

## **Gathering Place Community Center Grand Opening**

*The wait is over for residents and businesses as the doors to the Union City Gathering Place Community Center are now open.*

Located at 6280 Bryant Street near the UC Eagles ballfields, the center was previously home to the Union City Elementary School which once stood as an oasis of education for Fulton County residents. In continuance of that spirit, the 25,000 square foot facility will host new cultural programs including performing arts, business acceleration, exercise, improved indoor recreation, and more. The center contains an indoor gymnasium, a state-of-the-art performance theater, a courtyard with beautiful open space, a dining hall, and several multipurpose rooms.

“As we continue to invest in our plan to strengthen and connect our community, we are putting the City in reach of our children, seniors, and families,” said Union City’s Mayor Vince Williams. For more information about the Gathering Place along with upcoming events contact Lee Blitch, Director of Union City’s Park and Recreation Division, at [lblitch@unioncityga.org](mailto:lblitch@unioncityga.org).

### **Mayor Vince Williams Receives Standing Applause for his State of the City Address**

March 19th marked an important day for Union City as Mayor Vince Williams delivered his Progress 2020 remarks in the City’s annual State of the City Address. Held annually at Benjamin Banneker High School, the State of the City Address was attended by residents, businesses, and elected officials from neighboring municipalities.

Mayor Williams shared important details about the progress, health, and future of Union City. In his 360-degree overview, Williams shed light on the City’s improvement initiatives to public safety, streets, and park systems along with the successful efforts from each department to convert those initiatives into reality for its residents and businesses.

“We want you to know the State of Union City is Strong,” said Mayor Williams. “We have a vision. We have goals. And as we achieve those goals, will continue to reach for new ones.” To learn more about current and upcoming initiatives, visit our website and sign up to receive up-to-date news about Union City.

### **Union City Celebrates Healthy Living - MEALING**

Over 40 organizations partnered with Union City to celebrate its 5th Annual Community Health Day event on Saturday, April 6 at the Gathering Place Community Center. Among those in attendance were Fulton-Dekalb Hospital Authority, LifeSouth, Colgate, and the Fulton County Board of Health.

Participants from Community Health Day received a variety of free health-related services such as prescription refills, health, and dental screenings, live exercise workshops and educational resources. Additionally, participants engaged in moderated discussions led by renowned radio personality Twanda Black (KISS 104.1 FM) featuring a panel of health and fitness experts. Visit our website to learn more about how you can participate in Community Health Day as a vendor, guest speaker, or attendee.

### Minimizing Litter and Maximizing Partnerships - JONES

Like most cities around the country, Union City has seen its unfair share of litter. To address this rising concern, Mayor Williams and City Council have made the beautification of our community their priority by partnering with residents and businesses to host clean-up events throughout the City.

To date, the City has organized clean-up events in multiple areas along Oakley Road, Raymond Drive, and Highpoint Road. Members of the City Council, Mayor Williams, City staff, and resident volunteers visited these locations and gathered more than 40 bags of trash.

As dates and locations are confirmed for future community clean-ups, the City will continue its efforts of increased collaborations with neighborhood associations, local businesses, and national organizations like Amazon, Waste Industries, and DHL.

To learn more about our current and upcoming initiatives or to volunteer for the next clean-up event, email us at [contactuc@unioncityga.org](mailto:contactuc@unioncityga.org).

### American Red Cross & UC Fire Department Sound the Alarm to Save Lives in Union City - HOBBS

Everyone knows smoke alarms are important to have, yet most homeowners don't have the recommended amount of alarms in their homes. Most homeowners know to check (and change) smoke alarm batteries regularly, but many fail to test alarms each month as recommended. Few have the proper knowledge and awareness to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

In their third year of partnership, the American Red Cross and Union City Fire Department have installed over 1000 smoke alarms as part of the Sound the Alarm effort to keep City residents and their families safe. This year, volunteers from Amazon joined efforts to install nearly 260 smoke alarms, replace alarm batteries and provide fire safety tips to residents living in the Old Virginia, Old Savannah, and Wyndham Creek communities.

A report published earlier this year by Nation Fire Protection Association has revealed the following:

- Almost three of every five home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms (40%) or no smoke alarms that were working (17%).
- In fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, more than two of every five (43%) of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries.
- Dead batteries caused one-quarter (25%) of the smoke alarm failures.

“With these statistics, the Union City Fire Department wants you to get smoke alarms installed,” said Union City Fire Marshal Larry Knowles. “We install smoke alarms and conduct home safety inspections throughout the year. Any Union City resident can call the Fire Marshal’s office and schedule an appointment.”

Since the 2014 launch, nearly 600 lives have been saved from the Sound the Alarm effort with 16 confirmed lives saved in Georgia. With the collaborative efforts from the American Red Cross, Union City Fire Department and other organizations such as Amazon who volunteer, Union City residents now have the right tools and resources to remain safe in the event of a household fire.

