



THE ST. AUGUSTINE REPORT

Local news in our Nation's Oldest City



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City manager to retire

St. Augustine City Manager Bill Harriss will retire this summer, ending a 25-year career with our city, the last twelve years as its chief executive officer.

He'll make formal announcement to our City Commission at its regular meeting Monday.

Harriss, a graduate of the University of West Florida with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting, has focused his attention here - beginning in 1985 as financial services director - on the numbers.

"Since my first day with the city I have been involved with the numbers, the financial side of everything," he said. There is no better way to understand how something works than by understanding how it is financed."

Among highlights of his career, he notes a well planned expansion of water service, new or refurbished facilities including a fleet maintenance facility, new main fire station and financial services center, rehabilitated Visitor Information Center, and 1,200-vehicle Visitor Center Parking Facility, and "creation of a community redevelopment agency to fund the city's ongoing challenges related to traffic, (with a) dedicated funding source (that) relieves that commitment from the city's residential property owners."

The city manager is appointed by our City Commission which, for the past 25 years, has found qualified successors within our local government. Harriss said he'll urge commissioners to look here first in naming a successor.

"The challenge is unique and ongoing, but I have been very fortunate to work with a team of professionals who are not just committed to their work, but are committed to their work for St. Augustine," Harriss said.

The complete announcement is on our city [website](#).



Harriss



Cathedral Festival marks 25th year

Once again, the Great Cross at our Mission of Nombre de Dios will be framed this weekend with rides, games, food, and entertainment as the 25th annual Cathedral Festival unfolds.

Hours are Friday 5-10:30; Saturday Noon-10:30, and Sunday: Noon-9. Tickets: adults - \$5; Ages 6-16 - \$3; ages 5 & under - free, and seniors 65 & over - \$3. The Cathedral Festival supports the Cathedral Parish School Cathedral Parish Early Education Center.

Details on the festival [website](#).

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Mayor to UF president: help sunset legislation

Mayor Joe Boles is seeking the support of University of Florida President Bernie Machen in sunsetting 2007 legislation authorizing the university's takeover of management of 35 state-owned historic properties here.

In a letter to Machen, the mayor asked his support "so that we can move forward with not only the extension of our lease for a longer term, but also to allow us to move forward with gathering private, corporate, and international investment in these Historic Properties."

Our City Commission last week passed a resolution seeking the sunsetting and pursuing a 30-year lease on the properties, promising a solid business plan to generate revenue in our Colonial Spanish Quarter and public/private partnerships for an estimated \$27 million in repairs to the properties.

"As we now find ourselves four more years down the road without any funding and none likely in the foreseeable future," the mayor wrote, "it is incumbent upon our City to move forward with these Historic Properties with our own business plan, which is included in the Resolution."

Boles stressed the city wants to continue "all of our mutually beneficial academic partnerships and look forward to the continued, vital involvement of your Historic Preservation Departments."

Workshop on 450th plans

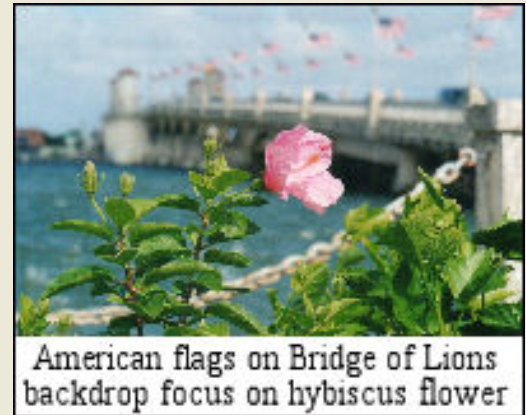
The first of expected monthly community updates on plans for our 450th Commemoration is set for Wednesday at 2 p.m. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall.

Commemoration Executive Director Dana Ste. Claire and Program Coordinator Jamie Alvarez have been herding cats in all directions since Ste. Claire's appointment in March, 2009.

