

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023



BAY COUNTY *Florida*
BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV





2023 ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN



tommy hamm
district 1

Bay County offers our residents the very best of Florida: beautiful beaches and sunny skies. But our Southern hospitality, charm, and low taxes also make our county among the very best places in our state to live. This book aims to highlight our accomplishments throughout Fiscal Year 2023, which ran from Oct. 1, 2022 to Sept. 30, 2023. We intend to provide readers with a snapshot of how each department and division of county government works daily with the common goal of bettering our community. The Bay County Board of County Commissioners will continue to work together to ensure we move our county forward in a thoughtful, expedient manner. We are proud of our staff and their hard work to make our home a wonderful place to live and visit. We expect our team to maintain focus on our customers – the citizens of Bay County – while also being good stewards of your taxpayer dollars. The board maintains a commitment to excellence and efficiency in government while also providing transparency and accountability to the citizens we serve, and we welcome input and feedback about ways we can do and be better for the people of Bay County.

A copy of this Annual Report for the Board of County Commissioners is available online at baycountyfl.gov.

BAY COUNTY STATISTICS PER FL LEGISLATIVE ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

POPULATION: 179,168
AREA (SQUARE MILES): 758
ESTABLISHED: 1913

COUNTY SEAT: PANAMA CITY
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$60,473
MEDIAN AGE: 39



ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners is a five-member governing board elected at-large to represent the citizens of Bay County. The board defines the role and guides the actions of the organization in ensuring the future of Bay County. The commission hires a county manager to implement policies established by the board and to manage the operations of the county. The commission annually adopts the millage rate and approves the budget, which determines the revenue and expenditures necessary to operate all county departments. The powers and duties of the county commission are established by Florida Statutes, Chapter 125.

The majority of offices of the Bay County Commission are located at the Bay County Government Center at 840 W. 11th Street in Panama City. The campus also houses the offices of the Bay County Supervisor of Elections, the Tax Collector and the Property Appraiser.

THE 5 COUNTY DISTRICTS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A Message from the Commission Chairman and Intro to Bay County **2 & 3**
- County Manager **4**
- County Attorney **5**
- Budget Office **6**
- Communications Office **7**
- Collaborative Services: Cooperative Extension **8 & 9**
- Collaborative Services: Library Services **10 & 11**
- Collaborative Services: Housing Services **12**
- Collaborative Services: Transit Division **13**
- Collaborative Services: Veterans Services **14**
- Community Development: Building Safety **15**
- Community Development: Code Enforcement **16**
- Community Development: Planning and Zoning **17**
- Emergency Services: Emergency Management **18**
- Emergency Services: Communications Division **19**
- Emergency Services: Emergency Medical Services (EMS) **20 & 21**
- Emergency Services: Fire Rescue **22 & 23**
- Emergency Services: Alert Bay – Emergency Notification System **24**
- General Services: Animal Control **25**
- General Services: Parks and Recreation **26**
- General Services: Facilities Management **27**
- General Services: Solid Waste **28 & 29**
- Human Resources **30 & 31**
- Information Technology / Geographic Information Systems **32**
- Public Works: Capital Projects **33**
- Public Works: Engineering **34**
- Public Works: Mosquito Control **35**
- Public Works: Roads and Bridges **36**
- Public Works: Traffic Engineering **37**
- Public Works: Infrastructure Surtax **38**
- Purchasing **39**
- RESTORE Act **40**
- Risk Management **41**
- Utility Services: Water & Wastewater **42 & 43**
- Economic Development Alliance **44**
- Mexico Beach Community Development Council **45**
- Panama City Community Development Council **46**
- Panama City Beach Tourist Development Council **47**
- Rebuild Bay County, Inc **48**
- County Directory **49**

BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
840 WEST 11TH STREET
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32401

TELEPHONE: (850) 248-8140

This publication can be viewed online in PDF format at the Bay County website:
www.baycountyfl.gov

PRODUCED BY:
Bay County Communications
Department

LAYOUT & DESIGN BY:
GORGEOUS (GRGS.CO | 850-888-8GRG)

INTRO

county manager



robert "bob" majka



MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER:

Throughout all of 2023, Bay County continued to work hard to meet the long-term, enduring goals we established and adopted in our strategic planning process. Ensuring safety; delivering needed and wanted services; maintaining a family friendly community that adheres to our values; effectively maintaining stewardship of our natural resources; and building and maintaining a healthy business climate remains our focus in Bay County.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the citizens of Bay County about the many ways in which we are working to reach our goals each year. This publication, along with the 2024 Budget Summary and the Bay County Strategic Plan, aim to keep our board and residents informed about where we've been, how we're spending taxpayer dollars, and where we're headed.

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

A FEW HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023 INCLUDE:

- > We continued working to improve upon the dearth of affordable housing in our area through our Housing Services Division, which has, since its inception in 2022, awarded more than \$19 million to over 335 families in the first-time homebuyer program. Housing also awarded \$6 million to three rental development projects for the construction of 308 multi-family units for low-income families.
- > Continued to support law enforcement, including the purchase of a \$2.15 million helicopter for the Bay County Sheriff's Office.
- > Implemented significant efforts to inform the public about the dangers of swimming during double red flag conditions, including new ordinances regarding notification in rental units and on the sandy beach, partnered with beach vendors to add more than 500 signs at the shoreline on double red-flag days, utilized Code Enforcement officers to write warnings and fines for ordinance violations on double red-flag days.
- > Implemented new fire-safety measures for short-term rentals, ensuring the safety of visitors to Bay County.
- > Continued work on more than \$6 million in capital improvement projects, including the completion of the Bay Dunes Community Center, hardened three fire stations against natural disasters, and completed the Bay County Skate Park at the Sports Complex.
- > Continued work on Half-Cent Surtax roadway and infrastructure projects, including the resurfacing of dozens of miles of roadways, improved intersections, and improved public safety through the implementation of sidewalks and multi-use paths.
- > Addressed repetitive flooding issues in the Riviera Beach area of Panama City Beach via the purchase of four homes and construction of stormwater retention facilities.

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

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8140 | bmajka@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



don banks

WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

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

- > In 2023, the County Attorney's Office remains involved with the opioid litigation project. Settlements continue to be received from the pharmaceutical companies. In addition, the County Attorney's Office has assisted with the implementation of the CORE program facilitated by the Northwest Florida Health Network to distribute the settlement funds for the welfare of the county citizens and recovery efforts.
- > The County Attorney's Office worked with the Fire Inspection staff on setting up the County's Short Term Rental Inspection process to implement fire safety measures and ensure rentals are in compliance with Florida's changing vacation rental standards.
- > This year, the County Attorney's Office drafted several opinions relating to state and federal regulations and continues to monitor new legislative bills that may have an impact on county business.
- > The County Attorney's Office started working on a resolution for the Southport ballpark litigation, and continued efforts are in place with an agreement forthcoming.
- > The office continues to staff the monthly Planning Commission Meetings, Code Enforcement Board Hearings, and Special Magistrate Code Enforcement Hearings for Hurricane Michael damages.
- > The County Attorney's Office has recently upgraded the public records software to accommodate the growing demand of record requests and continues to improve in the efficiency of response time.



CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8175 | countyattorney@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > In 2023, Bay County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was fully allocated. Of the \$33.9 million received, \$20.7 has been officially obligated through FY2023. Projects throughout the county were completed using ARPA funds this year, including a new fire truck, two new ambulances, stormwater drainage enhancements, drinking water and wastewater system improvements, park restoration, support for the jail, and facility repairs. Scholarships were also provided to Haney Technical College to offer reduced tuition to qualifying students and enhance the county workforce. Funds have to be obligated by Dec. 31, 2024, while working towards finalizing all improvements by Dec. 31, 2026.
- > Florida Statute provides that the state and counties have a joint obligation to pay for the costs of secure detention care provided for juveniles. Passed in the 2016 legislative session, Senate Bill 1322 revised the methodology for calculating the share of detention care costs which must be paid by each county that is not fiscally constrained and does not provide its own detention care for juveniles. This calculation provides each such county shall pay to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice its annual percentage share of the cost to the Department by dividing the total number of days for juveniles residing in that county for the most recently completed 12-month period by the total number of detention days for juveniles in all non-fiscally constrained counties during that same time period. Juvenile Justice (DJJ) cost sharing with the State increased to \$1,502,682 for State FY2023, an increase of \$743,415 over the FY2022 cost.
- > On June 2, 2022, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the Freedom First Budget for State Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The Freedom First Budget ("Budget") increased the minimum wage for employees of Medicaid providers to at least \$15 per hour. The new Florida Medicaid minimum wage requirement applies to the direct care providers of cities, counties, and special districts which are Medicaid providers that provide ambulance transportation. This requirement increased annual salaries with benefits around \$1.3 - \$1.4 million for Bay County Medicaid providers.
- > Bay County purchased a 2007 Bell 407 Helicopter for \$2.15 million to be used by the Bay County Sheriff's Office. This helicopter is a vast improvement from the 1969 and 1970 helicopters previously used. It has an upgraded FLIR system, police radios, rebuilt engine, and special avionics.
- > The Budget Office follows a Florida law known as TRIM (Truth-in-Millage). The Truth-in-Millage Law was passed by the Florida Legislature and is designed to keep the public informed about taxes as proposed by local taxing authorities. Property owners receive their TRIM notices from the Bay County Property Appraiser once millage rates are established by a vote of each taxing authority. TRIM notices provide an estimate of each property, list all taxing authorities, and provide an overall total estimated property tax. Property taxes are based on \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. For example, on a \$100,000 property, one mill would generate \$100. Taxable value for the General Fund in FY2023 was \$22.4 billion, resulting in ad valorem tax collections of \$96.5 million.
- > The Budget Office is responsible for all Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) calculations for county payment to the various established CRAs throughout the county. A CRA is established in counties and municipalities which have areas deemed to be in a state of slum or blight. Once established, the CRA area tax base, from which a taxing authority realizes tax revenues, is frozen for a period of 30 to 40 years. During that time, the taxing authority may only receive tax revenue equal to the revenue collected in the base year. Revenue collected in excess of that amount is returned to the CRA for redevelopment projects within the CRA. There are currently 13 CRAs within Bay County. Out of the \$96.5 million in ad valorem in the General Fund mentioned above, \$18.4 million was paid to CRAs in 2023.

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8240 | budget@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

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

Communications also leads in dissemination of information to the public, news media and other governmental entities during disaster events and helps coordinate with the local legislative delegation members to develop a legislative program of specific interest to Bay County. Governmental transparency and integrity is of the utmost importance, and the Communications Office strives to ensure openness and accountability to the media and public on behalf of the Bay County Board of County Commissioners.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Bay County Communications Office:

- > Created and organized an interactive 5-year Hurricane Michael anniversary exhibit at the Bay County Public Library that ran for four weeks and drew hundreds of visitors.
- > Coordinated, planned and executed the reinstatement of the Bay County Citizens' Academy in partnership with Gulf Coast State College.
- > Coordinated the creation of the Philipgriffittsparkway.com website to keep the public informed about the progress of the roadway.
- > Coordinated publicity for various county programs, projects, and events, including various holiday events, multiple press conferences on assorted topics, publicized various roadway projects, issued 33 news releases, coordinated responses to regular media inquiries on various topics.
- > Developed, coordinated, edited, and oversaw the production of the 2023 Annual Report and the 2024 Budget Summary.



CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8170 | communicationsoffice@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

cooperative extension



WHO WE ARE

UF/IFAS Extension Bay County uses science and research to solve problems right here in our backyard. Think of us as your helpful neighbors who team up with university experts and awesome volunteers to share knowledge that can make your life better.

We have a variety of programs and activities! For the young adventurers, we have 4-H programs and clubs where they can learn, have fun, and make new friends. We offer tips on how to grow beautiful gardens and healthy plants. For families, we have Family and Consumer Science (FCS) advice on how to be happier, healthier, and more financially successful at home.

For those who take care of our landscapes, manage our timber resources, and lead charter operations on the sea, our Horticulture and Sea Grant programs offer training and information to help them be successful in their work. Plus, we're always here to help protect our stunning beaches, precious ocean and water resources. Together, we're making Bay County an even better place to live!

