



TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

AGENDA

January 25, 2017

3:00 PM

Administration Building,
4th Floor, BCC Meeting Room, 477 Houston Street,
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Call to Order

Public Comments

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of September 7, 2016 TDC Minutes

Update on TDT Collections

2. Bed Tax Collections Analysis

New Business

3. Set Meeting Schedule
4. Budget
5. Special Event Grant Update
6. TDC Vacancy
7. AirBNB
8. Director of Tourism & Film Development (90-Day Plan)
9. Upcoming Events
10. Preparation for 2017-18 Event Grants
11. Strategic Plan Update
12. Rebranding

Old Business

13. Florida's First Coast of Golf

Adjournment



Agenda Item
Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Clay County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

- ▣ Approval of TDC Minutes of September 7, 2017

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer	Action	Date	Comments
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No Reviewers Available



**TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
September 7, 2016
3:00 PM**

**Administration Building, 4th Floor, BCC Meeting
Room, Green Cove Springs, Florida, 32043**

Call to Order

The Clay County Tourist Development Council (TDC) met on the above date and time in the Clay County Administration Building, 477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, Florida. TDC Council Chairman Buck Burney called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Marina Mathews

Susan Soltys
Bob Olson
Pat Sickles
Steve Hart

Absent: Eugene Nix

Kathy White
Kelly Mosley

Public Comments None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of Tourist Development Council Minutes of March 23, 2016

Bob Olson moved, seconded by Marina Mathews, and carried 5-0, to approve the minutes of March 23, 2016 as presented.

Update on TDT Collections

2. Tourist Development Tax Revenues Update (Jackie Slaybaugh)

Jackie Slaybaugh reported that the bed tax collected for July was \$49,984.33, bringing the annual collection to date to \$512,168.21. Last year, the annual bed tax collected was \$590,000.00 and it is estimated that it may be close to \$600,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

New Business

3. Update on Director of Tourism Candidates (Jennifer Bethelmy)

Human Resources Director, Jennifer Bethelmy, updated the Council on the status of hiring the Director of Tourism & Film Development.

4. Discussion of 2016/2017 TDC Grant Application Requests

Jackie Slaybaugh, reported that the total amount available for grant funding for Fiscal Year 2016/2017 is \$115,000.00.

After discussion, the Council approved FY 2016/17 TDC grant funding for the following 15 events:

\$2,450.00 to Moosehaven, Inc., for their 2017 American Pride 4th of July.

\$2,600.00 to the Military Museum of North Florida, for their Armed Forces Celebration and Car Show, 2017.

\$1,500.00 to the Black Creek Bowl Association of Middleburg, for their 5th Annual 5K and Kid's Fun Run, 2016.

\$3,500.00 to the CalaVida Arts Festival Group, for their 2017 CalaVida Arts Festival.

\$3,000.00 to Moosehaven, Inc., for their 2016 Chili Cook-off.

\$2,500.00 to the City of Green Cove Springs, for their Christmas on Walnut Street & the 49th Annual Christmas Parade, 2016.

\$50,000.00 to the Clay County Fair Association, Inc., for their Clay County Fair, 2017.

\$1,200.00 to Concert on the Green, Inc., for their Concert on the Green, 2017.

\$1,500.00 to the 2017 Hellcat 10Km 30Km and 50Km Fundraiser for the Military Museum of North Florida.

\$2,350.00 to the City of Green Cove Springs for their 29th Annual Memorial Day Riverfest, 2017.

\$1,500.00 to Our Country Day, Inc., for Our Country Day 4th of July Celebration, 2017.

\$1,450.00 to the J.C. Penney Memorial Scenic Highway Historic 5K Run, 2016.

\$30,000.00 to the Jacksonville Scottish Highland Games, Inc., for their Northeast Florida Scottish Games and Festival, 2017.

\$1,820.00 to the Soul Food Festival, Inc., for their 15th Annual Soul Food Festival and Parade, 2016.

\$10,000.00 to the Town of Orange Park, for their 34th Annual Fall Festival, 2016.

After discussion, Pat Sickles moved, seconded by Bob Olson, and carried 5-0, to place all of the approved grant recommendations in the amount of \$115,370.00, on

the Finance & Audit Committee Agenda of September 20, 2016 for the Board's consideration and approval at their September 27, 2016 Board of County Commissioner's Meeting.

Old Business None

Council Comments

- Marina Mathews invited the Tourist Development Council and the Clay County Board of County Commissioner's to Moosehaven's 10th Annual Halloween Trick or Treat Bash on October 31, 2016.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Buck Burney, Chairman

Ann Mitchell, Recording Secretary



Agenda Item
Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Clay County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

▣ Bed Tax Totals

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

Action

Date

Comments

No Reviewers Available

Bed Tax Collections

Fiscal Year	Total Collections	Variance	%	Notes
FY16-17	\$103,167			
FY15-16	\$605,117	\$14,169	2.39767	Loss of inventory from Astoria Hotel changing 300 rooms to assisted living; Rodeway Inn closing
FY14-15	\$590,948	\$61,761	11.6709	
FY13-14	\$529,187	\$38,958	7.9469	
FY12-13	\$490,229	\$27,540	5.95216	
FY11-12	\$462,689	\$38,000	8.94772	
FY10-11	\$424,689	-\$11,013	-2.52765	
FY09-10	\$435,702	\$435,702		



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AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

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Description

No Attachments Available

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

Action

Date

Comments

No Reviewers Available



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Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

▣ Budget

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

Action

Date

Comments

No Reviewers Available

Summaries by Fund

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND (109)

The Tourist Development Fund is used for activities that enhance tourism in Clay County in accordance with Florida Statute 125.0104. The revenue is generated from tourist development tax.

DESCRIPTION	FY 13/14 Actual	FY 14/15 Actual	FY 15/16 Budget	Estimated FY 15/16 Actuals	Final FY 16/17 Budget
FUND BALANCE CARRY FORWARD	1,251,774	1,295,252	1,410,192	1,501,806	1,772,922
ESTIMATED REVENUES					
Ad Valorem Taxes	-	-	-	-	-
Taxes	529,187	590,019	430,000	592,950	430,000
Permits, Fees & Special Assessments	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental Revenues	-	-	-	-	-
Charges for Services	-	-	-	-	-
Fines and Forfeits	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,515	1,904	2,600	2,937	2,600
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES	530,703	591,922	432,600	595,887	432,600
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES					
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Revenues	5,556	4,991	4,500	4,500	4,500
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES AND OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	536,259	596,913	437,100	600,387	437,100
Statutory Reserve (Less 5% per F.S. 129.01)	-	-	(21,855)	-	(21,855)
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES AND BALANCES FORWARD	1,788,033	1,892,165	1,825,437	2,102,193	2,188,167
EXPENDITURES					
General Government	-	-	-	-	-
Court Related Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-
Public Safety	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Environment	-	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	-	-	-	-
Economic Environment	492,781	390,359	445,727	329,271	453,677
Human Services	-	-	-	-	-
Culture & Recreation	-	-	-	-	-
Grants & Aid	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	492,781	390,359	445,727	329,271	453,677
OTHER FINANCING USES					
Interfund Transfers	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENDITURES AND OTHER FINANCING USES	492,781	390,359	445,727	329,271	453,677
ENDING BALANCES					
Reserves - Unassigned			1,245,992		1,598,388
Reserve for Contingency (10%)	49,278	39,036	44,573	32,927	45,367
Reserve for Cash Flow	1,245,974	1,462,771	89,145	1,739,995	90,735
TOTAL ENDING BALANCES	1,295,252	1,501,806	1,379,710	1,772,922	1,734,490
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES & ENDING BALANCE	1,788,033	1,892,165	1,825,437	2,102,193	2,188,167

Operating Budget by Service Area

		FUND:	109	TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND				
		FUNCTION / SERVICE AREA:	550	ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT				
		ACTIVITY:	550	INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT				
		DEPARTMENT:	20	COUNTY MANAGER				
		PROGRAM / DIVISION:	1910	TOURISM & FILM DEVELOPMENT				
PERSONAL SERVICES SCHEDULE:			FY 12/13 Actual	FY 13/14 Actual	FY 14/15 Actual	FY 15/16 Budget	Estimated FY 15/16 Actuals	Final FY 16/17 Budget
511000	EXECUTIVE SALARIES		-	-	-	-	-	-
512000	REGULAR SALARIES		50,897	52,388	54,649	55,616	3,085	56,473
513000	OTHER SALARIES & WAGES		-	-	-	-	-	-
514000	OVERTIME		-	-	-	-	-	-
515000	SPECIAL PAY		-	-	-	-	-	-
521000	FICA TAXES		3,542	3,663	3,801	4,255	214	4,321
522000	RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS		2,892	3,644	4,071	4,052	224	4,280
523000	HEALTH INSURANCE		12,656	14,519	16,068	17,025	1,357	17,567
523100	LIFE INSURANCE		46	44	46	46	4	48
523200	DENTAL INSURANCE		165	160	167	168	14	181
524000	WORKERS COMPENSATION		-	-	-	-	-	-
525000	UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL PERSONAL SERVICES			70,197	74,417	78,801	81,162	4,897	82,870
OPERATING EXPENDITURES SCHEDULE:			FY 12/13 Actual	FY 13/14 Actual	FY 14/15 Actual	FY 15/16 Budget	Estimated FY 15/16 Actuals	Final FY 16/17 Budget
531000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		-	-	-	30,000	-	30,000
531200	LEGAL		-	-	-	-	-	-
531500	FINANCIAL SERVICES		-	-	-	-	-	-
532000	ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING		-	-	-	-	-	-
533000	COURT REPORTER SERVICES		-	-	-	-	-	-
534000	OTHER CONTRACTUAL SVCS		-	-	-	-	-	-
534500	ADMINISTRATIVE EXP		-	-	-	12,900	12,900	17,907
534600	TEMP LBR, BILL COLL, MGMT & OPER SVCS		-	-	-	-	-	-
534700	CUSTODIAL & JANITORIAL		-	-	-	-	-	-
534800	SECURITY		-	-	-	-	-	-
534900	FOOD SERVICES		-	-	-	-	-	-
540000	TRAVEL AND PER DIEM		-	362	28	1,500	-	1,500
541100	TELEPHONE/COMMUNICATIONS		-	-	-	-	-	-
541200	POSTAGE AND FREIGHT		113	165	110	200	150	200
543000	UTILITY SERVICES		-	-	-	-	-	-
544000	RENTALS AND LEASES		-	-	-	-	-	-
545000	INSURANCE		-	-	-	-	-	-
546100	REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE		-	139,658	40,342	-	-	-
546200	R & M - VEHICLES		-	-	-	-	-	-
547000	PRINTING AND BINDING		457	-	-	500	500	1,500
548000	PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES		250,963	266,151	257,124	305,000	295,000	305,000
549100	OTHER CURRENT CHARGES		-	-	-	-	-	-
549200	LEGAL ADVERTISING		-	-	-	-	-	-
549300	TRAINING & CERTIFICATION		-	295	-	500	500	500
549600	ASSESSMENT BILLING		-	-	-	-	-	-
549999	TAX COLLECTOR COMMISSION		9,805	10,584	11,800	10,500	11,859	11,000
551000	OFFICE SUPPLIES		50	122	-	300	300	200
552000	OPERATING SUPPLIES		-	-	-	-	-	-
552032	FUELS & LUBRICANTS		-	-	-	-	-	-
552100	INVENTORIES		-	-	-	-	-	-
552160	UNIFORMS		-	-	-	-	-	-
552300	FOOD		-	-	-	-	-	-
552700	COMPUTER SOFTWARE		-	-	-	-	-	-
554000	BKS, PUBLICATIONS, DUES, MBRSHIP		620	1,027	1,961	3,165	3,165	3,000
559000	DEPRECIATION		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES			262,008	418,364	311,366	364,565	324,374	370,807
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES SCHEDULE:			FY 12/13 Actual	FY 13/14 Actual	FY 14/15 Actual	FY 15/16 Budget	Estimated FY 15/16 Actuals	Final FY 16/17 Budget
561000	LAND		-	-	-	-	-	-
562000	BUILDINGS		-	-	-	-	-	-
563000	IMPRV OTHR THAN BLDGS		-	-	-	-	-	-
564100	M & E - CAPITALIZED		-	-	-	-	-	-
564200	M & E - NON-CAPITALIZED		-	-	192	-	-	-
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES			-	-	192	-	-	-
OTHER EXPENDITURES/USES SCHEDULE:			FY 12/13 Actual	FY 13/14 Actual	FY 14/15 Actual	FY 15/16 Budget	Estimated FY 15/16 Actuals	Final FY 16/17 Budget
570000	DEBT SERVICE		-	-	-	-	-	-
580000	GRANTS IN AID		-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL OTHER EXPENDITURES/USES			-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL ALL EXPENDITURES			332,205	492,781	390,359	445,727	329,271	453,677

**FY 2016/17 Tourist Development Council
Grant Funding Recommendations**

	Last Year's Award	Current Request	Approved Reimbursable Grant Amount
American Pride 4 th of July	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$2,450
Armed Forces Car Show	2,600	3,000	2,600
Black Creek 5k	1,500	1,500	1,500
Calavida	3,000	10,000	3,500
Chili Cook-off (Moosehaven)	1,500	3,000	3,000
Christmas on Walnut St.	1,500	2,500	2,500
Clay County Agricultural Fair	45,950	50,000	50,000
Concert on the Green	1,200	1,500	1,200
Hellcat 10 & 50	1,500	2,000	1,500
Memorial Day Riverfest	2,000	2,500	2,350
Our Country Day	1,500	1,500	1,500
Penney Farms Historic Run	1,450	1,500	1,450
Scottish Highland Games	25,000	30,000	30,000
Soul Food Festival	1,750	2,000	1,820
Town of OP Fall Festival	5,000	15,000	<u>10,000</u>
Total			\$115,370



Agenda Item
Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Clay County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

▣ Grant Tracking Form

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer	Action	Date	Comments
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No Reviewers Available

FY 16-17 TDC Special Event Grants

Special Event	FY 15-16 Amount	FY16-17 Request	Approved Reimbursable Grant Amount	Grant application Rec'd	Reimbursement Info Received	Paid
American Pride 4th of July	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$2,450	x		
Armed Forces Car Show	\$2,600	\$3,000	\$2,600	x		
Black Creek 5k	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	x		
Calavida	\$3,000	\$10,000	\$3,500	x	x	\$2,820
Chili Cook off (Moosehaven)	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$3,000	x	Reviewing	
Christmas on Walnut Street	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	x	Reviewing	
Clay County Agricultural Fair	\$49,950	\$50,000	\$50,000	x		
Concert on the Green	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$1,200	x		
Hellcat 10 & 50	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$1,500	x		
Memorial Day Riverfest	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,350	x		
Our Country Day	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	x		
Penney Farms Historic Run	\$1,450	\$1,500	\$1,450	x	x	\$1,450
Scottish Games & Festival	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	x		
Soul Food Festival	\$1,750	\$2,000	\$1,820	x		
Town of OP Fall Festival	\$5,000	\$15,000	\$10,000	x	Reviewing	
Totals	\$101,950	\$129,000	\$115,370			\$4,270



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SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

No Attachments Available

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

Action

Date

Comments

No Reviewers Available



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Department Reviewer

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Comments

No Reviewers Available



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TO: Chairman Cella

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FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

▣ 90-Day Plan

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

Action

Date

Comments

No Reviewers Available

FY16-17 Tourism Timeline

January 2017

- Meeting with hoteliers
- Meeting with TDC members
- Meeting with BCC Director Team Members
 - MIS/GIS
 - Parks & Rec
 - Purchasing
 - Emergency Management
 - Budget
 - Finance (to be scheduled)
 - Legal (to be scheduled)
 - AirBNB contract
 - TDC Plan
 - Economic Development (to be scheduled)
 - Meeting with VISIT FLORIDA
- Meeting with Tasha Hyder - CCFA
- Meeting with Audie Gibson - Scottish Games & Festival
- Begin VISIT FLORIDA grant process
- Begin editing Visitors Guide
- Develop website Spotlight Policy (determines who/what info appears there) and begin submitting information
- Begin building database of product - company name, address, phone, email, contact info, brief description
- TDC Meeting
- Greet Hellcat 50K, 30K, 10K race - January 21

February 2017

- Finalize and apply for VISIT FLORIDA grant
- Complete Visitors Guide edits
- Establish photo shot list and request quotes for photo library (2 phases – Winter and Spring)
- Develop photo usage policy (we may already have this)
- Meeting with hoteliers individually
- Meeting with TDC members individually
- Meeting with independent restaurant owners individually
- Meeting with meeting facilities individually
- Meeting with Town Managers
- Develop FY16-17 Business Plan
- Work with Parks & Rec on Park Plan priorities
- Greet Scottish Games & Festival - February 25
- Continue building database of product - company name, address, phone, email, contact info, brief description

March 2017

- Budget prep for FY17-18
- Develop FY17-18 Business Plan
- Develop website wish list/site map draft
- Develop social media plan with MIS and Parks & Rec
- Work with Parks & Rec on Park Plan priorities
- Update from VISIT FLORIDA on grant award
- TDC Meeting
- Meeting with hoteliers individually
- Meeting with TDC members individually
- Meeting with independent restaurant owners individually
- Meeting with meeting facilities individually
- Begin building content for website
- Continue building database of product - company name, address, phone, email, contact info, brief description

April 2017

- TDC Special Event Grant updates to website
- Meeting with hoteliers individually
- Meeting with TDC members individually
- Meeting with independent restaurant owners individually
- Meeting with meeting facilities individually
- Continue building content for website
- Phase 2 of photo library update
- Continue building database of product - company name, address, phone, email, contact info, brief description

May 2017

- TDC Special Event Grant updates to website
- Meeting with hoteliers individually
- Meeting with TDC members individually
- Meeting with independent restaurant owners individually
- Meeting with meeting facilities individually
- Continue building database of product - company name, address, phone, email, contact info, brief description

June 2017

- TDC Special Event Grant deadline
- TDC Meeting (Special Event Grants approval meeting)
- Meeting with hoteliers individually
- Meeting with TDC members individually
- Meeting with independent restaurant owners individually

- Meeting with meeting facilities individually
- Continue building database of product - company name, address, phone, email, contact info, brief description

July 2017

- Visitor Profile Research bid goes out and project begins

August 2017

September 2017



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FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

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REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

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No Reviewers Available



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TO: Chairman Cella

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Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

- ▣ Subcommittee Proposal 03-23-16

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer	Action	Date	Comments
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No Reviewers Available

Tourist Development Subcommittee Proposal

Members:

Marina Matthews

Bob Olson

Jackie Slaybaugh

Susan Soltys

Kathy White

Overview

Our goal was to further develop the annual grant funding allocation process to identify an understandable, equitable, rational and more predictable approach for our annual grant submissions. The TDC Subcommittee focused on reviewing and enhancing our present policy document and application. Additionally, the TDC Subcommittee benchmarked various other counties TDC's approaches towards the application process and funds allocation. We combined these findings to design an approach which best fits the needs of Clay County.

