

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another edition of The Break Room. A weekly conversation about how the City of St Augustine works from those who do the work every day. Hosted by the City of St Augustine's Communications Director Melissa Wissel. The Break Room offers a closer look at the different city departments and provides updates on current and upcoming projects and events. And now your host, Melissa Wissel. MELISSA: Welcome to The Break Room. Thanks for tuning in. I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications Director for the City of St Augustine. Fourth of July is right around the corner, so I've invited the City's Event and Venue Coordinator Cori Niles to join me in studio this week to talk about all things 4th of July. Cori is our event planner extraordinaire making sure that the day's events go off without a hitch. We are going to have free parking and shuttle services on Anastasia Island, a patriotic band concert in the Plaza, and of course the pinnacle of the night, Fireworks over the Matanzas, the City's annual Independence Day fireworks extravaganza. Cori, that is a tall order. Welcome back to The Break Room. CORI: Thank you for having me. It is a tall order but luckily we have an event and venue... Events Review Committee that helps with all of that, so we don't have to do it all of ourselves. Our first person that really helps is X Pellicer, he handles our shuttle and parking. He's our Mobility Manager. And we will definitely have a lot of parking and shuttles back on the Anastasia Island side only this year. And the shuttles will run from six to midnight. We'll have multiple stops such as RB Hunt, the Amphitheater, Anastasia Baptist Church, and the Alligator parking lot. But the Alligator Farm parking lot is a park only, the shuttle will not pick you up. You'll have to just walk across the street to RB Hunt to get on a shuttle and then get off there to get back to your car. MELISSA: And this is only on the island. CORI: Only on the island. MELISSA: So people should not be looking for those shuttles up at the Health Department or Broudys. CORI: No, no there's too much traffic. MELISSA: Only parking on the island this year for Fourth of July. And it runs constantly? CORI: It will run from 6 pm to midnight that entire evening. That way we can make sure we get you in for all the festivities and we get you out after the festivities are safely over and the traffic has died down a little bit. MELISSA: And the drop the drop location is where I go back when I'm finished. Where is the drop location in terms of I get dropped off and then picked up again to get back to my car? CORI: They will drop you off right on the east side of the Bridge of Lions. And then you're welcome to walk through.. MELISSA: The cul-de-sac down there on, I think it's Flagler Boulevard. CORI: Yep, Oglethorpe and Flagler Boulevard. MELISSA: And it's free. CORI: It is free, it's completely free. We very much encourage people to use it. You know, parking is is kind of tight downtown. And with the number of people that will have come out, it'll be great to use them, utilize them. MELISSA: And we're we want to make sure we do give a big shout out to X and his team because that's a major undertaking. Those shuttles, I will also give a shout out to our providers. The shuttles are provided by Old Town Trolley as well as the Ripley Red Trains. CORI: Yes. MELISSA: So we appreciate their donation of that service for us. And what else? We've got a band concert. CORI: We do. The All-Star Orchestra is going to play their 27th year for us downtown in the Plaza. And that will happen from 6 pm to 8 pm. They are our our go-to for our Fourth of July event. They do big band and americana type music, so we'll have a really patriotic.. MELISSA: Get your patriotic groove on down in the Plaza. CORI: In the Plaza. And they're really good they love being there and. MELISSA: They also they also do our Christmas time. CORI: They do, they do our Light Up Night. They are the ones that give us all that wonderful Christmas music to light the town with. MELISSA: If I want to come down, can I bring chairs? CORI: You can, we encourage you to bring your lawn chair to sit and listen to the band. And then, you know, that way it's easy to kind of carry or put back in a car. So you can come down for the fireworks afterwards. MELISSA: Six to eight is the Concert in the Plaza. And then fireworks is always a huge celebration. It's beautiful every year. CORI: Huge. Santore and Sons has been putting it on for the last 24

