

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



August 2021

Condo Collapse

It is difficult to grasp the devastation in Surfside, Florida where portions of the Champlain Towers South condominium collapsed on June 24, 2021 and took scores of residents to their deaths. The tragedy has created concern for the structural integrity of other condominiums and tall buildings and calls for review of building regulations, including structures potentially susceptible to adverse ground conditions and sea level rise. HOA responsibility for ensuring required maintenance and inspections are completed is also under discussion. For more on the tragedy, see the July 10, 2021 *USA Today* article, updated on July 11, 2021 “Condo wars’: Surfside association fighting in Florida was extreme, but it’s a familiar battle for HOAs” by Kevin McCoy at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2021/07/10/surfside-condo-building-collapse-associations-fights-plans/7840468002/> and the July 15, 2021 *Washington Post* article “Search for Florida condo collapse victims nears end as more bodies are identified” by Paulina Firozi, Timothy Bella and María Luisa Paúl at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/07/15/surfside-condo-collapse-victims-recovered/>.

Another Fatal Accident on Perdido Key Drive

On July 23, 2021, a westbound sedan on Perdido Key Drive with one passenger crossed the centerline and collided with a truck near the entrance to Lost Key Golf and Beach Club. A 20 year old passenger in the sedan was killed and the driver seriously injured; the 37 year old driver of the truck suffered minor injuries. Charges in the collision are reportedly pending. Traffic was backed up for miles in both directions as emergency response personal investigated and cleared the accident scene. For more on the accident, go to the July 24, 2021 *NorthEscambia.com* article “Escambia Crash Claims One Life; PHP Says Charges Are Pending” at

<http://www.northescambia.com/2021/07/perdido-key-crash-claims-one-life-fhp-says-charges-are-pending>.

Johnson Beach Road Opens at National Seashore

The Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach) was hard hit by September 2020's Hurricane Sally. Much of the dune crossover infrastructure was destroyed, some dunes were flattened and portions of Johnson Beach Road were covered by sand forcing its closure to vehicles. Fortunately, the main parking area and pavilions were quickly restored for visitor use. In another step forward, Johnson Beach Road has been reopened for vehicle use though roadside parking is limited to a portion near the east end of the road where sand along the road has been cleared sufficiently for vehicles. Restoration of the park to full service will take many more months.

Additional Funds for New Beach Access on Perdido Key

At its July 8, 2021 meeting, the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners approved additional funds to create the proposed new beach access location just east of the Crab Trap Restaurant – called Beach Access #4. The decision follows state environmental regulatory approval of the project. As stated by Escambia County Commissioner Jeff Bergosh, “We’re going to have 35 parking spots.” “We’re going to have handicap spots. Importantly, we’re going to protect the habitat.” A lawsuit filed by the adjacent Seafarer Condos Owners Association is still pending. For more on the issue, see the May 6, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Controversial Perdido Key beach access point gets OK from state environmental regulators” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/05/06/perdido-key-beach-access-point-okd-state-environmental-regulators/4973834001/>.

Perdido Key Area Canal Road Access to Change

At its July 8, 2021 meeting, the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners also approved plans to close and reroute the intersection of Perdido Key Drive and Canal Road at the north end of the Theo Baars Bridge just south of the former Circle K service station. Canal Road leads to the Fisherman's Corner restaurant, Perdido Bay Seafood, and fishing charter enterprises. The access will likely close in September 2021 and traffic rerouted to Innerarity Pt. Road and back to Canal Road via side streets. The intersection in its current form is certainly hazardous. When the current road construction next to Publix is also complete, traffic safety and flow at that busy location should markedly improve.

Construction Projects Brief

Escambia County Transportation Engineer Christine Fanchi will be the featured speaker at the Friday, August 6, 2021 Perdido Key Chamber Breakfast Brief. Her discussion will include construction at the Gulf Beach Highway/ Sorrento Road intersection (near Publix) and the planned roundabout at the Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road intersection. Breakfast Briefs are at Hub Staceys' on Innerarity Point and begin at 8 AM.

Escambia County Bicentennial Celebration

State dignitaries and many residents and visitors gathered at Museum Plaza in downtown Pensacola on July 11, 2021 to celebrate the 1821 transition of the Pensacola area from Spanish to American control. Remarks by speakers such as local Florida political leaders State Senator Doug Broxon and State Representative Alex Andrade were followed by a stirring rendition of “America! The Beautiful” in multiple languages by Dr. Leo Day.

