

2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

INCLUDING LEGISLATIVE ISSUES EXPRESSED BY
GADSDEN COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITY INTERESTS



ADOPTED ON OCTOBER 6, 2015 BY:

THE GADSDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Eric Hinson, Vice-Chairman - District-1
Commissioner Dr. Anthony O. Viegbesie – District-2
Commissioner Gene Morgan – District-3
Commissioner Brenda Holt, Chairperson – District-4
Commissioner Sherrie Taylor – District-5

THE GADSDEN COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Senator Bill Montford
Representative Alan Williams

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PREFACE

The primary interest of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners is to meet the needs of the public through high-quality efficient governmental services.

The 2016 Legislative Program for Gadsden County is intended to promote policies, programs and areas of funding that are important to providing services that improve the quality of life for the citizens of Gadsden County.

Gadsden County generates its revenues through various revenue programs and grants that are critical to fund its day to day operations.

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners is appreciative of all the support and efforts that will be provided on its behalf and pledge to give its best effort to stand with the Florida Legislature to overcome the problems posed during these uncertain and unstable economic times.

QUICK FACTS

- Gadsden County is the 43rd largest county in Florida, with a population of 48,096.
- Gadsden County is defined by the State of Florida as a fiscally constrained county.
- In October 2014, Gadsden County was accepted as a Competitive Florida Partnership community.
- The 2014 taxable value of property tax in Gadsden County was \$1,334,841,413. The 2015 taxable value increased by \$10,227,147 or (0.77%) to \$1,345,068,560 compared to a State of Florida average taxable value increase of 8.14%.
- In Gadsden County, 1 cent of sales tax will generate \$3,148,686 or \$65.47 per capita. This is \$99 less than the \$164.68 that 1 cent will generate on a statewide per capita basis.
- Due to a number of economic factors, Gadsden County is included as part of the Rural Areas of Opportunity program and is eligible for special statutory provisions, waivers, and incentives to assist in economic development and funding programs.
- On an annual basis, the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners receives substantial funding from State authorized revenue and program sources. In 2014, funding from State and Local sources, other than Ad Valorem, provided \$18,174,513 or an amount that would be equivalent to 13.5 mils of property tax.

INTRODUCTION

Gadsden County receives significant support from the State of Florida.

Municipalities in the county rely heavily on State Agency programs to meet the need of Gadsden's citizens and the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners is appreciative of all the support.

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners pledges support for the Gadsden County Legislative Delegation as they work to address the needs of Gadsden County's residents.

Priorities to Guide the 2016 Legislative Session

Gadsden County submits the following Legislative Priorities and Policy Proposals for consideration by the Governor, Cabinet Members, Members of the Florida Legislature, the Leadership within State Agencies and other local, state, and federal interests that may be supportive of Florida's small and rural communities.

MAJOR LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

- *Provide Funding for Gadsden County Projects;*
- *Provide Funding in High Priority Programs in High Need Areas (i.e. Transportation, Parks, Infrastructure, Public Safety, Health Care and Nutrition);*
- *Ensure Effectiveness of Economic Development Efforts that Stimulate Employment Growth;*
- *Oppose Unnecessary Regulation that Impedes Growth and Development;*
- *Protect State Public Employment in Gadsden County;*
- *Oppose Privatization of Florida State Hospital and Gadsden Correctional Facility;*
- *Oppose Proposals that Shift Cost from State to Local Level, Oppose "one size fits all" Mandatory Requirements;*
- *Oppose Actions that Increase Local Costs;*
- *Support Legislation that Reduces Fiscal Costs Relating to Agency Actions in Small Counties; and,*
- *Oppose Unfunded Mandates*

FUNDING FOR PRIORITY PROJECT REQUESTS

A. Gadsden County Courthouse Renovation Funding

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners has requested funding via the Florida Department of State's Division of Historic Resources in the amount of \$500,000 to support continued renovations of the Gadsden County Courthouse. The 100 year old Gadsden County Courthouse is one of the few original courthouses in the State of Florida that are still actively used. It is a signature public building in Gadsden County which serves as the longstanding centerpiece of community pride and governmental services.

