

Foley Newsletter

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Ralph G. Hellmich

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Hello, Foley. Spring is here with its beautiful weather. And the season's arrival means, our events are really picking up.

Our annual Balloon Festival, which is put on by our partners South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce and OWA, is upon us. It's always enjoyable to see the show, visit the OWA Park and maybe do a little shopping in addition to admiring the balloons and all the festival sights.

Mother's Day is here, which means our Performing Arts Association will have the Annual Art in the Park Festival in Heritage Park. It's a great event and there's always something to buy.

Our Movie and a Music series is underway and will continue until May 22. The concert and movies are on Friday nights in Heritage Park. This is always a family favorite. Check our website VisitFoley.com, for details on Art in the Park and many other events.

Our projects around town are going well. The North Cedar Street Extension is complete. Our Highway 59 extension up to Section Avenue by Local and Company is underway. We will soon start our ALDOT TAP project to link Michigan Avenue to Pride Drive on Highway 59.

Another project soon to start is our downtown Safe Crosswalk Program covering five streets on Highway 98. Many other sidewalk expansions, such as the Mills Community Sidewalk Project, are also about to begin. The complicated engineering design and approvals are done and bidding will take place soon.

We have moved into our Public Works Campus on Poplar Street. Located on the corner of Poplar and Section Avenue, this facility is expected to meet Foley's needs for the next 40 years.

The Access Management Project on County Road 20 between 59 and Juniper should be



Mayor's Notes

completed soon. It will change some traffic pattern habits, but will make that stretch of the road vastly safer. Many accidents have occurred in that area.

Our school year is about to close. This has been an incredible year for our schools. The statewide report card is out, and all six schools achieved a "B" grade. This reflects the hard work by teachers and staff.

The Teacher of the Year Celebration recently took place. Teachers at each of our local public schools were among those honored. Congratulations to Florence Mathis Elementary—Kerry Becton, Foley Elementary—Amanda Welsh, Foley High—Brandy Richard, Foley Middle—Michelle Dillon, Magnolia Elementary—Kaitlyn Martin and Swift Elementary—Angela Ingraham.

We are certainly proud of them and all the teachers that help our children to be all they can be.

My friends at Live Oak Village had a great idea to mention to all about Low Speed Motor Vehicles (LSMV), which is the legal state designation for "golf cart" style of vehicles. The City of Foley encourages citizens, if they choose to own one, to make sure it's legal by purchasing a state tag. That means it meets all state requirements and can legally travel on any road in Alabama that has a speed limit of less than 35 miles per hour.

I am proud to announce our team acquired a state SEEDS grant for our new business industrial park. It will be used strictly for light business that compliments our city.

That's all for now. Enjoy the coming summer.

Mayor Ralph G. Hellmich

Foley adding more industrial property

A 121-acre parcel on the Foley Beach Express will become Baldwin County's newest industrial development property as a joint project by Foley, Baldwin Alliance and Alabama.

Foley is buying the property near the southwest corner of the intersection of the Foley Beach Express and Baldwin Beach Express.

The Alabama Industrial Development Authority approved a grant of almost \$3.33 million for part of the purchase price. The grant is through the state Site Evaluation Economic Development Strategy (SEEDS) program.

As Foley has grown and new businesses have begun operation in the region, much of the space available in the city's current industrial park area has been taken up.

Mayor Ralph Hellmich said the acquisition will bring economic development and jobs to the area. He said the project has been a joint effort by many local, county and state agencies. ■



Officials with Foley, Baldwin Alliance and the state of Alabama announced that the city is receiving a \$3.33 million grant to purchase property for the region's newest industrial park site.

Foley begins construction of Safe Room



Local officials break ground on North Poplar Street for a new safe room to shelter first responders. The Foley Emergency Operations Center is scheduled to open in 2027.

A facility to house Foley's first responders during a hurricane or other event is scheduled to be open by the 2027 storm season.

Mayor Ralph Hellmich said the project will be a benefit not only to Foley but agencies throughout the region.

