



Anglers wait for the start of the MAXAM Tire Bassmaster Elite fishing in Palatka on Wednesday.

## Bassmaster showcases Palatka

Last week, Palatka once again served as the host of the nationally televised MAXAM Tire Bassmaster Elite fishing tournament at Riverfront Park, attracting hundreds of anglers and spectators. The event spotlighted Palatka and the St. Johns River on an international stage and significantly boosted the local economy.



Cory Johnston

Palatka is a favored venue for fishing tournaments, hosting major events like the Bassmaster and the upcoming Wolfson Children's Hospital Tournament. This next event, marking its 35th visit to Palatka, will bring over 1,000 anglers to the city on May 16, along with numerous smaller gatherings throughout the year.

This year's Bassmaster Elite was won by Cory Johnston from Otonabee, Canada, who claimed a hefty total of 93 pounds, 6 ounces over four days. Johnston earned the top prize of \$101,000. The competition was featured on the FOX Sports TV network.

For those interested in participating in the Wolfson



An angler shows off his catch during the weight-in on Friday.

Children's Hospital Bass Tournament—which supports capital improvements and medical technology acquisitions for the hospital in Jacksonville—additional details are available at the Wolfson Children's Hospital website, <https://www.wolfsonchildrens.com/>.

## Palatka Recreation Department



# Soccer Stars

The City of Palatka Recreation Department concluded its youth soccer season with great fanfare on June 13, as hundreds of young athletes took to the fields at the Robert H. Jenkins Community Center for the final games. The season, filled with excitement and spirited competition, brought together children from across the community, providing them with an opportunity to develop their skills, learn teamwork, and engage in healthy physical activity.

As the season drew to a close, families and friends gathered to cheer on the players, celebrating the sportsmanship and accomplishments of these young soccer stars. The Recreation Department extends its heartfelt thanks to all the coaches, volunteers, and parents who dedicated their time and effort to make this season a success.

Every athlete was given a medal sponsored and presented by City Commission Justin Campbell honoring their achievements.

Looking forward, the Recreation Department is excited to offer more sporting activities and encourages young athletes to stay active and continue honing their skills. The next sport will be adult flag football, which begins on May 17.



Visit [www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/photos](http://www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/photos) to see a gallery of soccer photos

## At the Airport

Contractors working for the City of Palatka completed a project last week to resurface the apron and taxiways at the Palatka Municipal Airport. According to airport manager Yul McNair, the approximately \$1 million project, funded through grants from the Florida Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration, was long overdue.

“This project is part of the effort by the airport and the City to ensure a high level of operational efficiency and safety for our pilots,” said McNair, “and to continue to make this facility one of the best in North Florida.

The airport, also known as Lieutenant Kay Larkin Field, serves as a hub for aviation in the region. Named in honor of Lieutenant Kay Larkin, a local World War II hero, the airport accommodates a variety



of aviation needs, including general aviation, flight training, and corporate travel. Its location at 4015 Reid St. Hwy 100, west of Palatka supports the city's economic development by facilitating easy access for business travelers and aviation enthusiasts.

## Work on St. Johns Avenue

Contractors for the City of Palatka began work on the intersection on St. Johns Avenue last week. The project is to repair and upgrade the brick crosswalks in the intersection.

During the upgrade, intermittent traffic interruptions will occur in all directions.

The project will move to each intersection between 3th and 11th Streets except 9th Street. Each intersection will take 2 full work-days to complete.

Motorists and pedestrians are urged to remain attentive to changing traffic patterns and personnel within the work zone.

Please be mindful of changing traffic patterns and personnel in the roadway.

For more information, please contact Public Works at (386) 329-0107



## Firefighter training



Last week, Palatka firefighters took advantage of a unique training opportunity on the 800 block of St. Johns Avenue, practicing on a building slated for demolition. The team focused on honing their skills in roof ventilation—a crucial firefighting technique used to clear smoke and heat from burning buildings.

Palatka Fire Chief Chris Taylor emphasized the rarity and value of this training scenario. “It’s not often that we get the chance to practice like this on actual buildings,” he said. “This kind of training is invaluable.” The session allowed firefighters to enhance their practical skills in a controlled environment, preparing them for real-life emergencies.



