



Leon County
Board of County Commissioners
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YOUR TURN

Leon County: Investing in Community, Building for Tomorrow

Vincent S. Long, Leon County Administrator

2026 was another year of great progress for Leon County and our entire community. Delivering on the Board of County Commissioners' highest priorities, we served our citizens while embracing big challenges and always striving to set the standard for performance, fiscal stewardship and best practices for local governments everywhere.

Each year, I present an annual report to the Board of County Commissioners and our community that highlights Leon County's commitment to investing in infrastructure, creating places for people and businesses to thrive, and advancing innovation through co-creation — all of which make our county one of the best places anywhere to live, work and play.

In 2026, we stayed focused on protecting and improving water quality in the Southside by leveraging more than \$60 million in County and State funding for septic-to-sewer improvements, prioritizing critical work that keeps people safe and neighborhoods protected.

From pipes and pavement to parks and public spaces, Leon County raised the bar by investing \$3.5 million to transform more than 30,000 square feet of the Main Library's second floor. It offers 15 meeting and gathering spaces, a workforce hub, a recording studio, and a CAT Excavator simulator, one of only two library systems in the nation to offer it.

Our ongoing efforts to make our community more vibrant and resilient included expanding affordable housing — the bedrock of economic stability, health and opportunity for everyone.

With that same dedication to our community's future, Leon County expanded affordable housing by continuing \$500,000 in annual gap financing for rental housing and approving \$15 million in bonds to preserve 100 affordable units. Through the Community Land Trust, four first-time homebuyers moved into new homes, while construction began on the 17-unit Wallis Street development, our largest yet. The County also helped veterans and their families secure more than \$42 million in earned benefits this year.

Because building community is also about building connections, the County engaged thousands of our citizens across hundreds of events as we held our annual 9/11 Day of Service, celebrated the 11th year of the County's transformative Leon Works Expo, and

hosted our award-winning Created Equal event — exploring how food tells the story of survival, adaptation and celebration across generations.

Together, efforts like these make Leon County a premier destination, and 2026 was another record-breaking year for our local tourism economy. From concerts and festivals to sporting events and more, local tourism generated more than \$1.4 billion in economic impact and more than 2.5 million visitors. The County also delivered our most successful concert lineup yet, welcoming more than 15,000 to the Adderley Amphitheater.

This momentum set the stage for 2026, when Leon County welcomed the world to Apalachee Regional Park for the 46th World Athletics Cross Country Championships, marking the event's return to the United States in more than 30 years. Nearly 500 world-class runners and Olympians representing 48 countries traveled to Leon County to compete for world titles. The event welcomed more than 15,000 attendees and generated more than \$6 million in visitor economic impact, demonstrating the value of years of planning and preparation that went into the event.

Behind these achievements is a high-performing team committed to efficiency and results—guided by a strategic plan with a clear vision, bold goals, and measurable targets. In 2026, our dedicated County employees earned dozens of state and national awards for exceptional public service. And we did it while holding the millage rate flat for the 15th consecutive year and maintaining one of the lowest budgets and one of the lowest employee-to-resident ratios among peer counties, which underscores our effectiveness and fiscal stewardship.

With this momentum, we'll keep setting the standard in the year ahead — listening to the people we serve, addressing our biggest challenges together, and making Leon County a place like nowhere else.

And we cannot do this alone. Thank you for your continued confidence in the work we do on behalf of and alongside our citizens to make our community even better.

Take a look back at Leon County's progress in 2026 by viewing the annual report and video at LeonCountyFL.gov/AnnualReport.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vincent S. Long, County Administrator, has worked for Leon County since 1995, and in 2022, earned the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Award for Career Excellence. Reach him at 850-606-5300 or LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov.

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