



MISSION OF THE CITRUS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce is an organization of businesses unified in efforts to advance the economic growth of the region, promote the interests of the business community, provide key leadership on key commerce issues and preserve the county's quality of life.

Chamber Connection

915 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 · 352-795-3149 · 203 E. Dampier St., Inverness, FL 34450 · 352-726-2801

Strawberry Festival NEXT WEEKEND!

Get ready for a BERRY BUSTIN good time! Join us next Saturday and Sunday in beautiful Floral Park, for berries and pageants and pies (OH, MY)!

The 36th Annual Floral City Strawberry Festival is a salute to our local agriculture with fresh strawberries hand-picked right around the corner from the festival at Ferris Groves. Luscious strawberry shortcakes will be available for your noshing pleasure, along with flats and half-flats of whole fresh berries that you can take home with you as a sweet souvenir of your day to make your own delectable treats.

Saturday morning, the festival opens with the posting of Colors, the Pledge of Allegiance, and our National Anthem. Live music will also fill the main stage all weekend with a full performance lineup! Saturday will kick off with music from crowd favorite, Southern Express Band from 10 A.M. – 1 P.M., followed by local talent, Ashley Young, from 1:15 – 2:45, then our headliner Homegrown: The Zac Brown Band Experience takes the stage from 3 P.M. – 5 P.M. Sunday's lineup includes Bad Luck Penny from 10 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. with headliner Palomino Blonde closing out this year's festival from 1 P.M. – 4 P.M.

Sticking to its very berry American roots, the annual pie-eating contests and princess pageants will be back as well! Ooh and ahh on Saturday morning as poised young ladies take the stage in their favorite strawberry-themed attire for a chance to earn a crown and



become the next Strawberry Princesses. Or maybe getting messy is more your style? Then sign up FOR FREE to compete in the strawberry pie-eating contests for your shot at bragging rights until next year! Competitions will be held both Saturday and Sunday with registration beginning at 10am that day at the festival.

While visiting the 36th Annual Floral City Strawberry Festival visitors are invited to tour the Historic Duval-Metz House in Floral City. Considered to be the oldest home in Citrus County, it will be open during festival hours both Saturday, March 4th, and Sunday, March 5th, along with the Floral City Heritage Museum in the Town Center just across the street. Guests can also take a stroll downtown to see the beautiful Avenue of the Oaks and charming local shops for a

true "taste" of Old Florida. Shuttles will run all day Saturday and Sunday from the festival grounds to the Town Center. Look for the bus marked "Downtown".

New this year, we are excited to welcome The Soccer Collies! They are a professional team of soccer-playing Border Collies, right out of Floral City, on a Mission to connect the soccer world with the dog rescue world. Once an hour participants will be able to form a circle around a Soccer Dog and a very soft ball. When the dog pushes the ball out of the circle, then the dog has scored a goal! It is free to participate so make sure you schedule some time to PLAY BALL!

Round out your festival adventures by strolling the park and browsing over 200 arts and craft vendors; indulging in a cold beer; glass of wine or hard seltzer at the beer garden near the main stage; enjoying the gastronomic pleasures offered by the many food vendors; or enjoying laughs and smiles with the young ones as they "play themselves silly" in the kids' area.

Floral City Strawberry Festival hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Entrance fee is \$5.00 for adults, children 12 and under are free. Park free at the Citrus County Auditorium and take a shuttle to the festival location.

For complete information on the Floral City Strawberry Festival, visit www.GoStrawberryFest.com. On Facebook, search for "Floral City Strawberry Festival."



Chamber Talks Advocacy in Tallahassee



Citrus County Chamber President/CEO, Josh Wooten, was honored to speak on a statewide panel this week at the Annual Florida Chamber Legislative Fly-In. The discussion was focused on the importance of the Chamber's continued advocacy for business' interests on a local and state level to ensure local owners can concentrate on their day to day operations while still having a voice in matters that could affect them. Our Chamber, along with many across the state, is proud to be that voice and offer this integral service for our community and the businesses that support it.

03/04-03/05 — Floral City Strawberry Festival; Floral Park
03/10 March — Chamber Luncheon; Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club; Speaker: Sgt. Rachael Montgomery, CCSO – Behavioral Health Division
03/16 — March Mixer hosted by Daystar Life Center; Daystar Life Center
03/22-03/23 — Annual Legislative Days; Tallahassee

UPCOMING
EVENTS

Hop on the bus to Tallahassee: Join the Chamber for Citrus County Legislative Day

The Citrus County Chamber continues the tradition of organizing its annual Legislative Day bus trip to Tallahassee and we invite you to join us! The March 23 trip will feature a morning of legislators and agency officials who will meet with us to discuss issues of local, regional and state importance, with some time for questions and answers. It is a great way to get an overview of what is happening during the 2023 Legislative

Session, with a focus on matters of significance to Citrus County.

The trip includes round-trip transportation from Crystal River via motorcoach, all speaker sessions, and a catered gourmet buffet lunch. Following lunch, you will have time to sit in on House and Senate sessions or committee meetings, or explore the Capitol area downtown before returning to Citrus County late in the afternoon.

The trip is \$85/person and spaces are limited. To register or for further information, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2s3stekb>, or contact Ardath Prendergast at ardath@citruscountychamber.com or 352-795-3149.

The Chamber thanks presenting sponsor Crystal Tractor and Motorcycle Group, along with Duke Energy,

CareerSource and Ignited Business Brokers for helping to make this trip possible.

March Luncheon to focus on Mental Health in our Community

Join us for our March Chamber Luncheon featuring Sgt. Rachel Montgomery, CCSO behavioral health sergeant, to discuss the mental health issues our community is facing.

March 10th, 2023; 11:30am-1pm; Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club
Networking: 11:30am-12pm

Program/Speaker: 12pm-1pm
Sponsored by Vitas Health Care
Pricing is \$25 for members, \$30 for Non-members. Advanced reservations are required.

No walk-ups will be accepted. Reserve your space NOW at www.CitrusCountyChamber.com.

Chamber Legacy Members



The Chamber recognizes our Legacy Partners that have made a special investment in the Chamber to support the programs and mission of the Chamber. For information on becoming a Legacy Partner, please contact the Chamber by emailing Corrine@CitrusCountyChamber.com.