



official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | November 2023

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PLAY IT FORWARD 2023

The Playground that Built Community

What can you do with 6,092 pieces of composite lumber, three truckloads of concrete, 98,000 screws, 70 drills, and 1,120 dedicated volunteers?

You can build a one-of-a-kind, 13,000-square-foot, playground from the ground up!

Lifelong Suwaneetians and new residents alike, parents and grandparents, city staff, and groups representing many facets of our community worked throughout October 9-16, 2023, taking a dirt lot and transforming it into the kind of playground dreams are made of.



PlayTown Steering Committee

Thank you to our PlayTown Steering Committee who worked tirelessly planning, fundraising, and dreaming to bring this amazing community-built playground to life!

Committee Co-Chairs:

Colette Grodzicki & Zach Whigham
Alicia Carter
Kristen Dandar
Daniel Homrich
Ashley Jenkins
Ashley Lazarian

Rob Rohloff
Polly Smith
Alexandra Sorto
Stacey Whigham
Reese Walker VanBeber
Sarah VanVolkenburgh

Build Captains

Marty Allen
Chris Bridges
Amy Doherty
Kate Fanale
Clint Gooch
Heather Hall

Mel Hansen
Arthur Liu
Peter Maxfield
Tim Roman
Matt Savitt
Hardin Watkins



Part of what makes PlayTown so special is that it is personalized to Suwanee: not only does the structure mimic the Town Center skyline, but the tiny details like a wobbly cut line, or brush strokes slightly outside the lines – these are like fingerprints from our volunteers. It makes it unmistakably unique and “ours.”

**PlayTown Project Manager
Kim Towne**



PlayTown Suwanee 2023 By The Numbers

- 6,092** pieces of composite lumber
- 98,000** screws
- 70** drills
- 12** tons of sand
- 3** trucks of concrete
- 1,040** custom pickets surrounding the playground
- 1,273 million** plastic milk jugs recycled into structural plastic lumber
- 1,120** volunteers

“The pickets are like a big hug around the park!”
- 2004 & 2023
Build Captain
Amy Doherty

One AMAZING playground!



The volunteer team was led by Justin Fowler from playground design company Leathers & Associates. Justin was present on the 2004 PlayTown build – it was his first-ever playground build with Leathers!

Thank you to our sponsors!

Creators

PRICE **REEVES**
+ YOUNG

Builders

WALKER
ANDERSON

Explorers

aes
Clean Technology



CHAN
ELIZABETH
HOLMES

Supporters

- Beto's Tacos
- Brown Bag Deli
- Cheeky Taqueria
- Chick-fil-A
- Gwinnett Church
- Jackson EMC
- Kiwanis Club of Suwanee
- Lidl
- The MRS Georgia
- Outback
- Outlaw Snacks
- Planet Smoothie
- Publix
- Rabitsch State Farm
- Rita's Italian Ice
- Sam's Club
- Tequila Mama
- United Coke
- Volcanica Coffee
- Whitney Orthodontic

Partners

- Cooley's Pizza
- Ippolito's
- J&J Donuts
- Jimmy Johns
- Mellow Mushroom
- Penn Station
- Riverside Pizza



Pouring the surface, rerouting the road, finishing the bathrooms, oh my!

We had an incredible turnout of volunteers and met all of our goals for the community build, but we're not quite finished yet! Work on the punch list will continue throughout October, followed by the pouring and curing of the play surface (and it's all weather-dependent!).

The city anticipates that PlayTown will be open and ready for play in late fall 2023. Parking will be limited until the completion of Town Center on Main and realignment of Main Street in Summer 2024.

Please note that PlayTown is still an active construction site. Please do not enter the playground area, as it is extremely unsafe at this time. We'll all play together soon!



"I truly loved the way the community came together to rebuild this park, impacting the future generations of Suwanee. Being able to combine my own designs and ideas with those of my art students at NGHS is something I will forever cherish."

