



LEON COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Rick Minor

DISTRICT 3 NEWSLETTER



June - August 2021 News & Updates

Upcoming Meetings

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)

- Monday, Sept. 13
- City Hall (Commission Chambers)
- 1:30 pm

Board of County Commissioners

- Tuesday, Sept. 14
- 5th Floor, County Courthouse
- 3:00 pm - Meeting
- 6:00 pm - Budget Public Hearing

Blueprint Board Meeting and Budget Public Hearing

- Monday, Sept. 27
- City Hall (Commission Chambers)

Hello,

I hope you're doing well and have been enjoying the summer. My daughters finally completed their barrage of camps and swim lessons and started school last week. So far, so good!

Perhaps the biggest news this summer came on August 11th with the official announcement: Amazon will build a 630,000 square foot fulfillment center in Tallahassee and will hire 1,000 employees at \$15/hour or more. According to FSU's Center for Economic Forecasting and Analysis, the project will generate a total of 1,346 full-time jobs, 2,256 construction jobs, about \$167.6 million in wages, and an overall economic impact of \$451 million for Leon County. This will be a boon for local families and it comes at an opportune time. In addition, Amazon is a global leader in sustainability practices, investing heavily in all-electric vehicles for deliveries and expecting to meet its 100% renewable energy goal as soon as 2025. These new jobs, combined with the investments in sustainability as well as state-of-the-art technology, are an immensely good thing for our community.

On a more somber note, the pandemic remains a serious threat. In Leon County, the number of new COVID-19 cases increased by 30.7% last week. Please continue to follow the CDC guidelines and, if you haven't received a vaccination yet but are eligible, please get the shot. The COVID-19 vaccination is free, safe and effective, and it's the best way to protect you and your family. For vaccine locations and other local details, visit Leon County's Emergency Information portal by clicking HERE.

The summer heat hasn't slowed things down in Leon County, and we've worked to capture much of it in the newsletter below. I hope you'll find this information useful, and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any suggestions for our next one.

Thank you again for your interest in our community... it's a great honor serving you and the rest of Leon County.

Rick Minor

Commissioner, Leon County District 3
MinorR@leoncountyfl.gov

P.S. If you have friends and family who might be interested in receiving this newsletter each month, please ask them to sign up at www.LeonCountyFL.gov/RickMinor. Thank you!

Update on Lake Jackson's Dry Down



As you've likely heard, Lake Jackson's Porter Sink began draining in June. This natural event -- often referred to as a "dry down" -- has occurred at least nine times in the past 200 years. Recently, a group of experts from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, the NWFL Water Management District, and the U.S. Geological Survey met to discuss the dry down. Their findings:

- From an ecological standpoint, Lake Jackson is in fairly good condition. They attributed this to the extensive muck scraping operation during the 1999 dry down as well as other water quality projects.
- Lake Jackson's water quality is also fairly good, mostly because of the 1999 scraping and the previous water projects.
- The current dry down conditions are creating a good habitat for fishing.
- So far, random sampling shows that, for the most part, lake bed muck is only a few inches deep, though it is thicker in some locations.
- For these reasons, these agencies currently have no plans to conduct a large scale muck scraping operation like the one performed in 1999. However, they will continue to monitor the lake to determine if scraping, prescribed burning, or other actions would be helpful in 'hotspot' areas.

During this dry down, we have a limited window of opportunity to take actions that will: 1) further improve the health of the lake, and 2) restore access to recreational activities like boating, fishing, and swimming. I'm speaking regularly with FDEP, scientists, and other lake experts about options to achieve both of these goals. Please stay tuned for updates.

In the meantime, to learn more about the Lake Jackson Dry Down, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has created a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and the [James Call of the Tallahassee Democrat](#) just posted another comprehensive article.

In addition, FDEP has a [very helpful website](#) about the [Lake Jackson Aquatic Preserve](#) and WFSU has a terrific post about the dry down on its Ecology Blog: [Lake Jackson Dry Down: Everything You Wanted to Know](#).

