



# INTUUCKER



NOVEMBER 2019 | VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 11



## COUNTING ON YOU

SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT CENSUS 2020  
COULD MEAN BIG BUCKS FOR TUCKER

## EDITOR'S NOTE



When talking with out-of-towners, one of the questions I frequently get about Tucker is “what’s the

population?” The answer I always give is “about 35,000”. Pretty soon, I’m going to have to adopt a new answer.

As you see on the cover of this month’s *INTUCKER*, and as you’ll read on page 14, we are coming up on a Census year. The Census taking won’t actually happen until next spring, but Tucker’s city staff and leadership have been working for months now in conjunction with Census representatives to look at the best ways to make sure that all Tucker residents are counted.

Will that population go up or down? We, like just about everyone else in metro Atlanta, are expecting to see an increase in this Census count. But ours could be significant. Why? For starters, we voted to become a city four years ago this week, a move that has only stoked interest in Tucker. Our Tucker Cluster schools offer some innovative educational experiences not found in many other parts of the County, or the State for that matter (page 6). And Tucker’s got some top-notch realtors taking advantage of these selling points, helping families to relocate here, as opposed to other cities (page 10).

As we get closer to the official Census kickoff next year, expect to hear plenty about it from your city Communications staff. Help us spread the word to neighbors to have them fill out their Census forms and make sure every resident is counted here in the City of Tucker!

**MATT HOLMES**  
INTUCKER EDITOR

## IN THIS ISSUE



### From the Cover

You’re sure to hear plenty in the coming months about the U.S. Census. Where did this tradition come from? Why is it important that every Tucker household complete the survey? Find all the answers on page 14.



### Training for the Future

It may look like a simple classroom, but the technology room at Tucker’s Midvale Elementary School is getting kids ready for their role in the 21st century. Meet the man who’s “teaching tech” on page 6.



### Business Boom

Tucker is seeing an influx of new families moving in and adopting this as their new hometown. On page 10, John McHenry introduces us to some of the real estate agents who are introducing newcomers to Tucker.



### Home Grown

He grew up in Tucker, graduated from Tucker High and now he’s come back home to serve his city. On page 13, meet our Land Development Inspection Manager David Schmid.



### Ask Rip

Tucker Recreation Center has undergone some changes in recent months and now its new-look gymnasium is almost ready for action. On page 15, Rip discusses how kids will be the first ones to take advantage of the new space.



# INTUCKER

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# From the Mayor

Back in March, I used this space to explain what a Charter Commission was and why Tucker was appointing one. In a nutshell, it is a nine-person volunteer panel tasked with reading and evaluating our City Charter to see what works, what doesn't, and what, if any, changes should be made. It's a process that was required by the state legislature in the bill that led to the creation of Tucker.

The members of Tucker's Charter Commission were appointed one each by every state legislator who represents a part of Tucker, plus one by me as the Mayor, and one by our City Council as a whole. The Commission worked diligently over the past several months to review every word of our City Charter, to receive input from the public, and then to offer their recommendations. Here are some of the things they think we should consider changing:

- **Abolishing term limits**

There are pros and cons on both sides of the term limits issue. According to our Charter Commission's research, we are the only city in DeKalb County with term

limits for the City Council. Three DeKalb cities have term limits for the mayor.

- **Adding at-large council seats**

Tucker currently has six City Council seats, two voted on and residing in each of the three districts. This change would make one of the two seats in each district "at-large", meaning the councilmember would have to reside in the district, but would be voted on by the City's entire voting population.

- **Amending the budget formulation calendar**

Under our current charter, the City Manager has to present a budget proposal to the City Council by March of each year. This budget proposal is often full of question marks, as we don't have a clear picture of revenues and needed expenditures for the year ahead. The Charter Commission is recommending we move this deadline to May of each year.

These are just a few of their recommendations, which are included in their report, and available on the City's website. I want to thank the

Charter Commission for the work they put in. It was sometimes tedious and sometimes contentious, but always a valuable service to the City and its citizens. Secondly, please be clear that these are recommendations. They do not take effect without action by either the state legislature or the City Council. For our part, we want your feedback. If and when we take up individual recommendations for action, we will be spreading the word about public hearings and other opportunities for you to weigh in on each one. And, of course, you can also find our email addresses on the City website any time you'd like to offer your input.

