Many positive things are taking place in our community. I am extremely excited about the recent announcement by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians on their project here in Foley. Congratulations to them! This will have a very positive impact for our entire region. We see the value this is adding to our community and look forward to working with them on this tremendous project.

The new pedestrian crossover on Hwy. 59 was recently opened. Approximately 80 students from Foley Intermediate School participated in the inaugural walkover. The structure turned out beautifully, thanks to the hard work of Sted McCollough and his employees. Here are some facts about the crossover:

- 110-foot span
- 12-ft. wide walkway
- 18-ft. vertical clearance over the highway
- elevators on the east and west sides
- weight of the crossover: 64,602 pounds

While this structure certainly improves safety for pedestrians when crossing Hwy. 59, it will also enhance economic efforts in our downtown. The additional parking next to the Foley Art Center was made possible through the grant associated with this project.

Speaking of the art center, we congratulate them as they celebrate 50 years of service to our community this year. They provide a wonderful environment for local and regional artists, and also work with our schools to expose the children to art.

Our economic developer is in discussions regarding additional dining venues in historic downtown.

Grumpys’, on Hwy. 98 next to BB&T, is a recent addition offering breakfast and lunch opportunities to our community. (My grandchildren love the biscuits!)

We have a new event coming this Christmas season: The Coastal Ballet Academy will be performing the Nutcracker at the United Methodist Church in Foley.

Foley continues to be a top choice for retailers. The Burton Group has commitments from Pet Smart, ULTA Cosmetics, TJX Home Goods and Buffalo Wild Wings for their development near Academy Sports.

Construction is underway on the multi-use event center at our new sports complex. This 90,000-sq.-ft. facility is part of our youth sports tourism initiative. The Poarch Creek economic team has the first of two hotels under construction. They will connect to our event center. The event center and the first 150-room hotel are expected to open next summer.

A number of events are being hosted in November at the sports tourism complex. (See article on page 2.) Statewide and national tournaments will bring thousands of visitors to Foley who will eat at our restaurants, stay in our hotels and shop with our retailers. Our sister cities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach will also benefit from these visitors.

Many of you have asked about the availability of high-speed internet service in Foley. I am pleased to let you know that Riviera Utilities will be offering this service in the near future. Those who are existing Riviera Cable customers will be served first, as lines are already established to these homes and businesses. Others will be added as service is expanded.

SHOP FOLEY FIRST!
Best regards,

Mayor John Koniar
November is a big month for Foley's new state-of-the-art sports fields, where three separate tournaments are expected to bring in significant visitor numbers. These include the Sun Belt Conference Women's Soccer Championship, the ASA Alabama Soccer Cup tournament, and the first national tournament scheduled to be held in Foley, the NIRSA National Soccer Championships. These tournaments are expected to bring thousands of first-time visitors to Foley.

“We are so thrilled to host this quality national event here in Foley,” said the city’s director of sports tourism, Don Staley. “It’s a great opportunity to welcome so many from such far-reaching regions of the country and introduce many to our first-rate facilities and South Alabama hospitality.”

Foley’s new soccer facilities were included in this year’s list of “Eleven Soccer Facilities Ideal For Hosting Winning Events” in the southeastern U.S., by Sports Planning Guide magazine.

“With this many people visiting for these tournaments, some businesses could (expect to) see a month of Black Fridays,” said Foley council president Wayne Trawick. The city is sending a list of tournaments monthly to interested businesses to provide information about the number of visitors expected. Events are also listed online at www.foleysportstourism.com/events.

Fifty-plus events have been scheduled for the fields at the sports tourism complex in 2017, according to Staley.
The outline of Foley’s 90,000-square-foot event center can already be seen. The event center includes about 60,000 square feet of floor space that can be used for sporting events or trade shows, and includes multiple breakout rooms. The center is expected to be completed by summer of 2017.

