

Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025

146th year, 26th Issue — \$1

Search ends tragically for missing kayaker

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said it had found the body of a kayaker who went missing on Lake Santa Fe on January 1.

“On January 3,” the agency said in a statement, “around 12:00 p.m., the FWC dive team used sonar equipment to locate and recover the victim approximately 300 yards from the spot where he was last seen. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victim’s family and



FWC established a command center at Melrose Bay Park to search for the boater.

friends during this difficult time.” The state agency added that its investigation into the incident continues.

In an earlier news release, FWC said that on Wednesday, January 1, at approximately 7:15 p.m., its officers, Alachua County deputies, and the Florida Highway Patrol responded to a report of a man missing from a kayak. The agencies established a command center at Melrose Bay Park to search for the boater.

1 twin dead, another injured, mom arrested

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
Dan@BcTelegraph.com

A 32-year-old Bradford County woman is facing a charge of aggravated manslaughter of a child after one of her children died of asphyxiation and the baby’s twin suffered severe, lifelong injuries in a similar incident.

According to a complaint, the Bradford County Sheriff’s Office and Fire Rescue were called to a residence on County Road 100-A, also known as Griffis Loop, on January 22, 2024.

Ronnesha Flowers told first responders she was breastfeeding one of her twins around noon when she fell asleep.

“When she awoke,” wrote Detective Zachary Jones in the complaint, “she discovered (the child) laying on the bed unresponsive, not breathing, and blood coming out of his mouth.”

Jones added that the residence was in disarray, with toys, clothes, and other items scattered throughout all the rooms.

“The plumbing did not appear to be in working order due to both toilets being filled with feces and a bathroom sink stopped up as well,” Jones reported.

Jones added that countless roaches and insects, some dead and some alive, were observed throughout the residence.

“In the master bedroom,” he wrote, “a baby blanket was observed on the bed with red in color stains on it that appeared to be blood. Similar red in color stains were also observed on the comforter of the bed that appeared to be blood.”

The child was pronounced dead at Shands Pediatrics later that day.

The detective added that under further questioning, Flowers said that after taking one child to school and preparing breakfast for the rest of the family, she began feeding her infant twins.

“One twin finished eating,” Jones wrote, “but the other wasn’t finished

eating. During this time, Flowers started watching a show on Disney+ while she continued to breastfeed while lying on her right side. According to Flowers, she then fell asleep, and the next thing she remembers is waking up and finding (the child) motionless in the bed.”

The detective added that the mother told him the twins nap in the same bed as she does but typically sleep at the foot of the bed.

Jones concluded his report by stating that the mother failed to provide the victim with necessary care and supervision, resulting in the child’s death.

Sheriff’s Colonel Brad Smith told the Telegraph that around a month after the infant’s death, its twin suffered what he called severe, lifelong injuries under similar circumstances.

He added that the State Attorney’s Office decided to prosecute the mother.

Darry Lloyd, the chief investigator



Flowers

and public information officer for State Attorney Brian Kramer’s office, said prosecutors made their decision “based on the investigation and the evidence.”

He added that the office does not litigate trials in public but will present its case to a judge and jury.

Starke green lights updated impact fee study

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Starke has green lit an updated impact fee study, which could lead to fees on new development to pay for growth.

Jerry Dabkowski, vice president for Florida governmental services at ICE Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering, appeared to discuss the process updating a prior study to reflect the rising infrastructure costs.

Reading from the statutory definition, Dabkowski said, “An impact fee is a one-time capital charge levied against new development. An impact fee is designed to cover the portion of capital costs of infrastructure capacity consumed by the new development.”

Simply put, growth, whether residential or commercial, places demand on public infrastructure, sometimes requiring expansion. There is more traffic on the streets. There are additional calls for emergency services. More space may be needed for parks and recreation. Water and wastewater systems may need additional capacity.

Rather than expect the public to pay

for these costs, impact fees place that responsibility on developers, whether it’s a retail franchise opening a new location or a family building their dream home. Governments can use these fees as a source of revenue to carry out their capital improvement plans.

Dabkowski said he was before the commission to focus on roadway impacts. Determining an impact fee involves looking at trip generation rates to and from a new development as well as the length of the trips to and from the site. Consultants also take into consideration the cost to construct each lane mile, the price for which has been “going through the roof, he said.

Prior impact fees enacted but the city commission in 2007 for roads, parks, police, fire and public buildings were \$3,080 for every new home constructed, while fees for businesses were based on size and intensity. A new restaurant would have paid more than \$7,300 for every 1,000 square feet, while a restaurant with a drive-thru window would have paid more than \$10,000.

See FEE, page 4



Keystone demolishes China Chef

BY JENN SAMSEL AND DAN HILDEBRAN
Special to the Monitor

On Thursday, Jan. 2, a contractor for the city of Keystone Heights tore down a building on a lot that some residents characterized as the ugliest corner in the city.

Last November, the city council approved a bid to remove asbestos from the structure, last used as a restaurant called China Chef. The council also approved a second proposal to demolish the former restaurant, which was initially a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet.

The city’s community redevelopment agency purchased

the building and 0.165-acre parcel in March 2024 for \$240,000. The two bids to remove the carcinogenic material and tear down the building totaled \$30,250.

A consultant commissioned by the North Florida Transportation Planning Council recommended that the triangular parcel be converted into parking and open space, with the city using the open space as a marquee gateway to downtown. The gateway would include a sign and other assets, giving visitors a positive first impression of Keystone Heights.

See DEMO, page 4

DLPbank
Proud to Sponsor
WORTH NOTING

Raise money playing games

Help raise funds for youth mentorship by playing bingo and spades. 12 Guys in Bowties and 12 Girls in Pearls is sponsoring the event at the Downtown Grill in Starke on Monday, Jan. 13, at 5 p.m.

Bingo is \$20 for 10 games, plus \$5 each for additional cards. Prizes for every game won, including gift cards.

Enter the spades tournament for \$50 per team, with the first-place team winning half the entry fee pot. Twenty teams max; signups begin at 4:30 p.m. the day of the tournament. Players must be 18 or older.

Come help 12 Guys and 12 Girls celebrate a month of new beginnings!

Tickets available for chamber banquet

North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce’s annual meeting and banquet is set for Saturday, Feb. 8. The social hour begins at 5 p.m. and the banquet begins at 6 p.m. at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center in Starke. The chamber will honor its Board of Governors and present special awards to deserving businesses and individuals. The Bradford County Education Foundation will also be raising funds through is live and silent auctions.

Tickets are \$90 each or \$850 for a table of 10 and must be purchased by Feb. 3 (Jan. 31 for payment by check). Sponsorship opportunities are available for the entertainment, bar, desserts, venue and more. For more information, please contact the chamber at 904-964-5278 or pam@northfloridachamber.com.

Easters in concert

Hope Baptist Church welcomes you to enjoy Jeff and Sheri Easter in concert on Friday, Jan. 24. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert begins at 7 p.m. There is no admission charge to attend, but a love offering will be accepted.

TITAN CHEVROLET
SERVING STARKE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA
CUSTOMER HAPPINESS IS JOB #1
NEW OWNERSHIP, NEW APPROACH
TITANCHEVY.COM

HAPPY NEW YEAR
WE SERVICE:
GMC CHEVROLET BUICK

SPECIAL RATES ON SILVERADO!



Destroyed slushie machine, bites deputies

Officer employs Figure-4 wrestling hold to subdue suspect

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Deputies arrested a 21-year-old Raiford man for three felonies and a misdemeanor after officers said he destroyed the slushie machine at a Starke Shell station, bit two officers, and kept fighting deputies after being tased up to six times.

Jordan Wade Tucker was arrested for resisting an officer with violence, criminal mischief with property damage, and two counts of battery on a law enforcement officer.

Deputy Devin Jones wrote in



Tucker

an arrest report that Cpl. Jake Whitehead arrived at the U.S. 301 and State Road 100 convenience store to see Tucker destroying a slushie machine.

"Cpl. Whitehead attempted to

contact Jordan.," wrote Jones. "Jordan turned around and ran towards the bathroom where David Nazworth stopped him."

Whitehead then deployed his taser on the defendant, and Tucker shook off its effects and ran into the parking lot.

"Jordan then got on the tailgate of a pick-up truck and Cpl. Whitehead deployed a second taser cartridge, which was ineffective," Jones reported.

Deputy Shane Haddock then arrived at the station and joined Whitehead in what quickly became a fight.

Both officers struggled with the defendant, and Haddock tased Tucker, who fell to the ground, got back up, and kept fighting.

"As the struggle continued, D/S Haddock touch-tased the suspect at least two more times, possibly three," wrote Jones, "which still was unable to acquire compliance from the suspect."

Tucker then bit Haddock on his left forearm, refusing to let go.

"Finally, after moments of more struggling and compliance strikes, compliance was finally acquired from the suspect," Jones reported.

Deputy Tyler Oliver wrote in a supplement to the arrest report that he arrived at the station to see his two colleagues struggling

with Tucker.

"Upon arrival, I observed Cpl. Whitehead and D/S Haddock actively fighting with the suspect on the ground in the parking lot of the Island Food Store," he wrote. "I ran over to assist in detaining the suspect. I observed Cpl. Whitehead and D/S Haddock to have control of both the suspect's upper limbs; therefore, I grabbed both the suspect's legs and placed them into a figure 4 to prevent the suspect from establishing a base and to keep the suspect from kicking Cpl. Whitehead, D/S Haddock, and I. At this point, the suspect was placed in handcuffs."

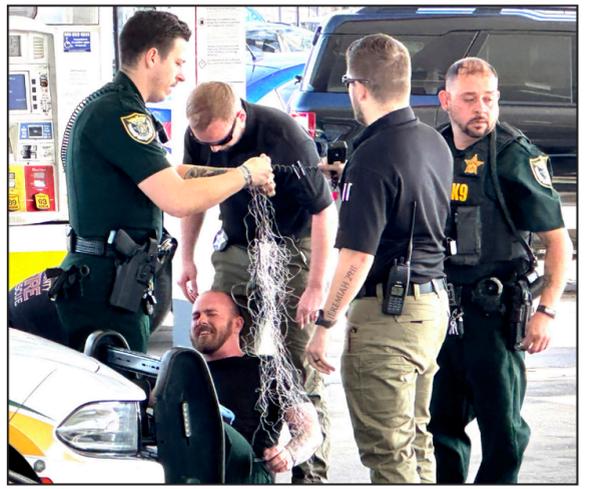
Oliver added that Whitehead was transported to a hospital with bite marks and other symptoms.

A woman whom Bradford Sheriff's Major George Konkel, Jr. identified as the suspect's grandmother was seen shouting at deputies after the incident.

"They hit him in the head, and they tased him twice," the woman shouted as she left the scene.

Konkel said the woman told him her family member has some type of medical condition.

Haddock wrote in a supplement to the report that he sustained teeth marks on his forearm and scrapes to both knees and left elbow.



Bradford Fire Rescue attends to an injured deputy while deputy Tyler Oliver gathers taser wires.



Bradford Sheriff's Maj. George Konkel Jr. (center) speaks to a woman he said is the suspect's grandmother.

Florida Twin Theatre
904-964-5451 REGULAR SCHEDULE!
Visit us on-line at www.FloridaTwinTheatre.com

<p>THURSDAY 1/9 HOMESTEAD- 6:30 (Downstairs) MUFASA- 6:30 (Upstairs)</p>	<p>FRIDAY 1/10 HOMESTEAD- 7:00 (Downstairs) MUFASA- 7:00 (Upstairs)</p>
<p>SATURDAY 1/11 HOMESTEAD- 4:00 & 7:00 (Downstairs) MUFASA- 4:00 & 7:00 (Upstairs)</p>	<p>SUNDAY 1/12 HOMESTEAD- 4:00 & 7:00 (Downstairs) MUFASA- 4:00 & 7:00 (Upstairs)</p>

- Septic Tank Pump Out
- Liftstation
- Septic System Inspection
- Septic & DF Installation
- Sump Pumps & More



Scan the QR code for our Google Reviews:



PHILLIP McDONALD
PLUMBING AND SEPTIC
904-964-3737
CFC 1428926

- Residential & Commercial
- Service Repairs
- Repipe
- Water Heater
- New Construction & More!

(904) 964-3737

LOCATION
11800 SW 157th Ln,
Brooker, FL 32622
17 miles N of Gainesville
15 miles west of Starke



CONTACT
(352) 538-3905
belleoaksbarn@gmail.com
www.BelleOaksBarn.com

FRIDAY JANUARY 24TH, 2025

Food & Refreshments will be available

General Admission: \$30
Reserved Seating: \$45





Get ready for unforgettable evenings in the southeast with Grand Ole Opry Members "Dailey & Vincent". This award winning duo along with their incredible band will be making tour stops in Georgia and Florida. You've seen them on TV, don't miss the chance to see them LIVE as they Serenade South in 2025.

TICKETS ON SALE ONLINE AT
www.BelleOaksBarn.com

ASK US ABOUT THE
VIP Experience

Doors Open: 6:00PM
Showtime: 7:30PM

Order tickets early to ensure seating, concerts typically sell out!
Bring a Comfortable Chair

For Sponsorship Opportunities:
Doug (352) 538-3905
Scott (904) 838-9398



Visit Our Showroom!

TEAL TILE
CARPET ONE

Local Flooring Specialists • since 1976

Sales • Service • Installation
Free Estimates
COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

THANK YOU
for allowing us the opportunity to serve you for the last 48 years.

Call for DIY specials!

12 months interest free financing on approved credit.
We will beat all competitor pricing!

M-F 8:30 am – 5:30 pm
Saturdays by Appointment

- Vinyl • Carpet
- Ceramic Tile

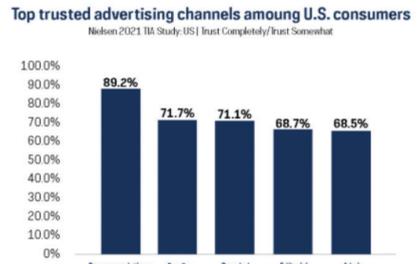
- Hardwood & Laminate Floors

131 N. Cherry Street
Starke, FL 32091
904-964-7423

DISCOUNT PRICING POWER OF OVER 1,400 STORES!!

CONSUMERS TRUST NEWSPAPERS

Top trusted advertising channels among U.S. consumers
Nielson 2021 IAA Study: US | Trust Completely/Trust Somewhat



Here's further proof that advertisers and marketers seeking a trusted media should hire newspapers. Newspapers show up as two of the Top 5 "trusted advertising channels" rated by U.S. Consumers in Nielsen's 2021 Trust in Advertising Study. Seven out of 10 consumers said they either trust completely or trust somewhat four of the channels that included newspapers or products they offer advertisers. The top channel applies also to newspapers because their readers are informed consumers.

Special note: The Relevancy Project thanks The Nielsen Co., a global leader in audience, measurement, data, ad analytics, for this excerpt from its Trust in Advertising Study. Nielsen used 21 channels, a term to distinguish where ads show up or are referenced, in the study.

SHOP • EAT • READ ADVERTISE LOCALLY

We're Local. Like You!

NEWSPAPER POWER.
Print, Digital & Creative Solutions for our advertisers.

ADVERTISE & PROMOTE LOCAL

John Ryan: johnryan@bctelegraph.com
904-796-3534 cell
Darlene: douglass80@embarqmail.com
904-796-0781 cell

www.BCTelegraph.com
Lake Region Monitor
UNION COUNTY TIMES
MOBILE • PRINT • ONLINE

Union County's biggest stories in 2024

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Hayes takes over as Lake Butler city manager

January 30, 2024

It's official; with the contracts signed, Kimberly Hayes is the new city manager of Lake Butler and is already on the job learning her duties.

Hayes is from Bradford County but has spent most of her working life in Union. She worked with the Department of Corrections for 27 ½ years, leaving to take the position of Union County Solid Waste Director in 2018. She said she would miss her co-workers, staff, and the county commissioners, but she "saw a need and felt like she would be a good candidate (for the manager position)." She said she felt she would be an asset to help the city recover from past problems.

Hayes, 56, has been married to husband, Dale Hayes, for 30 years, and the couple has two grown children. When not working, she said she enjoys gardening, working with livestock, family time, cooking for her family, and spending time with her four grandchildren, of whom she said she was very proud.

Hayes said she knows she is facing a steep learning curve in her new position and likes it. She said she is being trained by Mayor (and former acting city manager) David Stegall, former city manager, and current Finance Director Dave Mecusker, and they are teaching her the ins and outs of her new position.

"I am up for the challenge," Hayes said. "All you can do is grab the bull by the horns and hang on. I am excited to help the city move forward."

Mayor relinquishes city manager duties – Saved municipality nearly \$40,000

January 30, 2024

Mayor David Stegall is finally going to get some time off – after he smooths the transition for new City Manager Kim Hayes, that is.

Stegall moved to the Providence area with his family in 1977 and eventually moved to Starke. In 2010, he moved back to Lake Butler and plans to stay put.

Stegall was appointed mayor by the Lake Butler City Commission in July 2023. He was first elected to that body in 2020, holding Seat 1.

He worked in Starke for Horizon Global Americas (formerly Draw-Tite Hitch Co.). He was with the company for 27 years, the last 17 as a Distribution Center Manager. Then, the company was bought out, and the new owners downsized the operation, shutting down several distribution centers, including the one in Starke. Stegall did not want to leave the area to stay in the new company's employ, so he accepted a generous severance package and determined to take a little time off since he had not taken a vacation in several years. His last day at the distribution center was April 29, 2023, and he relaxed for a couple of months, beginning his search for a new job in July. Then, the city found itself without a manager, and Stegall volunteered to fill the position as acting city manager until one could be found – that happened on August 24, 2023. He put his job search on hold



Preparing the unveil the Consolidated High School historical marker are (l-r) Gertie Weeks Walker (Class of 1960), Rudy Shrivvers (Class of 1959), Betty Thomas Jones (Class of 1959), Elorene Manker-(Class of 1960), Mary Bryant (Class of 1960), Marcella Lett (Class of 1960) and Eddie Jackson (Class of 1960). Photos provided courtesy of Lola Lacy.

and spent the next 3 ½ months coming to city hall daily to try and help make sense of the city finances.

"It was just good luck that I was available when the city needed me," Stegall said.

Stegall's run as acting city manager ended on Jan. 18 with the first day of newly hired city manager Kimberly Hayes. For the duration of his time in the post, Stegall was paid nothing by the city – in fact, his service saved Lake Butler \$39,729, what a city manager's salary would have been for that time. He will remain in his role as mayor until July when the commission reorganizes after this year's election.

Stegall is no longer running the city daily, but at City Hall, he is still there to assist Hayes in learning the job, and he plans to stay around until he finds a job. And he also plans to continue as a public servant (as a city commissioner) after that. He brought in former city manager Dave Mecusker in late September 2023 as a temporary budget analyst while he was acting manager. In December, Mecusker was appointed to the also-vacant finance director position.

