

# Bradford County Telegraph

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146th year, 24th Issue — \$1

## Rodgers steps down as BHS football coach

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
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Jamie Rodgers is moving on from Bradford High School after four incredible seasons as head football coach in which the Tornadoes won 86.8 percent of their games to go along with three district championships, two regional titles and one state runner-up finish.

Rodgers went 46-7 at BHS, with every one of his teams qualifying for the postseason.

A Bradford High School social-media post read: "After a successful four-year run, the Bradford Tornadoes and Head Football Coach Jamie Rodgers have decided to part ways. We are thankful for his contributions to Bradford High School and our student-athletes. With a strong foundation already in place, Bradford High School will conduct a thorough search to identify the best possible leader to guide our program into its



Jamie Rodgers

next chapter. We are excited for what the future holds for Tornado Nation!"

Bradford Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley said the news may be surprising to many people, but admitted it wasn't a shock to him and fellow administrators.

"I think with a program like ours, where you have a coach everyone wants every year, I don't think it can ever really be a shock," Hartley said.

"As soon as Jamie came, and we had early success, we kind of knew every year that people were going to be after him."

Rumors have been circulating that Rodgers is returning to Baker County — his alma mater. Hartley couldn't confirm that, saying that Rodgers hasn't announced where he's going and has said he hasn't received any offers. The superintendent did say that when he last met with Rodgers, the coach admitted he was torn between spending time at home with his family in Baker County to spending time at BHS, which he considered one of the best jobs in North Florida.

The Telegraph-Times-Monitor left a voicemail for Rodgers on Jan. 6, but he hadn't returned the call by deadline.

Hartley said what Rodgers did more than anything at Bradford was build a program that caused excitement in and outside of the community.

"For me, this is back to Bradford football when I was growing up,"

Hartley said. "This is what I remember from being a little kid, and little kids now are getting to experience it. Everyone's excited to come out on Friday night. You can look at all of the teams around us — if they aren't playing on Friday night, a lot of their people are here watching us."

"To me, that's what Bradford football should be. We're grateful to (Rodgers) for getting us to that point. I think now the challenge is to bring somebody in who can take that and build on it and continue that. Not only just keep doing what we're doing, but make it even better. That's the next challenge."

Hartley said the job is sure to receive a lot of interest. He and Athletic Director Sampson Jackson received notification after notification on their phones as they were meeting with players and telling them the news.

See COACH, page 3

## Lawmakers discuss dissolving small counties

Union and Bradford could be merged into larger counties

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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The second-ranking Florida House member recently said that if voters approve reducing or eliminating property taxes on homesteads later this year, the legislature should consider merging smaller counties into larger ones.

Last year, Gov. Ron DeSantis began pushing to eliminate property taxes in the Sunshine State and proposed allocating \$300 million in the state budget to backfill county budgets, making up for lost property tax revenue.

However, Rep. Wayne Duggan recently told a Jacksonville television station that lawmakers should also consider axing the state's 29 fiscally restrained counties as an alternative.

"I just think it's time for perhaps a conversation around reexamining those assumptions, and do we continue to go forward with 67 counties? Maybe we should only have 40," Duggan told Action News Jax. "Should this county

even exist by itself, or should it be combined with some other county, so we can lower the overhead that we have to backfill?"

Voters would have to approve any proposal to eliminate property taxes by a 60% margin. To reach the ballot, 60% of House and Senate members must vote in favor of the proposal.

Of the seven proposed resolutions now being considered, five would eliminate at least part of homestead property taxes.

HJR 201 eliminates non-school homestead property taxes.

HJR 203 phases out non-school homestead property taxes over 10 years.

HJR 205 exempts residents 65 and older from paying non-school homestead property taxes.

HJR 207 creates a non-school property tax homestead exemption equal to 25% of the assessed value of the house.

HJR 209 creates a \$100,000 non-school homestead tax exemption for residences with property insurance.

HJR 211 eliminates the cap on portability, allowing homeowners to transfer tax savings from their previous home to a new one. This means a homeowner can transfer their

Save Our Homes tax cap benefit to a new home.

HJR 213 limits how much the assessed non-school property tax can grow for a home: 3% every three years instead of 3% annually for homestead property, and 15% over three years instead of 10% per year for non-homestead property.

Florida's fiscally constrained counties include Baker, Bradford, Calhoun, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Okechobee, Putnam, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Wakulla and Washington.

Those counties collect a disproportionate share of property taxes from homesteads because they lack the commercial real estate that larger counties have.

Duggan is not the only House member who has floated the idea of eliminating smaller counties.

Speaker Daniel Perez brought up the possibility of downsizing the number of Florida's counties in November.

"Do we have too many counties?" he asked during an interview about the property tax overhaul. "Should some

of them maybe be combined? I don't know. I have no idea. I'm not saying yes or no, but those are the questions that I'm asking."

The governor appears to be backing away from his original \$300 million backfill pledge, telling a cable news station that state help for smaller counties will eventually be phased out.

"Eventually they're going to have to figure it out," he said of the cash-strapped counties.

During a January 5 Union County Commission meeting, Chair Channing Dobbs warned residents that if county officials do not move on solutions to the county's budget struggles, like implementing higher EMS and solid waste assessments, a fuel tax and impact fees, residents may ultimately wind up paying them anyway, after being absorbed by its larger neighbor to the south.

"What kind of Union County am I going to leave my kids or even my grandkids?" he asked the audience. "Are we going to leave them one at all or are we going to sit here and drag our feet and be absorbed and then pay to higher taxes anyway?"

## Keystone Heights swears in Brandon Ludwig as city councilman

BY JENN SAMSEL  
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Keystone Heights officially welcomed Brandon Ludwig as the city's second youngest ever councilman during a special meeting held Dec. 16 at City Hall, following the resignation of Elston "Speedy" Kussler from the council.

Ludwig, a lifelong Keystone Heights resident and fifth-generation member of the community, was appointed to fill the seat left vacant by Kussler, who resigned in November after moving outside city limits. Councilman Ryan Knight nominated Ludwig for the position, and the council unanimously approved the nomination.

Ludwig is a graduate of Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School and holds a bachelor's degree in communication from the University of North Florida. His professional background includes serving as press secretary for Congresswoman Kat Cammack, public information officer for the Clay County Sheriff's Office, director of community services for the City of Starke, and working with County Commissioner Alexandra Compere and other local officials. He currently serves as state chairman of the Young Republicans of Florida.

At age 25, Ludwig is the second-youngest public official in the history of Keystone Heights and Clay County, following Gavin Rollins, who was elected to the council in 2009 at age 22.

"I've always enjoyed being behind the scenes and supporting the people who do the work," Ludwig said. "My priority is the residents who live here and making Keystone Heights a more beautiful community — a Norman Rockwell-type city."

Ludwig emphasized the importance of local government, noting that many decisions affecting daily life occur at the city and county levels rather than in Washington.



Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth (left) swears in Brandon Ludwig with the new councilman's parents, Bobby and Suzi Ludwig, holding the Bible. Inset: Brandon Ludwig.

"Ninety percent of what impacts you daily isn't happening in Washington," he said. "It's happening in city council chambers and county commission meetings."

During the meeting, resident Christine Arnold raised questions regarding adherence to the city's bylaws and charter, specifically whether all residents have equitable opportunities to seek office. After discussion with the city attorney, council members

confirmed Ludwig's appointment complied fully with the city charter.

The 25-year-old said he hopes to bring a fresh perspective while representing residents of all ages.

"It's an opportunity to express viewpoints that may not always be considered and to make sure every age group is represented," he said. "I think the council now reflects a broad range of perspectives."

Ludwig will serve until the next election cycle and is expected to participate in upcoming elections scheduled for April 2026 and 2027 to align the seat with its regular term. Mayor Nina Rodenroth is also expected to appear on the April 2026 ballot.

Looking ahead, Ludwig said his immediate focus is on quality-of-life issues and preserving the city's rural character.

"Residents' property, safe streets, and protecting the community we have here — those are the things that matter most right now," he said. "My goal is to support the mission of the council and serve the people of Keystone Heights and whatever doors God opens along the rest of the way."



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**WORTH NOTING**

### Food distribution

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Wednesday, Jan. 14, at 8:30 a.m. at the RJE Complex on Pine Street in Starke.

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.

### Crepe murder: What you can do about it

Do you have crepe myrtle trees? Would you like to know more about how to take care of them? Crepe myrtles are Florida-friendly trees which are quite easy to care for. Maybe you've seen how your neighbors trim their crepe myrtles and wondered if that's the right way to do it. One hint: You should not murder them!

Before you do anything to your crepe myrtles, take time to get informed. Information is available at the extension office and online. Just google "crepe myrtle." You can also get firsthand information at this month's meeting of the Alligator Creek Garden Club. Union County Extension Agent Jim DeValerio and Master Gardener Pat Caren will give a workshop on crepe myrtles. This will cover variety and sizes of the trees and bushes, their nutritional needs, pest issues, and how to trim them.

The next meeting is Thursday, Jan. 15, at 2 p.m. at the Bradford County Senior Center, located at 1805 N. Temple Ave. (U.S. 301 in front of the health department). Refreshments will be served. Also, bring your neighbor.

For more information call Pat Caren at 352-339-3673.

### Yesterdays Festival

Gold Head Branch State Park Yesterdays Festival will be Saturday, Jan. 31, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with family fun for everyone. There are hayrides, kids' games, hands-on activities, historic demonstrations, including cross-cut saw, real cannon fire, re-enactors, old tractors and live music. The event is free to the public, with the gate fee of \$5 per vehicle. For more information email Yesterdays@FriendsofGoldHead.org.

### Purchase pavers in Rosenberg Garden

The Woman's Club of Starke is honoring longtime member Della Rosenberg and offering personalized brick pavers to be placed in the Rosenberg Garden. These pavers make meaningful gifts for weddings, anniversaries, Christmas and memorials.

For details, please contact Cleo Elder at 904-796-7427 or Charnelle Whittemore at 352-235-1825.



# The growing gifts of trees

Free trees and care information on Arbor Day

Florida Arbor Day 2026 is

almost here and free trees will be returning to Bradford County! Trees can add value to your home, provide shade for hot days, and create food and shelter for pollinators, birds and other wildlife. This year, the

UF/IFAS Extension, Bradford County, Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Florida Forest Service are joining up with the Bradford County Public Library, Bradford County Master Gardeners and

the Alligator Creek Garden Club for free activities, planting, care information, and more.

Red maple, live oak and long leaf pine from the Florida Forest Service will be available first come, first serve with 1 per person or 3 per household available.

To learn more about the benefits of trees for your yard, join the celebration of Arbor Day at the Bradford County Public Library, 456 W. Pratt St. in Starke, on Friday, Jan. 16, from 3-6 p.m.



Red maple trees flower in the spring. Its green leaves turn red, yellow and purple in the fall. Credit: Gitta Hasing, UF/IFAS.

### Arbor Day origins

Arbor Day began in the United States in the 19th century. The first official Arbor Day was celebrated on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska. It was initiated by Julius Sterling Morton, a newspaper editor and a prominent tree advocate who recognized the necessity of planting trees in the

Great Plains. Morton proposed a special day to encourage people to plant trees and care for the natural environment. This first Arbor Day resulted in the planting of over a million trees in Nebraska. Following Nebraska's

lead, other states began to adopt their own Arbor Day celebrations. By the early 20th century, Arbor Day had become a national observance, celebrated on various dates depending on the state and its climate. The focus was not only on planting trees but also on educating the public about the importance of trees for the environment and community.

In Florida, Arbor Day is celebrated on the third Friday in January, a time when the weather is favorable for tree planting. The tradition began in the 1880s when the state recognized the importance of trees in the region's ecology and economy. The first formal observance of Arbor Day in Florida was initiated by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in 1887.

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| <b>SATURDAY 1/10</b><br>SONG SONG BLUE- 4:00 & 7:00<br>DAVID- 4:00 & 7:00 | <b>SUNDAY 1/11</b><br>SONG SONG BLUE- 4:00 & 7:00<br>DAVID- 4:00 & 7:00 |

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# Youth sports program finds director, signup beginning

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
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Exciting new changes are on the horizon for Bradford's youth athletics following the recent appointment of Deana DeSiena as recreation director for Bradford Sports United.

Chosen from a pool of 40 applicants for her passion and expertise, DeSiena is poised to lead the local youth sports programs into a new era. Hailing originally from Pennsylvania, she brings a lifetime of sports experience to her new role. Growing up, she participated in recreational sports. She played softball until her junior year in high school, when she focused on field hockey. She earned a spot in division one field hockey at a small university in her home state, where she also completed her master's degree in sport management.

Her professional experience includes event management at the university's athletic department, supporting nonprofit work and overseeing recreation center operations. DeSiena recently helped run game-day setups at a draft league baseball stadium, gaining valuable hands-on expertise in managing both sporting and concession operations. She moved to Florida with her husband, who is from Jacksonville, and they hope to be settling in the county soon.

DeSiena wants to share her experience with youth in Bradford County. She highlighted the importance of providing local



Bradford Sports United has found its final team member. Pictured are board members Clint Collins and Joann Jackson, Director Deana DeSiena, and board members Josh Davis, Danny Riddick, Gene Melvin, Marty Shaw and Cathy Bradley. DeSiena was introduced to the county and city commissions on Tuesday.

youth with a safe and welcoming space to play, learn teamwork and build important life skills.

"We want to create an environment where families and their athletes feel safe and comfortable, to allow their kids to play sports and hopefully keep them out of trouble. And if they're not in school, it gives them something to do so they're not just at home on an iPad or on their phone. This will be a safe place for them to come and just play with their friends and learn people skills and challenges," she said.

Under DeSiena's leadership, Bradford Sports United will offer a broad array of programs for all ages and abilities. Baseball and softball will be

available for children ages 4-17, with many other offerings, including racquetball, pickleball, basketball, soccer, flag football, and even adult leagues for those wishing to revisit their playing days. T-ball will be just \$75, and baseball and softball are set at \$100, with discounts for families registering multiple children. Scholarships and support will be made available, so no child is turned away.

Registration for spring ball kicks off this weekend online via SportsEngine.com, which will also be used to schedule games. A website is also on the way, and program updates will be shared via Facebook and Instagram.

DeSiena's 90-day plan includes outreach to local

schools, building community relationships, and gathering feedback to ensure the programs reflect the diverse needs of area families.

Commissioner Danny Riddick also delivered updates on the ongoing renovations and plans for Edwards Road Park, the hub of Bradford's recreational activities, although some sports will spread out to the park on Thomas Street. Initial upgrades to the park's single-stall restrooms were completed in record time thanks to generous donations and partnerships with local businesses such as Jackson Building Supply, Prestige Electric, Philip McDonald Plumbing, and M&R Construction. The total project cost was reduced from \$14,733

to just over \$4,100 thanks to their generosity, Riddick noted. The city of Starke and Bradford County worked together to fast-track permits and extend essential infrastructure upgrades, including a new two-inch water line, ensuring the facilities were ready for recent pickleball tournaments.

