

The Riverdale Citizen
Connection to your Community

Welcome to the Riverdale Citizen, a bi-monthly electronic publication distributed by the City of Riverdale Division of Community & Cultural Affairs and Leisure Services. The newsletter provides citizens with useful, in-depth information and announcements. It is our goal to advance and promote the image, reputation and recognition of our great City. Previous editions of [The Riverdale Citizen](#) are archived online.

**SETTING PRECEDENCE
FOR THE FUTURE**

ACCOUNTABILITY!
TEAMWORK!
VISION!

Our secret is no longer a secret as the latest United States Census certified that Riverdale is spiraling in progression and is the second largest and now the fastest growing city in Clayton County.

Accountability, teamwork and vision all account for this injection of economic growth and development but most importantly – it's the determination and business acumen of the city's leadership. Under the leadership of Mayor Evelyn Wynn-Dixon and city council, Riverdale is on the verge of being the most livable city in the South.

In the last several years, the city has moved to the forefront of Clayton County by offering investors viable products as Riverdale is a melting pot of diversity, culture and growth. The accomplishments of leadership have been achieved while maintaining a balanced budget without raising the tax millage rate.

There are four major factors that play an integral role in the aggressiveness of the city to move and claim its fame as the most livable city of the South.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is the key amidst the financial downturn nationally. Riverdale is currently completing plans necessary to develop a **"Downtown Riverdale"**. The new downtown will be developed through a public/private partnership with the construction of the public buildings commencing in January 2009. These buildings include a new 40,000 square foot multipurpose community center, 21,000 square foot city hall, 800 seat amphitheater, and a public plaza. The commercial office/retail and residential component will be developed by private investors.

Georgia



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Email: riverdaleneews@yahoo.com

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**Riverdale
Men of Distinction**

Would you like to impact a young person's life?

Volunteer Today
(10 hours a month)

The Riverdale Men of Distinction is a mentoring program that teaches life skills and offer guidance to young men in Riverdale.

Contact: Councilman Ruffin
Phone: (678) 524-1340
E-mail: kd_ruffin@comcast.net

In addition, the City has purchased approximately 17.8 acres of land that will be added to approximately 40 acres of open space for the development of a new park that will include ball fields, picnic pavilions, tennis courts, walking/hiking/biking trails and playgrounds.

DRIVING NEW BUSINESS TO THE CITY

Whether you are seeking employment, considering relocation of your existing business or starting a brand new endeavor, Riverdale is a smart choice.

In 2008, the city issued approximately 195 new business licenses including a Walgreens, Dollar Tree relocation and expansion, several restaurants, and jazz clubs helping to boost the city's economy.

Riverdale is well positioned for continued growth and success in the New Year. The impact is bringing diverse job opportunities and business development that is of economic benefit to all citizens.

CITY BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS

The City of Riverdale is committed to fostering civic pride, beautification and improving the quality of life in the community. As the city continues to grow, city streets have been improved by constructing sidewalks and installing new traffic mast arms and street signage that's more user friendly for the community along State Route 85.

Additionally, the city is very proud of the new Light Emitting Diode (LED) message sign on State Route 85. This newest technology allows the city to communicate more effectively by keeping the community informed of City news and events.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The City of Riverdale sponsors several educational, cultural and community events throughout the year for all ages that inspire creativity, foster communication and inform.

Upcoming Programs: Summer Youth Employment Program, Riverdale Youth Council, Riverdale Neighborhood University, Citizen Public Safety Academy.

Upcoming Events: Movies in the Park, Birthday Bash, Fall Festival, Holiday Tree Lighting and events to honor local Veterans.

The city plans to increase program offerings in the Arts and bring more culturally diverse activities in 2009. (Check the city website for up-to-date information)



Photo: New Walgreens opening soon on the corner of Hwy 85 and Main Street



Photo Above: Mast Arms and Street Signage intersection of State Route 85 & Upper Riverdale Road



Photo Left: Message Sign on State Route 85

Riverdale Youth Council Ready

The newly formed Riverdale Youth Council is officially established and will hold their first meeting January 28, 2009. It is comprised of students from Riverdale High School, Riverdale Middle School, Sequoyah Middle School and North Clayton High School that were selected by their school administrators.

