

# TALLAHASSEE REPORTS

Vol. 14 No. 12

June 20, 2026

TallahasseeReports.com

## The Reports

**On Wednesday June 10**, the Capital Conservatives hosted a mayoral campaign forum at the Elks Lodge on Magnolia Drive. **A1**

**The Leon County Commission** voted unanimously to take up a one-year moratorium against the creation of AI data centers in the county. **A1**

**The Tallahassee City Commission** voted 3-2 (Matlow, Porter against) to move forward with a voluntary annexation involving five parcels of rural land near the Lake Jackson area. **A3**

**Out-of-school suspension (OSS)** data from Leon County Schools shows that discipline trends among middle schools varied significantly between the 2021/22 and 2025/26 school years. **A5**

**David Jolly announced** Gwen Graham, the daughter of former Gov. Bob Graham, as his running mate. **A6**

**According to filings with** Leon County and the City of Tallahassee, the number of single-family residential construction permits was up 43.5% in May 2026 when compared to May 2025. **B1**

**Trulieve Cannabis Co.** has been approved for listing on the New York Stock Exchange. **B1**

## Leon County Commission Tackles Budget Issues

By Steve Stewart

During a budget workshop, Leon County Commissioners considered some changes to cut expenses if taxpayers vote to roll back property taxes this fall. At the workshop officials also discussed how the possible loss of property tax revenue could impact Leon County's budget in the coming years.

County officials said a study found Leon County is more reliant on the funds from property taxes than a typical Florida county, with property tax revenue making up about 60% of the county's budget. They also said there is no other revenue source that can replace the funds

BUDGET, Page A3

## Ausley, Parks, Foust Talk Civility at Forum

Commissioner Matlow continues attacks on Mayor Dailey, City

By Steve Stewart

On Wednesday June 10, the Capital Conservatives hosted a mayoral campaign forum at the Elks Lodge on Magnolia Drive. The candidates included former state lawmaker Lorraine Ausley, IT consulting firm owner Michael Foust, City Commissioner Jeremy Matlow and attorney and businessman Daryl Parks.

The format allowed each candidate to speak for five minutes. This was followed by a question-and-answer period.

While the evening did not provide any stark differences on policy issues, the opening remarks highlighted a divide among candidates over the style and priorities of city leadership. Three candidates — Lorraine Ausley, Daryl Parks, and Michael Foust — emphasized the importance of civility, collaboration, and restoring trust in local government, while Jeremy Matlow has centered his campaign around



From top left, clockwise: Lorraine Ausley, Daryl Parks, Mike Foust, Jeremy Matlow

allegations of dysfunction and concerns about transparency at City Hall.

The difference in style was evident near the end of the forum when Commissioner Mat-

low brought up Mayor Dailey's name. Dailey decided months ago not seek re-election.

FORUM, Page A4

## DeSantis Signs Law Enforcement Bills

By Jim Turner

The News Service of Florida

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a series of law enforcement-related measures Tuesday, with many of them designed to increase penalties for criminals and give police and prosecutors more options to pursue them.

The bills range from making it easier for police to identify an individual as a gang member to requiring criminals deemed "career offenders" have the designation on their driver's license.

DeSantis also used the bill signing event at the Winter Haven Police Department to warn of a state crackdown on "teen takeover" events where large groups of young people swarm public areas.

"We do not recognize any teen takeover. If you try that, you are doing that at your peril," DeSantis said. "And if the local officials are not holding you accountable, I'll put somebody in there who will hold you accountable."

Last week, Attorney General James Uthmeier announced a statewide initiative under the Office of Statewide Prosecution focused on "teen takeover" events.

"If you organize these destructive takeovers, we will find you, we will dismantle your network, and we will prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law," Uthmeier said in a release.

None of the bills signed Tuesday involved teen takeover events. But they do address a variety of law enforcement requests.

"I love a redemption arc. I love rehabilitation. But when you have some of these people that are career criminals, they are going to re-offend. And so you have to keep them off the street and make them serve their entire sentence," DeSantis said prior to signing the bills on Tuesday.

One of the bills signed Tuesday is an increase in registration requirements for individuals designated as a habitual violent felony offender, a violent career criminal, or a three-time violent felony offender (SB 1332).

Among the changes intended to make "career offender" registration similar to the sexual offender registry, those repeat offenders must annually provide the local sheriff with their address, phone number, employment, vehicles, professional licenses and immigration status. They must also report changes of address, phone numbers and employment within 48 hours.

The law, effective Oct. 1, also requires a career offender to obtain the marking of "775.261" on their driver license or identification card. The numbers refer to the section of state statutes defining "career offenders."

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Mark Glass

DESANTIS, Page A6

## Leon County, City Address Data Centers

By Steve Stewart

The Leon County Commission voted unanimously to take up a one-year moratorium against the creation of AI data centers in the county. The vote directed county staff to bring back an agenda item that would weigh the pros and cons of a possible moratorium. The issue was pushed by Leon County Commission Chairman Christian Caban.

In a June 9 letter to fellow commissioners, Caban said communities across the country are struggling to respond to the growth of large-scale data centers and the significant infrastructure demands that accompany them. He said the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence technology has created challenges for local governments trying to make long-term decisions about land use, utilities, and natural resources.

Caban said his proposed moratorium would apply to approval of major data center facilities in Leon County, as well as new power generation projects whose primary purpose would be to support future data center operations.

The chairman emphasized that the proposal was not opposition to technology or innovation, but rather an effort to allow local officials time to better understand potential consequences before making decisions that could affect the community for decades.

Among the issues Caban identified are energy consumption, water usage, environmental impacts, land use compatibility, noise, transmission infrastructure, and possible strain on public resources. He

DATA Page A4

## 10-Day Event Showcases More Than 25 Locally Owned Restaurants in Leon County

Leon County Government, in partnership with Tallahassee Foodies, proudly announces the launch of Tallahassee-Leon County Restaurant Week, a 10-day culinary celebration spotlighting the bold flavors, chef-driven concepts and Southern sophistication that define Florida's Capital City.

Taking place Friday, July 17, to Sunday, July 26, 2026, Tallahassee-Leon County Restaurant Week will feature more than 25 locally owned restaurants.

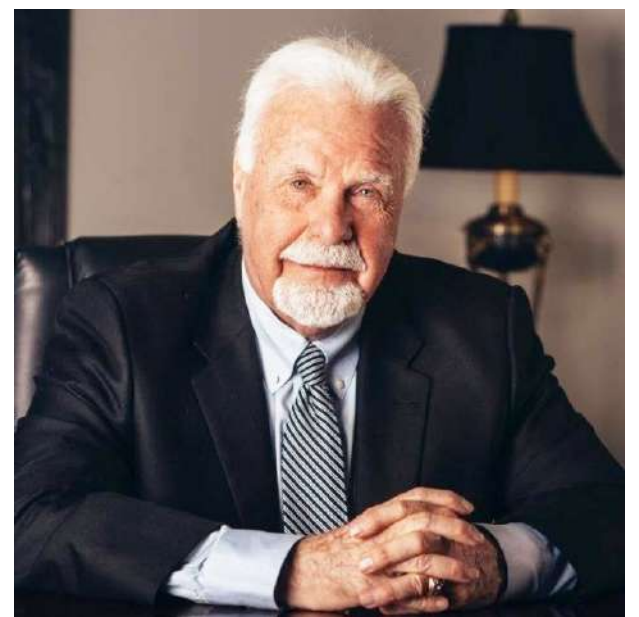
The initiative is designed to support local restaurants and showcase Leon County's growing reputation as a culinary destination. For a full

list of participating restaurants, menus, and pricing, visit VisitTallahassee.com.

Throughout the 10-day celebration, each participating restaurant will offer curated lunch and dinner menus at set price points, encouraging residents and visitors alike to discover new favorites, revisit longtime favorites and explore different parts of the community through food.

For participating restaurants, view menus and plan your culinary adventure at VisitTallahassee.com.

To discover local dining recommendations and the latest restaurant news, visit TallahasseeFoodies.com.



