

FORT MORGAN NEWS



April 2016 ~ Issue 110



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi, Folks,

We had a fine turnout for the community meeting in March--close to 200 people. Support for our incorporation efforts was over 95%! Good discussion and lots of questions were answered.

Rep. Steve McMillan has introduced our bill in the Alabama House and it was read for the first time. So...things are finally moving forward. Remember to talk up our efforts with friends, family and neighbors. If you live in Alabama, please contact your state legislators and ask them to support the bill for incorporation of Fort Morgan. We will need all the support we can muster. There will be some entrenched interests that will oppose us.

Rep. McMillan told me that plans are in the works to remove the old pier at the Fort and build a new one!! Maybe by Fall, but probably the following summer.

Hope all had a joyful Easter. Don't forget our April meeting on Monday, April 11, 6:30PM at Shell Banks Church.

Paul

Paul Barefield



MEMBER NOTICES

FMCA March Highlights

The Welcome to Fort Morgan District 25 sign is now installed on the north side of Fort Morgan Road, just west of the Gulf Shores city boundary. It was installed just in time for the Town Hall meeting of March 5th. Thanks to the committee, headed by Carol Kittrell, and to the installation crew Ken and Emily Steiner and Paul Barefield. It is a handsome welcome to our community.

The Community Town Hall meeting to discuss incorporation of District 25 drew an estimated 200 property and business owners and peninsula residents to Fire Station #2 on the afternoon of March 5th. An article with a photo of part of the standing-room-only crowd appeared in the Lagniappe-Mobile newspaper:

<http://lagniappemobile.com/fort-morgan-incorporation-gathers-steam/>

Photo Courtesy of Janice Neitzel

Cars were parked on both sides of the road for a long distance each way. Those parking in the boonies had a shuttle available courtesy of our firefighters and their ATV. President Paul Barefield made a balanced presentation of the pros and cons of incorporation. The majority of those attending were in favor of incorporation and several wanted more information before deciding.



A letter will be sent to Alabama state legislators asking for their support of the Fort Morgan incorporation bill. The letter will include reference to the historical and environmental importance of Fort Morgan and appreciation of their positive vote to allow only the voters of an affected county or political subdivision to vote on the amendment.

Incorporation of Fort Morgan District 25 ~ Bill is in the Alabama House!

The incorporation bill was introduced in the House by Rep. Steve McMillan Monday, March 21st and received its first reading. It was then referred to the Baldwin County Legislative Committee. **IF YOU ARE AN ALABAMA RESIDENT, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR ALABAMA LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATOR AND REQUEST THEIR SUPPORT FOR THIS BILL.**

A letter to District 25 property owners and registered voters was mailed (US Postal Service) February 24th explaining the rationale for incorporation and asking for comments and support. **If you have not yet responded to the letter, it's not too late**—send your answer to INFO@fortmorgancivic.org. For full content, see attachment to the February issue of the **NEWS** or contact the Editor to request another copy.

Turtle Tracks 2016~~~~~Volunteers Needed!!

Fort Morgan Share the Beach team is urgently seeking volunteers for the 2016 sea turtle nesting season starting May 1. Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge has lost some of its funding and will no longer cover non-Refuge areas with its UTVs. This leaves 8 miles of beach to be covered, an especially difficult task for early morning nest searching from May 1 through August 31. When the situation became known, members of the community rallied around the Fort Morgan Turtle Team. Many individuals and several businesses showed eagerness to donate for an all-terrain vehicle or to sponsor fund-raising events.

NEEDED NOW: volunteers willing and able to walk approximately 1 mile of beach in the early mornings to locate sea turtle tracks and nests. Team leaders will try their best to make it possible for you to pick the days you want to walk and the section of beach that you prefer. If you are interested, please contact team co-leader Debbie Harbin (251-391-8333) or Debi Gholson digholson@hotmail.com or send an email to fmseaturtles@hotmail.com ASAP!

Fort Morgan Volunteer Fire DepartmentChief Glenn Stevens

During February, your Fire Department responded to 25 calls: 12 medical, 12 false alarms, and 1 brush fire. March started off with a bang with 4 brush fires within a 24-hour period; all started from downed power lines due to high winds. One fire in the 4800 block of Highway 180 spread to both sides of the highway due to high winds. It took three hours and the help of Gulf Shores Fire Rescue to control the fire.

Spring breakers have invaded our area, and we expect to stay busy for the duration. Our young firefighters have stepped it up to help us with the large call volume, and some firefighters have volunteered to stay overnight at the Station for a faster response time.

The Ladies Auxiliary's spaghetti dinner fund-raiser was very successful. The new tee shirts were a big hit. [\$20 each or 2 for \$30—check the hot pink!] Anyone wanting to purchase our tee shirts can find the information on our Facebook page: Fort Morgan Fire Rescue. Also, visit our new website at www.fortmorganvfd.com. We'll try to keep new information and pictures posted on these sites for those of you interested in keeping up with Fire Department activities.



