

County Connection

April, 2023

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Stay Engaged. Click the logos to join us on social media



Finding the right tools, making progress

The Administrative staff and your Department heads are currently organizing and working on the budget for the next fiscal year. This includes making sure you have all the tools you need to complete your job safely and efficiently.

Okaloosa County's greatest asset is the employee. It is important to recognize your successes and help make improvements for you that are necessary.

A draft final report has recently been completed following a Classification and Compensation study that was conducted last August. One of the findings recommended a wage adjustment to help the County become more in line with related public sector peers. A wage adjustment was approved by the Board at the April 18 meeting. Employees will see a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment, that you will see on your May 18 paycheck. More analysis is expected from this study. As always, please reach out to me or your Department head with any concerns. Thanks for all you do for the County.



John Hofstad
County Administrator

Parking improvements coming to Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport

The Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) is looking to bring 400-800 new parking spaces at the Northeast corner of their property. VPS secured a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation to create the overflow parking lot. [READ FULL STORY>>](#)



UF/IFAS Extension offers lawn, landscape help

The plant clinic is not a seminar or lecture-type program, but provides a place for individuals to bring samples of their lawn, landscape or garden plants for diagnosis, including weeds and insects for identification. The plant clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to noon Friday at the temporary UF/IFAS Extension Annex located at the Okaloosa Technical College (OTC) in Fort Walton Beach. [READ MORE >>>](#)



Okaloosa Co. plans for more housing for middle-class, military



The strategic plan will be created by consulting firm Thomas P. Miller and Associates. In a release, the county said the firm will work with County staff and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee to develop the Countywide Comprehensive plan. [READ MORE>>](#)

Community receives life saving training



Several Crestview residents recently received a crash course in how to respond to someone going through an overdose to save their life. The City of Crestview partnered with Okaloosa EMS in putting together a training seminar for administering Narcan

Earth Day cleanup coming up

Join us for our annual Earth Day Cleanup event that's perfect for the whole family! We'll have clean-up contests with fun prizes, free event t-shirts, and a free post-cleanup breakfast served at some of our favorite local restaurants. T-shirts and breakfast will be limited in quantity, so make sure you register online and show up on time! [REGISTER HERE>>](#)

Cleanup Locations:

- -The Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island
- -The Crab Trap/James Lee Park in Destin
- -The Surf Hut in Miramar Beach
- -Henderson Beach State Park in Destin
- -Norriego Point in Destin
- -Clement Taylor Park in Destin



Department News

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The Okaloosa County Department of Corrections had multiple officers, civilian administrative staff and members from the medical team participate in the United Way National Day of Caring today, volunteering their time and efforts to help out the local community. "We are proud to have our officers and civilian staff participate in the United Way National Day of Caring," said Chief Nolan Weeks "Our department is committed to making a positive impact on the lives of those in our community, and this event is a great opportunity to do just that."



Save the Date! - The 3rd annual Food Truck Frenzy has been scheduled for the week of May 8-12 from 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m. daily at the Okaloosa County Jail, located at 1200 East James Lee Boulevard in Crestview. This annual event celebrates National Correctional Officers Week and National Nurses Appreciation Week. Over a dozen food truck vendors will be on hand to provide one meal daily to 150-plus staff members at the jail. The public is welcome to come.



Storm Prep

Public Safety Director Patrick Maddox recently spoke to the Kiwanis of FWB about storm preparations and having the right mindset as information is delivered during a storm event.

EMS information

EMS Chief Darrel Welborn, some with a group of students about EMS history at Davidson Middle School.

Overdose education

Lt. Kenneth Worley, Supervisor with Okaloosa County EMS, conducted a lecture and a demonstration at the Crestview Community Center about Opioid use and how to administer Narcan in the event of an overdose.



Keep Okaloosa Beautiful Director Kali Hiemier has been interacting with local students during their field trips, to educate them on how to recycle properly. Students played a game that forced them to choose which items can be recycled and which ones cannot.

Employee Spotlight

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EMPLOYEE MILESTONES



Shane Oglesby was recognized for his 30 years of service as a Waste Water Treatment Operator with our Water & Sewer Department. He is pictured at the April 4 Board meeting with County Administrator John Hofstad and the Board of County Commissioners.



Other April Milestones

- Nathan Harper, 5 years, Laboratory Technician, Water & Sewer
- Darrel Welborn, 35 years, EMS

MEET THE TEAM: We have begun to highlight the incredible work that you do in these short videos. If you or you know someone that should be considered, please reach out the Public Information team at OCPIO@myokaloosa.com . [View the ones we have done so far >>](#)



In Case You Missed It

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April 4 Board Meeting Quick Notes

- Proclamation recognizing Linda Hadden for 49 years of work with Elder Services
- Board approved the allocation of non-profit ARPA money to area non-profits
- Board approved an interlocal agreement for a comprehensive study of ECRider operations
- Board approved funding to company for text messaging alerts
- Board approved moving forward with \$750k to fund construction of new Medical Examiner's Office in Santa Rosa County

April 18 Board Meeting Quick Notes

- Proclamation declaring April 19 as "Child Abuse Prevention Day" in Okaloosa County
- Board approved design task order to Halff, Inc. for Santa Rosa Boulevard Improvements
- Board approved acquisition and preparation of two new large vessels for artificial reef deployment
- Board approved extending idle speed boating-restricted area at Liza Jackson Boat Ramp and Okaloosa Boat Basin
- Board approved 3% COLA for employees effective May 1, 2023

TIDBITS

FLASHBACK: [Listen>>](#) Did you know there was a dye mine in Shalimar?



Do you know someone looking for a great career? There are plenty of opportunities with Okaloosa County. [Send them to https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/okaloosa](https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/okaloosa)

The text alert system for beach flag notifications is up and running. Simply text BEACH to 44144 and each morning you will get a text letting you know the beach conditions.

