

March 1st, 2024

Dear Members of the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force,

We extend our sincere appreciation for the invaluable opportunity to present Jackson County's bid as the permanent home for the esteemed Florida Black History Museum. It is with great honor and enthusiasm that we submit this proposal for your consideration.

Recognizing the profound importance of preserving and celebrating Florida's diverse history, we believe that the establishment of the museum at Endeavor Park stands as a pivotal step towards enriching the cultural tapestry of our state. This project, we contend, holds immeasurable value in its potential to serve as a beacon of education, reconciliation, and unity for current and future generations.

As stewards of our shared heritage, we stand ready and eager to embrace the responsibility of hosting the Florida Black History Museum in Jackson County, fostering a space that pays homage to the past while guiding us toward a more enlightened and unified future.

Sincerely,

Byron Dickens  
Executive Director  
Emancipation Day Festival of NWFL

Kelsi Jackson  
Executive Director  
Jackson County TDC/BOCC

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## Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

Jackson County would like to propose the Black History Museum Task Force select Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Dozier School for Boys, as the future site of the State of Florida Black History Museum. We are moved by our rich history that predates even the establishment of Florida as a state. Our county is the cornerstone of Florida's African American history, and it is here that we must begin to tell this vital story. We must tell the story from the State's roots – "Before the beginning began."

From its earliest human inhabitants, its pre-Civil War African American early settlements including the Seminole Nation (mix of Creek, Cherokee, and runaway slaves), the Seminole War which most consider the nation's largest Slave rebellion, to the Battle of Marianna during the Civil War, to the bloodbaths that took place after Reconstruction also known as the Jackson County War; our community's historical significance provides a strong foundation for the museum's potential impact on preserving and showcasing the State's important heritage.

Jackson County has been home to many pivotal moments and figures in African American history, making it an ideal location for this museum. By situating it here, we ensure that future generations learn about these important narratives where they unfolded.

We believe that history should be told accurately and authentically - starting from its roots. The construction of the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park will allow us to do just that while also providing economic benefits for our community.

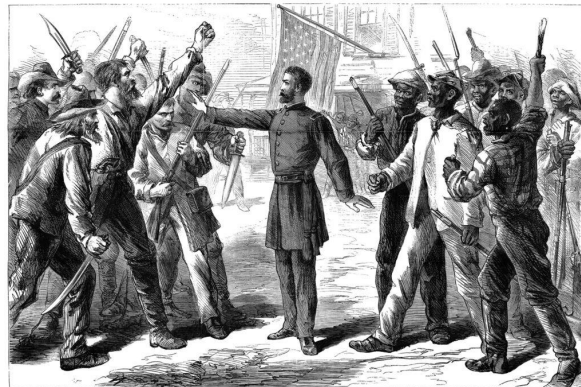
Significant figures, events, and places include:

- **The significance of slavery in Florida begins with Jackson County.** On March 3, 1845, Florida became a slave state of the United States. Almost half the state's population were enslaved African Americans working on large cotton and sugar plantations, between the Chattahoochee/Apalachicola River and the Suwannee Rivers in the northwest part of the state.<sup>1</sup>
- **Dozier School for Boys:** The former campus in Marianna is our proposed site for the museum. The complex and often troubling history of the school, especially its impact on African American youth, is a crucial aspect to consider.<sup>2</sup>



- **Battle of Marianna:** This battle marks one of the most tragic and memorable events in Jackson County history where a **500 Union Soldier Regiment consisting of two (2) U.S. Colored Infantry Detachments** brutally defeated the 200 Confederate troops, consisting of old men and young boys. The Episcopal Church was burned in the battle.<sup>3</sup>
- **Governor John Milton:** Marianna was the home of Governor Milton and was an important supply depot at the time. Less than seven months after this loss, Governor Milton committed suicide, leading to Florida's surrender to the Union only a few weeks later on April 26, 1865. Less than a month later General Edward M. McCook announced the Emancipation of Florida slaves per President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on May 20, 1865. <sup>4</sup>

- **The Jackson County War:** After the Civil War ended, Jackson County became known as one of the most violent counties in Florida during the Reconstruction era. The role of the Freedmen's Bureau during this time was instrumental in bringing in food and education for freed slaves. This era brought forth the development of African American political consciousness and leadership. <sup>5</sup>



- **Calvin Rogers:** First African American elected to public office as the first black Constable of Marianna. He was murdered in 1870 and is believed that Constable Calvin Rogers was the first black law enforcement officer killed in the history of the state. In 1997 at the request of Jackson County Sheriff John P. McDaniel, Rogers's name was added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C. <sup>6</sup>
- **Emanuel Fortune:** Born into slavery in Marianna in 1833. Elected to the 1868 Florida Constitutional Convention as one of four representatives for Jackson County. He was later forced to leave Jackson County and served the remainder of his term in Jacksonville. Father to Timothy Thomas Fortune. <sup>7</sup>

- **Timothy Thomas Fortune:** Born into slavery in Marianna. He attended Marianna's first school for African Americans after the Civil War. He later became a Civil Rights leader, journalist, editor, and publisher. He was a highly influential editor of the nation's leading black newspaper The New York Age, and was the leading economist in the black community. Fortune was also a long-time adviser to Booker T. Washington. Fortune's philosophy of militant agitation on behalf of the rights of black people laid one of the foundations of the Civil Rights Movement. He was considered the best and leading black publicist/writer of this Civil Rights era. <sup>8</sup>





