

# Annual Report Washington County, Florida

FY 2015-2016



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

District 1: Alan T Bush, Chairman

District 2: Charles Kent, Vice Chair

District 3: Charles Brock

District 4: Todd Abbott

District 5: Lynn Gothard

County Administrator: Hank Hamilton

County Attorney: Jeff Goodman

As a non-chartered county, Washington County residents cast their vote for all Districts during an election year. The County Commissioners serve a four-year term with the Districts alternating every two years. The position of Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners is voted on every November by the sitting County Commissioners.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with Title XI, Chapter 125, Section 125.74 (b) of the Florida Statutes, this annual report will detail the State of Washington County and actions taken in the past Fiscal Year as a result of Washington County Board of County Commissioners decisions during publically held meetings and the administration of County departments that are charged with the daily execution of Board policies.

The Washington County Administration staff worked closely with each Commissioner throughout the Fiscal Year to ensure the will of the Board was being completed. As the year progressed, the staff zeroed in on ways to improve processes, find savings, re-look at old ways of doing business and focused on improving the workforce morale. Simple, yet effective steps were taken to achieve these goals. Detailed throughout this report will show the ways Washington County is stewarding taxpayers money.

The County Administration staff was able to move forward with several new initiatives late in FY 2015-2016 resulting in \$550,000 towards paying down the debt. The staff was able to work with the Clerk of Court to make several changes to the payment schedule for local vendors. The old way of paying bills as they came in, was done away with and the staff was able to form relationships with the local vendors to get on a monthly billing cycle. As we move forward to next Fiscal Year the staff is working closely with the Constitutional Officers to ensure they receive funding as efficiently as possible and several budget line items will be consolidated into one account to get a clearer picture of how tax dollars are spent. Fiscal responsibility has been placed on the forefront of the staff's priorities and big improvements were made and will continue to be made as the County moves forward.

The budget planning cycle was overhauled to reflect a more modern approach to budgeting the County's resources. A quarterly review of all County finances was implemented by the County Administrator. Although, the new process started late in the Fiscal Year, the improvement and clarity of the finances were seen the first quarter of implementation. A spreadsheet of recurring bills was created to ensure the County was not spending money on accounts it no longer utilized, the details of the accounts were scrutinized to ensure the services paid for were the actual services being provided to the County.

The County was obligated to several contracts that were renegotiated this year to include the Sunny Hills mowing contract, Holmes County Animal Control cooperative agreement, and the Internet connectivity contract. The new terms listed in these contracts reflected a more balanced approach as Washington County intended. The County now has contracts that are friendlier to the taxpayer and has escape clauses that allow us to terminate bad contracts that are not meeting the scope of work described in the terms.



Part of streamlining processes and striving for continuous improvement included making great strides in our technology capabilities. While there is a lot of work left to do in this area, the County designed a new website and brought it online at no additional cost to the taxpayers. Several employees took it upon themselves to create a new web page that is easy to navigate, updated with current information and is attractive in design. This type of initiative is what makes Washington County employees great at what they do. The mentality of seeing a problem, fixing it and moving on is becoming widespread in every department. The new website is the gateway to the County for outside agencies and it was important that it was updated. The fact the staff was able to do it without contracting out the services help saved the County \$3,800 annually in webhosting fees.

One area the County will need to work on next year is the outdated telephone systems in the County Annex. The staff currently uses telephone systems that were designed in the 1980's. Some issues are addressed by adding fiber cable for our internet systems, so the phones will be able to utilize the fiber cabling to increase their capabilities. The County should see advancement next year due to the increase in data.

Although the County waived residential impact fees for the upcoming fiscal year, the Board voted unanimously to reinstate the commercial impact fees. The Planning and Building Departments started the process to overhaul the Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan. This will give new businesses the most current information on what they should expect when they are preparing to move into the County. The Department also started work on a "Welcome to Washington County" information packet. This information packet will give step by step instructions for a residential or commercial customer how to proceed to get the proper applications, permits and approvals during the initial construction phase. Instructions on how to get variances will also be included.

The County was in a position to hire a Fire Services Coordinator to fill a void in the Emergency Management field. This new hire came in and was able to build relationships with all the County Fire Chief's. One of the first improvements that was made was the creation of spreadsheets that made inventorying of assets more logical. The Coordinator was able to go in and hold departments more accountable for their equipment that was paid for by County funds.

The Fire Services Coordinator also took over a portion of the SAFER grant program. Schedules of the employees that are paid by SAFER grant funding was transferred from the Grant coordinator to the Fire Services Coordinator. This streamlining of scheduling improved coverage by 40%.

The County realized the importance of hiring a Publics Works Director. An original request was to hire a Director that had an engineering degree in hopes the County could realize savings by severing contracts with engineers that are costly to maintain. However, the fiscal constraints of



the budget made that requirement unfeasible. The County was able to hire a former City Public Works Director from Ft. Lauderdale who brings an enormous amount of experience and leadership capability to the position. This addition to the County team will pay big dividends as we move forward on ways to do processes more efficiently. The new Director's extensive knowledge of how to maintain roadways, read plans and organize public works activities has already produced a matrix of workloads, maintenance of roadways priorities listing and several other initiatives that will save the County money in the long term.

As Washington County enters into the next Fiscal Year, it is actively involved with Holmes County and City of Bonifay to establish a business friendly corridor on Highway 79, South of I-10. This corridor will be a catalyst to attract businesses to our area and create jobs for the citizens of all local Government's involved. This is a great example of how Counties can work together to bring jobs to everyone in the region. Once this corridor is established both counties and the city of Bonifay will enjoy the benefits of more employers providing jobs to more residents and generating more revenue for all the entities involved. The project is projected to bring over \$250,000 in new revenue during the first year of its existence.

As the Staff searched for other areas to improve, a common theme was discussed between staff members, Commissioners, citizens and the media. The monthly Commissioner meetings were not being administered as well as they should have been. The staff brainstormed and came up with a new agenda request form. This form mandated the requestor provide all the background data on the topic to be discussed. Having this data available, the staff was able to determine if the topic or presentation warranted Board action. The staff turned away over 25 request to meet the Board because the action did not require Board attention and was able to be handled at the Department level. This reduction in items that were not included on the agenda greatly reduced the amount of time public discussions were held. Only business that needed to reach the Board, reached the Board. The response from the public has been positive and the Commissioners have noticed the difference.

Commissioners were also provided with electronic tablets loaded with the meeting agenda information packet. This cut printing cost down by \$300 a month. Records were archived electronically, giving the Commissioners the ability to go back and research the information on any given project without having to take the time to dig through mountains of papers. This switch from paper agendas and meeting packets proved to make the Commissioners more informed on the topics and better, more productive debates were held as a result.

The Recycling Center took in over 1 million pounds of cardboard, paper, aluminum cans and plastic this year. Evaluation of the processes used at the recycling center, the shop foreman realized more money was being spent on processing aluminum cans than revenue that was



being received. We changed the process to only accept aluminum cans 2 days a week. This simple change saved 4 man hours a week and reduced the amount of checks the County was writing for bundles of used aluminum cans that were valued at less than \$5.

Washington County is proud of the progress that was made this year. The County is looking forward to moving even further ahead in the next year. Working closely with the municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, Tourist Development Council and the State, the County will be able to take the steps necessary to attract and retain businesses, create more jobs, manage revenue efficiently and conserve our abundant Natural Resources we are blessed with.





## AGRICULTURAL CENTER

### **Rentals/Contracts**

Over an eight month period, there were 54 events raising \$4,193.57 in revenue for the County. This includes both paid rentals and usage by UF/IFAS Extension Washington County for educational programs and other county entities for educational purposes. The Agricultural Center also hosted two major community events: the Washington County Youth Fair and the Panhandle Watermelon Festival. WCYF is a week-long event highlighting the achievements of school-aged youth in the county. PWF is a one-day event featuring a giant watermelon auction, vendors and a concert. The two events attract National recording artists and several thousand visitors.

### **UF/IFAS Extension Washington County**

In coordination with the county grant writer, \$300,000 was secured through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services agricultural education facilities grant to build a new Agricultural Center in the County. While not enough to replace the center this year, the grant was written to allow the County to carry over the funds and reapply in future grant cycles. The County has asked for another \$750,000 next year to assist in the building project.

### **UF/IFAS Extension Washington County – 4-H Youth & Volunteer Development**

During the 2015-2016 4-H year, 215 Washington County youth were enrolled in either 4-H community clubs or special interest/short term projects. Community club project focus included large animal livestock projects (market beef, breeding beef, market swine), small animal livestock projects (poultry and rabbit), shooting sports in archery and shotgun, STEM and community/service learning. Community clubs are led by a dedicated team of over 20 4-H volunteer leaders with whom the 4-H Agent works with closely. In addition, 54 youth were reached through the week-long, overnight camping program at 4-H Camp Timpoochee and a three-day camp focusing on meat selection, preparation and grilling. 4-H school enrichment programs in public speaking, gardening and embryology reached 1306 youth in the Washington County School District.

Using a learn-by-doing approach, Washington County 4-H develops life skills in youth that will help them become responsible, productive citizens both now and in the future. Monthly club meetings, school enrichment/4-H in the Classroom, overnight camping, day camping, workshops, individual consultations and competitive events are the delivery modes for 4-H in Washington County.





### **Youth Life Skill Development:**

Topics and/or educational programs include 4-H Camp Timpoochee, poultry showmanship and care, 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking Program, 4-H Awards Banquet, 4-H Chick Chain distribution, 4-H district speaking events, area a horse show, chick chain youth/parent workshop, 4-H in the Classroom: Embryology, KMSES garden clubs, state shotgun match, state archery match, Washington County Youth Fair – beef and swine showmanship, steer, heifer and swine market classes, rabbit show, poultry show, rabbit showmanship, poultry showmanship, livestock auction, 4-H Day at the Capitol, District Teen Retreat, rabbit showmanship workshop, swine nutrition and showmanship workshop and the annual Washington County Youth Fair.

**Total Community 4-H & Special Interest Clubs: 8    Total Enrollment in Clubs: 215**

**Total youth in camping: 54**

**Total youth in 4-H in the Classroom: 1306**

### **Volunteer Education & Organizational Strategies**

The agent for the County supervised a team of over 20 volunteers who lead 4-H club meetings monthly or bi-monthly. In addition, the agent sought volunteer support for episodic events such as the youth fair, judging and the WC 4-H Association. Youth/adult partnerships are the focus of clubs where a caring adult provides both educational opportunities, mentoring and guidance to youth. The agents met with volunteers on an individual basis and as a group and conducted group training and instruction in shooting sports for the Northwest Extension District. She also provided leadership, materials and expertise for the NW district for the 4-H Chick Chain Project.

**Total volunteer club leaders: 25**

**Total volunteer hours: 1191**

**Total grant funds & donations to support Washington County 4-H: \$9575**

### **UF/IFAS Extension Washington County – Agriculture & Natural Resources Livestock and Forage Production**

**10 Group Learning Activities; 489 total participants; 190 Individual Consultations**

The agent delivered programing (workshops, trainings, seminars, field-days, etc.) and individual consultations in an effort to help maximize the economic viability and sustainability of these operations. The issues addressed in the programing and individual consultations include; fertilization, weed control, grazing management, variety selection, establishment of annual forages, economics and marketing options, nutrition management, and reproductive management.

### **Natural Resources Management**

**8 Group Learning Activities; 216 total participants; 86 Individual Consultations**





satisfaction associated with these natural resources. The issues addressed in the programing and individual consultations include; wildlife management, pond management, invasive species control, and silviculture practices.

### **Agronomic Crop Production**

#### **4 Group Learning Activities; 242 total participants; 92 Individual Consultations**

The agent delivered programing (workshops, trainings, seminars, field-days, etc.) and individual consultations in an effort to help maximize the economic viability and sustainability of these operations. The issues addressed in the programing and individual consultations include; pest management, weed management, disease management, variety selection, marketing, and general agronomic practices.

