



there's more here!

RIDGELAND LIFE



To the History We Hold Dear,
And the Start of a Bright New Year!

the WINTER ISSUE

DECEMBER 2024 – FEBRUARY 2025



FROM THE MAYOR

Gene McGee

As we approach the close of 2024, I find myself reflecting on what has been an extraordinary year for Ridgeland. Celebrating our 125th anniversary has been a milestone in both our history and our sense of community.



One of the most exciting developments this year has been the unveiling of the Ridgeland History Trail. This trail not only offers visitors a deeper understanding of our City's past but also gives our citizens the opportunity to explore and appreciate the roots of Ridgeland and the people who have shaped it into what it is today. The idea of the trail came to us from Jim Woodrick, a member of the Historical Society of Ridgeland, who helped lead the effort.

If you haven't explored the history trail markers, I highly encourage you to take the time. With 22 markers to visit, each offering a glimpse into our history, you'll find it a truly enriching experience. I am confident you'll come away with a renewed sense of pride in our community. Additionally, there is great potential for our local schools to engage with the History Trail. I foresee opportunities for students to participate in events or contests, allowing them to learn more about our heritage and gain a deeper understanding of Ridgeland's history.

I want to express my appreciation to the many individuals who have worked tirelessly on the History Trail project. Special thanks go to the Historical Society and the History Committee, led by Nancy Batson, for their dedication, as well

as to Kim Cooper, our Director of Public Relations, and Matt Dodd, the City's landscape architect, for their countless hours ensuring the project came to fruition.

You may already know about Ridgeland's History Room at City Hall, but did you know that the room can now be accessed online? Kim Cooper partnered with Think Webstore to create this virtual feature. By visiting the City's website, you can explore our rich history from anywhere, which makes Ridgeland unique—not just in Mississippi but in the South. It's a great way to connect with our past and learn about the individuals who settled in the area.

I'm also very excited that we recently named the first Mayor's Youth Council for 2024-25. This program engages local high school students in municipal government and civic leadership. This new initiative will replace the Chamber of Commerce's Jr. Diplomat Program and will give students a deeper understanding of how local government functions and impacts everyday life. A special thank you to my Executive Assistant, Lisa Walters, who helped me launch this special effort.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to sign up for Ridgeland Alerts

to stay informed about important events and updates. This service keeps residents up-to-date on road closures, changes to garbage and recycling pickups, and other essential information. It's a valuable tool to ensure you're always in the loop, and I'm sure you'll find it incredibly helpful.

I wish you and your family a safe, peaceful, and joyful time together during the holiday season. May the New Year bring blessings to you all.

RIDGELAND LIFE

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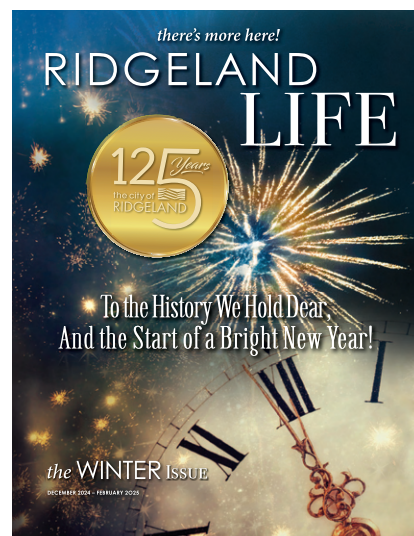
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“ It’s been truly inspiring to be a part of the community spirit that has flourished throughout the anniversary year. We’ve celebrated so many milestones together. It’s been an honor to chair the Anniversary Planning Committee, and I want to thank everyone who has helped make this an extraordinary year for Ridgeland! ”

Kim

Kim Cooper,
Editor/Director of Public Relations





TELLING RIDGELAND'S STORY: THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IS MAKING HISTORY



Early this year, a committee was formed to plan the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the chartering of the "Village of Ridgeland." Rather than just one celebration, a series of events would be held throughout the year. The City issued a proclamation, and the State Senate and House of Representatives passed resolutions. We had a lot to live up to!

The debut event in July was the creation of a virtual tour of the History Room in City Hall. Hopefully, many of you have accessed this "tour" through the City website and told friends and family about it. This room has been fifteen years in the making. The Society is excited to share it with all who are interested in the history of our City. Former Public Affairs

Coordinator Sandra Monohan, now living in Virginia, was instrumental in forming the Historical Society. She gave me her thoughts after taking the virtual tour. *"It is exciting to see how far the Historical Society of Ridgeland has come."* She said she remembered the first meetings, the stories told by long-time residents, and the memories shared.

In July of this year, the pecan tree was designated the official tree of Ridgeland. In honor of this, wraps for 44 traffic signal boxes featuring beautiful artwork of the trees will soon be seen at intersections around the City. This beautification project will be one for residents and visitors to enjoy for the years ahead.

“ The work of this dedicated group of citizens has helped instill a connection to the past and pave the way for the future. I remember spending time with the wonderful people who shared their stories. It felt significant to be a part of the beginning of the Society's work. ”

Sandra Monohan,
Former Public Affairs Coordinator

The long-awaited History Trail was unveiled in October. The 22 interpretive signs run throughout the City and are accessible by car or on foot. An easy-to-follow brochure and map guide you along the trail and provide a brief description of each sign. These brochures can be picked up at City Hall or Ridgeland Tourism. A virtual tour of the trail is also available through the City website.

The younger generation has not been left out. After all, what good is history unless future generations learn from it? Art and essay contests have been held in the Ridgeland area schools, and we are excited that most schools have been able to participate. Winning art and essays will be displayed at the Waller Craft Center later this year.

A “mini” History Trail event was held at the Library for children 6 to 11 years of

age. Accompanied by Recycle Ranger and outfitted with backpacks, compasses, and bandanas, they trekked through the Library as Society members described the signs along the trail. The children attending the event were given maps to explore the real History Trail with family and friends.

But there is more to come!

All will be “Merry and Bright” at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at the Plaza at Old Town Crossing on December 5th and the Christmas Parade/Christmas on the Green at City Hall on the evening of December 6th. Yes...A night-time parade!

Our year-long Anniversary Celebration will culminate in a festive affair at the Waller Craft Center on December 29th, featuring live music, videos, food, and a drone show that will wrap up the evening.

More details regarding the event can be found on page 10.

December 29, 1899 to December 29, 2024...125 incredible years!

Determined founders and first families persevered through fire, depression, wars, and many other hard times. Enlightened leaders worked to improve the quality of life and bring more people and businesses to our beautiful City. A firm foundation has been laid for a bright and promising future.

I keep remembering a phrase often uttered by the president on the TV show “West Wing”... WHAT’S NEXT?

By Polly Hammett

RIDGELAND
History Trail Map
Est. 1899

Legend:

- 1. Ridgeland City Hall
- 2. Natchez Trace Parkway
- 3. Highland Colony Company
- 4. Ridgeland & the Railroad
- 5. Early Commerce & Trade
- 6. Wesley Chapel Methodist Church
- 7. Historic Churches
- 8. Choctaw Agency
- 9. Greenwood Plantation
- 10. Old Agency Road
- 11. Clifton/Lash Plantation
- 12. School Days
- 13. Jessamine Cemetery
- 14. The Reservoir
- 15. Mississippi Craft Center
- 16. Brashears Stand
- 17. Civil War
- 18. Ridgeland's Agriculture Heritage
- 19. Northpark Mall
- 20. Ridgeland's Native American Heritage
- 21. Highways & Byways
- 22. The Pecan

Other Features:

- Natchez Trace Multi-use Trail
- Sign Locations
- The Village of Ridgeland Established - 1899
- W County Line Road
- Highland Colony Parkway
- Highway 51
- Old Canton Road
- Lake Harbour Drive
- E County Line Road

Virtual History Tour (QR Code)

1. City Hall
The current city hall, dedicated in 2021, is the fourth city hall building. Ridgeland became a city in 1974.