You can also learn more about the lake generally from the [Friends of Lake Jackson, Inc.](#) a local group that was formed in 1998 to organize the efforts of informed and concerned citizens who share a desire to protect Lake Jackson from further adverse effects.

NO COST

STARTING
August 16
2021

COVID-19 PCR TESTING

FOR ALL LEON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENTS & EMPLOYEES

Operational Hours: 9am - 2pm Monday - Friday

RESULTS



Results received within
24 hours via email

Testing Sites:

Leon County Drive-Thru Sites
NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED.

Eastside Branch Library

1583 Pedrick Road
Tallahassee, FL 32317

Ft. Braden Community Park

15000 Blountstown Highway
Tallahassee, FL 32310

Lake Jackson Public Library

3840 N. Monroe #300
Tallahassee, FL 32303

Northeast Branch Library

5513 Thomasville Road
Tallahassee, FL 32312

Woodville Community Center

8000 Old Woodville Road
Tallahassee, FL 32305

City of Tallahassee Community Centers
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

Jack McLean Community Center

700 Paul Russell Road
Tallahassee, FL 32301

[Schedule Appointment](#)

Lawrence-Gregory Community Center (Dade Street)

1115 Dade Street
Tallahassee, FL 32304

[Schedule Appointment](#)

Sue H. McCollum Community Center (Lafayette Park)

501 Ingleside Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32303

[Schedule Appointment](#)

