

there's more here!

RIDGELAND LIFE

Summer

Starts Here!



the SUMMER ISSUE

JUNE – AUGUST 2026

FROM THE MAYOR

Gene McGee



As I write this letter, it's hard to believe that spring has nearly passed and we're already experiencing temperatures that feel like the start of summer. I truly enjoy this time of year, as the trees are now fully green and flowers are in full bloom, making our City more beautiful than ever.

It is exciting to see all of the projects currently underway in our City. The rehabilitation of Lake Harbour Drive, including milling and overlay, the reconstruction of Wheatley Street, which is so important to our community, and the many streets being improved within our subdivisions are all vital. These efforts help maintain the high quality of life our citizens enjoy and ensure that visitors experience the very best of Ridgeland.

I am also excited about the recent ribbon-cutting for the Ridgeland Eco Park at Freedom Ridge that was held on May 11. This addition not only provides much-needed stormwater detention but also creates a space that everyone can enjoy. With its walking trails, beautiful trees, flowers, and natural landscape, this park is a tremendous asset to our City and will offer opportunities for recreation and relaxation for years to come.

Additionally, I am encouraged by the transformation that will begin later this year in the Railroad District along Jackson Street. This project will help create a true downtown area, something the City of Ridgeland has never had. It is an exciting and important step forward for our community.

As many of you know, one of the things I am most proud of is our dedicated City staff. While we often highlight our public-facing departments, we don't always recognize our administrative team, who work diligently behind the scenes to ensure our budget is sound, our funds are properly allocated, and our expenditures are carefully managed.

One individual who exemplifies this dedication is our Finance Manager, Ashley Daniel. Thanks to her hard work and leadership, the City of Ridgeland has once again received the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This marks the 33rd year the City has earned this prestigious award. Over her 14 years of service, Ashley has played a vital role in maintaining this high standard. Employees like Ashley help ensure Ridgeland remains a leader in municipal finance and continues to provide the transparency and accountability our citizens deserve.

Another proud moment for me is unfolding as the Mayor's Youth Council closes out its second year. We have had 28 incredible students participate, learning about and exploring all facets of our City. What makes me most proud, however, is their leadership beyond the classroom. In collaboration with the Killebrew Psychological Services, the Mayor's Youth Council has launched a student-led mental health awareness initiative focused on education, access to resources, and reducing stigma among students. Mental health challenges

among young people are increasing, yet many continue to struggle in silence. The students created this initiative to change that, to ensure every student hears one clear and powerful message: it is okay to ask for help, and help is available! The WORTH A LISTEN initiative can be found on the City's website.

I hope each of you has a wonderful and blessed summer. If you are planning a vacation, have fun and travel safely.

Gene F. McGee

RIDGELAND LIFE

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Kim Cooper, City of Ridgeland

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Carly Brandon, City of Ridgeland

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

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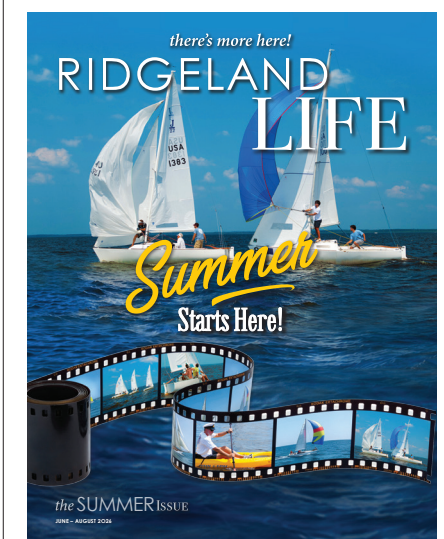
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“ I'm thrilled to share our summer issue, filled with City announcements and detailed event highlights for the months ahead. This edition also features the second installment of the Ridgeland Life Cover Series, showcasing the work of local photographer David Wiggins and capturing vibrant moments at the Barnett Reservoir, Balloon Glow, and more. Wishing you a wonderful season...summer starts here! ”

Kim

Kim Cooper,
Editor/Director of Public Relations



Cover photography by Wiggins & Co. Photography

TELLING RIDGELAND'S STORY STORIES OF IMPACT

By Polly Hammett



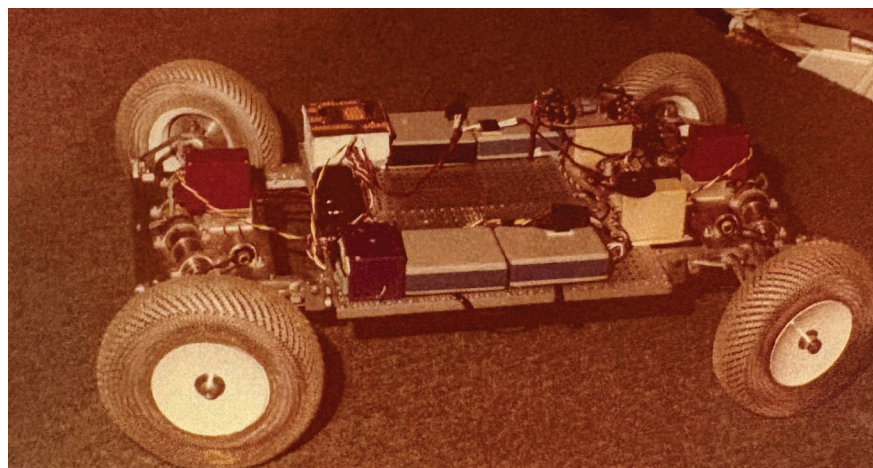
This year, we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence...The birth of the United States of America. Let's reflect on the contributions and accomplishments of a few "Ridgelanders" and the impact they have made on our city, state, nation, and beyond.

When I moved to Ridgeland, I heard of a man who built an underground house. It was 21 years later that I met William Dempsey Sturdivant and learned of his many contributions to waterway navigation and space exploration. A Navy veteran, Bill moved to Ridgeland with his wife and daughter soon after the close of World War II. He was a talented craftsman who made working models of container ships, towboats, and fishing boats. When a change was needed to an existing vessel, he would make a model to test whether the change would work. Some of his models were so realistic that they were used to train pilots for the boats. Most were built for the Army Corps of Engineers and tested in Vicksburg. But some were tested in Carr's Pond, where Holmes Community College soccer fields are now located.



ABOVE: One of the many boat models crafted by Sturdivant. BELOW: Lunar Rover featuring Sturdivant's tires.

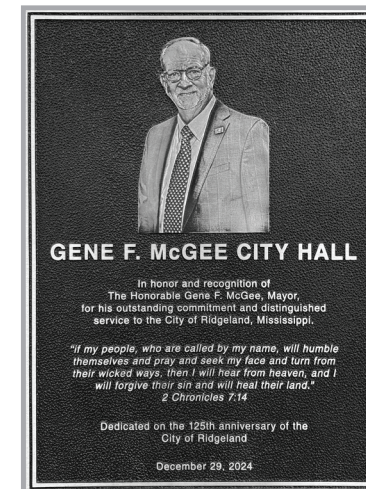
Bill served the City in several capacities over the years. But he served the nation (and arguably the whole world) by providing Mercury Recovery Charts to the Aeronautical Chart and Information Center of the United States Air Force, which were used in the Gemini and Apollo space missions. He received a letter of commendation for the renamed Spacecraft Recovery Charts in 1961. He was called on again a few years later to design a "tire" that could travel in space dust, thus allowing the Lunar Rover to travel on the moon.



Stained glasswork by Pearl River Glass Studio hanging at Ridgeland City Hall

Because of term limits established in the early 1990s, only one person has ever served more than two terms as Mississippi's Lt. Governor, and that was Brad Dye. He served under three Governors from 1980 to 1992: William Winter, Bill Allain, and Ray Mabus. A long-time public servant, Dye served as Director of the Mississippi Agricultural and Industrial Board (now MS Development Authority) as well as in the Mississippi House of Representatives and the Mississippi Senate. As Lt. Governor, he was key in implementing a Statewide Personnel System in 1980 and spearheaded the Public Utilities Act of 1983. He led efforts to improve Mississippi highways, establishing a 4-lane system in 1987. Another major focus was increased funding for UMMC to build a state-of-the-art facility that would attract the best doctors and, thereby, provide the best healthcare possible for Mississippians.

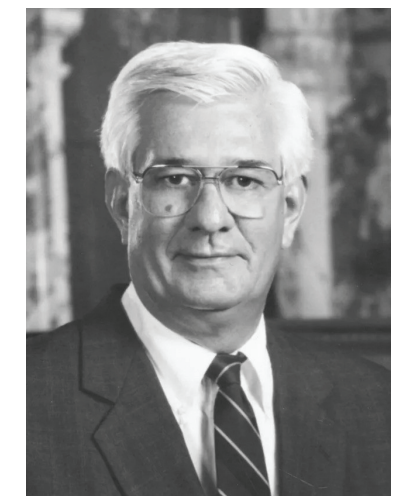
Gene McGee was elected to his first term as Mayor of Ridgeland in 1989. Having served on the Board of Aldermen, he was no stranger to public service. Mayor McGee has hired highly qualified people over the years who have played an integral part in the City's growth. In his tenure of dedicated



Dedication plaque hanging at City Hall

service, Ridgeland has grown from a small town into a vibrant City and is known as a major business hub.

The Master Plan was adopted in 2008 and several major projects from this plan have been completed. Ridgeland has been enhanced by a new City Hall, an extension of Lake Harbour Drive to Highland Colony Parkway and Colony Park Boulevard, with more projects in the works. The trail system played an important part in Ridgeland being



Lt. Governor Brad Dye

awarded the Healthiest Hometown and Bicycle Friendly Community designations. Strong ordinances resulted in being awarded Tree City USA multiple years. With many businesses locating in our City, it has been named Google eCity. Mayor McGee and his administration have made a positive impact on our community.