"It's a very well designed building rated to 200 miles an hour," Hellmich said. "Up to 200 people can be in here. That's responders, state troopers, deputy sheriffs, first responders from some of our smaller communities and our city workers. That way we can quickly respond."

The facility will be used for other purposes when not needed during emergencies. The operations center will be equipped with a 400-kilowatt

generator that can run on either natural gas or diesel fuel. The building will include kitchen facilities and everything needed to house personnel during an emergency.

A grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide most of the funding for the project.

Construction is scheduled to take 14 to 16 months. When completed, the building will be a single-story structure almost 10,000 square feet in size.

The safe room can be used as a command post if city facilities are damaged during a storm or other event. Police and firefighters will also use the facility as a center for training and meetings throughout the year. ■

Foley Baby Box opens

Parents who cannot care for infants now have a location in Foley where the babies can be relinquished safely and anonymously.

The Safe Haven Baby Box is open at Foley's Fire Station No. 1 on West Verbena Avenue.

Foley Fire Chief Joey Darby said firefighters and city officials worked on the project for several years. Foley developed the project in conjunction with Safe Haven Baby Boxes, a national organization that works with mothers in crisis and provides locations where children can be left if the parent has no alternative.

The box is on the east side of the station, away from the main entrance. A mother can open a door and place the infant in a cushioned box. The door opening triggers a silent alarm inside the station.

When the alarm is activated, the 911 center will alert responders. A firefighter can retrieve the baby from inside the building to begin immediate care.

The baby will be taken by ambulance to Baldwin Health Hospital. After a waiting period, state child protection services will place the baby for adoption.

The Foley site is the 425th box in the nation and the 20th box in Alabama.

Safe Haven runs a 24-hour hotline – 866-99BABY1 – that has received more than 9,000 phone calls across the nation. The program has helped with more than 186 face-to-face surrenders.

Currently, 76 babies have been surrendered through the Safe Haven program. ■

Celebrating milestones with fun and food

Major milestones for both the Coastal Alabama Farmers & Fishermen's Market (CAFFM) and America will be celebrated this summer at the Corn Festival on June 20 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

America is recognizing its semiquincentennial, the country's 250th anniversary. The Corn Festival is recognizing its 10-year anniversary. Combining the two was too good an opportunity to pass up, said CAFFM Market Manager Alescia Forland.

"We are so excited to celebrate a decade of what has become our cornerstone event," Forland said. "The best part is we get to honor the land we love, which has quite literally given us so much."

The event will still feature the Corny Dad Cook-Off. The contest consists of three dads creating a signature dish featuring corn. The public gets to taste each one and vote for their favorite. Each voting ticket comes with a miniature American flag.

This year's corn-eating contest will have a patriotic twist. Contestants will eat two ears of white corn, five slices of red watermelon, and a cup of blueberries. Whoever eats all their food the fastest wins. While everyone eats together, this year a kids division has been added.

Vendors will also get in on the patriotic action with a stall decorating contest. Foley Mayor Ralph Hellmich will judge the stalls and award a trophy to the best one.

Fun will be going on all day, so visitors are encouraged to stop by and take part. ■



Foley celebrates Arbor Day

Foley celebrated its 45th year as a Tree City by giving more than 700 trees to residents and celebrating two public servants who were lost in the last year.

The city held the annual Arbor Day celebration, co-hosted by Riviera Utilities, at the Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermen's Market on Feb. 28. Organizers distributed 720 trees in 3-gallon containers.

Varieties of trees given away included summer red maple, green giant arborvitae, live oak, crape myrtles, nuttall oak and several varieties of magnolia.

During the event, two larger summer red maples were dedicated as memorial trees in recognition of City Councilman Richard "Dick" Dayton and Marketing Director LaDonna Hinesley. Both officials died in 2025.

