

# Foley Newsletter



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Ralph G. Hellmich

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I hope everyone in our Foley area is having a wonderful fall season and looking forward to the holidays. It's an excellent time to take advantage of all the local seasonal produce and crafts at the Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermans Market. There are several new business announcements that are in the works but not quite ready to publicize. I look forward to providing details in the next newsletter.

Foley has received another Gulf of Mexico Environmental Stewardship Award (GOMESA) grant of \$2.5 million to be used to further expand the Graham Creek Nature Preserve (GCNP). We are working closely with our state partners and Gov. Ivey, with a common vision to protect the unique diversity of our area. Congrats to our Environmental Department led by Leslie Lassiter Gahagan, whose work resulted in these grants for Foley.

Congratulations to Foley's Fire Chief Joey Darby for being recognized as Fire Chief of the Year for the state by the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs.

The city council has approved funding to expand and modernize recreational parks across the city. Your input is requested to help set priorities to make sure the vision reflects the wants and needs of everyone. Watch for the opportunity to provide feedback.

We have identified at least \$3 million in needed drainage projects around the city. Some are small, while others, like the current Bon Secour headwater restoration project, are huge. Drainage projects in Foley are a challenge because our city is flat. Also, we receive some of the highest rainfall totals in the country. The city has spent millions in the past 10 years on



**Mayor's  
Notes**

drainage, but it is a constant and ever changing battle.

I ask our citizens for patience, and when you are aware of problems, let us know. You can help to by not placing debris in ditches and helping keep common easements in subdivisions open and not blocked by fences.

One of our challenges in Foley is the vast amount of non-city owned drainage on private property. Many times city right-of-ways work just fine, but then are connected to private-property ditches. State law restricts municipalities from working on private property except under certain conditions. We work closely with many landowners to solve these problems, but sometimes we just can't, for different reasons. We will continue to work to solve these issues.

Growth is on everyone's mind. As you have seen, we are in the top of many categories-whether it be business development or population growth. The city leadership recognizes both the challenges and opportunities that come with each. We are committed to managing growth, by lowering zoning densities, enacting impact fees and speeding up infrastructure projects for transportation.

Let us look at this growth as an opportunity to take our city, where everyone wants to come live now, to another level with modern parks and transportation. And let's do it in a way that protects our environment. It is all about quality of life and I think we can do it!

Mayor Ralph G. Hellmich

# City doubles down on road resurfacing

There are about 155 miles of paved roads with the city limits. To keep city roads in good condition, approximately \$1 million is budgeted annually for resurfacing and repair, according to city administrator Mike Thompson. During fiscal year 2020-2021, in spite of COVID-19 and Hurricane Sally, the city received better than normal revenues.

The city council voted to allocate some of these funds for additional paving, bringing the total spent on road improvement to approximately \$2 million.

The City utilizes a Pavement Management System to evaluate and assign a score for every road segment. This score identifies the streets that are most in need of

resurfacing. The scores range from 0 to 100 and priority is given to connector roads that serve the most citizens, as the level of wear relates to the volume of traffic. A number of these improvement projects have been completed or are active now. ■

## EV Charging Stations available in Foley

Wondering where to charge your new electric vehicle? There are several places to plug in around Foley, thanks to a partnership between the city and Riviera Utilities. You will find one at the Foley Dog Park at 208 S. McKenzie Street and two are located at the Riviera Solar Park at 700 N. McKenzie Street in Foley. Each station is a Level2 EV charging station with SAE J1772 plugs, and are capable of charging two cars at the rate of 6.6 KW/hr. Use your credit card to pay.

There are also two free charging stations in front of Benson's Appliance Center located at 501 N. McKenzie Street in Foley. These stations, available to the public for several years, are powered by solar panels on their roof.

Electric vehicle sales are predicted to grow from 2% of global share in 2016 to 30% by 2030, according to Forbes, calling the electrification of transport one of the major trends of the 21 century. ■



## Police Dept. K-9 Unit wins awards

Congratulations to Sgt. Carlos Lizarraga and K-9 Tua and Ofc. Curtis Ricks with K-9 Niko, who recently received awards at the 2021 USPCA PD1 Canine Trials in North Carolina.

Ofc. Ricks placed second overall in the obedience event that included 80 other K9 teams. Sgt. Lizarraga placed second overall in suspect search and article search, fifth overall in agility and placed eighth overall out of 80 K9 teams from all over the United States.

Sgt. Lizarraga also placed 1st overall in the 4 man Region One team. This team consisted of Sgt. Lizarraga, two Escambia County Sheriff deputies and a Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office deputy. All four combined scores with obedience, agility, suspect search, article search, and apprehension outscored other regions from all over the United States. ■

## City names senior managers

Area growth has led to the creation of two new senior management positions at the city of Foley. Two long-term city managers have been installed into positions that were created to allow for more flexibility and better utilization of skills among like departments.

