

# UNION COUNTY TIMES

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## Boat ramp improvements to focus on east side



The proposed improvements would enhance amenities along the boat ramp's east side, where the pier extends from a sidewalk.

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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The Lake Butler City Commission went along with a recommendation by engineers to abandon plans for a sidewalk on the west side of the Lakeside Park boat ramp and instead focus on improvements for the ramp's east side.

Jeffrey Antonacci, a project manager for Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering, told commissioners that the city's grant money would be better spent focusing on the east side of the ramp.

He said his firm's design for the east side includes a pile retaining wall instead of a more expensive concrete retaining wall.

"We think the (pile) retaining wall right now will be a better service to you," he said. "(It) will be cheaper, it'll be easier to construct, and will also look nice."

Antonacci told commissioners the pile retaining wall is common on Florida's east and west coasts, as well as inland water bodies.

"What we would do is we would... drive sheet piling into the lake bottom and we would cap that with a six-foot-eight to six-foot-nine-inch-wide

concrete sidewalk," he said. "That would be nice, would match pretty nicely with the existing pier."

"Our plan would also include lighting," he said. "We would install lighting starting there at the beginning of the asphalt where the asphalt driveway goes into the boat ramp. We would provide lighting along that sidewalk."

Mayor Melissa Hendrix said lighting is essential to the project because citizens often fish from the pier at night.

Commissioner Joe Stephenson said that in previous designs, boat slips had been included in the project, where up to six boats could park. He asked why the slips were not included in the current plans.

"We don't have the money for that," replied Hendrix, adding that city staff recently had to remove rotting wooden slips from the ramp area to avoid state fines, and floating, aluminum slips were cost-prohibitive.

"Is that something that we could add at a later time?" Stephenson asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the mayor.

Antonacci said the bottleneck for advancing the project is obtaining permits, which he hoped to get by Christmas.

A state grant will fund the boat ramp improvements.

## No living in campers or sheds

### City of Lake Butler to enforce rules

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Dan@BcTelegraph.com

Lake Butler City Commissioners gave City Manager Kim Hayes the green light to start code enforcement proceedings against residents living in campers, sheds, and travel trailers.

Hayes said that before she started enforcing the city's rules regarding such living arrangements, she wanted to check with commissioners, anticipating many complaints.

**Some shed and camper residents have illegally hooked up to the city's sewer system, while others have dumped raw sewage into ditches.**

"Because me riding around," Hayes told commissioners, "I have seen a lot of that. So, before I touch on that one, just that one's going to upset a lot of people. There are a lot of people living in campers, and there are a lot of people living in sheds."

Mayor Melissa Hendrix said that at one point, former Mayor Jack Schenck made daily rounds to inform residents of the city's rules.

"We got it cleaned up," Hendrix said, "but now they're coming back, and it's not really fair to the rest of us who are paying our taxes and

paying our bills, and then they're piggybacking off of that."

Hayes said some people living illegally in campers have hooked up to the city's sewer system and are using Lake Butler utilities free of charge.

Hayes also said many Lake Butler homeowners are renting their backyard sheds and campers.

Both Hayes and Hendrix stated that they have observed backyard structure residents discharging raw sewage into ditches.

Vice Mayor Rondoll Huggins advised his colleagues to prepare for complaints, noting that noncompliant residents would likely come armed with photos of other city code violations, claiming they were being singled out.

Hendrix said other code violations should be enforced as well. She instructed Hayes to proceed with enforcement.

"We have the policy, so we just enforce it," she said. "So, just enforce the policy."



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## WORTH NOTING

### Back-to-School Bash in Brooker

Brooker Community School is holding a Back-to-School Bash for new and returning students on Saturday, Aug. 9, beginning at 10 a.m. Come grab a free backpack and school supplies for the new year and enjoy a free hotdog lunch.

The first day of school is Aug. 12. For information about enrolling in the charter school, call 352-485-1545 or visit [www.brookercommunityschool.com](http://www.brookercommunityschool.com).

### LB VFW hosts bingo

Lake Butler VFW Post 10082 has bingo on Thursdays at 7 p.m. The VFW is located off C.R. 231 just outside of Lake Butler. Look for the sign on the left (coming from town).

### Union County food distribution

Food is distributed in Union County at the Hal Y. Maines Community Center on the third Thursday of each month from 9-10:30 a.m. or while supplies last. The center is located at 155 NW Third St. in Lake Butler. The giveaway is sponsored by Florida Gateway Foodbank and Catholic Charities.

### Family histories sought for new book

The Union County Historical Society is hard at work on a second book about the county's history and the families that made it happen.

Members are actively collecting family histories and information on Union County history. To inquire about the project or to submit a family history item, interested parties can email the society at [theucbook@gmail.com](mailto:theucbook@gmail.com).

### Hospital has program for seniors

Lake Butler Hospital has a program for those 55 and older to keep them active, sharp and connected. Gather practical health wisdom to make your days brighter and more independent. Laugh, learn and grow with folks who share your zest for life. Each event will include delicious snacks, keepsakes and a chance to win prizes.

The program takes place every second Thursday each month from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Lake Butler Hospital. Let them know to expect you by calling 386-496-9277.



**Mac Johns rails against "swamp-divisions"**  
Page 5

**Dad was seeking custody of kids when Mom killed him, Page 6**



## Union ambulances stuck at hospitals

### County to charge facilities for wait times

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Dan@BcTelegraph.com

Union County Commissioners approved a new fee schedule that the county will start charging healthcare facilities whenever emergency medical crews stay more than 20 minutes at a hospital after delivering a patient.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services Director Brent Allen said hospitals are holding up his crews and those from other counties when delivering patients.

"What's supposed to happen is the hospital automatically accepts

that patient," he told commissioners. "That's part of (the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act). If they don't have a room to put that patient in, they leave the patient on our stretcher and ask us to stay with them. We are going to do what's best for the patient. We're going to stay with them. But at the same time, we are paying that truck and those clinicians to be responding to calls in Union County."

Allen said his department is not the only one facing increasing wait times at hospitals.

"It has become a problem," he told commissioners. "A lot of counties are facing it. I've talked to other chiefs, and some of the ways that we're addressing that is they're addressing this by charging the hospitals for their crews being there."

Allen added that not all hospitals are holding up his crews.

According to the fee schedule, the county will bill a hospital \$287 after a crew has been at the facility for 20 minutes. The fee increases by \$108 for each additional 15 minutes, with a base rate reassessment every hour. If a crew was detained at a hospital for two hours and five minutes, the total charge would

**"We're not looking to make money off of this. We're looking to get our ambulances back in the county to serve our citizens."**  
**Union County Board of County Commissioners Chair Channing Dobbs.**

be \$1,617.

Allen said that according to other area fire chiefs, hospitals are paying the invoices sent to them by other jurisdictions.

"Hospitals are paying this right now," he said. "They don't see it as a problem. Our goal is that it does become a financial problem for them, and we get our resources back, and they address the problem on their end."

"We want our guys back," he added. "That is what we want. The only way we're going to get that is if we start charging them for it."

Allen told commissioners that when analyzing last year's calls, he found 188 cases of ambulances spending more than 20 minutes at hospitals. He stated that if the fee schedule had been in place



Union County Fire and Emergency Medical Services Director Brent Allen

last year, the county would have billed healthcare facilities nearly \$75,000.

He emphasized that the hospital fee is a temporary measure that should not be relied upon for county revenue growth.

"We're not looking to make money off of this," added Board Chair Channing Dobbs. "We're looking to get our ambulances back in the county to serve our citizens."



# 2025 "Pink Ladies" Banquet: A time for recognition and remembrance



Lt. John Townsend and Gertrude Griffis announce the winner of the raffle: Joan White. The raffle for a large gift basket, which included cash and donated items, was the auxiliary's summer fundraiser and raised over \$1,100.

**BY MELISSA PYLE**  
*Special to the Telegraph*

The unwavering faithfulness of volunteers and local emergency workers was celebrated at the Bradford County Auxiliary, also known as "The Pink Ladies," annual banquet on July 8 at the Woman's Club of Starke.

The banquet is traditionally held to recognize the group's volunteers, their hours of service, and money raised. Volunteers accumulated 7,500 hours of combined community service within the past year and are known for their dedication, kindness and life-saving donations.

President Linda Johns spoke about the significant impact the group has had in Bradford County throughout the past, noting that the "Pink Ladies" mission statement is "To render services, provide public relations, and provide financial aid to the health care missions approved by the auxiliary." She said when the

hospital closed the group was no longer known as the Shands Pink Ladies Auxiliary but kept the "Pink Ladies" nickname and refocused their efforts in working with the sheriff's office.

The money they once raised to give to the hospital for needs, is now poured back into the community in various ways. Just one past example was purchasing the county's first jaws of life extraction equipment. Currently, the group has ordered new first aid equipment for patrol cars.

One of the most important services the group currently provides is wellness checks. These checks are a free service for home bound or elderly residents and has saved lives. If a person falls or is otherwise incapacitated, a missed wellness check call will immediately alert local authorities to send a deputy to the home and make sure the resident is safe. Residents are encouraged to tell friends and neighbors about this service and can sign up by calling the sheriff's office.

The event included the announcement of this year's scholarship recipient. The auxiliary offers an endowment scholarship with Sante Fe College. The scholarship is available to anyone preparing to go into the healthcare field and this year's recipient is Neo Addison of Lawtey.

During the banquet, members took a moment to reflect on the lives of two faithful members who have recently passed away; EulaMae Carlton who passed away in December of last year and Ruby Crawford who passed more recently in March. Each was recognized and honored with a memorial table and by their families, who were in attendance.

The banquet was also time for the auxiliary to recognize member's service hours and

to install the 2025 officers: President Linda Johns, First Vice President Charlotte Williams, Second Vice President Loretta Edwards, Recording Secretary Virginia Lindsey, Correspondence Secretary Gertrude Griffis and Treasurer Linda Hildebran.

Johns concluded with a word of encouragement for the attendees and a challenge to spread the word about the program and especially its dire need for new volunteers. Johns

emphasized how volunteers are a vital part of the Bradford community and are needed for the success of the organization's future mission.

"The road to success for our auxiliary is always under construction," she said.

Anyone interested in volunteering for any amount of time can contact the sheriff's office to fill out an application form or call Johns directly at 904-263-0399.



Auxiliary members display their hours of recognition with a decorative bookmark. Pictured are: (front row, l-r) Merry Hess, 1st VP Charlotte Williams, 2nd VP Loretta Edwards, Treasurer Linda Hildebran, (back row) Correspondence Secretary Gertrude Griffis, President Linda K. Johns, Recording Secretary Virginia Linzy, Olivia Scott and Terrell Riley.

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<b>THURSDAY KID SHOW 7/24</b> THE DAY THE EARTH BLEW UP: A LOONEY TUNES MOVIE- 10AM & 1PM <small>All tickets are \$5 and include a small popcorn &amp; drink!</small>	<b>THURSDAY 7/24</b> FI- 6:30 SUPERMAN- 6:30
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**Chloe' Bailey**  
Principal & Kindergarten Teacher  
Hi, my name is Chloe' Bailey! I am the principal and kindergarten teacher for Rainbow Learning Academy! I am so excited about this upcoming school year and the plans God has in store for us! I am a graduate from the University of Florida and former UF and Penn State cheerleader. This will be my third year teaching. I love interacting with the kids and helping them explore all the gifts God has given us.

**Kim Bailey**  
Vice Principal  
Hi, my name is Kim Bailey. I am the vice principal of Rainbow Learning Academy. I have been the owner and director of Little Rainbows Learning Center for 23 years. I graduated from Santa Fe College with a degree in Early Childhood. I am excited where God is going to lead me and this school in the coming years.

**Anay Peretz**  
Kindergarten Teacher

**Zenaida "Zeny" Johns**  
Kindergarten Teacher

**Tiffany Miller**  
1st Grade Teacher

**Darian Tetstone**  
2nd Grade Teacher

**Amy Green**  
3rd Grade Teacher

**Kelsey King**  
4th Grade Teacher

**Maria Oswald**  
Spanish Teacher

**Kristin Muse**  
Home Ec. Teacher

# Clay sheriff: Crime still dropping *Theft and vandalism top Lake Region's reported crime*



Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook

are down by 20%.

"Right now, it looks like we have one confirmed overdose," she told the audience at First Baptist Church in Keystone Heights, "and there may be a second overdose that we're still waiting on the medical examiner to come back with a ruling, but overdoses in general are down."

Cook added that her office is seeing a spike in methamphetamine use.

"Fentanyl's out," she declared. "Meth is back, but we continue to fight the fight."

The sheriff added that traffic continues to be the Number 1 complaint she and her deputies hear daily, and in the first half of the year, her officers made 19,810 traffic stops throughout the county.

Cook said that although calls for service are up, both violent and property crimes are down this year.

## Deputies, technology, community

"There are three reasons why Clay County is safe," Cook said. "The first reason is because of the men and women who wear this uniform every single day who come out and work and put in the work. They're dogged about the pursuit of bad guys, dogged about making sure that they follow up on cases, and they truly have a heart of service."

Cook said the second reason crime is dropping in Clay County is the use of technology, including her office's Safer Watch smartphone app.

"I think we got 1,100 tips last year through (Safer Watch)," she said, plus all the information that we push out. So, it's a two-way communication."

Cook said license plate readers allow her deputies to quickly respond to stolen vehicles and wanted individuals entering the county.

"Within minutes, we know and we're on them," she said. "We have built a reputation in Clay County that other criminals want to avoid us because they know we have the license plate readers and we also have the cameras, the community connect program."

Cook said that although her office does not have "a ton" of cameras, businesses and organizations may voluntarily connect their cameras to the sheriff's office's network, which gives her office a wide range of surveillance capability.

"In fact, I think this church is on our program," she told the First Baptist audience. "If a 911 call were to go out here right now, we would immediately pull up the cameras for this area. We can see what's happening. We can see the bad guy leaving. We can see which direction they're heading, what they're wearing, and what kind of car they're driving. It is a game-changer when we're getting this real-time information."

Cook said the third reason Clay County is safe is because of an engaged community.

"When you have an engaged community, when you have a community that's willing to show up and say, 'Hey, I've got a problem,' or 'Hey, I'm seeing this in my neighborhood,' or 'Hey, I have this concern,' then we have an opportunity to work it," she explained.

"If everybody in this community just gave up and said, 'You know what? We're not calling the police anymore, crime would skyrocket,'" Cook declared. "But because all of you are engaged and you come to meetings like this, you call us when you need something, that's how we keep this community safe."



Wayne McKinney, director of patrol and community affairs.

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Dan@BcTelegraph.com

Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook said crime continues to trend down in the Lake Region and throughout Clay County. Cook made her comments during a July combined meeting of the Clay Chamber's Lake

Region Prosperity Partners, and Sheriff's Net, one of Cook's community outreach platforms.

## Fentanyl is out, meth is back in

Cook reported that overdoses in the Lake Region

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## A whole lot of young deputies out there

Cook also said that if anyone does not get the service they expected from the sheriff's office, they should complain.

"If you don't get the service that you expect," she said. "If we don't show up because of whatever reason or you didn't get the response that you thought you should, call and let us know."