Maintaining the Courthouse is a priority commitment of the community and the Gadsden County Commission. The Commission has been committed to a program of maintenance and renovation to keep the Courthouse functional as a public facility. Funding this project will significantly complement local efforts that ensure the restoration and critical maintenance work of the building. Over the past three years, the Commission allocated over \$3000,000 for courtroom renovations, roof repairs, window replacement, restroom remodeling, technology upgrades and sewer line replacement.

The \$500,000 requested will provide resources for external painting; restoration of the cupola windows, clock and bell; cleaning and sealing the terrazzo flooring; as well as the raising and restoration of the courtroom ceiling.

B. Funding for New Agriculture Education and Promotion Facility Grant

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners has requested funding for a new Agricultural Center through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Agriculture Education and Promotion Facility Grant. The application is requesting \$600,000 to construct a new facility that will house Extension and USDA offices and provide much needed space to accommodate educational program offerings. The application presents local match of 160% through land value, construction plans, infrastructure development and operating funds. The construction site of the new facility is located in the Gadsden County Enterprise Zone, the Quincy Brownfield Area and in a county designated as a Rural Area of Opportunity. The anticipated completion date is June 2017, provided that funding is received by July 2016.

The current facility was planned, constructed and completed during the administration of Governors Spessard Holland, Millard F. Caldwell, and Fuller Warren to house Farm Services and the Cooperative Extension Service in Gadsden County. It was also intended to promote livestock and crop marketing and production education. The facility was dedicated on October 19, 1951.

The current condition of the building is deplorable, hazardous and simply inadequate. Cinder blocks and bricks are falling apart - cracks in the brick facade are visible to visitors entering the building. Roof leaks allow water to intrude into both the office spaces and arena, creating mold and mildew conditions. As a result, office equipment has to be unplugged and relocated to protect them from water damage. Finally, external reviews by the University of Florida IFAS and

FAM-U Agricultural Extension Offices consistently refer to the current building as a poor facility for providing quality agricultural education programs to the people of Gadsden County.

C. Funding for the Gadsden County Economic Development Product Assessment & Development

Gadsden County is the only majority African American population county in Florida. The county's poverty rate is 29.5% and Gadsden is the only county in the three designated Rural Areas of Opportunity (RAO) that meets all eight criteria required for this designation. In 2013 the County Commission tapped the Gadsden County Development Council, Inc., a local 501(c)(3), to serve as the lead economic development agency for the County. This 15-year active organization represents continued participation of all six Gadsden County municipalities, the Board of County Commissioners and every desired stakeholder, both public and private.

Gadsden County is the focus of the Department of Economic Opportunity and Enterprise Florida through the Competitive Florida Partnership and State Strategic Inventories (SSI) programs respectively. In both programs, Gadsden County has sought to leverage the vast transportation assets of our four Interstate-10 interchanges, Apalachicola Northern shortline rail connecting Port of Port St. Joe to the east-west Class 1 CSX rail that goes coast to coast, as does Interstate 10. An additional CSX mainline connects Tallahassee to Bainbridge and beyond via Gadsden County. These assets are of significant value to reshoring and expanding manufacturers, warehousing and distributors.

Through the EFI SSI program funded by a Duke Energy Foundation grant, Gadsden County was identified as having the most potential sites, twenty (20) sites, out of 23 counties. These are sites proximate to FDOT SIS assets ranging from 200 to 1200 acres in size. Additionally, adoption of 2015 HB 257 prescribes Florida Freight Logistics Zones. Gadsden County Development Council recently initiated a regional transportation logistics discussion with the counties from Gadsden to Gulf, along the AN Railroad and including the Port of Port St. Joe. This region is ripe to expand and attract industries dependent upon these assets.

