



Leon County
Board of County Commissioners

Bryan's Brief April 2016

Can't you feel it! Spring is just around the corner. The dogwoods, crepe myrtles and azaleas will be in full bloom soon and with that will come mowing of lawns and pruning the shrubs, but isn't it the time of year we all love so much. Leon County dresses up in her best flora and fauna attire and we realize just how fortunate we are to have the quality of life we so enjoy. There's no place like home!!

The following are some updates for you. Please let me know if there are other issues of interest or if you have questions regarding any of these.

Legislative Update: Lobbying the Legislature is something expected every year. Sometimes we prevail and sometimes we don't, but this year we won. The Florida House of Representatives followed the Senate's lead and passed, SB 1322, a bill that settles a decade long dispute between Florida's counties and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Under SB 1322, counties will save more than \$11 million annually on its shared juvenile detention costs. For Leon County that's more than a hundred thousand dollars a year we don't have to include in our budget. No more reconciliations. No more guess work. No more cutting programs to pay for that surprise juvenile detention bill. We are thrilled with the prospect of the future and no longer having to address bad billing and flawed rule making.

Community Legislative Dialogue Meetings: The "End of Session" Community Legislative Dialogue Meeting is coming up Tuesday, March 22 at 7:30 A.M. in the Leon County Courthouse. The Public is welcome. We'll discuss the legislative session, but here's what we know at this time. The tentative state budget deal includes a few projects for the city of Tallahassee and Leon County. If all are approved by the governor, the city stands to get \$1 million to lure the airline JetBlue to Tallahassee International Airport. The money will be used for JetBlue start-up costs as well as marketing and revenue guarantees. Also included is \$470,000 for hazardous materials response equipment for the Tallahassee Fire Department. The Leon Works program, a county initiative that connects residents to training and job opportunities in skilled trades, should also receive \$100,000. The county will also receive about \$67 million for improvements on Capital Circle Southwest from Orange Avenue to Crawfordville Road. City and county lobbying efforts also scored \$500,000 for a drainage ditch project. The projects must outlast Gov. Rick Scott's veto pen. Last year, Scott vetoed millions of local projects, including nearly all of those requested by Tallahassee and Leon County. Keep your fingers crossed.

Federal Update: On Feb. 24, I had the honor of testifying before the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management. As a former FAC President and current National Association of Counties (NACo) First Vice President, I was charged with making the case for improving the federal government's process for evaluating and reducing the harmful impacts of federal mandates on counties and residents. "Without improving intergovernmental collaboration in the development and implementation of federal agency regulations, these mandates will continue to add another layer of fiscal strain on counties already operating under considerable pressure." We will continue to work on the federal and state level to minimize unfunded mandates to local government and look forward to wins in this area too.

While in D.C. I had the pleasure of representing the Florida Association of Counties in laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. If you have not visited this national treasure, I hope that one day you will. I can't say enough about the feelings that wash over you as you pay tribute to our fallen soldiers. Please keep those who protect and serve in your prayers.

Emergency Medical Service - I am pleased to inform you that the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS) conferred another three-year accreditation to EMS. As a part of the process, CAAS conducts an on-site review of EMS to ensure that each characteristic of the accreditation requirements are strictly met. **EMS received a perfect score on the evaluation and no deficiencies were identified during the process.** As you may remember, our EMS system became the first government-operated EMS system in Florida to meet the rigorous standards and receive accreditation. The accreditation process provides an independent review to validate that EMS is adhering to the highest standards and provides assurance to the community that Leon County EMS meets the established standards for quality patient care, organizational performance and customer

satisfaction. This accomplishment is yet another testament of the great work that our award-winning EMS team does on a daily basis.

