



Dear Neighbor,

If you're reading this message, something important is happening. You are actively participating in local government and making it work for the betterment of our community.

I write these email newsletters, record weekly update videos, and share deep dives into specific issues because I believe my office must be transparent. Government can be confusing, but it shouldn't be difficult for you to know exactly where I stand and why I vote the way I do.

When I take time to explain my thought process, it allows you to hold me accountable. I get plenty of emails from neighbors who support my decisions, and I also get emails from those who disagree. I genuinely appreciate every one of them. My job is to represent our district and Leon County as a whole, and I cannot do that without your honest feedback.

I especially appreciate everyone who takes the time to respond to my advocacy requests. When we needed to push for actual affordable rental housing, you made your voices heard. When a massive urban services expansion threatened the Old St. Augustine canopy road, you showed up to protect our environment. Local government works best when you are involved, and I couldn't do this without you.

Because my social media posts and email newsletters are voluntary, they don't reach everyone I want them to. My goal is to keep as many of our neighbors informed as possible about what is actually happening on the Commission dais.

If you know someone in the district who cares about our community and would find this useful, please forward this email to them and invite them to subscribe.

If your District Five neighborhood or community group would welcome me to your next meeting, I would love to attend! Just send me an email to set it up! (okeefed@leoncountyfl.gov)

Thank you for reading, for staying involved, and for letting me know what matters most to your family and your neighborhood.

Sincerely,

David

A Moment in Local Black History

John G. Riley

This February, in honor of Black History Month, I'd like to highlight the remarkable life of John G. Riley. Born into slavery in 1857, Mr. Riley overcame tremendous adversity to become one of Leon County's most respected educators and civic leaders.

He served as principal of Lincoln Academy (the county's first public school for African American students) and was known for his unwavering commitment to education, empowerment, and equality. Mr. Riley advocated for opportunity and advancement in Tallahassee, helping to lay the foundation for progress that would benefit countless families.

You can learn more about his enduring legacy by visiting the John G. Riley House, located in District Five. The museum preserves his story and offers a powerful window into our shared heritage. I encourage you to visit this local treasure and celebrate the life of John G. Riley during Black History Month. Visit rileymuseum.org for more information.



Leon County Septic-to-Sewer Program

Leon County's septic-to-sewer initiative is part of a long-term water quality and springs protection effort—especially in the **Primary Springs Protection Zone** in the southern parts of Tallahassee. Failing or aging septic systems were contributing excess nutrients into the groundwater that flows into Wakulla Springs and the Upper Wakulla River, degrading water quality and ecosystem health.

The septic-to-sewer conversions:

- Replace septic tanks with central sewer connections.
- Reduce nutrient and contaminant discharge into groundwater.
- Protect water supplies and spring ecosystems.

Last week, I was able to tour some of the conversion sites and see firsthand the progress being made by our staff and contractors on this work. Hundreds of homeowners have already taken advantage of this program, with more in the pipeline.





Recent Votes at the County Commission

To keep you informed on decisions we make at the County Commission, I am providing a summary of the key votes we took at our February meeting.

✓ Leon County Commission Highlights - February 10, 2026 Key Votes

- **World Athletics Cross Country Championships**
Approved update on the 2026 event at Apalachee Regional Park and authorized Chairman travel to Poland to meet with World Athletics officials. Goal: make Leon County the permanent home for this global event.
Vote: Passed 6-1 (Commissioner Minor opposed)
- **North Florida Fairgrounds Transformation**
Directed staff to begin lease negotiations with the North Florida Fair Association to allow up to \$30M in Blueprint-funded improvements and report back in 90 days.
Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)
- **Tourism & COCA Grant Accountability**
Directed staff to draft revisions to County Tourism Grant and COCA guidelines to prevent awarding funds to businesses owned by board members—unless through competitive bidding—with limited exceptions for sole-source vendors.
Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

