



LEON COUNTY COMMISSIONER

**Rick Minor**

DISTRICT 3 NEWSLETTER



## November - December 2024 News & Updates

### Upcoming Meetings

#### Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA)

-- Tuesday, January 21, 2025  
-- 10:00 am - 1:00 pm  
-- Tallahassee State College Center for Innovation Plaza Conference & Events Room (101) - 300 West Pensacola Street (Kleman Plaza)  
-- The agenda can be viewed [here](#) on or about January 14th

#### Board of County Commissioners Annual Retreat

-- Monday, January 27, 2025  
-- 9:00 am  
-- For further information, call 850-606-5300  
-- The agenda can be viewed [here](#) on or about January 20th

#### Board of County Commissioners Meeting

-- Tuesday, January 28, 2025  
-- 3:00 - Meeting  
-- 6:00 - Public Hearing  
-- County Courthouse, 5th Floor  
-- The agenda can be viewed [here](#) on or about January 20th

Hello Rick,

I hope you're doing well. My family and I are in high gear for the holiday season -- the tree is decorated, the stockings are hanging above the fireplace, and (as usual) I'm rushing to finish shopping.

Things are also busy at the County Commission. Last week I attended the [Florida Association of Counties \(FAC\)](#) legislative conference, where county commissioners from across Florida met to establish statewide priorities for next year's legislative session. This is an important part of the process, as it gives us a strategy for ensuring that the voices of Florida's local communities are heard when legislators meet in 2025.

I'm proud to report that, by teaming up with other Florida county commissioners, we were able to obtain FAC's unanimous vote of support for the State of Florida joining the [Southern Rail Commission](#). The SRC currently consists of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, and by working together, those states obtained \$178M in federal money to launch a new passenger rail route between New Orleans and Mobile, which should be operational early next year.

By becoming an SRC member, Florida can join a multi-state coalition to seek federal funding for restoring passenger rail throughout North Florida, with connectivity to the rest of the state and nation. This would boost the state's economy, connect our communities and businesses, and provide another transportation option for Floridians.

The decision to join the SRC lies with the Governor and legislature, and we believe FAC's support will encourage them to explore the idea.

As you'll see below, there's a lot going on in Leon County. I hope you'll find the information in this newsletter helpful, and please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any suggestions, comments, questions or any community issues.

In addition, please keep former State Senator Loranne Ausley in your prayers as [she continues to recover](#) after a serious bicycling accident.

Thank you once again for the incredible honor of representing you at the Leon County Commission. Happy holidays to you and yours, and best wishes for the new year!

Click [HERE](#) for the complete Commission calendar.



**Rick Minor**

Commissioner, Leon County District 3  
[MinorR@leoncountyfl.gov](mailto: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](http://www.LeonCountyFL.gov/RickMinor). Thank you!

## What's Your Big Idea?



At 8am on Monday, December 16th, Rick will be the guest on [The Greg Tish Show](#) and we'd like to hear from you!

What big, single audacious goal should we pursue as a community? Our neighborhoods, businesses, chambers of commerce, schools and universities all have key priorities, of course, but what single mission should we ALL get behind?

Tell us what YOUR idea is for Leon County/Tallahassee! Click on the button below or send an email to [MinorR@leoncountyfl.gov](mailto:MinorR@leoncountyfl.gov) to let us know what you're thinking. Write as much as you like, but please be sure to begin with a short summary of 50 words or less.

We'll review all of the ideas submitted and then discuss some of them when Rick appears on *The Greg Tish Show*. To listen to this segment live, tune your radio to Real Talk 93.3 or click [here](#) from 8am-9am on December 16th.

[Submit Your BIG IDEA Here](#)

# Leon County Commissioners' Installation and Reorganization



On November 19th, the Leon County Commission held the 2024 Reorganization and Installation Ceremony. Congratulations to the Commissioners who were re-elected and sworn in for another term - Christian Caban, Brian Welch and Carolyn Cummings.

Commissioner Brian Welch was selected by the Board to serve as this year's Board Chairman and Commissioner Christian Caban was selected as this year's Vice Chairman.

## Leon County Presents New Year's Eve Celebration at the Adderley Amphitheater



Leon County Government proudly presents "Countdown at Cascades," a New Year's Eve celebration at the Adderley Amphitheater at Cascades Park on Tuesday, December 31,



2024.

This free, family-friendly celebration will mark the end of Tallahassee-Leon County's Bicentennial and honor Leon County's founding/birthday on December 29, bringing the community together for a night of live music, local food trucks, and two spectacular fireworks displays. The night will feature two talented musical acts, Lili Forbes and J & The Causeways, promising a great night of entertainment for all ages.

