

Promotional information provided by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber Connection

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Floral City Strawberry Festival Only 1 Month Away!

The Floral City Strawberry Festival, a beloved tradition in Citrus County, is back for its 38th year of berry-filled fun and excitement. Presented by Coast to Coast Heating & Air Conditioning and produced by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, this year's festival promises a weekend overflowing with strawberries, entertainment, and family-friendly activities. Mark your calendars for March 1st & 2nd, 2025, and join us at Floral Park for a celebration of local agriculture and community spirit.

With fresh strawberries hand-picked right around the corner from the festival at Ferris Groves, you can look forward to luscious strawberry shortcakes 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. Not sure what to do with them all? Check out our Berry Bakery on our website at www.GoStrawberryFest.com.

Saturday morning, the

festival opens with the Posting of the Colors, the Pledge of Allegiance and our National Anthem. Live music and entertainment will fill the main stage all weekend with a full performance lineup! Stay up to date on all our very berry entertainment with the event calendar on our website!

Additionally, take your time on Saturday, March 1st, to explore the roots of our beautiful community with a tour of the Historic Duval-Metz House. The oldest documented home in Citrus County still standing, the Duval-Metz House will be open SATURDAY ONLY during from 9am – 4pm. Quick shuttles will transport you from the festival grounds to the heart of Floral City where you can view this historic destination and explore the quaint town offering a true taste of old Florida.

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 Miss & Little Miss Strawberry Princesses. Maybe getting messy is more your style? Then sign up to compete in the strawberry pie-eating contests for your shot at a year's worth of bragging rights! Pie eating competitions are free to enter and will be held at 1 P.M. both Saturday and Sunday with registration that day at the festival. There are limited slots so make sure you

get signed up early!

We are also excited to welcome back last year's fan favorite, the Soccer Collies! Kids of all ages (and even adults) won't want to miss this fun and exciting free attraction as the Collies take on festival attendees once an hour beginning at 9:45 a.m. Participants will line up in a circle around the trained dogs as they use their skills to score "goals", pushing the ball outside of the human goalie line. Think you have what it takes to

take on the Soccer Collies? Join us to find out!

Round out your festival adventures by strolling the park and browsing over 250 art and craft vendors. Indulge in a cold beer, a glass of wine or hard seltzer at the beer garden near the main stage; enjoy the gastronomic pleasures offered by the many food vendors; or share in 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 (3610 S. Florida Ave, Inverness, FL) and take a free shuttle to the festival location. Please be advised, parking at the festival grounds is extremely limited and not recommended during festival hours to ensure the safety of all involved.

For complete information on the Floral City Strawberry Festival, visit www.GoStrawberryFest.com.

February Chamber Luncheon focused on Mental Health

Join us for our February Chamber Luncheon featuring a panel discussion with Sunshine Arnold, LCSW, Citrus County Fire Rescue, Rachel Montgomery, Chief of Police, Citrus County School District, and Cindi Fein, Executive Director, NAMI Citrus.

They will lead an informal discussion on the powerful impact that investing in employees' mental health can have on a company's overall success.

In addition, they'll share how each is working within our community to

raise awareness, improve outcomes, and advocate for mental wellness.

Details:

February 14th, 2025; 11:30am-1pm; Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club
Networking: 11:30am-12pm
Program/Speakers: 12pm-1pm
Sponsor: Citrus Abuse Shelter Association - CASA
Pricing: \$25 - members and \$35 - Non-members
Advanced reservations are required. No walk-ups will be accepted. Online at www.CitrusCountyChamber.com

RECENT RIBBON CUTTINGS

The Chamber is growing every week. We welcome our new members and thank all of them for joining the Chamber. We encourage the community to support their businesses.

Discovery Map of Citrus County



Welcome to the Chamber, Discovery Map of Citrus County! Discovery Map of Citrus County is dedicated to supporting and promoting local destinations by driving both residents and visitors to the area's businesses. They accomplish this by distributing an impressive 150,000 maps throughout Citrus County and beyond. In addition to the printed map, Discovery Map also offers an interactive digital version and maintains a strong presence on Facebook. Their mission is clear: to "put your business on the map." For those interested in learning more about advertising opportunities or distribution, Al can be contacted at 352-613-3533 or via email at alpascal@discoverymap.com. <https://discoverymap.com/destination/citrus-county-fl/>

LegalShield



Welcome to the Chamber, LegalShield! Empower yourself with LegalShield, your trusted partner for accessible legal protection and peace of mind. Through LegalShield, individuals and families gain comprehensive legal coverage without the high costs associated with traditional legal services. Their services include expert legal advice, document review, and representation for a variety of legal matters, all delivered with a commitment to excellence and affordability. With a dedicated team of legal professionals at your fingertips, you can confidently navigate legal challenges and safeguard your rights. Explore how LegalShield's innovative solutions can provide you with invaluable support and protection, ensuring that you're never alone when facing legal issues. (407) 683-8065. <https://mele.legalshieldassociate.com/>

Upcoming Chamber Events

- 02/14 February Chamber Luncheon; 11:30am-1pm; Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club; Speakers: Sunshine Arnold, LCSW, Citrus County Fire Rescue, Rachel Montgomery, Chief of Police, Citrus County School District, and Cindi Fein, Executive Director, NAMI Citrus; Sponsored by CASA
- 02/20 February Chamber Mixer; 5pm-7pm; Citrus County Builders Association – Annual Ball Drop with Boys & Girls Clubs
- 03/01-03/02 38th Annual Floral City Strawberry Festival; Floral Park, Floral City
- 03/14 March Chamber Luncheon; 11:30am-1pm; Sweet Citrus Acres; Speaker: TBA
- 03/20 2025 Citrus County Legislative Day; Tallahassee
- 03/25 March Chamber Mixer; 5pm-7pm; Suncoast Business Masters at the Citrus County Realtors Association

Get Politically Savvy: Two-Day Virtual Workshop Prepares Future Leaders in Citrus County

The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Florida Institute for Political Leadership (FIPL), will host a free, virtual Campaign School & Community Leadership Training on February 5-6, 2025, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. ET each day.

This no-cost, nonpartisan program is open to anyone interested in public service, from current or aspiring candidates and campaign workers to individuals considering appointed positions. Attendees will gain insights on

emerging state and local issues, learn campaign strategies, and discover pathways to both elected and appointed leadership roles.

Presenters include political experts, elected officials, professors, and community leaders, offering a diverse perspective on effective governance and campaign success.

The training will be held entirely online. For more information or to register, visit www.fipl.org or go directly to www.fipl.org/register.

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.