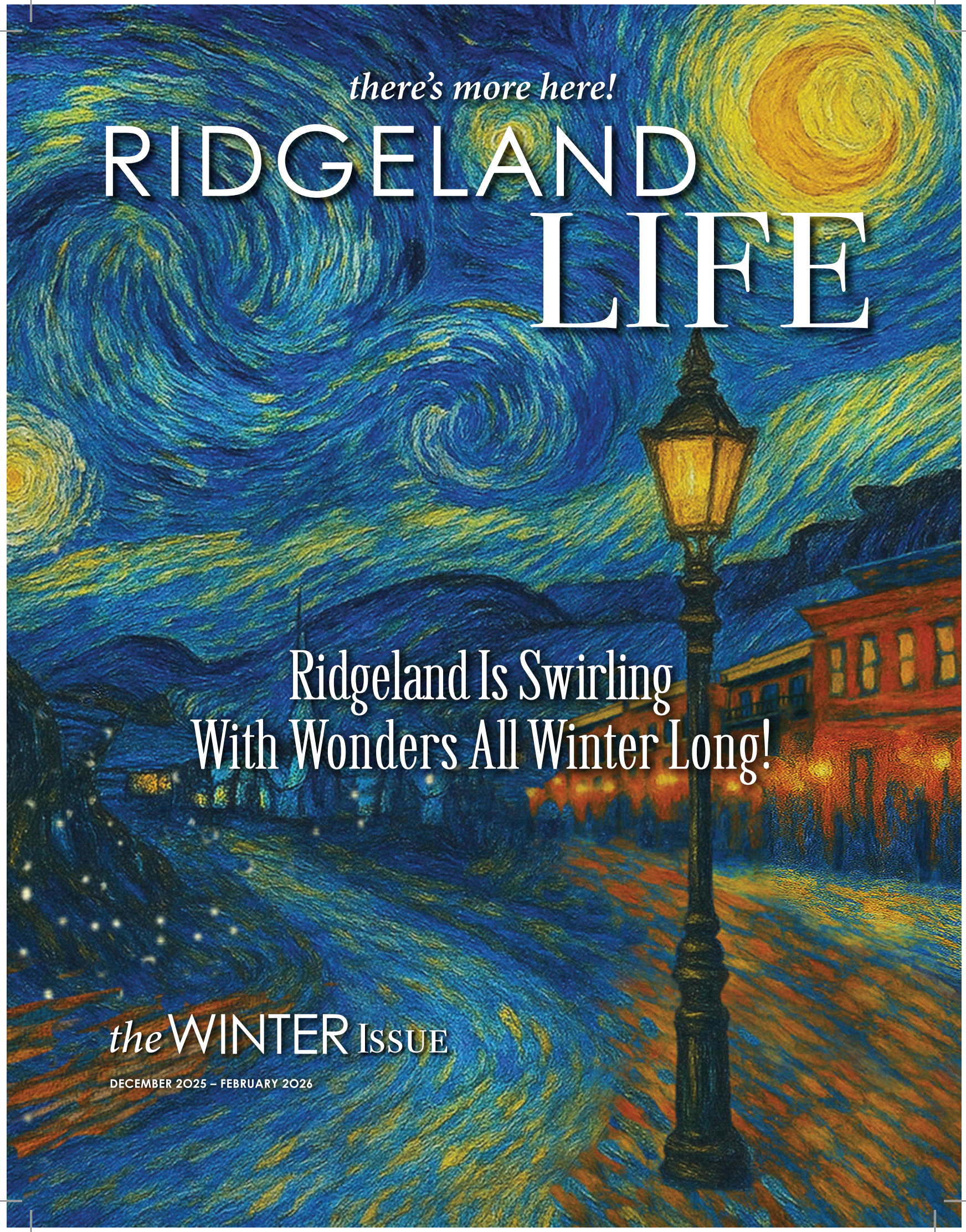




there's more here!

RIDGELAND LIFE

Ridgeland Is Swirling
With Wonders All Winter Long!

the WINTER ISSUE

DECEMBER 2025 – FEBRUARY 2026

FROM THE MAYOR

Gene McGee



It's hard to believe December is already here, and the holidays are just around the corner. This is a special time of year when families and friends gather to enjoy one another's company and celebrate the season.

It has truly been a remarkable year for the City of Ridgeland. We've enjoyed many wonderful events and milestones, and I couldn't be prouder of what we've accomplished together. One highlight was our inaugural Pecan Festival—a celebration of Ridgeland's heritage and community spirit. This wonderful new event was brought to life through the vision and leadership of our Public Relations Director, Kim Cooper, who worked alongside a dedicated planning committee and the Recreation and Parks team to make the festival a success. Their creativity and hard work laid the foundation for this to be a special fall event for years to come. Another occasion that holds a special place in my heart was our Veterans Day Ceremony. It is always an honor to

recognize our veterans and those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. I encourage everyone visiting City Hall to stop by the Veterans Memorial Garden and take a moment to reflect on the names of those who have served our country. If you wish to honor a veteran in your life, please contact our City staff to learn how to add a commemorative brick in their memory—a lasting and meaningful tribute to their service.

Looking ahead, two major projects are planned for 2026. Lake Harbour Drive will be milled entirely and overlaid, improving the roadway and multi-use trail. In addition, Wheatley Street will undergo a complete reconstruction—a long-awaited and much-needed upgrade. These projects will be significant undertakings that further strengthen our City's infrastructure.

As we move into the holiday season, I wish you a blessed and joyful time with your loved ones. We have so much to be thankful for here in Ridgeland—may we all take a moment to appreciate our community's many blessings.

Wishing you a safe, happy, and prosperous 2026!

Gene F. McGee

RIDGELAND LIFE

EDITOR/CONCEPT DESIGN

Kim Cooper, City of Ridgeland

RECRE8 SPONSORSHIP

Carly Brandon, City of Ridgeland

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Imaginary Company, Inc.

PRINTING

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

NEWSWORTHY

- 4 TELLING RIDGELAND'S STORY
Still Learning... Still Sharing
- 6 COMMUNITY TURNS OUT FOR INAUGURAL RIDGELAND PECAN FESTIVAL
- 10 RIDGELAND HONORS ITS VETERANS AND PRESERVES THEIR STORIES
- 12 KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL
Celebrating Tim Taylor: 28 Years of Dedication to the City of Ridgeland
Yards of the Month

EXPLORE RIDGELAND

- 15 *Explore Ridgeland*

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- 16 RECRE8
- 18 SUPERSTAR SENIORS
- 20 EVENT LISTING

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- 22 BUILDING BRIDGES AND FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

- 26 OLD TOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL
A Season of Growth and Excitement at Old Town Middle School

- 27 RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL

Once Upon a Titan: Ridgeland High's Magical Homecoming Week

- 29 HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Holmes launches Hotel and Restaurant Management Technology program

Holmes announces 2025 Ridgeland Campus Homecoming Court

PAGE TURNERS

- 32 RIDGELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS

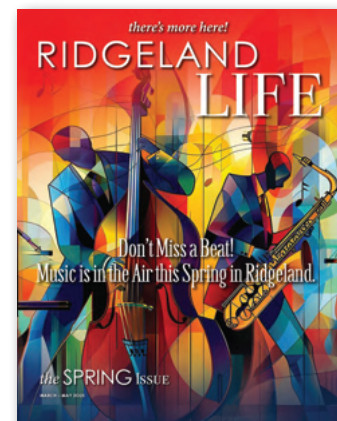
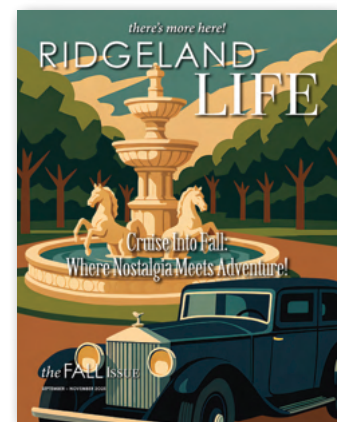
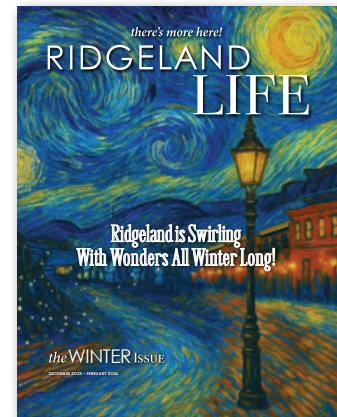
YOUR CITY AT WORK

- 33 MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL
- 35 RIDGELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT
- 36 STORMWATER POLLUTION
- 38 WHO & WHERE

“This year, we explored a range of artistic expression for the Ridgeland Life covers—beginning with cubism, moving through the warmth of watercolor and vintage poster art, and concluding with the beauty of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, reimagined through scenes from Jackson Street.”

