

FY **2011** Annual Report



Bringing Communities Together! | Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency



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Cover Photos (clockwise from top):

Photo 1 – courtesy of the Panama City Marina, Photos 2&3 – CRA staff, Photo 4 – courtesy of Panama City Beach Map, Inc
<http://www.pcbmap.com/>

Document Photos:

Community Policing Initiative – courtesy of the News Herald; A.D. Harris Learning Village – courtesy of Janice Lucas, Wainwright/Wiggins residence courtesy of Brenda Wainwright, all other photos by CRA staff

Chairman's Letter



March 22, 2012

Dear Citizens and Stakeholders,

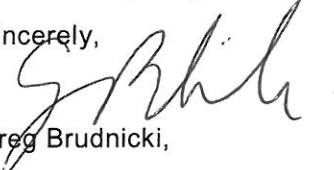
We are pleased and excited to issue this year's annual report regarding the activities and achievements of the Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). The mission of the Panama City CRA is to provide leadership and direction that will revitalize and redevelop economically distressed areas of our community. Currently, there are four (4) CRA districts designated under the provisions of the law. Our mission is to bring back jobs, investments and improved environmental conditions that will gradually reverse the blighted conditions we see in some portions of our community.

We are excited to report that there has been significant progress this year. This is due in part to the decision of the City Commission in 2009 to bring this operation in house under the leadership of the City Manager and City Commission. The Commission now serves as the governing body under Chapter 163 of Florida Statutes. Listed below are just a few of the key accomplishments of the CRA this past year:

- Expanded and updated our Community Policing initiatives. This includes new business and community outreach efforts as well as working to address vagrancy issues.
- Updated and expanded a new grants program that addresses facade improvements, housing improvement, and job creation.
- Expanded efforts to address derelict vessels on City waterways.
- Supported expansion of the community garden and waterfront market in St. Andrews.
- Purchased A.D. Harris campus and other properties in the CRA for redevelopment.
- Completed street and park improvements such as fountain repairs, new benches, new lighting, landscaping and more.
- Supported various community events that promoted safety and economic benefits for the community.
- Through bidding and negotiations staff found savings in support of various public projects valuing \$160,000.00 in 2011.

All these efforts and many more will improve the safety, aesthetics, and quality of life for citizens of our great City for many years to come. I am pleased to provide you with this report so that the community and funding agencies can learn even more about the CRA and the many outstanding projects completed and underway. If you are interested in learning more or even volunteering your time, please feel free to contact me, the CRA office or any member of the City Commission so that we can use your gifts and talents to benefit and improve our community in the coming year.

Sincerely,


Greg Brudnicki,
CRA Board Chairman

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Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency



Introduction

The Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has a long history of working to improve the economic conditions of the community. First started with the Downtown Improvement Board in the 1980's, the effort to improve the business and economic climate of various parts of the City has evolved, grown and expanded from those early years.

Today, there are four separate CRA Districts each with unique history, purpose and boundaries.

The Downtown CRA District established in 1983/84 is the original core business hub of the community. Downtown is connected to the traditional bay waterfront and the marina.

The St. Andrew's CRA District was created in 1989 and focuses on the St. Andrew's Bay Community. This working waterfront is a traditional fishing village located within Panama City.

Downtown North CRA District established in 1993 consists of over 1,100 acres. The district

includes major corridors such as Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Harrison Avenue, and portions of Highway 231. This District is the largest of the CRA areas and is the home of the Bay Medical Complex.

Finally, the newest CRA District is Millville started in 2004 which is working to revive the areas touching Business 98 in the Watson Bayou area. Millville has rich history and is the key gateway to Tyndall AFB and the rest of the city.

Four separate Districts created under Florida statutes at different points in time, each with its own history, yet, working collectively, the CRA Districts represent positive progress to attract investment, create new jobs and improve the quality of life we enjoy here in Panama City. Please see the information in this report for additional details on the benefits and accomplishments of your CRA this past year. Complete maps of the districts are available on the City's Website <http://www.pcgov.org/>.

