

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens
March 2002

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Open Line

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City of Auburn



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Support Your Hometown by Keeping Tax Dollars in Auburn

Sales taxes received by the State of Alabama in December were down about one-fourth of one percent from the prior year. Municipal sales tax revenue statewide has experienced a slight downturn, negatively impacting the budgets of many Alabama cities. For example, Montgomery has reported a decrease in sales tax of approximately 2% for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2001 and Gadsden has reported a decrease



Keep your tax dollars in Auburn by shopping locally.

of 2.3% for the year to date. Fortunately, Auburn has not experienced the decrease in sales tax revenues that many cities are facing. For the period of October through December 2001, sales tax receipts in Auburn show a slight increase of 2.8% over the prior year. However, Auburn has averaged a 5.7% increase in sales tax revenues for the past five years; so our increase is smaller than it has been in the past.

Sales taxes are an important component of the City's budget, accounting for more than 40% of total revenues. These dollars are used to provide the high quality of services Auburn citizens enjoy. Police and fire protection, garbage and recycling services, park maintenance, road construction and improvements, and street cleaning are just some of the City services funded in part by sales tax revenues. In addition, the City contributes approximately \$4 million to the Auburn City Schools each year to assist in maintaining first-rate public schools for Auburn's children.

Each time an item is purchased outside the City limits, those tax dollars are taken away from Auburn and given to another city. Auburn businesses provide a wide variety of goods and services. Shopping in Auburn keeps your tax dollars working locally to provide the services Auburn citizens need and enjoy. By choosing to do business in Auburn, you are supporting the Auburn City Schools and the funding of many City services. If you need help in locating Auburn businesses that offer specific goods and services, please call the Auburn Chamber of Commerce at 887-7011.

Environmental Update: Storm Water

As a part of the City's commitment to the environment, the Public Works Department's Engineering Division has initiated several projects to comply with the requirements of EPA's upcoming Phase II Storm Water Regulations. EPA's Phase II rule requires operators of



regulated small municipal separate storm sewer systems to obtain a National Pollutant

Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permit and develop a storm water management program designed to prevent harmful pollutants from being washed by storm water runoff into the storm sewer system.

Components of the Storm Water Management Plan currently underway include:

- 1. Establishment in May 2001 of a citizens advisory committee to guide the drafting of an erosion and sediment control policy.** The policy, once adopted, will be implemented on a regional basis and will include the City of Auburn, City of Opelika, Auburn University, and urbanized areas of Lee County. The draft ordinance was submitted and reviewed by joint councils and committees in January 2002.
- 2. Implementation of the public education and outreach element of the program.** Several meetings with concerned groups were held between November 2001 and January 2002 and will continue during the Phase II process.
- 3. Modification of Auburn's erosion control ordinance.** In December 2001, the City Council tightened erosion-related requirements to ensure compliance with the proposed erosion and sediment control policies.
- 4. Initiation of the illicit discharge detection and elimination element of the program.** Program is currently under review. Implementation date will be September 2002.
- 5. Development of a storm water manual to provide design guidance to local engineers in the future designs of storm water conveyance systems.** The contract by an engineering firm for the development of a storm water manual was approved by City Council in February 2002.

Join Us at the Library

The Auburn Public Library is currently offering Storytime for children ages 3 - 5 years on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. and on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.

Storytime themes in March:

- March 4 - 8 Wind Stories
- March 11-15 Wild West Stories
- March 18-22 Green Things
- March 25-29 Ducks and Bunnies



**For non-emergency police calls,
dial 501-3100**



Environmental Engineer Tim Logiotatos discusses erosion control measures with local contractors.

- 6. Engineering feasibility studies and construction designs of strategic regional detention facilities intended to reduce storm water volume and velocities that cause flooding and erode stream banks.** Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon, Inc. has been awarded design contracts for drainage facilities on White Street and Tacoma Drive, and Malcolm Pirnie, Inc. has been awarded contracts for Felton Little Park and Prather's Lake detention pond evaluations. Several other drainage-related projects will begin in the near future to address other issues identified in the storm water study.

