



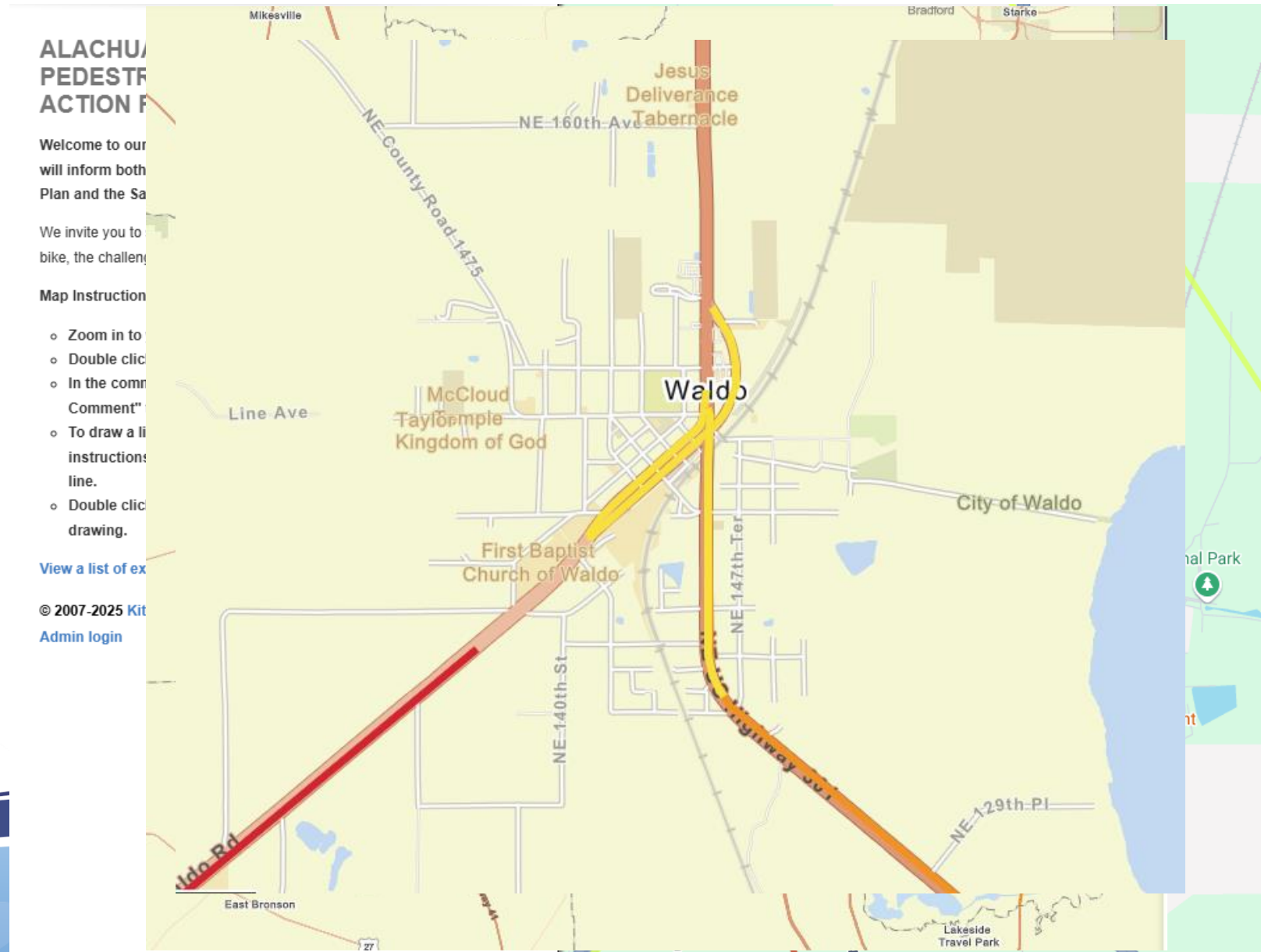
# **Waldo: Bike Path Tourism & Economic Development Opportunities**

Alison Moss, Jessica Hurov, Sean McLendon

April 17, 2025

# County Transportation Planning Efforts

1. Waldo Greenway Extension
2. Alachua Countywide Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan
3. County Safe Streets and Roads for All Action Plan





Visit  
**GAINESVILLE**  
Alachua County, FL  
WHERE NATURE AND CULTURE MEET

## City of Waldo Marketing and Media

Inviting the culturally  
curious and active  
outdoor enthusiasts  
to explore a historic  
Florida community.





## Explore Our Communities

Waldo and its attractions and events are promoted on the Visit Gainesville, Alachua County website year-round.

Waldo restaurants, lodging facilities and event venues and shops are featured throughout the site and on promoted pages like the Gatornationals and Festivals pages in order to increase destination awareness and to drive visitation.