What is a CRA?

Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA) are a popular and effective redevelopment tool, used in 44 states across the country. In fact, they are one of the few remaining tools that local governments can use to "think outside the box" in order to attract new business, invest in infrastructure improvements and rebuild blighted areas. In Florida, a CRA is a public body created by a county or municipality to carry out community redevelopment activities. At present, there are 202 active CRA areas in the state of Florida.

Activities for our CRAs are controlled by Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes (www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes). A CRA may be governed by an independent board appointed by the municipality or by the municipality that created it. The city or county commission itself may act as the CRA, or a downtown redevelopment entity in existence prior to July 1, 1997 may act as the CRA. The CRA is established by the local government and functions within that local government. The CRA was created under the authority of Florida's Community Redevelopment Act of 1969, which contains a detailed listing of the powers made available to cities and counties, and those available to the CRA. The ability to invest the "net increase" of local tax revenues back into the CRA District above the set base year has proven to be very successful method of bringing about new economic investment and opportunity.

What are the general powers of a CRA?

CRAs encourage economic development activities and redevelopment projects in slum and blighted areas. The Community Redevelopment Act of 1969 allows for the designation of special districts known as Community Revitalization Areas and confers upon the CRAs governing board special regulatory abilities. These abilities include issuing revenue bonds and utilizing Tax Increment Financing (TIF). However, these abilities are contingent upon the redevelopment plan having been approved by the governing body under whom these powers are vested and which created the CRA. When carrying out community redevelopment initiatives, CRAs may for example: acquire land; construct streets and utilities, carry out repair and rehabilitation programs; hold, improve, clean or prepare property; provide grants; mortgage or pledge property; borrow money and invest funds and sell property. These broad powers help attract new investment and help gradually turn around the economic fortunes of the designated area.

Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency



New District-wide Grant Programs

The CRA Board evaluated the need for a new and improved grant program for all CRA Districts. The Board adopted the new grant program which allows for commercial and residential improvements in October 2011. In addition, a new paint voucher program was created as well as a job creation incentive credit program. Thus far, the new grants program has been responsible for retaining or creating over 30 jobs in the first 3-4 months of the program with a total of \$70-80,000 being awarded. Additional information about the program can be obtained on the City of Panama City's web site.

Community Policing Initiative

In 2011, the CRA partnered closely with the Panama City Police Department to expand our community policing efforts. In the first full year of the program's operation over 350 arrests were made related to trespassing, vagrancy, and alcohol related incidence. Many citizens and merchants reported safer conditions and a greatly improved business climate. In addition, numerous workshops and neighborhood watch meetings were held and a new i-neighbors website was setup to receive and disseminate information more readily between the department and citizens/businesses to keep informed of activities, methods of crime prevention and community awareness. The Panama City Police Department continues to encourage direct contact with the agency at 850-872-3112.

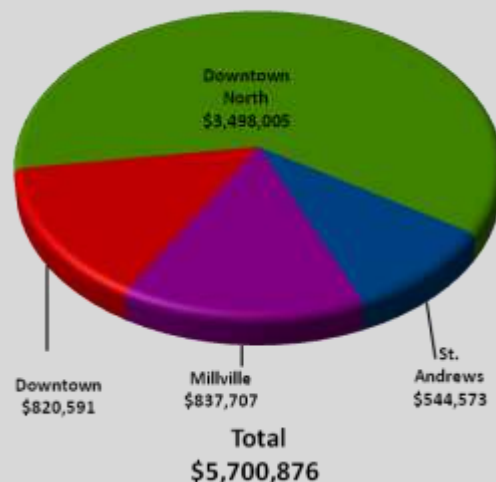


CRA Financial Information FY 2011

TOTAL CRA EXPENDITURES



CRA BUDGET BY DISTRICT



Downtown District

Marina Master Plan Update

A major public input workshop for the Marina Master Plan Update took place in March 2011 as directed by the CRA Board. The workshop was attended by 89 people and was facilitated by Pete Sechler, principal at AECOM. The workshop was videotaped and posted on-line. The workshop also surveyed attendees' preferences for this project. The CRA Board continued to meet with the AECOM team and various stakeholders in the community to refine the design plans for the Marina. From this extensive public involvement process several design concepts have been identified.



