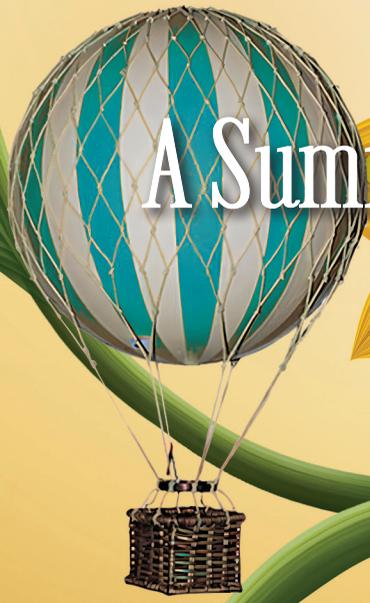


there's more here!

RIDGELAND LIFE



A Summer in Full Bloom!



the SUMMER ISSUE

JUNE - AUGUST 2024

FROM THE MAYOR

Gene McGee



It is hard to believe that it has been 25 years since the City of Ridgeland celebrated its 100th anniversary. As we begin the celebrations of our 125th anniversary, our challenge has been and remains to ensure that our City continues to be a vibrant place to live.

Ridgeland is buzzing with excitement as we welcome new developments like a Topgolf venue and an historic investment from Amazon Web Services, all signifying an even brighter future ahead for our City. Meanwhile, our 125th Anniversary Planning Committee has been working hard to launch milestone activities and events for our anniversary year – including the rollout of the Ridgeland Virtual History Room, the unveiling of the Ridgeland History Trail, and coordination of our anniversary celebration to be held on December 29, the date of Ridgeland's founding in 1899. Please stay tuned for more details from our team.

As summer approaches, I encourage everyone to take advantage of the many opportunities available through the Ridgeland Recreation and Parks Department. Our award-winning parks are some of the finest in the state, offering amenities and programs for a wide range of interests and all ability levels.

Speaking of our wonderful parks, I'm thrilled to announce that during the recent legislative session, Governor Reeves signed local and private legislation that will allow us to develop Freedom Ridge Park Phase II. I'd like to thank Senator

Walter Michel and Senator John Horhn for co-sponsoring the bill which was passed by the full Senate then moved to the House where Representative Jill Ford, Representative Justis Gibbs, Representative Shanda Yates, and Representative Jonathan McMillan supported the bill and ensured its passage. The next step in the process will be to offer a referendum to the citizens of Ridgeland. Approval of the referendum will result in funding for a significant expansion and upgrade of Freedom Ridge Park, which will in turn provide a gateway for Ridgeland to become a regional and national sport's destination.

Summer in Ridgeland always boasts a variety of outdoor opportunities to spend time with family and friends. It's easy to get outside and enjoy the fine weather in our City, including driving the historic and scenic Natchez Trace Parkway, boating on the Barnett Reservoir, playing a match at one of Mississippi's largest public tennis court facilities, playing pickleball, competing in a game on Ridgeland's disc golf courses, and walking or cycling on our multi-use trails.

As always, I encourage you to come and enjoy the 38th Annual

Celebrate America Balloon Glow on June 28th. It is an excellent opportunity to gather your family and friends together, listen to fantastic live music, and enjoy the beautiful balloons and fireworks show to wrap up the evening.

I hope each of you has a wonderful summer, and I look forward to continuing the celebration of our 125th anniversary together! It's truly a privilege to be a part of such a vibrant and positive community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene F. McGee". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

RIDGELAND LIFE

EDITOR

Kim Cooper, City of Ridgeland

SPONSORSHIP

Carly Brandon, City of Ridgeland

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Hederman Brothers

Ridgeland Life is a quarterly publication of the City of Ridgeland.

For information about Ridgeland Life, contact Kim Cooper at Kim.Cooper@RidgelandMS.org.

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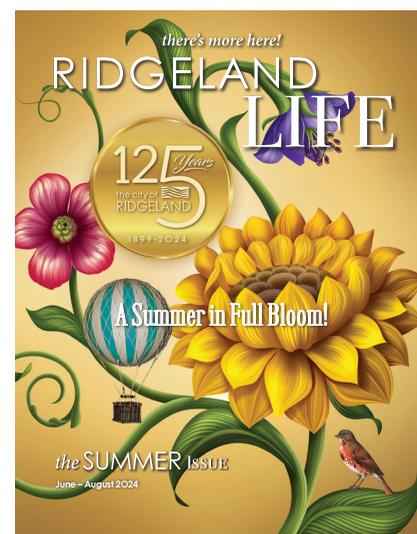
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“ Happy Summer, Ridgeland! Welcome to this sunny issue where we celebrate all that blossoms and thrives in our community. From the beautiful flowers at the Ridgeland Wildflower Field & Art Park to the future expansion of our thriving business community, Ridgeland continues to embrace an innovative spirit for community and growth. ”

Kim

Kim Cooper,
Editor/Director of Public Relations





TELLING RIDGELAND'S STORY:
HISTORY IS NOT JUST ONE EVENT...
HISTORY IS MADE EVERY DAY!



December 29, 2024, is the 125th anniversary of the day the State of Mississippi issued a charter for the Village of Ridgeland. In the coming months, many events and activities will be held to commemorate this date and to celebrate the many “historical” developments made over the last 125 years that have improved the quality of life in our City and will impact our future progress. When I moved to Ridgeland thirty-six years ago, the population was less than 12,000. There were very few traffic lights

or four-lane roads. Traffic was heavy in Old Town when you passed five or six cars on the way to the stop sign at the intersection of Jackson Street and Highway 51. That’s right...No, traffic light... Not even a 4-way stop! I loved the quiet neighborhood and the “walkability” of the area. Although it has changed a lot, Old Town still maintains these qualities. Since the population has grown to close to 25,000, many of you reading this article moved to Ridgeland from other areas.

What attracted you to this area? Would you have moved to Ridgeland if it didn't have a good school system? If there were no recreational facilities? If shopping was limited? If traffic was always heavy? Here are a few significant projects that have impacted the growth of Ridgeland:

- The completion of The Natchez Trace Parkway to Clinton
- Northpark/County Line Development
- Old Town Overlay



- Highland Colony Development
- Freedom Ridge Park and Sports Fields
- Hite B. Wolcott Park and Ridgeland Tennis Center
- Schools: Additional Elementary School, Middle School, High School and Holmes Community College
- Multi-use Trails throughout the City

These are just a few of the “historical” developments that enhanced the quality of life in our City. Establishing electrical service, relocating and paving Highway 51, and completing the reservoir also come to mind.

In the mid-2000s, the City began developing the Ridgeland Area Master Plan (RAMP). A team of consultants was hired, and “visioning” meetings were held to gain input from residents and a steering committee was established. This committee, comprised of representatives from City departments, businesses, residential areas, schools, and more, met with the consultants over the course of many months. While the consultants utilized the information from the visioning meetings, they also listened to suggestions from the committee. The plan proposed and adopted in 2008 won state-wide recognition from the Mississippi Municipal League.

Highway 51 originally ran parallel to the railroad. When the state announced

that the highway would be relocated to its present location, town leadership opposed the move, fearing that commerce would locate along the highway and desert the town. A major roadway, railroad, or interstate cutting through a town can cause one side to grow while the other side withers. Thanks to the completion of three major projects from the Master Plan, Ridgeland has not suffered this fate.

The consultants proposed three sites for the relocation of Ridgeland City Hall. Since the first town hall was located on Jackson Street, the committee voted to keep the new building in the area of the original village. A site at the intersection of School Street and Highway 51 was selected, and Ridgeland City Hall was built. The Ridgeland Municipal Court building and the Ridgeland Police Department are in this area, as well.



The plan also proposed two major east/west connectors - the extension of Lake Harbour Drive to Highland Colony Parkway and Colony Park Boulevard from Highway 51 to Highland Colony Parkway. Completing these corridors has kept Ridgeland connected while leaving it open to future expansion.

So, you see, we are celebrating more than one day in our history this year. Ridgeland has been making history for the past 125 years - building a vibrant and thriving City, leading to an even brighter future.

Happy 125th Anniversary Ridgeland!

By Polly Hammett

“ Understanding the history of Ridgeland is equally important to planning for the future. We should celebrate our successes while continuing to enhance best practices to preserve a long-term sustainable future. The last 125 years of growth will serve as a foundation for all the great things to come. ”

Alan Hart,
Director of Public Works

125TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR CELEBRATIONS

This year marks a significant milestone as the City of Ridgeland celebrates its 125th anniversary. Planning is underway to set the stage for activities commemorating Ridgeland's past and celebrating the bright future ahead.

Three key activities that will take place during this monumental year:

1. Virtual History Room: Ridgeland will introduce a Virtual History Room on the City's website that will mirror the physical History Room located at City Hall. The new feature will showcase historical archives of Ridgeland's first families, a share your story component, and much more. This virtual space will allow greater access to the narratives that have helped to shape Ridgeland.

"The first families are significant to our history and have left us with a heritage we can be proud of. We honor those who have made Ridgeland a special place to live and work, and we believe that a vital part of being a community is remembering our heritage and being thankful for those who took the time to plan for the future of our great City," stated Mayor Gene McGee.