**Playtown Committee Member,
North Gwinnett HS Art Teacher
Alexandra Sorto**



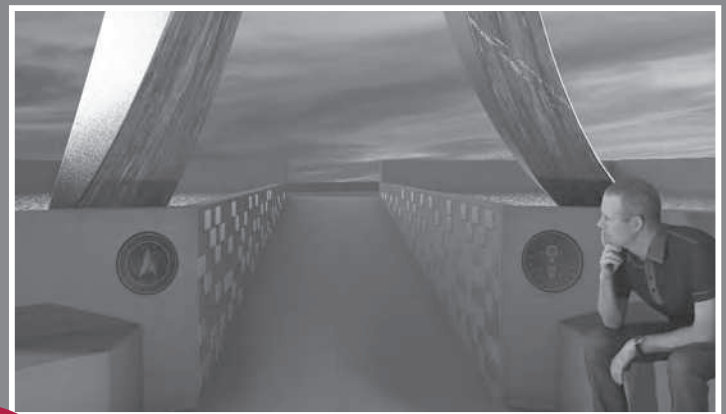
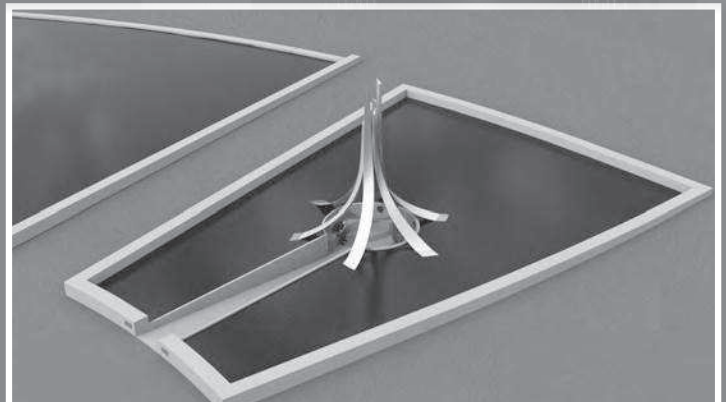
★ SUWANEE VETERANS ★ **MEMORIAL** HONOR YOUR SERVICE MEMBER WITH A COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

The City of Suwanee's newest park, Town Center on Main, will be home to a number of unique features, including a veterans memorial. The memorial, Greater Good, will be incorporated into a water feature within the park. The park is currently under construction, with an estimated completion date of Summer 2024.

The city is offering an opportunity to honor and recognize loved ones, living or deceased, who have served or are currently serving our nation through any military branch by purchasing an inscribed metal plaque that will be incorporated into the memorial.

The 8" x 4" etched stainless steel plaques will be installed on the walls of the walkway leading to the memorial. Each plaque can accommodate up to four lines of text with 30 characters per line. There is an option to include more than one name per plaque in order to recognize multiple service members.

A maximum of 300 plaques will be sold on a first-come first-served basis. Service members are not required to call Suwanee home in order to be commemorated with a plaque. The cost per plaque is \$300 with a limit of two plaques per purchaser; orders will be taken until November 30, 2023.



★
★
★
SCAN TO PURCHASE A
PLAQUE FOR THE SUWANEE
VETERANS MEMORIAL



ORDER DEADLINE
NOVEMBER 30, 2023





Local Cultural Assets PIERCE'S CORNER

In the early 1900s, Suwanee was a small, close-knit farming community with a population of only 240 people. Downtown Suwanee emerged as a hub for agricultural and regional commerce after the Georgia Air Railroad came to town in 1871.

George W. Little purchased the lot at the corner of the intersection of Main Street and Scales Road in 1905 from Dr. Edwin D. Little. The construction of the two-story building was completed in 1910 and served as one of the few general stores in the area, linking the rural and urban communities.

