

Prepared for the City Commission, April 2-15, 2015

City Manager

- ✓ The **City of Gainesville elections** for district one and one at-large commission seat were held Tuesday, March 17. Because no candidate had a 50 percent majority, **both races will go to a runoff, which will be held Tuesday, April 14**. Yvonne Hinson-Rawls and Charles Goston will be on the ballot in the district one race, and Harvey Budd and Jay Curtis will be on the ballot in the at-large race. For additional information on the March 17 election or the upcoming April 14 runoff, please visit <http://VoteAlachua.com>.
- ✓ **Congratulations to Jeffrey Lane, who was recently appointed as Gainesville Fire Rescue's Fire Chief**. Chief Lane has extensive experience in emergency services, becoming a certified firefighter in 1988 and joining Gainesville Fire Rescue in 1990. He is a certified Paramedic and Hazardous Materials Technician. Chief Lane has served at all levels of the organization, including Driver-Operator, Fire Lieutenant, District Chief, Assistant Chief, Deputy Fire Chief, and for the last four months, Interim Fire Chief. He holds Associate Degrees from Santa Fe College and a Bachelor of Science in Fire and Emergency Services from the University of Florida.
- ✓ The **City of Gainesville website and portions of GRU's website will be down for maintenance Saturday, April 4** beginning at 6 a.m., and continuing for approximately 36 hours.
- ✓ At the time of this publication, the **following special City Commission meetings/workshops have been scheduled**:
 - Monday, April 6 at 6 p.m.: Special City Commission meeting about the Capital Improvement Plan in the City Hall auditorium
 - Monday, April 13 at 3 p.m.: MTPO meeting in the Jack Durrance auditorium (county administration building)
 - Wednesday, April 15 at 5 p.m.: Special City Commission meeting about the Navigant Consultant's report in the City Hall auditorium
- ✓ 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

- ✓ **The tree removal phase of the sandhill restoration project at Boulware Nature Park is complete, and the Hawthorne Trail has reopened**. Informational signage will be placed at the park's kiosk with information about the project and examples of similar habitat restorations. Please contact Linda Demetroupolos at 352-393-8445 for more information.
- ✓ **Cofrin Nature Park, which is located at 4810 NW Eighth Ave., is closing beginning Monday, April 6**, for major structural repairs to stabilize the shoreline of Beville Creek, a stream that bisects the park. It is anticipated that the **park will reopen in August 2015**. Historic attempts by previous land owners to stabilize the shoreline from severe erosion included installation of wooden retaining

walls. Over time, these walls have crumbled, and the walls and shoreline are now crumbling and falling into the creek. Park structures that are situated close to the creek are in jeopardy, and the loose dirt poses safety risks for park patrons standing too close to the shoreline. Additionally, the water quality of the creek is compromised downstream due to the addition of silt to the water stemming from the crumbling shoreline. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department has hired a contractor to begin shoreline stabilization efforts. For public safety reasons, the entire park must be shut down while the contractor is working. Please contact Linda Demetroupolos at 352-393-8445 for more information.

- ✓ **Construction of Phase 2 of the Main Street streetscape** project started in early December, **with anticipated completion around April 2015**. The scope of the project includes brick pavers installation between South First and Second Avenues on Main Street, public art, low impact development stormwater treatment landscaping areas, street trees, benches and bike racks. For more information, please visit the [project website](#) or contact Stefan Broadus, project manager at broadusm@cityofgainesville.org or 352-393-8406.
- ✓ **Construction of the rail-trail landscaping project is underway and is expected to be complete in April 2015**. The purpose of the project is to clear existing overgrowth along the rail-trail and install landscaping and hardscaping to increase the use and appearance of the rail-trail in this area between Northwest Fourth Street and Northwest 16th Avenue. This project is consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan, which states the city will "provide a safe, convenient, accessible, comfortable, continuous, and aesthetically pleasing transportation environment that promotes walking..." and "is conducive to bicycling." For more information, please visit the [project website](#) or contact Stefan Broadus, project manager at broadusm@cityofgainesville.org or 352-393-8406.

Communications Office

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

- ✓ **Gainesville 101: the Spring 2015 Citizens' Academy** began Wednesday, March 11 and continues for seven consecutive weeks. During this reporting period, attendees will meet with the Public Works Department, the Communications Office, Planning & Development Services, GRU and Economic Development & Innovation Department.
- ✓ Staff from the Communications Office and the City Manager's Office are **coordinating the upcoming City Commission Orientation**, which is held every year a new commissioner is elected.

