



official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

# Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | September 2023

## INSIDE this issue...



3

Suwanee Fest  
Parade Info



4

Live Entertainment  
Schedule



8

Parking & Shuttles

YEE-HAW! IT'S SUWANEE FEST TIME!

★ SUWANEE'S ★

# WILD WILD WILD FEST



SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER  
16TH  
9AM TO 7PM



SUNDAY  
SEPTEMBER  
17TH  
NOON TO 5PM

TOWN CENTER PARK

PLATINUM SPONSORS Purifi<sup>IV</sup> Suwanee Community Culture Lifestyle magazine

SADDLE UP & HEAD ON DOWN TO SUWANEE FEST!

★ SUWANEEFEST.COM ★

# YEE-HAW!

It's time for a hootin' & hollerin' good time!

★ SUWANEE'S ★

# WILD WILD FEST



Round up your kinfolk and head on down to Town Center Park on September 16 and 17 for the 39th annual Suwanee Fest - a whole weekend filled with shopping, arts, entertainment, food, and more!

The shindig starts with a **jaw-droppin' parade** featuring bands, floats, performers, and more. Prizes are awarded to floats and participants in a variety of categories.

When the parade wraps up, mosey on down to Town Center Park where **200 vendors and exhibitors** will be selling their handcrafted goods and lip-smackin' delights.

You'll find all kinds of artists, craftsmen, and vittles purveyors showing off their talents.

Y'all can also enjoy a heapin' helpin' of **live entertainment** all weekend! Dance groups, acrobats, solo artists, bands, and other groups will take center stage and be featured throughout the park.

We ain't forgotten 'bout the little ones neither! We got plenty of free activities for the tenderfoots in the **Family Fun Zone**, better known as the A-Okay Corral 'round these parts. The kiddos can attempt a series of cowboy obstacles, including a hay-mazing maze, rodeo round up, and more! Rides and inflatables are also available throughout the park.

**Wanna be a part of this hoedown?** We're lookin' for over 200 volunteers to help us wrangle this year's Suwanee Fest and make it a rootin' tootin' success!

*Saddle Up*  
& HEAD ON DOWN TO  
**SUWANEE FEST**



## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

**8 AM - 8 PM**

Free shuttle to/from  
offsite parking

**9 AM**  
parade

**10 AM - 7 PM**

Arts & crafts exhibitors, inflatable  
rides, family fun zone,  
food vendors

**10:30 AM - 7 PM**

Free on-stage entertainment

**5:30 PM**

**\*HEADLINER\***

*Savannah Jack*

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

**11:30 AM - 7 PM**

Free shuttle to/from  
offsite parking

**NOON - 5 PM**

Arts & crafts exhibitors,  
inflatables, family fun zone,  
food vendors, free on-stage  
entertainment

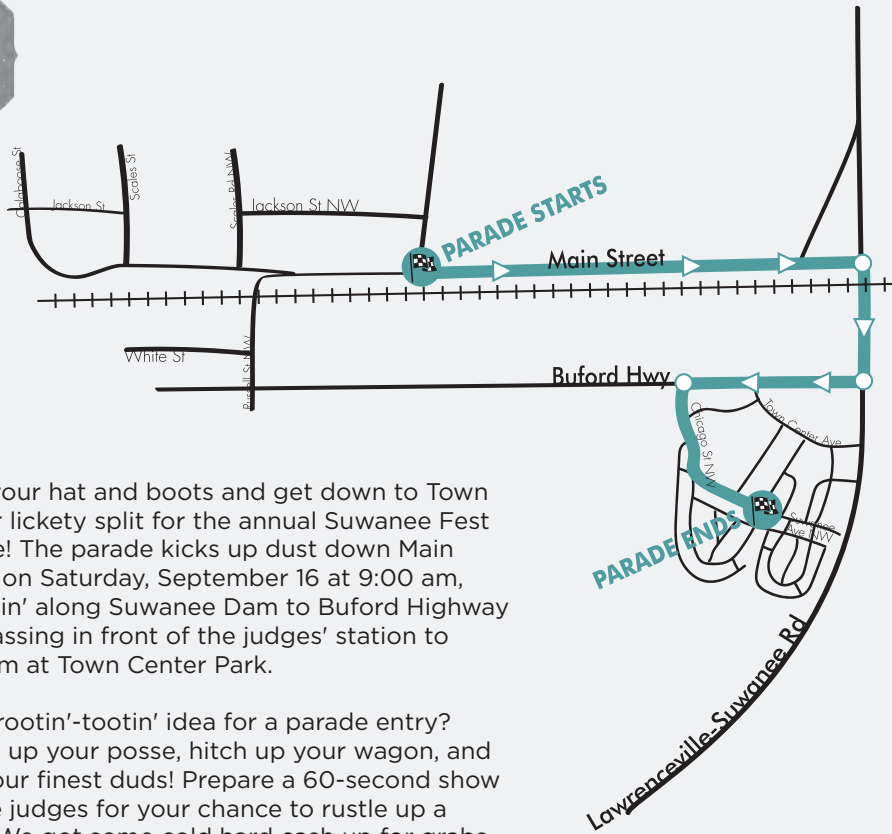
**4:00 PM**

**\*HEADLINER\***

*The New Quintet*

★ SUWANEЕ'S ★  
**WILD WILD**  
 2023  
**FEST**  
*Parade*

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH**  
 9:00 AM ♣ MAIN STREET SUWANEЕ



