

Volusia County Government Activities
March 28 – April 3, 2020

Community Services

Agriculture Extension (AG Center)

Extension Services has been able to transition several in-person educational programs to an online delivery mode for our citizens. Per UF guidance, this will continue through April 30. Interested residents can engage our team via email volusia@ifas.ufl.edu or by phone 386-822-5778 for a list of program offerings. For more information, contact Brad Burbaugh at bburbaugh@volusia.org.

Community Assistance

Human Services offers assistance to eligible households for utilities, past-due rent, and past-due mortgage. All client interviews are currently being conducted over the phone with a caseworker. A household in need of assistance may schedule an appointment by calling 386-239-7757.

Housing and Grants Administration -On April 6, the Housing and Grants activity will have applications available for rental assistance for those whose income was negatively impacted by COVID-19.

For more information, contact Carmen Hall at chall@volusia.org

Votran

Votran's Paratransit service is running at 28% of normal service and the fixed route services is at 52% of normal service. Route 25 will be suspended at the end of the route schedule on Friday, April 3. Votran staff is participating in webinars and training on the federal and state level pertaining to the COVID-19 virus and industry best practices and guidelines. For more information, contact Edie Biro at 386-756-7496.

County Manager's Office

Community Information

Community Information has been comprehensively involved in the dissemination of coronavirus information. With some staff working remotely, our team remains inordinately busy and actively engaged with many new undertakings. This includes multiple news releases, press conferences, special COVID-19-related graphic creations (including new signs for county parks), and daily division page website updates including the PIN site: Volusia.org/coronavirus. Staff is also coordinating the Public Information Network, a countywide group of public information officers. To perpetually support ESF #14, a minimum of one CI PIO staffer is assigned to the Emergency Operations Center as a part of its partial activation.

On April 3, Community Information collaborated with the Volusia Sheriff's Office in the efforts of a "Panel Discussion" surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel included: Sheriff Mike Chitwood (panel moderator); County Manager George Recktenwald; Margaret Crossman, MD - Chief Medical Officer, Halifax Health; Joe Smith, MD - Chief Medical Officer, AdventHealth; David Ottati, Regional CEO, AdventHealth (Volusia, Lake & Flagler counties); and Holly Smith, Communications Manager with FDOH in Volusia County. The panel included questions elicited from VSO PIO Andrew Gant via VSO's Facebook page directed to the selected panelists by the sheriff. The discussion is posted on the VSO Facebook page and shared on the Community Information and Emergency Management Facebook pages. This event gave rise to an extraordinary opportunity for CI's production coordinators to explore new ways of video creation.

Due to the cancellation of many county events and the transition of some in-person services, Community Information will be slightly changing the standard guests and topics for our weekly Volusia Today radio program. We will be adapting the "Today" context of the show by discussing and providing information about the current COVID-19 pandemic and its local impact. For more information, contact Kevin Captain at kcaptain@volusia.org.

Finance

Information Technology

Information Technology has created a website allowing citizens to submit public comments prior to virtual council meetings. We are currently testing a software patch to the financial system implementing provisions of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. IT has set up over 50 GoToMeeting accounts and provided training and documentation on how to create and manage virtual meetings. Increased VPN access capability to the County network to accommodate large numbers of remote users. IT has completed the install and configuration of the County's network to the new Elections facility to support the upcoming move expected by the end of April.

We are also providing ongoing GIS support, reviewing shelter information with the School Board, and updating information about health care facilities. We are coordinating with the School Board STEM coordinator and school GeoMentors to provide GIS resources for home schooling and remote education. IT is training Animal Control staff on the use of web-based forms to process online payments for the Spay/Neuter program. Continues to work with the Assistant County Attorney on the census-driven redistricting process. Currently evaluating software to assist with this process. For more information, contact Kevin Benge at kbenge@volusia.org or Brian Whiting at bwhiting@volusia.org.



Growth and Resource Management

Environmental Management

The LEC will be broadcasting live on Facebook every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11:15 a.m. Future programs will include such things as craft demonstrations, virtual hikes into the adjacent, 360-acre Lyonia Preserve, interactive games, educational talks about manatees and gopher tortoises and live feedings in saltwater aquariums.

The MSC continues to offer live streaming of MSC educational programs through coordination with Community Information. Last week's programs (March 23-27) focused on turtles and reached 44,694 people through social media. The MSC will continue its live streaming this week, every day at 1 p.m. For more information, contact Clay Ervin at cervin@volusia.org.

Public Protection

Animal Services

On March 25, the Volusia County Animal Services Director and team of Animal Services staff responded to an address in Deltona per a report made to the Volusia County Central Dispatch center regarding suspicious activity. Mr. Leath's received consent and was escorted onto the property to inspect the animals. He found the roosters being housed in isolation from one another, many with their combs and wattles removed, and several roosters with their natural spurs blunted; this is done to attach knives or gaffs prior to a fight.

The owner of the birds surrendered ownership to Volusia County Animal Services. A search warrant was then obtained, and after a two-day search and removal of all evidence and animals, approximately 310 game birds were collected, along with supporting evidence. For more information, contact Mark Swanson at 386-740-5120.

Emergency Medical Administration

Procedural changes and needs involving stakeholders concerning COVID-19 continue to be addressed. Specifically, addressing prehospital protocols; emergency medical dispatch, including nurse triage; and EMS-to-hospital interface. For more information, contact Mark Swanson at 386-740-5120.

Emergency Medical Services

Three new ambulances and three power-loading stretchers were added into the system. A class was held for five new lead EMTs and the Medical Director cleared a Paramedic, three full-time EMT's and an Intermittent EMT. For more information, contact Patricia Bythwood at 386-740-5120.