



Bryan's Brief  
September 2012

It's hard to believe that fall is just around the corner. I don't think anyone will miss the heat, mosquitos and daily rain showers, so now we can all sit back and enjoy the fall leaves, football season and holiday preparations. So much to look forward to!

Some of the neighborhood improvements we can all look forward to are the Bannerman Transportation Corridor Study and the Bull Headley/Bannerman Road Intersection Improvements. The Citizens Advisory Committee is putting the finishing touches on the engineering and environmental study which is about 30% of the Bannerman Transportation Corridor Study. They will bring the project to the County Commission sometime in January at which time this project will be recommended for referral to the Sales Tax Committee for their consideration for inclusion in the infrastructure sales tax projects. The intersection improvement projects at Bannerman and Bull Headley include: 1) Adding a 200 foot long plus taper eastbound left turn lane on Bannerman. 2) Adding a pork chop on the westbound side so the thru lanes on Bannerman are aligned. 3) Improving the southbound turning radius on Bull Headley to Bannerman. 4) Replacing the current span wire traffic signal with much more storm/wind resistant mast arms. 5) Adding curb and gutter where needed. 6) Adding some underground storm pipes and small storage area for drainage. 7) Constructing sidewalk to the commercial property on the south side of Bannerman. I think all of these improvements will make this intersection much safer and more user friendly for all of us in the area.

Something I'm afraid we can't look forward to anytime soon is the Killlearn Lakes Stormwater Project. According to FDEP, this project falls in the jurisdiction of the Northwest Florida Water Management District so we've been having some permitting challenges. Unit 1 seems to be the most challenging section regarding permits, but Units 2 & 3 Greenways Projects are much closer. None of us are happy about these delays, but I assure you I will work with staff in resolving them as quickly as possible.

The Board of County Commission has finalized their budget. In the last five years, we've had to cut more than \$60 million, including \$12.5 million from last year's budget and have been forced to absorb a \$1 million increase in unfunded state-mandated Medicaid expenses. Some of the cuts include the loss of 75.5 positions, with 5.5 from this year's budget, reduced hours of operation for the Woodville, Ft. Braden and Miccosukee Rural Waste Service Centers from 50 to 40 hours. The new hours are 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Thursday thru Sunday. We have also had to shift a portion of health care costs on to employees. There are many more changes to the County budget which you will find in the attached document. I welcome any questions you might have after you read through it all.

I couldn't be more pleased with the progress being made on the Thomasville Road Parks Property! The Board has approved moving forward with the purchase of the property and is referring this project to the Leon County Sales Tax Committee for their consideration for inclusion in the infrastructure sales tax projects. To find out more about this committee, go to <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/HomeLeonCountySalesTaxCommittee>. The mission of the Leon County Sales Tax Committee is to take public input on the proposed infrastructure projects and then make recommendations to the County Commission on those projects the public has deemed most important. Please contact them and share your thoughts on this much needed proposed District IV recreation project.

On a personal note, I was recently sworn in as the President of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC). This is a huge honor for me and I am humbled by the trust and respect placed on me by my peers. FAC represents all of Florida's 67 counties on a range of important issues that will come before the state legislature, the governor and Cabinet, various state agencies, commissions, and the courts. The FAC legislative advocacy team covers more than 80 percent of the thousands of bills proposed each legislative session. FAC is working hard to preserve home rule and minimize budgetary impacts to county governments. Additionally, I have been equally honored to have been appointed to the National Association of Counties Board (NACo). NACo is similar to FAC, but they advocate on a national level. While these are very important appointments I'm assuming, please rest assured that my priorities lie with the citizens of Leon County, specifically District IV. These additional duties will not

hinder my work in Leon County nor will they make me less accessible. I'm always available by e-mail and phone regardless of where I am, so don't hesitate to contact me or Brenda Tanner, my assistant, should you need anything.

It is truly a privilege to serve as your District IV Commissioner and i commit to you that I will continue to do the best job I can in representing you and our community. As always, I welcome your input and appreciate all of you who act as my eyes and ears in the District. Many of the improvements we've already made, or are currently working on, came from citizen suggestions or observations. As you plan for your Fall and holiday neighborhood/homeowner's association meetings, please let me know the dates and times so that I can try to attend. Always remember to call me if you have any questions or concerns –[deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov](mailto:deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov) or [606-5364](tel:606-5364).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bryan Desloge', written in a cursive style.

Bryan Desloge

## Leon County Budget Development Background and FY2013 Budget Overview

- Total Budget
  - The proposed FY2013 budget of \$223 million is \$12.5 million or 5.3 percent lower than the prior year.
  - For the fifth year in a row, the County has reduced the budget, resulting in a cumulative savings of \$60.5 million or roughly 22 percent since 2008.
  
