

Open Line

a newsletter for you, our residents

Cain named new Auburn Fire Chief as Lankford retires



Auburn Fire Chief Lankford retires after 30 years of service

When Auburn Fire Chief John Lankford graduated from Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business and economics, he weighed his options.

He briefly thought about a career in the private sector. But with two years as a student firefighter under his belt, it wasn't much of a question. His heart was set on the fire service.

With a 30-year career to look back on, Lankford retired at the end of March and passed the title of fire chief to longtime Auburn firefighter Matt Cain.

Lankford's interest in firefighting was piqued as a high school student when shadowing career opportunities in California. Originally from Birmingham, Lankford knew he wanted to move back to the South and chose to attend Auburn University — his parents' alma mater.

His first foray into the fire service was volunteering at Southwest Lee County Fire Department. He learned about Auburn Fire's student program through friends and enrolled as a student firefighter during his junior year. He soon realized he "was more into being a firefighter than going to school."

"The more I worked, the more I fell in love with the job," Lankford said. "It became a passion."



Cain appointed next Auburn Fire Chief

Matt Cain became the next chief of the Auburn Fire Department on April 1, stepping into the role after the retirement of Fire Chief John Lankford.

Cain began his career with Auburn Fire as a student firefighter in 2006. Over the last 19 years, he climbed to the rank of battalion chief holding nearly every position in the department along the way.

"Chief Cain has a proven track record of leadership, dedication and commitment to the City of Auburn, the Auburn Fire Department and Auburn residents," said Auburn City Manager Megan McGowen Crouch. "I have no doubt that he will lead the Fire Department to new heights."

Cain most recently served as the City's first EMS officer, leading the department's efforts to equip personnel and emergency vehicles to better serve the community's medical rescue needs.

Since the department received its Advanced Life Support (ALS) license in October 2023, Cain helped grow the City's ALS response by equipping fire trucks with more licensed paramedics, upgrading medical equipment and implementing new procedures.

Cain holds a bachelor's degree in science from Auburn University and has been an on-shift training officer for the Fire Department since 2014. He is a Certified

Continued on Page 2



(Lankford continued) After graduation in 1997, Lankford joined Auburn Fire as a career firefighter and served as chief of the Southwest Lee County Fire Department from '97-'05. He received an associate's degree in fire science from Chattahoochee Valley Community College in 1998 and went on to earn numerous technical and leadership certifications.

Lankford was promoted to lieutenant in 1999 and became the department's training officer in 2008. He was promoted to deputy chief in 2014 and served under former Fire Chief Lee Lamar until his passing in 2015. Lankford was promoted to chief and spent the last 10 years at the helm of the department.

As chief, Lankford elevated the department's services with a focus on training, professionalism and equipment and apparatus improvements. During his tenure, he oversaw the opening of a new fire station, a new training center and the department's transition to an Advanced Life Support certified entity.



To the Auburn community who put their trust and support in the department under his leadership, Lankford said thank you.

"I appreciate the community's unwavering support over the years," Lankford said. "And I want them to know that we have a great group of men and women that are here and ready to continue providing top-tier service whenever they're needed."

Memorial Day Breakfast & holiday closures

You're invited to join us for the 25th annual Mayor's Memorial Day Breakfast. The event will begin at 8 a.m. on May 26 at the Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center. Tickets are available at City Hall and are \$25 a person or \$250 for a table of eight. A free memorial wreath laying ceremony will follow the breakfast at 10 a.m. at the Auburn Veterans Memorial Monument.

Auburn City Hall and most City facilities will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 26. Police, fire and communications will remain on their regular schedules. Garbage, trash and recycling collection will be delayed by one day during the week of May 26-30.

Parks & Rec May Events

Auburn Parks and Recreation has something for everyone this May! Kick off the month with the 31st-annual Fishing Rodeo, sponsored by Evans Realty, at Auburn Technology Park South on May 3 at 7 a.m. This family-friendly event is \$5 for children 14 and under, and we'll supply the bait. The first 175 children to register will also receive a free rod and reel.

Throughout May, enjoy the Spring Sundown Concert Series at Kiesel Park every Thursday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Bring your friends and family for free live music in a beautiful setting!

City Market – Auburn's favorite Farmer's Market – will kick off on May 24. This weekly event will run every Saturday from 8-11 a.m. at Town Creek Park all summer long.

Lake Wilmore opens with new membership options

Lake Wilmore Park Recreation Center is now open to the public – complete with a brand-new fitness center, indoor track, basketball courts, pickleball courts and pool! Alongside the opening of the new facility, Parks and Recreation is introducing a new membership structure with plans for every lifestyle — from those looking for a fitness upgrade to families seeking fun and wellness.

