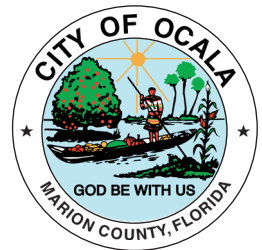




News Happening Around Town

February 2021 Newsletter



City of Ocala
Office of the Mayor

Message from the Mayor



“As an Ocala native, I deeply care about what happens in our city. The people and places that make up this town are an important part of our community. Serving as your mayor for nine years is both an honor and a privilege and I remain committed to staying connected to our citizens. My hope is that through this monthly newsletter, you will see the continuous progress of our city as we work together to make this city a great place to live, play and prosper.”

Calendar | Upcoming Meetings

2
Mar.

City Council Meeting
5 p.m.

16
Mar.

City Council Meeting
5 p.m.

Updates from the Police Department

Ocala Police Officer Honored

At the Feb. 16 City Council meeting, Officer Jordan Pagano was awarded the 2019-2020 Florida Police Chiefs Association Lifesaving Award for his heroic actions in saving a man from a burning building last month. Councilmembers, city staff and audience members gave him a standing ovation as he received the award from High Springs Police Chief, Antoine Sheppard.

In early January, Pagano responded to a 911 call about a potential house fire on NW Ninth St. Upon arrival, he discovered a 62-year-old man was still inside the home, which was engulfed in flames. Pagano pulled the man to safety and waited with him until an ambulance arrived. The man was then transported to UF Health Shands Hospital where he received care for burns and smoke inhalation. We are so grateful to have such men of honor serving on the Ocala Police force.

From Around the Community

Message from the Mayor

"I am back in the office and feeling better every day. I am so thankful to 'my angels in room 606' for the great care I received while in the hospital. I feel stronger each day. My heart goes out those who are still suffering from this virus. Please remember to stay safe and show kindness to your neighbor as we continue to work through this pandemic together."

Recent Road Work

As many of you may have noticed, Watula Ave. has been closed from Silver Springs Blvd. to Eighth St. for some time in order to accommodate a road resurfacing project. This project has now been completed, and we thank you for your patience during the construction period. Enjoy the new road!

Health Care Forum

One of the best ways we can fight COVID-19 is by living a healthy lifestyle. We need to go on offense and be prepared with a healthy immune system to better counteract the effects of the virus. To that end, we are in the early stages of planning a health care forum to take place towards the end of March. It is our goal to have speakers from Heart of Florida, AdventHealth, Ocala Health and more. In the meantime, don't hesitate to contact your family doctor and get your health straightened out.

Mayors United Against Antisemitism

In October 2020, the Global Jewish Advocacy (AJC) issued a report showing a steep climb in antisemitism in the United States. I, along with mayors across the United States, have joined together in an effort to speak out against this threat. Antisemitism is incompatible with the democratic values that are the very bedrock of our society. We must fight this trend.

Mary Sue Rich Community Center at Reed Place Groundbreaking

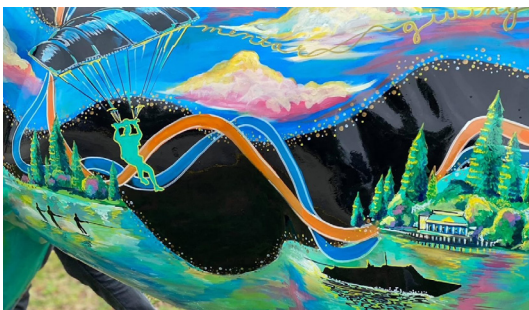


On January 28, the City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Department held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new community center in northwest Ocala. The event was attended by community leaders, politicians and many supporters. This complex will stand in honor of two women who have made an impact on this community, Ms. Mary Sue Rich and Ms. Ruth Reed. The expected completion date is Spring 2022. We will continue to keep you updated on the progress.



“Horse Fever” 20/20

One of the newest members of Ocala’s herd of painted horses pays tribute to the late Chief Greg Graham. This horse, entitled “Legacy” by artist Derek Grimsley, will reside outside of the Ocala Police Department building.



Proclamations



A proclamation is a formal public statement issued by a person of authority, dealing with matters of great importance or offering recognition to a person or organization. If you or your organization is interested in working with the Mayor's office to receive recognition, please contact Jackie McGuinness at (352)401-3977.

Recent Proclamations

Problem Gambling Awareness Month

The City of Ocala has recognized March 2021 as Problem Gambling Awareness month to demonstrate its support in addressing problem gambling and the initiative of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling in bringing awareness to the issues surrounding problem gambling in our community. Problem gambling is a serious public health issue which impacts family, friends and businesses with significant societal and economic costs, affecting more than one million Floridians of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds in all communities.

It is estimated that more than 6 million people of every age, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status suffer from problem gambling and need treatment. The issue of problem gambling is a community issue, as 8-10 people are affected for every one problem gambler and conservative estimated social costs are \$7 billion annually. Educating the public about how problem gambling affects everyone in the community, including youth, older adults and families, is essential if we are to be proactive about this problem. The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling's 2021 Problem Gambling Awareness Month campaign provides an opportunity for the public, policymakers, educators, businesses, mental health providers, criminal justice professionals, the gaming industry and others to make known the adverse effects of problem gambling, as well as available treatment.

Any individual, professional or organization dedicated to assisting those in need can participate in raising awareness of problem gambling and available resources by promoting the statewide 24-hour confidential, multilingual Helpline, 888-ADMIT-IT. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim the month of March 2021 in the City of Ocala as PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH.

Engineers Week

National Engineers Week, founded in 1951 by the National Society of Professional Engineers, is always celebrated at the time of George Washington's birthday in February because he was our first president and a military engineer.

Engineers employ scientific and technical skills to the advancement and betterment of human welfare and are dedicated to ensuring a diverse, vigorous and well-educated workforce by increasing interest in engineering and technology-oriented careers. Engineers encourage our young math and science students to realize the practical power of their own knowledge, and National Engineers Week promotes the importance

of high levels of math, science and technological literacy and motivates youth to pursue engineering careers. The theme of National Engineers Week 2021 is "Imagining Tomorrow." Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim February 21-27, 2021 as "ENGINEERS WEEK" in Ocala. I urge all citizens to join with me in paying tribute to the widespread contributions engineers make to our society.

Opioid and Amnesty Information

The Ocala Police Department (OPD) has multiple protocols in place to help alleviate addiction in our community.

All field officers are equipped with Narcan® to aid during a response to a possible opioid overdose call. Narcan® is an FDA approved nasal spray that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid emergency or overdose. OPD's Opioid Amnesty Program continues to be a prominent factor in the reduction of overdose deaths and crime throughout Marion County. If someone is struggling with addiction and needs assistance, upon request by the individual, an Ocala Police Officer will transport them to a local health treatment facility, free of charge. The officer will also take and properly destroy any drugs and/or drug paraphernalia surrendered to them by the individual without the fear of arrest for possession of those items. The goal of the Amnesty Program is to encourage individuals to seek treatment without the barriers of cost or arrest. It is the belief of OPD that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

OPD Numbers* 2021 Year to Date

Overdoses (OD)	36
OD Deaths	2
Narcan® Saves	22
Amnesty Program	
Total Participants	345
2021 Participants	14

*Numbers are as-of this writing and are subject to change.

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