



Happy Holidays and Thank You!

Dear Friend,

As we enjoy the holiday season, I want to thank you for your support and dedication to our community this past year.

Celebrating Our Achievements

With your help, we have made some great progress in our community. Together, we have:

- Begun adding 300 miles of fiber internet in Chaires, eventually connecting 3,000 households to high-speed internet;
- Improved our Parental Leave benefits for County Employees following birth or adoption;
- Broke ground on the next phase of the Magnolia Drive Trail, and
- Opened the Buck Lake access to the St. Marks Headwater Greenway.

These achievements show what we can do when we work together.

Facing Our Challenges

While we celebrate our successes, we must also recognize the work we must do. We have not yet:

- Adopted a proposal by the Capital Area Justice Ministry to increase affordable rental housing for low-income families;
- Make meaningful changes to our comprehensive plan to protect neighborhoods and encourage responsible growth;
- Followed cities like Atlanta that quickly built rapid rehousing to bring unhoused people inside, and
- Adopted improvements to reduce pedestrian traffic fatalities.

These challenges remind us that there is still work ahead, and we will keep them as top priorities.

Looking Ahead

As we welcome the new year, I feel hopeful about what we can achieve together. I am excited to work to

improve our community even more for our neighbors.

Thank you once again for your invaluable support and active involvement. Your contributions have been instrumental in our community's progress.

I wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season and a happy new year filled with peace and success.

Best wishes,

-David

Shelter Pet of the Month - ♥ Piper ♥



Meet Piper ♥ She's a two-month-old female kitten.

Piper is a bold and beautiful kitten with a "touch of sass"

- ☐ Not shy around older cats and even the dog in her foster home.
- ☐ Confident and affectionate.
- ☐ Sweet and spunky.

Piper is waiting for a new family to fill your home with love and laughter. Visit the shelter today to meet this incredible girl and make her part of your family.

By Appointment: Daily: **10:00a - 6:00p**

Walk-in Kennel Viewings: Wed., Sat. and Sun.: **1:00p - 5:00p**

Phone: 850-891-2950

Shelter Address: 1125 Easterwood Drive

Shelter Adoption Information

Upcoming Affordable Housing Vote Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Last month I told you about the unanimous vote of the County Commission to have staff analyze a proposal developed by the [Capital Area Justice Ministry](#) (CAJM). The proposal would set aside 20% of the county's annual Blueprint surcharge revenues, beginning in 2026, to fund an Affordable Rental Housing Land Acquisition and Leaseback Program modeled on the [Penny for Pinellas Land Assembly Fund](#).

We expect this information to return to the Commission for a vote at our January 28, 2025 meeting. If approved, this proposal would set aside nearly \$1.3 million each year for affordable rental housing projects that include rental units for extremely low—and very low-income families.

For years, CAJM has developed well-researched proposals to increase the stock of affordable rental housing for low-income and very low-income families. They have advocated at the City of Tallahassee and the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency and are now working on the Leon County Commission. Will your Leon County Commission be the first to say **YES to doing something to stem the worsening affordable housing crisis?**

How it Works:

The plan that CAJM is proposing allows the Leon County Housing Finance Authority (HFA) to review developer applications and obtain appraisals for the land proposed for the project. If approved, the HFA commits to purchasing the land and then leasing it back to the developer for 99 years for an annual fee in addition to the property taxes they would pay.

In exchange, the developer would agree to set aside a specified percentage of units for renters with extremely low and very low incomes. The purchase-leaseback arrangement reduces the developer's upfront capital costs by the amount of the cost of the land. This reduces the debt the developer must incur to begin the project and frees up money to be devoted to other project capital costs.

Year in Review

- Comcast began adding 300 miles of fiber in Chaires, the eastern portion of District 5. When completed in 2026, 3000 households will get connected to high-speed internet through this project.
- Phase 2 (Pontiac Dr. to Diamond St.) of the Magnolia Drive Multi-Use Trail in District 5 broke ground in May 2024. The anticipated completion date of this phase is Fall 2025.
- Improved the County's Parental Leave Policy to provide eight (8) weeks of paid leave at 100% of the employee's rate of pay following the birth or adoption of a child.

