



# INTUCKER

MAY 2021 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 5



## HOT SHOTS

TUCKER RESIDENTS YOUNG AND OLD GETTING THE COVID VACCINE IN DROVES AS WE MOVE CLOSER TO HERD IMMUNITY

# EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the May issue of *InTucker*! This issue finds our city at an exciting time. Vaccines are going in arms, our city budget is being decided, and students are winding down their school year while looking ahead to the excitement of summer camp.

Amidst the enthusiasm about a gradual return to normal, there are a couple of events that are not going to be able to happen this month. First and foremost, we are going to celebrate another Mothers' Day weekend without the fun and tradition of Tucker Day. With the uncertainty of COVID, organizers were not able to make the commitments necessary to pull off a Tucker Day in May.

The good news is, unlike last year, organizers do anticipate being able to hold Tucker Day in September on Labor Day weekend. In fact, they've already picked out a slogan for the new date: Fall Fantasy. I'm not sure what that's all about, but I know we're all going to be excited to get back to this great annual tradition and celebration of all things Tucker for the first time since 2019.

The other event that's going to look a little bit different will be Mayor Auman's State of the City Address. In past years, we've really blown it out with big speeches before big crowds and even a post-speech party. This time around, the State of the City will be recorded and then disseminated via the City's digital platforms.

In spite of our challenges, we as a community are taking gradual steps back toward the normal we once knew. And, when we get there, maybe we'll be more appreciative of the great fun these events bring to our lives.

**MATT HOLMES**  
INTUCKER EDITOR

# IN THIS ISSUE



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The COVID vaccine is available to all American adults who want it now. On page 6, see how Tucker residents are doing their part to embrace the vaccine.



**SCHOOL YEAR WRAP-UP**  
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**BUSINESS BOOM**  
With the recent passage of the American Recovery Plan, many businesses are scratching their collective heads wondering "What applies to me?" Angela Brooks answers that question on page 10.



**PTA PROGRESS**  
They give their time for the betterment of their children and their school. On page 14, get to know the PTA super duo who are our May Citizens of the Month.



**ASK RIP**  
What does a day in the life of a Tucker summer camper look like? Can you say fun in the sun with a dash of splash? Rip dives in on page 15.



# INTUCKER

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# From the Mayor:

The City Budget is undoubtedly the single most important piece of business we do as a city. It's a months-long process every year from about February through May. It's the most important because it's the practical outworking of our priorities; said more simply, it's when we put our money where our mouths are.

As we create the budget, there are several important priorities. One is to be transparent, gathering lots of input from our constituents and our professional staff, and then communicating that back in a way that allows for continuous input and refinement. That's part of why it takes so long. It's a big job just to put together a first draft, but then we pass it around, review it, and create opportunities for everyone, including the public, to comment on it before it's finalized.

A second priority is to see that the expenditures we're planning reflect our priorities. There's never enough money to do everything, hard choices always have to be made, and we work hard to account for the diversity of opinion we receive about what's most important for the next year, and even farther out than that.

And finally, we have to be prudent in forecasting revenues to match what we want to spend; spend too much and we're in one kind of trouble since we're required to have a balanced budget, spend too little relative to what we collect and people rightly feel overtaxed. Get it just right and we maintain a proper "rainy day fund", getting the right results from what we spend.

This year is a happy one for the City budget-wise. We created a very conservative budget last year because, as you will recall, the pandemic hit hard in March, just as we had gotten underway with planning the budget we're living under now. We forecast an eight percent decline in revenues, PLUS a \$2,000,000 contingency, which is money we would only spend if it came in, but we were prepared to run the City without it. The very good news is that we already know, with a couple of months left in the budget year, that we will cover that contingency, we will meet our lowered revenue plan, and we might even exceed last year's revenues by the end of the fiscal year. That's right, our revenues will be close to, and may even exceed the pre-pandemic year!

How could that happen? It's simple, but not easy. When the emergency began, we adopted an orientation to fight

with everything we had not to let the pandemic crush our spirits and ruin our livelihoods. It was not our role to solve the medical aspects of the virus or create vaccines. It was our role to analyze and distribute good information, establish proper safety protocols, and balance the need for all aspects of public health; not just physical health, but mental, financial and community health for the citizens of Tucker. Part of that balance was to leave as much room as prudently possible for individuals, businesses and other organizations to make smart, creative decisions about how to survive and even prosper over the course of what has turned out to be a much longer than anticipated battle. Now the report cards are starting to come in.

We had more new businesses created than we lost during the pandemic, including several new restaurants who are hitting it out of the park. Our manufacturing and distribution sector has been solid for the most part, and many have prospered, even struggling to find enough good employees. Sales tax receipts are up in the County, reflecting continued strong consumer spending, albeit in some different ways than before. Businesses staying in business and employing lots of our citizens has led to improved receipts from Occupational Tax Certificates, alcohol taxes, franchise fees and other key sources of income to the City. As property values increase, so will our small slice of your property taxes, which fund our parks. SPLOST revenues, which fund many capital projects, may be up slightly from last year. And, as the hospitality industry gets back on its feet, even taxes from those operations will begin to return to normal levels and beyond.

