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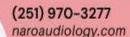
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Inside {local} March'25

6 BOOM TOWN

12 RASPBERRY DELIGHT

Foley is in the top 10 among the fastest-growing cities in the United States With chocolate and delicious raspberries this recipe is sure to please

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ON THE COVER: The City of Foley is working to accommodate the city's growth. From new home construction to major business expansions, Foley is preparing for the future.

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GROWTH IN FOLEY

BY LINDA WILLIFORD

This year, the City of Foley is working with bigger and better plans to accommodate the city's growth. From new home constructions to major business expansions, this city is preparing for future growth. According to a national study, Foley is in the top 10 among the fastest-growing cities in the United States.

When the Mayor of Foley, Ralph Hellmich, was asked why the growth occurred, he answered, "There are many reasons, but mainly the low cost of living, the low state tax, and property taxes. When compared to other states, many have higher property taxes and higher insurance costs.

Mayor Hellmich said that there are other factors why people are attracted to Foley. "Retirees move to Foley not only for the costof-living benefits, but they feel safe here. Foley has a lower crime rate than most cities." Mayor Hellmich also said, "I am repeatedly told that we have nice people who live here. They say to me, it's not like where I'm from." Many vacationers on their way to the beach like it so much that they decide to move to Foley when they retire. The Mayor said, "Right now, we are improving the infrastructure to meet our needs. We have a 5-year road plan." He said that they have 50 projects going on, which include updating and expanding the parks, civic center, public works, police and fire departments, library, post office, senior citizen center, and much more. "We are even working on a new pickleball complex and sand volleyball complex and a new city pool." Vacationers and visitors contribute a lot of revenue to the city, which helps them with these projects. He added, "We want to maintain quality of life here in Foley."

Foley's historic downtown continues to improve and grow. Community patrons and visitors are encouraged to tour the new Cat Alley extension. It includes a walkway and public seating area in what had been a fenced area between the main alley and North Alston Street. "The walkway was one of Foley Main Street's projects during last year," said Darrelyn Dunmore, executive director of Foley Main Street.

The city also created a downtown Arts and Entertainment District. In the district, patrons can take drinks out of local restaurants



and bars while strolling around the district.

Dunmore said, "Since Foley Main Street began in 2018, the city spurred private efforts to renovate downtown buildings and bring new businesses to Foley's historic center."

With all this growth, there is always an increase in emergencies and medical needs. The South Baldwin Regional Medical Center has changed its name to Baldwin Health and is expanding due to the growth in Foley.

Margaret Roley, hospital Administrator, says, "No matter the name, quality care is still at the forefront." She said, "We have expanded our surgical services to inpatients and outpatients, as well as our critical care." They have 90+ beds, and with the expansion, they will have the capacity of 142 beds. The robotic surgeries and orthopedic robotics' program have also gone to the next level.

This past September, they had a groundbreaking for an Ambulatory Surgery Center located behind the hospital, which is 50% completed. Currently, the hospital has about 35 to 40 doctors, but the plan is to expand, adding 30 more doctors in 12-18 months.

Other than the parking spaces in the West and South parking lots, Roley said, "We will have 300 more parking spaces, and 100 parking spaces will be added to the front of the hospital, which will be completed in May or June. The new hospital will increase the number of employees in the workforce by 10 percent.

Mayor Hellmich said, "The Foley Public Library has increased in visitors every year. We saw the need for expansion." Director of the Library, Kate Norris, says, "We are thrilled about our upcoming move to a new, nearly doubled-in-size facility."

The new library will be 40,000 square feet across two stories, allowing the staff to continue providing all the current services with several new services, which include a sensory room, dedicated activity areas for children and teens, a STEAM/STEM lab, a spacious multi-purpose room with seating for 277, and a second-story porch overlooking the Perry Wilbourne Antique Rose Trail and the City's Dog Park.

Norris says, "With this expansion, we anticipate the need for additional staff, which will be considered as the city begins planning for the FY26 budget cycle."

New constructions of businesses and homes always come with growth. Miriam Boone, Community Development Director, shared some numbers and information about what the future will look like. New commercial businesses under construction are Cobblestone Inn & Suites, Doc's Seafood, Express Oil, Fairfield Inn, Goodwill, Ocean Marine, and Publix. New residential approvals are 192 townhomes, 372 apartments, and 1,338 homes. Residential subdivisions in the city limits are 11 subdivisions.

Mayor Hellmich is excited about Foley's growth. He said that he had rather have this growth explosion in Foley than to have to find ways to cut the city budget for services for their residents.



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EXCITING UPCOMING EVENTS

History of Gulf Pirates Gulf State Park Nature Center, Gulf Shores March 5 & March 26, 11:00 am reserve.alapark.com/register/history-of-gulf-pirates

Discover the intriguing historical stories of local pirates who once sailed these waters in search of treasure. This captivating program is designed for history enthusiasts!