Pierce's Corner served as an important gathering place for farmers, manufacturers, and businesspeople to trade and barter their goods. The train stopped twice daily at the depot, just steps from the 6,000-square-foot general store.

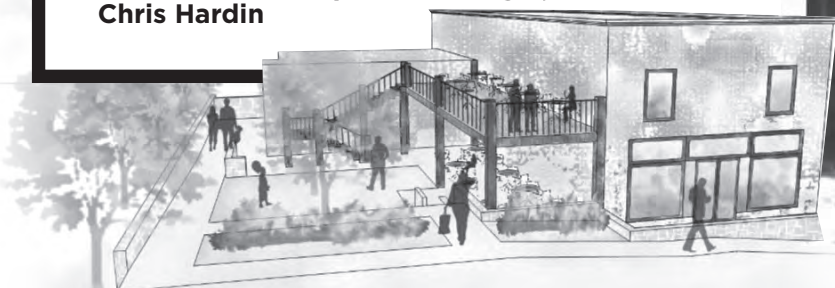
In 1951, the shop was sold to George Pierce for \$5,000. Throughout the years, Pierce family members used the building as a general store, antique store, gas station, and residence.

Since 2005, the City of Suwanee has owned the property, which is currently maintained by Suwanee's Downtown Development Authority. Their vision is for this historic 100-year-old site to be a representation of the integration between the old and the new.



The Suwanee Downtown Development Authority is in the midst of a transformative endeavor, revitalizing the charming, historic Pierce's Corner into a refined and inviting destination. Both the site and the building have undergone substantial enhancements, ensuring that they stand ready to embrace their future as a vibrant space, breathing new life into the heart of the city's original downtown."

**-City of Suwanee
Economic Development Manager,
Chris Hardin**



SUWANE' 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 or scan the QR code to read more and view the videos. You might see a few familiar faces, and learn something too!



SUWANEЕ POLICE DEPARTMENT EMBRACES INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR FASTER RESPONSE & ENHANCED COMMUNICATION



The Suwanee Police Department deployed a new software system that allows Suwanee dispatchers to send text messages to 911 callers within the city limits, connecting callers directly to the department and greatly improving communication between police and callers.

“When a Suwanee citizen calls 911, the call goes to a Gwinnett County call center. Suwanee dispatchers are able to see these calls on our computer screens. The Prepared Live software allows dispatchers to send the caller a text message while they are on hold with Gwinnett County,” explains Lindy Hildebrand, Suwanee Police Dispatch Supervisor. “We are able to see their exact location, as well as offer assistance. If it’s a police matter, they can hang up and call us directly.”

This new system reduces hold times, allowing the Suwanee Police to be on the scene much quicker. Another Prepared Live feature allows the caller to go live with their phone, so dispatchers are able to view the live scene, speak with the caller, and even take snapshots.

The live feature is extremely useful for briefing officers before they arrive on the scene,” said Hildebrand. “I think this will become a very helpful tool for us when people start to catch on to it. It’s another piece of technology that helps us provide the highest levels of service that we can offer.

Suwanee dispatchers hope the technology will catch on quickly and citizens will use it to their advantage. Dispatchers are sending text messages to every caller to introduce the system to the community.

“So far, the system has been very well received,” said Suwanee Police Chief Cass Mooney. “We even had one situation where the texts were not in English – our dispatcher was able to use an online translation service to communicate with the caller very effectively.”





From THE DESK of

CHIEF CASS MOONEY
CITY OF SUWANEE POLICE DEPARTMENT



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A SUWANEE POLICE OFFICER?

These are the minimum requirements that are outlined in the law and by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council:

- Minimum of 18 years old
- Citizen of the United States
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Undergo a background investigation, medical exam, psychological exam, polygraph exam, and complete a timed physical agility testing course
- Complete the state police academy ten-week basic training

So, what does it take to be a Suwanee Police officer? For starters, even though the minimum age for an officer in Georgia is 18, we require Suwanee officers be at least 21 years old.

