

FINANCIAL FOCUS



When should you take Social Security?



By Cory Taylor

One of your important sources of retirement income will likely be Social Security — but when should you start taking it?

You can start collecting Social Security benefits at 62, but your checks will be considerably bigger if you wait until your full retirement age, which is likely between

66 and 67.

You could even wait until you're 70, at which point the payments will max out, except for yearly cost-of-living adjustments. But if you need the money, you need the money, even if you're just 62 or any age before full retirement age.

However, if you have adequate financial resources to meet your monthly needs, whether through earned income, your investment portfolio or a combination of the two, you could have some flexibility in choosing when to take Social Security. In this case, you may want to weigh these considerations:

Life expectancy

For all of us, it's one of life's great mysteries:

How long will we live? Of course, we can't see into the future, so the question can't be answered with total confidence. But to make an informed decision on when to take Social Security, you don't need to know your exact lifespan — you just need to make a reasonably good estimate.

So, for example, if you're approaching 62, you're enjoying excellent health and you have a family history of longevity, you might conclude it's worth waiting a few years to collect Social Security, so you can receive the bigger payments. Conversely, if your health is questionable and your family has not been fortunate in terms of

longevity, you might want to start taking your benefits earlier.

Employment

You can certainly continue working and still receive Social Security benefits. However, if you're under your full retirement age for the entire year, Social Security will deduct \$1 from your benefits for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit of \$22,320. In the year you reach your full retirement age, Social Security will deduct \$1 in benefits for every \$3 you earn above \$59,520. So, you may want to keep these reductions in mind when deciding when to begin accepting benefits.

Once you reach your full retirement age, you can earn

any amount without losing benefits. (Also, at your full retirement age, Social Security will recalculate your benefit amount to credit you for the months you received reduced benefits because of your excess earnings.)

Spouse

Spouses can receive two types of Social Security benefits: spousal and survivor. With a spousal benefit, your spouse can receive up to 50% of your full retirement benefits, regardless of when you start taking them. (Your spouse's benefit can be reduced by the amount of their own retirement benefit and whether they took Social Security before their full retirement age.) But

with a survivor benefit, your decision about when to take Social Security can make a big difference.

A surviving spouse can receive the larger of their own benefit or 100% of a deceased spouse's benefit, so if you take benefits early and receive a permanent reduction, your spouse's survivor benefit may also be reduced for their lifetime.

When to take Social Security is an important — and irrevocable — decision. So, consider all the factors before making your choice.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by local Edward Jones Financial Advisor Cory Taylor, who can be reached by calling (850) 223-0999.

County to seek bidders soon for dredging at Keaton, Steinhatchee and design, permitting for Cedar Island, Dark Island, Dekle Beach

DREDGING
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earlier in the meeting regarding the ongoing debate over building regulations and pole barns, Bishop specifically pointed to a clause under which the county agrees to “comply with the flood insurance purchase and other requirements of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973...including requirements regarding the purchase of flood insurance in communities where such insurance is available as a condition for the receipt of any federal financial assistance for construction or acquisition purposes for use in any area having special flood hazards.”

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Michael Newman made a motion to approve the grant agreement. Commissioner Jim Moody seconded, and the measure passed 5-0.

Since the canal dredging project's inception back in 2016, the plan had been for the county to fund the dredging using a portion of approximately \$16.6 million allocated to Taylor County through the federal RESTORE Act, which determined what would happen to billions of dollars in administrative fines and civil penalties levied against BP and other companies after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

Taylor County's portion of the funding includes its \$4 million direct allocation (referred to as its “Pot 1” funds), as well as \$12.6 million in “Pot 3” funds, which are managed by the Gulf Consortium, a group of Florida Gulf coast counties (including Taylor) impacted by the oil spill.

The county had earmarked all of its \$4 million in “Pot 1” RESTORE Act funds for the dredging work and

shifted around \$1.5 million of its “Pot 3” funds to the project as well.

The remainder of the “Pot 3” funds has been earmarked for improvements at Hodges Park in Keaton Beach, the possible purchase of the Spring Warrior boat ramp and transportation bypasses in the areas around the Keaton Beach and Steinhatchee boat ramps.

However, the lengthy RESTORE Act process has forced Taylor County to apply for “grants” to receive the money necessary for each step of the various projects utilizing RESTORE Act funds.

It has taken an average of one year or more to receive grant approval from the U.S. Department of Treasury, which is overseeing the money, for each of the associated projects, including the dredging.

At the county's Dec. 19

meeting, Pemberton noted the many delays, including future RESTORE Act grant applications needed for each step of the process moving forward, and suggested the county instead seek state grant funding through the Idalia relief bill, which the commission ultimately approved, resulting in the FDEM grant.

