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Forgotten Coast Living!

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New Leadership Begins for Gulf County Government and Tourism

Gulf County is entering a new chapter of leadership as two key positions guiding the county's government and tourism efforts are now filled. James "Matt" Terry has stepped into the role of Gulf County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, while Blake Rish has been named the new Executive Director of the Gulf County Tourist Development Council (TDC). Together, the appointments signal a fresh season of leadership for both county operations and the continued growth of tourism along the Forgotten Coast.

James "Matt" Terry was appointed by Governor Ron DeSantis and officially sworn in as Gulf County Clerk of Court and Comptroller on February 18, following the retirement of longtime clerk Rebecca "Becky" Norris. Norris served the county for more than two decades and leaves behind a legacy of steady leadership and public service.

The Clerk's Office plays a central role in county government. The office is responsible for maintaining court records, overseeing county financial



transactions, recording official documents, and serving as clerk to the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners. The position also ensures transparency and accountability in how county funds are managed and how public records are maintained.

Terry is a familiar name to many residents across Gulf County. He is the owner and appraiser of the Appraisal Group of North Florida and has long been involved in the local community. In addition to his professional work, Terry has served as an elected member of the Gulf County School Board and has been active in

professional organizations including the Appraisal Institute of Florida's Gulf Coast chapter.

A graduate of Flagler College with a bachelor's degree in business, Terry brings a strong background in finance, property valuation, and community leadership to the role. Supporters say his combination of private-sector experience and public service will help guide the office as it continues to manage the county's records and financial oversight responsibilities.

At the same time, Gulf County's tourism industry is also welcoming new leader-

ship. Blake Rish has been selected as the new Executive Director of the Gulf County Tourist Development Council, the organization responsible for promoting the county as a destination and supporting the local tourism economy.

Rish is well known throughout the region, having served for years as the state representative for District 2, which includes Gulf, Franklin, and parts of Bay County. During his time in the Florida House of Representatives, Rish built strong relationships across the Panhandle and became a familiar advocate for coastal communities and local eco-

nomics development.

In his new role with the TDC, Rish will oversee tourism marketing, visitor outreach, and strategic initiatives designed to support the local hospitality industry. Tourism remains one of the most important economic drivers for Gulf County, bringing visitors to enjoy the area's natural beauty, beaches, fishing, and small-town charm.

Community leaders say Rish's experience in state government and his deep knowledge of the region make him well suited to help guide the next phase of tourism growth while preserving the character that makes Gulf County unique.

With Terry now managing the responsibilities of the Clerk's Office and Rish leading the county's tourism promotion efforts, Gulf County begins the year with new leadership in two positions that play important roles in shaping the community's future. Both men bring local knowledge, professional experience, and a strong connection to the region they now serve.



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Before Tourist Season: Five Marketing Fixes Every Local Business Should Make



BY CARA GOODMAN, OWNER OF CEB DESIGN STUDIO

Along the Forgotten Coast, the rhythm of business tends to follow the seasons. As winter fades and spring arrives, our coastal towns begin to wake up. Visitors start planning beach trips, vacation rentals fill their calendars, restaurants prepare for busy weekends, and small shops see more foot traffic. For many local businesses, the months ahead represent the most important stretch of the year.

That's why March is the perfect time to take a close look at your marketing before the rush begins. A few thoughtful updates now can make a meaningful difference once visitors arrive. Whether you operate a fishing charter, boutique, restaurant, rental company, or service business, a few simple adjustments can help ensure

your business is easy to find, easy to understand, and easy to contact.

Check Google Listing

One of the first places every business should check is their Google Business profile. When visitors search for places to eat, shop, or explore, Google is usually the first stop. If your listing has outdated hours, missing photos, or incomplete information, potential customers may move on to the next option. Make sure your phone number, address, hours of operation, and website link are correct. Adding recent photos of your storefront, products, or services also helps create a strong first impression. Businesses with active, well-maintained listings tend to appear more trustworthy and attract more clicks.

Evaluate your Website

Next, take a moment to look at your website from the perspective of a first-time visitor. Many people will discover your business online before they ever step through your door. If your website loads slowly, feels cluttered, or is difficult to navigate on a phone, it may be turning customers away without you realizing it. A strong website should answer three questions quickly: what you offer, why someone should choose you,

and how they can contact you. Clear headlines, simple navigation, and easy-to-find contact information go a long way toward turning curious visitors into real customers.

Invest in Quality Photography

Another area that can make a big difference is photography. In a coastal community where beauty and atmosphere play such an important role, strong visuals are powerful. Visitors often decide where to eat, shop, or book an experience based on what they see online. Fresh photos of your space, your products, or people enjoying your services can instantly elevate your marketing. Natural lighting, authentic moments, and images that reflect the character of the Forgotten Coast help potential customers picture themselves there.

Review Your Message and Branding

It's also worth taking a close look at your message and branding. Over time, businesses often accumulate different logos, colors, fonts, and messaging across websites, social media, signage, and advertisements. When these elements feel disconnected, it can make a business appear less established or harder to recognize. Consistent branding creates fa-

miliarity and trust. When your website, ads, social media, and printed materials all feel cohesive, customers are more likely to remember you and return.

Have A Clear Call To Action

Finally, make sure it is easy for customers to take the next step. Whether that step is making a reservation, booking a charter, placing an order, or simply calling for more information, the path should be obvious. Clear calls to action such as "Book Now," "Call Today," or "View Our Menu" help guide visitors toward becoming customers. The simpler and more direct the process is, the more likely someone is to follow through.

The good news is that these improvements don't always require major changes. Often, a few thoughtful updates are enough to make a business feel more polished, professional, and ready for the season ahead.

As the days grow longer and the coastal breeze warms, the Forgotten Coast will once again welcome travelers searching for beautiful beaches, fresh seafood, and the charm of small coastal towns. For local businesses, preparing now ensures you are ready to make the most of the busy months ahead.

For businesses looking for guidance, CEB Design Studio

specializes in helping companies of all sizes strengthen their brand, improve their marketing, and build websites that turn visitors into customers. From branding and graphic design to website development and conversion-focused marketing strategies, CEB Design Studio works with businesses to create clear, effective marketing that supports long-term growth and success.



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The Marshmallow Effect

BY: RANDY LOCKLIER, PRESIDENT OF GULF FINANCIAL

Don't we all love smore's? I do! On a recent mountain trip, we enjoyed them by the firepit. Melting chocolate and marshmallow oozing over a warm graham cracker is so delicious. Could you resist?

In 1972, an experiment was conducted at Stanford University. Children were brought into a room one at a time and sat down at a table. On the table was a marshmallow. The researcher told the children that he was leaving the room for 15 minutes and that if they did not eat the marshmallow, they would get a second one upon his return. A simple choice: one treat now or two later. Only 1 in 3 could wait. The really interesting part came later. Stanford researchers studied these children for 40 years (That's right!) and made an amazing discovery. Over and over again, by any measure, the children who waited succeeded in life at a much higher rate than

those who didn't wait. Higher SAT Scores, graduation rates, income, job performance, net worth as well as overall life and relationship satisfaction were the norm in this group. Is there a message here for us?

True happiness, said Aristotle (c. 300 BC) is about developing daily spiritual habits and surrounding yourself with people who grow your soul. At the center of the spiritual life is the concept of delayed gratification. Delayed gratification is an essential element of self-control. When you disavow immediate pleasure to seek a long-term higher value goal, you are practicing delayed gratification. It is here that we will move toward our greatest potential in this life. Studies have shown, like the Marshmallow Experiment, that deferred gratification is one of the most effective personal traits of highly successful, happy people. People who learn to manage their need to be satisfied in the moment thrive more



in their careers, relationships, and finances than people who give into it.

This seems to be proof of a path to an abundant and fulfilling life in this earthly realm. What of the spiritual realm? Once must have faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. It is this Faith, this hope for the future that gives us the strength to deny ourselves, pick up the cross daily and walk in the will of our Maker. A life aligned with the will of God

creates real joy that keeps our happiness meter on high!

Just think for a moment about some of the things in life that bring us immediate pleasure but can impose upon our physical, spiritual, and mental health. Food, drugs, gambling, alcohol (ever had a hangover?), sex, screaming in anger, or overusing our credit cards. These things don't necessarily bring out the best in us, they just ease our discomfort or satisfy our desires for a moment. Our modern society is one in

which instant gratification is glorified and obtainable, becoming a barrier to many seeking the spiritual life. To some, these temptations open the door to turmoil, addiction, and death.

Jesus teaches us not store up treasures on earth, but to store up our treasures in heaven. For where our treasure is there will our hearts be also. A person will never be successful on a spiritual walk without knowing how to say no to temptation and the pleasures of this world. Delay a little gratification and you will draw close to God. Say no to sin and temptation and they will flee from us. Believe that the promises of Christ are true and the promises will come to pass in our own lives and the next.

That's Good News for us all!

Great to be with you again. Until next time be happy, be safe, and be blessed.

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Franklin County

Events & Activities



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Enter to Win a Coastal Getaway!

The Franklin County Tourist Development Council launched its first getaway campaign this month with the rollout of the 2026 "Come to the Coast Outdoor Getaway" which runs from February 16 through April 1. Sign up for a chance to win this curated vacation featuring a 2-night stay on St. George Island, evening meals at area restaurants, a kayak rental and tour of Franklin County's two historic lighthouses.

Learn more and sign up for a chance to win at Floridasforgottencoast.com.



Bay Area Choral Society Hosts Spring Concert March 28

The Bay Area Choral Society will host its Spring Concert themed "Let the Sunshine In!" on Saturday, March 28 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Apalachicola from 6-7 pm. Get ready to vibe with some amazing choral tunes this spring at a concert you won't want to miss! Celebrate the joy and renewal of spring with these choirs and instrumentalists from FSU. The program will feature a special patriotic section honoring our country, as BACS salutes our military and veterans.



Eastpoint VFD Charity Rib Cookoff March 21

The 26th Annual Eastpoint Volunteer Fire Department Charity Rib Cookoff will be held Saturday, March 21 at Vroom Park in Eastpoint. BBQ dinners will be served from 11am.



Nationally recognized Forgotten Coast Plein Air Painting Event March 20-29

Now in the 21st year of documenting the landscape and culture of the last vestige of authentic "Old Florida," Forgotten Coast en Plein Air, America's Great Paint-out, is among the world's most prestigious plein air events. Artistic excellence and the production of investment quality art continues to be the trademark of this 10-day festival. The 2026

annual Forgotten Coast en Plein air painting event will be held March 20-29 throughout several venues along Florida's Forgotten Coast.

Apalachicola Boat & Car Show April 18

The Apalachicola Bay Chamber of Commerce present the 27th Annual Boat & Car Show on April 18 from 10am to 3pm at Riverfront Park in Apalachicola. Come see Boats, Cars and Golf Carts of all makes and models while enjoying the relaxed atmosphere of being on the river in Apalachicola.



