

Dispatches from DeFuniak



From Councilman Ron Kelley

D E F U N I A K S P R I N G S F L O R I D A

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Walton County Heritage Museum on Circle Drive
- The DeFuniak Springs Library on Circle Drive
- DeFuniak Springs Golf Course and on U.S. Hwy. 90 West



JUST THE FACTS

Greetings!

Remember that game in school where the teacher would whisper something in the ear of one child? That child would then whisper it into the ear of the next child and so on until the last child received the whispered message. At that point, the last child would stand up and announce what they had been told. Remember how that final announcement bore no resemblance to the original message?

It was an important lesson, meant to illustrate how facts can get lost in the translation from one person to the next.

We seem to be experiencing a grown-up version of this game.

The issue involves the council adjusting the mayor's salary.

The rumor is that the city council voted to cut the mayor's annual salary by \$2,500 and give themselves a raise of \$1,000 each. Well, that's only

part of the story *and* the dollar figure is wrong.



Here are the facts. During a budget workshop, the idea of lowering the mayor's salary to match that of the council was put forth by two council members. I was one of them. My reasoning was that the practice of paying the mayor about 30% more, (begun during the previous mayor's tenure), places a greater emphasis on the mayor than the city council. I don't think one job is more important than the other. The rest of the council agreed. I also suggested that the addi-

tional money from the mayor's salary be put toward employee raises.

Later, Interim City Manager Craig Drake recommended that all employees and elected officials (including the mayor) be given a 50-cent per hour raise. Therefore, the mayor received the exact same raise as the council members and all employees. The council agreed

Thus, the mayor's salary now matches the city council at \$9,459 per year, which is a reduction of only \$2,363. See the difference between rumor and fact?

Most people actually know their council members and know that the wilder the rumor, the more likely it is to be false. I hope the hysteria will calm down because, as Paul Harvey used to say, "Now you know the rest of the story."

- Ron Kelley

September 20, 2017

N O W O P E N !

Local and area residents now have another new choice for sweet treats. Dunkin' Donuts—Baskin-Robbins has opened a new location in DeFuniak Springs on U.S. 331 South, between Sonic Drive-In and Peoples National Bank. Try the new

Donut Ice Cream Sandwich. Pick any flavor of Baskin-Robbins ice cream you want, have it topped with fudge and sandwiched in a split Powdered Donut from Dunkin' Donuts.

Who says you can't have it all?



Meet the new DeFuniak Springs City Manager

The city of DeFuniak Springs should consider itself most fortunate to have had Interim City Manager Craig Drake holding the reins of city management. Though Mr. Drake never sought the position, he has done an outstanding job at maintaining continuity and consistency of mission since the departure of our former Interim City Manager Tilman Mears.

Both men proved they could do the job and do it well. We owe them both a very real debt of gratitude.

Now, after a lengthy and intensive search, DeFuniak Springs has a new city manager, Danny Lucas.

Mr. Lucas comes to us from Estill, South Carolina, where he has been city manager for the last 10 years. In fact, he has extensive municipal experience. Danny Lucas also served as city manager for Sylvester, Ga., and Hahira, Ga. Lucas also served as public services direc-

tor for the city of Hillsboro, Tx., as development specialist and airport manager for Cobb County, Ga., and

traffic engineering technician for the city of Columbus, Ga., among other municipal positions.

Danny Lucas will begin as the new city manager on Monday, Oct. 2. I believe I speak for the entire city council when I say that we look forward to working with him as we strive to improve life and create prosperity for all of the residents of our wonderful city.



Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.

— Thomas Jefferson

A MAIN STREET CITY

Recently, DeFuniak Springs voted to support an effort to acquire a Main Street designation, which is designed to help communities stimulate and revitalize their downtown areas.

In recent years, the trend has been for commercial centers to leave downtown and relocate near interstate highways and along major thoroughfares. The result has been empty downtown storefronts and far less retail foot traffic.

Main Street offers time-

tested ideas and initiatives that are easily tailored to fit local needs. This can take the shape of street beautification, traffic enhancements, better signage, new zoning, new

design standards and greater tax incentives.

The five-member board of the DeFuniak Springs Main Street program consists of Reynolds Henderson, president, Bruce Naylor, treasurer, Kristina Perry, secretary and directors Patricia Huffman and Mike Hill.

They are looking for donations and volunteers. To find out more, visit the Main Street office on Baldwin Avenue, where else, in downtown DeFuniak!



BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

Southbound US 331



FDOT is closer to completing the US 331S four-lane project. A single northbound lane is getting some blacktop. This will help with congestion on the busiest road in the city. Yay!

