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2021 Volusia County Council: A year of change



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DR. FRED LOWRY
DISTRICT 5



GEORGE RECKTENWALD
COUNTY MANAGER

For Volusia County, 2021 was a year of great hope, promise and optimism. And the accomplishments were abundant. An historic water quality improvement project with significant implications for the **Mosquito Lagoon** got underway. A cherished portion of the **Ormond Scenic Loop and Trail** was protected from development. Implementation began on a critically important, nearly \$25 million upgrade to Volusia County's public safety radio system. And the County continued to support community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

But more than anything, 2021 was a transformational year – a year of meaningful, monumental, impactful change for the county. There was a new County Chair and the redrawing of County Council districts. It was the year **Amendment 10** took effect. In fact, the planning and execution of the Amendment 10 transition with the County's Constitutional officers went so smoothly, in spite of the pandemic, that the process earned a 2021 Best Practices Award from the Florida Association of Counties.

Two new trail segments and a new production studio for the County also were dedicated in 2021. Eleven new directors were installed. A fresh, new look to the passenger terminal at Daytona Beach International Airport was unveiled. And **ECHO** and **Volusia Forever** were overhauled, with a newly created County operating division – Resource Stewardship – established to manage the hugely popular programs devoted to land preservation and the enhancement of environmental, cultural, historical and outdoor recreation facilities.

And the year ended with the selection of a **new district map** that will govern County Council elections for the next decade. Yes, change was everywhere! But that's how 2021 was – fast-paced and full of transitions.

The year started off in January with new County Chair Jeff Brower taking the oath of office and the Chair's gavel entrusted to him by Volusia County voters.

A second new Council member, District 3 representative Danny Robins, also was seated. Chair Brower started off the new year with a speech that was full of hope, optimism, excitement and a call to unity. And then it was time to get down to business – the people's business. The Council spent the year addressing issues as diverse as roads, recreational facilities, water protection, public safety, budget and taxes and continuing COVID relief.

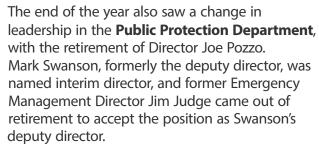
2021 Volusia County Council: A year of change





- · Emergency Management Director Helene Wetherington
- Accounting Director Lynne Urice
- Beach Safety Director Andy Ethridge
- Resource Stewardship Director Dr. Brad Burbaugh
- Airport and Economic Development Director Cyrus Callum
- Public Works Director Ben Bartlett
- **Emergency Medical Services Director Michael Colman**
- Road and Bridge Director Lori Koontz
- Planning and Development Services Director Carol McFarlane
- Mosquito Control Director Marcus McDonough
- Public Works Deputy Director Arden Fontaine















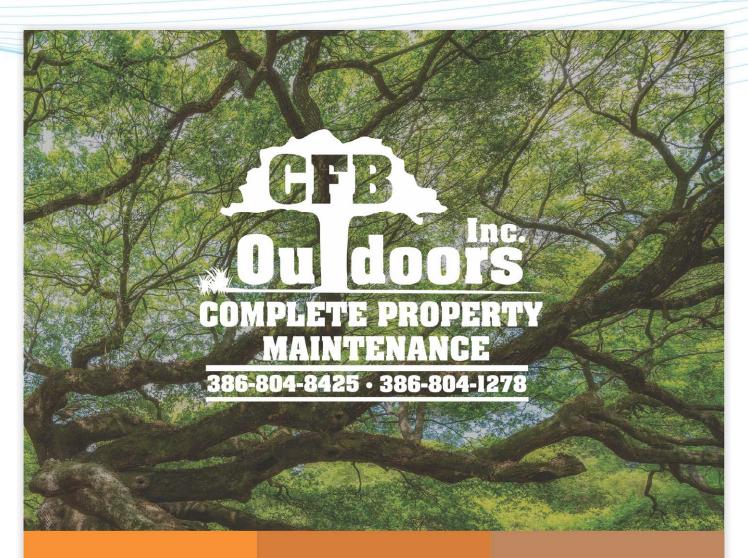


Meanwhile, the County Council ended the year by settling on new boundaries that will be in effect for the five Council districts over the next decade. The boundary changes are the result of Volusia's growing and shifting population patterns as documented in the 2020 census count. The county is required to go

through the **redistricting process** every 10 years after each census. The results of last year's census showed Volusia County's population increased by nearly 60,000 since the 2010 census. The re-drawing of the districts was necessitated by the need to shrink the size of the districts that grew more rapidly

in population over the last 10 years and expand the size of the slower growing districts to make them all roughly equal in population again. The new boundaries will impact County Council elections starting this year, since the five Council members who serve in the district seats must live within their district and are elected by voters within those districts. The other two members of the County Council – the County Chair and the At-Large representative – are elected by voters countywide.

With all that did change, what wasn't new for the County Council in 2021 was the commitment to improvement – improving the economy, the county, services and lives. That commitment to improvement will continue in 2022 and beyond!





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Constitutional Officers

Larry Bartlett



Mike Chitwood



Lisa Lewis

Larry Bartlett, Property Appraiser

Volusia County property values continued to experience steady growth in 2021, and the residential markets continued to surge despite the pandemic. Last year, we added a drone to our fleet of equipment. The remote sensing capabilities of an unmanned aircraft allow our mappers and appraisers to collect the high-quality images we use to improve our geographical information systems. We continued to fight Homestead Exemption fraud, which has cost Volusia County millions of dollars in revenue over the past 20 years. We are actively investigating homes improperly receiving multiple homestead exemptions and imposing tax liens on violators. We expect to collect millions of dollars for the County's General Fund in 2022.

