



County Connection

Issue No. 7 | August 15, 2022

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2022 Annual Communication Survey

Is Okaloosa County providing timely, accurate and engaging public information? Take the survey at myokaloosa.com/cc/survey

The Annual Communication Survey gives us the data and feedback needed in order to effectively convey public information to the community. The larger the sample size, the better! It's live until August 31. Click [HERE](#) to take the survey and share it with others.

Benefits Enrollment

It's benefits enrollment time! Risk Management, along with the Wellness Committee and volunteers in various departments within the county have been working hard to be sure our team is in the know and able to enroll efficiently in the benefits that are most meaningful for you and your families.

Have you enrolled yet? Have you taken part in one of the County's Benefits Fairs? They are an excellent way to get valued face-time with risk and the various benefits administrators so that

you can ask questions in advance of the deadline. If you haven't already enrolled in benefits, click [HERE](#) and enroll today.

Open enrollment opened August 10 and will remain open until Wednesday, August 31, 2022. Don't be late and don't miss out. If you want to contribute to HSA or FSA in the 2022 - 2023 plan year, you MUST go through full enrollment. These benefits are required to be made each year and do not carry over. If you have trouble enrolling or have questions, you can contact Bentek at 888-523-6835 or Risk Management at 850-689-5977



John Hofstad
County Administrator

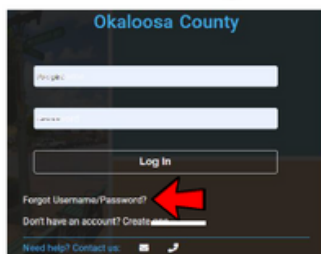
For the Health of it

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Open Enrollment Ends August 31

Enroll via Bentek. The following Login information will help. Click [HERE](#) to enroll now.

Bentek Login Information Recovery

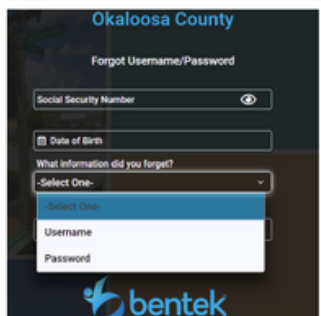


Okaloosa County

Forgot Username/Password?

Don't have an account? Create

Need help? Contact us



Okaloosa County

Forgot Username/Password

Social Security Number

Date of Birth

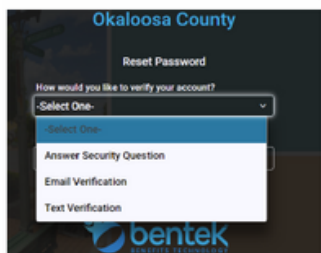
What information did you forget?

-Select One-

-Select One-

Username

Password



Okaloosa County

Reset Password

How would you like to verify your account?

-Select One-

-Select One-

Answer Security Question

Email Verification

Text Verification

Visit www.mybentek.com/myokaloos

Select "Forgot Username/Password"

Choose whichever you need information for – Username or Password

Username: Once information is entered it will pop up

If you forgot Password, the system will ask how you want to verify your account.

You will receive information on how to change your Password.

If you are still having trouble, you can contact Bentek at 888-523-6835 or contact Risk Management at 850-689-5977

Benefit Fairs August 10 & August 11

Did you attend? Have you signed up for your benefits? DID YOU GIVE BLOOD? Here's what we know about the blood drive: 40 employees donated a total of approximately 39 units of blood.



Each donation can save up to three lives. This means 117 patients could benefit from the lifesaving efforts of our team members. Kudos to us!

Wait... I still have questions

Now that the Benefits Fairs are behind us, how else can we be sure that our questions are answered before the August 31 deadline?

BENEFITS FAIR

We hope you can join! There will be both County and Vendor drawings and giveaways!

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
August 10th	OCAB Training Room 1250 Eglin Pkwy, Shalimar, FL 32579	7:00am – 12:00pm
August 11th	Crestview Community Center 1446 Commerce Drive Crestview, FL 32539	7:00am – 12:00pm

OPEN ENROLLMENT BRIEFING SESSIONS

August 15th	Corrections – Muster Room	6:00am – 7:00am 6:00pm – 7:00pm
August 16th	Water & Sewer – 1804 Lewis Turner Blvd, Fort Walton Beach	6:30am – 9:00am
August 17th	Corrections – Muster Room	6:00am – 7:00am 6:00pm – 7:00pm
August 18th	Public Works – North – 1759 S. Feron Blvd, Crestview	6:30am – 9:00am
	Facilities Maintenance – 5489 Old Bethel Rd, Crestview	12:00pm – 3:00pm
August 23rd	Public Works – South 84 Ready Ave NW, Fort Walton Beach	6:30am – 9:00am
	Airport (VPS) 2nd Floor	10:00am – 11:30am
August 24th	TDD (via Zoom)	9:00am – 11:00am
August 25th	EOC, Niceville	8:30am – 10:30am
August 31st	Brackin Building – ALL DAY LAST CHANCE!	8:00am – 5:00pm

Of course you could contact Risk Management at 850-689-5977 OR you could plan to attend one of the above Open Enrollment Briefing Sessions.

