



Promotional information provided by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber Connection

915 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River • 352-795-3149 • 212 W. Main St., Inverness • 352-726-2801

A Weekend of Manatee Magic Begins Today!

The wait is over! The 39th Annual Florida Manatee Festival starts today in the Manatee Capital of the World, downtown Crystal River, and the waterfront is coming alive with two full days of music, food, family fun, and unforgettable Nature Coast experiences. Produced by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce, this signature community celebration proudly welcomes Coast to Coast Heating and Air as presenting sponsor for the second year in a row.

Consistently ranked among Citrus County's favorite outdoor events, the Florida Manatee Festival offers something for everyone, from live entertainment and unique shopping to incredible opportunities to experience the natural beauty that makes Crystal River famous.

Today's weekend edition includes a \$5 OFF coupon for Sunday admission ONLY. Be sure to snag yours! The coupon can be used for up to four adult entries, making it the perfect excuse to bring the whole crew back for another day of Manatee Festival fun.

Festivalgoers are invited to come hungry and thirsty with two food courts and two beer and wine gardens located throughout the festival grounds, serving up everything from savory favorites to sweet treats. Back by popular demand, guided kayak tours with Paddle Tails are also available for a nominal fee, giving visitors the chance to explore Kings Bay and Hunter Springs while learning about the area's one of a kind ecosystem from experienced local guides.

Your festival admission also includes free shuttle transportation and entry to world famous Three Sisters Springs and the Friends of the Crystal River Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. Shuttle service runs both days from 9 AM to 2:30 PM with pickup and drop off at the 5th Street Gate.

During the colder months of Manatee Season, hundreds of manatees gather in

the springs to enjoy the constant 72-degree waters, offering guests a truly magical opportunity to see these gentle giants in their natural habitat.

Live music and entertainment will fill the air all weekend across four entertainment areas. The Alexander Real Estate Waterfront Main Stage will feature high-energy performances from Money for Nothin', Sada Davidson Band, and Moonflower – The Spirit of Santana, along with popular tribute acts celebrating classic rock favorites Bad Company and Foreigner. Additional stages and roaming performers, including internet sensation Florida Man, will be making appearances throughout the festival grounds to ensure the excitement never stops.

New this year, themed family entertainment takes center stage at the Black Shades Pumphouse Stage near Town Square and Art in the Park. Guests can meet real mermaids during MerTailor's Mermaid Photo Op from 9 AM to 11 AM both days and enjoy the interactive comedy of Pumphouse Plunder Live Pirate Improv, presented by Twisted Arts Initiative, appearing Saturday from 9 AM to 5 PM and Sunday from 9 AM to 4 PM.

Throughout downtown Crystal River, visitors will also find a wide variety of fine art, craft, marketplace, and non-profit vendors, with Art in the Park offering a beautiful setting to browse original artwork and handcrafted treasures.

A lively Kids Zone adds even more fun with inflatables, face painting, balloon pop, spider jump, and activities designed to keep young festivalgoers smiling.

With something to delight every age and interest, the 39th Annual Florida Manatee Festival is ready to make this weekend unforgettable.

For schedules, maps, and full event details, visit www.GoManateeFest.com and come celebrate the magic of Manatee Season in Crystal River.



He was a man
who had a
dream ...

Sunday, January 18, 2026
12 PM • Alexander Real Estate
Waterfront Main Stage

Harmonies of Hope: A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Held annually during MLK Weekend, the Florida Manatee Festival is honored to present a heartfelt tribute celebrating the life, legacy, and enduring dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Join us Sunday, January 18, 2026 at 12 PM at the Alexander Real Estate Waterfront Main Stage for a moving program that reflects the power of Dr. King's words and the unity they continue to inspire.

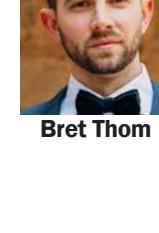
The tribute will begin with the invocation from Bishop Doug Alexander, followed by a stirring recitation of Dr. King's iconic "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered by talented local scholar Taylor Jacobs, whose powerful voice brings these timeless words to life. Crowning this special moment will be a live musical tribute by acclaimed opera vocalist Bret Thom, whose elegant voice and commanding stage presence promise a deeply moving honor to Dr. King's legacy.

This meaningful tribute is open to all festival guests and stands as one of the most powerful moments of the Florida Manatee Festival weekend.

ABOUT OUR PERFORMERS:

Taylor Jacobs is a bright and driven young scholar from Citrus County whose natural gift for public speaking has already touched countless audiences. With confidence beyond his years and a heart for his community, Taylor represents the next generation of leaders inspired by Dr. King's dream.

Bret Thom is a seasoned vocalist whose musical journey spans decades, from early appearances as a young Elvis performer to acclaimed roles in opera with companies including the St. Pete Opera. His rich, expressive voice blends classical training with timeless American music, making him the perfect artist to honor this historic legacy.



UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

- 01/17-01/18 Florida Manatee Festival; Downtown Crystal River
- 01/22 Annual Citrus County Legislative Day; Tallahassee
- 02/13 February Chamber Luncheon; 11:30am – 1:00pm; Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club

- 02/19 February Chamber "Ball Drop" Mixer; 5:00pm – 7:00pm; Chamber Office
- 02/22 CCBA Annual Jim Blackshear Memorial Golf Outing; Twisted Oaks Golf Course
- 03/07 – 03/08 39th Annual Floral City Strawberry Festival; Floral Park



FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

FEBRUARY 13TH, 2026
11:30AM - 1:00PM
Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club

County Administrator

STEVE HOWARD

Sponsored By: **Centratel**
Cloud Solutions Ground Support

February Luncheon: The Road Ahead for Citrus County

Join us for our February Chamber Luncheon featuring County Administrator Steve Howard. He will be providing a comprehensive wrap-up of 2025 and share some forward-looking updates on priorities and plans for the new year. Attendees will gain insight into countywide growth, infrastructure, and key initiatives shaping the future of Citrus County.

DETAILS

February 13th, 2026; 11:30am-1pm;

Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club

Networking: 11:30am-12pm

Program/Speaker: 12pm-1pm

Speaker: County Administrator Steve Howard

Sponsor: Centratel

Pricing:

\$30 – Members

\$35 - Non-members

Advanced reservations are required, online at www.CitrusCountyChamber.com. No walk-ups will be accepted.

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