Our Proposal

- Create a three tiered approach towards the grant funds allocation and categories
- Establish a percentage based approach towards the budget line funding allocation
- Implement a weighted funding allocation tool for the annual Special Event category distribution

Three Tier Funding Categories

Sponsorships: Ongoing major or highly visible events held throughout the year in the county by non-profit organizations, entities or individuals that attract a substantial number of visitors or tourists into Clay County.

Signature Events: An event attracting regional and/or national audiences with a minimum attendance of 20,000 having a significant level of economic impact on the county. (Maximum \$45,000 per event)

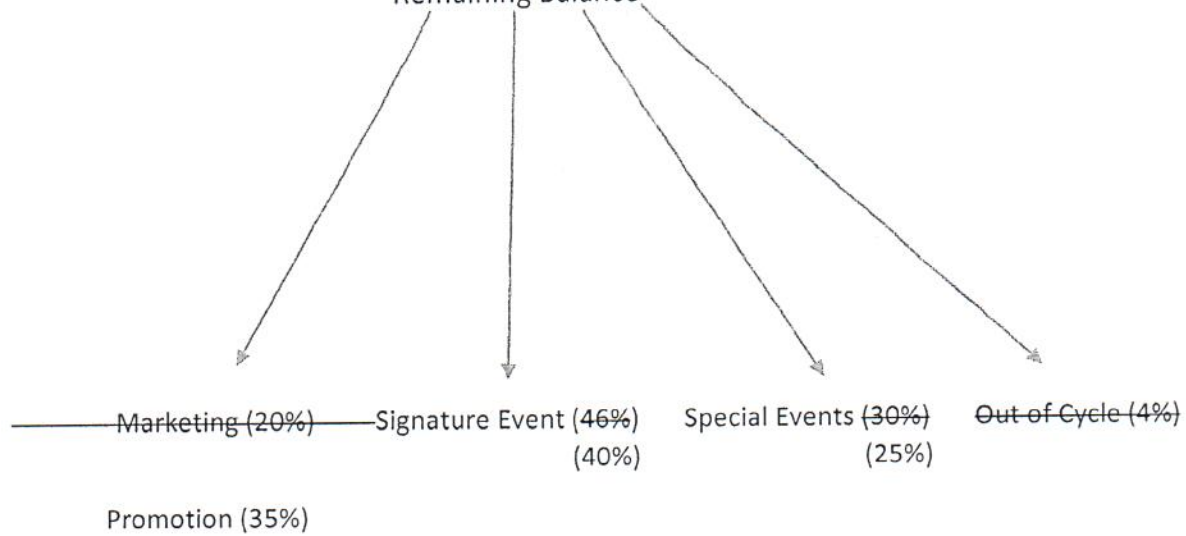
Special Events: One, two or multi-day events sponsored by non-profit organizations, entities or individuals which are open to the public such as festivals, community activities, chili cook-offs, historical events, art shows and other events. (Maximum \$3,500 per event)

Promotional Activities Funding Line Allocation

Projected Budget Line

❖ Less Sponsorship Allocation (normally a set dollar amount)

Remaining Balance

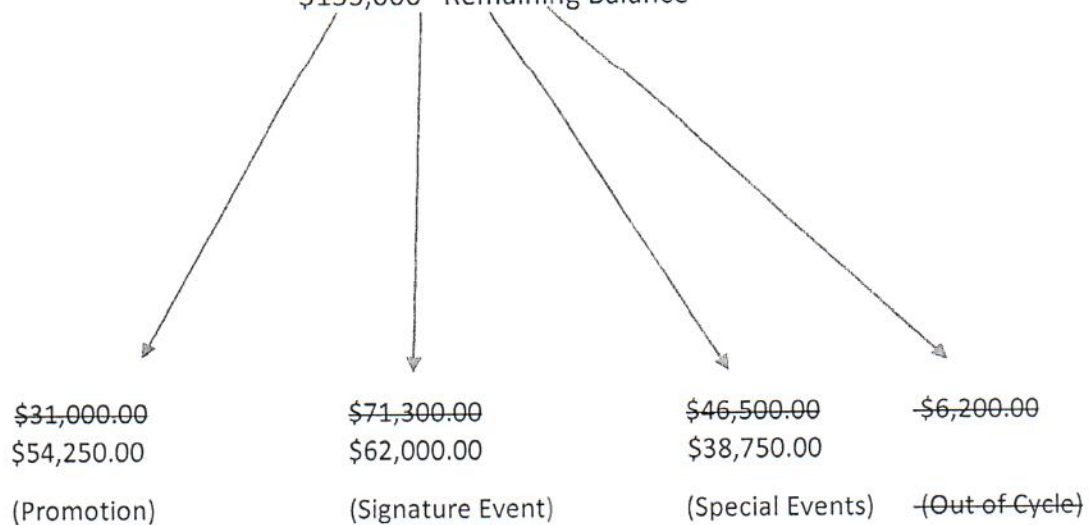


Example of Funding Line Allocation

\$280,000 -- Projected Budget Line

❖ \$125,000 -- Less Sponsorship Allocation

\$155,000 Remaining Balance



Benefits

- ❖ Event applications funding are determined based on the relative importance of identified factors to help boost our TDC efforts and to establish optimal use of our resources.
- ❖ The tool provides a structured, consistent and coherent way for both the applicants to submit/identify information most important to the TDC and for the TDC to ensure consistency in the allocation of funds.
- ❖ The structure also builds an incentive based approach for events to strive on reaching the most significant level of a signature event.
- ❖ The funds allocation at the Special Events level is objective, equitable and fair approach towards resource distribution. Additionally, by identifying a maximum funding level, it provides a reasonable assurance of general levels of TDC funding for events.

The Road Ahead

- ~~❖ Further develop the evaluation factors with point's assigned methodology.~~
- ❖ Conduct a review of our present application and make adjustments to align with the needed information for our evaluation factors.
- ❖ Review both concepts of "matching funds" and event "self-sufficiency" to identify how we can apply it in our policy/process.
- ❖ Develop an education workshop approach for both applicants and TDC members.
- ❖ *Review the present process for post event reporting*

Evaluation Factors

(A) Commitment to the Expansion of Tourism in Clay County – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the overall impact the event will have on the community and county. The request illustrates evidence that the event serves to attract out-of-county tourists/visitors.

High Value Visitors – those tourists/visitors from areas outside of Clay County staying overnight in paid accommodations.

Day Visitors – those tourists/visitors from areas outside of Clay County but not spending the night.

Points Assigned:

- (1) *High Impact (25 points):* Over 50 estimated room nights involving high value visitors and/or 4,000 day visitors.
- (2) *Medium Impact (15 points):* Over 25 estimated room nights involving high value visitors and/or 2,000 day visitors.
- (3) *Low Impact (5 points):* Less than 25 estimated room nights involving high value visitors and/or less than 2,000 day visitors.

(B) Soundness of Proposed Event – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the event illustrating clearly identified objectives, other additional funding sources being used, and an out-of-county advertising plan.

- (1) Illustrated clearly identified objectives
 - a. *Clearly defined on application (5 points)*
 - b. *Not defined well or at all on the application (0 points)*
- (2) Additional Funding sources
 - a. *Specific additional funding sources defined on application (10 points)*
 - b. *Additional funding sources identified but no specific funding sources (5 points)*
 - c. *Not defined on the application (0 points)*
- (3) Out-of County advertising plan
 - a. *Specifically defined on application (10 points)*
 - b. *Identified but not specifically defined on the application (5 points)*
 - c. *Not defined on the application (0 points)*

(C) Stability and Management Capacity – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the event having a proven record or demonstrated capacities of the organization to successfully develop resources, effectively plan, organize and implement the proposed event.

- (1) How long has the event existed?

Evaluation Factors

- a. Third year or more (10 points)
 - b. Second year (5 points)
 - c. First year (0 points)
- (2) For past events, was all the TDC grant documentation requirements submitted and adhered to as published in policy?
- a. All documentation properly submitted & grant funds used appropriately as well as outlined in the grant request. (10 points)
 - b. Documentation submitted but incomplete and/or grant funds not fully used or as outlined on the grant request. (5 points)
 - c. Documentation not submitted as required and/or grant funds not used as outlined in the grant request. (0 points)
- (3) Does event plan to use a visitor survey to capture data for future improvements and was a sample copy provided in the application package?
- a. Yes and sample included in the package (5 points)
 - b. No survey planned (0 points)

(D) Quality of Proposed Event – Maximum 25 points

Purpose: The grant request is evaluated based on the event attracting residents and visitors to Clay County with a high quality experience and provides a significant benefit to Clay County. Also, without TDC funding assistance, the event would not take place in Clay County.

- (1) *High Impact.* Recurring event with increasing level of participation and significant economic impact to county. Event uses a systematic approach towards data collection and analysis. (25 points)
- (2) *Medium Impact.* Recurring event with steady level of participation and economic impact to county. (15 points)
- (3) *Low Impact.* First year event with level of impact unknown, does have positive anticipated level of participation and economic impact county. Recurring event with declining level of participation and economic impact to county. (5 points)

Decision Matrix Allocation Formula/Tool

Event 1

	<u>Points Assigned</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Total</u>
Factor A	20	4	80
Factor B	25	3	75
Factor C	10	2	20
Factor D	15	1	15

190

Points Score: 12.6667

Event 2

	<u>Points Assigned</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Total</u>
Factor A	25	4	100
Factor B	25	3	75
Factor C	10	2	20
Factor D	5	1	5

200

Points Score: 13.3333

Event 3

	<u>Points Assigned</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Total</u>
Factor A	10	4	40
Factor B	25	3	75
Factor C	10	2	20
Factor D	5	1	5

140

Points Score: 9.33333

	<u>Pts Score</u>	<u>Allocation %</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Event 1	12.6667	0.358	\$3,226.42
Event 2	13.3333	0.377	\$3,396.23
Event 3	9.3333	0.264	\$2,377.36

Total Pts 35.3333

Funds Avail: \$9,000.00



Agenda Item
Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Clay County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

- ▣ Analysis and Strategy Part 1
- ▣ Analysis and Strategy Part 2

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer	Action	Date	Comments
No Reviewers Available			

(Draft)

*Tourism Analysis and Strategy
Clay County, Florida*

March 2010

*Report to the
Clay County Tourist Development Council
and
Clay County Board of County Commissioners*

*By
URBANOMICS, Inc
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida*

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1. Background and Summary

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF REPORT

URBANOMICS, Inc., was retained by the Board of County Commissioners of Clay County, Florida, to work with the Tourist Development Council and Tourism Office on a study of the characteristics and future potential of the County tourism industry. Objectives of the study include development of strategies to enhance the industry and strengthen its contribution to the local economy and to study and recommend ways in which tourist development tax revenues should be used to best advantage. Analyses and recommendations are presented in five sections.

- ***Section 1. Background and Summary.*** This section identifies the many government, organization, and business leaders (stakeholders) that were consulted and interviewed for information insights, and opinions on the state of tourism in the County and their ideas and recommendations as to how the industry can be improved. This section also presents summaries of key findings and recommendations detailed in succeeding sections.
- ***Section 2. Resources and Attractions.*** Important existing and potential tourism resources are profiled in this section, including natural and recreational resources, cultural and historical resources, entertainment and social venues that host activities and events of interest to visitors, and special annual events held in the County.
- ***Section 3. Industry Characteristics.*** Characteristics of existing visitors to the County are profiled in this section, along with a comparative analysis of Clay County to several other Florida counties with respect to several indicators of the local viability and economic impact of tourism. Overnight accommodations are also discussed.
- ***Section 4. Development Strategy.*** This section outlines a branding and marketing strategy for tourism development in Clay County to better capitalize on the diverse assets and areas of the County and to better focus local promotional activities and resources. The section also includes discussion of opportunities in ecotourism, heritage tourism, and sports development.
- ***Section 5. Funding and Management.*** Making the best use of limited tourist tax revenues is the subject of this section, including the allocation of resources for general marketing, support for public facilities, incentive grants, and capital improvements.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with more than 40 government, organization, civic, and business leaders in or knowledgeable of Clay County to discuss and determine characteristics of tourism activities and facilities in the County, views on issues affecting the tourism industry, and ideas and recommendations as to how tourism in the County could be improved. Some of the most common views, ideas, and recommendations expressed are:

- Virtually all stakeholders indicated that Clay County is not (yet) a tourist destination, as it lacks beaches, theme parks, and other traditional Florida attractions.
- Many stakeholders suggested that to the extent tourism exists in the County, it is largely special event-driven, in that non-resident vendors, performers, and visitors are drawn to the County by annual events like the Agricultural Fair, North Florida Hunter-Jumper Winter Series equestrian events, and the Scottish Games and Festival.
- Many stakeholders suggested that the tourism future of the County is linked to competitive youth and amateur sports and recommended that the County pursue development of a state-of-the-art sports complex comparable to others in Florida.
- Many stakeholders voiced concern with how tourist development tax revenues are used currently, including provision of large annual subsidies for operation of the Thrasher-Horne Arts and Conference Center.
- Many stakeholders suggested needs for public investments (including use of TDC dollars) in improving the County Agriculture Center (parking, bathrooms, etc.), in developing a sports complex, for billboard advertising, and improving historical signage.
- Many stakeholders cited needs to better promote the often under-appreciated maritime and wartime history of the County; to develop new historical, sporting, and entertainment events and programs, including those that capitalize on the rock music history of the County and its past successes with the film industry.
- Many stakeholders expressed needs for stepped up pro-active marketing of the County through news and broadcast media, through improved Internet communications, with event organizers, and with other external sources of business. Needs for experienced marketing personnel and grant writers were also expressed.

Stakeholders interviewed are listed below.