While the state mandates 408 hours of training at the Georgia police academy, our standard operating procedure requires an additional 188 hours of advanced training at the University of North Georgia Public Safety Training Academy-Forsyth. Suwanee police, along with five other agencies, partnered to create this academy to ensure that new officers are prepared to hit the ground running. Additional training includes advanced patrol rifle, speed detection, crisis intervention, standardized field sobriety, and Taser certification.

After completing the police academy, the officer will return to Suwanee and complete a 16-week Field Training Program, partnering with and shadowing a Field Training Officer (FTO) until they are ready to police on their own.

During the interview and selection process, we stress the importance of community relations and our desire for service-oriented officers. The City of Suwanee chose to have its own police department, so I remind recruits that our citizens expect and deserve a higher level of service for making that

choice. We provide many services to our citizens, such as home checks while citizens are away on vacation, that other agencies do not.

The Suwanee Police Department emphasizes the values of "faith, family, and job." By "faith," we mean possessing confidence and trust in oneself and one's abilities. It focuses on the drive to meet the calling to a higher purpose that provides personal and professional gratification and understanding that our work makes a difference. Officers must cultivate a strong sense of purpose and maintain emotional resilience to navigate the challenges they will encounter in their policing careers.

The second value, "family," represents our commitment to supporting officers in achieving a healthy work-life balance. Family connections are vital, so we strive to ensure officers can be present for significant family moments.

Finally, "job" symbolizes the dedication and commitment we expect from our officers in upholding their duty to serve and protect the community. When these three values align, officers feel valued and supported, and they, in turn, perform at their best for themselves, the agency, and our citizens.

We always look for the best in the Suwanee Police Department. If you want to police from the heart and serve with a connection to your community, then Suwanee is the place for you.

Chief Cass Mooney began his career in law enforcement with the Hall County Sheriff's Office, prior to joining the Suwanee Police Department in 1997. Chief Mooney worked his way up through the ranks and was appointed to the position of Suwanee chief of police in February 2021. Chief Mooney holds a master's degree in public administration, a BS in criminal justice, is a graduate of the FBI National Academy, and is a two-time Taekwondo world champion.

★ SUWANEE'S ★

WILD WILD WILD

2023

FEST

ROUND UP



Suwanee Fest Posse

A volunteer committee works hard all year long to ensure that Suwanee Fest is the best it can be, year after year. Thank you, Suwanee Fest Committee members, for sharing your time, enthusiasm, creativity, energy, dedication, and hard work!

Paul Beavin
Janis Beavin
Andrea Bridges
Michelle Budd
Donna Copeletti

Kate Fanale
Cathy Karlick
Mauro Marcillo
Matt Savitt
David Sullivan

Robin Sullivan
Karen Tevis
Jerry Weisfogel

2023 Parade WINNERS




Overall Best of Show

All Stars Performing Arts Academy

Most Creative

1ST Dance North

2ND North Gwinnett HS Air Force JROTC

3RD North Gwinnett HS Theatre

Best Reflection of Theme

1ST Collins Hill HS Dance Team

2ND Cub Scout Pack 518

3RD North Gwinnett HS Bulldog Marching Band

Most Entertaining

1ST Staying Alive Crew

2ND North Gwinnett MS and HS Orchestras

3RD Peachtree Ridge HS Robotics Team

Best Floats

1ST Ignite Robotics

2ND Suwanee United Methodist Church

2023 Suwanee Fest Outstanding Vendors



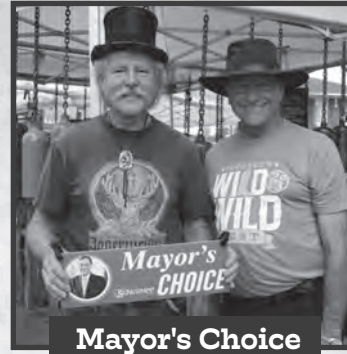
Best of Show

Marvelous Moosey



Best of Show

Arnie's Beercap Art



Mayor's Choice

Hells Bells



Parker's Choice

Northside Family
Medicine Partners

Thank You to the Best Sponsors on the Wild Frontier!