Kim

Kim Cooper,
Editor/Director of Public Relations



TELLING RIDGELAND'S STORY: STILL LEARNING...STILL SHARING...

By Polly Hammett



Several years ago, I asked a friend to research my family history. When I told him what I hoped he would find, he quickly told me that genealogy doesn't work like that. He said, "You have to accept what I find." Of course, the results were not what I had hoped for, and I was left with many unanswered questions. So it goes with historical research.



The Historical Society of Ridgeland has learned several lessons in its fifteen-plus years of discovery.

History is sometimes hard to accept:

I read through a Bill of Sale for property James Burroughs Yellowley sold in the early 1850s. According to an interview with Eloise Gilbert, one of the Charter Members of the Historical Society of Ridgeland, "her great grandmother was listed in the 1848 slave purchase of Patience to James Yellowley." Patience later married into the Harris family. When reading about the family's history, I had to put the papers aside and wipe away the tears.

I remember the pride and dignity Eloise exemplified as she told us the story of her ancestors during one of our Society

meetings. We are fortunate to have many of their descendants still living in Ridgeland today. A private street, Mary Harris Lane, runs off Ridgeland Avenue, where many of her family still reside.

There are always two sides to every story:

In the mid-1900s, clubs allowing gambling and liquor were established in Ridgeland. A few prominent men, unofficially known as The Vigilantes, took action to close these clubs. The "outside operators" were confronted with loud words, clubs, and possibly more. One of these confrontations took place in front of Henderson's Garage.

Eventually, the heavily insured clubs mysteriously burned down, and the owners took their generous insurance proceeds elsewhere. Ridgeland was free of the

unwanted businesses, but this left the predominantly African-American workers without employment when well-paying jobs were hard to find.

With every answer you find, there are usually two or three more questions:

While curating exhibits for the History Room at City Hall, we researched the mayors of Ridgeland. Several revelations were uncovered in this research. Society member, Robby Carr, said he had always been told that his ancestor, John Wesley Carr, had served as mayor. Matt Dodd, City liaison to the Society, found that Carr did serve from 1917 to 1918. He had to resign when the Carr family built their home on their farm, which was located outside the limits of the Village. Matt also found information on N. L. Ensor, who served



Missouri Harris Cummings

Alfred & Hasty Harris William
Alfred's Mother, Maude & Patience



The Harris Family

from 1916 to 1917. After his term ended, Ensor continued to live on Jackson Street. He was in poor health and believed he was being given bad medicine by the local pharmacist, Joseph H. Myers, who also served as postmaster and Alderman.

One morning in May of 1918, Ensor leaned out the window of his home and shot Myers as he was going to his mother's house.

his wounds. Several years ago, a member of the Speaks family told the Society a story passed down through the years of a morning when her grandmother had pushed her children under the kitchen table at breakfast because someone was shooting across Jackson Street. We finally found out what all the shooting was about.

through our past as they told the stories of many who are buried there.

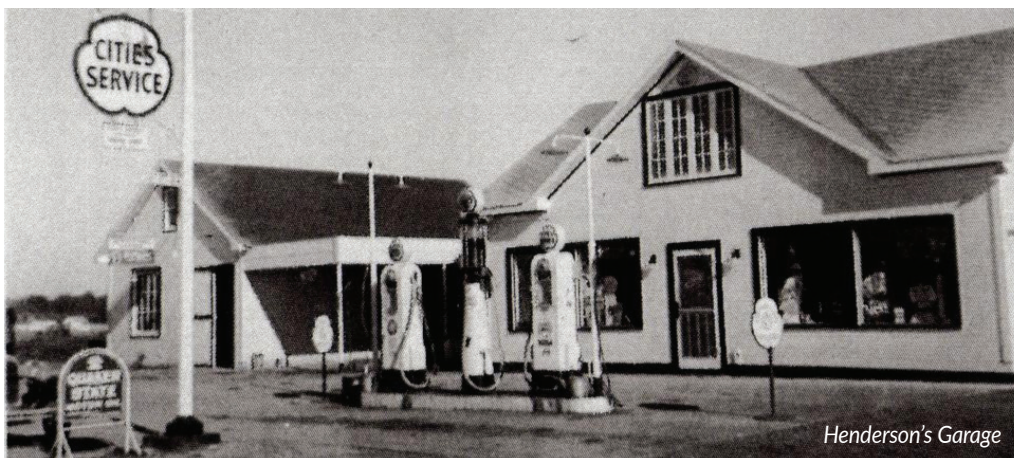
The Society was honored to participate in the first Ridgeland Pecan Festival in October. It was a well-attended event, and we saw many old friends and made new ones. A second-grade teacher at Ann Smith Elementary, who just moved here from Illinois, was surprised to learn that many of our early settlers came to Ridgeland from Illinois by train. She plans to use our History Trail Map in her classroom!

A touching display was set up at City Hall in November to honor veterans from Ridgeland. The tribute can be viewed in the History Room.

We look forward to seeing you at the Ridgeland Christmas Tree Lighting on December 4th and the Ridgeland Christmas Parade on December 5th. This year's theme is "Winter Wonderland."

Please go to City Hall, Explore Ridgeland, or the Ridgeland Library and pick up a History Trail Map. There are six Trail Markers in Old Town. Plan to arrive early for either of these events. Find a parking spot and a good place to eat, and view the markers. As always... We need your stories. You can contact us through kim.cooper@ridgelandms.org.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year!



Henderson's Garage

He threatened others who tried to render aid to the wounded man. However, Myers' mother ignored the threats and went to her son's side. W.R. Saber was shot at while trying to go to Mrs. Myers' aid. When the Madison County Sheriff arrived, citizens had gathered with revolvers and shotguns. Ensor had retreated to his house, where he took his own life. Myers also died from

The Society shares the stories we learn in several ways. "Telling Ridgeland's Story" has been an invaluable tool for educating our residents.

Recent & Upcoming Events: On a tour of Jessamine Cemetery held in September, presenters from the Historical Society and First Families of Ridgeland led attendees



COMMUNITY TURNS OUT FOR INAUGURAL RIDGELAND PECAN FESTIVAL

The City of Ridgeland hosted its inaugural Pecan Festival at Freedom Ridge Park on Saturday, October 18, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Close to 2,000 residents and visitors came together to enjoy a day filled with craftsmen booths, live artist demonstrations, food trucks, a farmers market, a pecan dessert showcase, live music, children's activities, and information booths—offering something for everyone to enjoy. Organizers say this marks the beginning of a new Ridgeland tradition.

"Coming off of the momentum of the 125th Anniversary year in 2024—when the pecan was officially named Ridgeland's City tree and a historical marker honoring its agricultural roots was placed at Freedom Ridge Park—I wanted to design a festival that honored Ridgeland's history while providing old-fashioned family fun in the park for the community," said Festival Chair Kim Cooper. "Thank you to the Pecan Festival Planning Committee, the Recreation and Parks team, Mayor and Board of Aldermen, the Historical Society of Ridgeland, for helping to 'Tell Ridgeland's Story,' our many vendors, musical lineup, and so many others who helped to make it a day to remember."





With strong community support and positive feedback from attendees, Mayor Gene McGee noted the event “captured the heart of Ridgeland — a community that values its history, people, and future. The turnout was outstanding, and the weather couldn’t have been better for the first-year event.”