✓ **Leon County Commission Highlights - February 10, 2026 Key Votes**

- **Complete Streets Ordinance**

Requested an agenda item to consider adopting a Complete Streets ordinance, based on recommendations from the American Heart Association.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

- **Resolution on Respect & Inclusion**

Approved a resolution affirming Leon County's commitment to respect and recognize the dignity of all individuals, urging all citizens to embrace diversity and inclusion.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

- **Lake Jackson Habitat Restoration**

Added support for Lake Jackson restoration funding to the County's legislative priorities.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

- **Florida Sun Estates Water Crisis Response**

Approved sending a demand letter to the property owner for reimbursement of \$33,000 in County costs and requesting rent abatement for impacted residents after a 5-day water outage.

Vote: Passed 7-0 (Unanimous)

Shelter Pet of the Month - ☐ Snow ☐



Meet Snow!

I am a 5-year-old neutered male, and the shelter staff says I'm a mix of an American Staffordshire Terrier and a Labrador. I may be a bigger boy at 60 pounds, but I'm a lap dog at heart. I like to think of myself as a gentle giant and a true couch potato.

I absolutely love lounging at home, watching people walk by, and even enjoy rolling around in the grass outside, playing with my toys! I'm fully potty-trained and love all people. I'm ready to be your second shadow, your fetch partner, and your best snuggle buddy!

By Appointment: Daily, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

Walk-in Kennel Viewings: Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Phone: 850-891-2950

Shelter Address: 1125 Easterwood Drive

Shelter Adoption Information

Apply to be a Summer Youth Intern with Leon County

The 2026 Summer Youth Intern Program is a paid summer work-experience and training initiative for local youth ages 14-24, offered by Leon County Government in partnership with CareerSource Capital Region. The goal is to help young people gain real-world job skills, professional development, and workplace experience within County government departments.

Interns work in County departments, performing entry-level tasks and building practical job skills. Interns will work for 5 weeks (June 29 - July 24), 20 hours per week, and earn \$14 per hour.

For more information, contact VolunteerLeon@LeonCountyFL.gov or call 850-606-1970. The [application portal](#) will be available on Monday, March 2, 2026.

Apply to Serve on a Citizens Committee

Leon County is seeking residents who want to serve on citizen advisory committees, boards, and authorities. These volunteer committees help guide local decision-making on issues such as planning, housing, environment, public safety, and more. Serving on a citizen committee is a great way to make a direct impact in our community.

To view available committees, vacancies, and to submit an application online visit:

☐ <https://www2.leoncountyfl.gov/Committees/>

Watch our Community Updates on Youtube

Commissioner David O'Keefe
 @commishokeefe · 30 subscribers · 158 videos
 Representing Leon County's District Five. | My videos are my own and do not reflect the views of the County Commission. [mtr.bio/Okeefe](#) and 4 more links

Shorts

- Leon County Weekly Update | Aug 30, 2025 (56 views)
- Weekly Update | Chamber Conference, ... (122 views)
- Attended the grand opening of The Kearney Center! (170 views)
- Upgrades coming to Pedrick Pond Park! (247 views)
- Field Trip - Affordable Housing (150 views)

Videos

- Leon County Fire Service Fee Recap (4 views · 2 weeks ago)
- Behind the Scenes at Tally Spay (18 views · 7 months ago)
- Pedrick Pond Flooding Update (35 views · 1 year ago)
- Greenway Vote Recap (12 views · 1 year ago)
- FEMA Money for Leon County from May Tornadoes (12 views · 1 year ago)

Stay connected between newsletters by subscribing to our YouTube channel. Each week we share updates on County projects, local events, and issues that matter to the community.

[Subscribe on YouTube](#)

Upcoming Meetings & Events

[Leon County Commission](#)

March 10 at 3:00 p.m. - Commission Meeting

March 10 at 6:00 p.m. - Public Hearings

Blueprint Board

March 12 at 3:00 p.m.







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