

Inverness Farmers Market

Attend the market

The Inverness Farmers Market will take place the first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the third Thursday of the month will present a “mini” version of the market from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.

The market will take place in and along the open-air pavilion in the Depot District. The markets will bring together 15-25 hand-picked vendors with fresh and artisanal products.

There may also be specialty markets from time-to-time that may include vintage markets and swap meets.

The markets will not take place in July or August.

Product that may be considered for the market:

Produce: fresh fruits, vegetables including conventional, hydroponic, organic and seasonal

Plants and flowers: shrubs, flowers, house & garden plants, herbs, landscaping items (planters/pots/baskets) ornamentals, seeds, bird feeders/baths, etc.

Prepared and specialty food products: baked goods, fresh bread, seafood, barbecue, cheese, smoothies, pasta, ethnic food, eggs, dried soups, coffees, teas, nuts, jams, jellies, honey, sauces and condiments

Art and craft products: handmade and original items such as candles, soaps, oils, balms, lotions, woodworking, leather items, paper goods and handmade bags and fabrics.

Depot District

The Depot District brings together the City's lakefront parks in a fresh and walkable design connecting Liberty Park and Wallace Brooks Park, which are situated along the Withlacoochee State Trail.

The Depot District opened in late 2019 and unveils a terraced lawn overlooking Lake Henderson, playground, waterfront gazebo and an open-air pavilion all located in Liberty Park. There is also a tower stage and a plaza along the lake created as an additional location for entertainment.

It's a short walk or bike ride (2-minutes, 0.2 miles) on the Withlacoochee State Trail to neighboring city park, Wallace Brooks. This park will unveil as a boater-friendly park with fishing and rowing tournaments and activities in the summer of 2020.

The Withlacoochee State Trail, runs through the Depot District and offers a great place to park your bike and stroll through its historic downtown filled with restaurants, shops and pubs. Inverness is one of a handful of cities that holds the designation as a Florida Trail Town. This designation states Inverness, “is a place where trail users can venture off a hiking, biking, equestrian or paddling trail to enjoy the amenities and unique heritage of the community, benefiting the town economically and socially.” The downtown is bustling with cafes, restaurants, pubs, antiques and shops and welcome cyclists and trail users year-round.

Inverness Christens Depot District a “Really Cool Place”

Sponsored Post • By [Deanna Dammer Kimbrough](#) • Posted on November 21, 2019

Naturecoast.com

On November 16, 2019, we celebrated the Grand Opening of the Depot District that unites renovated city and state parks, open spaces and multipurpose public buildings to serve Inverness residents and visitors.

“I-Town”, as City Manager Frank Digiovanni calls it, is worth the drive even if you don’t live in Citrus County. Well, it’s worth the drive to this wonderful enclave of natural beauty enhanced by historic downtown buildings housing boutique retailers and a variety of dining-drinking options around a 1912 courthouse and museum that spurs memories of *Back to the Future* and Elvis, no matter where you live.

One especially scenic route is from west Hernando or Pasco Counties, going north on U.S. 19, via Centralia, Citrus Way, Stage Coach Trail, and then Pleasant Grove Road before turning onto State Road 44. It eventually becomes Main Street and winds through downtown Inverness.



Along the way, you will experience what some call “Old Florida”. It’s a chance to enjoy the lush forests, winding dirt driveways with homes tucked back into the woods, and the chance of seeing deer or even a bear—stay alert! But most of all there is the serenity reminiscent of what early settlers might have experienced. Inverness is very convenient to access via other routes, however, so choose the way that suits you best.

After driving slowly through historic downtown Inverness, suddenly there it is, The Depot District on North Apopka Avenue. If you have been there before and it doesn’t look familiar, it’s because it has

been “re-purposed,” according to City Manager Frank Digiovanni. If you have not been there before, get ready for some WOW moments.



Members of the Nature Coast Young Marines JROTC brought the flags to start the occasion. Image by Diane Bedard.

40-foot Water Tower and a Public Stage

You can't miss the new 40-foot water tower that serves as a gateway to Liberty Park and includes a multi-purpose open stage beneath it. In fact, that's where the Grand Opening ceremony took place.

