



APR - JUN 2023 | 3RD QUARTER

THE QUARTERLY FOCUS

The Florida Association of Special Districts' Official Newsletter

CHECK OUT WHAT'S
INSIDE THE ISSUE:

**Message from The
Executive Director**

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Around The Districts

National Coalition

..and more!

3RD QUARTER RECAP

Written By FASD Staff

The FASD 2023 Annual Conference was a smashing success! We debuted many new features, including the official FASD smartphone application which was created by our corporate sponsor TheGovApp.com, as well as a new team building activity, A Minute 2 Win It!

We brought back our TopGolf Wednesday night event and this year it was a fundraiser benefiting the FASD Education Foundation. The generous contributions from attendees and sponsors played a crucial role in the success of the event.

The \$5,000 raised during the fundraiser will directly impact the foundation's efforts to continue to provide scholarships for FASD members to attend the CDM Program as well as continue to bring innovative and educational speakers to the Annual Conference.

We whole-heartedly could not do this without the generous contributions from our TopGolf sponsors: **Bouchard MMA, Egis Insurance & Risk Advisors, Deep Blue Investment Advisors, and Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust.**

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UPCOMING FASD EVENTS

2023 EVENTS

JUL 12 - NSDC WEBINAR: PRIORITIZING PROJECTS, STRATEGIZING, & NAVIGATING THROUGH THE PROCESS

AUG 2 - NSDC WEBINAR: ADVOCACY WEEK BRIEFING & APPROACH TO ADVOCACY

SEPT 2 - NSDC WEBINAR: PREPARING FOR FY25 CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS

OCT 9 - 12 - CDM PROGRAM, FT. LAUDERDALE

OCT 12 - 13 - QUARTERLY MEETING, FT. LAUDERDALE

2024 EVENTS

JAN 22 - 26 - CDM PROGRAM, TALLAHASSEE

JAN 23 - 25 - LEGISLATIVE FORUM, TALLAHASSEE

JUN 10 - 13 - ANNUAL CONFERENCE, ORLANDO

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Kevin Sasser. Destin Fire Control District

Tommy Strowd. Lake Worth Drainage District

Todd Wodraska. Sebastian River Improvement District

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Written by David E. Ramba

In the exhilarating third quarter of this year, our association witnessed a momentous event with the resounding success of our highly anticipated annual conference. Gathering like-minded individuals from various industries and backgrounds, our conference proved to be a transformative experience for all attendees.



Spanning several days, our conference provided a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and innovation. Esteemed speakers from around the globe graced our stages, delivering captivating talks that enlightened and inspired the audience. Their expertise and insights offered invaluable guidance for navigating the challenges of our rapidly evolving world, especially now more than ever.

Furthermore, our conference showcased groundbreaking technologies, emerging trends, and revolutionary ideas that are reshaping special districts. Exhibitors and sponsors demonstrated cutting-edge products and services, fostering collaboration, and stimulating partnerships that will undoubtedly shape the future of our association and its members.

Notably, the event's highlights included engaging workshops, interactive panel discussions, and engaging breakout sessions. Attendees enthusiastically participated, engaging in thought-provoking conversations and forging new connections that will undoubtedly lead to exciting collaborations.

The resounding success of our annual conference has solidified our association's position as a leading hub for special district professionals, thought leaders, and innovators.

As we move forward into the fourth quarter, the knowledge gained and relationships formed during this transformative event will undoubtedly drive us towards even greater achievements and opportunities.



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QUARTERLY MEETINGS



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando, FL hosted the Annual Conference from June 12-16. The event witnessed 348 registrations, with an impressive attendance of 335 individuals, achieving a remarkable 96% attendance rate. Additionally, there were 34 exhibitors present at the conference.

