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Jinks Middle School plans alumni tailgate



“We are committed to excellence here,” Principal Chris Coan said. “We are still making strides to being an A school and we want to propel these students into success in their high school careers.” DEONTAY SMITH/THE NEWS HERALD

Celebrating 75 years

DeonTay Smith
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

PANAMA CITY – One of Bay County’s historic schools, Jinks Middle School is celebrating its 75th anniversary.

Founded in 1950, the school at 600 W. 11th St. in Panama City has not seen much change, even after the devastating Hurricane Michael.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary, Jinks Middle School will host an alumni tailgate to celebrate. The tailgate will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 16

at 3:30 p.m during a football game against Surfside Middle School.

Chris Coan has been principal of Jinks Middle School since 2024.

“We want to welcome all of our Jinks alumni to the tailgate to share precious memories with one another,” Coan said. “The precious thing about our school is that it has rarely changed (appearance wise) since the 1950s. There’s been small changes since then, but we want people to enjoy the rich history we have.”

Coan said he wants to give the best environment to the students.

“We want students with the best

educators and faculty,” Coan said. “We are committed to excellence here. We are still making strides to being an A school and we want to propel these students into success in their high school careers.”

According to the school’s website, its core principles are Respectful, Responsible and Ready To Learn.

“(We want to) develop well-rounded, goal-oriented, lifelong learners, and actively-engaged students while providing a safe and compassionate school family that fosters self-esteem,

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City to remove crumbling mermaid sculpture

Dylan Gentile
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

PANAMA CITY — An iconic local statue has to come down for safety reasons.

The doomed artwork is the mermaid statue in the Oaks by the Bay Park in the Historic St Andrews neighborhood. It was carved from a tree that was damaged after Hurricane Michael.

“After a close inspection of the beloved Mermaid Totem sculpture at Oaks by the Bay Park in St. Andrews, we’ve determined that it now poses a safety hazard due to significant decay and compromised structural integrity,” the city said in a Sept. 2 Facebook post. “For the safety of all park visitors, our team will be removing the sculpture today to prevent any potential accidents.”

A spokesperson from the city told the News Herald that the base of the stump had rotted and that the trunk of the tree was hollow. The structure was extremely fragile and could fall at any time.

The mermaid totem was just one of several sculptures at Oaks by the Bay created by Chad Gainey, a wood carver. His other works at the park include

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PCB to spend \$68.47M on the Front Beach Road CRA in 2026

Nathan Cobb
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

PANAMA CITY BEACH — Local officials are moving full steam ahead to continue a comprehensive roadway improvement project along Front Beach Road.

In a meeting on Aug. 28, Panama City Beach City Council members approved a more than \$68.47 million budget for the Front Beach Road Community Redevelopment Area Plan in fiscal year 2026. The

city’s fiscal year spans from the beginning of October until the end of September.

Here’s what we know:

How is the CRA budget broken down?

Past reports note that of the \$68.47 million budget, 84% is for capital improvement projects, 9% is for debt services, 6% is for operating expenses and 1% is for personnel services.

Major capital improvement projects in the 2026 CRA budget include Segment 3 (\$2.9 million), Segments 4.1 and 4.2 (\$39.3 million combined) and Segment 4.3 (\$12.35 million). PCB also plans to spend \$1 million on crosswalks, \$800,000 on improvements to Hills Road and \$680,000 on improvements to Powell Adams Road.

What is the Front Beach Road CRA?

The Front Beach Road CRA began in

the early 2000s with the goal of installing upgraded features, such as sidewalks, improved lighting and new street signs, along Front Beach Road and its connecting roadways.

A CRA, short for community redevelopment area, is a designated region that allows for property taxes collected within a specific area to be used to fund developments. For instance, all transportation projects related to the Front Beach Road

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