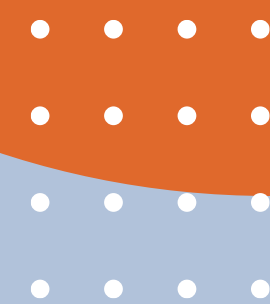
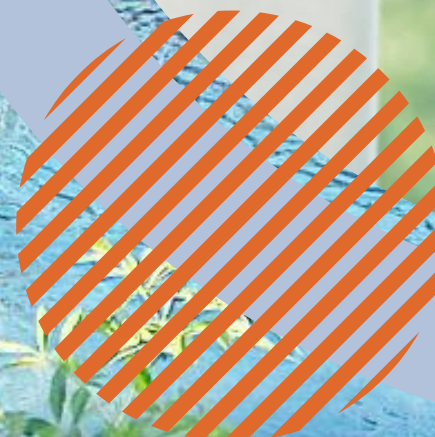




2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND KEY ISSUES





Our Foundation

The priorities and key issues outlined in this document for 2025 reflect the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce's steadfast commitment to addressing the concerns most important to our local businesses. These priorities center on fostering economic growth, enhancing quality of life, and promoting sustainable infrastructure in Citrus County.

To achieve these objectives, the Chamber works collaboratively with key local partners, including Citrus County, the Cities of Crystal River and Inverness, and nonprofit organizations with shared goals. By working together, we strive to present a united front, advancing initiatives that strengthen our community and ensure long-term prosperity for businesses and residents alike.



Barge Canal Boat Ramp

The northwest quadrant of Citrus County offers a prime opportunity for economic growth while addressing environmental, resilience, and recreational needs. The Chamber supports Citrus County's legislative request to fund a fully permitted boat ramp along the Cross Florida Barge Canal. This project will improve Gulf access, ease congestion at existing ramps, and reduce traffic in Crystal River.

Beyond better boating access, the ramp will boost economic development by increasing recreational and commercial boating, driving tourism, supporting local businesses, and spurring broader growth. Its strategic location is poised to create jobs and generate revenue for Citrus County.

Appropriations Request: \$10,000,000

Local Contribution

\$6,000,000

Alignment with Chamber Vision: Balancing economic growth with environmental stewardship while enhancing regional recreational opportunities.