Carrabelle Culture Crawl March 28

The Carrabelle Culture Crawl, hosted by the Carrabelle History Museum, will be held on Saturday, March 28. The free celebration of art, music, history, food, and fun in the heart of downtown Carrabelle, and will take place on Saturday, March 28 from 10 am to 3 pm. The event will feature live music, food, art and the popular Fishy Fashion show.

9th Annual SGI Brewfest April 18

The 2026 SGI Brewfest will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2026 from 1-4 pm (Eastern) in the public parking area adjacent to SGI Lighthouse Park. The SGI Brewfest is a one-day beer tasting festival to promote the appreciation of craft beer. All proceeds benefit the Franklin County Humane Society. This year's event features an even broader selection of amazing craft beers, friendly faces and furry friends.

Mid March through April Franklin County Events

March - Weekly Apalachicola Downtown Farmers' Markets
 March 14, 28 - Apalachicola Farmers' Market
 March 7, 21 - Country Farmers' Market in Carrabelle
 March 14 - 30th Annual Camp Gordon Johnston Day Parade
 March 14 - History Talk on Piracy - Apalachicola Historical Society
 March 20-29 - Forgotten Coast en Plein Air
 March 21 - Eastpoint VFD Charity Rib Cookoff
 March 21 - Quilt Show
 March 28 - Carrabelle Culture Crawl
 March 28 - Bay Area Choral Society Spring Concert
 April 1 - SGI Lighthouse Full Moon Climb
 April - Weekly Apalachicola Downtown Farmers' Markets
 April 2 - Crooked River Lighthouse Full Moon Climb
 April 4, 18 - Carrabelle Country Market
 April weekly - Yoga
 April weekly - Apalachicola Ghost Tours
 April 11, 25 - Apalachicola Farmers' Market
 April 18 - Apalachicola Boat and Car Show
 April 18 - SGI Brewfest
 April 25 - FSU Coastal Marine Lab Open house
 April 25 - Carrabelle Riverfront Festival

Sign up to receive monthly Franklin County event and news at Floridasforgottencoast.com

Visit

Floridasforgottencoast.com
 to stay up to date on all Franklin County events and activities

Port St. Joe Business Owner Competes to Raise Funds for Children with Cancer

A Port St. Joe health and wellness professional is turning a national fitness competition into an opportunity to give back and raise meaningful support for families facing childhood cancer.

Valerie Sayre, owner of Nutrition Connection Balance and a member of the Port St. Joe Chamber of Commerce, has entered the 2026 Ms. Health & Fitness competition, a national event that highlights women making a difference through health, fitness, and community leadership. The competition, hosted in partnership with Muscle & Fitness HERS magazine, raises funds for Foundation B+ (Be Positive), the largest nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated to providing financial and emotional support to families of children battling cancer.

Participants compete for the

chance to appear on the cover of Muscle & Fitness HERS while also raising awareness and donations for the cause. Community members can support competitors through free online voting or by making donations that go directly to Foundation B+.

For Sayre, the mission became deeply personal shortly after she began fundraising. Just weeks after committing to the campaign, her nephew's two-and-a-half-year-old son, Hudson, was diagnosed with leukemia and began chemotherapy treatments immediately.

"Many of us are fortunate to have our health, something so many children and their families fighting cancer are still hoping and praying for each day," Sayre said. "I believe we can all be positive and be the light. By working together, our community and our world can



bring hope and healing where it's needed most."

Sayre also carries the perspective of personal loss, having lost her own son at age 19. That experience, she says, fuels her desire to support other families navigating unimaginable hardship.

Beyond the competition, Sayre has built a reputation in the community for sharing health education and wellness resources. Through Nutrition Connection Balance, she regu-

larly provides free educational content on topics such as nutrition, exercise, and disease prevention through social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Her practice also hosts several free online health seminars each year, offering in-depth discussions on wellness topics. A recent presentation, titled "Beyond the Scale: Why Fat Loss Feels So Hard (And What Actually Works)," attracted community members interested in

learning more about sustainable health strategies.

Sayre has also been actively promoting the fundraiser locally by attending the Port St. Joe Farmer's Market, distributing informational flyers, and encouraging residents and businesses to get involved.

So far, she has ranked first in portions of the competition for donations raised, and she hopes continued community support will allow her to expand the impact even further. Local residents who would like to support the effort can cast a free vote or contribute to the fundraising campaign benefiting Foundation B+ by visiting: mshealthandfit.com/2026/valerie-sayre.

"Every vote and every donation makes a difference," Sayre said. "Together we can help bring hope to children and families who need it most."

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- 1) Vote for free once every day
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- 3) Your support helps Valerie advance as a finalist for the cover of Ms. Health & Fitness, as well as families in need
- 4) Cash donations go in this box for Foundation B+

Thank you for helping us support an incredible cause.



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Time & Location: 5:00 - 6:30 pm ET @ Vitality: 309 Williams Avenue, Port St Joe
Entry Donation: Minimum \$10.00 or more

How to Donate (between 3/9 - 3/25):

- 1. Scan the QR code or click the link:
 - 2. "Vote for Valerie" and provide a \$10+ donation
 - 3. Screenshot email confirmation receipt to show at door
- OR you can provide cash donation \$10 or more at entry



**all donations go to Foundation B+ and are a tax write-off <https://mshealthandfit.com/2026/valerie-sayre>
to help children with cancer and thier families during this traumatic experience

Club Fitting is More Than Just Swing Speed

BY ALAN M. WATSON, PRESIDENT, GOLF+ PCB

Years ago in the dark ages of golf club fitting, we had tiny radar devices that would give us one number we would use to determine shaft flex. A swing speed radar. We had one solitary number, and somehow we tried to find perfect golf clubs for people using this lone device. We made it through that lonely time, but the reality is that now with modern technology and a host of better shaft options, we can now do a much more thorough job and properly fit people to their equipment.

