

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another  
edition of The Break Room, a

weekly conversation about how  
the City of St Augustine

works, from those who do the  
work every day. Hosted by the

City of St Augustine's  
Communications Director, Melissa

Wissel. The Break Room offers a  
closer look at the different

city departments and provides  
updates on current and upcoming

projects and events. And now  
your host, Melissa Wissel.

MELISSA: Welcome to The Break Room.  
Thanks for joining us. I'm

Melissa Whistle, Communications  
Director for the City of St

Augustine. This week, we  
welcome a returning guest on

our show, Vicky Oakes. She is  
the Supervisor of Elections for

St Johns County. Vicky,  
welcome back. VICKY: Thank you,

Melissa. Thanks for having me.

MELISSA: We've got a lot to cover. So,

we're going to just jump right  
in. VICKY: Alright. MELISSA: Starting with, we

have an election season. We  
have general elections. We've

got primaries and qualifying  
period, all that. Clearly,

it's not my area of expertise,  
so I'm going to let you tell us

all about it. VICKY: Okay. So, our two  
elections are the August 23rd

primary election. And the  
general is November the eighth.

Candidate qualifying is June

the 13th through the

17th, ends at noon on

Friday the 17th.

However, the law allowed us to

start collecting papers from

our candidates, beginning this

week. So, we are

actively collecting papers from

candidates. MELISSA: And qualifying is

basically where I say I want to

run, and I, do I have to get a

signed petition or I just throw

my name in the hat? VICKY: Yes, that you

actually file your papers and

pay your fee. There's a lot

involved, especially for city

candidates. They're a little

different because under their

city charter, they are required

a different petition than our  
regular candidates have to, say

a county commission candidate.

So, I recommend anyone

interested in running for  
office, immediately please

contact our office, because time  
is running out. There are

certain things you have to do  
to make ballot position,

including having all of your  
signed petitions turned into

the office, if you're a city  
candidate by noon on Friday.

MELISSA: Friday the 17th. And we have a  
lot of seats. I'm going to run

off a couple and there, it, the  
list is way longer and we don't

have time to mention them all.

But right here closest to us,

and I know I may miss some, but  
it's on your website, two Board

of County Commission seats, a  
judge, three on the school board,

three commission seats in St  
Augustine, three commission

seats in St Augustine Beach,  
we've got some on the airport

Authority, Beach Port Waterway  
and Beach seats. There's a lot

of opportunity for people to be  
getting involved and running

for office in our county. VICKY: There  
is. And we have a full slate of

candidates already, Melissa. Just  
go to our website and you'll

check and see who's filed  
papers with us to run this

year. MELISSA: And I'm going to tell our

listeners, VoteSJC.com. VICKY:

.gov. MELISSA: .gov. SJ, no, VoteSJC.gov. VICKY: .gov. MELISSA: Vote SJC. And

it's a fabulous brand-new  
website. I'm going to say as

well. I will tell you, the old  
one had a lot going on. And this

one, I got on last week when I  
looking over things for our

notes for our conversation  
today, and let me tell you. Big

bold buttons, register to vote,  
my voter status, vote by mail,

election results, ways to vote,  
election security candidates,

and newsroom. Not to mention  
you've got these fantastic drop

down menus that have every  
imaginable short, easy. I bet you,

I would challenge anyone to not

find something within two

clicks. It's that good. VICKY: Well  
thank you. I'm glad you'd like

it. MELISSA: I love it. And  
particularly the, the candidate

information. There's a  
downloadable PDF that has, it's

a full page of all of the  
offices that are scheduled, even

up at the federal level. So,  
there's. all that information is

on the website. Again that is  
VoteSJC.gov. VICKY: And my

favorite part of our new  
website is our frequently asked

questions section. We have  
different sections. You can go

there. And last week, we even had  
a couple of questions that came

Up. So, we because of someone  
inquiring, we added them to our

list. MELISSA: Get enough of those same  
questions. You say, okay,

clearly, clearly we're missing  
something on the website. So,

let's add it. It's  
wonderful. The, let's talk a

little bit about our precincts.  
There's been a lot of

discussion with district lines,  
voting lines, state, county,

local, school districts. Tell  
me how all of that affects you

and affects us as the voters in  
terms of where we vote and how

do we know? VICKY: Okay. A has changed  
since the last general election

in 2020 because of the census.  
Then the redistricting process



happened in '21. So we  
have new voting districts. We

have new precinct lines and we  
have some new polling places,

especially here in the city.