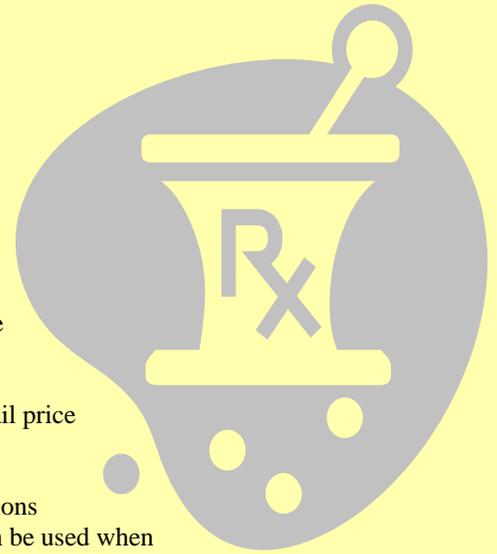
The group will work with city officials to address the needs of youth, develop leadership skills and offer programs to address the challenges youth face in Riverdale.

"Civic education should be instilled in citizens at an early age, not only through academic courses but also through practical experiences. I am excited to see this important endeavor come to fruition," said Councilman Kenny Ruffin.

Members will have an opportunity to serve for two academic school years if they remain in good standing.

Ruffin stated, "The creation of a Riverdale Youth Council will allow middle and high school youths an opportunity to experience the American political system through active participation in the democratic process."

The New Prescription Drug Discount Card Program is in Effect...



City of Riverdale launched a program to help provide residents with some relief from the high cost of prescription drugs. The city is making free prescription drug discount cards available to city residents through a program sponsored by the National League of Cities (NLC). The discount cards offer city residents' average savings of 20 percent off the retail price of commonly prescribed drugs.

The discount cards may be used by all residents of city of Riverdale and have no restrictions based on the resident's age, income level, or existing health coverage. The NLC card can be used when purchasing prescription drugs at approximately 30 pharmacies around the city, as well as at more than 59,000 participating retail pharmacies across the country.

"In the current economic climate, where many people are watching what they spend, The City of Riverdale is happy to partner with the National League of Cities to make this prescription discount card available for our residents," said Council member Kenny Ruffin. "Whether or not an individual has prescription coverage, this program can make it easier for our residents to afford the drugs they need to deal with a short - term illness or stay healthy by managing a chronic condition."

Cards are available at the Riverdale Fire Department at no cost to city and Clayton County residents. City residents can call toll-free 1-888-620-1749 or visit www.caremark.com/nlc for assistance with the program.

"Not only does the NLC prescription discount card help residents save money on their medications, it is easy to use," said City Manager Iris Jessie. "Riverdale residents only have to show their card when purchasing medication at one of the many participating pharmacies. There is no enrollment form required to get a card, no membership fee of any kind and city residents and their family members can use the card any time their prescriptions are not covered by insurance."

The discount card program is administered by CVS Caremark.

Teen Writes Song for City



Photo: Zinnae performs the 'Riverdale Song' during the City's Town Center groundbreaking ceremony

Smart, talented and spiritual Zinnae Macon has the voice of an angel. This 17 year-old student at Riverdale High School wrote a song that brings many to tears. The passion and the words in this song not only reflect Zinnae's feelings but the emotions of many residents in this great city.

The '*Riverdale Song*' as it is so frequently called came about during the planning of the City's centennial celebration. The Riverdale Centennial Committee presented the idea to Zinnae's father Haran Griffin, owner of Alexis Recording Studio on Highway 85. Griffin was asked to arrange a song that would represent the city.

"It was a cooperative project that I was privileged to have the opportunity to participate in," stated Griffin. "My daughter Zinnae was given the leeway to write the verses, and arrange anything to which she felt needed to be altered. With the help of others, the song came to fruition."

The '*Riverdale Song*' was first performed during the City of Riverdale Centennial celebration. As Zinnae sang, tears were on the faces of many in the crowd including the mayor, Dr. Evelyn Wynn-Dixon.

"All in all, this has been an unforgettable experience," said Zinnae. "The song has opened up many doors for me. I am very grateful for the chance to show Riverdale my talents and I am grateful that out of all of the thousands of teenagers in Riverdale, they chose me to carry out such a task. I am humbly honored."

An emotional Zinnae continued by stating, "I can look back years from now and remember the day when I was given the opportunity to write a song for a city that I lived in, a city to which I love, and a city with such character. The '*Riverdale Song*' is a way for me to give back to the community and to show my appreciation for what this great city has taught me."

RIVERDALE SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The City of Riverdale is committed to ensuring that youths in the community have an opportunity to grow and develop into responsible, well adjusted adults by providing them with educational, recreational, character building and employment opportunities. There are limited job training and job opportunities for young people, especially those ages 14 and 15. As a result, the City of Riverdale will co-sponsor, along with area businesses and citizens, the Summer Youth Employment Program.