Better You Strides – Earn extra money quick and easy (also be more healthy)

Step 1.) Go to login.onlifehealth.com/Home/Login and click Get Started.

Step 2.) Enter your name, date of birth and zip code. lick Next.

Step 3.) Enter your employer's group number 41954

Step 4.) Read and accept terms and choose communication preferences.

Step 5.) Before taking your health assessment, update your username and password. (Click on "I'll do this later" to be taken to the homepage.

Step 6.) Update username and password from the Settings icon in the upper right corner of the screen, then click the pencil icon to edit settings and create a unique username and password

Step 7.) Take the health assessment for Better You and start earning cash!

**** You may also download the AlwaysOn mobile app from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) and take similar steps for an entirely mobile experience****



Something to Talk About p. 3 of 6

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Tourism wins Destiny Award

Congratulations to our team in the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Department! Destin-Fort Walton Beach has received national recognition for their success in marketing the "Little Adventures" campaign.

Little Adventures in Destin-Fort Walton Beach has won a Destiny Award for Best Integrated Marketing and Messaging Campaign within their budget category. Finalists included Visit NYC and Visit Williamsburg. Ultimately, Destin-Fort Walton Beach took the win with their submissions including TV, Print, Digital, Adventure Packs Website, In-Destination Activations and the Little Adventures Outpost.



The Destiny Awards recognize U.S. travel destination members for excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion at the local and regional level; and foster the development of imaginative and innovative destination marketing promotion programs and activities. [View on LinkedIn.](#)

Public Safety Director, Patrick Maddox serves as guest speaker on WSRE - PBS Episode of *Connecting the Community*



Destin-Fort Walton Beach Sponsor Florida Restaurant & Lodging Event, recognizing the BEST in the industry.



Now's your time to shine.

The Northwest Florida Chapter of the FRLA recognizes the best of the best in our industry each year with the Hospitality Hero Awards.

Category nominees are honored at a prestigious banquet with a spectacular dinner, ceremony, and CASH PRIZES. Categories include:

Restaurant FOH Employee • Restaurant BOH Employee
Restaurant FOH Manager • Culinary Manager • Bartender
Hotel/Resort FOH Employee • Hotel/Resort BOH Employee
Hotel/Resort Manager • Spirit of Hospitality • And More

Nominations Open This September...



Hurricane season is in full swing, so Dr. Rameca Vincent Leary and her guests explore what to do before, during and after a natural disaster. Plus, the program includes a look at Florida International University's Category 5 "Wall of Wind" hurricane simulator in action. Experts from NWS, PSC, Fla. International Univ., PAWS and several regional emergency management offices are featured. Click [HERE](#) to view the full episode.

Employee Spotlight

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Congratulations on five years!

At the heart of Okaloosa County, we have dedicated team members focused on carrying out critical County values. Today the Board recognized Eddie Quinlan, GIS Manager and Kerry Sutsko, Destination Stewardship Manager for achieving their 5-year milestone anniversaries with Okaloosa County. Congratulations on your achievement and thank you for your dedication!



Engaged with armed suspect verbally to draw attention away from citizens...

Casting his own safety aside, Chief Darrel Welborn engaged the subject in conversation and gave the initial commands to drop the weapon. Acting above and beyond the call of duty, Chief Welborn's actions likely prevented additional injuries. You are a HERO, Chief Welborn. Thank you!



Her Fight is My Fight



Pictured: Phinley and her Dad, Inspector Huiskens

Several Months ago, a joyous homecoming took place for Phinley - Correctional Officer Travis Huiskens's Daughter, after a 7-month fight at Shands Hospital against cancer.

Inspector Huiskens, his wife and daughter, Phinley are currently at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital as she has suffered a relapse.

The jail has organized No-Shave/Hair-Down fundraisers to do what they can to help their team member and his family. Interested in learning more? Contact Christy Rogers at crogers@myokaloosa.com or 850-689-5515.

Up and Coming

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Okaloosa County Women's Hall of Fame >>

Congratulations to this year's Hall of Fame inductees for the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women!