Sheriff Mike Chitwood

The year 2021 was a historic one for the Volusia Sheriff's Office, capped by the graduation of the inaugural class of VSO Training Academy recruits. Established earlier in the year after passing a thorough review by the state, the new academy officially launched in the summer and brought deputy applications to a record high. The academy was just one of several new programs at the Sheriff's Office, which transitioned to an independent constitutional agency in 2021 and created its own human resource, finance and purchasing divisions without adding any new staff positions to the budget. Amid all these major changes, the agency also opened its doors to the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies for an independent review of our policies, procedures and operations. The result: Advanced Law Enforcement Accreditation for the 10th time in history. Today, with a Part I crime rate once again on pace to reach another record low, the Volusia Sheriff's Office enters 2022 preparing to implement the FBI's new National Incident-Based Reporting System, which will bring the public an even more detailed view of crime data for Volusia County.

Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections

In 2021, the supervisor of elections office was busy processing initiative petitions for possible placement on the 2022 general election ballot along with candidate ptetitions. Also in 2021, we conducted five municipal elections. Although on a smaller scale than countywide elections, the planning and implementation is still managed in the same manner. This includes poll worker training, securing polling locations, mailing ballots, early voting and Election Day. Due to the pandemic, census data was submitted late in 2021. Each municipality, the county, the school board and the state are or have already redrawn their respective boundaries. Once all of the boundaries have been approved, the elections office will re-draw precinct lines. And once that's complete, every registered voter will receive a new voter information card that will include their precinct information to prepare for the next election. Cyber security and physical security: They both have an integral role in the conducting of elections. We will continue providing open, secure and transparent elections for the residents of Volusia County.

Volusia County FLORIDA

Constitutional Officers

Will Roberts, Tax Collector

Volusia County's first year with an elected tax collector saw the office take big strides toward increasing convenience for the county's residents and taxpayers. As required by State statute, the Office of the Tax Collector assumed operations of two driver license locations from the State in 2021. An average of 1,400 customers are now served each day in all six Tax Collector offices collectively. The Tax Collector has also made final preparations to begin offering concealed weapon licensing for the first time in the county. In 2022, the Office will continue to make its services easier to access through one-stop locations that provide driver license services, vehicle tag and title services, property tax collection, disabled parking placards and hunting and fishing licenses. A new office in Deltona also is planned to improve access to services in southwest Volusia. Online tag and title transactions have increased nearly 60% since FY 19. Customers will continue to be encouraged to take advantage of online payment technology to avoid a trip to the office. While continuing to improve efficiencies for customers, the Tax Collector enhances internal fiscal efficiency by contracting with the County of Volusia to provide shared services such as human resources, information technology, facilities maintenance and purchasing and accounting.



Will Roberts

Laura Roth, Clerk of the Circuit Court

The Clerk of the Circuit Court maintains important documents and provides services such as marriage licenses, official land records, passport processing, domestic violence injunction assistance, child support services, foreclosure and tax deed land sales, traffic citation processing, maintenance of all official court records, and extensive free public records accessibility via www.clerk.org. The Clerk offers property fraud alert, a free, easy-to-use service to protect residents from land records fraud. You can sign up for this free service at www.clerk.org. In 2021, the Clerk's Office provided continuous essential services to the community without closure, held a virtual "Operation Green Light" event and added a new "contact us" system to clerk.org for improved responsiveness. Laura E. Roth was named the 2021 "Clerk of the Year" in June by the Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers. Volusia County honored the achievement with a proclamation on Aug. 3, 2021. Visit www.clerk.org and follow our official Facebook page for more information about future Operation Green Light events, the Ride Forever Biker wedding and other free programs and information.