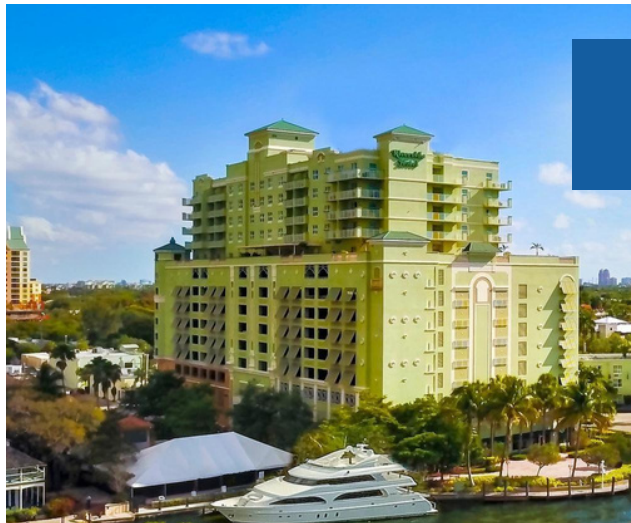
Please [click here](#) to access available speaker presentations for download.

AUGUST

Board Members: Please mark your calendars for August's virtual board meeting.

The meeting will take place via zoom on August 16, from 1PM EST - 3PM EST.

Rachel will send you a calendar invite with appropriate links.



OCTOBER

Due to Hurricane Ian's impact last year, we had to cancel the October Quarterly Meeting. However, this year we are excited to return to the Riverside Hotel in Ft. Lauderdale! The upcoming October Quarterly meeting is scheduled for October 12 - 13, 2023, and will coincide with the final offering of the CDM Program for the year. Keep an eye out for registration announcements in the upcoming months, and be sure not to delay in securing your spot!

Thank you to our Annual Conference sponsors!

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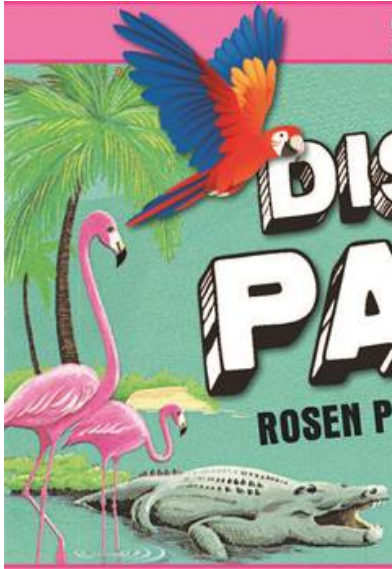


2023 FASD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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2023 FASD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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Awards and Tribute Luncheon



(listed from left to right)

Gale English Lifetime Achievement: Tanya Quickel, ACME Improvement District/Village of Wellington

Terry Lewis Legislative Award: Laura Jacobs Donaldson, Manson Bolves Donaldson Tanner, PA

FASD Board Member of the Year: Nate Spera, St. Lucie County Fire Control District

Member(s) of the Year: Kim Eikov, ACME Improvement District/Village of Wellington; Dave Cambareri, San Carlos Park Fire District

2023 FASD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

DISTRICTS IN PARADISE

ROSEN PLAZA, ORLANDO FL JUNE 12TH - 15TH, 2023

"Challenges In Paradise"
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Awards and Tribute Luncheon



(listed from left to right)

District of the Year: West Manatee Fire Rescue District

Safety Award: Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District

District Manager(s) of the Year: Joe Falcone, Cedar Hammock Fire Control District; Sherry Burroughs, Indian River Mosquito Control District

Not Pictured:

Associate Member of the Year: Synovus Bank

In Memoriam: Kay Gorham accepting on behalf of Tim McKenna, Spring Lake Improvement District