*Celebrating
the
Foundation
of our
FUTURE!*



2. Historical Markers Unveiling:

Following the successful unveiling of the first history trail marker located at City Hall and display cabinets honoring the first families of Ridgeland in October 2023, the City is excited to host a special event around the unveiling of 20 additional markers, further enriching our historical landscape. The Historical Committee of Ridgeland, with assistance from the Ridgeland Tourism Commission and City staff, has collaborated on developing the Ridgeland History Trail. The History Trail will consist of interpretive wayside exhibits highlighting the culture and history of Ridgeland. It will utilize the existing multi-use recreational trail system and additional off-trail sites. More details about the Ridgeland History Trail will be announced this summer.

3. Anniversary Event: The main event of the year's celebrations will be held on December 29th, the date of Ridgeland's

founding. Ridgeland was incorporated as a village on December 29, 1899, after the first families settled in the area. The event will be held at the Waller Craft Center, and Explore Ridgeland will sponsor a drone show production.

The Planning Committee is also working on a variety of other fun activities that will provide opportunities for the community to come together for this special and celebratory year. Additional activities will include an art/essay contest with Ridgeland's local schools and opportunities for local businesses.

These celebrations are not just about marking a milestone; they are a tribute to those who came before us and a celebration of a future path we pave together as a community. For upcoming details regarding events and activities, please remember to follow the City of Ridgeland's social channels, sign up for Ridgeland Alerts, and visit www.ridgelandms.org. Join us in making Ridgeland's 125th anniversary a year to remember!

125th Anniversary Planning Committee

Members: Kim Cooper – Chair, Nancy Batson, Pat Truesdale, Jim Woodrick, Robby Carr, Polly Hammett, Donna Dye, Mike Porter, Jane McGee, D.I. Smith, Bill Lee, Matt Dodd, Lisa Walters, Bryan Johnson, Linda Bynum, Karen McKie, Kenya Rachal, Carol Fitzgerald, Explore Ridgeland Staff, Ben McDonald, and William Gilbert

RIDGELAND WILDFLOWER GARDENS

Imagine stepping into a magical garden filled with thousands of colorful wildflowers located along winding paths. Visitors are greeted by upcycled sculptures that peek up through the flowers. As visitors walk the path through the vibrant garden, songbirds fly in and out in search of bugs to feed their babies while butterflies gently flit from plant to plant, opening and closing their beautiful wings in appreciation of the magical space.

The Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park is hiding in plain sight, next to Seabrook Paints, just off the interstate in Ridgeland at 311 West Jackson Street. The paint store employees keep an eye on



the garden and welcome visitors to use their parking lot.

About a mile away, another, more obvious, field of vividly colored zinnias will line Highway 51 in front of Ridgeland City Hall. It's not unusual to see people with clippers and buckets of water, choosing the blooms they want to put in their homes, businesses, or to give to friends.

Jan Richardson, chairperson of Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, says they have never run out of flowers. She explains that Karen McKie of Green Oak Nursery first came up with the idea to grow zinnias for the public to enjoy. "She brought her idea to the mayor, and he connected her to our group. We scouted sites and decided that

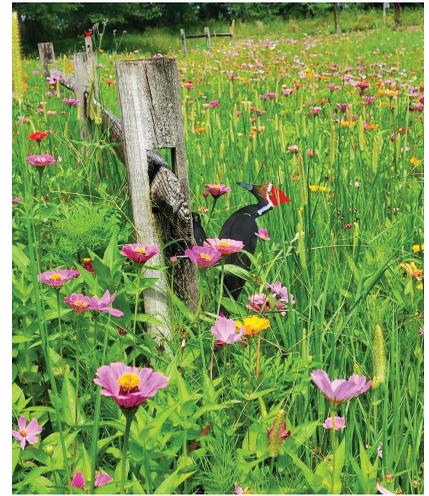
along Highway 51 would be ideal." That was five years ago, and new zinnias will pop up in the field once again this year.

"We have had support from the City and the Chamber of Commerce," says Jan. "The City prepared the fields, and we planted the seeds, provided to us by Wildflower Trail of Mississippi, through Keep Mississippi Beautiful. Tim Taylor and Matt Dodd with the City have been a tremendous help."

The wonderful thing about zinnias is that once planted, they maintain their own. Once the flowers go to seed, they produce a second crop of flowers that will bloom until the first frost. Jan says that collecting the seeds is encouraged.







“We have people who collect the seeds and plant them in their own yards. It’s the ultimate way to perpetuate this beauty. We’d love to see zinnias everywhere!”

Back at the Wildflower field on Jackson Street, zinnias share the garden space with black-eyed Susans, cosmos, cornflower, and the state’s wildflower, coreopsis. The garden is a place to stroll and enjoy nature. Visitors can also cut wildflowers to take home.

“It’s been fun to see families with children visit the garden,” says Jan. “The garden is also animal friendly, and we see folks there walking their dogs. Fortunately, they have all been considerate about picking up their dogs’ waste.” Members of Keep Ridgeland Beautiful volunteer to work in the gardens once a week. “We also have help from the Ridgeland Garden Club. They have been so generous with

cuttings from their own yards that we plant in the garden.”

Jan says the gardens are a lab of sorts, where residents can observe the plants and get ideas for their own yard. Tim Taylor designed and helped build the walking trail and gardens, where something different is blooming all the time. Sculptures made by Craftsmen’s Guild of Mississippi member Harry Day rise above the flowers, depicting activities that can be enjoyed in Ridgeland. “People

also come to the garden to birdwatch and to see the butterflies. We have created a real habitat for them in the garden.”

According to Jan, the field of flowers has an impact on economic development and tourism, as well as quality of life for Ridgeland residents. “We have had a professor from Mississippi College who brought his botany class to the garden, and we’ve had groups of children visit as well. It’s amazing what a field of flowers can do for a community.”

By Susan Marquez



SUMMER IS FILLED WITH SO MUCH TO DO IN RIDGELAND!

Summer is about engaging in fun activities and enjoying the warm weather. Ridgeland provides plenty of summer fun, whether your family enjoys spending time outdoors, finding new hobbies, attending one of the many events in the City, or more. There is something for everyone this summer in Ridgeland!

WALLER CRAFT CENTER

Show your creativity, and don't miss any of the fun summer camps and activities provided at the Waller Craft Center.



YOUNG ARTISAN STAINED GLASS CAMP

June 4 - 7, 11 - 14, 18 - 21

Young Artisan Stained Glass Camp, led by artist Sherry Stewart, will be held June 4 - 7, June 11 - 14, and June 18 - 21. This camp is for kids ages 9-18, and they will learn to cut glass and create their own stained glass! The camp is from 9:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. each day and costs \$205, which includes all the supplies.

YOUNG ARTISANS MOSAIC CAMP

July 9 - 12

Young Artisans Mosaic Camp, led by artist Corley Marsalis, will be held from July 9 to July 12 for ages 9 to 18. This camp will teach students the skills to complete a mosaic piece. The camp costs \$225.



CREATIVE CRAFT CAMP

July 16 - 19

Young campers ages 5 to 8 are welcome to Creative Craft Camp from July 16 to July 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

RENAISSANCE AT COLONY PARK

NEXTECH WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY E-WASTE-DISPOSAL EVENT

June 5

Join the Renaissance on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the NexTech World Environment Day E-Waste-Disposal Event. The event offers residents and businesses the disposal of discarded electronics, including computers, monitors, televisions, cell phones, printers, scanners, and cords.



From Friday, July 12, through Sunday, July 14, the Renaissance at Colony Park is celebrating Christmas in July. Enjoy amazing summer sales and apply to win fabulous prizes from Renaissance retailers and restaurants.

NORTHPARK



CELEBRATING 601 DAY

June 1

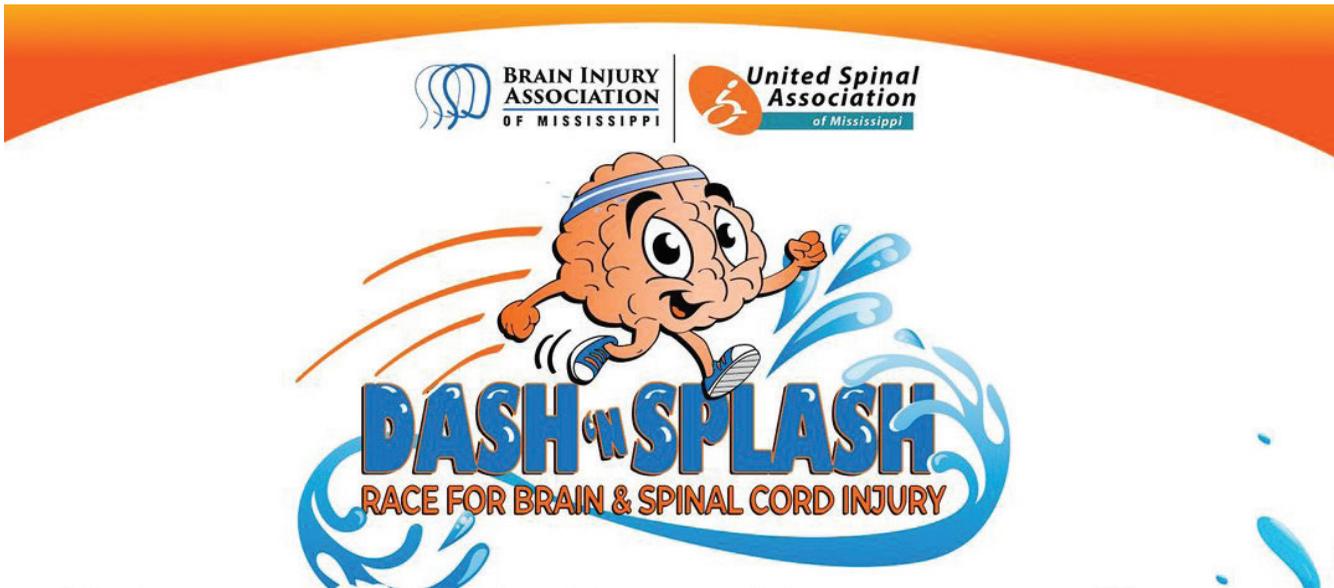
On June 1, join us in Celebrating 601 Day, dedicated to local shopping. The event highlights local businesses at Northpark.



