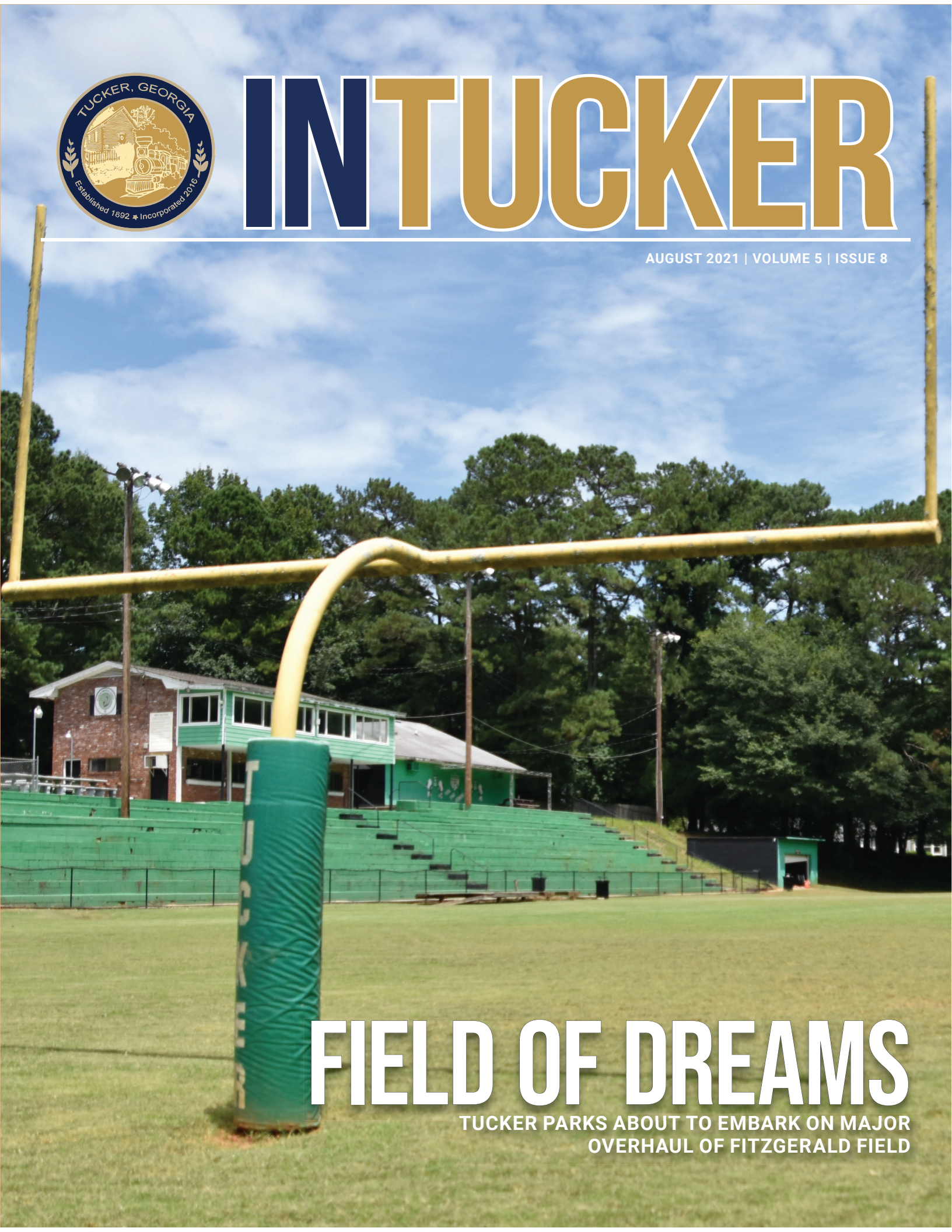




INTUCKER

AUGUST 2021 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 8



FIELD OF DREAMS

TUCKER PARKS ABOUT TO EMBARK ON MAJOR OVERHAUL OF FITZGERALD FIELD

EDITOR'S NOTE



This month's cover story is a response to some feedback we got on social media regarding projects starting up in the City.

The renovation of Fitzgerald Park is just one of several construction projects that are happening or are slated to happen here in Tucker. That would also include our SPLOST-funded road resurfacings, various intersection improvements, our PATH project and many more. These are big dollar projects and it is imperative that you be fully aware of how your tax dollars are being spent.