Laura Roth





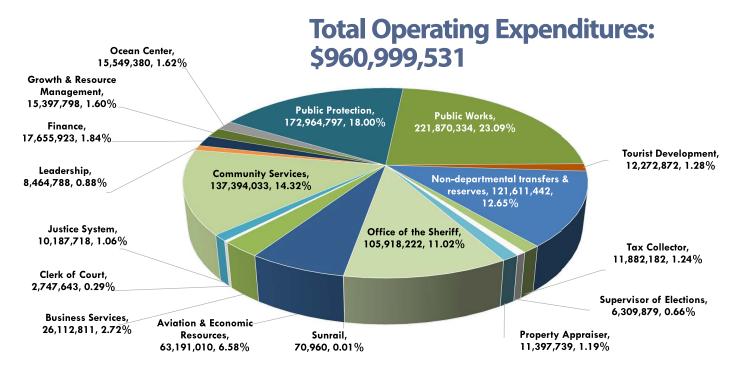








Operating Expenditures by Department



Budget Adoption



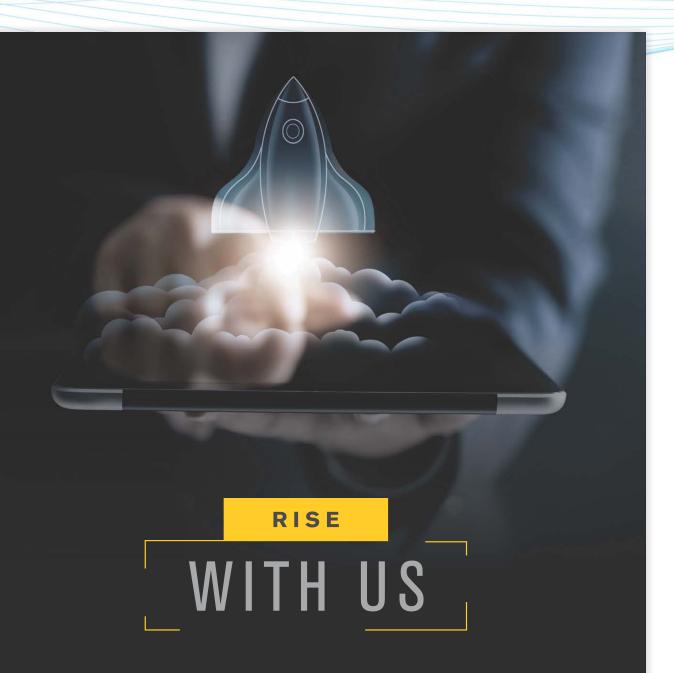
In its role as the policy-makers, the County Council establishes service levels and funding priorities through the annual budget adoption process.

For the current 2021-22 fiscal year, the County Council adopted a \$961 million operating budget for the County. The largest countywide component is the \$349.1 million General Fund, which supports services the County provides to all of Volusia. It's financed in part by a countywide property tax rate the County Council set for this year at 5.3812 mills – a reduction from last year's rate of 5.4500 mills. This marked the fourth year in a row and the fifth time in the past six years that the General Fund tax rate has gone down. By comparison, the rate in fiscal year 2015-16 was 6.3189 mills.

Property taxes account for approximately 33% of the County's total operating revenue. The remainder comes from a variety of sources, such as licenses and permits, fees, special assessments, fines, charges for services, and appropriated fund balance.

The new budget placed a high priority on public safety and included funds for several new positions, including nine firefighters and a part-time fire inspector, two EMTs, two paramedics, two ambulance supply technicians, six corrections officers and one corrections information service analyst. Also, \$5.8 million has been set aside in the budget for various building repairs required at the Emergency Medical Services building, as well as to fund the west wing replacement and design of the mental health/opioid dorms at the Corrections Facility.





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COVID-19: Volusia County Continues to Respond

Volusia County Government certainly found time to address plenty of other issues in 2021. Still, the County's Emergency Operations Center, Community Services Department and Facility Management team remained busy throughout the year responding to the continuing pandemic and supporting ongoing **community relief efforts**.

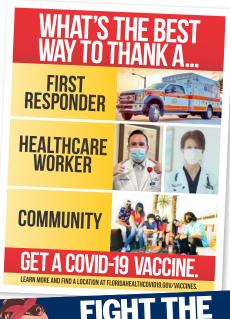
The County, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health in Volusia County, worked in 2021 to sustain a robust program of COVID-19 vaccination clinics and testing sites throughout the community on an as-needed basis to supplement services available through private providers. These included fixed locations, pop-up events and mobile clinics to help meet the needs of Volusia County residents.

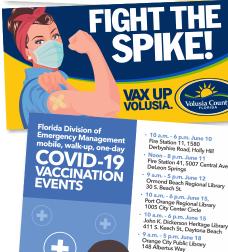
In addition to previous distributions, the County made another 100,000 protective face masks available to residents. And to serve patients diagnosed with COVID-19 as well as high-risk individuals, the County helped support a state-run monoclonal antibody therapy treatment center that operated in Volusia County for 3½ months.

Through federal relief funding to local governments, the County was able to make nearly \$30 million in additional rental assistance available to residents financially impacted by the pandemic. And throughout it all, the County closely coordinated with the Volusia-Flagler Public Information Network to ensure timely notification and consistent messaging to the public to promote awareness about COVID-19 services and reinforce health, safety and protective guidance.

Meanwhile, numerous **COVID-19 risk reduction measures** were undertaken in County buildings last year to keep them safe for the public and our employees. The measures included UV restroom lighting, advanced UV air filtration systems, door pullers, sanitizing stations, automatic faucets, safety signs and markings.

We eagerly look forward to a time when the pandemic has ended. Until then, Volusia County will continue to be on the front lines in serving the needs of our residents and businesses and helping our community recover.

















Protecting Natural Resources

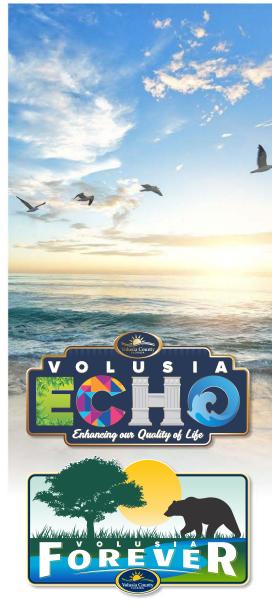
Volusia County is blessed with a spectacular array of **natural resources** – everything from rivers, lakes and springs to forests, conservation lands and preserves. They are a source of recreation, conservation and species habitat. The continued protection of our natural resources is a very high priority and absolutely essential to the quality of life for our residents and visitors.