Ralph Haben, Former Florida House Speaker, Dies at 84. A2

Non-Profit  
US Postage  
Paid  
Tallahassee, FL  
Permit No. 801

Tallahassee Reports  
3048 Waterford Dr  
Tallahassee, FL 32309

POSTAL CUSTOMER

### Community News

# Ralph Haben, Former Speaker of the Florida House, Dies at 84

Ralph Harris Haben, Jr., former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, passed away peacefully on June 13, 2026, at the age of 84. Ralph was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, attorney, and survivor of more adventures than most people would knowingly sign up for.

Born on November 25, 1941, Ralph grew up in Palmetto, Florida, a community he would proudly represent throughout much of his life. He developed his lifelong sweet tooth while working his first job at The Dairy Bar, his family's diner and ice cream shop. Throughout his childhood and into high school, Ralph played baseball as a left-handed pitcher, with a self-described unhittable screwball. He attended The Citadel Military College and earned degrees from the University of Florida and Cumberland School of Law. He was a diehard Gator fan, never missing the opportunity to watch every Gator game, regardless of the sport. Ralph then created a career that blended law and politics, putting his charisma and formidable advocacy to good use as a prosecutor, judge, member of the Florida House of Representatives, and ultimately Speaker of the Florida House from 1980 to 1982.

After leaving public office, he built a distinguished legal career, becoming a trusted and influential lobbyist and counselor to clients, colleagues, and friends. He was a mentor to many,

starting countless conversations with "dude, here's the problem," before proceeding to offer advice that was as good as gold.

Those who knew him best understood that professional accolades never fully captured the man.

Ralph lived his many lives to the fullest. He was an avid fisherman, often taking friends and family on his prized Hatteras, "Frayed Knot," for fishing trips in the Gulf, the Florida Keys, and the Bahamas. He spent many days riding his motorcycle across the country and beyond with his friends and his wife, Michelle. He took several dedicated motorcycle excursions, including trips to South Dakota, California, Canada, and more. He was proud to have ridden the legendary Tail of the Dragon, a world-famous motorcycle run with over 300 curves along the Tennessee-North Carolina state line.

Ralph's life story included more than its fair share of excitement and plot twists. Over the years, he survived a plane crash, a black widow spider bite, a near-death case of Hashimoto's thyroiditis, and the sinking of a boat 12 miles offshore. Ralph's friends and family often joked that fate kept trying to schedule a meeting with Ralph, and Ralph kept rescheduling.

Above all, Ralph was devoted to his family. He shared a loving partnership with Michelle, his wife of 30 years, and

was the proud father of their daughter, Elizabeth ("EJ"), whom he touted as his favorite daughter. He delighted in hosting dinners for family and friends to show off his grilling prowess, and to captivate the room with his stories – especially when he happened to be the hero of them.

He leaves behind a legacy not only of great accomplishment but of personal generosity, steadfast friendship, and deep love for his friends and family. Those who knew Ralph will remember his sharp mind, strong convictions, and remarkable resilience. It is fitting that a man who survived so much ultimately leaves behind something even more enduring than his accomplishments: the example of a life fully lived.

Ralph was preceded by his parents, Ralph Haben, Sr., and Jonnie Claire Haben. He is survived by his wife, Michelle Haben; his daughter, Elizabeth Watford (Sam); and his granddaughter, Sophie Watford.

He will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered, and frequently quoted.

The family asks that friends honor Ralph's memory by telling a good story – preferably one that improves slightly with each retelling, a tradition Ralph himself greatly appreciated.

A Celebration of Life will be held to honor his legacy. Date, time, and location will be announced soon.



Former Florida House Speaker Hyatt Brown on Ralph Haben.

Former House colleague Hyatt Brown, who preceded Haben as Speaker, said the two met on their first day in the House, and he knew right away he liked the man, a fellow University of Florida alum and Phi Delta Theta member. Brown described Haben as a man of great wit whose humor was disarming.

"When Ralph gave you his word, it was solid gold," said Brown, "and I'm not just talking about his friends. That was true as a legislator and that made him powerful because when people know that your word is your bond, you can really get things done."

American Legion-John W. Post-Post #84 meets every third Monday of each month @ 6:30 at Crossway Church 1698 Village Square Blvd, Tallahassee Fl 32309

All Veterans and spouses are cordially invited to attend. We welcome all!

Any questions please contact Jim Brennan 850-212-8677

THE CAPITAL OF FLORIDA. THE CAPITAL OF FLAVOR.

## TALLAHASSEE RESTAURANT WEEK

July 17 - 26, 2026

FLORIDA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION PROUDLY ENDORSED

# Talethia EDWARDS

For **CITY COMMISSION SEAT 3**

- PUBLIC SAFETY
- STRONGER NEIGHBORHOODS
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT APPROVED AND PAID FOR BY TALETHIA EDWARDS CAMPAIGN

Now serving the **FLORIDA PANHANDLE**

---

**15-Month Certificate**

# 4.25% APY

\$1,000 minimum | Available for business accounts too!  
Visit a branch near you and open an account today.

**LIMITED-TIME OFFER**

A locked-in rate yields savings you can count on.

**MIDFLORIDA**  
Florida's community credit union®

Offer and rate valid as of June 1, 2026, and may be canceled without notice. MIDFLORIDA Credit Union membership and eligibility requirements apply. Fees may reduce earnings. Minimum to open \$1,000. The initial deposit cannot exceed \$1 million per member or \$2 million per address. No institutional funds. 4.25% APY (Annual Percentage Yield) is based on the assumption that the funds will remain in the certificate until maturity. Penalties may apply for withdrawal of funds before maturity. Contact employees for further information on fees and terms. Insured by NCUA.

## Local News

## City Votes 3-2 to Set Public Hearing for Annexation of 1,700 Acres

By Staff

The Tallahassee City Commission voted 3-2 (Matlow, Porter against) to move forward with a voluntary annexation request from property owner Jeffrey Phipps involving five parcels of rural land near the Lake Jackson area. The request would bring the 1,700 acres into the City of Tallahassee and place future land-use decisions for the parcels under city jurisdiction.

The vote introduced the ordinance and scheduled the first and only public hearing for Aug. 26, 2026.

The annexation request follows a previous effort involving Phipps' property near Lake Jackson, where

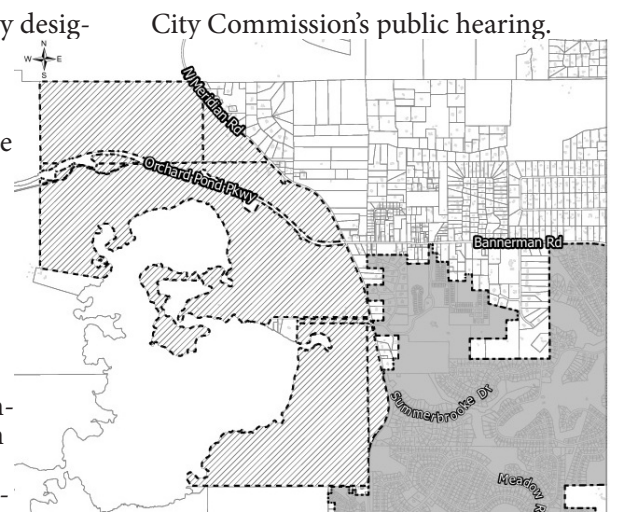
proposed comprehensive plan changes that would have allowed more intensive development generated significant public debate. Environmental advocates raised concerns about potential impacts near the Lake Jackson Aquatic Preserve, Carr Lake, and Mallard Pond.

City staff report that the parcels meet the geographic requirements for voluntary annexation under Florida law. Three parcels are within the City's electric service territory, while two would continue receiving electric service from Talquin Electric Cooperative. Water and sewer services are either available or planned within the City's five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

The properties are currently designated Rural on both the City and County future land use maps and zoning maps. No immediate rezoning would be required if the annexation is approved.

Supporters of annexation have noted that extending city services can help address infrastructure needs, while opponents have raised broader concerns about growth patterns, environmental protection, and expansion into rural areas.

The Leon County Commission is expected to review the annexation request before the



## Leon County Commission Seeks More Control Over COCA Spending

By Staff

Leon County Commissioners want a bigger say in how the Council on Culture and Arts, or COCA, spends local tourist development dollars.

