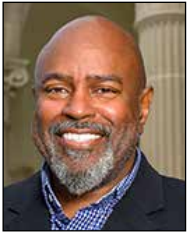


From the Manager's Desk

By Troy Bell
Palatka City Manager

Being new to the area, so as I get to know Palatka and its residents, I am constantly surprised by how much the City has to offer. This past week is a perfect example. I had a chance this week to join with the groups of county school students visiting



Troy Bell

Riverfront Park and the City's **St. Johns River Bartram Frolic**, where

they learned about explorer William Bartram and life in Florida in the 1700s.

The children were also treated to a ride on the St. Johns River on the City's boat, the '**Pride of Palatka I**' - the first time many students had the opportunity to go on a boat and the St. Johns River.

The event was open to the public on Saturday, it attracted visitors from across the state, and highlighted Palatka's unique history and natural beauty.

Last weekend, I also had the chance to attend the **Kiwanis Club of the Azalea City Benefit Bass Tournament** on the riverfront, that attracted hundreds of visitors to the City.

The event was in honor and memory of **Palatka Junior-Senior High student Baylee Holbrook**, who died last September. It was won by **Joe Riley and Jessey Nash** with a five-fish limit of bass weighing 24.51 pounds.

Palatka once again hosted the

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(Front row) Emma Sledge, Utility Clerk, Town of Welaka, Krister Brant, City Clerk, City of Gainesville, Karen Hayes, MMC, City Clerk, City of Crescent City, Mary Lou Hildreth, MMC, Town of Hampton, Patti Polk, Deputy Clerk, Town of Micanopy, Kierra Kaymore, Records Clerk, City of Palatka, Elise Earnest, Town of Hilliard, Lisa Purvis, MMC, Town Clerk, Town of Hilliard, (Back Row) Meghan Allmon, Town Clerk, Town of Welaka, Stephanie Silvia, City Clerk, City of Keystone Heights, Sunni Krantz, CMC, City Clerk, City of Palatka, Angie Guy, MMC, City Clerk, Dade City, FACC President, Diane Amendola, CMC, Assistant Deputy City Clerk, City of Alachua, Lisa Heeder, Deputy City Clerk, City of Starke, Joni Payne, Town Clerk, Town of Interlachen.

Clerks gather in Palatka

Palatka City Clerk Sunni Krantz hosted a gathering of her fellow clerks from other Putnam County towns are from across Northeast Florida at the Price Martin Center in Palatka for a quarterly meeting last week.

The Northeast Florida region of the Florida Association of City Clerks organized the meeting to foster collaboration and support among clerks who often operate as the sole record-keepers in their towns. The event offered a platform for sharing experiences and solutions to common challenges faced in the management of city records.

"Clerks are essential as custodians of public records and the official record of city commissions," said Krantz. "We are the hub of government operations, where citizens and city officials alike come for information."

The association, known for its tight-knit community, supports clerks



Palatka City Clerk Sunni Krantz stands with Palatka Mayor Robbi Correa, Town of Interlachen Clerk Joni Payne, and Town of Pomona Park Clerk Andrea Almeida while she holds a City proclamation naming May 5 to 11 Municipal Clerks' Week at the City Commission meeting last week.

through various initiatives, including a mentoring committee that guides new clerks through the complexities of their roles.

The gathering was particularly notable for the presence of the state association's president, Clerk Angie Guy of Dade City. Her participation highlighted the importance of these meetings in strengthening the network among city clerks.

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Students of the Month



Congratulations to the April Students of the Month

- **Brady Pinkerton**, Browning-Pearce Elementary School
 - **Madelyn Wilkinson**, Children's Reading Center Charter School
 - **Layla Hogan**, Hillcrest Academy
 - **Peter Jaramillo**, James A. Long Elementary School
 - **Joseph Johnson**, Kelley Smith Elementary School
 - **Kingston Odom**, Mellon Learning Center Pre – K
 - **Emily Boyles**, Mellon Learning Center K–12
 - **Ky'Marria Atterbury**, Moseley Elementary School
 - **Amaris Mack**, Palatka Jr./Sr. High School
 - **Joseph McCoy**, Putnam Academy of Arts & Sciences
- For more photos of these outstanding students, please visit www.Palatka-Fl.Gov/photos

Community Outreach

Last week Palatka City Manager Troy Bell, Community Affairs Director Eddie Cutwright, City Commissioners Will Jones, Justin Campbell Rufus Borom, Mayor Robbi Correa and other City staff held a community meeting at the Robert H. Jenkins Community Center, 1900 Napoleon St., to discuss the plans for the facility.

