

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: November 21, 2023

Date Submitted: October 23, 2023

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Edward J. Dixon County Administrator
Justin Steill, Growth Management Director

Subject: Approval of a Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce's Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds for Design Plans to Improve and Expand the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park.

Statement of Issue:

This item is presented to the Board for approval of Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce's Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds for Design Plans to Improve and Expand the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park.

Background:

The Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) is a reimbursement grant program within the Florida Commerce Department (Commerce), created to facilitate the planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities, which will encourage job creation, capital investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural economies. The Florida Legislature appropriated \$25 million in federally funded State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to the Rural Infrastructure Fund Statewide Program.

Eligible uses of funds include:

- Improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites;
- Upgrades to or development of public tourism infrastructure;
- Improvements to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action.
- Project planning and preparation grants for infrastructure feasibility studies, design and engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and preparation activities.

The maximum award is \$300,000.00 and no match requirements for applicants that are designated rural areas of economic opportunity.

Applications were due no later than November 6, 2023, and requires the local government authorizing official to sign applications or approval for staff to submit such application.

Analysis:

Gadsden County leases 13 acres of land on Lake Talquin from the Florida Department of Agriculture to operate and maintain a public park, the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park. The lease permits Gadsden County to make improvements and maintain the land for a public park. Lake Talquin and the Park are important tourist destinations and economic drivers for Gadsden County.

Staff reviewed current needs and potential projects, and based on the time needed to complete an application, that the most pressing allowable project was the need for funds to hire a professional architect or engineering firm to design and provide estimated costs to develop the expanded RV sites, new amenities, and improvements to the existing developed portion of the Park. The County is also seeking 2024-25 legislative funding in the amount of \$605,377.58 for construction of the improvements and expansion of the Park. Therefore, the staff prepared the attached application sought the Chairman’s signature, and submitted the application timely.

Due to the timing of Board meetings, deadlines to submit agenda items, and time needed to complete the application and to submit it timely to the Florida Commerce by the November 6th deadline, staff prepared the attached RIF application, sought the Chairman’s signature and submitted the application timely to Florida Commerce. In the event the Board does not ratify these actions, staff will resend the application.

If the Board does approve these actions, then staff are seeking Board approval of a Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce’s Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds for Design Plans to Improve and Expand the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park and the Chairman’s Signature on the Grant Application

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact with this agenda item.

Options:

1. Approve Resolution Ratifying Staff Submission of a Grant Application to the Florida Department of Commerce’s Rural Infrastructure Fund Seeking Funds for Design Plans to Improve and Expand the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park and the Chairman to sign all related documents.
2. Disapprove.
3. Board direction.

County Administrator's Recommendation:

Option 1.

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. RIF Application



Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund Program

Application for Funding

Applicant: Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

(Name of Applicant)

Project Title: Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park Improvements

(Name of Project)

State Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Application Date: November 6, 2023

Mailing Address: FloridaCommerce
Bureau of Small Cities and Rural Communities
107 East Madison Street – MSC 400
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-6508

Telephone: (850) 717-8405

Web: <http://www.FloridaJobs.org/RIF>

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Part I – Applicant Profile

Applicant Contact Information:

Entity Name: Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners		
Street Address: Suite 9, Jefferson Street		
Mailing Address (if different): PO Box 1799		
City: Quincy	Zip Code: 32351	County: Gadsden
Main Telephone: 850-875-8650	Main Facsimile:	Federal ID Number: 59-6000616

Chief Elected Official: Kimblin E. NeSmith, J.D.	Title: Chairman
Telephone: 850-875-8650	Facsimile:
E-mail Address: Knesmith@gadsdencountyfl.gov	

Chief Financial Officer: Nichols Thomas	Title: Clerk of the Court
Telephone: 850-875-8601	Facsimile:
E-mail Address: ClerkofCourt@gadsdenclerk.com	

Applicant Project Contact: Justin Stiehl	Title: Growth Management Director
Street Address: Suite 9, Jefferson Street	
City: Quincy	Zip Code: 32351
Direct Telephone: 850-875-8659	Facsimile:
E-mail Address: JStiehl@gadsdencountyfl.gov	

Application Preparer Information		
Preparer's Name: Sheree T. Keeler	Organization Preparing Application: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Government <input type="checkbox"/> Private Company <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Planning Council	
Street Address: Suite 9, Jefferson Street		
City: Quincy	FL	Zip Code: 32351
Telephone: 850-228-5526	Facsimile:	
E-mail Address: skeeler@gadsdencountyfl.gov		

