

CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

INTUCKER

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FROM THE MAYOR

As we promised, it's been an exciting summer here in the City of Tucker. Hundreds of neighbors got together for our Movie on Main Street in June. Thousands of neighbors enjoyed our Celebration of Independence and Fireworks Spectacular in July. We're going to cap it all off by welcoming folks to our National Night Out Celebration at Livsey Elementary on August 7.

The whole purpose of what we called the "TKR Summer of Fun" has been to engage the community and build upon the already strong sense of civic pride we have here in Tucker.

And now something else for everyone: if you've ever wondered why getting a project like citywide road resurfacing takes so long, or the basis on which zoning decisions get made, or where taxes are applied and spent, we have another great opportunity coming up this fall that I hope many of you will take advantage of. If you wonder how to be involved in planning our parks and trails or who to call when you see a dilapidated house that's hurting your property value, this is for you.

Our staff is leading a six-week session of the University of Government Affairs at Tucker. This is a concept meant to educate residents, business leaders and other stakeholders on how the City of Tucker's government functions. It will meet Tuesday nights beginning next month and each class will last around two hours. We tried this as a single session back in May and received some very encouraging feedback that made us think a full series would be a good idea. Several of our neighbor cities do this type of program and they all say that it's a great way to connect with people and help them become informed about topics that impact their lives daily. For us, that will mean planning and zoning, code enforcement, economic development, parks and recreation, public safety and transportation.

You'll find information on how to sign up on our website in the next couple weeks, but for now I want to extend a personal invitation to you to make the commitment to learn more about your community. I promise you won't regret it, and that we'll be a stronger city as we learn and work together.

DATES TO KNOW

August 6
First Day of School in DeKalb County

August 13
City Council

August 21
Zoning Board of Appeals

August 27
City Council

JOIN US FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

* Games * Food * Fun *



#TKRSummerofFun

August 7 from 6-8 p.m.
Livsey Elementary

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE



Tucker's City Council got together three times in the month of July, holding a work session, a special called meeting and a meeting for regular business.

The work session and special called meeting took place on July 18. Council got updates on the various studies and reports being commissioned by City staff. They also heard from the attorney to the Downtown Development Authority on how that body should proceed in the coming months.

On July 23, Council met to discuss regular business, including a pair of

items pertaining to the City's Parks and Recreation Department. Parks and Recreation Director Rip Robertson briefed Council on the Tucker Recreation Center After-School Program. For the upcoming school year, students will get new opportunities, like a weekly trip to Kelley Cofer Park pool during swim season, and will see an increase in price from \$37 per week to \$65 per week. This increase will help the Parks and Recreation Department to cover costs as they give students a safe and stimulating after-school environment.

Council then voted 6-0 to approve a \$290,000 expenditure to match grant money for replacing playgrounds at Henderson, Kelley Cofer and Montreal Parks, as well as at Tucker Recreation Center. The grant, provided by PlayCore, aims to have those park playgrounds replaced with brand new equipment in the fall.

The next issue discussed was the "Brunch Bill" passed this past legislative session and signed by Governor Deal. The bill gives localities the opportunity to permit restaurants to serve alcohol earlier on Sunday mornings, if approved by voters in a referendum. City Council voted 6-0 to allow that issue to go on the November ballot.

Council also voted 6-0 to pass an amendment that ensures that the City is providing quality transient lodging at extended stay hotels with new requirements on security measures, record keeping and life safety improvements, as well as limiting the length of a stay to six months.

Council meets next on August 13 at 7 p.m. at the City Hall Annex (4228 First Avenue).

"DON'T BE A SUCKER" CAMPAIGN GAINING TRACTION IN TUCKER

For most teenagers, summertime is an opportunity to relax, hang with friends and mentally prepare for the school year ahead. Leah and Sydney Shankman did some of that, but they also launched a project they're hoping can make a difference around the world.

The twins, rising ninth-graders at Lakeside High School, have been active with the Girl Scouts for eight years. This year, they were tasked with coming up with an idea for their Silver Award: identify a problem in your community and find solutions to make it better. As the sisters debated what their project should focus on, the answer actually came to them on YouTube.

"We saw a video of a sea turtle with a plastic straw stuck in its nose," Sydney recalls. "I thought, 'That's terrible. I don't want anything like that to happen in our world.'"

