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Inside {local} August '26

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BUSTING AT THE SEAMS

Senior Center provides friendship, activities, exercise and more

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THE HEARTBEAT OF DOWNTOWN

Foley Main Street receives important designation

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ON THE COVER: The The Foley Senior Center is more than a gathering place; it's a community where people continue to thrive, stay engaged, and prove the best years can be some of the busiest and most rewarding. Photo by Linda Williford

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Left to right: Teresa McKenzie, Manager; Pam Harris, Director; Karen Jordan, Administrative Assistant. Photography by Linda Williford

FOLEY IS FOR SENIORS

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

The parking lot at the Foley Senior Center is full—a sure sign that something is happening inside. Step through the doors, and you’ll find vibrant, active seniors who are truly shakers and movers. They’re staying fit, making friends, learning new skills, dancing, laughing, and embracing life with enthusiasm. The Senior Center is more than a gathering place; it’s a community where people continue to thrive, stay engaged, and prove the best years can be some of the busiest and most rewarding.

Teresa McKenzie, Manager of the Center, says, “We are not a daycare for seniors. We are not just a bunch of Bingo players.” However, they do play Bingo once a month. The ages range from 50 to a few who are in their 90s. McKenzie said that the seniors have the opportunity to volunteer for many activities, including stuffing tourism bags for the City of Foley and helping with the Snowbirds Coffee event every year in January.

McKenzie started full-time work at the Center in 2008. “I love the people. Seniors have so much wisdom from living full, rich lives,” she said. When McKenzie first started at the center, there

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Photography by Linda Williford

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were only 300 members, and the center has now grown to over 1,600 members. McKenzie recalls, “I remember that I felt like Julie from the series “Love Boat” cruise ship—finding activities for the guests. McKenzie says, “I have the best job in the world.”

Pam Harris has been the Director of the Senior Center since 2005. She is responsible for getting the center started and bringing it to where it is today. She said that the Mayor and Council wanted to grow the program for the senior population and hired her to be Director over Senior Services. She was already working for the City in a different role. Not only does Harris serve as Director of the Senior Center, but she also oversees other key operations for the City of Foley, including the Municipal Complex. Harris says, “Our seniors love the center. It’s a home away from home. It’s a vital part of our community.”

Harris said, “The center is now busting at the seams, and there are plans to have a groundbreaking ceremony in 2027 for a new Senior Center.

The Center has a calendar full of activities. They have exercise classes and offer Yoga and Tai Chi as well. They offer water aerobics at the Max Griffin pool on W. Roosevelt Avenue. For those who love to dance, join the Line Dancing, Zumba, or Ballroom Dancing classes. The more sedentary activities would include arts and crafts, crochet and knitting, and board and card games. And there are classes for Handbell Choir, with the Center’s Director, Pam Harris, as the instructor. The seniors take day trips and eat meals out together.

The yearly membership at the Center is \$15. But you don’t have to be a member to participate. There are non-member fees for whatever activity you might be interested in.

The Senior Center of Foley helps build confidence, encourages social connectivity, and creates lasting friendships. All seniors are encouraged to go by the Center to check it out and give it a try.

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FOLEY ALABAMA

MAY 2022



Photography provided

FOLEY MAIN STREET RECEIVES DESIGNATION

Foley Main Street has been designated as a 2026 Accredited Main Street America program for meeting rigorous performance standards. Each year, Main Street America and its partners announce the roster of designated programs in recognition of their commitment to creating meaningful improvements in their downtowns through preservation-based economic development and community revitalization using the Main Street Approach™.

“We are proud to recognize Foley Main Street as a 2026 Accredited Main Street America program for your unwavering commitment to grassroots transformation and the extraordinary abilities of your staff, board of directors, and volunteers to respond to the needs of their community,” said Erin Barnes, President and CEO at Main Street America.

To qualify for Accredited status—Main Street America’s top designation tier—communities must demonstrate a proven track record of achieving outcomes in alignment with the Main Street Approach and exceptional performance in six areas: broad-based community commitment to revitalization; inclusive leadership and organizational capacity; diversified funding and sustainable program operations; strategy-driven programming; preservation-based economic development; and demonstrated impact and results.

In 2025, Main Street America programs generated \$9.4 billion in local reinvestment, welcomed 6,936 net new businesses, facilitated the creation of 36,549 net new jobs, rehabilitated 10,623 historic buildings, and leveraged 1.8 million volunteer hours. On average, for every dollar a Main Street program spent on operations, \$23.13 was reinvested in its downtown district.

Foley Main Street (FMS) continues to serve as a powerful economic engine for the downtown district. Since its inception in 2018, it has recorded \$18 million in private investment alongside \$13.5 million in public improvements to date. This collaborative growth represents a positive return on investment. For every dollar the City of Foley invests in Downtown Foley, the district realized \$1.3 dollars in private sector enhancements. FMS has successfully secured \$134,838 in external grants over the past five years, injecting capital into the local economy that would otherwise have remained untapped.

In 2025, FMS further strengthened the downtown entrepreneurial ecosystem through targeted business support and professional development. The organization awarded \$17,000 in direct marketing grants to local business owners and invested an additional \$20,000 in grants into specialized training—including soft skills, customer service, and Google My Business optimization. These initiatives ensure that Foley’s small businesses remain resilient, visible, and equipped to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

“Achieving our 2026 National Accreditation status is a testament to the strategic work our board and partners have accomplished this past year,” said Wes Abrams, Foley Main Street Board President. “By pairing private investment with direct support—like our 2025 marketing and training grants—we are not just revitalizing buildings; we are empowering the entrepreneurs who are the heartbeat of Downtown Foley.”

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