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Northeast Georgia Health System
Northside Hospital
True Source Family Chiropractic
VyStar Credit Union

Silver Sponsors

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Atlanta Falcons
Atlanta United FC
Bartlett Tree Experts
Blossom Pediatric Dentistry
Bowman
Budget Blinds
Capital Vacations
Clear Path Family Chiropractic
Heartis Suwanee
HomeCraft Gutter Protection
Hope Primary Care & Dentistry
LeafFilter Gutter Protection
Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta
Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC

Olde Towne Animal Hospital
Pella Window & Door of Georgia
Power Home Remodeling
PrePress to Print
Regina Mathews for Superior Court
Rick Hendrick Chevrolet of Buford
Renewal by Andersen
Southeast Medical Group
Suwanee Dental Care
Topgolf Buford
Wyndham Vacation Resorts
Your Pie



SUWANEE WINS TWO DOWNTOWN EXCELLENCE AWARDS

FROM GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

The Georgia Downtown Association recognized the City of Suwanee with two Downtown Excellence Awards in the categories of *Promotion: Creative New Event* and *Design: Best Public Improvement Project*.

Suwanee's newest interactive public art piece, The Ultimate Participation Trophy, won in the category of *Promotion: Creative New Event*. This sparkling installation with a bold brass vision celebrates the power of community while capitalizing on a cool idea to use the community's endless treasure trove of trophies.

The city called for old trophies in the fall of 2022. Expecting a few hundred, the city received a few THOUSAND. Artist Phil Proctor then reimagined these outdated relics of past glory, infusing them with new meaning and purpose. The Ultimate Participation Trophy was unveiled at the Suwanee Arts Festival in April 2023.

The recently completed Better Buford Highway Project took home the prize for *Design: Best Public Improvement Project*. This instrumental project transformed downtown Suwanee into a vibrant and walkable destination, and is expected to be as transformative to downtown Suwanee as Town Center Park was over 20 years ago.

In 2008, the City of Suwanee recognized the importance of preserving the walkability of its downtown and included the goal of redesigning Buford Highway in its comprehensive plan. The city envisioned creating a "complete street" that accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles and connects the historic Old Town with vibrant Town Center.

A city-developed a concept for a low-speed, two-lane city street with a center-turn lane and medians, deviating from other plans for a four-lane divided highway. This shift in design prioritizes pedestrians over cars in order to preserve the walkable environment the city worked so hard to create. Aspects of the project include:

- A roundabout that provides a sense of arrival and encourages vehicles to slow down,
- Ten-foot-wide sidewalks,
- Street trees that offer shade and separation from vehicles,
- Streetlights,
- On-street parking supporting downtown businesses and helps to slow down traffic, and
- Dedicated bike lanes.

“ I asked my kids if they wanted their old trophies, and the answer was a hard no. As a parent, it's hard to just throw them away. This project gave those old mementos a second life with a meaningful purpose. ”



- Suwanee Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson

TIME TO LACE UP YOUR SNEAKERS & HIT THE PAVEMENT

Suwanee Half Marathon, Old Town 5k, and 10th Anniversary 10k



Register before January 1, 2024 for the best pricing. For more information, including routes, registration, and volunteering, visit SuwaneeHalf.com

The 10th annual Suwanee Half Marathon and Old Town 5k will run again on February 18, 2024. In celebration of the half marathon's 10th anniversary, we're also adding Suwanee 10k to the mix!