15. MS Craft Center
The Mississippi Craft Center was relocated to Rice Road in 2007 and later renamed the Waller Craft Center after former Mississippi Governor Bill Waller.

19. Northpark Mall
Built in 1984 on East County Line Road, Northpark Mall was a joint project of Cadillac-Fairview of White Plains, New York, and McRae's, Inc.

22. The Pecan
In 2024, in honor of the historical significance of the pecan tree and the 125th anniversary of the City, the Pecan Tree was designated as the Official City Tree.

14. The Reservoir
DID YOU KNOW... 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*.

EARLY COMMERCE AND TRADE

The Village of Ridgeland, now known as Old Town, was clustered around the Illinois Central Railroad. Before the village was chartered there was a train depot and hotel. One of the first industries was the Ridgeland Wagon Works, established in 1901 by Zimmi Long and George Kinker, former carpenters for a large carriage manufacturer in Cincinnati. They offered a full supply of farm equipment in addition to carriages and wagons.

Ridgeland

Disaster marks the spot where the great fire of 1902 took place. The fire was discovered at the top of the drug store owned by J.D. Devilling. The fire was under a brick building and spread to the adjacent stores of E. Manning and M.K. and Co. In some three hours the entire block was in ashes. The merchants will rebuild here to replace the destroyed mercantile buildings. In local quarters where they will remain until the new stores are ready for occupancy and will be sold on auction. They will sell all new fixtures.

The citizens were very actively engaged on the morning of May 9, 1902, in raising a subscription from Ridgeland to the necessary amount to stop the spread of the disease at Ridgeland. The citizens were not "waxen" to give the dis-

Clinton Times, May 9, 1902

Ridgeland general store

On May 1, 1902, tragedy struck the business district when a fire, which started in the back room of J.D. Devilling's drug store, quickly spread and left an entire block in ashes within two hours.

Planned Summer Home

The "Summer Home" in Ridgeland, which after several indications of business and a large house built during the winter of 1901-1902, was a large and comfortable one. The house was built on a hillside and was a "country place" in which the owner could enjoy the fresh air and the view of the hills. It was a "country place" in which the owner could enjoy the fresh air and the view of the hills. It was a "country place" in which the owner could enjoy the fresh air and the view of the hills.

Clinton Ledger, 1899



Jack Carr's sawmill, ca. 1920

The Ridgeland Canning Company opened in May 1908. The first fruit canned was strawberries from the farm of James Brownlow Yellowley. Other early businesses included a gin and supply company, Ridgeland Milling and Manufacturing and Adcock's Grocery and Grist Mill. There was also a sawmill and a butcher shop owned and operated by Jack Carr.

Many of these early businessmen and their descendants later served Ridgeland as elected officials.

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RIDGELAND





RIDGELAND UNVEILS THE HISTORY TRAIL IN HONOR OF THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY

The Historical Society of Ridgeland, in collaboration with the Ridgeland Tourism Commission and the City of Ridgeland, is proud to announce the launch of the Ridgeland History Trail. This innovative new trail allows locals and visitors to explore Ridgeland's rich cultural heritage through 22 trail markers along the City's extensive multi-use trails and additional off-trail sites.

The City hosted a festive community and press event at the Plaza at Old Town Crossing on October 1st to commemorate the trail's unveiling.

Speakers included Mayor Gene McGee, Jim Woodrick, and Nancy Batson of the Historical Society of Ridgeland, an opening prayer by Reverend William Gilbert, Chris Chapman of Explore Ridgeland, and special guest speaker Walt Grayson of WJTV.

"What an exciting anniversary year we are having in Ridgeland! The launch of the History Trail is not only a milestone in our year-long celebration but will be a permanent feature for all to enjoy and learn about our great City's history," stated Mayor McGee.

The Ridgeland History Trail features a series of interpretive wayside exhibits that shed light on the area's past, from its early beginnings to the vibrant community it is today. By integrating history with the city's natural landscape, the trail provides an engaging experience for all ages.

"We are thrilled to introduce the Ridgeland History Trail to the community," said Jim Woodrick from the Historical Society of Ridgeland. *"This trail allows us to celebrate and share the diverse history of our City, offering residents and tourists*



alike a meaningful way to connect with Ridgeland's heritage."

The Ridgeland Tourism Commission, which sponsored the trail's development, expressed its enthusiasm for the project.

“ We are always looking for ways to enhance the visitor experience in Ridgeland. The History Trail does just that by offering a unique journey through our city's cultural and historical landscape ”

Chris Chapman,
Explore Ridgeland

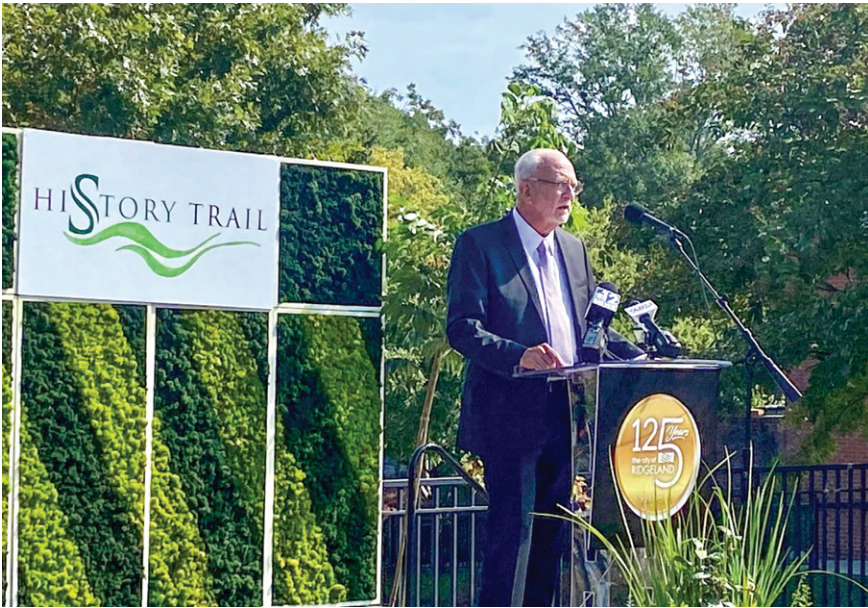
The City was also excited to announce that the Virtual History Trail went live

on the City's website on the day of the launch. *"We've collaborated with Think Webstore on several projects, and developing this virtual experience along with the Virtual History Room earlier in the year has been a new and innovative approach to telling Ridgeland's story, making them accessible to anyone from any*

location," stated Kim Cooper, Director of Public Relations and Chair of the 125th Anniversary Planning Committee.

The Ridgeland History Trail is open to the public year-round. Trail brochures are available at Ridgeland City Hall and Explore Ridgeland, and virtual tours are available at www.ridgelandms.org.







Join us for an evening celebrating the 125th Anniversary
of the founding of Ridgeland

A Night to Remember!

Sunday • December 29, 2024
6:00pm - 9:00pm • Waller Craft Center • Tickets Limited

<https://www.125thanniversaryparty.rsvpify.com>

Cocktail Attire • Heavy Hors D'oeuvres • Beer and Wine

Dancing with "The Bridge Band"

Drone Show by "Sky Elements" a recent "America's Got Talent" Semi-finalist

Sponsors: Southern Beverage Company and Joe T's Wine and Spirits



SCAN
FOR TICKETS
AND DETAILS

KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL

RIDGELAND WILDFLOWER FIELD AND ART PARK HONORED WITH TOURISM PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR BY THE MISSISSIPPI TOURISM ASSOCIATION

The Mississippi Tourism Association (MTA) recognized the impact and accomplishments of the state's tourism industry at the annual tourism awards program held during the Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Lake Terrace Convention Center in Hattiesburg on October 2 - 4, 2024.