I'm grateful to our community for its balanced, responsible and patient approach to facing this crisis. As we finish the budget from now through the first of June, I invite you to ask questions and examine the priorities we're developing. Just as we've all been in this public health crisis together, we've all been in on the solutions together, and we're all heading into the future together. It's a bright future indeed for all of us in Tucker and, as always, I'm glad we're in it together!



**FRANK AUMAN**  
MAYOR

# City Council Update



Tucker's Mayor and City Council met three times during the month of April, primarily discussing budgetary issues.

The first meeting took place on April 12, with the Council voting to set a date for a special election to fill a vacant seat. The election, to fill the seat left empty by the death earlier this year of Councilman Bill Rosenfeld, will take place concurrently with the election for three other Council seats and the Mayor's office on November 2. Qualifying for all offices will begin in August.

Earlier in the meeting, Council voted unanimously to approve a mid-year budget amendment. They also voted to approve a special land use permit (SLUP) for the soon-to-be constructed CDC Federal Credit Union at the redesigned Northlake power center. They then held a public hearing on an amendment to the City Zoning Ordinance.

There were a trio of transportation-related issues on the April 12 agenda. The first was a vote to approve a contract for engineering design, aiming to improve safety along Chamblee

Tucker Road. The plan is to reduce lanes from four to three and reduce the speed limit to 35 miles per hour. Second, they approved a contract amendment for the intersection improvements being made at Hugh Howell Road and Flintstone Drive. And thirdly, they voted to adopt the Tucker Summit Community Improvement District (CID) Freight Cluster Plan.

Lastly, Council approved a contract award for enhanced pool amenities. The contract, which was just shy of \$60,000, includes funding for installation of a water slide at Rosenfeld Park pool and an aqua swing at Cofer Park pool.

At work sessions on April 19 and April 26, they discussed and debated projects and initiatives to include in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. The \$16 million budget must be approved by June and will have multiple public hearings over the next two months.

The Mayor and City Council will hold their next meeting on Monday May 10 at 7 p.m. at City Hall (1975 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 350B).

## DATES TO KNOW

**May 3**  
Downtown Development Authority

**May 5**  
Traffic Court

**May 10**  
City Council

**May 12**  
Traffic Court

**May 18**  
Zoning Board of Appeals

**May 19**  
Municipal Court

**May 20**  
Planning Commission

**May 24**  
City Council

**May 31**  
Memorial Day  
(City Hall closed)

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**nextdoor**

# 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](mailto:dgschoeppner@dekalbcountyga.gov)*



In the past couple of years, street racing in metro Atlanta has captured quite a bit of attention. From racing on the interstates to groups taking over roadways and parking lots for burnouts, it has been a growing problem; so much that several

municipalities and even the state legislature have created laws to address it. Far be it for me to complain about having more tools available to combat crime, but this month we are going to talk about how we got here and why I don't think adding more laws is going to achieve the outcome that people desire.

Believe it or not, street racing has always been a problem. When I started here in DeKalb County, most of our problems were on Moreland Avenue out by I-285. Groups would race on the roadway and gather in the parking lots of the industrial businesses on Sunday nights. The police from DeKalb, Atlanta and Clayton County would take turns running them off from their areas. After a while the groups would disperse and no longer be a problem. Back then this area was still kind of out of the way. But as the metro area has grown and more people have been attracted to racing groups, the size of the groups and the number of days they meet has increased.

Social media has been a large contributor to this increase. The organizers of these groups use it to coordinate and promote

their events. Some of these groups have grown to be hundreds strong. One social media post can get just about the whole group at a single location in a very short amount of time. This means the police can't just disperse the group a couple of times to make it go away. It is very easy for them to regroup in a different spot and continue as long as they'd like.

Then there is the reason why I think adding more laws is fruitless. Many of these street racers have absolutely no regard for the law or the safety of others. When we arrive to break up their gatherings, they will take whatever steps necessary to get away. They don't care if anyone else is hurt or property is damaged in the process. Then consider that the police are held responsible for any injuries or damage that may occur. This makes it near impossible to make arrests. About the only time it happens is when the racing groups pick a spot or flee to an area where they can be trapped and they give up. This happens very infrequently.

No one hopes that I am wrong about this more than me. In the meantime, the police will continue to do everything we can do to combat this problem. That includes monitoring social media channels to get a jump start on planned racing outings, as well as trying to bust these outings up as we can. However, until these folks learn to respect our society's laws and the safety of their fellow man, it is going to be an uphill battle.



