

APRIL 2025



# Open Line

a newsletter for you, our residents



## Prevent, Protect & Adopt: Auburn's approach to animal welfare

In cartoons, animal control officers are often cast as **grumpy, heavy-handed villains** whose sole mission is to snatch up your beloved pets — usually with an oversized net and an exaggerated scowl.

Our Animal Control officers are less about dramatic pet heists and **more about keeping tails wagging**.

### The Role of Animal Control

ACOs play a critical role in the community, responding to stray, nuisance and welfare calls. However, their mission extends beyond writing citations. Their top priority is keeping pets safe in their homes through community education and reunification efforts.

**Did you know?** During their neighborhood patrol our Auburn Animal Control officers familiarize themselves with local pets so they can reunite lost pets with their owners.

As Auburn grows, so does the number of stray pets. From teacup poodles to 300-pound pigs and even larger livestock, ACOs work tirelessly to return lost animals to their homes. If an owner cannot be located, the pet is transferred to CARE Humane Society, a private nonprofit organization, for housing and potential adoption, if unclaimed.

### Auburn's pets are well "CARE-d" for

For over 50 years, CARE Humane Society (CARE) has provided a lifeline for Auburn's homeless and surrendered pets.

"Since 2017, we are proud to report at least 90% or

higher of all pets have found their way into loving homes through reunification, adoption, transfer to rescues and the dedication of our staff," CARE Executive Director TJ McCullough said. "We are an open-admissions shelter, meaning we accept all stray and surrendered pets from within the jurisdictional boundaries set by our city contracts."

All stray pets picked up by Animal Control in Auburn or Opelika city limits are delivered to CARE at 1140 Ware Drive, where they are held for seven days. This "stray hold" gives owners a full week to reclaim their lost pet. On day eight, the pet is assessed as a candidate for adoption or transfer to rescue organizations.

### The power of community engagement & education

Both CARE and Auburn Animal Control share the same goal: preventing pet homelessness and abandonment. Public education is key to preventing these pet-related issues.

"Many pet owners do not want to give up their pets but feel they have no other choice due to financial hardships," Auburn Animal Control Division Manager Krista Weldon said. "Our community is blessed to have CARE with resource programs available to any resident in Lee County, not just Auburn."

CARE offers resource programs, partially funded by city tax dollars, which are available to all Lee County residents. ACOs connect residents with CARE if they see there is a need with pet food assistance, low-cost

**...CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO**

or free spay/neuter vouchers, kennels, veterinary care assistance and other pet supplies.

Residents are urged to take advantage of CARE's affordable spay-neuter programs to help reduce the number of homeless pets in our community. Funding these assistance programs not only supports families and keeps pets in loving homes, but it also eases the strain on City resources and the number of animals surrendered to the shelter. It's a win-win for pets, their owners and the community.

City of Auburn and CARE both host outreach programs and public events throughout the year, such as Bark in the Park, to educate residents about basic pet care, responsible pet ownership, safe pet handling and the importance of spaying and neutering your pet. Don't forget, Auburn Animal Control is always available by phone calls at 334-501-3090 for any pet-related questions.

### Caring for animals is costly

On average, shelter stays last 98 days for dogs and 32 days for cats, with costs totaling \$3,038 per dog and \$992 per cat. Adoption fees cover only a fraction of these expenses, making community support and donations essential to sustain shelter operations.

For FY24-25, Auburn contributed \$31 per pet per day of each stray pet's stay at CARE, totaling \$225,472.91. To give unclaimed animals a chance to be adopted, CARE raises an additional \$920,000 (approximately 71% of its current operating budget) through fundraising efforts and community contributions.

### How you can help

Reporting concerns properly helps ACOs proceed with issuing a citation or facilitating the pet's removal, when necessary. While social media is useful for spreading awareness, it is never an official reporting tool. If you suspect pet neglect or abuse, report it directly to Auburn Animal Control at 334-501-3090 or the Auburn FixIt App ([auburnalabama.org/fixit](http://auburnalabama.org/fixit)) to ensure action may be taken.

Together, Auburn residents, Auburn Animal Control and CARE Humane Society can ensure every pet gets the care and protection they deserve.

For more information on CARE and its programs, visit [carehumane.org](http://carehumane.org). For more information about Animal Control, visit [auburnalabama.org](http://auburnalabama.org).

## READ MORE ONLINE.

This story was trimmed for print. Read the full version at [openline.auburnalabama.org](http://openline.auburnalabama.org).

## Spring into fun with Parks and Recreation!

Spring has arrived! Start the season by exploring our Summer Brochure, available on April 1, to plan your upcoming activities.

April's biggest celebration, the 24th-annual **Auburn CityFest**, will take over Kiesel Park on Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Auburn's largest outdoor festival is free to the public and will feature over 100 art exhibitors, children's activities, live entertainment, delicious food and more!

Leading up to CityFest, don't miss the **Auburn CityFest Juried Art Show & Preview Reception** on April 24, where art lovers can get a first look at the stunning works on display.