- **Armstrong Purdee:** Witnessed the burning of St. Luke's Episcopal Church during the Battle of Marianna. Later went on to become the first black lawyer in Jackson County. A monument was recently erected at the courthouse to honor Purdee and African American colored soldiers from the Civil War. <sup>9</sup>
- **North Star Legacy Communities** - Project from Florida State University that was developed to preserve and document self-sufficient communities that were developed by enslaved blacks and some freedmen on and around plantations. There are 21 currently known North Star Legacy Communities located in Jackson County. <sup>10</sup>
- **Jacob City:** Known as the first black community in Jackson County. After emancipation, freed slaves came to the area to restart their lives. <sup>11</sup>
- **Springfield Schoolhouse:** Built in 1936 and served as a school from 1937 to 1956 for black children in grades one through eight. Students then transferred to either Jackson County Training School in Marianna or to St. Paul High School in Campbellton. Currently is owned by the Springfield African Methodist Episcopal Church and currently serves as a museum. <sup>12</sup>
- **Jackson County Training School / Gilmore Academy** - First school in the county where black students could attend grades one through twelve. <sup>13</sup>
- **Union Grove School** – Another school created during segregation for black students which is the home of very prominent African Americans in the Jackson County community. <sup>14</sup>
- **Renaissance Park** - 40-acre wilderness park north of Marianna. The park is filled with artifacts and relics of folk life from early rural farm life in Jackson County and provides a hands-on experience on African American cultural traditions from the early 1900's. <sup>15</sup>

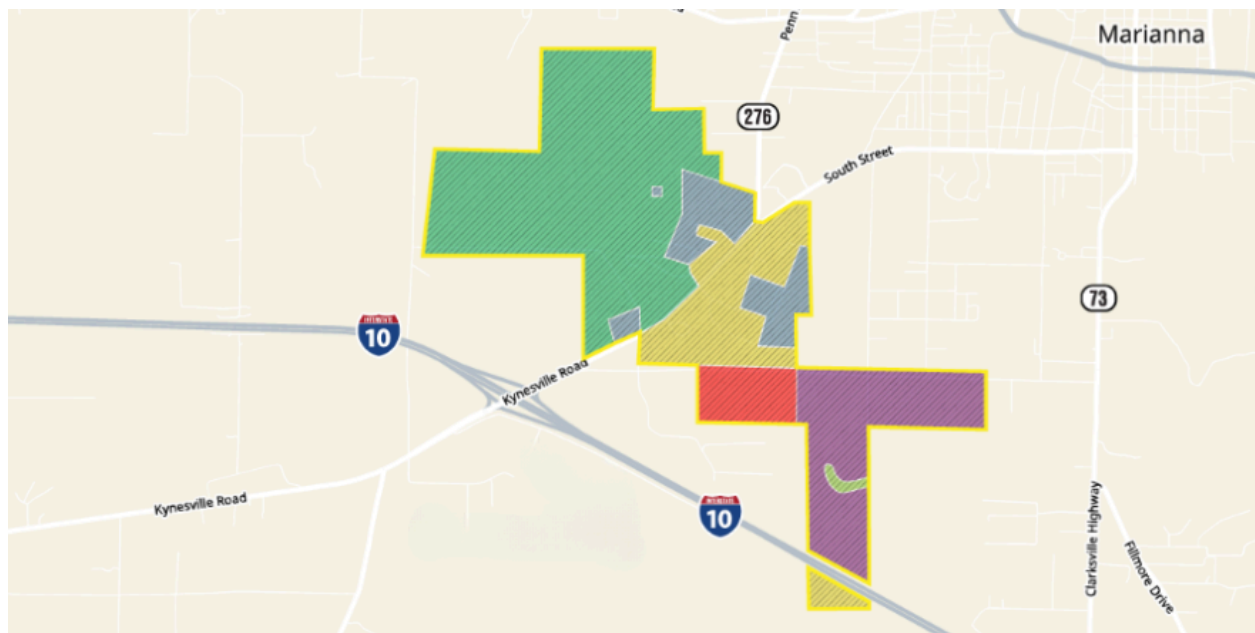


## Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

The proposed location for the Florida State Black History Museum at Endeavor Park offers a compelling blend of expansive land availability, existing facilities for adaptive reuse, and the necessary infrastructure to support this project. Endeavor Park boasts a substantial 1200 acres of available land, providing ample space for the envisioned development.

This expansive canvas offers flexibility in designing the museum's layout, ensuring a harmonious integration with the natural surroundings. The presence of existing buildings earmarked for potential renovation adds a layer of historical continuity, blending the old with the new to create a dynamic and immersive visitor experience. The extensive acreage allows for thoughtful planning, ensuring that the museum's footprint respects the historical context of the site while providing the necessary space for exhibitions, educational facilities, and community engagement areas.