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Contacts

- > Average Number of Unique Volunteers Per Month - 44
- > Individual Calls, Office Visits, and Emails - 5,276
- > Group Education Participants - 2,802
- > Engaged Social Media Users - 55,961

Horticulture

- > We taught more than 1,400 community members about plants through classes and answered 1,994 questions at our help desk.
- > Our 27 Master Gardener volunteers donated 3,113 hours to support our Extension Office.
- > We ran a 12-week Master Gardener class for 16 new graduates, who together gave 214 volunteer hours.
- > The Agent organized five training sessions for 79 green industry professionals who needed certifications.
- > The Bay County Horticulture Agent led "Gardening in the Panhandle LIVE!", a webinar series with other agents.
- > We hosted a Master Gardener Conference with 63 volunteers from across the Panhandle.

CONTACT US:

(850) 784-6105 | bay@ifas.ufl.edu
<http://bay.ifas.ufl.edu>



4-H Youth Development

- > 4-H and FCS collaborated on summer learning opportunities for youth including a tailgate grilling camp, multiple cake decorating classes, and food challenge programs for intermediate youth leadership program (iLEAD) and 4-H University. Introducing food safety, kitchen skills, kitchen safety, recipe preparation, and recipes for youth to prepare at home (under adult supervision). This program reached 106 participants.
- > 4-H, Horticulture, and Master Gardeners collaborated to offer youth science and arts camp programs reaching 42 youth. They also conducted school enrichment programs reaching more than 500 youth.
- > 4-H Faculty collaborated with other regional faculty to provide both county and regional training for volunteers on how to incorporate 4-H Science into afterschool and community club programs.
- > As the State Military Liaison, the 4-H Military Partnership Programs continued to provide scholarships for youth to take part in state and county programs. The 4-H faculty and staff are continuing to support military programs by offering training and resources for sites.

Marine/Coastal

- > We completed work to obtain a new artificial reef site, SAARS M, receiving all the necessary permits in 2022 (Florida Department of Environmental Protection) and 2023 (United States Army Corps of Engineers).
- > A contract for creating patch reefs with 1,000 tons of concrete was awarded in August 2023 with construction scheduled in 2024.
- > RESTORE funds for reef projects were boosted by \$210,000 to add more artificial reef materials and help with increased costs due to inflation. RESTORE now has \$651,976 for our upcoming reef projects utilizing concrete materials in state waters approximately five miles from the pass.
- > The FWC gave us \$900,000 for Natural Resource Damage Assessment funding. Our initial project is under way to place 30 new super reef modules in LAARS B in 2024.
- > We held a “Stem to Stern” conference to train (50) marine resource professionals and address responsible boating, how to bounce back after storms, and grants to remove derelict vessels.

Family and Consumer Sciences

- > The FCS Agent led 12 first-time home buyer classes for 111 people, a step needed for SHIP funds.
- > The value of the homes purchased within this multi-county home buyer education program totals \$36,879,146.
- > The down payment and closing costs assistance brought in an infusion of more than \$14 million into the economies of Bay, Jackson, Washington, Holmes, and Walton Counties through the sale and repair of these houses providing income for ad valorem taxes.
- > This also provides income for local realtors, appraisers, surveyors, home inspectors, title companies, lenders, insurance companies, contractors, tradesmen, and other housing industry professionals.
- > Bay County Extension Agents combined forces to offer food preservation, grilling, cooking, and art classes to more than 150 people.
- > The FCS Agent took on leadership roles, including Faculty Senate, FEAFCFS, and District Team Chair.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > 2023 ANREP (Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals) Bronze and FANREP- TV/Video: “DIY in the A.M. Spring and Summer Gardening” (Julie McConnell)
- > 2023 FANREP Newsletter/Series of Articles: “Let’s Grow with Julie” (Julie McConnell)
- > 2023 National Extension Technology Community Team Award for Excellence - Gardening in the Panhandle LIVE! (Julie McConnell et al.)
- > 2023 NEAFCS and FEAFCFS Housing Outreach Team Award - 1st place, (Melanie Taylor, et al.)
- > 2023 NEAFCS and FEAFCFS Disaster Education Team Award - 2nd place, (Melanie Taylor, et al.)
- > 2023 Wells Fargo Extension Term Professorship Award - (Melanie Taylor)
- > 2023 NAE4-HYDP Excellence in 4-H Team Award - (Paula Davis, et al.)



WHO WE ARE

The Northwest Regional Library System has seven locations in Bay, Gulf, and Liberty counties as well as a Mobile Library. Our headquarters are at the Bay County Public Library in Panama City. We served 253,301 visitors in 2023, providing access to more than 350,000 books, audiobooks, DVDs, ukuleles, e-books, downloadable audiobooks, plus additional online materials. More than 118,000 digital items were borrowed in FY2023, an increase of 29 percent over 2022. We offer public computers with internet access and wifi access in all locations. We also offer a variety of programming for all ages.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > The library continues to see an increase in library usage. Customer visits have increased by 5 percent compared to last year. There were 253,301 visits to NWRLS libraries in FY2023. Total items borrowed from the library have increased 10 percent at 520,817 items. The number of library cardholders has increased by 14 percent at 50,587.
- > The Summer Reading Program was a huge success. There were 85 in-person children's programs offered systemwide, with a total attendance of 2,399. In Bay County, 35 programs were offered with 1,532 attendees. There were 168 school-age students who turned in completed 'Be A Reader' Book Bingo cards for Bay County library locations. This reading challenge was sponsored by the Bay County Public Library Foundation.
- > Both Gulf County libraries offered a 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative to promote early literacy. There were 84 children who signed up in 2023, and three children who reached their goal of 1,000 books!
- > The Unstacked podcast, produced by community relations and marketing coordinator Sarah Burris, continues to attract well-known authors who are interviewed in each episode. Authors who have appeared on the show include: V. E. Schwab, Martha Wells, T. Kingfisher, T.J. Klune, Madeline Martin and Jean Kwok. There were 2,064 listens in FY2023.

CONTACT US:

(850) 522-2100 | referencedesk@nwrls.com
www.nwrls.com



- > The Panama City Beach Public Library began hosting the Chapter Chat book club in partnership with WJHG-TV, Channel 7. Newscasters Jessica Foster and Mel Zosh promote the books and authors on their show and then meet library staff and book club members at the beach library to discuss the month's selection.
- > The Career Online High School programs provides scholarships (funded through state funding, grants and donations) to adults aged 19 or older so they can complete high school and receive an accredited diploma. At the end of FY2023, 39 students had received their diplomas.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > The Bay County Public Library received a \$6,000 Digital Literacy Grant from the Public Library Association to provide technology classes to the public. Reference Department librarians offered classes including Email Basics, Cybersecurity Basics, and Mobile Device Drop-In.
- > Gulf County libraries received a second \$10,000 Battelle grant for enhanced STEM programming and materials.
- > Bay and Gulf County libraries each received a \$12,000 grant from the Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida to enhance preschool programming and add books for library collections and for giveaways so children can add to their personal libraries.
- > Reference Librarian Kat Kan wrote an article, "Graphic Novels and Manga for the Non-Comics Reader," which was published in the July issue of Booklist's Guide to Graphic Novels in Libraries 2023 online edition.



housing



WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

After Hurricane Michael, the Housing Services Division was awarded \$36 million in Hurricane Housing Recovery Program (HHRP) funds to assist families impacted by the storm find decent, safe, and affordable housing. The Purchase Assistance Program was launched in January 2022. During this time, more than \$19 million was awarded to 335 families/first-time home buyers to purchase a home in the county. An additional \$10 million has been encumbered for homeowners in need of home repairs for FY2024. More than \$20,000 in impact fee assistance was awarded to first-time homebuyers who purchased new construction homes. First-time Homebuyer Education was provided to more than 300 families through a partnership with the Bay County UF/IFAS Extension Center.

More than \$30,000 was awarded to 13 families for foreclosure prevention, homelessness prevention, and rental assistance.

The Bay County Board of County Commissioners awarded \$6 million to three rental development projects which should be completed by the end of 2024. Approximately, 308 multi-family units will be constructed and house low-income families at or below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI).

The Housing Division partnered with more than 150 realtors, 50 lending institutions, 35 home inspection companies and 30 title agencies. The division expended/encumbered more than \$28 million in HHRP funds.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Housing Services received the Excellence in Disaster Recovery Implementation from the Florida Housing Coalition at the 36th Annual State Conference. The award was given for the submission of a video featuring success stories for the ReHouse Bay Purchase Assistance Program. The state recognized the program as a best practice for rapidly housing low-income residents still recovering from Hurricane Michael. These clients could not qualify for a first mortgage so they received a new construction replacement home within five months.



CONTACT US:

(850) 215-2479 | housing@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

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

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

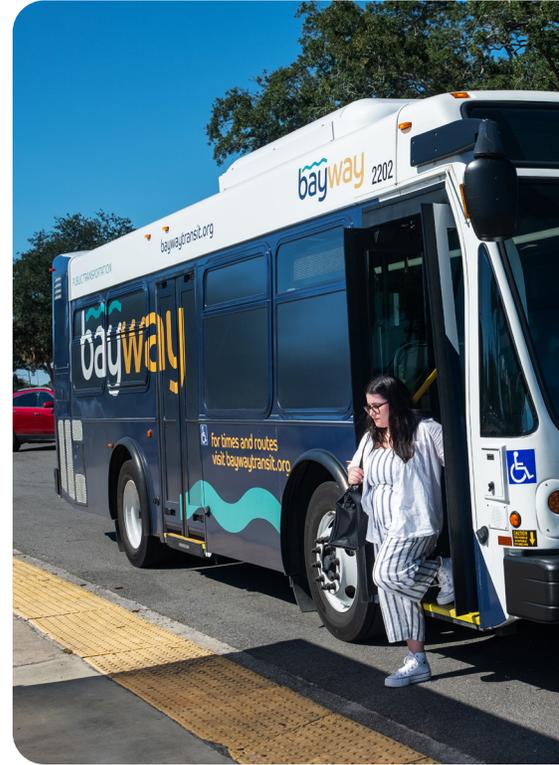
WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

It was an exciting year with a lot going on related to public transit. Bayway Public Transit System is an essential service, providing residents and visitors with safe, affordable transportation throughout the region. We remain committed to serving our community, and we are proud to serve both current and future riders. Below are some highlights that recap our team's efforts over the last year.

> **New Services**

- > Bayway and Uber partnered to provide qualified Transportation Disadvantaged riders living along the Highway 231 corridor from the Panama City Mall to Highway 20 with access to public transportation through the Uber app.
- > Bayway partnered with the City of Mexico Beach to provide riders with access to public transportation from the Callaway Walmart to Mexico Beach. The project allowed the Transit Department to determine the future need for public transportation to and from Mexico Beach.
- > Bayway partnered with the Bay County Tourist Development Council to expand fixed route operations to Sundays. The Transit Department is currently reviewing funding opportunities that will allow the service to continue year-round.

- > **New Mobile Ticketing App** - Bayway launched a new mobile ticketing application that allows riders to purchase passes in advance using the Token Transit app.
- > **New Student Pass Program** - Florida State University, Gulf Coast State College, and Bayway partnered to offer free rides to students possessing a valid student ID for either college.
- > **New Buses** - Federal funding allowed Bayway to purchase two new 40' heavy-duty fixed route buses, allowing for a larger number of riders.
- > **Safe Place Buses** - All Bayway buses are now designated as a "Safe Place," which offers help to people 18 years and under who need immediate help and safety. Each bus will provide a safe place to stay and get in contact with someone who can help.
- > **Transit Authority** - The Bay County Board of County Commissioners and the Bay County Transportation Planning Organization agreed to begin the process of forming a new Transit Authority to oversee all of Bay County's public transportation services. A bill is scheduled to go before the Florida Legislature in 2024 approving the creation of a new authority.



FIXED ROUTE SYSTEM



TOTAL RIDERSHIP # OF BUSES IN FLEET # OF BUS ROUTES

360,478 15 7

DEMAND RESPONSE SYSTEM



TOTAL RIDERSHIP # OF BUSES IN FLEET

49,551 23

CONTACT US:

Bay Town Trolley | (850) 769-0557 | info@baytownrolley.org
 Bay Area Transportation | (850) 785-0808
 Transit 8161 Administration | (850) 248-8161
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

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

Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We average between 21 and 25 client visits daily. In between client visits, our staff will receive another 20 to 30 phone calls per day.

