



INTUCKER

DECEMBER 2019 | VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 12



POTHOLE PROCESS

FROM REPORTING TO TRACKING AND FILLING POTHoles, TUCKER HAS A PROCESS. HERE'S AN INSIDE LOOK AT HOW IT HAPPENS.

EDITOR'S NOTE



One of the things I most closely associate with the month of December is tradition. Some of our strongest and longest lasting traditions happen this month. In my family, it's a visit to Santa, Christmas Eve church service and waking up bright and early on Christmas morning to open up presents. I'm sure you have your own traditions, too.

One of the Tucker traditions that has become a favorite of mine is delivering Christmas cards to area seniors. Three years ago, the City put up its very first booth at "Christmas on Main". As we sat around wondering what we could do to engage the community at that booth, the idea came to us to have kids make cards for folks in assisted living facilities. We got the construction paper, markers, and stickers together and the results were wonderful. When we delivered those cards to residents at what is now Phoenix Senior Living, they were delighted. There's something about a child's artwork that brings a smile to any face, especially those who are parents, grandparents or, in some cases, great-grandparents.

After last year's rainout, we will be back to continue this tradition at what is now "Holiday on Main" on December 14. Please make sure to stop by our city booth and show off your artistic skills, or lack thereof. Whatever you create is sure to brighten the day of a senior citizen living here in Tucker!



MATT HOLMES
INTUCKER EDITOR

IN THIS ISSUE



From the Cover

Flat tires and altered alignments are just some of the problems caused by roads riddled with potholes. But Tucker has a special way of tracking complaints and getting potholes filled. Read up about it on page 12.



Work-Based Learning

Tucker students are taking a unique and profitable approach to learning; an approach that takes them outside of the classroom. Hear how they're getting real life experience en route to a diploma on page 6.



On the Beat

It's no secret that our Tucker Precinct police are special. On page 5, meet one detective whose athletic prowess makes him a Hall of Famer.



Business Boom

Northlake Mall is starting an ambitious new redevelopment that could change the face of the region. On page 10, hear from the men behind the project and find out how they're working with the City to bring a new mix of office, retail and restaurants to Northlake.



Ask Rip

Tucker's Parks and Recreation staff is right in the thick of their second annual Advent Acts of Service campaign. On page 15, find out how you can get involved and spread some kindness in the community too.



INTUCKER

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 12

INTUCKER is a monthly publication of the City of Tucker, Georgia.

MMXIX. All rights reserved.

Printed by AtlantaPrintandMail.com, Inc.

From the Mayor

A few months ago, I used this space to discuss some of the triumphs of our City of Tucker Code Enforcement Department. Without rehashing that column, I want to reiterate that these dedicated professionals have made a difference in upholding our Code and, in the process, have dramatically advanced the City's first duty, which is to maintain the health, safety and welfare of our residents and business owners. The other important outcome of their work is maintaining the environmental, aesthetic and property values within our neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

Every city has a municipal code that defines the rules for living and working there. We can always adjust those codes based in part on the desires of our citizens, but whatever the code is, every city has to have code enforcement officers to enforce the code, the same way we have law enforcement officers to enforce the law.

Our Communications team for the City monitors social media all the time, as one of many ways we seek to understand issues around the City, and how we are doing at addressing them. There are a couple of common misperceptions that I'd like to address. One is that our Code Enforcement team is "targeting" certain areas, as it's been put. That's not the case at all, and never will be. In almost every case, our officers are responding to complaints from the community. If they give you a

citation for having tires stacked in your carport, it's usually because one of your neighbors filed a Code complaint. It is also true that in the course of their duties, our officers sometimes see a clear violation, and when they do, it's their duty to address it. It's their job, and their obligation.