The gist of the social media comments I referenced above is basically that people didn't know we had such an ambitious plan to turn Fitzgerald Park into a true athletic and entertainment destination. People felt like these were decisions being made behind closed doors.

In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. These plans have been discussed in public meetings and work sessions since way back in 2019, and to an extent the concepts involved were a large component of our Parks Master Plan process back in 2018; so, they're certainly no secret. But you know what? If people don't know about them, then it's on us to spread the word more effectively. Hence, the cover story.

We're excited about these plans and the immediate impact they will have on Tucker (new 1,500 seat stadium opening next spring!) and we want everyone to know about it. This means your kids may be playing football or soccer or someday lacrosse on a state-of-the-art field in front of big, enthusiastic crowds. Check out "Ask Rip" on page 14 and learn all the details about how one of Tucker's aging parks is about to be the coolest spot in town.

See you at Fitzgerald!

MATT HOLMES
INTUCKER EDITOR

IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE COVER

It may not be a field of dreams just yet, but the City of Tucker has big plans for the renovation of the stadium at Fitzgerald Park. On page 14, our Parks and Rec Director gives you all the details.



BUSINESS BOOM

Tucker staff and partners are excited about hosting their second Manufacturing Day later this month. On page 8, Angela Brooks tells you what to expect and how you can take part.



FIRST LOOK

It's been talked about for years and now it's finally here. On page 11, get a first look inside the newly constructed Smoke Rise Elementary School.



CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

You know that Tucker has a thriving Farmers Market, but do you know who's responsible for it? She's our Citizen of the Month and you'll meet her on page 10.



LOOKING BACK

Tucker's team of interns has completed their duties for the summer. On page 12, they look back on a summer of hands-on learning.



INTUCKER

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 8

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From the Mayor:



One thing I didn't fully appreciate before I became Mayor is the importance of, and the effort required to, build the partnerships and teamwork that make a city successful. To create a city where a person can Live, Work, Play and Pray their entire life, necessarily means we work closely with the County and State governments and their various agencies, non-profits and citizen groups of all kinds, contractors, consultants and service providers, and even our neighbor cities. Of course, we work daily with individual citizens on projects and needs of all kinds. And perhaps the most unique thing about city government is that elected officials are elected on a non-partisan basis. That doesn't mean we agree on everything (not by a long shot), but it means we don't run for office with a party label. And in an environment where all other politics is not only partisan, but seems completely polarized, it gives us a great advantage: we don't begin addressing every issue by going into our two separate corners and deciding how to malign the other side. Among the members of Council, we have worked hard to set aside any partisan differences to focus on delivering services to our citizens.

The City of Tucker's success is directly attributable to focusing on our priorities and key responsibilities, and to our efforts to nurture and strengthen teamwork and

partnerships toward that end. Over the course of the past five-plus years, we've fostered solid partnerships among our Council, with the private sector, our public utilities, our public schools and with many more entities. Perhaps the most important inter-government relationship that affects all our daily lives is the one we have with DeKalb County.

A partnership isn't an "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine" arrangement. It's about mutual respect, and recognizing that when one partner is successful, both are. Though we have different responsibilities, we both understand that nine times out of ten, what's good for us is good for them. Because of this, we get excellent service delivery when it comes to policing, fire and rescue, sanitation, and a range of other services. The relationship requires constant communication and nurturing to remain strong.

Our partnership with DeKalb County begins with the relationship between our elected officials, and that means our Mayor and City Council working with DeKalb's CEO and the seven County Commissioners. Of the commissioners who represent the City of Tucker, Steve Bradshaw has served the longest, and is currently the Commission's Presiding Officer. We have worked with Steve on more

(continued on page 6)

City Council Update

Tucker's Mayor and City Council met on July 12, holding their lone scheduled meeting for the month. In a meeting that saw several issues voted on, perhaps the most consequential agenda item was a presentation on sidewalk priorities in the City. As part of Tucker's Transportation Master Plan, the City's engineering team went to work identifying sidewalk gaps and roads where sidewalks may need to be constructed, aimed at achieving the goal of enhanced walkability and public safety in those communities. They presented the Council with a recommendation to prioritize sidewalks along Church Street, Old Norcross Road, Tucker Industrial Road and Montreal Road.

