

open line

a monthly newsletter for you, our residents.

OCTOBER 2023



City of Auburn



Leaving a legacy: Richardson retires after decades of public service

After nearly 47 years, Parks and Recreation Director Becky Richardson retired on Sept. 1, leaving a legacy of true public service.

Becky began her career with the City of Auburn as a playground assistant, volleyball official and tennis instructor while she was earning a master's in education from Auburn University. She wasn't sure she wanted to be a teacher, but she knew she was "looking for a career that you could reach people with." After graduation, she joined the City full-time as the assistant women's director. She was promoted to Parks and Recreation director in 1993 and has led one of the City's largest departments for 30 years.



During Becky's tenure, the City's parks and recreation offerings have grown exponentially. She was instrumental in the City's partnership with Auburn University to bring an exceptional tennis facility — the Yarbrough Tennis Center — to the Auburn community in 2007. Numerous other parks and recreation facilities opened and expanded under her leadership, including Town Creek Park, Sam Harris Park, Duck Samford Park, Hickory Dickory Park, the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center and the Auburn/Opelika Skate Park. The City's cemeteries have also been significantly upgraded, including the addition of columbariums and improved entrances and landscaping, and Town Creek Cemetery was built, the first City cemetery constructed since the late 1940s.

Community events like CityFest and the SummerNight Downtown Art Walk have only gotten "bigger and better" over the years, Becky said, and more events have been added like the beloved City Market to give people of all ages and backgrounds opportunities to connect.

Athletics has kept up with changes in interest over the years, adding new leagues in response to community members' requests. One of Becky's proudest accomplishments in her career was the formation of the soccer program. When the league first started, children would play on "every little scrap of field they could find." So, they constructed the Auburn Soccer Complex on Wire Road with six fields, eventually adding a seventh. The program exploded, and work is wrapping up on the newest additions to the complex, including three turf fields and an indoor multipurpose facility that will bring yet another new league to Auburn: futsal.



Becky Richardson (center) poses for a photo at a dedication ceremony for the Auburn Softball Complex.

Becky spearheaded efforts to develop a comprehensive road map for the City's future recreation needs, resulting in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan that was adopted by the Auburn City Council in 2018. Several projects that came out of the plan are currently underway, including the Soccer Complex additions, the expansion of the Jan Dempsey Community Arts Center and the new Lake Wilmore Community Center.

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(continued) Another product of the plan was Dinius Park, a 13-acre passive park on East Glenn Avenue that opened in 2021. Years before the park was built, the Dinius family established a life estate with the City, and Becky had the opportunity to get to know the family and their wishes for the property. Now, when she visits the park, she often thinks about how the park honors their memory and reflects what they would have wanted.

to watch teams compete in state tournaments, watching one play in Hartsell and driving overnight to watch another compete the next day in Robertsedale. She remembered all the people that pitched in to build Hickory Dickory Park, with Susie Thomas of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board leading the charge. And she remembered the many young people that came through the department under her leadership as interns or part-time workers.

"That is something that I consider a legacy, that those young people are now out there representing the City," Becky said.

Becky is a past director of the Achievement Center and Dixie Softball Incorporated. She served as president of the Alabama Tennis Association and the Auburn Beautification Council and has served on numerous committees for the Alabama Recreation and Parks Association as well as chairman of the Community Development Committee for Southern Tennis Association. She has also served on the board of the Kreher Preserve including as chair. In 2014, Richardson was inducted into the Alabama Tennis Foundation Hall of Fame.

"Through our parks, playgrounds, recreation centers, programs and special events, Becky has impacted the lives of practically everyone who has called Auburn home over the last four decades," Auburn City Manager Megan McGowen Crouch said. "She has always gone above and beyond the call of duty, and I will truly miss her counsel."

While she may be retiring, Becky plans to stay busy by continuing to serve the community through civic organizations, serving on committees with the Alabama Tennis Association and using some of the facilities she's had a hand in building.

"I'll be around," she said.