Another common misunderstanding is that Code Enforcement is a moneymaker for Tucker, and that we are writing citations just to pad the City coffers. With all due respect, I have to chuckle at that because, as anyone who has a hand in our budget knows, Code Enforcement actually loses revenue. During Fiscal Year 2019, we collected roughly \$70,000 in Code Enforcement fines. Between renting a courtroom, buying court software, paying judges, solicitors and interpreters, our expenses were nearly \$90,000. And that doesn't include paying our full-time Court Clerk and Assistant Court Clerk. We spend that money to achieve the goals I mentioned above about protecting our citizens, our environment, and our property values. So next time you see someone write on social media that our Code Enforcement team is abusive or only in it to make money for the City, you can copy and paste this paragraph and let them know how it really works.

One other number that's very important to all of us is 70 percent. That's the percentage of our Code

Enforcement citations that were resolved in Fiscal Year 2019 without a fine being paid. And a citation is not usually issued until a courtesy notice has been given, and the person has had a chance to remedy the issue, in which case the matter will be dropped. If they don't get it taken care of in a reasonable period of time, these residents or business owners receive a citation and then have more time to address it before being required to appear in court. And if they appear in court and prove the violation has been taken care of, it's usually dropped then. It's only after all of that, that a person would typically be fined for a violation. That's the way Code Enforcement should function – give everyone a chance to do the right thing, then take the strongest measures against the relative few who simply won't uphold our community's standards.

We are lucky to have the team that we do here in Tucker. I could sing their praises for many more paragraphs, but understand that they have a hard job. As in any city, there will be people who are angry at Code Enforcement. But I assure you that many more people are grateful for their work and the impact it has on our community. I know I am.

FRANK AUMAN
MAYOR OF TUCKER

Need to make a Code Enforcement complaint? Do it online at tuckerga.gov!

City Council Update



Tucker's Mayor and City Council held several meetings and work sessions during the month of November, discussing and voting on some important issues.

On November 5, they held a special called meeting to get project updates from staff, as well as to hold an executive session discussion about real estate matters.

November 12 saw a work session and meeting with relatively light agendas. Among the items that saw action were 5-0 votes to approve a contract for an internal auditor and to approve the Mayor's appointment of Bob Espy to a vacant seat on the City's Zoning Board of Appeals.

Council wrapped its business on November 25, hosting a work session followed by a meeting. Much of the crowd was on hand to hear a rezoning petition that seeks to create 63 single family homes on about 22.5 acres at the intersection of Midvale and Lavista Roads. That issue came before Council on a first read, meaning no action was taken. A second read, public hearing and vote are tentatively scheduled for January 14. They also held a public hearing for a special land use permit (SLUP) for a personal care

home at 5002 Chamblee Tucker Road. That will come up for a second read and vote on December 9.

Items that saw action at the November 25 meeting included:

- a unanimous vote to approve a mid-year budget amendment
- approval of a contract to install flashing lights in school zones at Tucker Middle and Tucker High School
- approval of a contract to install traffic signal detection on Mountain Industrial Boulevard

The next City Council meeting will be December 9 at 7 p.m. at the City Hall Annex (4228 First Avenue).



Mayor Auman presented a proclamation in honor of Small Business Saturday to three Tucker business owners on November 25.

DATES TO KNOW

December 2

Downtown Development Authority

December 9

City Council

December 11

Community Council

December 18

Municipal Court

December 24-25

Christmas holiday observed
(All City buildings closed)



TUCKER SOCIAL



 **Nextdoor**

ON THE BEAT *with Lt. Schoeppner*

Lt. D.G. Schoeppner is Tucker's liaison to the DeKalb County Police Department and can be followed at [facebook.com/dgschoeppner](https://www.facebook.com/dgschoeppner) or emailed at dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov



It's not uncommon for police agencies to brag about the high quality of the men and women who serve. Back in the mid-19th century, New Yorkers coined the phrase "New York's Finest" to describe their police officers. We in the DeKalb Police Department also take

great pride in our people who put on the uniform and take the great responsibility of putting others before themselves. This month we're going to take a moment to recognize Detective Terry McCord and how he is a shining example.