Let me give you a recent example.

72-year-old male. Avid golfer. Driver swing speed 66 miles per hour. 20 years ago, we would have given him a "Senior" shaft, and that would have been the end of it. But now with modern technology like our Foresight Game Changer Quad camera launch monitor, we can see that this golfer has a quick tempo, causing a softer shaft to bend too

much and that a stiffer, more stable shaft will hold the club head steady, producing a better ball flight. A lighter, softer shaft causes entirely too much backspin and side spin, thus the player is spraying the ball everywhere. Once we honed in on a lightweight but stiff profile that matched his delivery and closure rate, we found straighter shots and much more consistency. I always say that the golf ball does not know the age, sex, or skill level of the player hitting it.

Another modern advantage in club fitting is the interchangeable shafts and adaptable tip sleeves for shafts on many woods. We can quickly go through several shaft choices to find the right one for the player. In the past, we only had a few prebuilt clubs and very few shaft choices, and we couldn't swap them around. Now, if a loft is too low, we can raise it. If a shaft is too heavy, we can trade it out. We now have complete control over the clubs and components. We even change the length and



swing weight often to accommodate a player's needs. At my shop, we have 650 graphite shafts built and ready to swing for the top manufacturers and we are building more weekly. One recent trend in fitting is

leaning towards midsize and oversized grips to have a more comfortable experience on the course. Whether it's a medical reason like arthritis or just not wanting to have to close their hands down so tightly, a larger grip can often be helpful. We

have had to stock many more options in larger grips in our shop than in previous seasons, as it seems that 9 out of every 10 grips we do lately are either mid-sized or oversized. We can measure your hand size for the correct grip; however, many golfers are choosing to go up in size without a measurement, just as an experiment or just following the trend.

If you are considering getting custom fit for your next driver, iron shafts, grips or putter, we offer those services and much more at our shop. Please feel free to book a fitting online at the link provided on www.golfplusdothan.com. We also offer lessons, full-service club repair, and a room full of retail golf products. We are located next to Firefly in the Shoppes at Edgewater on Panama City Beach. I look forward to helping you with your equipment needs soon. For any questions about fitting, our brands and models offered, or about club repairs you may need, feel free to email me at golfpluspresident@gmail.com.



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Bay Area Choral Society Presents "Let the Sunshine In!"

Celebrate the joy and renewal of spring with the Bay Area Choral Society and BACS Youth Chorale at their spring concert "Let The Sunshine In!" on Friday, March 27, at 6:00 p.m. at First United Methodist Church in Port St. Joe and on Saturday, March 28, at 6:00 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Apalachicola.

The performance will be centered around the preparation, love, and renewal of spring and include pieces from composers like Handel and Dan Forrest. The program will feature a special patriotic section honoring our country and paying tribute to our military and veterans with songs like "A Tribute to the Armed Services," and "Our Song of Freedom-An Americana Medley" and will also include some pop favorites like "California Dreamin" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." The Youth Chorale will perform several pieces like "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel" and "Hakuna Matata" and will also collaborate with the community choir on some songs. Both

choirs will be accompanied by instrumentalists for FSU.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students and go on sale beginning March 5. Tickets can be purchased online at BACS-PSJ.eventbrite.com for the Port St. Joe concert and BACS-Trinity.eventbrite.com for the Apalachicola concert. Tickets may also be purchased from any BACS member, No Name Book store in Port St. Joe and Trinity Episcopal Church office in Apalachicola.

Join us for an evening of joy, renewal, and patriotism as we come together to "Let The Sunshine In!"

Since 1989, BACS has been committed to providing choral musical excellence in the Forgotten Coast Area. Music is directed and performed by a volunteer chorus and local accomplished musicians who are dedicated to producing a high standard of music to entertain and educate audiences. With music and narrative, audiences are exposed to various genres and eras of music and are provided the highest quality performance and educational experiences.

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Saturday, March 28, 6 PM EDT
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Tickets: \$20 adults, \$5 students
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Tickets for the Port St. Joe concert can be purchased at No Name Books & Gifts



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MAR 27- 28 BAY AREA CHORAL SOCIETY SPRING CONCERT

MAR 28 CARABELLE CULTURE CRAWL

APRIL 18 APALACHICOLA BOAT AND CAR SHOW

MAY 1-2 HISTORIC APALACHICOLA HOME AND GARDEN TOUR

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Consider a Chemical Peel Before Summertime Arrives



By BRIDGET SULLIVAN, PA-C,
COASTAL SKIN SURGERY AND
DERMATOLOGY

There are many different types of chemical peels and many benefits from this cosmetic treatment. Chemical peels, also known as chemexfoliation, trigger the repair and regeneration process in the epidermis and the dermis, resulting in the remodeling of the skin's surface.

Chemical peels differ in how deeply they penetrate the different layers of skin. The different types of peels are superficial, medium-depth and deep peels. Chemical peels can help with conditions like acne and acne scarring, melasma, hyperpigmentation, sun damage,



fine lines and wrinkles, uneven skin tone, and dull skin.

