

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2023 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024



BAY COUNTY *Florida*
BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV





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A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN



tommy hamm
district 1

Bay County offers our residents the very best of Florida: beautiful beaches and sunny skies. But our Southern hospitality, charm, and low taxes also make our county among the very best places in our state to live.

This annual report aims to highlight our accomplishments throughout Fiscal Year 2024, which ran from Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 30, 2024. We intend to provide readers with a snapshot of how each department and division of county government works daily with the common goal of bettering our community.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners will continue to work together to ensure we move our county forward in a thoughtful, expedient manner. We are proud of our staff and their hard work to make our home a wonderful place to live and visit. We expect our team to maintain focus on our customers – the citizens of Bay County – while also being good stewards of your taxpayer dollars. The board maintains a commitment to excellence and efficiency in government while also providing transparency and accountability to the citizens we serve, and we welcome input and feedback about ways we can do and be better for the people of Bay County.

BAY COUNTY STATISTICS Per American Community Survey 5-year estimates

POPULATION: 187,545
AREA (SQUARE MILES): 758
ESTABLISHED: 1913

COUNTY SEAT: PANAMA CITY
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$65,999
MEDIAN AGE: 39



ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners is a five-member governing board elected at-large to represent the citizens of Bay County. The board defines the role and guides the actions of the organization in ensuring the future of Bay County. The commission hires a county manager to implement policies established by the board and to manage the operations of the county. The commission annually adopts the millage rate and approves the budget, which determines the revenue and expenditures necessary to operate all county departments. The powers and duties of the county commission are established by Florida Statutes, Chapter 125. The majority of offices of the Bay County Commission are located at the Bay County Government Center at 840 W. 11th Street in Panama City. The campus also houses the offices of the Bay County Supervisor of Elections, the Tax Collector and the Property Appraiser.

THE 5 COUNTY DISTRICTS



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PRODUCED BY:
Bay County Communications Department

INTRO

county manager



robert "bob" majka



MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER:

In FY2024, Bay County continued to work toward meeting the long-term, enduring goals established and adopted in our strategic plan: Ensuring safety; delivering needed and wanted services; maintaining a family friendly community that adheres to our values; effectively maintaining stewardship of our natural resources; and building and maintaining a healthy business climate.

Bay County employees strive to reach our goals each year, and this publication, along with the 2025 Budget Summary and the Strategic Plan, aim to keep our board and residents informed about where we have been, how we are spending taxpayer dollars, and where we are headed.

Bay County employees serve their friends and neighbors with dignity and integrity daily, and we are grateful for their continued hard work.

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024 INCLUDE:

- > Maintained the county's property tax rate of 5.43 mills, the twelfth-lowest out of Florida's 67 counties.
- > Worked to provide public information that culminated in the reinstatement of the Half-Cent Surtax, which provides roughly \$18 million annually for infrastructure improvements in Bay County.
- > Continued the implementation of Half-Cent Surtax projects, including the resurfacing of roadways, improved intersections and improved public safety with the addition of sidewalks and multi-use paths.
- > Responded to several emergency situations, including the January 2024 tornadoes that devastated parts of Thomas Drive and the Youngstown/Fountain area and Hurricane Helene.
- > Implemented the new Fire and Life Safety Inspection Bureau, created to ensure short-term rental facilities comply with fire safety codes.
- > Hired additional lifeguards and implemented a red flag public information campaign aimed at helping visitors to the area better understand the county's flag system.
- > Completed the construction of the new Juvenile Justice Courthouse on the campus of the Bay County Courthouse.
- > Renegotiated the terms of the Community Redevelopment Area agreement with Panama City Beach that will ultimately save Bay County taxpayers some \$2.8 billion through the end of the agreement in 2049.

**ROBERT "BOB" MAJKA
BAY COUNTY MANAGER**

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don banks

WHO WE ARE

The County Attorney's Office represents the Board of County Commissioners in all legal matters. The three attorneys on staff represent Bay County in lawsuits, administrative hearings, and at public meetings. In addition, legal staff prepares and reviews ordinances, contracts, and other legal instruments. The attorneys also render legal opinions and provide legal support to commissioners, boards, and departments.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Legal staff worked on the following legal issues and projects this past year:

- > In 2024, the County Attorney's Office remains active as the contact for the NWFL Health Network's CORE programs, which distribute the opioid settlement funds to the county. The Attorney's Office is responsible for the annual contract implementation for each program and completing the monthly reporting requirements established by the Department of Children and Families, who oversee the opioid settlement programs. The county is earmarking the Coordinated Opioid Recovery funds to assist the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department with the purchase of 15 ventilators and the construction of the Lifeline Program, which is intended to help addicted inmates with necessary skills to recover from chemical dependency.
- > The County Attorney's Office was involved in the implementation of the revised Front Beach Road CRA agreement between Bay County and the City of Panama City Beach. The county and the city worked together to ensure payment of the CRA tax increment revenue is handled in a cooperative manner for both parties and ensured the CRA can fully fund its projects while also providing financial stability to the taxpayers of Bay County.
- > The County Attorney's Office was able to resolve a litigation case which started as a beach access complaint, and turned into an easement access issue. The county and the complainant agreed on the settlement terms, which gave the county the access needed via an easement to replace pipes on the property and locate them on an adjoining property.
- > The County Attorney's Office continues to manage the County Indigent Program, which assists families with the cremation process and payment for deceased individuals who are deemed indigent. The process also enables family members or friends of the deceased to obtain the deceased's remains at no charge if they qualify for indigency themselves.
- > Since January, the County Attorney's Office processed 2,202 public records requests. The office also continues to staff monthly Planning Commission meetings, Code Enforcement Board hearings, and Animal Control Dangerous Dog Appeal hearings, as well as monitor new legislation that may have an impact on county business.



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WHO WE ARE

The Budget Office creates, modifies, and monitors the annual budget for the Board of County Commissioners. We work closely with the county departments to develop the expenditure budget for the board. The office also develops financial projections for the county's revenues. It serves as a hub for financial data for the various departments under the board and assists the departments with any financial matters.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > The Budget Office adheres to Florida's Truth-in-Millage (TRIM) law, enacted by the Florida Legislature to ensure transparency regarding tax proposals from local taxing authorities. Property owners receive TRIM notices from the Bay County Property Appraiser after the millage rates are determined through voting by each taxing authority. These notices provide a property estimate, list all relevant taxing authorities and present the total estimated property tax. Property taxes are calculated at a rate of \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. For instance, a property valued at \$100,000 would generate \$100 for one mill. In FY2024, the taxable value for the General Fund was \$26.5 billion, resulting in ad valorem tax collections totaling \$139 million.
- > Preparations for the annual budget begin nearly nine months in advance. While FY2025 is just starting, the process took place entirely in 2024. This budget marks the first year that all TRIM requirements were submitted online through the Department of Revenue's OASYS ePortal system. The Budget team successfully completed and submitted certifications without the need to print packets, email large attachments, or overnight documents to the state.
- > The Budget Office oversees all calculations related to payments from the county to the various Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) established throughout the county. A CRA is created in areas identified as blighted within counties and municipalities. Once established, the tax base for the CRA is frozen for a period of 30 to 40 years. During this time, the taxing authority can only collect tax revenue equivalent to the amount received in the base year. Any revenue generated beyond this limit is redirected to the CRA to fund redevelopment projects within its boundaries. There are currently 13 CRAs in Bay County. In 2024, out of the \$143.9 million in ad valorem tax revenue allocated to the General Fund, \$27.3 million was distributed to these CRAs.
- > Disaster response and recovery funding is spearheaded by the Budget Office. Events like Hurricanes Michael and Sally, the 2024 tornadoes, and mutual aid deployments to other affected communities require large amounts of documentation and auditing in order to maximize the county's reimbursements from agencies like Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM). In 2024, Bay County participated in FDEM's inaugural F-ROC program, which involved a comprehensive application process and a review of our existing policies and procedures. Bay County achieved an impressive score of 58 out of 60, one of the highest in the state. This high score, coupled with improved forms from FDEM, enables the county to recover 78 percent of our immediate debris removal and emergency work costs from the state upfront before FEMA begins any reviews.
- > 2024 is the final year to obligate Bay County's remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. This year's projects include park improvements to H.G. Harders Park and Under the Oaks Park, facility repairs, lift station pump replacements, electrical enhancements to the water plant, additional stormwater drainage, equipment for Roads & Bridges, EMS apparatuses, fire trucks, and supporting the finalization of the new Southport Sports Complex. The county has until 2026 to complete any pending projects.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > John Parker from the Budget Office earned his Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) certification in July. To obtain CGFM credentials, individuals must have at least two years of experience in government finance and pass three separate exams. As our principal budget and financial specialist, John has been a tremendous asset to both the residents of Bay County and the county's budget since 2017.

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WHO WE ARE

The Bay County Communications Office is responsible for producing a variety of publications, maintaining media relations and supervising other special projects that help strengthen the communication between the Board of County Commissioners and the community.

The Communications Office also aims to enhance the community's access to Bay County government both directly and via traditional media outlets. This office is responsible for maintaining positive community and media relations through frequent contact and constant availability, preparation and distribution of informational publications, fact sheets, news articles and related materials, and through the use of social media outlets.

Communications also leads in dissemination of information to the public, news media and other governmental entities during disasters.

Governmental transparency and integrity is of the utmost importance, and the Communications Office strives to ensure openness and accountability to the media and public on behalf of the Bay County Board of County Commissioners.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In Fiscal Year 2024, the Bay County Communications Office:

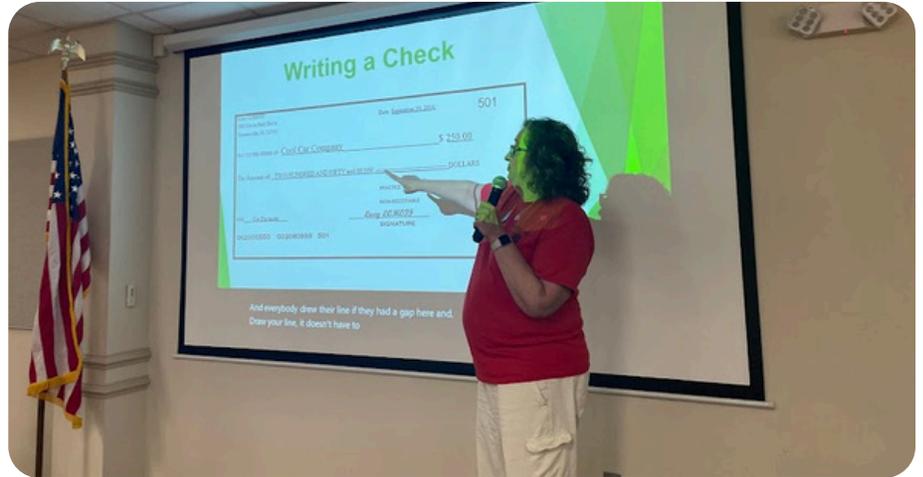
- > Expanded the Communications Office from one employee to two, adding Public Information Manager Caitlin Lawrence to the team. Caitlin previously served as the public information officer for the City of Panama City and brings many years of experience to the Bay County Communications team.
- > Coordinated the public information response to the January 2024 tornadoes, including debris collection and management coordination.
- > Assisted with public information surrounding the launch of the county's Fire and Life Safety Inspection Bureau.
- > Facilitated the addition of "double red flag" information to all Bay County Transit vehicles.
- > Launched the county's Red Flag Campaign, aimed at educating visitors about the dangers of the Gulf of Mexico during red flag conditions.
- > Launched the House Numbering Campaign, aimed at highlighting the importance of visible house numbers to aid first responders in reaching the correct destination in an emergency.
- > Led public information efforts during the county's response to Hurricane Helene and the subsequent Level 1 activation at the Emergency Operations Center.
- > Organized and coordinated the Fall Citizens Academy in cooperation with Gulf Coast State College.
- > Responded to approximately 350 media inquiries.



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cooperative extension



WHO WE ARE

At UF/IFAS Extension Bay County, we combine science and research to tackle challenges right here in our local community. Think of us as your friendly neighbors working alongside university experts and dedicated volunteers to share knowledge that enhances daily life.

We offer a wide range of programs and activities! For the young explorers, our 4-H programs and clubs provide opportunities to learn, grow, and build friendships. Whether you are a gardening enthusiast or new to planting, we offer expert advice on cultivating beautiful landscapes and healthy plants. For families, our Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) program offers guidance to promote well-being, happiness, and financial success at home.

For commercial operations managing landscapes, timber, or leading maritime ventures, our Horticulture and Sea Grant programs provide the training and tools needed to thrive as professionals. One of our core activities includes artificial reef creation, providing recreational opportunities, supporting marine conservation and sustainable fisheries. We are also committed to stewardship of our renowned beaches, coastal waters, and unique natural resources.

Together, we are making Bay County an even more vibrant place to live, work, and play!

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Contacts

- > Average number of unique volunteers per month – 43
- > Individual calls, office visits, and emails – 3,436
- > Group education participants – 4,703
- > Engaged social media users – 69,013

Horticulture

- > We taught more than 1,000 community members about plants and answered more than 700 questions at our help desk.
- > 88 percent of the 2023 Master Gardener class graduates earned their Master Gardener Volunteer certification.
- > Our 41 Master Gardener volunteers donated 3,221 hours to support our Extension Office.
- > Master Gardener volunteers partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Bay County and the Latitude Margaritaville Watersound Landscaping Committee to develop landscape site plans, conduct soil tests, propagate plants, assist with planting, and educate prospective homeowners.
- > We welcomed a new horticulture agent to support the community's residential and commercial horticulture needs.

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4-H Youth Development

- > 4-H and FCS collaborated on summer learning opportunities for youth including a tailgate grilling camp, multiple cake decorating classes, and food challenge programs for intermediate youth leadership program (iLEAD) and 4-H University. The programs introduce food safety, kitchen skills, kitchen safety, recipe preparation, and recipes for youth to prepare at home (under adult supervision). These programs reached 172 participants.
- > 4-H, horticulture, and master gardeners collaborated to offer youth science and school enrichment programs reaching 54 youth.
- > 4-H faculty collaborated with other regional faculty to provide both county and regional training for volunteers on how to incorporate 4-H science into after school and community club programs.

