

THE TOWNE HALL NEWS



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WOODSTOCK ON MONEY'S LIST OF BEST PLACES TO LIVE

Money, the digital destination for personal finance and news, listed Woodstock number 17 in its annual ranking of the Best Places to Live. Money looked at towns and cities with a population of at least 25,000 and put the greatest emphasis on economic factors, like employment opportunities, as well as supply and demand for homes, cost of living, quality of schools, racial and economic diversity, and health and safety.

"This year, given the general uncertainty around where and how we'll live, our list looks a little different," said Prachi Bhardwaj, lead reporter of Money's Best Places to Live. "We shifted our priorities to pay more attention to cities that aren't just doing well now, but that show great promise and stability for the next five to ten years. We also included suburban towns situated further away from major metros and have more industry diversity than you've seen from our list in years past."

Mayor Donnie Henriques responded to the announcement, "Even though our median home price is about the national norm, our median household income is 30% above the state of Georgia's. We appreciate Money recognizing that along with our short commute to Atlanta and our low unemployment especially in this economic climate."

SUPPORT WOODSTOCK'S SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses are a large part of what makes Woodstock authentic and vibrant. Our community needs to stand behind our small businesses especially once the holiday season is over. Restaurants, personal services, and retailers need our continued support. While big box stores and massive online retailers offer convenience and competitive pricing, small businesses impact our local economy and character in irreplaceable ways.

The obvious way to support a Woodstock small business is to buy their products and services, but you can also share their posts on social media or buy a gift card if you don't have an immediate need for what they offer. Also consider reaching out with an encouraging note or phone call. Many small business decision makers are facing tough choices right now, so be kind and patient when possible. Hint: it's always possible.

The City of Woodstock has created a relief package to help businesses in 2021. The City collects business license fees based on gross revenues. Business license fees will be waived in 2021 for small businesses with gross revenues of \$1 million and under. The \$30 administrative fee will also be waived.

An exception to this threshold will be made to include Woodstock's seven hotels because of the major impact these businesses have on tourism and economic development and due to the significant impact they experienced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The annual regulatory fee of \$250 for hotels will also be waived.

Restaurants in the City of Woodstock have been heavily impacted. Direct assistance will be provided through a \$750 renewal discount to the 63 on-premise consumption alcohol licensees. Many will also receive assistance on their business license renewal. Additionally, the City will make permanent the temporary retail package license offered during the pandemic and will extend it at no cost to the restaurants.

Take note of the movements to save America's Small businesses. American Express created Small Business Saturday and the Shop Small movement in the midst of the recession in 2010. More movements are gaining momentum in the current crisis. Small Unites is a national movement founded by Capital One supporting small businesses with access to funds and resources to move forward and keep doors open. Independent We Stand is a movement of independently owned businesses sponsored by tool company Stihl aimed at "rebuilding America one Main Street at a time" by providing locally owned businesses and their customers with tools and resources to understand the positive impacts of buying independent.

If you're a small business owner and need help to overcome the challenges of COVID-19, the Small Business Administration offers information on multiple funding options at [sba.gov](https://www.sba.gov). Reach out for help from programs and the people around you. You matter to us.

Upcoming Events

december

- Dec 21 Work Session of the Mayor and Council - CANCELLED
- Dec 24 City Offices Closed
- Dec 25 City Offices Closed
- Dec 28 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council - CANCELLED

- Jan 1 City Offices Closed
- Jan 7 Planning Commission 7 pm
- Jan 11 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council 7 pm
- Jan 18 City Offices Closed
- Jan 18 Work Session of the Mayor and Council - CANCELLED
- Jan 25 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council 7 pm

january

february

- Feb 4 Planning Commission 7 pm
- Feb 8 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council 7 pm
- Feb 10 Blood Drive outside The Chambers at City Center 9 am - 4 pm
- Feb 15 Work Session of the Mayor and Council - CANCELLED
- Feb 19 Arbor Day
- Feb 22 Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council 7pm

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

On Monday, January 25th, Mayor Donnie Henriques will make his annual State of the City Presentation to the City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting.

The meeting begins at 7pm at The Chambers at City Center (8534 Main St).

Holiday Trash Schedule

The City's residential trash service provider, Waste Management, observes Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Since those holidays fall on a Friday this year, those with a Friday service day will have their service delayed by one day.

2021 MAYOR AND COUNCIL RETREAT

On January 29th, 30th and 31st the Mayor and the members of the Woodstock City Council will gather with Department Directors and other staff members for the City's annual Planning Retreat.

Each City Department will present information to Council Members and coworkers. This year's retreat will be held locally.

