

Prepared for the City Commission, Jan. 16-February 5, 2014

City Manager

- ✓ Please join us for a **community gathering Saturday, Jan. 18 at 12 p.m. at Parkview Baptist**. A list of plants for new yards in the **Stephen Foster neighborhood** will be available, and there will be a chance for an open discussion about what the community can do to help the neighborhood.
- ✓ **City offices will be closed Monday, Jan. 20 to observe Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**. Residential curbside collection of refuse will not be collected on this day, and it will be on a one-day delayed schedule for the entire week. Additionally, all RTS offices will be closed and there will be no bus service, including paratransit service.
- ✓ **The State of the City Address will take place Wednesday, Jan. 22 at noon** at the Hippodrome Theatre, which is located at 25 SE Second Pl. in Gainesville. The Honorable Mayor Ed Braddy, accompanied by City Manager Russ Blackburn and interim General Manager for Utilities Kathy Viehe, will deliver the annual State of the City Address, which will feature highlights from 2013 and lay out the vision for the continued success of Gainesville. The address will not air live on C12, but it will be recorded and air on Community 12TV a few days after the live address. Additionally, it will stream live online, courtesy of Ozean Media. The public is welcome to attend this annual address.
- ✓ In order to provide better service to our employees, the City Of Gainesville is implementing a new process where a **copy of your current direct deposit pay slip can be emailed to you each pay period**. In order to receive your pay slip electronically, you must have a valid external email address. You cannot have your pay stub emailed to your General Government or GRU email address. If you would like to participate, please [click here](#) to access the Request to Receive Electronic Copy of Pay Slip form. Return your completed form to Human Resources at Box #20. You may sign up at any time; however, it may take several pay cycles before you begin receiving your pay stub via email. If you have additional questions, please contact HR at 352-334-5077.
- ✓ The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is a combined effort with the United Way of North Central Florida and the IRS to help low to moderate-income working people keep more of their refund and not pay for income tax services**. Many lower-income households are owed a significant refund because of the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC, a federal income tax credit for low to moderate-income working people. United Way officials are hoping to find more local residents who are eligible for the EITC by offering VITA, a free service. Residents can find out more about the free program, make an appointment and find out what to bring to the appointment by calling United Way's 24-hour information line 2-1-1.

Capital Projects

- ✓ **Work is continuing on the new RTS facility**. Crews are continuing to work on the Southwest 13th Road construction and the employee parking area. Overhead door installation on the maintenance building has been completed, with the roofs of the bays being installed. Precast installation and roofing work is being done on the service building. Formwork and rebar installation is also on-going for the bus wash building. Metal siding is almost complete on the administration building, with wallboard and painting beginning on the interior. Ceiling grids will also be started soon. The project remains on schedule.

Communications Office

Communications Office contact: Bob Woods – 352-393-8627

- ✓ The **redesigned City of Gainesville website is now accessible** at <http://www.cityofgainesville.org/>. With the assistance of the project vendor, Ingen Systems Inc., City of Gainesville Website Upgrade team members and GRU Information Technology team members, the revised site's successful beta launch occurred early Saturday, Jan. 11, with no disruption to city services or to public access. Beta testing continues as needed to resolve reported site issues.

The redesigned site now features more robust content management system software which extends site capability to integrate with third-party software modules and increases overall site functionality. New features include enhanced modular site architecture and improved user navigation, intuitive graphic design, improved quick links to frequently accessed information, enhanced "Smart Search" capability and use of RSS feeds to link to internal city calendar information. City staff encourages the public to visit the redesigned city website for information about department operations, projects and available services.

The **public and staff are able to provide direct, real-time feedback to city staff about the redesigned website using software which can be accessed by users by clicking on the "submit feedback" tab at the lower right corner of each page throughout the site.** Public comments will be used to identify and resolve site problems and provide responses to the public. A complementary City of Gainesville mobile website is in final test development and is expected to launch later this spring.

- ✓ **The 2013 Citizen's Report** will be released at the State of the City Address on Wednesday, Jan. 22 at 12 p.m. at the Hippodrome State Theatre. The report covers the highlights of the past fiscal year. After the official release, it will be available to view online, or if you wish to receive a hard copy, please email your request to rawsonle@cityofgainesville.org. The photography contest winner from the 2013 contest will also be unveiled at the event.

Gainesville Fire Rescue

GFR Administration and Operations contact: Chief Gene Prince – 352-334-5078

- ✓ The **Gainesville Fire Rescue Strategic Plan and Standards of Cover** may be viewed on the GFR page of the city's website at www.gfr.org.

GFR Risk Reduction Bureau contact: Asst. Chief JoAnne Rice – 352-393-8377

- ✓ **Requests for car seat safety checks and installation** should be directed to GFR's Risk Reduction Specialist Krista Gonzalez at 393-8461.
- ✓ GFR continues to host **crowd manager training** to enhance community safety. For information on **Operation Safe Club** classes, please call 334-5065.