Art and artists abound in Ridgeland! Breathtaking works showcased at City Hall from Mark Millet and Andy Young (Pearl



ABOVE: Artist Roger Leonard Long and his artwork
BELOW: The Mustard Seed in Old Town

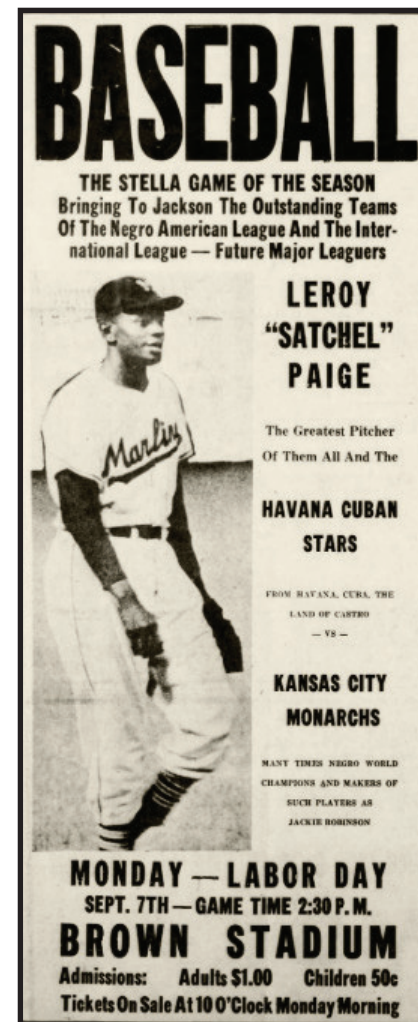
River Glass) depict our rich history and the bright path to our future. In the early 1990's native Mississippian, Vickie Carroll, established a premium line of hand painted and colorful pottery. Gail Pittman, renowned ceramic artist, launched her business in the Ridgeland industrial park area. Several area galleries showcase works by local and national artists. Mary Buckley Art offers art classes and will hold a summer camp for young artists-to-be. Jackson Street Gallery and Fischer Gallery are well-versed in the artists they feature. Look for local artists Dyann Gunter, Pamela Dewees, Mary Ann Elliott, Kit Fields, Kathy Sue Wells, and others on Facebook or on the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi page.

Of course, art is not just to be hung on a wall. The exhibits at Waller Craft Center feature a wide range of artworks by craftsmen and artists from across Mississippi. For art that lifts your spirits and warms your heart, visit Mustard Seed in Old

Town. Although it has been in Ridgeland for only about 3 years, Mustard Seed (founded in the 1980s) has been teaching special students the joy of expression through the arts for over 40 years.

If you like your art with a side of sunshine, flowers, birds, and butterflies, visit Ridgeland's Wildflower Field and Art Park. As you walk through the field, you will see Harry Day's whimsical sculptures made from recycled materials. These pieces depict activities you can enjoy in Ridgeland, such as tennis, cycling, and dog walking. There is a berm honoring the Challenger League and another honoring the Steed family, who operated a dairy farm here in the early to mid-1900s. There is a mural painted by Gavin Bird and a pavilion that is a piece of art unto itself.

The sculptures and art bring year-round color and life to the field, even in the snow! Don't be surprised to find an artist set up



ABOVE LEFT: Baseball league advertisement featuring LeRoy "Satchel" Paige
ABOVE RIGHT: Baseball player "Goose" Curry

with an easel and brushes, capturing the glorious color. This field won multiple awards, both state and national from organizations such as Keep Mississippi Beautiful and Keep America Beautiful and is part of the National Wildflower Trail.

The Ridgeland Public Library recently featured Roger Leonard Long, a contemporary portrait artist with a long history in Ridgeland. He is a descendant of one of Ridgeland's first families. His great-great-grandmother, Patience Harris, was the enslaved child of James Burroughs Yellowley. The Harris family has been in this area longer than Ridgeland has been chartered. If you missed his exhibit of



cutting-edge portraits, Roger can be found online at PortraitPhenomena.com. He and his wife also teach dance and art classes to young people, providing a positive outlet for their talents and energy.

A Ridgeland athlete represented the United States in the 2012 Summer Olympics, bringing home a gold medal in the Team 4 x 100 Relay. Bianca Knight started running at the age of 12. Before she graduated from Ridgeland High School, she had won many individual track titles. In 2006, Bianca was named Gatorade Athlete of the Year. She also ran in national competitions before qualifying for the Olympic Team. Recognizing the importance of team

participation in sports, she established the Bianca Knight Foundation to promote excellence in youth track and field. Bianca is currently an Assistant Track and Field Coach at Queen's University in Charlotte, North Carolina.

At a recent meeting of the Historical Society of Ridgeland, we received some exciting information from Matt Dodd and John Sydney North. We learned that Ridgeland once had a baseball field that hosted the Negro Baseball League, which played all over the country before black athletes were allowed to play in the National League. The field was owned by Mrs. Marion Smith Henderson, who also owned the Jackson Cubs. She was married to George Henderson, who played in the League. Other notable players in this League were "Goose" Curry, Roy Campanella, and LeRoy "Satchel" Paige. Brown Field was located in south Ridgeland, between Highway 51 and Interstate 55, and was named after her stepfather. Mrs. Henderson also owned a hotel on Farrish Street in Jackson. The field was lost when housing was built on the property in the early 1960s. We are still gathering information on this field and its rich history.

If you have any stories, photos, or other memories of this exciting part of our history, please contact kim.cooper@ridgelandms.org. The Historical Society of Ridgeland will be so happy to hear from you. The Society maintains a History Room at City Hall. The permanent display, along with the Ridgeland History Trail markers, can be seen on a virtual tour available on the City of Ridgeland website.

Occasionally, a special exhibit is curated for the History Room to highlight a person or historical archives. Please go by City Hall to enjoy the Memorial Day/America250 exhibit now on display. America was 123 years old when Ridgeland was chartered. Just imagine what we could have accomplished if we had been "born" earlier!

Happy Birthday, America!
Good job, Ridgelanders!

RIDGELAND LIFE COVER SERIES: WIGGINS & CO. PHOTOGRAPHY

By Kim Cooper

Wiggins & Co. Photography
298 Commerce Park Dr., Ste. E
Ridgeland, MS

Ridgeland Life continues its cover series celebrating the natural beauty and outdoor spaces that define our community. In the summer issue, photographer David Wiggins brings that vision to life with stunning images of the Barnett Reservoir, a favorite spot for long, sun-filled days with family and friends.

With a career that covers four decades, David continues to add to his photographic resume and skill set. Whether it's drawing on the experience of 500+ weddings, or the creation of a classic individual or family portrait, or using the challenge of personal projects to push the boundaries of what is possible, David is always eager to answer the age-old questions of 'what if' and 'how can we' as they relate to his photography.

Today, David continues to create timeless portraits of individuals and families, dynamic, edgy images for those looking for a creative representation of themselves, with the occasional wedding requesting classic images. Professional business portraits, social media images, headshots, and product photography, and the just-for-fun still photographer on movie sets round out David's calendar.

BELOW: David in his studio



ABOVE & BELOW: Sample photographs from David's portfolio



TREK THE TRAIL: DISCOVER RIDGELAND'S STORY

By Kim Cooper

The City of Ridgeland is proud to join communities across the nation in recognizing and celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States, also known as America250.



The Historical Society of Ridgeland, City staff, and members of the 125th Anniversary Committee unveiled the Ridgeland History Trail as part of the City's 125th Anniversary celebration in 2024. Sponsored by Explore Ridgeland, the trail features 22 interpretive wayside markers offering a self-guided experience that brings to life the people, places, and events that have shaped Ridgeland. The trail connects with Ridgeland's multi-use trail system and extends to several notable historic sites.

As part of the nationwide America250 celebration, the City has been featuring individual History Trail markers in the months leading up to Independence Day, to provide a closer look at the stories behind each stop.

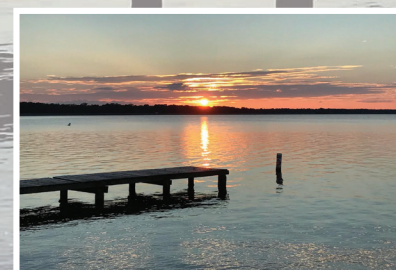
As a nod to this issue's cover, we're highlighting the Barnett Reservoir and its dedicated marker. From its construction in the early 1960s to its impact on recreation, economic growth, the Reservoir remains a

popular spot for outings year-round.

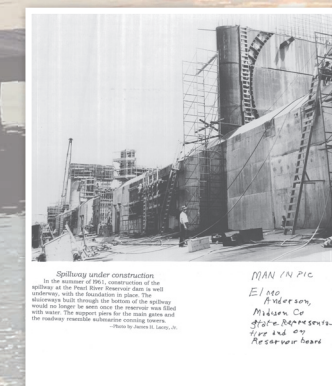
We invite you to Trek the Trail, take in the scenery, enjoy time with family and friends, and experience something that's both meaningful and fun for all ages. Discover our history and celebrate America250 right here in Ridgeland.

Visit ridgelandms.org to view the full trail map and explore all 22 markers.