Consultant Information (if applicable)		
Consultant's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Company <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Planning Council	
Street Address:		
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Telephone:	E-mail Address:	

Demographics and Area Data		
U.S. Congressional District Number: 2	Florida Senate District Number: 3	Florida House District Number: 8
Total Population: 43,403 Source: US Census Data/ Florida Legislature Office of Economic and Demographic Research/Gadsden County Profile Source Date: July 20, 2022/June 2023	Unemployment Rate: 3.8% Source: Florida Commerce, Bureau of Workforce Statistics, not seasonally adjusted Source Date: Release Date 10/20/2023	Poverty Rate: 25.8% Source: Florida Legislature Office of Economic and Demographic Research/Gadsden County Profile Source Date: June 2023

<p>Indicate what RIF grant category is being applied for:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Total Project Participation Grant</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Planning and Preparation Grant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Preclearance Review Grant</p>		
<p>Indicate the total amount of RIF funding being requested: \$</p>		
<p>If the proposed project is located in a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO), indicate which one: (See list of RAOs in application instructions.)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northwest RAO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> South Central RAO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> North Central RAO</p>		
<p>If applying for Panhandle Specific Appropriation funds, please indicate the County in which the project is located:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Calhoun County <input type="checkbox"/> Jackson County</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gadsden County <input type="checkbox"/> Liberty County</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Holmes County <input type="checkbox"/> Washington County</p>		
<p>Answer the following questions by clicking on the correct check box.</p>		
<p>Historic Preservation</p> <p>Will the project impact a building, public improvement, or planned open space that is 50 or more years old? If yes, include the documentation specified in the application instructions.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Interlocal Agreement</p> <p>Will project activities require an interlocal agreement? If yes, the interlocal agreement(s) must be included.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Regulatory Action</p> <p>Are improvements being made in this project to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth? If yes, include a copy of the letter citing the regulatory action.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Catalyst Site</p> <p>Is the project related to preclearance review and also located within a catalyst site as defined in Section 288.061, Florida Statutes? If yes, include a map showing the boundary of the catalyst site and the project boundary within.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Comprehensive Plan</p> <p>Is the proposed project consistent with the applicant's Comprehensive Plan? The project must be consistent in order for the project to be funded through the RIF program and supporting documentation must be included with the application.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

Project Description

Describe the proposed project in no more than three sentences:

Gadsden County operates and maintains the Pat-Thomas Eco-Tourism Park located at 949 Hopkins Landing Road, Quincy, Florida on approximately 13-acres leased from the Florida Department of Agriculture. Approximately six of the 13 acres are developed with 22 full-service RV sites, playground and picnic areas, fishing piers and a boat ramp, a pavilion, and other associated amenities. This project is seeking funds to contract with a professional A/E firm to design (which include identification of needed permits, environmental work, etc.) and provide estimated probable cost to develop the remaining property by constructing additional full-service RV sites and related amenities (i.e., bathhouse, pavilion, walking trail, picnic facilities, etc.) as well as needed and recommended improvements to the developed park and parking area.

Attachments to the Application:

Attachment 1: Ownership

Attachment 2: Boundary Survey/Site Map

Attachment 3: Boundary Map

Attachment 4: Driving Directions

Attachment 5: CIP

Clearly summarize the proposed project as outlined in the application instructions.

The Pat-Thomas Eco-Tourism Park is considered a main tourist destination spot in Gadsden County as it provides an array of outdoor recreational opportunities and access to Lake Talquin, which is nationally known for its high-quality black crappie (speckled perch) fishery. The lake has little vegetation, but tree stumps and logs provide an excellent nursery and habitat for many of North Florida's freshwater fish species, including black crappie, largemouth bass, bluegill, redear, white bass, and white striped bass. Lake Talquin is also one of Florida's deepest freshwater lakes.

The Park is easily accessible and is no more than a 10 minute drive from the I-10 exit to Pat Thomas Highway and is at most a 30-minute drive to the various Talquin State Forest tracks located off Pat Thomas Highway and US 20, which offers close to total of 20 thousand acres for eco-tourism recreation such as hiking, mountain biking, tent/primitive camping, wildlife viewing, and fishing, kayaking and canoeing on Lake Talquin.

