



As the third Committee Week in preparation of the 2021 Legislative Session comes to a close, we've heard presentations regarding Governor DeSantis' budget recommendations. Although the public health emergency caused declines in revenue collection in both the 2019-20 and 2020-21 fiscal years, as well as revisions to projected future revenue collections, the policies of Governor Ron DeSantis and his administration have led to Florida exceeding expectations for revenues, jobs and economic growth.

As always, it is a great honor to serve and represent you and the members of District 8. Share this newsletter with your friends and family so that they too can stay informed with our community updates, district-wide achievements, and future legislation.



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PEDESTRIAN SAFETY UPDATE



Florida Department of Transportation

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For Immediate Release
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FDOT Completes Initial Pedestrian Safety Improvements Along University Avenue

Improvements include enhanced crosswalks, updated signage, and visibility efforts

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – To swiftly help improve pedestrian safety, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has started several projects in the Gainesville area. Crosswalk enhancements, including re-alignment in some locations, new signs, and tree trimming are all part of current efforts to increase visibility of pedestrians crossing University Avenue.

This week, FDOT is realigning the crosswalk at the intersection of SW 13th Street and University Avenue (photo below). In the days to come, FDOT will also install new, special emphasis crosswalks at the intersections of 34th Street, Gale Lemerand Drive, NW 19th Street, and NW 14th Street.

Additionally, FDOT has installed all new signs with bright sticks, which are long reflectors on the signposts, for better nighttime visibility. Locations include:

- The intersections of 34th Street and University Avenue, University Avenue at NW 20th Terrace, and University Avenue and 13th Street have new “Use Crosswalk” signs to direct pedestrians to the proper crosswalk.
- The intersections of 34th Street and University Avenue and Gale Lemerand Drive and University Avenue have new “Turning Vehicles Stop for Pedestrians” signs to alert motorists that pedestrians may be using the crosswalk.
- The median of University Avenue for southbound traffic on NW 14th Street has a new “One way” sign to caution motorists that they can only turn right.

FDOT has also completed tree trimming on University Avenue at NW 22nd Street and NW 23rd Street. This will increase the visibility of pedestrians for motorists traveling along University Avenue.

FDOT conducted an initial partnering session on January 25 with city and county officials, the University of Florida, Gainesville Police Department, and the University of Florida Police Department. Another session is planned for February 10, 2021 and details regarding a listening session with the community will be forthcoming.

FDOT and the City of Gainesville are researching available technology to enhance pedestrian signal activation features at numerous locations along University Avenue. These features include:

- Passive pedestrian detection at the intersections of Gale Lemerand Drive, NW 17th Street, and 13th Street to detect pedestrians as they cross and not require the push of a button to cross the road.
- Illuminated push buttons at the intersections of Gale Lemerand Drive, NW 18th Street, NW 17th Street, and 13th Street to provide enhanced visibility of crosswalk buttons at these intersections.
- Audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Gale Lemerand Drive, NW 18th Street, NW 17th Street, and 13th Street to provide an audible tone for pedestrians indicating when it is safe to cross.

Other enhancements in the area include the installation of new traffic signals on University Avenue at both NW 16th Street and NW 19th Street, which is set to begin this August. These new traffic signals will create “short blocks” that should induce lower speed limits. This work will also include special emphasis crosswalks and enhanced pedestrian lighting to make the locations safer for pedestrians.

FDOT will continue to invest in high visibility enforcement, community education activities with increased signage, paid advertising for safety messages, and engaging with community partners to encourage safe, responsible habits on the roadway. In addition, FDOT's coordination with the University of Florida, local law enforcement, and the City of Gainesville to discuss future enhancement projects in the area is ongoing.

Members of the public who would like to receive real-time information regarding the continued safety efforts in the Gainesville area may send their email address to D2.Communications@dot.state.fl.us and subscribe for updates.

To stay connected, follow FDOT District 2 at [@MyFDOT_NEFL](https://twitter.com/MyFDOT_NEFL) on Twitter or at [MyFDOTNEFL](https://www.facebook.com/MyFDOTNEFL) on Facebook.



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COMMUNITY UPDATES

UF ONLINE PROGRAMS CLIMB IN U.S. NEWS RANKINGS



In the recent U.S. News & World Report, the University of Florida ranked No. 3 for online bachelor's degree programs and No. 1 for online graduate education programs. This is an incredible achievement and I am proud of Gator Nation's students, staff, and faculty's hard work. I look forward to seeing more accomplishments from the University of Florida in the near future!

PUTNAM COUNTY'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Alexis Strickland-Tilton for being recognized as Putnam County's Teacher of the Year. Our community greatly appreciates your passion and commitment to teaching agriculture to Florida's future leaders. I hope this well-deserved award serves as a reminder of the many positive impacts you have made in and out of the classroom. I wish you great success!



FREE COVID-19 TESTING AVAILABLE

The Florida Department of Health in Marion County is offering free COVID-19 drive-through testing twice a week. The testing is available at the Southeastern Livestock Pavilion, 2232 NE

Jacksonville Road, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. or until the day's available samples are used. A valid photo ID is required for testing and those 18 and under must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Scheduled testing dates include:

February - 3rd, 8th, and 10th

March - 1st, 3rd, 8th, 10th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 24th, 29th, and 31st.

April - 5th, 7th, 12th, 14th, 19th, 21st, 26th, and 28th.



HIS COMPASSION FOOD BANK



His Compassion is a non-profit food bank providing help to underserved communities. The organization serves areas in Central Florida including Marion, Alachua, Putnam, Citrus, Sumter, Levy, and Lake Counties.

You can help by hosting a food drive at your local agency, church, or community group. Please consider volunteering for this heart-warming organization by registering [here](#) or find calendar dates for upcoming food drives and drop-offs [here](#).