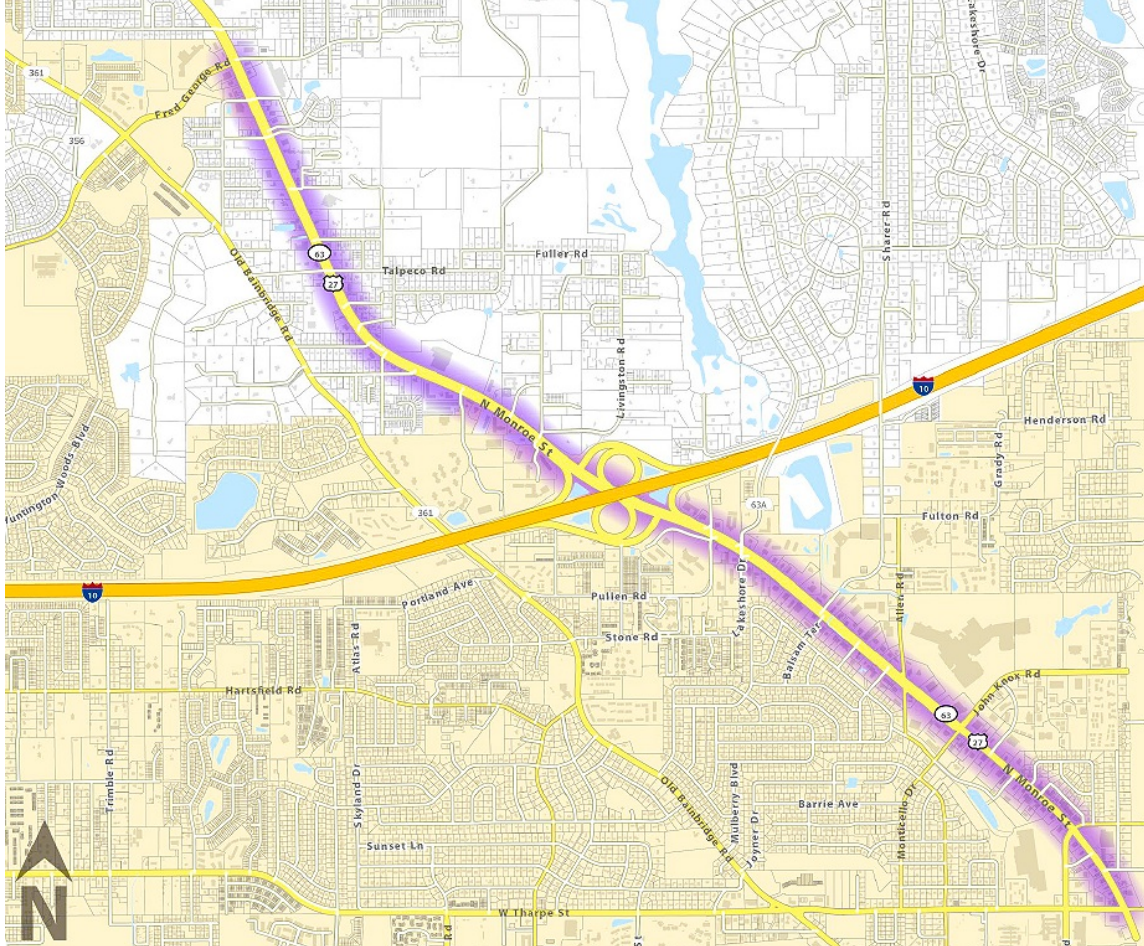
Walker-Ford Community Center

2301 Pasco Street
Tallahassee, FL 32310

[Schedule Appointment](#)



The Citizens North Monroe Corridor Task Force



The Citizens North Monroe Corridor Task Force is a County appointed focus group charged with looking at key issues of crime, homelessness and improvements on the North Monroe Street Corridor from Fred George Road to Tharpe Street. The task force will operate until December to explore current conditions and identify opportunities for improving the corridor.

The mission of the Task Force is to examine key issues along the corridor and identify short-term and long-term opportunities to reduce crime and improve safety and overall conditions - including economic conditions and aesthetics - in a report to the County. Thank you to the task force members, members of the public, and Planning Department staff for the time and effort you are investing in this area.

The next task force meeting will take place on **August 26** from **5:30 to 7:30 pm** at the **Lake Jackson Northwest Community Center** (northwest library branch) on Fred George Road. The public is invited to attend.

You can learn more about the Task Force by following its webpage [HERE](#) and you can contact the [Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department](#) at 850.891.6400.

New Park & Playground in District 3!



Rick and his family recently attended the dedication of Parwez “P.A.” Alam Park within Okeeheepkee Prairie Preserve. The park offers an active park space through a new ADA-compliant playground with a focus on inclusive play equipment for children of all abilities.

The park, located at 1294 Fuller Road, was named after Parwez Alam, known amongst his colleagues as “P.A.,” who served as County Administrator for 22 years. Under P.A.'s leadership, the County created library and park systems, opened community centers, improved road and storm-water facilities and built the County Courthouse, jail, and Transfer Station to name just a few accomplishments.

When Parwez Alam was appointed County Administrator in 1989, there were no active County parks or recreational programs. Under Alam, the County developed a comprehensive parks and recreations program, which has grown to include nearly 4,000 acres of community parks, boat landings, campgrounds and greenways.

Okeeheepkee Prairie Preserve, formerly Okeeheepkee Prairie Park, is a 26-acre preserve meant to serve as a catch-all for stormwater run-off and to provide a buffer to the Lake Jackson Mounds. Originally opened in 2015, the Preserve has been a mostly passive recreational space before the inclusion of this playground and picnic area.

The playground was specifically designed to accommodate children of all abilities. The playground’s vibrant colors and patterns and natural materials, such as rocks, logs and hills, encourage imaginative play-based learning that enhances sensory engagement.

City/County Joint Workshop on Homelessness and Affordable Housing



Recently, the Leon County Commission and the Tallahassee City Commission held a joint workshop on homelessness and affordable housing. At that meeting, commissioners approved \$6.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding.

The workshop allowed both Commissions to receive a comprehensive report, in coordination with the Big Bend Continuum of Care, on the current state of homelessness in Tallahassee-Leon County. Additionally, an update on the redevelopment of the Tallahassee Housing Authority's Orange Avenue Apartments was provided and agenda materials included a report on the current residential housing market.

The Tallahassee Democrat's review of the meeting is [HERE](#) and the meeting agenda in full is [HERE](#). You can view the entire meeting on YouTube [HERE](#).