Grab your hat and boots and get down to Town Center lickety split for the annual Suwanee Fest Parade! The parade kicks up dust down Main Street on Saturday, September 16 at 9:00 am, moseyin' along Suwanee Dam to Buford Highway and passing in front of the judges' station to perform at Town Center Park.

Got a rootin'-tootin' idea for a parade entry? Round up your posse, hitch up your wagon, and don your finest duds! Prepare a 60-second show for the judges for your chance to rustle up a prize. We got some cold hard cash up for grabs for the best use of theme, most entertaining, best costumes, and more. Sign up over yonder at [SuwaneeFest.com](http://SuwaneeFest.com)!





# ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>



### NEXUS DRUMLINE ♣ 10:30AM

A competition and performance drumline with the best student percussionists in the area, NeXuS Drumline has been racking up trophies from competitions around the country. Catch them first in the Suwanee Fest Parade, then on the Town Center Stage as they kick off Suwanee Fest 2023!

### HIP HOP ALL STARS ♣ 11:00AM



Hip Hop All Stars in Buford focuses not on being *the* best, but on helping young dancers become *their* best. Instructors focus on relationships with their dancers, teaching self-confidence and

provide challenging training. Dancers learn that hard work, dedication, and positivity always pay off.



### LAUREL TAYLOR ♣ NOON

Originally from Alabama, singer/songwriter Laurel Taylor made her move to the Music City 11 years ago, right after turning 18. From the *American Idol* stage to Tootsies on Broadway and the local church leading worship, her voice and sound speaks to every crowd. Laurel uses her life stories and raw country sound to speak to people through her music.

### 80HD BAND ♣ 1:00PM

80HD is a high-energy, 80s new wave and alternative music tribute band. Combining authentic keyboard and synth sounds, driving electronic beats, and melodic vocal



harmonies, iconic 80s tunes are recreated with intense detail and presented as they were originally recorded. 80HD shows are not just a performance, but a trip back in time.

### DAVID WILLS ♣ 2:00PM

David Wills charted twenty-one singles on the Billboard country charts from 1974-1988, including two in the top ten. Wills has also penned songs for songs for country music legends George Strait, Charley Pride, Martina McBride, The Oak Ridge Boys, Keith Whitley, and Garth Brooks. With two new albums, Wills is back on tour, bringing his traditional country style to audiences in a new way.

### GRAVY ♣ 3:15PM

Three-piece band GRAVY has been a regular attraction at many of Atlanta's best venues over the last four years. Atlanta's only cover band with a female lead singer/bassist, GRAVY plays favorite rock covers from the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

## Headliner

### SAVANNAH JACK ♣ 5:30PM

From lower Broadway honky-tonks in Nashville to opening arenas for Peter Frampton, John Fogerty, Vince Gill, The Doobie Brothers, and Kenny Rogers, to the Suwanee Fest stage! Joe Guercio, Elvis Presley's longtime music and orchestra director, calls Savannah Jack "the absolute best band I've seen in country music today...the Alabama of the 21st century." Get ready to enjoy original songs the band has written for major country artists, as well as a wide range of cover tunes from several decades, to include dynamic medleys of the Eagles, Alabama, and other artists in the country, southern, and classic rock genres.

# SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>

NGHS BIG T'DO 15 MINUTES OF FAME WINNER ♣ NOON



## JASMINE DANCE GROUP ♣ 12:30PM

Jasmine Dance Group consists of eight dance members who have a passion for classical Chinese dances. Jasmine Dance Group has performed at many cultural arts festivals and events, including Georgia Power's companywide Lunar New Year Celebration, TECO's Lunar New Year Spring Festival, Taiwan Yes Night Market, and Fulton Science Academy's International Celebration.



## BRETT RYDER ♣ 1:15PM

With his Southern rock and bluesy style, 17-year-old singer, songwriter, and guitarist Brett Ryder has been called an old soul, a young Elvis, and a melodic force for good. You can currently find Brett working tirelessly in the studio on his first album or playing shows around his hometown of Johns Creek.

## METRO JAZZ CLUB ♣ 2:30PM

Metro Jazz Club is a 20-piece band that performs swing, jazz, R&B, and pop/rock from the 60s through the 80s. Featuring male and female vocalists, Metro Jazz Club plays popular tunes from Duke Ellington, Burt Bacharach, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Tina Turner, The Temptations, Ray Charles, Chicago, and many others.