The Veterans Services staff consists of three counselors, one senior staff assistant, and one county veterans officer. Our county veterans services officer is also the area vice-president for the Northwest Florida Region of the County Veterans Services Officers Association, which includes all Veterans Services offices from Franklin County to Escambia County.

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Organizations and Events:

- > Our office assisted the Bay County Board of County Commissioners and the Bay County Veterans Council with a Memorial Day Ceremony in May and the annual Veterans' Day Parade and Ceremony.
- > We represent the Bay County Board of County Commissioners at the monthly meeting of the Bay County Veterans Council on the second Thursday of each month.
- > We support the veterans at Sims Florida State Nursing Home through the 'Friends of Sims Nursing Home,' a nonprofit organization run by the County Veterans Services Officers of Northwest Florida. Funds are donated to this organization and distributed to the nursing home to purchase items the State of Florida does not include in their budget.
- > We are on the executive committee with the board of directors for Career Source Gulf Coast.
- > We sit on the Disadvantaged Transportation Board to assist veterans in the local area.
- > We sit on the advisory committee for the Veterans Treatment Court of the 14th Judicial Circuit.
- > We are actively engaged with the Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard branches in the county by informing them individually throughout the year of benefits they may be eligible to receive.
- > We strive to hold a town hall meeting at the Bay County Public Library each year. This is a presentation of what VA benefits were available followed by a question and answer session. We usually try to have at least two of these sessions per year.
- > We also in September supported and assisted at the Annual Veterans Homeless Stand Down.

As the community recovers from the devastation caused by the hurricane and the COVID-19 pandemic, we at the Bay County Veterans Services look to the future for bigger and better events spotlighting our veterans of Bay County.

CONTACT US:
 (850) 248-8280 | veteransservices@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

The Builders Services Division rebranded at the conclusion of FY2023 and is now known as the Building Safety Division (BSD). The Division will remain committed to providing ever improving customer service to property owners, contractors, developers, and design professionals focusing on ensuring buildings and structures are safe for private and public occupancy. BSD consists of a diverse and well-rounded staff of International Code Council (ICC) certified permit technicians, ICC certified plans examiners and inspectors, Florida-licensed building code officials, a licensed professional engineer, an architect, licensed contractors, and administrative support staff. We collectively form a team of 'first preventers' charged with the responsibility of protecting the health, safety, and welfare of human life within the built environment. We accomplish this goal by assisting the general public, property owners, the design community, and contractors in meeting the minimum design and construction requirements outlined by the Florida Building Code and supporting standards.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Last year's theme/The theme of 2023 continued to be a challenging one for Bay County bringing apparent closure to the global pandemic, an economic down-turn, and ongoing natural disaster recovery efforts. Building Safety continues to strive toward providing consistent service to the citizens of Bay County coupled with clear communication. We invested significant efforts in employee recruitment in order to fully populate the board approved Organization Chart resulting in adding eleven new teammates to fill existing vacancies with four more remaining.

Building Safety staff remain steadfast in the commitment to aid the ongoing economic recovery and building reconstruction efforts throughout Bay County. Last year, 13,594 building permits were issued with an estimated Valuation of Work at \$1.1 billion. Roughly 7,495 of those permits were for new single-family residential homes valued at approximately \$802,319,683 with another 1,482 residential renovations totaling some \$18,449,261 in value. Several nationally recognized developers continue to develop and build within new residential subdivisions which include Latitude Margaritaville, Breakfast Point, Wards Creek and several others. Approximately 30,135 inspections were performed in the county, resulting in 2,062 certificates of occupancy issued for new residential and commercial structures.

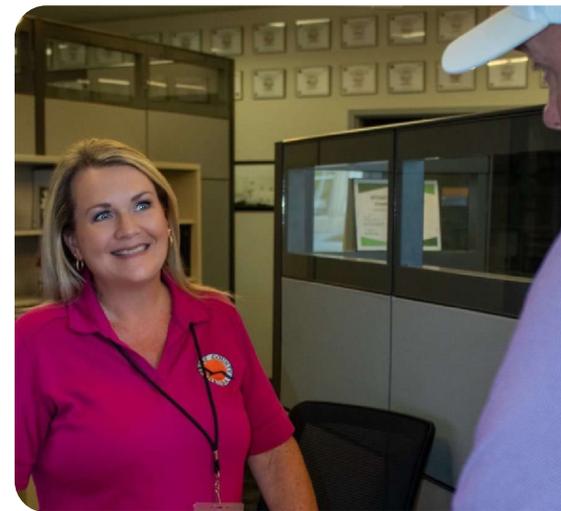
In addition to new construction plan reviews and building inspections, Building Safety continues to work closely with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) and the Bay County Sheriff's Office to combat unlicensed contractor activities and unpermitted work.

Leadership is committed to advancing the functionality of the division, which includes several other county permit issuing divisions, by investing in new cloud-based software and the associated hardware to increase functionality of customer service aspects of the customer application process and the county plan review and inspection processes. The new platform will provide interactive accessibility by the permit applicant while providing an increased in-house functionality for county staff and citizens. Functionality will include on-line permit applications, permit application tracking, plan review comments, plan revision submittals, inspection requests, inspection results, and issuance of the final Certificate of Occupancy. The new platform will also send electronic notices for plan review items, a 30-day notice for expiring permits, expiring licenses, and insurances among other items that will benefit property owners, contractors, and design professionals.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

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

Lastly, we continue down the arduous path of obtaining independent third-party ICC/IAS accreditation. Throughout this process, we have brought several operational policies, procedures, and practices into alignment with industry recognized best practices with much work remaining. We expect to complete this work and become Accredited in the fall of 2024.



CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8350 | buildersservices@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

code enforcement



WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

In 2023, Code Enforcement continued using the two-pronged approach it implemented after Hurricane Michael in 2018. The department is broken into two teams, Team Code Enforcement and Team Hurricane Michael. The doubled workload and doubled-up public hearings schedule continued throughout 2023.

About 3,921 Code Enforcement/Hurricane Michael cases were opened in FY2023. Staff brought 455 cases to hearings in front of a Magistrate or Code Board. Of these cases, 94 were brought into compliance by the property owner after the hearing. Another 189 were cleaned by the county, and 62 hearing cases were pending at the close of the fiscal year.

A total of 284 Hurricane Michael cases were closed during FY2023. Of those, 183 cases were closed with voluntary compliance, and 105 were closed with the county cleaning the property. Six cases were deemed unfounded. In FY2023, 149 newly-identified Hurricane Michael cases were opened. There are still 270 hurricane-damaged properties that remain active.

In response to a season of dangerous surf conditions and multiple drownings, Code Enforcement partnered with the Bay County Sheriff's Office, Fire Services, EMS, Parks and Recreation, and lifeguards to enforce the double red flag ordinance. Code Enforcement Officers responded to the sandy beaches to provide education and raise awareness of the flag system to beachgoers. When warranted, citations were issued for those in violation of the ordinance. Code Enforcement Officers issued three warning citations and 12 violation citations with a fine imposed.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Code Enforcement is proud to announce Investigators Robby Clarkson, Brandon Irwin, Raymond Scott, Chris Hubbard, Jennifer Wilburn, Tony Bruening, Code Enforcement Services Coordinator Jody Crosby and Staff Assistant Brenda Waltermeyer successfully completed training and obtained their state certification in Fundamentals of Code Enforcement and/or Legal Issues of Code Enforcement through the Florida Association of Code Enforcement (F.A.C.E.).

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8290 | codeenforcement@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

While the Planning Division saw an overall decrease in development permits compared to last year, FY2023 was a busy year just the same. In FY2023, we received 53 development order applications, 113 total land disturbance permit applications (land clearing, fill placement, grading, and excavation), 37 sign permits as well as reviewed 3,172 low-impact developments in support of the Building Safety Division.

The Planning Division also reviews and oversees the process where applications to change the land use and zoning are considered by the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. We received 32 land use and zone change applications which were presented before both the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners. One planned unit development (PUD) application was received and is currently under review. Another eight conditional use permit requests were presented to the Planning Commission in FY2023.

We fielded 6,298 phone calls and served 1,240 walk-in customers in FY2023.

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

The development of the Bay-Walton Sector Plan area continues as the Planning Division received another application for a Detailed Specific Area Plans (DSAP). The West Bay Crossing DSAP covers 2,017 acres and was approved for 600 residential units, 845,000 square feet of commercial/office use, 120,000 square feet of light industrial use, and 250 hotel rooms. Additionally, we also received a PUD application for phases 9-11 of the Latitude Margaritaville Watersound residential community which proposes an additional 1,004 residential units.

The Planning Division also helped facilitate and manage a new online permitting and review platform. CityView went live in October of 2023. This will help staff better manage applications and review, streamline permitting for citizens and the development community, and report on new metrics and turn around times.



CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8250 | planning@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

emergency management



WHO WE ARE

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan was completed and approved by the County Commissioners, the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. This version is in use and current through 2028.
- > The Vulnerability Assessment Sub-Committee continues to work with FSU to complete the assessment, currently at 40 percent complete.
- > CERT held four courses this year and assisted with several events. In total, CERT added 25 members to the program.
- > Emergency Management opened the first Cooling Center in more than 17 years during a heat wave at the end of July and August. Nearly two dozen (23) Bay County residents used the center over five days and volunteers distributed three fans. The American Red Cross, Pastor's United, Rebuild Bay County, Inc. and Bay County CERT volunteered to staff the center leading to zero cost to the county.
- > Emergency Management was awarded a \$5,000 Volunteer Florida 2022-2023 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)/Citizens Corps (CC) grant.
- > Emergency Management continued to assist with emergency response operations at various Panama City Beach tourist-related events, including the IronMan 70.3 mile and the IronMan (full) 140.6 mile, the Gulf Coast Sea Breeze Jazz Festival, Gulf Coast Pepsi Jam, Thunder Beach, and the Fourth of July celebrations.
- > Emergency Management conducted All-Hazards Incident Command Structure (ICS) Training at the Emergency Operations Center, hosting 12 courses and 160 students.
- > Emergency Management with the help of the Budget Department opted-in and completed the Florida Recovery Obligation Calculation Assessment five months ahead of the deadline. In total, all seven cities, the Bay County Sheriff's Office, and Bay District Schools have opted-in to the program. The F-ROC program will provide up to 80 percent of the initial obligation for reimbursement of disaster protective measures and debris management.
- > Emergency Management assisted the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Mobile, Panama City Police Department, and Panama City Port Authority with the design and execution of an active shooter exercise.
- > Emergency Management performed seven community disaster preparedness presentations for the community reaching over 120 residents.



CONTACT US:

(850) 784-4000 | recovery@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

Because an emergency can, and will, happen any time of day, our communications operators are always ready to take calls. We are responsible for all 911 medical and fire calls in Bay County. We also dispatch after-hours for Bay County Animal Control, Roads and Bridges, Traffic Engineering, Utilities, and the American Red Cross.

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > The Bay County Communications Center received 139,192 calls into the 911 call center. Additionally, Bay County Communications Operators fielded 61,864 administrative calls.
- > In technology, Bay County implemented text to 911 capabilities. Text-to-911 is a service that enables individuals to send text messages to emergency dispatchers in situations where making a phone call may be dangerous or impractical. It provides an alternative communication method for people with hearing or speech impairments, as well as in situations where it may not be safe to make a voice call, such as during a home invasion or an active shooter situation.
- > Bay County hosted and taught a Florida Public Safety Telecommunicators course for 13 Communications employees from Bay County and partner agencies. All 13 attendees passed the Florida state exams and became Certified Public Safety Telecommunicators.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > Nattalie Dorch received the State of Florida Dispatcher of the Year from the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Additionally, she received Dispatcher of the year on behalf of local VFW post 8205
- > Hunter Retherford received the award of Bay County First Responder of the Year for the dispatch discipline from the Bay County Chamber of Commerce.



