

Franklin County Tourist Development Council Board Meeting  
TDC Office Meeting Room  
Agenda  
Wednesday, April 10th, 2:00 P.M.

**AGENDA**

- |  |                    |                           |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Welcome/Call to Order               |                    | <b>Commissioner Jones</b> |
| 2. Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance     |                    |                           |
| 3. Quorum Announcement                 |                    | <b>Solomon</b>            |
| 4. Approval of the Minutes of Feb 14th | <b>Action Item</b> | <b>Davis</b>              |
| 5. Public Comments                     |                    |                           |
| 6. Administrative Reports              |                    |                           |
| • FCTDC Collections Report             |                    | <b>Davis/Solomon</b>      |
| • Expenditures to Budget               |                    | <b>Davis</b>              |

**Promotions Report**

- |                        |  |                 |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| • Bay Media            |  | <b>Clark</b>    |
| • Web Master Report    |  | <b>Kendrick</b> |
| • Visitor Numbers      |  | <b>Solomon</b>  |
| • Administrative Items |  | <b>Solomon</b>  |

**New business**

- A. Alligator Point New Sign Request
- B. Promotional Items Request

Reports by Local Government Representatives:

- A. City of Apalachicola:
- B. City of Carrabelle:
- C. Franklin County: TDC Board Policy Update

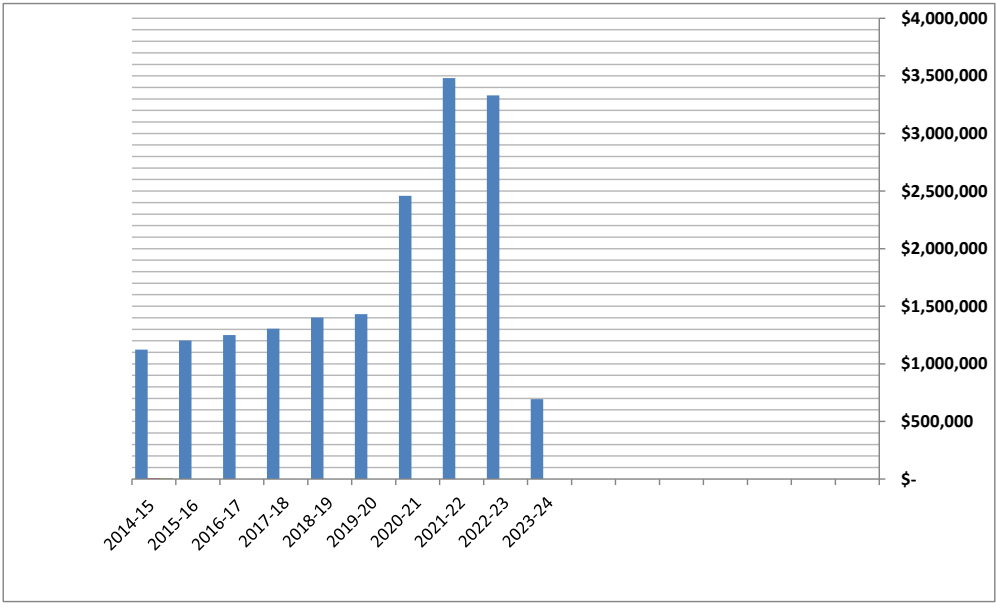
- 7. Reports from Member Organizations
- 8. Board Comments

**Meeting Announcements: TDC Board Meeting Wednesday, May 8th, 2024 at 2:00 pm at TDC Office meeting room**

**FCTDC Collections Report for 2012-2024 Year-to-Date Report  
Through January 2024**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	<b>Month</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	
2	October	\$ 58,876	\$ 75,085	\$ 95,108	\$ 85,823	\$ 38,417	\$ 89,660	\$ 147,542	\$ 294,549	\$ 280,910	\$ 235,669	
3	November	\$ 40,066	\$ 44,449	\$ 46,044	\$ 49,441	\$ 87,784	\$ 57,067	\$ 86,470	\$ 144,833	\$ 146,699	\$ 139,188	
4	December	\$ 30,979	\$ 24,693	\$ 41,580	\$ 37,182	\$ 46,715	\$ 52,527	\$ 67,724	\$ 116,196	\$ 128,229	\$ 158,894	
5	January	\$ 38,805	\$ 47,002	\$ 41,669	\$ 51,389	\$ 52,063	\$ 54,422	\$ 115,730	\$ 144,327	\$ 155,971	\$ 160,292	
6	February	\$ 42,755	\$ 64,494	\$ 60,423	\$ 58,338	\$ 66,632	\$ 95,017	\$ 84,508	\$ 182,356	\$ 170,298	\$ -	
7	March	\$ 83,626	\$ 80,018	\$ 84,583	\$ 111,947	\$ 127,975	\$ 71,947	\$ 149,485	\$ 261,238	\$ 248,693	\$ -	
8	April	\$ 101,310	\$ 103,120	\$ 89,950	\$ 103,422	\$ 82,258	\$ 20,067	\$ 181,178	\$ 281,271	\$ 295,444	\$ -	
9	May	\$ 143,700	\$ 131,348	\$ 110,485	\$ 140,130	\$ 166,130	\$ 123,839	\$ 276,459	\$ 351,652	\$ 333,083	\$ -	
10	June	\$ 195,093	\$ 213,949	\$ 226,795	\$ 269,049	\$ 300,092	\$ 283,735	\$ 327,038	\$ 569,447	\$ 502,792	\$ -	
11	July	\$ 182,236	\$ 253,603	\$ 242,037	\$ 215,933	\$ 209,374	\$ 253,488	\$ 551,474	\$ 651,425	\$ 601,106	\$ -	
12	August	\$ 129,880	\$ 82,664	\$ 121,809	\$ 111,323	\$ 134,239	\$ 190,136	\$ 306,565	\$ 246,874	\$ 217,277	\$ -	
13	September	\$ 75,778	\$ 81,869	\$ 90,214	\$ 70,419	\$ 90,052	\$ 140,186	\$ 164,076	\$ 236,109	\$ 249,963	\$ -	
14	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 1,123,104</b>	<b>\$ 1,202,294</b>	<b>\$ 1,250,696</b>	<b>\$ 1,304,398</b>	<b>\$ 1,401,732</b>	<b>\$ 1,432,091</b>	<b>\$ 2,458,249</b>	<b>\$ 3,480,276</b>	<b>\$ 3,330,466</b>	<b>\$ 694,043</b>	