# Discover Waldo

## A Charming Town with Rich History and Natural Wonders

The old red caboose in Waldo's city park is not just a conversation starter; it's a nostalgic reminder of the town's significance as a bustling train depot. Today, Waldo attracts bargain hunters to its renowned Farmers and Flea Market, celebrated as one of the largest flea markets in Florida

For those seeking adventure, explore the area's natural beauty by canoeing or kayaking along [Waldo's Canal Trail, which connects Lake Alto and Lake Santa Fe](#). Experience the tranquility of nature while paddling through stunning landscapes—learn more about this outdoor gem by requesting a Waldo Paddling Guide.

Read all about Waldo in *Florida Farm and Family* "[Where's Waldo, Florida? Discover This Rural Retreat in North-Central Florida](#)"

Whether you're interested in history, shopping, or outdoor activities, Waldo offers a unique blend of experiences waiting to be discovered. Plan your visit today and immerse yourself in the charm and beauty of this vibrant town!

Waldo on the Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Website

### Waldo Motorsports Park

16258 NE US Hwy 301  
Waldo, FL 32694

GET DIRECTIONS

VIEW WEBSITE

March 29, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### Waldo Plant Festival

Waldo City Square  
14450 NE 148th Ave.  
Waldo, FL 32694

DIRECTIONS

EVENT WEBSITE

ANTIQUES, SHOPPING

### Waldo Antique Village

17805 US HWY 301  
Waldo, FL 32694

352-468-3111

GET DIRECTIONS

VIEW WEBSITE

UNIQUE, WEDDING

### Embassy Event Hall

14630 NE Waldo Rd  
Waldo, FL 32694

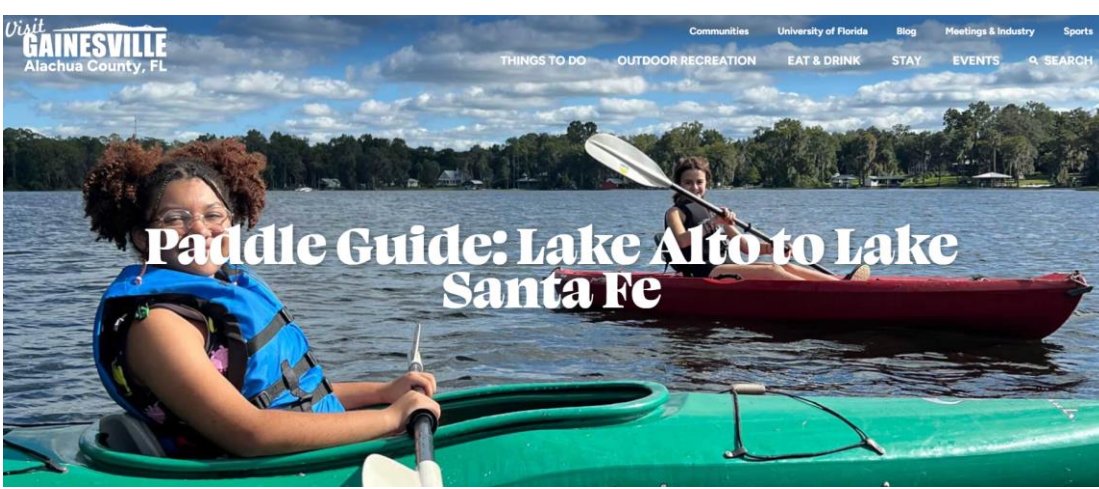
352-374-3244

GET DIRECTIONS

VIEW WEBSITE







## Explore the Santa Fe Canal and Lake Santa Fe

### Get to know Waldo!

Located northeast of Gainesville, Waldo is a great place to explore natural wonders by canoe or kayak. Paddle along Waldo's canal trail, which connects Lake Alto and Little Lake Santa Fe.

Visitors to Waldo enjoy treasure hunting at the Waldo Farmer's and Flea Market, grabbing a bite at the Classic Cafe, taking photos at the red caboose and attending events at Waldo City Square and the Waldo Motorcross Park.



[Download our Lake Alto and Lake Santa Fe Paddle Guide \[pdf\]](#)

Paddle the scenic canal connecting Lake Alto and Little Lake Santa Fe.

## Results from Paid Google and FB Ads for views of Waldo Paddling Guide (2020 – 2025)

- 87,521 Impressions
- 912 Clicks and Engagements

## Waldo Paddling Guide Webpage (2020 – 2025)

- 12,126 Views

## Waldo Featured on Gatornationals Page 2025

7,320 Views

## Popular Search Term Impressions (April 2024 – April 2025)

- Waldo Flea Market – 26,053
- Waldo, Florida – 18,936
- Best Western, Waldo – 6,149
- Waldo Antique Mall – 1,303