The ceremony was opened with a presentation of the American Flag by the Nature Coast Young Marines JROTC, the Pledge of Allegiance, and a prayer by City Council President Ken Hinkle.

Speakers included Mayor Bob Plaisted, City Council members, Assistant

City Manager Eric Williams; with appearances by County Commissioners, Superintendent of Schools Sandra Himmel, Afro-American Club of Citrus County President Robert Shelton, Crystal River Mayor Joe Meek, and representatives from the offices of State Representative Ralph Massullo and U.S. Representative Daniel Webster, as well as the Project Director Marc Black.

Hundreds of residents and visitors were walking around and enjoying the area even prior to the ceremony.

Inverness City

Councilman David Ryan, Marketing Manager Liz Fernley, and Council President Ken Hinkle are some of the many people who helped make the Depot District a reality and were there to celebrate its Grand Opening. Photo by Diane Bedard.

The Depot District Vision began many years ago

When City Manager Frank DiGiovanni spoke, he challenged everyone to “aim high” and told citizens that this grand re-opening of the Depot District and parks “is a legacy moment, and you’re all part of it.” He shared his philosophy that “people talk about cities they have visited, not counties.” The vision is that the Depot District will also draw visitors to the downtown area. Digiovanni added that it’s going to be known as “a cool place”.

The Citrus Academy of Dance and Arts added their flash mob artistry to the Grand Opening of the Inverness Depot District on November 16, 2019. Video by Diane Bedard.

Individual ribbon cuttings followed for the Depot District, Liberty Park and Wallace Brooks Park. During the day The MUDDS jazz and blues duo entertained, along with music by two Citrus High School students. Another Wow moment was the “flash mob” dancing throughout the area by youth from the Citrus Academy of Dance and Arts, who make up the CADA Fearless Competition Team.



Uniting City and State Parks with the Natural Environment and the Urban Core

The buildings adjacent to the existing Liberty and Wallace Brooks parks and Big Lake Henderson are part of the revitalization project that started many years ago, becoming a solid concept in 2016, and included the latest technology: photos from flyovers by planes and drones so aerial views could help inspire the vision of the new district.

Construction began in November 2018. When asked who came up with the idea of redesigning and renovating the 10-plus-acre site instead of tearing it all down, Digiovanni smiled proudly and said it was “several people all sharing ideas.”



Melissa, Colton, and Dave Perry, Jr. attended the grand opening and are standing in front of the beach near the Boathouse in Wallace Brooks Park. Image by Diane Bedard

Thousands of visitors already enjoy the Withlacoochee State Trail (part of Florida's Rails-to-Trails).

Now Wallace Brooks Park (established in 1968 and named in honor of an African-American citizen hiker), and Big Lake Henderson (part of the Tsala Apopka Lakes chain) will bring easier access with boat ramps and docks for fishing, boating of many types, and providing new paths and trails for bicycle enthusiasts and hikers.

The original Train Depot is part of the Depot District, with renovations restoring it to a beautiful amenity. Here, Christ Master watches his son showing off the balloon animal he got at the Grand Opening event. Image by Diane Bedard.

Public Services are integrated into the Depot District for Residents and Visitors

With the new pavilion, picnic, playground, and sports areas, there doesn't seem to be anything missing from this re-purposed area.

There are restrooms and outdoor showers, and new red, metal benches and directional signs throughout the entire area.

In fact, on Grand Opening Day, the Depot District was teeming with recumbent bike riders, hikers, children running in the open areas and doing what kids do in the playground area.

The Mudds Jazz & Blues band entertained on the integrated stage under the Inverness water tower in the Depot District. Video by Diane Bedard.

Volleyball teams were on the court for a tournament, kayakers were paddling around on the lake, and some folks were just sitting on the roomy benches, enjoying the beauty of nature.

Liberty Park has been re-landscaped to include parking and open-air stages, lighting, and restrooms. It allows smooth access to the Depot Market that, on Saturdays, will serve as an open-air

farmers' market with fresh produce and homemade goods, as well as locals selling their arts and crafts. It is also available as a venue for entertainment and rental opportunities.

Jim and Beth Reeves were here for the festivities. As part of the Citrus Cyclopaths, they are excited about how the new Depot District integrated our State Trail with Inverness city parks and the downtown historic district. Image by Diane Bedard.

