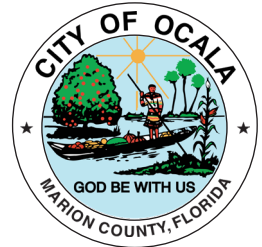




News Happening Around Town

October 2020 Newsletter



City of Ocala
Office of the Mayor

Message from the Mayor



“As an Ocala native, I deeply care about what happens in our city. The people and places that make up this town are an important part of our community. Serving as your mayor for nine years is both an honor and a privilege and I remain committed to staying connected to our citizens. My hope is that through this monthly newsletter, you will see the continuous progress of our city as we work together to make this city a great place to live, play and prosper.”

Calendar | Upcoming Events

3
Nov.

**City Council
Meeting**
5 p.m.

17
Nov.

**City Council
Meeting**
5 p.m.

Updates from the Police Department



Service Awards

The following members of the Ocala Police Department received their Service Awards during the Tuesday, Oct. 20 City Council Meeting. We would like to recognize these employees for their hard work and dedication, including multiple years of service to Ocala.



Kirk Friberg, OPD - 20 years



Robin Ford, OPD - 30 years



Tara Woods, OPD - 30 years

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October is National Domestic Awareness Month, and for the Ocala Police Department. Unfortunately, during the pandemic, OPD has seen a rise in these types of cases within our community. If you, or someone you know, needs help please dial 1-800-799-7233 or call 352-369-7000 and ask to speak to a victim advocate. Additional assistance can be found online at www.thehotline.org.

From Around the Community

MLK First Responder Campus

The MLK First Responder Campus encompasses a variety of operational facilities and public spaces. Included in the campus are OFR's administration building, fire station, basketball court, a community center that doubles as home to the Ocala Fire Museum, and an Ocala Police Department substation. *Opening date to be determined

The project, which was made possible through the one percent Public Safety and Transportation Infrastructure Sales Tax (aka Penny Sales Tax), broke ground in December 2019. Construction was completed within ten months.



Hilton Garden Inn Hotel Opening

The newest edition to the downtown Ocala area has officially opened. The 107-room hotel and its second-floor terrace will now welcome visitors

coming to the Ocala area. Previously, the downtown area was home to the Marion Hotel however it has not been operational for decades; the addition of this hotel will now provide accommodations in the middle of Ocala and a unique guest experience. The new Hilton Garden Inn will overlook the historic downtown square, feature an on-site restaurant, and the future completion of a food hall on the first floor.



Front View of Hotel



Rear View of Hotel

Kut Different, INC.

Within our community, there are at-risk youth that may not have the same opportunities or role models to support them throughout important life milestones. Kut Different is a male mentorship program started by Jamie Gilmore who has made it a personal mission to be a positive role model for young men in the Ocala community. The organization is built on the belief that if you reach young men at a critical point in their lives, you can help shape them by giving G.A.M.E (Guidance, Attention, Motivation,

Education). To find out more about this organization, email differentkut@gmail.com or check out their YouTube Channel, Kut Different, Inc.



U.S. News & World Report News

Ocala is a 2020-2021 top place to retire in the United States, according to U.S. News & World Report! Our area was evaluated on overall happiness of residents, housing affordability, health care quality, retiree taxes, desirability and job market strength.

Holiday Season

The holiday season will soon be here, and I hope that everyone will have an opportunity to spend time with loved ones. After a year filled with ups and downs, remember to take a moment to tell friends and family that you are thankful to have them in your life.



Proclamations



A proclamation is a formal public statement issued by a person of authority, dealing with matters of great importance or offering celebration to a person or organization. If you or your organization is interested in working with the Mayor’s office to receive recognition, please contact Jackie McGuinness at (352)401-3977.