Downtown Trick or Treat

OCT. 31 • 6-8 P.M.

Get ready for a spook-tacular night! Join Auburn Parks and Recreation for the best Halloween party in town on Tuesday, Oct. 31, from 6 - 8 p.m. in downtown Auburn. Trick-or-treat with downtown merchants who will be handing out candy and plenty of treats for everyone!

There will be music provided by our special spooky entertainment for the evening as well as the annual costume contest. If you want to participate in the contest, make sure to be at the event from 6:15-7:15 p.m. when our judges will be searching for their picks! Winners will be announced at 7:30 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you downtown for this free community event!

Fall Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

Our Environmental Services Department will host the biannual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday, Oct. 7. Auburn residents are invited to drop off materials from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Environmental Services Complex at 365-A N. Donahue Drive.

During the event, the department will accept hazardous waste not collected in regular garbage and trash pickup. Computers and electronics will be accepted as well as paper documents for secure, on-site shredding. Residents may bring up to 20 pounds of material per household for disposal at no charge.

Those participating in the event are asked to register ahead of time by filling out the form at auburnalabama.org/HHW.

Participation is limited to Auburn residents, and proof of residency can be shown by bringing a recent water bill. A list of acceptable materials can be found at auburnalabama.org/hhw.

Harvest Market

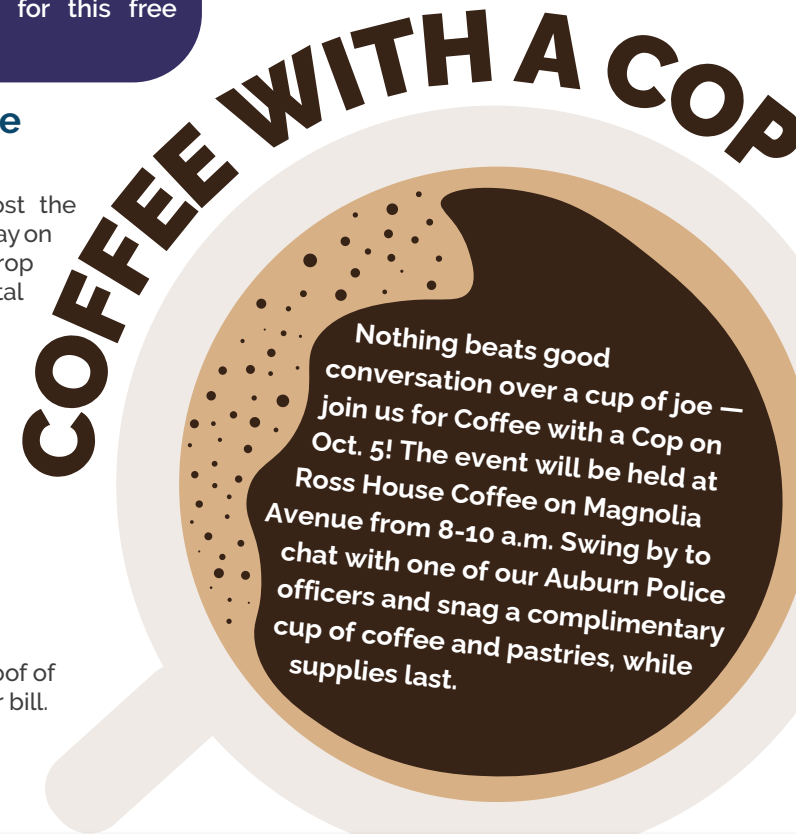
OCT. 7 • 8 A.M.-NOON

City Market will return this fall for a one-day Harvest Market on Saturday, Oct. 7, at Town Creek Park from 8 a.m. to noon!

Our annual fall farmers market will have a large selection of growers, makers and bakers. Stop by for fall produce, flowers, baked goods, meats and more. Parking will be available for all attendees in the gravel parking lot across from Town Creek Park.