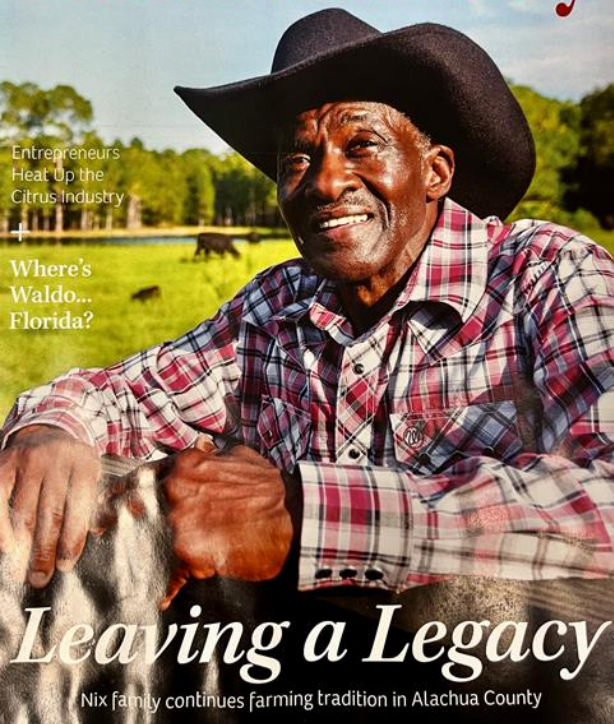




**FLORIDA**  
**Farm & Family**

Entrepreneurs  
Heat Up the  
Citrus Industry

Where's  
Waldo...  
Florida?



**Leaving a Legacy**

Nix family continues farming tradition in Alachua County

sprawling wildlife sanctuary is home to more than 100 animals, including 30 rare and endangered species.

**7 LOCAL RESTAURANTS**  
 If you crave Southern comfort food, you'll love all the homespun eateries dotting the area. Grab a bite to eat at Classic Cafe, located across the street from the Waldo Flea Market and Antique Village. For more than 20 years, this family-owned and operated diner specializes in burgers, milkshakes and all-day breakfast. If you're craving authentic Latin cuisine, stop by La Tambora Latin Flavor, located adjacent to the Best Western Waldo Inn & Suites. Or, if you're

**6 CARSON SPRINGS WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**  
 Looking for a hidden gem to explore? "Just under 10 minutes from downtown Waldo, connected by beautiful scenic drive, is the Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation," Reyes says. "The conservation sits on 275 acres of lush Florida woods and farmland and features tours

Gainesville. Randy's Rib Shack, an iconic Waldo eatery, is currently undergoing renovations. For updates, call (352) 468-1345.

**8 ANNUAL EVENTS**  
 Immerse yourself in the town's vibrant community spirit with seasonal events celebrating Waldo's rich heritage and culture. Waldo offers fun seasonal and family-friendly events such as the City of Waldo Fall Festival, Christmas at the Waldo Square and the annual Waldo Car Show. Check out [visitgainesville.com](http://visitgainesville.com) for the latest updates on events.

**9 U-PICK FARMS**  
 Feel like a farmer and experience the joy of harvesting your own produce and participating in seasonal events at nearby U-pick farms, where fresh flavors and family fun await. Enjoy great produce and fun farm experiences at Brown's Farm, Frog Song Organics or Santa Fe River Farms.

— Lisa A. Beach

**If You Go ...**

For trip ideas and planning resources, check out the Visit Gainesville, Alachua County website at [visitgainesville.com](http://visitgainesville.com).

You can also sign up for the Flagler Award-winning What's Good guide of weekly events to stay on top of upcoming events in Waldo at [visitgainesville.com/blog](http://visitgainesville.com/blog).

As always, please call ahead to confirm hours and availability.



Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation



Waldo

visitgainesville.com



**WHERE'S WALDO?** Enjoy a rural retreat with vintage vibes and outdoor adventures

Nestled in north-central Florida, the quaint town of Waldo exudes a rich heritage, natural beauty and Old Florida charm.

With its small-town allure, Waldo boasts vintage buildings, antique treasures, scenic waterways and warm hospitality.

"Waldo is one of Alachua County's charming municipalities," says Elizabeth Reyes, tourism development manager for Visit Gainesville, Alachua County. "Visitors can fuel up on delicious Southern comfort food in the town's eateries, enjoy a relaxing day finding treasures at the Antique Village and touring nearby attractions like Carson Springs Wildlife. Outdoor

enthusiasts can enjoy a paddling adventure, launching from Lake Alto Park and exploring Waldo's historic waterways."

In this walkable community, visitors will find friendly locals, charming restaurants and a calendar filled with community events, all providing an authentic taste of rural Florida. Check out these must-sees.



**1 HISTORIC RED CABOOSE**  
 Founded in the 1820s, Waldo has been attracting people since the early days of railroad travel. Back in the day, the train depot welcomed Civil War troops, winter tourists and settlers drawn to the soil and warm climate. The town's iconic landmark – the historic red caboose – serves as a picturesque reminder of its storied past. "The red caboose at City Square Park offers the perfect backdrop for an Instagram-worthy snapshot," Reyes says.

**2 WALDO FARMERS AND FLEA MARKET**  
 Calling all bargain-hunters! As north-central Florida's largest flea market, this venue serves as a hub of community spirit and commerce

market space and hundreds of vendors. A community staple for over 40 years, the flea market, located at 17805 U.S. Highway 301, regularly draws more than 40,000 visitors every week. Look for the giant chair, windmill and horse, and you know you're in the right spot.