The facility, which the City acquired from the Putnam County School District after the former Middle School was closed,

The former school was named in honor of Pfc. Robert Henry Jenkins Jr. who was born on June 1, 1948, in Interlachen. He attended Central Academy High School in Palatka from 1963 until 1967.

After graduation, Pfc. Jenkins enlisted in the U.S. Marines. While serving in Vietnam, he leaped on top of fellow Marine Fred Ostrom, shielding him from a grenade. He was mortally wounded and posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the United States' highest award for military valor in action.

Jenkins is buried at Sister Spring Baptist Cemetery in Interlachen.



City Manager Troy Bell speaks to residents at a meeting last week to discuss plans for the Robert H. Jenkins Community Center.

Employee of the Month



At last week's Commission meeting Police Officer Sgt. Micheal McNeil was named the City Employee of the Month for April.

On March 24th, 2024, officers were called to a scene where a man was in distress. Sgt. McNeil responded swiftly, and used his police vehicle to rescue the man. According to Police Chief Jason Shaw, his bravery and quick thinking in a life-threatening situation were lauded by city officials and the community.

"Sergeant McNeil also demonstrated immense compassion and professionalism towards the man's wife, who was present at the scene, comforting her during this critical time. We are simply grateful for his decisive action and exemplary conduct," Said Chief Shaw at the commission meeting, "Sergeant McNeil truly embodies the spirit and dedication of a fine law enforcement officer in the city of Palatka. Thank you for your outstanding service and dedication. We deeply appreciate your efforts."

Town Hall



Last week, Commissioner Rufus Borom held another in his series of town hall meetings at the Palatka Gold Club. Topics at the town hall included events at the Riverfront, the Main Street Palatka program, and public safety concerns, including noise issues. The issue of adding extra streetlights on Federal Street next to City Hall was also discussed. Commissioner Borom plans to hold more meetings at different locations around the City to hear from residents.

MANAGER continued for page 1

nationally televised **MAXAM Tire Bassmaster Elite** fishing tournament at **Riverfront Park**, April 18 to 21, 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.

The **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 event was broadcast nationwide on the **FOX Sports TV network** and featured several segments highlighted in Palatka and Putnam County.

Palatka is a favored venue for fishing tournaments, hosting major events like the Bassmaster, Kiwanis and the upcoming **Wolfson Children's Hospital Tournament**. The Wolfson event will bring over 1,000 anglers to the City on May 16, marking its 35th visit to Palatka.

ka.

Our city's commitment to the angling community was further underscored by opening a new bait shop at **Mary Larson Brown Marina** on the Riverfront, a collaborative effort between the City and **Boathouse Marina company**. This is just the beginning of several planned enhancements to the City dock that will transform our marina into a full-service facility that will include a food truck and boat rentals.

Art and community spirit were also on full display this weekend with a pop-up gallery exhibition for local artists on St. Johns Avenue and a **'Family Sunday Fun Day'** at **Hank Bryant Park**. The park event featured local vendors and food trucks and was one of several fun days



scheduled for Sundays in the City this spring and summer. I was thrilled to be able to attend both of these events, which brought our community together in celebration of local talent and fellowship.

Looking ahead, the **Palatka Blue Crab Festival 2024** on Memorial Day weekend promises to be another highlight in our

city's event calendar.

Please enjoy the pre-Blue Crab Festival Sunset Social on May 17. Visit www.Palatka-Fl.Gov for more information.

As we head towards summer, remember that the **City Community Affairs Recreation department** is signing up children aged 4 or 5 for T-ball, and spots are still available for the adult flag football league. Call recreation coordinator **Reno Fells** at (386) 329-0100 ext. 323 for more information.

