

CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

INTUCKER

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FROM THE MAYOR

Welcome to InTucker's "Back to School" issue. It's hard to imagine writing those words, as it seems like just yesterday another proud and accomplished class of Tucker Tigers walked across the stage having earned their diplomas.

But with a new school year comes a new set of opportunities.

This summer we said, "thank you" to longtime Tucker High Principal James Jackson. After more than a decade of overseeing academic, athletic and extracurricular achievement, Principal Jackson accepted a new opportunity with the DeKalb County School District. I have gotten to know his replacement, Mrs. Tamra Watts, as she stepped into her new role. You'll get to know her, too, and learn some of her goals for Tucker High School on page six of this newsletter.

Tucker Middle School continues to flourish under the guidance of Dr. Kathy Cunningham. Over the past year, our City staff has gotten to work with the STEM classes at Tucker Middle and I personally got the chance to meet and talk with members of their Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) group.

There is wonderful progress being made at each of our Tucker elementary schools. The strong relationships being forged between the teachers, administrators and PTAs have enriched our students and given them greater opportunity to succeed. The principals of these schools – Mrs. Venessa Bines-Truitt (Brockett), Ms. Rosemary Malone (Idlewood), Dr. Jamie Wilson (Livsey), Mrs. Deborah Satterfield (Midvale) and Mrs. Pamela McCloud (Smoke Rise) – are leading teams of educators as they guide our City's young people through some of their most important formative years.

I love getting to know folks who are new to Tucker. Recently, I met the Smith family; Jon, Mandy and their three young children ages five, seven and nine. When I asked them why they decided to move to Tucker as opposed to some other part of Metro Atlanta, their answer was simple: the schools. They recognized that even in a system that has had its challenges in recent years, a strong, involved community, combined with dedicated and professional teachers and administrators, can make for excellent local schools. I couldn't agree more.

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DATES TO KNOW

August 7
First Day of School in
DeKalb County

August 9
City Council Work
Session and Meeting

August 9
Community Council

August 14
City Council

August 15
Zoning Board of Appeals

August 24
Planning Commission

August 28
City Council

**AUGUST 1
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**





CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Tucker's City Council put in some long hours in the month of July holding two called meetings, as well as a day-long planning retreat to discuss future priorities.

At the meeting on July 10, an independent auditor from the firm Mauldin & Jenkins presented the City with a "clean audit" for the Fiscal Year '16 budget. Mauldin & Jenkins is poised to begin work on an audit for the six-month Fiscal Year '17 budget this summer. Council also voted unanimously to make changes to Chapter 16 of the City Code, tightening revocation procedures for "massage therapy licensing".

Two big development projects that were supposed to be heard at that July 10 meeting were postponed. An attorney representing the developer for "The Rise" asked for a deferral on his petition. The 88-acre mixed-use development at the intersection of Hugh Howell Road and Mountain Industrial Boulevard will now come up for a first read before City Council on August 14. A proposed self-storage facility on Northlake Center Drive was supposed to come up for a vote on July 10, but because of major changes to the plans it will go back before the Planning Commission at its August meeting.

No official vote or action was taken at the Council's planning retreat on July 11. The Mayor and Councilmembers discussed a number of topics including negotiation of intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) with DeKalb County, composition of a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) board and ideas for other potential citizen boards

At the July 24 meeting, Council voted unanimously to adopt a resolution complying with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) statement No. 54. This statement sets standards for fund balance reporting. They also held a first read on an ordinance to adopt a Model Building Code and Building Regulations. This is a streamlined set of standards that have been adopted by cities like Milton, Chamblee and Johns Creek to provide a more user-friendly process for contractors and developers.

FEATHER SIGNS WON'T FLY IN TUCKER

One change you might soon notice around town is fewer of those billowy signs known as "feather signs". City Council voted June 28 to amend the sign code to prohibit the signs, which advertise everything from restaurants to retail and even churches.

The City has defined feather signs as "any shape of lightweight plastic, fabric, or other material, whether or not containing a message of any kind, attached to a single pole or staff for support and designed to move in the wind."

"Like many other Metro Atlanta jurisdictions, the City of Tucker saw a new type of signage flooding the community and started studying the issue immediately," explained John McHenry, Tucker's Director of Community and Economic Development. "We found that there are safety concerns, as well as a challenge to the visual integrity of our commercial corridors. There's a real issue with visual clutter detracting from local businesses."