CALL INFORMATION

INCIDENTS DISPATCHED	TYPE OF CALL	% OF CALLS
FIRE	10,516	16.3%
EMS	33,815	52.3%
EOC (R&B, ETC)	410	0.6%
OTHER AGENCIES WE PROVIDE FIRE DISPATCH FOR	19,904	30.8%
TOTAL	64,618	100.00%

PHONE CALLS (911/INCOMING & OUTGOING ADMIN)		
Calls (911/Incoming)	47,750	45.6%
Admin (Incoming)	36,132	34.3%
Admin (Outgoing)	21,033	20.1%
TOTAL	104,602	100.00%

CONTACT US:

(850) 784-4000 | recovery@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

emergency medical services (ems)



WHO WE ARE

Bay County Emergency Medical Services Division (EMS) is a state-licensed Advanced Life Support (paramedic level) service. We answer all 9-1-1 emergency calls for service throughout Bay County, including the municipalities of Callaway, Lynn Haven, Panama City, Panama City Beach, Parker, and Springfield, along with the unincorporated portions of Bay County such as Southport, West Bay, Bayou George, Youngstown, and Fountain.

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

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

FY2023 was phenomenal for Emergency Medical Services. Although the primary function of EMS is to answer emergency calls for medical assistance, educating the community and assisting in non-emergency situations are extremely rewarding. Our paramedics and EMTs continue to be involved with the community by assisting with stand-by events and show-and-tells at local schools and venues throughout the community. Crews do a fantastic job of providing quality medical care and education whenever an opportunity arises.

- > Throughout the year, EMS Training Captain Bridgette Whately and her team of instructors provided first responders with hundreds of hours of continuing education. Courses offered included Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS), Geriatric Emergency Medical Services (GEMS), Acute Coronary Syndromes (ACS), Advanced Stroke Life Support (ASLS), IV Therapy, BLS Transport, Apparatus Familiarization, and many more. Continued training and education is paramount for our first responders. Providing quality education using our own employees, who are also certified instructors, helps save taxpayers thousands of dollars annually.
- > EMS was involved in several high profile stand-by events including both the Gulf Coast Ironman 70.3 and Ironman Florida 140.6. In June, EMS also assisted with providing medical coverage for the 2023 Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, which drew in more than 110,000 people over a four day period. EMS assisted Panama City Beach Fire Rescue with coverage of additional stand by events within their city limits including the Thunder Beach Concert Series, the SeaBreeze Jazz Festival, and many more.
- > In August of 2023, Bay County EMS had three graduates from the Paramedic Programs at Gulf Coast State College and Chipola College. This program is a strenuous three-semester program that is offered annually. The program involves clinical rotations on the ambulance, in the operating room, emergency room, cardiac catheterization lab, labor and delivery unit, pediatrics unit, a respiratory rotation, and in the District 14 Medical Examiner's Office. Congratulations to David Ammons, Brad Harrington and Veronica Reynolds on their successful completion of the program.



CONTACT US:

(850) 784-4000 | recovery@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

emergency medical services (ems)



- > In September of 2023, Bay County EMS had 14 graduates from the Minimum Fire Standards Program at Gulf Coast State College. This is the first time in history Bay County Emergency Services partnered with Gulf Coast State College to create a minimum standards course for Bay County EMS personnel. Employees spent nine months attending classes and physically preparing to take the state certification exam. Congratulations to Maranda Aaron, Kyle Crews, Lt. Katie Hicks, Lt. Amber Leach, EMS Division Chief Jessica Lundeen, Captain Gina Salaty, Zach Schmidt, Kyle Starling, Captain Kaitlyn Stevenson, Jordan Summers, Tim Thompson, Dale Thorne, Charles Tucker and Preston Tucker on their successful completion of the program.
- > In partnership with Bay District Schools, Bay County EMS provides ALS emergency medical coverage during all junior varsity and varsity high school football games. The #FridayNightLights campaign on the "Bay County, FL Emergency Services" Facebook page spotlights our hard working EMS crews as they stand-by to provide medical coverage for players and game attendees.
- > Refresher courses were provided for Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) as well as Basic Life Support (BLS). EMTs and paramedics are required to renew their respective certifications in each of these disciplines every two years. The ACLS course reviews the treatment of cardiac arrest, stroke, myocardial infarction and other life-threatening cardiovascular emergencies. The BLS course reviews the skills needed to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for all patients from infants to senior adults.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > In September of 2023, Capt. Jessica Lundeen was promoted to EMS Division Chief. Chief Lundeen is widely respected within all of our divisions in the first responder community. She has a wealth of experience in EMS and recently completed the Gulf Coast State College Minimum Fire Standards Program and earned her certification as a Florida Firefighter II. She has been involved in emergency services in Bay County for 20 years. Division Chief Lundeen is the first female EMS Division Chief in Bay County's history.
- > Throughout the year we had several line officer promotions as well. Lieutenants Nic Dickinson, Gina Salaty and Kaitlyn Stevenson were promoted to EMS Captain. Paramedics Kelly Guillory, James Jenkins, Amber Leach and Ashley Trent were all promoted to EMS Lieutenants. There are nearly 100 years of service between these amazing individuals.
- > In 2023, Bay County was honored to announce the retirement of three phenomenal individuals who all dedicated more than 20 years of service to Bay County EMS. Congratulations to EMT Jose' A. Cantres, Paramedic Kevin French and Captain Joel Welch on their well-deserved retirement!
- > Paramedic Kyle Starling was nominated as the recipient of the Bay County Chamber of Commerce EMS First Responder of the Year. Nominees were chosen based on going above and beyond their call of duty to better Bay County. Paramedic Starling has been involved in EMS in Bay County for many years which included years in Communications and EMS. In order to better serve his community, Paramedic Starling completed the Gulf Coast State College Minimum Fire Standards Program and earned his certification as a Florida Firefighter II.





WHO WE ARE

Bay County Fire Rescue Division provides fire suppression for structural and wildfire fires, emergency medical services, fire prevention and emergency Hazardous Materials response to the unincorporated areas of Bay County. Eighty percent of the calls for services are for medical emergencies. The Division consists of 72 career personnel and 15 Fire Rescue volunteers that respond from 13 stations throughout Bay County. Four advanced Life Support (ALS) engines are stationed to decrease the time before an advanced life support provider arrives on scene to a medical emergency. Those ALS units' primary response areas include Sand Hills, West End, Youngstown and Fountain areas. Station 6, located in the West Bay area, is now open and has an ALS Engine and the on-duty Battalion Chief stationed there.

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Fire Response

Fire responded to more than 10,000 fire related calls within 2023. In November 2023, BCFR responded along Panama City Beach Fire and the Florida Forest Service to a wild fire in the Wild Heron community. The fire burned approximately 340 acres without damage to any structures. The increase of dry weather in our area prompted a temporary burn ban until conditions improved.

Surf Rescue

As a result of the high-volume of water rescue calls over the past few years, Bay County Fire Rescue has deployed a Surf Rescue Team. Our team is designated as a USLA certified Aquatic Rescue Response Team (ARRT). The team works with the Bay County Sheriff's Office and Panama City Beach Fire Department's Beach Safety Division to assist each other when needed. Operational costs are funded through bed taxes collected by the Tourist Development Council.

The team is made up of state certified firefighters, Emergency Medical Technicians, and paramedics who are proficient in the latest lifesaving techniques. The team is part of a total

CONTACT US:

(850) 784-4000 | recovery@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



system that includes the coordinated efforts of surrounding agencies and jurisdictions including area fire departments, area law enforcement, city and county lifeguards, and the United States Coast Guard.

The surf rescue “season” begins March 1 and ends October 31. Between March 1, 2023 and October 31, 2023, BCFR performed 61 water rescues and assisted with numerous others. Our rescue personnel begin training before the season starts to keep up their skills and physical agility.

Hazardous Materials Responses

Our federally-funded HazMat Team responded to several complex incidents in our region, including a powdered drug exposure at the Bay Correctional Facility, an overturned tanker truck in Sneads, a liquid nitrogen release in Jackson County, and a muriatic acid spill at a local condominium.

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

Several Bay County Emergency Service Firefighter-Paramedics are also hazardous material trained paramedics. These paramedics are equipped to identify and intervene with victims of chemical exposures related to accidental or intentional releases. In addition to ensuring the public’s safety, these Hazmat Paramedics will travel with our Regional Hazmat Team to assist in the protection and treatment of our first responders in the event of a hazmat related incident in our region.

Specialized Training

Our newest fleet acquisition, Ladder 14, was placed in service on September 11, 2023. Ladder 14 is a quint combination of an aerial with a pumper/rescue capability. This apparatus allows for a variety of response including elevated water source and elevated rescues.

Ladder 14 operators are required to have 80 hours of pump operating training and 40 hours of aerial operations training. Operators are also required to have specific driving training with the ladder truck. We hosted two Ladder Operation courses in 2023 for our employees as well as for responders from other agencies.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > Engineer Brent Gibson
- > Lieutenant Jared Sasnett
- > Captain Jerrad Hiers
- > Optimist Club Firefighter of the Year Award: Firefighter Alexis Sansom and Captain Matt Gothard
- > Battalion Chief Raymond Hottinger retired after 40 years in the fire service field.



alertbay - emergency notification system

stay prepared in an emergency.

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



ALERTBAY: A MASS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

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

AlertBay was especially useful last year during the Chipola Complex fires in March, when thousands of residents in neighborhoods throughout eastern and northern Bay County had to be quickly evacuated due to rapidly spreading wildfires threatening life and property. Our mass notification system, along with the valiant efforts of our first responders, helped ensure that no lives were lost during the event that lasted several days and caused hundreds of thousands in property damage and recovery costs. AlertBay was also used extensively throughout the year to alert our citizens to severe weather dangers, boil water notices, and much more. In FY2023, AlertBay issued 1,580 notifications between the county, municipalities, law enforcement, and the school district. Users were also able to text keyword "PCBFlags" to 888-777 for daily updates about beach surf conditions. Some 427 keyword messages were issued.

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

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

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

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

FIND US ON FACEBOOK
@ BAYCOUNTYFLEMERGENCYSERVICES

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



WHO WE ARE

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

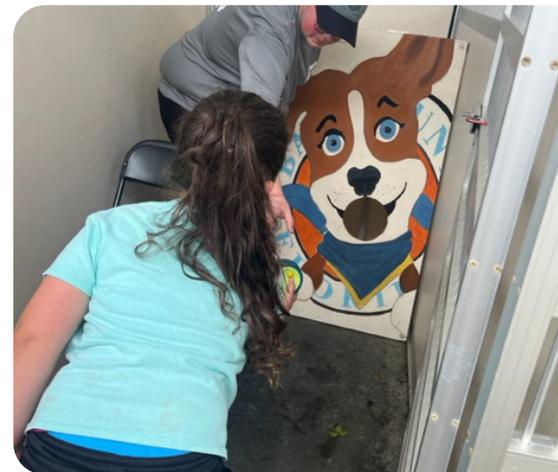
We are also responsible for the operations of Bay County's only open-admission animal shelter where all stray, unowned, and owned animals are accepted. We provide daily care for these animals while working to reunite them with their owners or find them a new home. Our shelter serves as the location for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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Animal Control focused on developing innovative ways to maintain services and build community relationships.

- > We started a new partnership with the Northwest Florida Reception Center for the training of shelter animals. Using the University of Auburn training model, the inmates have completed three training sessions, each of which run ten weeks. The animals who went through the program have been adopted and remain in their new homes.
- > We continue to partner with WMBB-TV, News 13 for their Founder's Day event in June in an effort to clear the shelter. In addition to adoptions, family friendly fun and food were available and staff from both entities were present to meet Bay County citizens.
- > We continue to work with Pier Park PetSmart to find new homes for the cats that come through our facility. Since we started working with them in 2016, more than 1,000 adoptions have been completed.
- > This year we had a 12 percent increase in the number of calls handled by Animal Control on a quarterly basis. Part of this increase can be attributed to the growing population in our area.
- > With the increase in service calls, we tried new approaches to handling situations concerning animals in our area. Since online training has become prevalent, we were able to utilize training classes provided by the National and Florida Animal Care Associations.
- > The shelter saw a 16.5 percent increase over last year in the number of animals coming into the shelter. While there are a variety of reasons, this increase is related to the cost of care for owning animals. Bay County Animal Control continues to adapt to any challenges we face. We welcome citizen input and feedback, and we strive to provide the best service possible to the citizens of Bay County.



