

Scenic Watch



Happy New Year!



Scenic Waterways:
Paddle Florida Adventures during 2016



Photo: Florida Times Union

..Paddle Florida Inc. is a not-for-profit organized to support canoeing and kayaking in Florida.

News From
December
2015



Fun Festivals
and Events

Central
and West

- Nov 27-Jan 3
Poinsetta Display, Lake Wales
- Nov 27-Jan 3
Winter Walking
- Jan 2-3
Dade's Battle Re-enactment &
Trade Fair, Bushnell
- Jan 2-3
Sunshine City Antiques and
Collectibles Show, Venice
- Jan 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Winter Music Series at the
Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards,
Clermont
- Jan 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Guided Nature Hikes, Titusville
- Jan 7-9
World Quilt Florida, Orlando
- Jan 8-10

Scenic Watch

Multi-day padding/camping adventures across Florida showcase the state's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage while promoting water conservation, wildlife preservation, springs restoration and waterways protection. Paddle Florida also seeks to promote Florida as an international destination for nature-based tourism...

Florida Keys Challenge — Jan. 15-22

Embark on an unforgettable 79-mile open water adventure from Pennekamp State Park in Key Largo to Fort Zachary Taylor State Park in Key West. Paddle alongside sea turtles and railroad visionary Henry Flagler's "Eighth Wonder of the World."

The Great Calusa Blueway — Feb. 13-19

Bask in the history, culture and beauty of Southwest Florida and explore 57 miles of Lee County's rivers, bays, creeks and mangrove tunnels, aquatic preserves, Calusa Shell mounds and pristine white-sand barrier islands.

Dam to the Bay on the Ochlockonee — March 12-18

From wild Tupelo honey to fresh Gulf oysters, experience the Panhandle's Ochlockonee River that winds through state and national forest lands on 76 miles of Florida's most remote wilderness river trail. Registration ends Feb. 18.

Suwannee River Paddling Festival — April 1-3

The fourth annual Suwannee River Paddling Festival will take place at the Suwannee River State Park near Live Oak. The festival will feature supported 12-20 mile trip options on the scenic Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers, a benefit concert featuring some of Paddle Florida's favorite entertainers to support waterways protection, and an opportunity to hear from regional water and wildlife experts.

For trip details and registration information, visit paddleflorida.org...

-- Clay Sun, Florida Times Union

[Read entire article here](#)

Scenic Highways: The Martin Grade named Florida's 25th Scenic Highway



Photo: Deborah Silver

"...Martin County citizens worked for eight years to protect the 100-year-old oak trees that line The Martin Grade, which was threatened in 2007 by regional traffic planners' plan to four-lane County Road 714 between State Highways 609 and 710. This would have required bulldozing the historic tree canopy.

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway is the only Florida Scenic Highway designation that was independently lobbied for by citizens, but county officials consistently supported the application. County Commissioner John Haddox is a member of the Martin Grade Team which made protecting the trees its No. 1 priority in the Corridor Management Plan submitted to the state.

'It was a long, complicated process,' said Rob Dawson in a news release. He was the member of the team who oversaw the completion of the Eligibility Application and successfully

Gem, Jewelry and Bead Show, Sarasota
Jan 9-10
Coquina Beach Winterfest Arts & Crafts Show, Bradenton Beach
Jan 9
Fly-in Breakfast, Titusville
Jan 13-16
Florida Flywheelers 27th Annual Antique Engine & Tractor "Swamp Meet," Fort Meade
Jan 14-23
Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival, Tampa
Jan 14-24
Manatee County Fair, Palmetto
Jan 15-18
Otronicon, Orlando
Jan 15-24
DeSoto County Fair, Arcadia
Jan 16
Art Walk, Sanford
Jan 16
Cruisin' Downtown DeLand Classic Car Show, DeLand
Jan 16
Florida Key Lime Pie Festival, Port Canaveral
Jan 16-17
Central Florida Scottish Highland Games, Winter Springs
Jan 16-17
Brooksville Raid Re-enactment, Brooksville
Jan 16-17
Sarasota Fine Arts Festival, Sarasota
Jan 16-18
Tarpon Springs Sponge Docks Art and Craft Festival, Tarpon Springs
Jan 17
High Tea and Paintings Off Easel, Sarasota
Jan 20-25
Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival, Titusville
Jan 21-24
Fellsmere Frog Leg Festival, Fellsmere
Jan 23-24
Blue Spring Manatee Festival, Orange City
Jan 21-23
Yeehaw Junction Bluegrass Festival, Yeehaw Junction
Jan 29-31
Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities, Orlando/Eatonville
Jan 29-31
Images, a Festival of the Arts, New Smyrna Beach
Jan 30
Pinellas Folk Festival, St Petersburg
Jan 30
Kumquat Festival, Dade City
Jan 30
Highland Games & Celtic Festival, Sarasota
Jan 30-31
Fort Foster Rendezvous, Hillsborough River State Park,

presented it to the Scenic Highway Advisory Committee in Tallahassee. 'Gaining the Scenic Highway designation isn't the end. It's just the beginning. Now we can start doing what we set out to do: protecting the trees and educating the public about Martin County's unique ecology and history.'