**3 NEW WALDO ANTIQUE VILLAGE**  
 Forget the malls and big box stores. Instead, get your retail fix old-school style. Stroll through this 20,000-square-foot, two-story building bursting with antiques and collectibles, ranging from jewelry and silverware to curios and knickknacks. Located on the same large property as Waldo Farmers and Flea Market, this indoor space serves as a mecca for antique lovers.

**4 LAKE ALTO AND LAKE SANTA FE**  
 Glide your canoe, kayak or stand-up paddleboard along the serene waters of Lake Alto and Lake Santa Fe, offering breathtaking views of the area's natural splendor. "Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy a paddling adventure launching from Lake Alto Park and exploring Waldo's historic waterways," Reyes says. She notes that the free Santa Fe Canoe Outpost also makes another great launch point.

**5 ISLAND GROVE WINE COMPANY**  
 Located in nearby Hawthorne, this winery manufactures and bottles its own wine on-site at its blueberry farm in a 10,000-square-foot facility. Though the winery is not currently open for tours, head to The Tasting

visitgainesville.com

## Waldo in the Media

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County provided the in-depth information and images used to create the July 2024 Waldo feature which appeared in Florida Farm & Family. Approximately 127,652 Florida families read Florida Farm and Family, which is published four times a year. The print publication reaches 60 counties. Thousands more read the publication online.



## The 10 Best Towns For Antique Shopping In Florida

Don't-miss destinations on your next antiquing adventure.

By [Linnea Bailey](#) | Updated on February 10, 2025



PHOTO: VISIT THE PALM BEACHES

Beyond its picturesque beaches and crystal-clear natural springs, the Sunshine State is home to dozens of many charming and historic downtowns. In addition to the thrill of antique malls (such as those in [Waldo](#) and [Jacksonville](#)), these towns serve as prime [shopping haunts](#) for antique and vintage enthusiasts. From the Georgia border down to [West Palm Beach](#), here are destinations not to be missed on your next antiquing adventure through Florida.

Travel

## 3 of the Best Places To Go Antiquing in Florida



AAALiving

### The New Waldo Flea Market, Waldo

Wear your best walking shoes to explore this popular 50-acre bazaar on U.S. Highway 301 in Waldo, northeast of Gainesville. To reach the antique mall, just look for the white clapboard house with green shutters. Inside are two full stories and 20,000 square feet of antiques, collectibles and knickknacks. As you hunt for treasures among the various rooms, knowledgeable staff are on hand to answer questions. In addition to its thousands of antiques, this eclectic property has a farmer's and flea market featuring everything from tools and fresh produce to art and sports memorabilia.



# Waldo in the Media

# Visit Gainesville, Alachua County assisted Southern Living and AAA Living magazines with articles featuring Waldo as a top antiquing destination.