The City of Inverness itself can be proud of many other honors. The Florida Trail Association considers it a Gateway Community; the National Arbor Day Foundation and U.S. Forest Service designated Inverness a Tree City USA in 1995; and in 2009 it was honored as City of the Year by *Forty and Eight* (an organization of United States veterans whose name translates from French to "Society of 40 men and 8 horses".)

For information about the Depot District and event rental opportunities, contact Manager Betty Pleacher at bpleacher@inverness-fl.gov or call 352-727-2611, ext. 1801.

Deanna Kimbrough interviews Frank Digiovanni on one of the sturdy new red benches installed throughout the Depot District parks. Image by Diane Bedard.

Without a doubt, Inverness in Citrus County Florida is a "must visit" place for every Nature Coaster.



Inverness Depot District holds grand opening

Fred Hiers

Nov 16, 2019

citruscountychronicleonline.com

A year of construction and a decade of planning culminated Saturday in the grand opening of Inverness' touted Depot District and renovations of both Liberty and Wallace Brooks parks, drawing 1,000 spectators and dignitaries.

City officials and local business people praised the \$10.5 million Depot District project — that includes an open-air pavilion, train depot and water tower and stage — and how it ties the two parks together via the Withlacoochee State Trail and sidewalks to the city's downtown just a few blocks west.

"See what a multi-year affect has produced," Inverness City Mayor Bob Plaisted told a cheering crowd about the completed project.

He said his hope was that the Depot District, and its parks, would be "a shining light for the whole county ... It's an exciting time for us."

City Manager Frank DiGiovanni, who spearheaded the project on behalf of the council, praised his council's support for the project.

"Nothing happens without their commitment," he told spectators.

He predicted the Depot District and its connecting attractions "will be talked about in all of Citrus County and several counties beyond."

"You are (participating in) a legacy moment for the county," he told the applauding crowd.

Dignitaries at the event in addition to the council included County Commissioners Jeff Kinnard and Brian Coleman; *Citrus County* School District Superintendent Sandra "Sam" Himmel; Crystal River Mayor Joe Meek and School Board member Doug Dodd.

—There were three ribbon cuttings: The Depot District, Liberty Park and Wallace Brooks Park.

DiGiovanni told the Chronicle before the ribbon cutting that the project will attract tourists but also serve the needs of area residents.

"What this does is elevate interest (in the city) and property values. This is very broad in its nature," he said.

The completion of the project also means "a huge weight is being lifted," off the city's staff's shoulders, DiGiovanni said.

But now the work starts in earnest in other ways, he said, such as drawing vendors to sign up for the pavilion's Sunday farmers' market and craft shows, attracting businesses to rent the former train depot, and organize events to attract tourists and area residents.

There were more than a dozen vendors in the pavilion Saturday.

One was Lynn Cumbie, owner of Cumbie Jewelers in downtown Inverness.

Cumbie said she doesn't fear the Depot District will take away business from her downtown store.

She thinks the Depot District, its proximity to parks and the Withlacoochee State Trail, will serve to bring people to the area. And when they want to eat or do a little shopping, they will head downtown, she said.

"I think there are a lot of people who will use (the Depot District and parks)," she said. "I think it's an improvement."

Rotary Club of Inverness President Drew Benefield said these projects are good for businesses and residents alike.

"I think it's fantastic," Benefield said. "I think it's a wonderful improvement to our county."

"This is what attracts tourists ... and supports downtown," said the owner of Bluewater Drafting, located in Lecanto.

Eric Williams, Inverness' assistant city manager, said the project will serve to not only attract tourists, but also young families and retirees to the city and expand the city's tax base.

Currently, Inverness depends heavily on taxes from commercial properties and businesses. City officials want to change that and become less dependent on commercial taxes.

Williams, who is slated to replace DiGiovanni when the city manager retires Jan. 1, said that building the Depot District and renovating the two parks was "just the natural order of things" in a first step to bring more attention to the city and now focus on residential growth.

"It's a great day for Inverness," he said.

Still uncompleted, however, is the project's plans for boat slips in big Lake Henderson, a kayak and canoe launch pad and sculling launch area near a storage building for the boats.