Marine/Coastal

- > **R/V Deep Stim III Deployment:** On January 30, 2024, the 239-foot R/V Deep Stim III was deployed as one of the largest artificial reefs in Northwest Florida. This historical milestone project involved collaboration between Bay, Walton, and Okaloosa coastal resource coordinators, their Tourist Development Councils (TDCs), nonprofit sponsors, support from industry leaders, and the county commissions from all three counties. The project enhances marine habitats and provides recreational opportunities, fostering regional collaboration and paving the way for future partnerships.
- > **RESTORE Project - SAARS M Patch Reefs:** Approximately 1,000 tons of concrete were placed within the Small Area Artificial Reef Site (SAARS M), Bay County's closest reef to St. Andrew Bay Pass, enhancing habitats and recreation five to six miles offshore.
- > **Bay County Artificial Reef Program Website:** The website overhaul benefits the community by providing publicly deployed artificial reefs in a variety of accessible formats including PDF, Excel, CSV, GPX, and KML. The coastal resources coordinator also designed an interactive artificial reef map that allows users to navigate by material type. Each site offers metadata, including historical information about the reef, dimensions, distance from St. Andrew Bay Pass, etc. The website address is <https://bit.ly/baycoreefs>.
- > **NRDA Projects:** With \$900,000 from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), 30 super reef modules will be deployed by the end of 2024 in Large Area Artificial Reef Site (LAARS B), a federally permitted area designed to expand marine habitats and recreational fishing. More reefs are planned for LAARS A in 2025.

- > **G.D. Blomberg Memorial Reef:** A 65-foot Swiftships aluminum patrol boat, now resting at 130 feet in LAARS B, honors the father of Hans Blomberg, former technical manager at Weeks Marine, known for his coastal restoration efforts. This memorial reef strengthens the Gulf of Mexico's reef system, supporting marine life and recreational opportunities.
- > **Workshops:** Two sessions trained marine professionals on lionfish management (49 participants) and the application of new research related to artificial reefs (72 participants). Attendees reported gaining valuable insights and expressed intent to apply the knowledge in their work, enhancing management practices, reef monitoring, and development strategies.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- > The FCS agent co-taught seven, six-hour, HUD certified, first-time home buyer classes for 149 people. This class is one step in the application process for State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) funds. The classes are also open to the public. Applying for SHIP funds is not a requirement to participate in the class, but the majority of participants are working on the SHIP application process.
- > The FCS agent taught food safety/preservation, heart healthy food preparation/cooking, grilling, and art classes to more than 100 youth and adults.
- > The FCS agent leadership roles included Faculty Senate, Florida Extension Association of Family & Consumer Science Agents (FEAFCS) President-Elect, and Northwest District FCS Program Implementation Team Chair.
- > The FCS agent served as the interim master gardener volunteer coordinator from October 2023 to August 2024, during the absence of a horticulture agent.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > 2024 Award of Excellence for 4-H and Youth – (master gardener volunteers)
- > 2024 ANREP (Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals) Gold Award, Outstanding Poster Presentation for “Stormwater Management: Expanding Educational Opportunities in Northwest Florida” (Scott Jackson et al.)
- > 2024 Wells Fargo Extension Term Professorship Award (Melanie Taylor)
- > 2024 4-H Excellence in Teamwork for Statewide Virtual Food Challenge Club (Paula Davis)

library services



WHO WE ARE

The Northwest Regional Library System has seven locations in Bay, Gulf, and Liberty counties as well as a Mobile Library. Our headquarters are at the Bay County Public Library in Panama City. We served 265,932 visitors in 2024, providing access to more than 380,000 books, DVD movies, musical instruments, puzzles, telescopes, e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and more. More than 152,000 digital items were borrowed in FY2024, an increase of 28 percent over 2023. We offer public computers with internet access and WiFi access in all locations. We also offer a variety of programming for all ages.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > The Hurricane Michael exhibit marking the storm's 5-year anniversary was incredibly successful, including four school field trips of 345 attendees. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive from the community as a whole. This was a collaborative Bay County effort that included the organizational and research efforts of the Bay County Public Information Office, UF/IFAS Bay County Extension Office, ReBuild Bay, Bay County Public Library and more.
- > The library continues to see an increase in usage. Customer visits have increased by 5 percent compared to last year. There were 265,932 visits to NWRLS libraries in FY2024. Total items borrowed from the library have increased 9 percent at 567,159 items. The number of library cardholders has increased by 7 percent at 55,904.
- > The 2024 Summer Reading Program was a huge success. There were 94 in-person children's and family programs offered system wide, with a total attendance of 3,510. In Bay County, 38 programs were offered with 2,214 attendees. There were 228 school-age students who completed Camp Read S'more Reading Challenge in Bay County, reading a minimum of five books during the summer. This is 60 more participants than in 2023! Prizes were awarded for finishers, sponsored by the Bay County Public Library Foundation. During June and July 2024, more than 40,000 physical youth items (excluding digital books) were borrowed from Bay County Library locations.

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- > The Unstacked podcast, produced by Community Relations and Marketing Coordinator Sarah Burris, continues to attract well-known authors who are interviewed in most episodes. Authors who have appeared on the show in 2024 include: Kate Quinn, Eliza Knight, Denny S. Bryce, Ben Aaronovich, and Gareth Brown. There were 1,108 listens in FY2024.
- > The inaugural Redfish Film Fest took place in downtown Panama City on Apr. 12 and 13, 2024. The Bay County Public Library partnered by facilitating the PBS POV venue at the Gallery of Art. Sarah Burris organized the film line up with Robert Salyer (PBS POV) and Kevin Elliott (Co-Producer of Redfish Film Fest), organized local guest panelists for two days of films, and marketed the PBS POV venue with the Gallery of Art. The PBS POV venue was the only entirely free film venue at the Redfish Film Fest open to the public.
- > The library launched the “Little Library Readers” campaign in September 2024, where kids aged five and under could visit one of the Bay County library locations and receive a tote bag with books, stickers, and early literacy tips. The program was sponsored by the Bay County Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Bay County Libraries.
- > The Panama City Beach Public Library began hosting the Chapter Chat book club in partnership with WJHG-TV in 2023 and the program continued in 2024. Newscasters Jessica Foster and Mel Zosh promote the books and authors on WJHG and then meet library staff and book club members at the beach library to discuss the month’s selection. There were 181 attendees in FY2024. WJHG won a Service to America Award from the National Association of Broadcasters Leadership Foundation for its efforts to inspire reading in our community. A book drive, sponsored by WJHG, collected more than 2,000 children’s books to distribute via the Bay County Library Foundation’s Free Library on Wheels (FLOW) to Bay County youth.
- > The Career Online High School program provides scholarships (funded through state funding, grants, and donations) to adults aged 19 or older so they can complete high school and receive an accredited diploma. There were seven graduates in FY2024, and 47 graduates since the program began in 2018.
- > Khelsea Rantanen, Head of Adult Services and a NASA Solar System Ambassador, obtained 500 solar eclipse glasses for the April 8 eclipse. All of the glasses were given away and approximately 200 people attended an eclipse viewing at the library.
- > The Bay County Writers Fest on Sept. 23, 2023 at the Bay County Public Library had 360 attendees. This event gives the public the opportunity to meet and speak with local authors.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > Bay and Gulf County libraries each received a \$10,000 grant from the Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida to enhance preschool programming. Sensory play items were added at the Bay County Public Library and books for library collections will be added in both counties.
- > Library staff members, Ann Howard and Tania Watts, completed their Master of Science in Information program at Florida State University.
- > Kat Kan, BCPL Adult Services Librarian and nationally-recognized expert on graphic novels and comic books, was invited by Barbara Dillon, Editor-in-Chief of Fanbase Press, to participate again in their “Countdown to the Eisners” series of video interviews with a number of comics and library professionals. This was her third year doing this. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uBliYN6jY0>.



housing



WHO WE ARE

The Housing Services Division oversees state and federally funded housing assistance programs for the county. The services include purchase assistance, including down payment and closing costs, home repairs and improvements, first-time home buying counseling, impact fees, and foreclosure prevention.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

After Hurricane Michael, the Housing Services Division was awarded \$36 million in Hurricane Housing Recovery Program (HHRP) funds to assist families impacted by the storm find decent, safe, and affordable housing. First-time Homebuyer Education was provided to more than 400 families through a partnership with the Bay County UF/IFAS Extension Center. The Housing Division partnered with more than 400 realtors, 55 lending institutions, 13 home inspection companies, five manufactured home companies, eight appraisers, six surveyors, 15 Homeowners Insurance companies, and 38 title agencies.

The HHRP 1 grant closed out in July of 2024 and more than \$26 million of the grant had been expended.

HHRP DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY

STRATEGY	EXPENDED	UNITS
PURCHASE ASSISTANCE	\$17,851,929	321
OWNER OCCUPIED REHAB	\$143,389	5
DEMOLITION/RECONSTRUCTION	\$3,445,312	24
EMERGENCY REPAIR	\$444,364	13
FORECLOSURE PREVENTION	\$45,557	6
IMPACT FEES	\$38,193	12
RENTAL ASSISTANCE	\$47,524	18
MULTI-FAMILY NEW CONSTRUCTION	\$4,000,000	40

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WHO WE ARE

Bay County's Public Transportation System known as Bayway was created in 1983 to provide residents and visitors with convenient and affordable transportation services. As the demand for public transportation increased, the original service area was expanded to encompass other areas of the county including Callaway, Lynn Haven, Mexico Beach, Panama City, Panama City Beach, Parker, Springfield, and the unincorporated areas of Bay County.

Our vision is to be recognized as the best transit system in Florida by delivering a well-balanced, multi-modal transportation system that promotes community education, embraces economic development, community accessibility, environmental sensitivity, and customer demand.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

It was an exciting year of service expansions and growth in FY2024 for Bayway. During the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) Annual Conference, Bayway received numerous awards, including Florida's 2024 Outstanding Transit Agency of the Year and three Marketing Awards, Outstanding Website/App for the Bayway Flex App, Sustaining Campaign for Bayway Flex Program, and Special Event for Bayway Day Celebration.

- > **New Services**
 - > Bayway and Uber continued our partnership to provide qualified transportation disadvantaged riders living in Bay County with access to public transportation through the Bayway Flex app. The service known as Bayway on Demand+ Uber was expanded to offer service availability countywide.
 - > Bayway launched its new micro-transit service called Bayway Flex to provide riders living within Panama City Beach with the ability to commute to work or to relax at popular destinations like Rosemary Beach, Laguna Beach, and more. Grant funding allowed Bayway to purchase four new ADA accessible Ford Transit Vans to be used as part of the program.
- > **New Mobile App** – We introduced a new way for riders to access and purchase rides on Bayway. The new app allows riders to schedule a ride on Bayway Flex and Uber for just \$1.50.
- > **New Student Pass Program** – Florida State University, Gulf Coast State College, and Bayway partnered to offer free rides to students possessing a valid student ID for either college.
- > **New Bus Wash Facility** - Construction on a new heavy-duty bus wash facility began at the beginning of the year. The new facility will be used to maintain all of our public transit buses on a regular basis.
- > **Student Pass Program** – Florida State University and Bayway have expanded the student ridership program to now include the new FSU Collegiate School. Students currently enrolled in the collegiate school can now access free transportation on all Bayway fixed route buses.



FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM

TOTAL RIDERSHIP	# OF BUSES IN FLEET	# OF BUS ROUTES
400,891	15	7



DEMAND RESPONSE SYSTEM

TOTAL RIDERSHIP	# OF BUSES IN FLEET
53,230	23



MICRO-TRANSIT SYSTEM

TOTAL RIDERSHIP	# OF VANS IN FLEET
15,915	4

UBER PARTNERSHIP

TOTAL RIDERSHIP

13,537



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 Bay Area Transportation | (850) 785-0808
 Transit 8161 Administration | (850) 248-8161
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veterans services



WHO WE ARE

Behind every veteran's benefits claim is a veteran in need. The Bay County Veterans' Services Office remains ready and willing to assist in obtaining those earned benefits. We provide dedicated service to all qualified veterans and their dependents, ensuring they are provided fair and just treatment in accordance with the published laws and regulations governing the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Our office assists veterans in applying for service-connected disabilities, obtaining non-service-connected pension benefits, healthcare eligibility, education benefits, life insurance, and VA home loan guaranty certificates of eligibility. Our office also helps veterans' family members with burial claims, widow and widower benefits, and dependency claims.

The Veterans Services staff consists of three counselors, one senior staff assistant and one county veterans' service officer. We average between 21 and 25 client visits daily. In between client visits, our staff will receive another 20 to 30 phone calls per day.

We are proud that our county veterans services officer is also the area vice president for the Northwest Florida Region of the County Veterans Services Officers Association, which includes all veterans service offices from Franklin County through Escambia County.

Our primary objective is customer service that may include: adding a spouse or a new baby to a veteran's award, requesting a veteran's eligibility to education, healthcare, home loan certificate, filing a service-connected disability claim, a pension claim, and a widow's benefit claim or even notifying the VA of a veteran's passing and burial. We assist veterans and their families from the cradle to the grave.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In the past, military bases throughout the United States had VA personnel who assisted active duty military when they were leaving the service. Unfortunately, a number of these VA employees have left their position. This left our active duty men and women without someone to help them deal with the VA. Our office has stepped in to fill that gap. We are now assisting active duty personnel file claims to the VA in order for them to start receiving their earned VA benefits as soon as possible after their discharge date.

Organizations and Events:

- › Our office assisted the Bay County Board of County Commissioners and the Bay County Veterans Council with a Memorial Day Ceremony in May and the annual Veterans' Day Parade and Ceremony in November.
- › We represent the Bay County Board of County Commissioners at the monthly meeting of the Bay County Veterans Council on the second Thursday of each month.
- › We support the veterans at Sims Florida State Nursing Home through the 'Friends of Sims Nursing Home,' a nonprofit organization run by the County Veterans Services Officers of North West Florida. Funds are donated to this organization and distributed to the nursing home to purchase items the State of Florida does not include in their budget.
- › Staff participate on the executive committee with the Board of Directors for Career Source Gulf Coast, the Disadvantaged Transportation Board to assist veterans in the local area, and on the advisory committee for the Veterans Treatment Court of the 14th Judicial Circuit.
- › We gave presentations at Tyndall Air Force Base for military personnel who will soon be discharged or retire on VA benefits. We have also briefed the Tyndall Non-Commissioned Officer Academy.
- › In August, our office held a town hall meeting at the Bay County Public Library to present what VA benefits were available followed by a question-and-answer session.
- › In September, we supported and assisted at the Annual Veterans Homeless Stand Down.
- › Our office is available to any organization in the community for presentations showing the various programs offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

CONTACT US:

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www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

The Building Safety Division (BSD) remains committed to providing ever-improving customer service to property owners, contractors, developers, and design professionals, focusing on ensuring buildings and structures are compliant with today's rigorous building standards and are safe for occupancy. BSD consists of a well-rounded staff of International Code Council (ICC) certified permit technicians, ICC-certified plans examiners and ICC-certified inspectors, Florida Building Code Administrators, a licensed Professional Engineer, an architect, licensed contractors, and administrative support staff. We collectively form a team of 'first preventers' charged with the responsibility of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of human life within the built environment. We accomplish this goal by assisting the general public, property owners, the design community, and contractors in meeting the minimum design and construction requirements outlined by the Florida Building Code and supporting standards.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Building Safety continues to strive toward providing consistent service to the citizens of Bay County coupled with clear communication. We invested significant efforts in employee recruitment in order to fully populate the board approved Organization Chart.