Now that plans are being finalized, an implementation work plan is being developed by the CRA in 2012 that will move this project forward. Illustrated in this publication are a few snapshots of the final design concepts being planned for the Marina Project.

Downtown District



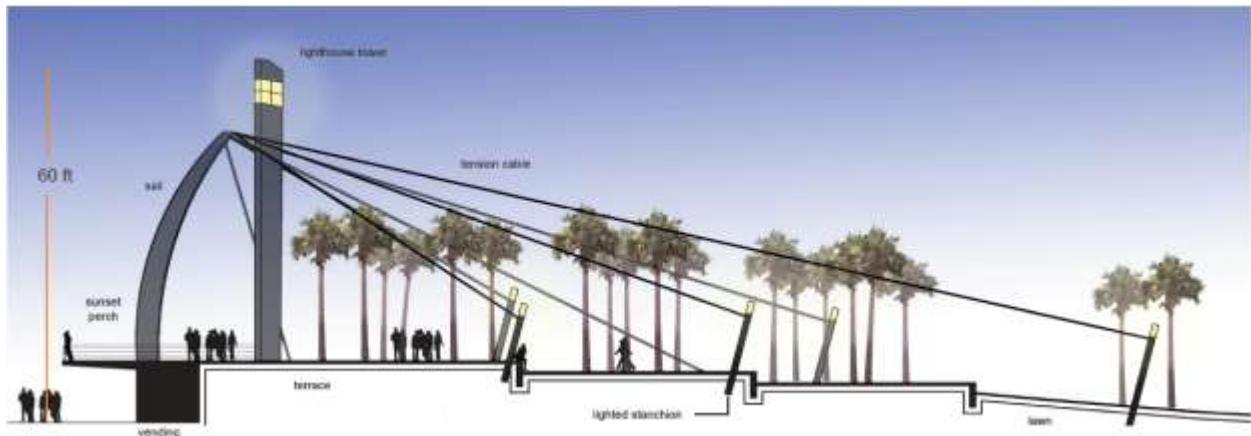
Civic Park
Panama City Marina
Public Art: 2008-2009



Marina Park
Panama City Marina
Public Art: 2008-2009



Marina Park at Sunset



Downtown District



Drive-In Movie Night

The first downtown drive-in movie night occurred in August 2011 on the Marina. This was done as an additional event to draw people into the downtown area. Several hundred people enjoyed the series in 2011 as a great “throw back” activity for family and friends. Plans are underway for additional events similar to this effort for next year.

McKenzie Park Gateway Fountain Renovation

Over the years, the McKenzie fountain has been a landmark gathering place for locals and tourists to visit and enjoy beautiful downtown Panama City. Many people also find it to be a place where they want to get their picture taken as a special “Kodak” moment. As with most public amenities, they require maintenance and repairs. The fountain was designed and installed using redevelopment dollars about 17 years ago and had developed a significant leak due to mortar joints failing and related issues. Because of the leaking the fountain had to be shut off last year, and it became a liability. The CRA worked with the city to initiate a plan to renovate the fountain with new tiling, resurfacing of the basins, and tuck pointing the brick. The fountain has now been renovated in a way that gives the fountain another 15+ years of life and will once again be enjoyed by the public as the gateway to McKenzie Park!



