



Dear Neighbor,

We are living in a time when cruelty, exclusion, and fear dominate our headlines and shape our public life. Around the world and close to home, we see leaders and institutions using division to build power. Neighbors feel isolated, communities feel fractured, and many of us struggle with how to respond in ways that do not let anger, fear, or despair consume us.

Those feelings are natural. But if we allow them to harden into hate, we lose the very thing that makes us resilient, our humanity. Fred Rogers once said, *“The media shows the tiniest percentage of what people do. There are millions and millions of people doing wonderful things all over the world, and they’re generally not the ones being touted in the news.”*

That truth is alive here at home. In the face of harmful policies from higher levels of government, neighbors are building networks of support, organizations are defending rights, and coalitions are forming to make sure no one is left standing alone. These efforts may not make the news, but they are acts of courage. They show that we can choose to protect each other when power is abused.

Too often we hear messages that paint those in need as a burden or suggest that receiving help makes someone less deserving. But the truth is we all know what it means to need help, whether it is a hand from a friend, medical care, or something as basic as food and shelter. Needing help is not a failing, and it never takes away from a person’s worth. Every one of us deserves dignity and respect in our hardest moments as well as in times of abundance.

We can find the strength to face cruelty without letting it change who we are. As Kahlil Gibran wrote in *The Prophet*, *“Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution.”*

I may not get a vote in Congress or the state legislature, but here in Leon County I will be steadfast in using every tool we have to respond to cruelty, to minimize harm, and to protect the dignity of every member of our community. When policies from above create fear or exclusion, I will work to ensure our county responds with care and resolve.

The feelings of fear and anger we carry are real, and they are justified. But the challenge is what we do with them. We can feel them fully, process them honestly, and then respond in defiance of cruelty by remembering both our own humanity and the humanity of others, refusing to mirror hate. As Desmond Tutu reminded us, *“All of our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others.”*

Fred Rogers asked us to imagine, *“What our real neighborhoods would be like if each of us offered, as a matter of course, just one kind word to another person.”* That vision is not small. It is an act of resistance against a culture of contempt. Kindness is not weakness. It is strength. Practiced together, it is how we face fear without letting fear define us, and how we stand against cruelty without becoming cruel ourselves.

Sincerely,

David

Fire Services in Leon County



You've probably heard a lot of news recently about fire services in the unincorporated parts of Leon County. Last week I recorded a video that hopefully clears up any questions you might have on the issue. Watch my recent video [here](#).

Washington Square Update



Real progress is finally being made at the stalled Washington Square project. Work crews have begun restoring the streets and sidewalks around the site.

Since the developer failed to make progress during the 60-day timeline the County gave them, we decided to pull the performance bond, and the bond company pressured the developer to start the work. If the work isn't completed to the County's satisfaction, the bond company will then either finish the job themselves, or they will pay the County to complete the work.

I appreciate our County Attorney's Office for pursuing the developer to fix our downtown streets. None of that would have been possible had it not been for the unanimous support that I received from my County Commission colleagues to seek legal action against the developer.

Main Library Renovations



On Friday, the County celebrated the ribbon-cutting of the renovated second floor of the downtown Main Library. The renovation enhances library services and allows the library to meet the community's current and future needs and increase accessibility for residents of all ages and abilities. The new additions include:

- 15 multi-use meeting rooms for tutoring and small events;
- Soundproof recording studio;
- Learning Commons for adult education and English-language tutoring;
- Ancestry alcove featuring resources for family history research;
- Workforce development hub with a career center and simulator lab, offering the hands-on real-world experience of working with heavy equipment machinery.

Recent Votes at Blueprint, CTRPA and the County Commission

September was a busy month with a Blueprint Meeting, a meeting of the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) and two (2) County Commission meetings. To keep the public informed on some of the decisions we make at these meetings, I am providing a summary of some of the key votes we took this month.



Leon County Commission Votes: 9/23/2025

- **Motion:** Directed staff to hire a consultant to evaluate all options to provide fire services to the unincorporated areas of the County beginning in October 2028.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, Minor, O'Keefe, Maddox, Welch
No: —
Not Present: —
Abstain: —
- **Motion:** Approved the 2026 County Budget funding vital county services and keeping the millage rate flat for the 14th consecutive year.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, Minor, O'Keefe, Maddox, Welch
No: —
Not Present: —
Abstain: Maddox (on homelessness funding)