The sheriff said that with over 280,000 calls for service in a year, things will occasionally go wrong.

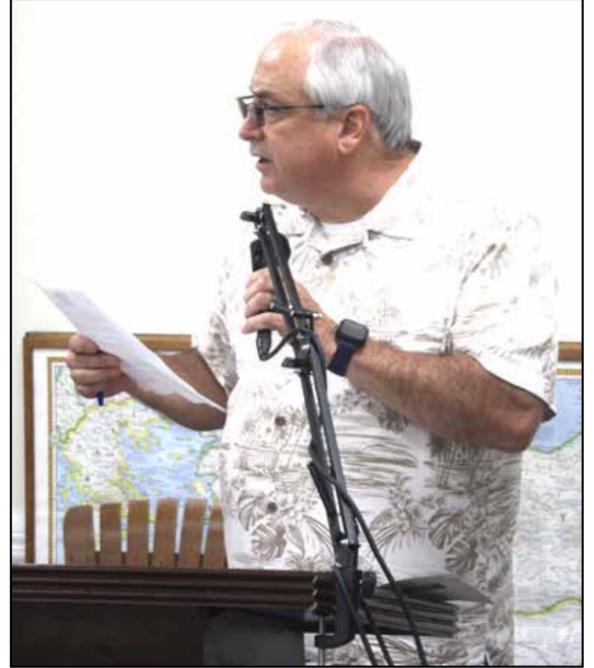
"They're not all going to go perfectly," she said. "We're human. We get distracted. We get pulled to another call."

"We will fix it," she continued. "We have a whole lot of young deputies out there. Boy, they're very young and they're learning and they're really good. They have a good heart. So, we can't fix an issue unless we know that something's not right."

Inexperienced patrol officers was a theme Wayne McKinney, Cook's director of patrol and community affairs, built upon after Cook's presentation.

"Last year we did a study," he said. "I think 70% of our patrol was under two years (of experience). As a deputy sheriff, that's very young. You're learning how to be a deputy sheriff. You're learning what it's like to go deal with the community. They're learning to deal with the stressors that they're faced with."

McKinney said the Clay County Sheriff's Office is still suffering from the exodus of senior and mid-level deputies



Sheriff's Net Chair Todd Beals

when the office failed to keep pace with the salaries of surrounding jurisdictions.

"We lost them because we weren't being competitive in salaries, and the neighboring counties were outpacing us," he said. "Now there's been a lot of huge strides, and Sheriff Cook's come a long way in working with our county commissioners, and we've taken some huge steps to keep us competitive in a rough environment right now because it's a struggle."

Like Cook, McKinney asked the crowd to be patient with his young officers, but to report any problems to the sheriff's office.

"We want to fix it," he said. "I want to correct it. I want to use it as a teaching moment. In some situations, you never know what they just faced, what frustrating call they just left, what they just dealt with. Maybe they didn't talk the right way. I want to correct it, but please give us some grace in that too."

## Petit theft and vandalism

McKinney said the Lake Region's top reported crimes are petit theft and vandalism. He added that much of the theft is retail shoplifting, many times fueled by a drug habit.

"There are some (thefts) from

homes and things like that," he said, "but if it's breaking into a house, it'd be burglary. So, burglary is not even really on the Top 10 list down here."

"Since January, the last six months, we've only had 15 auto burglaries in this area," he said. "We're down 48% this year compared to last year in auto theft. Crime stats don't drop that high very often."

McKinney said that his agency's push to make more drug arrests has resulted in decreases in the crimes that are motivated by drug dependency.

"We've had a 61% increase in the drug arrests that we've been making for drug and narcotics and the equipment that goes with it for this area," he said.

McKinney said the Lake Region's isolation from the rest of Clay County also causes problems.

"When somebody makes an arrest," he explained, "that's one less deputy down here, and it takes a little while to drive to Green Cove, drop them off at the jail, and get back."

McKinney added that with only three deputies covering the portion of the county south of State Road 16, one less officer can make a difference in response time.



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**I**n the natural, a baby needs milk in order to grow and develop properly. As a newborn Christian you need to feed on the Word of God and fellowship with the Lord everyday so you may develop spiritually. Someone in our church asked me, "Where should I start reading and studying in the Bible?" I always tell everyone to start in the Epistles. Those are the letters written to the church, written to you and me. A good place to start is Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians. I will show you why this is important in future lessons. You also need to immediately develop a consistent prayer life along with feeding on God's Word. Prayer is communing with God. If you can talk you can pray. Prayer is talking with God, and as you spend time in the Word and developing your prayer life you will learn to listen on the inside of your spirit and you will learn that prayer is a dialogue not just a monologue. When you speak to God (pray), He will speak to you. Take time to speak to the Heavenly Father, then pause, wait, and listen. In time, you will understand how wonderful a prayer life can truly be. As you would talk to a relative or a close friend you can more easily talk to your Father in heaven. What a life! The best way to begin your prayer is by simply thanking God for what He has done for you. I have been serving God for many years now and I always start my prayer time with Praise and Thanksgiving; "Father in Jesus Name I just want to thank you for saving me, for filling me with the Holy Spirit. I thank

you that all my sins are washed away by the Blood of your Son and my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank you that your Holy Spirit lives inside of me and that He will teach me, lead and guide me everyday of my life." If you will begin your prayer time with Praise and Thanksgiving you will begin to sense the Holy Spirit on the inside leading you into a deeper dimension of prayer. People grow old physically and this is a natural process, but Christians who develop the supernatural life by feeding on the Word of God, praying in the Spirit, and walking in love, will develop spiritually, and grow strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. There is a natural diet, and a super-natural diet. You can be saved for 40 years, go to church, be on the deacon board or some type of ministry in the church and still be a spiritual baby.

**M**any Christians never pursue the things of the Spirit after they are saved, and they do not continue seeking after God, but continue on with their normal everyday lives believing that God will force feed or dump on them whatever they may need and this is not true. In Galatians 3:3, we read, "Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh?" No, the idea is that after we are born-again, we should grow and develop to a place whereby our recreated human spirits begin to dominate our mind and our bodies. We begin to grow and mature as we live and walk in the Spirit. Develop your spiritual life, it is the eternal life. We'll continue next week. Until then, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**Pastor Rick**

22610 HWY 301 N, Lawtey, FL 32058



Max McDaniels spoke to the group about human trafficking.

# Starke city clerk's race

## Heeder says the woman for the job already has it

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Lisa Heeder's decision to run for city clerk was simple: she wants to keep her job.

The position of city clerk has been vacant since the resignation of Jimmy Crosby in March 2024 and duties formally placed in the hands of the city's manager on an interim basis. Most city commissioners favored removing the clerk as an elected official from the city's charter, but that was a decision only voters could make, and they disagreed in an April referendum.

The position may have been vacant for more than a year, but the office was not. And while the manager signed official documents, it was Heeder single-handedly running the clerk's office.

As administrative assistant for more than eight years, first in the city manager's office, and since in the city clerk's office, she knows the job.

"One of the most important roles of a city clerk is being a calming voice in adversity, displaying a caring and trustworthiness to the residents seeking help. I have maintained a true open-door policy for years, coming out to the lobby and speaking to customers to assure their experience was resolved," she said.

With responsibility for finance no longer under the clerk's umbrella, Heeder said the role includes working for the public and the city commission. She provides customer service, and access to public records,



Lisa Heeder

It is her role to record and archive those files. She attends meetings and documents them, keeping recordings and creating the minutes. Whether correspondence or contracts or any slip of paper pertinent to city business, the clerk's office is responsible for maintaining the file and making them available in accordance with Florida's public records law.

Unless a customer's issue is related to utilities, Heeder tries to resolve things to the customer's satisfaction. Business licensing in the city is also her responsibility.

"I'm very customer service minded. I believe that that's incredibly important that we treat our citizens like they should be treated," she said.

Heeder considers among her most important duties keeping commissioners informed and prepared for their role. That means providing background

necessary about anything on the agenda. She assists them in other ways as well, such as making travel arrangements.

In other words, if voters elect her, she will continue doing the job she loves, maintaining the positive connections she has with commissioners and others in city hall.

"I've held multiple roles in the city that have required unique skill sets and a strong knowledge of city functions that I will carry over in the future. We have a solid team of employees that have maintained a positive and caring attitude. I continue to serve the citizens, no matter the need," she said.

She described her relationship with the commissioners as excellent and included Commissioner-elect Dimple Overstreet in that group. She also included General Manager Drew Mullins and his assistant Kathy Bradley, saying she still performs much of the utility reporting that she began when working on that side of city hall. And she gave a nod to the finance department as well.

"Everybody, we have a really good relationship in city hall," she said.

An elected office is inherently political, but Heeder said she is not one to pick sides. She is a listener who wants to take what everyone has to say into account.

Outside of her role at city hall, Heeder is an active member at First Baptist Church, performing administrative

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## Thompson wants to add a new hat to her collection

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Chrissy Thompson believes Starke's city clerk should play an essential role as a public liaison and government watchdog.

Thompson said she wants to bring fresh leadership, transparency and a renewed sense of community engagement to the role, believing the job is more than administrative in nature.

She is well known as a local business owner and community servant, but many years ago she served on the city commission as well, a role she stepped away from in 2002. She sought guidance when deciding to run for office again.

"I have prayed and prayed, and I have served in a lot of different capacities, served in a lot of different things, and just feel led to serve," she said.

Thompson thinks the city clerk's office needs new energy and a liaison who can bridge the gap between the public and city government. She also emphasized the importance of checks and balances, ensuring that no single branch holds all the power and that the public's interests are always represented.

She said she sees the city clerk's role as more than a record keeper or compliance officer. She envisions the role as someone who ensures transparency, facilitates communication and maintains accountability. She advocates for the clerk to provide all commissioners with the same information at the same time, fostering fairness and informed



Chrissy Thompson

decision-making. She would also like to host regular town hall meetings to gather citizen input and relay that to the commission.

With a successful business background, Thompson said she will bring a practical, budget-conscious mindset to her candidacy.

"When you don't have the money, you don't spend it," she said, stressing the need for fiscal responsibility. She believes the city should be run like a business, with careful budgeting and a focus on serving taxpayers' needs. Even if the clerk no longer controls budgeting and finance, she wants to serve as a guardian on behalf of the public.

"I think that the more business minded we are, the more successful the city will be," she said.

Thompson's experience as a former city commissioner gives her insight into the importance of cooperation and neutrality when

working with other city leaders. She is committed to working with city commissioners and maintaining a nonpartisan approach, she said.

She also knows there are times when you can't make everyone happy or tell them what they want to hear. She's been honest while campaigning that the clerk won't be able to lower anyone's utility bill or clean up the city through code enforcement. But she said she can keep those concerns in front of those who can.

Thompson wears a lot of hats, and, if elected, she plans to remain deeply involved in local boards and organizations supporting education and other causes. She will continue to balance managing her business and community service. She has delegated responsibilities at her restaurant, Downtown Grill, which will allow her to focus on being city clerk, if elected. She assured voters of her dedication: "I do plan to give the city 100%, and I do know it is a full-time job. ... Just like always, I don't require much sleep."

She is passionate about encouraging voter participation and ensuring that every voice is heard, especially in elections with typically low turnout. "Everybody seems to have a voice until it's time to vote," she said, concerned that an election with single race on the ballot might easily be overlooked.

Supervisor of Elections Amanda Seyfang is conducting the election, which will take

See THOMPSON, page 5



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**FOR SALE**

# Huntley Redfearn Sr. came to Keystone Heights and made it his own

*Celebrating 100 years of Keystone Heights history*

**BY TRACY LEE TATE**  
*Special to the Monitor*

*This story first appeared in the April 13, 2000, edition of the Monitor and has been updated.*

Some of the most prominent Keystone Heights community members were not born and raised here but chose to live here as adults.

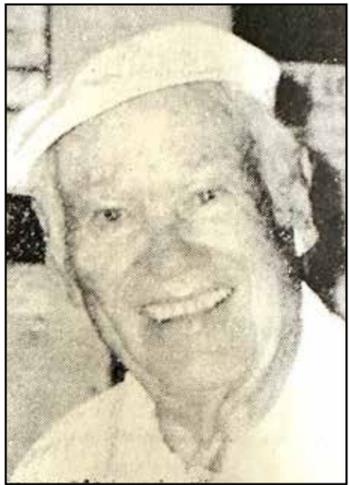
Huntley Redfearn Sr. came to the Lake Region as a young man in his 20s from Coral Gables.

"The war was still on, and I was working in an aircraft plant in Miami," Redfearn recalled. "My wife, Kathy, and I had just had our third child. Her family had moved to Live Oak, but she hadn't seen them in about four years. That was how the war was; it dismembered all relationships. We took the train with the baby, leaving the other two boys with my mother."

## Recruited by brother-in-law

"My wife's sister, Aggie, was married to Al Watson, and they picked us up at the station and drove us to Live Oak," he continued.

Redfearn said he had been considering moving with his family but had also considered finding a place around Atlanta, perhaps a cabin in the mountains. Instead, Al talked him into



Huntley Redfearn Sr.

moving to Keystone Heights and starting his own business.

"Al had bought a building and owned the only grocery store in town then," the former Coral Gables resident recalled. "I set up a variety dime store in part of the building. I had never been in retail before, but I ended up as the owner of Redfearn's Variety Store."

While he had no experience as a storekeeper, Redfearn was no stranger to working for himself.

He said he grew up in poverty after the death of his father from a stroke when he was two years old.

"Until I retired, I had not been out of a job since I was 11," Redfearn said. "I started out working as a delivery boy for a drug store, making \$5 a week.

During the war years was the only time I didn't work for myself."

Redfearn said that when he was growing up, no one could even think about owning their own home until they were in their 50s, but Franklin Roosevelt changed everything.

"Roosevelt did more for the general population of the United States than any other president," Redfearn said.

"His programs like the FDIC, the FHA, and the CCC made things so much better for working people. I was making \$1,200 a year when I got married and we got along fine on that."

Redfearn said that the money he had saved during the war years helped him keep going during his early years in business. He said there was nowhere to spend the money he made, so he saved it. It came in handy, as he said he didn't begin to be successful with his store until 1961.

## Cutting-edge tech: T.V. and air conditioning

"I got into appliances after the war and became a Hotpoint dealer," Redfearn said. "I had the first dishwashers and televisions in Keystone, both in my home and in the store. When there was a Gator game on TV, I had a house full of fans there to watch.

I set a TV in the window at my store, with a speaker outside for the sound, and people would come and bring chairs and sit and watch."

Redfearn said his real success came with the advent of air conditioning and especially the heat pump.

"Air conditioning hurt tourism in Keystone Heights because people didn't have to travel here anymore to escape the heat," Redfearn said.

"When heat pumps came out, the other heat and air conditioner men in the area didn't want to deal with them, but I did. It was the first time I realized a profit in the service business."

## Remembering the early days

One of the real passions in Redfearn's life has always been golf. He smiled as he remembered

the day in 1948 when enough local players got together to play golf and resurrected the Keystone Golf Course. The men sold timber and put up fences, cleared away the mess made on the course by cows and rooting hogs, and made some sand greens. He remained an avid golfer through much of his life.

