

WEEKLY MANAGER'S REPORT

TOWN OF LADY LAKE, FLORIDA

By Bill Lawrence, Town Manager

May 8, 2025

DEPARTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT (William Lawrence):

Shoutouts & Acknowledgments

Congratulations to Joella LeDonne on her well-deserved promotion from Assistant Finance Director to Finance Director! Joella was selected from a competitive pool of 17 applicants from across the United States. The field was narrowed down to five candidates for interviews, and Joella rose to the top. She has been with us for over a year, managing the Library Construction Account with dedication and expertise. Joella is a proud Purdue University graduate with degrees in Accounting and Marketing, and she holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix. We're excited to see her continue to lead and grow in this new role!

Lake County Manager's Meeting Update:

The County Manager's Meeting was held last Thursday in Leesburg. Key topics of discussion included the proposed raises being considered by both the Towns and the County for this year, as well as the status of legislation in Tallahassee regarding Property Tax reductions and the Homestead exemption increase. Unfortunately, momentum on these bills has stalled for the time being.

Transparency Initiative – Where Your Tax Dollars Go:

Lady Lake is moving forward with a new transparency project aimed at showing residents exactly how their tax dollars are spent. The Communications and Finance Departments are collaborating on this effort, and the resulting graphs will be posted on our website and Facebook page. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to enhance financial transparency in our community!

CLERK'S OFFICE (Nancy Wilson):

The Planning & Zoning Board's May meeting was cancelled. The commission meeting on Monday was a quick one and we have begun the agenda creation process for the May 19th meeting.

We are looking forward to working with our new Finance Director!! I'm sure she will be a great asset to the town and we in the clerk's office will do whatever we can to help her.

A workshop has been scheduled for May 15th at 4pm to discuss a new wastewater plant with Fruitland Park staff. Jason Shepler from Mittauer, Greg Lang from CPH and Karen Manila, City

Manager/Fruitland Park will attend. For background information: [Growth forces Fruitland Park to address wastewater treatment needs - Villages-News.com](#).

COMMUNICATIONS (Elisha Pappacoda):

April was a successful month for Communications.

Below is our April 2025 Facebook overview, with increases in all important metrics.

Page reach: 24,591 (+10.8%)

Views: 75,677 (+21%)

Posts: 52

Stories: 5

Content interactions: 1.8k (+28%)

Link clicks: 454 (+173%)

YouTube grew by 34 subscribers – likely the most growth we have ever seen in a month. We continue to work with PD to release body and dash cam videos that demonstrates the great work of our officers.

Our website traffic increased significantly from March (7,000 visitors) to April (9,000 visitors.) The top-visited pages were the main homepage, followed by the calendar and utilities.

We will seek to add additional funding to our budget in FY 25/26 for additional closed captioning due to increased streaming time for special meetings and workshops and allowing for longer Commission meetings. For example, in April, we streamed 132 minutes and had a total of 81 meeting viewers.

We had several positive news stories covered this week such as the Shred It and Forget It, the Arbor Day Tree Planting Ceremony, the Spring Concert Series, and PD at Bikefest (which was generated by a Facebook post) and how to prevent vehicle burglaries (which was generated by Chief's manager report.) Our multiple channels and methods of communication are reaching our audiences. We also proactively dispelled rumors regarding Portillo's and thank our media partners for being responsive.

We announced [Breakfast with the Mayor](#) on May 21 at 9 a.m. at Cottage Inn.

This week, we attended the Town Commission meeting and the wellness presentation on mental health. On Thursday, we will attend the swearing-in of new Officer Michael Tisdell.

Congratulations to our Water Conservation Poster Contest winners! Photos can be found on our [Facebook page](#) and the winning posters are on display at Town Hall.

FINANCE (Joella LeDonne)

This week the Finance Department experienced an email scam. The scammer tried to be sneaky and did not give up easily, but they didn't know who they were up against. The Town has their very own "Stalker", Michelle Sloane, who certainly tuned into her Spidey senses and took this scammer down and saved the Town lots of money. As we all grunt and groan over IT's cyber training and testing, it is very valuable. One of our construction contractors was the target. The scammer sent us an application to pay \$1,000,000, insisting that we pay it only by ACH. A million dollars? Wouldn't that be a red flag? Well, when you are dealing with construction invoices, that amount can be reasonable. In the past, this contractor had its mail stolen and when they caught the person, they had one of our checks in their possession, so we were already on alert. Not only does it create problems for our vendor but for us as well, by voiding and reissuing the check. We decided that going forward this contractor would have to come in and sign for the check. This scammer was good. The scammer stole our contractor's personal email address; you shouldn't mix your personal email with your work email (just saying). After all the explaining, the scammer just wasn't getting it, that we would only make the payment by check and someone would have to come in and sign for it. Michelle noticed that the email address was different than the one used before and alerted Howard. CT personally called our contractor. The contractor didn't know that his personal email address had been hacked and for us to ignore. Scammers are getting bolder and making it super difficult to spot. We are super grateful to have Michelle spot this hidden clue. While we stuck to our guns and did not change how we process payments, how many others would have caved. Huge kudos to Michelle!!! No scammer stands a chance against OUR STALKER!!!