Consolidated High historical marker unveiled

April 9, 2024

Graduates of the former Consolidated High School in Lake Butler helped to unveil a historical marker commemorating the school for Black students for approximately a decade before schools were desegregated.

The ceremony was held April 6 at Lake Butler Elementary School, which used to be Consolidated High School.

Black students in Union County used to attend various one- and two-room schools throughout the county and then be bussed to schools in other cities for their high-school years.

In 1957, Consolidated High School was built for \$219,000. As its name suggests, it was a consolidated school for the county's Black students.

Ruth Mildred Jenkins, who was already teaching in Union, was the school's principal.

When the school it opened, it was grades 1-10, though 11th and 12th grades were eventually added.

The school was known for having strong math and science departments and earned state and national awards.

Consolidated also had a 41-member choir that was featured on Jacksonville's "The

Ken Knight Show."

In the spring of 1968, Union's schools were integrated, with Consolidated High School becoming Lake Butler Elementary.

RV Park moratorium being extended

April 16, 2024

The Union County Board of County Commissioners, acting as the Planning and Zoning Board on April 16 has begun the process of extending the moratorium on the acceptance of applications and the processing of special exception applications for travel trailer parks and campgrounds for another year.

The reason for extending the moratorium is the concern of the board that such businesses would create an undue strain on county services, such as law enforcement, fire protection and EMS, as well as becoming havens for a wealth of other problems as the board's research has shown in other counties.

There are also concerns about taxation on such properties, increased traffic and the current lack of code enforcement in the county.

The planning and zoning board passed a resolution to recommend to the board that the moratorium be extended unanimously, on a motion by Commissioner Jimmy Tallman, with Commissioner Willie Croft seconding. It is the eventual intent of the board to establish Land Development Regulations, with the assistance of the planning council, to regulate such businesses and to determine procedures and methods to continue to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the county's citizens.

It is planned to develop LDRs, and other ordinances, regulations and other actions designed to implement provisions in the county's Comprehensive Plan to eventually make such establishments able to locate in the county.

Woman's Club takes on landscaping project

April 24, 2024

Lake Butler will soon be a prettier place when, through the joint efforts of the Lake Butler Woman's Club and the City of Lake Butler, the landscaping islands along Main St.

Monica Bayer spoke to the Lake Butler City Commission at its April 16, meeting to fill the board in on the project. She had already been in touch with City Manager Kimberly

Hayes about the project, which was conceived by the Woman's Club last year. The islands were installed and planted as part of an FDOT project but due to factors such as lack of coordination in maintenance and care of the plants, as well as the plants chosen for the project, most plants died and the islands came to resemble a dried out pocket of wild land. The plants have since been removed by the city and nothing has been done with the islands.

Bayer told commissioners that the club had secured the services of Evergreen Landscape Design, working out of Greenhouse Nursery on Newberry Rd. in Gainesville. The crew did the design, using drought resistant plants appropriate for this part of Florida. Bayer said that for the designer/nursery gave the club a price of over \$3,000 to complete the project, but said that the club members thought it could be done for less. The Woman's Club pledged funds to pay for part of the project last year, but it did not get done. The funds are still there and the club plans to use them to buy the materials to do three of the four big islands. The Huggins family has pledged to finance a small island, as has Free State Realty. Sponsorship is still being sought for two large islands (cost: \$190) and one small island (cost: \$165). It is planned to place tasteful signs on each island recognizing the sponsor.

Bayer talked with Hayes, who was very enthusiastic about the project. Bayer outlined the cost saving members, including her husband, the Honorable (Ret.) Judge Bo Bayer, volunteering to drive to Gainesville to pick up the plants and club members helping to place and plant the plants. Hayes said the planting would have to wait until the first part of May, so the city's annual Beautification Month would be over (as city workers are involved in some of the clean-up activities). It was agreed to start the first part of May. Bayer said that the city would have to handle the watering and Hayes said she would come up with a system to handle it, perhaps seeking help from the business owners near the islands. Hayes also said she would see about getting the city workers in on the project to assist the club. Commissioner Fred Sirmones said he would see to getting the signs made for the islands.

Bayer told the board that the islands would not be "flower beds with plants blooming all the time" but would rather be attractive landscaping that would improve the appearance of Main Street.

Families, individuals, organizations or businesses wishing to donate funds to sponsor an island can drop a check, made out to the City of

See TOP, page 6



Bethany Hunsinger

Bradford Fire Rescue honors 20-year employee

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Bradford County Fire Rescue Chief Ben Carter said Bethany Hunsinger, with 20 years of dedicated service, is a remarkable individual among the agency's employees.

"Bethany has dedicated 20 years of service to this department and to the citizens of Bradford County. Her career epitomizes the core values our department holds firm to — honor, dedication, preparedness and a steadfast commitment to excellence," he said.

During that time, Carter said Hunsinger has taken on multiple roles and risen through the ranks by demonstrating exceptional leadership.

"Her ability to mentor and inspire others has left an indelible remark on our department," he said. The impact of her outstanding performance earned her designation as Paramedic of the Year in 2014.

Ten years later she is still earning the respect of her peers, Carter said. Beyond the calls she responds to in service to the public, she serves her peers as chair of the Health and Wellness Committee, working to improve the health and mental wellbeing of her team members. She is a passionate advocate for mental health as an active member of the peer support team, helping to ensure that all employees have the tools and resources necessary to stay strong and build long and successful careers in fire rescue, he said.

"Her compassion, experience and dedication have made her a role model within Bradford County Fire Rescue. She has touched countless lives, both within our organization and in the community we serve. Tonight, we celebrate paramedic Bethany Hunsinger's remarkable achievements, her legacy of service and her enduring impact on the future of our department. I thank her for her unwavering

commitment to Bradford County Fire Rescue and the citizens she serves so faithfully," Carter said, presenting her with a plaque to commemorate her two decades with the department.

Hunsinger addressed the county commission, saying she was grateful for the privilege and honor to serve the community. It was a seed planted in her early growing up in Keystone Heights, she said, crediting the city's former manager Tony Brown for dazzling her with the lights of his ambulance when she was just four of five years old.

She also thanked her mother and her mother's friends whose prayers helped raise her and kept her safe on many occasions. She thanked her friend Michael, who has given her a strong shoulder to lean on in her most difficult moments.

Then she thanked the men who helped her make it to her 20-year anniversary with the department — Chief Carter, former Chief Allen Parrish, Division Chief Dylan Rogers and the late Dr. Peter Gians.

"I know Dr. Giannis is now up in heaven looking out for me, keeping me safe, and that just warms my heart. I'm very honored to continue in his footsteps, and I hope to continue to honor the legacy that he left," Hunsinger said.

Bradford High Class of 1964

Will meet at Cedar River Restaurant (Starke) on Thursday, JAN. 9, 2025 at 1 PM.

All graduates & spouses are invited.

Please let Jerome Kelly 352.538.0741 OR Eugenia Whitehead at 352.745.1828 know if you plan to attend so we can let the restaurant know how many. **BE THERE!**

THE ORIGINAL BRADFORD • UNION • CLAY COUNTIES

REGIONAL CHURCH DIRECTORY

Supported by Nearby Local Businesses, Services & Merchants who encourage you to

Worship in the house of the Lord... Somewhere this week!

<p>JBS JACKSON BUILDING SUPPLY</p> <p><i>"I am the way, the truth & the life. No one comes to the Father but through me"</i> John 14:6</p> <p>Starke 904-964-6078 Lake Butler 386-496-3079</p>	<p>R ROBERTS INSURANCE</p> <p>EXPERIENCE, SERVICE & GREAT RATES</p> <p>Starke Keystone Heights Middleburg Lake Butler 904.964.7826 352.473.7209 904.282.7665 386.496.3411</p> <p>www.georgerobertsins.com</p>	<p>Bryan's ACE Hardware Starke 904-964-4642 Melrose 352-475-2400 Keystone Hts 352-473-4006</p> <p>The helpful place.</p>
<p>Southland Surveying & Mapping, Inc.</p> <p>Professional land surveying and mapping services since 1975</p> <p>www.SouthlandSurvey.com</p> <p>386-496-3107 Licensed AL, FL, GA</p>	<p>A NAME YOU HAVE COME TO KNOW AND TRUST</p> <p>Y. Todd Ferreira</p> <p>Funeral Services</p> <p>Shirley Finney Memorial Chapel 904-964-5757 Lake Butler Chapel 386-496-1400</p>	<p>FOUNDATION CHURCH</p> <p>200 N. Walnut St. • Starke (904) 964-6864</p> <p>foundationchurch.cc info@foundationchurch.cc</p>
<p>JONES-GALLAGHER FUNERAL HOME</p> <p>Distinguished Caring Service for Over 50 Years</p> <p>Joe Gallagher - Owner Starke 904-964-6200 Keystone Heights 352-473-3176</p>	<p>Starke Lake Butler Interlachen</p> <p>DLPbank</p>	<p>Rev. Diane M. Wilson Pastor</p> <p>First Presbyterian Church of Starke 921 E. Call Street Starke, FL 32091</p> <p>"With God All Things Are Possible" Matthew 19:26</p> <p>E-mail: ladyd@earthlink.net fpcstarke@gmail.com Web: (904) 964-7937 Cell: (904) 965-1222</p>
<p>Competitive Rates, non-profit, right here in your community</p> <p>Clay Electric Cooperative, Inc.</p> <p>A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative</p> <p>Keystone District Office 352-473-4917 • clayelectric.com</p>	<p>After Church on Sunday Come to Powell's Dairy Freeze</p> <p>"Home of the Foot Long Steak"</p> <p>Stop by for Ice Cream on Wednesday Night!</p> <p>US 301 NORTH • STARKE, FL</p>	<p>Come Worship with us</p> <p>STARKE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH</p> <p>Church • Saturday 11:00 a.m. School • Saturday 10:00 a.m. 1649 W. Madison St • Starke, FL</p>
<p>DOUGLAS BATTERY OF STARKE</p> <p>We rebuild starters, alternators, generators.</p> <p>Auto • Marine • Cycle Batteries</p> <p>407 N. Temple • 964-7911</p>	<p>REGIONAL OUTREACH HERE</p> <p>thousands weekly</p> <p>904.964.6305</p> <p>classes@bctelegraph.com</p>	<p>Morgan Road Baptist Church 3784 NW CR 233 Starke</p> <p>Sunday Morning Worship 11am Sunday School 9:45am Sunday Evening Worship 6pm 964-4422 Wednesday Evening 7pm</p>

OVER 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE!

"Dedicated to Excellent Customer Service"

FREE QUOTES!

Dawn Corbett
INSURANCE AGENCY

116 N. Walnut St. • Starke, FL

"My job is to protect you!"

904-364-0123

Home	ATV	Fire
Automobile	Boat	Life
Mobile Home	Travel Trailer	Dwelling
Renters	Motorcycle	Commercial

Lawtey council member resigns

Plans underway for special elections

BY MELISSA PYLE
Special to the Telegraph

There was an empty chair on the board at Lawtey's first council meeting of 2025. Council member Emily Hoffman resigned her seat as of Dec. 20, 2024.

Hoffman cited personal circumstances and life changes that led to her resignation.

Hoffman, while not in attendance at the meeting, did issue a statement to the Telegraph expressing her gratitude to the citizens of Lawtey and to the Bradford County Fire Department for their service, especially those serving at the Lawtey station.

Hoffman had been assigned to be department head of the fire department by Mayor Jimmie Scott. Although the city technically had no fire department to oversee because the county now operates the station, Hoffman continued to be a liaison for the department and tried to make sure needs were met during her time in office.

The county is still awaiting a new memorandum of understanding agreement with the city of Lawtey.

Special election needed

The vacant seat on the council has prompted a special election to fill the seat temporarily until the January 2026 city election. Tentatively, the city will hold

qualifying from noon on Jan. 27 through noon Jan. 31. The special election would be on April 1.

The city is awaiting approval from the state before finalizing those dates.

City maintenance and changes

Personnel changes were also part of a discussion regarding the maintenance department, which led to some questions about city funds.

Vice Mayor Virginia Warner proposed a raise for the city's new maintenance man. Warner explained that the new hire has fulfilled his 90-day probationary period and has done an excellent job, without the need for any oversight. Warner and others praised the excellent work he has been doing for the city.

Warner told fellow council members that if they want to retain such a good worker, they need to pay him a little more. She proposed raising the hourly wage to \$20, an increase of \$3 an hour.

There was some pushback from the public about where the city would get the funds, and there was concern raised that the current maintenance person might already be planning to leave in March.

Warner used the possibility of him leaving as a reason to offer a higher hourly wage. Warner and Councilwoman Debra Norman argued that it's hard to find and retain a good maintenance person, and the city needs to offer competitive pay if they want to keep someone.

The motion to raise the rate

was approved by a vote of three to one, Councilwoman Amy Blom being the only no vote.

A citizen addressed maintenance issues as well regarding potholes on Fifth Street and asked a follow up question about lighting at Middleburg Park. Blom said she will be putting in a maintenance request to have the holes patched with lime rock the city has on hand.

Norman said the new recreation department will have to discuss lighting concerns. The citizen told the council she thought they had already decided to fix the lights. No one on council had a definitive answer about when they would be repaired.

Norman did give an update about city park maintenance that had previously been approved. The city finished putting up fencing the park on Lake Street. The extra fencing was needed to prevent people from driving into areas that are off limits to vehicles.

Norman also stated that due to low turnout at the monthly Community Health and Wellness Resource Hubs, the hubs will be held quarterly in Lawtey. Upcoming dates are Feb. 13, May 8, Aug. 14 and Nov. 13.

Department heads questioned and ordinance approved

The new year brought another discussion about making changes to existing city procedures.



There was an empty seat at the table at the city of Lawtey's January Council Meeting on Jan. 6. Council Member Emily Hoffman resigned her seat as of Dec. 20. A special election will be held to fill the seat. Pictured: Mayor Jimmie Scott alongside Councilwoman Virginia Warner.

Councilwoman Blom said the city's charter does not say the mayor has to assign each board member a city department to oversee. Blom expressed her frustration with what she feels is an outdated way to run the city.

"This isn't 1900, it's 2025," she said.

Mayor Scott pushed back on the request and said it was in the charter, but attorney Dan Sikes said Blom was correct in her assessment of the rules; it is just a city tradition to appoint departments for each council member to oversee.

The complaint from Blom and others is that, ultimately, they can't make decisions about the departments they are assigned outside of council meetings, and most of the things they are tasked to oversee get passed on to the city clerk and the mayor.

Blom and Norman each said the role of department heads also seems to keep them out of the loop of information regarding other city business. All members agreed there needs to be better

communication moving forward so all council members stay informed.

Sikes recommended the council set up a workshop to discuss the city's charter in order to make changes, if any, to the mayor appointing departments to council members.

The workshop is scheduled for Jan. 27 at 6 p.m.

A much-awaited update to the Lawtey Recreation Board was finalized with the second reading and approval of an ordinance reducing the number of recreation board members from seven to five. A smaller board means fewer members are needed for quorum at a meeting to conduct business and plan activities.

Council officers appointed

The first meeting was adjourned, and a second meeting was immediately started to appoint the 2025 mayor and vice

mayor for the city. The board held a unanimous vote to retain Scott as mayor, but the vice mayor position changed when the board voted to appoint Norman to the office.

New recreation board members were also appointed for 2025 with a total of four members nominated and appointed — Sheri Wilson, Nathan Blom, Kevin Taylor and Isaac Williams. The fifth recreation member will be appointed once the vacant council seat is filled.

Department heads were not appointed for 2025 because of the pending workshop. Sikes was unanimously voted to be retained as city attorney.

New city website

The city now has a website at CityofLawtey.org where users can find information about city departments, events and make utility payments.

FEE

Continued from page 1

Starke placed a moratorium on impact fees in 2013 as a way of incentivizing new development. Updated fees have been considered since then but never adopted.

Since then, Dabkowski said there has been a "dramatic change" in construction costs.

"Concrete is what I would call out of control. Asphalt is the highest it's ever been. Trying to buy right of way. All those types of things are very, very expensive right now. So, you could even look at, say, a restaurant with a drive-thru maybe 5,000 square foot. You might be looking at an impact fee of \$100,000," he said, estimating it's what Wawa would have paid had the fees been in place before that project got started.

Commissioner Danny Nugent asked about the residential costs, since those fees are typically passed on to buyers and affect housing prices. Without providing a number, Dabkowski said the cost would also take into consideration trip generation and length as well as housing size. Exemptions could only be granted for affordable housing, according to Chris Brimo, a principal planner working for Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering. As for increasing the cost for home buyers or renters, it also depends on the market, he said.

"Some markets have not felt that — they have still grown and expanded — and some markets have contracted a little bit because of those increases in the fees where developers have not put in. But you know, overall,

Florida has grown substantially in the residential housing market. So, I don't know specifically for the city of Starke how your numbers are, but yes, it does have an impact," Brimo said.

The city could also offer credits to developers who contribute in other ways such as donating property or creating community parks, thereby lowering their impact fee, he said.

Commissioner Bob Milner said the city is beyond the real estate market crash of 2008 and beyond the COVID pandemic, and while growth is not exploding here as it has elsewhere, Starke is growing. He said he supports having impact fees because the fees are paid by newcomers, not an additional tax on existing residents and businesses. People who have lived here for years, paying taxes and utility bills, shouldn't also have to bear the cost of building or improving roads to accommodate growth, he said.

"I welcome the growth. You all know my stance on economic development. We're all after it, but there's got to be some semblance of fairness in who pays for that, without the rest of us absorbing and subsidizing all of that new growth," Milner said.

Commissioner Scott Roberts agreed, saying that Starke's fees don't have to be the highest or the lowest. Determining what is fair will be up for debate, he said.

Mayor Andy Redding agreed.

"Impact fees are not meant to be punitive. They're not meant to suppress growth, but it's a preparation for the future, and it's somewhat of a pay to play, pay it forward kind of thing. And that way the people, as Commissioner Milner said, are not negatively impacted for being here, and it gives us a plan

forward," he said.

Redding called for a motion for staff and legal counsel to work with the consultants in preparing an up-to-date impact fee study. With all commissioners present in agreement, the motion passed 4-0.

DEMO

Continued from page 1

In subsequent meetings, council members indicated they intended to implement the consultant's recommendations.

Mayor Nina Rodenroth referenced the demolition as part of a broader project that will include widening South Lawrence Boulevard (State Road 21) to allow northbound traffic to make right turns onto eastbound Walker Drive (State Road 100) easier.

"The City of Keystone Heights purchased the property in the summer of 2024 in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation to widen the turn lane of SR 21 North for smoother traffic flow," she said in a statement. "We do not have a date for when FDOT will begin their portion of the project, but we expect it will start in mid-2025."

Other community leaders cheered the building's removal as a step toward downtown's continued development.

