

Bradford County Telegraph

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146th year, 25th Issue — \$1

Drugs, guns cash found in Lawtey drug bust

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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A significant drug bust unfolded Tuesday morning when the Bradford County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit arrested Cedric Carter of Lawtey in connection with extensive drug sales from his home.

The operation began with the undercover detectives purchasing cocaine from Carter's residence, confirming suspicions about his involvement in drug trafficking and leading to an arrest warrant and residential search warrant.

Tuesday morning, Carter was stopped during a traffic stop, where detectives detained him. Simultaneously, narcotics detectives alongside the Bradford County Sheriff's Office and Union County Sheriff's Office joint SWAT team, executed the search warrant at his home.

The search yielded a substantial amount of illicit substances and illegal items, including: cocaine, crack cocaine, MDMA pills,

methamphetamine, suboxone pills, various drug paraphernalia, two firearms, ammunition and \$1,400 in U.S. currency.

Carter has been arrested and booked into the Bradford County charges, including: possession with intent to sell and selling cocaine within 1,000 feet of a place of worship, use of a two-way communication device to facilitate a felony, keeping a public nuisance structure for drug activity, multiple charges of drug possession, and multiple charges of firearm possession by a convicted felon.



Carter



Bradford County Sheriff's Office Facebook.

Chamber enacts leadership changes, preps annual banquet

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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The North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Governors finalized leadership changes and set plans for its annual banquet during a Jan. 8 meeting, according to chamber officials.

The organization will see four board members departing due to term limits and personal circumstances, reshaping the business group's leadership heading into 2026.

Johns' resignation letter. Johns was slated to lead the board as chair in the upcoming year.

Three new board members have been selected to fill the vacancies:

—Chris Page, who works at DLP Bank, will return to the board after completing his mandatory one-year hiatus. He previously served six years on the board and will assume the role of treasurer. Outgoing chamber chair Brad Smith praised Page as "one of those quiet super volunteers who is involved in a lot of stuff but doesn't do it for the glory."

—Dawn Strickland, who currently serves on the board of the Northeast Florida Economic Development Corporation, will join the chamber board. Whittle said Strickland had expressed interest in serving on the chamber board and will bring her economic development experience to the new role.

—DLP Bank President Harry Gunsallus will transition from a one-year trial appointment to a full three-year term.

Johns' resignation leaves one additional seat vacant. The chamber

Board transitions

Three long-serving board members are completing their six-year terms and will step down following the February annual meeting: Steve Futch, Rhonda Hamilton and Brad Smith. Board members must sit out a minimum of one year after completing two, three-year terms.

Grace Johns also resigned from the board due to increased work responsibilities and personal commitments.

"I would no longer be able to give the role the time and attention it deserves," said Pam Whittle, chamber president, reading from

See CHAMBER, page 4

Eight competing for Miss Union County High

The 2026 Miss Union County High School pageant will be held on Thursday, January 22, in the high school auditorium. The pageant will begin at 7 p.m., with doors opening and ticket sales beginning an hour earlier. Tickets are \$10.

Last year, a Union County High School senior dual enrolled at Florida Gateway College claimed the 2024-2025 Miss Union County High School title after highlighting a World War II-era icon that symbolized the emerging role of women in the workforce.

Aubrie Muse donned the blue jumpsuit and red polka dot scarf made famous in the 1942 "We Can Do It!" poster that symbolized women's role in manufacturing during the war.

During the pageant's theme-wear competition, the 17-year-old struck the famous pose of Rosie pulling up a shirt sleeve and flexing a bicep. Co-host Mia Kent said Muse wanted to honor the famous icon who empowered women to be strong and confident and to enter the workforce while the nation's men were away

fighting the war. "Hometown Crown" is the theme for this year, and, according to pageant co-directors SaraBeth Vaughn and Erin Waters, the eight contestants have worked extremely hard in preparation for the event.

"There are six categories that are scored to determine the winner of Miss Union County High School: Interview, Opening Performance, Theme Wear, Talent, Evening Gown, and On-Stage Question," said the organizers. "There will also be awards given for Most Photogenic, Miss Congeniality, and People's Choice. These categories will be awarded but will not be included in the final score or the determination of



During last year's theme-wear competition, Aubrie Muse struck the famous pose of Rosie the Riveter pulling up a shirt sleeve and flexing a bicep.

Miss UCHS. The People's Choice category was added in 2020 and is strictly based on the total amount of funds donated by each contestant's

supporters. Contestants' boosters are encouraged to bring cash to vote for

See MISS, page 6

Lake Region in severe drought

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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The bureau chief for the St. Johns River Water Management District said below-average rainfall in December pushed the western and northern sections of the district into severe drought conditions, with other areas of the 18-county district undergoing moderate drought conditions.

Tim Miller briefed the district's governing board during its January 13 meeting and said the district averaged just 0.91 inches of rainfall in December, falling short of the monthly average of 2.54 inches.

The shortfall extends a concerning pattern, with annual rainfall totals now more than five inches below the normal average of 51.01 inches.

Widespread below-normal conditions

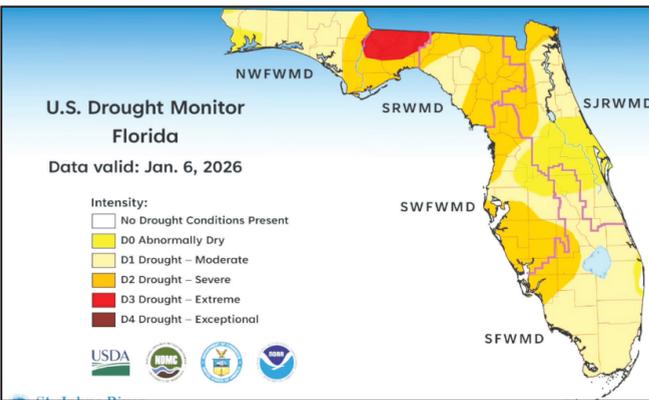
Seventeen of the district's 18 counties recorded below-normal precipitation in December, with eight counties receiving more than an inch less than their monthly averages. Okeechobee County experienced the driest conditions with only 0.54 inches of rainfall, while Orange County topped the region with three inches.

The deficit has been particularly severe in northern and western areas. Bradford County recorded the lowest annual total at just 37.35 inches, while five counties including Baker, Bradford, Alachua, Marion, and Putnam fell more than 11 inches below their annual averages.

Entire district under drought classification

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor assessment classifies the entire district as experiencing some level of drought, ranging from abnormally dry conditions in central portions to moderate and severe drought in western and northern areas.

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index, which measures wildfire potential, shows concerning upward trends with five counties now recording values of 500 or higher. County-enacted burn bans are currently in place for Baker and Bradford counties, with several other counties under burn ban restrictions.



The U.S. Drought Monitor showed abnormally dry conditions in Volusia, Lake, and Orange counties, moderate drought conditions in Duval, St. Johns, Flagler and eastern Clay, Putnam and Marion counties, and severe drought in western Clay, Putnam, and Marion counties as well as all of Bradford, Union, Nassau, Baker, Columbia, Alachua, Gilchrist and Levy counties.

Water levels declining across region

Surface flows and water levels reflect the dry conditions. The St. Mary's River to the north recorded flows in the very low range, while the Alafia River to the west registered low flows. Most lake levels decreased through December, with Lake Brooklyn dropping nine-tenths of a foot from the previous month.

See DROUGHT, page 6



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WORTH NOTING

MLK celebrations set

The annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet hosted by the Concerned Citizens of Bradford County will take place Saturday, Jan. 17, at 6 p.m. at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center, 1610 N. Temple Ave. in Starke. Tickets are \$40. For more information or tickets, please contact CCBC President Alica McMillian at 904-966-1100, Glenda Ruise at 904-769-1691 or Sherry Williams at 352-278-3540.

The annual program will take place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 19, at 11 a.m. at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center. The celebration is free to attend. Lunch will be served following the service.

Collection site closings

Bradford County solid waste collection sites will be closed Monday, Jan. 19, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. They will reopen at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Fairgrounds food distribution

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 9 a.m. at the Bradford County Fairgrounds.

Food boxes often include fresh produce, deli and bakery items, dairy and some meats. Inventory is subject to availability. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Food at True Vine

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Farm Share and True Vine Ministry will take place Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 10 a.m. at True Vine Outreach Ministry in Starke.

Food boxes often include fresh produce, deli and bakery items, dairy and some meats. Inventory is subject to change based on availability. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Wine and cheese meet and greet

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area will host an afternoon of sharing conversation and learning on Saturday, Jan. 24, at 2:30 p.m. for Democrats in the area. This is an antidote for isolation, an opportunity to socialize and hear about what Democrats are doing this year.

Delicious savory foods and desserts will be served as well as spirits and tea. Club officers will deliver a brief synopsis of 2026 objectives and share how it all gets done. All Democrats are welcome to attend. The address is 307 S.R. 26 in Melrose, about two blocks west of the stoplight. For further information call 904-860-6458.



Paramedicine program hires additional support for community

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Bradford County Board of County Commissioners welcomed a new addition to its community paramedicine efforts at the Dec. 18 meeting, officially introducing David Jackson as the next community paramedic for Bradford County Fire Rescue.

Fire Chief Ben Carter lauded Jackson's experience and commitment. "(David's) a paramedic firefighter. Has been with our department for a couple years now. He truly has a heart for caring for people, and that's really what we focused on," Carter said. Carter noted that Jackson was selected after an extensive interview process and that he stood out "against some tough candidates ... all of whom have been here for 10 years or



Bradford County paramedic firefighter David Jackson has joined BCFR's Community Paramedicine Program.

more." Jackson, addressing the commissioners and the community, expressed gratitude and optimism for the continued growth of the paramedicine program. "Just want to start by thanking you, commissioners, and you, chief, for the continued support and the growth for this community paramedicine program," he said. "It is no secret that Lt. (David) Weeks has taken this program and made it a smashing success, and my only goal is to amplify that success in any way I can so that we can reach more citizens and help more. So, whatever he needs, I'm here for him."

The paramedicine program is an innovative approach to health care that extends beyond traditional emergency response.

Originally modeled after programs in Alachua and other counties, the program aims to proactively address community health needs, particularly in response to the opioid crisis.

Recovery means addressing many levels of need, including chronic disease treatment and access to health care. Working with partners like Meridian, BCFR has made overdose prevention kits available throughout the community and instituted medically assisted addiction recovery. By helping patients proactively address their needs and pairing them with health care providers, the program has positively impacted the number of patients relying on EMS and the emergency room for regular care.

Opioid abatement dollars fund

the program, and a recent release of funding allowed BCFR to add a second position to assist Lt. Weeks, who was recently named the first ever Rural EMS Hero by the Florida Rural Health Association. "Really proud of the work that he's doing through our Community Paramedicine Program and so pleased with what that program has been able to do for our community at no cost to the taxpayers, which is a great part," Carter said.

County officials and board members applauded both employees for their service, expressing pride in the fire rescue team's statewide recognition and the dedication to Bradford County's residents.

SRWMD issues water shortage advisory

Following a year of below-average rainfall across North Florida that has affected rivers, springs and groundwater levels, the Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board on Tuesday issued a water shortage advisory, calling on water users to be mindful of

their consumption and adopt conservation practices.

As of Dec. 21, 2025, 14 of the 15 District counties had an average rainfall deficit of approximately 11.5 inches based on records dating back to 1932, and rainfall forecasts for the next three months call for below normal precipitation. All counties in the District are also at varying levels of drought conditions.

The declared advisory encourages all users to:

—conserve water to the maximum extent possible.

—reduce overall water use; be mindful of running taps, leaks and other indoor water uses that can add up.

—defer water-intensive activities such as washing cars, pressure washing, landscape plantings and other discretionary water uses until conditions improve.

If you choose to irrigate your landscape, schedule irrigation to no more than one day per week, ensure that the system is free of

leaks, and set for the minimum time and volume necessary for the yard.

All permittees are encouraged to review their operations, ensure permitted conservation measures are fully implemented, and plan for the possibility of extended drought. This advisory allows permit holders time to plan if further water restrictions are necessary, such as eliminating high-pressure irrigation systems, transitioning to night irrigation, and minimizing the use of less

efficient irrigation systems. Permittees should contact the District for potential cost-share programs to improve the long-term efficiency of these systems. Golf courses are encouraged to delay overseeding until conditions improve.

"This advisory is a proactive approach to increase awareness of our current conditions and encourage enhanced conservation efforts to protect our water resources," said Hugh Thomas, executive director of the District. "This applies to all water users, area residents, businesses, and visitors. While we always need to be mindful of our water resources, in times of drought and low rainfall, conservation is even more important. Water conservation requires all of us to work together."

The advisory applies to all counties within the District, and the unincorporated portions of Alachua and Levy counties.

The District, in coordination with Florida's other water

management districts, will continue to monitor hydrologic conditions, keep the public informed, and, if warranted, declare additional water shortage measures.

Democratic Women meet Jan. 22

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area will meet on Thursday, Jan. 22, at 7 p.m. (with doors opening at 6:30). The club will welcome its new president and sign up for active teams. All Democrats are welcome to attend. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Melrose Center, 309 S.R. 26 in Melrose. For further information call 352-317-1636.

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City, county and state races headed to the ballot

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Five county offices are open for election in Bradford in addition to the federal and state races taking place.

In addition to those county commission and school board races, there are also three seats open on the Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District.

Starke is also going to the polls, with three commission seats potentially on the ballot alongside a charter referendum.

As for county commission, districts two and four are up for election. That means the school board seats up for election are in districts one, three and five. Candidates serve four-year terms, so the seats up for election alternate every two years.

Starke also has three commission seats open for election — districts one, three and five. As nonpartisan races, the city and school board elections will take place on the date of the primary for the partisan elections — Tuesday, Aug. 18. Winners from the partisan races with opposition from another party will move on to November, appearing on the ballot alongside state and federal races, including governor.

One of Florida's U.S. Senate seats is up for election as are

all of its seats in the House of Representatives. All Florida Senate and House seats are open as well. In addition to a new governor, Florida voters will also choose an attorney general, a chief financial officer and a commissioner of agriculture.

Judicial elections and retentions will also be on the ballot.

Starke has a charter revision committee meeting to modernize its charter. The city commission will place recommended changes on this year's ballot. Other questions coming to voters could include a decision about the future of property taxes, marijuana legalization (again), cutting insurance rates and school prayer.

Interested in running?

Anyone interested in running for local office should call 904-966-6266 and make an appointment with Supervisor of Elections Amanda Seyfang who has handbooks ready to go and all the information you will need.

Seyfang's updated website — www.votebradfordfl.gov — is also full of information for voters and candidates alike. The modern design offers easy navigation and improved access. Voters can quickly find details about registration, voting by mail, early voting (still to be determined), polling places, upcoming elections and other essential resources.

Seyfang encouraged all voters to make sure their information,

including addresses and personal identification number required for registration (driver's license or Social Security number) are up to date. The elections office is receiving new, updated equipment with improved security, but with no changes to the user interface familiar to voters. Elections personnel are never too busy to answer questions about your right to vote.

To vote in the Aug. 18 primary election, voters must be registered by July 20. To vote in the Nov. 3 general election, voters must be registered by Oct. 5.

Announce your candidacy

The Bradford County Telegraph, Union County Times and Lake Region Monitor offer candidates an opportunity to publish an announcement of their intention to seek public office. This offer is limited, with submissions accepted no later than the Monday following qualifying week, which takes place in April for federal and judicial candidates, and June for state and local candidates.

There is a one-time charge of \$50 to run the announcement with a photo of the candidate (headshot). This must be paid out of your campaign account. All other submissions will be charged current rates.

Submissions should be emailed to editor@bctelegraph.com.

EDC talks economic development progress

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Amber Shepherd, strategic alliances partner with the Northeast Florida Economic Development Corporation, recently gave Starke city commissioners a presentation highlighting the organization's efforts to attract investment, promote job creation, and spur regional economic growth.

Shepherd began by outlining the EDC's core mission for Starke and Bradford County.

"My goal for Starke is simple," Shepherd told the commissioners. "I want to position Starke as a competitive, investment-ready city and make sure opportunities coming through Northeast Florida flow right here into Bradford County."