CRTPA Votes: 9/16/2025

- **Motion:** Adopted a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) providing \$300,000 of federal funding in FY 2026 to acquire right-of-way for the replacement of the Veterans Memorial Drive bridge over Still Creek.
Result: Passed
Yes: Messersmith, Maddox, Matlow, Minor, O'Keefe, Richardson, Williams-Cox, Riley-Goldwire
No: —
Not Present: Hosford, Lawson-Cox, Holt
- **Motion:** Approved the proposed FY26 CRTPA operating budget.
Result: Passed
Yes: Messersmith, Maddox, Matlow, Minor, O'Keefe, Richardson, Williams-Cox, Riley-Goldwire
No: —
Not Present: Hosford, Lawson-Cox, Holt
- **Motion:** Adopted the 2050 Regional Mobility Plan, our long range comprehensive strategy to guide investment in our regional transportation network.
Result: Passed
Yes: Messersmith, Maddox, Matlow, Minor, O'Keefe, Richardson, Williams-Cox
No: —
Not Present: Hosford, Lawson-Cox, Holt



Leon County Commission Votes: 9/15/2025

- **Motion:** Approved a one-year agreement with City to maintain landscaping of portions of CCSE and CCSW, and requested an agenda item outlining a bidding process for local businesses interested in the work.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, Minor, O'Keefe, Maddox, Welch
No: —
- **Motion:** Fire services assessment revenue collected by the County on property tax bills will continue to be remitted to the City to pay for fire services provided in the unincorporated area of the County.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, Minor, O'Keefe, Maddox, Welch
No: —
- **Motion:** Maintain current method of collection of the fire assessment revenue collected by the County on the utility bill and not shift to the property tax bill.
Result: Failed
Yes: Cummings, Minor, Maddox
No: Caban, Proctor, O'Keefe, Welch
- **Motion:** Shifted the method of collection by the County for the fire services assessment from the utility bill to the property tax bill.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, O'Keefe, Welch
No: Minor, Maddox
- **Motion:** Provided authority for the County Attorney to start the dispute resolution process related to the City violating the current 5-year Fire Service Agreement.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, Minor, O'Keefe, Maddox, Welch
No: —
- **Motion:** Requested an agenda item about the current lease agreement of the fairgrounds, its structure and authority and legislative remedies available to the Commission.
Result: Passed
Yes: Cummings, Caban, Proctor, Minor, O'Keefe, Maddox, Welch
No: —

● ● ● **Blueprint Votes: 9/11/2025**

- **Motion:** Requested a written legal opinion to the Blueprint Board clarifying whether the agency had the authority to approve the \$1 million grant recoverable to Cascades Gardens, given that it is now recorded as a loan receivable.
Result: Failed
Yes: Matlow, O'Keefe, Porter
No: Dailey, Richardson, Williams-Cox, Caban, Cummings, Maddox, Minor, Proctor, Welch
- **Motion:** Requested an agenda item to supplement funding with BP Infrastructure dollars to support fire stations 15 and 17.
Result: Passed
Yes: Matlow, Porter, Caban, Cummings, Maddox, Proctor, Welch
No: Dailey, Richardson, Williams-Cox, Minor, O'Keefe
- **Motion:** Requested an informational agenda item about suspending the consultant contract for the Fairgrounds Blueprint project.
Result: Passed
Yes: Matlow, Porter, Williams-Cox, Caban, Cummings, Minor, Proctor
No: Dailey, Richardson, Maddox, Welch
Not Present: O'Keefe
- **Motion:** Approve the FY 2026 Proposed Blueprint Budget and FY 2026–30 Capital Improvement Budget, requiring project level cost estimates to be provided by staff now and all future budgets.
Result: Passed
Yes: Caban, Cummings, Maddox, Minor, O'Keefe, Proctor, Welch, Dailey, Matlow, Porter, Richardson, Williams-Cox
No: —

2025 Small Neighborhood of the Year



Drum roll please! Congratulations to the **Avondale**, a District 5 neighborhood, for being named the 2025 Small Neighborhood of the Year. Each year the County, in cooperation with the Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) awards deserving neighborhoods for going above and beyond to make the community a better place to live, work, and play.

Avondale launched electronic newsletters, real-time alerts, and organized beautification workdays. They also prioritized safety by joining the Neighborhood Crime Watch Program and completing a tree project to protect the health of green spaces. **There's nothing small about this award!**

Comp. Plan Community Meetings

At our June 7th meeting, the County Commission postponed the adoption of the proposed changes to the [Comprehensive Plan](#) in order to get more community input. Our staff has scheduled the following Community Meetings throughout the county to hear from you.

Sept. 30 at 5:30 p.m. - Chaires Community Center, 4768 Chaires Cross Rd.

Oct. 1, at 5:30 p.m. - Fort Braden Community Center, 16387 Blountstown Hwy.

Oct. 8 at 5:30 p.m. - Bradfordville Community Center, 6808 Beech Ridge Trail



Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Learn about the latest in the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan Update. Each meeting will offer an opportunity to see what is proposed for your community and to review maps, specific land uses, and policies.

