

# **Okaloosa County News Release**

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## **Large Crowd at University of FL-Okaloosa Co. Extension Groundbreaking**

Over 50 attended the recent groundbreaking for the new University of Florida-Okaloosa County Extension building, which will be built at Bob Sikes Airport at the corner of Airport and John Givens Road. A \$750,000 grant sponsored by former State Senator Durell Peaden and now State Senator Greg Evers will result in construction of the building in the fall of this year. “Many have waited for this day and it took great teamwork to make it happen,” said Chairman Don Amunds, Okaloosa County Commission. “The County Extension is at the heart of all our communities and contributes so much to the agriculture industry, our citizens and our children.”

“So many have supported this goal finally reached today, from former County Extension Director Gerald Edmondson beginning the effort to Extension volunteers and advisory committee members encouraging support of the project,” said County Extension Director Larry Williams, thanking everyone at the groundbreaking. “From our county departments, to AVCON Engineers and Planners providing gratis work – and so many others. We look forward to a new building designed by Westerra and constructed by Moulton Construction,” added Williams.

The Extension represents 14 percent of agriculture jobs and almost a billion in revenues, has about 421 volunteers contributing \$235,302 man-hours for Okaloosa County and 4-H represents the largest youth organization in the world, not just Okaloosa County. According to Farm Bureau records, for every dollar invested in agriculture research and extension, there is a \$10 return on that investment to the community! Dr. Tom Obreza stated, “This Extension could not do all that it does without its partnership with Okaloosa County.” Obreza is the Interim Dean of Extension at the University of Florida.

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