THE CORRIDOR REPORT

Florida's corridor, decoded every week.

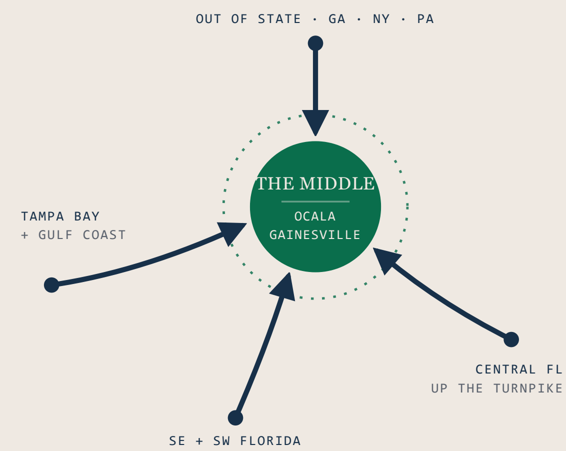
Expert weekly intelligence on the North Central Florida corridor, the booming interior between the coasts, and the trends, money, and risk reshaping it. Kane Brooks, Keller Williams Gainesville.

THE LEAD · WHAT MOVED THE CORRIDOR THIS WEEK

NOAA just cut the hurricane forecast again.

The migration to the middle

Coastal Florida, the Turnpike, and out-of-state movers, converging on Alachua, Marion, and the ring.



ORIGINS, THE COASTS + BEYOND

THE MIDDLE THEY ARE BUYING

THE RING, THE COUNTIES AROUND IT

The ring is Columbia, Levy, Sumter, Suwannee, Gilchrist, and Lake, the six counties the middle is spilling into.

75% *the odds NOAA now gives a below-normal Atlantic season, up from 55 percent in May.*

SOURCE · FL OIR / COUNTY RATE FILINGS · 2026

The forecast that helps set the price of living in Florida just got smaller again. In its August 6 mid-season update NOAA cut the 2026 Atlantic outlook to **7 to 13 named storms**, 2 to 6 hurricanes and 0 to 2 major, down from the May call, and lifted the odds of a below-normal season from 55 percent to **75 percent**, leaving a 5 percent chance of an above-normal year. Two named storms have formed and not one hurricane. The driver is a Pacific El Nino running 2.07 degrees hot, whose wind shear tears Atlantic storms apart before they organize. The September peak is still ahead, and a quiet sky is a season, not a repriced risk.

SOURCES · FL OIR / COUNTY RATE FILINGS 2026 · REDFIN 2026 · FAU CLIMATE SURVEY 2026

2.07°C

The Pacific is running record hot

The El Nino zone sits 2.07 degrees Celsius, about 3.7 Fahrenheit, above average, ahead of where the 2015, 1997, 1991 and 1982 events stood. Possibly the strongest since records began in 1950.

Source · NOAA, Aug 2026

278,662

The state insurer keeps emptying out

Citizens policies in force hit an all-time low on June 20, down from 1.41 million in October 2023. When the insurer of last resort empties, private carriers are taking the risk back.

Source · Florida Trend, Jun 2026

35

The flood program runs on extensions

Congress has passed 35 short-term reauthorizations of the National Flood Insurance Program since the last full one lapsed in 2017. The current authority expires September 30.

Source · Nat'l Assn of Realtors, 2026

THE READ THIS WEEK *"A quiet season lowers the risk. It does not lower the cost."* PAGE 4

THE FEED · WHAT CHANGED THIS WEEK

What changed this week.

Four sourced developments moving the corridor, and why each bends the migration inland.

A town of 8,800 has approved more than 6,000 housing permits

ON THE GROUND

Newberry is the fastest-growing community in Alachua County, with more than **6,000 housing permits** approved and more pending against a 2026 population of 8,830, up 19.7 percent since the 2020 census. Newberry Ridge and Sandia West alone account for over 1,700 approved homes. The city opened an $8.9 million city hall in January, built for the next twenty years of it.

Source · Mainstreet Daily News · 2026

The House voted 107 to 3 to free the Ocklawaha. The Senate did not.

THE WILD CARD

HB 981 would have directed DEP to plan removal of the Kirkpatrick dam, which has blocked the Ocklawaha in Putnam County since 1968, with restoration due by 2032. It cleared the House 107 to 3 in March, then died without a Senate vote for the second year running. The river links the Silver River to the St. Johns, so it sets the water and recreation economy on Marion's eastern edge.

Source · First Coast News · 2026 session

The latest on WEC: another 15 acres, a fourth parcel in nine months

THE DRIVERS

Part two of the land story. The Roberts family paid **$6 million** for 15 acres near the northwest Ocala campus on August 2, after a $7.5 million farm in December, a $4.5 million farm on May 1 and 13 acres for $1.2 million on May 13. The buyer is not assembling land for a horse show, it is assembling a district, and every parcel resets the comparable next door.

Source · Ocala-News.com · Aug 2026

Florida sales run a tenth straight month of growth, supply at 4.5 months

THE MONEY

Statewide closed sales of existing single-family homes reached **26,036** in June, up 9.3 percent year over year, with the median at $432,000, up 4.9 percent, and inventory at 4.5 months. Florida Realtors' own read is that conditions vary by community and price point, which is the whole reason a corridor buyer should not trade on the statewide number.