Endeavor Park's strategic location and well-established infrastructure make it highly adaptable for site access and parking requirements. Accessibility is facilitated by the proximity to major transportation routes, including Interstate 10, Highways 71, 231, and 90, ensuring ease of travel for visitors. The existing adult autism academy and convention center on-site speak to the adaptability of the location for diverse and inclusive community-focused initiatives.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>RESIDENTIAL</b><br>Public and Private Housing Development              | <b>COMMERCIAL</b><br>Commercial and Mixed-Use Development |
| <b>PUBLIC</b><br>LE (Sheriff, Temp holding), Local Gov, Autism non-profit | <b>INDUSTRIAL</b><br>Manufacturing, Distribution          |
| <b>CONSERVATION</b>   | <b>MIXED-USE</b>  |

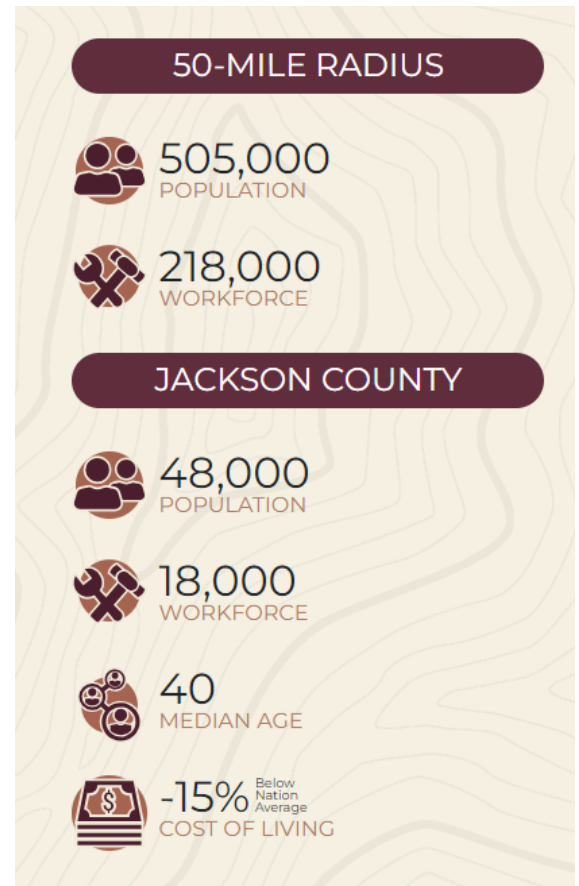
### Criteria 3: Regional Economy

#### ***Talent Supply and Education:***

The county boasts a robust talent pool supported by a commitment to education and workforce development. With nearly 60% of third-grade students performing at or above a third-grade reading level, Jackson County demonstrates a dedication to nurturing academic achievement from an early age. Furthermore, the presence of two four-year colleges within the county, along with several others within a 100-mile radius, provides a rich educational ecosystem that supports a skilled workforce ready for the demands of modern industries.

#### ***Innovation and Economic Development:***

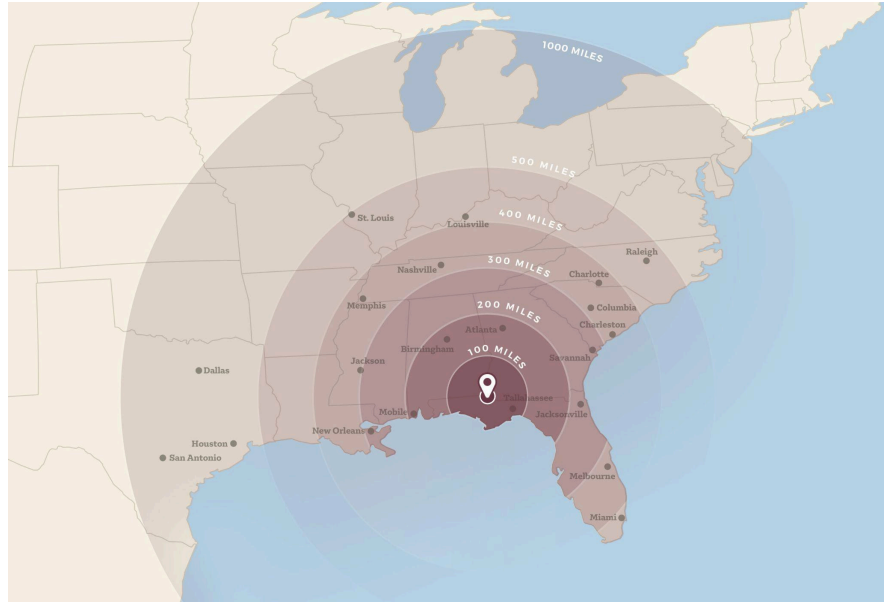
Jackson County's economic landscape is characterized by innovation and adaptability, mirroring job growth trends similar to neighboring counties such as Bay, Gulf, Franklin, Calhoun, Washington, and Holmes. The strategic partnerships with regional economic development groups, such as Florida's Great Northwest, offer access to certified development sites and streamlined processes, fostering a conducive environment for business expansion and investment. Notably, initiatives like NextStep at Endeavor Academy, an adult autism academy focusing on teaching independent living skills, exemplify the county's commitment to innovative solutions for workforce inclusion and development.



*NextStep participants celebrate the grand opening of the autism facility.*

***Infrastructure and Growth Leadership:***

Strategic infrastructure investments have positioned Jackson County as a prime location for business and economic growth. Major road corridors such as Interstate 10, and Highways 71, 73, 90, and 231 ensure ease of accessibility, facilitating seamless connectivity to neighboring regions and markets. Additionally, sales tax revenue has nearly doubled since 2013, reaching over \$7.71 million, reflecting a thriving business climate and robust economic activity.