15												
16	<b>YOY %</b>	<b>\$ 73,539</b>	<b>\$ 79,190</b>	<b>\$ 48,401</b>	<b>#REF!</b>	<b>\$ 97,334</b>	<b>\$ 30,360</b>	<b>\$ 1,026,157</b>	<b>\$ 1,022,027</b>	<b>\$ (149,810)</b>		
17		<b>7.5%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>#REF!</b>	<b>7.46%</b>	<b>2.17%</b>	<b>71.65%</b>	<b>41.58%</b>	<b>-4.30%</b>		



35 \* October and November 2018 due to Hurricane Michael statistically are outliers.  
 36 October and November 2019 compared with 2017-18 amounts are more representative,  
 37 thus, these months show increases of 10% and 9% respectively, or YTD increase of 31%.  
 38 \* Coronavirus-19 March 1 - May 18 2020  
 39 \* July 1, 2021 Increase in tax rate to 3%  
 40 \* 2020-21 increase if rate had stayed at 2% > \$685,452.64 or 47.86% increase  
 41

**2023-24 Budget**

**March 2024**

	A	B	C	D	E
1		Expended YTD	Budget	Balance	% of Budget
2	<b>ADMINISTRATION - 60002</b>	\$ 68,670	\$ 174,000	\$ 105,330	39%
3	<b>COUNTY ADMINISTRATION - 60003</b>	\$ 500			
4	<b>INFRASTRUCTURE - 60004</b>	\$ 499,999	\$ 3,645,376	\$ 3,145,377	14%
5	<b>Aid to Local Governments - 60005</b>	\$ 394,622	\$ 3,330,376	\$ 2,935,754	12%
6	Infrastructure Projects - per statue - 60006	\$ 344,335	\$ 1,564,188	\$ 1,219,853	22%
14	Beach Cleanup (Quarterly) - 60007	\$ 49,500	\$ 99,000	\$ 49,500	50%
15	Armory Website Page Addition - 60009	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	0%
16	Museum Infrastructure Grant Program - 60011	\$ 788	\$ 100,000	\$ 99,213	1%
17	<b>Aid to Non-Profits - 60012</b>	\$ 105,000	\$ 285,000	\$ 180,000	37%
18	Museum Grants - (\$3,750 each per quarterly) - 60013	\$ 15,000	\$ 105,000	\$ 90,000	14%
19	Visitor Centers (Quarterly) - 60014	\$ 90,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 90,000	50%
20	<b>TDC Maintenance and Repairs - 60015</b>	\$ 377	\$ 30,000	\$ 29,623	1%
21	TDC Building Maintenance /Repairs - 60016	\$ 377			
22	Insurance TDC Property Insurance	\$ -			
23	SGL Lighthouse Museum Flood Insurance	\$ -			
24	<b>PROMOTIONAL BUDGET - 60017</b>	\$ 367,439	\$ 1,267,812	\$ 900,373	29%
25	<b>Non-Profit Event Promotions - 60018</b>	\$ 15,752	\$ 163,000	\$ 147,248	10%
26	Non-Profit Promotion Grants - 60019	\$ 267	\$ 123,000	\$ 107,248	13%
27	Museum Promotional Grants (Events by Museums) 60020	\$ 15,485	\$ 40,000	\$ 39,733	1%
28	<b>New Promotional Opportunities - 60021</b>	\$ 27,810	\$ 30,000	\$ 2,190	93%
29	<b>Vendor Contracted Retainers - 60023</b>	\$ 56,665	\$ 131,000	\$ 74,335	43%
30	2K Webgroup - Internet (\$ 3333.33 / Month) - 60024	\$ 20,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 20,000	50%
31	Bay Media - Web (\$ 3333.33 / Month) - 60025	\$ 16,665	\$ 40,000	\$ 23,335	42%
32	Forgotten Coast TV ( \$ 3000 / Month) - 60026	\$ 15,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 21,000	42%
33	Oystter Radio ( \$ 1,250 / Month) - 60027	\$ 5,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 10,000	33%
34	<b>Internet Advertising - 60028</b>	\$ 112,479	\$ 238,600	\$ 126,121	47%
35	2K Social Media Campaigns - 60029	\$ 17,500	\$ 35,000	\$ 17,500	50%
36	Non-Contractual Website - 60030	\$ 1,016	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,984	10%
37	Search Engine Optimization - 60031	\$ 9,490	\$ 28,500	\$ 19,010	33%
38	Market Research & email marketing - 60032	\$ 7,251	\$ 6,000	\$ (1,251)	121%
39	Internet Marketing (Google, etc) - 60033	\$ 65,878	\$ 130,000	\$ 64,122	51%
40	14% Production - 60034	\$ 11,345	\$ 23,100	\$ 11,755	49%
41	Website Revisions - 60035	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	0%
42	<b>Print - 60036</b>	\$ 103,313	\$ 246,012	\$ 142,699	42%
43	Digital/ Banner Adds ( Bay Media) - 60037	\$ 5,950	\$ 25,800	\$ 19,850	23%
44	Banner Ads- 14% Production - 60038 *		\$ 3,612	\$ 3,612	0%
45	Content Production - 60039	\$ 553	\$ 12,000	\$ 11,448	5%
46	Print Advetising - 60040	\$ 89,103	\$ 150,000	\$ 60,897	59%
47	14% Production ( Print Advertising) - 60038 *	\$ 7,708	\$ 19,300	\$ 11,592	40%
48	Printing Promotional Materials (brochures) - 60041	\$ -	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	0%
49	<b>Photography - 60042</b>	\$ -	\$ 13,200	\$ 13,200	0%
50	Photo Library - 60043	\$ -	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,500	0%
51	Photo Setup (materials, actors, etc.) - 60044	\$ -	\$ 4,700	\$ 4,700	0%