Later in the meeting, Council voted 4-0 to approve an ordinance amending the recently concluded Fiscal Year 2021 budget. They also voted 4-0 to approve a franchise agreement with the City of Norcross regarding electrical service being provided to certain Tucker businesses.

Council also took action on a handful of items of new business, including:

- approving an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with DeKalb County for the intersection improvement

project at Hugh Howell Road and Flintstone Drive.

- approving a contract for \$904,425 with MHB Paving for resurfacing work on Rosser Road.
- approving a \$97,000 contract with Tristar America for demolition and grading of the old DeKalb County Library building in downtown Tucker.
- approving a contract for \$30,869 with Paula F. Price Enterprises for radar speed detection signs to be installed along critical roadways throughout the City.
- approving a contract for construction documents for the Fitzgerald Park stadium improvement project with Keck & Wood Collaboration by Design for \$64,200.
- holding a first read and public hearing on a proposed amendment to the City Code. The amendment would make proactive life safety changes pertaining to issues like vehicle storage in the City. No formal vote was taken on this issue.

The next meeting of the Mayor and City Council is scheduled for Monday August 9 at 7 p.m. at City Hall (1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B).

DATES TO KNOW

August 2
Downtown Development Authority

August 4
Traffic Court

August 9
City Council

August 11
Traffic Court

August 17
Zoning Board of Appeals

August 18
Municipal Court

August 19
Planning Commission

August 23
City Council

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO STAY UP TO DATE



nextdoor



Members of the Tucker Express, the City's competitive swim team, led the Pledge of Allegiance at the City Council meeting on July 12. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)

ON THE BEAT *with Lt. Schoeppner*

Lt. D.G. Schoeppner is Tucker's liaison to the DeKalb County Police Department and can be followed at [facebook.com/dgschoeppner](https://www.facebook.com/dgschoeppner) or emailed at dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov



I'm sure that most of you are aware of the civil unrest which affected many large cities last year. I'm also sure that you're aware that Atlanta is one of those cities. This partly has resulted in an increase of violent crime. It has become virtually impossible to look at any news media and not see something about it. One aspect of this that is truly concerning is the number of road rage incidents. This month we are going to talk about these increases and what drives them.

So far this year Tucker has seen about 33 more aggravated assaults than the same time last year. Some of that can be attributed to the move from FBR to NIBRS, which I talked about at length in my December 2020 article. Of course, that doesn't account for the entire increase. The cold, hard truth is that violent crime is up, even if it isn't up quite as much as the number may suggest. The next logical question is why is this happening?

Violent crime tends to be driven by three main factors. The first is domestic violence. Many of our aggravated assaults start as disputes between spouses (both current and estranged) and

couples that live together. Domestic violence has always been a problem, but recently these disputes have escalated to higher degrees of violence. The next common type of violent crime we see are disputes which escalate. In most cases, the parties in these disputes know one another. Just like domestic violence, these incidents have always occurred to some extent. Also, just like domestic violence, these incidents have recently escalated to greater degrees of violence than in previous years. The third most common type of violent crime incident is road rage. These incidents traditionally have been words exchanged and maybe a hand gesture or two. Lately, they have more regularly escalated to firearms being pointed and sometimes shots being fired.

I find the road rage incidents to be particularly concerning because they tend to be encounters between strangers. This typically means that identifying a suspect is far harder than incidents involving couples or acquaintances. The result is that these cases go unsolved far more often. This is why I would implore everyone to exercise patience with your fellow drivers. Road rage violence is never justified, but being right in a road encounter will be little consolation if you end up shot. That's especially true if there isn't enough evidence left behind to identify and catch the offender.



FROM THE MAYOR

(continued from page 3)

projects than I can count, especially in our Tucker parks. Beyond all his other regular duties, Steve hosts a quarterly meeting with all the Mayors in his district, where we exchange concerns and needs from both sides, that I have personally found very helpful in making progress together. He is a friend to the City and we are grateful for his spirit of cooperation.