## Headliner



## THE NEW QUINTET ♣ 4:00PM

Honoring the songs and styles that have shaped our country, from traditional folk to ragtime, old-time and early country, The NEW Quintet's big harmonies, intricate melodies, and lush textures rain upon both original and reimagined traditional material. The NEW Quintet has been on stages throughout the Southeast at festivals, concert series, listening rooms and theaters, and will be unveiling their first release in late 2023.



# Featured VENDORS

Whether you're looking for handcrafted treasures, fine artwork, wood and metalwork, or a whole heap of gourmet grub that'll leave you full as a tick, Suwanee Fest is home to some of the finest purveyors this side of the Mississippi! Mosey on down to Town Center Park and

**SHOP NEARLY 200 TALENTED ARTISTS.**



## COINHOLE ♡ BOOTH #B46

Ever been chained to your desk, when all you really want is to go outside and play cornhole? Introducing Coinhole! Great for giveaways, awards, and unique gifts, Coinhole is a 100% handcrafted mini version of cornhole played with quarters! Simply bounce a quarter or coin off the table; one point if you get on the board, three points for in the hole. Coinhole boards come in a variety of designs including officially licensed collegiate boards, and can be customized with your company's logo.

## GARDENS OF HONEY ♡ BOOTH #R11

Visit this "gardener's gift shop" for handmade and hand-printed dish towels, plant stakes, stickers, magnets, pins, headbands, hats, totes, and adult/youth/baby attire that are plant- and nature-related with a healthy dose of sarcasm. Gardens of Honey is a fun, eco-friendly company that gives back to honeybee rescue and education. They source all of their beautifully handcrafted products from artisans that represent pollinators, beekeepers, and honeybee conservation around the world.



## EDGEST LEATHER ♡ BOOTH #B17

Edgest Leather artists freehand carve, dye, and sew one-of-a-kind cowhide leather items. Using leather tools, wood burners, engravers, and multiple layers of dyes, Edgest creates journals, flasks, bags, wallets, cell phone cases, and more. Have something specific in mind? Edgest also takes custom orders!



### LMY SHOP ♣ BOOTH #B42

Artisan Lisa Yang produces handmade everything for mamas and babies: scrunchies, headbands, bloomers, skirts and dresses, as well as embroidered apparel such as sweatshirts, t-shirts, and rompers. Working mamas can also shop for key chains, badge reels, and an entire line of hand-sewn scrub hats for surgical health industries.



### LETTER BY LINDA ♣ BOOTH #B37

Linda Pipping hand stamps each letter of messages from the heart to create personalized jewelry in 14k gold, rose gold, sterling silver, and stainless steel. Each piece is hand-stamped on-site to the buyer's specifications to create a one-of-a-kind piece that will never rust, tarnish, or change color. Hypoallergenic rings, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings are shower- and swim-safe, so you never have to remove your custom jewelry.



### JEN SCHWARTZ POTTERY ♣ BOOTH #G14

Finding herself mesmerized by artisans throwing pots at an art festival, Jen Schwartz promised herself she'd take a class at a local museum. Then life got in the way. Thankfully, she eventually found her way to the pottery wheel and now creates beautiful, functional pieces out of her home: mugs, vases, jars, dishes, and more.



### HORTON'S BEEF JERKY ♣ BOOTH #B49

What do you call a cow with a twitch? Beef jerky! (*Ba-dum ching!*) Made from the leanest cuts of beef, Horton's Beef Jerky hand-slices, marinates, and dehydrates for seven hours to ensure the freshest jerky possible. Do you know why Horton's works overtime to make eleven flavors of jerky, along with six varieties of pork skins? To make ends *meat!* (I'll be here all night, tip your waitress!).

## SUWANEЕ VS. SUGAR HILL

# Food Fight!

Join the cities of Suwanee and Sugar Hill for a collection drive supporting the North Gwinnett Co-Op. The competition kicks off September 16 at Suwanee Fest and ends October 22 at Sugar Rush. Look for collection locations at Suwanee Fest and City Hall!

# PARKING & SHUTTLES

Parking is unavailable at Town Center during Suwanee Fest, and traffic in the Town Center area can be congested throughout the festival weekend. Please plan on utilizing the free shuttles for a hassle-free Suwanee Fest parking experience. Off-site festival parking and complimentary 'covered wagons' (shuttles) are available at three convenient locations:

- **Dusty Boots Lot**  
Shadowbrook Church  
4187 Suwanee Dam Road  
\*This lot features wheelchair-accessible shuttles.
- **Prickly Cactus**  
Shawnee North Business Center  
305 Shawnee North Drive  
at Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road
- **Wagon Wheel**  
Gwinnett Church  
300 Peachtree Industrial Boulevard

The air-conditioned shuttles will run from 8 am until 8 pm on Saturday, and from 11:30 am until 7 pm on Sunday. Please note that bus service will be very limited during the parade, from 8:45 am until approximately 10:30 am on Saturday. Dogs are welcome on the shuttles (leave yer horse hitched to a tree).



