



# 2016 Public Information Annual Report

## WEKIWA PARKWAY

Completing Central Florida's Beltway



Prepared For:  
Central Florida Expressway Authority  
Florida Department of Transportation - District Five



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## I. Introduction

This report is intended to provide the Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) – District Five, and other interested parties with a



summary of 2016 Wekiva Parkway community awareness activities. Consultant Public Involvement Coordinator (PIC) Mary Brooks of Quest Corporation of America (QCA) plans and implements the community awareness initiatives for both agencies; she has supported the parkway since 2004. Also assisting in 2016 were QCA associates Kym Graves, Shemir Wiles, Kelda Senior, Megan Olivera, and Eileen LaSeur.

As the first sections opened and others began construction, CFX and FDOT remained committed to ensuring that the community has input into, understands and supports the project. Outreach activities follow the strategies of the Wekiva Parkway Corridor-wide Community Awareness Plan (CAP). Robust communications strategies this year included intensifying the Wekiva Parkway Youth Outreach Program, by working with Lyman High School's engineering magnet program to provide an in-depth look at how CFX Sections 1A and 1B continue to take shape *(photo, right)*.



The agencies briefed elected and agency officials; conducted media tours, public meetings, community and homeowner association presentations; participated in community events; and frequently updated the project website and social media pages. Followings on the social media



pages increased dramatically this year – more than doubling on one account.

Outreach highlights included the Department holding the first Industry Forum for its portion of the parkway, with nearly 300 attendees *(photo, left)*.

The PIC also responded to hundreds of queries via the project hotline and email address. All public

interactions were documented in the project database, from which regular reports were generated and provided to the agencies. These strategies have educated the community and helped to solidify positive perceptions about the project, as well as generate excitement about its ultimate benefits. The approach also has allowed the public to provide valuable input, resolve concerns and issues early and minimize negative impacts.

2016 Outreach	Total
January	679
February	520
March	441
April	1,835
May	432
June	510
July	1,669
August	880
September	915
October	3,148
November	3,403
December	1,903
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,695</b>

The table to the left illustrates the extent to which project and communications staff directly interacted with community members regarding the project. From community presentations, special events, school engagements, public meetings, officials’ meetings and construction alerts sent to those requesting such information, this outreach resulted in nearly **15,000** people getting direct, accurate information on the Wekiva Parkway. That figure is nearly triple the number of people directly communicated with in 2015.

An eagerness to follow the progress and traffic impacts on the increasing number of project sections under construction weighs heavily in the increasing numbers. Communications team staff sent out about **50 construction alerts** in 2016. The increased outreach is expected to continue in 2017 as FDOT begins work on more sections.

The total direct outreach figure does not include those using the social media and website as vital sources of project information. Those statistics are provided later in this report. The figure also does not include the much broader penetration of project key messages via the media.

It was an action-packed year from a project progress perspective as well. This year saw FDOT open the first stretch of the Wekiva Parkway, Sections 4A/4B. CFX began building its second half of the parkway: Sections 2A, 2B, and 2C. Totalling about five miles, this stretch includes a multi-level systems interchange near Haas Road-Ondich Road and Plymouth Sorrento Road (*photo, right*). These sections will open to traffic in late spring of 2018.



## a. Project Description

The Wekiva Parkway (State Road 429) is a cooperative effort between the Central Florida Expressway Authority and the Florida Department of Transportation. The Florida's Turnpike Enterprise provided design input and collects the tolls on FDOT sections. The parkway will connect to SR 417, completing the beltway around northwest Central Florida. This estimated \$1.6 billion project includes \$500 million of non-toll road improvements including:

- Widening seven miles of SR 46 in Lake and Seminole counties
- Rebuilding the US 441/SR 46 interchange in Mount Dora
- Moving CR 46A out of the Seminole State Forest so wildlife can move safely between habitats
- Building parallel, non-tolled service roads for local trips in east Lake and Seminole counties.



The 25-mile expressway will provide travel alternatives, relieve US 441, SR 46 and other area roads of traffic congestion and make it easier to travel between Lake, Orange and Seminole counties. Authorized in 2004 by the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act, this expressway has been heralded as an example of smart transportation planning through an environmentally sensitive area. Parkway development has included setting aside more than

3,400 acres of land for conservation, numerous wildlife bridges and other safeguards for animals (*photo, left*). The parkway will be largely elevated to reduce collisions between vehicles and wildlife.

The Wekiva Parkway is the first expressway in Central Florida to feature **All Electronic Tolling (AET)** for the greatest customer convenience and traffic efficiency. There will be no toll plazas – motorists pay their tolls at safe highway and ramp speeds using E-PASS or SunPass. Both FDOT and CFX have license-plate recognition programs for those who do not have a transponder.



## b. Project Update

### Florida Department of Transportation



After decades in the making, the Department on January 20, 2016 made history by opening the first stretch of the Wekiva Parkway, Sections 4A/4B, from County Road 435 (Mount Plymouth Road) near Haas Road to State Road 46 east of Camp Challenge Road (*photos, left*

*and below right*). Construction began on this three-mile stretch in February 2013. FDOT started with this \$25.48 million section because all of the property needed had been acquired.

Section 4 lies on the 1,600-acre former Neighborhood Lakes property, one of several large parcels purchased for conservation as mandated by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway & Protection Act. Construction is to begin in 2017 on a multi-use trail along Section 4 that will connect to the planned Lake-Wekiva Trail and an extension of the West Orange Trail. The toll is \$0.75 for those with E-PASS or SunPass, and \$1.00, plus a \$2.50 monthly administrative fee, for those without a transponder who pay their toll using Toll by Plate.