Our donation request letter has been mailed out, and the response has been excellent. I want to thank everyone that has sent us a donation. The money will be used to obtain proper equipment and training that can improve our ISO rating, which can lead to lower homeowners' insurance premiums. Our goal is to provide the best possible fire, medical, and rescue services to our community.

We're still hoping to see a few more residents join us at our training meetings on the first and third Mondays every month. Also, if you have any ideas or suggestions that you would like the Fire Department to consider, join us at our Board Meetings on the second Tuesday every month at Station 1 at 5:30 p.m.

Fort Morgan State Historic Site

The Fort is still dealing with no main restrooms due to the collapse of the restroom septic system. If all goes as planned the restrooms may be back in operation by the start of the summer season. We are coping with porta-johns.



The Alabama Historical Commission has arranged to have radio spots and bill boards advertising the fort this spring. The bill boards will be located on 1-65 and 1-10.

Mike Bailey presented a program for 43 US Army Corps of Engineer officers and NCOs of the South Atlantic Division who were attending the Professional Development Conference in Mobile.

The spring looks to be very busy with a number of school groups booking tours through May. Some of these groups will have as many as 150 students.

During March 7-18 an Archaeological crew from the University of South Alabama conducted an archaeological dig around the Fort Morgan Ferry parking lot in preparation for installation of new lighting.

Army Corps of Engineer Officers & NCOs, South Atlantic Div.

Construction Proceeds on New Gulf State Park Lodge and Conference Center

Following a federal judge's decision that use of BP oil spill funds to construct the lodge is prohibited, Governor Bentley announced that construction will proceed as planned with funding identified from "other sources." The original lodge was destroyed by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, preceding the oil spill by six years. The State had planned to use \$58 million of the BP settlement to build the hotel and conference center, with an additional \$17 million to be spent on park improvements. Building of the lodge and center was lumped with park improvements into the "Gulf State Park Improvements" project. The Gulf Restoration Network (GRN), a non-profit environmental organization, filed suit and prevailed at the federal level on the basis that use of BP funds was improper.

Fort Morgan Peninsula Neighborhood Safety & Crime Report ~ March 2016

EMERGENCY: 911 ~ Report all potentially life-threatening and suspicious activities

Sheriff's Department—Administrative Office...972-6802

Sheriff's Office Website: www.sheriffobaldwin.com

Anonymous Tip Email Address (NOT for Emergencies): <http://sheriffobaldwin.com/contactRC.asp>

SPRING BREAK Message from Sgt. Nathan Lusk, BCSO:

As I'm sure most of you know, Spring Break is upon us. The next couple of weeks will bring an influx of juveniles, young adults, and adults to the area. There is always a rise in crime when the number of people in a small geographic area increases. Please keep in mind to lock your valuables up, document serial numbers on serialized items and report suspicious activity. We recommend safeguarding your properties at all times and remind you and your homeowners association that lights, cameras and alarms help deter most property crimes. Cameras add valuable evidence to cases and we recommend cameras and DVRs with a minimum of 1080HD resolution and enough memory to sufficiently lap the time between checking your investments.

In a response to the likelihood of crime in the area, the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office has increased patrols and the number of Deputies available for the area. So far a large number of arrests have been made stemming from alcohol and drug violations. We will continue to maintain this added presence throughout the Spring Break Season.

If you have information about thefts in the area or suspicious activity please contact the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office and let us know!

Fort Morgan Crime Report ~ February 28-March 18, 2016:

2/28/16	1600 Block Hwy. 180	Theft
3/1/16	1500 Block Hwy. 180	Theft
3/16/16	10400 Block 2 nd St.	Theft
3/18/16	6700 Block Driftwood Dr.	Theft

Sergeant Nathan Lusk, Criminal Investigations Command, 251-972-8589 Ext 7618

New Garbage (“Solid Waste”) Policy Affects Fort Morgan Peninsula Home Owners

Please read the new guidelines to see how you might be affected. For more info, see the February Fort Morgan NEWS issue. See the new policy at: <http://baldwincountyal.gov/departments/solid-waste/>
You will need to fill out the form for “Seasonal Rate” if your Fort Morgan house is your primary residence and you desire the old rate for 1/week pickup. If you have other comments, contact your Baldwin County Commissioner, Charles “Skip” Gruber: cgruber@baldwincountyal.gov

DISTRACTED DRIVING—AND WALKING?

In 2014, 3,179 deaths and 424,000 injuries were caused in the US by distracted driving, including driving while using cell phones, according to a study conducted by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Hands-free devices are culprits in many cases since they lull drivers into thinking they can handle highway hazards safely. Other possible causes: eating, drinking, talking to a passenger, and adjusting music or other devices. Pedestrian deaths were up 10% in 2015 over 2014, and up 20% in the six-year period since 2009. More than 9 of 10 adults owned a cell phone as of January 2014.

