

# Leon County Board of County Commissioners

## Agenda Item #27

December 13, 2022

**To:** Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

**From:** Vincent S. Long, County Administrator



**Title:** Acceptance of the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Organizational Management Plan and Adoption of a Resolution to Establish the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee

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<b>Review and Approval:</b>	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
<b>Department/ Division Review:</b>	Alan Rosenzweig, Deputy County Administrator Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator
<b>Lead Staff/ Project Team:</b>	Kerri L. Post, Director, Division of Tourism Dionte F. Gavin, Senior Operations Manager, Division of Tourism Katie Kole, Senior Marketing Manager, Division of Tourism

### **Statement of Issue:**

This item seeks Board acceptance of the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial organizational management plan and adoption of an Enabling Resolution to establish a Bicentennial Steering Committee to recognize the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our community in 2024.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

This item has a fiscal impact; however, funds are available in the Division of Tourism's FY 2023 budget to support promotional and planning efforts for the Tallahassee-County Bicentennial. Additional funding will be programmed in FY 2024 through the County's annual budget process.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

- Option #1: Accept the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Organizational Management Plan.
- Option#2: Adopt the Resolution establishing the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee (Attachment #1).

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## Report and Discussion

### **Background:**

This item seeks Board acceptance of the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial organizational management plan and adoption of an Enabling Resolution to establish a Bicentennial Steering Committee to recognize the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our community in 2024 (Attachment #1).

This status update advances the following FY2022-FY2026 Strategic Initiative and Strategic Plan Bold Goal and Target:

- *Grow the five-year tourism economy to \$5 billion. (BG1)*
- *Support 900 of community events, sporting competitions, festivals, performances, and cultural programming that will attract visitors and residents. (T10)*

This particular Bold Goal aligns with the Board's Economy Strategic Priority:

- *(EC4) Grow our tourism economy, its diversity, competitiveness, and economic impact.*
- *(EC4) Implement the Division of Tourism's Strategic Plan.*

The Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial in 2024 provides an opportunity to engage the community in the rich history of Tallahassee and Leon County over the past 200 years, and the vision of the community in years to come. The Bicentennial is envisioned to be a communitywide celebration that not only engages all segments of the community but shares residents' experiences and stories of Tallahassee from their unique perspective.

Historically, two major events have been hosted to commemorate milestones in our community - the Centennial and the Sesquicentennial of Tallahassee-Leon County. In November 1924, the Tallahassee-Leon County community celebrated its 100th anniversary with a weeklong centennial festival. Taking place from November 9 through November 15, the centennial festival was attended by more than 25,000 visitors and featured a variety of community events including parades, pageants, speeches, concerts, dance performances, and fireworks. In honor of the Sesquicentennial, a major observance was held on March 4, 1974, which marked 150 years since Governor William Duval signed legislation to create and designate the City of Tallahassee as Florida's capital. To celebrate this milestone, a year-long observance kicked off with a historical pageant in March, followed by special events hosted each month for the remainder of the year ranging from "Spring Saturday" in April, a concert in September, and re-enactment of the first Christmas in December 1974.

On September 17, 2019, the Board accepted a status report on community planning efforts to recognize the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial in 2024. The status report noted the Bicentennial celebrations will be centered on both the City's Anniversary on March 4<sup>th</sup> and the County's Anniversary on December 29<sup>th</sup>. A major objective of planning efforts is to generate awareness and to encourage and align participation from all segments of the community including

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local governmental and nonprofit entities, faith-based organizations, schools, civic clubs, and professional organizations.

On March 8, 2022, the Board approved the FY2022 – FY2026 Division of Tourism Strategic Plan which included the following Target:

- *Target 1.2.1: Provide technical assistance, financial and promotional support for the 2024 Bicentennial Committee and community activities.*

Since 2019, the Division of Tourism has continued to support efforts to generate awareness of Tallahassee and Leon County's 200th Anniversary Year in 2024, and has encouraged local organizations and residents to consider how they can support and participate in the anniversary celebration for the community. Since 2020, the County's Division of Tourism has participated in a Bicentennial workgroup initiated by the Mayor's Office that met occasionally to begin sharing ideas and information for the Bicentennial. More recently, staff has been a frequent participant in the monthly Tallahassee Historical Society board meetings. Notably, the County's Division of Tourism staff are uniquely experienced for this community anniversary celebration as Kerri Post (Director of Tourism) and Katie Kole (Sr. Marketing Manager) both served in leadership roles for the State of Florida's *Viva Florida 500* campaign in 2013, a statewide commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Juan Ponce de Leon's arrival to Florida.

