



CHECKS & BALANCES



Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Office Newsletter

October 2025

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Clerk's Message

Not to state the obvious, but the end of a fiscal year and the start of a new one are challenging. Once accomplished, as recently done successfully again thanks to our amazing Finance and Administration team, we can step back and breath for just a moment. Then we hit the ground running to again accomplish the roles and goals our newly-funded budget allows. **So, let's go!**

Fiscal Year 25/26 has begun. With it, as announced in our recent all-staff meeting, we are able to provide a 3% COLA for most of our 104 employees. Workspaces were improved recently (the dust is still settling in our Civil and Admin areas) and our eyes are now on improvements to our Clerk's Office Breakroom (by the APR) and updates to the main courthouse's entrance/exit areas that will make us all more safe/secure in the long run. I am thankful for everyone's patience as we adjust to the sounds and smells of renovations to other parts of the building. It will be great when its done (you'll hear me say that often in the months ahead, I am sure). In all seriousness, the growth of our county has to be matched by growth in our facilities and staff...it is how we will keep up with the pace of requested services while still providing the excellent customer service for which you are well known.

While clerks like you and your management team members continuously "hold down the fort" daily in 25/26, I will continue to make sure our priorities and workplace needs are shared with state and local leaders alike. I proudly serve on several key Clerk's association (FCCC) committees (pictured here with fellow Clerks in Tally as we honored Rep. Sam Garrison for his upcoming Speaker of the House role), where I share info about our many "lessons learned" which helps improve the reputation and involvement of Clerks of Court and Comptrollers statewide. Thank you for your support always!

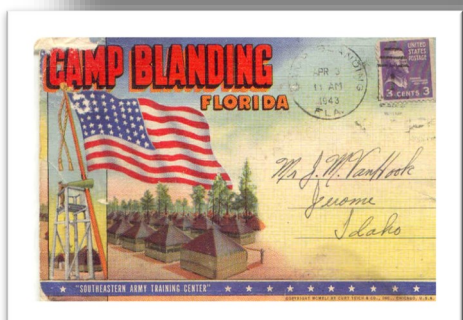


Tara Green



Camp Blanding — Community Partners

Twice this quarter our office was able to connect with our new partners from Camp Blanding. Personnel representing the base's Soldier & Family Readiness programs (Florida Army National Guard) met with Clerk Green, key staff, Judge Whittington, and with Clay County Veterans Services Department leaders, too. Camp Blanding plays an important role in the military history of Clay County — plus a major role still — Thank you!



Signs of the Season Abound!

As always, we encourage you to get out and enjoy all the signs, sights, and sounds of the upcoming holiday season in our county!

For example, look out for our office's decorated tree in nearby Spring Park (GCS), for *Christmas in the Courtyard* decorations throughout the Historic Triangle site (great place for family photos), and in the main courthouse lobby — our 12' Christmas tree.

Not to mention the decorations we know will pop up in our Admin lobby and in your departments. Enjoy!



Employment Milestones — Congrats!

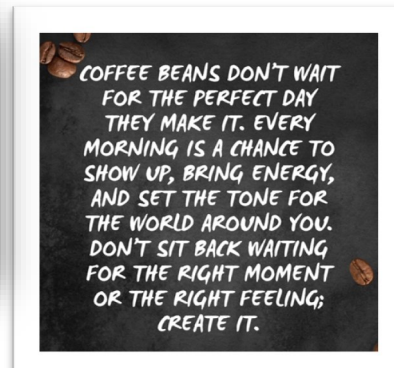
We love to celebrate your milestones and share a glimpse of everyone's career progress. Our colleagues with twenty (20) or more total years of service here are highlighted each quarter. We also acknowledge (*) that many of our Comptroller and VAB employees joined our Clerk's Office ranks five years ago as a continuation of years of service worked in other county or constitutional offices. Here's to many more successful milestones and to everyone's future accomplishments!

Name	Workiversary	Years of Service
Hailey Johns	August 5th	1
Chelsey Mason	August 14th	2
Dillon Averett	August 17th	*5
Mary Justino	August 18th	8
Becky Crews	August 19th	12
Dena Leino	August 23rd	26
MJ Rood	August 24th	5
Verlon Woodard	August 24th	10
Jeremy Bauer	August 26th	1
Tameika Hampshire	August 26th	23
Kim Rodgers	August 28th	19
Christie Blanchett	August 31st	*5
Paul Campanale	September 3rd	12
Christy Bell	September 5th	2
Blaine Hilton	September 10th	1
Tim Bell	September 12th	3
Cheryl Senter	September 14th	5
Sarah Knowlton	September 26th	9
Holly Casterline	September 30th	23
Cindy Atkinson	October 1st	*5
David Caudill	October 1st	*5
Pete Mauger	October 1st	*5
Beth Buford	October 2nd	2
Lillian Robles-Rodriguez	October 18th	3
Amie Herrera	October 29th	23
April Cercy	October 31st	2

Your Public Service is Appreciated



Congrats to these employees on hitting a variety of employment milestones — all were recently recognized at our all-staff meeting.



All-Star of the Quarter

This All-Star employee delivers exceptional service with integrity. Recording Department Clerk Theresa Blankenship is an innovative problem-solver whose stellar work helps her department navigate challenges. Especially when her manager takes well-deserved time off this employee’s sharp eye for spotting and solving curveball situations means she appropriately alerts members of the Executive Team so we can tackle issues successfully together. Her subtle leadership and teamwork turns potential pandemonium into polished triumph. She is a deserving All-Star recipient and target of multiple nominations submitted by her peers. Additionally, an Executive Team member described how, “....The Recording Department encounters a wide variety of tasks and issues to solve daily which may leave employees feeling like they “walk through a mine field” each week, but this employee handles that “walk” with grace and a calm demeanor.” Previously, this clerk also assisted with a microfilm scanning project, going above and beyond her daily assigned duties. In the bustling realm of our Recording Department this clerk emerges as a true public servant who cares deeply about her customers and colleagues alike.