These recommended changes apply to all of us who live, work, play and pray in Tucker. As more information comes out on the full Charter Commission report, I hope you'll read it and let us know what you would like to see happen here in Tucker.

**FRANK AUMAN**

# City Council Update



Tucker's Mayor and City Council held a pair of work sessions and meetings during the month of October, deciding on issues ranging from code amendments to land use cases. At the meeting on October 14, Council voted 5-1 to amend the City Code to prohibit sharable powered mobility devices. Those devices, commonly referred to as e-scooters and e-bikes, have been prohibited in many other cities based on safety concerns. Council then voted 6-0 to approve an ordinance dealing with prohibition of public alcoholic beverage consumption or open container transport. The move was largely clerical, as the code section was adopted last year, but left out of an amendment in codification.

On October 28, the Council voted 5-2 to approve a rezoning and special land use permit (SLUP) for a commercial development with a drive-thru at the intersection of Lawrenceville Highway and Lynburn Drive. The vote will allow a proposed Arby's restaurant with a drive-thru to be constructed as part of an 11,200 square foot shopping center that includes the drive-thru restaurant, as well as another commercial building on the corner. The other land use case on the agenda was a pair of SLUPs to allow fuel pumps and alcohol

sales at 4246 Lavista Road, the current site of a Chevron gas station. The issue came before Council on a first read, with an anticipated vote happening in November.

At that meeting, Council also voted unanimously to approve three action items, including:

- a contract for \$31,742 to install six retractable height basketball goals in the Tucker Recreation Center gym
- a contract for \$346,214 in general fund and SPLOST money for construction of a sidewalk on the east side of Idlewood Road from Lawrenceville Highway to Tucker Middle School
- an agreement for the City to partner with the Tucker Summit Community Improvement District (CID) on the application for \$600,000 in grant money from the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank. This money would go toward design work of improvements at US-78 and Mountain Industrial Boulevard.

The next City Council meeting will be on November 12 at 7 p.m. at the City Hall Annex (4228 First Avenue).

## DATES TO KNOW

**November 5**  
Election Day

**November 11**  
Veterans Day  
(All City buildings closed)

**November 12**  
City Council

**November 13**  
Community Council

**November 19**  
Zoning Board of Appeals

**November 20**  
Municipal Court  
(Environmental)

**November 21**  
Planning Commission

**November 25**  
City Council

**November 27**  
Municipal Court (Offenses)

**November 28-29**  
Thanksgiving 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://facebook.com/dgschoeppner) or emailed at [dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov](mailto:dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov)*



Back in April, we bid farewell to Police Chief Jim Conroy. Over the course of his 30-year career, Chief Conroy worked up through the ranks of the DeKalb County Police Department. He retired after serving as the chief since 2013.

After several months of searching for a replacement, CEO Michael Thurmond has elected to bring in a fresh perspective from another agency. This month, we begin a new chapter with the appointment of Chief Mirtha Ramos.

Chief Ramos comes to us from the Miami-Dade Police Department in Florida. She started with Miami-Dade 22 years ago and, like Chief Conroy, had worked her way up through the ranks to division chief.

As police division chief for both the North Operations and Special Investigations Divisions, Ramos was responsible for leading one of Miami-Dade Police Department's largest divisions, consisting of 1,047 employees in four police districts, including Miami International Airport and the Special Patrol Bureau.

Her responsibilities also included oversight of the Homeland Security, Economic Crimes, Warrants, Narcotics and Governmental Services bureaus. Ramos has successfully fostered positive partnerships with the Miami-Dade community through crime prevention and awareness programs. She was instrumental in growing Miami-Dade's Youth Outreach Unit, a community-oriented policing initiative focused on trust-building, partnerships and crime prevention.

Chief Ramos was introduced to the media by CEO Thurmond and Public Safety Director Jack Lumpkin on October 3 at the Manuel Maloof Building. At this event she

said, "I come here with no agenda. I come here to work with the men and women of the DeKalb County Police Department. I guarantee you that I'm here to serve."