Building Safety staff remain steadfast in the commitment to aid the ongoing economic recovery and building reconstruction efforts throughout Bay County. In FY2024, a total of 7,810 building permits were issued with an estimated Valuation of Work at \$880 million. Roughly 6,528 of those permits were associated with single-family residential homes valued at approximately \$ 646,921,357 with another 544 residential renovations totaling some \$ 14,988,771 in value. Several nationally recognized developers continue to develop and build within new residential subdivisions which include Latitude Margaritaville, Breakfast Point, Wards Creek and several others.

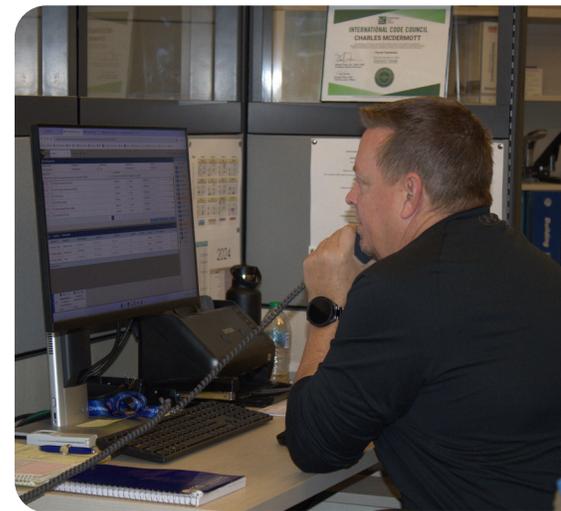
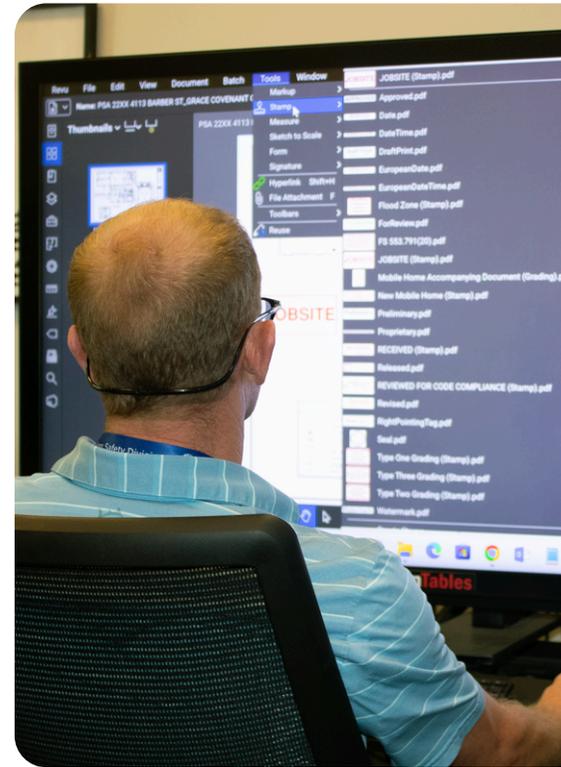
In addition to new construction plan reviews and building inspections, Building Safety continues to work closely with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) and the Bay County Sheriff's Office to combat unlicensed contractor activities and unpermitted construction activities.

Leadership continued the commitment to advancing the functionality of the division by directing staff to design and launch a new cloud-based permitting software platform and installing the associated hardware. Citizens can now submit building permit applications online at their convenience at any time of day, seven days a week, no longer having to wait for office hours to conduct business with the division. Moreover, inspection requests associated with permitted work, construction documents, along with any other project related documents can be uploaded through the online portal allowing for a more efficient submittal and review process. To that end, building permit review turn-around times have been reduced to approximately 10 business days thanks to hardware and software improvements and the diligence of qualified staff. Functionality also includes permit application tracking, plan review comments, plan revision submittals, inspection results, and issuance of the final Certificate of Occupancy. Lastly, the platform will also send electronic notices for plan review items, a 30-day notice for expiring permits, expiring contractor registrations and certificates of insurances among other items that will benefit property owners, contractors, and design professionals.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

We are pleased to currently have an Insurance Service Office (ISO), Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) score of 4 for residential projects and 3 for commercial projects. This scoring is based on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the highest rating possible and 10 being the lowest.

Lastly, we continue down the arduous path of obtaining independent third-party ICC/IAS accreditation. Throughout this process, we have brought several operational policies, procedures, and practices into alignment with industry recognized best practices with much work remaining. We expect this work to continue for several months until the goal is completed.



CONTACT US:

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code enforcement



WHO WE ARE

A Code Enforcement Officer is an agent of Bay County with the authority to enforce provisions of the Bay County Nuisance Ordinance and Land Development regulations. The division currently consists of seven code enforcement officers, four Hurricane Michael term-limited officers, one building inspector, one coordinator, one senior staff assistant, and one manager.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

For Code Enforcement, as it has since Hurricane Michael in 2018, the two-pronged approach still applies. Team Code Enforcement and Team Hurricane Michael were both in full swing during 2024, and the doubled workload and doubled-up hearings continue. There are still 68 Hurricane Michael cases that remain active.

Added to this workload in FY2024, tornadoes spawned by Winter Storm Finn on Jan. 9, 2024 created significant damage to the Lower Grand Lagoon area of Panama City Beach (EF3), Panama City (EF1), Lynn Haven, Southport, Deer Point Lake (EF2), Youngstown (EF2) and Callaway (EF2). The National Weather Service, assisted by Bay County Emergency Management, reported an estimated \$20.4 million in property damages.

An initial survey identified 168 damaged properties in the unincorporated areas. Of those, 84 properties have repaired the damages or demolished the structure(s). In response to those needing temporary housing due to tornado damage, Bay County allowed permissions for temporary emergency placement of recreational vehicles to those affected. Seven emergency permits were issued.

Some 3,660 Code Enforcement cases were opened in FY2024. Staff brought 355 cases to hearings in front of a magistrate or the Code Board. Of these cases, 28 were brought into compliance by the property owner after the hearing. Another 95 were cleaned by the county.

Code Enforcement officers removed and impounded 1,343 prohibited signs from county rights-of-way either proactively or in response to complaints.

In response to dangerous surf conditions, Code Enforcement partnered with the Bay County Sheriff's Office, Fire Services, Emergency Medical Services and lifeguards to enforce the double red flag ordinance. Code Enforcement officers responded to the sandy beaches to provide education and raise awareness of the flag system to beachgoers. When warranted, citations were issued for those in violation of the ordinance. Code Enforcement officers issued four warning citations and eight violation citations with a fine imposed.

CONTACT US:

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Photo Courtesy: Minto Communities

WHO WE ARE

The Planning Division’s mission is to affect an orderly and efficient growth pattern which promotes economic development and enhances the environment, aesthetics, and quality of life in Bay County.

The division is staffed by certified planners, a certified floodplain manager, a senior planner, and an administrative coordinator dedicated to providing quality examination and review of new development projects for the citizens of Bay County. We also manage requests for sign permits, conditional-use permits, variances, and land-use and zoning changes.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

The Planning Division saw an overall increase in development permits compared to last year. In FY2024, we received 67 development order applications, 79 total land disturbance permit applications (land clearing, fill placement, grading, and excavation), 44 sign permits as well as reviewed 3,840 low-impact developments in support of the Building Safety Division.

The Planning Division also reviews and oversees the process where applications to change the land use and zoning are considered by the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. We received 32 land use and zone change applications which were presented before both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. Four Planned Unit Development (PUD) applications were received and approved. Five conditional use permit requests, as well as two variance requests, were presented to the Planning Commission in FY2024.

We fielded 6,238 phone calls and served 1,007 walk-in customers in FY2024.

Bay County’s Community Rating System (CRS) program is coordinated by the Planning Division’s certified floodplain manager. Bay County received its re-certification audit from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to evaluate the county’s floodplain management program during FY2023. Bay County maintained its Class 5 CRS rating which ensures all residents with flood insurance policies will continue to receive a 25-percent discount on their flood insurance premiums.

The development of the Bay-Walton Sector Plan area continues as the Planning Division received another application for a Detailed Specific Area Plans (DSAP). The Pigeon Creek DSAP covers 1,702 acres and proposes 3,330 residential units and 450,000 square feet of commercial/office use.

The Planning Division also helped facilitate and manage a new online permitting and review platform. CityView went live in October 2023. In its first year, the new platform has provided staff the necessary tools to better manage applications and streamline permitting for citizens and the development community.



Photo Courtesy: Minto Communities



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emergency management



WHO WE ARE

Emergency Management is responsible for assisting the Chief of Emergency Services in coordinating the emergency preparedness efforts of the county. We provide assistance to local jurisdictions and county agencies before, during, and after disaster strikes.

Our department helps to manage response during activations of the Emergency Operations Center, which facilitates planning and aid in the aftermath of a disaster. The center is made up of a staff of professionals and liaisons from area public safety agencies, non-governmental organizations, schools, military partners, and other key community stakeholders.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > In 2024, Emergency Management welcomed Planner Brandon Barrette and Specialist Jennifer Wilburn to the department. Both Brandon and Jennifer arrived at our department with a wealth of knowledge and experience from their previous careers in the military.
- > Our new members were quickly introduced into Bay County's emergency response operations when the county went to a full-level activation in response to Hurricane Helene. Although Helene made landfall near Perry, Florida, activation in Bay County provided valuable experience for all emergency services personnel tasked with assisting in emergency management operations.
- > Emergency Management continued to assist with emergency response operations at various Panama City Beach tourist-related events, including the Gulf Coast Triathlon 70.3 and the Ironman (full) 140.6 mile, the Gulf Coast Sea Breeze Jazz Festival, Gulf Coast Pepsi Jam, Thunder Beach, Gulf Coast Salute Air Show, and the Fourth of July celebrations.
- > We continued to perform community outreach providing disaster preparedness briefings and public education with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the First Baptist Church in Lynn Haven, and the 337th Air Control Squadron at Tyndall Air Force Base.
- > Emergency Management personnel were also involved in planning meetings which included disaster housing discussions with the Florida Department of Emergency Management, Community Recovery Center updates, Region One Emergency Response meetings, Rebuild Bay, Integrated Preparedness Plan meetings and Local Emergency Planning Committee meetings.
- > Additionally, Emergency Management assisted with training on Florida Recovery Obligation Calculations (F-ROC) and coordinated an Emergency Management presentation with other divisions within Bay County Emergency Services to present to Bay County's Citizens Academy.

CONTACT US:

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WHO WE ARE

The Bay County Communications Division oversees county operations of the 911 call center. We are co-located with the Bay County Sheriff's Office at the Emergency Operations Center. The call center is continuously staffed with 911 call takers and communications operators to field the emergency and non-emergency calls from our citizens and visitors.

Because an emergency can, and will, happen any time of day, our 911 call takers are always ready to answer calls. Call takers are responsible for answering 911 and administrative calls for emergency medical services, all fire agencies within Bay County, Bay County Sheriff's Office, Panama City Police Department and Springfield Police Department. We also receive calls and dispatch after-hours for Bay County Animal Control, Roads and Bridges, Traffic Engineering, Utilities, and the American Red Cross.

Our 911 call takers and communications operators are highly trained to handle extremely serious and stressful calls and radio traffic. Many callers who use 911 services are experiencing what they would consider the worst day of their life. It is the job of our communications operators to get them the help and resources they need.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Bay County hosted and taught a Florida Public Safety Telecommunicators course for communications employees from Bay County and partnering agencies.
- > During the Emergency Operations Center activation for Hurricane Helene, call takers and communications operators fielded calls from the Citizens Information Line which allowed them the opportunity to disseminate valuable information to the community.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > Training Captain Bridgette Whately was promoted to Assistant Chief of Communications and Professional Standards. Chief Whately has been an integral part of training for many years. Her dedication to ensuring staff are not only educated but confident in their abilities has improved patient care and safety across fire and EMS. Her transition into the Communications Center brought a new vision and mindset into streamlining systems, standard operating guidelines, and procedures. We are excited about the transition in the upcoming year.
- > Communications Operator Hunter Retherford was promoted to Communications Supervisor. Hunter has been with Bay County Emergency Services since 2017 and she has been an invaluable asset within the Communications Center. She has more than 10 years of combined experience where she has gained the knowledge and capabilities to promote to a leadership role.



CALL INFORMATION

TYPE OF CALL	INCIDENTS DISPATCHED	% OF CALLS
FIRE	11,383	17.1%
EMS	34,131	51.2%
OTHER AGENCIES WE PROVIDE FIRE DISPATCH FOR	21,189	31.7%
TOTAL	66,703	100%

PHONE CALLS (911/INCOMING & OUTGOING ADMIN)		
Calls (911/Incoming)	117,397	40%
Admin (Incoming)	101,669	34.7%
Admin (Outgoing)	74,309	25.3%
TOTAL	293,375	100%

CONTACT US:

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www.baycountyfl.gov

emergency medical services (ems)



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Emergency Medical Services Division (EMS) is a state-licensed Advanced Life Support (paramedic level) service. We answer all emergency calls for service throughout Bay County, including the municipalities of Callaway, Lynn Haven, Panama City, Panama City Beach, Parker, and Springfield, along with the unincorporated portions of Bay County such as Southport, West Bay, Bayou George, Youngstown, and Fountain.

Working in conjunction with our municipal and county first-responder fire departments and law-enforcement partners, Bay County EMS answers nearly 31,000 calls for service each year.

We provide emergency care, treatment, and transport for incidents such as heart attacks, strokes, illness, traumatic injuries, vehicle accidents, water rescues, industrial incidents, rescues, and structure fires in support of our fire department partners. We have more than 70 Florida-licensed EMTs and paramedics.

EMS operates between seven and 10 mobile intensive-care ambulances along with field operations command staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week from eight strategically placed stations located throughout Bay County.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

As we reflect on FY2024, we celebrate our dedicated team of medical providers who have served our community. Throughout the year, we responded to emergencies, provided critical care, and engaged in outreach initiatives that fostered safety and education. This report highlights our achievements, challenges, and the impactful connections we've built within the community, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to delivering high-quality medical services and promoting public health and safety.