Mission

The mission of the Youth Summer Employment Program is to provide young people ages 14-16 with job opportunities that build positive work experience and foster development of Riverdale's future workforce.

Goal

Employ youths between the ages of 14-16 for twenty hours per week during the months of June and July at a pay rate of \$5.85 per hour.

Objectives

- To provide participants with pre-employment skills training
- To teach young people how to become responsible workers
- To provide young people with an opportunity to earn money
- To teach participants money management skills

Application Process

The Summer Youth Employment Program is open to Riverdale youths living in the greater Riverdale area; however, preference will be given to applicants who live within the city limits of Riverdale, Georgia. Youths may pick-up applications from Riverdale City Hall or at www.riverdalega.gov.

Completed Applications are due no later than 4:30PM on **Friday, February 27, 2009. NO EXCEPTIONS!** Space is limited. A completed application does not guarantee acceptance into the program. It is recommended that you submit a completed application with supporting documentation prior to the deadline. Application review and applicant acceptance will be on a rolling basis.

For more information or to submit a completed application, please call the City of Riverdale at (770) 997-8989.

Work Assignments

Job placements will be made in industries throughout Clayton County and the metro Atlanta area. Past placements have included: Clayton Libraries, the City of Riverdale departments, non-profit organizations, etc.

Contributions

Your help is needed to make this program a reality. Business owners, citizens, religious organizations, service organizations and other interested parties are urged to contribute to this effort. Donations can be made to the City of Riverdale Summer Youth Employment Program. For more information, please call the City Manager's Office at (770) 997-8989.



Photos: Past Participants

The Gift of Giving During the Holidays

Toy Drive...

The City of Riverdale Division of Community & Cultural Affairs and Leisure Services coordinated a public toy drive and donated approximately 120 items to include: toys, books, stuffed animals, gift cards and personal items to Clayton County Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) during the holidays.

“It is important that foster children have adequate toys, not only to ensure proper development but to make their holiday experience enjoyable,” said Lonnie Ballard, Assistant City Manager.

DFACS assist families and individuals to provide the care, protection and experiences essential to their well being. Rene’e Johnson, DFACS Representative stated that they will be providing these items to more than 1500 children whose ages range from newborn to twenty-one years old this year.

“The ultimate success of this toy drive was made possible by the generosity from the local community and City of Riverdale staff who donated items. I am sure that the items donated will bring smiles to the faces of all the children. Anything that makes their holiday brighter is worth the effort,” stated Ballard.



Photo (L-R): Assistant City Manager Lonnie Ballard, Department of Family & Children Services Representative, City Manager Iris Jessie proudly display toys donated by residents and staff

Christmas with A Cop...

Christmas with a Cop took place Saturday, December 20, 2008 at the Wal-Mart in Riverdale. Eleven families, all from Riverdale, were chosen by school counselors, neighbors, fire and police personnel to participate in the City of Riverdale Police Department annual Shop With A Cop.

The families began their holiday celebration at Wal-Mart working together to build gingerbread houses. Samuel F. Patterson, City of Riverdale Police Chief greeted and welcomed each family.

The eleven lucky families were given Wal-mart gift cards and paired up with police and fire personnel to go shopping. Upon their return from shopping, they were greeted by Santa as they enjoyed lunch donated by Subway and Panda Express restaurants in Riverdale.

Residents and businesses donated decorated Christmas trees, clothes, food, toys, books and Wal-Mart gift cards to each family to help make their Christmas enjoyable.

Wal-Mart and Myra Crawley, the Wal-Mart grants coordinator, went the extra mile to make their day special along with other gracious sponsors, including: The Cattle Exchange, J&L Cleaners, El Rancherito Mexican Restaurant, Chick-fil-A, CiCi's Pizza, Brook's Crossing Apartments, Windgate Homeowners Association and Melvin Morris, founder of Litehouse Kids Foundation.



Photo Top- The Lennon Family & Police Officer Godwin



Photo Left (L-R) – Fire Lt. Joseph, Brandon Melton, Firefighter Russaw, Gail Blakemore and Jayden Blakemore after making a gingerbread house

The logo for Riverdale Neighborhood University is presented within a white speech bubble. The bubble is set against a dark red background that features a grid of small black dots. The text 'Riverdale Neighborhood University' is centered within the bubble in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Riverdale Neighborhood University

Riverdale Neighborhood University's (RNU) Spring class will begin in March of 2009. RNU is dedicated to providing the highest quality training to citizens of Riverdale to foster a sense of commitment, pride and excellence. Instruction will be provided in topics designed to engage, inform and equip citizens with the training and technical assistance needed to increase their capacity to become better advocates for their communities.