"I'm delighted to see the structure come down and look forward to seeing what the city does with the property," said former mayor and current Lake Region Kiwanis President Karen Lake.

Added County Commissioner Betsy Condon, "Between DOT improvements to the intersection

and beautification of the City of Keystone Heights, the long-awaited project will change the face of the city. I'm sure some will not be happy with the change, but it really was the best decision our city council could have made, given the width of the intersection. For the safety and health of the public, I commend the decision and look forward to seeing the finished product."

Rodenroth signaled that she intended to follow the consultant's recommendation.

"Once the building has been demolished, the area will be sodded and prepared for a 'Welcome to Keystone Heights' marquee," she said. "We are very excited for our community as we provide this improved visual look for our town and safer roadway for that intersection."

Correction

North Florida Land Trust provided a correction to previous press release about acquiring more than 1,100 square feet in Bradford County to expand the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor and maintain a development buffer around Camp Blanding. This was not the largest acquisition in the organization's history. In 2018, the nonprofit acquired more than 2,100 acres surrounding Camp Blanding, now called Trail Ridge Preserve.



50+ years of support

Sheriff Gordon Smith recently thanked Vernon and Sylvia Reddish for more than 50 years of support for the Florida Sheriffs Association. Smith praised Sylvia Reddish, pictured above, for her work for a number of causes, performed out of her love for people. "On behalf of the Bradford County Sheriff's Office and the Florida law enforcement community, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Vernon and Sylvia Reddish for distinguished service and steadfast support of the Florida Sheriffs Association," he said. "The unwavering dedication and contributions have strengthened the mission of the Florida Sheriffs Association and enhanced the safety and wellbeing of all of our communities. Your loyalty, hard work and commitment exemplify the true spirit of service and partnership that make a lasting impact."

KEYSTONE YOUTH SOCCER

COACHES & VOLUNTEERS WELCOMED! COACHES & VOLUNTEERS WELCOMED!

SPRING Season Registration • AGES 4-18

TO REGISTER: SIGN UP by FEBRUARY 19, 2025

THE FEE is \$80. Sign up online.

Supplied uniform will be jersey, shorts & socks.

Register & Pay online at www.KeystoneYouthSoccer.com OR

Trevor Waters Realty, Inc
7374 SR 21 N • Keystone Heights
COACHES & VOLUNTEERS WELCOMED!

For more information call:

Trevor Waters at 352-246-7776

Registration forms on website www.keystoneyouthsoccer.com



Bradford County allocates funds to complete boat ramp project

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Bradford County has switched engineers, approving the expenditure of nearly \$60,000 to complete the design and permitting of the Cypress Run boat ramp at Lake Sampson.

The approval came over objections from someone who has been watching the slow progression of the grant-funded project.

Paul Still raised questions about the project, including whether the grant funds allocated to the project had already been spent with the prior engineer, and if so, whether the funds would be returned if the plans produced were unsatisfactory.

Still has raised questions about the project for some time now, believing the plans submitted to the state for approval would not be permitted.

"It's not clear whether they (engineers at CHW) are going to be designing a new set of plans. It's pretty clear to me that the plans that were designed by DRMP ... you're not going to be able to get a permit for those plans because they involve dredging Lake Sampson on property not owned by the county, and also because there is an existing canal that can be used. And one of the criteria for getting a permit for dredging is that there's not an alternative out there for the dredging," Still said.

Still asked the commission

to remove the item for approval with the consent agenda and table it until there is more clarity on what was being asked. According to him, there are items not included in CHW's proposal that will cost more than \$60,000 to complete.

"I think it's real important that you spend some time determining whether this is actually what you might want to go forward with. And more importantly, it's very simple to make that boat ramp serviceable," Still said.

Still would prefer that the county perform "maintenance sediment removal" from the canal and upgrade the existing boat ramp to make it serviceable.

Commissioners approved the proposal from CHW as part

of the consent agenda without comment.

Bradford County was awarded a \$59,000 grant requiring a \$1,000 county grant but did not meet the requirements for grant reimbursement. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission had previously allowed a one-year extension to complete the grant-funded project. However, according to staff, FWC rejected a recent amendment to the grant agreement that would have allowed the county to seek reimbursement of its expenses prior to receiving the necessary permits.

Staff said engaging with CHW to complete the project design will allow the county to pursue

reimbursement of design costs and then seek reimbursement of the permitting costs when that process is complete.

According to the clerk's office, the grant funding would be used to reimburse the county for most of what was paid to DRMP for its work. That total came to more than \$46,000 in Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021.

The funding will not cover the cost of CHW's work to complete the project. CHW will be paid with by the county, which has now allocated \$40,000 in vessel fees (paid through boat registrations) and \$19,850 in county contingency funding.

According to CHW's proposal, the project includes the design and permit approval

for the boat ramp as well as roadway improvements tying into Southeast 129th Street for "enlarged access and increased traffic." The design needs to address wetlands mitigation needed for the environmental resource permits from the Suwannee River Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers.

The county released the prior reports and plans to CHW, which found that "additional geotechnical, ecological, civil design and permitting services are necessary to obtain the necessary permits for the boat ramp and produce accurate construction plans with efficient stormwater management and offsite wetland mitigation strategies."

Courthouse may go solar to save money, fund improvements

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Schneider Electric has promised to save Bradford County hundreds of thousands of dollars in utility costs while performing deferred facility maintenance.

County commissioners accepted the agreement following a presentation from Larry Perrin that was months in the making. Perrin and his team from Schneider Electric have been meeting with county staff on a plan he said will result in much needed upgrades for county facilities that will be paid for in part by the utility cost savings generated by these changes.

"The biggest piece of this was finding ways to fund the much-

needed deferred maintenance work, because I know one of things that you all are always tasked with doing is trying to do more with less. You want to be able to put those funds back into the community, to pave roads, to build sidewalks, things like that, but you also have to upkeep your facilities, and that's one of the things that we're looking at trying to help you all with," he said.

Perrin said Schneider Electric has 30 years of experience working across the country and has spent many years working in counties like Citrus and school systems as small as Jefferson County.

Whether its upgrading infrastructure to make facilities

more efficient or introducing new technology or software, Perrin believes they can also make a difference in Bradford County.

"One of the great things about the way we go to business is we come in make sure that there's an opportunity on the front end, and then we actually design and engineer the project. We construct it, manage it, find the financial solutions for the county," he said, adding that support will be ongoing. They've had a partnership with Citrus County for 14 years, he said.

"One thing that we looked at here, as a county you all have extremely high utility rates," he said. "So, one thing that we are exploring as a potential option to generate some revenue for the

county to address facility needs is solar projects."

The county's annual utility bill is close to \$400,000. That includes electricity costs at the larger facilities and a greater than expected water use at the jail. Reducing that cost is one way money could be shifted to infrastructure investments.

Based on the Schneider team's survey, the courthouse and jail have HVAC equipment that is 15 to 20 years old, and the jail could be switched over to LED lighting. The HVAC system at the library has drainage problems that have caused water damage. LED lighting at the conference center would brighten the space and save money. Some HVAC equipment there is also more than 20 years old. Humidity in the county extension office has warped ceiling tiles, and the aging HVAC is likely responsible there, too. Even the senior center as the newest facility has room for improvement.

Without a solar project at the courthouse, the annual utility cost savings could be around \$55,000 (\$14%), or \$1.47 million over the length of the partnership.

With a solar project, the savings could grow to \$164,000 a year (41%), which adds up to around \$5 million over the length of the partnership.

"The courthouse, the jail, any of the facilities that are operating that need those deferred maintenance needs addressed, there's four and a half to five million dollars that you're going to spend one way or the other that can be used to address a lot of those needs," Perrin said.

The design agreement the county entered with Schneider Electric is collaborative, so commissioners and staff will help direct what goes into the resulting scope of work.

"I think there's some great opportunities, some great ways to save money. So, our next step is to get started with that design and move forward with that process," Perrin said. By law, Schneider must save the county more money than the proposed upgrades cost. When upfront costs are a concern, they have set it up lease-purchase agreements, minus any rebates, incentives or grants they are able to obtain, resulting in an annual payment.

"It's just reallocating the same money that you're spending now over time to upgrade your facilities, rather than to pay your utility costs. But we have to bring back a project that saves the county more than it's going to cost," he said.

If Schneider Electric designs a qualifying project, but the county chooses not to move forward, there is a \$34,000 exit fee the company would receive for its work. That is a rare occurrence, Perrin said. If they cannot design a qualifying project, the county would owe nothing.

After two years following completion of a project, Schneider would be paid an annual fee for technical assistance and maintenance, with the cost determined by level of service required. This is optional, however. The county would not be locked into a 20-year maintenance agreement.

Perrin also said to help guarantee projects will perform or overperform in terms of savings, the numbers quoted are conservative — around 85% of their actual savings projections.

City fine of \$157,800 revoked

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A special magistrate revoked a \$157,800 code enforcement fine assessed on a Starke property owner after determining that the owner did not receive notice of code violations four years ago.

According to official records, city Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Look reported in July 2020 that Raymond Durban's property at 400 S. Water St. violated city codes with excessive vegetation and an unsafe structure.

Magistrate Laura Gapski gave Durban 30 days to correct the violations before a \$100-a-day fine began.

However, during a December 10, 2024, hearing, Durban told Gapski that he never received notice of the 2020 violations and fines.

Code Enforcement Officer Nick Krahl testified at the hearing that the property had been mowed, the structure secured, and Durban had obtained a building permit to begin renovations.

The magistrate wrote in her order revoking the fines, "Aside from the original order imposing the fine, Code Enforcement could not locate any copies of the notices or any paperwork."

"Because of the lack of notice," Gapski added, "the 2020 case will be closed without any fines imposed."

The magistrate imposed a \$200 fine for similar violations of the property for 2024.

After the meeting, Krahl told the Telegraph that collecting fines is not the city's primary goal when enforcing its codes.

"We just want to clean up the city," he said, "and obviously, the best way to do that is through voluntary compliance."

Fines rack up for Cherry Street residence

The City of Starke said it had assessed nearly \$10,000 in fines on a North Cherry Street home and that daily penalties of \$150 are still accruing.

Special Magistrate Laura Gapski wrote in an order that Lancaster Investments, Inc., which owns the home at 375 N. Cherry St., has not responded to notices sent by Starke code enforcement officers in September, October, November, and December.

Officers first cited the property



Code Enforcement Officer Nick Krahl testified at a Dec. 10 hearing that the property at 400 S. Water St. had been mowed, the structure secured, and owner Raymond Durban had obtained a building permit to begin renovations.



Officers first cited the property at 375 N. Cherry St. in September as a public nuisance and for abandoned personal property.

in September as a public nuisance and for abandoned personal property.

The magistrate ruled that if the violations are not remedied in 30 days, the daily fine will increase to \$250 a day and then to \$500 a day after 60 days.

Ordered to mow grass, attach door, cover hole in wall

During a December 18 code enforcement hearing, a Pine Street single-wide owner was ordered to bring his property up to City of Starke codes.

Special Magistrate Laura Gapski ruled that the home at 1212 Pine St., owned by Lloyd

M. Grainger, Jr., was a dangerous structure and public nuisance.

"Mow and maintain the property, attach door, properly cover the hole in the exterior side of the structure, and remove or properly repair the unfinished deck," Gapski wrote in her order.

The magistrate imposed a \$100-a-day fine beginning on December 10, a \$250-a-day fine after 30 days, and a \$500-a-day fine after 60 days for non-compliance.



1212 Pine Street

ENROLLING IN HEALTH INSURANCE ISN'T EASY. FINDING HELP SHOULD BE!

Certified Navigators are standing by to help you!

We provide FREE and unbiased assistance with finding health insurance for you and your family!

Call: 386-230-9400

SUWANNEE RIVER

AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER



COVERING FLORIDA

COMMITTED TO COVERAGE



Scan the QR code to make an appointment with us!

This program is supported by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$13,792,500 with 100 percent funded by CMS/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CMS/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

TOP Continued from page 3

Lake Butler, at city hall during business hours for the above mentioned amounts by May 1, 2024 so the appropriate number of plants and supplies can be ordered.

Union Road Dept. leader retires

May 1, 2024

On April 26, about 100 people gathered in the Agricultural Education Center's meeting room to celebrate the retirement of Shelton "Jr." Arnold, the superintendent of the Union County Road Department.

The event was held on the last day of Arnold's 34 years of service to the county. The entire road department staff (on their lunch breaks) was in attendance, as were four county commissioners, supervisors of most of the county's departments, former road department employees who had moved on or retired, and members of the community who wanted to give Arnold a big sendoff and wish him well.

First to speak, before giving the invocation, Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead said he would miss Arnold's humor, patience, and dependability.

"Thanks for all the years you have supported the Sheriff's Office," Whitehead said. "It didn't matter if I called him at 3 a.m. with a problem, like a tree blocking a road; he always came out and took care of it."

Union County Supervisor of Elections Debbie Osborne and Tax Collector Lisa Johnson linked arms with Arnold and told everyone nearby that they had more than 100 years of combined service to the county.

Almost everyone there, especially the county commissioners, took a moment to make a personal comment to Arnold. The honoree was presented with a plaque commemorating his 34 years of service by Commissioner Jimmy Tallman and a custom-cut handsaw, with his initials and decorative artwork, by Christopher Griffis, the new department superintendent selected by the board.

Arnold was brief in his comments when presented with these tokens.

"I have enjoyed working here all these years," Arnold said. "I have had good people to work with and for. So many people have helped me over the years, and I want them to know I appreciate them. I am retiring because I feel as though it is the right time, and I plan to pursue other avenues to continue to serve the county and deal with some of the problems we have. But I will miss seeing people every day and helping them whenever I can."

Library and county say farewell to longtime library director

May 21, 2024

When Union County Library Director Mary Brown spoke to the Union County Board of Commissioners at their May 20, 2024 meeting, she told them that it would be her last official visit to one of their meetings.

Following that announcement, commissioners made a few

comments about how deeply she will be missed and how she was, for many county residents, THE Librarian, the one they had known their whole life.

"To me you are the library," Commission Chairman Channing Dobbs told Brown. "I remember when I was small coming to see you and now, I still am and am bringing my children. We will all miss you."

Brown said that was one of her joys during her latter years as director – seeing people she had worked with in youth programs in years past now bringing their children in to see Miss Mary and participate in the library's youth programs and story time. And she said they seemed to remember her fondly.

Brown said she had seen many changes in her time as a library director. She said that from her beginning there were no computers in the library, but she said she soon saw the future being different and always worked towards bringing in public access computers.

"I saw it coming," she said, "and we ended up being one of the top three libraries in the state to get Internet access. The Gates Foundation provided the public access computers."

Brown said that she saw the advent of e-books as well, and the library offers patrons access to more e-books than it has regular books on the shelves, as well as offering access to a number of accurate databases for research, some with vetted articles. Still, she does not believe that "hold-in-your-hand" books will ever go away, or at least anytime soon.

McNutt takes helm at library

July 29, 2024

There are two familiar faces at the newly named Mary C. Brown Public Library in Union County, but while the faces are the same, the functions these people serve have changed.

With the retirement of longtime library Director Mary Brown a few weeks ago, her assistant, Priti McNutt, has taken the helm, with the support of Brown, who had spent time preparing her for the position. Although Brown had brought her up to speed and recommended her to the county board of commissioners, the position was still advertised, and several applicants were interviewed. In the end, McNutt was selected to fill the position and hit the ground running.

McNutt, 43, has worked at the library since 2001 and was selected as assistant director in 2005. She is a second-generation East Indian immigrant – she said her parents came to the U.S. for a better life. She and her sister were both born in Jersey City, New Jersey. After a few years in the North, she said her parents wanted to move somewhere slower paced. They had family in Florida, so they decided to move here, landing in Lake Butler.

McNutt began third grade at Lake Butler Elementary School and later graduated from Union County High School in 2000. She attended Santa Fe Community College and graduated with an associate's degree in general studies, then attended online Liberty University, earning a Bachelor of Religious Studies degree in 2015. With a gentle push from Brown, she enrolled at Florida State University, earning a master's in library and information science in 2020. Much of this later program was

online and in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.

She met her husband, Brad, in 2007 and married him in 2009. He is originally from Orange Park. The couple has one daughter, who is still in elementary school.

McNutt officially became the library director on July 1, 2024, but she had been training under Brown for four years to prepare for the transition.

"I have some very big shoes to fill," McNutt said. "Mary was here at the library for 31 years. To many people around here, she was the library."

McNutt said she is not planning to make any drastic changes in her new position. She said what she really wants to do is "support the community." She intends to work hard to support the services that Brown established.

Providence family survives tornado scare

August 6, 2024

A family in Western Union County had a close call with a small tornado as Hurricane Debby closed in on Florida's Big Bend.

Zayden Pressley, an eighth grader at First Christian Academy in High Springs, said he was at first confused by the alert he received on his cell phone.

"It says tornado. It doesn't say hurricane," Zayden recalled telling his parents about the alert he received around 7:45 p.m. Sunday. Two minutes later, Zayden's parents, Darryl and Layne, received similar alerts on their phones.

Layne said that after the second warning, she wanted to check on her parents, who were temporarily staying in a camper in the backyard, but it was too late.

"All of the sudden, the wind picked up, and things started flying around outside and we just kind of looked at each other," remembered Layne.

In a panic, Zayden and Layne darted under a staircase while Darryl ran for a bathroom.

While in their respective safe places, the family of three heard debris striking the house and the freight-train sound they had heard tornado victims describe.

Five to ten seconds later, it was over.

When the family ventured outside, they discovered that Layne's parents were fine and had not realized what had happened.

A tree in the front yard was blown over, crushing the swing that previously hung from it.

The attached garage suffered roof damage, a solar panel was missing, and a privacy fence was blown away, revealing a neighbor's overturned pontoon boat and camper. The Pressley's aluminum shed in the backyard temporarily went missing but was discovered later about a block away.

The family found a two-by-four that the wind had driven into a bonus room in the garage.

The Pressleys said they feel fortunate to have escaped with only minor property damage.

They credit the alerts they received on their cell phones for warning them of the danger.

Darryl said the family had also received a cell phone alert around 15 minutes before the twister struck, so the three had gotten a trio of alerts within 15 minutes of the incident.

Zayden said he had gotten a

little weary of the warnings.

"A lot of times they always say stuff's going to happen, but then it never really does, Zayden said, "so I was just like, oh, it's probably overreacting, and it's just a small little—what we normally would get."

The eighth grader said that he briefly thought about ignoring the alert.

He added that he will never do that again.

Worthington Springs parking lot under construction

August 13, 2024

The Worthington Springs Community Center's parking lot expansion is temporarily on hold pending the processing of a change order.

The project, which should add around 18 new spaces to the center, is funded by a state grant.

Town Clerk Pat Harrell said several years ago, the town was awarded a \$600,000 grant to pave streets in the Worthington Springs Trailer Park.

However, when questions arose about the ownership of the streets and easement proceedings were delayed, town leaders decided to redirect the funding to a less controversial project.