Detective McCord originally hails from Anniston, Alabama, where he graduated high school in 1988. He studied criminal justice at Troy State University and was a member of the school's basketball team. His exploits on the basketball court were major contributors to the school winning the NCAA Division Two South Regional Title in 1991 and finishing as runners-up in the Division Two National Tournament just two years later.

In 2016, Detective McCord was inducted into the Troy State University Hall of Fame. Terry's former coach, Don Maestri, said of him at his induction, "He always wanted to be the best. He always wanted to be on top as a player and as a teammate. The strongest thing was his leadership skills. He's the one that led us to the national championship game, and he made everybody better on that team."

After college, Terry went on to play basketball professionally in Europe. After five years playing for teams in Luxembourg, Austria, Hungary, Italy and Lebanon, his professional basketball career came to a close. It was at that point that Terry moved back to Alabama and took a job as a campus police officer at Jacksonville State University.

In January of 2002, Detective McCord decided to move from the small-town campus police department to one of the largest agencies in the southeast, the DeKalb County Police Department. I was in the Police Academy myself when Terry came through the department's abbreviated academy for officers moving in from other agencies. Once out on the road, Detective McCord started his career in North Precinct. He was a patrolman there until he was selected to be a detective in their property crimes unit in 2008. When North Precinct closed in 2014, Detective McCord was transferred to Tucker where he has been investigating our property crimes ever since.



Detective Terry McCord
(Credit: DeKalb Police Department)

Sometimes when people look at police officers, they have a hard time thinking of them as regular people. Detective McCord, like many of us, had an entirely different life before he put on the gun and badge. And that diversity of experience makes our department stronger.

LIFE LESSONS

TUCKER HIGH STUDENTS GAIN REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE IN WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM

Erica Bower walks the halls of Tucker High School just like any other senior. As she counts down the days to graduation, Erica's mind jumps between any number of topics: friends, classes, extracurricular activities, her after-school job. Unlike many of her classmates, Erica is double-dipping with that after-school job; she's getting paid and receiving class credits as part of Tucker High's Work-Based Learning Program.

"I had a friend who did Work-Based Learning last year," Erica says. "You get away from school and make money, so your parents don't have to pay for everything."

To make it work, Erica attends classes, then leaves school by 1:30 to head across the street to her part-time job at Rosenfeld Jewelers. She works about a dozen hours a week doing everything from paperwork to getting hands-on with customers.

"I hate sitting in class, trying to focus. Here at work, I'm always doing something, moving around," Erica says. "One of my weaknesses is I'm actually really shy, so when I had to call customers and talk to them, I was so nervous. It's been a big confidence builder."

"You get away from school and make money, so your parents don't have to pay for everything."

Work-Based Learning is a program available to juniors and seniors around the State of Georgia, and it has been especially

popular here in DeKalb County. Jobs can range from working at Chick-fil-A to Stone Mountain and even daycare centers. According to the DeKalb County School District website, "Work-Based Learning Programs are structured educational experiences that integrate classroom learning (school-based) with productive, structured work experiences (work-based), related to a student's career goal."

To stay in the program and have the chance to gain class credit, students must keep their grades up in academic classes, meet the school's behavioral standards and demonstrate basic job skills like punctuality. The program is not designed to be a substitute for college, but some students have found an early entry into the workforce to be the best way to launch their post-high school career.

Tania Vasquez is one of those students. A 2017 graduate of Tucker High, Tania

entered the Work-Based Learning Program as a junior. She took on a part-time after-school job in customer service. It was a situation that forced her to step outside of her comfort zone.

"I'm a very shy person," Tania recalls, "but when I was here in the store, relating to customers, people started coming back and asking for me. I shocked myself working in the sales department."

After more than a year in the Work-Based Learning Program, she had a big decision to make: head to college or get a full-time job. When she chose the latter, she says her family was immediately supportive.

"My parents saw how iffy I was about a career path. They said, 'She's making money and learning. This is okay,'" Tania recounts, adding, "I don't like studying. [The job] is hands on. You're not sitting in a classroom and reading textbooks."

