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**Bronson breaks ground on \$2.9 million sewer project**

**Story and Photos**  
 By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 24, 2014  
**BRONSON** -- With a grant-loan mixture from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development of \$2.9 million, the Town of Bronson broke ground Tuesday (Sept. 213) on the expansion of its wastewater collection system.

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-- **UPDATED** --  
**WED. SEPT. 24 10:57 p.m.**  
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(Above) Preparing to break ground (from left) are Bronson Public Works Director Jimmy Dunford, Town Councilman Aaron Edmondson, Town Councilman Berlon Weeks, (not wearing a hardhat in the back -USDA Rural Development State Director Richard Machek), Mayor Franklin Schuler, Vice Mayor Beatrice Roberts, Town Councilman Bruce Greenlee and Town Clerk Kelli Brettel. (Below) They break ground as Machek holds the umbrella.



The project is funded by a \$40,000 contribution from the town; a \$1.27 million USDA Rural Development Community Facilities grant and a \$1.6 million USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Water and Wastewater loan.



Bronson Parks and Recreation Director Curtis Stacy (left) prepares to say the opening prayer before the speeches as public Works Director Jimmy Dunford works with the audio system. Some parts of the speeches went unheard by a number of the audience because of the road noise, which was amplified by rain.

The project shows a planned installation of 10,500 linear feet of gravity sewer lines, 14,200 linear feet of force mains, 40 manholes, nine grinder stations and three lift stations, according to information provided by USDA Rural Development.

Bronson Mayor Franklin Schuler welcomed everyone to the celebration. He note his

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appreciation for the USDA Rural Development for the loan-grant and to Mittauer & Associates for providing the engineering for the project.

**Bronson Mayor Franklin Schuler opens the program by introducing Curtis Stacy, who gave the prayer to start the ceremony.**

Town Councilman Berlon Weeks, who is the liaison for sewer and water departments in the town and who was a moving force in completing the process leading to the loan-grant, spoke after the mayor's

welcome. Weeks welcomed visitors: Levy County Commissioner John Meeks; Greg Lang of Mittauer & Associates; Joe Mittauer of Mittauer & Associates; Jason Shepler of Mittauer & Associates; Richard Machek of USDA Rural Development; Nature Coast Business Development Council Executive Director David Pieklik; David Dickens with Suwannee River Water Management District; and the Sewer Committee Advisory Members -- Jim Beck, Aaron Robinson, Frances Akins and Wilbur Dean.

**Town Councilman Berlon Weeks**

Other guests that day included Levy County Commission candidate Jamie Griffin, Fanning Springs Mayor Cheryl Nekola, Williston City Clerk Fran Taylor, State Rep. Jimmie R. Smith (R-Inverness, Dist. 34), Levy County School Board member Chris Cowart, Jessica Norfleet of the office of U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho (R-Fla., Dist. 3), Chiefland Wastewater Supervisor Randy Wilkerson and the whole Bronson Town Council.



On Wednesday afternoon (Sept. 24), State Rep. Charlie Stone (R-Ocala, Dist. 22) said he had planned on being at this event, but Gov. Rick Scott and The Florida Cabinet were dealing with a matter related to Marion County and he needed to be in Tallahassee.

**Jason Shepler of Mittauer & Associates**

Stone represents all of Levy County and the western part of Marion County.

Bronson is a small community, Weeks said, and it took vision to reach this goal, Weeks said.



The next speaker was from Mittauer of Mittauer & Associates.

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Shepler said that Mittauer of Mittauer & Associates has considered itself to become an extension of the town staff as it has worked through the process to reach the point of starting construction now. When Mittauer of Mittauer & Associates first became engaged with this project in Bronson in 2009, Shepler said, he saw that the town leaders wanted to improve economic development as well as continue being good stewards to the environment.



**USDA Rural Development State Director Richard Machek talks about how this project can help economic development as well as the environment.**

It was about eight years prior to this engineering firm's involvement that the vision for this project first began, he said. Bringing this vision to fruition, he said, by taking the baton and running with it shows the perseverance of this town's leadership and staff over the past several years.

USDA Rural Development State Director Machek was the next to speak. He joked about the rain. President Barack Obama appointed Machek in April 2010 to serve as State Director of USDA Rural Development for Florida/U.S. Virgin Islands.

"My father used to say, 'If you can't do anything about it, you just have to love it.' So I just love this rain," Machek said.

The sound of traffic on the highway next to the grassy area in front of the Doyle Cobb Municipal Building, where the ceremony was held, was even noisier than on a dry day as the hiss of tires added to the roar of engines going down the road.