Gainesville Fire Rescue

GFR Administration and Operations contact: Interim Chief Jeff Lane – 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's second comprehensive Citizens' Survey** has been published to the GFR website and shows the comparison between the 2011 and 2014 results for GFR's services.
- ✓ The **application period for fire special assessment hardship assistance and fire flow (sprinkler) mitigation credits is open until May 1, 2015**. Please visit the [fire assessment Web page](#) for information and forms, or call 352-334-5078 to request a form.

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

- ✓ **GFR is now accepting applications for the Junior Fire Academy** (June 8-11, 2015) for 6th-8th graders. The cost is \$50 for city residents and \$60 for non-residents. Applications are due Thursday, April 30. Visit www.gfr.org for forms and information, or call Risk Reduction Specialist Krista Ott at 352-393-8461.
- ✓ **Project Get Alarmed helps those who cannot afford smoke detectors.** Applications are [available online](#) or by calling Risk Reduction Specialist Krista Ott at 393-8461.
- ✓ **Requests for car seat safety checks and installation** should be directed to GFR's Risk Reduction Specialist Krista Ott at 393-8461.
- ✓ GFR continues to host **crowd manager training** to enhance community safety. For information on **Safe Assembly Training classes**, please call 334-5065.

GFR Support Services Bureau contact: Capt. Joseph Hillhouse – 352-393-8459

- ✓ Gainesville Fire Rescue continues to provide **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

- ✓ The **Solid Waste Division Office of Recycling will have an information booth at Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo**, 3000 NW 83rd Street, for the two-day **“Party for the Planet” Earth Day Celebration**. The event features all types of environmental booths **from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 11 and Sunday, April 12**. For more information, please contact Jade Salamone, Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo's conservation education specialist, at 352-395-7358.
- ✓ **A public meeting about the Suburban Heights stormwater improvement project is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28 at 7 p.m. at the Millhopper Library**, meeting room A/B. During this initial meeting, the City of Gainesville will be address drainage concerns associated with the open channel ditch located along the southwestern corner of the Suburban Heights subdivision. The proposed project consists of constructing a closed culvert system in order to reduce ongoing erosion of the existing ditch and providing an aesthetic drainage corridor for residents. For further information, please visit the [project website](#).
- ✓ The **[Bicycle/Pedestrian Program](#) is coordinating/participating in the following:**
 - Thursday, April 2 at 6 p.m.: Alachua Countywide Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB) Orientation Session at the Alachua County Administration Building 2nd floor, Grace Knight Conference Room
 - Thursday, April 2 at 7 p.m.: Alachua Countywide Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB) meeting at the Alachua County Administration Building 2nd floor, Grace Knight Conference Room
 - Saturday, April 4 at 10 a.m.: Yopp! ArtFest at Rosa B. Williams Community Center
 - Wednesday, April 8 at 2 p.m.: Porter's Community Center “Bike Rodeo” Safety Course
 - Thursday, April 9 at 11 a.m.: City of Gainesville Employee Rally
 - Thursday, April 9 at 3:30 p.m.: Rawlings Elementary safety presentation

For more information, scheduling a bicycle/pedestrian event, questions or volunteer opportunities, please contact Dekova Batey, bicycle/pedestrian program coordinator at 352-334-5070 or bikeped@cityofgainesville.org. Visit www.cityofgainesville.org/bikeped.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

Recreation contact: Ben Dilliard – 352-393-8192

- ✓ **The Foundations After-School Program aims to foster ethical values and teach academic and life skills for youth.** The program is offered through **June 4, 2015**. Participants will be involved in structured activities, such as tutoring, homework help, arts/crafts, recreation and sporting activities. All children are welcome, but pre-registration is required. Space is limited and is available on a first come, first serve basis. Please note, transportation is not provided for this program. The program is for kids in first-eighth grade with convenient locations at four recreation and community centers (Albert "Ray" Massey Recreation, Eastside Community, Clarence R. Kelly Community and Porters Community Centers). For full details, visit our [After-School Programs](#) page or call 352-334-5067.
- ✓ **Need a place for your kids to go on teacher work days or school holidays?** [Out-of-School Days](#) is a convenient option for busy parents. Let's work together to give your child a foundation for success! During camp, kids enjoy games, activities and crafts that encourage achievement, a sense of community, good health and strong character! The **remaining dates for 2014–15 are:**
 - Monday, April 6, 2015 (teacher workday) and Friday, June 5, 2015 (teacher workday)

Camps are located at Albert "Ray" Massey Recreation Center, 1001 NW 34th St., and Eastside Community Center, 2841 E. University Ave. Hours of operation are 7 a.m.-6 p.m., and the camp is offered for children in first through eighth grades. Cost per day is \$5.50 for city residents and \$8.40 for non-city residents. Proof of residency, such as a GRU bill or voter ID card, is required at the time of registration.

