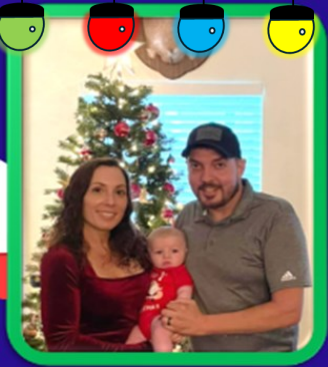


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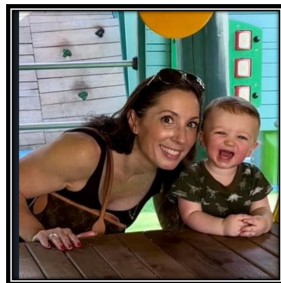
Focus

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2024 EDITION



From the Commissioner's Desk..

Dear Friends,
 The holiday season is a time for family and friends to gather, celebrate, create traditions, and rejoice in bringing unity to our communities.
 Over the course of this year I have learned so much, and have met so many wonderful people who are passionate and focused on keeping St. Lucie County thriving, strong, beautiful and healthy. My gift to you is to embrace these commitments, and do my part to incorporate them into my decision making process to help preserve the foundation that has kept St. Lucie County a gem of the Treasure Coast.
 From my family to yours, here's wishing everyone a joyous and happy holiday!
 Best regards,
 Jamie Lee Fowler



Commissioner Fowler & Easton Cole Fowler



Improving for the Better!!

It may come as a surprise to homeowners, but driveway culverts are the responsibility of the homeowner and not local government. Unfortunately, there are thousands of failed driveway culvert pipes in unincorporated St. Lucie County.

These culverts are important as they help drain runoff and stormwater out of neighborhoods.

Failed culvert pipes create poor drainage, flooding issues and water quality problems for many of our communities.



The price tag to replace a driveway culvert can be costly. To help offset the expense, the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners created the Culvert Assistance Program, which offers deferred payments to the homeowner so the expense of a culvert replacement becomes part of your yearly taxes and is spread over a 10-year period. The county hopes to assist residents through a financial mechanism which will lessen the up-front cost of this important home improvement project.



For more information:

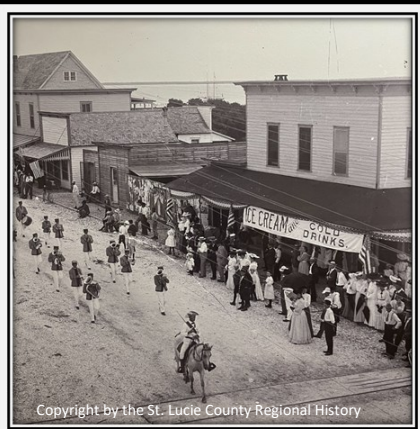
Call: (772) 462-1435

Email: waterquality@stlucieco.org



ST
LUCIE

HISTORY



Copyright by the St. Lucie County Regional History

Grand Marshall William Coats (on horse) leads the parade celebrating the formation of St. Lucie County on July 4, 1905.

Meet the Team !

Meet Jennifer Garrity. Jennifer has been with the county for over 15 years. She started as a Senior Staff Assistant in the Tourism Division and is now the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Budget Manager. She leads the budget staff and is responsible for developing and implementing major portions of the county's budget. She plays a key role in budget analysis, developing procedures and provides training and guidance to all the BOCC departments. She is a life-long St. Lucie county resident, born at the 7th street hospital and raised in Fort Pierce. She has a bachelor's degree in public administration from IRSC and is currently enrolled at the University of West Florida working on her master's in public administration. She is a certified Government Financial Officer with the Florida Government Finance Officers Association. She is a proud 4 year mentor in the Big Brother and Big Sister Mentor program and is focused on making a difference in her hometown of Fort Pierce. Her grandmother is one of the main founders of Heathcote Botanical Gardens and responsible for the largest collection of tropical bonsai. Jennifer's greatest accomplishment was beating cancer!