As seen with *Viva Florida 500*, it is important to utilize the year leading up to the anniversary as a planning and building year, to inform, engage and inspire community stakeholders. One of the goals is to encourage all organizations and individuals to be involved in some way in the year-long initiative celebrating and commemorating the past 200 years and looking ahead to advancing the community for the future. For the anniversary events to be successful, they must be collaborative and involve the entire community, be creative and resourceful, leverage existing assets, and look for new, expanded, and innovative partnerships.

**Analysis:**

This item provides a comprehensive overview of the community efforts to date and outlines the organizational management plan necessary to carry out the goals and objectives for the 2024 Bicentennial. The organizational management plan serves as a roadmap to advance a cohesive and inclusive communitywide planning effort. The draft Resolution seeks to establish the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee and build upon the planning efforts already taking place among key stakeholders and organizations, so that the community-at-large has an opportunity to participate and contribute during the 2023 calendar year. The establishment of the Bicentennial Steering Committee provides the necessary focus, leadership, and resources under one structure to ensure a coordinated marketing and branding framework for the activities associated with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our community.

Beginning in late January 2023 and leading to the kick-off event for the anniversary year on New Year's Eve (December 31, 2023) in Cascades Park, the County will have 11+ months to engage the community to broaden participation and that every effort to fulfill the stated values and goals

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for the Tallahassee/Leon County Bicentennial. The following sections outline the values and strategic goals for the Bicentennial, the structure and membership of the Steering Committee and action-oriented task forces, and some of the marketing priorities to generate greater awareness and interest in the upcoming Bicentennial celebration. Highlights are also provided for the known Bicentennial programs, events, and activities already in the planning stages for 2024.

*Values of the Tallahassee/Leon County Bicentennial*

Core principles and values will govern the Bicentennial Steering Committee to ensure that planning and communications strategies are guided with one cohesive voice. The following are the proposed values for the two-year initiative which includes the year-long Bicentennial celebration:

- Inclusiveness
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Fairness
- Accuracy
- Open Communication
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Fun

*Strategic Goals for the Tallahassee/Leon County Bicentennial*

The strategic goals provide the Committee with measurable objectives that are indicative of its vision. The strategic goals are:

- Provide leadership and structure for the 2024 Tallahassee/Leon County Bicentennial and be a conduit, collaborator, clearinghouse, and communicator for the 2-year-long initiative. (2023-2024).
- Create and/or expand public and private/not-for-profit partnerships.
- Expand outreach and education on the 200-year anniversary, create opportunities to engage the community to make history come alive, and look to the future/next 200 years.
- Increase our community's visibility, viability, and visitation.
- Encourage and promote Bicentennial events to take place every month during 2024.
- Generate investment in, and development of, inclusive Bicentennial marketing programs, themed events, and lasting legacies of public art/infrastructure.

Calendar year 2023 is envisioned to be a planning and development year, leading up to the Bicentennial in 2024. Beginning in late January 2023, the newly formed Bicentennial Steering Committee will convene to review the plan and start formulating an inventory of the current assets as well as the development, inclusion and creation of the planned programs, events, and activities for 2024. The Steering Committee will begin building community-wide awareness, outreach, engagement, planning, and collaboration throughout 2023, all leading up to the 2024 Bicentennial.

*Proposed Bicentennial Steering Committee and Task Forces*

The proposed Steering Committee membership provided below includes organizations that have participated in ongoing discussions about the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and builds on the community

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participation by adding leading local public/nonprofit/educational organizations with subject-matter expertise and/or a vast knowledge and understanding of the community. Should an individual no longer be able to fulfill their responsibilities and participate in the Steering Committee, the designated organization must notify the County, in writing, of its replacement to serve on the Steering Committee. The Bicentennial Steering Committee will begin meeting in late January 2023 with monthly meetings (virtual and in-person meetings) or more frequent as warranted.