- Property Taxes and Budget Balancing
  - Without a tax increase, absorbed \$1.0 million increase in unfunded state mandated Medicaid expenses
  - The Board accomplished this year's continued budget reduction by implementing the aggregate rolled-back millage rate of 8.3144.
  - Without the levying of the rolled-back rate, and leaving the millage rate at the current 7.85 mills, the Board would have had to make an additional \$5.9 million in reductions.
  - The total estimated tax collections for FY2013 will be \$587,000 or 0.5 percent less than 2012.
  - The recession has greatly affected the collection of property taxes, which resulted in a decline in taxable property values from 2007 – 2012 by \$3.2 billion, 20 percent.
  - Since FY2009, the total tax collection for the Board has been reduced by \$13.1 million or 11 percent.
  - By establishing the tax rate at the rolled-back millage rate, the Board has ensured that in accordance with Florida Statutes there will not be a tax increase next year.
    - This means that the County will not collect more in property tax revenues, excluding new construction, than during the prior fiscal year.
    - However, regardless of the tax rate established by the Board, individual taxable property values may have increased, decreased or remained the same.
    - As such, an individual's property taxes, which are calculated by multiplying the tax rate by the taxable value, may also increase, decrease or remain the same.
  - The actions of the Board are independent of any other local taxing authority.

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- Proposed Current Year Reductions
  - A series of reorganizations, which included position eliminations in Public Works Engineering Services, Purchasing, Human Service and Community Partnerships, and Planning;
  - Increasing Probation Officer Case Loads consistent with industry standards;
  - Additional reductions in operating and capital outlay by the Sheriff's Office, Supervisor of Elections, Clerk of the Circuit Court, and Property Appraiser;
  - A cost shift in healthcare costs to employees;
  - Leveraging private-sector relationships for creating efficiencies, including centralized printing; and
  - Reducing Rural Waste Collection Center Hours of Operation to Equivalent Hours at the Branch Libraries from 50 to 40 hours per week.
  
- Local Economy and Job Creation
  - Infrastructure improvements through the commitment of approximately \$107 million which has contributed to approximately 1,000 construction jobs being created.
  - Tax incentives to six companies (Bing Energy, Event Photography, Inc., ACS State and Local Solutions, Sunnyland Solar LLC, SolarSink, LLC and Red Hills Surgery Center) diversify the local economy.
    - Over the next several years, an additional 550 jobs are anticipated to be created through this investment.
  - FY2013 Budget includes funding to support the widening of the running trail Apalachee
    - A \$10.7 million economic impact could be realized through the hosting of a number of state, regional and national events that cannot currently be hosted given the track's existing configuration
  - Tourism Development's marketing and public relations advertising campaigns continue to:
    - Drive 2.3 million visitors to our community
    - \$540 million direct economic impact
    - Industry supports over 11, 240 jobs
  
- County Employees and Jobs
  - Eliminated an additional net 5.5 jobs, for total of 75.5 positions
  - Accomplished reductions through attrition; no layoffs
  - Shifted a portion of health care cost to employees
  - Cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of one percent in October and one percent in April was included in the budget.

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- This COLA is for all Board and Constitutional employees.
  - COLAs have not been provided to employees since FY2010, and the adjustment was only for half that year.
  - Last year, as a result of legislative changes to the Florida Retirement System (FRS), which requires employees to contribute 3 percent of their salaries to retirement, County staff saw between a 0- to 3-percent pay reduction.
  - In an effort to mitigate the effect of the cuts on employees, the Board took action to provide an offset, with the lowest-paid employees receiving a higher level offset.
  - County Commissioners and higher-paid employees did not receive the offset.
- Cost Avoidance
    - County LEADs process initiated during FY2011 focused on areas that the County can either control or influence
    - As evidenced by this approach, staff is continuously looking at ways to avoid costs and create efficiencies in the organization
    - Over \$10.5 million in cost avoidance realized this year, including:
      - Supervisor of Elections consolidated space in old Ashley's; eliminated need for \$10 million new capital project
      - Absorbed branch library expansion through existing staff; avoided hiring 4 new positions at \$260,000
      - Realigned a number of positions into critical areas such as Veteran Services and Parks and Recreation, thereby eliminating the need to create additional positions (3 positions \$133,000 saved)
        - Through Blueprint 2000 and other funding sources, over the past five years, the County has experienced a significant increase in greenways and passive parks, 1,185 acres, which require on-going maintenance. The County is experiencing a significant increase in demand for services in claims support from returning veterans.
  - Reserves
    - Utilized \$4.9 million to balance operating budget
      - Maintain overall reserves above policy minimums
    - Allocated \$14.7 million to support on-going capital maintenance needs for the next five years

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- Prior year budget actions
  - Restructuring Library Administration and Collection Services and opening the expanded library branches without adding additional staff;
  - Reducing Executive Management by 33 percent;
  - Closing the Solid Waste Facility to the public for the disposal of Class III waste and contracting with a private vendor to recycle this waste stream;
  - Significantly restructuring the Public Works Department's stormwater and mosquito control programs - specifically, stormwater maintenance was previously performed by two divisions and is now being conducted by one division;
  - Eliminating 18 positions in the Development Support and Environmental Management Department, over a two year period, to reflect decreased staffing needs due to the significant downturn in the construction industry;
  - Privatizing the Pre-trial GPS Monitoring Program;
  - Reducing roadside maintenance through the elimination of an operations crew saving; and
  - Utilization of fund balances to offset budget shortfalls.
  
- Comparative Information
  - 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.

*\*Leon County manages to maintain these efficiency benchmarks with among the highest % of property exempt from property taxation.*
  
- Public Hearings
  - The first public hearing will be on Tuesday, Sept. 11, at 6 p.m. in the Commission Chambers on the fifth floor of the Leon County Courthouse, located at 301 S. Monroe St.
  - The second public hearing will be at the same location on Tuesday, Sept. 18, at 6 p.m., at which time the Board is scheduled to adopt the final budget and millage rates.