And so the sisters had their project: "Don't Be a Sucker in Tucker". The idea was to encourage local restaurants to stop offering plastic drinking straws to

customers. The difference might be small from a global perspective, but the girls hoped it would make a huge difference here in the City. The next step was to find a restaurateur that shared their vision.

"We went to one of our favorite restaurants in the Tucker area: Local 7," Leah says. "We talked with the owner and the employees. We asked them not to [give out straws]. Once you put a straw on a table, you can't use it again."

Local 7's general manager Luis Finley was impressed by the girls and told them he wanted to help.

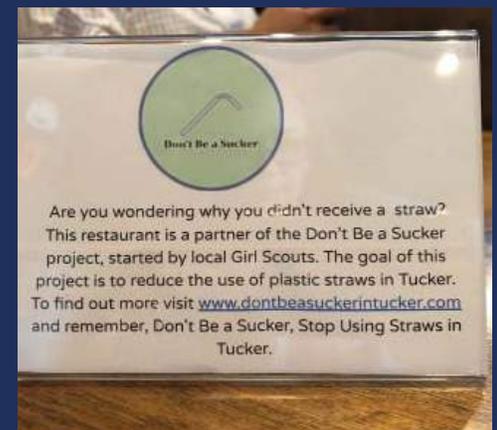
"They came in and were so articulate and excited about this cause," Finley recalls. "For us, this was an easy change to make... and the customers and the community have been really receptive."

Patrons of Local 7 are now greeted with signs on their tables explaining the "Don't Be a Sucker" campaign. They also have to ask for a straw with their drink, rather than simply being provided with one. With one restaurant onboard, the girls have developed a website to further

promote their efforts and spread the message to other restaurants. They say the pitch is very simple.

"Americans use 500 million straws a day. Skip the straw. Are they really necessary?" The sisters are hoping that for more and more restaurant owners and patrons the answer will be "no" and that their summer project will lead to a safer world for wildlife.

If you want to follow Leah and Sydney's progress visit their website, www.dontbeasuckerintucker.com.



ON THE BEAT WITH LT. SCHOEPPNER



FACEBOOK.COM/SCHOEPPNER
DGSCHOEPPNER@DEKALBCOUNTYGA.GOV

This month we continue our look at the different departments of the DeKalb Police Department with our K9 unit. DeKalb Police currently have 13 police canines. Most of the canines are Belgian Malinois (pronounced MAL-in-wah) with one Czech Shepherd. There are three separate disciplines of classification for these canines: utility, Explosive Ordinance D and single purpose. There are seven utility, or dual-purpose, canines which are utilized to track fleeing felons, find discarded evidence or lost property and narcotics detection. There are four EOD canines which detect explosive odors. They are used to assist bomb technicians and sweep events to keep venues safe. There are two missing person/narcotic detection canines who are attached to the Criminal Investigation Division/HIDTA unit. They can search for missing persons and detect narcotics.

Prospective K9 handlers go through a separate selection process, where they must complete another background check, oral interview and physical agility and strength test. If the applicant is selected, they will be paired with a canine that is selected through an approved vendor and go through the K9

handler school together. After completion of the school, they return to the department and continue to train numerous times a month. Not only do the canines need this training, but the handler needs it, as well. It usually takes a year for the pair to work well together. All the K9 teams are tested once a year in their specific disciplines by the North American Police Work Dog Association (N.A.P.W.D.A.). This testing showcases the K9 teams' proficiency in their specific disciplines.

The police canines are usually selected between eighteen months and three-years of age. They typically have a seven to nine-year work life and then will be retired to their handlers to relax and enjoy retired life. During the canine's employment, DeKalb Police Department provides all food, medical care and necessary equipment for the canine. The handler is still responsible for the overall

care of their partner on- and off-duty, like grooming and scheduling annual checkups.

Since joining the K9 unit, Sgt. Cusimano and K9 D'Jango have had over 300 deployments, from suspect searches and article searches to narcotic detection. They have made more than 135 arrests, seized nearly \$2 million worth of illegal narcotics and seized over \$100,000 of U.S. currency (which helps in funding equipment for the police department as a whole). Sgt. Cusimano is amazed at what his canine can do.

"He sure does make me look good," Sgt. Cusimano explains. He will never forget their first apprehension of a burglary suspect or how his partner led them directly to where the suspect was hiding in a backyard.

