

FINANCIAL FOCUS



You Have an Estate Plan — Whether You Know It or Not



By Cory Taylor

Think estate planning is only for the wealthy or elderly? Think again. If you own anything — a home, a car, a savings account, even a pet — you already have an estate plan. The only question is: Did you create it, or will your state do it for you?

When someone passes

away without an estate plan, state laws take over, deciding who gets what and when. This legal process may not reflect your wishes. That's why taking control of your assets through a personal estate plan should be a top priority.

At its core, estate planning is about clarifying your wishes and making things easier for your heirs. It ensures your assets are distributed according to your preferences, designates who will make decisions on your behalf if you can't and provides guidance for your care in a medical crisis. Most plans include four key components:

1. **A Will** – This document outlines how

your assets should be distributed after your death and names an executor to oversee the process in probate court. It can also designate guardians for minor children. Keep in mind that a will doesn't cover everything — certain transfer on death (TOD) accounts and jointly held property may bypass your will entirely.

2. **Power of Attorney** – If you become incapacitated, you'll want someone you trust to be able to make decisions on your behalf. A durable power of attorney designates such a person, helping to ensure your bills are paid, your business continues (if you have one) and your wishes

are honored.

3. **Health Care Directive** – Sometimes called a living will, this document spells out your preferences for medical treatment if you're unable to speak for yourself. It can also designate someone to make health care decisions for you.

4. **Beneficiary Designations** – Accounts like 401(k)s, IRAs, and life insurance policies transfer directly to the people you name, regardless of what your will says. It's essential to review these beneficiary designations regularly, especially after significant life events such as marriage, divorce, death of a spouse or the birth of a child.

One common myth is that a will is all you need. But wills only take effect after death; they don't help if you're alive but unable to make decisions. Another misconception is that estate planning is only for the wealthy. In truth, planning is about more than money — it's about making things easier for the people you love during difficult times.

An effective estate plan can prevent costly legal battles, reduce confusion and give your loved ones a clear roadmap to follow. It also allows you to leave a legacy that reflects your values and priorities.

As your life changes, your estate plan should change along with it. Review your

documents every few years or after major life events. It's often a good idea to seek help with such reviews. Your financial advisor or attorney can guide you through the process, ensuring your plan fits your unique circumstances.

In the end, estate planning isn't just about planning for what happens when you are gone. It's about feeling confident, knowing that what matters most — your family, your purpose, your legacy — is protected.

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.

Grant will be used to improve outreach efforts

TCDA Continued from page 1

their competitiveness in attracting businesses, skilled workers and technological advancements.

Each grant is connected to a specific strategy designed to make it easier to conduct business in Florida.

According to TCDA Executive Director Bob Cate, Taylor County submitted a "Reimagine Taylor County" grant application and was awarded \$10,000 to improve the TCDA's outreach efforts in order to create more industry opportunities for Taylor County.

In its application, Taylor County proposes to use the Duke "Vibrant Communities" grant to "create and customize marketing materials and

the TCDA website for the many diverse offerings in Taylor County, along with participation in select conferences targeting specific site selectors and potential end users that would be a great fit to the economic fabric of the community."

"After the impacts of three hurricanes and two massive business closures in the span of 24 months, Taylor County needs to continue to triage the economic shortfalls, while at the same time reimagine its economic future," the county's application states.

"With the forest products industry dominating the landscape for nearly a century, the need to address and view the industry in new ways, along with aggressive diversification of the economy, is paramount

to Taylor County's success.

"In addition to forest products, a legacy strength of Taylor County, emphasis will go towards opportunities in the aerospace sector involving the Perry-Foley Airport, along with the dynamic industries in the advanced manufacturing space looking to backfill the West Fraser and GP-Foley Mill sites, off of which will add to economic diversification in the county," the grant application states.

Focus areas will include:

- Community revitalization and local economic development efforts.
- Economic recovery for customers and communities facing unprecedented challenges.

The TCDA plans to use the funds to:

- Increase business retention efforts by implementing aggressive programs to support existing businesses, helping them overcome barriers to growth and providing tools to expand within the County.
- Launch a coordinated marketing strategy to aggressively reposition Taylor County as THE greatest opportunity in the state of Florida, promoting its business opportunities, advantages and quality of life to potential investors and companies.
- Add at least two new sites/opportunities annually to Taylor County's site selection inventory and attend at least one major conference or prospect meeting each quarter to engage with site selectors and or direct business

prospects.

- Develop initiatives in partnership with private sector businesses, local schools, colleges and vocational and CTE programs to prepare residents for new opportunities in growing industries, while at the same time elevating the rating of the school district.
- Target high-value and high multiplier industry in the advanced manufacturing sector to diversify the local economy and create high-quality job opportunities for residents.

