



## **Circle Square Foundation Breaks Ground for Florida Aquatics Swimming and Training (FAST)**

*Ocala, Florida* – The Circle Square Foundation celebrated the groundbreaking for the new aquatic center, Florida Aquatics Swimming and Training (FAST), on Tuesday, October 27, 2020, with community members and dignitaries. Among the attendees were Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn, Marion County Commissioners Michelle Stone and Carl Zalak, Ocala Chamber of Economic Commerce and Partnership Chair Angie Lewis, Judge Steven Rogers, and President of College of Central Florida Dr. James Henningsen. The General Contractor for the project, Parrish McCall Constructors, were in attendance, and Wannemacher Jensen Architects Jason Jensen and Sarah Lyons. The US Olympic Swim Team Coach Gregg Troy, Ocala Marlins Head Coach Bill Vargo, Gator Swim Club Head Coach Robert Pinter, UF Swimmer Elise Bauer, and Speedo USA representative Lauren Yeager were also in attendance.

FAST will provide a wide variety of programs beyond recreation and competition. County Commissioner Michelle Stone spoke to the plans for the community involvement, "Our local Marion County Fire Rescue Department will be able to use this facility for training projects." The programs at FAST will include swim lessons, drowning prevention, aquatic therapy and fitness, and life-saving water training for lifeguards and fire and rescue personnel. There is also an indoor fitness facility for optimal dryland athletic training.

Coach Gregg Troy spoke to his involvement with the facility's planning, "I put some of my input into the facility's planning. I really believe FAST will be one of the five best swimming facilities in the country." The covered pool—called a natatorium—will feature an indoor 10-lane 50 meter/25 yd competition pool, an outdoor 8-lane 50 meter/25 yd/25-meter competition pool, and a splash pool with lounge seating and shade.

FAST will be located across the street from the Ocala Recreation Sportsplex in Southwest Ocala. With the closing of the Newton A. Perry Aquatic Complex at the College of Central Florida, FAST will become home to local high schools and numerous local aquatics programs initially organized by the non-profit organization Ocala Aquatics.

Kenneth Colen, Trustee of Circle Square Foundation, spoke to the mission of FAST, "The mission of FAST is to train swimmers and athletes of all ages and abilities to go beyond their best through exceptional coaching, premier facilities, and cutting-edge athletic programming."

Executive Director of the Circle Square Foundation, Rebecca Rogers, was the emcee for the event and expressed gratitude and appreciation for all in attendance and everyone involved in the FAST facility's planning. There was a moment of silence at the start of the event to acknowledge the unexpected passing of esteemed Ocala Police Chief Greg Graham.

FAST is expected to open in late 2021.

For more information about FAST, please visit [floridafast.com](http://floridafast.com) and swim social with us (@swimfloridafast).