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Mayor Sherry Sullivan -
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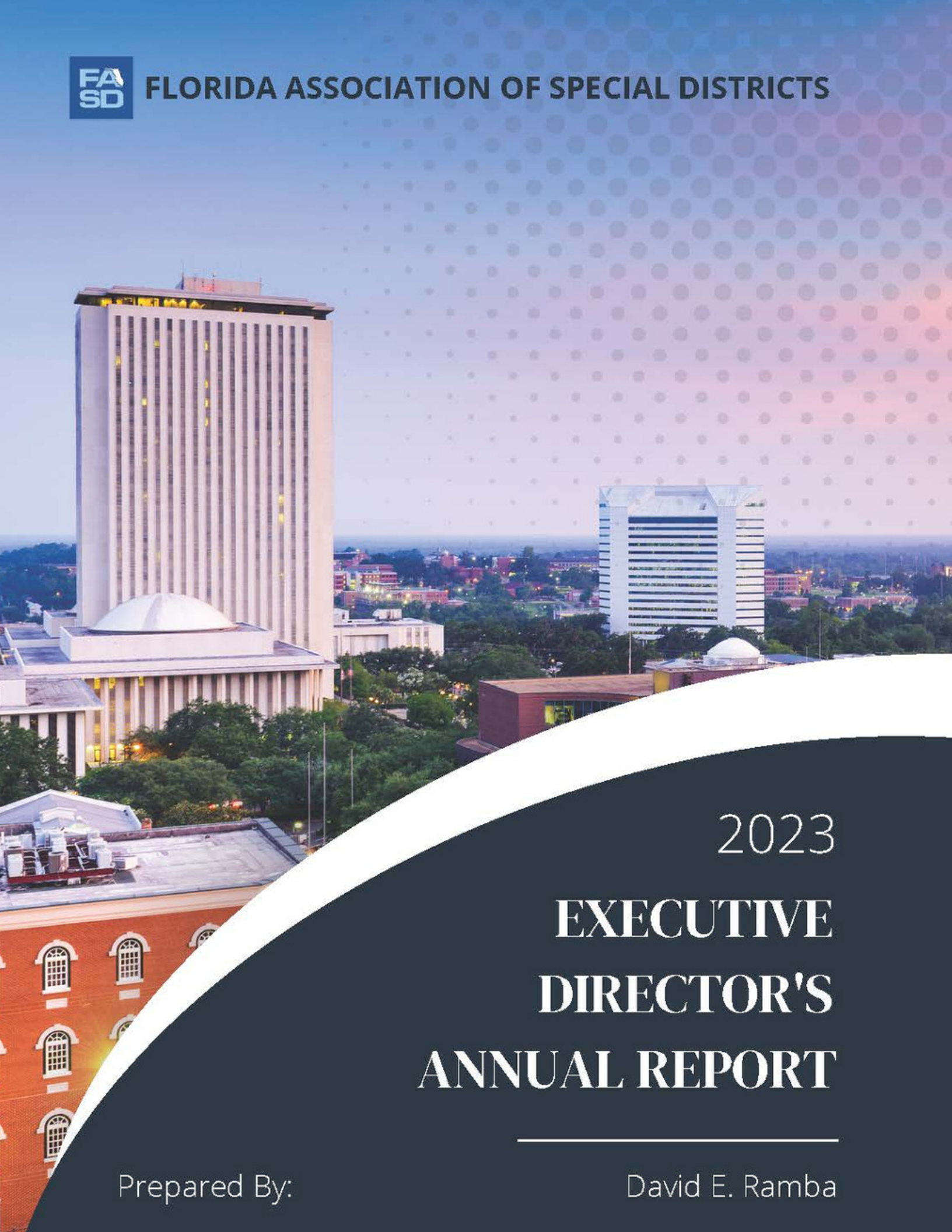


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FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS



2023
**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
ANNUAL REPORT**

Prepared By:

David E. Ramba



I am pleased to present to you the Executive Director's Annual Report of the Florida Association of Special Districts for the year 2022-2023. It has been an eventful and transformative year for our organization, and I am proud of the accomplishments we have achieved together. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our exceptional team, our committed board members, and our generous Associate Members and sponsors.

Without their unwavering dedication and support, none of our achievements would have been possible. Together, we have made a difference in the lives of those we serve and have strengthened our association's position as the premier voice for the special district network in Tallahassee.

MEET OUR TEAM



David Ramba

Executive
Director



Rachel Kruse

Office of
Executive Director



Katherine Hughes

Conference
Manager

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Conference and Awards Committee

FASD is thankful for our outstanding speakers, presenters, members, sponsors, and exhibitors who worked with us on the 2023 Annual Conference! We would like to express our gratitude for their invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to the success of the conference. Your dedication and expertise have been instrumental in shaping the program and ensuring a memorable experience for all participants.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee, in collaboration with Ramba Consulting Group, Laura Jacobs Donaldson, and Chris Lyon, achieved success in advancing FASD's priority legislation. Notably, this included the inclusion of trespass language to address issues of unlawful dumping, as well as the implementation of delaying performance reviews by the fire districts impacted by Hurricane Ian.