Williams said that work will be completed by the middle of December.

Originally, the city asked the Southwest Water Management District for approval to build 40 slips at the end of a dock in the lake. The water agency denied the request, but approved 10 slips. The denial and an earlier withdrawal of the permit request by the city delayed the project for months.

Williams said the slips are being manufactured and will soon arrive for assembly.



Liberty Park Renovations include:

- Terraced walls that will border green spaces.
- A children's playground area.
- A new park entrance.
- Bicycle parking and restroom facilities, vehicle parking, extensive landscaping, and lighting.

Wallace Brooks Park renovations include:

- A large activity lawn, volleyball courts and shuffleboard courts.

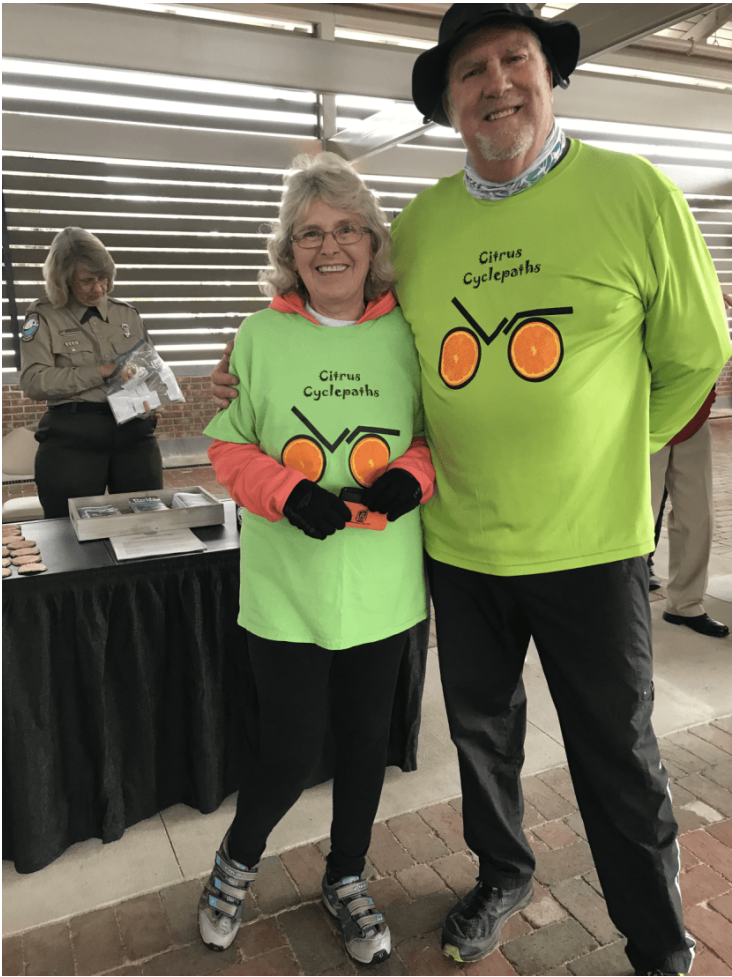
- A reconfiguration of the entrance to Wallace Brooks Park.
- Yet to be completed are boat slips docking, kayak launch and rentals, sculling launch.

City Council President Ken Hinkle said the Depot District will serve the city for decades.

"This really is multi-functional. And this is going to be a long-term asset," he said. "It's going to be amazing how all this will turn out. This is for 50 years."

"They will come here to see what we've got ... and they will want to move to the city," Hinkle said. "There's a lot of excitement here."

Contact Chronicle reporter Fred Hiers at fred.hiers@chronicleonline.com or 352-397-5914.











