

With Lake County Commissioner Wellington Caldwell in the driver's seat of the newly formed Central Florida Expressway Authority, residents find themselves in the fast lane toward economic benefit.

IN THE LOOP

Lake County has experienced major expressway development within its borders since the 1980s. The next couple of years along with the anticipated economic expansion will bring more opportunities and regional Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) officials are working hard to make sure those opportunities are well distributed throughout the greater Orlando area. In addition to Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties, the expressway can now consider additional opportunities.

The goal: even better. The chairman for the new Central Florida Expressway Authority is Lake County Commissioner Wellington Caldwell.

What Caldwell is doing in Lake County is a significant voice in a conversation that will impact the region and its economy: the Wekiva Parkway.

The Wekiva Parkway—State Road 435—is the 45-mile toll expressway from Interstate 4 to State Road 434, eventually closing the gap between US 41 and SR 434 and connecting them via a roundabout in Maitland. This corridor is being developed over the CFX and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

The estimated \$3.5 billion project involves SR 435 in Orange County and improvements between Lake County, including widening several miles of SR 435 in Lake and Seminole Counties, extending the US 41/SR 435 interchange in Mount Dora, and adding toll-free segments of highway between Lake and Seminole Counties, and linking the SR 435/Orange Avenue SR 43 to project visitors. The project also includes several wildlife bridges and more than 3,000 acres set aside for conservation.

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Infrastructure Project Act) funding from the federal Government; however the project has not been approved by the Lake County Board of County Commissioners yet, pending additional public input," Caldwell said. "But once we can make things more protective at least, more protective at school zones."

Commissioner Caldwell, in his CFAA-issued photo.

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The upgraded roads project makes Commissioner Caldwell's leadership critical. The entire county

has been involved in the planning process for 20 years. Caldwell wants to make sure the final product is not dictated by politics but by the needs of the people.

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It is a priority of the case.

"Our motto in Lake County is Real Roads, and that's what we applied that to CFX, and you have Lake County. You need to move to Seminole or Orange County, but we're educated, we understand our role, we're able to save money there. So it's easier to afford, and to live with your family, easier than on US 41 or SR 435," said Caldwell.

"Consider this: you will be able to live in concert, and still own a neighborhood in Lake County like Bradenton or Myrtle Beach, but be able to work in a Major City," said Michelle Mulford, director of marketing and public affairs at CFX. "If this case, we will seek a regional approach only thinking customer first, financially sound and seeking the opportunities to take a regional competitive edge in economic growth."

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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