

LABOR DAY

MILLER: A GOOD TIME TO APPRECIATE THE WORK PEOPLE DO EVERY DAY



O-A NEWS FILE PHOTO

This file photo shows Autumn Richardson of Auburn pouring an ingredient into a bag of macaroni and cheese at the United Way of Lee County Campaign Kickoff in 2024.

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Labor Day is upon us, and though it’s a day off for many workers in America, the holiday’s history dates back to the 1800s. As we look into the history of Labor Day, working members of the Auburn-Opelika community highlight the roles they play that make the two cities what they are.

Labor Day

The holiday originates from the late 19th century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the contributions workers have made to America’s strength, prosperity and well-being, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1882, in New York City, the website stated.

Workers in the Auburn-Opelika community

From city departments to small businesses to nonprofit organizations, there are employees in the community who play roles that help Auburn and Opelika flourish.

In 2024, the Opelika Chamber of Commerce won the 2024 Chamber of the Year award in category one, which is a national recognition for its work serving businesses in the community.

Ali Rauch, president and CEO of the Opelika Chamber of Commerce, said she is “beyond blessed with an incredible team at the Opelika Chamber.”

“Their commitment to being the champions for business shows in the long hours and relentless pursuit of service to our business community,” Rauch said. “All the great work we do to make Opelika a better place to live couldn’t happen without each of them... that’s also a huge part of why we were named the 2024 National Chamber of the Year. It’s all of them!”

Tipi Miller, director of the United Way of Lee County, said Labor Day is a good time to appreciate the work that people do every day to make the community great.

“At United Way of Lee County, our team’s responsibilities may look different from day to day; we are all working together to ensure individuals are connected to local resources, support is available to our community partners, and Lee County remains an amazing place to live,”

Miller said. “I am grateful for the dedication and compassion each member of our team brings to their work every day.”

Patrice Lipscomb, assistant director of Opelika Parks & Recreation, said their employees carry out the programs, maintenance, customer service and operations tasks that keep Opelika Parks & Recreation running smoothly.

“Whether it’s parks maintenance, recreation programming, special events, athletics or facility management, the many roles within our department are coordinated, with high standards, while addressing any issues quickly,” Lipscomb said. “Together, we have a department where everyone’s work supports the mission of serving Opelika’s citizens.”

In the past several years, local first responders have earned recognition for their service, such as being named a First Friday Hero by Piedmont Columbus Regional and receiving Life-Saver Awards.

Whether someone is working in customer service, healthcare, law enforcement, manufacturing and more, they will continue to play an important role in the economic development of Auburn and Opelika.

US envoys hopeful after Ukraine-Russia visits

MAX HUNDER
Reuters

KYIV — U.S. peace envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff heralded new momentum in peace talks after meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday in Kyiv as the Trump administration renewed its push to end Russia’s 4-year-old war in Ukraine.

Kushner and Witkoff traveled from Moscow, where they held three hours of talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday but did not appear to secure a breakthrough in the conflict.

Witkoff, President Donald Trump’s envoy, said they “heard new ideas” in Moscow, which they did not detail, and they hoped a new round of U.S.-mediated

Ukraine-Russia talks would be announced “in short order.”

Zelenskyy praised the “very substantive” conversation with Witkoff and Kushner and said Ukraine was ready for trilateral talks. He said he also discussed air defense supplies and energy support for Ukraine ahead of winter, with Russia expected to bomb Ukraine’s power grid again.

Previous rounds of U.S.-mediated peace talks encouraged by Trump, who campaigned on a promise to quickly end the war, have yielded few results. He suggested Friday that the U.S. had a fresh proposal, though he did not elaborate.



VALENTYN OGIRENKO, REUTERS

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomes U.S. President Donald Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner and U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff on Sunday in Kyiv.

Please see **VISITS**, Page A2