Before



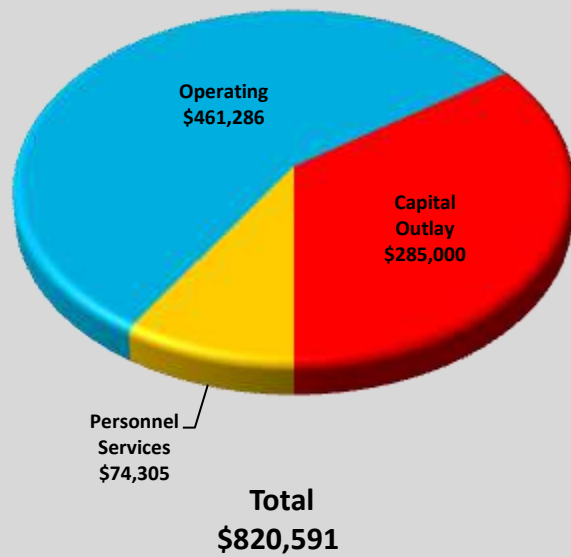
After



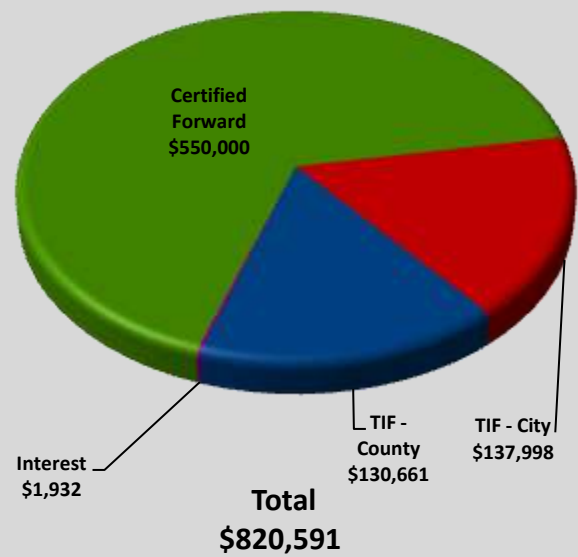
Downtown District

Downtown District Financial Information

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT EXPENDITURES



DOWNTOWN DISTRICT REVENUES





Downtown North District

A.D. Harris Learning Village

A.D. Harris is a former High School in the African American Community. It sits on a 5.6 acre campus just off MLK Boulevard and 11th Street. This property has always been used for education. Many generations have attended the school over the years until Bay School District closed the facility in 2009. In 2011 additional cuts in funding caused the District to send a conciliation notice to the not-for-profit organization (The A.D. Harris Improvement Society) trying to save the school campus. Cancelling the lease would mean that utilities to the school would have to be shut off. The CRA Board stepped in and provided a three (3) year performance based grant for \$225K in order to prevent utility shutoff and provide resources that would allow operations to continue. The performance based lease agreement calls for future renovations of the facility for education and

community service purposes. Already space is being leased and marketed to new tenants that are beginning to take notice of this key asset. The CRA is pleased that we could serve the community as an active partner that will preserve a key part of the community and implement our CRA redevelopment plan.



A.D. Harris Learning Village

Jewel in the Downtown North Reinvented

A CRA grant was used to attract and renovate a new business for the Downtown North. Ink Trax is a one stop shop featuring graphic design, screen printing and promotional products from start to finish and can take a concept and apply it to a huge array of apparel and products. Ink Trax decided to relocate this business from the Panama City Beach Parkway to Panama City, Downtown North CRA district. The site selected is the "Old Coke Building", the former home of Coca-Cola. The renovations removed old stucco covering the original brick work from the 1930s or early 40s while also applying historical treatments taking the building closer to its original look. Additionally Ink Trax will employ 16 full time employees and they plan to add 1 to 2 additional staff. The CRA Commercial Improvement Assistance grant provided \$47,644.68 of matching funds for allowable expenses, assisting with the total project cost of nearly \$280,000.00 in investment improvements.



Before



After

Absolute Business Solutions (ABS) requested and also received assistance from the CRA to improve the visibility and image of its building with a matching grant of \$10,270.07. Five jobs were preserved under this project effort.



Downtown North District



Before



After

Bar-B-Que Cook- Off and Red Velvet Cake Contest

The Glenwood Community hosted its 5th annual Bar- B- Que Cook off and Red Velvet Cake Contest. Imagine the smell of Bar- B- Que cooking while community bakers bring in their best Red Velvet Cakes to win top prize honors. The Community came out to participate in this family focused event. Media, local celebrities and community leaders judged the Bar B Que and Red Velvet Cakes while local youth showcased their musical talents and children played in the inflatable bounce houses.