● **Clay County Commissioners**

Wendell Davis
W. Travis Cummings
Doug Conkey
Chereese Stewart
Ronnie Robinson

● **Other Government Leaders**

Don Bowles, City Manager, City of Green Cove Springs
Felecia Hampshire, Mayor, City of Green Cove Springs
Mary Lou Hildreth, Mayor, City of Keystone Heights
Lee Bentley, Director, Planning & Zoning, City of Green Cove Springs
Mike Kloehn, Clay County Planning & Zoning Director
Holly Parrish, Clay County Development Services Director

● **Hoteliers**

Katharine Middleton, Hilton Garden Inn
Susan Soltys, Sleep Inn& Suites
Karrie Massee, Club Continental
Pat Sickles Garlinghouse, River Park Inn
Paz Patel, Comfort Inn
Phil Murphey, Holiday Inn & Suites
Denise Buzzy, Holiday Inn & Suites
Richard Lowe, Courtyard by Marriott

● **Facility Operators and Event Organizers**

Tom Reynolds, Thrasher-Horne Conference Center
Tony Walsh, Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts
Kathryn Wills, Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts
Ivor Wigham, European Road Rally School
Chad Davis, The Hilltop Inn
Major Greg Parsons, Camp Blanding Museum
James Overby, The Scottish Games and Festival
Susie Rindal, North Florida Hunter Jumper Association – The Winter Series
Bob Oehl, Wings of Dreams Museum and Air Show
Pete Sutton, Clay County Fair

● **Civic Leaders**

Joe H. Pickens, J.D., President, St. Johns River Community College
Claude W. Bass, Clay County Archivist
Dr. Cynthia Stone, Clay County Historical Commission
Carolyn Day, President, Orange Park Art Guild

Glen Thompson, President Orange Park Athletic Association
Kelli Jo Kilberg, Executive Director Clay County Chamber of Commerce
Rick Bebout, Clay County Planning Commissioner, Rails to Trails
Cheryl Hartzog, Coordinator, Clay County Council on Aging



Others

Eve Szymanski, former Tourism Director
Carl Post, former Volunteer Film Coordinator
Dan Hodges, Owner, Duval Ford
George Francisco, former Clay County Chamber of Commerce President
Brian Milstead, BSM Uniforms and Apparel
William S. Myers, CPA
Jon Cantrell, Editor, Clay Today
Annette Hastings, Executive Director, City of Jacksonville Tourist Development Council

RESOURCES AND ATTRACTIONS

Natural and Recreational Resources

Clay County has a diverse array of natural and recreational resources having the potential to attract visitors who enjoy various types of passive and active recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Natural resources include the wide and scenic St. Johns River and its tributaries that define the eastern side of County, numerous lakes in the southwest area of the County, and several large publicly-owned conservation and resource management areas. Abundant recreational resources in the County include state and county parks oriented to nature-based recreation, a segment of the statewide off-road trail system, several marinas and boat launch sites, several golf courses, and a number of youth sports facilities.

Cultural and Historical Resources

For visitors interested in the culture and history of Clay County and Northeast Florida, there are numerous cultural and historical sites and areas in the County, including museums, historic buildings, historic districts, and other places of interest. Green Cove Springs, particularly, has a rich history dating to the 1800s, when its warm mineral springs attracted US Presidents and industry magnates who arrived by steamboat from the North. That gilded era is long gone, but many remnants and reminders remain. Later, Green Cove Springs was the location of numerous US Navy warships mothballed after WWII. Twenty-three sites in the County are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Entertainment Venues

There are a number of facilities in Clay County that host various types of entertainment and group activity, including fairs, festivals, sporting events, the performing arts, meetings, and social functions. Facilities include the Clay County Agricultural Center and Fairgrounds, Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts and Conference Center, Orange Park Kennel Club, European Rally School & Motorsports Park, Club Continental, and The Hilltop.

Special Events

Numerous sporting and entertainment events are held annually in Clay County, including fairs, festivals, exhibits, commemorative activities, and sporting competitions. Several draw 20,000 to more than 80,000 visitors per year. The majority are held in the Green Cove Springs area, particularly on the grounds of the Clay County Agricultural Center. Noteworthy events that draw vendors, exhibitors, participants, and spectators for outside the County include the Clay County Agricultural Fair, North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series, Scottish Games and Festival, and Wings of Dreams Air Show.

INDUSTRY CHARACTERISTICS

Visitor Characteristics

Tourists are commonly defined as non-residents who stay overnight in an area to visit local attractions. Clay County tourists have to be defined more broadly as including non-residents from adjoining and other Northeast Florida counties. The County lacks traditional attractions that draw visitors to Florida, including beaches, theme parks, and widely known historical and natural attractions. Moreover, resources and events that are potential tourist draws are in areas of the County that lack traditional overnight lodgings. As a consequence, Clay County visitors are a mix of several market segments:

- Leisure travelers passing through the area on I-295 staying overnight in the Orange Park area on the way to other destinations.
- Vendors, contractors, business people, and military personnel staying overnight in the area who are visiting or are associated with nearby employment and activity centers, particularly NAS Jacksonville.

- Out-of-town vendors, participants, performers, and non-resident visitors staying overnight in the area and who are involved with or attending events in the County.
- Non-resident visitors staying overnight in the area visiting friends and relatives, attending weddings, and involved in other professional, fraternal, and social gatherings.
- Non-resident day-trippers to the County attending events held in the County and visiting local entertainment and recreational attractions.

Day visitors constitute the largest non-resident tourist segment in the County by far. However, the largest numbers of those who attend local events and visit local attractions are not non-residents, but rather are local residents of Clay County. It is important to recognize, however, that all entertainment, commemorative, sporting, and recreational events held in the County contribute on some level to the local economy and quality of life.

The busiest time for visitor activity is the first four months of the year. The North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series equestrian events in January attract 6,000 participants and visitors per week over a five-week period. The Scottish Games and Festival follows in February, with another 27,000 visitors. In that same month, the Wings of Dreams Air Show in Keystone Heights draws 15,000-20,000 over a three-day period. The Clay County Agricultural Fair in April hosts another 84,000 visitors over a ten-day period.

The North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series, Scottish Games and Festival, Clay County Agricultural Fair, and other events do generate overnight stays in widely varying amounts by vendors, performers, participants, and/or spectators, although most events are held in locations away from existing lodgings. The challenge facing the County is two-fold: develop attractions and hold events closer to lodging concentrations, and develop lodgings close to resources and attractions that have tourism potentials.

Economic Characteristics

Taxable sales for hotels and other lodgings in Clay County averaged \$79 per capita and \$9,504 per unit in 2008. Per capita taxable sales in Clay were substantially lower than four Northeast Florida coastal counties and the State of Florida as a whole. Taxable sales in Nassau and St. Johns Counties were over \$1,000 per capita and \$24,000-\$28,000 per unit, reflecting the substantial impact of tourism in these coastal counties.

Taxable sales per lodging unit in Clay County were only 41 percent of the statewide average, 58 percent of the Duval County average, 41 percent of the Flagler County average, 39 percent of the St. Johns County average, and only 33 percent of the Nassau County average. Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns Counties all have comparatively pricey resort hotels and condominiums. These sales comparisons are noteworthy in that they show that existing lodgings in Clay County suffer from a combination of low occupancy and low room rates and that the County has a long way to go in terms of attracting interest and visitors from outside the region.

In terms of employment in tourism-oriented activities, Clay County lags behind all but rural Baker, Bradford, and Putnam Counties in Northeast Florida. Expressed as the number of jobs per 1,000 residents, Clay County ratios for the amusements/gambling/recreation and accommodations sectors were 2.1 and 1.5 jobs per 1,000 residents in 2007, versus 7.6 and 8.5 per 1,000 population statewide. Ratios in Duval County were 3.8 and 4.9 jobs per 1,000 population, and in St. Johns County were 8.6 and 14.0 per 1,000. These comparisons further illustrate the comparatively under-developed nature of a tourist industry in Clay County and the challenges ahead in developing the industry.

Overnight Accommodations

Clay County has 1,540 licensed transient lodging units, including hotels/motel and B&B rooms as of 2008, according to state licensing records. All but a handful are located in the Orange Park area near I-295, including the recently closed Howard Johnson facility. The concentration of rooms in the north end of the County has little connection with the location of the majority of existing events and potential tourism resources and attractions in the south end. Most existing lodgings, instead, are located to take advantage of I-295 traffic or visitors destined for business and employment centers nearby, particularly the Jacksonville Naval Air Station.

It is desirable to promote and develop additional business and leisure opportunities in the greater Orange Park area to help support lodgings in the area, while also promoting and developing overnight accommodations in the southern part of the County to serve existing and potential tourism-related opportunities in that area. In this regard, the proposed riverfront resort hotel included in redevelopment plans for Reynolds Park is critical to the County's tourism future.

Average occupancy rates have declined significantly over the last five years, due to the introduction of two new hotels and a slumping general economy. Rates have dropped from near 68 percent in 2004-05 to around 50 percent in 2009-10, representing a significant loss of revenues to operators and tourist tax revenues to the County.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Creating a Tourism Identity

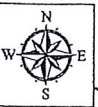
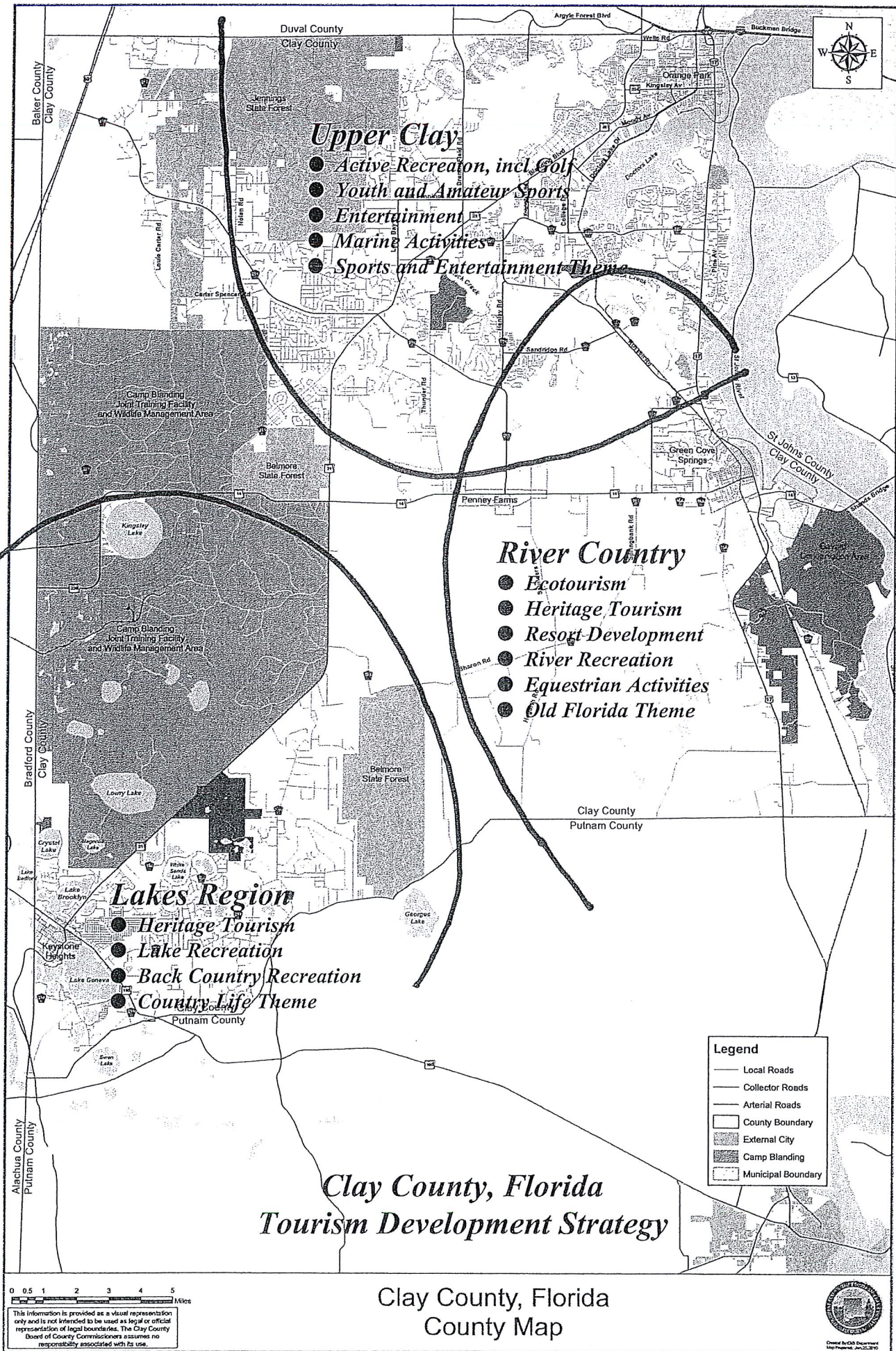
Attempts to promote Clay County as a viable tourist destination have been ineffective, largely because messages do not convey adequately the distinct assets and opportunities of individual areas of the County, which are quite diverse. Any strategy to develop a tourist industry in the County should include creation of an identity for these distinctive areas of the County and their individual assets and tourism development opportunities, and to focus for marketing initiatives and public investments needed to promote recognition and development of these areas. Toward these ends, three distinctive areas of the County are defined -- River Country, Lakes Region, and Upper Clay -- each having distinct features and development opportunities.

River Country. River Country is the suggested name for southeastern Clay County and defines a particularly scenic and largely undeveloped area of the St. Johns River that has enormous potentials in ecotourism, heritage tourism, and water-based recreation. In addition to the broad River and tranquil Black Creek, assets include Historic Green Cove Springs, Reynolds Park and its proposed resort hotel and marina, the Clay County Agricultural Center and Old Florida Village, and the unique Penney Farms community.

Investments and marketing activities in this area should focus on ecotourism, heritage tourism, riverfront resort development, equestrian activities, and river-based recreation, including river cruising, water-based ecotours, fishing tournaments, and boat races, and an old Florida theme. Green Cove Springs should be promoted and developed as the service center for River Country.

Lakes Region. Lakes Region is the suggested name for southwestern Clay County and defines an area from Keystone Heights to Kingsley Lake that features dozens of lakes, large and small. In addition to the lakes, assets of this area include a multi-use state park, paved state rail-trail, two WWII museums, and motorsports park. Despite severe falls in water levels in many lakes, the area is well suited to various water-based recreational activities, including swimming, fishing, and boating.

Investments and marketing activities in this area should focus on heritage tourism, lake-based recreation, back-country recreation (hunting, hiking, biking), and a country life theme. Keystone Heights should be promoted and developed as the service center for the Lakes Region.



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

This information is provided as a visual representation only and is not intended to be used as legal or official representation of legal boundaries. The Clay County Board of County Commissioners assumes no responsibility associated with its use.

Clay County, Florida
County Map



Upper Clay. Upper Clay is a working name for the largely developed suburban area of northern Clay County, including Orange Park, Fleming Island, Middleburg, and Oakleaf Plantation area. Investments and marketing activities in this area should focus on developing and enhancing entertainment, active recreation, golf packages and tournaments, and competitive youth and amateur sports opportunities, including development of a new sports complex to meet local needs as well as to attract an external competitive sports market. Existing assets in Upper Clay include the Thrasher-Horne Center, Orange Park Kennel Club, several golf courses, various youth sports facilities, active youth sports organizations, and 1,200 lodging units. Orange Park should be promoted and developed as the service center for Upper Clay.

Ecotourism and Heritage Tourism

Ecotourism, or nature-based recreation, and heritage tourism are growing segments of the travel and leisure market and attract generally older and more affluent tourists. National demographics point an increasing growth trend. Amenities and attractions in the River Country and Lakes region are ideally suited to these activities. A major shortcomings is the lack of traditional lodgings, but there are a number of cabins and RV campsites in the area to accommodate certain overnight visitors. Development of the proposed riverfront resort hotel on the Reynolds Park property would be a major boost to tourism opportunities in southern Clay County.

Sports Development

Clay County is extremely youth sports minded. The concept of “sports tourism,” including development of a major sports complex to meet local needs and attract regional, state, and national competitions, has been discussed among local leaders for several years. The same is occurring in many other Florida communities. The idea of a new sports complex in the Upper Clay area of the County has merit, if demonstrated to be feasible. There are national firms that partner with local governments in developing and operating such facilities, including Sportsplex USA and Big League Dreams.

The Consultant recommends creation of a volunteer Sports Development Council to advise the County on the location, scope, cost, and feasibility of a sports complex that would serve future local needs while also attracting sports competitions and tournaments from external markets. The Council would work with the County Department of Parks and Recreation and coordinate with the Tourist Development Council. Tourist tax revenues can help fund feasibility studies.

FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT

Use of Tourist Tax Revenues

General Policies and Priorities. Clay County receives approximately \$400,000 annually in tourist tax revenues and has reserves currently in the \$600,000 range. Annual revenues are small in comparison to many Florida counties, including Duval and St. Johns, which bring in around \$18 and \$5.5 million per year, respectively. Much larger revenue streams allow these counties to provide financial support for a number of tourism development programs and projects.

Clay County does not have the level of revenues to fund the array of programs and projects permitted by statute and should, with few exceptions, focus its limited resources on marketing activities, events, and public facilities that expose the County to external markets and have the best opportunities to attract non-resident visitors. Further, revenues should be used as a supplement to or to leverage other marketing and programming funds raised by event organizers and facility operators. The Consultant's recommendation is that County tourist tax dollars be matched by private funds by a minimum ratio of three to one, whenever possible.

These recommendations are intended to ensure that tax revenues are used to maximum effect in advertising, marketing, and promoting Clay County to external markets. If a desirable goal is to put "heads in beds" of the lodgings that generate revenues, it follows that revenues are best used for advertising, marketing, and promotional activities that reach non-resident markets and stimulate visitor interest. The Consultant further recommends that awards made to any one event or activity be limited, in most cases, to a maximum of ten (10) percent of total annual tax revenues, such that available revenues can be spread among the largest number of applicants.