Howdy, partner! We need the rootin-ist, tootin-ist kiddos in Suwanee to meet us at the A-Okay Corral, located on the west side of Town Center Avenue. Young tenderfoots can attempt a series of challenging obstacles to see if they have what it takes to be a real cowboy!

- Hay-Mazing Maze
- Rope 'Em Cowboy
- Rodeo Round-up
- Horseshoe Toss



Those who successfully complete the challenges will receive a prize, and might find themselves recruited for an adventure on the trails!

Other activities include a hippity-hop pony corral for the tots, campfire stories and songs, a photo booth, caricature artists, a balloon artist, and roaming performers! The Family Fun Zone area was created for our younger Suwanee Fest visitors; all activities are complimentary.



Got a hankering for some fun? Suwanee Fest also features a massive ride and games area, providing non-stop fun for kids of all ages (not to mention child-free shopping time for mom and dad!). Tickets are available for purchase at the festival for inflatables, small rides, and carnival-style games.

## RIDES & GAMES SCHEDULE

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**  
RIDES OPEN AT 10 AM & CLOSE AT 7 PM  
TICKET SALES END AT 6:30 PM

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17**  
RIDES OPEN AT NOON & CLOSE AT 5 PM  
TICKET SALES END AT 4:30 PM





The Suwanee City Council recognized Kristen Nielsen at their June meeting in appreciation for her service to the Harvest Farm Managing Board. Kristen chaired the board for the past seven years, making sure the garden was always fully functional and operational. A true champion of Harvest Farm, Kristen continues to share her knowledge with the new managing board, ensuring that the community garden remains a gem of our city.

*Thank you, Kristen!*

**UPCOMINGEVENTS** official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

**SEPTEMBER23**

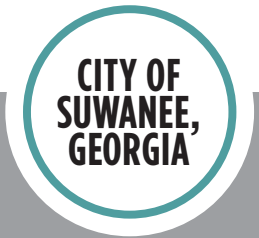
- 2 Farmers Market 8:00 am
- 4 City Hall CLOSED
- 5 Harvest Farm Managing Board 6:00 pm
- 5 Planning Commission 6:30 pm
- 7 Suwanee Fest Parade Meeting 6:00 pm
- 9 Farmers Market 8:00 am
- 11 Suwanee Fest Committee Meeting 6:30 pm
- 13 Public Art Commission 6:00 pm
- 14 City Council Workshop 5:30 pm
- 16 Suwanee Fest 9:00 am
- 17 Suwanee Fest Noon
- 19 Downtown Development Authority 7:30 am
- 19 Zoning Board of Appeals 6:30 pm
- 23 Farmers Market 8:00 am
- 23 Care for Cops 5K 8:00 am
- 26 City Council Meeting 6:30 pm
- 30 Farmers Market 8:00 am

**OCTOBER23**



- 3 Planning Commission 6:30 pm
- 7 Taste of BBQ & Music Festival 10:00 am
- 9-15 Playtown Suwanee Build 8:00 am
- 10 Road Atlanta Motul Petit Le Mans Kickoff Party 5:00 pm
- 10 Harvest Farm Managing Board 6:00 pm
- 11 Public Art Commission 6:00 pm
- 12 City Council Workshop 5:30 pm
- 14 Winter Farmers Market 9:00 am
- 14 Spooky Spirits 5K 11:00 am
- 17 Downtown Development Authority 7:30 am
- 17 Zoning Board of Appeals 6:30 pm
- 21 Al Son de la Musica – Celebrating Hispanic Culture 2:00 pm
- 24 City Council Meeting 6:30 pm
- 27 Suwanee Arts Center Dam Dinner (Sims Lake) 7:00 pm
- 28 Winter Farmers Market 9:00 am
- 28 Dinner & a BOOvie 5:00 pm

**MAYOR** Jimmy Burnette 770/868-7115  
**COUNCIL** Pete Charpentier 770/757-3323  
 Heather Hall 410/979-7905  
 Beth Hilscher 678/546-3388  
 Linnea Miller 678/592-4150  
 Larry Pettiford 678/464-3651

**CITY MANAGER** Marty Allen 770/945-8996  
**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER** Denise Brinson 770/904-3385  
**CITY CLERK** Robyn O'Donnell 770/904-2790  
**FINANCIAL SERVICES** Amie Sakmar 770/904-2797  
**PLANNING & INSPECTIONS** Josh Campbell 770/904-3372  
**POLICE CHIEF** Cass Mooney 770/904-7610  
**PUBLIC WORKS** Bob Dean 770/904-3373  
**EDITOR** Abby Wilkerson 770/945-3386



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

-  @CityofSuwaneeGA
-  @CityofSuwanee
-  @CityofSuwanee

Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check [suwanee.com](http://suwanee.com) for updates.