- Big Bend Minority Chamber of Commerce
- Capital City Chamber of Commerce
- Council on Culture and Arts
- Florida A&M University
- Florida Historic Capitol Museum
- Florida State University
- Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce
- Knight Creative Communities Initiative
- Leon County Schools
- Office of the Mayor of Tallahassee
- Riley House Center & Museum
- Tallahassee Community College
- Tallahassee Downtown Improvement Authority
- Tallahassee Historical Society

The proposed Enabling Resolution would formally establish the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee to function as a focus group and be supported by County staff. A focus group, as defined in Board Policy No. 03-15, provides a fact-finding source of community input and technical resources for use by staff in developing a staff recommendation regarding a matter that may be considered for Board approval. Upon adoption by the Board, staff will seek to fill the appointments to the Steering Committee and prepare to launch the Bicentennial website in January. The staff support for the Steering Committee will be led by Kerri Post (Director of Tourism) and Katie Kole (Sr. Marketing Manager) with the Division of Tourism will serve as the lead staff supporting the Steering Committee given their prior leadership roles with the State of Florida during the *Viva Florida 500* campaign in 2013 commemorating the 500th anniversary of Juan Ponce de Leon's arrival to Florida. Dionte Gavin, Sr. Operations Manager, will round out the primary staffing support from the Division of Tourism.

Additional County staff will participate in the Steering Committee meetings and task force (sub-groups and broader public participants) functions as needed due to their respective organizational roles and subject matter expertise and/or their responsibilities associated with planned Bicentennial programs or events. The Bicentennial Steering Committee is envisioned to divide into the task forces which will be the mechanism to further engage with individuals and organizations in the community. Engaging with the private sector on the task forces is paramount to the success of this community-wide celebration. In addition, some local businesses have served this community over

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many generations and are considered part of the community fabric and history, so it is important for their story and evolution be recognized during the Bicentennial. Examples of these long-standing businesses that double as valued institutions include Capital City Bank (founded in 1895), the Proctor Dealerships (1910), Bradley's Country Store (1927), and Economy Drug in Frenchtown (1940s).

Task forces will be utilized to communicate and coordinate with their respective audiences throughout the community. Task forces will be led by a Bicentennial Committee member and will include broader representation from the community in order to engage more local subject matter experts. Having regular communication and strong engagement with every corner of the community is paramount to success. Proposed task forces include:

- Programming/Events/Activities – to communicate and coordinate with existing or planned events to incorporate Bicentennial elements/themes and stimulate/encourage new Bicentennial events.
- Marketing – to develop and implement the 2024 Marketing Communications and Media Plan, and also develop and produce the year-end Bicentennial recap/report document.
- Education – to communicate and coordinate with local educational institutions and platforms to share Bicentennial information, materials, suggested readings, events, activities, etc. to seek broader participation from the universities and colleges, Leon County Schools, and private/home schools.
- Community Outreach & Inclusion – to communicate and coordinate with community groups such as churches, civic organizations (i.e., Rotary Clubs, Junior League), local business community, professional organizations, and non-profits to inspire and encourage inclusion and participation in any way they see fit in the year-long celebration and commemoration.
- Faith-Based – to communicate and coordinate with faith-based organizations and to encourage their participation in the community anniversary celebration.
- Legislative/State Government – to communicate and coordinate with local state delegates, state government agencies, and the Executive Office of the Governor, etc. for their collaboration and support.

*Inventory of Planned and Proposed Events, Programs and Activities, and Public Art*

Events greatly contribute to the quality of life for residents while some also serve as great motivators for travel. While the list of programs and events continues to evolve, some of the preliminary activities identified for the 2024 Bicentennial include a children's parade, a speaker symposium, installation of historical markers, themed performances hosted by local cultural organizations, creating a Bicentennial Time Capsule, and a reenactment of the "meeting in middle" at Cascades Park which led to the establishment of Florida's capital.

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*Budget Considerations*

The Bicentennial initiative will span across three fiscal years, FY 2023 – FY 2025, as the final three months of CY 2024 are also the first three months of FY 2025. To date, the County has allocated \$50,000 in the Division of Tourism FY 2023 budget for Bicentennial planning and promotional efforts. Based on the planning efforts of the Steering Committee and task forces, additional funding for anticipated expenses will be identified and programmed through the County's FY 2024 budget processes. At this time, staff does not anticipate establishing a stand-alone grant program for Bicentennial events in the community. Instead, the County will seek to leverage the existing COCA and Division of Tourism grant programs to support Bicentennial programming and events.