Northbound US 331



“Looks like we got us an Onvoi”

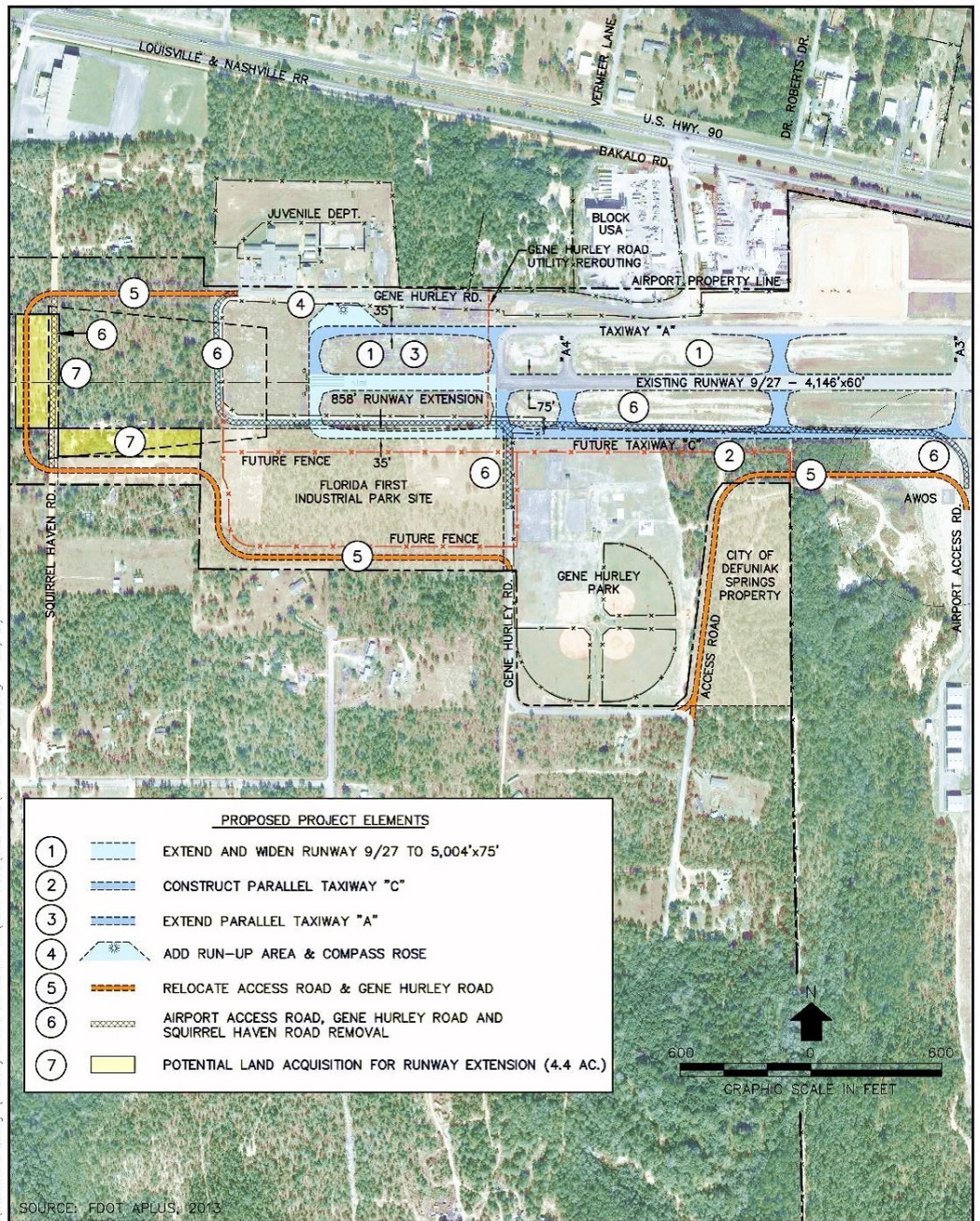
The DeFuniak Springs Municipal Airport is continuing to grow. Earlier this year, the city entered into an agreement with Onvoi Global Services, a federal defense contractor and aviation operator. Onvoi’s president and founder Darryl Centanni has located his corporate headquarters here and is leasing two sites at the airport and renting an existing out-building to house visiting staff members from their Columbus, Mississippi and Little Rock, Arkansas offices.

Centanni says his long-term plans are to hire 25-30 employees over the next two years and locate five aircraft here for both commercial and government flight training. The aircraft will include two Cessna 172’s and one Cessna 208 EX Caravan. In 2018, Onvoi will add another Cessna 172 and King Air C90.

Planned future expansion of the Onvoi operations will require improvements at the airport that will include a 5,000 runway and a realignment of the existing Gene Hurley Road. Another important factor will be to place existing power lines underground.

According to Airport Director Ryan Adams, that project is scheduled to begin within two weeks and is made possible by grant funding. In fact, the runway extension, road realignment and development of the industrial park will all be dependent upon grant funding.

Even though all our hangar space is currently in use, we have been contacted by several other aviation companies interested in space at the airport, so it looks like—with the city council’s continued support—the sky is the limit for the municipal airport!



“Be sure to put your feet in the right place, then stand firm.”

— Abraham Lincoln

DEFUNIACK SPRINGS AIRPORT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE EXTENSION OF RUNWAY 9/27

PROPOSED PROJECT

FIGURE 1.2-1

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