### **4-H & Agricultural Awareness**

#### **10 Group Learning Activities; 1,312 total participants; 107 Individual Consultations**

The agent delivered programing (classes, demonstrations, camps, clinics, etc.) and individual consultations to 4-H members to help facilitate there animal science projects and to the general public to help them become more informed consumers with a greater appreciation of production agriculture.

#### **Totals: 32 Group Learning Activities; 2,259 total participants; 475 Individual Consultations**

### **UF/IFAS Extension Washington County – Family & Consumer Sciences**

Program topics for FCS included homebuyer education, Washington County Council on Aging nutrition classes, sausage making, rocket stoves, cheesemaking, basic breadmaking, advanced breadmaking, produce pointers for raised bed gardening, make your own convenience mixes, DIY personal care products, MyPlate nutrition, building a pantry and cooking with preserved foods, re-think your drink, balancing work and family stress management, pressure canning, water bath canning, maximizing your dollars in retirement, solar cooking, 4-H grilling contest, fundamentals of charcoal grilling and healthy snacks.

**Number of Programs: 40      Number of Attendees: 1,018**

### **How Programs Have Helped Clientele:**

The **Homebuyer Education classes** helped prospective first-time homebuyers to assess their readiness to purchase a home by understanding the home buying process step-by-step, by learning how to maintain a home through routine maintenance, and by learning how to set up a spending plan to pay down debt, start or increase savings, and how to manage credit wisely. Being prepared financially to purchase a home reduces the risk of mortgage loan default and foreclosure. Persons who set up and use a spending plan have a clearer understanding of their income and expenses and are more likely to live within their means. They also are more likely to save money for future purchases because they can set aside money for savings in their



spending plan. Home ownership contributes to the overall stability of a community through the investment of the residents in their respective properties and community and payment of ad valorem taxes. Studies show that children living in homes owned, rather than rented, by their parents/caregivers are more likely to perform better in school due to the stability of their living environment.

- The **MyPlate/nutrition education classes** taught youth and adults how to make healthy food choices that promote sound nutrition and health and reduce the risk of chronic disease and poor overall health.
- The **sausage making classes** taught participants how to prepare and preserve meat at home to save money on meat processing fees.
- The **rocket stove and solar cooking classes** taught participants alternative methods to cook food to reduce home energy costs; these methods can be especially beneficial during a power outage following a hurricane or other natural disaster.
- The **cheesemaking and breadmaking classes** taught participants how to prepare common food items at home.
- The **Produce Pointers in Raised Bed Gardening class** taught participants how to grow vegetables at home in a raised bed garden and how to prepare the vegetables in a healthy way to enjoy the nutritional benefits they offer.
- The **Mix It Up! Convenience Mix classes** taught participants how to prepare one-dish meal mixes, baking mix, spice blends, and other “convenience” foods to save money and reduce dietary sodium intake for better health.
- The **DIY Personal Care Products classes** taught participants how to prepare personal hygiene products to save money and as alternatives for persons with sensitivity to fragrances and other ingredients used in commercially prepared products.
- The **Building a Pantry/Cooking with Preserved Foods class** taught participants the basic staples and other ingredients to have in their kitchens to prepare nutritious meals. The class also addressed ways to organize the kitchen to maximize storage space and efficiency.
- The **Re-Think Your Drink exhibit** demonstrated the sugar content of several popular beverages and their role in contributing to weight gain and obesity. Participants were encouraged to drink 64 ounces of water daily for better health.
- The **Balancing Work and Family-Stress Management classes** taught participants methods for managing stress and balancing work and family obligations for better health and well-being.
- The **Pressure Canning and Water Bath Canning classes** taught participants how to preserve food safely for future use using USDA guidelines. Home-canned foods provide a safe, non-electricity-dependent supply of food in an emergency situation.
- The **Maximizing Your Dollars in Retirement class** taught participants basic budgeting methods and different options for helping them to save money and stretch their retirement savings.



- The **4-H Grilling Contest** provided an opportunity for youth to demonstrate meat selection, food safety/healthy cooking techniques, and home safety while grilling.
- The **Fundamentals of Charcoal Grilling class** taught participants meat selection, food safety/healthy cooking techniques, and home safety while grilling.
- The **Healthy Snacks exhibit** provided displays and recipes for easy-to-prepare healthy snacks for children and adults.

#### **UF/IFAS Extension Washington County – Horticulture**

**Number of Programs: 49    Number of attendees: 1603    Individual Consultations: 1819**

**Residential Horticulture:** Home Gardens, Landscape, Vegetable & Fruit Production, Environmental Stewardship.

- **Raised Bed Gardening Program:** Residential vegetable gardening improves the nutrition and health of Washington County residents as well as property. Studies show that gardening improves property values.

**Commercial Horticulture:** Nursery production, Landscape (green) Industry, Commercial fruit and vegetable production.

- **Beekeeping in the Panhandle 2016 Field Day and Tradeshow:** This program enhances the profitability and viability of established beekeepers while encouraging the establishment of new beekeepers in the Northwest Florida Region. Annually, it brings 15-300 individuals to Washington County over a three-day period. Not only are beekeepers important for their honey production, but also contribute to our agriculture sector by renting out their bees for fruit and vegetable pollination.
- **Agricultural Pesticide Training:** 91% of attendees either received a pesticide license, required for their business, from the as a result of passing the licensure exam offered or CEU's to maintain their license. Attendees not taking the exam received 4 CEU in the proper category certificate required to perform their job duties.
- **Limited Category Pesticide Certification:** Professionals who are licensed and applying chemicals according to the law receive a benefit in terms of increased wages. In 2016 a landscape and grounds keeping worker makes an average of \$11.26 per hour. A trained individual handling, spraying, and applying pesticides makes \$4.27 more per hour (\$15.53) than the previous mentioned category of workers.  
(<http://www.floridajobs.org/labor-market-information/data-center/statistical-programs/occupational-employment-statistics-and-wages> this programs economic impact is an increase (so far) of \$204,960\* in wages for participants who earned a license.



- According to the University of Florida Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department (Aug. 2012) following the BMP guidelines has the potential to save water at an average of 13,766 gal/1,000 sq. /yr. rate.
- GI-BMP Classes are for landscape industry professionals that apply fertilizer for home lawns. 95% of course attendees passed the state exam; State Bill 494, signed by Governor Crist in 2009, requires that all commercial fertilizer applicators have a Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services license by January 1, 2014. Completing the BMP training and passing the post test is mandatory to obtain the license and operate a landscaping business that applies fertilizer to home and commercial landscapes.
- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Urban Areas (November 2005, EPA-841-B-05-004) public education on pests, handling of fertilizers/pesticides, proper watering and management of yard waste can reduce the potential adverse impacts to waters from runoff from lawns. As determined by a post program survey, all BMP participants (16) reported that they already do or will use the BMP manual recommended fertilization rates and methods of application and already do or will inform clients of the recommendation contained in the BMP manual. According to the University of Florida Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department (Aug. 2012) following the BMP guidelines has the potential to save water at an average of 13,766 gal/1,000 sq. /yr. rate.

**Master Gardener Development** – the agent recruited and trained a group of volunteers who assist with teaching and conducting educational programs as volunteers.

**4-H & Schools** – Plant related projects with youth through the classroom and 4-H clubs.







## BUILDING AND PLANNING

The Building Department administers all permits involving contracting through the County. The purpose of this process is to ensure the protection of life and property. The process begins with the submittal of construction documents which are reviewed for compliance with applicable building codes and standards. Approved projects are issued a building permit allowing construction to begin and conducts field inspections to monitor compliance.

Beginning October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015 the Building Department reviewed and issued a total of 208 Building Permits, 350 Electrical Permits, 106 Mechanical Permits, 52 Plumbing Permits, 168 Roofing Permits and 4 Gas Permits.

Beginning October 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016, the Building Department issued 233 Building Permits, 303 Electrical Permits, 127 Mechanical Permits, 63 Plumbing Permits, 198 Roofing Permits and 6 Gas Permits.

On the new construction front a total of 27 Single Family Dwellings were issued in Fiscal Year 2014-2015, a total of 30 have been issued for Fiscal Year 2015 to date. An increase in Single Family Dwelling by 3.

We have issued 842 permits resulting in \$129,337.85 in revenue for the County to date.

There was a total of 805 inspections performed for Fiscal Year 2014-2015. A total of 80 Licenses (Comp Cards) were issued in Fiscal Year 2014-2015. Beginning October 1, 2015 to the present there has been 57 Licenses (Comp Cards) issued to date.

We recognized the need to enhance our operation to better serve our customers by upgrading our computer system. The department software was updated from the original PTWin32v2 system which was currently purchased in May of 2005. In November of 2014, the Building Department updated to the Iworq System and installed a major program update this year which was compatible to the old software system so the old information was carried over into the new system. The Department also has the ability to use the new programs on tablets. The technology in the new modules provide instant retention of all documents created.

### NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>START DATE</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
KATE SMITH	3/19/2015	8/5/2016
DUNKIN DONUTS	5/7/2015	8/24/2015
WC COURTHOUSE	5/12/2015	TENTATIVELY SEPT 2016
FAST LANE (DRIVE-THRU)	12/18/2015	TENTATIVELY NOVEMBER 2016
<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>START DATE</b>	<b>COMPLETED</b>
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	1/15/2016	SPRING 2017

### TOTAL NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS

<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>TOTAL # OF INSPECTIONS</b>
KATE SMITH	200
DUNKIN DONUTS	5
WC COURTHOUSE	50
FAST LANE (DRIVE-THRU)	4
<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>START DATE</b>
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	14

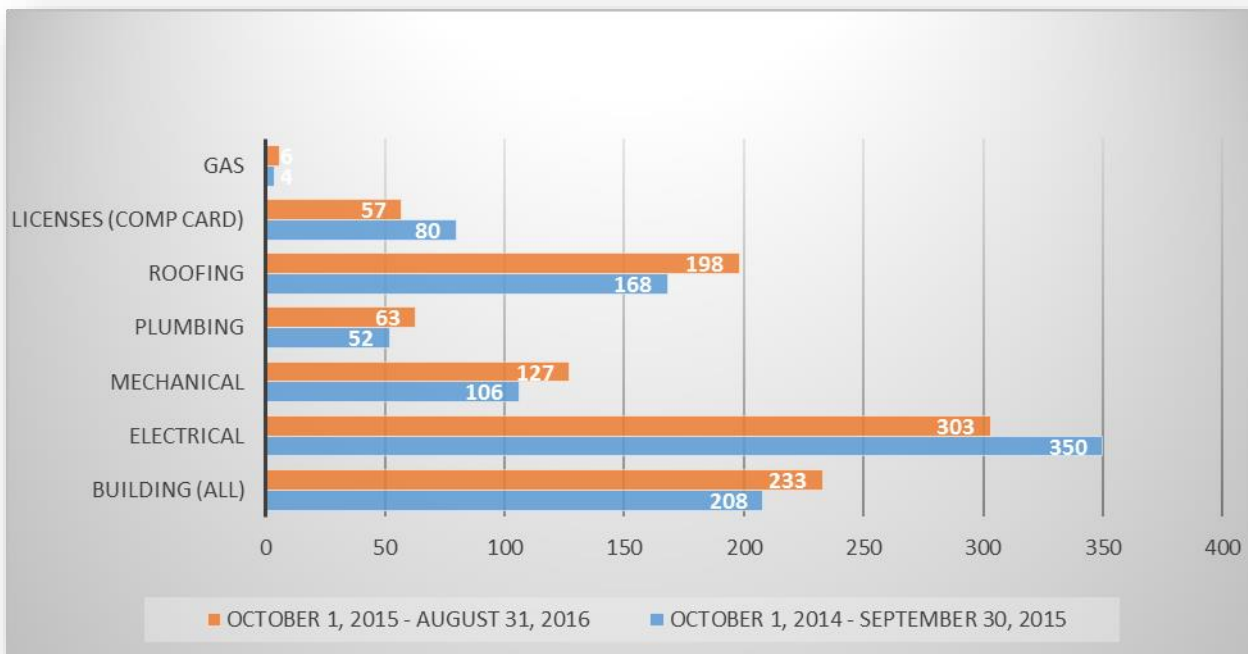
### MONIES COLLECTED FOR COMMERCIAL

<b>FY 2015</b>	<b>FEE AMOUNT COLLECTED</b>
KATE SMITH (PHASE 1 & 2)	\$19,098.00
DUNKIN DONUTS	\$571.00
WC COURTHOUSE	\$9,874.00
FAST LANE (DRIVE-THRU)	\$775.00
<b>FY 2016</b>	<b>START DATE</b>
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH	\$8,670.00

### PERMIT COMPARISONS

	<b>FY 14-15</b>	<b>FY15-16</b>
BUILDING (ALL)	208	233
ELECTRICAL	350	303
MECHANICAL	106	127
PLUMBING	52	63
ROOFING	168	198
LICENSES (COMP CARD)	80	57
GAS	4	6





The Department is up on all categories except Electrical and Licenses. The license are down due to Contractors becoming certified through the State. The County does not charge the contactors a fee if they are certified. The Building Department predicts that the Electrical Permits will be close to the last Fiscal Year. There is currently a 47% difference between the two years.