Athletics and Aquatics contact: Jeff Moffitt – 352-393-8732

- ✓ **Baseball for All is a free, adaptive program** is offered through a partnership with the non-profit corporation Noah's Endeavor, Inc., for children with special physical and developmental needs. The program teaches children to be comfortable on the field while they have fun and learn important safety skills. For additional information, please contact Noah's Endeavor at 352-275-9639 or info@noahsendeavor.org or visit their website at www.noahsendeavor.org. Baseball for All is held at ball field no. 1 at the Albert "Ray" Massey (Westside) Park, which is located at 1001 NW 34th St. It is from 2–4 p.m. on the following remaining Sunday: April 12.
- ✓ **Swim lessons are offered for children ages 6 months to adults.** The focus is on fun, safety and basic swimming skills. Swim lessons are available **this spring at the Dwight H. Hunter (Northeast) Pool**, which is located at 1100 NE 14th St., offering convenient evening sessions. Class times depend on which level the child is in. For more information, and a full schedule, please visit the [Swimming Lessons Web page](#). The fee is \$44.50 for city residents and \$67.75 for non-city residents. **Registration is now available; the first session began March 23.**
- ✓ **Pop Warner Football and Cheerleading registration is open!** There are no tryouts and everyone participates. Youth compete and practice with others of similar age and size. Register early and save \$10! These programs are open to boys and girls age five through 15, and divisions are determined by age and weight. The regular season is August-October. For more information, please visit the [youth athletics Web page](#).

- ✓ The [annual biathlon series](#), which consists of six races that alternate between Northeast and Westside Pools, **begins Saturday, April 25**. The biathlon consists of a 5k run and an 800-meter swim. Early registration fees (register more than two days before each race) are \$17.25 per race for city residents and \$23 for non-city residents for each race, or \$23 for city residents and \$34.50 for non-city residents for regular or on-site registration. On-site registration and check-in begins at 7 a.m. and the race begins at 8 a.m. If you participate in four or more biathlons (before the final race), you will receive a free t-shirt and a free entry to the last race on Sept. 12. The series begins Saturday, April 25 at Northeast Pool. For more information, or to register, please contact the PRCA Department at 334-5067.
- ✓ For more information about the specific **American Red Cross certification courses**, schedules and prerequisites, visit the [lifeguarding and safety courses Web page](#).
Lifeguarding Certification and Re-Certification (age 15 and older) - Get certified to qualify for great summer jobs! Several sessions are available starting in April. The certification fee is \$175, and includes books and materials. The re-certification is \$90, with materials available for class use and purchase.
Lifeguarding Instructor Certification (age 17 and older) - Do you want to get your lifeguard instructor certification so that you can teach lifeguarding courses this summer? American Red Cross Lifeguarding (ARC) Instructor Course certifies successful graduates to teach all ARC lifeguarding courses, including first aid and CPR/AED skills. The fee is \$275, and participants must register by May 6 (begins May 13). Nightly coursework will be given.
American Red Cross Adult/Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED Certification Course (age 11 and older) - Join the ranks of those who can spring into action when trouble strikes - sign up today to get certified in CPR, first aid and AED. The fee is \$60, and includes books and materials.
- ✓ [Aqua-Fit water aerobics](#) is a low/medium-intensity class offers more aerobic cardio and core training which also focuses on flexibility and total body toning. Aqua-Fit **classes began March 2 at the Dwight H. Hunter "Northeast" Pool (1100 NE 14th St.)**. All instructors are certified.
Times: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Ages: 13 and older
Fee: \$2.55 a class or buy 8 classes (\$20.40) and get 2 classes free!
- ✓ **Spring operating hours for municipal pools are as follows (began March 16):**

<u>Northeast Pool</u>	<u>Westside Pool</u> (reopens May 1)
M-F: 6-9 a.m., Lap Swim	<u>Mickle Pool</u> (reopens May 22)
M-F: 11:30 a.m.-7 p.m., Open Swim/Lap Swim	
SA: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Open Swim/Lap Swim	
SU: 12-5 p.m. Open Swim, Lap Swim	

Environmental Education contact: Sally Wazny – 352-334-3326

- ✓ **Go native at the 2015 Spring Native Plant Sale April 3 and 4!** Take advantage of the largest offering of native plants in north Florida during the Spring Native Plant Sale at Morningside Nature Center, 3540 E. University Ave. The **sale begins Friday, April 3 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. for members only** (members of Friends of Nature Parks and the Florida Native Plant Society). You can join online (<http://www.friendsofnatureparks.org> and <http://www.fnps.org>) or at the gate the day of the sale. The **plant sale continues and is open to the public Saturday, April 4 from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** The sale features free, expert plant advice, free Park-a-Plant service that allows you to shop hands-free while staff tag, store and help you load your plants. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted.
- ✓ Be a part of helping to keep our natural areas well-maintained and free of trash and invasive plants. Individuals and organizations can be part of the **Gainesville Greenway Challenge, offering year-**

round volunteer opportunities for invasive plant removal. Please contact gnvgreenwaychallenge@gmail.com to learn more!