Feather signs will still be allowed in the case of special events. Organizers of those events will be able to apply online or at City Hall for a "special event sign permit". They will be allowed to use the signage a maximum of two times per year for a period of 16 days each.

Existing business owners have been notified by the City. The new regulation takes effect on September 1.

ON THE BEAT WITH LT. SMITH

With school getting ready to start back, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone about stopping for school buses. Not only is it a safety concern for children, but not stopping for school buses is also against the law.

A citation for passing a stopped school bus can cost you up to a \$1,000 fine and six points on your license. The only time you do not have to stop is if there is a physical median between you and the bus. Please keep this in mind so that our children can safely get on and off of school buses.

In case there's any confusion, here's how the law sees it:

O.C.G.A. 40-6-163 (2010)

40-6-163. Duty of driver of vehicle meeting or overtaking school bus; reporting of violations

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this Code section, the driver of a vehicle meeting or overtaking from either direction any school bus stopped on the highway shall stop before reaching such school bus when there are in operation on the school bus the visual signals as specified in Code Sections 40-8-111 and 40-8-115, and such driver shall not proceed until the school bus resumes motion or the visual signals are no longer actuated.

(b) The driver of a vehicle upon a highway with separate roadways need not stop upon meeting or passing a school bus which is on a different roadway, or upon a controlled-access highway when the school bus is stopped in a loading zone which is a part of or adjacent to such highway and where pedestrians are not permitted to cross the roadway.

It seems like we're always in a hurry, but no hurry is worth the possibility of endangering a young life.



[facebook.com/LtRSSmith](https://www.facebook.com/LtRSSmith)

POLICE BLOTTER

NEED A RIDE? – On June 24, officers responded to a person stabbed call that occurred at Mountain Industrial Boulevard and Hirsch Drive. Once they arrived, the victim stated that he had stopped at the bus stop and offered a female a ride. She said “yes” and they stopped at a gas station so he could purchase some condoms. At this time, the female produced a knife and demanded money from him. When he said he didn’t have any, she stabbed him in the chest and then fled the location on foot. The victim went to a friend’s house and called for an ambulance and the police. He was transported to Grady Hospital for treatment and the female suspect has yet to be apprehended.

GOTTA BE QUICKER THAN THAT – On June 21, officers responded to the TitleMax on Lawrenceville Highway in reference to an armed robbery that had just occurred. Officers arrived on the scene quickly and were able to immediately broadcast a “look-out” over the radio of the suspect. Several officers were circulating in the area when one observed the suspect exit a nearby business on foot. The officer attempted to stop him and the suspect took off running. Additional officers responded to the area and were able to surround and then apprehend him without incident. As they were taking him into custody, they located the firearm and cash on him from the robbery. They then conducted a show-up line-up where the victim positively identified him as the suspect. At that point, the suspect again attempted to flee on foot. He was once again apprehended and arrested for the armed robbery.

INDECENT PROPOSAL – On July 12, detectives with our vice/narcotics unit conducted an undercover operation at the Hot Stone Massage Parlor with the assistance of Tucker Precinct officers. They had received complaints that employees of the business were illegally soliciting customers for extra services during their massage. During the operation, detectives witnessed this occur and uniformed officers moved in to make the arrest. A search warrant was later executed at the location, where records and money were seized as part of the investigation. Two females were subsequently arrested and transported to the DeKalb County Jail where they were lodged.

NEW PRINCIPAL READY TO 'HIT THE GROUND RUNNING' AT TUCKER HIGH

Tamra Watts knows she's stepping into a great situation.

"I tell everybody I've died and gone to heaven," she explains. "The people here are wonderful (and) the students are just fabulous."

Sitting in the principal's office – her new office – at Tucker High School, Watts isn't shy about discussing the great strides made under her predecessor James Jackson.

On the athletics department: "We are a powerhouse." Academically: "There's some very, very talented students here." On her faculty: "They are just out of the box, but they're in the box enough to cultivate the (students') needs."

Watts is a veteran educator who comes to Tucker from her alma mater Towers High School in Decatur. When she was tapped for the job back in May, Watts had to pull double duty.

"The first four weeks I did half the day here and half the day at Towers," she recounts. "I had a lot of meetings with department heads (and) program heads...to understand the culture and climate for their departments."