The Building Department also handles the receiving of payments for Driveway Permits and E-911 Addressing.

	FY 14-15	FY 15-16
DRIVEWAY PERMIT	32	30
911 ADDRESSING	48	51



## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

The Washington County Planning Department is responsible for the implementation of Washington County's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC). The Department conducts technical review of regulated development activities which are located within the unincorporated areas of Washington County, Florida, as well as, within the municipalities of Caryville, Ebro, Wausau and Vernon and is responsible for providing staff recommendations to the Washington County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners. The Planning Department administers Land Use Certificates, Development Orders and Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code Amendment, maintains the County's fixed assets inventory and records retention schedule and provides interdepartmental support for services such as building permits, driveway permits, road name changes, addressing applications and public records requests.

The Planning Secretary carries out all administrative functions of the Planning Department, and supports the County with tasks such as building permitting and administration, fixed assets inventory, public records requests, records retention and interdepartmental payment processing and application transmittal.

The Senior Planner provides technical review of all regulated development activities and Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code Amendments and provides staff recommendations to the Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners based on the developments conformance to the Land Development Code, consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and compliance with local, state and federal regulations.

### **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission is a Board of County Commissioner's (BCC) Appointed Citizen Advisory Board which serves to review and consider proposals for regulated development activities within the jurisdiction of Washington County for consistency with the Washington County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC). The Planning Commission typically meets on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) Tuesday of each month, however meetings are subject to change or may be cancelled due to a lack of a quorum or agenda items. The Planning Commission is charged with vetting most developments for recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners, however, in some cases, the Planning Commission may have authority to take final action.

#### Planning Commission Members, as of July 31, 2016

<b>NAME</b>	<b>POSITION</b>
<b>ROGER HAGAN</b>	District 1
<b>JAMES USSERY</b>	District 2
<b>AL KEOWN, CHAIRMAN</b>	District 3
<b>JIM ACKERMAN</b>	District 4
<b>DAVID MORRIS, VICE CHAIRMAN</b>	District 5
<b>JOHN GAY</b>	At-Large
<b>MIKE PARK</b>	School Board





The Washington County Planning Department accomplished the following during FY2016:

- **IWORQ Permitting System** – To improve project tracking and save money on time and paper, the Planning Department has converted from a paper filing system to an electronic filing system. This process now allows the Department to communicate electronically with applicants, as well as state and county agencies and departments such as the Florida Department of Health and the Building and Public Works Departments.
- **Surplus Property** – During June 2015, the Planning Department was tasked with the Surplus of Real Property which was owned by the Washington County, Florida Board of County Commissioners (BCC) and located within the Sunny Hills Subdivision. Over the course of two (2) months, two (2) properties were sold totaling \$4,020. All revenues were credited to the County's General Fund.
- **Fixed Assets Inventory**- The Planning Department was tasked with compiling the Fixed Assets Inventory for Washington County. At the time that the task was assigned, staff training and procedural information was unavailable. Therefore, staff was required to implement a new system for tracking the County's fixed assets. To-date the project is approximately sixty percent (60%) complete.
- **Commercial Intent Overlay District FLUM Amendment**- The Commercial Intent Overlay District Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendment was initiated by the Washington County Planning Department during FY2015 and accepted for adoption by the State of Florida during FY2016. The newly designated district provides an option for property owners located within the district boundaries to enjoy an expedited review process from their current FLUM designation (mostly Agricultural) to General Commercial in an effort to encourage commercial development off of Highways 77 and 79 in Washington County, Florida.
- **Land Development Code (LDC) Update Amendments**- The Land Development Code (LDC) Update was initiated during FY2015 and adopted by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners during the beginning of FY2016. The LDC Update provided clarification of several sections contained within the Land Development Code.

### Services Provided

The Planning Department provides pre-permitting services by reviewing proposed developments within unincorporated areas of the County and the municipalities of Ebro, Caryville, Vernon and Wausau for compliance with the Washington County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC) and recommendation to the Washington County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners (BCC), as applicable. The Department also provides periodic review and updates of local plans and ordinances including, but not limited to, the Washington County Comprehensive Plan and LDC.



The following activities are regulated and/or administered by the Planning Department:

- Land Use Certifications
- Future Land Use Map Amendments
- Land Development Code (LDC) and Comprehensive Plan Text Amendments
- General, Minor and Major Development Review
- Subdivisions and Property Division Review
- Plat Vacations/Right-of-Way (ROW) Abandonment
- Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Developments
- Alcoholic Beverage Certifications
- Nursing Home Certifications
- Variance Requests
- Land Use Letters

### **Other Services**

In addition to planning services, the Planning Secretary also serves as the Public Records, Records Retention, and Fixed Assets Liaison for the County, and provides back-up staff for the Building Department and Administration Office. The Secretary is responsible for processing public records requests (with the exception of staff-related inquiries which are handled by the Human Resources Department), overseeing Washington County's records retention schedule and fixed asset inventory and responding to an estimated fifteen (15) to thirty (30) inquiries per day related to the issuance of building permits and processes. In addition, the Planning Department also transmits applications and processes fees for interdepartmental tasks including driveway permits, road grading fees, road name change applications and Emergency 911 (E911) address applications. In an effort to provide a "One-Stop Shop" for citizens, the Planning Department provides administrative support to the Public Works Department and E911 for these services, and fees are credited to these entities accordingly.

### **Community Involvement**

#### **Neighborhood Information Meetings (NIM)**

Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendments, Subdivisions, and Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) are subject to a Neighborhood Information Meeting (NIM). NIM's provide an opportunity for neighbors surrounding a proposed development to learn more about the project and express questions or concerns related to the proposal. Property owners located within 300-feet of a proposed development receive notification of the NIM via certified mail and the applicant and Planning Department collaborate to inform the public of the development which is proposed to occur within their neighborhood. NIM's typically occur after the proposal has been reviewed by County Staff and prior to the Planning Commission Public Hearing.



## Public Notification

FLUM Amendments, Subdivisions, DRI's, Plat and Right-of-Way Abandonment and Variances require public notification of public hearings via newspaper advertisement and some require on-site signage, and/or adjoining property owner notification. All development activities requiring Planning Commission and/or Board of County Commissioner approval, as indicated below, are subject to public hearing.

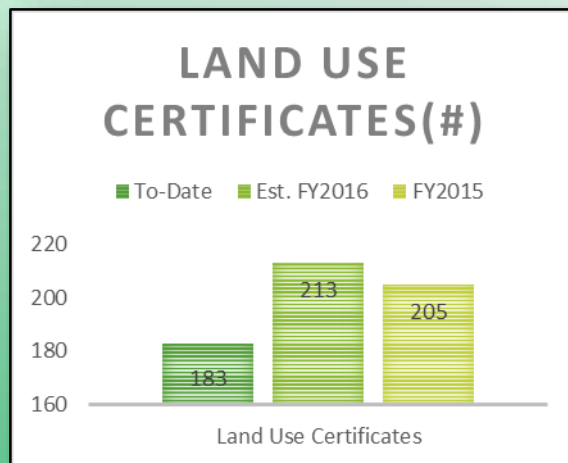
## Planning Review Requirements

Planning Commission or BCC Approval	Staff Approval Only	Upon Request
Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendments	Land Use Certificates	Land Use Letters
Subdivisions	Property Divisions	Flood Zone Letters
Plat Vacations/ROW Abandonment	General Developments	
Minor Developments	Alcoholic Beverage Certification	
Major Developments	Nursing Home Certification	
DRI Developments		
Variance Requests		

## Fiscal Year Activity

### General Activities

The most common activities carried out by the Planning Department includes processing and reviewing applications for Land Use Certificates and providing procedural information to prospective developers, and local citizens on local land development regulations. These processes can be greatly time intensive as they often times require an extensive analysis of individual site characteristics and must be assessed on a case by case basis. On a daily basis, the Planning Department responds to approximately fifteen (15) to thirty (30) inquiries via phone, email and/or in-person meetings.



### **Land Use, Alcohol Zoning and Nursing Home Certificates**

Land Use Certificates certify that proposed developments conform to Land Development Code (LDC) regulations, are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and are required prior to the issuance of an E911 address, utility and/or building permit. To-Date<sup>1</sup>, the Washington County Planning Department has processed approximately 180 applications for Land Use Certificates, compared to 205 applications during FY2015<sup>2</sup>. The Planning Department anticipates approximately thirty-three (33) additional applications during the months of August and September based on the prior fiscal year's activity rates. Based on the anticipated rate, the number of applications for land use certificates processed in FY2016<sup>3</sup> would exceed FY2015 by eight (8) applications. Three (3) land use letters were also processed during FY2016 compared to zero (0) letters in FY2015.

Occasionally, the Planning Department will certify alcohol zoning and nursing home certificates for new establishments which intend to sell alcoholic beverages and/or offer nursing home services. The Department will also provide Land Use Letters which include information on the allowable uses and permitted densities, or intensities of a specific development site, upon request. Flood Zone Letters may also be provided with includes information on allowable development within on-site flood zones of a development site, however, no flood zone letters were issued during FY2015 or FY2016.

### **Development Orders**

Development Orders provide County approval of site plans, variance requests, special exception requests and subdivision plats and permits an applicant to proceed with obtaining the necessary construction permits from the Building Department for building erection, mobile home installation, and utility construction. Development orders may contain conditions that the applicant must meet prior to receiving a building permit or conditions which may run with the land.

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<sup>1</sup> To-Date: As of August 23, 2016.

