



Gary Turner is a native of Valdosta, Georgia and graduated from Lowndes County High School. Gary began his employment with the City of Valdosta Public Works Department in June 2004, as a Groundskeeper II assigned to the Right-of-Way Maintenance Division. In this position, Gary is responsible for the grounds maintenance in assigned areas of Downtown Valdosta and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park. Besides

mowing and trimming, he also supervises litter control, taking care of the alley ways and cares for plants, and flowerbeds and maintains the Downtown irrigation system. Gary is instrumental and takes pride in making sure the Downtown area is in tip top shape for special events such as First Friday, Art After Dark, Brown Bag Concert, and Farmers Market etc. Gary has other duties as installing seasonal banners on the light poles throughout Downtown which keeps the area always looking festive. Gary coordinates the installation of Christmas Décor throughout the Downtown area and assigned entrances to the city. Gary is a charismatic employee and has a desire and passion to serve the community of Valdosta.

## **Gary Turner – Public Works Employee of the Year**

Gary Turner began his employment with the City of Valdosta in June of 2004. He holds the position of Groundskeeper II in the Right-of-Way Maintenance Division. Gary is responsible for the general ground's maintenance and landscaping of the Downtown Main Street area. These duties include mowing grass, weed control, pressure washing, and keeping grounds free of litter. Seasonal activities include changing decorative banners to installing Christmas Décor, shrubs, flowers, and mulch.

Gary works tirelessly making sure the City provides a well-kept Downtown for its many visitors and citizens. His commitment and attention to detail daily provides a first-class Main Street in the City's Downtown area as the city prepares for the many upcoming Downtown hosted events.

Gary's dedication did not stop Downtown. March 2021, the Mayor and Council's Strategic Initiatives Summit was held at the Woman's Building. He took the lead completing many tasks in the preparation of the facility and its grounds to meet the deadline of this highly anticipated event. After the building was pressure washed and the grounds beautified, Gary continued to assist with other tasks that were out of his normal duties. It is because of his perseverance the facility and grounds were in supreme condition, allowing for a successful event.

Another example of Gary's work ethic was demonstrated during the time the City took over the maintenance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park in the Downtown District. Gary eagerly took on the challenge in addition to his normal daily routine to ensure that the park stays pristinely manicured for the community and visitors to enjoy and honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

During special events Downtown, Gary is instrumental in the behind-the-scenes operations for ensuring the events runs as smoothly as possible for the community members' enjoyment. He takes initiative to get things in order without having to be micromanaged. During these events, Gary is always there even in the evenings and on weekends as needed.

Gary is a true role model as he represents the City daily during his interactions with visitors and citizens while maintaining Downtown. The City constantly receives praise complimenting the appearance of the Downtown area. Gary's actions display great dedication and a "Service-Before Self" attitude.

The Downtown Valdosta community wholeheartedly endorses Gary Turner as APWA Employee of the Year. Gary is the embodiment of a great employee. He works tirelessly all year – through the cold, rain, and South Georgia summers without complaint – to make sure that Downtown Valdosta is kept clean and beautiful. His commitment to his work is always noticed and appreciated by not only the Downtown Development Authority, Main Street Office and other staff, but also the Downtown community. On any given day Downtown, we can see Gary completing his daily duties including cleaning the seemingly endless amounts of leaves from the trees and gutters all with a smile on his face, a kind comment, or an enthusiastic "hello".

Many people who do not work with Gary appreciate the results of his work every day. One such person stated, "Gary is such a hard worker. He goes out of his way to keep our buildings and Downtown looking great. I only knew him from talking with him when he is working around our building, but from what I see when others are taking a break, he keeps on working. He takes pride in what he does and it shows!" Another person wrote, "Gary is energetic, cooperative, and friendly. He assists the Downtown business and

property owners whenever asked and goes out of his way to do things correctly and on time. We always know that for events such as First Friday, Art After Dark, and others that Downtown will be looking great!” It has been said that dedication is not what others expect of you, it is what you can give to others. Gary’s dedication to his job and the City of Valdosta has given its citizens and Downtown business owners something to be proud of.

Gary has been nominated on several occurrences for the City’s Employee of the Month. He was nominated along with another City employee for the Chamber’s World Class Employee Program. He was a finalist in that Program and was served breakfast at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center. The Employee Relations Committee also recognized Gary for his hard work and above and beyond attitude.

Gary is a wonderful representative of the City of Valdosta through his interaction with citizens and visitors of Downtown. A simple thank you isn’t enough for recognizing his hard work and caring attitude to make Downtown Valdosta a better place to visit, work, play, and/or own a business. It is for these reasons and many more that the City of Valdosta endorse Gary for the prestigious APWA Employee of the Year Award!