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**County Unveils New Website**

**New Look for Celebrating 10 Years Online**

Alachua County first went online in 1996, 10 years later, it was time for a complete overhaul of its website. The new approach to web design and structure places emphasis on consistency of look and feel, easy-to-use navigation and search functions, and accessibility standards including US Government Section 508 and W3C compliance. The accessibility standards will ensure that the blind and visually impaired will have better access to the site.

The site includes new eGovernment services such as a new dynamic survey system; handheld device capable content; and a “live help” system for real-time contact with citizens and other website users. This changes Alachua County’s older information based approach to a more innovative, service-oriented approach. And County Manager Randall H. Reid is using the website unveiling to roll out his new County Manager’s Blog.

Employees of all County departments now have a Content Management System (CMS) in place to aid in creation and maintenance of site content. The CMS system will streamline the work process and reduce the time it takes to get information and service to the citizens via our website. The CMS also allows for real-time updating of critical emergency information during an active emergency within the County making our website a valuable tool for communicating and collaborating with citizens on many new levels.

Talking about the site, Alachua County Web Services Supervisor Brent Messer said, “I have been developing applications and designing websites since the internet’s infancy and have been privileged to see the amazing changes in technology that have taken place over the last decade. I have been a resident of Alachua County for 23 years and have always been interested in local government and public service, so this project was very important to me. My staff felt equally involved with the project and did an outstanding job with a great team effort to reach our goal.”

Visit the Manager’s Blog:
http://www.alachua-county.org/government/blog/

Commenting on his Blog, County Manager Randall H. Reid said, “Blogging is just another form of communication with citizens, and it puts a personal face on County government. Citizens wander around the blogosphere just as they wander around the downtown, hallways at work, university dorms, or fitness centers. Whenever a chance comes to communicate you take it.”
On August 8th, Alachua County Commission authorized County staff to proceed with the issuance of Public Improvement Revenue Bonds in the amount of $79.15 million. They also approved the following list of projects to be funded by the bond issue:

**Public Safety Needs ($26.9M)**
- Jonesville Fire Station ($2.9M)
- Jail Dormitory & Barracks ($5.4M)
- CR 337 [SR 26 to county line] ($8.3M)
- CR 236 [US 441 to I-75] ($3.5M)
- Traffic Management System [signalization project] ($2.0M)
- SW 8th Avenue [connect to 61st St.] ($3.0M)
- Multiple Sidewalk Projects ($1.6M)
- Hull Road Bikeway Project [Forest Park to Park-n-Ride] ($200,000)

**Customer Service Needs ($41.25M)**
- Judicial Services Center ($33.55M)
- Renovation of State Attorney’s Office for non-court related functions ($7.7M)

**Park Needs ($11M)**
- SE 35th Street Community Park ($690,000)
- San Felasco Park Nature Center ($219,000)
- Jonesville Recreation & Aquatic Center ($9.9M)
- Kanapaha Park Shelter & Roller Rink Resurfacing ($192,000)

**Total Project Estimates to be bonded - $79.15 million**

The parks projects are scheduled to begin in 2007. It is estimated that building construction projects will begin sometime in late 2008 after a comprehensive design phase is completed.

The bond issue includes $19 million for transportation projects to be added to the existing $43 million in transportation projects currently underway.

In speaking of the bond issue, County Manager Randall H. Reid said, “This Commission should be very proud of the steps they are taking to maintain our existing infrastructure and build for the future. This bond issue tackles the priority projects in three areas: Customer Service, Public Safety, and Parks.” He continued saying, “Over the last two years this Commission has allocated over $60 million for transportation challenges alone. This represents a significant first step in tackling the enormous challenge of maintaining and expanding our transportation infrastructure.”

Vice Chair Paula M. DeLaney, Chair Lee Pinkoson, Commissioner Cynthia Moore Chestnut, Commissioner Rodney J. Long and Commissioner Mike Byerly
VISIT FLORIDA, the state’s official source for travel planning, announced today the winners for the 2006 Flagler Awards, the organization’s statewide hospitality awards program. The program is designed to recognize the outstanding tourism marketing achievements of Florida’s innumerable travel businesses, destinations and attractions.

The Alachua County Visitor & Convention Bureau was awarded the VISIT FLORIDA Flagler Award for excellence in tourism marketing in the ‘newspaper’ medium at Florida’s Annual Governor’s Conference on Tourism. More than 900 travel and tourism industry leaders gathered at the Omni Orlando Resort at Champions Gate for the conference.