STATEWIDE UPDATES

GOVERNOR DESANTIS' BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2021-2022 FISCAL YEAR



Thanks to Governor DeSantis' leadership, Florida continues to outpace the nation in job growth and closed out 2020 with eight consecutive months of job growth, gaining over 748,000 private sector jobs from May through December. Florida's future remains bright and continues to lead the nation in many policy areas.

The following fiscally responsible budget protects taxpayer dollars while being mindful that the state is still engaged in an all-hands-on-deck response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Accordingly, this budget ensures the State maintains significant funding in reserves, including General Revenue, while safeguarding our K-12 education system and supporting our teachers, as well as continuing our commitment to Florida's environmental resources.

The Governor's total recommendation for the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget is \$96.6 billion. The General Revenue portion is \$35.8 billion. Florida's total reserves are \$6.6 billion more than 6 percent of the total recommended budget for the Fiscal Year 2021-22, leaving ample resources for unforeseen expenditures related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2021 hurricane season. You can review a detailed summary of Governor Desantis' proposed budget for this fiscal year [here](#).



Joint Information Center on COVID-19 for the State of Florida

FLORIDA LAUNCHES STATEWIDE PREREGISTRATION SYSTEM FOR COVID-19 VACCINE APPOINTMENTS

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The state announced the launch of a statewide preregistration system to schedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments for individuals 65 and older and frontline health care workers. Individuals can pre-register for vaccine appointments and be notified when appointments are available in their area by visiting myvaccine.fl.gov.

This website will allow individuals who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to be proactively contacted when vaccine appointments are available at state-supported vaccination sites. On the site, residents can select their county and submit their contact information. Once appointments are available, individuals will be contacted by phone call, text or email and will be assisted in scheduling an appointment.

Alachua County DOH is not part of the statewide system. Go to Alachua.floridahealth.gov to sign up if you live in Alachua County.

Vaccine supply remains limited and appointments may not be available for several weeks in some counties. Additionally, as part of the statewide registration system, each county has a designated phone number that individuals can call and pre-register if they do not have Internet access. Please find the complete list of numbers by county [here](#). Whether a resident calls by phone or visits myvaccine.fl.gov, their place in line will be reserved reliably using Sharecare software.

As outlined in Executive Order 20 – 315, individuals who are eligible for the vaccine in Florida are outlined below. If someone does not

meet these eligibility requirements, they will not be able to pre-register.

- Long-term care facility residents and staff;
- Persons 65 years of age and older; and
- Health care personnel with direct patient contact.

Hospital providers, however, also may vaccinate persons who they deem to be extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. On January 21, State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees issued a Public Health Advisory prioritizing vaccine in Florida for Florida residents.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



With only two committee weeks left before we begin the 2021 Legislative Session I would like to begin by highlighting some of my priorities below for this legislative term. The policies I champion aim to create more flexibility and strengthen the voices of all constituents in District 8. I will be including discussions of different bills I am sponsoring or are hot topics in each newsletter through the Legislative Session. Contact my office if there are any bills, in particular, you'd like to hear more about.

SB 380: CHILD RESTRAINT REQUIREMENTS

The safety of our children should never be compromised. This session, I have filed Senate Bill 380, increasing the age requirements for a child to use a booster seat by one year, until a child's 7th birthday. The current restraint laws for small children do not reflect the highest safety measures for kids in the state of Florida. Most families and caregivers assume current laws reflect the safest standards.

However, many states' restraint laws are the result of compromises between best practices recommended by safety experts and provisions legislators find practicable, enforceable, and will be tolerated by the general public. In my view, the booster seat law should be considered the minimum safety standard which is why I believe it is necessary to establish enhanced safety guidelines that ensure protection for all young children in the state of Florida.

- "Children seated in a booster seat in the back of a car are 45% less likely to be injured in a crash than children using a seat belt alone." Safe Kids Worldwide.
- "Car crashes remain a leading cause of death for children," said Benjamin Hoffman, M.D., lead author of the new policy statement and chair of the AAP Council on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention.

The current restraint law for children requires the ages of 4 to 5 to use a booster seat. I am proposing one additional year of booster seat usage. This would safeguard 50% of the children who are unprotected under Florida's existing law.

The cost to purchase a booster seat is minimal and can be obtained for free, or discounted, from a variety of organizations, such as local kid coalitions. While this requirement can be an additional financial burden to Florida families, you simply cannot put a price tag on preventing the injury or death of a child involved in a car accident. Please join me in supporting this important bill to provide greater protections for children in Florida.

[Click here to see SB 380 Bill Text.](#)

Resources for Free Booster Seats in District 8

Marion County:

- [United Way of Marion County](#)
- [Safe Kids Marion County](#)

Alachua County:

- [Car Seat Safety Program](#)

Putnam County:

- [Florida Farm Bureau](#)

NEWSWORTHY

SENATOR KEITH PERRY IN THE NEWS

- [Sen. Keith Perry garners Democratic support for prison reform bill](#)
- [Sen. Keith Perry, R-Gainesville, has proposed a bill \(SB 598\) that would create a nine-day school tax holiday](#)
- [State Senator Keith Perry introduces bill to change purpose of sentencing, supports booster seat bill](#)
- [2 Florida bills seek to improve child safety](#)

Do you have events, accomplishments, or local news that you wish to share with members in District 8?

Please email your submissions to Perry.Keith.Web@flsenate.gov

It's an honor to represent you in the Florida Senate. Thank you for your continued support, input, and patience as we work together to make lasting impacts in our community. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, concerns, or thoughts at any time. We are here for you!

Sincerely,

Keith Perry

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