KIXCON

August 31

Join us for the one-day celebration of KixCon on August 31 for all things Sneakers! KixCon includes panels, vendors, demonstrations, and entertainment.



OLD TRACE PARK

DASH'N SPLASH RUN, WALK, AND ROLL: THE RACE FOR BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD INJURY

June 29

Get ready for an exhilarating adrenaline rush at the 2024 Dash' N Splash Run, Walk, and Roll! This event promises a day filled with vibrant energy and community spirit at the scenic Old Trace Park. Whether you want to sprint, jog, or wheel your way through the course, everyone is invited to join the fun! Soak

up the Mississippi sunshine and cool off at our splash zones. What's better than getting your heartbeat up and enjoying a splash-tastic cool down? Mark your calendar and be a part of this unforgettable experience. Let's dash, make a splash, and create memories that will last a lifetime!

MORE OUTDOOR ACTIVITES

THE BIG RUN

Hosted by Fleet Feet
Township at Colony Park
6:00 p.m.
June 5, 2024



MAG RIDGE BMX EVENTS

Join Mississippi's only BMX track for the annual series of summer races. This includes a weekend-long Gold Cup and state qualifiers every June.

- June 1:** Gold Cup Qualifier Race
- June 2:** State Qualifier Race
- June 14:** Registration Day

- Registration 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
- This will be a free event sponsored by USABMX. It will be open to the public for those wanting to try out BMX.
- August 16:** Race for Life
- All proceeds will be donated to the Race for Life organization.

August 17: Earned Double Race

August 18: State Championship Race

All races and practices are open to the public for viewing. We have practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., and regular single-point races are on Fridays starting at 7:00 p.m. during the summer months.

KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY: KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL AND PARTNERS EARN STATE-WIDE HONORS

Keep Mississippi Beautiful, the state's leading organization for community improvement, honored Keep Ridgeland Beautiful and two of its local partners, Explore Ridgeland and The Village School MS, at the 31st Annual Awards Program.

Keep Mississippi Beautiful's annual awards program recognizes the best of the best among our network of community-based affiliates, leading corporate partners and individuals across Mississippi who have committed to delivering cleaner, greener, and more beautiful communities.

Keep Ridgeland Beautiful won first place in the *Wildflower Trails of Mississippi* category. Ridgeland's Wildflower Field and Art Park has a faithful following: a first visit will lead to many more, as



the field's floral blooms and bird and butterfly population changes through the seasons. Keep Ridgeland Beautiful is grateful to Entergy volunteers for assisting with the wildflower seed planting for the last two years. Open to the public from sun up to sun down; this area features a walking trail weaving through the wildflowers. Find local artist Harry Day's whimsical upcycled sculptures representing activities available in Ridgeland.

In partnership with Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, Explore Ridgeland was thrilled to accept the *Keep Mississippi*

Beautiful Business Partnership Award for promoting the Ridgeland Wildflower Field to visitors and area locals. The field is listed as a featured attraction on www.explorerridgeland.com/things-to-do. The Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park is also conveniently located near the Chisha Foka Multi-Use Trail entrance.

The Village School MS earned an honorable mention in the High School Youth and Education Group category for their commendable, ongoing volunteer efforts. Together with Keep Ridgeland Beautiful and Ridgeland City Garden Club, over 600 daffodil

“ These award winners tell a story of commitment, dedication, and tireless service given to their communities. Keep Mississippi Beautiful awards are given to true leaders across our state that make a difference every day. ”

Sarah Kountouris,
Executive Director,
Keep Ridgeland Beautiful



bulbs were planted in new beds near City Hall, along Highway 51 South. The Village School high school students and staff also participated in a workday at the Never Forget Garden located at Ridgeland's Freedom Ridge Park around the pavilion near the baseball field entrance.

By Keep Ridgeland Beautiful
Committee



KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL YARD OF THE MONTH AWARDS

Through the Yard of the Month Program, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful recognizes residents and businesses who demonstrate exemplary efforts in maintaining and beautifying their homes and outdoor spaces.



MARCH *Yards of the Month*
Ridgeland City Hall at 100 West School Street



APRIL *Residential Yard of the Month*
Connie Brewer at 335 Pinewood Lane



MAY *Residential Yard of the Month*
Matthew Boyd at 120 North Central Avenue



MARCH *Yards of the Month*
City of Ridgeland Clock Tower



APRIL *Business Yard of the Month*
Primos Café at 515 Lake Harbour Drive



MAY *Business Yard of the Month*
Concourse at Colony Park at
1052 Highland Colony Parkway

explore outdoors



32.4584,
-90.0278

The Rez

always biting

Time to go outside! Need a hand finding the right place to play? We can help at exploreRidgeland.com.

explore
RIDGELAND



RIDGELAND TOURISM OPENS NEW VISITORS CENTER AND UNVEILS NEW BRAND

By Explore Ridgeland Staff

After nearly two years of research, focus groups, design, and interpretive creation, officials gathered to open the new visitors center for the Ridgeland Tourism Commission (RTC) and unveil the destination's new brand: Explore Ridgeland. The new brand elements will be used to market the City across the nation to attract visitors helping to positively impact the local economy and increase the quality of life for residents.



explore RIDGELAND

"These projects have been the result of cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders and leaders from our community as well as visitors from around the region who came to Ridgeland as leisure consumers, group travel experts, small meeting planners, and event and sports organizers," said Chris Chapman, President and CEO of Explore Ridgeland. "We look forward to getting the word out to our audiences about our new brand and many new offerings."

As Mississippi's fourth-largest industry, tourism plays a vital role in Ridgeland, and RTC has been leading this charge for almost 27 years.

"We have seen growth and changes in all departments - marketing, sales, visitor services - and in the world, through the digital landscape and the evolving role of destination marketing organizations in their communities," added Chapman. "Collectively, our staff has over 80 years of tourism experience to help make Ridgeland one of the fastest-growing tourism markets in our State, especially for outdoor enthusiasts, shoppers, and event-goers."

Because of this growth, RTC board members and staff wanted to better reflect the Ridgeland product through creative messaging to out-of-market visitors as well as with the in-market welcome center. Thus, two major projects began consecutively: plans for the new visitors center and a full creative rebranding campaign and website.

With new creative assets in place, RTC and their board began combining the creativity into interpretive tools designed to tell the story of Ridgeland and the City's offerings as guests explore the new Visitors Center, located on the I-55 side of the Renaissance at Colony Park (1000 Highland Colony Parkway, Suite 3002 between Barnes and Noble & AT&T).

"We truly appreciate the A-Team, led by Andrew Mattiace, for helping us to visualize what the new space could be for the Visitor Center," said Lesley Holleman, RTC board president and owner of Fleet Feet Jackson.



"The tourism team has accomplished so much by moving to this location as we increase visibility for our visitors, add parking spaces, and have a more modern center to tell the story of Ridgeland."

New features highlighted include a Bikeshare patio with Explore Ridgeland branded bikes, an outdoor scenic mural, Waller Craft Center displays, local art, a 24-hour accessible True Omni Kiosk, and a branded conference room and bike wall depicting Ridgeland trails.

The visitor economy is vital to Ridgeland's success. In 2022, visitors spent \$106.8 million in Ridgeland generating an economic impact of \$121.6 million. That money comes from outside the region and benefits the local community.

"Ultimately, our mission is to increase opportunity and economic impact for our City, and we believe the 'Explore Ridgeland' message will encourage guests and residents alike to explore their passions and tell others about our thriving City," said Chapman.

"Transitioning from Visit Ridgeland to Explore Ridgeland signifies a renewed approach to showcasing Ridgeland as a premier travel destination. The City is excited about the future and would like to thank Chris Chapman and her team for all of their hard work with the rebranding and promotion of our great City," stated Kim Cooper, City of Ridgeland Director of Public Relations.

For more about the brand and the Ridgeland tourism offerings, visit www.explorerridgeland.com.



RECRE8

CITY SUMMER EVENTS!

The City of Ridgeland's Recreation and Parks Department looks forward to a fun summer!

On June 28, we'll host the 38th Annual Celebrate American Balloon Glow at Northpark. In Partnership with the Mississippi Championship Hot Air Balloon Festival and Canton Tourism, the balloons will come

to life and light up the night sky as we celebrate America with a patriotic fireworks display. We will have musical entertainment on the main stage, a kid's corner, and food vendors throughout.





