



NEWS TO YOU

Volume 7 No. 3

City of Ocoee, Florida

Fall 2008

Rodney Atkins and .38 Special

Headline Founders' Day Festival



On stage Saturday

Ocoee's 15th Annual Founders' Day Festival is kicking off with a big bang this year. There will be music, food, games, fireworks, rides, historical exhibits, arts and crafts, classic cars, a fishing tournament and more. Founders' Day Festival will be held on Friday, October 17 and Saturday, October 18, at Bill Breeze Park, along the beautiful shores of Starke Lake. The highlight of the 2-day event is the FREE concerts on Friday and Saturday. This year's line up is impressive.

Rodney Atkins will headline the concert on Saturday. Atkins has been nominated for six Academy of Country Music Awards. Atkins second album, *If You're Going through Hell*, has been a big success. There were four No. 1 hits off this album including the title track, plus *Watching You*, *These Are My People* and *Clean This Gun*.

After more than two decades together, **.38 Special**, a blues-rock band, is still playing more than 100 shows per year. With Donnie Van Zant as lead, the group's latest album, *Drivetrain*, personifies what rock and roll is all about. *Drivetrain's* southern-rock tinged, sometimes big chorus-laden tracks show the heart of a seasoned band after decades of intense roadwork.



On stage Friday



On stage Saturday

Earl Thomas Conley is a Grammy winner who has 18 No. 1 singles on the country music charts, including *Fire & Smoke*, *Holding Her and Loving You*, *Once in a Blue Moon*, and *Love Out Loud*. Earl became the first and only country artist ever to appear on the popular R&B television show "Soul Train," where he sang his 1986 hit duet with Anita Pointer of the Pointer Sisters, "Too Many Times."

Jim Van Fleet & The Reign, a popular local group, won the 2005 Central Florida Country Battle of the Bands championship out of 45 entries. Fox 35 Morning Meteorologist Jim Van Fleet (yes, the weatherman) is the front man and leading vocalist for one of Central Florida's hottest bands. A repeat performer at the Founders' Day Festival, the group is a crowd-pleaser.



On stage Saturday

Contact your City Government

www.ci.oceee.fl.us

CITY COMMISSION

(407) 905-3100

Mayor S. Scott Vandergrift
svandergrift@ci.oceee.fl.us

COMMISSIONERS:

District 1 – Gary Hood
ghood@ci.oceee.fl.us

District 2 – Scott Anderson
sanderson@ci.oceee.fl.us

District 3 – Rusty Johnson
rjohnson@ci.oceee.fl.us

District 4 – Joel F. Keller
jkeller@ci.oceee.fl.us

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY

Police/Fire/Medical 911

Water/Wastewater..... 407-428-5766

RSVP City “Hot Line”.....407-656-2218

City Hall Main Number..... 407-905-3100

Animal Control (Orange County) ... 407-836-3111

Emergency /service311

Building Department

Inspections..... 407-905-3102

Permits..... 407-905-3104

City Clerk..... 407-905-3105

Code Enforcement..... 407-905-3106

Community Relations..... 407-905-3109

Fire

Administration 407-905-3140

Inspections 407-905-3141

Human Resources..... 407-905-3154

Occupational Licensing..... 407-905-3156

Planning..... 407-905-3157

Police/Non-Emergency

Administration/Information 407-905-3160

Detectives 407-905-3161

Records 407-905-3162

Public Works

Administration 407-905-3170

Parks Maintenance 407-905-3171

Sanitation 407-905-3172

Signs 407-905-3173

Storm Drainage 407-905-3174

Streets 407-905-3175

Recreation

Administration 407-905-3180

Beech Center 407-905-3180

Tom Ison Seniors & Veterans Center 407-905-3180

Water and Wastewater

Billing and Payments..... 407-905-3191

Service and Repairs 407-905-3192

After Hours Emergency 407-428-5766

Editor's note

News To You is a publication of the City of Ocoee, Florida, and is intended to serve as a forum for providing information to residents and businesses on such topics as City services, current and planned projects, and other issues affecting the people who live and work in Ocoee. Comments or inquiries on the newsletter should be directed to Joy P. Wright, Community Relations Manager, 150 North Lakeshore Drive, Ocoee, Florida 34761, or you may send an e-mail to jwright@ci.oceee.fl.us.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