# COMMUNITY MEETING

## City of Palatka to hold public input session on Jenkins Community Center

The City of Palatka invites residents to participate in a public input session focused on the future use of the Robert Jenkins Community Center, located at 1900 Napoleon St., Palatka. This meeting aims to gather input from community members regarding their vision and preferences for using this important community asset.

City Commissioners and staff members will be present to listen to residents' ideas and discuss potential developments. This session is an opportunity for residents to directly influence the future of the Jenkins Community Center so that it can better serve the community's needs.



- **Location: Robert Jenkins Community Center, 1900 Napoleon Street**
- **Date and Time: April 30, 5:30 p.m.**

For more information, please contact Palatka Community Affairs at (386) 329-0100 ext. 325

## Quick Thinking Saves the Day



## Palatka tackles unexpected water main break

Earlier this month, Public Works Utilities Department supervisor Eli Higginbotham and his crew showed their resourcefulness and willingness to get their hands dirty (and wet) to keep Palatka's water flowing.

Higginbotham and his team responded to a minor leak at the corner of Palm and Kennedy Streets, but the situation quickly escalated. As they dug into the asphalt to reach the problem area, they discovered a failed clamp at a joint where two pipes met. An unexpected twist occurred despite their preparations and attempts to shut off the water based on standard procedures. "We thought we had all the valves turned off and even opened a fire hydrant on the same main to check, but it turned out the hydrant wasn't drawing water," Higginbotham explained.

The crew then attempted to replace the faulty clamp. However, as they removed the old bolts, the clamp burst open under the still-active pressure of the 8-inch water main, surprising everyone involved. "It blew apart, and there was still full pressure," Higginbotham said. In response, his team had to adapt quickly, finding alternative valves while managing to keep the site clear of flooding using a vacuum truck.

Higginbotham described the high-pressure environ-

ment in the trench as he worked to fit a new clamp around the pipe, "Luckily, we had the new clamp ready; otherwise, it would have taken twice as long." Thanks to their efforts and some frantic valve shutting by other crew members, they managed to control the situation.

Higginbotham said that while there was a pressure drop, thankfully, no residents lost their water supply.

Higginbotham reflected on the challenges of working with aging infrastructure, a common issue in Palatka. "Some valves are so old or buried under asphalt that they're practically lost in time," he said, which complicates routine maintenance. The oldest pipe he's ever replaced was stamped with the year 1886.

Despite the difficulties, Higginbotham loves his job. "It's a lot of fun. You never know what you'll get into," he said, "Especially on a hot day. If you can't get the water all the way off, that's okay with us because it usually just means we work in a cooler environment."

So, the next time you turn on your faucet or enjoy a refreshing shower, take a moment to appreciate the dedication of Higginbotham and his team. They work tirelessly to keep the water flowing and ensure the water of Palatka remains strong, healthy, and steady.

CITY of *Palatka*  
FLORIDA

Players under 18 years old  
must have signed parent  
permission form.

**ADULT FLAG FOOTBALL**

FRIDAY  
NIGHT  
LIGHTS

**FLAG  
FOOTBALL**



7 VS 7  
UP TO 10 PLAYERS

6 GAME SEASON PLUS CHAMPIONSHIP  
SEASON STARTS 5/17/24  
CONTACT CITY OF PALATKA  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
386-329-0100 EXT323

Register your team at the  
Community Affairs office, located at  
1100 N 19th Street.  
386-329-010 ext323

**League begins May 17th**

**REGISTRATION  
\$250 PER TEAM**



# Celebrate Palatka!



People ask, 'What's Palatka got?' One big answer is Trails! and Friday, April 26th at 6 p.m. at the clock tower in Palatka's riverfront park, people will gather to celebrate all of them, plus the re-opening of the **City's River Center** and **Memorial Bridge boardwalk**.

Come and join Palatka **Mayor Robbi Correa**, reenactors portraying American botanist, ornithologist, natural historian, and explorer **William Bartram**, and other officials for a **Trail Town Celebration** and to kick off the annual **St. Johns River Bartram Frolic**.

The celebration follows a 6-mile bicycling tour of Palatka featuring sites with a connection to Bartram.

The tour starts at 5 p.m. at the **Azalea City Brewing Co.**, 120 S 7th St, Palatka.