The relationship between an officer and his canine partner is certainly a special thing.



Sgt. Frank Cusimano is a 20-year veteran of the DeKalb County Police Department. He began his career in 1998 and was selected to be a canine supervisor/handler in 2013. K9 D'Jango was born in Holland on February 8, 2011. He was selected from his breeder to become a police canine and was shipped to the Kasseburg Canine Training Center here in the United States, where their partnership began.

THANK YOU, TUCKER!

A quick note of thanks from all of us at Tucker Precinct. On July 14, community leaders, businesses and volunteers donated a full lunch spread for our Tucker Precinct Officer Appreciation Cookout. The expressions of gratitude from Tucker residents are nothing new to us, but those kind words and actions sure make a difficult job a little bit easier. We are grateful to serve you!

PARENTS, EDUCATORS TEAM UP ON TUCKER CLUSTER COUNCIL

Tucker's schools are enjoying a renaissance. Several of the Tucker Cluster schools have gained STEM and/or IB certification, CCRPI scores are routinely meeting or exceeding state averages and Tucker High School's graduation rate is now routinely among the highest in DeKalb County.

While that's all good news, parents, educators and others with a stake in the schools are faced with a question: how do you build upon these gains and keep Tucker schools on a trajectory to be one of the best clusters in Metro Atlanta?

Enter the Tucker Cluster Council (TCC). Comprised of administrators, teachers, faculty specialists, parents and support staff from DeKalb County Schools, the TCC began monthly meetings at the start of the 2017-18 school year.

"The mission of the Tucker Cluster Council is to create a unified voice to efficiently and effectively communicate the needs of every school in our cluster to the DeKalb County School District," says co-president Anne Thomas. "We have been very pleased with the willingness of the Tucker community to meet together to discuss best practices and brainstorm ideas for the betterment of our Tucker Cluster students."

The Council discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the seven Cluster schools and looks at what opportunities may exist for improvement. Additional support comes from DeKalb's District II Superintendent Trenton Arnold, as well as the Cluster's outgoing and incoming representatives on the DeKalb School Board.

"It's a cohesive and collaborative approach," explains School Board Member Jim McMahan. "School administration would rather hear from 20 clusters, rather than 130 individual schools. Tucker should be proud of taking this step."

As the TCC prepares for the upcoming school year, they are exploring the formation of a Tucker Education Foundation, which would afford them the opportunity to raise money to further support teachers and students in the classrooms. There is also a strong focus on how to keep the Cluster at the forefront of the STEM revolution.

"The value of STEM is that it works really well for bringing people together around education," says Tucker Middle School STEM/IB coordinator and Tucker Cluster Council member Eric Knapp. "Through problem-based learning, kids are engaging with problems in the community and that's why STEM is important: it's bringing together those parties. Most of what we call STEM is just good teaching and what we'd like school to be."

With this type of leadership and investment from schools, county leaders and other stakeholders, the Tucker Cluster is poised to continue its recent gains; and that will only serve to better prepare teachers to teach and students to achieve.

TUCKER SCHOOLS WELCOME TWO NEW PRINCIPALS



Midvale Elementary - Tara Dougherty

Dr. Dougherty was elevated from Assistant Principal at Midvale this summer following the departure of Principal Debbie Satterfield.

"As principal, it is my goal to foster an environment that encourages the social, emotional, and academic growth of students, while preparing them to be globally-minded citizens. I will continue to work collaboratively with staff, students, parents, and community members to extend our partnership and support the Tucker community."



Brockett Elementary - Antoinette Seabrook

Ms. Seabrook left her position overseeing Human Resources in the DeKalb County School District to replace Brockett Principal Venessa Bines-Truett.

"Aristotle stated that 'educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.' I look forward to working with the Brockett community to not only ensure that our students have a quality academic education, but that we also teach them to be compassionate and caring citizens."

TUCKER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH SIEMENS



The City of Tucker is home to several major global corporations. Many of them are household names like Ricoh and Pepsi, others emerging brands like sonnenBatterie.

But did you know that one of the biggest companies with a presence in Tucker is also among those that's been here the longest?

Through a 1984 corporate merger, innovation leader Siemens moved into Tucker more than a generation ago. Their testing laboratory on Montreal Industrial Way is thriving today, with around 30 employees doing work that is found in homes all over the world.