GFR support services Bureau contact: Asst. Chief Jeff Lane – 352-393-8459

- ✓ Gainesville Fire Rescue is announcing **its CPR and related course offerings to the community through its Operation C.A.R.E or Citizens Aiding in Response to Emergencies.** The program is being provided on a fee basis by the City Of Gainesville to increase the number of persons who can perform CPR, first aid and other skills during an emergency until help can arrive. For more information, please visit gfr.org/community_training.

Public Works

Public Works contact: Chantel Thomas – 352-334-5070

- ✓ In observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, all **RTS offices will be closed and bus service will be suspended Monday, Jan. 20.** Normal spring service will resume Tuesday, Jan. 21.
- ✓ **Wrapping paper and gift boxes can be recycled in your curbside orange bin. Christmas trees can be placed at curbside for pick up on your regular trash day.** The trees need to be stripped of all decorations, including ornaments, bows, tinsel and lights, but there is no need to cut them down if they are over the 5-ft. limit. Additionally, trees can be dropped off at no charge at [Wood Resource Recovery](#), which is located at 10606 N. State Road 121 (352-378-9133).
- ✓ **Christmas tree and other ornamental lights can be recycled year-round at the Public Works Center**, which is located at 405 NW 39th Ave. There is a green cart by the front door of the main lobby that is available 24 hours a day for your convenience.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

Administrative Office – 352-334-5067

- ✓ The City of Gainesville Planning and Development Services Department; the City Beautification Board; Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department and the Four Seasons Garden Club invite the media and the public to **the free Florida Arbor Day 2014 celebration. It will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16 at the Depot Building, which is located at 201 SE Depot Ave.,** in Gainesville, Fla. The City of Gainesville, the City Beautification Board and the Four Seasons Garden Club will **celebrate its 30th year as Tree City USA** and will honor these years by planting 68 shade trees. Music, tours of Depot Park, shade trees giveaway and light refreshments will be provided. For additional information, please contact Earline Luhrman at 352-393-8188. Please RSVP to Ella Bernhardt-Brooks at 352-393-8181 or brooksel@cityofgainesville.org.
- ✓ The **15th Annual Great Air Potato Round-Up is coming up Saturday, Jan. 25, 2014!** This year's theme is "Taters of the Lost Park." **[Online registration is required to participate.](#)** Hundreds of volunteers will come together for the 15th Annual Great Air Potato Round-Up to remove air potatoes and other invasive exotic plants from Gainesville's natural areas. After the harvest, volunteers will gather at Morningside Nature Center for a celebration for participants with free event t-shirts, refreshments, music and prizes. The air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) is a non-native vine that jeopardizes Florida's natural communities by engulfing native vegetation. The rapid-growing vine produces aerial tubers (hence the common name "air potato") that fall to the ground in the late fall and winter and produce new vines that sprout in the spring. The previous 14 Great Air Potato Round-Ups have all been tremendously successful! Last year, nearly 1,000 eager participants enjoyed beautiful weather while removing more than 6.69 tons of air potatoes, 1,905 lbs. of other invasive plants and one 20-yard construction dumpster of trash from more than 25 natural areas and parks throughout Gainesville. With your help, we are making a difference!
- ✓ To have a strong, sound structure you have to begin with a solid foundation! **Plan ahead for Foundations After-School Program, which continues through Thursday, June 5, 2014.** The program is for kids in first-eighth grade and there are convenient locations at four of our recreation and community centers: Albert "Ray" Massey Recreation Center, Clarence R. Kelly Community Center, Eastside Community Center and Porters Community Center. Participants will be involved in structured activities, such as tutoring, homework help, arts/crafts, recreation and sporting activities. All children are welcome, pre-registration is required. Space is limited and is available on a first come

first serve basis. Transportation is not provided for this program. For more information, please visit www.cityofgainesvilleparks.org or call 352-334-5067.