Keep Ridgeland Beautiful's Wildflower Field and Art Park received the Tourism Partnership of the Year award this year in recognition of our partnerships with Explore Ridgeland.

Explore Ridgeland partnered with Keep Ridgeland Beautiful in 2024 to promote the Wildflower Field and Art Park. This partnership has significantly impacted the community by enhancing





local tourism and fostering a deeper connection between residents and the natural beauty of our area.

The wildflower field in Ridgeland was created almost five years ago. Designed by Tim Taylor, it is part of Keep Mississippi Beautiful's Wildflower Trails of Mississippi program. Located on West Jackson Street, it has become a beloved attraction for visitors and locals alike. No two visits are the same.

The Scarecrow Trail is another Wildflower Field and Art Park community collaboration. From October through November, the field pops with

creativity. Community members, City departments, and businesses installed their most creative scarecrow designs. With support from Explore Ridgeland and the festive eye of Karen McKie at Green Oak, the "bones" of the Scarecrow Trail were installed.

Around every bend of the trail, another scarecrow or painted pumpkin was there to delight visitors and serve as a perfect backdrop for photos. The dedication to the project and the creative scarecrows like Miss Zinnia and Recycle Rosie by Lea Anne Stacy from Keep Ridgeland Beautiful are noteworthy.

One of the Scarecrow Trail participants was AC Marriott at the Township at Colony Park. The hotel also features the wildflower field's flowers in a specialty drink, the Lady Whistledown - a play on the popular show Bridgerton.

Thanks to a generous grant awarded to Keep Ridgeland Beautiful from Entergy, information signage about butterflies, birds, and other pollinators one might find in the field will be installed. We invite visitors to share photos of their visit to the field.

One more fun activity at the Wildflower Field is letterboxing. Please scan the QR code and follow the clues to find our letterbox in the field. Bring a notebook so you can stamp it when you find the letterbox.



Scan the QR code to reach the Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park Facebook Page



Scan the QR code for the letterbox clues at the Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park

By Jan Richardson & Danielle Morgan

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 Boyd Home at 120 North Central Avenue



OCTOBER Residential Yard of the Month
The Patton Home at 7140 Copper Ridge



NOVEMBER Residential Yard of the Month
The Goode Home at 104 Beaver Run Court



SEPTEMBER Business Yard of the Month
Buffalo Wild Wings at 808 Lake Harbour Drive



OCTOBER Business Yard of the Month
First Ridgeland Baptist Church at 302 W Jackson Street



NOVEMBER Business Yard of the Month
Renaissance at Colony Park
1000 Highland Colony Parkway



explore events



32.4450,
-90.1519

The Township
at Colony Park

festive fun

Get ready to explore winter events this holiday season in Ridgeland! Mark your calendars and start planning today. For local events, visit exploreRidgeland.com.



explore
RIDGELAND



EXPLORE RIDGELAND WINS MULTIPLE AWARDS INCLUDING DMO OF THE YEAR BY THE MISSISSIPPI TOURISM ASSOCIATION

The team and partners of Explore Ridgeland were recently honored at the Mississippi Tourism Association (MTA) 2024 Governor's Conference on Tourism, held October 2-4, 2024, in Hattiesburg. The conference recognized excellence in tourism through 22 awards, and Explore Ridgeland was the standout winner, receiving four of the 22 honors, including the coveted Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) of the Year award.

Explore Ridgeland was awarded DMO of the Year for its budget category (\$1,000,000 to \$2,999,999), recognizing its exceptional efforts in destination marketing and management. This award spotlights Ridgeland's strategic initiatives, including a comprehensive rebrand, the launch of Mississippi's first True Omni Kiosk at its new Visitor Center, and the introduction of the city's first Bikeshare Program. These achievements, alongside a notable 8% growth in lodging and restaurant revenues, underscore Explore Ridgeland's commitment to enhancing the visitor experience and driving economic success.

"We are thrilled to be recognized for our dedication to advancing tourism in Ridgeland and across Mississippi,"



said Chris Chapman, President/CEO of Explore Ridgeland. "This past year, our team's hard work paid off with a transformative rebrand, the opening of our interactive Visitor Center, and key legislative wins, including securing Mississippi's first Top Golf facility."

In addition to the DMO of the Year award, Explore Ridgeland and its partners were honored with three additional accolades:

1. Tourism Investment Award – David Conn

David Conn, managing partner at 4Top Hospitality and a long-time supporter and board member of Ridgeland's tourism sector, was recognized with the Tourism Investment Award for his contributions to the city's vibrant culinary scene. As the owner of Amerigo, Anjou, and Sombra, Conn's investment in Ridgeland's restaurant offerings has enhanced its appeal as a dining destination. His leadership has also been instrumental in supporting tourism initiatives at the local and state levels.

2. Lodging Property of the Year – AC Marriott Ridgeland

The AC Marriott Ridgeland earned the Lodging Property of the Year award for its exceptional guest experience, modern amenities, and its role in elevating Ridgeland's status as a premier destination for luxury travel. As the only city in Mississippi with an AC Marriott, Ridgeland continues to attract visitors seeking high-end retail and accommodations.

3. Partnership of the Year – Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park

The Ridgeland Wildflower Field and Art Park is an innovative project that combines natural beauty with community art to create a unique and welcoming space. Through partnerships with Keep Ridgeland Beautiful and local artists, the park features vibrant wildflower blooms, upcycled sculptures, and inviting trails, offering a peaceful retreat for locals and visitors alike.

These awards highlight Explore Ridgeland's leadership in the state's tourism industry, setting a standard for destination marketing, community engagement, and visitor experience. Through bold initiatives, strategic partnerships, and a focus on passion and innovation, Ridgeland continues to shine as a vibrant and welcoming destination for travelers from across the region and beyond.

By Explore Ridgeland staff

RECRE8

HOLIDAY FUN IN THE CITY

The City of Ridgeland Recreation and Parks Department would like to wish everyone a MERRY and BRIGHT holiday season! We invite you to join us at our annual events around the City. As we celebrate the 125th

anniversary of Ridgeland's founding, we will light the tree and light up the night at our Christmas parade. Be on the lookout for Santa and Mrs. Claus. They will be spreading holiday joy as Christmas approaches.

Please see detailed information regarding registration for our many RECRE8 spring programs and senior adult activities.





Dog Obedience

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

- To learn more about the 2025 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 2025 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 2025 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 2025 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
- This evening is presented by The Historical Society of Ridgeland.
- There is no admission charge for this event.

Date: Thursday, December 5, 2024
 Time: 6:00 p.m.
 Location: 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!

Date: Friday, December 6, 2024
 Time: 6:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS ON THE GREEN

Join us at Ridgeland City Hall after the parade for a festive evening of holiday cheer.

- Enjoy holiday treats
- Play holiday games
- Get a photo with Santa and Mrs. Claus
- Listen to live Christmas music
- There is no admission charge for this event.

