



CALHOUN COUNTY LONG-TERM RECOVERY PLAN **DRAFT**

A Strategy for Recovery Following Hurricane Michael

September 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Executive Summary

On October 10, 2018 Hurricane Michael made landfall west of Calhoun County, devastating homes, businesses and the small communities that make up this rural area of North Florida. Significant progress has been made over the past year and everyday things get a little better, restoring hope to the citizens of Calhoun County. However, much work remains to be done. Out of disasters comes the opportunity to rebuild back stronger and move the vision of a community forward and Calhoun County is committed to seizing this opportunity. The Calhoun County Long-term Recovery Plan outlines a new vision for the community moving forward, based on significant stakeholder input from the entire community.

Calhoun County is both designated as fiscally constrained and a Rural Area of Opportunity. These designations are given to smaller, rural areas that need an extra boost to stimulate their economy due to the challenges they face including a low median income and in comparison to the State of Florida, high health uninsured population and lower high school graduation rate.

Given the pre-existing challenges faced by Calhoun County, Hurricane Michael dealt a significant blow to their livelihoods – including the homes that residents live in and the timber-based agricultural economy that they rely so heavily upon. While Calhoun County's population is modest with approximately 6,000 homes, over 30% of their housing stock suffered significant damage requiring extensive repair or replacement and nearly one thousand businesses reported some level of damage to their structure, contents or operations. Based on calculations from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, \$172 million in unmet needs remain in Calhoun County.

To address this critical need, the county is prioritizing the following strategies:

- Remove barriers to resources available to support clearing, replanting and restoring the timber industry.
- Restore and expand of the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital.
- Restore damaged housing stock, following Hurricane Michael.
- Create opportunities to incentivize the development of new single-family homes in a manner that is consistent with community character.
- Critical enhancements to public facilities that are outdated and in need of redevelopment and hardening to withstand future storms including ambulance stations and a new jail.
- Update and expand sewer infrastructure in the City of Blountstown to ensure resiliency and offer opportunities for economic growth.
- Seek cost-share match to maximize the return on investment of recovery funding.
- Revitalize downtowns and commercial corridors to help support the growth and expansion of small businesses.

Overview of Calhoun County

Calhoun County was created in 1838 to establish St. Joseph as a commercial competitor to the nearby City of Apalachicola. St. Joseph flourished as a seaport as goods, predominately cotton, were diverted from Apalachicola by train, and then shipped to England. The first constitution of the territory of Florida was written and adopted in the City of St. Joseph. From 1840 to 1860, cotton became the predominate industry in Calhoun County. The lands along the Apalachicola became known as the “little Mississippi”. The War Between the States, however, ended the cotton era for Calhoun County. By the turn of the century, naval stores and timber became the predominate industry. Cypress growing in the area were cut and floated down the Chipola and the Apalachicola rivers to the sawmills at the mouth of the river¹.

Calhoun County covers 567 square miles and is the 50th-largest county in Florida by area. Calhoun County is in the Panhandle of Florida, neighbored by Gadsden County, Jackson County, Liberty County, Bay County, and Gulf County. Blountstown is the county seat. Tucked away in the Panhandle of Florida and the 5th smallest county in Florida with a population of 14,625 at the 2010 Census, Calhoun County is located right in the center of everything Northwest Florida has to offer.

The following statistics taken from the U.S. Census Bureau provide a snapshot of Calhoun County in comparison to the State of Florida.

U.S Census Data	Calhoun County	State of Florida
Median Household Income	\$38,609	\$55,462
Educational Attainment: High School Graduate or Higher	78.1%	88.5%
Homeownership Rate	82.4%	65.9%
Median Value of Housing	\$81,300	\$230,600
Median Gross Rent	\$661	\$1,182
Health Insurance: Uninsured Population	18.3%	13.0%

City of Blountstown

Calhoun County has one incorporated city, the City of Blountstown, which also serves as the county seat. As of the 2010 Census the population of Blountstown was 2,514. Blountstown is only a few minutes from interstate 10 and less than an hour from the beach, Panama City, Tallahassee, as well as the Alabama and Georgia state lines. Located near the Liberty County border and City of Bristol, along the Apalachicola River, City of Blountstown residents and visitors enjoy the beautiful rivers, Greenway Trail, friendly neighbors, and hometown atmosphere.

Town of Altha

The population was 536 at the 2010 census. Altha is in north Calhoun County, approximately 45 minutes from the Georgia state line and one hour from the Alabama state line. Founded in 1902, the largest employer in Altha is Oglesby Plants International. The Chipola River, about three miles west of Altha, offers swimming and fishing opportunities. The Town of Altha recently received a \$90,000 grant from the state to study the efficiency and environmental impact of the town’s water system, as well as explore alternatives for improving the system to potentially attract more commerce.

¹ Calhoun County, Florida Official County website, About page. Accessed via: <https://calhouncountygov.com/about/>

Unincorporated Communities

Calhoun County currently has one major city, Blountstown, and one established town, Altha. Along with these areas, there are twenty-five unincorporated communities located in Calhoun County: Abe Springs, Broad Branch, Chason, Chipola, Chipola Park, Clarksville, Cox, Eufala, Fisher Corner, Frink, Gaskins, Henderson Mill, Iolee, Kinard, Leonards, Marysville, McNeal, New Hope, Ocheese Landing, Ocheeseulga, Pine Island, Rollins Corner, Scotts Ferry, Selman, and Willis.

HURRICANE MICHAEL IMPACTS AND UNMET NEEDS

Overview

This section of the Calhoun County Long-term Recovery Plan uses best available data from local, state and federal resources to identify the unmet needs of Calhoun County in its recovery from the impacts of Hurricane Michael. To understand the needs that remain in this community, targeted stakeholder interviews were conducted, and a community survey was disseminated. This local feedback has been integrated throughout this entire plan to capture existing conditions and remaining needs.

In summary, the following unmet needs remain in Calhoun County:

- Calhoun County will need planning support to increase the number of homes allowed per acre in targeted areas to support new residential development that is affordable for the workforce in the wake of Hurricane Michael.
- Calhoun County and the City of Blountstown will need long-term assistance with managing grant funding that may come into their community in the wake of Hurricane Michael. This means that funding sources offered by the State will need to include Administrative Fees to allow the communities to hire the support to manage large contracts in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Calhoun County and the City of Blountstown will need additional cost-share support to access other federal long-term recovery resources that are available following major disasters including the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Rural Infrastructure Fund and programs from the Economic Development Administration.
- Calhoun County residents will need technical assistance navigating the funds available to them to replant damaged forestlands. This includes advocacy efforts to help remove barriers like reimbursement processes that require individuals to take out hefty loans to conduct the work with no guarantee for reimbursement.
- The Calhoun-Liberty Hospital will need to be restored and expanded ensure that jobs associated with the healthcare industry are not lost and new jobs can be created to further diversify the economy.

- Commercial Corridors throughout the community, including Downtown Blountstown need revitalization due to damage caused by Hurricane Michael.
- Calhoun County will need assistance with workforce retraining considering the impacts to the timber industry. This could include construction or healthcare related jobs.
- The Calhoun-Liberty Hospital will need to be restored and expanded ensure that healthcare options are available for residents.
- Mental health and substance abuse services are needed to address the significant rise in crime rates and lower recidivism in the future.
- Additional social services will be needed to support the long-term health needs of the community that have increased as a result of the storm.
- Additional support for the repair and rehabilitation and replacement of owner-occupied homes. This includes the replacement of a likely high number of damaged mobile homes throughout the community and the need for assistance with clouded title issues that result from homes passed down through generations.
- Support for wind mitigation retrofits to existing homes throughout Calhoun County that were built prior to more stringent Florida Building Code requirements to ensure the long-term resiliency of housing stock.
- Assistance to support the acquisition and demolition of abandoned homes that are severely damaged from Hurricane Michael to encourage the development of new housing options.
- Consider increasing the number of units per acre in targeted areas to allow for the development of more residential neighborhoods to serve the post-Hurricane Michael demand for housing including the need for rental housing.
- Clear vegetative debris to reduce the significant wildfire threat posed by Hurricane Michael.
- Restore forests and in-town tree canopy throughout the county to enable residents and visitors to enjoy these areas once again and sustain ecotourism opportunities.
- Restore and improve access to rivers through enhancements to boat ramps and associated facilities.

Community Planning and Capacity Impacts and Unmet Needs

Pre-Hurricane Existing Conditions

As the smallest county in the State of Florida, countywide, the capacity for community planning and local government operations is conservative. Therefore, much of the planning and engineering work and local government capacity is supplemented through local vendors.

Calhoun County and the City of Blountstown have both adopted local comprehensive plans and corresponding land development codes which guide growth and development in their communities. In addition, they have an active Chamber of Commerce that leads economic development visioning for the community in addition to the regional organizations, Florida's Great Northwest and Opportunity Florida. Calhoun is one of 21 counties not within the jurisdiction of a metropolitan planning organization.

The modest budgets the County magnify the impacts of significant events, like Hurricane Michael. With an annual budget of \$20 million, it can be difficult to rebound after a catastrophic event.

Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners Adopted Budget Summary Fiscal Year 2019-2020	
General Fund	<u>\$ 13,156,303</u>
Special Revenue Funds:	
County Transportation Trust Fund I (CTTF I)	1,635,554
County Transportation Trust Fund II (CTTF II)	1,682,295
Domestic Violence Trust Fund	23,140
Boating Improvement Program Fund	430,597
Police Education Fund	1,750
Radio Communications Fund	12,265
Library Fund	864,770
Waste Management Grants	144,909
Crime Prevention Fund	26,415
Industrial Development Authority (IDA) Board	1,089,984
State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) Fund	938,125
Courthouse Facilities Fund (Ordinance 06-04)	42,175
Teen Court Fund	16,410
Old Courthouse Restoration Fund	67,505
Article V Trust Fund	11,592
Total Special Revenue Funds	<u>6,987,486</u>
Total Budget	<u>\$ 20,143,789</u>

Hurricane Michael Impacts and Recovery Resources

Hurricane Michael overwhelmed the conservative capacity of both local governments, requiring them to bring on additional contractual support as they sifted through infrastructure claims and FEMA Public Assistance projects for major repairs to infrastructure and public facilities. Hurricane Michael also brought to light the need to vision from a community wide perspective for long-term redevelopment as it impacted the homes, economy, infrastructure and public facilities. The County received a \$40,000 grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for this purpose and hired the Apalachee Regional Planning Council to assist with developing a Countywide Long-term Recovery Plan. This plan will outline projects and policies that can be carried out by the county to ensure that the community can build back stronger both from an economic and structural perspective.

However, to access the dollars available to the community, additional assistance will be needed to assist with local cost-share. Even with state and federal aid, recovery is expensive and can dramatically affect local budgets. Calhoun County has been fortunate to receive a lower cost-share amount for FEMA Public Assistance funds and additional assistance from the State. However, even with this aid, it will be difficult for the County and City to maximize their opportunities through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Economic Development Administration and Rural Infrastructure Fund, as these programs require significant community match.

Community Planning Local Government Capacity Unmet Needs

- Calhoun County will need planning support to increase density in targeted areas to support new residential development that is affordable for the workforce in the wake Hurricane Michael.
- Calhoun County, the City of Blountstown and Town of Altha will need long-term assistance with managing grant funding that may come into their community in the wake of Hurricane Michael. This means that funding sources offered by the State will need to include Administrative Fees to allow the communities to hire the support to manage large contracts in accordance with state and federal guidelines.
- Calhoun County, the City of Blountstown and Town of Altha will need additional cost-share support to access other federal long-term recovery resources that are available following major disasters including the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Rural Infrastructure Fund and programs from the Economic Development Administration.
 - *The County is pleased to see that the Draft Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Action Plan for Hurricane Michael includes matching funds for the FEMA HMGP and PA programs.*

Housing Impacts and Unmet Needs

Pre-Hurricane Existing Conditions

Calhoun County's small population equates to a little more than 6,000 homes located throughout the county with a median value of \$80,000 per home. This is significantly lower than the statewide median home value of \$178,700 and 25 percent of these homes are valued under \$50,000. However, in 2017 it was reported that only a little less than 4,600 were occupied, meaning that a significant portion of the homes at the time of Hurricane Michael could have been abandoned or unoccupied. Of the occupied homes, 83.5% were owned by an individual with 16.5% occupied with renters. Thirty-eight percent of the housing stock is made of mobile homes with the balance consisting of single-family detached homes. There are a little more than 150 attached units in the community.²

Due to the age of structures, many of the homes were vulnerable to impacts from high winds. In fact, over 60 percent of all homes were built prior to the enactment of the Florida Building Codes in 1994 that strengthened homes to withstand the impacts of high winds in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

Of the land available for development and under government ownership, most of the residential land use in Calhoun County is low-density. This requires a potential homebuyer to purchase a larger tract of land in order to be able to develop a home. The scarcity of land and the large lot size requirements can contribute to challenges in building new housing options that are affordable in Calhoun County.

Hurricane Michael Impacts and Recovery Resources

According to FEMA data, nearly 4,100 applicants in Calhoun County registered to seek assistance. If each applicant represents a household, this accounts for approximately 68% of the total homes and nearly 90% of the occupied homes in the county.³ The table below reflects the estimated damage received to owner-occupied homes on a scale of minor-low to severe damage. Of the homes estimated to have received damage, over 85% could be categorized as major – severe damage, requiring a significant amount of investment to repair the housing stock and potentially bring it into current code compliance.

ESTIMATED DAMAGED TO OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING IN CALHOUN COUNTY

County	Minor-Low	Minor-High	Major-Low	Major-High	Severe	Grand Total
Calhoun	120	192	242	573	990	2,117

² <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

³ http://www.floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/office-of-disaster-recovery/hurricane-michael/draft-action-plan_hurricane-michael_3_11_20.pdf?sfvrsn=35c343b0_4

Calhoun County received support for housing recovery through a variety of resources. In 2019 the State Legislature appropriated a special appropriation for housing recovery through the Hurricane Housing Recovery Program. This program is similar to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program but is a one-time large allocation specific for Hurricane Michael Recovery. In addition, the county received both their annual appropriation of SHIP dollars and a small allocation of emergency assistance through the SHIP Program.

HOUSING FUNDING RECEIVED FROM THE STATE IN 2019

Program	Amount
State Housing Initiatives Partnership	\$350,000
State Housing Initiatives Partnership – Emergency Assistance	\$425,125
Hurricane Housing Recovery Program	5,135,000
TOTAL	\$5,910,125

In addition, a volunteer-led partnership between Calhoun and Jackson County resulted in the North Florida Inland Long-term Recovery Group. This local partnership worked with many non-profit and charitable organizations to provide support for residents who needed assistance making repairs to their homes.

The tables below, taken from the Unmet Needs Assessment for Hurricane Michael (broken up for easier viewing) shows the overall housing damage and remaining unmet needs in Calhoun County.



SUMMARY OF UNMET HOUSING NEEDS IN CALHOUN COUNTY

Small Business Administration Verified Loss of All SBA Applicants		
	Count	Value
SBA applicants with a real estate verified loss	683	\$29,611,278
SBA applicants without a real estate verified loss (estimate)	597	\$18,754,158
Total verified loss of FEMA applicants referred to SBA (estimate)	1280	\$48,365,436
Estimated Damage to Owner Applicant Dwellings		
	Count	Value
FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with FEMA inspected real property damage (SBA Multiplier)	2096	\$106,319,590
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Minor-Low	0	\$
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Minor-High	1	\$20,820
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Major-Low	1	\$38,249
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Major-High	7	\$291,165
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Severe	12	\$792,792
Total owner or "not specified" applicants without a FEMA Verified Loss (Property or Contents)	1,144	
Total SBA applicants	1,280	
Number of SBA Applicants without FEMA REGID	85	
Potential additional owner unmet need population	-11	345,554
Losses of FEMA applicants not referred to SBA (estimate)		\$107,117,062
Total verified loss of all homeowner applicants across FEMA and SBA (estimate)		\$155,482,498

Estimated Damage to Rental Applicant Dwellings		
	Count	Value
FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with FEMA inspected real property damage (SBA Multiplier)	365	\$5,786,565
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Minor-Low	2	\$13,822
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Minor-High	15	\$312,300
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Major-Low	28	\$1,070,972
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Major-High	112	\$4,658,640
Additional FEMA owner or "not specified" applicants with only FEMA inspected personal property damage (SBA Multiplier) Severe	208	\$13,741,728
Total owner or "not specified" applicants without a FEMA Verified Loss (Property or Contents)	467	
Total SBA Business applicants (landlords) with verified repair, reconstruction, or relocation losses (rental NAICS code 531110)	28	\$1,203,750
Potential additional renter unmet need population	69	\$2,167,566
Total verified loss of rental property (estimated)		\$28,955,343
Other Housing Damage Estimates		
	Count	Value
Real estate damage to public housing	310	\$13,330,000
Total verified loss to other housing (estimate)		\$13,330,000
Total housing verified loss (estimate)		\$149,402,404
Accounting for 30% resilience addition		\$194,223,126

Duplication of Benefits	
	Value
FEMA housing assistance payments	\$7,393,032
SBA Home - Real Property Loans	\$14,414,600
SBA Business Loan Payments to landlords	\$412,600
NFIP Building payments	
State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program	\$425,125
Total benefit	\$22,645,357
Total unmet housing need	\$126,757,047
Account of 30% resilience addition	\$171,577,769

Considering the estimated damage to homes and resources received to-date is projected that there is over \$128 million remaining in unmet needs. Given the need to build back stronger and the rise in construction cost after a hurricane, the state included a 30% increase to account for added expenses bringing the estimated total of unmet need to close to \$172 million in Calhoun County.

Housing Recovery Unmet Needs

- Support for wind mitigation retrofits to existing homes throughout Calhoun County that were built prior to more stringent Florida Building Code requirements to ensure the long-term resiliency of housing stock.
- Additional support for the repair and rehabilitation and replacement of owner-occupied homes. This includes the replacement of a likely high number of damaged mobile homes throughout the community.
- Assistance to support the acquisition and demolition of abandoned homes that are severely damaged from Hurricane Michael to encourage new development.
- Consider strategically increasing density in targeted areas to allow for the development of more residential homes to serve the post-Hurricane Michael demand for housing including the need for rental housing.

Economic Impacts and Unmet Needs

Pre-Hurricane Existing Conditions

Calhoun County is located within the Northwest Florida Economic Region. The County is one of ten counties in the Northwest Florida Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) eligible to offer additional incentives for new and expanding industries through Opportunity Florida. Opportunity Florida promotes positive economic growth in this ten-county region by providing technical assistance to economic development organizations and businesses and by working together with local, regional, and state organizations to market the region to businesses and government officials.

In addition, Calhoun County is located within the Northwest Florida Economic Region. [Florida's Great Northwest](#) (FGN) is the regional economic development organization for the Florida Panhandle. The organization is an investor-supported 501(c)(6) not for profit corporation created to promote Northwest Florida for economic growth and diversification, advocate for economic development issues that affect the region, and collaborate to improve regional competitiveness. The organization accomplishes this in partnership with the state and local economic development organizations, rural regional economic development organization, utility partners, private sector businesses, local government, higher education institutions, workforce boards, and community leaders.

Calhoun's unemployment for February of 2020 rate was 3.4 percent according to the State of Florida, which was higher than the state unemployment rate of 2.8 percent but lower than the national average of 3.8 percent.⁴

The graphic below describes the highest industry employment concentrations in Calhoun County, prior to Hurricane Michael.



⁴ <http://www.floridajobs.org/workforce-statistics/data-center/statistical-programs/local-area-unemployment-statistics>

Top 10 Industries by Employment in Calhoun County

According to a county snapshot provide by Florida's Great Northwest, the top industries by employment are in state and local government. However, nursing care facilities and general medical and surgical hospitals came next in the list of top industries.

NAICS	Description	2016 Jobs	Forecast Growth, 2016-2021		2016 LQ (US = 1.00)	Current Total Earnings	Current National Total	Relative Earnings (US=1)
			Net	%				
902999	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	370	9	2%	7.83	\$51,873	\$80,713	0.64
903999	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	342	24	7%	2.92	\$37,994	\$74,479	0.51
623110	Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	258	123	48%	7.43	\$24,593	\$39,261	0.63
903611	Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	223	15	7%	1.51	\$59,242	\$65,455	0.91
622110	General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	148	-24	-16%	1.52	\$62,784	\$74,163	0.85
445110	Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores	142	17	12%	2.66	\$19,567	\$29,452	0.66
722513	Limited-Service Restaurants	124	0	0%	1.41	\$15,432	\$17,214	0.90
111000	Crop Production	103	-4	-4%	5.88	\$36,145	\$32,845	1.10
424720	Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers	89	-6	-7%	64.21	\$25,791	\$88,734	0.29
813110	Religious Organizations	76	6	8%	2.11	\$19,791	\$21,297	0.93

Top 10 Occupations by Employment

The presence of the Calhoun Correctional Institution and County Jail results in correctional officers and jailers ranking top on the list of occupations by employment followed by commercial truck driving. However, it should be noted that when all healthcare occupations are totaled, healthcare jobs outpace all other occupations collectively and have the highest forecasted growth rate by far.

SOC	Description	2016 Jobs	Forecast Growth, 2016-2021		Projected Annual Openings	2016 LQ (US = 1.00)	Median Hourly Earnings	National Median Hourly	Relative Earnings (US=1)
			Net	%					
33-3012	Correctional Officers and Jailers	225	7	3%	8	24.75	\$16.48	\$22.27	0.74
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	131	-8	-6%	2	3.28	\$12.91	\$19.23	0.67
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	124	48	39%	13	3.99	\$10.11	\$12.63	0.80
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving	121	3	2%	5	1.74	\$8.77	\$9.45	0.93
41-2011	Cashiers	95	11	12%	6	1.28	\$8.66	\$9.72	0.89
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery	84	-1	-1%	3	5.12	\$13.78	\$10.56	1.31
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except	59	3	5%	insf. Data	1.03	\$13.11	\$16.52	0.79
29-1141	Registered Nurses	59	6	10%	3	0.98	\$28.74	\$33.81	0.85
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	55	20	36%	6	3.58	\$16.20	\$21.09	0.77
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	55	4	7%	insf. Data	0.79	\$11.49	\$14.54	0.79

Timber Industry in Calhoun County

Calhoun County is one of four counties in the state that is classified as very dependent upon the timber industry. According to an Economic Impact Analysis conducted by the University of Florida⁵, over 11 percent of the total workforce is dependent upon the forestry industry. These beautiful forests represent an industry output of \$56.4 million, over 500 jobs and a tax contribution of approximately \$12 million. The table below describes the total employment contributions of the forested lands, by jobs and industry:

⁵ <https://fred.ifas.ufl.edu/economicimpactanalysis/publications/2016-Forest-industry-and-forest-recreation/>

Industry	Number of Jobs
Forestry Production	470
Secondary Wood Products Manufacturing	27
Wholesale Trade Lumber and Wood	8

In addition to contributions to the economy and jobs, many families in Calhoun County manage forestland on their own private acres as supplemental income or savings for retirement.

Healthcare Industry in Calhoun County

As noted above, healthcare is booming industry in Calhoun County. This industry is tied to the Calhoun-Liberty County Hospital, which is considered a critical access facility by Medicare. This designation is given to hospitals that:

- Have 25 or fewer acute care inpatient beds
- Are Located more than 35 miles from another hospital
- Provide 24/7 emergency care and
- Maintain an annual length of stay of 96 hours or less for acute care patients.

In addition to a place of employment, this hospital serves as a critical healthcare provider for the entire region. Prior to the hurricane, this hospital had significant challenges.

Hurricane Michael Impacts and Recovery Resources

Hurricane Michael inflicted major damage to many businesses in the Florida panhandle, causing substantial damage to commercial structures, destroying their contents and causing losses in operating revenues. In the aftermath of the storm, many roads were blocked or washed away by storm surge, flooding, downed trees, power lines and other debris, and power outages were widespread. In this environment, operation of businesses is impossible, and recovery is difficult.

