

SARAH 'SAM' SEEVERS

Make no mistake about it....Council Member and Mayor Pro-Tem Sarah "Sam" Seevers is passionate about Destin! She works enthusiastically to give her community a better quality of life.

As Owner & Associate Publisher for LIFE'S A BEACH PUBLICATIONS of Destin, Seevers knows first-hand the value of Destin's natural resources to this community. A Destin resident for more than 30 years, she married and raised two children in this community. Seevers has long been active in the community. So active in fact, that she received the 2007 Destin Chamber of Commerce's Community Service Award, given annually to a community leader for his/her commitment to making Destin a better place to live work and play.

For Seevers, it is all about "the vision." The City's vision of Destin being a world-class beach and fishing resort community that seeks to carefully and proactively balance quality of life for its residents and visitors, while preserving its heritage and environment – that drives her. As a council member, Seevers has crusaded long and hard for visionary projects such as a campaigning for promoting beach warning flags, advocating lifeguards for Destin's beaches, supporting beach restoration, and encouraging revitalization of the Destin Harbor.

In 2001, she developed an idea to partner with the YMCA to build a swimming pool for Destin's residents. This past year, after years of contracts and negotiations, her dream turned into reality when the YMCA opened an aquatics



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facility consisting of a 25 meter heated lap pool, children's water splash zone, and a family pool with a lazy river including water slides.

First and foremost, Sam is an ardent believer of Destin's young people. Since 2004, she has been a youth mentor to a child in the "Take Stock In Children" program. That child is now in her sophomore year in high school and on the honor roll. Seevers' commitment will continue, with the same child, until she graduates.

During the past year, Seevers has spearheaded the formation of the Destin Youth Council. Seevers proposed the idea in 2007 and the Destin City Council voted unanimously to pursue it. Sam said she wanted to give Destin teens a vehicle for speaking up about city policy and programs.

The Destin Youth Council can already take credit for two accomplishments during the past 12 months. First, the teens convinced the City to revive its "inactive" Adopt-a-Street program. This program lets groups and individuals commit to make litter pickups on local streets they adopt. Then, the youth council helped sway the city council to renovate a recreation building at a local park into a youth center. It had been planned for demolition. After a year of meetings, proposals and discussion the 14 member board youth council proclaims, "It still has work to do."

Under Council Member Seevers guidance, as the chair of the Destin Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the effort to implement a harbor



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redevelopment plan is underway. In particular, Seevers strongly advocated for the City to purchase property on the harbor for public use. The “festival marketplace” section of the boardwalk will serve as a gateway to the harbor. It will draw people to the water. The park is named after a longtime charter boat captain and community leader. Sam also believes it is important that the park’s design be consistent with Destin’s character and flavor.

Continuing in her role as a community consensus builder, Seevers took the lead to save the iconic “Welcome to Destin...the World’s Luckiest Fishing Village” sign, which has stood at the gateway to Destin for 40 years. When the sign was to be removed by Air Force officials she negotiated an agreement between the City and Military officials allowing the sign to remain. Newspaper accounts credit her with “single-handedly saving the sign.”

At first glance, you may think that taking on other public service roles would NOT even fit into Council Member Seevers schedule. Well, you would be wrong. As the Vice President of the Rotary Club, an Honorary Commander for the 68th Electronic Warfare Squadron at Eglin AFB, and as past President of the Northwest Florida League of Cities, Seevers continues to set her sights on making Destin better by taking an “up-front” position.

She lobbies lawmakers in both Tallahassee and Washington DC. She has served on several Florida League of Cities committees, the Federal Action Strike Team, District 1 Director on the Board, and the Advocacy Committee, as well as



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serving on the Municipal Loan Council, as part of her efforts to do things that are best for Destin, best for Northwest Florida and best for all of Florida.

As President of the Northwest Florida League of Cities, Sam saw her role as a unifier. She implemented the "Sam Hayes Scholarship" program, a first and only in the state, scholarship program that allowed elected officials to attend Institute Municipal training at no cost to their cities. Another of her top priorities was to create better communication by creating a monthly e-mail newsletter with a calendar of events, current issues, and a city spotlight section. Sam is always willing to do new things, take on new tasks and charge forward to get things accomplished.

Therefore, it is without hesitation that the City of Destin nominates Council Member Sarah "Sam" Seevers for the 2008 Council Member of the Year Award given by the Florida League of Cities "Florida Cities of Excellence Award."

