

MILITARY [#]

Clay County awarded \$400K in military grant money

Camp Blanding among installations to benefit from \$765K in grants

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - Three projects that serve to protect military installations across Florida, including one in Clay County, will benefit from \$765,000 in grant money from the Florida Defense Support Task Force Grant Program, the governor announced Wednesday.

The awards were given to the Clay County Development Authority, the Greater Pensacola Chamber of Commerce and the South Florida Progress Foundation of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

The \$400,000 in funding awarded to Clay County continues the Development Authority's commitment to preserving and protecting the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center from incompatible land development and encroachment, officials said.

The funding, in addition to a federal match, will purchase land valued at over a million dollars.

“In accordance with our principal purpose of promoting sound economic development of Clay County, the Clay County Development Authority is pleased to receive this grant that will strengthen the strategic partnership with Camp Blanding Joint Training Center to improve the quality of life for our citizens by securing a buffer from future development and encroachment thus protecting the installation that comprises almost one fifth of the county and is tied to its economic viability,” said Josh Cockrell of the Clay County Development Authority. “This is a remarkable opportunity not only to strengthen our part in national security, but promote jobs and economic development at both the local and state levels.”

According to the governor's office, Florida's military installations contribute more than \$79.8 billion in economic impact, and the defense industry supports more than 774,000 jobs in Florida.

“We are proud to be the most military-friendly state in the nation and this funding not only supports our military members but the thousands of families that have jobs across the state thanks to our military installations,” Gov. Rick Scott said. “We will continue to do all we can to recognize the many brave military men and women, and their families, whose service and sacrifice keeps our country safe.”

The Greater Pensacola Chamber of Commerce was awarded \$250,000 to reroute traffic to the Naval Aviation Museum from the main gate to a more direct access point in an effort to enhance protection and base security. And the South Florida Progress Foundation of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce was awarded \$115,000 to unite, champion and represent the local defense community.

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