As this issue goes to press, we are diligently working on the City's budget for the upcoming year. The state legislature's property tax reform measures continue to affect not only Ocoee, but every local government in the state. The doubling of the homestead exemption, the decline in the real estate market and the overall economy has driven down tax revenues and assessed values. The City's gross taxable value of real property for the coming year is \$2,325,169,608—an approximate 6 percent decline in value from last year.



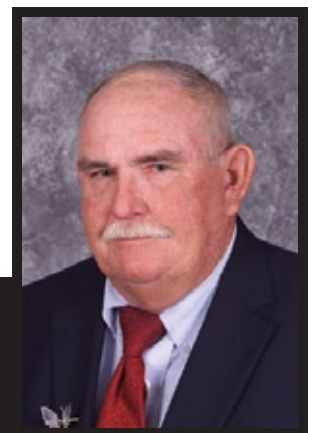
While our fiscal outlook is tight, I think it is important to acknowledge some of our accomplishments over the past year. The City's new employee healthcare center opened earlier this year, which will save the City an anticipated several hundred thousand dollars annually in health care costs. The reconstruction of Lakeshore Drive is scheduled for completion in late September just in time for our Founders' Day Festival to be held on October 17 and 18, and a revamp of the adjacent Bill Breeze Park will begin shortly thereafter. The Pioneer Key Stormwater Pond and Park Project will also be completed by the end of September. Construction of the Utilities Department new administration building is well underway and will be completed by the end of December.

As we move forward into the coming year, we will continue to focus on how to enhance our customer service with an eye on streamlining processes and improving efficiency. We will continue our tradition of citizen-oriented government in a fiscally-conservative manner.

Robert D. Frank
City Manager

Mayor S. Scott Vandergrift

See a Word from Your Mayor on page 8



Message from your City Commissioners

We dodged the bullet, but stay ready

First, I'd like to thank the City's Emergency Operations Team who pulled together during Tropical Storm Fay. While many people were home with their families, key city staff were busily working throughout the storm ensuring the safety of our citizens. Ocoee was fortunate not to have sustained any major damage from Fay. However, many others living in Central Florida were not as fortunate. Tropical Storm Fay killed at least 10 people and caused millions of dollars in flood damage.

While we dodged the bullet this time, I encourage residents to be ready by getting their storm supplies now, before the next storm hits.

Basic Hurricane Essentials

1. First aid kit and essential medications
2. Canned food and canned food opener
3. At least 3 gallons of water per person
4. Protective clothing, rainwear, bedding or sleeping bags
5. Battery-powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
6. Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

Remember, Hurricane Season doesn't end until November 30. For more information on how you can be prepared, call our Fire Department at 407-905-3140.



*Gary Hood
Commissioner
District 1*

Keeping our community safe

Our Police Department is made up of men and women who do an outstanding job of protecting and serving our community. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Charlie Brown, our new police chief. Chief Brown is a 16-year veteran of the Ocoee Police Department and will serve our city well.

As citizens, we can support Chief Brown and our police department by helping take a bite out of crime in our communities. One way to be involved in your community is to call the CRIMELINE. The mission of CRIMELINE is to increase the safety of the Central Florida community by assisting law enforcement agencies in removing undesirable individuals from the community. Too often, persons with vital information about crimes fail to contact their law enforcement agency because they don't want to testify in court. The result of this

reluctance is that many dangerous criminals who should be behind bars are still walking the streets.

CRIMELINE means that a citizen can phone in anything you know or hear, and nobody will ever know that the information came from you! It is a proven, effective community service program combining the efforts of the police, media, and public in solving crime and counters the FEAR and APATHY that make the public reluctant to fight crime.