During her report, Shepherd described how NEFEDC leverages Starke's central location — between Jacksonville, Gainesville and Ocala — and its infrastructure, including proximity to major highways, rail, and the Foreign Trade Zone, as key selling points. Over the past year, Shepherd's outreach efforts have reached over 13,000 businesses and led to dozens of meetings with prospective investors looking to establish operations in Bradford County. High-growth sectors targeted

by NEFEDC include advanced manufacturing, aviation, aerospace, renewable energy, defense, robotics, logistics and distribution. Shepherd specifically highlighted several ongoing initiatives:

—A "smart manufacturing hub" project for the Keystone Heights Airport, promising hundreds of new jobs and millions in capital investment.

—A renewable diesel facility under discussion for a Starke property, aimed at converting biomass into fuel.

—And another expansion that would see city water and sewer service extended to an existing local facility preparing for a \$35 million upgrade and 100 new jobs.

Shepherd also emphasized the organization's partnerships with local schools and colleges for workforce development, noting the importance of aligning career training with the opportunities the EDC is working to attract.

Commissioners responded enthusiastically to Shepherd's initiatives. Commissioner Danny Nugent thanked Shepherd for her commitment. Commissioner Bob Milner shared praise for NEFEDC's outreach and acknowledged the challenge of local workforce shortages. "I think that Amber and Northeast Florida Economic Development Corporation are going to be an absolute necessity," he said when working with Santa Fe College and North Florida Technical College on workforce training.

Mayor Andy Redding said many may not understand what

NEFEDC does. Emphasizing the city's potential and opportunities for strategic growth, he said, "If we continue to position ourselves in that fashion, we will be very competitive in the job market and what's coming forth."

Shepherd concluded by inviting commissioners to participate in NEFEDC's newly launched "North Florida Development Diaries" podcast and requested their input on potential local incentive strategies, expressing confidence that Starke's regional partnerships and economic groundwork would yield tangible benefits for residents.

As a government investor, Starke contributes \$10,000 annually to NEFEDC's budget.

Manager rewarded for positive evals

The results from the city manager's performance review were two commissioners saying Drew Mullins was meeting expectations and three saying he was exceeding expectations. The recommendations were for a pay increase of 10% to 15%. After taking into consideration what other cities are paying their manager and the additional duties taken on, the commission set Mullins' new salary at \$125,000, which is around 17% more.

The commission was considering \$120,000, but Redding pointed out prior discussions about competitive salaries for the position were from \$125,000 to \$150,000.

Letters

Commendation for BCFR

Dear Editor:

On the evening of Jan. 8, 2026, our two dogs were on chains close together. They got into a fight, and we didn't know it was happening. We heard wailing and went to see what the commotion was about.

We discovered one of our dogs in great distress, with both cables wrapped around her front legs so tightly that we couldn't free her. She was in terrible pain, bleeding from both legs. She was bound so tightly that no matter what we attempted to do, we could not get her loose.

We called 911, and Stewart Brandrick responded to assist us. The dog, which weighs 50 pounds, is very muscular and was not willing to allow us to remove the restraints. She tried to bite him many times during the rescue. We did not have the proper tool to cut the cables to free her. Mr. Brandrick went out and brought a special tool to cut them loose.

Mr. Brandrick went far above

what was expected, putting himself in danger to free a helpless animal. He refused to stop trying until she was loose and able to stand up. His actions were very courageous and extremely helpful. He represented the Bradford County Fire Department in the best possible light. He should be commended for his courage and determination in helping us free her.

We took her to an urgent animal care facility in Gainesville. She is recovering nicely now, thanks

to the incredible intervention of this fine firefighter.

Sincerely,
Thomas J Potts

CCBC says thanks

Dear Editor:

The Concerned Citizens of Bradford County would like to thank the following businesses, churches and individuals for helping

to make the 2025 annual Christmas Party a huge success. Your generous contributions and donations put hundreds of smiles on children and their families.

Toy drive participants: Starke City Hall, Downtown Grill, Nicky's Beauty Bar, Murray Ford Superstore, Starke Church of God by Faith, Macedonia Baptist Church

in Hampton, Chemours, New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and True Vine Ministry.

Donors: Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, Mt. Moriah Community Church, Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, Mt. Pisgah AME Church, Roberts Insurance, Sonny's BBQ, T.D. Davis Enterprises, L&M Mobile Homes,

Yolanda Hankerson, Mary Lee Hankerson, Carnell Williams and Sam's Liquor.

Again, thank you for your generous contributions!

Sincerely,
Alica McMillian, President
Concerned Citizens of
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ARE YOU ASLEEP IN THE LIGHT ?

When it comes to sleeping, I personally prefer it to be dark. I don't really care for a light to be on in the bedroom, even a small night light can be distracting. However, I have fallen asleep many times in a chair on the porch in the middle of the afternoon. I have awakened from a nap on the beach only to find myself sunburned. Having said that, even though I prefer the dark for perfect sleeping I have fallen asleep many times when the light was shining brightly. I have also had this same experience spiritually as well. Having been a Christian for many years and now a pastor for the last fifteen, I know what it means to fall asleep spiritually. I have also watched other Christian's snooze away their spiritual lives not ever realizing they were asleep. A few verses come to mind when I think about sleeping spiritually. The first is Matthew 25:5-6, "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard; behold, the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him!" In this parable, the delay of the bridegroom causes all 10 of the virgins (bridesmaids) to become drowsy and fall asleep. The midnight cry awakes them all to the arrival of the bridegroom. The point here is the need for readiness for the return of Christ Jesus. One message here is all of us should be prepared for His return because we do not know the exact day or time. We are encouraged as Christians to remain watchful. This is our personal responsibility, it is not something that someone can do for us, neither can we watch for others. Upon examining other New Testament scriptures we are warned against falling to sleep altogether. If you are a born-again Christian, the life and light of God are on the inside of us and that we are to walk in the light. The Bible also tells us that we are not only in the light but we are also called "the Light". We read in Ephesians 5:13-14 (ESV), "But when anything is exposed

by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake O'sleeper and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." The call to awake and arise is a spiritual call to action. It is waking up and coming to the realization that we are called of God to follow Christ our Savior. We are called, not just to sit around and wait for His return but to arise and become sober and vigilant. Have we forgotten that we have a corporate and personal responsibility to God? Jesus says in Matthew 5:14-15, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven." Jesus is telling us that we must be visible, we are not to be concealed but seen. We cannot keep silent but we must proclaim the Truth of the Gospel. The light that we are to show the world, those that are not saved, is His light, not our own. We can no longer remain asleep in the light but we must be carriers of the light of His glory! The life that God has changed must awake and proclaim the goodness, mercy and grace of God. How can we allow ourselves to sleep through these last days knowing the arrival of Christ is at hand and millions are not ready to meet Him? To make it even more personal, how can we allow ourselves to continue to doze our spiritual lives away while we have family members and friends that are a last breath away from eternal hell. It is time for you and I and the entire Body of Christ to wake up and get busy about the Father's business. Until next week, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. Blessings! -**Pastor Rick**

22610 HWY 301 N, Lawtey, FL 32058



Bradford Elementary School secretary Cheryl Chalker (second from left) is the school's Employee of the Year. She is pictured with Superintendent Will Hartley, Principal Cassie Melvin and Assistant Principal Michelle Cino.



Stacy Dyal (third from the left) is Bradford High School's Employee of the Year. She is pictured (third from the left) with Superintendent Will Hartley, Assistant Principal Nicole Stafford and Principal Chris Coffey.



Felicia Simon is Bradford Middle School's School-Related Employee of the Year. She is pictured (third from the left) with Principal Crystal Williams, Assistant Principal Rob Charles and Superintendent Will Hartley.



Lawtey Elementary School paraprofessional Sandy Acree (center) is School-Related Employee of the Year. She is pictured with Superintendent Will Hartley and Principal Terri O'Quinn.



Mechanic Heath Vann (center) is School-Related Employee of the Year from the Operations Department. He is pictured with Director of Operations Jeff Edison, Transportation Supervisor Louette Smith (retired), Transportation Coordinator Tonya Barnhart (now transportation manager) and Superintendent Will Hartley.



School-Related Employee of the Year for the district office is applications associate Christine Collins. She is pictured with IT Director Michael Warren and Superintendent Will Hartley.



North Florida Technical College secretary Aleta Durant (center) is the School-Related Employee of the Year. She is pictured with Director Keith Kirby.

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CHAMBER

Continued from page 1

is actively seeking a qualified community member who can commit to monthly meetings and participate in ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, and other chamber events.

With Johns' departure, the chamber's executive leadership has been reorganized. Justis Smith has been elevated from chair-elect to chair for 2026. Scott Kornegay will fill the vacant chair-elect office, positioning him to assume the chair in 2027.

Annual banquet set for Feb. 7

The Chamber's annual banquet is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 7, at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center. This year's theme is "Yellowstone," inspired by the popular television western series.

Individual tickets are \$90,

with tables of 10 available for \$850. Whittle noted that many attendees organize groups of 10 friends to share a table. The event typically draws between 250 and 300 attendees.

In a new initiative this year, the chamber will recognize Teachers of the Year and School-Related Employees of the Year from each of Bradford County's public schools.

The Bradford Education Foundation will hold a fundraiser during the event.

Recreation leader introduced

In other business, the board met the county's new recreation department director, introduced by Commissioner Danny Reddick. New director, Deana DeSiena, discussed plans to reintroduce local business sponsorships for youth sports teams and install sponsor banners at recreational facilities.

Lake Region

KH approves industrial zoning change for Commercial Circle property

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Keystone Heights City Council voted 3-1 on Tuesday, January 5, to approve a controversial rezoning request for property at 200 Northeast Commercial Circle, overriding the recommendation of the city's Planning and Zoning Board.

The council approved both a future land use map amendment and rezoning for the 2.72-acre property, changing its designation from commercial to light industrial.

Applicant Bob Mitchell, owner of Property Armor, sought to redevelop the site for his Jacksonville-based business specializing in air conditioning parts, security cages, and powder coating operations.

The property has sat vacant for several years and includes a 13,000-square-foot building, a garage, and an 18,000-square-foot canopy structure.

The decision came after extensive debate over spot zoning concerns, economic development opportunities, and the types of businesses that could potentially occupy the site in the future.

Staff recommends approval, planning and zoning board advises denial

City staff recommended approval of both measures, citing consistency with the city's comprehensive plan and the potential for economic development. However, the Planning and Zoning Board had voted 4-1 in September to deny the request.

Dr. John Zieser and Dr. Geraldine Robbins explained that the board's primary concern was spot zoning – applying a land use change to a single parcel without corresponding transitions in adjacent properties or buffer areas to protect surrounding land.

"The board understands that its role is advisory and that final authority rests with the city council," Zieser said, reading from prepared remarks. "However, when the council is considering action that diverges from the formal board recommendation, it is important for transparency, institutional clarity, and public confidence that the reasoning and context behind the board's decision are



The property has sat vacant for several years and includes a 13,000-square-foot building, a garage, and an 18,000-square-foot canopy structure.

clearly communicated."

Zieser also noted that economic development arguments presented at the council meeting had not been part of the September board discussion. The applicant's proposed use would employ 8 to 10 workers in a light industrial operation, fabricating security equipment for HVAC systems.

City Planner Janice Fleet explained that staff believed the rezoning was appropriate because light industrial zoning already exists along the street from the property. She argued that this made the change a continuation of existing land-use patterns rather than spot zoning.

"The surrounding land uses are both a combination of light industrial, commercial, institutional," Fleet said. "The buildings are kind of comparable – it's hard to tell whether they're really even commercial or industrial because of the same type of metal building."

Fleet emphasized that the city's comprehensive plan would take precedence over zoning regulations, limiting uses on the property to warehousing, indoor storage, auto repair, and processing or fabricating within an enclosed building. Outdoor storage would not be permitted under the comprehensive plan designation.

Ludwig: city's regs more liberal than county's

Councilman Brandon Ludwig, who cast the sole vote opposing the change, raised concerns about the breadth of uses permitted under the city's current industrial zoning regulations. He

noted that the city's industrial zoning is actually less restrictive than Clay County's, potentially allowing uses such as bulk storage yards, car dealerships, and laundry facilities.

However, Fleet clarified that the comprehensive plan's more restrictive language would override the broader zoning code, limiting what could actually be developed on the property.

Councilman Dan Lewandowski acknowledged the difficulty of the decision, particularly in going against the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation.

"There are really good reasons to vote either way on this one. This is not easy. This is tough," the council member said. "I am very reticent to go against the recommendation of the planning and zoning board. I respect them entirely."

Economic development argument wins out

However, Lewandowski noted his previous advocacy for economic development and the city's primary sources of income, which influenced his decision to support the rezoning.

Mayor Nina Rodenroth emphasized the practical considerations of leaving the building vacant.

"We can't predict the future, none of us can," Rodenroth said. "All we can do is do the best thing that we think is the best for our community as a whole, and that includes potential for economic growth. If it sits there with a very limited land use assignment, then it's going to sit there vacant longer."

Black Creek treatment facility nearly complete, drought preventing final tests

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A director for the St. Johns Water Management District said the treatment facility for the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project has reached a significant milestone with all six treatment cells now filled with media, but drought conditions are preventing the facility from beginning full operations.

The project will divert up to 10 million gallons per day from the South Fork of Black Creek during wet-weather high-flow periods. The water will be pumped through a transmission system before being treated for color and nutrients prior to discharge into Alligator Creek. Alligator Creek flows into Lake Brooklyn, which will increase recharge to the Upper Floridan aquifer through the lake bottom.

The project is also expected to contribute to regional minimum flows and levels recovery and will help improve water levels in lakes and the Alligator Creek system, including drought-stressed lakes Brooklyn and Geneva.

Dale Jenkins, director of the Division of Infrastructure and Land Resources, provided an update to the board on Tuesday, January 13, reporting that the final treatment cell was completed last week.

"All six cells are now full of media. So that's a big milestone that we've met," Jenkins told board members.

Drought delays plant installation

Jenkins said that while the construction phase is essentially complete, the project team decided to delay installing plants in Cells 5 and 6 due to severe drought conditions affecting the



Drone video footage shows all six cells at the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project's Camp Blanding treatment facility filled with media.

region.

"We don't want to put the plants in right now because the water that we have available, we don't want to use it all up to try to keep those plants going," Jenkins explained. The plants are being held at a nursery until rainfall conditions improve.

The area is currently classified as experiencing severe drought, according to recent hydrologic assessments. The water shortage is significantly impacting the project timeline, as adequate rainfall is needed before the facility can begin operations.

Limited water available for testing

Project staff are making progress where possible with limited water resources. Available water is being used to maintain plants already installed in Cells 1 through 4, while technicians conduct testing on valves and sensors throughout the system.

Workers are also completing remaining site work, including grading, capping berms with rock and stone, and installing fencing around the facility.

Functional testing awaits rainfall

The final major hurdle before the facility can become operational is functional demonstration testing, which requires several consecutive days of water flow through the system. This comprehensive testing will verify that all automated systems function properly, including:

- The Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system
- Automatic pump operations
- Water delivery to the treatment system
- All valves and sensors across the six cells
- Proper timing of pump activation and deactivation

"We're going to need some rain in order to do that," Jenkins said of the final testing phase.

KH marks centennial with time capsule and fireworks

BY JENN SAMSEL
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The City of Keystone Heights closed out its centennial year with a final, milestone celebration on Wednesday, December 31, at City Hall, commemorating 100 years of history while preserving the present for generations yet to come.

City officials, community leaders, and residents gathered for the city's last official celebration of the year, with the sealing and burial of a centennial time capsule on city hall grounds. The capsule captures a snapshot of Keystone Heights in 2025 and will be opened 50 to 100 years from now by future city leaders.

"As we celebrate our 100 years of the city, I can imagine that at this time, the founders of Keystone were celebrating over at the historic inn. The historic inn was demolished in 1999. Had there been a Heritage Commission, we would've sought to preserve this important monument for our



City Councilman Brandon Ludwig holds a time capsule that captures a snapshot of Keystone Heights in 2025. Also pictured (l-r) are David Kirkland, Drew Bell, Dave Welch, Deirdre Murphy, Dan Lewandowski, Wendy Harris, Nina Rodenroth, James Booth and Ryan Knight.

city. The Heritage Commission is about preservation and education," said Deirdre Murphy, Heritage Commission Chair.