Under a plan given initial approval by the commission Tuesday with a 6-1 vote (Proctor against), COCA will continue to administer arts and cultural grants funded by the county, but how those dollars are doled out will be determined by the Leon commissioners every year during the budgeting process.

The move comes as the commission recently considered giving control of the entire grant process to the county's tourist development arm. Commissioners describe the new approach as a "compromise" between the sole

administrator model (current), where COCA decided all grant distributions and the in-house model, which would have placed COCA under the County's Division of Tourism, potentially saving \$213,000 but reducing COCA's independence.

"When I get in situations like this. This is exactly where I end up. Everybody gives a little bit, we get a compromise, we can move forward, but nobody's hurt too bad to where it's not working as for our community," Leon County Commissioner Nick Maddox said.

The county says COCA's agency status and funding level are unchanged.

Supporters say the model brings consistency similar to other county partnerships (e.g., Community Human Service Partnership) and im-

proves stewardship of taxpayer dollars. However, COCA Executive Director Kathleen Spehar has expressed worries about the impact on drawing down National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) grants, though the county says COCA will still be eligible.

The ordinance to implement the change must pass with at least 5/7 votes after a public hearing.

The Council on Culture & Arts is a non-profit organization serving as the umbrella agency for arts and culture in Florida's capital area, including Leon County Tallahassee Arts Guide. It was established in 1985 to provide a centralized voice and support system for the region's arts and cultural sector.



COCA is not a government entity but works closely with the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, the state, and local school districts as a cultural industry partner. The group currently oversees \$2 million in grant programs annually to promote and support the arts, ensure equitable access to creative opportunities, and advocate for the cultural sector's economic and social value.

WWW.TALLAHASSEEREPORTS.COM

## Leon County Commission Addresses Budget Issues

BUDGET, From Front Page

generated by property taxes.

Documents prepared for the workshop reviewed the FY 2027 Preliminary Budget, which totals \$420.8 million — a 4.8% increase over the current fiscal year budget. County officials described the upcoming budget year as a transition period designed to prepare for potential structural changes if voters approve a proposed constitutional amendment affecting property taxes.

The proposed amendment, approved by the Florida Legislature for the November ballot, would increase the homestead exemption and direct the Legislature to establish procedures to gradually eliminate homestead property taxes. It would also reduce the annual assessment cap on non-homestead property from 10% to 5%. County staff estimate the measure could reduce Leon County's property tax revenue by approximately \$71 million, or 30%, during the first two years of implementation.

County leaders discussed cost saving measures to prepare for possible cuts like implementing a hiring freeze for non-essential positions and a voluntary separation program, similar to the one offered by the City of Tallahassee.

"Given the magnitude of the projected property tax reductions, I'm proposing that the county implement immediate stop-gap measures in the current fiscal year to the best position the county for the difficult decisions to be made in the coming months," Leon County Administrator Vince Long said. "This includes a hiring freeze for all nonessential personnel, a freeze on nonessential travel and training not required to maintain certifications and licenses, a freeze on discretionary community sponsorships, not including those line items

approved in March in your budget."

Long said that these measures are designed to mitigate layoffs to the greatest extent possible by leaving vacant positions unfilled and to realize cost savings that can be used to delay service level reductions.

With commission approval, the hiring, travel and training freezes will extend to the constitutional offices, such as the Leon County Sheriff's Office and the Leon County Clerk of Courts.

Amid all the cost saving discussion, commissioners voted 4-3 in favor or a 4% raise for county employees. This will cost the county an additional \$800,000, but commissioners in support said this may be the last time they're able to give raises for a while. Those against said they can't support spending more on salaries when the potential for property tax revenue to be cut is on the table.

"We're lucky to have a gap year to prepare for what we have to deal with next year. But as we make our decisions today, let's make our decisions today understanding what we're going to have to deal with a year from now, and understanding the position that Leon County — not just the commissioners and not just the constitutionals — but Leon County as a whole is going to be in when we have to deal with those cost-savings," Leon County Commissioner Nick Maddox said.

The county may also enact a voluntary separation program for employees. It would be the second local government to institute that form of cutback.

Specific details related to the issues discussed will be provided at another workshop in July.

## Welcome, Matt.

Matt Edwards draws upon years of experience in the financial services industry, with emphasis on retirement, estate and tax planning as well as risk management. Eager to help the needs of individuals and business owners in Leon County, he takes a tailored approach to developing comprehensive financial plans with achievable goals.

Call Matt today to schedule your no-obligation financial plan review.

## Matt Edwards

Financial Advisor, LPL Financial  
matt.edwards2@lpl.com  
850.402.8081



## CAPITAL CITY INVESTMENTS

ccb.com/wealth

a division of



Securities and advisory services are offered through LPL Financial (LPL), a registered investment advisor and broker-dealer (member FINRA/SIPC). Insurance products are offered through LPL or its licensed affiliates. Capital City Bank and Capital City Investments are not registered as a broker-dealer or investment advisor. Registered representatives of LPL offer products and services using Capital City Investments, and may also be employees of Capital City Bank. These products and services are being offered through LPL or its affiliates, which are separate entities from, and not affiliates of, Capital City Bank or Capital City Investments. Capital City Wealth™ is a brand name used to market certain wealth-related services. Securities and insurance offered through LPL or its affiliates are:

Not Insured by FDIC or Any Federal Government Agency • Not Bank Guaranteed  
Not Bank Deposits or Obligations • May Lose Value



Support Tallahassee Reports  
by Subscribing Today.

Only \$4.99 Monthly or \$50 Annually

## Local News

# Homestead Tax Amendment Could Reduce Tallahassee General Revenue by 4.8%

By Steve Stewart

According to a City of Tallahassee budget workshop report, the proposed constitutional amendment approved by the Florida Legislature during a special session on June 1-2 could reduce property tax revenues for the City of Tallahassee by approximately \$11.2 million in FY2028 and \$17.8 million in FY2029. This means the proposed constitutional homestead tax amendment, if passed, would reduce the projected 2028 general revenue by approximately 4.8%. The general fund is currently projected to collect \$238 million in revenue from several different sources in 2028.

The amendment, which will appear on the Nov. 3 general

election ballot, would increase Florida's homestead exemption for non-school taxes from the current \$50,000 to \$150,000 beginning Jan. 1, 2027, and to \$250,000 beginning Jan. 1, 2028. The measure requires approval from at least 60% of voters statewide to take effect.

Property tax revenue is the primary funding source for Tallahassee's General Fund and is projected to generate \$77.7 million in Fiscal Year 2026. Those revenues fund approximately 94% of the Tallahassee Police Department budget, while also supporting parks and recreation, public infrastructure, children's and adult services, and capital investments.

The projected losses represent a 13% reduction in

taxable value in FY2028 and a 21% reduction in FY2029.

The proposal establishes a framework for future increases in homestead exemptions and directs the Legislature to create procedures that could eventually exempt all remaining assessed homestead value from taxation. City officials estimate that a complete elimination of homestead property taxes would create an annual funding gap of approximately \$36 million, equivalent to about 40% of the City's current property tax revenue and 10% of the general fund revenue.

Supporters of the amendment argue it would provide meaningful tax relief to homeowners. However, City officials note that the benefits would be limited to residents

receiving a homestead exemption. Of approximately 89,000 households within Tallahassee city limits, about 25,500 households, or 28.6%, would directly benefit from lower property taxes.

The remaining 71% of households, many of them renters, would receive no direct tax reduction while continuing to contribute indirectly to property tax collections through rental payments. As a result, city officials contend that a majority of residents would continue paying for municipal services without receiving the proposed tax savings.

The amendment also would impose a five-year Florida residency requirement for new residents seeking the enhanced homestead exemp-

tion and would authorize local governments to adopt additional exemptions under certain circumstances.

City leaders say the recently implemented Voluntary Separation Incentive (VSI) program represents an important step toward preparing for potential future budget constraints if voters approve the amendment.

The proposed measure is expected to generate significant debate in the months leading up to the November election as local governments across Florida evaluate the impact of reduced property tax revenues on public safety, infrastructure, and other core services.

## Leon County, City Address Data Centers

DATA, From Front Page

also noted that the future direction of artificial intelligence and the infrastructure required to support it remains uncertain.