David Thompson was promoted to Executive Director of Leisure Services. In this position, he will oversee the library, Graham Creek Preserve Nature Parks, city parks, horticulture and the senior center, as well as continuing to manage Foley's recreation and sports tourism programs. Thompson has served as Director of Recreation since 2005 and led Foley's successful Sports Tourism Department since 2017.

David Wilson, Foley's former police chief, was brought out of a short-lived retirement to be named Executive Director of Public Safety. In this position, he will oversee the police and fire departments and coordinate the city's emergency management response during times of emergencies. Wilson served as Foley's police chief from 2007 until 2020. ■



David Thompson



David Wilson



## Let us know what you think

The City of Foley is conducting a community needs assessment as part of a Parks and Open Space Master Plan. The intent of this plan is to identify our community's park and open space needs so we can proactively plan for the future. In order to identify and prioritize them, we are asking for your help.

We want to hear from you about our city park facilities. Please take a few moments to complete the survey at [FoleyRecreation.com/Planning](https://www.foleyrecreation.com/Planning) and let us know where you would like us to start focusing our resources. Your assistance will help us improve the quality of life in our community for generations to come. ■

## Sun Belt Conference Finds Home in Foley

Foley will soon be the home of three of the four Sun Belt Conference fall sports championships. The Sun Belt has inked a 10 – year deal with Foley Sports Tourism to host the majority of the Conference's fall finals. The city has hosted the Sun Belt Conference Women's Soccer Championship since 2016 and this year's contest is being played this week at the FST Championship Stadium. The Women's Volleyball Championship was held at the Foley Event Center for the first time last year and will be returning November 17 - 21. Both events are broadcast on ESPN+ bringing a national spotlight to the city. Starting in 2022, Graham Creek Nature Preserve will be the new home of the Sun Belt Cross Country Championship. ■



New brown street signs designate the Foley Main Street footprint in the city's historic downtown area. The signs are part of their public relations/branding campaign that recently won a state award.

## Butterfly garden dedicated in memory of Terry Underwood



*Photo courtesy of Gulf Coast Media*

A second butterfly garden was recently dedicated in memory of Terry Underwood, a long-time resident and local educator who served for many years on Foley's Beautification Committee. This garden, located on the southern section of the Wilbourne Antique Rose Train near the Foley Dog Park, is another colorful display of blooming flowers that provides food for some of the millions of Monarch butterflies that fly across this area annually. Thank you to Foley's Revitalization and Beautification Board for a beautiful project. ■

## Fall / Winter Fire Safety

As we are in the fall season and approaching the holidays, the Foley Fire Department reminds you to practice fire safety in all of your fall and winter activities. This includes: proper use and display of decorations, heating equipment / fireplace safety, and cooking safety. We also remind you to install and keep working smoke alarms in your homes, and replace those batteries when needed. Smoke alarms have a rated life of 10 years, so replace older alarms for the best protection. This year's NFPA fire prevention campaign has focused on knowing and understanding the various sounds that smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms make. We encourage you to visit the NFPA website at <https://www.nfpa.org/Events/Events/Fire-Prevention-Week/About> to learn more about these important sounds.

## Open Burning / Fireworks

As of Nov. 1, the annual ADEM ban on open burning has expired. HOWEVER, a burn permit from the Foley Fire Department is required by City ordinance for any open burning of debris within the Foley City limits. Several conditions must be met in order to obtain a permit. The debris must be vegetative or untreated wood, and the location of the fire must be at least 500 feet from any structure or public road. The use of portable or fixed outdoor fireplaces is allowed without a permit, provided that they are at least 15 feet away from a structure.

We remind all residents that the sale, possession, and use of consumer fireworks is prohibited in the Foley City limits. We encourage residents to visit an approved public fireworks display in order to safely enjoy fireworks throughout the year.

Please contact the Foley Fire Department at 251-943-1266 for questions or assistance. ■

## Holiday Sanitation schedule

**Veterans Day**—City closed Nov. 11 & 12

Garbage pick-up—Regular schedule

Recycling

Tues. and Thurs. will be picked up Tues. Nov. 9.

Wed. and Fri. will be picked up Wed. Nov. 10.

**Thanksgiving**—City closed Nov. 25 & 26

Garbage and Recycling

Tues. and Thurs. will be picked up Tues. Nov. 23.

Wed. and Fri. will be picked up Wed. Nov. 24.

**Christmas**—City closed Dec. 23 & 24

Garbage and Recycling

Tues. and Thurs. will be picked up Tues. Dec. 21.

