

Santa Rosa County District 3 Newsletter

A Message From Your Commissioner



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I often talk about Santa Rosa County being "a special place" to live, work and play! When someone asks me what makes it special, I respond – it's the people who choose to call Santa Rosa their home, people who truly care about our county and our way of life. It's easy to understand why so many new families move here every year, approximately 33,000 new residents from 2000-2010. We have a great quality of life which includes: low taxation, low cost of living, great schools, low crime rate, beautiful beaches, a state forest, rivers, streams and some of the best recreational facilities in the state. As spring approaches, our ballparks become alive with the sound of children's voices and the sound of bats hitting balls. Our parks and our volunteers help develop our young people into disciplined, productive and competitive young adults.

In district 3, we have several new recreational projects under way: a new community center and voting precinct facility at the Santa Rosa Sportsplex, which is a joint project between districts 1 and 3; upgraded tennis courts at the Town of Jay Recreational Park, which is a joint project between the Town of Jay and district 3; the new Chumuckla Springs boat ramp, which has cleared all state permitting and will be under construction soon. All of these projects are investments into the future of Santa Rosa County!

As we all know, our military installations, NAS Whiting Field, Eglin and Hurlburt Field are a major part of our county. Whiting Field alone contributes approximately \$850 million a year to our local economy.

These bases must be protected at all costs! The Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta recently stated that the Department of Defense would conduct new rounds of Base Realignment and Closure or BRAC in 2013 and 2015. The loss of any of our military installations would be devastating to our county and region. As you may know, I have spent the last 20 years working on "base protection and enhancement" issues and will continue to do so in the future. We must stay diligent and very progressive during these times.

There are many other good things going on in our county; the Santa Rosa County Chamber of Commerce has created a new Governmental Affairs Committee that is working closely with our Developmental Services Department and the state to better understand governmental regulations and reduce or eliminate unnecessary rules that may be encumbering new business creation and growth.

As a native Santa Rosan and Vietnam Veteran, I am honored to serve the people of Santa Rosa County and with your help, we will continue to have the greatest county in the country!

God Bless America,

Don Salter
District 3 Commissioner

Construction of the new Pace Community Center located at the Santa Rosa Sportsplex began on Feb. 13. The project is expected to be complete by August, in time for 2012 elections.





Santa Rosa District 3 News

Partnerships Vital to Park System

Santa Rosa County maintains 61 recreational sites throughout the county, offering visitors and residents a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities from which to choose. The success of these parks can be attributed to the collaboration between various organizations and Santa Rosa County.

Team sports provide our youth with a safe opportunity to grow physically and socially. Local parks are able to host organized team sports thanks to the partnership between Santa Rosa County and community sports organizations like the Pace Area Tennis Association, East Milton Youth Association, Chumuckla Athletic Association, Tiger Point Sports Association, Futbol Club of Santa Rosa, Navarre Youth Sports Association, and the Pace Athletic and Recreation Association. Through management agreements, the county builds and maintains the infrastructure at each park. In turn, the sports association takes on the programming of youth and adult sports including tennis, baseball, t-ball, softball, soccer, football, and cheerleading. The county's administrative services staff, Tammy Simmons and Rebecca Welch, support the associations with volunteer background screenings and the budgeting and scheduling of improvements and maintenance. Whenever possible, county park staff is utilized to make repairs and improvements.

District 3 recreational funds are also utilized to support the park system in the Town of Jay. With 80 percent of the

children participating in park programs in the Town of Jay living in the unincorporated areas of Santa Rosa County, Commissioner Salter states, "It just make sense to support Jay's programs." Examples include \$10,000 donated to Jay in 2011 for the upkeep and maintenance of Bray Hendricks Park and a combined \$31,000 in 2010 to purchase lawn equipment for the Jay Recreation Association, to support recreations efforts of the Town of Jay, and to help fund start up costs of Jay Junior League Football. In addition, commissioners will also combine their funds to maximize recreational dollars for our residents (see box below).

A recent park success story can be found at the Santa Rosa Soccer Complex located on Chumuckla Highway and managed by the Futbol Club of Santa Rosa, where two club players signed collegiate acceptance letters on Feb. 9. Mary Katheryn Taylor, a senior at Pace High School, signed a letter of intent with Mississippi State University. Lana Chechek, 17, is also a senior at Pace High School and signed a letter of intent with the University of West Florida.

Lana and Mary Katheryn represent the first graduating class from the FCSR Academy program. The Academy program began at FCSR approximately five years ago. Coach Louie Sahin, who holds U.S., European and Turkish top national soccer coaching licenses, created the program to develop local children of all skill levels between the ages of nine and 12 into competitive soccer players. Lana and Mary Katheryn are two of four senior girls at FCSR, the first to ever complete this program and later compete with the FCSR Revolution Club Team. The two remaining FCSR senior girls, who attend Milton High School, are expected to sign letters of intent in March,



placing every senior girl graduating from the FCSR Academy program onto a college soccer team.