**Street racing has been glorified and normalized by popular culture, specifically by Hollywood films like the "Fast and Furious" series. (File photo)**

# VACCINE SCENE

TUCKER TURNS OUT TO ROLL UP ITS SLEEVES



Eighteen-year-old Victoria Smash is at a stage in life where her social calendar should be fairly full. Between friends and prom and all the other demands of senior year, she should be in a constant state of busyness. But, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tucker High School senior has led a relatively sheltered existence over these past 14 months, laying low at home and taking her classes virtually.

Victoria had no choice in the matter. She's not just taking care of herself, but looking out for others, as well. One family member has severe asthma. Another is recovering from open-heart surgery. Her mother is a diabetic. And during the past year, the whole family was reminded of the seriousness of COVID as the virus claimed the life of Victoria's beloved great-grandmother.

"It's been rough," Victoria said. "I honestly never got to have my senior year in person. I'm still doing virtual learning and am just now starting to leave the house."

Victoria was one of dozens of people who came out to Tucker Recreation Center on April 20 to receive the Moderna COVID vaccine. Before she attends Georgia State University, Victoria said she wanted to be ready to live safely on campus.

"I'm going to college this fall and I'll be [living in the dormitories]," she explained. "I need to reduce the risk to my friends and family of COVID. I need the peace of mind for myself and my friends."

Bridget Curren got vaccinated at that same April 20 event. A second year anatomy and environmental science teacher at Tucker High, Curren was thinking more of others than of herself when she got the shot.

"I'm still going to be careful, but it makes me feel less nervous," she said, adding her hope that as many people who feel comfortable getting vaccinated will do so. "It's super important being vaccinated because we have a lot of at-risk families at our school. You know, maybe I don't get sick but a student does and they take the virus home to their families."

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 85 million Americans are fully vaccinated. That's good news, but it falls far short of where the nation – and the world – needs to be for herd immunity to be achieved.

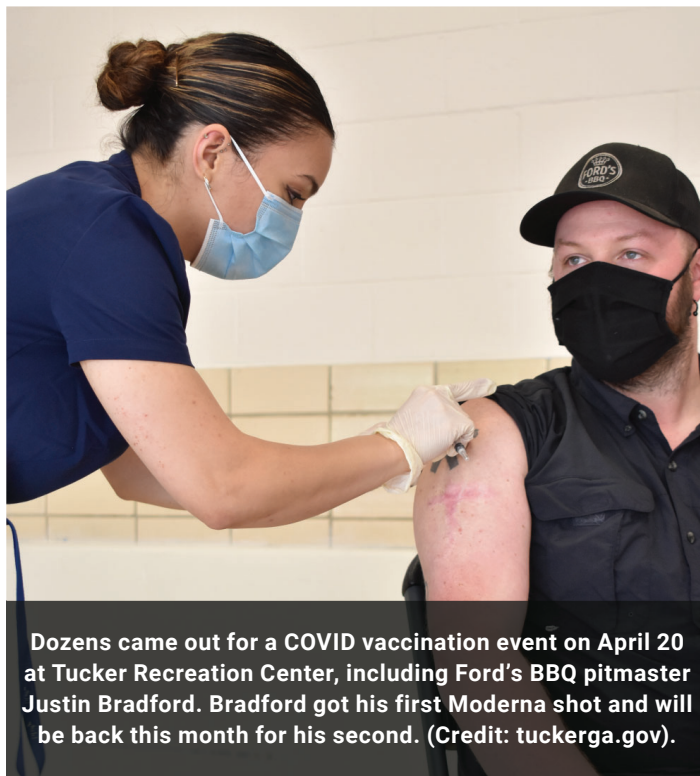
Local pharmacist Jon Carr was the inspiration behind the April 20 vaccine giveaway. He says he applied several months ago to receive vaccines and has since gotten a steady supply. Carr, who says he's only had one flu shot in his entire life, says getting vaccinated against coronavirus was a no-brainer.

"I took this because I've seen some of my friends get really sick from [COVID]," Carr said. "I do believe that in our community we have more vaccine than we have people willing to take it."

Tucker resident Alisha Etheredge waited to get vaccinated until after her baby was born earlier this year. She got her first

Moderna shot on April 20 and, in so doing, expressed her hope that friends and neighbors would follow suit.

"Even though I'm vaccinated, you're not protected," she said. "In order to get back to the life that we enjoy, go get vaccinated."



**Dozens came out for a COVID vaccination event on April 20 at Tucker Recreation Center, including Ford's BBQ pitmaster Justin Bradford. Bradford got his first Moderna shot and will be back this month for his second. (Credit: tuckerga.gov).**

Justin Bradford has his own reasons for hoping people get the vaccine. At 32, Bradford waited to get his shot until older or less healthy people had their turn. The pitmaster at Ford's BBQ on Main Street, Bradford says the pandemic continues to have an impact on his business.

"We've had staffing issues," Bradford shared, adding that it's an industry-wide problem. "We're barely getting by because it's hard to find staff during the pandemic."

Carr and the City of Tucker are partnering on another vaccine event scheduled for May 18 at Tucker Recreation Center. Many of the people who got their first shots on April 20 will be back to be fully vaccinated, while many others will be able to come and get their first shot.