**2023-24 Budget**

**March 2024**

	A	B	C	D	E
1		Expensed YTD	Budget	Balance	% of Budget
52	<b>Welcoming Tourists - 60045</b>	\$ 5,520	\$ 55,000	\$ 49,480	10%
53	Airport Signage/Display - Clear Channel Tallahassee - 60046	\$ 1,770	\$ 10,000	\$ 8,230	18%
54	Historical Signage - 60048	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	0%
55	Additional Signage (roadside, storefront, billboards) - 60049	\$ 3,750	\$ 20,000	\$ 16,250	19%
56	<b>TV and Radio Advertising - 60050</b>	\$ 2,500	\$ 45,000	\$ 42,500	6%
57	Radio (FSU, Cumulus, Out of Area, etc)- 60051	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	0%
58	Television Advertising - 60052	\$ 2,500	\$ 35,000	\$ 32,500	7%
59	<b>Video Production - 60053</b>	\$ 11,950	\$ 51,000	\$ 39,050	23%
60	Video Library - 60054	\$ 2,200	\$ 10,000	\$ 7,800	22%
61	Commercials / Specials - 60055	\$ 9,750	\$ 10,000	\$ 250	98%
62	Video Production- PSAs - 60056	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	0%
63	Video Production -TV Shows - 60057	\$ -	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,000	0%
64	<b>Partnerships (co-ops) - 60058</b>	\$ -	\$ 30,500	\$ 30,500	0%
65	VF State Welcome Center - Kids Corner - 60059	\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	0%
66	Explore NW Florida Beaches/ Visit Florida Grant - 60062	\$ -	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000	0%
67	98 Corridor Mkting - 60060	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	0%
68	COCA Banner - 60061	\$ -	\$ 5,500	\$ 5,500	0%
69	<b>Special Events and Outreach - 60070</b>	\$ 25,398	\$ 170,500	\$ 145,102	15%
70	Webcam Installation/Maintenance - 60071	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	0%
71	Get-a-Way Contests - 60072	\$ 1,578	\$ 20,000	\$ 18,422	8%
72	Hospitality Training - 60073	\$ -	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	0%
73	Journalists Visits - 60074	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	0%
74	Mentoring /Scholarships - 60075	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	0%
75	Promotional Items - 60076	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	0%
76	Visitor Guide Production - 60077	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000	0%
77	Visitor Guide, Promotion, Office Mailings (Postage) - 60080	\$ 2,884	\$ 35,000	\$ 32,116	8%
78	New Software Advancements - 60081	\$ 6,536	\$ 13,000	\$ 6,464	50%
79	CrowRiff - 60082	\$ -	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	0%
80	Wander Map - 60083	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -	100%
81	Keydata Dashboard - 60084	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,500	\$ 100	99%
82	Forgotten Coast Mobile App - 60085	\$ -	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	0%
83	<b>Dues/Memberships/Meetings /Conferences - 60090</b>	\$ 6,051	\$ 29,000	\$ 22,949	21%
89	VF, STS, FOWA, NOWA,COCA,DMO Assn, NWTDC - 60093	\$ 6,051	\$ 13,000	\$ 6,949	47%
90	Gov Conferences/Meetings(Registration/ Accomod - 60092	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	0%
91	Travel/Conferences/Meetings (perdeim/mileage) - 60091	\$ -	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	0%
92	Explore NW Florida (Riverway South) Membership - 60094	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	0%
93	<b>TOTAL BUDGET2023-24</b>	\$ 936,608	\$ 5,087,188	\$ 4,151,080	18%



March 28, 2024

To: TDC Board Members

From: C. Clark

Subject: April 2024 marketing report

**METRICS ANALYSIS OF APRIL NEWSLETTER** launched Thursday, March 21 to 109,140 recipients. The reader open rate averaged 28.8% and the click to open rate averaged 2.4%. There were 25 trackable links in the newsletter. The highest number of click throughs registered as follows: SGI Lighthouse Full Moon (16.6%), Crooked River Lighthouse Full Moon (7%), Carrabelle Riverfront Festival (6%), Home & Garden Tour (5.4%), survey (5.2%).

### **EMAIL MARKETING DATABASE DETAILS:**

Total Database: June 19, 2011: 7,410

Total Database: January 3, 2024: 109,697

### **MARKETING/MEDIA COORDINATION**

Production: *April Newsletter*

Production: *Maritime Museum Exhibit Displays*

### **AD BUY REQUEST**

**Florida Sportfishing** - July/August issue. Print and digital - Full page \$2905 plus digimag video link. This is the issue we are expecting to see considerable editorial coverage.

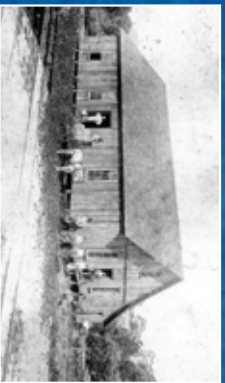
**Orlando Magazine** - Great Getaways /September Issue. 2 page spread - \$3887.40. Includes digital, enewsletter and social media coverage. 134K readership, 115K social media. Orlando is ranked #... in visitor origin for Franklin County.

**Visit Florida Media Tour** - Domestic audience. Lodging Package Request \$5000.



# Sponges - A Squishy Industry

## Area Sponge Industry was Popular but Short-lived



From the mid-1870's to the early decades of the twentieth century, the sponge industry was a lucrative fishery in Franklin County. Greek families immigrating to Florida in the late 1800s brought their sponge harvesting knowledge, boat building skills, cultural and culinary traditions. It was a successful fishery that flourished here for more than 50 years.

Bring Franklin County's early maritime era alive by scanning the QR code below.