Scott Schneider, FCSR Communication Director, attributes the program's success to, "It's our community that makes our soccer club successful. With FCSR managing the soccer fields and the support of the board of county commissioners, parents and the community as a whole, we are able to offer the youth of Santa Rosa County a quality soccer program in a wonderful family atmosphere."

Parks Supported with District 3 Recreational Funds

- Chumuckla Park & Community Center
- Bray Hendricks Park (Town of Jay)
- Fidelis Community Center and Park
- Keyser's Boat Ramp
- McDavid Park
- Santa Rosa Soccer/Horse Complex
- Sandy Landing Boat Ramp
- Wayside Park
- Webb Landing Boat Ramp
- Williams Lake Boat Ramp

Districts 1 & 3 Recreation Funds

- Benny Russell Park
- Pace Area Recreation Park
- Quintette Boat Ramp
- Santa Rosa Sportsplex
- Pace Community Center (in construction)

2012 Gulf Coast Agribusiness Conference "Extreme Farm Makeover - Maximizing Your Farms Potential"

The University of Florida, West Florida Research and Education Center, IFAS Extension and TEAM Santa Rosa hosted the 2012 Gulf Coast Agribusiness Conference on Feb. 16 at the Chumuckla Farmers Opry House with 117 folks in attendance and a variety of vendors including Smith Tractor Company and Farm Credit of NWF.

The theme of the conference was "Extreme Farm Makeover: Maximizing your Farm's Potential." Lecture topics included produce marketing, Florida's new cottage-food laws, fruit orchard management, as well as produce marketing and silvo pasture conversion. An afternoon session was held at the University of Florida's West Florida Research and Education Facility, where attendees were given the opportunity to learn about different hydroponic growing systems for produce, weed management for newly acquired land, small ruminant marketing and fruit orchard management. Farmers that attended the conference learned how they can diversify their operation and how to maximize their profits with the help of the University of Florida, West Florida Research and Education Center, County Extension Services and the Panhandle Fresh Marketing Association.



Santa Rosa District 3 News

District 3 Public Works Projects

Santa Rosa County has an ongoing program to pave county maintained dirt roads and resurface county maintained paved roads. New pavement is constructed by a contractor, but county Road and Bridge employees are involved in the preparation prior to paving and shoulder work after paving in order to reduce the cost of paving projects. Residents with questions about paving are encouraged to call the Road and Bridge Department at (850) 626-0191 or email at public-works@santarosa.fl.gov .

The following roads were recently resurfaced in working district 3:

- Gardenview Road
- Daisy Lane
- Rocky Lane
- Polk Road
- Dykes Lane

The following dirt roads were recently paved in Working District Three:

- Transfer Station Road
- J. Lowery Road

The following roads were recently approved for resurfacing in working district 3 and should be completed by September 30, 2012:

- Pine Blossom Road
- Moose Road (Badger Road to Anderson Lane)
- Antelope Road
- Badger Road
- Tidwell Road (Willard Norris to Ty Lane)
- Terrell Lowery Road (north end)
- Hollandtown Church Road (S.R. 89 to Pineview Church Road)
- Watermill Road (address 4372 east & north for 5000 feet)

The following dirt roads were recently approved for paving in working district 3 and should be completed by September 30, 2012:

- Ira Lane
- Manning Creek Lane

A safety project that was recently completed in District Three was the construction of a right turn lane on C.R. 182 for access to the Chumuckla Elementary School. The project was done to enhance safety during times when parents drop off and pick up their children from school.

Chumuckla Springs Boat Ramp Receives Permitting

The Chumuckla Springs Boat Ramp has received the final permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, enabling the project to begin construction. The new boat ramp will be owned by the county and will be open year round. It will replace the current Sandy Landing Boat Ramp which is privately owned but maintained by the county and open to the public through a license agreement. Land clearing for the Chumuckla Springs Boat Ramp located on Mineral Springs Lake is expected to begin the first week of March.

This will be a large and challenging project as it will require over nine acres of clearing and grubbing, one-half mile of new paved road construction, over one-half mile of paved ditches, four stormwater retention ponds, over 7,000 square yards of compacted rock parking and driving areas and extensive erosion controls. The project construction time will be weather driven and will take several months depending on rain and potential flooding of the river and the lake.

In addition to being open year round, the Mineral Springs location will have several advantages over the Sandy Landing Boat Ramp including more favorable currents for launching or loading small fishing boats and the ability to launch boats during low river tides. Features of the Chumuckla Springs Boat Ramp will include a gravel parking area with parking for 30 trucks with trailers and 20 standard parking spaces and a ramp which will allow the launching of two boats side by side with appropriate loading and staging areas.