Looking ahead, an expanded concessions stand and additional amenities are in the works. The upgraded building will accommodate more restroom space, a new concession area and covered seating for families — efforts intended to make the park a true gathering place for the whole community and welcome players from other areas.

Riddick took time to express his deep appreciation to all who contributed to the park's development, saying they could not have done it without the incredible cooperation between the city, county and local businesses. He praised fellow members of the Bradford Sports United board for their commitment and energy, emphasizing how vital their teamwork has been to the initiative.

Bradford County, Starke and the Tourist Development Council each contributed \$150,000 to help get Bradford Sports United off the ground. Riddick said the goal is to become independent of local taxpayer support. They are researching grant opportunities and requesting legislators to consider a \$150,000 allocation from the state.

In other business:

—County Manager Scott Kornegay said the Bradford County Agricultural Fair would feature some surprises courtesy of fair manager Harley Hutchinson's tireless work. The grand opening on Feb. 26 at 4 p.m. will be an event, he said.

—Kornegay said Cox confirmed broadband internet service is now available to more than 800 homes in the Brooker area.

## Chemours laying off 30% of workforce

New contractor may hire displaced workers

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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Chemours told employees at its Trail Ridge worksite this week that the company is laying off approximately 30% of its workforce, but that a new contractor may hire those displaced workers.

The company employs around 230 employees at the Trail Ridge operation.

Chemours said it is shifting its field operations to another company, Palatka-based Krebs Land Development, and that, after the transition, Chemours will operate only the mill.

## COACH

Continued from page 1

"A lot of that was coaches calling us," Hartley said.

The goal is to name a new coach in the next couple of weeks.

"It's definitely something nowadays you have to do quickly," Hartley said. "It's not a secret with open enrollment that kids can pretty much go wherever they want to go. If you don't have a coach in place, those types of things will happen. You can't blame them. Parents have to do what's right for their kids."

"We know there's a timeline. We'll take care of it as quickly as we possibly can."

Rodgers arrived at Bradford with 10 years of head-coaching experience at Suwannee, Baker County and Cook in Adel, Georgia. He made an impact immediately, especially on the defensive side of the ball. His Bradford teams held opponents to an average of 6.9 points per game. The Tornadoes recorded 23 shutouts in its 53 games under Rodgers. That included a school-record nine in one season (2022).

The Tornadoes' first season under Rodgers saw them go undefeated until losing 10-7 on the road to Suwannee in the final game of the regular season. Bradford rebounded to defeat Crescent City 48-0 in the first round of the playoffs. The Tornadoes added a 37-0 win over Eastside and a 28-17 regional-championship win over Baker County before their season ended in the state semifinals with a 31-21 loss to Cocoa.

Bradford finished that season 12-2, outscoring its opponents

411-79.

In 2023, the Tornadoes went 14-0 before losing 20-6 to Cocoa in the Class 2S state-championship game. Bradford's undefeated regular season was its first since 1990. The Tornadoes had playoff wins of 42-0 over Atlantic, 28-7 over Eastside, 43-0 over Baker County (regional championship) and 22-21 in overtime over Pensacola Catholic.

The Tornadoes, who played for a state title for the first time since 1985, shut out six teams in

2023, outscoring opponents 462-90.

After winning two consecutive district championships, the Tornadoes failed to do so in 2024. Still, it was a 10-2 season that included one playoff win — 35-0 over The Villages. Both losses came against Newberry, which won the district title and ended Bradford's season with a

34-19 loss in the second round of the playoffs.

Bradford outscored teams that season 319-103, shutting out two opponents.

Rodgers coached the Tornadoes to an 11-2 record in 2025. Bradford's only loss in the regular season was by seven points to Class 6A Mandarin. The Tornadoes won their district and

earned playoff wins over Avon Park and Berkeley Prep by scores of 55-6 and 24-14, respectively. Bradford played Cocoa for a regional championship, losing 17-10.

The Tornadoes scored 380 points in Rodgers' final season, while allowing opponents to score 94. Bradford recorded four shutouts.



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**T**he world and everything this life in the natural has to offer will never fill the void that was meant for God and God alone. In closing, I want to ask you a question? Who or what is sitting on the throne of your heart? Your spouse, your children, your work, money, pleasures or you? The throne of your heart is for One and only One, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, have you noticed something different lately about yourself? A feeling, a sense, something out of the ordinary? It is the Holy Spirit drawing you, trying to get your attention. Jesus is knocking, open the door. Blessings! -**Pastor Rick**

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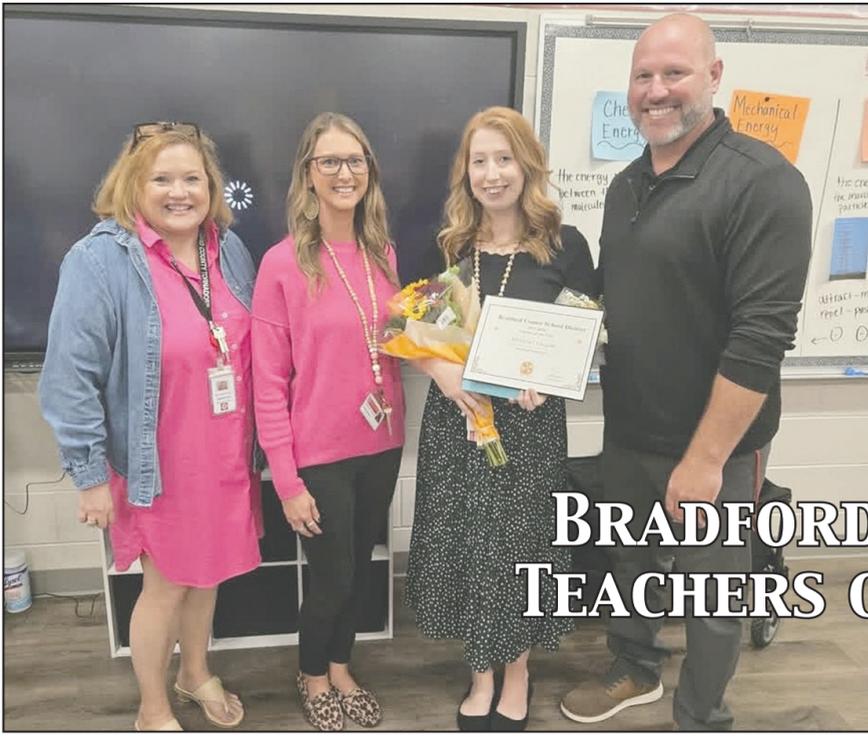
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Bradford Elementary School Teacher of the Year Bobbie Douglas teaches fifth grade science. She was also named the Districtwide Teacher of the Year. She is pictured (third from the left) Assistant Principal Michelle Cino, Principal Cassie Melvin and Superintendent Will Hartley.



Bradford High School English teacher Rebecca Wilhite is the school's Teacher of the Year. She is pictured (third from the left) with Superintendent Will Hartley, Assistant Principal Nicole Stafford and Principal Chris Coffey.



Science teacher Phylcia Petteway is Bradford Middle School's Teacher of the Year. She is pictured (third from the left) with Principal Crystal Williams, Assistant Principal Rob Charles and Superintendent Will Hartley.



Sixth grade teacher Billy Stroud (center) is Lawtey Elementary School's Teacher of the Year. He is pictured with Principal Terri O'Quinn and Superintendent Will Hartley.



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Criminal justice instructor David Bukowski (center) is Teacher of the Year at North Florida Technical College. He is pictured with Director Keith Kirby and Superintendent Will Hartley.



Starke Elementary School Teacher of the Year Jessica Archibald (second from the left) teaches sixth grade science. She is pictured with Assistant Principal Michelle Davis, Superintendent Will Hartley and Principal Lauren Morgan.

# Lake Region

## Keystone Heights Honors WWII Veteran Whisk Café cuts ribbon on South Lawrence

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The city of Keystone Heights honored World War II veteran John S. Fenwick on Dec. 26 as he celebrated his 100th birthday, recognizing a century of life marked by service, resilience, and community pride.

Fenwick, a United States Merchant Marine veteran who served in the Pacific Theater during World War II, was recognized during a special ceremony at City Hall attended by his family, American Legion Post 202 members, city officials, community members, and local veterans. The milestone celebration included the presentation of two official certificates acknowledging his military service and lifelong contributions.

The first certificate was presented by Post 202 members, honoring Fenwick for his service as a Merchant Marine officer during World War II. The citation recognized his dedication to freedom and democracy, as well as his allegiance to God and country. Fenwick participated in operations connected to the Battle

of Saipan and in the aftermath of the Battle of Midway—two of the most significant engagements of the war.

Although merchant mariners played a vital role in wartime logistics, they were not formally recognized as veterans until 1988, when the United States Armed Forces acknowledged their service and sacrifices. During the war, merchant mariners faced some of the highest casualty rates of any branch as they transported troops, fuel, and supplies through active combat zones.

The second certificate was presented by Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth, who issued an official proclamation declaring December 26 as John S. Fenwick Day in the City of Keystone Heights. The declaration recognized Fenwick as a cherished community member whose life reflects a century of American history and service.

“Mr. John S. Fenwick is a remarkable example of resilience, dedication, and strength,” said Rodenroth. “His life and service serve as an inspiration to current and future generations, reminding us of the importance



John Fenwick with Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth.

of hard work, perseverance, and strong community connections.”

Fenwick expressed gratitude for the recognition and reflected humbly on reaching the milestone.

“It’s a big surprise to even make it to 100,” he said. “I feel it’s wonderful. I can hardly believe it.”

In addition to his military service, Fenwick has recently shared his wartime experiences through his newly published book, *A Number of Ways I Could Have Died: And Other Adventures*, which recounts the dangers faced by merchant mariners during World War II. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.

City officials noted that honoring Fenwick not only celebrates a personal milestone but also preserves an important chapter of American history, recognizing the sacrifices of those who served to help shape the nation as Keystone Heights residents mark the city’s first 100 years.



Members of the Clay Chamber’s Lake Region Prosperity Partners join Whisk Café owners Ronald Todd and Danny Yangtodd cut the ribbon on their eatery.

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The Lake Region Prosperity Partners hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Dec. 9 to formally welcome Whisk Café to the Keystone Heights business community.

Members of the Clay Chamber group and city officials attended the ceremony at Whisk’s 190 South Lawrence Boulevard location.

The eatery opened its doors in February 2025. After several months navigating the challenges of launching a new business and becoming established in the community, the owners felt it was the right time to mark the milestone with a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Owned by husband-and-wife team Ronald Todd and Danny Yangtodd, Whisk Café brings a menu focused on home-cooked, healthy options, along with a variety of desserts and ice cream. The couple said they chose Keystone Heights intentionally, seeing an opportunity to serve local families with convenient, quality meals.

“I’ve been a chef my whole life. I’ve worked for companies, opened restaurants with partners, and owned our own restaurant before,” said Todd. “We made mistakes and learned lessons along the way, so when we got this opportunity, we decided to go back to the fundamentals.”

Todd previously worked as a chef at Butler Hospital and Butler University in Indianapolis, experiences he said helped shape the café’s approach to consistency and fresh preparation.

Yangtodd emphasized the café’s focus on convenience for busy families.

“We wanted to offer grab-and-go options for families,” Yangtodd said. “From personal experience, when I come home, pick up my son, and still have to think about cooking, it can be a lot. This makes it easier.”

The café prides itself on preparing all menu items in-house. According to the owners, items such as pastries, pies, parfaits, egg rolls, and chicken tenders are made fresh daily.

“Everything you see here is made in-house,” Todd said. “Our chicken tenders are hand-battered using fresh chicken—we don’t serve frozen products. That freshness is why customers tell us we have some of the best tenders they’ve ever had. We also offer boba teas and ice cream.”

Whisk Café is open Monday



Sarah Langland, Cindy Fenwick, Spencer Fenwick and John Fenwick.

## Helpers remember seniors for the holidays

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The holidays can be particularly challenging for many seniors, especially those who have lost loved ones or cannot be with their families.

The Holiday Helpers hosted their 5th Annual Christmas luncheon for seniors in Keystone Heights and the surrounding communities, featuring bingo, door prizes, and goodie bags.

The event took place on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at St. William’s Catholic Church in Keystone Heights, Clay County.

The lunch menu featured turkey and bean soup, ham and bean soup, along with options of egg salad, chicken salad, or pimento cheese. For dessert, guests enjoyed brownies, ice cream, and whipped cream.

“We wanted to make sure the seniors get something for the holidays,” said David Dickinson, co-chair of Holiday Helpers.

The Holiday Helpers also support the Angel Tree program. This year, they had 930 angels, which approximately translates to 465 children.



David Dickinson, Tina Lozaro and Karen Cox.

Dickinson stated that for each angel tree and each child that a family applies for, they provide some toys and clothing.

“We thank the community for their continued support for us for Holiday Helpers, and also thank Clay Electric for their support and grant, and the churches in the community,” said Tina Lazaro, Office Manager for St. Williams Catholic Church.

This year, due to limited funds from the shutdown and an increase in the number of children in need of gifts, the holiday helpers were only able to provide a meal and a goodie bag, as opposed to the larger gifts that they had provided in past years, such as blankets, slippers, and other essential items to brighten the holidays.

## Community partnership help parents shop for Christmas

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

To assist those in need of Christmas shopping, the Community Partnership hosted its 5th annual Christmas Shop for parents facing financial difficulties.

The event took place on Monday, Dec. 8, at Keystone Heights Junior High School.

“We try to provide them opportunities to shop at discounted prices right here in our community so that they can get more things for their families, plus we added this year stocking

stuffers,” said Issac Morford, Director of the Community Partnership, Keystone Heights Junior Senior High School.

This provides parents with an opportunity to discreetly purchase gifts for their children, from babies to 18-year-olds, within a limited budget.

The selection includes bikes, toys, and this year, a bonus of stocking stuffers. While families are limited to 3 to 5 gifts, the stocking stuffers offer a way to include a few extra surprises for their children.



Laura Dean, Tina Santillo and Patricia Hatch wrap gifts for the event.



Danny and Todd Yangtodd, owners of Whisk Café.

through Friday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

With its emphasis on fresh, made-from-scratch food and family-friendly convenience, Whisk Café aims to become a staple dining destination for residents and visitors in Keystone Heights.

**NOTICE OF ELECTION**  
**2026 SUPER TUESDAY MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**  
City of Green Cove Springs  
City of Keystone Heights  
Town of Orange Park

Pursuant to Section 100.021 of the Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the 2026 Super Tuesday Municipal Elections will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at each respective Municipality.

