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## Our mission:

*To provide efficient, effective and openly responsive municipal services to all citizens while promoting responsible economic development, preserving our heritage and enhancing our quality of life, and creating a better community.*

## From the Mayor's Desk

Dear employees,

In the coming days, people across our city and across America will gather to celebrate the blessings of Christmas and the holiday season.

As we celebrate this joyous time of year, our thoughts and prayers are with those brave and selfless men and women serving our country in a foreign land. Let their sacrifices be an inspiration to us all.

Here at home, we know that these are difficult times for many Americans struggling under the weight of a slumping economy. As we give thanks for the blessings of friends and family, we are aware that there is growing uncertainty among the people of Gulfport about the future.

In the coming months, we all will have to make great sacrifices and difficult decisions, and I am confident that by working together we can conquer the challenges that lie ahead. We have come a long way in the past few months and the progress we have made would not have been possible without the unbroken line of dedication from our employees.

Our success this past year would not have been possible, also, without the extraordinary support and devotion of your husbands and wives. Because of this team, Gulfport's future is bright.

Peggy and I thank you for welcoming us to this team and embracing us as we enter this new chapter of our lives. We have you in our prayers this Christmas.

I am proud of each of you and I am thankful for the hard work you have done this past year on the city's behalf.



*(continued on page 5)*

## One of Gulfport's Bravest Needs Your Help

Just days before Christmas, tragedy struck for one of our own. On Sunday morning **John Johnson**, a Gulfport firefighter, went home after the end of his 24-hour shift to find his house ablaze.

**John**, who has worked for the City for 6 years, suffered the loss of his home and belongings as well as Christmas presents for his two children—Jack, 4 and Kennedy, 2.

The Fire Department is asking for donations in any form to help **John** and his family recover. Cash donations for the family may be given at any Hancock Bank branch. Clothing is also needed—his son wears 4T-5T, his daughter wears 3T-5T, and **John** wears large shirts and size 34/34 pants. You may bring these items to the **Central Fire Station**.



### And the Verdict is...Two New Judges! - by Jennifer Jones-Snaer

On September 8, 2009, Council voted to approve the appointment of two full-time judges to Gulfport Municipal Court (GMC). The court, which handles the highest volume of municipal cases in the state, has operated with only part-time judges since February 2009. This is the first time the city has had two full-time judges to handle the high-volume of cases (in 2008, there were 42,587 misdemeanor tickets/citations filed in Municipal Court).

On September 14, 2009 **Felicia Dunn Burkes** and **R. Fant Walker** were both sworn in as municipal court

judges and took the bench for the first time the following day.

**Felicia Dunn Burkes** was born & raised in Gulfport. She received her law degree from the University Of Mississippi School Of Law in 1984. **Ms. Burkes** clerked with United States District Court Judge Walter J. Gex, III. She was in private practice in both Mississippi & Louisiana from 1988-2007. In 2007, she served as Asst. Special Counsel to the LA Judiciary Commission. Before becoming judge, **Felicia Burkes** was appointed as City Prosecutor for the City of Gulfport in December 2008. Throughout her legal career **Judge Burkes** has worked diligently to enhance and bring the highest degree of ethics & professionalism to the legal profession. **Judge Burkes** said she is "committed to working to improve the fair, efficient, & effective processing of cases in GMC with upmost regard to the law enforcement officers, who enforce our laws, as well as the citizens who come to our court, both victims & defendants" when asked what she would like to see done while serving as GMC Judge.

**Fant Walker** is also a native of Gulfport. He received his undergraduate degree and law degree from the University of Mississippi. There, he worked as a Regional Admissions Counselor for two years before entering the law field. **Walker** worked for Judge David Ishee at the Court of Appeals and then as an Asst. District Attorney where he prosecuted felony cases. In every job he has taken he has been involved in Public Service. When asked, "what do you want done at the court with you as judge," he humbly answered "that justice is administered fairly & everyone's experience at the GMC is as pleasant as it can be." **Judge Walker** also said he was grateful for another opportunity to help the City of Gulfport & make his hometown a better place.

Welcome aboard **Judge Burkes** and **Judge Walker**! Thanks to **Chandra Moore**, Operations Court Clerk, who managed to consistently arrange for the court to function by rotating the part-time judges for the seven month stint as well as all of the Deputy Court Clerks and entire staff for keeping the court afloat!

