



Leon County

Board of County Commissioners

301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida
(850) 606-5300 www.leoncountyfl.gov

MY VIEW

2019 Leon County in Review: Performance Driven Progress

Vincent S. Long, Leon County Administrator

2019 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 government everywhere.

Each year I present an annual report to the Board of County Commissioners that takes a look back at the progress of the past year. 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 Leon County's 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 2019 we continued to focus our efforts on being a premiere destination for adventure, culture, and sports tourism. Because of these efforts and the commitment of local leaders, businesses, and citizens, in 2019 Southern Living Magazine also named us one of the South's Best communities. This dedication led to another record-setting year for tourism, generating \$972 million in economic impact, attracting more than 2.5 million visitors to Leon County, and selling out the Capital City Amphitheater.

The past year also brought a different kind of visitor: Hurricane Michael, which ravaged our western neighbors and tested us like no other storm. As the nation's first #HurricaneStrong community, Leon County Government led our community's largest and most effective disaster response ever by clearing more than 1,000 roads and removing one million cubic yards of debris, enough to stack a football field more than 60 stories tall.

Leon County also stayed focused on enhancing our quality of life and protecting our environment as we continued removing hundreds of septic tanks in southern Leon County and eliminated fees at all our rural waste sites to encourage recycling, decrease litter, and save customers \$200,000 per year.

And because building community is about building connections, we engaged citizens on our community's growth with our partners at The Village Square, hosted our annual Created Equal event with a powerful symphony performance followed by a frank conversation on race and racial equality, served over 4,600 veterans by securing \$23 million in benefits, and revitalized the Lakewood Estates neighborhood with our 9/11 Day of Service.

In 2019, our dedicated County employees continued to set the highest standards in public service by earning a dozen awards from the National Association of Counties, bringing the

total to 68 awards since 2013. These employee-led efforts have been key to keeping Leon County amongst the most efficient and affordable counties anywhere, resulting in \$28.9 million in savings over the past seven years.

The County continued growing our local economy and developing our workforce by investing in infrastructure with the last \$90 million segment of the critical Capital Circle transportation corridor and launching the “Magnetic Capital of the World” campaign, both of which encourage economic development opportunities.

And to that end in 2019, the County began a multi-year budgeting plan which ensures the County's long-term fiscal viability and avoids \$4.6 million in planned tax and fee increases. We also continued to reduce the County's outstanding debt, and we are on pace to be debt-free by 2025.

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 and video at 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.

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