

**Earth Day-Arbor Day Celebration
City Square Community Garden - April 22, 2012
Mayor Van W. Johnson, Sr., - Remarks**

Once again, it's an honor and privilege for me to join you as we celebrate another Earth Day in Apalachicola.

Earth Day started as a national movement to place emphasis on protecting the environment after a massive oil spill devastated the coast of Santa Barbara, California over four decades ago.

However, here in the unique city of Apalachicola we have found ways to couple the celebration of Earth Day with other important community activities.

I'm reminded of our very first Earth Day celebration, where our local clergy came out and blessed the works of this garden and all the hands that till of its soil – and just last year, the celebration felled on Good Friday - the organizers coupled that event with Arbor Day, and we planted a tree.

Today, we not only celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day together, we also celebrate the conception of City Square Community Garden, conceived in 2008 by a group of community-minded organizers, led by Karla Ambos and Jenny Billings.

Since its conception, City Square Community Garden has served as much more than just “making community flowers” as expressed by one resident. It has served as I've often stated - a catalyst to bring the people of Apalachicola together.

Generating from this place is an overwhelming sense of community - where people are chatting, sharing moments and ideas, and getting to know one another better.

Today, we continue that course - by dedicating the newest addition to this garden – namely this pavilion - with this entire area serving as a physical portal to connect all of Apalachicola.

So you see, for Apalachicola today's celebration really isn't just about Earth Day or Arbor Day - it's about every day. Everyday living in Apalachicola.

It's about one community - under God, working together so that all can experience the joy, peace, and tranquility of living in a small historic coastal community.

Happy Earth Day Apalachicola and Happy Fourth Anniversary City Square Community Garden.