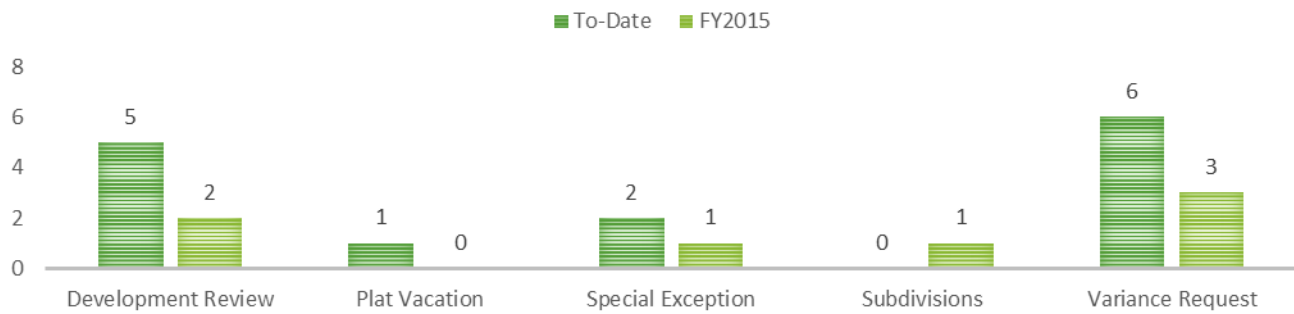
<sup>2</sup> Fiscal Year 2015 (FY2015): October 1, 2014 – September 31, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Fiscal Year 2015 (FY2016): October 1, 2015 – September 31, 2016

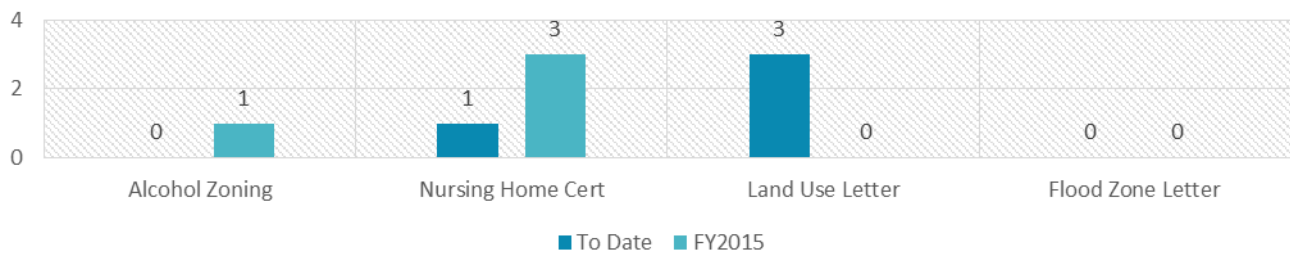




## DEVELOPMENT ORDERS (#)



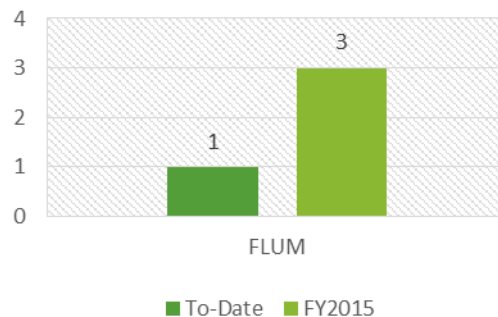
## Other Certifications (#)



### Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code Amendments

Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code (LDC) Amendments may be initiated by the County or requested by an applicant, and may be applied to textual provisions or provide an update to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). Generally, County-initiated amendments seek to correct an error on the FLUM or provide clarification or updates to outdated or poorly-defined provisions. These documents are periodically reviewed by Planning Department Staff and updated as needed, and as funds become available.

### Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendments by Citizen Request



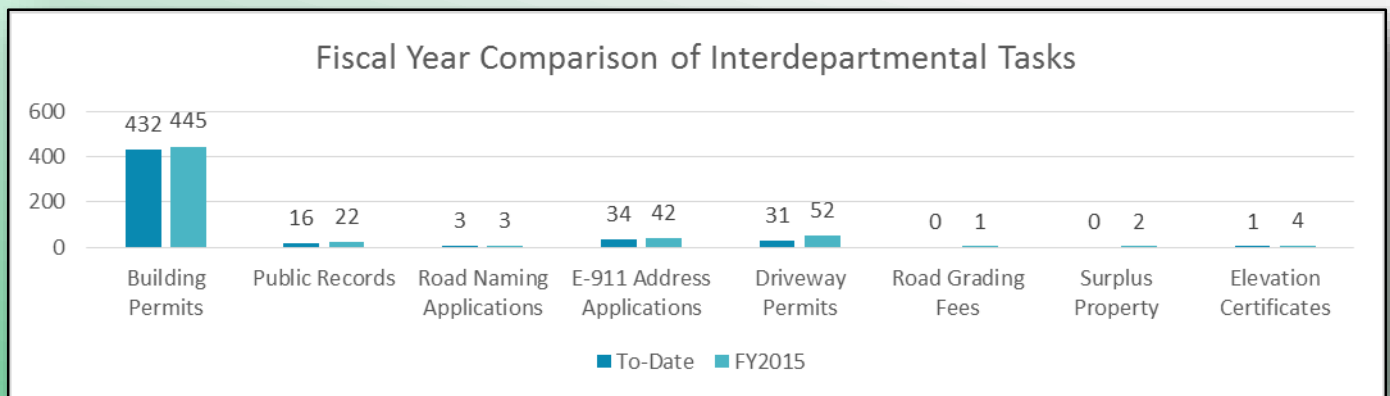
Local citizens and/or developers may petition for a FLUM Amendment in accordance with LDC Section 10.02.02. In most cases, a FLUM Amendment is requested when a FLUM designation does not allow for a proposed land use or development density or intensity. The Planning Department provides technical review of all FLUM Amendment requests and coordinates public notification and public hearings.

**To-Date, the Planning Department has processed 180 Land Use Certificates, fourteen (14) Development Order Requests, and five (5) Future Land Use Map and/or Text Amendments.** In addition, the Department provided technical support for a proposed parking ordinance and Floodplain Management Ordinance Update. The parking ordinance was tabled during the May 2016 Board of County Commissioner’s Meeting due to citizen opposition, and the Floodplain Management Ordinance Update remains in progress.

**Planning-Related activity rates are estimated to increase approximately 1% at the completion of FY2016 compared to FY2015.**

### Other Tasks

In an effort to create a “One-Stop Shop” for development-related permitting and public records requests, the Planning Department processes and transmits payment and applications for other County Departments including Building, Emergency 911, and Public Works. Additionally, Planning staff processes County-wide public records requests with the exception of staff-related requests which are processed by Human Resources.



To Date, the Planning Department processed approximately 517 applications/requests related to the building permits, public records requests, road naming applications, grading fees, elevation certificates, E911 address applications and driveway permits.



## **Notable Accomplishments**

### **FY2015**

During FY2015, Planning Department Staff initiated a major Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendment which provided corrections and updates to approximately 1,000 affected parcels. The proposed amendment sought to update FLUM areas which were designated Conservation to include newly acquired Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) properties, lakes and conservation organization owned properties, such as the Nature Conservancy, 1000 Friends of Florida and the Audubon Society, and updated FLUM areas which were designated Public/Semi-Public to include property owned by Washington County, the Washington County School District, local municipalities, the State of Florida and the Washington County Fire Districts. Local municipality, the Sunny Hills Mixed Use District and the Air Installation Compatibility Use Zone (AICUZ) boundaries were also incorporated into the FLUM.

During the course of the amendment process, approximately 1,500 property owners of affected and adjoining parcels were noticed and multiple NIM's and public hearings were held which provided an opportunity for the Planning Department to address public questions, comments or concerns related to the proposal. The project totaled approximately \$10,000 in expenditures and lasted six (6) months. Due to the large-scale of the amendment, the process required transmittal to the State of Florida for comment and adoption.

To obtain reimbursement for the FLUM Amendment expenditures, the Planning Department, with assistance from the Washington County Grants Department, applied for and was awarded two (2) grants from the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). The initial grant, which was granted in the amount of \$7,500.00 for the time period of December 10, 2015 through March 30, 2015, provided reimbursement for the revised FLUM and copies of meeting notices, agendas and minutes of all eight (8) public hearings. The second grant, also in the amount of \$7,500.00 for the for the time period of March 30, 2015 through May 12, 2015, provided reimbursement for a draft of the Land Development Code (LDC) amendment and copies of meeting notices, agendas, and minutes of all eight (8) public hearings. The total amount of grant funding received was \$15,000.00, a 50% increase from the \$10,000.00 budgeted line item that the Board of County Commissioners granted to the Planning Department for FY2015.

### **FY2016**

During FY2016, Planning Department Staff initiated an additional Comprehensive Plan amendment to establish a Commercial Intent Overlay District. The proposal resulted from input received from multiple community outreach efforts which sought to educate citizens and identify methodology for encouraging commercial development. The Commercial Intent Overlay District was proposed in an effort to address the limited amount of commercially designated property in Washington County, and encourage economic development in targeted areas and while providing property owner flexibility in opting to amend their land use.



Two (2) Commercial Intent Overlay District target areas were established at the Highway 79/Douglas Ferry Intersection and on Highway 77, just south of the Interstate 10 ramp. These areas were identified for potential commercial development due to road widening, trip generation, and volume of residential homes within an identified radius. Property owners within the Overlay District were invited to immediately amend their FLUM designation to General Commercial with no review fee as part of the application process. Property owners which chose to amend their property at a later date, would receive an expedited review from the Washington County Planning Department. After a NIM, the Board of County Commissioners approved transmitting the Overlay District amendment application to the State of Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and other state agencies, in accordance with statutory requirements. The State of Florida supported the amendment and the Board adopted the Commercial Intent Overlay District in April 2016.

During the Overlay District amendment process, staff identified four (4) parcels which did not conform to the FLUM District in which they were designated. Planning Department Staff proposed to amend the FLUM designation of these parcels based on the historical use of the property and the finding that the existing designation would unduly limit future development and/or expansion.

NIMs were advertised and held at the local library to present the County-initiated amendments to citizens. The amendments were transmitted to state agencies and were brought back to the Washington County Board of Commissioners in April for final adoption. The 2020 Future Land Use map was updated accordingly to reflect the new FLUM amendments.

During FY2016, the County was not reimbursed for any funds spend out of the approved budgeted line of the \$6,500.00 due to the unavailability of grant funding. To-date \$6,054.30 has been expended from this budget line.

### **Planning Department Fiscal Year Revenues**

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Planning Department sources of revenue include application and filing fees for land use letters, flood zone verification letters, alcoholic beverage certifications, assisted living/nursing home certifications, public records requests and development activities requiring Planning Commission (PC) and/or BCC Approval.



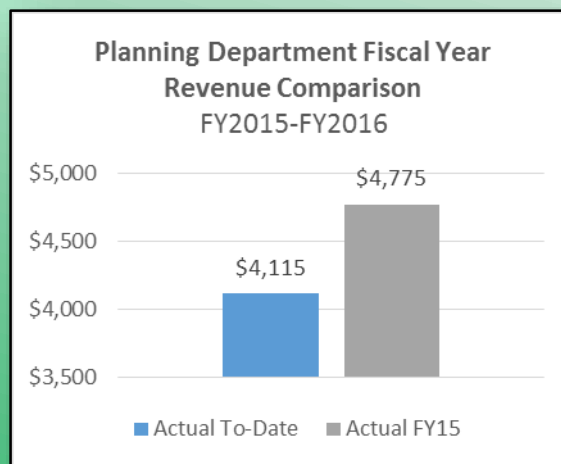


## Planning Department Revenue Sources

Fee Type	To-Date	FY2015	Change (\$)	% Change
Land Use Certificate	\$505	\$0	\$505	0%
Land Use Letter	\$30	\$0	\$30	0%
Flood Zone Letter	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Alcoholic Beverage Certification	\$0	\$50	(\$50)	-100%
Assisted Living/Nursing Home Certification	\$25	\$75	(\$50)	-67%
Development Review	\$1,055	500	\$555	111%
Subdivision Review	\$0	500	(\$500)	-100%
Special Exception	\$1,500	1000	\$500	50%
FLUM Amendment	\$500	2500	(\$2,000)	-80%
Variance	\$300	150	\$150	100%
Plat Vacation/ROW Abandonment	\$200	0	\$200	0%
DRI Review	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,115</b>	<b>\$4,775</b>	<b>(\$660)</b>	<b>-14%</b>

To-Date approximately \$4,115 was assessed for the processing of planning-related application and filing fees, compared to \$4,775 in FY2015. Effective May 1, 2016, applications for land use certificates were assessed a twenty-dollar (\$20) application fee, in accordance with a fee schedule amendment adopted by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners on April 21, 2016. Prior to May 1, 2016, however, no fees were assessed for land use certificates. The increase in land use certificate revenues are likely the result in revenue increases during FY2016, as well as during future fiscal years.