***Business Climate and Competitiveness:***

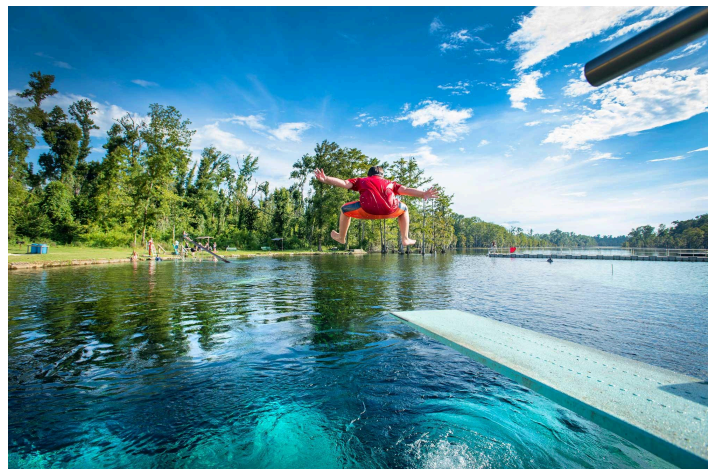
Jackson County's business climate is characterized by a supportive ecosystem that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation. Local government agencies have engaged in extensive community engagement sessions, working to streamline processes and create an environment that is conducive to business growth and development. These efforts have contributed to a vibrant and competitive business landscape that attracts investment and fosters long-term economic sustainability.

***Civics and Governance:***

Jackson County's commitment to effective governance and civic engagement is evident in its proactive approach to community development. Local government agencies have demonstrated a dedication to transparency and accountability, engaging residents in decision-making processes and implementing policies that prioritize the needs and aspirations of the community.

***Quality of Life:***

Beyond economic indicators, Jackson County offers a vibrant quality of life that enriches the overall well-being of its residents. With a focus on community amenities, recreational opportunities, and cultural offerings, Jackson County is not just a place to work, but a place to thrive and call home.



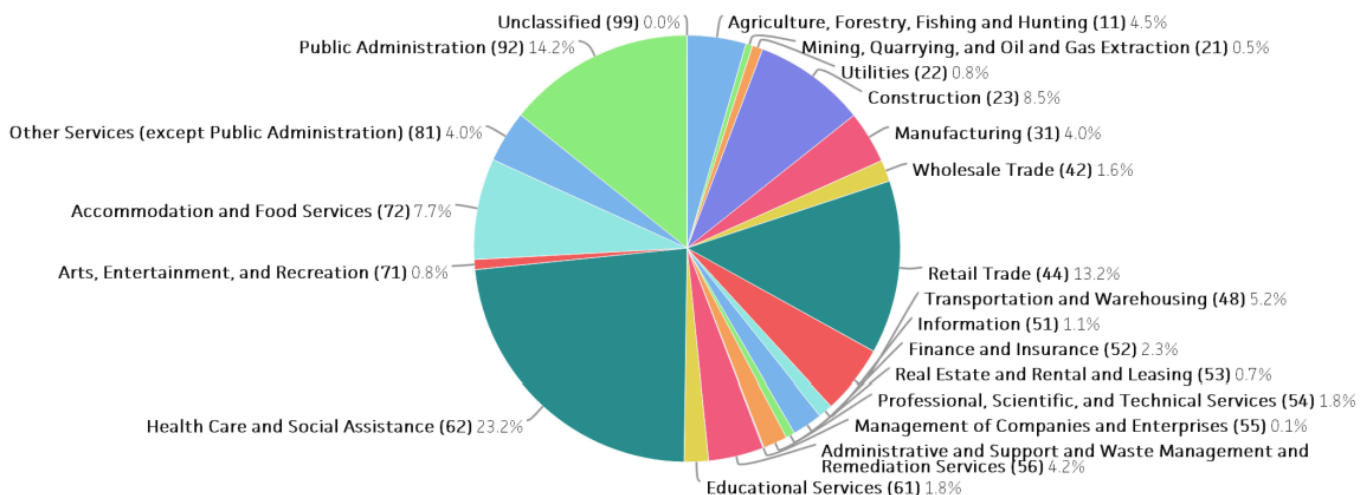
## Criteria 4: Regional Demographics

Jackson County presents a diverse and vibrant demographic landscape. Comprising a population with rich historical roots, the county embodies a blend of cultural heritage that forms the backbone of its identity. Jackson County demographics include a population of 69.1% White and 26.6% Black or African American, which is over 10% higher than the state of Florida. This diversity contributes to a dynamic community poised to embrace the inclusive mission of the Florida State Black History Museum.

Education stands as a cornerstone of Jackson County's community, with a commitment to fostering learning and intellectual growth. The presence of educational institutions, such as Chipola College and the Baptist College of Florida, within and near the county reflects a dedication to providing residents with opportunities for academic advancement and cultural enrichment. The County's populations have shown improvement in educational attainment, with the percentage of residents holding a Bachelor's degree increasing from 12.4% to 14.6% from 2010 to 2017.<sup>16</sup>

