

# Foley Newsletter



**MAYOR**

Ralph G. Hellmich

**COUNCIL**

J. Wayne Trawick  
Council President  
District 1

Vera J. Quaites  
District 2

Richard Dayton  
District 3

C. Rick Blackwell  
District 4

Charlie J. Ebert III  
President-protempore  
District 5

**CITY  
ADMINISTRATOR**  
Michael L. Thompson

407 E. Laurel Ave.  
P.O. Box 1750  
Foley, AL 36536

(251) 943-1545  
(251) 952-4014 - fax

[www.cityoffoley.org](http://www.cityoffoley.org)

Welcome to winter. A good way to enjoy the cool weather is to visit Foley’s award-winning Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market. Also consider visiting our historic downtown. Seeing Foley’s museums and shops provides a good day’s outing. Let the kids enjoy the train ride around Heritage Park.

Foley continues to thrive. We are very proud that our city was recently selected by the National Park Service as a World War II Heritage City for our city’s contribution to the nation’s effort in WWII. One city per state was selected and we are honored to represent Alabama. Our area has always fulfilled our patriotic duty to support our armed forces and veterans. Foley has historically been instrumental in helping train naval aviators. During WWII, Foley’s population swelled to three times its prewar level and this was mostly people who were involved with Barin Field and the Navy to meet our nation’s defense. South Alabama’s importance to the Navy cannot be overstated. Since the beginnings of naval aviation, sixty percent of all naval aviators have been trained to fly in our area. It is a fact we can all be proud of.

I’ll give a brief update on city projects. The South Pecan Street extension is complete and open. The full South Juniper Street extension is very close to completion. Our 9th Avenue sidewalk project is now under construction. Several of the proposed pedestrian crosswalks around the city have been completed, with others soon to follow. The city is about to go to bid on both the Foley Beach Express and the Hwy. 59/CR 12 intersection. Additional projects on



**Mayor’s  
Notes**

the list for this year include upgraded bathrooms, sidewalk additions and small connector road projects. Our \$15 million Public Works Campus is under construction, as are the pickleball courts adjacent to our farmers market. The Stabler Avenue sidewalk/lighting project is also under construction. We plan to be ready to bid two additional projects this summer. One is our safe room for housing necessary workers during storms, and our new library.

Also, we are moving forward on the planning phase for a new aquatics center and several intersection upgrades.

We are wrapping up our detailed planning process for Foley’s Strategic Plan. By summer, it should be released. Thank you to everyone who is providing input. This will help guide our city’s direction for the future. The members of the City Council and I are dedicated to addressing our needs and preserving our way of life.

We have a primary on March 5. Please remember to vote.

In closing, I’ll repeat these words from our police chief: “Let’s work together to keep each other safe. If you see something, say something.”

Foley will celebrate its 43rd Annual Arbor Day at the Foley Farmers and Fishermens Market on Saturday, Feb. 24, at 1 p.m. Stop by and get a free tree.

Enjoy this brief winter. Spring is right around the corner!

Mayor Ralph G. Hellmich

# Foley named American World War II Heritage City

The National Park Service has chosen Foley as the American World War II Heritage City for Alabama.

Only one community in each state or territory can be designated an American World War II Heritage City.

The program recognizes communities that made contributions to the war effort and that continue to recognize the sacrifices made by veterans and those on the home front during World War II.

Mayor Ralph Hellmich said the designation is a great honor that salutes the patriotism of Foley residents from the past and today.

“Foley’s recognition by the National Park Service is an incredible recognition of our city and area’s support of our military and veterans,” Hellmich said. “Even before World War II, our area was patriotic, but it certainly peaked during our nation’s World War II effort. We should all be proud of this recognition.”

The World War II Heritage Cities program recognizes the historic importance of the United States’ domestic involvement in World War II and ensures the continued preservation of a defining period in American history.

“Foley played a critical role in this history, and we are pleased to recognize



**Navy training aircraft line the runways at Barin Field in Foley during World War II. The National Park Service named Foley one of 11 new American World War II Heritage Cities**

your jurisdiction as an American World War II Heritage City through the program,” a National Park Service statement said.

The city of Foley plans new exhibits at the city’s Depot Museum and park memorials to commemorate the designation and the community’s role in World War II. The displays will describe the role of Barin Field, a Navy aviation training center that opened in 1942, and

Foley’s overall support of the war effort.

Since 2020, the National Park Service has designated 30 communities as American World War II Heritage Cities. Those communities include Pensacola, Pascagoula and New Orleans.