The project included a partial interchange at SR 46 and building several bridges. A floodplain bridge in the middle of this stretch provides safe passage under the parkway for wildlife during the dry season. A temporary ramp connects the parkway to CR 435. That temporary connection will be removed once CFX ties Section 2A to the west into Section 4A.

Many have been surprised by the amount of traffic on the first stretch, which had 495,428 total trips through the end of November. Tolls on more than 80 percent of the trips have been paid via a transponder; the remainder have used the Toll by Plate program.

FDOT this year advertised the Section 6 Design-Build project, which includes a parallel, non-tolled service road, several wildlife bridges and the new, high-profile bridge over the Wekiva River (*photo, right*). Selection for that project was scheduled for March of 2017, with the project to kick off in May-June. Actual construction was expected to begin near year's end.



The Department continued right of way acquisition this year and also prepared to start construction in 2017 on Sections 3A/3B and 5.

In December the Department kicked off design of Section 7B, the last non-tolled section, which stretches from east of Orange Boulevard to near International Parkway. Design is scheduled to finish in late 2018, with construction to begin in mid-2019.



### Central Florida Expressway Authority

The communications staff had its hands full this year keeping the community up to speed on the amazing progress and related traffic impacts from construction on the CFX sections.

CFX ramped up construction on Sections 1A and 1B, from US 441 near Plymouth Sorrento Road to the planned interchange at Kelly Park Road. Since the summer of 2015, Prince Construction has been building the \$56.1 million Section 1A, and Superior Construction has worked on the \$46.6 million Section 1B.

Bridge work intensified this year. Construction on the bridge near US 441 at the SR 429 Connector Road required temporary lane, ramp and road closures. The contractor during one operation placed 30, 100-foot-long concrete beams at the Connector Road bridge (*photo, above*). This interchange gave the public its first views of project aesthetics including stone relief on walls and piers, “haunched” – or slightly arched – beams and arched pier caps (*photo, right*).



Elsewhere, pile driving, beams, decks and other progress was made at Belgian Street (*photo below, left*) and the low area bridge north of Southfork Drive (*photo below, right*).



CFX's first parkway paving occurred on Section 1A in the early fall from north of Yothers Road to just south of Ponkan Road. The toll gantry building (*photo below, right*) also was completed along this stretch, providing the first glimpse of the rich brown stain and warm tan color that will pervade the corridor once complete.

Subsequently, CFX's contractor successfully detoured traffic off Yothers Road to build a new bridge in that location (*photo below, left*). The road closure allowed excavation to continue building the parkway's "depressed" section.



This parkway stretch of about a mile is 20-30 feet below ground from south of Belgian Street to south of Ponkan Road. Dirt from this stretch was used to elevate the road elsewhere. Lowering the parkway minimizes the visibility and noise for the surrounding community. Traffic was detoured via the new Belgian Street bridge for this operation.

This year Section 1B saw the Kelly Park Road interchange clearly take shape. Following a tremendous amount of drainage and earthwork, crews built bridge walls and began to shape the various interchange ramps. Streetlights and decorative pedestrian railing on the bridges also were put in place.

In June 2016 crews began installing the “haunched,” or slightly arched, steel bridge beams across Kelly Park Road (*photo, right*). Installing the 160-foot-long beams required a series of road closures and detours for the cross street.



In late fall, Section 1B crews began paving the mainline (*photos below, left and center*), as well as installing cantilever signs. The first staining and painting of CFX retaining walls occurred on this section in the fall at the Joey McGuckin Road bridge (*photo below, right*).

Section 1 is scheduled to open to traffic in late spring of 2017.



Before CFX started work on its second half of the parkway in 2016, crews first had to excavate and relocate protected gopher tortoises (*photos, right*). Sections 2A, 2B and 2C began in 2016, yielding a total of 233 gopher tortoises from 522 burrows.

All told on all sections, CFX crews excavated a total of 1,139 burrows to find and safely transfer 619 of the keystone species to state licensed recipient sites in Osceola and Sumter counties.





On January 4, 2016 crews began building the systems interchange on Section 2B. By the end of the year, crews had transformed the area as aesthetic bridge columns and beams (*photo, left and below left*) rose out of the ground for the multi-level interchange at Haas-Ondich and Plymouth Sorrento roads. The contractor, Southland Construction, engaged in extensive earthwork to elevate the parkway in this area. Work on this section has required lowering the speed limit and ongoing flagging operations to safely get equipment across Plymouth Sorrento Road. Bridge abutment walls now flank the side street.

Installing some of the bridge beams at the interchange has required periodic closures and detours on Ondich Road (*photo below, right*). Since the detour route included Kelly Park Road, close coordination has taken place on the maintenance of traffic between the Sections 1B and 2B project teams.



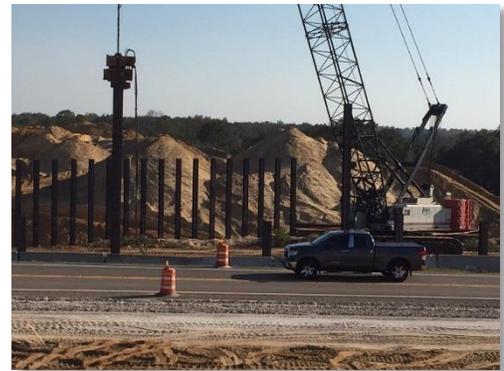
CFX in the summer of 2016 kicked off its final two sections – 2C and 2A – in May and August, respectively. Section 2C extends northwest from the systems interchange, across the Orange-Lake County line and Coronado Somerset Drive, to end at a loop interchange at State Road 46 east of Round Lake Road. GLF Construction is the contractor building this \$49.48 million project.