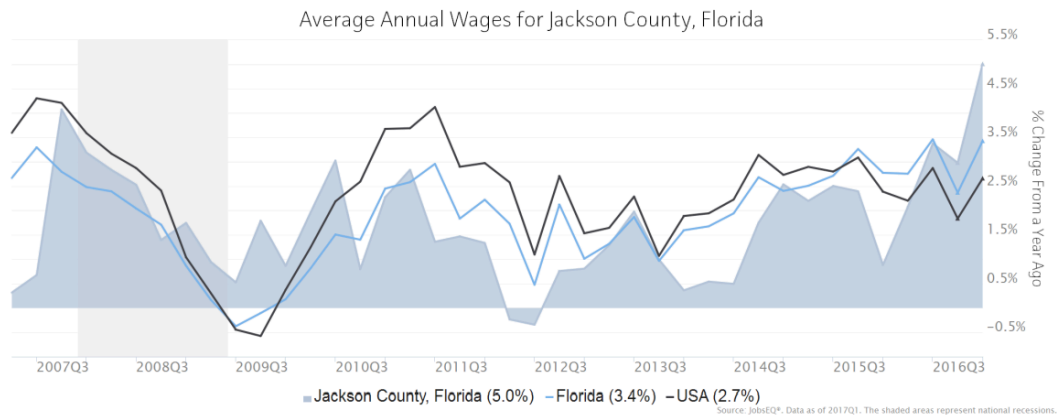
Jackson County's economic landscape is marked by diversity and resilience, supported by key industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism. According to a recent census report, the county's total non-farm employment grew by 7.5% between 2010 and 2017, outpacing the statewide growth rate of 6.8% over the same period.<sup>16</sup> This strong job growth reflects Jackson County's status as a dynamic economic hub within the region, attracting businesses and fostering entrepreneurship. The proposed Florida State Black History Museum at Endeavor Park aligns with the community's economic aspirations, offering the potential for increased tourism, job creation, and a positive impact on local businesses.

Total Workers for Jackson County, Florida by Industry





While Jackson County celebrates economic progress, it also faces challenges related to income inequality and poverty. Highlights include that the median household income in the county increased from \$36,726 in 2010 to \$41,000 in 2017, representing a significant improvement. However, poverty rates remain a concern, with 20.1% of the population living below the poverty line in 2017.<sup>16</sup> Efforts to address poverty and promote economic mobility are ongoing, underscoring Jackson County's commitment to ensuring equitable opportunities for all residents.



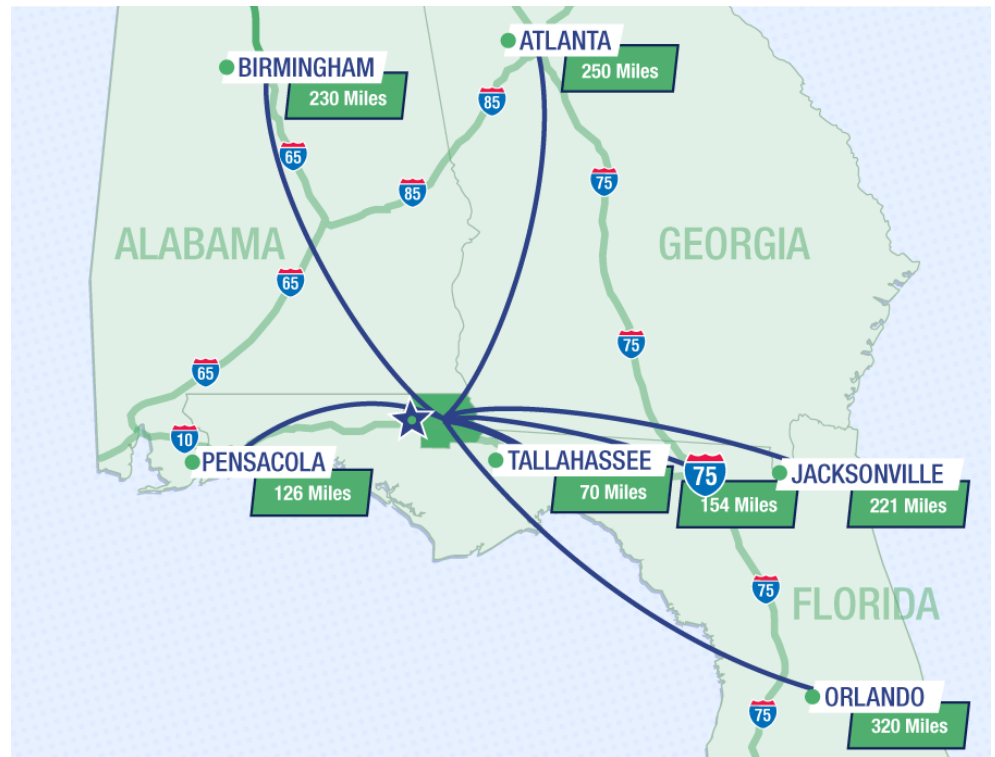
Jackson County's business landscape is characterized by a diverse mix of enterprises across various sectors, contributing to its economic vibrancy. The county is home to over 1,200 business establishments, ranging from small startups to large corporations.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, strategic initiatives aimed at supporting business growth and entrepreneurship, such as the Jackson County Economic Development Committee's programs and incentives, demonstrate the county's proactive approach to fostering a conducive business environment.

Geographically, Jackson County's strategic location and natural assets contribute to its appeal as a desirable destination for residents and businesses alike. The county's proximity to major transportation routes, including Interstate 10 and U.S. Highways 231 and 90, facilitates connectivity and accessibility. Additionally, the county's diverse geography, which includes fertile agricultural lands and scenic landscapes, enhances its attractiveness as a destination for tourism and outdoor recreation.

## Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure

The proposed location at Endeavor Park benefits from proximity to Interstate 10, located less than a mile from the proposed site. Close proximities to Highways 231, 90, and 71 provide easy access to those traveling from the north or south of Marianna as well.