Caban pointed to concerns raised by fellow Commissioner Jeremy Matlow regarding utility-scale solar and energy storage projects potentially becoming pathways for future artificial intelligence data center development. He also referenced other counties, including Jackson and Citrus counties, that have considered or implemented temporary moratoriums.

The proposed pause would give Leon County time to study data center trends, review policies from other communities, assess infrastructure needs, and develop regulations for future proposals, Caban said.

"We have one opportunity to get this right," Caban wrote. "Taking the time to fully evaluate these projects before opening the door to them is not anti-growth. It is responsible governance."

The proposal comes as local governments nationwide debate how to balance economic development opportunities associated with data centers against concerns about resource demands and community impacts.

### City Votes Down Moratorium

The Tallahassee City Commission voted 3-2 to against adding additional barriers to the construction of any proposed data centers within the

city. At Wednesday's meeting, the majority bloc of Tallahassee Mayor John Dailey and City Commissioners Curtis Richardson and Dianne Williams-Cox voted against a motion by Commissioner Jeremy Matlow to implement a one-year moratorium for large-scale data center to be built within city limits.

The majority vote was based on City Manager Reese Goad's comments that local law does not currently allow for the data centers. They "cannot exist in Tallahassee today based on the (Comprehensive) Plan and Land Use Ordinances," Goad said, adding a moratorium wouldn't be necessary.

Both commissions faced the challenge of responding to a rapidly changing industry without creating unnecessary barriers to investment. Local leaders recognized that data centers could bring economic opportunities but also require careful planning because of their unique demands on electricity, water, and land.

The debate reflects a broader question facing many communities: how to balance technology-driven growth with long-term sustainability. As artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure expand, local governments will continue deciding whether data centers represent the next generation of economic development or a strain on existing resources.

## Ausley, Parks, Faust Talk Civility at Forum

FORUM, From Front Page

Matlow told the crowd that the good news with this election is that whoever you vote for John Dailey will not be Tallahassee's mayor. Then Matlow made an attempt to take a dig at Daryl Parks by referencing a comment about Mayor Daily. Parks responded by telling Matlow he should not use these tactics in his campaign.

Beyond that brief back and forth, the question-and-answer period addressed ICE, taxes and spending.

The candidates all agreed they would facilitate cooperation between local law enforcement and ICE to remove people in the U.S. illegally who have committed violent crimes. Matlow added that was opposed to the 287(g) agreement that essential paid local law enforcement officials to help with immigration enforcement.

When asked about the rise in property values over the past five years and when is it appropriate for local government to refund property tax money, the candidates all mentioned a review of the budget is needed before committing to refunds. Parks said, "I think we have a fresh look at the budget day one, and ... make sure that whatever's in the budget are the priorities of this community."

On the topic of auditing budgets and policies to stop waste and corruption, all the candidates supported audit functions to ensure the efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Claude Pichard, the President of the Capital Conservative, called the forum a success. He said the event gave the members of the conservative club an opportunity to get a feel for candidates that don't agree with them on most ideological issues, but share a common goal related to the success of Tallahassee.

### The Candidates

Loranne Ausley is a longtime Tallahassee public servant and attorney who previously represented the area in the Florida House

and served in the Florida Senate, where she focused on issues including education, health care, and children's services. A graduate of Randolph-Macon Woman's College and Washington & Lee University School of Law, Ausley has deep roots in Tallahassee's civic and legal community. Before entering elected office, she worked as an attorney and policy advocate. Her campaign emphasizes collaboration, economic opportunity, public services, and bringing experience in state government to City Hall.

Jeremy Matlow is a Tallahassee City Commissioner and local entrepreneur who was first elected to the City Commission in 2018. Matlow has built a reputation as an outspoken advocate for government transparency, neighborhood concerns, and increased public involvement in city decisions. During his time on the commission, Matlow has been an outspoken critic of City Manager Reese Goad and critical of the overall operation of the city. Before entering politics, he was known for his work as a small-business owner.

Daryl Parks is an attorney, businessman, and civil rights advocate who has practiced law for decades, focusing on civil rights, wrongful death, and personal injury cases. He previously ran for the Florida Senate and entered the mayoral race emphasizing economic development, opportunity, and leadership. Parks has said Tallahassee needs to create an environment that encourages business growth while expanding opportunities for residents.

Michael Foust is a businessman and political newcomer. Foust enters the race from the private sector and has positioned himself as an outsider seeking to bring a different perspective to City Hall. His campaign emphasizes community involvement, practical leadership, and reducing the influence of traditional political structures.

## Local News Briefs

### TPD Increases Enforcement Efforts Following Recent Shooting Incidents

The Tallahassee Police Department (TPD) recently made an arrest in connection with a weekend shooting that left three people injured and continues to actively investigate several recent acts of gun violence across the community.

Over the last month, Tallahassee has experienced nine separate shootings resulting in 13 people injured and three homicides. Many of these incidents have occurred in or around locations where large crowds had gathered.

While preliminary findings indicate each case is isolated in nature, the common denominator is clear: large, unsanctioned gatherings can create environments where conflicts escalate quickly, and innocent people are placed at risk.

In response, TPD is continuing to dedicate significant resources toward addressing these incidents through increased patrols, proactive enforcement, and focused monitoring of areas where large crowds are known to gather.

TPD is asking commu-

nity members to immediately notify law enforcement when they observe large crowds gathering in public spaces, parking lots or other locations where disturbances may develop. Early notification allows officers the opportunity to respond proactively, deter criminal activity and prevent situations from escalating.

### Leon County Flags at Half-Mast for Tallahassee Fire Dept. Engineer Charles "Chuck" Droessler

Leon County flags were flying at half-mast starting Friday as the community mourns the death of Tallahassee Fire Department Engineer Charles "Chuck" Droessler.

Leon County directed that local flags be at half-mast for seven days starting Friday, after Droessler's death was announced earlier this week.

"In recognition of Engineer Droessler's service and sacrifice, I am directing that Leon County flags be lowered to half-mast for a period of seven days beginning tomorrow, June 12, 2026, in his honor," officials said.

The veteran firefighter served the community for nearly 11 years.

Droessler died following a

medical emergency and was not in the line of duty, according to previous reporting. Leon County officials said his commitment to the community will be missed.

"His dedication to protecting the citizens of Tallahassee and Leon County, as well as his service alongside his fellow firefighters, leaves behind a lasting legacy that will not be forgotten," officials said.

### Report: City Paid \$4M in Buyouts

The Tallahassee Democrat recently reported that city of Tallahassee paid nearly \$4 million in buyouts to 171 employees who opted into the city's voluntary separation incentive program. Nearly 2,800 employees were eligible for the program.

In April, city commissioners approved the severance package that consisted of either 12 weeks of pay or \$20,000, "whichever is greater." The total, which the Tallahassee Democrat obtained through a records request, equated to \$3,869,496 for the 171 city workers that chose to leave their roles.

This news comes after a City of Tallahassee budget workshop revealed the pro-

posed constitutional amendment approved by the Florida Legislature during a special session on June 1-2 could reduce property tax revenues for the City of Tallahassee by approximately \$11.2 million in FY2028 and \$17.8 million in FY2029. This means the proposed constitutional homestead tax amendment, if passed, would reduce the projected 2028 general revenue by approximately 4.8%. The general fund is currently projected to collect \$238 million in revenue from several different sources in 2028.

The voluntary separation incentive program was presented by officials as part of broader cost-saving measures amid potential property tax cuts and economic uncertainty.

### Record-breaking TPD Drug Bust Leads to Federal Indictment

Chandale Maurice Mills, 42, of Tallahassee, Florida, has been indicted in federal court for possession with intent to distribute multiple controlled substances including more than 5 kilograms of cocaine, 500 grams of methamphetamine, 40 grams of fentanyl, and 50 kilograms of marijuana-

na; possession of firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking; and possession of firearms and ammunition by a convicted felon. John P. Heekin, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida announced the charges.

The case was investigated by the Tallahassee Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James A. McCain.

Mills appeared in federal court for his arraignment before United States Magistrate Judge Martin A. Fitzpatrick in Tallahassee, Florida. Jury trial is scheduled for July 27, 2026, at 8:30 am before Chief District Court Judge Allen C. Winsor in Tallahassee, Florida.

