

CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

INTUCKER

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FROM THE MAYOR

One of the most important decisions we had to make in helping Tucker to incorporate as a city was what to do about public safety. Tucker's never been a "dangerous" place. As long as I've lived here, you can walk up Main Street at any hour of the day or night and never have to look over your shoulder. But there was a debate over how to police ourselves: do we stay with DeKalb County Police and all the training and resources they bring to the table or do we start from scratch and create our own police force?

We chose to stay with DeKalb and it's a decision that continues to pay dividends. This Spring, we sat down with Chief James Conroy and Major Greg Padrick and reimagined what policing in the City of Tucker could look like. The result was a new intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the City and DeKalb Police that takes one of DeKalb's four police precincts – the aptly named Tucker Precinct – and redraws the boundaries to ensure the entirety of the City of Tucker is policed by that same precinct. Even more, the Captain and I swore in DeKalb Police officers to enforce the City's ordinances when crimes are committed within our boundaries and you'll see "Tucker Precinct" written on the doors of police cars that serve our City.

Why does this matter? When we try and market Tucker as a place for people to call home, one of the first questions they'll ask is about crime. We consider ourselves among the safest communities in Metro Atlanta, but we want to take steps to become the safest. Additionally, public safety is a major consideration for businesses looking to relocate to Tucker. Not only can we tout our relationship with DeKalb Police, but also the work of our Community Improvement Districts (CIDs). The Stone Mountain CID, which covers much of our industrial corridor, has regular security patrols. The Tucker-Northlake CID, which includes Main Street and has more retail membership, is looking into funding security patrols. Not to mention when there's an incident requiring large-scale response (see page 3), our police force is able to respond without hampering regular patrols in other parts of the City.

The results of this collaboration are obvious to any potential resident or business owner. And it's something that our existing stakeholders can testify to: Tucker is a city where safety comes first.

DATES TO KNOW

- July 4
Independence Day
(City Hall closed)
- July 11
Community Council
- July 17
Zoning Board of Appeals
- July 23
City Council
- July 26
Planning Commission





CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Tucker's City Council had a busy June, meeting twice while also attending the annual convention of the Georgia Municipal Association.

At the meeting on June 11, Council voted unanimously to amend the contract with ch2m/Jacobs to address additional staffing needs, particularly in the Parks and Recreation Department. With that additional staffing comes the need for more office space. Council voted to authorize the City Manager to sign a lease for the additional space.

They also cast a series of votes pertaining to transportation improvements funded by SPLOST money. The first vote approved a contract for \$3,691,464 to have Atlanta Paving & Concrete Construction do repaving work for Fiscal Year 2019. They then granted an engineering and inspections contract to BM&K Construction for \$61,605. The last vote awarded a contract for collection of geospatial data to Stantec. Stantec is the same company that drove the entirety of Tucker earlier this year, collecting data on road conditions. This project would cover data on assets like road signage, traffic signals and sidewalks.

The June 27 meeting saw four public hearings and several important votes. The first was a 6-0 approval of a zero-millage rate for the upcoming year. Next, they voted 6-0 to approve a Special Land Use Permit (SLUP) for Frolic & Flow massage therapy, a home-based business with customer contact located at 4076 Morgan Road. A rezoning petition for a 15-unit single-family development on Cooledge Road was denied 6-0. Council then voted 6-0 to approve a rezoning to light industrial for a furniture distribution warehouse on Sarr Parkway.

From June 22-26, the Mayor and several Councilmembers attended the Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) Annual Convention. The purpose of the event is to get elected officials valuable training on a variety of topics. Councilmen Bill Rosenfeld and Matt Robbins were each presented with their GMA Training Certificates for completing at least 42 units of credits within the program.

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for July 23 at 7 p.m. at the City Hall Annex (4228 First Avenue).



Members of the Westhampton/Embry Hills Electric Rays Swim Team led the Pledge of Allegiance at the June 11 City Council meeting. If you know of a group that is interested in leading the Pledge, email us at info@tuckerga.gov.

MUSIC MAKERS FIND A HOME AT TUCKER REC

Most people know Tucker Recreation Center as a place where you can go for pottery, gymnastics, meditation, education. But did you know it's also a place where you can go to record an album?