Riverdale Neighborhood University provides opportunities for networking and sharing practical ideas for problem solving, decision making and managing community development initiatives; cultivating community interest and neighborhood support; orienting citizens to specific policy issues and government practices; and informing citizens of available resources.

All Neighborhood University courses are FREE.

Who: Open to the general public

When: Wednesdays starting March 4th—April 1st for five weeks

Where: Riverdale City Hall

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 pm.

Deadline to apply: Friday, February 20th

Those citizens interested in participating in the spring session of Riverdale Neighborhood University should complete an [application](#) and mail or hand deliver it to the Riverdale City Hall, 6690 Church Street, Riverdale, Georgia.

Classes are limited to 20 participants and selection will be made competitively. Citizens must attend all sessions in order to graduate. Preference will be given to applicants who live or work within the city limits.

Phase 1 Groundbreaking Ceremony for the New Riverdale Town Center Project

The City of Riverdale officially broke ground for the new, state-of-the-art Riverdale Town Center project on Saturday, December 13, 2008 at 7208 Church Street in Riverdale. More than 80 people including residents and state, county and local elected officials attended the ceremony for the first phase of the project.

Scheduled for completion in 2009, “The public piece will consist of a new 21,000 square-foot City Hall and a 40,000 square-foot Community Center,” said Doug Manning, Assistant City Manager for Community Development.

Manning stated, “We will be working with an aggressive schedule to have completion in about 14 months. Maybe it can be a Christmas present for the City by this time next year. With all your help and all your support, we will see this project come to fruition.”

The City is seeking a private developer to execute the second and third phases of the Town Center project which will include 40,000 to 50,000 mixed use commercial office space, retail shops, restaurants and new residential housing.

“When a City works together, you can be so unified,” commented Congressman David Scott. “You couldn’t have a harder working, committed and energetic Mayor than Evelyn Wynn-Dixon and your council men and women.”

Mayor Dixon stated, “This is history. We’re bringing jobs and a change of lifestyle to our City.”

The Riverdale Town Center project is designed for residents and visitors to enjoy the pedestrian-friendly streets, restaurants and shopping in a village type atmosphere. In addition, citizens will be able to enjoy community events, festivals and concerts.

State Representative Mike Glanton stated, “This project will enhance the image of the City and I salute you for your efforts to make this possible.”



Congressman David Scott announced that more money and resources is coming to Riverdale to help keep our community safe.



Photo (L-R): Douglas Manning, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; Iris Jessie, City Manager; Kenny Ruffin, Riverdale City Councilman; Wanda Wallace, Riverdale Mayor Pro-Tem; Mike Glanton, State Representative; Eldrin Bell, Clayton County Commission Chairman; Evelyn Wynn-Dixon, Mayor of Riverdale; David Scott, Congressman; Hebrew Dixon, New South/Circle D and Contractor for the Public Component of the Town Center Project; Roland Downing, Riverdale DDA Chairman and the BOZA and Michael Sizemore, Sizemore Group, Architect.

The Sizemore Group is the architecture firm working on the project. The firm is one of Atlanta's most diversified and innovative architectural firms that offer complete architectural services with a special emphasis on complex and mixed-use developments



Zinnae Macon performed the ‘Riverdale Song’ that she wrote.



Everything you've ever wanted to know about

YOUR

Police and Fire Department

But Were Afraid to Ask ... or Didn't Know Who to Ask ...

***The CITY of RIVERDALE PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT
Presents...***

Citizen Public Safety Academy

March 5, 2009 – May 11, 2009

Thursday evenings, 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

**Riverdale Police Department
6690 Church Street, Riverdale, GA 30274**

Education is a significant factor in gaining understanding and support from the community. The purpose of the Citizen Public Safety Academy is to foster better communication between citizens and the public safety departments through education and citizen feedback.

Eligibility:

- Residents and workers of the City of Riverdale
- At least 18 years of age
- No felony convictions

Classes are taught by Riverdale's Finest: Certified Police Officers, Fire Fighters, Supervisors, Civilian Instructors and Command Officials.

Topics include:

- 🕒 Community Oriented Policing, Gangs & Drug Awareness
- 🕒 Public Safety Procedures & 911
- 🕒 CPR and First Aid certification & Extrication

Cost: FREE

APPLICATIONS DUE BY FEBRUARY 20.

[\(Click here for application\)](#)

Complete the enrollment application and return to:

Sergeant Nicole Rabel, Community Service Office

Deliver to: City of Riverdale Police Department

6690 Church Street, Riverdale, GA 30274

E-mail: nrabel@riverdalega.gov

Fax: (770) 996-1913