Options for Auburn residents (live or work in Auburn)

- **Free Amenities Membership:** Includes access to free-play basketball at Boykin Community Center (BCC), Dean Road Recreation Center (DRRC), Frank Brown Recreation Center (FBRC) and Lake Wilmore Park Recreation Center (LWP), as well as the eSports room, game room and racquetball court at FBRC.
 - ◊ Annual registration is required for this free membership.
- **Paid Memberships:** Includes access to all fitness centers (BCC, FBRC and LWP), indoor walking track (LWP), aquatic facilities (LWP and Samford Pool), free-play basketball (BCC, DRRC, FBRC, LW) and additional amenities at Frank Brown Recreation Center (eSports room, game room and racquetball court).
 - ◊ **Individual Memberships:** \$20/month or \$200/year
 - ◊ **Family Memberships** (up to six household members): \$60/month or \$600/year, Add-On Member: \$10/month per additional person
 - ◊ **Low-Income Discount** (Medicaid Card Holders): 50% off membership fees
 - ◊ **Senior Membership** (65+): Membership is FREE for individuals eligible through a qualifying Medicare Advantage or supplement plan. To check if you are eligible, visit tools.silversneakers.com/Eligibility/CheckEligibility. If you have questions about your insurance eligibility, please call 334-501-2930.
 - ◊ **Fitness Membership to BCC and FBRC ONLY:** \$30/person/year

Options for non-residents & non-members

- **Daily Pass:** \$10 per day grants access to all fitness centers, indoor track and pools
- **Pool Daily Pass:** \$5 per day grants access to both pools (LWP and SP)

Current membership holders

Current memberships at Boykin Community Center and Frank Brown Recreation Center will be honored for those facilities ONLY. However, members interested in accessing Lake Wilmore Park Recreation Center or the pools (LWP and SP) will need to purchase a new membership and will receive a one-time \$30 discount off their first annual membership purchase.

Purchase your membership

Memberships are available for purchase at auburnal.myrec.com. Membership cards can be picked up from the Frank Brown Recreation Center or Lake Wilmore Park Recreation Center. For cash payments, please visit the Harris Center.

Other elements of Lake Wilmore — including the multipurpose fields and mountain bike trails — will continue to open throughout the year as different components of the project are completed. Please remember to stay away from active construction zones on the property for everyone's safety.

For more information, please contact 334-501-2930 or registration@auburnalabama.org, visit auburnalabama.org/parks or follow @COAParksAndRec on Facebook and Instagram.



MAY 2025

upcoming events

Open Line is produced by the Office of the City Manager
334.501.7268 | openline@auburnlabama.org

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<p>Background Photo: Spring Sundown Concert Series</p>	<p>Auburn Public Library auburnlabama.org/library</p> <p>City Meetings auburnlabama.org/boards</p> <p>Parks & Recreation auburnlabama.org/parks</p> <p>Citywide Events auburnlabama.org</p>	<p>Preschool Story Time Tuesdays @ 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Parks & Recreation Advisory Board 11:45 a.m.</p> <p>PreK in PJs Tuesdays @ 1 p.m.</p> <p>S.T.E.A.M Lab (Grades K-3) Tuesdays @ 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Adults Create! Faux Neon Signs 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole TBD</p> <p>City Council 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Programs & events are subject to change.</p> <p>Find up-to-date information at auburnlabama.org.</p> <p>Baby's 1st Story Time Wednesdays @ 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Untidy Tales Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.</p> <p>Awesome Art (Grades 4-6) Wednesdays @ 4 p.m.</p> <p>Board of Zoning Adjustment 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Lullabies for Little Ones Thursdays @ 1 p.m.</p> <p>Toddler Tales Thursdays @ 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>City Council Agenda Review Meeting 4 p.m.</p> <p>Star Wars Imperial Gala 5:30-7 p.m.</p> <p>Sundown Concert Series 6-7:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p> <p>Teens: Boosting Mental Health 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>Planning Commission 5 p.m.</p> <p>Sundown Concert Series 6-7:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Puppet Shows Fridays @ 9:30 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Tree Commission 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Fishing Rodeo 7 a.m. @ Auburn Tech Park South</p> <p>Family Story Time Saturdays @ 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Untidy Tales Saturdays @ 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Movers & Shakers Saturdays @ 1 p.m.</p>
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<p>Planning Commission Packet Meeting Noon</p> <p>Cemetery Advisory Board 4 p.m.</p>					<p>Adults Create! Faux Neon Signs 2 p.m.</p>
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
		<p>Historic Preservation Commission 4 p.m.</p>		<p>City Council Agenda Review Meeting 4 p.m.</p> <p>Sundown Concert Series 6-7:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p>		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		<p>Library Board 10 a.m.</p> <p>Greenspace Advisory Board Noon</p> <p>Chapter Chats Book Club 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole TBD</p> <p>City Council 6 p.m.</p>		<p>Water Works Board 4 p.m.</p> <p>Sundown Concert Series 6-7:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p>		<p>City Market 8-11 a.m. @ Town Creek Park</p>
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
				<p>Sundown Concert Series 6-7:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p>		<p>City Market 8-11 a.m. @ Town Creek Park</p>