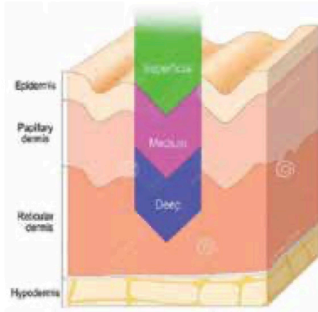
Depending on the type of chemical peel you choose depends on the goal you are trying to achieve, your skin type, and your desired recovery time. The many benefits of chemical peels can include evening out skin tone, helping with fine lines and wrinkles, decreasing pore size, improving skin texture, stimulating collagen production, brightening

dull skin, decreasing sebum or oil production, decreasing sun damage, helping improve skin products to absorb more effectively, and reducing acne and acne scarring.

This treatment is typically preferred to be done in the colder months because during the recovery process, which is about a week, you want to avoid direct sunlight and have minimal sun exposure. The recovery process will vary great-

ly depending on the type of chemical peel you choose, but for a typical medium-depth peel, you will experience skin shedding for 4–7 days. A post-care packet and instructions will be provided after your procedure to ensure understanding and optimal results. Not everyone is a candidate for a chemical peel, so make sure to have a consultation with your medical provider to ensure the best fit for your skin type and

desired results. Healthy skin leads to beautiful skin, and we all deserve to love the skin we are in!



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Franklin County TDC Invests in Infrastructure to Support Growing Tourism

The Franklin County Tourist Development Council (TDC) has approved a request from the Franklin County Commission to fund nearly \$600,000 worth of roadway improvements within the St. George Island commercial district from 3rd Street East to 3rd Street West. The funding was approved at the TDC board's January 28 meeting and will be combined with more than \$930,000 in county RESTORE ACT funding for roadway-adjacent stormwater drainage improvements. The result will mean better roads for the SGI commercial district just in time for the 2026 Spring influx of visitors.

The St. George Island roadway improvement request is the first of its kind for Franklin County made possible as a result of recent changes to Florida Statutes that now allow fiscally-constrained counties to use Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue for infrastructure projects while still requiring a portion of TDT funds to be allocated for tourism promotion. Fiscally constrained counties such as Franklin County can now access TDT funds for infrastructure projects, which was previously limited to counties collecting at least \$10 million annually.

Franklin County Commissioner and TDC Chairman Ricky Jones is a proponent of the amended legislation and says it is a critical step in being able to fund tourist-related infrastructure in Franklin County.

"We were successful last year in getting the TDT statute amended," Jones said. "Now, Franklin County can address a wide variety of its infrastructure issues which have increased because of increased tourism in our area. It is helpful to our residents that we can now utilize these dollars to meet needs that is not being paid for by our residents."

The new law comes with new restrictions. To qualify for TDT funding for infrastructure, counties must secure a



two-thirds vote from the county commission, continue to allocate at least 40% of TDT revenues to tourism promotion, obtain an independent professional analysis of the infrastructure project and fund no more than 70% of the infrastructure project with TDT revenue. Provisions of the new law now also allow counties to use TDT revenue to fund lifeguards on beaches, enhancing public safety.

Making sure adequate infrastructure is available to support growing tourism industry is paramount to county leaders and they are putting their money to work. During the 2025 fiscal year the TDC recommended approval to the County Commission of more than \$3 million in funding requests for tourism-related infrastructure projects countywide including beach dune walkovers, parks and playgrounds, piers, sports facility improvements, and other tourism-related infrastructure projects.

Over the past six years, more than \$10 million in TDC lodging tax funds have gone towards upgrading infrastructure throughout the county including renovations to Apalachicola's historic Fort Coombs Armory, public bathrooms on St. George Island, dock facilities in Carrabelle as well as ongoing park and museum infrastructure repairs.

Tourism-related infrastructure projects are also underway for 2026. In Apalachicola, more than a half million will go towards replacing the popular V pier along the Apalachicola riverfront. The V Pier was damaged during Hurricane Michael in 2018 and is considered a major draw for tourists as it provides access to both the Apalachicola Bay and River and is one of the first landmarks visitors see when crossing the bridge into Apalachicola. A key feature of the pier design is the addition of nine ADA-accessible fishing areas, ensuring that people of all abilities can experience the pier. In addition, ball fields in Apalachicola and Carrabelle will receive an upgrade in the form of new lighting and signage and a new pickleball court in Apalachicola. TDC funds are also being used to replace dune walkovers on St. George Island and Carrabelle Beach and to add 620 feet of Mobi-Mat at eight beach access points to make Carrabelle beaches easier to access. In Eastpoint, plans are on the drawing board for a public venue

be dredged for years now," said Commissioner Jones. "We have not increased taxes on our residents. We can now provide a benefit to our residents and visitors with these TDT funds." For more information, contact Franklin County TDC 850-670-3474



and park and the board also recently approved a request to dredge Eastpoint's Indian River boat ramp located on North Bayshore Drive.

"This creek has needed to

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Wellness

Taming the Green-Eyed Monster: Navigating Healthy Jealousy Together



By JAMIE C. WILLIAMSON, PHD

Jealousy can be toxic or healthy for married couples.

Toxic jealousy is a red flag. But healthy jealousy can actually signal that you and your partner want to protect your bond. For healthy jealousy, both partners share the blame for the jealous feelings, and both have a role in determining the impact of jealousy on their marriage.

Toxic Jealousy

Toxic jealousy is rooted in low self-esteem, insecurity, and a debilitating fear of abandonment. These psychological drivers can transform a loving spouse into a “green-eyed monster” who monitors texts and emails without permission, makes accusations of lying without evidence, engages in controlling behavior, and might even stalk their partner.

People who feel jealousy this intensely are still responsible for controlling their behavior. Acting out through anger, controlling, and spying is inappropriate, unhealthy, and damaging to the relationship. These obsessive actions lead to conflict and dissatisfaction. If unchecked, they could be considered abusive and constitute a “red flag” of concern that should be addressed professionally.

