



Leon County
Board of County Commissioners

Bryan's Brief January 2013

Happy New Year! I am proud to begin another year representing District IV on the Board of County Commissioners. Leon County is a very special place to live and raise our families and that's because of you, the great people who make up this community. I know 2013 will bring great things our way and I can't wait to share them with you.

While 2012 ended on a difficult note with the tragedy in Newtown, I have great confidence that our school district and local law enforcement are doing everything they can to prevent such a horrendous act from happening in Leon County. We live in difficult and challenging times which require us to be ever vigilant to insure our safety and that of others. My heart goes out to the families and residents of Newtown, Connecticut.

Last month the County Commission held their annual Board Retreat. There we discussed many items including setting the Counties priorities for this year. Topping the list of priorities for 2013 are the economy, the environment, our quality of life and governance. As in years past, our challenge remains trying to move forward and do what needs to be done with fewer resources and no new construction. This is a challenge that we've faced before and with your support and the dedication of the commissioners and staff, we will meet and hopefully even exceed expectations. There are things that we cannot control, but we can work hard within those constraints and focus on what needs to be done. For instance, we discussed ways to optimize the resources we have and better align them with the Board's priorities. We identified 54 strategic initiatives that we plan to tackle in the next couple of years to better position our county for the future.

During the Board Retreat two important items were brought to light. One was the lack of sidewalks in certain neighborhoods and the other was the need to connect all of our beautiful local trails. The County's lack of sidewalks in areas like Magnolia Drive between Lafayette and Adams Streets and Miccosukee Road between Capital Circle Northeast and Fleischmann Road is a safety issue. We need to look at ways to be more proactive with the city and state in addressing sidewalk concerns. Regarding our local trails, I asked that we look at doing more to promote existing trails and to create a single source of trail information that everyone can access. If we can brand "Trail-ahassee" it will not only be a great resource for our local community, but also a tourist draw and economic resource for the County. Surprisingly, many local residents, and those interested in traveling here, don't know about our scenic trails or even the Miccosukee Greenway. We can, and should promote these beautiful local natural resources for everyone to enjoy.

One item that fellow Commissioner, Bill Proctor has tirelessly advocated for is a central sewer system in Woodville. I support Commissioner Proctor on this issue, but whether or not it comes to fruition depends on the Blueprint 2000 extension committee. This is one of many items they will consider for their list of projects that will then be voted on by you.

A five-year look at the county's needs for financial stability with its revenue was also discussed, along with a joint retreat between the city, county and university and business leaders; and periodic chairman meetings with the county's constitutional officers on their budgets.

I'm very proud to say, that for the first time, the commissioners participated in a conversation on how to improve our communication skills with one another. Everyone acknowledged that there are times when we will disagree with other members of the Board, but that it doesn't excuse unprofessional or even unfriendly behavior. As I said at the Retreat, "The fights about the issues are expected. That's our job!" "The problem is occasionally it turns personal ... what happens is the line gets blurred somehow and that doesn't lend to good governance!" Out of the respect we have for each other, we have committed to remembering the collegial exercise from the Board Retreat and practice what we learned when things get heated on the dais.

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 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 or [606-5364](tel:606-5364). May 2013 bring peace, happiness and prosperity to all.



Bryan Desloge