- ✓ **Environmental education programs resume at Morningside Nature Center** (3540 E. University Ave.)! The free, educational and fun-filled programs at Morningside Nature Center start in September and continue through May! For more information, please call 352-334-3326.
 - C’mon home to the Living History Farm and experience a time when the rooster’s crow and the rising sun, not an alarm clock, welcomed a new day! During **Living History Days**, interpreters portray day-to-day life on an 1870 Florida farm. Living History Days take place the first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The farm is open to the public from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday all year long. The remaining Living History Days dates are April 4 and May 2. Step back in time, enjoy nature, and experience Florida as it was!
 - Morningside Nature Center has a farm, ee—i—ee—i—oh! On this farm, 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 the animals love donations of carrots, squash, apples, sweet potatoes, and melons (please give these items to a staff member and not directly to the animals). With a sheep here—and a cow there—learning about heritage breeds is fun! The **Barnyard Buddies Program** takes place Wednesdays at 3 p.m. at the Living History Farm.
 - 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. Join the fun, get the facts! This free program begins at 2 p.m. in the Education Building. The remaining Frogs and Friends Friday dates are April 3 and May 1.

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

- ✓ **Artist applications are now available for the 34th Annual Downtown Festival & Art Show.** With its blend of art, food and music, the Downtown Festival & Art Show has consistently been recognized as one of the top 200 shows in the nation since 1996. The Downtown Festival & Art Show jumped into the top 10 in national art show rankings last year to No. 10 on Sunshine Artist magazine’s “200 Best” list of top fine arts festivals in the nation. On Saturday, Nov. 14 and Sunday Nov. 15, 2015, more than 250 artists will display original oils and acrylics, vibrant watercolors, captivating sculptures, dazzling jewelry, decorative ceramics and vivid photography in historic downtown Gainesville. They will compete for \$19,000 in cash prizes and purchase awards. The festival attracts more than 100,000 visitors, who travel the historic streets of Gainesville to purchase one-of-a-kind art work. Visitors can savor local and international cuisine, enjoy live music from three stages, and explore the Community Information Area, featuring 50 nonprofit organizations showcasing their services. Children can enjoy free, hands-on art activities at the Children’s Imagination Station. Applications for the Downtown Festival & Art Show are available upon request at 352-393-8536 or online at <http://www.gvlculturalaffairs.org>. The **application deadline is Friday, May 4.**
- ✓ **The Jewel Box Concert Series** continues in April with two performances.
 - **Caravan of Thieves performs Friday, April 3.** Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the band begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$15 at the door - cash or check only, please. Within their first year, Caravan of Thieves began to win immediate praise for their unique blend of gypsy swing and popular music, inspiring them to record and release their full-length, debut album “Bouquet” (2009). Now the group is gearing up for their newest release, “Kiss Kiss,” which comes out March 31. “Kiss Kiss” combines the dark humor and sarcastic social commentary of their previous efforts, with an added emphasis on love and all the beauty and danger it brings. They have created the music to match, adding in tuba, beat box and everything including the kitchen sink to draw listeners in to the Caravan of Thieves’ world.

- [HuDost](#) performs **Sunday, April 19**. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the band begins at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$15 at the door - cash or check only, please. The music of HuDost, the neo-folk, world rock ensemble from Montreal and Nashville, weaves a seamless tapestry of sound that renders tears and laughter in listeners, cultivating that nameless longing that abides somewhere in all our hearts. HuDost's core musicians are Moksha Sommer and Jemal Wade Hines. Having toured the USA, Canada and Europe constantly since April 2006, HuDost has grown and expanded, travelled rocky and glorious terrain, and marveled at all they can learn and explore.
- ✓ [Thomas Center Galleries](#): *TIGHTROPE: Betwixt the Magical & the Macabre* is in the Main Gallery March 26-May 30. *ALACHUA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Visual Arts Program Showcase – Elementary* is in the Mezzanine Gallery April 4-May 2.

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.

The next report will cover April 16-May 6, 2015. Items for submission to the report are due to the Communications Office no later than Thursday, April 9. For more information, please contact [Laura Rawson](#) at extension 8740.