Inaugural State Games – Ultimate Flying Disc

Ultimate is a fun and exciting team sport that is growing all around the country. It combines the athleticism of running and quick changes of direction with the skill of throwing – the disc flies like nothing else. (USA Ultimate website)

Date: June 1 – 2, 2024

Location: Freedom Ridge Park

For more info:

<https://stategamesofms.org/event/166335/>



Father Child Fishing Tournament

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks presents the Father Child Fishing Tournament!

- Bring your fishing pole or rod and reel and bait to catch your fish!

- Prize winners: 12 years old and under
- Prizes: biggest fish, smallest fish, and most fish
- There is no charge for this event.

Location: Old Trace Park, Ross Barnett Reservoir

Date: June 8

Time: 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.



Fall Sports Registration Dates

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks partners with Madison Ridgeland Youth Club and Mississippi Futbol Club to provide fall league sports. Registration deadlines are as follows:

- MFC Fall Soccer: registration from June 1 – July 10 (visit mfcsocket.com)
- Flag Football: registration from June 5 – July 31
- MRYC Fall Baseball: registration from July 15 – August 15 (visit mryouthbaseball.com)
- MRYC Fall Softball: registration from July 4 – September 1 (visit mrycsoftball.com)

SkyHawk Summer Camp

SkyHawks summer camps offer a variety of sports camps for kids ages 12 and under. Each week is different!

- Camp sports: Golf, Flag Football, Soccer and more
- Ages vary by sports camp
- Visit Skyhawks.com for more information.

Location: Freedom Ridge Park / Sand Volleyball is at Hite Wolcott

Date: June & July



Dog Obedience

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks is a program partner with The Jackson Obedience Training Club (JOTC). JOTC offers puppy, beginner, and advanced dog obedience classes.

- Class registration is in July & August
- Classes start in September
- Classes are located at Old Trace Park
- Proof of vaccination by a licensed vet is required
- There is a fee for this program.

To find out more information about the 2024 fall classes, visit www.jotc.org.



Enjoy an Evening of Patriotism and Celebration

The City of Ridgeland and Ridgeland Recreation and Parks is proud to present an evening of patriotism and celebration at the CELEBRATE AMERICA BALLOON GLOW! There is no admission cost for this family-friendly event.

You'll enjoy seeing all the balloons here for the Mississippi Championship Balloon Festival inflate and light up the night sky. While you're there, enjoy food vendors, a kid's corner, and live music. You'll get down to the sounds

of SoundCheck the Band and Drake Milligan. Temperance Babcock will share patriotic music during the impressive fireworks show.

- Friday, June 28, 2024 at Northpark Mall
- Festivities begin at 5:00 p.m.
- Musical Guests: DJ Trix, SoundCheck the Band and Drake Milligan
- Fireworks show starts at 9:15 p.m.
- Patriotic musical performance by Temperance Babcock starts at 9:30 p.m.

- Bring your chair or blanket to enjoy this FREE event
- Kid's Corner is open from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- For more details, visit the City of Ridgeland's Recreation and Parks Department Facebook page: @RidgelandRecreationandParks or the City of Ridgeland's website at ridgelandms.org



SUPER SENIORS

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Exercise

\$15/month
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Instructors: Martha Millsaps,
Rita Latham, and Lynda Assink

Certified instructors lead participants through a series of cardiovascular and strength training exercises specifically designed to improve flexibility and health in senior adults.

Line Dance

\$10/class or \$40/month
Mondays
6:00 p.m.
Instructor: Darlene Epple

Learn a wide variety of line dances while exercising in a fun way, no partner needed.

Martial Arts for Seniors

\$10/month
Tuesdays and Thursdays
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Instructor: Andy Dillon

Learn age and physically appropriate traditional martial arts and practical self-defense techniques.

Seated Yoga

\$5/class or \$30 for 6 (30 minute) classes
Mondays and Fridays
11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Instructor: Martha Millsaps

Yoga practice connects the mind, body, and your breath. This class trains you on breathing techniques and helps to focus your mind. Most of the class is done from your chair.

Standing Yoga

\$5/class or \$30 for 6 (30 minute) classes
Mondays and Fridays
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Instructor: Martha Millsaps

Yoga practice connects the mind, body, and your breath. This class includes standing poses for balance and floor poses to improve overall strength.

Senior Fit

\$15/month
Mondays and Wednesdays
12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Instructor: Sally Holly

Improve balance, flexibility, and strength through stretching and light weights for those recovering from recent illness, surgery, or neurological diseases.

The Complete Mix

\$15/month
Mondays and Wednesdays
1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays
1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
Instructor: Sally Holly

Intermediate circuit type exercise combining low impact cardio, balancing, stretching and strengthening exercises.

Tap Dancing

\$5/class
Mondays
2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Instructor: Monica Russell

Beginning to intermediate tap dance instruction. This group performs at Ridgeland events and nursing homes.

Men's Bible Study

FREE
Tuesdays
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Men are welcome to join the group in person and everyone is invited to watch the recording on Facebook @RidgelandMensBible.

To stay up-to-date on the latest from Ridgeland's Senior Adult Programs, sign up for our monthly e-newsletter by emailing neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org!

Neeley Jones

Senior Adult Coordinator
(601) 856-6876, neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org,
Facebook: [facebook.com/ridgelandsuperstarseniors](https://www.facebook.com/ridgelandsuperstarseniors)
Ridgeland Recreational Center, 137 Old Park Trail, Ridgeland, MS 39157

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Ridgeland Garden Club

\$20/year
 1st Tuesday of the month
 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

A monthly meeting for those who love nature and gardening. Fun and educational programs served with a nice lunch. Please contact President Peggy Peterson if interested in joining the waitlist at Peggybpeterson@gmail.com.

Bridge

\$1
 Dates: 6/20, 7/18, 8/15
 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

A team trick taking game played with a standard 52 playing card deck.

Birthday Bingo

FREE
 Dates: 6/27, 7/25, 8/22
 NEW TIME: 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Everyone is invited to play bingo, win prizes and eat cake in celebrating all of the birthdays each month. Must sign up in advance, space is limited.



senior adult programs

RIDGELAND recreation & parks senior adult programs

SUMMERHOUSE BEAU RIDGE

WATERMELON DOOR HANGER WORKSHOP

Thursday, June 13th, 2:30 - 4:00 pm
 Ridgeland Recreational Center

Let's kick off summer with a craft workshop sponsored by Summerhouse Beau Ridge! We will be making the most adorable watermelon door hangers! No artistic talent needed!! Spots will fill up quick! **Cost is only \$20!**

Register at 769-235-9579 or email neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org. Limited space available!

VETERANS' COFFEE & LEARN

THURSDAY, JULY 18 AT 9:00 AM

RIDGELAND RECREATIONAL CENTER
 (LOCATED INSIDE OF OLD TRACE PARK)

JOIN VISITING ANGELS AS THEY DISCUSS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HOME CARE THROUGH THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION (VA). REGISTER AT 769.235.9579 OR NEELEY.JONES@RIDGELANDMS.ORG.

RIDGELAND recreation & parks senior adult programs

Visiting Angels LIVING ASSISTANCE SERVICES



Photo courtesy of Explore Ridgeland

SUMMERTIME IN THE CITY

Whether you're interested in family fun events, sporting activities, or simply enjoying nature, there's something for everyone. Here are a few suggestions for making the most of the summer in Ridgeland!

EVENTS

JUNE 1 - 2

Ultimate Flying Disc

Freedom Ridge Park

JUNE 5

*The Big Run
Hosted by Fleet Feet*

The Township at Colony Park
6:00 p.m.

JUNE 5

*NexTech World
Environment Day*

Renaissance

JUNE 6

Cartoons & Portraits

Ridgeland Library
3:00 p.m.

JUNE 7

*Magician Dorian
LaChance*

Ridgeland Library
10:00 a.m.

JUNE 8***Father Child Fishing
Tournament***

Old Trace Park
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

JUNE 11***Balloon Pilot, Ken Johnston***

Freedom Ridge Park
9:00 a.m.

JUNE 4 - 7
JUNE 11 - 14
JUNE 18 - 21

***Young Artisan Stained
Glass Camp***

Waller Craft Center
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

JUNE 13***Senior Adult Program:
Door Hanger Craft***

Ridgeland Recreational Center
2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

JUNE 18***Cartoons & Portraits***

Ridgeland Library
2:00 p.m.

JUNE 20***Glow in the Dark
Painting Party***

Ridgeland Library
2:00 p.m.

JUNE 28***Celebrate America
Balloon Glow***

Northpark
5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

JUNE 29***Dash 'N Splash Run,
Walk, and Roll***

Old Trace Park

JULY 9 - 12***Young Artisans Mosaic
Camp***

Waller Craft Center

JULY 12 - 14***Christmas in July***

Renaissance

JULY 16 - 19***Creative Craft Camp***

Waller Craft Center

JULY 18***Senior Adult Program:
Veterans Coffee & Learn***

Ridgeland Recreational Center
9:00 a.m.

AUGUST 31***KixCon***

Northpark

FOREVER MOTOWN: THEME OF RIDGELAND CHAMBER'S AWARDS BANQUET



Volunteers and City Leaders Honored

Business leaders and City officials recently filled the Country Club of Jackson to celebrate Ridgeland's economic growth and development during 2023 and to honor volunteers for their dedicated service to the Chamber and City.



Forever Motown featured Jackson's Mo' Money Band with a special video tribute to 2022 and 2023 Ridgeland Chamber President Ray Balentine of Michael Baker International from Motown legend G.C. Cameron, lead singer for The Temptations. Ray, a graduate of Mississippi State University, also received a video tribute from Mississippi State University President Dr. Mark Keenum, congratulating Ray on two very successful years as Ridgeland Chamber President.

Ray passed the President's gavel to 2024 Ridgeland Chamber President Cecil Harper of Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, P.A.

“With our 2024 theme, Turning Vision Into Reality, we will continue our mission of not only helping businesses to succeed but helping businesses turn their vision and dreams into reality,” said 2024 Ridgeland Chamber President Cecil Harper. “Let’s make 2024 the year when we all turn our visions into reality.”

The Awards Banquet also honored Ridgeland Chamber volunteers for their contributions to the Chamber and the City of Ridgeland.

By Linda Bynum,
Chamber Executive Director



2023 Award Winners



2022 and 2023 Ridgeland Chamber President Ray Balentine, Michael Baker International, welcomes Chamber members and guests to the Chamber's 2023 Annual Awards Banquet.



Sissy Lloyd of Professional Eyecare Associates left and was named 2023 Volunteer of the Year. Presenting the award is 2022 Volunteer of the Year, Allison DeWeese of Holmes Community College.



Scott Stricklin of Fisher Brown Bottrell Insurance, Inc., left, was named 2023 Diplomat of the Year. Presenting the award is 2022 Diplomat of the Year David Broadaway of Members Exchange Federal Credit Union.



StorageMax received the 2023 Community Service Award. Presenting the 2023 Award to Sumer Barakat of StorageMax, right, is Diane Jackson of Ridgeland, who was named the 2022 Community Service Award recipient.



Staffers, Inc. was named 2023 Business of the Year. Presenting the award to Staffer's President and CEO Beth Henry is John Dorsa, State Farm Insurance, which was named 2022 Business of the Year.



Dr. Mark Byrd of First Ridgeland, left, was named City Maker 2023. Presenting the award to Dr. Byrd is Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee.



Ray Balentine, Michael Baker International and 2022/2023 Ridgeland Chamber President Cecil Harper, Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, the Chamber's gavel and wishes him a successful year.



2024 Ridgeland Chamber President Cecil Harper, Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, presents Ray Balentine, Michael Baker International, with the President's plaque.

2024 Ridgeland Chamber Board of Directors

President
Cecil Harper
Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, P.A.

Vice-President
Tim Magandy
Robot Coupe USA, Inc.

Treasurer
Nicky Cobb
Guaranty Bank & Trust Company

Immediate Past President
Ray Balentine
Michael Baker International

Shawn Cochran
Northpark

John Dorsa
State Farm Insurance

Chris Hemphill
C Spire Business

Deonte Oscar
Community Bank of Mississippi

Carla Palmer
CPA Realty, LLC

Jay Reber
CenterPoint Energy

Jeremy Rodden
BankPlus

Tom Steadman
Tuxedo Junction

Chamber Staff

Linda Bynum, Executive Director

Sandy Baas, Administrative Assistant



ANN SMITH ELEMENTARY

School Highlights

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ASE Parent Academy

This January, Ann Smith Elementary started the first Parent Academy. Karen Harness, principal, stated, “My goal for the past three years has been to increase parent engagement. Research shows that parent engagement is linked to improved student behavior, higher academic achievement, and enhanced social skills. I hope that the parents completing this program will be advocates for our school and will pay it forward by continuing to educate other parents on the importance of being actively engaged in supporting school events and building strong relationships with our teachers and administrators.” Parent Academy provides parents with the tools and resources they will need to effectively support their students. It also builds strong partnerships with families to help their students and the school thrive.



Darnesha Bolden, ASE Counselor, said, “We have been working toward this for months and are excited about how it is already bringing together many in our community who want to see transformation and growth in parents

and their children. To encourage parents to attend, we hope to incentivize them by providing meals.”

This program has been paid for, and the training and support come from ResilientKidz, a 13-year-old educational organization that brings together communities to help parents raise children to become healthy, caring, and responsible adults. Currently, over 36,000 parents have been engaged in 39 states and 267 communities.

We are excited to celebrate our first families to complete this 13-week program at the end of April.

By Delila Vance



HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY

Celebrating the Diverse Cultures of all Students in Positive Learning Environments

By Serenity Lockett

Highland Elementary School hosted its 6th Annual Multicultural Festival on April 9, 2024. Ericka West and Brenda Arriaga collaborated with families throughout the Ridgeland community to celebrate the 19 countries represented at HES.



The third, fourth, and fifth grade students began the festival with a parade of nations. They dressed in traditional outfits carrying flags from countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Traditional music filled the air as teachers, students, and parents performed the African



Jerusalem dance, Indian folk dance, traditional Iranian dance, Nicaraguan Ay Nicaragua Nicaraguita, and Mexican Grupo folclórico: Sol de Mexico performed to two traditional folk songs Las Alazanas and El Son de la Negra. The student dances were performed with Highland Elementary teachers: Jhess Alonzo, Andrea Duran, Dr. Natasha May, Erin Mitchell, Andrea Olmedo, and Mrs. West. The diverse audience could barely keep still as the rhythms moved through the school.

After the opening celebration, guests traveled through the halls to taste local cuisines from students' native countries. Families brought popular dishes, drinks, and desserts. There was Alfajores from

Argentina, Pupusas from El Salvador, Horchata from Honduras, Kheer from India, Tamales from Mexico, authentic Harira soup from Morocco, and many more delights. Students decorated tables with cultural artifacts and created informational posters displaying facts and photographs of their countries. The families ate, participated in a raffle, and shared stories together in the cafeteria.

Highland Elementary's vibrant student body traveled through five continents without leaving Ridgeland. The administrators, teachers, and staff at Highland are committed to creating a welcoming learning environment where all students and families are supported.



OLD TOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Abbie Marbury

It's been another whirlwind year at Old Town Middle School. After welcoming several new faculty and administrators to Old Town into the full swing of school, Homecoming kicked off with "Cartoon Mania" as the theme. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grades outdid themselves with floats depicting "Minions," "Looney Tunes," and "Toy Story." The beginning of the year always means the start of sports, and this year was no exception. Swimming, volleyball, football, basketball, archery, bowling, track, cross country, and more dominate the scene and remind us of our Titan pride with every win!



OTMS' focus on technology continues as well. This year, the OTMS Robotics team hosted the final qualifying match of the Madison County Schools robotics season and traveled to Iowa

to compete in the 2024 Create U.S. Open Robotics National Championship Tournament. The Technology Students Association showed out at both district and state competitions. TSA competes at nationals in Orlando, FL, this June. OTMS also participated in Engineers Week through the Computer Science and Engineering classes, including visits to the school from Mendrop Engineering and Tesla. The Robotics team even got to make a special trip to the Eaton Aerospace plant.

The arts are thriving at OTMS. Christmas is always a highlight of the year with the annual concert given by the Silver and Blue Bands. OTMS choirs also participate in the season's Festival of Carols.

January brings us the Titan Idol competition, and the middle school's contestants this year did not disappoint. The singing talent at Old Town continues to impress. This year, the Chamber Choir competed in the Madison County School District's choral festival, bringing home a "superior" rating. Following up was the state choral competition in Pearl, MS, with the Chamber Choir earning two "superior" ratings and an "excellent" rating. OTMS



choirs finish out the year with their spring concert in May.

As usual, Old Town's scholars stand out with another large group of 8th grade students scoring a 20 or higher on the Pre-ACT. We are so proud of them! Additionally, several 7th and 8th grade students were asked to take the PSAT early based on their academic achievements. Old Town continues to "Move the Mark" in academics. Last but certainly not least is finding the time to squeeze in some fun. Whether it be the 6th grade "Fun Days," the 7th and 8th grade winter and spring dances, PBIS celebrations, field trips, or the annual end-of-the-year trip to the Rez for the 8th grade, there are plenty of good times to be had at OTMS! It's been another successful academic year, and special thanks go out to all of the teachers, administrators, staff, parents, PTO, and community supporters!

RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL

From Pandemic to Graduation: A Story of Resilience

By Sissy Lynn

In May, more than 200 Ridgeland High School seniors walked across the graduation stage to embark on their next phase of life, whether going to college, joining the workforce, or enlisting in the military. But their journey to this point was anything but normal.



Students from the class of 2024 were having a typical 8th grade year when they left for spring break in March of 2020. But the break was a weeks-long affair, leading to a nationwide lockdown and, eventually, virtual learning – all thanks to COVID-19. Rather than attending annual events like the middle school spring dance, field trips, or class awards day, students had to stay home and interact with their teachers and classmates over the Internet. After an exceptionally long summer of wondering whether to attend school online or in person, it was time for their high school experience to begin.

For the class of 2024 graduate Taylor Brandon, the decision to go to school virtually her freshman year stemmed from the fact that her mother has an autoimmune disorder that put her at

higher risk for contracting the virus. Ultimately, virtual learning was the best decision for her family, but it didn't mean that her first year of high school was easy.

Brandon quickly learned that virtual learning made it more difficult to connect one-on-one with teachers. "One of the biggest challenges was not having teachers that I could just go to for help as I would in a normal school," said Brandon. "I had to wait for emails and messages, and often the teachers weren't even from Ridgeland High School."