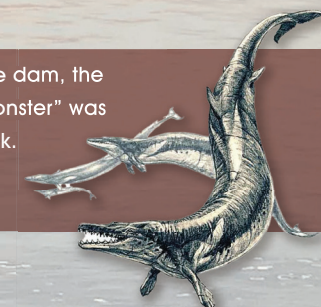
THE RESERVOIR



Construction of the Ross Barnett Reservoir began in 1960 under the direction of the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District. Although the Army Corps of Engineers had studied flooding in the area since the 1930s, the main purpose of the reservoir project was to create a permanent source of drinking water for the City of Jackson and to provide recreational and economic development opportunities for Madison and Rankin counties. Construction of the spillway was completed in 1962 and the reservoir was dedicated on May 30, 1965. The 33,000-acre lake is the state's third largest lake, with 105 miles of shoreline.



In 1962, during construction of the dam, the skeleton of a "huge prehistoric monster" was unearthed near Pelahatchie Creek. Examined by geologists, the fossil was identified as a *Basilosaurus*.



CITY UNVEILS NEW ECO PARK AT FREEDOM RIDGE

By City Staff

A ribbon-cutting event was hosted on May 11 to unveil the newest addition that will benefit outdoor recreation and sustain the environment.

The City of Ridgeland hosted a ribbon-cutting event at Freedom Ridge Park on May 11 to unveil the new Eco Park. This transformative initiative was designed to enhance both environmental sustainability and outdoor recreation.

The new park includes a scenic loop trail around the Purple Creek Basin. This new trail expands mileage within the park and features interpretive markers highlighting the area's unique ecosystem, offering both educational and recreational opportunities for visitors.

“ This project represents what can happen when infrastructure, environmental stewardship, recreation, and long-term planning all come together with a shared vision. ”

Alan Hart,
Director of Public Works



THE PROJECT WAS CENTERED AROUND FIVE KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Stream bank stabilization
- Water quality protection
- Flood risk reduction
- Wildlife habitat restoration and preservation
- Expansion of outdoor recreational opportunities

KEY IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Construction of additional retention ponds and settling basins to enhance water storage and reduce siltation
- Rehabilitation and restoration of the existing retention facility within Freedom Ridge Park
- Streambank stabilization and channel improvements along the Purple Creek tributary between the park and Highway 51
- Development of low-impact nature trails designed for both recreation and environmental education
- Restoration and preservation of native wildlife habitats through sustainable best management practices

“ These investments are helping create a stronger, more resilient, and more beautiful Ridgeland for generations to come. ”

Mayor Gene McGee

The \$6.5 million multi-phase Purple Creek and Freedom Ridge Drainage Project was funded through a combination of federal and state resources, including ARPA funds, MCWI funding, a \$1 million grant from the Mississippi Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund (MOSTF), and a \$500,000 grant from Madison County.

These improvements will significantly increase detention capacity within the Purple Creek Basin, helping reduce downstream flooding while enhancing eco-tourism features such as trails, native landscaping, bridges, and interpretive signage.

ABOVE: One of the five interpretive signs in the Eco Park.
BELOW: May 11, 2026 ribbon-cutting event at Freedom Ridge Park.



CELEBRATE AMERICA BALLOON GLOW: GOING STRONG FOR 36 YEARS

By Kim Cooper



For 36 years, the Celebrate America Balloon Glow has been a highlight of summer in Ridgeland, bringing together families, friends, and visitors for an evening filled with patriotism, music, and community spirit. What began as a festive gathering has grown into an annual tradition, thanks to a long-standing partnership between the City of Ridgeland and Northpark.



Year after year, this collaboration has created a welcoming, family-friendly event that continues to draw strong crowds and lasting memories. The City also proudly partners with Canton Tourism to bring in the hot air balloons, connecting the Balloon Glow to the larger Mississippi Championship Balloon Festival experience.

The City of Ridgeland invites everyone to experience the magic of the Celebrate America Balloon Glow this year. As dusk falls, guests can watch the vibrant hot air balloons inflate and illuminate the night sky, an unforgettable sight that captures the spirit of summer.

Beyond the glow, the evening is filled with activities for everyone to enjoy. Guests can explore a variety of food vendors, have fun in the Kids' Corner, and take in live music throughout the night. The celebration culminates in a spectacular fireworks show, accompanied by a patriotic performance by Temperance Babcock.

There is no admission cost, making it easy for families to come out, relax, and enjoy an evening together under the summer sky.



Come out and show your Patriotism !

The City of Ridgeland Recreation and Parks team invites everyone to experience the magic of the CELEBRATE AMERICA BALLOON GLOW this year.



Schedule

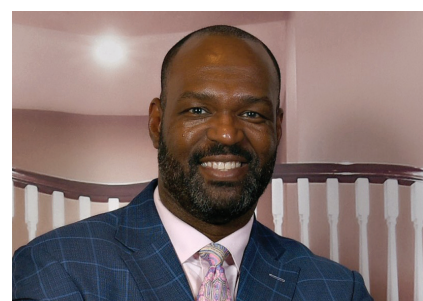
Friday, June 26, 2026 at Northpark

- Festivities begin at 5:00 p.m.
- Live music from Luckenbach, with headliner George Birge.
- Special Flyover: Blackhawk Helicopters
- 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



ABOVE: George Birge

Welcoming New Leadership at Northpark



As this beloved event continues to grow, Northpark enters an exciting new chapter with the addition of its new General Manager, Onassis Burress. A seasoned retail and business leader, Burress brings extensive experience in shopping center

management and community engagement. He holds both a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Master of Business Administration from Columbia College.

A proud veteran of the United States Air Force, Burress served during Operation Joint Guard in Bosnia, earning the Armed Forces Service Medal. His professional background includes leadership roles at Simon and GGP, where he served as both an Area General Manager and a General Manager. Most recently, he led operations at Marathon Mall in Nassau, Bahamas, overseeing strategic initiatives and daily management.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Burress has demonstrated a strong commitment to community service. He has served as a City Council Member

for the City of Radford, President of the Radford Chamber of Commerce, and a board member for several organizations throughout his career.

A native of Baldwin, Mississippi, he is passionate about building strong community connections and looks forward to further integrating Northpark with the greater Jackson area.

As Ridgeland celebrates 36 years of Balloon Glow, the event remains a shining example of what can happen when community partnerships, tradition, and a shared vision come together, lighting up the sky and bringing people together year after year.

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.



MAY
Residential Yard of the Month
The Dukes home at 359 Indian Gate Circle



MAY
Business Yard of the Month
Highland Home at 638 Highland Colony Parkway

KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS WITH STATEWIDE AWARD RECOGNITION

By Jan Richardson

Keep Ridgeland Beautiful's (KRB) Ginger Cocke has been honored with the 2026 Pat Fordice Award, a prestigious recognition presented annually by Keep Mississippi Beautiful (KMB) at its awards luncheon to an individual who demonstrates exceptional dedication to community improvement and environmental stewardship. Named after former Mississippi First Lady Pat Fordice, the award celebrates those who embody a spirit of service and a commitment to enhancing the state's natural beauty.

Ginger's contributions through Keep Ridgeland Beautiful include countless hours working on our wildflower project, community bulb plantings, educational presentations, and cleanups, like the Pearl River Clean Sweep. Ginger led the development of the state's first Never Forget Garden project, in commemoration of the Centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Located around a pavilion in Freedom Ridge Park, the garden is a peaceful place to honor those who served our country. Keep Ridgeland Beautiful won a Keep America Beautiful Innovation Award for this project, and Ginger and the founder of the Never Forget program, Richard Azzaro, co-presented on a national stage at a Keep America Beautiful conference in Washington, D.C.

"Ginger is an outstanding leader and an extremely committed volunteer," shares Kenya Rachal, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful member. "She approaches every volunteer effort with the same professionalism and care as a full-time job. Ginger invests time in thoughtful planning and preparation, stays on task, and gets the job done efficiently and with excellence."

Additionally, Ginger volunteers with Gleaners, First Baptist Church of Jackson, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. *"It was an unexpected delight to be nominated by my fellow KRB members," said Ginger. "Then, to join the other Keep Ridgeland Beautiful members who are past*

recipients of the Pat Fordice award is truly special to me. As we work together to create beautiful spaces, the blooms may fade, but it's our friendship that will last."

In addition to Ginger's individual honor, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful received statewide recognition by winning a Wildflower Field Award for the Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park on West Jackson Street, a Wildflower Trails of Mississippi member. This award highlights outstanding efforts in landscaping, beautification, and the creative use of native plants to enhance public areas. At the heart of the achievement this year is the installation of the one-of-a-kind Wildflower Pavilion,



IN THIS PHOTO: KRB's Ginger Cocke, the 2026 Keep Mississippi Beautiful Pat Fordice Award winner. April 30 at the KMB Annual Awards Luncheon in Jackson, MS



ABOVE, Left to right: Polly Hammett, Kenya Rachal, Jan Richardson, Mayor McGee, Jane McGee, Ginger Cocke, Lea Anne Stacey, James Mathews, Crystal Pham, Amelia Dalton

a distinctive and innovative structure that serves as a focal point within the park.

The Wildflower Pavilion stands out as a one-of-a-kind feature and photo stop. Surrounded by vibrant native wildflowers, the pavilion not only provides a shaded space for visitors but is also a work of art. The idea for the pavilion came from Explore Ridgeland's Chris Chapman, retired CEO. Explore Ridgeland's valuable support brought the idea to fruition in collaboration with Keep Ridgeland Beautiful and Tim Taylor. The award also recognized the jubilant ribbon-cutting event for the pavilion, which featured a duo of musicians, activities, flower planting, and a lemonade stand to round out the community celebration.

Keep Ridgeland Beautiful is thankful to Keep Mississippi Beautiful for these honors. Be sure to visit the Wildflower Field and Art Park. You will see changes every week, so visit often.