The community benefits from CRIMELINE because citizens becoming involved in policing their community can make a strong contribution in solving crime. They feel a sense of ownership and participation in making their community a safer place to live.



*Scott Anderson
Commissioner
District 2*

Continued on pg. 7

New park serves dual purpose to benefit citizens

Residents living near Palm Drive can put on their exercise shoes, and take a stroll at our new park area. The new 6-acre neighborhood park is located at 529 Palm Drive directly across from the Pioneer Key II community. The park has a 2,000 foot walking path, two pedestrian bridges, extensive landscaping and a convenient parking area.

The centerpiece of the park is the Pioneer Key Regional Pond. The stormwater pond, unofficially called Lake Woody, will slow down the water as it flows north so that sediment will settle out rather than clog Lake Apopka, while the extensive landscaping is designed to clean the water of excess nutrients, which is the current primary pollutant in Lake Apopka. Although it looks like just a hole in the ground, the pond

was technically difficult to construct due to the kind of soil found in the area plus the discovery of an informal construction debris dump. Water treatment used during construction went well beyond that normally used on construction sites. One hundred percent of the rain that fell on the site was treated and discharged with no visible sediment or detected pollutants.

Wildlife has already begun to populate the pond, as wading birds and turtles hunt for small fish in the water as a result of the remnant pond that was previously on the site. All irrigation water used to maintain the landscaping will come from the stormwater pond.



*Rusty Johnson
Commissioner
District 3*

Continued on pg. 7

Updates on our Schools, Fire, Police

As we get ready for the fall we remind everyone to be careful of the children at the bus stops. At the time I am writing this (mid July) the school board still hasn't seen reason and switched back the times the schools start. So as our younger students venture out in the darkness please take extra care.

Speaking of the school board we should have 3 new members from the west side of the county. We wish them all the best and we ask that they listen to their constituents when making decisions.

Please also watch for information on the charter schools. While the county would continue to keep control of the buildings we would have more direct say into the direction of our schools and what we feel is important within the day to day education of our children. Along with this I am still working with the state to see if we can't

change the constitution to allow cities to have their own school districts.

The finishing touches will soon be made to the new police station. This has been a tough year for our men and women in blue. Unfortunately, some personal issues of a few have tainted a group of fine men and women who care deeply and serve our city honorably. It is with a very heavy heart that we had to watch this take away from a reputation of excellence in their job that our police force has. As with our military it seems they do a very hard job with little thanks from the community they protect. Next time you see one of our officers (hopefully not because you were speeding) thank them for the job they do.



*Joel F. Keller
Commissioner
District 4*

Continued on pg. 7



Deputy Chief Charlie Brown was recently appointed Police Chief of Ocoee. Brown, a veteran of the Ocoee Police Department for 16 years has served in many capacities including detective, sergeant, lieutenant and most recently deputy chief since 2007.

“I would like to thank the community for its support and involvement; effective policing involves a partnership with the community. The employees of the department rely on your encouragement and assistance in combating the issues that face our area,” said Chief Brown. “Public safety through enforcement and education is our top priority. Through the input of our citizens, our commission, our city manager and other city departments we will continue our commitment to excellent customer service.”

Chief Brown will lead the department as it moves forward with several initiatives, including the move to a new station near Old Winter Garden Road and Bluford Avenue.

City Breaks Ground on New Utilities Headquarters

The City’s new Utilities Administration Building is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. At a groundbreaking ceremony held in May, city officials marked the momentous occasion. The new facility, located at 1800 A.D. Mims Road, will provide more space and better efficiency for Ocoee’s water, and reclaimed water service operations. The 3,200 square foot building will house the city’s water conservation programs, and it will serve as the headquarters for Ocoee’s Utilities Management Team.



Dr. H2O was on hand as the City celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for its new Utilities Administration Building. From Left to Right: Bryan Sherron, Project Manager for Southern Building Services; Jeff Sherron, President of Southern Building Services; Charles Smith, Utilities Director; Jamie Croteau, Assistant City Manager; Mayor Scott Vandergrift; Robert Frank, City Manager; Commissioner Rusty Johnson, and Dr. H2O.

