

## celebrating **BLACK HISTORY**

This year marks the sixth year the City of Daytona Beach, in partnership with the Midtown Community Development Corporation, will celebrate Black History Month by honoring 12 individuals who shaped our community. These remarkable men and women will be featured on double-sided, custom-designed street banners displayed throughout February along International Speedway Boulevard, from Nova Road to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

## 2026 BLACK HISTORY ICONS



**Rev. Bobby L. Bradley Jr.** – A role model who overcame adversity, pursued higher education and dedicated himself to uplifting young people.



**Winona Agatha Mason Brown** – A music educator who taught in the Volusia County public school system and served in the music department at Bethune-Cookman University.



**Henry T. "Jack" Christian** – A "jack of all trades" who taught valuable skills to young men and stood up to discrimination through landmark legal action.



**Joel Van Fears Sr.** – A U.S. Navy veteran and retired engineer who built a second career of service through education, faith leadership, scouting and community advocacy.



**Farris Bennett Fryer** – A lifelong educator and church leader who helped shape thousands of lives, strengthened youth programs and served through civic boards and long-standing engagement with NAACP.



**Joseph W. Hatchett** – A trailblazing legal leader whose career expanded access to justice and representation, including historic statewide service on the Florida Supreme Court and federal judicial leadership.



**Willie Mae Huggins** – A lifelong church and community servant who held leadership roles, including president of the Women's Home Mission Society, Youth Department Director, Assistant Superintendent of Sunday School, toddler-class teacher and senior choir member.



**Bessie Murphy Marshall** – An educator, dean and coach who championed excellence in young people while modeling leadership, discipline and pride in community.



**Louise "Mutt-I" McGill** – A beloved entrepreneur and "community she-ro" whose restaurant and generosity ensured people were fed and supported.



**Robert "Pops" Lee Popwell** – An internationally respected musician whose work helped define the sound of 1970s jazz, funk and R&B through collaborations.



**Levi "Lee" Sims Sr.** – A visionary craftsman who transformed cemetery memorials into works of art and lived a life of generosity.



**Loretta Osgood Wright** – A respected librarian and service leader who strengthened literacy, supported educators and organized community help for basic needs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.CELEBRATINGBLACKHISTORY.COM](http://WWW.CELEBRATINGBLACKHISTORY.COM)





**TIM PACE, OWNER**



## **BIG SHARK GIFT SHOP: SIX DECADES OF SERVING DAYTONA BEACH FAMILIES**

The city's sesquicentennial Business Milestone Series kicks off with Big Shark Gift Shop, a family-owned Daytona Beach business that has served locals and visitors for more than 60 years. Founded in 1960 as Daytona Shells and Curios, the shop has grown into a 13,000-square-foot destination offering souvenirs, beach-themed décor and apparel. Still operated today by Tim Pace, Big Shark remains rooted in family, longtime employees and a strong connection to the community. From its distinctive curved palm trees to its welcoming atmosphere, Big Shark Gift Shop reflects hospitality and tradition along the Ormond Beach–Daytona Beach line, which is represented by Zone 2 City Commissioner Ken Strickland. **Read the full story and learn more about this milestone business by visiting:**

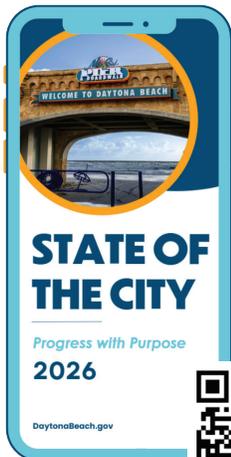
<https://tinyurl.com/y6sdh77y>

## **RESIDENTIAL RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM**

A new home at 322 N. Keech St. closed on Friday, Jan. 30, marking another milestone in the city's residential reconstruction program aimed at replacing unsafe housing with safe, modern homes for income-qualified residents. This home is located in Zone 6, represented by City Commissioner Paula R. Reed.

The program, administered by the city's Redevelopment and Neighborhood Services Department, provides assistance to low-income homeowners. Additional reconstruction projects are underway at 351 Garden St. and 831 Madison St. The program currently has a waitlist of more than five years and continues to support residents through reconstruction, rehabilitation and owner-occupied housing assistance.