**City of Green Cove Springs**  
321 Walnut St., Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043  
Seats One (1) and Two (2) for a three (3) year term of office on the Green Cove Springs City Council.

**City of Keystone Heights**  
555 S. Lawrence Blvd., Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
Seats Four (4) and Five (5) for a three (3) year term of office on the Keystone Heights City Council.

**Town of Orange Park**  
2042 Park Ave., Orange Park, FL 32073  
Seats One (1) and Two (2) for a three (3) year term of office on the Orange Park Town Council.  
Qualifying for all seats will open Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at NOON and remain open until Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at NOON at the Clay County Supervisor of Elections Office.  
Those interested in qualifying for Seats on the aforementioned City or Town Councils must be a qualified elector, a citizen of the United States and meet all other qualifying requirements as outlined in each respective Municipal Charter.  
A Run-off Election, if necessary for any Municipality will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of May.  
For further information, please contact the Clay County Supervisor of Elections  
Office at (904) 269-6350.  
In accordance with the Sunshine Law of Florida, this meeting is open to the public.  
Note: Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, states that if a person decides to appeal any decision by the board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purposes, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

**AVISO DE ELECCION**  
**ELECCIONES MUNICIPALES DEL SÚPER MARTES 2026**  
Ciudad de Green Cove Springs  
Ciudad de Keystone Heights  
Ciudad de Orange Park

De conformidad con la Sección 100.021 de los Estatutos de Florida, se notifica que las Elecciones Municipales del Súper Martes 2026 se llevarán a cabo el martes 14 de abril de 2026 de 7:00 a.m. a 7:00 p.m. en cada Municipio respectivo.

**Ciudad de Green Cove Springs**  
321 Walnut St., Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043  
Asientos Uno (1) y Dos (2) por un periodo de tres (3) años en el Consejo de la Ciudad de Green Cove Springs.

**Ciudad de Keystone Heights**  
555 S. Lawrence Blvd., Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
Asientos Cuatro (4) y Cinco (5) por un periodo de tres (3) años en el Consejo de la Ciudad de Keystone Heights.

**Ciudad de Orange Park**  
2042 Park Ave., Orange Park, FL 32073  
Asientos Uno (1) y Dos (2) por un periodo de tres (3) años en el Consejo Municipal de Orange Park.  
La calificación para los asientos se abrirá el lunes 2 de febrero a mediodía y permanecerá abierta hasta el viernes 6 de febrero a mediodía en la Oficina del Supervisor de Elecciones del Condado de Clay.  
Aquellos interesados en calificar para Asientos en los Consejos Municipales o Municipales mencionados anteriormente debe ser un elector calificado, un ciudadano de los Estados Unidos y cumplir con todos los demás requisitos de calificación como se detalla en cada Carta Municipal respectiva.  
Una segunda vuelta electoral, si es necesario para cualquier municipio, se llevará a cabo el segundo martes de mayo.  
Para obtener más información, comuníquese con la oficina del Supervisor de Elecciones del Condado de Clay, (904) 269-6350.  
De acuerdo con la Ley Sunshine de Florida, esta reunión está abierta al público.  
Nota: La Sección 286.0105, Estatutos de la Florida, establece que si una persona decide apelar cualquier decisión de la junta, agencia o comisión con respecto a cualquier asunto considerado en una reunión o audiencia, necesitará un registro de los procedimientos, y que, para tales fines, él o ella puede necesitar asegurarse de que se haga un registro literal de los procedimientos, el cual incluye el testimonio y la evidencia sobre los cuales se basará la apelación.

# UNION COUNTY

## 'It's time to give Union County a raise'

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County commissioners held a town hall meeting for Worthington Springs residents at the county's extension office to discuss proposed increases to special assessments, impact fees, and a potential gas tax as the county faces significant budget shortfalls in its solid waste and emergency medical services operations.

The meeting, attended by only nine residents, revealed stark realities about the county's financial situation.



According to County Coordinator Jimmy Williams, the solid waste department's budget for fiscal year 2023-24 was \$1.3 million, while special assessment collections totaled only approximately \$320,000, leaving nearly a \$1 million shortfall.

According to County Coordinator Jimmy Williams, the solid waste department's budget for fiscal year 2023-24 was \$1.3 million, while special assessment collections totaled only approximately \$320,000, leaving nearly a \$1 million shortfall.

"We're doing this because we think if we don't do something, the service is going to go away and you're going to have to take your garbage out to the landfill and make your own arrangements because we're at a point where if we don't stop the bleeding out of our reserves, there will be no reserves," added Commissioner Donna Jackson. "We've pulled \$1.7 million out of reserves like the last couple of years. If we need \$1.7 million in this coming year, there won't be \$1.7 million there to get."

## Decades Without Increases

Commissioners emphasized that special assessments for garbage disposal and emergency medical services have remained largely unchanged since the 1980s. The current assessment is \$70 per household for each service, a rate that has not kept pace with inflation or operational costs.

Clerk Kellie Hendricks Rhoades explained that to break even in fiscal year 2026, the special assessment would need to be approximately \$131 per household just for solid waste, based on roughly 4,450 residential properties paying the fee.

"It's not realistic to expect that you would run your household on the same income you were getting in 1989 and expect to operate that household today," Jackson noted, addressing concerns about rate increases.



Laurel Schaffna, a Union County resident, suggested the board wait until after November 2026 to see what additional property tax revenue comes in from new construction and property sales before making permanent changes.

## Multiple Revenue Strategies Proposed

To address the funding gap without placing the entire burden on special assessments, commissioners discussed several options:

**Impact Fees:** The board is considering implementing impact fees of approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000 on new construction permits. Williams calculated that with an average of 80 new building permits per year, this would generate enough revenue to purchase a new ambulance every two years, which is the typical replacement cycle.

**Gas Tax:** A gas tax was mentioned as a way to spread the burden to those passing through the county, with potential revenue directed toward road department operations.

**Collection Site**

**Improvements:** Following Bradford County's model, commissioners discussed requiring stickers for residents to access collection sites. Bradford County reportedly reduced garbage volume by 40% at its Keystone Heights site after implementing such a system, primarily by preventing non-residents from using the facilities.

## RV Park Assessment Controversy

A significant portion of the discussion focused on RV parks, which commissioners acknowledged are not paying their fair share under current regulations. Currently, a legal RV park with dozens of sites pays only a single residential assessment, the same as a single-family home.

"So, for the RV park, I would



Clerk Kellie Hendricks Rhoades explained that to break even in fiscal year 2026, the special assessment would need to be approximately \$131 per household just for solid waste, based on roughly 4,450 residential properties paying the fee. Also pictured is County Attorney Russ Wade.

say," Williams said, referring to the Palm RV Park in Worthington Springs. "I don't know how many are in there now, 60, 70. I'm not sure how many RVs are in there now. They are paying ... I believe it got changed to this Commercial Garbage 1, and it's paying \$65 a year in garbage."

Jackson noted that 911 calls frequently come from these locations that aren't paying adequate taxes.

"Our sheriff's office is telling us day in and day out that a lot of their calls are coming from these places that are not even paying taxes," she said. "So, there's a sense of fairness that I've tried to address."

## Landfill Operations and Tipping Fees

Williams provided data showing that between January 2024 and December 2024, Union County paid \$272,775 in tipping fees to the New River landfill. In return, the county receives a host fee of \$100,000 annually for having the landfill located in Union County, and an additional \$100,000 for being one of the association's three partners. The other partners are

Baker and Bradford Counties. That leaves Union County approximately \$70,000 in the red just for garbage disposal, before accounting for operational costs.

Jackson and Chairman Channing Dobbs, who sit on the New River Solid Waste Association Board, expressed frustration that commercial entities like Lake Butler's McDonald's pay minimal special assessments while generating significant waste.

"Let's use our imaginations," Jackson said. "McDonald's is a Commercial Garbage 4, so that would mean that McDonald's pays \$130 a year to dispose of all of the garbage created out of McDonald's from their two dumpsters, I think, that are out back. Do you think that's fair? That's what they pay."

Williams explained that the current commercial garbage categories, established in 1988, no longer reflect actual usage patterns.

## Emergency Medical Services Under Strain

The EMS department faces similar financial pressures. Operating a single ambulance costs approximately \$800,000 to \$1 million annually, according to Williams. The county currently runs two ambulances, and residents have expressed interest in a third unit to improve response times.

"Every time you build these subdivisions, and you have this influx of people, what happens when you have more people? They're dialing 911 a lot more," Jackson explained, justifying the need for impact fees to offset the cost of serving new development.

## Resident Concerns and Commissioner Response

Laurel Schaffna, a Union County resident, suggested the board wait until after November 2026 to see what additional property tax revenue comes in from new construction and property sales before making permanent changes. However, commissioners countered that the county has already depleted its reserves and can no longer afford to delay action.

"The county commission has put off making these decisions for so long now that we're at a critical point," Jackson said. "None of us who sit up here want to be known as the board that raised your taxes. We're doing this because we think if we don't do something, the service is going to go away."

Johns declared that by living in the woods, almost off-grid, he doesn't need fire-rescue or the sheriff's office.

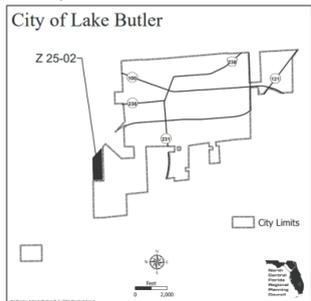
"The majority of people aren't like that anymore," he added. "They want this and they want that, but they don't want to pay taxes to get it. That doesn't work. Now we're not creating new taxes. We're just saying, well, if we're going to keep up with the flow, the county's grown, the government's grown, but our income has not grown. So, it's time to give Union County a raise."

## NOTICE OF ZONING CHANGE

The City Commission of the City of Lake Butler, Florida proposes to regulate the use of land within the area shown on the map below, by amending the Official Zoning Atlas of the City of Lake Butler Land Development Regulations, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Regulations, as follows:

Z 25-02, an application by SC Services, Inc., as agent for the City Commission, to amend the Official Zoning Atlas of the Land Development Regulations by changing the zoning district on certain lands from COMMERCIAL GENERAL (CG) to INDUSTRIAL (I) for the property described, as follows:

A parcel of land lying in Section 36, Township 5 South, Range 19 East, Union County, Florida. Being more particularly described as follows: Commence at Southeast corner of said Section 36; thence North 01°24'13" West 984.65 feet, along the East line of said Section 36 to the Point of Beginning; thence South 88°45'17" West 666.69 feet; thence North 01°24'49" West 1,458.59 feet to the Southerly right-of-way line of State Road 121; thence North 42°46'14" East 957.10 feet, along the Southerly right-of-way line of said State Road 121 to the East line of Section 36; thence South 01°24'13" East 2,146.89 feet, along the East line of said Section 36 to the Point of Beginning. Containing 27.60 acres, more or less.



A public hearing will be conducted by the City Commission to consider the amendment and enactment of the ordinance adopting the amendment on January 20, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the Commission Chambers, City Hall located at 200 Southwest First Street, Lake Butler, Florida. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, RELATING TO THE REZONING OF TEN OR MORE CONTIGUOUS ACRES OF LAND, PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION, Z 24-02, BY SC SERVICES, AS AGENT FOR THE CITY COMMISSION; PROVIDING FOR REZONING FROM COMMERCIAL, GENERAL (CG) TO INDUSTRIAL (I) OF CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the amendment.

Copies of the amendment are available for public inspection at the Office of the City Manager, City Hall located at 200 Southwest First Street, Lake Butler, Florida, during regular business hours.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Any person requiring auxiliary aids and services at this meeting may contact the Office of the City Manager at 386.496.3401 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 1.800.955.8770 (voice) or 1.800.955.8771 (TTY).

## Lake Butler Lodge installs Worshipful Master



2026 Officers of Lake Butler Lodge No. 52: L-r Jim Horler, Colin Coody, Calvin Peterson, Roy Weiland, Bill Mahoney, Leaman Alvarez, Brian Barton, John Holt, JD Ross

On January 5, 2026, Roy Weiland was installed as Worshipful Master of Lake Butler Lodge No. 52 for the year of 2026.

Having been a Mason for 52 years, a Past Worshipful Master, and a Past District Deputy Grand Master, he finds it to be a great honor to be elected as Worshipful

Master of Lake Butler Lodge No. 52 Free & Accepted Masons in Lake Butler, Florida, for the year of 2026.

Worshipful Roy will be following in the footsteps of many outstanding Worshipful Masters of Lake Butler Lodge before him, including the very first Master, Isaac I. Coon when

Lake Butler Lodge No. 52 was chartered on January 17, 1861.

Roy stated the brothers of Lake Butler Lodge are a great group of men who believe in God, charity work, and fellowship. Worshipful Roy stated it will be an outstanding year that he is looking forward to.

## Car crashes into KH Home

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

A car collided with a home in Keystone Heights, displacing residents and leaving the driver in serious condition.

According to the Florida Highway Patrol, the driver, who veered off course and crashed into the home, had a medical condition at the time of the incident.

The accident occurred on Tuesday, December 30, at 11 SE Nelson's Point at 2:47 p.m.

Bradford County Fire Rescue reported that one person was transported with serious injuries. The residents who were at home during the accident were not injured.



Car collides with house.

## Keystone's founder was man of business, faith



The Lawrence Family consisted of John Sr. (seated) and (l-r standing) Agnes, John Jr. and Jess. This photo was taken around 1924.

BY ERIC OWNES

This article is reprinted from the Bradford County Telegraph 110th anniversary special of August 10, 1989.

John J. Lawrence, the founder of Keystone Heights, was born in June 1870 in the Summerhill Township of Erie County, Pennsylvania, to parents, Hiram Lawrence of Pennsylvania and Julia Walrath Lawrence of New York.

Lawrence's wife, Agnes Ellen Boyd, was born on March 7, 1891, in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and they were married on December 16, 1916, in Pittsburgh.

Lawrence was an ordained minister and is memorable for his participation in religious causes and organizations, as well as his land development. His theology has been described as interdenominational in scope, reflecting the four-fold gospel of salvation, sanctification, healing, and the second coming of Christ.

### From Lake Brooklyn to Lake Geneva

During the opening years of this century, many land speculators and developers came from the north, either to invest in or develop land in Florida. Shortly after World War I, Lawrence, like most of the others, headed first for the south of the state, toward Miami.

There, he investigated the possibility of acquiring and developing some land, but because he was dissatisfied with the high prices in southern Florida, he began traveling along the Trail Ridge, searching for an ideal town site where the land prices were reasonable.

Apparently, while Lawrence was still residing in Pennsylvania, George Sebring had asked him to come to Florida to assist him

in a development project he was undertaking. The city they developed together is now the city of Sebring.

While in Sebring, Lawrence met J. B. Zell, who owned several thousand acres around Brooklyn Lake, formally located where Park of The Palms is today. Lawrence visited the area, decided it was suitable for his plans, and purchased the land.