While there is no comprehensive central repository of business damage and loss claims for Hurricane Michael, application data from the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) low-interest disaster loans provide a reliable sample of the type and extent of damage and losses experienced by businesses because of Hurricane Michael. In Calhoun County, only 39 businesses received verified business losses from Hurricane Michael. However, we know that this does not tell the true story of impacts as many businesses chose to not seek SBA assistance and therefore can remain uncounted in total business losses. Using Dunn & Bradstreet registered business information combined with the area that experienced sustained winds of 57 mph or higher in Hurricane Michael can provide a more realistic understanding of losses. Given the widespread impacts to the county, 987 businesses were assumed to have sustained damage due to their location and sustained winds countywide. The table below provides a summary of verified losses and estimated losses, combined with known insurance and SBA loan payouts to calculate the gap that exists between damage received and remaining unmet need. **Calhoun County has more than \$120 million remaining in unmet economic need.**

CALHOUN COUNTY ECONOMIC LOSSES AND UNMET NEEDS

Known Damage (SBA Verified Loss)		
	Count	Amount
<i>Structure</i>	39	\$2,533,148
<i>Contents</i>	26	\$785,547
<i>Operations</i>	7	\$186,500
TOTAL	39	\$3,505,195
Estimated Damage (D&B Registered Businesses)		
	Count	Amount
<i>Structure</i>	987	\$119,311,495
<i>Contents</i>	987	\$32,333,675
<i>Operations</i>	987	\$33,685,860
TOTAL	987	\$185,331,030
Insurance Payouts		
	Count	Amount
<i>Commercial Structures</i>	338	\$52,002,934
<i>Business Interruptions</i>	586	\$11,990,770
SBA Payouts		
	Count	Amount
<i>Structure</i>	10	\$289,200
<i>Contents</i>	9	\$147,400
<i>Operations</i>	7	\$186,500
TOTAL SBA Payouts	10	\$623,100
<u>TOTAL Estimated Unmet Needs</u>	<u>391</u>	<u>\$120,714,227</u>

In fact, most businesses in Calhoun County experienced sustained winds in excess of 73 mph. Given the age of structures in Calhoun County, it is likely that many of these businesses suffered significant losses. The table

below shows a breakdown of industries (by NAICS code) that experienced in excess of \$3 million in estimated total damages.

CALHOUN COUNTY INDUSTRIES THAT EXPERIENCED ESTIMATED LOSSES OVER \$3 MILLION

Calhoun County Industries	Total Estimated Losses
Other Services and Non-Governmental Organizations	\$27,604,633
Construction	\$18,900,146
Retail Trade	\$17,105,263
Healthcare and Social Assistance	\$14,080,957
Administrative and Support/Waste Management/Remediation Services	\$13,798,992
Educational Services	\$10,004,280
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$6,665,049
Accommodation and Food Services	\$5,558,760
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$5,477,357
Real Estate and Rental Leasing	\$5,361,373
Wholesale Trade	\$4,837,439
Manufacturing	\$4,738,390
Transportation and Warehousing	\$4,107,062

Source: Draft Unmet Needs Assessment for Hurricane Michael, 2020.

The strong winds of Hurricane Michael devastated the forestry and logging industries that contribute to jobs in Calhoun County. The decimation of their forestland has crippled this industry for the foreseeable future. The pine species grown in North Florida are a long-term investment that can take 20 – 25 years to mature for harvest. This means that it will be at least two decades before forestland cleared and replanted today will be ready for harvest. This loss of forestland has crippled the top industry in the county, making many residents vulnerable to both job loss and financial insecurity.

There are resources available to help landowners restore forestland such as the USDA Emergency Forest Restoration Program and USDA Crop Loss Grants. However, local landowners and businesses are having difficulty navigating these processes that require a significant investment upfront with the potential for reimbursement on the backend. In addition, the rules related to crop loss grants that could provide aid to locals has not been released.

Of note is also the impacts to the Healthcare and Social Assistance industry. One of the most critical needs following Hurricane Michael is the regional hospital and the jobs that depend on it. The Calhoun-Liberty Hospital was significantly damaged, threatening the 200+ jobs associated with the healthcare industry. The

Hospital continues to navigate the FEMA Public Assistance process with hopes of securing a replacement facility. However, additional funding could be used to expand the facility and create new jobs, given the impacts to the timber industry.

Economic Unmet Needs

- Calhoun County residents will need technical assistance navigating the funds available to them to replant damaged forestlands. This includes advocacy efforts to help remove barriers like reimbursement processes that require individuals to take out hefty loans to conduct the work with no guarantee for reimbursement.
- The Calhoun-Liberty Hospital will need to be restored and expanded ensure that jobs associated with the healthcare industry are not lost and new jobs can be created to further diversify the economy.
 - *The County is pleased to see that the Draft Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Action Plan for Hurricane Michael includes direct support for the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital.*
- Commercial Corridors throughout the community, including Downtown Blountstown need revitalization due to damage caused by Hurricane Michael.
- Calhoun County will need assistance with workforce retraining considering the impacts to the timber industry. This could include construction or healthcare related jobs.



Infrastructure and Public Facilities Impacts

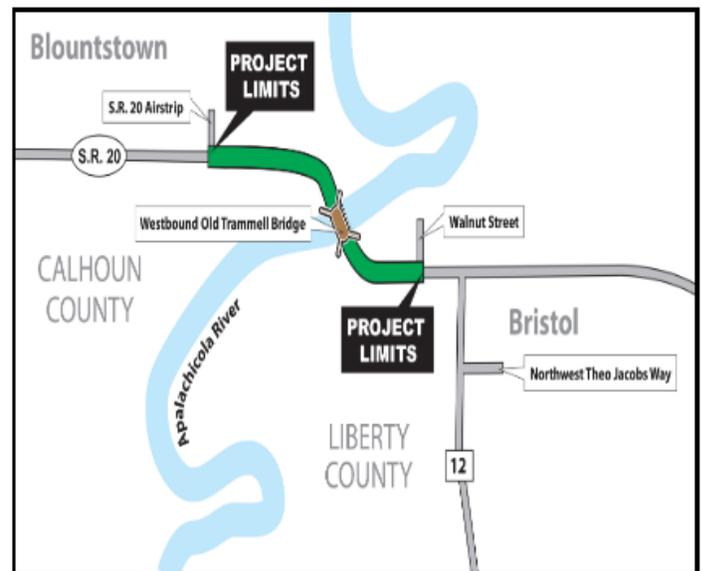
Pre-Hurricane Michael Existing Conditions

systems. However, the City of Blountstown has a public wastewater system and there is a water distribution system provided in the Town of Altha.

There are several state roads that crisscross the community including:

- State Road 20,
- State Road 77,
- State Road 368,
- State Road 390,
- State Road 60,
- State Road 71, and
- State Road 73.
-

The Florida Department of Transportation is currently conducting preliminary design and engineering work on the SR 20 Trammell Bridge. The intent of this study is to evaluate multiple alternatives relative to the future of the SR 20 Apalachicola River Bridge No. 470029 (Westbound Old Trammell Bridge) and how these alternatives will impact motor vehicle and navigation activities along the project area, as well as identify how the bridge's function provides service to the local community area.⁶ As this older bridge span continues to age, the state is considering tearing it down and combining traffic on the much newer eastbound bridge. Community members are worried about how this significant reduction in road and bridge capacity will affect economic development prospects in the future.



The county is serviced mainly by Florida Public Utilities which provides electric and propane services. The county has very limited broadband capacity as the alliance that formed to service this area went bankrupt in 2016.

Hurricane Michael Impacts and Recovery Resources

According to data from the Florida Division of Emergency Management, over \$22 million was spent on addressing debris removal, emergency protective measures and impacts to infrastructure. The table below shows the amount of FEMA Public Assistance funding provided to each category,

⁶ <https://nwflroads.com/projects/439202-2>

FEMA PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FUNDS SPENT IN CALHOUN COUNTY

Public Assistance Category	Total Amount Spent
Category A: Debris Removal	\$3,556,701
Category B: Emergency Protective Measures	\$2,223,700
Category C: Roads and Bridges	\$374,200
Category D: Water Control Facilities	\$0
Category E: Buildings and Equipment	\$35,411,331
Category F: Utilities	\$3,654,250
Category G: Parks, Recreation and Other	\$5,018,738
Category Z: Project Management	\$3,200
TOTAL	\$49,758,238

Fortunately, cost share for Categories A, B, and most of Category Z costs is 0% for the state and will be covered 100% by FEMA through the Stafford Act. All other Public Assistance categories remain at a 75% Federal / 25% State cost share. Estimating remaining unmet needs across these counties is possible by presuming that all state or local cost shares are “unmet needs”. Based on this information, there is over \$11 million remaining in unmet needs tied to damages from Hurricane Michael.

In addition to the FEMA Public Assistance Program, FEMA offers Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for the purposes of hardening infrastructure to withstand the impacts of future disasters. According to data from FEMA as of November of 2019, Calhoun County is eligible to receive over \$14 million in HMGP funds with a required match of over \$4.7 million. This total amount will likely change in the coming months as the total amount available per county is tied to a formula based on overall FEMA spending on disaster recovery. The State of Florida recently announced that they hope to use Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery programs to match HMGP funding. This could be a significant resource for Calhoun County.

The lack of communication infrastructure following Hurricane Michael was a tremendous need that hampered response and recovery. There are places within the county that lack access to even wireless cell phone signal, which can challenge emergency response efforts. In addition, the lack of broadband capacity throughout the community can make it difficult for businesses and industries who may wish to locate or expand their operations within Calhoun County.

Infrastructure Unmet Needs

- Cost-share for Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program projects.
- Upgrades and enhancements to wastewater infrastructure throughout the City of Blountstown, including improvements needed to address consent order.
- Enhancements to communication infrastructure including broadband capacity.



Health and Social Services Impacts and Unmet Needs

Existing Conditions

Calhoun County, a rural community, has challenges associated with health and social services that can largely be tied to the high rate of poverty in the community and the cascading impacts that are associated with individuals under a great deal of stress that must make difficult choices every day on prioritizing their resources for daily living. However, Calhoun County has good schools. In fact, in 2019, the Florida Department of Education graded the Calhoun County School District overall as a B-rated school system. In 2018, Calhoun County School District received an A rating. This slight drop in overall scoring may have been a result of school closures and displacement as a result of Hurricane Michael.⁷

However, based on data presented in the 2018-2021 Community Health Improvement Plan the community recognized its need to continue to make improvements in the areas of:

- Mental health and substance abuse,
- Access to healthcare, and
- Obesity.

The community identified the following key forces and threats that they feel contribute to these challenges:

Key Forces	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug use• Lack of activities for the youth• Acceptance of fast food as a way of life• Sedentary lifestyle• Unemployment rate• Poverty rate• Budget cuts to Medicaid• Unknown future for Affordable Care Act• Telemedicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crime• No access to Narcan• Lack of interest in change• Obesity, heart disease and diabetes• Lack of fresh fruit and vegetables• Lack of personal motivation

Hurricane Michael Impacts and Recovery Resources

Hurricanes can have a significant impact on the overall mental and physical health of a community. However, it can sometimes be hard to recognize as an entire community is navigating varying levels of prolonged Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The initial impact of surviving the event itself can be traumatic. This is further compounded as individuals move forward with their recovery experiencing displacement from their homes, community groups, frustrating insurance claims processes, unemployment and in some cases grieving the loss of loved ones. Enduring the long-term stress caused by a catastrophic hurricane can be truly overwhelming for those who were considered stable prior to a disaster. This stress can be difficult to measure but often presents itself in the data of unfortunate side effects from stress like increased substance abuse and incarceration rates.

⁷ <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/accountability-reporting/school-grades/>

Between 2017 and 2018, Calhoun County saw a six percent decrease in the total number of arrests – a dramatic decrease, demonstrating the overall improvement of the county.⁸ However, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Uniform Crime Statistics data for 2019 shows an overall 13.3 percent increase in crime rate including a 24.6 percent increase in violent crime. according to Sherriff Glen Kimbrel, the inmate population has significantly increased since Hurricane Michael.

Prior to Hurricane Michael, it was reported that Calhoun County performed the worst in the State of Florida in the following health indicators that are associated with substance abuse and mental health issues. With no access in the county to psychiatric or substance abuse beds in Calhoun County, it can be difficult to treat severe substance abuse and mental health challenges.⁹

- Infant Mortality
- Post Neonatal Deaths
- Nephritis, Nephritic Syndrome Deaths
- Motor Vehicle Accident Deaths
- Low Birth Weight
- Hepatitis C, Acute
- Adults with Poor Mental Health 14 of the past 30 days
- Unhealthy Mental Days Interfered w/ADLs
- Alcohol Consumption in Lifetime (Youth)
- Alcohol Consumption in Past 30 days (Youth)
- Binge Drinking (Youth)
- Marijuana Use
- Birth to Mothers aged 10 – 16
- Birth to Mothers aged 15 – 19
- Children Ages 1-5 receiving mental health treatment
- Alcohol-related motor vehicle traffic crashes

While the data has not been collected to show how these factors have been affected by Hurricane Michael, it can be expected that the stress of the storm likely increased many of these indicators.

Access to comprehensive, quality health care services is traditionally a struggle for rural communities and is true for Calhoun County as well. Access to healthcare is a critical part of increasing the quality of life for residents as it impacts:

- Prevention of disease and disability,
- Preventable hospitalization,
- Overall physical, social and mental health status,

⁸<https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/FSAC/County-Profiles/Calhoun>

⁹<http://calhoun.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health-planning-and-statistics/ documents/2017CHA.pdf>

- Detection and treatment of disease and health conditions,
- Preventable death, and
- Life expectancy.

The severe damage caused to Calhoun-Liberty hospital and its associated facilities, located in neighboring Calhoun County dealt the final devastating blow to the healthcare infrastructure of this region. In addition, the hospital has an ancillary clinic that practices family medicine. The building where the clinic is housed is not rated for high winds and must be evacuated during strong summer storms that are frequent in Florida. Without restoration of the hospital and hardening of the clinic, it will be difficult for this community to maintain what little healthcare options available without rebuilding this hospital. The expansion of services offered through the hospital and clinic could serve as a great economic development opportunity for the community's future.

Health and Social Services Unmet Needs

- The Calhoun-Liberty Hospital will need to be restored and expanded ensure that healthcare options are available for residents.
- *The County is pleased to see that the Draft Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Action Plan for Hurricane Michael includes direct support for the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital.*
- Mental health and substance abuse services are needed to address the significant rise in crime rates and lower recidivism in the future.
- Additional social services will be needed to support the long-term health needs of the community that have increased as a result of the storm.



Natural and Cultural Resource Impacts

Pre-Hurricane Michael Existing Conditions

The natural and cultural significance of Calhoun County is one of the county's greatest assets. In fact, according to survey responses, nearly 70% of all respondents said they love Calhoun County for its beautiful natural forests and the river. Residents enjoy hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, and Calhoun County offers many opportunities get outside and enjoy nature in solitude. In addition, the rich history of Calhoun County spans multiple centuries and there are unique treasures throughout the community that celebrate the cultural significance of this area.

Calhoun County is home to the Apalachicola Forest, Apalachicola River, Chipola River, Look & Tremble Falls, Blountstown Greenway Trail and several local parks. In addition, there are many historically significant places within Calhoun County that add to the culture of the community. This includes the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement, Cayson Mound & Village Site, Florida Historical Marker for Apalachicola Creek Indians and the Old Calhoun County Courthouse.

Hurricane Michael Impacts and Resources

One of the most striking impacts throughout the community that can be seen from driving along its main thoroughfares is the damage to the forests that. Hurricane Michael uprooted and snapped trees in half throughout the beautiful forests on both public and private lands. This damage will take years to replant to ensure healthy forests in the future. These once beautiful forests now pose a major threat as the dead trees have created significant fuel loads for wildfires that can damage nearby homes and businesses. While there are resources available to help clear debris and replant forests, it will take years to accomplish the clean-up necessary to restore the forests and reduce the wildfire threat to this community.

In addition, the damage to forests and Forest Roads have made access to boat ramps and other recreational opportunities difficult. Without major clean-up and repair efforts, Calhoun County's top asset – its natural landscape – will be lost.

Natural and Cultural Resource Unmet Needs

- Clear vegetative debris to reduce the significant wildfire threat posed by Hurricane Michael.
- Restore forests and in-town tree canopy throughout the county to enable residents and visitors to enjoy these areas once again and sustain ecotourism opportunities.
- Restore and improve access to rivers through enhancements to boat ramps and associated facilities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Overview

Community engagement is an essential part of any long-term recovery plan. Calhoun County used many methods to seek input from the public including setting up booths at a Christmas event, public meetings, a community survey, and one-on-one stakeholder meetings. The information we gathered from this input has been integrated into the entire plan and highlighted in the sections below.

Community Events

Community Outreach – Veteran’s Memorial Railroad

On Saturday, December 14 the Apalachee Regional Planning Council set up a booth at the popular Veteran’s Memorial Railroad to get input from citizens on their long-term vision for Calhoun County. Community members filled out surveys and were invited to answer the question, “Our Community is a great place to live – how can we make it even better?” Project staff handed out flyers and encouraged residents to participate through the survey or community meetings.

Public Meeting #1

On Thursday, January 16 the first Public Meeting was held to discuss ways the community continued to struggle following Hurricane Michael and brainstorm ideas for the future. Ten individuals from the community attended this meeting and provided the following feedback.

- The local economy is still struggling post-hurricane.
 - Winds damaged the trees, ruining the local timber industry
 - Ten out of 50 ranchers sold their cattle and do not intend to stay in the business.
 - Recovery related workers (plumbers, electricians, general contractors) are still in high demand.
 - The community is considering hemp as an alternative crop.

- The school system was impacted by Hurricane Michael.
 - Elementary school buildings were damaged but are seeking funding through the Florida Department of Education and FEMA to repair.
 - Many children are not living at home but instead staying with family friends.
 - There was an initial decrease in attendance after the hurricane due to no housing, however Altha increased in student population.
 - The school board has a long-term plan for redevelopment and expansion that includes new trade school opportunities and life skills.

- The impacts to the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital has affected many throughout the community. Schools, nursing homes, citizens, doctors and jobs all depend on the hospital.

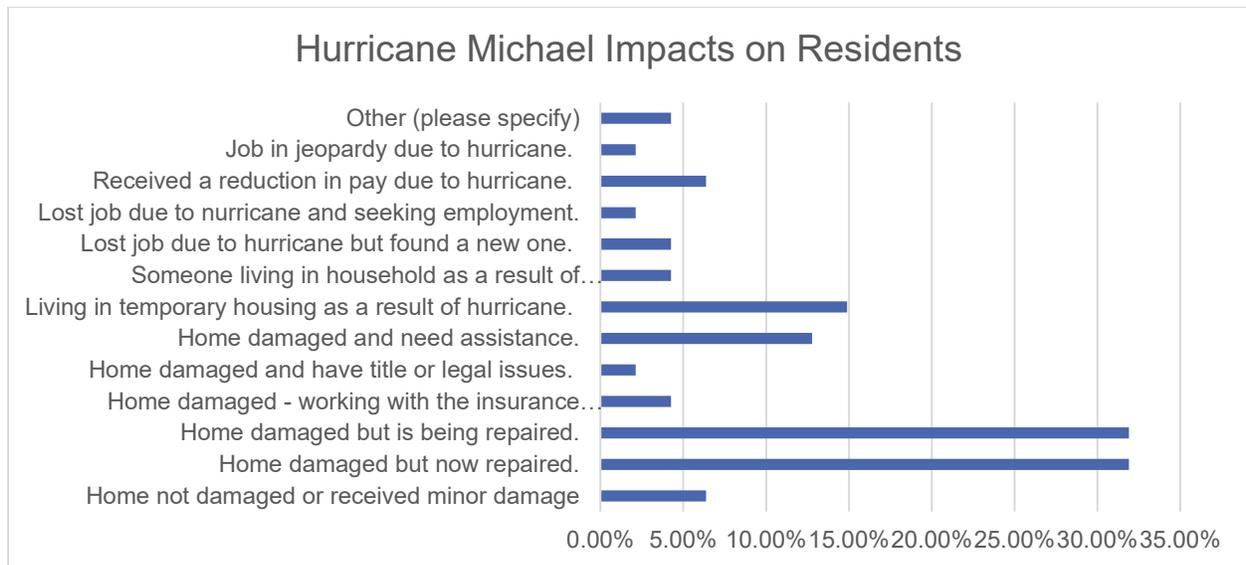
- Housing recovery remains a challenge.
 - Relief workers do not have places to stay when they come to Calhoun County to volunteer, making it difficult to use this as a resource.
 - There is a need to improve rental houses with the goal of no blue tarps in the future.
 - There is a need for rental housing, affordable housing and new housing stock for sale.
 - Most homes are valued under \$100,000 and are 50 to 70 years old.
 - Hurricane Michael has created a homeless problem in Calhoun County. This includes many people living with other family members who don't consider themselves homeless.
- Further community clean-up efforts are needed.
 - Debris removal is needed in the Chipola River. Marine debris from the storm is in the river, displacing water and causing flooding in new areas of the community.
 - There are standing dead trees that threaten nearby homes, businesses, roadways, power lines and create a wildfire threat in the community.
 - The community is running out of places to put dead vegetation.
- There major impacts to cultural resources in the community.
 - Improvements are needed to libraries and parks.
 - Frink Gym is damaged and is need of repair because it is used as a community center.
 - The Pioneer Settlement received damage and would like to expand operations in the future to include educational skill building.
- Public facilities are in need of improvement.
 - The jail is still waiting on FEMA reimbursements.
 - There is a need to expand to make more room for female inmates.
 - It will take longer for FEMA funding to be approved for the courthouse because it is on the national historic registry.
 - The number of inmates has increased, and meth problems are on the rise – a potential result of PTSD in the community.
- City of Blountstown
 - There are many transients after Hurricane Michael – new individuals who are homeless who did not live here prior to the storm.
 - The city had to install security equipment to deter vandalism.
 - Residents are experiencing application fatigue and do not want to fill out new applications for assistance.
 - Power lines, buildings and roadways are being damaged by fallen dead trees.
 - In the future, our community needs a designated shelter that can be staffed properly for hurricanes.
- Future Goals
 - Vocational and trade school options.
 - Need affordable housing and encouraging the option for duplexes. There are stories of local workers who are living in Bay County because housing options are not available.
 - Explore tiny homes or Katrina cottages as a model.
 - Attract more industry in the future. The lack of rail and no water access limit opportunities.

- The County’s Catalyst Site should be further explored.
- There is a need to four-lane Hwy 71 and Hwy 20.
- Calhoun County should embrace its ability to become a bedroom community that offers a low cost of living.
- Need to revitalize downtown areas and make them more appealing with medians, trees, streetlights.
- Encourage RV and campsites as lodging for visitors.