Victoria Smash said she's "thankful" to get that second vaccine later this month, adding that she already has big plans for her newfound immunity.

"I'm going to go on vacation before I start my studies," she said.

Vacations. Just another sign of the "normal" that many will be looking for as society prepares to turn the corner on this pandemic.

# UPDATE ON TUCKER CLUSTER SCHOOLS

On April 20, the Tucker Cluster Council (TCC) held its final meeting of the school year. During that meeting, several members of the DeKalb County School District leadership team provided updates to the group on how things are going in the District on a number of fronts.

ALLYSON GEVERTZ  
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER



The plan is to be face-to-face in August...five days. That's very, very exciting. Everyone's gearing up for that.... There will be an online option for people who, for whatever reason, do not feel comfortable going back. It'll be through Flex Academy. There will be a component that will connect the student to their local school [and those] details are still being worked out.

The Comprehensive Master Plan... is moving along. It's pretty exciting. Probably most of you are engaged enough at your local schools that you might have seen your Facility Condition Assessment or your Educational Suitability Assessment by now. Perkins & Will, [who are] in charge of the whole Comprehensive Master Plan, they're doing a great job incorporating feedback.... There's been input from Tucker, from the schools and the community members that has made it back to Perkins & Will and they are making changes and making edits because of your input on those.

TRENTON ARNOLD  
REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT



We are preparing and looking at next year, and long-term in the future, as well. We talk about the CARES Act funding, we are meeting regularly, and I mean every week, to assess how to best use this money to make sure that we are taking advantage of this one-time infusion of money into the District, but also making sure that it reaches where it needs to go, which is down to the classrooms.

The COVID think tank meets every week. We have conversations about where we are right now, what we need to be looking at in the future, how to be better prepared. We know that COVID is not going away, but we do want to make sure that we take some of the practices that we have learned from this experience and make them into best practices because there are a lot of positive takeaways. We're looking at one right now and, of course, we'd much rather be face-to-face, but being able to meet virtually when we need to [is a benefit]. If you asked all of us a year ago if we'd be comfortable with doing this, we'd say no. Now, it's just secondary nature.

NOEL MALOOF  
DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATIONS



I want to thank [Smoke Rise Elementary School Principal Pamela] McCloud and her team, [community stakeholder] Mr. [Alan] Armstrong and the team that he's pulled together, all the support and shepherding that's going on, it's been fantastic to have this level of input and support. We're looking forward to a beautiful building opening up and those of you who have been closely involved, I think will all agree that we're going to end up with a fantastic school to support our students and to move on into the next chapter of Smoke Rise.

We've been in the COVID crisis for the last year and I commend all the folks on this call for supporting our students. I know that we're also looking at a lot of technology upgrades to continue the great work that's gone on with virtual learning, and the benefits of us really stepping into that realm as much as we've had to, it's going to have a long-term effect on our students in a very positive way.