He invited his brothers, Jess, Joe, and Claude, to invest in and develop the land with him, and in 1919, they founded the Lawrence Development Company, which they headquartered in the Brooklyn Hotel, a two-story frame building.

John Lawrence quickly became dissatisfied with Brooklyn's platting. Agnes took him to the shore of the lake she had found while on a walk, and they agreed to move the town site to Lake Geneva.

The new town, Keystone Heights, would be an investment opportunity for entrepreneurial northerners. The Lawrence Brothers envisioned a community supported economically by pecan orchards and orange groves. They began clearing the land themselves with the assistance of a few local residents.

### Revivals, schools and churches

Besides his real estate activities in Sebring and Keystone Heights, Lawrence was interested in promoting religious organizations. He and his wife frequently entertained the Rev. Dr. W. T. Watson, and Dr. John Minder, who traveled through this section of Florida to conduct services in homes, schoolhouses, and churches.

In 1924 when Rev. Watson went to St. Petersburg to begin an evangelistic tent revival, he asked Lawrence to conduct the

first series of meetings. The revival resulted in an organized church, which Watson continued to pastor for more than 30 years.

This church, which John Lawrence helped form, was instrumental in establishing the Florida Bible Institute at Temple Terrace near Tampa, where a young Billy Graham received his basic training. The school eventually grew even larger and has since changed its name to Trinity College.

Lawrence also helped to form the Gospel Tabernacle of Melrose, an organization affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, whose charter lists its objective as to promote the cause of the Christian religion. Lawrence served on its board of trustees for three years.

John Lawrence is also remembered locally for having started the first church in Keystone Heights, Community Christian Church, which met in his house, located on the hill at the corner of Lawrence Boulevard and Jasmine Avenue, until other facilities were available.

### Estate liquidated

John Lawrence died of colon cancer at 6 a.m., March 25, 1929, at St. Luke's Hospital in Jacksonville. Just prior to his death, he was reported to have felt ill but still able to get around town. He went to Jacksonville simply for treatment. His death was unexpected.

Agnes Lawrence lived until 1968. They had no children, and Agnes rationalized that since all their relatives were already self-sufficient, the Lawrence estate should be liquidated into cash and donated in John Lawrence's name to any Christian cause to be chosen at the discretion of the executor. Agnes suggested a scholarship fund for ministerial students at Trinity College.

## It's the people that make the history

### Watson serves as role model

BY TRACY LEE TATE AND DAN HILDEBRAN  
Special to the Monitor

Among the prominent people in Keystone Heights over the years, many can be cited as examples of various qualities and favorable traits. Still, few would qualify as an overall role model for young people to follow and aspire to.

If anyone in Lake Region history fits this rather tall bill, it would have to be Al Watson, who has given much to the community since he moved to Keystone Heights in 1937.

Watson came to Florida with his family from New Jersey when he was 20. His father immediately fell in love with



Al and Aggie Watson

of free rent to open a grocery store in Keystone Heights."

Watson said that when he and Aggie came to Keystone

food store in Clay County, netting about \$2,500 a week. In 1950, Watson and his store were featured in the largest independent grocery trade magazine in the United States. "The Progressive Grocer."

### 250 days at sea

Despite his business achievements, Watson said his greatest success and joy in life has always been his family. He and Aggie raised two children, Dr. Alfred B. Watson, Jr. and Agnes Jr. The couple also had five grandchildren.

The Watsons sold their store in 1975. The couple loved to travel and once spent 250 days on a ship cruising the sea. They traveled all over the world.

Al and Aggie were always active in the community, giving themselves and their time to help others. Al was a Keystone Heights Boy Scouts leader, and Aggie took the reins as a den mother. Al was always happy to lend the young people in the community a leg up in life, hiring them to work in his store. Al also served on the Keystone Heights City Council for six years in 1940-41, 1950-51, and 1962-63. He was a charter member of the Keystone Heights Rotary Club.

In their early days in the community, the Watsons were members of Community Church, where Al taught Sunday school for several years. After a few years, they moved to Faith Presbyterian Church, where Al served as an elder and continued to teach Sunday school. They then moved their membership to Keystone United Methodist Church because Aggie was of the Methodist faith.

### Leaving a legacy

"I have always been a goal-oriented person," Watson said. "I have never thought about failing, even when I had to use a cigar box for a cash register. I wanted my children to have a college education, and they did. I wanted to plan and save for my retirement so it would be pleasant, and I did. We had always wanted to travel around to see the world, section by section, and we did."

The Watsons' legacy includes gifts to Keystone Heights High School, Jacksonville's Mayo Clinic, and their home church.

In 2009, Santa Fe College's Watson Center opened in the Lake Region after a \$3.84 million donation by Al and Aggie.

Then-President Jackson Sasser said the retired grocer's influence exceeded his financial gifts. Jackson said the college began offering bachelor's degrees in 2010 at Watson's urging.

In a news release announcing Al's death in 2009, Santa Fe College Foundation Executive Director Chuck Clemons said, "Through his generosity and leadership, many students will obtain an education that will change their lives and their community forever."

Aggie died in 2006.

Throughout life, Al and Aggie had always been a team, walking through life hand in hand, and the softness in his voice when he spoke of her and the sparkle in his eyes when he looked at her spoke plainly that, over the years, this partnership

grew both stronger and greater in love and devotion. Perhaps this is the best reason for admiring Al Watson and his success.



Watson pioneered the self-service concept in North Florida.

the area when he traveled here on a hunting trip and purchased 120 acres in Melrose, where the family went into the wholesale meat business.

"That was when I found out how easy it is to lose money and how hard you must work to earn it," Watson said.

The meat business failed, but Watson soon set himself up in the grocery business in Melrose.

Watson met his future partner in life, Agnes "Aggie" Wright, when he transferred from Rutgers University to the University of Florida after his family moved.

The couple married in 1935.

### Recruited to Keystone with a year's free rent

Watson opened his first grocery store in an orange grove 100 feet off the highway in Melrose, where he had borrowed \$200 from Aggie's grandfather. The business netted him about \$15 a week.

In 1938, Watson was approached by Ed Wiggins about coming to Keystone Heights to open a grocery store. Wiggins owned a service station, and another prominent businessman in town, Frank Walrath, opened a gas station that offered 24-hour service, eating into Wiggins' business. Walrath also owned the only grocery store in the city at the time.

Heights, there was only one church in town, and a Sunday when 20 people attended was a banner day. He remembers there were very few cars in town, and when Wiggins got a new one, the whole community came to see it. He recalled a place where simple pleasures, like swimming in the lake, played a major role in life and simpler times when people had no need to lock their doors and could always count on their neighbors when they needed help. He remembered talking to local police officers who viewed duty in Keystone Heights as recreation and relaxation rather than work.

### Netting \$2,500 a week in 1948

Al and Aggie opened their store in Keystone Heights on July 1, 1937, in the building that later became Mallards. They were truly partners in the business. Al supervised and handled the ordering, and Aggie kept the books and filled in as a cashier when needed. When Al couldn't make the necessary weekly trip to Jacksonville to pick up supplies for the store, Aggie made the trip.

At first, the store was slow to take off, netting only about \$20 a week, but Al refused to give up. In 1939, he changed locations, moved a few doors up the street, and took his business to semi-self-service. By 1941,



Watson said his first business venture, a partnership with his father, taught him how easy it is to lose money.

"I guess Mr. Wiggins wanted him to know what it felt like to have a little competition," Watson remembered with a smile. "He offered me one year

he had upped his overall sales to \$40,000; by 1943, he had made his store completely self-service.

By 1948, his newly remodeled store was the largest and finest

# 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

Jakerria Kirie Brooks, 32, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 2 for an out-of-county warrant.

Coy Allan Busby, 39, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 1 for child neglect and resisting an officer.

Courtney Cordelia Clark, 20, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 28 for battery.

Felix Antonio Dela Cruz, 50, of Citra, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 30 for disorderly intoxication

and resisting an officer.

Joshua Gordon Gaines, 36, of Lake City, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 29 for withholding support.

Steven Dwayne Hawley, 63, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 31 for DUI and a moving traffic violation.

Ruth Mae Hurst, 32, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 30 for child neglect and cruelty toward a child.

Daryl Devon Riley, 50, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 1 for aggravated assault with a weapon, disorderly intoxication, resisting an officer, destroying evidence, and marijuana possession.

Travis Dean Thompson, 47, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 2 for seven counts of dealing in stolen property.

### Union

Bernice Raymond Boyette, 61, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 24 for aggravated assault with a

weapon.

Gerald Burnsed, 61, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 22 for first degree premeditated murder.

Antwan Terrel Givens, 39, of Green Cove Springs, was arrested by Union deputies on December 22 for an out-of-county warrant.

James Mannon Goff, 38, of Green Cove Springs, was arrested by Union deputies on December 26 for an out-of-county warrant.

Hailey Amanda Hart, 27, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 31 for battery.

William Michael Hedrick, 44, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on December 31 for an out-of-county warrant.

### Clay

Jimmy Joe Lawrence Dales, 31, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on December 30 for retail petit theft.

Wayne Jackson Stone, 47, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on January 2 for being a fugitive from justice.



## Russ WADE

### Attorney at Law

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# Obituaries

## Robert Barksdale

Mr. Robert Cody Barksdale Sr., 98, of Starke passed away peacefully at his home, Thursday, Dec. 18, 2025, surrounded by family. He was born Sept. 26, 1927, in Tampa to the late Cody and Virgie (Thomas) Barksdale. After graduating from Bradford High School, he attended Massey Business College in Jacksonville. He then joined his parents in their family clothing business, Barksdale's Department Store. In 1962, he switched to a different career path when he and his wife, Barbara, purchased the Florida Theatre in Starke.



Mr. and Mrs. Barksdale actively participated in all aspects of running a movie theater, from selling tickets and candy, to cleaning the theater, to projecting the movies, to making trips to haul concession supplies and film. Barksdale Theatres Inc. eventually grew to six indoor and two drive-in theaters in several southeastern states. Robert served his country in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II, stationed at Fort McHenry in Maryland. He was a proud Mason for 75 years and served as past Master of Bradford Lodge #35. The Barksdales were of the Baptist faith, being members of First Baptist Church in Starke before moving to Humboldt, Tennessee and joining The Church at Sugar Creek (formerly First Baptist Church of Humboldt). He greatly enjoyed getting together with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, treating them twice yearly to family gatherings at a variety of locations in the southeast. He also enjoyed traveling with his wife in their motor home to many places in the United States and were often accompanied by others.

Left behind to cherish his memory is his loving wife of 78 years, Barbara (Horne) Barksdale, and their children, Bobbie Sue (James) O'Brian, Robert "Robby" Barksdale Jr., and Vicki Sparks. He was lovingly called "Granddad" by his four grandsons, Cody, Benjamin, Matthew, and Justin, and by his eight great-grandchildren, James, Ellie, Lily, McKenna, Emmie, Evie, Monroe, and Maverick, all of whom he loved dearly.

Services will be announced at a later date.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Kim Brown

Kim Ann Rosenberger Brown, 70, of Lake Butler passed away Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025, at Community Hospice in Jacksonville. She was born Sept. 12, 1955, in Mystic, Connecticut to the late Robert and Joan (Russell) Rosenberger.

Survivors are her sons, Geno Moppert (Amanda), Stephen Brown (Alyson), and Jonathan Brown; husband, Johnny Brown; sister, Karen Rosenberger (Gene Schaffan); and niece, Kristen Rosenberger; and extended family members.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

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

## Andrew Caldwell-Perry

Andrew Ross Caldwell-Perry, 7/18/05-12/22/25. On Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, our beloved was welcomed into the arms of his Savior. He was one with the Lord and never let his faith go astray. He was his parents' world, along with his brother, who was his best friend. He was preceded in death by his Granny, Glenda; and Gran and Papaw, Marie and Harry.

He is survived by his mom, Kristina; dad, Chris; brother, Tyler; grandpa, Brian; granddaddy, Drew (Betty Jane); his Pops, Kenneth; extended family; and so many people that loved him. He will always be in our hearts. Until we meet again.

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



## Carolyn Civitarese

Carolyn Hilliard Civitarese, 83, of Starke, passed away peacefully on Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, at her residence with her loving family by her side. She was born in Jacksonville on March 10, 1942, to the late Asbury Waldron Sr. and Carrie Cribbs Waldron. Carolyn was raised in Jacksonville, where she met the love of her life, Tommy Lewis Hilliard. They were happily married on April 26, 1958, shortly after Carolyn graduated from Andrew Jackson High School. Together, they were blessed with 39 wonderful years of marriage and five precious children. They made Bradford County their home, where they lovingly raised their family.

Carolyn was a devoted homemaker whose greatest passion in life was her family. She was hardworking and gifted with her hands. Throughout the years, she worked as a seamstress and proudly owned and operated Carolyn's Upholstery. She enjoyed sewing, making headliners, reupholstering furniture, and even woodworking, talents that reflected her creativity, dedication, and strong work ethic. She also served as a custodian at the Bradford County Courthouse for 20 years, a career she truly enjoyed. In her free time, she loved her daily five-mile walks, spending time in nature, and working in her yard. Years after Tommy's passing, Carolyn married her best friend, Anthony "Tony" Civitarese, and together they were blessed with 14 wonderful years of marriage until his passing in 2014. More than anything, Carolyn's life was firmly centered on her love for Jesus Christ, her Lord and Savior, and her family. She was a longtime, devoted member of Sampson City Church of God, where she found great joy in praising and worshiping alongside her church family. Carolyn was deeply treasured and will be immensely missed by all who knew her. She was preceded in death by her parents; husbands, Tommy Lewis Hilliard Sr. and Anthony "Tony" Civitarese; siblings, Eugene Waldron, Everett Waldron, Thelma Thrift, Evelyn Mullins, Asbury "Buddy" Waldron Jr., and Laura Mitchell; and her grandchildren, Betty Ruth Reddish and Trudy Taylor.