Date: Friday, December 6, 2024
 Time: 7:30 – 8:30 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
- There is no charge for letters to Santa

Date: Drop off through December 14, 2024
 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

\$15/month

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

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

Line Dance

\$10/class or \$40/month

Mondays
6:00 p.m.
Instructor: Darlene Epple

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

Martial Arts for Seniors

\$10/month

Tuesdays and Thursdays
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Instructor: Andy Dillon

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

Seated Yoga

\$5/class or \$30 for 6 (30 minute) classes

Mondays and Fridays
11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Instructor: Martha Millsaps

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

Standing Yoga

\$5/class or \$30 for 6 (30 minute) classes

Mondays and Fridays
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Instructor: Martha Millsaps

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

Senior Fit

\$15/month

Mondays and Wednesdays
12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Instructor: Sally Holly

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

The Complete Mix

\$15/month

Mondays and Wednesdays
1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Tuesdays and Thursdays

1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Instructor: Sally Holly

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

Tap Dancing

\$5/class

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

Instructor: Monica Russell

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

Men's Community Coffee & Bible Time

FREE

Tuesdays (beginning January 6)
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Lead by Randy Assink

Gather together to grow in faith, deepen our friendships and support one another.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

Ridgeland Garden Club

\$20/year

1st Tuesday of the month
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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

Mah Jongg

FREE

Dates are 12/19, 1/16, and 2/20
3rd Thursday
9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Tile-based matching game
Registration required

Bridge

\$1

Dates: 12/19, 1/16, 2/20

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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

Birthday Bingo

FREE

Dates: 12/12

New Time: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

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

Breakfast Bingo

(rebranded for the New Year)

FREE

Dates: 1/23, 2/27

Time: 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Everyone is invited to play bingo and enjoy breakfast with friends. Please sign up in advance, space is limited.



senior adult programs

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

Neeley Jones

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

RIDGELAND RECREATION AND PARKS PRESENTS



2025
senior adult
VALENTINE'S
luncheon



TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 11, 2025
12 NOON

COLONIAL HEIGHTS
BAPTIST CHURCH
444 NORTHPARK DRIVE

lunch - entertainment - door prizes

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



senior adult programs



FALL PREVENTION & HOME SAFETY PRESENTATION

PRESENTED BY ED GRACE WITH ELECTRONIC CAREGIVER

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

9:30-10:30 AM

RIDGELAND REC CENTER

NO CHARGE, BUT PLEASE REGISTER!

- Snacks & door prizes provided
- Overcome mistakes that lead to pain and discomfort
- Protect yourself from unattended medical emergencies

Sign up at neeley.jones@ridgelandms.org or 769.235.9579



HOLIDAY FUN IN THE CITY

*Are you looking for festive activities this holiday season?
Ridgeland has a variety of family fun adventures around the corner!*

EVENTS

DECEMBER 5

Chimneyville Arts Festival

Preview Party

Waller Craft Center
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 5 - 8

Pet Photos with Santa

Northpark
1:00 – 6:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 6

Ridgeland Christmas Parade

Old Town Ridgeland
6:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 6

Christmas on the Green

Ridgeland City Hall
7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

DECEMBER 6 - 7

Chimneyville Arts Festival

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

DECEMBER 10

Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

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

DECEMBER 10

Mystery Reader's Book Club

Ridgeland Public Library
10:30 a.m.

DECEMBER 14

Copiah Academy Band Performance

Renaissance
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 14

Santa's Pajama Jam

Northpark
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 20

Christmas on the Green

Presented by Colonial Heights Baptist Church
Renaissance
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 1 - 24

Daily Holiday Photos with Santa

Northpark
Hours may vary, visitnorthpark.com/holiday

DECEMBER 29

A Night to Remember: 125th Anniversary Celebration

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

JANUARY 14

Mystery Reader's Book Club

Ridgeland Public Library
10:30 a.m.

FEBRUARY 11

Ridgeland Recreation & Parks Senior Adult Program

Valentine's Lunch

Colonial Heights Baptist Church
12:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 11

Mystery Reader's Book Club

Ridgeland Public Library
10:30 a.m.

BUILDING BRIDGES & FOSTERING CONNECTIONS



Ridgeland Chamber Diplomats Know the Value of Networking

David Broadway
Members Exchange Credit Union
Diplomat Co-Captain



“By joining the Diplomat Program, I am introduced to new businesses that have chosen Ridgeland as their home. I get to meet the business owners,

and being a Diplomat gives me a chance to introduce myself and my business to them. The Ridgeland Chamber has afforded me several new business opportunities I would not have had otherwise.”

Scott Stricklin
Marsh & McLennan Agency, LLC
Diplomat Co-Captain



“Being a Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat has benefited me in so many ways, both personally and professionally. I’m so fortunate to be a member of such a great team,

which helps me promote my business and allows me to make lasting connections. If you’re working for an organization and looking to grow your business, I strongly recommend joining our Diplomat Council.”

Del Adams
Digio Strategies



“I have made genuine friends, learned great things about Ridgeland, and increased my own business.”

Lee Balch
Mississippi Smart Homes



“I have benefitted greatly from participating in the Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Program in so very many different facets.

I had planned, like many, to meet new people and grow my business. I soon found a wonderful group of people who were investing in the City of Ridgeland with their time, energy, and investments. I have loved being on the front lines and watching the City of Ridgeland grow. Through the Diplomat Program, I have grown and become a part of an amazing group of business owners and representatives. The contacts and friendships are of lifelong value. I cannot imagine working in the area and

not being a part of such an amazing and dynamic group of people.”

Sheila Cheeks
Trustmark



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

Kelly Anne 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 really rewarding professionally and personally. Executive Director Linda Bynum 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 detail 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!"

Amelia Dalton
Explore Ridgeland



"Through my involvement in the Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Program, I have built lasting relationships with community

leaders and developed a passion for supporting the growth of local small businesses. As the liaison between my team at Explore Ridgeland and the community, I ensure our staff stays informed about upcoming local events and ribbon cuttings, contributing to the success and visibility of these businesses."

Kristy Daniels
Origin Bank



"I have benefitted 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."

Johnny Davidson
Citizens National Bank



"Being a Diplomat for the Ridgeland Chamber has several benefits. I attend Chamber events, ribbon cuttings, and networking opportunities,

giving me a chance to meet local business owners, politicians, and community influencers. These contacts can help build a strong network that may lead to new clients, partnerships, and opportunities. Being a Diplomat positions you as an engaged leader, which can enhance your personal brand and that of your company. Increased exposure often translates to referrals or direct business opportunities. Most importantly, Diplomats play an active role in our communities by supporting local businesses and promoting economic development. This can create a sense of personal satisfaction while contributing to the greater good of the local economy."

Andrea Hopkins
Nola Lending Group



"As a Diplomat, I have had the opportunity to meet and connect with new and existing Chamber members, as well as local business and community

leaders, serve the community, and exhibit community pride while building long-lasting relationships."

Nicole Irwin
Varicosity Vein Center



"As a Diplomat, I have experienced such a welcoming feeling when I attended my first Diplomat luncheon. The more meetings I attend and

committees I serve on, I always meet someone new or happen to see an old friend involved as well. I immediately noticed the great attention and pride the Diplomats and Chamber staff contribute to every event and meeting. I thought to myself this is definitely a group that I want to be a part of for life!"

Gray Jackson
Embassy Suites



"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!"

Sissy Lloyd
Professional Eyecare Associates



“Through the Ridgeland Chamber Diplomat Program, I have met people who would become dear friends (and reconnect with a wonderful friend

from the past). And, I have been able to see firsthand what the City of Ridgeland has to offer to all of us in the Jackson Metro area. It has given me the chance to promote my employer, Professional Eyecare Associates, through sponsorships and by simply attending the ribbon cuttings. I am grateful and honored to be part of a great group of business leaders and friends.”

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.”

Elaine Maisel
eXp Realty



“Networking has been not only a pleasure, but also a direct benefit to my own business. It is exciting to see every new entrepreneur,

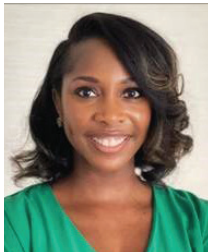
restaurant, and professional that chooses Ridgeland as their community.”

Rueben Watkins
Northpark



“I enjoy new business and all the business in Ridgeland, and I see everyone’s smiling faces.”