Success Metrics will include:

- Business Retention: Number of existing businesses receiving support from the TCDA and associated community partners and continuing operations in Taylor

County.

- Job Creation: New jobs created through business retention and attraction efforts.
- Capital Investment: Total amount of private investment in Taylor County.
- Site Development: Number of sites made available for business relocation and expansion.
- Population Growth: Increase in population, especially those related to job creation.

The North Florida Economic Development Partnership (NFDPP) Foundation, Inc. also received \$15,000 under the Duke Energy grant program "to create a matrix of grant programs to address infrastructure needs in its area, which includes Taylor and 14 other rural counties.

Budget workshop scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 26

BUDGET Continued from page 1

previous (current) budget year (\$2,145,808).

The city council will have one more budget workshop at its upcoming Aug. 26 regular meeting before holding a pair of final public hearings on the budget and millage rate set for 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 11 and Tuesday, Sept. 23.

Beck also informed the council that the city is still waiting on updated revenue estimates from the Florida Department of Revenue in several revenue sharing categories to plug into the budget.

"They can publish these revenue estimates, for example our share of the communications tax, anytime in August, and they have not yet," Beck said.

"We did get quite a few of them, but there are some I am still waiting on," Beck told the council. "Of course, I plug them into the budget

as I get them."

In addition to keeping the property tax (millage) rate the same — which will technically be considered a .25% tax increase — Hart's initial proposed budget does not include any city utility rate increases for water, sewer, gas or residential garbage pick-up.

When summarizing his proposed budget for 2025-26, Hart stated it included 3% raises for all city employees, adding that water and gas revenue projections had been adjusted down to account for the Georgia-Pacific Foley Mill closure.

Beck stated that the proposed budget included estimated costs for liability insurance and workers comp insurance, as final numbers would not be available for several weeks, adding that health insurance costs increased by only 1.5%.

Overall, Hart said the proposed budget projects

\$14.2 million in revenues and \$13.5 million in expenditures for a positive operating balance (or budget surplus) of \$688,181 before budgeting for any capital outlay expenses.

Hart said the city's list of capital outlay funding requests (new vehicles and equipment) initially totaled nearly \$2.4 million, before it was "whittled down" to the \$553,900 that was

included in the budget, leaving approximately \$130,000 in cash carry forward projected to go to cash reserves.

The budget also includes another \$8.8 million in grant

revenues and offsetting expenditures, primarily consisting of \$4.6 million in water utility grant projects, \$2.1 million in CDBG funds and \$1.4 million in wastewater projects.

'We both had to grin and bear it'

COMMON TATER Continued from page 8

tooth were a front tooth, you might get lucky enough to get it knocked out by someone with no sense of humor, a soft head, a hard fist and a low tolerance for being staggered into.

That would save you a trip to the dentist, but it would have been tough on me — mine was a back tooth.

Like dollar bills at a hoochie-coochie show, my toothache disappeared. And from that point on, that faithful patron was my go-to pain relief coordinator whenever we played in

south Georgia.

I started calling him "Doc," but I doubt he ever went to college.

A year later, our close friends Eddie and Maxine Rogers were visiting from Kansas on a night I was playing at that same dance hall.

I am thankful for old friends like Eddie and Maxine because I've reached the point in my life where it's too late to start making any more old friends.

Eddie and I grew up in the same small town, surrounded by thick, swampy hiding places out of view of official eyes,

and plenty of fresh water sources.

So, Eddie had memories of clear glass jars too, where that cloudless concoction of corn and creek water lifted him to faraway places, just like it did me once, or twice, or....

When it came to those old times, we both just had to just grin at the sin and bear it.

If the truth be known, we weren't all that bad. Unlike what the preacher told us back then, our souls were not forever lost — just misplaced in a clear jar and an even clearer liquid.

As we pulled into the

Georgia tonk's dirt parking lot, we were laughing and talking about old times.

"You know what I'd like," said Eddie with reverie in his eyes. "I'd like to get my hands on some moonshine. It's been a long time."

I turned and looped my arm around the headrest so I could pull myself around enough to see into the back seat.

"I'll explain this to you later," I said, like a fortune teller about to deliver good news.

"But tonight is your lucky night, because you now have a toothache that needs doctoring!"

LEGALS

(Continued from page 9)

P.M., local time, on **October 3, 2025**. All Proposals MUST have the respondent's name and mailing address clearly shown on the outside of the envelope or package when submitted.

Proposals will be opened and respondents announced at 6:05 P.M. local time, or as soon thereafter as practical, on **October 6, 2025**, in the Taylor County Administrative Complex, 201 East Green Street, Perry, Florida 32347.

RFP information MUST be obtained on-line from the following County Web Site address: https://www.taylorcountygov.com/government/county_bids/index.php

Note that a Pre-Bid Conference will not be held for this project. See Instructions to Bidders, Article 5 for information concerning requests for additional information or clarification.

