

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

June 2011

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City of Auburn



Efficiency in Government: How do We Rank?

As state and local governments brainstorm new ways to provide core services, government spending is on the minds of many citizens. Likewise, with tax dollars being stretched more than ever, taxpayers want to be sure their government operates efficiently and uses money wisely. Good news for Auburn is found in a 2010 analysis by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) showing Auburn as lower in total expenditures per capita than most of the largest 23 cities in the state. According to the 2010 census, Auburn is the 9th largest City in Alabama, but in PARCA's analysis Auburn is 17th in terms of expenditures per capita.

2011 Citizen Survey results tell us that, even with relatively low expenditures, Auburn citizens are satisfied with City services and the local quality of life. PARCA's report points out that "the amount of money spent per capita is not always a measure of program quality," a point demonstrated by Auburn's expenditures versus results, with citizens ranking the value received for their tax dollars 32 percentage points above the national average for surveyed cities.

The PARCA report also analyzes how Alabama cities rank in terms of revenues per capita. Auburn places 15th out of 23 for overall revenues per capita, and 19th out of 23 cities for sales tax, the key revenue source for most Alabama municipalities. Local sales tax dollars comprise 40% of the City's general fund. Auburn City Schools are heavily supported by the general fund, with approximately \$7 million annually dedicated to the school system.

How is it that Auburn can operate with relatively low expenditures and revenues, and still provide a quality of life that is not only highly-ranked by citizens, but has earned Auburn a "Best Place to Live" distinction from *U.S. News and World Report*? The answers lie in the long-term financial management values established by the City Council and City management. A June 2010 Moody's report confirming the City's AA+ credit rating commends the City's "long history of solid financial management, conservative budgeting practices and high reserve levels." Historically, City departments faithfully end the fiscal year at or under budget. And while scholarly research places typical personnel costs in government as high as 80% of a city's operating budget, the City of Auburn has consistently held personnel costs to approximately 50% of the budget.

This long-term commitment to fiscal discipline and efficiency has kept Auburn financially strong during a historic recession. According to Mayor Bill Ham, Jr. "the good news for Auburn's taxpayers is that the PARCA data shows that Auburn does more with less, with revenues and expenditures both relatively low for Alabama, a state reputed to have one of the lower tax burdens in the nation. The City of Auburn will strive to continue providing essential City services with efficiency and accountability."



City of Auburn Mission Statement

The mission of the City of Auburn is to provide economical delivery of quality services created and designed in response to the needs of its citizens rather than by habit or tradition.

We will achieve this by:

- Encouraging planned and managed growth as a means of developing an attractive built-environment and protecting and conserving our natural resources
- Creating diverse employment opportunities leading to an increased tax base
- Providing and maintaining reliable and appropriate infrastructure
- Providing and promoting quality housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities
- Providing quality public safety services
- Operating an adequately funded city government in a financially responsible and fiscally sound manner
- Recruiting and maintaining a highly motivated work force committed to excellence
- Facilitating citizen involvement

5th Annual SummerNight Downtown Art Walk

Join the City of Auburn, Auburn Arts Association, Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center, and the Downtown Auburn Merchants for the 5th Annual SummerNight Downtown Art Walk on Friday, June 17 from 6 – 9:30 p.m. in downtown Auburn. This FREE community event has become a summertime tradition for citizens of all ages to enjoy. Take advantage of late night shopping hours and enjoy an evening of dining, art, music, and children's activities. Local artists will have their works on display throughout downtown and many downtown merchants will be offering SummerNight specials.



Need more information about the SummerNight Downtown Art Walk? Interested in participating in SummerNight as an artist or merchant? Please visit our website at www.auburnalabama.org/arts to download an application or contact the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center at 501-2963.

Downtown streets will be closed during the event. In the event of rain, join us on Saturday, June 18.