The Gadsden County Development Council is seeking funding through the Department of Economic Opportunity in the amount of \$350,000 to augment the annual \$172,000 county and municipal investment. These funds will be utilized to complete a strategic sites analysis (\$3300,000), establish a Freight Logistics Zone (\$30,000) and launch a Workforce Engagement and Industry Alignment Plan (\$20,000).

PROTECT REVENUE SHARING AND HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAM FUNDS

Protect Revenue Sharing, Fiscally Constrained Funding and Provide Funding for Grant Programs Important to Gadsden County

A major part of the County's operating budget is supported through State Revenue Sharing funds, Fiscally Constrained funding, and grant funding that assist small counties in providing services and programs. Gadsden County relies heavily on state agency program funding to support Library Services, Transportation Disadvantaged Programs, Rural Health Programs, Aerial Photography, Emergency Services, Recycling Programs, and other infrastructure projects. Although funding varies slightly from year to year, the funding is substantial and Gadsden County requests continued support for these funding programs.

In 2014, funding from State and Local sources other than Ad Valorem provided almost \$18,174,513.

- State and local revenue source (excluding Ad Valorem) generated \$14,042,611.
- Funding from state grants programs totaled \$4,131,902.

State and Local Revenue Sources utilized by the Gadsden County BOCC, with 2013 amounts:

• State Revenue Sharing	\$ 863,569
• Local Government ½ Cent Sales Tax Distribution	\$1,657,785
• ½ Cent Sales Tax-	\$1,163,556
• Fiscally Constrained ½ Cent Sales Tax	\$ 616,306
• Fiscally Constrained Amendment 1	\$1,293,382
• Diesel Fuel Tax	\$ 827,903
• Local Option Gas Tax	\$1,220,102
• Constitutional 2 Cent per Gallon Fuel Tax	\$1,039,729
• County Gas Tax	\$ 448,421
• Indigent Ordinance Surtax	\$1,562,580
• Small County Surtax	\$2,155,834

Major sources of program funding utilized by the Gadsden County BOCC (with approximate amounts):

• Office of the Governor - Emergency Preparedness Grants	\$ 111,453
• Florida DEP – Small County Solid Waste Grant	\$ 70,371
• Florida DACS – Mosquito Control	\$ 23,861
• Florida Department of Corrections – Payment In Lieu of Taxes	\$ 100,000
• Florida DOS – State Aid to Libraries	\$ 330,164
• Florida Housing Fin. Corp. – State Housing Initiative Partnership	\$ 221,782
• Florida DOT – Small County Outreach Program (Non-recurring Project)	\$2,052,391
• Florida DOT – Small County Rd Assist. Prog (Non-recurring Project)	\$1,141,262
• Florida Department of Health – Emergency Medical Services	\$ 229,954
• Florida Dept of Management Services – E911 System/Training	\$ 45,237
• Florida Department of Management Service – E911 Upgrade	\$ 5,427

MAJOR PROGRAM PRIORITIES

A. Support Funding for Transportation Infrastructure

Transportation funding is a continued priority for Gadsden County. The Board of County Commissioners works closely with the Department of Transportation and the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA) which includes all of Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon and Wakulla counties. The CRTPA assists in the development of a long range transportation plan which creates an integrated regional multimodal transportation network that supports sustainable development patterns and promotes economic growth.

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests support for the Gadsden County projects represented in the Florida Department of Transportation Five Year Work Program. Further, the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests that the Florida Legislature avoid funding sweeps from the Florida Transportation Trust Fund which provides revenues to support the FDOT Five Year Work Program and important local grant programs.