Recent Proclamations

Public Power Week

The citizens of Ocala place high value on local control of community services and

therefore have chosen to operate a community owned, locally controlled, not-for-profit electric utility. Ocala Electric Utility (OEU) provides reliable, efficient and cost-effective electricity. OEU is a valuable community asset that contributes to the well-being of local citizens and will continue to work to bring lower-cost, safe, reliable electricity to community homes and businesses just as it has since 1898. I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim October 4-10, 2020 as Public Power Week to recognize OEU for its contributions to the community and recognize the benefits of public power.

Guardianship Awareness Month

Our community is home to vulnerable seniors and residents with disabilities which require special attention and knowledge. Guardians provide critical daily work and an important voice for our most vulnerable populations and annually devote millions of hours to ensure the needs of their wards are met. Hundreds of public and professional guardians and thousands of family guardians provide vital services to our citizens. I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all residents of Ocala observing October 2020 as Guardianship Awareness Month.

2020 National Chamber of the Year Award

The Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership (CEP) has been named Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. This award recognizes excellence in financial performance, partner retention, organizational strength and impact on the community in such areas as education, transportation, business development, and quality of life. There are approximately 7,000 chambers in the United States, with over 1,300 chambers globally represented by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, including 93 chambers that represent the top 100 U.S. Metro areas. Because of its comprehensive evaluation process, the award is a reflection of the hard work dedication, and collaborative effort of many people throughout the Ocala Metro; and we appreciate the Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership for its work which continues to expand our economy by attracting and growing jobs in the Ocala Metro. I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim that the Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership is the best of the best in their industry having been awarded the 2020 National Chamber of the Year Award and I congratulate their Board of Directors, staff, and partners for being recognized accordingly by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Red Ribbon Week

Alcohol and drug abuse affect individuals, families, and communities across Marion County, FL and the nation. It is imperative that visible, unified efforts by community members be launched to prevent drug abuse, and Red Ribbon Week offers citizens the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to drug-free lifestyles. Businesses, government, law enforcement, media, health care providers, religious institutions, schools, and other community-based organizations will demonstrate their commitment to healthy, drug-free lifestyles by wearing red ribbons and participating in drug prevention activities. I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim October 23-31 as Red Ribbon Week. I encourage all residents to participate in drug prevention education activities, not only during Red Ribbon Week but throughout the year.

Opioid and Amnesty Information

The Ocala Police Department (OPD) has multiple protocols in place to help alleviate addiction in our community.

All officers in the field are equipped with Narcan® to aid during a response to a possible opioid overdose call. Narcan® is an FDA approved nasal spray that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid emergency or overdose. OPD's Opioid Amnesty Program began in January 2018 and continues to be a prominent factor in the reduction of overdose deaths and crime throughout Marion County. If someone is struggling with addiction and needs assistance, upon request by the individual, an Ocala Police Officer will transport them to a local health treatment facility, free of charge. The officer will also take and properly destroy any drugs and/or drug paraphernalia surrendered to them by the individual without the fear of arrest for possession of those items. The goal of the Amnesty Program is to encourage individuals to seek treatment without the barriers of cost or arrest. It is the belief of the Ocala Police Department that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

OPD Numbers* 2020 Year to Date

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Overdoses (OD) | 288 |
| OD Deaths | 34 |
| Narcan® Saves | 119 |
| Amnesty Program | |
| Total Participants | 345 |
| 2020 Participants | 149 |

*Numbers are as-of this writing and are subject to change.

About the Mayor

Kent Guinn assumed the office of Mayor in December 2011 after serving the City of Ocala for 12 years as the Councilman representing District 4. Mayor Guinn is in the financial services business and is a representative of the Guardian Life Insurance Company of America as well as owner of the firm Guinn & Company, LLC.

For the past 29 years he has served on the Board of the Children's Home Society Mid-Florida Division which covers North Central Florida. He served on the CHS State Board of Directors for 26 years. CHS is a 112-year-old not for profit child welfare agency in the State of Florida. Mayor Guinn was adopted through CHS.

Mayor Guinn is a 5th generation Ocalan. His family has been in Ocala since 1850. He and his wife Sandra have been married for 39 years and have two sons.

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