Director Lumpkin said of Chief Ramos, "She has the knowledge, skill, and abilities to develop and sustain strong partnerships that reduce crime. She is the right person at the right time."

Chief Ramos is originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She has earned her bachelor's in criminal justice from Lynn University and her master's in psychology from Penn State. She also attended the International Association of Chiefs of Police Women's Leadership Institute and the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy.



**Mayor Auman greets new DeKalb County Police Chief Mirtha Ramos following a press conference on October 3. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)**

A change in leadership can be turbulent for any organization. Even strong leaders and good workers take time to learn what the other expects. With the wealth of knowledge and the excitement that Chief Ramos brings to DeKalb, I anticipate this transition will be very successful and the start of a great new chapter in the history of our agency.

# TEACHING TECH



## TUCKER'S STEM-CERTIFIED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRAINS STUDENTS FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

If you ask a teacher why they chose that particular profession, you could get any number of answers. For some, it's the opportunity to shape and mold young minds. Others enjoy the challenge of teaching skills that will last students a lifetime. And some are just really passionate about the subject matter that they teach.

Veteran teacher Ricky Board claims all three. Board teaches technology at Midvale Elementary School, the first STEM and IB-certified elementary school in Georgia. A self-proclaimed tech geek, Board began his teaching career a decade ago in Texas before coming to Tucker, where he has taught the past three years. But he was interested in the subject for years before becoming a teacher.

"I'm just fascinated by technology. I always want to know what the future is," he explains.

Board's classroom is an innovation hub.

On one shelf sits a drone. On another, a row of coding robots. There are a handful of 3D printers along the wall, right next to the Promethean Board. And lined up on each of the tables are Chromebooks that students start using as learning tools as early as pre-K.

This technology can be expensive and is ever-changing, so Board and his school's leadership look to a variety of sources for funding. DeKalb County School District budgets some. The Midvale PTA has contributed. Various grants and community partners have helped secure the rest. The result is a learning environment where students develop an aptitude for tech gadgets, while developing themselves as critical thinkers.

"We need to teach our children to think, refine, pivot and problem solve," says Midvale's STEM/IB Coordinator Ashley Little. Little says that the use of technology combined with Problem Based Learning

(PBL) assignments across all curricula are helping Midvale students to thrive in a rigorous academic environment and helping the older students to prepare for the transition to middle school.

While academic preparation is important, Midvale Principal Dr. Tara Dougherty says these tools are critical to developing the students and preparing them to enter the workforce in 10 to 20 years.

"Even if you're not going into a tech-specific field, the skills they're learning will help in any field," she says.

Board agrees, adding, "Technology will be part of any job. All the things we're doing can be applied to different things. I tell kids their future is going to be very different. The jobs they're going to do we probably don't even know about yet."

As for the technology and all those gadgets Board stores in his classroom,

*(continued on page 8)*

# Changing Class: 1989 vs. 2019

Classroom technology has changed significantly over the past generation. Parents today likely wouldn't recognize their old schools if they stepped inside with their young students. Here are four classroom staples that won't be found in any school in 2019.

## OVERHEAD PROJECTOR



Gone are the days of having to dim the lights and take notes off the transparencies on an overhead projector. Today's classrooms feature Promethean Boards, which are large touch screen internet-connected devices that teachers can use to play videos, share notes or keep track of student behavior.

## PULL DOWN MAPS



Just behind the projector screen were rolled up maps that teachers could pull down to show you a unique view of your state, the country or even the world. Not anymore. Today's teachers can dial up Google Earth on the Promethean Board and take you for a virtual walk through the Sahara.

## CARD CATALOG



Remember the Dewey Decimal System? Today's students learn it, but then take that information straight to a computer or Chromebook and look up their favorite authors that way. No more pulling out drawers and flipping through cards to find the book you're looking for.

## EDUCATIONAL GAMES



Remember how crushing it was to get the news that "YOU HAVE DIED OF DYSENTERY"? Bummer, right? Today's students aren't popping in floppy disks to play Oregon Trail. Instead, they use Chromebooks to enjoy web-based, slightly more educationally enriching games. Depending on age, it could be learning to spell on ABC Mouse or mastering math with Prodigy.

they are doing more than just teaching students; they're solving problems and saving money within the school. Dougherty tells a story of a science class that didn't have the right supplies to complete a project.