Healthy Jealousy

Healthy jealousy, by contrast, is a fleeting, manageable emotion that often acts as a protective mechanism for the relationship rather than a sign of dysfunction.

Feelings of jealousy naturally and understandably arise when a person experiences a real or perceived threat to their marital relationship. Although jealousy is more commonly experienced by people who

are insecure, even the most secure people can experience a twinge of jealousy when someone flirts with their spouse and during circumstances that involve loss of time with or attention from their spouse. Add a bit of vulnerability to the mix, and jealousy escalates, but can still remain healthy.

Fortunately, normal, healthy jealousy can be managed through open communication, trust-building, and mutual reassurances of commitment.

Shared Blame and Joint Responsibility

Jealousy in marriage is rarely caused by just one person, but rather a combination of one partner’s internal fears and the other partner’s actions (or lack thereof).

Why Blame the Person Who Feels Jealous?

Rooted in Insecurity: Jealousy often stems from personal insecurities, low self-esteem, or past traumatic experiences, rather than the partner’s actual behavior.

Emotional Regulation: Individuals are responsible for managing their own emotions (fear, anger, anxiety) rather than projecting them onto their spouse.

Unrealistic Expectations: Sometimes jealousy arises from unrealistic demands on a partner’s time or social life.

Why Blame the Person Who Causes It?

Inconsiderate Behavior: At the same time, actions that trigger jealousy, such as flirting, keeping secrets, or failing to prioritize the spouse, can exacerbate insecurity.

Lack of Trust/Connection: Not providing enough reassurance, emotional closeness, or honesty can foster an environment where jealousy thrives.

Ignoring Boundaries: Continuing behaviors that a partner says makes them uncomfortable shows disrespect and erodes marital trust.

Responsibility of the Jealous Person

While feelings themselves aren’t “wrong,” the individual experiencing them is responsible



for managing their internal reactions and behaviors.

Root Causes: Identify and use approaches that will reduce personal insecurities and increase self-esteem.

Accountability: Be responsible for owning your emotions and communicating them using “I” statements (e.g., “I feel insecure when...” rather than making accusations).

Behavioral Control: Practice self-control. Feeling jealous is natural but does not excuse expressing those feelings through antisocial behaviors like controlling or spying.

Responsibility of the Person “Causing” Jealousy

People are not responsible for their spouse’s internal feelings, but they are responsible for their own actions and how those actions affect the relationship’s security.

Avoid Fuzzy Boundaries: Help create a secure environment. Don’t display secretive behavior, break commitments, or maintain inappropriate closeness with others.

Provide Reassurance: In a healthy marriage, partners act as allies. So, readily offer reassurance and adjust behaviors that may be legitimate jealousy triggers for a spouse.

Be Transparent: Being open about schedules or interactions builds trust and can help rebuild trust if there has been a past breach.

Bottom Line: Fix the Problem, not the Blame

If you and your partner need to navigate healthy jealousy issues, start by acting like cooperative allies. Avoid the blame game. Concentrate on open

communication, setting clear boundaries, and strengthening trust. Jealous partners should examine their insecurities and learn to express their feelings constructively. At the same time, the triggering partners should be mindful of their spouse’s vulnerabilities and intentionally avoid actions that will activate their spouse’s insecurities and jealousy. Together, you can tame the green-eyed monster. Let me know if I can help.

Jamie C. Williamson, PhD is a FL Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator and mem-

ber of the Gottman Referral Network, with a Certificate in the Science of Wellbeing and Happiness from the Harvard School of Medicine. She is an owner and partner at Amity Mediation Workshop, a mediation practice specializing in “friendly divorce” mediation and psycho-educational couples counseling. Dr. Jamie speaks frequently on relationship topics like jealousy and authors the blog “Work it Out.” You can find her online at amitymediationworkshop.com



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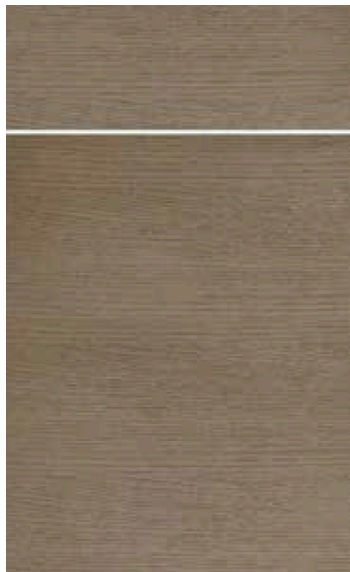
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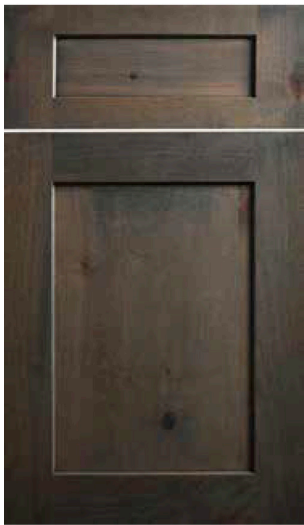
Farmhouse, contemporary, beachy chic, urban — whichever direction you may be considering for your next project, the combination of painted and wood cabinets is here to stay for now as trends for 2024 are warm, cozy, and sophisticated. Knotty alder, cherry, rustic maple, maple, white oak, oak, and hickory are all woods available for cabinetry at Granite Plus and we have a wide range of stains available. It is always a good idea to select your countertops at the same time to ensure a stain has been selected that will translate into a lovely, refined, finished space.



