

## Report to the Franklin Board of County Commissioners May 19

This is the last report from me as Chair of the Franklin Complete Count Committee. As was our agreement last November, I am stepping down at the end of this month. The County Commission can determine next steps for the census campaign.

The Complete Count committee has worked hard since our first meeting in January. We have 22 members on the Steering Committee but many more volunteers.

### Complete Count Steering Committee membership:

Pat O'Connell, Chair	Evelin Ramirez, Partnership Specialist, Census Bureau
Michael Moron, County Coordinator	Rick Watson, Tax Collector, Chair Businesses and Utilities
Traci Moses, Superintendent	Buena Brown, Vice-Chair/ Media Director
Valentina Webb, Seniors/Careers	James Donald, Chair, Faith-Based and Veterans' communities
Barry Hand, Pastor Mt. Zion	David Walker, CEO Weems Hospital
David Adlerstein, Apalachicola <i>Times</i>	Diane Meagh. Media Assistant
Mary Stutzman, Statistics	Rex Pennycuff, Eastpoint Civic Organization
Pam Richardson, Apalach Counts!	Patricia Murphy. Apalach Counts!
Father Eric Zile, Trinity Episcopal, Spanish-Community	Ramon Valenzuela-Lopez, Spanish Community
Julia Houston, Bald Point	Pam Tullous, President, Friends of Franklin Library System
Evelyn Martinez, Spanish Speaking	Cortni Bankston, County Administrative Assistant

### Budget:

The county allocated \$4,500 to the census effort. The committee collected \$3,000 in private donations from Waste Pro, Garlick Engineering and Dewberry Engineering. Recently, the county won a grant from the National League of Cities for \$4500 in a competition in which only 200 of 700 applications were selected. We were one of those 200.

We have spent all the county and donated funds on print materials and radio commercials and other minor investments. With the grant, we intend to pay for expansion of our outreach on FB, Instagram, and other social media. We will also expand the click-throughs on county and other websites. We also will spend funds on phone banking, where we can help answer questions to households who still have questions about answering the census.

### Expenditures:

#### 1. Electronic Media:

**Radio Commercials:** We wrote and recorded scripts of most of the elected officials and leaders in the county starting in February. As of the end of the month, over 1,200 commercials promoting the census will have been heard on Oyster Radio. We also ran commercials on Forgotten Coast Country Music, briefly, before that station was closed. All production was done by volunteers, but we paid for the airing of these commercials. Those radio commercials were in English and Spanish.

**Video/YouTube:** We wrote and produced 5 YouTube videos that featured various segments of the local population, such as senior citizens or students. Again, we used Spanish and English. These were all done by volunteers. These are just a minute long. I'd like to play these videos now.

1. Senior Citizens and Veterans : - [www.vimeo.com/418178363](http://www.vimeo.com/418178363)
2. Bilingual using local images - [www.vimeo.com/418161173](http://www.vimeo.com/418161173)
3. Promotion of the \$25 Gift Card <https://vimeo.com/415668966>
4. Students and education [www.vimeo.com/414118208](http://www.vimeo.com/414118208)
5. Bilingual using stock footage, not local.

To date these videos have been distributed by volunteers and displayed on various local Facebook sites.

Websites: The County Commission homepage is displaying a click-through so that residents can go directly to the response page from the county site. That information is also included on several county sites and emails, such as the school district, local utilities, and organizations like the SGI Civic Club.

## 2. Print Media:

**Newspaper:** Apalachicola *Times* has constantly promoted the census by running weekly articles written by the committee, typically on the Opinion page, which is one of the most popular pages in the newspaper. We have done modest paid advertising with the Times. We have requested that the Census Bureau purchase paid advertising with the Times because they did not purchase advertisements here or in the Panama City media markets with their vast national advertising budget.

**Yard signs/posters/banners:** We created and printed approximately 1500 professionally printed yard signs and posters and twenty large banners that were distributed throughout the county. The City of Apalachicola also purchased a few banners themselves. We sent over 2000 postcards to Post Office Box holders in the county because the census bureau does not mail to post office boxes. Finally, the county and volunteers printed thousands of pages of flyers that were distributed through the food distribution programs in the schools, the churches and Farm Share programs across the county. We are doing similar distributions at Covid Testing sites. Speaking of signs, the Sheriff has two electronic flashing signs displaying in the eastern end of the county, which is the lowest performing census tract in the county.

## 3. Miscellaneous:

**Census Promotional Materials:** The Census Bureau has provided promotional materials, such as water bottles, tote bags, fans, lip balm, coffee cups, and pencils and pens for distribution in Franklin. Those are still available for any food distributions or other entities distributing flyers. We produced a limited number of t-shirts that we gave people to wear for events.

**Tables at Special Events:** Prior to the Stay-at-Home order from the Governor, beginning in November 2019, committee members attended local events to offer materials and promotional items. Those activities ceased because of the virus

**Census Assistance Centers:** We identified more than 20 Census Assistance Centers that were prepared to offer internet and computer access. We acquired donated chrome books and tablets, we re-purposed computers from county offices, and we recruited volunteers to help people navigate the internet to get to the correct site. Of course, this ended with the virus. We didn't spend any of our budget on these items.

**EOC Alerts:** the county is adding a census reminder to its alerts, on occasion. These alerts go out to the majority of local residents as texts and phone calls.

## Self-Response Rates

As of 5/13/2020

Nation 59.1%  
Florida 56.7%  
Franklin 28.2%

9703.02 – Apalachicola above Hwy 98 (Parrish and Lockley)  
45.5%

9702 - Eastpoint and West Carrabelle (Jones and Massey)  
38.2%

9703.04- Apalachicola south of Hwy 98 and St George Island (Jones and Parrish/Lockley)  
28.3%

9701.02 -- East Carrabelle, Lanark and east county (Boldt)  
16.3%

### Franklin Challenges:

Self-response rate is the percentage of households responding compared to the number of street addresses:

1. The 2020 Census is the first in which residents are expected to respond online.

Franklin challenge:

- Low rate of in-home internet access, based on numbers of families receiving free lunch;
- Neighborhood Census Assistance Centers prevented from opening because of COVID-19.

2. The Census relies on street addresses to determine accurate count.

Franklin Challenge:

- High rate of post office box users (these never received communications from Bureau)
- High rate of second homes vacant much of the year

Example: Island houses: 2400

Short Rentals: - 800

Homesteads: - 340

Unknown: 1300 (are these second homes or full time residences?)

3. COVID-19 has disrupted our lives.

Franklin Challenge:

- Some Spanish-speaking families have left area after losing work
- Trust in all forms of government, particularly with young people, at all time low

### Next Steps to Consider:

1. Create neighborhood assistance centers with internet access, particularly in unincorporated areas of the east end of the county or hard to reach, poor neighborhoods
2. Purchase wi-fi boosters/chrome books and sanitary supplies to expand physical reach of wi-fi
3. Spend grant dollars on local paid social media and direct contact (phone banking, flyers, direct mail)
4. Other ideas?