The City extends a warm thank you to all of the vendors, musicians, the Historical Society of Ridgeland, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, Explore Ridgeland, the Ridgeland Public Library, Green Oak, Imaginary Company, Mars Marketing, Vertigo Sound, Mississippi Tent & Party Rental, Gotta Go, Mad Genius, and the many volunteers, including members of the Mayor’s Youth Council, who made the festival possible. The City also expresses special appreciation to Explore Ridgeland for helping to sponsor event activities and WLBT, Freshway Produce, and Martinson’s Garden Works for in-kind sponsorship and pumpkin donations.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Live Music: Soundwagon, Bridgette Ferguson & Tim Avalon, D’lo Trio, and The Accumulators

Artists Tents & Demonstrations: Sweet Magnolia Creations, Woodstock, In Stitches, The Wood Shop, Moss Pottery, Pressed Flower Art, Kit White Printmaker, Nick Neese Glass, Everlasting Petal Co., Creative Crafts, The Rising Phoenix Candle Co., Nerdy Laundry, Rose Ellen Lindsey, SAKs, Grace Outdoor Furniture, Nadabutter, Throwing Hands Pottery, and Todd Carr Design

Live Craft Demonstrations: Brian Hill (Woodturning), Nic Neese (Glass Blowing)

Farmer’s Market: Martinson’s Garden Works, Cedar Hill Gardens, Sparrow Gardens, Twelve2 Farm, Hooey Honey, Cypress Point Pecans, and Magnolia Pecan Delights

Pecan Dessert Showcase: Amerigo Ridgeland, Fresh Market, Bo’s Bake Shop, Your Personal Chef, and a special pecan pie made by Mayor McGee

Food & Drink Pavilion: Barbeque SHINE, One Guy Steak and Chicken, C&C Cotton Candy, Flying Dolly’s Sno Cones, Bee Bee’s Fresh Squeezed Lemonade, and Loren’s Colombian Kitchen

Information Booths: Ridgeland Historical Society, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, Explore Ridgeland, Ridgeland Garden Club, and Ridgeland Public Library

Pecan Festival Planning Committee: Kim Cooper (Chair), Jane McGee, John Sidney North, Nancy Batson, Lisa Walters, Ben McDonald, Carly Brandon, Jan Richardson, Betsy Ross, Karen McKie, Jim Woodrick, Matt Dodd, Matthew Magee, Dr. Catherine Sledge, Amelia Dalton, Crystal Pham, and Krystal Watson



RIDGELAND HONORS ITS VETERANS AND PRESERVES THEIR STORIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

By Kim Cooper

The City of Ridgeland observed Veterans Day with its annual ceremony at the Veterans Memory Park at City Hall, paying tribute to those who have served and sacrificed for our nation.

This year's observance carried an added layer of meaning. Following the ceremony, guests were invited to visit a new Veterans Exhibit, curated by Nancy Batson, Chair of the City History Committee.

The exhibit was created especially for this year's program and is now a permanent installation in the Ridgeland History Room at City Hall. It features stories and memorabilia from local veterans, many of whom belong to some of Ridgeland's earliest families.

Among those represented are members of the Board of Aldermen, descendants of the City's founding families, and relatives of the Mayor, City staff, and City committees — a reminder that military service runs deep through Ridgeland's history.

Preserving a Proud Legacy

The new Veterans Exhibit is a permanent reminder of Ridgeland's history of service and the individuals who shaped it. Each display offers a deeply personal story — one that links the City's past to its present and keeps alive the spirit of dedication that defines its people.

During regular City Hall hours, the exhibit is open to the public, inviting all residents to learn from and honor the veterans who helped define Ridgeland's legacy.



“ It has been my honor and privilege as curator of the History Room to develop this exhibit featuring the service of 13 veterans. My inspiration to archive the service of these veterans comes from my daddy, David Fox and two of my neighbors, Gordon McLemore, and Hartwell Bowling.

Their stories as well as all of the stories from the veterans featured range from the view of a rear gunner of a B-17 Bomber in the WWII battle fields of Iwo Jima, Philippines, Normandy and the Liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany, to The Chosin Reservoir in Korea, the airfield at Anson, Vietnam, flying General Marshall and driving General Patton, serving as surgical nurse in Germany and staff Sergeant stateside and present day Syria, have been shared over the years and I wanted to preserve them for future generations. I also want to remind everyone that freedom is not free. ” **Nancy Batson, Chair of the Ridgeland History Committee**



"Ridgeland's strength has always come from its people, and none have shown greater devotion than those who served our country. I want to give special thanks to Nancy Batson and her husband, Jim Batson, for putting this special exhibit together."

—Mayor Gene McGee

Stories of Service and Sacrifice

Captain Robert Hartwell Bowling, U.S. Army Air Corps

Captain Bowling recorded his experiences in his book *Out From Freney*, which recounts his transition to B-17 Flying Fortress operations and his service with the 3rd Photo Recon Group under Elliott Roosevelt, son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. His memoir includes chapters such as "Over the North Atlantic in a Flying Fortress," "Flying General Marshall," and "A Long Dream Fulfilled."

Technical Sergeant Harold C. Butler, U.S. Army Air Corps (1942 - WWII)

Trained in Morse Code, Sgt. Butler served as a rear gunner aboard B-17 bombers during World War II. He is the father of Pat Truesdale.

Corporal Edward R. Carr, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

Corporal Carr earned the Bronze Star for heroic actions on Iwo Jima in February 1945 and was wounded in battle, receiving the Purple Heart. His brother, Roger Carr, also served during World War II. Both are great-uncles of Robby Carr.

Chief David L. Fox, U.S. Navy Reserve, Seabees Construction Battalion

While stationed in the Philippines during World War II, Chief Fox designed and built a small aircraft-towing vehicle nicknamed the "Doodlebug." He is the father of Nancy Batson, who organized the exhibit.

Master Sergeant Austin T. Harbour, U.S. Air Force

A 2010 graduate of Ridgeland High School, MSgt. Harbour served in Operation Freedom Sentinel (2019 - 2020), earning a Commendation Medal for his work supporting the mission that led to the removal of ISIS's top leadership in Syria. He now serves as a Logistics Advisor for the 172nd Contingency Response Team—one of only four units nationwide capable of deploying within 36 hours to establish airfields in remote areas.

Staff Sergeant Joseph Quincy McGee, U.S. Army (WWII)

McGee served as a tank driver in the European Theater and a part-time jeep driver for General George Patton. He fought in campaigns across Germany and Sicily, was wounded in combat, and received numerous decorations, including the Purple Heart and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two stars. He is the uncle of Mayor Gene McGee.

Sergeant Hansel Gordon McLemore, U.S. Marine Corps (Korea, 1950 - 1951)

A member of the First Marine Division, Sgt. McLemore fought in five campaigns, including the bitter battle at the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea. As one of the "Chosin Few," he received the Bronze Star with Combat V and a Purple Heart with Cluster. His division twice received the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism.

Staff Sergeant Vicki Costigan (Holweger), U.S. Air Force

Enlisting near the close of the Vietnam era, she served six years at Grissom Air Force Base in Indiana and completed her service in 1980 as a Staff Sergeant.

Colonel Douglas I. "D.I." Smith, Jr., U.S. Army (Retired)

During his 27-year career, Col. Smith served in Vietnam as Section Leader of the 129th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter). His many honors include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, ten Air Medals, and the Ranger Tab.

Lieutenant Colonel Audrey R. Rials, U.S. Air Force

Lt. Col. Rials joined the Air Force in 1950 after completing her nursing degree in Memphis. She served as a surgical nurse at postings in Germany, Japan, and the United States, including Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, where she became Chief Surgical Nurse. She is the aunt of Jim Woodrick.

Edward W. Young, U.S. Army (WWII)

Serving with the Seventh Army during the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp, Young discovered a German manuscript of propaganda writings from 1920 - 1933. He later had it translated and published by the Young Book Company under the title *Germany Awakes*.

Private First-Class James William (J.W.) Benefield, U.S. Army (WWII)

Served during World War II and is the maternal grandfather of Angela Richburg. He was in the Army 207th Engineer C Battalion and journeyed from the Beach of Normandy, France, on June 15, 1944, to Berlin, Germany, on June 27, 1945.

Master Sergeant Robert L. Gilbert, U.S. Air Force

A member of one of Ridgeland's First Families, MSgt. Gilbert was proud of his service and often visited local classrooms in full dress uniform to share his experiences with students.

KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL: CELEBRATING TIM TAYLOR

28 YEARS OF DEDICATION TO THE CITY OF RIDGELAND

By Jan Richardson

After 28 years of dedicated service, Tim Taylor is retiring from the City of Ridgeland Recreation and Parks department. Tim's contributions can be found throughout many of Ridgeland's parks and green spaces.





Never Forget Garden: A national call was made from the Society of the Honor Guard, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to pay respects to all Veterans and their families on the centennial year of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by planting a Never Forget Garden. Taylor identified the space and designed the garden area in Freedom Ridge Park, incorporating existing plantings as well. The Never Forget Garden opened with a ribbon cutting on Nov 12, 2021. Planted in the garden is the eponymous Never Forget Rose.

Bulb Program: Tim selected places through the City to plant thousands of daffodil bulbs. Bulbs were donated to KRB from Keep Mississippi Beautiful.

Collaboration with KRB: Tim's vision for the Wildflower Field and Art Park brought murals, metal sculptures, gigantic butterflies, and the one-of-a-kind Wildflower Pavillion/photo stop to our City.

Pat Fordice Award: For his extraordinary achievements moving the mission forward, Keep Mississippi Beautiful honored Tim with the award named for Mississippi's former First Lady.



Tim was there from the start when the Keep Ridgeland Beautiful (KRB) Committee was formed ten years ago. His first major project with the group—the Keep Mississippi Beautiful's Great American Cleanup Kickoff at Midway Park—set the tone for what was to come.

Partnering with former Director of Public Works Mike McCollum, with sponsors and the community volunteers, Tim helped design and transform Midway Park into an award-winning space that became the foundation for KRB's future success.

Among the many jewels in Ridgeland's crown is the Wildflower Field and Art Park, a showcase of art and nature that has earned two national and several state awards, including the Tourism Partnership of the Year with Explore Ridgeland. Tim

has also been awarded the Keep Mississippi Beautiful's Pat Fordice Award.

In early spring, as daffodils bloom along the City's multipurpose trails, residents enjoy another of Tim's projects, which includes naturalized bulbs planted with help from KRB.

Tim has also guided countless volunteers who work with KRB, helping direct efforts that contribute thousands of dollars' worth of time to maintaining and enhancing the City's parks.

Tim designed and led the installation of Mississippi's first Never Forget Garden at Freedom Ridge Park, a collaborative project between the Mississippi State Society Daughters of the American Revolution (MSSDAR) and Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, honoring the centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Ginger Cocke, a member

of KRB and MSSDAR, spearheaded the project and with the founder of the Never Forget Garden program, Richard A. Azzaro, presented at the national Keep America Beautiful conference, where Ridgeland's project was also awarded a Keep America Beautiful Innovation Award.

Tim's generosity of time and talent extends outside of work, as he guides alligator hunts, is a taxidermist, and has been featured on *Mississippi Outdoors*. An avid outdoorsman, he also captures Mississippi moments with beautiful photos.

From artists to anglers, Tim's telephone seems to have a contact for any project need. We have benefited from his landscape design skills, willingness to always go the extra mile, and drive to improve things.

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.



SEPTEMBER Residential Yard of the Month
The Bowen Home at 101 Broadfoot Circle



OCTOBER Residential Yard of the Month
The Sharp Home at 266 West Washington Street



SEPTEMBER Business Yard of the Month
Porter Malouf, P.A. at 825 Ridgewood Road



OCTOBER Business Yard of the Month
Kinkade's Fine Clothing at 120 West Jackson Street

explore events



32.4450,
-90.1519

Ridgeland,
Mississippi

festive fun

Get ready to explore winter events this holiday season in Ridgeland! Mark your calendars and start planning today.

For events, visit exploreRidgeland.com.



explore
RIDGELAND

RECRE8

CITY WINTER **EVENTS!**

The City of Ridgeland's Recreation and Parks Department looks forward to a wonderful winter!

The City of Ridgeland's Recreation & Parks Department will kick off the winter months with the annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Parade as we light up the night in our Winter Wonderland!

Even as temperatures drop, we'll be busy planning activities, events, and programs for all ages. Stay informed with all we have to offer here in Ridgeland.





Dog Obedience

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks is a program partner with The Jackson Obedience Training Club (JOTC).

- To learn more about the 2026 spring classes, visit www.jotc.org.
- Registration for classes: February / March; Classes start in March at the Ridgeland Recreational Center, Old Trace Park



Mississippi Rush Spring Soccer

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks is a sports program partner with Mississippi Rush Soccer, providing sports leagues for the community.

- For more information about the 2026 spring soccer season, visit www.mfcsoccer.com.



Madison Ridgeland Youth Club Spring Baseball

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks is a sports program partner with Madison Ridgeland Youth Club, which provides sports leagues for the community.

- For more information about the 2026 spring baseball season, visit www.mryouthbaseball.com



Hoops Basketball

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks provides a basketball league for individuals with disabilities. Leagues are played at Old Town Middle School off Sunnybrook Road.

- Men's and Women's leagues are available
- Season schedule: months of February/ March
- Registration runs throughout December
- Registration forms can be found at www.ridgelandms.org (forms tab)



Miracle League Baseball

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks provides a baseball league for individuals with disabilities. Leagues are played at Hite Wolcott on the Parker Miracle Field.

- Youth and Adult leagues are available
- The season runs from April through May
- Registration opens February 1 and runs through early March
- Registration forms can be found at www.ridgelandms.org (forms tab)



TOPSoccer

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks is a sports program partner helping provide a soccer league for individuals with disabilities. For more information about the 2026 spring TOPSoccer season, visit www.topsoccerms.com.



RIDGELAND CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Come join us for the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting and start your holiday season!

- Enjoy Christmas music & dance performances
 - Photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus
 - Count down to the lighting of the tree
- Presented by The Historical Society of Ridgeland.
- There is no admission charge for this event.

Thursday, December 4 • 6:00 p.m.
Plaza at Old Town Crossing

CHRISTMAS PARADE

Ridgeland Mayor McGee, City Aldermen and Santa will lead bands, businesses, and other organizations with an old-fashioned Christmas parade!

- The parade route will begin and end at Holmes Community College.
- Please join us this year and help us light up the evening with your Christmas floats and participation!

Friday, December 5 • 6:00 p.m.



Ridgeland Letters to Santa

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks will have a dedicated mailbox for letters to the North Pole. Drop your letters off and receive a letter back from Santa!

- Include name and address for Santa's reply letter
- Only letters received from the mailbox will receive a reply
- Duplicate letters will receive one reply
- Letters must be received by December 14
- There is no charge for letters to Santa

Date: December 1 - 14, 2025

Location: On the North Side of the Ridgeland Green in front of City Hall

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks wishes you a very happy holiday season!

SUPER SENIORS

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Exercise

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

\$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

Martial Arts for Seniors

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

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

Seated Yoga

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

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

Standing Yoga

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

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

Senior Fit

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

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

The Complete Mix

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

\$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

Tap Dancing

Beginning to intermediate tap dance instruction. This group performs at Ridgeland events and nursing homes. Classes are \$5 each.

Mondays
Intermediate 2:30 - 3:15 p.m.
Beginner 3:30 - 4:15 p.m.
Instructor: Monica Russell

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Move & Groove

Low impact, energizing movement combining dance, tai chi, yoga & martial arts. At your own pace. rhythmic motions to stretch and invigorate. Wear comfortable clothing and "grippy socks" or barefoot - no shoes!

2nd and 4th Tuesdays
12:45 - 1:15 p.m. - 30 Minute Sessions
Instructor: Sally Holly

Mah Jongg

Tile-based matching game. Free sign-up, registration is required.

Dates are 12/18, 1/15, 2/19
3rd Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Bridge

A team trick taking game played with a standard 52 playing card deck. Registration is \$1 per person.

Dates: 12/18, 1/15, and 2/19
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Breakfast Bingo

Play bingo and enjoy breakfast with friends. Registration is free but sign-up in advance, as space is limited.

Dates: 12/11, 1/22, 2/26
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Wellness Workshop

Bryant Physical Therapy and Wellness presents a wellness workshop for increasing mobility, posture, strength and help with fall prevention.

