



## **NEW OKALOOSA APP ALLOWS EASY ACCESS TO ROAD JURISDICTION FOR CITIZENS**

There are many issues that a constituent will reach out to a county commissioner about, and roads are an important issue to everyone. It is frustrating to figure out which governmental entity has jurisdiction over which roads (including the responsibility to maintain such roads). After all, the roads are in Okaloosa County, so doesn't the county control the roads? The simple answer is "some of them".

While talking with Jason Autrey, Okaloosa County Public Works Director last year, I lamented that there ought to be a way that could tell citizens who has jurisdiction over each road in the county. I went to our county Department of Information Technology and asked if an app could be developed to eliminate confusion by citizens regarding who has the responsibility to maintain a particular roadway. The answer was "yes" and after many months of work and effort, the county is ready to unveil this project.

An interactive map of the roads in Okaloosa County has been created to allow easy access to information regarding the responsibility of maintenance of highways, interstates, county and municipal roads. Personnel in our Department of Information Technology, particularly those in the GIS division, have spent several months creating the color-coded map to provide a visual key detailing the designated authority of each roadway.

The Road Management Information Application is a web-based tool to assist in determining road ownership and maintenance in Okaloosa County. Visually, the map symbolizes roads in color based on jurisdiction. The color-coded key provides detailed information as to whether the road is located under the jurisdiction of a municipality, Okaloosa County or the Florida Department of Transportation. Users can either key in their address or select a point on the map. The tool will search within 250 feet of the location and give feedback about the surrounding roads. A user can also click on a road to find the same information. The layers tab allows users to turn on or off certain information layers. The interactive map will be located on the county webpage and perhaps even a physical kiosk. This will be a useful tool for quick access as to the authority over roadways located inside Okaloosa County but not necessarily maintained by Okaloosa County.

As an example, let's look at Hollywood Blvd. which is a main artery in south Okaloosa County. This road is partly under the jurisdiction of the county, partly in the city of Fort Walton Beach

and partly in Mary Esther. How confusing for everyone! Each different jurisdiction must maintain Hollywood Blvd. when it crosses within a different municipality.

Another example, State Road 85 is currently in terrible shape from Shalimar headed south and especially over the Shalimar Bridge! Many believe that the City of Shalimar and/or Okaloosa County have authority over this section of the road, but neither local governmental entity has the authority or responsibility to maintain this important roadway. Some areas have been repaired by the Florida Department of Transportation, and I have been assured by FDOT that Shalimar Bridge and State Road 85 will be addressed by August 2025.

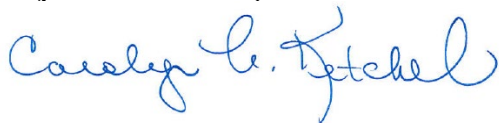
I must give a shout out to our Public Works Department because Okaloosa County roads are well maintained. We take pride in our roads. The ½ Penny Sale Tax, voted on by the citizens of Okaloosa County, has allowed us to accomplish much needed roadwork. From repair of neighborhood streets to paving 400 miles of dirt roads in the north end, our Public Works Department continues to work hard to keep our infrastructure functioning well.

Now citizens will be able to visit a map of Okaloosa County and quickly access the roadway of their concern. It is our intent to provide contact information on this app where a citizen can notify the proper jurisdiction of their concerns. These concerns include items such as stripping, potholes or paving. Our citizens are often our best eyes on road conditions.

You can access this app by typing <https://bit.ly/WhoManagesMyRoad> into your web browser. I am excited to unveil this new tool for your information. Please let me know your thoughts, ideas and suggestions for improvement.

It is an honor to serve as your County Commissioner.

*My Sincere Thanks,*



*Carolyn N. Ketchel*

*Vice-Chairman*

*District 2*

*County Commissioner*

*Okaloosa County, Board of County Commissioners*

*1250 N Eglin Pkwy., Suite 100*

*Shalimar, FL 32579*

*850-651-7105*

[cketchel@myokaloosa.com](mailto:cketchel@myokaloosa.com)