We strongly recommend reviewing the final legislative report for further details on specific bills that were passed during this session, relating to our focus areas. This report is forthcoming.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance and Strategic Committee

The committee served as an oversight team for FASD by providing recommendations and feedback as to the impact of financial matters, budget preparation, expenditures, revenue projections and investments. Committee members provided detailed guidance and leadership to the association's Board with enabled FASD to be fiscally responsible and operate in accordance with State guidelines.

Education and Certification Committee

The Education and Certification Committee continues to expand FASD's outreach with respected certification programs and training. Committee members worked monthly to provide guidance on the future of a new certification program as well as increasing the amount of continuing education hours to conference attendees. The committee anticipates further expansion of education opportunities in the new year!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership and Technology Committee

The committee worked diligently together to update and modernize our membership levels, aligning them with the evolving demands and expectations of the 21st century. As a result, there will be revisions to the upcoming membership dues.

We kindly request that you remain attentive for these vital updates.

Nominating Committee

This smaller committee oversees the FASD membership to identify eligible candidates who can be considered for available positions on the Board of Directors while ensuring representation across membership categories.

This year, the committee faced a significant task, resulting in the appointment of 11 new members to the FASD Board of Directors, including 4 individuals who are entirely new to the board.



CERTIFICATION REPORT

Certified District Manager

Since the inaugural class of CDMs in 2005, a total of 203 candidates have participated in the CDM Program. Currently, there are 117 individuals who have successfully obtained their CDM certification. Out of the 117 certified CDMs, 42 of them are due for renewal this year. Since the fall of 2021, the CDM Program has welcomed 79 new candidates. On Thursday, we will be awarding certificates to 15 deserving candidates.

Certified District Official

Since the inception of CDO certification courses in 2007, a total of 98 individuals have successfully completed the program and obtained their certification. Currently, there are 57 professionals who hold the certified CDO designation. Furthermore, we currently have 32 applicants seeking CDO certification.

THANK YOU

On behalf of the entire team, I would like to express our sincerest gratitude for your presence at this year's annual conference. Your participation has been instrumental in making it a resounding success and a memorable event for all. This conference has provided a platform for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas, and fostering valuable connections. The diverse perspectives, expertise, and experiences brought by each attendee have enriched our collective understanding and propelled us forward on our journey of growth and innovation.

CONTACT US



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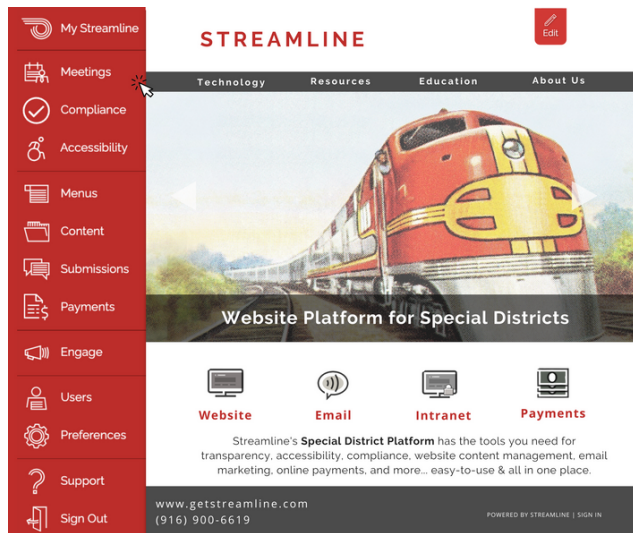
LOOKING FOR PROJECT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES?

NSDC HAS YOU COVERED.

Earlier this year, the National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC) launched a tool to streamline special district members' ability to search for project or program funding opportunities.