The County is seeking \$300,000 in RIF funding to contract with a professional A/E firm to assess (1) the developed area of the Park and provide recommend/needed improvements to the existing features with probable cost and any new improvements with probable cost; and (2) assess the undeveloped area of the Park to determine the feasibility, permitting requirements, and probably cost to develop and construct additional full-service RV sites, a bathhouse, pavilion, nature trails, picnic area and other amenities associated with Eco-Tourism parks. Once this step has been completed and reviewed with the County, the professional A/E firm will provide a design plan and specifications for improvements to the developed area and for development of the expansion to the Park. The County will require that the design and specifications are done so that all improvements, new construction and amenities are alt-adds so that bids for amenities and construction can be awarded based priority features and available funding.

Construction activities for improvements and expansion are contingent upon the professional assessment and design as well as funding.

Proposed Timeline

Task/Activity Description	Task/Activity Duration	Deliverable
Procurement and Contract with A/E Firm	90 days	Procurement Documents and Contract
Assessment and Recommendations from A/E firm for improvements and expansion/construction	35 days	Assessment and Recommendation Report
10% Design for County Approval	60 days	Initial Design Documents
30% Design for County Approval	60 days	Interim Design Documents
90% Design for County Approval	60 days	Substantial Design Documents
Final Design for County Approval	60 days	Final Design, Specification and Estimated Probable Cost Documents

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Part III – Economic Narrative

Provide a summary of the project’s economic benefit, long-term viability, and potential local or regional economic impact. The summary should include a description of the current and anticipated economic conditions of the area.

According to the US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, the outdoor recreation economy accounted for 1.9% (\$454.0 billion) of current-dollar gross domestic product (GDP) for the nation in 2021. The value added as a share of GDP for Florida 3.3%. Outdoor recreation also makes up 2.1 percent of U.S. GDP, generating \$788 billion in gross output and supporting 5.2 million jobs a year. Boating/fishing, RVing, hunting/shooting/trapping, motorcycling/ATVing, and equestrian sports are the five largest conventional outdoor recreation activities in terms of economic output in the US. <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation>.

In fact, due to the impact of Outdoor Recreation activities, it was recently added as a Sector of the National Economy by the Bureau of Economic Analysis their national economy tracking, which includes outdoor recreation activities categorized into conventional activities (e.g., bicycling, boating, hiking, and hunting); other core activities (e.g., gardening, and outdoor concerts); and supporting activities (e.g., travel and tourism, local trips and government expenditures).

Gadsden County is a recognized RAO with an estimated population of 43,403, and 58.37% of this population is in the low-to-mid income range making it one of the highest LMI rates in the state, according to the most current US Census and HUD data. Gadsden also has the highest African American populations of all Florida counties, with 54.9% of the population being African American and 42.2% white, and the remaining 2.9% being Hispanic, Asian, or other. The poverty rate is 25.8%, which is 12.7% higher, or almost double, that of the State poverty rate of 13.1%. Low to mid income is one of the highest in the State with the County being 58.37%, which is over half the total population. The Socioeconomic Status of the Social Vulnerability Index, indicates an overall score of 0.9726% and a social vulnerability score 0.8415, ranking Gadsden residents at a high level of risk (i.e., stress and social vulnerability) in preparedness, response, and recovery to disasters. One hundred percent of Gadsden’s public-school enrollment is eligible for free or reduced cost lunches, which is almost 30% higher than the state rate of 71% of enrollment.

It is anticipated that by improving and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities at the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park that Gadsden County and the surrounding counties of Liberty, Leon and Wakulla will also follow this national trend and benefit from the infusion of tourist spending year-round. There are no retail shops or food establishment near the Park, and it is hoped and anticipated that expanding and improving the Park will spur local small boutique businesses selling and/or renting camping/hiking gear, kayak/canoes, bicycles, fishing gear, food or food truck establishments and other businesses and services associated with outdoor recreation.

Describe the proposed project’s potential for enhanced job creation and/or increased capital investment, including but not limited to the following information:

- **The nature of the business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to the project.**
- **Description of the capital investment in real and personal property – do not include product inventory.**

According to the Department of Revenue, in FY 2022 Gadsden collected \$186,065 in local tourist development taxes, which is mainly attributed to tourist camping and fishing at Lake Talquin as well as attendance at bass fishing tournaments or seasonal hunting. By improving and expanding the Park Gadsden as an opportunity to increase its local tourism and other taxes by visitors spending in the area to enjoy the Lake and Park.