While direct access to an international airport within Jackson County is limited, the site's strategic location places it within reasonable reach of regional airports. Air travel convenience is enhanced through access to airports in Tallahassee and Panama City Beach, ensuring that the museum remains easily accessible for both regional and national visitors.



Public transportation options within Jackson County contribute to the region's connectivity. JTrans is a local transportation network that is available to Jackson County residents. In addition to JTrans, a number of tour buses and guided tours travel to Jackson County to explore the Florida Caverns State Park, allowing ample transportation options for those wishing to visit the museum. While the county may not have an extensive public transit network, the collaborative potential with neighboring areas provides opportunities for coordinated transportation services. The museum's presence could catalyze further developments in public transportation infrastructure.

As an advocate for inclusivity and community engagement, the proposed museum at Endeavor Park recognizes the importance of alternative transportation. Bicycle and pedestrian safety considerations align with the site's commitment to providing a welcoming and accessible experience for visitors. By promoting alternative transportation options, the museum contributes to a sustainable and health-conscious approach to accessibility.

## Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support

The vision of establishing the Florida State Black History Museum at Endeavor Park in Jackson County has garnered steadfast support from government entities at multiple levels. Locally, the county government has expressed enthusiasm and commitment to the project, recognizing its potential to be a cultural and economic cornerstone for the region. Furthermore, the state government has shown a keen interest in supporting initiatives that celebrate and preserve Florida's diverse heritage, indicating a collaborative effort to make this museum a reality.

Given the proposed location at Endeavor Park, organizations and universities that have closely followed updates related to the Dozier School may serve as potential partners for funding. Their vested interest in the historical significance of the site and commitment to justice and reconciliation initiatives aligns with the museum's objectives. Collaborative efforts with these advocates could further enhance financial backing and community involvement.

Please see attached letters of support from the Jackson County NAACP, City of Marianna, Tourist Development Council, Jackson County Board of County Commissioners, and Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.





## Criteria 7: Educational Resources

We envision a partnership with the Florida State Black History Museum to play an impactful role in educational outreach, fostering partnerships with both public and private schools in the region. Collaborative initiatives aim to provide students with enriching experiences, aligning with curriculum objectives and promoting a deeper understanding of Florida's diverse cultural heritage.



The museum stands to benefit from an established cultural heritage tourism visitor and supporter base within and beyond Jackson County. Building upon the rich historical narrative of Endeavor Park and the Dozier School, the museum aims to attract visitors passionate about preserving and learning from Florida's complex history.

The educational resources of the Florida State Black History Museum extend beyond its physical location through strategic partnerships. The collaboration with the University of South Florida, pivotal in researching the Dozier School post-closure, enriches the museum's offerings with academic rigor and historical depth. Additionally, the partnership with Florida State University in their research and development with the North Star Legacy Community reinforces a commitment to comprehensive and inclusive historical narratives.

A significant advocate for cultural heritage tourism in Jackson County and the wider panhandle and tri-state area, historian Dale Cox contributes a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The museum's partnership with Cox ensures a seamless integration into the existing cultural heritage tourism initiatives, leveraging his deep understanding of the region's history to enhance the museum's educational impact.



We would seek to embrace a multifaceted approach to educational resources, anchored in partnerships with schools, an established visitor base, and collaborations with prestigious institutions and passionate advocates. This tapestry of educational alliances positions the museum as a dynamic and enriching hub for learning, cultural exploration, and community engagement.

## Bibliography

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## BOARD of COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Phone : (850) 482-9633  
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www.jacksoncountyfl.gov

Administration Building  
2864 Madison Street  
Marianna, Florida 32448-4021

January 17, 2024

### Jackson County BOCC Letter of Support

Members of the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Jackson County's bid to become the permanent home of the Florida Black History Museum. As the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, I believe that our county, with its rich history and commitment to inclusivity, is an ideal location for this significant institution.

Jackson County's historical legacy, dating back to well before Florida's statehood, makes it a natural fit for hosting the Florida Black History Museum. The proposed site, Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys, holds a unique historical significance that should be honored and celebrated.

The transformation of the campus into a museum dedicated to Black history represents a powerful and positive evolution for our community. It underscores our commitment to learning from our history, fostering positive change, and promoting a more unified and inclusive future.

Beyond its cultural and historical importance, the museum's presence in Jackson County would have far-reaching economic benefits. It has the potential to invigorate local businesses, attract tourism, and create new avenues for growth and prosperity within our community.

I urge the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to recognize the value and potential impact of selecting Jackson County as the future site for the Florida Black History Museum. Our community is ready and eager to embrace this responsibility and contribute to the preservation of Florida's rich cultural heritage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Donofro, Jr.  
Chairman, Jackson County Board of County Commissioners

#### Commissioners

District 1  
Alex B. McKinnie

District 2  
Edward  
Crutchfield

District 3  
Paul Donofro, Jr.

District 4  
Donnie Branch

District 5  
Jim Peacock



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Administration Building  
2864 Madison Street  
Marianna, Florida 32448-4021

January 17, 2024

## Jackson County BOCC Letter of Support

Members of the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force,

I am writing to express my strong endorsement for Jackson County's bid to host the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. As the County Administrator, I believe that designating Jackson County as the permanent home for this esteemed institution aligns seamlessly with our commitment to acknowledging and reconciling with our historical past.