Credit Cards Now Accepted at City Hall!



You can leave your checkbook and cash at home. The next time you come to City Hall to pay your utility bill, you can whip out your credit card! For the first time, the City now accepts major credit and debit cards. It’s so convenient and easy. Remember, City Hall is open longer to serve you better. Visit us on Monday through Thursday, 7:30 am – 5:30 pm. , and on Fridays, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Garbage Collection Survey in this issue!

Please take a moment to fill out the enclosed survey regarding your garbage collection!



Lakeshore Drive construction nearing an end

Historic Lakeshore Drive is getting a facelift. The brick roadway, originally constructed in the early 1900s, is being restored to its former glory. New brick paving and some of the original brick pavers are being laid on Lakeshore Drive. The restoration is part of a major construction improvement project that includes raising and widening Lakeshore Drive to alleviate flooding. Other improvements along Lakeshore Drive include a new stormwater system that will reduce pollution to Starke Lake, a designated FAB FIVE body of water. The construction is scheduled to be completed just in time for the City's annual Founders' Day Festival to be held on October 17 and 18.

City Donates Vehicle to Assist Veterans in Need of Transportation

The Winter Garden Veterans of Foreign Wars now have a smooth ride, thanks to the city of Ocoee. Ocoee recently donated a Ford Taurus to the VFW Post 4305. The 9-year old vehicle was scheduled to hit the auction block when city officials discovered a better way to utilize the car in the community. The vehicle is being used to transport veterans in need of transportation to the veterans administration office in Tampa. "Ford Daley with the VFW approached us with the idea, and we thought what better way to give back to the men and women in our community who have served our country," said Mayor Scott Vandergrift. The Ocoee Public Works Team breathed new life into the car with a super tune up, new tires and a paint job with custom lettering.



The Public Works Team fixed up a city vehicle scheduled to hit the auction block, and the City generously donated the 9-year old car to the Winter Garden VFW. The spiffy-looking Ford Taurus is now being used to transport veterans in need of transportation to the veterans administration office in Tampa. Pictured from left to right are: Bill McGovern, Public Works; Debbie Love, Public Works; Mayor Scott Vandergrift; Bill Simmons, Public Works; Mark Pargeon, Public Works; Ford Daley and Commander Jim Bateman, Winter Garden VFW Post 4305.

National Preparedness Month

*By Tishya Luedtke,
Municipal Inspector, Building Department*

Looking back through recent years at both natural and inflicted disasters, and epidemics, makes for great sorrow. I think of the Towers, Pentagon, Oklahoma bombing, terrorism around the world, Katrina, Charley, the tsunamis, the recent China earthquake and Myanmar cyclone. These are just a few of the many events that people face daily-- the threat of a disaster. That is why it is so important for everyone to be as prepared as possible for any disaster that you may be subjected to. During this observance of National Preparedness Month, we hope to get people to understand why it is so important to be prepared for all situations. Know what to do for each situation. National Preparedness motto is: "Get a Kit, Make a Plan, Be Informed and Get Involved." Spread the word to everyone. There are many things to prepare for and the City of Ocoee would like to assist you in learning how. Through the month of September

there is a display in the lobby of Ocoee City Hall with free brochures available to teach you how to evaluate the type of disaster you may be subjected to. You will learn how to make a proper kit to cover all types of events. Ocoee also has a website: www.ci.ocoee.fl.us/building/index.asp then click Safety Information. There are hyperlinks and downloads for brochures about these threats with instructions on how to prepare, prevent, survive and rebuild.

Please take the time to protect yourself and your family. You must always be on guard when going to public areas. Be observant of people, watch for unusual out of place items. Look for safe escape routes.

Do not take for granted that you are safe. The world is forever changing and we must change with it, **which means, be prepared for the unexpected.**

Removing Torpedo Grass from Starke Lake

The City of Ocoee would like to thank Jim Sweatman of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) for pulling together the joint effort between the FWCC and the City of Ocoee Public Works Team to remove torpedo grass on the shoreline of Starke Lake at Lakeshore Drive in June.