The event was held at the A. D. Harris Learning Village, and was co-sponsored by the Glenwood Working Partnership, the A. D. Harris Improvement Society, Inc. and the Downtown North CRA. Approximately 400 people attended the event which draws attention to the new energy of investment opportunities in this part of Panama City.





Downtown North District

Jenks Corridor Improvement Project

Jenks Avenue was named after George Walker Jenks family. Captain G.W. Jenks had made earlier trips to this area and in 1890 came here and built the Gulf View Inn. Jenks Avenue, especially around 5th Street intersection, was pretty much a business hub with the Post Office (that housed the Federal Bldg., Customs Department and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers) was built in 1938. Beyond 6th Street was primarily residential. As people moved out of the downtown area, the area began to change from residential to commercial. The Downtown, Downtown North CRA districts and the City of Panama City have joined together to plan new improvements to the mostly commercial/professional services corridor. Meetings with property owners have prioritized the improvement plans which feature sidewalks, banners, bike lanes and new lighting. Illustrated on the next page are some of the public display information boards discussed with the public regarding this project. Project construction is anticipated in the summer/fall of 2012.





Downtown North District

SIDE WALKS

BIKE LANES

CROSS WALKS

LIGHTING

POTENTIAL FEATURES

NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IMAGES ARE CONCEPTUAL IDEAS.

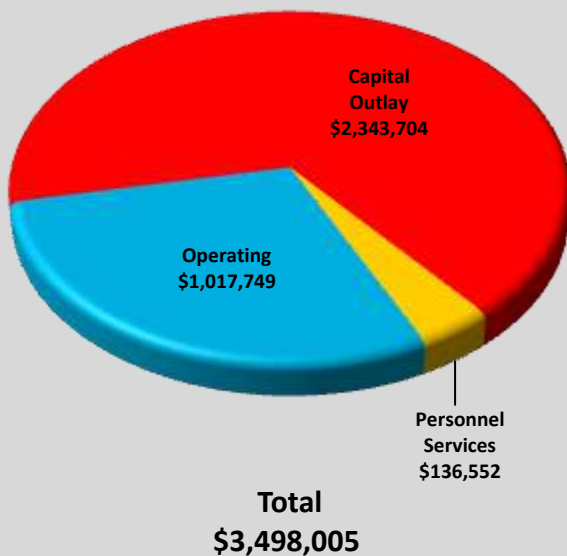
JENKS AVENUE CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

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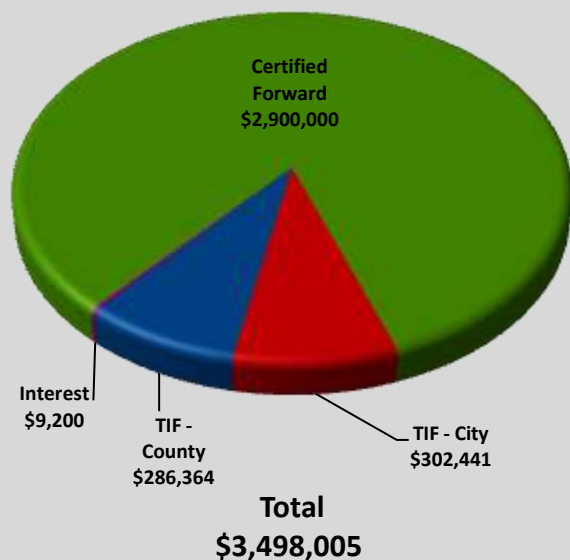
OCTOBER 6, 2011

Downtown North District Financial Information

DOWNTOWN NORTH DISTRICT EXPENDITURES



DOWNTOWN NORTH DISTRICT REVENUES





St. Andrews District

Bayview Streetscape Project

The St. Andrews Waterfront Partnership has been actively working with the City of Panama City and Gulf Power to renovate Bayview with underground utilities, sidewalks, lighting and landscaping. The St. Andrews Marina will also get a face lift to its entrance and parking area. Underground utilities, landscaping and sidewalks are now complete!