Palatka is a city of gatherings, history, and natural beauty. I am eager to meet more of you as we continue to celebrate and enjoy all that our city has to offer. Please feel free to call me at (386) 329-0100 or send me an email at TBell@Palatka-Fl.Gov, if you have any questions or concerns or would just like to say hello. As I am fond of pointing out, we can only do this if we do it together. **Pick Palatka and Watch Us Go!**



Bartram Frolic showcases City

Groups of Putnam County elementary students entered the past while visiting the City's Riverfront Park and St. Johns River Center at the end of last month, where they learned about explorer William Bartram and life in Florida in the 1700s.

The children were also treated to a ride on the St. Johns River on the City's boat, the 'Pride of Palatka'. The trip was the first time many students had the opportunity to go on a boat on the river.

The field trips served as a preview to the annual St. Johns River Bartram Frolic, organized by the Bartram Trail Society of Florida. This year's event held a special significance as it commemorated the 250th anniversary of Bartram's visit to Palatka, a milestone in Florida's rich history.

Later, members of the community joined Bartram Society members and community leaders, including Mayor Correa and City Manager Troy Bell, for a gathering at the River Center to kick off the event. The party followed a bike tour of the City featuring locations William Bartram visited during his time in Palatka. Bartram stayed in the Palatka area in 1774 while exploring what is now Florida.

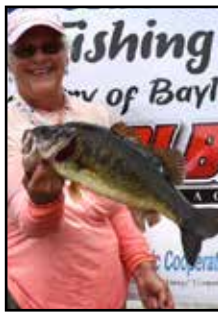
The gathering at the River Center included reenactments of the Bartram story by local historians and a group photograph.

The event, which was open to the public on Saturday, attracted visitors from across the state and highlighted Palatka's unique history and natural beauty. Sam Carr, the president of the Bartram Trail Society of Florida, said that the recreation aims to preserve William Bartram's contributions to Florida, especially Palatka. For more information about the Bartram Frolic, please visit bartramtrailsociety.com.



Photo Gallery

Kiwanis Club of the Azalea City Benefit Bass Tournament



Photos courtesy of Becky Williams

CLERKS continued for page 1

“These meetings are important because they give clerks an opportunity to team-build with each other. There’s only one city clerk in every town. So having the ability to reach out to the clerk in the next town to say, hey, I have this situation. How would you handle it? It’s important to us.” said Krantz.

Additionally, the city commission recently proclaimed May 6 to 11 as City Clerks Week, recognizing the vital role clerks play in local governance and encouraging community engagement with city hall operations. Town of Interlachen Clerk, Joni Payne, and Town of Pomona Park, Clerk Andrea Almeida, joined Palatka Clerk, Sunni Krantz, to accept the proclamation.

Photo from Palatka’s Past



A photograph from 1900 shows Lemon Street, now St. Johns Avenue, in Palatka in 1900. The photograph is used with the permission of Bill Price, who lives in Monticello and colorizes historical photographs as a hobby.

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.

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.

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 out work 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."

Sunrise over the St. Johns



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.



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 for Vacant, Foreclosed Abandon Property Information, Common Code Enforcement Issues and a list of fire damaged structure in the City.



CITY of Palatka

Incorporated Jan. 8, 1853



www.Palatka-FL.Gov

From 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

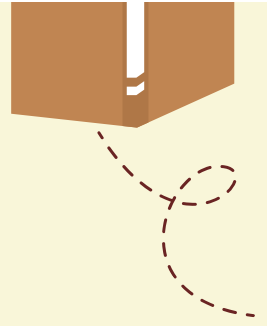
Palatka Municipal Airport 386-329-0148
Yul McNair, Airport Manager

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



CITY of *Palatka*
FLORIDA

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*
FLORIDA

Youth
AMBASSADOR
PROGRAM

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

APPLY BY MAY 31, 2024

Applications available at:

palatka-fl.gov/

email: vjones@palatka-fl.gov

call: 386-329-0100 ext 218

You're Invited to the City of Palatka's

RIVERFRONT SUNSET SOCIAL

Open to the Public | 21 and over



MAY

Friday **17** 5 to 10 PM

St. Johns River Center

102 North First Street

\$20 Entry Fee

Live Music - Steve Chandler and Buffalo Munn

Adult Beverages (cash bar) & Hor' D oeuvres

Food Truck Onsite- JB's Wingz n Thingz

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