



PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

PEOPLE FOCUSED

Under Leon County government's reorganization, the Department of Development Support and Environmental Management (DSEM) has been realigned under the department of Public Works and Community Development. DSEM provides one-stop permitting and processing services related to development activities, and consists of four divisions: Building Review & Inspection, Development Services, Environmental Compliance, and Permit and Compliance Services. The primary mission of DSEM is to ensure the continued vitality of the County, including both the built and natural environments, by promoting awareness and compliance with the Board's adopted growth management regulations.

Through the department's work with a variety of public and private partners and organizations, DSEM addresses the issues impacting the growth of the local community. DSEM frequently holds meetings to engage citizens on matters critical to the future of Leon County.

Director David McDevitt has led DSEM since 2005, and he previously served as the department's director of Development Services. He is a Certified Planner with extensive experience and professional practice in the areas of growth management, land use and transportation planning.



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PERFORMANCE DRIVEN

PERMITTING, INSPECTION, DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

Development Services Division

- Throughout the current economic condition, the County has actively pursued opportunities to improve the economic condition of the housing market:
 - » Implemented a new 2-track review and approval process intended to streamline the review of site and development plans by providing applicants the option of either an expedited Concept Plan Approval track or a Final Design Plan Approval track.
 - » Implemented a Project Manager concept for site and development plan applications in order to provide a more efficient delivery of customer service. The Project Manager provides applicants and citizens with a primary contact for particular projects and assists in resolving issues that may arise during the development review process.
- With the assistance of the Management Information Services Department, staff implemented Project Dox, a web-based project management and tracking software application enabling applicants to submit site and development plans digitally. Project Dox is intended to reduce costs and time associated with paper submittals, provide an efficient and transparent delivery of services, and reduce review and project approval timeframes.
- To provide regulation for the growing mobile food service industry, DSEM drafted an ordinance that provides regulations to these mobile operations which address issues relating to traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, land use compatibility and environmental concerns.

- The County works to ensure that the community has a reliable and consistent system of assigning addresses to buildings and properties. Such a system is necessary for the public health, safety, and economic growth. DSEM assigned and/or verified an estimated 2,597 additional street addresses in the County. The department coordinated with the Florida Department of Agriculture to complete street naming for trail heads located within the Apalachicola National Forest to provide consistency with the addressing and street naming procedures, as well as the Emergency 9-1-1 System.

Building Review and Inspection Division

- In a continued effort to support sustainability initiatives throughout the community, the Building Inspection Division, with input from representatives of the industry, developed a revised fee assessment methodology for the installation of solar. This effort included a revised Internet and telephone application process.
- In an effort to reduce the review time and cost for natural gas permits, the Building Inspection staff revised and streamlined the natural gas permitting process for natural gas installations within Leon County. The process removes the requirement for the City of Tallahassee to permit natural gas installations in Leon County.



Did You Know

Leon County now offers expedited site plan reviews, which includes concurrent review of associated environmental and building permits.



PERMITTING, INSPECTION, DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT



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- In order to ensure the safety of buildings within unincorporated Leon County, the Building Inspection staff, consisting of five multi-licensed inspectors, performed approximately 14,770 building, electrical, plumbing and mechanical inspections. Two multi-licensed plans examiners on staff in the Building Inspections Division processed approximately 3,309 building permit applications.

Environmental Compliance Division

- On November 2, 2010, the citizens of Leon County amended the County Charter requiring the establishment of countywide environmental standards. Following input from several citizen groups, the Commission adopted a two-phased implementation approach. Staff continues to work cooperatively with the City of Tallahassee to develop comprehensive Minimum Countywide Environmental Standards for the entire community.
- The division worked with the Science Advisory Committee (SAC) and Leon County Public Works Department to complete the drawdown of Lake Munson and permitted the necessary dam repairs.
- Staff assisted in completion of permitting for the new Florida Gas Transmission 36-inch line across the County, after securing 132 acres of environmentally sensitive land (Eight Mile Pond Tract) as mitigation at no cost to the County.
- An important function of the County is to ensure the protection of the community's natural features. The Environmental Compliance Division completed the review of 549 environmental permit applications, 60 site plan and subdivision requests, 45 natural features inventories, and 45 stormwater management facility operating permit reviews.

Permit and Compliance Services Division

- A growing concern of the community this past year was the proliferation of simulated gambling facilities in Leon County. In June 2011, the Commission adopted an ordinance regulating and limiting the number of such facilities. Permit and Compliance Services implemented the new Simulated Gambling Devices Ordinance developing the application process and working with the County Attorney's Office to establish a database for tracking simulated gambling facilities.
- Development support through customer service is critical to the department's success. The following provides a quick summary of the volume of citizens utilizing the services of the division:
 - » Assisted approximately 9,700 walk-in customers, processed approximately 2,700 applications, and provided assistance with over 32,000 telephone calls over the past year.
 - » Supported 1,108 contractor licensing walk-in and telephone customers and responded to 2,356 code compliance calls that resulted in 637 site inspections.



Did You Know

Leon County now accepts and reviews many types of plan submittals electronically. Applicants may submit digital plans or electronic files in lieu of paper copies.