Pre-registration is preferred but not mandatory. Program Host: Bill Ratner hannah.russell@dcnr.alabama.gov 251-948-7275, extension 62093

BBQ & Blues Cookoff Heritage Park March 7 - 8 Downtown Foley foleybbqandblues.net

This outdoor event in Downtown Foley's Heritage Park on the second Saturday of March. It is a barbecue cookoff sanctioned by the Kansas City Barbeque Society, attracting both corporate and individual teams who compete for bragging rights in various award categories. Festival attendees can enjoy delicious food, popular blues music, and activities for children. All proceeds from the event support the South Baldwin Chamber Foundation.

Orange Beach Festival of Art Coastal Arts Center, 26389 Canal Road Orange Beach, March 8 – 9 Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm; Sunday: 10 am to 4 pm orangebeachal.gov/338/Orange-Beach-Festival-of-Art

For more than 50 years, the Festival of Art has been our island's first rite of spring. It is a celebration of visual, literary, performing, musical, and culinary arts. The show has won Best Art Show in Alabama three times in the past five years by the luxury magazine "Alabama" and is currently ranked in the top 100 of national fine art and design shows.

This fine arts festival is completely free, with music and entertainment featured on two stages. You can be a part of it by volunteering or purchasing art through our Patron of the Arts program.

Stargazing at the Pier When: March 8 at 7:30 pm Gulf State Park Saltwater Pier, Gulf Shores

Meet at the Gulf State Park Pier for a guided exploration of the sky, stars, planets, and constellations (Weather dependent). Pre-registration is preferred but not required. Program Host: Bill Ratner; hannah.russell@dcnr.alabama.gov 251-948-7275 extension 62093

Lawn & Leisure Expo OWA, 1501 South OWA Blvd., Foley March 29 & March 30 Saturday: 10 am to 5 pm; Sunday: 10 am to 4 pm

Spring is in the air, and Lawn & Leisure at Downtown OWA is your go-to event for outdoor living and recreation! On March 29th and 30th, explore a variety of local vendors showcasing the best in landscaping, gardening, camping, and more. Whether you're looking to refresh your backyard, discover the latest in outdoor gear, or get inspired by the season ahead, this expo has something for everyone!

CEAS 3rd Annual CarShow 22703 Racine Street, Robertsdale March 29, 9 am to 2 pm

The Cutting Edge Automotive Solutions Annual Car Show was created with the idea of bringing the local car community together and providing a fun space to enjoy cars, food, live music, and tools. Free and open to the Public

With an expected 1000+ spectators, there will be special guests, live music, food trucks, tool trucks, arts & crafts, exciting giveaways, eight new awards categories, and over 80 registered cars to see!

Mudbugs & Margarita's Festival Heritage Park, 101 E. Laurel Ave., Foley, AL April 5, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm beachlifeevents.com

All food vendors will have unique, tasty crawfish dishes along with other menu items for purchase. Multiple margarita lines, beer and wine, and scrumptious snack vendors. Great live music all day. Arts & crafts, home decor, and unique vendors. Contests throughout the day. Huge kids' entertainment/activity area. Petting zoo, bounce houses, and more.

Want us to list your event? Please send us the details and let us know what's going on! Send your information to jbryant@wilcolocal.com. Be sure to include dates, times, contact info, and a description of your event.



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Chocolate Raspberry Torte

INGREDIENTS:

2 CUPS WHITE SUGAR 1 ¾ CUPS ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR 1 CUP UNSWEETENED COCOA POWDER 1 ½ TEASPOONS BAKING POWDER 1 ½ TEASPOONS BAKING SODA 1/2 TEASPOON SALT 2 LARGE EGGS (ROOM TEMPERATURE) 1 CUP MILK (ROOM TEMPERATURE) ½ CUP VEGETABLE OIL 2 TEASPOONS VANILLA EXTRACT 1 CUP BOILING WATER 1/2 CUP RASPBERRY JAM 2 CUPS FRESH RASPBERRIES

FROSTING

1 CUP OF ROOM TEMPERATURE UNSALTED BUTTER
1/2 CUP COCOA POWDER
5 CUPS OF CONFECTIONARY SUGAR
2 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
3-4 TABLESPOONS MILK
(if you have raspberry juice you can substitute half milk/half raspberry juice)

From the kitchen of Ruth Woetzel

DIRECTIONS TORTE

Gather all ingredients.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour two 9-inch round baking pans.

Stir sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl.

We put all dry ingredients into a sieve, and then all ingredients are well combined.

Add room temperature eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; mix for 2 minutes on medium speed with an electric mixer.

Stir in the boiling water. The batter will be thin. Pour equal parts of the batter into the two prepared pans.

Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 30 to 35 minutes. Cool in the pans for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

We put a layer of raspberry jam, chocolate icing, and fresh raspberries between the 2 cakes. Then decorate with chocolate icing and fresh raspberries on top.

DIRECTIONS FROSTING

1 cup of room temperature unsalted butter
1/2 cup cocoa powder
5 cups of confectionary sugar
2 teaspoon vanilla extract
3-4 tablespoons milk (if you have raspberry juice you can substitute half milk / half raspberry juice)
With a hand mixer, whip the room temperature unsalted butter and cocoa together until smooth. Once all creamed together, add vanilla extract. On low speed, slowly add the confectionary sugar one spoon at a time. As frosting gets thick, add milk (or raspberry juice)
one tablespoon at a time until the mixture reaches desire consistency. Scrape side and whip until smooth and fluffy.

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