Call If You Can, Text If You Can't: Text-to-9-1-1 Now Active in Leon County

USE TEXT TO 9-1-1 IF YOU ARE:



Deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability

In a situation where it's not safe to call 9-1-1 for help

Having a medical crisis and can't speak on the phone

Anyone experiencing an emergency in Leon County may now text 9-1-1 when calling is not an option. Text-to-9-1-1 allows anyone in need to send a text message directly to a 9-1-1

call taker. With this new functionality, it is important to remember that Text-to-9-1-1 should only be used in emergency situations where someone is unable to call 9-1-1. Some examples include if speaking would put someone in danger or the caller is deaf or speech-impaired due to a medical crisis.

Calling 9-1-1 remains the quickest way to reach emergency services, though texting provides additional access for citizens who are unable to make a call. As with all text messages, 9-1-1 messages can take longer to receive or can be received out of order.

To use the new function, users can simply send a text as they normally would. In the recipient field, enter 911 with no dashes, compose the message and push send. The first text message should contain the location (or nearby landmarks) of the emergency and the type of help needed: fire, law enforcement or medical services. Please use simple words in messages and do not use abbreviations or slang. Citizens should be prepared to answer questions and follow instructions from the 9-1-1 call taker. Citizens should not text photos, video or emojis to 9-1-1, as these files cannot be received through Text-to-9-1-1.

The Child Tax Credit



The Child Tax Credit in the American Rescue Plan provides the largest child tax credit ever and relief to the most working families ever. Most families will automatically receive monthly payments, without having to take any action.

For those with children, the American Rescue Plan increased the Child Tax Credit from \$2,000 per child to \$3,000 per child for children over the age of six and from \$2,000 to \$3,600 for children under the age of six, and raised the age limit from 16 to 17.

All working families will get the full credit if they make up to \$150,000 for a couple or \$112,500 for a family with a single parent (also called Head of Household).

Beginning July 15th and for the rest of the calendar year, payments will be made monthly (via direct deposit for 80% of families and through the mail for the others).

For further information, please see this [letter](#) and [flyer](#) prepared by Congressman Al Lawson or contact Congressman Lawson's local Tallahassee office at 850-558-9450.

New Technology for Removing Algae Debuts at Lake Munson



Rick speaking at the June 17 Lake Munson event

Rick recently attended and spoke at the public launch of a test program operating at Lake Munson to remove algae from the lake.

This new technology, developed by California-based engineering company [AECOM](#), is the first of its kind. Essentially, the machine takes in lake water, removes the algae from it, and recycles the clean water back into the lake. In other words, algae-filled water goes in, and crystal clear water comes out.

This process not only improves water quality before the water gets into Wakulla Springs, but it also prevents the explosion of toxic algal blooms.

To learn more about this incredible process and to watch videos of the technology in action, check out the stories and videos from [WCTV](#), [The Tallahassee Democrat](#), and [WFSU](#).

Leon County Sandbags and How to Use Them Properly for Flood Protection



Rick and his daughters at Fred George Park - filling sandbags for people who needed them in anticipation of Hurricane Elsa.

As we prepare for possible future storms this year, keep these tips in mind when placing sandbags for flood protection:

- Place your sandbags outside and against the doors where water enters your home.
- Stack layers of bags like a brick wall, overlapping layers by half of a bag width.
- Step on bags to make sure they're firmly in place and to create a tight seal.
- Sandbags are intended to protect homes and structures in their immediate vicinity. Sandbags are not intended to prevent water from coming onto property.

Find more information from Leon County about how to use sandbags before and after a storm [HERE](#). To learn more about how you and your family can have a hurricane plan and prepare for hurricane season, visit: LeonCountyFL.gov/DisasterBucket