Congratulations to EMS Chief Chad Abrams – EMS Chief Chad Abrams was recently accepted to the Center for Homeland Defense and Security's Executive Leaders Program. This prestigious program provides educational training to enhance leaders' capacity to identify and resolve homeland security challenges. As EMS Chief, Chad must ensure a number of homeland security training and response activities such as providing care for patients with infectious diseases, preparation for potential domestic terrorism events at large venues such as the State Capitol or football stadiums, and the recent implementation of the Tactical EMS Unit to assist LCSO's SWAT Team. Congratulations, Chief Abrams

County Leadership Recognition – I thought I would recap your County's Leadership Honors. I will be sworn in as the president of the National Association of Counties in July. County Administrator Vince Long was elected and currently services as the president of the Florida Association of County Managers. County Attorney Herb Thiele was elected by his peers and serves as president of the International Municipal Lawyers Association. Just as impressive, he was past president of the Florida Association of County Attorneys four terms and he has testified before the Florida Supreme Court on behalf of county issues. His success record is highly impressive. Tourist Development Director Lee Daniel was elected as the president of the Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations. Public Works Senior Design Engineer George Su was elected to serve as president of the local American Public Works Association, Local Big Bend Branch and I will be sworn in as the president of the National Association of Counties in July.

In addition, last year Leon County Government received eleven awards bestowed by the National Association of Counties recognizing outstanding county programs and services. One of these awards was designated "Best in Category" as the most outstanding program nationwide in category. These national awards reflect the effort and commitment of talented and dedicated County employees who actively engage our citizens on the most important challenges and opportunities facing our community. I provide you all this information so that you know the leadership you have in your County government. I doubt there is any other government anywhere who has the equivalent. We're here to serve!

Canopy Roads Advisory Committee – I know many of you are aware this issue that came before the Commission March 8 and to all of you who contacted me sharing your recommendations and concerns and to those who worked on the "Statement to the Community" regarding preservation of our canopy roads – I thank you! I welcome all the feedback I can get to help in the decision making process. There's obviously some tweaking that needs to be done, but I have every faith the committee, with the support of the department and legal staff will be able to handle it. Having clearer direction regarding their responsibilities, regular training of the committee members, and Permitting staff support should help expedite the review process for the committee. Of course, having an urban forester at their disposal won't hurt either. The Committee's final recommendations will be brought back to the Commission for citizen comment and final approval and I hope you will look it over and provide comment. I believe, they will do an outstanding job. As many of you know, there was a lot of misinformation going round about the Commission's intent to abolish the Committee and it made for a difficult few months for all. It's imperative that the Committee members understand we trust in their abilities to handle this responsibility - after all that is a bylaw requirement - to bring back reports to the Commission.

District IV Projects

Thomasville/Proctor Rd Recreation Park Property – Thought you might like an update on this. The County bought 100 acres on the corner of Proctor and Thomasville just north of Chiles High. There's money for this project (\$8-10M) that was allocated in the next round of Blueprint tax dollars that will start in 2019 - I'll push as hard as I can to accelerate the build out and my hope is that in the short term (next 2 years or so) we can start cutting some trails for some light passive uses. It's my intent to ask for citizen input on how this is developed. It's still a long time coming, but the money is there. That's the best news of all!

Millers Landing Rd and Meridian Rd – Good news! It's been a long time coming, but I understand the traffic signal is now operational. The City Traffic Engineers will be monitoring its operation. If you have any concerns with its operation, please call their engineers at 891-2080.

Bradfordville Community Center (Bannerman Rd) – We still have continued interest in our classes at the NE Branch Library. We've added a fourth fitness class and will feature three art classes in April. Our Bradfordville Lunch and Learn, held at the Wildwood Presbyterian Fellowship Hall (100 Ox Bottom Rd) on April 13, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, will feature guest speaker Piper Miller from the Leon County

Office of Resource Stewardship, along with a variety of exhibitors and a delicious catered lunch. For information, or to register for any of our Bradfordville Senior Outreach classes, please call 891-4065 or e-mail susan.davis@talgov.com.