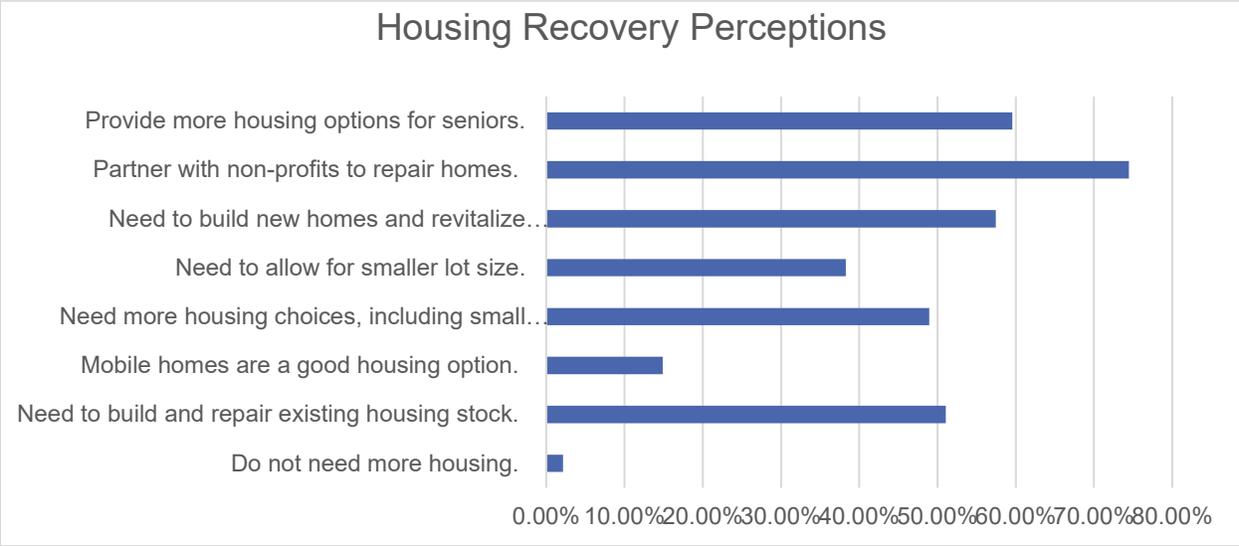
Community Survey

From December of 2019 through March of 2020, the project team solicited responses to a community-wide survey to gather input on future goals of the citizens of Calhoun County. Forty-seven individuals responded to the survey. The outputs from the survey have been included below.

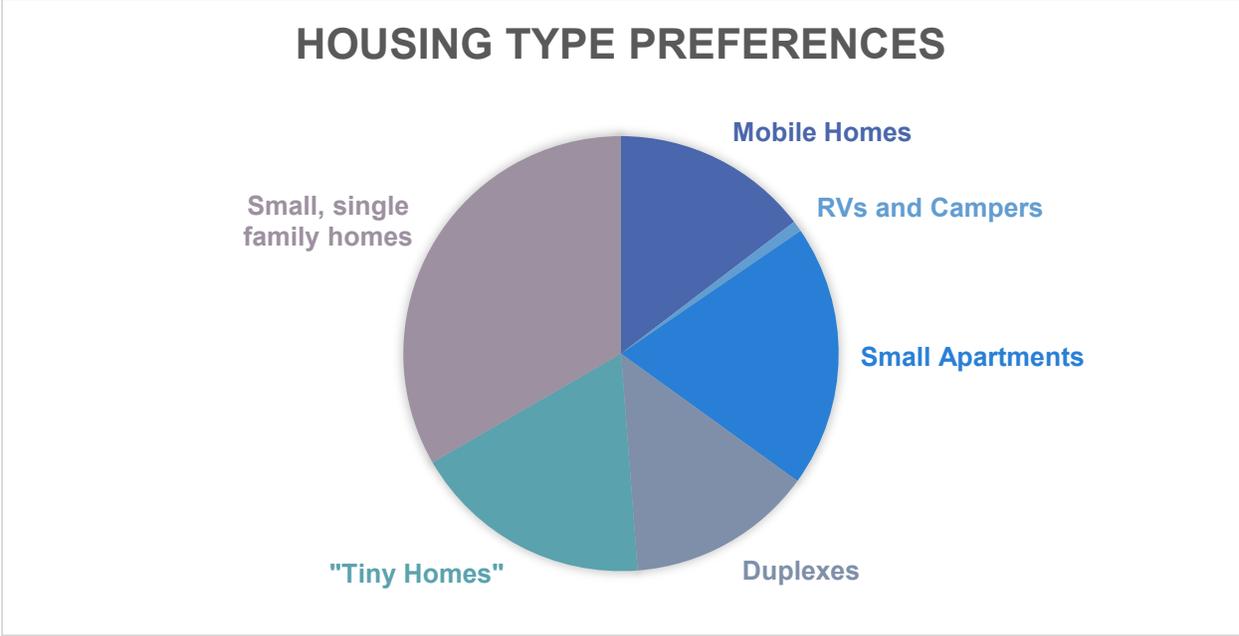
According to the survey, most residents reported that their homes were damaged but has been repaired or is in the process of being repaired. It should be noted that at the time of the survey, 15 percent of individuals reported they were still living in temporary housing with slightly less indicating they need assistance.



As is true to the nature of Calhoun County that takes care of the members of its community, most respondents felt strongly about the need to partner with non-profits to continue to help others repair homes and provide more housing options for seniors. Respondents also pointed to the need to build new homes with more choices. A very small minority indicated they do not want more housing in the community.

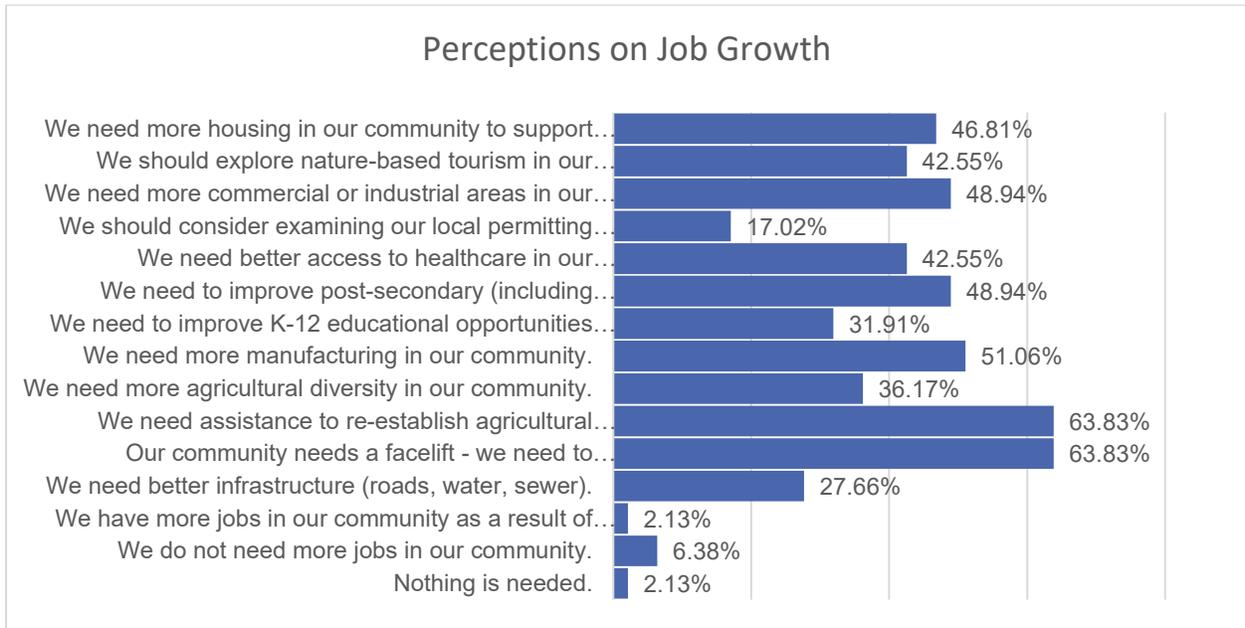


For the most part, most respondents felt that small, single family homes were the best fit for Calhoun County. However, many felt that there should be a variety of choices including mobile homes, small apartments, duplexes and even smaller homes.

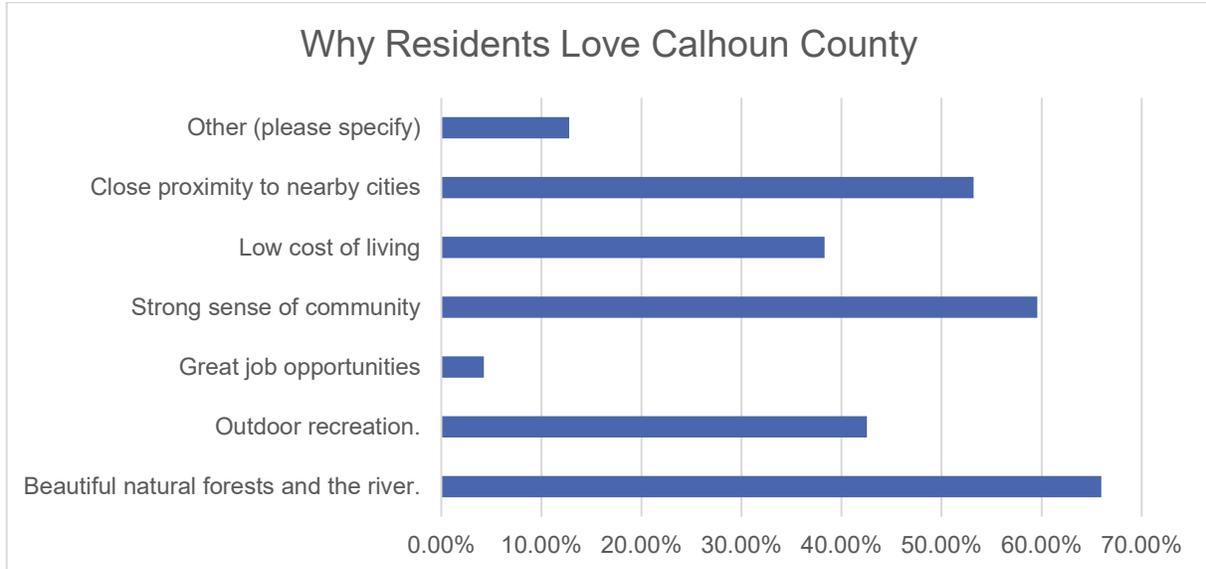


Calhoun County respondents felt that their community needs a facelift through community revitalization efforts and that infrastructure should be improved. The County also felt strongly that more manufacturing is needed in the community along with industrial areas to support this growth. Many felt that improvements to post-

secondary educational options, including vocational opportunities could help produce more jobs in their community.



Calhoun County is loved for its beautiful natural assets and strong sense of community. Specific things that residents reported to be the reasons they loved the community are reported below. They also reported ways that the community could be improved in the future.



Specific Things Residents Love About Calhoun County

- Nature, beautiful resources
- Close, caring community that lends a helping hand.
- Our People
- Our Church
- My family is here
- The love and fellowship we have for our neighbors and friends and the compassion we have for all in our community.
- Small town
- Get to raise my children here. Having a son with a medical condition and needing people in the school system to understand why I moved back. They have been great.
- The sense of community and how we all come together in a time of need.
- Carr School – small schools give kids better opportunities.
- The way we worked together after the storm. It seemed we were one and not divided.
- The way people pull together in times of need. Everyone knows everyone or at least someone in your family.
- Not heavily populated, friendly folks, ample dining options and light traffic.
- Lived here since birth and know everyone.
- Traffic and slower life.
- Simplicity, kind people.
- Small Town USA

Specific Things that Need to be Improved

- The Senior Center needs service improvements.
- Housing
- Job opportunities
- Trade school in the county
- Healthcare
- Need better paying jobs
- Need to fix homes and businesses that can be fixed and demolish what cannot be fixed.
- Need to restore the tree canopy
- Need transportation to nearby jobs
- More activities for kids who are not medically allowed to play sports
- Afterschool care programs and activities for kids and teens.
- Need to address drug challenges in the community
- New industry
- Clean up storm debris on the Chipola to increase nature-based tourism opportunities
- Need new homes and nice apartment complexes
- Tourism and camping opportunities
- Improve internet availability
- Entry level job options
- Be more open to outsiders and new individuals coming into our community
- Need job growth in Calhoun County

Summary of Stakeholder Meetings

One-on-one meetings with stakeholders in the community provided the most valuable input in the development of the Long-Term Recovery Plan. Over the course of the development of this plan, the project team met with many stakeholders. Their invaluable input has been integrated into all aspects of this plan to understand the unique impacts from Hurricane Michael and how assets can be used to support economic growth. In addition, these stakeholders have been instrumental in identifying new projects that would support the county's use of existing assets for economic growth.

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Stakeholders Interviewed

The following individuals were interviewed as part of this planning effort.

- Noah Byler, Dewberry
- Justin Ford, Dewberry
- Tim Revell, Calhoun-Liberty Hospital Board Member
- Richard Williams, Opportunity Florida
- Kristy Terry, Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce
- Traci Hall, Blountstown City Manager
- Sheriff Glen Kimbrel, Calhoun County Sheriff's Office
- Daniel Leonard, Calhoun County Extension Director
- Chelsea Ranew, Calhoun County Emergency Management

Summary of Major Themes and Ideas from Interviews

The following is a summary of major themes and ideas presented over the course of meetings with stakeholders. To help ensure the anonymity of their input, names have not been attributed to the ideas presented. Ideas captured below are those that were not already addressed through survey input or public meetings (duplicative ideas are not included).

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- There is a need to increase density to lower lot size requirements. This will allow for more affordable housing choices in the community.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- The restoration and expansion of the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital was considered by many stakeholders as the top regional recovery need. In addition, the clinic associated with the hospital needs to be enhanced or hardened against wind impacts. Over 500 jobs depend on this hospital and if not rebuilt it would be a tremendous loss for the entire community.
- There is a need for an alternative to the timber industry and agricultural diversification.

- The Calhoun County Catalyst Site is a great asset, but the size limits many opportunities additional enhancements are needed.
- Smaller landowners that do not have the equipment or funding to clean up properties are struggling to replant timber.
- The Crop Loss Grant could be a great opportunity to continue clean-up, but the rules have not yet been released by the state.
- The Emergency Reforestation Grant period ends in April.
- Over 500 jobs depend on timber in the area.

HEATH AND SOCIAL SERVICES RECOVERY

- Since Hurricane Michael, the number of inmates has significantly increased.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

- Stormwater improvements are needed to address flooding issues in neighborhoods within Blountstown.
- There are portions of the sewer system currently under consent order by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection – these need to be addressed.
- There is a large need for digital communication in Calhoun County. Calls are dropped and scrambled – at least two more repeaters are needed.
- There is a need to enhance the jail significantly as the current facility is not safe. An option could be behind the courthouse, near the airport which would allow the county to expand operations to include federal inmates. There are currently 65 beds in the jail but a need for approximately 160 beds.

HOUSING

- Community members are open to small multi-family options such as duplexes to allow for more housing choice that is affordable.
- Calhoun County should expand its residential offerings, catering to individuals who live in nearby communities as a “bedroom” community due to lower cost of living.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Calhoun County is the only county in the state that does not have a state park. There are appropriate sites for a park that should be explored in the future.
- There is a need to continue to restore and revitalize historic structures located in the downtown corridor.
- Standing dead trees pose a threat to repaired homes and infrastructure.



CALHOUN COUNTY VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Overview

In the wake of Hurricane Michael, Calhoun County chooses to look forward and not backwards, into the future. The County chooses to see the redevelopment that must occur after the storm as an opportunity to create a community that future generations will be proud to call home while maintain the small town character that makes the community special.

Calhoun County Vision for the Future



Preserve the river landscape for environmentally-friendly tourism opportunities through the development of a State Park with nearby lodging opportunities.



Support the regrowth of the timber industry for small businesses in the community.



Grow the economy and create jobs for the next generation by expanding healthcare opportunities and diversifying agricultural crops.

Improve the industrial park and adjacent properties to attract manufacturing opportunities in line with the character of the community.



Create partnerships between local schools and vocational training to develop the workforce in line with targeted industries.

Promote homegrown businesses and enhance commercial corridors to create an attractive downtown and commercial areas.



Enhance infrastructure throughout the county to address current challenges and allow for future opportunities.

Create opportunities for neighborhoods and workforce housing for growing families in the community and promote home ownership.



Retain and enhance healthcare access to improve the quality of life of residents.

RECOVERY PROJECTS & ACTIONS

Overview

The Calhoun County Long-term Recovery Plan outlines projects that will the community to recover from Hurricane Michael and achieve the future vision for the County. These projects have been categorized by topic area and include information that can be used as data to help them vet potential grant opportunities.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

- Amendments to Local Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code to Encourage Housing that is Affordable

HOUSING RECOVERY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

- Conduct an Inventory of Vacant Lots
- Utilize Hurricane Housing Recovery Program for Workforce Housing New Construction
- Acquire Homes through Voluntary Buyouts in Areas that Frequently Flood
- Rebuild Florida Housing Repair and Replacement Outreach to Residents and Landlords

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

- Calhoun-Liberty Hospital Reconstruction
- Implement Highway 20 Economic Development Project
- Repair Tri-County Agricultural Complex
- Revitalize Downtown Blountstown and Commercial Corridors
- Develop Trade Skills Programs
- Technical Assistance for Crop Loss Grants
- Identify Workforce Retraining Opportunities

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

- Enhance Blountstown Sewer System
- Construct a New Jail
- Upgrade and Enhance Communications Infrastructure
- Additional Well Installation at the Calhoun County Industrial Park
- Additional Fire Protection Storage Capacity at the Calhoun County Industrial Park
- Water Distribution Main Extension at the Calhoun County Industrial Park
- Wastewater Collection Improvements at the Calhoun County Industrial Park
- Wastewater Transmission Improvements from the Calhoun County Industrial Park to the Town of Altha.
- Town of Altha Wastewater Collection System

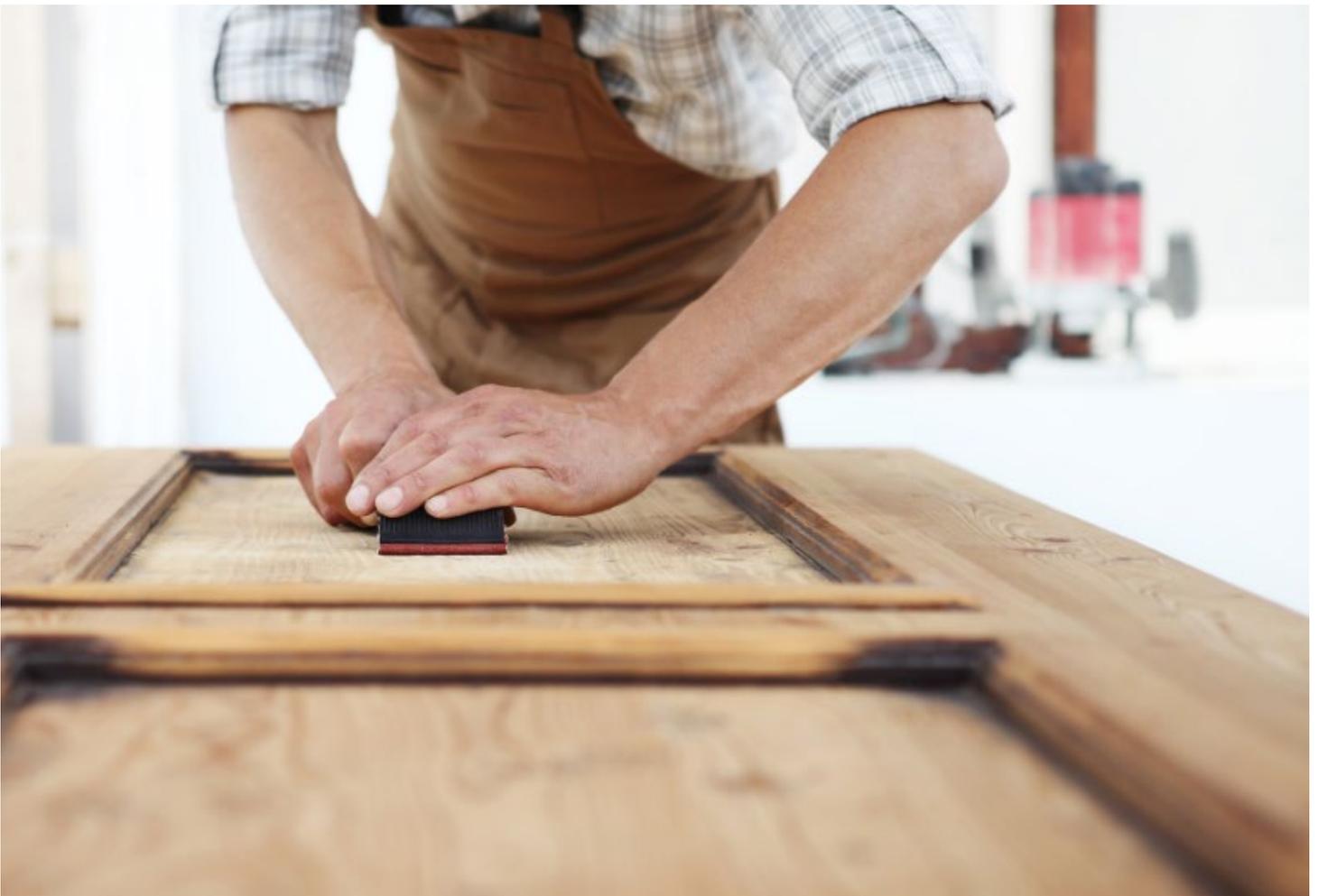
- Natural Gas Metering and Regulation Station
- Installation of a Natural Gas Distribution System
- Develop a Stormwater Master Plan
- Create a Designated Shelter in Calhoun County

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

- Develop Partnership Programs to Address Rising Crime Rates
- Develop Programs to Reduce Recidivism for Inmates in County Jail

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOVERY PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

- Riverfront Park Development
- Restore and Enhance Pioneer Settlement
- Restore Old Calhoun County Courthouse
- Remove Debris from Chipola River
- Remove Damaged Trees
- Restore Tree Canopy
- Monitor State & Federal Forestry Controlled Burn Efforts
- Repair & Improve Existing Boat Ramps



Community Planning and Capacity Building Projects and Actions

Amendments to Local Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code, \$40,000

Summary

Within the unincorporated area of Calhoun County, the Development Code requires that if the subdivider's development plan is based on an eventual reliance upon individual wells and waste water disposal systems, such as septic tanks, which will be provided by the purchaser of each lot, each lot shall be platted as a minimum of one-half acre in size for single family dwellings or at a net residential density no greater than 2.0 units per acre for multifamily dwellings. If the subdivider agrees to provide a community water system to serve all of the lots to be platted and further proposes a reliance upon individual wastewater disposal systems, such as septic tanks, which will be provided by the purchaser of each lot, each lot shall be platted as a minimum of one-fourth acres in size for single family dwellings or at a net residential density no greater than 4.0 units per acre for multifamily dwellings. If the subdivider agrees to provide a community water system and a central sewage system to serve all lots to be platted, and paved roads throughout the subdivision, each lot shall be platted as a minimum of one-sixth acre in size for single family dwellings or at a net residential density no greater than 12.0 units per acre for multifamily dwellings.

The County may consider lowering the lot size requirement to allow for more affordable housing choices in the county and the creation of neighborhoods that are affordable for families. The County could strategically determine which areas should allow for smaller lot sizes, without a variance, and which areas should remain "rural" with larger lot size requirements. In addition to this Code change, the County may also consider amending zoning requirements to allow homes with less square footage. This would offer additional choices for housing that is affordable for seniors in Calhoun County. In addition to decreased lot sizes, the County may consider allowing multi-family structures and small garden apartments in areas with access to sewer and water to increase the availability of workforce housing. This change would be in conjunction with the lot size change, allowing for increased density in specific areas. While the County does allow for a variance process, developers may not opt to go through this hoop in the process and instead relocate to another county with more favorable development standards. This project has the potential to make the County more competitive and encourages economic development.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County BOCC

Project Location

Unincorporated areas of Calhoun County

Project Benefits to Homes

Calhoun County has identified a need for workforce housing, this code change could incentivize future workforce housing development.

Actions to Support Project

- Review zoning code and zoning maps to identify areas where increased lot coverage would be consistent with current uses.
- Develop code changes.