Improving and offering more and improved outdoor recreation opportunities (eco-tourism) at the Park will increase sales at local business by visitors purchasing food, fishing and camping gear, fuel, etc. as well as potentially spur small boutique businesses that could provide RV rentals, boat/kayak rental, bike rentals, food services and more. Improvements and expansion of the Park will also provide and stimulate more visitors to the nearby Talquin State Forest tracks for outdoor recreational opportunities, thereby stimulating the economy.

In summary, spending occurs on outdoor recreation in two forms: the purchase of gear and vehicles, and dollars spent on trips and travel, and both of these activities infuse dollars into the local economy to retain current business, provide opportunities for boutique retail and food businesses.

The County is in need of a professional assessment and design plans in order to pursue grant funding or dedicate County funds for construction.

Describe the level of public and private commitment to the project. Include the extent of local expenditures for construction, use of local firms or resources, or purchase of local equipment or materials which have or will have ripple effects on the area’s economy.

It is not anticipated that the project assessment or design will have an impact on the local economy or ripple effect. However, should the County determine to move forward with improvements to the existing developed Park and construction of the expansion it is anticipated that there will be short term impact with the hiring of a general contractor and subcontractors. Local or regional firms will be hired to the extent required by law, especially if federal grant funds are used in part or in whole for construction. The County will seek public input on the Park improvements and expansion prior to commencement of any construction. However, the County has applied for RPT and FRDAP funding in the past and public input has been very favorable.

Part IV – Project Budget

Provide a breakdown of the total budget for the proposed project, including both RIF funding and other sources of funding.

ACTIVITY/TASK	RIF FUNDS	OTHER FUNDING SOURCES	TOTAL
Procure/contract with a professional A/E firm to provide a design and feasibility study for Park expansion and improvements	\$-0-	\$0	\$0
Final Design and Specifications	\$300,000.00	0	\$300,000.00
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$300,000.00	\$0	\$300,000.00

Provide an explanation of how the total infrastructure costs for the proposed project were estimated.

The estimated cost for the assessment and final design is based on prior costs for design of facility renovations and/or new construction.

Part V – Sources and Uses of Non-RIF Funds

Source	Amount Contributed	Type (Loan, Grant, Local Government Funds, Donated Land, or Other Funding)
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	

	\$	
	\$	
Totals	\$	

Part VI – Participating Party Information (if applicable)

Complete and attach a [Participating Party Information Form](#) for each entity creating or retaining jobs as a result of this project.

Part VII – Application Authorization

I, the undersigned chief elected official or authorized representative of the applicant, certify that to the best of my knowledge:

- a. This application is in all respects fair and submitted in good faith without collusion or fraud;*
- b. If selected through this application process, the recipient will work in good faith and in partnership with the Department of Commerce to manage its grant in a timely and accurate manner;*
- c. The information in this application is accurate; and,*
- d. The undersigned is duly authorized to bind the entity represented in this application.*

Signature of Chief Elected Official or Designee
Signature: _____
Typed Name and Title: Kimblin E. NeSmith, J.D., Chairman, Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
Date:
If signed by a person other than the chief elected official, a signature authorization must be included.

Signature of Application Preparer if not an employee of the Applicant

Signature: _____

Typed Name and Title:

Name of Firm or Agency:



Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund Program

Application Instructions

Part I – Applicant Profile

The application profile must reflect the requested information about the applicant, including demographics, area data, and the person who prepared the application.

Application Category

There are three categories of RIF grants that applicants can request funding for. Indicate which category is being applied for:

Total Project Participation Grants

To facilitate access to and maximize the use of state, federal, local, and private resources, grants may be awarded for up to 75 percent (75%) of the total infrastructure project costs, or up to one hundred percent (100%) of the total infrastructure project cost for a project located in a rural community as defined in s. 288.0656(2), F.S., which is also located in a fiscally constrained county as defined in s. 218.67(1), F.S., or a rural area of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656(2), F.S.

Eligible uses of funds include:

- Improvements to public infrastructure for industrial or commercial sites;
- Upgrades to or development of public tourism infrastructure;
- Improvements to inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action.

Authorized infrastructure may include the following public-private partnership facilities:

- storm water systems;
- telecommunications facilities;
- roads or other remedies to transportation impediments;
- other physical requirements to facilitate economic development activities in the community.

Project Planning and Preparation Grants

Grants may be awarded for up to \$300,000 for feasibility studies, design and engineering activities, or other infrastructure planning and preparation activities. Grants awarded under this category may be used in conjunction with Total Project Participation grants.