#### Infrastructure: Investing in Our Water Future

You may not be aware, but May 13-19 was Infrastructure Week, an opportunity for people nationwide to reflect on and celebrate the role and importance of infrastructure for our economy and communities. As a rule, infrastructure hums along in the background for busy Americans who tend to assume that transportation, energy, sanitation and water services will just be there unless and until something goes wrong. But the reality is that investing in sustainable infrastructure is essential to maintain and grow the systems that keep the nation competitive, prosperous and healthy.

Here in Union City, where we average about 51 inches of rain annually, we rely on infrastructure to help manage, convey, store, and treat our water. The challenge and opportunity for Infrastructure Week 2019 was to expand our view of water infrastructure to include not only conventional built systems, but also onsite, localized strategies that serve the same functions – often at lower costs and with broad community benefits. Pipes, tanks, and treatment facilities are vital, of course. The consensus is growing to increase resilience and expand opportunities to become more efficient in our use of water. We have a greater distance to go to ensure that our community has the water it needs to sustain life and the economy in these changing times, and one of the most cost-effective and proven tools to get us there is to double down on our investment in water use efficiency and green infrastructure. We have already initiated the Water Meter Program that helps Union City provide water services in a more efficient way. These automated water meter replacement programs support detection of water loss in the system, such as leaks more quickly, which results in saving water and costs for customers.

In addition to efficient water use, we strive to provide an environment for our citizens to have high-quality access to recreation and open spaces. In a way, every park, water garden, and yard are a mini-reservoirs, allowing local utilities to retain water in storage systems and efficiently manage stormwater. Supplementing and integrated with our extensive built infrastructure, investments in these onsite and localized systems stretch existing supplies, restrict conventional built systems' expenses, and limit the impact of future droughts on homes and businesses. Moreover, this kind of “distributed” water infrastructure is one of the best ways for local water providers to hold down costs, keeping rates affordable for ratepayers.

This brings us back to investing in our infrastructure future. In Union City, in addition to the implementation of the Water Meter Program, currently underway is the Mayor's Park Storm Sewer Rehabilitation Project, which consists of diverting stormwater in order to alleviate drainage problems in the downtown area by rehabilitating the stormwater system. The overall

project cost is \$359,057.50 which includes pavement replacement, upgraded stormwater piping, green stormwater infrastructure (i.e., bioswales), and a critical part of the project also includes landscaping of the park. The new stormwater pipe is just a small portion of all that was required for the overall improvements for water management and recreational opportunities.

Here in Union City we are proud that we are investing in our future with the Water Meter Program and incorporating green infrastructure to manage our stormwater. We believe the reality is that investing in sustainable infrastructure is essential to maintain, grow, and keep Union City competitive, prosperous, and healthy. Come join us at the Mayor's Park later this year to check out our park upgrades!

Shayla J. Nealy  
Council Member for Union City, GA  
Director of Infrastructure Programming at Wendel

Meet Union City's First-Ever Citizens Emergency Response Team from South Wind  
In partnership with the South Wind residential community, Union City Fire Department formed their first-ever Citizens Emergency Response Team, CERT. Its purpose is to provide members with extensive knowledge and training to help themselves and others during a situation where emergency services may be delayed due to increased call volumes during times of a natural or manmade disaster.

Under the guidance of Battalion Chief Moore and other members of the department, South Wind CERT members studied a variety of courses such as disaster preparedness, fire safety and utility controls, search and rescue, and first aid. Additionally, they engaged in hands-on exercises to apply what they learned in real-time scenarios.

During the City Council meeting held in February, each member was recognized by Mayor Vince Williams and Council Members Brian Jones, Shayla Nealy and Angelette Mealing.

Registration is currently open to those interested in signing up for the CERT program. To learn more about the program and how you can get your community involved, contact the Union City Fire Department at (770) 515-7880.

Union City Police to Recognize its Sixth Class of Citizen Cadets

The Citizens Police Academy is an 8-week educational program offering citizens deeper insight toward the inner workings of the Union City Police Department. In its sixth year of providing community education, Union City's Citizens Police Academy was established to remove perceived barriers, encourage improved communications and increase trust within the community.

The Union City Police Department subscribes a citizen-centric policing model which requires a great deal of participation. Citizen cadets engaged in several learning exercises throughout the program to gain knowledge of the department's culture, processes and standards. Under the leadership of Police Chief Cassandra Jones and program facilitation by Lieutenants Melvin Echols and Rodney Pittman-Delany, participants underwent a series of courses which traced the

path of an incident as it would be handled by the police department in real-time situations. Additionally, they toured the Fulton County 911 Emergency Call Center and the South Fulton Regional Jail Complex, witnessed a mock trial and participated in a police firearms simulator.

This year's commencement is scheduled on June 6, 2019 at the Gathering Place Community Center. Citizen cadets will be recognized and receive certificates of attendance for their participation in the Union City Police Academy. As opportunities arise, they will partner with the Union City Police Department in various events to help the department's mission of preventing crime and serve as ambassadors of goodwill throughout the community.

To learn more about the Citizens Police Academy, contact the Union City Police Department at (770) 964-1333.