



Leon County

Board of County Commissioners

301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida
(850) 606-5300 www.leoncountyfl.gov

MY VIEW

A Year of Big Changes and Bold Initiatives

Vincent S. Long, Leon County Administrator

Ben Franklin once said, "When you're finished changing, you're finished." The famously innovative and civic-minded Founding Father would find much to be proud of in Leon County government in 2016, including our commitment to adapting to meet the changes and challenges facing our community. That's what the best organizations do. They anticipate change, challenge themselves and continue to advance their strategy. 2016 was a year of big changes and bold initiatives for Leon County, marking the last in our five year 2012-2016 Strategic Plan.

Each year I present an annual report to the Board of County Commissioners which also serves as an important state of the County to our community. Here are just a few highlights from the Annual Report demonstrating the dependability of the Board of County Commissioners and the dedication of the men and women of Leon County government in doing what we said we would do in 2016.

We said we would continue to be an effective leader and a reliable partner in growing and diversifying our local economy.

And we did, by leading our tourism economy to another record setting year with \$863 million in economic impact from 2.35 million visitors. We started the Leon Works initiative to help our community fill the gap of 10,000 skilled jobs by 2022. And we created the Office of Economic Vitality to serve as the hub of our economic development ecosystem, convening and leveraging the efforts of our many economic development partners.

We said we would continue to be responsible stewards of our precious resources and natural environment.

And we did, by working with the Keep It Rural coalition to preserve the character of our rural areas through our updated land use policies. We launched a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program to help residents and businesses finance energy improvements. And we continued to support 27 community gardens throughout Leon County.

We said we would continue to protect and enhance our unique quality of life so people are safe, healthy and connected to their community.

And we did, by expanding and improving our beautiful parks including the newly-opened Fred George Park. We celebrated 25 years at our Main Library, which has seen 25 million patrons since it opened in 1991. And we created public-private partnerships to realize the Orchard Pond toll road and to enhance Bannerman Road for the benefit of our community.

Among our many commitments to our citizens, we said we would continue to be a model local government which our citizens believe in and others benchmark against.

And we did, as Leon County was recognized in 2016 with 14 national awards for the efficient, equitable and innovative provision of services to our community. We continued to reach beyond our core practices of transparency, accessibility and customer service to engage citizens as co-creators of our community - we trained 600 citizens in CPR at the annual Press the Chest event, conducted 30 listening sessions with over 300 citizens to continue improving service delivery and engaged citizens on important issues, as we did for Created Equal: A Community Conversation about Race which attracted over 250 participants.

And in 2016, our organizational culture saw us through the disaster of Hurricane Hermine, where County, City and nonprofit partners worked around the clock to help our community recover. The Leon County Emergency Operations Center served as the hub of our response efforts and performed flawlessly throughout its toughest trial.

In all the ways that Leon County touches the lives of the people we serve, we not only do what we say we will do; we do it putting each person first, striving to set the standard in public service.

While we will continue to face the same challenges as communities and local governments everywhere else, Leon County is committed to ensuring that our community continues to be a place like nowhere else, as demonstrated through the pages of the 2016 Annual Report. As always, I appreciate your feedback.

Please find the complete report at www.LeonCountyFL.gov/AnnualReport.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vince Long became County Administrator on July 1, 2011, and has worked for Leon County since 1995. He can be reached at (850) 606-5300 or LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov.

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