Lili Forbes will kick off the night at 6 p.m., performing with her 15-piece band that blends funk and Caribbean influences. Known for her vibrant stage presence and powerful vocals, Forbes brings an infectious energy that transforms every performance into a lively, family-friendly experience. Her band's dynamic arrangements create a rich, engaging sound that captivates audiences from start to finish.

At 8 p.m., the first of two dazzling fireworks displays will light up the sky, setting the stage for J & The Causeways, a Southern powerhouse known for their soulful blend of blues, R&B, and rock. Backed by a blazing horn section, the band delivers an electric performance that keeps the crowd moving. Formed at the iconic Maple Leaf Bar in New Orleans, J & The Causeways are known for their heavy backbeats and the magnetic vocals of Jordan Anderson, creating a powerful live experience.

The night will culminate with the second fireworks display at 10 p.m., bringing the festivities to a thrilling close to ring in 2025.

In addition to the live music, food trucks and concessions will be available on-site, ensuring attendees can enjoy a variety of local flavors while they celebrate.

For more information on The Adderley Amphitheater at Cascades Park, seating details and other concerts, visit [TheAdderleyAmphitheater.com](https://TheAdderleyAmphitheater.com).

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## Leon County and the American Legion Honor Veterans at the 12th Annual *Operation Thank You* Community Breakfast



On Veterans Day, Rick was proud to join other members of the Leon County Government, as well as American Legion Sauls-Bridges Post 13, for the annual *Operation Thank You*

community breakfast to honor the service of veterans within the United States Armed Forces. In gratitude, Rick, other Leon County Commissioners, County staff, American Legion members, and community volunteers served breakfast to the more than 450 veterans and their families in attendance.

Each year during the event, Leon County takes the opportunity to recognize a veteran or veteran organization for their continued service to veterans in our community. This year, the County presented two Veterans Day proclamations honoring Colonel Augustus D. Aikens, Jr, a U.S. Army veteran who completed 30 years of service, and Colonel Charles G. "Chuck" Mohr, a U.S. Army veteran who completed 37 years of service.

Since 2012, Leon County has held *Operation Thank You* events annually, giving the community an opportunity to thank the brave men and women who have served or continue to serve their country in the U.S. Armed Forces. The *Operation Thank You* breakfast is one of the community's largest events dedicated to showing appreciation for the 17,000 veterans who call Leon County home.

Leon County remains committed to supporting local veterans all year long with services and programs offered by the [Leon County Division of Veteran Services](#). The Division assists veterans and their dependents in securing all entitled benefits earned through their honorable military service and advocates for veterans' interests in the community.

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## St. Marks Headwaters Greenway Buck Lake Trailhead Opening



Everyone is invited to the opening of the St. Marks Headwaters Greenway Buck Lake Trailhead (10995 Buck Lake Road) on Thursday, December 12 at 10 a.m.

This family-friendly event will introduce the community to the exciting new amenities and adventures available at this additional entry location. Refreshments will be provided, and hay rides will offer tours of this newly expanded gateway. Learn more [here](#).

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# Winter Wonders

## EXPLORING SCIENCE

**LEON COUNTY MAIN LIBRARY**

Saturday, December 7 • 1-4 p.m.

**NORTHEAST BRANCH LIBRARY**

Saturday, December 21 • 12-3 p.m.

**EASTSIDE BRANCH LIBRARY**

Saturday, January 4 • 1-3 p.m.

**WOODVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY**

Saturday, January 11 • 1-3 p.m.

**LAKE JACKSON BRANCH LIBRARY**

Friday, January 17 • 3-5 p.m.

**FORT BRADEN BRANCH LIBRARY**

Saturday, January 18 • 2-3:30 p.m.

**DR. B.L. PERRY, JR. BRANCH LIBRARY**

Saturday, January 25 • 12:30-3:30 p.m.

## The magic of winter meets the wonders of science!

*Ignite your curiosity with engaging and educational hands-on activities centered around the enchanting winter season, featuring crafts, science experiments, and more.*



LEROY COLLINS  
**LEON COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

[LeonCountyLibrary.org/WinterWonders](http://LeonCountyLibrary.org/WinterWonders)

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## Learn How to Create a Family Heir Subdivision in Leon County



## LEARN HOW TO CREATE A FAMILY HEIR SUBDIVISION IN LEON COUNTY



FOR MORE INFORMATION contact the  
Leon County Development Services  
Division at 850-606-1300 or  
visit [LeonCountyFL.gov/DSEM](http://LeonCountyFL.gov/DSEM).

Do you own property in non-urban areas of Leon County?

According to Land Use Policy 2.1.9, your property can be subdivided for family heirs, allowing the creation of family heir subdivisions without having to worry about existing density regulations.