Potential Funding Sources

- DEO Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants



Housing Recovery Projects and Actions

Vacant Lot Inventory, \$10,000

Summary

Workforce Housing is a priority for Calhoun County, however addressing that challenge can be done in a variety of ways. As previously discussed, making Code adjustments to create a developer-friendly environment is just one example. Another recommendation is to conduct a city/county-owned vacant lot inventory as a resource for contractors with the focus on workforce development. It can be challenging to bring developers or contractors into your region for workforce housing projects, however taking the guesswork out of finding available and shovel-ready properties can be an incentive for development.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, City of Blountstown, Apalachee Regional Planning Council

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Calhoun County has identified a need for workforce housing, a vacant lot inventory for contractors and developers could incentivize future workforce housing development.

Actions to Support Project

- Determine how the information will be shared with contractors and providers.
- Consider contracting with Apalachee Regional Planning Council or a private consulting firm to collect the information and develop the dissemination process. Options include hard-copy materials and online.

Potential Funding Sources

- DEO Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants

Hurricane Housing Recovery Program for New Construction

Summary

Calhoun County has been the recipient of funds through the Hurricane Housing Recovery Program in response to Hurricane Michael. HHRP funding is almost identical to the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program, but is a one-time special appropriation following disasters. The county could consider using this funding for construction activities to build new, attractive workforce housing in the community. Currently, the Calhoun County Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) does not include this as a strategy, but through an amendment a new construction strategy could be added to construct new homes in the community. This could be done on vacant city and county-owned lots or in partnership with a for-profit or not-for-profit developer. Implementing a new construction strategy for the first time can be challenging. If the community pursues this project, it is recommended that they contact the Florida Housing Coalition for technical assistance.

In developing an arsenal of resources and incentives for developers and contractors, the addition of funding is invaluable and can provide a tangible leg up on other areas who lack those resources.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Calhoun County has identified a need for workforce housing, funding availability to supplement costs for contractors and developers could incentivize future workforce housing development.

Actions to Support Project

- Reach out to the Florida Housing Coalition for technical assistance on new construction strategies.
- Review other county [LHAPs](#) for sample strategy language.
- Consider watching this [webinar](#) on new construction strategies to determine if this is a good fit for the community.
- Reach out to local developers and non-profits in the region to find potential partners and gauge interest for a new construction strategy.

Potential Funding Sources

- Hurricane Housing Recovery Program
- State Housing Initiatives Partnership

Acquire Homes through Voluntary Buyouts in Areas that Frequently Flood

Summary

Portions of Calhoun County are subject to flooding which can have a devastating effect on the places people call home. Recognizing this risk, the Florida Division of Emergency Management has recommended that communities focus on acquisition of properties without flood insurance in a Special Flood Hazard Area. In response to this recommendation, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity created a \$27 million Voluntary Home Buyout Program through the Hurricane Michael CDBG-DR Action Plan. Cities and counties will be eligible to receive up to \$5 million to acquire homes in high risk flood areas. Property acquired through this program can then be used to alleviate flooding on other properties through infrastructure improvements or stormwater retention ponds. This property can also be used to create recreational space within the community.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County BOCC, The City of Blountstown

Project Location

Special Flood Hazard Area

Project Benefits to Homes

Will relocate residents from areas vulnerable to flood to safer ground. Property can then be used to further alleviate flooding from nearby property or as a recreational space.

Actions to Support Project

- Calhoun County might consider coordinating with the City of Blountstown on this program. If the total value of property to be acquired throughout the county does not exceed \$5 million, a combined application could be developed, and resources could be leveraged.
- Using recent flood maps, the County could inventory residential properties that are at risk to flood and those that meet LMI criteria, as 75 percent of the funding allocated must be spent to address the needs of LMI.
- To understand how the program may be structured, the City could review applications and guidelines released for a similar program launched after [Hurricane Irma](#).
- Reach out to potential candidates to determine their willingness to participate in the program and monitor the launch of this opportunity on the [DEO website](#).

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael: Voluntary Home Buyout Program
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program

Housing Repair and Replacement Outreach to Residents and Landlords

Summary

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity has committed to the implementation of a state-managed Housing Repair and Replacement Program (HRRP) in the Hurricane Michael CDBG-DR Action Plan. Nearly \$250 million in funding will be spent to repair and replace homes that received damage from Hurricane Michael through the Rebuild Florida Program. Most of this funding will go to address the needs of Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) residents who earn no more than 80 percent of the Area Median Income. The following activities will be allowed under this program:

- Repairs to, reconstruction or replacement of housing units damaged by Hurricane Michael, much may include bringing the home into code compliance and mitigation against future storm impacts, including elevation.
- The completion of work to homes that have been partially repaired.
- Repairs to, or replacement of, manufactured, modular and mobile homes impacted by Hurricane Michael.
- Assistance to address clouded title issues that may be hampering the repair or replacement of homes.

The maximum amount of funding that can be awarded for a home replacement is \$350,000 – significantly higher than traditional housing rehabilitations programs funded through the State Housing Initiatives Partnership. This could be a major opportunity to improve the modest income housing stock for both homeowners and renters in the community. Eligible applicants include homeowners and owners of rental properties, including Public Housing Authorities, whose primary residence sustained damage from Hurricane Michael and property owners of rental housing.

At the time of the completion of this plan, the HRRP program had not yet been opened for Hurricane Michael. However, interested parties can check the [DEO website](#) for the most up-to-date information or [sign-up for updates](#) on Rebuild Florida.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, City of Blountstown, North Florida Inland Recovery Group, Calhoun County BOCC.

Project Location

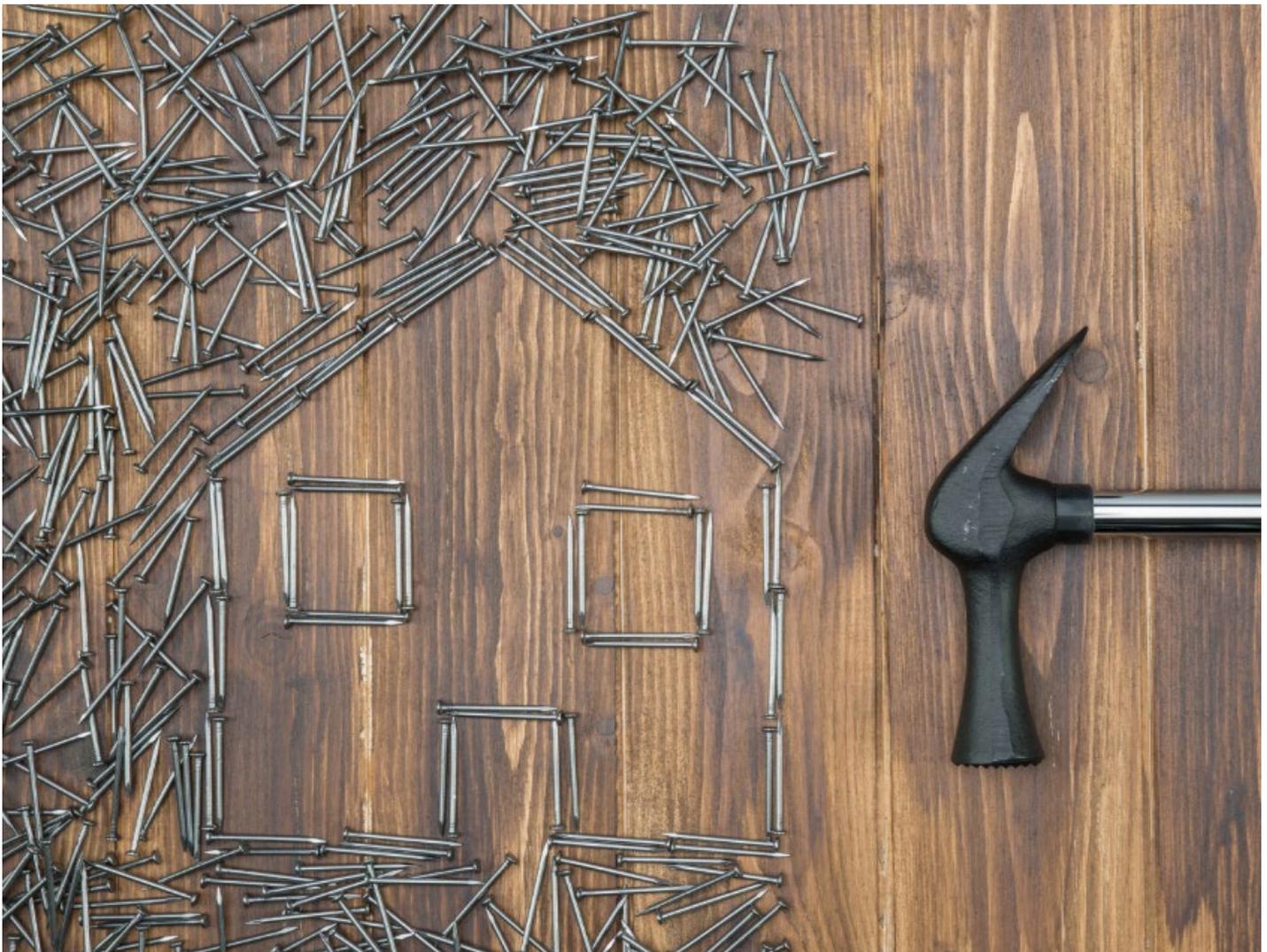
Countywide.

Project Benefits to Homes

Homeowners with damaged or condemned properties due to Hurricane Michael can utilize CDBG-DR to recover. This recommended marketing and education process will help inform and encourage eligible applicants to take advantage of the program.

Actions to Support Project

- Monitor the launch of Rebuild Florida for Hurricane Michael impacted communities.
- To understand how this program may work, employees can visit the current program website that showcases housing programs in place following Hurricane Irma. While policies may change, it is likely that much of the information will be similar.
- Work with DEO to acquire educational material on CDBG-DR to provide to property owners.
- Have a point of contact within the County or a partner dedicated to the North Florida Inland Recovery Group educated in the program and available to answer any questions from local citizens. Ensure this person's information is widely available to encourage outreach.
- In partnership with the Calhoun County SHIP administrator, contact local homeowners known to have sustained damage in Hurricane Michael to educate them on their options with CDBG-DR and encourage them to apply.



Economic Recovery Projects and Actions

Calhoun-Liberty Hospital Reconstruction, \$30,000,000

Summary

Calhoun-Liberty Hospital, while in Calhoun County, is a joint facility and serves the surrounding areas of Calhoun, Liberty, Gulf, and Jackson counties. The Hospital is a critical institution in the region and was badly impacted by Hurricane Michael. Over 80% of the roof was torn off, now replaced by a temporary roof. Water-damaged areas, such as the main lobby and lab, were forced to close and relocate. For months, the Hospital was closed for inpatient services and has seen an increase in uninsured patients since the storm. While the Hospital will get some funding from FEMA, it will not be enough to replace the facility up to the codes and regulations for hospitals. Prior to Hurricane Michael, there was an emergency room Expansion planned, using a \$1 million grant. This effort has now been postponed due to the need to replace the facility. The hospital creates over 500 jobs in the community and the loss of this facility would be devastating from both a health access and economic perspective. This project recommends the complete reconstruction of the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital following the damage from Hurricane Michael. This effort would include the replacement and enhancement of the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital, clinic, and EMS facilities to provide better access to healthcare and opportunities for expanded services to residents in the region. This project could assist with Calhoun-Liberty Hospital retaining valuable jobs as well as create new job opportunities for the region.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun-Liberty Hospital Board of Directors

Project Location

20370 Burns Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424, New Facility – TBD

Project Benefits to Homes

Access to critical and continuing care facilities is a significant consideration for current and future residents. Ensuring the survival of Calhoun-Liberty Hospital will likely help to support future economic and community development. In addition, this hospital primarily services low- and moderate-income individuals.

Actions to Support Project

- Finalize FEMA PA process to secure funding for replacement facility.
- Acquire property for new hospital location.
- Develop detailed site plans that include costs for the new hospital, healthcare clinic and EMS facility.
- Evaluate all funding sources currently allocated to support the project and define clear scopes of work that ensure that there documented proof of no duplication of benefits.

Highway 20 Economic Development, \$2,383,409

Summary

State Road 20 (SR 20) is a 358.154-mile-long east-to-west route across northern Florida and the Florida Panhandle. It cuts directly through Calhoun County, including through Blountstown, the County's most populous community.

The proposed project would focus on a 2.5 mi. corridor along SR 20 for new development and economic diversity. This project was initiated in 2018 and the development would include the construction of a small motel to create jobs and a bed tax to help fund local economic development efforts.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County BOCC

Project Location

State Road 20

This project is partially located in a Low- to Moderate-Income area with 52% percent of individuals in park of the community meeting LMI criteria.

Actions to Support Project

- Identify incentives for developers. Options may include:
 - Expedited Process of Development Approvals
 - Ongoing Regulatory Review Process
 - Impact fee Modifications, Waivers, or Reimbursement
 - Inventory of Lands for Affordable Housing
 - Work with property owners along SR 20 to provide incentives for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael – Hometown Revitalization Program
- CDBG Coronavirus Relief
- Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program
- Rural Business Development Grants
- Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program

Repair Tri-County Agricultural Complex, \$1,000,000

Summary

Opened in 2013, the Tri-County Agricultural Complex serves Calhoun, Liberty and Gulf counties. It is located on a 46-acre site next to the Florida Division of Forestry building inside the Calhoun County Industrial Park at SR 71 and Magnolia Church Road, just outside of Altha. The venue hosts livestock shows, equestrian events, fairs, and festivals.

This project recommends the repair of the Tri-County Complex in Altha to serve as a venue for events in the future and extend water and sewer to the facility as a potential site for economic development expansion. The Tri-County Complex was heavily damaged in Hurricane Michael and has slowly begun to rebuild, but there is significant work left to be completed.

Located adjacent to the Calhoun County Industrial Park, extension of sewer and water could be included in the work to extend services to the remaining plots available in the park.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Liberty County, Gulf County

Project Location

17680 NW Magnolia Church Rd, Altha, FL 32421

Actions to Support Project

- Evaluate needs that remain after FEMA Public Assistance has been exhausted.
- Reconvene the partners involved during the original development project.
- Hire an engineering firm to determine the extent of the damage, need for rehabilitation, and costs to extend water and sewer to the property.
- Identify funding sources and prioritize needs for phases if necessary.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael – Hometown Revitalization
- Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program
- CDBG Coronavirus Relief
- USDA Rural Development

Revitalize Downtown Blountstown and Commercial Corridors

Summary

Calhoun County sustained significant damage from Hurricane Michael and has been slow to recover due to lack of resources, local contractors, and funding. This project recommends a focused initiative on revitalizing the commercial corridors in Calhoun County, specifically Downtown Blountstown and Altha, to address remaining damage from Hurricane Michael and attract new businesses to these areas.

Calhoun County may consider themselves a partner with existing commercial businesses in an effort to rehabilitate, revitalize, and incentivize the region. This could include efforts such as training on which resources are available for existing businesses to rehabilitate their structures; identifying match dollars for existing grants; beautifying the public spaces along the corridors through sidewalks, plantings, and wayfinding; and offering incentives for new businesses to locate in these areas.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Town of Altha, City of Blountstown, Private Business Owners along Corridor

Project Location

Countywide, Commercial Corridors

Actions to Support Project

- Identify which structures along the corridors are still damaged from Hurricane Michael and need financial assistance to initiate repairs. Work with business owners to understand their options in repair from the hurricane.
- Contract with an engineering or planning firm to develop a streetscape project along the commercial corridors.
- Identify funding sources for streetscape efforts.
- Identify incentives for future business owners or developers. Options may include:
 - Expedited Process of Development Approvals
 - Ongoing Regulatory Review Process
 - Impact fee Modifications, Waivers, or Reimbursement
 - Inventory of Lands for Affordable Housing

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael – Hometown Revitalization Program
- Florida Small Cities CDBG
- Coronavirus Relief CDBG

Trade Skills Development Programs, \$200,000

Summary

The need for skilled tradespeople has been a challenge in recent years and is becoming more acute as more baby boomers hit retirement age and exit the labor force. This is even more true in rural areas with an aging population. Trades are disproportionately affected by this phenomena because trades people are on average older than many other segments of the workforce. Enrollment in trades has declined over the past several decades, providing an opportunity for rural communities to train a future workforce in these valuable trades.

Electricians; Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC) Technicians; Masons; Plumbers, Pipefitters/Steamfitters; and Welders are a few of the skilled trades in highest demand.

This project proposes that Calhoun County partners with Calhoun County School District on creating a trade skills development program for high school students. By exposing young students to these trades at an early age, and connecting them with apprenticeship opportunities, the program would have the potential to not just help fill a need but to provide a career path in the County for young people who might otherwise leave for other opportunities.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County School District, Calhoun County, CareerSource Chipola

Project Location

Countywide

Actions to Support Project

- Identify business partners who would be willing to create apprenticeship opportunities for students upon graduating from the program.
- Develop a curriculum for the program, perhaps starting with 1 or 2 trades and building from there. Work with CareerSource Chipola to identify funding opportunities and development guidance.
- Contract with licensed instructors and work with them to finalize curriculum.
- Consider the budget elements for the project: instructor fees, equipment, etc.

Potential Funding Sources

- Consider soliciting sponsorships from businesses who have expressed a workforce need in the area. These may be the same businesses offering apprenticeships after graduation, with the goal of building their workforce and expanding the business.
- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael – Workforce Recovery Training Program
- Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

Technical Assistance for Crop Loss Grants

Summary

The timber industry in Florida was devastated by Hurricane Michael. Over a year later, the industry is still needing recovery assistance from state and federal funding to clean up the fallen timber and prepare for new plantings. Calhoun County may consider providing space and outreach for the Florida Forest Service to assist with one-on-one assistance to help landowners and those in the timber industry navigate the resources available to them for recovery. Specifically, this service should focus on small landowners that do not have the equipment or resources to clean-up properties and replace timber crops with Crop Loss Grants.

During this process, the County could also collect information on the most immediate needs of the industry and advocate for them to the State to help enact policies that will most benefit the industry. These recommendations to the State would likely include advocating for clear, easy-to-navigate systems for first-time grant writers and managers. This information should be conveyed to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service and Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide

Actions to Support Project

- Consider evaluating some of these resources:
 - [USDA Disaster Survey](#)
 - [USDA Disaster Assistance Programs](#)
 - [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services grants](#)
- Stay in contact with the [Florida Department of Emergency Management](#) and USDA to be aware when the grant application becomes available for the disaster recovery program specific for Florida, Georgia, and Alabama.
- Offer group and individual training on available programs, walking through the grant process from application to final reporting.

Identify Workforce Retraining Opportunities

Summary

Calhoun County has identified a need to retrain those who have been negatively impacted by the loss of timber industry due to Hurricane Michael and are out of work. Calhoun County could consider partnering with vocational and technical colleges on workforce retraining opportunities, focusing on those areas most lacking in the county such as healthcare and construction related. The partnership could include the addition of a satellite campus in Calhoun County located in a school or other existing building or marketing online programs with apprenticeship opportunities.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun-Liberty County Hospital, CareerSource Chipola, Calhoun County School District, North Florida Technical College

Project Location

Countywide

Actions to Support Project

- Work with local employers to identify most urgent workforce needs. The retraining initiative will likely be more successful if there is the potential for immediate employment post-graduation.
- Meet with regional technical colleges to identify who best fits the needs of Calhoun County residents and who is most interested in partnering.
- Consider providing scholarships to adult students entering the program or solicit funding from local businesses who will benefit from trained skilled workers exiting the program.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Workforce Recovery Training Program
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program



Infrastructure and Public Facilities Projects and Actions

Enhance Blountstown Sewer System

Summary

The City of Blountstown may consider enhancing the City sewer system, including a new holding tank to address existing issues with the Department of Environmental Protection and inflow and infiltration issues that allow stormwater to enter the sewer system. This is especially important if there are unincorporated areas interested in connecting to the existing system. Maintaining wastewater collection infrastructure – pump stations, force mains, and sewers – is an integral component of the proper management of a treatment system and critical to preventing illegal wastewater releases. Effective preventive maintenance programs have been shown to significantly reduce the frequency and volume of untreated sewage discharges, help communities plan for the future and save money on emergency response. The costs of infrastructure maintenance and repair can be high, but these costs will only continue to mount as aging or maxed-out infrastructures continue to erode. With the average cost to replace a major sewer line at one million dollars per mile, wastewater collection and treatment facilities can be the most expensive infrastructure for many communities. When these systems fail due to age or maintenance issues, fines can add to the cost of repair or replacement.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, City of Blountstown

Project Location

Citywide and Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Aging wastewater systems can lead to failing systems, resulting in costly repairs and impacts to houses and businesses. By maintaining a regular evaluation process, the City and County will avoid these impacts to citizens.

Actions to Support Project

- Work with a licensed inspector to evaluate the collections system and provide recommendations on necessary maintenance and repairs.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Small Cities CDBG Program
- Coronavirus Relief CDBG Funding
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program
- USDA Rural Development
- Florida Rural Water Association
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund
- Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants Program

Construction of a New Jail, \$4,300,000

Summary

Calhoun County Jail is a medium security detention center located in Blountstown. The jail is run by the Calhoun Sheriff's Department and houses adult inmates who are awaiting trial or sentencing. Every year, Calhoun County Jail has approximately 1000 bookings, with a daily average of 50 inmates and 50 beds available. The jail was negatively impacted by Hurricane Michael, including roof and water damage.

The combination of increased bookings, limited space, and hurricane damage resulted in the recommendation to construct a new jail for Calhoun County. According to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, it costs \$43,000 per bed to build a new jail. This project recommends doubling the current capacity in a new jail, including 100 beds. The new construction would also need to be built to current codes, ensuring safety during storms.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County Sheriff's Department, Calhoun County, City of Blountstown

Project Location

20830 NE w C Reeder Dr, Blountstown, FL 32424

Actions to Support Project

- Identify potential locations for a new jail, considering zoning requirements and proximity to neighborhoods. Determine the cost of purchasing property or consider using the current location and demolishing the existing structure or expanding with rehabilitation efforts on the existing building.
- Work with an engineering firm to design and manage the construction project. Determine if there is a need to close the current jail during the transition, and work with regional jails to manage the closure.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael – General Infrastructure Repair Program
- USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program



Upgrade & Enhance Communication Infrastructure

Summary

Communication infrastructure refers to the backbone of the communications system upon which various broadcasting and telecommunication services are operated. This can be built from copper cable, fiber, or wireless technologies utilizing the radio frequency spectrum, such as microwave and satellite.

Looking at the two largest communities in Calhoun County, Blountstown and Altha, there are a few broadband options. There are 3 primary Internet service providers (ISPs) in Blountstown and Altha with home connections, and a total of 8 including business and mobile providers. According to broadbandnow.com, as a whole, their broadband access is not high. Options are limited to DSL and satellite. This data does not include the more rural parts of the county.

This project suggests upgrading and enhancing communication infrastructure to better position Calhoun County for the future. Jobs and schools are going increasingly digital, and not having access to technology can limit the potential for growth, both in population and commercial businesses. This project could include a regional partnership on broadband infrastructure to offer more opportunities for home businesses, schools and new industries.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Homes that do not have access to the internet are unattractive to current and future homeowners. By treating connectivity as a necessary utility within the county, Calhoun County will be better poised to attract new residents, developers, and businesses.

Actions to Support Project

- Meet with primary providers in the county to identify where they serve, gaps in service, and what incentives would be needed to expand into areas with unmet need.
- Identify funding resources and incentive opportunities. For example, the City of Tallahassee offered its utility poles as shareable space to MetroNet in order to expand fiber throughout the City.

Potential Funding Sources

- Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery Funding
- USDA ReConnect Loan & Grant Program

Additional Well Installation at the Calhoun County Industrial Park, \$10,000

Summary

Calhoun County should consider the installation of a second well to meet Florida Department of Environmental Protections regulations of having a minimum two water supply sources. The department implements the requirements through a coordinated effort with the Florida regional water management districts (WMDs), the Florida Department of Health (DOH), and local county health departments (CHD). The WMDs may also require additional water well construction requirements to protect public health and the ground water resource. As part of these requirements, the well must be capable of producing 300 gpm of water and located near the existing water treatment facility.