*An amended fee schedule was approved during May 2016.*



### Interdepartmental Revenues

The following interdepartmental fees were processed by the Planning Department and credited to the receiving Department, as applicable

Fee Type/Receiving Department	To-Date	FY2015	Change (\$)	% Change
Building Permits (Building)	\$235	\$1,804	(\$1,569)	-87%
Public Records (General)	103.19	163.29	(\$60)	-37%
Road Naming Application (Public Works)	350	800	(\$450)	-56%
E911 Address (E911)	3125	1050	\$2,075	198%
Driveway Permit (Public Works)	2225	3105	(\$880)	-28%
Elevation Certificates (Building)	52	95	(\$43)	-45%
Road Grading Fees (Public Works)	0	50	(\$50)	-100%
Surplus Property (General)	0	4020	(\$4,020)	-100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,090</b>	<b>\$11,087</b>	<b>(\$4,997)</b>	<b>-45%</b>

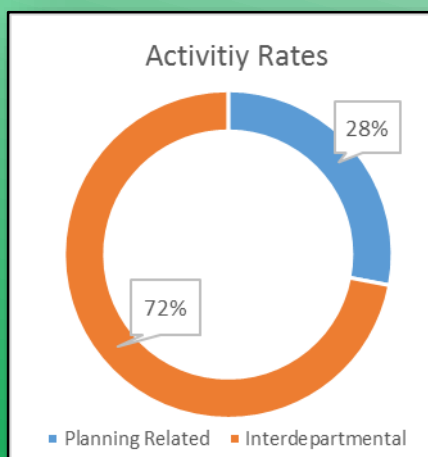
To-Date, approximately, 72% of activities conducted by the Planning Department were interdepartmental in nature.

Although, the majority of interdepartmental services provided by the Planning Department consist of fee processing rather than technical review and are less time-consuming in nature than many of the planning-related services which are provided, these services provide many benefits to Washington County citizens by streamlining the development process.

#### Next Steps – Outlook for Fiscal Year 2017

During the 2017 Fiscal Year, the Planning Department anticipates the initiation of a substantial Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code update to redefine the Goals, Objectives and Strategies identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan and clarify Land Development Code provisions. The Planning Department will also seek funding to amend non-conforming Future Land Use Designations and identify strategic locations which would be suitable for commercial and/or industrial development.

#### Development Order Justification Table



<b>Development Description</b>	<b>Review Type</b>	<b>Planning Commission Review Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Min. Lot Size Requirement – 2987 Bruner Dairy Rd</b>	Variance	Oct 6, 2015	Approved
<b>RV as a Residential Use – Coyote Drive</b>	Variance	Nov 5, 2015	Approved
<b>Single Lot Subdivision &amp; Min. Lot Size Requirement- 3404 Cook Cir</b>	Single Lot Subdivision Exception and Variance	Dec 1, 2015	Approved
<b>Chipleigh High School Locker Room- 1545 Brickyard Rd</b>	Development Review	Dec 1, 2015	Approved
<b>Density Requirement- 3120 Bonnet Pond Rd</b>	Variance	Jan 5, 2016	Approved
<b>Crematory – 1401 Blue Lake Rd</b>	Special Exception	Feb 2, 2016	Approved
<b>Crematory – 1401 Blue Lake Rd</b>	Development Review	March 1, 2016	Approved
<b>Produce Stand – 5157 Hwy 77</b>	Development Review	Feb 2, 2016	Approved
<b>Seminole Plantation</b>	Plat Vacation	April 5, 2016	Approved
<b>Subdivision Density and Side Setback Requirements- 291 Highway 90</b>	Variance	May 3, 2016	Approved
<b>Wireless Communications Tower (C4 Towers) – 2258 Orange Hill Rd</b>	Special Exception/Minor Development Review	August 2, 2016	Approved



**Development Order Justification Table (FY2015)**

<b>Development Description</b>	<b>Review Type</b>	<b>Planning Commission Review Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Porter Pond Subdivision</b>	Subdivision (Minor)	December 2, 2014	Approved
<b>Campbell Park Community Center</b>	Development Review	February 3, 2015	Approved
<b>Piney Grove Single Lot Subdivision</b>	Single Lot Subdivision Exception and Variance	March 10, 2015	Approved
<b>FDOT Conference Room Addition</b>	Development Review	March 2015	Approved
<b>Sand Pit (Mining Operation)</b>	Special Exception (V)/Minor Development Review	April 7, 2015	Approved
<b>Residential Use in Commercial District</b>	Special Exception (I)	May 5, 2015	Approved
<b>LMR to Commercial - 1447 Main St (Hwy 77) – Harrell</b>	FLUM Amendment (Small Scale)	June 2, 2015	Approved

**Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code Amendments (County Initiated)**

FY2015 to FY2016

<b>Amendment Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Planning Commission Review Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	Section J (Public Participation) and Section K (Monitoring and Evaluation)	November 5, 2015	BCC Adoption
<b>Land Development Code</b>	LDC Text Amendments	November 5, 2015	BCC Adoption
<b>Future Land Use Map</b>	FLUM Amendments (Conservation)	April 5, 2016	BCC and State Adoption
<b>Future Land Use Map</b>	Commercial Intent Overlay District (Large Scale)	April 5, 2016	BCC & State Adoption
<b>Future Land Use Map</b>	LDC Amendment (Small Scale)- General Commercial to L/M Residential (1.091 Acres)	May 3, 2016	BCC Adoption





Fee Type	FY2016		FY2015		Change (\$)
Land Use Certificate	\$20		\$0		+\$20
Land Use Letter	\$10		\$10		No Change
Flood Zone Letter	\$15		\$15		No Change
Alcoholic Beverage Certificate	\$50		\$50		No Change
Assisted Living/Nursing Home Certificate	\$25		\$25		No Change
FLUM Amendment (<20 Acres)	\$250		\$500		-\$250
FLUM Amendment (>20 Acres)	\$1,000		\$1,500		-\$500
FLUM Amendment (Industrial, Mining, Landfill)	\$3,000		\$3,000		No Change
Development of Regional Impact	\$5,000		\$5,000		No Change
Plat Vacation	\$200		\$200		No Change
ROW Abandonment	\$200		\$200		No Change
Special Exception	\$750		\$750		No Change
Special Exception (Cemetery Only)	\$250		\$250		No Change
Variance	\$50		\$50		No Change
Single Lot Subdivision	\$50		\$50		No Change
Cemetery Plat Review	Half of Plat Review Fee		Half of Plat Review Fee		No Change
Plat Review	Preliminary	Final	No Change	Final	No Change
2-10 Lots					No Change
Without Improvements	\$250	\$250	\$250	\$250	
With Improvements	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$300	
11-25 Lots					No Change
Without Improvements	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	
With Improvements	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	
26-50 Lots					No Change
Without Improvements	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	
With Improvements	\$550	\$550	\$550	\$550	
51-75 Lots					No Change
Without Improvements	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750	
With Improvements	\$850	\$850	\$850	\$850	
76-100 Lots					No Change
Without Improvements	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	
With Improvements	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	
Over 100 Lots	Add \$25 Per Lot		Add \$25 Per Lot		No Change





# Code Enforcement

Law enforcement officials understand the important relationship between crime, blight and code enforcement. Code enforcement is a valuable place-based approach to addressing neighborhood blight. The one Code Enforcement Officer employed by Washington County has performed over 150 inspections for this calendar year. Incredibly 110 of these cases were complied with and the cases closed. The vehicle miles travelled averaged 925 miles per month. Field inspections remain a top priority while providing exceptional customer service responding to the needs of the County.

The goal to create and sustain vibrant, healthy neighborhoods continues to be a challenge and the abatement activities continue to be on-going to reach this goal. To spend more time in the field and responding to calls results in enhanced customer service for Washington County citizens. The work orders for trash & litter removal were 37 cases this year and many were closed out within 48 hours.

This year the Code Enforcement division added a webpage. This webpage depicts the commitment to stay focused on the big picture. Long-term success depends on effective enforcement of blight within the County and through the webpage, educating the public will be an ongoing task.

Not only responsible for field inspections, the Code Enforcement office has spent over 40 hours a month researching liens. Using several data bases, the office responds via fax and phone calls as well.

The Code Enforcement Officer maintains a network of contacts such as; The Health Department, The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Washington County Sheriff's Office, Waste Management, Gulf Coast Electric and various interoffice departments within. This networking provides assistance when owners fail to meet their obligations.

With the addition of the Special Magistrate Washington County will continue to enforce the ordinances set forth by the BOCC. The County has the task of encouraging negligent owners to carry out their responsibilities to keep their properties in a trash free condition.

Training attended by the Code Enforcement Officer this year was: Interviewing Skills for Law Enforcement/Active Shooter Training/Ethics in the Sunshine State/Dealing with Sovereign Citizens.

Anticipated Training for 2017 includes: Human Diversity/Fourth Amendment Guidelines/Advanced Interviewing Skills for Law Enforcement.



# Emergency Management

The Emergency Management Staff operated on a budget of \$211,017; a State Grant (EMPA) of \$105,806, a Federal Grant (EMPG) of \$43,536, and a local match of \$61,675. All funds were expended and the following activities occurred.

The EMPA Scope of Work (SOW) deliverables were completed. SOW deliverables included:

- Attendance of quarterly regional meetings, the Current Issues in Emergency Management Conference, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Annual Meeting, and Local Mitigation Workshops.
- Held one EOC Concept of Operations Meeting and Recovery Strategy Meeting.
- Participated in the Statewide Exercise.
- Submitted an After Action Report (AAR) and Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for all exercises not conducted by the State.
- Verified no GIS changes to critical facilities.
- Maintain Logistics Plan.
- Shelter Retrofit Projects report.

The EMPG Scope of Work (SOW) deliverables were completed. SOW deliverables included:

- Attended the Regional Training and Exercise Planning (TEP) Workshop.
- Participated in three (3) exercises this year.

The staff attended three (3) conferences; the Current Issues in Emergency Management Conference, the Florida Emergency Preparedness Association Conference, and the Governor's Hurricane Conference.

Emergency Management participated in the Statewide Hurricane Exercise conducted by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) and a Functional Needs Exercise and a Zika Exercise both conducted by the Local Department of Health.

Staff members logged 52 hours of training including:

- Emergency Management Director and Key Staff Training (16Hrs)
- Rapid Needs Assessment (8Hrs)
- Recovery from Disaster (16Hrs)
- Individual Assistance and Public Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment (6Hrs)
- How to Deal with the Media When You're Not a Public Information Officer (3Hrs)
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact Mission Ready Package (3Hrs)

Training was conducted on WebEOC, a web-based information management system that provides a single access point for the collection and dissemination of emergency or event related information. Homeland Security Funds are being used to establish the system in Washington County which will promote situational awareness for crisis management and public safety officials.

An Active Shooter Workshop was organized by our office for elected officials and their staffs.

Three (3) plan updates were completed including the Radiological Emergency Plan for Nuclear Power, the Local Mitigation Strategy, and the Debris Plan.

Washington County was re-certified by the National Weather Service as a Storm Ready County after visits to the County Warning Point and the Emergency Operations Center to verify qualifying guidelines continue to be met.

Staff members responded to an F1 Tornado on Syfrett Road, and Sink Hole on Fortune Lane, a reported equipment oil leak on Hwy 79 south of Vernon, the August rain event, and went to a Level 2 Activation for severe thunderstorms in February.

