



## Summer is a Busy Time

August/September 2012

**Discovery at Cascades Park:** *Discovery* at Cascades, a family-oriented playscape designed for the enjoyment of families and children of all ages, will bring a new recreational offering to Cascades Park. Funded entirely through private donations, *Discovery* is truly a grassroots project. The concept was developed by KCCI's Cultivate Cascades team, and designed by the local firm, From the Ground Up. We owe a special thanks to the presenting sponsor, First Commerce Credit Union, whose support made *Discovery* a reality. Set to open in 2013, *Discovery* will include habitat gardens, a water play area, boulders, climbing logs, artwork and interpretative signage. I look forward to exploring the playscape with my grandchildren when the park opens!

**Eighteen Hour Downtown? We need a Trolley:** Now that places to play are sprouting like flowers after the rain, it's time to talk about how to safely move people who are having a good time from one place to another. The Midtown and Downtown Merchants' Associations, the Downtown Improvement Agency and local business folks are all hatching the same idea – a system of fun trolleys circulating between Midtown, Downtown, Parkway, Cascades Park, College Town, South Monroe and Adams and the colleges. There is enough interest and enthusiasm to fill a trolley right this minute. There's always a lot of talk about what government can do to help businesses succeed, and a good place to start is by listening. That's what our office has been up to and besides, I love trolleys.

**The Community Conference:** The Chamber Retreat, held this August, generated a new enthusiasm for pitching Tallahassee, both at home and away. This is the second Chamber seminar I've attended where speakers stressed the need to build local economies on local businesses first (also note *Time Magazine* article August 7<sup>th</sup>). Speaker John Doggett, JD, MBA, from the University of Texas recommended that community leaders start by critically assessing with laser precision what types of new businesses fit with the existing local business community. Instead of "attracting" business per se, choose the right fit, and then PURSUE the appropriate targets.

Tallahassee has the attributes that many, especially young people, are seeking in a place to settle – a progressive, well-educated, diverse community with a variety of recreational and educational opportunities and reasonably priced housing, all within a rich natural environment. Investments by government in Capital Circle, Cascades Park, Gaines Street and more have been noticed. Our community is on the move, garnering national attention, and investment.

### Upcoming Events

**August 22, 2012** Regular City Commission Meeting—City Hall, 4 PM

**August 29, 2012** Regular City Commission Meeting—City Hall, 4 PM

**September 3, 2012** Labor Day Holiday

**September 5, 2012** City Commission Meeting and Budget Public Hearing—City Hall, 4 PM

**September 17, 2012** Environment & Energy Target Issue Meeting—City Hall, 3 PM

**September 18, 2012** Joint City/County Workshop on Redevelopment Issues—Courthouse, 10 AM

**September 19, 2012** Regular City Commission Meeting—City Hall, 4 PM

### Amtrak Update:

On August 16, the Gulf Coast Mayoral Summit for restoring Passenger Rail Service was held in Mobile, Alabama, building upon the momentum generated by the City of Tallahassee's Campaign. Over 50 Mayors, State and Federal Legislators, and Economic Development agencies from four states either personally attended or were represented. The outcome was regional consensus that the restored service must be a daily, reliable schedule, which will

make our Gulf Coast competitive in the global quest for jobs and tourism, and provide an essential transportation option. Another forum is being planned for Biloxi, Mississippi in just a few months.



Nationally, over 300 U.S. Train Stations are currently undergoing renovations. Amtrak ridership has increased from 22 million per year in 2003, to 31 million per year in 2011, setting ridership records in eight of nine years. But the ridership numbers miss the point about economic development – it's all about the Return on Investment for each community and the connections to other transportation routes. The Florida East Coast Railroad's All

Aboard Florida aims to get ridership from 50 million travelers. It doesn't make sense to bring travelers from South Florida and Orlando to Jacksonville, then route them through North Carolina if they want to travel west.

Cost is the obstacle, but rail is recognized by other regions of the U.S. as an essential piece of any future transportation grid, and right now, the Gulf Coast is out of the game.

**Revolving Loan Program for Businesses:** The Apalachee Regional Planning Council (ARPC) provides business start-up and business expansion loans and is designed to fill capital gaps and promote job creation. Money borrowed under this program can be used for the purchase of machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, inventory, and working capital (but cannot be used to pay existing debts). For more information please contact ARPC Loan Officer Janice Watson at [arpc1@fairpoint.net](mailto:arpc1@fairpoint.net) or 850-674-4571.

The **new roundabout** at the intersection of Miccosukee Road and Fleischman Road is now open to traffic! Despite our wet summer, the road is now open —just in time for school to start. The entire project, which includes the planting of nearly 700 trees and sidewalk installation, should be completed by mid-October.

### Did you Know?

- **The Florida Airports Council** recently awarded the prestigious **Environmental Excellence Award** to the **Tallahassee Regional Airport** for the installation of a Solar Photovoltaic System in the main terminal building.
- Congratulations to my wonderful aide, SarahKeith Valentine, on the birth of her daughter, Lina, on August 22, 2012.
- **The American Public Power Association** recently recognized the **City of Tallahassee's Electric Utility** as the **top public power utility** in the country at their national conference in Seattle! At the same time, the City also received the 2012 Energy Innovator Award for the highly successful Neighborhood REACH program, which promotes conservation and cost savings by helping residents manage their home energy and water usage.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Miller".

Nancy Miller, Commissioner  
City of Tallahassee  
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