Carolyn is survived by her loving children, Lola Evern (Wayne "Doug") Douglas of Bulverde, Texas, Teresa (Joey) Faulkner, daughter and longtime caretaker, Tommy Lewis Hilliard Jr., Carolyn "Toots" (William) Reddish, and James Todd (Julie) Hillard Sr., all of Starke; adopted son she inherited from her sister Laura Mitchell, Jay "Dooney" (Lillian) Adams of Jacksonville; grandchildren, Heather Wheeler, Rick Faulkner, Jasmine Brown, Jason Faulkner, Cindy Layne, Scarlet Wheeler, Tressie Knipp, Brittany Davis, Tommy Hilliard III, Joey Faulkner, Dylan Hilliard, Kristin Holland, Houston Fender, James Todd Hilliard Jr., Kelsey Lewis, Harleigh Hilliard, Dakota Hilliard, Cecilia Griffis, Haileigh Nelson, and Reid Hilliard; along with several grandchildren she loved and claimed as her own; 38 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren; along with many extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held Friday, Jan. 9 at 2:30 p.m. at Sampson City Church of God with Brother John Frampton, Dr. Rick Adams, and Rev. J.T. Tomlinson officiating. Interment will follow at Evergreen Cemetery. The family will receive friends Thursday, Jan. 8, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at the church.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel, Starke, 904-964-5757. Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

## Lois Griffin

Mrs. Lois Fay Griffin, 92 of Keystone Heights passed away peacefully on Sunday, Dec. 28, 2025, at Shands Hospital in Gainesville. She was born April 20, 1933, in Jacksonville to the late Winslow and Maymie (Teauge) Keen. A proud homemaker, she was devoted to her family, especially her daughter, Debra Bertie, and son, Shawn Griffin. She was affectionately known as "Nana" to her three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, who were her pride and joy. She loved spending her days working in her yard, dancing, and challenging herself with word search puzzles. She was a die-hard fan of both the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Florida Gators, always cheering them on with passion.

In addition to her children, she also leaves behind her sisters, Judy Young and Merle Sheffield, who shared in her laughter and love through the years.

A graveside service to celebrate her life was held Monday, Jan. 5, 2026, at Keystone Heights Cemetery. Prior to the service, there was a public viewing.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## James Harper

James Michael "Mike" Harper, 44, of Hampton began his journey into eternal life on Monday, Dec. 23, 2025, where he was reunited with his father, James "Alex" Harper and nephew, Dayton Oats. Michael, affectionately known as "Mikey," was raised in Bradford County off Griffis Loop with his beloved mother, father, and sisters. From a young age, he was very gifted with his hands. He made his living at many trades, including but not limited to welding, carpentry and mechanical work. He was currently embarking on a new journey and was enrolled in a culinary program to pursue his passion for cooking. When he wasn't working, he loved the outdoors. He especially enjoyed hunting and fishing and cherished every opportunity to spend time with his family. His skills, work ethic, and love for those closest to him will be remembered always. He was certainly a treasure and will be deeply missed by all who knew him.



He is survived by his mother, Linda Myrick DeLong of Hampton; daughter, Raylenn Harper of Hampton; sisters, Jennifer Harper of Quincy and Brandy Harper of Lake City; brother-in-law, Albert Oats of Starke; nieces, Brittany Boatwright (Michael) James, Lauren Brumbley, Ashtyn Varnum and Skylar Dennis, all of Hampton; nephews, Christopher Andrews of Hampton and Marcus Oats of Lake City; aunt, Kathy Myrick of Canton, North Carolina; great-aunt, Judy Crews Lee of Starke; along with several friends and cherished loved ones.

A Celebration of Life was held Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel with Pastor John Hodges officiating. Interment followed at Hope Cemetery. The family received friends on Saturday, Jan. 3, at the funeral home. Please keep the family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel, Starke, 904-964-5757. Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family's guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

## Larry Hartley

Mr. Larry William Hartley, 78, of Keystone Heights passed away Saturday, Dec. 27, 2025, at Shands Hospital in Gainesville following a brief illness. He was born Sept. 29, 1947, in Jacksonville to the late Clarence and Helen (Price) Hartley and spent most of his life in Keystone Heights. He was a proud veteran of the National Guard and poured his working years into the construction industry as a journeyman with W.W. Gay until his retirement 45 years later. He was a simple man at heart, who could often be found in his trusty flannel shirts and jeans, doing what he loved, building race cars and boats, and cheering on his favorite racers from the stands. An active and long-time member of Hope Baptist Church in Teressa for 31 years, he embraced his faith and was a familiar face in his community.

He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Linda (Waldron) Hartley and his son, Larry Wade Hartley, both of Keystone Heights; his brother, Fred Hartley and his sister, Martha Weeks, both of Jacksonville. He was lovingly called "Papa" by his grandson, Connor Hartley. Also left behind are several nieces, nephews, and his adorable fur babies.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 17, at Hope Baptist Church with Dr. Larry Strickland officiating.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Nancy Huling

Nancy P. Huling, born Jan. 23, 1934, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Monday, Dec. 15, 2025, surrounded by the love of her family at her home. She was born in East Providence, Rhode Island, to the late Frederick Norberg and Elsa Larsson. Nancy was married for more than 67 years to the love of her life, Richard Huling, whom she was truly head over heels for. They were best friends in every sense of the word. Richard went to be with the Lord on May 10, 2022, and Nancy found comfort in the promise of being reunited with him again. Nancy was encouraging, playful, energetic, and known for her snappy sense of humor and quick wit, traits that brought smiles and laughter to those who knew her best. She cherished time with her family and had a special fondness for her granddaughter Melissa's dog, Casper, who held a special place in her heart.

She was a devoted mother to four children, Doug (Marilou), the late Christine (the late Dennis) and Sue, together known affectionately as the "Irish triplets," and her youngest, Judy. Nancy's legacy continues through nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, all of whom she loved deeply.

A funeral service celebrating her life was held at Lake Hill Baptist Church on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026, led by Pastor Steve Conner.

Arrangements are under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, Keystone Heights 32656. 352-473-3176. jonesgallagherfh@gmail.com

PAID OBITUARY

## Tracy Jones

Mr. Tracy Arnold (T.A.) Jones, 88, of Hampton passed away at his home on Friday, Jan. 2, 2026. He was born in Trenton on Sept. 24, 1937, to the late Mark and Norcey Alene (Layfield) Jones. Following graduation from Bradford High School he joined the United States Air Force followed by serving in the United States Navy as well. He was a talented carpenter, dedicated to his craft and the people he served. He spent many fulfilling years working in maintenance for the Duval Detention Center and later retired from the State of Florida. His passion for carpentry was matched only by his devotion to his family and his faith in Jesus Christ. Preceding him in death were his brother, Rothelle Jones; and half-brother, Ardel Brannen.

He leaves behind his loving and devoted wife of 66 years, Florence Jones, and their children Valerie (Vic) Hoffer-Maddox, Heather (Tyler) Thomas, Tim (Robin) Jones and Mark (Sandy) Jones; along with his dear sister, Norma Jean Faile. He leaves behind a legacy of love as "Grandpa" to his eight grandchildren and one great-grandson, who will forever cherish the memories of their time with him.

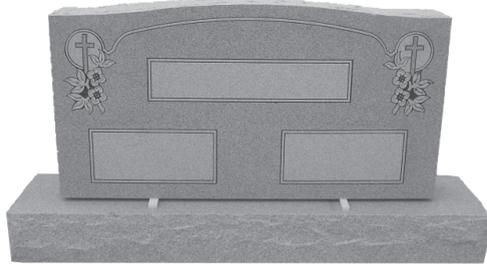
Funeral services were held at the DeWitt C. Jones Chapel on Wednesday, Jan. 7, with Pastor Sebbly Volpe officiating. Interment followed at Santa Fe Cemetery.

Arrangements were under the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home of Starke, 904-964-6200. www.jonesgallagherfh.com

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# Obituaries

## Billy Melvin



Billy Melvin, a loving husband, dad, papa, and great-papa, was born Nov. 20, 1948, in Crestview. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on Monday, Dec. 22, 2025, while at Clear Sky Rehabilitation Hospital of Lake City following an illness. He proudly served in the United States Air Force during the Vietnam War. He later retired from the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, where he worked as a counselor in Talladega, Alabama. A lifelong athlete, he played football, basketball, baseball and ran track for Union County High School. He spent most of his life in Lake Butler. He was an avid Union County Tiger, born and bred. He always supported them by buying their latest Tiger apparel. When they won the state championship, he had his sister-in-law get him the state championship shirt. He was in Talladega at the time and couldn't stand the thought of not having one. Billy loved his daughters and grandchildren more than anything. Saturdays usually meant Gator football and his wife's famous wings. As the boys got older, their friends were always welcome, and Billy treated them like his own. He didn't miss a chance to give someone a hard time or get a laugh, and being PAPA and GREAT-PAPA was his favorite role. Billy will be remembered for the life he built with his family and the memories they shared together. He was preceded in death by his parents, Cecil and Anne B. Melvin; and his older brother, J.D. Melvin, all from Lake Butler.

He is survived by his wife, Gail Melvin; daughters, Elaine (Jon) Buchanan and Dessie (David) Calihou; grandchildren, Nikki Doan, Rayla Horn, Robin (Erica) Buchanan, and Aaron Horn; and great-grandchildren, Emmett Horn, Waylon Buchanan, and T.J. Horn.

Friends and family were invited to a visitation on Friday, Dec. 26. A funeral service was held Saturday, Dec. 27. He was laid to rest immediately following the service at Dekle Cemetery with military honors.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## JoAnn O'Grady



JoAnn Ridaught O'Grady, 87, peacefully passed away on the afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 28, 2025, surrounded by the love and warmth of her family and friends. Born Sept. 7, 1938, in Palatka, she was the cherished daughter of the late Harold Leslie Ridaught and Winona Louise Ridaught. JoAnn, affectionately known as "Go Go Jo" for her vivacious spirit, lived life to the fullest. Her journey was marked by love, faith, and dedication. She built a rewarding career at the University of Florida, where she earned numerous accolades, including the distinguished Employee of the Year award. A devoted Christian, she was an active member of Woodlawn Baptist Church. She found joy in her service with the Ladies of the Church and cherished her Sundays in the nursery and Sunday school. Her love for plants, traveling, and spending time with her sisters brought her immense joy. Always up for an adventure, she recently fulfilled a dream by traveling and exploring nearly 20 states, visiting iconic landmarks such as Mount Rushmore and Yellowstone. JoAnn's love extended beyond her immediate family to her beloved community at Nelsons Point. There, she cultivated deep friendships and embraced her neighbors as family. Her warmth and compassion were a beacon of light, and she delighted in participating in community gatherings and celebrations. Family was the heart of her world. She was a nurturing presence who delighted in family gatherings and took great pride in watching her family grow and succeed. Her generous spirit and love for others will be forever remembered. JoAnn was preceded in death by her beloved husband, John F. "Jack" O'Grady; her daughter Tonda Jo Dotson; and her sister Lee Johnson.

She is survived by her daughter, Susanna (Rusty) Sumpter; granddaughter, Joanna (Wes) McKinney; great-grandson, Tanner Thornton; grandson, George (Brittany) McKinney; son Richard (Amy) Barton Jr.; grandsons, Wyatt Barton, Rick and Randall Grice; granddaughter, Shaina Grice; great-grandchildren, Zaine, Titan, and Shalin; granddaughter, Ashlee (Steven) Johnson; great-grandson, Landon; grandson, Adam (Jennie) Dotson with great-grandchildren Oliver and Rosie. She is also survived by her brother, Les (Evelyn) Ridaught; sisters, Kathy Scates, Sandra (Perman) Roberts, Vic (Rodney) Paul and June Cassala; best friend Diana Combs; along with many nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

A funeral service to celebrate her life will be held Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at Woodlawn Baptist Church, 818 County Road 20A, Hawthorne 32640. Friends and family are invited to gather for visitation from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. with funeral services to follow from 11 a.m. until 12 p.m. The burial will take place at Ochwilla Cemetery, State Road 21, Hawthorne, 32640. In lieu of flowers, JoAnn has kindly requested that donations be made in her name to Woodlawn Baptist Church. "What we once enjoyed and loved so deeply, we can never lose." — Unknown

JoAnn's enduring legacy of love and kindness will continue to inspire all who knew her. She will be deeply missed and forever cherished. Memories and condolences may be expressed to the family at JoAnn's Book of Memories page at www.j-ofunerals.com.

Arrangements are entrusted to Johnson-Overturf Funeral Home in Palatka.

PAID OBITUARY

## Breann Ponce



Breann Marie "Bree Marie" Ponce, 21, of Starke, passed away Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026. She was born in Jacksonville on May 10, 2004, to her loving parents, Robert "Robbie" William Ponce III and Brandi Gallion Ponce. She was raised in Bradford County and attended Northside Christian Academy before graduating from Bradford High School in 2022. With a heart devoted to helping others, she continued her education at Santa Fe College, where she was just one credit away from earning her associate degree. From a young age, she had a deep passion for animals and dreamed of becoming a veterinarian, a calling that reflected her love for all living creatures. She found great joy being outdoors, especially hunting and fishing, alongside her eight beloved hunting dogs, Charlie, Roscoe, Junior, Ruger, Bo, Little Ann, Rocky, and beloved pet, Dozer. She also enjoyed working on and fixing trucks with her stepfather, Chuck, moments that reflected her love for learning. Breann cherished her family deeply and treasured the time she spent with them, especially with her sisters, Brittany and Harley, along with her cousin, Trinity Gallion, who all held a very special place in her heart. She was certainly treasured and will be deeply missed by all who knew her. She was preceded in death by her paternal grandfather, Robert William Ponce Jr.; paternal great-grandmother, Patsy Ponce; maternal grandmother, Joyce Gallion; her cousin, Jase Gallion; and her sweet and favorite dog, Luke.

Breann is survived by her parents, Robbie (Tori) Ponce of Jacksonville and Brandi (Chuck Smith) Ponce of Starke; special aunt who was like a mother, Heather Gallion; sisters, Brittany Ponce and Harley Smith, both of Starke; brothers, Steffen Shivers of Jacksonville and Hunter (Shae) Smith of Starke; paternal grandparents, Janet Ponce of Jacksonville Beach, Joy and Ken Scott of Palm Valley; paternal great-grandfather, Robert "Bobby" William Ponce Sr. of St. Augustine; maternal grandparents, Mike Gallion of Highlands, William T. and Linda Smith of Keystone Heights; nephew, Weston Smith; along with several extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held Friday, Jan. 9, at 11 a.m. at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel with Pastor Jay Baker officiating. Interment will follow at Santa Fe Cemetery. The family will receive friends Thursday, Jan. 8, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at the funeral home.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services and Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel, Starke. 904-964-5757. Visit www.ferreirafuneralservices.com to sign the family guest book.