Thrasher-Horne Center. The County can take great pride in having a facility like the Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts. It is among a comparatively small number of theater-style performing arts halls in Florida and is competitively sized to attract and host a variety of performing arts events. But, it is not conveniently located to hotels and restaurants, closer proximity to which would help generate more patronage.

The combined Arts and Convention Centers have experienced large net losses for several years. On the plus side, revenues from ticket sales and private contributions reached their highest levels in FY08-09. The facility has been receiving \$125,000 in annual operating funds from County tourist tax revenues over the past several years, representing 30 percent of total revenues. This

County contribution has become a bone of contention among civic and business interests, with questions raised as to if Thrasher-Horne is on a path to self-sufficiency. The reality is that facilities of this type rarely achieve self-sufficiency and must rely on private contributions and/or government subsidies to continue operations. It is the Consultant's opinion that some level of public funding support be continued, but the amount should be based on the following considerations:

- Thrasher-Horne should be required to apply for annual funding and describe how funds requested will be utilized for advertising, marketing, and programming that advances tourism in the County.
- The amount of funds awarded should bear some relationship to the amount of private contributions budgeted that year. A one-to-one matching ratio is recommended. Private contributions totaled nearly \$53,000 in FY08-09. Another option is to increase the tourist tax to four percent, using additional revenues for Thrasher-Horne. Bradford and Putnam Counties have four-percent tax rates.
- County tax revenues should be used only to help offset costs of advertising, marketing, and programming for Thrasher-Horne, which by so doing also helps promote Clay County to external markets.

Film Promotion. Clay County has had past successes in the film and music industries as the locale for a number of motion picture and music video shoots. The County has funded film promotion activities in the past, and has been presented again with a proposal from a local industry professional to renew film promotion. The Consultant recommends an investment in film promotion, as it has the potential to pay off more readily as a generator of economic impact than investments in developing the County as an ecotourism, heritage tourism, and sports destination, which, while each presents significant opportunities, are long term.

Capital Projects. Annual tax revenues should not be used to fund capital projects. Instead, any capital funding should come from reserve funds, and use of these funds should be limited in order to maintain a minimum balance. Funding of capital projects should be limited to investments desirable or needed to enhance visitor experiences and improve public venues. For example, the County Fairgrounds has various needs which should be considered by the TDC and County, including expanded permanent seating and stage in the Cattleman's Arena and improved bathrooms. Tourist tax revenues should be considered supplemental to other capital funds.

Incentive Grants

Tourist tax revenues are commonly used as financial grants to help support visitor-oriented programs and special events, their organizers, and host venues. Grant awards often may be based on numbers of room nights generated or return on investment (ROI). Lacking evidence that entertainment and sporting activities and events held presently in Clay County generate non-resident visitor traffic and “heads and beds,” it is premature to base grant awards on typical room night and ROI factors. Instead, the following objectives and criteria are recommended as the basis for accepting and awarding grants to organizers and hosts of fairs, festivals, and other potential visitor-oriented activities and events:

- Incentive grants should be provided to organizers and hosts of significant recreation, sports, and entertainment-related events, activities, and programs that enhance the quality of life in Clay County and attract participants and visitors from outside the County.
- Incentive grants should be provided for the promotion of significant cultural, historical, and natural resources, and for activities and programs that provide educational benefits to County residents and attract interest of participants and visitors from outside the County.
- Incentive grants should be limited to public and non-profit applicants, except where it can be shown that activities and events conducted by private for-profit entities meet a public need or have a public benefit.
- The effectiveness of County financial resources to increase market awareness of the assets and amenities of Clay County should be maximized by requiring that incentive grants and supplemental funds be used only for advertising, marketing, promotional, and programming activities.
- The use of County financial resources should be optimized by requiring events hosts and organizers match the amount of public funds requested with funds raised for advertising, marketing, promotion, and programming by event hosts and organizers from other sources by a ratio not less than 3:1.
- Priorities for public funding among applicants and funding decisions should reflect matching fund ratios, such that applications with higher ratios will be considered more favorably than those with lower ratios, except where other considerations may prevail.

2. Resources and Attractions

NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Clay County has a diverse array of natural and recreational resources having the potential to attract visitors who enjoy various types of passive and active recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Natural resources include the wide and scenic St. Johns River and its tributaries define the eastern side of County, numerous lakes in the southwest area of the County and several large publicly-owned conservation and resource management areas. Abundant recreational resources in the County include state and county parks oriented to nature-based recreation, a segment of the statewide off-road trail system, several marinas and boat launch sites, a dozen golf courses, and a number of youth sports facilities. A number of significant individual natural and recreational resources are profiled below.

Conservation and Resource Management Areas

Jennings State Forest. The 24,000-acre Jennings State Forest is located in northwestern Clay County west of Oakleaf Plantation and Branam Field Road and mostly north of CR218. Recreational opportunities include hunting, fishing, canoeing, hiking, horseback riding, and nature study. There are several miles of trails in the Forest. Clay County is also the location of the comparatively new Belmore State Forest in the southwestern area of the County near Keystone heights. The 8,700-acre Forest is formerly part of the Gilman timber holdings. Recreational uses are proposed in the management plan, but are not yet available to the public.

Bayard Conservation and Wildlife Management Area. The 10,320-acre Bayard Conservation and WMA, located on the west bank of the St. Johns River in southeastern Clay, is also comparatively new state preserve and recreation area. Formerly part of the J.P. Hall holdings, the land was purchased with Florida Preservation 2000 funds and is administered by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) in partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). The property is adjacent to the Reynolds Industrial Airpark and is accessed in several locations -- from SR16 near the Shands Bridge, from US17 south of Green Cove Springs, and from CR226 between US17 and CR209. Recreational opportunities on the property include seasonal hunting, bank fishing, primitive camping, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, and boating and canoeing on the river. The property has seven miles of river frontage.

Camp Blanding and Wildlife Management Area. The Florida FWC shares responsibility for management and use of 56,200 acres of 73,000-acre Camp Blanding in the southwestern section of the County. An area north of SR16 is designated for seasonal dog hunting. Designated seasonal still hunting areas are located in the southwest corner of SR16 and SR21 and in the south end of Camp Blanding. Areas designated for bow hunting only are located south and west of Kingsley Lake. Main access points are located on SR16 and SR21. Fishing is permitted on Lowry and Magnolia Lakes. In addition to these activities, recreational facilities in Camp Blanding include the James E. Johnson Memorial RV Park, a camping area for military personnel and their families with 41 RV sites and 59 primitive tent sites.

Parks and Recreation Areas

Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park. This State Park, located off SR21 north of Keystone Heights in the southwestern section of the County, is among the oldest in Florida. It was developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. The Park contains and is adjacent to several lakes, characteristic of this area of the County, and provides a wide variety of recreational facilities and opportunities. These include several types of camping, swimming, picnicking, fishing, canoeing, biking, hiking, horseback riding, and wildlife viewing. Camping opportunities include vacation cabins, family camping, group camping, and primitive camping.

The 16 lakefront cabins are of three types and can accommodate four or six persons. Rental rates range from \$65 to \$100, plus tax, per day and from \$425 to \$650 per week. There are 74 full facility campsites with water and electric hookups in three campground areas that can accommodate tents, trailers, and motorized campers. Three group campsites will accommodate 25 persons each and have access to water, showers, and flush toilets. The Park also has eight covered picnic pavilions and several miles of hiking, nature, and equestrian trails.

The Park attracted 67,600 visitors in 2009, including 30,900 day visitors and 36,700 overnight visitors. Annual attendance has fluctuated in the past four years, with peak visitation occurring in 2006 and again in 2009. The peak season for day visitors is April through July. The low months are August through December. For overnight visitors, peaks occur generally from March through June and again in November. Overnight visitation is lowest in August-September.

Camp Chowenwaw. Camp Chowenwaw is a 153-acre County park located on the south side of Black Creek near the St. Johns River north of Green Cove Springs. Once a Girl Scout camp, the park is accessed from US17 immediately south of the Black Creek bridge and has 3,000 feet of

frontage on Black Creek and 4,800 feet of frontage on Peters Creek, a tributary of Black Creek. When it was purchased by Clay County in 2006, the heavily wooded site had become a regional center for environmental and outdoor recreation learning for the Girl Scouts because of its floodplain ecosystems. Camp facilities include a lodge and cabins, fishing pier on Black Creek, nature center and trails, canoe launch, swimming pool, and dining pavilions. Overnight facilities include a rustic lodge, called “Big Cabin,” built in the 1930s by the CCC, twenty other cabins, and nine elevated and screened “tree houses.” The County plans to operate the camp as a retreat centered on the environment and nature-based recreation.

Palatka-Lake Butler State Trail. This is a proposed 47-mile long rail-trail extending from the Palatka area in Putnam County to the Lake Butler area in Bradford County and is being constructed on an old railbed of the Norfolk-Southern Railroad. It may ultimately be extended to more than 100 miles to connect St. Augustine and Lake City. The paved 12-foot wide trail passes through the southwest corner of Clay County in the Keystone Heights-Lake Geneva area and runs parallel to SR100. Managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Office of Greenways and Trails, the first-phase 5.5-mile Clay County segment was opened in 2008. Twin Lakes Park is the main trailhead in Clay County for this trail.

Other Significant Facilities

Reynolds Park Yachting Center. Reynolds Park Yachting Center is part of the 1,700-acre Reynolds Park property on SR16 between downtown Green Cove Springs and the Shands Bridge. The property, a former US Navy aviation training facility and marine terminal for ships mothballed after WWII, was acquired in the 1960s from the Navy by industrialist J. Louis Reynolds, former chairman of Reynolds Metals Company, who established Reynolds Park. Current uses include extensive marine repair and refurbishment facilities, recreational marina, industrial park, 5,000-foot airstrip, 18-hole golf course, and event pavilion with covered stage.

Marine repair and refurbishment facilities are operated under the name Clay Port. Existing commercial and recreational marine facilities include 49,000 feet of fixed concrete pier and bulkhead, 60-ton travel lift, dry-docking capability for up to 1,100 tons, and 70 slips for boats up to 350 feet in length.

There are plans to redevelop the property as primarily a residential and resort community, but with substantial retail, office, and industrial development. Centerpieces of residential and resort development are a full-service resort hotel (up to 250 rooms) and large recreational marina. Key factors supporting this redevelopment concept are an unequalled location on the St. Johns River

providing dramatic long views over the broad river toward downtown Jacksonville and close proximity and access to the First Coast Outer Beltway, a proposed limited-access toll highway connecting I-10 to the north and I-95 to the east.

Green Cove Springs is a port-of-call for American Cruise Lines, which operates a fleet of small ships (70-100 passengers). Their 7-8 day “Great Rivers of Florida” cruise originates from Fernandina Beach and sails the Intracoastal Waterway (stops at St. Augustine and the Tolomato River) and the St. Johns River down to Lake George, stopping at Green Cove Springs and Palatka. The cruise schedule includes nine in 2010 and 16 in 2011.

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

For visitors interested in the culture and history of Clay County and Northeast Florida, there are numerous cultural and historical sites and areas in the County, including museums, historic buildings, historic districts, and other places of interest. Green Cove Springs, particularly, has a rich history dating to the 1800s, when its warm mineral springs attracted US Presidents and industry magnates who arrived by steamboat from the North. That gilded era is long gone, but many remnants and reminders remain. Later, Green Cove Springs was the location of numerous US Navy warships mothballed after WWII. Twenty-three sites in the County are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Cultural and historical resources include:

- Several museums, including Camp Blanding WWII Museum, Wings of Dreams Aviation Museum, Clay County Historical Triangle and Museum, and the Middleburg Historic Museum.
- Many historic homes, including Budington House, Chalker House, Clark-Chalker House, Frisbee House, Green Home, Haskell-Long House, Helffrich House, Wescott House, and Winterbourne House.
- Several historic churches, including Methodist Episcopal Church, St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church, and St. Mary’s Episcopal Church.
- Several historic districts, including the Green Cove Springs, Memorial Home, Middleburg, and River Road Historic Districts.
- Other places of interest, including Penney Farms, a retirement community founded by retail magnate JC Penney.

The majority of cultural and historic resources are located in the southern part of the County. Two noteworthy museum attractions -- the Camp Blanding WWII Museum and the Wings of Dreams Aviation Museum -- are profiled below.

Camp Blanding WWII Museum and Memorial Park

This museum is located in Camp Blanding, a 73,000-acre military installation on SR16 between the Cities of Green Cove Springs and Starke. The museum is housed in WWII-era military barracks and is dedicated to the nine Infantry Divisions that trained there from 1940-1943. It is a repository for artifacts, uniforms, letters, journals and other materials preserving the story of US Army soldiers who trained at Camp Blanding. Exhibits showcase the role of Camp Blanding as a major military training center in the early 1940s. There are plans to move the museum to a new 13-acre site near its present location and expanded to include exhibits to honor those who served in various 20th Century conflicts.

The adjacent memorial park is an outdoor exhibit area commemorating veterans who served and received the nation's highest awards for valor and service. Honorees include Medal of Honor and Purple Heart recipients and former Prisoners of War. The park is laid out around a lagoon and picnic area. The museum and gift shop are staffed by volunteers who are part of the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The museum curator visits school classes with traveling exhibits and is available to speak to groups and organizations about the past and future of the museum and history of Camp Blanding.

Visitors include military veterans from Northeast Florida and out-of-state veterans who once trained at Camp Blanding and visit on their way to other destinations. Most are accompanied by spouses, children, or grandchildren who can see and hear about the experiences of these veterans.

Wings of Dreams Aviation Museum

This museum, celebrating and commemorating those who flew and fought in WWII and their aircraft, is located at the Keystone Heights Airport off SR100 in the southwest corner of the County between the Cities of Keystone Heights and Starke. The museum is housed currently in a small building at the Airport, but will be moved eventually to a larger facility at the Airport. Only a portion of the many exhibits, including history books, written correspondence from WWII pilots, uniforms, medals of valor, autographed books, flight itineraries and memorabilia are currently on display. The collection, much of which is in storage at the Airport, has been donated by former aviators and war veterans.

Plans for the new museum include buildings that will be home to the Warbird Restoration Project and actual Flying Warbirds. The site will also include classrooms for aerospace education, an aviation library and exhibits highlighting the Civil Air Patrol and the Womens Air Service Patrol exhibit, a Veterans History Project, a “Flight Magic” Discovery Park for children, Aerospace Science Fair Awards displays, a Veterans Legacy Trail exhibit, and a Civil Air Patrol Museum.

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

There are a number of facilities in Clay County that host various types of entertainment and group activity, including fairs, festivals, sporting events, the performing arts, meetings, and social functions. Significant facilities profiled below are the Clay County Agricultural Center and Fairground, Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts and Conference Center, Orange Park Kennel Club, European Rally School & Motorsports Park, Club Continental, and The Hilltop.

Clay County Agricultural Center and Fairgrounds

The Paul E. Reinhold Agricultural Center and Fairgrounds is located on SR16 at CR315 between the City of Green Cove Springs and the Town of Penney Farm. The facility is the main outdoor entertainment venue in the County. Sixty-five acres of the 80-acre facility is County-owned and administered by the County Department of Parks & Recreation. The facility includes 204 stalls, including 48 stalls that belong to the North Florida Hunter jumper Association, with different floorings located in three barns. Additional features include a midway area, four open arenas, Founders Exhibit Hall, JP Hall Covered Arena, Clay County Cattleman’s Arena, Prahl Pavilion (entertainment stage), 48 full service RV hookups, 40 additional RV hookups in various locations on the grounds, a concession building and three restroom buildings.

Fees for use of various buildings and arenas vary from \$150 per day to \$2,500 per day for the entire facility. The Center and fairgrounds is regarded as an excellent facility among national and international competitive riders who attend the North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series of equestrian events, one of the most successful annual events held at the Center. The annual Clay County Agricultural Fair, held in April, is considered among the best county fairs in Florida. However, the facility is in need of certain improvement and others are desirable, including expanded parking, increased permanent seating and a stage in the Cattlemen’s Arena, and improved and additional bathroom facilities.

The Center is booked throughout the year with a variety of events such as the Cattleman's Rodeo, the First Coast Hunter Jumper Horse Shows, the Monster Truck Show, 4-H Club Cam and Show, the North Florida Rabbit Breeders Association, the Clay County BCC Surplus Auction, an International Barrel Racing Association Horse Show, the North Florida Dressage Federation Horse Show, the Fair Association Steer Weigh-In, the JP Hall Toy Drive, etc.

The Clay County Fair Association owns and manages the remaining fifteen acres. This includes the home office of the Fair Association and the Florida Village. This wonderful step into the past community of authentic and replica homes and businesses is only open to the public during the ten days of the Clay County Fair. The Fair Association is looking forward to the day when it will be able to welcome tourists more frequently throughout the year.

Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts and Conference Center

The 85,000-square foot Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts and Conference Center opened in 2004 on the Orange Park campus of St. Johns River Community College (SJRCC) on College Avenue. The facility was named for John Thrasher, former speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, and Jim Horne, former commissioner of the Florida Department of Education and before that a state legislator representing the Orange Park area. Thrasher-Horne was built with a combination of \$16+ million of state funds and \$1.7 million from Clay County.

Arts Center. Thrasher-Horne has a main theater that seats 1,750 and a smaller theatre that seats approximately 200. There are also two art galleries dedicated to the visual arts. The Jack Mitchell Gallery is named after the famous photographer of the stars who has donated his work to the Center for permanent display and this gallery space is dedicated solely to photography. Mary Ward Huntley dedicated the Lee Adams' Florida Artists Gallery in honor of her late husband and this gallery features exhibits of all the other mediums of the visual arts.

The goal and mission of the Arts Center is the presentation of quality artistic programs, events and exhibitions that develop and nurture the artistic potential of students, residents and visitors through quality professional theater, dance, music performance, and visual art exhibits. The Palatka campus of the SJRCC houses the Florida School of the Arts, Florida's first state-supported art school. Thrasher-Horne is seen as the second home of this theatrical program.

The Arts Center hosts an average of 20 performances (not necessarily days of use) per year, which generate an average of 600 ticket sales. There were 12,106 tickets sold in FY08-09. The number of performances with 1,000 or more tickets sold has increased in recent years from two each in FY05-06 and FY06-07, to six in FY07-08, and seven in FY08-09. The majority of

attendees and ticket purchasers are from the 32073, 32065, 32068, and 32043 zip code areas, in that order, all of which are in Clay County. There is a core group of Thrasher-Horne Arts supporters and audience interest varies from the single ticket purchaser to those who have subscribed for the entire season of events. Corporate and individual membership levels are available from \$50 to \$1,000 per season. The different prices each include varying perks and special tickets to certain additional events. A number of retail outlets actively support THCA.

The competitive nature of scheduling for the performing arts means that programs for THCA must be scheduled 8-9 months in advance. THCA also schedules six visual arts shows per year. As there is no dedicated budget for the gallery, sponsors are sought to fund receptions, support services, and printing of programs.

Conference Center. The Conference Center includes six meeting rooms that are used by a variety of college, community and public agencies for meetings and events. Spring is the busiest season for the conference Center. It is regularly booked for school graduations, AP and SAT college testing for the high school students, receptions, wedding rehearsal dinners, and other end of the academic year functions for local schools. The local high schools also book for end of the year school or seasonal sports banquets. During the summer months a small number of weddings are scheduled, but this is recognized as the slow season for the Center.

The Conference Center is actively used by a combination of companies and organizations that rent the facility for various functions, various Chamber of Commerce meetings, and various College in-house activities. Total annual attendance and number of events over the past four years have averaged around 15,850 and 143, respectively. In FY08-09, 14,724 attended 159 events. Facility rentals account for approximately 60 percent of total annual attendance.

The Conference Center has only a warming kitchen. This type of kitchen allows caterers to bring in meals and snacks for events but is seen as drawback for some meeting planners. Thrasher-Horne also serves as an emergency shelter for Clay County, so locations of load bearing walls do not allow Conference Center rooms to be opened up to accommodate large groups.

Orange Park Kennel Club

The Orange Park Kennel Club is one of three greyhound racing venues in the Jacksonville area. Others are the Jacksonville Kennel Club on west of downtown Jacksonville and the St. Johns Greyhound Park in northern St. Johns County. The facility is open year round and is located on Park Avenue (US17) a short distance south of Exit 10 on I-295. It has 1,100 clubhouse seats,

seating for another 4,000 in the grandstand. Gaming activity includes a Poker Room in addition to traditional greyhound racing. Of the 18 greyhound racing facilities in Florida in FY08-09, the Orange Park Kennel Club ranked ninth in “handle” (dollars), behind both other Jacksonville area facilities. In cardroom receipts, however, Orange Park ranked second in the state, behind only the Palm Beach Kennel Club. The vast majority of visitors are from the Jacksonville area. However, high-stakes races and poker tournamants draw serious gamblers and professional players from outside the region.

European Rally School & Motorsports Park

This facility, located at the Keystone Heights Airport in southwestern Clay County, is the first major full time rally school in the United States and may be the most complete motorsport facility in the USA. This facility provides the opportunity for private, corporate, recreational and military training. Corporate team building events can be hosted at the site and up to sixty participants can partake in the driving experience. Eighty-five percent of the customers that attend the rally school are from out of state. The remaining 15% are international customers that have found this facility on the Internet at their own website. Clients are reached through advertising in Motor Trend, Car & Driver, Road and Track and other auto magazines.

After investigating other Florida locations, Keystone Heights Airport was selected the as the site for the facility, which now is operated under a 50-year lease of 400 acres of airport property. The airport, which is owned by the City of Keystone Heights, straddles the Clay County-Bradford County line. Main access to the airport property is through Bradford County.

This facility hosts motor clubs, off road course driving and contributes the facility for many free events for local groups. The Clay County Sheriff’s Department uses the facility for teaching teen drivers. Bradford County sends their police to training classes at the rally courses at no charge. A road rally for Breast Cancer will be held in May 2010. Bradford County also hosts a regular Friday night drive for classic cars and uses the facility. The European Rally is also a sponsor of the University of Florida National Racing Team. This group competes in the Baja and open wheel race car events and they sponsor and donate free track time.

The facility hosts a regional bike event held the week before Bike Week in Daytona to capture the riding public as they head south. In addition, the facility has a five-year contract from the GSA to train military drivers, Navy Seals, Special Forces and Army Rangers. This program has been in existence for eleven years.

The Rally School is about to undergo a \$250,000 upgrade in order to receive a SCCA rating. This rating is a key ingredient for this facility and will open a number of growth opportunities for the facility. This will allow him to add 100 event days to his calendar. Upgrades include 40 stalls for cars, re-configuring a couple of the courses, adding a 1,400 foot concrete wall, a tech building, timing and scoring cables, a public address system and new toilet blocks and showers. Road upgrades on the site were made a year ago \$700,000.

This facility is reported to have the least expensive rates in the Southeast. The closest competitor for rally driving is West Palm Beach Motor Sports. That facility charges \$10,000 per day and the Keystone Heights site charges \$4,000 per day. A three day weekend in Keystone is \$15,000 and a one day rental of Daytona International Speedway is \$100,000.

The Bradford County Chamber of Commerce concluded in an economic impact study about the European Rally site that its effect on the that county amounted to \$1.7 million dollars. Yearly attendance is between 15,000 and 18,000 people, including drivers, friends, and families.

Club Continental

Club Continental is an elegant 22-room, bed and breakfast inn located in Orange Park on the west bank of the St. Johns River. This facility occupies a 27-acre and was originally built as the winter home of Caleb Johnson, founder of the Palmolive Soap Company. The original home is now the Dining and Tennis Club. Other features include tennis courts, a yacht harbor, swimming pools throughout the grounds, suites with Jacuzzis, and spa services.

Club Continental is a favorite site for weddings and special family occasions. With approximately 6,000 square feet of event space, the Club is able to host a wide array of private social and business events. The secluded location and beautifully landscaped surroundings provide the ultimate in upscale entertaining. Club Continental also is a private club with memberships ranging from the non-residential category of \$150 per year to a family membership of \$450. Additional amenities carry fees which are added to the yearly membership.

The mainstay of Club continental has long been the wedding market and the events surrounding these occasions. There is a small corporate market that continues to rely on the Club for its business travelers. This market has been developed over the years and represents the long standing relationships Club Continental has developed with the business community. The Club offers rooms in either the Main House or the River Suites. These private, classically appointed rooms are priced from \$90-\$200 per night. The \$99 per night is the reserved rate for return corporate clients.

The Hilltop

The Hilltop is a restaurant and group banquet facility located in a wooded area on a five-acre site on Wells Road west of Blanding Boulevard in Orange Park. The Hilltop was built in 1985 and has been the home of gracious entertaining in Clay County since. This facility includes 12,500 square feet of meeting and banquet space and overlooks lush landscaped grounds. The facility was winner of the 2008 Best Venue by a local publication and has received rave reviews from the Florida Times Union.

Weddings accounts for 75 percent of guests at the Hilltop. The facility hosts 250-300 weddings per year. Other activities include rehearsal dinners, wedding and baby showers, family celebrations and small private corporate retreats. The Hilltop does very little advertising, relying mostly on word of mouth and previous visits by guests.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Numerous sporting and entertainment events are held annually in Clay County, including fairs, festivals, exhibits, commemorative activities, and sporting competitions. The majority are held in the Green Cove Springs area, particularly on the grounds of the Clay County Agricultural Center. Noteworthy events that draw vendors, exhibitors, participants, and spectators from outside the County include the Clay County Agricultural Fair, North Florida Hunter Winter (Equestrian) Series, Scottish Games and Festival, and Wings of Dreams Air Show. These and several other events are profiled below. Their timing and annual attendance is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Clay County Events and Their Annual Attendance

Event	When and Where Held	2009 Attendance
Clay County Agricultural Fair	April, Clay County Fairgrounds	84,152
North Fla Hunter Jumper Winter Series	January, Clay County Fairgrounds	30,000
Scottish Festival and Games	February, Clay County Fairgrounds	27,000
Wings of Deams Air Show	February, Keystone Heights Airport	15,000-20,000
Ham Jam Classic Car Festival	November, Reynolds Park	Unavailable
Memorial Day Riverfest	May, Green Cove Springs	8,000-10,000
Christmas on Walnut Street	December, Green Cove Springs	Unavailable
Soul Food Festival	October, Green Cove Springs	4,000-5,000

Source: Compiled from various sources by URBANOMICS, Inc.

Clay County Agricultural Fair

Clay County will host its 24th Annual Clay County Agricultural Fair this spring. This fair which has received the Blue Ribbon from the Florida County Fair Association is a ten day event that attracts visitors from all around northeast Florida and South Georgia. The fair contains a midway of rides, food and beverages, talent shows, competitions, scholarship contests, headline entertainment and fun for all ages. The Fair also showcases the agricultural successes of 4-H Clubs and other youth groups.

The 2009 attendance at this A+ rated Family Fair was 84,152 people. Forty percent of the attendees were from outside of Clay County. The fair turns over the attendance every 3 to 5 hours and has had between 7,000 and 20,000 visitors per day. It is estimated by Fair officials that visitors accounted for approximately 140 hotel room nights in Clay County hotels.

The Fair is managed by a staff of three paid staff and approximately 900 volunteers. It would not be feasible to have additional events of this magnitude hosted by this same group as many of the volunteers schedule their vacation at this time and camp at the grounds in order to be able to work the Fair. There are approximately 200 vendors that will rent space for the duration of the Clay County Fair. Each of these vendors are registered and certified by the National Independent Concessionaires Association.

The working relationship between the fair and the County is a good one. The Clay Fair is an organized and well run event organization is reflected in records kept, history preserved and future plans well thought out and supported by an active Board of Directors. The Fair Association has over the years upgraded the facilities, added sidewalks, upgraded the electricity and built additional buildings. The Fair Association purchased three trams from the Florida Strawberry Festival in Starke in order to shuttle people from parking to the venues. The Fair has tried satellite parking in the past and this was unsuccessful.

The Fair is recognized as one of the most friendly family atmosphere and safest county fairs in the state. The lack of alcohol sales is seen as a positive contributing factor to its family friendly reputation. The potential problems that may be associated with liquor sales and some of those encountered by other fairs that do have alcohol sales is avoided at this widely respected event.

Another eagerly anticipated feature of the Fair is the Early Florida Village. This rarely open exhibit is one of the most popular attractions of the Fair. The village is a peek into 19th century Florida life located on the east side of the Clay Fair Association building and is only open during the ten days of the Fair. Comprised of 17 buildings on 15 acres, this historic community consists

of buildings that are either the original building or are a newly constructed replica of that time period. These are working exhibits with volunteers in period costumes. Each of the small businesses represents what one would find in an Old Florida settlement. The volunteers produce a variety of goods that would be found in any early Florida village. The students from Clay County High School built the replica Cracker House. The Fair Association looks forward to the day when it will be able to host visitors to this historic replica village on a more regular basis.

Tickets to the Fair range from \$4 to \$8 per day with the option of lower prices with advanced purchase. Children under five years of age are admitted for free. Concert ticket prices range from \$10-\$15 for reserved seating and stadium seating for the shows is free.

North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series

The 10th Annual Winter Series of Horse Shows, hosted by the North Florida Hunter Jumper Association (NFHJA) and held at the Clay County Agricultural Center, has the most financial impact on Clay County. This is a nationally sanctioned series of horse shows that lasts for five weeks and impacts, hotels, restaurants, and a wide variety of local businesses. This “A” rated competition draws between 500 and 600 riders from over 20 states and representatives from Canada, Brazil, New Zealand, Columbia, Ireland and Mexico.

National and international competitors bring with them families, friends, trainers, veterinarians, grooms, and of course horses that represent the highest level of competition in this industry. This year competitors included members of the US Olympic Gold Medal Equestrian Team and the Canadian Olympic Team. Other competitors come from around the country. Riders compete for points and awards that enhance careers and purses. The FOX news station covers this event for its specialty channel and there is considerable prize money available for the top finishers.

The NFHJA approaches national and international businesses to underwrite and sponsor this internationally recognized event. The organization also approaches many regional and local businesses for financial support and in-kind services. Many sponsors purchase advertising space in the program, which is a high-end glossy publication showcasing riders, horses, underwriters, farms for horse breeding and purchases, trainers, and equipment sales.

The Winter Series attracted 6,000 visitors per week in 2009 who watched 650 horses compete over the five-week period. Each horse is accompanied by between three to five people, including riders, owners, grooms, drivers, trainers, etc. The event generates an estimated 1,500 hotel room nights in an area extending to the World Golf Village in St. Johns County. It is estimated that the Winter Series contributes approximately \$15 million to the local economy over the five-week period and has contributed over \$900,000 to local area non-profit institutions.

Scottish Games and Festival

The Scottish Games and Festival is presented by the Jacksonville Scottish Highland Games, Inc. It is held annually and this year celebrated the 15th anniversary of the games. These games which can trace their origin back one thousand years showcase feats of strength that once kept Scottish men fit for war. Each year a particular clan is honored and the Clan Fraser is the honoree for 2010. The Games consist of a variety of activities that begin the week before. These include a Kilted Golf Tournament, a whiskey tasting, sponsor's reception, a pub crawl on a double-decker bus held on five different nights; pipe and drum band performances, and harp, bagpipe, fiddle and Scottish dancing competitions. The demonstration rugby match takes place the week before. The Kids Day Games (for 5-10 year olds) is run by the YMCA and the Boy Scouts.

The attendance at this well attended event was 27,000 in 2009 with 600 waivers prepared for the children. Publicity is placed in many newspapers in and out of county and eight sites of the Daily Billboard in the north Florida area are used to advertise this event the week before the games. The games also purchase TV spots and advertise in Scottish Newspapers.

These games are recognized as one of the best in country and draw visitors from all over the country; especially from up and down the eastern seaboard. Many come from Nova Scotia, Maritime, and Ontario. This year's games were serviced by approximately twenty-eight food vendors, selling Scottish and British prepared foods who camp in the RV sections of the Clay Fairgrounds. They are charged a \$75 fee to set up. Other vendors sell authentic Scottish merchandise i.e., clothing, jewelry, knitwear, knives, swords, music CDs, a blacksmith is on hand. A few vendors stay in local hotels. Clay County charges the Scottish Games for the overnight RV parking of exhibitors and others attendees.

Different levels of sponsorship are available and these range from \$500 to \$2,500. The ticket price is \$10 per person and children under 10 are free. The 2010 Games support two special charities. These are the Segs 4 Vets which provides Segways, at a cost \$6,000 per vehicle, to every United States soldier whose service to this country results in a disability that impairs walking. The Segway scooter has been approved by the Department Of Defense. The second charity is the YMCA of the First Coast Florida.

Wing of Dreams Air Show

The Wings of Dreams Air Show is a three and a half –day event held at the Keystone Heights Airport. In February for the past four years the Collings Foundation has brought the most high-profile WWII bomber and fighter aircraft to Clay County. Visitors to this one-of-a-kind air show have the opportunity to both tour the aircraft and also to schedule training flights, for a fee, and

take other rides and instructional flights during the show. Professional pilots perform aerial demonstrations in these restored warplanes. Visitors see the fighting planes of WWII that include the B-17 Flying Fortress, a B-25 Mitchell, the only flying B-24 Liberator and a TP-51C Mustang. World class exhibitions are put on by the USAF A-10 demonstration teams and other stunt pilots.