Source · Florida Realtors · Jun 2026

WHAT TO WATCH

— **September 10.** The statistical peak of the Atlantic season. Two named storms and no hurricane so far, with NOAA's below-normal odds now at 75 percent.

— **September 30.** Federal flood insurance authority lapses at 11:59 p.m. unless Congress acts. A lapse stalls any closing that requires a new flood policy.

— **The 2027 session.** The Ocklawaha dam bill returns after two Senate deaths. A removal plan would reshape water and recreation on Marion's eastern edge.

BY THE NUMBERS

6.69% 30-YR FIXED A fifth straight weekly rise, now above last year's 6.63%. Freddie Mac · Aug 6 2026	$279,000 MARION COUNTY MEDIAN Down 3.7% a year, while Alachua sits at $340,000, up 4.3%. Redfin · Jul 2026	$4,974 OCALA HOME INSURANCE Gainesville $4,259, against $16,123 in Miami, same policy. MoneyGeek · 2026
4.5 mo FL SINGLE-FAMILY SUPPLY Condos and townhouses sit at 8.1 months, nearly double. Florida Realtors · Jun 2026	$1,549 OCALA AVERAGE RENT Up 3.49% a year; Gainesville is $1,824, up 1.77%. RentCafe · 2026	$3.83 FL AVERAGE GAS Regular unleaded statewide, a live line item on any commute. AAA · Aug 3 2026

THE FEATURE · THE RENTAL MATH

Where a landlord's dollar goes further.

The corridor's two anchors sit 25 miles apart and rent nothing alike. The market with no university and no captive student demand is the one with faster rent growth and cheaper entry, while short-term supply arrives fast enough to change the math a landlord underwrote last year.

Ocala / Marion

THE FASTER MOVER

$1,549	+3.49%	$279,000
AVERAGE APARTMENT RENT	RENT, YEAR OVER YEAR	COUNTY MEDIAN, −3.7%

The cheaper anchor is also the faster one. Ocala's average apartment rent rose **3.49 percent** to $1,549 while the county median sale price eased 3.7 percent to $279,000. Rent climbing into a softening purchase price is the cleanest yield setup the corridor has offered in three years.

Source · RentCafe / Redfin · 2026

Gainesville / Alachua

BIGGER RENT, SLOWER CLIMB

$1,824	+1.77%	$340,000
AVERAGE APARTMENT RENT	RENT, YEAR OVER YEAR	COUNTY MEDIAN, +4.3%

Gainesville carries the higher absolute rent, $1,824, and grows it at roughly **half Ocala's pace**. The university floor steadies occupancy, but the metro shed about 600 jobs over the year, so the premium a landlord pays here buys stability rather than momentum.

Source · RentCafe / FloridaCommerce · 2026

Short-term rentals

SUPPLY IS OUTRUNNING IT

53%	$153	+131%
OCALA STR OCCUPANCY	AVERAGE NIGHTLY RATE	ACTIVE LISTINGS, 1 YR

Ocala's Airbnb and Vrbo field averages 53 percent occupancy at a **$153** nightly rate, workaday numbers built on event and equestrian demand rather than beach season. Active listings grew 131 percent in a year, so anyone underwriting on last year's occupancy is pricing against a field that has doubled.

Source · AirDNA / Rabbu · 2026

THE READ

A quiet season is not a cheap one.

THE READ · BY KANE BROOKS

NOAA cut the hurricane forecast again this week, and I want to be careful about what that does and does not mean. A **75 percent** chance of a below-normal season is real relief for this year. It is not a change in what a house costs to carry. The El Nino behind it is weather, and weather turns.

What actually moves the carrying cost showed up in the same week. Citizens is at an all-time low of **278,662** policies, which means private carriers want Florida risk again, and that is the mechanism behind the rate cuts now being filed. Meanwhile the federal flood program's authority expires September 30, and Congress has extended it 35 times since 2017. The sky got quieter. The paperwork did not.

So I underwrite the line items, not the forecast. Insurance quotes before an offer, the flood zone confirmed before a closing date is set, and a rate decision made on the 6.69 percent in front of us rather than the one we hoped for. In this corridor those three numbers settle more deals than the weather ever has.

Kane Brooks

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

If you're buying	Get the insurance quote and flood determination before you write, not after inspection. With the federal program's authority set to expire **September 30**, do not schedule a closing that needs a new flood policy tight to that date.
If you're selling	A calmer forecast adds nothing to your listing, but a documented low premium does. Pull your declarations page and wind mitigation report before showings. In the corridor, a buyer's carrying cost is what closes the deal.
If you own here	Ocala rents rose **3.49 percent** into a median that fell 3.7 percent, the cleanest yield setup here in three years. On short-term, re-run occupancy: the active listing count grew 131 percent in a year.

SOURCES & DATA VINTAGE

U.S. Census Bureau · FHFA House Price Index (through Q3 2025) · NAR / MLS Campus 2026 forecast · Longyield 2026 · Florida OIR / industry insurance filings 2026 · FL SB 4-D · FL DOR (Save Our Homes) · 352today 2026 · KeyCrew 2026 · UF / IFAS · Bosshardt 2026 · Redfin 2026 · FAU climate survey 2026 · Pegasus 2026. Rates, corridor median / DOM / supply, gas, commute, and weather refresh each issue from the named source; no unsourced figure ships.

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