**What:** Trail Town Celebration

**When:** Friday, April 26th at 6 p.m

**Where:** The clock tower in River Front Park

**Why:** Officially reopen the River Center and Memorial Bridge boardwalk and kickoff the Bartram Frolic



## Property Registration

# City partners with company for property services

The City of Palatka has partnered with Orange Data, a Sarasota-based technology company specializing in public records and property registration.

With this new partnership, property owners in the City of Palatka can now benefit from Orange Data's expertise in lien searches and the registration of vacant, foreclosed, blighted, unsecured, or abandoned structures.

According to the City Code, owners of vacant, foreclosed, blighted, unsecured, or abandoned structures in the City of Palatka are responsible for registering and maintaining their property.

More information on registering these properties is available at [www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/registration](http://www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/registration).

Orange Data partners with more than 30 governments in Florida, including the City of Ocala, Sarasota County, and the Orange County Tax Collector. More information on Orange Data can be found at [www.orangeliens.com](http://www.orangeliens.com).

Orange Data replaces the City's previous service provider, ProChamps, who filed for liquidation in June of 2023.

"Orange Data is a well-respected company with a proven history of working with municipalities across Florida," said Palatka City Attorney Jane West. "This



partnership will be good for the residents and the City"

"The Orange Data service is providing just the first part of the City's new efforts to make registering and using City services easier for residents," said City Manager Troy Bell, "in addition to Orange Data this includes a new reporting system that posts to the City's website – all code enforcement case data, cases on properties destroyed by fire, and eventually, Public Works completed workorder data. We are now exploring several more solutions with technology companies to increase transparency, elevate accountability, and ultimately better serve the people of Palatka."

## The City of Palatka Summer Internship Program

City of Palatka is seeking High School/College students for our paid Summer Internship Program that are interested in learning aspects of public relations and local government. The interns that are selected for these positions should expect to learn key points of the field and gain work life experience to prepare them for the future. It is essential that the applicant have excellent communications skills, demonstrate creativity, and understand the importance of attending to even the smallest details.

Choose the City of Palatka for your paid summer internship. Here are just a few reasons:

**Hands-on Experience:** Gain practical, real-world experience in fields such as urban planning, public administration, environmental conservation, and more. Our internship opportunities provide you with the chance to roll up your sleeves and get involved in meaningful projects that have a tangible impact on our city.

**Resume Building:** Strengthen your resume and set yourself apart. A City of Palatka internship is not just a summer job—it's a strategic move that will impress college admissions officers and future employers, paving the way for your successful future.

Don't miss this opportunity to kickstart your future career while positively impacting the City of Palatka. Apply for our summer internship program today and unlock a world of possibilities!

Ready to seize the summer? Apply now and join us in shaping the future of Palatka!



Assist in one of the following departments:

- City Clerk's Office
- Planning and Zoning
- Community Affairs (Parks & Recreation)
- Palatka Municipal Airport
- Police Department
- Human Resources
- Public Works
- Fire Department
- Public Information

**Visit [www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/intern](http://www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/intern) for more information and to apply**

# Join Our Team - Career Opportunities

The City of Palatka has job openings available for the following positions. If you are interested in any of the following roles, please consider applying:

## **Aviation Administrative Assistant**

This is a part-time position which provides direct support to the daily operation of Palatka Municipal Airport through customer service and operations assistance. The primary responsibilities include supporting the Administrative/Operations Assistant in maintaining administrative records to ensure operational and financial requirements of the airport are met.

## **Aviation Operations Assistant**

This is a full time position in support of the daily administration and operation of Palatka Municipal Airport providing customer service and administrative assistance.

## **Firefighter:**

We are seeking dedicated firefighters to join the City of Palatka's Fire Department and contribute to the safety and well-being of the community.

## **Financial Services Supervisor**

This is a supervisory level accounting

position responsible for the supervision and/or preparation of complex professional, accounting, pension, and finance functions necessary to maintain the accounting and financial records and systems of the City. The Financial Services Supervisor reports directly to the Finance Director. Interaction with City employees, numerous vendors and the public while maintaining a friendly environment within the Department is required.

## **Police Officer:**

Join the Palatka Police Department as an officer and play a crucial role in maintaining law and order within the city.

## **Refuse Collector**

This position performs routine manual refuse collection work in the city refuse collection and disposal program. Works under direct supervision of a refuse collection driver.