The Air Show honors all pilots that flew missions during WWII. There is a panel discussion and questions and answers are fielded by the guest “fighter aces.” One of the guests is a retired pilot is a former member of the Tuskegee Airmen. These pilots regularly visit local schools in their home communities as resource persons and part of the country’s living history. Several members from the Women’s Air Service Program (WASP) attend yearly who flew WWII planes to repair facilities and on other missions. This group was just awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for service during WWII.

Wings of Dreams Inc. is a non-profit corporation and tax-exempt 501(c) (3) charitable organization. The flight event held each year in February drew 20,000 visitors in 2008. Admission fees are \$5 per person and \$10 per family. The event is covered in 15 newspapers around the country; and other flying community newsletters and military publications. It is also listed on the many websites of the participants. Air show attendees come from Florida, with other visitors attending from around the United States and Europe; plane fanciers all. The budget for the show is \$40,000 and costs are covered by the gate and underwriters.

Memorial Day Riverfest

Riverfest is an annual event held in Green Cove Springs that is celebrated on Memorial Day weekend. This all day event includes a 5K Fun Run, performances by the Navy Brass Band and local performers dancing and singing, a military flyover, fitness demonstrations, and tributes to the military. Vendors display artwork and other goods in a festival market atmosphere in downtown Green Cove Springs. This year, the event will honor fighter pilot Captain Scott Speicher, the first American killed in the Persian Gulf War. This event attracts between 8,000 and 10,000 visitors, including participants in the different activities, vendors, and onlookers.

Soul Food Festival

The Soul Food Festival in Green Cove Springs is an annual celebration of African-American heritage, talent and culinary skills, and is on the first Saturday in October. Activities include a parade, art displays, entertainment, music, and the “best” cooks in the County displaying their favorite foods. Food is provided by 45-55 vendors.

Last year, a favorite member of the community was honored as the recipient of the Pride of Soul Award. Harold “Soul” Douglas is a nephew of the legendary Vera Francis Hall for whom the park in Green Cove Springs is named. A committee of twenty-five volunteers worked on securing performers, and vendors to serve the 4,500 to 5,000 visitors that attended in 2009.

Green Cove Springs will hold its Tenth Annual Soul Food festival on October 2, 2010. The festival is organized and is operated under the auspices of the Augusta Savage Committee, so named for the African-American sculptress born in Green Cove Springs, who worked in Harlem, New York.

Christmas on Walnut Street

The 2009 Christmas on Walnut Street celebrated the 43rd Anniversary of the Christmas Parade. This is an annual festival that attracts thousands of visitors to downtown Green Cove Springs in early December and signals the beginning of the holiday season. Held in the vicinity of Spring Park, on Walnut Street and Magnolia Avenue, the highlight of this traditional event is the collection of over one hundred and fifty Christmas trees that line the streets in downtown, around City Hall and border Spring Park and are decorated and sponsored by businesses, community groups, students and private citizens.

This Friday evening and Saturday event officially begins the Christmas season and is marked by the Friday Night Lighting of the Parade of Trees, performances by local school groups and the lighting of the City’s own tree. This holiday event also includes horse drawn carriage rides vocal and dance performances and a lighted boat parade. The event is free with only a small fee charged for those who wish to have a tour of downtown in the horse drawn carriage.

On Saturday the festival continues with the street festival and booths that represent both retailers from the City and county and individual vendors. Arts and crafts booths face painting, a food court and community health visits from the Blood Mobile and the Mobile Sight and Hearing Test are features in this busy holiday event. Santa arrives on Saturday afternoon to the delight of the thousands that attend on the second day and then the Christmas season is officially underway in Green Cove Springs.

Ham Jam Classic Car Festival

The 2009 Ham Jam Classic Car Festival is a new take on an old favorite. After being held in Jacksonville and St. Johns County, the latest version of Ham Jam included a classic car show of dozens of show cars vying for trophies for being the best in their special category. Held at Reynolds Park, this fall staple of Clay County festivals is looking for a home to call its own.

The original Ham Jam was a BBQ cook off competition and music festival formerly held in Middleburg. Dating back to the 1990s, Ham Jam brought together residents and music lovers for a long weekend of music, rides and food and vendors that included Clay County non-profits set up to raise money for their individual causes. In the past, Ham Jam was supported by the Tourist Development Council and local businesses profited from visitors who spent the night and the money in the County. This event attracted up to 30,000 visitors over the three or four day period and was so successful as a fall event that it was held in the spring to test the audience interest.

The 2009 November event included the car show, BBQ cook off, children's fun zone, a cute baby contest, and the opportunity to watch weekend sports and NFL football on a big screen and listen to entertainment all weekend. Admission fees were \$15 for adults and \$5 for children under 12 years of age. Sponsors included the North Florida Show Car Association and Cripple Dog Hot Rods.

3. Industry Characteristics

VISITOR CHARACTERISTICS

Market Segments

Tourists are commonly defined as non-residents who stay overnight in an area to visit local attractions. Clay County tourists have to be defined more broadly as including non-residents day visitors from adjoining counties and other North Florida locations for two key reasons. First, Clay County lacks the traditional attractions that draw visitors to Florida, including beaches, theme parks, and well-known historical and natural attractions. Second, resources and events that are potential tourist draws are in areas of the County that lack traditional overnight lodgings. As a consequence, Clay County visitors are a mix of several market segments:

- Leisure travelers passing through the area on I-295 staying overnight in the Orange Park area on the way to other destinations.
- Vendors, contractors, business people, and military personnel staying overnight in the area who are visiting or are associated with nearby employment and activity centers, particularly NAS Jacksonville.
- Vendors, participants, performers, and non-resident visitors staying overnight in the area and who are involved with or attending events in the County, including those at the Agricultural Center and Thrasher-Horne.
- Non-residents staying overnight in the area visiting friends and relatives, attending weddings, and involved in other professional, fraternal, and social activities.
- Non-resident day-trippers to the County attending events held in the County and visiting local entertainment and recreational attractions.

There is no quantitative data available to estimate sizes and impacts of these individual groups, but it is most reasonable to assume that day visitors constitute the largest non-resident tourist segment in the County by far. However, the largest numbers of those who attend local events and visit local attractions are not non-residents, but rather are local residents of Clay County. As an example, the County Fair Association analyzed a sample of 14,200 ticket sales at the 2009 Fair, and found that 60 percent had Clay County Zip Codes. Another 36 percent were sold to

residents of other Northeast Florida and nearby counties. Two percent had other Florida Zip Codes, and two percent were out-of-state, mostly in Georgia. While this may be illustrative for most activities and events in the County, it is important to recognize that these entertainment and recreational opportunities contribute on some level to the local economy and quality of life in the County.

Patterns of Existing Visitation

Clay County is not seen as a destination location by virtually all stakeholders interviewed. It is, however, regarded as an “event destination” by these stakeholders. These events range in size from the smaller art fairs and shows attracting hundreds of visitors to Christmas on Walnut Street, the Riverfest, and Soul food Festivals that attract thousands of visitors. The largest event of all is the annual Clay County Agricultural Fair, which has grown to over 84,000 visitors over the ten-day period. Some events put heads in beds, which is the goal for hoteliers in the County. If that were the only measurement of tourism no event would be more successful than the Winter Series Horse Shows. The five-week duration of this event puts it in a class of its own for two reasons. First, it attracts and is visited by a segment of the traveling population that has the disposable income to spend at the event; second, it lasts for five consecutive weeks.

The three most heavily attended events all occur in the southern end of the county. All three of these take place at the Clay County Fairgrounds. This is an unusual situation because there are no hotels in this part of the county with the exception of a small B&B in Green Cove Springs. There is a built-in commute time for the visiting tourist or vendor who chooses to spend the night for an event in Clay County. This results in the majority of visitor being daytrippers.

The busiest time for visitor activity in Clay County is the first four months of the year. The North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series equestrian events in January attract approximately 6,000 per week over a five-week period. The Scottish Games and Festival follow in February, with another 27,000 visitors. In that same month, the Wings of Dreams Air Show in Keystone Heights draws 15,000-20,000 over a three-day period. In April, the Clay County Agricultural Fair in April hosts another 84,000 visitors over a ten-day period. These events appeal to the tourist/visitor with family, children and those who are interested in being outdoors for entertainment. These are also events in which visitors include vendors and concessionaires selling goods and providing services during the event.

These and other events and entertainment activities of interest to tourists are held largely in the southern part of the County in the Green Cove Springs and Keystone Heights areas, where overnight accommodations are limited to rustic cabins, RV campgrounds, and primitive campsites in parks and other public properties. For those events held in the Green Cove Springs

area, Orange Park area hotels, except the Sleep Inn on Fleming Island, are several miles away. For aviation and motorsports activities held in the Keystone Heights area, the closest lodgings are in Starke in neighboring Bradford County. As a result, existing visitors to events held in the southern part of the County are largely day-trippers. However, there is enough to see and do at the ten-day Agricultural Fair to generate many more room nights if overnight accommodations were available in the area. This is true for the North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series, which extends over five weeks.

Many events held in the County are smaller functions that are more community oriented, in that they are mostly one-day events organized around a particular theme or holiday. These community events are attended mostly by local residents and include Christmas on Walnut Street, First Coast Winter Lights, Memorial Day Riverfest, Soul Food Festival, and Orange Park Fall Festival.

Clay County receives limited spillover from activities and events held elsewhere in the region. In past years, Orange Park hotels hosted fans unable to find rooms in Jacksonville for the Gator Bowl and Florida-Georgia game. But, local hotels experienced a decrease in room demand for both games. The Daytona 500 and other Race Week events once benefited Orange Park hotels in a similar manner, but increased hotel capacity near Daytona International Speedway has greatly reduced demand for rooms outside Volusia County.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Comparative analyses of selected tourism industry indicators are presented below for Clay County and seven other Northeast Florida and contiguous counties and eight other Florida counties that have populations comparable in size to Clay or are second tier metropolitan areas counties. Northeast Florida and contiguous counties include Baker, Bradford, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns. Of these, four are coastal (Duval, Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns) and three are non-coastal (Baker, Bradford, and Putnam). Other Florida counties of similar size are Charlotte, Citrus, Hernando, and Santa Rosa, all on the Gulf of Mexico. Second tier metro counties include Lake, Pasco, and Seminole. Lake and Seminole Counties adjoin Orange County (Orlando area) and Pasco County adjoins Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties (Tampa-St. Pete area). Marion County (Ocala area) is also included in this comparative analysis.

Lodgings and Restaurants

Table 2 shows the number of licensed transient lodgings in these counties, including hotel, motel, and rental condo units, and licensed restaurant seating capacity. Comparisons among counties are based on ratios between numbers of lodging units and restaurant seats and county population

(i.e., number per 1,000 residents in this case). Clay County had 1,540 licensed lodging units and 25,048 licensed restaurant seats in 2008, according to the Florida Division of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), equating to 8.3 lodging units and 135.7 restaurant seats per 1,000 population.

Table 2. Licensed Tourist-Oriented Facilities, 2008

County	Lodgings (no. units)			Restaurants (seating capacity)	No. Per 1000 Population	
	Hotels and Motels	Rental Condos	Total Units		Lodging Units	Restaurant Seats
State of Florida	387,949	113,874	501,823	3,591,139	26.9	192.2
<i>Northeast Florida Counties (1)</i>						
Baker	147	0	147	1,842	5.7	71.9
Bradford	357	12	369	3,157	12.7	108.7
Clay	1,540	0	1,540	25,048	8.3	135.7
Duval	16,919	136	17,055	177,346	19.0	197.6
Flagler	711	585	1,296	12,528	13.9	133.9
Nassau	1,718	968	2,686	15,857	38.6	227.9
Putnam	542	23	565	7,128	7.6	95.3
St. Johns	5,675	1,901	7,576	41,928	43.6	241.1
<i>Other Representative Counties (2)</i>						
Charlotte	1,183	1,104	2,287	29,013	13.9	176.3
Citrus	1,205	13	1,218	20,086	8.7	143.3
Hernando	670	0	670	21,807	4.1	134.4
Lake	3,011	1,433	4,444	44,499	15.5	155.3
Marion	4,474	41	4,515	42,437	13.9	130.6
Pasco	2,411	889	3,300	57,309	7.6	131.9
Santa Rosa	762	455	1,217	14,717	8.6	103.5
Seminole	4,649	25	4,674	68,657	11.0	161.3

(1) List also includes other counties adjacent to Clay.

(2) List includes counties of similar size and other metro suburban counties.

Source: Florida Statistical Abstract, 2008 and URBANOMICS, Inc.

The ratio of units to population in Clay exceeds that in rural Baker and Putnam Counties, but is much less than in the Northeast Florida urban core county, Duval, and other coastal counties, as would be expected. The ratio in Clay also exceeds that in Hernando and Pasco Counties. Clay County also exceeds several counties in the number of hotel/motel units and all lodging units.

The Clay County ratio for restaurant seats is more competitive with other counties, reflecting the fact that restaurants are supported largely by the local population. The Orange Park Mall in Clay County near the Duval County line is a significant generator of restaurants that attract patrons from outside the County. Nevertheless, the impact of coastal tourism is shown by much higher ratios in Nassau and St. Johns Counties, which are 68 and 78 percent higher than that in Clay.

Taxable Sales for Lodgings

Comparisons of taxable lodging sales per capita and per unit in 2008 are presented in Table 3. Sales in Clay County averaged \$79 per capita and \$9,504 per unit. Sales in Clay were lower than

Table 3. Taxable Sales for Lodgings and Other Transient Facilities, 2008

County	Population	Sales (\$000)	Sales Per Capita (\$)	Transient Units (1)	Sales Per Unit (\$)
State of Florida	18,807,219	11,599,249	617	501,823	23,114
<i>Northeast Florida Counties (2)</i>					
Baker	25,890	1,352	52	147	9,196
Bradford	29,059	2,709	93	369	7,341
<i>Clay</i>	<i>185,168</i>	<i>14,636</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>1,540</i>	<i>9,504</i>
Duval	904,971	278,888	308	17,055	16,352
Flagler	95,512	30,298	317	1,296	23,378
Nassau	71,915	76,590	1,065	2,686	28,515
Putnam	74,989	6,921	92	565	12,250
St. Johns	181,180	184,662	1,019	7,576	24,375
<i>Other Representative Counties (3)</i>					
Charlotte	165,781	40,343	243	2,287	17,640
Citrus	142,043	20,972	148	1,218	17,218
Hernando	164,907	12,593	73	670	18,796
Lake	288,379	58,514	203	5,114	11,442
Marion	329,418	53,702	163	4,515	11,894
Pasco	438,668	41,728	95	3,300	12,645
Santa Rosa	144,136	22,478	156	1,217	18,470
Seminole	426,413	72,691	170	4,674	15,552

(1) Transient units include hotels, motels, and short-term rental condominiums.

(2) List also includes other counties adjacent to Clay.

(3) List includes counties of similar size and other metro suburban counties.

Source: Florida Department of Revenue, 2008 *Florida Statistical Abstract*, and URBANOMICS, Inc.

in all but Baker and Hernando Counties, and were substantially lower than the four Northeast Florida coastal counties and Florida as a whole. Taxable sales in Nassau and St. Johns Counties were over \$1,000 per capita, reflecting the substantial impact of tourism on these counties.

Taxable sales per lodging unit in Clay were lower than all but Bradford County and were only 41 percent of the statewide average. Taxable sales per unit in Clay were 58 percent of the Duval County average, 41 percent of the Flagler County average, 39 percent of the St. Johns County average, and only 33 percent of the Nassau County average. Flagler, Nassau, and St. Johns Counties all have comparatively pricey resort hotels and condominiums.

These sales comparisons are noteworthy in that they show that existing hotels, motels, and other lodgings in Clay County suffer from a combination of low occupancy and low room rates and that the County has a long way to go in terms of attracting interest and visitors from outside the region.

Tourism-Oriented Employment

Employment characteristics for three tourism-oriented economic sectors in 2007 are shown in Table 4. These sectors are: amusements, gambling, and recreation; accommodations; and food services and drinking places. Comparative analysis is based on the number of employees in each sector per 1,000 residents of each county.

Clay County ranks lower than most counties listed in the amusements, gambling, and recreation and accommodations sectors with only 2.1 and 1.5 jobs per 1,000 population, respectively. Only rural Baker, Bradford, and Putnam Counties have lower ratios in the amusements, gambling, and recreation sector. St. Johns County is tops in this sector with 8.6 jobs per 1,000 population. The statewide average is 7.6 jobs per 1,000 population.

Nassau and St. Johns Counties rank highest in the accommodations sector, with 29.1 and 14.0 jobs per 1,000 population. Both counties have large full-service resort facilities and hotels in their lodging inventories. The comparatively small lodging sector in Clay County is reflected in its ratio of only 1.5 jobs per 1,000 residents. The Clay inventory consists of generally smaller limited service hotels and motels. The statewide average is 8.5 jobs per 1,000 population.

In the food services sector, Clay County is very competitive, with 26.3 jobs per 1,000 population, compared to 31.5 jobs per 1,000 population for the state. Here again, this reflects the fact that restaurants draw their primary support from local residents and the strong presence and drawing power of the Orange Park Mall near the Clay/Duval line.