Enjoy **Breakfast with the Bunny** on April 5 at the Lake Wilmore Community Center, a special Easter event for children ages 5 and under. The fun continues with the 45th-annual **Easter Egg Hunt** on April 19 at Duck Samford Baseball Fields, where children can race to gather colorful eggs and win prizes. Register at [auburnalabama.myrec.com](http://auburnalabama.myrec.com).

In support of the Lee County Special Olympics, **Cops on Top** will take place on April 18 at area Kroger stores, where Auburn Public Safety officers and Special Olympians will be collecting donations throughout the day.



## PROJECT UPDATE

### Public Safety Training Center

Construction of the new Public Safety Training Center at the intersection of North College Street and U.S. Highway 280 is complete! Revitalizing the site of a former rest area, the center provides local and regional first responders a place to safely train and prepare for responding to all kinds of emergencies.

The site includes:

- A 12,000-square-foot multiuse **classroom building** with space for fire recruit training, in-house continuing education and regional training offerings.
- A three-level **burn building** with open and enclosed areas and stairwells for live fire training.
- A **search and rescue maze simulator** for training in confined spaces.
- A six-level **drill tower** for multi-level structure emergencies training.



## Borrow a board game from the Auburn Public Library

Have you heard? You can check out board games at the Auburn Public Library!

Auburn residents can now borrow one board game per library card with a two-week borrowing period. The library's collection includes a variety of popular games suitable for different age groups and interests, from classics like Monopoly and Scrabble to strategy-based games and family favorites. The collection will continue to grow as the program develops.

Games can be checked out in person at the Auburn Public Library, 749 E Thach Avenue. For more information, email [weblibrary@auburnalabama.org](mailto:weblibrary@auburnalabama.org) or call the library at 334-501-3190.



## Board & commission vacancies

Looking for an opportunity to serve? Applications to serve on the Board of Education will be open Feb. 19-March 17, and appointments will be made at the April 15 Auburn City Council meeting. Applications to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission and the Auburn Public Library Board will be open March 5-24, and appointments will be made at the April 1 City Council meeting.

Find applications and more info at [auburnalabama.org/boards](http://auburnalabama.org/boards).

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# APRIL 2025 upcoming events

Open Line is produced by the Office of the City Manager  
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S	M	T	W	T	F
		<b>Preschool Story Time</b> Tuesdays @ 9:30 a.m. <b>Parks &amp; Recreation Advisory Board</b> 11:45 a.m. <b>PreK in PJs</b> Tuesdays @ 1 p.m. <b>S.T.E.A.M Lab (Grades K-3)</b> Tuesdays @ 3:30 p.m. <b>Committee of the Whole</b> TBD <b>City Council</b> 6 p.m.	<b>Baby's 1st Story Time</b> Wednesdays @ 9:30 a.m. <b>Untidy Tales</b> Wednesdays @ 1 p.m. <b>Awesome Art (Grades 4-6)</b> Wednesdays @ 4 p.m. <b>Board of Zoning Adjustment</b> 4:30 p.m.	<b>Lullabies for Little Ones</b> Thursdays @ 1 p.m. <b>Toddler Tales</b> Thursdays @ 9:30 a.m.	<b>Breakfast with the Bunny</b> 8 a.m. @ Lake Wilmore Community Center <b>Family Story Time</b> Saturdays @ 9:30 a.m. <b>Untidy Tales</b> Saturdays @ 10:30 a.m. <b>Movers &amp; Shakers</b> Saturdays @ 1 p.m. <b>Local Authors in the Library</b> 2 p.m.
6	7	8	9	10	11
	<b>Planning Commission Packet Meeting</b> Noon <b>Family Movie Matinee</b> 3:30 p.m. <b>Cemetery Advisory Board</b> 4 p.m.	<b>Historic Preservation Commission</b> 4 p.m. <b>Adults Create! UV Resin Bookmarks</b> 5:30 p.m.		<b>City Council Agenda Review Meeting</b> 4 p.m. <b>Planning Commission</b> 5 p.m.	
13	14	15	16	17	18
		<b>Library Board</b> 10 a.m. <b>Greenspace Advisory Board</b> Noon <b>Chapter Chats Book Club</b> 5:30 p.m. <b>Committee of the Whole</b> TBD <b>City Council</b> 6 p.m.		<b>Water Works Board</b> 4 p.m. <b>Black Out Poetry (Teen Program)</b> 4:30 p.m.	<b>Cops on Top @ Kroger on Dean Road</b>
20	21	22	23	24	25
		<b>Earth Day @ Chewacla State Park</b> 3:30 p.m.		<b>Juried Art Show &amp; Preview Reception</b> 5:30-7:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park	
27	28	29	30		
			<b>Auburn Public Library</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org/library">auburnalabama.org/library</a> <b>City Meetings</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org/boards">auburnalabama.org/boards</a> <b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org/parks">auburnalabama.org/parks</a> <b>Citywide Events</b> <a href="http://auburnalabama.org">auburnalabama.org</a>	Programs & events are subject to change.  Find up-to-date information at <a href="http://auburnalabama.org">auburnalabama.org</a> .	<i>Background Photo: Easter Egg Hunt</i>