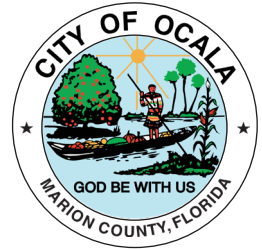




News Happening Around Town

April 2021 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

4
May

City Council Meeting
City Hall
5 p.m.

6
May

National Day of Prayer Gathering
Downtown Square
8 a.m & 6 p.m.

7
May

**First Friday Art
Walk
Downtown Ocala
6-9 p.m.**

18
May

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

Updates from the Police Department

Swearing-in and Promotional Ceremony

On Tuesday, April 13, the Ocala Police Department hosted a Swearing-In and Promotional Ceremony at First Baptist Church. We recognized the retirement of Major Robin Ford and presented her with a plaque in honor of her 30 years of service. Chief Balken and I both spoke in regards to her impact and well-deserved retirement from OPD, as well as her new position with the City as the Manager for the Office of Homeless Prevention. That evening, 11 new 911 Dispatchers and 16 new police officers were sworn in, and six Sergeants, five Lieutenants, four Captains and three Majors were promoted. We also swore in our Deputy Chief & Police Chief. We are so glad we could celebrate the accomplishments made over the last year.



Unified Drug Enforcement Strike Team (UDEST)

During the first quarter of 2021, UDEST identified a trend of opioid related overdoses and overdose deaths. In response to this trend, UDEST launched investigations into organizations responsible for trafficking narcotics. Since the first of the year, several drug trafficking organizations in Ocala/Marion County have been interrupted and dismantled. Agents have apprehended 83 felony offenders with charges ranging from "Sale and Possession of Cocaine" to "Trafficking kilograms of Fentanyl." Additionally, several suspects directly related to opioid overdose death investigations were arrested. At the conclusion of those investigations the cases will be submitted to the Office of the State Attorney with the intention of securing manslaughter indictments. In recent months UDEST has seized the following throughout Marion County:

- Marijuana: Over 300 plants plus an additional 300 pounds packaged for distribution; Over one kilogram of THC concentrated derivatives
- Cocaine: 2 Kilograms
- Crystal Meth "Ice": Over 30 pounds
- Heroin: Over 1 Kilogram
- Fentanyl: 3 Kilograms
- Cash: in excess of \$108,000
- Firearms: 21 including assault rifles, shotguns, handguns and ammunition

Fentanyl is a highly addictive and extremely lethal substance contributing to the rise in overdose deaths not only in Marion County but also across the country. This substance is being broken down and mixed with other drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin. The tremendous amount of work that the UDEST agents exhibited in the seizure of three kilograms of Fentanyl is significant in that they potentially saved thousands of lives.

Domestic Violence Awareness

While National Domestic Violence Awareness month isn't until October, you can raise awareness and watch out for signs of domestic abuse all year. Locally, OPD worked 914 domestic violence and 200 dating violence cases in 2020. Since 2018, there have been 31 homicides related to domestic violence, with three of those taking place in Ocala.

Talking about it and building each other up helps take the stigma away. We want people to feel comfortable enough to have the conversation and understand the danger that exists. Each person's situation is unique and we are here to help.

Relationship Warning Signs

1. Do you feel afraid around your boyfriend, girlfriend, or partner?
2. Do you have to be careful to control your behavior to avoid their anger?

3. Do you feel forced by them when it comes to sex?
4. Are you scared of disagreeing with them?
5. Do they call you names or humiliate you?
6. Do they act abusive in private and different in public?
7. Do they repeatedly and wrongly accuse you of flirting or being unfaithful?
8. Do they isolate you from friends or family?
9. Have they ever been violent with you or threatened you?
10. Have they ever prevented you from leaving a room or home?
11. Have they destroyed items special to you?
12. Have they punched holes in the wall?
13. Have they ever tried to strangle you?
14. Have they ever abused an animal or threatened to?
15. Have they ever abused a child or threatened to?
16. Do they threaten to kill you or hurt themselves if you break up with them?
17. Do they make excuses or try to justify their behavior? (for example: saying you made them abuse you, blaming the abuse on alcohol or drugs, claiming they can't control their temper, or saying they were just joking?)