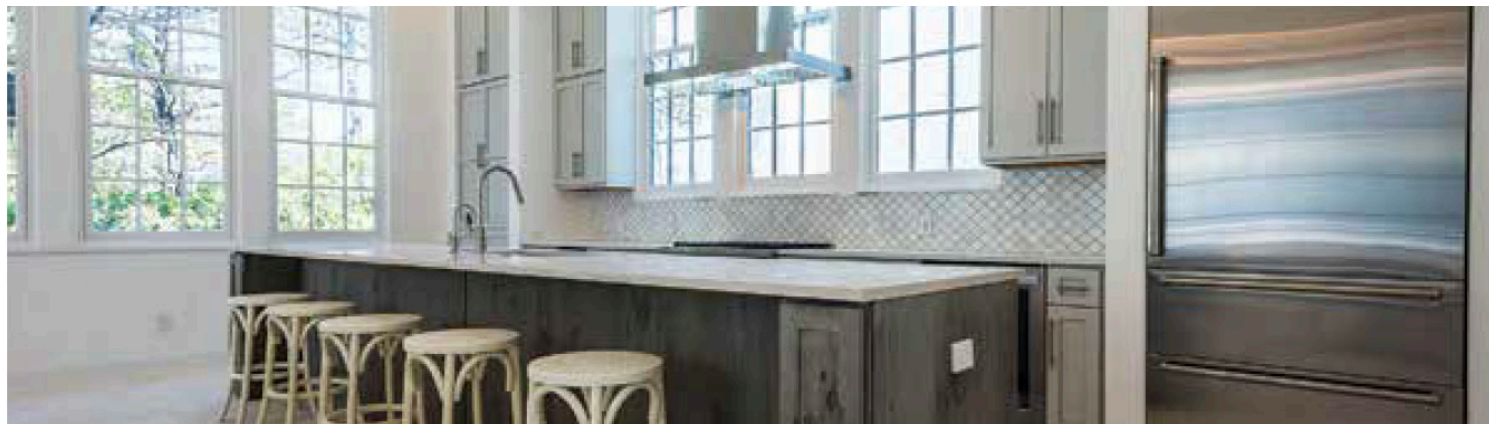
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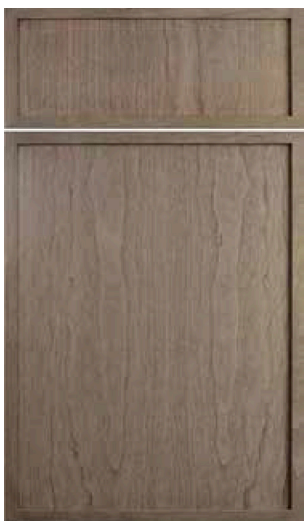
Kitchen Design by Granite Plus. Lower cabinets are maple with a poppyseed stain in combination with linen white and Cyberspace painted cabinetry. The upper cabinets are the Homestead door and the island and lower cabinets are the Lauren door. The countertops are Carrara Quartz from Vadara with Monte Blue granite on the island.



Knotty Adler



Kitchen Design by Granite Plus. Island is Knotty Alder with a weathered finish and the perimeter is Pearl.



Cherry with Heather Stain

The natural character and grain of wood species like knotty alder, rustic maple, and cherry make these an elegant selection for a rustic farmhouse-style kitchen. When selecting a door style for a rustic farmhouse look, you can consider a shaker door with a wider rail or one with no bevel on the inside of the frame such as the Waverly door from WF Cabinetry or the Craftsmen door from DuraSupreme Cabinetry.

For a modern farmhouse look, maple or white oak are good choices as these woods will have softer graining. A beveled shaker door style is a charming selection for this look.

For a contemporary or urban look, try cherry, maple or white oak in the Camden door style, a solid wood door. Another great option is the Moda door style with an exotic veneer which gives you the choice of a vertical or horizontal grain to add a bold statement throughout your space.

Beachy chic, or what I would consider a transitional design, is usually somewhere in between traditional and modern. The newest door style, the

skinny shaker, is a perfect door style for this. The Reese door by DuraSupreme is available in cherry, maple or white oak. From light to dark stains, all are fair game with this trend and will depend on the countertop selection.

If you would like to find out more, you can visit Granite Plus at 17801 Ashley Drive or call our showroom at (850) 236-6363 and a project manager will assist you. We are locally owned and operated and look forward to hearing from you!




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Spring Is Here: Transform Your Outdoor Living Space with Retractable Screens and Awnings

BY DONNA GODWIN, OWNER OF
MADE IN THE SHADE

Spring has officially arrived, and with it comes longer days, warmer temperatures, and the perfect opportunity to refresh your outdoor living space. After months of cooler weather, now is the time to step outside, entertain, relax, and truly enjoy your home. One of the smartest ways to upgrade your patio, porch, or outdoor area this season is by installing retractable screens and retractable awnings.

Outdoor living has become more than just a trend, it's a lifestyle. Homeowners want flexible spaces that provide comfort, shade, and protection without sacrificing beauty. That's where retractable systems shine.

Create Comfort Without Losing the View

Retractable screens allow you to enjoy fresh air while

keeping out unwanted guests like mosquitoes, flies, and other pests. They also help reduce glare and harsh sunlight while maintaining your view of the outdoors. When not in use, the screens disappear seamlessly into a housing cassette, preserving the open feel of your space.

Whether you have a covered porch, lanai, garage opening, or large patio enclosure, retractable screens create a versatile environment. You can host dinner parties without worrying about bugs, watch the sunset without squinting, and let the breeze flow through your home.