Preventing Your Car From Being Burglarized

The Auburn Police Division wishes to remind citizens that there are a few basic things that can be done to reduce the chance of becoming a victim of a vehicle burglary. First, keep the doors of your vehicle locked at all times. Secondly, keep all windows rolled up all the way. Finally, keep valuables inside the vehicle out of sight. Seldom will a burglar break into a vehicle and then rummage through it to see what is worth taking. Instead, most of the time the burglar takes something of value left in plain view inside the vehicle. And, more often than not, burglars choose vehicles left unsecured which makes the theft quick and easy. Parking in a well-lit area at night and installing a car alarm are other things you can do to protect your vehicle and belongings. Citizens are encouraged to call police immediately to report suspicious activity. Dial 911 if it is a crime in progress. Call the Auburn Police Division's Crime Prevention Unit at (334) 501-3116 if you have questions or would like more information on how to protect your property.

Dean Road Ceramics Studio Day in Clay

Join Auburn Parks and Recreation and the Dean Road Ceramics Studio for a Day in Clay on Saturday, June 25. This one-day open house encourages the whole family to visit our fully-equipped studio, enjoy beverages and snacks, and watch demonstrations by studio members. Visitors who want to have the experience of working in clay can pay \$10 per person and select either an adult or kids project to create. All projects are led by Dean Road Ceramics Studio instructors and will be taught at 1:00, 1:45, 2:25, and 3:05 p.m. Whether you're looking for a new hobby or just want to come see everything the Ceramics Studio has to offer, come join us for a Day in Clay!



MEETING SCHEDULE

JUNE

- 1 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 3 Tree Commission**, 11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 714 East Glenn Avenue
- 6 Cemeteries Advisory Board**, 4:00 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center, 307 South Dean Road
- 7 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**, 5:15 p.m., Dean Road Recreation Center, 307 South Dean Road
- City Council**, 7 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 9 Planning Commission**, 5 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 14 Greenspace Advisory Board**, 11:30 a.m., City Meeting Room, 122 Tichenor Avenue
- Historic Preservation Commission**, 4 p.m., Development Services Building, 171 North Ross Street
- Board of Education**, 6 p.m., AHS Multi-Media Room, 405 South Dean Road
- 21 City Council**, 7 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 23 Water Works Board**, 4 p.m., Water Board Conference Room, 1501 West Samford Avenue
- 28 Bicycle Committee**, 7 p.m., Development Services Building, 171 North Ross Street

Meeting times and places are subject to change.

For more information, including a map of City meeting locations, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/boards.

Irrigation System Startup Tips

Spring brings with it blooming flowers, warmer weather and, of course, yard work and the annual startup of the irrigation system. The greatest threat to irrigation systems during annual startup is damage caused by excessive water pressure. Below are some general tips to help you start up your irrigation system properly and avoid potential damage.

Tips:

- Prior to startup be sure to have plenty of spare irrigation parts on hand for possible repairs.
- Before turning water on to the irrigation system, make sure all manual drain valves are in the "closed" position.
- Open the main water valve slowly to gradually fill pipes with water.
- If your irrigation system isn't equipped with air pressure relief valves or drains, remove the sprinkler heads located at the highest point of each zone to allow air to be pushed out of the system during filling.
- Close air-relief valves or replace sprinkler heads that were removed beginning with those closest to the water source.
- Verify the proper operation of each zone valve by manually activating it from the controller.
- After filling the entire system, run each zone for two minutes to flush out any remaining air. Inspect each zone of the controller, checking for proper operation of the zone.
- Reprogram automatic watering schedules and replace automatic controller batteries. The most efficient irrigation occurs during the early morning hours or late evening hours and not during the heat of the day.
- Uncover and clean system rain sensors if applicable.
- Once the system has been filled and is operating correctly, slowly open the main supply valve to its full operating position.

For additional information, please contact the City's Water Resource Management Department at 334-501-3060 or visit our website at www.auburnalabama.org/wrm.

Summer Camps and Programs

Hey kids, Auburn Parks and Recreation has the perfect cure for your summer boredom! Join us for preschool music camp, visual arts workshops, art for young children, young artist atelier, theatre camp, musical theatre camp, therapeutics camp, ceramics, day camp, and much more.