"The Tucker facility serves two roles," explains Siemens Engineering Manager Jorg Sizemore. "Primarily, it is a test facility for engineering development done here in the Atlanta area and worldwide. It also serves as a high-powered test lab running tests on circuit breakers and other electrical equipment for outside companies."

Sizemore says those circuit breakers are the same ones you might buy from big box stores to install in your home or business.

He adds Siemens' roots in the Metro Atlanta area run deep. The Tucker location works in concert with a much larger operation the company has in Norcross. Both projects are able to take advantage of the region's highly-skilled workforce, including a big contingent of employees from the engineering programs at Georgia Tech.

Like with most enterprises, Sizemore says the biggest advantage is location.

"We are quite hidden back in the woods [and] a lot of people don't know we're here," he explains. "We have direct access to all Siemens operations in Metro Atlanta. We have easy access to (Interstate) 285 for Siemens colleagues coming in from the airport."

All those factors have helped foster a long-standing relationship between the Tucker community and this global pioneer, further enhancing Tucker's reputation as a hotbed of innovation.

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH JACK SARTAIN



photo by Dean Hesse, Hometown News

"I am nominating Jack B. Sartain for August's InTucker Citizen Spotlight. Jack is tireless in his contributions to Tucker. In his ninth decade now, Jack can't retire as there is too much to be done!

You'll find Jack organizing and supporting local music, art, theatre and opera organizations. Most recently, he recruited and coordinated singers for Tucker's first July 3rd Celebration.

Jack has organized over 325 Music for Missions programs at Tucker's Lawrenceville Road United Methodist Church since 1997. He is presently acting as interim volunteer music director at LRUMC.

Jack is tireless, having the energy of a man half his age. He is the consummate connector, identifying people who should know each other and initiating relationships. He sees a need and figures out a way to fill it. I've watched him develop talent and build confidence in amateur musicians. Jack is an encourager and promoter, as well as a social media guru. He uses his connections to create opportunities for people to develop their skills.

Jack shares his musical talents playing trumpet in the Briarlake Baptist Church orchestra and singing in Chorale II. He is a lifelong Atlanta-area resident, a graduate of Emory University and is the former CEO at DeKalb County Board of Health.

Jack is a devoted husband, father, grandfather and friend. He's a great asset to Tucker and is deserving of the Citizen Spotlight."

Nomination by Ruthann Lacey

TEAM TUCKER SPOTLIGHT

Orin Romain - Parks and Recreation and Communications



You are in both the Parks and Recreation and Communications Departments. How does that work? I have two very patient and very accommodating supervisors working together to ensure my vibrant charm and winning smile are on display at the Rec Center, as well as assisting at City Hall and all TKR events.

What do you enjoy most about Parks and Recreation? As cliché as this sounds, it's the people. Being able to interact with so many people of so many ages is extremely fulfilling. And, for whatever time you are able to interact with them during the day, you get a chance to make an imprint in a positive way. That's so powerful to me.

What do you enjoy most about Communications? More like what do you not enjoy about communications?!? Everyone has a distinct voice, a distinct quality that makes them that particular person. Communications is so cool because you get to try to find a way to tailor a message to as many voices as possible. Dialogue, in any form, is one of life's greatest gifts.

What do you see as the role of social media in a local government? It's as important as ever. With the increase in social media platforms and users, being able to reach the largest audience with the widest reach in the shortest amount of time is critical and necessary. Social media allows for almost instantaneous feedback to address concerns

OFF THE WALL

What's your favorite movie? I can't go with just one – Coming to America, Dumb and Dumber, and the Godfather II.

What is the worst job you've ever had? Mall Easter Bunny. The job itself paid very well for the work and it gave me money for a college Spring Break. But, there are few things worse than seeing a parent dress a child up for three straight days, only to take him away as he sobs because my mask looks like something out of a Hitchcock movie.



Best concert you've ever been to?

Best and also most memorable are the same for me. Bucket list show: Prince came to Atlanta to do two shows in April of 2016, with just himself, a microphone and a piano. I saw the late show he did that night and it turned out to be the last concert he ever did. The show was indescribable and his passing made it that much more special to me.