Board & commission vacancies

Ready to serve? Applications for the Building Board of Adjustments, Educational Building Authority and the Auburn Tree Commission will open on Sept. 20 and close Oct. 9 at 5 p.m. Visit auburnalabama.org/boards to learn about these boards and see if one of them would be a good fit for you.



Becky Richardson (left) talks with a visitor at the Yarbrough Tennis Center.

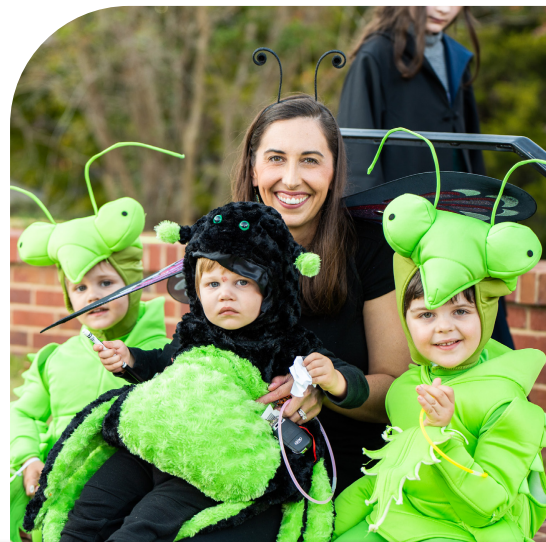
Becky's memories over her decades-long career include more than just projects — the people stand out, too. She remembered a young girl who played softball when Becky was new to the job and was just a couple years older than the girl herself. Now, that woman is a regular attendee of the City's senior programs and still affectionately calls Becky "coach." She remembered traveling with Allijean Northcutt

Haunted Happenings at the Library

Spooky season is almost here, and the Auburn Public Library has lots of tricks (and some treats) up their sleeves! Check out the calendar on the back of this month's Open Line or visit auburnalabama.org/library for details about all their Halloween-related events, including:

Haunted Library: Take a stroll through the spine-tingling, shriek-inducing, haunted wing of the library on Thursday, Oct. 19, from 5:30-7 p.m. The wing will be open to willing adventurers of all ages. Enter if you dare!

Paranormal Library Lockdown: On Thursday, Oct. 19, from 7:30-9:30 p.m., the Southern Ghost Girls Paranormal Research Group will lead brave participants on an investigation of the library to uncover its ghostly inhabitants! Experiment with ghost hunting equipment with the lights out in this after-hours Paranormal Library Lockdown. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. No entry will be permitted after 8 p.m.



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OCTOBER 2023 upcoming events

Open Line is produced by the Office of the City Manager
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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	<p>Harvest Market 8 a.m. @ Town Creek Park</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> <p>Exploring Our Linguistic Journeys 2 p.m.</p>
	<p>Movie Matinee 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Cemetery Advisory Board 4 p.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>Creepy Crawlers 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Committee of the Whole TBD</p> <p>City Council 6 p.m.</p>	<p>Baby's 1st Story Time Wednesdays @ 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Untidy Tales Wednesdays @ 1 p.m.</p> <p>Culture Explorers Club (Grades 4-6) Wednesdays @ 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Board of Zoning Adjustment 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Toddler Tales Thursdays @ 9:30 a.m.</p> <p>Lullabies for Little Ones Thursdays @ 1 p.m.</p> <p>#TeenTrends (Grades 7-12) Thursdays @ 4 p.m.</p> <p>Fall Sundown Concert Series 5:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p>	<p>Puppet Shows (in person/virtual) Fridays @ 9:30 a.m. & 3:30 p.m.</p> <p>Tree Commission 11:30 a.m.</p>	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	<p>Planning Commission Packet Meeting Noon</p>	<p>Historic Preservation Commission 4 p.m.</p>		<p>City Council Agenda Review Meeting 4 p.m.</p> <p>Posh Pumpkins 4:30-6 p.m.</p> <p>Planning Commission 5 p.m.</p>	<p>Friday Fright Night Movie 6:45 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p>	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
		<p>Library Board 10 a.m.</p> <p>Greenspace Advisory Board Noon</p> <p>Reader's Review Virtual Book Club (Adults) 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>Haunted Library 5:30-7 p.m.</p> <p>Fall Sundown Concert Series 5:30 p.m. @ Kiesel Park</p> <p>Paranormal Library Lockdown 7:30-9:30 p.m.</p>		<p>Haunted Zumba 8:30 a.m. @ Frank Brown Recreation Center</p> <p>Custom Candle Creations 2 p.m.</p>
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
				<p>Ghouliah Gala 5:30-7 p.m.</p>		
29	30	31				
		<p>Downtown Trick or Treat 6-8 p.m. @ Downtown Auburn</p>		<p><i>Background photo: A creepy crawler is perched in the bushes at the Auburn Public Library's Ghouliah Gala.</i></p>	<p>Programs & events are subject to change.</p> <p>Find up-to-date information at auburnalabama.org.</p>	<p>Auburn Public Library auburnalabama.org/library</p> <p>City Meetings auburnalabama.org/boards</p> <p>Parks & Recreation auburnalabama.org/parks</p> <p>Citywide Events auburnalabama.org</p>