The award was for “The Gainesville Sun Newspaper Wrap” marketing program that partnered the Alachua County Visitor & Convention Bureau, City of Gainesville Department of Cultural Affairs, the Gainesville Sun and local hoteliers. The program delivered newspapers every weekend to the doorstep of every occupied hotel and B&B room in the County. The newspaper was wrapped in a 4 page “look alike” cover that featured stories on things to see and do in Alachua County.

This year’s award went to the smallest destination to ever win. “We are pleased that a tourism market our size has captured an award that historically has gone to areas such as Key West and Fort Myers/Sanibel,” said Roland Loog, Executive Director of Alachua County Visitor & Convention Bureau. “This reflects well on the efforts of the VCB staff who tirelessly promote the natural and cultural assets of the Gainesville area.”

For more information contact the Alachua County Visitor & Convention Bureau, 30 East University Ave. Gainesville, FL 32601, visit www.visitgainesville.com or call 1 (866) 778-5002.

Alachua County is pleased to announce that County Manager Randall H. Reid was released from the MDA jail at 4:42 p.m. on August 10, after making a $1,000 bail payment.

Fortunately for Mr. Reid, his new cell mate was able to convince the judge that the outstanding generosity of Alachua County employees to even consider bailing someone like him out of the “slammer” for $1,000 was an indication that there was hope for him. The judge agreed and released Mr. Reid on a $1,000 bail.

Alachua County and Mr. Reid are honored to help out the community and its children.
Jonesville Park Public Meeting
Discussion of $200,000 Recreation Program Grant

On August 14 at 6:30 p.m., there will be a Public Meeting in Jonesville to discuss an application for a $200,000 Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program grant to assist in the development of Jonesville Park. The meeting will be held at the Eventfuls Banquet Center, Venetian Room, 13840 W. Newberry Road.

The discussion will include the relocation of the Jonesville fire station to the park, the cooperative development of the soccer facilities with the Gainesville Soccer Alliance, proposed cooperative development efforts with the Rotary Clubs of Gainesville for the ball fields & event picnic area, a potential development of the tennis courts, the development of a library/recreation center in the park, and other funding opportunities such as bonding for park development.

Learn to Buy S.M.A.R.T.

Learn the earth-friendly answer to this and other shopping questions from representatives of the Alachua County Office of Waste Alternatives. The “Waste Watchers” will be at a local grocery store every Thursday in August to offer shoppers information about how to Buy S.M.A.R.T. (Save Money And Reduce Trash).

The Waste Watchers will be available to speak with shoppers about buying recycled products, purchasing products with minimal packaging, and buying reusable items instead of disposables. Shoppers can learn how Buying S.M.A.R.T. can save money and help the environment. All shoppers that visit the Waste Watchers display will receive a free reusable shopping bag made from recycled plastic.

The Waste Watchers will be at these stores on Thursdays, from 4 to 6 p.m.:

**August 17**
Publix in Butler Plaza  
3100 SW 35th Blvd., Gainesville

**August 24**
Publix in Westgate Plaza  
125 SW 34th St., Gainesville

**August 31**
Kash N’ Karry  
2002 SW 34th St., Gainesville

Learn how to Buy S.M.A.R.T. and be a Waste Watcher! For more information on Buying S.M.A.R.T, please call (352) 374-5213.
After serving the citizens of Alachua County for 28 years, Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center is underway in creating an Advisory Council.

The Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center serves victims of all crimes in Alachua County while maintaining an emphasis on serving victims of sexual violence with 24 hour crisis intervention and support. Services to all crime victims include continued support throughout the criminal justice process, information and updates on the status of their case, individual counseling and support groups, confidential HIV testing, assistance with victims’ compensation applications, and accompaniment to court proceedings. Beyond direct services to victims and their families, Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center offers community education through public awareness campaigns and free presentations to schools and other groups.

Members of the new Advisory Council will make recommendations to the County on future program policies, work to promote community awareness and education on program services and related issues, and engage in an annual review.

The Advisory Council shall be composed of eleven (11) voting citizen members, one (1) voting County Commissioner, and one alternate member. Of the eleven citizen appointments plus one alternate appointment, all shall be citizens of Alachua County and have an interest in the program. Four of the eleven citizen members must have a history of victimization.

Persons interested in being on the Advisory Council can call the Office of Victim Services at (352) 264-6760 or apply online at www.alachuacounty.us/government/bocc/advisoryboard.aspx.