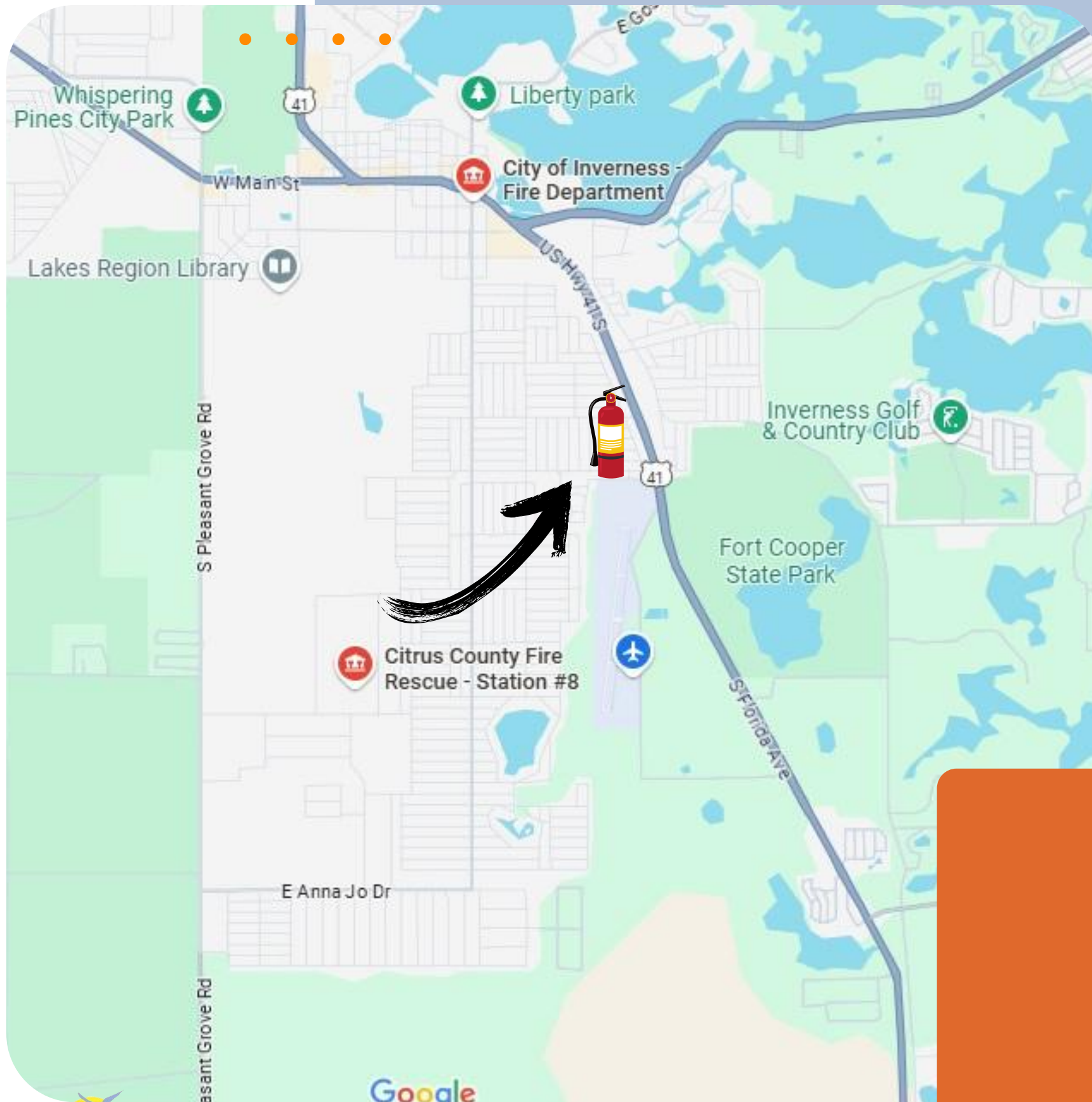


Citrus County Fire Rescue Station 8

The Chamber supports Citrus County's request for funding to relocate Fire Rescue Station #8 to the Inverness Airport, enhancing emergency response for aviation and nearly 21,000 residents within a five-mile radius.

The new location will improve safety for pilots, aviation businesses, and visitors, while its proximity to U.S. Highway 41 and State Road 44 ensures faster response times across rural and urban areas.

This move will also drive economic development by supporting the Inverness Airport Business Park, attracting aviation-related enterprises, and reducing disruptions in the current residential area. Improved service delivery may lower insurance premiums by enhancing the county's ISO ratings.





Improve response times for 20,900 residents.



Reduce insurance costs by improving ISO ratings

Citrus County Fire Rescue Station 8

This project represents a critical investment in Citrus County's public safety infrastructure and economic future, fostering a safer, more resilient, and prosperous community.

Built in 1980, the station requires modernization to meet increasing emergency response demands.

Appropriations Request: \$3,500,000

Alignment with Chamber Vision: Enhancing quality of life and supporting sustainable infrastructure to ensure community safety, resilience, and economic vitality.



Support for Expansion of the Citrus YMCA

Since opening in 2016, the Citrus Memorial Health Foundation YMCA has become a cornerstone of our community, fostering health, wellness, and education for residents of all ages. Through its impactful programs, the YMCA has demonstrated immense value to Citrus County families, addressing critical needs and enhancing the quality of life for our growing population:

- **Youth Programs:** Providing enriching academic, wellness, and recreational opportunities, as well as essential before- and after-school care for working parents.
- **Aquatics:** Operating a competition pool vital to our schools' swim programs, especially given the lack of on-campus pools in Citrus County schools.
- **Adult Wellness:** Offering fitness and wellness programs that support a healthier, more productive workforce.



Support for Expansion of the Citrus YMCA



The YMCA's rapid growth underscores its strong community support, making it one of the largest branches in the YMCA of the Suncoast network. After a previous expansion to meet rising demand, the Y now seeks funding for a second expansion to accommodate the needs of Citrus County's ever-growing population and to ensure continued access to these essential programs.