By 1879, Apalachicola was home to 16 sponge vessels. By 1895, there were two sponge warehouses in Apalachicola, a fleet of 16 sponge harvesting boats and approximately 100 men employed by this industry. Carrabelle had also developed a large sponge fleet of its own during that time and by 1879, Carrabelle had the largest sponge fleet in Florida next to Key West. By the late 1800s, the Apalachicola waterfront was teeming with fishermen unloading their sponges and taking them to the Apalachicola Sponge Exchange where the sponges were auctioned to dealers, who shipped the sponges to San Francisco, St. Louis, Baltimore, and New York.

The sponge fleet of the Northern Gulf were typically small schooners. Each vessel carried a few small dinghies, usually locally-built boats from 12-15 feet in length. Two men worked each dinghy, one slowly sculling the boat as the other tied and hooked the catch. Sponge glasses were used to view the sea floor. These were wooden boxes or buckets with a glass bottom, often worn around the neck. Sponges were brought to the surface with a long-handled, three-pronged iron hook in a harvesting method called "hooking."

Franklin County's sponge industry was profitable but short-lived. The arrival of diving technology in the early 1900s brought more



Above: Apalachicola Sponge Exchange, circa 1890. Taken on Avenue E looking southeast towards water. Far left: Apalachicola sponge packing warehouse, circa 1900. Middle: Sponge boat with haul. Left: You can still find sponges at Franklin County retailers.

efficiency to harvesting. By around the 1930s a combination of overharvesting, blight, and the invention of synthetic sponges led to the depletion of the sponge industry. In 1939, sponge harvesting was banned in the northern Gulf waters until 2007 when the State reopened the northern Gulf and extended the sponge harvesting area along much of Florida's Northern Gulf Coast.

Today, you may find locally-sourced sponges in retail shops in Franklin County. Modern sponge divers still use the air hose method pioneered by Greek divers but sustainable harvesting methods are used today.

Visit [floridastoforgothenortherncoast.com](http://floridastoforgothenortherncoast.com) to learn more about Franklin County maritime history.



One of the original sponge warehouses remains in Apalachicola's historic downtown district. The Sponge Exchange, located at 16 Avenue E was built in 1831 and is one of the original sponge warehouses. Descendants of Greek sponge divers, boat builders, and their families still live in Apalachicola. You can find locally-sourced sponges in retail shops in Franklin County.



The Carrabelle History Museum features a unique sponge Diving exhibit that features a turn-of-the-century Greek sponge diving suit complete with helmet and weight belt. The Carrabelle History museum is located one block from the Carrabelle waterfront at 106 SE Avenue B, Carrabelle.



# Franklin County's Neptune Bounty

## Oysters Are Area's First Important Seafood Industry



Above left, wild oysters were harvested in the 1800s much the same way they are today. Top: Oyster shuckers. Above: Joseph C. Messing and Company were one of several early oyster canneries. Photographs courtesy of the Florida State Archives. Colorization by Bill Price.

Oysters were sold locally in Franklin County as early as 1836, harvested much the same as they are today with scissor-shaped tongs hoisted aboard shallow-draft skiffs. By 1850, oysters had begun to be packed in barrels and shipped aboard steamers headed north or to other neighboring states. During the Civil War (1861-1865) no oyster business was done but following the war, shipments resumed and increased.

Apalachicola Bay is historically the premier wild oyster harvesting area in the state. Franklin County waters once produced 90% percent of Florida's oysters and 10% of the nation's supply.

Over the years, the commercial oyster industry has been affected by weather and man-made influences. Freshets (influx of fresh water), hurricanes and even documented severe freezes dating back to the 1890s have impacted oyster production in and around Apalachicola Bay.

Recent years have seen similar challenges. The harvest of "wild" oysters dropped dramatically in 2013 following years of decreased freshwater flow conditions throughout the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River basin. The collapse of this fishery had devastating impacts to oyster harvester's, seafood processors, and the community.

By 2020, Apalachicola Bay's natural oyster population dwindled so precipitously that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission suspended the harvest of wild-caught oysters from public harvesting areas until 2025.

Since then, scientists who are studying the problem say conditions are improving and the oyster populations are slowly rebounding for the public oyster bars.



## Oyster Facts

Franklin County's oyster industry is based on the highly preferred "Eastern" oyster, also known by its scientific name *Crassostrea virginica*. Oysters here grow rapidly (the fastest in the country) in these waters reaching marketable size in less than two years. Apalachicola Bay's wild oysters are diploids which means that they spawn during the summer to release eggs and sperm into the warm salty water. A single female oyster can discharge 10-20 million eggs per spawn and as many as 100 million per season. Upon fertilization, the free-floating larvae develop quickly, attach to a hard substrate and become a tiny oyster called "spat." Once attached to substrate, these bivalve mollusks form large colonies called reefs, bars or beds. Oysters feed by drawing in water with their gills to extract nutrients.

Learn more about Apalachicola Bay oysters at the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve (ANERR) Visitor Center located in Eastport at 108 Island Drive. The ANERR Visitor Center features exhibits, live fish tanks, and a 1/2 scale model oyster boat.



# Farmers of the Bay

## Oyster Harvesting Methods



In the wild, oysters are usually found in large groups, called an oyster bed. An oyster bed begins by smaller, baby oysters (called spat) attaching themselves to a stable surface (rocks, fallen trees, etc...). If the conditions are right the oyster community thrives, building upon each other in great mass. Some oyster beds can extend for several nautical miles!

Tongers (traditionally called “oystermen”) harvest the oysters from small boats using tongs which look like two rakes attached in a scissor style. Tongers generally

Bring Franklin County's early seafood era alive by scanning the QR code below.



use a small wooden boat equipped with a culling board near the bow and sometimes equipped with a “dog house” or small covered area to provide shelter from bad weather. Tongers are accompanied usually by “cullers” who separate the oysters by size (oysters must be at least three inches in length to be considered legally harvestable).

Out on the bay, oysters are stored in burlap sacks and shaded until they reach the shore. On the shore, seafood houses employ “housemen” who sort the oysters and package them for sale either in bags or boxes or pass them onto struckers where they will be shucked, washed and sold either in pints or gallons.

Visit [floridastforgottencast.com](http://floridastforgottencast.com) to learn more about Franklin County maritime history, museums, and historic sites.