PAID OBITUARY

## Richard Robinson



Richard Britt Robinson, born on Feb. 12, 1941, in Ashville, North Carolina, passed away Wednesday Dec. 31, 2025, at HCA North Florida Hospital after a brief illness. He led a life marked by dedication and service, proudly serving in the United States Army for 28 years, concluding his military career in 1993. His time in the Army included participation in Operation Desert Storm stateside, where he demonstrated unwavering commitment to his country. Following his distinguished military service, he embarked on a career with the Florida Department of Corrections, beginning in the business department and then getting promoted to classification. He dedicated 23 years to the department until his retirement in 2009. His professional journey was complemented by a solid educational foundation, having graduated from Palatka High School in 1959. He furthered his education at Florida State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in business and later obtained a master's degree in administration from Central Michigan University. He was a devoted member of First Baptist Church of Lake Butler, where he spent many years actively participating and proudly singing in the choir. His faith and commitment to the Lord and his family were evident throughout his life. In addition to his professional accomplishments, he valued his family above all. He cherished spending time with his loved ones, often taking trips together and creating lasting memories, especially on family cruises. He was preceded in death by his parents, James Britt and Ruth Robinson, and infant son, Richard James Robinson.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 19 years, Linda Pace Robinson; his son, Douglas Britt (Mildred) Robinson; stepchildren, Diana (Bob) Hogsten, Kimberly (Dan) Bryant, and Eric (Richelle) Pace. He proudly held the title of Grandpa, Papa Richard, or Poppy to his grandchildren, Brittney (Logan) Betzer, Courtney Robinson, Joey Norris, Jessica (Kenny) Holmes, Kellen Crawford, Aniston Crawford, and Josee Pace. He also took great joy in his role as a great-grandfather to Landon Britt Betzer, Tripp Norris, Rylee Norris, Alana Holmes, Kai Holmes, Leilani Holmes, and Brooks Norris. He is further survived by his sister, Janice Husk (John Watterson) and numerous cousins and friends. He will be remembered for his unwavering faith, profound love for his family, and his dedication to service. His legacy will continue to live on in the hearts of those who knew him and loved him deeply.

Visitation took place on Sunday, Jan. 4, 2026, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home. A funeral service was held the following day, Monday, Jan. 5, at First Baptist Church, Lake Butler with interment following at Old Providence Baptist Church Cemetery. Pastor Jason Johns officiated the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to First Baptist Church Lake Butler choir, missions or youth programs in Richard's honor. Archer-Milton Funeral Home was honored to serve Linda and the rest of Richard's family during this time. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY

## Betty Smith



Born on March 30, 1935, in Ransom, Kentucky, Betty Smith, 90, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Dec. 27, 2025. She was raised in the Appalachian Mountains, where her humble beginnings helped shape a life marked by resilience, generosity, and deep-rooted faith. From an early age, her trust in God guided her steps, and that faith remained a steady presence throughout her entire life. Betty was one of 10 siblings, growing up with a strong sense of family, hard work, and community. She carried those values into adulthood, building a life centered on love, service, and devotion. She worked for 20 years at General Electric, demonstrating a remarkable work ethic while always keeping her family as her highest priority. As the preacher's wife, she faithfully supported her husband, Elder Bob Smith, serving alongside him with grace, humility, and unwavering belief. Betty was a devoted and faithful member of Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, where her love for God and her church family was clearly evident. Known for her caring heart, she poured herself into the lives of those she loved. She was especially famous for her pound cakes, which she joyfully shared often with family and friends. She also found great joy in sewing baby dolls for her grandchildren, gifts that reflected both her creativity and tenderness. In 1967, after residing in Sanford, she moved to Lake Butler, where she and Bob built a loving home filled with laughter, faith, and hospitality. Betty and Bob shared 57 wonderful years of marriage and cherished traveling together, including a memorable 30-day road trip across the western United States.

Betty was a devoted mother to her daughters, Debi (Terry) Dukes, Lisa (Don) Vintilla, and Keri (Jeff) Rimes, and to her son, Rob (Ranae) Smith. She was lovingly known as "Nana" to her grandchildren, Mark Dukes, Kryshelle (Joshua) Cothran, Derek (Felicia) Dukes, Kassie (Paul) Harris, DJ Vintilla, Alex (Brooke) Vintilla, Caroline (Cpt P-Colby) Andrews, Madison Rimes, and Veronica (Cole) Bruss. She was also blessed with great-grandchildren, Caleb Cothran, Victoria Cothran, Aaron Cothran, Liam Dukes, Marley Dukes, Sarah Jean Harris, and Anderson K. Vintilla, each of whom brought her immense pride and joy.

Betty is remembered for her loving spirit, servant's heart, and steadfast faith that guided her throughout her life. She was preceded in death by her parents, Richard and Susan Caroline Keese; her beloved husband, Elder Bob Smith; her son, Richard Davey Smith; her great-granddaughters, Ashley and Kendall Dukes; and all nine of her siblings. The love she shared, the faith she lived by, and the memories she created will continue to be a lasting testament to her remarkable life. Though she will be deeply missed, her presence and influence will never be forgotten.

A service honoring her was held Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, at Archer-Milton Funeral Home. Family and friends were invited to attend a visitation prior to the funeral. Brother Kyle Lloyd and Brother Alan Sapp officiated the ceremony. Following the service, Betty was laid to rest at Elzey Chapel Cemetery, with Brother Carl "Buddy" Harris presiding over the graveside. Serving as pallbearers were Betty's beloved grandsons. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Haven Hospice Lake City - havenhospice.com/donate.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Traver Tetstone



Traver Lane Tetstone was born March 13, 1992, in Gainesville. He was a good ol' boy through and through, living life with a big heart and a whole lot of love for his family. Tragically, he left this world Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025, but not without leaving behind a legacy that will always be remembered amongst those who knew him. Traver worked hard in construction and farming. People knew him for his cheerful attitude and undeniable knack for bringing folks together for a good time. Whether he was out fishing, tinkering with motorcycles, or listening to his favorite tunes, he knew how to live life to the fullest. As a young man, he had a passion for baseball. His talents on the field were matched only by his love for his family, who were always by his side no matter what. Traver was preceded in death by his brother, Travis Tetstone; mother, Teresa Polk; grandparents, Hubert and Joyce Tetstone; and grandfather, Olan Polk.

He is survived by his parents, Dickie Tetstone and Lori Reid; and his siblings, Troy Tetstone Sr., Krystal Reid, Kassie Lynn Reid, and Hunter Tetstone. He was also beloved by his many nieces and nephews, Troy Jr., Braxton, Wyatt, Allison, Trinity, Kania, Kaylee, Alex, Matthew, Ethan, Colten, Meya, Travis, and Blair, who will carry his memory with them always. He is also survived by a host of extended family and friends.

A visitation to celebrate his life was held on Sunday, Dec. 28, where friends and family gathered to share stories and laughs, remembering the joyful spirit of a man who brought so much love into the world. This was followed by a funeral service on Monday, Dec. 29, 2025. Both were held at Archer-Milton Funeral Home in Lake Butler. Though he may have left us way too soon, his legacy of love and laughter will live on in the hearts of those who were lucky enough to know him. Rest easy, Traver, you'll never be forgotten.

PAID OBITUARY

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When local businesses do well, so do students and local organizations which help build and strengthen the fabric of our community.

Your local merchant wants to help support these community groups and activities, but they need your support in order to continue.

Fulfill your family's wants and needs by buying locally! Invest in your own community by supporting local businesses.



### Build Communities' Economic Foundations

Supporting local small businesses including restaurants, goods and services means investing in our present and our future:

- **Keep money in the neighborhood.** Locally owned businesses recirculate 70% more money back into their own local community than big box chain stores and restaurants.
- **Embrace what makes us unique.** Where we shop, eat, work, play and hang out makes our communities home. If we wanted to live someplace that was like everywhere else, we wouldn't be living in this region of Florida.
- **Get better service.** In a local business you know the person behind the counter and they know you. They have a deeper understanding of the products and services they are selling and they take the time to serve their customers.
- **Create & keep good jobs.** Small local businesses are the largest employer nationally and account for the vast majority of job growth. Growing local businesses mean more jobs for residents and more taxes to invest in our own communities, churches, schools and groups.

SUPPORT • STRENGTHEN • BUILD OUR COMMUNITY

# BHS grad Covey earns team award at Jan. 2 Liberty Bowl

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

The AutoZone Liberty Bowl named Manny Covey the University of Cincinnati's Most Outstanding Offensive Player of the Game after he gained 106 rushing and receiving yards in his team's 35-13 loss to Navy on Jan. 2.

Covey, a redshirt sophomore running back who graduated from Bradford High School, rushed for 78 yards on 11 carries, with his longest run netting a career-high 36 yards. He caught five passes for 28 yards, with his longest reception covering 18 yards.

The former Tornado, whose senior season at BHS was 2022, added 53 yards on three punt returns to his totals, making him the game's leader in all-purpose yards with 159. Covey was the game's second-leading rusher behind Navy's Alex Tecza.

It was the first start for Covey as Cincinnati was without its top two running backs. Tawee Walker and Evan Pryor entered

the transfer portal. Quarterback Brendan Sorsby, who was one of the Bearcats' top three rushers along with Pryor and Walker, entered the portal as well.

It was a rough ending to the season for Cincinnati, which lost five straight games and finished 7-6, but perhaps it was a positive sign of things to come with Covey, who's played in all 25 of the Bearcats' games after redshirting in 2023.

Covey rushed for 62 yards on 17 carries his freshman season, while also catching eight passes for 119 yards and two touchdowns. His highlight game occurred in a 44-41 loss to Texas Tech in which he caught six passes for 100 yards and two touchdowns.

This past season, Covey rushed for 198 yards and a touchdown on 28 carries. He caught eight passes for 82 yards and returned 16 punts for 156 yards.

Covey's best rushing performances in 2025 prior to

See COVEY, page 13



Bradford won the Gray bracket of the Santa Fe High School True Force Shootout. The 3-0 performance resulted in BHS receiving \$500, which Head Coach Tarrin Jackson (second from left) received from Santa Fe Head Coach Glen Banks (far left). Players pictured are (l-r) Breion Johnson, Kemontae Nixon, Steven Carter, K.J. Taylor, Larry Ardley, Jordan Cason, Maliki Cobarris, Jy'Quez Cason, Bryston Williams and Dylan Ruise.

# BHS boys win True Force Shootout title

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

The Bradford High School outscored Santa Fe 26-11 in the second half in winning the Gray bracket championship at Santa Fe's True Force Shootout on Dec. 29.

Bradford (6-1) received a \$500 prize after going 3-0 in the three-day event, which was held at Alachua's Legacy Park Multipurpose Center. The tournament consisted of two boys brackets, with The Rock defeating Ocala Forest to win the Red championship.

A girls bracket was also part of the event, with Williston defeating Buchholz for the championship.

Steven Carter and Maliki Cobarris combined to score 12 points in the first quarter as Bradford entered the second quarter trailing 16-15.

Santa Fe (5-10) went on a 10-2 run to start the second quarter. Brody Sapp scored the quarter's first points with a three-pointer, while Jeremiah Lee scored six points during the run as the Raiders built a 26-17 lead.

The Tornadoes answered with a 12-2 run to take a one-point lead into halftime. Kemontae

Nixon scored off an offensive rebound and then made an awarded free throw. After a basket by Santa Fe's Ethan Innarelli, Nixon scored again off a Jordan Cason assist. A Raiders turnover eventually led to a three-pointer by K.J. Taylor to narrow Santa Fe's lead to three. Jy'Quez Cason had a layup off a Cobarris assist before Jordan Cason, following a Taylor steal, scored off a Carter assist to put the Tornadoes up 29-28.

Bradford scored the first nine points of the second half. Jy'Quez Cason scored off a Taylor assist, while Carter got a basket off a turnover. It was the first of five consecutive possessions in which Santa Fe turned the ball over. One led to a three-pointer by Carter, while a steal by Jy'Quez Cason led to his own basket and a 38-28 lead.

The Raiders didn't get on the scoreboard until Dantre Little made a free throw at the 2:17 mark of the third quarter.

Another three-pointer by Carter — his third of the game — put the Tornadoes ahead 41-29.

After a free throw by Innarelli, Santa Fe finally got a field goal in the second half when Bryce Carter knocked down a jumper with 55 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

Taylor and Jordan Cason each scored five points in the fourth quarter as Bradford maintained its double-digit lead.

Carter led the Tornadoes with 15 points, while Jordan Cason



Steven Carter (center) goes up for two of his team-high 15 points against Santa Fe.

had 11. Bradford also got nine from Cobarris, eight from Taylor, six from Jy'Quez Cason, five from Nixon and one from Dylan Ruise.

Besides Bradford and Santa Fe, the eight-team Gray bracket also consisted of Bell, Belleview, Branford, Hamilton County, St.

John Paul II and Taylor County. The Tornadoes began their tournament play with a 67-34 win over Taylor County on Dec. 27.

A Cobarris three-pointer helped Bradford take an early

See BHS, page 11



Manny Covey (left) receives a trophy from AutoZone Liberty Bowl Executive Director Steve Ehrhart for being Cincinnati's Most Outstanding Offensive Player of the Game. Photo courtesy of AutoZone Liberty Bowl.

## Shining Stars of the Week!

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



**Bethany Perano**  
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Providence Christian Academy  
Bethany has a lively attitude and is always the first to volunteer to help when it's needed.



**Emma Frazier**  
5th Grade  
Hope Christian Academy  
Emma is helpful to classmates, and she cares about her classwork.



**Nicholas Gadson**  
1st Grade  
Bradford Elementary  
Nicholas always tries his best and he never gives up.



**David Pickett**  
5th Grade  
Lighthouse Christian Academy  
This is David's first year with us at Light Christian Academy. He has adapted well to our curriculum and our school setting. We have enjoyed seeing him succeed in his schoolwork and we are proud that he is a student at LCA.



**Carter Bennett**  
6th Grade  
Lawtey Elementary  
Carter is a shining star in our classroom, consistently demonstrating hard work, kindness, and a positive attitude toward learning.



**Bentley Young**  
4th Grade  
Starke Elementary  
Bentley took his time and did his best on a test.

## KHHS girls drop 3rd straight with loss to Stanton

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School struggled to score and committed 29 turnovers in a 45-21 loss to visiting Stanton Prep in a girls basketball game on Jan. 5.

It was the third straight loss for the Indians (6-6) and their sixth loss in seven games.

Keystone's Alexandra Papaianou scored the game's first points with a basket off a Kadence Massey assist. The Indians turned the ball over on five straight possessions and trailed 6-2 before Daisy Hubbard scored underneath the basket off a Rigby Morford assist. A Hubbard basket off a Massey assist before the buzzer tied the game at 6-6 going into the second quarter.

Morford scored off a Hubbard assist to even the score at 8-8, but the Blue Devils (7-7) scored the remaining eight points in the half, leaving the Indians trailing 16-8 at the break.

Stanton opened the third quarter with a 9-2 run, but the Indians then scored three straight. Morford scored off an offensive rebound, while a three-pointer by Raven Bastin made it an eight-point game at 25-17.

The Indians missed five straight field-goal attempts after



Alexandra Papaianou (left) makes her move to the basket against Stanton Prep.

Bastin's basket and trailed by 10 entering the fourth quarter.

Keystone's struggles from the field continued as Stanton expanded its lead to 19. The Indians didn't score in the final quarter until three minutes had gone by, getting a basket from Hubbard, which left Keystone trailing 36-19.

Hubbard finished with a team-high six points. Bastin had five, while Keystone also got four each from Massey and Morford and two from Papaianou.