special to
open line



FLOOD PROTECTION & PREPARATION INFORMATION

In May 2014, the City of Auburn was accepted into the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). Even though everyone doesn't own or live on property in a floodplain, this program benefits the community by protecting the environment, making people safer and saving everyone money. The City has received a Class 8 score for our CRS application, giving the citizens of Auburn a 10% discount on their flood insurance. The 10% discount is applied uniformly to all CRS eligible NFIP policies in the community regardless of flood zone. Below is some information you might find helpful about floodplains in the City of Auburn.

LOCAL FLOOD HAZARD

The City of Auburn has an annual precipitation of 52.6 inches and has a history of major rainstorm events. Over the last 10 years, our biggest rain events occurred in August 2013, December 2015, May 2017, June 2017, May 2018, December 2018, February 2020, April 2020, August 2021, December 2021, April 2022, July 2022, January 2023 and June 2023. During these major storm events, flooding can occur when drainage courses, such as stormwater systems and natural ditches, overflow. Local bodies of water and roadways subject to flooding include:

Local Water Bodies: Choctafaula Creek, Parkerson Mill Creek, Town Creek, Moore's Mill Creek, Chewacla Creek, Lake Chewacla, Lake Ogletree, Saugahatchee Creek and Little Loblockee Creek

Roadways: Watercrest Drive Bridge, East University Drive Bridge at Summertrees Drive, Moores Mill Road Bridge at Forestdale Drive and Windway Road Bridge

KNOW YOUR FLOOD HAZARD

Our staff is available to provide more information on whether a property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area. Find out if your property is in the regulated floodplain by calling Engineering Services at (334) 501-7390.

For more general information, you can view your property in relation to the regulated floodplain online using the City's interactive map at auburnalabama.org/maps. Select the COA Map then turn on the "Natural Features" layer and the "Floodplain" sublayer.

The following Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information can also be provided upon request: the community number, the map panel number and suffix, the date of the FIRM's index, the Base Flood Elevation shown on the FIRM, the elevation datum used on the FIRM and the availability of Elevation Certificates for review.

INSURE YOUR PROPERTY FOR YOUR FLOOD HAZARD

The City encourages all citizens to purchase flood insurance. Even if your property is not located in a high-risk flood area, it's a good idea to buy flood insurance because

almost 25% of all flood insurance claims come from areas with minimal flood risk. Here are some important facts you should know:

- Homeowner's insurance policies DO NOT cover flood damages or losses.
- Flood insurance policies have a 30-day waiting period before coverage goes into effect.
- Renters are able to buy flood insurance for the contents of their homes.

Contact your insurance agent to see if your property is covered for flood damage. Additional information on flood insurance can be found at auburnalabama.org/engineering-services/flood-protection.



Water rushes through Moores Mill Creek after a heavy rainfall.

