

About our city . . .

HISTORY: Jacksonville's origins go back to 1564 when French Huguenots formed the first Protestant colony in America, just minutes from the present downtown. It is named for Andrew Jackson, the first provisional Governor of Florida. During the Civil War it was virtually depopulated, and in 1901 a Great Fire destroyed more than half the city, which was rebuilt just seven years later. A major port, the heart of Jacksonville sits on the St. Johns River, 18 miles west of where it empties into the Atlantic.

SIZE: The 19th largest city in the country, Jacksonville serves a metropolitan area of 832,600. The U.S. Census Bureau cites Jacksonville as the fastest growing of the nation's largest cities. Covering 840 square miles, it is also the largest city in the continental United States. The consolidation of city and county governments in 1968, to improve the efficiency and unity of government, has created one of the most progressive areas in the country.

HOTELS - RESTAURANTS - SHOPPING: Three downtown hotels with a total 951 guest rooms are available to visitors and a 350-room hotel is under construction, opening early 1987. 40 public restaurants offer a variety of cuisines. Charter boats on the St. Johns River are available and an old fashioned paddlewheel dinner-excursion boat will be operating in spring 1986, with a seating capacity of 400. One major department store and over 75 specialty shops serve the central business district.

PARKING: There are 34,000 parking spaces downtown and over 10,000 spaces are available for lease on a monthly basis. The Downtown Development Authority is currently studying additional parking requirements for downtown's Northbank and Southbank.

ENTERTAINMENT: Jacksonville and All That Jazz, one of the world's largest free jazz festivals, draws over 100,000 people during its annual fall weekend. A week-long Country Music Fest, River Day, Party in the Park, a spectacular July 4th celebration, and a Spring Music Festival with nationally known performers, bring quality entertainment to Jacksonville each year.

THE ARTS: Jacksonville boasts a symphony orchestra with regional ranking, featuring many world renown guest artists. Live theatre flourishes with both professional and amateur companies providing a wide gamut of productions year-round. Our Florida Ballet is one of the Southeast's finest regional, professional companies. The city is home to three museums: the Cummer Gallery, the Jacksonville Art Museum, and the Museum of Arts and Sciences which houses the Brest Planetarium.

SPORTS: The renowned Gator Bowl is located downtown, which hosts the annual Gator Bowl football classic, the annual Florida-Georgia football clash, and is the home of the Jacksonville Bulls, USFL football team. In addition, the Gator Bowl sponsors a wide variety of events each year: a college basketball tournament, a tennis tournament, and a regatta, to name a few. The Jacksonville Expos Double-A baseball team, play in Wolfson Park. Pleasure boating, fishing, and an annual 15 kilometer River Run focus on the St. Johns river downtown.

PUBLIC PLACES: The Riverwalk, a leisure time activity center, provides pedestrian access in a park-like setting, to a variety of amenities and establishments on the Southbank. Metropolitan Park, on downtown's Northbank, is a 23-acre waterfront facility for picnicking, strolling, sunning and family activities. Hemming Plaza, a charming brick square with trees and benches, presents a peaceful oasis in the heart of the CBD. A Rouse festival marketplace opens in 1987, on our downtown riverfront.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: A variety of college credit and non-credit courses are offered by Florida Junior College and the University of North Florida, on campuses located downtown. The majority of curriculum is designed by employers, labor agencies, etc., to meet specific needs of a business or industry.

HERITAGE: Since 1979, approximately \$92 million has been devoted to renovating 1.1 million square feet of downtown's historic buildings. 37 projects have been involved in this rehabilitation effort, to date.