If convicted as charged, Mills faces ten years to Life imprisonment on the drug trafficking count, five years to Life for possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking, and up to 15 years imprisonment for possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon.

Local News

# LCS Middle School Discipline Trends Show Largest Increases at Griffin and Nims

Out-of-school suspension (OSS) data from Leon County Schools shows that discipline trends among middle schools varied significantly between the 2021/22 and 2025/26 school years, with the largest increases occurring at a small number of campuses.

The largest increase was recorded at Griffin Middle School, where OSS actions increased from 495 in 2021/22 to 814 in 2025/26 — an increase of 319 OSS actions. Griffin's increase was the largest among traditional middle schools during the five-year period.

Nims Middle School recorded the second-largest increase, with OSS actions rising from 277 in 2021/22 to 539 in 2025/26, an increase of 262

actions.

Fairview Middle School also saw a notable increase. OSS actions grew from 438 in 2021/22 to 570 in 2025/26, an increase of 132. Raa Middle School increased from 277 to 376, a rise of 99 OSS actions.

Several middle schools reported decreases in OSS actions over the same period. Cobb Middle School dropped from 460 OSS actions in 2021/22 to 243 in 2025/26, a decrease of 217 actions. Montford Middle School declined from 163 to 140, while Swift Creek Middle School decreased from 86 to 76. Deerlake Middle School declined from 85 to 76.

The schools with the fewest OSS actions in 2025/26 were Deerlake

Middle School and Swift Creek Middle School, each reporting 76 OSS actions. Other schools with relatively low totals included Montford Middle School (140) and Cobb Middle School (243).

The five-year data indicates that the growth in OSS usage among middle schools was concentrated at a few campuses, particularly Griffin and Nims. At the same time, several schools either reduced or maintained comparatively low levels of OSS activity.

The discipline report does not identify the reasons behind changes at individual schools. Factors that

Middle School	Enrollment	OSS
Cobb	613	243
Deerlake	834	76
Fairview	727	570
Griffin	489	814
Montford	1064	140
Nims	539	228
Raa	927	376
Swift Creek	792	76

can influence OSS numbers include enrollment changes, student behavior patterns, school climate initiatives, staffing, and disciplinary approaches.

# Leon County FY 2027 Changes in Revenues/Expenses

## Preliminary Estimated Changes in Revenues

As reflected in Table #2, the following section provides a summary of the projected changes to major general revenues between the current fiscal year (FY 2026) and next fiscal year (FY 2027).

**Property Taxes (\$11 million):** Property tax collections are calculated based on the countywide millage rate multiplied by the taxable value of all property in Leon County. Last year, taxable property values increased 7.78%.

**Solid Waste Assessment and Fees (\$3.2 million):** Most of this increase is related to the increase in the solid waste assessment from \$40 to \$80, which will generate an additional \$1.6 million in revenue.

**EMS Fees/Medicaid Reimbursement (\$2.6 million):** Growth in EMS transport revenues is directly related to continued projected growth in patient

transports.

**EMS Municipal Services Tax Unit (MSTU) (\$988,363):** The MSTU revenue reflects the 5.07% increase in property values and anticipates no change to the 0.75 millage rate.

**School Zone Speed Detection Program (\$712,500):** Gas Taxes (\$518,510): Gasoline taxes are estimated to increase slightly by 4%. In FY 2022, as the economy rebounded from the effects of COVID and travel dramatically increased, gas tax collections increased over 8%.

**State Shared Revenue and 1/2 cent Sales Tax (\$494,333)**

Historically, the Sheriff's budget has trended slightly above annual property tax growth. The estimated growth in the Sheriff's budget (6%) is currently slightly higher than the projected property tax growth rate (5.07%).

**Capital Projects (\$2.9 million):** The overall capital budget for FY 2027 is \$34.3 million, an increase of \$2.9 million from the FY 2026 budget.

**Contractual Obligations, Repairs and Maintenance, Utilities, other Operating (\$2.7 million):** All projected increases are associated with contractual and inflationary adjustments.

**Leon County Employee Related Expenses (\$1.6 million):** The budget includes a 3% average pay increase (0-5% performance) for all County and Constitutional Officer employees, and increased costs associated with healthcare and retirement rates.

## Preliminary Estimated Changes in Expenses

Sheriff Personnel and Operating Expenses (\$7.4

Preliminary Estimated Changes in Revenues	Change from Fiscal Year 2026
Property Taxes with current millage rate (8.3144 mills)	\$10,956,859
Solid Waste Revenues (e.g., Tipping Fees)	\$3,248,967
EMS Fees/Medicaid Reimbursement	\$2,562,672
Other General Revenue	\$1,192,875
EMS Municipal Service Tax Unit (0.75 mills)	\$988,363
School Zone Camera Enforcement	\$712,500
Gas Taxes	\$518,510
1/2 Cent Sales, State Revenue Sharing	\$494,333
DSEM Fees	\$199,215
Special Revenue Fund Balance	\$112,097
Other Non-General Revenue (e.g., Courts, SHIP, E-911, Rental Income)	\$98,606
Blueprint Infrastructure Sales Tax (10% infrastructure, 2% LIFE)	\$0
Public Services Tax (PST) & Communications Services Tax (CST)	(\$47,564)
Building Inspection and Permitting Fees	(\$216,795)
Departmental Internal Billing (Insurance, Fleet, and Communications)	(\$303,063)
Interest Earnings	(\$605,570)
Tourism Revenue	(\$630,802)
<b>Total Change in Revenue</b>	<b>\$19,281,203</b>

Preliminary Estimated Changes in Expenditures	
Sheriff Personnel and Operating Expenses	\$7,436,475
EMS Personnel and Operating Costs	\$3,174,864
Capital Projects	\$2,888,799
Contractual Obligations, Maintenance, Utilities, other Operating	\$2,720,376
County Government Personnel Costs	\$1,581,837
School Zone Camera Enforcement	\$712,500
Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Payment	\$681,459
Medicaid & Other Mandatory Payments (Med Examiner, DJJ, Baker/Marchman)	\$512,147
City Interlocal Agreements (CDA, Parks, Animal Control, Planning, Sewer, ALS)	\$487,608
Other Constitutional Offices	\$404,036
Debt Service Payments	(\$72,997)
Division of Tourism	(\$470,460)
Workers Compensation/Insurance	(\$775,441)
<b>Total Change in Expenses</b>	<b>\$19,281,203</b>
<b>Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**Committed. Trusted. Local.**

**PAUL'S**  
TERMITE & PEST CONTROL

222-6808

**SOUTHERN SEAFOOD INC.**  
TALLAHASSEE FISH COMPANY

**BUY FRESH • BUY WILD**  
**BUY SOUTHERN**

1415 Timberlane Road  
Market Square  
850.893.7301  
southernseafoodmarket.com

**Dine-In** **Carry Out**

**GORDOS**  
CUBAN CUISINE

**PUT A CUBAN IN YOUR MOUTH**

2 Locations:  
Market Square - 850-727-5914 • Pensacola St - 850-576-5767

**WE CATER!**

**JACKSON PROPERTIES**  
PREMIER STUDENT HOUSING

**CONVENIENT & AFFORDABLE**  
**BUILT FOR YOUR STUDENT'S SUCCESS**

850.894.7368

**WWW.JACKSONPROPERTIESINC.COM**

1341 JACKSON BLUFF ROAD TALLAHASSEE, FL 32315

**The TOTAL Package**

State News

Jolly Adds Graham To Anticipated Democratic Ticket

By Jim Turner, The News Service of Florida

Former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham, who fell 3.1 percentage points short of being the Democratic gubernatorial nominee in 2018, could be on the ballot again this year, but in a supporting role.

David Jolly, another former U.S. House member, announced Graham, the daughter of former Gov. Bob Graham, as his running mate, putting a northern Democrat on the ticket days after his anticipated biggest primary challenger, Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, dropped out of the race.

Jolly, 53, noted he has been friends with Gwen Graham, 63, for more than a decade. They served together on opposite sides of the aisle in Congress, working on issues from gun reform after the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando in 2016 to education and the environment. He said he wanted a running mate with the skills to oversee the state.