The loop interchange includes a sprawling, joint-use pond (*photo, left*) to catch runoff from both Section 2C and FDOT Section 3A immediately to the west. Sharing the pond resulted in fewer private properties needing to be acquired for the improvements. Dirt from pond excavations is being used to elevate the parkway elsewhere along this stretch.

The interchange pond will be “curvilinear,” or naturally shaped, with enhanced landscaping, to help the feature better blend in with the natural surroundings.

The PIO staff has worked diligently to keep the community, emergency services personnel and others apprised of ongoing flagging operations, traffic shifts and other impacts to SR 46 (*photo, right*) from work on this section. Close coordination with Coronado Somerset Drive residents also has been required for bridge and other work affecting this neighborhood street.



Section 2A extends west from the systems interchange to connect to FDOT Section 4A at CR 435. This section, which parallels Haas Road, includes the former Pine Plantation property, one of several large parcels purchased for conservation along the project corridor as required by the 2004 Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act.



Once clearing and demolition were done (*photo, left*), the contractor, Superior Construction, quickly moved into earthwork, drainage and other operations on this \$38.65 million project.



Crews this fall began driving bridge pile at Morris Access Road and in other locations (*photo, left*).

Once Section 2A successfully connects to FDOT Section 4A, the temporary ramp onto the parkway at CR 435 will be removed (*photo, below right*). The Legislature saw fit in the Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act to limit the number of permanent interchanges to curb development in the environmentally sensitive area.

Section 2 is scheduled to open to traffic in spring of 2018.



## II. Joint Agency Public Involvement Coordination

Since 2012, the agencies have worked in tandem to provide consistent project messaging to the public throughout the 25-mile corridor. An important element of that has been regular Joint Agency Public Involvement Coordination meetings, of which **7 meetings** were held in 2016.

Organized by QCA, the meetings are attended by engineering directors, construction engineers, communications and project management staff for both agencies, as well as the corridor consultant, CH2M. During the meetings, agency



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staff members share information about progress on their respective sections, discuss milestone and major project activities, reach consensus on key messaging, jointly plan media and special events, and discuss all facets of community outreach and other coordination for the parkway.

The joint meetings are also used to discuss the development and updating of project resources such as the [www.wekivaparkway.com](http://www.wekivaparkway.com) website, collaterals including the project fact sheet, FAQ's and talking points. The meetings facilitate further development and strengthening of the

corridor-wide branding for the parkway. This uniform branding throughout the corridor makes the project – and related information resources – easily recognizable to the public.

Key project participants in the joint agency meetings have included:

Alan Hyman, FDOT Director of Transportation Operations  
Glenn Pressimone, CFX Director of Engineering  
Michelle Maikisch, CFX Chief of Staff & Public Affairs Officer  
Don Budnovich, CFX Resident Engineer  
Brian Hutchings, CFX Senior Communications Specialist  
Steve Olson, FDOT District Five Public Information Manager  
Ashraf Elmaghraby, FDOT Constructability & Design Services  
Kevin Moss, FDOT Design Project Manager  
Matt Hassan, FDOT Design Project Manager  
Scott Bear, Corridor Consultant, CH2M  
Mary Brooks, Consultant Public Involvement Coordinator, QCA

Summaries of the joint agency meetings, including action items, are provided to participants and also broadly distributed to additional staff at both agencies.

### III. Elected & Agency Officials' Coordination



CFX and FDOT in 2016 continued to proactively communicate and involve area officials in the design and construction process. The goal was to keep the officials informed of the progress made on the various sections, to address any questions or concerns, and to also make them aware of community outreach and concerns from their constituents.

Elected and agency officials' coordination was accomplished through strategies including: Commissioners' Briefing Reports, one-on-one meetings, and presentations to city and county councils and at officials' town hall meetings. In addition to extensive emails and calls, following is a sampling of the officials' outreach that occurred in the past year.

### 2016 Local Board Presentations

Mount Dora City Council – Jan. 5  
Lake County Commission Update – March 15

### Officials' Briefings

Apopka Mayor Joe Kilsheimer Radio Show Request – Jan. 5  
MetroPlan Orlando Open House – Jan. 13  
Mount Dora Interim City Manager and Interim Planning Director – April 12  
Lake County Engineer at Section 2C Partnering – April 26  
Apopka Mayor Joe Kilsheimer Radio Show Request – June 14  
Seminole County Commissioner Brenda Carey – Sept. 12  
Sen. Alan Hays fly over tour – Sept. 28  
Mount Dora City Manager and Public Works Director – Dec. 7



### Committee Presentations

MetroPlan Orlando Community Advisory Committee – April 27

Communications staff in late 2016 were already preparing to provide updates to the Lake-Sumter MPO and its committees.

## **IV. Media Relations**

With the first sections opening, and more sections entering construction, the Wekiva Parkway catapulted to front page – and even national – news in 2016. The project communications team continued to try to maximize earned media, a cost-effective method of communicating with the public.



Coverage of the Wekiva Parkway in 2016 was overwhelmingly positive, with a number of the stories dealing with the important role the expressway will play in local municipalities' economic development and jobs creation plans. There was also advanced coverage of public

workshops, helping to generate continued healthy attendance.

There was extensive coverage – before, during and since – of the Section 4 opening and subsequent traffic volumes.

The project gained nationwide exposure via two packages in ENR – Engineering News Record: in the August national edition and in the September Southeast edition, focusing on the unique engineering and aesthetic strategies employed on the CFX sections.

Through the agencies’ proactive media strategies, transparent operations and positive, constructive relationships with media members, the project has largely been successful in getting the media to disseminate accurate key messaging – and positive coverage – to the public.