Wed. and Fri. will be picked up Wed. Dec. 22.

**New Year's**—City closed Dec. 31

Garbage and Recycling

Fri. will be picked up Thurs. Dec. 30.

Find these schedules and more on [cityoffoley.org/public-works](https://www.cityoffoley.org/public-works).



407 E. Laurel Ave.  
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## Upcoming Events

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**Foley Events Updated Daily** VisitFoley.com

**Foley Public Library** FoleyLibrary.org

**Foley Senior Center** CityofFoley.org

**Foley Sports Tourism** FoleySportsTourism.com

**Graham Creek Preserve** GrahamCreekPreserve.org

### **Downtown OWA**

Live shows: Brandon Styles, magician/  
comedian and Legends in Concert.  
For info and times VisitOWA.com

### **Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market**

Local produce, fresh seafood, homemade  
goods and more. Open Sat. 9 a.m.–2 p.m.  
20733 Mifflin Rd.  
CoastalAlabamaMarket.com

### **Observe and Explore Days**

First Wednesday and third Saturday each  
month, 10 a.m.–noon. Free activities for  
children 10 and under.  
Graham Creek Nature Preserve  
23460 Wolf Bay Dr., Foley.  
grahamcreekpreserve.org

### **Nov. 11 Veteran's Day Parade**

10 a.m. Come join us in Heritage Park as we  
celebrate Veterans of all branches.  
Map of parade route at VisitFoley.com.

### **Nov. 12–Dec. 23 54th Annual Trim-a-Tree Marketplace**

Unique Christmas ornaments, decorations  
and gifts created by local artists and  
members. Presented by the Foley Art  
Center. Suite 182, Tanger Outlet Center..  
Mon.–Sat. 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Sundays 11  
a.m.–6 p.m. 251-943-4381.

### **Nov. 13 28th Annual Foley Rotary Club Oyster Run**

7 a.m.–12 p.m. 5k run/walk begins at 8 a.m.  
and one-mile fun run begins at 9 a.m.  
Registration at 7 a.m. Heritage Park.

### **Nov. 13 Chocolate and Cheese Festival**

10 a.m.–7 p.m.  
Heritage Park

### **Nov. 20 Creek Crawl**

A four-mile course of mud, water and  
other obstacles testing strength, agility and  
endurance. Sign up at  
<https://crawlcreek.itsyourrace.com>.  
23460 Wolf Bay Dr., Foley  
grahamcreekpreserve.org

### **Nov. 20 Tree Lighting Ceremony**

Enjoy a snowy Tree Lighting ceremony with  
Christmas music. VisitOWA.com

### **Nov. 20 & Dec. 18 John Hughes Film Fest**

11 a.m. Dress for the 1980s and come watch  
a classic John Hughes' film at the Foley  
Public Library. Free admission, popcorn and  
drinks. FoleyLibrary.org

### **Nov. 27 Walk to End Alzheimers**

8 a.m.–12 p.m. No registration fee required.  
Raising funds for Alzheimer's Association  
encouraged. Heritage Park.

### **Dec. 3 Christmas in the Park**

6–8 p.m. Stroll through the park and  
enjoy the lights, Christmas Tree Lane and  
Christmas village for a socially distanced  
holiday celebration in Heritage Park.  
VisitFoley.com.

### **Dec. 4 Foley Christmas Parade**

10 a.m. Enjoyed by young and old, the  
parade includes music, floats, tractors and  
even a glimpse of Old St. Nick. Organized  
by the Foley Kiwanis Club. Map of parade  
route at VisitFoley.com.

### **Dec. 4 Let It Snow**

11 a.m.–3 p.m. Fun activities, music and  
photo ops in Heritage Park. More details to  
come. VisitFoley.com

### **Dec. 4–5, 11–12, 18–22 Brunch with Santa**

Dine with Santa and enjoy a delectable  
pancake spread. Ticket required. Seating is  
limited. VisitOWA.com

### **Dec. 3 Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra Presentation**

7 p.m. Accomplished young musicians from  
across the Gulf Coast perform a beautiful  
holiday concert. \$5 suggested donation.  
Foley Civic Center.

### **Dec. 6 The Baldwin Pops Christmas Concert**

7 p.m. Join us for a magical evening full  
of holiday spirit at the Foley Civic Center!  
Presented free of charge by the City of  
Foley.

### **Dec. 9–10 Christmas Murder Mystery Dinner Show**

6:30 p.m. Enjoy a delectable plated dinner  
situated around an up-close interactive show  
that will take everything you have to solve  
the case. Tickets required. VisitOWA.com

### **Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Celebration**

8:00 p.m. Celebrate New Year's at OWA  
with a spectacular fireworks show.