



# The Leon County LINK

## Connecting Citizens with Leon County Services

### Looking Back 2006 Year-in-Review



### ...and Looking Forward 2007 County Commission Priorities

Leon County government strives every day to enhance the outstanding quality of life which has made our community a desirable place to live, work and raise our children. 2006 was a prolific year for County government, and here are a few of the significant achievements made in our community.

#### Joint Dispatch



Leon County, the City of Tallahassee and the Sheriff committed to resolving one of the longstanding public safety concerns of our community - the creation of a joint dispatch center. The three entities agreed that it was in the public's best interest to have one location that would dispatch all public safety calls: law enforcement, fire, and Emergency

Medical Services (EMS). Currently, the City of Tallahassee dispatches police and fire and the Leon County Sheriff's Office dispatches deputies and EMS.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding signed on Dec. 13, the Public Safety Communications Board (PSCB) was formed. The PSCB consists of the Sheriff, Police Chief, Fire Chief, EMS Chief, City Manager and County Administrator. It is the charge of this Board to develop a plan to facilitate the actual consolidation and then, ultimately, hire a Director to run the day-to-day operations of the facility.

The County and City Commissions agreed to the creation of a joint dispatch operation in April. The ultimate consolidation of this crucial public safety function is a testament to our community's ability to work together for the benefit of all our citizens.

#### Have a Hurricane Plan Campaign

The Public Information Office created and launched the "Have a Hurricane Plan" campaign to provide residents with the tools needed to create their own hurricane preparedness plans. The campaign commenced with the beginning of the 2006 hurricane season and consisted of a website, an informational video, brochure, and billboards. The plan helps citizens make the first critical decision - whether to stay or go. Visit [www.haveahurricaneplan.com](http://www.haveahurricaneplan.com) to build your plan and learn more.



#### Reduced Property Tax

The budget recently adopted by the Board of County Commissioners provides for a significant reduction in the property tax millage rate. The countywide rate going from 8.54 to 7.99 mills. One mill equals \$1 in taxes for every \$1,000 worth in value.

The property tax rate reduction is the most significant in Leon County's recent history. The cumulative reduction in the millage rate for the past ten years has been 0.08 mills. For a home with a taxable value of \$150,000 the reduction of 0.67 mills equates to a savings of \$100. Based on data provided by the Property Appraiser, 49,584 or 91% of the homesteaded properties in Leon County recently saw a reduction in their County property tax bill, exclusive of any new taxes they will pay as the result of improvements they made to the property. Please note that due to rising property values on an individual basis, taxes may increase despite the fact that the millage rate has been reduced.



Each year the Board of County Commissioners meets at an annual Board retreat to identify key community issues to address during the upcoming year. This year, the Board met and agreed on the following priorities to tackle in 2007:

#### Economic Development



Pursue programs to enhance local economic development, which may include: an incubator at Innovation Park, a business accelerator program, a research and development facility, and partnerships with the state and universities. The Board also aims to identify a continuous funding source and establish measures for these initiatives.

#### Performing Arts Center

Continue dialogue with community partners on the development of a performing arts center, conduct a funding feasibility study, and consider funding options.



#### Jail Diversion Programs

Continue to invest in technology that provides alternatives to incarceration, such as GPS monitoring and Secured Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM). Pursue other intervention programs, specifically targeting at-risk youth, and pursue restorative justice programs, including community crime prevention programs.

#### Functional Consolidation of Some Leon County and City of Tallahassee Government Services

Evaluate County and City services that can be consolidated to provide for more effective and efficient delivery of services.

#### Southside Senior Center

Collaborate with the City of Tallahassee on the development of a senior center facility to be located at the former Wesson School, and pursue the feasibility of long-term, affordable housing opportunities for senior citizens at the site.

#### Ongoing Priorities Adopted in 2005

- Joint Dispatch Facility for Law Enforcement and Emergency Response
- Woodville Branch Library
- Redevelopment of the North Florida Fairgrounds Property
- Countywide Lake Protection Program

## January 2007 Board of County Commissioners Schedule

- 9 Commission Meeting**, 3 p.m.  
**Public Hearings**, 6 p.m.  
Leon County Courthouse, Commission Chambers, 5th Floor
- 15 Offices Closed** in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 22 Joint County/City Comprehensive Plan Meeting**, 1:30 p.m., City Commission Chambers
- 23 Commission Meeting**, 3 p.m.  
**Public Hearings**, 6 p.m.  
Leon County Courthouse, Commission Chambers, 5th Floor

The Link is produced by Leon County Public Information, 606-5300.