Widening of State Road 87 North Moves Forward

In December 2011, the Florida Department of Transportation announced the addition of \$3 million to its Five Year Work Program to design the five-mile segment from NAS Whiting Field to Coldwater Creek for widening to four lanes. For over a decade, the county has worked in partnership with federal and state legislative delegations, FDOT, the Florida – Alabama Transportation Planning Organization, NAS Whiting Field, and Eglin Air Force Base to improve the north-south State Road 87 corridor. This has resulted in the widening of segments from Milton to NAS Whiting Field, through Navarre, from Hickory Hammock Road to US 90, and more recently through Holley. The SR 87 Connector study to connect SR 87N and SR 87S is part of this effort. Coincidentally, the announcement was released on the same day as a SR 87 Summit held by the county to keep the momentum going to fund remaining segments.



After design comes right-of-way acquisition and construction, so it may be many years before we see dirt turning on the segment now funded for design. Meanwhile, the county continues to take advantage of all funding opportunities including application for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery or TIGER grants now available from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Coughlin Takes Command of NAS Whiting Field



Naval Air Station Whiting Field Commanding Officer Capt. Matthew Coughlin has experienced Santa Rosa County from both ends of the Navy spectrum: the bottom and the top. As a student naval aviator, Ensign Coughlin earned his wings of gold aboard the base in 1990. The intervening 22 years have taken Coughlin to global duty stations and the corridors of power in Washington, D.C. However, the commanding officer of the air station, who assumed his office in November of 2011, always harbored an undiminished affection for the West Florida region that launched his career. "To this day, I have only the fondest memories of my time here at Whiting," Coughlin remarked as he accepted responsibility for the air station, its personnel, and its special relationship with the Santa Rosa community.

Coughlin was born and raised in Greenfield, Mass, a small town in the New England interior. His father had established the family's naval tradition as a destroyer sailor during World War II and the younger Coughlin was powerfully impressed by his father's lifelong commitment to public service. This inspiration has served as an enduring basis for common ground with the residents of Santa Rosa County. "He was quiet about his [wartime] service, but he continued to serve by running

for public office and serving the veterans of our community," Coughlin explained during his Veterans' Day address in downtown Milton.

Following graduation from Western New England College in Springfield, Mass., with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Coughlin was commissioned in October 1988 through the Aviation Officer Candidate School Program in Pensacola, Fla. He completed flight training at NAS Whiting Field and was designated a Naval Aviator in January 1990.

Coughlin's career has taken him on a journey of service through several positions of escalating responsibility. Stints as the Mini-Boss (seaborne airspace authority) aboard the USS Peleliu (LHA-5) and instructor duty with SH-60B Fleet Replacement Squadron HSL-41 preceded Coughlin's first command suite assignments as executive officer and later commanding officer of HSL-43. Upon his return to sea duty, Coughlin assumed responsibilities as Air Boss aboard the Peleliu. He experienced the defense establishment's inner corridors of power as Assistant Deputy Director of Operations, Surveillance Officer, and Emergency Actions in the Pentagon. He also qualified as a Nuclear Strike Advisor for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Coughlin's return to Santa Rosa County and NAS Whiting Field mark a homecoming for a man who never relinquished his small-town values. His continued regard for the air station, its neighbors, and its culture led to a serendipitous reunion in 2011. The newly-minted base commanding officer reflected on this turn of fortune during his initial introduction to base personnel in November. "This was the first time in my career that my future assignment happened to also be my top personal choice," Coughlin declared.

Veterans Receive Helping Hand

The Santa Rosa County Veterans Memorial Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, has a program that helps veterans in a special way through the "veterans assistance fund." The veterans assistance fund lends a helping hand to Santa Rosa County veterans who do not have the physical or financial ability to complete minor repairs and/or the addition of safety features to their homes. Improvements are made to raise their most basic standard of living conditions.

Thanks to the time and financial donations of the following individuals and organizations, several projects have already been approved by the assistance committee:

- C.W. "Blackie" Black replaced a veteran's roof in Pace and has installed small wheelchair ramps in Pace and Milton.
- Ray of Hope, a Christian motorcycle organization, built a large wheelchair ramp.
- Brantley Nesenson repaired an air conditioning unit in East Milton.
- Dan Powers of AM Vets, will soon be widening bathroom doors to accommodate a wheelchair in a Gulf Breeze home.

There are many veterans who are in need of our help. For more information on how you can assist this tax deductible-worthwhile program, please call (850) 626-7292.

Norfolk Area Aircraft to Use NOLF Choctaw

FA-18 aircraft which normally use Navy Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress in Virginia will be using Navy Outlying Landing Field Choctaw to meet their training requirements while NALF Fentress is temporarily closed. Aircraft use will be limited to no more than four to five FA-18s at NOLF Choctaw at any given time. Training operations will include both day and night time evolutions.

Due to the increased carrier landing operations at NOLF Choctaw, area residents will likely see and hear some increased activity. We are sensitive to community concerns associated with these changes. The Navy will mitigate the amount of noise where possible.

The first detachment will operate at NOLF Choctaw from Mar. 1 through 10.