## GEMS Dazzle!



The City of Gulfport is proud to have loyal, efficient and dedicated employees who provide valuable services to our citizens. GEM Awards is an employee recognition program that celebrates employees who “Go the Extra Mile” and is designed to recognize individuals who have made extraordinary contributions in the workplace or community. This quarter, seven individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions:

- **Russell Beech**, Urban Development—Outstanding Service
- **Orientian Bradley**, Leisure Services—Outstanding Service
- **Jose Briones**, Public Works—Innovation
- **Daniel Campton**, Fire Department—Safety & Heroism
- **Bruce Griebel**, Public Works—Outstanding Service
- **Sarah Lizana**, Police Department—Community Service
- **Mathew Lopez**, Fire Department—Safety & Heroism



*Our GEMs with Mayor George Schloegel (L-R): Orientian Bradley, Russell Beech, Sarah Lizana, Daniel Campton, Mathew Lopez, Jose Briones. Not pictured: Bruce Griebel*

### Know someone who Goes the Extra Mile? Nominate them for a GEM Award!

Download a form our web page: [www.gulfport-ms.gov/hr\\_GEM.shtml](http://www.gulfport-ms.gov/hr_GEM.shtml) and submit to Human Resources by the **JANUARY 15th** deadline. Complete guidelines can also be found on this page.

Remember, any City of Gulfport employee, manager, or supervisor can nominate any non-managerial employee who has worked at least ninety (90) days. Employees may nominate employees from other departments.



## Five Steps to a Healthy Heart

*submitted by Mike Bradley, Wellness Trainer*

So you want to maintain a healthy heart but you're not exactly sure where to start? Don't sweat it. I'm here to share five easy steps to maintaining a healthy heart.

- **Step 1 -- Eat Right**

Diet is one of the most important factors to consider when keeping your heart in tip-top shape. Think of your body as a fine automobile. Without the proper fuel, your car would fall apart. However, when the right fuel is put in, the car is in fine performing condition.

The same goes for your body. Without the right fuel, your body will fall apart, including your heart. Eating right is one of the best things you can ever do for yourself and for a healthy heart.

When trying to eat right, there's one rule of thumb to remember. Everything is okay in moderation.

Eating right doesn't mean that you can never have another French fry for as long as you live. It just means that you can't have them all the time and when you do indulge in the occasional fry, stay away from the supersize temptation.

- **Step 2 -- Get Enough Exercise**

The second step to a healthy heart is regular exercise. If you're not exercising on a regular basis, you're not exercising enough. So what exactly is a regular basis? You should be exercising for at least a half an hour three to four times a week.

Cardiovascular exercise (treadmill, elliptical, walking, running or aerobics classes) are great for a healthy heart and can also help you lose weight, which brings us to step 3.

- **Step 3 -- Maintain Proper Weight**

Although it's a touchy subject, it's important to understand that maintaining proper weight is extremely important to a healthy heart. Being overweight just isn't good for you physically.

The good news is that by following steps 1 and 2, it should be much easier to reach step 3. Diet and exercise will naturally bring you to a healthy weight level if you're not there already.

- **Step 4 -- Dietary Supplements**

Dietary supplements can also benefit a healthy heart. There are a number of supplements on the market that can help you keep your heart happy and healthy. Supplements are great for overall health including a healthy heart.

- **Step 5 -- Repeat Steps 1 through 4**

A healthy heart needs consistency. That means that you can't just expect to run through steps 1 through 4 as though you were going through a checklist. Steps 1 through 4 should be implemented in your everyday living, in order for your heart to benefit from them. With a sound body, a sound mind is sure to follow. By following my five easy steps to a healthy heart, you'll be feeling better physically and mentally and isn't that the key to a quality life?



**Mike Bradley** has been contracted to manage our Fitness Center and assist employees with their personal fitness and dietary goals. In addition to over 15 years of professional experience in fitness and personal training, Mike is also certified in Biomechanics. He brings additional qualifications as a Personal Trainer, Physical Fitness Specialist and Master Fitness Specialist!

Mike will create a personal fitness plan specific to your needs and goals. Mike can be reached at (228) 669-9325 or at [mikefitness@yahoo.com](mailto:mikefitness@yahoo.com) to schedule a time for your schedule your assessment.