Following is a sampling of stories and media interactions pertaining to, or referencing, the Wekiva Parkway in 2016:

- David Cohea/Mount Dora Citizen/Crossroads for the City of Mount Dora – Jan. 3
- Kevin Spear/Orlando Sentinel/Small stretch of Wekiva Parkway is a big milestone – Jan. 3
- Gina Benitez/FOX 35 – Section 4 Media Tour – Jan. 6
- Florida Channel Rebecca Baer Section 4 Tour & Project Overview – Jan. 8
- Bethany Rodgers/Orlando Sentinel – Apopka primed for economic growth, council candidate say – Jan. 13
- Staff Report/Orlando Sentinel - Lake Commissioner Welton Cadwell tapped again to lead Central Florida Expressway Authority – Jan. 15
- Staff Report/Daily Commercial – First Wekiva section slated to open – Jan. 16
- Staff Report/Debary Life – Debary Drivers: 1<sup>st</sup> leg of new parkway opens Wednesday – Jan. 16
- Paul Brickmann/Orlando Sentinel – Higher pay jobs come to Orlando, but challenges remain – Jan. 18
- Staff Report/Orlando Sentinel – Wekiva Parkway: Looking Ahead – Jan. 19
- Kevin Spear/Orlando Sentinel – Wekiva Parkway cashless tolls are Central Florida first – Jan. 19
- Cindy Barth/Orlando Business Journal - Wekiva Parkway’s first section to open this week – Jan. 19
- Staff/WOFL FOX 35 – 3-mile section of Wekiva Parkway opens Wednesday – Jan. 19
- Staff/Orlando Sentinel – Transportation Milestone: First leg of the Wekiva Parkway to open – Jan. 20
- Roy Ramos/WFTV Ch.9 – Portion on Wekiva Parkway open to public – Jan. 20
- Kristin O’Conner/WKMG Ch. 6 – Stretch of Wekiva Parkway open from Orange County to Lake County – Jan. 20
- Livi Stanford/The Daily Commercial - County expected to be see significant economic growth - Jan. 23

### Small stretch of Wekiva Parkway is big milestone



Highly more than 3 miles of expressway near the community of Mount Plymouth will be the first opened section of

- Martin Comas/Orlando Sentinel – Seminole County expects \$102M windfall in sales tax revenues – Jan. 27
- Livi Stanford/The Daily Commercial – MPO honors Cadwell with leadership award – Jan. 28
- Tom McNiff/The Daily Commercial – Mount Dora 2016 celebrates area’s successes – Jan. 29
- Staff/ASHTO Journal - FDOT opens first 3-mile section of no-cash Wekiva Parkway toll road project – Jan. 29
- Tracy Jacim/WOFL FOX 35 – Apopka closer to finalizing plans for City Center – Feb. 2
- Staff/The Florida Channel – Capitol Update Extended – Wekiva Parkway Opens – Feb. 5
- Bethany Rodgers/Orlando Sentinel – Apopka Council races act as checkpoint for young administration – Feb. 5
- Scott Callahan/Daily Commercial – Mount Dora innovation district taking shape – Feb. 9
- Livi Stanford/Daily Commercial – LSSC’s new President Stanley Sidor tackles issues head on – Feb. 12
- Jennifer Nessler/West Orange Times & Observer – Winter Garden Commission approves SR 429 Master Plan – Feb. 12
- Anjali Fluker/Orlando Business Journal – Expressway Authority’s top exec shares her greatest regional transportation challenge – Feb. 18
- Kevin Spear/Orlando Sentinel – Road signs will keep aging letter style – Feb. 22
- Livi Stanford/Daily Commercial – Progress made on Wekiva Trail – March 2
- Dawn Brooks/Web Editor/WKMG Ch. 6 – Deputy, 1 other injured in rollover crash in Apopka – March 2
- Web Team/WESH Ch. 2 – Deputy involved crash near Apopka – March 2
- Web Team/WOFL FOX 35 – Deputy injured after overnight SUV rollover – March 2
- Lauren Ritchie/Orlando Sentinel – City must make sure ‘something great’ built – March 8
- Kevin Spear/Orlando Sentinel – Central Florida Expressway Authority debates lawyer costs – March 10
- Business Wire/Staff – Fitch Rates Central Florida’s Auth’s Senior Revenue Bonds ‘A’; Outlook Stable – March 11
- Web Team/WESH Ch. 2 – I-4 Ultimate ramp closure planned for this week – March 14
- Capital Soup – Upcoming Public Information Meeting for Wekiva Parkway Section 8 – March 22
- Staff/Orlando Sentinel – # CF100: Cuba, Brussels, pot in Tampa, Uber in Altamonte Springs – March 25
- Bethany Rodgers/Orlando Sentinel – Passage of ‘Grow Apopka’ plan caps \$141K vision efforting process – April 6
- Martin Comas/Orlando Sentinel – DOT ditches plan for extra 417 toll – April 12
- Lauren Ritchie/Orlando Sentinel – Fire MPO Director, start over after audit – April 13
- Scott Powers/FloridaPolitics.com – Worried it’s losing to Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise through cooperation, Central Florida Expressway Authority seeks to compete more – April 14