Preclearance Review Grants

To enable rural communities to access the resources available under the Expedited Permitting – Preclearance Review Process (Section 403.973(18), Florida Statutes), grants may be awarded for surveys, feasibility studies, and other activities related to the identification and preclearance review of land which is suitable for preclearance review. Grant application criteria includes the extent to which administrative and consultant expenses are minimized.

Maximum award amounts and local funds match requirements:

- Projects located outside a RAO - \$75,000 with 50 percent local funds match;
- Projects located within a RAO - \$300,000 with no local funds match required; and
- Projects located within a catalyst site (as defined in Section 288.0656, Florida Statutes) - maximum amounts same as above, depending on RAO status. However, the local funds match requirement may be waived pursuant to the process in Section 288.06561, Florida Statutes, for projects outside an RAO.

Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO)

If the proposed project is located in a RAO, indicate which one.

- *Northwest Rural Area of Opportunity:* Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Wakulla, and Washington counties, and the area within the city limits of Freeport and Walton County north of the Choctawhatchee Bay and intercoastal waterway. To learn more about the Northwest RAO region, please contact [Opportunity Florida](#).
- *South Central Rural Area of Opportunity:* DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties, and the cities of Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay (Palm Beach County), and Immokalee (Collier County). For more information about the South Central RAO region, please contact [Florida's Heartland Regional Economic Development Initiative, Inc.](#)
- *North Central Rural Area of Opportunity:* Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor, and Union counties. For more information about the North Central RAO region, please contact [North Florida Economic Development Partnership](#).

Historic Preservation

Answer "Yes" if any project activity will result in one of the following:

- Direct physical changes to a structure 50 or more years old, such as demolition (partial or complete), rehabilitation, restoration, remodeling, renovation, expansion, or relocation
- Direct physical changes to public improvements 50 or more years old, such as stone curbs or brick streets
- Direct physical changes to a planned open space 50 or more years old, such as a park or plaza
- Project activities occurring within 100 feet of a structure, public improvement, or planned open space 50 or more years old
- Project activities occurring in a Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

If this question is answered "Yes," proceed as follows:

- Contact the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) during the application planning process. Properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places must be designed in accordance with the recommended approaches in the ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards or Rehabilitation Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*** (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service). This publication and technical assistance may be obtained from the SHPO, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250.
- Provide original photographs to SHPO that can be used to determine the historical/architectural significance of the property. Photographs must show each side of the structure and general views of the property in its surroundings; they should be identified by street address and keyed to the service area map. If potentially significant historic properties are identified, SHPO will recommend the appropriate approach.

- Provide the following documentation:
 - The location/address;
 - The construction date;
 - The activity affecting the historic property; and
 - The results of any pre-application discussions with SHPO regarding the potential impact of the proposed project on historic properties

Interlocal Agreements

Indicate whether or not activities will require an interlocal agreement. If activities will take place, or services will be extended or provided, outside of the local government applicant's jurisdiction, include an interlocal agreement signed by the chief elected officials, or legally designated individuals of the jurisdictions, that specifies:

- The units of local government (parties involved);
- The purpose of the interlocal agreement;
- A delineation of the cooperation between the parties involved;
- A description of the activities and the service area(s);
- The amount of funds being committed (and associated terms); and
- A statement that the project is not inconsistent with the local comprehensive plans of all involved jurisdictions.

Regulatory Action

If the proposed project will address inadequate infrastructure that has resulted in regulatory action that prohibits economic or community growth, the application must include a copy of the letter citing the relevant regulatory action.

Catalyst Site

If the proposed project is related to preclearance review and is also located within a catalyst site as defined in Section 288.061, Florida Statutes, the application must include a map showing the boundary of the catalyst site and the project boundary within.

Comprehensive Plan

The proposed project must be consistent with the applicant's comprehensive plan and the application must include documentation to support this consistency.

Part II – Project Description and Timeline

Project Description

Provide a narrative description of each proposed activity. Applications proposing more than one activity should include a description for each activity.

Each description should include the following minimum information:

- Quantity of the activity
- If funds from other sources are being used, describe how the funds will be used
- Location of the activity within the applicant's jurisdiction
- Cost of the activity
- A list of any major permits, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning changes, or similar approvals required
- For infrastructure projects, an indication of who will own and maintain the infrastructure once completed

In addition to describing the location of the project, the applicant must provide a project map, which, at a minimum, shows:

- A scale;
- A north arrow;
- The boundaries of the applicant's jurisdiction;
- The specific location of the project activity within the applicant's jurisdiction;
- The applicant's administration building, from which it will be managing the project; and
- Street names and other identifying landmarks within the jurisdiction.