SPECIAL THANKS TO INSEASON

The INSeason Committee, a part of IN WDSTK, did a fantastic job on Downtown Woodstock's holiday decorations this season. Colorful ornaments were hung in the trees along Chambers Street for the first time this year. Learn more about this group at inwdstk.org or on their new Instagram account at [@inseasonwdstk](https://www.instagram.com/inseasonwdstk).



K-9 HANDLER AND PARTNER PLACE 2ND IN COMPETITION



Congratulations to K9 Handler Officer D. Butler and his partner, K9 Exo, for their 2nd place finish at the 11th annual South Georgia K-9 Training and Certification Workshop.

Officer Butler and K9 Exo demonstrated their outstanding partnership through command response. After competing against approximately 125 other teams, Officer Butler and K9 Exo finished 2nd place in the obedience category.

The annual conference is held in Perry, Georgia. Officials from the National Narcotic Detector Dog Association (NNDAA) train and certify police service dogs in patrol, tracking, narcotics detection, and explosive detection at this conference. All 4 of Woodstock's K9 teams received their annual certification.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

WOODSTOCK POLICE

SAFE RIDE



CALL US FOR A SAFE & FREE LOCAL RIDE HOME

404-740-4502

10p.m. - 2a.m.



MAYOR HOSTS VIRTUAL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

On Wednesday, December 2nd, Mayor Donnie Henriques went live on the City of Woodstock Facebook page to host the lighting of the City Christmas Tree in The Park in City Center. The Mayor was joined by members of Preservation Woodstock as they presented their 2020 Citizen of the Year Award to Pastor Carl Moore of Allen Temple A.M.E.

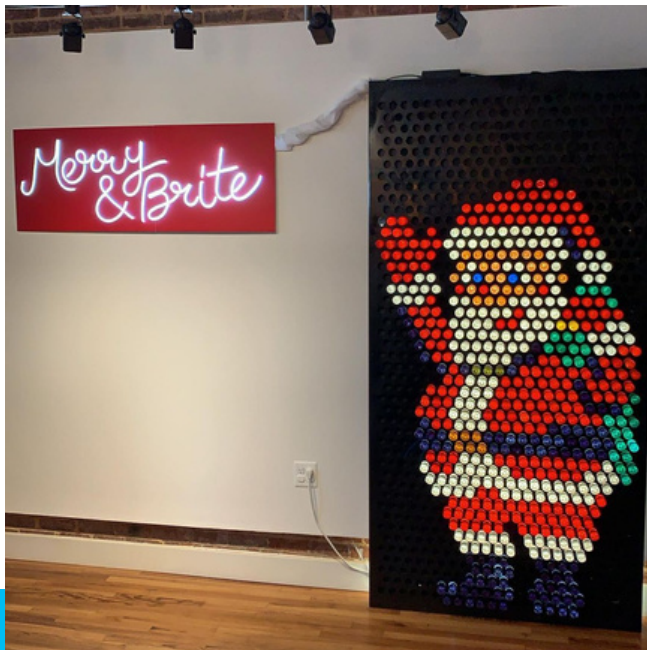
Also at the virtually hosted event was the Jolly Ol' Elf himself. Santa Claus joined in the online celebration to light the beautiful tree. Following remarks by Mayor Henriques and the Citizen of the Year Award presentation, Santa emerged from behind the Christmas tree in the gazebo and reminded Woodstock families to place their letters to Santa in the Santa Mail Box before December 14th. He also shared info about a Facebook Live event on Saturday, December 5th where he would be reading and responding to children's letters since there would not be live in person visits in the gazebo or the visitors center this year. Santa presented the Mayor with a giant, festively decorated switch and the two descended the gazebo stairs to light the tree. Video of the event is available on the City of Woodstock Facebook page.



VISIT WOODSTOCK GA SIP + SHOP EVENTS

The City's official destination marketing organization, Visit Woodstock GA, hosted two Holiday Sip + Shop events in Downtown Woodstock in November and December. On the day of the event, shoppers began at the visitors center where they picked up the special holiday tote and the directory of participating retailers. While there, they also registered to win prizes in the event raffle. Participating retailers offered exclusive deals to ticket holders and provided light refreshments and festive beverages as well. Hundreds of shoppers, many wearing masks, participated in each event.

"This holiday season, we hope everyone who loves Downtown Woodstock will intentionally shop for gifts among its merchants," said Marketing and Communications Manager Stacy Brown. "Our favorite local shops and merchants need us most after this difficult year."



VISITORS CENTER SANTA DISPLAY

Come take your photo with a life size Lite Brite at the Woodstock Visitors Center. Created by Marc Barbier from Garden & Goods by the Woodstock Flower Co. and designed by Dusty Beaulieu of Blue Elixer Press, both members of Made Mercantile, this impressive installation consists of over 1100 precisely drilled holes and over 400 bottles of colored water to lite up this socially distant Santa.