When asked about the changes he has seen in the community over the years, Redfearn clearly remembers them.

"When I came here, three cattle gaps were coming into town," Redfearn said. "If you drove to Starke at night, you had to be careful of cows in the middle

of the road. They gathered there because it was warmer. There were only two telephones in town: one at Lindsey Walker's service station and one at the Keystone Inn."

"Lawrence Boulevard was the only paved road in town, and it was lined with trees. The only church in the city was the Community Church. Kathy had trouble getting two tables of ladies for bridge."

## Raising a family in Keystone Heights

Redfearn was one of the charter members of the Keystone Heights Rotary Club, which was formed in

1948. He remembers many people whose names are now legends in the city's history.

"I think my secret is that I have been acting like a kid all my life," Redfearn said.

"When I play golf, I often play with much younger players, and I love to bet on the games and cut up and joke around with them. I have always found a way to enjoy life. I have never regretted coming to Keystone Heights. This is, and was, a great place to raise children. I think my boys all benefitted from growing up in such a wonderful place. I know I have benefitted by living here."

Redfearn and Kathy had four sons, three remaining in the area. At the time of her death from Alzheimer's disease, they had been married for 66 years. Huntley Redfearn, Sr. died in 2003 at the age of 90.

# Mac Johns rails against 'swamp-division'



Union County Commissioner Mac Johns

**BY DAN HILDEBRAN**  
*Dan@BcTelegraph.com*

The developer of Liberty Farms gained approval from Union County commissioners for a preliminary plat and construction plans during the commission's July 21 meeting, but not before Commissioner Mac Johns railed against the development, declaring that the neighborhood would ultimately cost the county money.

He said that other neighborhoods developed 10 or 20 years ago are now a burden on the county.

"I mean, it's still a swamp-division anyway," he said of the site, inferring the acreage was low-lying. "You look at it, Liberty Farms, it sounds good. People from out of the state (are) going to be buying it and they're going to be mad. They're going to sell it. People can't get to their homes when it rains. So, they're going to be complaining (to) their commissioner, and the commissioner's going to get tired of hearing the complaints, and the school bus can't get down there, and before you know it, our county motor grader's going out there and working here and loads of lime rock. That's costing us a ton. Just like some of these roads now. I don't like it."

County Attorney Russ Wade informed commissioners that the developer is exceeding the minimum standards for roads in the plans. Commissioners approved the plat and road construction plans for the site near County Road 229.

After the vote, developer Pete Scerbo told commissioners, "We'll do our best as a steward to make sure that it's the least amount of burden, negative burden on the county. I hope that it brings some tax dollars, and it turns out to be a benefit as opposed to a burden."

Commissioners approved the plat and road construction plans for the site near County Road 229.

After the vote, developer Pete Scerbo told commissioners, "We'll do our best as a steward to make sure that it's the least amount of burden, negative burden on the county. I hope that it brings some tax dollars, and it turns out to be a benefit as opposed to a burden."

## HEEDER Continued from page 4

work and helping the ministry as a greeter, nursery care and outreach volunteer for events like vacation Bible school. She is also secretary for the Kiwanis Club of Starke, assisting with its community service endeavors, and volunteering at other community events, such as the Community Day held in Lawley on Saturday.

Supervisor of Elections Amanda Seyfang is conducting the election, which will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 19, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at city hall. Early voting will take place Monday, Aug. 11, to Friday, Aug. 15, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily in the supervisor of elections office at the courthouse.

For information call the supervisor of elections office at 904-966-6266 or visit [www.votebradfordfl.gov](http://www.votebradfordfl.gov).

## THOMPSON Continued from page 4

place on Tuesday, Aug. 19, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at city hall. Early voting will take place Monday, Aug. 11, to Friday, Aug. 15, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily in the supervisor of elections office at the courthouse.

For information call the supervisor of elections office at 904-966-6266 or visit [www.votebradfordfl.gov](http://www.votebradfordfl.gov).

# Bradford High School earns Cognia accreditation

Bradford High School announced it has earned Cognia Accreditation. Cognia is a nonprofit organization that provides quality assurance for schools, school districts and education service providers.

"Accreditation as conferred by the Cognia Global Accreditation Commission provides Bradford High School a nationally recognized mark of quality for our school," shared Principal

Chris Coffey. "It demonstrates to our community our commitment to excellence, our willingness to enact meaningful change based on evaluation and feedback, and our desire to be the best we can be on behalf of the students we serve."

Cognia recognizes schools across the globe that meet rigorous standards focused on productive learning environments, equitable resource allocation and effective



leadership. To earn Cognia accreditation, a school must submit to internal and external review. Earning accreditation from the Cognia Global Accreditation Commission means that the school meets Cognia Performance Standards and maintains a commitment to continuous improvement. Schools

in good standing can maintain their accreditation for a six-year term.

Dr. Mark A. Elgart, president and CEO of Cognia, stated, "Cognia accreditation is a rigorous process that focuses the entire school and its community on the primary goal of ensuring all students can flourish in engaging and equitable learning environments. We commend Bradford High School for meeting high standards and making progress on key indicators that impact student learning."

Cognia is the parent organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, Northwest Accreditation Commission and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

Cognia is a global, nonprofit improvement organization dedicated to helping institutions and other education providers grow learners, teachers, and leaders. Cognia offers accreditation and certification, assessment, and improvement services within a framework of continuous improvement. Serving 40,000 public and private institutions from early learning through high school in more than 90 countries, Cognia brings a global perspective to advancing teaching and learning. Find out more at [cognia.org](http://cognia.org).

**Bradford High Class of 1964**  
Will meet at Cedar River Restaurant (Starke) on Thursday, AUG. 14, 2025 at 1 PM.  
All graduates & spouses are invited.  
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# Crime

## Dad was seeking custody of kids when Mom killed him

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Dan@BcTelegraph.com

The Starke man shot by a woman at Starke's Auntie Lil's Daycare last Friday was seeking custody of two children he had in common with the shooter.

According to the Bradford County Sheriff's Office, Mindy Osteen, 34, shot Christopher Jones, 37, while the victim was in his vehicle, and the couple's two-year-old son and one-year-old son were in the vehicle with their father.

Sheriff's Maj. George L. Konkel, Jr. said that in a video he viewed, Jones exited the vehicle after the initial rounds, and the 34-year-old chased him, eventually to the front of the daycare, where Osteen shot him again.

The victim later died at HCA Starke ER.

Osteen was arrested for homicide, child cruelty, possession of a weapon by a convicted felon, and larceny.

According to court papers, Jones filed paperwork at the Bradford County Courthouse beginning in November 2024 to establish paternity of the two boys.

### Wanted custody on weekends

On November 19, 2024, Jones filed a petition to determine paternity and for related relief.

In that document, he stated that he and Osteen were together from July 2021 through November 2024, and that the couple had one son in August 2022 and a second in November of the following year.

On the same day, Jones filed a proposed parenting plan under which he would have custody of the boys on the weekends.

### Sister tried to get Osteen Baker Acted

In December 2024, Jones filed an emergency motion for child pickup. In the motion, Jones stated that the children were in immediate danger of harm because of the mother's mental health.

"The mother's mental health is not well," wrote Jones in the motion. "(Her sister) called me on Dec. 13 to come pick up my sons because the mother, Mindy Osteen, was having a severe mental breakdown. She doesn't even know who her father is."

Jones wrote that he took the children with him on the evening of Dec. 13. The following day, after Osteen called the sheriff's office, he returned the boys to the sister's home in Sampson City.

"Her sister...told me that she does not trust Mindy Osteen to be alone with our boys because of her current mental health situation," Jones continued, adding that the sister was trying to get Osteen involuntarily committed for an evaluation under Florida's Baker Act.

However, at the time of Jones's petition, his paternity had not yet been established, and his motion was denied.

### Mediation failed

In January 2025, Circuit Judge George Wright ordered the couple to undergo mediation to resolve their differences. However, the following month, a mediator reported that the effort did not result in an agreement.

The mediator noted that Jones attended the session with a

lawyer and Osteen represented



Mindy Osteen

herself.

After the failed mediation, Wright set a non-jury trial date of September 18.

### Victim: 'Help me please'

One week after Wright set the trial date, Bradford Sheriff's Deputy Kyle Mozingo said he received a dispatch to Auntie Lil's Daycare on Starke's Washington Street regarding an armed white female.

Monzingo reported that he arrived at the facility at 6 p.m. and found Jones "lying in the doorway of the day care bleeding profusely from what appeared to be multiple gunshot wounds."

The deputy also made contact with Osteen, who was on the ground in handcuffs, clad in a Bonefish Grill uniform.

Mozingo wrote that after putting the suspect in the back of his patrol car, he started interviewing witnesses.

One woman told the deputy that while she was strapping her child into a car seat, she heard three or four gunshots.

"(The witness) advised that she saw a blonde, white female, wearing a white Bonefish Grill shirt and black pants, standing by a car with a gun in her hand, shooting at a white male in his vehicle," wrote Mozingo.

The woman added that she then saw the victim run from the car and toward the building, holding his chest, with blood on his shirt.

"As Christopher entered the daycare, (the witness) observed Mindy following him with the gun," the deputy reported.

The woman said she then heard two more shots coming from inside the daycare. The witness then drove to the other side of the block to protect her child and called 911.

Mozingo then interviewed another eyewitness, who told him she saw a black SUV blocking the roundabout, and a woman in a Bonefish Grill shirt pacing around the vehicle.

"Then she saw her strapping (redacted) in the passenger back seat," the deputy wrote. "(The witness) advised she began walking up to the front door of the daycare and saw blood, and the door closed...The door swung open, and she saw a white male laying on the floor, covered in blood, reaching out his hand and stating, 'Help me please,'"

As the woman fled from the building, she saw a deputy approaching and told the officer that someone was on the floor and that children were still inside.

Mozingo said Jones was transported to Starke ER, where he was pronounced dead at 7:03 p.m.

### Shooter: 'You got to die, Chris.'

Det. Logan Hough wrote in the same report that he viewed a video of the incident recorded on a doorbell camera. He gave the following account of what he saw.

"I observed Christopher pull up to the daycare front door at approximately (5:47 p.m.). Christopher then walked into the daycare to retrieve (redacted). At (5:50 p.m.) Mindy walks up to the front door with a backpack and stands between the front door of the daycare and Christopher's vehicle."

Hough added that the daycare owner walked the children out of the building, and their mother hugged and held them.

Jones then walked out, loaded items into the vehicle, and strapped the children into car seats. Osteen followed and watched.

As Jones got into the driver's seat, Osteen stayed back by the passenger's side back door.

"Mindy then walks around the back of the vehicle as she approaches Christopher, she has her hand inside the backpack she is holding," Hough reported. "Christopher is sitting in the driver's seat with the driver's door opened. Mindy walks directly up to Christopher and fires three shots as she backs up slightly. She then walks back up to Christopher and fires two more shots. Christopher can be heard screaming."

Osteen then jogged out to the front of the vehicle, and Jones ran to the back. The woman then approached Jones again and fired a round toward him in the direction of Bradford High School.

Jones ran to the building for cover, but after opening the daycare's outer door, he found the inside security door locked, trapping him between the two doorways.

"Mindy appears to be trying to clear a malfunction in the firearm," Hough wrote. "She then gets the malfunction cleared and goes into where Christopher was trapped. Mindy then fires three more shots at Christopher. After the third shot, Christopher stops screaming."

The gun appears to jam again, and Osteen is seen walking in front of the daycare while her children are heard screaming from the vehicle. Unable to clear the malfunction, Osteen walks back to Jones's vehicle.

"Mindy then places the firearm in the driver's seat of Christopher's vehicle as she says, 'Please let the monster die.' She then repeats it as she opens the rear door where (redacted) are located."

Hough said Jones then paced back and forth between the daycare and vehicle, before finally walking up to her victim, unarmed, and addressing him.

"You got to die, Chris. You can't kill (redacted)."

Christopher then says, "Help me."

Mindy then says "Chris you can't kill (redacted)". Chris then says, "I'm not killing nobody".

Hough reported that Osteen then walked away from the door and down the steps.

Moments later, deputies arrive. Cpl. Trenton Lovell is one of the first to arrive and goes to Jones, who tells him Osteen was the shooter.

"While other deputies arrive," Hough wrote, "Mindy can be seen walking around. Mindy then walks to the front of Christopher's vehicle and puts her hands up and says, 'I'm right here, y'all. I done it in self-defense.'"

## Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

The following individuals were arrested recently by local law enforcement officers in Bradford, Union, or Clay (Keystone Heights-area) counties. All defendants are considered innocent until convicted in a court or until pleading guilty or no contest. Information in this report is from law enforcement agencies and court documents, which are public records.

### Bradford

Stacie Bentley, 50, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 21 for dealing in stolen property, possession of a weapon by a convicted felon, driving with a suspended or revoked license, and fraud-impersonation.

Jordan Bresee, 33, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 21 for larceny, possession of drugs, possession of drug equipment, dealing in stolen property and fraud.

Jonathan Deese, 43, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 22 for dealing in stolen property, possession of drugs, possession of drug equipment, and possession of marijuana.

Andrew Floyd, 25, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 19 for DUI.

Birmingham Guirand, 39, of Hollywood, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 24 for smuggling contraband into a prison.

Johnny Gunter, 52, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 21 for burglary, larceny, possession of stolen equipment and dealing in stolen property.

Andrew Hildebran, 25,

of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 19 for resisting an officer and DUI.

Regina Hilliard, 57, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 21 for probation violations and possession of drug equipment.

Jacarra Holloway, 34, of Citra, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 19 for DUI.

Christopher King, 45, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 23 for aggravated assault and criminal mischief with property damage.

Mark Oody, 53, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 22 for battery.

Mindy Osteen, 34, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 25 for homicide, child cruelty, possession of a weapon by a convicted felon and larceny.

David Perry, 44, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 24 for withholding support.

Gary Powell, 44, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 22 for an out-of-county warrant.

William Shamp, 31, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 23 for a probation violation.

Kenneth Steel, 55, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 25 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Dallas Witters, 33, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 21 for DUI.

Angie Wojciechowicz, 46, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on July 20 for an out-of-county warrant.

## Union

Cody Andrews, 33, of Williston, was arrested by Union deputies on July 25 for a probation violation.

Lauren Bradford, 36, of Newberry, was arrested by Union deputies on July 22 for a probation violation.

Sahara Canada, 20, of Raiford, was arrested by Union deputies on July 22 for a conditional release violation.

John Keen, 43, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on July 25 for a conditional release violation, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and petit theft.

Alexis Lopez, 25, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Union deputies on July 23 for failure to appear.

David McSpadden, 57, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on July 22 for hit and run and failing to register a motor vehicle.

Gary Powell, 44, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on July 22 for a probation violation.

Carey Shields, 48, of Bell, was arrested by Union deputies on July 24 for a probation violation.

## Clay

Brandon Goodin, 21, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on July 22 for driving with a suspended or revoked license and operating a motorcycle without a license endorsement.

Reid Mulholland, 48, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on July 20 for domestic battery.