Historic Villa Gateway

The Partnership also worked with the Department of Leisure Services to complete a small pocket park in St. Andrews on the water called Villa Gateway. Dr. and Mrs. Tim Smith donated the historic Villa Gateway for relocation to the public access area at the West End of 12th Street. The gateway has now been installed and a celebration ceremony was held. The area between the gate and the bay was landscaped and irrigated. Dr. Smith's father built the gate and fence, around what had been the old Villa Hotel, in about 1940. The hotel had housed people during the famous "Cincinnati Land Boom" of the 1880's. The Partnership's History Committee identified the new gate and fence as a feature to enhance the public waterfront area and to build on the historic theme of the St. Andrews revitalization effort.



Historic Lion Fountain

The old horse trough, or more recently named "Lion Fountain", came from the St. Andrew Methodist Church. The church purchased property behind their main building. The property fronting West 10th Street included a historic fountain the church donated to the City for relocation to Oaks by the Bay Park. It is thought that the fountain was originally located at the Pines Hotel, and moved to the Manghum property on West 10th Street in the 1920's. The fountain has been converted into a planter and grant funding was obtained from FDEP to improve the area around it. The grant from the FDEP will be used to create a "Lion Plaza" which will be constructed using a brick paver base as a new home for the lion fountain. The



Lion Plaza – Oaks by the Bay Park

grant will also provide landscaping, lighting, benches and a decorative arbor to enhance the east-side entrance to this outstanding park resource!





St. Andrews District

The Panama City Publishing Building

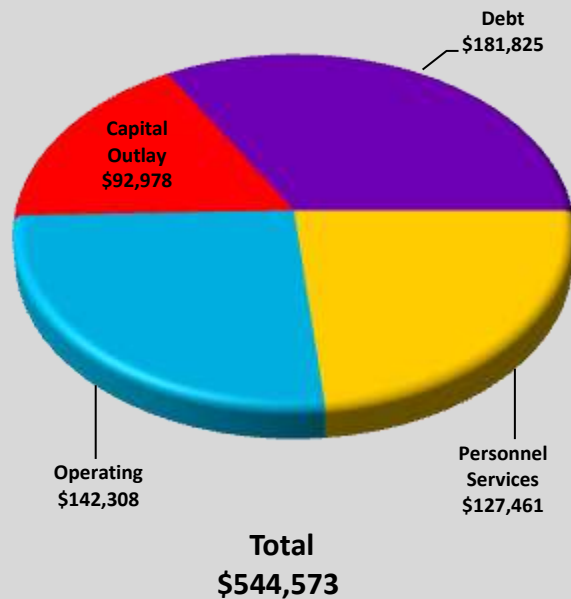
The final payment for the Publishing Building and Parking Lot on Chestnut Avenue has now been paid! The St. Andrews CRA is no longer in debt for these important assets. The Partnership is also continually working on projects to improve the waterfront, as well as the market and the Publishing Museum. The Partnership has initiated tours for visitors, developed new museum displays, and is even working to develop an audio/visual center in the museum to showcase historical documents and videos. Each month the Publishing Building also showcases new local artist exhibits for all to enjoy. Visitor traffic in 2011 was up over 60% and the Museum has been awarded a grant from the Department of State for museum docent training, print-making classes, printing press demonstrations and more!



