



# **Alachua County Board of County Commissioners**

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**Administration**  
Michele L. Lieberman  
*County Manager*

November 12, 2019

Ms. Dawn Taylor, Chair  
Original Florida Tourism Task Force  
2009 NW 67th Place  
Gainesville, Florida, 32653

RE: Original Florida Tourism Task Force 2020 Application for Rural Regional Development Grant.

Dear Ms. Taylor:

This letter is in support of the Original Florida Tourism Task Force's application for a Rural Regional Development Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. We believe this grant is vital to the continued growth and development of rural tourism as a means of sustainable economic development in the North Florida region, as well as in Alachua County.

Since its founding in 1993, the Original Florida Tourism Task Force has been the regional voice which educates both citizens and travelers about the natural, historic, and cultural attractions of the north central Florida region through branding and marketing activities.

The result of the marketing activities in the Natural North Florida region is evidenced by increases in bed tax revenues, electronic and print media advertising featuring undeveloped coastlines, state parks, unique springs, greenways and trails, historic sites, local restaurants and lodging, outfitters and tour guides, festivals and special events. The Visit Natural North Florida website provides our county with an expanded online presence, resulting in additional travel to our area. Similarly, Task Force participation in both in-state and out-of-state travel shows has expanded our reach to major metropolitan areas in the eastern United States as well as in Europe.

Fishing, paddling, cycling and springs hopping are just a few of the themes developed by the Task Force over the last several years which positively impact our visitor's experiences and directly benefit our local economies.

We value the sustained commitment to rural economic development that the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity provides via the Rural Development Grant program and their support of the Original Florida Tourism Task Force as we seek in partnership to increase visitation, generate tourism related revenue, grow our small businesses and promote Natural North Florida as a tourism destination.

Sincerely,

Charles S. Chestnut, IV, Chair  
Alachua County Commission  
Chr19.XX

CSC/SP/sp

**\*\***(proper business format calls for the initials of the person who signs in upper case: followed by the initials of the person who composes the letter in uppercase; followed by the initials of the typist in lower case)

CC: Board of County Commissioners  
Michele L. Lieberman, County Manager  
Sylvia Torres, County Attorney  
Department File