More information about the program is available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/worldwarii/americanheritagecity.htm> ■

## Harrison Foley’s new general government, administration executive director

Cian Caldwell Harrison is Foley’s new executive director of general government and administration.

Harrison comes to Foley after serving as Baldwin County clerk treasurer. She will oversee several departments, including revenue, human resources, marketing, municipal complex, financial services, information technology, the city clerk’s office and municipal court.

The new position is one of four executive director posts that oversee portions of municipal government under the direction of City Administrator Mike Thompson.

Harrison, whose family has been in Foley for several generations, spent more than five years with Baldwin County and before that as a certified public accountant for a CPA firm. She hopes to use her experience as part of the Foley team and to learn as much about the city as possible from her fellow employees. ■



## Firefighters receive Director’s Award



The city of Foley recognized two firefighters Tuesday after the first responders completed a rigorous state training program.

David Snyder and Lee Taylor received the Director’s Award during the City Council meeting. The two men completed the Alabama Fire College smoke diver training course in 2023.

Foley Public Safety Director David Wilson said fewer than 1% of state firefighters have completed the intense 60-hour training program.

The smoke diver training course is designed to help firefighters sharpen their existing skills and learn new techniques through realistic training.

Most of the course takes place on the drill field in full protective gear. Each student must understand firefighter survival and rapid intervention crew techniques before starting the course. ■

# Improvements continue in annexed Mills community

Foley continues to move forward with plans for improvements in the recently annexed Mills community, with a new park and sidewalks among the projects approved by the City Council.

Residents in the unincorporated area of Mills voted in August to have their community annexed into Foley.

The city plans to build a park on a 4-acre site in the community. The council voted in January to approve engineering for a pedestrian improvement project in Mills. The proposal includes surveys, design, environmental permitting and construction inspection services for a 5-foot concrete sidewalk in the area.

Mayor Hellmich said Foley will seek community development block grant funding to pay some of the cost of the project. Hellmich said a new park in a community without such facilities could help the project qualify for a grant.

“This will mean a new park in a new area,” Hellmich said. “We feel like we have a better chance so if we get the grant money that would be good.” ■

## Major accomplishments of 2023, plus more planned in 2024

New streets, an expanded wildlife preserve, new areas coming into the city, and continued growth are some of the many highlights of 2023 in Foley, said Mayor Ralph Hellmich.

In a year-end review of city projects, Hellmich said Foley has continued to grow. With a population of about 25,000, it is the second largest city in Baldwin County. Foley also has the fastest growth rate in the area.

To accommodate that growth, the city is adding to its services, including increasing its staffing and equipment for emergency services. The city added 10 new police officer positions in the last year and brought in new technology and equipment.

In December, Foley broke ground to start construction of a new Public Works campus which will provide updated space for the department’s 78 employees and a new mechanic shop to service the city’s more than 400 vehicles.

Another building project planned to start in 2024 is the new library that will be constructed next to the Foley Dog Park off Orange Avenue.

The city is also expanding the Graham Creek Nature Preserve, which is already the largest municipal nature reserve in Alabama, Hellmich said.

Foley acquired the former National Guard armory in 2023. The city received the facility in exchange for donating property to the National Guard for a new armory that was built near the Foley Beach Express.

The city completed the extension of North Pecan Street. New traffic signals and other improvements were also completed at the intersection of Juniper Street and Baldwin County 20. ■

## Foley receives award for financial reporting excellence for 10th year

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Foley. The city was recognized for its comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended Sept. 30, 2022. The city has now received the distinguished award for 10 years in a row. ■

## New pumper truck for Foley Fire



The Foley Fire Department recently took delivery of a new 2023 Rosenbauer EXT Custom Fire Pumper to enhance the department’s fire and emergency response capabilities.

This state-of-the-art fire engine has a 1500-gallon-per-minute pump and a 750-gallon water tank. The new Engine 5 is assigned to Fire Station 1 on West Verbena Avenue in downtown Foley. The cost of the truck was \$592,261. A full complement of firefighting and rescue equipment has been added at an additional cost of \$82,774. Engine 5 should be in service for calls in the coming weeks.

The department appreciates the continued support of the mayor and City Council to maintain a modern fleet of emergency response vehicles in order to better serve Foley.

Remember to practice fire safety when using space heaters. Firefighters have already responded to several residential fires this year as a result of space heaters. Make sure that a fire escape plan is made, and remember that working smoke alarms save lives. Even though smoke alarms have a service life of 10 years, test them routinely and replace batteries when needed.