**Portion of Wekiva Parkway opens to public**

Updated: Jan 20, 2016 - 3:45 PM



- Staff/Bizjournals.com – 9 corridors part of Orange County’s \$200M infrastructure plan – April 25
- Ryan Harper/Orlando Sentinel – Traffic Inbox: Signal coming to busy Apopka Intersection – April 25
- Jerry Hume/CFN13 – Work begins on latest phase of Wekiva Parkway – May 2
- Staff/Daily Commercial – Wekiva Parkway section in Lake underway – May 2
- Tom McNiff/Daily Commercial – Congressman Webster eyes a stronger, more transparent House – May 5
- Tiffanie Reynolds/Naples Daily News – Stantec wins two of seven “Outstanding Project Awards” from the Florida Institute on Consulting Engineers Annual Awards Program – May 25
- Staff/The Herald-Tribune – Stantec Wins 2 Industry Awards – June 2
- Lauren Ritchie/Orlando Sentinel – Higher tax rolls tell tale of Lake growth – June 2
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Construction to disrupt 441/429 Connector Road – June 3
- Jason Ruitter/Orlando Sentinel – Florida leads nation in toll roads – June 6
- Lauren Ritchie/Orlando Sentinel – A bad idea: Council gets in the weeds with call to go “proactive” on code enforcement – June 10
- John Peery /The Apopka Chief – Section 1A&1B Tour – June 10
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Four Week Kelly Park Road Detour Begins Monday – June 18
- Staff/The Biz Journal – Closures scheduled due to Wekiva Parkway construction – June 21
- Ryan Harper/CFN 13 – Section 1A&1B Tour – June 22
- Jason Ruitter/Orlando Sentinel – Toll agency awards its last Wekiva Parkway Contract – June 22
- Scott Powers/Florida Politics – Key \$39 million Wekiva Parkway contract awarded – June 22
- Racquel Asa/WFTV Ch. 9 – Section 1A&1B Tour – June 23
- Scott Judy/Engineering News Record – Sections 1A & 1B Tour – June 23
- Racquel Asa/WFTV Ch. 9 – Construction on the Wekiva Parkway to connect to Lake County ahead of schedule – June 24
- Jason Ruitter/Orlando Sentinel – Section 1A & 1B Tour – June 28
- Staff/World Highways – New Florida toll road under construction – June 28
- Susan Jacobson/Orlando Sentinel – Fast-growing Ocoee tries to balance small-town past with progress – July 1
- Beth Kassab/Orlando Sentinel – Apopka working on next chapter – July 1
- Jason Ruitter/Orlando Sentinel – Wekiva Parkway traffic light so far, but residents see bright future – July 5
- Jason Ruitter/Orlando Sentinel – State, expressway authority butt heads over 408 extension – July 14
- Jason Ruitter/Orlando Sentinel – I-4 Ultimate boosts hiring, pays for training – July 27
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Work Begins on Final Section of Wekiva Parkway – July 28



- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Construction to disrupt 441/429 Connector Road – July 28
- Emma Skeels/Orlando Business Journal – Here’s the date when construction begins on the final piece of the Wekiva Parkway – July 28
- Staff Report / The Triangle News Leader – Connector Road Detour For Nightly Bridge Work Scheduled as part of Wekiva Parkway Construction – July 29
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Chief-Planter - Road faces closure for Wekiva Parkway work – July 29
- The Daily Commercial/Staff – Connector Road at SR 429 to close nightly through Aug. 31. – July 29
- Ryan Harper/CFN 13 – Section 2A Gopher Tortoise Relocation – Aug. 2
- Roxanne Brown/The Leesburg Daily Commercial - 2A Construction Start Tour – Aug. 2
- WorldHighways.com/Staff – Final stage of Florida project – Aug. 3
- Roxanne Brown/The Leesburg Daily Commercial – Work begins on final section of Wekiva Parkway – Aug. 3
- Lauren Ritchie/The Orlando Sentinel – City passed over more qualified candidates – Aug. 3
- Catherine Welch/WMFE FM Project Briefing – Aug. 9
- Staff/The Daily Commercial – Connector Road will be closed this weekend for Wekiva Parkway construction – Aug. 9
- Scott Judy/Engineering News-Record – How Florida Infrastructure Investment is Forging a Fruitful Future – Aug. 15
- Eryka Washington/WKMG Ch. 6 – Traffic light to be put up at dangerous intersection in Apopka – Aug. 19
- Livi Stanford/The Daily Commercial – Officials say they lack a revenue source for road repairs, projects – Aug. 20
- Ryan Gillespie/Orlando Sentinel – 4 compete to take over for Stivender on School Board – Aug. 23
- Reggie Connell/The Apopka Voice – City Council agrees to six additional firefighters – Aug 24
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – 429 lane closures this weekend – Traffic diverted to 451 – Aug. 25
- John Peery/The Apopka Chief-Planter – SR 429 lane closures and detour scheduled as part of the Wekiva Parkway construction – Aug. 25
- Jerry Fallstrom/Orlando Sentinel – Challenger calls for new blood on commission – Aug. 29
- BizJournals.com/Staff – Central Florida Expressway Authority to take over Osceola toll road work – Sept. 8



- BusinessWire/Staff – Fitch Rates Central Florida Expressway Authority’s Senior Revenue Bonds ‘A’; Outlook Stable – Sept. 9
- Scott Judy/Engineering News-Record – Builders Sweat Details of Creating a Parkway – Sept. 15
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Kelly Park Road closed tonight – Sept. 16
- Anjali Fluker/Orlando Business Journal – Breaking: Noranne Downs to retire as local FDOT chief – Sept. 22
- John Peery/The Apopka Chief-Planter – Yothers Road will be closed for several months as a part of Wekiva Parkway work – Sept. 23
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Yothers Road to be closed for Wekiva Parkway construction – Sept. 23
- Staff/The Apopka Chief-Planter – Wekiva Parkway will cause traffic stoppages on Ponkan – Sept. 23
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Kelly Park Road detour for bridge work is scheduled as part of Wekiva Parkway construction – Sept. 28
- Reggie Connell/The Apopka Voice – City Approves millage rate, 3-2, Budget 4-1 – Sept. 30
- Jason Ruitter/The Orlando Sentinel – Poinciana Parkway gets off to a strong start – Oct. 3
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Hurricane Matthew forces SR 429 interchange detour – Oct. 6
- Livi Stanford/The Daily Commercial – Lake County’s wages and jobs soaring, officials say – Oct. 12
- Staff/The Apopka Chief-Planter – Wekiva Parkway construction is prompting a Kelly Park Road detour – Oct. 14
- Staff/WKMG Ch. 6 – Road closures set to begin for Wekiva Parkway expansion – Oct. 18
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Ondich Road detour begins tomorrow – Oct. 23
- Dale Fenwick/The Apopka Voice – Kelly Park Road to be closed for 3 nights – Oct. 29
- Ryan Harper/CFN 13 – Wekiva Parkway project tour – Nov. 2
- Staff Report / WorldHighways.com – Work carried out on Florida route – Nov. 14
- Teresa Burney/The Orlando Sentinel – Tavares, Leesburg targeted for gigantic development projects - Nov. 15
- Lauren Ritchie/The Orlando Sentinel – ‘Hard man with soft soul,’ a landholder and philanthropist, leave Lake a better place – Nov. 17
- Orlando Sentinel / Mount Dora gears up for development thanks to Wekiva Parkway – Nov. 19
- Editorial Staff/ The Apopka Chief-Planter – Parts of Ondich Road to close for Wekiva Parkway construction - Nov. 28
- Reggie Connell/The Apopka Voice – Updated Traffic Alert: Road Closure – Nov. 29