In a case of everything coming full circle, Tania's boss told her earlier this year that the company was taking on a Work-Based Learning student. He asked her to mentor the young lady, showing her the ropes and getting her comfortable with a role in customer service.

That student was Erica Bower.

"I teach Erica to be open and welcoming to customers," Tania says of her Rosenfeld co-worker. "I want her to feel like I'm

her friend and she can come to me with anything."

"I don't like studying. [The job] is hands on. You're not sitting in a classroom and reading textbooks."

Erica admits that she has no plans to follow in her mentor's footsteps and turn her Work-Based Learning assignment into a full-fledged career. She's more interested in college life, where she hopes to play soccer and study biology. But, as she weighs her college options, she says there's one more very tangible takeaway from the experience.

"I didn't know anything about jewelry. It's been really fun and interesting learning about gems," she says. "If nothing else, this has opened my eyes to when I get married...now I know you get the good engagement ring."

Thanks to the Work-Based Learning Program, she and her classmates are also learning that some of the best education can happen outside of the walls of the school.

TUCKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WIN STATE HONOR



Livsey and Smoke Rise Elementary Schools have reason to celebrate after they were named Title I Distinguished and Rewards Schools. The recognition comes from the Georgia Department of Education to honor significant progress in improving student achievement or progress in closing the achievement gap. This honor began in 2018 and Livsey is one of only three DeKalb County schools to be recognized in both 2018 and 2019. The recent College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores bore out the progress at each school: Livsey received a 91.3, while Smoke Rise earned an 89.2, both well exceeding county and state averages.



TUCKER CLUSTER

Updates & News

Important Dates

- December 9 - Board of Education Meeting
- December 20 - Last Day of First Semester
- December 23-31 – Winter Break
(Schools closed)



THE BRAG SHEET

Brockett Elementary

• In honor of Literacy Month, Brockett held several activities in November. The One School, One Book campaign involved the entire school reading the same book together. There was a family literacy night where parents and families were able to participate in literacy-based activities and make learning games that could be used at home. To end the month, they had a Book Character Dress Up Day where staff and students came dressed as their favorite book character.

Idlewood Elementary

• The Mustang community came together last month for another successful school beautification day. This dedicated group of volunteers is giving time on the weekends to make improvements to the school's interior and exterior.

Livsey Elementary

• On November 21, Livsey had its first STEM Night with over 100 families in attendance. Livsey partnered with STEM for Every Child and representatives from Microsoft, Tucker High School RoboTigers, Fernbank Science Center, SubZero Nitrogen, and even had NASA Mars Rovers on hand.

Midvale Elementary

• Midvale hosted an International Baccalaureate (IB) Teacher Work Day on November 5, giving their staff and teachers from

Brockett Elementary a chance to learn teaching techniques and gain new insights into globally-minded education.

Smoke Rise Elementary

• The Georgia Department of Education posted its 2019 College and Career Ready Performance Index Report (CCRPI) scores last month. The scores, which reflect school performance for the 2018-'19 school year, show Smoke Rise jumping to an 89.2, well above the state average.

Tucker Middle

• Tucker Middle students placed in the state's top five middle level FBLA teams for their recruitment video. They are now preparing for regional competition and hope to bring more awards back to TMS.

• The TMS Counseling Department received a \$1,500 Walmart Giving Community Grant from store #3071; Tucker Square Shopping Center. Dr. Moon, head counselor, submitted a grant with the goal of providing Tucker Middle student ambassadors with research-based training and resources to recognize bias and its negative impact on the school environment.

Tucker High

• The Tiger cheer squad will host a fundraiser movie night on December 5. The event starts at 6 p.m. and is open to all ages from the community.

Want to know about all the great things happening in our Tucker Cluster schools? Check out our new schools webpage at tuckerga.gov/schools.