Krystal Watson
Hilton Jackson



“Not only has being a part of the Diplomat Program with the City of Ridgeland Chamber of Commerce helped me professionally as a sales manager

by networking with local, like-minded individuals, but the program has also allowed me to meet some amazing new friends.”

Alexis Wright
Northpark



“The Ridgeland Chamber’s Diplomat Program has been incredibly beneficial personally and professionally. The Chamber allows me to

expand my network and build meaningful relationships with local professionals and business owners. By engaging with projects and events, I’ve gained a deeper understanding of the Ridgeland market allowing me to better align my retail and leasing offerings with the community’s evolving needs. Overall, the Diplomat Program has helped me grow and contribute to the success of Northpark and the broader Ridgeland community.”

2024 Ridgeland Chamber Board of Directors

President

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

Vice-President

Tim Magandy
Robot Coupe USA, Inc.

Treasurer

Nicky Cobb
Guaranty Bank & Trust Company

Immediate Past President

Ray Balentine
Michael Baker International

Shawn Cochran
Northpark

John Dorsa
State Farm Insurance

Chris Hemphill
C Spire Business

Deonte Oscar
Community Bank of Mississippi

Carla Palmer
CPA Realty, LLC

Jay Reber
CenterPoint Energy

Jeremy Rodden
BankPlus

Tom Steadman
Tuxedo Junction

Chamber Staff

Linda Bynum, Executive Director

Peyton Torrence, Administrative Assistant



School Highlights

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ANN SMITH ELEMENTARY

Shaking into an “A” School

For every school, accomplishing a level A rating is a commendable achievement that signifies a commitment to excellence in education. It reflects the hard work and dedication of administrators, educators, and our students. Ann Smith Elementary’s educators and staff strive daily to reach this goal. In addition to being named a level A school, we kicked off the week-long celebration with the 5th day of school. This exciting milestone was an opportunity for students and educators to reflect on their achievements, engage in fun activities, and embrace the joy of learning. The 50th Day of School serves as a reminder of how far students have come since the first day. It’s a moment for reflection on the knowledge they’ve gained, the friendships they’ve built, and the challenges they’ve overcome. We often take this opportunity to



celebrate student progress, reinforcing the idea that learning is a journey filled with milestones. We are “shaking” things up here at Ann Smith with our school theme this year, “Diversity is Our Superpower.” This superpower allows us

to celebrate our differences and foster an inclusive environment, motivating us to strive for excellence.

By LaToria Washington



HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY

Highland Elementary Announces Recent Awards

By Serenity Lockett

The Highland Elementary School Robotics Team is ROCKING IT! In October, the team traveled to Mississippi State University for their first robotics competition of the year and hosted the first local competition. The Highland team earned two awards at each competition. Students competed against teams from around the state at both events. Judges rated teams on skills, teamwork, driving ability, field competition, and creativity. Highland Elementary students won the Judges Award at both events, the Excellence Award at MSU, and the Create Award at the Highland's competition.



OLD TOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

2024 OTMS Robotics Team competes at Mississippi State University

By Dr. Natasha May

Old Town Middle School Robotics has twenty-one students who are divided into six individual teams. OTMS students participate in VEX IQ robotics competitions. They have a rich tradition of robotics participation. Each year, students develop their engineering, coding, and problem-solving skills. Last year, one team had an opportunity to compete in a national competition in Council Bluffs, Iowa. With the kick-off of the robotics season this year, OTMS competed at Mississippi State University.

Team Electro Eclipse won the Teamwork Champion award, and The Dream Team won the Robot Skills Champion award! This season, the goal is for all six teams to make it to the State Robotics Championship and qualify for the World Championship in Dallas, Texas.



Students participate in the Election process

The students at OTMS experienced the election process firsthand. Students from each grade level who met the qualifications ran for office and campaigned. This event concluded with each student voting for the candidates they believed would represent them well. Congratulations to the 2024-25 OTMS Student Council.

OTMS 2024-25 Student Council

President: Zy'Kesiah Evans

Vice President: Meagan Buchanan

Secretary: Aubrey James

Historian: Gigi Jenkins

Treasurers: Jana Anderson and Hannah Simmons

8th grade Representatives: Sophie Dansereau, Laila Moore, and Neeraja Sri Kamma

7th grade Representatives: Misheeta Soma and Poorvi Kshatri

6th grade Representatives: Emmerson Manogin, Makenzie Pollard, and Journey Young

RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL

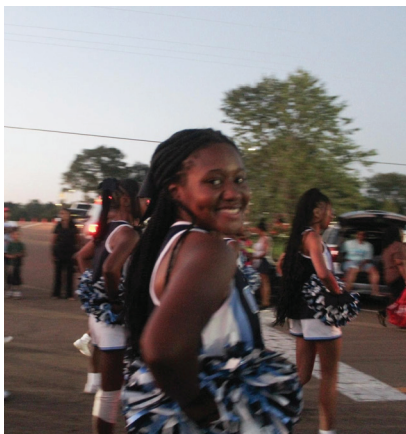
2024 Ridgeland High School Homecoming

By Abbie Marbury

The beginning of the school year signals one of the most fun and exciting times of the year- HOMECOMING! Hall decorations, floats, parade, spirit days, the homecoming court, the drumbeat of the band, and the game itself usher in a time for the schools in the Titan Zone to show off their Titan pride. This year's theme was "Through the Decades," giving Titan fans a trip down memory lane.

The freshmen brought us a '90s house party, the sophomores put on a '50s sock hop, the juniors showed out with a groovy '70s party, and the seniors took everyone back to the '80s, complete with a DJ booth. Congratulations to the sophomores who won the hall decorating competition and the juniors who took first place for their float.

Halftime at the game had all the pageantry you could want. The homecoming class maids were stunning in their gowns, and their escorts were equally handsome. Everyone represented Ridgeland well. Congratulations to Queen Shanti Guice and King Phil Nelson on their reign over Homecoming 2024!



HALLWAY DECORATING CONTEST HOMECOMING 2024 THROUGH THE DECADES



HOLMES

COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Holmes Ridgeland Homecoming Maids

Holmes Community College Ridgeland Campus court members include Student Body Maid Addison Chelsey Sawyer of Madison, Sophomore Maid Kamilah Millsap of Canton, Sophomore Maid Miracle McGee of Flowood, Freshman Maid Paris Garrett of Canton, and Freshman Maid Sydney Ferguson Neely of Flowood.

Addison Sawyer is the daughter of Katresia and Earl Sawyer. She is a biological science major actively involved in the Student Government Association (SGA) and Phi Theta Kappa, where she advocates for students and engages in community service. Outside of school, she works with children to enrich their educational experiences and foster academic development.

Sawyer plans to pursue medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, specializing in ophthalmology. She looks forward to merging her passion for healthcare with a commitment to enhancing patients' quality of life.

Miracle McGee of Madison is the daughter of Stacey Davis and Cedric McGee. She is a psychology major who enjoys socializing and attending coffee shops to study with friends she's met at school. She likes to work out in her free time and is very active in church. Specifically, she enjoys running track and has been a runner her whole life.

Paris Garrett is the daughter of Felicia Garrett and Rod Garrett. She is a

By Mary Margaret Busby



IN THIS PHOTO: (left to right) Freshman Maid Paris Garrett of Canton, Freshman Maid Sydney Neely of Flowood, Student Body Maid Addison Sawyer of Madison, Sophomore Maid Miracle McGee of Flowood, and Sophomore Maid Kamilah Millsap of Canton

general college studies major who plans to transfer to AMDA in Los Angeles, California, to study acting with the goal of becoming a successful actress.

Sydney Ferguson Neely is the daughter of Sherry Neely and Sean Neely. She is a pre-radiologic science major who enjoys baking, working, napping, and traveling.

When not on campus, Neely works as a pharmacy technician.