Send an e-mail to Mike with questions about the latest training techniques, nutrition, diet and weight loss questions. You'll find some of his answers in our next newsletter. Please note that Mike cannot make diagnoses or give specific advice for medical conditions.

## From the Mayor's Desk *(continued from page 1)*

This season of giving should be a time to renew our sense of common purpose, to rededicate ourselves to serving the people of this great city. Our convictions and ideals should endure, but we must move away from the usual practices of yesterday, and begin governing for a brighter tomorrow.

Now, more than ever, we must rededicate ourselves to the notion that we share a common destiny as citizens of Gulfport; that together we will continue to forge ahead, and continue pushing to make Gulfport one of America's most vibrant and thriving communities. That's the spirit that will guide our city in the New Year. If we continue to work together, then I know we can put our city back on the path to greatness.

So this holiday season, let us celebrate the joy of Christmas and the promise of a new beginning for the City of Gulfport.

Sincerely,  
George Schloegel  
Mayor

## Fire Department News & Info

### Donations made to the Mississippi Firefighters Burn Association

The Fire department recently donated \$600 to the Mississippi Firefighters Association to help the many children in our state that have been treated at the burn center.

The Association distributes \$150 gift cards to these children who have experienced traumatic injuries which many times requires extensive and expensive treatment. Because of the financial burden these treatments create, many families are unable to provide Christmas gifts to their children. With their donations, the Gulfport Fire Department was able to sponsor four children.



### Community Outreach Programs

On the November 20<sup>th</sup> Inspectors **Mike Liles**, **Richard Ritchie** and **Randall Johnson** facilitated two fire extinguisher classes at Keesler Federal Credit Union on Seaway Road (51 people and at the It Takes A Village Day Care (6 people).

### New Arrivals

On December 2, Firefighter **Timothy Ishee** welcomed a new baby boy, Jacoby Daniel Ishee. Congratulations to the Ishee family.

Have some news? Let us know! Send your ideas, information, and pictures to:

**Fire** - Donna Ladner  
868-5954  
[dladner@gulfport-MS.gov](mailto:dladner@gulfport-MS.gov)

**Municipal Courts** - Jennifer Jones-Snaer  
868-4285  
[jjснаer@gulfport-MS.gov](mailto:jjснаer@gulfport-MS.gov)

**Public Works** - Yolanda McArthur  
868-5741  
[ymcarthur@gulfport-MS.gov](mailto:ymcarthur@gulfport-MS.gov)

**General Admin/Council/Legal** -  
Lauren Germany  
868-5831  
[lgermany@gulfport-MS.gov](mailto:lgermany@gulfport-MS.gov)

**Police** - Mike Saucier  
868-5900  
[msaucier@gulfport-MS.gov](mailto:msaucier@gulfport-MS.gov)

**Urban Development** - Isaac Williams  
868-5710  
[iwilliams@gulfport-MS.gov](mailto:iwilliams@gulfport-MS.gov)

**Leisure Services** - Kerri Jones  
868-5881

## Remembering our Troops at Christmas

During this holiday season, take the time to remember the men and women of the Gulfport Police Department who are assigned to active military duty. These officers are true heroes as they serve their nation in two capacities: protecting and defending our freedoms at home and abroad. Their desire to serve their nation and communities speaks highly of their character and commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.

Pictured (L-R): Detective **Chuck Koewers**, Officer **T.J. King**, Sgt. **Darin Corrie**, Sgt. **Greg Goodman**, Officer **David Cochran**, Lieutenant **George Chaix**



## OFFICERS OF THE MONTH



Officer **Bryan Watson** (pictured at left) was selected as Officer of the Month for **August 2009**. **Officer Watson** is a three year veteran of the police department assigned to the patrol division. **Watson** was instrumental in the apprehension of a murder suspect from the City of Biloxi. He received information from a confidential source that the suspect was in Gulfport. Because of his ability to interact with the general public in a positive and proactive way, he was able to gather timely information which was a key factor in the apprehension of the suspect.

Officer **Adam Dedeaux** (no picture available) was chosen as Officer of the Month for **September 2009**. **Officer Dedeaux** is a seven year veteran of the Gulfport Police Department. **Dedeaux** is credited with bringing a burglary case to a close through great personal effort. He used good initiative in following leads in the case including gathering information from an informant on his time off. Due to the diligence shown by Officer Dedeaux, an arrest made and some of the victim's property was returned. the victim was able to get some of their property returned.