DERIK WEST

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH



"I would like to nominate Derik West for *InTucker Magazine's* Citizen of the Month. Derik has always been an active supporter of the City, he attends all of the volunteer run festivals on Main Street and the City events, too. If there is a clean-up day or any opportunity to serve his community, Derik is there. Since incorporating the City over three years ago, he has attended almost every City Council meeting and stays abreast of all the current issues. Derik was a graduating member of the first University of Government Affairs in Tucker, Class of 2019 and more recently, I had the privilege of working side by side with him on the Tucker City Charter Review Committee.

The committee was made up of nine residents from all over the City, nominated by the Mayor, City Council and state lawmakers. We were tasked with no easy feat of reviewing the City's charter and coming up with possible changes to recommend to the Mayor and Council. Derik was a delight to work with and, when asked to chair the committee, he graciously accepted. As the Chair of the committee, he diligently worked to keep us on point and moving forward, while at the same time making it an enjoyable process.

Derik truly loves the City of Tucker and lives the Tucker Way with his whole heart. He is excited about the growth and potential that the City has and is proud to be a resident and play a positive role. I am so proud to nominate Derik as our Citizen of the Month. He is a great role model to all of us."

Nomination by Rebekah Coblentz

BUSINESS BOOM

by John McHenry, Community and Economic Development Director



In 1971, Northlake Mall opened with much fanfare with then Governor

Jimmy Carter in

attendance. With a million square feet of retail space, it was the first three-anchor mall – then Sears, Davison’s and J.C. Penney – in DeKalb County with fountains, skylights, a food court and 100,000 visitors on opening day. Over time the retail landscape dramatically shifted with more competition from newer regional malls and the advent of online shopping; all leading to a loss in national tenants and disinvestment in the property.

Fortunately, in 2016 an innovative team out of Dallas, Texas bought the struggling property with a vision of retrofitting the half-empty space into a dynamic, mixed-use development. ATR Corinth Partners, led by Tony Ruggeri and Frank Mihalopoulos, specializes in turning underutilized malls into dynamic centers and has a successful track record of reimagining malls throughout the country. By changing the tenant mix and adding updated amenities, they bring jobs, investment and a new sense of community to their redevelopment projects.

In June of this year, the Northlake Mall was annexed into the City of Tucker, an area that was a part of Tucker’s original cityhood map. This was recently followed by the exciting news that Emory Healthcare will be the newest Northlake anchor tenant, leasing 224,000 square feet of space. Emory Healthcare’s initial plans

include corporate administrative services occupying the former Sears building with an option for more space in the future.

“Northlake gives us the opportunity to centralize corporate support services in one location for more than 1,600 employees while providing the additional benefit of direct access to on-site amenities like restaurants and retail,” said Mike Mason, Emory Healthcare Vice President of Operations.

This approach of introducing a premier office tenant first has worked successfully at ATR Corinth’s other projects. As Tony Ruggeri explained, “Emory’s presence will add more daytime traffic to an already vibrant residential community surrounding the project. It’s a winning formula to support further retail and restaurant development.”

Ruggeri and Mihalopoulos shared that Northlake Mall was a great redevelopment opportunity with its excellent access to the Perimeter, a strong residential market and engaged neighboring community groups.

“Our lease with Emory signifies the start of reimagining the former mall as ‘Northlake,’ a dynamic mixed-use development incorporating office, medical, retail and restaurants,” Mihalopoulos said. “We have just begun what will be a project that reconnects the community with Northlake as a place to spend time with family and friends.”

For Matthew Lee, Executive Director of the Tucker-Northlake CID, this is the culmination of many years of hard work by both the developers and community leaders.

“I can’t tell you how impressed I am with Tony and Frank, not only for their expertise and vision, but in how they’ve worked diligently with the City of Tucker, DeKalb County, and the business community in developing winning solutions for their property and the district,” Lee said.

“With an additional hotel, apartments, remodeled class A office space, and retail development underway at other locations along Northlake Parkway, it should be clear to everyone that the Northlake renaissance has officially begun.”

While additional leases are not being announced at this time, Northlake will see more office space, new retail and a mix of sit-down, fast casual, and quick-service restaurant concepts. Construction of the retail portion of the project is slated to begin in early 2020. JCPenney and Macy’s will remain as anchor tenants and will be open during construction.

