



WHAT IS THAT NEW BUILDING AT THE FAIRGROUNDS?

The building that is almost finished is the new south end agricultural building. The previous south end AG building on Hollywood Boulevard in Fort Walton Beach was very old and long dilapidated. Hurricane Sally finally finished it off. In case you have not seen the new structure, it is located at the fairground property across from the Courthouse Annex Extension. It is important to point out that this is not part of the newly acquired property of the Fairground, but property that the county owned beforehand. The cost to build is to be \$1.5 million with the county providing the match in real estate. It is also the only University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Service (UF IFAS) building that has been approved in the State of Florida during Governor DeSantis's Administration.

The team of Okaloosa UF IFAS Extension office employees and volunteer Master Gardeners anticipate offering a variety of courses, programs, workshops and meetings. The courses will feature agriculture, family and consumer sciences, commercial and residential horticulture, natural resources and 4-H Youth Development program areas. Some of the examples include: Master Gardner programs, food preparation and safety workshops, Master Naturalist program, drone training, 4-H development clubs and after school programs.

One of my favorites is where to find and how to grow antique roses. What are antique roses? They are roses that came over with early European settlers and are often found growing in old cemeteries next to a loved one's grave or a stone fence.

Each year, the extension service features several plant clinics. The plant clinic is designed to provide a place and time for people to bring in samples of plants for diagnosis, including weeds for identification.

If you have a plant problem that you would like diagnosed, bring a sample of the weed, plant, insect, etc., to the clinic. Be sure to bring a fresh sample that represents what is seen in the landscape. This may include a plant stem with several leaves, a 4-inch square of grass with roots attached, etc. Soil samples can be brought from your lawn, landscape or garden for pH testing.

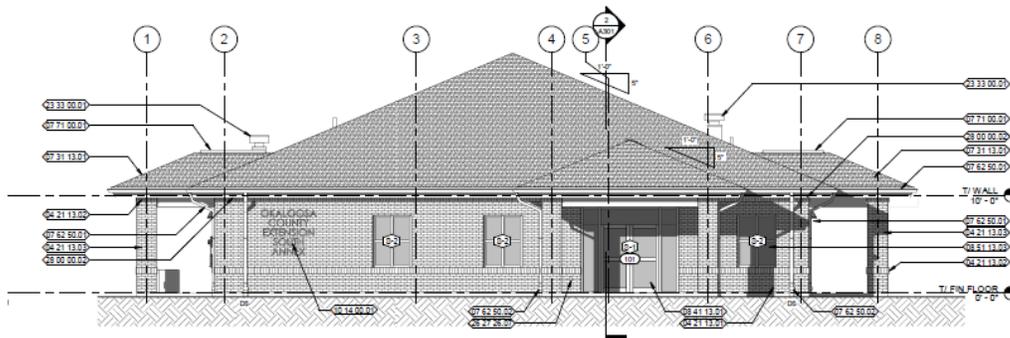
The plans also include building a green house on the grounds. In April, the Board of County Commission will consider naming the new Ag Extension Building for a long-term employee Sheila O. Dunning who passed away suddenly after giving Okaloosa County 22 years of

amazing service. She had an incredible knowledge of landscaping and horticulture that cannot be replaced. She contributed so much to our Women Veterans Park on Okaloosa Island.

The ribbon cutting will be later this spring or early summer. We are all eager to occupy the new Ag Building and begin offering classes and expertise to the public.

It is an honor to serve as your County Commissioner.

My Sincere Thanks,
Carolyn N. Ketchel
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District 2
County Commissioner
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1 WEST ELEVATION
Scale: 3/8" = 1'-0"