Project Timeline

Outline each step of the project, from grant award to closing out the agreement. Provide an estimate of how long each step of the process will take, in months, and the associated activity/task deliverable.

Part III – Economic Narrative

Describe the proposed project's economic benefit, long-term viability, and potential local or regional economic impact. The summary should include a description of the current and anticipated economic conditions of the area. Describe the project's potential for enhanced job creation or increased capital investment, including but not limited to, the following information:

- (1) The nature of business activities which will be conducted at the site of, or which relate to, the project, and
- (2) A description of the capital investment in real and personal property, not including product inventory.
- (3) Describe the level of public and private commitment to the project. Include the extent of local expenditures for construction, use of local firms or resources, or purchase of local equipment or materials which have or will impact on the area's economy.

Part IV – Project Budget

Complete the budget table included in the application based on the type of activity being applied for. If funds from another source are being used to

assist with a particular activity, those funds should be listed separately from the requested RIF funds.

Applicants must also detail how they determined the total estimated costs associated with the project and upload all documentation used to make the determination. The written explanation should detail how the proposed budget is reasonable and appropriate considering the scope, substance, and duration of the proposed project. There is no specific format for providing budget assumption documentation, but it should clearly correspond with the type of activities and their associated costs entered in the budget table. The documentation should also demonstrate that the applicant has carefully considered the financial aspects of the project and has a solid rationale for the amount of RIF funding being requested.

Part V – Sources and Uses of Non-RIF Funds

Identify any additional sources of funding that will be contributed to the project. Additionally, include documentation that the funds are available for use, such as an award letter, and that they have been contributed to this project, such as a resolution or minutes from a council or commission meeting. If an application has been submitted, but not yet awarded, for other non-RIF funds, include a copy of the application. Please note: all other funds must be available for use prior to award of RIF funding.

Part VI – Participating Party Information (if applicable)

Complete a Participating Party Information Form for each entity creating or retaining jobs as a result of this project and upload them as part of the application. Participating Party Information Form available for download from www.FloridaJobs.org/RIF

Part VII – Application Authorization

The application certification statement must be signed by the applicant's chief elected official. Any other signatory must be accompanied by a letter of signature authority signed by the chief elected official.

Supporting Documentation Summary

- Communications with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), if applicable
- Interlocal Agreements, if applicable
- Letter citing regulatory action, if applicable
- Catalyst Site Map, if applicable
- Comprehensive Plan documentation
- Project Map

- Cost Estimate documentation
- Documentation of other sources of funding
- [Participating Party Information Forms](#) for each Participating Party, if applicable
- Letter of signature authority signed by chief elected official, if applicable

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-039

**A RESOLUTION OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA;
RATIFYING AND APPROVING STAFF SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE'S RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND SEEKING
FUNDS FOR DESIGN PLANS TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND THE PAT THOMAS ECO-
TOURISM PARK AND THE CHAIRMAN'S SIGNATURE ON THE GRANT APPLICATION**

WHEREAS, the Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF) Grant program is made available to Florida units of government to provide funding to facilitate the planning, preparing, and financing of infrastructure projects in rural communities which will encourage job creation, capital investment, and the strengthening and diversification of rural economies. The RIF program is intended to facilitate access of rural communities to infrastructure funding programs, such as those offered by the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, the United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development, and the United States Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration.

WHEREAS, the Florida legislature provided \$25 million in funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 for eligible projects.

WHEREAS Gadsden County is eligible to make the application and has an eligible project, which is the design of the expansion and improvements to the Pat Thomas Eco-Tourism Park (the "Park"), an important tourism destination and economic driver for the County.

WHEREAS Gadsden County desires to seek \$300,000.00 in RIF grant funds to hire a professional firm to design the expansion and improvements to the Park.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA, hereby

1. Approves staff submittal of a RIF application to the Florida Department of Commerce seeking \$300,000.00 to hire a professional firm to design the expansion and improvements to the Park.
2. Approves and ratifies the Chairman's signature on the grant application document.

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED, in regular session by the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners on this _____ day of _____, 2023.

GADSDEN COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Attest:

Clerk

Chairman