Workers erect one of the baseload steel beams at the Wekiva Parkway's interchange at Kelly Road.



## V. Public Meetings

The agencies in 2016 held an **Industry Forum**, as well as **one public meeting and one public hearing** for four project sections in Lake, Orange and Seminole counties. The gatherings drew more than **600 attendees**. All state and other requirements were met with regard to noticing the meetings, including the Florida Administrative Register (FAR) and legal advertisements and the notices mailed to property owners, officials' notifications, media releases and the like.

Meeting notification fliers were also distributed to businesses and others on the relevant sections. Feedback at the meetings was largely positive, with questions increasingly related to when the parkway would be open and public access points. Meetings were attended by state and local officials, property owners, environmentalists, realtors, developers, attorneys and other interested parties.

### 1) Wekiva Parkway Industry Forum – January 26, 2016



As design on various sections wrapped up, the Department on January 26, 2016 hosted an Industry Forum for its sections of the Wekiva Parkway. The event provided scope, schedule information and other project details to firms interested in participating in building the FDOT sections in Lake and Seminole counties. The forum also included a Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE)

session and an overall project Q&A session.

Communications and project staff welcomed nearly 300 attendees for the event held at the Sanborn Event and Activity Center in Deland. The event invitations were sent to more than 3,000 contractor, CEI, design and other firms, as well as provided to transportation associations, publications and the mainstream media. The event also provided an opportunity for prime consultants, DBE firms and others to network and explore teaming opportunities to pursue the various project sections.



Highlights and interviews from the forum were posted on social media and compiled into short- and long-length videos for the project website and social media pages.

## 2) FDOT Section 8 Design Update Public Meeting – March 29, 2016

More than 140 people attended the Wekiva Parkway Section 8 preliminary design update meeting. This project will include almost three miles of limited access toll road from Orange Boulevard to Rinehart Road, and the new Wekiva Parkway interchange at I-4 that will connect with State Road 417. Among those in attendance were Seminole County Commissioner Lee Constantine, Acting Public Works Director Jean Jreij, Assistant County Engineer Shad Smith, and Bill Wharton and Tony Matthews of Seminole County Planning. Three comment forms were submitted.



## 3) FDOT Sections 3A, 3B & 5 Access Management Public Hearing – July 12, 2016



More than 200 people attended Wekiva Parkway Sections 3A, 3B & 5 Access Management Public Hearing. Nineteen comment forms were submitted, four people spoke during the public testimony period and one person testified to the court reporter. Several others completed speaker cards, but did not ultimately testify. Among the officials attending the public hearing were Mount Dora City Council members Cal Rolfson



and Ed Rowlett, and former Mayor Jim Yatsuk; Executive Director TJ Fish of the Lake Sumter MPO; Lake County Public Works Director Jim Stivender; and Morgan Hatfield from the office of State Rep. Jennifer Sullivan, District 31.

There were a number of repeated concerns, including noise and proximity issues, impacts to quality of life / property values, access management (having to make U-turns), the removal of trees and impacts to wildlife, and impacts on local roads. Many other comments were positive, with folks saying the project is needed and will help them in their travels greatly.

## VI. Environmental Coordination

CFX and FDOT this year continued to do their due diligence in coordinating with state and federal environmental agencies regarding permitting and other project matters. Various environmental permits were received for various sections from several agencies in 2016.



Coordination with environmental agencies also included close communications on project debris burning and other construction activities, as well as addressing questions from agency personnel. FDOT also communicated with environmental advocates during regular Wekiva River System Management Advisory Committee meetings.

CFX and FDOT continued to adhere to the Parkway and Protection Act requirements to brief the roughly 30 members and staff on the **Wekiva River Basin Commission** periodically on project progress and other matters. Those presentations in 2016 occurred **March 16, Aug. 15 and Dec. 5**.

Attendance at the meetings was in addition to communications that also occurred throughout the year with individual WRBC members as questions or other matters arose.

## VII. Community Presentations

The agencies' commitment to keeping accurate parkway information "front of mind" is seen clearly in the continuing effort to take project information directly to community members. The consultant public involvement coordinator and other project staff in 2016 presented project updates to about **30** homeowners associations, business groups, cultural, civic and fraternal organizations, trade associations, directly educating and engaging more than **800 community members** in this manner.