MELISSA: And that means not all of the

places we're used to going to  
are open. VICKY: That's correct. Now.

MELISSA: Can you tell us? VICKY: Alright. 78%  
of our voters will be voting at

the same location that they  
voted at on election day in

'20. The 78% of our  
voters. MELISSA: In the county? VICKY: In the

county. Okay. In the entire  
county. So some great news

about the city. We consolidated  
a couple of our very small

precincts. Willie

Gallamore Center and the Days

Inn on San Marco will no longer  
be used as polling places.

The River House is one of  
our new polling places. I'm

very excited about that. And  
then another new polling place

is the National Guard Armory on  
San Marco. MELISSA: Okay, so no longer

Days Inn and the Galimore.  
Galimore is down there in

Lincolnvile and the Days Inn  
is over there on US-1. VICKY: Yes.

MELISSA: So those are no longer.  
And those those are being

replaced, if you will, by the  
River House, which is down in

Old City South. And the  
National Guard Armory by the

library. VICKY: Correct. Okay. MELISSA: Now,

how do I know that? If if I'm

not, if I was, if I'm not so  
fortunate to be listening to

this broadcast, or if my  
neighbor asked me, what do I

tell them, how are they  
going to know where to go?

VICKY: Okay, first thing you need to  
do is watch your mailbox

because there's a publication  
coming out by my office. It's

called Citizens Guide to  
Registering and Voting. It will

be delivered to 120,000 plus  
residents in St Johns

County. It's going to every  
residential mailbox in the

county and will be delivered this  
week. So watch for, watch

your mailbox. The first  
thing that's going to come is

the Citizens Guide that has all  
the information about preparing

for the 2022 elections, plus  
information on the new precinct

lines, new polling places. Then,  
in the two weeks following that,

watch your mailbox again.  
Because every registered voter

in St Johns County is going  
to be mailed a new voter

information card, giving them  
and letting them know their new

districts. The new precincts,  
the new polling place, and like

I said, 78% may have not, have  
not changed. However, some

have. MELISSA: So, even if mine hasn't  
changed, I'll still get a card.

VICKY: Absolutely. MELISSA: Everybody's getting  
a brand-new card. VICKY: Everybody in

St Johns County, if you are  
registered voter will be

getting a new voter information  
card from my office. MELISSA: Okay. So,

watch the mail box coming. I'm  
just going to do a quick

station identification. You are  
listening to The Break Room, I'm

Melissa Wissel, Communications  
Director for the City of St.

Augustine. And today in studio  
with me, I have Vicky Oakes.

She is the Supervisor of  
Elections for St Johns

County. So, Vicky, let's talk  
about voting itself. How do I

vote? I mean, I know how I

vote. I check the box where I

go to the polling place. How do  
we vote? VICKY: Voting's never been

easier than it is today. Any  
registered voter can request a

ballot and vote by mail. You  
can vote early. We have a

period, time period before each  
election. And as a last resort,

your precinct is always open on  
Election Day from 7AM to 7PM.

So, Melissa, it's really your  
choice. MELISSA: Okay. So, if I, so I

don't have to be out of the  
area physically to vote by by

mail. It's a convenience thing.

VICKY: That's correct and Florida's a

no excuse state. If you want to  
vote by mail, all you have to

do is ask. MELISSA: Is there a deadline  
that I have to ask by to get my

ballot? VICKY: Yes, it's about 10 days  
before the election. MELISSA: Okay, so I

can't go in or request it like  
2 days before. My, my vote by mail

ballot. VICKY: You can come in the  
office and request one in

person. But we stop  
mailing them. So, now's

a great time. You can go right  
on our website. People can use

the tool, the my voter status.  
If they can't remember whether

or not they have a request on  
file. They can look and see,

because after this year, the  
requests are only going to be

good for one year. It's very  
possible that if people voted

by mail in 2020 and they made  
their request for the two

general elections that they  
have a request on file already

for this year. MELISSA: Okay. But then  
you're you're saying that it's

possible then that we're  
going to have to renew that

request each year. It's not,  
just going to be indefinite.