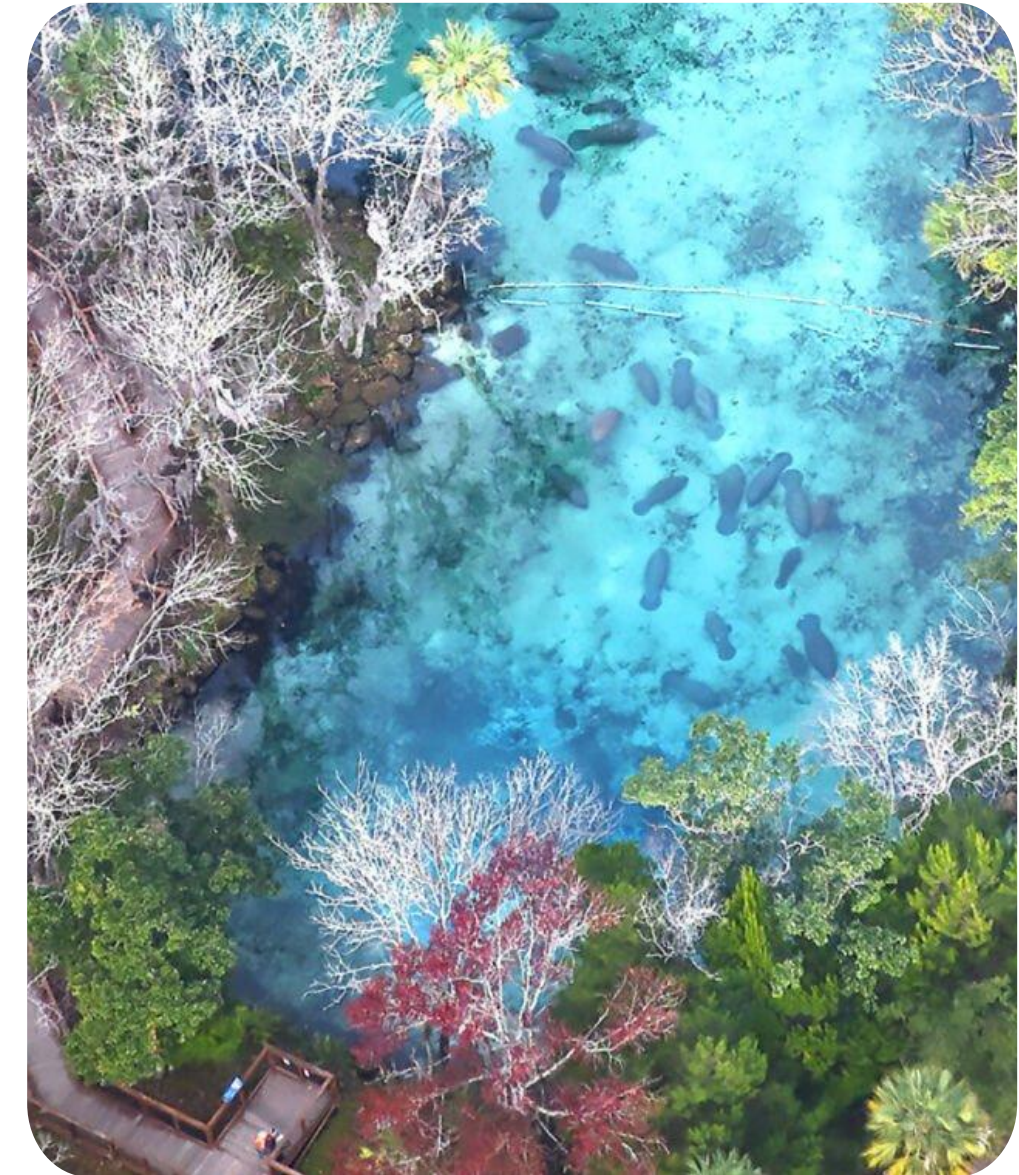
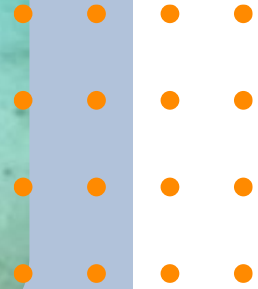
Appropriations Request: \$1,200,000



Alignment with Chamber Vision: The Chamber supports the YMCA's expansion project, recognizing it as a critical community investment. The Y addresses vital needs through youth programs, aquatics, and adult wellness initiatives, all of which bolster workforce productivity, promote healthier lifestyles, and enrich the lives of Citrus County residents.