January 21, 2026
11:00 a.m.
Ridgeland Recreational Center



HOLIDAY FUN IN THE CITY

*Searching for something merry to do this holiday season?
Ridgeland is filled with festive activities and family fun
waiting just around the corner!*

EVENTS

FIRST TUESDAYS

Ridgeland Garden Club

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Information contact: joanhp19@gmail.com

DECEMBER 1 - 24

Photos With Santa

Northpark

DECEMBER 3 - 5

Young Artisans Event

Waller Craft Center

Visit mscrafts.org for details

DECEMBER 4

*Ridgeland Christmas
Tree Lighting*

Old Town Plaza

6:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 4

Christmas Open House

The Township at Colony Park

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 4 & 6

Pet Photos With Santa

Northpark

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 5

Ridgeland Christmas Parade

Old Town Ridgeland
6:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 9

Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

Colonial Heights Baptist Church
7:00 a.m. - Breakfast Buffet
7:30 a.m. - Program

DECEMBER 9

Mystery Reader's Book Club

Ridgeland Public Library
10:30 a.m.

DECEMBER 12

Jan Brett Book Tour and Signing

Barnes & Noble
Renaissance at Colony Park
5:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 13

Jane Austen's Birthday Party

Ridgeland Public Library
3:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 13

Copiah Academy Bank Performance

Show Fountain
Renaissance at Colony Park
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 13 - 14

Hometown Vendor Market

Northpark

DECEMBER 19

Colonial Heights Christmas on the Green

Renaissance at Colony Park
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

JANUARY 13

Mystery Reader's Book Club

Ridgeland Public Library
10:30 a.m.

JANUARY 28

Senior Adult Program Lunch & Learn

Ridgeland Recreational Center
11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

FEBRUARY 10

Senior Adult Program Valentine's Lunch

Colonial Heights Baptist Church
11:30 a.m.

FEBRUARY 10

Mystery Reader's Book Club

Ridgeland Public Library
10:30 a.m.

LUNCH & LEARN

WITH
Financial Advisor, Kayla Soukup, AAMS




RAYMOND JAMES

*A Guide for Seniors:
Avoiding Scams & Fraud*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28
11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
RIDGELAND REC CENTER

Registration required at 769.235.9579 or
neelej.jones@ridgelandms.org.
Lunch provided, limited space available.

RIDGELAND RECREATION AND PARKS
PRESENTS

2026 SENIOR ADULT VALENTINE LUNCHEON

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH
11:30 AM

**COLONIAL HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH**
444 NORTHPARK DRIVE

*lunch,
door prizes &
entertainment*

TICKETS ARE \$10 AND CAN BE PURCHASED AT
RIDGELAND CITY HALL OR THE RIDGELAND REC CENTER.
LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 769.235.9579.

RIDGELAND
recreation & parks
senior adult
programs

BUILDING BRIDGES & FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

By Linda Bynum

Ridgeland
Chamber of
Commerce



The Ridgeland Chamber Diplomats are passionate about helping Ridgeland's business community flourish by fostering connections, supporting local enterprises, and creating positive community relations.

2025 Diplomat Co-Captains



Gray Jackson

Embassy Suites-Ridgeland

"My association with the Ridgeland Chamber has enriched my life professionally and socially. I have not only reconnected with old friends, but I have also made wonderful new connections and friendships through the Diplomat Program. Serving as a Diplomat has directly impacted me professionally, bringing me opportunities I might not have benefited from otherwise. There is a loyalty and camaraderie among us Diplomats that transitions into positive business relationships and growth while supporting the dynamic City of Ridgeland as a place to live and work."



Scott Stricklin

Marsh & McLennan Agency, LLC

"I enjoy my role as Chamber Diplomat because it allows me to connect with other business owners to see how I can better serve them and the community. It creates visibility not only for my company but also for myself, and has blessed me with numerous friendships and business partners."

Del Adams

Digio Strategies



"I enjoy being a Diplomat because it lets me connect with local business owners, celebrate their successes, and stay plugged into what's happening in our community. It's all about

relationships. Being a Diplomat with the Ridgeland Chamber helps me build trust, expand my network, and open doors that directly support my role in radio and advertising."

Lee Balch

PriorityOne Bank



"The Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Program is a hidden gem in learning new things about the City of Ridgeland and getting to know others professionally. I thoroughly enjoy being a part of the

Diplomat Program and look forward to all of the events throughout the year, such as Women to Women and the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast."

David Broadaway

Members Exchange Federal Credit Union



"Being a Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat has exposed me to new resources, programs, and places and broadened my network."

Shelia Cheeks

Trustmark



"The Diplomat Council provides a unique opportunity to form close ties with other Diplomats, Board members, and influential business owners."

Kelly Ann Coleman

Staffers, Inc.



"From the great relationships I've built with the other Diplomats, to being able to volunteer and represent Ridgeland in various ways, being a Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat has been rewarding professionally and personally. Linda does a fantastic job of keeping us all informed on what is new and happening in Ridgeland and helping us connect with other members. Her attention to all the details makes it a seamless experience and a lot of fun to participate in. I've really enjoyed getting to know my fellow Diplomats and look forward to cultivating those relationships!"

Johnny Davidson

Citizens National Bank



"I have benefited from the Chamber's Diplomat Program in the last eleven years, not only in my career but also in my personal life. I have met some amazing people in this program who've become some of my closest friends. They have shown up and supported my family in numerous ways. In my career, it has allowed me opportunities to meet people who have become mentors, and I have been able to gain some great customers."

Amber Davis

AC Hotel by Marriott



"I enjoy my role as a Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat because of the wonderful people I meet from other companies and the meaningful connections we build. I believe the Diplomat Council is beneficial because we can support each other in many ways, both professionally and personally, creating a stronger community within our workplaces."

Nicole Irwin

Varicosity Vein Center



"Serving as a Diplomat of the Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce has provided unique visibility and credibility for my business within the local community. The program has opened doors to strategic networking opportunities that have led to valuable partnerships."

Engaging in Chamber events and initiatives has and will continue to build lasting relationships with fellow business leaders and decision-makers. I feel this role allows me to contribute to the growth of the local economy while enhancing my company's presence and reputation."

Ray Jost

The Oglesbee Group Insurance Services, LLC



"I enjoy being a Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat because it allows me to connect with new businesses and support our growing community. It's a great way to build relationships and stay involved in what's happening locally. The role has also helped me expand my professional network and visibility. Overall, it's a meaningful way to give back while growing in my career."

Sissy Lloyd

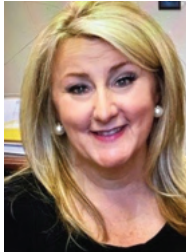
Professional Eyecare Associates



"I have benefited in many ways from serving as a Diplomat with the Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce over these past few years. Mainly, the great network of business professionals and the friendships that have resulted in being a part of this organization is what stand out in my mind. As Diplomats, we have a common goal of promoting Ridgeland as a great community in which to live and work. I am proud of my work with the Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Program and all we have done as a group to advance the working business community of Ridgeland. Ridgeland is the place to be!"

Tammy Louvier

Goodwill Industries of Mississippi



"I have made great business connections and friends that will last a lifetime because of the Chamber. Our Chamber is a true source of calibration and fellowship in a business setting."

Lakeita Pitts

Origin Bank



"Being a Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat allows me to contribute to our community's success. I enjoy my role as a Diplomat because, through ribbon cuttings and events, I can network with local

business leaders and support new businesses opening within our community. As a manager at Origin Bank, being a Diplomat is beneficial because it enables me to live out our purpose, which is to enrich the lives of people within our community. This commitment extends beyond the banking center, and it is through the Diplomat Program, I can make a difference in my community, represent both Origin Bank and the City of Ridgeland, and support our small businesses."

Sierra White

Cadence Bank



"Being a part of the Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Council has been a wonderful experience. It has allowed me to connect with people in my community while supporting local businesses. As a

Diplomat, I have enhanced my professional role by expanding my network, being in the know, and strengthening relationships in the community. Overall, it has been rewarding to be a part of an organization that truly makes a positive impact in Ridgeland."