# Do You Want to Build a Playground?

We're breaking ground on PlayTown Suwanee 2.0

Building upon the success of PlayTown Suwanee nearly 20 years ago, the city is excited to break ground on a new community-built playground on October 9-15!

After weeks of brainstorming, designing, reviewing, re-designing, and designing again, the City of Suwanee and PlayTown Committee unveiled the playground design in July. The design can currently be viewed at [Suwanee.com](http://Suwanee.com).

Leathers & Associates - the designer and project management team behind the original community build - designed the playground after hosting interactive design sessions with classrooms in Suwanee elementary schools to gather ideas. The custom-designed playground will be at the same location, similarly sized, and include elements reminiscent and the character of the original. The design will meet modern standards and utilize from earth-friendly, recycled materials that are long lasting and virtually maintenance-free.

More than 1,000 community members helped build the original PlayTown Suwanee over a five-day period in 2004. The collective build experience offers a hands-on opportunity for citizens give something tangible back to their community, resulting in a beautifully constructed, unique expression of shared pride.

**Playground  
Build Dates  
October  
9-15, 2023**

**Are you ready  
to get your  
hands dirty?**

We're looking for volunteers who aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty (or covered in paint, or cement, or whatever else we may need). Whether you're a master builder or a complete novice, we want you on our team! Not only will you help create something amazing, you'll also meet some pretty cool people from your community.



**See pages 10-11 for all  
the PlayTown details**

**PLAYTOWN  
SUWANEE V2.0**

**PLAY IT FORWARD 2023**



# PLAYTOWN SUWANEE

PLAY IT FORWARD 2023



**THIS IS NOT  
A DRILL!**  
I mean, yes,  
*this* is a drill.



This playground is  
**100% VOLUNTEER-BUILT.**  
**WE NEED YOU**  
to make it happen!

**Playground Build Dates**  
**October 9-15, 2023**

## PlayTown 2.0 Committee

Co-Chairs: Colette Grodzicki & Zach Whigham  
Build Captains: Kate Fanale, Clint Gooch, Matt Savitt  
Publicity: Alicia Carter, Stacey Whigham  
Accessibility: Kristen Dandar  
Fundraising: Daniel Homrich  
Children's Committee: Ashley Jenkins  
Food: Ashley Lazarian, Polly Smith  
Volunteers: Sarah VanVolkenburgh, Renee Williams  
Tools/Materials: Rob Rohloff, Matt Savitt, Reese Walker VanBeber  
Art/Special Features: Alexandra Sorto



## How can you get involved?

Contact project coordinator Kim Towne at [ktowne@suwanee.com](mailto:ktowne@suwanee.com) for more information.

### Gather a group of friends or coworkers and volunteer!

We need over 400 volunteers each day to get our playground built; all levels of experience and skill are welcome. Besides construction, we need volunteers to help with first aid, food service, and more. Tell a friend!

### Purchase or coordinate a meal for our volunteers during the build.

We need to feed volunteers lunch, dinner, and snacks daily. Maybe you know a restaurant owner, civic group, or other business who could sponsor or serve a meal.

### Support the work with contributions of all kinds.

We're looking for donations of bottled water, snacks, and other essential items used during the build. We're not going to turn down a financial contribution either!