Congrats, Recording Clerk Theresa Blankenship!

Did You Know...

We all see how dedicated our Comptroller’s Office staff are. What you may not know about their leader, Finance Director / Comptroller David Caudill, however is that when he isn’t putting his finance skills to good use for the Clerk’s Office and county, he puts them to good use for the Boy Scouts (Pack 281, St. Johns County), so much so that he was named the Scout’s *Committee Member of the Year* in recognition of all the extra time and effort poured into their activities. We join David’s family and Scouting colleagues in congratulating him!



Finance Director – Comptroller David Caudill took over leadership of the Comptroller Division in 2024; joined the Clerk’s Office initially in 2020; he was with the County as their Assistant Finance Director commencing in 2019.

Civil Dept. — Our Purple People!



Thank you, Clerks of the Civil Department, for representing our office well year-round but especially during the month of October. You look great in purple — as does the whole group pictured — and we appreciate you raising awareness annually about the dangers of domestic violence.



Out and About — With Our Community



Our interactions with our community (both inside our offices and out) are so important. Kudos for showing off your USA pride and for welcoming Clay County teachers to the courthouse, too! Clerk Green loved spending time with students during US Constitution Week and joining Habitat for Humanity members on site!



ATTENTION

PLEASE BE AWARE - SOME AREAS OF COURTHOUSE ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

All services remain available.

- Deliveries to Clerk's all-purpose room (1st Floor, old side); Admin staff there.
- Clerk's Office OP Branch and online options are available (clayclerk.com)
- In September, renovation projects are ongoing in Administration, Civil, and Clerk's Finance (1st Floor) areas.
- Customers please go to Traffic Court, Comptroller's Office to contact Civil clerks while other areas close.

Please keep an eye open and an ear listening out for more construction in some additional areas of our buildings—even down at the Historic Triangle (Archives Depository) this year and next year.



Tales from the Clink 2025 —

Another fun *Tales from the Clink* event in the books - *darn the rain* - but we forged on! Kudos to all involved especially our Clerk's Office Historical Archives team (Vishi, Amelia, Tim) and our great volunteers (Brian, Melba, Rick, Marilyn, Rob, Patrice, Lt. McDade, plus Library and Museum staff). Thanks most of all to the awesome drama students from RHS and instructor Lindsay McDade. We hope attendees enjoyed this rare opportunity to view our county's coolest historic buildings in the evening, plus the history museum and railroad depot manned by the Historical Society members. Always a cool and creepy way to kick off the fall season! The GCSPD vintage patrol car on site plus the coffee, cookies, and hot cocoa from the Spring Park Coffee shop owners helped, too!



October 2025

IT Dept = Software Design & More Featured in Clay Today Article

By Kyla Woodard

kyla@claytodayonline.com

Click [here](#) to view the full story online. :)

Saving money and getting legal assistance has never been easier when it comes to the Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller's Low Bono services. And one new addition is taking it a step further. The courthouse's legal assistance program is now offered online, making it convenient for users to access virtually. From child support, divorce and domestic violence injunctions, to paternity and probate, the program connects self-representing litigants, or pro se litigants, with licensed attorneys willing to assist civil cases at a low cost, whether that be with case guidance, or form and packet reviews. The program benefits those who don't qualify for Pro Bono services (these are free and provided by the Legal Aide Office), but also lack the funds to pay for a private attorney. Generally, rates for Florida attorneys can range anywhere from \$150 to \$500 an hour. Local volunteer attorneys run the Low Bono sessions at 30 minutes for \$50 and an hour for \$80. Clerk Tara Green said that these pro se litigants are often people trying to navigate the legal landscape, getting lost with the requirements of forms and filings, and frequently filling them out incorrectly. This, in turn, can lead to a longer court process.

This program does its best to prevent that....and General Counsel Brian Byrd said adding a virtual option was imperative. "We had failures to appear, we had numerous people, attorneys as well, who said they would really like a virtual option," Byrd said.

With the help of Chief Technology Officer Justin Horan and Clerk's Office Info Systems Specialist Mitchell Mackoul, Byrd said the office was able to create the software in-house in just a few months..... (continues online).

**Please remember to refer citizens to the Low Bono page on our website!*



Mock Trial Competition — Here!

The 4th Floor of the main courthouse will soon be home to our Teen Court Program's first hosting of a mock trial competition here in our main courthouse. Teen Court Manager Stacey Smith and her staff are working very hard to not only host the event logistically but also to create the manuals required for use as a legit "trial". A word of thanks in advance of this 10/24/25 event to everyone helping to prepare our site, welcome the visiting teams, and judging the competition, too. Have a great event!



Coming Soon...

- Halloween Friday Fun on October 31st (enjoy casual dress / costumes)
- Veteran's Day Holiday on Tuesday, November 11th (offices closed)
- Clerk's Office THANKFUL TREE in November (main courthouse lobby)
- Christmas in the Courtyard in December (Historic Triangle, GCS)
- Art in the Courthouse Youth Art Display (late Nov, Dec, Jan); 4th Floor
- Clerk/Comptroller's Office Annual Employee Christmas Luncheon/Party

Friday, December 5th

at Thrasher-Horne

Conference Center