CONTACT US:

(850) 767-3333 | bcac@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

During 2023, the Bay County Parks and Recreation Division continued its valuable customer service through increased facility maintenance, quality athletic surface maintenance and preparation, and the use of technology to allow park patrons easier access to scheduling, reservations, and programming. Last year:

- > Scheduled events increased between FY2022 and FY2023
 - > In 2022 - 3,082 events
 - > In 2023 - 3,102 events
- > Staff performed approximately 20,000 hours of athletic field preparation and park maintenance activities, accounting for approximately 80 percent of the division's maintenance staff work hours
- > The M.B Miller Pier welcomed approximately 215,000 visitors
- > Beach Operations and Lifeguard staff performed 11,746 educational opportunities, including beach warning flag explanations, water safety, and marine life education
- > Lifeguard staff performed 144 water rescues with no fatalities

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8730 | parks@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

In 2023, Facilities Management executed and processed more than \$4.1 million in repair, maintenance, planned projects, and service contract management. Highlights accomplished over the past year include:

Building maintenance:

- > Responded to a total of 1,163 requests for maintenance, including 207 high priority, 862 medium priority, and 94 low priority maintenance requests, and accomplished preventive maintenance on 1,377 pieces of HVAC equipment.

Building improvements:

- > Bay County Library – completed HVAC controls upgrade; initiated 125-ton chiller replacement; initiated Youth Services carpet replacement
- > Bay County Health Department – replaced boiler; rebuilt six each Variable Air Volume HVAC units; replaced water heater; completed a roof restoration utilizing a seal coat roofing system
- > Health Department Dental Clinic – replaced concrete driveway; replaced HVAC units 4 and 5; replaced crushed sewer line
- > Government Center – Completed HVAC controls upgrade; completed 3rd floor build-out for state representative office suite; initiated 3rd floor build-out for the Building Safety Division; replaced coils on Air Handling Units 1 and 3
- > BCSO Jail – replaced walk-in freezer and the refrigeration equipment on walk-in cooler; re-caulked interior concrete panel walls; replaced 1.5M BTU water heater; replaced bullet proof glass at reception counter; replaced sallyport roll-up door
- > Bay County Courthouse – Replaced six fan coil units; replaced and/or repaired four each exhaust fan units; replaced rooftop condensing units 10A and 10B; water extraction and carpet replacement after water line break; oversight of contracted 1st and 2nd floor remodel
- > Juvenile Justice Annex – water extraction and extensive facility repairs after fire sprinkler system froze/broke; replaced purlins and metal roofing on pavilion
- > Bay County Animal Control – replaced acoustical ceiling; replaced HVAC unit #4
- > Thomas Drive Fire Station – replaced north concrete apron; replaced carpet in living quarters/bunk rooms
- > Sand Hills Fire Station – painted apparatus bay and exterior doors
- > Bear Creek Fire Station – painted apparatus bay; replaced carpet in living quarters/bunk rooms
- > Allison Ave. Fire Station – replaced HVAC unit
- > Bayou George Fire Station – lighting upgrades in the apparatus bay
- > Radio Communication – replaced four wall-pack HVAC units at various tower locations
- > State Attorney / Public Defender – completed HVAC controls installation; initiated emergency generator and automatic transfer switch installation; replaced conference room lighting fixtures; installed dividing wall in IT
- > Medical Examiner's Office – replaced HVAC units 1 and 3
- > Landfill – installed metal awning for servicing equipment; replaced maintenance building HVAC unit; replaced scale house HVAC unit.

**CONTACT US:**

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



WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > **The "Hill"**- The Steelfield Road Landfill has been actively accepting waste since the fall of 1987. As a result, the height of the landfill has continued to increase. From a starting elevation of around 47 feet above sea level, over the years it has increased in height and currently stands at about 180 feet in elevation. As Bay County continues to grow, so will this massive monument. It will continue to grow until it reaches 247 feet above sea level, possibly making it, at that time, the highest point in Bay County. Since 2010, the landfill has taken in nearly 2.7 million tons of waste.

CONTACT US:

(850) 236-2212 | solidwaste@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



- > **Tonnages and Customer Usage** - During FY2023, 90,362 vehicles crossed the scales at our facilities. In total, the division processed and disposed of 264,847 tons of discarded material. Based upon a Monday through Saturday operational work week, this is an average of 726 tons per day.
- > **Waste Amnesty Days** -The Solid Waste Division hosts two waste amnesty events each year, allowing residents the opportunity to dispose of waste and debris from their properties at no charge. This provides Bay County residents with an economical way to clean up their residence and assist us in keeping potentially hazardous materials out of the waste stream. Bay County has hosted these events for more than 20 years. During 2023, we had 2,375 customers cross the scales and took in 849 tons of waste. We also collected 1,600 waste tires and 900 gallons of used oil.





WHO WE ARE

The six Human Resources professionals in our department are committed to providing exemplary service to our employees and the external customers we serve. Our primary mission is to develop and administer value-added human resources policies, programs, and services that support the county's ability to provide opportunities to our employees. We are talent seekers, advocates, advisors, coaches, and more so we can recruit and retain outstanding employees and support management. It is also incumbent upon us to stay abreast of current employment law and share that knowledge with our employees to ensure legal compliance and minimize losses to the county by helping to avoid litigation. We strive for engagement with our employees, assisting and guiding them throughout their employment on matters related to benefits, promotional opportunities, policy understanding, educational opportunities, retirement, and more. Our focus is to foster a workplace that promotes mutual respect, personal and professional growth, fairness, and diversity. We concentrate our efforts every day to advance Bay County as a proven place to build a long and rewarding career.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

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

- > Received 1,932 online employment applications and 64 paper applications
- > Reviewed nearly 2,000 applications, of which 1,800 met the minimum qualifications and were referred to the respective departments
- > On-boarded 144 new hires
- > Processed 74 promotions, 88 resignations, 15 retirements, 14 probationary dismissals, five involuntary separations and 47 disciplinary actions
- > Processed 79 Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) packets
- > Reviewed and processed 507 Employee Performance Evaluations with an above average score of 3.56 out of 5

Major Project

After more than 20 years with the same benefits provider, the Human Resources Department facilitated the change to a self-insured health insurance program with the Florida Sheriffs Health Plan, which impacted not only our health-related benefits, but all other benefit programs we offer, such as Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA's), Health Savings Accounts (HSA's), Long Term Disability and more. The transition to a self-insured plan will give us more control over our premiums in an effort to keep costs down.

We launched a major information campaign, provided educational meetings, and made many on-site visits to our various departments throughout the county to assist our

CONTACT US:

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

employees with this transition. Behind the scenes, there were countless meetings with not only the Florida Sheriffs Health Plan representatives but many of the other benefit programs vendors as well to make this change as smooth as possible.

As we strive to move away from paper processes, we also partnered with the Florida Sheriffs Health Plan this past summer to successfully conduct our first ever online open enrollment, which proved to be very successful.

Training and Development

Because our county manager understands and supports the value of providing training initiatives to our employees, we continue to develop our training programs to give our employees the tools they will need to hone their skills and succeed in their careers. During this past year, we continued to conduct our Servant Leadership Program for our employees in management roles in order to practice this leadership philosophy throughout our organization. The goal of this program is to develop leaders whose main goal is to put the needs of their employees first by providing the means necessary to develop and succeed at their jobs.

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

Six Sigma training and practices are still being utilized and we plan to continue advancing participants into higher levels, as well as offering beginner level classes again in order to ingrain this process driven philosophy into all aspects of BOCC operations.

A total of 40 classes were offered in our New Employee Academy with 95 new hires in attendance. These classes provide education on important employment law topics, as well as workplace culture and relationships. This curriculum was revised to include process improvement training as an introduction to Six Sigma philosophies, ensuring employees are exposed to this topic from the beginning of their careers with Bay County. New employees must attend all required classes before they are eligible to move out of probationary status employment.

Giving Back to the Community

Bay County employees continued to meet the needs of our citizens by participating in three blood drives that we hosted in 2023. As one of the biggest donors for OneBlood, they depend on our employees to provide the life-saving blood donations for those in need in our local hospitals. Our employees donated 426 units of blood, which all stay here locally, potentially saving 1,320 lives.

Wellness Initiative

The EVOLVE wellness initiative and Coach JT remain one of the TOP employee benefits for Bay County BOCC. Since launching the Evolve Wellness Initiative with Bay County BOCC on Oct. 1, 2018, Coach JT has conducted 6,700 individual one-on-one appointments with 1,397 in 2023 alone).

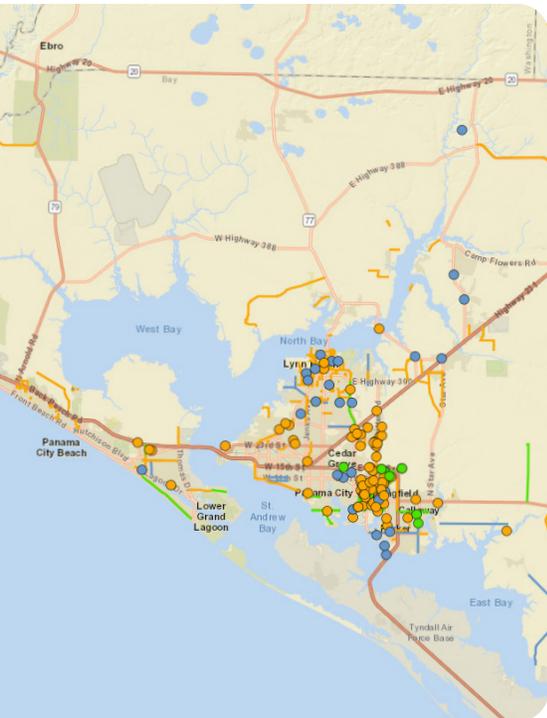
We continue to see incredible progress from Individual Coaching, group workshops and the NEW Online Program participation with thousands of pounds lost (multiple individuals well over 100 lbs each!) PLUS significant improvement in mental and emotional wellbeing, better interpersonal relationships, energy, sleep, reduced inflammation, less sick time, increased morale, and overall productivity. In 2023, a new initiative was launched to work closer with FIRE/EMS on improving functional fitness, on-the-go-nutrition, and mental health.

CONGRATS AGAIN! 2023 marks the 6th consecutive year Evolve with JT was voted the "Best Weight Loss Program" in Bay County by the public! (via Panama City News Herald).

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > 15 employees were recognized for 15 years of service with Bay County
- > Ten employees were recognized for 20 years of service with Bay County
- > One employee was recognized for 25 years of service with Bay County
- > Six employees were recognized for 30 years of service with Bay County
- > Two employees were recognized for 35 years of service with Bay County
- > One employee was recognized for 40 years of service with Bay County





INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > Supported county operations by providing a reliable and stable network with 99-percent uptime, making county services available to citizens without delays.
- > Averaged 84,000 unique website visitors monthly, totaling more than one million visitors during FY2023.
- > Received 9 million emails during FY2023, 18-percent of which were caught by a security filter.
- > Blocked 11,000 viruses through cybersecurity solutions.
- > Awarded the Florida Digital Service Cybersecurity Grant to expand cybersecurity initiatives.
- > Passed a third-party assessment/audit to validate backup procedures and infrastructure to assess National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) compliance.
- > Implemented and maintained building Access Control, keeping the county's buildings safe and secure.
- > Implemented and maintained patch management keeping the county's data safe and secure.

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > Averaged 24,000 unique visitors to the BayView app each month, totaling more than 288,000 visitors during FY2023.
- > Continued collaboration with Emergency Services to facilitate a significant GIS centric upgrade to Next Generation 9-1-1.
- > Worked with Esri Professional Services to migrate 90-percent of Bay County's Web Maps to Esri's new Experience Builder Platform.
- > Aided local UF/IFAS Extension Sea Grant office in launching an interactive story map with locations of Bay County Artificial Reefs.
- > Launched an interactive story map with locations of Bay County Boat Ramps.

CONTACT US:
 (850) 248-8004 | it@baycountyfl.gov | gis@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

In 2023, Capital Projects managed approximately \$6 million in vertical construction projects and design, including grant-funded projects, renovations, and construction of new buildings.

Projects include:

- > Completion of the Bay Dunes Community Center
- > Replacement of backup Generators on 911 Towers
- > Hardening of Fire Stations #1 Thomas Drive, #9 Sand Hills and #11 Bear Creek Youngstown
- > Bay County Government Center Generator
- > Bay County Skate Park



CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8120 | facilities@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

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

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

Engineering's priorities include:

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > Continued Hurricane Michael recovery, with various roadway repairs and rehabilitation.
- > Continued implementation of the surtax projects.
- > Provided assistance to other departments in surveying, evaluating, repairing or demolishing many county facilities, including asbestos surveys for proposed building demolitions, preliminary site plans and finish floor elevations.