SAVE THE DATE

MAYOR'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

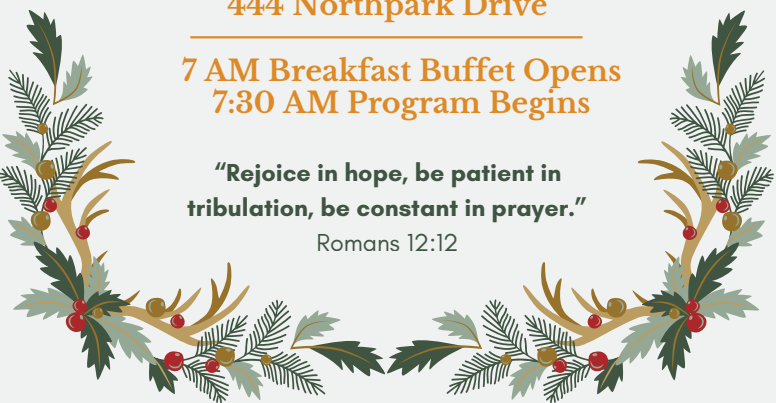
Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Colonial Heights Baptist Church 444 Northpark Drive

7 AM Breakfast Buffet Opens 7:30 AM Program Begins

"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."

Romans 12:12





Ministers at the 2024 Mayor's Prayer Breakfast - Pastor Kylie Ham, Colonial Heights Baptist Church; Pastor Chase Sievers, Word of Life Church; Reverend Dean Williams, Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church; Dr. Bernie Ervin, Mt. Charity Baptist Church; Pastor Dustin Abbot, Lake Harbour Church of Christ; Reverend Steve Street, Trace Ridge Baptist Church; Reverend C.J. Meaders, St. Columb's Episcopal Church; Reverend Cathy Halford, St. Columb's Episcopal Church and Ridgeland Mayor Gene McGee.

A young girl with long dark hair, wearing a white knit beanie with a pom-pom, a dark grey quilted puffer jacket, a dark skirt, black tights, and black sneakers with pink accents, is standing on a polished wooden floor in a library. She is reaching up with her right arm to touch a book on a high wooden shelf. The shelves are filled with many colorful books. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the girl and the bookshelf she is reaching for.

School Highlights

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OLD TOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Dr. Natasha May

A Season of Growth and Excitement at Old Town Middle School



As the leaves change and the air turns crisp, Old Town Middle School is full of energy and excitement for the season ahead. The shift from summer to fall brings new opportunities for students to learn, compete, and celebrate their achievements together.

Fall Sports and School Spirit

This fall, Old Town Middle School's student-athletes have shown incredible dedication and teamwork in sports such as football, volleyball, cross country, and cheer. Their effort and sportsmanship have brought pride to the Titan community. As the fall season wraps up, the excitement continues with basketball season tipping off, and our players are ready to bring that same Titan spirit to the court.

Honoring Academic Excellence

Students who have excelled in the classroom will soon be recognized during the Honor Roll field trip, a well-deserved celebration of their hard work and commitment to academic success. It's a wonderful reminder that effort in the classroom pays off!

Preparing for the Future

Old Town's eighth graders will also take the Pre-ACT test this season. This important assessment gives students an early opportunity to experience a college-readiness test, helping to set goals and prepare for success in high school and beyond.



Looking Ahead to the Winter Dance

As the semester winds down, excitement is already building for the Winter Dance in December—a chance for students to celebrate their hard work, make memories with friends, and enjoy the spirit of the season.

From academics and athletics to celebrations and community pride, this fall has been one of growth, energy, and achievement at Old Town Middle School. The Titans are finishing the year strong and looking forward to even more success in the coming seasons.

RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL

By Keshia Williams

Once Upon A Titan: Ridgeland High's Magical Homecoming Week



There was something truly special in the air at Ridgeland High School the week of September 16 - 20.

The excitement, the laughter, the sea of blue and silver—it could only mean one thing: Homecoming Week had arrived! And this year's theme, "Once Upon a Titan," turned the entire campus into a fairytale come to life.

Each day of the week brought a new themed dress-up day, and the students didn't hold back. From Disney Movie themes to duos dressing as "Things That Rhymed," Titans showed up in full character, filling the halls with creativity and fun. It wasn't just about the costumes—it was about the joy, school spirit, and connection that make Ridgeland High such a special place.

The fun rolled right into the Hallway Decorating Competition, where each grade

took the theme to heart. The results were nothing short of breathtaking. The halls were transformed into a fairytale wonderland—complete with castles, enchanted forests, and sparkling lights that made you feel like you had stepped into a storybook. It was a magical reminder of what teamwork and Titan pride can be created when everyone comes together.

Friday, September 19, brought it all home with a day packed full of excitement. The pep rally was pure energy—students,

Then came one of the community's favorite traditions—the Homecoming Parade. Families, alumni, students, faculty, and staff lined the streets to cheer as each class showcased its creative floats, decked out in the “Once Upon a Titan” theme. Music, laughter, and that unmistakable Titan energy were in the air. The parade also featured the proud introduction of the Homecoming Court is a group of students chosen for their leadership, character, and dedication to the spirit of Ridgeland High.



cheerleaders, dance team, and the Titan band all coming together to fire up the crowd for game night. And when the lights came on at Titan Stadium, Ridgeland's football team put on a show to remember, defeating Yazoo City with an impressive 48 - 20 victory!

But the most heartwarming moment of the night came at halftime, when Brooklyn Barnes was crowned Homecoming Queen alongside Homecoming King Josiah Davidson. The cheers, the smiles, and the pride in that moment captured everything Homecoming is about—celebrating not just a game, but a family.

This year's Homecoming was more than just a week of events; it was a story of community, creativity, and connection. “Once Upon a Titan” reminded everyone that when Ridgeland comes together—with heart, imagination, and school spirit—something truly magical happens.



HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By Mary Margaret Busby



Holmes Launches Hotel and Restaurant Management Technology Program



Holmes Community College recently announced the launch of a new Hotel and Restaurant Management Technology program on the Ridgeland Campus. The program, which expands upon the college's long-standing Culinary Arts Technology program, provides students with an option to pursue careers in the growing hospitality and tourism industry.

The Culinary Arts Technology program focuses on hands-on lab instruction led by a chef instructor in a commercial kitchen. Students gain practical experience in food preparation while also preparing to earn their ServSafe Manager certification from the National Restaurant Association upon completion of CUT 1213 Sanitation and Safety.

The new Hotel and Restaurant Management Technology program provides specialized career and technical instruction in all hotel and restaurant management phases. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for leadership roles in the hospitality and tourism industry, including positions as general managers and directors of operations. Instruction covers travel and tourism, hotel and lodging facilities, food services, recreation facilities, hospitality marketing, franchise and unit management, business and financial management, hospitality transportation and logistics, and industry policies and regulations.

Instructor Alexei Harrison, who leads the program at Holmes, said the expansion directly responds to student and industry needs. "We have listened to our students and

industry over the past five years. The need for flexible degree options and training to fit the varied career goals of our students pushed us to expand the course offerings of the traditional culinary or hospitality degree. Our students can now customize the learning experience by choosing from the many baking and pastry, advanced culinary, or hospitality course electives being offered," stated Harrison.

Harrison added, "Our Hotel and Restaurant Management degree prepares students for leadership in one of the world's most dynamic industries. With hands-on experience, industry connections, and a focus on hospitality, graduates are prepared to build careers in hotels, resorts, restaurants, and beyond. The opportunities are endless, both internationally and at home. Once students complete the required coursework, they can earn the nationally

recognized Restaurant Management Professional credential from the National Restaurant Association."

In addition, instructor Lori Morrison teaches both Culinary Arts and advanced Baking and Pastry courses at Holmes. While the Baking and Pastry degree is not yet an official program, Holmes already offers all the required courses, giving students another avenue to enhance their skills.

"We are so very proud of how Chef Alexei Harrison has built this program over the past few years," said Vice President for Career

cent of employment in the state. By 2029, that number is projected to grow by 10.2 percent, adding 12,400 jobs for a total of 134,300.

Employment opportunities in hospitality are expected to continue increasing nationwide. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment of chefs and head cooks to grow 11 percent from 2018 to 2028, faster than the average for all occupations, with most opportunities in food services such as restaurants. Food service managers should see the same increase of 11 percent. In 2024, the BLS estimated that the median

salary for food service managers averaged \$65,310, while lodging managers averaged \$68,130. The BLS also notes that an associate degree is the minimum requirement for various entry-level positions in the hospitality field.