## Farming the Bay with Aquaculture

Apalachicola Bay is seeing a new generation of seafood workers who are producing their own oysters using innovative farming methods on small, leased parcels in and around Apalachicola Bay.



Aquaculture farming consists of three stages: production of small seed in a hatchery, rearing of larger seed in a land-based nursery, and grow-out on an open-water lease.

Florida's growing aquaculture industry is catching on in Franklin County. More than 60 lease holders have now staked their claim and futures on state-leased water plots in and around Apalachicola Bay.

Farmed oysters are grown and harvested differently than their wild-caught brethren. In the wild, juvenile oysters, known as spat, attach to the first hard surface the spat can find. Traditional oystermen harvest those oysters using scissor-shaped tongs.

Around Apalachicola Bay, leaseholders grow oysters in floating cages or bags, although some leaseholders also direct seed the bay bottom on privately-leased areas.

Lease-grown oysters are subject to the same rules as wild-caught oysters. The harvest, sale and transportation of oysters in Franklin County are governed by rules administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and enforced by the Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC).



# When Cotton was King

## Franklin County's Earliest Maritime Economies Depended on the River

Less than 10 years after Apalachicola was established in 1831, the town reveled in a cotton boom that lasted nearly 20 years and catapulted the town to rank as third largest cotton shipping port on the Gulf of Mexico.

During the 1840s and early 1850s, cotton from farms upriver were loaded onto steamboats that traveled downriver and unloaded their cargo along the Apalachicola waterfront.

Once unloaded, cotton was weighed, and stockpiled in warehouses that lined the waterfront. From there it was sold and reloaded onto shallow-draft schooners that ferried the cargo to larger vessels waiting offshore.

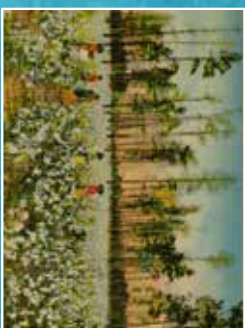
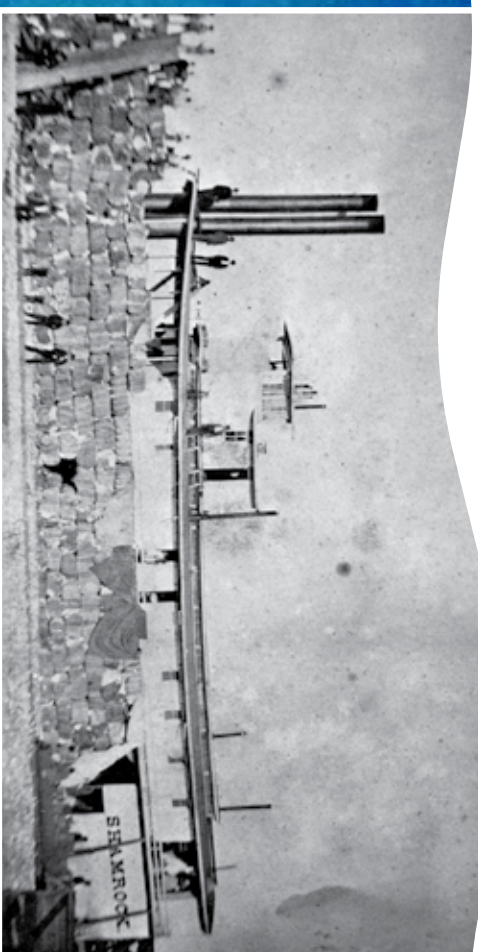
During Apalachicola's cotton era, mountains of "white gold" spilled from the warehouses and clogged the streets. During the winter of 1853, 140,000 bales of cotton passed through the bustling port town and the town's population had swelled to several thousand.

Apalachicola's economy during the mid 1800s was dependent upon cotton and upon the river which brought that cotton to market. Fortunately, the months when the river was high enough for steamboat traffic coincided with the period when cotton was ready for shipment - usually May through early October.

Apalachicola's cotton boom was not destined to last however. A combination of transportation challenges hampered Apalachicola's growth as a cotton shipping port. River travel by steamboat was often dangerous and, by the 1860s, an expanding railroad network siphoned off much of the river shipping business. The Civil War and ensuing river blockades were also disruptive forces.

The end of cotton era heralded the beginning of the lumber era in Franklin County. Several lumber mills were established along the river in the years right after the Civil War and by the late 1870s, the lumber industry flourished.

Bring Franklin County's early cotton, lumber and steamboat era alive by scanning the QR code below.



Top: Cotton bales filled the Apalachicola waterfront when steamboats such as the Sharrcock arrived in Apalachicola to unload from farms upriver. Above left: Middlebrook warehouse was one of more than 50 brick buildings used for river commerce during the 1800s. Above right: cotton farming upriver contributed to Apalachicola earliest maritime economy. Photographs courtesy of the Florida State Archives.



You can still see remnants of Apalachicola's cotton era in the form of two remaining brick warehouses located along the Apalachicola River. The Harrison-Raney warehouse and neighboring Middlebrook warehouse are the only two remaining brick structures built along Apalachicola's Water Street when "Cotton Was King." Originally, there were more than fifty of the three-story brick warehouses lining the waterfront.

Visit [floridastorefront.com](http://floridastorefront.com)

to learn more about Franklin County maritime history, museums, and historic sites.









# Bountiful Harvest to Celebrate Franklin County's Seafood is Festival-Worthy!



Former Apalachicola Mayor Jimmy Nicols (far right) was an ardent supporter of Apalachicola and worked tirelessly to promote the seafood festival. Photo courtesy Florida Archive.

Franklin County celebrates its maritime heritage and coastal bounty with several seafood celebrations throughout the year,

including the state's oldest seafood celebration – the Florida Seafood Festival.

The Florida Seafood Festival is a two-day event annually drawing tens of thousands of visitors to Apalachicola the first weekend in November. The festival is held at the mouth of the Apalachicola River and pays homage to Franklin County's maritime history interwoven with the resources that abound in the area.

Bring Franklin County's early seafood industry alive by scanning the QR code below.



