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April is a great month to take advantage of some of the natural resources that Florida has available. It is not yet too hot, the summer crowds are not here from out of state, and it is a great time for a road trip! We have so many cool local parks, State and National Parks, Forests and Preserves ... April is a great time to visit somewhere you have not gone before. I have highlighted a few of our local favorites on the next page.

In future issues, I will mention some of the great local parks in our area. And I also hope to discuss a few of the natural springs that are close enough to check out in a day trip. If anyone has a favorite local gem, please let me know so I can check it out with my family!

PLEASE NOTICE EVERYTHING THAT IS UNDERLINED IS A CLICKABLE LINK!

Please **visit my YouTube channel** by clicking this link [@johnlawrencerealtor](#) and hit the **SUBSCRIBE button**. It does not cost anything and would be a huge favor that would really help me out!

I look forward to hopefully providing some helpful information for you in the First Coast Report. If you ever have any suggestions for content or any questions to ask, please let me know. If you have a new business or restaurant that you like, please share with me. Thanks for reading!

John Lawrence, Broker Associate

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In addition to all our great beaches, NE Florida offers some fantastic parks and preserves to enjoy!

[Anastasia State Park, St. Augustine](#)

Located just minutes away from all the action of St. Augustine, Anastasia State Park is a haven for visitors and for wildlife. Abundant wading birds hunt for food along Salt Run, including colorful spoonbills. Osprey and eagles rule the skies with more than 1,600 acres of unspoiled beaches, tidal marshes, maritime hammocks and ancient sand dunes. Kayaks, bikes, and other watercraft can be rented at the park's concessionaire.

[Raven Gardens State Park, Palatka](#)

Ravine Gardens State Park is one of the nine New Deal-era state parks in Florida. The park has two ravines up to 120 feet deep with steep banks at 45-degree angles. A 1.8-mile paved road winds around the ravines, offering visitors dramatic views. Numerous picnic sites, equipped with tables and grills, are available to visitors. The garden's peak flowering period is azalea season, January to March. The hundreds of remaining azaleas have a "rolling bloom" and top out with about 50% to 60% of the plants blooming simultaneously.

[Talbot Island State Parks, Jacksonville](#)

Seven NE Florida parks and preserves make up the Talbot Islands system giving visitors an in-depth look at the area's history and natural beauty. Each park has its own special draw: Visit the Civil War ruins at Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park, take a kayak trip at Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park, or ride horses along the beach at Amelia Island State Park just for starters. The other four NE Florida parks in the system are Little Talbot Island State Park, Big Talbot Island State Park, Fort George Island Cultural State Park, and George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park.

[Princess Place Preserve, Palm Coast](#)

Situated on 1,500 acres along the Matanzas River and Pellicer Creek, Princess Place Preserve is the site of a real-life fairytale romance between the widow who once owned the property and an exiled Russian prince. The lodge was built in 1887 using local materials and constructed in the Adirondack camp style and is most likely the only example of this style in the state. Florida's first in-ground swimming pool is here ... drawing water from an artesian spring. Spend time kayaking, birding, hiking, biking, or camping at one of the many primitive sites on the property.

[Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, Palm Coast](#)