Baldwin County Commission Contacts

Commissioners:

Charles “Skip” Gruber
cgruber@baldwincountyal.gov
251-943-5061

Tucker Dorsey
tdorsey@baldwincountyal.gov
251-972-8502

Chris Elliott
ctelliott@baldwincountyal.gov
251-990-4606

Frank Burt, Jr.
fburt@baldwincountyal.gov
251-937-0395

To speak at a regular commission meeting, you must have signed up before the meeting. Check the dates, times and locations for all meetings at <http://www.baldwincountyal.gov>

FMCA Executive Board Contacts

If you have questions, need information or would like to volunteer, please contact one of the following board members:

Officers

President	Paul Barefield	540-7727	csbarefield@gmail.com
Vice President	Ernie Church	334-220-0851	ecaces4@gmail.com
Treasurer	Chan West	979-4932	granchan@earthlink.net
Secretary	Carol Kittrell	251-605-4134	ckittrell@southalabama.edu
Standing Committee Chairs			
District 25 Planning & Zoning	Ken Steiner	540-7223	kennethjsteiner@centurytel.net
Hospitality	Thelma Strong	540-7383	twstrong@gulftel.com
Incorporation	Paul Barefield	540-7727	csbarefield@gmail.com
Membership	Bonnie Lowry	540-9327	
NEWS & Website Editor	Sonja Sanders	543-1030	
Sunshine	sunnisands@centurylink.net		
	Vickie Matranga	543-1555	vpowers110@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendars:

FMCA Monthly Meeting ~ Monday, April 11th, 6:30pm
District 25 Planning & Zoning Committee ~ April 20th, 9:00am

FMCA 2016 MEETINGS ~ 2nd Monday, 6:30pm, Shell Banks Church:
April 11 ~ May 9 ~ June 13 ~ July 11 ~ August 8 ~ September 12

IF 2016 DUES ARE NOT PAID ~ THIS IS YOUR LAST FORT MORGAN NEWS
Send the completed member form [attached] with your dues. If unsure of your status, contact: Treasurer Chan West, granchan@earthlink.net or 251-979-4932.

Fort Morgan Civic Association
P. O. Box 5313 ~ Gulf Shores, AL 36547
www.fortmorgancivic.org

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MEMBERSHIP FORM – ANNUAL DUES \$15.00

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Home Mailing Address _____ Phone _____

City, State, Zip _____ Cell Phone _____

Fort Morgan Address _____ Phone _____

This property is west of mile 14.7: _____yes _____no -- See Article III, Section 1 below OR Associate Member? _____ yes

Registered Voter? Yes____ No____ Fort Morgan District 25____ Alabama-other district/city____ State_____

Email (please provide for special alerts) _____
 [Save trees, stamps, time, get your news in color by e-mail.] Send newsletter by email____ by U.S. Postal Service____

Your employment _____ Spouse's employment _____

Referred to FMCA by _____

Reason for joining the Association _____

NOTICE: We need volunteers to help the Association in the following areas. Where can you assist? (circle)

- Program Planning:** Identify & Arrange Speakers Phone/Survey Members for Interests
Zoning: Attend Meetings of Baldwin County/Gulf Shores Write Brief Reports
Membership/Hospitality: Recruitment Phone Tree Greeter at Meetings Help with Dinners
Communications: Postal Mailings E-mail Writing for Newspaper, Publicity Releases, etc.
Newsletter: Desktop Graphics/Layout Gather/Submit News Items Write Brief Articles Photography
Computer: Set Up/Maintain Data Base Spreadsheets Excel Access Word PowerPoint
Financial: Help with Fundraising Bookkeeping Annual Audit

What other skills, experience or talents could you volunteer? _____

From the By-laws Adopted April 11, 2005

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1 Regular (voting) Membership in this association shall be open only to property owners and/or residents in the unincorporated area west of mile 14.7 of the Fort Morgan peninsula.
- Section 2 Associate (non-voting) Membership shall be open to residents of areas outside the Fort Morgan Peninsula whose interests coincide with those of the Association including the preservation of the environment and quality of life of the Fort Morgan peninsula.
- Section 3 Membership application shall be made by completion of a form provided by the Association and payment of the required dues. Dues for the following year shall be determined at the October general meeting and shall be for the following calendar year January 1st through December 31st.
- Section 4 Payment of Regular (voting) Membership dues entitles a member household to one (1) vote. A member household is comprised of Association members living at one physical address. Past year member households paying dues after January 31st and new members joining the Association will have no voting rights until thirty (30) days after payment of dues.
- Section 5 Payment of Associate (non-voting) Membership dues entitles the member to attend all member meetings and receive the monthly newsletter.

Make checks payable to: **Fort Morgan Civic Association or FMCA**

I would like to make a donation to the Incorporation Fund in the amount of \$ _____

2016 dues @ \$15/household _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Your donation to the Fort Morgan Civic Association is not tax deductible as we do not qualify because of our political activity attempting to prevent proliferation of large-scale high-rise development on Fort Morgan Peninsula.