- ✓ **Need a place for your kids to go on teacher work days or school holidays?** [Out of School Days](#) camp hours are from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Fees are \$5.50 per day/per child for city residents (proof of residency required) and \$8.40 per day/per child for non-city residents. Lunch is **not** provided. You may register online or at the PRCA Administrative Office, which is located on the third floor of the Historic Thomas Center, Bldg. B, 306 NE Sixth Ave. Please call 352-334-5067 with any questions. The Recreation Division offers full day camps at Eastside Recreation Center and Albert "Ray" Massey Recreation Center on the following dates:
 - Friday, Jan. 17; Friday, Feb. 17; Friday, April 4; Friday, June 6
- ✓ **Environmental education programs resume at Morningside Nature Center!** The free, educational and fun-filled programs at Morningside Nature Center start in September and end the last week of May! History comes to life at the little farm in the Piney Woods during **Living History Days**. Interpreters portray day-to-day life on an 1870 Florida farm the first Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The farm is open to the public, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday all year long. **Barnyard Buddies Program** takes place every Wednesday at 3 p.m. Youngsters, with an adult, can meet and greet farm animals by helping staff with afternoon feeding on the Living History Farm. This program is free, but you may bring donations of animal favorites like carrots, squash, apples and sweet potatoes and give it to staff. At the **Frogs and Friends Friday** program, children, with an adult, can join a Morningside Nature Center animal caretaker for an exciting and educational program featuring live amphibians and reptiles. The program takes place the first Friday of the month at 2 p.m. in the Education Building. Morningside Nature Center is located at 3540 E. University Ave., approximately three miles east of downtown Gainesville. For more information, please call 334-3326.

Aquatics contact: Jeff Moffitt – 352-393-8732

- ✓ [Aqua-Fit water aerobics](#) classes are available at the **Northeast Pool**, Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Perfect for city employees to stop by on their lunch break for a great workout (which can count towards your Pro-Club exercise points)! This program is offered throughout the year, so employees can join in at any time! This low/medium-intensity class offers more aerobic, cardio and core training, but also focuses on flexibility and total body toning. Please note, classes will be delayed when temperatures are forecast to be below 50 degrees. The class fee is \$2.55 a class or 10 classes for \$20.40! Please call the PRCA Department at 334-5067 for more information.
- ✓ The current **winter pool hours** are as follows:
 - Northeast Pool**
 - Mon.-Fri.: 11:30 a.m.-7 p.m. – open swim
 - Sat.: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. – open swim
 - Sun.: closed

Lap lane availability may be limited on certain days. Aquatic staff will make every attempt possible to accommodate our patrons, but will request sharing lanes when needed. Please be considerate of others. Please be advised that during winter months, pool closures can occur due to ambient air temperatures dropping below 50°F and other severe weather conditions. Please call 352-334-2191 before your visit for updates.

Cultural Affairs contact: Russell Etling – 352-393-8532

- ✓ Experience a world of medieval magic, where jousting knights, dancing gypsies and historic heroes mingle with visitors at the **28th Annual Hoggetowne Medieval Faire**. **During the last weekend in January and the first weekend in February, on Saturday, Jan. 25; Sunday, Jan. 26 and Friday,**

Jan 31 through Sunday, Feb. 2, the Alachua County Fairgrounds transforms into a medieval marketplace filled with hundreds of artisans and entertainers. A special **School Day celebration Friday, Jan 31 features half-price ticket sales for all guests**. The bustling medieval marketplace will showcase more than 160 talented artisans and craftspeople from all over the countryside that arrive at Hoggetowne to display and sell a variety of goods, trinkets and wares. Visitors will find one-of-a-kind blacksmithing, pewter, jewelry, stone carvings, wood-carving, weaving, hand-blown glassware, leatherworking and much more. Guests may enjoy human-powered push rides, olde worlde games and a food court fit for a king. Enjoy eight stages of entertainment where the forgotten skills of full flight falconry, jousting on horseback, human chess game, gripping aerial acrobatics and astonishing magic acts. Jugglers, musicians, and dancers fill the streets and stages with ancient music and thrilling performances.

Come early to enjoy a day packed with excitement and medieval merriment. Faire hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, and 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 31. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$7 for children ages 5 to 17 and free for children younger than 5. Experience the convenience of purchasing tickets in advance online at <http://www.gvlculturalaffairs.org>, at any Domino's Pizza in Gainesville, and in person at the Thomas Center, Building B, room 344. For more information call 352-334-ARTS, and don't forget to become a fan of the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire on [Facebook](#).

- ✓ **Thomas Center Galleries:** The Thomas Center Galleries invite the community to the opening reception for the *A BARE THREAD Art Quilts by Amy Vigilante* exhibition Friday, Jan. 17 at 6 p.m. The reception will be followed by a 7 p.m. concert featuring popular local singer-songwriter Ricky Kendall and his friends. Both events are free and open to the public. The *A BARE THREAD Art Quilts by Amy Vigilante* exhibit will be on display in the Main Gallery Jan. 10-Mar. 22, 2014.