ABOVE, Left to right: Sandy Powlett, Board Chair, KMB and Lea Anne Stacey, KRB member



explore outdoors



32.4619,
-90.1931

Ridgeland,
Mississippi

miles of trails

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



explore
RIDGELAND.

explore **RIDGELAND** Bikeshare Program

Explore Ridgeland on Two Wheels - for FREE

As Mississippi's premier cycling destination, we are delighted to offer the free Explore Ridgeland Bikeshare Program. Locals and visitors are invited to experience on-demand bike sharing, powered by Explore Ridgeland and Koloni Fleets!

The fleet is split between The Bike Crossing for easy access to the Chisha Foka Multi-Use Trail and the Ridgeland Visitors Center near popular outdoor shopping districts Renaissance at Colony Park and The Township at Colony Park.

Explore Ridgeland Bikeshare at **The Bike Crossing**
192 Old Town Crossing, Ridgeland MS

Explore Ridgeland Bikeshare at **Ridgeland Visitors Center**
1000 Highland Colony Pkwy, Suite 3002, Ridgeland MS

Hours of Operation:

- Monday 8AM - 5PM
- Tuesday 8AM - 5PM
- Wednesday 8AM - 5PM
- Thursday 8AM - 5PM
- Friday 5AM - 5PM
- Saturday 7AM - 5PM
- Sunday 7AM - 5PM

How it Works:

1. Set up the Koloni App

Follow the QR code or visit the Google Play Store or Apple Store to download the app. Follow the in-app instructions to create a free account.



2. Select Your Bike

Unlock a bike inside the app by scanning a QR code or inputting a bike ID.



3. Enjoy Your Ride

Explore Ridgeland on two wheels. Don't forget your helmet!

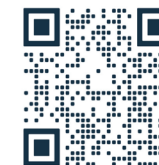
City of Ridgeland ordinance requires all persons to wear protective helmets when riding a bicycle. Ride at your own risk.



Things to Know:

- You may not ride a bicycle if you are under 18 years of age. A minor who is 18 years of age or older may only use the services if the minor's membership is subscribed for by, and the minor is under the responsibility of, the minor's parent or legal guardian.
- Users must review and approve the terms and conditions inside the app.
- Ride at your own risk and be sure to follow the rules of the road.

Visit our website for suggested routes and more information:



RECRE8

CITY SUMMER EVENTS!

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

Summer kicks off in great American style as the Celebrate America Balloon Glow honors our country's 250th Anniversary with live music from Luckenbach, The Temperance Babcock Trio, and headliner George Birge, as well as hot air balloons, fireworks, kids' activities, food trucks, and even a flyover by Blackhawk helicopters from our local military. Fathers and children will enjoy fishing in the Barnett Reservoir as they compete for the biggest catch. For those looking to beat the heat, the Ridgeland Library offers indoor activities to keep you cool, and the City's Super Seniors program offers numerous indoor activities year-round.



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 and under
- Prizes: biggest, smallest, and most fish
- There is no charge for this event.

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026
Time: 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.
Location: Old Trace Park, Barnett Reservoir



Celebrate America Balloon Glow

Come out and show your patriotism! Ridgeland Recreation and Parks will partner with the Mississippi Championship Balloon Fest for a spectacular evening.

Date: Friday, June 26, 2026
5:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Location: at Northpark

- Fireworks show starts at 9:15 p.m.
- Bring your chair or blanket to enjoy this FREE event
- Kids' Corner is open from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

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

Date: June & July
Location: Freedom Ridge Park/ Sand Volleyball is at Hite Wolcott



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 12 (visit mfcsoccer.com)
 Late registration from July 13 - 31 (\$30 late fee)
- Flag Football: registration from June 8 – July 10
- MRYC Fall Baseball: (visit mryouthbaseball.com)
- MRYC Fall Softball: registration from July 1 – August 28 (visit mrycsoftball.com)

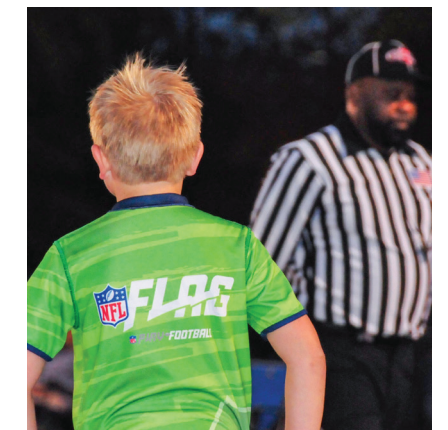


Dog Obedience

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 2026 fall classes, visit: www.jotc.org.



SUPER SENIORS

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Strong and Steady

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 - 10:00 a.m., 10:00 - 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 - 11:00 a.m.
 Instructor: Andy Dillon

Seated Yoga

Improve flexibility, mobility, and relaxation with gentle yoga movements performed entirely from a chair. Perfect for beginners or those who prefer a seated workout, this class focuses on stretching, breathing, and light strengthening in a safe and supportive environment

\$5/class
Mondays and Fridays
 11:00 - 11:30 a.m.
 Instructors: Martha Millsaps & Vickie White

Standing Yoga

An extension of the Seated Yoga class, some stay for both. The gentle yoga class incorporates standing poses and floor work to build strength, balance, and flexibility. Movements are slow and accessible, with modifications offered to help all ability levels stay active and improve wellness.

\$5/class
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 - 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 - 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

Mah Jongg

Tile-based matching game for those who know how to play and complete the Charleston. Free sign-up, and registration is required.

Dates: 6/18, 7/16, and 8/20
 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Bridge

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

Dates: 6/18, 7/16, and 8/20
 1:00 - 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: 6/25, 7/23, and 8/27
 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS

Patriotic Door Hanger Craft Workshop

Join us at the Ridgeland Recreational Center for a fun afternoon painting a wood door hanger—all supplies are included! Registration is required; call 769-235-9579 or email at Neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org.

Free! Sponsored by Summerhouse Beau Ridge
June 24, 2026
 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
 Ridgeland Recreational Center

Spare Time Bowling Club

Join us for a fun afternoon of bowling—all levels welcome. Must register by Monday, July 6 to 769-235-9579 or Neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org

\$8.25 fee, includes 2 games + shoe rental
July 7, 2026
 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.
 Fannin Lanes, 1145 Old Fannin Road

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



senior adult programs

Neeley Jones
 Senior Adult Coordinator

(769) 235-9579
neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org,
 Facebook:
facebook.com/ridgelandsuperstarseniors

Ridgeland Recreational Center
 137 Old Park Trail, Ridgeland, MS 39157

Patriotic DOOR HANGER CRAFT WORKSHOP
 FREE, all supplies are included
special thanks to

JUNE 24TH FROM 2-4 PM
RIDGELAND REC CENTER
 Registration required:
 769-235-9579 or email
neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org

SPARE TIME BOWLING CLUB

Tuesday, July 7th, 2-4 pm

Fannin Lanes
 1145 Old Fannin Rd

Join us for a fun afternoon of bowling - all levels are welcome.

\$8.25 and covers 2 games with shoes.

Must register by Monday, July 6th to Neeley at 769-235-9579.





Reservoir photos courtesy of Explore Ridgeland

SUMMERTIME IN THE CITY

Ridgeland is the place to be this summer. From scenic nature trails to days on the Reservoir, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Gather your family and friends and experience the many events and moments waiting for you here.

EVENTS

JUNE 3

The Big Run Hosted by Fleet Feet

The Township – AC Marriott Hotel
6:00 p.m.

JUNE 5

Ridgeland Library 55th Anniversary Celebration

Ridgeland Library
3:00 p.m.

JUNE 12

Paleo Palooza

Ridgeland Library
10:00 a.m.

JUNE 13

Father Child Fishing Tournament

Old Trace Park
8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

JUNE 22 - 26

Creative Craft Camp

Ages 6 - 12
Waller Craft Center

JUNE 23

MS Museum of Natural Science Event

Ridgeland Library
10:00 a.m.

JUNE 24

Senior Adult Workshop: Patriotic Door Hanger Crafts

Ridgeland Recreational Center
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

JUNE 26

Celebrate America Balloon Glow

Northpark
5:00 - 9:30 p.m.

JUNE 27

Dash 'N Splash Run, Walk, and Roll

Benefits Brain and Spine
Old Trace Park
8:00 a.m.

JULY 2

Library Event: Hot Air Balloon and Army Military Band

Freedom Ridge Park
9:00 a.m.

JULY 7

Senior Adult Spare Time Bowling Club

Fannin Lanes Bowling Alley
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

JULY 7 - 9

Stained Glass for Teens

Waller Craft Center
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

JULY 9

Summer Porch Party: Movie Night

Waller Craft Center
6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

JULY 10 - 12

Christmas in July

Renaissance

JULY 18

Christmas in July Demo Day

Waller Craft Center
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

JULY 18

Back to School Event

Northpark
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

JULY 20 - 24

Creative Craft Camp

Ages 6 - 12
Waller Craft Center

JULY 21

Hattiesburg Zoom

Ridgeland Library
10:00 a.m.



RIDGELAND CHAMBER AWARDS LUNCHEON

By Linda Bynum
Chamber Executive Director



Some 300 business leaders and City officials filled the Country Club of Jackson, celebrating Ridgeland's economic growth and development during 2025 and honoring volunteers for their dedicated service to the Chamber and the City. The event featured hit Songwriter and Recording Artist, Steve Azar, whose song "One Mississippi" is the newly proclaimed official state song.