# Tucker Cluster

## Updates & News

### IMPORTANT DATES

**May 17**

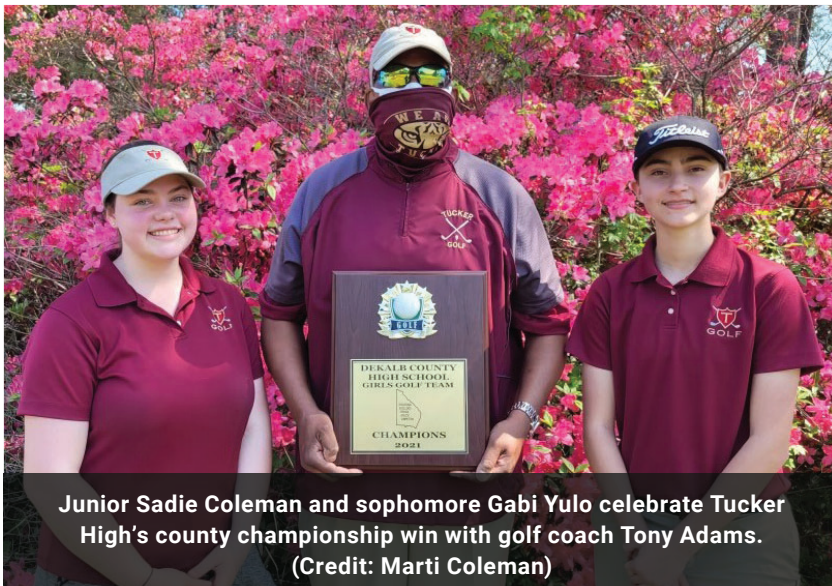
Board of Education Meeting

**May 28**

Last day of school

**May 31**

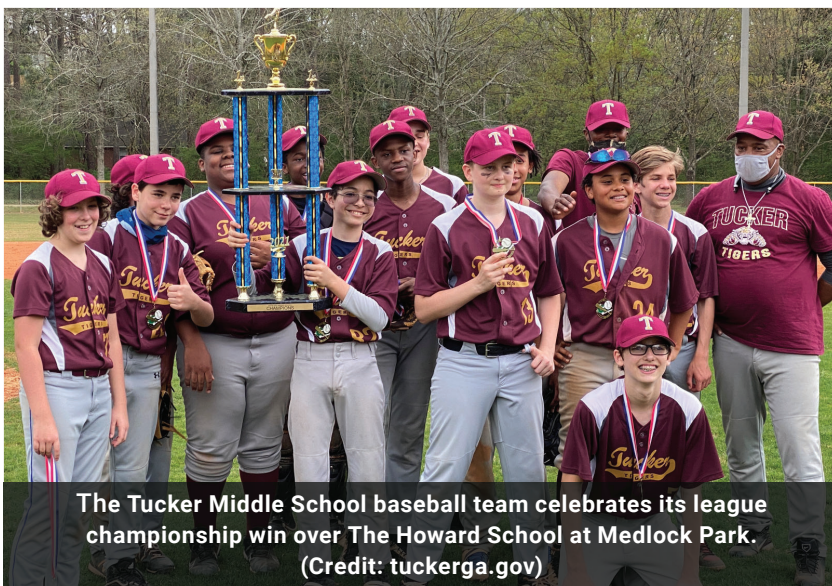
All schools closed for Memorial Day



Junior Sadie Coleman and sophomore Gabi Yulo celebrate Tucker High's county championship win with golf coach Tony Adams.  
(Credit: Marti Coleman)



The Tucker High boys and girls tennis teams made it to state competition in April, with the boys advancing to the Sweet 16.



The Tucker Middle School baseball team celebrates its league championship win over The Howard School at Medlock Park.  
(Credit: tuckerga.gov)

## BRAG SHEET

### BROCKETT ELEMENTARY

- Brockett's fifth grade classes recently flexed their economic muscles by participating in the Stock Market Game.

### IDLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

- Idlewood will welcome the expertise and experience of local businesses as they host a Virtual Career Day on May 14.

### MIDVALE ELEMENTARY

- Midvale will host its annual STEM Week during the week of May 17. In addition to hearing from virtual speakers, students will get to take part in virtual STEM related field trips.

### SMOKE RISE ELEMENTARY

- Fourth grade teacher Kalisha Watts won a \$10,000 grant to give her classroom a complete makeover.

### TUCKER MIDDLE

- TMS will host an IB/STEM showcase on May 13 with teachers and students presenting their IB community projects and STEM projects.

### TUCKER HIGH

- Almost 350 members of the Class of 2021 are expected to take part in graduation exercises on May 28. The ceremony begins at 1 p.m. at Hallford Stadium.

# BUSINESS BOOM

by Angela Brooks, Business Outreach Coordinator



March 2021 marked a one-year anniversary that, arguably, no one wanted to celebrate – a global economy in the grip of a pandemic.

Despite that grim reality, many businesses – particularly small business – did receive some good news in March in the form of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The \$1.9 trillion economic relief package was signed into law and is designed to infuse billions of more dollars into businesses adversely impacted by COVID-19. It also continues some, and expands other, programs that were established under the prior stimulus, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Additionally, it modifies some eligibility requirements, financial and other components, and resources to help struggling businesses and individuals.

“Our business has been hit hard by COVID, and we could use all the help we can get,” said Rebecca Liska, who owns Pinehill Awards of Tucker along with her husband Danny. “The past year was very difficult. Our fixed expenses remained the same, but our sales plummeted. Thankfully, the CARES grant helped us close out 2020 on a positive note.”

The ARP Act came about to provide additional relief for the nation’s small businesses and hardest-hit industries through existing relief programs and added new efforts to help owners like the Liskas pay those maintenance and payroll expenses, as well as unexpected COVID-related costs.

One such relief program in the existing Small Business Administration (SBA) CARES Act relief program is the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), which receives another \$15 billion and is set aside for the Targeted EIDL program. It’s designed for certain small organizations and for entities that had previously applied for the program under the CARES Act, but did not receive all or a portion of their \$10,000 grant. Go to [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) for details.

The ARP is also purported to make some provisions easier to understand and to access – such as eligibility requirements and eligibility across programs, which in some instances allow businesses to apply for and potentially receive funds from multiple programs. It also provides more grant funds and forgivable loans.



Theaters like Tucker’s Movie Tavern could be eligible for a portion of \$16 billion in SVOG funds.



A small handful of businesses in Tucker, like Massage Envy, were unable to survive the financial hit of the pandemic.

## FUNDING FOR SHUTTERED VENUE OPERATORS

The existing Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) is amended by the ARP Act. The program includes over \$16 billion in grants, to be administered by SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance. Entities eligible to apply include live venue operators or promoters, theatrical producers, live performing arts organization operators, museum operators, motion picture theater operators, and talent representatives. The SBA has more information, including a dedicated portal SVOG with requirements, eligibility, FAQs and more on their website.

## PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is an SBA-backed loan designed to help businesses keep their workforce employed during the pandemic. Program changes have been made under ARP in an effort to make access to PPP loans more equitable – equity became a hot-button issue when PPP was initially launched under the CARES Act. Also, if you have previously received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, certain businesses are eligible for a Second Draw PPP loan, and some borrowers may be eligible for loan forgiveness.

## RESTAURANT REVITALIZATION FUND

Like other parts of the country, Tucker's restaurants and bars were among the hardest hit businesses over the past year. Fear and shelter-in-place orders drastically reduced customer traffic, and later social distancing requirements severely limited most restaurants' use of available seating for indoor dining.

"We lost about 60 percent of our revenue when COVID first hit," said chef and general manager Austin Phillips of Shorty's Pizza. And at the same time, they faced increased costs for meat and dairy – another side effect of the pandemic. "As you can imagine, we use a lot of cheese," he added.

There's help in the form of grants, not loans. The Restaurant Revitalization Fund provides \$28.6 billion in direct relief to restaurants through its new grant program. Five billion dollars of this allocation is set aside specifically for small establishments with gross annual receipts of less than \$500,000. Grants can be used for payroll costs, rent and utility payments, mortgage interest, supplies, and paid sick leave. A variety of food and drink establishments are eligible, including restaurants, bars, food trucks, caterers, tasting rooms, brewpubs, and so on.

## EMPLOYER TAX CREDITS

A multitude of employer tax credits have material changes and extensions resulting from the ARP implementation. The tax credits are provided to reimburse 100 percent of leave wages paid by an employer who provides employees with qualifying paid leave taken

for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Consult your tax advisor or the SBA for all the specifics and qualifications related to each available tax credit and your business.

Plummeting revenues and dwindling customer bases, mostly driven by last year's shelter-in-place orders, forced some business owners to cut their payrolls by releasing or furloughing some staff members.

"Our business was down 50 percent in April of 2020," said Starlene Kirkland, co-owner of Swept Away Cleaning and Janitorial. "People were – and some still are – afraid to have us come and clean. So many more people started working from home. Their kids were home from school, and they just didn't feel comfortable having people other than immediate family inside their homes."

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Unemployment insurance has helped many non-traditional, home-based and entrepreneurial businesses stay afloat. ARP makes important changes to the major unemployment insurance programs created by the CARES Act, ensuring that they are extended and continued. Two of these programs related to business owners include Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and the Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC). The PUA program, which is for workers who are not traditionally eligible for unemployment insurance (such as independent contractors), has been extended through early September 2021. The MEUC program targets freelancers and gig economy workers and provides financial assistance to those individuals who receive at least \$5,000 in self-employment income. More details can be found on the Georgia Department of Labor's website, [www.dol.georgia.gov](http://www.dol.georgia.gov).

## SBA DEBT RELIEF

The SBA also offers debt relief to existing SBA loan borrowers whose businesses have been impacted by COVID-19. Businesses in Tucker and throughout the country continue to struggle and many have been forced to alter their operations or just plain shut their doors completely because of this crisis. Althea Jenkins' business was a local casualty of the pandemic.

"This is a very real issue with small businesses actually closing because of the pandemic," said Jenkins. Her high-touch business, Massage Envy Spa, opened in the Tucker Meridian Shopping Center in 2018. "I am so sad. My business closed permanently in March because of COVID." Despite available funding, her customer base just did not rebound enough for her to remain open.

Despite unprecedented losses brought on by this pandemic, the City of Tucker remains committed to helping current businesses to grow, develop and expand, while continuing to work to attract new opportunities to enhance our local economy. Visit our website regularly at [www.tuckerga.gov](http://www.tuckerga.gov) to stay abreast of what's happening and what resources that may be beneficial to your business.

*Note: This column provides a high-level overview of some of the Plan's major provisions, but make sure to go to the appropriate sources to get comprehensive information that may be available to help your small business.*



## BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

# RADIO TUCKER

Jason Becknell is a lifelong radio geek. The Tucker resident began his broadcasting career as a teenager in his native South Carolina, doing odd jobs for the local radio station. Eventually, he graduated from the University of South Carolina and would get into a career in television production. After spending a decade working at WXIA and WGCL as a news producer, he is currently producing at The Weather Channel.

Yet last year Jason decided there was an itch he just needed to scratch.

“I got my start in radio and I always missed that,” Becknell explained. “I thought that Tucker would be a great town to have its own community radio station. But, I thought it would be impractical to launch an FM radio station in a market like Atlanta, and it is. So, I found out about internet radio broadcasting, which allowed me to launch RadioTucker.com.”

Radio Tucker is Becknell’s baby. An online radio station that plays music from the 60s to today, Radio Tucker is a little piece of DeKalb County that can be heard all around the world. Becknell proudly promotes local bands, as well as Georgia staples ranging from R.E.M. to the Allman Brothers and Drivin N Cryin.

