



# Leon County

## Board of County Commissioners

301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida  
(850) 606-5300 [www.leoncountyfl.gov](http://www.leoncountyfl.gov)

### YOUR TURN

## **2018 Leon County in Review: Advancing our Strategy**

*Vincent S. Long, Leon County Administrator*

2018 was another year of great progress for Leon County toward realizing an ambitious vision for our community and setting 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 that provides an important state of the County to the citizens we serve, whose active engagement, feedback, and participation make our biggest accomplishments possible. This year's report demonstrates how Leon County continued to advance our strategic priorities and achieve tangible results for our community. The report also highlights our ongoing commitment to investing in infrastructure, creating places for people and businesses to thrive, and building a culture of innovation and co-creation, all of which makes Leon County a special place to live, work, and play.

For example, in 2018 we continued to focus our efforts on being a premiere destination for adventure, culture, and sports tourism. We grew our tourism economy to another record year, from our national headlining acts at the Capital Cascades Amphitheater to the starting line at our cross country championship course at Apalachee Regional Park.

And because we committed to learn all we could from back-to-back hurricanes, Leon County was recognized as a national leader in disaster resilience, earning the nation's first #HurricaneStrong designation from the Federal Alliance for Safe Homes and FEMA. As a learning organization, we also enhanced community resilience efforts through preparedness events like Build Your Bucket and with cutting-edge technology like our Citizens Connect Mobile App.

With that same dedication to ensuring people are safe, healthy, and connected to their community, Leon County continued to protect our environment and natural ecosystems for future generations. This year, we began retrofitting entire neighborhoods to eliminate hundreds of septic tanks in southern Leon County, which will preserve our precious aquifer and the Wakulla Springs basin. We also grew our beautiful parks countywide, adding 204 acres with the opening of St. Marks Headwaters Greenway and Northeast Trail, and with improvements to a community treasure at Ft. Braden Park for families to enjoy.

And because building community is about building connections, we engaged our residents on the Citizens Charter Review Committee, trained more than 1,600 citizens in CPR and AED use, and continued to host community-wide events like our Library Lecture Series, Citizen Engagement Series, and our annual Created Equal event with a frank conversation on race and racial equality. We also assisted veterans and their families by helping secure

more than \$22 million in veteran benefits, and we joined citizens to revitalize a neighborhood with our 9/11 Day of Service.

In 2018, our dedicated Leon County employees continued to set the highest standards in public service by earning 10 more awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for outstanding programs and initiatives, bringing the six-year total to more than 50 NACO awards, more than any other time in our history. These employee-led efforts have been key to keeping Leon County among the most efficient and affordable counties anywhere.

While Leon County will continue to face the same challenges of communities and governments everywhere else, as we look back at the progress of the last year, we see a County that listens to the citizens we serve, solves our problems, and ensures that our community continues to be a place like nowhere else.

Please find the complete report at [www.LeonCountyFL.gov/AnnualReport](http://www.LeonCountyFL.gov/AnnualReport).

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Vince Long became County Administrator on July 1, 2011, and has worked for Leon County since 1995. He can be reached at (850) 606-5300 or [LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov](mailto:LongV@LeonCountyFL.gov).

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