



# THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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## Recycling plan for greener city

From biodegradable water bottles on the City Commission table Monday night to expanded cardboard collection, recycling containers in our historic district, and a drop-off recycling center, city commissioners hailed steps outlined for a greener city Monday.

"This is a really big start," incoming City Manager John Regan told commissioners as Public Works Director Martha Graham outlined steps to boost our city's recycling rate from 12.1% to 16% with increased cardboard collection alone.

The plan calls for budgeting \$32,000, including \$10,000 for collecting cardboard left by cooperating businesses at downtown compactors, \$15,000 for recycling containers in the historic district, \$200 to create a drop-off site at the solid waste plant on the south end of Riberia Street, and \$5,000 for public education.

A bigger number is \$170,000 for bottle and can recycling among commercial businesses. Graham said that could be done with a \$7 a month business fee, which Commissioner Leanna Freeman, a former downtown business owner, said "is not unreasonable."



## Carrera Street location not ready for Amtrak bid

Our city's favored Carrera Street location for an Amtrak passenger rail station can't be ready in time to meet requirements for "shovel-ready" stimulus funding, so an alternate site at US 1 and San Marco Avenue is likely to be submitted with a federal funding application due by month's end, Planning and Building Director Mark Knight says.

Evaluations by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Amtrak, Florida East Coast Railway (FEC), and other partner entities will be presented in a follow-up workshop here tomorrow in a public workshop at 11 a.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. Eight cities from Jacksonville to Miami are coordinating a funding application for passenger rail service.

Knight told city commissioners Monday the Carrera Street location will require an extensive environmental and development permitting process, while the San Marco/US



## ***Juneteenth Festival***

Food, contests, giveaways, and live local entertainment are on tap Saturday in this year's Juneteenth Festival, with an added feature - introduction of winners of the First Miss Juneteenth Pageant.

Festivities begin at 10 a.m. with a parade from Chase Field to Collier Blocker Puryear Park at West King Street and Holmes Boulevard. Miss Juneteenth Pageant winners include Junior Princess, Princess, Junior Miss, and Miss Juneteenth.

Far more than a beauty pageant, the 25 young women began preparations in March with educational workshops, community service activities, fundraising, pageant preparation, and mentoring. [Linda Murray](#) has details.

**Photo: Ribs on the grill  
for 2009 Festival, by Shirley  
Galvin Williams**

1 site, originally built by FEC as a rail station, can meet the application deadline.

The San Marco/US 1 site could be temporary, with the favored Carrera Street site being developed later as a permanent station, Knight said. Also in the mix, the Northeast Florida Regional Airport, whose officials envision a future intermodal complex.

Details on the Amtrak effort [here](#).

## ***Green for 450th***

The green of biodegradable water bottles labeled for our 450<sup>th</sup> commemoration, and of investment by strategic partners for the commemoration, both won City Commission approval Monday.

Incoming City Manager John Regan said details are being worked out to label the plastic bottles of the 450<sup>th</sup>, while local lighting contractor Capri Industries "is our first strategic partner for the 450<sup>th</sup>" with its offer to contribute installation of undercarriage lighting on the Bridge of Lions.

"This is a significant investment for Capri," Regan said. "That's about a \$400,000 project."

Commissioner Don Crichlow, who initially proposed the lighting plan, said, "Hopefully this will inspire other businesses to become strategic partners."

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## **Contract approved for city attorney**

City commissioners Monday approved a five-year renewable contract with City Attorney Ron Brown, which Brown told commissioners "helps clarify who works for whom."

The contract follows a similar pact with incoming City Manager John Regan, who assumes office July 1.

Brown noted, "There's been confusion in the minds of some that the city attorney works for the city manager. But both positions, as well as city clerk, are hired by and work for the City Commission."

Regan added, "I think it's important to have contracts for city manager and city attorney to distinguish their roles."

## ***Commission okays project funding***

Commissioners Monday approved \$174,600 for Landmark Engineering of Jacksonville to engineer an estimated \$679,000 in pedestrian improvements around the Castillo, \$150,000 for Florida Power and Light to begin utility pole relocations and undergrounding of power lines for the Riberia Street improvement project, and \$10,000 to landscape the former car wash site at US 1 and King Street.

## ***Other commission actions***

Commissioners also moved to public hearing June 28 an ordinance making permanent extended alcohol sales hours from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m., and accepted Commissioner Don Crichlow's offer to serve on the Guana Tolomato, Matanzas Estuarine Research Reserve's Management Advisory Group.

## ***What's for supper? Pesolo, Efo, Gazpacho***

From the native Timucuans, *Pesolo*, a breadmade from coonti, acorn, or corn meal, and *Gacha*, a succotashof maize with ashes, squash, and kidney beans.

From the Africans, *Nyami*, the native African culinary equivalent of our potato, and *Efo*, greens eaten throughout Africa.

From the Spanish, *Fabada*, a bean-and-pork stew traditionally the "national" dish of Asturias, the home region of Pedro Menendez and most of St. Augustine's original settlers, and *Gazpacho*, a traditional "liquid salad" of Spanish farmers, popular as a way to both cool off during the summer. St. Augustine Founder Pedro Menendez specifically mentions Gazpacho in his correspondence.

All will be presented for sampling Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.in our Colonial Spanish Quarter at the First Annual Heritage Food Festival, organized by Los Compañeros de la Cocina (The Companions of the Kitchen) and prepared by Robb's Catering.

The festival is free, with a small charge for samples. More information, email [Los Companeros](mailto:LosCompaneros) or call 877-FLA-HIST (1-877-352-4478).



Gazpacho cold salad  
a Pedro Menendez favorite

## ***Tour four centuries of black history***

More than four centuries of African American history in our nation's oldest city will be narrated by tour guide Howard (Xhabbo) Lewis Saturday in a two-hour red train tour departing from Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum at 10 a.m.

Pedro Menendez, Ft. Mose, the Plaza Market, Dr. Alexander Darnes, the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincolnville, and the Civil Rights Era are among the features in the Romanza-sponsored tour. Tickets and information at [blackhistorytour@yahoo.com](mailto:blackhistorytour@yahoo.com) or (904)501-6878.

## ***History's Highlights***

# **Juneteenth - 2 ½ years after Emancipation**

One in a series of historic features as we prepare for our commemorations, drawn from research by George Gardner.

*5 years, 2 months, and 25 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary*

*"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer."*



It was General Order Number 3, one of Major General Gordon Granger's first orders of business June 19, 1865, as Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free.

It was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which was read in Union-held St. Augustine in January, 1863. At the time it had little impact on the Texans; there were few Union troops to enforce it. Now, with the surrender of General Lee in April of 1865, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome resistance.

That landing and reading of General Order Number 3 would become *Juneteenth* - the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States.

The reactions to this profound news ranged from pure shock to immediate jubilation. While many lingered to learn of this new plantation relationship, others left, attesting to the varying conditions on the plantations and the realization of freedom.

The celebration of June 19<sup>th</sup> was coined Juneteenth and grew with more participation, a time for reassuring each other, for praying and for gathering remaining family members. Juneteenth continued to be highly revered in Texas decades later, with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on this date.

*Compiled from the Juneteenth [website](#)*

The St. Augustine Report is published by the Department of Public Affairs of the City of St. Augustine each Tuesday and on Fridays previewing City Commission meetings. The Report is written and distributed by George Gardner, former St. Augustine Mayor (2002-2006) and Commissioner (2006-2008) and a longtime newspaper reporter and editor. Contact The Report at [gardner@aug.com](mailto:gardner@aug.com)

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