At the start of the 2020-2021 school year, 25% of the class of 2024 were virtual learners, at least during the first semester. Beginning their freshman year during a global pandemic certainly wasn't easy for students transitioning from middle to high school.

One struggle, in particular, was limited social interaction with peers. "During the high school years, teens rely heavily on peer relationships," said Shemeka Hawkins, a counselor at RHS. "The pandemic posed a challenge because students had limited face-to-face interaction due to social distancing and the uncertainty of COVID-19. High school is also a time when many students find their niche and passions. During the height of the pandemic, there were restrictions in place that may have prevented them from exploring those outlets, which in turn may have created other challenges."

When the time came to go back to school in person her sophomore year, Brandon understandably had some concerns. "I felt socially behind because all my friends had been together at school except for me," explained



Brandon. "Luckily, I had a friend group that still texted and checked up on me, but it was hard to do. However, I think it pushed me to join clubs and make new friends when I returned."

She added, "Being virtual did make it harder to go back to in-person school. I had to learn the dynamic all over again of being in school. I had to join the band without knowing anybody but the people in my class, which also made it very difficult. I felt like everyone was ahead of me in the band, but I eventually got used to it and made so many new friends."

Steven Wansley of the class of 2024 went to school in person his freshman year. He expected to be involved in clubs and organizations and to meet upperclassmen. Instead, he found that very few were meeting due to the pandemic, and many of the students were virtual. His new reality included mask-wearing, social distancing, and having to quarantine if anyone who sat near him in class tested positive for the virus.

"There were green dots in the cafeteria spaced out between every chair (approximately 6 feet), and if there wasn't a green dot there, you couldn't sit there," said Wansley. "The lunch tables even extended out of the cafeteria into the entire commons. If someone in a classroom contracted COVID-19, they

would be removed from the class and quarantined for ten days, and this would not only include the infected individual but also people sitting within close proximity of the person. So, seating charts were very important that year and rarely changed. Since one person getting COVID could lead to up to four people in each class they were in getting quarantined, the already small population of the school was dramatically reduced from there.”

Thankfully, the past two years presented more of a normal high school experience for both Brandon and Wansley, with COVID-19 restrictions no longer in place. Students have been able to participate in all clubs, organizations, sports, and school activities as they did before the pandemic. Being involved in extracurriculars was a plus for Brandon, who joined the Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce Junior Diplomats, the Junior Auxiliary of Madison County Crown Club, the RHS Ambassadors Club, the marching band and color guard, and many other school and community organizations. Wansley, who was also a marching band member, joined the debate, archery, and tennis teams and participated in JROTC, the Student Government Association, and several other school-sponsored volunteer organizations.

Even though the class of 2024 started high school facing great uncertainty, Hawkins believes these students are more prepared for the challenges they may face in college and beyond. “While students continued to learn academically during the pandemic, they also learned valuable life lessons they will carry with them beyond high school,” said Hawkins. “The pandemic taught students the importance of adaptability and resilience. They learned that life could change without notice, and it’s during challenging times that personal growth and character evolve.”

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Holmes Art Students Earn Awards at 2024 MCCAIA State Student Art Competition

By Mary Margaret Busby



IN THIS PHOTO: Pictured are Holmes art students (left to right) Hannah Hurst of Jackson, Emeree Moncrief of Madison, and Caroline Newman of Jackson. These three students, along with (not pictured) Allison Mott of Madison, earned awards at the 2024 Mississippi Community College Art Instructors Association (MCCAIA) Student Art Exhibition and Competition.

Four Holmes Community College's Ridgeland Campus students earned awards at the 2024 Mississippi Community College Art Instructors Association (MCCAIA) Student Art Exhibition and Competition. Award winners included Hannah Hurst

of Jackson, Emeree Moncrief of Madison, Allison Mott of Madison, and Caroline Newman of Jackson. The students were recognized during an awards ceremony on Wednesday, March 27, at Southwest Mississippi Community College.

In the Painting Category, Moncrief won first place for “Hot Messenny” and second place for “Das Boot.” Hurst took home third for “Reflecting on Jack.”

In the Drawing Division, Mott took home an honorable mention for “Dear Maria Count Me Out,” and Newman won an honorable mention for “Still Life with Mocha Pot.”

The competition’s jurors included Wyatt Waters, a renowned watercolorist, and William Beckwith, a former sculptor instructor from the University of Mississippi. All fifteen community colleges in the state participated in the competition.

“We have a very talented group this year that has worked incredibly hard. For some, this is their first year taking art classes at a collegiate level. I feel like I say this every year, but this is our strongest and most capable group of art students that our campus has had since our program’s inception. It’s truly astounding what these students are capable of, even with our very limited studio time. I’m so excited to see what’s in store for them as they pursue their futures in the visual arts. I’m so proud of all of them: those who placed and those who did not. Our program wouldn’t be as amazing as it is without students like ours. We couldn’t do what we do without them, and I appreciate it every single day,” said art instructor Kris Wilson.

Holmes brings Home Gold at SkillsUSA State Championship



IN THIS PHOTO: Pictured are the Holmes students who placed in the 2024 SkillsUSA State Competition. Pictured are (front, left to right) Wil'Tavious Williams of Coila, Brett Coffey of Pearl, Leah Rainey of Madison, Irvin Ortega of Ridgeland, William Griffin of Brandon, Juan Chacon of Ridgeland, (back row, left to right) Matthew Hodges of Ridgeland, Payton Brady of Madison, Kennedy Lacey, Sr., of Canton, Ben Lewis, Jr. of Goodman, Nicholas Dunaway of Terry, Richard Ginn of Brandon and Quincy Boles of Canton.

The SkillsUSA chapters from Holmes Community College’s Goodman and Ridgeland campuses successfully competed in the 2024 SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference held in March and April. The winners were recognized during a ceremony on April 4 at the Hilton Jackson. Overall, Holmes took home fourteen awards: six gold, seven silver, and one bronze. Holmes student Chris Coleman will also compete in the Collision Repair Technology competition next week.

Ridgeland Campus Heating, Cooling and Ventilation (HVAC) students Brett Coffey of Pearl, Nicholas Dunaway of Terry, and Matthew Hodges of Ridgeland all three earned gold medals: Coffey for Job Skills Demonstration Open, Dunaway for HVAC and Hodges for Job Skills Demonstration A. Leah Rainey of Madison, an Architectural Engineering Technology student representing the Goodman Campus, won two gold medals; one for her Pin Design and one for her Prepared Speech.

From the Ridgeland Campus, Electro-Mechanic Technology major Richard Ginn of Brandon earned a gold medal

in the Industrial Motor Control Competition. Two other Electro-Mechanic Tech majors – Juan Chacon of Ridgeland and Irvin Ortega of Ridgeland – won silver medals as a team in the Mechatronics competition. Ridgeland Culinary Arts students also fared well; Quincy Boles of Canton won a silver medal in Culinary Arts, Kennedy Lacey, Sr. of Canton, a silver in Restaurant Service, and William Griffin of Brandon a silver in Extemporaneous Speaking.

Additionally, three other Goodman Campus students placed in the competition. Automotive Technology major Payton Brady of Madison earned a silver medal in the Job Skills Demonstration A competition, Industrial Technology major Wil'Tavious Williams of Coila won a silver medal for Technical Drafting, and Industrial Tech major Ben Lewis, Jr. of Goodman, won a bronze medal for Job Interview.

The SkillsUSA advisors include Bill Fitts, Chef Alexei Harrison, Peter Hindman, and Heather Mooney in Ridgeland, and Will Alexander, Casey Caldwell, Ben Lewis, Sr., Derrick Rainey, and Jonathan Stokes in Goodman.

Holmes Ridgeland Campus holds 2024 Honors Day

The Holmes Community College Ridgeland Campus recognized its students' achievements and honors during the 2024 Honors Day Program held on April 17 in the Pat McGowan Workforce Training Center on the Ridgeland Campus. Representatives from each academic and career-technical program presented awards to students who have shown excellence in their given major, program, or extracurricular activity. Other special awards were given in various categories as well.

The 2024 Hall of Fame inductees included Brooke Barron of Brandon, Colin Crosby of Ridgeland, Cedravious Davis of Canton, Tori Dew of Canton, Jaden Gonzalez of Brandon, Mary Katherine Hamilton of Madison, Analise Johnson of Sandhill, Graham Lambert of Canton, Presleigh Powers of Carthage, Jaycelyn Russ of Madison, Camille Scott of Brandon, and Patrick Vallean of Olive Branch. A few of

the Hall of Fame inductees received other awards, as well.

Lambert received the Ambassador Award, Gonzalez received the Physical Science Award, Dew received the Biological Science and Health Award, and Physical Education and Recreation Award. Additionally, Crosby was the Engineering Award recipient, and Vallean was the Mathematics Award recipient.

For other academic awards, the Business Administration Award went to Ava Wages of Madison, the Criminal Justice Award went to Meagan Snyder of Madison, and Kyle Hawkins of Madison took home the Education Programs Award as well as the History & Political Science Award. Jenna Hood of Madison received the English Composition Award, Emeree Moncrief of Madison the Fine Arts Award, and Aleesa Booker of Madison the Journalism Award. Additionally, Ornette Lee of Brandon took home the Literature Award, Hayden Tanner of Madison the Spanish Award, Greysen Lewis of Flora the Public Speaking

Award, and Kent Barrett of Madison the Social & Behavioral Science Award.