For more information about the Hotel and Restaurant Management Technology program, contact Harrison at amharrison@holmescc.edu or 601-605-3327.



Technical Education Dr. Amy Whittington. "Her knowledge and industry relationships have helped make this program world-class. We look forward to seeing how this new program option will support our local industry needs."

Restaurants are a driving force in Mississippi's economy, providing jobs and building careers for thousands while playing a vital role in local communities. In 2019, there were 121,900 restaurant and foodservice jobs in Mississippi, accounting for 10 per-





Holmes 2025 Ridgeland Campus Homecoming Court

IN THIS PHOTO: Pictured are the Ridgeland Campus members of the 2025 Holmes Community College Homecoming Court. They are (left to right) Freshman Maids Mariah Jimerson and Sarah Grace Nail; Student Body Maid Alisha Davis and Sophomore Maids Ashlyn Dodd and Sydney Neely..

Holmes Community College announces their Ridgeland Campus Homecoming court and celebrated its centennial Homecoming celebration on Thursday, October 23rd in Goodman.

Student Body Maid: Alisha Davis, the daughter of Tim Davis and Lisa Bryant, is majoring in pre-physician assistant studies. On campus, Davis is involved as an Ambassador, Student Government Association representative, work-study for Student Services, Content Creators Club member, and Phi Theta Kappa honor society member. After Holmes, she plans to transfer to the University of Southern Mississippi to obtain her bachelor's degree in biological sciences with a specialization in sports medicine, then apply to a physician assistant school.

Sophomore Maid: Ashlyn Dodd, the daughter of Shannon and Matthew Dodd, is majoring in pre-med. She is active on campus as an Ambassador, president of the Alpha Lambda Sigma Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, Student Government Association, and Content

Creators Club. After Holmes, she plans to transfer to Mississippi State University to major in biochemistry with a concentration in pre-med.

Sophomore Maid: Sydney Neely, the daughter of Sherry Neely and Sean Neely, is majoring in pre-radiological science. She is involved in the Student Government Association, STEM Club, Grands and Gadgets Club, and Content Creators Club. After Holmes, she plans to attend a two-year program at Arkansas State University to earn her bachelor's degree in radiological science and become an X-ray technician. In her free time, Neely enjoys working at her job, dog sitting, and taking naps.

Freshman Maid: Mariah Jimerson, the daughter of Amy Downing and Hannah Benton, is majoring in sports medicine. Jimerson is active in the Student Government Association and STEM Club. After Holmes, she plans to continue her education at Alcorn State University. Outside of school, she attends Relate Church in Byram and enjoys

volunteering at the Webster Animal Shelter, where she helps care for the animals.

Freshman Maid: Sarah Grace "SG" Nail, daughter of Angela and Adam Nail, is a pre-nursing major. She is active in the Student Government Association and the Content Creators Club and serves as a Holmes Ambassador. After obtaining her associate degree in nursing from Holmes, Nail plans to pursue her bachelor's in nursing at the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. Outside of school, she works as a customer service representative at Palm Beach Tan. She also enjoys going to church, spending time with her family—including her mini dachshund Lola—shopping with friends, traveling, and going to the beach. Nail loves spending time with her nephews and is excited to become an aunt to a new niece in January 2026.

Holmes honored the Homecoming Court at halftime of the Homecoming football game against Northwest Mississippi Community College.

LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS



By Evanne Flanders

It's been a busy, joy-filled year at the library.

We've loved seeing patrons at our regular programs, special events, and Summer Reading. As the year winds down and a new one begins, we're excited to continue our monthly offerings and introduce a few new ones.

For children and teens:

- Sensory Play for Littles (ages 0 - 2): Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.
- Little Adventures Storytime (ages 3 - 5): Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.
- Creative Writing: fourth Saturdays (ages 9 - 12) at 10:30 a.m. (ages 13 - 18) at 3:00 p.m.
- Tiempo de Cuentos (Spanish Storytime) (ages 3-5): second Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.
- We also host additional programs for ages 6 - 18 throughout the week.

For adults:

We're celebrating Jane Austen's 250th birthday. Join us on December 13 at 3:00 p.m. for trivia, refreshments, and hands-on activities. We also offer a full slate of ongoing programs, including the Madison County Mystery Readers Book Club, meeting on the

second Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m., and a Journaling Program on the third Saturday at 2:30 p.m.

We have something for everyone all year long. For details on upcoming events, visit mclms.org, follow us on Facebook, or call the Ridgeland Library at 601-856-4536.



Page Turners

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC LIBRARY



CITY OF RIDGELAND ANNOUNCES SECOND YEAR OF MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

Following a successful first year, the program continues to give local high school students an inside look at city government and the importance of civic leadership..

By Kim Cooper

The City of Ridgeland is proud to launch the second year of the Mayor's Youth Council. Participants gain experience and a better understanding of how local decisions shape the community where they live.

"Our young people have shown a real passion for learning how their City works," said Mayor Gene McGee. "This program

allows them to develop leadership skills and see firsthand how teamwork and good ideas can lead to meaningful change."

The Mayor's Youth Council members meet throughout the year with Mayor McGee, the Board of Aldermen, City department heads, and community leaders. These sessions help students



learn about communication, collaboration, and how people serve their community through local government.

"This experience gives students a true sense of connection and responsibility," said program coordinator & Chief of Staff to the Mayor, Lisa Walters. "They gain confidence and a better understanding of how they can make a difference—now and in the future."

Now in its second year, the Mayor's Youth Council encourages young leaders to get involved, stay engaged, and build a lifelong commitment to public service.



“ Our young people have shown a real passion for learning how their City works. This program allows them to develop leadership skills and see firsthand how teamwork and good ideas can lead to meaningful change. ”

Mayor Gene McGee

2025-26 MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

BESS BORNE

Jackson Academy, 11th grade

JOSELIN BUSTILLO

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Cameron Cooper

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Chase Cox

St. Joseph, 12th grade

Josiah Davidson

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Knox Davidson

Jackson Prep, 12th grade

Ella Douglas

Jackson Prep, 12th grade

Ethan Graves

Jackson Prep, 11th grade

Lilly Hart

MRA, 11th grade

Stella Hathcock

St. Andrew's, 11th grade

Kelly Herring

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Melissa Khadivi

St. Andrew's, 11th grade

Sophia Le

St. Andrew's, 12th grade

Lauren Mathews

Jackson Prep, 12th grade

Porter Meeks

Jackson Academy, 11th grade

Manning Parks

Jackson Prep, 11th grade

Mary Russell Philpott

St. Andrews's, 12th grade

Madison Russell

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Arvind Singh

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Waris Singh

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Ra'kiya Smith

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Kashvi Sukhadia

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Ashwin Talwar

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Bryson Tucker

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Sharon Perez Vasquez

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Breanna Washington

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Caysen Young

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Thank you to our 2025-26 sponsor,
Watkins Construction & Roofing!

RIDGELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT CREATES NEW PATHWAYS FOR VETERANS THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

By Kim Cooper

The Ridgeland Fire Department (RFD), led by a veteran who knows firsthand the meaning of service, is opening new doors for those who have served in the armed forces. Guided by a deep understanding of what it means to give back, RFD is helping veterans transition from military life to public service—continuing their mission to protect and serve in a new capacity.

The program provides a structured, hands-on learning experience that blends classroom instruction, fieldwork, and real-world practice. It gives veterans a strong foundation in emergency response while easing the transition into civilian life through mentorship and teamwork—hallmarks of both military and fire service culture.

RFD is also developing plans to expand the program to include onboarding for veterans who wish to become Firefighters or EMT-Basics. This next step will open additional opportunities for service-minded individuals to join the department, further strengthening Ridgeland's ability to respond to emergencies with professionalism and compassion.

Through this initiative, the City of Ridgeland reaffirms its dedication to supporting veterans while investing in the community's safety and resilience. The program is a powerful example of how service can evolve, allowing those who once defended our nation to continue protecting it at home.

“ With the support of the Board of Aldermen and in partnership with the School of EMS and COMPASS, the City of Ridgeland has introduced an Apprenticeship Program for Emergency Medical Technician–Basic (EMT-B) training. This effort allows veterans to use their GI Bill benefits to complete the School of EMS's Paramedic program, setting them on a path toward a fulfilling and lasting career in emergency medical services. ”

Mayor Gene McGee



HOW YOU CAN PREVENT STORMWATER POLLUTION

By Cynthia James

Polluted stormwater is the #1 source of water pollution in the country, but you can do your part to help keep the waterways of Ridgeland and the Reservoir clean and flowing.