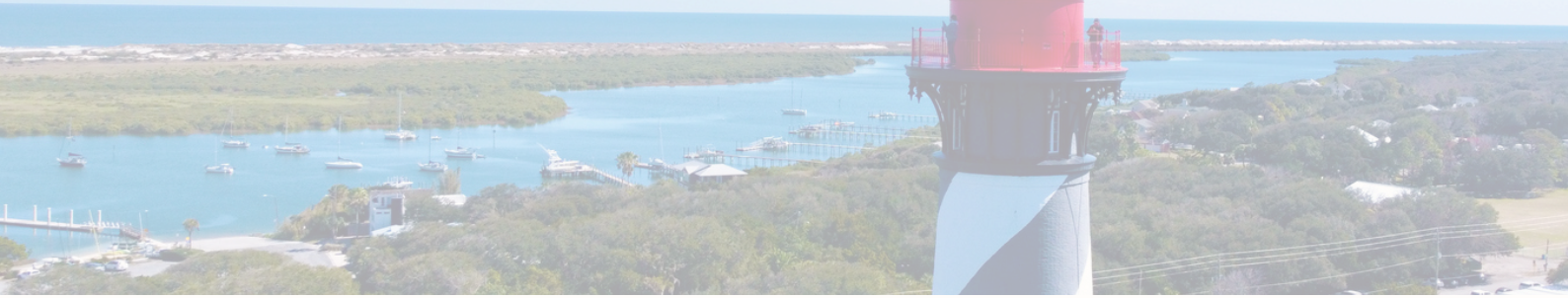
Enjoy two vastly different experiences here as the gardens side offers visitors a peaceful stroll along winding reflection ponds sheltered by a picturesque oak hammock and Intracoastal views. Oceanside, Washington Oaks is famous for its unique shoreline of coquina rock formations along the Atlantic beach. This ancient rock formation creates the perfect spot for beachcombing, tidal pool exploring, and photography.



APRIL 2026 ... AREA EVENTS

First Coast Report

April 2026



APRIL 2026 ... AREA EVENTS

NOTE: THESE ARE CLICKABLE LINKS THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO THE EVENT PAGE

- [April 2-12 - Clay County Ag Fair @ Clay County Fairgrounds \(Green Cove Springs\)](#)
- [April 4 - Easter Parade \(St. Augustine\)](#)
- [April 4 - Sugar Land Space Cowboys vs. Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp @ VyStar Ballpark \(Jax\)](#)
- [April 4-5 - Mandarin Art Festival @ Mandarin Community Club \(Jacksonville\)](#)
- [April 7 - Carlos Santana at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre \(St. Aug.\) - SOLD OUT!](#)
- [April 8 - The Band Perry @ Ponte Vedra Music Hall \(Ponte Vedra Beach\)](#)
- [April 9 - Dwight Yoakam @ The Amp \(St. Augustine\)](#)
- [April 10-12 - Gamble Rogers Folk Festival @ St. Johns County Fairgrounds \(Elkton\)](#)
- [April 11 - Atlanta Gladiators vs. Jacksonville Icemen @ VyStar Veterans Arena \(Jax\)](#)
- [April 12 - A Taste of St. Augustine @ The Amp \(St. Augustine\)](#)
- [April 12 - Jam'n 4 Paws Music Fest @ Palm Coast Elks Club \(Palm Coast\)](#)
- [April 12 - Taj Mahal & The Phantom Blue Band @ Florida Theatre \(Jacksonville\)](#)
- [April 14 - The Fabulous Thunderbirds @ Ponte Vedra Music Hall \(Ponte Vedra Beach\)](#)
- [April 16 - Trace Adkins with Confederate Railroad @ The Amp \(St. Augustine\)](#)
- [April 16-19 - Fish to Fork Weekend @ Omni Resort \(Amelia Island\)](#)
- [April 17 - Foreigner with Night Ranger @ The Amp \(St. Augustine\)](#)
- [April 18 - Annual Middleburg Spring Festival @ Middleburg Museum \(Middleburg\)](#)
- [April 24 - Everclear @ The Five Theatre - \(Jacksonville\)](#)
- [April 25 - Touch A Truck 2026 @ Clay County Fairgrounds \(Green Cove Springs\)](#)
- [April 25 - Bostwick Blueberry Festival @ Bostwick Community Center \(Palatka\)](#)
- [April 25-26 - Cabbage, Potato, & Bacon Festival - Hastings Main Street \(Hastings\)](#)
- [April 27-28 - Maren Morris @ Ponte Vedra Music Hall \(Ponte Vedra Beach\)](#)



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CLAY COUNTY UPDATE

NOTE: THESE ARE CLICKABLE LINKS THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO THE BUSINESS PAGE

Fleming Island

One of my favorite water view locations, [Whitey's Fish Camp](#) on Doctors Lake Creek on County Rd 220, is being sold after 60+ years of family ownership. Founded in 1963 by Whitey and Ann Ham, it was sold on March 10, 2026 to Harry's of America, the same group behind Harry's Seafood and Casa Reina in St. Augustine. The new owners plan to preserve the Whitey's name and legacy while making some additions to the menu after a short refresh closure from March 30 - April 7. I think this will be great as I love Harry's and Casa Reina! [V Pizza + Tap Garden](#) is another option to check out on US 17.