Construction is underway on the 150-room Marriott TownePlace Hotel that will be located alongside Owa’s 14-acre lake. The hotel is one of two slated to be built near Foley’s sports tourism complex.

Foley continues to grow

Foley’s Community Development Department annual report for fiscal year 2015/2016 confirms what we already know: Foley is growing at a very healthy rate.

According to the CDD report:
• A total of 249 residential building permits were issued from Oct. 1, 2015 through Sept. 30, 2016, compared to 152 issued the previous year.
• These 249 permits include 235 single-family residences and 14 duplex structures.
• Permits for new commercial structures include the Alabama Credit Union, City Hope Church, Crossfit Gym, Glen Lakes Village Building #3, Panda Express, Pet Smart, T&T Guns & Ammo and foundations for buildings at the Owa complex that include a Marriott TownePlace Suites and restaurant and retail buildings.
• Public projects permitted included the pedestrian walkway downtown and several buildings at the Foley Sports Tourism Complex: a championship fieldhouse, the foundation for the Foley Event Center, a pavilion, a maintenance building and a north fieldhouse.

Foley’s annual financial report receives award

For the third consecutive year, The City of Foley’s comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for the year was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada. Foley has received this award for the years ending Sept. 30 in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition for excellence in state and local government financial reporting. All three reports can be viewed at www.cityoffoley.org/Your Government/Finance/Audited Financial Statements.

In addition, the City’s Finance Division received an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement. This division is led by Sue Steigerwald, finance director/city treasurer, who is primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning CAFR.
Upcoming Events

Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market
Local produce, fresh seafood, homemade goods and more. Tues. and Sat. 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Co. Rd. 20 between Ala. 59 and Foley Beach Express. www.CoastalAlabamaMarket.com

Foley Sports Tourism
A full calendar of events can be found online at FoleySportsTourism.com.

Foley Public Library
A full calendar of events can be found online at FoleyLibrary.org.

Foley Senior Center
A full calendar of events can be found online at CityofFoley.org.

Observe and Explore Days
Every first Wednesday and third Saturday of the month, 10 a.m.–Noon. Activities for children 10 and under. FREE. Graham Creek Nature Preserve, 23460 Wolf Bay Dr., Foley, AL 36535
www.grahamcreekpreserve.org

Nov. 11–Dec. 22 49th Annual Trim-A-Tree Holiday Marketplace
Mon.–Sat. 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.–6 p.m. Unique Christmas ornaments, decorations and gifts, all created by local artists and members of the Foley Art Center. Suite 230, Tanger Outlets. 251-943-4381. FoleyArtCenter.com

Nov. 12 Annual Foley Rotary Oyster Run
A 5K course beginning and finishing at Orange Blossom Square starting at 8 a.m. Followed by a 1-mile Fun Run for ages 10 and under beginning at 9 a.m. VisitFoley.org

Dec. 2 Christmas in the Park
6 p.m. The community comes together to enjoy music, visits with Santa, refreshments and the official lighting of holiday lights. Free admission. Foley’s Heritage Park. 251-943-1200. VisitFoley.org

Dec. 2 Mobile Youth Symphony Holiday Concert
7:30 p.m. Favorites performed by a symphony comprised of young musicians. Foley Civic Center. Seating is limited. Suggested $5 donation. VisitFoley.org

Dec. 3 Foley Christmas Parade

Dec. 3 Let It Snow
11 a.m. Food, activities and SNOW! Free admission. Foley’s Heritage Park. 251-943-1200. VisitFoley.org

Dec. 5 Baldwin Pops Concert

Dec. 9–10 The Nutcracker performed by the Coastal Ballet Academy
Fri. 7 p.m. and Sat. 2 p.m. Foley UMC Spirit Center. 251-979-9851. VisitFoley.org

Jan. 10 Visit Foley Snowbird Coffee
9 a.m.–noon. Welcome coffee for winter visitors. Join us for coffee and doughnuts and discover things to see and do in this area. Free admission. Foley Civic Center. 251-943-1200.