In partnership with The Ferguson Group (TFG), NSDC established a "project idea portal" for districts to submit projects for which funding opportunities are sought. Districts are welcome to submit details of the project via the webform, which TFG's grants team will review and work with the district to identify and apply for potential grant and finance opportunities.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE NSDC PROJECT IDEA PORTAL](#)



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STATE ADVOCACY



DESANTIS EXERCISES VETO POWER; TRIMS FLORIDA BUDGET FOR 2023-2024

Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida has wielded his veto power to strike down certain provisions within the state budget for the fiscal year 2023-2024. With an eye toward fiscal responsibility and prioritizing key areas, the governor's veto actions have aimed to streamline the budget and ensure effective allocation of resources. Here's a summary of the notable items Governor DeSantis has vetoed.

— **EDUCATION:** In the realm of education, Governor DeSantis exercised his veto pen to eliminate certain funding proposals. The budget initially included appropriations for new school construction projects, but the governor vetoed a significant portion of these funds.

The rationale behind the veto was to focus on maintaining existing school facilities and bolstering educational programs and initiatives rather than expanding infrastructure.

— **INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION:** While infrastructure remains a key priority for the state, Governor DeSantis made strategic cuts in certain transportation-related projects. The budget initially allocated funds for various infrastructure developments, including road improvements and public transit initiatives. However, the governor exercised his veto power to reduce these allocations, redirecting resources to high-priority transportation projects that align more closely with his administration's vision.

— **HEALTHCARE:** In the realm of healthcare, Governor DeSantis exercised caution and targeted certain provisions in the budget. While preserving critical healthcare funding, the governor vetoed specific proposals to ensure responsible spending. This approach allows for a more focused allocation of resources, prioritizing essential healthcare services and initiatives that align with the state's long-term goals.

— **ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION:** Recognizing the importance of environmental preservation and conservation, Governor DeSantis took care to strike a balance between responsible budgeting and environmental stewardship. The governor vetoed certain funding allocations that were deemed excessive or unnecessary, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are directed towards the most impactful environmental initiatives, including conservation efforts and protecting the state's natural resources.

Governor Ron DeSantis wielded his veto power to carefully curtail certain provisions within the Florida state budget for the fiscal year 2023-2024. By selectively vetoing items in the budget, the governor sought to prioritize key areas such as education, infrastructure, healthcare, and the environment. This approach ensures that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively, aligning with the governor's vision for a fiscally responsible and prosperous Florida.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



WHY RELYING SOLELY ON FACEBOOK CAN BE PROBLEMATIC

By Annelise Spargo, Head of Marketing, Streamline

Every day we talk to districts across the country that use Facebook as their primary (and often only) online presence.

Let's check out 3 things to consider when using Facebook as the primary online presence:

1. Not everyone has a Facebook account. According to a 2021 survey by the Pew Research Center, only 69% of American adults use Facebook, and the number of users is decreasing daily. This means that by relying solely on Facebook, districts are excluding a significant portion of their constituents from accessing important information and updates.

Additionally, even for those who do have a Facebook account, it can be challenging to navigate and find the information they need. Facebook's algorithm typically prioritizes content based on engagement, which means that important updates from local governments can easily get lost in users' newsfeeds. This can create a situation where crucial information is missed by residents, leading to confusion and frustration.

2. Facebook is not a reliable source of information. Facebook's terms of service state that the company cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information shared on its platform. This means that districts run the risk of sharing inaccurate information, which can have serious consequences for their constituents and impact the credibility of the district. Or in a worst-case scenario, one port district in California was shocked to find out that a Facebook page with their name on it was posting about a beer festival. After some investigating, they determined that a resident created a false Facebook page and was posting updates as the district, but the community had no way of knowing that it was a fake account.

3. Relying on Facebook can lead to issues with transparency and accountability. Unlike a government website, which is owned and managed by the government itself, Facebook is a third-party platform. This means that districts have less control over how their information is presented and shared. Additionally, Facebook's algorithm determines which posts are shown to users, which can create a situation where important updates are not seen by residents. If the community can't see it, they won't know you're doing it. And because Facebook is a social media platform, there is nowhere to reliably share important documents like agendas, minutes, and budgets - all of which are crucial in building trust and credibility with the community.