- > In FY2024, Bay County welcomed the new Chief of Emergency Services Matthew Lindewirth. With an extensive background in fire safety, emergency medical services, emergency management, and leadership, Chief Lindewirth brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position. Chief Lindewirth earned his associate degree in Applied Science, Aviation Operations from the Community College of the Air Force; his Bachelor of Science from Troy University; and his Master of Science in Emergency Medical Services from Creighton University.
- > EMS continues to be involved in several high profile stand-by events including both the Gulf Coast Ironman 70.3 and Ironman Florida 140.6. In May, EMS was excited to assist with coverage for the return of the Gulf Coast Salute Air Show. The air show took place over Panama City Beach's Russell-Fields City Pier and showcased 16 acts including a MIG-17 demo, F-22 demo and the world renowned Thunderbirds. In June, EMS also assisted with providing medical coverage for the 2024 Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam which drew a crowd of approximately 120,000 over a four-day period.



CONTACT US:

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emergency medical services (ems)

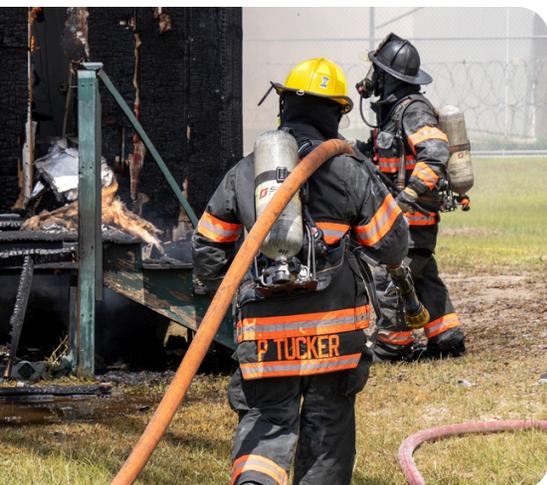


- > In partnership with the Bay County Sheriff's Office, Bay District Schools and several other mutual aid partners within the county, EMS participated in the Bay County Sheriff's Office Active Assailant Full-Scale Exercise held at A. Crawford Mosley High School. Conducting an active assailant full-scale exercise is essential for preparing our emergency response teams and community for the unimaginable. These exercises provide realistic scenarios that enhance coordination among various agencies, improve communication, and ensure that all participants understand their roles in a crisis.
- > Bay County EMS continues to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) emergency medical coverage during all junior varsity and varsity high school football games. Having an ambulance at football games is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of players, coaches, and spectators. The presence of an ambulance provides peace of mind for athletes and their families, reinforcing a commitment to health and safety at sporting events.
- > Training officers continue to provide more than 200 hours of medical training annually which include trainings such as Advanced Medical Life Support (AMLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), and Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS). We also offered refresher courses for Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) as well as Basic Life Support (BLS). EMTs and paramedics are required to renew their respective certifications in each of these disciplines every two years. The ACLS course reviews the treatment of cardiac arrest, stroke, myocardial infarction and other life-threatening cardiovascular emergencies. The BLS course reviews the skills needed to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for all patients from infants to senior adults.



AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > In August of 2024, Bay County EMS had six graduates from the Paramedic Program at Gulf Coast State College. This program is a strenuous three-semester program that is offered annually. The program involves clinical rotations on the ambulance, in the operating room, emergency room, cardiac catheterization lab, labor and delivery unit, pediatrics unit, a respiratory rotation, and in the District 14 Medical Examiner's Office. Congratulations to Justin Beavers, Chelsea Finnerty, Hannah Jones, Cameron Maurer, Hunter Meiser, and Ashley Thompson.
- > In September 2024, three EMS employees were promoted to the position of battalion chief. With the growth of the Emergency Services Department, expanding leadership was essential to ensure a manageable span of control. The addition of a second battalion chief on-duty assists in overseeing employees, stations and emergency scenes. Congratulations to Battalion Chiefs Nicolas Dickinson, Jake Keeney, and Gina Salaty. Additionally, congratulations to Lieutenants Kelly Guillory, Amber Leach and Ashley Trent who were promoted to EMS captain.



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Fire Rescue Division provides fire suppression for structural fires and wildfires, emergency medical services, fire prevention and emergency hazardous materials response to the unincorporated areas of Bay County. About 80 percent of the calls for service received are for medical emergencies. The Division consists of both career and volunteer firefighters who respond from 13 stations throughout Bay County. Four Advanced Life Support (ALS) engines are stationed to decrease the time before an ALS provider is on scene to a medical emergency. Those ALS units' primary response areas include Fountain, Sandhills, West Bay, West End, and Youngstown.

Bay County Fire Rescue Division provides and receives assistance through mutual aid and automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire departments. The Bay County Fire Rescue Hazardous Materials Team is a regional asset that responds throughout the region to assist fire departments and law enforcement agencies with hazardous materials calls. The Surf Rescue team provides water rescue assets and personnel to cover Bay County's unincorporated beaches and waterways.

Bay County Fire Rescue Division personnel are required to be dual-certified to at least the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level and many are advanced trained as a paramedic. All officer-level positions now require a paramedic certification for promotion.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Fire Response

Fire responded to more than 10,000 fire-related calls in 2024. In June, firefighters assisted with the containment of the Pigeon Creek Road Fire. The Florida Fire Service reported the wildfire to have affected more than 370 acres. Dry vegetation and rising temperatures can increase the likelihood of wildfires.

Surf Rescue

The Parks and Recreation Department previously employed rescue swimmers during the surf rescue season. Members of Emergency Services assisted with bolstering coverage across the beaches in unincorporated Bay County. In 2024, under the direction of Battalion Chief Dustin Marsden, the Parks and Recreation Department and Emergency Services Department combined to create the Bay County Emergency Services Surf Rescue Division. The division is comprised of 16 rescue swimmers certified by the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) as open water rescue swimmers.

The Surf Rescue Division is part of a total system that includes the coordinated efforts of surrounding agencies and jurisdictions including area fire departments, area law enforcement, and the United States Coast Guard.

The surf rescue "season" begins March 1 and ends October 31. Between March 1 and October 31, our rescue swimmers performed more than 110 rescues and more than 400 rescue assists. Our rescue personnel begin training before the season starts to keep up their skills and physical agility.

CONTACT US:

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Hazardous Materials Responses

Our federally-funded HazMat Team responded to several complex incidents in our region, including a potential powdered drug exposure at a prison in Jackson County and a fuel spill at U.S. Highway 77 and County Road 2321.

All firefighters are required to complete 160 hours of HazMat Technician training. They are also required to complete refresher training quarterly to maintain their certifications.

Several of our firefighter-paramedics have also obtained their Toxicology Paramedic Certification. These paramedics are equipped to identify and intervene with victims of chemical exposures related to accidental or intentional releases. In addition to ensuring the public's safety, these toxicology paramedics travel with our Regional Hazmat Team to assist in the protection and treatment of our first responders in the event of a hazmat-related incidents in our region.

Fire and Life Safety Inspection Bureau

The Fire and Life Safety Inspection Bureau was created in 2024. Lead Fire Inspector Cory Welch, Inspectors Trey Baur and Michael Laramore and the administrative staff are responsible for inspecting buildings to ensure they comply with fire safety codes, identifying potential fire hazards, testing fire protection equipment such as alarms and sprinklers, reviewing emergency evacuation plans, and educating building owners and occupants on fire safety practices to prevent fires.

The Fire and Life Safety Inspection Bureau is also responsible for inspection and certification for the county's short-term rentals in accordance with the Bay County Ordinance 23-18.

Specialized Training

Working alongside our Professional Standards Division, Fire Rescue began utilizing a streamlined, functional approach to train firefighters who recently obtained their minimum fire standards certification or who are new to our organization. In addition to completing their firefighter task-book, firefighters attend a two-week orientation course to build on their current skills and gain knowledge on the county's approach to firefighting. Completing the two-week course prior to being placed on an apparatus to respond in the field improves the safety of our responders and their ability to function as members of the team in a shorter amount of time.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > In August 2024, Chase Gilmore, Jalen Johnson, and Ryan Plowman graduated from the Paramedic Program at Gulf Coast State College. This program is a strenuous three-semester program that is offered annually. The program involves clinical rotations on the ambulance, in the operating room, emergency room, cardiac catheterization lab, labor and delivery unit, pediatrics unit, a respiratory rotation, and in the District 14 Medical Examiner's Office.

In 2024, there were several promotions within the Fire Division for engineer, captain, battalion chief and assistant chief, as well as within logistics and professional standards.

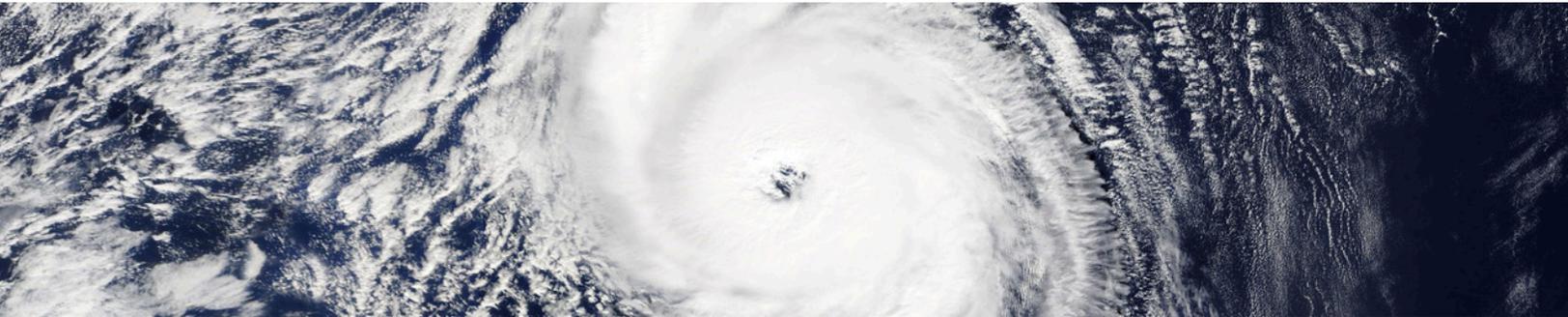
- > Firefighter Paramedics Jesse Alday, Alan Ford, Shiquan Green and Ryan Plowman, along with Firefighter-EMT Austin Williams were promoted to engineer.
- > Firefighter Paramedics Paul Fowler, Marshall Gordon, Jerrad Hiers, Salem Imhof-Grier, Lucas Kisela, Megan Lavery, Mitchell Manning, Jared Sasnett, along with Firefighter EMT Josh Crundwell and Paul Hagan were promoted to captain.
- > Captains Matthew Gothard and Steven Whitters were promoted to battalion chief.
- > Battalion Chief Darrel Wise was promoted to assistant chief of operations. Chief Wise has more than 40 years of experience in the fire service and has selflessly dedicated many years of service to the citizens of Bay County. He is well respected within the department and amongst the first responder community.
- > Justin Leach and Brian Welborn were selected to lead our Logistics Division and were elevated to the rank of captain.
- > Lieutenant Travis Williams was selected to assist in professional standards and was promoted to training captain.



alertbay - emergency notification system

stay prepared in an emergency.

When disaster strikes, how will you and your family be notified? Protect yourself and your loved ones in Bay County by signing up for **AlertBay Emergency Notifications**.



ALERTBAY: A MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

Bay County uses AlertBay, a partnership with the State of Florida's Division of Emergency Management and the AlertFlorida mass notification system, to keep citizens and visitors informed. The system is extremely valuable in keeping residents, visitors, government staff, and emergency personnel safe and in-the-know with quick and reliable emergency notifications and public safety announcements about a range of events, such as severe weather, fires, floods, active shooters, or other emergencies. Messages are sent to residents on their preferred contact paths—cell phone, SMS text messaging, home phone, email, and more—to ensure real-time access to potentially lifesaving information. The program is funded largely by the state, saving Bay County taxpayers more than \$100,000 annually.

AlertBay was especially useful last year during the January tornadoes, Hurricane Helene, and in notifying the public about dangerous surf conditions and wildlife in our gulf.

AlertBay was also used extensively throughout the year to alert our citizens to severe weather dangers, boil water notices, and much more. In FY2024, AlertBay issued 13,442 notifications between the county, municipalities, law enforcement, and the school district. Users were also able to text keyword "PCBFlags" to 888-777 for daily updates about beach surf conditions.

To ensure notification when a specific location in Bay County is threatened by an event or severe weather, simply register an address and contact information into an AlertBay profile, available at www.alertbay.org. Users may set up a separate profile for each person in a household to ensure each person gets the message. Once a message is confirmed, the system will not make any further contact about the event.

With multiple ways to subscribe, the free Everbridge app is the recommended way to receive alerts from AlertBay, as it allows alerts from throughout the state of Florida.

AlertBay is a partnership between the Bay County Board of County Commissioners, the Bay County Sheriff's Office, local municipalities, and the school district, enabling each entity to send out emergency calls specific to their audiences.

Visitors to Bay County can subscribe to AlertBay by texting the keyword **ALERTBAY** to **888-777**, and opt in to receive important alerts during their stay.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK
@BAYCOUNTYFLEMERGENCYSERVICES

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ALERTBAY OR FOR HELP REGISTERING, CONTACT BAY COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES AT (850) 248-6040.



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Animal Control is responsible for protecting the public's health and safety and enforcing Florida state statutes and Bay County ordinances related to animal issues and owners' responsibility for animals. Services are provided to all of the municipalities in Bay County, except the City of Lynn Haven, through interlocal agreements. Our goal is to protect the interests of animals, owners, and non-owners alike.

We are also responsible for the operations of Bay County's only open-admission animal shelter where all stray, unowned, and owned animals are accepted. We provide daily care for these animals while working to reunite them with their owners or find them a new home. Our shelter serves as the location for all Animal Control operations.

The Animal Control Division has 14 staff members, all of whom are trained to handle any of the tasks related to operations.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Animal Control focused on developing innovative ways to maintain services and build community relationships.
- > Animal Control continues its partnership with the Northwest Florida Reception Center for the Top Dog Program. Using the University of Auburn training model, the inmates have completed three training sessions, each of which runs 12 weeks. All the shelter animal graduates have been adopted and remain in their new homes.
- > Animal Control partnered with WMBB-TV, News 13 for its Founder's Day event in June. This event is open to the public with a goal to clear the shelter. In addition to adoptions, family-friendly fun and food was available and staff from both entities were present to meet citizens.
- > Beginning in 2016, Animal Control partnered with Pier Park PetSmart to find new homes for the cats that come through our facility. To date, this partnership has assisted more than 1,200 cats in finding forever homes.
- > This year, there was a 3-percent decrease in the number of quarterly calls handled by Animal Control.
- > Even with the decrease in service calls, Animal Control still respond to hundreds of calls monthly, continually looking for new approaches for handling situations concerning animals in our area. Animal Control utilized online training classes provided by the National and Florida Animal Care Associations.
- > Animal Control is working to bridge the gap between the community and the number of free-roaming cats. Spay and neutering programs and a close working relationship with Operation Spay Bay assists with this countywide issue.
- > The shelter saw a 9-percent decrease over last year in the number of animals coming into the shelter. Even with this small decrease, the shelter still sees a number of animals being surrendered by owners. While there are a variety of reasons, the costs related to owning animals seem to be the most prominent. In addition to the decrease in intake, adoptions have been on the decline as well.
- > Bay County Animal Control continues to adapt to challenges and welcomes citizen input and feedback as we strive to provide the best service possible to the citizens of Bay County.