GADSDEN COUNTY PROJECTS IN THE FDOT 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM			
PROJECT	TYPE OF WORK	2016 FUNDING	2017 FUNDING
Brickyard Road	Widen/Resurface Exist Lanes	\$931,590	
CR-65B	Widen/Resurface Exist Lanes	\$1,117,837	
Howell Road (CR-379 to SR-10)	Resurfacing	\$98,864	
Howell Road (SR-10 to Spitz Farm Rd)	Widen/Resurface Exist Lanes		\$704,028
McPhaul Road	Flexible Pavement Reconstruction	\$418,796	
Peck Betts Road	Road Reconstruction – 2 Lane	\$1,495,483	
South Atlanta Street	Sidewalk		\$257,200
Telogia Creek Road	Resurfacing	\$678,954	
	TOTAL	\$4,741,524	\$961,228

B. Support Park Funding for Local Projects

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests funding for the following Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) Small Park Fund – Development Program applications:

- Gadsden County BOCC Pat Thomas Park \$ 50,000
- Gadsden County BOCC St. Hebron Park \$ 50,000

TOTAL REQUEST \$ 100,000

C. Increase Funding for Small County Solid Waste and Recycling Programs

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests that the Gadsden County Legislative Delegation restore full-funding and provide continued support for the small county solid waste/recycling grant program. This year small county grants were reduced from \$90,000 to \$45,454 due to an inadvertent omission of implementing language. The Gadsden BOCC requests that funding language be clarified and that small county Solid Waste grants be restored to prior year levels.

D. Provide Special Funding for Small County Tax Collectors

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests special funding to offset the costs that Tax Collectors in Fiscally Constrained counties incur associated with meeting the State requirement for issuing Florida Divers Licenses. It is estimated that the impact on the Gadsden County Tax Collectors Office for providing this State function is approximately \$50,000 annually.

E. Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Funding

Gadsden County receives a Payment In Lieu of Taxes grant from the Florida Legislature in the amount of \$100,000 to offset the loss of ad valorem income from the “privatized” operation of Gadsden Correctional Institute. The Commission requests that the PILT payment be increased to reflect the current property value which would increase the PILT payment to an estimated amount of \$145,000.

F. Protect and Support Agriculture & Municipal Water Projects

The primary economic base in Gadsden County is the agricultural industry. The Gadsden Board of County Commissioners requests that the Florida Legislature promote, protect, and strengthen support for the agricultural industry which is so vital to the economic base of Florida.

Sustainable water resources are critical to the economy of Gadsden County. The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners supports project funding to support water supply and access to water projects in all areas throughout Gadsden County. The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners supports steps that will ensure the availability of water supply to the county’s citizens and businesses.

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests funding support for the following municipal water systems related projects:

- City of Midway (Septic Tank Elimination Project) \$500,000
- City of Chattahoochee (Rosedale Water System Improvement) \$543,000

- City of Gretna (Water Systems Improvement – Construction Funding) \$1,675,000
- City of Quincy (SR#12 Potable Water Extension) \$825,288
- City of Quincy (Water and Gas Extension South Beyond I-10 Interchange on SR#267) \$1,046,760

TOTAL REQUEST \$4,590,048

The Gadsden County Commission requests continued State and Regional efforts to protect adequate water levels in the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint River Basin.

The Gadsden County Commission supports the continuation of the DEP study of the Total Maximum Daily Load in Lake Talquin. This study is important in identifying the point source of pollution in Lake Talquin.

G. Protect the Local Economic Base and Promote Economic Enhancement

1. Support Rural Job Creation and Protection of the Rural Economic Base

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners supports continued efforts to promote job creation in Gadsden County. The Board requests that the Legislature protect the county from actions that negatively impact local economic stability and provide funding for economic development projects that assist in job expansion and creation.

2. Protect Jobs at the Florida State Hospital & the Gadsden Correctional Facility While Opposing the Privatization of Public Institutions and Programs

Efforts to avoid negative impacts on quality of services, local programs, and local employment base are a priority. The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests the Florida Legislature to provide continued support for these important public sector institutions and oppose their privatization. The Florida State Hospital and the Gadsden Correctional Facility provide important employment opportunities and economic stability for Gadsden County residents. State public institutions and programs are an important part of the economic base in North Florida. It is felt that privatization proposals for existing public institutions would negatively impact the quality of services, as well as the local economy.