Brought to you by Performance Race Services and the City of Suwanee, the races kick off at dawn on Sunday, February 18:

7:30 am	Half Marathon
7:45 am	Suwanee 10k
8:00 am	Old Town 5k

All three courses include a great mix of flats and hills that will keep runners on their toes (literally). Race finishers will receive a medal and race T-shirt. Half marathon finishers will also receive a limited edition blanket featuring Suwanee's Ultimate Participation Trophy. Additionally, five-time finishers of the Suwanee Half Marathons will receive a commemorative jacket.

Upcoming

FALL & HOLIDAY EVENTS

November

December



10th Anniversary Suwanee Wine Fest November 4 | 1 pm

Suwanee Wine Fest returns for its 10th year with more wine, more shopping, and more fun! The festival features more than 150 wines from all over the world, plus a Georgia

winery section, as well as live music, artisanal products from local vendors and artists, food trucks, and more.

Suwanee Classic Car Show November 5 | 10 am



Join us as 175+ absolutely beautiful classic cars roll in to Town Center! Benefitting the Suwanee Arts Center, the Classic Car Show features music and a veteran appreciation ceremony. Admission is free to the public.

Walk to End Alzheimer's

Part of the Suwanee Running Series!

November 11 | 8 am

The Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's® is full of flowers, each carried by someone committed to ending this disease.

Suwanee Chili Cook-off & Music Festival November 11 | Noon

The Suwanee Chili Cook-Off is an International Chili Society-sanctioned event. The festival is a fundraiser for Project Green, a local children's non-profit. Admission is free; wristbands for tasting are available for purchase.

Jolly Holly Day December 1 | 6:30 pm

Ring in the holiday season with festive performances by local schools, help us light the big tree, and get a photo with Santa himself!



HappyFeat's Run Run Rudolph 5k

Part of the Suwanee Running Series!

December 2 | 9 am

Dress in your fun holiday Rudolph attire, jingle bells, or Christmas PJs for this festive, USATF certified and electronic chip-timed race! This event benefits HappyFeat, a nonprofit 501(c)3 that gives individuals with special needs the chance to work and be a part of a variety of special events.

Ugly Christmas Sweater 5k

Final Race in the 2023 Suwanee Running Series!

December 9 | 11 am

Grab your tackiest holiday sweater and lace up your sneakers! There will be prizes, so get your ugly on!

Winter Farmers Markets

9-11 AM

November 11
November 18
December 9

December 16
January 13
January 27

2024 Suwanee event applications are now open!



UPCOMING EVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

NOVEMBER 23

1-3	Advanced In-Person Voting	9:00 am
4	Suwanee Wine Fest	Noon
5	Suwanee Classic Car Show	10:00 am
7	Planning Commission Meeting	6:30 am
7	Election Day	7:00 am
8	Public Arts Commission	6:00 pm
10	CITY HALL CLOSED	
11	Walk to End Alzheimer's	8:00 am
11	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
11	Suwanee Chili Cook Off & Music Festival	Noon
14	Harvest Farm Managing Board	6:00 pm
14	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
16	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
18	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
21	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
23	CITY HALL CLOSED	
24	CITY HALL CLOSED	
28	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm

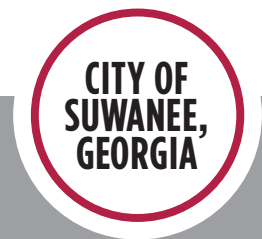
DECEMBER 23

1	Jolly Holly Day	6:30 pm
2	Happy Feet Run Run Rudolph 5k	9:00 am
5	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
7	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
9	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
9	Ugly Sweater 5k	11:00 am
12	Harvest Farm Managing Board	6:00 pm
12	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
13	Public Arts Commission	6:00 pm
16	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
19	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
19	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
25	CITY HALL CLOSED	
26	CITY HALL CLOSED	

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 Heather Hall 410/979-7905
 Beth Hilscher 678/546-3388
 Linnea Miller 678/592-4150
 Larry Pettiford 678/464-3651

Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check suwanee.com for updates.

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