# Waldo featured on Meta and Instagram



Visit Gainesville, Alachua County

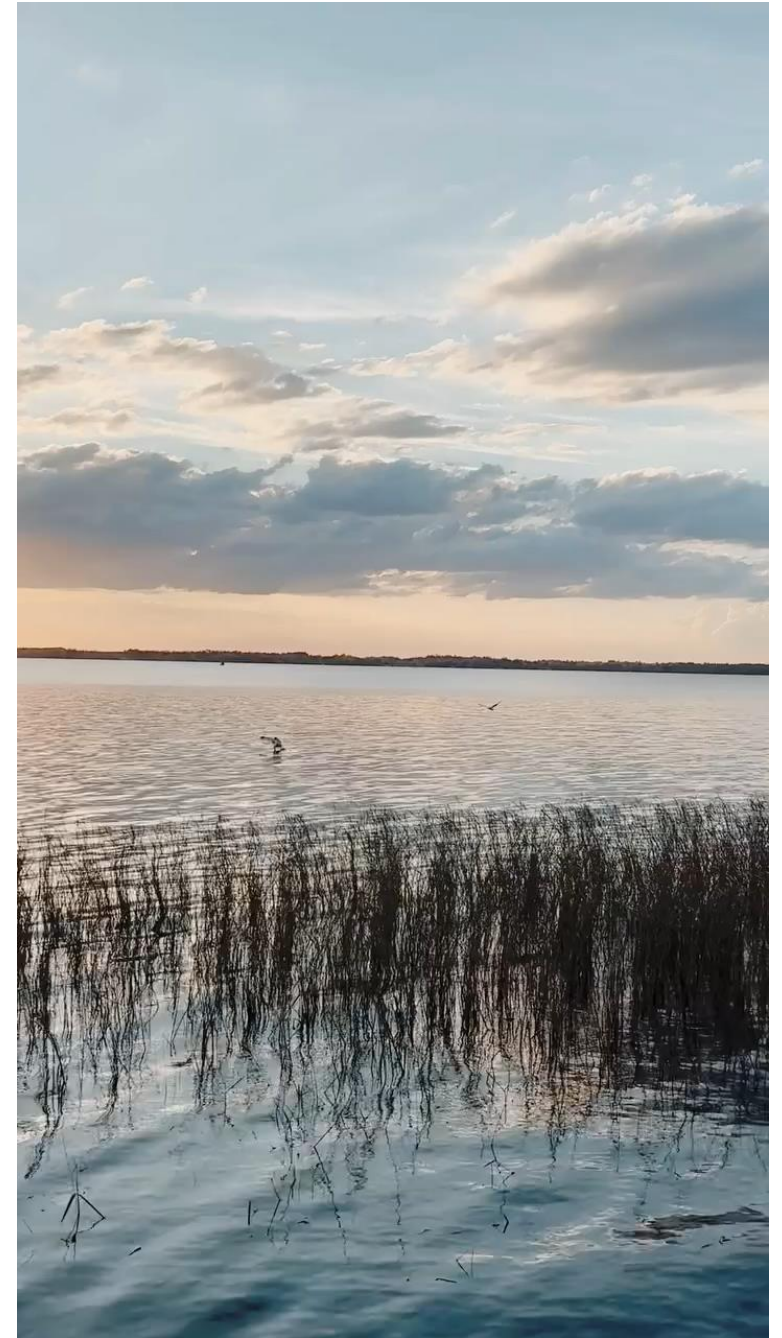
Published by Dorian Lancaster Morgan



· April 5 at 7:33 PM · 🌐

🌅 The sun is setting on another breathtaking Florida day in the middle of it all. Whether you're paddling between towering cypress trees, casting a line, or simply taking in the golden hour glow, Santa Fe Lake is the perfect spot to unwind. Launch your adventure from Jill McGuire Santa Fe Lake Park (24500 NE SR 26) and explore the interconnected waterways leading to Little Lake Santa Fe, the Santa Fe Canal, and Lake Alto (also accessible from Waldo Canal Park). Plan your paddle at [bit.ly/LakeSFPaddle](https://bit.ly/LakeSFPaddle)

The Santa Fe Lake social media post links to the [Waldo Paddling Guide](#) page.



# Waldo featured on Meta and Instagram



Visit Gainesville, Alachua County

Published by Dorian Lancaster Morgan



· March 29 at 7:00 PM ·

🦁 Roaring Through Waldo – Plan a Weekend of Timeless Treasures and Natural Wonders. 📸

Plan a fun escape to historic Waldo - a hidden gem, just north of Gainesville, Florida, offering a unique blend of history, nature, and local charm.

🦁 Start your journey at nearby [Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation Foundation](#) to see Lotis the white lioness in action! Don't miss the Spring Safari on April 5 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., an unforgettable opportunity to get up close with incredible wildlife.

🚂 Step back in time and explore Waldo's historic charm. Stop by the iconic red caboose at the city park, a nostalgic nod to Waldo's past as a bustling train depot.

👉 Treasure hunters, take note! The [Waldo Farmer's and Flea Market](#) is one of Florida's largest, offering a shopper's paradise filled with unique finds. And for families, don't miss the 10,000-egg Easter Egg Hunt at Kids Fest on April 19!

🛶 Love the outdoors? Canoe or kayak along the Waldo Canal Trail, connecting Lake Alto and Lake Santa Fe. Paddle through stunning landscapes and soak in the beauty of Florida's natural scenery.

No matter your adventure style—wildlife, history, shopping, or the great outdoors—Waldo has something special waiting for you.

📌 Ready to roar and explore? Plan your visit today: [bit.ly/VistWaldo](https://bit.ly/VistWaldo)

#VisitWaldo #LotistheLion #WhatsGoodAlachuaCounty #ROARing #RoadTrip #springbreak #summervibes #WheresWaldo #FloridaAdventures #WildlifeEncounter #WhereNatureAndCultureMeet #ExploreMore #SpringSafari #FleaMarketFinds #OutdoorEscape #HiddenGems

The Roaring Through Waldo social media post tags the Waldo Farmer's and Flea Market, mentions the Waldo Canal Trail and leverages a near by attraction to elicit attention. The post links to VisitGainesville.com's [City of Waldo Landing page](#).





# Waldo featured on Meta and Instagram



Visit Gainesville, Alachua County

Published by Dorian Lancaster Morgan

January 25 · 🌐

🧡 Celebrate National Florida Day in Alachua County! 🧡

Nestled in the heart of the Sunshine State, Alachua County is where stunning natural wonders meet rich history, culture, and unforgettable experiences. From quaint small towns to breathtaking landscapes, it's a destination worth exploring.

🌿 Dive into Nature: Paddle along the Santa Fe River to uncover its famous springs, hike or bike the scenic trails at San Felasco Hammock Preserve, or experience a piece of history while spotting wildlife at Dudley Farm Historic State Park in Newberry. For a truly wild Florida experience, visit Payne's Prairie in Micanopy, where wild bison and horses roam freely.