At Monday's meeting, County Grants Writer Melody Cox noted that with the new funding, the county will need to amend its Multi-Year Implementation Plan (MYIP) to redesignate its Pot 1 fund to another project soon, because the process will take about a year.

In the event the \$5,050,000 in state funding is not enough to complete all of the dredging projects, she suggested the county use the \$1.5 million in Pot 3 funds set aside for dredging, as the county already has a grant “on hold” for those funds. Cox said it would

take four to six months to receive those funds, compared to about a year to apply for and receive a grant from its Pot 1 funds.

County Engineer Kenneth Dudley said the county will soon have a better idea of the likely total dredging cost “because we will solicit bids for the Steinhatchee boat ramp basin and Keaton canals. Those (costs) will be fairly certain. I've already asked for the task orders for the design and permitting of the other three locations. Those (costs) will be known in a month or so, so we'll have a good handle dollars-wise before we ever show up on site to start the job.”

Dudley added that there would be a delay in advertising for bidders because the county must rework the bid-solicitation documents — changing out the requirements from U.S. Treasury to the new requirements included in

the state's FDEM grant agreement.

“I'm assuming FDEM has to approve it before we actually (advertise) it,” Dudley said.

“It would probably be a quicker process than working with Treasury,” Pemberton said. “We know we don't want to begin dredging until after scallop season anyway. So, we have a little bit of time.”

Dudley said the bid solicitation for the dredging work at Keaton and Steinhatchee would be timed so that work could begin once scallop season is concluded and canal usage begins to “normalize.”

“We know the advertising timeframe,” he said. “We know about the time between award and show up on site. That gives us a window to easily achieve that, as long as (amending the bid specifications to meet FDEM's requirements) isn't horrible.”

Bolden identified as person who pointed gun at EMS

EMS
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use of a firearm while under the influence of alcohol. She posted a \$5,000 bail and was released the following day, March 30.

Perry Police Department (PPD) Capt. Lin Gray said the incident began at 3:33 a.m. with a call for assistance at the apartment in regards to an individual who was “throwing up and

not feeling well.”

When the ambulance crew arrived at the residence and attempted to enter the home, they were “asked for their badge number.”

When the EMS crew member explained “he was with EMS and did not have a badge number. He was then asked to show his face. After some time, he was allowed to enter the apartment, and when he did, he was confronted by

a woman holding a semi-automatic handgun. He exited the apartment and contacted law enforcement for assistance,” Gray said.

The two women who exited the apartment “were uncooperative” when officers asked if anyone else was inside the residence, Gray said.

“When officers were clearing the apartment, they found a black male cowering in the shower.

During subsequent interviews, the woman said that her friend had gotten drunk and passed out, so she put her to bed. She said the male indicated he wanted to have intercourse with her friend (who was passed out).

“She said when she went into the bedroom to check on her friend, she could not find her, so she got her gun and held the male at gunpoint and forced him

into the shower because he was a rapist,” Gray said.

“She then called 911 to report her friend missing. However, the 911 caller stated that she needed assistance with someone who was throwing up and not feeling well,” Gray reported.

“At this point, the male — who had been temporarily detained during the investigation — refused to cooperate, and the friend

claimed nothing happened.

Both were released. The friend insisted her friend (Bolden) had done nothing wrong and was protecting her. They said they had been drinking and partying all night,” Gray said.

Bolden was identified as the female who pointed the gun at the EMS crew member, and was taken into custody.

No one was injured during the incident.

LEGALS

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CITY OF PERRY

Is now accepting bids for JANITORIAL BID # 02-24-001. Go to cityofperry.net for bid information and process.

CITY OF PERRY

Is now accepting bids for SANITATION STORAGE BUILDING BID # 02-29-2024. Go to cityofperry.net for bid information and process.

CITY OF PERRY

CITIZEN ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEETING NOTICE

The City of Perry will conduct a meeting of its Citizen Advisory Task Force (CATF) in the City Council Room at City Hall located at 224 S. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard. The CATF will meet to discuss project options for the Community Development Block Grant program. For more information concerning this meeting, contact Contact City Hall at 850-584-7161.

A FAIR HOUSING/EQUAL/ OPPORTUNITY/HANDICAP ACCESS JURISDICTION

CITY OF PERRY

FIRST PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Perry is considering applying to the Florida Department of Commerce for one or more Small Cities Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for the 2024-25 CDBG program year. Each grant is expected to be in the range of \$700,000 to \$2.5 million. CDBG funds may be used for one of the following purposes: 1. To benefit low- and moderate-income persons; 2. To aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight; or 3. To meet other community development needs of recent origin having a particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community and where other financial resources are not available to meet such needs. The categories of activities for which these funds may be used are in the areas of housing, neighborhood revitalization, commercial revitalization, or economic development and include such improvement activities as acquisition of real property, loans to private-for-profit business, purchase

of machinery and equipment, construction of infrastructure, planning/design, rehabilitation of houses and commercial buildings, and energy conservation.