"We are at a crossroads, and there is an opportunity to do something very differently. This is a moment where we need new leadership in the state of Florida," Jolly said during an event outside

the Old Capitol. "We need capable, responsible leaders willing to put the people of Florida first."

Graham said the November election will be a choice between candidates "who will listen to the voices of all Floridians, or do you want a governor who just plays to the political extremes?"

"The connection David and I have built is on the simple belief that public service and public servants should focus and deliver on improving people's lives," Graham said.

The selection wasn't a surprise. The two had appeared together at several events in the past year and on Monday the USA Today Network reported Rev. R.B. Holmes Jr., pastor of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Tallahassee, revealed Graham as Jolly's running mate in his Sunday sermon.

Jolly said he isn't waiting to set up his team.

On Tuesday, he named lobbyist Sean Pittman as his transition chairman.

Jolly and Graham served in Congress together from 2015 to 2017. Jolly at the time was a Republican representing Florida's 13th congressional district, which covered part of the Tampa area.

Largely in reaction to the

rise of Donald Trump and the GOP's embrace of him as president, Jolly left the Republican Party and later became a Democrat.

The Republican Party of Florida quickly responded to the report by characterizing Jolly a "political chameleon" and Graham a "liberal (nepotism) baby."

"Together, Jolly and Graham represent everything Florida voters have spent the last decade rejecting: career politicians, Washington insiders, and a far-left agenda that is out of step with the values of Florida families," the party said in a statement on Monday.

Gates McGavick, the campaign communications director for U.S. Rep. Bryon Donalds the GOP frontrunner to replace the term-limited Gov. Ron DeSantis, issued a statement that "this might have been an interesting ticket 10 years ago."

Jolly on Wednesday said he wasn't convinced Donalds will become the Republican party nominee.

Besides Donalds, the Republican primary includes former House Speaker Paul Renner and conservative activist James Fishback, who have already qualified. Lt. Gov. Jay Collins, who has

announced his bid for the office, has until noon on Friday to qualify.

Democrats Evelyn Castillo-Bach of Pembroke Pines and Thomas Eloy Hernandez of Homestead have already qualified for the primary, paying the \$8,480 filing fee. Still, the Democratic field cleared a little on Friday when Demings suspended his campaign after being diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Florida also hasn't elected a Democrat as governor since Lawton Chiles was reelected in 1994. The last Democrat to win a statewide contest was Nikki Fried as agriculture commissioner in 2018. Fried is now the Florida Democratic Party chairwoman.

Jolly said he considered five or six "strong" candidates to be his running mate.

Graham served in President Joe Biden's administration as an assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Education for legislation and congressional affairs.

Her father, Bob Graham, who died in 2024, served as Florida's governor from 1979



to 1987 before moving to the U.S. Senate, where he served until 2005.

An attorney, Gwen Graham worked on her father's 2004 presidential campaign and later the campaigns of Howard Dean and John Kerry.

She defeated Republican incumbent U.S. Rep. Steve Southerland in 2014, only to leave Congress to pursue the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 2018. He finished second in a seven-person primary with 31.3 percent of the vote, 47,289 votes behind former Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum.

Gillum lost the general election to DeSantis, in his first run for governor, by 32,463 votes out of more than 8 million cast.

DeSantis Signs Law Enforcement Bills

DESANTIS, From Front Page

said the mark will help law enforcement officers.

"The career offender is not little Johnny going to steal a candy bar at the food store," Glass said. "The career offender is the one who's been deemed by the court that continuously keeps coming through here, and these are your violent ones."

Another measure (HB 429) signed by DeSantis eases the criteria to determine if a person is a criminal gang member.

The bill allows someone's spouse to identify them as a gang member, accepting online admissions of gang membership, and reducing

the number of times a person must be seen in the company of gang members from four to two.

DeSantis also signed a bill (SB 156) requiring someone convicted of manslaughter against an active duty law enforcement officer to serve life in prison.

The bill is named after Daytona Beach Police Officer Jason Raynor who was shot and later died while questioning a suspect in 2021. Jurors found Othal Wallace, who resisted being detained, guilty of manslaughter, which carried a 30-year sentence.

A measure (SB 432)

making it a first-degree felony to manufacture, sell or deliver xylazine outside its allowed use as animal drug products for veterinary purposes was also among the bills signed by DeSantis.

The bill also makes it a third-degree felony to sell or possess nitrous oxide, except for its approved uses at grocery stores and supermarkets.

Under another bill (SB 436) signed by DeSantis, someone with a prior conviction for "resisting an officer with violence" can see a first-degree misdemeanor battery charge upgraded to a third-degree felony.

Property Tax Amendment to Save Owners, Hit Local Governments

By Gray Rohrer, The News Service of Florida

If voters approve the property tax cut on the November ballot, cities, counties and special taxing districts will lose nearly \$5 billion the first year, and nearly \$12 billion in the fifth year, according to projections developed by state economists Friday.

Homestead owners will be the initial beneficiaries of the amendment, but non-homestead owners, including businesses and those who own vacation homes and condos, will reap rewards as well in future years.

Under the estimates approved by the Legislative Office of Economic and Demographic Research, local governments will see a \$5 billion hit in the 2027-2028 fiscal year, followed by a nearly \$8.8 billion cut the next year.

In the third and fourth years after the approval of the amendment, local governments will get a \$9.7 billion cut and \$10.75 billion hit, respectively.

The amendment needs 60 percent support from voters to pass. Lawmakers took the measure drafted by Gov. Ron DeSantis' office and changed it to exempt school taxes from the hike in the homestead exemption, which rises from \$50,000 to \$150,000 in 2027, then \$250,000 in 2028.

Another piece of the proposal lowers the cap on annual assessment increases on non-homestead properties. The current cap is 10 percent and the amendment would lower it to 5 percent.

Also, to benefit from the jump in the homestead exemption, a person must be a resident of Florida as of Dec. 31, 2026. If someone moves to the Sunshine State after that date and buys a

homestead, they'll have to wait five years to get the higher exemption.

DeSantis has been the driving force for property tax cuts, stressing the need for relief for homeowners amid rising costs and surging home valuations that have sent tax bills soaring in the last six years.

"The proposal will increase constitutional protection against taxes for homestead properties and will be the biggest property tax cut in Florida history," DeSantis posted on X earlier this month. "Floridians looking for help with affordability will have a great opportunity to vote for it."

Local government officials, though, have warned the drastic cuts will impair their ability to provide basic services.

Lawmakers tried to address that concern by requiring property taxes to only be spent on "core services" such as public safety, education and environmental and infrastructure projects. But that provision doesn't address the main worry of city and county officials - that there will be much less money to pay for those services.

Small, rural counties and towns with a large percentage of homestead properties in their tax base are especially concerned what the measure could do to their bottom line.

A lawsuit has been filed by an activist group and two former local elected officials against the state over the ballot measure, alleging it is misleading.

But even if the courts rule against the state, that wouldn't automatically remove the measure from the ballot. Under state law, Attorney General James Uthmeier would be required to amend the ballot summary if it is found to be defective.

Support the businesses that support TALLAHASSEE REPORTS!



PRACTICAL GOVERNANCE. ACCOUNTABILITY. A MAYOR FOR ALL OF TALLAHASSEE.

Tallahassee doesn't need more political noise or backroom deals. We need a pragmatic leader who answers directly to the taxpayers, not special interests. Daryl Parks is running as a nonpartisan candidate to bring common-sense business solutions and fiscal responsibility to City Hall.

ELECT DARYL PARKS FOR MAYOR ON AUGUST 18, 2026.



WHY DARYL PARKS IS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ALL OF TALLAHASSEE:

- LAW AND ORDER IS JOB #1:** Public safety is our top priority. Daryl will ensure law enforcement has the resources required to fight crime and keep our families safe.
- A PRO-BUSINESS MINDSET:** As a national hospitality business owner, Daryl knows how red tape suffocates job growth. He will fix local planning and permitting so small businesses can thrive.
- FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY:** With upcoming state property tax reforms looming, City Hall faces incoming budget cuts. Daryl will use out-of-the-box business strategies to balance the budget without cutting essential public services.
- INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT:** Trained as an attorney to listen to both sides of an issue before deciding, Daryl enters office with an open mind and a commitment to measurable accountability.
- FAMILY FIRST:** A proud father of three dedicated to building a safer, stronger, and more affordable community for the next generation.