"We didn't have enough tweezers for our students to do their owl pellet dissection project," she recalls. "So, Mr. Board has the 3D printers. Rather than us taking time and spending money to buy more tweezers, he just printed tweezers for everybody."

Board, an Apple Distinguished Educator, is especially excited about 3D printers and the possibilities associated with that technology. He cites new efforts around the country to create affordable housing by literally printing small homes for just a few thousand dollars. If you're not familiar with 3D printers, he says, you're going to be.

"[They'll] be like microwaves someday," he predicts. "There will be one in every home and they'll be affordable. A couple of years ago, they were selling for over \$2,000. They're \$300 now."

Technology is a favorite class for many Midvale students and the man who leads that class is a favorite teacher. Need proof? Each year during Midvale's Read-a-thon fundraiser, two students who meet a certain monetary goal get to choose a teacher to pie in the face at a schoolwide assembly. Board has gotten a pie each of his

three years at the school.

It's not just that the kids like Board and that he enjoys them (his son is a student at the school), he says he's inspired by watching their minds work and figure things out for the first time.

"I love the creativity of our kids," he explains. "They're not afraid to try. Even if they don't have solutions, that's how you innovate. You never know if you don't try."

"Technology is changing so fast you've got to be able to keep up. That's why it's important at Midvale that we do the process with design and the factors of STEM and IB. These students are finding real world solutions to real world problems. I tell them, 'I want you to learn how to learn.'"

After a lot of work, Midvale gained its STEM certification in 2017. For the past two years, the school has aimed to push the program further, becoming a model for elementary schools across the country. The woman in charge says there is one key element that has helped Midvale thrive.

"A school can only be as good as our teachers are," Dougherty explains. "Giving them autonomy and trusting them, providing what they need is really important."

It's a belief that empowers those teachers, trickles down to the students and is creating young leaders for the 21st century.



# TUCKER CLUSTER UPDATES & NEWS

## Important Dates

- November 4 - Board of Education Meeting
- November 5 - Teacher Workday  
(Schools closed)
- November 25-29 - Thanksgiving Break  
(Schools closed)

## The Brag Sheet

### Brockett Elementary

• Each year, the Brockett PTA has a fundraiser called Penny Wars, where loose change is donated to pay for field trips, sending staff to conferences and other PTA initiatives. This year, Brockett students raised about \$1,500.

### Midvale Elementary

• Midvale has instituted a schoolwide Morning Meeting the last Thursday and Friday of every month. The purpose of these meetings is to focus on social emotional growth and to serve as an extension of the classroom morning meetings. Students utilize that time to make connections between the IB Learner Profile and children around the world who exhibit those attributes.

### Smoke Rise Elementary

• As a reward for students exhibiting behavioral and academic success, they receive weekly access to the Jaguar Den. The Jaguar Den is a classroom that has been transformed into a mini game room consisting of choices like Wii, X-Box, arcade games, basketball shooting, air hockey and more. Smoke Rise Community Association and Tucker's Game Stop have partnered to make the Jaguar Den a reality.

### Tucker Middle

• The TMS PTA raised over \$170 at Spirit Night at The Juicy Crab on October 17.

### Tucker High

• It was a big month for Tucker sports. The high school boys cross country team won the region championship for a fourth consecutive year. Four boys placed in the top five finishers. The girls volleyball team advanced to the state Sweet 16, their best finish since 2012.

# Breaking Ground

Tucker elected officials joined leaders with the DeKalb County School District on October 24 for the groundbreaking celebration of the new Smoke Rise Elementary School.



On October 23, representatives from the Tucker Cluster Council were given a tour of the new Fernbank Elementary School. The tour gave the local education advocates a glimpse into the future, as Smoke Rise will have the same layout as Fernbank.