The annual ADEM burn ban returns on May 1. Property owners in the Foley city limits are reminded that a burn permit is required in order to open burn yard debris. Residents should contact the office at 251-943-1266 to see if they meet the requirements for a permit or have other questions. ■

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FY 2023/24 Annual Report (Oct. 2023–Dec. 2023)

- 146 Single-family Permits—\$54,170,698 Valuation
- 183 Single-family Rentals—\$29,580,748 Valuation
- 31 Multi-Family Permits (413 Units)—\$54,852,725 Valuation
- 5 New Commercial Permits—\$9,231,000 Valuation (includes Fairfield Inn & Suites)
- 13 Commercial Addition/Remodel Permits—\$1,970,260 Valuation
- 1,419 Total Permits—\$156,842,529 Valuation
- 3rd in the nation in FORTIFIED construction

Visit [cityoffoley.org/Community-Development](http://cityoffoley.org/Community-Development) or call 251-952-4011 for more information. ■



407 E. Laurel Ave.  
P.O. Box 1750  
Foley, AL 36536

## Upcoming Events

**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

### Foley Public Library

New hours: 9 a.m.–7 p.m. Mon.–Thurs.; 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Fri.–Sat. Monthly programs, Makersaurus Time, adult arts and crafts, family bingo night, lunch and learns and other clubs.

### Downtown OWA

Live shows: Brandon Styles, magician/comedian and other special events.  
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

### Foley Senior Center

Adults over 50 meet at the Foley Senior Center every 1st and 3rd Saturday evening with live entertainment for dancing. Doors open at 6:00, band begins at 6:30. \$7 per person. Bring refreshments of your choice.

### Feb. 24 Annual Arbor Day Celebration

1 p.m. A tree dedication ceremony and celebration of Foley as a Tree City. One free tree per family. Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market.

### Feb. 24 Coastal Garden Festival

9 a.m.–2 p.m. 20733 Mifflin Road  
Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market.

### March 6, 13, 20 & 27 Midday Melodies

11 a.m.–2 p.m. Bring your lunch and come listen to live music in Heritage Park. Details at VisitFoley.com or call 251-943-1200.

### March 8 BBQ & Blues Kick-Off Concert

5–9 p.m. Food trucks and entertainment. Heritage Park. Tickets: FoleyBBQandBlues.net.

### March 9 BBQ & Blues Cook-Off

11 a.m.–5 p.m. Enjoy live blues music, arts and crafts, children's activities, and the delicious, finger-licking, grilled concoctions from competing BBQ teams! Heritage Park. Tickets: FoleyBBQandBlues.net.

### March 9 Gulf Coast Regional Mustang and Mega Car Show

11 a.m.–5 p.m. Mustangs, classic cars and more! Pre-register or register the day of the show. VisitOWA.com

### March 18–31 Bunny Scavenger Hunt

Graham Creek Nature Preserve.  
23460 Wolf Bay Drive

### March 23 Graham Creek Easter Egg Hunt

10 a.m.–12 p.m. Graham Creek Nature Preserve, 23460 Wolf Bay Drive

### March 30 Elberta Sausage Festival

8 a.m.–5 p.m. Join us for Elberta's famous German sausage and sauerkraut, plus music and over 200 arts and crafts booths.

### April Saturdays Downtown Foley Walking Tours

10 a.m. Enjoy a free guided tour of downtown Foley each Saturday in April. Wear comfortable walking shoes for the

one-hour tour that highlights Foley's historic buildings. Foley Welcome Center.

### April 6 Mudbugs & Margaritas Festival

10 a.m.–7 p.m. Enjoy unique, tasty crawfish dishes, margaritas, live music and more. Tickets at the gate. Heritage Park.

### April 19 & 26 Music and a Movie / Heritage Park Marketplace

Marketplace 4–7 p.m. Music 6 p.m. Movie at dusk. VisitFoley.com or call 251-943-1200.

### April 25 Shred It Day

3–5 p.m. Behind City Hall. VisitFoley.com

### April 27 Annual Kiwanis Club Motorcycle Poker Run

Registration starts at 9 a.m., ride begins at 10 a.m. 404 N Cypress St. Masonic Lodge 766. foleykiwanis.club/poker-run-2024

### May 2–4 Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival

A family-friendly event with tethered balloon rides, balloon glows, balloons in flight, artisan and food vendors, and live music. Downtown OWA.

### May 11 Creek Crawl

A four-mile course of mud, water and other obstacles. Sign up at crawlcreek. itsyourrace.com. 23460 Wolf Bay Drive

### May 11–12 Art in the Park

More than 100 artists with hand-crafted art and gift items. John B. Foley Park.