The city also recognized two live oak trees that will be added to the list of Landmark Trees. One tree on property owned by James Shoots has a diameter of 83 inches, and another tree on property owned by Brad Stansbury has a diameter of 57 inches. ■

Fire Department reminders

The Foley Fire Department reminds you that the annual Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Burn Ban for Baldwin County goes into effect May 1 in an effort to improve air quality. Open burning of debris is prohibited until Nov. 1 with only a few exceptions (recreational/ceremonial/cooking fires; agricultural/silvicultural burns). These exceptions may also be restricted by the fire chief via a local burn ban when drought or weather conditions make it necessary.

As we enter the summer months, we remind you to prepare for hurricane season and other severe weather events. Please download a reliable weather app for your mobile devices or purchase a weather radio with local alerts. Contact our office at 251-943-1266 for more information on these items, and turn your attention to fire prevention! ■

Building Department Reminders

In the City of Foley, flooding can happen from heavy rains, storms, or even sunny-day flooding. Whether you live in a high-risk flood zone or not, flood insurance protects your home and belongings.

Protect what matters most. Ask your insurance agent today about adding NFIP flood insurance. Renters: Don't forget contents coverage! There's a 30-day waiting period, so don't wait until the next storm.

Take action now: Visit FloodSmart.gov to learn your flood risk and get a quote in minutes. Or contact our floodplain administrator at 251-943-5074 or jcottis@cityoffoley.gov for local information and help. ■

BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMITTING REPORT

(January–March 2026)

- 100 Single-family Permits
\$32,842,680 Valuation
- 3 New Commercial Permits
\$3,825,400 Valuation
- 154 Miscellaneous Permits
\$6,624,143 Valuation
- 437 Trade Permits
\$2,114,576 Valuation
- 694 Total Permits
\$45,406,801 Valuation
- Certificates of Occupancy Issued:
Residential 133 | Commercial 22

Visit cityoffoley.org/building-department or call 251-952-4011 for more information.

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cityoffoley.org/mayors-newsletters





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Upcoming Events



Celebrating together in 2026

In 2026, the United States will celebrate a historic milestone: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The City of Foley is proud to be officially recognized as an America 250 Semiquincentennial City.

Throughout 2026, Foley will recognize this milestone with community activities, events, and projects that celebrate our nation's history, our local heritage, and our shared future. This will be a year-long celebration focused not just on the past, but on the people, places, and progress that make our community special.

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

Hours: 8:30 a.m.–7 p.m. Mon.–Thurs.; 8:30 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.
781 Farmers Market Ln.
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.

April 30–May 2 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.
gulfcoastballoonfestival.com

May 9 Graham Creek's Annual Creek Crawl

7 a.m. Adrenaline-pumping 4-mile obstacle course. Graham Creek Nature Preserve.
GrahamCreekPreserve.org

May 9–10 54th Annual Art in the Park

Over 100 juried fine artists and craftsmen. Live entertainment on Sat.
John B. Foley Park

May 15 & 22 Music and a Movie

Music at 6 p.m., movie at dusk in Heritage Park. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs and enjoy free live entertainment and a movie under the stars. Food trucks and concessions.
VisitFoley.com

May 23–25 Memorial Day Weekend Party

Kicking off summer with three days of star-spangled fun. Downtown OWA.
VisitOWA.com

June 1 Summer Reading Program

For all ages: kids, tweens, teens, adults & families. For information on the activities and events, visit foleylibrary.org.

June 20 10th Annual Corn Festival

9 a.m.–2 p.m. Coastal Alabama Farmers and Fishermens Market. Seasonal flavor, delicious sweet corn, kids' activities and a corn-eating contest. 781 Farmers Market Lane
CoastalAlabamaMarket.com

July 3–5 4th of July Weekend Party

Celebrate Independence Day with family-friendly activities and live entertainment in Downtown OWA.
VisitOWA.com

July 25 Sweet Grown Alabama Day

Open Sat. 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
781 Farmers Market Lane
CoastalAlabamaMarket.com

Aug 1 Graham Creek Water Day

10 a.m. Come play in the water.
GrahamCreekPreserve.org