Shade When You Want It

Retractable awnings take comfort to the next level by providing instant shade at the touch of a button. Spring sunshine feels wonderful until it becomes too intense. A retractable awning gives you control



over how much sun reaches your outdoor seating area.

Not only do awnings create a cooler and more comfortable outdoor environment, but they can also help reduce indoor heat gain. By shading windows and patio doors, awnings lessen the strain on your air conditioning system and may improve energy efficiency during the warmer months.

Today's retractable awnings

are available in a wide range of fabrics, colors, and patterns, allowing you to complement your home's exterior style. From classic neutrals to bold stripes, there's a design option for every aesthetic.

Expand Your Living Space

Think of retractable screens and awnings as an extension of your home. They turn patios into outdoor living rooms,

porches into peaceful retreats, and backyards into entertainment hubs.

Imagine enjoying your morning coffee in the shade, hosting spring gatherings with friends, or unwinding in the evening without battling insects. These upgrades add both functionality and value to your property.

Spring Is the Perfect Time to Upgrade

Installing retractable screens and awnings in the spring ensures you're ready to enjoy the entire outdoor season. With summer just around the corner, now is the ideal time to invest in comfort, flexibility, and style.

If you've been dreaming about enhancing your outdoor space, consider retractable solutions that adapt to your lifestyle. Spring is here and your backyard is ready for its transformation.



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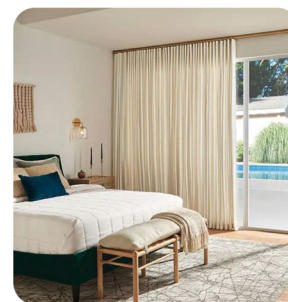
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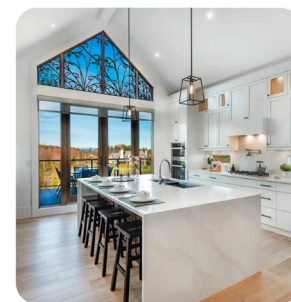
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Sean of the South: Dogs



BY SEAN DIETRICH

My truck cab was filled with three barking dogs and one idiot. The dogs were in the backseat. The idiot was behind the wheel.

“Sit down!” the idiot kept saying.

But my dogs do not sit when I drive. They never sit. They dutifully explore their space when the vehicle is underway.

To the untrained eye my dogs appear to be acting disobediently. But that’s not it. Really, they are just looking for food.

They are always looking for food. They even look for food in places where there has never been any food, such as my bathroom. In a pinch, they will

even resort to eating non-food items such as my reading glasses, my sandals, sheetrock, etc.

But they particularly go crazy when in my truck because they know the odds of finding abandoned food here are exponential. Thus, they are constantly on the lookout for expired Corn Nuts, old pistachio shells, or a petrified French fry predating the Reagan administration.

So we finally arrived at the dog park. I turned them loose. They ran. They chased squirrels. They wrestled. They hunted around for any threatening or suspicious objects so they could sniff them, bark at them, then pee on them.

And then, basically, all the dogs in the dog park just stood around. That’s all the dogs do there. They play for short bursts, then they stand around and look at their owners.

“Why do dogs just stand around at dog parks?” one dog owner asked the group of us dog owners who were also, as it happens, just standing around.

Another dog owner said, “I drove forty-five minutes to get here, just so my dog could stand around.”

One of the other dog owners remarked, “You ever wonder what would happen if dog and human roles were reversed? What if DOGS took US to the bathroom in front of each other?”

We all just looked at him.

And, of course, at dog parks,



dogs sniff each other’s rears. I don’t know why dogs do this. This behavior has always perplexed me. They are not picky about whose butts they sniff. They’ll sniff any butt you give them. I’ve read that rear-sniffing is a primal greeting of sorts wherein complex pheromone scents are exchanged. But I think it’s something dogs do because they like nasty things.

I have been owned by 13 dogs in my lifetime. And I have

learned that dogs are not above wallowing in stinky objects. I have seen my dogs roll themselves in everything from cat feces to armadillo remains.

And one time when I was in a major city—this is a true story—walking my bloodhound after hours, we were near the dumpsters. It had been a long night. I had just given a speech and I was tired, so I wasn’t paying attention.

When I got back to the hotel, the clerk looked at me and said, “Sir, there’s something in your dog’s mouth.”

“Drop it, Thelma Lou!” I said.

It turned out to be—remember I am not kidding—a retired breast implant. The thing hit the floor.

The clerk and I stared at the prosthesis and, in a moment I will never forget, the clerk said flatly, “Double D.”

I’m running out of room here, but I’ll close by saying, the more I learn about people, the more I like my dogs.

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Deb Robertson is a local real estate agent who knows the St. George Island market and takes a hands-on approach with her clients. She helps buyers and sellers understand the details that matter, from rental potential to HOA considerations, and often works with out-of-area clients. Deb is active in the community and focused on making every transaction a positive experience.





Kara Landiss

THE NAUMANN
REAL ESTATE, INC. *Group*

139 W Gulf Beach Drive
St. George Island, FL 32328
(850) 653-7753
Kara@BeachDreamsNow.com

The key to Kara's success in real estate is her unique ability to connect to her customers and their needs.

This "high-touch" approach focuses on listening to her customers and partnering with them on a plan of action to find the perfect property.

Kara also understands that buying a property in a vacation destination market is unlike the typical purchase of a land-locked property, and her ability to navigate these complex transactions is unmatched.





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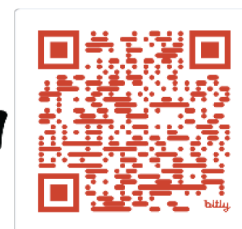
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