## **Sanitation Equipment Operator**

Skilled work in the operation the manual and semi-automated operation of refuse collection and disposal equipment on assigned routes.

## **Utility Maintenance Worker-Trainee:**

This position involves semi-skilled work in constructing, installing, maintaining, and repairing water mains, water services, fire hydrants, sewer mains, sewer laterals, manholes, force mains, and valves.

## **Water Plant Mechanic Trainee**

Performs skilled preventative and corrective maintenance on a wide array of machinery to include engines, generators, pumps, motors at the water treatment plant and related facilities. Inspects, maintains, adjusts other associated equipment including compressors, valves, tanks, shafts, and blowers.

## **Wastewater Treatment Plant Mechanic Trainee**

Under general supervision, performs skilled and semi-skilled work in the installation, maintenance, and repair of plant and/or lift station equipment and electronic components. Provides leadership and limited supervision of junior personnel.

*For more information or to apply for any of these positions, please visit [Palatka-Fl.Gov](http://Palatka-Fl.Gov).*



## About Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement Unit is dedicated to providing prompt, courteous service to our community through the enforcement of our City's Code of Ordinances.

Our primary focus is the protection of the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens. Quality service by our staff helps to ensure the positive growth of property values and a safe, healthy environment to work

and play in. As our community continues to grow and prosper, the importance of professional enforcement of our Codes becomes increasingly important.

Visit [www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/code](http://www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/code) for Vacant, Foreclosed Abandon Property Information, Common Code Enforcement Issues and a list of fire damaged structure in the City.



# Youth Ambassadors

## Children's Book Drive

We are collecting Children's Books at Palatka City Hall, Gas Authority, Public Works, St. Johns River Center, now through May 1st. The books will be given away during the Blue Crab Festival at the St. Johns River Center.

Note: During the festival, a Parent/Guardian must be present for a child to receive a book.





# CITY of Palatka

Incorporated Jan. 8, 1853



[www.Palatka-FL.Gov](http://www.Palatka-FL.Gov)

**F**rom local festivals to community events, there's always something exciting happening right in your backyard. Dive into the rich tapestry of Palatka's history, explore charming neighborhoods, and support local businesses that make our city thrive. Join us in celebrating the spirit of the place we proudly call home. Pick Palatka and watch us go!

Regular City Commission meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.

## Contact Your City of Palatka



**Robbi Correa**  
Mayor/Commissioner



**Tammie McCaskill**  
Commissioner



**Justin Campbell**  
Commissioner



**Will Jones**  
Commissioner



**Rufus Borom**  
Commissioner



**Troy Bell**  
City Manager

**Administration - City Hall** 386-329-0100  
Troy Bell, City Manager  
Jonathan Griffith, Assistant City Manager  
Sunny Krantz, City Clerk  
Virginia Jones, Human Resources Generalist  
Jane West, City Attorney  
Marcia Carly, Finance Director  
Peter Willott, Public Information Officer

**Planning and Zoning Department** 386-329-0100  
Lorenzo Aghemo, Planning Director

**Palatka Police Dept.** 386-329-0115  
In any emergency, dial 911  
Jason Shaw, Police Chief 386-329-0110

**Community Affairs** 386-329-0100  
Includes Recreation, Cultural Arts and Code Enforcement  
Eddie Cutwright, Community Affairs Director

**Palatka Housing Authority** 386-329-0132

**Palatka Gas Authority** 386-328-1591  
Includes Water, Sewer & Sanitation Billing Department  
Brett Dennis, General Manager

**Palatka Fire Dept Downtown Station** 386-329-0120  
In any emergency Dial 911

Chief Chris Taylor  
Deputy Chief Chad Branford

**Palatka Fire Dept - Kay Larkin Station** 386-329-0155  
In any emergency Dial 911

**Palatka Municipal Airport** 386-329-0148  
Yul McNair, Airport Manager

**Palatka Golf Club** 386-329-0141  
Andy Hartz, Manager  
Call for Clubhouse reservations and prices

**Public Works Department** 386-329-0107  
Includes Cemetery Plot Sales  
Del McMillen, Public Works Director

**Water Treatment Plant** 386-329-0144

**Waste Water Treatment Plant** 386-329-0146  
Brian McCann, Superintendent