🎨 Immerse Yourself in Arts, History, and Live Performances: Whether you're soaking in the arts or treasure hunting, Alachua County adds a unique brushstroke to the Sunshine State's cultural canvas. Dive into Florida's artistic flair with year-round live theatre and performances, stroll downtown Alachua's friendly shops and cafés, or hunt for hidden gems in High Springs, Waldo's and Micanopy antique havens.

🦋 Discover Unique Attractions: Meet exotic and native wildlife at Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation and the Santa Fe Teaching Zoo. Stroll through the Butterfly Rainforest at the Florida Museum of Natural History, and don't miss the breathtaking sunsets at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens.

🧡 Celebrate National Florida Day by exploring the trails, springs, arts, and traditions that make Alachua County a must-visit destination. Plan your trip today and see why it's so fun to find yourself [#InTheMiddleOfItAll](#). 🧡

[#DiscoverAlachua](#) [#NationalFloridaDay](#) [#SpringsAndTrails](#) [#SmallTownCharm](#) [#VisitGainesville](#)

[#AlachuaAdventures](#) [#ExploreFlorida](#) [#SunshineState](#) [#TravelFlorida](#)

[VisitGainesville.com](#)

The social media post for National Florida Day includes mention of Waldo as an antiquing haven.



Have you ever asked yourself "Where's Waldo?" From a history museum in a train car to a renowned flea market and paddling trails, explore the city of Waldo with [Florida Farm & Family](#) and find fun things to do on your next road trip.

[#WhatsGoodAlachuaCounty](#) [#WaldoFL](#) [#WheresWaldo](#)  
[#FloridaRoadTrip](#) [#OffTheBeatenPath](#) [#LoveFL](#)— in [Waldo, FL](#).



FLORIDAFARMFAMILY.COM

**Where's Waldo, Florida? Discover This Rural Retreat in North-Central Florida**

Catch a train ride to the past at the [Waldo Area Historical Society Museum](#), now open Saturdays. In the 1870s, travel guides advertised Waldo as a winter playground destination thanks to its railroad, opera house and cruises on Lake Alto.

Located at Waldo City Square (14450 NE 148th Ave., Waldo, FL 32694) from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., the museum features a historic train car and artifacts from the City of Waldo's past.

Photo: State Archives of Florida... [See more](#)



## More Waldo Promotions Throughout the Years

What do Waldo and 007 Have in Common? Discover a Local Connection to the James Bond Series with New Displays at Waldo's History Museums

<https://www.waldohistoricalsociety.org>

Saturday, August 3, 2:30 p.m. | Waldo Historical Railroad Museum  
14... [See more](#)



Gainesville, Alachua County

Oct 25 - 6



**Saturday, October 26th**  
**4:00pm - 7:00pm**

**Waldo City Square**  
**14450 NE 148th Ave**  
**Waldo, FL 32694**

**Food - Games-Music -Candy- Raffle**  
**Bounce House-Costumes**  
**Crafts - Pumpkin Patch -Vendors**

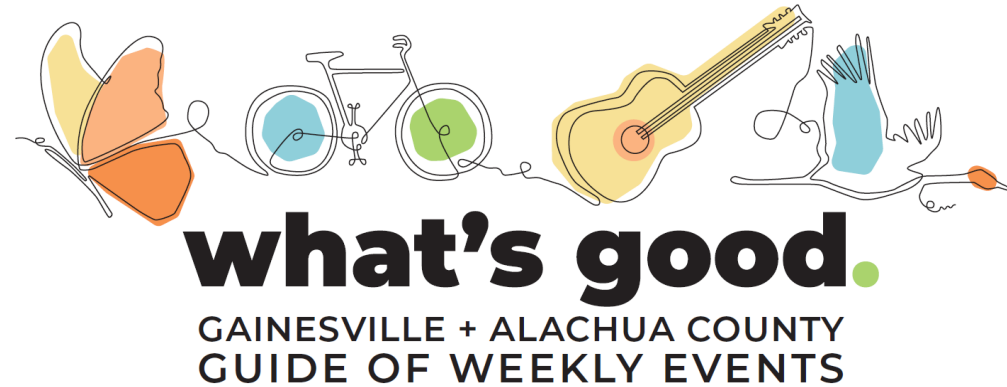


For more information or to volunteer contact 352-468-1001

to the best of fall in Alachua County with What's Good  
for more of What's Good @ [bit.ly/whatsgood10-24](https://bit.ly/whatsgood10-24)



# What's Good Event Guide Statistics



Waldo's public-facing, visitation-driving events are featured in What's Good®, Visit Gainesville, Alachua County's signature weekly event guide.

Events can be submitted directly at:

[www.visitgainesville.com/events/community/add](http://www.visitgainesville.com/events/community/add)

**What's Good® is emailed weekly to more than 24,000 subscribers and achieved a total of 1.1 million email deliveries in FY24.** The website version is viewed by tens-of-thousands more visitors each week.

## WUFT REGIONAL + INMARKET

WUFT ads air over 16 counties in North Central Florida and target audiences within a 2 hour of less driving radius to Alachua County. WUFT radio ads reach: approx. 32,206 persons with a projected 3.6M gross impressions per year for our buys.