- Approved funding for a third H.O.S.T. Sheriff's Deputy to reach out to the unhoused to help them find housing.
- Added an individual who currently benefits from a rental housing assistance program, has benefited from an affordable homeownership program, or experienced an eviction within the last 10 years to the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.
- Directed staff to bring back an agenda item to consider an ordinance restricting sales of certain animals at pet stores in Leon County to reduce overpopulation from puppy mill breeders.
- Approved an agreement with Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad to install new crossing surfaces and pavement markings at seven railroad crossings in Leon County.
- Directed staff to collaborate with CAJM to prepare an agenda item with a proposal amending the 5-year capital improvement budget to set aside 20% of the county's annual Blueprint surcharge revenues, beginning in 2026, for the duration of Blueprint 2020, to fund an Affordable Rental Housing Land Acquisition and Leaseback Program modeled on the Penny for Pinellas Land Assembly Fund.
- Directed staff to prepare an agenda item identifying new actionable ways to prevent pedestrian-related severe injuries and fatalities in all of Leon County, incorporating lessons from successful example governments.
- Approved the 2024 Annual Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Report of Recommendations, including a SEER energy-efficiency recommendation made by ReThink Energy., which will result in lower monthly utility bill amounts for the affected low-income households.
- Directed staff to conduct a traffic and safety study for pedestrians and vehicles from the intersection of Apalachee Parkway and Capital Circle SE eastward for five miles – just beyond the Apalachee Regional Park.

Food Distributions During the Holidays

The holiday season can be a challenging time for many families and individuals who may struggle to access sufficient food. Fortunately, there several food distributions that provide assistance to those in need. Here is some helpful information about these locations.

December 21 - [Second Harvest of the Big Bend](#), 7am until food is gone at Governors Square Mall, located at 1500 Apalachee Parkway. This distribution will be drive-thru and served on a first come, first served basis.

For the complete list of food distributions in Tallahassee or to make a donation to these efforts, visit this [link](#).

These local organizations also provide meals and services:

[ECHO Outreach Ministries](#), 548 E Bradford Rd. - providing support services, including food assistance, to families in need throughout the year, with special programs during the holidays.

[City Walk Urban Mission](#), 1105 N Monroe St. - offers various services to those experiencing homelessness or in need, including food distribution during the holiday season.

[Salvation Army Tallahassee](#), 2410 Allen Rd. - known for its community support efforts, including food distribution, especially during the holidays.

[Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida](#), 1380 Blountstown Hwy. - providing a variety of services, including food assistance, to help families during the holiday season.

Animal Shelter Foundation Tally Spay & Neuter Clinic

Tally Spay & Neuter Clinic is a dedicated facility aimed at controlling the pet population through affordable and accessible spay and neuter services. The clinic provides high-quality care to pets and promotes responsible pet ownership.

The clinic is currently looking for [volunteers](#) to help support its mission and make a difference in the community. Tasks include preparing kennels and traps, preparing food for post-op patients, assisting with laundry, general clinic maintenance, photography, data entry, client service, and much more. To learn more about volunteer opportunities at the clinic, click [here](#).

Be on the lookout for our video on our socials of our volunteer time at the clinic.



Local Holiday Events Leon County Closures & Service Changes



December 19 - [Elf Night at Dorothy B. Owen Park](#)

December 21 - [Winter Wonders: Exploring Science](#)

December 31 - [Countdown at Cascades](#)

Leon County Closures/Services Changes for the Holidays

Closed Wednesday, Dec. 25 and Wednesday, Jan. 1 - Leon County offices, libraries, community centers, Animal Control.

Remaining Open - Leon County Parks and Recreation facilities (parks, greenways, campgrounds, and boat landings).

Libraries - All Public Library locations will close on Tuesday, December 24, 2024, and Tuesday, December 31, 2024, at 6 p.m. The Main Library will resume normal operating hours at 10 a.m. on Thursday, December 26, 2024, and Thursday, January 2, 2025. All other Library branch locations will resume normal operating hours at 11 a.m. on

Thursday, December 26, 2024, and Thursday, January 2, 2025.

WastePro Pickup- delayed one day for citizens whose normal pick-up day is during the holiday.



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