What is Stormwater?

Stormwater is water from rain that does not soak into the ground. It flows from rooftops, over paved areas, bare soil, and sloped lawns. Stormwater collects and transports animal waste, litter, soil, pesticides, fertilizers, oil & grease, and other potential pollutants as it flows.

What's the Problem?

Rain events wash pollutants from land, streets, and construction sites into storm sewers and drainage ditches. Eventually,

this empties the polluted stormwater directly into our streams, rivers, and, ultimately, the Ross Barnett Reservoir without treatment.

Polluted stormwater degrades our lakes, rivers, wetlands, reservoirs, and other waterways. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen can cause algae's overgrowth, resulting in oxygen depletion. Toxic substances from motor vehicles and careless application of pesticides and fertilizers threaten water quality and can kill fish and other aquatic life. Bacteria from animal wastes and improper connections

to storm sewer systems can make lakes and waterways unsafe for wading, swimming, and fish consumption.

Eroded soil is a pollutant as well. It can cloud waterways and interfere with fish and plant life habitats.

Many types of pollutants find their way into storm drains.

Common pollutants found in storm sewers and drainageways include:

- Animal Waste
- Litter
- Motor oil
- Yard clippings
- Fertilizers and pesticides
- Soapy car wash water
- Eroded sediment from construction sites

It's important to remember that any surface water runoff, not just rainfall, can run into the storm sewer and collect in the stormwater management system. For example, when you wash your car on the driveway, the water, dirt, and grime can end up in the system. That's why we must be careful with what we put into the storm sewers, as traces of all this material can end up in the stormwater system and our local waterways.

What can you do to Prevent Stormwater Pollution in Ridgeland?

- Remember: Only rain belongs in the drain!
- Wash your car over your lawn or gravel.
- Keep your car well-maintained.
- Consider disconnecting your downspouts and rerouting the water into a rain garden.
- Use lawn or garden chemicals sparingly.
- Plant native, low-maintenance plants and grasses.
- Minimize runoff by not over-watering your lawn and garden.
- Clean up pet waste.
- Consider minimizing impervious surfaces around your home.
- Do not drain your pool, spa, or fountain to a storm drain.
- Make sure storm drain outfalls are not running in dry weather. If it hasn't rained in 72 hours, it should not be flowing. Call Ridgeland Public Works at 601-853-2027 if you see a potential problem.
- Properly maintain your neighborhood stormwater pond.
- Install a rain barrel or cistern to capture roof runoff.
- Walk, bike, or share a ride when possible.



ABOVE: This sign at Brashear Creek is one of many located at the waterways of Ridgeland to remind citizens to do their part to keep the waterways clean. BELOW: A waterway located at Wolcott Park.



WHO AND WHERE

RIDGELAND ALDERMEN



D.I. Smith
Alderman At-Large
Mayor Pro Tempore
601-940-2710
DI.Smith@RidgelandMS.org



Ken Heard
Ward 1
601-201-7392
Ken.Heard@RidgelandMS.org



Chuck Gautier
Ward 2
601-506-5913
Chuck.Gautier@RidgelandMS.org



Kevin Holder
Ward 3
601-238-5361
Kevin.Holder@RidgelandMS.org



Brian Ramsey
Ward 4
601-506-1979
Brian.Ramsey@RidgelandMS.org

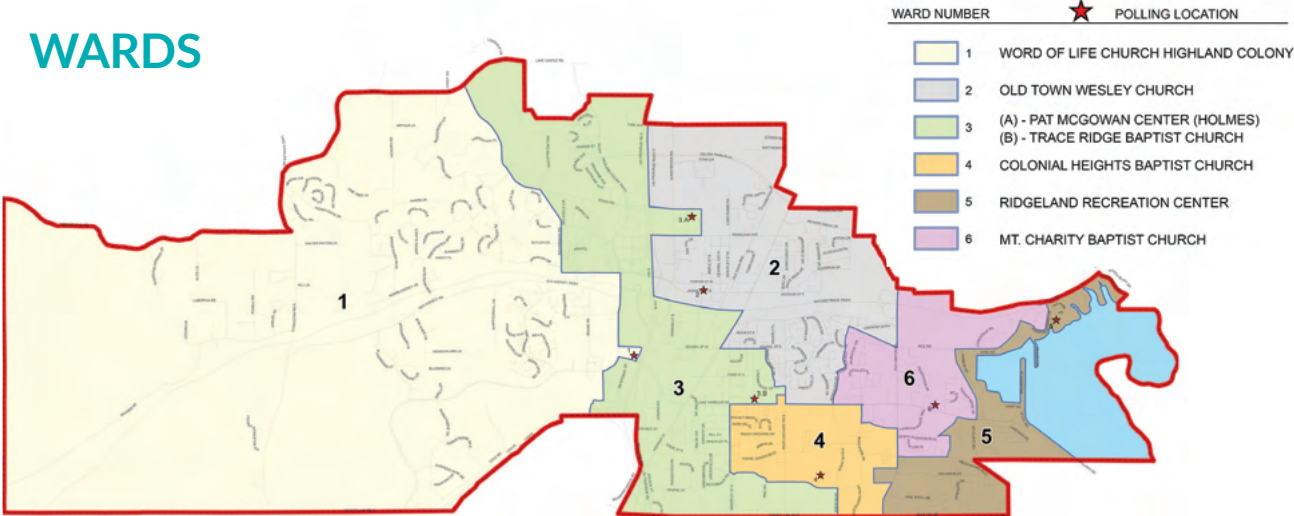


Bill Lee
Ward 5
601-278-6256
Bill.Lee@RidgelandMS.org



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

WARDS



CITY DIRECTORY

ANIMAL CONTROL

animalcontrol@ridgelandms.org..... 601-856-2121

ANONYMOUS TIP LINE

(criminal investigations division)..... 601-853-2006

CITY HALL/MAYOR'S OFFICE..... 601-856-7113

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

(development, property maintenance, zoning, signs, permits) ... 601-856-3877

COURT CLERK

(traffic violations, misdemeanors and fines)..... 601-853-2001

EMERGENCY

(police and re dispatch center)..... 9-1-1

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION *(business licenses, elections,*

meeting minutes, budget, public records)..... 601-856-7113

FIRE DEPARTMENT

(non-emergency calls, safety education programs)..... 601-856-7004

POLICE DEPARTMENT

(non-emergency calls, public safety concerns)..... 601-856-2121

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

(roads, garbage, recycling, water, storm water)..... 601-853-2027

RECREATION AND PARKS *(special events, athletics and program*

registration, park information)..... 601-853-2011

UTILITY BILLING DEPARTMENT *(water, sewer, garbage,*

& recycling billing) *utilitybilling@ridgelandms.org*..... 601-856-3938

CITY MEETINGS

MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

1st & 3rd Tuesday - 6 p.m.

Work sessions are Mondays prior to Board Meeting - 6 p.m.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

2nd & 4th Tuesday - 6 p.m.

Randy Lynn - Chair, Connie Suber (Secretary), Robert Moore, Rick Eades, Jim Woodrick, Leigh Ann Sullivan, Jim Powell

KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL

First Monday - 4 p.m.

Jan Richardson - Chair, Rachel Bradley, Ginger Cocke, Polly Hammett, Claire Jackson, Phyllis Parker, Kenya Rachal, Lea Anne Stacy

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Every other month - TBA

Nancy Batson - Chair, 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 - Chair, 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 - Chair, Michelle Caballero, Kim Lovato,

Theresa G. Kennedy, Drew Malone, Judy Rice, David Dunbar, Don Roberts

DEPARTMENT HEADS



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



Fire Department
Johnathan Posey
Fire Chief
johnathan.posey@ridgelandms.org



Finance And Administration
Angela Richburg
City Clerk/CFO
angela.richburg@ridgelandms.org



Police Department
Brian Myers
Chief of Police
brian.myers@ridgelandms.org



Recreation & Parks Department
John Sidney North
Director
john.north@ridgelandms.org



Recreation and Parks

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

