

County Connection

December 2024

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



Reflecting back on 2024

As the year draws to a close, it is only natural to look back and take note of all of our accomplishments and the challenges we have overcome.

Our County continues to grow and requires additional efforts to maintain the high level of service our residents have come to expect from their County government. Your commitment has allowed us to achieve and maintain this level of service in 2024.

With Board leadership and through your dedication, we will continue to look toward enhancing and retaining talented and knowledgeable employees that make up our team.

It is important that we give you the tools and path forward so that you can continue to succeed and grow in your career with the County. Your County leadership is committed to give you that support.

I look forward to another prosperous year and wish you and your family a safe and merry holiday this Christmas and New Year.

Thank you for your service to Okaloosa County. Please reach out to me or your department head for any needs you may have.



John Hofstad
County Administrator

Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport to host TSA PreCheck Enrollment event in January



IDEMIA will host a TSA PreCheck enrollment event at Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport from January 6-17, offering expedited security screening for approved travelers. [READ MORE>>](#)

Okaloosa County receives \$750,000 grant to combat coastal erosion along Highway 98



A critical stretch of Highway 98 on Okaloosa Island faces severe erosion threats, with over 4 acres of shoreline lost since 2010. The county secured federal funding to design natural barriers against what experts identify as a significant risk to infrastructure and military operations. [READ MORE>>](#)

PMI awarded \$509,000 grant to expand calibration services in Okaloosa County

“Public safety is a top priority in Okaloosa County and we support any effort to provide our law enforcement agencies with the necessary tools they need to serve our residents,” said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Paul Mixon. [READ MORE>>](#)

Major progress on Southwest Crestview Bypass as bridge construction advances

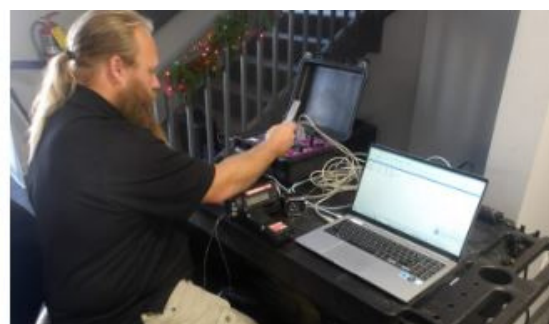


The Southwest Crestview Bypass project in Okaloosa County shows significant headway with bridge construction over railroad tracks, featuring 370 piles across 14 bents as crews work toward completion. [READ MORE>>](#)

Okaloosa County lawmakers to hold public hearing on 2025 legislative proposals



The delegation, which includes State Senators Jay Trumbull and Don Gaetz, along with State Representatives Joel Rudman and Patt Maney, will hear presentations from government entities and take public testimony. [READ MORE>>](#)



2025 Chairman and Vice Chairman

Okaloosa County continues to lead the way for success with your elected Commissioners. During the December Board Meeting, Okaloosa County Commissioners selected Commissioner Paul Mixon (District 1) to continue as Chairman for 2025 while Commissioner Carolyn Ketchel (District 2) will serve as the 2025 Vice Chairman.



Southwest Crestview Bypass Update



Multiple funding sources, including voter-approved surtax revenue are being used to build the bypass along with partnerships with FDOT and the City of Crestview. [VIEW A VIDEO OF THE PROGRESS>>](#)

- **Timing:** Under a year until completion.
- **PJ Adams Pkwy.:** All four lanes of traffic are now open to traffic. FDOT continues the work on PJ Adams at the location of their I-10 interchange project. More at <https://www.facebook.com/interstate10.antioch/>
- **Fallen Heroes Way (East-West connector):** The roadway is cleared and being stabilized in preparation for being paved.
- **North-South section:** Most of the roadway is now paved and awaits bridge completion over the railroad for total connection.
- **Miles of new roadway created:** About 13 miles of new roadway have been constructed for this traffic roadway improvement project.

Want to learn more? >>> <https://myokaloosa.com/bcc/infrastructureprojects>

The Future of Okaloosa County



Congratulations to these employees who were recognized at this year's manager's retreat for their completion of Okaloosa County's Leadership program.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors



Did you know Okaloosa County has Community Paramedics? EMS Capt. Greg Cain recently appeared in a video that describes exactly what our community paramedics do. [View the video >>](#)

Staying prepared at VPS



EXERCISE*EXERCISE- This is not a real mishap. The power of partnerships was on display recently at VPS. Okaloosa County's Airports Department at Destin - Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS), Eglin Air Force Base and other area first responder agencies conducted exercises to simulate a mass casualty event at VPS. These exercises are a vital part of staying prepared in the event of a disaster.