CONTACT US:

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www.baycountyfl.gov

parks and recreation



WHO WE ARE

The Bay County Parks and Recreation Division provides recreational services and facilities for use by Bay County citizens and visitors. The division is tasked with the maintenance of more than 1,000 acres and operations of 31 recreational and athletic parks, 21 boat ramps, 11 small craft launches, 46 beach accesses, two community buildings, the M.B. Miller County Pier, Bay County Skate Park and the Bay County Shooting Range. Bay County Parks and Recreation works to understand the recreational needs of residents through community outreach and input. Planning and project development ensures these needs are fulfilled.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

During 2024, Bay County Parks and Recreation continued its valuable customer service through increased facility maintenance, quality athletic surface maintenance and preparation, and the use of technology to allow park patrons easier access to scheduling, reservations, and programming.

Projects

- > Porter Landing
- > Ed Hickey Jr. Park - Beach Access 22

Special Events - More than 5,000 citizens attend free events with their families each year:

- > Easter Egg Hunt
- > Fall Festival
- > Christmas at H.G. Harder's Park
- > Movie Nights in the Park
- > Wheels and Waves Car Show at the Pier

Scheduled events increased from FY2023 to FY2024:

- > 2023 - 3,102 events
- > 2024 - 3,125 events

Staff performed approximately 22,000 hours of athletic field preparation and park maintenance activities, accounting for approximately 80 percent of maintenance staff work hours.

The M.B. Miller Pier welcomed approximately 210,000 visitors.

CONTACT US:

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www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

Bay County Facilities Management provides maintenance and support to the buildings and departments under the purview of the Bay County Board of County Commissioners. Facilities maintains/manages 120 buildings/structures totaling two million square feet. Services provided by Facilities Management include large and small building improvements, routine and preventive building maintenance, custodial services, project management, and grounds maintenance.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In 2024, Facilities Management executed and processed more than \$6.4 million in repair, maintenance, planned projects, and service contract management. Highlights accomplished over the past year include:

Building maintenance:

- Responded to a total of 1,266 requests for maintenance, including 168 high priority, 1,002 medium priority, and 96 low priority maintenance requests, and accomplished preventive maintenance on 1,377 pieces of HVAC equipment.

Building improvements:

- Utilities Admin and Lab – replaced standing seam metal roof.
- Bay County Library – replaced 125-ton chiller #2; replaced 11,700 square feet of carpet in Youth Services. Initiated lighting conversion to LED lighting.
- Bay County Health Department – rebuilt 12 each Variable Air Volume (VAV) dampers and controls; rebuilt 12 each VAV boxes; relocated filter grills for easier access.
- Government Center – renovated the new 3,774 square foot third floor office suite for the Building Safety Division; constructed “safe” workspace for Human Resources Department; upgraded elevator controls; various repairs and/or replacement of HVAC equipment; designed rotunda flooring replacement/entrance upgrades.
- Bay County Sheriff’s Office – initiated replacement of standing seam metal roof.
- County Jail – annually scheduled replacement of inmate shower and toilet units; replacement of inmate shower flooring and walls; replacement of four each rooftop exhaust fan motors; assisting jail staff with interior buildout of new training building.
- Bay County Courthouse – replaced 12 each fan coil units; replaced rooftop condensing units 1, 2, and 5; replaced Fan Coil Unit #49; painted walls in Circuit Courthouse; converted lighting to LED in Court Storage facility.
- Juvenile Justice Annex – replaced 5-ton HVAC split system.
- Old Juvenile Justice Courthouse – reestablished HVAC controls to HVAC equipment.
- Bay County Animal Control – painted exterior of facility.
- Thomas Drive Fire Station – replaced south concrete apron to apparatus bay; replaced plenum boxes under AHU’s.
- Sand Hills Fire Station – replaced carpet in bunk rooms and offices.
- Bear Creek Fire Station – upgraded apparatus bay lighting to LED.
- Allison Avenue Fire Station – replaced building’s exterior siding.
- West End Fire Station – upgraded apparatus bay lighting to LED; prepped and stained exterior block walls; prepped and painted side awnings and bay door hardware.
- Radio Communication – replaced four wall-pack HVAC units at various tower locations.
- State Attorney / Public Defender – installed emergency generator and automatic transfer switch; area hardening of entryways and reception area; replaced water heater; installed auxiliary drain pans under HVAC air handlers.
- Medical Examiner’s Office – replaced ceiling tile and LED lighting upgrades; resurfaced morgue flooring with epoxy; bathroom fixture and flooring upgrades; constructed privacy screen for the cadaver reception dock.
- Steelfield Landfill – initiated wind damage repairs (exterior wall replacement) to the maintenance building.
- Cooperative Extension Office – replaced 7.5-ton rooftop HVAC unit.
- Spring Avenue Walking Trail – replaced light poles and lighting around the walking trail.

**CONTACT US:**

(850) 248-8142 | facilities@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

The Solid Waste Division provides solid waste disposal, household hazardous material disposal, and recycling services for all of the citizens of Bay County. Waste disposal services provided are the operation of the Bay County Steelfield Road Landfill, available to both commercial and residential customers, and the residential-only drop-off facility located at 6510 Bayline Drive. The Division is also responsible for the long-term care and environmental monitoring of the closed landfill located at Majette Park.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > **The "Hill"** - The Steelfield Road Landfill has been actively accepting waste since the fall of 1987. As a result, the height of the landfill has continued to increase. From a starting elevation of around 47 feet above sea level, over the years it has increased in height and currently stands at about 200 feet in elevation. As Bay County continues to grow, so will this massive monument. It will continue to grow until it reaches 247 feet above sea level, possibly making it, at that time, the highest point in Bay County. Since 2010, the landfill has taken in nearly 2.9 million tons of waste.

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www.baycountyfl.gov



- > **Tonnages and Customer Usage** – During FY2024, 91,314 vehicles crossed the scales at our facilities. In total, the division processed and disposed of 275,890 tons of discarded material. Based upon a Monday through Saturday operational work week, this is an average of 756 tons per day.
- > **Waste Amnesty Days** – The Solid Waste Division hosts two waste amnesty events each year, allowing residents the opportunity to dispose of waste and debris from their properties at no charge. This provides Bay County residents with an economical way to clean up their residence and assist us in keeping potentially hazardous materials out of the waste stream. Bay County has hosted these events for more than 20 years. During 2024, we had 2,275 customers cross the scales and took in 864 tons of waste. We also collected 2,177 waste tires and 1,390 gallons of used oil.





WHO WE ARE

The six Human Resources professionals in our department are committed to providing exemplary service to our employees and the external customers we serve. Our primary mission is to develop and administer value-added human resources policies, programs, and services that support the county's ability to provide opportunities to our employees. We are talent seekers, advocates, advisors, coaches, and more so we can recruit and retain outstanding employees and support management.

It is also incumbent upon us to stay abreast of current employment law and share that knowledge with our employees to ensure legal compliance and minimize losses to the county by helping to avoid litigation. We strive for engagement with our employees, assisting and guiding them throughout their employment on matters related to benefits, promotional opportunities, policy understanding, educational opportunities, retirement, and more.

Our focus is to foster a workplace that promotes mutual respect, personal and professional growth, fairness, and diversity. We concentrate our efforts every day to advance Bay County as a proven place to build a long and rewarding career.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

During this past year we worked diligently with our departments to recruit top notch candidates to fill our vacancies in a competitive job market. We:

- > Received 3,150 online employment applications and 62 paper applications
- > Reviewed nearly 3,212 applications, of which 2,691 met the minimum qualifications and were referred to the respective departments
- > On-boarded 230 new hires
- > Processed 65 promotions, 70 resignations, 19 retirements, eight probationary dismissals, five involuntary separations and 58 disciplinary actions
- > Processed 93 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) packets
- > Reviewed and processed 515 Employee Performance Evaluations with an above average score of 3.54 out of 5

Major Project

In an ongoing effort to the county's commitment to provide a positive work environment for our employees, and to ensure compliance with Federal and State laws, we provided all employees with an updated Personnel Policy Handbook this year.

Partnering with the Bay County Clerk of Court, more than half of the HR Team was also heavily involved with a major software implementation project that will ultimately streamline our processes and enable us to work much more efficiently.

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8201 | humanresources@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

human resources

Training and Development

Through the continued support of the county manager who understands and supports the value of providing training initiatives to our employees, we continue to develop our training programs to give our employees the tools they will need to hone their skills and succeed in their careers.

During this past year we continued to conduct our Servant Leadership Program for our employees in management roles in order to practice this leadership philosophy throughout our organization. The goal of this program is to develop leaders whose main goal is to put the needs of their employees first by providing the means necessary to develop and succeed at their jobs.

We also continued our Leadership Development Academy comprising 20 unique courses, including a Capstone Course that requires participants to present a project before attendees in order to be eligible to graduate. Employees voluntarily go through this program to enhance their leadership skills and will no doubt make our organization and the employees they serve stronger and more capable.

A total of 40 classes were offered in our New Employee Academy with 128 new hires in attendance. These classes provide education on important employment law topics, as well as workplace culture and relationships. This curriculum also includes process improvement training as an introduction to Six Sigma philosophies, ensuring employees are exposed to this topic from the beginning of their careers with Bay County. New employees must attend all required classes before they are eligible to move out of probationary status employment.

Giving Back to the Community

Bay County employees continued to meet the needs of our citizens by participating in three blood drives that we hosted in 2023. As one of the biggest donors for OneBlood, they depend on our employees to provide the life-saving blood donations for those in need in our local hospitals. Our employees donated 321 units of blood, which all stays here locally, potentially saving 963 lives.

Wellness Initiative

The EVOLVE wellness initiative and Coach JT remain one of the top employee benefits for employees.

In 2024, JT launched a new initiative to work more closely with FIRE/EMS on improving functional fitness, on-the-go nutrition, and mental health. The program was very well received by Emergency Services employees.

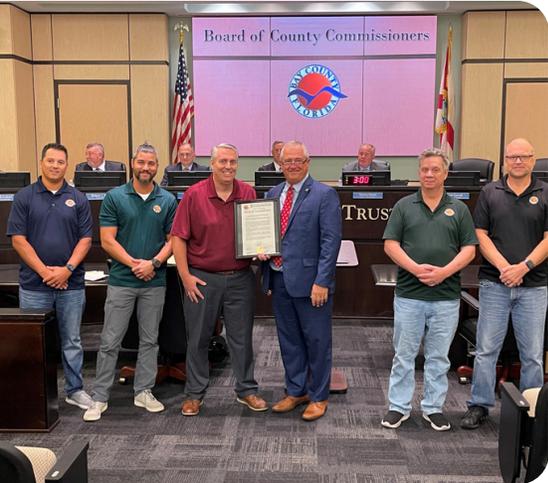
Our 2024 new employee participation more than doubled with 201 new employees seeking assistance due to an expansion of services, including a virtual weekly group call, online coaching sessions and seminars and workshops covering various topics.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > Eight employees were recognized for 15 years of service with Bay County
- > Eleven employees were recognized for 20 years of service with Bay County
- > Four employees were recognized for 25 years of service with Bay County
- > Two employees were recognized for 30 years of service with Bay County



information technology / geographic information systems



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

WHO WE ARE

The Information Technology Division supports county operations by providing reliable and stable telecommunications and data management infrastructure and maintaining all computers, video security systems, access control, mobile devices, and other electronic-related systems. IT assists with the technical aspects of our various websites and assists others with reports and technical matters. IT is also responsible for network connectivity, software deployment, database creation and management, email services, and overall information security.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Supported county operations by providing a reliable and stable network with 99 percent uptime, making county services available to citizens without delays.
- > Averaged 84,000 unique website visitors monthly, totaling more than 1 million visitors during FY2024.
- > Received 8 million emails during FY24, 25 percent of which were caught by a security filter.
- > Blocked 11,000 viruses through cybersecurity solutions.
- > Awarded year two of the Florida Digital Service Cybersecurity Grant to expand cybersecurity initiatives.
- > Passed a third-party assessment/audit to validate backup procedures and infrastructure to assess National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) compliance.
- > Implemented and maintained building access control, keeping the county's buildings safe and secure.
- > Implemented and maintained patch management keeping the county's data safe and secure.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

WHO WE ARE

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) provides mapping services and products to internal county departments, the public, and other agencies. The GIS Division functions as a service-focused central resource of geographic information. We provide customer assistance, mapping, spatial analysis, data integration, application development, and deployment of content-specific web-mapping solutions to provide access to geographic data. Our web maps are available 24 hours a day for users to access the information they need.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Averaged 23,000 unique visitors to the BayView app each month, totaling more than 276,000 visitors during FY24.
- > Continued collaboration with Emergency Services to facilitate a significant GIS-centric upgrade to Next Generation 9-1-1.
- > Worked with Esri Professional Services to migrate 90 percent of Bay County's web maps to Esri's new Experience Builder Platform.
- > Worked with Solid Waste to add their division to Cartegraph, the county's asset management software.
- > We managed and maintained an interactive story map with locations of Bay County surtax projects.

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www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

The Capital Projects Division provides project oversight for the county's vertical capital projects to ensure feasible and cost-effective designs and construction. The capital projects team oversees each project during the planning, design, permitting, and construction phases, including coordination with other departments, architects, and engineering consultants until the completion of the project.

Capital Projects is dedicated to the construction and renovation of Bay County's vertical infrastructure; providing project management to ensure completion of projects on time, within budget and to the highest quality for its citizens.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In FY2024, the Capital Projects team managed approximately \$17 million in vertical construction projects and design, including grant-funded projects, renovations, and construction of new buildings.

Projects include:

- > Design of the Bay County Sheriff Office's new helicopter facility.
- > Renovation of a warehouse into the new Emergency Services Maintenance Complex.
- > Construction of the new Juvenile Justice Courthouse addition at the Bay County Courthouse.
- > Assisted the Roads and Bridges division in the demolition of Barefoot Palms.
- > Assisted the Housing Division with home demolitions as part of the Rebuild Bay Housing Program.



CONTACT US:

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www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

The Engineering Division is staffed with professional engineers, a licensed professional surveyor, surveying parties, engineering technicians, FDOT-certified inspectors, and administrative staff dedicated to providing quality surveying, transportation and stormwater engineering, and construction management for the citizens of Bay County.