TALLAHASSEE
LEON COUNTY

VISION
2055

A
FOCUSED
FUTURE

**Thursday
SEPT 25TH**

5:30 PM - 7 PM
**Lake Jackson
Community Center**
3840 N Monroe Street

**Monday
SEPT 29TH**

5:30 PM - 7 PM
**Miccosukee Community
Center**
15011 Cromartie Road

**Tuesday
SEPT 30TH**

5:30 PM - 7 PM
**Chaires Community
Center**
4768 Chaires Cross Road

**Wednesday
OCT 1ST**

5:30 PM - 7 PM
**Fort Braden Community
Center**
16387 Blountstown Highway

**Wednesday
OCT 8TH**

5:30 PM - 7 PM
**Bradfordville Community
Center**
6808 Beech Ridge Trail



Improvements at Pedrick Pond Park



One of the best parts of my job as your County Commissioner is being able to deliver results when someone comes to us with an issue. As I spoke with neighbors at community gatherings and meetings, I would hear that there was a need for shade at the Pedrick Park playground. Especially during the very hot summer months, the heat was making it almost unbearable for kids to enjoy the amenity.

I'm happy to announce that the County has begun the installation of shade sails over the playground area. The poles for the sails have been installed although new sails had to be ordered to accommodate a revision to the initial design. Installation should be completed by the end of October.

The Table of Kindness



Last weekend, I took part in a very special event hosted by the New Life UMC and the Leon County Sheriff's Office - **The Table of Kindness**. This community-wide event was a time to unite and remember those families and victims affected by gun violence and violent acts in Tallahassee and the surrounding areas. It was a great event and a day of building bridges and breaking down barriers in our community.

A special shout-out to Pastor Terry Andrews of New Life UMC for the invitation and to the LCSO's Chief of Staff, Dr. Argatha Rigby-Gilmore for introducing me to so many wonderful people throughout the day.

Leon County's 2025 Annual Report



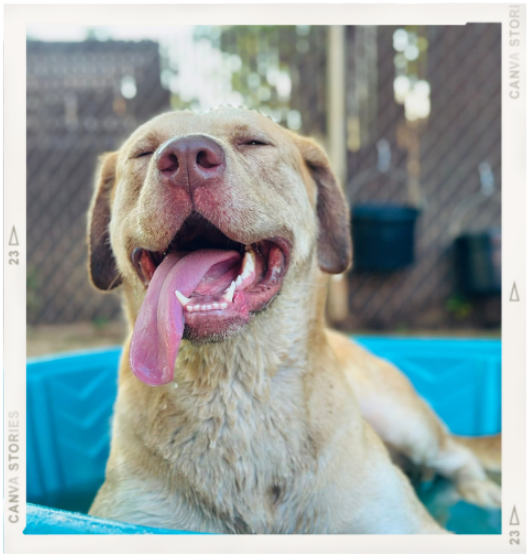
At our last County Commission meeting our staff unveiled the [2025 Annual Report](#) for Leon County Government. This report looks back at what the County did over the past year and highlights community projects, new investments, and how taxpayer money was used responsibly.

Some of the highlights include:

- Increased annual gap financing to \$500,000 for affordable housing projects for low and very low income families;
- Paired \$5.8 million in direct funding with \$183 million in bond financing helping deliver more than 1,200 affordable

- rental homes with more on the way;
- ☐ Protected water quality with \$60 million for septic-to-sewer conversion projects, removing more than 700 septic tanks;
 - ☐ Managed and maintained 600 miles of roads and 700 miles of stormwater ditches to keep neighborhoods safe;
 - ☐ Added more than 100 acres of green spaces adding to the County's 3,400 acres of parks and nearly 50 miles of trails;
 - ☐ Opened the County's largest dog park at Apalachee Regional Park;
 - ☐ Delivered 18 street-lighting projects and 15 bus stop lighting upgrades;
 - ☐ Secured more than \$40 million in earned benefits for local veterans and their families.

Shelter Pet of the Month - Anakin



Meet Anakin! I'm a **neutered male**, and I look like a **Labrador Retriever Mix**. The shelter staff thinks I am about **1 and 1/2 years old**.

I love walks on our trails and being around people. I do pretty well walking on a leash, but there is always room for improvement with my leash manners. I am housetrained, and I even go to the door when I need to go potty.

WCTV recently featured me on their Furry Friday segment, so be sure to check out my [video](#).

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

Watch our Community Updates on Youtube

youtube.com

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Shorts

Leon County Weekly Update | Aug 30, 2025
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Weekly Update | Chamber Conference, ...
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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

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[Subscribe on YouTube](#)

Upcoming Meetings

[Comprehensive Plan Community Open-House Meetings](#)

Sept. 30 at 5:30 p.m. - Chaires Community Center, 4768 Chaires Cross Rd.

Oct. 1, at 5:30 p.m. - Fort Braden Community Center, 16387 Blountstown Hwy.
Oct. 8 at 5:30 p.m. - Bradfordville Community Center, 6808 Beech Ridge Trail

Leon County Commission

Oct. 14 at 3:00 p.m. - Commission Meeting
Oct. 28 at 1:00 p.m. - Commission Workshop on Legislative Priorities

Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency

Oct. 21 at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall







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