The queen and her court were presented during halftime of the Bulldogs' Homecoming Game against East Mississippi Community College on Thursday, October 31, in Goodman.

Holmes Ridgeland Practical Nursing Program Achieves 100 percent Pass Rate on NCLEX-PN



IN THIS PHOTO: (front row, left to right) PN Instructor Dr. Lakesia Sutton, Hannah Alexis Rigby, Jessica Quarles, Sara Kathryn Self, Cortlyn Norris Bardwell, Shae Kelly, Alicia Goldman, Alexandria Cyrus, PN Instructor Heather Roberts, (back row, left to right) Nikeya Rogers, Megan Brittany Middleton, Kavondra McCauley, Anastasia Kelly, Destiny Janae Malone, l'Leyah Janae Green and PN Instructor Caley Stogner

The Holmes Community College Practical Nursing (PN) program on the Ridgeland Campus had a 100 percent pass rate on the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-PN) exam.

"We are proud to announce that all of our practical nursing students have passed the state licensure examination on their first attempt, with their dedication, rigorous training, and unwavering support," said PN instructor Dr. Lakesia Sutton.

Instructor Heather Roberts also expressed her excitement for the students. *"I am immensely proud of our graduates and their accomplishments over the past year,"* Roberts said. *"Their achievement is something to take pride in as they begin the first steps into*

a professional future. We value the benchmark of passing the NCLEX on the first attempt as we feel it sets the tone for confidence and success moving forward."

There were 13 graduates in total in the 2024 Ridgeland PN Class. Graduates included Cortlyn Norris Bardwell of Vicksburg, Alexandria Dominique Cyrus of Madison, Alicia Goldman of Canton, l'Leyah Janae Green of Fayette, Anastasia Kelly Ingram of Madison, Shafreta "Shae" Kelly of Canton, Destiny Janae Malone of Brandon, Kavondra McCauley of Meridian, Megan Brittany Middleton of Florence, Jessica Quarles of Jackson, Hannah Alexis Rigby of Vicksburg, Nikeya Rogers of Byram and Sara Kathryn Self of Madison.

"I am extremely proud of our PN students and their NCLEX scores," said Director of Health Sciences Allison DeWeese. *"These students spent many hours studying and preparing for the NCLEX. I look forward to hearing about their successful careers in healthcare. I would also like to congratulate the PN instructors, Mrs. Roberts and Dr. Sutton. Without their dedication to the students, this would not be possible."*

The PN program prepares students to assist in providing general nursing care under the direction of a registered nurse, licensed physician, or dentist. Intensive preparation for the NCLEX-PN Exam and transitioning from student to employee is provided in the program.

RIDGELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ridgeland Library Announcements

Page
Turners

RIDGELAND
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Many exciting events have been happening at the library. In October, the Ridgeland Historical Society put together a miniature version of the Ridgeland's History Trail for our kids. Society members acted as trail rangers for the program. Each kid received a backpack, compass, snacks, a trail guide, and other small goodies for an adventure on the trail. Recycle Ranger made a special appearance, too!

During the program, the kids learned about Ridgeland's early beginnings to the present day. The trail started with an exploration regarding the first inhabitants: the Choctaw tribe. The kids also learned about the City's official tree: the pecan tree. Pecan trees can be found all over the City, which speaks to Ridgeland's agricultural roots. The kids were excited to learn they could find pecans coming to and from their games at Freedom Ridge Park!



Other trail stops included:

- Old Agency Road - They were surprised to learn that, by the 1800s, it was used as a mail route.
- Brashears Stand, located on the Natchez Trace.
- Railroad - The development of Ridgeland was made possible by the

railroad. Many of the first families traveled to Ridgeland by train.

- The kids also learned about Highway 51, Northpark Mall, Wesley Chapel Methodist Church, Jessamine Cemetery, and City Hall.

Everyone had a blast learning about Ridgeland's rich history!



Vox Books Coming Soon

We are excited to announce that the Madison County Library System was awarded a \$10,000 grant from AWS InCommunities Greater Jackson MS Area Fund. This grant will be used to purchase Vox Books for our library system. Vox Books are books in print with a built-in audio player. Our young patrons have enjoyed our current collections at the Ridgeland and Canton branches. We are so excited to announce that this grant will allow us to increase the current collections at our Ridgeland and Canton branches. This grant will also be used to start Vox Books collections at our Camden, Flora, and Madison branches. All collections will include picture books and now chapter books! We are so excited to bring this popular collection to all of our branches. Be on the lookout for these new titles coming soon!

To learn about future events, visit mclsms.org or Facebook, or stop by your local library and pick up a copy of the monthly calendar.

By Evanne Flanders,
Branch Librarian

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.
- **Effective January 1, 2025, 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



RIDGELAND RECYCLING Rewards

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



HELP SPONSOR
VETERANS MEMORY PARK

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

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



3 WAYS TO SIGN UP
GET NOTICES & ALERTS

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




REMEMBER TO SIGN UP FOR RIDGELAND ALERTS!

CITY OF RIDGELAND AND KIMLEY-HORN RECEIVES AWARD FOR BEST SMALL AREA PROJECT FROM THE MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

The City of Ridgeland and Kimley-Horn were recently honored with the Award for Best Small Area Project by the Mississippi Chapter of the American Planning Association for their work on the West Jackson Street Master Plan. The award recognizes an outstanding small area plan that advances the art and science of planning for a community, county, or region. The Master Plan will steer future development in alignment with the shared vision of stakeholders, City officials, and community members who collaborated on this pedestrian-focused initiative.

The Master Plan aims to enhance the existing character of the West Jackson Street corridor. The plan includes improvements within the right-of-way and





City-owned property to create a cohesive, contemporary-traditional aesthetic that further strengthens the Railroad District's identity and sense of place. A key component throughout the plan is the implementation of traffic calming measures to foster a safe, pedestrian-oriented streetscape environment. The Master Plan seeks to enhance the pedestrian experience while balancing with vehicular traffic to further activate the corridor and promote increased economic development.

"The potential of West Jackson Street as a true destination is enormous. This Master Plan establishes a framework to realize that potential by reimagining the existing space within the right-of-way with the pedestrian in mind. By intentionally creating active,

flexible streetscapes and public spaces in the heart of the community, we can begin to foster an authentic 'sense of place' that people and businesses are attracted to. This plan is a great step forward in the growth of West Jackson Street and the Railroad District," said Cameron Cooper with Kimley-Horn.

The recommendations in the Master Plan were developed based on stakeholder input sessions and City staff feedback. The design team consisted of Landscape Architects, Traffic Planners, and Roadway Engineers working together to ensure a feasible, safe, aesthetic, and pedestrian-focused streetscape Master Plan. It is important to note that this is a planning-level design, and further detailed construction documentation will

be necessary to implement the proposed improvements.

The study area for this plan was created by understanding the major streets, properties, and land uses that would influence how people arrive, experience, and ultimately depart from the Railroad District. The study area begins west of Sunnybrook Road at the Ridgeland Wildflower Field and extends east to Highway 51. It also includes improvements in the 'Core' of the Railroad District on N Wheatley Street and Old Town Crossing. The improvements proposed are within public rights-of-way and City-owned parcels.

Through intentional landscape and material design recommendations, this

plan will create a unique, contemporary, yet historic aesthetic and design character that will carry throughout the Railroad District's limits, creating a sense of place and arrival at all edges.

“ Winning this award is another sign that the City of Ridgeland and its dedicated staff are committed to forward-thinking and innovative planning. We will continue to set a high standard for quality of life for both our residents and visitors. We are actively pursuing funding from various sources to make this project a reality. ”

Mayor Gene McGee

Goals and Objectives of the Plan

Improve the Pedestrian Experience:

This plan will prioritize safety and the pedestrian experience in design. Safe, defined, walkable areas are critical for activating any streetscape corridor. This plan will improve existing pedestrian activity nodes and offer design recommendations to enhance the overall pedestrian experience.