## Open houses for Bradford schools begin next week

Bradford County's public schools are set to host open houses next week, beginning with Bradford Middle School, which will host its event on Tuesday, Aug. 5, at 6 p.m. for seventh-graders and at 6:45 p.m. for eighth-graders.

The open house for Bradford High School will be Thursday, Aug. 7, from 6 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., while Bradford Elementary and Lawtey



## veterans

An American Legion Post 56 Service Officer is available to assist veterans by providing information concerning available benefits and other needs. Walk-ins are available at the American Legion Hall on Edwards Road in Starke every Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., or call Al Hunter at 407-494-9694 for an appointment. Legion membership is not required for this free service.

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## Union schools' open house-orientation info

Union County High School will host a freshman orientation on Monday, Aug. 4, at 6 p.m., while its open house for 10th-12th grade will take place that same night, beginning at 7 p.m.

Lake Butler Middle School will have its open house on Tuesday, Aug. 5, from 5:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. for fifth grade and from 7 p.m.

until 8 p.m. for sixth-eighth grade.

A Meet-the-Teacher Night will be hosted by Lake Butler Elementary School on Thursday, Aug. 7, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

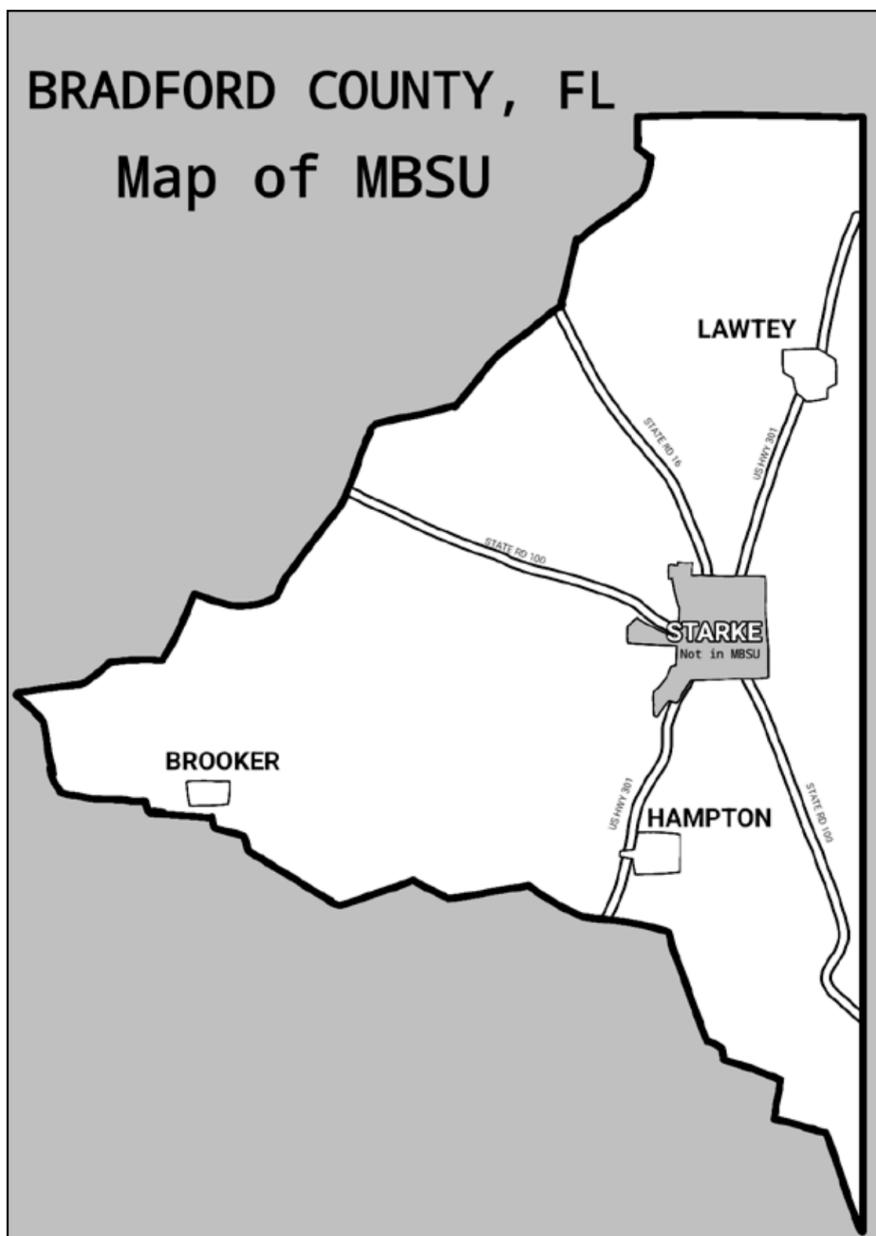
## Orientation events set for KH schools

Prior to the start of the school year, Keystone Heights High School will host an orientation for incoming seventh-graders and new

students on Thursday, Aug. 7, from 8 a.m. until noon. Registration for the event can be done via a link on the "Keystone Heights Junior/Senior High School" Facebook page.

Keystone Elementary School's Meet-the-Teacher event will take place Friday, Aug. 8, at 1 p.m. for pre-K-second grade and at 2 p.m. for third-sixth grade. That same day, McRae Elementary will host its back-to-school orientation, which will be 10:30-11:30 a.m. for pre-k and kindergarten and 1:30-3 p.m. for first-sixth grade.

**BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
NOTICE OF HEARING  
TO IMPOSE AND PROVIDE FOR COLLECTION OF  
NON-AD VALOREM SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS  
TO FUND FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES**



The Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") of Bradford County, Florida (the "County") is considering the levy of annual non-ad valorem special assessments to fund the costs incurred by the County each year in providing fire protection services and facilities. The special assessments would be imposed with the "municipal service benefit unit" depicted on the enclosed map which generally includes all of the unincorporated area of the County, plus the incorporated area of Lawtey, Hampton, and Brooker. The City of Starke is not included in the proposed assessment program. The fire assessment, if adopted by the Board, would be imposed to fund fire services for the County's fiscal year which begins October 1, 2025 (Fiscal Year 2025-26").

Notice is hereby given that the Board will conduct a public hearing to consider adoption of a Final Assessment Resolution related to the provision and funding of fire protection services and facilities. The Final Assessment Resolution will approve the fire assessment rates for Fiscal Year 2025-26 and collection of the assessments pursuant to the tax bill collection method for such fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter. The assessment is an annual assessment that will continue from year to year. The hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard, on August 21, 2025 in the Commission Chambers, 945 North Temple Avenue Starke, Florida 32091. All affected property owners have a right to appear at the hearing and be heard with respect to the proposed fire assessment and to file written objections with the Board within twenty (20) days of this notice.

The assessments will fund a portion of the costs incurred each year in providing fire protection services and facilities throughout the MSBU. The assessment for each parcel of property will be based upon a calls for service methodology wherein costs associated with fire protection services and facilities are allocated among different types of property according to historic fire incident reports and call data. For Fiscal Year 2025-26, the assessments will be imposed against residential property on a "per dwelling unit" basis at a proposed rate of \$167 per dwelling unit, against non-residential (commercial) property based on the square footage of all structures located on each parcel at a proposed rate of \$0.11 per square foot, and against vacant,

undeveloped parcels at the rate of \$46.50 per parcel. Properties owned by government entities, churches and non-profits would be exempt from the fire assessments. Agricultural property will not be assessed unless the property contains a residential dwelling unit, in which case it will be assessed on a per dwelling unit basis at the rate specified above. For future years following Fiscal Year 2025-26, the rate of assessment may be increased by up to 4% per year without further notice.

The fire protection assessment will be collected on the County's behalf by the Bradford County Tax Collector pursuant to the tax bill collection method authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, commencing in November, 2025, and include collection costs incurred by the County and have been adjusted as necessary to account for the statutory early payment discounts which apply when collecting the assessments annually on the same bill as property taxes. The fire assessments will be imposed solely by the County and not by the Tax Collector or Property Appraiser. Any questions concerning the fire assessments should be directed to the County Manager's office at (904) 966-6327.

A more specific description of the fire protection services and facilities and the method of computing the assessment for each parcel of property are set forth in Resolution No. 2025-05 (the "Initial Assessment Resolution") adopted by the Board on July 1, 2025. Copies of the Initial Assessment Resolution and the preliminary Fire Protection Assessment Roll are available for inspection at the office of the County Manager, located at 945 North Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091. If a person decides to appeal any decision made by Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation of an interpreter to participate in these proceedings should contact the County Manager at (904) 966-6327, at least 48 hours prior to the time of the hearing.

# Students working summer jobs through Community for Schools

The nonprofit, Bradford County organization's goal is to help students overcome obstacles, experience success and graduate

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford Community for Schools is all about setting up students for success in life. One way of doing that is putting them on track toward graduating, while another is to give them a taste of a work environment.

The nonprofit organization offered a summer employment program for the third straight year, with 20 students taking part this year at a total of 10 job sites: Bradford County Public Library, Bradford High School, Downtown Grill, Florida Twin Theatre, Headstart, Home Sweet Bone/Grooming by Sister, Hometown Grounds, Lake Area Physical Therapy, Nicky's Beauty Bar and Young Hearts Extended Assisted Living Facility.

Other employers who had agreed to participate were

"It's giving them employability skills," said Community for Schools Executive Director Cindy DeValerio. "It's, of course, building self-esteem, building character and teaching them skills. Also, they can use the hours (working) as community service toward scholarships. They're also building a resume."

Preston Clem, who's set to begin his senior year at Bradford High School, is all about anything that'll help him get scholarship money. Plus, he also gets the benefit of being around dogs. He loves dogs — he has four at home — so the chance to work at the Home Sweet Bone boarding business and its related Grooming by Sister business was a perfect opportunity for him.



Preston Clem helps this dog get dry after a wash at Grooming by Sister.

Clem's responsibilities included giving the boarders at Home Sweet Bone food and water and taking them outside. At Grooming by Sister, he got to wash and dry dogs.



Elijah Lawrence prepares drinks for customers at the Downtown Grill.

Future employment opportunities may not have Clem working with dogs, but he views his summer experience as kind of a head start in life.

"I think it can help me with getting future jobs," he said. "I now have job experience in general. Also, if I have a dog of my own, I now know how to take care of him."

Home Sweet Bone Owner Dawn Strickland said, "I cannot say enough about the importance of this program. It exposes kids to the workplace when they otherwise would not have had a chance. It's almost like a test run in a field to see whether they would enjoy it."

Students in 10th-12th grades mostly as well as some who've just graduated participated in the program, working 15 hours a week and earning money provided through a grant from Northeast Florida Career Source.

"The big thing for those employers is they're not at risk of losing anything because the grant funding takes care of what (students) get paid," said Ken Weaver, one of Community for Schools' student-support specialists.

Strickland described it as a "win-win" situation for local businesses.

"Yes, you do have to take the extra time in training because these young adults typically don't have a lot, if any, work experience," Strickland said, "but they are also an extra set of hands at no financial cost."

The students surely enjoy making some money, but the benefits, of course, go beyond that. DeValerio said students are building a rapport with members of the community they will one day be a part of as adults if they

don't move away.

"They're building a lot of things other than just a paycheck," DeValerio said. "It's not just about a paycheck."

That's true for Ta'laysia Cummings, who recently



Mariah Williams worked this summer at Young Hearts Assisted Living Facility.

graduated and worked this summer at Hometown Grounds.

"During the summer, I learned how to better manage my time, communicate with confidence and stay committed to my education," Cummings said. "It helped me stay motivated and reminded me that I'm not alone in this journey — that there are people who believe in me and want to see me succeed"

Students, who selected which participating business they wanted to work at, first had to meet with their employers and become informed of what was expected of them. DeValerio said students were told that if they couldn't commit to the job's obligations, they were to be honest with employers and tell them.

DeValerio said students taking on job responsibilities, which include calling your employer if you're going to be late or unable to come in, is like an early start to adulthood.

"I think that kind of takes you out of your high-school fun world," DeValerio said.

The job site, of course, can provide fun of a different sort, like Clem getting the chance to be around dogs. However, students do get to see that not every day at work is necessarily enjoyable. They may also learn that a certain type of job is not what they want to do in the future.

"I think it's good for them," DeValerio said. "They're figuring out that jobs are not always fun, but they've committed to it. Jobs are not always exciting, but sometimes you have to do what you don't like to do for a little while to figure out what you do like."

Weaver believes working on a job and taking it seriously will benefit students in school.

"It's that motivation factor," Weaver said. "The job helps them to understand how they have to really invest themselves if they're going to be successful."

Strickland encourages employers who haven't participated to do so in the future.

"Working with everyone in Community for Schools is such a pleasure," Strickland said. "I just hope that more employers will take advantage of the opportunity, not just to help themselves, but to help a student become a productive, working member of the community."



Agape Murungi spent her summer working at Nicky's Beauty Bar.



Ta'laysia Cummings, who worked at Hometown Grounds, said Community for Schools "gave me access to mentors, support and resources that helped me stay focused on my goals and inspired me to keep pushing forward, no matter what challenges I faced."



Jordyn Sumpter (left) and Jessariah Hankerson make up a bed at Young Hearts Assisted Living Facility.

## Resources, support for student success

Bradford Community for



Cayson Hampton shelves books as part of her summer job at the Bradford County Public Library.

Schools is dedicated to helping at-risk students improve and putting them on a path toward graduation. At-risk students can be those who have no interest in going to school and have no one supporting and encouraging

school performance.

As student-support specialists, Weaver and Martha Boyette interact with BHS students on campus, serving as mentors, providing support and encouragement. They may also help students get the resources they need, either directly or by acting as liaisons with other organizations. Maybe a student simply needs a kind word on a given day. Maybe a student needs something to eat, a jacket to wear during winter or personal-hygiene products

Community for Schools' office space on campus can sometimes simply be a place to take a breather for a few seconds.

"Come in and take a break from life," DeValerio said.

Think of Boyette and Weaver as teachers' assistants. Teachers may be the best people on campus to see what needs students have, but they have only so much time in a class period.

"There's no way a teacher can really invest themselves completely in every student they have in all their classrooms," Weaver said, adding that his experience with Community for Schools "has opened my eyes a lot more to the extreme challenge that educators have."

Community for Schools' mission is to connect with students buy surrounding them with a caring community of

support and empowering them to reach their full potential and achieve success in life. The organization's vision statement is to provide a supportive environment centered on student improvement and success. Though adult mentorships and community resources, students can realize and reach their full potential.

Partnerships with educators, businesses, healthcare providers, social-service agencies, volunteers and other resources and programs help Community for Schools provide that assistance to help students overcome the life challenges that hinder their academic success.

Weaver said the first student he talked to upon becoming a student-support specialist was a senior who wasn't on track to graduate. The student told Weaver that he viewed school as a waste of time.

That was this past January. Weaver's mentorship and the help of guidance counselors resulted in that student not only changing his attitude about school, but graduating in May.

"He's reached out to me a couple of times this summer just to say hello," Weaver said, adding that the student has asked for his assistance as he wants to pursue employment in a trade job.

This past school year saw all 26 seniors served by Community for Schools graduate.