*DeKalb County School District wants YOUR input on a new school superintendent!*

**Community Meeting for Region 2**

**November 6 at 7 p.m.**

**Tucker High School**

# BUSINESS BOOM

by John McHenry, Community and Economic Development Director



We talk so often about new people and new businesses coming to Tucker. There's a lot to love about our little city, but to make that move, often the buyer needs the assistance of a skilled and knowledgeable real estate agent. Fortunately, we have an abundance of those here in Tucker.

In September, Smoke Rise Agents opened a new office at Heritage Place Office Park at 4500 Hugh Howell Road. The team, owned by Soltys, Inc., recently affiliated with PalmerHouse Properties, a brokerage with over 2,000 agents and 81 teams. The Smoke Rise Agents team features a dozen agents and four more on the support staff. They are continuing to expand their residential practice in Tucker, Smoke Rise, Decatur, Lilburn, Norcross, Snellville, Lawrenceville and Stone Mountain.

ceremony, Mayor Auman noted, "Pat and her team have chosen to move to Tucker and it's a business in the business of moving people to Tucker."

There has also been the move of Georgian Home Realty to 5180 Lavista Road from their Main Street location. The charming former home is owned by local REALTOR Crayton Lankford.

"It's a great location for a real estate office because there are over 20,000 vehicles a day to see them, while still centrally located for the Tucker market," Lankford shared.

As if there wasn't enough happening on the Tucker real estate scene, we're excited to see that one of our very own local agents, Bob Espy, has won the prestigious Georgia 2019 REALTOR® of the Year.

"We are so proud to have Bob Espy as our REALTOR® of the Year," said Chris Jiles, 2019 President of the Georgia REALTORS®.

"Bob is a hard-working man who has committed himself to not only the real estate industry, but to his community as well. He is more than deserving of this honor."

Bob manages Espy Real Estate & Development Center located in the Smoke Rise community, a firm that he started in 2016. He is an active and engaged member of the Tucker community and has donated countless hours to the Tucker Business Association and Tucker Civic Association, as well as playing a prominent role in the success of Tucker Day.

"I could not think of a better place to do business than the City of Tucker!" Bob said. "This has always been home to me. Cityhood has seen Tucker become a major player in the Atlanta

market not only for residential, but commercial and industrial real estate as well. I am very optimistic to see the next chapter in Tucker's future."

As Tucker continues to grow, it is important that we realize the important contributions of these and other real estate professionals working in the Tucker community.

Keep tabs on the Tucker business scene at [tuckerga.gov/biz](http://tuckerga.gov/biz)



"We have agent specialists in each of these geographic areas so that buyers and sellers are getting the best possible service," said Smoke Rise Agents team leader and Tucker City Councilmember Pat Soltys. "We're a tech-savvy, customer-oriented practice with 150 closed sides last year."

The Mayor and other City Councilmembers helped cut the ribbon at the new Heritage Place location on September 26. At the

# DONNA DAVIS

## CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

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Donna Davis (left) and her mother, Christine H. Davis

"It is my pleasure to nominate Donna Davis for Tucker Citizen of the Month.

Donna grew up in Tucker and graduated from Tucker High School. After school, Donna lived in other parts of the country, but Tucker was always home, and she eventually returned to be with family. Since her return she has lived and loved The Tucker Way wholeheartedly. As a member of the Tucker First United Methodist Church, Donna has been able to foster her volunteerism and she currently serves on the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Having been a member of the Tucker Civic Association for years, Donna was elected to the board of TCA four years ago as the treasurer and is currently the Chair of the Membership Committee. Throughout the Cityhood process, Donna was an ardent supporter and volunteer. Donna currently serves on the board of NET Pantry, a free food bank located in the Tucker Recreation Center and is a close liaison with NETWorks Cooperative here in Tucker.

Donna can be found shopping at local stores, the Tucker Farmers Market and attending all the Tucker events throughout the year. Donna often promotes and encourages her fellow residents to come out and enjoy Tucker through the various Tucker-centric Facebook groups.

The City of Tucker is blessed to have such an involved and invested resident like Donna!"

*Nomination by Mimi Sanders*

# BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

# TANDEM BANK



One of the charming aspects of Tucker's Main Street is the abundance of small, locally owned businesses. That has long been epitomized by mainstays like Matthews Cafeteria and Cofer Bros., but the tradition has continued in recent years with additions like Local 7 and The Garden Enthusiast.