Right in the heart of the Recreation Center is Dlanor Studios, a fully functioning recording studio where aspiring singers, musicians and broadcasters are plying their trade each and every day. The studio is run by Ronald Holmes, a former college football player who worked on the business side of the National Football League for a time. Once he left football, Holmes focused his efforts on another passion: music.

"I got interested in the music industry because of what was happening digitally," Holmes recalls. "I started a digital distribution company (Eidol Music) producing audio and music for writers, rappers, singers and storytellers."

It wasn't until a couple years ago that Holmes came across his current studio space at Tucker Recreation Center.

"My daughter was doing gymnastics (at the Rec Center) and they showed me a storage closet," he remembers. "We're starting small, but don't despise humble beginnings."

Once Holmes signed on to set up a studio in the Rec Center, he got a group from Mountain West Church to come in on a service day and clean out and paint the closet. He then made a trip to Handy Ace Hardware for the wood to build a recording booth. He finished it off with foam from old mattresses for the soundproofing.

The first studio session happened in April of 2017 and the customer base has been building ever since.

"My daughters and I recorded a song there earlier this year," says Bettie Hall. "The experience was awesome."

Holmes says he's working with a lot of talented people, everyone from singers to podcasters, but he's only just scratching the surface.

"I want to branch into films," Holmes says, adding he has his eyes on other producers like Atlanta's own Tyler Perry. "I see the studio as a factory for music and audio for my distribution company. If you want to get somewhere, you've got to start somewhere."

Starting here in Tucker seems to have been the right move for Dlanor Studios.



To learn more about the operation, go to EIDOLMUSIC.COM

ON THE BEAT WITH LT. SCHOEPPNER

In last month's newsletter I continued covering the various divisions in the DeKalb Police Department by talking about the Uniform Division. In light of recent events (see below), it seems a good time now to look at the Special Operations Division, where the SWAT team resides.

The Special Operations Division (SOD) is the second largest in the department. It also has the most individual units within it. Here's a rundown:

The **Aerial Support Unit** primarily supports uniformed or criminal investigations personnel on the ground. This includes assisting in the location of offenders who have fled from officers, aiding in the location of missing persons or surveying and photographing crime scenes. DeKalb County currently has two helicopters at its disposal.

The **Traffic Specialist Unit** handles all hit-and-run traffic accidents in DeKalb County. They also reconstruct scenes from fatal traffic accidents.

The **SWAT Team** is staffed by 12 full-time officers. There are 12 more officers assigned to SWAT whose primary assignment is in the Uniform Division. They are mainly utilized in serving high-risk warrants, performing hostage rescues and engaging heavily armed and barricaded suspects.

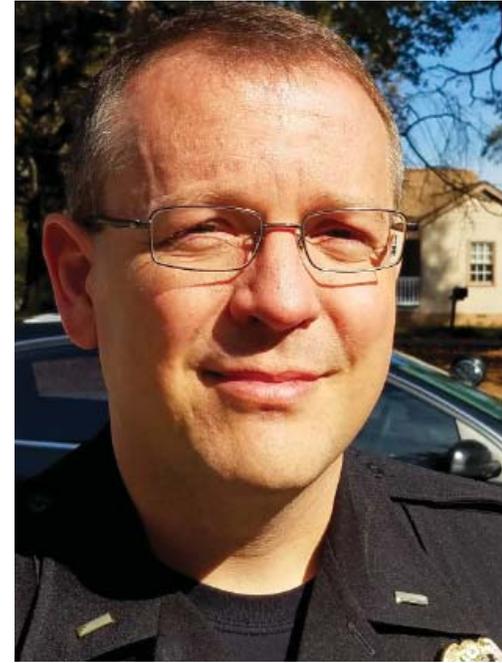
The **Bomb Squad** responds to any bomb or hazardous material related incident. Officers assigned to the bomb squad are trained in identifying, disarming and transporting explosive devices. They also supervise the destruction of explosive devices after they are removed from a scene.

Next is the **Strategic Traffic Accident Reduction (STAR)** unit. The primary way they accomplish this task is DUI enforcement. They also provide safe driving education programs to the public.

The **Strategic Traffic Enforcement and Patrol (STEP)** and **Motor** units provide dedicated traffic enforcement and focused patrol efforts throughout DeKalb County. This is mostly achieved by running laser in problem traffic areas. The STEP unit operates in marked police cars and the Motor units ride motorcycles.