The two newest commissioners representing parts of Tucker are Lorraine Cochran-Johnson and Robert Patrick. Both Lorraine and Robert have proven themselves to be very responsive to the needs of Tucker residents. We saw this most recently when the large item pickup promised by the Sanitation Department skipped large parts of Tucker and left lots of items on our streets and curbs. They both responded personally and quickly to correct the situation immediately. There are plenty of other examples, but even beyond that, they have supported projects in the City with their discretionary county funds. Most recently, they each directed \$50,000 toward completion of the redesigned intersection in front of the new Smoke Rise Elementary School. The money is only part of the total funding for a huge project, but it shows that they are interested in the safety of our students, parents, and teachers and that we trust each other to do the right thing. What could be more important?

CEO Mike Thurmond is himself a citizen of Tucker, and we have worked since the beginning to forge a strong working relationship. As the Chief Executive Officer, all the nuts and bolts of getting things done ultimately fall to him, his Chief Operating Officer and their staff and department heads. Our city staff leadership team works closely with them daily. Our City Councilmembers spend a great deal of time during and after hours getting to know the commissioners, helping them understand the needs of the people of Tucker, and figuring out the best ways to deliver services together.

Similar teamwork takes place every day with all the other partners I've mentioned, and credit for these healthy relationships goes to a lot of different people who work hard to make them work. Just like in our personal lives, we need relationships and partnerships in order to thrive. It will remain among our highest priorities to continually nurture and strengthen them.



FRANK AUMAN
MAYOR



Mayor Auman has developed a working relationship with DeKalb County's newest commissioner, Robert Patrick (top). DeKalb County and the City of Tucker share much more than just borders (bottom). (Credit: tuckerga.gov)



LADY OF FIRSTS

TUCKER RESIDENT MAKING HER MARK IN STATE GOVERNMENT

Some people when they start a new job – especially a high-profile one – suffer from the new job jitters. Robyn Crittenden's not one of those people.

"I don't think it's ever easy to start a new job with all those things to learn," the 14-year Tucker resident explained, "but I think my experience in state government and the fact that I'm an attorney, as well...I'm well-equipped for it."

Crittenden was recently tapped to serve as the Commissioner of Georgia's Department of Revenue, overseeing a department that is charged with administering tax laws in the State. She had been heading up Georgia's Department of Human Services, but Governor Brian Kemp had other plans for her. The governor, in a press release earlier this summer, lauded Crittenden saying he wants her for this job because she "brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that will allow Georgia to remain a leader in combating wasteful spending, streamlining government, keeping Georgia the top state for business, and creating new opportunities for hardworking Georgians."

Crittenden's resume is an impressive one. A native of Long Island, New York, she attended Yale University as an undergraduate and then got her law degree from the University of Michigan. After spending her entire young life up north, it was at that point she decided to come south.

"I came here because I saw a lot of opportunities here and I saw a lot of opportunities for African-Americans here in Atlanta," she recalled. "I love it here in Georgia. I think that it is a great place to live, a great place to raise a family, a great place to work, and it's certainly been that for me. I wouldn't imagine being any place else."

Once here, Crittenden established herself in state government, working for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, as well as the Georgia Student Finance Commission. More recently, she made local and national headlines in 2018 when Governor Nathan Deal appointed her as Georgia's 28th Secretary of State. With her current position, however, Crittenden is making history by becoming the first African-American to lead the Georgia Department of Revenue.

"It means a great deal to me to be able to open doors and to show others that there are opportunities for African-Americans to do things," Crittenden shared. "I feel like each time an African-American or any first...does get an opportunity, it lets other people know that the door is open for other people who work hard and want to have opportunities to be able to grow."



While she's made history with her appointment, Crittenden knows that now the hard work begins. She takes over a department that saw its former commissioner step down in June to launch a congressional bid. It was then run on an interim basis until she was tapped for the permanent position. Although new on the job, Crittenden has a definite vision for what she wants to accomplish.

"I want us to be known for providing excellent customer service, treating all taxpayers and license holders equitably and consistently," she said. "I want us to have top notch technology in place and to always be open to and always improving."

After busy days leading the Department of Revenue, this rising star will continue to return to the comfort of home. Here in Tucker.

"I think Tucker is just a great place," Crittenden shared. "I've been so pleased the last [few] years to see it growing and all the new businesses and community offerings in the area. It reminds me very much of the community that I grew up in on Long Island. It has really a hometown feel to it and I think it's a special place to live."

You can get more information on the Georgia Department of Revenue at www.dor.georgia.gov.

