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FLORIDA HUMANITIES COUNCIL
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Regional public-television documentaries

explore distinctive Florida communities

The Florida Humanities Council is sponsoring four regional public-television programs that premiere Thursday, May 13, as companions to the statewide documentary "Imagining a New Florida."

The regional programs—produced by WJCT-Jacksonville, WEDU-West Central Florida, WUSF-Tampa, and WGCU-Fort Myers—also air statewide Sunday, May 16 on most Florida public-television stations. Check local listings for details. Each regional program looks at the issue of developing community from a different Florida perspective:

- "Jacksonville Beach: Through the Change," produced by WJCT—Jacksonville, examines how Jacksonville Beach maintains its unique identity and whether its sense of community is important to the residents and their quality of life. The half-hour program looks into the history of the beach and its neighborhoods and includes the views of a cross-section of residents, urban planners and architects, and government leaders.

- “Venice, Florida: Moving Forward by Looking Back,” produced by WEDU–West Central Florida, looks at the legacy of John Nolen, who designed Venice in the 1920s as a walkable community built around nature, and reports on the city’s current efforts to create a better place in a new time. The half-hour program delves into issues involving New Urbanism today and citizen involvement in plans for the future of Venice.
- “St. Petersburg: New Place in the Sun,” produced by WUSF–Tampa, explores the urban transformation ongoing in historic downtown St. Petersburg, focusing on its livability and issues related to “redeveloping paradise.” The half-hour program traces how St. Petersburg, once an important resort, declined into a retiree haven nicknamed “God’s waiting room” before re-energizing its downtown and embarking on what may be a cultural sea change.
- “Florida: Heaven on Earth?” produced by WGCU–Fort Myers, examines the origins and development of four spiritual communities in Florida—the Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp, the Koreshan Unity, Kashi Ashram, and Ave Maria—and looks at the importance of ideas and motivations in the creation of sustainable communities. The one-hour program provides an overview of each of these distinctive communities and explores the spiritual motivations and quest for utopia involved in the creation of each—and how their experiences may help inform our notions of how community is created.

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