Harrell added that since the parking lot expansion will only cost between \$170,000 and \$200,000, the balance of the grant will revert to the state.

The town clerk said one part of the change order involves removing an additional tree. Another amendment involves moving an underground gas tank that supplies fuel to the community center's generator.

Harrell said the community center is frequently used for receptions, weddings, family reunions, and other events. She added that the facility is rented virtually all Saturdays and is often rented on both days of the weekend.

Lake Butler school welcomes new principal

August 13, 2024

There's a new face at Lake Butler Elementary School this year, and Michelle Fuist said she is looking forward to working at a school and in a school district that mirrors her philosophy of educating young people.

Fuist and her husband, Rich, bought a house in Columbia County that fulfilled his dream of living in an airpark. She said she started looking around in the area for a school administrative position. She said she applied on the last day of the job listing for the principal position at LBES before the ad closed and was interviewed and hired.

"I came into the interview wondering about the attitudes in this system and was delighted to find that the same attitudes, values and beliefs I have about learning and community involvement in the schools were practiced throughout the Union County schools," Fuist said.

Fuist said she has hit the ground running and is ready for the new school year.

"Our theme for the year is 'Let's Root for Each Other' and our goal is to build a positive culture and learning environment," Fuist said. "We have new Positive Behavior Intervention Support and we are all committed to making sure that everyone is included through resiliency activities and other programs."

Fuist holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Akron in Ohio and a Master of Arts in Education from Hampton University in Hampton, VA. She also holds certificates and endorsements in reading, educational leadership (all levels), school principal (all levels) and exceptional student education. She has completed programs as an iObservation Observer, the Aspiring Leaders Academy, has received the Emerging School of Character Award and holds a private pilot's license.

Lake Butler's financial position deteriorating

September 3, 2024

At its regular meeting on August 20, 2024, the Lake Butler City Commission received its

annual audit report for the fiscal year period of Oct. 1, 2022, through Sept. 30, 2023.

During the presentation, the auditor from James Moore noted that the city is still recovering from the misspending of the previous city manager but that the financial condition of the city is not positive.

The general fund balance was at a three-year low, at \$462,887 (down from \$466,220 at the end of the previous year, which was down from \$542,511 the year before). The CRA funds were also in a deficit of \$9,815. Despite this, the audit received an unqualified opinion.

Material weaknesses were observed, mainly in the internal controls for the fuel purchasing system, the journal entry controls, and the payroll process. However, the City Finance Director, Dave Mecusker, stated that these matters had been dealt with when first noted by the auditors. It was pointed out in the audit report that all but three of the material weaknesses from the previous fiscal year's audit had been addressed and corrected. These weaknesses included credit card abuse, questioned costs, the property exchange between Johnny Welch and the city, Internal Revenue Service Noncompliance, employee leave records, the bidding process, audit solicitation, and the ARPA grant funds.

Overall, the audit states that for the 2022-23 fiscal year, the city was in a financial condition, indicating a deteriorating financial condition that could lead to various emergency financial situations.

This is in the process of being corrected, beginning with the firing of the previous city manager and general belt-tightening on spending in the subsequent budget for the current fiscal year.

All of the misspending, questionable spending, transfers from one account to another to cover excess spending and the misuse of grant funds has stopped.

Currently, the city is meeting its debt obligations, staying within the limits of a tight budget, looking for new sources of revenue, and watching all spending very closely.

Union Commissioner injured in explosion

September 3, 2024

Union County Commissioner Jimmy Tallman was life-flighted to U.F. Health Shands last week after an explosion caused second and third-degree burns over his upper body.

Sheriff Brad Whitehead said the accident occurred at the Worthington Springs area commissioner's business, North Florida Custom Meats.

"He has a smokehouse that's run by propane," said the sheriff. "What we think happened is (the light in the smoker) went out, and it filled the room up with gas. When he went to ignite it, it basically was like a bomb that exploded and burned him. My understanding is that he has second and third-degree burns."

Whitehead added that, according to Tallman's brother, he has been and will continue to undergo skin graft surgeries.

The sheriff also said that based on his experience with the Florida Fire Marshal, he knows that severe burns are painful.

"Probably one of the most painful things," he said, "just with dealing with patients over the years."

The sheriff said that Tallman's injuries could have been worse because, at the time of the blast, he was looking away from the smoker.

Whitehead said that Tallman's workers rendered aid and called 911. Union County Fire Rescue units were the first responders on the scene, and his deputies assisted firefighters in getting Tallman to an airstrip in Worthington Springs for a helicopter flight to Gainesville.

Construction of new Lake Butler Elementary clears hurdle

September 10, 2024

A state committee ranked the rebuilding of Lake Butler Elementary School as the

Number 1 project for Florida's Special Facility Construction Account for the upcoming 2025 legislative session.

The Florida Department of Education's Special Facility Construction Committee vote on September 5 puts the Union County School District on solid footing for a state appropriation in the 2025 legislative session.

Schools Superintendent Mike Ripplinger asked committee members for \$88.5 million during the meeting in Tallahassee.

Also seeking funds from the committee were Baker County for a new middle school, Desoto County for a pre-k through third-grade campus, and Holmes County for a new kindergarten through 12th-grade school in Ponce de Leon. The committee ranked Union County's project first, followed by Baker, Desoto, and Holmes.

Superintendent Mike Ripplinger told the Florida Department of Education's Special Facility Construction Committee that Lake Butler Elementary School's buildings date back to 1956, and the school's 22 portables have outlived their life expectancies.

The committee's rankings now go to the Florida Legislature as part of the Education Department's annual capital outlay budget request. If Tallahassee lawmakers green-light the Lake Butler project and the governor signs off on the new school, the district should have around \$30 million to start the project in the summer of 2025. Ripplinger said the state typically funds new school construction over three years.

Helene leaves Union County with downed trees, no power

October 2, 2024

Gov. Ron DeSantis said that Union County, with 86% of residents losing power during Hurricane Helene, was one of the hardest-hit areas with power outages, following only those in the direct path of the storm, like Dixie, Lafayette, Suwannee, Hamilton, Taylor, Madison, and Columbia counties.

The state's chief executive said 99% of residents in the counties in the direct path of the storm were without power.

Wind damage was visible the day following the storm at the Lake Butler Hospital's sign, Lake Butler Elementary School, and the city's First Baptist Church.

Ten people sought refuge at the Union County High School hurricane shelter.

Union County Sheriff's Captain Lyn Williams said crews worked throughout Thursday night and Friday clearing roads from downed trees.

McNeal replacing Tallman on county commission

November 11, 2024

Some records will be set at the next meeting (Tues. Nov. 19, 2024) of the Union County Board of Commissioners when Melissa Dukes McNeal takes her seat, filling the board's District Three seat.

As far as the records go, she will be the first woman to fill that seat. Along with Donna Jackson (District One), she will be part of the first instance in which the board has had two female members.

Commissioners elected or reelected in the August Primary Election will all be sworn in at 2 p.m. in the board meeting room.

McNeal said she is looking forward to taking her place on the board. She had decided to run for the seat when she found out that the former holder of the District Three seat, veteran commissioner Jimmy Tallman, would not be running again.

"I knew Jimmy Tallman would be retiring and knew that with the changing times, I saw a need for someone to fill that seat who would work to preserve all the good things about our county – helping it grow and progress while staying true to our county's roots," McNeal said.

To prepare for her running for a position on the board, McNeal attended all of the meetings held in the past two years to learn the ropes and also to be informed of issues she would be walking into

See MORE, page 7

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR NEW UNION COUNTY JAIL IN LAKE BUTLER, FLORIDA

The Union County Board of County Commissioners is requesting written responses from qualified construction firms to provide professional At-Risk Construction Management Services for the Budgeting and Construction Phase on the new proposed Union County Jail (Phase 2 and 3 of the new Public Safety Complex). Facility is to include demolition of site elements and sitework. The approximate budget for construction and all other activities is \$13,870,100.00.

The complete Request for Qualifications (RFQ) information page can be obtained from the Union County, Florida website – <https://unioncounty-fl.gov/advertisements-notice-and-rfps/> or by emailing Dir. Timothy Allen at allentc@unionsheriff.us.

RFQ's due by January 13, 2025

Union County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We encourage all small and minority-owned businesses to apply.

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

Candice Berry, 52, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 30 for an out-of-county warrant.

Ronnesha Flowers, 32, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 3 for aggravated manslaughter of a child.

Michael Griffin, 28, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 3 for fraud and larceny.

Christopher Holmes, 53, of Alachua, was arrested by FHP troopers and Bradford deputies on December 28 for DUI, possession of a weapon by a convicted felon, destroying evidence, possession of marijuana, and possession of drug equipment.

Daphne Johnson, 31, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 3 for a probation violation.

Kirstyn Key, 25, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 2 for a probation violation and an out-of-county warrant.

Christopher Kimbrell, 25, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 31 for resisting an officer and a probation violation.

Jonathan Landaverde, 32,

was arrested by FHP troopers on January 2 for driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Kelvin Lane, 49, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 28 for aggravated battery.

Rafael Martinez, 25, of Gainesville, was arrested by FHP troopers on January 1 for stunt driving, racing, engaging in a speed competition or contest, drag race or acceleration contest, and for performing a burnout on a public road.

Brian McCloud, 41, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 1 for failure to appear.

Daris McCutcheon, 42, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 2 for a probation violation.

Ian Owen Lopez, 22, of Miami, was arrested by FHP troopers on January 1 for stunt driving, racing, engaging in a speed competition or contest, drag race or acceleration contest, and for performing a burnout on a public road.

Akeem Smith, 29, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 1 for an out-of-county warrant.

Blaise Thomas, 58, up Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on December 28 for failure to appear.

Jordan Tucker, 21, Raiford, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 2 for battery on a law enforcement officer, criminal mischief with property damage, and resisting an officer.

Marion Waldron, 48, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on January 2 for probation violations.

Union

None reported.

Clay

Noah Shirley, 20, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on December 30 for simple domestic battery.

Facebook posts lead to arrest

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 25-year-old Starke man has pleaded not guilty to cyberstalking, and prosecutors said they intend to ask a judge to detain him until his misdemeanor case is resolved.

Bradford deputies arrested Christopher Richard Kimbrell on Dec. 31 while he was walking near the courthouse.

According to an arrest report, the 25-year-old had been tagging a public official in Facebook posts, which "have caused (the victim) substantial emotional distress over the safety of (the victim's) family due to them being home alone and Kimbrell having a history of violent tendencies."

"One of the posts Kimbrell tagged (the victim) in depicts a skeleton standing in a cross pose," wrote Detective James D. Hall, II, in the report. "The skeleton is shown glowing yellow, and there is fire burning around it."

The investigator added that in several posted photos, the defendant tagged the victim and wrote, "America needs to repent."

"One post he tagged (the victim) in is of an image depicting an eyeball watching through a wall, possibly insinuating he is watching (the victim)," Hall wrote.

According to the detective, Kimbrell admitted to posting the threatening content and claimed the official "kicked him out of (redacted)."

"Kimbrell also believes that the justice system has demons in it, and they are oppressing



Kimbrell



Douglas

people," Hall reported.

According to the defendant's probation officer, the December 31 arrest triggered a probation violation.

In July 2024, the defendant was sentenced to 75 days in jail and two years' probation after pleading to possession of drug paraphernalia, threatening a law enforcement officer, resisting without violence, and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

According to a May 17, 2024, arrest report, a deputy spotted Kimbrell "pacing back and forth, waving his arms in an aggressive manner" in the gazebo area of Starke City Square.

Kimbrell made an aggressive move toward the officer while holding a 14-inch wooden pipe and later took steps toward the deputy while holding a pocket knife.

According to a deputy, while walking Kimbrell to a holding cell, the defendant told him, "I should have stabbed ya when I had the chance. Next time, I will."

Deputies chase man over the weekend

The Bradford County Sheriff's office said a traffic stop near Brooker on Friday night evolved into a two-day manhunt in which the defendant held three people at gunpoint.

The office said in a social media post that during the attempted traffic stop, Terrell Douglas led deputies on a chase down a dirt road to a cemetery,

then fled on foot.

Later in the day, deputies received a tip that the 50-year-old was in a Brooker car shop.

"As initial deputies arrived," the agency said, "three men exited the building and reported to deputies that Douglas had entered the shop with a firearm and held them at gunpoint, threatening to shoot them if they did not surrender their cellphones to him."

As SWAT team members and deputies surrounded the structure, Douglas slipped out a back door and into the woods before a perimeter had been established.

On Saturday morning, Alachua and Bradford deputies followed a tip that the fugitive was in Waldo. However, officers were unable to locate him.

Deputies then tracked Douglas back to the Brooker car shop, where they apprehended him.

'Pooped' cell phone out of rectum

A Florida State Prison inmate was sentenced to one day in jail after pleading to smuggling contraband into a correctional facility by hiding the device in his rectum.

According to a Department of Corrections Inspector General complaint, Keon Mayant Jr., 24, set off a handheld metal detector on February 18, 2021, as he entered Florida State Prison after disembarking from a van that transported him from Santa Rosa Correctional Institution.

A corrections sergeant told investigators that after a second metal detector also alerted to the presence of metal in the inmate's backside area, Mayant told the sergeant he would immediately surrender the device.

"(The sergeant) explained Inmate Mayant then 'pooped' the cellphone out of his rectum," wrote Senior Inspector S. Donaldson in the complaint. The officer added that the device was photographed, bagged, and sent to a lab for analysis.

Mayant began serving a 10-year sentence in 2016 for an Orange County armed robbery. He has been in Department of Corrections custody for eight years.

During a hearing before Circuit Judge James Colaw on December 18, 2024, Assistant Public Defender Susan Ward said Mayant's case might have a statute of limitations problem because her client was arrested for the smuggling felony over three years after the alleged infraction.

"It's not like he's been evading capture," Ward told the judge. "They knew exactly where he was."

The judge told Mayant that after a quick glance, he did not see a statute of limitations issue with the case.

"But if you want more time to explore that type of issue or defense to the charges," Colaw added, "I'm happy to give you that. I'm also happy in light of all the circumstances— you are already here today. If you just want to resolve it today, I'm happy to adjudicate you and close it, so there's no additional time. It just means you'll have another conviction for this felony, but you won't do any additional time."

The defendant responded that his current release date is March 3, 2025. He asked the judge if he would still get released in March if he pleaded to the smuggling charge.

Colaw said the plea would not add time to Mayant's sentence but could affect any gain time he had earned while incarcerated.

After consulting with Ward, the defendant accepted the offer, and Colaw sentenced Mayant to one day in jail, with a day's credit for time served.

MORE Continued from page 6

the middle of, as well as allowing her to be mentally prepared for her new role. She said she plans to be a full participant in the conducting of county business as it comes before the board during her first year, but also to spend time learning and researching matters involved with her new position. She added that she had never served as an elected official before and wanted to be sure she learned the finer details of serving her constituents and other county residents.

McNeal said the county needs managed and planned growth, especially in job creation. She said that one of her concerns in this area was the careful location of such businesses.

"Everywhere in the county is somebody's home, their backyard, and growth cannot be allowed to affect their quality of life and lifestyle," McNeal said.

The incoming commissioner, 34, is a seventh-generation Union County resident and a Union County High School graduate. She has been married to Tim for 15 years and has six children (three girls and three boys). She homeschools the children and owns a cut flower business, selling warm- and cool-season annuals. Her parents own and operate Dukes Family Farm adjacent to the flower farm, and McNeal also has duties in that operation.

Tim is a subcontractor and owner of Residential Window Solutions in Lake Butler. He installs and replaces windows and doors, primarily for the Pella Company but also for others.

County coordinator cleared by ethics commission

November 19, 2024

In a public report dated Oct. 30, 2024, the State of Florida Ethics Commission has found County Coordinator Jimmy Williams cleared of all three

charges brought against him.

Williams was accused of using his position to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for himself, using his position to secure a disproportionate benefit for himself or another, and having an employment or contractual relationship with a business entity that is subject to the regulation of the county... creating a conflict between his private interests and the performance of his public duties. The complaint was dismissed with the issuance of the public report.

The matter started in October 2023 when Union County Clerk of Court and Comptroller Kellie Rhoades and her Deputy Clerk Pam Woodington brought the three allegations against Williams before the Union County Board of County Commissioners. The claims stemmed from the permitting process on a house Williams was building.

The county board investigated and found no issues in the matter. Rhoades and Woodington then drove to the Gainesville office of State Attorney Brian Kramer to submit the allegations.

In response, the board hired labor attorneys Constangy and Brooks to conduct an investigation on its behalf.

While Kramer's report to the board found substance to the allegations, the labor attorneys found nothing and even commented on the inaccuracies in the state attorney's report, including the fact that the custodian of public records (Rhoades) did not supply the requested and subpoenaed records of emails related to the matter.

This was confirmed by Union County's IT Specialist. Constangy and Brooks found no sufficient evidence of wrongdoing by Williams. The matter was then pushed on to the Florida State Ethics Commission by Kramer and Rhoades.

The county coordinator said he is glad to be cleared of all charges, but he regrets the effect the process has had on him.

Tigers Den to close

December 18, 2024

Union County School Board members voted to close the district's daycare before or on June 30 during a December 17 school board meeting.

During the same meeting, the board also ended a cell phone reimbursement policy, terminated the district's contract completion supplement, and modified support of some employee health benefits.

School Board Member Becky Raulerson said she asked a lot of questions about the proposed cuts and appreciated community feedback.

"I did the best job I could to represent my constituency and at the same time, I have to remember that my job is to protect our student body and the

integrity of our district, including the financial integrity of our district."

Board Member Chris Hodgson directed the audience to photos of previous board members in the building's foyer and said that the current board's difficult

decisions were one in a long line of challenges past district leaders have faced.

"A lot of struggles went behind the scenes there," he said of previous district difficulties, "depending on what time and what year it was and what the

climate was. And that goes from schools burning to recessions to a lot of needs. So, I can only imagine any decision that they made was well thought out as well."



Russ WADE

Attorney at Law



620 East Main Street
Lake Butler, FL 32054
(Across from Subway Plaza)

386-496-9656

Probate • Family • Wills • Adoption • Litigation • Corporate

CRIME DOESN'T PAY BUT WE DO!

REWARDS

UP TO

\$3,000

FIRST COAST CRIME STOPPERS



Remain Anonymous
CALL TOLL FREE

1-866-845-TIPS (8477)

Submit a TIP ON-LINE at:
www.FCCrimeStoppers.com

PD BY CSTF

Union County's Simmons and Thomas 3rd in Florida Dairy Farmers voting

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School running back Drew Simmons finished third in voting for the Florida Dairy Farmers Rural Class Player of the Year, while the Tigers' Andrew Thomas was third in Rural Coach of the Year voting.