BUSINESS BOOM

by Angela Brooks, Business Outreach Coordinator



Industry experts from leading Tucker manufacturing companies will address important issues impacting the manufacturing industry at this year's Manufacturing Day event. City and business leaders will also have this special opportunity to network with their peers, to share their knowledge and

to learn from top-level manufacturing experts through panel discussions and speakers.

"Tucker's Manufacturing Day creates local connections and aims to build a strong sense of community in this industry within Tucker," said Tucker Assistant City Manager and Director of Community and Economic Development John McHenry. "By supporting each other, local leaders and manufacturers are growing their businesses and positioning Georgia as the leader in the manufacturing industry in the U.S."

The overarching theme of Manufacturing Day is education and understanding. It's part of an effort to change people's perceptions about today's manufacturing environment and to draw attention to, and to celebrate the importance of, the manufacturing sector to Tucker and the nation's economy. It is an opportunity for manufacturers to highlight their company, their work and the need to energize a future pipeline of skilled workers.

When asking a random sampling of people on the street, what you often hear is that America doesn't make anything here anymore. People think that countries such as China and Mexico have taken all of our factory jobs and production. Au contraire! Manufacturing in the U.S. is alive and well and is actually among the top five largest sectors driving our economy.

The inaugural Manufacturing Day event, held in 2019, was derived from Mayor Auman's vision to create an opportunity to showcase the City's dynamic manufacturing industry by bringing together local experts and influencers. Unfortunately, last year's event was suspended due to COVID.

Sponsored by the City, the Tucker Summit and the Tucker-Northlake Community Improvement Districts (CIDs), Manufacturing Day is an opportunity to help foster learning and collaboration between manufacturing companies and the public. It's a showcase to promote the importance of manufacturing on a local, national and global level. It's an occasion during which manufacturers open their doors to showcase the potential of modern manufacturing and foster interest in manufacturing. The event will also include in-person

tours of four local manufacturers including Tucker Brewing Company and Briggs & Stratton's new advanced battery manufacturing.

"We have a very strong industrial base along Mountain Industrial Boulevard that has continued to grow and expand. We've had some large corporations put their headquarters here in our city – the Sugar Bowl Bakery came from northern California and now calls Tucker home," said Tucker Summit CID President Emory Morsberger.



SteelMart owner Paul Carling leads a tour of his facility at the 2019 Tucker Manufacturing Day. (Credit: tuckerga.gov)

Manufacturing Day allows existing and potentially new businesses, community and business leaders, and residents to learn more about the benefits that modern manufacturing offers in Tucker. It also allows them to learn about local companies that are part of an industry that employs over 12 million workers across the country. Those employees work on durable goods and real, tangible products that improve people's lives. This runs the gamut from lifesaving medical equipment to food products for domestic consumption and exportation abroad.

"We've got a large road network and Tucker's been putting in and improving a lot of the roads here in the City, so they can see where the community is focused on transportation," said Tucker-Northlake CID Executive Director Matthew Lee. "It's critical for their businesses, certainly the commercial and industrial distribution folks."

Tucker Manufacturing Day takes place Wednesday August 25 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Stone Ridge Event Center (1750 Stoneridge Drive). The in-person event will be executed with precautions in mind to create a safer environment for all participants. Go to tuckerga.gov/biz to register.

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

INTERNATIONAL PAPER



Some of the most interesting businesses in Tucker are the ones you have no idea even exist. Such is the case of International Paper, a major multi-national brand most have likely heard of, but one that most people wouldn't know has a presence here in Tucker.

"We have plants internationally; Asia, Europe, Mexico and the United States, of course," explains Chance Nesbitt, Manufacturing Manager at IP's Tucker location. "We're a pre-print facility. So, we get...six- [or] eight-thousand pound rolls of paper and we unwind those rolls. We put the print on it...wind them back up and then we send it to our box plants. We turn those into boxes and then sell it to the end user."

Those boxes can house any type of consumer product found in just about any supermarket or big box store. It's another example of something created in Tucker going all over the planet.

"I've been with IP for 11 years," Nesbitt says. "Every time I go into the grocery store, I pick a box up, turn it over and look and see if we made that box."

While those boxes come from trees, IP looks to be a good global citizen. They have a longstanding formula to ensure that the company is as environmentally friendly as possible, while also having enough resources to continue doing business.