"I can't say enough good things about our Bradford County Community for Schools and all they do for our students," Bradford County Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley said. "Everyone involved in the organizations goes above and beyond to meet our students' needs and ensure their success."

"They are truly a meaningful asset to our school community."

DeValerio said she'd love for Community for Schools to have student-support specialists at Bradford Middle School, but that'll take additional funding.

See JOBS, page 11

## NOTICE OF NEW IMPACT FEES

### BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

#### Effective October 1, 2025

Per Ordinance 2025-01, approved by the Board of County Commissioners of Bradford County, Florida on July 17, 2025, Bradford County will implement new impact fees on new growth and development to fund fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency medical services facilities.

#### Fire Protection Impact Fee Rate Schedule

Residential Use	Non-Residential Use
\$498.00 per Dwelling Unit	\$194.00 per 1,000 Square Feet

#### Law Enforcement Impact Fee Rate Schedule

Residential Use	Non-Residential Use
\$304.00 per Dwelling Unit	\$119.00 per 1,000 Square Feet

#### Emergency Medical Services Impact Fee Rate Schedule

Residential Use	Non-Residential Use
\$258.00 per Dwelling Unit	\$101.00 per 1,000 Square Feet

An administrative charge of 2% will apply

These fees will be imposed in all unincorporated areas and municipalities that agree to collect and remit the fees to the County, except for the City of Starke, which provides its own fire protection.

For more information, visit the County Manager's office at 945 North Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091, or call (904) 966-6327.

## AYCE breakfast to be hosted by AMVETS 86

Keystone Heights' AMVETS Post 86 will host an all-you-can-eat breakfast on Saturday, Aug. 2, from 8 a.m. until 10:30 a.m.

The event, which will be held at 6685 Brooklyn Bay Road, is open to the public.

Cooked-to-order eggs, omelets with your favorite toppings, bacon, sausage, ham, biscuits and gravy, French toast, grits and more will be available for \$9.

The day's cooks will be veterans Fred Dressel, Roger Marr, Vince St. John and Eddie Wester.

Besides enjoying breakfast, you can browse items at the AMVETS Ladies Auxiliary yard sale.

## Christian women building relationships

MT. ZION A.M.E. Church of Lawtey (2229 Lake St.) and its pastor, Rev. Jacqueline L. Dupree, invite the public to celebrate "Christian Women Building Relationships to Serve Together" at its Women's Day program on Sunday, Aug. 10, at 3 p.m. Rev. Kennetta C. Carter of Greater Payne A.M.E. Church

in Jacksonville will be the guest speaker.

## Medicare classes offered online

SHINE offers virtual classes on Medicare basics, prescription drug coverage, Medicare Part C, long-term care planning and more. Visit [www.floridashine.org](http://www.floridashine.org) to view the schedule, register and explore information on the latest scams.

For more information, you may also contact Elder Options at 1-800-262-2243 or visit [www.agingresources.org](http://www.agingresources.org).

## Linda Bennett, Vivian Ramseur to be honored at BCEF Leave a Legacy event

The Bradford County Education Foundation will host its annual Leave a Legacy event on Thursday, Aug. 28, at 6 p.m. at Starke's Madison Street Baptist Church.

This year's honorees are Linda Bennett and Vivian Ramseur.

Tickets, which are \$30, include dinner and can be purchased from any BCEF board member or via the "Bradford County Education Foundation" Facebook page.



Linda Bennett



Vivian Ramseur

The event also includes the Dessert Dash, an additional fundraiser for BCEF. Guests will pool their monies as they try to make their table among the highest bidders for the chance to "dash" for their preferred dessert.

# Highly Rated Local Businesses!

**Lake Area Heating and Air**  
7415 State Rd 21, Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
(352) 473-9595

Formerly Mike Bertie Heating and Air. Serving Keystone Heights and surrounding areas since 2008.

(386) 496-2630 **PRITCHETT TRUCKING, INC.**

1050 SE 6th Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054

"Excellent service. On time delivery. Driver very professional and courteous. Equipment well maintained."

**Rivers Flowing Church**  
22610 Hwy 301 N Lawtey, FL 32054

Welcome to Rivers Flowing Church—where the river of God never runs dry!

SUN: 10AM  
WED: 7PM

**Robert's Insurance**  
986 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 452-7784

"The insurance agency helps keep the insurance prices down."

**Durrance Pump**  
864 N Temple Ave STE C, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-7061

"Great set of guys that came. Found my issue. Quick work. Started a second issue and came right back and made the changes..."

**DLP Bank**  
811 S Walnut St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-7830

"Very welcoming bank. They learn and know you by name and will not stop until they have helped with whatever your needs may be. I love this bank."

**Bradford County Sheriffs Office**  
945-B N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 966-6161

"I need to take a minute to recognize my jail command team, the people I'm surrounded by. Each unique and strong in their own areas. There is nothing anyone asks of them they don't do and almost always with a smile. They take care of business and take care of people at the same time."

**Hometown Health & Wellness**  
260 S Lawrence Blvd, Suite 101 Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
(352) 664-7702

"Very knowledgeable and responsive, would definitely recommend them"

**Craig Falstreux Heating & Air, Inc**  
228 S Walnut St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-2241

"We have used them twice for emergency situations on the weekend. They are fast and helpful. They do charge a weekend/holiday fee but I think that is fair. It is an efficient family business as far as I can tell."

**Town & Country Vet Clinic**  
1051 S Water St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-6411

"We couldn't be happier with the care our dog Chevy received here. The whole team is kind, flexible, and took the time to answer all our questions. You can tell they truly care about the animals. Prices are very reasonable, and the service is top-notch. Huge thanks to Abby—she's amazing!"

**The Chiropractic & Injury Clinic of Starke**  
601 E Call St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-8018

"Amazing staff and doctor! Very satisfied. They were able to squeeze me in the same day and get me feeling almost back to normal in minutes."

**Andrews Site Prep**  
(386) 867-0572  
Services 20 different counties!

"Very responsive and they were able to pull the permit and have the well done only within a couple weeks. They hands down have the best quote around no matter how far out you are."

**WORLEY CONSTRUCTION & ASSOCIATES, INC.**

GENERAL & MARINE CONTRACTING  
STATE LICENSED GENERAL CONTRACTOR

352-481-2255

[www.worleyconstruction.net](http://www.worleyconstruction.net)  
CGC 060228

**Teal Tile Carpet One**  
131 N Cherry St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-7423

"High quality in every way!! Product was great. Workmanship was great. Pleasant staff. Just a pleasure to work with. Highly recommend!"

**Bradford County Eye Center**  
292 Lafayette St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-8076

"My experience at Bradford County Eye Center was amazing. The staff was attentive and provided exceptional care. Would highly recommend!"

**Sporting Chance**  
218 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-7434

"The owner sat down with me and helped me find a logo for my husband's company and then designed the shirt with logo and name. She also took time to explain the different shirt and ordering options. I also got a deal on the Gator items at 70% off."

**Parrish Mobile Welding LLC**  
(904) 263-2223

"Wyatt was referred to me for some welding work I needed done. He was incredibly polite, thoughtful and straight forward. He understood quickly what I needed done, showed up when he said he would, even though he mentioned he was 1 minute late, and completed the job quickly and efficiently.. I recommend Wyatt without reproach.."

**Phillip McDonald Plumbing**  
740 S Orange St, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-3737

"The work crew from Phillip McDonald's Plumbing, along with the back office staff, were courteous, on time, and came in at the budget we agreed to. When we ran to any discrepancies or any hold ups, they worked diligently to get the job taken care of."

**JBS Jackson Building Supply**  
"Serving Our Community For Over 60 Years"

- LUMBER & BUILDING MATERIALS
- PAIN, LADDERS & SUPPLIES
- ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING SUPPLIES
- METAL ROOFING & SHINGLES
- DOORS & WINDOWS
- HAND & POWER TOOLS
- HOME & FARM HARDWARE
- BATHROOM VANITIES
- HOT WATER HEATERS
- LAWN & GARDEN

STARKE US-301S 964-6078  
LAKE BUTLER 145 SW 6th Ave. 496-3079

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

**Starke Golf & Country Club**  
15501 NE 14th Ave, Starke, FL 32091  
(904) 964-5441

"It's a lot of fun. Can't beat the price."

**YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!**

**CALL 904-964-6305 TODAY!**

**Bradford County Telegraph**  
**Lake Region Monitor**  
**UNION COUNTY TIMES**

# Legal Notices

## BRADFORD

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE  
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF  
JUSTICE  
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION  
JUVENILE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF:  
25JT000022-100  
M.K.D.P.,  
Minor Child.

TO: **JASON WALDON, RESPONDENT FATHER**, of one female bi-racial child, born March 7, 2019, in Haywood County, North Carolina, to K.L.F. TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-captioned action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows: Termination of parental rights to M.K.D.P., the minor child, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute, 7B-1111.

You are required to make defense to such proceedings no later than August 26, 2025, said date being forty (40) days from the publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services, Petitioner, will apply to the Court for the relief sought. If you are indigent, you are entitled to appointed counsel. You may contact the Buncombe County Clerk of Superior Court, Juvenile Division, District Court 4C, 60 Court Plaza, Asheville, NC 28801 immediately to request counsel. Any counsel appointed previously and still representing you in the underlying juvenile matter regarding the minor children shall continue to represent you unless otherwise ordered by the Court.

**THIS**, the 17<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025.  
JACK DENSMORE, ESQ.  
BCDHHS  
PO BOX 7408  
ASHEVILLE, NC 28802  
828-250-5500

7/17 3tchg 7/31-BCT

### City of Starke Commission Meeting Dates for August and September

Commission Meeting August 12, 2025 at 5:30 pm  
Commission Meeting August 26, 2025 at 5:30 pm  
Tentative Budget Hearing September 9, 2025 at 5:01 pm  
Commission Meeting September 9, 2025 at 5:30 pm  
Final Budget Hearing September 23, 2025 at 5:01 pm  
Commission Meeting September 23, 2025 at 5:30 pm

7/31 2tchg 8/7-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
File No. 04-2025-CP-0068-CPAXMX  
PROBATE DIVISION

IN RE: ESTATE OF GLORIA AGEE GRIFFIS,  
Deceased.

### PETITION FOR SUMMARY ADMINISTRATION

(Testate)  
Petitioner **LONNIE JOSEPH GRIFFIS**, son of decedent allege:  
1. Petitioner has an interest in the Estate of **GLORIA AGEE GRIFFIS**. Petitioner's address is 720 Glendale Street, Starke, Florida 32091.  
A. Decedent died testate on June 18, 2014, her last known address was

720 Glendale Street, Starke, Florida, was 88 years of age, whose Social Security number was XXX-XX-4849, and is survived by her two Sui Juris children, Lonnie Joseph Griffis and KATHLYN ANN GRIFFIS.  
3. Venue for this proceeding is in Bradford County because the decedent was a resident of Bradford County.

4. Proceedings concerning this decedent's estate are not pending in another state or country.  
5. Decedent died testate. A copy of the original Last Will and Testament is being filed at the same time of this Petition. The original will be delivered to the Clerk of the Court, Bradford County, Florida.

6. The estate qualifies for summary administration because the value of the estate, less the value of the property exempt from claims of creditors, is less than \$75,000.00.  
7. At the time of decedent's death, the decedent owned property which constituted the homestead of the decedent within the meaning of Section 222.01(1) of the Statutes of the State of Florida, on the following described parcel of real property: NAME 720 Glendale Street Starke, Florida 32091  
VALUE \$125,481.00  
Homestead - EXEMPT  
Lot 8 Block F, Dalewood Subdivision, as per plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 3, Page 8, Section 21, Township 6 South, Range 22 East, Bradford County, Florida

8. Property is inside of a municipality and is approximately one-fourth (1/4) acre more or less.  
9. The Petitioner has made a diligent search and reasonable inquiry for any known or reasonably ascertainable creditors and the estate is not indebted.  
10. After a diligent search for additional assets, none were found and none are expected.  
11. The name of the decedent's surviving descendants having an interest in the decedent's estate, and their respective relationships to decedent and dates of birth, if minors are as follows:  
NAME ADDRESS RELATIONSHIP AGE  
William Elisha Griffis - (Deceased) Spouse  
Lonnie Joseph Griffis - 720 Glendale Street - Starke, Florida 32091 - Son - Sui Juris  
Kathlynn Ann Griffis - Unknown - Daughter - Sui Juris

12. Per the Last Will and Testament of the decedent, petitioners propose to distribute the estate as follows: All property, whether real or personal, to be distributed and placed into the name of my son, **LONNIE JOSEPH GRIFFIS**.

13. Petitioners acknowledge that the recipients of the decedent's property under this Order of Summary Administration shall be personally liable for a pro rata share of all lawful claims against the estate of the decedent, but only to the extent of the value of the estate of the decedent actually received by each recipient, exclusive of the property exempt from claims of creditors under the Constitution and Statutes of Florida. Any known or reasonably ascertainable creditor who did not receive notice and for whom provisions for payment

7/31 1tchg 8/7-BCT

was not made may enforce the claim, and if the creditor prevails, shall be awarded reasonable attorney's fees as an element of cost against those who joined in the petition.

14. Under penalties of perjury, the petitioners declare, by and through undersigned counsel, that they have read the copies of the foregoing, and the facts alleged are true, to the best of their knowledge and beliefs.  
Dated this 20th of June, 2025.  
/s/LONNIE JOSEPH GRIFFIS  
LONNIE JOSEPH GRIFFIS  
Petitioner

/s/ Curtis A. Sanders  
Curtis A. Sanders, Esquire  
The Law Office of Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders, P.A.  
407 W. Georgia Street  
Starke, FL 32091  
Florida Bar #0625647  
Phone: 904-964-4111  
Fax: 904-964-5111  
Attorney for Petitioner  
7/31 4tchg 8/21-BCT

### NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME

Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: **TERRA SHALOM FARM**, 5137 NW County Rd 233, Starke, FL, 32091, **SOLE** owner, doing business under the firm name of: **TSF EATS AND CATERING**, 5137 NW County Rd 233, Starke, FL 32091 intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 24TH day of JULY A.D., 2025, in BRADFORD County.  
7/31 1tchg 8/7-BCT

### COMMISSION MEETING

THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on August 5, 2025, at 9:30 AM, inside the county commission meeting room, located in the north wing section of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 N. Temple, Avenue, Starke, FL. A copy of the meeting agenda may be obtained from the Bradford County website: [www.bradfordcountyfl.gov](http://www.bradfordcountyfl.gov). Said meeting location is secured - no firearms or weapons are permitted.  
7/31 1tchg 8/7-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
FILE No.: 2025-CP-000082  
DIVISION: PROBATE

IN RE: ESTATE OF **BETTY ALBERTA KRAJNOVICH**, Deceased.

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of **BETTY ALBERTA KRAJNOVICH**, deceased, whose date of death was May 2, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for Bradford County Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 11649 Parker Street, Brookier, Florida 32622. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against the decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required

to be served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is July 31, 2025.