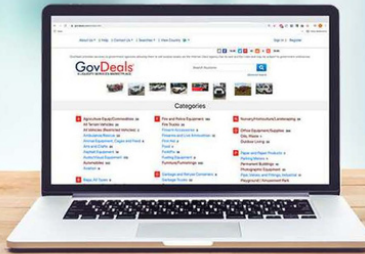
Instead of relying on Facebook alone, districts should focus on building a robust online presence that includes a website, social media platforms, and other digital channels that are accessible to all community members.



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

ADA Emergency Planning

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Working to protect the public from emergencies and disasters such as storms and other weather events is known as Emergency Management. Local governments have a responsibility to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters. Emergency Management programs must follow the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, which ensures their programs do not discriminate against people with disabilities.

Examples of the programs within Emergency Management plans include:

- Emergency shelter programs
- Community evacuation and transportation
- Emergency alerts

Temporary shelter during an emergency is something that local governments usually supply and are responsible for. The ADA requires shelters to offer persons with disabilities equal access to these services as well as their benefits such as safety, food and medical care.

Temporary shelter during an emergency is something that local governments usually supply and are responsible for. The ADA requires shelters to offer persons with disabilities equal access to these services as well as their benefits such as safety, food and medical care.

Local governments may need to make modifications to their Emergency Management programs and services. These modifications or changes should be reasonable and always be clearly defined.

Physical accessibility to the shelter is a strong consideration. Along these lines, a physical survey of the shelter spaces should be made to ensure they comply with ADA Standards.

- Accessible routes, no trip hazards and wheelchair navigable
- Entrances/exits/doorways must be wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, if acceptable
- Sleeping area accommodates for any equipment needed to assist the disabled person
- Shower/sinks/toilets accommodate for disabled individuals and any assistance that they need
- Dining areas; Recreational areas; Parking
- Emergency exits

To learn more about how emergency planning should comply with ADA Standards, visit: [Emergency Preparedness Resources](#)



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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

The Importance of Tracking Near Miss Incidents

Written by Brett Crecco, Loss Control Consultant- Egis Insurance & Risk Advisors

According to the National Safety Council, for every 100 accidents that occur, there are 300 near misses. For every single serious accident that happens, there are 300 opportunities to prevent it from happening and that is a huge opportunity.

Tracking near misses is an important part of any comprehensive safety program. By tracking near misses, districts can identify potential hazards and address problems head-on before they lead to accidents where injuries or property damage may occur. A near miss is an unplanned or unexpected event that has the potential to cause harm to people, property, or the environment. Near misses are often overlooked, but they can provide valuable insights into potential hazards and risks.

Here are some examples of near misses:

- A board meeting attendee almost slips and falls on a wet floor in a meeting space.
- A district employee almost cuts himself with a utility knife while breaking down boxes.

- A district employee almost gets struck by flying debris during landscaping.
- A district volunteer almost makes a mistake with cleaning chemicals that could have caused a serious accident.
- A district field operations manager almost falls when retrieving a shelved item stored in a maintenance shed.
- A district employee almost touches a live electrical wire.

There are many benefits to tracking near misses. First, it can help to improve safety culture. When employees feel comfortable reporting near misses, it shows that they trust their managers and supervisors to take action to prevent future accidents. This can lead to a more initiative-taking approach to safety, one where employees are constantly looking for ways to improve safety procedures and practices.

Second, tracking near misses can help to identify and address potential hazards. By analyzing near misses, districts can identify the root causes of potential problems. This information can then be used to implement changes to policies, procedures, equipment, or training to prevent future accidents.

Third, tracking near misses can help to reduce a district's total cost of risk.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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By tracking near misses and taking steps to prevent accidents through the knowledge gained, organizations can demonstrate that they are proactively committed to safety, not just reacting when accidents occur. By lowering the frequency and severity of accidents, the district's claim or loss experience is reduced making them a more desirable risk to insure (thereby saving money).

How to Track Near Misses Effectively

There are several ways to track near misses effectively. The most important step is to create a clear culture in your district where employees feel comfortable reporting near misses, no matter how minor they seem to be. Messaging and perception are key here. This can be done by providing employees with training on the importance of reporting near misses and by creating a system for reporting near misses that is easy to use. Of course, reporting can range from filling out a card and dropping it in a box or completing an online form that automatically fills a spreadsheet or database.