The **Warrant and Security Unit** primarily serves warrants issued by the traffic division of state court. They also provide security for county buildings and other government events.

The **K-9 Unit** supports other units in the department by tracking suspected felons, tracking missing persons, controlled substance detection, explosives detection and article searches for evidence that has been



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discarded by suspects. The K-9 Unit consists of 12 handler/canine teams who maintain certification with the North American Police Working Dog Association.

Officers who have two or more years of experience in the Uniform Division are able to apply for positions within SOD when they become available.

POLICE BLOTTER

On June 18 at 2:55 a.m., DeKalb Police officers responded to an alarm call from the Waffle House at 2693 Lawrenceville Highway. Upon arrival, officers made contact with employees of the restaurant who told them that the business had been robbed by two suspects. They also told the officers that the suspects had run in the direction of the Knights Inn across the street.

Those officers directed additional units to the motel, where they observed a suspect described by the victims. Once questioned, this person said the other suspect committed the robbery and directed officers to the room where he was hiding. When officers went to this room they observed the second suspect leaving the room. When he saw the officers he fled back inside the room. Since the suspect was armed and dangerous, the decision was made to call in the SWAT team.

When the SWAT team arrived, they attempted to make contact with the suspect and end the standoff peacefully. The suspect refused to communicate, forcing the officers to deploy tear gas into the room. The suspect still refused to surrender, so the SWAT team had to make entry. They located the suspect hiding in the bathroom. He was taken into custody without further incident and charged with armed robbery.

PLANNING AHEAD: NEW STUDIES DIRECT TUCKER'S FUTURE GROWTH

As is true of any young city, Tucker has a lot of self-discovery ahead of it. Much of that work was done over the past couple years with the drafting of a Comprehensive Plan. Much more will happen though over the next 12 months. City staff is preparing to award contracts for a number of plans and studies that will do a deep dive into what Tucker is, was and will be in the coming generations. These assessments will impact how our parks are developed, how our roads are improved and how we grow as a destination for businesses and visitors.

If you haven't followed the plans thus far, there will be ample opportunity for you to get involved in most of these processes in the coming weeks and months, whether through surveys, meetings or just providing online feedback. But for now, here's an overview of what they may mean to you.

Downtown Master Plan

Anticipated completion: mid-2019

Purpose: To have a blueprint for the growth and redevelopment of Tucker's downtown looking 20 years into the future. This is an outgrowth of the Comprehensive Plan's goals to bolster economic development and enhance the downtown with a mixture of retail, restaurants and mixed-use developments.

Impact: This could shape what businesses you see on Main Street, the creation of additional downtown parking options, as well as new buildout in Tucker's downtown.

Environmental Assessments of Park Properties

Anticipated completion: Summer 2018

Purpose: To assess the environmental condition of the parks and ensure that there are no hazards.

Impact: If the assessment shows any environmental concerns, the City will work to mitigate those, ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its citizens.

Geospatial Data Inventory

Anticipated completion: Fall 2018

Purpose: To provide Geographic Information System (GIS) data for all assets in Tucker rights-of-way, including signs, traffic signals, pavement markings, stormwater inlets, fire hydrants and sidewalks.

Impact: This will let the City know where it needs to improve the quality or visibility of certain assets (e.g. faded stop signs), thus enhancing public safety.

Historic Resource Report

Anticipated completion: Spring 2019

Purpose: To establish a baseline document that lists Tucker's historic resources (buildings, cemeteries, archaeological sites, etc), as well as a history of the area.

Impact: This would aid in staff evaluations of development and rezoning petitions by indicating where valuable historic resources are located. It would enable the people of Tucker to better understand, grow and plan around their rich history.

Intersection Accident Analysis

Anticipated completion: Summer 2018

Purpose: To identify high accident locations, using data to rank the top 10 most dangerous intersections on state and local roads in Tucker.

Impact: The City will have hard data to use in its efforts to win matching dollars for intersection improvements, as well as to prioritize which intersections need to be addressed. This analysis will offer the City Engineer short-term, intermediate and long-term fixes for some of the issues at these intersections.