years, almost a quarter century. MELISSA: Wow. CORI: And they will start at 9:30 and it's usually about a 20-minute fireworks display. And it'll be set to music big band and very patriotic music on the Bayfront. MELISSA: How does that work? Do we have a Master of Ceremonies? Is there an announcement? How do we? CORI: Barry Fox will be our Master of Ceremonies and he will make any important announcements throughout the day that the public may need. But he'll also be the one to do the countdown and get the fireworks started for us. MELISSA: Excellent. And if you're coming downtown, what about street closures? I think we do have some street closures and some no parking, so just be careful if you're coming downtown. CORI: Yes, the street closures should start around 8 pm. Could be a little bit earlier, depending on how crowded it gets. Jeff Truncellito from the St Augustine Police Department is our person in charge of all that, that helps us... MELISSA: He's got a big task. CORI: Yeah he does to make sure that we can close them in enough time for everybody to be safe and make sure that it's not closed too early to kind of gum up the traffic. MELISSA: And we've got... That's basically up there, north end of San Marco, Piccolata, San Carlos gets closed down. We've got, King Street gets rearranged a little bit with one-way, two-lane, single directional, if you will. I'm not going to try to explain it to everybody. If you go to our website, you can go to CityStAug.com/fireworks. And all of this information is there. What about by water? Can I, can I get into the Marina? CORI: You can, but after eight o'clock they will not allow anybody in. And there is a no boating zone, so the police are out there and the the fire rescue will be out there in the boats keeping everybody safe and making sure that you're in the correct zone so that, that nobody crashes in to one another or gets in the danger. MELISSA: And I'll also add, if you're, if you want to go to the marina, I do know that it is first come, first serve. You can catch the marina on the radio, on vhf channel 16 or 71. But it is first come first serve. It's gonna get filled up. I think they have a wait list at this point for overnight anyway. But it's a, it's a busy town, busy time to be downtown, but it's so beautiful. CORI: It is, it really is, I mean, nothing better than watching the fireworks over the bay. And it's become a family tradition for people from St Augustine, all over Florida. They all come in for it. MELISSA: And the other thing we always want to remind folks is please be patient. It takes all day for everybody to kind of trickle in and get their spot and sit where they want to sit or mosey on around get a spot on the Bayfront. The bridge does, the Bridge of Lions also does close to vehicular traffic. But people really just need to be patient and realize that when it's time to go, maybe take a few extra minutes, walk slower to your car, give the folks in the parking garage a little bit of extra time to get folks out of there. We will try to get everyone out and they really do a really good job. The Police Department is out there all day, all day long and all night, along with our Fire Rescue folks keeping everyone safe. So, if you come in to enjoy, just be patient leaving. It's going to take time, but you will get out and just give everybody a break and enjoy being downtown for the Fourth of July. If you are just now tuning into The Break Room, I am speaking with Cori Niles today. She is the City's Event and Venue Coordinator. We're talking about Fourth of July. And other exciting news that we have, we're back with our concerts again this year. We brought them back last year with COVID wiping us out the pre, prior season. And we've got quite a new lineup this year. CORI: We do. This is the 31st annual Concerts in the Plaza series. And with it being my first Concert in Plaza series, I kind of wanted to mix a little bit of the old with some new. Yeah, just to see you know kind of, how it takes and if people like the different genres that we've brought in. We will have a total of 14 concerts over the series, so it's quite a bit of music to enjoy. MELISSA: Can you tell us, I know it's, who's who's been there who's coming. We've got some really cool bands this year that are really local favorites. We always try to get the local favorites. Who do we have coming up yet still this summer? CORI: This summer, we'll have i - vibes coming up, the God's City Duo, Grapes of Roth who has been playing with us for many many years, The Committee,

Str8up, and Gypsy Stars, they're a new one that's coming in this year, Ancient City Slickers is an old favorite, Lonesome Burt and the Thick and Thin Band he's also one of the the favorites, and then we have the Sauce Boss coming in to close out the series, which ought to be exciting. MELISSA: He's really interesting, he does something with gumbo and... CORI: He does. MELISSA: He's a real show. CORI: Yes, he plays instruments, he cooks gumbo, he sings, I think it'll be a great closing to the series. MELISSA: And that closes out. So we're running these concerts every Thursday, seven to nine. CORI: Yes and it'll close out on September 1st. So basically we run from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. MELISSA: Okay and they are downtown on the Plaza. CORI: They are downtown on the Plaza every Thursday night from seven to nine. We encourage you to come