In developing an application for submission to the Florida Department of Commerce, the City of Perry must plan to minimize displacement of persons as a result of planned CDBG activities. In addition, the City is required to develop a plan to assist displaced persons. A public hearing to receive citizen views concerning the community's economic and community development needs will be held in the City Council Room at City Hall located at 224 S. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard. Additional information regarding the range of activities that may be undertaken with funding from the CDBG grant program will be provided at the public hearing. For more information concerning this meeting, contact City Hall at 850-584-7161. Also, comments or questions (and requests for additional information) may be submitted to Mr. Hart, by email at jhart@cityofperry.net, or by postal service at 224 S. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347.

The public hearing will be conducted in a handicapped accessible location. Any handicapped person requiring an interpreter for the hearing impaired or the visually impaired or requiring any other special accommodation should contact the City at the phone number listed above at least five calendar days prior to the meeting so that arrangements can be made for an interpreter or other special accommodation. To access a Telecommunication Device for

Deaf Persons (TDD) please call (1-800-877-8339). Any non-English speaking person wishing to attend the public hearing should contact the City at the phone number listed above so that arrangements for a language interpreter can be made.

A FAIR HOUSING/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/HANDICAP ACCESS JURISDICTION

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Notice is hereby given that Taylor County will receive sealed bids at the Taylor County Clerk of Court, Attn: Gary Knowles, 108 North Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 until 4:00 PM local time on Friday, May 3, 2024, for the APRON FLOOD LIGHTING project at Perry Foley Airport. All bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked “BID ENCLOSED: APRON FLOOD LIGHTING – PERRY FOLEY AIRPORT.” The project generally includes, but is not necessarily limited to the following tasks:

The project can generally be described: New lighting poles with LED flood lights, conduit and cable, disconnects, and photo-cells.

The time of completion for the work is anticipated to be up to 120 calendar days to achieve Substantial Completion. Exact time requirements are defined in the Instructions to Bidders.

On and after Wednesday, April 3, 2024, Bid Documents will be available electronically and may be obtained by contacting John Collins, P.E., AVCON INC, 320 Bayshore Drive, Suite A, Niceville Florida, 32578, 850-678-0050, jcollins@avconinc.com. A complete examination and understanding

of the drawings and specifications contained in the Bid Documents is necessary in order for the Bidder to properly submit a Bid. The Bid Documents also include a detailed set of Instructions to Bidders. All Bids shall be prepared in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders. The failure to comply with any requirement contained in the Bid Documents may result in the rejection of the Bid as non-responsive or a finding that the Bidder is not qualified for this Project.

A non-mandatory Pre Bid Conference will be conducted at the Terminal Building of the Perry Foley Airport on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. local time (CDT). Questions relating to the Project Documents will be answered at that time. Attendance by prospective prime contractors is strongly recommended.

A Bid Security in the amount of five percent (5%) of the sum of the Total Bid Price will be required for this Project. Exact Bid Guarantee period requirements are defined in the Instructions to Bidders.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

All Bidders are hereby notified that they must comply with: 1) the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) requirements of 49 CFR Part 26, as referenced in the Owner's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Participation Program and Affirmative Action requirements; 2) the Buy American requirements imposed by 49 USC § 50101; 3) the minimum prevailing wage rates established by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor (Davis Bacon requirements); 4) Certification Regarding Lobbying Pursuant to 49 CFR Part 20 for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and

Cooperative Agreements; 5) Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility And Voluntary Exclusion (2 CFR Part 1200 and 2 CFR Part 180); and 6) Certification Regarding Foreign Trade Restriction.

Taylor County, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises and airport concessions disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The DBE Participation Goal for this Contract is 4.78%.

Funding for this project is being provided by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation and will be subject to all applicable County requirements. Taylor County reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any technical or legal deficiencies and to accept any bid that it may deem to be in the best interest of the County. No bidder may withdraw his/her bid for a period of 120 calendar days following the bid opening.

All bids shall be sealed and shall be addressed as follows: Taylor County Clerk of Court Attn: Gary Knowles 108 North Jefferson Street Perry, Florida 32347 BID ENCLOSED: APRON FLOOD LIGHTING, PERRY FOLEY AIRPORT