Engineering aims to provide the citizens of Bay County with quality, best-value engineering services in support of the construction, maintenance, and repair of Bay County's roads and stormwater management systems and capital improvement projects.

The Engineering Division is responsible for providing program management, design, permitting, inspection, and construction management services necessary to implement Public Works' transportation and stormwater programs. Additional responsibilities include improving the safety and efficiency of the county's transportation and stormwater systems; assisting Roads and Bridges in road maintenance; handling citizen inquiries; managing the Participating Paving Program (PPP); and managing the Adopt-a-Highway Program.

Engineering's priorities include:

- > Assisting the Roads and Bridges Division and other county departments as needed.
- > Facilitating the Half-Cent Surtax Capital Improvement Program.
- > Completing design of projects generated by Roads and Bridges work requests.
- > Applying for and managing grants.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Continued Hurricane Michael recovery with various roadway repairs and rehabilitation.
- > Continued implementation of the surtax projects.
- > Provided assistance to other departments in surveying, environmental, and engineering services.

Engineering has been working on many grant opportunities such as dirt road paving, safety projects, capacity improvement projects, stormwater improvement projects, intersection improvements, East Pass evaluation, and flooding home buyouts.

Engineering also completed or initiated the following Capital Improvement Plan projects:

- > FY2024 Local Dirt Road Stabilization
- > FY2023 Annual Resurfacing Phase II
- > FY2024 Resurfacing Phase I and II
- > W. Linger Longer Rd Stabilization
- > Redwood Ave Drainage Improvements
- > East Pass Evaluation
- > Minge Branch Roadway
- > County Line Rd Stabilization Project
- > Hurricane Michael Roadway Rehabilitation
- > East Hiland Park and Sherman Ave Drainage Improvement Projects
- > Titus Rd and CR 2321 Roundabout
- > HMGP Dirt Road Stabilization Project
- > CR 2297 Safety Project

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8301 | engineering@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

mosquito control

WHO WE ARE

Bay County Mosquito Control Division's priority is the protection of public health by the suppression of pestiferous mosquitoes capable of potentially spreading viruses. We are staffed by professional technicians certified in public health pest control and licensed through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). We provide specialized mosquito control services for the residents of our county. Our main areas of operation are mosquito sample collection and identification, arbovirus surveillance and testing, Larvaciding, Adulticiding, and source reduction. These operations cohesively work to service 25 districts of Bay County, Florida.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Mosquito Control had a slightly late start for the kick-off into the spray season at the end of March 2024, primarily due to inconsistent weather patterns. All of our teams carefully monitored known low areas susceptible to holding water. Our Adulticide team observed great results from occasionally alternating the use of products to prevent pesticide resistance. Implementing these methods proved effective to mosquito colonies that can become chemically resistant to pesticides. For our Larvicide team, the use of Granular products has shown to provide long-lasting results for areas that hold stagnant water. These remote areas that are difficult to reach are a constant struggle for the Larvicide team to treat and maintain. Here the purpose is to counteract the first stages of the mosquito life cycle. Since the implementation of the Granular products, our Larvicide team has seen great improvements in the efficacy of treatments over extended periods. Late summer and into the fall season became a challenge due to precipitation from storms and hurricanes, which greatly increases mosquito populations with stagnant water as a major culprit. The surveillance team conducted more than 300 randomized, triple-panel tests this year in search of mosquito-borne diseases with little success in their findings. This comes as a success to our department as a whole since it means we have properly served Bay County citizens with our topmost priority, preventing the spread of mosquito-borne illnesses.

Identification Operations:

- > Deployed, set, and retrieved traps 1,853 times
- > Counted and identified 239,736 mosquitoes

Larvaciding Operations:

- > Answered 161 service requests
- > Inspected 7,627 mosquito breeding sites
- > Treated 3,823 sites
- > Stocked 15 pools with minnows
- > Manually back-pack sprayed 33 sites for a total coverage of 4.09 acres
- > Removed 1,011 abandoned waste tires
- > Performed 21 neighborhood sweeps
- > Treated 4,522 storm drains

Adulticiding Operations:

- > Traveled 13,785.90 miles
- > Sprayed 971 times
- > Treated 497,342.92 acres

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8720 | mosquito@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



roads and bridges



WHO WE ARE

The Roads and Bridges Division is staffed by licensed construction operators and truck drivers, skilled craftsman, maintenance workers, customer service representatives, resource accountants, and program managers. Our mission is to provide efficient and high-quality operations and maintenance of county roads, bridges, and stormwater facilities.

The Roads and Bridges Division is responsible for the maintenance and repair work necessary to sustain the county transportation and stormwater infrastructure at an acceptable level of service. When possible, system improvements are made to enhance capacity, improve service, and protect the environment. Work is identified through route maintenance schedules, routine and special inspections, customer service work requests, state inspections, and regulatory requirements.

The division answers customer inquiries regarding the location and ownership of transportation rights-of-way and stormwater drainage easements. It also responds to commissioner inquiries and assists other governmental agencies when possible. The division manages the Residential Driveway Permit Program which regulates the connection of residential properties to county roadways. The program provides the direction required providing for safe access connections to the county transportation network while maintaining roadside drainage systems.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In FY2024, the Bay County Roads and Bridges Division staff conducted the following daily maintenance duties:

- > Roads and Bridges received 2,115 service requests.
- > Maintained approximately 130 miles of county-owned dirt roadways, with a 75-percent success rate of routine grading within a 21-day cycle.
- > Inspected, repaired, or replaced more than 2.2 miles of stormwater pipe and 267 inlet boxes.
- > Maintained/repaired the Public Works equipment fleet. In FY2024, Roads and Bridges service technicians completed more than 1,195 repairs with a value of \$795,837.

CONTACT US:

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www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

The Traffic Engineering Division is staffed by experienced transportation professionals, consisting of engineering, technical, and administrative staff with special expertise in the planning, design, construction, integration, operation, maintenance, project management, and overall support of transportation technology system deployment projects. Such projects include the countywide advanced traffic signal system, the associated Intelligent Transportation System, and the regional Traffic Management Center (TMC) facility.

The Traffic Engineering Division is responsible for the design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance of all road signs and pavement markings located on roadways within unincorporated Bay County. The division additionally maintains all traffic signals, school zone installations, and other traffic control devices within Bay County, including those located in the local municipalities. The Traffic Engineering Division also operates and maintains the regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), which not only encompasses the network of 190 traffic signals but also an array of roadside devices used to manage the overall transportation network from the central TMC facility. The regional ITS manages over 200 miles of underground fiber optic cable, including design, modifications, and responding to 12,000 locate tickets from the Florida Sunshine One Call Program. It also handles emergency repairs to the cable, conduit, and network equipment. The system includes 131 pan/tilt/zoom traffic cameras, more than 24 travel-time sensors, five dynamic messaging signs, several portable variable message signs, and other roadside transportation devices.

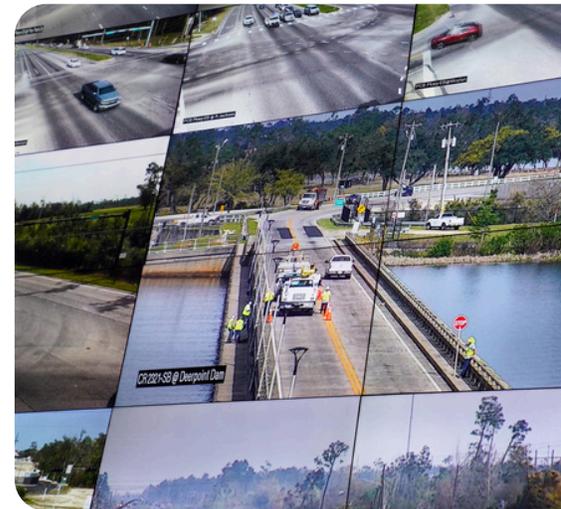
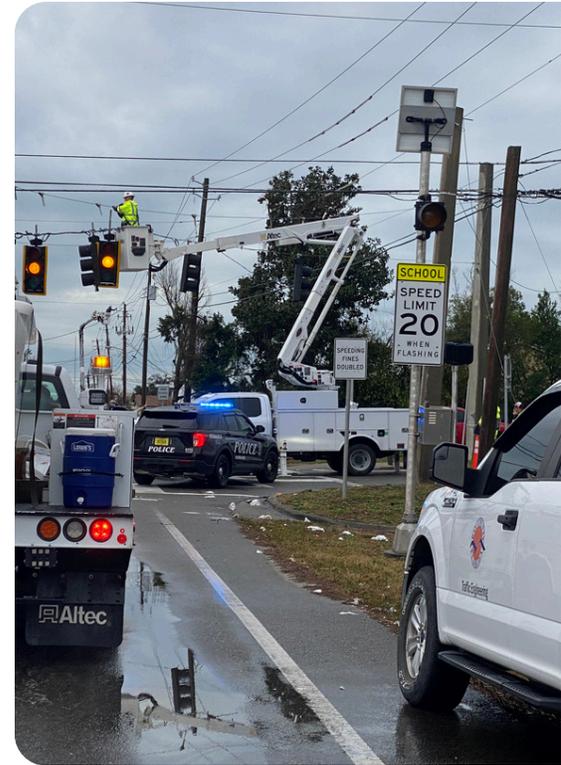
The Traffic Engineering Division maintains more than 21,000 road signs as well as administers many transportation-related grant programs.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Oversaw two Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Studies for Philip Griffitts Sr. Parkway and C.R. 2321.
- > Led updates to the county's Concurrency Management System to align with FDOT-level service standards.
- > Managed fiber hardening project to enhance network connectivity and redundancy.
- > Established fiber connections to five new signalized intersections within the ITS.
- > Oversaw traffic signal mast arm replacement, replacing 14 span wire intersections with storm-rated mast arms.
- > Repaired and replaced three highway light poles on the Deer Point Dam bridge (County Road 2321).
- > Installed first radio frequency preemption device at Lynn Haven Fire Department to improve emergency response.
- > Rebuilt signalized intersection after tornado damage, including span wire support repairs.
- > Managed traffic signal corridor retiming project on U.S. 231.
- > Installed four solar-powered speed feedback signs and coordinated speed hump/sign projects on local roads.
- > Provided traffic signal inspection and acceptance services for four projects.
- > Installed video detection cameras and new communication cables at U.S. Business 98 and Third Street intersection.
- > Replaced three signal control cabinets and eight pedestrian poles due to vehicle impacts.
- > Repaired 12 traffic signal battery backup units and added two new locations.
- > Installed remote power monitoring units at eight intersections to reduce downtime.
- > Installed more than a dozen new CCTV cameras for enhanced traffic monitoring.
- > Installed and relocated Bluetooth travel time monitoring devices for improved signal timing optimization.
- > Restriped pavement markings on various streets and installed additional stop bar and crosswalk markings.
- > Replaced 1,176 traffic signs and installed 105 new roadside signs across county roads.

CONTACT US:

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infrastructure surtax

Bay County has completed the following projects with funding from the surtax:

RESURFACING:

- > North Lagoon Road with multi-use path, Silver Lake Road, Center Drive, Camelia Street, County Road 2302, High Point Road, Indian Bluff Road, East Avenue (State 77 to County 390), East Avenue (390 to Baldwin), County Road 2297, Laird Street, Allison Avenue, Harvard Boulevard, Bayou George Drive, Merritt Brown Road, Cherokee Heights Road, Edwards Road, County Road 388, Pine Log Road, Frankford Avenue, Wildwood Road, and Thomas Drive

DIRT ROAD STABILIZATION AND DRAINAGE PROJECTS:

- > Bertha Nelson Road
- > Wendy Road
- > Cowels Road Veal Road
- > Nehi Road
- > Silver Lake Road
- > S. Silver Lake Road

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

- > County Road 389 and State Road 77
- > County Road 389 and U.S. 231
- > Moylan Road and Panama City Beach Parkway
- > County Road 389 and Dundee Lane

BRIDGE REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT PROJECTS:

- > Deer Point Dam repair/rehabilitation
- > East Avenue bridge replacement
- > County Road 2297

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NOTICE OF VIOLATION PROJECTS:

- > Webber Road
- > Sorrel's Drive Old
- > Allentown Road

CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

- > Loop Road Phase 2
- > Jenks Avenue widening - Baldwin to State Road 390
- > County Road 2321 to State Road 390 Connector Road

ROADWAY SAFETY PROJECTS:

- > Laird Street sidewalks
- > Frankford Avenue sidewalks
- > Magnolia Beach Road sidewalks, phases 1 and 2
- > Merritt Brown Road sidewalks
- > Front Beach Road sidewalks

STORMWATER CAPACITY PROJECTS:

- > Allison Avenue Regional Stormwater Facility
- > Laird Stormwater Basin Study



ABOUT THE INFRASTRUCTURE SURTAX

Voters approved the Bay County Half-Cent Infrastructure Surtax in 2016 by a margin of greater than 10 percent, with the funding aimed at improving area roadways and infrastructure. Collection of the sales tax began in early 2017. The county collects about \$18 million annually and works to leverage that funding for grants and partnerships that often significantly augment the county's annual surtax revenues each year.

The tax is for use exclusively in Bay County to repair local roads, reduce neighborhood flooding, and reduce traffic congestion. The sales tax generates roughly \$21 million annually split between the county and its cities by a formula based on population. Bay County's Revenue must be spent on needed roadway and infrastructure improvements, as mandated by the ballot language. As an added layer of protection to ensure that the money is spent wisely, a citizens' oversight committee was empaneled as part of the referendum and meets regularly to check the county's progress.

The increased revenues have allowed the county to address a more than \$57 million backlog in needed road resurfacing as well embark on other infrastructure improvements, including bridge replacements, intersection improvement projects, dirt road stabilization, capacity and stormwater improvements, roadway safety, and more.

The dollars raised by the sales tax must be spent inside Bay County on local projects. Tallahassee and Washington, D.C. have no say on how or where the money is spent; however, the availability of funding may make grant applications that require matching funds more competitive. Bay County has been able to leverage the tax to obtain more than \$42 million in grant funding.

The sales tax is levied on eligible goods with a value of up to the first \$5,000 of value – the tax is capped at \$25 per item.

For more information about the surtax, visit www.bayhalfcent.com.

CONTACT US:

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www.bayhalfcent.com



WHO WE ARE

The Purchasing Department is responsible for coordinating the county's central procurement system, promoting efficiency, economy, and fair and open competition in an effort to reduce the appearance and opportunity for favoritism or impropriety. We strive to inspire public confidence that purchase orders and contracts are awarded equitably and economically. It is essential for effective and ethical procurement that there is a consistent system of procedures which establish basic guidelines to regulate procurement activities, contract management, and the resulting distribution of funds.