VICKY: That's correct. That's the new  
law. There were some law

changes the last couple of  
years too. MELISSA: So vote by mail. I

can vote early, but that's  
physically going in. VICKY: Right.

That's voting in person.  
And for the August primary, we

will have eight days of early



voting, from August the

13th through the

20th, our regular six

locations, and our, they will

all be open from 9AM to 6PM

daily. That includes two

weekends. MELISSA: Okay. And that's for

early voting? VICKY: Right. MELISSA: In August

and also in November, I can

vote early? VICKY: Yes, we'll have

almost two full weeks of early

voting for the November general

election, again two weekends.

MELISSA: Now you mentioned six locations,

and I think maybe general, you

told me there was eight. So we

have how many total voting

place, voting locations? VICKY: Okay, so

early voting. We have six for

the primary. Eight for the  
general. We now have, with our

new lines. We have 53  
precincts. And we have 41

polling locations. Some precincts share polling locations.

MELISSA: So we're not, you need to be  
careful if you're going to vote

early in person. Your your  
place may not be the place you

go for early voting. VICKY: Well, the  
greatest thing about early

voting is there's no wrong  
place to go. You can go

anywhere. MELISSA: That's open. VICKY: In the  
county, any of our six early

voting locations. MELISSA: Got it. Okay.

VIKCY: But on election day, you are

required to go to your assigned  
precinct to vote in person.

MELISSA: Okay, and that's going to come  
on my card. VICKY: Got it, right. MELISSA: In

the mail. VIKCY: Right. MELISSA: But when all  
else fails, go to the website,

VoteSJC. gov. VICKY: Right. MELISSA: It's a  
fabulous website. The only

other thing I wanted to ask  
you, voting in person on

election day, for me, there's  
just something about going on

election day. Feeling like  
today was the day and today of

it. VICKY: We do have our  
traditionalists, but you know,

Melissa, trends really are  
changing over the last few

years. And do you know in the  
November 2020 general election

where St Johns County had an  
85% voter turnout. Third

highest in the state, only  
15% of our voters went to

the polls on election day to  
count their cast their vote. MELISSA: So

we had 85% voted and only 15%  
of that was in person. On

election day. VICKY: On election day  
yes. MELISSA: Wow. So we're taking

advantage of those early  
options or by mail. VICKY: Yes. MELISSA: But

we're voting. VICKY: Yes. MELISSA: And we like  
to see that. VICKY: Yes. I wish, now

that was for a general  
election. Unfortunately, we

don't see that kind of turnout  
in the primary. Sadly, it's

only been 26, 28, 29% in the last

few primaries. Those are  
important elections, because so

many of our local elected  
officials are elected in our

primary. MELISSA: Yes. Well, let's do a  
big shout out to make sure that

you're registered to vote. Come  
out for the primary in August.

Take advantage of early voting.  
And we'll have you back to tell

us what our trend is looking  
like at the end of this

election season. We might have  
you back in before November. But

thank you for joining me.

VICKY: Thanks for having me. MELISSA: It's

always great pleasure to have  
you. The Break Room is now a

podcast. So, if you missed part  
of this broadcast and want to

listen from the beginning, or

share it with your friends,

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Until next time. Thanks for

tuning in. ANNOUNCER: You've been

listening to The Break Room, a

weekly program addressing

projects and programs offered

by the City of St Augustine.

Join us each week as the City's

Communications Director,

Melissa Wissel, has in-depth  
conversations with the people

who make our town work to meet  
the needs of our community. The

Break Room is produced by  
Communication Specialist for

the City of St Augustine,  
Cindy Walker. See you at this

time next week for another  
edition of The Break Room.