Inside the capsule are flyers, photographs, and a carefully selected assortment of items representing the city's centennial year. The contents reflect the Chautauqua Pop-Up Museum, Spring Thing, a Fourth Grade Field Trip, the July 4th Celebration, Fall Festival, Boo on the Boulevard, Veterans Breakfast, Centennial Gala, Christmas Parade of Trees, Christmas Market and Parade, a New Year's Eve Fireworks Celebration, and the creation of the city's mural, each documenting the people, progress, and civic pride that defined Keystone Heights at its 100-year milestone.

City officials said the capsule is intended to tell the story of how the community honored its past

while continuing to build for the future, offering a firsthand look at daily life, leadership, and local priorities during 2025.

"We are proud of the Keystone Heights Airport Authority, Heritage Commission, and Planning and Zoning Board, whose members provide invaluable support to our council and staff. We are fortunate to work alongside our civic and business organizations. None of this could be accomplished alone," said Mayor Nina Rodenroth. "This city's success is because of you: our residents, volunteers, civic groups, businesses, and leaders who show up and care. Through your efforts, Keystone Heights remains a place of charm, community, and promise. Thank you for your trust. It has been my honor to serve you."

The evening concluded with a fireworks display at 8 p.m.



City Council members (l-r) Dave Welch, Dan Lewandowski, Ryan Knight, Nina Rodenroth and Brandon Ludwig bury the time capsule.

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UNION COUNTY

MISS

Continued from page 1



Summer Shaw



Bella Johns



Isabelle Kirsten

their favorite contestant.

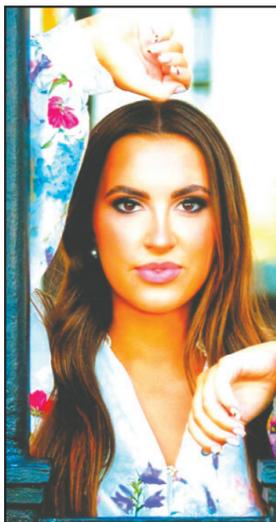
Chloie Harris

Contestant Number 1 is Chloie Harris, the 17-year-old daughter of Doney and Sarah Harris, Rebekah Harris, and Timothy Allen.

Chloie is a member of JROTC, where she is on the Raiders, Drill, MP, Color Guard, and Honor Guard teams. She is also a member of the Junior Friends of the Library, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and has a role in this year's play production. After high school, Chloie plans to enlist in the Army National Guard, finish her AA at Florida Gateway College while enlisted, and get her esthetician's license. She then plans to transfer to the University of Florida to get her bachelor's in business administration - management and complete the ROTC program. She wants to continue in the Army to become an officer and travel the world, then one day own her own salon doing facials.

Summer Shaw

Contestant Number 2, Summer Shaw, 18, is the daughter of Shawna Shaw. Summer is a member of the Future Farmers



Kenli Jenkins

of America, the Tigerettes, the cheer squad, and the golf team. After high school, she hopes to become a realtor. Shaw wants to own her own Etsy shop so she can sell earrings that she creates and eventually have a family of her own.

Taylor Lesch

Contestant Number 3 is Taylor Lesch. She is the 15-year-old daughter of Fred and Spring Lesch. Taylor is currently a member of Future Farmers of America and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. After high school, Lesch plans to attend college for biblical studies, start a women's ministry, and be a role model to those around her.

Kenli Jenkins

Contestant Number 4, Kenli Jenkins, 17, is the daughter of Jonathan and Kelli Jenkins. She is a member of the Future Farmers of America, BETA club, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Black Student Union, and the Student Section Club. After high school, Kenli plans



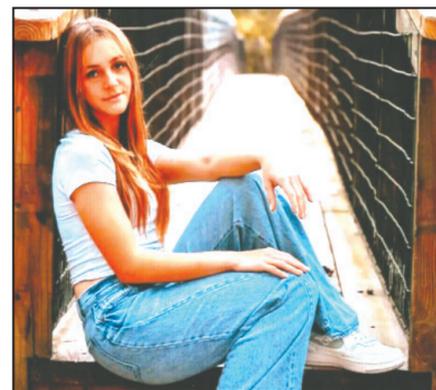
Taylor Lesch



Lillie Lane



Addison Wright



Chloie Harris

to complete her AA at Florida Gateway College and begin the dental hygiene program at Santa Fe College.

Lillie Lane

Contestant Number 5, Lillie Lane, is the 19-year-old daughter of Morgan Kerschner and Mark Lane. Lillie is a member of JROTC and the BETA Club. After high school, Lillie plans to attend a university, join its ROTC program, and become a military lawyer.

Bella Johns

Contestant Number 6, Bella Johns, is the 18-year-old daughter of Jason and Nancy Johns. Bella is a member of the BETA club, the Students Working Against Tobacco club, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Future

Farmers of America, and the Union County High School Volleyball team. She is also the Student Council Secretary and was the Class and Beta Treasurer in 9th through 11th grades. After high school, Bella plans to finish her AA at Florida Gateway College and attend Palm Beach Atlantic University to pursue a degree in physician assistant studies, specializing in dermatology.

Isabelle Kirsten

Contestant number 7 is Isabelle Kirsten. The 17-year-old is the daughter of Johnny and Julie Kirsten. Isabelle is a member of the track team, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and JROTC where she is on the MP, JLAB, Raider, Drill, Air Rifle, Honor Guard, and Staff teams. After high school, Isabella would like

to work as a yacht stewardess for several years, earn her real estate license, and transition into property management.

Addison Wright

Contestant number 8, Addison Wright, is the 18-year-old daughter of Richard and Melissa Wright. Addison is a member of the cheerleading team, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Farmers of America, and the weightlifting team. After high school, Addison plans to attend Florida Gateway College, receive her AA, and go on to get a bachelor's in elementary education. She hopes to get a job at the elementary school and have a classroom where everyone feels welcome. She also wants to be more active in the community.

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DROUGHT

Continued from page 1

Groundwater conditions show a mixed picture, with approximately 70 percent of monitoring sites recording decreases in the Upper Floridan Aquifer. Areas of low groundwater levels have expanded in St. Johns, Putnam, Alachua, and Marion counties, while very low levels persist in Duval County. The district-wide aquifer index value dropped 32 points from the previous month,

though it remains in the normal range.

Spring flows also reflect the dry conditions. Silver Springs saw an 18 cubic feet per second decrease from the previous monthly mean and remains in the low range for this time of year.

Conservation urged as forecast remains dry

Weather forecasts provide little relief, as La Niña conditions persist and the National Weather Service predicts a cooler, drier

winter. The NOAA Climate Prediction Center indicates a greater likelihood of less-than-normal rainfall and higher-than-normal temperatures in coming months, though with some uncertainty.

Miller emphasized the importance of water conservation by residents as the district moves through the traditionally drier winter and spring months. While typical evapotranspiration rates are lowest in December and cooler conditions help reduce water loss, the cumulative rainfall deficit and dry forecast raise concerns.

Renovations continue at Union courthouse

The Eighth Judicial Circuit said much-needed security enhancements and renovations continue to progress at the Union County Courthouse.

In a news release, the circuit said work began in the fall of 2025.

"Plans that have been in development for more than eight years have finally come to fruition with the receipt of \$1,265,000 through legislative appropriation grants," the circuit said. "These improvements are managed by a security committee established by the Board of County Commissioners. Current members of the security committee include Mitchell Bishop (County Court Judge),

Karen Cashdollar (Chief Deputy Court Administrator), William Davis (Chief Judge), Donna Jackson (County Commissioner), Kellie Hendricks Rhoades (Clerk of Court), Brad Whitehead (Sheriff), Capt. Lyn Williams (Chief Deputy Sheriff), and Pam Woodington (Finance Director).

The Union County Courthouse, originally built in 1936, underwent renovations in 1967 and 2000; however, neither project included modern safety and security measures. In January 2017, then-Chief Judge Toby Monaco wrote to the Board of County Commissioners emphasizing the importance of improving safety for the public, staff, and officials who work

in and visit the courthouse. He called for modifications that would establish a single public entry point - complete with ADA-compliant access - and incorporate new security screening equipment.

In addition to enhanced security, the courthouse will undergo restoration and repair work. Significant structural, mechanical, and aesthetic issues must be addressed to ensure the building remains safe, functional, and welcoming for employees and county residents. Architecture and engineering experts have evaluated the building and provided recommendations for preserving the historic structure using allocated legislative funds.

Over the next several months, demolition and construction will continue, including development of the new public entrance on the east side of the courthouse. Until the entrance is complete, the temporary public entry, featuring an accessible ADA ramp, will remain at the Main Street front entrance. Once the new east entrance is complete and operating with security screening, the front door facing Main Street will close and no longer be a public access point.

For additional information, contact the Public Information Officer at caine@circuit8.org or at (352) 264-7080.

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Crime

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

Howard Walter Austin, 63, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 8 for a probation violation.

Dawn Rane Bowling, 53, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for drug possession, destroying evidence, and possession of drug equipment.

Jonathan Ray Burns, 31, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 5 for battery.

Fired gun into the air

Judson Coy Davis, 18, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 8 for aggravated assault with a weapon and firing a weapon.

According to an arrest report, deputies responded to the scene around 10:04 p.m. on January 7 following reports of a disturbance involving the discharge of firearms. A neighbor also reported hearing gunfire and yelling from the location.

When deputies arrived, they spoke with two witnesses and a victim. The witnesses told deputies that Davis had arrived at their residence and began yelling and making threats at the parties present.

According to the report, when the victim attempted to calm the situation, Davis grabbed a firearm. The victim ran inside and retrieved a .380 pistol out of fear for his family's safety. Davis then threatened to shoot the victim and fired a shot into the air. The victim responded by firing a shot into the air in an attempt to get Davis to leave.

Davis then drove away from the residence but threatened to return and shoot their home, according to witness statements.

When interviewed by deputies, the defendant admitted to going to the incident location and discharging a firearm. However, he claimed the victim fired first. Another witness, who was with Davis at the time of the incident, backed up the defendant's claim that the victim fired first.

Shelton Lorendy Dell, 48, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for drug possession and possession of drug equipment.

Abandoned woman and child on road

Tyrese Josiah Denegall, 24, of Jasper, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for child neglect and battery.

According to a September 10, 2025, sworn complaint, the victim was driving her 2018 Toyota on State Road 100 West, near the Bradford-Union County line, with the defendant in the passenger seat and a child in the back.

According to the victim, during an argument, Denegall struck her in the back of the head with a closed fist. She responded by pulling the Toyota to the side of the road and exiting the vehicle. While Denegall moved from the passenger to the driver's seat, the victim removed the couple's child from the back seat. Denegall then drove off, leaving the woman and child by the side of the road.

According to the reporting

deputy, "the location where (redacted) and (redacted) were left was approximately 5 miles from the nearest city or store."

The officer added that the woman was left with no food or water for the care of the child.

Terrius Germaine Green, 34, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 9 for failure to appear.

James Ray Harris, 64, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for a probation violation.

Kathryn Lynn Henderson, 40, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 6 for an out-of-county warrant.

Pushed household members to the ground

Kelvin Devante Jenkins, 33, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 6 for battery.

According to an arrest report, the victims told deputies the defendant lives in an enclosed front extension of the residence and does not have full access to the home.

However, on one occasion in which Jenkins showered in the residence and refused to return to his room, he and the victims engaged in a verbal altercation.

The complainants reported that Jenkins pushed both victims, with one hitting the ground. A deputy noted a cut on one of the victim's hands. One injured party complained of pain in her left arm and shoulder following the incident. Emergency Medical Services evaluated the victim and offered treatment. However, the aggrieved party declined additional medical care.

Shi'Kira Quinmya Ashunte Jones, 22, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for a probation violation.

Tried to sneak drugs into jail

Michael Brandel Kiser, 37, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 4 for a moving traffic violation, marijuana possession, smuggling contraband into prison, and drug possession.

According to an arrest report, a deputy noticed that the tag light on the defendant's yellow Chevrolet truck was out and stopped the vehicle at the Shell gas station near U.S. 301 and State Road 100.

When asked for his driver's license, Kiser initially claimed he had misplaced the permit, but later admitted his license had been suspended. The arresting officer noted that Kiser had two prior convictions for driving with a suspended license: a 2011 conviction in Georgia and a 2012 finding of guilt in Florida.

Corrections deputies reported that while Kiser was undergoing a search at the jail, a hidden bag of marijuana was found falling down from his leg.

"During intake prior to patting down Michael, (the deputy) asked if he had any contraband on his person, such as drugs, weapons, or alcohol," an officer wrote in the arrest report. "Michael informed the deputy no."

A subsequent body scan resulted in two abnormal readings, and a strip search revealed the defendant had "a clear plastic bag with a green leafy substance sticking out from his genitalia."

A presumptive field test yielded positive results for marijuana and methamphetamine. The marijuana weighed five grams.

Priscilla Lynn Manning, 57, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 6 for a probation violation.

Ellisa Ann McCutchen, 23,

of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 9 for an out-of-county warrant.

Michael David Patrick, 49, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for withholding support.

Mary Elizabeth Tyre, 20, of Cairo, Georgia, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 7 for an out-of-county warrant.

Timothy Tyrone Tyson, 41, of Orlando, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 9 for sex offender violations.

Anger after DoorDash delivery

Kaleb Maxie Wilkerson, 21, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 3 for battery.

According to an arrest report, the victim told deputies that Wilkerson had purchased food for her through DoorDash. When he brought the food inside, she told him she didn't want to eat it because she wasn't hungry. The victim said Wilkerson became irate and started screaming at her before walking outside.

The victim followed Wilkerson outside to try to talk to him and calm him down. As she was following him, he slammed the door on her. While she was in the front yard looking for him and trying to get her dog inside, she sat down in the grass.

The victim told deputies that Wilkerson walked over to her as she was sitting on the ground, then pushed her over and began hitting her. When he walked away, she stood up to follow him to try to talk to him. At that point, the victim said, Wilkerson grabbed her neck with both hands and pushed her to the ground. She told deputies that when he grabbed her neck, she could not breathe. She then ran inside screaming for a family member to call the police while Wilkerson left the property on foot.

The victim told deputies she never defended herself throughout the incident.

When a deputy made contact with the victim, he noticed her face was completely red, and there was slight discoloration on her neck above her collarbone. The injured woman was evaluated by Bradford County Fire Rescue but refused to be transported to a hospital.

A witness to the incident corroborated the victim's account, and video footage from the residence also backed up the victim's account of the events.

Wilkerson was located at 59th Loop and County Road 229 by another deputy.

According to the report, Wilkerson and the victim have a child in common and split custody 50/50. The Department of Children and Families was notified of the incident.

Union

Billy Joe Ziesmer, 41, of Starke, was arrested by Union deputies on January 8 for a probation violation.

Jessica Marie Clark, 41, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on January 8 for child neglect.

Clay

Jaden Maurice Smith, 18, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on January 8 for grand theft.

Wayne Dana Stephens, 55, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on January 9 for possession of fentanyl.

Isaiah Sidney Surdam, 41, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on January 9 for lewd or lascivious battery and causing a child to become delinquent, dependent, or needy.

Could have walked away, sentenced to 2 years

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 47-year-old Raiford man, whom deputies told was free to leave a traffic stop but instead stayed with officers to ask for his friend's cell phone, was sentenced to two years in prison after a search during the traffic stop revealed he was in possession of 8.6 grams of crack cocaine.

Shelton Dell pleaded to possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and use or possession of drug paraphernalia.

Sex offender gets 3 years for failing to register

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A sexual offender registered as a Portland, Oregon, resident was sentenced to three years after admitting to moving to Starke and failing to register as required by law.

Gordon Miller III, 36, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on Sept. 12, 2025. He pleaded to failing to register as a sexual offender on Jan. 7.

4 years for bar fight, probation violation

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 37-year-old Starke man was sentenced to four years with the Department of Corrections after pleading to a probation violation.

Joshua Bruce Norris was first arrested on September 8, 2023, after attacking a bouncer at the Whiskey River Saloon.

According to an arrest report, the defendant first threatened a woman in the bar's parking lot, then struck the woman's fiancé when he intervened. The bouncer attempted to break up the fight,

Tried to lure girls into car

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 45-year-old Keystone Heights man was sentenced to five years after failing to complete a psychosexual treatment program as a condition of his probation.

Anthony Wayne Terry was first arrested on January 26, 2021, in Starke's Cherry Street area after Starke police said he tried to lure two girls into his car.

According to a police report, the victims told police they first thought Terry was going to hit

Community control for check fraud

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 63-year-old Keystone Heights man was sentenced to two years of community control followed by a year of probation after pleading to uttering a false bank bill, note, check or draft.