The origin of the Florida Seafood Festival dates back to the Apalachicola Mardi Gras celebration in the early 1900s. That celebration first introduced King Retsyo (Oyster spelled backward) as its reigning monarch. Early Mardi Gras events saw King Retsyo and his court arriving by steamboat to open the ceremonies. Apalachicola's Mardi Gras Festival continued until sometime about 1916.

Harbor Day, a celebration started in 1946 to promote development along the Apalachicola River, evolved into a celebration of the area's maritime culture and was later named the Apalachicola Seafood Festival. In 1963, the event earned the designation as the State's oldest maritime event and was officially renamed as the Florida Seafood Festival.

Visit [floridasforgottencast.com](http://floridasforgottencast.com) to learn more about Franklin County events.



Right Top: Harbor Day float from 1951. Left Top: Apalachicola's Mardi Gras celebration was the precursor to the area's seafood festival. Left Middle: Festivals from years past featured free food but only if you waited until politicians were done speaking! Below: The Florida Seafood Festival begins each year with the Blessing of the Fleet. Photos courtesy Florida Archive.



## Legend of King Retsyo

The legend of King Retsyo comes from an ancient tribe of Indians who lived in the Apalachicola River Valley. The tribe's great Indian prince, Retsyo (oyster spelled backwards), had many wives but no children. Retsyo, exiled from the tribe because he had no heirs, was wading in the bay when he cut his foot on a shell, accidentally discovering the first oyster. Soon he devoured oysters — broiled, smoked, steamed and raw. After Retsyo returned to his tribe, his 12 wives gave birth to 12 sons. Thus the saying was born, "Eat fish and live longer, eat oysters and live longer."



John Cook as King Retsyo, 1912. Photo courtesy Cook family.

Apalachicola, Florida

Open to the city community

Vendor admission: \$2000

and sponsor of numerous

Judges: Tom and Tim Frimble

to the \$10,000 award!

## HARBOR DAY

THURSDAY, NOV. 13, '03

The occasion when those interested in the development of the Apalachicola - Chattahoochee - Flint River Valley and other projects of the Seaport and City, convene at Harbor Day.

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10:00 AM (EST) Registration opens.  
 Mayor Pro-tem and staff of Seaport Harbor

10:30 Breakfast of Gentle Baked  
 prepared by Dr. Alan Green, Chairman of the Seaport, by Robert A. Strickland, Chairman State Park Dept.

12:00 Five Starred Dinner served by ANN, Co. of C.

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1:30 TALKS ON BUYER DEVELOPMENT  
 by Tom and Tim Frimble, Mayor of Chattahoochee  
 by Alan Green, Mayor of Seaport  
 by Robert A. Strickland, Chairman State Park Dept.  
 by Dr. W. S. Wilson, Chairman of the Seaport  
 by Dr. C. E. Manning, Chairman of the Seaport  
 by Dr. J. H. Manning, Chairman of the Seaport  
 by Dr. J. H. Manning, Chairman of the Seaport  
 by Dr. J. H. Manning, Chairman of the Seaport

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3:00 Dedication of First Canals  
 (National Inland Waterway) to General Mark Lane,  
 4:00 Harbor Day Dinner at First Canals  
 sponsored by Mayor Michael D. The National Canal



# The Buzzsaw Heard Round the Region

## The Early Timber Industry Brought Prosperity to Franklin County



Far left: The Franklin County Lumber was a prominent lumber mill in Carrabelle. Left top and bottom: Black men dominated timber work in Northern Florida during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, comprising more than half of the total population of loggers in the region. Logging teams were racially mixed; logging operations could only be safe and successful if all involved worked as a cohesive team. Photographs courtesy of the Florida State Archives.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the capacity of local mills was greater than the area's shipping facilities and it became clear that a faster more efficient means for shipping lumber was necessary in order for the industry to grow. Relief arrived in 1907, when the Appalachian Northern Railroad rolled into town and with it the promise of faster and more efficient shipping.

Franklin County's timber industry flourished until the mid 1920s, declining, in part due to dwindling virgin timber stands and a declining naval stores industry.

**Bring Franklin County's early cotton, lumber and steamboat era alive by scanning the QR code below.**

Franklin County's timber industry emerged prior to the Civil War on the heels of the area's cotton shipping trade. The area's first sawmill, the Pennsylvania Tie Company, was located at a site known today as the "Mill Pond" in Apalachicola. The sawmill cut railroad cross-ties from cypress logs that had been dragged from the swamps surrounding the Apalachicola River.

Once processed, most of the coastal sawmills cut and ferried lumber by shallow-draft lighters to larger ships waiting offshore for shipment to Europe and Mexico.

At the height of Franklin County's lumber boom, more than 30 sawmills dotted along the river and uplands of North Florida's coastal region. Early Apalachicola mills included the Kennedy Lumber Company Mill, the Kimball Lumber Company, the Cypress Lumber Company and the Apalachicola Lumber Mill. There were also mills in eastern Franklin County including the Franklin County Lumber Company in Carrabelle.



## Sheip Lumber

The Sheip Lumber Company occupied a site beside Scipio Creek at the north end of Market Street in Apalachicola. Originally the site of the Pennsylvania Tie Company and later the Cypress Lumber Company, Sheip Lumber Company owner Jerome Sheip purchased the mill in 1926 with a plan to manufacture cigar box lumber exclusively. By 1940 the mill was also cutting lumber for furniture. At one time, more than 200 men were employed at the mill which operated until the late 1940s.

