



COUNTY CONNECTION

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4 • APRIL 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

Section	Page(s)
• Top Story	1
• Infographics	2
• Top Story (continued)	3
• Newsflash	4
• Legislative Delegation	5

Marion County Commissioners

- David Moore, District 1
- Kathy Bryant, District 2
- Stan McClain, Vice Chair, District 3
- Carl Zalak III, Chairman, District 4
- Earl Arnett, District 5

Marion County Administrator

Dr. Lee A. Niblock

Find Marion County on:



<http://facebook.com/MarionCountyFlorida>
<http://twitter.com/MarionCountyGov>

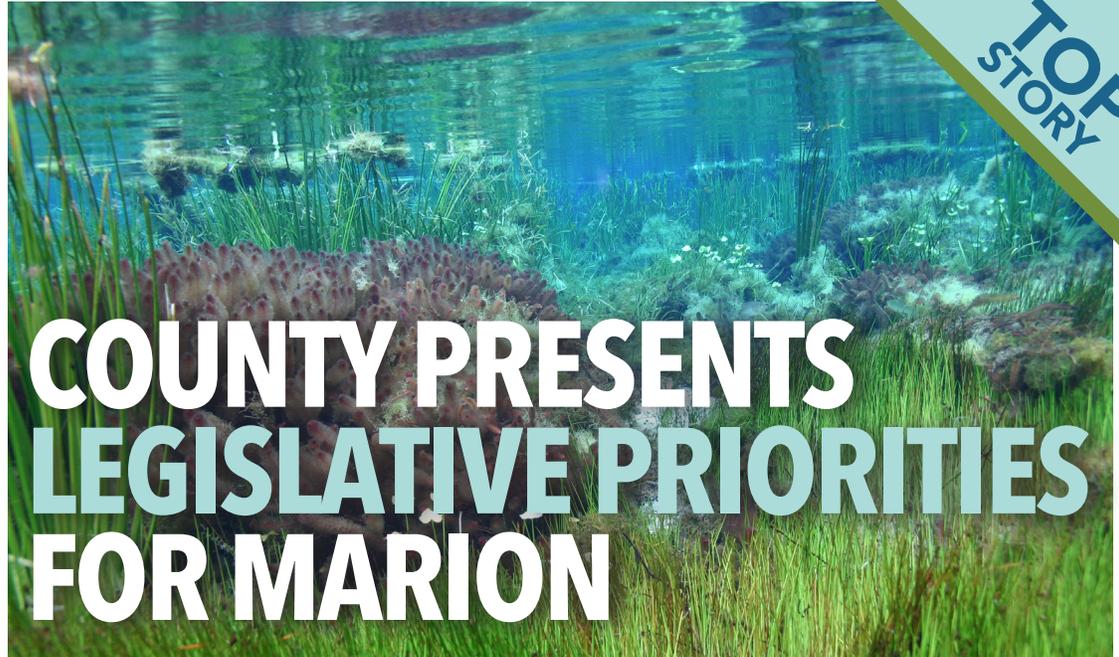


Scan the QR code with your smartphone to visit Marion County online.

MISSION STATEMENT

Marion County provides professional and resourceful public services for our citizens through strategic planning and cost-effective implementation of county initiatives, generating positive results that set the standard for quality local government.

TOP STORY



COUNTY PRESENTS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR MARION

By Barbra Hernández, APR, Office of Public Information

Each year, the Marion County Commission speaks to all of Marion County's state legislators about concerns or issues they would like their representatives to work on during the state's legislative session. Read on for a snapshot of Marion County's legislative priorities and the reasons our community cares about these issues:

Action steps:

- Fund programs for water quality improvements and wastewater projects.
- Continue working with the fertilizer industry to establish chemical formulas and application practices that protect water quality, and fund related education programs.
- Provide funding for regional verification of the effectiveness of agricultural and industry best management practices.

OUR SPRINGS



Why we care:

Marion's springs are showing signs of degradation due to nutrient loading in the Floridan Aquifer. As the aquifer extends well beyond Marion County boundaries, efforts to improve its health and abundance must be a state priority, not just a local one.

Benefits:

Restore our springs and ensure safe, adequate water supply.

Continues on page 3



Protect our springs

Although we may not live right next to a spring, what we do in our homes can have an effect on the health of our water bodies.



Water overuse

In Marion County, about 60 percent of our water use is for our homes and lawns. Because we use most of our water at home, small changes can make a big difference and help free up substantial water to help meet future needs.



Too much fertilizer

When applied improperly or in excess, fertilizers can wash off or leach into nearby storm drains, water bodies or even into our aquifer.



Unmaintained septic systems

Septic systems help remove some pollutants from our wastewater – when they work correctly. A failing septic system can discharge untreated effluent into the groundwater, which could potentially enter any nearby well, as well as pollute our water supply.

How you can help

- **Water** your lawn before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. During midday, a lot of water is lost to evaporation.
- **Use** water-wise landscaping or switch to water-efficient sprinkler heads to reduce irrigation.
- **Periodically check** your water meter and fixtures for leaks.
- **Consider** retrofitting your bathrooms and kitchen with water-saving fixtures; high-efficiency showerheads can save about 6 gallons a minute.
- **Visit [Marion County Utilities online](#)** for more tips to save water in your home and yard.

How you can help

- **Select** slow-release fertilizers; they are kinder to the environment and usually more cost-effective.
- **Look** at the 3 numbers on the fertilizer bag (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium). Nitrogen and phosphorus can pollute water, and Marion soils already have plenty of phosphorus.
- **Do not** apply fertilizer prior to a rain event. Too much water will wash away the chemicals. These could end up in a nearby river, lake or spring.
- **Visit www.BeWiseWhenYouFertilize.com** for more tips on preventing pollution from fertilizer-use.