The Purchasing Department is staffed with five full-time employees charged with abiding by, upholding, and adhering to the county's procurement code and manual to guard against the misuse or misinterpretation of those rules and regulations.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In FY2024, the Purchasing Department:

- Provided management oversight of the county's purchasing card program with a purchase volume of more than \$3.1 million and realized an annual rebate of more than \$43,000.
- Provided sales and support to county staff through ordering goods and services valued at more than \$89 million through 677 purchase orders.
- Provided sales and support to county staff and vendors through 60 solicitations resulting in contracts valued at more than \$86 million.
- Utilized online and on-site auction services to dispose of surplus and obsolete equipment in order to maximize the county's investment. Purchasing conducted five auctions resulting in a return of more than \$84,000.
- Represented Bay County at the Central Gulf Coast Chapter of the NIGP Reverse Trade Show, meeting with more than 100 new vendors interested in providing goods and services to Bay County.



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WHO WE ARE

In July 2012, the federal RESTORE Act (Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act) established a trust fund from administrative and civil penalties related to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Five “pots” of funds were set up in the federal trust fund.

A portion of funds from Pot 1 and Pot 3 are reserved for Bay County. Settlement payments will be made into the trust fund over a number of years and will gradually be available to the county. The county’s share of Pot 1 will be approximately \$42 million over 15 years. Pot 3 will provide about \$11 million. The county will also pursue matching funds. The money can be used to restore and protect the natural resources and economy of the Gulf Coast region.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners decides which eligible projects to fund. Based on recommendations from a citizens advisory committee, the board selected projects for the first funds available from Pot 1, the Direct Component, and for all funds which will be available from Pot 3, the Spill Impact Component. A grant application must be submitted to the U.S. Department of the Treasury for each Pot 1 project and to the Gulf RESTORE Council for each Pot 3 project.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > The North Bay Wastewater Reuse grant will be used for pumps and infrastructure to provide reuse water to the new Southport Sports Complex, the Bay County Emergency Operations Center and the Gulf Coast Community College North Campus. The project is currently in the final design stage.
- > Based on the approved feasibility study, the project is going through preliminary engineering with a permitting phase to follow.
- > Bay County Artificial Reef website Bay County Artificial Reefs - Bay County - University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences - UF/IFAS (ufl.edu) went live early spring of 2024. Materials deployment contractor completed installation of eight artificial reefs. The reefs are located about six nautical miles southwest of St. Andrew Bay Pass
- > The East Bay Living Shoreline and Seagrass Project is in the planning and preliminary design phase. Project location was moved from East Bay and to the southern side of Tyndall Air Force Base in the St. Andrew Sound due to the East Bay project location being unsuitable for seagrass enhancement activities.
- > With funding provided by the Nature Conservancy and Bay County RESTORE Act funds, the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program (SASJBEP), hosted by FSU Panama City, has developed a Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The plan can be found at CCMP | St. Andrew & St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program (sasjbep.org). Additional information on SASJBEP’s program and available resource can be found at St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program (sasjbep.org)
- > St. Andrew Bay Watch group continues water quality testing program in the St. Andrew Bay
- > The project includes construction of a sewer collection system for the residents in the Deer Point Protection Zone and removal of failing septic tanks within this zone. The county has received a Gulf Consortium (pot 3 funding) grant and is in the process of the preliminary procurement process.
- > The grant application for construction of East Highland Park Stormwater Treatment Facility is in progress. The project is currently in the preliminary design and stormwater modeling phase.
- > The grant application for paving dirt roads is under review by Gulf Consortium group.

Additional information on RESTORE is available at baycountyfl.gov.

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(850) 248-8253 | publicworks@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



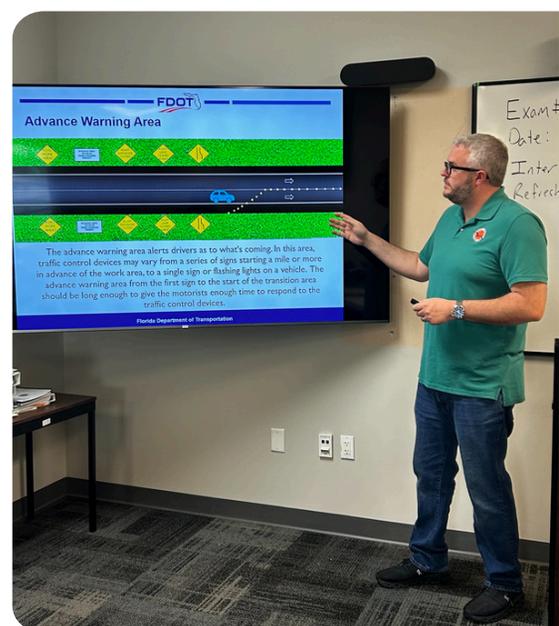
WHO WE ARE

The mission of Risk Management is to ensure the safety and well-being of all Bay County employees, its properties, and the citizens of Bay County. Our responsibility is to produce and implement safety programs that provide a safe work environment, provide essential training for employees, and maintain safe facilities for citizens to enjoy.

Risk Management also works to administer the Americans with Disabilities Act Program for the county. Under this same umbrella, the department oversees a very successful and long-standing Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Program with three of the five constitutional offices participating. The County Self-Insured Workers' Compensation Program includes a Drug Free Workplace Program and an active Safety Program. Additionally, Risk Management is responsible for the management of the county's insurance programs, hazardous chemical state reporting, incident/accident reporting, and claims processing. We are dedicated to providing the best products, safest environment, and most diligent service to employees and the citizens of Bay County.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

- > Risk Management recovered more than \$67,780 in third-party claims. These claims are collected from the other party's insurance company for damages to county property.
- > The team logged and investigated more than 240 reported incidents in the county for FY2024.
- > Risk Management successfully found light duty for 99 percent of employees with Workers' Compensation restrictions. Finding light duty assignments is one factor which helps reduce our Workers' Compensation premiums. This year our Workers' Compensation Experience Modification was 0.83, which is well below the state average of 1.00.
- > The team continues to expand its safety training program. These programs are focused on the safety of both county employees and the citizens of Bay County. Classes include bucket truck operations, temporary traffic control, and CPR/First-Aid.
- > Risk Management has successfully met the state regulated Tier II completion deadline for the 14th consecutive year.
- > Risk Management also successfully set Bay County up as a Third Party Testing agency through the FLHSMV for CDL licensure.

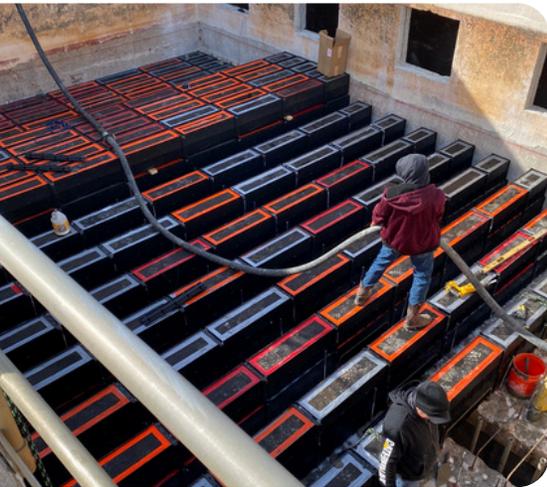


CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8230 | risk@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

UTILITY SERVICES

water and wastewater



WHO WE ARE

For more than 50 years, Bay County Utility Services (BCUS) has provided Bay County with reliable, economical, and high-quality water and wastewater services. We employ highly trained people and use state-of-the-art equipment while continuing to set industry standards as they relate to procedures, methods, and customer service. Bay County Utility Services is committed to customer satisfaction and is always looking for ways to streamline processes to reduce redundancy and expense. Our customers receive the most cost-effective service to reduce water losses while conserving one of the world's most precious resources.

The Utility Services Department employs more than 80 people who make up the Water, Wastewater, and Utility Permitting divisions, along with laboratory and administrative staff dedicated to providing quality water and wastewater services. The Water Division treats and distributes drinking water to the local municipalities, Tyndall Air Force Base, and the county's retail customers in the unincorporated area. The Water Division also provides untreated raw water for local industry use in their cooling processes. Utility Services owns and operates one water treatment plant which is permitted to treat 60 million gallons of water per day, two raw water pumping stations, six water booster stations, with approximately 400 miles of retail and wholesale infrastructure.

The Wastewater Division provides wastewater treatment services to unincorporated Bay County and the cities of Callaway, Parker, Springfield, Mexico Beach, and Tyndall Air Force Base. Utility Services operates two wastewater treatment plants strategically located throughout the county to provide sewer services to residents. The Wastewater Division also manages the Bay County Environmental Laboratory, which provides short hold-time analysis for the department.

The Permitting Division facilitates the review and processing of plans and permits for the Utility Services Department, which includes water and wastewater construction contract assistance and bid preparation. The Permitting Division performs construction site inspections and project management and performs water and wastewater utility locates for public and private development and construction.

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-5010 | utilityservices@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

water and wastewater

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Bay County Utility Services has consistently provided high quality service to our citizens. Our talented team of employees were able to accomplish the following:

- > Star Avenue Water Resiliency Project – This \$4 million project will help supply water to North Panama City to utilizing 19,000 LF of 16” water main and the Booster Pump Station that Bay County purchased from the City of Callaway.
- > Filter Replacement Project – This \$3 million project replaced outdated and failing underdrain system on three filters at the Water Treatment Plant. These filters were showing signs of age and needed to be rehabbed. The filter media was removed along with the underdrain system. All new underdrain system and new media was installed. The plan is to rehab all 11 filters over the new few years.
- > Removal of flocculator paddle equipment at the Water Treatment Plant – the old equipment was very high in maintenance costs and one entire treatment train had to be offline for it to be maintained. Old paddle equipment was removed for the installation of new state-of-the-art mixer flocculators. The new mixers are mounted on a rail system for easy removal. This allows for less maintenance and can be repaired while the treatment train is in service. (\$200,000)
- > MPAWTF FEMA Project – Replaced the switchgear that was damaged by Hurricane Michael. The switchgear will ensure resiliency in the event of another extreme weather event and in the event of an extended power outage. (\$2,310,012)
- > MPAWTF FEMA Project – Installation of four blowers to replace the damaged blowers from hurricane Michael. The new blowers have magnetic bearings for reduced maintenance and increased energy efficiency. (\$825,350)
- > ITB 23-37 FEMA Project Retail – Installation of 49 lift station control panels to replace damaged panels from Hurricane Michael. The new lift station control panels have upgraded electronics and new communication devices to allow for more immediate responses to lift station emergencies and avoid overflow. (\$1,548,365)
- > MPAWTF Force main extension – Bay County Utilities worked with USACE to connect a new force main built to capture flows from Tyndall Air Force base. The new force main ensures the continued operation of Tyndall AFB’s wastewater system and uninterrupted completion of the bases mission. (\$335,300)
- > Locate technicians performed 13,631 water and wastewater locates.
- > The Utility Permitting Division reviewed new residential neighborhood development permits, resulting in more than 2,170 new residential and commercial connections.
- > Annual drawdown of Deer Point Reservoir – Every year the county draws down Deer Point Reservoir from November through February at the request of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The annual drawdown decreases nuisance aquatic vegetation, consolidates and releases nutrients from the exposed shoreline sediments, improves fishing and boating access, and enhances fish spawning habitat.



2024 DRINKING WATER CONSUMPTION Million Gallons

	FY2023	FY2024
PANAMA CITY	1,989	2,381
PANAMA CITY BEACH	4,693	4,800
SPRINGFIELD	348	293
PARKER	120	130
CALLAWAY	460	552
LYNN HAVEN	155	238
MEXICO BEACH	99	166
TAFB	160	359
BAY COUNTY	1076	1011
TOTAL	9,100	9,900

economic development alliance



WHO WE ARE

The Economic Development Alliance of Bay County (Bay EDA) is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to stimulating economic growth and improving the quality of life for the citizens of Bay County. Bay EDA operates as a 501(c)(6), public/ private partnership funded by Bay County, our cities, private businesses and community partners who share our mission and are committed and invested in growing and diversifying our local economy. Using an experienced and professional team of economic developers, Bay EDA presents the positive points of Bay County to businesses, industry, and professional leaders nationally and internationally who bring jobs to the community.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

FY2024 was a successful year for the Bay Economic Development Alliance. Bay EDA had the opportunity to work projects, such as: Spinner (500 Jobs/ \$107 million investment), Amadeus (50 Jobs / \$5 million investment), Clear (200 Jobs / \$17.5 million investment), Clean (50 Jobs / \$10 million investment), Opal (300 Jobs / \$1 billion investment) and Trailblazer (1,100 jobs / \$1 billion investment).

Project Spinner purchased a 140,000-square-foot building in Lynn Haven and is expected to announce plans for future investment at the airport. Additionally, Bay EDA submitted and received approvals for \$31.5 million in grant requests from Triumph Gulf Coast and UWF IRDF grant funds to support Project Spinner. Furthermore, Bay EDA continues to support previously recruited industries such as FedEx Ground, Central Moloney Inc., Mocama Marine, Southern Sky Aviation, and Premier Aviation.

BayEDA continues to work as the “tip of the spear” for companies looking to expand or set up new operations in Bay County. The team supports both existing and new industry in all aspects of this endeavor. Additionally, Bay EDA attended 13 recruitment trips outside of Bay County and hosted 15 site visits in our community with prospective companies and/or site consultants. The team recruited 10 new investors to join the Bay EDA investor network in FY2024 as well as welcomed new Director of Finance and Administration Cyndi Cleghorn.

Past Project Highlights:

- > **Central Moloney Inc.**, a top supplier of electrical distribution transformers and parts nationwide, launched a new manufacturing venture in Bay County, specializing in single-phase pole mounted transformers. Since its start in the second quarter of 2023 at VentureCrossings® Enterprise Centre, the company has hired approximately 130 employees with plans to generate 200 new jobs. Working alongside the Bay County Board of Commissioners and Triumph Gulf Coast, the Bay EDA secured a \$7 million Triumph Gulf Coast Grant and \$2 million in University of West Florida IRDF grant funds to support the project, aiding in reducing the company’s ad-valorem tax liability and constructing a six-acre finished goods storage facility.
- > **Mocama Marine LLC**, a marine manufacturing company, announced on Sept. 6, 2022 that they would establish their boat manufacturing operation and company headquarters in Bay County. The company has created 40 of 105 new jobs and have invested nearly \$10.5 million in this new operation. Production began in the second quarter 2023 in two existing buildings totaling 120,000 square feet on Bay Line Drive. The company has completed renovations on both buildings to support their operations. The project received support from the Bay EDA, Bay County Board of County Commissioners, and other various organizations, securing \$3,675,000 in Triumph Gulf Coast grant funds and \$500,000 from the University of West Florida IRDF. Mocama Marine LLC owns boat brands Action Craft and Southwind Deckboats.
- > **Southern Sky Aviation**, based in Birmingham, Alabama, completed construction on a new \$30 million fixed base operation (FBO) at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport. Their grand opening was held Apr. 24, 2024, where many community members attended the ribbon cutting. The company has had a successful first year at the airport and anticipates future success at this location. The project includes an 8,800 square foot FBO terminal and more than 73,000 square feet of hangar space.