Engineering has been working on many grant opportunities such as dirt road paving, resurfacing CR 2297, stormwater improvement projects, sidewalk projects, East pass evaluation, and flooding home buyout.

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

- > FY2022/23 Local Dirt Road Stabilization
- > CR 30 Sidewalks Phase III
- > Sherman Ave and 15th St turn lane
- > Joan Ave and North Lagoon turn lane
- > FY2023 Resurfacing Phase I
- > Sweetwater Branch Rd Stabilization
- > W. Linger Longer Rd Stabilization
- > Redwood Ave Drainage Improvements
- > CR 2297 Resurfacing
- > East Pass Evaluation
- > Pompano and Riviera Stormwater Pond
- > Magnolia Beach Rd Multi Use Path
- > Minge Branch Roadway
- > Hurricane Michael Roadway Rehabilitation

CONTACT US:

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

WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Mosquito Control had a somewhat late start for the kick-off into the spray season at the end of March 2023, mainly due to inconsistent weather patterns. Special focus on known low areas which are susceptible to holding water were carefully monitored by all of our teams. In this unified effort, we were able to avoid common drawbacks that have been observed from previous years. Our Adulticide team observed great results from occasionally alternating the use of products throughout the districts. Solely, for the purpose to prevent pesticide resistance which is widely observed and often a risk in adult mosquito populations. Implementing these methods have proven to be effective in providing disruption and decline in growing mosquito colonies that have become chemically resistant to pesticides. For our Larvicide team the use of Granular products have shown to provide long lasting results for vast areas that hold stagnant water. These remote areas that are difficult to reach are a constant struggle for the Larvicide team to treat and maintain. Here the purpose is to counteract the first stages of the mosquito life cycle. Since the implementation of the Granular products, our Larvicide team saw major improvements in the efficacy of treatments over extended periods of time. We strategically relocated some of our traps for our Surveillance team and conducted more than 300 randomized, triple panel tests in search of mosquito-borne diseases. This Summer provided lots of relief for our teams with temperatures reaching and surpassing 100° F most days. This allows for stagnant water to either evaporate or to be absorbed quickly into the ground removing breeding sites for mosquitoes and decreasing adult mosquitoes gatherings for Bay County citizens.

Identification Operations:

- > Deployed, set, and retrieved traps 2,275 Times
- > Counted and Identified 16,664 Mosquitoes

Larviciding Operations:

- > Answered 113 service requests
- > Inspected 7184 mosquito breeding sites
- > Treated 4089 sites
- > Stocked 13 pools with minnows
- > Manually back-pack sprayed 29 sites for a total coverage of 2.64 acres
- > Removed 1820 abandoned waste tires
- > Performed six neighborhood sweeps
- > Treated 4,512 storm drains

Adulticiding Operations:

- > Traveled 16,358.47 miles
- > Sprayed 1,109 times
- > Treated 594,853.40 acres

CONTACT US:

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





WHO WE ARE

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

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Bay County Roads and Bridges Division staff conducted the following daily maintenance duties:

- > Roads and Bridges received approximately 2,120 requests for service.
- > Maintained approximately 130 miles of county-owned dirt roadways, with a 75 percent success rate of routine grading within a 21-day cycle.
- > Inspected, repaired, or replaced more than 1.5 miles of stormwater pipe and 397 inlet boxes.
- > Maintained/repared the Public Works equipment fleet. In FY2023, Roads and Bridges service technicians completed over 1,000 repairs with a value of approximately \$730,000.

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8810 | roads@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

WHO WE ARE

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

The Traffic Engineering Division is responsible for the design, fabrication, installation, and maintenance of all road signs and pavement markings located on roadways within unincorporated Bay County. The division additionally maintains all traffic signals, school zone installations, and other traffic control devices within Bay County, including those located in the local municipalities. The Traffic Engineering Division also operates and maintains the regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), which not only encompasses the network of 180-plus traffic signals but also an array of roadside devices used to manage the overall transportation network from the central TMC facility. A primary component of the regional ITS is the administration of all ownership issues associated with 100-plus miles of underground fiber optic cable, including design and implementation of modifications, provision of underground location services required in response to nearly 10,000 locate tickets issued under the Florida Sunshine One Call Program, as well as emergency repairs to the underground cable/conduit facility and network switching equipment whenever necessary. Other components of the regional ITS deployment include 110-plus pan/tilt/zoom traffic monitoring cameras, more than two dozen travel-time sensor devices, five dynamic messaging signs, several trailer-mounted portable variable message signs, as well as many other transportation-related roadside devices that comprise the overall ITS network.

The Traffic Engineering Division maintains more than 20,000 road signs. The Traffic Engineering Division also administers many transportation-related grant programs financed by state and federal dollars.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > Rebuilt two traffic signals, including entire overhead spanwire support system
- > Installed four solar-powered flasher assemblies at midblock pedestrian crossings
- > Installed three solar-powered speed feedback signs on neighborhood streets
- > Coordinated speed hump and sign installation projects on two local roadways
- > Provided oversight for two comprehensive traffic signal corridor retiming projects
- > Performed traffic signal inspection and acceptance services for three construction projects
- > Integrated 180 new state-of-the-art traffic signal controllers into roadside controller cabinets
- > Installed two new closed-circuit television cameras providing images to TMC
- > Installed 4G wireless communication interface modems at five locations
- > Installed two Bluetooth-based travel time monitoring devices
- > Installed more than 24 'stop bar' pavement markings, and eight 'crosswalk' pavement markings
- > Fabricated over 200 signs requested by other BOCC divisions or departments

**CONTACT US:**

(850) 248-8740 | trafficengineering@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov

infrastructure surtax

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

RESURFACING:

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

DIRT ROAD STABILIZATION AND DRAINAGE PROJECTS:

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

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

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

BRIDGE REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT PROJECTS:

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

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION NOTICE OF VIOLATION PROJECTS:

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

CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS:

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

ROADWAY SAFETY PROJECTS:

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

STORMWATER CAPACITY PROJECTS:

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



ABOUT THE INFRASTRUCTURE SURTAX

Voters approved the Bay County Half-Cent Infrastructure Surtax in 2016 by a margin of greater than 10 percent, with the funding aimed at improving area roadways and infrastructure. Collection of the sales tax began in early 2017. The county collects an average of \$15.5 million annually and works to leverage that funding for grants and partnerships that often significantly augment the county's annual surtax revenues each year.

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

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

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

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

CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8740 | engineering@baycountyfl.gov
www.bayhalfcent.com



WHO WE ARE

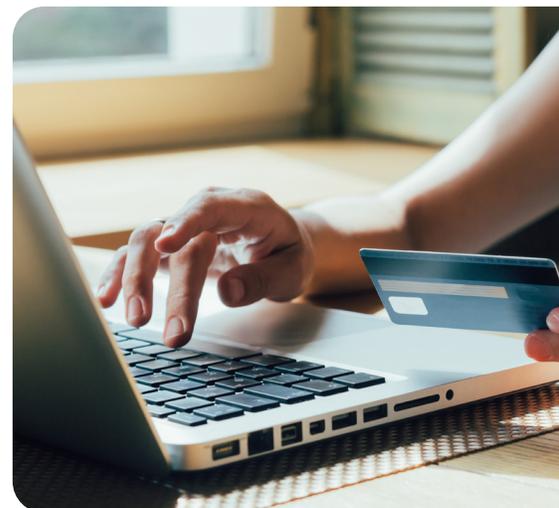
The Purchasing Department is responsible for coordinating the county's central procurement system, promoting efficiency, economy, and fair and open competition in an effort to reduce the appearance and opportunity for favoritism or impropriety. We strive to inspire public confidence that purchase orders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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Purchasing Department:

- > Provided management oversight of the county's purchasing card program with a purchase volume of more than \$3.2 million and realized an annual rebate of more than \$41,000.
- > Provided sales and support to county staff through ordering goods and services valued at more than \$89 million through 683 purchase orders.
- > Provided sales and support to county staff and vendors through 62 solicitations, resulting in contracts valued at more than \$45 million.
- > Utilized online and on-site auction services to dispose of surplus and obsolete equipment in order to maximize the county's investment. Purchasing conducted seven auctions resulting in a return of more than \$37,000.
- > Represented Bay County at the Central Gulf Coast Chapter of the NIGP Reverse Trade Show, meeting with more than 75 new vendors interested in providing goods and services to Bay County.



CONTACT US:

(850) 248-8270 | purchasing@baycountyfl.gov
www.baycountyfl.gov



WHO WE ARE

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

A portion of funds from Pot 1 and Pot 3 are reserved for Bay County. Settlement payments will be made into the trust fund over a number of years and will gradually be available to the county. The county’s share of Pot 1 will be approximately \$42 million over 15 years.

Pot 3 will provide about \$11 million. The county will also pursue matching funds. The money can be used to restore and protect the natural resources and economy of the Gulf Coast region.

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > The county’s draft Stormwater Master Plan and Capital Improvement Strategic Plan Update was completed. Public Works will use the documents to prioritize stormwater management and treatment for the bay system.
- > The feasibility study for the reopening of East Pass (Old Pass) was completed and an alternative was selected to maximize project performance and minimize adverse impacts. The North Bay Wastewater Reuse grant will be used for pumps and infrastructure to provide reuse water to the new Southport Sports Complex, the Bay County Emergency Operations Center and the Gulf Coast Community College North Campus.
- > The materials deployment contract for the RESTORE-funded Artificial Reefs Project has been awarded. Bay County Extension Service staff are managing the project, and deployment began in late 2023.
- > The RESTORE Pot 3 grant application for Deerpoint sewer to septic was approved by the Gulf Consortium.
- > The grant application for construction of the East Highland Park stormwater treatment facility was approved by the Gulf Consortium.
- > With funding provided by The Nature Conservancy and Bay County RESTORE Act funds, the St. Andrew and St. Joseph Bays Estuary Program, hosted by FSU Panama City, is well under way. Estuary Program staff are working with local governments on proposals to restore and enhance streams and wetlands, assess the success of ecosystem restoration efforts, use biological indicators to inform stormwater management priorities, and implement nature-based strategies to enhance St. Andrew Bay and St. Joseph Bay habitats.

Additional information on RESTORE is available at baycountyfl.gov.

CONTACT US:

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



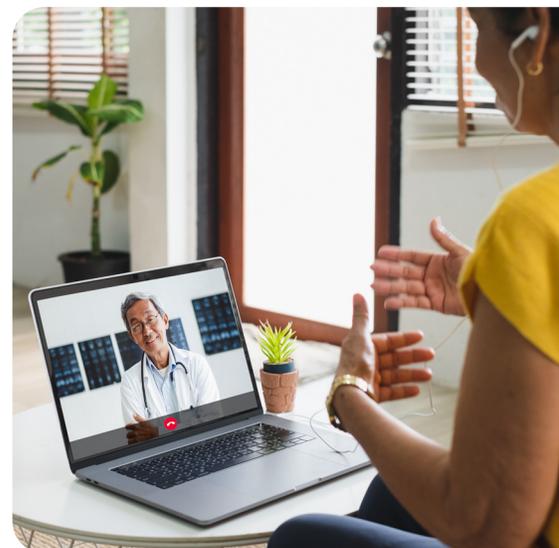
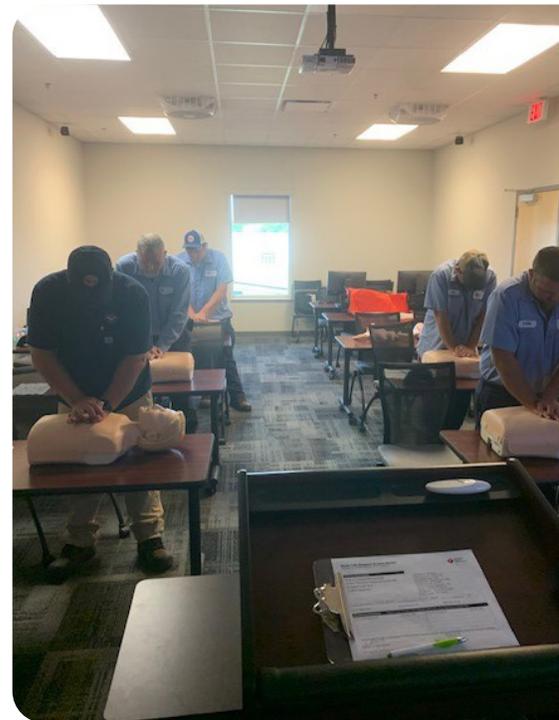
WHO WE ARE

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

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

- > Risk Management recovered more than \$22,884 in third-party claims. These claims are collected from the other party's insurance company for damages to county property.
- > Risk Management logged and investigated more than 225 reported incidents in the county for FY2023.
- > As a result of the 24/7 Healthiest You/Telehealth Program, the county experienced a 72.6 percent utilization, a return of investment of 4.58 percent, and an estimated net savings of \$168,951. This program does not interact with the group health insurance; hence, these virtual visits are not charged against the health insurance.
- > Risk Management successfully found light duty for 100 percent of employees with Workers' Compensation restrictions. Finding light duty assignments is one factor which helps reduce our Workers' Compensation premiums. This year our Workers' Compensation Experience Modification was .80, saving the county \$30,482.
- > Risk Management continues to expand its safety training program. These programs are clearly focused on the safety of both county employees and the citizens of Bay County. Classes include forklift operation, temporary traffic control, and CPR/First-Aid.
- > Risk Management has successfully met the state regulated Tier II completion deadline for the 13th consecutive year.
- > Risk Management is in the late stages of getting approval for a CDL training program for its employees. The required tester/trainers have been trained and the state is reviewing our program application.