Bring your own camera for this photo opportunity available during operating hours : Mon - Sat 10-5 until Dec 23 and 10-3 on Dec 24.

PRESERVATION WOODSTOCK CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION



The 2020 recipient of the Barbara G. Ingram Citizen of the Year Award is Pastor Carl Moore, Sr.

Preservation Woodstock, Inc., presents this award every year to a Woodstock area citizen who has made notable contributions toward the preservation of the city's heritage.

The Ingram family presented Pastor Moore with his award at the virtual tree lighting ceremony and the video is available on our Facebook page.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS JUBILEE PARADE OF LIGHTS HELD IN REVERSE FOR 2020

On Saturday, December 5, 2020 from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm, Parks and Recreation held a reverse parade of lights. Instead of parade floats traveling down Main Street, spectators traveled around the stationary float displays at River Ridge High School and Mill Creek Middle School. Participants viewed the holiday floats and displays from the comfort and safety of their own vehicle. Santa waved at cars at the end of the parade and Parks and Rec staff treated each car with a bag of candy and other little prizes.

Trophies for Best Holiday, Most Original, and the History and Heritage floats were awarded:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Best Holiday: | Let's Pretend Publishing |
| Most Original: | Sign Dreamers Metro Atlanta |
| History & Heritage: | Timothy Lutheran Church |
| People's Choice: | Gold Swimming |



PARKS AND REC FALL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Woodstock Parks and Recreation held a Woodstock in the Fall Photography Contest on the department Facebook page.

Woodstock citizens submitted their best photo celebrating the fall colors of Woodstock. By submitting, photographers granted Parks and Rec rights to use the photo through 2021.

Congratulations winners!



TRAIL CLEANUP

Rotary Club of Towne Lake held a cleanup of its Adopt-a-Trail section of the Noonday Creek Trail. The organization posted a video on YouTube of the work. Click the photo below to view. Thanks Rotarians!

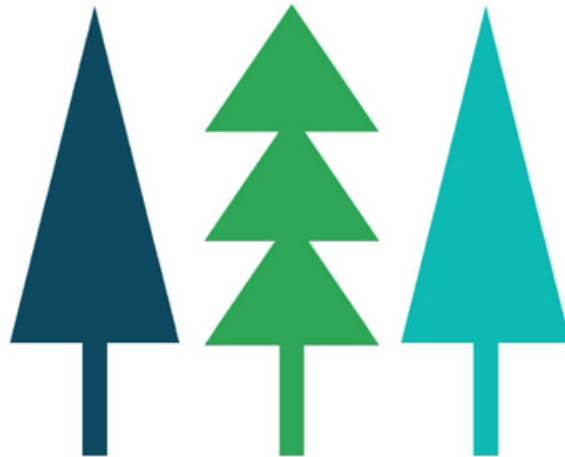


Bring One for the Chipper!

Recycle your Christmas tree

Bring your Christmas tree to Olde Rope Mill Park on Saturday, January 9th between 9 AM and 4 PM.

Remove all lights and decorations from your tree; no artificial trees will be accepted.



RETAIL MAKER COWORK SPACE AND RETAIL SHOP OPENS IN DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK

The Woodstock Downtown Development Authority (DDA) announces the opening of a new retail maker co-workspace and retail shop in Downtown Woodstock. Made Mercantile is the retail space associated with an economic development program that supports retail production businesses to concept, test and grow products to scale to market.

The DDA has leased approximately 4,000 square feet of retail and flex use space located at 8636 Main Street to operate Made Mercantile. The space includes a retail store and production space for small scale retail products that business owners are looking to take to market at a larger scale. Seven companies are in residence in the space.

“We have found throughout our business community that the small-scale retail makers are seeking a community collaboration space similar to professional co-workspaces you see in the community today. We believe this new program and space will be synergistic with the space at the Circuit and the upcoming artist spaces that will be available at the Reeves House,” states Brian Stockton, Executive Director of the DDA. “This will be a space where the shoppers will have the ability to go shop, meet and interact with the people who are designing and making the products being sold.”

Member Makers include Beau Paper Co., The Woodstock Flower Company, Dirty Beauty skin care, Punk and Pea jewelry, Blu Elixir Press, Garden and Goods custom furnishings, and Little Woven Home Co embroidered gifts. The retail shop is currently open Thursday through Sunday 11 am to 7 pm but expanded holiday hours will be in place. Shoppers may request a tour of the artisans’ workspaces to learn more about the makers and their process to enhance the shopping experience.

A few workspaces remain. Memberships range from \$400 per month to \$750 per month. Preliminary information such as application requirements and membership procedures as well as an interest form is available at www.mademercantile.com.