Expressive & Alternative Healing Support Group

Beginning September 4, The Alachua County Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center will be offering a special Expressive and Alternative Healing Support Group for adult women survivors of rape. Meeting weekly for 10 weeks, group members will be introduced to a variety of activities including the visual arts, yoga, massage, drumming, spoken word, martial arts, sound, and acupuncture, and given the opportunity to apply the activities to their healing from sexual assault. There is no charge to participants.

There is space for 10 survivors in the group. Please call Rita Lawrence or Renee Peel at (352) 264-6760 to be screened or to discuss your interest.

Crisis Center Seeking Volunteer Crisis Line Counselors

The Alachua County Crisis Center is seeking volunteers to become Crisis Line Counselors. Sixty hours of in-depth training are provided. This is an opportunity to positively affect the lives of fellow community members and to gain life-enhancing communication skills.

The next training class begins Saturday, September 16, 2006. Please contact Ali Martinez, Training Coordinator for the Alachua County Crisis Center, at (352) 264-6782 or visit www.alachuacounty.us/government/depts/css/crisis/ for more information.
Alachua County Animal Services was recently one of the key facilitators in the rescue of a missing Alachua County woman. Elinore Sheffield, 66, a Gainesville resident in the latter stages of Alzheimer’s disease was reported missing by her family Wednesday, June 21, with no one having seen her since the previous day. Family members theorized that she became disoriented due to her disease while walking her pet poodle, Peaches.

Over the next seven days Alachua County Sheriff’s Office deputies searched for her, employing helicopters and dogs, but found no evidence of her whereabouts.

During that time, Alachua County Animal Services, at the request of a family member of Ms. Sheffield, and in cooperation with the Sheriff’s Office, set traps and routinely patrolled the area around the missing woman’s house, in an attempt to locate Peaches, and thereby locate the woman. They also canvassed the area, inquiring if neighbors and residents had sited the dog. Samantha Davis, Steve Gayler and Hilary Hynes were the Animal Services officers who set the traps, while all of the remaining officers in the division were involved in patrolling and canvassing the area. The operation was conducted and coordinated by Field Operations Supervisor Vernon Sawyer. Sawyer’s previous experience as a police officer and his ability to coordinate with the Sheriff’s Office was very instrumental in Animal Services efforts in this matter.

On the tenth day of her disappearance, a construction worker at a site north of Sheffield’s home found the poodle. Animal Services Officer Freddie Edwards was dispatched to collect the poodle and Ms. Sheffield’s brother was contacted to identify it. After it was positively identified, officer Edwards took the poodle back to the construction site where Sheriff’s deputies were beginning to assemble for another search after being notified of the discovery of Peaches.

Officer Edwards, who is trained in canine search and rescue, was walking the poodle on a leash near the woods adjacent to the construction site, when he noticed its keen interest in a certain location in the woods. Edwards alerted deputies, who later rescued Ms. Sheffield twenty five yards into the woods where her dog was indicating.

Ms. Sheffield was found lying next to a creek, uninjured and remembering nothing of the previous ten days.

Alachua County applauds the efforts of all of the individuals involved in rescuing Ms. Sheffield.

“The efforts of Alachua County Animal Services staff in this effort is a reminder of the dedication of each of our employees. We help find lost pets on a daily basis, but on this special day we were able to support the Sheriff’s Office with a different kind of rescue. I applaud the efforts, dedication and expertise of our staff,” said Ray Sim, Alachua County Animal Services Director.
There are so many things in life that most of us take for granted - like going up and down the stairs or watching your kids play outside in the sunshine; but, for one 48-year-old Gainesville man, these simple tasks were his biggest dream because he had less than a week to live.

After spending months fighting cancer, Daniel was confined to a second story bedroom in his family’s home where he was tethered to IVs, monitors and oxygen. Unable to get up or down the stairs or even see out a nearby window, Daniel wanted to see his two young daughters, ages seven and nine, ride their bikes one last time.

On a recent sunny day, paramedics and firefighters from Alachua County Fire Rescue made Daniel’s wish come true.

Working together with the staff from Gainesville’s Haven Hospice, Lt. Jeff Hogg, Driver Operator Fawn Willis, Firefighters Will Hightower and Felter Blake, Paramedic Jim Pridgeon and EMT-Firefighter Jason Pruitt went to Daniel’s house to help him get downstairs and spend time in the sunshine one last time.

Carefully carrying him down the stairs with his IVs and oxygen in tow, ACFR crews settled Daniel by the family pool where he could watch his kids play in the water and ride their bikes. For 45 minutes, the family spent time in the sun, laughing and playing.

Daniel passed away only a few days later.

Abandoned shopping carts are a nuisance in every community. They end up in empty lots, public parks, and creek beds. A dumped shopping cart makes Alachua County look like a dump.