"We make boxes that are 100 percent recyclable," Nesbitt says. "So, we're trying to feed back into the planet. And then for every one tree that we cut down, we plant seven more trees to keep it going."

The Tucker factory employs about 100 people, including many who have worked at the plant for several decades. Nesbitt says being located so centrally in Tucker has been great for his workers, but also good for the bottom line.

"We know customers have deadlines and we get hot orders all the time," he explains. "The faster we can get that product out to them and get it to them on time, the better the customer service. That's what we're all about."

International Paper is located at 5099 N. Royal Atlanta Drive. Being a manufacturing facility, it is not open to the public, but you can learn more about the company and its mission at internationalpaper.com.



CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

NANCY QARMOUT



My name is Jamey Wilson, event manager with the Old Town Tucker Merchants' Association, and I would like to nominate Nancy Qarmout for Citizen of the Month.

Nancy, her wife Leanne and I have been friends for over a decade. We went a step further and became family after they introduced me to Leanne's cousin, Neely, on a blind (somewhat ambush) date at Local 7. Thanks to them, we've been married for over seven years and have added two adorable kids to the mix (as have they).

If you've been to any events on Main Street in the past 10 years, you've probably seen Nancy. She's the one you'll see coordinating vendors, finding new and fun things to bring in for the kids, and generally being a point of contact for the community. She helps with the Tucker Chili Cook-Off, Taste of Tucker and Holiday on Main Street. She's also responsible for starting the Halloween Trunk or Treat and the Tucker Farmers Market, which has become a go-to for people in and around the City. During COVID, she and her vendors

seamlessly switched to an online ordering system to keep the patrons active and the vendors prosperous.

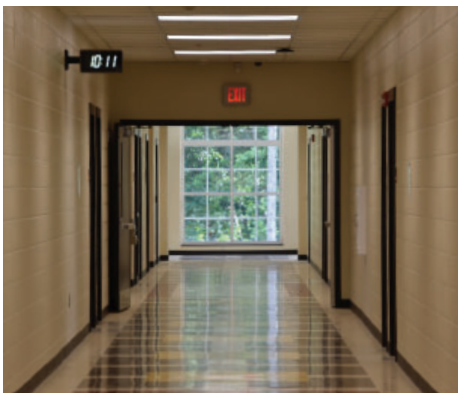
Nancy exudes Tucker Pride in everything she does. She's hardworking, dedicated, and committed to the advancement of the community and keeping Tucker engaged. Nancy makes a point to know everybody and lends an ear whenever possible; for many people around here, she is Tucker.

Nomination by Jamey Wilson

BACK TO SCHOOL



When it opens on August 2, the new Smoke Rise Elementary School will welcome 420 students with capacity to eventually house up to 900 students. The school shares the same model as other recently constructed DeKalb County schools including the new Fernbank Elementary and Pleasantdale Elementary. The first feature built was an outdoor amphitheater (bottom right). The school was then constructed around it.



INTERN REFLECTIONS

This summer, three bright young minds – all of them Tucker residents – were selected to serve the City as summer interns. Nazeer, Sarah and Jack were tremendous assets, bringing a youthful inquisitiveness to the policies and procedures at City Hall. Here are their reflections on the Summer of 2021.



NAZEER FERGUSON

I started this internship with general knowledge about government and the inside workings of day-to-day governmental tasks. I have always had an interest in politics and a want to understand the legal side of Civil Engineering to get a well-rounded knowledge base. During the time of my internship, I found that assisting with municipal court has been the most hands on. From transferring documents and getting to know the operations of court, I truly enjoyed myself. My biggest accomplishment that's still in the works is coming up with a new Planning and Zoning ordinance for the City. This was a difficult and challenging task, but I overcame the obstacles and found a solution by gathering information from neighboring cities and states to accumulate a draft of Tucker's new policy. The Carbon Reduction Challenge has also been a great venture. Being able to implement a progressive and helpful way for the future really impacts a town even in the beginning stages.