## PAL OFFICER OF THE YEAR

**Sgt. Adam Gibbons** (pictured at right) was recognized as Officer of the Year for the Gulfport Police Athletic League. **Gibbons**, a nine year veteran of the Gulfport Police Department, was instrumental in the development and the success of the Gulfport Uniform Neighborhood Improvement Team by leading the team in the reduction of all types of crimes within the City of Gulfport for a continuous for a fifteen month period.

**Sgt. Gibbons** has shown a remarkable talent for quickly transitioning between tasks and assignments that range from property crimes, violent crimes or juvenile crime. He and the Unit have become very capable of identifying and solving areas of crime that have a tendency to negatively affect a person's quality of life.



## What You Should Know About Your Benefits—*submitted by Lynn Hill*

Our 2009 Open Electronic enrollment was a BIG success, thanks to our partnership with our broker, Beecher Carlson and all of our employees.

We know that it might have been challenging to some employees, since this was our first electronic enrollment, but overall it was a very positive move for everyone. The most important part of the process was the time and costs we saved with the electronic enrollment compared to processing forms manually.

**HR Connect ion** is a valuable resources that we hope that you will continue to use and become familiar with. As we approach the new plan year, the Summary Plan Description will be posted with an abundance of other valuable information. You can visit the website anytime by simply logging in with your username and password given to you during open enrollment. If you have misplaced your information or forgotten your password, please call Human Resources.

There are several links already posted to the site, such as, **First Choice of MS** and the **Select Administrative** provider networks. City of Gulfport employees have access to the Select Administrative Services *exclusive* networks, as well as First Choice's preferred provider networks. If your physician isn't in the First Choice Network he/she may be in the SAS Network. There are also links posted to **SAS** (Select Administrative Services) and **VSP** (Vision Service plan).

### Out of State Emergencies

Covered individuals seeking care for emergency medical situations should contact the nearest emergency facility. Claims for emergencies will be paid at the in-network rate; claims for medical care that is not of an emergency nature will be subject to the out-of-network deductible and any applicable coinsurance, plus any balance billing by the provider.

### Out of State Dependents

Covered dependents living outside the First Choice service area may have access to medical providers through national network arrangements. All services provided outside the area must be pre-authorized in order to receive in-network benefits. You should contact the Medical Management Department of SAS at the phone number on your insurance card for authorization within five (5) working days prior to receiving services. Authorization from SAS will be provided within two (2) working days of your initial request.

### Changes to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

January 1 will bring more benefits available through our EAP, a free and confidential service that provides support for employees who may be experiencing legal, financial, family, or other stressful life issues. More information will be announced within the next few weeks.

For questions about these or your other benefits, call **Human Resources** at **x5831**.



## After School Programs Enjoy Christmas Shows

*submitted by Kerri Jones, Leisure Services*

On November 19, the children at the Gaston Point Community Center Af-

ter School Program enjoyed a live puppet show performed by the WINGS Performing Arts Group from Lynn Meadows Discovery Center.

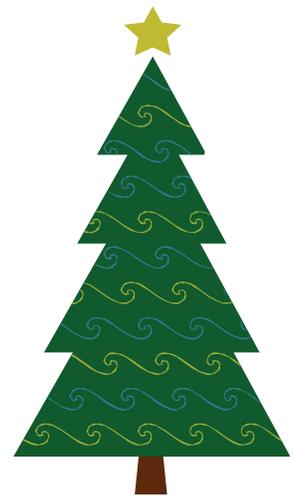
The performance was part of an educational series focusing on puppetry. The children, ages 5-12 also learned about two Spanish legends including "The Man Who Rode the Wind" and "The Legend of the Poinsettia."

The very spirited and lively performance was enjoyed by the children and helped to spread the Christmas spirit.

## Urban Development Kudos

*submitted by Isaac*

Congratulations to **Gary Anderson**, Deputy Building Official for receiving his Flood Plain Administrator certification on July 31st.