In March 2003, the City must obtain a permit from ADEM to discharge storm water and it must be renewed every five years. For more information on these efforts, contact Jeff Ramsey or Tim Logiotatos at 501-3000.

MEETING SCHEDULE

- Cemeteries Advisory Board** - March 4, 4:00 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center.
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board** - March 4, 6:00 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center.
- City Council** - March 5, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber.
- Board of Zoning Adjustment** - March 6, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber.
- Tree Commission** - March 7, 4:00 p.m., City Hall Annex.
- Water Works Board** - March 11, 4:00 p.m., Water and Sewer Conference Room, 214 N. Donahue Drive.
- Greenspace Advisory Board** - March 12, 11:30 a.m., Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center.
- Historic Preservation Commission** - March 12, 3:00 p.m., Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center.
- Board of Education** - March 12, 6:00 p.m., AHS Multi-Media Room.
- Planning Commission** - March 14, 5:00 p.m., Council Chamber.
- City Council** - March 19, 7:30 p.m., Council Chamber.
- Library Board** - March 21, 10:00 a.m., Library Board Room.

-Meeting times and places are subject to change-

Free Child Booster Seat Program Continues

The City of Auburn, in cooperation with the Alabama Safe Kids Coalition, is participating in the Ford Motor Company's national

safety program to encourage the use of booster seats. As a part of the program, the City is giving away booster seats free of charge provided by Ford Motor Company to qualified low- and moderate-income families residing in Auburn. Proof of income and residency is required.

A belt-positioning booster seat raises a child so that the seat belt fits properly across the shoulder and lap. Seat belts are not designed for young children. The shoulder belts often cross their faces or necks, and the lap belts ride too high across their stomachs. Booster seats position shoulder belts properly across their shoulders and keep the lap belts low on their hips.

Size of the child is more important than age in determining how long to use a booster seat. Booster seats are for children who weigh at least 40 pounds (most often ages four to eight) who are too big to fit in a standard child safety seat and are too small to properly use an adult safety belt. To apply for a free booster seat through this program, contact Carol Ebert at 501-7280.

Boost America!
Raising kids with safety in mind
www.boostamerica.org



JOIN OUR WINNING TEAM!

The City of Auburn is currently accepting applications for **Student Firefighters Starting at \$5.30/Hour**

The duties involve extensive physical activity including heavy lifting, operating in hazardous environments, using a variety of hand and power tools and equipment, and working as part of a directly supervised team. Tuition reimbursement and housing are available.

Required Special Qualifications: Must be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited post-secondary learning institution, maintain a 2.0 average, and make regular progress toward a degree. Must be willing to work varying shifts, including nights, weekdays and weekends, with the occasional requirement to work

weekday shifts.

Applicants may apply at the Human Resources Department in City Hall or the Alabama State Employment Office.



Bond Rating Upgrade

In early February, Standard & Poor's, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies and one of the national credit rating agencies, announced an upgrade of the City of Auburn's bond rating from A+ to AA-.

The City requested a rating review in anticipation of the issuance of approximately \$27 million of its general obligation school warrants. The proceeds of this bond issue will be used to refund several outstanding school bond issues in order to achieve interest rate savings and will provide \$12 million in new money for expansion of the Auburn City Schools' facilities. The rating upgrade also applies to the City's prior bond issues.

Standard & Poor's cited Auburn's "demonstrated diversification of the city's economic base, coupled with higher home values and improving income levels" as the basis for



the rating upgrade. S&P reported that, "relative to other municipalities in Alabama, Auburn relies on a diversified stream of revenues, led by sales taxes. With only 50% of its budget dedicated to wages, and a stable municipal workforce, the city has good expenditure flexibility. Strong

revenue growth and expenditure control has enabled the city to maintain strong reserve levels."

Auburn is one of the few cities in the State of Alabama with a bond rating this

high. The upgrade is based on the City's strong financial position, as well as other important factors about the City government. All Auburn taxpayers will benefit from this good news in the form of less interest paid on the City's bonds.