Help Is Available

Police, safe shelter, transportation, injunctions for protection, loaner cell phones, relocation assistance, address confidentiality program, housing assistance, free counseling for victims & their children, Crimes compensation, free legal aid and victim advocates.

What can friends or loved ones do? You can report abuse to law enforcement if you hear or witness anything. You can also use phrases like:

- I am afraid for your safety
- The abuse will only get worse
- You don't deserve to live in fear
- There is help available
- I'm afraid for the safety of your children
- I'm here for you if you decide to leave

Call 911 to report any domestic violence

Ocala Police Department Victim Advocate: 369-7139, 7134 or 7158

Marion County Sheriff's Dept Victim Advocate: 369-6762

Domestic Violence Shelter 24-hour hot-line: 622-8495

From Around the Community

Arts in Ocala

There are many ways to support art in our community. On the first Friday of each month from Sept. - May, the City of Ocala hosts First Friday Art Walk. Local artists and musicians set up around downtown Ocala for a night of music, art and fun. May 7 is the final event for the 2020 - 2021 season.

Make sure to go out and support art in our community, and we'll see you again in September!

As First Friday Art Walk breaks for the summer, the Levitt Amp Ocala Concert Series is just getting started! Enjoy free outdoor concerts each Friday night from now until June 25 (excluding May 28). Concerts take place at Webb Field, 7 - 9 p.m.

10 Free Outdoor Concerts



Fridays, April 16 - June 25 | 7-9 p.m. | Webb Field, 1510 NW Fourth St.
**Excluding May 28 / June 25 6 - 9 p.m.*

www.ocalafl.org/performingarts | artinfo@ocalafl.org | 352-629-8447

MUSIC - FOOD - FUN

April 16	Sunny War Caly & Megan (Folk Rock)
April 23	The HeadTones Souljam (Funk/Jam)
April 30	Tiempo Libre Bohemia Trio Rosal (Latin Jazz/Bolero)
May 7	Sideline Justin Mason and the Blue Nights (Bluegrass)
May 14	Dwayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hellraisers Julie Black (Zydeco/Blues)
May 21	The New Respects The States (Pop/Indie)
June 4	JP Soars' Gypsy Blues Revue with Anne Harris Pam Taylor Duo (Blues)
June 11	Ruby Velle and the Soulphonics Becky Sinn (Retro Soul)
June 18	Love, DEAN Kristopher James (Soul Pop)
June 25	Thomas McClary's Commodore Experience Fareeza (Soul) <i>*Grand Finale 6 - 9 p.m. : special performances presented by the MLK Jr. Commemorative Commission</i>



 @levittampocala #musicmoves



Kentucky Derby

The Kentucky Derby is steeped in longstanding tradition, so is the friendship that has bonded Greg Fischer, Mayor of Louisville, Kentucky and myself. We created a tradition to see who can pick a winning horse. This year marks

the seventh year of our friendly wager, with Mayor Fischer betting a bottle of Woodford Reserve Bourbon signed by Master Distiller Chris Morris and a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon from Stonestreet Estate Vineyards. We both select a horse from our respective towns in the hopes that the winner takes all: the Derby title, bragging rights, and of course the hand-selected gift that accompanies the bet.



Soup and Sandwich by Lauren King Photo

This year I selected the racing horse known as Soup and Sandwich, a horse that was bred at Live Oak Stud, owned by Live Oak Plantation, and trained by Mark E. Casse. The name may seem out of place, but Ocala locals will

instantly recognize the witty take on Charlotte Weber's family-owned business, Campbell Soup Company. Currently ranked #13, I hope this will be the horse to carry Ocala over the finish line. Mayor Fischer has selected Essential Quality as his horse for this year's race.

All eyes will be on the Kentucky Derby, this Saturday, May 1, when the horses take center stage for the derby. Win or lose, I want to continue to shine a light on the thriving equine industry located in Ocala, while embracing the spirit of friendly rivalry between two equine-centric cities. Stay tuned to see who will be victorious this year!