You can add another locally owned business to the list, as Tandem Bank is now open at the corner of Main Street and First Avenue. Founded by former Resurgens Bank CEO Charles DeWitt, Tandem is a full-service bank offering service to area residents and small business owners.

"Anyone who's driven down Main Street knows how interesting and unique Tucker is," said DeWitt. "The fact that you can be this close to Atlanta, yet it feels like a separate, successful, welcoming community is remarkable. When we realized we could establish our flagship location at the corner of First Avenue and Main Street, we knew we had something special."

DeWitt operated Resurgens, then located on Lavista Road in the Northlake Festival Shopping Center, during the financial crisis of the late 2000's. It was at that time that financiers stopped opening local banks. Now, with the economy stronger and the stock market at record highs,

Tandem becomes the first local bank to open in Georgia in more than a decade.

"The formation of this new state bank is further evidence that community banking in Georgia has recovered from the depths of the financial crisis," Georgia Department of Banking and Finance Commissioner Kevin Hagler said in a statement.

According to state officials, state-chartered banks provide two-thirds of the banking industry's loans to farms and about half of the banking industry's small loans to businesses.

"At heart we are entrepreneurs, just like many of our customers. So, our success is all about leveraging a good idea, in this case a new type of community bank, into a lasting enterprise that makes a difference in people's lives," DeWitt explains. "We believe local banking is a sign of community strength. Our growth will be fueled by investing in the community and creating a positive customer experience at every turn that inspires people to do business with us."

Tandem Bank is open weekdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. It is located at 2356 Main Street and can be found online at [www.tandem.bank](http://www.tandem.bank).

# TEAM TUCKER *Spotlight*

## DAVID SCHMID, LAND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

### **What do you do as a Land Development Inspection Manager?**

My main focus is to review land development plans (LDPs) to ensure compliance with city, state and federal ordinances and then to inspect the sites once they are permitted to verify compliance with the approved plans. Other responsibilities include determining state waters and buffers, reviewing tree permit applications, and reviewing city Land Development and Environmental ordinances to ensure compliance with state regulations.

### **What kind of education or training do you need to get into this line of work?**

I received most of my certifications and credentials after my college education; I majored in English with plans to go to Law School. My certifications include: Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) and Certified Inspector of Erosion Control (CISEC). I have multiple certifications through the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) which include Inspector, Plan Review, and

Design, and I am a certified instructor for all three.

### **Why is working for the City of Tucker like a homecoming for you?**

It is a literal homecoming because I grew up in Tucker. I went to Brockett Elementary School and Tucker High School when it was still grades 8-12.

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

The thing I enjoy most about my job is that I am helping to protect the waters of the state which I spend a lot of my free time enjoying. I also enjoy the fact that a lot of my work time is in the field walking job sites and communicating with the public.

### **Why is land development inspection important in the grand scheme of things?**

Inspecting development sites for compliance helps to ensure that our state waters will not be adversely affected by the development. The health of the streams, lakes and rivers in Georgia is vital because it is a limited resource. Not only do we drink the water, but it is important to the health of our forests, our crops, wildlife and recreation.



## *Off the Wall*

### **Do you have any hobbies?**

I love to hike. I spend almost every weekend on a trail, whether it's as close as Stone Mountain or across the country in Muir Woods, California.

### **What is one superpower from the Marvel universe you would want for yourself?**

Tony Stark's intelligence. That's a superpower, right?

### **What's your favorite song?**

Right now, it is Johnny Cash's cover of "In My Life" by The Beatles. Cash brings a depth to the song that gives me chills every time I hear it. I also just love the message of always remembering and loving all who pass through your life no matter how much time passes.

### **What was the happiest day of your life?**

Can it be a week? Exploring San Francisco and hiking in Muir Woods with my wife Cosette was definitely the happiest week of my life so far.