Simmons, a sophomore, rushed for 17 touchdowns and more than 1,400 yards. The team's featured back had the second-most total yards on the team behind dual-threat quarterback Trenton Klein and was in the top five in the state for rushing yards in the Rural Class.

In terms of yards, Simmons' best game was in a 38-7 win over Hudson in which he gained 218 yards on 17 carries. He rushed for more than 100 yards in all but three of the Tigers' 12 games.

Simmons had three games

in which he rushed for three touchdowns: a 35-0 win over Keystone, a 47-14 win over Zarephath Academy and a 42-20 playoff win over Holmes County.

Senior running back/linebacker Jason McDaniel of state-champion Madison County (the team that ended the Tigers' season in the state semifinals) was the Rural Player of the Year, while senior running back Keenon Johnson of state runner-up Hawthorne was second in voting.

In guiding the Tigers to a 10-2 record and a season in which they advanced to the state semifinals, Thomas earned the third-most points in Rural Coach-of-the-Year voting, finishing behind Madison County's Price Harris, who was first, and Hawthorne's Cornelius Ingram.

Former Union Head Coach Robby Pruitt, who's now at Williston, was fourth.

Thomas has coached five seasons at UCHS, winning at least eight games in each season with a total record of 46-14. The Tigers have advanced to at least the region-final round each year under Thomas and have reached the state semifinals in 2022 and 2024.

BHS boys defeat Bell for 3rd straight win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School was able to put several runs together whenever visiting Bell began cutting into the Tornadoes' lead, resulting in a 66-47 win in a boys basketball game on Jan. 4.

It was the first game of 2025 for the Tornadoes (7-2), who won their third straight and has now won seven of their last eight games.

A three-pointer by Maliki Cobarris was the start of a 12-3 second-quarter run that put Bradford up 30-17. Cobarris followed up his long-range shot with a two-point basket off a turnover. Another turnover led to a score by Jordan Cason.

Bell's Sheltin Varnon made a three-pointer, but the Tornadoes answered with five straight points. Cason scored off a Cobarris steal. Cobarris then had a rebound on the defensive end and got the ball back on the offensive end, knocking down a three-pointer for a 13-point lead.

The Bulldogs were able to trim Bradford's lead to nine before the Tornadoes' Breion Johnson sank

a three-point shot, making the score 33-21. Bell scored the next four points, which had Bradford taking an eight-point lead into the half.

Bradford scored the first five points of the third quarter. Cason drove to the basket for a score and picked up a foul. He made the awarded free throw. Johnson then scored following a turnover to put the Tornadoes ahead 38-25.

Bell cut its deficit to single digits before Bradford got two free throws from Cobarris and a Cason layup off a Steven Carter assist.

A three-pointer by Bell's Varnon helped the Bulldogs cut Bradford's lead to seven points. The teams exchanged baskets before the Tornadoes scored the final five points of the third quarter. Carter scored off a layup and drew a foul, making the awarded free throw. A steal by K.J. Taylor led to a Cason basket and a 51-40 Bradford lead.

The Tornadoes used a 9-1 run to go up by 17 in the fourth



Maliki Cobarris (second from left) drives to the basket for a second-half score.

See BHS, page 10

SHOP LOCAL ALL 2025 Highly Rated Local Businesses! 2025 SHOP LOCAL ALL

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

"Very friendly and caring staff. Left me feeling confident that my eye care and health was in good hands. Highly recommend."

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

"I would like to Thank Shawn & Dusty for coming here and fixing my well issues. They worked very hard and they were very respectful and knowledgeable. I would definitely recommend them. Again, Thank you so very much. If I could give more stars for these two gentlemen, I would."

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

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

STARKE US-301S 964-6078
Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

LAKE BUTLER 145 SW 6th Ave. 496-3079

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

"Teal Tile Carpet One is our hometown favorite businesses for all of our flooring needs! We are doing a small remodel to our mobile home and we chose Teal Tile Carpet One over all others because of their experience, their professional installation of our carpet and waterproof planking in our home, and for their great deals on high quality products. I highly recommend Teal Tile Carpet One for all of your flooring needs."

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

"The insurance agency helps keep the insurance prices down." "Always a great place to visit and get help!"

Craig Falstreux Heating & Air, Inc
228 S Walnut St, Starke, FL 32091
(352) 792-4426

"Our AC quit blowing last night and Danny came out first thing today and had the issue found and fixed within an hour! Fair price and extremely nice! Could not recommend them more! Thanks so much!"

Hearing Aids Today
450 S Lawrence Blvd, Keystone Heights, FL 32656
(352) 877-4471

"Very professional and compassionate in taking care of their customers. They are family owned and operated! The man that owns the place is the one that you deal with. The rest of the staff is amazing as well! As I am a local business owner also, I highly recommend. If there were more stars I would give them!"

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

"I really must give all the stars. I have never been to a place where everyone is kind and full of energy. I'm not going to lie- we were nervous, but they definitely made me feel at ease. I wish I'd known about this place sooner. Thank you!"

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

Open for business starting Wednesday, January 8th 2025!

Walk 18 holes for \$10

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

"I shopped around for septic pump out - picked them - they were right on time and did a good job as far as I can tell! Thank you much!"

Hometown Health & Wellness
110 Nightingale St, Keystone Heights, FL 32656
(352) 664-7702

"Hometown Health & Wellness has literally changed my life. I was sluggish, overwhelmed, overweight & irritated all the time. Bryan helped me fix all of that by regulating my hormones. They have a friendly staff & very attentive to your needs. I'm forever grateful to find someone to actually listen to me."

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

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

North Florida Land Works
(904) 263-6844

"Great family owned business. Had a really technical job and the owner James knocked it out with such professionalism. Super affordable! 10/10 would recommend."

Pressure Perfect Massage
By Lana Taylor MA58996 MM21459
7426 State Rd 21, Keystone Heights, FL 32656
(859) 415-3886

"Lana is amazing! I have gotten massages elsewhere and nobody compares to Lana. She listens to her patients needs and addresses them. I always feel like a new woman after I leave."

Stor-Mor of Starke
12046 US-301, Hampton, FL 32044
(386) 339-7543

"For all your portable building needs, contact Braxton Townsend. Great customer service and wonderful products."

Turners Automotive & Transmission
135 Commercial Cir, Keystone Heights, FL 32656
(352) 473-3404

"Fast turnaround time and fair prices. The technicians kept us well informed of the progress and called with any additional issues. First time customers and we will return. Awesome job! Will recommend 10/10."

GT Plumbing Lic. #RF11067979
4050 L.M. Gaines Blvd, Starke, FL 32091
904-796-7228
GTPlumbing.com

- New construction
- Septic tank & drain field installation
- Building, sewer, & drain repair
- Bathroom, shower, & kitchen remodels
- Service calls • Back flow certified

Miller HVAC Services, Inc.
(904) 626-0963
Serving Northeast FL

"You can't go wrong with Miller HVAC, they have a dedicated team in providing excellent service, excellent customer skills, service with a smile and at a great price!! They care about your needs! Customer service goes a long way, i will always use Miller HVAC and you should too!!! They are there when you need them!!!!"

T.E.S. Rentals
2000 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091
(904) 452-0888

"These guys do great business, highly recommend! Truly outstanding customer service and very fair pricing."

C & S Site Prep
22787 NW 34th Ave, Lawtey, FL 32058
(352) 235-1210

Land Clearing, Driveway, Culverts, Excavation, Ponds, House Pads, Drainage, Grading, Erosion Control, Dirt, Lime Rock, Asphalt, Sand, Crushed Concrete, 57 Stone

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

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

Indians and Tigers play each other in boys, girls basketball

UCHS boys end 2-game skid with 73-46 victory

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Three players scored in double figures, with Gavin Jenkins pouring in a game-high 19 points as the Union County High School boys basketball team began play in 2025 with a 73-46 win over host Keystone Heights on Jan. 3.

The Tigers outscored the Indians 18-2 in the second quarter en route to ending a two-game losing streak.

Early baskets by Ty Mitzel and Michael Petty, who had a three-pointer, gave Keystone an early 5-2 lead.

A three-pointer by R.J. Odom sparked a 9-0 Union run, giving the Tigers a lead they'd never relinquish. Jenkins went to the foul line after a Keystone turnover, making 1 of 2 free throws. Jamie "Bubba" McGhee rebounded the miss and scored to put Union up 8-5. Then, after McGhee grabbed a rebound on the defensive end, Jenkins made a three-point shot for a six-point Tigers lead.



Union's Gavin Jenkins (right) takes a three-point shot against Keystone's Michael Petty. Jenkins led all scorers with 19 points.

Baskets by Petty and Cooper Barry, as well as two free throws by Brody Stevens, helped the Indians make it a three-point game. Union then got a free

throw from Jenkins before Odom, off his own steal, spun away from a defender and scored on a layup that sent the Tigers into the second quarter leading 17-11.

The second quarter was all Union. Odom knocked down a three-point shot, followed by a free throw from Tyrese Chandler. The Tigers then took advantage of four turnovers, with the first two leading to baskets by Isaiah Folaji. Jenkins drained a three-pointer, while Adrian Manns scored off an offensive rebound, putting Union ahead 30-11.

Jenkins, who had 14 first-half points, connected again from beyond the arc for a 22-point Union lead.

Keystone finally scored points on a drive to the basket by Petty, but a Manns basket off an Odom assist (and another Indians turnover) sent the Tigers into halftime leading 35-13.

The Tigers had runs of 8-1 and 7-2 in the third quarter and held a 27-point lead at one point.

Jenkins and Jashun Green each scored five points in the third quarter, which ended with Union leading 52-28.

See UCHS, page 10

KHHS girls pull away in 2nd, 3rd quarters for win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Host Keystone Heights High School outscored Union County 21-8 in the second and third quarters in defeating the Tigers 38-18 in a girls basketball game on Jan. 3.

Neither team shot well, but Union struggled mightily in the second and third quarters, making just two of 30-plus field-goal attempts.

It wasn't until three minutes after tip-off when the first points were scored, courtesy of the Tigers' Brooke Hunt.

The Indians committed seven turnovers and missed their first seven field-goal attempts before Riley Shuford knocked down a three-pointer with 2:21 left in the first quarter. It was the first of two long-range shots by Keystone in the quarter, with McKinlee Kirkland dropping a shot in from beyond the arc with 38 seconds remaining to put the Indians ahead 6-2.

Union's Heaven Scott rebounded her own miss and put



Keystone's Riley Shuford scores two of her 14 points on a layup.

it back before the buzzer, making it a 6-4 game entering the second quarter.

Scott made a three-pointer to give the Tigers a 7-6 lead, but

it would be Union's only field goal of the quarter. Shuford sank a three-point shot to give the Indians the lead for good and followed that with a basket off her own steal for an 11-7 Keystone lead.

Iamorieah Williams made a free throw for the Tigers before Shuford turned a steal into another basket for Keystone, making it a five-point game.

Shuford finished the game with five steals.

The Tigers got a free throw from Scott to make the score 13-9 with 49 seconds remaining until halftime. Union threatened to narrow the margin even more on a fastbreak opportunity, but Shuford blocked the shot attempt from behind — her second such block in the quarter.

Keystone's Rigby Morford went to the foul line with 13 seconds on the clock. She made one of her two free-throw attempts, with the Indians rebounding the miss. Keystone was unsuccessful on one field-goal attempt, but a Kadence Massey rebound led to a basket by Kirkland before the buzzer, giving the Indians a 16-9 halftime lead.

See KHHS, page 10





Calee Hinson
386-406-0119
2518 State Rd 21,
Melrose, FL 32666
"Their knowledgeable and professional attitude is a winning combination."
For Sale!



MLS #GC527193



Justis Smith
352-258-4619
100 E Nightingale St.
Keystone Heights, FL 32656
justis@southland-realty.com
7060 Stetson Street
Keystone Heights, FL 32656
For Sale!



MLS #11338853



HOMES ONLY LOT
High and dry beautiful lot ready for your new home!
0.41 acres with beautiful shade trees and on the corner of a paved and gravel road. Zoned homes only, no mobile homes allowed. Minutes from town and zoned Keystone Heights Elementary School.

Featured Listings From Your Local Realtors!



MeLissa Pellerito
352-494-1829 call/text
mpelleritorealtor@gmail.com
275 S Lawrence Blvd • Ste 1
Keystone Heights, FL 32656



For Sale!
MLS #2059965



Marty & Lisa Shaw
904-964-9222
415 E Call St,
Starke, FL 32091



For Sale!
MLS #2059461



"Absolutely amazing to work with MeLissa. Her professionalism, market knowledge, prompt attention to all matters makes her a true professional who cares about the service she provides. Thanks MeLissa!"



6519 Triest Avenue
Keystone Heights, FL 32656



COLDWELL BANKER
SMITH & SMITH REALTY

"Marty and Lisa helped my husband and I purchase some property back in March. We were almost to closing when all the chaos from COVID-19 started. Through it all they worked over time to help us get all the details organized, finalized, and to closing on time. Not a single step was missed and we could not have been more pleased with their professionalism and coordination of all of our needs."



10992 SW 106th Avenue
Hampton, FL 32044

TRI-COUNTY / LAKE REGION

Classified Ads

EFFECTIVE • HYPER LOCAL • ECONOMICAL

Telegraph • Times • Monitor

904-964-6305

classads@bctelegraph.com

Where one call does it all!



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"

Class Ads 01/09/25

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

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

65 Help Wanted

HOUSEKEEPER wanted. Call 904-263-8715 for details.

HERITAGE VILLAS
Accepting Applications for 1 & 2 BR Apts

607 Bradford Court
Starke, FL 32091
904-964-6216
TDD 771

This Institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider

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

Licensed • Bonded • Insured • Lic# IH/1025656



WELL DRILLING

QUALITY SERVICE SINCE 1964

24 Hr. PUMP SERVICE

964-7061

STATE LICENSE #1305

DURRANCE PUMP



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"

Tri-County Classifieds

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

INDEX

40 Notice	57 For Sale
41 Vehicles Accessories	58 Building Materials
42 Motor Vehicles	59 Personal Services
43 Rv's & Campers	60 Secretarial Services
44 Boats	61 Scriptures
45 Land for Sale	62 Vacation/Travel
46 Real Estate Out of Area	63 Love Lines
47 Commercial Property Rent, Lease, Sell	64 Business Opportunity
48 Homes for Sale	65 Help Wanted
49 Mobile Homes for Sale	66 Investment Opportunity
50 For Rent	67 Hunting Land for Rent
51 Lost/Found	68 Rent to Own
52 Animals & Pets	69 Food Supplements
53 Yard Sales	70 Money to Lend
54 Keystone Yard Sales	72 Sporting Goods
55 Wanted	74 Computers & Computer Accessories
56 Trade or Swap	

Reach All 3 Counties Bradford • Union • Clay

Worded Classified Ad up to 25 words is \$10
Classified Display Ad is \$10 per col. inch
Deadline for Classified ads - **Tuesday 12 noon**

904-964-6305
classads@bctelegraph.com

WE ACCEPT
MasterCard Visa American Express

Tornadoes win 24-23 in home wrestling match with Tigers

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's Taylor Touchton and Union County's Matthew Rogers battled into the second period before Touchton

won by a pin in 3:05, which gave the host Tornadoes a 24-23 win over the Tigers in a Jan. 6 wrestling match.

The matchup between Touchton and Rogers was the

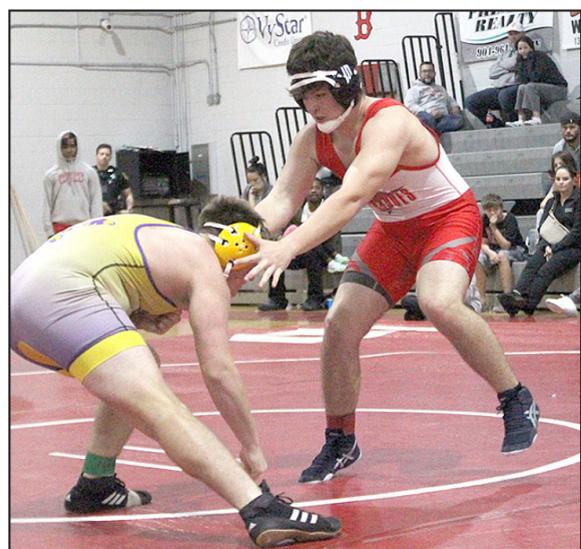
final one of the night. Wins by Hunter Cruz and Wyatt Elixson, along with Bradford forfeiting a weight class, had Union in the lead before Touchton's win.

Two Bradford wrestlers (Aiden Scott and Jonathon Armstrong) were awarded wins due to Union having no wrestlers in the 120- and 126-pound classes. The first head-to-head matchup then took place, with the Tornadoes' Jayden Prevatt facing off against the Tigers' Gavin Sparkman in the 138 class. Sparkman pinned Prevatt in 1:18 for Union's first win of the night.

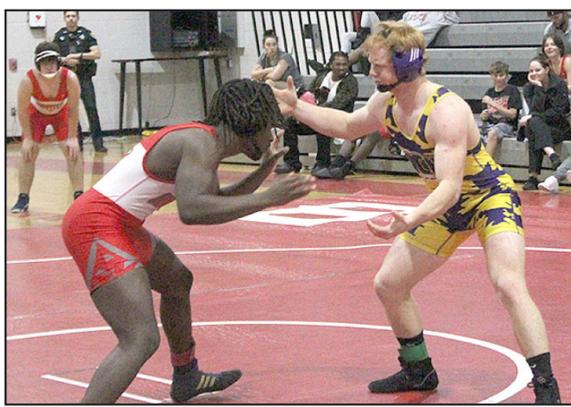
The 144 class saw Bradford's Wyatt Acevedo pin Union's Jarred Bennett in 43 seconds. The Tigers' Cruz then earned a win for Union when he pinned Bradford's Miguel Rivera in 3:36 in the 150 class.

Union's Akireon Boykin was awarded a win due to the Tornadoes not having a wrestler in the 157 class.

Both teams had wrestlers in the 175 class, with the Tigers' Elixson and the Tornadoes' Tremeze White battling each other into the third period. Elixson led 7-1 after the first



Bradford's Taylor Touchton (right) wrestles against Union's Matthew Rogers in the 215 class. Touchton won to give Bradford the team win.



Bradford's Tremeze White (left) and Union's Wyatt Elixson size each other up in the 175-pound class matchup, which Elixson won.

period and 10-1 after the second before finally pinning White in 4:18.

That set up the pivotal match between Touchton and Rogers in the 215 class. Rogers led 6-3 after the first period. The wrestlers battled for approximately one minute in the second period before Touchton got the pin.

Bradford will return to action in a dual-meet at Palatka on Thursday, Jan. 9, at 6 p.m. The Tornadoes then take part in Dual at the Dunes at Fernandina Beach on Saturday, Jan. 11, at 9:15 a.m.

Union will compete in the Billy Saylor Duals at Suwannee on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 10-11. Action begins at 3 p.m. on Jan. 10 and at 9 a.m. on Jan. 11.