Green Cove Springs

This quaint river town is undergoing a multi-year effort on enhancing downtown to boost walkability and economic growth. The Walnut Street streetscape, Spring Park renovations, and restoration of the Rivers House for public use are all part of the long term plan. On the housing development side of things, lots of new construction neighborhoods are being built including the Rookery by DR Horton, just south of town. The distinction between Green Cove Springs and Middleburg is barely visible now with many new neighborhoods on Russell Rd (Cross Creek by DR Horton, Anabelle Island by KB Home, and Russell Retreat by Lennar). Sandridge Rd is especially busy with Granary Park and Holstein Crossing by Lennar, Sandridge Hills and Lakes at Bella Lago by Mattamy Homes, and Hyland Trail are just a few of the new options. To get away from the construction, consider a visit to [Reparation Earth Farms](#), south of Green Cove on County Rd 209. Here they are producing fresh produce with aquaponic lettuces and herbs and farm raised fish.

Middleburg

The opening of the First Coast Expressway has created several new neighborhoods including Jennings Farm and Atlantis Pointe by Dream Finders Homes, Double Branch and Murray Farms by Pulte Homes and Baxley Villas by Drees Homes. Lots of new retail offerings are now open on Blanding Blvd. by the First Coast Expressway interchange including [Anejo Cocina Middleburg](#).

Orange Park












[Callahan's Irish Bistro](#) is a new dining option featuring classic Irish dishes - some infused with a Cajun flair as the Irish Callahan Family married into a French Cajun family ... sounds like a good match!



Valued Friends and Customers ...Thanks for taking the time to read my newsletter!

March was a busy month for me. I was able to close two of my listings (both cash buyers) and signed another new construction contract for a "build from dirt" home in St. Johns County.

Interest rates have risen to approximately 6.5% after a brief drop under 6%. Overall activity has remained pretty strong and we anticipate an increase in new listings hitting the market this Spring. Inflation is becoming a big concern and the analysts are keeping a close watch on the job market. Florida employment continues to outperform the country with construction, health care, professional services, tourism & hospitality sectors leading the way.

Jacksonville MSA		February 2026 Year-to-Date	
Single-Family Homes			
	CLOSED SALES		MEDIAN SALE PRICE
 8.80% from a year ago	2,843	 -1.30% from a year ago	\$384,900
	DOLLAR VOLUME		NEW LISTINGS
 6.90% from a year ago	\$1.4 Billion	 3.20% from a year ago	5,218
	ACTIVE INVENTORY		NEW PENDING SALES
 -8.30% from a year ago	6,761	 120% from a year ago	4,017



For Sale
\$600,000

254 OAK SHADOW PL



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RIVERTOWN

[VIEW LISTING](#)

Owner pride truly shows in this Holton Farmhouse plan by Mattamy Homes in the Arbors at Rivertown. You will appreciate the upgraded features and enjoy living in this open concept single story home. The 8' doors, 5 1/4" base molding, and luxury vinyl plank flooring are impressive. 4 bedrooms plus a study with french doors provide lots of family options. Beautiful ceiling fans, light fixtures, and plantation shutters throughout. Master suite features a tray ceiling, dual vanities, large walk-in shower and closet with storage organizers. These Boaxel organizers have been added throughout the storage areas and closets. Other great features include a water softener, EV charging outlet, electronic shade for sliding glass doors, extended lanai and paver patio, vinyl privacy fence, gutters & downspouts, and custom landscaping. Great location in the community close to the new Hallows Cove Academy, Riverview Lodge, and all the outstanding amenities that Rivertown has to offer!



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