Enhance District Identity: Through intentional landscape and material design recommendations, this plan will create a unique, contemporary-traditional aesthetic and design character that will carry throughout the limits of the Railroad District. Overall, this will create an enhanced sense of place throughout the corridor and a sense of arrival at both gateways.

Implement Traffic Calming Measures:

Traffic calming measures are a vital objective in the Master Plan and are intended to reduce traffic speeds and



improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The tangible effects of traffic calming measures will create a much friendlier and more inviting pedestrian experience, directly correlating with increased district activation.

Create Flexible Spaces: Flexible spaces are essential in ensuring this plan remains relevant. As businesses, land uses, and human behaviors change, the spaces within the streetscape and civic spaces will need to adapt to the most current needs of the businesses and community. With a focus on flexibility, the plan should create many opportunities for programmable spaces of various sizes within the streetscape and adjacent civic spaces.

Optimize District Parking: Although a primary goal of the Master Plan is to create walkable streetscapes, most visitors will arrive to the district via automobile. This plan looks to optimize public parking while balancing programmable pedestrian spaces to provide a total net gain in available parking spaces and parking distribution.

Promote Multi-Modal Transportation:

Multi-modal connectivity is a key component in activating a corridor. A focus on multi-modal connectivity, in

this case, the integration of bicycle and pedestrian networks, ensures that the improvements made are equitable and provide transportation options for users of all ages and abilities.

Wayfinding and Branding: This plan's primary objective is to create a cohesive design that is easily discernible as a distinct place. This will require a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes branding the district itself and wayfinding within the district.

Increase Economic Development: The overall goal of the plan is to increase economic development in the Railroad District by implementing the objectives listed in the master plan document. The District has seen steady growth over the years; however, undeveloped and underutilized lots remain. With the increased activation of the corridor, development will continue to gain momentum. This plan will serve as a tool to help support design and guide the development of the West Jackson corridor to meet the established vision of the Railroad District.

By Jordan Lohman & Cameron Cooper

THE CITY RECOGNIZES LONG-TERM EMPLOYEES

This year has been marked by numerous milestones for Ridgeland, with activities and projects that honor our City’s rich history and celebrate its bright future.

Among these milestones, we’ve extended congratulations to Mayor McGee on his 35th anniversary of service and expressed gratitude to our dedicated Board of Aldermen in the pages of this year’s Ridgeland Life.

It’s only fitting, then, that we also recognize the City staff members who have served the citizens of Ridgeland for 20 years or more.

| By Kim Cooper

Steven Wilson
Assistant Fire Chief
08/11/1980

Karen Knight
Community Development Zoning
Administrative Assistant
10/01/1984

Ina Byrd
Deputy Director of Finance / Information
Systems
06/01/1987

John McKinnon
Fire Lieutenant
02/26/1988

Troy Bergeron
Assistant Fire Chief
01/23/1989

Ben Mays
Deputy Director of Public Works
11/19/1990

Mike Smith
Street Maintenance Worker II
07/29/1991

Renee Buckner
Public Works Administrative Assistant
10/14/1994

Kevin Eldridge
Assistant Fire Chief
04/14/1995

Leslie Thomas
Permit Manager
05/01/1995

Steven Tillman
Park - Superintendent Grounds
Maintenance
12/08/1995

Tony Willridge
Assistant Police Chief
02/20/1996

John Sidney North
Director of Recreation & Parks
10/14/1996

Tim Taylor
Park - Senior Crew Leader
07/14/1997

Willie Jackson
Fire Captain
07/25/1997

Brian Myers

Chief of Police

07/06/1998

Matthew Jenkins

Fire Captain

01/04/1999

Michael McGahey

CID Sergeant

02/01/1999

Michael Vaughn

Utilities Crew Leader

02/11/2000

Ericka Shelton

Human Resources Assistant

04/10/2000

Ronnie Tompkins

Utilities Inspector

07/03/2000

Ricky Bracey

Police Officer

10/10/2000

Tony Thompson

Police Booking Officer

05/08/2001

Brett Bertucci

Police Lieutenant

09/07/2001

Robert Camp

Judge Pro Tem

10/01/2001

Matt Bailey

Fire Chief

10/22/2001

Harold McCarly

Municipal Judge

10/01/2001

Michael Bullock

Fire Captain

02/08/2002

Lee Dorr

Fire Lieutenant

02/08/2002

Eddie Addison

Police Lieutenant

05/13/2002

James Hemphill

Fire Lieutenant

05/23/2003

Benjamin West

Fire Lieutenant

05/20/2003

Cynthia James

Senior Civil Engineer

07/01/2003

Stephen Donaldson

Park - Senior Crew Leader

12/10/2003

Kelvin Luckett

Fire Lieutenant

09/24/2004

John Mitchell

Firefighter II

09/24/2004



IN THIS PHOTO: (left to right) Ester Nichols, James Lockett, Sam Vinson, Cornelius Rivers, Richard Harmon, Adam Page, Johnny Ousley, Willie Rainey, Roscoe Chinn, Mike McCollum, Richard Murphy, Robert Bias, and Wallace Thomas

This year, a group of retired public works employees gathered for a reunion at the Ridgeland Recreational Center, hosted by Sam Vinson. Vinson served as the Director of Public works from 1990 to 2002. He confirmed recently that he

hopes to bring the group back together again this spring.

"It was great catching up with everyone and sharing all the exciting things happening in Ridgeland. Thank you for the

years you spent as part of the public works team—you helped lay the groundwork for what we're doing today," stated Alan Hart, Director of Public Works.

MAYOR GENE MCGEE RECEIVES STS GOVERNMENTAL TOURISM LEADERSHIP AWARD

Mayor Gene McGee has recently received the prestigious Southeast Tourism Society (STS) Governmental Tourism Leadership Award. Tourism is a thriving industry in Ridgeland, Mississippi, that has grown exponentially since the creation of the Ridgeland Tourism Commission (RTC) 27 years ago, an accomplishment led by Ridgeland's Mayor, the Honorable Gene McGee. The RTC exists because of his forward-thinking and determination to see it created by the state legislature.

Each year, a selection committee recognizes outstanding tourism leaders in the Southeast, celebrating their accomplishments in marketing, revenue growth, and contributions to the industry. STS is a not-for-profit membership association dedicated to the development of travel and tourism professionals and organizations within the southeast region. The association's mission is to empower a diverse network of tourism professionals



through Education, Advocacy, Recognition, and Networking. Member states include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

"Mayor Gene McGee's vision and dedication have been instrumental in shaping Ridgeland into a thriving travel destination," said Chris Chapman, President and CEO of Explore Ridgeland. *"His unwavering support for the Ridgeland Tourism Commission has allowed us to showcase the unique offerings of our City to visitors from across the region and beyond. To be recognized with the Governmental*

Tourism Leadership Award, out of the numerous leaders from the 13 states and the District of Columbia, is a testament to his exceptional leadership and commitment to fostering tourism growth. We are honored to celebrate this well-deserved milestone with him."

Mayor McGee and City officials' support has been crucial for RTC in promoting Ridgeland as a travel destination. As Ridgeland celebrates the growth of tourism, it is fitting to recognize the Honorable Gene McGee for the Governmental Tourism Leadership Award.

| By Explore Ridgeland staff

THE CITY OF RIDGELAND JOINS THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES CENTENNIAL ROADSHOW



The City of Ridgeland is honored to announce its participation as an official stop on the National League of Cities (NLC) Centennial Roadshow: 100 Years, 100 Cities. This initiative is part of NLC's year-long celebration, marking a century of commitment to advancing local government and advocating for the interests of cities, towns and villages nationwide.