The presentations also serve as an excellent opportunity to reinforce the availability of project information resources, including the website, where a number of the presentations have been posted. The communications team continues to proactively schedule presentations with community groups. The following is a sampling of meetings we participated in for 2016:

### Neighborhoods, HOA's & Businesses

- Twelve Oaks RV Resort (Owners) – Jan. 7
- Lakes of Mount Dora – Jan. 11
- Bella Foresta Field Meeting – Jan. 18
- Country Club of Mount Dora HOA – Jan. 28
- Rock Springs Ridge HOA – April 5
- Zellwood Station HOA – May 4
- Estates at Wekiva Park HOA field meeting – May 9
- Tall Trees HOA – June 9
- Lake Forest HOA Board Meeting – June 13
- Sylvan Lake Reserve HOA Board members – July 25
- Estates at Wekiva Park HOA – Oct. 24
- Waterman Village HOA – Nov. 8
- Rivercrest HOA – Nov. 9
- Shadow Lake Woods Subdivision – Nov. 22





### Community Group Presentations

- Apopka Women’s Club – March 15
- Apopka Chamber of Commerce – Sept. 7
- Central Florida Transportation Planning Group (CFTPG) – May 5
- Lake Forest Men’s Club – Aug. 16
- Apopka Rotary Club – Aug. 18
- Apopka Chamber of Commerce – Sept. 7



## VIII. Youth Outreach & Education Program

The agencies in 2016 took the Wekiva Parkway Youth Outreach and Education Program to a new level. The goal has been to educate young people on the unique environmental protections encompassed in the project; encourage youngsters to view major transportation projects as potential, future career opportunities; enlist youngsters to become advocates for the project and its unique environmental character, and share that information with their parents and other adults; and to motivate students to encourage their families to stay safe in work zones.

Youth outreach has included agency or community youth programs with a conservation or environmental mission, schools on or near the corridor, as well as those with engineering magnet

programs.



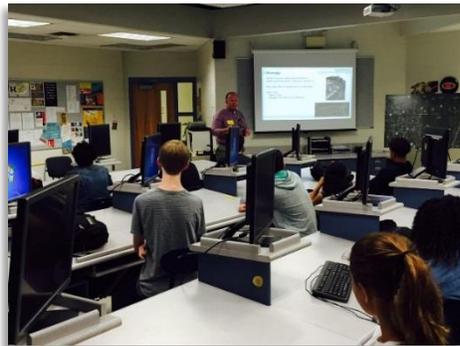
To ensure students of various ages would understand project particulars, the agencies use age-appropriate materials, including a project map, wildlife coloring sheet and a fun quiz. The map, for example, is highly simplified and highlights activities youngsters could take part in at the

state parks along the parkway corridor, as well as the protective wildlife bridges planned.

Public Involvement Coordinator Mary Brooks always seeks the advice of youth program leaders in developing talking points and multimedia presentations for the students. She also asks students at the end of each event how we could improve the materials and presentations; a number of the students' suggestions have been incorporated or helped refine program strategies.

This year agency, project and communications staff focused on school magnet engineering programs. Staff worked with teachers in engineering, construction and architectural classes to show students real-world, project examples of curriculum topics. Project and agency staff also participated in large-scale, back-to-school events. All told, we interacted with **1,337 teachers, students and their families** using this strategy.

### 1. Lyman High School Institute for Engineering, Classroom Session – April 4, 2016



CFX and project staff gave Lyman High School engineering students an inside look into what it's taking to build the Wekiva Parkway. About 40 students in several classes learned about the project's environmental significance, protections and permitting.

They got a better understanding of the scale of such a major improvement, and were able to review project plans and other design details from sections under construction in Apopka.



### 2. Lyman High School Institute for Engineering, Section 1 Tour – April 7, 2016



Many of the same students got to see the materials and equipment for each of their classroom topics live and in person. The tour started with students getting hard hats and vests as they disembarked the bus, and then a safety briefing by Superior Construction at the Kelly Park Road bridge site.

Superior had cordoned off a large, safe area where the students could view the work but remained out of active traffic areas.

Dewberry provided the students with a survey demo, including letting the kids look through the equipment. They also took them on top of the overpass where they could stand next to a large, inactive crane and pile cutoffs, and see a long view of the project in both directions.



The students also received briefings on each of the project sections using aerial exhibits and plan sheets in the respective CEI – construction engineering and inspection – firms' trailers.



### 3. Mount Dora Back to School Youth Rally – July 30, 2016



Nearly 300 parents and students stopped by the Wekiva Parkway booth at the annual Back to School Youth Rally in Mount Dora on July 30, 2016. Students received a variety of school supplies from pens, pencils, rulers and E-PASS lanyards, along with some toys such as small SunPass basketball balls, plastic hard hats and squeeze

cars for the younger children.

Parents were interested to learn about the latest schedule and other details for the project.



#### 4. Seminole Town Center 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Back to School Expo – August 6, 2016



Public Involvement Coordinator Mary Brooks along with the Central Florida Expressway Authority's Brian Hutchings worked the Wekiva Parkway booth at the annual Back to School Expo at the Seminole Town Center Mall in Sanford. Around 740 parents and students stopping by to pick up back-to-school supplies for the upcoming fall semester also got to hear the latest updates on the project.

Many parents were excited to have such ready access to project schedules and other details, and were eager to see the parkway come to the Sanford area.

#### 5. SCPS Annual Teach-In – Hamilton Elementary School – November 15, 2016



About 80 fourth graders and teachers at Hamilton Elementary School in Sanford got to learn about how the Wekiva Parkway will finish the beltway and help protect wildlife. Everyone was recruited as a "safety ambassador," taking an oath to help keep their families and friends safe when passing through work zones. "This was excellent!" said one fourth grader.

#### 6. OCPS Annual Teach-In – Zellwood Elementary and Apopka Elementary Schools – November 16, 2016

Just off the CFX project corridor, about 190 students at Apopka and Zellwood Elementary schools got to learn about the Wekiva Parkway's wildlife protections, emphasis on safety and careers in transportation as part of the annual Teach In program.

