



Leon County

Board of County Commissioners

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YOUR TURN

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2021 Year in Review: Great Progress Amidst Seemingly Endless Challenges

Each year it is a great honor to present the Leon County Annual Report to the community on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners and the hard-working men and women of your County government. You can find the complete report and video at LeonCountyFL.gov/AnnualReport.

This year's annual report reflects our organization-wide response to the pandemic, the uninterrupted provision of essential services, and the adaptation, innovation, and unrelenting commitment of County employees alongside the citizens we serve.

In 2021, Leon County continued to make great progress and serve our community amidst seemingly endless challenges. Activated now for more than 19 straight months in response to the pandemic and with delta variant cases surging nationwide, the County led efforts to vaccinate and protect our most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach communities. At the same time, while nationwide evictions and business closures soared, we provided tens of millions in direct assistance to households, businesses, and nonprofit partners.

While addressing the urgent needs of the day, we remained committed to executing our long-term strategy by landing Amazon, creating the largest private sector job opportunity in our history. This game-changing project will bring more than 1,000 full-time jobs to our community and lead to a \$100 million a year local economic impact.

In addition to these important initiatives, the County continued to realized progress in 2021, produce results, and deliver on our ambitious targets and bold goals for the organization and the community. Although we may have done it differently in some cases, our dedicated employees continued to set the standard each day in EMS, Public Works and Parks, libraries, and so many other essential services, helping more than 5,000 veterans claim \$21 million in benefits they deserve, responding to more than 47,000 calls for life-saving care, serving nearly one million library patrons, and so much more.

As we continued to serve the community in 2021, we also shaped it for future generations with work on transformational projects like the replacement of hundreds of septic tanks in the southside and opening and improving green spaces for all to enjoy. We also continued to keep our community engaged with initiatives like our annual Day of Service on the 20th anniversary of September 11 and with Created Equal to discuss issues of race on Florida Emancipation Day.

And with live music and events safely returning, we remained committed to being one of the South's best destinations for residents and visitors alike. The County sprinted into 2021 with state-of-the-art improvements to Apalachee Regional Park, a world-class destination for us to host the NCAA Cross Country national championships this November. As the nation's premiere cross-country destination, over the past decade the facility has hosted more than 80,000 runners across 100 meets leading to more than \$40 million in direct spending here in Leon County.

We did all this while remaining focused on our most important responsibility to protect public and provide essential services throughout the coronavirus pandemic. With vaccinations stagnating and delta variant surging, we became the nation's first local government to require vaccines to protect our employees. Through the County's ongoing COVID-19 response and coordination efforts, our teams led the first and largest vaccination campaign to directly reach more than 25,000 households and vaccinate nearly 5,000 people in minority communities. We also protected the community by distributing 1.7 million pieces of PPE, planning for healthcare surges, and providing more than a half million masks through our libraries.

Recognized as the number one county in Florida at distributing emergency relief during the pandemic, we leveraged more than \$138 million in federal funding to quickly address the community's most urgent needs. This included: direct assistance to more than 8,000 households and nearly 1,000 businesses, funding more than 180 nonprofits, distributing 4.1 million meals to the food insecure, investing \$6.7 million dollars to increase contact tracing and testing—all while Leon County EMS responded to more than 13,000 urgent COVID-19 calls.

As we have done again in 2021, Leon County will remain committed to listening to the people we serve, addressing the challenges we face together, and striving every day to be a healthy, safe community, where people thrive.

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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