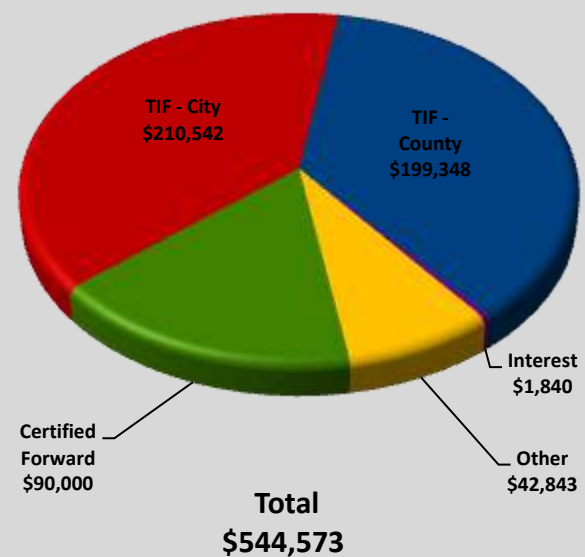
Panama City Publishing Building in Historic St. Andrews

St Andrews District Financial Information

ST. ANDREWS DISTRICT EXPENDITURES



ST. ANDREWS DISTRICT REVENUES





Millville District

The Millville District continues to move forward with the Community Redevelopment Plan implementation and reinforcing community connections and partnerships through a multitude of programs, projects, and events. Highlights include:

- Implementation of Millville Waterfront Vision Plan
- Continued Development of the Watson Bayou Waterfront Park
- Successful Execution of Commercial and Residential Improvement Assistance Programs
- Community Events such as the Pet Masquerade, Movie Nights, and Children's Christmas Parade

Waterfront Vision Plan

With the completion of the Millville Waterfront Vision Plan, the Millville District's pursuit of the Waterfronts Florida Partnership Community designation continued into the second phase. This phase focuses on the implementation of the Vision Plan. The Plan identified the most pressing priorities such as addressing blight conditions, revitalizing the community in Millville's historic waterfront character, and developing the Watson Bayou Waterfront Park. The second phase of Waterfronts Florida assistance includes a package of projects to jump start these priorities. This package consists of:

- an extensive inventory of blight conditions
- blight reduction strategies menu
- area specific district design guidelines
- matching funds to move the Watson Bayou Waterfront Park fishing pier through the design phase

Development of these projects provides a solid foundation for the full implementation of the Waterfronts Vision Plan and designation as graduate Waterfronts Florida Partnership Community.



Derelict Vessel Initiative

The CRA staff, with support of the Board, initiated efforts to clear water ways in Watson Bayou of derelict vessels. Our key partners were the Panama City Police Department and the State of Florida. By working together, several vessels were removed from Watson Bayou. These efforts not only eliminated blight, but removed navigation hazards, pollution sources, and potential havens for crime and vagrant activity. In 2011, a grant for \$75,000.00 was also obtained by the city from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) through the Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) and will result in removal of over 20 more vessels from local waterways.



Millville District



Watson Bayou Waterfront Park

The development of the Watson Bayou Waterfront Park continues to move forward. A conceptual park plan has been created by a student from the Landscape Architecture Program at Florida A&M University with support from CRA staff. The plan provides the overall design of the park. The main function of the park is to serve as a site for public events, festivals, markets, and similar activities. To date, the park has been improved with signage, several benches, and lighting. A major element of the park is the fishing pier which is currently in the design phase. This design includes a 288-foot fishing pier with a pavilion on one side of the 46-foot wide terminus. The pier construction project will include an ADA accessible sidewalk and parking space. The 10-foot wide sidewalk is first leg of the park's pathway system.





Millville District

Improvement Assistance Program

Two grant programs were established by the Panama City CRA to assist businesses and residents in exterior building/site improvements. The Commercial and Residential Improvement Assistance Programs provide matching funds to encourage redevelopment and revitalization to stimulate reinvestment in the CRA. Millville provided grants to both commercial and residential applicants this year. Improvements range from fencing to major exterior renovations. Yesco Scaffolding Company received assistance with façade improvements & the Wainwright/Wiggins residence off Elm Street received a grant for a new metal roof. The pictures below illustrate the Yesco commercial business renovation and the Wainwright/Wiggins residential renovation.