This historic, 12-mile road is shaded by a canopy of hundred-year-old oaks and surrounded by pastures, groves, swamps, and woods just as it was when it was carved out of the wilderness by the region's earliest settlers.

Because The Martin Grade has no commercial development along its path, it's difficult to raise money for road maintenance.

The Scenic Highway Manual requires The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Team develop an interactive website, design a corridor logo, print educational materials and install informational kiosks at key points along the road.

The group will apply for grants and attempt to raise additional funds..."

-- TC Palm

[Read entire article here](#)

Ft. Lauderdale: Vision Zero



Photo:Larry Barszewski,Sun Sentinel

"If you can imagine a year when no one gets killed crossing a street, riding a bike or driving a car here, someone might ask what you've been smoking.

It's a pretty far-fetched notion in a city with the nation's second-highest pedestrian fatality rate and fifth-highest overall traffic fatality rate, based on 2012 U.S. Department of Transportation figures, the latest national data available.

But that's the goal of Vision Zero, an ambitious city initiative to eliminate all road deaths and serious injuries within its borders.

Vision Zero is a holistic program started in Sweden two decades ago to curb that country's rising traffic death toll by enlisting all its citizens in an effort to make streets safer.

'We are committed to changing the mindset that traffic deaths and injuries are 'accidents', said Debbie Griner, Fort Lauderdale's transportation manager. 'Instead, they are incidents that can be avoided and through the collaborative effort of Vision Zero Fort Lauderdale, everyone has an opportunity to save lives.'

'Every little action, it all adds up,' Griner said. 'It all adds up to zero.'

Sweden has seen its traffic death rate cut in half since its program began in 1997. Vision Zero came to America in 2013, when New York Mayor Bill de Blasio followed through on a campaign commitment. The Big Apple in 2014 recorded its lowest number of pedestrian deaths since it began keeping records a century ago. Its total traffic fatalities dropped 15 percent from the previous year.

Fort Lauderdale is the first city in Florida — and the Southeastern U.S. — to sign up.

'It's about changing our legacies,' said Greg Stuart, director of the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization. 'Do we want to be known as the place where if you walk across the street, you're probably going to be hit by a car?'

The road situation isn't getting any better, as distracted drivers and pedestrians pay more

Thonotosassa

South

Jan 2-3

Bi-Annual Estero Fine Arts Show, Estero

Jan 3

Suntrust Sunday Jazz Brunch, Fort Lauderdale

Jan 7-10

Key West Literary Seminar, Key West

Jan 8-10

Florida's Creative Coast Weekend, Pine Island

Jan 9-10

Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan 9-10, Jan 30-31, March 5-6

Bonita Springs National Art Festival, Bonita Springs

Jan 9-10

Las Olas Art Fair, Fort Lauderdale

Jan 9-10

Redland Heritage Festival, Homestead

Jan 10

River, Roots and Ruts Trail Run, Alva

Jan 15-16

Historic House Tours, Key West

Jan 15-17

Art Deco Weekend, Miami Beach

Jan 15-17

BayGrass Bluegrass Festival, Islamorada

Jan 15-17

Southwest Florida Nature Festival, Naples

Jan 16

Sunshine Blues Festival, St Petersburg

Jan 16

Art Under the Oaks, Islamorada

Jan 16-17

Florida Keys Seafood Festival, Key West

Jan 16-17

Big Pine Key Nautical Market, Big Pine & the Lower Keys

Jan 16-17

Boca Fest, Boca Raton

Jan 16-17, 23-24

Medieval Faire, Fort Myers

Jan 17-18

Broward Shell Show, Pompano Beach

Jan 17-18

18th Annual Sullivan Street Craft Fair, Punta Gorda

Jan 17-22

Key West Race Week 2015, Key West

Jan 21

Downtown Gallery Walk, Punta Gorda

Jan 22-24

International Chocolate Festival, Coral Gables

Jan 23-24

attention to their smartphones than to what's happening around them.