At Tucker, she takes over a school that has seen its graduation rate skyrocket over the past several years, jumping to better than 90 percent in 2016. She says she's working with educators in Tucker's STEM, IB and AP programs to ensure the academic growth continues. Moreover, Watts says she's doing some learning herself.

"I'm doing a lot of observing, a lot of watching and a lot of listening

right now," she explains, adding "[I] have learned a lot."

One key constituency Watts wants to involve is the parents. While she notes that parental involvement is key in any educational setting, it can be a challenge.

"The administrative team and I are working with the calendars so that we can meet all the different work schedules and do things at different times of the day for different periods of time in different locations so that we can meet as many parents where they are," Watts explains.

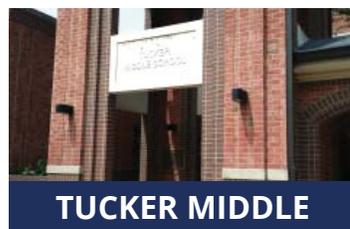
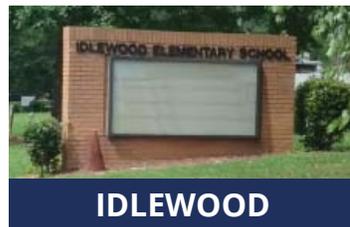
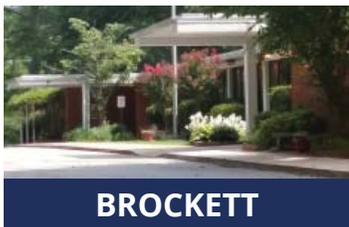
Those who know Watts say she is well-equipped to succeed at Tucker. "We faced many challenges together," says City Councilmember Anne Lerner, who worked with Watts a decade ago when they both were teachers at Stone Mountain Middle School. "Tamra always put the needs of the students first and let nothing get in the way of their progress and success."

With the new school year just days away, Watts shows no signs of uncertainty. She says hard work put in by administrators and staff over the summer will pay dividends immediately.

"The work that we did in that short period of time has us already ready for school."



OUR TUCKER SCHOOLS



TEAM TUCKER SPOTLIGHT

Brian Anderson - City Attorney



What are the day-to-day responsibilities of the City Attorney?

In a new city like Tucker that has limited staffing, the city attorney writes a lot of the City's ordinances. The city attorney also reviews or drafts all contracts and IGAs (intergovernmental agreements). In addition, the city attorney has the lead on any lawsuits involving the city.

What is your role at City Council meetings?

The city attorney's role at City Council meetings is to ensure compliance with applicable codes and laws and that the meetings conform to procedural due process requirements. The City has adopted Robert's Rules of Order to use in running their Council meetings. In addition, since the city attorney is involved in most matters, he can answer Council's questions if there is not a subject matter expert at the meeting.

Tell us about your unique career path...

I started my career as a nuclear engineer. I am the only person that was on the startup teams for both of Texas' nuclear power electric generating plants. However, my wife wished to be a big city advertising director, which is not compatible with "middle-of-nowhere" nuclear plants. Consequently, I opted to go to law school to become a patent attorney.

Why did you decide to come work in Tucker?

I had helped start the cityhood movement for the City of Dunwoody, becoming Dunwoody's first city attorney and its first employee. When Tucker began its cityhood movement, I offered my services as one of the few attorneys who had started up a new city.

OFF THE WALL

Who's the best athlete in your family? Currently, I coach several baseball teams. All three of my sons play baseball, with my oldest boy on the Dunwoody High School team. We just dropped off my oldest child at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst for her freshman year. She is on scholarship for the crew team. She ended her high school career placing ninth at nationals, seventh at the Head of the Charles and she is the 6K erg all-time leader of the Atlanta Junior Rowing Association.

What celebrity do people tell you that you look like?

Back in the day, my co-workers threw a Kirk Cameron party stating I was really him studying for a new sitcom about life at a nuke plant. Outside of that, I do not believe anyone has ever stated that I look like anyone quasi-famous.



Favorite movie?

My favorite movie is probably "The Chronicles of Riddick", with "The Matrix" being a close second. My favorite lawyer movie would have to be "My Cousin Vinny".



INTERNATIONAL TUCKER

Mayor Auman welcomed Japanese Consul General Takashi Shinozuka to City Hall on July 13. Their discussion covered current and potential economic partnerships in the City of Tucker.