Machek congratulated the town on taking initiative to become an active community in Levy County as it prepares for an economic upswing, which may be coming.



It was November of 2011 when the check for this project was presented in a different ceremony, he said.

**Bronson Public Works Director Jimmy Dunford gives the closing speech.**

"At the speed of government, you can see how fast this is getting going," he said. "It's going to make it. And it wouldn't have made it without good people to work on these projects."

Among the staff from USDA Rural Development who helped make this project succeed was Area Specialist Stephanie

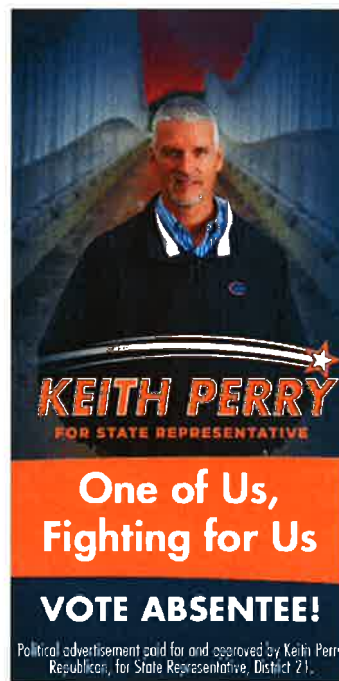
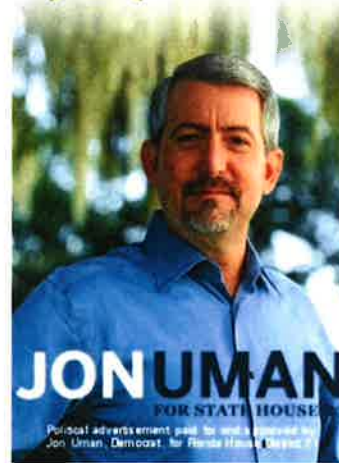
Hodges of Ocala and other staff from that office.

Machek said USDA Rural Development has helped Bronson with projects before, and he invited the town to utilize the resources that can be provided to help improve the infrastructure of the town in the future.

"President Obama's plan for rural America has brought about historic investment and resulted in stronger rural communities," USDA Rural Development spokeswoman Ellen Boukari noted. "Under the President's leadership, these investments in housing community facilities, businesses and infrastructure have empowered rural America to continue leading the way – strengthening America's economy, small towns and communities."

Bronson Public Works Director Jimmy Dunford concluded the speeches before the ceremonial groundbreaking.

Dunford said there has been work going on that was not visible to people since the acceptance of the check in November of 2011. Now, people who asked him "When is construction going to start," will be asking "When will construction be finished."



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Dunford asked that anyone who has any concerns should contact Town Hall rather than asking the crews who are going to be working on the pipelines. The town's public works director said residents and visitors of Bronson can expect to see machines working on the pipeline very soon now.

With that, the groundbreakers went out into the drizzling rain, donned their custom made construction helmets, grabbed a gold-colored shovel and moved some sand.

Delicious hors d'oeuvres from the Ivy House Restaurant of Williston were available for guests after the ceremony.

## Levy County 4-H Round-Up offers chances to participate

By Jeff M. Hardison © Sept. 22, 2013

**BRONSON** -- Children, parents, grandparents and others enjoyed another annual Levy County 4-H Round-Up in Bronson on Saturday (Sept. 20) as the many various aspects of the organization were shared with people at the Extension Office and Campus in the 600 block of North Hathaway Avenue (U.S. Alt. 27) in Bronson.

Barbecue competition, lessons in rifle shooting, displays by the many various clubs and projects, and a wonderful barbecue chicken dinner that was separate from the competition, were all part of the half-day of fun.



Winners in the Hartley Barbecue Contest are (back row) Intermediate Second Place winner Mackenzie Henderson; Intermediate First Place winner Sidney Bray; Intermediate Third Place winner Johnny Long; Senior First Place winner Michael Owens; and (front row) Junior Second Place winner Brooke Batey; Junior Third Place winner Luke Henderson; Junior Second Place winner Casey Owens; and Junior First Place winner Aubrey Catlett.

Photo by Sharon Hardison, courtesy of Levy Extension

The morning opened with many of the 4-H clubs in Levy County setting up tables to show visitors what is happening in their clubs. A child may join however many clubs that he or she wants, and believes they can contribute to and participate in.



Teachers and learners use their hands to represent sites as they practice looking at targets.

Photo by Jeff M. Hardison



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