

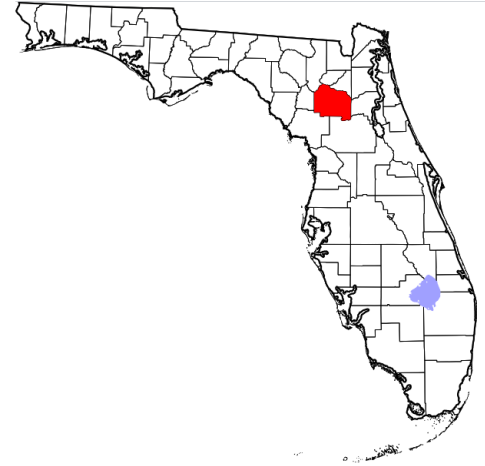


# **The Silly Things We Do & Lessons Learned at the Alachua County Public Works Department**

Don Clifton, Alachua County Road Superintendent  
Brian Kauffman, P.E. Assistant PW Director  
Ramon D. Gavarrete, P.E. PW Director



**Every day we must make decisions.  
Hopefully, they are good decisions.  
How do we learn to make good decisions?  
By making bad decisions.**



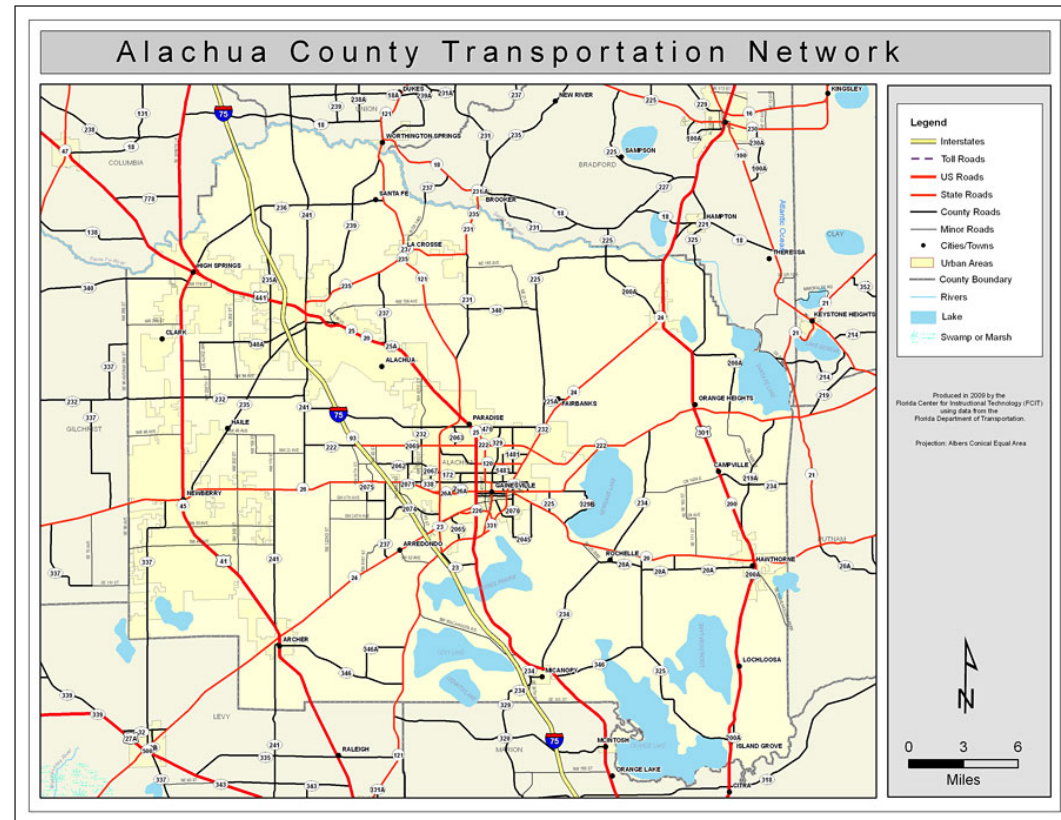
**Today our goal is to share some of the silly things we've done  
so you can learn what not to do. In doing so, we will also  
share what has worked well.**



# Alachua County Public Works Department

## 7 Divisions

- Real Property
- Development Review
- Construction Inspection
- Surveying
- Engineering
- Fleet Maintenance
- Road & Bridge
  - 690 Paved Road Miles (centerline)
  - 79 Positions



# Game Changers

**Ramon D. Gavarrete, P.E. – May 2016**

- **25+ years of experience county engineering, traffic operations, and maintenance.**
- **Proficient in collaborating with stakeholders to ensure project success, resolve issues, and meet quality requirements.**
- **A proven leader**
- **Strong problem-solving abilities and effective communication skills.**
- **Skilled at overseeing various public works projects.**



# Game Changers

## **Donald E. Clifton – October 2016**

- **25+ years of self-employment in construction and manufacturing for both government and private sector projects.**
- **Committed to delivering exceptional customer service and ensuring customer satisfaction.**
- **Skilled at placing staff members in roles that set them up for success within the organization.**
- **Continuously invests in the integration of new equipment and software to enhance staff efficiency.**
- **Possesses a keen vision for future growth and development**



# Clash of Cultures



**An organizations culture is like the asphalt of our workplace**

**– it's the smooth or bumpy ride we all experience together. It's not just about meetings; it's the daily traffic of vibes and attitudes.**

**- Donald E. Clifton**



## Division Challenges/Opportunities

- **Goals were only at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. “GO GATORS”**
- **Hesitant to learn new computer management systems (City Works) but knew how to print BOGO’s coupons in full color.**
- **Supervisors would hoard upcoming projects like treasure maps. Afraid if they spill the beans, chaos will erupt and lose control.**
- **One operator for one piece of equipment**
- **Hunting Season – Shut it down**





## Division Challenges/Opportunities

- Didn't want to learn new computer management systems (City Works) but knew how to print those BOGO's, in full color.
- Who needs technology when you've got a string and a level? It's just a dose of old-school charm and a touch of medieval engineering.
- Why bother cross-training? If Dean is out, we have a free day. What we didn't get done yesterday we'll get done tomorrow, if Dean returns.