TUCKER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

M572 BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Over the past year-and-a-half, the staff at M572 has built up a loyal following for the upscale culinary offerings on its menu. Now, restaurateur James Maggard is incorporating guest feedback into a newly revamped menu at his Main Street eatery.

"[We're] taking the pulse of the community and actually skewing the menu and the feel of the restaurant more towards the day-in, day-out diner, as opposed to the Friday night cocktail hour," explains Maggard, who also oversees Local 7.

The new menu keeps some of the old favorites (trout, pot roast, steak frites) and incorporates new, lower-priced sandwich options. M572 held a ribbon cutting on July 19 to celebrate the new menu. You can find the menu at fiveseventwo.com.



ANITA STOLTZFUS CITIZEN OF THE MONTH



"I first met Anita when I was elected as Treasurer for Tucker Civic Association. She was in charge of membership and did the best job of anyone I know keeping up with renewal dates and mailing notices to members. During the two years I served, the membership increased from about 100 to about 150. This was much higher than any other year that I know of.

In addition, Anita has used social media to promote new businesses in the area. She is always positive in her outlook and strives to give start-up businesses a helping hand. I know she feels the pressure of starting out as she is a small business owner herself."

Nominated by Earl Ryan

FROM THE MAYOR

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It makes sense. If you start your 5-year-old in Tucker's schools, they could go their entire academic careers through elementary, middle then high school on a STEM or IB track. That means they will be as prepared – or likely more prepared – for the rigors of college as any student anywhere in the state of Georgia.

Families from outside of Tucker are realizing this. Businesses from outside of Tucker are realizing this. And they're moving to call Tucker home. Although the City government doesn't have any official relationship to the school system, we work closely with school leaders and do everything we can to support our schools in a positive way. In May, my wife Gaye and I were delighted to participate in a Celebration of Reading at Brockett Elementary. While we read to and encouraged a class of first grade students, volunteers from IT firm Wipro handed out 500 backpacks and 1,500 books to students. I like to think that putting books into the hands of kids as they head off for summer break may have them just a little more eager or prepared to return to class for the fall.

I wish continued success for the upcoming year to all of our teachers, administrators, faculty members, bus drivers, students, parents, coaches and mentors. Welcome back to school!

BUILDER'S CORNER WITH STEVE HOLDER

HVAC REPLACEMENT



We're often asked which types of home improvements require a permit from the City. This time of year, we often get that question about HVAC replacement.

So, do you need a permit? The answer is "yes" and here's why:

1. It's the law. You are required by law to have a permit for the HVAC work done in your home. The HVAC contractor is required to be licensed by the state of Georgia.
2. It helps ensure your HVAC system stays in good working order. A permit ensures that your new HVAC system will have inspections to ensure it was installed properly and that it meets all current legislation, including the State Energy Conservation Code and the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) requirements.

Did you know that about 50 percent of all the money we spend on heating and cooling is due to inefficiencies in the way these systems are installed? Have a licensed professional check your HVAC system for energy efficiency by verifying the original installation. Studies have found that items like the compressor, coil and capacitor will last much longer when compared to the exact HVAC systems that were installed by a lazy or incompetent HVAC contractor.

TIPS ON HIRING CONTRACTORS

- Hire only licensed contractors and ask to see their license and a photo ID to verify their identity.
- Get at least three bids.
- Get three references.
- Get it in writing, but before you sign the contract, make sure you understand it completely.
- Verify the contractor has applied for the required permits.



Steve Holder is the Building Official for the City of Tucker. He has nearly two decades of experience in building inspection.



THIS MONTH IN OUR PARKS

Tucker GIS analyst Chris Rice and summer intern Katherine Francesconi surveyed Henderson Park as part of their inventory of Tucker park assets. This weeks-long project has been aided by volunteers from Tucker High School's STEM program.

HENDERSON PARK TENNIS COURTS

City leaders were joined by DeKalb Commissioners Nancy Jester and Gregory Adams at the ribbon cutting for the newly refurbished tennis courts at Henderson Park on July 12. Members of the Tucker High School girls tennis team were the first to volley on the new courts.



OFFICER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

City officials, civic leaders and Tucker residents enjoyed lunch with the men and women of the DeKalb Police Tucker Precinct on July 18. The Officer Appreciation Luncheon and Open House provided an opportunity for the community to meet and get to know their local police.



GET IN TOUCH WITH US !

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