Also in the Historic Thomas Center's Mezzanine Gallery is the Alachua County Public Schools' Visual Arts Program SHOWCASING STUDENT ART K-12 exhibition, which will be on display Jan. 11-Feb. 8 and features dozens of works of art in a variety of media that were created in the fall of 2013 by Alachua County art students, from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Housing & Community Development

Housing & Community Development contact: Jackie Richardson – 352-334-5026

- ✓ The Housing & Community Development Division **monthly Homeowners Training workshop for homeowners is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 23 from 1:30–5 p.m.** The training will be held at Thomas Center B, room 249. For more information, please contact the HCD Division at 352-393-8618.
- ✓ The Housing & Community Development Division will **open its application cycle and start taking applications Jan. 13, 2014**, for assistance **for the following programs:** Homeowner Rehabilitation Program - Minor Rehabilitation, Purchase Assistance Program (DPA) and Housing Rehabilitation-Roof Program. Application packets for all programs may be picked at City of Gainesville-Housing & Community Development Division, 306 NE Sixth Ave., room 245 Gainesville, Fla. For more information, contact HCD Supervisor Burnadine Rich at 352-393-8568 or richb1@cityofgainesville.org.
- ✓ The City of Gainesville has hired Tampa-based firm Tindale-Oliver & Associates (TOA) **to conduct a study to determine whether or not any parts of a northwest Gainesville study area meet the State of Florida's criteria to become a Community Redevelopment Agency area.** The study is expected to take approximately six months and the study area includes the Cabot/Koppers Superfund Site, the city Public Works Complex, the Stephen Foster neighborhood and the Northwest 13th Street

corridor from approximately 16th Avenue to 45th Avenue. Representatives from several city departments will meet with TOA in the Thomas Center Monday, Jan. 27 to discuss data needs and data sharing for the study. For more information, contact Neighborhood Planning Coordinator John Wachtel at 352-393-8565 or wachteljs@cityofgainesville.org.

Planning and Development Services

Planning & Development Services contact: Steve Dush – 352-393-8690

- ✓ **John Freeland, the building official** for the City of Gainesville, attended the local chapter of the United States Green Building Council meeting in December and **spoke about Gainesville’s Green Building Program.**
- ✓ **Building Inspection plans examiners and inspectors have been busy issuing permits and conducting inspections at the new Shoppes at Butler Plaza project,** located at 3524 SW Archer Rd. Gigi’s Cupcakes, Burger Fi, Which Wich and Starbucks have been identified as businesses occupying the building.
- ✓ **Major continuing projects** include: RTS, GPD, Fleet Garage, Dean Building, The Grove, Innovation Square and Savion Apartments.
- ✓ **The Planning Division is holding a public workshop on the Land Development Code Update with the City Plan Board Thursday, Jan. 30 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium,** which is located at 200 E. University Ave. Staff and the Plan Board will discuss a variety of key issues including: building heights and compatibility, automotive oriented uses, parking issues and the development review process.
- ✓ **The Planning Division and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department held a successful urban forestry workshop in early December** at Ironwood Golf Course. The workshop had 81 participant representing citizens and industry professionals.
- ✓ **The Planning Division and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department is holding a local Florida Arbor Day Celebration Thursday, Jan. 16. Gainesville will be celebrating its 30th year as Tree City USA.** The event will be held at the Depot Building, which is located at 201 SE Depot Ave. from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. The public is invited to this event, which includes tours of the Depot Building, a tree-give-away and a tree planting ceremony.

Economic Development & Innovation

Economic Development & Innovation contact: Erik Bredfeldt – 352-393-8614

- ✓ On Thursday, Jan. 16, the Economic Development & Innovation Director will **attend a First-Step meeting and GRU utility project meeting,** each concerning a different business proposition.
- ✓ On Thursday, Jan. 23, the Economic Development & Innovation Director will **attend the monthly Alachua County Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting and the monthly Gainesville - Alachua County Regional Airport Authority meeting.**
- ✓ On Monday, Jan. 27, the Economic Development & Innovation Director will **attend a meeting regarding a blight study hosted by Housing & Community Development.**
- ✓ On Thursday, Jan. 30, the Economic Development & Innovation Director will **staff the EDUCC meeting to be held in room 16 of City Hall at 3 p.m.**

- ✓ On Monday, Feb. 3, the Economic Development & Innovation Director will **participate in a meeting of the Innovation Academy and then a tour of Innovation HUB** with academy members.
- ✓ On Tuesday, Feb. 4, the Economic Development & Innovation Director will **attend the annual Gainesville Real Estate Forum at the Gainesville Women's Club.**

Gainesville Police Department

Gainesville Police Department contact: Officer Ben Tobias – 352-393-7525

- ✓ The [Gainesville Police Department Community Calendar](#) provides information on crime watch meetings and other community meetings, such as the Black-on-Black Task Force. Please view the calendar for meeting dates and locations.
- ✓ GPD officers and staff have been in the **process of cleaning the Phoenix neighborhood GPD annex. On Thursday, Jan. 23, beginning at 8 a.m.**, GPD officers and staff will continue their efforts in the cleanup.

The next report will cover February 6-19, 2014. Items for submission to the report are due to the Communications Office no later than Thursday, January 30. For more information, please contact [Laura Rawson](#) at extension 8740.