



## **June another near-record month for building in St. Johns County**

By Stuart Korfhage  
July 11, 2018

After a year in which new home building nearly hit a record set in the pre-recession boom days, building in St. Johns County in 2018 is easily outpacing last year's rate.

New home permits totaled 488 for June, according to the St. Johns County Building Department report. That's the second-highest number since the recession and housing market collapse about a decade ago.

The highest number came in April when 522 permits were issued. That was a record for the history of the building department.

Before that recent spurt, only one other month since the recession had produced a month with at least 400 new home permits. And that was October 2017 when building was slowed the previous month by Hurricane Irma.

With the first half of 2018 complete, there have now been 2,390 permits issued for new homes in this county. That's about 300 more than 2017 through June.

There was some expectation that builders might try to get homes permitted before July 1 when impact fees for new construction increase in the county. Those fees will rise again Jan. 1, 2019.

However, it is likely just a reflection of the continued strength of the market.

A release sent out Tuesday by Beacon Lake developer BBX Capital said there have been more than 115 homes sold in the community that opened late in 2017. Located off of County Road 210, it's expected to contain more than 1,400 homes at full build out.

“We are pleased with the success we have already achieved at Beacon Lake,” said Bruce J. Parker, managing director for BBX Capital Real Estate, in the release. “There is a strong demand for new homes in this price range in St. Johns County.”

Building has been strong in the area in general. Information published by the Northeast Florida Builders Association (NEFBA) showed increased permit activity in Duval County as well.

Jacksonville has seen 1,842 new home permits through June, NEFBA said. That puts Duval ahead of last year’s pace when 3,073 new homes were permitted for the year.

The prices are still rising as well. The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors reported that as of May, the median price for new construction single-family homes was \$300,000.

That’s for the entire region. NEFAR does not break down that statistic by county. However, almost half of the new construction in the region is in St. Johns County.

- In other development news, Wawa has filed an application to build a gas station/convenience store on State Road 16 near the Interstate 95 interchange. The 6,000-square-foot store is planned for the north side of S.R. 16.

Right across on the south side of S.R. 16, applications have been filed for new Hardee’s and Zaxby’s restaurants.

All of those projects are items that do not require a public hearing.

- Summit Contracting Group, a multi-family general contractor with offices in Jacksonville and Atlanta, announced that it has started construction on Sentosa Beachwalk apartments.

It’s part of the Beachwalk development off of County Road 210. It will consist of 348 units in 11 buildings with 354,972 total square footage. Construction is expected to be finished in fall 2019.

Beachwalk has the 14-acre Crystal Lagoons beach as the centerpiece of the development.