If you need to remove a cart from the property of the store to which it belongs, please obtain permission from the store’s manager, and make sure you bring the cart back to the store as soon as you’re finished.

If you see an abandoned shopping cart, the best way to get it removed from your neighborhood is to contact the nearest store whose name appears on the cart. Most stores hire a shopping cart retrieval service or use their own personnel to collect shopping carts that have been removed from store premises. The costs related to these abandoned shopping carts are eventually passed on to the store’s consumers.

The answer to all of these problems lies within the residents. If you see someone removing a shopping cart from the premises, kindly ask them to return it to the store.
Proclamations and Recognitions

- Proclamation declaring “Alachua County Firefighter Appreciation Month” in Alachua County.

Commission Chair Lee Pinkoson Presents the proclamation to Kevin Wesley Alachua County Paramedic Firefighter

Click here to view the Proclamation

Advisory Boards and Committee Reports

- Presentation of Semi-Annual Report from Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council
- Alexander Fein was appointed as a citizen-at-large to a term expiring in November of 2008
- Richard Roberts was appointed as an alternate to a term expiring in November of 2008

Environmental Protection Advisory Committee
- Michael Zelazo was appointed as a citizen-at-large to a term expiring in June of 2009

Original Florida Tourism Task Force
- John Parker was appointed as a citizen-at-large
- Bill Richards was appointed as a citizen-at-large
- David Crawford was appointed as an alternate
County Attorney

- The Board approved a request to adopt the Resolution to implement the Florida Governmental Conflict Resolution Act/ City of Hawthorne and authorized the County Attorney and the County Manager to coordinate the meetings and events that are required pursuant of the Florida Governmental Conflict Resolution Act.

- The Board authorized the County Manager to proceed with issuance of Public Improvement Revenue Bonds, Series 2006. The Board approved the projects list for bond financing.

Community Planning Group

- The Board approved a phased strategy to eliminate illegal camping on the Sweetwater Preserve Property.

- The Board approved a request to add one classification to the FY05/06 Non-Bargaining Pay plan; add six (6) FTE’s in the Road & Bridge Division of the Public Works Department for Construction and Pavement Management.

County Manager Reports

- The subject of the City of Newberry’s offer to make a partial payment for County funded law enforcement services was discussed with the Board. The Board instructed the Manager to accept the partial payment of $127,000 and asked the Manager to continue working with the City of Newberry to secure a commitment to the full amount based on the actual cost.

- The Manager made the Board aware of the impending closure of Diamond Sports Park. The Board expressed their interest in adding the park to the County’s parks inventory. The Manager will explore options to accomplish this.

- The Manager, at the request of absent Commissioner Byerly, brought up the issue of more protection at the State level for the Gopher Tortoise. The Board authorized a letter of support for the new protections.
Get Involved

Alachua County Advisory Boards

The Alachua County Commission is committed to citizen involvement on its 33 advisory boards and is soliciting applications for the following vacancies:

- **CHOICES Advisory Board**: One alternate who is a CHOICES program participant
- **Citizen Disability Advisory Committee**: Three citizens-at-large
- **Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee**: Six citizens-at-large, one alternate
- **Economic Development Advisory Board**: One Representative of UF
- **Environmental Protection Advisory Board**: One alternate
- **Fair Housing Human Rights Board**: One lending institution representative, one citizen-at-large, one alternate
- **Gainesville/Alachua County Cultural Affairs Board**: One citizen-at-large
- **Health Care Board**: One low income consumer, one Alachua County Dental Association representative, one Shands representative
- **Health Facilities Authority**: One alternate
- **Original Florida Tourism Task Force**: One alternate
- **Poverty Reduction Advisory Board**: One representative of Alachua/Bradford Workforce Board, one citizen-at-large with a disability, one low income citizen, one faith based organization representative
- **Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee**: Four citizens-at-large, one alternate
- **RTS Advisory Board**: One senior citizen
- **Rural Concerns Advisory Committee**: One member from an unincorporated town
- **Tourist Development Council**: One owner/operator
- **Veterans Service Advisory Board**: One citizen who is a Veteran
- **Victim Services and Rape Crisis Center Advisory Board**: Eleven voting citizens (four of which must have a history of victimization), one alternate

**Apply Now**

Click here for an application

Applications are also available at the County Manager’s Office on the Second Floor of the County Administration Building, 12 S. E. First St., Gainesville.

For more information, call Darlene Ryon, Advisory Board Coordinator, at (352) 264-6906