NO SPECIAL INTERESTS. JUST COMMON-SENSE LEADERSHIP. Learn more about Daryl's plans at [DarylforMayor.com](http://DarylforMayor.com)



Paid for and approved by Daryl Parks, nonpartisan candidate for Tallahassee Mayor

# BUSINESS & SPORTS

TALLAHASSEE REPORTS

June 6, 2026 | B1

## Leon County Residential Permits Up 43.5% in May

By Steve Stewart

According to filings with Leon County and the City of Tallahassee, the number of single-family residential construction permits was up 43.5% in May 2026 when compared to May 2025.

There were 66 permits issued in May 2026, compared

to 46 permits issued one year ago. There were 70 permits issued last month, April 2026.

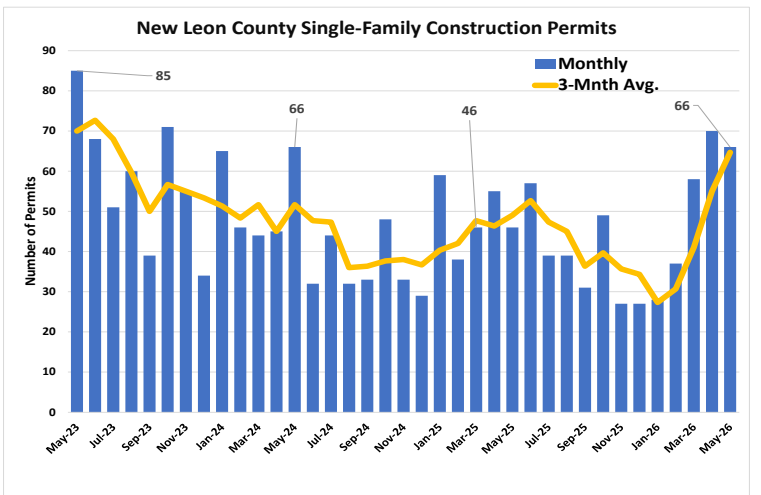
The 3-Mnth Avg. data (Mar. – May.), which smooths out the month-to-month volatility, shows a 32.0% increase in the number of permits issued over the same 3-month period one year ago.

The 3-Mnth Avg. data show a 6.1% increase in monthly average permit value during this period. The 3-month average permit values increased from \$13.1 million in May 2025

to \$13.9 million in May 2026.

The chart below shows the number of permits issued each month for the last 37-month period. A 3-month average line is also included. The highlighted numbers relate to permits issued in the month of April back to 2023.

The chart shows that the 3-month average declining trend that began in June 2025 has been reversed. The year-to-date (YTD) numbers through May show 2026 permits (259) is behind the number of permits issued during the first six months of



2025 (301).

	May-25	May-26	Chg	%Chg
Permits	46	66	20	43.5%
Value (millions)	\$ 13.3	\$ 14.2	\$ 0.9	6.8%
3-Mnth Avg.	49.0	64.7	15.7	32.0%
Value (millions)	\$ 13.1	\$ 13.9	\$ 0.8	6.1%

Source: Leon County, Office of Econ. Vitality

## Tallahassee MSA Median Single-Family Sales Price Up 4.4% in May

The Tallahassee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) housing market posted modest gains in both home prices and sales activity in May 2026 compared to the same month a year earlier, signaling continued resilience despite broader affordability challenges.

According to the May 2026 sales data tabulated by the Florida Realtors®, the median single-family home sales price increased from \$340,000 in May 2025 to \$355,000 in May 2026, a gain of \$15,000 or 4.4%. The increase suggests that home values in the Tallahassee area continue to appreciate, although at a moderate pace that is more consistent with a stabilizing market than the rapid

price growth experienced during the pandemic-era housing boom.

Sales activity also improved during the month. Total transactions increased from 330 homes sold in May 2025 to 357 in May 2026, an increase of 27 sales or 8.2%. The rise in transactions indicates that buyer demand remained strong enough to support increased market activity despite higher mortgage rates and elevated home prices.

Year-to-date figures present a somewhat different picture. While overall sales volume is stronger, median prices have softened slightly. Through the first five months of 2026, the median sales price stood at \$339,300, compared with

\$331,000 during the same period in 2025, a decline of \$8,300 or 2.5%. The decrease suggests that while May was a strong pricing month, lower-priced sales earlier in the year may have pulled down the cumulative median.

Meanwhile, year-to-date transactions rose significantly from 1,373 sales in 2025 to 1,466 sales in 2026, an increase of 93 homes or 6.8%.

This stronger growth in sales volume indicates a healthier level of market participation and suggests that buyers remain active in the Tallahassee market

despite economic uncertainties.

Overall, May's data show a housing market characterized by modest price appreciation and increasing sales activity, while year-to-date figures point to stronger demand but slightly lower average pricing than a year ago.

	May-25	May-26	Chg	%Chg
Median Price	\$ 340.0	\$ 355.0	\$ 15.0	4.4%
Transactions	330	357	27	8.2%
YTD	\$ 331.0	\$ 339.3	\$ 8.3	2.5%
Transactions	1,373	1,466	93	6.8%

## Trulieve Set to Become First Cannabis Company Listed on the NYSE

By Mitch Perry, *The Florida Phoenix*

Trulieve Cannabis Co., Florida's largest marijuana provider and one of the biggest in the nation, has been approved for listing on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

Voting shares are expected to begin trading on the NYSE floor under the ticker symbol TRLV on Wednesday morning.

When that happens, it will have become the first U.S. cannabis company to list on the NYSE.

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche reclassified medical marijuana to Schedule III in April, opening a pathway for Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration for state licensed medical marijuana companies. The classification means a drug has some medical use and a moderate to low potential for physical and psychological dependence.

"As the first U.S. cannabis company to list on a major U.S. exchange, we are excited for the opportunity to expand our shareholder base, increase

liquidity, and raise awareness for the benefits of medical marijuana," Kim Rivers, Trulieve founder and CEO, said in a press release. "Uplisting to the NYSE is a major advancement for Trulieve and the industry."

Trulieve provided the financial muscle in 2024 to fund Smart & Safe Florida, the advocacy group that worked to place recreational cannabis on the ballot. The measure received nearly 56% support, short of the 60% required for passage.

The company came back last year to fund a similar effort to get the issue on the ballot this November, but the Florida Supreme Court ended that push in March when it declined to rehear Smart & Safe's lawsuit against Secretary of State Cord Byrd. That lawsuit challenged a directive by Byrd to invalidate more than 70,000 petition signatures collected by the campaign.

Trulieve has been listed on the Canadian Stock Exchange since 2018, but will no longer do so following the close of the market on Tuesday.

## Stay informed on LOCAL Sports

### TALLAHASSEE ACROSS THE GLOBE

The City of Tallahassee has more than \$100 million in strategic investments that will come alive over the next year, including an International Processing Facility at Tallahassee International Airport to support the Foreign Trade Zone that will serve up to 11 counties and create \$300 million in annual economic impact. By investing in infrastructure and quality of life amenities, Tallahassee is attracting new businesses and over the last five years has created more than 15,000 jobs, while growing the local economy nearly 25 percent.



**TALLAHASSEE**  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

TLHAIRPORT.COM



**Outside is fun again!**

- Tailored Treatment
- No Contracts Required
- Serviced by Certified Technicians
- Guaranteed Satisfaction



Tallahassee.MosquitoJoe.com

Mosquitoes • Fleas • Ticks

**850-772-0664**

**HOME PEST DEFENSE**



# ROWE

# ROOFING

1843 Commerce Blvd, Midway, FL 32343

[www.RoweRoofing.com](http://www.RoweRoofing.com) 850.386.ROOF (7663)

“We Make Roofing Easy, Every *SHINGLE* Time”



**Commercial and Residential Services**

**Tallahassee's  
best roofing  
contractor for  
over 50 years**

# Local Sports

## Walker Notches Second Consecutive National Title

By FSU News

EUGENE, Ore. – Florida State track and field senior Shenese Walker won her second straight national championship and her first NCAA 100-meter national title at Hayward Field on Saturday.