“I’m so proud of this community and how we partner to spur positive change,” said Tucker Mayor Frank Auman. “The redevelopment of Northlake is just one more example of the success story that is our city.”

It promises to be a long process, but a dynamic one that will transform the Northlake area of Tucker into one of the most exciting redeveloped areas in metro Atlanta. I will keep you updated on all the exciting progress in this space, but keep an eye out as you pass Northlake over the coming months; you’ll see history made right before your eyes.

Keep tabs on the Tucker business scene at tuckerga.gov/biz

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

PEACHTREE IMMEDIATE CARE



Healthcare is an ever-changing field and one of the newest concepts in healthcare, Peachtree Immediate Care, is coming to one of Tucker's busiest intersections.

"It is right here next to Chipotle, across from Chick-fil-A, lots of traffic, lots of visibility," says Bill Miller, CEO of CRH Healthcare, which owns Peachtree Immediate Care.

Miller is correct; the intersection of Lawrenceville Highway and Hugh Howell Road sees thousands of cars each day. For years, however, those drivers passed by a weathered, run-down building that once housed Jack's Package Store. The building was completely renovated last year, and Peachtree Immediate Care signed on as a tenant earlier this year. Suddenly, a longtime eyesore was gone, and, in its place, a new, state-of-the-art medical facility was opened.

It was such an improvement to the commercial area that dozens of business leaders and elected officials turned out for a ribbon cutting celebration on November 12 to welcome the new location.

"It's really a great opportunity for us to show off what we can do, not only in the facility and the location, but then also our team that will serve the community here," Miller explains.

Since 2013, six different brands have been consolidated into the Peachtree Immediate Care brand, Miller says. They've since partnered with Emory Healthcare in the Atlanta area to be the urgent care provider for Emory. Peachtree Immediate Care now features more than 30 clinics across the metro Atlanta area. Their goal is to fill the void for patients who can't get an appointment with a primary care doctor, yet have a low acuity need that may not be suitable for a visit to the emergency room.

"Today's healthcare environment is changing all the time and we know the difficulties of it," Miller says. "It's on TV, it's talked about all the time and we think urgent care is part of the solution, not part of the problem."

"We say we want to deliver the perfect patient experience every time and that starts before you walk in the door. That starts on the web, that starts if you call us and you're looking for a place that's nearby your house. We want to be there and be easy to find, easy to check in online before you get here."

Peachtree Immediate Care is located at 4327 Hugh Howell Road in Tucker. Patients can make an appointment online at www.peachtreemed.com.

GETTING THEIR FILL:

A LOOK INSIDE THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT FIX TUCKER'S PROBLEM POTHOLES

Staff at Tucker's City Hall receive complaints about potholes weekly, sometimes daily. It's much less frequent than before the City's SPLOST-funded road resurfacing program launched in 2018, but still, potholes are a way of life in any municipality and Tucker is no exception.

What many may not know, however, is that unlike some other cities, Tucker does not fill its own potholes. As a newer city with a very limited public works function, Tucker relies on its partnership with DeKalb County to take care of things like potholes and broken catch basins.

With winter approaching and colder temperatures upon us, this is the time of year when pothole-related complaints skyrocket. Why is that? And how do you report a pothole? More importantly, how are they getting fixed? Consider this your primer for pothole season in Tucker.



DeKalb Deputy COO of Infrastructure Ted Rhineart and city of Tucker engineer Ken Hildebrandt (center) lead a monthly meeting to address potholes and other issues within the city limits.

FEELING THE FREEZE

Although Georgia doesn't see sub-freezing temperatures nearly as often as other parts of the United States, wintertime can still get pretty nippy in the Peach State. That's enough to open up some big problems on our roads.

"When it's rained and we get temperatures below freezing overnight, it's an invitation for potholes," says Tucker's City Engineer Ken Hildebrandt. "That water will settle into a crack or a small gap in the roadway and when it freezes, the ice expands and makes that crack bigger. Before you know it, you've got a pothole."