CONTACT US:

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www.bayeda.com

mexico beach community development council

WHO WE ARE

The Mexico Beach Community Development Council (MBCDC) is dedicated to promoting the Mexico Beach area, highlighting its accommodations and attractions to inspire visitors to enjoy a memorable beach vacation here. Funded by a 5-percent tourist development tax on short-term accommodations in Mexico Beach, the organization not only leads marketing efforts but also supports beach nourishment, festivals and events, and community stewardship.

Though Mexico Beach is Bay County's smallest city, spanning less than five miles, it offers a rich variety of activities through its unique tourism offerings. As a distinctive beach destination, Mexico Beach provides visitors with year-round adventures that embrace a relaxed, easy-going vibe.

For more information on Mexico Beach tourism, visit www.MexicoBeach.com.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

The MBCDC celebrated a successful year with new businesses opening and existing ones thriving. Visitor impact reached record-breaking levels, with lodging revenues surpassing 2023 figures even before the fourth quarter of 2024. Mexico Beach remains a relaxing, inviting destination for those seeking a break from the hustle and bustle, offering beautiful beaches and a serene atmosphere.

Marketing efforts played a vital role in 2024's success. Fresh creative assets and captivating imagery were gathered and shared with both past and potential visitors, encouraging them to explore Mexico Beach. Collaborations with partners expanded marketing reach through additional publications and engaging video storytelling. With a continued focus on brand recognition and showcasing the essence of "The Unforgettable Coast" continues to welcome both new and returning visitors to its shores.

Events, Tournaments, and More

The year began with the annual Gumbo Cook-Off at the Mexico Beach Boat Ramp Park, organized by Special Events for Mexico Beach. This popular event continues to be the largest fundraiser for the July Fourth fireworks show. In May, the Welcome Center hosted the annual "Punch on the Porch" event, celebrating hospitality and tourism appreciation month. Spring brought back both the GollyWhopper Classic Fishing Tournament and the Mexico Beach Artificial Reef Association's Kingfish Tournament, each having an overwhelming participation and success. July 4th, celebrated with our annual "Best Blast on the Beach" fireworks show and the 5K Fun Run, drawing the largest crowds Mexico Beach has seen in years. The free "Music in the Park" concert series ran throughout September, attracting large audiences to every show. November saw the return of the Thanksgiving Day Turkey Trot, with participants enthusiastically running, walking, and waddling across the finish line. The annual Christmas Tree Lighting delighted the community with a festive golf cart parade, a heartwarming moment when a special community member lit the tree, and a memorable visit from Santa. The MBCDC proudly continues to support all these events through volunteer efforts as well as in-kind and paid marketing contributions.

Beach Restoration

The MBCDC secured grant funding that allows a full beach restoration project to be completed in 2025. This project enacts a \$27 million, grant-funded full beach restoration project that will place sand along the entire coastline in Mexico Beach. The first full-scale beach nourishment of the Mexico Beach shoreline is a very important storm protection project for Mexico Beach that has taken years of hard work and planning. The Mexico Beach Community Development Council began work on this project prior to the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael.

The MBCDC continues to partner in the "Stay it Forward" campaign, created by the Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau. Collectively, visitors, students, and residents have planted more than 9,000 sea oats and other beach vegetation along the dunes in Mexico Beach.



CONTACT US:

850-648-8196 | 102 Canal Parkway, Mexico Beach, FL 32456
www.mexicobeach.com

panama city community development council



WHO WE ARE

Located along the serene St. Andrews Bay in Northwest Florida, Panama City brings together a unique mix of culinary, outdoor, and cultural experiences, all within a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. This combination continues to attract a wide range of visitors, including individuals, couples, and families. As Bay County's largest city and the county seat, Panama City encompasses multiple historic districts and vibrant neighborhoods, including its renowned oyster trail. Since its establishment as a tourist development taxing district in 2014, Destination Panama City (officially Panama City Community Development Council, Inc.) has led the charge in promoting the area's tourism. The 5-percent tourist development tax, collected from short-term accommodations, supports Destination Panama City's initiatives to showcase the city's distinct charm and broaden its appeal. In recent years, the city's resilience and diverse appeal—spanning ecotourism, history, culinary delights, and cultural enrichment—have empowered Panama City's tourism industry to overcome challenges and flourish.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

In 2024, Panama City continued its steady growth and community-focused initiatives. Destination Panama City capitalized on its strong drive market from the Southeast, focusing on placemaking, engaging storytelling, and eco-tourism to captivate audiences. Here's a look at this year's achievements:

Destination Panama City Visitor's Center

The bayfront Visitor's Center, opened in late 2021, has continued to serve as a gathering spot, hosting events such as the Roux Doux Cajun Food & Music Experience, Salute to Freedom, and GrooveFest. Open six days a week, the center serves as a vital resource for visitors, providing tailored recommendations to enhance their experience.

Events

Beyond organizing its signature events, Destination Panama City supported various community-led initiatives. Financial support extended to the Krewe of St. Andrews Mardi Gras, Public Eye Soar Digital Projection Festival, Panama City Songwriters Festival, FLLUXE Arts Festival, Panama City Symphony Orchestra's concert series, the inaugural Redfish Documentary Film Festival, and other popular events. With the support of these gatherings, Panama City attracted diverse audiences, bolstering its reputation as a cultural and tourism hub.

Glenwood Historical Marker Trail - Otocast

In 2024, Destination Panama City began work on an self-guided audio trail highlighting 17 historical markers in the Glenwood area. This interactive, self-guided experience, launching on the Otocast app in November 2024, offers residents and visitors an engaging way to explore Panama City's history through mobile audio tours, promoting local heritage while supporting outdoor activities.

St. Andrews School Restoration Project

This year, efforts continued on the historic St. Andrews School renovation. Listed on the National Historic Registry, this project aims to transform the school into a cultural arts venue by 2026, in time for its centennial. With support from local nonprofits and a sponsorship from St. Joe for the auditorium, the project is part of Destination Panama City's dedication to preserving and celebrating local history.

LovePC Living Shoreline Project

In conjunction with the University of Florida, Destination Panama City has started the first steps in acquiring the necessary permits and designs for a living shoreline project. This project will install reef balls immediately adjacent to the western seawall of the downtown Panama City Marina where there is known to be an area of depleted seagrass from prior dredge activities. The living shoreline project is Destination Panama City's commitment to maintaining a sustainable destination that visitors and locals will enjoy for generations to come.

CONTACT US:

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www.destinationpanamacity.com

panama city beach tourist development council

WHO WE ARE

The Bay County Tourist Development Council (TDC) and Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) are responsible for marketing Panama City Beach as a yearround tourist destination, funded through a 5-percent tourist development tax applied to short-term, overnight accommodation rentals in Panama City Beach, which equals about 18 million visitor days/nights each year. The tax also pays for beach renourishment, cleaning, and maintenance efforts.

The TDC owns and operates the 13-field Publix Sports Park and is working to develop an Indoor Sports Center to further expand and support the sports tourism market and serve as an asset to aid in the county's response and recovery efforts following an emergency event.

The TDC funds the lifeguard programs for Bay County and the City of Panama City Beach, equipment for first responders, and overtime during times of peak visitation for the Sheriff's Office and Beach Police.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

With the brand of **Real. FUN. Beach.**, the TDC promotes Panama City Beach as a tourist destination through cutting-edge marketing initiatives and creation of innovative events.

The TDC's goal was to reintroduce the Make It Yours creative campaign with fresh versions called "Where You Can Be You." The TDC launched additional initiatives focusing on sales, sports and FUN for ALL, our accessibility campaign.

Sports

PCB venues hosted 94 events with 3,739 teams and an economic impact of \$153 million. Publix Sports Park hosted 67 tournaments, bringing in 109,761 visitors. In total from FY2023 to FY2024, PCB Sports grew in economic impact by 5.5 percent and total visitors rose by 19.1 percent.

Sales

The Sales Department traveled across the nation, attending 23 tradeshows covering a variety of markets: leisure travel, group travel, incentive travel, meetings and conventions, military and more. The CVB Sales Team generated 17,365 group room nights booked, totaling \$68 million in economic impact.

Special Events

In 2024, the Special Events Department produced five signature events for Panama City Beach:

- > Mardi Gras & Music Festival
- > UNwineD March 2024
- > Pirates of the High Seas & Renaissance Fest
- > Beach Home for the Holidays
- > Visit PCB New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop

Special Initiatives

FUN for ALL - In 2024, Visit Panama City Beach built on the "Fun. For. All." initiative by partnering with Wheel the World to certify Panama City Beach as an official accessible destination, promoting inclusive travel and showcasing its commitment to welcoming all visitors.

Chasin' The Sun Fishing Show - The show enjoyed a viewership of 1.7 million on the Discovery Channel with another 21.5 million minutes streamed.

Color Your Summer Snapper Red Campaign - Visit PCB launched a new pulse campaign, called "Color your Summer Red." The campaign was launched to drive awareness about red snapper season in PCB while encouraging a trip to the destination.



CONTACT US:

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www.visitpanamacitybeach.com



WHO WE ARE

Rebuild Bay is Bay County's Long Term Recovery Organization/Group (LTRO/G) providing critical resources for the Bay County community. We were established to assist residents in their recovery following Hurricane Michael. With the subsequent disasters, including COVID, Hurricane Sally and torrential rains, and the wrap-around services required to assist residents, we have expanded our operations towards a community resilience focus. We seek to provide access to critical resources, education and advocacy to build resilient communities able to withstand disasters of any kind.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024?

Rebuild Bay hosted multiple volunteer groups, including ones from Valparaiso University, Alabama Disciples of Christ Church, Midtown Fellowship, Carlise Lacrosse Team, Iowa High School, and Common Faith Network.

Disaster Recovery

- > **Responded to Jan. 9 tornadoes** – stood up the Community Recovery Center to collect long-term impacts to residents. Served 101 residents, logged 94 volunteer hours, provided recovery assistance to impacted residents, including case management and housing referrals, home repair projects, temporary housing, and a trailer loaner program.
- > **Led Warming Center effort in January** – opened center at A.D. Harris Learning Village; served an average of 50 guests nightly for five nights and logged more than 150 volunteer hours.
- > **Deployed to Leon County** – responded to neighboring county following tornadoes in May; assisted with ESF-15 (volunteer and donation management) functions in the Leon County Emergency Operations Center, coordinating debris clean-up through volunteer organizations.

Community Resilience

- > **Food distributions** - Partnered with House of Hope Outreach Ministry, Goshen Resource and Recovery Program, and Forest Park Church on ten food distributions, including a Thanksgiving Meal Box Distribution; distributed more than 60,000 pounds of food to residents experiencing food insecurity.
- > **Supported Community Partnership Schools (CPS)** - provided monthly meal items for at least ten households per school.
- > **Keeping it Cool Program** – partnered with Family of God Men's Ministry to install 15 window air conditioning units for residents at risk of heat exhaustion.
- > **Glenwood community clean-up** - Partnered with the City of Panama City's Downtown North Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to continue home repair and clean-up projects and assisted five households with much needed work.
- > **Community Resilience Center (CRC)** – Successfully negotiated agreement with the Downtown North CRA for management of the A.D. Harris Learning Village to establish a resilience center, partnering with multiple organizations and businesses to enhance facility and provide services and programming to benefit the Bay County community.

CONTACT US:

(850) 481-1357 | information@rebuildbaycounty.org
www.rebuildbaycounty.org
[Facebook.com/RebuildBayCountyInc](https://www.facebook.com/RebuildBayCountyInc)
Text-2-Donate : REBUILDBAY (to 41444)

BAY COUNTY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
ADMINISTRATION	(850) 248-8140
ADDRESSING	(850) 248-8374
ANIMAL CONTROL	(850) 767-3333
BUDGET OFFICE	(850) 248-8240
BUILDING SAFETY	(850) 248-8350
CODE ENFORCEMENT	(850) 248-8290
COMMUNICATIONS	(850) 248-8170
CO-OP EXTENSION	(850) 784-6105
COUNTY ATTORNEY	(850) 248-8175
EMERGENCY SERVICES	(850) 248-6040
EMS	(850) 248-6070
ENGINEERING	(850) 248-8301
FACILITIES	(850) 248-8120
FIRE SERVICES	(850) 248-6040
GENERAL SERVICES	(850) 248-8732
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	(850) 248-8071
HUMAN RESOURCES	(850) 248-8201
HOUSING	(850) 248-2465
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	(850) 248-8004
LIBRARY	(850) 522-2100
MEDICAL EXAMINER	(850) 747-5740
MOSQUITO CONTROL	(850) 248-8720
PARKS & RECREATION	(850) 248-8730
PLANNING	(850) 248-8250
PUBLIC WORKS	(850) 248-8302
PURCHASING	(850) 248-8270
RECORDS MANAGEMENT	(850) 248-8278
RISK MANAGEMENT	(850) 248-8230
ROADS AND BRIDGES	(850) 248-8810
SECURITY	(850) 248-8195
SOLID WASTE	(850) 236-2212
TRANSIT	(850) 248-8195
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING	(850) 248-8740
UTILITY SERVICES	(850) 248-5010
VETERANS SERVICES	(850) 248-8280

CONSTITUTIONAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT	(850) 747-5100
CLERK FINANCE	(850) 747-5219
PROPERTY APPRAISER	(850) 248-8401
SHERIFF	(850) 747-4700
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS	(850) 784-6100
TAX COLLECTOR	(850) 248-8501

MUNICIPAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CALLAWAY	(850) 871-6000
LYNN HAVEN	(850) 265-2121
MEXICO BEACH	(850) 648-5700
PANAMA CITY BEACH	(850) 233-5100
PANAMA CITY	(850) 872-3000
PARKER	(850) 871-4104
SPRINGFIELD	(850) 872-7570

OTHER

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL	(850) 233-5070
FLORIDA STATE INFO CENTER	1-866-693-6748
ONLINE	http://411.myflorida.com
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE	(850) 215-9965

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
FIRE / POLICE / AMBULANCE	9-1-1
BAY COUNTY DISPATCH	(850) 784-4000
ANIMAL CONTROL DISPATCH	(850) 248-6034
POISON INFORMATION	1-800-222-1222



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