Massey and Morford each grabbed six defensive rebounds in the second half.

Prior to the holiday break,

Keystone snapped a three-game losing streak with a 37-23 win over Union County on Dec. 22 in a tournament at Clay High School. Massey and Morford each had a double-double, with Massey scoring 10 points and grabbing 14 rebounds and Morford getting 10 points and 11 rebounds. Massey also had six assists and four steals.

The Indians got six points from BrookeLynn Nunez, five from Grace Keaton, four from Papaianou and two from Bastin. Keaton also had seven rebounds, while Papaianou had five rebounds and three steals.

Keystone's second game in the Clay tournament was a 38-25 loss to the host Blue Devils on Dec. 23.

The Indians' first game of 2026 was a 53-20 loss to host Chiefland on Jan. 2.

Keystone, which played Crescent City this past Tuesday, will host Baldwin on Friday, Jan. 9, at 6 p.m. The Indians then travel to Jacksonville to play Duval Charter on Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 6 p.m.

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# Starke Elementary's Cullingford is BC's Employee of the Year

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Dawn Cullingford has made an impact in a short time at Starke Elementary School, and people have noticed.

In just her second year manning the front desk, Cullingford was voted as the school's Employee of the Year. Shortly after that, she was announced as the Employee of the Year for the entire school district.

"You know, I'm just up here doing my job," Cullingford said. "That's all I'm doing, but I guess it's a great job that I'm doing. People are seeing that and noticing that. That's very special to me. That means a lot."

Cullingford worked various jobs in which she didn't feel appreciated prior to becoming a stay-at-home mom. She's found a different atmosphere at Starke Elementary.

"Just being here at Starke Elementary — it's so rewarding," Cullingford said. "I feel valued.

My opinion matters. I'm seen. I'm heard.

"It feels like a big family — like an extension of family."

Principal Laurén Morgan said, "I don't think there's anybody on this campus who doesn't have love in their heart for Miss Dawn."

Cullingford hadn't been in a work setting for 19 years. When she returned in 2023, she was the aftercare program coordinator at Bradford Elementary School for one year.

"They did away with that program," Cullingford said. "Then this position (at Starke Elementary) came open last year."

Morgan said interviewing Cullingford left her with no doubts that she had found the right person for the job. Nothing since her hiring has proved otherwise.

"She was an immediate fit for the front desk," Morgan said, adding, "You want folks

to be welcomed and greeted on the phone. She's got a positive attitude. The reality is sometimes people are a little bit unhappy about something, but she's very good about calming them and saying, 'How can I assist you? What can I do to help? Let me get you to the right person.' De-escalating any situation — she's got a knack for it. I just think it's her personality."

Cullingford said she loves smiling and enjoys helping people, which have obviously been a plus for the school.

"If I interact with someone, I want it to be a good interaction," Cullingford said.

## Multi-tasker

It isn't just Cullingford's personality that's made her a good fit for her position. The job allows her to put her previous work experience to use. It's often hectic — Morgan described the job to Cullingford as being

an air-traffic controller — but Cullingford has been able to handle it.

"Sometimes I feel like an octopus," Cullingford said, adding, "I kind of feel like I thrive on it almost. When I started here, I felt like I was jumping right back into all my other jobs."

Morgan is impressed with Cullingford's ability to juggle all her duties, saying, "She's able to multi-task with the best of them."

Despite all the facets of the position, the one that stands out is answering the phone.

"That thing will ring off the hook all day sometimes," Cullingford said.

Cullingford said the end of the workday often brings a sigh of relief as well as decompression time on the way home.

"I usually ride home in silence," she said. "No radio. No anything. It's just quiet time in my car. That gives me a 20-

See SRE, page 13



Dawn Cullingford, who mans the front desk at Starke Elementary School, is the school district's Employee of the Year.



Jordan Cason (right) goes up strong in the win over Santa Fe.

## BHS

Continued from page 10

5-0 lead, while Taylor had three points during a 7-0 run to close out the first quarter, which ended with the Tornados leading 14-4.

Taylor's Jacob Anderson hit a three-pointer to start the second quarter, but Cobarris answered with a trey of his own. That began a 10-0 Bradford run that included two baskets by Cobarris, one basket each from Carter and Nixon and free throw by Ruise that put the Tornados up 24-8.

Bradford added to its big lead in the third quarter, outscoring the Bulldogs 21-8. That included

nine points from Taylor as part of a 14-2 run to close out the quarter. A Taylor basket got the run started. Cobarris scored on a drive to the basket and drew a foul. He made the awarded free throw to put the Tornados ahead 48-29.

Bryston Williams made two free throws and then had a steal on the defensive end, leading to a basket by Taylor. Taylor later scored and drew a foul, making the ensuing free throw to give Bradford a 26-point lead.

Bradford's last offensive possession of the third quarter saw Taylor grab three straight offensive rebounds. He scored off the third to send the Tornados into the final quarter leading 57-29.

Jordan Cason scored six points in the fourth quarter to help get the final margin to 33 points.

Cobarris finished with 16 points, while Carter and Taylor each had 12. The Tornados also got seven points from Ruise, six each from Nixon and Jordan Cason, five from Williams and four from Jy'Quez Cason.

Bradford's second game in the tournament wasn't as easy, but the Tornados were able to pull out a 65-60 win against Hamilton County on Dec. 28.

Hamilton put together a 7-0 run to take a 17-9 lead in the first quarter. That included a four-point play when Hayden Tabor was fouled on a made three-point attempt.

The Trojans got two three-pointers from Cayden Merine and one from Tabor as they took a 30-20 lead in the second quarter.

Two free throws by Jy'Quez Cason and a Cobarris basket off a Carter steal helped Bradford cut its deficit to single digit, while



Dylan Ruise (center) draws contact as he attempts a shot in front of the basket against Taylor County.

a Williams basket before the buzzer sent the Tornados into halftime trailing 38-30.

Merine made a three-pointer to start the second half, giving the Trojans their eighth made shot from beyond the arc. They wouldn't make another.

Hamilton got two baskets from Brandon Robinson as it built a 47-33 lead. The Tornados then closed out the third quarter with a 16-3 run. Jy'Quez Cason had two consecutive baskets to get the run started, followed by a Jordan Cason basket.

A three-pointer by Larry Ardley and a two-point basket by Jordan Cason off a Ruise steal pulled Bradford to within 49-44. A turnover led to a Jordan Cason

basket off an Ardley assist, while a Ruise three-pointer following a Williams steal tied the score at 49-49 with 54 seconds left in the quarter. A free throw by Hamilton's Kyle Brown sent the Trojans into the fourth quarter leading 50-49.

Nixon came up big in the fourth quarter with seven points. His rebound putback put the Tornados up 53-52. After a basket by Hamilton's Robinson, Nixon scored off another offensive rebound, drawing a foul in the process. He made the awarded free throw to make it a 56-54 game in favor of the Tornados. Robinson had another basket for the Trojans, but a rebound putback by Nixon gave Bradford a 58-56 lead.

The Trojans only managed two free throws the rest of the way until Kavon Horne scored off an offensive rebound for the game's final points. Bradford, meanwhile, got baskets from Carter and Jy'Quez Cason and three free throws from Jordan Cason.

Cobarris and Jordan Cason finished with 19 and 11 points, respectively, while Nixon and Jy'Quez Cason each had nine. Bradford also got five from Breion Johnson, three each from Ardley and Ruise and two each from Carter, Taylor and Williams.

The Tornados played Bell on Jan. 3 and were scheduled to play at Jacksonville Bolles on Wednesday, Jan. 7, at 7:30 p.m. Bradford will host P.K. Yonge on Thursday, Jan. 8, at 7:30 p.m. and Branford on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 7 p.m.

On Tuesday, Jan. 13, the Tornados host Westside at 7:30 p.m.



K.J. Taylor (center) attacks the rim against Taylor County.



Kemontae Nixon (far right) prepares to grab an offensive rebound against Taylor County.

# Classified Ads - 904-964-6305



Where one call does it all!



Class Ads for week  
January 8, 2026

40  
Notices

**EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY.** All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 in which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal

custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate in which is in violation 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

47  
Commercial Rental Property  
**OFFICE SPACE, 4 rooms and reception area. Downtown location. \$950/ mo. 1st & last. 904-964-6305.**

50  
For Rent

**WE HAVE 2 OR 3 bedroom MH, clean, close to prison. Call 352-468-1323**

**NEWLY RENOVATED 2BR/2BA SW, 3BR/2BA DW**

**Lake Butler. No pets. 18 acres for sale. Starke-Lake Butler. 1-678-438-6828**

**DOWNTOWN 1BR upstairs apartment. \$950/mo. 1st & last. Call 904-964-6305.**

**4BR/4BA 2 story home w/2 car garage for rent. Fireplace, fenced yard w/ balcony. HUD okay. \$1450/ mo. 813-369-4454**

**Lake Butler Apartments 1, 2, 3 & 4 BEDROOM APARTMENTS**  
HC & Non-HC accessible.  
1005 SW 6th St.  
Lake Butler, FL  
**386-496-3141**  
TDD/TTY 711.  
Accepting Applications!  
Rental Assistance!  
\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer.\*  
\*Equal Housing Opportunity

**NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS**  
**Southern Villas of Starke**  
Ask about our  
1&2 BR Apartments HC & non-HC Units. Central AC/ Heat, on-site laundry, playground, private, quiet atmosphere.  
Located on SR-16, 1001 Southern Villas Dr. Starke, FL  
Call 904-964-7295  
TDD/TTY 711  
\*Equal Housing Opportunity\*

**SPACE FOR LEASE**  
— Starke, Close to downtown 1800+ sq.ft. Professional, general office, insurance, realtor, attorney, etc. Two restrooms, space flexible for small business. Rent \$1500/mth, utilities not included.  
**Call (904)964-7404**

**Tri-County Classifieds**  
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69 Food Supplements  
70 Money to Lend  
71 Sporting Goods  
74 Computers & Computer Accessories  
Reach All 3 Counties Bradford • Union • Clay  
Worded Classified Ad up to 25 words is \$10  
Classified Display Ad is \$7.35 per col. inch  
Deadline for Classified ads - **Tuesday 12 noon**  
904-964-6305  
classads@bctelegraph.com  
**WE ACCEPT**  
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## Set Right Mobile Homes

Specializing In Relocations, Re-Levels, Set-Ups & Disposal

Rodney A. Carmichael, Owner  
Email: set\_right\_homes@yahoo.com **904-364-6383**

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## Orangewood Apartments

801 South Water Street  
Starke, FL 32091  
904-964-4214  
TDD/TTY 711

Accepting Applications!  
Rental Assistance!  
1, 2, & 3 bedroom HC & Non-HC accessible apartments.  
\*This institution is an equal opportunity provider, and employer.\*  
\*Equal Housing Opportunity\*

# Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Jan. 8, 2026

## BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHT JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
CASE NO: 2019-DR-631  
Division:

BRANDON LEE,  
Petitioner  
and ASHLYN WALL  
Respondent.

NOTICE OF ACTION FOR MODIFICATION OF PARENTING PLAN

TO: ASHLYN WALL, 1854 SR 230 EAST, STARKE, FL 32091  
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for MODIFICATION OF PARENTING PLAN has been filed against you and that you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on BRANDON LEE, whose address is 5494 HAMPTON VILLAS DRIVE, HAMPTON, FL 32044 on or before January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026 and file the original with the clerk of this Court at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091 before service on Petitioner or immediately thereafter. **If you fail to do so, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the petition.**

Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office. You may review these documents upon request.

You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court's office notified of your current address. (You may file Designation of Current Mailing and E-Mail Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.915.) Future papers in this lawsuit will be mailed or e-mailed to the addresses on record at the clerk's office.

WARNING: Rule 12.285, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure, requires certain automatic disclosure of documents and information. Failure to comply can result in sanctions, including dismissal or striking of pleadings.

Dated: December 15, 2025  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
BY: KANETRA JENKINS  
Deputy Clerk

12/18 4tchg 1/8/26-BCT

LEGAL NOTICE  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council is accepting proposals from qualified agencies or firms for the award of a contract to coordinate transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged in Union County, Florida. The selected contractor will be the designated Community Transportation Coordinator under Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program, as authorized by Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, and more fully described in Rule 41-2 of the Florida Administrative Code.

The Community Transportation Coordinator is defined by Chapter 427, Florida Statutes as a transportation entity recommended by the appropriate designated official planning agency to ensure that coordinated transportation services are provided to the transportation disadvantaged population in a designated service area. The Community Transportation Coordinator has full responsibility for the delivery of transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged as outlined in Section 427.015(2), Florida Statutes.

The complete Request for Proposals will be available January 9, 2026 at <http://www.ncfrpc.org/>. It may also be obtained by contacting Lynn Franson, AICP, Senior Planner at 352.955.2200, ext. 110. Experience with eligibility-based transportation services is required.

A mandatory virtual pre-proposal conference will be held January 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., Eastern Standard Time, to answer questions about the Request for Proposals. The pre-proposal conference will be conducted via communications media technology in the following format: DIAL IN NUMBER: Toll free 1.888.585.9008

CONFERENCE CODE: 864 183 272  
Inquiries about this Request for Proposals must be made during the virtual pre-proposal conference. Firms and agencies represented will have an opportunity to clarify any information contained in the request for proposals at the pre-proposal conference.

Proposals must be received by 3:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, February 12, 2026 at the office of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council. Five (5) copies

of the proposal must be submitted to: North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, ATTENTION: Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director, 2009 N.W. 67th Place, Gainesville, Florida 32653-1603. One of these copies must be a clean, single-sided original that can be used to make additional copies. The outside of the envelope or box containing proposals must be marked "PROPOSAL FOR UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR." **Faxed and electronically mailed responses will not be accepted.**

The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council will not accept responsibility for proposals that are not marked and submitted in this manner. Proposals are to remain in effect for ninety (90) calendar days from date of submission. The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any formality concerning proposals or negotiate changes to the proposals whenever such rejection or waiver or negotiation is in the best interest of the State and the transportation disadvantaged. Failure to file a protest within the time prescribed in Section 120.57(3), Florida Statutes, shall constitute a waiver of proceedings under Chapter 120, Florida Statutes.