The County reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to reject any or all Bids, to cancel or withdraw this solicitation at any time and waive any irregularities in the Bid process. The County, in its sole and absolute discretion, reserves the right to waive any minor defects

in the process and to accept the lowest responsive and responsible Bidder. **No faxed Proposals will be accepted.**

Additional Information may be obtained from: Taylor County Engineering Department 201 East Green Street Perry, FL 32347 850-838-3500

CITY OF PERRY PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Perry plans to apply to the Florida Department of Commerce for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to be funded by the 2023 and 2024 storms, which include Hurricane Idalia (DR-4734-FL), Hurricane Debby (DR-4806-FL), and Hurricane Helene (DR-4828-FL). The Florida Department of Commerce (Florida Commerce) is the lead agency and responsible entity for administering the CDBG-DR funds allocated to the state by HUD to address unmet disaster recovery needs related to damage from the 2023 and 2024 Storms. Florida Commerce has allocated \$400,000,000 in funding to the Rebuild Florida Infrastructure Repair Program (IRP). The funds will

be used to address infrastructure repairs and improvements that are needed as a result of these storms.

To address its long-term recovery needs, the City of Perry has identified a comprehensive list of critical infrastructure projects. From this list, the city has up to 15 projects that it will consider for this funding request. The city will submit an application for each of the projects. The projects and amounts to be applied for are in five (5) categories. The proposed projects that will potentially be submitted for application are summarized in five major groups: 1.) Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades will harden and modernize the main treatment plant to better handle storm-related flows and ensure regulatory compliance. These projects will take place at the City of Perry Wastewater Treatment Facility, located at 507 Goff Street, Perry, FL, and have an estimated cost of \$21,500,000. 2.) Effluent Disposal and Reuse System Hardening will add capacity and reliability to the system that disposes of treated wastewater, focusing on the city sprayfield and effluent pump station, for an estimated cost of \$16,300,000. The spray field is located in the vicinity of Hampton Springs Road and the

Fenholloway River. The effluent pump stations are located in various locations throughout the City of Perry. 3.) Drinking Water Source and Treatment Improvements will fund the construction of a new, hurricane-resistant water treatment plant and a new well to ensure a safe and redundant drinking water supply, for an estimated cost of \$30,000,000. The existing water plant to be demolished is located at 713 Faulkner Street, Perry, FL, while the new well and new water treatment plant will be located in the vicinity of the South Quadrant of the City of Perry. 4.) A City-wide Sanitary Sewer Collection and Drinking Water Distribution System Rehabilitation program will replace the oldest and most vulnerable sewer and water pipes to prevent failures during storms. These projects are located city-wide, with a focus on older/deteriorated pipes located mostly in and near the downtown area of Perry. The estimated cost is \$157,550,000. 5.) The Wastewater Conveyance (Lift Station) Hardening project will rehabilitate 11 critical lift stations throughout the city to prevent sewer overflows for an estimated cost of \$10,800,000. The benefit to low- and moderate-income persons (LMI) is over 51%.

For a more detailed list of all potential projects and their locations, please visit the City of Perry website at <https://www.cityofperry.net/> or contact John Hart, City Manager.

The City of Perry does not expect that anyone will be displaced as a result of CDBG-funded activities. If any persons are displaced as a result of the planned activities, the City of Perry will assist them as described in the City's anti-displacement and relocation policy, which is available for review at City Hall.

A public hearing to provide citizens an opportunity to comment on the application will be held in the City Council Room at City Hall located at 224 S. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 on Tuesday, August 26, at 5:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard. A draft copy of the application will be available for review during normal business hours in the City Manager's Office at City Hall by noon on September 15, 2025. Persons wanting to submit written comments on the application should send them to John Hart, City Manager, by e-mail to jhart@cityofperry.net, or by USPS mail to 224 S. Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 no later than September 20, 2025. A copy of the final application will be available

for review in the Clerk's Office at City Hall no later than September 25, 2025. The application will be submitted to the grant agency no later than September 29, 2025.

To obtain additional information concerning the application and the public hearing, contact John Hart, City Manager, at 850-584-7161 or by e-mail at jhart@cityofperry.net. The public hearing is being conducted in a handicapped accessible location. Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in the hearing is asked to advise the City at least five days before the hearing by contacting John Hart, City Manager, at 850-584-7161 or by e-mail at jhart@cityofperry.net. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the City using the Florida Relay Service, 1(800) 955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800) 955-8770 (Voice). Any non-English speaking person wishing to attend the public hearing should contact John Hart, City Manager, at 850-584-7161 at least five days prior to the hearing and an interpreter will be provided. A FAIR HOUSING/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/HANDICAP ACCESS JURISDICTION