Table 4. Tourism-Oriented Employment, 2007

County	Amusements, Gambling & Recreation (NAICS 713) (1)		Accommodations (NAICS 721)		Food Services & Drinking Places (NAICS 722)	
	Number Employed	No. Per 1,000 Pop.	Number Employed	No. Per 1,000 Pop.	Number Employed	No. Per 1,000 Pop.
State of Florida	142,165	7.6	158,862	8.5	589,233	31.5
<i>Northeast Florida Counties (2)</i>						
Baker	0	0.0	35	1.4	399	15.6
Bradford	39	1.3	58	2.0	649	22.3
Clay	389	2.1	286	1.5	4,865	26.3
Duval	3,366	3.8	4,382	4.9	32,718	36.5
Flagler	363	3.9	167	1.8	1,672	17.9
Nassau	188	2.7	2,026	29.1	1,937	27.8
Putnam	40	0.5	96	1.3	1,220	16.3
St. Johns	1,500	8.6	2,435	14.0	7,115	40.9
<i>Other Representative Counties (3)</i>						
Charlotte	991	6.0	314	1.9	3,754	22.8
Citrus	694	5.0	314	2.2	2,570	18.3
Hernando	564	3.5	228	1.4	4,184	25.8
Lake	821	2.9	993	3.5	6,923	24.2
Marion	1,200	3.7	872	2.7	7,724	23.8
Pasco	1,503	3.5	1,255	2.9	8,819	20.3
Santa Rosa	422	3.0	322	2.3	3,172	22.3
Seminole	1,465	3.4	1,121	2.6	14,612	34.3

NAICS North American Industrial Classification System.

(1) Includes golf courses/country clubs, theme parks, amusement arcades, marinas, and fitness facilities.

(2) List also includes other counties adjacent to Clay.

(3) List includes counties of similar size and other metro suburban counties.

Source: Florida Statistical Abstract, 2008 and URBANOMICS, Inc.

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

There were 1,540 licensed transient lodging units in Clay County in 2008 according to the DBPR. Most are hotel and motel units in the Orange Park area, the largest concentration of which are near the Exit 10 interchange on I-295. There are (or were) 12 existing chain hotels/motels in this area with a total of 1,404 rooms, but the 233-room Howard Johnson facility closed in November 2009. Another 24 rooms in this area are classified as Bed & Breakfast

accommodations. Currently, there are 1,200 existing licensed hotel, motel, and B&B units in the County, as summarized in Table 5. All but five units are in the Orange Park area.

Table 5. Licensed Hotels, Motels, and B&Bs in Clay County

Name	Location	No. Rooms
<i>Orange Park Area</i>		
Rodeway Inn & Conference Center	300 Park Avenue	181
Suburban Extended Stay Hotel	1656 Wells Road	144
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites	620 Wells Road	134
In Town Suites	4442 Blanding Boulevard	121
Comfort Inn	341 Park Avenue	119
Courtyard Marriott	610 Wells Road	115
Hilton Garden Inn	145 Park Avenue	100
Sleep Inn & Suites	1815 east West Parkway, Fleming Island	90
Fairfield Inn by Marriott	450 Eldridge Avenue	83
Days Inn	4280 Eldridge Loop	58
EconoLodge	141 Park Avenue	26
Club Continental/Winterbourne	2143 Astor Street	24
<i>Green Cove Springs Area</i>		
River Park Inn B&B	103 S. Magnolia Avenue	5
TOTALS		1,200

Source: Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation; and URBANOMICS, Inc.

In addition to hotels, motels, and B&Bs, overnight accommodations in the County include a number of rental condominiums in golf course communities such as Eagle Harbor and Magnolia Point and a number of cabins and campgrounds on county and state lands, including the County Agricultural Center, Camp Chowenwaw, Gold Head Branch State Park, and Camp Blanding.

Average occupancy rates have declined significantly over the last five years, in part due to the introduction of two new hotels and in part due to the slumping general economy. Average annual occupancy rates have dropped by an estimated 18 percentage points from near 68 percent in 2004-05 to around 50 percent in 2009-10, representing a significant loss of income to operators and tourist tax revenues to the County.

The concentration of overnight accommodations in Orange Park near I-295 has little connection with the location of the majority of existing special events and potential tourism resources in the south end of the County. Most existing lodgings, instead, are located to take advantage of traffic passing by on I-295 or destined for major business and employment centers nearby, particularly the Jacksonville Naval Air Station complex a few miles north on US17.

For this reason, it is desirable to promote and develop additional business and leisure opportunities in the greater Orange Park area to help support existing lodgings in the area, while also promoting and developing overnight accommodations in the southern part of the County to serve existing and potential tourism-related opportunities in that area. In this regard, the proposed full-service riverfront resort hotel included in redevelopment plans for Reynolds Park will be critical to the County's tourism future.

4. Development Strategy

CREATING A TOURISM IDENTITY

Attempts to promote Clay County as a viable tourist destination have been ineffective, largely because messages do not convey adequately the distinct assets and opportunities of individual areas of the County, which are quite diverse. Any strategy to develop a tourist industry in the County should include creation of an identity for these distinctive areas of the County and their individual assets and tourism development opportunities and to focus for marketing initiatives and public investments needed to promote recognition and development of these areas. Toward these ends, three distinctive areas of the County are defined -- River Country, Lakes Region, and Upper Clay -- each having distinct features and development opportunities.

River Country

River Country is the suggested name for southeastern Clay County and defines a particularly scenic and largely undeveloped area of the St. Johns River that has enormous potentials in ecotourism, heritage tourism, and river-based recreation. In addition to the broad River and tranquil Black Creek, assets include Historic Green Cove Springs, Reynolds Park and its proposed resort hotel and marina, the Clay County Agricultural Center and Old Florida Village, and the unique Penney Farms community. This area hosts a number of special annual events in Green Cove Springs and at the Agricultural Center, including the three most visited in the County -- the County Agricultural Fair, North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series equestrian events, and the Scottish Games and Festival.

Investments and marketing activities should focus on the following activities and themes:

- Ecotourism, including water-based ecotours on Black Creek and adventure and sightseeing cruises on the St. Johns River.
- Heritage tourism, including tours that communicate the maritime and wartime history of the area and its gilded era as a mineral springs spa for wealthy visitors from the North.
- Riverfront resort development, notably the proposed full-service resort hotel on the Reynolds Park property. .
- River-based recreation, including river cruising, water-based ecotours, kayaking/canoeing on Black Creek, fishing tournaments, and sailing and power boat races.

- Equestrian activities, including the North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series and other equestrian events.
- An Old Florida theme that captures the rich natural environment and history of the area..

Green Cove Springs should be promoted and developed as the visitor service center for River Country, including development of land-based and water-based ecotours and heritage tours that communicate the maritime and wartime history of the area and its gilded era as a mineral springs spa for wealthy visitors from the North.

Recognizing the need for overnight lodgings in this area, it will be important for the County and City of Green Cove Springs to provide whatever marketing and permitting support possible to the owners of the Reynolds Park to redevelop the property and attract a proposed full-service riverfront resort hotel, which the Consultant considers a critical part of the County's tourism future.

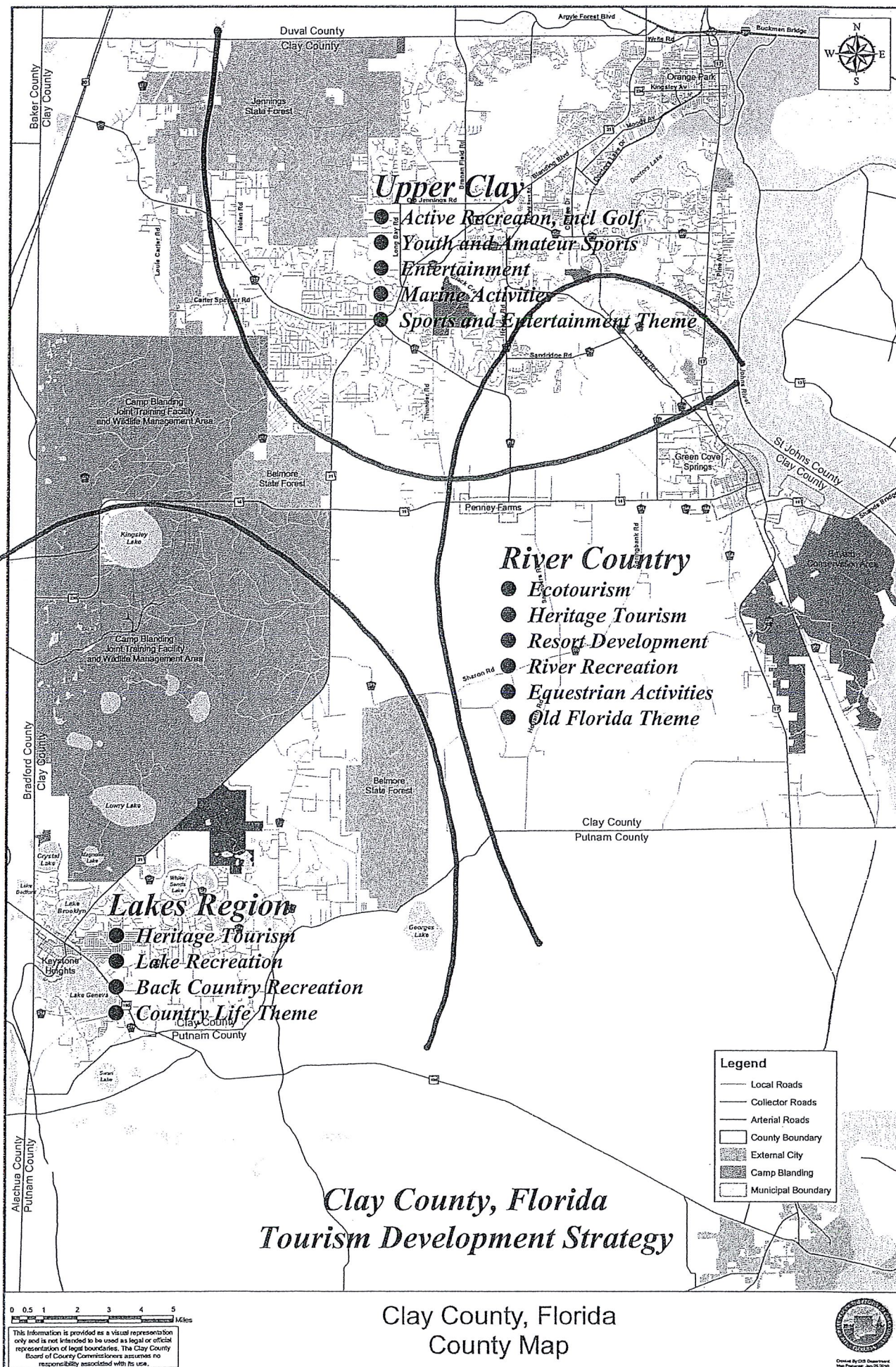
The "River County" concept applies equally to areas of Putnam County and St. Johns County along the River between Green Cove Springs and Palatka. The Consultant recommends that Clay County tourism officials approach their Putnam and St. Johns County counterparts to discuss advantages of a cooperative promotional program for the area.

Lakes Region

Lakes Region is the suggested name for southwestern Clay County and defines an area from Keystone Heights to Kingsley Lake that features dozens of lakes, large and small. In addition to the lakes, assets of this area include a multi-use state park, paved state rail-trail, two WWII museums, and motorsports park. Despite severe falls in water levels in many lakes, the area is well suited to various lake-based recreational activities, including swimming, fishing, and boating. This area hosts the Wings of Dreams Air Show and various training programs and motorsports competitions at the European Rally School at Keystone Heights Airport.

Investments and marketing activities should focus on the following activities and themes:

- Heritage tourism, including programs that increase the appeal and recognition of the two existing WWII museums in the area and the resort history of the area.
- Lake-based recreation, including fishing, swimming, and boating
- Back-country recreation, including camping, hunting, hiking, and biking.
- A country life theme that captures the rural character of the area.



Keystone Heights should be promoted and developed as the service center for the Lakes Region. The "Lakes Region" concept also applies to adjacent areas of Putnam County and Alachua County centering on the Town of Melrose. The Consultant recommends that Clay County tourism officials approach their Putnam and Alachua County counterparts to discuss advantages of a cooperative promotional program for this lakes area as well.

Upper Clay

Upper Clay is a working name for the largely developed suburban area of northern Clay County, including Orange Park, Fleming Island, Middleburg, and Oakleaf Plantation area. Existing assets in Upper Clay include the Thrasher-Horne Center, Orange Park Kennel Club, several golf courses, various youth sports facilities, active youth sports organizations, and nearly 1,200 hotel/motel and B&B rooms. Orange Park is the service center for Upper Clay.

Investments and marketing activities should focus on developing and enhancing entertainment, active recreation, and competitive youth and amateur sports opportunities, including development of a new sports complex to meet future local needs as well as to attract an external competitive sports market. Recreation and sports opportunities in this area also include golf packages, outings, and tournaments, taking advantage of five existing golf courses in the area. In addition, County recreation and tourism officials should investigate the status and future of the closed Ravines golf course. The Ravines once was among the premier courses in Florida, and its infrastructure includes a clubhouse/lodge and a number of rental units for overnight guests. Closure of the facility is a major setback for the future of golf tourism in the County.

ECOTOURISM AND HERITAGE TOURISM

Ecotourism, or nature-based recreation, and heritage tourism are increasingly popular and growing segments of the travel and leisure market. Travelers and vacationers who enjoy these activities tend to be older and have higher incomes than typical family-tourists. National demographic trends indicate that their numbers are increasing the most rapidly of all tourist segments. Amenities and attractions in the River County and Lakes Region areas of the County are ideally suited to ecotourism and heritage tourism.

The major shortcoming of these areas is the lack of traditional overnight accommodations. Cabins and RV campsites, however, are available in the Gold Head Branch State Park, Camp Chowenwaw Park, and the County Fairgrounds. The proposed full-service riverfront resort hotel on the Reynolds Park property, if and when developed, will give ecotourism, heritage tourism, and other recreational opportunities in the south County a major boost and, along with

completion of the proposed First Coast Outer Beltway, may be a catalyst for other lodgings to develop in the area. For a variety of reasons, the proposed hotel and beltway projects critical parts of the County's tourism future.

Opportunities for ecotourism and heritage tourism can be linked to existing visitor events, but marketing efforts to link events and other attractions in the County are not evident. Tours of historic sites and museums, musical entertainment, arts exhibits, and ecotourism opportunities, and publicizing of these as potential packages of attractions may interest day visitor to spend a night and visit another amenity before heading home. This type of tourism is a new market being touted in travel circles as edu-tourism. This name is given to visitors who travel to an area to learn about the specific history, culture, or environmental assets of the area. Clay County has opportunities to mix and match events and attractions to convert day trips into overnight visits for this market, but such trips must be created and marketed to visitors.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Clay County is extremely youth sports minded. A number of athletic facilities are located in the northern part of the County adjacent to schools, in County parks, and in large planned communities such as Eagle Harbor and Oakleaf Plantation. The concept of expanding facilities used locally for competitive youth team sports and recreation activities to attract regional and national competitive events, i.e., "sports tourism," has been discussed actively among public officials and interested residents for several years.

Most recently, companies that develop and operate sports complexes nationally in partnership with local governments have been in contact with County representatives to discuss opportunities in the County. A number of stakeholders interviewed for this study voiced their strong support for development of such a complex, also recommending that it be funded in part by tourist tax revenues. And, a local group, Clay County Sports, Inc., proposes development of a 500-acre multi-use sports complex with a 500-acre buffer, costing as much as \$100 million.

Many communities in Florida and elsewhere are actively pursuing the "sports tourism" market and are considering or developing sports complexes to capture opportunities in this growing industry. Osceola, Pasco, and Seminole Counties are among the Florida locations where these facilities are being considered and are in development. The presence of such a youth and amateur sports complex in Clay County, even one much less ambitious than that proposed above, would allow the County to compete for state, regional, and national sports events and tournaments. Upper Clay is the optimal location in the County because of its greater proximity to hotels, restaurants, and other urban amenities and services needed to support visiting teams.

Determination of the market and financial feasibility of a sports complex in Clay County, including its scope, competition, cost, and economic impact is the first order of business. Scope of the complex should be viewed in the context of types and amounts of recreation and sports facilities needed for the future County population and building from there. The Consultant recommends creation of a Sports Development Council (SDC) of interested and knowledgeable volunteers to advise the County on local needs, project feasibility, and, ultimately, project operations. The SDC would work with and be staffed by the County Department of Parks and Recreation, similar to the relationship between the TDC and County Tourism Office.