Attorney for Personal Representative: /s/ Cherie H. Fine  
CHERIE H. FINE, ESQUIRE  
Fla. Bar No. 0331317  
FINE, FARKASH & PARLAPIANO, PA  
622 NE First Street  
Gainesville, Florida 32601  
(352) 376-6046  
Personal Representative: /s/ BARRY KRAJNOVICH  
BARRY KRAJNOVICH  
11649 Parker Street  
Brookier, Florida 32622  
7/31 2tchg 8/7-BCT

## UNION

### NOTICE OF INTENT TO VACATE PLAT

Pursuant to Section 177.101(4), Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the Linda H. Johns Family Trust and Blake Dicks, owners of all lots within the Lake Butler Highlands Subdivision, Union County, Florida, intend to file a petition with the Board of County Commissioners of Union County to vacate the plat of said subdivision, as recorded in the Public Records of Union County, Florida. A public hearing on this matter will be held before the Union County Board of County Commissioners on August 18, 2025, at 6:00 PM, in the Board Chambers at the Union County Courthouse, 55 W Main St, Lake Butler, FL 32054.

For further information, contact the Union County Board of County Commissioners office at (386) 496-4241 during regular business hours.

The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no further notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above-referenced public hearing. At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the proposed board action.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above-referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to

ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact Dianne Hannon, Secretary to the Board of County Commissioners at (386) 496-4241 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 711, or 1-800-955-8770 (voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TTY).

7/24 2tchg 7/31-UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CIVIL DIVISION  
CASE NO.: 24000047CAAXMX

PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION PLAINTIFF,  
VS.  
REBECCA M. NETTLES, AGNES R. HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH SAPP F/K/A AGNES R. COMBS, ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS ET AL., DEFENDANTS.

RE-NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE  
(Please publish in Union County Times)  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Order Rescheduling Foreclosure Sale dated the 26<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2025, and entered in Case No. 24000047CAAXMX, of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Union County, Florida, wherein PHH Mortgage Corporation is the Plaintiff and AGNES R. HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH SAPP F/K/A AGNES R. COMBS, REBECCAM. NETTLES, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF REBECCA M. NETTLES, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS, ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY N/K/A LORETTA MERRITT are defendants. Kelly Hendricks Rhoades as the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder for cash in the lobby of the Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054 at 11:00 A.M on the **25<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2025**, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:

Part of the South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, containing one-acre, more or less, as defined by four concrete monuments. These monuments are located as follows: Running Southerly along the supposed East boundary of the above 20 acre tract to a monument said to be the Southeast corner thereof, run right through a deflection angle of 86°15'; Thence 163.33 feet to a point, at which turn right through a deflection angle of 48°05'; Thence Northwesterly along this course a distance of 512.00 feet, to a monument, this monument being the East corner monument of the one-acre tract herein described, thence run left through a deflection angle of 89°59'; Thence along this line, being a boundary of the one-acre

tract herein described for a distance of 209.00 feet to a monument, being the Southern corner of the one-acre tract herein described, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°03'; Thence along this course being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the West corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 89°50'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the North corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, and thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°07'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the aforesaid one-acre tract, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the East corner previously mentioned; It being specifically understood the aforesaid monuments are and remain the boundaries of the parcel herein described. AND Commence at the Northwest corner of the South 1/2 of Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, and run North 84° 30' 27" East along the North line of said South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, 146.89 feet, thence South 44° 32' 28" East, 420.69 feet to the point of beginning, thence South 42° 52' 17" West 122.00 feet, thence South 47° 08' 43" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 42° 52' 17" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 47° 08' 43" West 210.00 feet, thence South 42° 52' 17" West, 88.00 feet to the Point of Beginning. IF YOU ARE A PERSON CLAIMING A RIGHT TO FUNDS REMAINING AFTER THE SALE, YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Persons with a disability who need any accommodation in order to participate should call Jan Phillips, ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Courthouse, 201 E. University Ave., Gainesville, FL 32601 at (352) 337-6237 within two (2) working days of your receipt of this notice; if you are hearing impaired call (800) 955-8771; if you are voice impaired, call (800) 955-8770.

Dated this 2nd day of July, 2025.  
Kellie Hendricks Rhoades  
Clerk of the Circuit Court  
By: C. Hollingsworth  
Deputy Clerk  
Submitted by:  
Miller, George & Suggs, PLLC  
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF  
210 N. University Drive, Suite 900  
Coral Springs, FL 33071  
DESIGNATED PRIMARY E-MAIL FOR SERVICE  
PURSUANT TO FLA. R. JUD. ADMIN 2.516  
[ESERVICE@MGS-LEGAL.COM](mailto:ESERVICE@MGS-LEGAL.COM)  
24FL922-0055  
7/31 2tchg 8/7-UCT

# STEM-Chalk-Photos



Olivia Cruger colors in her chalk art as she and other children in the 12G Mentoring I Am STEM camp participated in decorating the sidewalks in downtown Starke in preparation for the July 18 Chalk up an Appetite event, hosted by the Downtown Merchants.



Christian Charles, Olivia Cruger and Lee Cruger Jr. (front to back) take part in their chalk-drawn game in which they attempt to avoid the "spikes."



Lee Cruger Jr. works on coloring in a chalk drawing.



E.J. Hamilton has some fun holding onto a group of chalk-drawn balloons.

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Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler  
Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goodge  
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# Dream Pilot Media: telling sports stories and more

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Want to relive that touchdown you scored, that 3-point shot you sank or that home run you hit?

In today's world, it's easier for high-school student-athletes to see their highlight plays, thanks to technology and a platform in social media in which to post them, but it takes someone to step up and make it happen.

Enter Dream Pilot Media, a venture started in 2021 by Latoya Chandler (a 2001 Bradford High School graduate) and Stefan Nichols (a 1995 BHS graduate) that creates videos set to music, giving high-school kids something maybe they wouldn't experience unless they were fortunate to play collegiately or professionally.

When he was a BHS student, Nichols could read about himself and see photos of himself in the newspaper, but actually watching plays unfold was something he and other student-athletes didn't enjoy.

"It was just something I never had growing up in Starke," he said. "Graduating in 1995, there was no social media. You just had a whole bunch of VHS tapes."

Dream Pilot Media, which also takes still photos and produces graphics work, began as a hobby, really, but it led to paid contracts with school booster groups and other organizations.

"I never went into it thinking, 'Hey, I'm getting ready to start a media company,'" Nichols said. "It wasn't until we started getting a whole bunch of taps on the shoulder from high schools and different organizations like the North Florida Suns. It was like, 'You need an LLC, and we can pay you.' I was like, 'Well, I guess we've got a business now.'"

"I'm not going to say we were forced into being a business. It was kind of a nice, friendly nudge to go ahead and become official."

The overall goal, though, remains the same — to give back to young student-athletes and others in the community.

"We've done more stuff for free than we've gotten paid



Dream Pilot Media was started in 2021 by Latoya Chandler (left) and Stefan Nichols.

for," Nichols said. "Honestly, I wouldn't have it any other way."

## From community events to athletics

Dream Pilot Media really got its start on a whim, with Nichols deciding to buy a camera and learning how to use it and getting tremendous help from Chandler.

"She taught me the ins and outs as far as how to operate the camera," Nichols said.

Then, it was simply improving as he went.

"I'm not going to say everybody should adopt this, but if you keep trying something long enough, eventually you'll start to pick it up," Nichols said. "You'll figure out an easier way to do things or smarter ways to do things the next time."

Nichols and Chandler first began chronicling community events. Then, the requests started coming in.

"It turned into doing a few videos here and there for a few couples for weddings," Nichols said. "Then, somebody asked us, 'Hey, do you do baby showers?' I was like, 'Well, I guess so.'"

"It was like one job after

another. It was something we had never done before, so we just said, 'You know what? Let's try it?'"

Eventually, the decision was made to try capturing moments from BHS football games.

"I just wanted to give kids an opportunity for exposure," Nichols said.

Nichols, Chandler and Brenton Ruise cover various athletic events from all angles. At a football game, for example, Nichols said he'll typically use a camcorder that can zoom in from long distances, so a lot of times he'll stand in the back of one of the end zones, while Chandler and Ruise work the sidelines.

"If one person misses a play, the other person has it," Nichols said. "A lot of times, people ask us about a play: 'How did you all switch angles?' 'Well, we've got three different cameras.' We may splice a play together from three different camera angles to make it look cinematic."

Nichols also has a DJI pocket gimbal, which is good for getting close-in shots. He'll use that to get footage of a team huddling on the sideline with a coach or for interviews.

"The coaches are very

helpful," Nichols said. "They know what I'm there for, so that makes it a lot easier."

Editing and producing a finished highlight video after a football game tends to be a long affair.

"We burn the candle very late on Friday nights and into Saturday morning," Nichols said, adding that the work can last until 3 a.m. to 4 a.m. on Saturday.

You won't find Dream Pilot Media at Bradford athletic events only. The crew has also done work or has been asked to do work for schools in Union County, Baker County, Columbia County, Middleburg and Williston.

Dream Pilot was contracted to do work for the BHS football program last year by the Bradford Touchdown Club, resulting in working all home games and a few away games as well as gathering footage from practices.

Other paid jobs have included working with the North Florida Suns basketball organization as well as the Lake City Vipers youth football organization. Nichols said he especially enjoyed the Lake City Vipers job, which involved covering a big tournament at the University of Florida.

"That was a dream come true for me because since I started filming, I've wanted to actually film a Gators game," Nichols said. "It wasn't quite a Gators game, but I was there at Ben Hill Griffin (Stadium)."

"That's one thing on my bucket list, to hopefully get on the sideline for the Gators."

## Opportunities, achieving dreams and telling a story

Though Dream Pilot Media moved toward covering athletics, it's still involved in non-sports work. Nichols said Dream Pilot has done projects for mosquito-repellent company Thermacell, which has a research center in Hampton. Other jobs have included working with real-estate companies and assisting

BHS in its attempt to get funding for parking by providing aerial-drone footage.

"It just shows that if you have the means to do media, there are all types of avenues you can go down," Nichols said. "You don't even really have to do sports."

One project, which was kind of sports-related, but really more a labor of love for someone many people in the community know, was producing a video for Roger Crews and his love of paintball.

I think I had more fun than Roger," Nichols said. "Roger was tired. I don't think he understood that when you're actually filming, you have to do several takes. It was hot out there. He had all his gear on. I think he was relieved when it was over with, but I had fun."

In looking toward the future, Nichols said he'd love to have contracts with various universities, but said that his ultimate goal is to create his own TV channel that would be available for content creators.

"I want to have a platform where people can have their short films or docuseries or whatever else they are going on," Nichols said.

That would tie in to how Dream Pilot Media got its name. People have dreams, and Dream Pilot Media is the "pilot" that helps people turn their dreams into reality.

And if someone's dream is to go into some type of media, Dream Pilot's creators are willing to help. Nichols said he'd like to give shadow opportunities to youth. Perhaps a young person will one day be part of a new Dream Pilot Media-type venture.

"I can't do this forever," Nichols said.

Helping youth is something Nichols enjoys, whether it's giving a student-athlete a cool-looking highlights video with Dream Pilot Media or talking to Bradford High School students about their future in his "real job" as a Santa Fe College Achieve specialist.

"I'm on the high school campus almost every day throughout the week," Nichols



Stefan Nichols is pictured getting video footage of a July 3 meet-and-greet event that Starke's Beef O'Brady's hosted for former BHS football players Torin Brazell and Chail Cummings, who play in college at East Carolina and Purdue, respectively.

said. "I pretty much just meet with kids, and I talk to them about their career exploration and, really, just life. The truth is, not everybody's going to go to college. You just talk to them and make sure they're actually on a path where they're setting up options for themselves."

Perhaps some of those students he talks to will go on to find great success in life. Who knows? Maybe Dream Pilot Media will help them tell their story.

That's what Dream Pilot Media is all about — telling a story.

"I would say that's the biggest thing we do," Nichols said. "We don't just point and film a game and say, 'These are the highlights.' We want it to be entertaining, especially in this day and age of social media, where people's attention spans are kind of short."

"We try to do something that's going to kind of grab you."

You can find Dream Pilot Media at dreampilotmedia.com, on Facebook and YouTube under "Dream Pilot Media," on Instagram under "dreampilot1104" and on X under "DreamPilotMedia1."

## JOBS

Continued from page 8

"We can always use donations because they are somehow going to benefit a student," DeValerio said.

Some students benefit by receiving money for college. Community for Schools established the Cheryl G. Canova Scholarship, which was presented for the first time this year to graduating seniors Jaden Hankerson and Saniyah Thompson. Each received \$2,000.

DeValerio said the goal is to increase the scholarship amount each year.

Students also have the chance to earn scholarships through Community for Schools' Take

Stock in Children program. The program pairs students with adult mentors, with that mentor relationship idealistically lasting from sixth grade through graduation. Students who successfully go through the program, maintaining a specified minimum grade-point average, avoiding major disciplinary issues and keeping absences to a minimum, receive two-year scholarships.

Another program within the Take Stock program has chosen ninth-graders receiving four-year scholarships upon graduating. Those students also receive yearly stipends for college incidentals.

DeValerio and Take Stock in Children College Success Coach Candace Osteen, in a joint statement, shared their thoughts on the Take Stock program: "Take

Stock in Children scholarships open doors for students in rural communities by removing financial and social barriers that often limit their access to higher education. These scholarships provide more than just college tuition, and they come with mentorship, academic support and a clear pathway to success.

"For students in rural areas, where resources can be limited, and college may seem out of reach, Take Stock offers hope, guidance and the tangible means to pursue a college degree. This not only increases their chances of achieving well-paying careers, but also empowers them to break generational barriers, become leaders in their communities and inspire others to aim higher."

Cummings, who was part of Take Stock in Children, said, "The program gave me access to

mentors, support and resources that helped me stay focused on my goals and inspired me to keep pushing forward, no matter what challenges I faced." She also added, "Looking ahead, I know the lessons and support I've received through Take Stock will help me and others prepare for college and beyond. It has given me a clearer vision of my future, helped me build better habits and boosted my confidence. Most importantly, it showed me that with the right mindset and support, I can achieve anything I set my mind to."

If you'd like to support Bradford Community for Schools with a monetary donation, serve as a student mentor or find out other ways in which you can help, please call 904-966-6004.



Jaden "Chop" Hankerson (far left) and Saniyah Thompson (far right) are pictured with Cheryl Canova after receiving Bradford Community for Schools' first-ever Cheryl G. Canova Scholarships.

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# Obituaries

## Paritia Bennett

Paritia Mae Joe Bennett, 76, of Lake City, died Saturday, July 19, 2025 at her residence.

Survivors are children, Ronald (Pamela) Leffel and Jessica Mickelson; sister, Beatrice Creamer; brother, Don E. Lucas; and many extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be Friday, Aug. 1, at 10:30 a.m. at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel. The family will receive friends 30 minutes prior at the funeral home. Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services, Starke, 904-964-5757.

