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County Manager

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Board to Designate \$4 Million in American Rescue Plan Act Funding to
Town of Callahan to Expand Water & Sewer Services for Economic Development and
Job Growth in Nassau County**

Nassau County, Florida, June 23, 2022 – The Crawford Diamond Industrial Park is a McCallum Sweeney Certified Industrial Park consisting of 1,814 acres and approved for up to 10.5 million square feet of heavy industrial use. It's proximity to three ports, two interstates, and two railroad lines makes it a prime location for Economic Development with the opportunity to bring thousands of jobs to Nassau County. However, attracting companies has been difficult due to the site's lack of water and sewer services.

A coalition consisting of the Board of County Commissioners, the Nassau County Economic Development Board, JaxUSA, and the Town of Callahan have been collaborating efforts to expand the Town's current water and sewer system to the Crawford Diamond.

In an attempt to fund the expansion, the Town of Callahan applied for a 21/22 Florida Job Growth Public Infrastructure Grant from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity in the amount of \$4 million. In order to qualify for the grant, the Town of Callahan needed support from the Board of County Commissioners. The County's contribution will be the final financial piece to make this estimated \$12 million project a reality. The investments into these critical infrastructure projects will place the County in a very competitive position to bring significant economic development and job growth within the County.

On January 4, 2022, County Manager, Taco Pope, sent a letter to the Economic Development Board tentatively committing \$4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding

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received from the U.S. Department of Treasury following the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding the project is consistent with guidelines set forth by the U.S. Treasury and the Nassau County Prosperity Plan adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in May 2021.

In the January 4th memo, Mr. Pope stated, “The establishment of a public water system to serve the Crawford Diamond Industrial Park supports community goals by creating a more diversified, resilient, sustainable and prosperous local economic ecosystem; improves access to public water; creates high wage jobs; leverages state and federal dollars to build strategic infrastructure; and expands the local tax base”.

We are excited to announce that on Monday, June 20, 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis visited Nassau County and presented the Town of Callahan with a check to assist in funding the project! This funding is in addition to \$4 million awarded to the Town during the previous fiscal year.

Following the Governor’s check presentation to the Town of Callahan, County Manager, Taco Pope, stated, “This is a big day for Nassau County! By working together to find solutions, the Coalition has finally found a way to bring water to the Crawford Diamond. The Board of Commissioners will continue to invest in infrastructure and to expanding our County’s workforce to strengthen our local economy”.

Construction of the water plant follows the \$9 million Crawford Road improvements project completed by the Board of County Commissioners in November 2021. Later this year, the Board of County Commissioners will commence a \$2 million intersection improvements project at US 301 and Crawford Road to allow heavy truck traffic to access the Crawford Diamond Industrial Park.

Sherri Mitchell, Executive Director for the Nassau County Economic Development Board, stated, “This is such an exciting time for Nassau County and I couldn’t be more thrilled! When we all work together to create planned developments that are diverse, we are truly paving the way for a stronger future. I want to thank the Board of County Commissioners and the Town of Callahan for their commitment to this specific infrastructure project for the Crawford Diamond. Infrastructure is crucially important to foster Nassau County’s economic development and prosperity. This is a game changer and will have a direct effect as it contributes to higher productivity and growth, facilitates connectivity, and promotes economic inclusion”.