide higher than average salaries and good benefits for the employees and their families.



The new industries and commercial businesses locating in Auburn increase the City's revenues. These additional revenues are paid in part by the companies themselves through property taxes and business license fees, by the employees who are working in these new jobs through the occupation license fee, and by the

customers of these new industries, stores, and service businesses through sales and use tax. In fiscal year 2005, the various companies recruited and assisted by the City's economic development efforts provided direct revenues of over \$7.2 million to the General Fund.

In addition to these direct revenues, employees receiving paychecks from these companies then spend a significant portion of their pay at Auburn businesses, providing even more revenue to the City. Estimating the economic impact of the turnover of payrolls, the indirect revenue from these companies for fiscal 2005 is projected to be more than \$12.1 million. These additional revenues enable Auburn citizens to enjoy a variety of high quality recreational amenities, including parks and sports facilities, miles of sidewalks and bikeways, and a well-funded, nationally recognized and award-winning public school system. The City relies on its economic development programs to produce the revenues that enable the City to meet the expectations of its citizens that go above and beyond the basic services provided by city governments.

The City of Auburn's finances continue to be strong, as evidenced by its high bond ratings. To learn more about the City's financial position, please see the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR), and the proposed budget document. All of these documents may be found on the City's web site at www.auburnalabama.org.



Meeting Schedule

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – August 1, 5:30 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center

City Council – August 1, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber

Board of Zoning Adjustment – August 2, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber

Tree Commission - August 4, 11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 714 East Glenn Avenue

Cemeteries Advisory Board – August 7, 4:00 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center

Water Works Board – August 7, 4:00 p.m., Water Resource Management Conference Room, 1501 West Samford Avenue

Greenspace Advisory Board – August 8, 11:30 a.m., City of Auburn Meeting Room, 122 Tichenor Avenue

Historic Preservation Commission – August 8, 4:00 p.m., Development Services Building

Board of Education - August 8, 6:00 p.m., AHS Multi-Media Room

Planning Commission - August 10, 5:00 p.m., Council Chamber

City Council - August 15, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber

City Council – August 23, TBA, Council Chamber, (Canvass results of August 22 Election)

Bicycle Committee - August 29, 7:00 p.m., Development Services Building, 171 N. Ross Street

Tree Commission - September 1, 11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 714 East Glenn Avenue

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – September 5, 5:30 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center

City Council - September 5, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber

Board of Zoning Adjustment – September 6, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber

-Meeting times and places are subject to change-

Auburn's Sales Tax Holiday Weekend

At its June 6 regularly scheduled meeting, the City Council unanimously approved an ordinance authorizing Auburn's first ever sales tax holiday weekend. The sales tax holiday weekend will begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 4 and ends at midnight on Sunday, August 6.

Items exempt for the duration of the Sales Tax Holiday Weekend fall into 3 major categories:

- **Clothing** – All human wearing apparel suitable for general use is exempt unless it otherwise appears on the taxable list; clothing items must cost \$100 or less per article of clothing to be exempt.
- **Computers and Computer Software** – A single purchase with a sales price of \$750 or less will be exempt. Exempt items include computers, computer software, and school computer supplies.
- **School Supplies** – Any items of \$50 or less per item commonly used by a student in a course of study will be exempt. Supplies may include art supplies, reference maps and globes, textbooks on an official school book list with a sales price of more than \$30 but less than \$50, and books with a sales price of \$30 or less per book. An all-inclusive list of exempt school supplies may be found on the City's web site at www.auburnalabama.org.

Items **not** exempt during the Sales Tax Holiday Weekend include:

- Clothing accessories such as handbags, jewelry, sunglasses, and umbrellas.
- Protective equipment such as breathing masks, hard hats, helmets, and safety belts.
- Sports or recreational equipment such as ballet or tap shoes, athletic gloves, goggles, or shin guards.
- Furniture
- Any systems, devices, software, or peripherals designed or intended primarily for recreational use.
- Video games
- Magazines, newspapers, periodicals, or any other document printed or offered for sale in a non-bound form.

For a complete list of exempt and taxable items, please visit the City's website at www.auburnalabama.org and click on **Sales Tax Holiday Brochure** under Hot Topics. For more information, please contact the City of Auburn's Revenue Office at 501-7224.



Board Vacancies

Two vacancies on the **Greenspace Advisory Board** were announced at the July 5 City Council meeting and will be filled at the August 1 meeting. One incumbent has served two terms and one incumbent has served a partial term.



One vacancy on the **Lee County Youth Development Center** will be announced at the August 15 City Council meeting and will be filled at the September 19 meeting. The incumbent has served a partial term.

Two vacancies on the **Industrial Development Board** will be announced at the September 5 City Council meeting and will be filled at the October 3 meeting. One incumbent has served one full term and one partial term and one incumbent has served a partial term.

Two vacancies on the **Building Board of Adjustments** will be announced at the September 19 City Council meeting and will be filled at the October 17 meeting. Both incumbents have served one full term and one partial term.

Three vacancies on the **Tree Commission** will be announced at the September 19 City Council meeting and will be filled at the October 17 meeting. One incumbent has served one full term and one partial term and two incumbents have served one full term each.

Citizens interested in serving are encouraged to contact one of their City Council members or notify the City Manager's Office.

New Electronic Services at the Auburn Public Library



The Auburn Public Library offers a variety of electronic services for citizens of all ages. For more information on these programs, please contact the Electronic Services Department at the Auburn Public Library at 501-3194.

Go Wireless

The Auburn Public Library now offers free wireless connections for all laptop computers.