Larry Lee Garrow was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 17 for fraud.

According to a March 11, 2025, complaint, Garrow opened a savings account at a Starke bank in December 2024. Between

According to an arrest report, on June 12, 2025, deputies stopped a silver Chevrolet Trailblazer in the area of Starke's Grand and Brownlee Streets because they knew the driver, Dallas Sylvester, did not have a valid license.

Dell was a passenger in the SUV, and deputies told the 47-year-old he was free to leave. However, the Raiford man stayed on scene and asked to speak with Sylvester.

Meanwhile, a deputy located a black scale with white residue in the center console of the vehicle that was within reach of both of the SUV's occupants. The residue tested positive for cocaine.

"At this time," wrote a deputy in the report, "Shelton approached me and asked if he could have Dallas's cellphone."

According to an arrest report, deputies were dispatched to the Whispering Oaks apartments on South Water Street regarding a disturbance. While investigating, an officer was informed by another individual at the scene that one of the men present, Miller, was a sex offender.

The defendant initially provided an Arizona ID card that did not indicate his status. However, a deputy conducted a further search of law enforcement databases, which confirmed he was required to register. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's sex offender database listed an address for Miller in Portland, Oregon.

The investigation revealed that

and Norris, along with another man, then went after the bar employee.

The fiancé was treated for injuries to his face, and the bouncer was transported to a hospital for treatment.

On February 28, 2024, Norris pleaded to felony battery and assault and was sentenced to one year in jail and three years' probation.

On July 10, 2025, a probation officer filed a violation report, stating that on July 4, Norris was arrested in Duval County for domestic battery and criminal mischief.

According to the report, a witness and a victim claimed that while Norris and a woman were riding in a cab, the defendant struck the woman and damaged

them with his car because of how close he stopped the vehicle by the girls.

The victims stated Terry said, "I love you, beautiful girl," and lunged for one of the females, but the other grabbed her playmate and pulled her away from the defendant.

The arresting officer reported that Terry only spoke of unrelated events when questioned about the incident and had a strong smell of alcohol coming from his person.

Another witness said Terry also tried to grab a boy who was playing basketball in his front yard, but the youngster's mother confronted the defendant with a hammer as police arrived on the

January and March, he allegedly deposited three fraudulent checks at the depository.

The first incident occurred on January 21, when Garrow deposited a \$4,860 check drawn on First Hawaiian Bank, claiming to be from a Missouri cannabis dispensary. The bank immediately flagged it as fraudulent.

On March 4, Garrow allegedly deposited a \$15,750 check purportedly from JPMorgan Chase Bank, made out to himself and marked "Home Remodeling." During the same transaction, he received a cashier's check for \$15,006 from the bank.

The following day, he deposited another fraudulent

Due to the scale being located in the vehicle, I conducted a search of Shelton's person. Shelton became very agitated and provided me with a green leafy substance, within a plastic bag, from his right shorts' pocket."

The officer added that he also located a bag in Dell's lower right cargo pocket, which contained multiple pieces of a rocklike substance, which, based on the deputy's training and experience, he knew to be crack cocaine.

The defendant's prior convictions include possession of cocaine, possession of methamphetamine, criminal mischief, felony driving with a suspended or revoked license, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis, and loitering or prowling.

Miller had been living in Bradford County for approximately two months without registering with the sheriff's office, a violation of state law. His partner confirmed their two-month residency at Whispering Oaks.

After being read his Miranda Rights, Miller declined to speak with deputies.

The defendant's prior convictions include domestic battery, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis, sexual battery on an adult without force, petit theft and battery.

The car's camera and windshield. The woman sustained minor injuries and said Norris spat on her three times. The arresting officer reported that the defendant appeared intoxicated.

The defendant's prior convictions include felony battery-repeat offender, driving with a suspended or revoked license, disorderly conduct, contributing to the delinquency or dependency of a minor, trespassing, possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis, use or possession of drug paraphernalia, and DUI manslaughter.

Norris served four years with the Department of Corrections beginning in 2009 for the DUI manslaughter conviction.

Police said that during questioning, Terry threatened to shoot officers with their own weapons and had to be restrained while being evaluated at a hospital.

On December 9, 2021, Terry was sentenced to 27 months with the Department of Corrections and five years' probation with sexual offender conditions.

On November 25, 2025, a probation officer reported that the defendant violated probation by failing to attend and successfully complete a psychosexual treatment program. He was subsequently sentenced to five years on January 7.

check for \$13,655, also from Chase Bank. On March 6, Garrow withdrew \$5,300 in cash before both checks were flagged as fraud.

The fraudulent deposits left his account with a balance of negative \$21,166.43.

When questioned by investigators at his residence on March 12, Garrow told deputies he had been communicating for several years with a woman he met online who claimed to be a model involved in a lawsuit with her former agency. Garrow said a lawyer set up the Chase account in his name and instructed him to deposit checks and send money to New York.



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8 Tornadoes earn Sun All-Area Football recognition

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School had five players receive first-team Gainesville Sun All-Area Big-School Football honors, while another three earned second-team recognition.

Three of the first-team picks came on the defensive side of the ball, including senior linebackers Kingston Brooker and J.J. Hall. Brooker led the Tornadoes in tackles with 112, while Hall was second with 105 tackles.

Sophomore defensive back Caiden Carn was named to the first team after making three interceptions and 30 tackles.

Junior Bryce Daniels was one of two offensive players to earn first-team recognition. He was part of a line that paved the way for Bradford to rush for 2,000 yards, with runners averaging 6.3 yards per attempt.

Most of those rushing yards belonged to Bradford's other first-team selection: junior running back Iyen Addison, who rushed for 1,073 yards and eight touchdowns on 160 carries.

Two defensive players were second-team selections: senior defensive back Jy'Quez Cason and senior lineman Nate Raymond. Cason had 62 tackles and four interceptions, while Raymond had 92 tackles, with 11 sacks and 24 in all for a loss of yards.

Senior wide receiver Kemontae Nixon earned second-team honors after catching 36 passes for 513 yards and 10 touchdowns.

KHHS athletes honored in cross country, golf, volleyball

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Gainesville Sun All-Area teams recognized one Keystone Heights High School student-athlete each in boys cross country, girls golf and volleyball.

Noah Yara was a second-team pick in cross country with a season-best time of 17:20.4 at the Region 1-2A meet. That time placed him 37th out of 116. He was 26th out of 163 at the District 2 meet with a time of 17:43.

Golfer Aubrey Brooks earned second-team honors after a season in which she had a nine-



Trenton Noble (left) scored a total of five goals in the Keystone boys soccer team's last three matches — all wins.

hole average of 50. She won three regular-season matches, made one birdie and one eagle and made on average one par per match. Brooks placed fifth at the district meet with an 18-hole score of 94.

Mia Rivera, a junior, was a second-team selection in volleyball after recording a team-high 372 kills. She was third in digs with 167, third in blocks with 20 and third in service aces with 33.

Rivera was one of five KHHS volleyball players to earn Bosshardt Realty All-Area Big-School honorable mention, joining seniors Mackenzie Castelvechchi Kadence Massey, junior Kaleigh Marquart and sophomore Bella Cumbo.

Massey led the team in digs with 234 and aces with 76. She was second in kills with 183.

Castelvechchi was third in kills with 80 and recorded a team-high 41 blocks.

Marquart, the team's setter, had 717 assists. She was also second in aces with 64.

UCHS volleyball players receive Bosshardt, Sun recognition

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School seniors Bella Johns and Jilyn Simmons received first-team honors on the Bosshardt Realty and Gainesville Sun all-area small-school volleyball teams.

Johns, a libero, led the team in digs with 391, while Simmons, a middle hitter, recorded a team-high 325 kills. Simmons also led the team in blocks with 60 and service aces with 61.

Three players were named to Bosshardt Realty second team: senior outside hitter Indi Knox, senior setter Abby Williams and junior middle hitter/setter Mallory Waugh. Waugh was second on the team in kills with 206, while Knox was tied for third with 196. Knox and Waugh were second and third, respectively, in digs with 270 and 254, while Waugh was second in blocks with 37 and aces with 52.

Williams was the top setter with 482 assists, while Waugh was second with 303.

Simmons finished her season ranked in the top 10 in two categories in the Rural Class. She was sixth in kills and eighth in blocks. Simmons was also 12th in aces.

Williams was eighth in digs in the Rural Class, while Johns was 11th in digs.

KHHS boys defeat Rams 9-1 in soccer

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Eight players scored goals in the Keystone Heights High School boys soccer team's 9-1 win at Interlachen on Jan. 12.

Ryder Thomas scored two goals as well as recording two assists, while the following scored one goal each: Luke Buchanan, Noah Jaramillo, A.J. Nilsen, Trenton Noble, Kipton Spence, Landon Spence and Sammy Wach.

Noble led the team in assists with three. Wach and Britain Wilson added two and one, respectively.

The win was the third straight for the Indians (10-7-2) since returning from the Christmas break. Keystone's first game of 2026 was a 5-1 win at Newberry on Jan. 6. Jaramillo, Nilsen, Noble, Thomas and Wach each had one goal.

Kipton Spence recorded two assists, while Nilsen, Thomas and Landon Spence each had one.

On Jan. 9, Keystone defeated visiting Palatka 4-0, getting three goals from Noble.

Nathan Benson scored one goal, while Thomas had two assists.

The Indians, who are 5-0-1 in their last six matches, played Williston this past Tuesday and will host Episcopal on Friday, Jan. 16, at 7:20 p.m.

KHHS girls soccer team ends skid

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School had lost three in a row in girls soccer, but the Indians put an end to that streak with a 4-1 win over visiting Orange Park on Jan. 9.

Taylor Buchanan, Parker Collins, Halea Lam and Kaylee Park each scored a goal. Park also had one assist.

The Indians (6-8-3) entered the match off a 3-2 loss at Newberry on Jan. 6. Buchanan scored both goals off assists from Park and Kayden Huntley.

Goalie Xana Briley made nine saves.

Keystone played Middleburg and Williston this past Monday



Iamorieah Williams (right) scored 21 points for the Union girls basketball team as it picked up its first win of the season.

and Tuesday and will host Episcopal on Friday, Jan. 16, at 5:30 p.m.

Union County girls defeat Hope 45-30

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School outscored host Hope Christian 26-6 in the third quarter en route to a 45-30 girls basketball win on Jan. 8.

Iamorieah Williams poured in 21 points as the Tigers (1-10) earned their first win. Union also got nine points from Latoya Hampton, seven from Tessa Warren, four from Aundria Phipps and two each from Ambrielle Holder and Brianna Taylor.

Williams finished with a double-double, adding 11 rebounds to her scoring total.

Hampton led the Tigers in rebounds with 12, while Phipps and Warren had eight and seven, respectively. Brooke Hunt grabbed six rebounds.

Phipps and Williams each had seven steals, while Union

See SPORTS, page 9

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



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Obituaries

Jean Ball

Mrs. Jean Louise Ball, 78, of Keystone Heights died Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026, at HCA Hospital in Gainesville. She was born Oct. 8, 1947, in McKeesport, Pennsylvania to the late John and Ruth (McCabe) Greer.

Survivors are her husband of 41 years, Thomas "Tom" Ball; children, Brenda David and John David; stepson, David Ball; and four grandchildren.

A memorial service will be at 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 22, at the funeral home chapel, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating.

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. www.jonesgallagherfh.com



Barbara Fitzpatrick

Mrs. Barbara Jeanne' Fitzpatrick, 80, of Middleburg, passed away Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026. She was born on Sept. 11, 1945, in St. Petersburg, to Charles Omer and Viola Mae (Cory) Lefebvre. Barbara lived a life full of love, laughter, and dedication to her family and community. She was a cherished homemaker, making a warm and welcoming home for her family throughout her life. She was a vibrant, active member of her community. As a past president of the PTA, she dedicated her time and energy to ensuring the best for her children's education and was known for being involved in school activities even within the county system. She volunteered with the Red Cross and was a devoted parishioner at St. Luke Catholic Church in Middleburg. Prior to making Middleburg her home, she and her husband attended 40 years at Nativity of Our Lord in Pensacola, where she was active and volunteered countless hours to her community. Never one to meet a stranger, her generosity knew no bounds. She was always ready to lend a helping hand or share a friendly smile, making friends wherever she went. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her sister, Judith Spell.

Left behind to cherish her memory is her loving and devoted husband of 63 years, Edward Fitzpatrick and their children, Victoria (Lee) Steele, Michael (Suzanna) Fitzpatrick, Julie (Robert) Schmidling, and John (Martha) Fitzpatrick. Also left behind is her 104-year-old mother-in-law, Ruth Fitzpatrick and brother, Alan (Karen) Lefebvre; niece, Connie (William) Muse and family; and nephew, Stephen (Tammy) Spell and family. Known affectionately as "Nanny" to her grandchildren, James Matthew Steele, Jennifer Leanna Czwoznow, Amber Noel Schmidling-White, Rebekah Jeanne' King, Erin Adelle Schmidling, Abbygail Rachel Fitzpatrick, Victoria Danielle Schmidling, Alison Rhea Fitzpatrick, and John Thomas Fitzpatrick, she had a special bond with each of them. She was also a proud great-grandmother to Riley Scott Czwoznow, David John King, and Ryder Liam Czwoznow. Her nurturing spirit and unwavering support will be deeply missed by all.

The family received friends Tuesday, Jan. 13, at Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home Chapel, Keystone Heights. A funeral Mass was held, Wednesday, Jan. 14, at St. William Catholic Church, with Father Jaison Xaviour officiating. Interment followed at Santa Fe Cemetery in Hampton.

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. www.jonesgallagherfh.com



Dr. James Pennington

Dr. James E. Pennington, 82, of Melrose passed away Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026, at Haven Hospice in Gainesville from a lengthy illness associated with the effects of exposure to Agent Orange herbicide. He was born on Oct. 11, 1943, the second son of Bill and Juda Pennington of Jasper. Jim was a sixth generation native North Floridian and grew up on the family farm near Jasper with his brothers and, later, his two sisters. Growing up on a farm, he developed an early and life-long love of all animals. He was always quick to tend to wounded or orphaned critters. He was a 1961 graduate of Jasper High School. He graduated from North Florida Junior College in Madison in 1963, where he served as student body president during his second year. He continued his education at the University of Florida, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture in 1965. He completed his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine studies at Auburn University in 1969. Upon graduation, he was commissioned a Captain in the U.S. Army. After his preceptorship in Oklahoma, he received orders to South Korea, where he attended to military dogs from Vietnam and surrounding countries who were often exposed to Agent Orange herbicide. He returned to Florida in 1973 to Gainesville Animal Hospital. Jim soon saw a need for veterinary services in surrounding communities, often sparsely populated and underserved. He purchased an RV and started the first mobile veterinary practice in Alachua County in 1975, serving the smaller communities of Archer, Alachua, High Springs, Starke, and locations in between.

He married Kathryn Wolfe of Gainesville in 1976, and they settled in Starke where, in 1978, he opened Town and Country Veterinary Clinic. He enjoyed a small-animal and large-animal practice for 22 years. When diagnosed with serious illness, he sold the practice in Starke and semi-retired. Upon recovery, Jim continued his work as an associate and relief veterinarian at clinics in Melrose and Keystone. He also became active in veterinary organizations at the local and state levels. He was quite active in Jacksonville and Gainesville Veterinary Medical Associations and served on several committees with the Florida Veterinary Medical Association (FVMA). He was elected State President of the FVMA in 2002 and in 2011, he received the esteemed Distinguished Service Award from the FVMA. He also served on the Dean's Circle of Excellence at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine as his health allowed. He treasured his many friendships during his life. He was especially partial to his four-legged friends, notably English Setters and a number of rescue cats. He also loved his Limousin Cattle and enjoyed tending to them during his time in Starke. He was preceded in death by his parents; and his sister and brother-in-law, Jeanne and Jim Kennedy.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Kathryn; his son, James Wesley (Heather) Pennington of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; daughter, Emily Brooke Pennington of Gainesville; and stepson, George (Mari) Levasser of Miami. He is also survived by his siblings, Billy (Barbara) of Savannah Georgia, Pat Pennington of Jasper, Robert Pennington of Jacksonville, Bill (Marian) Bryan of Tuscaloosa, Alabama; and sisters, Juda Pennington (Rick Culbreath) of Branford, and Katherine Pennington (Terry Straub) of Tallahassee. He is also survived by his brother-in-law, Verne Wolfe and family of Sugar Grove, Illinois. Jim also leaves numerous nieces and nephews.