"This year we celebrate our 33rd anniversary. Thirty-three years of serving our business community. With our 2026 theme 'Always Open For Business', we will continue our mission of not only helping businesses to succeed, but in helping businesses turn their vision and dreams into reality. We are a community with momentum, with leadership taking us in good directions. Leadership can pull together a network of people to accomplish positive results. By working

together, friendships and cooperation grow. Ideas grow. And, goals grow. Simply getting started and keeping at it are the keys to making a difference and the most valuable key to bringing it all together."

Nicky Cobb,
2026 Ridgeland Chamber President
Guaranty Bank and Trust Company



Left: 2024 - 2025 Ridgeland Chamber President, Cecil Harper, Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, P.A., left receiving the President's Plaque as he passes the gavel to 2026 Ridgeland Chamber President Nicky Cobb, Guaranty Bank & Trust Company. Center: Lieutenant Governor Delbert Hosemann introduces Mississippi recording artist Steve Azar. Right: Award-winning Raphael Semmes and the Raphael Semmes Quartet entertaining guests with America's favorite pop tunes.

Below: Hit songwriter and recording artist Steve Azar sings "One Mississippi", Mississippi's new official State Song



"We're one Mississippi, where there's a magnolia tree
Two Mississippi, while a mockingbird sings out on its limb
Oh, and what a sweet soulful hymn
I say three Mississippi to this land called home
I'll breath Mississippi 'til I'm dead and gone, won't you carry on?
Ahh carry on Mississippi"

Excerpt from "One Mississippi", Lyrics and Music by Steve Azar
The Official State Song of Mississippi
Bill signed into law by Governor Tate Reeves on April 14, 2022

The awards luncheon also honored Ridgeland Chamber volunteers for their contributions to the Chamber and the City of Ridgeland.

Thank you to the Chamber's Awards Luncheon Prime Sponsors!

Presenting Sponsor:
Guaranty Bank and Trust Company

- Diamond Sponsors:**
- Atmos Energy
 - City of Ridgeland
 - Delta Utilities
 - Explore Ridgeland
 - Green Oak Florist & Garden Center
 - Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, P.A.
 - Mad Genius, Inc.
 - Madison County Business League & Foundation
 - Members Exchange Federal Credit Union
 - Mendrop Engineering Resources, LLC
 - Michael Baker International
 - Neel Schaffer, Inc.
 - Story Financial Partners
 - Town Square Publications
 - Trustmark

- Gold Sponsors:**
- BankPlus
 - Community Bank of Mississippi
 - Dean Architecture
 - Goodwill Industries of Mississippi
 - Keesler Federal Credit Union

- Silver Sponsors:**
- Citizens National Bank
 - Embassy Suites - Ridgeland
 - PriorityOne Bank
 - StorageMax - Ridgeland

- Bronze Sponsors:**
- BMSS, LLC Advisors & CPAs
 - Huntington Bank
 - Mattiace Properties - Renaissance at Colony Park
 - Southern AgCredit, ACA



Ridgeland Mayor McGee, left, presents the 2025 Gene F. McGee Economic Development award to Mike Marsh of Marsh Marketing, Inc. for dedicated economic leadership enhancing the quality of life for Ridgeland residents and for making Ridgeland a premier community and one of Mississippi's brightest stars.



Nicole Irwin of Varicosity Vein Center was named 2025 Diplomat of the Year. Presenting the award is 2024 Diplomat of the Year Gray Jackson of Embassy Suites - Ridgeland.

- Copper Sponsors:**
- Holmes Community College
 - Northpark
 - Olivia's Food Emporium
 - Origin Bank
 - Professional Eyecare Associates
 - Staffers, Inc.
 - State Farm Insurance - John Dorsa
 - The Lily Pad
 - Varicosity Vein Center
 - Wells Marble & Hurst, PLLC
 - White Construction Company

- Special appreciation to:**
- Steve Azar • Mad Genius, Inc.
 - Raphael Semmes & the Raphael Semmes Quartet • Green Oak Florist and Garden Center • Abe Draper, Photographer
 - Bob Smylie, Bowie Audio Visual Enterprises
 - Mississippi Tent & Party Rental
 - McKenna Nolen, Story Financial Partners
 - Ridgeland Chamber Diplomats
 - Country Club of Jackson



Scott Stricklin of Marsh & McLennan Agency, LLC, was named 2025 Volunteer of the Year. Presenting the award is 2018 Volunteer of the Year Tammy Louvier of Goodwill Industries of Mississippi.



Olivia's Food Emporium was named 2025 Business of the Year. Presenting the award to store owner Olivia King is Ray Balentine representing the 2024 Business of the Year Michael Baker International.



The Lily Pad received the 2025 Community Service Award. Presenting the award to founder Kristin Lape is 2024 Community Service award recipient Lesley Holleman of Fleet Feet.



David Broadway of Members Exchange Federal Credit Union was named the Legacy Builder 2025. Presenting the award is Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Co-Captain 2021-2022 Sissy Lloyd of Professional Eyecare Associates.



The award-winning team from Mad Genius, Inc., which created the tribute video honoring 2024-2025 Ridgeland Chamber President Cecil Harper, Harper, Rains, Knight & Company, P.A. From Left to Right: Rob Bridges, CEO; Chip Sarver, CGO; Catherine Strong, CFO; Julianna Ladner, Project Coordinator; and Ryan Farmer, COO.



From left, recording artist Steve Azar; 2026 Ridgeland Chamber President Nicky Cobb, Guaranty Bank & Trust Company and Linda Bynum, Executive Director, Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce.

COMING EVENTS

Ridgeland Chamber Summer Fling Golf Tournament
 Tuesday, June 23, 2026
 Whisper Lake Country Club
 414 Annandale Parkway, Madison MS
 10:30 a.m. - Registration
 11:00 a.m. - Lunch
 1:00 p.m. - Shot Gun Start

Women To Women: A Celebration Luncheon
 Tuesday, August 25, 2026
 Country Club of Jackson
 345 St. Andrews Drive, Jackson, MS
 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Ridgeland Chamber Golf Classic
 Thursday, September 24, 2026
 Lake Caroline Golf Club
 118 Caroline Club Circle, Madison MS
 10:30 a.m. - Registration
 11:00 a.m. - Lunch
 1:00 p.m. - Shot Gun Start

For more information: please call the Chamber at 601-991-9996



School Highlights

RIDGELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ANN SMITH ELEMENTARY

By Karen Harness

Champions of Our School Community: Recognizing Those Who Make a Difference



Mrs. Wilbanks of Ann Smith Elementary has always found fun ways of incorporating tech into her classroom. Whether it's Kahoot, Blooket or digital escape rooms, she finds fun ways to incorporate tech in with math lessons.

Megan Wilbanks Named Teacher of the Year

We are proud to celebrate Megan Wilbanks as our Teacher of the Year, recognizing her exceptional dedication, leadership, and passion for student success at Ann Smith Elementary.

As a 2nd-grade math teacher, Ms. Wilbanks brings learning to life with engaging, meaningful instruction that builds strong foundational skills in her students. Her classroom is filled with energy, encouragement, and high expectations, creating an environment where every child feels supported and inspired to succeed.

Now in her seventh year at Ann Smith

Elementary, Ms. Wilbanks has proven herself to be a committed and valued member of our school community. She serves as a team lead and takes on additional leadership roles throughout the building, consistently going above and beyond to support both students and staff. Her positive energy is contagious, uplifting those around her and contributing to a strong, collaborative school culture.

Also a dedicated mentor to new teachers, she offers guidance, encouragement, and practical support to help them grow in their practice. Her willingness to share her knowledge and invest in others reflects her deep commitment not only to her own students, but to the success of the entire school.

Above all, Ms. Wilbanks has a genuine love for children and a passion for making a difference in their lives. Her dedication to the Ann Smith community is evident in everything she does, from the relationships she builds to the leadership she provides. We are honored to recognize Megan Wilbanks as our Teacher of the Year and thank her for the lasting impact she continues to make every day.

Mrs. Creel Named Paraprofessional of the Year

We are proud to recognize Mrs. Creel as our Paraprofessional of the Year, honoring her outstanding dedication, compassion, and commitment to our school community. Mrs. Creel plays an essential role in ensuring that all families - especially our English Learner (EL) families - feel welcomed, valued, and supported.

Serving as a trusted bridge between the school and families, Mrs. Creel goes above and beyond to make meaningful connections. She provides translation and interpretation services with clarity, professionalism, and genuine care, ensuring that families fully understand their child's education and engage with it. Her ability to maintain open and effective communication with parents, teachers, and administrators makes her an invaluable asset to our school.

Mrs. Creel is often the first person families reach out to because they know she listens with empathy and responds with



compassion. She creates a safe, respectful environment where families feel heard, understood, and appreciated. Her warm personality and welcoming smile immediately put others at ease, helping to build strong, trusting relationships.

In addition to her communication efforts, Mrs. Creel honors and celebrates the diverse cultures within our school. She works closely with staff to deepen their understanding of students' cultural backgrounds, fostering inclusivity and strengthening connections across our school community.

Mrs. Creel also supports families in navigating school resources and expectations with patience and cultural sensitivity. She ensures that language is never a barrier to participation, empowering families to advocate for their children and take an active role in their education.

Through her unwavering dedication, Mrs. Creel creates a positive and inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels a true sense of belonging. We are grateful for her service and proud to celebrate her as our Paraprofessional of the Year.

Our Partner in Education: ASE Parent of the Year - Andriena Rios

We are proud to recognize our Parent of the Year. This dedicated and inspiring mother truly exemplifies what it means to be actively engaged in her child's life and our school community. From the very beginning, she has made it a priority to be a hands-on parent - one who consistently supports, encourages, and shows up both at home and at school.