The County Council and County staff continue to work in collaboration with local, state, regional and national partners to help preserve our waterways, open spaces and wildlife. But when it comes to preserving and protecting our natural resources, current residents as well as future generations also owe a huge debt of gratitude to Volusia County voters. In 2000, residents voted to tax themselves to fund **Volusia Forever** and **ECHO** – two programs managed by the County that preserve and enhance environmental, cultural, historic and outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Originally designed to last for 20 years, the programs became extremely popular and successful – so much so that in 2020, voters overwhelmingly approved 20-year extensions for both programs.

Working with the Volusia Forever and ECHO advisory committees, County staff and the Council devoted 2021 to updating the guidelines and operating procedures for both programs. As part of the process, 10 public listening sessions took place, citizen input was gathered from online surveys, and joint workshops with the County Council were conducted to help shape the program changes. The adopted changes to the ECHO program strengthen administrative processes and procedures, expand opportunities for nonprofits, and elevate transparency and marketing. And the adopted changes to Volusia Forever further align property evaluation with science-based criteria, establish a new forests and farmlands program, and transition the land acquisition and management activities to be fully funded by the ad-valorem assessment.

The County also created a new division – the **Resource Stewardship Division** – to unify management of Volusia Forever and ECHO and installed Dr. Brad Burbaugh as the director to oversee the programs. Both programs are now back in full swing and soliciting new projects to fund.

Yet another triumph in the land preservation efforts during 2021 was the county's acquisition of a 36-acre tract hugging the **Ormond Scenic Loop** and Trail. Cherished by area residents, the parcel had been slated for the development of home sites in a section of Plantation Oaks teeming with historic significance and pristine, natural beauty. With the County Council stepping in to purchase the land from the developer for \$988,000, the acreage has now been preserved for the public's enjoyment.





Protecting Natural Resources









Last year also saw the start of an ambitious, \$3 million stormwater treatment project designed to improve water quality in the **Mosquito Lagoon**. The project involves construction of a treatment facility that will divert stormwater from the **Gabordy Canal** into a 2-acre treatment facility, where detrimental nutrients will be removed prior to the water being discharged back into the canal and ultimately into Mosquito Lagoon. Identified in the Mosquito Lagoon Reasonable Assurance Plan, the project will result in the removal of thousands of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus – one of the primary causes of harmful algae blooms. The project is being jointly funded by Volusia County, the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The work is expected to be completed by this summer.

In a somewhat related note, the County Council heard a presentation in October regarding an innovative technology for restoring seagrass. Officials are continuing to look for effective tools to help improve water quality in the Indian River Lagoon.

The County also partnered with the **Riverside Conservancy** and the **Indian River Lagoon Council** on a project to grow out and deploy 1.3 million clams to filter water in the Mosquito Lagoon. In addition, the County provided matching funds to the Riverside Conservancy to support a grant-funded project to install a mangrove reef wall along a shoreline on the Mosquito Lagoon. These reef walls are designed to mimic the surface area of mangrove roots or other natural forms and attract oysters and other filter feeding organisms to colonize, providing an important water quality benefit.

Meanwhile, on the west side of the county, water quality in **Lake Beresford** got a boost in 2021 with construction of a new treatment system to help filter out more pollutants from stormwater before it flows into the lake. The system diverts stormwater runoff in the area into a detention pond and then through an additional treatment system to provide for sediment and nutrient removal before the treated water is discharged into the lake and the St. Johns River. The project was financed through stormwater utility funds and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.



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Protecting Natural Resources

The County also recently secured \$20.4 million in state grant funds for two major wastewater treatment projects that will aid in water quality protection and improvement efforts. The first is on the west side of the county, where treatment capacity will be expanded at the Southwest Regional Water Reclamation Facility in DeBary. The project, which will also include upgrades to existing biosolids treatment processes and increased reclaimed water storage capacity, represents a key initiative for the protection of both Volusia Blue and Gemini Springs. The other project, in Southeast Volusia, involves expanding capacity and upgrading the southeast regional wastewater facility in Oak Hill to advanced wastewater treatment processes, benefiting the Mosquito Lagoon.

Also in 2021, design work was initiated on more than 3 miles of water and wastewater infrastructure along the U.S. Highway 17 corridor of northwest Volusia, within the priority focus area of DeLeon Springs to provide centralized utility service to this unserved area. Installation of sewer lines is considered a critical step in protecting the delicate spring basin from nutrient pollution.

The Marine Science Center tended to a record number of hospitalized marine life last year, logging in more than 200 sea turtles and 100 miscellaneous reptiles. This is the highest intake year for sea turtles, exceeding the previous high of 171 sea turtles in 2010. Sunrise was one of last year's many success stories. The 268-pound loggerhead was spotted on April 15, 2021, by Senior Lifeguard Ryan Skinner swimming in circles in the surf. Knowing she was in trouble, Skinner called the MSC's turtle hospital, which responded immediately and initiated diagnosis and treatment. University of Florida veterinarian Dr. Craig Pelton diagnosed her with an internal infection and placed her on a strict regimen of antibiotics, vitamins and fluids. The bird hospital has also had a busy year, surpassing its average with more than 1,100 avian patients.