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

water and wastewater



WHO WE ARE

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

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

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

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

CONTACT US:

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

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

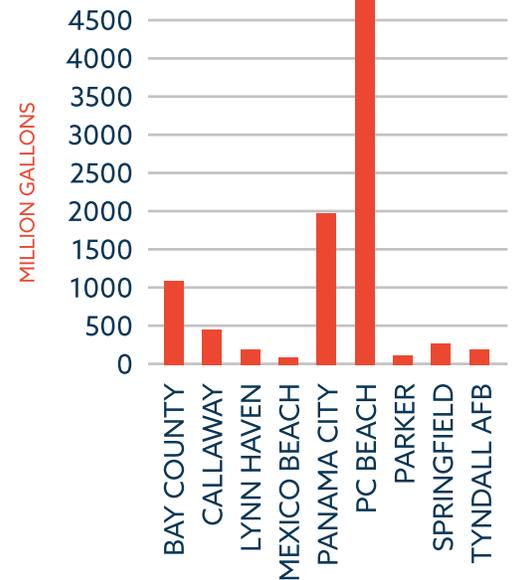
- > Utility Services worked with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to perform pilot testing on alternative treatment chemicals to ensure Bay County consistently had access to available approved treatment chemicals at all times. With approval of FDEP, the County identified, tested, and selected a suitable product that is used nationwide. This alternative product has improved water quality, reduced the primary treatment chemical cost, and provides resiliency to the treatment process.
- > Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Master Plan - The recent completion of the Master Plan established new standards for software, equipment, and communications. The new plan includes the ability to integrate with other BCUS systems such as CMMS and GIS. The plan includes design for redundant servers and provides a formal disaster recovery plan. Implementation of the recommendations are underway and include the replacement of outdated PLC's, upgrades to the Fiber Optic network, and replacement of control panels throughout the system.
- > Hwy 231 Aerial Water and Force Main Replacement Project - To improve reliability and resiliency, the 24" water main and 10" wastewater main that crossed Bayou George was replaced using horizontal drilling. The project was funded by The American Rescue Plan Act and wholesale water fund and cost \$2.7 million.
- > Approximately 1200 new retail accounts were added due to increasing growth in northern and eastern Bay County bringing the total retail accounts serviced by Bay County Utilities to 9,624.
- > HMGP Lift Station Hardening Project- Diesel bypass pumps were added to lift stations around Bay County to ensure continued service in the event of sustained power loss. The cost of the project was \$2.5 million.
- > HMGP MPAWTF Generator Replacement Project - Hurricane-damaged generators at Military Point Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility at a cost of \$338,000.
- > HMGP MPAWTF Effluent Station Pump Replacement - All the pumps and motors at the effluent pump stations which had been previously damaged by Hurricane Michael were replaced at a cost of \$564,000.
- > Locate technicians performed 16,052 water and wastewater locates.
- > The Utility Permitting Division reviewed new residential neighborhood development permits resulting in more than 1,265 new residential and commercial connections.
- > Annual drawdown of Deer Point Reservoir - Every year the county draws down Deer Point Reservoir from November through February at the request of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The annual drawdown decreases nuisance aquatic vegetation, consolidates and releases nutrients from the exposed shoreline sediments, improves fishing and boating access, and enhances fish spawning habitat.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- > Bay County Utility employees have attended various training opportunities during the year to maintain their state licenses and expand their knowledge.
- > 2019-2023 Florida Section American Water Works Association (FSAWWA)- Region XII Best Testing Water Award



2023 DRINKING WATER CONSUMPTION



	FY2022	FY2023
PANAMA CITY	2,339	1,989
PANAMA CITY BEACH	5,031	4,693
SPRINGFIELD	258	348
PARKER	113	120
CALLAWAY	486	460
LYNN HAVEN	202	155
MEXICO BEACH	122	99
TAFB	189	160
BAY COUNTY	1,152	1076
TOTAL	9,892	9,100



WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Project Announcements:

- > **Premier Aviation USA Overhaul Services (Premier Aviation)**, chose Bay County for its second Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) facility, set to be constructed at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport. The facility will include a two-bay narrow-body hangar, totaling 100,000 square feet. With a capital investment exceeding \$30 million, it's expected to employ 250 individuals, generating \$13.75 million in private payroll. Bay EDA secured a \$11.25 million grant through the Triumph Gulf Coast Board of Directors to support the project. Construction is slated for completion in Q4 2025.

Past Project Highlights:

- > **Central Moloney Inc.**, a top supplier of electrical distribution transformers and parts nationwide, launched a new manufacturing venture in Bay County, specializing in single-phase pole mounted transformers. Since its start in the second quarter of 2023 at VentureCrossings® Enterprise Centre, the company hired approximately 50 employees, with plans to introduce a second shift by the fourth quarter of the same year. With a capital investment surpassing \$25 million, they aim to generate 200 new jobs in Bay County. Working alongside the Bay County Board of Commissioners and Triumph Gulf Coast, the Bay EDA secured a \$7 million Triumph Gulf Coast Grant and \$2 million in University of West Florida IRDF grant funds to support the project, aiding in reducing the company's ad-valorem tax liability and constructing a six-acre finished goods storage facility.
- > **FedEx Ground**, a subsidiary of FedEx Corporation, expanded its operations in Bay County with the construction of a new 251,000-square-foot facility in Panama City. Completed in the first quarter of 2023, this facility is situated on a 33-acre site chosen for its accessibility to major highways, proximity to customer distribution centers, and a robust local workforce. The facility serves as a regional distribution center with more than 200 employees. The Bay EDA focuses on distribution and logistics as one of its key target markets in economic development recruitment; therefore, this project has a major impact on the county's continued growth and diversity.
- > **Mocama Marine LLC**, a marine manufacturing company, announced on September 6, 2022 that they would be establishing their boat manufacturing operation and company headquarters in Bay County. The company will create 105 new jobs, approximately 50 of which have already been hired, and have invested \$10.5M in this new operation. Production began in Q2 2023 in two existing buildings totaling 120,000 square feet on Bay Line Drive. The project received support from the Bay EDA, Bay County Board of County Commissioners, and other various organizations, securing \$3,675,000 in Triumph Gulf Coast grant funds and \$500,000 from the University of West Florida IRDF. Mocama Marine LLC recently acquired the boat brands of Action Craft and Southwind.
- > **Southern Sky Aviation**, based in Birmingham, Alabama, is constructing a new \$25 million fixed base operation (FBO) at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport. The project includes an 8,800 square foot FBO terminal, more than 73,000 square feet of hangar space, and is expected to employ approximately 30 people.
- > **Suzuki Marine**, which announced its establishment in 2020, began operations in a temporary facility on site. On May 17, 2023, the company celebrated the opening of its new state-of-the-art research and development facility with the Bay EDA and around 150 key stakeholders in the marine industry. With an investment of approximately \$25 million, Suzuki plans to hire about 20 employees over the next five years, including engineers, research technicians, and marine powersport experts.

CONTACT US:

(850) 215-9965 | 5230 West Highway 98, Panama City, Florida 32401
www.bayeda.com

mexico beach community development council

WHO WE ARE

The Mexico Beach Community Development Council (MBCDC) is responsible for marketing and promoting the Mexico Beach area, its accommodations, and attractions in a manner that will invite visitors to vacation in Mexico Beach. Funding stems from a 5 percent tourist development tax which is applied to short-term overnight accommodations in Mexico Beach. The MBCDC continuously develops the marketing operations as well as assists in beach nourishment, cleaning, park enhancements, and community event support.

As Bay County's smallest city, Mexico Beach is less than five miles long; however, there is an abundance of activity thanks to the tourism entities that are offered. An unconventional beach destination, Mexico Beach provides unique adventures tailored towards an easy-going vibe for visitors year-round.

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

The MBCDC was delighted to welcome both new and returning visitors to the destination. 2023 saw the return of two hoteliers in Mexico Beach, the Gulf View Motel and the El Governor Beach Resort, as well as other lodging homes and businesses. The area continues to make monumental strides and continues to pivot forward since Hurricane Michael.

The MBCDC marketing efforts were enhanced thanks to Madden Media, who became the marketing agency of record for the MBCDC. Promotional efforts were placed into paid social media campaigns as well as online organic media postings which reached past visitors to the destination. Marketing campaigns were launched with update imagery and video that highlighted the new growth and continued beauty of the destination. The campaign's deliverables performed well above benchmark average for both website and social media avenues. With the continued focus of recognition and highlights to reflect the destination, the continued branding of the Unforgettable Coast continues to invite new and returning visitors to the beach.

Events, Tournaments, and More

The Special Events for Mexico Beach began the year with the annual Gumbo Cook-off at Parker Park. The event is the largest fundraiser for the July 4th firework show. The Welcome Center hosted the annual "Punch on the Porch" in celebration of hospitality and tourism appreciation during the month of May. The annual GollyWhopper Classic Fishing Tournament and Mexico Beach Artificial Reef Association's Kingfish Tournament were held with overwhelming success. Collectively both tournaments had more than 225 boats participate and paid out over \$47,000 in cash and prizes. July 4th's Best Blast on the Beach firework show and 5k Fun-Run had the largest attendees and spectators Mexico Beach has seen in years. The beloved Music in the Park, a free concert series throughout September, was a success with large attendees the entire series. The Thanksgiving Day 5k Turkey Trot returned with participants all eager to run, walk and waddle across the finish line. The MBCDC supported all events both with in-kind and paid marketing support.

Beach Restoration

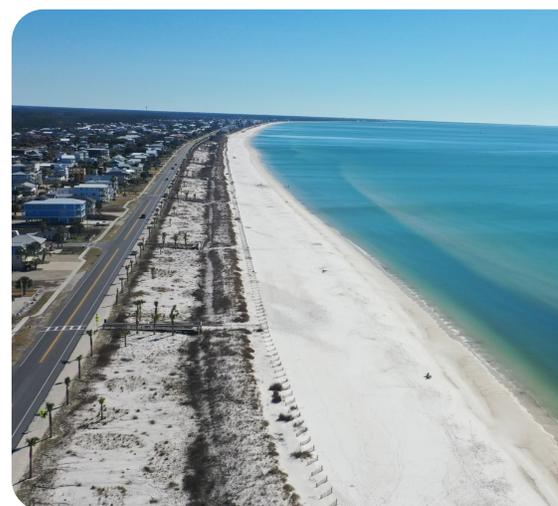
The MBCDC continues efforts to enact a \$25 million, grant-funded full beach restoration project which will place sand along the entire coastline in Mexico Beach. The project is in its final permitting stages and is expected to receive federal permitting in early 2024. The MBCDC continues to partner in the "Stay it Forward" campaign, created by the Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau. Collectively, visitors, students, and residents have planted more than 9,000 sea oats and other beach vegetation along the dunes in Mexico Beach.