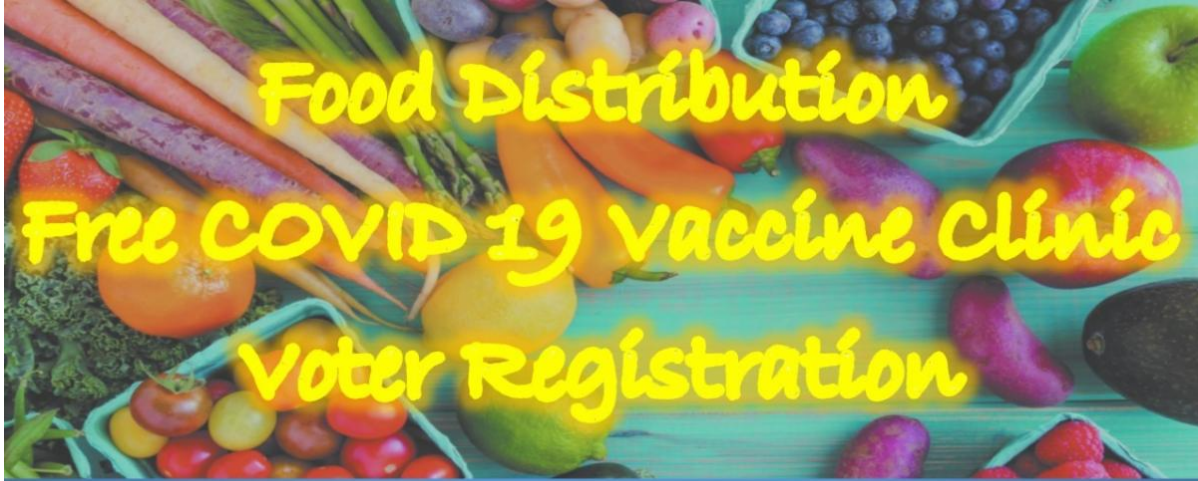
County Expands Community-Wide Public Art Project With Five New Installments



Leon County Government and KCCI Community Catalysts recently unveiled the five latest installments of Art of the Box, a growing communitywide initiative that transforms utility boxes into public art. Leon County and Knight Creative Communities Institute (KCCI) celebrated the original artwork of the local artists selected for Art of the Box at LeRoy Collins Leon County Main Library, one of the five new locations.

The artistically covered County boxes bring the total number of installations to 19 for Art of the Box, a project first piloted by KCCI in fall 2020. In collaboration with partners such as Leon County, the project gives local artists the opportunity to exhibit art outdoors in the public realm and helps deter graffiti. Their artwork is printed onto waterproof vinyl and then wrapped around utility boxes, transforming two-dimensional artworks into outdoor three-dimensional murals for all to enjoy.

Visit ArtofTheBox.org to see a map featuring all of the Art of the Box locations, find information about the artists, and download free walking or driving tour brochures.



Food Distribution Free COVID 19 Vaccine Clinic Voter Registration

Wednesday

August 25, 2021

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Friendship African Methodist Episcopal Church

5975 Old Bainbridge Road, Tallahassee, FL 32303

Food Quantities are Limited

First come, first serve



TALLAHASSEE
VETERANS LEGAL COLLABORATIVE

Leon County's Sustainable Business Recognition Program

Sustainabiz, Leon County's Sustainable Business Recognition Program, acknowledges local businesses and organizations that have made substantial efforts in implementing sustainability practices in areas like energy, water, waste, community and employee engagement, and local economy. This voluntary program is free and provides businesses and organizations with an easy checklist to help determine their recognition



level, as well as technical assistance, and a sustainable business network for our county.

Learn more [HERE](#).



Safety Improvements along North Meridian

Leon County recently installed new safety measures along North Meridian Road from Gardner Road to the Summerbrooke neighborhood.

You can read more about these important safety measures [HERE](#).



Fertilizer Rain Delay Campaign

At the May Board of County Commissioners meeting, the County amended its fertilizer use ordinance to ensure commercial fertilizer applicators are trained and certified in line with industry best practices.

In addition, the County also established a prohibition period for all county residents when applying fertilizer before heavy rain.

Click [HERE](#) for an educational brochure on how and when is best to apply fertilizer.

Congratulations to Local Eagle Scouts Macey and Major Hartman

Rick and his family recently joined Macey and Major Hartman at the Centerville Conservation Trail to learn about and see first-hand their Eagle Scout service projects.

Macey, who is now a sophomore at Chiles High School, is part of the national



inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts. Her service project was a series of four (very comfortable!) benches on the 1.72 mile Centerville Conservation Trail.

Major, who is also a student at Chiles, showed the Minor family his Eagle Scout Service Project - a Conservation Kiosk that reminds us to "act locally".

