



Bryan's Brief
March 2013

It's hard to deny the amount of beauty and enjoyment that comes with springtime in Leon County. Whether it's driving around town looking at all of the colorful blooming azaleas, finally being able to take long bike rides or walks in the evenings, watching the Red Hills Horse Trials, going to FSU baseball games or, everyone's favorite, taking part in all of the Springtime Tallahassee events, there is something for everyone this time of year.

It all comes at a perfect time for me because I've spent the majority of the last two months traveling the state in my role as President of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC). While I'm glad to be back in Tallahassee, it was important for me to go to many of the counties' local newspapers to talk with editorial boards, explaining and garnering support for the issues facing our counties this legislative session. One of those issues is the flawed state Medicaid billing system. The current billing process has been a fiscal nightmare for counties, adversely affecting their ability to address their own county budgetary issues. FAC is advocating for legislation that would alleviate the problem for the hardest hit counties, but allow other counties who are able to manage this system effectively to remain status quo. Essentially, FAC wants to work with legislators to engage them in deliberative dialogue, help them to avoid making decisions in a vacuum and urge them to implement changes collaboratively and transparently. The Medicaid billing issue affects all of Florida's taxpayers, but especially the most vulnerable who utilize these services. I urge you to read more about this, as it will come up during the 2013 legislative session. <http://www.fl-counties.com/member-services/publications/news-notes/2013/03/08/fac-priorities-medicaid>.

Despite my traveling the state on behalf of FAC, my priorities are still with Leon County. At the March 12, 2013 BOCC meeting, I'm proud to announce that the Commission approved the *Veterans Emergency Assistance Program Guidelines*. Leon County has a very large veteran population and I know I speak for all of us when I say that we are grateful for their service and sacrifice. Through the *Veterans Emergency Assistance Program*, when situations arise due to a family crisis, loss of employment, deployment, or some other emergency, an individual or family finds that they are temporarily unable to pay for necessities, such as shelter and utilities, they now have a place to turn to for help. This is the least we can do to provide a "service for their service." Go to http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/coadmin/agenda/view2.asp?meeting_date=3/12/2013&item_type=0 (Agenda item 9) to find out more about this program, or call our Veterans Services staff at 606-1900 and please share this information with all of the veterans you know.

Have you ever driven Orchard Pond Road? It's a 5.3-mile County-maintained dirt road that meanders between Meridian and Old Bainbridge Roads. It was not built to any geometric standards and several of the curves are much too sharp for normal vehicle speed. For years the County has maintained this road without a deeded right-of-way. In 2011, FDOT awarded a State Infrastructure Bank loan to Orchard Pond Greenway, LLC who planned to construct a two-lane toll road and associated facilities. The loan was to fund \$10,500,000 of the \$17,294,168 needed for the project, with the property owner, who controls all of the land needed to construct the project, funding the balance with toll revenues.

It's been determined that it would be more advantageous for the County to own the road due to FDOT regulations governing the operation of toll roads. If the County owns the road it will allow the toll collection system to be a drive-thru system (think "Sunpass") as opposed to a stop-

and-pay system with a toll gantry. This will make the driving experience more enjoyable to users and will speed up traffic along the roadway. Orchard Pond Greenway, LLC and the County are working towards having this piece of land become part of the County road system in the near future. There are more details under Agenda item 26 at http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/coadmin/agenda/view2.asp?meeting_date=3/12/2013&item_type=0.

Back on September 13, 2011, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the [enacting resolution](#) which established the Leon County Sales Tax Committee. The Committee's objective was to collect public input and make recommendations regarding public policy for the infrastructure sales tax issues within Leon County. And that is exactly what they have been doing, as they continue to meet regularly to learn about proposed projects of which they will make final recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and the City Commission. Those recommendations shall include: (1) recommendations as to the timing of the infrastructure sales tax referendum, if any; and (2) a review that contains advisory feedback on the projects considered by the committee. To read more about the committee and the proposed projects to date, go to <http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/Home/LeonCountySalesTaxCommittee>

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. With the help of my aide, Brenda, I am kept in the loop and am able to stay involved in my district's daily issues. 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 have 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).

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Commissioner District IV