The family received friends at Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home in Keystone Heights, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656, on Wednesday, Jan. 14. A graveside service, led by Pastor Missy Turbeville, will take place at Evergreen Cemetery, Jasper, on Friday, Jan. 16, beginning at 2 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Jim's memory to First United Methodist Church of Jasper, 405 Central Ave., S.E., Jasper 32052, 386-792-1122 or The Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine, Auburn Giving, or The University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, Honor Card Program, Office of Advancement, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida.

PAID OBITUARY

Judith Burnett

Mrs. Judith "Judy" Phalaine Burnett, 84, of Keystone Heights passed away Saturday afternoon, Jan. 3, 2026, after a lengthy illness. She was born Feb. 9, 1941, in Elba, Alabama to John Elbert and Mattie Ruth (Maddox) Kemp. Judy was an active and longtime member of First Baptist Church in Keystone Heights, where she enjoyed attending Bible study and volunteering for church events and humanitarian efforts. Prior to retiring, she worked as a real-estate agent for more than 30 years, representing several brokers and specializing in lake-front properties. She enjoyed making many memorable trips with her husband, Efrid, but her favorite place was always at the beach. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husbands, Edwin Harris Meadows Jr. and Efrid Burnett; her son, Edwin "Eddie" Harris Meadows III; and brothers, Sam and Ted Kemp.

Left behind to cherish her memory are her son, Robert (Joanne) Meadows; grandchildren, Austin (Jessica) Meadows, Mikaela (Nicholas) Orsted, Sarah (Brandon) Mavrick and Garrison Meadows; and three great-grandchildren, Emma, Elijah, and Lily.

Funeral services will be at 10 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 15, at First Baptist Church, with Rev. Ryan Begue officiating. Interment will follow at Keystone Heights Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to a charity of your choice.

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. www.jonesgallagherfh.com



PAID OBITUARY

SPORTS

Continued from page 8

also got six from Warren, five from Hampton, four from Hunt and two each from Holder and Melinda Mabrey.

Hope (1-7) was led in scoring by Addyson Williams, who had 11 points. The Lions also got six points from Ashlyn Crews, four each from Morgan Cass and Mackenzie McRaney, two each from Maddie McCloud and Lesly Salvidez and one from Allyssa Wilson.

The Lions earned their first win on with a 35-21 defeat of host Gainesville Christian Community. Crews scored 15 points, while Hope also got seven from Addyson Wilson, six from Salvidez, four from McRaney and three from McCloud.

Wilson added seven rebounds, six blocked shots and five steals to her totals.

Crews had five steals as well.

The Tigers travel to play West Nassau on Friday, Jan. 16, at 7 p.m. and host Clay on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 6 p.m. Union hosts Saint Francis on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 6 p.m.

Hope hosts First Coast Christian on Friday, Jan. 16, at 5 p.m.

UCHS boys fall by 7 points to Fort White

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School dropped its second straight game, losing 57-50 to host Fort White in a Jan. 8 boys basketball game.

The Tigers (7-3) got 15 points from Garrison Smith and 12 from Montrell Woods. Also scoring were Tyrese Chandler with eight points, R.J. Odom with seven points, Adrian Manns with four points and Cadenz Merriex and Jaylen Pierre with two points each.

Pierre added eight assists and three steals, while Manns grabbed 11 rebounds and blocked five shots.

Union's last game of 2025 was a 63-35 win at Lafayette on Dec. 22. Chandler led three players in double-digit scoring with 13 points, while Smith and Woods had 12 and 10 points, respectively. The Tigers also got six points each from Manns, Odom and Pierre, three from Darell Merriex, two each from Andersen-Davis, Erick Lasseter and Parker Parrish and one from Cadenz Merriex.

Manns had seven rebounds and eight blocked shots, while Pierre had six assists and three

steals. Andersen-Davis also had three steals, while Woods and Darell Merriex led the team with four each.

The Tigers returned to action after the holiday break with a 55-46 win at Clay on Jan. 5, but then dropped a 47-46 game to visiting Suwannee on Jan. 6.

Chandler led Union in scoring against Suwannee with 10 points, while Manns and Pierre had nine and eight, respectively. The Tigers also got six points from Andersen-Davis, five from Odom and four each from Smith and Woods.

Manns added 10 rebounds and five blocked shots to his totals against Suwannee. Woods had eight rebounds, while Andersen-Davis blocked three shots.

Odom and Pierre dished out four and three, assists, respectively.

The Tigers played Hilliard this past Tuesday and will host Baker County on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 7:30 p.m. Union hosts Clay on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 7:30 p.m.

KHHS girls hoops team falls to Baldwin

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School fell to 7-7 on the season with a 29-16 loss to visiting Baldwin on Jan. 9.

Raven Bastin, Rigby Morford and Alexandra Papaioannou each scored four points for the Indians, who also got three from Daisy Hubbard and one from Melissa Williams.

Kadence Massey led the team in rebounds with 15, while Morford had nine and Bastin and Grace Keaton each had seven.

Massey also had three steals and two blocked shots.

Keystone entered the game off a 42-17 win over visiting Crescent City on Jan. 6. Bastin scored a game-high 15 points, with the Indians also getting nine points from Papaioannou, eight from Hubbard, six from Morford and two each from Keaton and Massey.

Keaton and Massey grabbed nine and eight rebounds, respectively, while Bastin and Hubbard each had seven.

Massey led the team in assists with four and steals with seven.

The Indians played Duval Charter this past Tuesday and will host Palatka on Friday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m. Keystone then travels for a pair of games, playing at Clay on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m. and at Crescent City on Wednesday, Jan. 21, at 4:30 p.m.

Mildred Haynes

Mildred (Millie) Lelia Scott Haynes went to be with her Savior on Monday, Jan. 12, 2026, at the remarkable age of 103. She was predeceased by her husband, Dr. O.L. "Sonny" Haynes; siblings, Dorothy Scott Stevenson, David Gilbert (Joscelyn) Scott Jr., Alexander John (Jack) (Ruby) Scott, and Charles Floyd (Jo Ann) Scott. The second of six children, Millie was born in Decatur, Georgia on March 13, 1922. She graduated junior college with an accounting degree and worked as an accountant in Atlanta until her marriage.

An unparalleled homemaker, she enjoyed cooking and baking (her chocolate pound cake, frequently mailed to her grandchildren in college) and all sorts of handicrafts, including sewing, crochet, knitting, and cross stitch. She was an avid bridge player and enjoyed hosting her friends for bridge parties for many years. Millie was a calm and joyful presence, who made every member of her large family and wide circle of friends feel loved and welcome at once. A devoted believer, she was a member for 72 years at Foundation Church (formally known as First United Methodist Church) and was an active member of Starke Woman's Club and Methodist Women for many years. Her unflappable sense of humor stood her well as she encountered the challenges of aging. A former beauty queen (Miss DeKalb County 1938!) she was unfazed by her thinning hair and adopted a wig in her late 90s. One morning before leaving the house, her daughter and great-granddaughter remarked that they had better get up and take the time to fix their hair. With a sly half smile, she informed them, "Well, I just have to put mine on!" While her family rejoices that this good and faithful servant is with Jesus today, they deeply miss her warm and loving presence and look forward to being reunited with her heaven.

She is survived by her daughters, Marcia Haynes Welch of Savannah, Georgia and Mildred Anne Haynes of Starke; sister, Betty Nell Keane of Atlanta, Georgia; grandchildren, Dorothy Welch (John) Childress, Jeffrey Dale (Kate) Welch and Charles Ashley (Meg) Welch, all of Savannah, Georgia; 12 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; 19 nieces and nephews and additional great-nieces and nephews and great-nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held Thursday, Jan. 15, at 1 p.m., with Rev. Mike Moore officiating. Interment will be at Crosby Lake Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Haven Hospice, 4200 N.W. 90th Blvd., Gainesville 32606. www.havenhospice.com

Arrangements are by Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E. Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

PAID OBITUARY

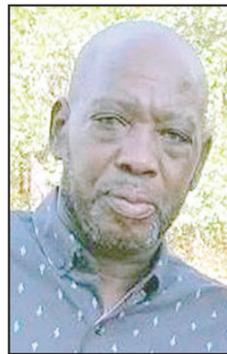
Horace Odem Jr.

Horace Odem Jr., 60, of Lake Butler transitioned from this life on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at HCA North Florida Hospital. Horace was born June 24, 1965, in Lake Butler to parents Willie Mae Bradley and Horace Odem Sr., who preceded him in death. He attended the Union County School System. He was raised in church, where he played drums and would often sing his favorite song, "I've got the love of Jesus!" He worked as a brick mason most of his life and would proudly point out projects he worked on in town. He had an infectious love for country music; he loved to make others laugh and enjoyed spending time with his family and friends. He leaves to cherish memories his loving mother, Willie Mae Odem; siblings, Beverly Odem, Brenda Odem, Theresa (Alvin) Jernigan, Tonya Odem, Harvey Odem, Randy Odem (Tasha); children, Marissa Thompson (LaBradford) and Da'Shaun Odem; and his beautiful grandchildren, Makh Gaddy, Maia Gaddy, and Nevaeh Thompson. He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered for his kindness, hard work, and the love he shared with everyone around him.

A public viewing will be held Friday, Jan. 16, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. A funeral service will begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 17, at Victory Christian Center.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve the Odem Family during their time of loss. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY



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Joann Shadd

Joann Seay Shadd, 91, departed this world Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, at her home after an extended illness. Born on March 8, 1934, in Worthington Springs, Joann was raised in Union County, where she blossomed into a warm-hearted woman who touched the lives of many. Her journey through life began with her loving marriage with D.L. Shadd, and together they moved to Jacksonville, where they embarked on the next chapter of their lives side by side. Throughout her varied career, she held numerous positions, showcasing her talents in bookkeeping and kitchen design. However, it was in her primary role as a devoted homemaker that she truly thrived. Her home was a sanctuary filled with love, laughter, and warmth, a true reflection of her vibrant spirit. Known for her talkative and friendly demeanor, Joann was full of life. She possessed a zest for living that was exemplified through her love of dance; frequently attending gatherings with a seniors group dedicated to embracing this joyous activity. A devoted member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, she committed herself to her faith and community, which further enriched her relationships and fostered connections that spanned generations. She leaves behind a rich legacy of family and friendship. Joann is reunited in eternity with her parents, Alma Lee and Dewitt William Seay; her siblings, Iris "Tootsie" Parrish, Gene Seay, Elmer Seay, Larry Seay, and James Seay; and her beloved husband, D.L. Shadd.

She is survived by her brothers, Gary (Brenda) Seay, Jimmy Luke, and Rex (Kim) Seay; her nieces and nephews, Vicky Barron, Brian (Paula) Seay, Sara Wilson, Amanda (Mike) Maddox, Shelby (Jared) Ellis, Kendel Seay, Roger (Sharon) Parrish, Karen Turner, Sandra Arnold, Carol McNeil, Cephus Seay, and Jason Seay; and a host of great-nieces and nephews. The bond she shared with her best friend, Diana Thomas, exemplified the profound connections she cultivated throughout her life. She also leaves behind her beloved Maltese, Louis, who was always the light of her life.

A visitation was held Thursday, Jan. 8, followed by her funeral service at Archer-Milton Funeral Home. Joann was laid to rest next to her husband immediately following the service at Dekle Cemetery.

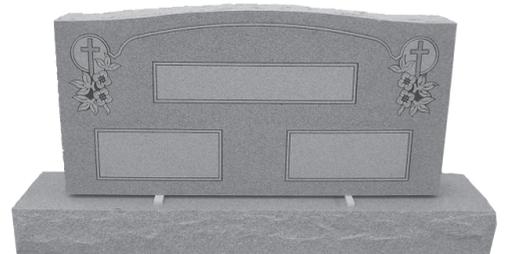
Archer-Milton Funeral Home was honored to serve Joann's family at this difficult time. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY



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BHS and KHHS in same district, UCHS pulls out of FHSAA

Not much change for BHS, KHHS in new football assignments

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Not much has changed for Bradford and Keystone Heights high schools with the release

of the Florida High School Athletic Association's new football classification/district assignments for 2026 and 2027, but a big difference is that powerhouse Chaminade-Madonna of Hollywood is now in Class 2A with the Tornados and the Indians.

Bradford and Keystone are again in the same district in 2A, but instead of District 5, they're now in District 4. The Tornados and Indians keep Newberry as a district opponent, but gain a new opponent in Ocala's Trinity

Catholic.

Palatka and Santa Fe, who were in the same district with Bradford and Keystone, have moved out of Class 2A and into Class 3A.

Bradford, which has been one of the better teams in Class 2A the past four years, still has Cocoa in its region (Region 2). Cocoa defeated the Tornados in the postseason in three of the last four years, including in the 2023 Class 2S state championship

See NEW, page 13

Tigers will join Sunshine State Athletic Association for football

Editor's note: The information presented is from a press release received from Union County Superintendent of Schools Mike Ripplinger.

The Union County High School Football Program has joined several other schools in transitioning from the Florida High School Athletic Association Rural Classification to the Sunshine State Athletic Association Atlantic League. This decision was made in response to the changing landscape of high school football and to provide our student-athletes with a more competitive and sustainable environment in which to pursue a championship.

High school athletics have changed significantly in recent years due to legislative decisions, FHSAA policy changes and the introduction of Name, Image, and Likeness opportunities. Competing at the highest levels with teams primarily composed of hometown student-athletes has become increasingly difficult. Many programs now rely heavily on transfers from outside their communities, often involving

See SSAA, page 11

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Jan. 15, 2026

BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION
CASE NO. 25000463CAAXMX
LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC,
Plaintiff,

vs. ANTHONY JOHN KULBACKI, et. al.
Defendant(s),
NOTICE OF ACTION - CONSTRUCTIVE SERVICE
TO: ANTHONY JOHN KULBACKI, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ANTHONY JOHN KULBACKI, whose residence is unknown and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title or interest in the property described in the mortgage being foreclosed herein.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property:

TRACT L-1 & L-2
A PARCEL OF LAND LYING IN SECTION 24, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 22 EAST, AND BEING A PART OF LOTS 1, 2, 3, AS SHOWN ON THE PLAT OF THE TOWN OF LAWTEY, EAST OF THE RAILROAD, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 39 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA. SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF CARTER ROAD (A40-FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY AS NOW ESTABLISHED), WITH THE EASTERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF HIGHWAY NO. 301 AND/OR THE S.C.L. RAILROAD (A 200-FOOT RIGHT-OF-WAY AS SHOWN ON SAID PLAT OF THE TOWN OF LAWTEY); THENCE SOUTH 67 DEGREES 00 MINUTES 00 SECONDS EAST ALONG SAID NORTHERLY RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF CARTER ROAD, 1640.81 FEET TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE LANDS DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 246, PAGE 155 OF SAID PUBLIC RECORDS; THENCE CONTINUE SOUTH 67 DEGREES 00 MINUTES 00 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID NORTHERLY LINE, 225.80 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 18 DEGREES 09 MINUTES 50 SECONDS EAST 788.66 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 05 DEGREES 19 MINUTES 23 SECONDS EAST 291.47 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUE NORTH 05 DEGREES 19 MINUTES 23 SECONDS EAST 286.30 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 84 DEGREES 40 MINUTES 37 SECONDS EAST 291.37 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 00 DEGREES 10 MINUTES 17 SECONDS WEST 287.46 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 84 DEGREES 40 MINUTES 37 SECONDS WEST 317.20 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

TOGETHER WITH THAT CERTAIN 1985 STAL MOBILE HOME WITH VIN GDWSGA 198533454 has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on counsel for Plaintiff, whose address is 6409 Congress Avenue, Suite 100, Boca Raton, Florida 33487 on or before /30 days from Date of First Publication of this Notice) and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition filed herein.

WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court at Bradford County, Florida, this 31 day of December, 2025.
DENNY THOMPSON
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
BY: KANETRA JENKINS
DEPUTY CLERK
Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC
6409 Congress Ave., Suite 100
Boca Raton, FL 33487
PRIMARY EMAIL: fmail@raslg.com
THIS NOTICE SHALL BE PUBLISHED ONCE A WEEK FOR TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE WEEKS.
PUBLISH IN: BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH

1/8 2tchg 1/15-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION
CASE NO. 2024000431CAAXMX
PROVIDENT ASSOCIATES, L.P.
Plaintiff,

vs. PAUL MCDAVID AKA PAUL G. MCDAVID AKA PAUL GLEN MCDAVID, et. al.,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to an Order or Final Judgment entered in Case No. 2024000431CAAXMX of the Circuit Court of the 8th Judicial Circuit in and for Bradford County, Florida, wherein, PROVIDENT FUNDING ASSOCIATES, L.P., Plaintiff, and PAUL MCDAVID AKA PAUL G. MCDAVID AKA PAUL GLEN MCDAVID, et. al., are Defendants, Clerk of Circuit Court, Denny Thompson, will sell to the highest bidder for cash at the lobby of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091, on January 29, 2026 at 11:00 AM, the following described property:

A TRACT OF LAND LOCATED IN SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 7 SOUTH, RANGE 20 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCE AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 25 FOR A POINT OF REFERENCE; THENCE RUN SOUTHERLY ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID SECTION 25 FOR A DISTANCE OF 3.24 FEET TO AN INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF STATE ROAD NO. S-231, SAID POINT OF INTERSECTION BEING IN A CURVE HAVING A DELTA OF 1 DEGREE 56 MINUTES 40 SECONDS, A RADIUS OF 22918.31 FEET AND A TANGENT OF 390.04 FEET; THENCE RUN EASTERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE AN ARC DISTANCE OF 390.00 FEET TO THE P.T. OF SAID CURVE; THENCE RUN NORTH 89 DEGREES 24 MINUTES 32 SECONDS EAST, ALONG SAID CENTERLINE 1680.90 FEET TO THE P.C. OF A CURVE; THENCE CONTINUE NORTH 89 DEGREES 24 MINUTES 32 SECONDS EAST, 400.00 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 8 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 28 SECONDS EAST, 12.30 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, SAID POINT LYING 40.09 FEET RADIIALLY SOUTH OF THE CENTERLINE OF SAID STATE ROAD NO. S-231; THENCE RUN SOUTH 8 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 28 SECONDS EAST, 548.66 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 87 DEGREES 39 MINUTES 25 SECONDS EAST 398.49 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 8 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 28 SECONDS WEST 548.66 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 87 DEGREES 39 MINUTES 25 SECONDS WEST, 398.49 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, must file a claim per the requirements set forth in FL Stat. 45.302.

DATED this 5 day of JANUARY, 2026.
GREENSPOON MARDER, LLP
100 W. Cypress Creek Road, Suite 700
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
Telephone: (954) 491-1120
Hearing Line: (888) 491-1120
Facsimile: (954) 343-6982
Email: gmforeclosure@gmlaw.com
Email: Michele.Clancy@gmlaw.com
By: /s/ Michele R. Clancy
Michele R. Clancy, Esq.
Florida Bar No. 498661
24-002694-01 / 41176.0188 / Jean Schwartz
Publish in: Bradford County Telegraph

IMPORTANT
Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in a proceeding, you are entitled to be provided with certain assistance at no cost to you. Please contact the ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Family and Civil Justice Center, 201 East University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601 (352-337-6237) at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days. If you are hearing or voice-impaired, call 1-800-955-8770 via Florida Relay Service.

1/8 2tchg 1/15-BCT

N THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR

BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
FILE NO.: 04-2025-CP-151
PROBATE DIVISION
IN RE: ESTATE OF LEON THOMAS ODOM III,
Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of LEON THOMAS ODOM III, deceased, File Number 042025-CP-151, is pending in the Circuit Court for Bradford County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 345 N. Temple Ave. Starke, FL 32091. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

ALL INTERESTED PERSONS ARE NOTIFIED THAT:
All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's Estate, including unmaturing, contingent or unliquidated claims, on whom a copy of this Notice is served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF THREE MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

ALL CREDITORS OF THE DECEDENT AND OTHER PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS OR DEMANDS AGAINST DECEDENT'S ESTATE, INCLUDING UNMATURED, CONTINGENT OR UNLIQUIDATED CLAIMS, MUST FILE THEIR CLAIMS WITH THIS COURT WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.
ALL CLAIMS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED!
The date of the first publication of this Notice is EXECUTED this 6th day of January, 2026.

PAUL SANDERS, P.A.
Attorney for Petitioner
Florida Bar No.: 557463
132 E. Call St.
Starke, Florida 32091
Telephone: 904/964-2323
LLOYD THOMAS ODOM, (Petitioner)
255 SW. 5th Ave.
Lake Butler, FL 32054

1/8 2tchg 1/15-BCT

Bid Notice/Advertisement for Bids –
City of Starke
Bid #: 2026-01
CDBG Grant #: 22CV-S47
Notice is hereby given that the City of Starke, Florida, will accept sealed bids until 2:00 PM (local time), February 17, 2026 for the following project:
Project Description: The City of Starke requests bids for Construction Services for RJE Renaissance Center Gymnasium Renovation Project – Phase III to be provided at the RJE Renaissance Center Gymnasium, which is located at 1080 Pine Street, Starke, Florida 32091. The bidder that submits the lowest responsive and responsible bid will be awarded the service contract.

At 2:00 PM (local time), February 17, 2026, the bids will be opened and read aloud at the City of Starke City Hall located at 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091. Please submit one (1) original and three (3) copies of your bid in a sealed envelope reflecting on the outside thereof of the bidder's name and "Sealed Bid for the City of Starke: Construction Services for RJE Renaissance Center Gymnasium Renovation Project – Phase III, Bid # 2026-01". The City will consider all bids properly submitted at its scheduled Bid Opening.

A mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held at the RJE Renaissance Center Gymnasium, 1080 Pine Street, Starke, FL 32091.
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting: February 4, 2026
Time of Pre-Bid Meeting: 2:00 PM
Copies of the bid package may be requested at no cost from Becky May at bmay@cityofstarke.org.
The City of Starke shall be the sole judge of the bid and the resulting agreement that is in its best interest, and its decision shall be final. All bidding and award procedures undertaken by the City regarding this project shall be consistent with the City's adopted procurement procedures and with the rules and regulations of the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program. Bid prices shall remain in effect for 90 days after bid opening. All bids should be addressed as follows: City of Starke
Becky May, Grants Coordinator
209 North Thompson Street
Starke, Florida 32091
Sealed Bid for the City of Starke

1/8 2tchg 1/15-BCT

Construction Services for RJE Renaissance Center Gymnasium Renovation Project – Phase III Bid #: 2026-01
The City of Starke is a Fair Housing, Equal Opportunity, Handicap Access jurisdiction.
1/15 1tchg-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 04 2025 CA 000457
VYSTAR CREDIT UNION,
Plaintiff,

vs. UNKNOWN HEIRS, SPOUSES, DEVISEES, GRANTEES, CREDITORS, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF DEBRA ILENE HUNTER F/K/A DEBRA ILENE MILLER; LORA O'MARA; APRIL M. OLIVER; AMY R. EBENAL; HOLLY BROWN A/K/A HOLLY WHITTINGTON; RONALD ADAM MILLER; CHRISTOPHER J. MILLER; UNKNOWN TENANT NO. 1; UNKNOWN TENANT NO. 2,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION
TO: Unknown Beneficiaries, Heirs, Spouses, Devisees, Grantees, Creditors, and All Other Parties claiming by, through, under or against the Estate of Debra Ilene Hunter f/k/a Debra Ilene Miller 18737 Charlotte Avenue Brookler, FL 32622
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS STATED, and any unknown heirs, devisees, grantees, creditors, and other unknown persons claiming by, through, and under the above-named Defendant, if deceased or whose last known addresses are unknown.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property in Bradford County, Florida: LOT 10 AND 11, BLOCK 15, WARD CITY, NOW KNOWN AS THE CITY OF BROOKER, AS PER PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 21 OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, LESS AND EXCEPT THEREFROM THE EASTERLY 25 FEET OF SAID LOT 11. (WC)
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 18737 Charlotte Avenue, Brookler, FL 32622 has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on Adam G. Schwartz, Esq., the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is 819 SW Federal Hwy, Suite 301, Stuart, FL 34994, within 30 days, and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on the plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.

DATE: December 29, 2025
BY: Kanetra Jenkins
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
1/15 2tchg 1/22-BCT

Notice of Self Storage Sale
Please take notice Safe and Easy Self Storage located at 7192 SE 9th Ave Starke FL 32091 intends to hold a sale to sell the property stored at the Facility by the below list of Occupants who are in default at an Auction. The sale will occur as an online auction via www.lockerfox.com on 2/5/2026 at 10:00 AM. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods, furnishings and garage essentials. Kirsten Carroll unit #102; Dexter Clayton unit #43. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply. See manager for details.
1/15 2tchg 1/22-BCT

REQUEST FOR BIDS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Bradford County S.H.I.P. Program will receive sealed bids until 2:30 p.m. January 30, 2026 at the Bradford County Office of the County Clerk located at 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091 for the following:
Demo Replacement of residence located at:
318 Redgrave Street, Starke, FL
A mandatory walk through is a requisite to a valid bid. All interested bidders will meet at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 22, 2026 at the Community Development Office located at 925-E North Temple Avenue in Starke, Florida. If you plan to submit a bid, a representative of your firm must attend the "walk through" of the unit to become familiar

with the property and the scope of work to be completed.

No contractors shall visit the subject property for any reason without first making arrangements with the County and owner.

All contractors must have proof of Residential or General Contractor's License, proof of Liability Insurance, proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance (or Exemption Card), a statement of non-discrimination, and at least two references from previously completed jobs.

Bids will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, January 30, 2026, or as soon thereafter as possible in the presence of the Clerk or his designee, Community Development staff, and all interested persons in the Bradford County Board of County Commission Meeting Room.

The opened bids will be read into public record and preserved in the custody of the Community Development Department.

Bids will not be valid unless received by the bid deadline and in a sealed envelope marked, "Sealed Bid, S.H.I.P." and received by 2:30 p.m., January 30, 2026.

Questions to be submitted in writing to the Community Development office at kelly.canady@bradfordcountyfl.gov or Fax (904) 966-6384 no later than 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 27, 2026

The County reserves the right to reject all bids when in its best judgment they are too high or when it is determined to be in the best interest of the County that the bids be re-advertised.

Pursuant to Section 255.0991, Florida Statutes, Bradford County WILL NOT offer a local preference for this project.
It is the policy of the County to promote equal opportunity to obtain adequate housing by all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, handicap, or national origin.

1/15 1tchg-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 2025-134-CP
DIVISION:

IN RE: ESTATE OF LOIS ROWE MANNING,
Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS (Summary Administration)
TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS OR DEMANDS AGAINST THE ABOVE ESTATE:

You are hereby notified that an Order of Summary Administration has been entered in the estate of LOIS ROWE MANNING, deceased, File Number: 2025-134-CP, by the Circuit Court for Putnam County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is Post Office Box 758, Palatka, Florida 32178; that the decedent's date of death was 22 May 2025; that the value of the estate is \$3 1,686 and that the name and address to whom it has been assigned by such order are:

NAME Frederick Aloysius Francis Williams, IV
ADDRESS 22830 Lynwood Avenue Lawley, Florida 32058
ALL INTERESTED PERSONS ARE NOTIFIED THAT:
All creditors of the estate of the decedent and persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent other than those for whom provision for full payment was met in the Order of Summary Administration must file their claims in this court WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE.
ALL CLAIMS AND DEMANDS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.
NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER APPLICABLE TIME PERIOD, 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 JANUARY 15, 2026.
ATTORNEY AT LAW, P.A.
/s/ Timothy Keyser
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Attorneys for Petitioner
Florida Bar Number: 181740
Post Office Box 92
Interlachen, Florida 32148
(386) 684-4673
Keyser.legal@gmail.com
keyser@gmail.com
BENEFICIARY
FREDERICK ALYSIUS FRANCIS WILLIAMS IV
22830 Lynwood Avenue
Lawley, Florida 32059

1/15 2tchg 1/22-BCT

REQUEST FOR BIDS
The Union County Board of County Commissioners is accepting sealed bids for new baseball field fencing at OJ Phillips Recreation Complex located at 15233 SW 84th Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054 (30°00'00.0"N 82°22'12.0"W). This project is for fence installation for one new baseball field including, fence fabric, posts, post footings, and gates. Bids must be delivered to the Union County Board of County Commissioners Office located at 15 NE 1st St., Lake Butler FL 32054. For Bid Document please visit the BOCC website
Bid Deadline: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 12:00 PM
Bid Opening: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 12:00 PM or as soon as possible thereafter
1/15 1tchg-UCT

UNION

NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE
Please take notice Lake Butler Mini Storage, located at 1015 SW 3rd St. Lake Butler, FL, 32054 intends to hold an auction of goods stored in the following units in default for non-payment of rent on Lockerfox.com. The sale will occur on January 30, 2026 at 12:01 pm on Lockerfox.com. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods and furnishings.

Unit # Name Amount
62 Mavis Mobley \$416.76
All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. See manager for details.
1/8 2tchg 1/15-UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
File No. 2025 CP 00022
Division

IN RE: ESTATE OF MARGARET LOUISE DOBBS
Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of MARGARET LOUISE DOBBS, deceased, whose date of death was October 23, 2024, is pending in the Circuit Court for Union County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, Florida 32054 ;

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 decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE 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 FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 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 January 15, 2026.
Attorney for Personal Representative: Personal Representative: /s/ HECTOR L. ZAYAS JR.
HECTOR L. ZAYAS JR.
Attorney
Florida Bar Number: 1021693
25 Cathedral St., Ste 303
St. Augustine, FL 32084
Telephone: (904) 327-4111
E-Mail: hzayas@taxestatplanning.com

/s/MARSHA LORI DOBBS BACON
MARSHA LORI DOBBS BACON
1713 Manchester Court N.
Jacksonville, FL 32259
/s/TERRI LISA DOBBS BURTON
TERRI LISA DOBBS BURTON
751 Maplelake Drive
Acworth, GA 30101

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Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700

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Tornadoes defeat Tigers in Jan. 8 wrestling match

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

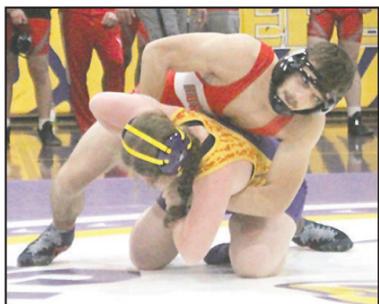
Bradford High School defeated host Union County 39-36, with five Tornadoes recording wins by pinning their opponents in a Jan. 8 wrestling match.

The Tornadoes' Johnathan Armstrong and Aiden Scott recorded the first two wins of the match, with Armstrong pinning Abigail Melton in 1:23 and Scott pinning Breydan Peugh in 1:04.

Union then picked up its first win, with Jamal Reynolds pinning Lemuel Cooper in 1:18.

After the Tigers forfeited the 138 class (giving a win to the Tornadoes' Derrick McBride), Bradford wrestlers recorded three straight pins: Wyatt Acevedo in 44 seconds over Chloe Foerman, Tremeze White in 1:42 over Troy Alexander and Benjamin Bryzinski in 2:25 over Isaiah Cepeda.

The next head-to-head battle saw Bradford's Jaland Carey defeat the Tigers' Wyatt Elixson 12-6, giving the Tornadoes a



Bradford's Wyatt Acevedo (top) wrestles against Union's Chloe Foerman. Acevedo won the match with a pin.



Union's C.J. Ivey (top) takes Bradford's Kendrick Baggett to the mat. Ivey won by a pin.

team score of 39 to Union's 6.

Union wrestlers then recorded four straight pins: Carsen Thomas in 44 seconds over Mason Lowe, C.J. Ivey in 19 seconds over Kendrick Baggett, Preston Griffin in 13 seconds over Joseph Shetler and Edward Durant in 2:58 over Kaison Pierce.

The Tornadoes forfeited a weight class, which gave a victory to Union's Aidan Hancock and accounted for the 39-36 final score.

Bradford and Union each wrestled Gainesville as well, with both defeating the Purple Hurricanes. Gainesville forfeited most of the weight classes.

The Tornadoes had three head-to-head matches against Gainesville, winning two of them. Acevedo pinned his opponent in 1:16, while White pinned his in 3:01.

