



COUNTY CONNECTION

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Marion County Commissioners
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Kathy Bryant, Vice Chair, District 2
Stan McClain, Chairman, District 3
Carl Zalak III, District 4
Earl Arnett, District 5

Interim County Administrator
Bill Kauffman

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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.



LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS ON TRACK

By Danielle Damato Doty

In a span of six days, Marion County leaders attended two major events that will impact the area's economic development outlook for years to come.

On Feb. 27, FedEx Ground hosted a construction celebration at its site in the Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park. At the event, Commission Chairman Stan McClain, Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn, Ocala/Marion County CEP former chairman Doug Cone, FedEx officials, site developers and community members all signed a construction beam, highlighting the successful public-private partnership that brought FedEx to our community.

"Marion County is pleased to welcome FedEx Ground and the exciting job creation opportunities it will bring," said Chairman McClain. "Its presence in this vital north central Florida area reflects our community's steadfast commitment to creating long-lasting economic benefits for the region and beyond."

Marion County partnered with the State of Florida and City of Ocala to provide incentives and assistance to FedEx Ground on this project. Steady progress on the 400,000 square-foot facility continues and is expected to be completed in August 2016. The first phase has grown by an additional \$45 million and 40 jobs since it was first finalized in 2013. The first phase is now at \$170 million and will open with more than 350 full- and part-time employees.

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(Continued from page 1)

On March 4, Marion County commissioners joined local officials, community members and CSX leaders at the CSX Select Site Celebration. **The CSX Select Site designation of an 83-acre parcel in the Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park is the first in Florida and certifies that the site is shovel-ready for industrial or commercial development. It is only the 15th Select Site property within the CSX 23-state territory.**



Property developers Ocala 489, LLC and local leaders hope that it will help market the property to a rail user and bring new industry to Ocala/Marion County. The approved plan for development includes the building of a spur, or a short line of railroad tracks, from the larger CSX rail line into the Commerce Park to the certified site.

"My job is to drive new business to the railroad," said Clark Robertson, assistant vice president of regional development at CSX. "This is an endeavor we've backed in a pretty good way to encourage users to be able to find really great sites very quickly."

Robertson presented plaques of appreciation to Chairman Stan McClain, Mayor Kent Guinn and Tom Owen with Pinsky Railroad Company to thank them for the partnership throughout the Select Site designation process.



TOP STORY

Commission proclaims Feb. 16-20 as **First Responder Appreciation Week**

By Barbra Hernández, APR

Alarms ring. Emergency calls are dialed in. They grab their gear and climb aboard their emergency vehicles to head out to the rescue. That is what a regular work day might look like for hundreds of men and women who serve as first responders in Marion County.

Recognizing their selfless acts of courage to protect life and property, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners recently proclaimed Feb. 16-20, 2015 as the inaugural Marion County First Responder Appreciation Week.

"Our law enforcement officers, firefighters, paramedics and EMTs are vital members of our community," said Commission Chairman Stan



McClain. "These brave responders serve our citizens every day without seeking recognition, and we truly value and appreciate their service."

The County Commission's proclamation comes just a few weeks after Governor Rick Scott issued a similar recognition statewide. First responders from the Belleview Police Department, Dunnellon Police Department, Florida Highway Patrol, Ocala Fire Rescue, Ocala Police Department, Marion County Fire Rescue and Marion County Sheriff's Office attended the commission meeting to accept the proclamation.

6 steps to celebrate Water Conservation Month from Marion County Utilities

In Marion County, about 60 percent of our water use is for our homes and lawns. That means small changes we make at home can make a big difference.

1

Don't waste water down the drain. Use a container to collect cold water you run while waiting for it to warm up, and use it later for watering plants. Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator, not under running water. Time your shower to 5-7 minutes. Operate washers with full loads only. These and other small actions can significantly conserve water when practiced regularly.

2

Go with the flow: low-flow, that is. Low-flow fixtures are inexpensive, easy-to-install attachments that will increase the water efficiency of home appliances. Look for faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads next time you stop by the hardware store.

3

Fix those leaks. That drip, drip, drip of a leaky faucet or showerhead is more than just an annoying sound. Tiny leaks could cost big money over time and waste several to hundreds of gallons of water per day.

4

Follow irrigation schedules. During daylight saving time, odd-numbered addresses may irrigate on Wednesdays and Saturdays only, even-numbered addresses may irrigate on Thursdays and Sundays only, and non-residential properties may irrigate on Tuesdays and Fridays only. Water only before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. on designated days.

5

Use water-wise landscaping. Native Florida plants are adapted to the state's climate. They can tolerate periods of drought – reducing need for irrigation – more than non-native species. Contact Marion County UF/IFAS Extension Service at 352-671-8400 for environmentally-friendly yard tips.

6

Listen to your lawn. Your lawn will tell you when it needs to be watered; look for signs such as curling blades, changes in color to a blue/gray tint or footprints remaining in the grass before turning on your sprinklers. Studies have shown that lawns that are allowed to dry out are more tolerant of drought and have fewer problems with pests than those that aren't. To prevent overwatering, install a rain sensor; sensors override the system when enough rain has fallen to skip an irrigation cycle. Often, irrigation is the source of more than half our home water use and these simple changes could save tens of thousands of gallons per year.