Jackson County, being the third oldest county in the state of Florida, holds a deep and multifaceted history that is woven into the fabric of our state. The proposed site for the museum, not only symbolizes our rich heritage but also provides a unique opportunity for transformation and healing.

The historical significance of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys serves as a testament to the challenges faced in the struggle against segregation and inequality. Converting this site into the Florida Black History Museum would not only preserve history but also serve as a beacon of education, celebration, and reconciliation.

Selecting Jackson County as the museum's location is not merely a decision for historical preservation; it is an investment in our community's future. The economic benefits, including increased tourism, local business development, and enhanced community growth, are invaluable contributions that this museum will bring to our area.

I encourage the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to recognize the potential impact and historical significance of choosing Jackson County. We are ready to contribute to the enduring legacy of Black history in Florida.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wilanne Daniels  
County Administrator  
Jackson County Board of County Commissioners

Commissioners

District 1  
Alex B. McKinnie

District 2  
Edward Crutchfield

District 3  
Paul Donofro, Jr.

District 4  
Donnie Branch

District 5  
Jim Peacock





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Administration Building  
2864 Madison Street  
Marianna, Florida 32448-4021

January 17, 2024

### Jackson County BOCC Letter of Support

Members of the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Jackson County's bid to become the permanent home of the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park, the historic site of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys.

Jackson County's rich history and deep cultural roots make it an ideal setting for the Florida Black History Museum. As the third oldest county in Florida, our community's legacy is entwined with the broader narrative of the state.

The community of Jackson County has shown time and again its commitment to positive transformation, most notably in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. The shared experiences and challenges we have overcome together have forged a strong sense of community engagement and cooperation, qualities that will undoubtedly contribute to the success of this monumental project.

Selecting Jackson County as the location for the museum aligns with our community's vision for growth and inclusivity. The economic benefits stemming from this decision would extend beyond the cultural sphere, invigorating local businesses, promoting tourism, and providing new opportunities for development and prosperity in our region.

Our community is ready and enthusiastic about the opportunity to host the Florida Black History Museum, contributing to the preservation and celebration of Florida's diverse cultural legacy.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to enriching Florida's cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

  
Kelsi Jackson

Executive Director, Tourist Development Council, JCBOCC

Commissioners

District 1  
Alex B. McKinnie

District 2  
Edward Crutchfield

District 3  
Paul Donofro, Jr

District 4  
Donnie Blanch

District 5  
Jim Peacock



# CITY OF MARIANNA

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Post Office Box 936

Marianna, FL 32447

(850) 482-4353

January 17, 2024

Members of the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Jackson County's bid to host the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. As the City Manager for the City of Marianna, I believe that our city, nestled within Jackson County, is poised to contribute significantly to the success and impact of this important cultural institution.

Marianna, like the rest of Jackson County, has a deep and intertwined history with the state of Florida. Our community recognizes the significance of preserving and celebrating Black history, and hosting the Florida Black History Museum aligns perfectly with our values.

The proposed site, Endeavor Park, holds a unique historical narrative that reflects the challenges and triumphs of the struggle against segregation and inequality. Transforming this site into a museum dedicated to Black history would not only pay homage to our past but also serve as a catalyst for education, reconciliation, and positive change.

Establishing the museum in Jackson County, and by extension, Marianna, offers an unprecedented opportunity to alter perceptions of our area. It showcases our commitment to acknowledging and learning from history, fostering inclusivity, and contributing to the cultural enrichment of our community.

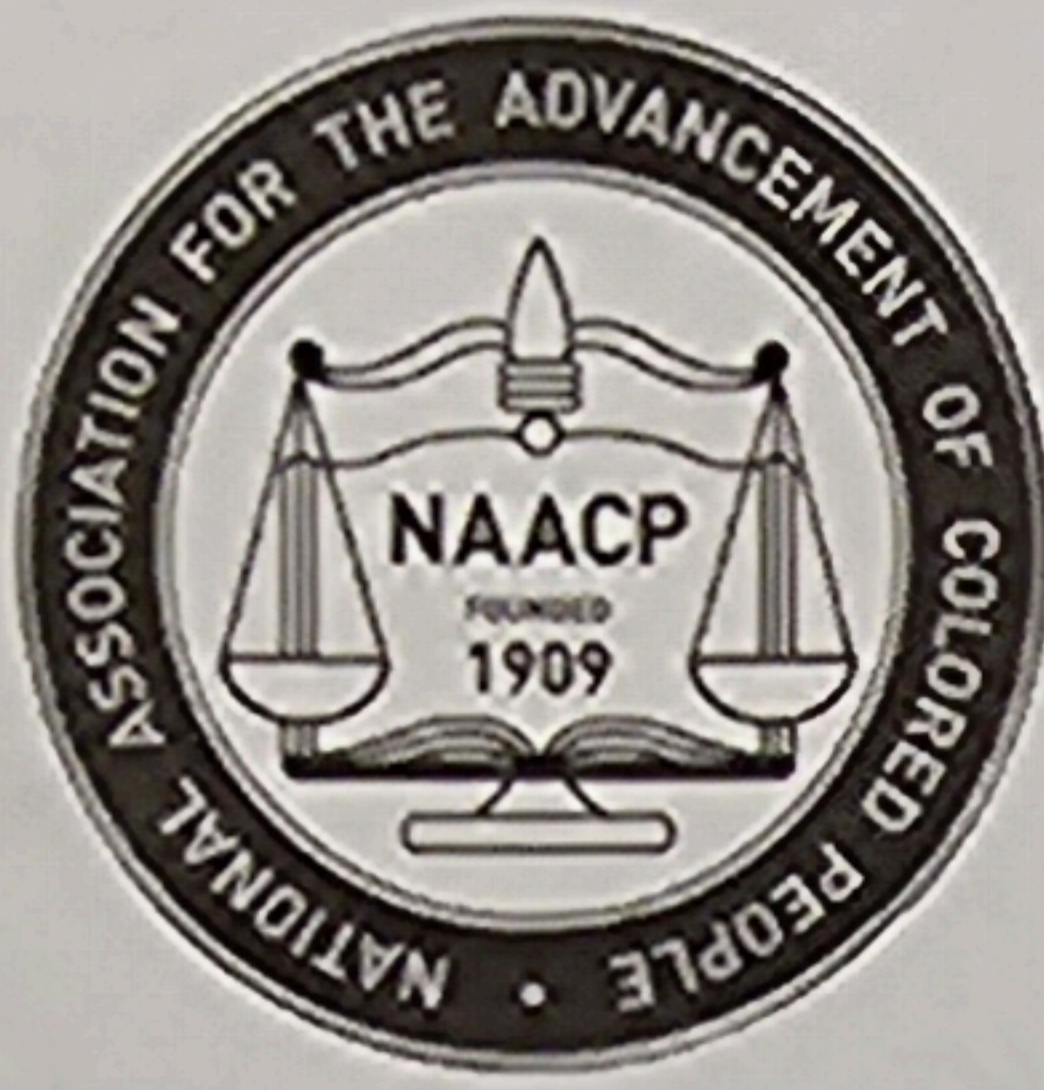
I encourage the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to recognize the depth of commitment and readiness within Jackson County, and particularly Marianna, to embrace this responsibility. The economic, cultural, and historical benefits that will emanate from selecting our community as the museum's home are immeasurable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