## Shirley Bridgman

Shirley Jane Bridgman, 75 of Lake Butler, passed away Sunday, July 20, 2025 at Bedrock Nursing Home in Lake City following an extended illness with Parkinson's disease. She was born in Jacksonville on Sept. 27, 1949 to her late parents, Joseph and Mildred Bridgman. She was a great cook and loved experimenting in the kitchen. She also enjoyed reading, listening to country music and watching her soaps. She enjoyed spending time with her family, especially relishing the moments with the little ones. She loved Christmas and cherished seeing the kids dressed up for Halloween. Shirley loved watching her sports; football, basketball, tennis and gymnastics. Her favorite teams were Union County Tigers, Florida Gators and Miami Dolphins. She was a member of Trinity Baptist Church of Lake Butler and was actively involved as secretary for several years. She also worked a decade as a secretary for the County Extension Office. She was preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Mildred Bridgman; along with her siblings, Joann Manning, June Turrill, Janice Bridgman, Jennifer Williams and Johnny Bridgman.

She is survived by her son, Travis (Christina) Williams, grandchildren, Blaine, Ayden and Ashlyn Williams, all of Lake Butler; sisters, Judie (Wayne) Davis of Saraland, Alabama, Diane (Steve) Saunders and Linda Morton; brother, David (Lulamae) Bridgman of Lake Butler; along with a host of nieces and nephews. Her warmth, love and spirit will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

A memorial service in her honor will be held Saturday, Aug. 9, at 11 a.m. at Trinity Baptist Church of Lake Butler with Pastor Danny Fouraker and Pastor Mike Norman, officiating.



PAID OBITUARY

## Thomas Clark

Thomas "Tommy" Charles Clark died Monday, July 21, 2025. He was born Nov. 24, 1941, in Waycross to Frank Clifton Clark and Willie Mae Sikes. He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank and Willie Mae Clark; brothers, Kay and Donnie Clark; and grandson, Theo Marshall.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia Clark; son, Kenny (Kellie) Clark; brother, Lane (Sandy) Clark of Mansfield, Georgia; and extended family members.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke, 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

## Michael Crawford

Mr. Michael L. "Big Mike" Crawford, 39, of Starke passed away suddenly Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at his home. He was born June 28, 1986, in Gainesville to Randy E. and Judith (McKelvey) Crawford. He transferred from Bradford High School to Baldwin High School, where he earned two football scholarships. The first scholarship was to Louisburg College in North Carolina, where he earned a two-year degree, followed by another full scholarship to Newberry College in South Carolina, where he earned his bachelor's degree in science. Later on, he became employed with the University of Florida as their fields and grounds keeper. Being outdoors was a great passion of his, whether it was fishing, target shooting, or just living the lake life. He also enjoyed weightlifting, cooking, and was a gun collector as well. Those who knew him knew he would give you the shirt off his back and his dad said he "had a heart of gold," and taking care of family was his main priority. Michael is survived by his father, Randy E. Crawford; brother, Alan E. Crawford; and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and a host of extended family members and friends that will miss him dearly.

Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 1, at Sampson City Church of God with Mr. Johnny Frampton officiating. Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke, 32091. www.jonesgallagherfh.com 904-964-6200.



PAID OBITUARY

## Janet Ehrisman

Mrs. Janet Davis Ehrisman, 72, of Starke, died Wednesday, July 23, 2025, at North Florida Hospital in Gainesville.

Survivors are her husband Ken James Ehrisman; children, Wesley (Cheryl Lynn) Lester (Cheryl Lynn) and Jana (John) Mallard; three siblings; and extended family members.

Funeral services were held Monday, July 28, at Rock Primitive Baptist Church. Interment followed at Rock Cemetery.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke, 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

## Jimmy Gilland

With heavy hearts, the family of Jimmy Clifford Gilland, 90, of Graham announces his passing. He went to meet his Savior face to face on Saturday, July 26, 2024, at E.T. York Hospice Haven in Gainesville. He was born Dec. 11, 1934, to Henry "Pee Wee" and Minnie Arthur Gilland. He was born in Alabama and moved with his family to Gainesville as a small child. He was a hard worker as a tree surgeon for the City of Gainesville from 1952 until July of 1982, when he retired. He planted and maintained many of the trees around downtown Gainesville. Not one to be idle, he then went to work for the Alachua County Sheriff's office from Dec. 1982, as an animal control officer until he retired again in 1997. He was skilled at working with his hands. There weren't too many things Jimmy couldn't fix or build. He cut and milled trees to make furniture for many years. He also tanned hides and did bead work in the Native American tradition. He was very proud of his Native American heritage. He enjoyed hunting, making knives, turning wood on his lathe, making and giving away ink pens and growing things. After his retirements, he learned wood carving and flint napping. He and Pat loved traveling and fulfilled their "bucket list," traveling in the Western United States. He was a gifted storyteller who never met a stranger. He was preceded in death by his parents; and daughter, Penny Gilland Kientz.

He will be sorely missed by his beloved wife of 20 years, Patricia "Pat" Gilland; brother, Wayne Gilland; sons, Clifford (Cathy) Gilland and Johnny Gilland; three stepdaughters, Mary (Steve) Griffis, Liz (Dale) Knabb and Ruth (Tim) Dean; 20 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

The family will receive friends Thursday, July 31, beginning at 10 a.m. at Brooker Baptist Church. Funeral services will follow at 11 a.m. with Pastor Steven Griffis and Pastor Dave Teems officiating. Interment will be at a later date.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke, 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY



## Betty Ann Griffis

Mrs. Betty Ann Griffis, 82, of Starke, passed away Sunday, July 27, 2025 at her residence. She was born July 17, 1943 in Bradford County to the late William R. and Pearl (Sapp) Conner and was a lifelong area resident. She attended Sampson City Church of God and, prior to retirement, she worked as a bus driver for the Bradford County School Board. She enjoyed reading, sewing, and spending time with her family, friends and her favorite dachshund, Misty. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, Jack Dale Griffis.

Survivors are her children, Ricky Dale (Stephanie) Griffis and Kimberly Ann Griffis and her sister, Nancy Coleman, all of Starke. Also left are her grandchildren, Kristin (Jacob) Cannon, Kaitlin (Garrett) Ritch and Courtney (Alec) Finley; along with her great-grandchildren, Sophie Anne Finley, Kylie Cannon, Levi Ritch, Emery Finley, Carsen Finley, and Maggie Finley.

A celebration of life will be held at Sampson City Church of God on Saturday, Aug. 2, from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. with funeral services beginning at 11 a.m. with Rev. Gene Bass officiating. Interment will follow at Conner Cemetery.

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke, 904-964-6200 www.jonesgallagherfh.com.



PAID OBITUARY

## Vernon Hendricks

With heavy but thankful hearts, the family of Vernon McQueen Hendricks announces his passing on Monday, July 21, 2025, at the age of 89. He was born Dec. 6, 1935, in Lake Butler, to Butler and Ollie Hendricks. His twin, Herman, and Vernon were the 10th and 11th of 12 children, and grew up on the family farm. A farm that remains in the family to this day. His parents left a legacy of love and family that is rare, and he and his siblings have carried that legacy forward. It gave him great happiness to know that, just as his children had grown up with cousins as best friends, his grandchildren were doing the same. He graduated from the University of Florida with Bachelor's and Master's of Science in Biology.

Following the completion of his master's degree, he traveled to Europe and began his teaching career at a US military base in Verdun, France. He spent two years in Europe, taking the opportunity to travel as much as possible and visiting every country on the continent. Upon his return to the United States, he continued his teaching career at high schools in Lake City and Rockledge. He later became a Professor of Botany and Biology at Brevard Community College (now known as Eastern Florida State College) in Cocoa. After more than 25 years there, he and Janet retired to Gainesville in 1995. While teaching in Rockledge, he received a National Science Foundation grant to participate in a summer science program at Rutgers University, where he met his wife, Janet Proulx. They married June 26, 1965, in Connecticut at the home of Janet's aunt and uncle. Over the years, they welcomed the arrival of David, Donna, and Tom. In June of this year, they celebrated 60 devoted years together. Although, as their household expanded, Janet devoted herself to raising their children, Vernon viewed her as an equal partner, treating her with appreciation and respect. Their home was one known for its hospitality and warmth, filled with laughter and fellowship. Vernon, having been one of the first in his family to graduate from college, believed strongly in the value of education, and was proud to support each of the children in obtaining their degrees. However, he was proudest that David, Donna, and Tom were happily married, with loving homes of their own, and what he considered to be their greatest accomplishment, his grandchildren, Eli, Kaylie, Grace, Eden, and Emmeline (better known as Emma), were the great joy of his life. It was hard to convince them that he was a strict father because at Granddaddy's house, you didn't have to finish a meal to have ice cream, you could make as big a mess as you wanted, and it was always playtime! His life was defined by his faith, and he devoted many years of service to the church, serving as a deacon at Central Church of Christ in Cocoa, as a deacon and an elder at the Rockledge Church of Christ in Rockledge, and as an elder at the University City Church of Christ in Gainesville. He instilled that faith in his children by living a life that exemplified humility and integrity. The saying that "you can't go home again" has not been true for his children. They have turned to him throughout their adult lives to help them make important decisions, guide them through the challenges of jobs and relationships, and as a source of constant strength and encouragement. Though his frugality was the stuff of family legend, he gave generously of his time and financial resources to those in need, no matter who they were. They have lost count of how many people have reached out over the years to tell them about the impact their dad had on their lives, whether as a teacher, a friend, a mentor, or just a kind man who bought them a meal, paid their bills, or held their hand and prayed with them in a time of need.

In a world where many are relentlessly focused on the pursuit of money and status, Vernon was a humble and unassuming man, committed to loving and serving others. For him wealth was found in servanthood to Christ, the love of family, fellowship with friends, and spending time in nature, especially growing and nurturing a garden. By these measures, he left this world the richest man on earth. For his family, his absence leaves a hole in their hearts that will not be filled until they are reunited with him in Heaven. He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Marie (Elijah) Brooks, John (Eloise) and Strick), Evelyn (Edison) Paulk, James (Adolyen), Drew (Josie), Bryan (Jeannette), Joe (Elaine), Harold (Martha), David (Ann), and Herman (Pam).

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Janet; children, David (Megan) Hendricks, Donna (Greg) Edwards, and Thomas (Jennifer) Hendricks; adored grandchildren, Eli, Kaylie, Grace, Eden, and Emmeline; youngest brother, Donald (Lois); treasured nieces and nephews, all of which he called his "favorites;" and many great- and great-great-nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held Saturday, Aug. 2, at University City Church of Christ. Visitation with the family will begin at 10 a.m. and the service will follow at 11 a.m. The family appreciates more than words can convey the support of their many friends and family during this sad time. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one of the following: Christian Family Services, the adoption agency that helped make Emmeline Faith (Emma) a beloved member of the Hendricks family and Vernon's granddaughter: Christian Family Services, Inc., 2720 SW Second Ave., Gainesville, 32607

https://cfsfl.org/contact-us/ or Mount Dora Children's Home, which provides loving homes and education to children in need, a cause Vernon supported for many years: Development Office, Mount Dora Children's Home, 301 W. 13 Ave., Mount Dora, 32757

PAID OBITUARY

## Christopher Jones

In Loving Memory of Christopher Travis Jones.

Christopher Travis Jones, 37, passed away Friday, July 25, 2025 in Starke. Chris was a devoted father to two sweet boys who were the light of his life. His love for them was the driving force behind his transformation, proof that with heart and determination, people can truly change for the better. He worked hard to build a life he could be proud of and to become a man his children could look up to. He will be remembered for his strength, his growth, and the deep love he carried for his family. His legacy lives on in the hearts of his children and all who knew and loved him.

A memorial service will be announced at a later date. In this time of grief, the family asks for your continued prayers and support as they navigate this heartbreaking loss.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke, 32091. 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY



## Judy Kimbrell

Judy Lynn Kimbrell, 74, of Starke died Sunday, July 27, 2025, at HCA Florida North Florida Hospital in Gainesville. She was born in Jacksonville on July 11, 1951 to the late Willard Rader and Easter Lily Bryant Rader. She was preceded in death by parents, Willard Rader and Easter Lily Bryant Rader; and six siblings, Lucille, Willard Jr., Pat, Nancy, Joyce and Albert.

She is survived by her son, Bruce (Leah) Kimbrell and grandson, Scott Kimbrell, all of Starke; along with many extended relatives and close friends.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial chapel, Starke. 904-964-5757.



## Deborah Rogers

With extremely heavy hearts, the family of Deborah "Debbie" Box Rogers announces her entrance to her Heavenly mansion on Saturday, July 26, 2025. She was born Feb. 19, 1956 in Lake City to Emogene and J.E. Box of Lake Butler. She was the oldest of four children and was not afraid to let them know that she was their "big sis." To say Debbie had a wonderful life would be an understatement. Throughout the tenure of her treasured time on Earth, she loved many things, but aside from Jesus, her grandchildren took the lead! She enjoyed the simple things in life, including sitting on her front porch with a cup of coffee and looking out at all of God's creations. She devoted 40 years to Pritchett Trucking, where she worked as an administrative assistant to Marvin and Phillip Pritchett (who both held a unique spot in her heart that couldn't be filled by anyone else). She was a proud member of First Baptist Church of Raiford and took pride in leading the congregation in songs every Sunday. To her, singing for the Lord was the best way to worship him. Her sweet voice and contagious, uplifting spirit will be deeply missed. She was preceded in death by her loving husband of 33 years, David Rogers; and wonderful father, J.E. Box.

She is survived by her mother, Emogene Box of Lake Butler; brothers, Wayne (Janice) Box of Jacksonville and Greg (CecCee) Box and Kevin (Kim) Box, all of Lake Butler; children, Chad Rogers and Justin Rogers; grandchildren, Eli Rogers, Morgan Rogers, Grayson Sykes, Harper Rogers, Easton Rogers, and Brantley Etheridge; and a host of nieces and nephews. To be such a little lady, Debbie had a heart bigger than words could describe and to say she will be greatly missed would be an understatement.

Services were Tuesday, July 29, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home and Wednesday, July 30, at First Baptist Church of Raiford. Debbie will be laid to rest beside David at Sapp Cemetery immediately following the service.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve Debbie's family during this difficult time. www.archerfuneralhome.com 386-496-2008.

PAID OBITUARY

## Beat the heat: Proper hydration goes beyond '8 cups a day'



Water pouring into glass.

heat, many Americans are feeling parched. But just how much water will keep them properly hydrated and healthy?

It depends, said Laura Acosta, a registered dietitian nutritionist and instructional associate professor with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences food science and human nutrition department.

Recommended daily water intake varies by age, sex, activity level and body size, she said. General public health guidelines recommend about 11 cups per day for women and about 15 cups per day for men. A more

With large swaths of the country sizzling due to oppressive

See HEAT, page 14

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## Bradford's 2024 football season by the numbers

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Though getting eliminated in the second round of the playoffs after finishing as a state runner-up in 2023, the 2024 Bradford High School Tornadoes still had a solid season, going 10-2. Both losses were to the same opponent — Newberry.

It was another season in which the defense was stout, with the Tornadoes shutting out four opponents and allowing double-digit points to only three teams: Dunnellon, Mandarin and Newberry (twice).

The offense scored at least 28 points in seven games and 40 or more points in four games. Bradford was held to single digits in points just once.

With the 2025 season approaching, the Telegraph-Times-Monitor takes a look at last year's results and some of the numbers associated with the season.