NEWSFLASH

On April 11, Run for the Springs

By Stacie Causey

The 3rd Annual Corporate Run for the Springs 5K will take runners and walkers on a fit celebration of Marion County's springs the morning of **Saturday, April 11** at the McPherson Complex (601 SE 25th Ave., Ocala) while raising awareness about steps that individuals and businesses can take to protect local water resources. If you haven't already signed up, you still have time: visit www.marioncountyfl.org/CorpRun. Register now to claim your bib number, T-shirt and tote bag stuffed with educational and promotional items from the Stormwater Section and community partners. Want to learn more? Here are 3 things you need to know about the run:

THE FACT:

The 5K aims to raise awareness about steps that individuals and businesses can take to protect our local springs and water resources. Proceeds will be returned to Marion County residents and businesses in the form of projects that will benefit the health of the springs.

THE FUN:

5K participants will enjoy: warm-up Zumba session, scenic route, refreshments, door prizes, cool-down yoga session and more. The family-friendly event is free for spectators. Visit the kids' area, bounce house and vendor booths, and then cheer on your favorite runners and walkers as they cross the finish line.

THE FOLLOW-UP:

For more details, contact the Office of the County Engineer's Stormwater Section at 352-671-8686 or visit the [Corporate Run website](#).

HAVE YOU NOTICED?

A stormwater retrofit project in the South Oak and South Oak Forest subdivisions began in March and is projected to be finished in June 2015. This project involves the expansion of an existing retention pond and modification to another to improve drainage conditions for the communities.



Animal Services repeats top award at state conference

By Elaine Delorio McClain



The Florida Animal Control Association, the leading professional agency that guides the state's shelters and control divisions, recognized a Marion County Animal Services employee on Feb. 23 at the association's annual statewide conference. Pamela Butscher, an Animal Services care technician coordinator, won Employee of the Year, an award given to the top non-animal control officer employee in the state.

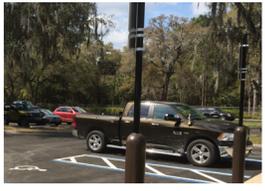
Pam has worked at MCAS for eight years, and has been promoted through the ranks to her current position of animal care technician coordinator. She's responsible for overseeing technicians and training new staff, in addition to her kennel duties. She's in charge of the shelter's entire cat housing area, and can always tell visitors a little bit about each cat's background and personality. Pam also oversees MCAS' partnership with PetSmart Charities that enables the shelter's cats to be adopted right from the Lady Lake PetSmart store, providing a second adoption location for Marion's southeastern residents. She also arranges many outreach adoption events that help give some of the shelter's longest residents additional exposure in the community. Pam spearheads the externship and veterinarian-assisting programs, giving students real-life experience side-by-side MCAS' staff veterinarians and technicians. Her love and compassion for shelter animals doesn't end when she goes home for the night; Pam fosters kittens until they're well and old enough to go up for adoption.

This year was the second straight year that MCAS employees received top statewide honors. In 2014, MCAS staff veterinarian Dr. Martha Zimmerman, DVM, was awarded with Employee of the Year and MCAS animal control officer Jennifer Knappenburger was runner-up for Animal Control Officer of the Year.

Improvements spring up at local parks

By Elaine Delorio McClain

If you frequented a number of Marion County Parks and Recreation facilities over the winter and early spring months, you may have noticed some visitors wearing hard hats and work boots instead of bathing suits and hiking shoes. Taking advantage of the slower, colder months, Parks and Recreation and construction crews have been busily renovating and enhancing parks across the county. Take a look below to see what's new at your favorite recreation spot.



PARK: KP HOLE PARK

STATUS: Complete

PROJECT: Visitors will notice a new boat ramp livery loop, a new concrete apron for the overflow parking area and a newly-resurfaced parking lot.



PARK: BELLEVIEW SPORTSPLEX

STATUS: Complete

PROJECT: With the addition of three new ones, children visiting the Belleview Sportsplex will now enjoy swinging and sliding at a total of four playground areas. And, because practice makes perfect, little all-stars will be happy to see three new batting cages installed at the park.



PARK: BRICK CITY ADVENTURE PARK

STATUS: In progress

PROJECT: Crews are currently reconstructing Southeast 22nd Road, which runs through Brick City Adventure Park. The project includes reconstruction of the road to add bike lanes and parallel parking near the pavilions, as well as a new sidewalk connecting the neighborhoods at the east end of the road to the main park area. In addition, a new stormwater management system will be created to treat runoff that discharges into the quarry. This project is funded by a partnership between the Marion County Board of County Commissioners and the City of Ocala.



PARK: BLUE RUN OF DUNNELLON PARK

STATUS: Complete

PROJECT: Visitors will enjoy a new trail spur – a 10-foot wide paved trail with grass shoulders – that connects the park to the recently-completed

extension of the Withlacoochee State Trail just south of the park. The county also connected the new trail spur to the waterfront, providing ADA-accessible access.

PROGRAM PORTRAITS:

African-American Read-In inspires dozens

By Stacie Causey

Guest speakers, performers and volunteer readers gathered at Headquarters-Ocala Public Library on Feb. 22 to participate in Marion County's eighth celebration of the National African-American Read-In. The event is held during National Black History Month to showcase the rich heritage of African-American literature, film, music and art.



Participants were tallied and records submitted for inclusion in the nationwide event's yearly totals. Over 5.5 million participants were documented last year according to the event sponsors, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. The national numbers for this year's event are still being tallied, so be sure to watch for the announcement on the [Marion County Public Library System's Facebook page](#).

Calendar of Events

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