Also, I would like to thank Bill for selecting me for the Finance Director's position, which I accepted. I was waiting to announce it in the weekly letter. I know some may have doubts and there is a lot to learn, but there has never been a challenge or obstacle that I could not overcome, and I welcome that. I work with a wonderful group of people and am grateful for what The Villages didn't see. I look forward to this new adventure that includes all of you.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT (Thad Carroll):

Building plans for the New Medical Building located at 151 La Grande Boulevard have been approved; the site will be developed as a 7,100 square foot single-story medical office building. The building department also received revised plans for the interior demolition of existing space at 480 North Highway 27/441; the location formerly occupied by Simply Salt.

Building plan revisions were also received for the La Reina Building - Exterior Restaurant Facade Renovations located at 1004 Main Street, as well as revisions for the first floor Sales and Information Suite Renovations at 1120 Main Street. Both permits are currently under review.

Plan review comments were sent to the applicant for the Church at the Springs Major Site Plan Modification located at 600 Rolling Acres Road. Site modifications include changes to the parking area, including the expansion of the parking lot, and landscaping enhancements.

Staff received applications for the annexation, rezoning, and small-scale future land use map amendment for property located at 129 East Hermosa Street. The property is 2.29 acres and currently zoned Lake County Rural Residential (R-1). The applicant is pursuing a designation of Single-Family Medium Density (R-6) in the Town of Lady Lake, as it is contiguous to Town property currently zoned R-6. The property is pursuing the annexation due to the need to connect to Town utilities.

One hundred and fifty-nine building permits or revisions were received this week, and one hundred permits were issued. One hundred and forty-five inspections were conducted in the field.

This week code enforcement opened nineteen new cases, closed eleven cases, and conducted sixty-five inspections. Senior Code Enforcement Officer Crain completed researching all the lien records from 2005 to present. Any outstanding activities have been canceled or completed. Release of Lien documents have been forwarded to the Lake County Clerk of Court for approximately 10 outstanding liens that had expired or were not officially released over the years.

HUMAN RESOURCES (Tamika DeLee):

The seventh wellness presentation was on May 7th. May's wellness topic was "Let's Talk About Mental Health." The presenter was Jana Liptak, a licensed mental health counselor, MA from Freedom Counseling Services, LLC. She has expertise in the following areas: anxiety, behavioral issues, divorce and many other topics. A total of 39 employees attended this presentation. Interviews are scheduled for today for the following positions: Public Works Operator I and Mechanic. Congratulations to Joella LeDonna on her promotion as the new Finance Director.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (John Pearl):

Staff are involved in multiple ongoing enterprise software, infrastructure and information security projects.

The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Implementation Team continues to be hard at work leaning into data migration effort. The team will meet later today to review our progress.

Patrick continued GIS field collection this week of the Town's water infrastructure.

The FiberWAN construction project continues. Most of the activity over the next few weeks will be noticed on the 27/441 corridor. John will be meeting this morning with the construction company to review progress.

Howard is continuing preparations for the security-related Lunch-and-Learn next week. Hourly staff, please check with your Department Heads for approval to attend prior to RSVP'ing.

LIBRARY (Aly Herman):

On Monday, I attended the commission workshop discussing the possibility of building a recreation center here in Lady Lake. I'm hopeful the commission recognizes the community's need for such a facility, and I'm excited about the opportunities it could offer our residents.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and Sierra created a thoughtful display in the library to help promote awareness and understanding.

Nicole and Kourtney will begin assembling the summer reading bags soon. Each bag will include a program calendar for June and July, a pencil, a reading log, stickers, markers, and a color-your-own beach ball for kids to keep. Our youngest patrons can start picking up their summer reading bags the week of May 26.

Here are the youth program stats for this week:

-Scavenger Hunt:28

-Lego Masters: 16

-Craft Corner: 30

-Tiny Tots: 20

-Family Crafting:10

-Storytime: 52

-Reading with Scarlett: 12

www.facebook.com/lakelakelibrary225

PARKS AND RECREATION (Mike Burske):

The Parks and Recreation Department had a maintenance week this week. We prepared the fields for play and mowed where necessary. We are in dire need of rain to keep the dust down and to let the grass green up.

We had a great Survivor Event on Saturday. We had a similar crowd to last year. The team along with some of Public Works staff did a great job once again. Rumor has it that we are having a concert in the near future, so keep your eyes peeled.

Sam, Vicky, and Nick have been diligently removing the shrubs located at the southern end of the soccer fields. These shrubs were planted 21 years ago, and over time, their health has deteriorated, particularly because they have been overshadowed by the trees I planted around 12 years ago. The trees provide much greater benefits to the park, offering shade, while the shrubs merely served as a barrier to the fence.

The Parks and Recreation Director has been working on next year's budget for the department. We will have the resurfacing of the courts at the Guava Street Athletic Complex as our biggest investment next year. I will be putting \$350k in my budget for the repaving/ resurfacing of the courts. I propose to eliminate tennis and have a total of six pickleball courts. Our tennis court is sparsely used and when it is it is someone trying to play pickleball on it.