Registration for summer programs will be held May 2 - 27. For a complete guide to summer camps, programs, and special events, be sure to pick up a copy of the Parks and Recreation Summer Brochure, available at City facilities and online at www.auburnalabama.org/parksbrochure.



Board Vacancies

- One vacancy on the **Indian Pines Recreation Authority** will be filled at the June 7, 2011 City Council meeting.
- Two vacancies on the **Auburn Downtown Redevelopment Authority** will be announced at the June 7 meeting and will be filled at the July 5, 2011 City Council meeting.
- One vacancy on the **Planning Commission** will be announced at the June 21 meeting and will be filled at the July 19, 2011 City Council meeting.
- Two vacancies on the **Greenspace Advisory Board** will be announced at the July 5 meeting and will be filled at the August 2, 2011 City Council meeting.



Citizens interested in serving are encouraged to contact their City Council member or notify the City Manager's Office.

Veterans Brick Orders Due June 30

Each year, the City of Auburn provides citizens with the opportunity to honor a member of the military by purchasing a brick to be placed at the Veterans Memorial Monument, located on the corner of Ross Street and Glenn Avenue. Personalized bricks engraved with the veteran's name, rank, branch of service, and years of service may be purchased for \$100. For bricks to be placed at the Veteran's Memorial Monument in time for the 2011 Veterans Day Ceremony, brick orders must be received no later than Thursday, June 30. Brick order forms are available online at www.auburnalabama.org/veterans or at Auburn City Hall. The location of the more than 800 bricks, which are currently located at the Memorial, can be viewed on our interactive website at www.auburnalabama.org/veterans.



Storm Drain Marker Super Stars!

Beginning in 2007 the City of Auburn Water Resource Management Department expanded its stormwater education and outreach program to include a Storm Drain Marker Initiative. This project encourages citizen participation through the placement of watershed-specific markers on stormwater inlets throughout the City. These markers educate citizens about the connection our storm sewer system has with the surrounding water bodies and emphasizes the importance of stormwater management. As of January 2011, citizens, school groups, and organizations such as the Boy Scouts* and JROTC have helped to install over 850 of these markers throughout the City! We would like to thank all of those who participated in this project so far and would like to extend a special thank you to several of our "Storm Drain Marker Super Stars" (individuals who have personally installed more than 100 markers). Our Storm Drain Marker Super Stars are Emma and Sydney Smith and Ron Estridge. If you want to know more about participating please call the City of Auburn Water Resource Management Department at (334) 501-3060 or email dballard@auburnalabama.org for more information. *May meet various Merit Badge criteria for boy scouts and girl scouts.

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Open Line Feedback

Do you have any suggestions, feedback, or story ideas that you would like to share? If so, please contact us at openline@auburnalabama.org or call 501-7255.

up COMING EVENTS

Due to space considerations, we are unable to publicize any events that are not directly affiliated with a City department.

Auburn Public Library

Youth Services Summer Reading Program is continuing through July. Youth from ages 3 - 18 are invited to participate and win prizes. For more information call Youth Services at 501-3196.



Baby Time - Tuesdays at 10:00am for babies ages 6 - 18 months and their caregivers. For more information contact Youth Services at 501-3196.

Tween Movie Day - Tuesdays at 2:00pm for rising grades 5 - 8. Join us for a family friendly movie each week. For more information contact Youth Services at 501-3196.

Toddler Time - Wednesdays at 10:00am for toddlers ages 18 months - 3 years and their caregivers. For more information contact Youth Services at 501-3196.



Salmagundi - Wednesdays at 2:00pm for students in rising grades K - 5. This program features a variety of entertainment each week. For more information, contact Youth Services at 501-3196.



Preschool Time - Thursdays at 10:00am for preschoolers ages 3 - 5 years and their caregivers. For more information contact Youth Services at 501-3196.

Teen Cafe - Thursdays at 6:30pm for teens in rising grades 8 - 12. Two hours of fun with refreshments. For more information, contact Youth Services at 501-3196.