The mission of the SDC would differ from that of the TDC in that the SDC would be facility oriented, whereas the focus of the TDC is on marketing the County. Close coordination and overlapping membership are desirable because of the potential of a sports complex to impact local tourism and needs to market the facility outside the County. Tourist tax revenues can help fund feasibility studies and plans.

5. Funding and Management

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND PRIORITIES

Uses of Tourist Tax Revenues

Clay County receives approximately \$400,000 annually in tourist tax revenues from transient accommodations in the County and has reserves currently in the \$600,000 range. Annual revenues are small in comparison to those in several Northeast Florida counties and many others across the state. For example, Duval County brings in around \$18 million and St. Johns County receives about \$5.5 million annually, which allows these and other counties to provide financial support for a number of tourist development programs and public facilities and improvements.

In Duval County, revenues from four percent of its six percent tourist tax is used to help fund the Prime Osborne Convention Center and Jacksonville Municipal Stadium. Four-fifths of the remaining two percent tax are used to fund Visit Jacksonville, the former Jacksonville & The Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau.

In St. Johns County, which has a three-percent tax rate, revenues are used to fund media advertising and marketing programs, the Visitor and Convention Bureau, several visitor centers, support of special events initiatives, operational support for the Convention Center and Players Championship, as well as beach access improvements, beach re-nourishment programs, and other capital projects. The St. Johns FY09-10 TDC budget includes grants for 47 events and activities, averaging approximately \$15,000.

Clay County does not have the level of tourist tax revenues to fund an array of marketing activities, public facility operations, and capital improvements. Although Florida statute allows a range of uses for tourist tax funds, the Consultant is of the opinion that tourist tax revenues in Clay, with few exceptions, should be focused on marketing activities, events, and public facilities that expose the County to external markets.

Further, tourist tax revenues should not be the sole source or a principal source of funds used to promote and market events and facilities. Rather, revenues should be used to leverage other marketing and programming funds raised by event organizers and facility operators, with the recommendation that local tax funds be matched wherever practicable by a minimum of three to five (3-5) times the amount of other funds raised.

The objective of these recommended policies and practices is to ensure that limited revenues are used to maximum effect in advertising, marketing, and promoting Clay County to external markets. If a goal is to put “heads in beds” of the lodgings that generate the tourist tax revenues, then it follows that these revenues are best used for activities that reach non-resident markets and stimulate visitor interest.

It is also desirable that tax revenues be used to provide marketing support market for a range of activities, events, and facilities, each of which may have the ability to capture non-local interest. Thus, the Consultant recommends further that funds allocated to an individual event, facility, or special program be limited to ten (10) percent of total annual tax revenues unless there are compelling reasons to grant exceptions.

Thrasher-Horne

The Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts is a facility in which Clay County can be truly proud. It is among a relatively small number of theater-style performing arts facilities in Florida, most of which are located in center cities or urban areas with hotels and restaurants nearby. These others include the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota (1,736 seats), Ruth Eckerd Hall in Clearwater (2,180 seats), Philharmonic Center for the Arts in Naples (1,221 seats), and Mahaffey Theater in St. Petersburg (2,030 seats). Thrasher-Horne is a competitively-sized facility, with 1,750 seats, but is somewhat remote from the amenities and services that would help generate patronage.

The Arts Center and Convention Center have experienced significant net losses for several years, reaching \$908,000 in FY08-09. On the plus side, revenues reached a peak in FY08-09 of \$488,000, including \$79,000 in rental income, \$231,000 in ticket sales (highest year to date), and \$53,000 in contributions (best year to date, by far). The County has been giving Thrasher-Horne \$125,000 in annual operating funds from tourist tax revenues for several years, representing 30 percent of the Thrasher-Horne’s total average annual operating income.

This annual contribution has become a bone of contention among government representatives and business interests in the County and questions are raised as to whether Thrasher-Horne is on the path to self-sufficiency. The reality is that public facilities of this type rarely achieve financial self-sufficiency and rely on private contributions and/or government subsidies to continue operations. It is the opinion of the Consultant that some level of public funding support for Thrasher-Horne should continue, but the amount of support should be based on the following:

- Thrasher-Horne should be required to apply for annual funding and describe how funds requested will be utilized for advertising, marketing, and programming and how those activities help advance tourism in the County.

- The amount of funds awarded should bear some matching relationship to the amount of private contributions budgeted that year. A one-to-one matching ratio is recommended. Private contributions totaled nearly \$53,000 in FY08-09. A like amount from the County would not be unreasonable for Thrasher-Horne to apply for from tourist tax revenues. Another option is to increase the tourist tax to four percent, using additional revenues for Thrasher-Horne. Thirty-one counties have a four-percent tax, including Bradford and Putnam Counties.
- County tax revenues should be used only to help offset costs of advertising, marketing, and programming for Thrasher-Horne, and in so doing also helps promote Clay County.

Film Promotion

Clay County has past successes in the film production and music industries as the locale for a number of motion picture and music video shoots. Camp Blanding and the Green Cove Springs area among the proven locations in Northeast Florida for these activities. The Tourist Development Council and County have funded film promotion activities in the past, and have been presented again with a proposal from an local industry professional to renew a film promotion program.

It is the opinion of the Consultant that an investment by the County in film promotion activities has the potential to pay off more readily as a generator of economic impacts than investments in building ecotourism, heritage tourism, and sports development, all of which have significant potentials, but are more long range opportunities for the County. A film promotion program will also help increase the exposure of Clay County to external markets.

Capital Funding

Use of annual tax revenues to fund capital improvements is not recommended. Instead, reserve funds are a potential source for assisting with certain public improvements that enhance visitor experiences while in the County, including improvements on public properties and rights-of way. In this regard, the Tourist Development Council and County should consider using some reserve funds to improve the County Fairgrounds, including expansion of permanent seating and constructing a stage in the Cattleman's Arena and improving bathrooms.

In addition, several stakeholders indicated needs to improve certain wayfinding, trail, and historic site signage at various locations in the County. Here again, best uses of tourist tax reserves are those matched by other sources, including state and federal grants and other County capital improvement funds.

INCENTIVE GRANTS

Objectives and Criteria

Tourist tax revenues are commonly used as financial grants to help support visitor-oriented programs and special events, their organizers, and host venues. Grant awards often may be based on numbers of room nights generated or return on investment (ROI). Lacking evidence that entertainment and sporting activities and events held presently in Clay County generate non-resident visitor traffic and “heads and beds,” it is premature to base grant awards on typical room night and ROI factors.

Rather, the interest of the County should be in providing financial support and promoting activities and events that may be attractive to non-resident and overnight visitor and that present the County as having the attractions and amenities of a potential tourist destination. Towards these ends, the following objectives and criteria are recommended as the basis for accepting and awarding grants to organizers and hosts of fairs, festivals, and other potential visitor-oriented activities and events:

- Incentive grants should be provided to organizers and hosts of significant recreation, sports, and entertainment-related events, activities, and programs that enhance the quality of life in Clay County and attract participants and visitors from outside the County.
- Incentive grants should be provided for the promotion of significant cultural, historical, and natural resources, and for activities and programs that provide educational benefits to County residents and attract interest of participants and visitors from outside the County.
- Incentive grants should be limited to public and non-profit applicants, except where it can be shown that activities and events conducted by private for-profit entities meet a public need or have a public benefit.
- The effectiveness of County financial resources to increase market awareness of the assets and amenities of Clay County should be maximized by requiring that incentive grants and supplemental funds be used only for advertising, marketing, promotional, and programming activities.
- The use of County financial resources should be optimized by requiring events hosts and organizers match the amount of public funds requested with funds raised for advertising, marketing, promotion, and programming by event hosts and organizers from other sources by a ratio not less than 3:1.

- Priorities for public funding among applicants and funding decisions should reflect matching fund ratios, such that applications with higher ratios will be considered more favorably than those with lower ratios, except where other considerations may prevail.

Application Requirements -- Recreation, Sports, and Entertainment Activities

- The applicant should provide a description of the activity, event, or program for which funding assistance is being sought, including when and where held, duration, types of participants and users, and a statement of how it relates to the advancement of tourism in Clay County.
- The applicant should indicate the amount of and need for grant funds being requested, including a description of how the requested funds will be used to advertise, market, and promote the activity, event, or program.
- The applicant should provide a description of and itemized budget for advertising, marketing, and programming activities anticipated or planned, and estimates of potential revenues from other sources.
- The applicant should provide estimates of the number of participants and attendees, including exhibitors, performers, spectators, and other users, including percentages of each from the local area (of Clay County), elsewhere in Northeast Florida, and outside the region (i.e., potential overnight visitors).

Application Requirements -- Cultural, Historic, and Natural Resources and Programs

- The applicant should provide a description of the resource and/or program for which funding assistance is being sought, including a statement of how it relates to the advancement of tourism in Clay County.
- The applicant should indicate the amount of and need for grant funds being requested, including a description of how the requested funds will be used to advertise, market, and promote the activity, event, or program.
- The applicant should provide a description of and itemized budget for advertising, marketing, and programming activities anticipated or planned, and estimates of potential revenues from other sources.
- The applicant should provide estimates of numbers of visitors and users, including percentages from the local area (of Clay County), elsewhere in Northeast Florida, and outside the region (i.e., potential overnight visitors).

***Clay County Tourism Development Strategy
Budget Guidelines***

Program Area	Function and Activity	Revenue Source and Budget Share (%)
Administration	Provide staff support to TDC and BOCC Provide quarterly and annual reports Coordinate with county agencies and cities Coordinate with special event organizers Coordinate with hotels and venue operators	Annual Revenues, 20-25%
Tourism Marketing	Develop image and branding program Develop and place collateral materials Network with external organizations/contacts Provide news briefs to media Develop and maintain up-to-date website Respond to inquiries Coordinate with travel writers Retain advertising/PR firms	Annual Revenues, 20-25% (if additional funding is needed to hire firms to design and develop marketing campaign and materials, access reserve funds)
Incentive Grants	Special Events (up to 10 per year) -- County Agricultural Fair -- North Florida Hunter Jumper Winter Series -- Scottish Games and Festival -- Others of significance	Annual Revenues, 25-30%
	Thrasher-Horne matching grants	Annual Revenues, 15-20%
Special Programs	Film/Video Promotion -- Network with state and industry contacts -- Coordinate local logistics -- Provide quarterly and annual reports	Annual Revenues, 5-10%
	Sports Development -- Coordinate with Sports Development Council -- Coordinate with Parks and Recreation	Included in Admin and Tourism Marketing budgets
Capital Projects	County Fairgrounds improvements	Reserve Funds
	Sports Development (Feasibility Study)	Reserve Funds
	Signage and wayfinding improvements	Reserve Funds

*Clay County Tourism Development Strategy
Five-Year Action Plan*

Year	Program Area			
	Tourism Marketing	Incentive Grants	Special Programs	Capital Projects
2010	Discuss image/branding strategy with cities, neighbor counties (e.g., Putnam), event organizers, and others who may benefit	Update grant criteria and application forms, including a post event reporting procedure and form	Initiate film/video promotion program	Fund County Fairgrounds improvements (e.g., bathrooms); allocate up to \$50,000 from reserves
	Determine status of proposed resort hotel/marina project from Reynolds Park officials; assist as appropriate	Fund up to 10 special events	BOCC to establish Sports Development Council (SDC)	
	Develop/maintain relationships with military and NAS Jax to foster overnight business	Establish funding policy for Thrasher-Horne and fund accordingly	SDC to begin reviewing local needs and external opportunities with Parks and Rec Dept	
2011	Retain Ad/PR firm to assist with design/development of image/branding campaign	Fund up to 10 special events	Continue film/video program	Continue funding County Fairgrounds improvements; allocate up to \$50,000 from reserves
	Continue to work with Reynolds Park officials and City of Green Cove Springs on project	Fund Thrasher-Horne	SDC/Parks and Rec to discuss opportunities with potential partners (Big League Dreams, Sportsplex USA, etc.)	
	Develop/maintain relationships with military and NAS Jax to foster overnight business			

(continued)

*Clay County Tourism Development Strategy
Five-Year Action Plan (continued)*

Year	Program Area			
	Tourism Marketing	Incentive Grants	Special Programs	Capital Projects
2012	Develop new collateral materials and update website to reflect new image/branding strategy	Fund up to 10 special events	Continue film/video program	Continue funding County Fairgrounds improvements; allocate up to \$50,000 from reserves
	Distribute collateral materials to area hotels, Visit Florida, Florida Welcome Centers, etc.	Fund Thrasher-Horne	SDC/Parks and Rec through BOCC to retain firm for feasibility study of sports complex, incl. analyses of demand, usage, and costs	Fund feasibility study of sports complex; allocate \$25,000-\$50,000 from tourist tax reserve revenues
	Continue to work with Reynolds Park officials and City of Green Cove Springs on project			
	Develop/maintain relationships with military and NAS Jax to foster overnight business			
2013	Identify/develop opportunities for other events that complement new image/branding strategy	Fund up to 10 special events	Continue film/video program	Fund visitor informational and directional signage; allocate up to \$25,000 from reserves
	Continue to work with Reynolds Park officials and City of Green Cove Springs on project	Fund Thrasher-Horne	SDC/Parks & Rec to present and recommend directions/actions on a sports complex to BOCC	
	Develop/maintain relationships with military and NAS Jax to foster overnight business			

(continued)

*Clay County Tourism Development Strategy
Five-Year Action Plan (continued)*

Year	Program Area			
	Tourism Marketing	Incentive Grants	Special Programs	Capital Projects
2014	Identify/develop opportunities for other events that complement new image/branding strategy	Fund up to 10 special events	Continue film/video program	Fund visitor informational and directional signage; allocate up to \$25,000 from reserves
	Continue to work with Reynolds Park officials and City of Green Cove Springs on project	Fund Thrasher-Horne	BOCC/SDC/Parks & Rec to take next steps towards implementing sports complex	
	Develop/maintain relationships with military and NAS Jax to foster overnight business			



Agenda Item
Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Clay County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

No Attachments Available

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer

Action

Date

Comments

No Reviewers Available



Agenda Item
Clay County Board of County Commissioners

Clay County Administration Building
Wednesday, January 25 3:00 PM

TO: Chairman Cella

DATE: 1/20/2017

FROM: Ann Mitchell,
Administrative Assistant

SUBJECT:

AGENDA ITEM TYPE:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

▣ North American Golf

REVIEWERS:

Department Reviewer	Action	Date	Comments
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No Reviewers Available

Northeast Florida selected as the winner of the IAGTO North American Golf Destination of the Year

17 November 2016

Northeastern Florida's Coast is pleased to announce it has been awarded the Golf Destination of the Year for North America for 2017 by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO).

With five distinct coastal regions, each with their own championship golf offerings and luxury southern charm, Amelia Island, Jacksonville and The Beaches, Clay County, Palm Coast and Flagler Beaches, and St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra Beach makes Northeast Florida's Coast a premier golf destination.

Northeastern Florida's Coast is globally recognized as the home of THE PLAYERS Championship played each May on TPC Sawgrass' THE PLAYERS Stadium Course. The region is also home to the World Golf Hall of Fame & Museum, PGA TOUR and Champions Tour. Northeast Florida, and its 196 kilometer stretch along Florida's Atlantic Coast, is home to some of the world's finest coastal golf courses, resorts and teaching academies in the USA.

IAGTO is the global trade association of the golf tourism industry, comprised of 600 golf tour operators from more than 60 different countries who cast their vote for this award. Each operator is asked to nominate the best performing golf destinations enjoyed by their clients, resulting in five Golf Destination of the Year winners from each of the five regional categories – North America, Latin America & Caribbean, Europe, Africa & Gulf States & Indian Ocean, Asia and Australasia. Criteria under consideration include customer satisfaction, quality of courses and accommodation, value for money, professional conduct of suppliers, support from local tourism industry and accessibility to tee times.

Visiting golfers have many choices to select from boasting 44 travel friendly courses stretching over 196 kilometers of Florida Atlantic coastline. Accommodation choices are abundant featuring 7 luxurious golf resorts with four and 5 diamond ratings as well as upper mid-scale accommodations. Apart from the fantastic golf, accommodations, beaches and Florida sunshine – the region's people have a hospitable culture and southern charm that has visiting golfers returning year after year. Shopping, local seafood dining and popular local breweries and wineries are also part of the local flare our guests partake.

For golf aficionados and leisure travelers alike, Northeast Florida's travel access points are easy to navigate. The award winning Jacksonville International Airport (JAX) has up to 14 daily flights connecting from all international gateways within the United States and direct service from Toronto. By car, the regional motorways are brilliantly positioned for efficiently navigating the region and is just a short 1.5 hour drive from Orlando.

Florida's First Coast is a resort destination for families, couples, and senior travelers, offering pristine beaches, exceptional golf, a wealth of art and cultural events, and a variety of shopping, dining, and entertainment for all ages year-round.

For more information on visiting Northeast Florida, contact Florida's First Coast of Golf, Inc. 904.607.3204 or visit www.florida-golf.org (<http://www.florida-golf.org>)

ENDS

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