Before



After



Before



After

Community Events

Community events are key element to Millville's identity and help energize the community, build partnerships and community identity. The Millville Community Alliance with the support the CRA organized a multitude of events in 2011. These events included:

- Two disc golf tournaments (Spring Fling and Turkey Toss)
- Movies in the park series (from May – October.)
- Pet Masquerade - October
- 11th Annual Children's Christmas Parade - December

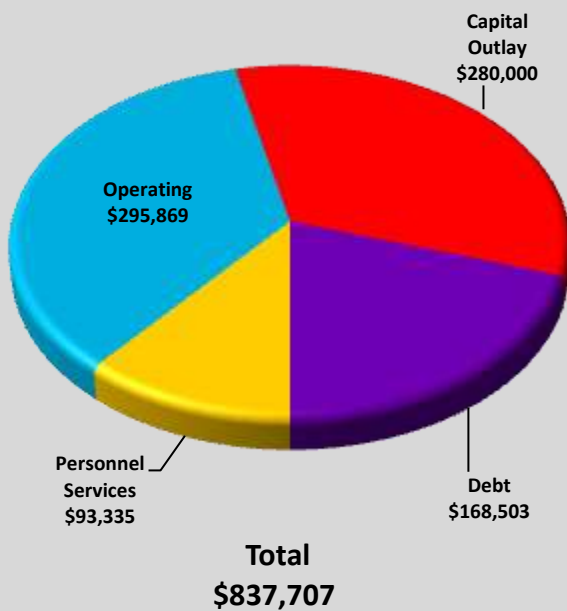


Millville District

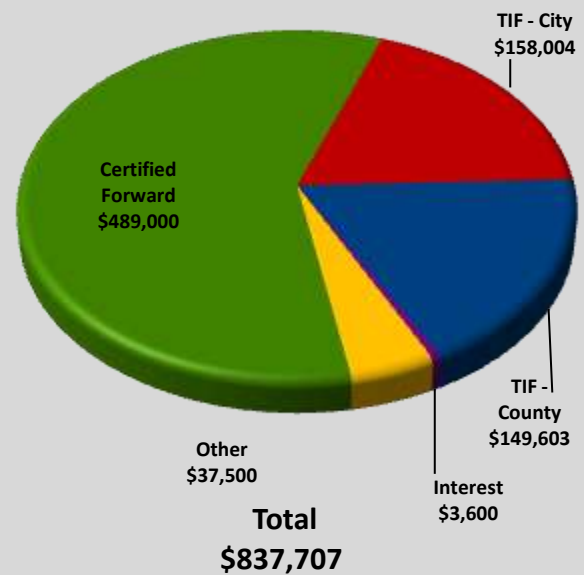


Millville District Financial Information

MILLVILLE DISTRICT EXPENDITURES



MILLVILLE DISTRICT REVENUES



Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency



Last fiscal year was very exciting and the Panama City CRA accomplished many projects to revitalize and redevelop our community. We gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the many volunteers that have continued to demonstrate their support by participating on the various CRA committees. Our committees and partners include: Glenwood Working Partnership, Inc., the Downtown North/GWP Design and Planning Committee, Downtown Northwest Advisory Committee, the A. D. Harris Improvement Society, Inc., the Neighborhood Watch committees, the Millville Community Alliance, the St. Andrews Waterfront Partnership, the Downtown Advisory Committee, the Downtown Improvement Board, Main Streets, and many other various churches and community groups. We salute our volunteers and understand that we could not accomplish our goals without their tireless dedication and support. The assistance and partnership rendered by these organizations is instrumental in making our community a better place to live, work and play. Thank you!

FY 2011 CRA Board Members

Greg Brudnicki – Chairman

Billy Rader – Vice Chairman

John Kady

Kenneth Brown

Mike Nichols

Contact information

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Rob Rosner	St. Andrews CRA Manager	850-215-3871
Toni Shamplain	Downtown North CRA Manager	850-215-3872
Tim Whaler	Millville CRA Manager	850-215-3873



Panama City Community Redevelopment Agency
803 Jenks Avenue, Suite 1
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Phone: 850-215-3869

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See Our Website at www.pc.gov.org

Go to the Community Redevelopment link to learn more about our Programs and Committees and how you can get involved and participate.