### Purchase a fence picket.

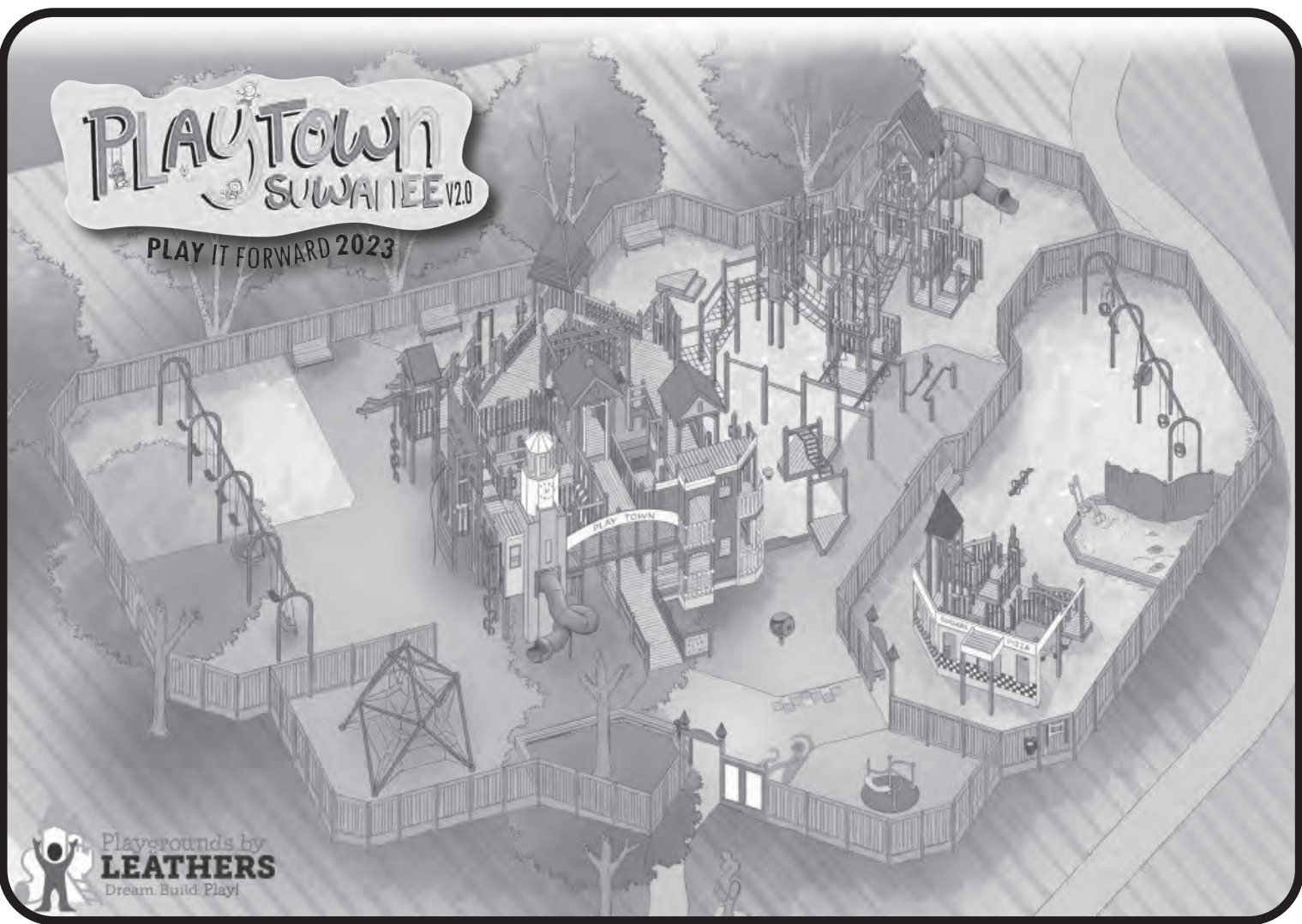
Put your stamp on PlayTown! Purchase a picket (or two, or three!) to dedicate to a family member, recognize a milestone, or just show your love for your city. Picket purchasing deadline is Monday, September 18 (no exceptions!).