Commencing the Steering Committee meetings next month enables all stakeholders to further develop their plans for the Bicentennial so that the County can assist organizations with identifying available and needed resources. The County Division of Tourism event grants and COCA's grant programs are examples of available resources that can be made available to support and encourage Bicentennial programming and themes. COCA administers approximately 50 grants each year which support public art, culture, history, and heritage programming in our community. During the FY 2024 budget process, after the Bicentennial events begin to take shape, staff will evaluate the provision of additional funding for COCA to support and administer grants award for Bicentennial events, programming and activities. This may include additional general revenue funds to support Bicentennial activities which do not draw visitors to our community and would be ineligible to utilize Tourist Development Tax funds.

*Marketing Communications and Promotion*

The immediate/short-term marketing communications and promotional priorities to ramp up the Bicentennial efforts include finalizing a logo and branding plan, and the development and launch of a Bicentennial URL/website to be a consumer-facing communications resource. Once the Bicentennial Select Committee are established with the input of the Marketing Task Force, the short/mid-term marketing priorities will include the development of a marketing communications plan and the related key performance indicators (KPIs) for both the 2023 planning/development efforts as well as the 2024 Bicentennial.

Marketing communications and promotions will continue evolving during 2023 including activations in Public/Media Relations through coordinated interviews with local, regional, and national media outlets to tell the story of Tallahassee/Leon County's 200-year history. All County communication channels and communication platforms will be utilized for Bicentennial messaging and populated with blog posts and photo content. This includes the County websites, social and digital channels, broadcast channel, print materials, staff email signatures, and County venues/facilities. Bicentennial logo/branding will also be incorporated into paid advertising executions including print advertising, NPR radio, outdoor digital and static billboards, and digital banner ads. The County's Visitor Information Centers (VICs) will draw attention to the significance of the upcoming anniversary and the Tourism's Group Sales team will focus on hosting and supporting local family reunions group business throughout 2024.

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The year-long planning effort will also encourage businesses and other organizations to participate in the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary at no cost, such as including a Bicentennial logo on their website, in email signatures, post story-telling images and content, and tag the effort in social media posts. Small efforts can have a big impact and make a difference in reaching business customers and residents of the County.

*Cross-Department Support for the Bicentennial*

The County's Division of Tourism will provide the necessary staffing support for the Steering Committee and serve as the primary liaisons on behalf of the County. However, this year-long community planning effort followed by a year of activities to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our community will require additional personnel serving throughout the County organization. The listing below describes some of the staffing support needs and preliminary roles identified thus far by County department:

- Tourism – primary County support staff for the Bicentennial Steering Committee to lead and coordinate the initiative, host the website, and provide marketing support.
- Libraries Provide space for programs, speakers and events for all ages and host Library Lecture Series related to Bicentennial themes. Collaborate with local organizations and groups to provide programming and activities.
- CMR – direct and coordinate local outreach and marketing communications, distribute collateral/presentations for promotion.
- Parks – display Bicentennial signage, host/produce community events at area parks and community centers.
- Legislative and Strategic Initiatives (Governmental Relations) – state communication/collaboration.
- Other departments will be involved as needed.

Conclusion

The Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial in 2024 provides a unique opportunity to engage the community in the rich history of Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida over the past 200 years and the vision of the community in years to come. The Bicentennial is envisioned to be an inclusive community-wide celebration that not only engages all segments of the community but shares residents' experiences and stories of our community from their unique perspectives. Following the Board's acceptance of the Bicentennial organizational management plan and adoption of the Resolution establishing the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee, staff will begin filling appointments to the Steering Committee which is slated to convene its first meeting by late January. The Bicentennial website will be ready to launch prior to the first meeting of the Steering Committee.

Any anticipated funding needs related to the Bicentennial will be brought back to the Board during the FY 2024 budget process. A status update will be presented at the Board meeting on November 14, 2023, prior to the start of the 2024 anniversary year.



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**Options:**

1. Accept the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Organizational Management Plan.
2. Adopt the Resolution establishing the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee (Attachment #1).
3. Do not accept the status update on the community planning efforts to recognize the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial in 2024.
4. Board direction.

**Recommendation:**

Options #1 and #2

**Attachment:**

1. Draft Resolution Establishing the Tallahassee-Leon County Bicentennial Steering Committee