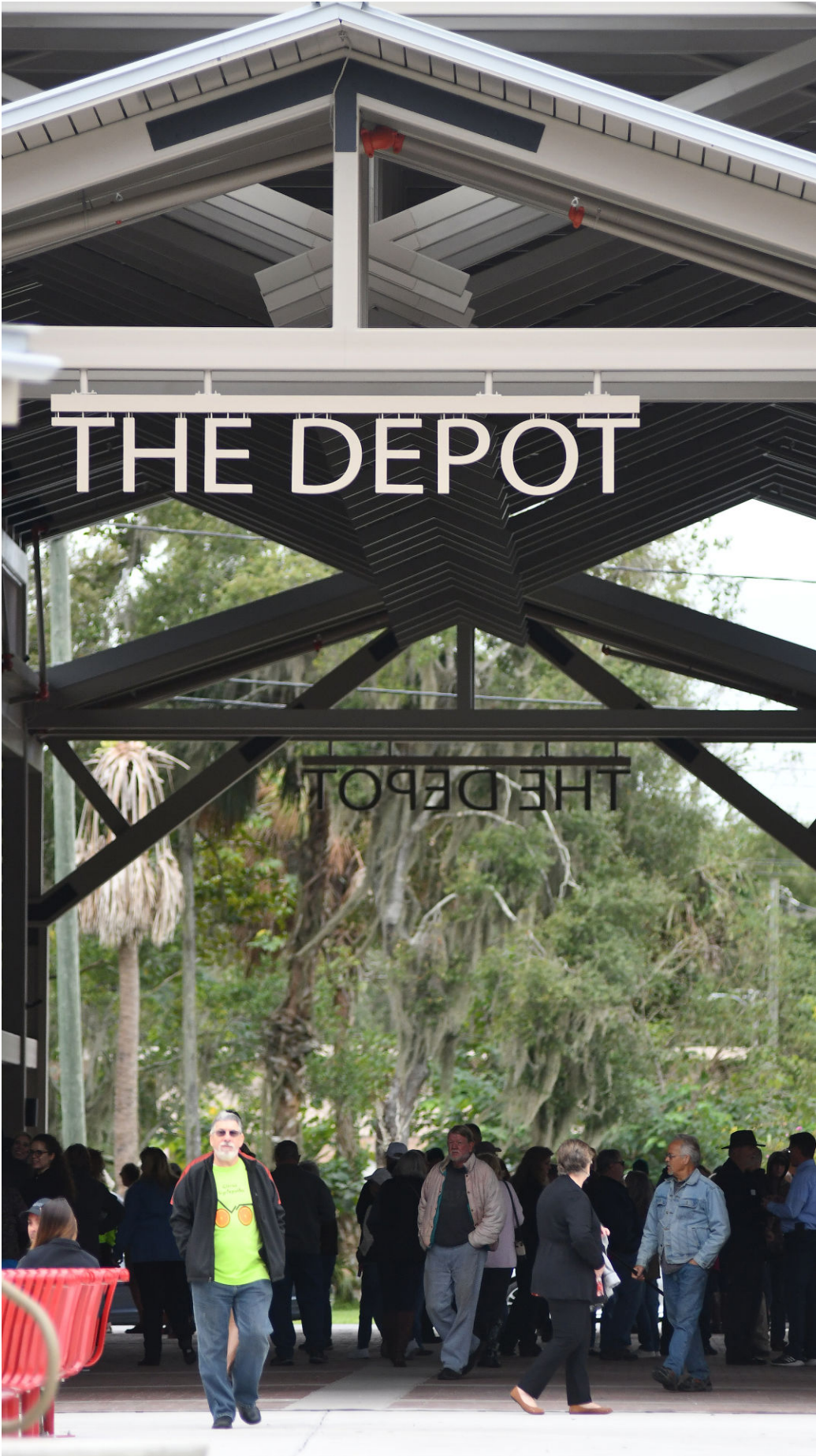














THE DEPOT

Dedicated to the People of Inverness
November, 2019 A.D.

by the Mayor and Council of the
City of Inverness, Florida

KEN HINKLE, PRESIDENT • JACQUIE HEPFER, VICE PRESIDENT
CABOT MCBRIDE • LINDA BEGA • DAVE RYAN
BOB PLAISTED, MAYOR

FRANK DIGIOVANNI, CITY MANAGER

SUSAN JACKSON, CITY CLERK

ERIC WILLIAMS, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

MARC BLACK, PROJECT DIRECTOR

PAUL VERLANDER, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

C T HSU, ARCHITECT

CLANCEY & THEYS, CONSTRUCTION MANAGER







View from the road looking south towards the depot







BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHS



