

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



**August 2017**

## **Perdido Key Issues**

### **Traffic at the Flora-Bama**

The PKA Board has received a number of comments this summer about traffic delays in the vicinity of the Flora-Bama. With recent accidents on Perdido Key Drive as well, some improvement may be forthcoming. While awaiting the approval of Escambia County planners and the end of the summer tourist season, the changes (as mentioned by Flora-Bama co-owner John McInnis and District 2 Commissioner Doug Underhill in the referenced article) will likely include turn lanes, crosswalk improvements, eliminating some entrances and exits, and funneling parking traffic in a one-way direction.

See Pensacola News Journal July 25, 2017 article by Melissa Nelson Gabriel "Flora-Bama, Escambia County try to improve traffic flow, pedestrian safety" at <http://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2017/07/25/flora-bama-escambia-county-try-improve-traffic-flow-pedestrian-safety/508136001/>.

### **Sacred Heart Perdido Medical Park Open House**

A nice crowd was on hand Monday, July 24, 2017 for a first look at the new Sacred Heart Perdido Medical Park on Sorrento Road near the Gulf Beach Highway intersection. Those attending could tour the new patient areas, view the imaging equipment, and admire the expansive physical and occupational therapy area on the second floor. The therapy area opened for patients the next day, with the rest of the facility in operation on August 1, 2017. At the same time, construction continues on the West Florida Healthcare Perdido Bay Emergency Room at the corner of Rt. 98 and Blue Angel Parkway. The two facilities will make substantial contributions to healthcare availability in the Perdido Key area.

### **Eden Condominium to Host Wounded Warriors**

Beginning in mid-September, the Eden Condominium on Perdido Key will host 25 wounded American military veterans and their families for a week-long vacation. Many Eden owners have donated their condominium Units in this fourth year of the program. Other area businesses, individuals, and the USO have become involved and made varying contributions, including meals and gift cards. Additional items would be welcome. If you would like to help, please contact the Eden at [850 492-3336](tel:850-492-3336) or [rental@perdido-key.com](mailto:rental@perdido-key.com); for additional information, go to <http://www.edencondominiums.com/blog/23-eden-condominiums-salutes-wounded-u-s-military-veterans-with-free-family-beach-vacations-on-perdido-key>.

### **Public Hearing to Vacate a Portion of Semmes Street**

Semmes Street used to run from River Road to Perdido Key Drive not far from the Johnson Beach Road intersection. The Lost Key Resort now takes up the center of the eastern portion of Perdido Key so Semmes Street is now two dead-end roads at both ends. GPD (which owns part of the western portion of Semmes Street) is requesting vacation of a 66 ft. by 690 ft. portion of the road's right of way just south of the Perdido Gardens development project, which GPD also owns. A Public Hearing on the request will be held on August 3, 2017 at 5:32 PM at the Escambia County Court House, 221 Palafox Place, Pensacola. For more on the request, go to BCC Regular Meeting 07/06/2017 agenda item 4, (2409) "Scheduling of a Public Hearing to Consider the Petition to Vacate a Portion of Semmes Street" at <http://escambiacountyfl.swagit.com/play/07062017-922/>.

## Frontier Airlines to Serve Pensacola

Frontier Airlines will provide non-stop service between Pensacola and Denver beginning in spring 2018. Denver is the airline's main hub and should provide more options for travelers using Pensacola International Airport. See The Pulse July 18, 2017 article by Derek Cosson "Frontier Airlines, Denver nonstop coming to Pensacola International Airport" at <http://pulsegulfoast.com/2017/07/frontier-airlines-denver-nonstop-coming-to-pensacola-international-airport>.

## OWA Now Open

The OWA amusement park in Foley, Alabama has opened its first phase of development, which includes multiple rides, shopping, and other attractions. More information on the park is available at the OWA website (<http://visitowa.com>) and in various articles from local media about the opening.

## Artificial Reefs Deployed off Pensacola Beach

Escambia County has added 34 artificial reefs about one mile from Pensacola Beach to provide additional habitat for ocean species and new locations for divers to explore. The new structures are concrete tetrahedrons paid for with BP restitution funds from the 2010 oil spill. See Pensacola News Journal July 17, 2017 article "Escambia County deploys 34 new artificial reefs off Pensacola Beach" at <http://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2017/07/17/escambia-county-deploys-34-new-artificial-reefs-off-pensacola-beach/485968001/>.