How you can help

- **Have** your septic system inspected about every 2-3 years.
- **Use** water efficiently to reduce the amount of water that enters the septic system.
- **Don't** flush anything that could clog the system (e.g. dental floss, personal hygiene items, paper towels, etc.).
- **Don't** pour chemicals or hazardous waste in sinks or toilets; this can kill the good bacteria at work in your septic tank, as well as contaminate our aquifer.

SOUTHEASTERN LIVESTOCK PAVILION



Action steps:

Allocate \$1.2 million toward the final phase of the pavilion's master plan through the Department of Agriculture's FY 2014 budget.

Why we care:

The pavilion is an arterial complex for one of Florida's vital industries - agriculture. It generates \$11.2 million in economic activity and more than \$200,000 in state sales tax annually. The facility is booked nearly every weekend with regional agricultural events and civic functions. It is also the largest clear-span roof south of Atlanta.

Benefits:

- Maximizes the facility's regional and statewide economic potential.
- Better promotes Florida's agriculture by bringing the industry closer to the public.
- Fuels economic and community development in Florida's central and northeastern regions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Action steps:

Set guidelines for developing qualified regional targeted industries eligible for benefits from the Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund Program.

Why we care:

Florida is made up of several distinct regions with varying conditions and assets that affect the fiscal and economic viability of each region's unique workforce and industry sector strengths. Establishing qualified targeted industries consistent with these regional strengths will enhance the ability of local economies to leverage their unique assets to grow their industry and workforce base.

Benefits:

- Empowers the unique conditions and assets of each of the state's regional economies.
- Allows regional and local community input into the qualifying priority for targeted industries.
- Enhances the ability of the state's rural areas to qualify non-traditional targeted industries as important recruiting and job creation opportunities.

Action steps:

Raise the state's capital construction project bonding requirements from the \$200,000 minimum (established more than 10 years ago) to \$750,000.

Why we care:

The current performance bond exemption requirements for Florida's local governments are \$200,000 or less, causing the general cost of bonding to be passed along from the contractor to the county as part of the bid pricing structure.

Benefits:

- Provides local governments significant financial savings of 6 percent or more on smaller capital projects, saving tens of millions of dollars statewide each year and improving the economic development potential for Florida's contractors.
- Increases competitive bidding, diversifies contractor participation and increases minority- and women-owned business engagement in the public bidding process.



Calendar of Events

Find out what events are coming up in Marion County – check the online [calendar of events!](#)



NEWSFLASH

“Run for the Springs” on April 12 to raise awareness of Marion’s water resources

By Stacie Causey, Marion County Office of Public Information

Grab your running shoes and a few speedy comrades and join the Marion County Office of the County Engineer on **April 12** for the second annual “Run for the Springs” 5K. The all-day celebration of our community’s unique water resources will combine great family fun with raising awareness about steps that individuals and businesses can take to protect Marion County’s unique water resources. Here’s how to be a part of it:

Runners – Think your team has what it takes? Try your speed against other teams as well as individuals to see just who wins the awards in various business and age categories.

Sponsors – Reserve tent space to showcase your business or team and network with potential clients. Various other sponsorships are available, including water stations and mile markers.

Spectators – Just want to join in on the fun? Bring your family and friends to enjoy music, refreshments, children’s crafts and play areas, and much more!

Register today to run in the 5K!
www.marioncountyfl.org/corporaterun or contact Gail Mowry at 352-671-8686.



Animal Services employees win top honors at state conference

By Elaine Delorio McClain, Marion County Office of Public Information



Jennifer Knappenburger

The Florida Animal Control Association, the leading professional agency that guides the state’s shelters and control divisions, recognized two Marion County Animal Services employees on Feb. 23 at the association’s annual statewide conference. Dr. Martha Zimmerman, DVM, an Animal Services staff veterinarian, won Employee of the Year, an award given to the top non-animal control officer employee in the state. Jennifer Knappenburger was runner-up for the Animal Control Officer of the Year award.

Helping shelter animals find homes consumes nearly every minute of Dr. Zimmerman’s day. Dr. Z performs more than 4,000 spay and neuter surgeries each year for the adoption and Neuter Commuter programs, in addition to providing daily vet care for the animals that call the Animal Center their temporary home. Dr. Z takes many of the adoptable pet photos you see online and uses her spare time to train and socialize some of the shyer or more high-spirited dogs to help increase their chances of finding homes. Her dedication to shelter animals extends past her work day, as she fosters pets in her home that are too young, sick or injured

to go up for adoption. The most helpless and hopeless of shelter pets are closest to Dr. Z’s heart; she sometimes performs special surgeries for injured or disabled animals and then works to nurse them back to health until they can be adopted.

Officer Knappenburger works a high volume of cases – more than 1,000 in 2013 alone – and was recognized for her excellent customer service and quality work. She uses her expertise in dog training to help educate citizens when working cases, and uses her knowledge to coach co-workers and new employees.



Dr. Martha Zimmerman

MARION COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION 2013-2014

Compiled by Stacie Causey, Marion County Office of Public Information

Marion County is represented at the state level by seven legislative delegates. Find out more about your state government officials and pending legislation by visiting www.flsenate.gov or www.flhouse.gov.

FLORIDA SENATORS



Sen. Charles S. Dean Sr.
District 5



Sen. Alan Hays
District 11



Sen. Dorothy L. Hukill
District 8

FLORIDA REPRESENTATIVES



Rep. Clovis Watson Jr.
District 20



Rep. Dennis K. Baxley
District 23



Rep. Charlie Stone
District 22



Rep. H. Marlene O'Toole
District 33