BHS, UCHS each have 3rd-, 4th-place wrestlers at the Joe Bees Memorial

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford and Union County high schools competed in the Jan. 3-4 Joe Bees Memorial: Battle of the Border at Yulee High School, with each team having a third-place wrestler and a fourth-place wrestler.

Union's Gavin Sparkman took third in the 138-pound class. He opened by pinning an opponent in 17 seconds before suffering a 15-0 loss by technical fall in the second round. Sparkman then won by a pin of 1:46 before recording a 16-1 win by technical fall over Yulee's Isaiah Stutsman.

Daniel Banda of Bradford was third in the 165 class. After opening with a 4-0 loss,

he pinned an opponent in 44 seconds, defeated another by a score of 21-19 and then recorded another pin (2:38) to advance to the third-place match. There, Banda pinned Peter Fallon of Benedictine Military School (Savannah, Georgia) in 2:31.

Bradford's Miguel Rivera wrestled in the 150 class. After getting pinned in 1:50, he pinned an opponent in 35 seconds to reach the third-place match. He finished fourth after getting pinned in 3:52 by Eric Albert of Nease.

Carsen Thomas represented Union in the 175 class. He had a couple of wins by a pin (1:40) and a forfeit before finishing in fourth place.

Union's Alec French went 3-1 in the 132 class before losing in the consolation semifinals. He pinned opponents in 52 seconds, 1:13 and 26 seconds for all of his wins.

Bradford and Union each had one wrestler go 2-2. The Tornadoes' Tremeze White did so in the 175 class, pinning two opponents in 4:37 and 1:21, while the Tigers' Preston Griffin pinned opponents in 36 seconds and 1:17 in the 190 class.

The Tigers had three wrestlers with one win each: Elijah Roberts by forfeit in the 157 class, Jameson Lang by a pin of 1:16 in the 175 class and C.J. Ivey by a pin of 2:38 in the 190 class.

BMS defeats LBMS for the program's 1st-ever victory

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford Middle School won nine of the 12 head-to-head matches, giving the program its first-ever win as the Tornadoes topped visiting Lake Butler on Jan. 6.

The first-year Bradford program defeated the Tigers 65-48 after falling behind 24-0.

Bradford didn't have wrestlers in the 75- and 80-pound weight classes, giving Lake Butler two wins by forfeiture. The Tigers then got two straight wins in head-to-head competition, with Kyson Waters and Winston Sparkman both pinning their opponents in less than 20 seconds in the 85- and 90-pound weight classes.

The Tornadoes got their first win with Demetrius Hunter pinning his opponent in 22 seconds to win the 95 class.

Lake Butler was awarded another two wins due to forfeitures, which put the Tigers ahead as a team 36-6.

Julius Givings and Nathaniel Givings gave Bradford wins in the 113 and 120 classes, respectively, with both pinning their opponents — Julius Givings in 25 seconds and Nathaniel Givings in 47 seconds.

The Tigers' Landon Douglas won the 126 class, recording a pin in 1:02.

Bradford got a 17-1 win by technical fall in the 132 class

RIGHT: Bradford's Julius Givings (top) wrestles his way to a win over Benjamin Russell in the 113 class. BELOW RIGHT: Bradford's Colton Rowe (top) earned a win over Easton Tetstone in the 138 class.



from Stanley Varnum. That was followed by Colton Rowe pinning his opponent in 36 seconds to give the Tornadoes the win in the 138 class.

The Tornadoes had to forfeit the 145 class, which put the score at 48-29 in favor of Lake Butler.

Bradford recorded three straight wins by pins, with Mason Lowe earning the victory in the 150 class in 23 seconds, Jaland Carey earning the win in the 157 class in 25 seconds and Keden Drayton earning the win in the 165 class in 1:03.

Lake Butler didn't have a wrestler in the 190 class, which gave Bradford a forfeit win and a 53-48 lead. Kaison Pierce then



pinned his opponent in 2:42 to win the 215 class.

The Tigers also had to forfeit the heavyweight class, which accounted for the 65-48 final score.



Lake Butler's Kyson Waters works toward pinning Avery Gardner to win the 85 class.

BHS

Continued from page 8

quarter. Cobarris made a free throw before Larry Ardley had a layup off a Carter assist. After another free throw by Cobarris, Carter knocked down a three-pointer following a turnover. Cobarris scored on a drive to the basket to make the score 60-43.

UCHS

Continued from page 9

Petty and Dereon Tochtermann combined to score all but one of Keystone's 15 third-quarter points, with Petty making two three-pointers.

Chandler had a big fourth quarter for the Tigers with 10 points, while Keystone's Brayden Wester, set up by three assists from Petty and one from Tochtermann, scored eight points

on layups. The Tigers' Jenkins led all scorers with 19 points. Union also got 13 points from Chandler, 12 from Odom, eight from Green, six each from Folaji and Manns, five from Jacques McKenzie and two each from McGhee and Erick Lasseter.

Petty led Keystone with 15 points, while Tochtermann had 14. The Indians also got eight points from Wester, three from Barry and two each from Stevens and Jamari Turner.

Union traveled to play

Johnson led the team in blocks with four and steals with three.

Carter and Taylor had five and four assists, respectively.

Bradford returns to action with three straight home games — against Middleburg on Thursday, Jan. 9, Baldwin on Friday, Jan. 10 and Baker County on Saturday, Jan. 11. All tip off at 7:30 p.m.

The Tornadoes travel to play Palatka on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 7:30 p.m.

on layups.

The Tigers' Jenkins led all scorers with 19 points. Union also got 13 points from Chandler, 12 from Odom, eight from Green, six each from Folaji and Manns, five from Jacques McKenzie and two each from McGhee and Erick Lasseter.

Petty led Keystone with 15 points, while Tochtermann had 14. The Indians also got eight points from Wester, three from Barry and two each from Stevens and Jamari Turner.

Union traveled to play

Branford on Jan. 4, winning 60-55 in overtime to improve to 5-2 on the season. The Tigers played Dixie County this past Tuesday and will host Branford on Saturday, Jan. 11, at 7:30 p.m.

The Indians (2-8) played North Marion this past Tuesday and will host Palatka on Friday, Jan. 10, at 7:30 p.m. Keystone then travels to play Ridgeview on Monday, Jan. 13, at 7:30 p.m.

Keystone and Union play each other again on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 8 p.m. in Lake Butler.

KHHS

Continued from page 9

The Indians opened the third quarter with an 8-2 run, getting all eight points from Shuford and Daisy Hubbard.

Shuford finished with a game-high 14 points, while Hubbard was the game's second-highest scorer with nine points.

As the Tigers continued to struggle from the field, Keystone's Massey added to her rebound totals, finishing the game with 16.

Keystone held a 27-12 lead before Union scored the first six points of the fourth quarter. Faith Sirmones scored the Tigers' first two points, followed by a Scott basket that was set up by a Williams steal. Another

Keystone turnover led to a basket by Gabrielle Moore, making the score 27-18.

Moore's basket accounted for the Tigers' final points.

Brynn Creekmore ended the Indians' brief drought when she sank a three-pointer. Hubbard then scored off a Shuford assist, followed by Morford's basket off a rebound putback. Hubbard scored again — this time off a Massey assist — while a basket by Massey off a Morford assist ended the scoring.

Kirkland finished with five points for the Indians, who also got three points each from Creekmore and Morford. Massey added two points.

Scott led Union with eight points. Sirmones was the Tigers' second-leading scorer with four points.

The Indians, who earned their second win, played North Marion this past Tuesday and will travel to play Crescent City on Thursday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m. Keystone returns home to play Palatka on Friday, Jan. 10, at 6 p.m.

Union, which also has two wins, played at Branford the night after playing Keystone, losing 51-15. The Tigers played Cedar Key this past Tuesday and will travel to Gainesville to play The Rock on Thursday, Jan. 9, at 5:30 p.m. Union travels to play Santa Fe on Friday, Jan. 10, at 6 p.m. and returns home to play Branford on Saturday, Jan. 11, at 6 p.m.

Keystone and Union play each other again on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at 6:30 p.m. in Lake Butler.



THE JACKSONVILLE PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS
APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING PROGRAM IS

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS "NOW"

Become a highly skilled craftsman in the trades of plumbing,
pipefitting, welding or the air-conditioning refrigeration field.

**JOB PLACEMENTS • INSURANCE
RETIREMENT BENEFITS
PLUMBERS / PIPEFITTERS / HVAC**

The Jacksonville Plumbers & Pipefitters Joint Apprenticeship
Training Program is accepting applications for
Applications are now being accepted for the 2025-2026
Application period is January 6, 2025 – April 4, 2025.

Applications are available as follows:

489 Stevens St., Jacksonville, FL 32254

Weekdays, 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. &

1:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. (4:30 p.m. on April 5, 2025)

OR

2420 NE 17th Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32609

Wednesdays ONLY, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

For more information, call (904) 781-2112 or
to Apply Now visit <https://ua234.com/training>

We Are an Equal Opportunity Program.

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Jan. 9, 2025

BRADFORD

NOTICE OF SALE
Ron Denmark Mini Storage will hold a public auction on January 10, 2025 10:00am at 2117 N. Temple Ave. Starke, FL on the following units containing personal items:
Unit 96 Belonging to R. Austin
Unit 138 Belonging to F. Barnes
Unit 98 Belonging to S. Hampton
Unit 117 Belonging to T. Reed
Unit 102 Belonging to I. Tisdale
Unit 95 Belonging to T. Weaver
Unit 50 Belonging to A. Williams
Unit 110 Belonging to V. Atkinson
1/2 2tchg 1/9-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO. 23000430CAAXMX
JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, Plaintiff,

vs. RYAN RUSSELL RAMSEY; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF RYAN RUSSELL RAMSEY; UNKNOWN PERSON(S) IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, Defendant(s)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
(Please publish in BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure filed November 12, 2024 and entered in Case No. 23000430CAAXMX, of the Circuit Court of the 8th Judicial Circuit in and for BRADFORD County, Florida, wherein JPMORGAN CHASE BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION is Plaintiff and RYAN RUSSELL RAMSEY; UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF RYAN RUSSELL RAMSEY; UNKNOWN PERSON(S) IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY; are defendants. DENNY THOMPSON, the Clerk of the Circuit Court, will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash IN THE LOBBY OF THE COURTHOUSE, at 945 NORTH TEMPLE AVENUE, STARKE in BRADFORD County, FLORIDA 32091, at 11:00 A.M. EST, on January 23, 2025, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:
LOT 7
A parcel of land situated in the South One Half of the Northeast One Quarter of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCE at a concrete monument at the Southeast corner of said NE 1/4 and run S 89 deg 39 min 07 sec W, along the South line of said NE 1/4 a distance of 1429.18 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, 495.00 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, along the center-line of a 60 foot easement for Utilities and general road purposes, 140.00 feet; thence run S 70 deg 11 min 40 sec E, 390 feet more or less to the center-line of Gum Creek; thence run Southwesterly along said centerline to a point bearing S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec W, 352 feet to the point of beginning.
SUBJECT TO an easement for Utilities and general road purposes across the Westerly 30 feet thereof.
SUBJECT TO the easement right of way as recorded in Deed book 90, Page 377, of the public records of Bradford County, Florida.
LOT 8
A parcel of land situated in the South One Half of the Northeast One Quarter of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCE at a concrete monument at the Southeast corner of said NE 1/4 and run S 89 deg 39 min 07 sec W, along the South line of said NE 1/4 a distance of 1429.18 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, 355 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, along the center-line of a 60 foot easement for Utilities and general road purposes 140.00 feet; thence run S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, 352 feet more or less to the center-line of Gum Creek; thence run Southwesterly along said center-line to a point bearing S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, from the point of beginning; thence run N 75 deg 41 min 40 sec W, 335 feet to the point of beginning.
SUBJECT TO an easement for Utilities and general road purposes across the Westerly 30 feet thereof.
SUBJECT TO the easement right of way as recorded in Deed book 90, Page 377, of the public records of Bradford County, Florida.
LOT 8
A parcel of land situated in the South One Half of the Northeast One Quarter of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCE at a concrete monument at the Southeast corner of said NE 1/4 and run S 89 deg 39 min 07 sec W, along the South line of said NE 1/4 a distance of 1429.18 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, 355 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, along the center-line of a 60 foot easement for Utilities and general road purposes 140.00 feet; thence run S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, 352 feet more or less to the center-line of Gum Creek; thence run Southwesterly along said center-line to a point bearing S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, from the point of beginning; thence run N 75 deg 41 min 40 sec W, 335 feet to the point of beginning.
SUBJECT TO an easement for Utilities and general road purposes across the Westerly 30 feet thereof.
SUBJECT TO the easement right of way as recorded in Deed book 90, Page 377, of the public records of Bradford County, Florida.
LOT 8
A parcel of land situated in the South One Half of the Northeast One Quarter of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCE at a concrete monument at the Southeast corner of said NE 1/4 and run S 89 deg 39 min 07 sec W, along the South line of said NE 1/4 a distance of 1429.18 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, 355 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, along the center-line of a 60 foot easement for Utilities and general road purposes 140.00 feet; thence run S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, 352 feet more or less to the center-line of Gum Creek; thence run Southwesterly along said center-line to a point bearing S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, from the point of beginning; thence run N 75 deg 41 min 40 sec W, 335 feet to the point of beginning.
SUBJECT TO an easement for Utilities and general road purposes across the Westerly 30 feet thereof.
SUBJECT TO the easement right of way as recorded in Deed book 90, Page 377, of the public records of Bradford County, Florida.
LOT 8
A parcel of land situated in the South One Half of the Northeast One Quarter of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

COMMENCE at a concrete monument at the Southeast corner of said NE 1/4 and run S 89 deg 39 min 07 sec W, along the South line of said NE 1/4 a distance of 1429.18 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, 355 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, along the center-line of a 60 foot easement for Utilities and general road purposes 140.00 feet; thence run S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, 352 feet more or less to the center-line of Gum Creek; thence run Southwesterly along said center-line to a point bearing S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, from the point of beginning; thence run N 75 deg 41 min 40 sec W, 335 feet to the point of beginning.
SUBJECT TO an easement for Utilities and general road purposes across the Westerly 30 feet thereof.
SUBJECT TO the easement right of way as recorded in Deed book 90, Page 377, of the public records of Bradford County, Florida.
LOT 8
A parcel of land situated in the South One Half of the Northeast One Quarter of Section 34, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows:

NE 1/4 a distance of 1429.18 feet to an iron pipe; thence run N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E, 215.00 feet to the point of beginning; thence continue N 14 deg 18 min 20 sec E along the center-line of a 60 foot easement for Utilities and general road purposes, 140.00 feet; thence run S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, 335 feet more or less to the center-line of Gum Creek; thence run Southwesterly along said center-line to a point bearing S 75 deg 41 min 40 sec E, from the point of beginning; thence run N 75 deg 41 min 40 sec W, 300 feet to the point of beginning.
SUBJECT TO an easement for Utilities and general road purposes across the Westerly 30 feet thereof.
TPN: 00551-0-00700 (lots 7-9)
Together with 1989 PINE Doublewide Mobile Home with Title No's 47469171 and 47501543 located thereon AND BEARING VIN# HMLCP28151504104A AND HMLCP28151504104B.
a/k/a 8462 NW 210TH STREET, STARKE, FLORIDA 32091
Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim before the Clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed.
Dated this 31st day of December, 2024.

/s/ Eric Knopp, Esq.
Bar. No.: 709921
Kahane & Associates, P.A.
1619 NW 136th Avenue, Suite D-220 Sunrise, Florida 33323
Telephone: (954) 382-3486
Telefacsimile: (954) 382-5380
Designated service email: notice@kahaneandassociates.com

This notice is provided pursuant to Administrative Order No.2.065. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to provisions of certain assistance. Please contact the Court Administrator at 945 North Temple Avenue, Rm. 137, Starke, FL 32091, Phone No. (904)966-6280 within 2 working days of your receipt of this notice or pleading; if you are hearing impaired, call 1-800-955-8771 (TDD); if you are voice impaired, call 1-800-995-8770 (V) (Via Florida Relay Services).
Submitted by:
Kahane & Associates, P.A.
1619 NW 136th Avenue, Suite D-220 Sunrise, Florida 33323
Telephone: (954) 382-3486
Telefacsimile: (954) 382-5380
Designated service email: notice@kahaneandassociates.com
1/9 1tchg 1/16-BCT

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the following application for permit was received on August 1, 2024:

Justin Garland of FDOT, 1109 South Marion Avenue, Lake City, FL 32025, has submitted an environmental resource permit (ERP) application number ERP-007-249431-1. The project is located in Bradford County, Section 4 and 5, Township 7 South, Range 21 East, Sections 30,31, and 32, Township 6 South, Range 21 East, Sections 24 and 25, Township 6 South, and Range 20 East, and includes 49.76-acres. Interested persons may comment upon the application or submit a written request for a staff report containing proposed agency action regarding the application by writing to the Suwannee River Water Management District, Attn: Resource Management, 9225 C.R. 49, Live Oak, Florida 32060. Such comments or requests must be received by 5:00 PM within 14 days from the date of publication.
No further public notice will be provided regarding this application. A copy of the staff report must be requested in order to remain advised of further proceedings. Substantially affected persons are entitled to request an administrative hearing, pursuant to Title 28, Florida Administrative Code, regarding the proposed agency action by submitting a written request after reviewing the staff report.
PUBLISH: no later than January 9, 2025 /tm
1/9 1tchg-BCT

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the following application for permit was received on December 13, 2024:
North Florida Reforestation Services, Inc, PO Box 365, Lake Butler, FL 32054-0365, has submitted Water Use Permit application 250405-1, to use 0.1261 million gallons per day of groundwater for agricultural use. This project is located in Section 33, Township 6S, Range 20E, in Bradford County.
Interested persons may comment upon the application or submit a written request for a staff report containing proposed agency action regarding the application by writing to the Suwannee River Water Management District, Attn: Resource Management, 9225 C.R. 49, Live

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the following application for permit was received on December 13, 2024:
North Florida Reforestation Services, Inc, PO Box 365, Lake Butler, FL 32054-0365, has submitted Water Use Permit application 250405-1, to use 0.1261 million gallons per day of groundwater for agricultural use. This project is located in Section 33, Township 6S, Range 20E, in Bradford County.
Interested persons may comment upon the application or submit a written request for a staff report containing proposed agency action regarding the application by writing to the Suwannee River Water Management District, Attn: Resource Management, 9225 C.R. 49, Live

Oak, Florida 32060. Such comments or requests must be received by 5:00 PM within 14 days from the date of publication.
No further public notice will be provided regarding this application. A copy of the staff report must be requested in order to remain advised of further proceedings. Substantially affected persons are entitled to request an administrative hearing, pursuant to Title 28, Florida Administrative Code, regarding the proposed agency action by submitting a written request after reviewing the staff report.
PUBLISH: no later than January 9, 2025 /tm
1/9 1tchg-BCT