As part of Vision Zero, the city is partnering with the MPO, the county and the state transportation department. It's creating a 'team of champions' who will set milestones — including a target date for reaching fatality-free roadways — and putting together proposals that city staff will turn into a five-year plan that will help measure progress. The plan will rely on five 'E's': Engineering, evaluation, education, encouragement and enforcement.

The city has hosted a number of educational events already. It plans another Alert Today Alive Tomorrow event Feb. 2 at Broward Boulevard and Andrews Avenue, where dozens of yellow-shirted volunteers will distribute material educating people on foot and in cars about safe behavior and will assist pedestrians crossing the streets.

The Police Department on Dec. 13 started a half-year High Visibility Enforcement initiative along eight major roadways: Federal Highway, State Road A1A, Sunrise and Broward boulevards between Federal Highway and Interstate 95, Las Olas Boulevard east of Andrews Avenue and State Road 84 between Andrews Avenue and I-95.

Officers will be handing out educational material to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers through March. They will then issue warnings to people breaking traffic laws during April and will ticket violators in May.

While all the 'E's' are important, engineering is the one that's going to make the biggest difference in saving lives, said Leah Shahum, founder and director of the San Francisco-based Vision Zero Network, which is assisting cities involved in the initiative.

'What we've learned in cities across the country, where we can have the most impact is in making lasting, physical changes,' Shahum said. Those changes can be adding bike lanes or crosswalks and redesigning roads in ways that encourage slower traffic speeds.

Vision Zero is a data-driven approach prioritizing safety over speed, Shahum said. Cities look at where collisions are occurring and analyze traffic patterns so they can spend limited dollars where they're needed the most, she said.

When it comes to safety, nobody's perfect.

'People make mistakes,' Shahum said. 'We can design streets that are more forgiving, less dangerous.'

Fort Lauderdale, for instance, is planning to add 6-foot-wide bike lanes on Powerline Road north of Sunrise Boulevard, with an additional 3-foot-wide buffer from the passing cars. The city will be encouraging cyclists to use an app called Strava, that records information about where they're riding into a state database, which will use the data to determine the streets most heavily used by cyclists so bike-lane improvements can be focused there.

The work is an extension of the city's 'complete streets' efforts that design roads for all users.

The MPO's Stuart said something as innocuous as a bus stop location can make a difference. Most stops are placed mid-block instead of at intersections where there are crosswalks, he said, making it more likely that departing passengers will jaywalk to get to the other side of the street.

'Who's more likely to be walking? Somebody getting on and off a bus,' Stuart said. 'How do you educate the people that are scheduling the buses that maybe this isn't the best location?'

More 'wayfaring' signs are also needed because of the city's substantial number of tourists, who can be distracted walking or driving while hunting for their destination.

Not only will the end result save lives, but it will be a paradigm shift and produce less congestion, city planner Karen Mendrala said. Fewer crashes means fewer traffic tie-ups for drivers, she said. And as the safety of walking and biking increases, more people will leave their cars at home, she said.

Robin Haines Merrill, who fought for years to get the city and county to approve a needed crosswalk on Las Olas Boulevard at Southeast 13th Avenue, is impressed the city has embraced such a 'radical' approach. She's not naive about the difficulty in achieving the goal.

'We've got to ring the bell really loud. This is not just a traffic safety issue. This is a moral issue. It comes from our core,' said Merrill, a Las Olas Boulevard gallery owner and a Christian missionary.

The statistics cry out for action because everyone is at fault, she said...'

-- Larry Barszewski, Sun Sentinel

[Read entire article here](#)

Islamorada Fine Art Festival,
Islamorada
Jan 23-24
Downtown Delray Beach Festival
of the Arts, Delray Beach
Jan 27-31
Key West Food & Wine Festival
Jan 29-31
Garlic Fest, Delray Beach
Jan 30
Port Salerno Seafood Festival,
Port Salerno
Jan 30
Mariners Hospital Bougainvillea
Ball, Islamorada
Jan 30-31
Key Largo Stone Crab & Seafood
festival, Key Largo
Jan 30-31
Key West Craft Show, Key West

North

Nov 21-Jan 31
Nights of Lights Festival and
Celebration, St Augustine
Jan 2-3
Old Town Craft Show, St
Augustine
Jan 9
Tour de Felasco, Gainesville
Jan 16-17
Apalachicola Oyster Cook Off,
Apalachicola
Jan 16-17
Florida Manatee Festival, Crystal
River
Jan 22-31
Annual Amelia Island Restaurant
Week, Amelia Island
Jan 23-March 4
ADSO Juried Southeast Regional
Art Exhibits, Destin
Jan 29-31
St Augustine Film Festival, St
Augustine

[For many more events and
details please visit the Orlando
Times Travel Calendar here](#)