This project will provide another necessary step for marketing the Industrial Park to potential corporations and businesses. By completing these requirements ahead of time, the County is positioning the park as a shovel-ready facility, with all infrastructure established and meeting state requirements.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County Economic Development Council

Project Location

16701 NW Agri Park Rd., Altha, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Review the [well regulations and necessary permits](#).
- Hire a licensed contractor to install the well in the legal and appropriate location on the property.
- Work with Calhoun County Economic Development Council to market the property for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- FRDAP (Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program)
- FCT (Florida Communities Trust)
- Parks and Open Space Florida Forever Grant Program
- Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Florida Forever Grant Program
- Northwest Florida Water Management Grant

Additional Fire Protection Storage Capacity at the Calhoun County Industrial Park, \$150,000

Summary

The Calhoun County Industrial Park includes the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department on site. This project recommends the construction of an additional 150,000-gallon ground storage tank and booster plant. The booster plant will ensure adequate water pressure is available. This improvement will increase the system's fire flow to 2,500 gpm and provide fire protection for buildings up to approximately 50,000 sq ft.

In addition to the second well, providing this type of guarantee and amenity for future developers will help marketability of the available space.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County Economic Development Council

Project Location

16701 NW Agri Park Rd., Altha, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Hire a licensed contractor to install the ground storage tank and booster plant.
- Work with Calhoun County Economic Development Council to market the property for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael – Hometown Revitalization Program
- Rural Infrastructure Fund



Water Distribution Main Extension at the Calhoun County Industrial Park, \$100,000

Summary

Additional proposed infrastructure improvements at the Calhoun County Industrial Park include extending the water distribution main by approx. 900 linear feet with an 8" PVC water main. This improvement would include one fire hydrant, providing water service and fire flow protection to proposed lot #4 of the Industrial Park.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County Economic Development Council

Project Location

16701 NW Agri Park Rd., Altha, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Hire a licensed contractor to extend the water main and add the hydrant.
- Work with Calhoun County Economic Development Council to market the property for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- Northwest Florida Water Management grant
- Florida Rural Water Association
- Rural Infrastructure Fund
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund



Wastewater Collection Improvements at the Calhoun County Industrial Park, \$400,000

Summary

A gravity sewer is a conduit utilizing the energy resulting from a difference in elevation to remove unwanted water. This project recommends the construction of a gravity sewer main extension to collect wastewater flows from proposed lot #3 and #4 at the Calhoun County Industrial Park for approximately 1,800 linear feet of 8" gravity sewer main and 8 manholes.

The existing gravity sewer mains will tie into the proposed sewer mains and flow into the onsite lift station. These additional improvements will provide marketability for the site as shovel ready, with all infrastructure in place and permitted.

Project Type

Infrastructure, Economic Development

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County Economic Development Council

Project Location

16701 NW Agri Park Rd., Altha, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Hire a licensed contractor to implement the wastewater collection improvements.
- Work with Calhoun County Economic Development Council to market the property for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Small Cities CDBG Program
- Coronavirus Relief CDBG Funding
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program
- USDA Rural Development
- Florida Rural Water Association
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund
- Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants Program

Wastewater Transmission Improvements from the Calhoun County Industrial Park to the Town of Altha, \$15,000

Summary

Lift stations are used to reduce the capital cost of sewer system construction. A wastewater lift station is a pumping station that moves wastewater from a lower elevation to a higher elevation. The benefit of using a lift station in a sewage collection system is that it saves a substantial amount of money in excavation costs, which involves digging for sewer pipes.

This project recommends constructing a new lift station capable of handling the future wastewater flows from the Calhoun County Industrial Park and Town of Altha. The Industrial Park lift station will be capable of pumping wastewater to the Blountstown Wastewater Treatment Plant at the peak hour flow rate of 325 gpm.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County Economic Development Council

Project Location

16701 NW Agri Park Rd., Altha, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Hire a licensed contractor to implement the wastewater transmission improvements.
- Work with Calhoun County Economic Development Council to market the property for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Small Cities CDBG Program
- Coronavirus Relief CDBG Funding
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program
- USDA Rural Development
- Florida Rural Water Association
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund
- Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants Program

Town of Altha Wastewater Collection System

Summary

Calhoun County and the Town of Altha may consider extending sewer service to the Town of Altha. Sewer systems are a series of underground pipes that haul away waste water from a home in a town. The wastewater is then treated in a water treatment facility before being returned to the environment. Comparatively, currently the residents and businesses rely on septic tanks, which are essentially mini private sewer systems. The water is held in a tank in the ground beneath the property, and over time that water is filtered out of the system and into the drain field area.

Sewer systems are maintained by public agencies, so homeowners feel less responsible for the care and upkeep of the sewer system. For that reason, home buyers look on sewer systems favorably. Additionally, compared to septic tanks, sewer systems may be less sensitive to non-human waste that's commonly flushed down the pipes. Septic tanks need to be pumped out every 3 years or so, sometimes more often, depending on the size of the tank and the amount of wastewater produced by the household. Septic tanks are also more sensitive to solid waste that can get flushed down the pipes of a home. Moving the Town of Altha to sewer from septic will likely increase the attractiveness of the community to future homebuyers.

The Town of Altha and Calhoun County may consider extending sewer service to the Town of Altha by constructing a new wastewater collection system. Several lift stations will be needed for this expansion due to the length of the force main. Force main sewers are pipelines that convey wastewater under pressure from the discharge side of a pump to a discharge point. Pumps or compressors located in a lift station provide the energy for wastewater conveyance in force mains. The wastewater will be treated by the City of Blountstown.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Town of Altha

Project Location

Altha, FL

Project Benefits to Homes

Moving the Town of Altha to a sewer system will be attractive to future homeowners, homeowners looking to sell, and current homeowners who do not appreciate the maintenance required by septic systems.

Actions to Support Project

- Identify funding resources.
- Hire a licensed contractor to implement the wastewater extension improvements.
- Work with Calhoun County Economic Development Council to market the property for developers.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Small Cities CDBG Program
- Coronavirus Relief CDBG Funding
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program
- USDA Rural Development

- Florida Rural Water Association
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund
- Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants Program



Natural Gas Metering and Regulation Station, \$50,000

Summary

Metering and regulating stations track the volume of natural gas as it is transported and distributed. M&R stations use various meters and other equipment to continuously measure the flow and, if needed, reduce the pressure of gas as it moves through the station.

Calhoun County should consider constructing a metering and regulation station to obtain natural gas from the mainline system. Natural gas is a popular option with homeowners and commercial businesses due to its convenience and efficiency.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Homeowners prefer natural gas because it saves money, heats faster than standard electricity, and more affordable.

Actions to Support Project

- Identify funding sources for the project.
- Contract with an engineering firm to develop project implementation plan and manage construction.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Small Cities CDBG Program
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program
- USDA Rural Development

Installation of a Natural Gas Distribution System

Summary

Distribution is the final step in delivering natural gas to customers. Local distribution companies typically transport natural gas from delivery points located on interstate and intrastate pipelines to households and businesses through thousands of miles of small-diameter distribution pipe. The installation of natural gas distribution pipe requires the same process as for larger pipelines: the excavation of trenches into which the pipe is laid.

Calhoun County could consider installing a distribution system consisting of gas mains, pressure reducing stations, and service connections to deliver natural gas to the Calhoun County Industrial Park. This additional service would assist in marketing the available properties at the property.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

16701 NW Agri Park Rd., Altha, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Contract with an engineering firm to develop project timeline, create an implementation plan, and to manage the construction of the project.
- Identify funding sources and coordinate with property owners for expansion lines.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Small Cities CDBG Program
- EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program
- USDA Rural Development



Upgrade & Enhance Communication Infrastructure

Summary

Communication infrastructure refers to the backbone of the communications system upon which various broadcasting and telecommunication services are operated. This can be built from copper cable, fiber, or wireless technologies utilizing the radio frequency spectrum, such as microwave and satellite.

Calhoun County may consider investigating ways to update communication infrastructure for cell phone networks, broadband capacity, and radio communication both during emergency response and to support economic development. Specifically, improved communication infrastructure within the Apalachicola National Forest is needed. It is critical that in times of natural disasters or some other emergency, that there is a reliable network of digital communication throughout the county.

This project suggests upgrading and enhancing communication infrastructure to better position Calhoun County for the future. Jobs and schools are going increasingly digital, and not having access to technology can limit the potential for growth, both in population and commercial businesses. This project could include a regional partnership on broadband infrastructure to offer more opportunities for home businesses, schools and new industries.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Homes that do not have access to the internet are unattractive to current and future homeowners. By treating connectivity as a necessary utility within the county, Calhoun County will be better poised to attract new residents, developers, and businesses.

Actions to Support Project

- Meet with primary providers in the county to identify where they serve, gaps in service, and what incentives would be needed to expand into areas with unmet need.
- Identify funding resources and incentive opportunities. For example, the City of Tallahassee offered its utility poles as shareable space to MetroNet in order to expand fiber throughout the City.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael General Infrastructure Repair Program.
- USDA ReConnect Loan & Grant Program

Stormwater Master Plan

Summary

Calhoun County may consider developing a stormwater master plan with detailed projects to address improvements needed to reduce flooding within Blountstown and targeted flood areas within Calhoun County. The goal of stormwater planning is to protect or maintain the health of streams, lakes and aquatic life as well as to provide opportunities for human uses of water by mitigating the effects of built development. Stormwater master plans can prevent problems from happening either by mitigating impacts before they create problems or by avoiding the creation of problems, and prevention is usually cheaper than restoration.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, City of Blountstown

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Proactive stormwater management planning and mitigation efforts protects and/or prepares houses for future flooding events.

Actions to Support Project

- Contract with a stormwater management consulting firm to develop a comprehensive stormwater master plan with detailed list of projects, budgets, prioritization, and implementation timeline.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael Planning Program
- Northwest Florida Water Management Grant



Designated Shelter in Calhoun County, \$1 million

Summary

Calhoun County has 3 locations designated as emergency shelters: Altha Elementary School, Blountstown High School, and Mossy Pond Community Center. None of these meet the requirements of a special needs storm shelter and all of them are structures with another primary use. It is recommended that Calhoun County construct a designated shelter with a plan for appropriate staffing for future storms.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County School District, Calhoun County Emergency Management

Project Location

To be determined

Project Benefits to Homes

Having a secure and well-prepared storm shelter in the case of a natural disaster provides a safe place for residents if their homes are compromised.

Actions to Support Project

- Calhoun County could first identify property that would be a suitable and centralized location for the shelter. This property should be well outside the flood zone, flat, and easily accessible.
- Contract with an engineering firm to create the designs of the project and manage implementation using the [guidelines](#) published by Florida Division of Emergency Management.
- Partner with the [American Red Cross](#) to get the shelter certified and potentially staffed by ARC volunteers.
- Work with Calhoun County Emergency Management and Calhoun County School District to identify and train staff for the shelter in the event of an emergency.

Potential Funding Sources

- CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael General Infrastructure Repair Program (in conjunction with a school or another public facility repair).
- Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program

Health and Social Services Projects and Actions

Develop Partnership Programs to Address Rising Crime Rates

Summary

In addition to violent crimes, Calhoun County has experienced increased drug and substance abuse among residents. Like the crime statistics, these trends may be a result of post-traumatic stress, displacement following Hurricane Michael, and job loss from the timber industry. The County may consider partnering with mental and behavioral health providers to determine which programs are available for residents and if there is a need for additional programs. The providers and County can then work together to promote these programs and encourage residents to take advantage of them. The County may also consider offering scholarships or sponsoring group programs to increase accessibility for low income residents as well as offer to provide host site locations throughout the County to ease travel distances and remove additional barriers to participation.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Mental and Behavioral Health Providers, Florida Department of Health, Calhoun County Sheriff's Office, Capital Area Community Action Agency

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Increased crime rates can have a negative impact on home values and interest from future homeowners to purchase in an area with increasing crime. Addressing these trends before they continue will mitigate potential long-term impacts.

Actions to Support Project

- Work with Florida Department of Health to identify mental and behavioral health providers in the area.
- Develop a task force to focus on determining what programs exist, what gaps exist and potential programs to fill them, and how to reach all populations within the County.
- Identify funding resources or partner with non-profits who would donate their space for programming.

Potential Funding Sources

- Community Services Block Grant Funding
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grant Funding for Disaster Recovery

Develop Programs to Reduce Recidivism for Inmates in County Jail

Summary

Jail recidivism refers to the percentage of former prisoners who are rearrested for a similar offense. The term is frequently used in conjunction with repeated criminal behavior and substance abuse. Recidivism is measured by criminal acts that resulted in rearrest, reconviction or return to prison with or without a new sentence during a short period following the prisoner's release. Calhoun County may consider developing programs aimed at reducing recidivism for inmates in the County Jail. Ways to reduce recidivism include: encouraging inmates to develop marketable job skills; prioritizing mental health treatment for inmates; ensuring inmates receive appropriate substance abuse treatment; helping inmates maintain family ties while incarcerated; and equipping inmates with information and resources as they return to the community.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Calhoun County Sheriff's Office, Capital Area Community Action Agency

Potential Supporting Partners: Florida Department of Corrections, Florida Department of Health

Project Location

Countywide

Actions to Support Project

- Identify what programs that the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office is currently offering inmates to help prepare them for release.
- Work with the Department of Corrections to develop additional programs as needed.
- Partner with local and regional companies to develop a work program for inmates, providing training in skills they can use once released. Consider identifying a list of businesses that will hire employees with a criminal record and match released inmates to these positions as available.

Potential Funding Sources

- Community Services Block Grant Funding
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grant Funding for Disaster Recovery

Natural and Cultural Resources Projects and Actions

River Park Development, \$6,999,075

Summary

Calhoun County is the only county in Florida without a State Park. This project would be the initial steps in advocating for a State Park as a resource for local residents as well as tourist attraction.

This project recommends that the former Rysco Property be redeveloped into a recreation and tourism destination for economic development in the county. The Rysco property directly connects to the old railroad line which is now the Blountstown Greenway multi-use trail. This trail winds through the charming background of Blountstown and leads directly to Sam Atkins Park which is home to the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement. The Settlement is a living history museum with a working pioneer village, including a blacksmith shop, doctor's office, general store, church, community center, and more. These three anchors – river park, trail, and museum – are the ideal foundation for a Florida State Park.

Development of this property would assist the county in establishing a presence in eco-tourism and rural tourism opportunities, as well help preserve the beautiful Apalachicola River. This project would: redefine local economy, provide jobs, create business opportunities, revitalize the area, stimulate managed growth and help preserve the Apalachicola River.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, City of Blountstown, Current Property Owner(s), Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Project Location

SE Mayhaw Ave, Blountstown, FL

Project Benefits to Homes

In addition to tourists, this park would serve the immediate needs of nearby neighborhoods.

Actions to Support Project

- Identify current property owners of proposed park area and determine interest in selling the property to the County.
- Meet with Florida Department of Environment Protection to determine how to best advocate for River Park to be an official State Park.
- Identify local and tourism needs within the proposed park.
- Create a task force to manage the prioritization of projects, implementation strategy, and funding resources.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program
- Florida Communities Trust
 - Parks and Open Space Florida Forever Grant Program
 - Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Florida Forever Grant Program

Restore and Enhance Pioneer Settlement

Summary

The Panhandle Pioneer Settlement, a living-history museum in Blountstown, has a collection of 18 historical buildings, dating from 1820 to the 1940s. Arranged on five acres to replicate an idyllic farm community, the buildings were moved from their original locations throughout Calhoun County. During the year, the Settlement is home to numerous events and festivals, and offers classes on the trades and crafts of the past.

Pioneer Settlement was damaged during Hurricane Michael, and while it has reopened in a limited capacity, is still undergoing rehabilitation efforts. This project recommends addressing the remaining hurricane damage and supporting enhancement to Pioneer Settlement as an important cultural resource to the County and region. This includes the repair of historic Frink Gym which serves as a community center and the potential expansion of operations to include educational skill building.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Pioneer Settlement

Project Location

Panhandle Pioneer Park, Blountstown, FL

Actions to Support Project

- Partner with Panhandle Pioneer Park owners to identify greatest needs, expansion priorities, and current facility status.
- Develop a prioritized list of projects with a budget and implementation plan.
- Contract with an engineering firm to provide estimates on infrastructure development and to manage implementation of steps.
- Consider a grass-roots capital fundraising campaign of past patrons and frequent visitors who may be interested in supporting these efforts. Perhaps there is a way to recognize various levels of donations, such as a donor wall.

Potential Funding Sources

- Department of State Historic Preservation Grant Program
- Department of State Hurricane Michael Grant Program

Restore Old Calhoun County Courthouse, \$200,000

Summary

The Old Calhoun County Courthouse was built in 1904 and is an historic building located at. On October 16, 1980, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. In 1989, the Old Calhoun County Courthouse was listed in [A Guide to Florida's Historic Architecture](#), published by the University of Florida Press. The listing calls it: "one of two Romanesque Revival courthouses extant in Florida." It is now the home of the Calhoun County Sheriff's Office.

The building was damaged in Hurricane Michael, including roof and water damage. The County may consider identifying grant resources to restore the Calhoun County Courthouse as a historic and cultural resource in the community.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

314 East Central Avenue, Blountstown, Florida

Actions to Support Project

- Work with a preservationist engineer to develop plans to restore and rehabilitate the historic structure.
- Identify funding sources to implement the project, with the engineering firm acting as the construction management entity.

Potential Funding Sources

- Department of State Historic Preservation Grant Program
- Department of State Hurricane Michael Grant Program



Remove Debris from Chipola River, \$200,000

Summary

Hurricane Michael resulted in significant debris in many of the County's waterways, including the Chipola River which runs the length of the county from north to south. While extensive time and resources have already been spent on removing the debris, the job is not done and the river is still 1-2 feet higher than normal levels. This increase makes the Chipola more at risk of flooding during a future storm or natural event.

The County may consider removing the remaining debris from Chipola River because it is displacing water and causing flooding to new areas within the county. In a region that is already prone to floods, with many areas in flood zones, mitigating future damage however possibly is a priority.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Florida Wildlife Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Northwest Water District

Project Location

Chipola River

Project Benefits to Homes

The displaced water and increased flow level of the Chipola puts homes currently at risk of future flooding that were outside of the flood zone. This project will likely help mitigate that future flooding.

Actions to Support Project

- Contract with an environmental engineer to identify the problem areas where debris still remains and develop a plan to remove the debris.
- During removal there should be care taken to ensure minimal environmental disturbance or destruction.
- Coordinate with private property owners as needed while navigating the waters and removal of debris.

Potential Funding Sources

- In coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, evaluate [these sources](#) for debris clean-up.

Remove Damaged Trees

Summary

Following Hurricane Michael, there was significant damage to trees throughout Calhoun County. Many that had fallen have already been removed, however the County could consider taking an inventory of damaged trees that still pose a risk. Damaged standing trees can be a threat to nearby homes, businesses, powerlines, and roadways. The trees may be weakened enough to fall during a high windstorm, resulting in future damage. After taking an inventory of those trees most at risk, the County can consider resources available for private properties to remove the trees, help in removing, and remove those on public property. When working with private property owners, consider recommending professional tree removal services to manage the process.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide. Parts of this project is located in a Low- to Moderate-Income area with more than 50% percent of individuals in the community meeting LMI criteria.

Project Benefits to Homes

Damaged trees are at higher risk of falling in another wind event, potentially impacting homes and residents. However, the cost to remove trees can be a barrier for some homeowners. Through a potential partnership with the County to assist in the process, homes and homeowners could be protected from future damage.

Actions to Support Project

- Hire a professional service to inventory damaged trees in the county, focusing on those areas near homes, commercial structures, powerlines, and roadways.
- Prioritize identified damaged trees based on severity of damage.
- Identify funding resources, for public and private entities, supporting tree removal.
- Work with private landowners to provide resources and technical assistance during tree removal process.

Potential Funding Sources

- State Housing Initiatives Partnership (Under a Disaster Recovery Strategy. Amendments to the LHAP may be required, if the community feels that this is a good use of these funds on private property. The County is encouraged to work with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to understand if this option is available for their community.)

Restore Tree Canopy

Summary

Calhoun County is abundant with natural beauty, stretching from the Ochlockonee to the Apalachicola River and home to multiple parks, including the Apalachicola National Forest. While still beautiful, these natural assets were heavily impacted by Hurricane Michael and many areas are still flattened from downed trees.

Calhoun County may consider supporting efforts to restore the tree canopy on public lands to restore the natural beauty of the county. The County may also encourage private landowners to undergo similar effort on their property.

These efforts can include replanting trees, removing damaged trees to allow for new growth, and removing debris from the ground floor.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Forest Service

Project Location

Countywide

Actions to Support Project

- [Arbor Day Foundation](#) hosted tree distribution days in Marianna, Panama City, and Panama City Beach to support tree plantings and restoration of the canopy.
- Identify potential partners to support tree replanting on public or private lands. Determine which public areas were hit the hardest and need assistance in recovery.
- Implement in phases and publicize the events as a best practice for private businesses and homeowners to follow.

Potential Funding Sources

- TD Green Space Grants
- Regional Private Donations



Monitor State & Federal Forestry Controlled Burn Efforts

Summary

Controlled burning, also known as prescribed burning, involves setting planned fires to maintain the health of a forest. Controlled burns are lit for a number of reasons. By ridding a forest of dead leaves, tree limbs, and other debris, a prescribed burn can help prevent a destructive wildfire. Controlled burns can also reduce insect populations and destroy invasive plants. In addition, fire can be rejuvenating. It returns nutrients to the soil in the ashes of vegetation that could otherwise take years to decompose. And after a fire, the additional sunlight and open space in a forest can help young trees and other plants start to grow.

While controlled burns are healthy for forests, they must be carefully planned to avoid wildfires. With increased debris and vegetation after Hurricane Michael in many of the forests in Calhoun County, there is an increased risk associated with the burns. Calhoun County may consider ways to work collaboratively with state and federal forestry-controlled burn efforts to help reduce the chance of wildfire due to the increased debris. This effort could include additional preventative measures around the perimeter of the burn as well as having resources on hand if the burn were to start getting out of control.

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Florida Forest Service, National Forest Service, Calhoun County

Project Location

Countywide

Actions to Support Project

- Meet with State and Federal Forestry Services to have a firm timeline of anticipated burns and a map of the proposed areas. Offer resources from the County to help mitigate any anticipated challenges.
- Review areas planned for a burn prior to the burning to remove any risky debris, especially if there is unnatural debris that may burn differently.
- Be on site during the burns with resources available to assist if there are any unanticipated challenges.



Repair & Improve Existing Boat Ramps

Summary

Given its location between the Apalachee River and Ochlockonee River, as well as containing numerous other creeks, streams, and lakes, Calhoun County has numerous public boat ramps for recreational use. While some of these are managed by FWC, others are owned by the County.

This project recommends the repair and enhancements of existing boat ramps for better public access to waterways both as a benefit for local residents as well as to attract nature-loving tourists.

Project Type

Public Facilities

Project Sponsors

Potential Primary Sponsor: Calhoun County

Potential Supporting Partners: FWC

Project Location

Countywide

Project Benefits to Homes

Homes will benefit by having safe and accessible access to the water near the neighborhood.

Actions to Support Project

- Inventory all publicly accessible boat ramps in the County and assess their condition.
- Prioritize the ramps based on popularity and need for repair.
- Identify funding resources and develop an implementation plan.
- Market available ramps on the county website and regional tourism website.

Potential Funding Sources

- Florida Boating Improvement Program

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Funding resources have been included in project descriptions throughout the Calhoun County Long-term Recovery Plan. This implementation strategy is a compilation of additional information on each of the funding sources listed with links for guidance on how to access these dollars.