3. Continued Financial Support of Opportunity Florida

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners supports funding for Opportunity Florida to be continued and expanded for the Northwest Florida Business Development Council, Inc. through funds appropriated by the Florida Legislature and administered through Florida's Department of Economic Opportunity, Enterprise Florida, Inc., and other designated agencies.

4. Support Creek Entertainment Gretna's Expansion Plan

Creek Entertainment Gretna (CEG) is a licensed pari-mutuel facility that currently offers poker and simulcast wagering in addition to quarter horse racing. CEG is owned by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians (PBCI), a federally recognized tribe with land in trust in Florida. Since opening in December 2011 CEG has injected more than \$10.5 million dollars into the regional economy through payroll expenses, goods and services, corporate contributions, and government fees and taxes. CEG desires to expand its existing facility by adding slot machines.

On January 31, 2012 the Citizens of Gadsden County passed a referendum in support of CEG to have slot machines. As such, the State may negotiate a compact with PBCI to allow slot machines without impacting the current Seminole compact. We request that the Legislature include language in any gaming legislation that strongly urges the Governor to negotiate a compact with PBCI that authorizes slot machines at CEG.

5. Oppose Cost-shifting for Relocation of Utility Infrastructure

The Gadsden County BOCC requests that the Legislature oppose legislation requiring local governments to pay the costs of relocating private utility lines that are inside a county right-of-way. Legislation is anticipated that will propose requiring local governments to pay for the relocation costs of the private utility.

I. MEDICAID COUNTY COST-SHARE FORMULA AND RURAL HEALTH CARE

1. County Medicaid Cost Share

THE 2013 CHANGE TO THE COUNTY MEDICAID COST SHARE FORMULA HAS A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT ON GADSDEN COUNTY AND IS UNFAIR

Senate Bill 1520, passed in the 2013 Legislative Session, changed the method of calculating what each county is required to pay in State County Medicaid Cost Share. Each county's share changed from a formula based on "Utilization" to a formula based on "Enrollment". The use of enrollees as the predominant distribution factor has a profound impact on the amount Gadsden County is required to cost-share.

Overall, the formula change, adopted in 2013, will result in 50.55% increase from base year FY14-15 to FY 19-20. Gadsden County cost share will increase \$334,419.65 from \$661,520 in FY14-15 to \$995,940 in FY19-20. The projected increase for FY16-17 is 13.20% or approximately \$95,000 over current year. Gadsden Board of County Commissioners requests that the Florida Legislature to cap annual increases at a 3% rate.

STATEWIDE IMPACT

The use of Enrollment as the predominant factor in calculating each county's share of the State County Medicaid Cost Share program creates a substantial shift from historical factors associated with the actual use of services by county residents. The chart below shows the impact of over seven years.