"I've been a member of the National League of Cities for many years, and it's incredibly exciting to see Ridgeland highlighted as part of the Centennial Roadshow. I'm so proud of our community and thrilled about this recognition," stated Mayor Gene McGee.

The roadshow, organized by NLC, includes in-person and digital stops

to 100 cities in regions of the country, aimed at spotlighting the diversity, resilience, and transformation of America's local communities. The roadshow kicked off in February at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, where NLC was founded. Since then, the roadshow has toured cities of all sizes to showcase the unique stories of municipalities like Ridgeland.

As part of the roadshow the City of Ridgeland has highlighted the recent unveiling of the Ridgeland History Trail and details regarding Ridgeland's 125th Anniversary year. Ridgeland unveiled the History Trail on October 1st with a community and press event showcasing the 22 historical markers.

"It is truly an honor for NLC to spotlight remarkable municipalities, like Ridgeland that have made significant contributions to the advancement of local government over the past 100 years," said Clarence Anthony, CEO and Executive Director of the National League of Cities. *"Cities across the country have played a pivotal role in moving communities forward and has a unique story that showcases transformative change. As we continue to celebrate the advancement of cities over the past 100 years and chart a course for the next 100 years, I am more excited than ever for the future of cities, towns and villages and look forward to continuing the important work I know we will do together."*

CITY OF RIDGELAND LAUNCHES **INAUGURAL** **MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL**

This fall the City of Ridgeland was excited to announce the launch of the inaugural Mayor's Youth Council. This program aims to engage local high school students in municipal government and civic leadership. This new initiative will replace the Chamber of Commerce's Jr. Diplomat Program and will aim to give students a deeper understanding of how local government functions and impacts everyday life.

"It is exciting to get our youth involved in city government. I look forward to meeting and working with the council to address important issues and bring fresh perspectives," said Mayor McGee. "This program will help develop their leadership and citizenship skills while providing valuable insights into municipal government."

Participants in the Mayor's Youth Council will have the opportunity to meet and work closely with Mayor McGee, the Board of Aldermen, department heads, City employees, and representatives from various schools. Through this hands-on experience, students will learn about the inner workings of city government and public service responsibilities.

"Mayor McGee feels very strongly that students should be familiar with all facets of local government," said Lisa Walters, program coordinator. "This experience may even inspire some to pursue careers in public policy or politics."

| By Kim Cooper





mayor's youth council

2024-25 MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL ROSTER

(All council members reside in Ridgeland)

Samuel Bender

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Joselin Bustillo

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Jayla Chatmon

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Cameron Cooper

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Hallie Dale

MRA, 12th grade

Knox Davidson

Jackson Prep, 11th grade

Ty Davidson

Jackson Prep, 12th grade

Sarah Hart

MRA, 12th grade

Stella Hathcock

St. Andrew's, 11th grade

Deagan Hollins

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Mykailah Edwards

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Katie Lancaster

St. Joseph, 11th grade

Lauren Mathews

Jackson Prep, 11th grade

Lake McGee

MRA, 12th grade

Ahmed Mokhtar

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Phil Nelson

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Shikah Patel

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Haylee Phelps

Ridgeland High School, 12th grade

Mary Russell Philpott

St. Andrew's, 11th grade

Emma Kate Poole

MRA, 11th grade

Luke Smith

St. Andrew's, 11th grade

Arvind Singh

Ridgeland High School 11th Grade

Ra'kiya Smith

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Kashvi Sukhadia

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Ann Magee Stradinger

Jackson Prep, 12th grade

Sharon Naomi Perez

Ridgeland High School, 11th grade

Jack Voyles

Jackson Prep, 11th grade

Elle White

St. Andrew's, 12th grade

WHO AND WHERE

RIDGELAND ALDERMEN



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Brian Ramsey
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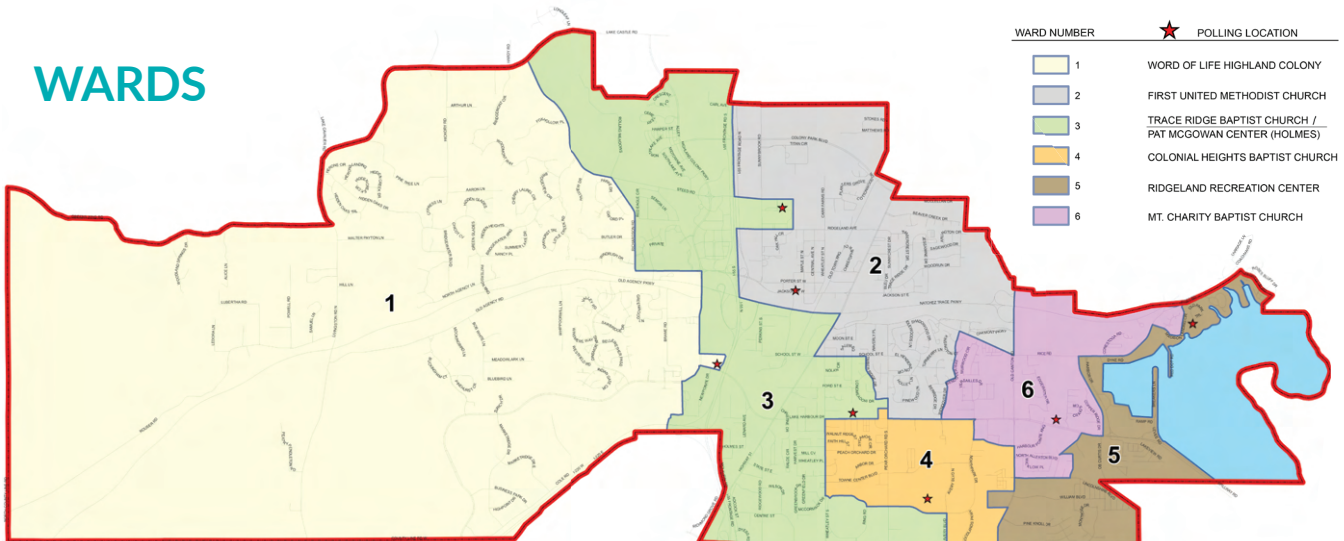


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Wesley Hamlin
Ward 6
Mayor Pro Tempore
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Wesley.Hamlin@RidgelandMS.org

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 session is held on Mondays prior to Board Meeting - 6 p.m.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
 2nd & 4th Tuesday - 6 p.m.
 Bill Dicken (Chairman), Connie Suber (Secretary), Randy Lynn, Robert Moore, Lynette Praytor, Rick Eades, Jim Woodrick, Leigh Ann Sullivan

KEEP RIDGELAND BEAUTIFUL
 First Monday - 4 p.m.
 Jan Richardson - Chairman
 Rachel Bradley, Ginger Cocke, Polly Hammett, Claire Jackson, Phyllis Parker, Kenya Rachal, Lea Anne Stacy

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
 Every other month - TBA
 Nancy Batson - Chairman
 Robby Carr, Donna Dye, Polly Hammett, Mike Porter, Pat Truesdale, Jim Woodrick

CONTRACTORS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEALS
 Quarterly meetings - 4 p.m.
 Lantz Kuykendall - Chairman
 Terry Evans, David Pursell, Steve Rimmer, Clay Sutherland, Keith West

ZONING BOARD
 Thursdays, the week of Mayor and Board of Aldermen meeting - 6 p.m.
 Bernie Giessner - Chairman
 Michelle Caballero, Tabitha Baum, Theresa G. Kennedy, Drew Malone, Judy Rice, David Dunbar, Don Roberts

DEPARTMENT HEADS



Public Works
 Alan Hart
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 alan.hart@ridgelandms.org



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