

# Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Recommends St. Johns County as the Location of State's Black History Museum

*St. Johns County is recommended to the Governor and the Legislature by the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force .*

ST. AUGUSTINE , FL, US, July 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- St. Johns County is the location of the Florida Museum of Black History, as recommended by the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force after its meeting on June 28, 2024, where the Task Force voted 6-1 to formally transmit this recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature. The County's Office of Public Affairs produced a [video](#) for this special announcement.



A Marker along the Accord Freedom Trail in St. Augustine

"We did it!" St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners Chair Sarah Arnold exclaimed. "The St. Johns County community rallied together and displayed their determination to get this museum. It is a testament to the tenacity of our team and the public's passion for the history of St. Augustine and the surrounding communities."

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I am so proud of our partners in this process, They never quit fighting for this museum. They traveled with us many times to Tallahassee to tell our story of Black history."

*Joy Andrews, County Administrator*

On May 11, 2023, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law CS/CS/HB 1441 (Chapter 2023-72, Laws of Florida) relating to a Florida Museum of Black History Task Force. The bill created a nine-member task force to provide recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of

Black History. One of the goals of the Task Force is to recommend to Governor Ron DeSantis, the

President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives a location for the museum.

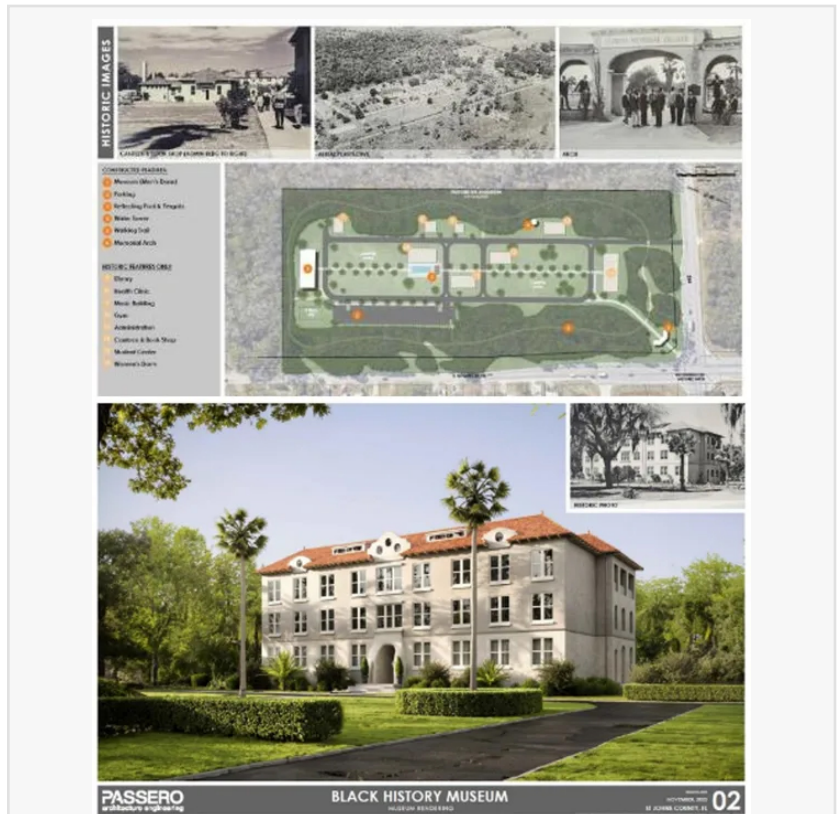
"I am so proud of our partners in this process," County Administrator Joy Andrews proclaimed. "They never quit fighting for this museum. They were alongside the County every step of the way. They traveled with us many times to Tallahassee to tell our story of Black history and its importance on a state and national level."

The project partners for St. Johns County's proposal included the Florida Memorial Museum, West Augustine Community Redevelopment Area, Accord Civil Rights Museum, Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center, St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau, St. Johns Cultural Council, and the City of St. Augustine.

Andrews shared that on June 19, the County hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the successful relocation of the Canright House. It is a home where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was scheduled to stay in the 1960s before segregationists vandalized it. The home was moved to Collier-Blocker-Puryear Park from its original Butler Beach site. The park sits on the former site of [Florida Memorial University](#) (FMU), one of the State's oldest academic centers and a historically Black university. St. Johns County plans to place its campus-style Black history museum on the former site of FMU located in West Augustine.

"The placement of this historic home on the museum site will add to the opportunities to learn about Black history in St. Johns County," County Administrator Andrews said.

The Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources notified St. Johns County on



Fort Mose Historic State Park is the site of the First Free Black community in North America. 16th century runaway slaves would flee to Spanish Florida for their freedom.

The Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources notified St. Johns County on

[April 15](#) that its proposal scored among the top four prospective locations.

The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners voted on April 16, 2024, to negotiate a purchase and sale agreement with Florida Memorial University to develop a campus-style museum of African American history, performing arts, cultural exhibits, and more.

At the ninth meeting of the Task Force on May 21, the members voted 5-4 in favor of recommending St. Johns County, affirming the location's top rank for the third time. Following a meticulous selection and scoring process, St. Johns County emerged as the leading choice, surpassing Eatonville/Orange County, Opa-locka, and Sarasota.

St. Johns County is a world-class African American heritage destination with abundant historic and cultural sites. These include:

- ACCORD Civil Rights Museum
- ACCORD Freedom Trail, with 30-plus African American Heritage locations
- Al Lewis Archway: Florida Normal & Industrial Institute
- Butler Beach
- Fort Mose Historic State Park
- Excelsior School Building
- Lincolnton
- Lincolnton Museum and Cultural Center
- Plaza de la Constitucion
- Coquina Slave Cabin
- St. Augustine Beach Hotel
- St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church
- Zion Missionary Baptist Church
- Zora Neil Hurston Boarding House

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra, the rural beauty of Hastings, Elkton, St. Johns, and 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches.

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