The low lake levels have exposed the mud flats of the lake bed and allowed the torpedo grass to advance along the lakeshore and reach deeper into the lake. Mechanical removal of the excessive growth will help to maintain the shoreline.



Residents Give Crime and Drugs a Going Away Party

Residents had a night out against crime at the 25th Annual National Night Out. The event, held at Palm Drive and Hackney Praire Parks, is part of the national effort to encourage neighborhoods to take a stand against crime and drugs. The Ocoee Police Department's K-9 Unit conducted demonstrations of their full service dogs and the Traffic Unit displayed their new motorcycle units. The Ocoee Police Explorer Post 2909 conducted child fingerprinting for parents' record and the Ocoee Fire Department had their fire trucks on display. Children had fun in abounce houses provided at a discounted rate by Bounce Round Orlando. Free hot dogs and drinks were provided by Target.



(Right) Police Records Technician Madeleine Garza, Lieutenant Brad Dreasher and Deputy Chief Steve Goclon personally greeted children in attendance.

(Top) Dozens of families attended National Night Out. Ocoee police officers encouraged residents to work with them to help stop crime in their community.



Splish Splash is a Blast!

Ocoee Parks and Recreation Department's "Splish Splash Summer Bash" was an enjoyable and successful event for both residents and employees.

With an attendance of over 500 guests, along with games, prizes, water slides, inflatables, bouncers, and other fun activities for family and friends, the summertime weather didn't slow these residents down one bit. There was also a movie by the pool premiere of "Alvin and The Chipmunks," which concluded the event.

With all the free food, amazing activities, and exciting games that took place, this event was definitely a summer bash with a lot of splish splash.

Commissioner Anderson continued from pg. 3

The police benefit from CRIMELINE because increasing crime produces the need for innovation. Effective programs which generate information on criminal activity, yet maintain anonymity, give the police a better chance of combating crime.

If you have information about a crime, call CRIMELINE at 1-800-423-8477 anytime, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Help our new Police Chief Charlie Brown and his officers take a bite out of crime in your neighborhood!

Commissioner Johnson continued from pg. 3

Four artificial full-size Canadian geese float in the pond to support the irrigation system's water intake. Ocoee has a 10-year commitment to monitor and report the quality of water flowing into and out of the pond as part of a project evaluation program. The regional pond is the first step in a series of improvements to the infrastructure of this area. Reconstruction of the stormwater, sanitary sewer, drinking water, and the roads in Pioneer Key II Mobile Home Park is the next step and is just getting started. Subsequent phases of the work will reconstruct Pioneer Key I

Mobil Home Park, build a pipeline from Pioneer Key I to the regional pond to transport stormwater, and relocate Palm Drive further north on Ocoee-Apopka Road to reduce conflict with the Silver Star Road intersection.

While the primary intent of the park area is to clean and regulate water flowing from western Ocoee into Lake Apopka, it has a secondary and important benefit to citizens. It provides our citizens with a much needed green space to relax, or just stroll down the walking path.

Commissioner Keller continued from pg. 3

Our fire department now has 2 of our 3 stations ALS (Advanced Life Support) ready with the 3rd one to be on line shortly. This is great news and we are proud of the job they are doing. In the short time they have been an ALS unit we have already received praise from the county and an EXCEPTIONAL RATING from the State of Florida Department of Health/EMS.

With Winter Garden moving their fire station we need to look at what we want to do in District One for an Ocoee Fire Station. Currently, we have stations in all 3 of the other districts and none where we have a lot of new homes and our high school. We want to make sure that we can have the same level of service there as anywhere else in city. This will more than likely come up in the budget meetings and I would ask for your support as we try to make sure all of Ocoee has the fire and emergency coverage we have come to expect in our city.

Also don't forget that our fire department offers CPR classes free of charge to Ocoee residents the fourth Wednesday of the month. Classes are from 7:00PM – 9:30PM and are held at Fire Station One, 563 South Bluford Avenue.