<i>Alachua County's share is estimated to increase 1.61%</i>	<i>Lake County's share is estimated to increase 19.05%</i>
<i>Baker County's share is estimated to increase 73.84%</i>	<i>Lee County's share is estimated to increase 48.22%</i>
<i>Bay County's share is estimated to increase 101.70%</i>	<i>Leon County's share is estimated to increase 41.87%</i>
<i>Bradford County's share is estimated to increase 19.81%</i>	<i>Levy County's share is estimated to increase 26.55%</i>
<i>Brevard County's share is estimated to increase 15.46%</i>	<i>Liberty County's share is estimated to increase 18.46%</i>
<i>Broward County's share is estimated to increase 10.74%</i>	<i>Madison County's share is estimated to increase 108.95%</i>
<i>Calhoun County's share is estimated to increase 37.11%</i>	<i>Manatee County's share is estimated to increase 12%</i>
<i>Charlotte County's share is estimated to increase 30.67%</i>	<i>Marion County's share is estimated to increase 48.29%</i>
<i>Citrus County's share is estimated to increase 27.96%</i>	<i>Martin County's share is estimated to increase 58.44%</i>
<i>Clay County's share is estimated to increase 44.31%</i>	<i>Monroe County's share is estimated to increase 5.97%</i>
<i>Collier County's share is estimated to increase 36.24%</i>	<i>Nassau County's share is estimated to increase 53.40%</i>
<i>Columbia County's share is estimated to increase 1.60%</i>	<i>Okaloosa County's share is estimated to increase 64.24%</i>
<i>Dade County's share is estimated to increase 21.31%</i>	<i>Okeechobee County's share is estimated to increase 47.40%</i>
<i>DeSoto County's share is estimated to increase 75.21%</i>	<i>Orange County's share is estimated to increase 21.82%</i>
<i>Dixie County's share is estimated to increase 50.58%</i>	<i>Osceola County's share is estimated to increase 72.66%</i>
<i>Duval County's share is estimated to increase 19.08%</i>	<i>Palm Beach County's share is estimated to increase 18.6%</i>
<i>Escambia County's share is estimated to increase 38.18%</i>	<i>Pasco County's share is estimated to increase 18.63%</i>
<i>Flagler County's share is estimated to increase 33.12%</i>	<i>Pinellas County's share is estimated to decrease (23.65%)</i>
<i>Franklin County's share is estimated to decrease (7.26%)</i>	<i>Polk County's share is estimated to increase 27.92%</i>
<i>Gadsden County's share is estimated to increase 89.29%</i>	<i>Putnam County's share is estimated to increase 83.30%</i>
<i>Gilchrist County's share is estimated to increase 56.08%</i>	<i>Santa Rosa County's share is estimated to increase 56.91%</i>
<i>Glades County's share is estimated to decrease (19.64%)</i>	<i>Sarasota County's share is estimated to increase 32.64%</i>
<i>Gulf County's share is estimated to increase 26.97%</i>	<i>Seminole County's share is estimated to increase 5.31%</i>
<i>Hamilton County's share is estimated to increase 74.53%</i>	<i>St. Johns County's share is estimated to increase 36.68%</i>
<i>Hardee County's share is estimated to increase 152.93%</i>	<i>St. Lucie County's share is estimated to increase 61.99%</i>
<i>Hendry County's share is estimated to increase 155.95%</i>	<i>Sumter County's share is estimated to increase 63.33%</i>
<i>Hernando County's share is estimated to increase 35.92%</i>	<i>Suwannee County's share is estimated to increase 48.43%</i>
<i>Highlands County's share is estimated to increase 50.57%</i>	<i>Taylor County's share is estimated to increase 72.84%</i>
<i>Hillsborough County's share is estimated to increase 30.76%</i>	<i>Union County's share is estimated to increase 33.30%</i>
<i>Holmes County's share is estimated to increase 93.76%</i>	<i>Volusia County's share is estimated to increase 39.73%</i>
<i>Indian River County's share is estimated to increase 82.47%</i>	<i>Wakulla County's share is estimated to increase 62.23%</i>
<i>Jackson County's share is estimated to increase 81.57%</i>	<i>Walton County's share is estimated to increase 28.71%</i>
<i>Jefferson County's share is estimated to increase 21.20%</i>	<i>Washington County's share is estimated to increase 76.45%</i>
<i>Lafayette County's share is estimated to increase 220.44%</i>	

2. Addressing Rural Health Care Is Critical in Gadsden County

The Gadsden County Health Department plays a vital role in providing critical primary care services to county residents. The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests continued support for the Health Department, including funding for primary health care services.

In addition, the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners supports efforts to close the health-care gap that exists in many rural counties.

Organizational Partners and County Contacts

SUPPORT FOR THE SMALL COUNTY COALITION

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners is a participating member of the Florida Small County Coalition. The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests that the Gadsden Legislative Delegation support the Legislative Proposals of this organization.

SUPPORT FOR THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners is a participating member of the Florida Association of Counties. The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners requests that the Gadsden Legislative Delegation support the Legislative Proposals of this organization.

GADSDEN COUNTY CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information regarding the items within the Gadsden County 2015 Legislative Priorities, please contact:

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