Learn more about Land Use Policy 2.1.9 by contacting the Leon County Development Services Division at 850-606-1300, or visit their website at [LeonCountyFL.gov/DSEM](http://LeonCountyFL.gov/DSEM).

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## Leon County's Annual Adopt-A-Tree Program is back!

*Leon County*  
**ADOPT-A-TREE**  
PROGRAM

**TREE SPECIES**

- Eastern Redbud
- Riverbirch
- Shumard Oak

 **Apply by January 31, 2025**

LEARN MORE AT  
[LeonCountyFL.gov/AdoptATree](http://LeonCountyFL.gov/AdoptATree)

Leon County is proud to offer the 2025 Adopt-A-Tree Program. Applications are now being accepted through January 31, 2025, on a first-come, first-served basis. If you live inside Leon County but outside of Tallahassee city limits, you may qualify to have a tree planted on your property for free.

Residents will have the option to have a tree delivered to their residence for planting at their convenience. This project provides an enjoyable and educational experience for the

entire family, and comprehensive instructions for tree planting and care will be provided upon tree delivery. For those who prefer assistance with tree planting, County staff is available to assist upon request; just choose the "delivery and plant" option.

If you agree to water the tree three times a week for one year, Leon County will plant the tree anywhere between your house and any publicly maintained road or any privately maintained road with public access. To learn more about tree care, [click here](#). To find other tree resources, [click here](#).

To ensure your tree gets a strong start, consistent watering is crucial.

For the first two weeks after transplanting, provide three gallons of water daily. Following this initial period, water the tree two to three times each week throughout the growing season, increasing water intake during droughts. As your tree matures, apply two to three gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter over the root ball, keeping the soil moist but not waterlogged.

Maintain a mulch layer around your tree that extends at least three feet in width. This minimizes competition from turf roots and weeds, safeguarding your tree from potential damage by lawn equipment. The mulch should be two to three inches deep and situated four inches away from the tree trunk. You can expand the mulch ring as your tree grows.

Avoid the use of lawn or weed chemicals and herbicides around the tree. Fertilization is unnecessary. Fertilization is not required. Pruning is not recommended in the first three years, except in the case of broken, dead, or diseased branches.

[Click here](#) to complete the County application for adopting a tree. Residents residing within the Tallahassee city limits are encouraged to explore the City of Tallahassee's Adopt-A-Tree program by visiting [Talgov.com/AdoptATree](http://Talgov.com/AdoptATree).

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## Leon County Dedicates Courthouse in Honor of Judge Augustus D. Aikens, Jr.



On November 22nd, Leon County Government, in coordination with the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida, dedicated the Leon County Courthouse at 301 S. Monroe Street in honor of the Honorable Judge Augustus D. Aikens, Jr. Rick was honored to speak during the dedication ceremony, at which time the Leon County Courthouse was renamed the Judge Augustus D. Aikens, Jr. Leon County Courthouse.

Judge Augustus D. Aikens, Jr. has been a pillar of the Leon County judicial system, exemplifying dedication and service throughout his extensive career. A native of Madison County, Florida, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in public administration and his law degree from Florida State University. Appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles to the Leon County Bench in November 1997, Judge Aikens was re-elected in 2000, 2006, 2012, and 2018, making him the longest-serving Leon County Judge.

Before his judicial appointment, Judge Aikens served the State of Florida as an attorney for over 20 years, holding positions such as General Counsel of the Department of Administration, legal advisor to the Florida Career Service Commission, and Chief Legal



Counsel for the State of Florida's Retirement System. He also maintained a private law practice in Leon County.

In addition to his distinguished judicial career, Judge Aikens honorably served in the military. His service, spanning three decades, includes roles as Staff Judge Advocate, military judge, military police officer, and field artillery officer. He retired as a full Colonel in June 2003 and was awarded the Bronze Star for his service during Operation Desert Storm. He was also awarded the Legion of Merit Medal "for exceptionally meritorious service throughout a long and distinguished career."

Furthermore, Judge Aikens was instrumental in establishing the Leon County Veterans Treatment Court in 2015, a program providing treatment and diversion for veterans and service members facing service-related mental health or substance abuse challenges. Drawing on his 30 years of military experience, Judge Aikens brought credibility and unique insight to this role. He has been a member of The Florida Bar for 49 years and has held significant leadership positions within the Florida Conference of County Judges, including President.

On March 5, 2024, Judge Aikens was honored with a proclamation from the Supreme Court of Florida for his dedicated service. His numerous accolades include the Harvey Ford Award, the highest recognition for a Florida County Judge, the Richard W. Ervin Equal Justice Award, and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tallahassee Martin Luther King, Jr. Foundation. In 2022, he was named the "County Judge Who Made a Difference" by the Conference of County Judges of Florida.