## Christmas Fun Facts:

- "It's a Wonderful Life" appears on TV more often than any other holiday movie.
- "Rudolph" was actually created by Montgomery Ward in the late 1930's for a holiday promotion.
- "Jingle Bells" was first written for Thanksgiving and then became one of the most popular Christmas songs.
- If you received all of the gifts in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas," you would receive 364 gifts.
- Holly berries are poisonous.
- In 1843, "A Christmas Carol" was written by Charles Dickens in just six weeks.
- The first state to recognize the Christmas holiday officially was Alabama in 1836.
- More diamonds are sold around Christmas than any other time of the year.
- In 1999, residents of Maine created the largest snowman ever built . He stood 113 feet tall .
- During the Christmas shopping season, Visa cards are used an average of 5,340 times every minute in the United States.
- It is estimated that 400,000 people become sick each year from eating tainted Christmas leftovers.

**PROMOTIONS**

Christina Thompson, Dispatch Supervisor  
 Joshua Agent, Firefighter II  
 Ryker Haselden, Firefighter II  
 Michael Westbrook, Firefighter II  
 Alan Anderson, Firefighter II

**NEW HIRES**

Bruce Archebelle, Patrol Officer  
 Benjamin Bentz, Patrol Officer  
 Robert Brown, Patrol Officer  
 Ahmed Elalighe, Patrol Officer  
 Haley Fields, Patrol Officer  
 Lori Guardia, Dispatcher  
 The'on Jackson, Dispatcher  
 Ronald Radix, Auto Mechanic  
 Richard Smith, Judge  
 Alicia Strickland, Dispatcher

**BIRTHDAYS****DECEMBER**

1– Denise Racz, Rebecca Werner  
 2– Windell Johnson, Curtis Saucier  
 3– Lester Coleman, Barbara Lazerio  
 4– James Lovitt  
 5– Gregory Pelaz, Britini Smith, Brittany Whitten  
 7– Brent Necaie, Bill Racz, Ashly Ruiz  
 8– Steve Decelle, Monica Johnson  
 9– Tonya Laville, Mark Quintero  
 10– Vicki Byrd, April Shavers  
 12– Ronda Cole, Mae Medina, Neil Stachura  
 13– Doug Galloway, Gary Joffrion, Jr., Bryan Rowe  
 14– Neil Clark, Michael Edwards, Kevin Jackson,  
 Christopher Parrish  
 15– Brenda Reed  
 16– Wade Beesley, Scott Gregory, Fran Hall  
 17– Elfren Acosta, Ken Edwards  
 18– Christopher Langenbach, Jeffrey Necaie,  
 Rick Ryan, David Scarborough  
 19– Angel Barnes, Joseph Brown, Timothy Holliman,  
 Keith Walker  
 20– Walter Brightman, Heather Johnson, Mike Liles,  
 Wanda McCormack, Jacob Smith  
 22– Everett Compston, David Faul, Renee Oatman,  
 Keith Rhodes  
 23– Ryan Carter, Pat Sullivan  
 24– Mark Peduzzi  
 26– Herbert Hickman  
 28– Scotty King, Glenn Parker  
 29– Bradley Worthington, Katherine Zanders  
 30– Brandon Bang, John Fletcher, Kevin Lundy,  
 Max Ramon, Antoinette White

**JANUARY**

1– Mark Burns, Gary Fitzpatrick  
 3– William Bullen, Jesse Vincent  
 4– Richard Smith  
 5– William Walkinshaw  
 6– Debra Malley  
 7 - Ken Bishop  
 8– Johnnie Magee  
 9– Garry Green  
 10– Tammy Johnson  
 12– Mark Bierschenk, Naiem Bordeaux  
 13– Maria Nichols, Ron Smith  
 15– Rickey McCaskill  
 16– Kristan Anderson, Robert Parker, Paul Podlin  
 17– Bradley Barta, Phillip Kincaid, Drew Robinson  
 18– Denis Davidson, Monica King  
 19– Will Platts  
 20– Frank Moraway.  
 21 - Paula Doyle, Stave Martin  
 22 - Kelley Clark  
 23– Mark Joseph, David Montague, Carl Washington  
 25– Anthony Wallace  
 26– Timothy Ishee, Allen Johnson  
 27– Rob Enochs, Mickey Wallis  
 29– James Nix, Alicia Strickland  
 30 - Mitchell Quince  
 31 - Roger Etheridge, Steven Kelly