out and bring a lawn chair, some people bring coolers with sandwiches and really make a night of it or a date night out of it. As you know though, the weather can be a little iffy. MELISSA: Yeah, so what do I do. So I know your phone rings off the hook every Thursday about 3:30 or 4 o'clock if the weather's looking a little bit like a typical Florida afternoon. How do I know? CORI: I would say just check our website and all of our social media outlets. We will not make that decision until right at the bitter end, because what it looks like at three or four in the afternoon is not what it'll be at seven o'clock, usually due to our summer storms. But we try not to, and the bands would prefer us not to have to cancel, because we kind of run a tight schedule, so it's hard to reschedule them. But we will make that last last last minute decision if it's too dangerous to play or or the lightning's too bad. But I would say always, if you have any inkling that it may clear up, come on down, bring a chair. Because chances are we're gonna keep playing. MELISSA: And it's not a bad walk if I park at the parking garage. No. There's generally, it hasn't been too too bad in terms of parking around town. And I'm gonna also put in a little plug right now for the Park Now Card and the and the parking app. The ParkStAug app that we have. If you're a St Johns County resident you'll get a discounted rate on your parking using the ParkStAug app. And if you're a St Johns County resident, you can get a discount on your parking with the Park Now Card. Yes. Remind us how we get the Park Now Card. CORI: So for the Park Now Card, you can go to the Customer Service Division at 50 Bridge Street. You can walk inside and get one, or you can go through the drive through. And they sell them in increments of 20, 30, 50, or 100 dollars. And it does make it three dollars for every time you want to park in the garage versus \$15. So it's a nice local discount for people that have it. And you know, you you want to park early in the morning and stay parked all day and then come to the concert, it's just the three dollars. MELISSA: Park Now Card. And that's the... I don't think we can use the ParkStAug app yet in the parking garage, is that still true? CORI: That is still true. MELISSA: But I can use my Park Now Card. CORI: Yes. MELISSA: So I can get that discount in the garage, I just need the Park Now Card. CORI: Yes and you can use the Park Now Cards in the meters. But we can't use the app in the garage. MELISSA: Okay, so lots going on downtown. The Concerts in the Plaza has been a great success. We've got Fourth of July. So on our website, you can go to CityStAug.com, that's the website. If you want to go directly to the fireworks, you're going to go to CityStAug.com/fireworks. If you want to know about concerts, it's CityStAug.com/concerts. It's really ingenious, right? All of that information, parking information, cancellation information... Again, you've got free parking for 4th of July on the Island only, on Anastasia Island. That's going to be at Anastasia Baptist Church, RB Hunt Elementary, as well as The Amphitheater. And like Cori said, you can park at the Alligator Farm, but you're going to have to walk back across the street to catch the bus and get dropped off. And enjoy those fireworks. Anything else exciting? CORI: No, I think that's it, we're just hoping for a great year. We're happy to be back after COVID. And looking forward to hopefully some great weather for the fireworks. MELISSA: Excellent. Well everybody have a happy Fourth of July and come down and see us on Thursday nights in the Plaza for Concerts in the Plaza. Cori, thanks for coming. CORI: Thanks

for having me. MELISSA: As we wrap up another edition of The Break Room, did you know that we are now a podcast? So, if you missed part of this broadcast and want to listen from the beginning or share it with your friends, you can subscribe to The Break Room wherever you find your podcasts. Find us on Spreaker, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Apple Podcasts, and a few more channels. You can find a complete listing and past episodes online at CityStAugRadio.com. We want to keep you informed about what's happening in and around the city and most importantly you hear it hear from the people doing the work and making it happen every day. Stay up to date on all of our social media channels. You'll find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @CityStAug. Thanks for tuning in, until next time. ANNOUNCER: You've been listening to The Break Room, a weekly program addressing projects and programs offered by the City of St Augustine. Join us each week as the City's Communications Director Melissa Wissel has in-depth conversations with the people who make our town work to meet the needs of our community. The Break Room is produced by Communications Specialist for the City of St Augustine, Cindy Walker. See you at this time next week for another edition of The Break Room.