Judge Aikens' final term concluded on Monday, November 18, 2024, officially marking his retirement with the Second Judicial Circuit of Florida. The Leon County Courthouse will stand as a tribute to Judge Aikens' significant contributions, inspiring all who enter to uphold the values and principles he championed.

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## Lake Jackson Greenway



●●● Lake Jackson Greenway

Great progress is being made on Phase 1 of the Lake Jackson Greenway, which will link the City of Tallahassee's Trousdell Center to Lake Ella through sidewalks and on-street cycle routes.

In total, the Lake Jackson Greenway Project will create a 5.1-mile multimodal connection from Lake Ella to the Lake Jackson Mounds Archaeological State Park.

This project has two phases that will provide connectivity to neighborhoods and several existing parks through sidewalks, on-street cycle routes, and shared-use paths for bicyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorized users.

The Lake Jackson Greenway Project will improve the safety and connectivity of pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrian and cyclist improvements include intersection safety treatments, lighting, crosswalks and, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) in key locations (Tharpe Street, Dellwood Drive and Bradford Road).

Stay tuned as progress continues on this transformative project and learn more [here](#).

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## Congratulations to Riccardo's Restaurant



At the most recent County Commission meeting, Rick presented a proclamation to District 3 restaurant owner John Acevedo, owner of Riccardo's Restaurant, in recognition of the restaurant's 25th anniversary.

Attending the presentation with John was his mother-in-law, Tina Lipford, who purchased the restaurant in 1999 and sold it to John and his wife Alicea in 2006.

Tina is well-known for regularly walking babies around the restaurant so their parents could eat, dressing up as Lucille Ball for the restaurant's yearly anniversary celebration, and chasing after patrons all the way out to Capital Circle to say 'thank you' and 'goodbye'.

Riccardo's, which is now located in Betton Place in Midtown, has an outstanding and dedicated staff, two of whom have worked at the restaurant since before Tina purchased it in 1999.

Riccardo's is a Leon County treasure, whose family-oriented operation has made a lasting impression upon thousands of residents and visitors alike. Congratulations to John, Alicea, Tina, and the entire Riccardo's family!

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## Northeast Park Groundbreaking





Rick recently joined the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency, Leon County Government and the City of Tallahassee to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Northeast Park project.

Located adjacent to Roberts Elementary and Montford Middle School on Centerville Road, the park is slated to be completed by late 2026 and will introduce a new array of recreational opportunities to Northeast Tallahassee-Leon County, offering a mix of both active and passive amenities to the entire community.

Planned amenities include two full-sized, lighted baseball/softball fields, one lighted multi-use field, four pickleball courts, a basketball court, three sand volleyball courts, walking trails, a playground, open green space, a restroom and community center, concession stand, and paved parking with electric vehicle charging stations.

The park's design is based on a thorough needs assessment, which incorporated community feedback through surveys and interviews with residents and recreation experts. Results indicated a strong community desire for walking paths, playgrounds, picnic shelters, and facilities for team sports, all of which will be integrated into the park.

The Northeast Park project represents a \$12 million investment in the Tallahassee-Leon County community, offers valuable green space to promote a healthy community, and serves as a vital recreational asset for generations to come.

## Community Gingerbread House Competition

Rick had a great time serving as a judge for the Sixth Annual Community Gingerbread House Competition, held at Leon County's LeRoy Collins Main Library last Saturday. There were so many great entries -- thanks to the competitors, and to everyone who stopped by!





## Youth Book Club Kits

Looking for a fun way to get your child excited about reading? Why not let them start a book club with their friends?

With your library card, you can borrow a Youth Book Club Kit, which comes with five copies of an awesome kids' book for them to read and discuss!

Our book club kits are perfect for sparking exciting conversations and getting everyone hooked on reading!

Request your kit today and pick it up at your nearest library location. Find out more [here](#).



## Neighborhood Meetings

Rick recently spoke at the annual meeting of the Settlers Spring Neighborhood Association. Speaking at HOA/NOA meetings is a great way for neighbors to learn more about the County and for Rick to hear how he can better serve you and your neighborhood.

If your HOA or NOA has a meeting coming up and you would like Rick to speak at it, [please click here to let us know](#).



## Leon County News and Alerts

Don't miss out on crucial updates from Leon County!

Subscribe to Leon County news and alerts for the latest info on County programs and services.

Sign up [here](#).



## Fall and Winter Parades



*Rick and his family riding on the Leon County float in the annual Veterans Day Parade.*



*Rick and his family passed out candy along the parade route for the FAMU Homecoming Parade.*





Rick walking in the WinterFestival Parade

Leon County Commission, District 3 | 301 S Monroe St | Tallahassee, FL 32301 US

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