To set up a near miss reporting process, a district can create a near miss reporting form. The form should include the following basic information:

- Date and time of the near miss
- Location of the near miss
- Description of the near miss
- Operations or tasks being done at the time
- Names of any witnesses

Once a system for reporting near misses is in place, it is important to investigate each near miss and analyze the data that is collected. Investigating near miss incidents should carry the same weight and importance as investigating accidents and injuries. This data can be used to identify potential hazards, track trends, and measure the effectiveness of safety initiatives. Again, using technology like simple spreadsheets, apps or databases to help identify trends speeds analysis and aids the district in efficiently administering the program.

It is also important to take demonstrable action on the data collected to address near misses in a way that is readily apparent to all members. This may involve implementing changes to policies, procedures, equipment, or training. By taking action to address near misses, organizations and districts can prevent accidents and improve overall safety.

Additional tips for tracking near misses effectively:

- Make sure that employees understand the definition of a near miss and the importance of tracking.
- Provide employees with a variety of ways to report near misses, such as completing cards, online forms, phone calls, or email.
- Use near miss data to improve safety policies, procedures, equipment, and training.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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- Keep near miss reports confidential (and even anonymous). As with incident reports, near miss reports could happen to anyone so there should not be the tendency to assign blame but rather find root causes and fix them (which helps encourage reporting).
- Investigate all near misses and take clear action to prevent future accidents. Share the knowledge gained from these reports regularly.

We have all had situations where we have felt that lump in our throat after experiencing a near miss or said to ourselves: “Whew, that could’ve been bad.” If we collectively embrace a system of identifying and resolving or managing the risks before they manifest in an injury, accident, or property damage – it makes your district safer for everyone.

DON'T DISMISS
^a
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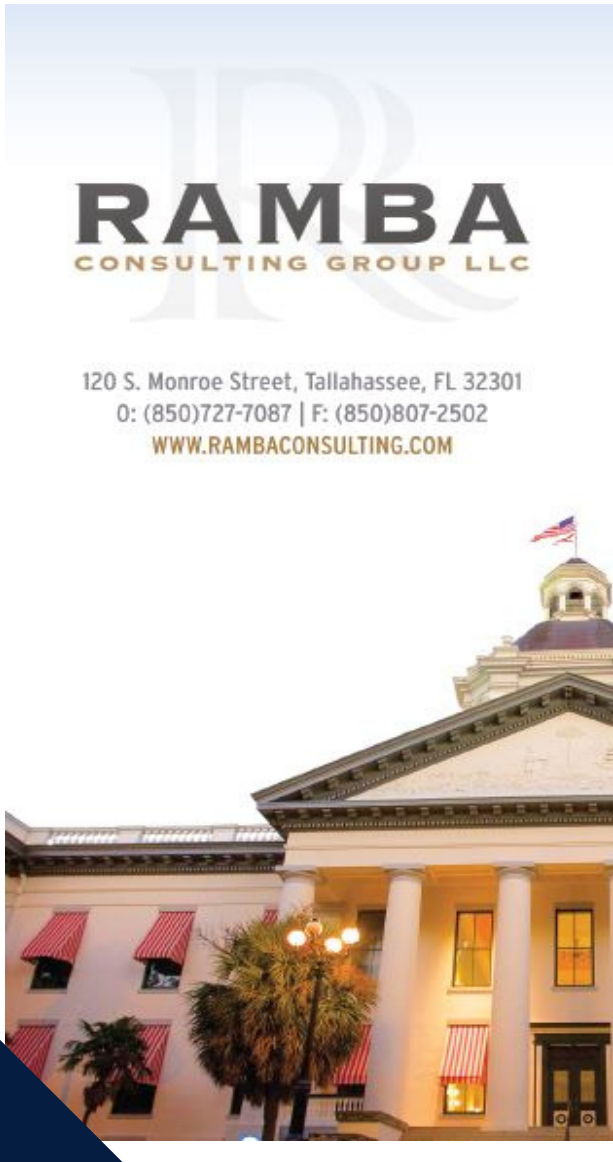
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