## Division Challenges/Opportunities

- Our intention is to not just changing our culture to avoid workplace yawning competitions. But to think of it as upgrading a gravel road to a smooth, well-paved expressway. We want our workplace to be the Autobahn of job satisfaction, not a pothole-filled detour.
- A positive organizational culture is the GPS that guides us through the workday. It's the difference between a lively highway and a deserted dirt road.



## Division Strengths

- We have go-getters who want to learn a better way.
- Some have goals and know what they wanted accomplish each day.
- A couple have great attitudes and were ready for a change.
- Some were helpful to others and encouraged others to succeed.
- A couple would take on new task even when persecuted by other staff.



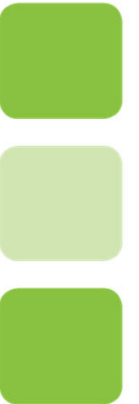
## Division Strengths

- Implementing a top-down attitude for supervisors, consider them as the asphalt rollers of the organization. If they don't buy in first, we'd end up with speed bumps instead of smooth roads.
- Change Management Plan. Moved supervisors to Units that best fit their management skills that they had presented in the past. Had my HR hat on for sure!



## Division Strengths

- Empower staff to be more accountable.
- Eliminate the “WE CAN’T” and “ HAVE TO SHUT IT DOWN” attitudes.
- Get what you need to be successful.
- Start using all the County assets. Survey, Engineering and Admin when needed.



## DON'T PUSH THE LIMITS!

- Expected too much too soon and focused only on the finish line.
- Forgot to set small achievable goals.
- Didn't work on trust.
- Didn't involve all staff – only supervisors





## More Opportunities

- “Don Said” Gave direction to get them started but when it failed, “Don Said”.
- Provided supervisors more knowledge, but it wasn't getting to operational staff, they were still lost.
- Who can keep the rental equipment the longest? Whose green trailer is this?
- I still can not understand this computer. You didn't email me!



## More Opportunities

- Providing training for new skills and behaviors.
- Reinforcing the Desired Culture through training and special events. Who doesn't want a week off for the APWA?
- Strategies to overcome resistance (spoiler alert: they all involve a good joke)
- Turning critics into advocates. Been there done that is out. Been there and let's do it better has arrived.





## Cultural Opportunities



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## Safety and Maintenance Opportunities





# Training Opportunities

- Who's responsible?
- Employee or Supervisor?





## Right Equipment to Do the Job – Rent it if we need it

- The right size machine can save human resources - MOT
- Can save money, if you turn it back in





# Do Not Mix Materials





# Read the Grade Stakes





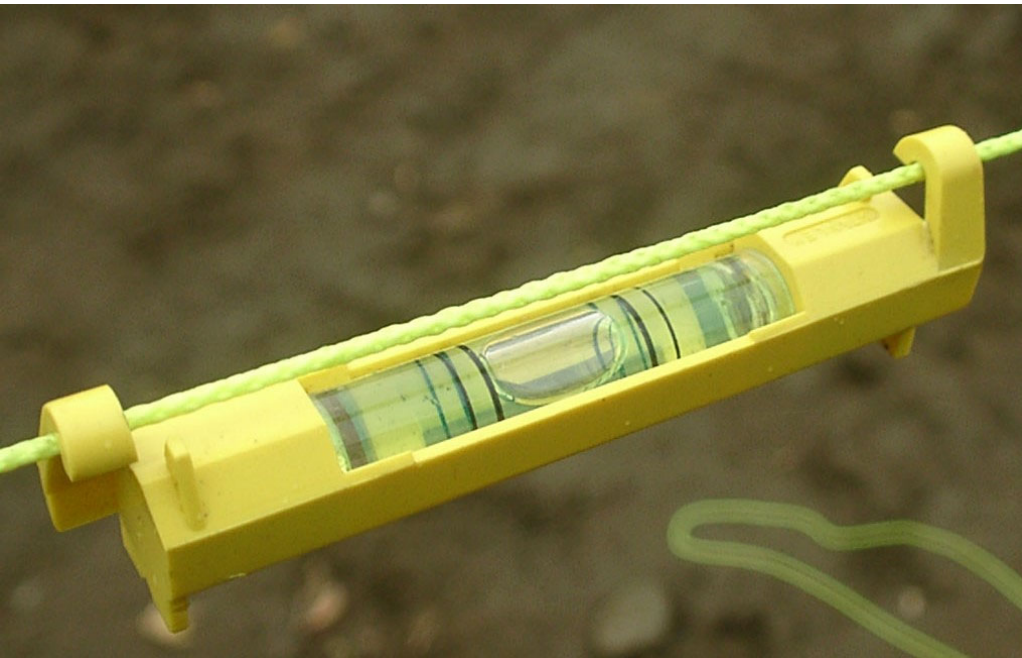
# Do not work at night





# Right Equipment to Do the Job

That is not a level



This is a level



## Some Lessons Learned

- It's hard to change culture, but it can be done
- Empower Employees & Encourage the Heart
- Professional Development
  - Safety Training
  - How to read plans and grade stakes
- Rent if we need it – but turn it back in.
- Lazer levels are better than string levels
- Don't mix materials
- Don't work at night unless you have too
- Include all staff in employee interviews
- Include all staff in project meetings

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