Community Planning and Capacity Building Resources

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity: Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants

[Community Planning Technical Assistance Grants](#) provide counties, municipalities and regional planning councils the opportunity to create innovative plans and development strategies to promote a diverse economy, vibrant rural and suburban areas and meet the requirements of the Community Planning Act, while protecting environmentally sensitive areas. Understanding that many Florida communities are impacted by hurricanes, CPTA grants may also be used for disaster recovery or resiliency planning and economic development. The county, municipality or regional planning council develops projects that generally relate to community planning and economic development strategies that implement the requirements in the Community Planning Act. DEO encourages communities impacted by hurricanes Irma and/or Michael to apply for projects related to disaster recovery or resiliency. Previous grant projects include, but are not limited to: visual imaging for public projects; community redevelopment area plans and land development regulations; sea level rise impacts to stormwater outfalls in the Indian River Lagoon; amendments to comprehensive plans and land development regulations; and master plans for recreation, neighborhoods, infrastructure, urban design, etc. Applicants are encouraged to seek funding for innovative, creative or unique approaches to planning and development.

Housing Recovery Resources

State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program

Florida Housing administers the [State Housing Initiatives Partnership program](#) (SHIP), which provides funds to local governments as an incentive to create partnerships that produce and preserve affordable homeownership and multifamily housing. The program was designed to serve very low, low- and moderate-income families.

Calhoun County typically receives \$350,000 annually through this program. In order to participate, local governments must establish a [local housing assistance program](#) by ordinance; develop a local housing assistance plan and housing incentive strategy; amend land development regulations or establish local policies to implement the incentive strategies; form partnerships and combine resources in order to reduce housing

costs; and ensure that rent or mortgage payments within the targeted areas do not exceed 30 percent of the area median income limits, unless authorized by the mortgage lender.

SHIP dollars may be used to fund emergency repairs, new construction, rehabilitation, down payment and closing cost assistance, impact fees, construction and gap financing, mortgage buy-downs, acquisition of property for affordable housing, matching dollars for federal housing grants and programs, and homeownership counseling.

A minimum of 65 percent of the funds must be spent on eligible homeownership activities; a minimum of 75 percent of funds must be spent on eligible construction activities; at least 30 percent of the funds must be reserved for very-low income households (up to 50 percent of the area median income or AMI); an additional 30 percent must be reserved for low income households (up to 80 percent of AMI); and the remaining funds may be reserved for households up to 140 percent of AMI. No more than 10 percent of SHIP funds may be used for administrative expenses.

Hurricane Housing Recovery Program

In 2019, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$65 million in Hurricane Housing Recovery Program (HHRP) dollars for the SHIP-eligible local governments affected by Hurricane Michael. The 2020 budget contains additional funding for this program, but at the time of this plan the budget had not yet been adopted. This funding is very similar to SHIP funding with additional flexibility granted for disaster recovery. Since this funding is directly allocated to local governments, there is no application process. For more information on the HHRP program and the ways that it can be used consult the [Florida Housing Coalition guidebook](#) on housing disaster recovery.

Economic Development and Infrastructure Resources

Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

The [Florida Job Growth Grant Fund](#) is an economic development program designed to promote public infrastructure and workforce training across the state. Proposals are reviewed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and Enterprise Florida, Inc. (EFI) and chosen by the Governor to meet the demand for workforce or infrastructure needs in the community they are awarded to.

In 2019-20, the agency will be able to provide \$40 million for projects that focus on rapidly developing a highly-skilled workforce and on infrastructure initiatives that attract businesses, create jobs and promote economic growth. Workforce training projects will provide Floridians with transferable, sustainable workforce skills applicable to more than a single employer, and for equipment associated with these programs. Public infrastructure projects can include transportation and utilities needed to support economic development.

Rural Infrastructure Fund

The purpose of the [Rural Infrastructure Fund](#) Grant is to facilitate the planning, preparing, and financing of traditional economic development or nature-based tourism infrastructure projects that encourage job creation and capital investment in rural communities. The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) may award up to 40 percent of total costs for catalyst site projects, and no more than 30 percent of total costs for projects in rural counties that are not located on designated catalyst sites. The three types of grants available under the program are as follows:

Total Project Participation Grants - Up to 30 percent of the total infrastructure project costs related to specific job-creating opportunities; and up to 40 percent of the total infrastructure project costs related to specific job-creating opportunities for projects located on a designated catalyst site.

Infrastructure Feasibility Grants - Funding for infrastructure feasibility studies, design, and engineering or other planning and preparation activities that will help facilitate the location or expansion of specific job-creating opportunities. Grant awards are dependent on the number of jobs a business commits to create; and project location.

- \$50,000 (max.) for projects creating at least 100 jobs
- \$150,000 (max.) for projects creating at least 300 jobs
- \$300,000 (max.) for projects in a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO)

Preclearance Review Grants - This grant is used to help local governments access resources available pursuant to section 403.973(18), Florida Statutes, (Expedited permitting; comprehensive plan amendments). Grants may be used for surveys, feasibility studies and other activities related to the identification and preclearance review of land use modifications. Available funding and the required match is dependent on the location of the project and the degree to which administrative and consultant expenses are minimized.

- \$75,000 (max.) with a 50 percent local match
- \$300,000 (max.) with a 33 percent local match for activities in a RAO.

CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael: General Infrastructure Repair Program

The [Hurricane Michael CDBG-DR Action Plan](#) includes over \$340 million dedicated to a general infrastructure program for areas impacted by Hurricane Michael. This funding can be used to:

- Restore infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Michael (such as water and sewer facilities, streets, removal of debris, drainage, bridges, etc.).
-
- Demolish and rehabilitate publicly or privately owned commercial or industrial buildings.
- Renourish protective coastal dune systems and state beaches.
-
- Repair damaged buildings that are essential to the health, safety and welfare of a community when repairs to these buildings constitutes an urgent need (this can include police stations, fire stations, parks and recreational centers, community and senior centers, hospitals, clinics, schools and educational facilities and other public properties).
-
- Repair water lines and systems, sewer lines and systems, drainage, and flood mitigation systems.

Eligible projects must demonstrate tie-back to Hurricane Michael damage and must not duplicate benefits received from other grant sources including the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program. However, this funding can be used as match for other grant sources including FEMA PA and the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). Competitive projects will also demonstrate how they:

- Support low- and moderate-income (LMI) housing needs,
- Primarily serve LMI populations, or
- Address an urgent need in the community.

As CDBG-DR funding must primarily address the needs of the LMI community, DEO will give priority to applications that meet this criterion. At the time of development of this plan, this program had not yet been launched. However, the City can check the [DEO website](#) for more up-to-date information or get an understanding of potential program requirements by reviewing the guidance released for a [similar program launched after Hurricane Irma](#).

Florida Small Cities CDBG Program

The [Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program](#) is a competitive grant program that awards funds to eligible cities, counties, towns and villages. There are approximately 249 eligible communities in Florida. To be eligible for the Small Cities CDBG Program, a city must have a population under 50,000, and a county's population must be under 200,000. The Program awards subgrants in four categories: Economic Development, Neighborhood Revitalization, Housing Rehabilitation, and Commercial Revitalization. Infrastructure projects are often funded through Economic Development, Commercial Revitalization and Neighborhood Revitalization.

CDBG – Coronavirus Relief Funding

The CARES Act appropriated \$154.7 million to the State of Florida to assist communities with bolstering their COVID-19 response and relief efforts to help low-income families and vulnerable citizens. The City of Apalachicola will be eligible for a little over half of this funding which will be administered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity likely through a competitive application cycle. DEO is currently awaiting additional guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for more insight on how these funds may be able to help local governments respond to COVID-19 and its long-term impacts.

CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael: Hometown Revitalization Program

The [Hurricane Michael CDBG-DR Action Plan](#) includes over \$60 million dedicated to a general infrastructure program for areas impacted by Hurricane Michael. This funding can be used for:

- Public facility improvements, including streetscapes, lighting, sidewalks and other physical improvements to commercial areas.
- Acquisition, demolition, site preparation or rehabilitation of commercial structures carried out by a unit of local government.
- Assistance to small businesses for rehabilitation and physical improvements to their places of business.
- Façade improvements to private or public structures in commercial areas.

Eligible projects must demonstrate tie-back to Hurricane Michael damage and must not duplicate benefits received from other grant sources including the FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program. Competitive projects will also demonstrate how they:

- Primarily serve LMI populations,
- Aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or
- Address an urgent need in the community.

As CDBG-DR funding must primarily address the needs of the LMI community, DEO will give priority to applications that meet this criterion. At the time of development of this plan, this program had not yet been

launched. However, the County can check the [DEO website](#) for more up-to-date information. This is the first time that DEO has implemented a program of this kind therefore there is no precedent to research as an example. The County may consider the basic requirements for a Commercial Revitalization grant through the Small Cities CDBG program as a resource.

USDA Crop Loss Grants

In May of 2020, the State of Florida signed an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to administer \$380.7 million in grant funding to help Florida's timber industry recover following Hurricane Michael. This is the first time that Florida has received this type of federal assistance following a disaster. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) and Florida Forest Service will help administer this grant that will likely be housed within the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM). While very little official information is available on this grant and how it can be accessed by the agricultural community at this time, it is likely that the Florida Forest Service will provide technical assistance to individual land owners affected in the area. They may work with timber producers to verify their timber loss and help landowners with documentation of loss. Timber producers may be expected to receive funding as soon as this fall with funding providing relief to both timber producers and farmers whose irrigation infrastructure was damaged by Hurricane Michael. The County should monitor the DACS and DEM websites in the coming months for more information.

Florida Farm Bill Programs and Grants

There are many programs available for both farmers and organizations through the [Farm Bill](#) to support agricultural activities. This includes programs for:

- Beginning and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
- Conservation and Environment
- Credit and Crop Insurance
- Food Safety
- Healthy Food Access
- Local and Regional Food Systems
- Organic Production
- Renewable Energy
- Rural Development
- Sustainable and Organic Research

CDBG-DR Hurricane Michael: Workforce Recovery Training Program

The \$8 million Workforce Recovery Training Program managed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity will select entities to deliver workforce training services through a competitive application cycle to implement training programs that may include, but not be limited to:

- Roofing
- Masonry
- Carpentry
- Concrete finishing
- Plumbing
- HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning)
- Electricity

- Heavy equipment operations
- Flooring installation/Carpet laying
- Glass/window installation
- Plastering
- Welding, and
- Customized training tailored to the needs of the specific economic revitalization needs of a region.

Eligible entities include local workforce development boards, educational institutions, and technical centers.

Awards will range from \$200,000 to \$3 million. While this program is included in the CDBG-DR Action Plan for Hurricane Michael, the details have not yet been released. To understand how the State may operate this program, interested applicants should view [a similar program](#) released after Hurricane Irma.

EDA Public Works and Development Facilities Program

The [EDA Public Works Program](#) empowers distressed communities in economic decline to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. In many cases, public works projects are used to upgrade or expand an area's economic infrastructure to support the next generation of industry or commerce. Whenever possible, this program seeks to redevelop existing facilities and industrial/commercial locations. EDA encourages such redevelopment projects because they promote sustainable economic development by taking advantage of readily available infrastructure and markets.

The Public Works and Economic Development Program supports locally developed projects that long-term economic self-sufficiency and global competitiveness. Examples of past infrastructure investments include water and sewer facilities, industrial access roads, rail spurs, port improvements, skill-training facilities, technology-related infrastructure, as well as the demolition, renovation, and construction of publicly owned facilities.

USDA Rural Development

Loans and grants and grants are available for construction of public water and wastewater facilities, as well as for other municipal projects, from the [US Department of Agriculture's Rural Development](#). A community must have a population of less than 10,000 to qualify. The applicant must be an incorporated body or be organized as a private, nonprofit corporation. Grants for as much as 75% of project costs may be awarded for projects which pertain to public health, public health, public safety, or environmental improvement depending on the income level and need within the community. Rural Development prioritizes projects based on the assessment of need for the project and the financial capabilities of the applicant. The proportions of loan and grant vary depending on the agency's overall assessment of a project.

USDA ReConnect Loan and Grant Program

The Broadband ReConnect Program furnishes loans and grants to provide funds for the cost of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband services in eligible rural

areas. This opportunity most recently provided grants, grant/loan combinations and low-interest loans. The ReConnect Program offers unique federal financing and funding options in the form of loans, grants, and loan/grant combinations to facilitate broadband deployment in areas of rural America that don't currently have sufficient access to broadband, defined by the law as 10 Mbps (megabits per second) downstream and 1 Mbps upstream.

- The entities considered eligible to apply for assistance under the ReConnect Program included:
- Cooperatives, non-profits, or mutual associations
- For-profit corporations or limited liability companies
- States, local governments, or any agency, subdivision, instrumentality, or political subdivision thereof
- A territory or possession of the United States
- An Indian tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. § 450b)).

Northwest Florida Water Management Grant

The [Northwest Florida Water Management District](#) provides or assists in developing funding opportunities for projects that help protect, maintain, or improve water resources. When available, project funding may be awarded to local governments, utilities, agricultural producers, and other entities. In general, projects of interest must benefit one or more of the District's core mission areas, including:

- Water supply: alternative water supply development, water resource development, or water conservation.
- Water quality: stormwater, wastewater, or other projects that improve water quality and/or provide a reduction in nutrient loading to a waterbody.
- Natural systems: acquisition and restoration of measurable resource benefits to streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, or aquifers.
- Flood protection: structural and non-structural flood protection or abatement projects.

Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund

The [Clean Water State Revolving Fund \(CWSRF\)](#) program provides low-interest loans for planning, designing and constructing water pollution control facilities under Chapter 62-503, F.A.C. The department receives requests for funding throughout the year for wastewater, stormwater, and certain energy and other types of projects. The information gathered in the request is used to establish project priorities for listing projects in order of priority for funding at the beginning of each fiscal year and each quarter, thereafter, as funds are available.

Funds are made available for Planning Loans, Design Loans and Construction Loans. Small, disadvantaged communities may also be eligible for grants, which, once qualified, can significantly reduce the amount owed on a CWSRF loan. The loan terms include a 20-year amortization and low-interest rates. Financing rates vary based on the median household income, the poverty index, and the unemployment index, but average less than 50 percent of the market rate.

Florida Rural Water Association

[Florida Rural Water Association's](#) primary purpose is to assist water and wastewater systems with every phase of the water and wastewater operations. The Funding Group meets on a quarterly basis, at which time each

project submitted during the quarter will be reviewed and the appropriate funding authority will contact the applicant.

Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants Program

The [Small Community Wastewater Construction Grants \(SCWCG\) Program](#) grant program assists small communities and wastewater authorities in planning, designing and constructing wastewater management facilities under Chapter 62-505, F.A.C. An eligible small community must be a municipality, county or authority with a total population of 10,000 or less and have a per capita income (PCI) less than the state of Florida average PCI. Projects shall compete separately for planning, design, and construction grants.

The highest priority is given to projects that address a public health risk and projects that are included in a Basin Management Action Plan. The grant percentage is determined by the sponsor's affordability index and is 70, 80 or 90 percent of the loan amount up to 25 percent of the funds available during the fiscal year. All projects must receive a Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan to receive these grant funds.

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Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program

The Florida's Division of Emergency Management created the [Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program](#) to act as a specialized, state-funded mitigation program aimed at minimizing damages caused by hurricanes. The program began as an active response to the devastation brought by Hurricane Andrew, specifically to the insurance market in the State of Florida. With an annual budget of \$7 million, provided by the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Trust Fund, the program is funding activities that promote property resiliency through retrofits made to residential, commercial, and mobile home properties, the promotion of public education and public information, and through hurricane research activities.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

The [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#) is authorized by Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. It is a partnership that is designed to assist states, local governments, private non-profit organizations and Indian Tribes in implementing long-term hazard mitigation measures following a major disaster declaration.

Although the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is federally funded, the program is administered by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. The process of selecting eligible mitigation projects to be submitted for funding consideration has been delegated to each county's Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group (LMSWG) in accordance with 27P-22 of the Florida Administrative Code.

State Homeland Security Grant Program

The [State Homeland Security Program](#) (SHSP) is a core assistance program that provides funds to build capabilities at the State, local, tribal, and territorial levels, to enhance our national resilience to absorb disruptions and rapidly recover from incidents both natural and manmade as well as to implement the goals and objectives included in State homeland security strategies and initiatives in their State Preparedness Report (SPR).

Activities implemented under SHSP must support terrorism preparedness by building or enhancing capabilities that relate to the prevention of, protection from, mitigation of, response to, and recovery from terrorism in order to be considered eligible. However, many capabilities which support terrorism preparedness simultaneously support preparedness for other hazards. Grantees must demonstrate this dual-use quality for any activities implemented under this program that are not explicitly focused on terrorism preparedness.

Emergency Management Performance Grant

The purpose of the [Emergency Management Performance Grant](#) (EMPG) Program is to provide Federal funds to states to assist state, local, territorial, and tribal governments in preparing for all hazards. The EMPG Program supports a comprehensive, all-hazard emergency preparedness system by building and sustaining the core capabilities contained in the Goal.

In developing applications for the FY 2019 EMPG program, recipients should consider funding projects that address areas for improvement as they relate to emergency management capabilities, including: (1) Logistics & Distribution Management Planning; (2) Evacuation Plan/Annex; (3) Disaster Financial Management; (4) Catastrophic Disaster Housing; (5) Resilient Communications; (6) Emerging Threats, including Cybersecurity; and (7) Lifelines.

Department of State Historic Preservation Grant Program

The [Historic Preservation Grants Program](#) allocates state funds appropriated by the Legislature and federal funds apportioned to the state by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for the preservation and protection of the state's historic and archaeological sites and properties. The program is administered by the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State and is governed by rules in Chapter 1A-39, Florida Administrative Code and Section 267.0617, Florida Statutes.

Two types of grants are awarded through this program: Small Matching Grants and Special Category Grants.

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Health and Social Services Resources

Community Services Block Grant Funding

The [Community Services Block Grant Program](#) (CSBG) provides federal funds to designated local governments and non-profit agencies called Community Action Agencies to assist eligible low-income households in attaining the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to achieve self-sufficiency. The agencies may provide a variety of antipoverty services such as emergency health, food, housing, day care, transportation assistance; housing counseling; financial management assistance; nutrition programs including federal surplus food distribution, community gardening projects, food banks, job counseling, placement and training services, and homeless prevention programs. Ninety percent of the CSBG program funds are allocated to the state's existing network of Community Action Agencies.

The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2019 appropriated approximately \$25 million in CSBG – Disaster Relief Supplemental Funds to be awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Community Services to assist with “necessary expenses directly related to the consequences” of presidentially-declared disasters in 2018 and 2019. A total of \$6.4 million of these funds have been allocated to Florida and will be administered by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), Division of Community Development. This supplemental funding is intended to provide community services to Floridians impacted by Hurricane Michael

This is a formula-based grant and is not competitive. The [Capital Area Community Action Agency](#) serves as the Community Action Agency for Calhoun County.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grant Funding for Disaster Recovery

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. After major disasters, this agency often receives funding to support mental health recovery efforts. More information on grant programs available can be found on their [website](#).

Natural and Cultural Resources

TD Green Space Grants

[TD Green Space Grants](#) support green infrastructure development, tree planting, forestry stewardship, and community green space expansion as a way to advance environmental and economic benefits toward a low-carbon economy. Through the program, municipalities in the United States and Canada are eligible to receive \$20,000 (USD) - \$25,000 (CAD) grants in support of local forestry projects in areas of great need within a community.

Department of State Historic Preservation Grant Program

The [Historic Preservation Grants Program](#) allocates state funds appropriated by the Legislature and federal funds apportioned to the state by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for the preservation and protection of the state's historic and archaeological sites and properties. The program is administered by the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State and is governed by rules in Chapter 1A-39, Florida Administrative Code and Section 267.0617, Florida Statutes.

Two types of grants are awarded through this program: Small Matching Grants and Special Category Grants. Please see the respective pages for further information. FY2023 Application Cycle is expected to be available in spring 2021.

Department of State Hurricane Michael Fund Grant Program

The Hurricane Michael Fund Grant Program is a newly created program for the eleven (11) Hurricane Michael impacted counties in the Florida Panhandle to allow entities in those locations to apply for grants for historical, cultural, and natural sites and structures.

Funding for this program is provided by the National Park Service (NPS) pursuant to its Hurricane Michael Fund Grant Program for historic preservation projects providing relief to damages in areas that have received a major disaster declaration as a result of Hurricane Michael.

NPS awarded over \$8 Million to Florida's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to fund subgrants for recovery, repair, and disaster mitigation activities directed at historic properties damaged during Hurricane Michael. Once Governor Ron DeSantis has signed the 2020-2021 budget, DHR will release the grant application and eligibility requirements. Because the state budget for this upcoming fiscal year is awaiting final approval, we are helping communities, nonprofits, and other entities prepare to apply for this grant program.

The [DHR website](#) contains important information on the Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria Grant Program (HIM). This was an earlier special grant program funded after Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria to assist cultural and historical sites with assessment, repairs, and retrofitting from those storms and for future storms. The final information and documents for the Hurricane Michael Fund Grant program have not yet been released, but in the meantime, the earlier requirements are being used as a general guide. There will be a short turnaround time for submitting your grant applications, probably only 30 days once DHR opens the application window. Please feel free to reach out to us for advice and assistance.

Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection administers grants to local governments through the [Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program](#) (FRDAP). This competitive, reimbursement grant program provides financial assistance for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreation. Eligible participants include all county governments, municipalities in Florida and other legally constituted local governmental entities with the responsibility for providing outdoor recreational sites and facilities for the general public. The maximum grant request may not exceed \$200,000.00. As a community covered under the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Program, Calhoun County can apply for a waiver of match requirements.

Florida Boating Improvement Program

The [Florida Boating Improvement Program](#) provides funding through competitive grants for boating access projects and other boating-related activities on coastal and/or inland waters of Florida. Eligible program participants include county governments, municipalities and other governmental entities of the state of Florida

Eligible uses of program funds include:

- Boat ramps; lifts and hoists; marine railways; and other public launching facilities
- Piers, docks and other mooring facilities
- Recreational channel marking and other uniform waterway markers
- Derelict vessel removal
- Boating education
- Economic development initiatives that promote boating
- Other local boating-related activities that enhance boating access for recreational boaters



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Calhoun County Planning Efforts

In the process of developing and preparing a long-term recovery plan for Calhoun County, it is necessary and prudent to examine any past countywide planning efforts and previously identified project needs. According to FEMA, in Calhoun County, the data from Hurricane Michael showed wind gusts approaching Category 5 level all the way to Highway 20 in Blountstown. Calhoun County is in dire need to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Michael. This planning effort affords an opportunity to review and examine past plans and ascertain the need to update and augment those plans and project future needs. The following report details known established plans and strategies for meeting the needs of Calhoun County. This information will be used to further assess countywide unmet needs.

Blountstown/Calhoun County Apalachicola River Park 2019

Overview

In late March 2014, it was discovered that the property along the Apalachicola River in Blountstown, known as the “Rysco Property” was for sale. Kristy Terry, executive director of the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, met with City of Blountstown Attorney David House, as well as Lobbyist, Patrick Bell to discuss options for the acquiring the Rysco Property in hopes of developing a park and recreational facility on the property. The Rysco property directly connects to the old railroad line which is now the Blountstown Greenway multi-use trail. This trail winds through the charming background of Blountstown and leads directly to Sam Atkins Park which is home to the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement. The Settlement is a living history museum with a working pioneer village, including a blacksmith shop, doctor’s office, general store, church, community center, and more. These three anchors – river park, trail, and museum – are the ideal foundation for a Florida State Park.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

A primary goal of this project is to clean up potential contaminates which could negatively impact the Apalachicola River. Redeveloping the site as a recreation and tourism destination could have a positive impact on economic development efforts as we capitalize on natural resource assets. Development of this property would assist the county in establishing a presence in eco-tourism and rural tourism opportunities, as well help preserve the beautiful Apalachicola River. This project would: redefine local economy, provide jobs, create business opportunities, revitalize the area, stimulate managed growth and help preserve the Apalachicola River.