2023 MEXICO BEACH STATS

- > 93,000 Facebook likes
- > 18,000 Instagram followers
- > 4,400 X (formally Twitter) followers
- > 578,000 website visits

CONTACT US:

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



panama city community development council



WHO WE ARE

Nestled along beautiful St. Andrews Bay in Northwest Florida, Panama City offers an exciting balance of culinary experiences, outdoor activities, and cultural encounters, while radiating a laid-back feel. It's this unique combination that makes Panama City an irresistible destination for individuals, couples, and families. With multiple historic neighborhoods and its own oyster trail, there's always something to see or do in Panama City. As the largest city in Bay County, Panama City serves as the county seat. While other areas of the county have had tourist development taxing districts for many decades, the Panama City tourist development taxing district was established in 2014 with collections beginning in January of 2015. Destination Panama City (Panama City Community Development Council, Inc.) is the official tourism agency for the City of Panama City, Florida and is funded by the 5-percent tourist development tax applied to short term, overnight accommodation rentals in Panama City. From 2015-2018, the tourist development tax generated about \$1.5 million per year with an average year over year growth of 5 percent. On the tails of Hurricane Michael, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic in fiscal years 2020 and 2021 created challenges for industries around the world, specifically the travel and tourism industries. Panama City, due to its diversified draw of ecotourism, history, culinary, and culture was uniquely positioned to not only rebound, but thrive during these challenging times.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

As the City of Panama City continues to rebuild from Hurricane Michael (2018), the city's tourism industry continued to show resilience and strength by generating greater revenue despite having fewer travel accommodations than there were pre-hurricane. Most visitors were domestic travelers, specifically from the southeastern drive market. Marketing focused on placemaking, storytelling, and eco-adventure excursions, ensuring the charm, character, and natural amenities of the community were well represented.

Destination Panama City Visitor's Center – Since the opening in late 2021, the new bayfront Visitor's Center has hosted numerous events including the Downtown After Dark series, FLLUXE Arts Festival, Roux Doux Cajun Food & Mood Experience, Salute to Freedom, and Oktoberfest celebrations. The Visitor's Center is open six days a week and provides recommendations and referrals to travelers.

Events – In addition to hosting in-house signature events, Destination Panama City works diligently to support other local community groups that bring positive attractions and events to the city. In 2023, Destination Panama City continued to financially support the Krewe of St. Andrews Mardi Gras and Seafood Festivals, the Public Eye Soar Digital Projection Festival, the Panama City Songwriters Festival, the Gulf Jazz Society's Jazz by the Bay Festival, Panama City Music Association Seasonal Concert Series, and Panama City Symphony Orchestra's Seasonal Concert Series, Second Chance of Northwest Florida's Blessing of the Fleet & Sock Burning, Florida Jeep Jam, Backstage Pass, St. Patrick's Day Festival, and many traveling sports tournaments.

Honors Best Documentary – In 2017, Destination Panama City in partnership with VISIT FLORIDA and Visit Panama City Beach started a documentary about Honor Allen and the Panama City Oyster Trail. At the time, Honor was a three-time national oyster shucking champion and was preparing to compete in Galway, Ireland at the International Oyster Opening Competition. In 2022, after a major setback with Hurricane Michael, the documentary was completed and made its rounds on the independent film festival circuit with wide acclaim. The film is currently available on a number of streaming services. Check out www.theoystershuckerfilm.com for more information.

Advocacy and Community Relations – In 2023, Destination Panama City was engaged to lease the historic St. Andrews School. Listed on the National Historic Registry, the school is currently being remodeled into a creative and cultural arts venue. The restoration project should be complete before the schools centennial anniversary in 2026.

CONTACT US:

(850) 215-1700 | 1000 Beck Avenue, Panama City, Florida 32401
www.destinationpanamacity.com

panama city beach tourist development council

WHO WE ARE

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

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

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

For more information on Bay County Tourism, visit www.VisitPanamaCityBeach.com.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

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

The TDC's goal last year was to reintroduce our Make It Yours creative campaign with fresh versions called "Where You Can Be You." The TDC (Visit PCB) launched additional initiatives focusing on Sales, Sports and FUN For ALL, our accessibility campaign.

New VisitPanamaCityBeach.com Website - In 2023, Visit Panama City Beach launched a new website featuring new innovative technology called SKYNAV. SKYNAV is an immersive, mixed-reality platform that provides an incredible showcase of the destination with rich, vivid HD aerial and ground panoramic imagery resulting in 3D interactive experiences.

Sports - The Publix Sport Complex held more than 80 events with 3125 sports teams which attributed to \$137 million in economic impact. Overall, PCB venues hosted 90 events with more than 3,000 teams and an economic impact of \$140 million.

Sales - The Sales department traveled across the nation and attended 22 Tradeshows with a variety of purposes, (Travel Leisure, Meeting Planning, Educational, Military Leisure and more). The CVB Sales Team generated 16,058 group room nights booked equating to \$14 million in economic impact revenue.

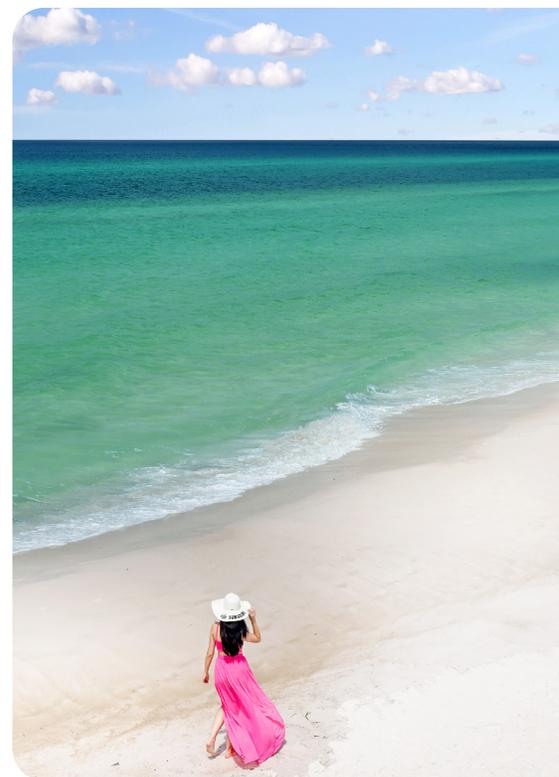
Special Events: In 2023, the Special Events Department produced five signature events for Panama City Beach:

- > **Mardi Gras & Music Festival**, the two-day festival featured parades, live music and much more for the entire family to enjoy.
- > **UNwineD March 2023**, a two-day culinary festival featured bites from the area's leading chefs and craft beer, wine, and spirits from around the world to a sold-out crowd.
- > **Pirates of the High Seas & Renaissance Fest**, the annual event celebrates the legacy of the pirates who once roamed the Gulf of Mexico with a treasure hunt, parades, live music, fireworks, and Renaissance vendors and activities. In 2023, this event experienced the largest crowds in attendance.
- > **Beach Home for the Holidays**, held over the Thanksgiving weekend, featured campfires with s'mores, Santa's village, carolers, kid's activities, vendors, and performances by the all-vocal country music sensation, Home Free, as well as the Panama City Symphony Orchestra.
- > **Visit PCB New Year's Eve Beach Ball Drop**, the 16th annual event, featured live music, fireworks, and two beach ball drops. In 2023, USA Today readers voted the Visit PCB Beach Ball Drop the top New Year's Eve event.

Special Initiatives - During National Mobility Awareness Month in May, Visit Panama City Beach launched the "Fun.For.All." initiative to promote accessible travel and to highlight the destination's commitment to welcoming all visitors.

CONTACT US:

(850) 233-5070 | info@visitpanamacitybeach.com
www.visitpanamacitybeach.com



2023 stats

- > 1.1 million Facebook likes
- > 94.7k Instagram followers
- > 40.9k X/Twitter followers
- > 8.8 million website visits





WHO WE ARE

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

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2023?

Disaster Recovery

- > Completed 30 home repair and recovery projects
- > Partnered with Bay County Government on 5-Year Hurricane Michael Anniversary Exhibit, educating the public on Bay County’s recovery journey
- > Supported neighboring counties in Hurricane Idalia recovery efforts; provided supplies and direct follow-on support to residents in Dowling Park, FL

Community Resilience

- > Partnered with House of Hope Outreach Ministry, Catalyst Church, and Forest Park United Methodist on 12 food distributions
- > Distributed more than 60,000 lbs of food; assisted over 8,000 residents with over 700 volunteer hours
- > Partnered with Messiah Lutheran Church to establish the Community Table, a weekly free hot meal service
- > Partnered with United Way of Northwest Florida on grant opportunity to provide volunteer management software to more than 25 affiliate organizations
- > Established the Keeping it Cool Program, providing air conditioning units to residents at risk of heat exhaustion
- > Represented Bay County in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine’s Gulf Research Program workshop on Bridging Diverse Knowledge Systems to Address Flood Risk in Northeast Houston Communities – provided lessons learned from Bay County’s disaster recovery efforts
- > Hosted 2nd Annual Holiday Services Fair, free public event offering interaction with over 20 service organizations

CONTACT US:

(850) 320-3211 | director@rebuildbaycounty.org
www.rebuildbaycounty.org
[Facebook.com/RebuildBayCountyInc](https://www.facebook.com/RebuildBayCountyInc)
Text-2-Donate : REBUILDBAY (to 41444)

BAY COUNTY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
ADMINISTRATION	248-8140
ADDRESSING	248-8374
ANIMAL CONTROL	767-3333
BUDGET OFFICE	248-8240
BUILDERS SERVICES	248-8350
CAFE	248-8196
CODE ENFORCEMENT	248-8290
COMMUNICATIONS	248-8170
CO-OP EXTENSION	784-6105
COUNTY ATTORNEY	248-8175
EMERGENCY SERVICES	248-6040
EMS	248-6070
ENGINEERING	248-8301
FACILITIES	248-8120
FIRE SERVICES	248-6040
GENERAL SERVICES	248-8732
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS	248-8071
HUMAN RESOURCES	248-8201
HOUSING	248-2465
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	248-8004
LIBRARY	522-2100
MEDICAL EXAMINER	747-5740
MOSQUITO CONTROL	248-8720
PARKS & RECREATION	248-8730
PLANNING	248-8250
PUBLIC WORKS	248-8302
PURCHASING	248-8270
RECORDS MANAGEMENT	248-8278
RISK MANAGEMENT	248-8230
ROADS	248-8810
SECURITY	248-8195
SOLID WASTE	236-2212
TRANSIT	248-8161
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING	248-8740
UTILITY SERVICES	248-5010
VETERANS SERVICES	248-8280

CONSTITUTIONAL

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

MUNICIPAL

DEPARTMENT	PHONE NUMBER
CALLAWAY	871-6000
LYNN HAVEN	265-2121
MEXICO BEACH	648-5700
PANAMA CITY BEACH	233-5100
PANAMA CITY	872-3010
PARKER	871-4104
SPRINGFIELD	872-7570

OTHER

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

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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



stay prepared in an emergency.

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

PROVIDING YOU WITH REAL-TIME UPDATES

- › SEVERE WEATHER & EVACUATIONS
- › UNEXPECTED ROAD CLOSURES
- › POLICE & FIRE SITUATIONS
- › MISSING PERSONS
- › PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

**SIGNING UP
IS SIMPLE**



VISIT
ALERTBAY.ORG
AND SIGN UP



SELECT WHAT
NOTIFICATIONS YOU'D LIKE TO RECEIVE
AND WHERE YOU'D LIKE THEM SENT



NOTIFICATIONS WILL
BE SENT DURING AN
EMERGENCY

**alertbay**
EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM



DOWNLOAD THE EVERBRIDGE APP
TO YOUR MOBILE DEVICE AND LOG IN
USING YOUR ALERTBAY CREDENTIALS



alertbay.org



YOUR **HALF-CENT** SURTAX AT WORK

Visit [BAYHALFCENT.COM](https://www.bayhalfcent.com) to view what your Surtax has done so far.



BAY COUNTY *Florida*
[BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV](https://www.baycountyfl.gov)



This publication can be viewed online in PDF format
at the Bay County website: www.baycountyfl.gov



BAY COUNTY *Florida*

BAYCOUNTYFL.GOV

BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
840 WEST 11TH STREET
PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32401
TELEPHONE: (850) 248-8140