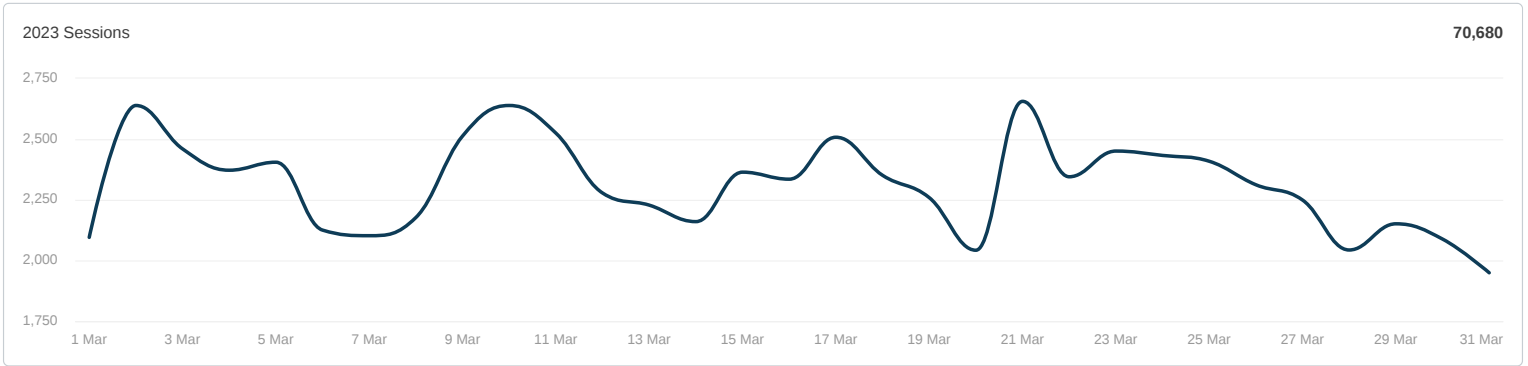


Top: The Sheip Lumber Company was the last lumber mill to operate at the site in Apalachicola. Above: The Cypress Lumber Company after a burn in 1900. Photographs courtesy of the Florida State Archives.



# Franklin County TDC Monthly Marketing Report

March 2024



2024 Sessions

**70,680**

2024 Bounce Rate

**43.16%**

2024 Goals Completed

**1,851**

2023 Sessions  
(Feb 1, 2023 - Feb 28, 2023)

**82,693**

2023 Bounce Rate  
(Feb 1, 2023 - Feb 28, 2023)

**65.99%**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Feb 1, 2023 - Feb 28, 2023)

**5,355**

## Goals Completed

### Accommodation Requests

### Getaway Signups

2024 Goals Completed

**513**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)

**532**

2024 Goals Completed

**0**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)

**1,404**

### Visitor Guide Requests

### Visitor Guide Views

2024 Goals Completed

**449**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)

**1,663**

2024 Goals Completed

**218**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)

**1,688**

### Newsletter Signups

### Newsletter Views

2024 Goals Completed

**513**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)

**629**

2024 Goals Completed

**145**

2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)

**255**



## Top Cities

Top 10 Cities			
CITY	SESSIONS	VIEWS	BOUNCE RATE
Atlanta	7,060	15,127	43.85%
(not set)	6,438	14,029	42.65%
Chicago	2,236	4,563	41.28%
Nashville	2,207	4,846	55.19%
Orlando	1,976	3,592	40.38%
Miami	1,449	2,620	43.06%
Birmingham	1,230	2,756	50.73%
Ashburn	1,147	2,113	49.96%
Dallas	1,094	2,015	40.49%
Louisville	984	2,043	52.95%

## Most Popular Pages

Top 10 Pages			
LANDING PAGE	SESSIONS	VIEWS	BOUNCE RATE
/	23,826	55,024	53.96%
/st-george-island	11,892	26,243	31.64%
/e-newsletter	4,534	5,852	71.53%
/apalachicola	3,598	9,342	26.82%
/things-to-see-do	2,088	5,412	28.07%
(not set)	1,811	2,580	96.19%
/alligator-point	1,513	3,113	27.23%
/carrabelle	1,071	2,503	30.44%
/things-to-see-do/webcams/st-george-island-florida-webcam	934	1,511	39.29%
/places-to-stay	890	3,639	15.06%

## Organic Search

2024 Organic Sessions

**21,183**

2024 Organic Pageviews

**41,502**

2024 Goals Completed

**347**2023 Organic Sessions  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**28,512**2023 Organic Pageviews  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**55,135**2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**586**

## Paid Search

2024 Sessions

**13,826**

2024 Pageviews

**33,599**

2024 Goals Completed

**362**2023 Sessions  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**18,948**2023 Pageviews  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**36,082**2023 Goals Completed  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**471**

## Social Media Overview

2024 Social Audience

**263 K**











2024 Social Impressions

**4.16 M**

2024 Social Link Clicks


**28,216**2023 Social Audience  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**247 K**2023 Social Impressions  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**4.29 M**2023 Social Link Clicks  
(Mar 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2023)**77,247**











## Most Popular Facebook Posts

f Top 10 Facebook Posts				
DATE	POST	POST IMPRESSIONS	LIKES	CLICKS
Mar 9, 2024	 Step back in time and immerse yourself in...	17,988	240	122
Mar 8, 2024	 Don't let rain dampen your fun! ☁️ Check ...	9,443	38	105
Mar 12, 2024	 We want to see your Spring Break memor...	8,058	38	36
Mar 4, 2024	 Check out what's going on in March on...	7,718	50	159
Mar 17, 2024	 Here's to a brew-tiful St. Paddy's Day on ...	6,248	73	98
Mar 21, 2024	 Step back in time and immerse yourself in...	5,904	125	57
Mar 5, 2024	 Embrace the pace and savor every deli...	5,675	72	99
Mar 7, 2024	 No such thing as a "Ruff" day on Florida's...	5,290	141	57
Mar 1, 2024	 Some moments are just perfect. ✨ Le...	4,719	94	37
Mar 22, 2024	 Where every day feels like a coastal g...	4,109	106	30



## Most Popular Instagram Posts

 Top 10 Instagram Posts & Stories

DATE	POST	REACH▼	POST ENGAGEMENT
Mar 4, 2024	 Check out what's going on in March on FL...	2,276	119
Mar 8, 2024	 Don't let rain dampen your fun! ☁️ Check ou...	2,240	92
Mar 12, 2024	 We want to see your Spring Break memories...	1,462	70
Mar 17, 2024	 Here's to a brew-tiful St. Paddy's Day on Flor...	1,422	78
Mar 20, 2024	 Don't miss out on the artistic wonders awaiti...	1,400	112
Mar 1, 2024	 Some moments are just perfect. ✨📷@...	1,211	161
Mar 15, 2024	 ☀️🌅 Enjoy special discounts on stays al...	1,069	130
Mar 25, 2024	 Starting off the week with a little taste of p...	1,041	88
Mar 21, 2024	 Step back in time and immerse yourself in th...	1,016	144
Mar 6, 2024	 Ready for a spring break that rejuvenates...	940	119