WOODSTOCK RECOGNIZED FOR EFFECTIVE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Several Georgia communities, ranging from metro Atlanta to rural Georgia, have received statewide distinction in the PlanFirst program, which recognizes excellence in community planning. PlanFirst, a Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) program, recognizes and rewards communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their Local Comprehensive Plan.

Bainbridge, Cornelia, and Sandy Springs have each achieved “PlanFirst” designation for 2021-2023. In addition, the following seven communities renewed their PlanFirst designation for 2021-2022: Adel, Perry, Thomasville, Tifton, Vienna, Woodstock, and Jones County. Designated communities are eligible for technical assistance, as well as bonus points and enhanced eligibility for certain DCA funding opportunities.

“DCA applauds local leadership in these PlanFirst communities and is pleased to recognize those who have sustained quality, long-range planning and plan execution,” said Commissioner Christopher Nunn. To apply for PlanFirst, communities are required to address four primary program criteria focused on having a proven record of plan implementation success: goals, leadership, community participation and implementation. The designation is for three years – beginning January 1, 2021 – and enables these communities to take advantage of various incentives that include public recognition, eligibility for specified grant opportunities, and certain reduced interest loans.

The Department of Community Affairs developed the program with a steering committee comprised of partners including the Georgia Municipal Association, Association County Commissioners of Georgia, Georgia Planning Association, Regional Commissions, University of Georgia Archways program, and other state agencies including the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, Historic Preservation Division, and Environmental Protection Division.



CITY OF WOODSTOCK AWARDS GRANTS TO LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

At the City of Woodstock's Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council on Monday, November 9th at the Chambers at City Center, Mayor Donnie Henriques presented grant funding to local food pantries to assist in serving residents of Woodstock who have been most affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The 2020 Food Pantry Grant is offered as a result of the City being reimbursed with CARES Act funding for expenses previously incurred during the City's response to the pandemic. Local nonprofits that operate a food pantry that serves residents of the City of Woodstock were eligible to apply.

The one-time grants were presented at the November 9th and November 16th meetings of the City Council and range in amount from \$2,500 to \$10,000. Recipients include: Bascomb Mission Thrift (9550 Main Street), Encompass Ministries (6551 Commerce Pkwy), MUST Ministries (111 Brown Industrial Pkwy, Canton), Never Alone (291 Arnold Mill Rd), Timothy Lutheran Church (556 Arnold Mill Rd), and Woodstock First Baptist (11905 Highway 92).

"Woodstock's City Council identified an opportunity to address a growing food insecurity need that has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic," said Mayor Donnie Henriques. "We are happy to serve as a partner to those in our community that serve our residents so well."

CITY OF WOODSTOCK AWARDS GRANT TO PROVIDE A YEAR OF INTERNET TO LOCAL STUDENTS IN NEED

The City of Woodstock awarded a one-time grant to the Cherokee County School District to allow them to purchase additional mobile Wi-Fi hotspot connectivity devices for schools that serve students who live in the City of Woodstock. Mayor Henriques awarded the grant to Superintendent Brian Hightower at the City's Council Meeting Monday evening.

The devices will be distributed by the school system to schools serving children who live in city limits engaged in digital learning. The grant is offered as a result of a reallocation of funding that was reimbursed through the CARES Act.

"City Council prioritized funding to provide these devices because we want to break down obstacles to digital learning for Woodstock's students," said Mayor Donnie Henriques. "Many families in our city are facing hardship due to the coronavirus pandemic and we don't want any student in the City of Woodstock to not have the tools they need to be successful."

SHOP WITH A HERO!

Thanks to the Woodstock Public Safety Foundation and its generous sponsors! On Saturday, December 12th more than 100 area children were able to shop for the holidays, courtesy of Shop with a Hero!

Social distancing measures were in place so employees of Woodstock Police Department and Woodstock Fire & Rescue were on site but families shopped on their own this year.



Did you know?

City of Woodstock is hiring! We're currently accepting applications for a Financial Analyst, a Streets Maintenance Worker, an Equipment Operator, and first responders. See the descriptions and apply at woodstockga.gov/jobs.

BUSINESSES CELEBRATE MILESTONES IN THE CITY OF WOODSTOCK



On November 10th, City officials and members of IN WSTK participated in a groundbreaking for the Culver's restaurant being built at the intersection of Neese Road and Hwy 92.



IN WSTK hosted a ribbon cutting in October for The Daily Draft Tap Room and Bar to celebrate their Grand Opening. Daily Draft is located at 8594 Main Street. The 'on demand sports bar' features a walk up window on the sidewalk for take away food and beverage orders.



Towne Hall News is a quarterly publication. The next issue will be in March 2020.

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