Drug-free workplace (THC, CBD Info)

Okaloosa County Human Resources recently updated the employee manual to address the use of medical marijuana. You should have received mandatory online training regarding this topic. If you have not, please reach out to Human Resources at 850-689-5870. Medical marijuana is prohibited for County employees. Marijuana is still an illegal Schedule 1 drug under federal law and because we receive federal funds in Okaloosa County we must comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act. Any employee that tests positive for the substance during a drug screening may face disciplinary action that may include termination. We would like to also caution you on the use of CBD products. The labeling of many CBD products may be misleading because the products could contain higher levels of THC than what the product label states and could lead to a positive result for THC in a drug screening. [View the training video >>](#)



Health Fair & Biometrics

January

2025

Health Fair & Biometrics



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
6	7	8 County Extension Office 3098 Airport Rd. Crestview 7:00 am – 11:30 am	9 Water & Sewer 1804 Lewis Turner Blvd Fort Walton Beach 6:30 am – 10:30 am
13	14 OCAB Training Room 1250 Eglin Pkwy Shalimar, FL 32579 7am – 11 am 12pm – 1:00pm (FM only)	15 Corrections Muster Room 4pm – 7pm	16
20	21	22 Corrections Muster Room 4pm – 7pm	23
27	28 Public Works – North 1759 S. Ferdon Blvd, Crestview 6:30 am – 10:00 am Facility Maintenance Old Bethel, Crestview 12pm – 2pm	29	30



Okaloosa County BCC – HR & Risk Management



We, from the Human Resources and RM Staff, wish everyone Happy Holidays. Stay safe, enjoy your loved ones, and prepare your minds for an even better 2025!

Join us in January for a quick Health Checkup! All health information is kept private and confidential. We receive overall percentages from this data to help us create more Wellness Programs.

Earn \$75 - \$125 just in Biometric Incentives! On-site nurses check your Blood Pressure, Glucose Levels and Weight and are available to answer any questions you may have about taking better care of yourself!

It is so convenient!! Make an appointment at 1 of 6 different locations around the County by clicking [HERE](#)

Join the Wellness Committee

If anyone is interested in joining the Wellness Committee, please contact me. All regular committee meetings will be conducted via Zoom.

Your responsibilities include liaising between your department and Wellness and obtaining employee feedback on different programs or events.

Help create ideas for programs and events. Inform department employees of upcoming events and initiatives.

December Milestones



Congratulations to these County employees who are celebrating their work anniversaries. Pictured with County Administrator John Hofstad and County Commissioners are Mike Stenson, 19 years and retirement as Deputy Airports Director, Stephen Saxer, 5 years Airports Finance & Project Development Specialist, Heather Overstreet, 15 years EMS Lieutenant, Roland Sims, Jr. 15, years County Administrator's Office Administrative Manager and Bryan Graham, 20 years Correctional Captain.



In Case You Missed It

Regular Board Meetings

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Dec. 3- Meeting notes

- Representative from the Florida City County Management Association (FCCMA) presented certificate to the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners and County Administrator on the 30 year Anniversary of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) initial 1994 recognition of Okaloosa County as a Commission-Manager form of government.
- Okaloosa County Commission unanimously agreed to deny a request to change the future land use map designation of 498 acres north of Possum Ridge Road.
- Board adopted the revision to County ARPA Expenditure Plan and additionally allocated interest earned from ARPA funds.
- Board approved authorization execution of task order funding for the rehabilitation of gravity sewer lines and manholes throughout OCWS' service.

TIDBITS

Need Repairs? Apply Now

The SHIP Owner Occupied Rehabilitation program provides financial assistance to low-income families for home repairs to alleviate health hazards, life and safety issues and code violations. (Roof, Doors, Windows, HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical) This is a 5-year, 0% interest, deferred payment loan.

Learn more and to apply, reach out to the Housing Division of Growth Management at <https://myokaloosa.com/gm/housing>

SHIP
Sustainable Housing Investment Program

Homeowners Wanted

This is a 5 year deferred payment loan with 0% interest and no monthly payments

Need Repairs?
Apply Now!
Funding Available

housing@myokaloosa.com
850-609-6183

Qualified Repairs

- Roof Replacement
- Doors and Windows
- HVAC Replacement
- Electrical Issues

- Home must be located in Okaloosa County
- Must be the owner (name on deed) occupant (homestead exemption) of the property for minimum of 3 years prior to receiving assistance
- Property taxes and Mortgage must be current on property
- Home must be covered by property insurance
- Other program requirements must be met