**SCAN HERE TO PURCHASE  
A FENCE PICKET**



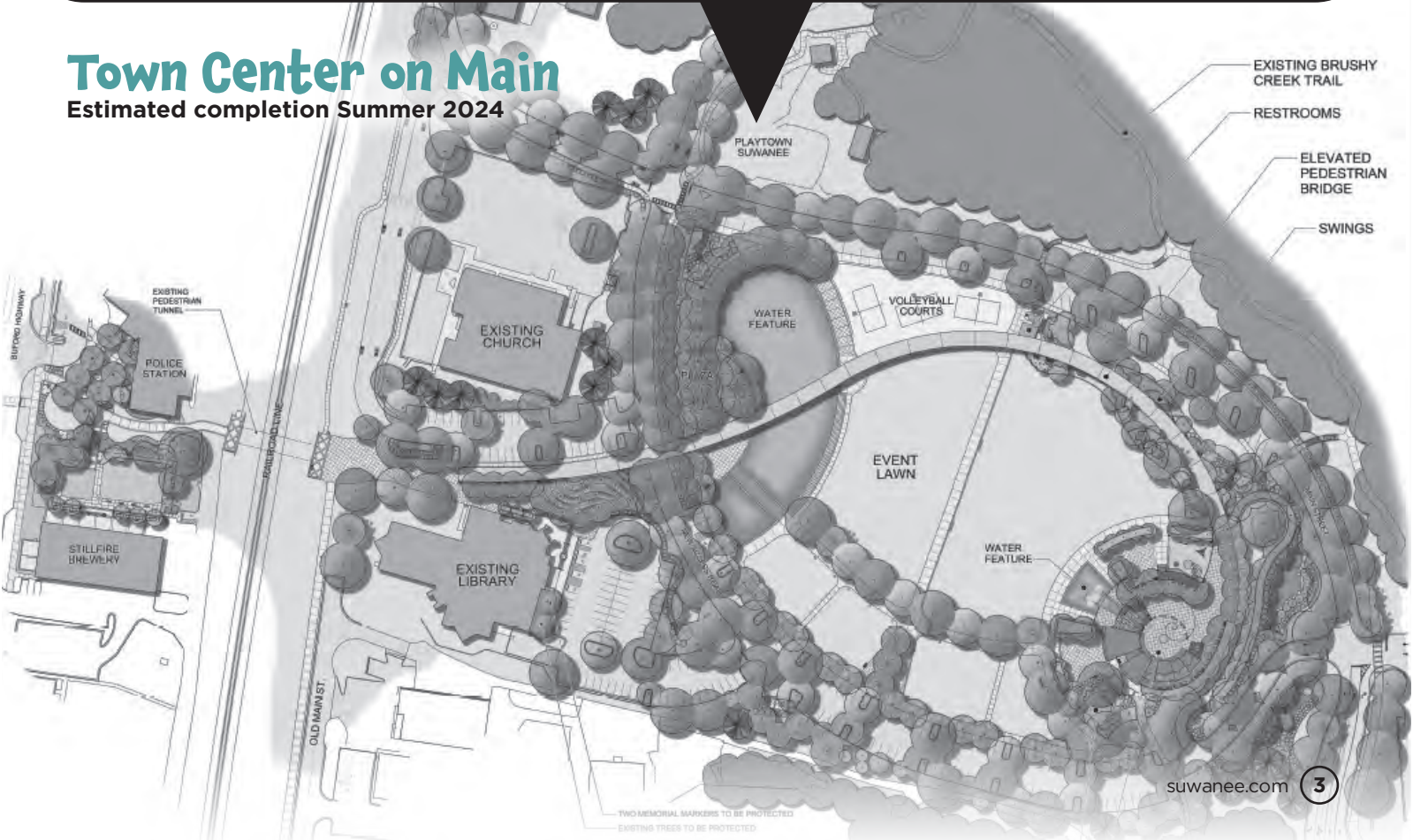
# PLAYTOWN SUWANEE V2.0

PLAY IT FORWARD 2023



## Town Center on Main

Estimated completion Summer 2024



- EXISTING BRUSHY CREEK TRAIL
- RESTROOMS
- ELEVATED PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE
- SWINGS

TWO MEMORIAL MARKERS TO BE PROTECTED  
EXISTING TREES TO BE PROTECTED



Suwanee Named a  
**CITY OF CIVILITY**  
by Georgia Municipal Association

The City of Suwanee has been designated as a City of Civility by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). GMA, in partnership with Georgia City Solutions, created the Embrace Civility program to equip Georgia's cities with resources to promote civility in their meetings and among their residents and meeting attendees.

The Suwanee City Council adopted a civility resolution as part of GMA's new Embrace Civility program on May 23.



"Civil behavior and speech are critically important to a healthy, functional, and respectful society. For public service to be effective, there must be an atmosphere of respect and tolerance, as well as a commitment to a healthy public exchange of diverse ideas and viewpoints."

Suwanee City Councilmember  
**Linnea Miller**



"Civility is more than just politeness; it is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue, and listening past preconceptions and teaching others to do the same."

Learn more about the Embrace Civility program at [www.gacities.com/civility](http://www.gacities.com/civility).

CITY NAMES THE 2023-24

**SUWANEE YOUTH LEADERS CLASS**



The City of Suwanee recently named the members of its eighth Suwanee Youth Leaders (SYL) class. These students were chosen based on a combination of the strength of application, recommendations from teachers and school administrators, and extracurricular resume.

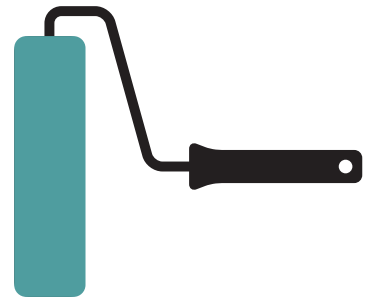
SYL is an eight-month leadership program for high school sophomores and juniors living within the North Gwinnett, Peachtree Ridge, or Collins Hill clusters. Participants gain exposure to local initiatives and community and civic leaders, while allowing the city to engage with young leaders. The class will also be involved in planning and implementing a citywide event, as well as a community service Cheers Project.

**Congratulations**  
to the Suwanee Youth Leaders  
Class of 2023-24

- Adarsh Venkatesh
- Ajla Murtic
- Alexander Lee
- Andrew Margeanu
- Arnav Awasthi
- Arvin Guo
- Audrey Johnson
- Ayo Babatunde
- Blen Areda
- Brady Williams
- Brian Bambach
- Brodie Mullin
- Charlotte Maguire
- Christian Blocker
- Davis Graham
- Dylan Ruff
- Eden Goode

- Elizabeth Tsiporkin
- Ella Hui
- Emily Yoo
- Emma Doherty
- Emma Young
- Ethan Son
- George Bayouk
- Grace Peng
- Holly Davis
- Inaaya Hirani
- Inez Lee
- Jace Lee
- Jack Hunsaker
- Jake Park
- Jamila Bangura
- Jaslene Zamorano

# EXPLORE GWINNETT AWARDS SUWANEЕ PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION CREATIVITY FUND PROJECT GRANT



Explore Gwinnett has selected the City of Suwanee Public Arts Commission to receive a Gwinnett Creativity Fund (GCF) project grant to fund a mural on the side of the historic Pierce's Corner building in the heart of Old Town Suwanee.