Parks Master Plan

Anticipated completion: Late 2018

Purpose: To create a road map showing how we want our Tucker parks to be in the future. Guidelines on future expansions, ensure there are enough parks for the community parks per square mile. This includes studies on staffing, programs, community needs, park ordinances.

Impact: Going forward, the City will better understand what residents want in their parks and will be better equipped to make that happen. You will see new activities and amenities in the parks, as well as better connectivity to the City's anticipated trail system.

Parks Survey

Anticipated completion: Summer 2018

Purpose: To evaluate the boundaries of Tucker's parks assets.

Impact: This will give the City better guidance on making decisions regarding potential park expansion or land acquisition.

Pavement Condition Study

Complete

Purpose: To assess every mile of public roadway in the City of Tucker. This survey

employed state-of-the-art technology to determine road surface quality, as well as quality of the road base.

Impact: This information was used to prioritize which roads will be resurfaced first in the City's SPLOST-funded repaving efforts. More than 20 roads will be resurfaced in 2018, with dozens more planned over the life of the six-year SPLOST.

Sign Ordinance & Overlay Rewrite

Anticipated completion: Spring 2019

Purpose: To rewrite the sign code to establish signage as a design element that can contribute to a sense of place, while balancing the needs of business owners to properly advertise and market their business. This would also amend Tucker's three overlay districts to streamline the regulations and clarify the design requirements for each overlay. This aligns with the Comprehensive Plan's goals by enhancing downtown, bolstering the economic base and creating gateways that will improve transportation connections.

Impact: This will create regulations that are more user-friendly and easier to interpret, as well as address items missing from the City's current codes. It will also lead to more attractive streetscapes, a more business-friendly policy on temporary signage and a streamlined, easy to interpret overlay process.

Trail Master Plan

Anticipated completion: Late 2018

Purpose: To evaluate opportunities for trail connectivity, as well as new trails in the City of Tucker.

Impact: This will provide a vision for a connected, expansive network of trails to run through the City of Tucker. It could also lead to trail connections to neighboring communities.

Transportation Master Plan

Anticipated completion: Spring 2019

Purpose: To gather information with an eye toward improving pedestrian accessibility and safety, traffic congestion, and connectivity of roads and trails. This will take a broader look at the existing conditions of our transportation network and establish priorities, while assessing needs and budget guidelines.

Impact: This will enable City leaders to establish local priorities in terms of funding, as well as clearly demonstrate the needs of the community when pursuing state and federal funds.

TEAM TUCKER SPOTLIGHT

Tim Lampkin - City Planner



OFF THE WALL

What is your biggest personal achievement?

Each decade brings a new achievement: Graduating college. Completing my MA. Losing 50 lbs. in three months.

Each year brings a new challenge along with new personal achievement.

What is your greatest fear?

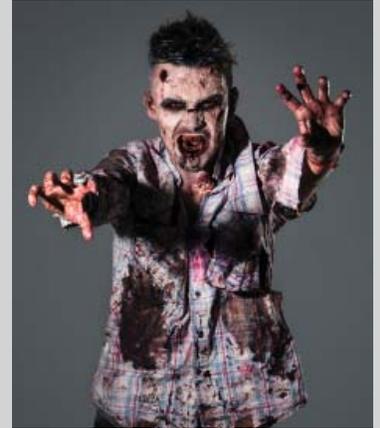
A Zombie Apocalypse, of course.

What is the last TV show you binge-watched?

Stranger Things

What is the most ridiculous purchase you've ever made?

A watch— who needs a watch when you have an iPhone?



How did you arrive in Tucker?

Old school—by car—Hyundai Elantra.

What does a Planner do?

Urban Planners serve as advocates for the community and assist to make plans with the best interest of the community in mind. The ultimate goal of an urban planner is the successful functionality of a community.

A day may consist of meeting with a resident regarding zoning of a property, reviewing a site plan for a new eatery or single-family home, analyzing a rezoning proposal for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and reviewing the allowable uses in a zoning district. We may work evenings or weekends to attend meetings and leave the office to inspect proposed development sites. Planners are your main point of contact for Comprehensive Plan queries, zoning ordinance questions, assisting you to determine your zone district and your first point of contact for variances, proposed developments and potential land use change requests.