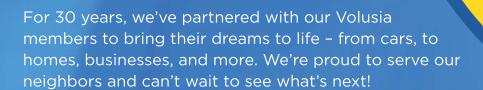


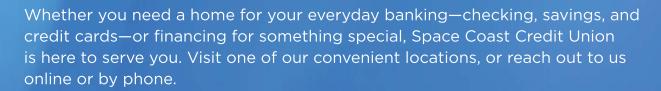






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A Safe Community

Volusia County provides a wide range of programs and services to our residents and visitors. And in all we do, the public's health, safety and welfare is always our very first priority. In fact, maintaining a high-level and efficient public safety network is absolutely essential to the well-being of our community. Here at the County, with the support of our County Council and the public, we're blessed to have an excellent public safety response system. But as our population continues to grow, the service needs grow too. And it's the reason so much time, effort and resources in 2021 went into enhancing and evolving our public safety capabilities in order to position the system to meet the needs of the future.

Here are some of the results of those efforts.

In this modern age, effective and reliable communications are essential. In an emergency, they can be a matter of life and death. Years in the making, a \$33.4 million upgrade to the County's public safety radio **system** got the green light last year from the County Council. All first responders in Volusia County – law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services – rely on the radio system to communicate with each other in the field, receive real-time updates and stay connected to the dispatch center while responding to emergencies. Developed by public safety professionals, P25 standards for two-way radio systems have become the industry norm because of their enhanced reliability and the ability for radios on different radio systems to communicate with each other. Interoperability, or the ability to effectively connect with other radio systems, is particularly important in fast-moving events that involve multiple jurisdictions. In fact, it's absolutely crucial for the safety and protection of both residents and responding officers – which is why the County is making the investment and the switch to P25. As part of the upgrade, the number of towers is increasing from 13 to 15 to further improve radio coverage. The two new towers include one that was built in 2021 at Plantation Bay and a site that has been secured in the Lake Harney area.

In another move to **improve public safety radio coverage**, the County negotiated an agreement with Flagler County last year to co-locate a communications relay at a tower in Bunnell. The agreement improves the availability and reliability of coverage in the northern extremes of Volusia County.

Vital to life safety, the County's **EMS ambulance service** was upgraded in 2021. The improvements included new positions - two EMTs, two paramedics and two ambulance supply technicians as well as 10 new replacement ambulances. The establishment of a \$4,500 signing bonus to boost efforts to recruit fulltime paramedics, a \$5,000 retention bonus for current fulltime paramedics and a \$2,000 retention bonus for current fulltime EMTs were implemented. The hours also were expanded for the **E-911 re-direct nurse triage program**, where nurses are assigned to the Volusia Sheriff's Office dispatch center to determine which medical callers can be offered an alternative to ambulance transport. The E-911 nurse triage program received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties.









A Safe Community



Fire Rescue brought on **15 new firefighters** – nine funded through the County Council's budget adoption and another six funded through a \$1.3 million SAFER grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The new firefighters boost the County's ongoing efforts to bring staffing levels up to at least three firefighters on every shift at all 18 county-staffed structural fire stations in Volusia County. In other Fire Rescue news, design is underway for the relocation of **Rima Ridge Fire Station**, **18**. And plans to either expand **Fire Station 15** on Tiger Bay Road or purchase a nearby building to convert the station from one primarily used for training to a fully functional fire station are under consideration.



Also new last year, Daytona Beach International Airport took delivery of **two new aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) trucks** for the airport's on-site fire station. The station is manned by a specialized Volusia County Fire Rescue unit that's trained to respond to any runway incident or accident. The new ARFF trucks are equipped with modern safety features such as all around LED lighting and light towers to facilitate nighttime operations, and a 360-degree camera with thermal imaging that enables firefighters to see through smoky conditions.

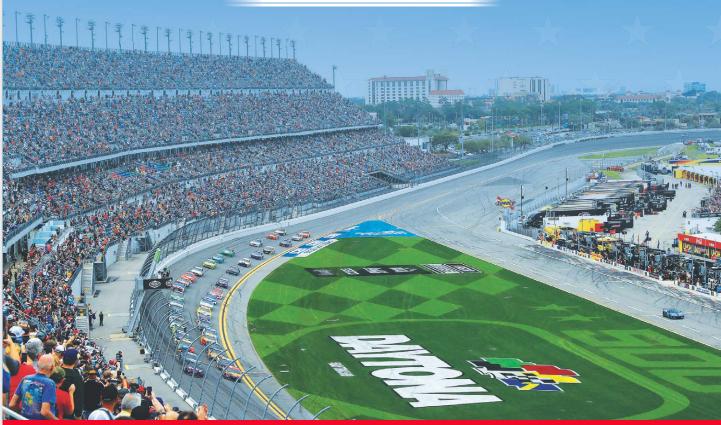
Meanwhile, Volusia County **Emergency Management** was under new management in 2021 with the **hiring of Director Helene Wetherington**, who has worked with more than 60 community partners to build a long-term strategic vision and plan for program enhancement. Under Wetherington's leadership, Emergency Management initiated a **Know Your Zone** campaign, enhanced our information web site and conducted 25 community presentations to promote public awareness about evacuation zones and storm preparedness. Emergency Management continues to build towards a resilient community through the conducting of monthly training for partners, enhancing redundancy and staffing depth for the Emergency Operations Center and enhancing all hazards plans.