1/8 1tchg-BCT

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 GDW5GA 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: [filmail@raslg.com](mailto:filmail@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  
FUNDING

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 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: [gmoreclosure@gmlaw.com](mailto:gmoreclosure@gmlaw.com)  
Email: [Michele.Clancy@gmlaw.com](mailto: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

SUPPLEMENTAL MEETING NOTICE  
Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District will hold a SUPPLEMENTAL MEETING on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 10:30am at UF/IFAS Extension located at 2266 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091

1/8 1tchg-BCT

IN 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 unmatured, 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

COMMISSION MEETING  
THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on January 15, 2026, at 6:30 PM inside the county commission meeting room, located in the north wing section of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 N. Temple, Avenue, Starke, FL. A copy of the meeting agenda may be obtained from the Bradford County website: [www.bradfordcountyfl.gov](http://www.bradfordcountyfl.gov). Said meeting location is secured - no firearms or weapons are permitted

1/8 1tchg-BCT

COMMISSION MEETING  
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1/8 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ordinance, which title hereinafter appears, will be considered for enactment by the City Commission of the City of Lake Butler, Florida, at a public hearing on January 20, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the City Commission Meeting Room, City Hall, located at 200 Southwest First Street, Lake Butler, Florida. A copy of said ordinance may be inspected by any member of the public at the Office of the City Manager in the City Hall, at 200 Southwest First Street, Lake Butler, Florida, during regular business hours. On the date, time and place first above mentioned, all interested persons may appear and be heard with respect to the ordinance. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01  
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA, RELATING TO AN AMENDMENT OF 50 OR LESS ACRES OF LAND TO THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION, CPA 25-02, BY THE PROPERTY OWNER OF SAID ACREAGE; UNDER THE AMENDMENT PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED IN SECTIONS 163.3161 THROUGH 163.3248, FLORIDA STATUTES, AS AMENDED; PROVIDING FOR A CHANGE IN LAND USE CLASSIFICATION FROM COMMERCIAL TO INDUSTRIAL OF CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

All persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decisions made at the public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Any person requiring auxiliary aids and services at this meeting may contact the City Manager's Office at 386.496.3401 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 800.955.8770 (voice) or 800.955.8771 (TTY).

1/8 1tchg-UCT

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCE BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ordinance, which title hereinafter appears, will be considered for enactment by the City Commission of the City of Lake Butler, Florida, at a public hearing on January 20, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the City Commission Meeting Room, City Hall, located at 200 Southwest First Street, Lake Butler, Florida. A copy of said ordinance may be inspected by any member of the public at the Office of the City Manager in the City Hall, at 200 Southwest First Street, Lake Butler, Florida, during regular business hours. On the date, time and place first above mentioned, all interested persons may appear and be heard with respect to the ordinance. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-02  
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, RELATING TO THE REZONING OF TEN OR MORE CONTIGUOUS ACRES OF LAND, PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION, Z 24-02, BY SC SERVICES, AS AGENT FOR THE CITY COMMISSION; PROVIDING FOR REZONING FROM COMMERCIAL GENERAL (CG) TO INDUSTRIAL (I) OF CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

All persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decisions made at the public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Any person requiring auxiliary aids and services at this meeting may contact the City Manager's Office at 386.496.3401 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Service at 800.955.8770 (voice) or 800.955.8771 (TTY).

1/8 1tchg-UCT

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

# A Place of Grace INC.

and the churches of Bradford County volunteers provide a free hot meal to those in need within our community.

225 Andrews Street Starke, FL  
(behind Powells)



We are deeply grateful to the volunteers who give their time and care to serve others. Their compassion ensures that our neighbors facing food insecurity are not forgotten.

Together, we serve. Together, we care.

## Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Starke, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Bradford County Telegraph

131 West Call Street • Starke, Florida 32091  
Phone: 964-6305 • P.O. Drawer A • Starke, FL 32091

John Miller, Publisher



Subscription Rate in Trade Area  
\$52.00 per year;  
\$26.00 six months  
Outside Trade Area:  
\$52.00 per year;  
\$26.00 six months

Editor: Mark J. Crawford  
Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley  
Advertising: John R. Tillman  
Typesetting: Mary Goode  
Advertising & Newspaper Prod: Macie Hamilton  
Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler  
Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode  
Front office Asst:

## Lake Region Monitor

USPS 114-170

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Keystone Heights, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Lake Region Monitor

P.O. Drawer A - Starke, FL 32091  
131 W. Call Street - Starke, FL 32091  
Phone: (904)964-6305 • Fax: (904)964-8628



Subscription Rate in Trade Area  
\$52.00 per year;  
\$26.00 six months  
Outside Trade Area:  
\$52.00 per year;  
\$26.00 six months

John Miller, Publisher  
Dan Hildebran  
Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley  
Advertising: John R. Tillman  
Typesetting: Mary Goode  
Advertising & Newspaper Prod: Macie Hamilton  
Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler  
Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode  
Front office Asst:

## Union County Times

USPS 648-200

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Lake Butler, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

UNION COUNTY TIMES

131 W. Call Street • Starke, FL 32091  
[uctimeseditor@gmail.com](mailto:uctimeseditor@gmail.com)  
904-964-6305 • fax 904-964-8628



Subscription Rate in Trade Area  
\$52.00 per year;  
\$26.00 six months  
Outside Trade Area:  
\$52.00 per year;  
\$26.00 six months

John Miller, Publisher

Editor: Mark J. Crawford  
Advertising: John R. Tillman  
Typesetting: Mary Goode  
Advertising & Newspaper Prod: Macie Hamilton  
Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler  
Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode  
Front office Asst:

# SRE

Continued from page 11

30-minute drive that I can just have to myself. Maybe roll down the window, get some fresh air.”

When the next day rolls around, she’s ready to go back to work.

“I love my job,” Cullingford said. “I love coming here. I love the people. I wish everyone had the same experience.”

Morgan sees that love for the job, noting that Cullingford goes above and beyond.

“She’ll do anything that you ask and even things that you don’t ask,” Morgan said, adding, “One Sunday, she texted me. She was up here decorating a bulletin board on her own free time. I didn’t ask her to do that. She decorates our front office for every holiday, and she does it with love and care and pure joy.”

## Life away from SES

Cullingford and her husband, Derrick, have been together 38 years.

“He is my best friend,” Cullingford said.

They raised two sons: Dakota, who’s 25, and Riley, who’s 18.

“We adore them both,” Cullingford said. “We just like to try to spend time with them and our grand-dog.”

The family enjoys camping

and hiking in the mountains. Cullingford said their favorite places to camp are “anywhere there’s hiking and cool weather.”

After raising two boys, Cullingford is enjoying having a female around in Riley’s girlfriend.

“I have had so much fun buying presents for a girl finally,” Cullingford said regarding her Christmas shopping. She added, “If I could’ve picked anybody for him, it would have been her. She’s amazing.”

## A surprise announcement

Cullingford normally makes school-wide announcements, so it surprised her one day when she heard someone else’s voice come on over the intercom system.

“I’m working away, and I hear this very deep voice come on,” Cullingford said. “I was like, ‘Who is that? Why is somebody else on the intercom?’”

That deep voice belonged to Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley, who was on campus to announce Cullingford as the district’s School-Related Employee of the Year.

“We snuck him in,” Morgan said. “He came in through the side because if he would’ve walked in the front, (Cullingford) would’ve seen him.”

In hindsight, teacher Amber Hartley’s presence at the

front desk should’ve tipped Cullingford off that something was up.

“I didn’t think anything about Mrs. Hartley being up there,” Cullingford said. “The whole time she was filming me, and I didn’t even know because I was so involved in what I was trying to do and focus on my work.”

Amber Hartley (the superintendent’s wife) had her phone out and was taking video, which you can view on the Starke Elementary School – Bradford County School District Facebook page. It captures Cullingford’s reaction to hearing that she was the district’s top employee: “Are you seriously kidding me? Oh, my gosh. That is crazy news.”

Dawn Cullingford is pictured after learning she was named Starke Elementary’s SRE of the Year. Pictured (l-r) are Starke Elementary Principal Lauren Morgan, Cullingford, Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley and Starke Assistant Principal Michelle Ware.



“She was so stunned and shocked,” Morgan said. “It was quite a priceless moment.”

Cullingford said, “I’m still shocked.”

Morgan will tell you the honor is a confirmation of what she and everyone else at Starke Elementary already know — that Cullingford has been an asset to

the school. “I feel like she does make Starke Elementary a brighter, better place,” Morgan said.

# COVEY

Continued from page 10

the Liberty Bowl were four carries for 43 yards in a 70-0 win over Northwestern State and five carries for 47 yards in a 45-14 loss to Utah.

His longest pass reception was 37 yards in a 26-14 loss to BYU. It was his only catch of the game.

Covey was an early enrollee at Cincinnati after signing his letter of intent in December 2022. He

rushed for nine touchdowns and approximately 600 yards as a senior at BHS before fracturing a bone in his ankle during the Tornadoes’ eighth game. During his junior season, he rushed for 558 yards and seven touchdowns on 102 carries. He also caught 27 passes for 399 yards and two touchdowns.

As a sophomore at Union County High School, Covey rushed for 810 yards and 10 touchdowns on 123 carries and caught 15 passes for 299 yards and three touchdowns.



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| <p><b>AUNTIE LIL'S CHILD CARE CENTER</b></p> <p>904-303-1014<br/>407 W. Washington St. Starke</p>   | <p><b>HOMETOWN Health &amp; Wellness</b></p> <p>260 S Lawrence Blvd, Suite 101<br/>Keystone Heights, FL 32656<br/><b>352-664-7702</b></p> <p><i>“Very knowledgeable and caring staff!”</i></p>  | <p><b>BRADFORD COUNTY EYE CENTER</b></p> <p>292 Lafayette St<br/>Starke, FL 32091<br/><b>(904) 964-8076</b></p> <p><i>“Everyone was great. They went above and beyond. Very happy with the way I was treated. Looking forward to my next visit.”</i></p> |
| <p><b>CF AC FAISTREAU HEATING &amp; AIR, INC.</b></p> <p>Craig Faistreau Heating &amp; Air, Inc<br/>228 S Walnut St, Starke, FL 32091<br/><b>(904) 964-2241</b></p> <p>5-STAR RATED!</p>  | <p>Welcome to Rivers Flowing Church- where the river of God never runs dry!</p> <p><b>904-964-7061</b><br/>22610 HWY 301 N<br/>Lawtey, FL 32054</p> <p>SUN: 10AM   WED: 7PM</p>   | <p><b>Lake Area HEATING &amp; AIR</b></p> <p>Formerly Mike Bertie Heating and Air, Serving Keystone Heights and surrounding areas since 2008.</p> <p>7415 State Rd 21<br/>Keystone Heights, FL 32656<br/><b>(352) 473-9595</b></p> <p>5-STAR RATED!</p>  |
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|-------|-------|-------|
| 1/10  | 2/14  | 3/14  |
| 4/11  | 5/09  | 6/13  |
| 7/11  | 8/08  | 9/12  |
| 10/10 | 11/14 | 12/12 |

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For more info or questions please call (904) 796-2359 or email newriverbaptistbrooker@gmail.com

# 14 Tornadoes receive All-First Coast football honors

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
 cliff@bctelegraph.com

Five Bradford High School football players earned second- and third-team Florida Times-Union All-First Coast honors, while another nine received honorable mention.

The Tornadoes had two second-team defensive selections in senior lineman Nate Raymond and senior defensive back Jy'Quez Cason. Raymond had 92 tackles, with 11 sacks and 24 in all for a loss of yards. He also forced two fumbles, while Cason had 62 tackles and four interceptions.

Junior Bryce Daniels earned second-team offensive honors. 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.

Cohen Cioffi, a junior linebacker, was a third-team pick after recording 92 tackles, five sacks, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery.

Senior kicker Tyler Sapp also earned third-team honors. He was 46 of 47 on extra-point attempts and made seven of his eight field-goal attempts.

Senior wide receiver Kemontae Nixon, junior running back Iyen Addison and sophomore quarterback Cy Cubbedge received honorable mention at their respective positions. Nixon caught 36 passes for 513 yards and 10 touchdowns, while Addison rushed for 1,073 yards and eight touchdowns on 160 carries. Cubbedge completed 138 of 262 pass attempts for 1,832 yards and 24 touchdowns.

Defensive players who earned honorable mention at their positions were senior linebacker Kingston Brooker, junior linemen Parviele Lee and Danny Torres and sophomore defensive back Caiden Carn. Brooker led the team in tackles with 112, while Torres and Lee had 90 and 84 tackles, respectively. Lee made 15 tackles for loss, including six sacks, while Torres had 13 tackles for loss.

Carn made three interceptions and had 30 tackles.

Senior defensive back Jackson Parmeter and junior defensive back/wide receiver Jordan Cason received honorable mention as athletes. Parmeter had 57 tackles, while Cason had 40. On offense, Cason caught 32 passes for 435 yards and five touchdowns.

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# Bradford County

EVERYTHING IS BETTER IN BRADFORD

*Thank you* for allowing us the opportunity to serve you in 2025. We are very honored to work in the best county with the best employees and citizens. Here are a few highlights that we were able to accomplish in 2025, and look forward to more great things to come in 2026.

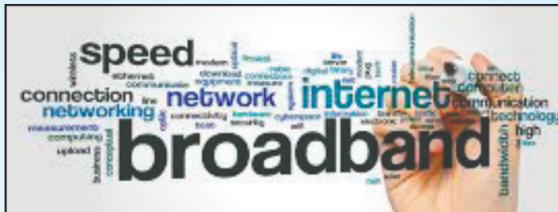
#### Major Funding

- \$6 Million in state infrastructure funding paving SW 163 Street and associated flood damage mitigation improvements
- Keystone Heights Airport received \$3 million for improvement and expansion Runway 11/29. This allows large Aircrafts to utilize the airport and promote economic development



#### Broadband & Connectivity Expansion

- Cox Internet recently reported High Speed Internet is available for 800 homes, and looks to expand broadband internet access in 2026.



#### Infrastructure, Zoning & Planning

- A BoCC workshop in 2025 reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan, including Courthouse ADA upgrades, roof replacement, and Sampson Lake boat Ramp design/construction, as well as long-range funding strategies.



#### Acquiring the Bradford County Fair Grounds

- After taking over ownership of the Bradford County Fairgrounds, the county changed the management structure and selected a new fair association board. The board selected Harlee Hutchinson as fair manager. Ms. Hutchinson brings broad fundraising and event management experience to Bradford County.



#### Increasing public safety and cutting down on response times.

- The Bradford County Board of County Commissioners agreed to add living quarters in Station 10 Speedville and Station 9 Sampson City to cut down on response times for citizens living in those areas. The Speedville Project was fully funded by Vincent Esson, and the Sampson City living Quarters was funded through State appropriations.

#### Station 9 (Sampson City) Living Quarters Completed

- Construction was completed on permanent living quarters at Station 9, replacing a temporary housing unit. The project was funded through state appropriations, and crews have fully moved into the new facility.

#### Station 10 (Speedville) Living Quarters Opened

- In January 2025, Bradford County Fire Rescue cut the ribbon on new living quarters at Station 10 in Speedville. The project was fully funded through generous donations from Vincent Esson and the Keystone Heights RV Resort.



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 County Manager



**Carolyn Spooner**  
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**Kenny Thompson**  
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