# COMPLETE COUNT: TUCKER'S CENSUS COUNT COULD HAVE A BIG IMPACT ON ITS FUTURE

One of the big projects the City of Tucker's staff will be working on in close partnership with DeKalb County in 2020 is getting residents to participate in the United States Census Count. While you won't see much in the way of paperwork or questionnaires until the spring, local leaders have been working behind the scenes with federal Census representatives for several months to learn about changes to the process and how best to get a complete count of those who live here.

Before you are inundated with mailers, television, radio, and print ads, here are some things you need to know about the 2020 Census.

## HISTORICAL PRECEDENT

The concept of a census is nothing new; in fact, it dates back to Biblical times. Here in the United States, the Constitution mandates that every citizen be counted every 10 years. Starting in 1790, the federal government has attempted to keep an accurate count of how many people are living in the country.

## CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

If you're a veteran of the U.S. Census and you're used to receiving a form in the mail, sitting down at your kitchen table, filling it out and mailing it back to the government, you can still do that. But this upcoming Census will also have a digital component. Residents will get a postcard inviting them to go online and enter a unique code that will allow them to enter their information without killing any trees. They will also have the option of completing the survey by telephone.

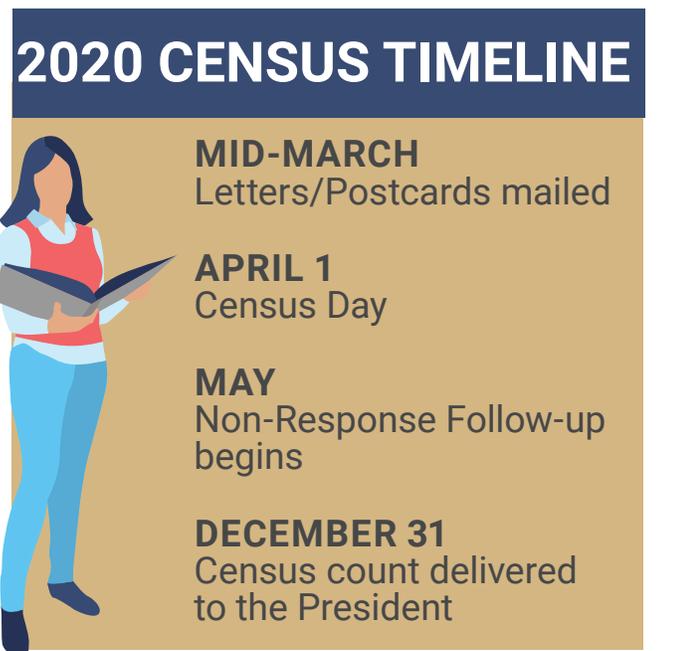
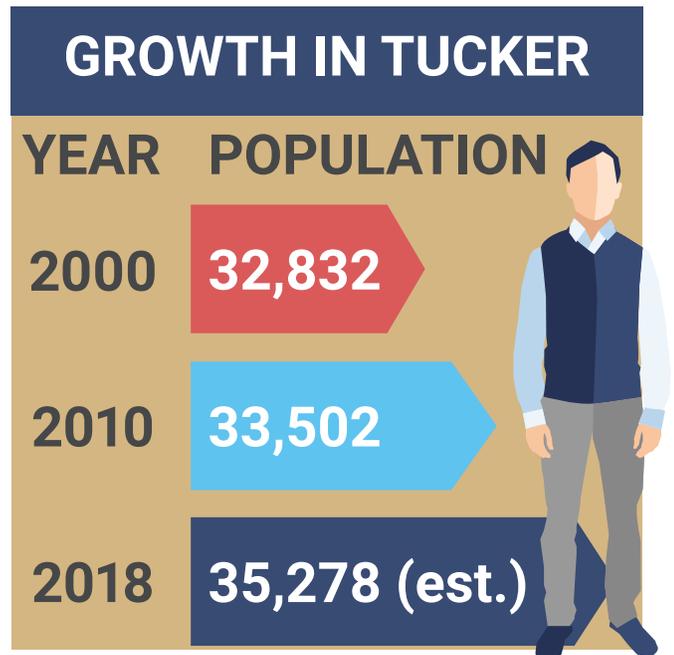
## RESIDENTS = RESOURCES

One of the biggest questions about the Census is "why?" Why is this important to my community? Why is this worth my time? Why does the federal government put so much time and so many resources into this?

