

County Connection

Issue No. 6 | June 24, 2022

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Prepare and Stay Weather-Aware
at AlertOkaloosa.com

For Daily Beach Flag Updates
Text BEACH to 44144

Explore
Okaloosa at
MyOkaloosa.com

[Take Only Memories](#)
LEAVE NO TRACE
OKALOOSA COUNTY
[Shorelines to Woodlines](#)
[Leave Only Footprints](#)

 Cotton Bridge Park, Baker FL

Sharable Resources for a safe and enjoyable Okaloosa County summertime include:

[BEACH CONDITIONS](#) | [COUNTY PARKS LIST](#) | [ALERTOKALOOSA.COM](https://AlertOkaloosa.com)

[BOATER SAFETY](#) | [HURRICANE GUIDE](#) | [LIBRARY CO-OP](#) | [LEAVE NO TRACE](#)

Summertime in Okaloosa

It's summertime in Okaloosa County and you know what that means. It means it's hot! Oftentimes, what we find in our downtime, is that there is no better way to cool off than to participate in water-based activities along the many waterways of Okaloosa County. Bays, bayous, rivers, lakes, swimming pools and our white sandy beaches; We could not be more fortunate to have this much access to the water but we must also respect it.

Participating in water-based activities requires respect, attention, caution and responsibility. While there is no substitute for personal responsibility, our team has worked to provide guidance and resources. You will find those tools linked above, as well as leave no trace resources for staying mindful of our environmental impact. Leave only footprints and take only memories. Text BEACH to 44144 for daily beach conditions and don't forget to sign up for weather alerts ahead of peak Atlantic Hurricane Season at AlertOkaloosa.com.



John Hofstad
County Administrator

Okaloosa County to get \$7.9M in state funding for infrastructure

There are various approved projects that will be included within the budget. \$750,000 for Overbrook Area Stormwater Improvements, \$300,000 for Cinco Bayou Glenwood Park Water Quality Improvement, \$2 million for US 98 Bridge-to-Bridge Multi-Use Path from West Okaloosa Island to Destin, \$3 million for County Road 2 Road Safety and Upgrades to Big Horse Creek and Yellow River Bridges, \$1.5 million for Niceville, College Boulevard Multi-Use Pathway and \$350,000 for the continued support of the Pretrial Mental Health Diversion Program.

Click [HERE](#) for the full article.



Use past storms to develop updated hurricane planning for your family

Rehearsing your plan is different than re-reading the plan from last season. It means walking through the written steps with the members of your household to make certain that they can be executed as intended in the real world.



A crisis is no time for inference, do this while things are calm. Perhaps a family member has suffered a limitation that makes other actions necessary this year, or construction near your evacuation route requires re-working your timeline ~Public Safety Director, Patrick Maddox

Click [HERE](#) for details.

Okaloosa Watersport Operators release 'jet ski safety' video ahead of peak boating season

"There is no denying that the access comes with additional responsibility, especially around educating rental guests who are not as familiar with safety precautions and regulations intended to keep everyone safer on the water. This video supports the mission," according to Okaloosa County Commissioner Trey Goodwin. Click [HERE](#) to view video.



Click [HERE](#) for the full article.

Starborough Wine to deploy two artificial 'Super Reefs' off Okaloosa, Walton beaches

According to Coastal Resource Manager Alex Fogg, these super reefs are 16 tons that have proven to be very stable in storm situations. Additionally, because they have limestone incorporated into the reef, it encourages growth of a lot of sponges, soft corals and other encrusting organisms.



"Because we don't really have a lot of that reef habitat here in Northwest Florida, it really is great that they're deploying these structures off of our shores," said Fogg.

Click [HERE](#) for the full story.

Department News

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4-H Grilling Contest >> Congratulations to all of these young grillers who participated in 4-H Grilling Camp this week. The week ended with a judged competition. Winners will go on to join the Okaloosa County Competition Grilling team for a chance at scholarships at the local and state level. UF IFAS Extension Okaloosa County UF IFAS Extension Okaloosa County 4-H [CLICK FOR VIDEO](#)



Florida 4-H State Horticulture Identification and Judging Contest >> Okaloosa County took the first-place Intermediate team which included Anabelle Brush, Augusto Barreto, and Ella Brush. Ella earned 1st place Intermediate individual and Annabelle earned 2nd place Intermediate individual. Kylie Goodson from Marion County earned the 3rd place Intermediate spot. Isabella Elia from Clay County also competed in the Intermediate age division.