Continued Support for Springs Restoration Projects



The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce supports local initiatives to restore and protect local waterways by removing filamentous algae (Lyngbya) and benthic detrital matter, and by planting and maintaining submerged aquatic vegetation, such as Rockstar eelgrass. These efforts are essential for environmental sustainability, public health, and as economic drivers for tourism and recreation.

Key Projects and Funding Needs

Kings Bay Restoration Project

- Objective: Complete and sustain restoration efforts.
- Funding Needs:
 - Appropriation Request: \$2,000,000
 - DEP Springs Fund Allocation: \$2,000,000

Homosassa River Restoration Project

- Objective: Complete and sustain restoration efforts.
- Funding Needs:
 - Appropriation Request: \$2,000,000
 - DEP Springs Fund Allocation: \$2,000,000

Chamber Alignment: The Chamber sees springs restoration as vital to our economy. Healthy waterways sustain tourism, boost local businesses, enhance property values, and attract new industries, including outdoor recreation and eco-tourism.





Support for the Academy of Environmental Science

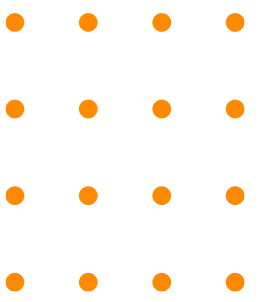
The Academy of Environmental Science (AES), an A-rated Citrus County charter school on the Salt River in Crystal River, serves 9th and 10th graders through an application-based admission. Offering honors and AP courses, AES combines rigorous academics with daily hands-on exploration, fostering curiosity and environmental stewardship.

Chamber Alignment: The Chamber supports AES in securing funding for essential repairs, ensuring its role in developing critical thinkers, environmental stewards, and future leaders while preserving Citrus County's natural and cultural resources.

While the Academy's location on the Salt River is ideal for environmental exploration, its building has faced significant repair needs in recent years. To address these challenges, the Academy board has embarked on a 5-phase repair initiative, successfully raising nearly \$1,000,000 to date. The school seeks a legislative appropriation to complete phase 4 of these critical repairs.

Appropriation Request: \$240,000

2025 Primary Chamber Advocacy Priorities



Workforce Support

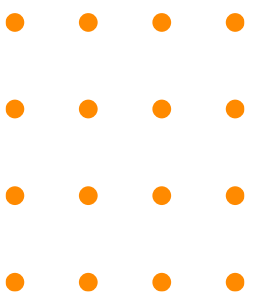
- Mental health services
- Education deficiencies and skills gaps
- Affordable and attainable housing
- Childcare options / incentives

Insurance Reform

- Stabilize markets
- Additional tort reform
- Reduce costs for homeowners and businesses
- Ensure affordable, accessible coverage



2025 Primary Chamber Advocacy Priorities



Resilience and Environment

- Septic-to-sewer conversions and stormwater infrastructure and the expansion of central wastewater collection systems in areas within the first order magnitude spring sheds, including storm water management and construction of infrastructure.



Health and Wellness

- Address homelessness and affordable housing needs.
- Improve healthcare access in rural areas.
- Expand workplace wellness and mental health programs.



Together, we are building a stronger, more prosperous Citrus County—advancing economic growth, championing business interests, and preserving the quality of life that makes our community thrive.

JOB CHANGE

Jobs Year Over Year Change

-870
(Gain)

Growth Rate

-1.8%
(Negative)

[View Statewide Heat Map](#)

Net New Jobs Needed by 2030

5,798

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

23.2%
(Unchanged)

<10%
2030 Goal

5,290
(Increasing)

3RD GRADE READING SCORES

53%
(Improving)

560
Not Reading at Grade Level
(Decreasing)

[View Statewide Heat Map](#)

100%
2030 Goal

[Florida Gap Map](#)

OPEN JOBS

1,022
(Declining)

2,355
Unemployed Persons
(Declining)

231

Unemployed People per 100
Jobs