The Bannerman Road Widening – The completion of the road widening from Thomasville Rd to 900 feet west of Quail Commons will be delayed as we've had some utility relocation issues. However, traffic will be shifted to the new roadway, located south of the existing road, on or about May 1. Drive carefully until everyone gets used to the new traffic routing. This shift will allow them to move forward with the next portion of the project. I should be able to give you more accurate completion dates in my next newsletter

Miles Johnson and Miccosukee Intersection – I've been writing about this for almost a year now and still don't have a resolution. Here's the situation! Although this area is inside the City limits, the County is responsible for Miccosukee Rd and the City is responsible for Miles Johnson. The City and County have received complaints about the fact that if you're coming off Miles Johnson, you have to pull out into Miccosukee to see around a tree for oncoming traffic. The County suggested taking out the tree which is on our right of way and that was rejected by the Canopy Roads Advisory Committee, the County suggested realigning Miccosukee, but that was also nixed as some trees would have to be removed. The City looked at whether or not a traffic signal could be installed, but the site failed to meet National Traffic Standards to warrant signalization, so that is not an option. The Committee has now asked staff to look at the installation of convex mirrors to address sight distance issues. A report will be brought back to the Committee at their next meeting, but convex mirrors are not an accepted traffic control option per the National Traffic Standards. Stand by, more to come..

Timberlane Rd Sidewalk –The permit to add a sidewalk from Deerlane to Meridian should be under construction by May and we'll coordinate with the City on the pedestrian crossing. The gap in the sidewalk between the day care and the interstate will remain until we see how the City matches up their portion of the sidewalk with ours.

Killearn Acres – There have been no changes on this one as FEMA has not responded to our recommended corrections. As you may recall, we submitted recommendations for changes to the FEMA Maps for Killearn Acres. We're still in the tentative approval phase awaiting final approval from FEMA of the formal map including our recommended corrections. Once we receive formal approval, we'll be holding public hearings and meeting with those property owners who are directly impacted. I know I've shared all of this before, but just in case there are some who has not seen it or doesn't remember - some properties are currently listed as located in the flood zone that should not be, some are not that should be and some we're just correcting the flood elevation. This will allow the insurance companies to better evaluate rates, especially those who are incorrectly included in the flood zone. Once we get their feedback, we'll begin to work on addressing localized flooding along Whirlaway, Apollo Tr and Kauai King. A drainage project has already been funded and when we get their response, we'll be in touch with affected property owners. Yes the wheels of government grind slowly especially on the Federal level.

Orchard Pond Toll Road – Plans for the ribbon cutting and festivities are tentatively scheduled for April 18. The first 10 days after April 18 will be free. If you don't have Sun Pass, you may want to contact the State to secure one. The existing Orchard Pond Rd will be converted into a bike pedestrian trail. More information to follow.

Killearn Lakes Sidewalk Installation – The survey of the property is complete, but we've not yet received the conceptional drawings. Once we receive and approve the drawings a meeting will be scheduled with the Home Owners Association to go over the plans. You may recall that the design is for the installation of a sidewalk on Chadwick from Bull Headly to Deer Lake and from Deer Lake to Journey's End. They'll also connect the sidewalk to the small stretch on Pheasant Run where there is no sidewalk. This is being done under the Safe Routes To School Initiative and is being funded by the local option Gas Tax and Blueprint 2000 allocations.

Killearn Lakes Unit 2 and Unit 3 - Stormwater Project Improvements – The actual construction work is complete in these two units, and only a few items are left on the punch list. Those are primarily landscaping,

Killearn Lakes Unit 1 – is under construction with an eight to nine month completion date if there are no adverse weather conditions to delay construction. The problem we're encountering is that this is a designated wetland area protected by State Environmental Regulations and we're challenged in doing any type construction or restoration in that area. The work is moving very slowly.

Roadway Restoration – The culverts under Kinhega need to be replaced and are in the permitting process for design work. We should be moving forward with the installation with those culverts beginning April. You can expect there to be lane closures when work begins. Repaving of Kinhega will be done when the culvert project is complete.

It's been bitter sweet over the past few months knowing that I would be walking my daughter down the aisle at her wedding. Testifying before a congressional meeting and laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were definite highs that I'm grateful to share with you.

You are receiving this because I have your name or neighborhood association on my mailing list. Many of your family, friends or neighbors may not receive my newsletter. I hope you'll take the time to share this information or let them know they can send an email to me and I'll add them to the mailing list.

I consider it an honor and 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 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 may join you. Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions or concerns, deslogeb@leoncountyfl.gov or 606-5364.

Bryan Desloge