This summer, the Hartman family hiked 60+miles in 12-days at Philmont Scout Camp to earn the Triple Crown National High Adventure Award!

Be sure to check out Macey and Mason's additions to the trail the next time you are there!



Volunteer with Classroom Connection



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents opted to "redshirt" their children from entering school last fall and enrolled them for kindergarten this school year. Accordingly, Leon County Schools is welcoming more than 3,000 kindergarteners this August, which is about 400+ more than a regular school year. With more than 170 classrooms up for adoption, organizers are asking community members to join in supporting our children in their most critical year of development.

This is not a monetary ask; it is an ask for volunteer time and teacher support. To learn more and to sign up, click [HERE](#).

Financing and Grants for Local Businesses!

Through local and state resources, there are programs that are focused on assisting local companies. The Office of Economic Vitality (OEV) can help your business navigate its financial and workforce needs,



determine its eligibility for incentives, and access funding for needed training, staffing, and research.

To learn more, click [HERE](#).






Whole Child Leon 2021 Report: Critical Issues Impacting the Status of the Child

Whole Child Leon recently released its 2021 report on the status of children in our community.

Ten critical issues were identified as needing priority attention. These issues are outlined in the report, along with strategies for addressing each of them.

To read the report, click [HERE](#).

village squareCast  



"It's not just a one-day event... the Emancipation was more of a process."
~ Althemese Barnes

EPISODE 35: CREATED EQUAL

Created Equal: Stretching Toward Freedom

This year's Created Equal event commemorated Emancipation Day in Florida, which is recognized on May 20.

More than two years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, Union General McCook announced Emancipation to the state of Florida from the Knott House in Leon County on May 20, 1865.

The journey toward freedom that began 156 years ago, continues today in our community. You can watch this very worthwhile program in its entirety [HERE](#).

Summer Backyard Bucket List Challenge

Looking for a fun way to try something new or to rediscover your favorite local attraction this summer? Explore the sites, tastes and experiences found right in your own backyard with the Summer Backyard



Bucket List Challenge!

Every month this summer, Visit Tallahassee will highlight local businesses to explore, including museums, restaurants, breweries, attractions and more.

All you need to do is visit the business and snap a picture for Instagram using the #TallyBucketListSweepstakes hashtag. You can win monthly prizes and even the grand prize: a staycation for two!

The more pics you share, the more chances you have to win! Learn more [HERE](#).



Congratulations to Barb's Brittles!

Congratulations to [Barb's Southern Style Gourmet Brittles](#) for being featured in Food Network's "50 States, 50 Scoops" tour.

Barb's Brittles famous chocolate sunflower brittle was Food Network's choice for the best flavor in Florida! Learn more from the Tallahassee Democrat [HERE](#).

Pet Cosplay Contest

Chance to win prizes!

Prizes Sponsored by: FRIENDS OF THE LEON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

Submit photos by August 21
tinyurl.com/LCPLPetCosplay

SMILE ON

Leon County Library's Pet Cosplay Contest

Does your pet ever remind you of Baby Yoda or the Cat Bus from Totoro? Dress your pet and take part in the Library's CosmicCon Pet Cosplay!

Submit your pet's cosplay pictures by August 21 to be showcased in our virtual gallery and on social media. Three pets will win a \$25 Amazon gift card for their amazing cosplay.

Submit your pet's photo here: tinyurl.com/LCPLPetCosplay

Free Face Masks at all Leon County Libraries

All Leon County Library locations are continuing to offer free, reusable face masks.

Patrons can pick up masks inside of the Library or request curbside pickup upon

arrival.

For hours and locations, visit
www.LeonCountyLibrary.org.



Vaccines Are Your Best Shot Against Covid-19

Find your vaccine appointment with Leon County's Vax Map



The banner features a light blue background with a faint map of Leon County. On the left is the official Leon County logo, which is a blue circle containing a white outline of the county and the word "LEON" in white. On the right is a green silhouette of the county with a blue pin marking a specific location. The central text is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, and the tagline below it is in a smaller, italicized blue font.