The GCF provides financial support to arts and cultural organizations that boost Gwinnett County's economic development and further the community's diverse cultural scene through funding from Gwinnett County. Now in its fourth year, the GCF awarded nearly \$200,000 in grants to fund projects and operational grants in 2023, including:

- Suwanee Arts Center – operating grant for renovation and expansion, and support for summer camps
- Suwanee Performing Arts – project grant for Broadway in the Park
- African American Cultural & Arts Festival – project grant for event

"We are fortunate to be part of a community with such a flourishing arts and culture scene. The contributions of the local organizations who received a grant in 2023 have made a profound impact on our community's well-being, cultural growth and vitality.

Explore Gwinnett's executive director, **Lisa Anders**, who leads the Gwinnett Creativity Fund

The City of Suwanee has been the recipient of past GCF grants for the Ultimate Participation Trophy (2022), the Town Center Park amphitheater stage wings project (2021), and the Buford Highway Mural (2020).



# Local Cultural Assets

## EVERETT MUSIC BARN

“  
**NO FOOLISHNESS  
& NO DRINKING.**  
”



Randall Everett



Roger Everett

Those were the words of Ma Everett back in 1964 when her sons, Randall and Roger Everett, asked permission to have members of their bluegrass band over to the family home to record live music for a radio station talent contest. The recording turned into a weekly jam session, with family members singing and playing, and the living room audience growing every week. Nearly every Saturday evening since, Everett's Music Barn has hosted local musical talent and even welcomed some of the most famous bluegrass artists from all over the United States.

Though Randall, Roger, and Ma Everett have since passed away, the dream and the music continue each Saturday night beginning at 8 pm. The stage is open to all levels of talent for jam sessions.



### SUWANEE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN PRESERVATION INITIATIVE

As her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Ashlee Tam spent several months identifying Suwanee's local cultural assets, researching and writing about them, and interviewing "local legends" who impacted people and places (and some place names) in Suwanee. Visit [Suwanee.com](http://Suwanee.com) or scan the QR code to read more and view the videos. You might see a few familiar faces, and learn something too!



# SUWanee NAMED TOP 10 SUBURB IN U.S. FOR 'MODERN LIFESTYLE'

According to a recent analysis by STORAGECafé, Suwanee is performing well in terms of walkable, versatile development patterns and is among the best suburbs in America for city-like living.

The study ranked Suwanee sixth out of over 900 suburbs around the 100 most populated cities in the US. The study considered criteria such as crime rates, prevalence of restaurants and shopping, housing affordability, median household income, and public school rankings, with extra points given to suburbs with sustainable, mixed-use development that caters to various demographics.

Suwanee excelled in the areas of education, residential, and business sectors, with 42 businesses for every 1,000 residents, according to the analysis. The study also highlighted Suwanee's vibrant Town Center, eclectic festivals, and extensive nearby trail system, including the Suwanee Creek Trail, a 4.5-mile paved path through the woods. Town Center Park's ongoing expansion, along with its cultural and entertainment amenities, were also highlighted.



## NEWLY ADOPTED CITY BUDGET ASSUMES MILLAGE TO REMAIN AT 4.93, SAME AS PAST ELEVEN YEARS

The City of Suwanee began the new fiscal (budget) year on July 1, 2023 with a \$17.9 million balanced operating budget. This year's budget represents an eight percent increase in operating expenditures as compared to FY 2023 amended budget.

### SUWanee'S \$17.9 MILLION FY 2024 BUDGET INCLUDES:

- 120 full-time and 12 part-time positions, including four new full-time positions
- New benefit - Peace Officers Annuity & Benefit
- 4.9 percent group health insurance renewal
- Public Works and Police electric vehicle transition, \$123,000
- Strategic Plan, \$120,000 (first half of a two year plan)
- Facilities and right-of-way maintenance program, \$530,000
- Capital funding, \$442,000

After analyzing the 2023 tax consolidation information provided by Gwinnett County, the City of Suwanee is adopted a budget that assumes that the millage rate remain at 4.93 mills, the same rate adopted by the city the past eleven years. This proposed millage rate of 4.93 is a rollback millage rate increase of .405 mills, an 8.95 percent increase in property taxes based on market value growth. Property taxes, one of the chief sources of revenue for the City, are collected based on the millage rate.

The Suwanee City Council adopted the millage rate for the new budget year at its regular August 22 meeting. The city held three public hearings at City Hall on August 10 at 5:30 pm, and August

Scan to view the City of  
Suwanee's FY2024 budget