### 2024 results (with \* denoting District 5-2A games)

- 13-7 win over Baker County
- 29-14 win over Dunnellon
- 28-7 win over South Sumter
- 18-13 win over Mandarin
- 40-0 win over Keystone Heights\*
- 41-0 win over Palatka\*
- 21-7 loss to Newberry\*
- 43-7 win over Leon
- 44-0 win over Santa Fe\*
- 2-0 win (forfeit) over North Florida Educational Institute
- 35-0 win over The Villages (Region 2 quarterfinals)
- 34-19 loss to Newberry (Region 2 semifinals)

### BHS numbers

- Average points per game: 28.8
- Most points scored in a game: 44 (44-0 win over Santa Fe)
- Fewest points in a game: 7 (21-7 loss to Newberry)
- Rushing yards on the season: 2,250 on 325 carries
- Leading rusher: Gino Addison, 722 yards on 110 carries
- Player with most rushing touchdowns: Gino Addison, 9
- Most rushing yards in a game: 278 (29-14 win over Dunnellon)
- Fewest rushing yards in a game: 42 (21-7 loss to Newberry)
- Most rushing attempts in a game: 48 (18-13 win over Mandarin)
- Fewest rushing attempts in a game: 17 (40-0 win over Keystone)
- Most rushing touchdowns in a game: 5 (41-0 win over Palatka)
- Fewest rushing touchdowns in a game: 0 (21-7 loss to Newberry)
- Passing yards on the season: 1,372 (95 of 152)
- Leading passer: Zack Paulk, 93 of 149, 1,347 yards, 14 touchdowns
- Leading receiver: Jy'Quez Cason, 450 yards on 25 catches
- Player with most touchdown receptions: Jy'Quez Cason, 5
- Most passing yards in a game: 200 (21-7 loss to



Jy'Quez Cason (right) led Bradford in receiving last year as a junior.

- Newberry)
- Fewest passing yards in a game: 7 (29-14 win over Dunnellon)
- Most pass attempts in a game: 33 (21-7 loss to Newberry)
- Fewest pass attempts in a game: 7 (29-14 win over Dunnellon, 35-0 win over The Villages)
- Most pass completions in a game: 23 (21-7 loss to Newberry)
- Fewest pass completions in a game: 2 (29-14 win over Dunnellon)
- Most passing touchdowns in a game: 3 (40-0 win over Keystone, 43-7 win over Leon)
- Fewest passing touchdowns in a game: 0 (29-14 win over Dunnellon, 28-7 win over South Sumter, 18-13 win over Mandarin, 41-0 win over Palatka, 35-0 win over The Villages)
- Player with most tackles: Jeremiah McKenzie, 84
- Player with most tackles for loss: Trente Jenkins, 10
- Player with most sacks: Trevis Johnson, 6
- Players with most interceptions: Mikey Oliver and Branden Williams, 2 each
- Player with most fumble recoveries: Trente Jenkins, 2

### Opponent numbers

- Average points per game: 9.4
- Most points scored in a game: 34, Newberry
- Fewest points scored in a game: 0, Keystone, Palatka, Santa Fe, The Villages
- Most rushing yards in a game: 167, Newberry
- Fewest rushing yards: 29, Mandarin, The Villages
- Most rushing attempts in a game: 40, Palatka
- Fewest rushing attempts in a game: 16, Mandarin
- Most rushing touchdowns in a game: 4, Newberry
- Fewest rushing touchdowns in a game: 0, Baker County, Keystone, Leon, Palatka, Santa Fe, The Villages
- Most passing yards in a game: 159, Mandarin
- Fewest passing yards in a game: 6, Palatka
- Most pass attempts in a game: 27, The Villages
- Fewest pass attempts in a game: 5, Palatka
- Most pass completions in a game: 16, The Villages
- Fewest pass completions in a game: 2, Keystone, Palatka
- Most passing touchdowns in a game: 1, Baker County, Dunnellon, Leon, Mandarin, Newberry (twice)
- Fewest passing touchdowns in a game: 0, Keystone, Santa Fe, South Sumter, The Villages

## Union's 2024 football season by the numbers

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School came close to a perfect regular season in 2024 (with a one-point loss to Chiefland the only blemish) and then won two playoff games before its season came to an end with a loss to Madison County in the Rural Class state semifinals.

Madison would go on to win the state championship.

It was the second time in three years that the Tigers played a state-semifinal game and the sixth straight year they advanced to at least the region-final round.

Only one of Union's 10 wins saw the Tigers score less than 22 points. The Tigers had five games in which they scored at least 42 points.

Defensively, the Tigers held 10 opponents to less than 20 points and recorded three shutouts.

With the 2025 season approaching, the Telegraph-Times-Monitor takes a look at last year's results and some of the numbers associated with the season.

### 2024 results

- 14-13 win over Yulee
- 35-0 win over Keystone Heights
- 45-0 win over Santa Fe
- 22-0 win over Baldwin
- 46-19 win over Fort White
- 47-14 win over Zarephath Academy
- 54-16 win over Trinity Catholic
- 38-7 win over Hudson
- 30-29 loss to Chiefland
- 42-20 win over Holmes County (Rural semifinals)
- 28-18 win over Pahokee (Rural finals)
- 34-8 loss to Madison County (state semifinals)

### UCHS numbers

*Editor's note: Except for scoring, the Telegraph-Times-Monitor doesn't have Union County's official stats from the 34-8 state semifinal loss to Madison County, so those aren't factored into most of the following numbers.*

- Average points per game: 34.0
- Most points scored in a game: 54 (54-16 win over Trinity Catholic)
- Fewest points scored in a game: 8 (34-8 loss to Madison County)
- Rushing yards on the season: 2,866 on 371 carries
- Leading rusher: Drew Simmons, 1,444 yards on 161 carries
- Player with most rushing touchdowns: Drew Simmons, 17
- Most rushing yards in a game: 357 (47-14 win over Zarephath Academy)
- Fewest rushing yards in a game: 69 (30-29 loss to Chiefland)
- Most rushing attempts in a game: 51 (28-18 win over Pahokee)
- Fewest rushing attempts in a game: 20 (30-29 loss to Chiefland)
- Most rushing touchdowns in a game: 5 (46-19 win over Fort White)



Drew Simmons (right) led the Tigers in rushing last year as a sophomore.

—Fewest rushing touchdowns in a game: 0 (30-29 loss to Chiefland, 34-8 loss to Madison County)

- Passing yards on the season: 1,478 (91 of 144)
- Leading passer: Trenton Klein, 88 of 141, 1,409, 23 touchdowns
- Leading receiver: Gavin Jenkins, 577 yards on 31 catches
- Player with most touchdown receptions: Gavin Jenkins, 8
- Most passing yards in a game: 248 (42-20 win over Holmes County)
- Fewest passing yards in a game: 42 (14-13 win over Yulee)
- Most pass attempts in a game: 29 (30-29 loss to Chiefland)
- Fewest pass attempts in a game: 3 (47-14 win over Zarephath Academy)
- Most pass completions in a game: 15 (30-29 loss to Chiefland)
- Fewest pass completions in a game: 2 (28-18 win over Pahokee)
- Most passing touchdowns in a game: 5 (54-16 win over Trinity Catholic)
- Fewest passing touchdowns in a game: 0 (14-13 win over Yulee, 22-0 win over Baldwin)
- Player with most tackles:

- Trenton Klein, 78
- Player with most tackles for loss: Trenton Klein, 23.5
- Player with most sacks: Trenton Klein, 7.5
- Player with most interceptions: Ibn Williams, 2
- Players with most fumble recoveries: Jesse Chaikin, Gavin Jenkins, Ashton Newsom, 2 each

### Opponent numbers

*Editor's note: Except for scoring, the Telegraph-Times-Monitor doesn't have official stats for Santa Fe, so those aren't factored into most of the following numbers.*

- Average points per game: 14.3
- Most points in a game: 34, Madison County
- Fewest points in a game: 0, Baldwin, Keystone, Santa Fe
- Most rushing yards in a game: 383, Madison County
- Fewest rushing yards in a game: 12, Hudson
- Most rushing attempts in a game: 40, Madison County
- Fewest rushing attempts in a game: 8, Hudson
- Most rushing touchdowns in a game: 5, Madison County
- Fewest rushing touchdowns in a game: 0, Baldwin, Keystone, Santa Fe, Trinity Catholic
- Most passing yards in a game: 247, Zarephath Academy
- Fewest passing yards in a game: 26, Hudson
- Most pass attempts in a game: 28, Trinity Catholic
- Fewest pass attempts in a game: 5, Keystone, Madison County
- Most pass completions in a game: 15, Zarephath Academy
- Fewest pass completions in a game: 2, Keystone, Madison County
- Most passing touchdowns in a game: 2, Holmes County, Trinity Catholic
- Fewest passing touchdowns in a game: 0, Baldwin, Keystone, Madison County, Santa Fe, Trinity Catholic

## Keystone 2024 football season by the numbers



Zane Leger was Keystone's leading rusher last year as a junior.

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School got the 2024 varsity football season off to a strong start with a shutout win over Interlachen. Despite two big shutout losses in a row after that, the Indians were a .500 team after the first four games.

Unfortunately, not much went right the rest of the season, as the Indians sustained a number of injuries and lost six in a row to finish with a 2-8 record.

With the 2025 season approaching, the Telegraph-Times-Monitor takes a look at last year's results and some of the numbers associated with the season.

### 2024 results (with \* denoting District 5-2A games)

- 29-0 win over Interlachen
- 35-0 loss to Union County

See Keystone, page 14



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# KEYSTONE

Continued from page 13

- 48-0 loss to Newberry\*
- 14-6 win over Dixie County
- 40-0 loss to Bradford\*
- 42-10 loss to West Nassau
- 30-7 loss to Santa Fe\*
- 54-0 loss to Chiefland
- 40-0 loss to Palatka\*
- 26-10 loss to Crescent City

## KHHS numbers

*Editor's note: Except for scoring, the Telegraph-Times-Monitor doesn't have Keystone's official stats against Crescent City, so those aren't factored into most of the following numbers.*

- Average points per game: 7.0
- Most points scored in a game: 29 (29-0 win over Interlachen)
- Fewest points scored in a game: 0 (35-0 loss to Union County, 48-0 loss to Newberry, 40-0 loss to Bradford, 54-0 loss to Chiefland, 40-0 loss to Palatka)
- Rushing yards on the season: 918 on 268 carries
- Leading rusher: Zane Leger, 438 yards on 98 carries
- Player with most rushing touchdowns: Zane Leger, 3
- Most rushing yards in a game: 258 (29-0 win over Interlachen)
- Fewest rushing yards in a game: 32 (48-0 loss to Newberry)
- Most rushing attempts in

- a game: 39 (29-0 win over Interlachen)
- Fewest rushing attempts in a game: 20 (35-0 loss to Union County)
- Most rushing touchdowns in a game: 2 (29-0 win over Interlachen)
- Passing yards on the season: 371 (32 of 82)
- Leading passer: Baylor Ford, 20 of 53, 224 yards, 2 touchdowns
- Leading receiver: Andrew Wilson, 85 yards on 4 catches
- Player with most touchdown receptions: Andrew Wilson, 2
- Most passing yards in a game: 88 (14-6 win over Dixie County)
- Fewest passing yards in a game: 0 (40-0 loss to Palatka)
- Most pass attempts in a game: 14 (30-7 loss to Santa Fe)
- Fewest pass attempts in a game: 5 (35-0 loss to Union County)
- Most pass completions in a game: 6, (14-16 win over Dixie County, 30-7 loss to Santa Fe, 42-10 loss to West Nassau)
- Fewest pass completions in a game: 0 (40-0 loss to Palatka)
- Most passing touchdowns in a game: 2 (29-0 win over Interlachen)
- Player with the most tackles: Kyle Perkins, 50
- Players with the most tackles for loss: Jackson Herman, Colton Hollingsworth, 2 each
- Player with the most sacks: Luke Bacorn, Bryce Daniels, Jackson Herman, Kyle Perkins, Zane Leger, 1 each

- Player with the most interceptions: Tallon Campbell, 3
- Player with the most fumble recoveries: Kyle Perkins, 4

## Opponent numbers

- Average points per game: 32.1
- Most points in a game: 54, Chiefland
- Fewest points in a game: 0, Interlachen
- Most rushing yards in a game: 352, Chiefland
- Fewest rushing yards in a game: 145, Interlachen
- Most rushing attempts in a game: 40, Dixie County
- Fewest rushing attempts in a game: 17, Bradford
- Most rushing touchdowns in a game: 4, Newberry, Union County, West Nassau
- Fewest rushing touchdowns in a game: 0, Interlachen
- Most passing yards in a game: 195, Bradford
- Fewest passing yards in a game: 0, Dixie County
- Most pass attempts in a game: 26, Interlachen
- Fewest pass attempts in a game: 6, Newberry
- Most pass completions in a game: 12, Interlachen, Union County
- Fewest pass completions in a game: 0, Dixie County
- Most passing touchdowns in a game: 4, Palatka
- Fewest passing touchdowns in a game: 0, Dixie County, Interlachen

# HEAT

Continued from page 12

customized estimate based on body size can be reached by dividing one's body weight in pounds by 15. Children, who become dehydrated more easily than adults, need more water per pound. A 10-pound child, for example, needs between 2 cups and 3 cups of fluids a day, and a 90-pound child needs between 8 cups and 9 cups.

Although these guidelines exceed the well-known, "eight-cups-a-day" maxim, Acosta said it's important to remember they include water consumed through both drinking and eating. Many fruits and vegetables, including oranges, watermelon, cucumbers, lettuce and tomatoes, naturally contain significant amounts of water. Broths and soups — particularly clear ones — are also water-rich foods.

"So, you're not necessarily chugging 11 to 15 cups of water a day," she said.

Hydrating through beverages doesn't have to be boring, either. While drinks containing caffeine, alcohol and added sugar can have dehydrating effects and should generally be avoided, sparkling water is just as hydrating as still water. Infusing water with fruit and herbs or using sugar-free flavoring drops can also make it more appealing.

Acosta suggests increasing motivation by using a bottle

labeled with time markers that indicate consumption goals. Setting reminders or associating daily activities with drinking can also be helpful.

"Consider something you do on a regular basis, like brushing your teeth or eating a meal. Perhaps that's the time to take a sip," she said.

She cautions, however, that water is not always the most effective hydration choice.

Someone engaged in vigorous activity loses electrolytes — essential minerals like sodium and potassium — through sweating, and water alone cannot restore them, Acosta said. Instead, grab a sports drink or combine water with a salty snack, like pretzels or nuts.

"You don't necessarily need a commercial sports beverage," she said. "While these can be helpful for athletes needing just the right balance of water, electrolytes and carbohydrates to fuel performance, most people can rehydrate quite effectively with just water and a salty snack if they've lost some water from sweating."

One of the simplest methods

to gauge whether any hydration-boosting technique is working is tied to the bathroom.

An adequately hydrated person will feel the urge to urinate every three to four hours, and their urine should be a light-yellow color, Acosta said.

"And be sure to pay attention to how thirsty you are," she said. "If you start to feel thirsty, there's a good chance you're already somewhat dehydrated."

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