For career technology and workforce programs, Jayvion Caston of Jackson received the Heating, Ventilation, AC & Refrigeration (HVAC) Technology Award; Lee Drake of Madison, the Business & Office Technology Award; Caleb Hernandez of Madison, the Welding & Cutting Technology Award and Emily Rowlen of Hollandale, the Occupational Therapy Assistant Technology Award.

In addition, the Electro-Mechanical Technology Award went to Braeden Adams of Madison, the Engineering Technology Award to Ricky Tebo of Flora, the Culinary Arts Technology Award to D'Quevion Clay of Canton, and the Associate Degree Nursing Award to Emily Price of Vaughan. Finally, Charles Mistich of Ridgeland was the Information Systems Technology Award recipient; Antwan Tingle of Meridian, the Paralegal Technology Award recipient; and Troy Scott of Clinton received the Emergency Medical Science Award.



IN THIS PHOTO: Pictured are the 2024 Ridgeland Campus Awards & Honors Program recipient. They are (front row, left to right) Emily Price of Vaughan, Mary Katherine Hamilton of Madison, Analise Johnson of Sandhill, Tori Dew of Canton, Brooke Barron of Brandon, Jenna Hood of Madison, Camille Scott of Brandon, Jaycelyn Russ of Madison, Greysen Lewis of Flora, (middle row, left to right) Graham Lambert of Canton, Ornette Lee of Brandon, Presleigh Powers of Carthage, Emeree Moncrief of Madison, Braeden Adams of Madison, Ricky Tebo of Flora, D'Quevion Clay of Canton, Charles Mistich of Ridgeland, Jaden Gonzalez of Brandon, Lee Drake of Madison, (back row, left to right) Kyle Hawkins of Madison, Colin Crosby of Ridgeland, Kent Barrett of Madison, Antwan Tingle of Meridian, Jayvion Caston of Jackson, Caleb Hernandez of Madison, Patrick Vallean of Olive Branch, Aleesa Booker of Madison, Meagan Snyder of Madison and Hayden Tanner of Madison. Not pictured: Cedravious Davis of Canton, Ava Wages of Madison, Emily Rowlen of Hollandale, and Troy Scott of Clinton.

SUMMER AT THE RIDGELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Ridgeland Public Library has so much to offer our community.

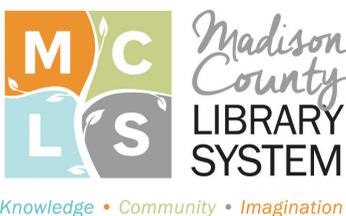
Page Turners

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Join us this June and July for our annual Summer Reading Program. This year's theme is Adventure Begins at your Library. This summer, crowd favorite magician Dorian LaChance will return on June 7 at 10:00 a.m. with his new magical adventure, Your Library, Your Adventure! We cannot wait to see what he does this summer!

The excitement continues on June 11 at 9:00 a.m. with balloon pilot Ken Johnston at Freedom Ridge Park. He will teach us about the history of the hot air balloon, flight preparation, and more! June 20 at 2:00 p.m. for ages 10 - 18, we will have our Glow in the Dark Painting Party, where we can paint and have fun! In July, we will learn about Things that Fly! Gyrocopter and Cessna with pilots Charles Harrison and George Cricenti at the Madison Airport on July 18 at 10:00



a.m. See an M24 Gyrocopter and even sit in a Cessna! This program will be at the Madison Airport located at 7450 Old Canton Rd. Crescent Circus is returning this summer on July 23 at 11:00 a.m. to entertain us with their magic, circus arts, juggling, and balancing acts.

For our young artists and gardeners, we have some fun programs for you this summer. Artist Joe McKeever will be at the Ridgeland Library on June 6 at 3:00 p.m. and June 18 at 2:00 p.m. for Cartoons and Portraits, a program to teach kids ages 10 - 18 how he draws and will advise on how to make your drawings even better. He will even make a portrait of you! Ms. Emily with Cedar Hill Garden Consulting will be at the Ridgeland Library on July 10 at 10:00 a.m. to talk to kids ages 6 - 11 about plants, flowers, and gardening. We will even have some fun activities to do after!

In addition to our summer reading events, we will continue to have our regular programs like Otaku Club for kids ages 12 - 18. June 27 and July 25 at 2:00 p.m., we will watch anime, talk about manga, try snacks from Japan and its neighboring countries, and make fun crafts. Remember to check out our manga and anime collections while you are here.

If you find yourself with a little more time to read this summer, or you are looking for a group of people who also love to



read and talk about books, we have three book clubs for adults to choose from. Mystery Readers meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. This book club chooses from a monthly list of mystery books to read and discuss at our monthly meetings. Books & Beverages meets on the third Tuesday of each month on Zoom at 6:00 p.m. Each month, we get together and talk about our latest reads. Email Evanne Flanders at eflanders@mcls.ms for the Zoom link. For our non-fiction readers, we have a club for you, too. Join us on the fourth Saturday of the month at 2:00 p.m. for Dewey Decimators, our non-fiction book club. Each month, we get together and talk about our latest non-fiction reads.

Be sure to check our online calendar of events for new and upcoming programs by visiting mclsms.org. You can check out what is happening at Ridgeland Library and all of our Madison County Library System branches (Bookmobile, Camden, Canton, Flora, and Madison) on our website, Facebook, or by picking up a print calendar at your local library.

By Evanne Flanders,
Branch Librarian

CITY NOTIFICATIONS & TIPS



THE CITY OF RIDGELAND IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE ARE 99% COMPLETE WITH THE WATER METER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

- Our new system allows you to connect to your water meter through an app called EyeOnWater.
- This app will enable you to monitor your usage, which helps lead to a better understanding of the usage to make decisions about water conservation and lowering your water bill.
- Its best feature is the leak detection. You can set customized notifications for your water meter to alert you of a leak, saving you hundreds to thousands of dollars.
- DOWNLOAD THE APP TODAY, CREATE AN ACCOUNT, AND ENTER YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ITS FEATURES. REACH OUT TO THE WATER DEPARTMENT IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE SIGNING UP.
- VISIT [HTTPS://EYONWATER.COM/SIGNUP](https://eyeonwater.com/signup) TO CREATE YOUR ONLINE ACCOUNT
- HOW TO VIDEO: [HTTPS://HELPBEACONAMA.NET/CUSTOMER-OUTREACH/](https://helpbeaconama.net/customer-outreach/)



CITY OF RIDGELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

DOWNLOAD ON THE APP STORE & GOOGLE PLAY



Ridgeland Recycling Rewards

RidgelandRecycleRewards.com **Recycle, Report, Get Rewarded!**



HELP SPONSOR VETERANS MEMORY PARK

\$200 • BUY A BRICK
 \$5,000 • BRASS PLAQUE ON PAVER
 \$10,000 • BRASS PLAQUE ON BENCH
 \$15,000 • ENGRAVED PLAQUE AT BELL TOWER

TO HONOR A VETERAN CONTACT:
 ALAN HART: 601-853-2027
 KIM COOPER: 601-856-7113



3 WAYS TO SIGN UP GET NOTICES & ALERTS

1: www.RidgelandMS.org
 2: www.Ridgeland-MS.MyFreeAlerts.com
 3: Text your zip code to 38276 for emergency alerts via SMS only

REMEMBER TO SIGN UP FOR RIDGELAND ALERTS!



TOPGOLF BREAKS GROUND IN RIDGELAND

The City of Ridgeland is eagerly anticipating the grand opening of Topgolf later this year. This exciting project resulted from a fruitful collaboration between the City's leadership, including the Mayor, the Board of Aldermen, City staff, and the Prado Vista and Topgolf representatives.

The groundbreaking ceremony, held earlier this year, was a significant event, drawing a large crowd excited to welcome Topgolf's first facility in Mississippi. Topgolf will provide a premier entertainment venue for families, friends, and entertainment seekers alike.

"We are very excited about the first Topgolf in Mississippi being in Ridgeland. The City's pro-business approach and

their support were essential in getting this project to completion. The Mayor, the Board, Alan Hart, and his whole staff were pivotal to making this happen at Prado Vista at Ridgeland. We are looking forward to getting Topgolf and the rest of the development going."

Gabriel Prado, PraCon Global Investment Group

"I am thrilled to welcome Topgolf to Ridgeland and honored they have chosen our City as the first location in Mississippi. This development isn't just about economic growth; it's a true destination point for friends and families to come together. Additionally, I'm proud to share that one of Topgolf's core values is to give back to the communities they serve, whether providing unique opportunities for local schools, retirement communities, or charitable giving endeavors. Topgolf's decision to call Ridgeland home reaffirms our City's appeal and continued growth."

Mayor Gene McGee



HAPPY 35TH ANNIVERSARY, MAYOR MCGEE

What a historic year of anniversary celebrations in Ridgeland! We are proudly celebrating the 125th anniversary of the City's founding, the 25th year of the Natchez Trace Century Ride, and 35 years of dedicated service from our esteemed Mayor Gene McGee. His contributions and steadfast commitment has guided Ridgeland through significant development and growth. Happy 35th anniversary, Mayor McGee!

"I remember the City of Ridgeland in 1989. When you think about where you are today, it is easy to assume the progress which has occurred over the last 35 years was by happenstance. Where your City Hall stands was a concrete construction company, Highland Colony Parkway was not developed, nor were many subdivisions and developments which followed creating a sense of place to do business, learn, raise our families, shop, and practice our faith.