Family is at the heart of everything she does. She not only pours love into her own son but also extends that same care and compassion to all children. Her belief that every child deserves to feel valued and supported is evident in her daily actions and involvement.

Her commitment to our school shines through her PTO involvement, where she has worked to ensure that all students have fun, feel celebrated, and experience a sense of belonging. Through this involvement, she has also built meaningful connections with other families, strengthening the sense of community within our school.

In addition to her role as a devoted parent, she is a hardworking professional. She is a real estate agent with ROA and a business owner in the beauty industry through HLB Beauty Studio. Despite juggling multiple roles, responsibilities, and busy schedules, she manages it all with grace and determination.

Above all, she considers being a parent to her son her greatest accomplishment. Her unwavering commitment to "bring the hustle" and her belief that showing up truly matters make her a powerful role model for both parents and students alike.

We are honored to celebrate her as our Parent of the Year and thank her for the positive impact she continues to make in our school community.

OLD TOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Dr. Natasha May



Celebrating Growth, Achievement, and Community: A Successful Year at Old Town Middle School



As the school year comes to a close, Old Town Middle School proudly reflects on a year filled with growth, resilience, and meaningful accomplishments. Our students, staff, and families have worked together to create a culture centered on excellence, support, and opportunity.

Academically, our students have continued to rise to the challenge. Through engaging instruction, targeted support, and a commitment to high expectations, we have seen steady progress across grade levels. Teachers have implemented innovative strategies to meet learners' diverse needs, ensuring that every student has the tools needed to succeed.

Beyond the classroom, our students have excelled in a variety of extracurricular activities. From athletics to fine arts and

academic clubs, students have demonstrated teamwork, discipline, and creativity. These experiences have not only showcased their talents but also helped build confidence and leadership skills that will serve them well in the future.

This year also emphasized the importance of community and connection. Family engagement events, service projects, and school-wide celebrations brought us together and strengthened the partnerships that are essential to student success. We are grateful for the continued support of our families and community members who invest their time and resources into our school.

We are especially proud of our eighth-grade students as they prepare to take the next step into high school. Their

growth over the past three years has been inspiring, and we are confident they are well-prepared for the journey ahead.

As we look forward to the upcoming school year, we remain committed to fostering an environment where every student is challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential.

Thank you to our dedicated teachers, supportive families, and outstanding students for making this a truly remarkable year at Old Town Middle School. Be sure to check Old Town Middle School's website for important school announcements, such as Summer Registration hours, required Summer Reading, and Back to School Supply List throughout the summer. We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.

RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL

By ToShunda Washington



Building the Future at Ridgeland High School

At Ridgeland High School, being laser-focused means more than academic success - it means intentionally creating an environment where every student has the space, support, and structure to thrive.

That commitment is now taking shape on campus.

In October, the Madison County School District broke ground on a new classroom addition at Ridgeland High School. Now, months later, that vision is becoming reality in a way that everyone who steps onto campus can see. Visible signs of progress greet visitors arriving at Ridgeland High School - sections of the parking lot dedicated to construction, equipment in motion, and the steady rise in new classroom space. While these temporary shifts may disrupt daily routines, they are part of a larger, carefully planned investment unfolding in real time. What may look like disruption at first glance is, in fact, progress, intentional, necessary, and focused on creating a stronger future for our students and staff.

The addition will include eight new classrooms, helping transition students out of portable buildings and into more connected, secure, and modern learning spaces. This shift represents more than new construction - it reflects a commitment to providing a cohesive educational environment where students and teachers can fully engage and collaborate.

"I'm so excited to see the additions at Ridgeland High School. I still remember when we first added portables because we were growing; even then, we needed more classrooms and an auditorium. Now, 23 years later, we're continuing that growth with even more



classrooms. It shows our dedication to providing students with the best opportunities possible," stated Preston Nailor.

Bringing more of the Ridgeland High School community under one roof will:

- Enhance campus safety and accessibility
- Provide more consistent and high-quality instructional environments
- Improve access to technology and resources
- Strengthen students and staff collaboration

For many on campus, this moment carries special meaning. Few understand the full journey of Ridgeland High School like Roderick Davidson, who has been part of the school since its doors first opened.

As construction continues, students pass the site each day, watching progress unfold in real time. It serves as a daily reminder that Ridgeland High School is not only focused on the present but is also intentionally building for the future.

This project aligns directly with this year's theme of being laser-focused, clear in vision, purposeful

in action, and committed to preparing every student for life beyond high school. Every step forward in this construction reflects a broader mission: to ensure that Ridgeland High School remains a place where excellence is supported by opportunity.

As Preston Nailor previously shared, the district's investment in facility improvements reflects a commitment to supporting student growth and creating learning environments that match the needs of a growing school community. That vision continues to take shape through projects like this classroom addition.

At Ridgeland High School, we are not just adding classrooms - we are strengthening our foundation.

We are laser-focused. And we are building what comes next. As always, it's a great day to be a Titan!

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By Mary Margaret Busby



Holmes Ridgeland Campus Students Named to 2026 Holmes Hall of Fame

Holmes Community College recently recognized outstanding student leaders from the Ridgeland Campus with induction into the 2026 Holmes Hall of Fame, the college's highest student honor.

Students selected for this distinction demonstrated academic excellence, leadership, service, and commitment to the Holmes community. For the Ridgeland Campus, honorees include Anthony Angel Agustin-Salvador of Canton, Mary Crawford Canard of Madison, Alisha Grace Davis of Flora, Ashlyn Dodd of Flowood, Kelsey Hall of Jackson, Jrace L. Jamison of Madison, Anna Beth Korhonen of Foley, Alabama, Emma Korhonen of Foley, Alabama, Brooklin Latina Potee of Ridgeland, Tyler Grace Sims of Brandon, and Alyssa Joanne Vancor of Flowood.



IN THIS PHOTO: 2026 Holmes Community College Ridgeland Campus Hall of Fame inductees are (front row, left to right) Jrace L. Jamison, Mika Maehata, Ashlyn Dodd, Anthony Angel Agustin-Salvador, Kelsey Hall, Emma Korhonen, (back row, left to right) Brooklin Latina Potee, Anna Beth Korhonen, Tyler Grace Sims, Alyssa Joanne Vancor, Alisha Grace Davis and Mary Crawford Canard

2026

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Hall of Fame

Anthony Angel Agustin-Salvador

Anthony Angel Agustin-Salvador, son of Adela Salvador Orozco and Oscar Agustin Jimenez, is a pre-law major at Holmes Community College. During his time at Holmes, he has been recognized for his academic achievement, including membership in Phi Theta Kappa and recipient of the President's List Scholarship during both his freshman and sophomore years. He also earned President's List honors during both years. Agustin-Salvador plans to transfer to a four-year university to earn a bachelor's degree before attending law school in Georgia. He aspires to become an immigration lawyer, aiming to serve his community through advocacy and legal support.

Mary Crawford Canard

Mary Crawford Canard, daughter of Laura Coleman Canard and Richard Peyton Canard, is an English writing major at Holmes. Her academic achievements include membership in Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, President's List honors, and an ACT Scholarship. Canard plans to transfer to Mississippi State University to continue her studies in English writing. She is currently working on a novel and aspires to build a career in publishing, with the long-term goal of opening her own publishing house in Mississippi.

Alisha Grace Davis

Alisha Grace Davis, daughter of Lisa Renee Bryant and Tim Davis, is a pre-physician assistant major. She plans to transfer to the University of Southern Mississippi to pursue a degree in sports medicine with a minor in chemistry, to become a physician assistant. Davis currently works as an emergency room technician at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center and is interested in emergency medicine and orthopedics. While at Holmes, she has been active as an Ambassador, vice president of the Student Government Association, a member of Phi Theta Kappa, and a member of the Content Creators Club. She has earned President's List honors, a STEMMY Award, and recognition as STAR Student of the Semester in Dr. Gates' Medical Terminology course.

Davis was also voted 2025 Ridgeland Campus Student Body Maid. She credits her Holmes experience with strengthening her academic confidence, leadership skills, and commitment to empathy and service.

Ashlyn Dodd

Ashlyn Dodd, daughter of Shannon and Matthew Dodd, is a pre-med major at Holmes. She plans to transfer to Mississippi State University to pursue a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry before applying to medical school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. During her time at Holmes, Dodd has been recognized for her academic achievement as a President's Scholarship recipient and a member of Phi Theta Kappa, where she serves as president. She has also earned President's List honors and received a STEM Award. In addition to her academic honors, Dodd serves as president of the Student Government Association and is a Holmes Ambassador. She is also a member of the Content Creators Club and was voted Sophomore Maid for Homecoming 2025.

Kelsey Hall

Kelsey Hall, daughter of Annette and Fred Hall, is a general studies major. After Holmes, Hall plans to pursue a career in digital media marketing and social content creation, combining creativity and strategy to build brands and engage audiences. She credits her time at Holmes with strengthening her resilience, communication, and teamwork skills. During her freshman year, Hall was a member of Phi Theta Kappa and earned President's List honors. She continued her involvement in Phi Theta Kappa as a sophomore and was again named to the President's List. Hall also serves as an Ambassador and member of the Content Creator's Club.

Jrace L. Jamison

Jrace L. Jamison, daughter of Lavetta and Jeffery Jamison, is a criminal justice major. Jamison plans to transfer to a Texas university while continuing a federal internship in Austin. Her long-term goal is a career in federal law enforcement, grounded in integrity, faith, service, and mentorship. During her freshman year, Jamison was selected for a federal internship with the U.S. Secret Service and completed her freshman year at Mississippi College.