With support from the Clerk's Office, the Property Appraiser's Office, and the 9-1-1 Office, the staff was able to properly identify and verify that properties acquired by Washington County through FEMA funding are being maintained by deed restrictions.

Seven (7) Emergency Plans for Assisted Living Facilities were reviewed as well as the Emergency Plan for the Washington County Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

The Emergency Management office attended committee meetings as required including:

- Development Review Committee meetings
- Community Traffic Safety Team meetings (Serve as Vice-Chair, Secretary)
- Communications Committee meetings (Serve as Secretary)
- Washington County Fire Fighters Association meetings (Serve as Secretary)
- Long Term Recovery Organization meetings (Serve as Secretary)
- Local Mitigation Strategy meetings (Serve as Vice-Chair, Secretary)



# Fire Services



## MISSION STATEMENT

The Washington County Fire Services is committed to serving Washington County and surrounding area counties with the highest level of life and property protection. We will achieve this by providing excellent and compassionate service in an atmosphere that encourages innovation, professional development and diversity. The mission of the Fire Services is to protect the lives and property of the citizens of Washington County from fires, natural disasters, and hazardous materials incidents; to save lives by providing emergency first responses; to prevent fires through prevention and education programs; and to provide a work environment that values cultural diversity and is free of harassment and discrimination. We provide quality service, professional fire protection and life safety to meet the needs of our communities. Our values are: Diversity, Strength through diversity; Respect, Trust, support and honor both internal and external; Teamwork, Our team members are our most valuable assets; Service, We strive for excellence.



The Washington Fire Service is made up of a group of dedicated personnel that represent the diversity of the community. These persons work every day of the year to improve the quality of service provided to the communities.

## Departments

- |                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Chipley Fire                      | Chief Floyd Aycock  |
| 2. Country Oaks Fire                 | Chief John Thompson |
| 3. Ebro Fire                         | Chief Carl Seley    |
| 4. Five Points Fire                  | Chief Myron Pierce  |
| 5. Greenhead Fire                    | Chief Jim Palmer    |
| 6. Hinson Cross Roads Fire           | Chief Lee Duke      |
| 7. Orange Hill Fire                  | Chief Jeromy Hayes  |
| 8. Vernon Fire                       | Chief John White    |
| 9. Washington Co Fire (Caryville)    | Chief Greg Gordon   |
| 10. Washington Co Fire (Sunny Hills) | Chief Al Gothard    |
| 11. Wausau Fire                      | Chief Sam Rudd      |



All Washington County fire departments normally maintain a 20 to 22 personnel roster, those personnel are trained in the State of Florida Firefighter 1 training standard. This will require each member to obtain a 206 hour certificate from the Standards and Training Bureau on fire tactics. The course ranges from using (PPE) Personal Protective Equipment; hoses and ladders. All students have to complete a set of drills and a live burn building to receive their certificate.

Every year the State of Florida Fire College puts on a Volunteer weekend; starting Sept 14-18 the state has been offering this weekend to personnel across Florida for free training and give personnel a set of (PPE) from head to toe for completing their training. Each member after completing training receives a certificate from the Bureau of Standards and Training. Weekends and other training opportunities have saved thousands of dollars in the county educating the first responders. Washington County fire departments has in the past sent several members to this volunteer weekend each year for advance training or continuing education for those members.

Fire services demands continuing training for each member on an annual basis, from medical first response to structure fires; there is no routine call for the first responders. Washington County Board of County Commissioners stands behind all the first responders in this County and their training to better serve the citizens of Washington County.

### **Emergency Calls Answered**

Washington County Fire Services answer any type of calls of citizens in need, the scope of their duties range from structure fire to woodland fires. Personnel are trained to handle simple public assistance calls to extricating patients from vehicle crashes. Personnel are also trained in First Responder; this will allow personnel to respond to assist EMS units on medical calls.

Fire services personnel will be activated to be prepared for a possible severe storms entering the County area, personnel will assist citizen with evacuations' or assist power companies with power lines down. Personnel also assist other local agencies with removal of trees' or debris obstructing roadways so citizens and other emergency crews have passable roadways.

Fire services personnel are required to attend a 40 hour Forestry class, this trains personnel on how to attack and contain a woodland fire. By taking this class by forestry instructors will also certify personnel to volunteer their services to assist large wildland fires in other states under the direction of Division of Forestry.

Another mandatory training that is required for each member is Traffic Incident Management class (T.I.M.). This class is offered thru Florida Department of Transportation and teaches personnel on the safety of working crashes on the Florida highways. This training demonstrates the placement of emergency vehicles, to traffic cone setup and personnel directing traffic around a traffic crash scene.



## **Special Events**

Washington County fire departments are involved in civic activities in their communities; special events. Local departments also host fall events such as holiday parades, school homecoming parades. Departments also participate in the Relay for Life during the month of October.

The Chipley Fire Department is one of the hosts for the Annual Watermelon Festival.

Wausau Fire hosts the Possum Day Festival; with a 5k run, different type of vendors with arts and crafts, gospel singing groups and a possum auction.

The departments have their own outreach programs they offer different times of the year. Fire Prevention programs for the local schools is the leading community service that provides leadership and fire education.

## **S.A.F.E.R. Grant**

### **Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response**

In November 2015, Washington County Board of County Commissioners was granted a \$1.16 million federal grant from FEMA. The grant is designed to staff qualified stations with personnel on a daily basis for eight hour shifts. The personnel has to be a level 2 or level 1 Florida Firefighter. Depending on the level, the firefighter will be paid a stipend based on his or her certification. While staffing these stations, the personnel are required to perform daily station duties and equipment checks.

### **The goal of SAFER is to:**

- Assist local fire departments improve and restore staffing and deployment capabilities so they may more effectively and safely respond to emergencies.
- Improve ability of the fire departments to assemble a sufficient number of firefighters at a structure fire in compliance with NFPA 1710 and 1720.
- Assist fire departments ensure that all first-arriving apparatus are staffed with a minimum of two qualified personnel who are capable of initiating the suppression response.
- Improve firefighter safety by meeting minimum staffing guidelines.

With the qualified stations being staffed, response times to calls in those areas have decreased by approximately 75 percent. When a call comes in, received by Washington County Sheriff's Office dispatch, a page will be sent to the closest volunteer station to the call. While having the Vernon station and Sunny Hills station staffed, those two stations will have a faster response time. Volunteers working during day time hours have to travel to the station and then travel to the call with a fire unit. Average volunteer response time on any particular day could be from 7 to 9 minutes to station before driving to the call.





## Grants /Special Projects

The Grants/Special Projects Department of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners is responsible for identifying, applying, and managing all Federal and State grant programs. In addition, the department ensures grant reimbursements and mandatory progress reports are completed within each grant's unique timeframe. The department is also responsible for ensuring that all grant activities progress in compliance and with funding requirements in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local statutes, as well as County policies and procedures.

Currently, the Grants Department manages over \$7,000,000.00 worth of grants, and is monitoring an additional \$7,000,000.00 in pending grants. This report contains grant activities in alphabetical order from October 2015 through present time in Washington County.

These grants include:

- Consolidated Small County Solid Waste Management Grant (Recycling Grant)
- County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP)
- Firefighter Support Foundation (FSF)
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Health Care Responsibility Act (HCRA)
- Local Agency Program (LAP)
- Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWMD) Grant
- Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER)
- Small County Outreach Program (SCOP)
- Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP)
- State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Volunteer Fire Assistance Program (VFA)

The Grants/Special Projects Department of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners strives to exceed the expectations of the County Administrator, County Commissioners, and the stakeholders of Washington County as they relate to the duties of the department. With the highest standards of moral and ethical values and principles, the department pledges to help Washington County grow and prosper.

### **Consolidated Small County Solid Waste Management Grant**

Also known as the county's Recycling Grant, this annual grant is issued through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and subsidizes the operation of Washington County's Recycling Center with \$90,909.00 annually. The grant has typically funded three employee salaries with fringe benefits calculated at 12.25 percent, utilities for the center, waste tire disposal, and scale inspections.

At the end of 2015, the County was unable to collect the total grant award due to an insufficient work plan. Funding is only given to items or activities clearly outlined in the work plan submitted by the county. The Grants Department reevaluated the work plan and submitted for 2016 a work plan that utilized the total grant award.

After calculating all of the anticipated expenses in the work plan based on the previous year's actuals, the department discovered a total of \$4,307.79 not planned for expenditure. The department met with the Recycling Center manager to discuss possible ways to spend the money. The manager voiced a need for new recycling bins to replace the county's existing ones that were rusting beyond repair. Research for new recycling bins revealed quotes ranging from \$10,000 - \$15,000 each. Further research for used or refurbished bins led the Grants Department to recycling officials with the City of Tallahassee. Following negotiations, the County agreed to purchase 10 used bins in excellent condition for a total of \$3,500. The Panhandle Technical College, through its truck driving school, transported the bins from Tallahassee to Washington County at no cost to the County. The remaining \$807.79 was budgeted for paint, decals, etc. needed to make the bins more aesthetically pleasing and Washington County relative.

On July 13, 2016 the County requested a reimbursement of \$53,015.75 based upon activities completed in the work plan. The remaining \$37,893.25 will be requested at the end of the grant year in October.

The Grants Department and the recycling center manager are currently working on the FY16-17 recycling grant work plan.

### **County Incentive Grant Program**

The County Incentive Grant Program (CIGP) is funded through the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and was created for the purpose of providing grants to counties to improve a transportation facility (including transit) that is located on the State Highway System (SHS) or which relieves traffic congestion on the SHS per Florida Statutes.



Washington County currently has no open project through CIGP, however an application for funding was submitted on April 22, 2016. The County anticipates a decision for funding in November. This is a 50/50 matching grant.

The proposed project totals \$97,076.00 and includes resurfacing Kirkland Road for a total length of 4,101 feet with the installation of a double 48" RCP cross drain and FDOT index 250 headwalls. Additional improvements include thermoplastic striping, building out the shoulders, sodding and signage.

Kirkland Road has also been submitted as a potential SCRAP project in hopes that with both program's funding, the project can be completed at no cost to the County.

### **Firefighter Support Foundation**

The Firefighter Support Foundation (FSF) provides grants annually to U.S. fire department to purchase needed equipment.

Upon the request of the Vernon Fire Department, the Grants Department submitted an application on July 7, 2016 requesting \$4,500.00 to purchase a Forestry Skid Unit. Multiple grants are awarded annually with no specific time frame.

Washington County's submittal will be kept on file for one year.

### **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

On October 1, 2015, Washington County applied for Agriculture Education and Promotion Facility Request for Funding through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), asking for \$750,000 to aide in the construction of a new Agricultural Center.

On May 4, 2016, the County Administrator was notified by the FDACS office that Washington County would be awarded \$300,000. After much discussion, the Board of County Commissioners agreed to ask the state to hold the money, and the County would reapply during subsequent grant cycles until enough funds were accumulated to build a new Agriculture Center.

Then Grants Department is submitting another application asking for an additional \$750,000 on October 1, 2016.





On August 4, 2015, Washington County was awarded an HMGP grant totaling \$9,000.00 for design, engineering, permitting, study and survey for improvements to the intersection of Gainer Road and Joe Neel Road.

The original contract expiration date was Aug. 4, 2016. However, the county was granted a six-month extension on July 26, 2016, making the new contract expiration date February 4, 2017. The purpose for the extension is to allow time to acquire necessary right-of-way.

A community meeting, planned by the Grants Department, was held at the County Government Offices on August 4, 2016. ROW acquisition from 14 property owners is continuing.

### **Health Care Responsibility Act**

Health Care Responsibility Act (HCRA) was enacted in 1977 in order to assure that adequate and affordable health care is available to all Floridians. All Florida counties are required to participate.