Jennifer Garrity



Citizens Making a Difference!

Meet Shawn DeSantis. Originally from Lake Worth, Florida, Shawn relocated to Fort Pierce in 2004. He began his academic journey at Indian River State College (then Indian River Community College), where he earned his Associate of Arts (AA) degree. During this time, he joined the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (UF IFAS) at the Indian River Research and Education Center (IRREC), where he devoted eight years conducting aquaculture research. In addition to completing his AA and earning a certificate in aquaculture from IRSC, he started attending classes at UF IRREC where he earned his bachelor's degree in environmental management.

In 2010, he and his fiancée purchased a home in Indian River Estates (IRE), and became part of the Indian River Estates Association (IREA). After attending several meetings, he quickly realized that the IREA was an association comprised of homeowners who advocated the preservation of the neighborhood on behalf of the community's interests to St. Lucie County.

Over time he developed a passion and strong desire to take the IREA in a new direction and decided to run for a Trustee position which he was elected to. He realized what a vital role IREA played in conserving their neighborhood, from advocating for city water installation and supporting drainage projects in collaboration with the County to installing streetlights.



Shawn DeSantis and River

In 2018, he ran for President of the Association on a platform focused on maintaining the unique character of IRE, and was elected. He believes that the Association is the best advocate for residents when working with the County, as it can achieve more than any individual resident alone. Since taking office, he has organized town hall meetings, addressed issues with Savannas State Park such as fencing, wild hogs, and maintenance. IREA has been proactive in providing information on the SUN trail and traffic surveys. He has established a vital link with District 4 and proactively addresses community concerns and offers viable solutions.



DID YOU KNOW?!



A Municipal Services Benefit Unit (“MSBU”) is a legal financing mechanism wherein a local government establishes a discrete area within which to provide for the delivery and funding of essential services or improvements such as potable water, wastewater, paving and drainage, sidewalks, street lighting, beach restoration, solid waste collection, etc. through the imposition of special assessments (sometimes referred to as non-ad Valorem assessments) against real property located therein. In other words, it gives a group of property owners a way to finance improvements that they desire by paying a pro-rata share of the cost through a special assessment.

The MSBU boundary is legally determined by the properties which will derive a special benefit from the service or improvement.

If an MSBU is created and assessments are levied, property owners have the option of financing their assessment amount over a ten to twenty-year period or prepaying their assessment in full prior to bank financing, thereby saving interest and financing fees. If the assessment is paid overtime, annual payments would be collected on the property’s property tax bill. The special assessments would be levied and collected by the County in accordance with the procedure set forth in the County’s Code of Ordinances and as authorized by Florida Statute.



For more info scan the QR code

The steps in bringing a typical MSBU project to fruition is time-consuming. Petition validation, engineering design, permitting, land acquisition, construction, bond validation, financing and the MSBU "legal process" will usually take about two years.

For more information or to request a petition packet, please contact Barbara Guettler at (772) 462-2568 or GuettlerB@stlucieco.org



Commissioner Fowler hosted her third Shadow the Commissioner event with Isabella Saldivar. Isabella is a homeschooled high school student in St. Lucie County, and an active St. Lucie County 4-H member. She heard about the program through the IRSC 4-H program.



Isabella Saldivar and Commissioner Fowler

The Commissioner hosted Isabella and her mother, Ana, for lunch to talk about Isabella’s experience and share her plans and hope for the future.

“I would recommend this program to anyone who has an interest in politics, community or if you want to experience a day in a commissioner’s life. Being able to shadow Commissioner Fowler was an amazing opportunity, and I am appreciative to have been presented with it.” - Isabella Saldivar.

If you know of a student who would like to shadow the Commissioner, please email: torchiado@stlucieco.org.