*(Click Sound Icon for Sample Radio Spot)*

**Waldo over  
Regional  
Radio Airwaves**



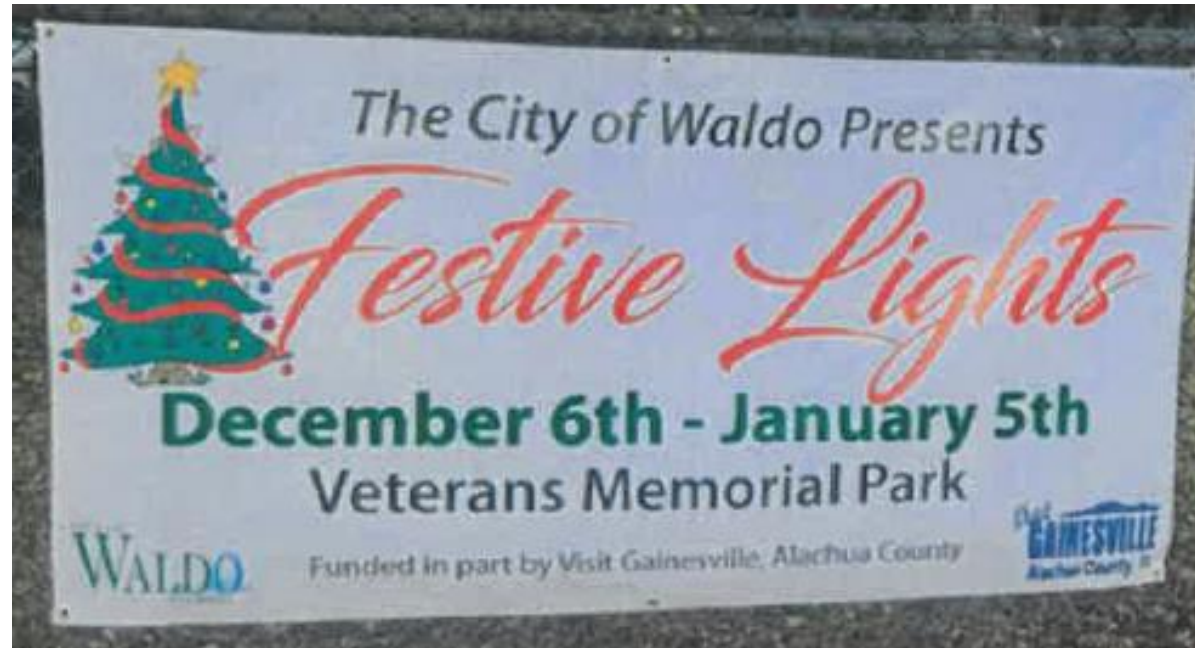
**Sample Radio:** Supported by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, producers of the What's Good guide of events. Starting Friday, Downtown Gainesville welcomes three days of music at "Fest Twenty-Two". And at the U.F. Phillips Center, Dance Alive National Ballet presents "Dracula and Vampyra." On Saturday, the Waldo Fall Festival hosts family fun at Waldo City Square. Plus, on Saturday and Sunday, the Micanopy Fall Festival features hundreds of artist booths and food vendors.

Details at [What's Good Alachua County dot com](http://What'sGoodAlachuaCounty.com).

Waldo events are publicized on branded radio campaigns the week preceding the event achieving approximately 69,230 gross impressions per week and a projected 3.6 million gross impressions per year.



# Alachua County sponsored the Festive Lights display



**Veterans Memorial Park through the Visit Gainesville,  
Alachua County municipalities grant  
December 6, 2024 - January 5, 2025**

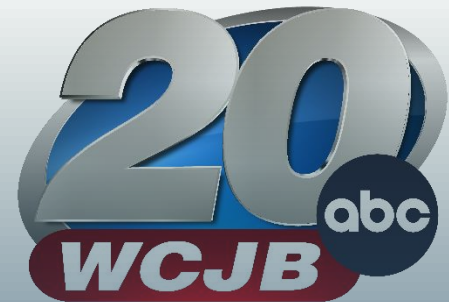
# New for Summer 2025

**A Regional Targeted Display Ads Campaigns in Partnership with Grey Media**

**Projected 2.5 Million Impressions**

Reaching Outdoor Adventure Seekers and Adults with School-aged Children in the following DMAs:

- Orlando
- Jacksonville
- Tampa
- Miami
- Tallahassee





# Forward Focus: Community Economic Priorities



Waldo January 2025 Meeting

## Key Themes:

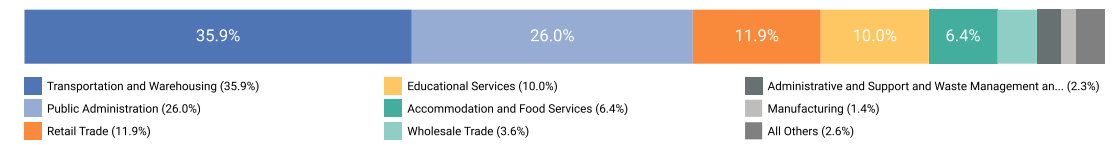
- Preserve & Enhance Local Character
- Tourism & Recreation
- Business Support
- Local Food Access