Discover Your Family Tree

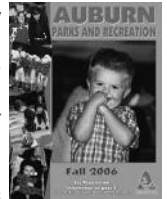
The Library has subscribed to two genealogy databases, HeritageQuest Online and Ancestry Library. Both databases may be accessed using Library computers. Users may also access HeritageQuest online from any computer through the Library's web site at www.auburnalabama.org/library/genealogy.htm and entering their library card number as a login.

Free Live Online Homework Help

Homeworkalabama.org is a free, live online homework help service available 7 days a week from 3:00 p.m.-midnight. Free tutoring is offered in math, science, social studies, and English in grades 4-12 and college introductory courses. To access the site, visit www.homeworkalabama.org. You will need an Alabama Virtual Library card to use as a login. Users who live, work, or attend school in Auburn may sign up for a free Alabama Virtual Library card at the Auburn Public Library or by contacting their school media specialist.

Parks and Recreation Fall Registration Dates

The **Parks and Recreation Fall Quarterly Brochure** is available now at various City facilities and online at www.auburnalabama.org/parks. Be sure to pick up your copy to learn about classes, programs, and special events offered this fall. The program quarter begins September 5 and runs through November 10. Adult Softball, Soccer, Fall Baseball, Cheerleading, Tackle Football, and Fall Program and Class Registration are going on throughout the month of August. For more information, please contact Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.



Job Vacancies

The City of Auburn has full-time and part-time positions in a wide range of areas. One of the current regular, full-time job openings is:



- **Utility Maintenance Worker-Sewer**
(\$12.01-14.35/hour)

For updated job opportunities, visit the City's web site at www.auburnalabama.org, contact the Alabama State Employment Office, or call the City's job line at 501-7250. The City of Auburn is an equal opportunity employer.

East University Drive Multi-Use Pathway Grand Opening

Join the City of Auburn and the Auburn Bicycle Committee on Saturday, August 26 at 10:00 a.m. for the grand opening of a new multi-use pathway on East University Drive between North Dean Road and Gatewood Drive. Door prizes will be awarded and refreshments will be provided.

The East University Drive multi-use path covers approximately 1/2 mile and completes another portion of the City's Master Bike Plan. Currently, the City of Auburn has over 30 miles of bike lanes with the Master Bike Plan calling for 115 miles of bike lanes within the City limits. In May, the City celebrated the grand opening of the Wire Road bike path, an off-road path running along Wire Road from Cox Road to Talheim Road. The path is approximately 1 1/2 miles in length with future plans to tie into Auburn's Kiesel Park.



Mayor Bill Ham and members of the Auburn Bicycle Committee, along with Auburn bicycle enthusiasts, cut the ribbon at the Wire Road Bikeway Grand Opening in May.

For more information on the City of Auburn's bike paths, please visit the Auburn Bicycle Committee's web site at www.auburnalabama.org/cycle or contact Brandy Ezelle, City Traffic Engineer, at 501-3029.

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• • • • •

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up COMING EVENTS

contact the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center at 501-2963.



• **Summer Invitational 2006**, through August 21, abstract works by Gloe Herbert Dyne, Barry Fleming, and Roger Reeves.

• **New Works VIII**, August 25-September 20, paintings and works on paper by Cleve Webber and Jackie Webber



LynnTerra Ballet will be holding open auditions for the **Nutcracker Ballet**, sponsored by Parks and Recreation, on August 26 at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. and auditions begin at 10:00 a.m. Auditions are free and open to the public for ages 8 years and older. Participants must be 8 years old by December 31, 2006. For more information, contact Barbara Stauffer at 887-6067.

Preschool Story Time, for children ages 3-5 years, will meet each Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. at the Auburn Public Library. Please note there will be no story time the first week of August. For more information, contact Youth Services at 501-3196.



Join the Auburn Public Library for **Toddler Time** each Thursday this month at 10:00 a.m. with the exception of the first week of August. Toddler Time is a story time for toddlers ages 18 months-3 years and their caregivers. For more information, contact Youth Services at 501-3196.



The **Auburn Public Library Book Group** will meet on August 15 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the classics. Participants may read a book by their favorite classic author. For more information, contact Jennifer Brenton at 501-3190.



Housing Counseling Classes are available upon request to anyone interested in the home buying process. These courses are designed to help prospective homeowners to better understand homeownership, from selecting properties to getting a home loan. These classes are offered at no cost by the Community Development Division of the City of Auburn's Economic Development Department and are scheduled upon request. For more information, contact Todd White at 501-7277.



Mark your calendar for the **Annual Downtown Trick-or-Treat** celebration on Tuesday, October 31 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in downtown Auburn. Join us for this excellent alternative to door-to-door trick-or-treating. Downtown merchants will provide treats for the children. Musical entertainment will also be provided. Don't miss out on your chance to win the "Best Costume" contest. Downtown Trick-or-Treat is a free event for children ages 3-12 years old. Parents must accompany their children. For more information, contact Alison Hall at 501-2940.



Auburn CityFest 2007 Exhibitor Applications and Sponsorship Opportunities Now Available

The Auburn CityFest Committee is currently accepting applications and sponsorships for Auburn CityFest 2007 to be held on Saturday, April 28, 2007. Applications for Fine Arts, Arts & Crafts, Food, and Non-Profit Exhibitors are available on the CityFest web site at www.auburncityfest.com. If you are interested in participating in Auburn CityFest 2007, be sure to reserve your space today. Limited space is available. Auburn CityFest 2006, Auburn's largest, FREE, festival, attracted more than 35,000 people to Kiesel Park. To download an application or for sponsorship information, please visit www.auburncityfest.com, or contact the Auburn CityFest Headquarters at 501-2930.