GOAL: Capitalize on natural resource assets by redeveloping riverfront and adjacent properties for maximum economic impact

Action: Using FDEP funding, buyout and redevelop the Rysco Property site as a recreation and tourism destination to assist the county in establishing a presence in eco-tourism and rural tourism opportunities, as well help preserve the Apalachicola River.

Supporting Data

- Calhoun County remains the ONLY county in the state without a state park
- Currently no viable overnight lodging, RV parks, or campgrounds
- Due to Hurricane Michael, 75 to 95 percent of all pine trees damaged or destroyed
- Timber Industry suffered approx. \$1.3 billion in damage

Specific Projects

River Park Development (\$6,999,075.00)

Calhoun County would like to redevelop the Rysco Property site as a recreation and tourism destination in order to have a positive impact on economic development efforts as they capitalize on natural resource assets. The Rysco property directly connects to the old railroad line which is now the Blountstown Greenway multi-use trail and leads directly to the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement. These three anchors – river park, trail, and museum – are the ideal foundation for a Florida State Park. The development of such an opportunity would infuse the county with the vigor needed to validate Blountstown/Calhoun County as a true tourist destination on the Apalachicola River Blueway.

Responsible Entity: Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce

Calhoun County Catalyst Site Utility Master Plan 2010

Overview

There are three Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) within Florida. In 2006, the State of Florida designated these three rural areas for a specific revitalization initiative called the Rural Economic Development Catalyst Project. The purpose of the Catalyst Site Utility Master Plan is to provide a documented evaluation of the Calhoun County Industrial Park's existing utilities and to identify needed improvements with the development of the Park. This project is designed to gather economic intelligence and perspectives for each RACEC in order to target the industries of the future, find a regional catalyst site, improve the site to meet industry or target company needs, and go-to market with the site as a credible economic asset.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

The goal of the Calhoun County Site Utility Master Plan is to identify needed improvements with the development of the Calhoun County Industrial Park. This plan will evaluate the water, wastewater, electric, and natural gas systems individually. This report will discuss existing infrastructure, calculate future demands, propose improvements and provide cost estimates for the needed improvements.

GOAL: IDENTIFY NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF CALHOUN COUNTY INDUSTRIAL PARK

Action: Through the Catalyst Site Feasibility Study, provide a documented evaluation of the Calhoun County Industrial Park's existing utilities and identify the needed improvements.

Supporting Data

- The existing Industrial Park water treatment plant consists of an elevated storage tank, well and control building - this well is the only water source.
- The Calhoun County Industrial Park was ranked 1st of the 20 proposed Catalyst sites by the Northwest RACEC team.

Specific Projects

Additional Well Installation

Calhoun County would like to install a second well at the Calhoun County Industrial Park in order to meet FDEP regulations of having a minimum two water supply sources. The well needs to be capable of producing 300 gpm of water and located near the existing water treatment facility.

Additional Fire Storage

Calhoun County would like to add a 150,000-gallon ground storage tank and booster plant in order to increase the system's fire flow to 2,500 gpm and provide adequate fire protection for buildings up to approx. 50,000 sqft.

Water Distribution Main Extension

City of Blountstown would like to extend the water distribution man by approx. 900 linear feet of 8" PVC water main and one fire hydrant in order to provide water service and fire flow protection to proposed lot #4.

Future Offsite System Flows

The Town of Altha is planning to extend sewer service to the community by constructing a new wastewater collection system. The wastewater from Altha's collection system will be treated by the City of Blountstown. Due to the length of the forcemain several lift stations are needed along the route.

Wastewater Collection Improvements

Calhoun County would like to develop a gravity sewer main extension in order to collect wastewater flows from proposed lot #3 and #4 of approx. 1,800 linear feet of 8" gravity sewer main and 8 manholes. The existing gravity sewer mains will tie into the proposed sewer mains and flow into the onsite lift station.

Wastewater Transmission Improvements

Calhoun County would like to construct a new lift station that is capable of handling the future wastewater flows from Industrial Park and Town of Altha. The Industrial Park lift station will be capable of pumping wastewater to the Blountstown WWTP at the peak hour flow rate of 325 gpm.

Metering and Regulation Station

Calhoun County recommends the development of a metering and regulation station in order to obtain natural gas from the mainline system.

Install Natural Gas Distribution System

Calhoun County recommends the installation of a distribution system consisting of gas mains, pressure reducing stations and service connections which will be required to deliver natural gas to the CCIP.

Hwy. 20 Economic Development Corridor Project 2018

Overview

Calhoun County is part of the Northwest Florida Rural Area Opportunity spearheaded by Opportunity Florida. With limited access to infrastructure, the county currently is not able to compete for many economic development projects. The Highway 20 Economic Development Corridor Project wishes to extend water, sewer and natural gas 2.5 miles along Highway 20 West, as well as acquire industrial property for potential development and job creation.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

The primary goal for the Hwy. 20 Economic Development Corridor Project is to open a 2.5-mile corridor for new development and economic diversity in the county. The site of Mowrey Industrial Park has been a successful manufacturing site in the past, and with the new utilities could once again support the region with employment and ad valorem taxes. Extension of water, sewer and natural gas as well as acquisition of a very successful manufacturing site, would position the county to be a contender location of a light manufacturing operation.

GOAL: IMPROVE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY IN CALHOUN COUNTY

Action: Using FDEO funding, open a 2.5-mile corridor for new development and economic diversity in the county.

Supporting Data

- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Calhoun County was 4.8% as of May 2017.
- The largest sector in Calhoun County is Public Administration, employing 653 workers.
- The largest industry cluster (geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations) is Wood/Paper with a location quotient of 7.23.

Specific Projects

Highway 20 Economic Development Project (\$2,383,409.66)

Calhoun County wishes to develop a 2.5-mile corridor alongside of Highway 20 (State Road 20 West) for new development and economic diversity in the county.

Timeline: Commencement date of January 2018 and 1-year timeframe for completion.

Responsible Entity: Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners

Overnight Lodging Facility Development (cost included in the total above)

With the development of the 2.5-mile Hwy. 20 corridor, Calhoun County would like to develop a small motel that would accommodate the needs of the community. While adding jobs, a small motel would also create a bed tax which would help fund the local economic development efforts.

Timeline: 1-year timeframe for completion.

Responsible Entity: Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners

Blountstown Main Street Strategic Community Vision Plan 2016

Overview

The development of the Strategic Community Vision Plan has been designed to correspond with the schedule for administering the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant awarded to Blountstown Main Street by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. This Strategic Community Vision Plan is looking to establish leadership roles, evaluate current resources for planning and logistics, preserve historic structures within the community, build economic development, build relationships through community buy-in, and improve marketing strategies in the downtown area.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

One of the main goals for this Community Vision Plan is to establish leadership roles within the community. They plan to reach this goal by: exploring options to compensated a part- or full-time Main Street Coordinator, evaluate current bylaws, designate board of directors, develop a fundraising plan, and create and promote events that support Main Street businesses. Another goal of this plan is to evaluate the current resources in the community. By revising the Main Street boundaries, evaluating parking issues, including addition of Public Wi-Fi, create design standards and recommendation for existing businesses, improve the look of Main Street, explore creation of a Community Revitalization Area (CRA), and developing a street-scaping plan they could achieve this goal. The preservation of historic structures is also a goal of this plan and by evaluation buildings in Main Street, creating a historical assets inventory, developing a plan to save buildings, and work to secure funding to restore qualified structures will ensure the completion of this goal. Building economic development in the community by developing incentives for businesses located in the Main Street are and targeting new business that fit into the theme and brand of Blountstown Main Street will help reach the fifth goal of theirs.

GOAL: ESTABLISH LEADERSHIP ROLES IN THE COMMUNITY

Action: Using the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant awarded through FDEO, the City of Blountstown would like to establish and designate a Main Street Coordinator along with a Board of Directors to help establish a chain of command within the community.

GOAL: EVALUATE CURRENT RESOURCES

Action: Using the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant, the City of Blountstown wishes to evaluate and capitalize on resources in the community through planning and logistics.

Policy: Revise Blountstown Main Street boundaries, evaluate parking issues, addition of public Wi-Fi, create design standards and recommendations for new and existing businesses, improve look entrances of Main Street area, explore creation of (CRA) and develop street-scaping plan.

GOAL: PRESERVE HISTORICAL STRUCTURES IN CITY OF BLOUNTSTOWN

Action: Using the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant, the City of Blountstown wishes to evaluate, maintain, and restore historical structures located in the Downtown area.

Policy: Evaluate and assess buildings in Main Street Area, create historical asset inventory, develop a plan to save qualifying buildings, and work to secure funding to restore the buildings that do qualify.

GOAL: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Action: Using the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant, the City of Blountstown wants to improve the economic development in the community using business retention and recruitment.

Policy: By developing incentives for businesses located in the Main Street area and targeting new businesses that fit into the theme and brand of Blountstown Main Street, the goal of economic development can be reached.

GOAL: COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Action: Using the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant, the City of Blountstown wishes to develop and build relationships through community buy-in.

Policy: Developing a cooperative relationship with the Blountstown City Council and partner with the Chamber of Commerce and the civic groups for outreach and promotion will be the first steps towards community buy-in. Following with including youth and African-American community members in outreach efforts.

GOAL: IMPROVE MARKETING

Action: Using the Small Community Technical Assistance Grant, the City of Blountstown wishes to brand and market Blountstown main street.

Policy: Evaluating the current Blountstown Main Street brand and logo and develop brand to promote Main Street locally and beyond.

Specific Projects

Historic First National Bank Project (\$438,500.00)

These funds will be used to renovate the west interior space of the National Bank, the west façade and the north façade.

Play Me, I'm Yours Public Piano Project

Using the two public pianos recently donated, these weatherproof pianos will be placed in the Gazebo at Confederate Park and on the stage at Madison Park.

Business After Hours Social Events

Main Street in partnership with the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Business After Hours event once a month with the local downtown businesses.

City of Blountstown, Town of Altha and Calhoun County – Infrastructure Extension Project 2014

Overview

In a step towards economic and community development for our area, the Blountstown City Council voted Tuesday night to partner with the Calhoun County Commission to extend sewer service to the Town of Altha. The vote was unanimous and was a giant step towards development of the Hwy. 71 North corridor, as well as potential construction of a new school in Altha. Representatives of the Town of Altha were in attendance and have hoped for such cooperation and support for years. Later that evening, the Calhoun County Board of Commissioners voted to support the project, as well.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

Economic development for Calhoun County could hinge on this infrastructure extension from Altha to Blountstown. This project could potentially open doors to new opportunities that simply would not be presented if basic infrastructure, i.e. sewer system, was not available to those who might invest in our county. As the entities begin to look at funding options for the project, all agreed that the best chance for success would be for the three municipalities, as well as the school board and Chamber of Commerce, to support the same application.

North Florida Long-Term Recovery Group Housing Recovery Plan 2018

Overview

The North Florida Long Term Recovery Group was created by community leaders from Calhoun and Jackson Counties to address the ongoing recovery needs of the community. The North Florida Inland Long-Term Recovery Group reached out to the Florida Housing Coalition to develop a housing recovery strategy that would be based on needs and would reflect the rural nature of Calhoun and Jackson Counties. Through support from the National Association of Latino Community Asset Builders Rural Community Builders program, the Coalition has reviewed the damage assessments, available resources for housing recovery, and developed a set of strategies to guide these communities in rebuilding their housing stock to better serve the needs of its residents and to ensure that replacement housing will be resilient and affordable to the workforce families of the region. This report is the first overview of the housing needs and will be followed by community engagement to further guide the housing recovery process. The recovery process must reflect the rural nature of these communities as well as support the redevelopment of the economy and infrastructure of the impacted communities.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

There are seven primary goals set in place for this plan: design housing strategies to fully maximize available and pending funding, create target strategies for Rental Repair and Construction, capitalize on resources aimed at assisting and aiding homeownership opportunities, evaluate existing land use regulations, remove unnecessary regulatory barriers and utilize the land use planning process for community centric outcomes, support a Community Land Trust or otherwise use land banking principles for affordable housing, employ innovative housing solutions to meet pressing needs, and support a robust case management system.

GOAL: Utilize and Maximize Existing State and Federal Funding Sources

Policy/Action: Using State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program, Hurricane Housing Recovery Program (HHRP), Hazard Grant Mitigation Program, and other funds, Calhoun County should capitalize on all available disaster housing recovery resources.

Considerations: There are three main considerations that should predominate the use of these funds: 1) income eligibility; 2) eligible activities; and 3) the affordability period.

GOAL: Create Targeted Strategies for Rental Repair and Construction

Policy/Action: Calhoun county should consider allocating resources for the repair of small-scale rental properties, in conjunction with resources for multifamily rehab, that serve low and moderate income residents. These properties should also be eligible for mitigation treatments that increase safety, resiliency, and energy efficiency.

GOAL: Capitalize on Resources Aimed at Assisting and Aiding Homeownership Opportunities

Policy/Action: Increasing the availability of vacant land, the development of infrastructure to accommodate new residential areas, and development incentives can make homeownership a vital part of the recovery process. The public and private sector can partner with developers and financial institutions to provide single family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and new subdivisions to provide housing variety.

GOAL: Evaluate Existing Land Use Regulations, Remove Unnecessary Regulatory Barriers, and Utilize the Land Use Planning Process for Community-Centric Outcomes

Policy/Action: The land use planning process should be used for community-centric outcomes. Incentives such as expedited permitting, zoning and land use flexibility, and surplus land can bring down the cost of replacing housing or creating new housing. The counties may also use other zoning incentives, such as inclusionary zoning, that ensures that large scale residential developments include a provision to create affordable units as well as market rate units. A robust accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance or other code amendment relating to an innovative housing solution can be utilized to encourage affordable housing development.

GOAL: Support a Community Land Trust or Otherwise Use Land Banking Principles for Affordable Housing

Policy/Action: By taking a property out of the speculative market, a CLT (Community Land Trust) is often able to recycle and initial subsidy from a government entity for many subsequent homebuyers. This is particularly important during the rebuilding phase after a disaster. The support of a CLT is a great tool by which Calhoun can improve and maintain its affordable housing stock.

GOAL: Employ Innovative Housing Solutions to Meet Pressing Needs

Policy/Action: Innovative housing configurations such as shared living, accessory dwelling units, or tiny home communities can also improve quality of life while making housing less expensive. Calhoun County encourage innovative housing solutions by requiring or encouraging them as part of any relevant requests for local government funding.

GOAL: Establish or Otherwise Support a Robust Case Management System

Policy/Action: Calhoun County should utilize or support a Case Management System that aids those who are working through the disaster recovery process. Housing providers should also develop a network with Case Management providers to identify cases for home repair or replacement. A working relationship between local government, Case Management providers, and housing providers is necessary for disaster recovery.

Supporting Data

- The vast majority of approved repairs in both Calhoun and Jackson Counties fall within the \$1-\$10,000 category: the lowest damage category recognized by FEMA.
- 76 homes in Calhoun County fall into the highest category: damage over \$30,000. While there are far fewer of these homes with this level of damage, they account for a large proportion of the redevelopment costs because of their high damage
- There are two assisted multifamily properties located in Calhoun County: Sutton Creek Apartments (50 units for family demographic) and Chipola Manor Apartments (38 units for elderly). No damage was reported for Sutton Creek Apartments and six units were reported damaged at Chipola Manor.
- More than 1.9 million cubic yards of debris has been removed in Calhoun County as of March 13, 2019
- The rental housing stock in Calhoun makes up 30% of the total units
- Calhoun County 2019 AMI: \$48,700 (Area Median Income)

Disaster Recovery Resources

SHIP Program in General. Created in 1992 as part of the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act, the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program's mission is threefold: (1) provide funding to eligible local governments for the implementation of programs that create and preserve affordable housing; (2) foster public-private partnerships to create and preserve affordable housing; and (3) encourage local governments to implement regulatory reforms and promote the development of affordable housing in their communities by using funds as an incentive for private development. Funds are allocated to every Florida county, as well as municipalities, which receive CDBG entitlement funds. Calhoun County has participated in the SHIP program since 1992.

Local SHIP Disaster Strategy. The SHIP program authorizes a Disaster Strategy to be included in the official SHIP Local Housing Assistance Plan. In the event of a disaster declaration by the Governor, the Disaster Strategy may be funded with any unencumbered funds available in the SHIP Trust Account. These funds can be used for a variety of disaster relief both in the immediate aftermath such as debris removal (limited to the house structure), temporary protection (blue tarps), and temporary rental assistance for survivors whose homes cannot be inhabited. The amount of funding available for disaster emergencies will be very limited and additional funds will be essential for long term recovery.

SHIP Disaster Allocation. Each year \$5 million in State Housing Trust Funds is set aside for disaster assistance. In 2018 this funding was announced and made available to the Hurricane Michael communities. Table 5 details the amount of SHIP Disaster Funding that was allocated to Calhoun and Jackson Counties. Calhoun County received \$425,125.

Hurricane Housing Recovery Program (HHRP). The 2019 Florida Legislature allocated \$65 million of the state's affordable housing trust funds to the Hurricane Housing Recovery Program for Hurricane Michael-

affected counties. The Hurricane Housing Recovery Program is operated similarly to SHIP. Allocations were made to the Michael impacted counties based on level of damage. Table 5 details the amount of HHRP funding that was allocated to Calhoun and Jackson Counties. The funding will be available October 2019.

Hurricane Rental Loan Program (HRLP). The 2019 Florida Legislature also allocated \$50 million from the state's housing trust funds for rental housing development to be completed in the Hurricane Michael impacted counties. This is a competitive funding source administered by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation. The Requests for Applications was issued August 1, 2019 and responses are due October 9, 2019. This funding is open to qualified developer applicants for the construction of new multifamily housing.

Neighborhood Lending Partners (NLP) Restore. A special program designed specifically for use in the Hurricane Michael region is offered by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta and Neighborhood Lending Partners. This program can provide up to \$10,000 for home repair. The program is offered through the local SHIP offices. This

funding is best blended with HHRP or SHIP. Applicants must have a FEMA ID. Households at or below 80% of the Area Median Income are eligible. The funding is first come, first serve and is provided as a deferred payment loan, but it becomes a grant if the homeowner remains in the home for five years. For more information on this program contact the SHIP Administrator.

Economic Development Strategic Plan

Overview

The Chamber of Commerce is the economic and industrial development organization representing Calhoun County. The Chamber of Commerce's primary purpose is to provide support for existing businesses, facilitate business recruitment and development activities, as well as promote tourism for Calhoun County. In addition, the Chamber works to build synergy across the county by uniting communities under one organization. The Economic Development Strategic Plan is based on a comprehensive representation of community input and feedback collected through surveys and during a series of monthly leadership meetings open to the general public. Participants and respondents included business leaders, chamber of commerce leaders and management, business professionals and county government officials.

Goals, Objective or Policies/Actions

Job Creation is a priority of the County. Since the county is largely devoid of major private employers or employer groups, outside business recruitment and the subsequent job opportunities created is a principal objective in achieving economic diversity and sustainability. The retention of existing Jobs is of equal priority. Assisting existing businesses in the areas of retention and expansion is a must to achieving a self-sustaining and self-sufficient economy. Community Compatibility and job creation efforts will be focused on the types of businesses that are compatible with the local environment and community values. Lastly, Self-Sufficiency and Self Sustainability is a major priority in the county. Abundant natural resources and outdoor recreational assets should be both utilized and conserved in such a way to create a sustainable economy that provides a high degree of self-sustainability.

GOAL: Increase the Level of Financial Support to Economic Development

Action: Work with local municipalities to ensure a long-term, dependable commitment of financial support for Economic Development and target service sector within Calhoun County (i.e., banks, real estate, insurance, title companies, engineering firms and professionals) for broader chamber participation and/or the establishment of an Economic Development Council within the Chamber.

GOAL: Increase Community-Wide Support for Economic Development

Action: Engage all stakeholders in economic development (i.e. elected officials, school board, school administrators, businesses, local residents, etc.) by encouraging membership growth in the Chamber of Commerce, continue to sponsor and coordinate quarterly Super Council meetings including county, municipal, local constitutional and business leadership and sponsor, facilitate, and encourage community-wide efforts for making Calhoun County an even more attractive location for businesses.

GOAL: Continually develop and enhance the quality of the local labor force

Action: Provide speakers from local businesses to inform local students of what employers are looking for, meet and coordinate with Calhoun County District School Board and local colleges to develop a “model employer to student targeted skills”, sponsor SBDC and Career Source Florida training seminars and work with local education officials to help organize on-going activities.

GOAL: Increase the level of Third-Party Financial Support

Action: Apply for rural economic development grants and promote local investments.

GOAL: Institute a comprehensive marketing program aimed at attracting new businesses

Action: Engage in allied marketing efforts with regional economic development, initiate efforts with the Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners and the municipalities to develop coordinated plans for shovel-ready industrial sites, seek and participate in marketing and prospect development events, prepare printed and electronic marketing materials that highlight economic development assets, and increase promotion and outreach efforts to promote Catalyst site as a primary asset.

GOAL: Increase access to capital for local businesses that want to expand as well as local entrepreneurs.

Action: Identify venture capitalists in Florida and throughout the Southeast and establish a working relationship with them, work with local banks to establish a common business loan application that all of them will accept and investigate the establishment of Intermediary Re-lending Programs and micro-lending programs for access by existing businesses within Calhoun County.

GOAL: Encourage local entrepreneurship for local business start-ups

Action: Work with the SBDC, Chipola College and Gulf Coast State College to offer its new and existing business seminars on-site in Calhoun County and work with the Continuing Education Department at Chipola State College and Gulf Coast State College to offer on-site seminars about the various aspects of starting new business.

GOAL: Ensure that the Chamber of Commerce is structured to support business retention, expansion, recruiting, and entrepreneurship.

Action: Organize volunteer members into task forces representing each of these high-priority areas and orient volunteers assigned to each area so they become experts in their areas of responsibility.

GOAL: Maintain the “Rural” character of the community.

Action: Pursue businesses that will not adversely affect the environment, investigate the potential for pursuing more rural (Ag, eco, heritage) tourism as a business sector, develop a sector strategy that will focus the Chamber of Commerce’s efforts on business development that is compatible with the County’s assets, development of a plan to encourage lodging i.e. hotel and bed & breakfasts, and investigate opportunities to acquire, through donation of special easement, land to be utilized as a State (or county) park to encourage and increase tourism and public, outdoor recreation.

GOAL: Ensure a broader base of hands-on community participation in economic development

Action: Actively pursue key business leaders and encourage them to accept leadership roles.

Key Initiatives

- Economic development Ad Valorem Tax Abatement referendum on election ballot
- Identification of property and resources to develop a riparian based state park
- Work to develop bed and breakfast and traditional lodging opportunities
- Development of resources and alternatives for the construction of a speculative building on catalyst site property

- Initiate labor survey to determine available skill sets
- Develop proposals and partnerships for city beautification campaign
- Initiate discussions with Calhoun County District School Board, Chipola College and Chamber members to align school curriculum and training to local business and industry needs

- Work with Calhoun County District School to initiate a healthy work ethic training and personal finance program

- Initiate a membership campaign to encourage greater Chamber support and involvement from county and civic industries, i.e. banks, realties, insurance and professional occupations

- Increase lobby efforts to construct water and sewer infrastructure between the cities of Altha and Blountstown
- Identify parcels of 20 - 50 acres or more on Highway 71 in Altha vicinity for purchase or option for potential transportation and logistics related industry or dependent upon such industry.

- Explore opportunities with regional economic development and marketing organizations and the state of Florida to conduct target business and industry study

Strengths, Weaknesses and Threats of Calhoun County

During the V2011 sessions, we went through an in-depth SWOT analysis. We discussed the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Calhoun County.