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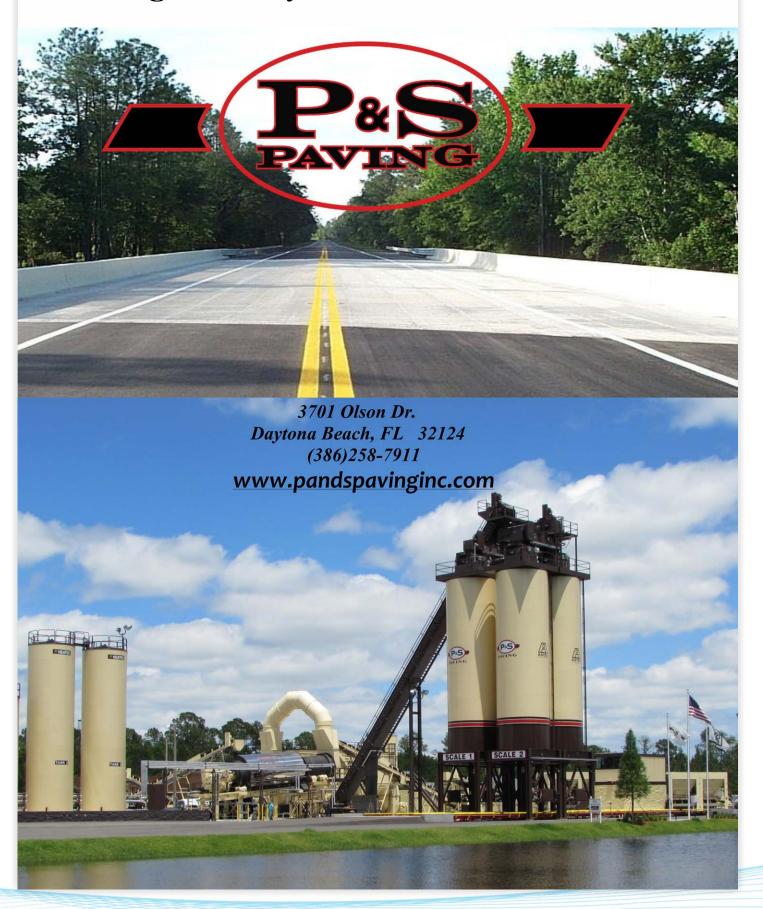








Paving the Way to a Better Tomorrow....





A Safe Community

Animal Services continued its community outreach in 2021, hosting five free pet microchip events. More than 850 pets were chipped through the events, greatly increasing their chances of being reunited with their family should a pet go lost or missing. More than 300 pets also received free rabies vaccines at the events. Also new last year, Animal Services teamed up with Volusia County Fire Rescue to launch an initiative to help bring lost pets home safe-and-sound by easily identifying the owners. Called **Operation Fire Scan and Rescue**, microchip scanners have been placed in all County fire stations. Because of the program, a lost or wandering animal can be brought to any County fire station to be scanned to see if it has been microchipped. If it has, return to its owner is quick and easy.

Also last year, in recognition of their commitment to the highest standards of professionalism, **Beach Safety Ocean Rescue** once again received **accreditation** from the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation. This was their fifth consecutive accreditation, qualifying the agency for the highest level of achievement – **Excelsior status**. By earning five consecutive accreditations, Beach Safety has met or exceeded 186 applicable standards set forth by the commission for the last 15 years. The Beach Safety division is also accredited as an advanced lifesaving agency by the U.S. Lifesaving Association.

Enhancements also were made to the Public Protection Critical Incident Stress Management Program, including advanced peer support training to all team members. In addition, grant funding was awarded to provide more advanced training to team members who will be assisting those in need of this important program.

2021 also was a good year for **labor negotiations**, as the County and the unions representing the County's corrections officers as well as the County's beach safety specialists, senior lifeguards and lifeguard supervisors reached agreement on new, three-year contracts. Both contracts included pay raises and signing and retention bonus programs for covered employees.

Plans for a more modern and spacious headquarters for the **Medical Examiner** took a giant leap forward in 2021. The County Council commissioned an architectural firm to begin designing the building and selected the location for the new facility – a 2.7-acre site off Tiger Bay Road, adjacent to the Volusia Sheriff's Office's evidence facility. At 18,200 square feet, the new Medical Examiner's office will be more than double the size of the 25-year-old building on Indian Lake Road that now houses the County's morgue facilities. The schematic design and design development phases of the project have been completed.

Whether for residents, visitors or our four-legged friends, Volusia County is a safer place because of these efforts!







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A Caring Community

In a caring community, everyone is welcome. A caring community is kind, helpful and supportive. It's considerate. And a caring community is compassionate. Caring communities help meet the needs of their residents, and in doing so, strengthen connections and bring us all a little closer.

Volusia County embarked on a number of initiatives in 2021 designed to attain equity and access for all. Two of the most significant of these initiatives were an ambitious **affordable housing plan** and the **Strive to Thrive** program.

Like many communities across the country, Volusia County is facing a severe shortage of affordable housing. The causes and solutions are complex. Progress in effectively addressing the issue will require a holistic approach that includes government, nonprofit organizations, residents and the private sector all working together. And that's why Volusia County launched a comprehensive affordable housing initiative in 2021 to bring agencies and organizations together to tackle the housing problem. The initiative kicked off in July with a series of eight informational webinars that addressed a wide range of issues, such as the need for affordable housing, challenges and barriers that must be overcome, options for funding affordable housing efforts, and a look at how other communities are dealing with the problem. The webinars featured a cross-section of expert panelists representing organizations like the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the Florida Housing Coalition, the Center for Community Change and Habitat for Humanity. The initiative culminated in an affordable housing summit in December at the Ocean Center that brought together key stakeholders to brainstorm potential solutions to the problem.