Ward-Highlands Elementary School Visit

I recently gave a presentation to the third grade class at Ward-Highlands Elementary School. The students are currently studying the government and students requested to meet a 'real' elected official. As part of the presentation, I discussed local elections, what my role is in our local government, the Ocala Police Department, and I fielded questions from eager students. I always enjoy getting to meet students within the schools and hopefully pass along some information that will inspire them to be involved one day. Thanks for having me, Ward-Highlands!

Welcome Fazillete Gonzalez

I want to welcome Fazillete Gonzalez, Executive Administrative Assistance, to the City of Ocala team. Fazillete worked with us a few years ago and has returned following the retirement of Jackie McGuinness. I want to thank

Jackie for all her help and hard work over the years. We wish her all the best in her retirement and are excited to have Fazillete on board.

Proclamations



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

Recent Proclamations

Men's Health Month

Despite advances in medical technology and research, men continue to live an average of five years less than women, with Native American and African-American men having the lowest life expectancy. Educating the public and health care providers about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and early detection of male health problems will result in reducing rates of mortality from disease. Men who are educated about the value that preventive health can play in prolonging their lifespan and their role as productive family members are more likely to participate in health screenings. Fathers who maintain a healthy lifestyle are role models for their children and have happier, healthier children. The Men's Health Network worked with Congress to develop a national men's health awareness period as a special campaign to help educate men, boys and their families about the importance of positive health attitudes and preventive health practices. The Men's Health Month website has been established at www.MensHealthMonth.org and features resources, proclamations and information about awareness events and activities, including Wear Blue for Men's Health (www.WearBlueForMensHealth.com).

Men's Health Month in Ocala will focus on a broad range of men's health issues, including heart disease, mental health, diabetes, and prostate, testicular and colon cancer. The citizens of this city are encouraged to increase awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, regular exercise and medical check-ups. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim the month of June 2021 as MEN'S HEALTH MONTH in Ocala and I encourage all citizens to pursue preventative health practices and early detection efforts.

Water Conservation Month 2021

Water is a basic and essential need of every living creature. The City of Ocala and the State of Florida have designated April, typically a dry month when water demands are most acute, as Florida's Water Conservation Month to educate citizens about how they can help save Florida's precious water resources. The City of Ocala has always encouraged and supported water conservation through various educational programs and special events. Every business, industry, school and citizen can make a difference by saving water and thus promote a healthy economy and community. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby

proclaim the month of April 2021 as Water Conservation Month in Ocala and I call upon each citizen and business to help protect our precious resource by practicing water saving measures and becoming more aware of the need to save water.

Lineworker Appreciation Day

The City of Ocala celebrates the profession of an electrical lineman and wishes to honor its Electric Department personnel for their exemplary service to the City and its citizens. America is powered by thousands of power plants generating electric energy and connected by an electric grid comprising of 5 million miles of electrical lines delivering energy across the country. This profession demands passion, dedication and ongoing training and requires our linemen to work the lines 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to keep electricity flowing. Lineworkers play a vital role in the lives of our citizens by maintaining and growing our electrical infrastructure; and they must often work under dangerous conditions far from their families to construct and maintain the energy infrastructure of the City of Ocala.

Ocala Electric Utility line workers have demonstrated their dedication and skills and deserve the appreciation of the Ocala community. It is most fitting and proper that the City of Ocala set aside a special day to recognize and honor these dedicated professionals. Therefore, I, Kent Guinn, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Ocala, do hereby proclaim April 18, 2021 as LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY in the City of Ocala and call upon the people of Ocala to show their appreciation for the work done day in and day out by these dedicated workers by recognizing lineworkers throughout Ocala.

Opioid and Amnesty Information

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

All field officers 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 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

OPD Numbers* 2021 Year to Date	
Overdoses (OD)	84
OD Deaths	11
Narcan® Saves	39
Amnesty Program	
Total Participants	364
2021 Participants	33

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

Program is to encourage individuals to seek treatment without the barriers of cost or arrest. It is the belief of OPD that together, as a community, we can combat this crisis.

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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www.ocalafl.org



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