



Honoring History and Growing Today

BY MAYOR KENT GUINN

Ocala remains in the forefront of the equine industry and has become the global epicenter for all things equestrian.

The city recognized African American history with a proclamation at our council meeting. The meeting was also an opportunity to recognize one of the local sororities who will be celebrating their 100th anniversary.

There are so many components that go into the city's makeup that showcase the area's diversity.

The Ocala Horse Alliance is making its presence felt, generating additional exposure for an industry that has become synonymous globally with the city of Ocala and Marion County.

The World Equestrian Center continues to progress and will leave an indelible imprint on the area for future generations to enjoy. The hotel that is being built on the property is beginning to take shape. They have two new arenas that they've added to the mix. The arenas will have concrete floors and will be twice the size of the ones that are already there.

The cohesiveness between the horseman from all different breeds and disciplines demonstrates and suggests a common objective, which is to grow the industry and generate exposure for the equine industry and equestrian sport. We've yet to see the full impact of the World Equestrian Center itself, and the affect the facility will have not only on equestrian-based businesses but those ancillary companies that will benefit from the venue's presence. Property values adjacent to the facility and in the surrounding environs have increased and there has been talk of building another golf course.

The community possesses a broad base of people who are highly skilled and extremely talented and have come from other parts of the country and from other nations, and they recognize that Ocala is the best place in the world to live.

Corporations also see the benefit of doing business in Marion County, establishing a deeper footprint. The Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership recently announced the building of a 1.7 million square foot building for Dollar Tree near Marion Oaks, which will help transform that particular community and generate additional employment opportunities, inspire people to build new homes, purchase existing properties, and help spur additional growth.

Mayor Kent Guinn