FLOOD SAFETY

Safety is a must when it comes to possible flooding in our area. The following tips can keep you and your family from harm during flooding:

- Do not walk through flowing waters.
- Do not drive through a flooded area.
- Stay away from power and electrical lines.
- Shut off all gas and water valves.
- Have a departure plan in case of emergency.

FLOOD WARNING

The City of Auburn works with the Lee County Emergency Management Agency to give citizens ample warning in cases of a flooding event. Emergency messages are broadcast through local radio and TV stations. In the event of heavy rains, it is essential to monitor TV and/or radio weather broadcasts for up-to-date forecasts on tornadoes, hurricanes or flash floods. Please call 911 for any emergencies and (334) 501-3100 for any non-emergencies.

PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES

Flooding remains the country's number one disaster and can potentially affect everyone and every property. If you own property, you can apply these permanent retrofitting techniques that can help to eliminate or reduce flood damage:

(CONTINUED ON BACK)

- Elevating your house one foot above the base flood elevation.
- Flood proofing your house to make the walls and flooring watertight so water cannot enter.
- If you know you are in the flood prone area, flood vent the crawl space under your home so that water can flow through.

Employees from the City of Auburn are available for site visits to review flooding and drainage issues and provide one-on-one advice to property owners on appropriate flood protection measures. We are also available to help you with reviewing and critiquing retrofit plans for flood-prone residences and buildings.

Contact our Inspection Services Department at (334) 501-3170 or webcodes@auburnalabama.org about protecting your home or business from flooding.

FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

To ensure the highest degree of safety and to protect your property from flood damage, the Inspection Services Department enforces the Building Code for the City of Auburn. Check with them before you build on, alter, grade or fill on your property. A permit is required for all construction in the City of Auburn to ensure that a project is compliant with all regulations.

Substantial Improvement Requirements

For the City of Auburn to participate in the NFIP, we adopted regulations and codes that apply to new developments in the floodplains. Local floodplain management regulations and codes contain minimum NFIP requirements that apply to new and existing structures that are “substantially improved” or “substantially damaged.”

“Substantially damaged” means damage of any origin sustained by a structure whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before-damaged condition would equal or exceed 50% of the market value of the structure before damage occurred.

“Substantially improved” means any reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvements of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure before the “start of construction” of the improvement. This term includes structures that have incurred “substantial damage” regardless of the actual

repair work performed.

The City of Auburn requires an elevation of one foot above the base flood elevation for new construction and for existing structures before they are repaired.

PROTECT NATURAL FLOODPLAIN FUNCTIONS

Floodplain areas and wetlands provide a wide range of benefits to both human and natural systems. Wetlands in and around the City of Auburn are a valuable asset, flood control and water quality being the two most important aspects of our local floodplain.

One of the ways you can help prevent flooding is to make sure you don't dump pollutants or debris into our storm drains. These debris drain into our natural drainage systems and wetlands. For the natural drainage system to operate efficiently, our ditches, streams and channels must remain clean. Debris, even leaves and grass clippings, can obstruct the flow of water and cause overflow onto streets and yards. Wetlands absorb water during heavy rainfall or flooding and slowly release the waters downstream, reducing flood damage. Wetlands and wetland plants help to absorb and filter potentially harmful chemicals and pollutants before they get into our waterways. The City of Auburn is home to several identified undeveloped floodplain areas that are vital for several endangered or threatened species unique to this area. These areas also provide recreation, education, and research opportunities important to our local economy.

Residents, businesses, and property owners play a huge role in maintaining the ditches and streams on their property. They should notify the City when maintenance is needed on the right of way. City Code, Section 7-1, prohibits taking any action that can impede the flow of water in ditches and waterways. If you know of any illegal dumping of debris or any action that could affect the drainage system, please contact the Public Works Department at (334) 501-3000 or webpw@auburnalabama.org.

For more information regarding the National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System, please contact the Engineering Services Department at 161 N. Ross St., webengineering@auburnalabama.org or visit auburnalabama.org/engineering-services.