COMMISSION MEETING
THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on January 16, 2025, 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. Said meeting location is secured – no firearms or weapons are permitted.
1/9 1tchg-BCT

REQUEST FOR BIDS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Bradford County S.H.I.P. Program will receive sealed bids until 2:30 p.m. January 24, 2025 at the Bradford County Office of the County Clerk located at 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, Florida 32091 for the following:
Renovation/Demo Replacement of residence located at: 17843 NW 48th Avenue, Starke, FL 24582 Grove Street, Lawtey, FL Demo/Replacement- 707 North Street, Starke, FL
A mandatory walk through is a prerequisite to a valid bid. All interested bidders will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at the Community Development Office located at 925-E North Temple Avenue in Starke, Florida. If you plan to submit a bid, a representative of your firm must attend the "walk through" of the unit to become familiar with the property and the scope of work to be completed.
No contractors shall visit the subject property for any reason without first making arrangements with the County and owner.
All contractors must have proof of Residential or General Contractor's License, proof of Liability Insurance, proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance (or Exemption Card), a statement of non-discrimination, and at least two references from previously completed jobs.
Bids will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, January 24, 2025 or as soon thereafter as possible in the presence of the Clerk or his designee, Community Development staff, and all interested persons in the Bradford County Board of County Commission Meeting Room.
The opened bids will be read into public record and preserved in the custody of the Community Development Department.
Bids will not be valid unless received by the bid deadline and in a sealed envelope marked, "Sealed Bid, S.H.I.P." and received by 2:30 p.m., January 24, 2025.
Questions to be submitted in writing to the Community Development office at kelly_canady@bradfordcountyfl.gov or Fax (904) 966-6384 no later than 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 22, 2025.
The County reserves the right to reject all bids when in its best judgment they are too high or when it is determined to be in the best interest of the County that the bids be re-advertised.
Pursuant to Section 255.0991, Florida Statutes, Bradford County WILL NOT offer a local preference for this project.
It is the policy of the County to promote equal opportunity to obtain adequate housing by all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, handicap, or national origin.
1/9 1tchg-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO. 24000397CAAXMX
VYSTAR CREDIT UNION, Plaintiff,
vs. ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, CREDITORS, DEVISEES, BENEFICIARIES, GRANTEEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF MARIAN KATHLEEN MCRAE, DECEASED; MICHAEL JAMES MCRAE; UNKNOWN PERSON(S) IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, Defendant(s)
NOTICE OF ACTION
To the following Defendant(s):
ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, CREDITORS, DEVISEES,

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME
Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: Donna M. Brantley, P. O. Box 733, Starke, FL 32091, JOINT owner, doing business under the firm name of: DONNA BZZZ, LLC, 4131 NW CR 233, Starke, FL 32091, intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 6TH day of JANUARY A.D., 2025, in BRADFORD County.
1/9 1tchg-BCT

INVITATION TO BID
The Bradford County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting sealed proposals for improvements to Fire Station #90 in Sampson City. Qualified firms or individuals desiring to provide the required products or services must submit two (2) packages in a sealed envelope or similar package marked "Sealed Proposal for Fire Station #90" to the Bradford County Clerk located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091 no later than 2:00 PM, local time, on Monday, January 27, 2025.
All proposals MUST have the responder's name and mailing address clearly shown on the outside of the envelope or package when submitted. Proposals will be opened and respondents announced at 2:15 PM, local time, or as soon thereafter as practical, on Monday, January 27, 2025, in the Board of County BOCC Chambers located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091. No faxed or emailed proposals will be accepted.
RFP will be provided to interested parties via email. Interested parties are to contact Christie McLelland with CHW, an NV5 Company at christie.mcllland@nv5.com to obtain an FTP link for download of the RFP.
A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the Board of County BOCC Chambers located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091 on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 11:00 AM. Representatives of Owner and Engineer will be present to discuss the project.
The County has set a maximum budget amount of \$650,000.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO. 24000397CAAXMX
VYSTAR CREDIT UNION, Plaintiff,
vs. ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, CREDITORS, DEVISEES, BENEFICIARIES, GRANTEEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF MARIAN KATHLEEN MCRAE, DECEASED; MICHAEL JAMES MCRAE; UNKNOWN PERSON(S) IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY, Defendant(s)
NOTICE OF ACTION
To the following Defendant(s):
ALL UNKNOWN HEIRS, CREDITORS, DEVISEES,

BENEFICIARIES, GRANTEEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF MARIAN KATHLEEN MCRAE, DECEASED (LAST KNOWN ADDRESS)
1210 BRADFORD STREET, STARKE, FLORIDA 32091
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action for Foreclosure of Mortgage on the following described property: LOT SIXTEEN (16), BLOCK SIX (6) SARATOGA HEIGHTS, UNIT 16 ACCORDING TO PLAT BOOK 2, PAGE 70, PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA. a/k/a 1210 BRADFORD STREET., STARKE, FLORIDA 32091 has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it, on Kahane & Associates, P.A., Attorney for Plaintiff, whose address is 1619 NW 136th Avenue, Suite D-220, Sunrise, FLORIDA 33323 on or before _____, a date which is within thirty (30) days after the first publication of this Notice in the BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH 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.
This notice is provided pursuant to Administrative Order No.2.065. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to provisions of certain assistance. Please contact the Court Administrator at 945 North Temple Avenue, Rm. 137, Starke, FL 32091, Phone No. (904)966-6280 within 2 working days of your receipt of this notice or pleading; if you are hearing impaired, call 1-800-955-8771 (TDD); if you are voice impaired, call 1-800-995-8770 (V) (Via Florida Relay Services). WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court this 27TH day of December, 2024.
DENNY THOMPSON
As Clerk of the Court
By Kyrah Smith
As Deputy Clerk
Publish: (Please publish in BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH)
Submitted by:
Kahane & Associates, P.A.
1619 NW 136th Avenue, Suite D-220 Sunrise, Florida 33323
Telephone: (954) 382-3486
Telefacsimile: (954) 382-5380
Designated service email: notice@kahaneandassociates.com
1/9 2tchg 1/16-BCT

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME
Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: Donna M. Brantley, P. O. Box 733, Starke, FL 32091, JOINT owner, doing business under the firm name of: DONNA BZZZ, LLC, 4131 NW CR 233, Starke, FL 32091, intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 6TH day of JANUARY A.D., 2025, in BRADFORD County.
1/9 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME
Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: Donna M. Brantley, P. O. Box 733, Starke, FL 32091, JOINT owner, doing business under the firm name of: DONNA BZZZ, LLC, 4131 NW CR 233, Starke, FL 32091, intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 6TH day of JANUARY A.D., 2025, in BRADFORD County.
1/9 1tchg-BCT

PUBLIC NOTICE
City of Lawtey Special Election
To finish term ending January 2026
CITY COMMISSION GROUP 3
Qualifying will be from noon January 27 until noon January 31st, 2025
Election Day is April 1, 2025
1/9 1tchg-BCT

INVITATION TO BID
The Bradford County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting sealed proposals for improvements to Fire Station #90 in Sampson City. Qualified firms or individuals desiring to provide the required products or services must submit two (2) packages in a sealed envelope or similar package marked "Sealed Proposal for Fire Station #90" to the Bradford County Clerk located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091 no later than 2:00 PM, local time, on Monday, January 27, 2025.
All proposals MUST have the responder's name and mailing address clearly shown on the outside of the envelope or package when submitted. Proposals will be opened and respondents announced at 2:15 PM, local time, or as soon thereafter as practical, on Monday, January 27, 2025, in the Board of County BOCC Chambers located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091. No faxed or emailed proposals will be accepted.
RFP will be provided to interested parties via email. Interested parties are to contact Christie McLelland with CHW, an NV5 Company at christie.mcllland@nv5.com to obtain an FTP link for download of the RFP.
A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the Board of County BOCC Chambers located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091 on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 11:00 AM. Representatives of Owner and Engineer will be present to discuss the project.
The County has set a maximum budget amount of \$650,000.

The County reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to reject any or all proposals, to cancel or withdraw this solicitation at any time and waive any irregularities in the RFP process. The County reserves the right to award any contract to the respondent which it deems to offer the best overall service; therefore, the County is not bound to award any contract based on the lowest quoted price. The County, in its sole and absolute discretion, also reserves the right to waive any minor defects in the process and to accept the proposal deemed to be in the County's best interest.
Additional information may be obtained from:
Ben Carter, Chief of Fire Rescue
(904) 966-6906
ben_carter@bradfordcountyfl.gov
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
Bradford County, Florida
1/9 1tchg-BCT

UNION

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the following application for permit was received on December 17, 2024:
Matthew Onken of Wawa Florida, LLC, 1911 NUS Highway 301, Tampa, FL, 33619-2642 has submitted an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) application number ERP-125-250425-1. The project is located in Union County, Section 31, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, and includes a total project area of 2 acres.
Interested persons may comment upon the application or submit a written request for a staff report containing proposed agency action regarding the application by writing to the Suwannee River Water Management District, Attn: Resource Management, 9225 C.R. 49, Live Oak, Florida 32060. Such comments or requests must be received by 5:00 PM within 14 days from the date of publication.
No further public notice will be provided regarding this application. A copy of the staff report must be requested in order to remain advised of further proceedings. Substantially affected persons are entitled to request an administrative hearing, pursuant to Title 28, Florida Administrative Code, regarding the proposed agency action by submitting a written request after reviewing the staff report.
PUBLISH: no later than January 9, 2025 /tm
1/9 1tchg-UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA CIVIL DIVISION
CASE NO.: 22000014CA
SOUTHWEST STAGE FUNDING, LLC DBA CASCADE FINANCIAL SERVICES Plaintiff(s),
vs. RANDALL A. GRIFFIS, JR.; et al., Defendant(s).

RE-NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT, pursuant to the Order Rescheduling Foreclosure Sale entered on November 21, 2024 in the above-

captioned action, the Clerk of Court will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at the front door lobby of the Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, Florida 32054 in accordance with Chapter 45, Florida Statutes on the 27th day of February, 2025 at 11:00 AM on the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment of Foreclosure or order, to wit:
A parcel of land lying in Section 30, Township 5 South, Range 21 East, Union County, Florida; said parcel being more particularly described as follows: Commence at a found 2 inch iron pipe located at the Northwest corner of said Section 30 and run North 84 degrees 29 minutes 06 seconds East, along the North line of said Section 30, for a distance of 1528.89 feet to a found 1/2 inch iron rod located on the Westerly right of way line of County Road 793 (80 feet right of way); thence run South 11 degrees 59 minutes 17 seconds East, along said Westerly right of way line, for a distance of 987.20 feet to a found 1/2 inch iron rod for the Point of Beginning. From the Point of Beginning thus described continue South 11 degrees 59 minutes 17 seconds East, along said Westerly right of way line, for a distance of 110.09 feet to a set 1/2 inch iron rod; thence run South 84 degrees 27 minutes 55 seconds West, for a distance of 409.74 feet to a set 1/2 inch iron rod located on the West line of the Northeast 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of said Section 30; thence run North 01 degrees 08 minutes 07 seconds West, along the West line of said Northeast 1/4 of Northwest 1/4, for a distance of 109.51 feet to a found 1/2 inch iron rod; thence run North 84 degrees 26 minutes 06 seconds East for a distance of 388.97 feet to the Point of Beginning. Subject to any covenants, easements, and/or restrictions of record. Together with that certain 2018 mobile home bearing Serial Numbers: LOHGA21833204A and LOHGA21833204B.
Property address: 11311 Northeast Country Road 793, Raiford, FL 32083
Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens, must file a claim before the clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed.
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at (352) 337-6237, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance. If you are hearing or voice impaired, please call 711. If you are deaf or hard of hearing and require an ASL interpreter or an assisted listening device to participate in a proceeding, please contact Court Interpreting at interpreter@courtfl8.org.
Kellie Hendricks-Rhoades
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
As Clerk of the Court
BY: Crystal Hollingsworth
Deputy Clerk
Publish in: The Union County Times
P.O Drawer A
Stark, FL 32091
Padgett Law Group, Attorney for Plaintiff
6267 Old Water Oak Road, Suite 203 Tallahassee, FL 32312
attorney@padgettlawgroup.com
1/9 2tchg 1/16-UCT

Terry McCarthy
Complete
TREE SERVICE & STUMP GRINDING
Free Estimates Provided!

We do tree removal, tree trimming, and skid steer mulching. We have a lift for those hard-to-reach heights and places! WE DO IT ALL!

904-364-7065 Fully Insured

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders
Attorney at Law

- Personal Injury
- Divorce and Family
- Bankruptcy
- Criminal Law
- Auto Accidents
- Real Estate
- Traffic/DUI
- Wills, Trusts, Probate
- Estate Planning

(904) 964-4111
407 W. Georgia St. • Starke

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

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

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

Lake Region Monitor
USPS 114-170

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Lakeystone 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

John Miller, Publisher

Editor: Dan Hildebrand	Sports Editor: Cliff Smelley
Advertising: John R. Tillman	Typesetting: Mary Goode
Advertising & Newspaper Prod: C. Hurston	Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts: Heather Wheeler
Bookkeeping Asst: Mary Goode	Front office Asst:

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

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
904-964-6305 • fax 904-964-8628

John Miller, Publisher

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

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

Obituaries

Billy Belford

It is with great sadness that the family of Billy James Belford announces his passing after a brief illness on Monday, Dec. 23, 2024, at the age of 71. He was born in Union County on Oct. 23, 1953, and was a lifelong resident of Lake Butler. He was a remarkable man and father who touched the lives and hearts of those who knew him. His laughter and caring gestures will echo in our memories as we carry on his legacy of kindness and joy. He was preceded in death by his father, James B. Reed; his mother, Pearl Mae Belford; one brother, Jerome Belford; and a niece, Angela Horne Williams.

He leaves behind to cherish his loving memory his two children, Javaris J. Belford and Monique Belford; and three grandchildren, Zaydian Belford, Adia Belford and Aniyah Purcell. He is also survived by five sisters, Bobbie J. Horne of Lake Butler, Ella Mae Haile and Latonia (Stephen) Foster, all of Starke, Erma J. Reed of Alachua, and Linda (Bobby) Albertie of Lake City; and one brother, Edward J. Reed of Lake City. In addition, he leaves behind a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and grieving friends who will share in the loss of his presence.

A visitation was held Thursday, Jan. 2, and a funeral service in his memory was held Friday, Jan. 3. Both were held at Archer-Milton Funeral Home, 55 N. Lake Ave., Lake Butler, 32054 with Elder Abraham L. Perry Sr., officiating. Those who desire to send memorial flowers and cards in memory of Billy Belford can send them to Archer-Milton Funeral Home, 55 N. Lake Ave., Lake Butler 32054.



PAID OBITUARY

Manda Lee Buck-Griffis

Manda Lee Buck-Griffis (Mandalee) of Lake City was born on July 9, 1943, in Starke. On Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024, she gained her wings, surrounded by two of her sons, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter at home in Arvada, Colorado at the age of 81. She was preceded in death by her husband, David Buck; father, Robert Rollin Griffis; mother, Viola Martha Johnson-Griffis; sisters, Jewell, Daphne, and Oleana Griffis; brothers, Homer, Earl, and W.L. Griffis; son, Robert Roland Griffis; and a great-granddaughter, Ivori Rose Mosley.

She is survived by her sons, Willie James Harris of Lake City, Elbert Leroy Bryant of Whitakers, North Carolina and Daniel Lee Bryant of Arvada, Colorado. Also left are her grandchildren, Elbert L. Bryant II, Jason A. Harris, Candace L. Dilda, Kennedy K. Bryant, Daniel L. Bryant, and Dean Bryant; along with 14 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends at Dyal Cemetery on Thursday, Jan. 9, from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m., with graveside services beginning at 11 a.m.

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



PAID OBITUARY

Christopher Carson

Christopher Leroy Carson, born April 13, 1954, in Jacksonville to Sheriff Dale and Dr. Doris Carson, passed away Monday, Dec. 16, 2024. He married his high-school sweetheart, Julia Jordan, on March 22, 1975, and, after graduating from Florida State University in 1977, he and Julie moved to Keystone Heights in 1979. He participated in and served his community in so many ways. Through the years, he coached youth sports (baseball and soccer), was a volunteer firefighter, a mentor with Take Stock in Children, and a member of Kiwanis, Keystone Heights Business Association, Melrose Business Association, Hawthorne Business Association, Azalea Health (Rural Health Care Inc.) Board of Governors, Keystone Heights High School Quarterback Club (President) and Keystone Heights Methodist Church. He was named Citizen of the Year by the North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce in 2003. He worked at Clay Electric Cooperative for 34 years, first in building and grounds, and later as a member-relations representative for the Keystone District. He retired in 2016. Throughout his life, his family, friends, hunting, fishing, cooking, and serving his community were his joys and passions. His humor and high jinks were legendary, and he could make an adventure out of anything. His family and friends never doubted his love for them. He joins in heaven his parents; parents-in-law, Lloyd and Libby Jordan; sister, Cyndi Jackson; and best friend, Billy Byrom.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Julia Jordan Carson; daughter, Whitney (Greg) Harper of Ponte Vedra Beach; son Christian (Meghan) Carson of Bradenton; grandchildren, Zane and Evelyn Harper and Merritt and Burke Carson; brother, Dale Craig Carson; numerous nieces and nephews; and many other loving family members and friends, including the CarGoetzBy family (Janice and Fred Goetzman and Liz Byrom and their children and grandchildren). He will be remembered as a loving and generous man who never met a stranger and had an infectious laugh and a quick wit. He will be deeply missed by all.

A celebration of life was held at Keystone Heights Methodist Church on Saturday, Jan. 4, with Rev. J.T. Taylor officiating. For those who wish to make a gift in remembrance of him, the family asks that you join him in caring well for his community, through gifts to Mission of the Dirt Road or Lake Area Ministries in Keystone Heights.

Arrangements were under the care of Milam Funeral Home, Inc., 311 S. Main St., Gainesville. 352-376-5361. www.milamfh.com



PAID OBITUARY

Sam A. Johns

Sam A. Johns, 76, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024, at HCA North Florida Hospital in Gainesville following an extended illness. Born on Nov. 18, 1948, in Gainesville to the late Seeber and Nina Lee Croft Johns, he made invaluable contributions both professionally and personally throughout his life. After high school, he pursued education in diesel mechanics at a college in Nashville, equipping him with the technical expertise that would guide his professional journey.

He owned and operated Johns Union 76 in downtown Lake Butler until its closing in the mid-1990s. Following this chapter, he transitioned to a rewarding career with the Union County School Board, where he worked diligently as a mechanic at the bus garage until his retirement. His dedication and skilled workmanship left a lasting impact on those he worked with and served. Further showing his dedication and love to his community, he proudly served as county commissioner from 1976 to 1984. His last four years in office he held the title of chairman. Beyond his professional accomplishments, he was deeply passionate about farming. He found joy in working his cattle, bailing hay, and riding his property on his Kubota, nurturing his love for his family land and animals. He was preceded in death by his parents, Seeber and Nina Lee Croft Johns.