Walker became the first ACC women's sprinter in the modern era to win both the indoor 60 and outdoor 100 in the same year. Walker opened her weekend in the preliminaries with the third-fastest qualifying time of 10.94, before edging out world leader Adeaiah Hodge of Georgia in the finals with a winning time of 10.88.

Walker won the program's

third national title in the event and the first since Michelle Finn in 1985. The Jamaica native's victory also marks Florida State's 22nd national champion of all-time and the program's first since Colleen Quigley in 2015.

"Amazing run, Shenese was dialed in today," head coach Matt Kane said. "Championship racing is all about winning. There have been crazy times all week, but this is about the win. She dominated an amazing field, and I can't think of a better way for Shenese to cap her career as a Seminole."

The 4x100 meter relay team consisting of Lucy May Sleeman, Walker, Liana Tyson and Micayah Holland started

the night by capturing first-team All-America honors, recording the highest finish in the event since 2022 after placing sixth with the third-fastest time in program history at 42.81.

Kayla Pinkard concluded her collegiate career by earning second-team All-America honors in the women's triple jump after placing 10th with a mark of 13.26 meters. The finish marked the highest NCAA Championship placement of her career and the best finish by a Seminole in the event since



Alonie Sutton's 13th place finish in 2021. The women's team finished 19th overall with 15 points.

## Lee Poppell Finishes 13th in U.S. Open Final Qualifier

By Robert Stewart

On June 8, The Florida State Golf Association held the U.S. Open Final Qualifying tournament at BallenIsles Country Club located in Palm Beach Gardens, FL. This two-day tournament was one of 13 final qualifiers allowing the top four golfers to advance to the U.S. Open.

Leon County Alum Lee

Poppell finished his second round with a final score of 142 (-2), just four shots behind the fourth qualifier. Although Poppell did not qualify, he finished under par with a round of 70 (-2) on the first day and a round of 72 (E) on the second, finishing in 13th place out of a field of 71 golfers.

Poppell advanced to final qualifying after shooting a 4-under 68 to tie for second

place at a local U.S. Open qualifier at The Plantation at Ponte Vedra. He carded six birdies during the round, including four on the back nine after making the turn at even par.

The qualifier capped a strong junior season at Troy University, where Poppell posted a 72.06 stroke average, recorded 15 under-par rounds and finished inside the top 25 in eight of 11 events.



Stay informed on **LOCAL** Sports



Brand **NEW**

price start at **\$1559**

1, 2, & 3 Bedroom Apartment Homes

2730 Welaunee Blvd Tallahassee, FL 32308

P: 850-765-6113 arborblvd@arborproperties.com

Where The Living Is Easy

LISTEN TO THE SHOW  
LIVE 12P - 1P ET  
@**REALTALK93.COM**



“Subscribe to TR and help my furry friends.”  
—Zeke, The TR Newshound

For every TR annual subscription, \$5 will be donated to a local animal shelter.

Subscribe online at **Tallahasseereports.com** or call **850-766-6207** and ask for Zeke!



## Local Sports

# Godby's Jamarin Simmons Commits to Clemson, Rickards' Davion Crumitie Commits to Vanderbilt

By Robert Stewart

Two Leon County wide receivers, Jamarin Simmons and Davion Crumitie, committed to high-profile college football programs during the month of May. Rickards' Davion Crumitie, regarded as one of the fastest high school athletes in Florida, committed to Vanderbilt on May 30 as a 3-star recruit, while Godby standout Jamarin Simmons, a 5-star prospect and the No. 5 ranked wide receiver in his class according to 247Sports, committed to Clemson on May 20.

### Jamarin Simmons – Clemson

Godby wide receiver Jamarin "Waffle House" Simmons, a five-star prospect in the Class of 2027, has established himself as one of the most accomplished football recruits in Leon County, culminating in his commitment to Clemson in May.

Simmons enters his senior season coming off a standout junior campaign in which he recorded 59 receptions for 932 yards and 14 touchdowns while helping lead the Cougars. He also showcased his versatility by adding a rushing touchdown and a passing touchdown on offense, while contributing defensively with 25 tackles, six pass breakups, and three interceptions.

His production has been consistent throughout his high school career. As a sophomore, Simmons hauled in 49 receptions for 996 yards and eight touchdowns, averaging more than 20 yards per catch. He also saw varsity action as a freshman, giving him three years of experience against top compe-

tion entering his final season.

Beyond Friday nights, Simmons has earned recognition on the national recruiting circuit. He was named an "Alpha Dog" at Under Armour Orlando in 2026 and participated in The Opening Finals, one of the country's premier showcase events for high school football prospects. Recruiting services rank him among the top wide receivers in Florida and one of the highest-rated prospects in the nation.

His recruitment drew interest from some of the nation's top programs, including Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Colorado, Miami and LSU, before he ultimately chose Clemson. The commitment marks a significant milestone for both Simmons and the Godby football program, as the dynamic playmaker prepares for what could be a memorable senior season before heading to the ACC.

### Davion Crumitie – Vanderbilt

Rickards athlete Davion Crumitie, one of the top multi-sport prospects in Florida's Class of 2027, announced his commitment to Vanderbilt in May after reopening his recruitment with a decommitment from Syracuse on Feb. 3. The decision came after Crumitie emerged as one of the state's most dynamic athletes, drawing interest from programs across the country.

Crumitie enters his senior season following a productive junior campaign in which he contributed in all three phases of the game for the Raiders. Playing both wide receiver and safety, he recorded 52 receptions for 776 yards while adding 26 tackles and an inter-



Two Leon County wide receivers, Jamarin Simmons(R) and Davion Crumitie, committed to high-profile college football programs during the month of May.


ception on defense. He also made an impact on special teams with both a kickoff return touchdown and a punt return touchdown.

His versatility has been a hallmark of his high school career. As a sophomore, Crumitie contributed as both a receiver and defensive back, finishing the season with 22 catches, four interceptions, and a forced fumble. Through two varsity seasons, he has totaled 74 receptions for more than 1,000 receiving yards while also making plays on defense and special teams.

While his football accomplishments have drawn the attention of college recruiters, Crumitie has also established himself as one of Florida's premier track and field athletes. As a junior, he captured FHSAA Class 3A state

championships in both the 100-meter and 200-meter dash and helped Rickards win a state title in the 4x100 relay. He also claimed Florida indoor state championships in the 60-meter and 200-meter dash, further cementing his reputation as one of the fastest athletes in the country.


His combination of speed, athleticism, and versatility attracted more than 30 scholarship offers from programs across the nation, including Auburn, Florida, Florida State, Tennessee and Syracuse, before he ultimately chose Vanderbilt. The commitment represents another major recruiting victory for Rickards and gives the Commodores one of the state's most dynamic athletes as Crumitie prepares for his senior season.



# DIANNE WILLIAMS - COX

- Building public infrastructure
- Strong investments in our neighborhoods and public safety, keeping our families safe
- Securing \$250 million to improve local healthcare
- Economic Development, supporting major projects like Amazon to create new jobs

**ENDORSED BY FLORIDA POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION**



PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT APPROVED AND PAID FOR BY DIANNE WILLIAMS-COX CANDIDATE FOR TALLAHASSEE CITY COMMISSION SEAT 5.

When You See This Logo, You Know – You've Got the BEST



Experience What Makes BENSON'S the Best

850-562-3132

Service is Always 24 Hours

Thank You, Tallahassee! Best Heating & Air Conditioning Company  
 2016 BEST Awardee  
 HOURS: Mon-Fri: 8am-8pm & Sat: 8am-4pm  
 BensonsHVAC.com Financing Available

4803 Seaton Court Tallahassee, FL 32309



Family-Owned & Operated



- Competitive pricing
- Selling All Major Brands
- State of the Art Equipment
- Computerized Wheel Alignment
- Road Hazard Coverage
- Road Force Balancing

CONTACT US

(850)-893-2000





Complete Auto Repair & Service All Makes and Models



# WELCOMES OUR NEWEST PHYSICIANS



Dr. Mark Woernle

Spine Surgeon



Dr. Ashley Henning

Primary Care Sports Medicine Physician



Dr. Jonathan Liu

Pain Management Physician



Dr. Natalie Marengi

Trauma Surgeon