Strengths:

- School System
- Lower Cost of Housing
- Lower Taxes
- Low Crime
- Recreation Opportunities
- Timber Resources
- Heritage
- New County Airport
- Geographic Location
 - Rivers
- Infrastructure
- Water Supply
- Community Pride

Weaknesses:

- Skilled Labor
- Available Workforce Housing
- Infrastructure
 - Water/Sewer
- Labor Export
- Rail Transit
- Entertainment
- Image
- Code Enforcement
- Lack of Codes
 - Animal Control
 - Appearance
- Representation
 - Lobbying Efforts
- Use of Resources
 - Partners
- Communication
- Grant Writers

Opportunities:

- Workforce Board Training
- Character Programs
- Business Leadership Classes
- ECO Heritage Tourism
 - Train Depot

- Pioneer Settlement
- ECO Tourism
 - River, River Boat Rides, Hunting, Fishing
- Work Together for Promotion
- Festivals
- RV Park
- Hospital
 - Healthcare, 90 Employees, On the Job Training
- Assisted Living
- Transportation
 - Highways 71 and 20
- Signage
 - Marketing
- Tourism Development Council (TDC)
- Prison
- Film
- New International Airport in Panama City

Threats:

- River
- Drought
- Supply
- Non-expandable Corridors
- State Road 20 through Downtown
- Lack of Codes
- Employment Opportunities
- No Public Input
- Leadership Void
- Comp Plan
- Education/Explanation
- Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Zoning
- Lack of Participation in Process
- Lack of Grant Planning

Appendix B: Calhoun County Assets for Economic Development

Local Businesses

Calhoun is a rural county, with the primary industry being agriculture. Tomatoes, watermelons, green vegetables, cucumbers, peanuts, corn, wheat, and cotton are all major crops in this farming area. The timber industry also thrives in the area, with many farmers electing to plant pine trees.

Oglesby Plants International

15168 NW Oglesby Rd, Altha, FL 32421

Oglesby Plants International is well known in the ornamental plant industry as a leading supplier of high-quality young plants for commercial growers around the world. Founded in 1947, they provide the newest varieties and highest quality plants to customers. The company's founder, Raymond P. Oglesby was on the cutting edge of plant propagation and in the mid 1970's he started working with plant tissue culture. As an early pioneer, Oglesby helped make plant tissue culture propagation a commercial reality as a reliable and efficient method for plant propagation. Today, the legacy of Ray Oglesby continues with a vibrant company with over 90 dedicated employees who truly enjoy working with plants. The business includes a Laboratory, Greenhouse, Product Development, and Sales Team.



Tri-County Agricultural Complex

17680 NW Magnolia Church Rd, Altha, FL 32421

Opened in 2013, the Tri-County Agricultural Complex serves Calhoun, Liberty and Gulf counties. It is located on a 46-acre site next to the Florida Division of Forestry building inside the Calhoun County Industrial Park at SR 71 and Magnolia Church Road, just outside of Altha. The venue hosts livestock shows, equestrian events, fairs, and festivals. Heavily impacted by Hurricane Michael, it is in the process of being rebuilt.



Lodging

For visitors, the Airport Motel (21901 FL-20, Blountstown, FL 32424), located in Blountstown, is a great option located halfway between downtown Blountstown and the Apalachee River. Guests can stay a few nights and explore all that Calhoun County has to offer! Only a mile from city amenities, the Motel offers affordable rates while providing access to downtown Blountstown and easy driving access to the natural and historic assets in the county. Additionally, there are Airbnb options throughout the county, including the beautiful Farm House

(17298 N.W. Magnolia Church Road, Altha, Florida 32421) in Altha. The Farm House was built by the Nissley Family in the early 1950s. where they raised nine of their fourteen children. They built and operated a dairy until 1969 when they retired and sold the property to the current owners. The property is now a tree farm, but the house and its history has been preserved for others to enjoy through Airbnb.

Barker's Bees Chipola Country Honey

11783 SE Barkers Bees Ln, Kinard, FL 32449

Barker's Bees offers an online store to purchase locally made honey. The company also provides Pollination Services, Queen Rearing, Raw & Unfiltered Honey, and Tupelo & Wildflower Honey. Large quantities are also available.



Clayco Forestry, LLC

4433 Co Rd 274, Altha, FL 32421

Located in the panhandle of Florida, Clayco Forestry, LLC serves many surrounding counties in North Florida. They offer a wide variety of services including reforestation, site prep for reforestation, land clearing, excavating, road building, and pond digging. They have been instrumental in recovery work and replanting efforts after Hurricane Michael.

Badcock Home Furniture & More

20291 W Central Ave W, Blountstown, FL 32424

Over one hundred years ago, Badcock Home Furniture & More was founded by Henry Stanhope Badcock in Mulberry, Florida, where their headquarters is located today. During the Great Depression in the 1920s, Henry's son, Wogan, saw that many families were struggling financially and unable to afford furniture they needed. Seeing an opportunity to help, he sold furniture to clients on credit and allowed them to pay it off in installments. This allowed many people to provide their family with the comfort that a home should have at prices and payments that worked for them. Today, Badcock & More still values this concept, selling home furnishings as well as mattresses, electronics, appliances & seasonal items, such as grills. While this is a chain store, it provides a valuable service to Blountstown residents and the surrounding communities.

Hardware Stores

In many rural communities, the presence of a healthy, hardware store is the foundation of the commercial vibrancy of the downtown. Both the City of Blountstown and Town of Altha have locally managed, chain hardware stores in their downtowns. Tatum's Hardware (19668 FL-20, Blountstown, FL 32424) and Waldorff Ace Hardware (25615 N Main St, Altha, FL 32421) not only provide household supplies and tools but also education opportunities and stability for the communities.

Sweetwater Farm and Stables

20564 NW County Road 275, Altha, Florida 32421

Sweetwater Farm and Stables is a family owned farm with fragrant Lavender fields, two horse training arenas, and horse boarding on 40 acres of land outside of Altha. They host horse training clinics and other events in their arena as well as opportunities to purchase lavender and farm fresh eggs off their farm.



The County Record

20311 W Central Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424

Located in Blountstown and serving Calhoun County since 1907, the County Record is a weekly newspaper with daily online news and a social media presence. The Journal provides primarily local and regional news, including public notices, obituaries, classifieds, school announcements, and more.

Pharmacies

Blountstown has two local pharmacies, both employing 4 pharmacists. A local, hometown pharmacy, Golden Pharmacy, Inc. (20370 W Central Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424) provides retail healthcare services. Blountstown Drugs (17324 Main Street North, Blountstown, FL 32424) also provides healthcare services and education. In addition to healthcare, they have a digital photo lab, unique gifts, invitation printing, and personalization through embroidery, heat press and laser engraving.

WYBT – AM1000

20872 NE Kelley Ave, Blountstown, Florida 32424

A local radio station, WYBT plays music from the 60's & 70's, as well as provides swap shop segments and updates from Blountstown and Liberty County. Programming includes daily world/national/regional/local news segments, Back to The Beach Show, local high school football coverage, and the Bob Watson Show.

Blountstown Restaurants

The City of Blountstown has a variety of locally owned restaurants in their downtown serving residents and visitors. The local and regional support of these restaurants is critical for not only their success but for the vitality of Blountstown's downtown. Established in 2015, SandBar & Grille (17932 Main St N, Blountstown, FL 32424) is one of the local favorites with American food and a beach atmosphere. Another locally owned restaurant in Blountstown, Shadav's Sweets (20345-20349 W Central Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424) has a selection of American cuisine, including multiple popular fish options and shrimp baskets. Many southern favorites and an affordable option for those living, working, or visiting downtown.



A popular new food truck in the heart of downtown Blountstown with a mission to build a successful business with a main purpose being ministry, Swamp Shack BBQ (20331 West Central Ave, Blountstown, Florida 32424) is focused on supporting missions and spreading the gospel abroad. They have a variety of BBQ options and sides available. Another local and regional favorite in Blountstown, Fiddler's Steamhouse & Oyster bar (17415 Main St N, Blountstown, FL 32424) is a family friendly restaurant serving a variety of seafood options.



KayKay's Cafe (20737 E, W Central Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424) is located right on Central Avenue in Blountstown and breakfast and lunch. Well-done American fare, they support the local businesses and schools through various fundraisers and events. Another locally owned business on Central Avenue in downtown Blountstown, Sweet Spoon (20741 W Central Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424) is an ice cream shop next door to KayKay's Cafe.

Blountstown Shops

As a designated Florida Main Street, Blountstown has a variety of specialty shops in addition to restaurants that add vibrancy and life to their downtown district. Rivertown Mercantile (20721 E Central Ave., Blountstown, FL 32424) is a charming downtown antique shop with a variety of home decor and furniture for residents and visitors. Pretty Girlz (17245 Main St N, Blountstown, FL 32424), a women's boutique, offers not only Women's Clothing, but also Gifts, Accessories, and Designer Jewelry.

Benjamin Walden Creations

20187 Evans St, Blountstown, FL 32424

A local Blountstown florist shop with a variety of fresh flowers and creative gift ideas. They offer local as well as worldwide deliveries, including daily floral delivery to local funeral homes and hospitals. Benjamin Walden

Creations specializes in fresh and silk flowers, Weddings, Events, Sympathy and Special Occasions in Calhoun, Liberty, Jackson, and Gadsden Counties.

Parks & Natural Resources

Apalachicola River

Forming the eastern boundary of Calhoun County, the Apalachicola River is a wide, sinuous river rolling down to Apalachicola Bay. This river has the highest diversity of freshwater fish species in the state, leading to some of the best fishing in Florida's Panhandle. The numerous creeks and tributaries feeding into the Apalachicola offer scenic runs with deep, quiet pools. There are multiple opportunities for fishing, nature viewing, and water activities along the river.



Chipola River

The Chipola River is a tributary of the Apalachicola River and crosses through Jackson, Calhoun, and Gulf counties. In its entirety, the Chipola River flows nearly 100 miles through northwest Florida. Sixty-three freshwater springs nourish it, and no other river boasts so many springs in a state so dependent on its underground aquifer. Boat ramps can be found at Chipola Estates Landing and John Boy Landing in Calhoun County. Canoeing, kayaking and tubing are popular activities on the river. Residents and visitors can enjoy a three- or four-hour adventure between Look and Tremble Landing and Lamb Eddie Landing on the Chipola River. In addition to water activities, this region is the center for tupelo honey. Tupelo trees only bloom for about five days in the spring, so beekeepers strip their hives and place them near tupelos and watch closely until the blooms fall away, signaling the end of the tupelo harvest along the banks of the Chipola.

Look & Tremble

Altha, Florida

Look and Tremble, sometimes known as Look and Tremble Falls, is a shoal or rapids and swimming hole on the Chipola River west of Altha. Look and Tremble Park is adjacent to the shoals. The area is popular for tubing and swimming. Holes in the limestone bottom of the river at Look and Tremble are repositories for American Indian artifacts and animal fossils that have washed downstream.



Blountstown Greenway Trail

Part of the Florida National Scenic Trail, a hiking and backpacking route that stretches more than 1,000 miles from the Georgia border to the Everglades, the Blountstown Greenway Trail is a 3.9 paved trail that connects many of the premier assets of Blountstown. The trail is ideal for walking or biking and goes through the center of town. Heavily shaded by deep upland forest for much of the distance, it connects Sam Atkins Park, home of the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement, at the western edge of town with Neal Landing along the Apalachicola River.



Sam Atkins Park

19972 FL-71, Blountstown, FL 32424

A multi-use park that includes a combination of amenities such as baseball diamonds, trailhead, and the Panhandle Pioneer Settlement. Other points of interest within the park include a large playground, multiple volleyball courts, basketball courts, a horse ring, and an off-leash dog park. The park is the location of the Blountstown High School Baseball Fields, illustrating the collaborative nature of the community with shared resources.

M&B Railroad Memorial Park

Corner of Railroad Ave & N Pear St, Blountstown, Florida 32424

One of the most recognized assets in Blountstown, the park is on land that houses Marianna & Blountstown Railroad Steam Locomotive 444 and M&B Railroad Caboose 102. A plaque in the park provides a Resolution passed by City of Blountstown "honoring the memory of a group of distinguished citizens of Blountstown and Calhoun County." The M&B had a significant impact on Calhoun County. Until 1929, before automobile travel was commonplace, the M&B provided passenger service. Farmers used the railroad to ship a wide array of agricultural and timber products. The M&B also carried mail, manufactured goods, and building products. During its operation, the 29-mile-long line was Florida's shortest railroad. Until 1938 it ran 16 miles farther south to Scotts Ferry. Steam locomotive #444 was in operation when the M&B's first diesel engine arrived in 1947 and rests today on the exact location of the M&B roadbed.



Magnolia Square Gazebo

W Central Ave & Main St N, Blountstown, FL 32424

The Magnolia Square Gazebo is in the heart of downtown Blountstown and is available to be rented for special occasions. It features a beautiful gazebo as well as restrooms and dressing rooms in one location. Downtown greenspace is an excellent opportunity for community gathering and interaction, this park has extensive potential in the future.

Historic & Cultural Resources

Florida Historical Marker for Apalachicola Creek Indians

Highway 20 on grounds of Old County Courthouse between Cayson and Rauson St., Blountstown, Florida

On Highway 20 just outside the Old County Courthouse, now the home of the Sheriff's Office, is the only Florida Historic Marker written in two languages: English and Apalachicola Muskogee/Creek. The historical marker, titled Cochranetown - Corakko Talofv, outlines the history of the town and the native tribes. Apalachicola Creek Indians permanently settled Calhoun County in 1815 when wars forced them out of Alabama. A new Tribal Town was built by Chief Tuskie Hajo Cochrane between Old River and Noble Lake. Cochrane is an anglicized version of his Creek name Corakko pronounced "Cho'thlakko" which means Horse. The 1823 Treaty of Moultrie Creek recognized Cochranetown with its 100 families as part of the Blunt-Tuskie Hajo Reservation now called Blountstown.

Old Calhoun County Courthouse

20776 Central Ave E, Blountstown, Florida 32424

Built in 1904, the Old Calhoun County Courthouse was added to the US National Register of Historic Places on October 16, 1980. In 1880, after the Calhoun County courthouse at Abe Springs Bluff burned, the county seat was moved to Blountstown, a growing community of 100 or so inhabitants at the turn of the century. The original wood frame courthouse was built in the floodplain, so in 1902 a movement began to build a new courthouse a mile north and west of the river town. In May 1903 the present city of Blountstown was chartered, and the old courthouse was completed in 1904. It is one of two Romanesque Revival courthouses extant in Florida.



Cayson Mound & Village Site

Apalachicola River, outside of Blountstown

The Cayson Mound & Village Site is a prehistoric archaeological site located three miles southeast of Blountstown, on the Apalachicola River. The site was occupied by peoples of the Fort Walton Culture. This site was added to the US National Register of Historic Places on March 15, 1976.

Panhandle Pioneer Settlement

17869 NW Pioneer Settlement Rd., Blountstown, FL 32424

The Panhandle Pioneer Settlement, a living-history museum in Blountstown, has a collection of 18 historical buildings, dating from 1820 to the 1940s. Arranged on five acres to replicate an idyllic farm community, the buildings were moved from their original locations throughout Calhoun County. During the year, the Settlement is home to numerous events and festivals, and offers classes on the trades and crafts of the past.

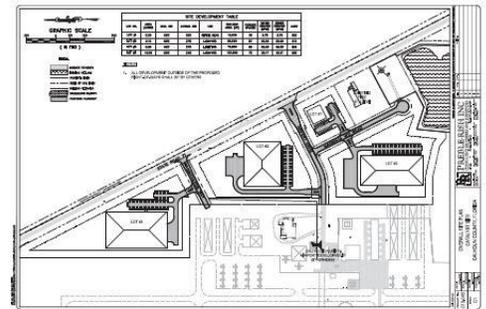


Industry & Manufacturing

Calhoun County Catalyst Site

State Highway 71 outside of Blountstown

Calhoun County, in conjunction with the City of Blountstown, the Town of Altha and the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce prepared a conceptual site plan for the Calhoun County Catalyst Site as part of REDI's Catalyst Projects. To prepare the site for development, to date the county has prepared an overview of the hydraulic water model of the Catalyst Site and city's water systems; prepared the Catalyst Site Utility Master Plan Report, which identifies all the needed utility improvements to support the development; contracted with Preble-Rish (PRI) who has completed 100 percent of the design and construction drawings and permit applications; submitted all permit applications and all permits and Notices of Intent have been received; held a funding meeting to discuss potential funding sources for the proposed improvements; and \$300,000 has been identified to begin construction of building-ready sites on Lots 1 and 2, consisting of grading and drainage improvements with existing utilities sufficient to serve these lots. The property is 200 acres and current tenants include the Calhoun County Recycling Center, Calhoun County Sheriff's Department, Florida Division of Forestry, Calhoun County Airport.



Mowrey Industrial Park

State Highway 20 outside of Blountstown

This cleared property is ready for development and includes 20 acres with 300' fronting State Highway 20 outside of Blountstown. Currently there are no tenants. There is an available building on site: 46,000 square foot metal structure including 4200 square feet office space, ideal for manufacturing and distribution/warehousing, plus 17 acres of usable property.

Industrial Development Authority

20859 Central Avenue East, Blountstown, FL 32424

A Dependent Special District created by Resolution of the Calhoun County Board of County Commissioners on April 5, 1988. It was created to preserve and maintain Calhoun County's agriculturally based economy and for development and financing of industry and other projects within Calhoun County.

Norris' Smoke House

17089 NW Smokehouse Rd, Blountstown, Florida 32424

A local meat processing business, they process wild game/hog. They also produce old fashioned smoke sausage (link, patty, breakfast links & summer sausage), snack sticks, or can make it into cube steaks or burger. They produce a wide variety of flavors or combinations. They also sell 100% USDA approved all pork smoked sausage that can only be purchased at Norris Smoke House.

Organizations

County Service & Education Non-Profits

Calhoun County has a variety of organizations that are committed to service and community betterment. For example, the Blountstown Rotary Club which hosts GOAT Day, one of the largest and best-known festivals in the region and continues to partner with the Settlement's Pioneer Day just across the park the same day. Additionally, Calhoun County IFAS Extension Office supports multiple programs, including Calhoun County 4-H Clubs which offers youth programming for children between the ages of 5-18. Calhoun County IFAS Extension Office (20816 East Central Avenue, Blountstown, FL 32424) also provides educational outreach through: workshops, seminars & webinars; office visits, phone consultations & field visits; and educational materials & field demonstrations.



Main Street Blountstown

20755 Central Avenue, East-Suite B, Blountstown, FL 32424

Main Street Blountstown is a non-profit organization established by business owners, property owners, and citizens to encourage collaborations and provide education, support, guidance, facilitation, and vision for the promotion of preservation, improvement, and economic restructuring of Blountstown's historic commercial district. Main Street Blountstown is dedicated to enhancing downtown Blountstown through sound economic development which promotes their future while preserving the past. They host events, trainings, and provide financial support opportunities.

Calhoun County Public Library System

The Calhoun County Public Library is a member of the Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System (PPLCS) and the Panhandle Library Access Network (PLAN). There are 6 branches throughout the county, including: Blountstown Public Library, Altha Public Library, Hugh Creek Public Library, Kinard Public Library, Mossy Pond

Public Library, and Shelton Public Library. The libraries offer not only book check-out, but also education opportunities, online access, and community meeting spaces.

Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce

20816 Central Ave E #2, Blountstown, FL 32424

The Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce supports local businesses and tourism by providing information on the county, communities, businesses, and natural resources. The website includes member business contact information, business development resources, and news announcements. The Chamber is well connected to the pulse of the county and a strong partner in economic development initiatives.



Calhoun County Community Foundation

4919 SW John Daniels Rd. Kinard, FL 32449

The Calhoun County Community Foundation (Calco CF) was founded in 2019 by Jami Daniels Joe to assist the rural communities of Calhoun County following the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael on October 10, 2018. It is an applied 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All funds raised go back into the communities to directly benefit citizens and support community pride. The organization also serves the community by promoting all that Calhoun County has to offer.

Infrastructure

Calhoun County is centrally located within the Florida Panhandle with easy access to Georgia, Alabama, and North Florida. Crisscrossed by major roads and highways, the county quickly links businesses to Florida's and the country's interstate system. This includes State Road 20 which connects the county to Tallahassee and Panama City as well as State Roads 69, 71, and 73.

Calhoun County Airport-F95

16701 NW Agri Park Rd, Altha, FL 32421

Calhoun County Airport (FAA LID: X10) is a public airport 5 miles northwest of Blountstown. It is on State Road 71 between the unincorporated communities of Leonards and Chipola and is publicly owned. The runway length is 3,100 ft (945 m) and the property is part of the largely undeveloped industrial park.



Schools

Calhoun County has three elementary schools, three middle schools, and two high schools. The Calhoun County School District is committed to excellence, and their mission is “ensuring that each student achieves his or her highest potential in a global society.” Blountstown High School serves 421 students in grades 9-12 and has a state rating of B. Altha Public School serves 602 students in grades Prekindergarten-12 and has a

state rating of B. Blountstown Middle School serves 258 students in grades 6-8 and has a state rating of A. Blountstown Elementary School serves 606 students in grades Prekindergarten-5 and has a state rating of C. Blountstown Elementary School serves 606 students in grades Prekindergarten-5 and has a state rating of B. The county also has the Calhoun County Adult Education Center for furthering or continuing education.

Institutions

Calhoun County Jail

20830 NE w C Reeder Dr, Blountstown, FL 32424

Calhoun County Jail is a medium security detention center located in Blountstown. The jail is run by the Calhoun Sheriff's Department and houses adult inmates who are awaiting trial or sentencing. Every year, Calhoun County Jail has approximately 1000 bookings, with a daily average of 50 inmates. Inmates at Calhoun County Jail are given three meals a day, medical care, recreation time each day, and programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.

Calhoun-Liberty Hospital

20370 Burns Ave, Blountstown, FL 32424

Calhoun-Liberty Hospital is a healthcare provider for all ages. They serve the surrounding areas of Calhoun, Liberty, Gulf, and Jackson counties. The facility is State licensed for 10 beds and offers a large number of services to the area. Services include radiology, clinical, respiratory, and a Smoking Cessation Program. Calhoun-Liberty Hospital works in conjunction with the local Board of County Commissioners to provide Emergency Medical Services for Calhoun County.



Blountstown Health & Rehabilitation Center

16690 Chipola Rd, Blountstown, FL 32424

Blountstown Health & Rehabilitation Center is a 96-bed, 5 Star facility (for 4 consecutive years) and a proven leader in skilled nursing and rehabilitation. They have a flexible interdisciplinary approach to healthcare that is centered on caregiver compassion and provided in a comfortable, home-like setting. They also have a brand new, in-house, on-site Dialysis center. Their Rehabilitation Center offers comprehensive services that create a full spectrum of care. These services are provided by licensed physical, speech, and occupational therapists.

W.T. Neal Civic Center

17773 NE Pear St, Blountstown, FL 32424

An event center and community space located in Blountstown and available for rentals, the W.T. Neal Civic Center is located on the north side of town and includes outdoor space. It has seen a wide range of uses, including trainings, parties, weddings, and public meetings.



Large Available Parcels

In consideration of opportunities for county growth, the following large parcels of land are current available in Calhoun County:

- 0000 WHITE WATER GRADE, Clarksville, 32430 - \$1,250,000 - 500 acres
- 14600 SW COUNTY ROAD 275, Blountstown, 3242- \$645,000 - 169 acres
- Vacant SW Big Mac Rd., Clarksville, 32430 - \$343,200 - 156 acres
- NW KB Jones, Blountstown, 32424 - \$1,100,000 - 120 acres
- NW Twin Ponds Road, Altha, 32421 - \$169,900 - 95 acres
- 10850 SW CR 275, Blountstown, 32424 - \$495,000 - 50.5 acres