Lego Play All Day - Fridays all day for students ages 5 - 13. This is an open play opportunity where students may come in and build their own Lego creations. For more information, contact Youth Services at 501-3196.

Legos for Young Adults - Saturdays at 10:00am for young adults in rising 9th grade and up. This is an organized program teaching the fundamentals of physics, construction, design and engineering using Legos. For more information, contact Youth Services at 501-3196.

Parks and Recreation

Now Showing...Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center Exhibitions - Mark your calendar for the following Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center Exhibitions. The exhibits are free and open to the public Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. For more information, contact the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center at 501-2963.

13th Annual Juried Art Exhibition, May 9 - June 24. A competitive exhibition open to artists and craftpersons residing or employed in Lee County.



Summer Invitational 2011 - JDCAC Artists, June 29 - July 28. New works by artists associated with programs at the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center.



Open Daily...Auburn City Pools - Splash into summer at Auburn City Pools, beginning May 25. Samford Pool and Drake Pool will be open throughout the summer. Visit www.auburnalabama.org/pools for a complete list of swim times, pool and safety rules, and weather policies. Admission is \$2/person (children 1 & under are free), or purchase your Splash Pass for the season. Splash Passes are valid at both pools all season. Individual passes are \$50 and \$100 for families (immediate family members residing in the same household only). Splash Passes will be available beginning May 2 at the Dean Road Recreation Center. For more information, visit www.auburnalabama.org/pools or contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.

Ends May 27...Registration for Summer Camps and Programs - Registration for summer camps and programs will be held May 2 - 27 at the Dean Road Recreation Center. For a complete listing of camps, programs, and summer events, be sure to pick up a copy of the Parks and Recreation Summer Brochure, available at City facilities and online at www.auburnalabama.org/parksbrochure. For more information, contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.

June 3...First Friday Night Tennis Mixer - Join the Auburn Community Tennis Association (ACTA) for the First Friday Night Tennis Mixer on June 3 at 6:30 p.m. at the City of Auburn/Auburn University Yarbrough Tennis Center. Citizens ages 19 and up are encouraged to play. All levels of play are welcome. No partner is necessary. The event will be held rain or shine. Yarbrough Tennis Center non-member court fees apply. For more information, visit www.auburnalabama.org/tennis or contact the Yarbrough Tennis Center at 501-2920.

June 11...Weekend Warriors Motorcycle Ride to Mount Cheaha - Hey grownups, it's time to have some fun! Join Auburn Parks and Recreation's newest group, the weekend warriors, a group of active adults ages 35 & up who enjoy fresh air, challenging activities, good company, and a chance to meet new friends. Tired of taking a motorcycle ride alone? Join us on June 11 as we ride the open roads together to Cheaha State Park and enjoy a picnic lunch or dine on-site at the park restaurant. Participants will meet at the Dean Road Recreation Center at 9 a.m. There is no fee to participate, but you must be pre-registered by June 3. For more information, contact Melissa Weldon at 501-2946.

June 22...Dog First Aid - Auburn Parks and Recreation and the East Alabama Chapter of the American Red Cross will offer a first aid class for dogs on June 22 from 6 - 10 p.m. at the Frank Brown Recreation Center. Topics include assessing emergency situations, CPR, shock, basic wound care and control of bleeding, heat or cold-related emergencies, and how to care for a dog involved in a car accident. The cost is \$30 and participants must be registered by June 16. To register, contact Leigh Warren at 749-9981.

July 4...Annual Fourth of July Celebration Sponsored by Briggs & Stratton - Celebrate Independence Day with the entire Auburn Community, Auburn Parks and Recreation, and Briggs & Stratton! Enjoy great food, live music, free goodies courtesy of Briggs and Stratton, and THE best fireworks display in the entire area! Join us Monday, July 4 behind the home side of Duck Samford Stadium. Gates open at 6 p.m., followed by live music at 7 p.m., and one of the biggest fireworks displays in the area at 9 p.m. In case of rain, join us Tuesday, July 5. For more information, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/parks or contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.