Auburn Will Host 2002 State Dixie Youth Majors Tournament

The City of Auburn will host the 2002 State Dixie Youth Majors Tournament at Duck Samford Park during July 28 - August 3.

"What a great opportunity for these outstanding district champions to compete in America's Game. We are pleased to be able to host this event at our wonderful new facility at Duck Samford Park," said Mayor Bill Ham.

This tournament is expected to attract nearly 700 people to Auburn. The ten champion youth baseball teams from each district in Alabama, ages 11 - 12, will compete for the state title. Opening ceremonies for the tournament will be held on the Auburn University campus at Hitchcock Field in Plainsman Park.

To volunteer during the tournament please contact Julie Wall at 887-4930.



Board Vacancies

One vacancy on the **Library Board** and three vacancies on the **Historic Preservation Commission** will be announced at the March 5th City Council meeting and will be filled at the April 2, 2002 City Council meeting.

Citizens interested in serving in these voluntary capacities are encouraged to contact one of their City Council members or notify the City Manager's Office.

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up COMING EVENTS

The **Winter Invitational 2002** exhibition of figurative works by five regional artists will be on display in the art gallery at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center until March 22. Admission is free. For additional information, call the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center at 887-4938.

In honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, "**Read Across America**" will feature storytelling from Dr. Seuss' books on March 1 from 3:30 - 4:00 at the Auburn Public Library. All ages are welcome.



Discover Dance!, an evening of dancing and entertainment, will be held on Saturday, March 2 at 6:30 p.m. at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center. Various dancers from the community will "showcase" their talents. Featured dances will include the cha cha, the waltz, line dancing, square dancing, and ballroom dancing. The dance will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by the "showcase" starting at 7:00 p.m. Attendees will then be invited to dance until 11:00 p.m. Refreshments will be provided. Free admission.



The **Auburn Community Orchestra** will perform a Chamber Music Concert on Sunday, March 3 at 2:30 p.m. at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center. Admission is free. For additional information, contact Conductor Howard Goldstein at 844-3167.

Salmagundi, offered to children in grades K-5th, will meet on Wednesday, March 6 from 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. in the Youth Services area at the Auburn Public Library.

The theme will be "Wind Stories." For more information, contact Eve Kneeland at 501-3190.

The **Young Adult Coffeehouse** will be held from 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. on March 7 in the Youth Services area at the Auburn Public Library. The theme this month is "The History of Rock and Roll." For more information, contact Eve Kneeland at 501-3190.



The **USTA Auburn Spring Tennis Classic** tournament will host men's and women's singles and doubles events during March 8-10 at the Samford Avenue Tennis Center. Entry deadline is March 6. For official entry information, call the Samford Avenue Tennis Center at 887-4935.

A **Homeschool Forum** will be held at the Auburn Public Library on Saturday, March 9 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. The Forum is open to anyone considering homeschooling as well as for those currently involved in homeschooling. Admission is free. For more information, contact Eve Kneeland at 501-3190.



The **4th Annual Juried Art Exhibition** will be held at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center during March 25 - April 26. This competitive exhibition is open to artists and craftspersons residing or employed in Lee County. Entries are due by March 16. Entry forms are available at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center or by calling the Auburn Arts Association at 887-2832. Free admission.

The City of Auburn's annual **Easter Egg Hunt** at Kiesel Park will be held at 11:00 a.m. on March 30. Mark your calendars for this fun community event for the entire family co-sponsored by SouthTrust Bank. The event will offer musical entertainment, free sodas, and balloons. In case of rain, the event will be held at 2:00 p.m. on March 31. For more information, contact Donna Forbus at 887-4930.

Auburn CityFest 2002, an all-day festival bringing music, arts & crafts, great food and exciting children's activities to Kiesel Park, will be held April 27. Applications are still being accepted for volunteers, corporate sponsors, vendors, artists, and craftspersons. To access the appropriate applications or to find out more about the festival, visit www.auburnalabama.org/cityfest or contact Julie Wall at 887-4930.



Need income tax forms? - State and federal income tax forms are available in the Auburn Public Library at 749 East Thach Avenue as long as supplies last.