How tall are you exactly? I tell people I'm 6'5", but if you cut off all my hair, I'm actually 4'7". You aren't gonna tell anyone this part, are you?

and needs from the smallest level to the largest. The thing I struggle with is convincing people there can be a balance between media life and non-media life; being social media savvy is a benefit more so than a detriment.

When you're not working, where are we most likely to find you? All over – I do not like sitting still. Ball games, concerts, karaoke spots, ALL of the restaurants. But I do find time for the occasional Netflix binge.



COMMUNITY CORNER

8/7 – National Night Out Celebration

6-8 p.m., 4137 Livsey Road

The final event in our TKR Summer of Fun series will be the City's second annual National Night Out celebration. Join us at Livsey Elementary School to celebrate safe communities and meet some of your Tucker Precinct police personnel. Residents of the City and neighboring areas are invited to come out for face painting, games and a free dinner provided by Chick-fil-A.

8/17 – Tucker High Varsity Football Opener

5:30 p.m., Georgia State Stadium

The Tigers open the season in the Corky Kell Classic against perennial state power Buford. Check our Community Calendar for all game times and locations for the 2018 campaign.



“ASK RIP” ANSWERS YOUR PARKS QUESTIONS

Greetings from a very busy Parks and Recreation Department! I hope you and your family have had a great summer and that you've had the chance to enjoy it at some of our Tucker parks. I'd like to update you on several things of interest happening in the department that we're getting questions about daily.

- As we wrap up a very successful Summer Camp, our staff is ready to dive right into our After-School Program. We learned a lot in taking over the program in the middle of the last school year. This time around, our team – guided by Recreation Leader Crystal Dawson – has pinpointed things they want to change or improve upon to give your students the best and safest environment possible for their after-school care. You can sign your child up and get more information at tuckerga.gov/parks.
- Summer break is over, but that doesn't mean the end of summer fun. Once school is back, Kelley Cofer Park pool will still be open Thursday and Friday evenings and weekends – and we expect DeKalb County to finish construction on the new splash pad any day. August is hot in Georgia and we're going to help you cool off all the way until Labor Day!
- One of the biggest priorities for a successful Parks and Recreation Department is safety. To that end, you're going to start seeing security cameras at Tucker Recreation Center, as well as at Kelley Cofer and Peters Park. This is a needed improvement that will help us to make sure the people in our parks are there for the right reasons.
- We are stepping up our game on social media. Our Recreation Assistant Orin Romain is now our new Social Media Coordinator for the City. Among his first duties was creating a Facebook page specific to our Parks and Recreation Department. You'll see Tucker Parks and Rec on other social media channels in the coming months.
- Maybe most exciting, as you read on Page 2, we've secured a grant to install new playgrounds at many of our parks. From the moment I got here, I heard Tucker moms and dads saying this was a priority for them. As of November, that priority becomes a reality.



If you have questions for next month's column, send them to parks@tuckerga.gov. I hope to see you at the Rec Center!

Rip Robertson is the first Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Tucker. He takes the job with years of experience in Parks and Rec, as well as Public Works. Rip is a former Military Intelligence Analyst for the U.S. Army and is active with the Army Reserve.



TRC AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

8-week session begins August 6, 2018.
Cost is \$65 per week per child and includes a daily snack. For details and to register, visit tuckerga.gov/parks.

8/18 – The United Methodist Children's Home Flea Market

9 a.m. – 4 p.m., 1967 Lakeside Pkwy., Suite 400

The United Methodist Children's Home (UMCH) long-standing and popular flea market is free to the public. Proceeds of the sale of donated items will help UMCH reach more children and families in crisis in new communities across North Georgia. All major credit cards are accepted.

8/24 - 26 – Smoke Rise Academy of the Arts presents “Annie Get Your Gun”

Showtimes vary, 5901 Hugh Howell Road

“Annie Get Your Gun” is a fun, family show suitable for all ages. Performances will start at 7 p.m. on Friday, 3 and 7 p.m. on Saturday and 3 p.m. on Sunday. Each show will have live pre-show entertainment and concessions are available for purchase during intermissions. Attendance is free with no tickets required.

TUCKERGA.GOV

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CELEBRATING FREEDOM

Members of the Tucker community competed in a July 3 photograph contest, taking pictures and using the hashtag #tkrsummeroffun. The winning photo was taken by Tucker resident Brian Chambers. Others were awarded honorable mention.



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