Pelham

DISCOVER

At a Glance
Creek Maintenance

What:
75/25 percent grant for clearing of tornado debris from the creek.

Location:
Cahaba Valley Creek between Chandalar Drive & Highway 31

Time Frame:
Six-month project from start to finish.

Property Owners:
The City will contact property owners for permission to access private property.

CREEK CLEANUP
Grant Approved - What's Next?

A portion of Cahaba Valley Creek will receive some much-needed maintenance in the next few months. The City of Pelham applied for and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service to remove storm debris such as fallen trees, limbs, and trash from the March 25, 2021 tornado. Acting City Engineer, Chris Cousins, stated the debris removal will be in an area generally from Chandalar Drive to U.S. Highway 31. "The grant is for a 75 percent/25 percent participation, with the City's portion being 25 percent." On July 5, 2022, the Pelham City Council approved funding of 266 thousand dollars for the City's portion of the work. The entire project is estimated at 1.1 million dollars.

Cousins said the project will go out for bids, and work should begin in September or October. He estimated the work will take six months, from start to finish.

"The creek and its banks are private property. We'll have to get access permission from property owners to complete the work," Cousins explained. "The storm debris will be removed through a series of hand work and heavy equipment. The debris will then be transported off-site and disposed of in a landfill. The goal is to get this portion of the creek cleaned up and free-flowing."

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The items in the sensory bags can help lessen overload and also engage those who have various sensory needs.

Pelham Police units displaying a KultureCity sticker on the back windshield are equipped with sensory bags.

Sensory Inclusion

The Pelham Police Department is taking strides to better serve those in our community with sensory needs. All employees of the department, including patrol officers, dispatchers, and records clerks recently went through specialized training and received the KultureCity Sensory Inclusive Certification. With this training, first responders are better able to serve all citizens regardless of their sensory needs, mental health challenges, or invisible disabilities. The Pelham Police Department joins the Pelham Public Library with this certification. The Pelham Public Library was the first library in the state of Alabama to be 100 percent certified in 2019.

With the Sensory Inclusive Certification, police units displaying a KultureCity sticker on the back windshield are equipped with sensory bags. The items in the bags can help lessen overload and also engage those who have various sensory needs. The objects in the bags can be easily cleaned and sterilized for multiple uses.

Laura Ehrhart, dispatcher and S.A.F.E.R. Coordinator with the Pelham Police Department, said she was approached to oversee the KultureCity training, sensory bag distribution, and overall implementation of the program. "As a department, we wanted to be more mindful of the various needs and communication techniques utilized by those we encounter in daily interactions with the public while providing tools to comfort and calm those with sensory needs."

KultureCity is a Birmingham-based organization and the nation's leading nonprofit on sensory accessibility and acceptance for those with invisible disabilities. Studies show one in six people have a sensory need or invisible disability, including PTSD, autism, dementia, and strokes, just to name a few. Sensory needs are a common medical condition in which the brain has trouble receiving and responding to information that comes in through the senses.
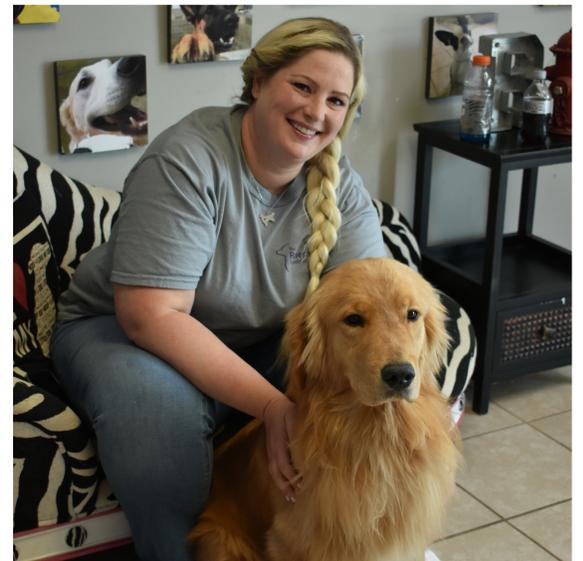
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Left to Right: Lexi Watts, Dreamgate Events; Mayor Gary Waters; Abigail Witthauer, Roverchase Foundation; Penelope Witthauer, Roverchase Foundation; Paula Holly, City of Pelham; Debbie Navez, Dreamgate Events.

Pelham Palooza Gives Back

In the eyes of organizers, the 2022 Pelham Palooza in the Park was a huge success. But after all was said and done, their favorite accomplishment is the donation they presented to the Pelham-based Roverchase Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to providing professionally trained service dogs to individuals with disabilities.

Paula Holly with the City of Pelham, and Debbie Navez, owner of Dreamgate Events spent months planning the popular community event. This year, they were looking for a way to raise money for a non-profit organization. "We knew we wanted our charity recipient to reflect the pet-friendly atmosphere of the Pelham Palooza. We also wanted to make sure the money benefited a Pelham organization. Roverchase Foundation was a no-brainer because they provide such a great service to our community," said Holly. Navez and Holly came up with the idea of a cornhole tournament which was organized by Patrick Kennedy of KSM Events. "Entry fees and donations allowed us to raise $1,500 for Roverchase Foundation," said Holly.

Abigail Witthauer founded Roverchase Foundation in 2015. She said the cost of raising and training a professionally trained service dog is about $30,000. The process takes 18-24 months of daily socialization, specialized training, and care. "The Roverchase Foundation will utilize the funds from the Pelham Palooza to directly cover the costs associated with raising and training the professionally-trained service dogs placed by our organization. Funds like the ones from Pelham Palooza allow us to cover the costs of equipment, food, veterinary care, and specialized training for each of our hero dogs that are training with The Roverchase Foundation to become professionally trained service dogs." Roverchase Foundation has 19 dogs from the service dog program currently working, and five more will graduate in October of this year.

Attention Pelham Residents

Report Blocked Railroad Crossings

Report blocked crossings on the Federal Railroad Administration Blocked Crossing Portal. The portal requests specific information from users reporting blocked crossings, including the date, time, location, and duration that crossing is blocked.

Click here to report blocked crossings