Planners make recommendations to help guide decision makers to consider all the factors involved in a new project. Urban planners collaborate with private residents, business owners, real estate developers, non-profit organizations, architects, engineers, building officials, regional authorities, city officials and many other parties that are relevant to the sustainability of a community.

Why is planning and zoning important to our city's vitality?

Planning and zoning is a team effort involving transportation, environmental resources, economic development, urban design, historical preservation and parks and recreation, to name a few. A wide range of partnerships ensures Tucker remains a vibrant community that protects historic, cultural and environmental resources. Planning and zoning also works with regional agencies such as the Atlanta Regional Commission to ensure Tucker has a seat at the table. It's this synergy of regulatory compliance of our zoning ordinance and collaboration with our local partners that is pivotal in ensuring the city remains resilient and its vitality intact for future generations.

How is Tucker unique from other municipalities from a planning and zoning standpoint?

Cities are complex systems of formal and informal relationships—spatial, social, economic—that defy easy explanation. From a planning and zoning standpoint Tucker is much more efficient and things get done quicker.

Two things stand out for me working for Tucker from a planning and zoning standpoint. The first is how accessible and pro-active everyone is from the elected officials and advisory board appointees to private residents and business owners. The second is how engaged the residents and business owners are and the pride that everyone takes in Tucker. Overall, there is more concern and earnest desire. There is more transparency, access, tradition and civitas in Tucker. If something should be done, it comes down to you to do it.

TUCKER COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH THE GARDEN ENTHUSIAST



For the past seven years, The Garden Enthusiast has been a staple of Tucker's Main Street. Offering an array of specialty gardening products, as well as bird seed and feeders, the store built up a loyal following of green thumbs all over the Metro area.

So when owner Linda Carr decided this year to step away and spend more time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the store's future was in jeopardy. But, as it turns out, gardening is in the family's blood.

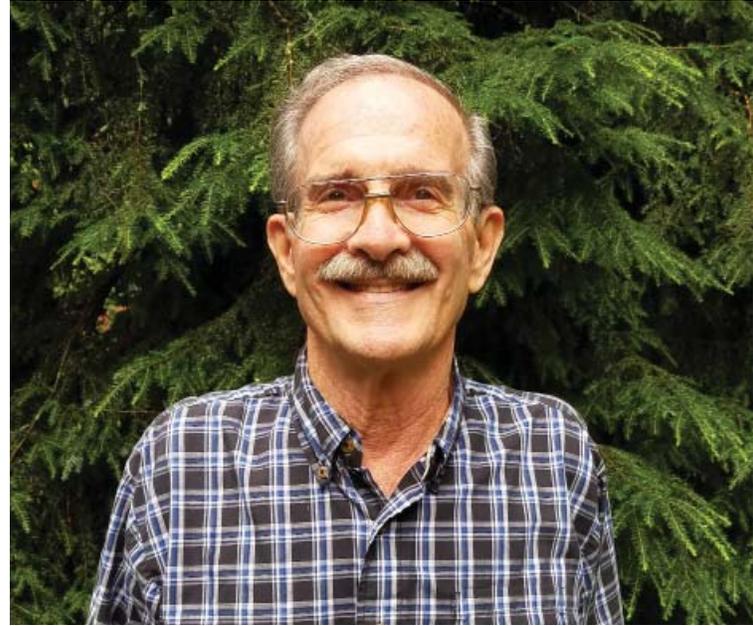
"I didn't want to see it go away," says Scott Scheivelhud, Linda's son and the store's new owner. Scheivelhud's arrival will allow his mom, not just to focus on family, but also on the garden at her home in Tucker's Smoke Rise community. And it will allow him to make some changes to the business.

"I plan to add free delivery on purchases by Tucker residents, as well as free delivery to community gardens in Tucker," Scheivelhud explains, adding he wants to revamp the store's website to better serve local customers.

But with those changes, many things will stay the same. Linda Carr still plans to drop in a couple days a week to see customers and write the store's monthly newsletter. They also will continue their commitment to charity. Over the years, The Garden Enthusiast has hosted fundraisers generating more than \$25,000 for Tucker parks and historical places. And, they promise, the customer service that has made the store so successful will stay the same with the new ownership.

The Garden Enthusiast is located at 2316 Main Street.