Hall of Fame students represent the highest ideals of Holmes Community College through scholarship, leadership, and service. Their achievements reflect the college's mission of developing students who make meaningful contributions to their communities and future professions.

Anna Beth Korhonen

Anna Beth Korhonen is the daughter of Krystal and Chris Korhonen. A kinesiology/exercise science major, she plans to attend McNeese State University to pursue a bachelor's degree in kinesiology while continuing her soccer career. During her time at Holmes, Korhonen was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, earned both President's List and Dean's List honors, and competed as an outside back for the Lady Bulldogs soccer team, making an impact as a sophomore student-athlete.

Emma Korhonen

Emma Korhonen is the daughter of Krystal and Chris Korhonen. A pre-civil engineering major, she plans to transfer to McNeese State University to pursue a degree in civil engineering and continue her soccer career after signing to play for the Cowgirls. During her time at Holmes, Korhonen was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, earned President's List honors, and competed as a forward for the Lady Bulldogs soccer team.

Mika Maehata

Mika Maehata is the daughter of Nami and Kousaku Maehata. A biological engineering major, she plans to transfer to Mississippi State University to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering while participating in the Thrive in Five program toward earning a master's degree in biomedical engineering. During her time at Holmes, Maehata earned President's List honors and was recognized with the Board of Trustees ACT Scholarship and STEM Award. She is also a member and an officer of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Brooklin Latina Potee

Brooklin Latina Potee is the daughter of Akilah and Torry Potee. A major in occupational therapy assistant, she plans to begin her career as an Occupational Therapy Assistant before pursuing a doctoral degree in occupational therapy to improve the quality of life for others. During her time at Holmes, Potee was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and earned both President's List and Dean's List honors.

Tyler Grace Sims

Tyler Grace Sims is the daughter of Kim and Shane Sims. A kinesiology/exercise science major, she plans to transfer to a four-year university to continue her soccer career while pursuing studies toward becoming an occupational therapist, with a desire to work with children. During her time at Holmes, Sims was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, earned President's List honors, and served as captain of the women's soccer team. She was also recognized as a MACCC All-Conference First Team selection, NJCAA All-Tournament Team member, United Soccer Coaches All-Region honoree, and First Team All-American, while helping lead the Lady Bulldogs to a MACCC Conference Championship.

Alyssa Joanne Vancor

Alyssa Joanne Vancor is the daughter of Jennifer and William Vancor. A pre-medical major, she plans to attend a four-year university, then apply to medical school while continuing her collegiate soccer career. During her time at Holmes, Vancor was a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, earned President's List honors, and was recognized as a MACCC All-Conference selection in women's soccer. She is also a recipient of the President's ACT Scholarship, Women's Soccer Athletic Scholarship, and Eagle Express Federal Credit Union Scholarship.



Holmes to Host Amazon Web Services Workforce Training Program in June

Holmes Community College will host the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Information Infrastructure Pre-Apprenticeship (I2PA) program in June, offering eligible participants an opportunity to gain workforce training and industry-relevant skills.

The four-week program is scheduled for June 1 - 26 and will meet Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Holmes Ridgeland Campus. Due to the accelerated nature of the program and the volume of material covered, daily attendance is required, and participants must provide their own transportation.

"I2PA is a great opportunity for recent high school graduates as well as adults who want to learn new skills," said Workforce Development Coordinator Angie Williams. "Participants will be exposed to the different kinds of work that go into building and maintaining data centers and given opportunities to network with professionals working in the field."

The application period was closed on April 24. To be eligible, applicants must be at least 18 years old and possess a high school diploma or GED equivalent. All applicants were screened, and final selections were made at the discretion of

Holmes Community College. Submission of an application does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Participants in the program will receive a \$10 per hour stipend. The AWS I2PA program is designed to prepare individuals for careers in information infrastructure by providing foundational training and hands-on experience.

LIBRARY HAPPENINGS THIS SUMMER



Page Turners

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ridgeland Library 55th Anniversary Year

By Evanne Flanders

The Ridgeland Public Library turns 55 this year! Join us as we celebrate this special milestone on June 5th at 3:00 p.m. We look forward to sharing memories and celebrating all the ones to come. Light refreshments will be served. We cannot wait to see everyone!

We are excited for another fun Summer Reading Program! This year's theme is "Unearth A Story." We will have the return of local magician, Dorian LaChance. The Hattiesburg Zoo and the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science are also returning by popular demand. From programs on hieroglyphics, fossils, dinosaurs, and celebrating America's 250th anniversary, this summer is sure to be a blast.

In addition to our summer reading programs, we will continue to offer our regular, favorite programs for kids and adults. For kids, we will have story times and even a baby rave. For adults, we will continue to offer the Madison County Mystery Readers Book Club, journaling, Spanish language programs, and the Books & Beverages online book club.

For more information on our Summer Reading Program and upcoming events, visit us at mclms.org, on Facebook and Instagram, or call the Ridgeland Library at 601-856-4536.



CITY OF RIDGELAND RECEIVES FINANCIAL REPORTING CERTIFICATE

By Kim Cooper

Ridgeland is dedicated to highest levels of financial transparency and fiscal responsibility.



The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Ridgeland for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2024.

The report was reviewed by an impartial panel and determined to meet the program's rigorous standards for transparency, accuracy, and full disclosure in financial reporting.

This year's recognition marks the 33rd consecutive year the City of Ridgeland has received this distinguished honor. Achieving the Certificate of Achievement for more than three decades represents a rare and prestigious accomplishment, demonstrating the City's longstanding commitment to sound financial management, accountability, and institutional integrity.

Often regarded as the "gold standard" of governmental financial reporting, the award reflects Ridgeland's dedication to maintaining the highest levels of transparency and fiscal responsibility.

The City would like to extend special recognition and appreciation to Ashley Daniel, Finance Manager, for her many years of dedication and hard work, which continue to play an essential role in earning and maintaining this outstanding achievement.

NEW CHAPTER ANNOUNCED FOR CONFERENCE CENTER PROJECT

The City of Ridgeland is proud to share exciting news that marks a major step forward in our continued growth and commitment to enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

By Alan Hart

In partnership with Madison County and PraCon Global Investment Group, plans are moving forward for a new conference center that will expand economic development, tourism, and community engagement right here at home.

This transformative project will also include a 250-room luxury hotel, creating a true destination for visitors and event organizers.

The addition of a high-quality hotel alongside the conference center positions Ridgeland to attract larger conferences, regional events, and new visitors, further strengthening our local economy and supporting our restaurants, shops, and small businesses.

"Ridgeland has always taken a thoughtful approach to growth, and this project

reflects that vision," said Mayor Gene McGee. "This conference center and accompanying hotel will not only elevate our ability to host major events, but it will also create lasting economic benefits for our residents and businesses. We are excited about what this means for the future of our City."





STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY: WORTH A LISTEN



By City Staff

Ridgeland Mayor's Youth Council Launches Mental Health Initiative to Break Stigma and Save Lives



The Ridgeland Mayor's Youth Council (MYC), in collaboration with Killebrew Psychological Services and Essential Touchstones, is proud to announce the launch of "WORTH A LISTEN," a student-led mental health awareness initiative focused on education, increasing access to resources, and reducing stigma among young people.

The Ridgeland Mayor's Youth Council is comprised of Ridgeland residents who attend six schools across the metro area, giving the group a unique and diverse perspective on the challenges students face today. The initiative will begin rolling out across these six schools, with a long-term goal of expanding the program statewide.

Research from organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the American Psychological Association shows that youth mental health is a growing public health concern, with nearly

40% of high school students reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness and about 2 in 5 experiencing a diagnosable mental health condition each year. Despite how common these challenges are, many young people never receive treatment, highlighting a significant gap between need and access to care. Because most mental health conditions begin before age 24, adolescence represents a critical window for early identification and intervention. Without support, these struggles can impact academic performance, relationships, and long-term well-being, underscoring the



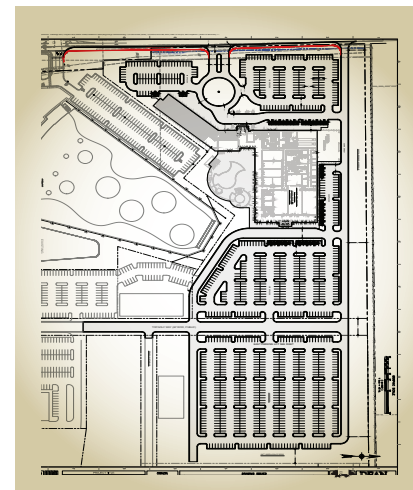
City leadership has long prioritized strategic investments that enhance livability while preserving the character that makes Ridgeland special. This project aligns with that commitment by expanding amenities and opportunities without compromising the values that define our community.

The City of Ridgeland extends its sincere appreciation to Madison County for its partnership in bringing this project to life. We would especially like to thank Gerald Steen, President of the Madison County Board of Supervisors, for his leadership and support throughout this effort. His commitment to

regional collaboration has been instrumental in advancing this vision.

We are also grateful to PraCon for their investment and expertise in helping shape a development that will serve Ridgeland for years to come. Together, these partnerships reflect a shared belief in the strength and future of our community.

As the project progresses, the City will continue to keep residents informed and engaged at every step. We are excited to see this vision become reality and to continue building a stronger, more vibrant Ridgeland for generations to come.



“Young people today are facing pressures and challenges unlike any generation before them. As a City, we have a responsibility to ensure our students know they are not alone. ‘WORTH A LISTEN’ sends a powerful message that their voices matter, their struggles are seen, and help is always available.”

