



JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October 8, 2024

Jackson County BOCC Regular Meeting Highlights

Jackson County, FL. – On October 8, 2024, at 9:00 AM, the Jackson County Board of County Commissioners held a Regular Meeting. This is a recap of some of the reports and requests included in that meeting.

REQUEST: Adoption of White Cane Safety Day Proclamation

On October 15, 2024, blind citizens nationwide will celebrate White Cane Day, raising awareness of the needs of the blind, including right here in the Florida Panhandle. Independence for the Blind of Northwest Florida plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to live independently by teaching essential skills such as cooking, cleaning, using white canes, and navigating technology. Serving 10 counties in our region, their work highlights the importance of supporting the blind community. The Board adopted the White Cane Safety Day Proclamation in Jackson County.



RECOGNITION: Employee Years of Service



The Jackson County Board of County Commissioners has recognized the dedicated service of its employees by awarding "Years of Service" awards to those who have shown commitment and loyalty to the county through their tenure. This acknowledgement of their hard work and dedication serves as a testament to their contributions towards the growth and success of Jackson County.

At this meeting, District 3 Commissioner and Chairman, Paul Donofro Jr., Administrator Wilanne Daniels, and Road and Bridge Director Jeffrey Register presented awards to the following employees:

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- **Julie Warren**
Julie Warren currently serves as Director of Jackson County Veteran Services. She is recognized for 30 years of continuous service.
 - **Judy Austin**
Judy Austin currently serves as Human Resources and Risk Management Director for Jackson County. She is recognized for 10 years of continuous service.
 - **Rett Daniels**
Rett Daniels currently serves as Deputy County Administrator over Field Operations. He is recognized for 10 years of continuous service.
 - **John Searcy**
John Searcy currently serves as Assistant Utilities Operator. He is recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
 - **Bradley Drieth**
Bradley Drieth currently serves as an Engineering Tech for Jackson County Road and Bridge. He is recognized for 5 years of continuous service.
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REQUEST: Approval to Postpone Public Hearing for the Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and Transmittal to Florida Commerce

On August 13, 2024, the Board approved Amendment 2 of the agreement with the Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) for technical assistance with updates to the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan. This is a continuation of a diligent process that began in December 2023, aimed at ensuring the plan reflects current needs and changes within the county. The final draft of the proposed updates was recently reviewed, marking a significant milestone in the process. As required every seven years by Florida law, the county is updating its Comprehensive Plan to keep pace with growth and development. A public hearing for the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and transmittal to Florida Commerce will be postponed to the next meeting scheduled for October 22, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.



REPORT: Jackson County Economic Development Council Quarterly Report

Darwin Gilmore, President/CEO of the Jackson County Economic Development Council (EDC), presented a positive quarterly report to the Board of County Commissioners, highlighting ongoing progress and plans aimed at boosting the local economy. Notable updates include advancements on key projects like the TPA Group's option agreement and several ongoing developments, including Blue Sky, Lava, and Bristol.

Mr. Gilmore also shared the EDC's proactive efforts to build valuable connections through participation in national economic development councils and leadership programs. These initiatives will provide Jackson County with the tools and partnerships needed to attract new industries, create

jobs, and strengthen the region’s economic future. The EDC remains committed to ensuring long-term growth and prosperity for Jackson County.



REPORT: Update on 2020 Census Urban Area Map

In January, the Board received an update on the revised Census Urban Area boundaries, which determine the official urban designation for roadways, now approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). While the Marianna Urban Area saw a reduction in the southern portion, it gained additional area to the east along US 90. The Chattahoochee/Sneads Urban Area was eliminated. These changes reflect the Census Bureau's shift to using housing units to measure urbanization, which excluded hospitals, group homes, and prisons from many urban areas.



REQUEST: Board Support of Imagination Library Initiative in Jackson County

Brent Melvin, representing the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Board to announce an exciting new partnership aimed at fostering early childhood literacy in our community. The Chamber is collaborating with local businesses and Chipola College to launch a local chapter of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. This remarkable program provides free, high-quality books each month to children from birth to age five, helping spark a lifelong love of reading.

The Board enthusiastically voted to approve the Jackson County Public Library’s management of the program once it is in place. By offering books at no cost to families, the Imagination Library has proven to be a powerful tool in improving literacy rates and preparing children for success in school. This initiative will make a lasting impact on young lives in Jackson County, equipping our next generation with the skills and knowledge to thrive.

The Imagination Library, founded by Dolly Parton in 1995, has become a global movement that reaches millions of children. This new program will strengthen our community’s educational resources and give local children a head start in their learning journeys.



REQUEST: Approval to Award 2324-33 AG Center Concessionaire to the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce

Recently, Jackson County sought proposals from qualified vendors to manage the day-to-day operations of the Jackson County Agriculture Center, located at 3631 US-90, Marianna, FL. This role

includes overseeing all aspects of the facility, from marketing and advertising to organizing sporting events and handling rentals.

On August 29, 2024, we received a proposal from the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. Following successful negotiations based on their proposal, we are confident that this partnership will bring significant benefits to both the County and the Chamber. Their proven track record and local expertise make them an ideal candidate to enhance the operations and visibility of the AG Center. The Board approved to award the project to the Chamber to ensure the continued growth and success of this vital community facility.



REQUEST: Approval to Award 2324-35 Jackson Endeavor Museum Phase 1 – Demo to great Southern Demolition, Inc.

Jackson County recently took a significant step toward the development of the future Endeavor Museum by opening bids for the selective demolition of the former cafeteria on the Endeavor Property. This historic 10,144-square-foot building, which sustained damage during Hurricane Michael, will undergo a meticulous demolition process to preserve its original façade. After reviewing sealed bids, the County received two proposals and recommends awarding the project to the lowest qualified bidder, Great Southern Demolition, Inc., for \$98,720.00. This marks an exciting milestone in the ongoing revitalization of the Endeavor Property.



REQUEST: Approval of Local State of Emergency for Hurricane Milton

The Board of County Commissioners proactively approved a local State of Emergency in preparation for Hurricane Milton, in alignment with the Jackson County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and Governor DeSantis' evacuation orders. Jackson County is taking proactive steps to assist those affected by the storm, including offering 50 RV sites at the Jackson County Agricultural Center for evacuees. This declaration authorizes staff to carry out emergency functions as necessary to assist evacuees from other areas.



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