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH JOE GOODMAN



"I would like to nominate Joe Goodman to be Tucker's Spotlight Citizen of the Month. Joe is the publisher of Up Close and Personal in Tucker. Joe is not just the publisher, he IS Up Close and Personal in Tucker. I know Joe doesn't know everyone in Tucker, but it seems like it. Joe uses his publication to trumpet this community. He always finds those good stories about good people doing good things.

Joe believes strongly in community as a whole and he demonstrates this by being a Tucker advocate. Anytime there is an event in Tucker like Tucker Day or the Chili Cook-Off, Joe will be found there, walking and talking. He checks in with everyone, partially because I'm sure he's always looking for interesting stories, but more importantly, it's obvious it's because he cares deeply about the people in this community.

Joe has had a very interesting life, and I have encouraged him to highlight himself in Up Close and Personal. He won't do that, because he wants to showcase others in the community. So if Joe won't do it, I will. I'm proud to nominate a man I call Mr. Tucker, Joe Goodman!"

Nomination by Paul Fincannon



“ASK RIP” ANSWERS YOUR PARKS QUESTIONS

In preparing for this column each month, we reach out for questions from the community. This time around there was one question it seems was on everyone's mind: when will the splash pad open at Kelley Cofer Park pool? To be honest, I've asked that same question myself several times.

Here's the deal: we had anticipated having this splash pad open for kids to enjoy when we opened the pool on Memorial Day weekend. DeKalb County had contractors onsite to pour some concrete and install the drainage. Then they hit a bad stretch of weather that delayed construction. Then they had issues with availability of the fixtures for the splash pad.

And here we are. The County now has those fixtures and is ready to complete the project sometime this month. It's not as quick as we had hoped, but your kids will be able to play in a brand new, 400 square foot splash pad during the Summer of 2018. We'll be sure to keep you updated.

Finally, I want to let you know that as we enter the final month of our Summer Camp, it has been a huge success. When we assumed responsibility of Tucker Recreation Center back in January, we almost immediately started planning for Summer Camp. This is a huge undertaking, not just making sure that campers are having a good time, but making sure those campers' parents have peace of mind that their kids are safe. Our Recreation Leaders Crystal Dawson and Joe Stewart used their expertise in working with children to make sure our promises of "fun" and "safety" were kept. I truly believe that if you have a quality program with quality people, word will spread and you will find success. That's exactly what's happened.

The last week of June we had 134 campers. That is up from the 94 campers we started with back in May and getting close to our capacity of 150 campers. In addition to our Tucker Rec Center staff, I have to give a lot of credit to our partners at the YMCA. We've had a few minor hiccups, but the feedback we've gotten for you has been so encouraging. We will review every piece of feedback – positive or negative – and retool for an even better Summer Camp in 2019. Oh, and don't forget, we've still got a few openings for campers as we wind down over the next month!



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.



COMMUNITY CORNER

7/14 – Tucker Cruise-In

5-8 p.m., Main Street

Come check out some cool cars or show off your own at the Cruise-In, held the second Saturday of every month from April to September. Awards will be presented at 8 o'clock.



7/16 – Got Magic with Jeff McClure

6-7 p.m., Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library

Parents and children will enjoy this offering in the free "Family Nights @ Tucker" Summer series. Magician Jeff McClure brings a blend of street magic, illusions, balloon tricks and more!

7/21 – 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.

7/5, 7/12, 7/19, 7/26 – Tucker Farmer's Market

4-8 p.m., Freemason's Square

Come find fresh fruits and veggies, artisan breads, prepared foods and handmade goods. While you're there, enjoy live music, children's activities and fellowship with Tucker neighbors.

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JUMPIN' IN JUNE

The City of Tucker was bustling with fun community activities throughout the month of June. On June 8, the City kicked off its TKR Summer of Fun events series as hundreds turned out for "Movies on Main". There were plenty of green thumbs on hand June 20 as the DeKalb Master Gardeners hosted a ribbon cutting for the new and improved Tucker Butterfly Garden. Things got exotic inside Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library on June 25 as Parrot Productions delighted children and parents with their bird show.



Watch for our August "Back to School" issue featuring:

- Interviews with the new principals in our Tucker Cluster schools
- Local students hoping their project will change the world
- Meet our new Social Media Coordinator, by far the tallest member of Team Tucker



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