SARAH PENKAVA

Interning for the City of Tucker has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I have been afforded the unique opportunity to work with each of the departments within City Hall and Parks and Recreation, and have learned invaluable information and skills that I likely would not have gained elsewhere. I consider some of my biggest accomplishments this summer to be becoming proficient in the areas of City Hall that most interested me. I particularly enjoyed watching full processes play out, as I did in my time with Maricela, Tucker's Code Enforcement Manager. I visited code violation sites with her and then had the chance to watch some of these code violations play out in court. I have great interest in law and policy, and she catered this experience toward my interests. So did Courtney in Planning and Zoning, who helped me write code and learn more about Tucker's policies. I also took part in the Georgia Tech Carbon Reduction Challenge along with the other interns wherein I worked with local schools and parks to bring our proposed composting initiative to fruition. I am grateful to have had these experiences and learned so much in my time at City Hall this summer!



JACK SMITH

This summer, I was involved on a lot of fun and exciting projects. From designing sidewalks to presenting in front of the City Council, I got to do it all. My most exciting project had to be my work on renovating MARTA bus stops all over the City. The project involved multiple days of being out in the community and deciding which stops were most in need of an update. Through this process, I was able to meet many new people, and get a better understanding of the how these improvements would greatly benefit those who use these stops daily. As a resident of Tucker, it was an honor to get to work on so many projects just like this one. I greatly enjoyed getting to know my hometown better than I did before, and to know that my contributions would help make a real impact on the community and City that I call home.

TEAM TUCKER *Spotlight*

KYLIE THOMAS, CITY PLANNER



How did you decide to come work in Tucker?

Tucker is where my husband and I bought our first home when we got married. I immediately fell in love with the character and charm of the City and always said, if ever given the opportunity, I would work for Tucker.

What is your background in Planning and Zoning?

I graduated from the University of Alabama (ROLL TIDE!) with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning and a minor in Geographic Information Systems. After graduation, I moved to Atlanta and have worked in a few local jurisdictions throughout metro Atlanta ever since.

What does a Planner do?

Planners help to determine the best way to use a city's land

through short and long-term goals. Planners have the unfortunate job of having to tell people the rules they must follow before they are allowed to build a shed, cut down a tree or install a fence on their private property. However, planners also help to create a vision for the community and design an environment that creates a sense of place for our residents.

Why is Planning and Zoning important in a city?

Planning and Zoning is important because it helps to protect property values by keeping incompatible or unsuitable uses away from your property, or requiring buffers and screening when incompatible uses are located next to each other. Planning and

Zoning also establishes limitations such as height standards, building setbacks, and square footage requirements, which keep buildings from being built too close to a neighbor's property.

What makes Tucker unique from a Planning and Zoning perspective?

Tucker is unique because the City has been around since the 1800's, but didn't incorporate until 2016. So while there is a ton of history here, Tucker is also so young and I frequently run across something I've never experienced before in my career as a Planner. Also, Tucker's downtown is a City Planner's dream! Downtowns are the heart of a city and most cities have to design, create, and buildout what Tucker already has.

Off the Wall

How would co-workers describe you in three words?

Exuberant, rule-follower and detail-oriented.

What's the last movie you saw?

"Top Gun", an oldie but goodie. I have an unrealistic fear of going to movie theaters and much prefer to watch movies at my home.

What is one thing you've always wanted to do, but never had the chance?

I've been really blessed to be able to experience a lot in my life and don't have a bucket list. For me, a bucket list would make me feel as though I am unsatisfied with my life.

What is the craziest thing you've ever done?

I'm not much of a risk taker. I actually prefer to always be prepared and take as few risks as possible. I would say going to college out of state (I'm from Kentucky) is probably the craziest thing I've ever done.

“ASK RIP”

Rip Robertson is the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Tucker. He brings to the job years of experience in Parks and Rec, as well as Public Works.



I'm writing this month about one of the topics I get the most questions about, and likely will continue to get more questions about in the coming months: the renovation project at Fitzgerald Park. I want to start with some background.

The City acquired Fitzgerald Park from the Tucker Football League Trust in 2019 with an assurance of improvements to the park and facilities. The City immediately began discussing how this new asset could be improved to aid the City's growing Parks and Recreation Department. The City began working on plans to create a sports complex that is as state-of-the-art and functional as is feasible. As part of the plan, the City completed studies for fit/location, economic impact and design and engineering to assist in the planning process. The present plan helps the City create a space that will not only accommodate a number of different sporting opportunities, but also host city/community events and activities. The current plan could also accommodate some of our local high school events and activities.

