

*Proclaiming 2025 as “Discover 200 Year - A Bicentennial celebration”
in Alachua County, Florida*

WHEREAS, Alachua County's lands have been nurtured and stewarded by Indigenous peoples long before recorded history, including the Timucua, Seminoles, and other tribes whose presence and contributions remain vital to the area's cultural heritage; and

WHEREAS, The name "Alachua," derived from the Timucua and means "big jug," paying tribute to the region's unique sinkhole geology and the Alachua prairie settlement; and

WHEREAS, In 1539, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto passed through the area, marking the beginning of the European contact that profoundly impacted indigenous peoples; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County was officially established on December 29, 1824, carved from what was the frontier of Spanish Florida, encompassing lands stretching from the Georgia border to the Gulf of Mexico to Port Charlotte, making it one of Florida's first counties; and

WHEREAS, The contributions of African Americans have been integral to the history and development of Alachua County, from the enslaved people who built the foundations of its agricultural economy to the Reconstruction Era when African Americans became leaders in culture, politics, education and justice, to the civil rights movement with local leaders and activists championing the cause of equality; and

WHEREAS Alachua County continues its Truth & Reconciliation process to acknowledge and heal from its legacy of racial injustice, paving the way for a future rooted in equity, inclusion, and mutual respect; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County's cultural and ethnic diversity enriches its communities, fostering understanding, creativity, and shared prosperity; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County has a rich history of economic growth rooted in agriculture, railroads, and education; and

WHEREAS, The University of Florida and Santa Fe College have played a transformative role in driving and diversifying the economy through research, technology, and workforce development; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County is as a hub for biotech, life sciences, and sustainable innovation, attracting national and global investment, and

WHEREAS, Alachua County is renowned for its unique blend of natural beauty, including nature preserves, parks, springs, river and wildlife habitats; and Alachua County is committed to preserving its natural resources as a leader in land conservation, sustainability initiatives, and climate resilience; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County is home to an extraordinary community of artists and artistic offerings, including theatre productions, dance performances, music, visual arts, and writers, all of which enrich the cultural fabric of the region and inspire creativity for residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County is a premier destination for sports and recreation, offering world-class collegiate athletics, a wide range of youth and adult sports leagues, and state-of-the-art facilities for sports activities, making it a hub for athletes and enthusiasts from around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County is made up of a large unincorporated area and nine distinct cities that include our county seat Gainesville, Archer, Alachua, Micanopy, Waldo, Hawthorne, High Springs, Newberry and La Crosse, encompassing 876 square miles and home to nearly 290,000 residents.

Now, therefore, through the authority vested in me by the Board of County Commissioners of Alachua County, Florida, I do hereby proclaim 2025, as “Discover 200 Year – A Bicentennial Celebration” in Alachua County, Florida.