

# FIFTEEN WAYS “LOCAL” GOVERNMENT AFFECTS STETSON STUDENTS’ LIVES

*It is said that “all politics is local.” Many Americans, however, pay more attention to national politics than state, county, or city politics – the three of which are often lumped together and called “local” politics. Whether you drive a car, rent or own a home, earn minimum wage, or drink tap water, city, county and state governments daily impact your life in many more ways than does the federal government. Here are just five ways that DeLand, Volusia County, and Florida state government each impacts Stetson students’ lives.*

## **FIVE WAYS DELAND CITY GOVERNMENT AFFECTS STUDENTS’ LIVES**

- 1) **Want to see more happening in downtown DeLand?** City government budgets, laws and priorities substantially influence how many and what types of stores, bars, clubs and events operate downtown. City zoning laws also shape the outside look of local businesses, whether they offer outdoor seating, whether musicians are allowed to play on street corners, and how many benches, parks, murals, water fountains and other attractive amenities exist downtown.
- 2) **Want to live off-campus but close to Stetson?** City government development plans and zoning laws affect how much rental housing exists, where it exists, and its quality. Should there be housing above the stores in downtown DeLand? Should there be more luxury condos, or mixed-income apartments? How tall should buildings be? These and other questions are the stuff of local government deliberation.
- 3) **Want to feel safer?** City budgets, policies, and local police department rules and norms largely determine the number of policemen; where they patrol; whether they drive, walk, or ride a bike; how they act toward residents; and what laws they enforce (Go after drug users or dealers? Pot or heroin? Public drunkenness or traffic violations?).
- 4) **Too hot?** City zoning laws and budget priorities substantially determine the number, type, and location of trees, canopies and other shade-providers on sidewalks, in parks, parking lots, downtown and everywhere else in DeLand.
- 5) **Flooding in your neighborhood?** Whether and how much streets, homes, and other places flood after a tropical storm are determined in part by city laws and budgets. Cities can help prevent flood damage to homes and businesses by limiting or prohibiting development in vulnerable low-lying areas and flood plains. Similarly, cities can help keep traffic flowing smoothly in a storm by ensuring construction and maintenance of proper street storm water infrastructure.

## **FIVE WAYS VOLUSIA COUNTY GOVERNMENT AFFECTS STUDENTS' LIVES**

- 1) **Flying somewhere?** If you've ever flown on Delta, US Airways or another carrier from or to Daytona Beach International Airport, you have used a Volusia County government facility. Volusia County manages and operates the Airport since 1969, when Daytona Beach's city government transferred the Airport's management to the County.
- 2) **Need a book?** If our Stetson Library doesn't have the book you need, maybe one of Volusia County's sixteen public libraries has it. With one library card, Volusia residents can use all sixteen libraries free. Use the "Surfcat" online catalog at [volusialibrary.org](http://volusialibrary.org) to find books, periodicals, CDs and videos.
- 3) **Want to recycle, or get rid of furniture?** County government in Florida manages trash and recycling. Volusia recycles everything from pizza boxes to CD cases.
- 4) **Need immunization, or STD testing?** Volusia County's Health Department has several locations, including in DeLand, providing immunizations, STD testing, emergency contraception, pregnancy testing, health education, and much more.
- 5) **Like the beach?** County government determines whether or not people can swim in the water or drive on the beach, and whether the handicapped can access county beaches, among other things. County beach patrols ensure safety, cleanliness and law abidance. County lifeguards protect swimmers, making an average of 3,000 rescues per year.

## **FIVE WAYS FLORIDA STATE GOVERNMENT AFFECTS STUDENTS' LIVES**

- 1) **Do you have a BF?** In 1997, the Florida Legislature established the Florida Bright Future Scholarship Program using state lottery funds to provide college scholarships for academically strong high school students. In 2007-8, nearly 160,000 Florida students received Bright Futures Scholarships for a total of nearly \$380 million.
- 2) **Did you get FRAG'ed ?** Florida state government provides Florida Resident Access Grants to state undergraduates attending Florida private universities like Stetson.
- 3) **Got a car?** Florida government does not provide free cars to state residents, but it does renew drivers' licenses, set highway toll prices, regulate car insurance rates, and more.
- 4) **Got grandparents?** If your grandparents are old enough to be receiving Medicare insurance, they benefit from more than fifteen billion dollars in state Medicare funding.
- 5) **Breathe air? Drink water?** Florida's state government regulates water quality, and what state businesses and vehicles can put in the air we all breathe.

*Brought to you by **Stetson Votes**.*

*To learn more, or to get involved, contact Dr. Paul Lachelier at [placheli@stetson.edu](mailto:placheli@stetson.edu).*

*To learn much more about how city, county and state governments affect your life, and how you can have a voice, visit their websites:*

*Deland: [deland.org](http://deland.org), Volusia County: [Volusia.org](http://Volusia.org), Florida: [myflorida.com](http://myflorida.com).*