The plan for this project is to renovate the existing park and not change its current use nor capacity. Many of the events and activities being discussed can currently be held at the park, but we delayed implementing most due to the conditions

of the fields and facilities. The new single field will actually decrease overall capacity from the existing fields. For many remembering Tucker Football League's heyday (late 1970s to early 2000s), they normally had 500 football players and 200 cheerleaders, with games during the week and on weekends. They operated at nearly full capacity (more than 2,000) during those years. With the new facilities and field, we do anticipate increased programming at Fitzgerald with community events, possibly adding new youth sports opportunities and upgrading the other fields to assist in the growth of our newly formed baseball program.

A newly renovated field and bathrooms are not the only plans for this exciting new addition to our city. With improved accessibility and maintenance of the park, there are other improvements in store in the future. These include playgrounds, adult activity features and a walking loop.

We have received several specific questions about the new project at Fitzgerald and I would like to answer some of them for you:

What is the plan concerning new sound and lighting in the park?

The City has an existing noise level ordinance. That will be enforced strictly. There is also a policy restricting times for games and events in our parks. There is existing lighting and





sound used during games and events in most of our parks. The plan for Fitzgerald Park has high quality, state-of-the-art lights and sound. The current orientation of the main field is east and west, which opens the endzones to the neighborhoods. The newly renovated field will be oriented north and south and, with bleachers on either side and restroom facilities planned, this will channel sound toward Lawrenceville Highway and away from the neighborhoods. The new LED lighting is designed to minimize “light spillage” and direct high-quality light onto the playing surface, decreasing levels in the neighborhoods.

What is the plan to handle the increase in traffic into and out of the facility?

Traffic will remain consistent with existing traffic due to no change in capacity or usage. We have had numerous large games and activities at Fitzgerald in the past few years that have shown ingress and egress to be normal for this type of park/facility. If the need arises, our partners at the DeKalb County Police Department will be on site and can be used for traffic control. Presently, P.D. is required at all games and most large events and activities. This presence is paid for by those conducting the games/events/activities.

How will the maintenance costs be impacted by these renovations?

Park maintenance is always something we consider when making any proposals to add or improve parks and facilities. The annual maintenance costs could potentially decrease with new facilities, infrastructure and fields. Currently we have direct costs for repairing and maintaining old, outdated facilities, infrastructure repairs and maintenance, turf maintenance on two fields, and time costs for staff at this park. By reducing the number of fields and the possibility of installing artificial turf, and with new facilities and infrastructure, we anticipate maintenance costs being consistent with current funding levels.

What about trash/litter in the park?

Litter in our parks is always a concern. As we do presently, user groups will be responsible for trash pickup and removal, and our current policy of park maintenance will continue. We have maintenance staff that monitor parks daily, weekly and monthly for issues and address them.

How will these park improvements affect home/property values in the area?

This park has been in its current configuration and usage since the early 1970s and, with usage not changing, I anticipate the park improvements will be similar to any other investment made in the parks. Improvements to existing parks, and addition of parks to communities, do not harm, but actually improve home value and desirability.

Thanks for listening, and I hope to see you out at Fitzgerald when this project is complete.





TUCKER Community Corner



8/3 – National Night Out
6-8 p.m., 3836 Midvale Road

Join us at Midvale Elementary School for our fifth annual National Night Out event, the culmination of our TKR Summer of Fun! The Patty Wagon and Ice Cream Carousel will be there as well as face painting, games and more.

8/14 – Tucker Cruise-In
11 a.m.-2 p.m., Main Street

One of Tucker's proudest traditions, the Cruise-In is back in full swing! If you're a car nut, or just appreciate a cool city packed with cool classic cars, this is an event you won't want to miss! Happening each month on Tucker's historic Main Street.

8/5, 8/12, 8/19, 8/26 – Tucker Farmers Market
4-7 p.m., 4882 Lavista Road

The Tucker Farmers Market is back in person! If you're looking for the finest in fresh, local produce, cheeses, and handmade artisan goods, come out to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church every Thursday!

8/28 – Paws in the Park
9-11 a.m., 4000 Henderson Park Road

Grab your fur-baby and join Tucker Parks & Recreation at the Henderson Dog Park for a morning of play, toy giveaways, cooling pools and Lifeline Animal project. Vanilla Crepes will be there, too!