Also last year, the County Council agreed to provide \$900,000 in funding support to an apartment complex along Clyde Morris Boulevard in Daytona Beach that will feature more than 200 affordable units.

Look for a lot more to come related to the affordable housing issue in 2022. As a follow-up to the summit, work groups have been tasked with creating a comprehensive, countywide plan for increasing the availability of affordable housing. Once drafted, the plan will be presented to the County Council for formal approval and implementation.







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Spring Hill

Community Cleanup

It's cleanup time in your area!

Volusia.org

The City of DeLand and Volusia County have teamed

in the Spring Hill area.

Bulk items include mattresses,

up for a bulk item pickup on Saturday, Dec. 12, for residents

furniture and other household items. No liquids, hazardous

waste, construction debris, appliances, tires, electronics

Place items at the curb by 7 a.m. or the night before.

We're

or food waste will be collected

Pickup is automatic.

A Caring Community

The year 2021 also saw the launch of a new, all-inclusive learning program by Library Services called **We are CapABLE**. This virtual program series addressed a need to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. The library team created programming and events specifically geared for this demographic, just as Library Services does for children, teens, adults and seniors.

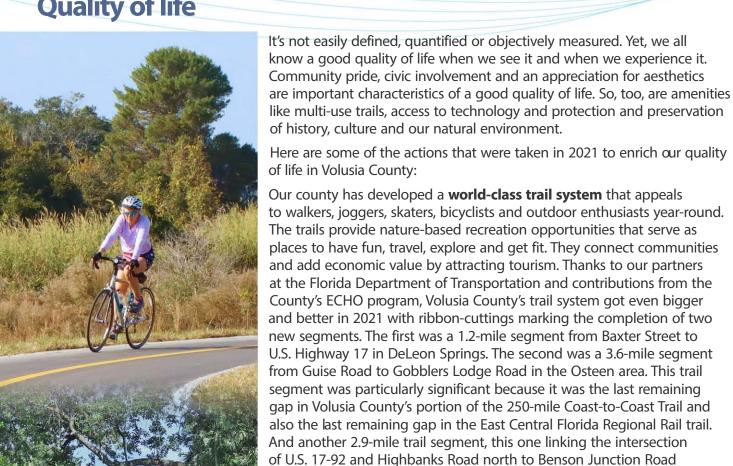
Another initiative, **Strive to Thrive**, continued to gain momentum in 2021. The initiative actually got its start in 2020 as a unified effort to bring added focus and attention to the needs of the Spring Hill area of DeLand. The initiative began in 2020 with several free community clean-up events the County and the City of DeLand partnered on. Those efforts continued in 2021 with a right-of-way cleanup that included mowing, sidewalk maintenance, litter pickup and tree trimming.

The initiative also expanded beyond cleanup activities. Last year, the County launched a survey to get feedback from Spring Hill residents about other programs and services needed in the community. Nearly 200 people took the survey, and the information they provided will help in the planning of future events to better serve the community.

The outreach has helped in other ways as well. A barrier to economic growth has been identified and corrected. It's the minimum lot size required to develop non-residential commercial uses under the planned unit development, or PUD zoning classification. Minimum lot sizes were put into Volusia County's zoning ordinance for good reason and with good intentions. However, they became an impediment to redevelopment efforts in economically depressed areas where some blight or substandard conditions already exist. And those are areas where government should be doing everything possible to encourage and incentivize growth and rebirth. To that end, the County Council amended the zoning ordinance to eliminate minimum lot sizes for PUD zones in areas of special need – areas like Spring Hill. This change will provide opportunities for properties that are underutilized and hard to develop because they can't meet the current minimum lot size



Quality of life



The County's plans to improve popular **beach ramps** continued to progress in 2021. The International Speedway Boulevard beach ramp serves as the main gateway to the beaches of Daytona Beach and is the most heavily used of all the beach ramps in the county. The County solicited public feedback last year for both the ISB and Silver Beach Avenue beach ramp improvement projects through an online survey before both projects moved into the design and permitting phases. Construction on both projects is expected to take about six months each. The County plans to stagger the projects, with the Silver Beach Avenue improvements tentatively scheduled to be completed in May 2023 and the ISB improvements getting underway the following off-season after the Silver Beach project is finished. Improvements also were made to the Plaza Boulevard beach ramp in 2021, while plans moved forward last year to improve the Boylston Avenue approach.

and Rob Sullivan Park in DeBary, also was just recently completed.



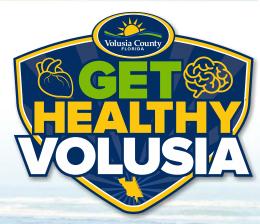
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Quality of life







2021 also was the year one of Volusia County's most prominent citizens, Bethune-Cookman University founder **Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune**, was immortalized in a magnificent statue carved out of Italian marble. The breathtaking statue spent two months on public display at the News-Journal Center before being shipped to Washington, D.C., where it will be permanently housed in National Statuary Hall inside the U.S. Capitol proudly representing Florida. And a smaller, bronze version of the statue will adorn Daytona Beach's Riverfront Esplanade Park. Sixty-six years after her death, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune continues to inspire!