Women Veteran Monuments at Veterans Park >> Vegetation in the Women Veterans Memorial on Okaloosa Island is filling in nicely since its grand unveiling last November. Also, the statue of Veteran Cathay Williams has returned after being reinforced and elevated by the sculptor. [CLICK FOR VIDEO](#)



Okaloosa County Beach Safety >>

Recognized by Cumulus Broadcasting and Eglin Federal Credit Union today, with the "Everyday Heroes" award. Click [HERE](#) for more.



In Case You Missed It

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Soundside Access 2 Boat Basin >> Great news! The improvements to the Soundside Access No. 2 on Okaloosa Island are proceeding according to schedule. It is on budget and there have been no delays so far. Completion is scheduled for early September. [CLICK FOR VIDEO](#)



Turtle Talk >> Do you like sea turtles? So do we! Our Coastal Resource team has partnered with the Gulfarium CARE Center for Turtle Talks. Get a behind-the-scenes look at how the CARE Center treats injured sea turtles and learn how you can protect nests. Turtle Talks are held each Wednesday. Our turtle expert Jessica Valek gives a brief rundown in this video of what to expect. [CLICK FOR VIDEO](#)



June 22 Board Meeting QuickNotes

BIG STORY - Board approved employee benefits plan for FY22 with maximum savings to employees! Our health insurance premiums decrease and BCC contribution remains unchanged. This is great news!



Other Notable Decisions

- Approved Mid Bay Bridge Authority Budget, less \$72k – Changes to MBBA Bridge Authority? Maybe - TBD at a later meeting.
 - Approved Expansion of Children's Advocacy Center in Niceville, in accordance with their lease.
 - Approval is to construct a 2,400 sf expansion on their leased property at 401 McEwen Dr. in Niceville. A number of factors have contributed to the need for expansion. Since opening the center in 2000, ECCAC has experienced a 226% increase in the number of child abuse cases. The increase in cases has necessitated an increase in staff and the need for additional space to facilitate the care of children and their families. The expansion will help meet the current and future needs.
 - Approved 9 new airport positions to meet the demands of the expanding airports.
 - Amending passenger facility charge to reduction from \$4.50 per enplaned passenger, down to \$3. All of our carriers are aware of the potential planned reduction and have overwhelmingly voiced support. This will benefit airlines and could positively impact travelers through efficiencies and savings.
 - Approved amendment to Baker Arena lease to add county maintenance.
 - Approved the hiring of code enforcement officer for implementation of county waterway safety ordinance.
- Click [HERE](#) to view commission meetings.

Employee Spotlight

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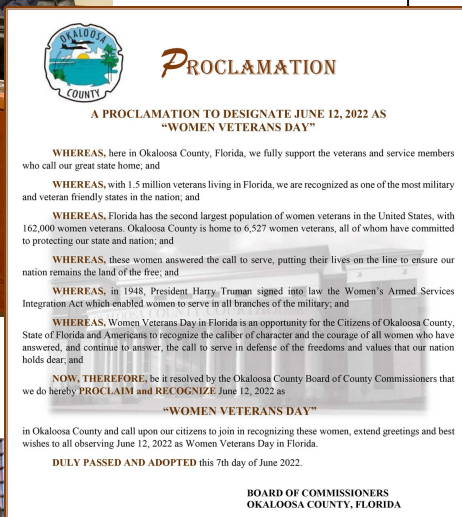
Congratulations on five years!



Eddie Taylor, Veterans' Services Counselor, stands for a photo with the Board and County Administrator in recognition of five years with the County.



Veteran Services Director, Beatrice Love-Moore accepts a Proclamation from the Board designating June 12, 2022 Women Veterans Day.



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Ms. Love-Moore is Pictured here with retired Marine Corps Major General James S. "Hammer" Hartsell, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs after he spoke at a Governor's Press Conference where 6 military-friendly bills were signed locally, in Ft. Walton Beach.

WheelSpeak - Who's keeping those wheels turning in the right direction?

Roland Sims, of County Administration along with the County's legal team, County Attorney Lynn Hoshihara, Kerry Parsons and Greg Stewart are pictured here and WheelSpeak Magazine, for their participation in Tour de Forts, a long-distance bike race.