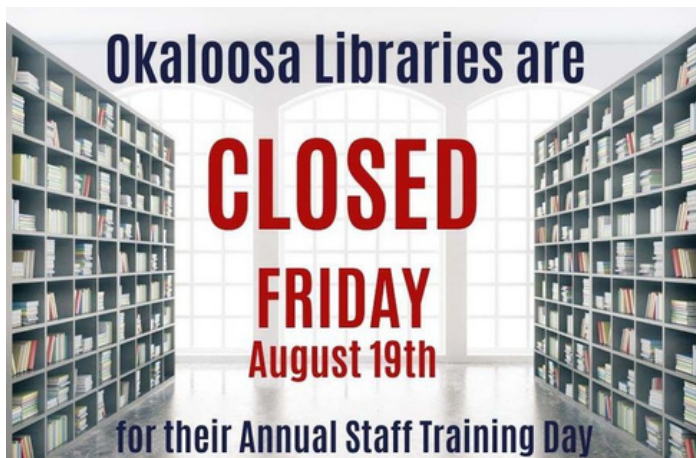
They will be recognized at the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony & Honoree Reunion event, on August 22, 5:30 p.m. at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center

These nine exceptional women made contributions to the arts, business, education, government, the humanities, philanthropy and science. Click [HERE](#) for more.



Okaloosa Libraries are Closed Friday, August 19>>

All Okaloosa Cooperative library locations will be closed for annual staff training on Friday, August 19. This includes Crestview, Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Mary Esther, Niceville and Valparaiso. The ONLINE LIBRARY is always open: customers can continue to checkout eBooks, audios and magazines online and access their account at www.readokaloosa.org



Island Pier Cleanup >> Calling all experienced divers to participate in the Island Pier Cleanup Dive. Help remove debris from the seafloor and pier pilings! August 27 6am check-in.

Volunteers must pre-register and bring a completed waiver form to check-in. Mesh bags will be provided for the collection of debris. Participants are responsible for their own gear and tanks and should bring gloves and a utensil for cutting fishing line. Click [HERE](#) for more.



Upcoming Meetings at a glance>> Tuesday, August 16 - BCC Meeting (South) 8:30am and Recycling Advisory Committee Meeting at 1pm. Code Enforcement will meet Wednesday of this week, followed by TDC the following week - Tuesday at 8:30am.

The August 16 BCC Meeting Agenda includes a public hearing on the FY 2022 Capital Improvements Update Ordinance and department business including Growth Management, Public Works, County Administration and more. Click [HERE](#) to view the agenda.



In Case You Missed It

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Purple Pipes >> MAKING PROGRESS: Okaloosa County's 11-mile reclaimed water pipeline continues its journey from Arbennie Pritchett Water Reclamation Facility to a reclaimed water lagoon on Eglin Golf Course. The pipeline will allow reclaimed water to be used for irrigation for the citizens in the Niceville area. The project is estimated to be complete in spring 2023. Click [HERE](#) for more.

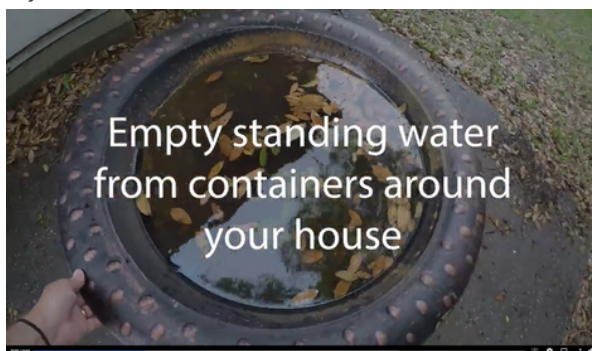


Household Hazardous Waste >> can be recycled for free in Okaloosa County at the following drop-off locations:
In Fort Walton Beach, 80 Ready Ave. - Tuesday through Saturday from 7a.m. - 3p.m., no appointment necessary. For information call 850-301-2013.

In Crestview, 1759 S. Ferdon Blvd.- Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 4 p.m., for information call 850-301-2013. Click [HERE](#) for more.



Mosquito Control >> Did you know a mosquito needs only a teaspoon of water to breed? These tips will help limit the number of mosquitoes around your house
Click [HERE](#) to view mosquito counts/species, spray schedules and maps for your area. Click [HERE](#) for video.



Bed-Tax Projects: Destin wants more public beaches, FWB invests in sports/parks,...

As part of the expanded Tourist Development District in Okaloosa County, local municipalities each receive a proportionate share of 12.5% of the bed taxes



Okaloosa County shares hurricane preparedness resources

The Okaloosa Department of Emergency Management also lists the guide on its website



Okaloosa agrees to give \$3M to help fund new Medical Examiner's office

District 1 Medical Examiner's Office receives funding support from Okaloosa County