As with most endeavors, leadership matters. The leadership of Mayor Gene McGee is obvious and visible. I have had the privilege of meeting with Gene numerous times on many matters. He is not just another person riding his bicycle into town; he is the driving force in Ridgeland's development.



Gene loves his city, watches the pennies, has a vision, and is a nonstop worker. We in state government respect and understand the importance of leadership at the municipal level. I have been pleased to support Gene and Ridgeland in its growth and prosperity, and I intend to continue to do so in the future."

-Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann

"Ridgeland's transformation from a sleepy bedroom community to a vibrant and dynamic city would not have been possible without Mayor McGee's dedication," Senator Wicker said. "Over three decades, he has helped bring new infrastructure investment to Ridgeland and established the first public high school in the city. The mayor has helped

build the community, and his impact will be felt for decades to come. The next time you see him biking on the Natchez Trace, join me in thanking him for his unwavering dedication. I wish Ridgeland another great 125 years."

-U.S. Senator Roger Wicker

"Effective leadership in a mayor makes all the difference in a city's quality of life and how well a city grows, and that's just what Ridgeland has in Gene McGee. Over the course of my public service, I've enjoyed opportunities to work with Mayor McGee and city leaders. His professionalism, tenacity, and preparedness have allowed us to work so well together to improve Ridgeland for its citizens and our state."

-U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

"I am proud to represent the City of Ridgeland and the great people who call it home. Since its incorporation, Ridgeland has been a center for economic growth and entertainment in our state. Ridgeland has been blessed with forward-thinking leadership, including that of Mayor Gene McGee, with whom I have had the honor of working for the last two decades. Ridgeland will continue to prosper, and its residents will always have a great community to live, worship, and raise a family."

-Congressman Michael Guest



MCEDA Executive Director Joey Deason said, "I've known Mayor Gene McGee for twenty years, and his passion and commitment to the City of Ridgeland has not wavered."

What has been accomplished by the Mayor's vision has been nothing short of spectacular, and the Mayor's business-friendly approach has made Ridgeland a premier destination. We look forward to all the future economic development projects that will call Ridgeland Home."

-Joey Deason, MCEDA Executive Director

"While Dean Architecture has had the opportunity to work with many municipalities over the years, we are especially grateful for and proud of the work we have been privileged to do in and for The City of Ridgeland. As President of our firm, I cherish my personal and working relationship with Mayor Gene McGee. His Christian guiding principles, morals, and ethics, along

with his friendship, are unsurpassed. I look forward to seeing the city continue to grow under his and the Board of Alderman's leadership."

-Alan Grant, Dean Architecture

"I am proud to call Ridgeland my home. I live minutes away from wonderful shopping opportunities, grocery stores, and clients in the attractive office parks. As a commercial real estate broker, I find it evident that the safe community has much to do with Ridgeland's steady growth. Congratulations to Mayor McGee on your 35th anniversary! Your commitment and dedication have played a major role in bringing Ridgeland to where it is today."

-Senator Walter Michel

"He as chief executive officer of the City, our client, and me as "cub" engineer - though we were at vastly different stations in our roles, Mayor McGee was personable and engaging, and he quickly found that we had common roots

(in dairy and farming), family-friends connections, faith, and music. From that time to now, I have seen in Mayor McGee, time and again, all of the best traits of a strong upbringing: high standards, hard work ethic, faith, kindness, persistence, community, and family values. These traits have served well for him and the City of Ridgeland, as well as for Mayor McGee's family, church, and the larger community of municipal officials all across the State of Mississippi."

"Gene McGee is an ideal mayor and leader of the City of Ridgeland. He has a truly rare knack for having a leader's vision while also being a skilled encourager of teamwork AND attention to detail. He makes all team members better. It really sounds too good to be true, but his emphasis on healthy lifestyles and fitness and faith is successfully pointing a whole community to a better and more fulfilling life."

-Hunter Arnold, Waggoner Engineering

WHO AND WHERE

RIDGELAND ALDERMEN



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Brian Ramsey
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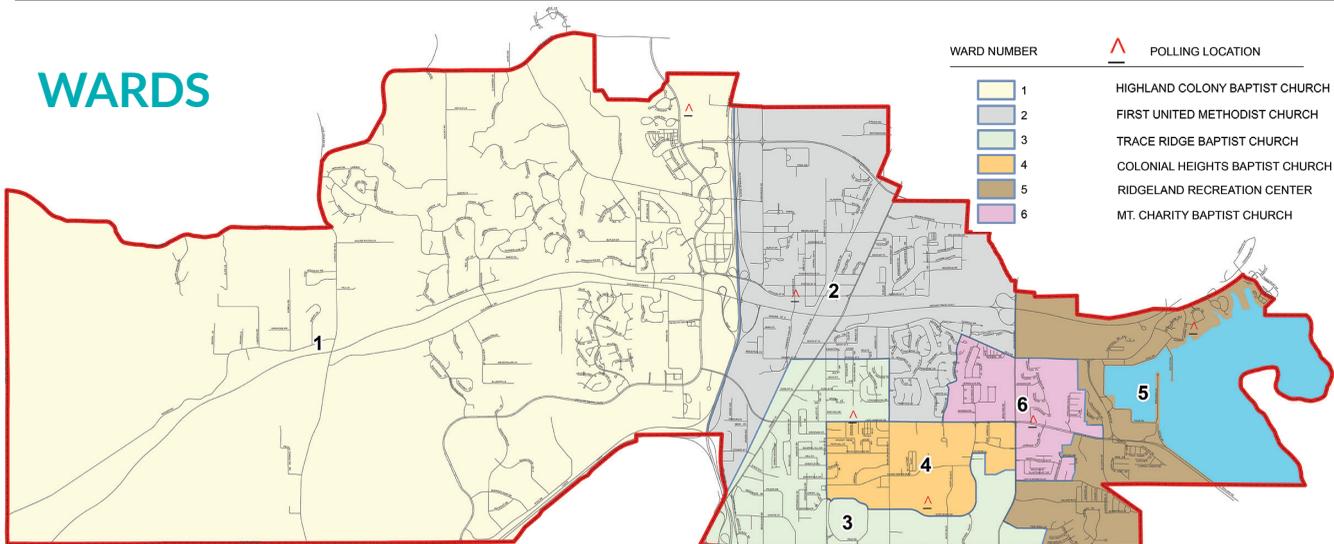


Bill Lee
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Bill.Lee@RidgelandMS.org



Wesley Hamlin
Ward 6
Mayor Pro Tempore
601-454-0353
Wesley.Hamlin@RidgelandMS.org

WARDS



CITY DIRECTORY

ANIMAL CONTROL <i>animalcontrol@ridgelandms.org</i>	601-856-2121
ANONYMOUS TIP LINE <i>(criminal investigations division)</i>	601-853-2006
CITY HALL/MAYOR'S OFFICE	601-856-7113
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT <i>(development, property maintenance, zoning, signs, permits)</i> ...	601-856-3877
COURT CLERK <i>(traffic violations, misdemeanors and fines)</i>	601-853-2001
EMERGENCY <i>(police and re dispatch center)</i>	9-1-1
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION <i>(business licenses, elections, meeting minutes, budget, public records)</i>	601-856-7113
FIRE DEPARTMENT <i>(non-emergency calls, safety education programs)</i>	601-856-7004
POLICE DEPARTMENT <i>(non-emergency calls, public safety concerns)</i>	601-856-2121
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT <i>(roads, garbage, recycling, water, storm water)</i>	601-853-2027
RECREATION AND PARKS <i>(special events, athletics and program registration, park information)</i>	601-853-2011
UTILITY BILLING DEPARTMENT <i>(water, sewer, garbage, & recycling billing)</i> <i>utilitybilling@ridgelandms.org</i>	601-856-3938

CITY MEETINGS

MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING 1st & 3rd Tuesday - 6 p.m. Work session is held on Mondays prior to Board Meeting - 6 p.m.
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD 2nd & 4th Tuesday - 6 p.m. Bill Dicken (Chairman), Connie Suber (Secretary), Randy Lynn, Robert Moore, Lynette Praytor, Rick Eades, Jim Woodrick, Leigh Ann Sullivan
KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL First Monday - 4 p.m. Jan Richardson - Chairman Rachel Bradley, Ginger Cocke, Polly Hammett, Claire Jackson, Phyllis Parker, Kenya Rachal, Lea Anne Stacy
HISTORICAL COMMITTEE Every other month - TBA Nancy Batson - Chairman Robby Carr, Donna Dye, Polly Hammett, Mike Porter, Pat Truesdale, Jim Woodrick
CONTRACTORS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS Quarterly meetings - 4 p.m. Lantz Kuykendall - Chairman Terry Evans, David Pursell, Steve Rimmer, Clay Sutherland, Keith West
ZONING BOARD Thursdays, the week of Mayor and Board of Aldermen meeting - 6 p.m. Bernie Giessner - Chairman Michelle Caballero, Tabitha Baum, Theresa G. Kennedy, Drew Malone, Judy Rice, David Dunbar, Don Roberts

DEPARTMENT HEADS



Public Works
Alan Hart
Director
alan.hart@ridgelandms.org



Fire Department
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Fire Chief
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Finance And Administration
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City Clerk/Human Resources Director
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Recreation & Parks Department
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