Washington County is required to budget \$100,000 each year to reimburse participating hospitals for qualified indigent emergency services or pre-approved non-emergency care. The Grants Department receives HCRA applications from participating hospitals and has 30 days to determine eligibility of each applicant by verifying income, assets, and proof of residency. Once eligibility is determined, the applicant and hospital are notified by the Grants Department in writing. If the applicant is determined to be eligible, the hospital has six months to send to the county a completed UB-04 form (invoice). Using code guides of Medicare reimbursement rates and interactive calculators provided by the state, the Grants Department calculates the total amount due to the hospital and requests a check from Board Finance.

Since October, 2015 to present, Washington County has paid participating hospitals a total of \$38,789.38 for indigent care. Also during this time, a total of four applications have been denied by the Grants Department due to applicants not providing necessary information to determine eligibility.

### **Local Agency Program**

The Local Agency Program (LAP) provides towns, cities and counties funds to develop, design, and construct transportation facilities with federal funds. FDOT is the steward of the federal funds and is responsible for oversight of funded projects on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA.)



that increased the funding by \$89,996.00. The contract expired on June 30, 2016. The total cost of the project was \$243,389.60. Washington County is awaiting the final reimbursement for the project, which is \$22,639.56.

### **Northwest Florida Water Management District Agreement**

Washington County and Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) have a local government agreement in place where NFWFMD agrees to provide \$200,000 for streambank restoration, protection, repair and improvements to the Hightower Landing, Spurling Landing and Live Oak Landing recreation areas in the Holmes Creek Water Management Area.

Records indicate that \$60,635.00 has been reimbursed since the agreement was executed in 2012. Several agreement extensions have been approved following the original 24-month agreement. The latest agreement extension expires in September, 2017.

Most recently, a bid opening was held on Aug. 22, 2016 for boardwalk improvements at Live Oak Landing and Hightower Landing.

### **Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant**

On August 28, 2015, the Grants Department received official notification from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that Washington County was a FY 2014 recipient of a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant issued through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The total amount of the award is \$1,161,888.00 with a grant period of Nov. 21, 2015 through Nov. 20, 2019.

To date, the following reimbursements have been issued:

Stipends for Stand-by Volunteers	= \$58,950.00	
PPE for new recruits	= \$41,386.00	
Marketing	= \$11,760.00	
Training for Volunteers	= \$8,924.00	<i>*See next page</i>
Fire Services Salary	= \$23,416.00	<i>for complete payment chart</i>
Admin Scheduling Program	= \$1,995.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>= \$146,431.00</b>	





### **Small County Outreach Program**

The purpose of the Small County Outreach Program (SCOP), administered through FDOT, is to assist small county governments in repairing or rehabilitating county bridges, paving unpaved roads, addressing road-related drainage improvements, resurfacing or reconstructing county roads, or constructing capacity or safety improvements to county roads.

In 2015, Washington County was the recipient of two SCOP awards to pave Roche Road and Lucas Lake Road. The total cost to pave both roads was \$2,882,335.74.

The Grants Department coordinated community meetings and worked to secure right-of-way from 25 property owners along the approximate 2.3-mile Roche Road project. Community meetings were also coordinated for Lucas Lake Road. This approximate 3-mile project required right-of-way from 11 property owners.

In April 2015, Buckhorn Boulevard and Hard Labor Road were submitted as potential SCOP projects. FDOT anticipates announcing funded projects in November, 2016.

### **Small County Road Assistance Program**

The purpose of the Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), administered through FDOT, is to assist small county governments in resurfacing and reconstructing county roads.

Over the past year, Washington County completed three SCRAP projects, which total \$2,365,345.58.

Griffin Road was a .7-mile resurfacing project totaling \$99,121.00;

Shakey Joe Road, from end of pavement to SR 284, totaled \$100,841.82; and

Wilderness Road, a 6.8-mile project, totaled \$2,165,382.76.

In April, 2016, Washington County submitted Kirkland Road and Bonnett Pond Road for potential SCOP projects. FDOT anticipates announcing funded projects in November, 2016

### **State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program**

Florida Housing administers the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program, which provides funds to local governments as an incentive to create partnerships that produce and preserve affordable homeownership. The program was designed to serve very low, low and moderate income families.

SHIP funds are distributed on an entitlement basis to all 67 counties in Florida. The minimum allocation is \$350,000, which is what Washington County receives. The Grants Department



directs potential participants to the West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC), which administers Washington County's program at no cost to the County. WFRPC is paid through administrative funds as part of the grant.

The Grants Department serves as liaison between the County and WFRPC, as well as the County and the Commissioner-appointed Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC). The AHAC, made up of local professionals and residents who have a vested interest and knowledge of Washington County's housing situation, meets to discuss Washington County's Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) and makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

Over the past year, the Washington County's SHIP program has paid \$123,280.00 for emergency housing rehabilitation on seven homes and assisted eight residents with purchase assistance totaling \$80,000. In addition, three homes are in the process of being rehabilitated at a cost of \$78,421.65, while four residents are in the process of receiving purchase assistance, totaling \$40,000.

### **Transportation Alternatives Program**

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is administered through the FDOT and focus on expanding alternative modes of transportation.

The Grants Department was notified by the FDOT in October, 2015 that Washington County's applications for sidewalks along South Blvd. (from SR 77 to Hoyt Street) and along Hoyt Street had been approved for funding. Design, estimated at \$100,000, is currently underway by FDOT subcontractors.

In June, 2016, applications were submitted for the funding of sidewalks to be continued along Pine Avenue and Usery Road following discussion at a Community Traffic Safety Team meeting. A decision on this project is expected in October of this year.

### **Volunteer Fire Assistance Program**

On June 23, 2016, the Grants Department applied for a Volunteer Fire Assistance Program (VFA) 50/50 matching grant on behalf of the Washington County Volunteer Fire Departments of Caryville and Sunny Hills. This grant is administered through the Florida Forest Service.

Notification of award was received on July 14, 2016 to purchase six Mototurbo Digital Mobile Radios with antenna and installation kits. The total value of the radios is \$3,084.00.

A reimbursement request of \$1,542.00 was requested on August 24, 2016.







# Human Resources

The Board of County Commissioners strives to create a workplace that is diverse and provides opportunities for advancement for the most qualified employees. Being a rural county limits the pool of potential employees, due to private businesses and larger cities in neighboring counties offering higher salaries and competitive benefits. Competing against larger counties is challenging, but the new hires for FY 2015-2016 have been high quality with post high school education and certifications that add expertise to the county workforce.

## Current Workforce Composition

### Age and Years of Service

Age	<5 yrs	5-9.9 yrs	10-14.9 yrs	15-19.9 yrs	20-24.9 yrs	25-29.9 yrs	30-34.9 yrs	35+	Total	Percentage of Total Labor Force
<20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20-24	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.14%
25-29	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.14%
30-34	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7.94%
35-39	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	4.55%
40-44	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5.68%
45-49	8	2	3	3	2	0	0	0	18	20.45%
50-54	6	3	2	4	3	2	0	0	20	22.73%
55-59	4	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	10	11.36%
60-64	5	2	4	1	0	0	0	0	12	13.64%
65-69	6	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	9	10.23%
>70	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>88</b>	
<b>Percentage of Labor Force</b>	42.05%	18.18%	17.05%	11.35%	6.82%	3.41%	0.00%	1.14%		100.00%

### Ethnic Breakdown

Ethnic Category	Number	Percentage
White Male	48	54.6%
White Female	28	31.8%
Black/African American Male	6	6.8%
Black/African American Female	2	2.3%
American Indian Male	3	3.4%
American Indian Female	1	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Separations

### FY Comparison of Separations

TYPE OF SEPARATION	WM		WF		BM		BF		IM		IF	
FY	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16
DROP RETIREMENT	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PERM EMP VOL RESIGN	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
PROB EMP VOL RESIGN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMP EMP VOL RESIGN	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PERM EMP DISMISSAL	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PROB EMP DISMISSAL	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMP EMP DISMISSAL	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	3	8	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

## Recruitment & Selection

Last FY the County advertised a total of 18 positions; included in those advertisements were 2 Senior Management positions and 1 Temporary position. The County had 15 New Hires and 3 promotions. Two positions were not filled due to applicants not having the required qualifications for the positions advertised.

The County also advertised Firefighter positions under Safer Grant. We interviewed 26 applicants. We hired 4 Firefighter I's and 21 Firefighter II's. This was a huge win for the County as these positions are paid for with grant monies, as the County budgets for these positions after the grant monies have been exhausted.

Whenever an applicant is selected for employment, the County requires they are physically fit to perform the required job duties. This FY the County paid for 28 pre-employment physicals.

### FY COMPARISON OF NEW HIRES

	WM		WF		BM		BF		IM		IF	
FY	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16	14/15	15/16
	7	9	3	5	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

The County has taken a serious approach to ensure we employ drug free personnel. Not only is this the right thing to do for the County, it reduces the liability and risk the County assumes. To meet the pre-employment requirement 45 employees were screened, this included Firefighter positions. Over the course of the FY the County conducted 19 Random Drug Tests and 3 Random Breath Alcohol Tests.



The County has an established policy that, if you are involved in an accident in a County owned vehicle you will automatically get tested for drugs or alcohol. The County conducted 7 post accident tests.

## **Benefits**

Workers Compensation is a vital part of ensuring the County takes care of each employee. The processes that are in place to reduce risk and mitigate mishaps have resulted in impressive numbers for our workers compensation program. These types of programs reduce our insurance rates and saves money for each employee and tax payer.

- 1 Incident Only
- 1 Medical Only - Claim Total - \$1,219.96
- 1 Loss Time – Claim Total 14,735.88

We had 7 employees on Family and Medical Leave. This leave enables the employee to take the necessary time to recover from issues that prevent them from working in a healthy environment.

Benefits for the 2015/2016 plan year for health insurance were negotiated with no increase in premium. Vision and Dental insurance had a minimal increase. The County has a 90 percent participation rate.

Human Resources received a steady stream of phone calls, emails and walk-ins from employees requesting assistance with benefit related issues. In order to maintain compliance with the Affordable Healthcare Act, the Human Resources Office has submitted numerous detailed employee census reports.

## **Risk Management**

As the County focuses on the safety and health for employees, citizens are also ensured the County conducts business in a professional and safe manner, we had 7 citizen incident claims. All were denied due to negligence on part of the citizen.

The County takes stewardship very seriously, not only of County property, but citizen's property as well. This FY the County had 4 Property Damage Claims resulting in settlements totaling \$103,257.25.





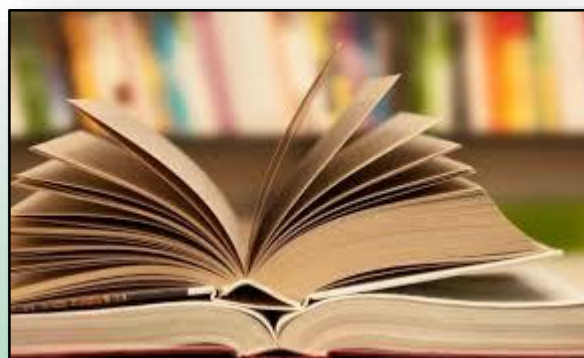
# Library Services



The Washington County Public Library (Library) strives to **Educate, Enlighten, and Empower** all individuals who seek its services. The mission statement is critical in ways the Library has enriched the lives of those who have walked through its doors during Fiscal Year 2016. This report gives a basic overview of how staff has demonstrated its vision and commitment to public service.