Mayor Gene McGee

urgency of expanding access to care, reducing stigma, and strengthening systems that support youth mental health.

The “WORTH A LISTEN” initiative began to take shape after an overwhelming response from students applying to the Mayor’s Youth Council.

“As part of the application process, we asked students to identify the biggest issue facing their peers today,” said Lisa Walters, Mayor’s Chief of Staff and coordinator of the MYC. “An incredible 95% of applicants pointed to mental health issues, specifically anxiety, depression, bullying, and social media addiction. That told us immediately this was something we could not ignore.”

As the initiative developed, Walters reached out to Dr. Alyssa Killebrew and Dr. Jerri Gledhill of Killebrew Psychological Services and Essential Touchstones to help guide the effort.

“I went to Dr. Killebrew and Dr. Gledhill to share the idea and get their feedback,” Walters said. “They didn’t hesitate for a second. They immediately stepped in to support us on every level. Their expertise, experience working with local families and students, and clinical guidance have been invaluable in helping shape this initiative. Their compassion, along with that of their entire team, has been truly incredible.”

“When young people are willing to speak up and lead on mental health, that is something we should all pay attention to,” said Dr. Killebrew. “What makes this initiative so powerful is that it is coming directly from students who recognize the need among their own peers. By combining their voices with professional guidance and community support, we can truly begin to reduce stigma and connect students with the help they need.”



Youth Mental Health Initiative

- Student-led awareness campaigns
- Distribution of mental health resources and crisis contacts
- School and community outreach efforts
- Partnerships with local and state mental health organizations

LEARN MORE!



Mayor’s Youth Council members involved in the initiative shared the importance of the message:

“So many students feel like they have to handle everything on their own, and that’s just not true. This initiative is about making sure everyone knows there is someone who will listen and that it’s okay to ask for help.” (Ashwin Talwar, Ridgeland High School)

“This is my second year being part of the Mayor’s Youth Council, and something we keep coming back to is how big an issue mental health is, not just in our schools, but everywhere. We see it every day with our friends and classmates. It’s not going away, but mental health is treatable, and we want people to know that. That’s why we’re trying to start conversations and get the word out.” (Knox Davidson, Jackson Prep)

“It’s time we talk about mental health. Help is out there, and friends need to support friends.” (Ra’kiya Smith, Ridgeland High School)

“I’m excited to be a part of this mental health initiative. Worth a Listen is something that will be around for a long time and will help us all start talking about it. There is help, and asking for it should not be anything to be ashamed about.” (Bess Borne, Jackson Academy)

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to those who have played a huge part in making this initiative a reality: Mad Genius, Mars Marketing, Killebrew Psychological Services, and Watkins Roofing & Construction, the MYC sponsor this year.

CITY NOTIFICATIONS & TIPS



The City of Ridgeland is pleased to announce that we have completed the advanced water meter improvement project.

- These improvements enable access to EyeOnWater, a FREE tool for you to monitor water usage and provide leak detection. It is accessible via browser or app.
- A better understanding of your usage can help you make decisions that could lower your water bill.
- Its quick and customizable leak alerts could save you hundreds to thousands of dollars.
- We will no longer mail courtesy leak letters, and leak alerts must come from EyeOnWater.

CREATE AN ACCOUNT TODAY BY VISITING www.Eyeonwater.Com/signup or downloading the app.

You will need your account number (with dashes) and zip code.



CITY OF RIDGELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

DOWNLOAD ON THE APP STORE & GOOGLE PLAY



<p>THOMAS LOGUE MG MS 31 DIXIE DIV KOREAN WAR</p> <p>JOHN A DECELL CAPTAIN US AIR FORCE</p>	<p>HELP SPONSOR VETERANS MEMORY PARK</p> <p>\$200 • BUY A BRICK \$5,000 • BRASS PLAQUE ON PAVER \$10,000 • BRASS PLAQUE ON BENCH \$15,000 • ENGRAVED PLAQUE AT BELL TOWER</p> <p>TO HONOR A VETERAN CONTACT: ALAN HART: 601-853-2027 KIM COOPER: 601-856-7113</p>	
	<p>3 WAYS TO SIGN UP GET NOTICES & ALERTS</p> <p>1: www.RidgelandMS.org 2: www.Ridgeland-MS.MyFreeAlerts.com 3: Text your zip code to 38276 for emergency alerts via SMS only</p>	

REMEMBER TO SIGN UP FOR RIDGELAND ALERTS!

WHO AND WHERE

RIDGELAND ALDERMEN



D.I. Smith
Alderman At-Large
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

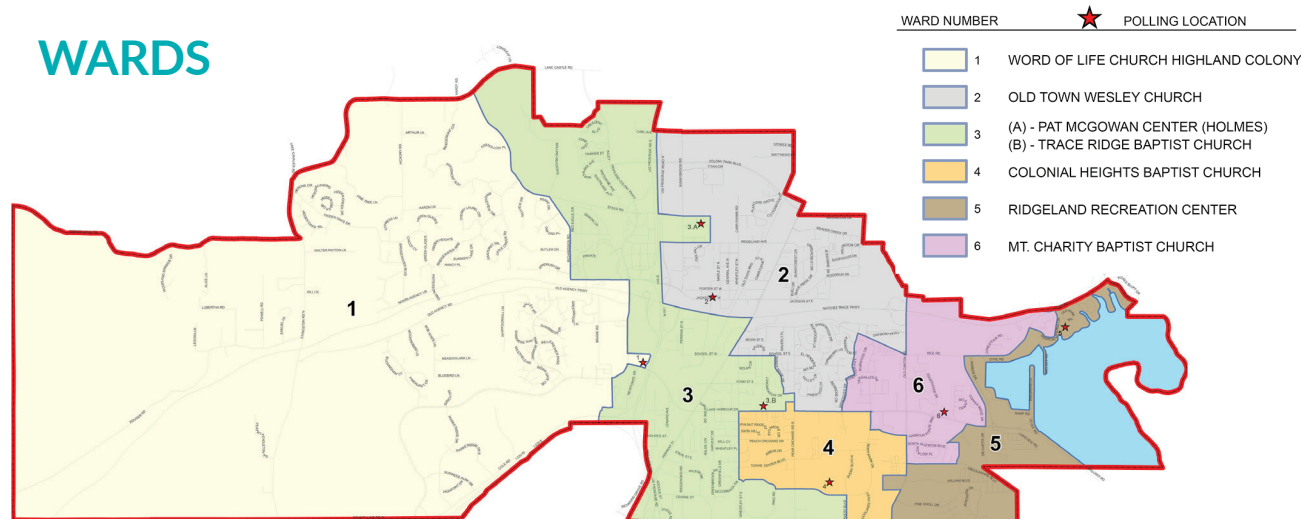


Bill Lee
Ward 5
601-278-6256
Bill.Lee@RidgelandMS.org



Wesley Hamlin
Ward 6
Mayor Pro Tempore
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 - 6:00 p.m.
Work sessions are Mondays prior to Board Meeting - 6:00 p.m.
- ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD**
2nd & 4th Tuesday - 6:00 p.m.
Randy Lynn - Chair, Connie Suber (Secretary), Robert Moore, Rick Eades, Jim Woodrick, Leigh Ann Sullivan, Jim Powell
City Liaison: Jordan Lohman
- KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL**
First Monday - 4:00 p.m.
Jan Richardson - Chair, Ginger Cocke, Polly Hammett, Claire Jackson, Phyllis Parker, Kenya Rachal, Lea Anne Stacy
City Liaisons: Tally Berry, Kim Cooper, Matt Dodd, James Mathews, Ben McDonald
- HISTORICAL COMMITTEE**
Every other month - TBA
Nancy Batson - Chair, Robby Carr, Donna Dye, Polly Hammett, Mike Porter, Pat Truesdale, Jim Woodrick
City Liaisons: Kim Cooper, Matt Dodd
- CONTRACTORS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS**
Quarterly meetings - 4:00 p.m.
Lantz Kuykendall - Chair, Terry Evans, David Pursell, Steve Rimmer, Clay Sutherland, Keith West
City Liaison: Leslie Thomas
- ZONING BOARD**
Thursdays, the week of Mayor and Board of Aldermen meeting - 6:00 p.m.
Bernie Giessner - Chair, Michelle Caballero, Kim Lovato, Theresa G. Kennedy, Drew Malone, Judy Rice, David Dunbar, Don Roberts
City Liaison: Jordan Lohman

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!

A large rectangular area containing a grid of 50+ logos for various local businesses and organizations, including Green Oak, Chick-fil-e, Micro Printing, Keesler Federal Credit Union, Bank Plus, Buflin Mechanical Inc, Gene McGee, Sullivan Electric, Explore Ridgeland, Renasant Bank, Johnny's Pizza House, Fleet Feet Jackson, Waggoner, AARP, Hydro Wash, Staffers, Humana, A Complete Place Source, Northpark, Mars Marketing, Bulldog Construction, Trey Crane's Academy of Kung Fu, Dean Architecture, Wellcare, Your Country US96, Mix 98.7, 93.5 FM Legend, 102.1 The Box, Blues 93.7, The Orchard, HomeWell Care Services, Madison County Journal, St. Catherine's Village, WLBT3 On Your Side, GoShine Express Car Wash, CenterWell Senior Primary Care, Pafford Emergency Medical Services, Summer House, Professional Eyecare Associates, Holiday by AARP Senior Living, The Chateau Ridgeland, Watkins, GuarantyBank, Members Exchange Credit Union, PriorityOne Member FDIC, and Apac A CRH Company.