“We have local Tucker weather at the top of every hour from Tucker-based meteorologist Ryan Davidson. We also have local information like our ‘What’s Up in Tucker’ segment, telling our listeners what’s happening in the City of Tucker,” Becknell said. “We also allow members of the community to be a guest DJ on Radio Tucker on our guest DJ show that airs Sundays at 6 p.m.”

After its launch, listenership for the station quickly grew into the thousands. That got the attention of companies looking to advertise at the hyperlocal level. Becknell now has paid sponsors across industries like roofing and home repair, mortgage services and personal fitness.

While Radio Tucker has operated exclusively during the pandemic, Becknell has ideas on how to grow the company when things get back to normal. He expects to be a fixture at city events like Tucker Day and the Tucker Chili Cook-off, doing live remote broadcasts and meeting new listeners.

“I want Tucker to have its own radio station where people can get local weather, local music, and we can come together as a community and just have some fun.”

You can stream Radio Tucker 24 hours a day, seven days a week at [www.RadioTucker.com](http://www.RadioTucker.com).

# TEAM TUCKER *Spotlight*

## JESSICA HOLMES, BUILDING DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR

### **What is your professional background?**

I have worked in county government for the last four years. Previously, I worked for DeKalb County Planning & Sustainability in the Land Development and Zoning Departments. I also worked for the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office in the Warrants Department. Before coming to DeKalb County, I worked at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas as an Accounting Technician for Sheppard Air Force Base Lodging Facility.

I completed my undergraduate degree in Communications, from the University of Maryland online while living in Naples, Italy. I am currently working on my MBA degree at Strayer

University, and I look forward to completing my degree fall of next year.

### **What are your day-to-day responsibilities in the Building and Permitting Department?**

My responsibilities include the intake and processing of permit applications, issuance of permits and assisting the public with information regarding the permit process and requirements.

### **Why did you choose to come to Tucker?**

I chose the City of Tucker because I wanted the opportunity to grow professionally. During my interview process and meeting the team, I felt comfortable and I liked that everyone had a positive attitude.

The city of Tucker is growing, and I am glad to be a part of the team and contribute to the growth of the City!

### **What do you like most about your job?**

What I like most about my job is being able to assist customers. I am a people person and I enjoy helping others and customer interaction.

### **Why is Building and Permitting important in a city?**

Building and Permitting is important because we ensure the safety of the community. Obtaining a permit means that you have met all the necessary requirements and also helps protect property values.

## *Off the Wall*

### **What do you like to do in your free time?**

I enjoy traveling, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

### **Have you ever lived anywhere exotic?**

I lived in Naples, Italy for three years. I really enjoyed being able to attend markets daily and walk to the beach and my favorite café or pizzeria. The language barrier can be difficult at times when traveling, however I tried my best to learn enough of the language to get by!

### **What shows are you currently bingeing?**

I am currently catching up on "Law and Order: SVU" episodes that I have missed! I also enjoy watching Netflix movies, as well.

### **What is one thing your co-workers do not know about you?**

One thing my co workers do not know about me is that, even though I love going to the beach, I cannot swim! My parents enrolled me in swimming lessons when I was younger, but I was too scared to complete the lessons.



## CITIZENS OF THE MONTH

# JENNIFER LENAC AND MEREDITH MOSELEY



Oprah Winfrey once wrote, “Leadership is about empathy. It’s about having the ability to relate and connect with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives.” This quote is indicative of two remarkable leaders who selflessly inspire and empower others. Based on these characteristics, I am recommending Mrs. Meredith Moseley and Mrs. Jennifer Lenac (Co-PTA Presidents) for the May 2021 Citizens of the Month Award.

To begin with, these two leaders are highly vested in promoting academic achievement at Tucker Middle School. Mrs. Moseley and Mrs. Lenac, along with the PTA team, render collective feedback relative to our IB and STEM programs. These PTA leaders seamlessly promote Book Fairs to enhance our reading initiatives. They also help facilitate International Night and Black History Month activities.

In addition to their efforts within the school, Mrs. Moseley and Mrs. Lenac are the driving force to advertising our school’s accomplishments to the

community, local businesses and faith-based organizations. Also, they have generated scholarships/donations for the top 10% and generated funds for teacher recognition incentives. Furthermore, amid the pandemic, they played critical roles in donating school supplies, cleaning products, disinfectants, plexiglass and bottled water to the school. Likewise, their constant request is “what else can we do to help?”

Undoubtedly, Mrs. Moseley and Mrs. Lenac have led their team to making an immeasurable positive impact at Tucker Middle School. They exemplify teamwork through every manner of their continuous unmatched service. It is with great pleasure that I have been given the opportunity to elaborate on their unique talents and contributions. In essence, these forerunners have drastically connected, inspired and empowered the lives of everyone at Tucker Middle School and beyond!