ENGAGED - INVOLVED - LEARNING



St. Lucie County Commissioners and the Environmental Resources Department officially cut the ribbon and opened the county's newest conservation area Lake Indrio Preserve off U.S. 1 across from FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute.



Commissioner Fowler attended a Ground Breaking ceremony for the Stars & Stripes Park in Tradition. The park is situated on 26.5 acres and will be located east of SW Village Parkway on Open View Road, across from Del Webb Tradition. The park will feature star sculptures and symbols, messages, and inspirational quotes from veterans and first responders.



ST. LUCIE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN



[Click here to view the plan](#)

The Strategic Plan guides St. Lucie County in its operations and allocation of resources, ensuring we align priorities in support of the Plan. Through Plan implementation we continue the Board's commitment to good fiscal stewardship, a strong commitment to public safety, improving infrastructure, facilitating economic growth, protecting our environmental resources, collaborating with our partner agencies, and creating an award-winning "Best Places to Work" environment for our employees.

Look What's Happening in our Neighborhood!



Breakfast with Santa!



December 14, 2024

9 am - 12 pm

Havert L. Fenn Center

Cost: \$10 dollars per person - Kids ages 5 & under FREE!

Breakfast

Waffles

Eggs

Bacon

Fruit

and much more



Candy Canes



Gingerbread houses



Elves



Photos With Santa!



North Pole

Fun Stations

Hot chocolate station

Cookie & Donut Decorating Stations

Popcorn station

Art & Crafts Stations

Fun and games



2000 Virginia Avenue
Fort Pierce Fl 34982
(772) 462-1521





Sights & Sounds on Second Christmas Parade

Downtown Fort Pierce





December 8th

1:00 PM - 6:00 PM

[Sights & Sounds on Second Christmas Parade \(mainstreetfortpierce.org\)](http://mainstreetfortpierce.org)

Holiday Lights in the Gardens - Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens







December

2nd to 30th

5 to 9 PM





[Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens \(pslbg.org\)](http://pslbg.org)


The Nutcracker Ballet at Sunrise Theatre

December 6th St. Lucie Ballet

December 26th The State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine







[Treasure Coast Youth Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker - Sunrise Theatre](#)



"Tourism is Florida's economic driver and here in St. Lucie County, tourism is no different. In 2023, visitors to St. Lucie County spent over \$703.7 million on accommodations, restaurants, groceries, transportation, entertainment and shopping. This spending contributes to our local sales tax and helps fund local services such as law enforcement, infrastructure, and more. This visitor spending saves county residents an estimated \$406 in taxes per household annually. Tourism is crucial to our local economy." - Charlotte Bireley Director of Tourism & Marketing



Highlight of St. Lucie County Resources



St. Lucie County Area Regional Transit (ART): Administered by St. Lucie County's Transit Department, ART is a fare-free, award-winning public transit system serving the cities of Fort Pierce, Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie Village, and the unincorporated areas of St. Lucie County. There are [eight bus routes](#), one [microtransit service area](#) and [door-to-door para-transportation](#) for eligible individuals.

To access the St. Lucie County ART web page click on the following link:

<https://www.stlucieco.gov/departments-and-services/area-regional-transit>



Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Mapping: Geographical (spatial) information and maps are very important to most operations in St. Lucie County and are used on a daily basis to support countywide services. GIS provides a visual and geographical platform for managing County operations and provides a framework for information transfer between departments and the public.



To access the GIS web page click on the following link:

<https://www.stlucieco.gov/departments-and-services/planning-and-development-services/gis-division>



OXBOW Eco-Center and Preserve



Eco-Center Hours

Tue—Sat Noon to 4 pm

Admission is free!

To visit the web site click here: [OXBOW](#)



Preserve Trails

Nature Playscape

Gardens

Open sunrise-sunset

365 days a year



Commissioner Jamie Lee Fowler
St. Lucie County District 4

2300 Virginia Avenue Fort Pierce, 772-462-1100