*// Pictured is the city's Housing Administrator LaShondra Robinson.*



## **DAYTONA BEACH'S 2026 STATE OF THE CITY: PROGRESS WITH PURPOSE NOW AVAILABLE**

The digital report highlights how the city is sustaining momentum by pairing major infrastructure investments with neighborhood quality-of-life improvements. Signature projects featured include the Main Street Arch restoration, the new Fire Station No. 1 (targeted for completion in spring 2026) and continued upgrades at Jackie Robinson Ballpark. The update also emphasizes stronger accountability through the hiring of a

City Auditor, as well as continued work on core services such as water/wastewater resiliency, citywide roadway improvements and park upgrades. A short video was also produced to accompany the 35-page booklet. **Access the 2026 State of the City by visiting:** <https://tinyurl.com/4vzptmkn>



# IN THE WORKS



100% COMPLETION

## BOOKLAND BRIDGE

**Project Status:** 100% Complete

**Project Value:** Engineering completed in-house, Construction \$277,063.41  
The Bookland Bridge reconstruction project, which connects City Island to the Riverfront Esplanade, is now complete. The project included repairs to approximately 164 linear feet of wooden boardwalk damaged during Hurricane Milton. Additional improvements included replacing 12 deck boards with 4-foot-by-12-foot micro-mesh grates to improve drainage and durability, repairing handrails and installing new light fixtures. **All work complies with Americans with Disabilities Act standards.**



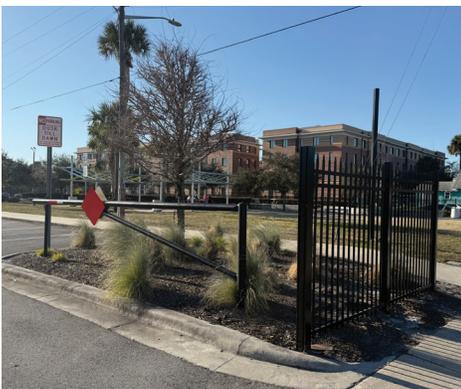
NEARING COMPLETION

## MIDTOWN RECREATION CENTER PLAYGROUND & FITNESS EQUIPMENT (CYPRESS PARK)

**Project Status:** Final Stages

**Project Value:** \$419,028.30

The city has completed major upgrades to the Midtown Recreation Complex Playground at Cypress Park, 981 George W. Engram Blvd., supported by a \$375,028 grant from the Racing and Recreational Facilities District. New playground equipment for children ages 2 to 12 and outdoor fitness features have been installed south of the Cypress Aquatic Center, along with drainage improvements, ribbon curbing and pour-in-place safety surfacing. **The final phase will include installation of an ADA-compliant sidewalk to improve access to the playground.**



NEARING COMPLETION

## JOE HARRIS PARK PERIMETER FENCING

**Project Status:** Final Stages

**Project Value:** \$90,081.00

The installation of 6-foot-tall perimeter fencing and gates at Joe Harris Park is underway. The project, which began in early 2026, is expected to be finished within approximately two weeks and will enhance safety and access control at the park.



## ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!

### DB UNIVERSITY: 2026 CITIZENS ACADEMY

Discover how the City of Daytona Beach works from the inside out by registering for the upcoming DB University: Citizens Academy.

This free, 10-week program begins Thursday, March 19, and offers hands-on, interactive sessions from 9 a.m. to noon on Thursdays, led by senior staff from departments including Police, Fire, Public Works, Utilities, Parks and Recreation, Growth Management and the City Manager's Office.

**Cost:** Free! It's just a commitment of your time.

**Class Size:** Limited to 30 participants for an interactive experience.

Apply now to secure your spot! Online application can be found by visiting:

[DaytonaBeach.gov/CitizensAcademy](http://DaytonaBeach.gov/CitizensAcademy)



### TICKETS REQUIRED BEACH STREET WINE & CHOCOLATE WALK

Feb. 7 from 1 to 5 p.m.

Downtown Daytona Beach

[DaytonaScene.com](http://DaytonaScene.com)



### BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2026 BLACK ICON RECOGNITION

Thursday, Feb. 5 at 11 a.m.

B-CU Center for Civic Engagement  
740 W. International Speedway Blvd.



### FREE TO ATTEND RIVERFRONT MARKET

Friday, Feb. 6 from 5-9 p.m.

Riverfront Esplanade

179 S. Beach St.

[RiverfrontEsplanade.com](http://RiverfrontEsplanade.com)



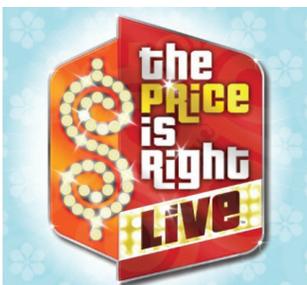
### APPLICATIONS OPEN DROP SAVERS POSTER CONTEST

Submission Deadline:

Friday, Feb. 13

Students in grades K-5

[DaytonaBeach.gov/DropSavers](http://DaytonaBeach.gov/DropSavers)



### TICKETS REQUIRED THE PRICE IS RIGHT LIVE

Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Peabody Auditorium

600 Auditorium Blvd.

[www.peabodyauditorium.org](http://www.peabodyauditorium.org)



### FREE TO ATTEND 2026 MIDTOWN CONCERT SERIES

FEB. 28 | MARCH 28 | APRIL 25  
MAY 30 | JUNE 27 at 6:30 p.m.

Daisy Stocking Park

555 Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Blvd.