



# THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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## **City wins softer recommendation on land for Castillo visitor center**

A state advisory panel will support our city's request to transfer state lands here, necessary for a Castillo Orientation Center in our Colonial Spanish Quarter, but will leave it to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Governor and Cabinet) to decide whether our city must replace the land or pay its \$588,000 value.

City Manager John Regan won the state Acquisition and Restoration Council's softer recommendation in Tallahassee Thursday. The panel of state agencies makes recommendations on the use of state-owned land.

Our city wants to package the parcel with city-owned land to transfer to the National Park Service (NPS) for the Castillo center.

Next hurdles: September 8, when aides to the Internal Improvement Trust Fund meet, then September 14, when the Cabinet meets to make its decision.

Regan plans to attend both sessions.

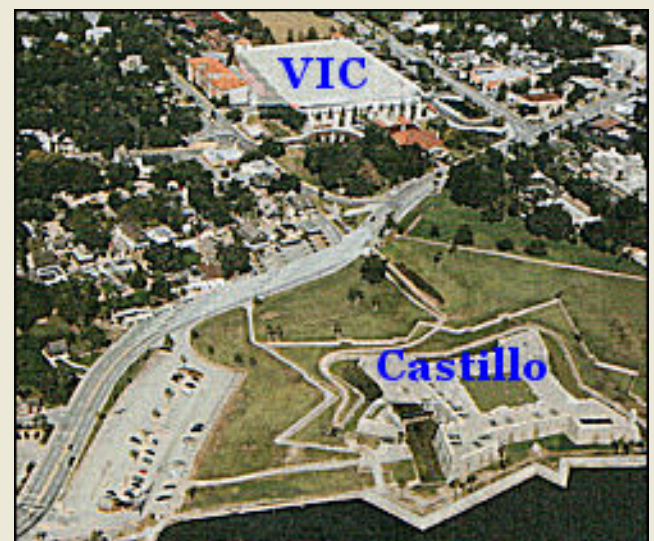
## **How can we improve Castillo/city connection?**

St. Augustine has many unique features, but perhaps the most unique is having its major historic asset - the Castillo de San Marcos - separated from our city by a four-lane highway.

A study funded by the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks grant program aims to improve the connection, and a major part of that study is input from visitors and residents on how.

A brief survey is available at our Visitors Information Center and on our city [website](#) for you to help design a better connection.

The Transit in Parks grant program was authorized by Congress to enhance the protection of national parks and federal lands, including easy access. With our Visitor Center, Colonial Spanish Quarter, and all our other historic assets across a four-lane highway, adjustments are needed.





## Remembering the fallen

It ended not in victory, but in a procession to bury all the remains that could be found of the 1,468 US military casualties of the Florida Indian Wars.

After seven years of battle in the Second Seminole War (1835-1842), the order came down that "hostilities with the Indians within this territory have ceased."

The West Point Society of North Florida on Saturday honored the Seminole and Miccosukee Indians, U.S. Army Soldiers and West Point graduates who perished in the conflict.

It was the third annual ceremony at our National Cemetery, arguably the first national cemetery, established with those burials 21 years before President Abraham Lincoln dedicated the Gettysburg site in 1863.

*Photo: US Army Command Historian Greg Moore describes ceremonies as Harry Metz stands by military standards in period uniform*

## City gateway to sunshine

Florida's Sunshine Law assures our access to public documents and meetings, and our city wants your input on how its efforts can be improved.

A new email address, [sunshine@citystaug.com](mailto:sunshine@citystaug.com), is your gateway to suggestions on city performance.

Of particular interest are how the city's web site can better serve community needs and how the city might make its records and meetings more accessible. Current city policies and procedures are being reviewed as well.

[sunshine @ citystaug.com](mailto:sunshine@citystaug.com)

The city's website is the main source for government procedures, carrying agendas and minutes from every meeting for the past eight years of the City Commission, Planning and Zoning Board (PZB), Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) and many other bodies within city government, as well as contact information for officials, rosters of members of the many city boards, special reports, and requests for bids on city projects.

There's always room for improvement, and your comments to [sunshine@citystaug.com](mailto:sunshine@citystaug.com) can help.

## Election 2010

# Primary voting

Avoid the lines primary election day August 24 with early voting, continuing through Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at [six locations](#). Bring a current and valid photo and signature ID with you, or you can vote on a provisional ballot, meaning your voter eligibility will be checked before validating your ballot.

Primaries reduce the number of candidates for an office in the same party to one for the November 2 general election. You'll be voting for candidates in your registered party. The two county commission races have only Republican candidates, so they'll be on all ballots and the winners elected in the primary



In addition to federal, state and county offices, one City Commission seat will be on the primary ballot. Incumbent Nancy Sikes-Kline will face Chuck Hennessey and Dutch Register. The top two will go on to the November ballot, unless one wins more than 50 percent of the primary vote to win election to the city seat.

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# San Sebastian Bridge replacement planned



Plans for a \$29 million, two-year project to replace the San Sebastian River Bridge on US 1, just south of our city fire station, begin with a public workshop August 30 from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the St. Johns County Public Library.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) anticipates a construction start in December 2011, with completion in December 2013.

The workshop is a stop-by-any-time affair, with project team members on hand to discuss construction plans and answer questions.

# St. Augustine's 445th weekend

Three days of activity will commemorate our city's 445<sup>th</sup> birthday Thursday, September 2 through Saturday, September 5.

Festivities begin Thursday with a city birthday cake cutting before the 7 p.m. Concert in the Plaza, continue Friday with interpretations of the earliest occupants of these lands, the indigenous peoples, at the Fountain of Youth, and wrap up Saturday with Founder's Day ceremonies at the Mission of Nombre de Dios at 10 a. m., followed by a procession to move Pedro Menendez' casket to the new Mission Museum, the museum grand opening ceremonies, and finally a 16th century cooking contest and feast at the Fountain of Youth. Complete details on our city [website](#).



The weekend of activities falls between the two significant dates in our founding - August 28, 1565, when Founder Pedro Menendez first sighted land off Canaveral and, being the feast day of St. Augustine of Hippo, determined to name his first settlement St. Augustine, and September 8, 1565, when Menendez came ashore to claim these lands for Spain

## History's Highlights

### Menendez'Asiento with King Phillip II

As St. Augustine's 445<sup>th</sup> birthday approaches, this is the first of four accounts of our founding period, including Pedro Menendez' contract with Spain's King Phillip II, the founding voyage, the battle with the French, and the founding.

### 5 years and 23 days to St. Augustine's 450th anniversary

"The 1565 Spanish attempt to conquer Florida was not at first intended to be a largely military expedition," Historian Eugene Lyon writes in *The Florida Mutineers, 1566-67*. "Although it was known in Spain that Frenchmen had established Port Royal, in present South Carolina, in 1562, it was understood that their colony had failed.

"When Philip II approved the contract of March 20, 1565, with Pedro Menendez de Aviles, the newly-created Adelantado was required to build two cities, transport one hundred





Menendez

settlers, and bring four hundred armed men to protect the whole.

"When belated news of Rene de Laudonnière's Fort Caroline (near today's Jacksonville) reached Spain, the King agreed to add three hundred soldiers of his own to Menéndez' force. As further news reached Spain of the reinforcement which Jean Ribault was planning for French Florida, Philip approved a larger Royal expedition . . ."

While the expedition had become largely military, Menendez had to prepare as well for building those cities.

"Many of Menendez' men were craftsmen, 117 were soldier-farmers, and the holds of his ships carried settlement needs ranging from six tons of bulk iron, a half-ton of steel, 200 fishnets, and shoemaking supplies, to 12,000

sheets of paper for his Escribano Público - a Notary Public.



Philip II

His leadership ranks were filled with trusted" Asturian or at least north-of-Spain noblemen who were tied by blood, marriage or close friendship to himself. By this stiffening, Menendez hoped to insure loyalty and discipline and overcome the disadvantages of his heterogeneous soldiery, in which there were many raw troops."

Thus the adventure began, to drive out the French and establish a colony that survives to this day - an adventure made successful through the wit and daring of Spain's most renowned seaman of his day, Pedro Menendez.

*Next: The voyage*

**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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