OLF-8 Back to the Drawing Board Again!

In the latest twist in plans for OLF-8 (the 630-acre Beulah field next to the Navy Federal Credit Union complex acquired by the County in 2013), the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners rejected the “Land Use Plan” presented by architectural firm DPZ to further develop what was thought to be a compromise proposal. Commissioners believed there was less land devoted to commerce than what had been agreed upon. District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh said: “It was a compromise ... if we make essentially half of it mixed-use urban it appears it makes it a lot easier for folks to go in there and build apartment complexes, which is not what the community wants.” For more on the issue, see the July 9, 2021 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Commission kicks back OLF-8 design saying it was changed to deprioritize commerce” by Emma Kennedy at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2021/07/09/escambia-county-commission-kicks-back-olf-8-design-saying-deprioritizes-commerce/7903391002/>.

Red Tide Hazard near Tampa

Red tide blooms have killed huge numbers of fish and other marine life in the Tampa area. While the bloom has decreased in Tampa Bay, high concentrations are now found in Gulf waters halfway down the Florida peninsula south of Tampa. In addition to endangering sea life, the blooms can cause respiratory and skin problems in humans. For more on the issue, see the July 28, 2021 *WUSF Public Media* release “Red Tide Decreasing In Tampa Bay, Increasing Along Gulf Beaches” by Steve Newborn at <https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/environment/2021-07-28/red-tide-decreasing-in-tampa-bay-increasing-along-gulf-beaches>.

How Safe are Your Passwords?

A recent *Kiplinger's* article discussing ID theft included a table illustrating the length of time it takes hackers using sophisticated computer programs to crack passwords as a function of the length and complexity of the passwords. For example, a password with 10 characters that has numbers only would be cracked instantaneously; one with 10 lower case letters would take 58 minutes. But if you have 10 characters with a mix of numbers, upper and lower case letters and symbols, it would take 5 years to crack; increasing the same combination to 13 characters would take two million years to crack! For more on ID theft, see the May 27, 2021 *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* article “Protect Yourself Against New ID-Theft Schemes” by Lisa Gerstner at <https://www.kiplinger.com/personal-finance/credit-debt/loans/credit-reports/602854/protect-yourself-against-new-id-theft>.

Alabama Amberjack and Triggerfish Fishing Opens August 01

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Marine Resources Division announced a 2021 greater amberjack season from August 01 until October 31 and gray triggerfish season from August 01 to December 31 or until closure is announced by the National Marine Fisheries Service. For more information, go to the *Outdoor Alabama* article “Amberjack and Triggerfish Seasons Open August 1” at <https://www.outdooralabama.com/articles/amberjack-and-triggerfish-seasons-open-august-1>.

Local Sturgeon?

Who knew there were prehistoric looking fish in Escambia County waters, but there are! For an update on the strange, wonderful but threatened sturgeon, see the *UF/IFAS Blog* article “Sturgeon in the Florida Panhandle” by Rick O-Connor at <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2021/07/09/sturgeon-in-the-florida-panhandle/>.

August Calendar

Aug 01,10-15,17-22 – Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium
Aug 05-07 – Orange Beach Open fishing tournament
Aug 06 – Perdido Key Chamber Breakfast Brief by Traffic Engineer Christine Fanchi
Aug 07 – Safe Boating Class by Coast Guard Auxiliary in Orange Beach
Aug 13-14 – Emerald Coast Poker Run charity event at Ft. Walton Beach
Aug 11,17,18,24,25 – Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola
Aug 20 – Gallery Night downtown Pensacola
Aug 21 – Cheryl & Co. Coastal Horse Show at Escambia County Equestrian Center
Aug 21 – Argonaut 5K road race at University of West Florida campus
Aug 21 – Community Safety Day and Island Movie Night at OWA
Aug 21 – Rouse’s Kids Fishing Tournament at The Wharf
Aug 21 – Paddle at the Park paddle board races in Destin
Aug 26 – “Heroes Among Us” speaker at Pensacola Veterans Memorial Park
Aug 28 – Ever’Market@Nine Mile Road by Ever’man Cooperative Grocery
Aug 28 – Hurricane Run 5K on Dauphin Island

Bands on the Beach every Tuesday evening at Gulfside Pavilion, 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/>

<http://mulletwrapper.net/>

<https://myescambia.com/>

<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com/>

<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors