

Bryan's Brief July, 2011

With all the heat and rain we're having, I'm looking forward to the cooler days of autumn, even if it does mean raking leaves. We're now on our summer break, but there's a lot going on with the budget reconciliation, infrastructure issues, etc. Here's some updates:

Budget Workshop - the Board approved a proposed budget of approximately \$235 million for the 2011/2012 fiscal year, bringing the total reduction of Leon County's budget to more than \$48.9 million, or roughly 17.2 percent, since 2008. For the third year in a row, the County has reduced citizens' property taxes, resulting in a cumulative savings of \$13.9 million over the past three budget cycles. I'm pleased no new taxes have been added, but if you would like to view the Workshop go to <http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/admin/agenda/realworkshops.asp> or if you would like to read the agenda item that details staff's report on the budget, go to http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/ADMIN/Agenda/Workshops/BudgetWorkshop12/Budget_Workshop_Book-Final.pdf. Please keep in mind the budget will not have final approval until September and our next public hearing on the budget will be September 13th and the final - September 20th. Leon County continues to maintain the lowest net budget, the lowest net budget per resident, the lowest number of employees, and the lowest number of employees per capita than any other like-sized counties in Florida. And when compared to Florida's other 66 counties: • Leon County has the seventh lowest net budget per capita; and • Leon County has the second lowest number of employees per capita

County Leadership Change – The mantle has been passed and Vince Long is now our new County Administrator. At his appointment in June, I asked that he come back to the Commission with goals for our organization that are measurable. A workshop will be held August 23rd for him to present his recommendations. Hope you can tune in for that meeting.

Proctor Rd – some property owners along Proctor Rd. have presented a petition to the Commission requesting the paving of Proctor Rd. At this time there are no funds available for new infrastructure or upgrades, but Proctor Rd is number one on the list as a paving project should funds come available and I'll continue to look for options to move this project forward - without impacting property tax.

Internet Café Regulation – An Internet Café is not a place for a latte or to surf the Internet – their design is similar to that of actual gambling casinos. A public hearing was held June 14th and the Commission moved forward with regulating the more than 20 local Internet cafes located in Leon County. The requirements include guidelines for hours of operation, location restrictions in relation to churches, schools and day-care facilities, licensing fees ranging from \$2500 to \$15,000 and background checks for all employees and owners. No more permits will be issued for new cafes. Those in operation now, can remain in operation, but if they close for any reason, they cannot reopen. The goal is to get the number down to no more than 10. There is still the possibility the Legislature can take action next session, but I'm not very hopeful! The following provides info on the issue <http://www.news-journalonline.com/opinion/editorials/n-j-editorials/2011/06/12/legislature-must-act-on-internet-cafes.html>

Revision of Gun Laws - In April, the Florida Legislature amended Florida Statutes preempting to the state the entire field of regulation of firearms. The Bill provides for a criminal penalty and fines of governmental entities that knowingly and willfully violate the section, eliminates the limited exception of the county waiting period ordinances, and provides for termination of employment or contract or removal from office of a person acting in an official capacity who knowingly and willfully violates any provision of the section. Based on the revised laws, we had to revoke all laws implemented by the County that regulate firearms and ammunition. For more information on this situation you can view agenda items 20-22 at <http://www.leoncountyfl.gov/admin/agenda/view2.asp?id=10383>. We'll be lobbying for change in our next Legislative Session.

Bannerman Rd Corridor Study – The Citizens Action Committee has been meeting and developing recommendations for the design based upon information they received from the public hearings. It's expected that their report will be brought back to the Commission in October. Still no funds available to implement the design, but we will now be ready should Federal stimulus funds come available.

Northeast Park – I didn't have the votes to move forward on a northeast park, but I'll continue to work to identify where and how we can establish a park in the north east - many of the commissioners were supportive but did not feel that now was the time to spend the dollars. We are, however, moving forward with a study to determine the feasibility of having a competitive sports complex here in Leon County. I've studied this issue and from all I've read on those currently in existence they've been money makers – a boon to the economy – and with no other sports complexes in the Big Bend, southern Alabama and Georgia areas, we would have year round visitors for competitive sports and a revenue stream that could prove beneficial. We'll see how the study goes – more later.

Miccosukee Park – Funds have been approved in the FY2012 budget to expand the proposed sports field to better accommodate the needs for both baseball and football space. Pending no changes to the current proposed budget, we will begin work on the field next year.

As always, thank you for your continued support. I'm honored to serve as your District IV Commissioner. I appreciate all of your calls, e-mails and letters advising me of service or operational issues you've identified in District IV. It's because of you and your continued contact with me that I am able to identify opportunities for improvement and make District IV the wonderful place it is to live. I hope you'll call me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions – deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov or [606-5364](tel:606-5364).

Bryan Desloge