In addition to establishing state, national and international connections and developing committees for more than 300 volunteers, Ste. Claire also took on direction of our city's Heritage Tourism Department in July, where he's begun implementing Colonial Spanish Quarter improvements and developing a strategic business plan for continuing management of the 34 state-owned historic properties here.

Flags on our bridge now history?

The light posts on our rehabilitated Bridge of Lions have two eyelets spaced above the lamps - perhaps for flying flags?



American flags on Bridge of Lions backdrop focus on hibiscus flower

Doesn't matter. While city commissioners decided several years ago that only government or American flags would be flown on the bridge, City Attorney Ron Brown has found court rulings that the American flag "is not content neutral."

Translation: Old Glory is classified with any other flags, so permitting it to be flown allows the flying of any other flags.

All of which is moot because the Florida Department of Transportation owns the bridge, and may not continue an agreement with our city to use the light posts. Bridge project spokes-person Laurie Sanderson says that while elements of the bridge were thoroughly researched for historic accuracy, nothing was found to explain the purpose of those eyelets on the light posts.

Lincolnvile briefed on Riberia Street project



Consulting Engineer Hall and Public Works Director Graham describe project plans

There were questions - "the flooding along my street," "detouring commuter traffic through our area," and others - and there were answers as some two dozen Lincolnvile residents were briefed last week on plans for Riberia Street improvements.

Public Works Director Martha Graham and Consulting Engineer Jason Hall, with England, Timms & Miller of Jacksonville, outlined plans to begin road work on the \$8.9 million project this fall, with much of the utility work during the summer. Funding is in place for the first phase from King to Bridge Street, \$3.5 million, with \$500,000 committed by our City Commission toward the estimated \$5.4 million second phase, to Galimore Center.

Chief Operations Officer John Regan said a variety of funding sources are being pursued for additional monies.

Among elements discussed: any necessary detouring will be along ML King Avenue, service wires crossing the street will be set underground where possible to reduce wire clutter, and the sidewalk will be along the west side, engineers determining on the east side it would impact residential privacy.

Coupons offer more than one way to park



A coupon program to support our downtown businesses - offering half price all-day and free two hour parking in our Visitor Center parking facility - is being offered by our city.

Available are booklets of 25 half price all-day coupons at \$93.75 - half the regular parking cost - and 25 free two hour parking coupons at \$26.50 - a cost of \$1.06 each, less than half the regular two-hour charge of \$2.50. The program is detailed on our city [website](#).

History's Highlights

Pirates here predate St. Augustine

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

The pirate's life was attractive for a number of reasons - among them supply shortages and the urge for adventure.

Such was the case a year before Pedro Menendez founded St. Augustine. St. Augustine Historian Eugene Lyon, in his *The Enterprise of Florida*, describes trouble in the French Huguenot colony, Fort Caroline.

"An increasing shortage of supplies and a desire for adventure provoked some of the garrison to mutiny. Eleven mutineers fled the fort first, taking a small shallop and setting course for the Caribbean.



Three weeks later, on December 18, 1564, seventy men from the garrison held (French Commander) Rene de Laudonnière prisoner long enough to extort from him a document authorizing their jour-ney. They then departed on a voyage of adventure among the Antil-les in two small sailing craft."

The French mutineers' antics in the Caribbean actually alerted the Spanish to the hitherto unknown French colony that threatened Spain's control of the Florida region.

Pedro Menendez was the right choice to drive the French from these new lands. He had fought pirates as early as his teenage years in the Mediterranean, where he was commissioned by Spain to escort its merchant ships from port to port.

The raids on St. Augustine by Sir Francis Drake in 1586 and Robert Searle in 1668 are reenacted here each year. Among lesser known skirmishes, on March 24, 1683, a band of 230 French and English buccaneers from New Providence, in the Bahamas, captured the Ayamón and Matanzas watchtowers, tortured the garrisons for information on the town's defenses, and marched on to Anastasia Island where, on March 31, they were ambushed by 30 Spanish musketeers and routed.

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

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