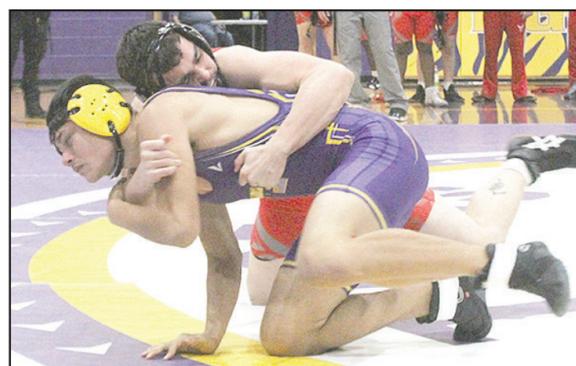
Union and Gainesville had four head-to-head matches, with the Tigers winning one off of Hancock's 3:08 pin.



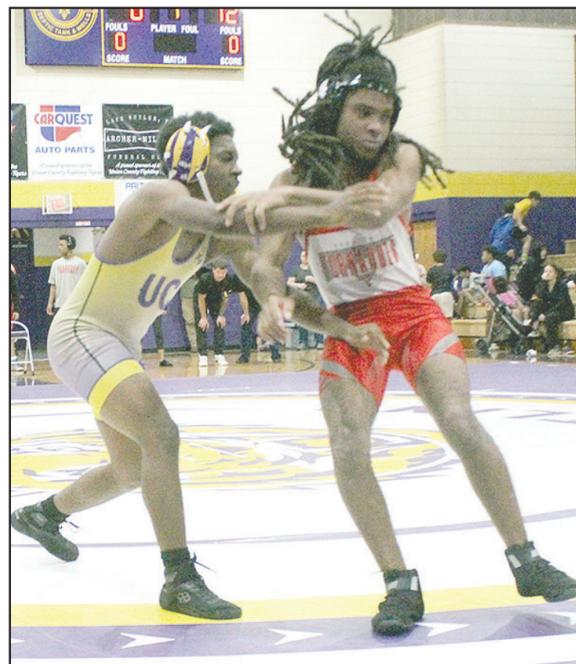
Bradford's Jaland Carey (left) and Union's Wyatt Elixson size each other up. Their match was the only one that came down to a decision, which went in Carey's favor.



Union's Preston Griffin (top) wrestles Bradford's Joseph Shetler. Griffin won by a pin.



Bradford's Benjamin Bryzinski (top) wrestles Union's Isaiah Cepeda. Bryzinski won by a pin.



Union's Jamal Reynolds (left) and Bradford's Lemuel Cooper grapple in the early stages of their match, which Reynolds won by pin.

BHS wrestlers White, Cooper are 3rd and 4th at Buchholz Round Robin

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Two Bradford High School wrestlers earned top-four finishes at the Dec. 12-13 Buchholz High School Bobcat Round Robin.

Tremeze White went 3-2 in placing third in the 150-157 B bracket. His wins were a 5:17 pin against Oakleaf's Matthew Ingram, a 4-2 decision over Baker County's Dane Hall and a forfeit over Columbia's Zachary Morris.

Lemuel Cooper was fourth in the 138-144 B bracket, earning one head-to-head win with a forfeit over Suwannee's Kale Staley.

Julius Givings (138-pound class) and Wyatt Acevedo (144) each had four wins by pinning their opponents. Givings earned wins in 1:15, 2:23, 2:46 and 3:20,

while Acevedo had wins in 19 seconds, 1:15, 1:47 and 1:49.

Jaland Carey (157) had three wins, pinning two opponents in 1:50 and 5:21 and coming out on top of another by a 17-5 major decision.

Kaison Pierce (215) earned two wins, both by pins (1:05, 3:18).

Aiden Scott (132) and Derrick McBride (150) also had two wins each. Scott's came by a forfeit and a 1:22 pin, while both of McBride's were by forfeit.

Kyson Richardson (165) and Kendrick Baggett (175) each had one win by forfeit.

On Jan. 2-3, the Tornadoes competed in the Clay Rotary Tournament, with Scott and White both going 2-2.

Scot defeated one opponent by a 4:33 pin and another by a 7-5 decision. Both of White's wins were by pins, occurring in 1:36 and 3:42.

Five wrestlers went 1-2: McBride (2:36 pin), Acevedo (1:52 pin), Carey (16-11 decision), Pierce (21-6 technical fall) and Joseph Shetler (3:00 pin).

Hancock, Melton, Thomas earn wins for UCHS at Joe Bees event

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's wrestling team took part in the Jan. 2-3 Joe Bees Battle of the Border Memorial at Yulee High School, with Aidan Hancock and Carsen Thomas winning their weight classes in the boys event and Abigail Melton earning a win in the girls event.

Hancock pinned every wrestler he faced in the 106-pound class, earning wins in 1:54, 1:17, 30 seconds and 1:38 before pinning Benedictine Military's Maden Home in 49 seconds to win the championship.

Thomas also pinned all five of his opponents in winning the 175 class. He had wins in 4:24, 20 seconds, 2:31 and 3:25 before pinning West Nassau's Emmanuel Davis in 1:53.

Breydan Peugh (126 class) and Preston Griffin (215) each earned a third-place finish.

The 126 class had only four wrestlers, with Peugh and teammate Ayden Beckham both facing off in the third-place match, which was Peugh's only win.

Beckham had one win as well, having defeated Peugh earlier in the tournament.

Griffin began his day by getting pinned by West Nassau's Bryce Mangum. He then pinned five straight opponents, earning wins in 17 seconds, 53 seconds, 44 seconds and 56 seconds before pinning teammate Matthew Rogers in 35 seconds.

Rogers started his day with a forfeit win. After getting pinned by West Nassau's Mangum, he pinned opponents in 1:10 and 1:41 before his loss to Griffin, which gave him fourth place.

Isaiah Cepeda didn't earn a win, but did place sixth in the 157 class.

Melton wrestled her way to first place in the 115-130 class in the girls event. She won with pins in 2:39, 3:09 and 1:27 and then had a win by forfeit.

SSAA

Continued from page 10

NIL-related compensation, which can become costly and ultimately unsustainable, particularly for small, rural schools.

While the SSAA follows all state regulations regarding student-athlete transfers, it takes a more proactive approach to monitoring recruiting and discouraging players from moving from school to school during the season. This philosophy places a greater emphasis on

developing homegrown talent and maintaining competitive integrity.

Additionally, the SSAA separates public and private schools into different divisions, allowing for more equitable, apples-to-apples competition rather than requiring public schools to compete against private schools with built-in advantages.

Another key factor in this decision was the uncertainty surrounding the long-term viability of the FHSAA Rural Classification. The Rural division requires a minimum of 24 teams to remain active. For the 2026-27 and 2027-28

seasons, the FHSAA tentatively listed 37 rural teams. However, since the release of the tentative list, 15 schools have moved away from the FHSAA and to the SSAA, with others exploring or pursuing the same move.

Currently, there are only 22 schools listed in the Rural Classification. According to the by-laws of the FHSAA, the Rural Classification must have at least 24 teams. Union County did not want to risk remaining in a classification that could be disbanded, potentially forcing our program into a higher classification with significantly larger schools and a disproportionate number of

private schools.

After careful consideration of all available information and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of both associations, Union County High School determined that moving to the SSAA is the best path forward for our football program. This move allows our student-athletes to compete, develop and thrive in an environment that better reflects the values of small-school athletics, showcasing teams built primarily from hometown kids rather than relying on large numbers of transfers to compete for a championship.

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Class Ads for week January 15, 2026

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of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777, the toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275. For further information call Florida Commission on Human Relations, Lisa Sutherland 850-488-7082 ext. #1005

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Tri-County Classifieds

Bradford County Lake Region UNION COUNTY
Telegraph Monitor TIMES



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Clark Hill (right) performs during the New Year's Eve Clark Hill Hometown Bash, an approximate four-hour show that was performed on the new stage at Starke's Downtown Square.

New Year's Eve with Clark in Starke



Porter Martin (left) opened the show, followed by Stephen Barker Liles of Love and Theft fame.



Clark Hill (left) is pictured with guitarist and brother-in-law Michael Calderin.



Clark Hill, known as Jimmie Clark in Bradford County and the surrounding area, was joined by his daughter, Natalie, and his son, Chason, on stage. Natalie sang with her father, while Chason played the keys.



BHS boys improve to 10-1 in hoops

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School went on a 15-2 run in the first quarter and led by double digits for most of the game after that, defeating visiting Branford 64-41 on Jan. 10.

The Tornadoes (10-1) trailed early, but tied the score at 6-6 when Jy'Quez Cason scored off a Maliki Cobarris drive. K.J. Taylor then scored off a turnover to give Bradford the lead for good at 8-6.

Jordan Cason, on a possession in which he grabbed two offensive rebounds, had a basket to make it a four-point game, while Jy'Quez Cason scored off a turnover to make it a 12-6 game.

Branford (6-8) got a basket from Jaiden Jones, but the Tornadoes then scored seven straight to end the quarter. Cobarris made a three-pointer and then added a two-point basket. Dylan Ruise was fouled trying to score off an offensive rebound. He made both free throws to send the Tornadoes into the second quarter leading 19-8.

Ruise would go on to have a good second quarter. His rebound putback was the start of a 14-3 run to close out the first half. Steven Carter scored off a Jy'Quez Cason assist and then knocked down a three-point shot that put Bradford ahead 28-14. Ruise scored off a dunk in transition and then sank a three-pointer of his own. Breion Johnson scored off a Jordan Cason assist to make it a 35-16 game.

Bradford got a combined 14 points from Carter, Taylor and Jy'Quez Cason in the third quarter as the Tornadoes built a 27-point lead.

Carter finished had 10 points in the second half and finished with 15 to lead the Tornadoes. Ruise's seven second-quarter

points helped him finish with 13. Jy'Quez Cason added 10 points, while Bradford also got seven from Cobarris, six from Taylor, four from Johnson, three from Larry Ardley and two each from Jordan Cason and Kemontae Nixon.

It was Bradford's fourth game in 2026, with the first being a 54-29 win at Bell on Jan. 3.

Cobarris and Jy'Quez Cason scored 10 and nine points, respectively, while the Tornadoes also got eight points from Taylor, seven each from Carter and Johnson, six from Nixon, five from Ruise and two from Bryston Williams.

Nixon grabbed a team-high nine rebounds and also blocked two shots.

Ruise and Jordan Cason each had three assists, with Ruise also coming away with four steals.

Jy'Quez Cason led the team in steals with six.

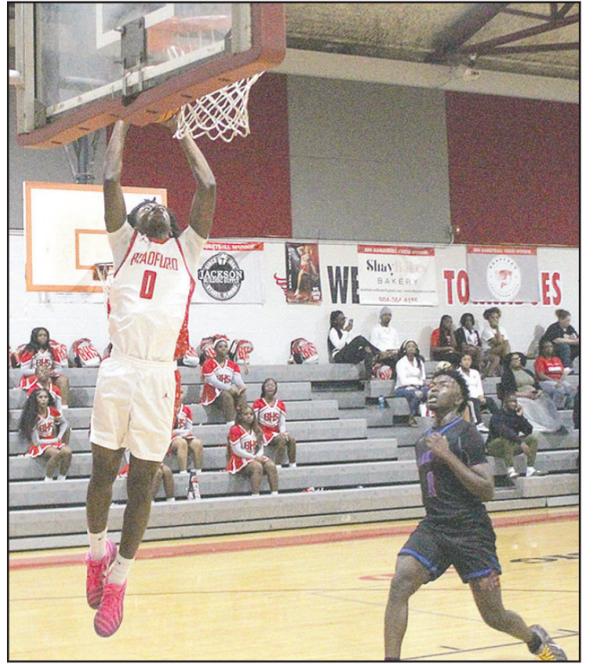
The Tornadoes traveled to play Bolles on Jan. 7, winning 34-31.

Bolles led 31-28 before Cobarris and Jy'Quez Cason knocked down back-to-back three-pointers for the game's final points.

Cobarris led Bradford with 12 points. Nixon and Taylor each had six points, while Jy'Quez Cason had five. Carter and Jordan Cason added three and two points, respectively.

Bradford returned home to play P.K. Yonge on Jan. 8, winning 59-48. Cobarris scored 12 points, while Nixon and Carter had 11 and 10, respectively. The Tornadoes also got eight from Johnson, seven from Taylor, five from Ruise, three from Ardley, two from Jy'Quez Cason and one from Jordan Cason.

The Tornadoes played Westside this past Tuesday and will host Columbia on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 7:30 p.m. Bradford hosts Baker County on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 7:30 p.m. and then travels to play Hawthorne on



Dylan Ruise (left) goes up for a basket in the Tornadoes' 23-point win over Branford.



Maliki Cobarris (far right) glides to the rim in the second half of the win over Branford.

Monday, Jan. 19, at 3:30 p.m. Tornadoes travel to play Fort On Tuesday, Jan. 20, the White at 7:30 p.m.

Griffin scores 33 for BHS girls in 59-22 win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Ar'Nayshia Griffin scored 19 of her game-high 33 points in the first quarter, helping the Bradford High School girls basketball team earn an easy 59-22 win over host Suwannee on Jan. 8.

Suwannee (1-8) scored the game's first two points, but Bradford responded by scoring 11 in a row. A Wynter Barrington basket tied it up, while Griffin scored off her own steal to give the Tornadoes (9-6) the lead for good.

The run continued with Griffin making a three-pointer following a Barrington steal. Griffin then came away with a steal and scored, drawing a foul in the process. She made the awarded free-throw attempt. Griffin later added a free throw on another trip to the foul line to put Bradford up 11-2.

Bradford scored nine of the final 10 points of the first quarter. Griffin scored off a steal, while



Ar'Nayshia Griffin scored 33 points in Bradford's win over Suwannee. She has 54 points in the Tornadoes' last two games.

Kah'myra Hankerson scored off

an offensive rebound. After a free throw by Suwannee, Griffin knocked down a three-point shot. A basket by Ky'lee Johnson sent the Tornadoes into the second quarter leading 25-8.

The Tornadoes scored the first 12 points of the second quarter. Riley Shuford and Kaiya Thompson each made a three-pointer during the run as Bradford increased its lead to 29 points.

Barrington scored six points in the third quarter and finished with eight. Bradford also got five points each from Shuford and Thompson and two each from Hankerson, Johnson, Nyasia Lopey and Mia Olesen.

Griffin led the Tornadoes in rebounds with seven and steals with seven.

Shuford and Cayson Hampton each had three assists.

The Tornadoes' last game of 2025 was a 62-11 loss to San Jose Prep in a Dec. 29 game as part of a tournament at Eagle's View Academy in Jacksonville. Bradford bounced back in its first game of 2026, defeating host Palatka 49-43 on Jan. 5.

Bradford, which led 43-26 entering the final quarter, got 21 points, 13 rebounds, three assists and three steals from Griffin.

Shuford added nine points, with the Tornadoes also getting five from Hampton, four each from Hankerson and Lopey and three each from Barrington and Thompson.

The Tornadoes played Hilliard this past Tuesday and will host Baker County on Saturday, Jan. 17, at 6 p.m. Bradford travels to play Eastside on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m.



Jontez Williams, a 2022 Bradford High School graduate and standout player at Iowa State, is transferring to USC to play for the Trojans.

Williams going to LA to play for USC

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Jontez Williams, who will be a redshirt junior for the 2026 season, is transferring from Iowa State University to become a USC Trojan.

Williams, a 2022 Bradford High School graduate, was considered the best available defensive back in the portal. He entered the 2025 season as a Preseason All-Big 12 selection and played in five games before a knee injury ended his season. He recorded 15 tackles, one interception and two pass breakups.

The 5-11, 200-pound corner was coming off a 2024 season in which he received second-team All-Big 12 and Associated Press All-Big 12 honors. Williams, in his first season as a starter, led the team in interceptions with four — all occurring in consecutive games. That made him the first Iowa State player since Ronnie Osborne in 1982 to record at least one interception in four straight games.

Williams also had 46 tackles in 2024, with a season-high 11 (six solo) in a 21-3 win over North Dakota on Aug. 31.

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Bradford Elementary's Douglas is district's TOY

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Her original plan wasn't to teach science or to teach at all at the elementary level, but Bradford Elementary's Bobbie Douglas is doing both and doing them quite well, as evidenced by her being named the Bradford County School District's Teacher of the Year.

"It's a huge honor," Douglas said. "I feel like I am still getting started in education. This is my third year, and I'm in the middle of getting my master's, and I'm in the middle of doing so many new teacher things. It doesn't feel real."