## Print

2024 Sessions

**119**

2024 Pageviews

**495**

2024 Goals Completed

**2**

## Email Newsletters

2024 Sessions

**1,495**

2024 Pageviews

**2,468**

2024 Goals Completed

**38**

## Banners

2024 Sessions

**49**

2024 Pageviews

**104**

2024 Goals Completed

**0**

## QR

2024 Sessions

**3**

2024 Pageviews

**14**

2024 Goals Completed

**0**



## **April 2024 Update**

We have begun work on Re-Enactments videos that will be displayed at the TDC's Maritime Museum (Lombardi Property) when it opens later this year.

We have already completed one of the videos out of six. Topics will include oystering, shrimping, crabbing, logging, fin fishing, and steamboats.

Historical photographs and video footage will be used in the videos and each video will run between one to 3-minutes in length.

This series of videos will be completed by mid-May.

## 2024 VISITOR COUNT

### Month

	Apalachicola	EPVC	SGI	Carrabelle	Total
January	1,563	205	684	191	2,643
February	1,864	357	931	283	3,435
March	1,873	377	968	287	3,505
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,583</b>





## Alligator Point • St. Teresa *Association*

### APSTA

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President

Dr. David Harris

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

Ray Pierce

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Rob Linebarger

Treasurer

Nonda Meng

Secretary

Lyra Erath

### JOHN SOLOMON

---

DIRECTOR • FRANKLIN COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL • 731  
HWY 98 • EASTPOINT, FL 32328

February 19, 2024

Dear John Solomon,

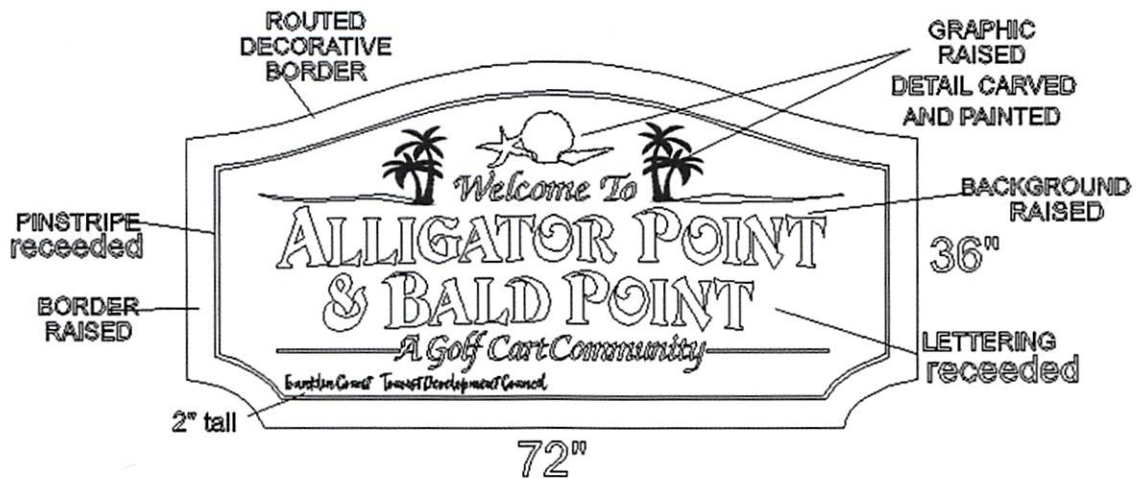
The APSTA Board is writing to you on behalf of our community to request funding for replacing the existing Alligator Point and Bald Point welcome sign. The current welcome sign has become unsightly and illegible. The new sign would be installed at the current sign's location which is just north of Pine Street on Alligator Drive. The new sign announces that visitors are entering a "Golf Cart Community". This sign's location is also where the reduced speed limit of 30mph begins.

I have attached several documents to my email which outline the associated costs and the design of a new sign. Thank you for your consideration of funding this project. A new sign will significantly contribute to the beautification and appeal of Franklin County.

Sincerely,

Alligator Point St Teresa Association

Lyra Erath, APSTA Secretary



72"  
 SIGN PANEL CONSTRUCTED OF  
 HDU (HIGH DENSITY URETHANE)  
 ACCESS MY WEBSITE  
[WWW.WEATHERTOPWOODCRAFT.NET](http://WWW.WEATHERTOPWOODCRAFT.NET)  
 START TO FINISH AND HDU PAGES  
 FOR INFORMATION AND IMAGES  
 REGARDING THIS MATERIAL

**\$2350.00**

### What are our signs made of?

High Density Urethane (HDU). This substrate has been developed to eliminate the negative aspects of exterior wood signage (warping, cracking, delaminating, checkink etc.) We have done dimensional signs for 35 years and have experienced these drawbacks which is why HDU is used. Folks invest in quality signage- it should remain that way.

Approximate Cost of Sign Installation

Lyra Erath APSTA

DESCRIPTION

4 Bags Concrete \$54  
4x4x8 Pressure Treated Posts \$42  
Installation at Location \$500

SUBTOTAL TAX TOTAL

Accepted Date

ESTIMATE # 1093 DATE 02/19/2024

596.00

596.00T

596.00 44.70

**\$640.70**

The existing Alligator Point and Bald Point "Welcome Sign":





Promotional Items Request

Budget \$5,000

500 Tote Bags - \$850.00

1000 Stickers 4" Diameter – \$535.00

200 Franklin County Challenge Coins - \$1315.00

500 Motel Style Keychain - \$500.00

1000 Ink Pens - \$330.00

500 Can Koozies – \$607.00

500 Bottle Opener Flashlight Keychain – \$590.00

Total: \$4727.00