When it comes to quality of life, technology makes our lives better and easier in so many ways. Two recent examples from last year are the County's new **beach app** and **mobile hotspots** the County purchased for use by library patrons. The beach app maximizes a trip to the beach in Volusia County by providing real-time updates on everything from beach ramps and staffed lifeguard towers to tides and beach conditions. It can also help you find off-beach parking and coastal parks. Also, you can sign up for text or email alerts on ramp openings and closings. And it's free!

In another expanded use of technology, the county added several hundred mobile Wi-Fi hotspot devices that residents can check out for free at County libraries. The small devices that enable users to establish a portable internet connection are especially useful for people who either don't have home internet access or have Internet service, but their signal is unstable. In 2021, Library Services landed a grant from the Federal Communications Commission that resulted in the acquisition of 650 more mobile hotspots. That's good news for users of the popular devices because of the wait lists to use them when the library only had 350 of them.

People and the environment: They both need to get healthy. And good health is an important component of a good quality of life. That was the motivation behind two major public awareness and education campaigns the county rolled out on social media in 2021. The first, #GetHealthyVolusia, featured informational materials, challenges and opportunities for engagement that focused on three pillars of healthy living – physical, emotional and dietary health. The second is a social media-focused anti-litter campaign that will feature a series of call-to-action public service announcements with all seven County Council members. The messaging is part of the county's comprehensive,

integrated Keep Volusia Beautiful initiative that includes marking storm drains; adopt-a-beach, adopt-a-road and adopt-a-trail programs; beach, river, coastal and underwater clean-ups; fill-a-bag stations; monofilament recycling bins; tire amnesty and household hazardous waste collection events; the routine cleaning of drainage boxes, curbs, gutters and drainage pipes; and the removal of tons of litter from road rights-of-way.

Let's all continue to do our part to keep Volusia County healthy, clean and beautiful!





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Airport and Economic Development







Daytona Beach International Airport and economic development are two critically important fiscal drivers for Volusia County. And there was positive news on both fronts in 2021.

Started in 2019, a \$14 million renovation of the **airport terminal** was completed in 2021 – marking the first major update to the terminal since it was built in 1992. The renovation features a coastal ecology theme with many enhancements to the passenger experience, with amenities that include all new comfortable seating with built-in power outlets. Technology upgrades include new flight and gate information display monitors and LED video walls. The airport's two meeting rooms and the business center also were renovated, and a new mother's room was added.

The first phase of the airport's terminal parking lot improvement project also was completed in 2021. The project included new pavement for the short and long term parking lots, the rental car lot and Catalina Drive, and safety improvements such as new LED strobe lighting at all crosswalks.

These renovations were part of the reason the airport was named **Florida's 2021 Commercial Service Airport of the Year** by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The award is selective to airports that have proven exceptional aviation safety, completed aesthetic improvements and shown innovative management solutions throughout the year. In selecting Daytona Beach International Airport for the award, FDOT cited both the terminal renovation and the airport's handling of the pandemic.

On the economic development front, efforts to lure more industry and jobs to the airport received a major boost in 2021 when Volusia County landed a **\$4 million federal economic development grant**. The grant funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration will be used to expand infrastructure improvements to prepare the airport's commercial/industrial park for future development. Targeting research and manufacturing, the infrastructure improvements are expected to result in \$150 million in private investment and the creation of 360 jobs. The County also is contributing \$1 million in matching funds, a requirement for obtaining the grant.



Airport and Economic Development

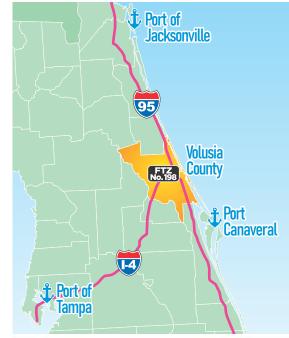
New in 2021, the Economic Development Division initiated a **business** creation, retention and expansion collaboration program.

The division engaged key Volusia business community stakeholders to develop a countywide program targeting local businesses. The goal of the program is to provide new and growing businesses with the tools and resources needed for success.

Economic Development also expanded its reach by partnering with local shipping ports to maximize importing opportunities for local manufacturers. Those partnerships were confirmed through memorandums of understanding with JaxPort and Port Canaveral.

In other news related to Volusia County's economy, the County-owned and operated **Ocean Center** convention facility saw a huge rebound in both events and attendance for 2021 as compared to 2020. While still not at pre-pandemic levels, activity has ramped up to levels not seen since 2019. In 2021 the Ocean Center played host to 113 events, with 319,500 attendee days compared to 54 events and 148,000 attendee days in 2020. In essence, activity doubled over 2020 and came close to its last normalized year (130 events, 380,000 attendee days). For the Ocean Center, the primary factor in booking events is driven by potential economic impact for the community. And that really means bringing groups in from out of town to help fill hotel rooms, restaurants, shops and other retail and entertainment venues. The best barometer of that activity is room nights booked locally by events utilizing Ocean Center. In 2020, that number dipped to approximately 20,000. However, it rebounded to 50,000 in 2021 and is forecast at a very strong 74,000 for 2022.

In addition to event activity, the Ocean Center reached completion on major capital projects in 2021, including the re-roofing of the arena. Other projects that began in 2021 will see completion in 2022, such as a new sound system for the entire venue.







GO BEYOND

THE BEACH



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OceanCenter.com

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THE MORE EXPENSIVE THE FLIGHT.

000000000



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