I want to thank the Water Department for their help in installing extra spickets for the soccer fields. The new lines are coming right off a two-inch line and we did not feel comfortable tapping into that supply line. As always, Butch and his guys did awesome.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (Chief Steve Hunt):

We attended the Lake County Law Enforcement Memorial event hosted by the Lake County Sheriff's Office, honoring our fallen heroes. Tribute was paid to all the law enforcement officers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and served within the county.

Officer Michael Tisdell completed his two-week orientation and took his oath on Thursday. Michael comes to us with eight (8) years of experience from Astatula PD. He will begin his field training next week.

Officer Steven Johnson began his first week of orientation and will be sworn in next week. Steve comes to us from Leesburg PD.

We conducted a mock accreditation inspection as we prepare for our August inspection. Representatives from Clermont, Mount Dora, and Eustis conducted the two-day inspection.

I had a great time representing the police department at the Mother and Son Survivor competition last Saturday. I worked at a booth with Brad from Parks and Recreation.

Patrol had a productive weekend highlighted with a stolen car and stolen golf cart recovery, a couple of warrant arrests, a few shoplifters, and a DWI.

PUBLIC WORKS/UTILITIES DEPARTMENT (C.T. Eagle):

Administration (C.T. Eagle -Director and Peggy Smith – Admin Assistant to Director):

We have multiple positions open here at Public Works; open positions can be found here:

<https://www.ladylakefl.gov/210/Human-Resources>

Information regarding current Town Projects can be found here:

<https://www.ladylakefl.gov/167/Town-Projects>

Updated information regarding the FDOT US 27/441 Road Widening Project can be found here

<https://www.cflroads.com/project/238395-5>. Questions and concerns can also be submitted via the website.

Maintenance Department (Ted Williams, Supervisor):

Performed driveway apron inspections.

Worked on upcoming budget requests, gathering quotes, assisting and coordinating with other departments.

Responded to stormwater concerns.

Conducted interviews for open positions.

Streets (Kon Scott, Travis Lacey, and Justin Wallace - Lead Operators; Todd Foster – Operator II):

Performed litter pickup along roadways in Town. Continued cleaning or replacing street and stop signs townwide. Cleaned storm drains. Patched potholes and road cuts. Mowed Town maintained rights of ways.

Trimmed trees on W Lady Lake Blvd, W McClendon St, and Clay Ave.

Assisted with the Parks and Recreation event on Saturday.

Facilities Maintenance (Truman Henson - Lead Operator, Mark Walls - Operator II, and Phillip Perna – Operator I):

Staff completed multiple work orders at Town facilities. Repaired irrigation at Town Hall, PD, and the Library. Repaired HVAC unit at the Library.

Continued performing groundskeeping at Town Hall, PD, and the Library.

Motor Pool (Billy Kohler - Lead Mechanic):

Ongoing repair and maintenance on Town Vehicles and Equipment.

Utilities – Water and Sewer (Thomas “Butch” Goodman – Supervisor, and Mary Levesque -Staff Assistant to Supervisor):

A workshop meeting with the Town Commission is scheduled for May 15th, at 4:00 PM in the Commission Chambers for discussion and direction regarding future wastewater treatment and capacity planning.

Working on upcoming budget requests.

Coordinated with multiple contractors, engineers, vendors, developers, and other departments regarding future and current in-process projects going on around Town.

Current project coordination with Hammock Oaks (Multiple Phases), Boulevard Oaks, Lake Ella Estates, and Green Key Village, phases 5 and 6.

Conducted interviews for open positions.

Distribution and Collection Systems Field Operations (Robert Barnes, Lead Operator):

Coordinate and complete various work orders, working on new accounts, meter reading, and re-reads.

Completed 811 dig ticket location requests. Coordinating new fiber optic line locations.

Completed FDEP submittals, Water/Sewer/Reuse physical availability requests, Utility Quotes, CO inspection requests, and required back-flow device verification audits.

Performed weekly fueling and testing of emergency equipment, pumps, vehicles, and generators.

Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants (Daniel Myklejord – Lead Water Plant Operator, Darryl Flanders – Lead Wastewater Plant Operator, and Steve Pfouts – Treatment Plants Operations Manager)

Continued round-the-clock monitoring, making adjustments, and compliance assurance operations of the treatment plants is ongoing and doing well.

Water, Wastewater, and Reuse Systems Master Planning Project is in process by the Town Engineer, Jason Shepler. The results and suggested projects will be presented to the Town Commission for consideration of approval this Fiscal Year. These master plans outline current and projected system needs and potential projects, for continued operations levels of service, and to keep up with known and potential future demands due to growth.

The Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) renewal project with St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), is nearing the submittal phase to the regulatory agency for review. Projected completion of renewal is by the end of this year or early 2026. The Town received the last permit in 2006, a 20-year permit which allocates the maximum amount of groundwater that may be used to

supply the potable water system. Known and potential future growth contribute to the requested and granted water allocations.