Bradford Elementary Principal Cassie Melvin said if one was to walk into Douglas' classroom, they wouldn't believe she was only in her third year of teaching. "She very quickly proved she was going to be a great teacher," Melvin said. "We thought she was going to be good, but she started proving she was going to be great."

Becoming a teacher...eventually

Douglas, who grew up in Union County (she's a 2012 Union County High School graduate), said she always wanted to become an educator. She took teacher-prep courses while in high school and was also a member of Future Business Leaders of America, which had her thinking of going into business education.

College, though, was put on hold for a while as she and her husband, Colby, began their family.

"I was 19 when I had my son, so I stopped going to college," Douglas said, adding, "I went back to college, and then I had another kid. Then, 2020 happened, and everything kind of shut down. My kids were at home. I started doing homeschool with them."

Douglas, who now has four children (Elijah, Brilynn, Eleanor, Callum), said teaching her first two children at home was such a joy that she was determined to "buckle down" and finish college so she could become a teacher.

It was difficult to find a college program that would allow her to be a mother and a student, but Douglas eventually found what

she was looking for in Western Governors University, an online university based in Millcreek, Utah.

"Finally, I did it," Douglas said. "I just pushed through. I graduated. I started teaching."

The goal was to teach at the high-school level, but Douglas applied to all the schools in Bradford County. The first one she interviewed at was Bradford Elementary when it was still known as Southside Elementary. It was the only interview she participated in.

"I just had a really great feeling after that interview," Douglas said. "I called and canceled my other interviews."

Douglas admitted she pictured teaching in elementary school would involve "a lot of hand holding," but as a someone who began teaching in fourth grade and is now teaching fifth-graders, she found that to not be the case. In the older elementary grades, she can have the type of academic discussions with students she was envisioning having as a teacher. She can also ask a lot of her students.

"I can push these 10- to 11-year-olds, and I can challenge them academically," Douglas said. "That was always the goal. I wanted that academic discourse." Douglas not only wants to continue teaching in elementary school; she wants to continue doing it at Bradford Elementary.

"I think the leadership here is phenomenal," Douglas said.

Science and fun

Douglas got her degree in Secondary Biology, even though she didn't love science growing up. In fact, when she told her husband what she was going to major in, he replied, "You hate science."

Yet Douglas saw an area in which she thought she could make a difference.

"I think that science gets a bad rap because of how it's taught," she said.

How Douglas teaches it isn't simply having students copy notes. It's creating hands-on activities and sometimes catering those activities to students' interests. For example, Douglas said a lot of her students this year play baseball and softball. Thus, a recent science activity had students going outside and throwing balls to each other

to understand the relationship between force and mass.

"I think that is the key to making science stick for kids," Douglas said. "Putting it in their hands and seeing what happens."

Douglas wants her students to have fun. That's why she's often referred to on campus as "the fun teacher."

"We have a great time in science," Douglas said. "I fully own the fact that I am labeled 'the fun teacher.'"

The fun extends beyond teaching science.

"I also make time for us to play games," Douglas said. "At recess, I play four square with these kids every single day. Every day, I get out there, and I hit that ball with them. It keeps us close as a class. We're here with each other 180 days. I don't want that to be 180 miserable days."

Still, the overriding emphasis is also learning. Douglas said in state testing, fifth-grade science is a "low area" throughout Florida. As she prepared to start the 2024-25 year as a fifth-grade science teacher, she said she "dove into the standards" to better prepare her students for when they're tested.

"I kind of built the curriculum from the ground up to match the state standards," Douglas said, adding, "I am strictly standards-based. I take the standards the state of Florida gives us, and I break them down. I teach the standards to a letter. Everything ties back into some standard of some sort. I really look at how the state assesses those concepts. Everything ties into those concepts."

Melvin said Douglas has had a tremendous impact with the way she's teaching science.

"We went from a 45-percent proficiency in science to a 61-percent proficiency," Melvin said, noting that it was the school's best performance in 15 years.

The Bradford Elementary principal thinks so much of Douglas that she said she's a teacher Bradford County must keep.

Of course, Melvin hopes she can keep Douglas at her school.

"Any (administrator) would be extremely lucky and blessed to have her teaching science on their campus," Melvin said. "I know that. I am very well aware of how good she is, especially being a new teacher. I just try

to express my gratitude for her choosing Bradford Elementary."

The 'total package'

Douglas may be getting students to excel in the classroom, but she's so much more than the person who's teaching them science. Melvin said Douglas is the "total package," adding, "She is empathetic to the students. She's very tuned in to their needs. She's very tuned in to their mental state. She cares about those kids. She loves them."

Douglas admitted she's not good at recognizing her own strengths as a teacher, but she's been told by several of her colleagues that she is good at building relationships with her students and really getting to know them. Douglas said a teacher recently told her, "Once you have that relationship with that child, they will do anything that you ask them to do in your room. That's so obvious when we come into your room. We can see that."

Perhaps the relationships are created through playing four square during recess. Or maybe they come about through the book club Douglas started. Douglas, an avid reader, is willing to give up her lunch time for club meetings.

Out of her 63-65 students, 50 applied to be in the club.

"Now, I'm trying to figure out how I'm going to buy 50 copies of whatever book we choose," Douglas said, "but that is something that I'm going to do out of my own pocket. I want these kids to love to read like I love to read."

Reading, of course, will pay dividends in school performance, and Douglas said it's certainly a plus when it comes to the subject she teaches.

"Literacy plays a huge part in science," she said. "If they can't comprehend these questions and be able to break them down, they're not going to be able to find success."

Success is the teacher's goal,



Bradford Elementary School's Bobbie Douglas has been named the Bradford County School District's Teacher of the Year. Douglas is in her third year of teaching and is in her second year of teaching fifth-grade science.

and when Douglas has a student experience it, it's a moment for everyone in her classroom to observe.

"We celebrate that moment," Douglas said. "I feel overjoyed. I want the kids to feel overjoyed. I want them to hold onto that feeling. We, as a class, celebrate that. We clap. We cheer."

Don't be surprised if Douglas sheds some tears during such celebrations. She admitted she's emotional and that her students are used to the fact they may see her cry.

"It's the best feeling," Douglas said of seeing a student succeed. "It makes you feel like you're doing what you wanted to do. You're meeting the goal."

Douglas is right where she belongs

It would seem Douglas was meant to be in a classroom. Melvin said she has a natural ability to teach and is driven to succeed.

"We started to learn that she

was that teacher who had a lot of internal motivation to be great," Melvin said. "We laugh because she never feels like what she's doing is good enough."

Douglas admitted that she's "very hard" on herself.

"A lot of times I struggle with impostor syndrome," she said. "Am I actually good enough to do this? Am I actually doing what needs to be done? I do struggle with that."

Classroom results prove she's good enough. The joy students get from learning in "the fun teacher's" class proves she's good enough. Being named the school district's Teacher of the Year proves she's good enough.

"I guess I did OK," Douglas said about the impression she made in getting the district-wide honor.

As someone who didn't plan to be a science teacher or even plan to teach at the elementary level, it seems as if Douglas is doing more than OK.

"I definitely think she's found her niche," Melvin said.

Rodgers now coaching his alma mater Baker County

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

In talk that had been swirling around Jamie Rodgers stepping down as the head football coach at Bradford High School, the assumption seemed to be that Rodgers was returning to Baker County — his alma mater and where he had previously been head coach.

It became official on Jan. 9, with a Baker County High School social-media post, which read: "BCHS welcomes Coach Jamie Rodgers back, and we look forward to the positive impact he will have on our students, school and community."

In a December 2021 Telegraph-Times-Monitor story, Rodgers said leaving Georgia, where he was coaching at Adel's Cook High School, to take the job at Bradford had a lot to do with being closer to home and his mother in Macclenny and his wife Ashley's family in Glen St. Mary.

In speaking to the Florida Times-Union, Rodgers expressed that home and family were a part of going from Bradford to Baker. The Jan. 10 story written by Clayton Freeman quotes Rodgers as saying, "It just seemed like when this presented itself, it felt right."

Rodgers will replace Brock



Jamie Rodgers addresses his team after what would be his final game at Bradford — the 17-10 loss to Cocoa in the 2025 Region 2-2A championship game.

Canaday, who was relieved of his coaching duties after one year. Canaday, who was to be a part of Rodgers' Bradford staff before accepting the job coaching the Wildcats, went 4-7 and qualified for the playoffs.

During his first stint at Baker (2016-18), Rodgers' teams went 29-9 with three district championships. The Wildcats went 13-2 in 2017, finishing as the Class 5A state runner-up after a loss to powerhouse American Heritage. That season earned Rodgers his second Florida

Dairy Farmers Coach of the Year award, with the first being earned when he was at Suwannee.

In the six seasons since Rodgers left to take the job at Cook, the Wildcats went 53-31. They qualified for the playoffs in every year but one, compiling a postseason record of 10-6.

The Wildcats are currently in Class 3A (Bradford is 2A) and will be in a district with Godby, Suwannee and Wakulla.

Rodgers has a career record of 121-52 at four schools, with a postseason record of 23-13.

NEW Continued from page 10

game. Sarasota's Cardinal Mooney, which won this past season's Class 2A state championship and was in Bradford's region, has moved up to Class 3A. However,

Bradford, Cocoa, Bolles and other teams with hopes of making a deep postseason run in Class 2A now must contend with Chaminade-Madonna, which has moved up from Class 1A. Chaminade-Madonna, which is now in Class 2A's Region 3, has won seven state championships in the past 10 years and was the runner-up the three years it didn't

win it all. Union County, which has been a member of the Rural Class, is no longer participating in the FHSAA in football. The Tigers are now members of the Sunshine State Athletic Association.

Complete assignments for 2026 and 2027 can be viewed at fhsaa.com.

Shining Stars of the Week!

Recognizing the following outstanding students for their amazing character and academic achievements!

 Nathan Parson 1st Grade Hope Christian Academy <i>Nathan listens carefully, tries his best, and shows kindness to others. He follows the rules and always does his work with a smile. Keep shining and doing great things!</i>	 Messiah Mitchell-Blount Kindergarten Lawtrey Elementary <i>Messiah comes to school everyday ready to learn. He is eager to learn and works hard during our small group time.</i>
 Laraya Mitchell 1st Grade Bradford Elementary <i>Laraya is a ray of sunshine! She always comes to class with the best attitude and is ready to learn. She is smart, kind and a great student!</i>	 Gabriel Lee Kindergarten Lighthouse Christian Academy <i>Gabriel is one of our K5 students, and he is learning a lot of new things this school year. We have enjoyed watching him learn how to read, write, and count. He continues to grow in his academic abilities every day, and we are excited to see what all he will accomplish this school year.</i>
 Spanish Class 3rd & 4th Grade Rainbow Learning Academy Excellence in Pronunciation: Boone, Dukes, Levi <i>O'Steen, Ella Douglas, Ashton Harvey, Knox Barnett, Gunner King, Aria Jackson, Sadie Croft, Peyton Williams, Walker Duggan</i>	 Karleigh Sheeler 6th Grade Starke Elementary <i>Karleigh shows us how a student should act. She is always Respectful, Ready, Responsible, and Safe.</i>
 Auzrael Wilson 1st Grade Providence Christian Academy <i>Auzrael greets his teacher every morning with his million-dollar smile. He is a great friend and helpful in his class.</i>	

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Kindergarten Perfect Attendance 1st quarter-
Magnolia Duggan, Preslee Elixson, Holdyn Dukes, Elizabeth Settles, Milo Reid, Audrie Ranard, Hudson Padgett
2nd quarter- Brett Arnold-Muniz & Stewart Rogers



Kindergarten All A's 1st Quarter or 2nd Quarter
Holdyn Dukes, Emersyn Lee, Hudson Padgett, Piper Waters, Milo Reid, Audrey Clyatt, Nash Cheevers, Georgia Gaines, Hadley Bennett, Emory Bailey, Malia Short, Elizabeth Settles, Amelia O'Steen, Jessa Ford, Stella Jackson, Magnolia Duggan



Kindergarten Citizenship Award
Malia Short
Jessa Ford
Angelica Pitts
Audrey Clyatt
Georgia Gaines
Julianna Bias



Kindergarten A/B Honor Roll 1st quarter
Irelynd Archer, Stewart Rogers
2nd quarter
Preslee Elixson, Audrie Ranard, Cason Croft
1st, 2nd quarter and all Semester
Jase Brown



Kindergarten Spanish 1st Place Family Tree:
Brett Arnold-Muniz
Excellence in Pronunciation
Elizabeth Settles, Jessa Ford, Malia Short, Stella Jackson



1st Place Family Tree: Hudson Padgett
Excellence in Spanish Pronunciation: Holdyn Dukes, Emory Bailey, Emersyn Lee, Milo Reid



1st Grade Spanish Maverick 1st place Family Tree
Excellence in pronunciation
Shep Dukes, Claire Dukes, Blake Muse



1st Grade All A's for the 1st, 2nd quarter and all semester
Blake Muse, Chanci Miller, Matthew Shepherd Dukes, Claire Dukes, Conway Clemons



Second Grade A Honor Roll for 1st, 2nd quarter and all Semester
Zoey Johns, Riley Griffis, Chasity Miller, Waylon Seay



1st grade A/B Honor roll 1st, 2nd Quarter and all Semester
Maverick Hendricks, Bailey Holderfield, Teagan Parnell, Maddie Woods



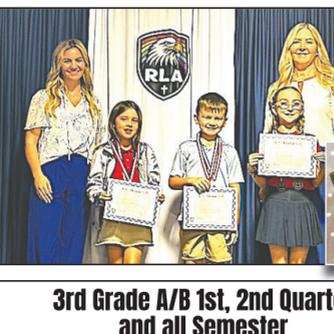
Kindergarten straight A's 1st, 2nd quarter and all Semester. Holdyn Dukes, Emersyn Lee, Hudson Padgett, Piper Waters, Milo Reid, Audrey Clyatt, Nash Cheevers, Georgia Gaines, Hadley Bennett, Emory Bailey, Malia Short, Elizabeth Settles, Amelia O'Steen, Jessa Ford, Stella Jackson, Magnolia Duggan



2nd grade A/B 2nd quarter
Zach Tompkins, Zoey Johns, Chasity Miller, Waylon Seay, Riley Griffis



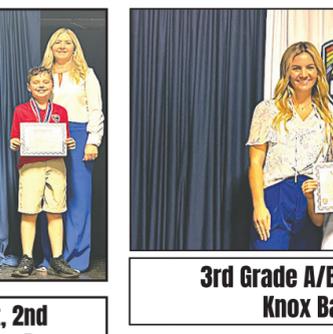
2nd grade Spanish-Excellence in Pronunciation:
Perry Norman, Riley Griffis, Zoey Johns



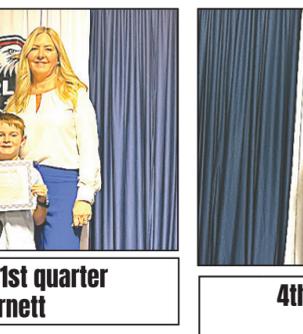
3rd Grade A/B 1st, 2nd Quarter and all Semester
Ella Douglas, Smith "Gunner" King, Peyton Williams, Brantley Seay



3rd Grade A Honor Roll 1st, 2nd Quarter and All Semester: Walker Duggan, Aria Jackson, James Dukes, Levi O'Steen



3rd Grade A/B 1st quarter
Knox Barnett



4th Grade A/B 2nd quarter
Sadie Croft



3rd and 4th grade Spanish Ella Douglas- 1st Family Tree
Ashton Harvey- excellence in Spanish
Spelling Excellence in Pronunciation: Boone Dukes, Levi O'Steen, Ashton Harvey, Knox Barnett



1st-4th grade Citizenship Award
Sawyer Griffis, Maddie Woods, Blake Muse, Everly Wimpey, Riley Griffis, Ella Douglas, Levi O'Steen, Brantley Seay (Not photoed)



1st-4th Grade 1st Quarter Perfect Attendance
Peyton Williams
Zoey Johns
Zack Tompkins (Not photoed)



1st-4th Grade 2nd Quarter Perfect Attendance
Knylee Cochran
Perry Normal



1st-4th Grade 1st Quarter Perfect Attendance
Ashton Harvey, Walker Duggan, Boone Dukes, Claire Dukes



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