Numbers are a critical component of any organizational strategy. For a public library, statistics allow for the creation of quality information, which results in an investment that is visible to taxpayers. There are six core statistics used within the library: registered library card patrons; overall library visitors; total circulation of inventory; programs and attendees, and; technology assistance. From October 1, 2015, to September 1, 2016, the Washington County Public Library generated the following numbers:

- Library card patrons - 11,489
- Library visitors – 51,695
- Total Circulation – 51,445
- Programs -157
  - Attendees – 2,137
- Technology Assistance Session- 356
  - Hours - 101
- Computer Sessions - 9,148



## **Educate:**

For many, education is the road to personal development and a more productive life. The Library has adopted imagination as an essential component in giving patrons what they require in their pursuits of lifelong learning. In addition to reading materials, it has become necessary to address such topics as cultural heritage, oral tradition, and native language in satisfying the needs of the Library's constituency. Currently, it is a vital managerial philosophy to not only consider the reading tastes of the public but also to focus on the technological requirements of today's Library visitors.

The Library now offers free Basic Computer Skills as one of its core educational classes. The curriculum presents rudimentary instruction in computer usage and techniques for accessing the Internet. Presentation highlights methodologies that will transform the nervous neophyte into the excited expert. Awareness will allow users to visit social-assistance sites, informational locations, and self-help settings that enrich their lives and allow them to discover new educational horizons.

The need to bridge the “Digital Divide” brought about a Library initiative called Device Advice. Digital literacy is no longer a choice: it is crucial in doing everything from job securement to gaining health coverage. Library staff offer free guidance to visitors on how to access new technologies and ways to make the ‘Digital Highway’ more accessible and navigable. It is staff’s responsibility to ensure that all residents, whether it’s a grandma or a grandchild, have opportunities to succeed in the electronic universe.

The shaping and designing of children’s learning constitutes an important role for Library staff. By capturing children’s interest and imagination early, dividends are paid later when they finally enter the classroom. Story Time at the Library is a school readiness program that sets the stage for children to learn basic vocabulary, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and print recognition. When reading, playing, and singing are parts of a child’s literacy toolbox, it can increase brain development and school-readiness skills. The Library’s youth manager plans each weekly “Letter Learners” session with curiosity, enthusiasm, and knowledge: these fundamentals are built into all planned activities.

During the summer months, many disadvantaged children experience what is labelled ‘Summer Slide.’ It accounts for about two-thirds of the ninth-grade attainment gap in disadvantaged children. The result: studies indicate they will diminish academically and as well as emotionally when indigent schoolchildren are removed from classrooms during summer recess. The learning process should not fall by the wayside because school is out for the summer. The Library has developed programs that target low-income students and help to close the achievement breach, which has been shown to be more pronounced in the underprivileged demographic group.

Research has shown the effects of summer learning programs endure for at least two years after student participation. The Library’s Reading Program has helped to address the ‘Summer Slide’ in the community’s low income families. Also, staff visits local community centers with “on-the-road” kids’ reading presentations to get all economic levels involved. Area educators have told staff that the Library’s summer programs have improved classroom achievement, boosted reading skills, advanced literacy performance, and increased enthusiasm in reluctant readers.

### **Enlighten:**

FY 2016 has shown with certainty it is imperative that the Library decide its community role. Is its responsibility to be a provider or an educator? Providers want individuals to read: educators want them to read well. It turns out the Library exists to do both, with the objective being to improve the community and to enlighten its residents. With this purpose in mind, the Library offers music and cultural programs that broaden perspectives and highlight entertainment. Community partnerships have been established that extend the Library’s footprint well beyond its brick and mortar walls. For instance, Library staff will order reading materials that supplement teacher syllabi that offer students additional resource outlets during the regular school year.





Visible profiles are important to any educational effort. They signify are reminders of what the Library is doing and what it has achieved. Gallagher and Hayashi write that “[libraries] must be a visible member of the whole learning community” (2001). Based on their research, staff still maintains an informative website that contains links to social services (Access Florida), self-help programs (Universal Class), and child reading resources (Tumblebook). Also available on it are entry points to access current e-book and audio selections that can be downloaded for home use. There is a monthly digital newsletter that outlines upcoming public programs and services, too.

Patron interest and need must be guiding ideals that drive Library enlightenment undertakings. The Florida Electronic Library, accessible to visitors, is a portal that connects students, research scholars, and consumers to information. It is the gateway to electronic magazines, books, newspapers, and a service called *Ask a Librarian*. Personnel involved with this provision answer more than 83,000 queries a year. This free Library storehouse is a significant virtual tool for patrons to search numerous informational sources. Enlightenment has become a core mission value at the Library.

### **Empower:**

The Library assures individuals the right to pursue and select any direction related to thought, study, or accomplishment they choose. One goal of Library staff is to empower patrons to be the facilitator of their own learning. Encouragement is given to them to take charge of their lives and communities, and to be involved in their governments and schools. Today, the Library maintains tools for them to become informed and to carry them into tomorrow. Technology, such as computers, databases, and e-books are available to assist in their search for answers. DVDs (movies) provide entertainment, while audiobooks and reading are accessible for both enjoyment and knowledge. Computers can provide a broad-brush of information quickly, while books for some may be easier on the eyes. Whatever mediums patrons prefer, it is staff’s responsibility to keep in mind that the Library is not just an e-business venture.

During FY 2016, the Library was awarded a grant to assist adults in earning their high school diplomas online. To inspire and coach individuals to go beyond their expectations is the central element of empowerment. The process allows staff to promote responsibility, motivation, and authority in adults to help them realize personal life goals. The 18-month course strengthens self-esteem in participants and will illustrate that reaching a bit beyond their grasp is achievable and well-worth the investment.

To empower someone means to make that person stronger and more confident. At the Library, a main goal is to harness information and weave it into a form that is palatable for anyone’s use. To create a cultural landscape that ‘informs quickly and easily,’ the Library should house resources whose functions remain cosmopolitan and progressive. Basically, this means: software must be current; staff must stay informed, and; inventories must be maintained in order to provide enlightenment appropriately. Library personnel took pride in empowering visitors through use of each of these instruments. FY 2016 was a very successful period for both staff and patrons alike.





## Public Works

The Washington County Public Works Departments is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the County roads, bridges, drainage ditches and culverts as well as the associated easement and Rights of Way. The Public Works Department also operates the County's fleet maintenance and repair shop. The department has 38 full time permanent employees, which is down from 49 full time employees prior to the 2008 economic recession. Employees work four 10 hour days with an annual operating budget of approximately \$3,000,000. Two of the full time employees work in the Public Works office answering phones, initiating work orders in our work order system, preparing purchase orders and reconciling and preparing for payment invoices as they come in. The monthly average is 320 phone calls answered resulting in 85 work orders initiated while over 640 purchase orders were issued and reconciled this year.

Washington County has over 800 miles of roads serving an area of 616 square miles while only having a population of approximately 25,000. Of the 800 plus miles of roads more than 500 miles are dirt roads and the remaining 340 miles are paved. The dirt roads are maintained on a 10 to 14 day cycle by 10 motor graders strategically positioned throughout the County. Dirt road maintenance includes grading, clearing minor road side ditches and placing fill in areas where needed. 96,824 cubic yards of 60/40 sand/clay mix fill were placed on problem areas of the County roads this year. Public Works is also responsible for the maintenance 59 bridges, a majority of which are single lane, single or double span wooden bridges.

In addition to the dirt roads, the larger drainage ditches along county roads are maintained by 2 rubber tire excavators and 2 backhoes. The excavators and backhoes are also responsible for culvert replacement and road and driveway cross drains. This year 28 culverts were replaced. During routine ditch maintenance County forces removed 40,964 cubic yards of sediment and eroded dirt from the drainage ditches. The road graders, backhoes and excavators are supported by a fleet of 14 dump trucks.

Vegetative growth along County roads is maintained by the Public Works Department by 2 18' wide grass/brush mowers and 2 boom mowers to keep tree branches etc. clear of the road. While the grass in this area of Florida will go dormant in the winter and the brush mowers will be taken off the road the boom mowers will continue to work through the winter. The Public Works Department also receives a significant amount of mowing and trimming support along the roadways from our Parks and Recreation Department.

Over the years Washington County has placed recycled milled asphalt on approximately 60 miles of dirt roads. While these are not considered paved roads the placing of milled asphalt is an economical way of stabilizing roads and significantly reducing maintenance. This year Public Works placed milled asphalt on an additional 8 miles of dirt roads utilizing County forces.

In July 2013 and April 2014 Washington County was effected by record rain storms causing significant local flooding and extensive damage to the County's dirt roads. All combined these storms resulted in 202 FEMA Project Worksheets. The County currently has 3 temporary full time employees working strictly on FEMA projects often supported by County forces when available. The County is also utilizing private contractors to help complete this work. 30 FEMA Project Worksheets remain to be completed requiring 78,500 cubic yards of limestone or granite rock to be placed. Currently all work is scheduled to be completed by August 2017.

The County fleet maintenance shop is staffed with 3 full time mechanics. They are responsible for the maintenance of the Public Works fleet including 12 motor graders, 2 front end loaders, 3 excavators, 4 backhoes, 2 boom mowers, 2 bull dozers, 14 dump trucks, 14 pickup trucks and several other vehicles and pieces of equipment. The maintenance shop also provides maintenance and repair of approximately 20 vehicles used by other County departments and small engine repairs. The maintenance shop averages 32 scheduled repairs or services, 40 unscheduled repairs or services and 36 road calls per month.

Throughout the year the Public Works assists other County Departments and public agencies in their efforts to serve the community. Public Works assisted the County Parks and Recreation Department in the construction of the parking lot and drainage of the Campbell Park and Recreation Center. Assisted the town of Wausau with the installation of new playground equipment and road stabilization at George M. Rogers Park. The County also participated in 4 projects with the Northwest Florida Water Management District by creating retention ponds and parking lots and assisted in the installation of river stabilization.







# Veterans Services

Washington County currently has a veteran population of 2,600 former service members. The largest portion being those that served during the Vietnam War, as time progresses we are starting to see more Desert Storm and OIF and OEF veterans.

In the past year this office has filed 3,000 plus claims to the Veterans Affairs for disability, education and healthcare. The County's lone Veteran's Service Officer aides an average of 200 veterans in the office per month and fields 300 phone calls regarding veteran's benefits. Last year the office was able to obtain \$945,000.00 for veterans we served, which increased the County's yearly total to \$12,350,000.00.

Currently, Veteran's Services is waiting for the federal court to add bladder cancer to the presumptive diseases for the exposure of Agent Orange for those that served in the Republic of Vietnam during the war. If and when that takes place, the County's Veterans Services Offices will see a large influx of veteran's claims for benefits and this office has taken steps to insure they are prepared to handle those claims.

The Veterans Benefits Administration is currently working a pilot program to speed the processing of claims through the use of technology. The program allows veterans to file claims via the VA website and to upload supporting documents to support the claim, this is a very useful tool for those that do not live in a rural area. It does not, at the current time, help support the veterans that reside in our county for two reasons, the first being the majority of our veterans do not have internet access. And second being most of them do not use computers. Also veterans who were surveyed stated that the site is not very user friendly.

## **Veterans Healthcare**

Veteran's healthcare is challenging because Washington County sits between two different healthcare VISIN's our veterans are able to use both the Panama City Community Outpatient Clinic which falls under Biloxi VA Hospital (VISIN 16) and the Marianna CBOC that falls under Gainesville VA Hospital (VISIN 8). It does create a unique situation as this office has to deal with two different VISIN's with several different guidelines when it pertains to patient care.

Panama CBOC is projected to move into a new building in the late fall. The County is looking forward to improved healthcare for veterans enrolled in that facility and make the process for patient appointments faster.

## **Sims Veterans State Nursing Home**

As a member of the Friends of Sims our group accepts donation and we help to purchase items needed to make the lives of the veterans that reside in the facility more comfortable, on a case by case bases. The County also will help with the cost of some healthcare issues for residents. The group consists of the VSO in the panhandle and is the only group in the State of Florida that does this for a State Veterans Nursing Home.

The facility is at max patient compactly and has a very long waiting list at times; the hope is that future funds will be made available to expand the number of patient beds allowing for more access for our Country's veterans.

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