*Nomination by Dr. Kathy Cunningham, Principal*

# “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.*



Are you ready to splash into summer?

Tucker is making a splash with improvements at

the pools, as well as to

our popular summer camp. So I thought I'd take the opportunity this month to write a little bit about both.

To start, I know a lot of parents might be asking, "What would a typical day look like at the Tucker Recreation Center Summer Camp?" Glad you asked.

## CAMP DAY

**7 a.m.:** We start the day with a "hello, hi, good morning, and high fives" from the enthusiastic staff team. Then we sing our all-time favorite camp song "I'm Alive, Awake, Alert, Enthusiastic." Such fun! On Wednesdays, the staff dress in their favorite wacky outfits and campers get to do it, too!

**8:30 a.m.:** One of our favorite things is having breakfast together with campers in the dining hall. Breakfast and lunch are made possible by our great partner Wayward Homes.

**8:45 a.m.:** Right after breakfast, it's time for Morning Assembly! This is where we get the day started with a dance party, counselor challenges, riddles and the question of the day. One question could be, "How do you make someone feel welcome here at camp?" Our counselors are trying to make sure campers really feel like they "belong here" and are building forever friends.

**9:00 a.m.:** Next, our groups meet to go over the day's schedule and our daily expectations. It's also the time we

welcome any new campers and we set our daily activity goals!

**10 a.m.:** We have a ton of activities and get to rotate to different ones all day long. (This summer, campers will attend classes with others from their unit cohort – there will be no mixing of units in classes.) This is when we get to create fun and exciting games, crafts, experiments and classes. There will even be a Fortnite Kid Fit class, in addition to all the games being played in the new Rec Center gym. Some days campers will get to swim and, on non-swimming days, there will be water games on the front lawn.

**11:30 a.m.:** After such a busy morning, we have lunch and it is our first time to rest (whew!) and enjoy some really great food! All meals are balanced with the major food groups and, as we are a nut-free camp, they will be free of tree nuts. Lunch is another time campers get to make new friends.

**12:30 p.m.:** On days where it's a pool day, we'll jump on the bus and take a short ride to Cofer Pool, where campers will get to try the exciting new rope swing. (Not to be outdone, Rosenfeld Pool is getting a new waterslide, so get your season passes today!) Don't worry if your child is not a confident swimmer. Each camper is required to take a swim test to enter the deep end. If your child is under 48" tall and they do not pass the swim test, they will be placed in a life jacket and can enjoy the shallow end of the pool with their friends and a camp counselor.

**12:30-2:30 p.m.:** On non-swim days, afternoons are full of fun camp activities. Some days you'll find campers at Henderson Park, engaged in a scavenger hunt. Others, we'll get to learn in one of the STEM rooms, while other times we do art classes.

**3:30 p.m.:** After an exhausting day of fun, we come back together to wrap up the day with the closing ceremony. We get to answer questions like "Who is one new friend you made today?" and "Tell us one thing about that friend."

**4 p.m.:** After so much fun, we start to say goodbye as parents come for pick-up. Safety is a priority at the City of Tucker Summer Camp, so we require all parents and guardians to present their ID at every pick-up throughout the week and that all adults picking up are on the authorized pick-up list.

**WARNING:** Before you pull out of the parking lot, your child may be fast asleep in the back of the car, dreaming about Frozen Treat Friday at camp.

One last note: We will open our pools on Saturday May 29 for the Memorial Day weekend. We will continue with our safety protocols this summer similar to last year. We have made a few adjustments to our swim sessions to expand times and to allow longer stays. We have also adjusted our capacity slightly, but will still limit the number of swimmers in the pool at any time to allow for safe spacing. We have added a couple of new features that we are sure will be a huge hit for the kids and the kid in all of us. Visit [tuckerga.gov/parks](http://tuckerga.gov/parks) for all the details and news for the upcoming summer fun.

**SIGN YOUR  
CAMPERS UP  
TODAY!**

Visit [tuckerga.gov/summerncamp](http://tuckerga.gov/summerncamp) for registration details, dates and times.

# TUCKERGA.GOV

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## TUCKER *Community Corner*



**Thursdays in May –  
Tucker Farmers Market**  
**4-6 p.m., 4882 Lavista Road**

The Tucker Farmers Market has gone virtual! Order online by Wednesday at 8 a.m. for pick up or delivery on Thursday. The Farmers Market website is [TFMOnlineStore.com](http://TFMOnlineStore.com).

**5/8 – Tucker Cruise In**  
**10 a.m.-1 p.m., Main Street**

The first Cruise In since 2019 is not to be missed! CDC safety guidelines will be observed and masks are encouraged. See you on Main Street!

**5/8 – Adult Field Day**  
**4-8 p.m., 4898 Lavista Road**

Adult Field Day is BACK! Our Parks and Recreation Department is excited to once again host Adult Field in May. Visit [tuckerga.gov/parks](http://tuckerga.gov/parks) for details and to register.