# Waldo Economic Indicators

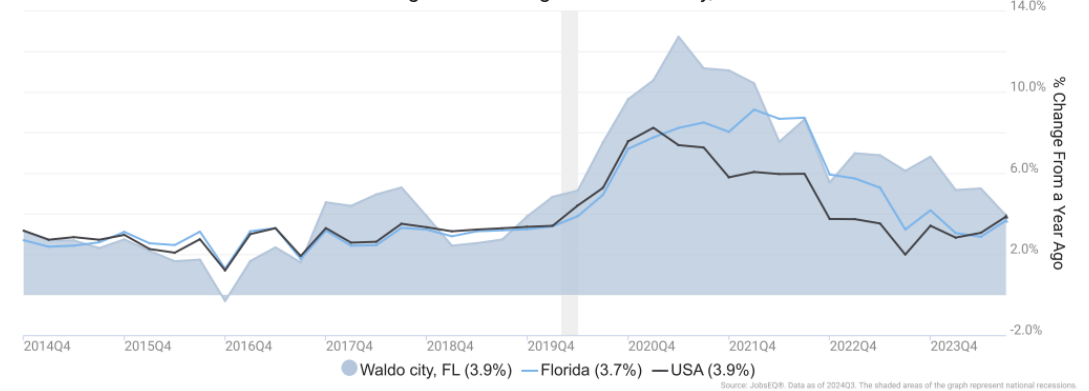
## Summary:

- Waldo's employment is concentrated in a few key sectors, notably transportation and public administration.
- While there has been overall job growth, there are also sectors experiencing decline.
- Significant wage disparities exist, highlighting the need for diverse employment opportunities.

Total Workers for Waldo city, FL by Industry

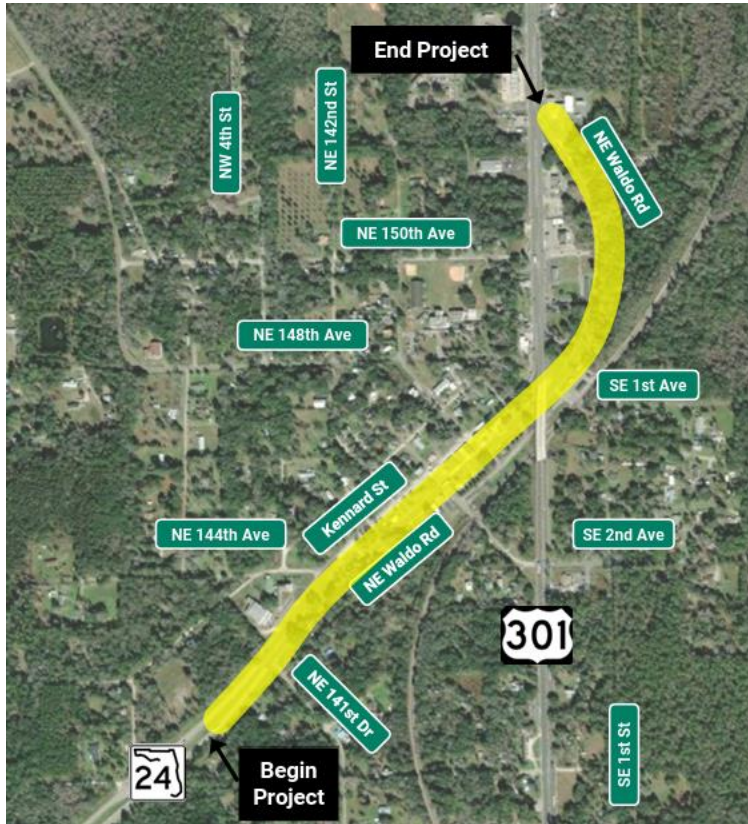


Average Annual Wages for Waldo city, FL





# Investments in Infrastructure



- **Municipal Match Projects (Surtax-Supported)**
  - \$333,333 is available to support Waldo's surtax-related infrastructure priorities.
- **County Road Projects (Surtax-Supported):**
  - NE CR 1471 Major Rehabilitation:
    - US 301 to NE 143 Ave.: \$2.96 M (Planning/Design Phase, 2025)
    - NE 143 Ave. to Bradford County Line: \$5.07 M (Planning/Design Phase, 2025)
- **State FDOT Road Projects:**
  - SR 24 (Waldo Road) Resurfacing: SR 222 to US 301: \$23.4 Million (Under Construction, est. completion Jul 2025)
- **Total Investment Commitment: \$31.7M**



# **ALACHUA COUNTY SMALL CITIES AND TOWNS TOURISM GRANT PROGRAM**

- Apply for up to 2 events annually
- Available now through September 30
- Funding renews on October 1