Kids really enjoyed becoming "safety ambassadors" and getting coloring sheets showing the wildlife being protected along the corridor.



## IX. Special Events

The agencies in 2016 continued to increase the penetration of the Wekiva Parkway's key messages by taking part in several community special events. The events provide opportunities to raise awareness of the Wekiva Parkway amongst a broader audience and help to build positive relationships with the communities hosting the events, as well as with individual members of the public.

As a cost-effective measure, several existing community events along the corridor were selected to help distribute information and address questions regarding the project. The following are special events at which staff represented the project in 2016:



### East Lake Heritage Festival at the Lake County Library Branch in Sorrento – May 21, 2016

About 110 people stopped by the project booth at the East Lake Heritage Festival in Sorrento. People were excited about the opening schedules for the various sections, and to learn more about E-PASS and SunPass.

## Mount Dora Police Department's National Night Out – Oct. 4, 2016

About 270 people stopped by the Wekiva Parkway booth at the Mount Dora National Night Out event, sponsored by the City Police Department. Many people thanked us for providing an update on the project, and wanted to know when the sections near them would open.



## Mount Dora Craft Festival – Oct. 22-23

The Wekiva Parkway booth at the Mount Dora Craft Festival drew 664 festivalgoers. Many were happy to get easy access to project schedules and other information. Lots of folks were excited about soon being able to quickly get between Mount Dora and their jobs, family members and other Central Florida destinations. Several said they couldn't wait to have access to the parkway.

## X. Project Materials

Providing accurate, up-to-date and easily accessible project information – in a variety of formats – is essential to helping the community understand and support major transportation initiatives such as the Wekiva Parkway. The public involvement coordinator consistently updated multimedia presentations, project fact sheets, map exhibits, FAQ's and talking points to highlight project progress and benefits.

Project materials were displayed and/or distributed at public meetings, community presentations and special events, as well as were posted on the project website and social media pages.

With the opening of Sections 4A and 4B, the communications team worked with the Department and Turnpike to develop a flier detailing toll costs on those sections, including information about SunPass and Toll by Plate (*photo, left*).

Two videos, just under two minutes and five minutes, were produced from the FDOT Industry Forum (*photo, below right*). The videos, which give a sense of the heavy forum attendance and excitement and anticipation surrounding the project, were posted on the project Facebook page and [wekivaparkway.com](http://wekivaparkway.com) website. Featured are clips from forum speakers, shots of the exhibits and interviews with agency staff and attendees.

The project fact sheet was updated several times as new schedule and other details became available. The communications team also updated the popular bear fans, branded water bottles, project business cards, as well as began developing other promotional items.



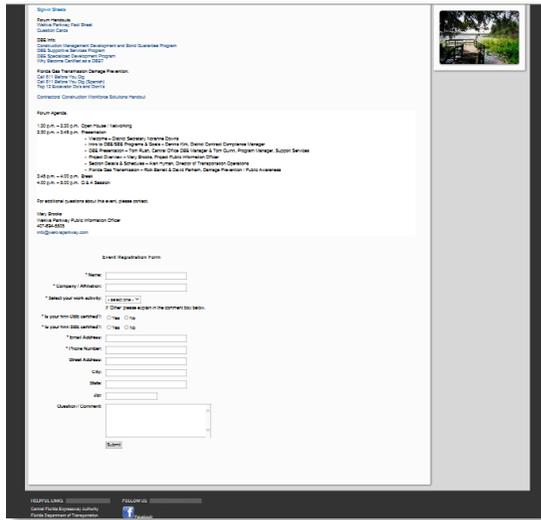
## XI. Website

The project website [www.wekivaparkway.com](http://www.wekivaparkway.com) in 2016 reached a milestone of **153,643 visits** by **115,983 visitors** since the site launched on June 15, 2012. The site continues to be an invaluable resource for community members interested in the details, benefits and progress of the project.



The communications team worked with the Department in advance of the FDOT Industry Forum to develop and launch an event web page. The page included a registration portal, with the ability to collect and sort the attendees by the type of firm and whether they were minority- or small-business certified.

Following the January 20, 2016 event, the forum video, presentation, exhibits, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and other documents were posted on the site for easy access.



The agencies greatly expanded the available resources on the site in 2016. The homepage now hosts a .KMZ file version of the overall corridor map. Monthly traffic and revenue reports from Section 4 are easily accessible on that page. As design wrapped up on several sections, updated plans, aerial exhibits and other documents were posted. The Section 6 web page provided ready information and crucial links for the Request for Proposal for firms hoping to help build that project.

The site's Visual Gallery includes videos and aerial photos from various CFX sections under construction. The communications team also continued to post all materials from public meetings, as well as many of the community presentations that were made this year. The interactive project map on the home page continues to allow visitors to quickly get to the project section of interest.

The site's Visual Gallery includes videos and aerial photos from various CFX sections under

Monthly web traffic reports were provided to the agencies and discussed at each joint agency public involvement coordination meeting. The data and discussions were used to continue to improve the site's usefulness and traffic.

## XII. Social Media



The agencies dramatically increased social media posts and followings in 2016. The Facebook and Twitter pages were brimming with construction alerts, videos and photos; community and special event recaps and photos; Youth Outreach Program engagements; public meeting notices; the latest project graphics, reports, plan updates – and more.

As of December 2016, there were **481 Facebook** and **339 Twitter** followers. Compared to the end of 2015, that's an increase of 228 followers – or up **nearly 111 percent – for Facebook**, and 68 more followers, or **25 percent, for Twitter**.

Expanding the project's social media reach will continue to be a priority in 2017, particularly as FDOT begins building four more sections.

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