Complicating things, cold temperatures can limit the effectiveness of certain pothole repairs, meaning some of the bigger jobs have to wait until spring comes along to thaw things out.

WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

While the City of Tucker does not fix potholes, there is staff on standby to take and process those complaints. Drivers who notice a pothole or other road problem can simply email info@tuckerga.gov or call (678) 597-9040 to talk with the City's Citizen Responder.

"We're glad for you to reach out, but it's so important that we get good information," explains Citizen Responder Jennifer Downer. "The more detail you can offer about a specific block or intersection, even an estimate on the size of the pothole, will help us to expedite getting that pothole filled."

The one thing that won't help get that pothole fixed: complaining on social media. A formal complaint or notification must be filed with the City or the County to get

a work order started. You can't do that through Facebook.



TEAMING UP

So, if Tucker doesn't fill its own potholes, how do they ever get fixed? The City has an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with DeKalb County for repairs and maintenance of our roads. A complaint comes in to the City, they pass it on to DeKalb's Public Works team and that work order enters the queue to get fixed. From a city perspective, accountability is key.

"One of the reasons we've been successful is that we have monthly meetings with leadership from DeKalb Public Works and Watershed," says Tucker's Superintendent Sam Durrance. "We sit down around the table and review every single work order, if needed. We understand their challenges of serving a 750,000-person county, while they understand our need to get action for our 36,000 folks. In the end, there's a lot of give and take and it's led to a solid partnership."

The IGA on road repair is one of several service agreements between the City and County (see top right).

WORKING TOGETHER

IGAs BETWEEN TUCKER AND DEKALB CO.

- 911 Communication Services
- Ad Valorem Tax Billing and Collection
- Election Services
- Fire Rescue Services
- HOST and EHOST
- Maintenance Repair Improvement of Roads and Bridges
- Maintenance Repair Improvement of Stormwater Systems and Facilities
- Police Services
- Sidewalk and Streetscape Improvements
- Solid Waste Management Services
- SPLOST 2017



There are two active projects you will notice as you drive around town. Phase II of the Tucker Streetscape (above) is underway along First Avenue. This project is being completed in partnership with DeKalb County. The Idlewood Road sidewalk project (below) is being completed between Lawrenceville Highway and Tucker Middle School.



TEAM TUCKER *Spotlight*

ANGELA BROOKS, BUSINESS OUTREACH COORDINATOR

What are your responsibilities as a Business Outreach Coordinator?

My responsibilities include serving as a staff resource to the Downtown Development Authority, working on an effective retention and expansion program for Tucker businesses, and engaging with existing businesses to help support their growth and vibrancy. I will also be helping to plan and organize our annual Manufacturing Day in the spring.

What was your background before coming to Tucker?

Most recently, I served as a public information officer for one of Atlanta's Watershed Management Consent Decree projects. Over the years, I have been honored to have worked for some other great companies including Comcast, BellSouth (now AT&T), HD Supply and Bechtel Engineering. In all my roles, I served in some type of communications or community engagement capacity.

What have you enjoyed so far about this job

Actually, I can't think of anything I haven't enjoyed so far! I work with people who conduct themselves in a professional manner and who are great at what they

do. They have given me a warm welcome and brought me into the fold. I get to meet someone new from the community almost every day. I go home every night having learned something new, and that's exciting. And speaking of going home, the icing on the cake is my totally awesome commute to and from Stone Mountain. It has put a new spring in my step.

What are you learning about Tucker's business community?

There are lots of hidden gems... quaint shops and restaurants. I had no idea there was so much going on here. I lived in Stone Mountain for 16 years and my commute always took me through Tucker, but I must admit, I rarely took the opportunity to explore all that it has to offer. I'm in the process of shifting as much of my routine spending as possible to Tucker businesses.

How do you see Tucker as being positioned for business growth and success in the years ahead?

Having solid leadership is critical for success, and I think the City of Tucker has teams of professionals in place who understand the nuances and complexities of building the Tucker of tomorrow.



Off the Wall

What is your favorite holiday tradition??

Opening our presents at 12:01 a.m. We've done that for as long as I can remember.

Tell us one thing your co-workers don't know about you...

One of my favorite things to tell co-workers is that I'm from Cuba. Typically, they are immediately interested and ask about my life there. Then I smile, come clean and tell them I'm actually from Cuba, ALABAMA!

Who is the most interesting person you've come across in this job?

This is a tough one, but I'd have to say Councilman Matt Robbins. He was one of the first people I met, outside of our team, and he has a great spirit about him.

“ASK RIP” *Answers Your Park Questions*



Rip Robertson is the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Tucker. He brings to the job 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.

As we begin to wind down the year, the activity is actually picking up here at the Tucker Recreation Center. I wrote last month about the renovations to our gymnasium and how you'll soon hear the dribbling of basketballs and squeaks of sneakers emanating from the gym. This week, we will get the floor installed, meaning we are ready to host our first-ever Tucker Rec youth basketball league. If you have a boy or girl of any skill level ages 5-12, I hope you'll go on our Parks website (www.tuckerga.gov/parks) and find registration under the "League Sports" tab. If you don't have a child, don't worry! We are looking at other ways to use this great space. We learned in our Parks Master Plan process that there is a demand for space for adult basketball. I have also talked with the folks at the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association about bringing wheelchair basketball tournaments to our facility. Beyond just hoops, we plan to host pickleball, volleyball and a number of other sports in this great new space.

For those of you who follow us on social media at www.facebook.com/TuckerParksRec, you know about our second annual Advent Acts of Service campaign. It started on November 25 and will continue right up until Christmas. Each day this month, there will be a different act; some intended to serve you, and some intended for you to serve others. You can keep up at www.tuckerga.gov/actsofservice and I hope you will post photos of these acts to your social media pages with the hashtag #tkrcares. I also want you to know that we'll have some new procedures coming up in 2020 at the Tucker Rec Center. We're going to be implementing a check-in system for safety and accountability at the Rec Center during the first quarter of the year. This will help us in our efforts to create



a safe facility and allow us to better serve our participants and program offerings. More details will be coming as the program is prepared and implemented. Feel free to ask any of our staff at the Rec Center.

Finally, I want to wish you and yours the happiest of holiday seasons. For my wife and I, it will be our first Christmas with our new granddaughter Lilah. While we take a few days to enjoy that special time with her, I hope that you, too, have time with your families and the ones you love. It truly is the most wonderful time of the year.



TUCKER Community Corner



**12/7 – Chorale II
Holiday Concert**
4 p.m., 5073 Lavista Road

First Baptist Church of Tucker will be full of Christmas spirit with the holiday concert “Songs in the Air”. Selections run the gamut from the early English Sussex Carol to the modern favorite You’re A Mean One, Mr. Grinch! Admission is free, and donations are welcome.

**12/12 – Tucker
High School Winter
Concert**
6 p.m., 5036 Lavista Road

The community is invited to see and hear Tucker’s young talent on display. This night of festive music will include the THS Chorus, Orchestra, Band and Winter Guard. Admission is free and a \$5 donation will enter you to win a THS Band Holiday Gift Basket.

**12/14 – Holiday on
Main**
4-7 p.m., Main Street

It’s that time of year again! The Old Town Tucker Merchants’ Association (OTTMA) and Tucker Farmer’s Market is hosting this annual celebration. Enjoy craft and food vendors, bounce houses for the kids and watch Santa’s yearly trip down Main Street on a fire truck.

**12/31 – Tucker New
Year’s Eve Family
Festival**
4-8 p.m., Main Street

This is a new, volunteer-driven event which promises to help Tucker ring in the new year in a way it’s never been done before. Expect live bands, interactive activities for children and a kid-friendly countdown to 2020. Make sure to bring your own chairs and blankets!