As the summer draws to a close, I would like to take an opportunity to thank the Park and Recreation Department for the job well done with the pool and the parks. Thanks to your dedication our citizens have facilities they can be proud of.

Ocoee TV on Channel 200
Bright House Cable
For more information, call
Bright House Cable at 407-291-2500

Also as we come back from time off, I would ask for your involvement in our committees and advisory boards. As the liaison to both the Human Relations Diversity Board and the Citizens Advisory Board for the Ocoee Fire Department, I can tell you these two boards as well as most of the others need volunteers. Please take time to check what committees and boards we have and where your talents can be applied to continue to make us The Center of Good Living.

TELEVISED MEETINGS SCHEDULE

City Commission Meetings

- Wed. & Fridays 10:00 AM
- Tues. & Thursdays 7:30 PM
- Sundays 2:00 PM
- Mon., Thurs., Saturdays 1:00 AM

Repeat of previous month's Commission Meeting

Code Enforcement Board Meetings

- Tuesdays 10:00 AM
- Mon. & Fridays 7:30 PM
- Wed. & Sundays 1:00 AM

Repeat of previous month's Code Mtg.

Ocoee School Advisory Board Meetings

- Mon. & Thursdays 10:00 AM
- Wednesdays 7:30 AM
- Saturdays 2:00 PM
- Tues. & Fridays 1:00 AM

Repeat of previous month's OSAB mtg.



Don't forget to come out for the Founder's Day celebration October 17th and 18th. As always this promises to be an exceptionally good time and we look forward to seeing you there.

In closing, let me remind you all that this November 4th is Election Day. This year with the presidential, congressional, and state elections all the way down to our local elections for County Commissioner and School Board members, it is important that you get out and vote. There are a lot of very important issues at all levels of government and it is important that your voice is heard. If you haven't already done so, please register to vote. If you won't be around for some reason that day, please get an absentee ballot and vote before you leave.

Thank you and God bless,
Joel Keller

A Word from the Mayor

The Ocoee Historical Commission is in the process of collecting information for the purpose of writing a book titled "The History of Ocoee and Its Pioneers."

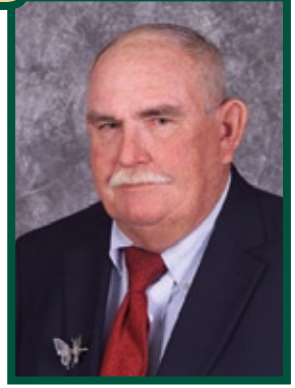
Nancy Maguire, curator of the Withers-Maguire House and Museum, is collecting this information in the hopes that the book will be available to the public in Spring 2009. The book will not be an attempt to cover all aspects of Ocoee, but to present people, places and events that have been recorded in photographs, writings, documents and in the memories of its citizens.

Ocoee's history began on the shores of a clear spring fed lake when Dr. James D. Starke settled here between 1850 and 1860 and has experienced many interesting twists and turns over the years to become the fine city it is today.

The first portion of the book will chronicle the history of the city and the second portion will tell of Ocoee's early pioneer families and some of their descendents.

If anyone has information, photos, letters, etc. that could be used in the book, please contact Nancy Maguire at 407-656-9609 or email her at nlmaguire@earthlink.net.

The Ocoee Historical Commission also invites any citizen to visit the Withers-Maguire House on Saturdays and Sundays, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm. The house is located at 16 East Oakland Avenue.



Think, "Rigid Flexibility."

Mayor Scott



**PHOTO CONTEST:
WE WANT YOUR
PICTURES!**

The City is redesigning its Web site and we'd like to include snapshots of 'Living in Ocoee'. We want any photos that you've taken at Ocoee's parks, restaurants, schools, picnics, pool, fishing at lakes or jogging. Selected photos will be included on the City's Web site at www.ci.ocoee.fl.us

Send your 'Living in Ocoee' snapshots to: pictures@ci.ocoee.fl.us

SEE SURVEY ENCLOSED
We want your feedback!



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