William H. Long  
City Manager





## **Jackson County NAACP #5104-B**

Bishop Adrian D. Abner, *President*  
Pastor DeRon D. Johnson, *1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*  
Leon Kelly, *2nd Vice President*  
Linda B. Franklin, *3rd Vice President*  
Randall Wynn, Sr., *Secretary*  
LaRhonda S. Barnes, *Assistant Secretary*  
LaVon Pope, *Treasurer*  
Mozell Jackson, *Assistant Treasurer*

January 7, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Jackson County NAACP Branch #5104-B, Marianna, Florida, and its 125-plus members, I wish to communicate our strong and continued support for The Florida Black History Museum to be erected in Jackson County. This noble and worthy effort, spearheaded by The Emancipation Day Festival of NW Florida, Inc. Executive Director, Byron Dickens, deserves the recognition and respect that is due for not just a community but a national treasure. As a President and Member of the oldest and largest Civil Rights Organization in The United States, we are proud of what this museum and the grounds on which it is proposed to be built symbolize for the state, the Northwest Florida region, and this honored American history.

With humility and strong support,

**Bishop Adrian D. Abner, *Branch President***





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**Carmen Smith, Chair**  
Chipola Area Habitat

**Logan Chappell, Chair Elect**  
Farm Credit of Northwest FL

**Ben Odom, Past Chair**  
Country Land Realty

**Rhonda Smith, Treasurer**  
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**Deanna Halstead**  
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**Lauren Milton Lyons**  
Chipola Realty

**Brent Melvin**  
Melvin Engineering

**Michael John Mitchell**  
Miller Miller Chevrolet

**Arthur Obar**  
City of Graceville/Obar Insurance

**Winter Spires**  
Winter Spires & Associates, P.A.

**Kevin Yoder**  
Rivertown Community Church

**Steve Young**  
Chipola College

December 27, 2023

Dear Members of the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Jackson County's bid to become the permanent home of the esteemed Florida Black History Museum. As the President & CEO of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, I am fervently convinced that our county stands as an exemplary site for such a significant institution, and I believe that choosing Jackson County would be a testament to the profound historical relevance and transformative potential of our region.

Jackson County boasts a rich and storied legacy, serving as the third oldest county in the state of Florida. Our roots run deep, preceding Florida's statehood, and much of our history resonates statewide, contributing significantly to the fabric of Florida's narrative. It is within this historical tapestry that we find the proposed site for the museum, the former Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys now known as Endeavor Park.

The Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys carries a complex and poignant history, emblematic of the struggle against segregation and inequality. Transforming this site into a bastion of education, celebration, and reconciliation through the Florida Black History Museum would represent a powerful and positive evolution. It would not only preserve our heritage but also stand as a beacon of hope and progress, embracing our past while guiding us toward a more unified future.

Furthermore, establishing the museum in Jackson County would be a monumental step in altering perceptions of our area. It presents an unparalleled opportunity to showcase our commitment to acknowledging and learning from our history, catalyzing positive change and promoting inclusivity. The economic benefits stemming from the museum's presence cannot be overlooked either, as it would undoubtedly invigorate local businesses, foster tourism, and create new opportunities for growth and prosperity within our community.

In conclusion, I urge the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to consider the immense significance and potential impact of selecting Jackson County as the future site for the Florida Black History Museum. Our community stands ready and eager to embrace this responsibility and honor the legacy of Black history in Florida.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to preserving and promoting Florida's rich cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Wilson Garling, CCE, IOM, FCCP  
President & CEO