## Passenger Rail Service for Pensacola?

Numerous recent articles discuss the possible return of Amtrak passenger rail service to Pensacola and the rest of the northern Gulf Coast- i.e., from New Orleans to Jacksonville/Orlando. The service ended in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina. Debate on restoration centers on federal government rules for on-time service (problematic because of drawbridge crossings in the region) and the cost of rail line upgrades to support service. Organizations and groups, such as the Federal Railroad Administration and the Southern Rail Commission, are hopeful that solutions can be found. See Pensacola News Journal articles on July 17, 2017 by Jim Little "Amtrak co-CEO optimistic about restoring service to Gulf Coast" at <http://www.pnj.com/story/news/2017/07/17/amtrak-co-ceo-optimistic-restoring-service-gulf-coast/485000001/> and on July 22, 2017 by Joseph Baucum "Amtrak's Pensacola restoration demands funding options, advocates say" at <http://www.pnj.com/story/money/business/2017/07/22/amtrak-pensacola-gulf-coast-restoration-funding-improvements/499185001/>.

## Pensacola Beach/Navarre Beach Private Ownership Bill Passes House

The US House of Representatives has passed a bill sponsored by Florida District One Representative Matt Gaetz to privatize land ownership on Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach. The bill now goes to the US Senate where both Republican Senator Mark Rubio and Democrat Bill Nelson support similar measures. Supporters of the measure say it will simplify the current leasing system while opponents fear it will lead to greater development and privatization of once public land. See Pensacola News Journal July 26, 2017 article by Mellissa Nelson Gabriel "Bill to allow privatize ownership on Pensacola, Navarre Beaches passes House" at <http://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2017/07/26/bill-allow-private-ownership-pensacola-navarre-beaches-passes-house/510322001/>.

## Former Commissioner Valentino Suing Commissioner Underhill

On July 25, 2017, Derek Cosson reported in The Pulse that former District 2 Commissioner Gene Valentino was suing his 2014 primary opponent and current Commissioner Doug Underhill and Ray Guillory, a candidate for the Democratic nomination in the same election, for allegedly "malicious (in law and fact) and defamatory" statements on Facebook during the election campaign. For more on the issue, see "Former Commissioner Valentino suing Underhill/Guillory" at <http://pulsegulfoast.com/2017/07/former-escambia-commissioner-valentino-suing-underhill-guillory>.

## Navy Veteran to Run Against Gaetz

Retired Naval officer Phil Ehr has announced plans to run against current Congressman Matt Gaetz for the Florida District One (includes Perdido Key) seat in the US House of Representatives in the 2018 election. Though previously a Republican, Mr. Ehr will participate in the election as a Democrat. See The Pulse July 18, 2017 article by Derek Cosson "Retired naval officer Ehr announces congressional campaign" at <http://pulsegulfoast.com/2017/07/retired-naval-officer-ehr-announces-congressional-campaign>.

## International Coastal Cleanup Day is September 16

Please place September 16, 2017 from 8 AM to Noon on your calendars and plan to join friends and colleagues to help keep our Perdido Key beaches among the most beautiful in the country. PKA co-sponsors a beach cleanup each year on International Coastal Cleanup Day at the West Use Area of the Perdido Key State Park.

# August Calendar

August 5 - Sandstock at the Flora-Bama  
August 5 - Kenny Chesney at The Wharf  
August 5 - Big Lagoon State Park Summer Concert Series with Willie Sugarapps  
August 5 - Santa Rosa Sound and Big Lagoon 2017 Great Scallop Search  
August 5 - Celebrating Brownsville Festival  
August 5-6 - Discover the Dinosaurs in Mobile Arthur R Outlaw Convention Center  
August 10-14 and 21-30 - Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoos Stadium  
August 11 - 2017 Demolition Derby at 5 Flags Speedway  
August 12 - Perdido Soccer Golf Tournament at Perdido Bay County Club  
August 15 - Songwriter Series at The Point Restaurant  
August 19-20 - Pensacola Comic Convention at Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds  
August 21 - Solar Eclipse, but you need to travel northeast over 300 miles to see it total

Blue Angels practice on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, NAS Pensacola  
Bands on the Beach every Tuesday, Pensacola Beach

The following websites provide additional information about events taking place in our great Gulf Coast region:

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>  
<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>  
<http://www.visitperdido.com/>  
[www.mulletwrapper.com](http://www.mulletwrapper.com)  
[www.myescambia.com](http://www.myescambia.com)  
<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com/>  
<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>  
<http://www.cityofmobile.org/calendar/>

Regards,

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors