



# INSIGHT

INTO YOUR CITY GOVERNMENT

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City of St. Augustine  
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[www.staugustinegovernment.com](http://www.staugustinegovernment.com)

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency	911
Fire/Non-Emergency	825.1098
Police/Non-Emergency	825.1070
Water Bills/Customer Service	825.1037
Utility Dept/After Hours	825.1044
Planning/Building	825.1065
Public Works	825.1040
City Clerk	825.1007

## Updates

### Bridge of Lions

The restored Bridge of Lions is anticipated to open before the end of the month however construction work will continue in the area of the bridge. Further, after opening, the temporary bridge will be removed which will take approximately one year. For up to date information go to [www.fdotbridgeoflions.com](http://www.fdotbridgeoflions.com).

### COSA Web site: find it here

Like most government sites, the City of St. Augustine Web site is organized according to 'who's doing the asking'— is the person a resident, business or visitor or anyone of the three who just wants a quick answer to a quick question?

Useful information is readily available on the front page for the weekly city calendar, upcoming meetings, Planning and Building and Public Works forms and documents and the city code. These are just a few of the titles for information located on the front page for a quick look.

Updated regularly, the site offers readers timely stories of interest. If looking for something specific, the search engine is particularly helpful to locate the information desired.

For more information on the Web site contact Cathy DuPont at 825.1053.

## CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE • THE NATION'S OLDEST CITY

### [www.digstaug.org](http://www.digstaug.org) offers unique view of local digs

Few cities in the nation can rival St. Augustine's archeological heritage and now there is a way to experience the excitement of discovery without getting dirty.

The City of St. Augustine has launched a new Web site featuring the extensive work and research literally uncovered by the city's Archaeological Division due to the city's archaeological preservation ordinance.

The city adopted the ordinance in 1987 and over the past 22 years more than 600 locations within the city limits have been investigated. The Web site's address is [www.digstaug.org](http://www.digstaug.org).

Destined to become a valuable tool for historians in general and archeologists in particular, it provides a greater understanding of archaeology as a discipline. The Web site was developed with the aid of

a grant from the St. Augustine Research Institute (SARI) to the City of St. Augustine's Archaeology Division.



17th Century St. Onofrius Medallion, Patron Saint of Weavers and Jurists

The goals of SARI, which is a collaboration between Flagler College and the University of Florida, are to encourage, coordinate and disseminate active academic research related to the history, archaeology, and historical landscape and structures of St. Augustine. Carl Halbirt, the city's archeologist, stated that SARI saw

value in such a Web site resource.

The Web site has information on the methods used by the division to investigate a site location, how and where a dig might begin, questions owners or contractors might have if an archeological investigation is required, location of archaeological zones in the city limits and detailed information about St. Augustine's unique archaeological heritage. Images of the artifacts found throughout the city are highlighted along with their description.

"With the upcoming 450th anniversary it's great to have this Web site available for the public and educators to learn about the City's archaeological heritage," said Mark Knight, Director of the City of St. Augustine's Planning and Building Department.

The Archeological Division is part of the Planning and Building Department of the City of St. Augustine.

### St. Augustine's 450th offers two more opportunities to learn

Florida will celebrate two major historical milestones in the next few years with the 500th anniversary of the landing of Juan Ponce de Leon in 2013 and two years later, the 450th anniversary of the founding of St. Augustine, the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the United States. These two anniversaries will bracket a planned three-year linear event, the St. Augustine 450th Commemoration, an initiative created by an act of the United States Congress and executed by President Barack Obama just shy of a year ago.

The Commemoration will be directed by a Federal Commission appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, as well as a Steering Committee formed of regional agency and organizational leaders. The event will commemorate the important role of the 450th Commemoration of St. Augustine.

In order to prepare local residents for the event, the City of St. Augustine began the *Discover First America—Legacies of La Florida* series late last year. Two presentations are left in the series; April 13, Palaces in Paradise: Flagler's Age of Opulence

and May 18, Road to Freedom: African-Americans in Florida.

Both presentations will be in Flagler Auditorium, 14 Grand St. at 7 p.m.

Sponsors of the series are Florida Trust for Historic Preservation; Historic St. Augustine Research Institute; Florida Humanities Council; Flagler College; *The St. Augustine Record*; the Tourist Development Council; and the City of St. Augustine.

For more information contact 450th Commemoration Office at 209.4226.



## 'Christmas berry' invasive species

Charlene Putz, Supervisor of the Parks Division, cautions home and business owner's that the Brazilian pepper tree is an invasive species that has been identified in the City of St. Augustine and should be eradicated by property owners.



Thought to have been brought into Florida in the mid-1840's as a cultivated ornamental, the plant is considered by the Florida

Department of Environment Protection to reduce the quality of native communities and has been on their invasive species list for more than a decade.

Sometimes referred to as Christmas berry or Florida holly, the bush which can grow into a tree, is closely related to poison ivy and oak and can cause skin and eye irritation. The plant should not be confused with the East Palatka holly, a popular landscape tree which also has red berries. After inspection of your bush or tree, if you are unable to determine the species, contact an arborist.

The Brazilian pepper which was previously found only in central and south Florida, has caused ecosystem damage on more than 700,000 acres of previously natural plant communities such as mangroves and hammocks.

In order to eradicate the plant, removal of the entire root system is necessary.

For more information and a brochure on Florida's invasive plants, go to [www.sjrwmd.com](http://www.sjrwmd.com) and search for 'invasive Brazilian pepper.'

## Saving money in Public Works due to innovative ideas from staff

All city departments are continually searching for ways to save taxpayer's money and the Department of Public Works is in the forefront of that challenge.

Public Works is responsible for the planning, management and administration of the city's public works infrastructure and services. This includes utilities, roadways, stormwater, wastewater, solid waste, residential recycling collection, parks, engineering and development review.

To fully comply with the American With Disabilities Act (ADA), last year the city entered into an agreement with Precision Sidewalk Safety (PSS) for turning city sidewalks into smooth and level walking areas making all city sidewalks 'no trip zones.'

The PSS method is patented, more effective and less expensive than conventional methods used by most governmental entities.

The company has a patented

saw cutting technology, which reaches completely to both edges of the connecting sidewalk areas and produces a great looking result without the inconvenience of closing and breaking up and replacing portions of the sidewalks.

The savings is estimated to be approximately one-third of the cost of the conventional method of adherence to the ADA.

In November of last year the city had PSS begin their work in the area of Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind in north city. This month the company will be completing the sidewalks in all the Historic Preservation areas of the city from Bridge St. north to Orange St. and Cordova St. east to Avenida Menendez.

In the area of utilities, it was evident that an upgrade in the aeration system was necessary at the city wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The equipment used to treat the incoming wastewater was needing repairs

from too frequent mechanical failures.

Faced with the decision of replacing the existing system with the same system or replacing it with a more efficient system, city staff at the WWTP found a way to supplement the current system in use and still be able to meet permit requirements without taking any of the necessary treatment out of service.

The modular design allowed staff to add units to extend the lifetime of the current system and due to staff experience at the plant, they were able to remove portions of the old system and assemble the new system therefore saving taxpayers upward to six figures.

Martha Graham, P. E., Director of Public Works stated that "city staff is not only innovative by finding cost saving solutions, they took it another step by using their talent and ability to perform the work 'in house' themselves, at a savings to the public."

## Menendez Noche de Gala event planned

The 491st birthday of St. Augustine's founder, Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles, will be celebrated Saturday, February 27 as the Menendez Noche de Gala event.

Now in its 14th year, the Gala has earned a tradition of elegance, with fine dining and dancing for all guests participating in the memorable evening.

Portraying Menendez will be Chaz Mena, actor of stage, film and television. Mena will engage the audience who ultimately become partners in his performance.

At 5 p.m. beginning at the City Gate, Menendez and his entourage will begin a procession inspecting 'his colony.' The entourage will end at the Alcazar, home to City Hall and the Lightner Museum Grand Ballroom where the Gala will be held.

The black tie or 16th century period attire event takes place in the ballroom of the Lightner Museum where guests will be surrounded by priceless art and sculpture.

Entertainment will consist of actors, dancers, musicians and colonial artisans, all anxious to greet and mingle with Menendez on his birthday.

Cocktails will begin at 6:30 p.m. and dinner at 8 p.m. with dancing afterward to the band *The Company*.

Proceeds from the event will support local historic preservation efforts.

Attendance is limited therefore early reservations are encouraged. For more information, call the Department of Heritage Tourism at 825.5033 or visit [www.menendezgala.com](http://www.menendezgala.com).



## Notes of interest

Each Friday *News and Notes*, an email newsletter, is sent to interested residents and businesses.

Included is news of road closures, traffic interruptions and city agendas for the city commission and citizen boards. To be placed on this list, email [cdupont@citystaug.com](mailto:cdupont@citystaug.com) or call 825.1053.



Steve Wright, Solid Waste Division of the Department of Public Works, was recently named City of St. Augustine's 2009 Employee of the Year. To read more about Wright on the COSA Web site visit [www.staugustinegovernment.com/the-city/featured-stories-archive/11\\_09/EOYWright.cfm](http://www.staugustinegovernment.com/the-city/featured-stories-archive/11_09/EOYWright.cfm).



The City Marina consists of 85 slips, a 280' fuel area, two pump out facilities, a special events dock and laundry and shower facilities.

For more information visit [www.staugustinegovernment.com/visitors/municipal-marina.cfm](http://www.staugustinegovernment.com/visitors/municipal-marina.cfm).



Stormwater runoff from street drains poses the most serious problem for pollution to the city's waterways. Prevent everything but rainwater from emptying into stormwater drains.



If you have professional landscapers or tree trimmers, the contractor must remove the debris prior to leaving the site. This ordinance is for residents and business owners alike.

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