The answer is that there is a significant local impact based on Census data. The Census Bureau estimates that more than \$675 billion in federal funds and grants doled out to localities will be based on Census findings. That money will go toward things like schools, hospitals and public works. It could also have an impact on congressional redistricting, as some areas of the country gain or lose seats due to increases or decreases in their population.

## PROMISE OF PRIVACY

Some folks don't want to participate in the Census because they don't want the government having or sharing their information. You should know that it is codified in federal law that the Census Bureau cannot share your answers to the Census survey with any other government agency. They also are forbidden from sharing responses that could identify you or your family.



# “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.*

For this month’s Ask Rip column, I wanted to talk about a topic I’ve been asked about time and again since I took this job back in 2017. That

topic is basketball. Now, I know we’re in the throes of college football season here in the South. Personally, I’m a graduate of Fresno State University. Unlike the Bulldogs here in Georgia, my Bulldogs are unranked at 3-4 with no real national title aspirations. So, let’s talk hoops.

We are in the finishing stages of renovating the gymnasium at Tucker Recreation Center. While we do have outdoor basketball courts in our Parks system, we’ve never been able to offer indoor basketball options for cold or inclement weather. With these renovations, the Rec Center will be able to run two games simultaneously or one game with bleachers on either side of the court.

It also allows us to offer a youth basketball league for the winter. We are partnering with Halftime Sports on a league for boys and girls ages five to twelve. Registration begins November 1 and runs through December 6. You can sign up on our [tuckerga.gov/parks](http://tuckerga.gov/parks) website or in person at Tucker Recreation Center. On Saturday December 7 we will host a free clinic where you will have one last chance to register your child. Games begin in January and the season will run for six-to-eight weeks. We will participate in the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association (GRPA) season ending tournaments and hope to host several age groups for that event.

One note on Halftime Sports: while they have not run a basketball league in the Tucker area before, you may actually know them. Back in April, they conducted a free community basketball clinic at Peters Park. It was well attended with over 40 young men and women participating and working on their skills. Halftime Sports is run by former basketball coaches and they work with high school



and college basketball players to serve as mentors to the league participants. It’s a great environment for our youngsters to learn teamwork, develop skills and forge friendships.

Lastly, I want to offer a reminder that the holidays are just around the corner (I know, it seems like our Independence Day fireworks show was just last week!). During the month of December, we will be hosting the “Advent Acts of Service” again this year. Be on the lookout for some advance notice on what some of these acts will be. Our Recreation Leaders, Crystal Dawson and Joe Stewart, are working hard and will have some fun and meaningful ways to impact your neighbors, community, friends and family.



## TUCKER *Community Corner*



**11/2 - Tucker Optimist Club Fall BBQ**  
11 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
across from 4325 First Avenue

Can you smell what the Optimists are cooking? The group is holding its annual fall barbecue fundraiser with profits going to local youth-oriented projects. Chopped pork plates and half-chicken plates will be available for \$10. Pre-order whole butts for \$40.

**11/7 – Fifth Annual Tucker Job Fair**  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
2997 Lawrenceville Highway

Tucker Civic Association is again partnering with a host of local groups to welcome those searching for jobs to Rehoboth Baptist Church. Companies from across metro Atlanta will be present to greet job seekers and accept resumes. Email [tuckerjobfair@gmail.com](mailto:tuckerjobfair@gmail.com) for more information.

**11/8-10, 11/15-17 – “The Dining Room”**  
Showtimes vary  
4898 Lavista Road

Carrie Harris directs a seven-member cast who will be portraying 57 different characters in the latest offering from Tucker’s Main Street Theatre. A special pre-show dining experience will be offered before the Saturday shows. Get tickets at [www.mainstreettheatre.com](http://www.mainstreettheatre.com).

**11/14-16 – Fall Book Sale**  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
5234 Lavista Road

Looking to add to your home library? The Tucker-Reid H. Cofer Library is hosting its bi-annual book sale. Used books, CDs and DVDs of all genres will be available for \$.50 to \$2. Proceeds go to fund library programs and events for patrons of all ages.