He is survived by his sisters, Teresa Johns, Mary Lee O'Steen, and Sue (David) Stalnaker. He cherished his role as an uncle to his nephews, Johnny O'Steen, Joey (Frankie) O'Steen, Chris (Amy) Stalnaker, and Chad (Cailyn) Stalnaker. He also delighted in the company of his great-nieces and nephews, Tyler O'Steen, Jadee O'Steen, Jake O'Steen, Paislee Stalnaker, and Sawyer Stalnaker, who brought him immense joy, and his special friend, Gail Sheppard.

Visitation was held on Jan. 4, with the funeral service following, at the First Christian Church, Lake Butler. He was laid to rest immediately following the service at Swift Creek Cemetery. Brother Art Peterson and Brother Shane Collins officiated the service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital or First Christian Church, Lake Butler.

It is the pleasure of Archer-Milton Funeral Home to serve the Johns family as they honor Sam. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY



Elizabeth Miller

Elizabeth "Liz" Daggy Miller, 90, of Middleburg passed away Saturday, Dec. 28, 2024, at Palagio Senior Living Facility in Orange Park with her loving family by her side. She was born in Harrisonburg, Virginia on Aug. 23, 1934, to her loving mother, Estelle Daggy. She was raised in Virginia and graduated from North River High School. Shortly after graduation, she embarked on her next chapter, furthering her education. She had a deep passion to help others and was able to fulfill her passion through her career as a registered nurse. She served many years at the State Hospital in Virginia, specializing in psychiatric medicine. She met her best friend and forever companion, Roy Francis Miller, later in life, and they were happily married in September of 2000. A few years later, they relocated to Bradford County to be closer to her son and enjoy the warmer weather. She was a longtime member of Bayless Highway Baptist Church, where she enjoyed worshipping and praising her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She was very talented with her hands. Throughout the years, she enjoyed knitting, sewing, weaving, and painting photos. She was also gifted in music; had a beautiful voice, loved to play piano and sing, and was a member of the choral society for years. In her free time, she enjoyed watching all sports, but most recently loved the Chiefs football games and WWE wrestling. More than anything, she was most joyed by spending time with her precious family and her cat, Baby. She was preceded in death by her parents; her loving husband of 22 years, Roy Francis Miller; and two sisters.

She is survived by her loving children, Paula Craun of Virginia, Kenny Craun of Middleburg, Reta (Robbie) Crissman and Marcia (Steve) Grimm, both of Virginia; 12 grandchildren; many great-grandchildren; along with several extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life was held Saturday, Jan. 4, at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel with Pastor Mike Conner officiating.

Arrangements were 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



Marlane Padgett

Marlane Collins Padgett, 65, of Lawtey, died Sunday, Dec. 22, 2024, at UF Health Shands Hospital in Gainesville. She was born in Jacksonville to the late Clinton Collins and Zedra Jordan Collins. She was preceded in death by her husband, Thomas Padgett; parents; and two brothers.

Survivors are her children, Casey Nettles, Jeffery (Brittany) Nettles, Jamie Padgett and Alexa Padgett; sisters, Lisa (Kevin) Dugger and Lynette Stucka; and eight grandchildren.

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



Dewey Thornton

Dewey Franklin Thornton, 91, passed away Friday, Jan. 3, 2025, at UF Health Shands in Gainesville. Born on March 15, 1933, in Lake City, he lived a life full of purpose and dedication. He grew up surrounded by the warmth of family, notably cherished for the love instilled by his parents, David and Mary Etta Stafford Thornton. He devoted 33 years of his life to serving the U.S. Department of Labor in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he made significant contributions in the wage hour division. His professional endeavors culminated in his retirement in 1993, when he held the esteemed position of district director. This role was not merely a job to him; it represented his commitment to fairness and integrity in the workplace. A proud veteran, he served four years in the United States Air Force, which further shaped his strong sense of duty and respect for service. His discipline and dedication followed him throughout his lifetime, including his academic achievements, as he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Florida in 1960. Beyond his impressive career, he was a man of many passions. He had a deep love for fishing and spent countless hours by the water, happily casting his line and enjoying nature. Gardening was another of his cherished hobbies; he took great joy in nurturing his plants and took pride in growing eggplants. His affection for his extended family truly defined his character, as he cherished every moment spent with them. He was preceded in death by his siblings, Lindsey (Essie) Thornton, Myrtice (J.C.) Kitchens, Mavle (Andrew) Crews, Edith (Cecil) Brannen, Wilma (S.B.) Carroll, Melvina "Bunny" (Robbie) Addison, and Charles (June) Thornton; as well as his parents, David and Mary Etta Stafford Thornton.

He leaves behind his beloved wife of 72 years, Norma Dekle Thornton, with whom he shared a lifetime of love and companionship. He is survived by his sons, David (Carol) Thornton of Clearwater and Donald Thornton of High Springs. He took pride in being a grandfather to his granddaughters, Jessica Thornton of St. Petersburg and Marianne (James) Montgomery of Clearwater. His extensive family also includes numerous nieces and nephews, all of whom will carry forward his legacy of love and kindness.

A service to honor his life will be held at 11 a.m. at First Baptist Church, Lake Butler on Saturday, Jan. 11. The family will receive friends for a visitation beginning an hour prior at 10 a.m. He will be laid to rest immediately following the service at Elzey Chapel Cemetery.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home considers it an honor to serve the Thornton family during this time. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

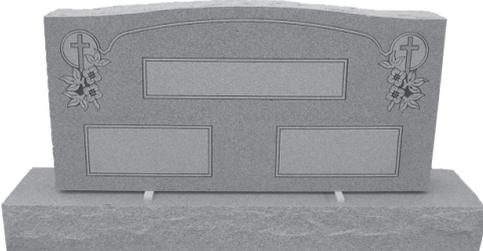
PAID OBITUARY



If you have an In Memory or Card of Thanks you'd like to publish, please email to socials@bctelegraph.com or call 904-964-6305.

Charles Custom Memorials

Serving Families in North Florida since 1973



The area's largest supplier of Colored Granite
When Quality Counts, You Can Count On Us

STARKE OFFICE OPEN 8:30 to 5:00 MON-FRI
Hwy 301 North, Starke • 904-964-2010
(Next to Best Western)

Primary Location in Lake City at 561 NW Hilton Ave.

CharlesMonuments.com

Member of Better Business Bureau
Monument Builders of North America
Florida Monument Builders
FL Lic. # F037700

The Genuine. The Original.



the original since 1921

Overhead Door Company of Gainesville
• Garage Doors & Openers • Springs, Cables & Sections Replaced
• Residential & Commercial • Free Estimates • Licensed & Insured
Sales - Installation - Service
352-468-2733 www.OverheadDoor.com

We're here for you... Your loved one NEVER leaves our care...

To help celebrate a life...to help say goodbye.

Whether your loved one wanted a traditional funeral or a more casual way to bring family and friends together, we'll help your remembrance be something special. Let us ease the burden and help you celebrate a life in a wonderful way.

Complete Funeral Arrangements • Pre-planning Assistance • Cremation Services • Monuments

Out of Town Arrangements • Spacious and Intimate Facilities • Off Street Parking

P. Steven Futch
Funeral Director

Austin Gaver
Funeral Director

620 East Nona Street
(corner of SR 100)
Starke
904.964.6200

Joe Gallagher
Owner/Funeral Director



JONES-GALLAGHER
FUNERAL HOME
jonesgallagherfh.com

Kelli Parks Moreland
Funeral Director

Laura Crews
Office Manager

340 E. Walker Drive
(SR 100)
Keystone Heights
352.473.3176

Only on-site crematory in Bradford, Union & Lake Region area

The Matthews Museum (Bradford County Museum) Needs Volunteers!

- * Show visitors around the museum.
- * Share interesting facts about Bradford County.
- * All of this in a climate controlled location.
- * Students can earn Community Service Points.

To find out more

Contact: **Chuck Kramer**
(904) 964-5001 or (904) 364-6977



Roast of Rodgers helps BHS Touchdown Club raise \$21K-plus

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Coaches are no strangers to having insults hurled at them, but a Dec. 19 Bradford Touchdown Club event was all about Bradford High School Head Football Coach Jamie Rodgers taking some good-natured abuse for a good cause — raising money to support the Tornadoes. “We’re here to support the players and the future of this program,” Touchdown Club President Katlyn Reinken said. “Events like tonight are crucial for funding to ensure that this football program has everything needed to excel.”

Rodgers said when he was approached about the idea of the event, which was held Dec. 19 at Starke’s Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center, his response was, “I’m all for that if it helps us raise money for our kids. If it helps us feed our kids, if it helps get the equipment they need to keep them safe, if it helps us get better in the weight room, I’m all for it. Make fun of me all day long.”

It did indeed help the football program and the kids who are a part of it, raising a total of \$21,340 through ticket sales, an auction of 16 items and a drawing to win a chiminea.

Mike Qualls, who handles the public-address announcing for football games at David Hurst Stadium, was the event emcee. He said since the purpose was to roast Rodgers, he had to change into the proper uniform. Qualls took off his shirt to reveal he was wearing an official’s shirt underneath. Then, pointing to a photo that was on display that showed Rodgers yelling during a game, Qualls said, “He can get hot real quick, and it only takes one of these right here.” With that, Qualls produced a penalty flag, which he threw onto the floor, announcing that he was assessing a penalty against Rodgers for excessive abuse of officials.

Former Suwannee AD takes his shots

The crowd then watched a video clip of Hunter Abercrombie, a former athletic director at Suwannee High School who hired Rodgers to be the school’s head football coach. It was Rodgers’ first head-



Emcee Mike Qualls dressed as an official and threw penalties on Jamie Rodgers throughout the event.

coaching job.

Abercrombie said he had asked John Staples, who’s a current assistant coach on Rodgers’ BHS staff, for the name of a young, up-and-coming coach to hire. He said Staples gave him Rodgers’ name and described him as “the Tim Tebow of Baker County.” Rodgers played for Staples when Staples was the head baseball coach at Baker County.

“After I met Jamie, I realized very quickly that either, A, Staples was hammered, or B, he has no idea who Tim Tebow is,” Abercrombie said. “I guess Jamie is similar to Tim Tebow besides the fact his face, body, personality and athleticism are all far less attractive. Other than that, they’re basically the same person.”

Abercrombie said he was glad to hear that Rodgers had a couple of Live Oak natives on his staff at Bradford, though he asked those in attendance “to please not judge the rest of Suwannee County by the Shrek and Donkey-ish figures that are David May and Tyler Stevens.”

“I promise you, we do not all look like that,” Abercrombie said, adding, “I really feel like when Jamie was deciding, ‘Who do I want to take from Suwannee to continue coaching with me,’ he looked around the room and said, ‘I’m not really as concerned with the football as I am with which of these guys will make me look like a GQ model standing on the sidelines.’ He landed on David and Tyler.”

Abercrombie poked fun at the fact that Bradford has had players who’ve moved in from other areas, saying, “I appreciate the chance to speak tonight to help raise money and

support the Bradford County football program because when you support Bradford County football, you’re supporting kids from six surrounding counties.”

The former Suwannee AD noted that Rodgers has been a winner wherever he’s gone, but he said that’s because Rodgers has accepted jobs at schools that always had Division-I prospects “waiting on him when he got there.”

“Just know Bradford County, if you look around in a couple of years, and you see a bunch of 5-3, 120-pound kids running around on JV going 1-7, your time is short,” Abercrombie said.

In all seriousness, Abercrombie said Rodgers has succeeded wherever he’s been because that’s how good a coach he is.

“There are a lot of coaches who know Xs and Os and know football, but no coach that I’ve been around in my time in education or even after gets kids to play hard like Jamie gets kids to play hard,” Abercrombie said, adding, “For my money, there’s not a better high school football coach around than Jamie Rodgers.”

When the video was done, Qualls threw a flag on Rodgers for illegal recruiting.

Staples speaks of long relationship

Staples took to the stage for his turn to talk about Rodgers, including the first time the two met. Staples made his first visit to Baker County High School about its opening for head baseball coach. He met with the athletic director, who told him one of the school’s best baseball players was waiting to meet him.

“Here comes my best baseball player, walking into the front office,” said Staples, who had a photo shown of Rodgers at that age. “He’s got a chocolate milk in one hand and a Snickers bar in the other.”

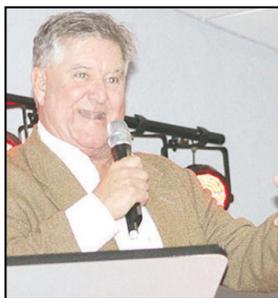
The point was that Rodgers didn’t possess the body of an elite athlete. Later in the night, when Rodgers got his chance to speak, he said you could look at such photos and conclude that he “wasn’t really focused on nutrition.”

In sharing the fact that Rodgers hit 19 career home runs at Baker County, Staples said, “If you’ve been to Baker County, that’s a pretty big ballpark. As much chocolate milk as he drank and as many Snickers bars as he ate, he couldn’t run the bases, so he might as well jog them.”

Actually, Staples didn’t roast Rodgers as much as probably Rodgers expected, choosing instead to focus on their time together. Staples had left Baker County, but returned to coach baseball again. However, Rodgers had been offered the job of head coach before Staples inquired about it. Rodgers said if Staples wanted to be the head coach, he would coach as his assistant.

“If that had not taken place, he’d be coaching baseball today,” Staples said.

Rodgers was the head football



Assistant Coach John Staples talks about working alongside Jamie Rodgers as well as coaching him when Rodgers was a student at Baker County High School.

coach at Suwannee when he asked Staples for his opinion about leaving and taking the head job at his alma mater — Baker County. Staples likened it to what Bear Bryant said when he left Texas A&M to coach his alma mater — Alabama: “Mama called, and when Mama calls, you just have to come running.”

Staples told Rodgers, “If you leave Suwannee, it will be the stupidest decision of your life, but you’ve got to go home.”

“What I’m telling you tonight is that was then,” Staples said. “He’s a dumb*** if he goes back anymore.”

Staples had another photo shown of Rodgers. It was on the sideline during his first game at Bradford. He was yelling at Staples. Staples explained it was because Bradford had 13 players on the field as part of the punt team.

That was the start of Staples talking about how Rodgers talks to officials, players and parents, most of which can’t be reprinted in this paper. Since it was a roast, though, you could take what Staples said with a grain of salt. In fact, Rodgers spoke up often to deny he ever said what he was accused of having said.

That prompted Qualls, when Staples was done, to throw a flag on Rodgers for abusive language.

Superintendent gets in digs, too

Bradford Superintendent of Schools Will Hartley was introduced and proceeded to say that hiring Rodgers to be the Tornadoes’ coach was a simple process.

“The honest truth is we were really just looking for somebody who liked chocolate milk,” Hartley said.

Hartley said his brother-in-law Josh Reinken played baseball with Rodgers at Jacksonville University and recently showed him a video of when JU was playing the Florida Gators. Hartley had a video clip played of Rodgers at bat. You could hear fans in the stands shouting such things as, “I bet if that was a Twinkie you’d hit it,” and, “Imagine if that was a cupcake.”

“Back before Jamie was working here in Bradford County and the school district was paying him to walk around the football field while the rest of

us work, he carried a few more pounds,” Hartley said.

Rodgers’ turn

When Rodgers had his chance to speak, he said he had some good stuff to say about BHS Principal Chris Coffey and Athletic Director Sampson Jackson, but neither one roasted him, so he saved that material.

Hartley, however, was a different story. In referencing the recent election in which an opponent referred to Hartley as “just a PE coach,” Rodgers said that not long after he began working in Bradford County, he was visited by a woman he’d never met before who asked him if he knew he was working for “a dumb jock?” Rodgers said she told him he was making a big mistake.

“Well, I get my first check, and he signed it in crayon,” Rodgers said. “This guy really is just an elementary PE teacher.”

Those assistant coaches Abercrombie talked about — May and Stevens — weren’t spared any further jokes. Rodgers said he was going to send them to football clinics during the offseason to “learn not to run the ball up the middle.”

When it came to talking about Staples, Rodgers had the photo of him yelling at Staples shown again.

“This is the picture of 13 men on the field, like he said. What he didn’t tell you is we had to call back-to-back timeouts,” Rodgers said. “We had 10 on the field the first time. This (photo) is when went back out after the time out with 13 on the field. Let me ask you how you would’ve reacted.”

“He looked at me and said, ‘Man, this is my first game in 25 years. What do you want me to do?’ I said, ‘I want you to think back to your younger self and learn how to count to 11. That’s what I want you to do.’”

Rodgers said Staples could say a lot of things about him, but one thing he couldn’t say was that Rodgers didn’t get him “a better gig” than the one he had before joining the Bradford staff, which was selling insurance. With that, Rodgers had a photo shown of Staples asleep in a chair at school.

“This is what’s teaching our youth,” Rodgers said. “Sorry, Will. At least we can punt good.”

Jokes aside, Rodgers thanked Staples for instilling mental toughness into him, saying, “He gave me the tools that I needed.”

Rodgers thanked his entire staff of assistants as well as the players, saying they deserved the credit for Bradford’s success more than him.

“There’s no secret sauce to winning,” Rodgers said. “Players, assistant coaches and the head coach. It’s that order.”

The coach also said the support of the community and the Bradford Touchdown Club is the best he’s had anywhere and the best you’ll find without having to travel to Georgia.

“This place, this community, the people who have rallied around our football program



Jamie Rodgers expresses his appreciation for his assistant coaches, school administrators and supporters of the football program before giving gift to those who roasted him.

have made this South Georgia,” Rodgers said. “This is a South Georgia program. Don’t let anybody tell you different.”

Most of the money raised by the event occurred in the auction, which consisted of 15 items that sold for a total of \$15,275. The item that sold for the most money was a commercial spot on David Hurst Stadium’s video scoreboard, which went for \$4,500 to John F. Crawford Homes.

A couple of other big-money items included a three-day deer-hunting trip to Troy, Alabama, which sold for \$3,000 to Hartley, and a homecoming 2025 fireworks sponsorship, which sold for \$1,900 to Quality Plumbing.



Chason Clark, a 2024 BHS graduate and current Marshall football player, shows off three John Deere caps that were part of the auction.



BHS player Jaden Hankerson displays one of the auction items — a Yeti Hopper M20 backpack cooler donated by the Bradford County Sheriff’s Office. Hankerson joked that the BCSO decal on the cooler could be used as a get-out-of-jail-free card.



Auctioneer Daniel Jerrels (left) has some fun with BHS player Brian Clifflin, who was displaying a signed team photo for attendees to bid on.



Your local photos They’re all in **COLOR** online!



www.BCTelegraph.com > subscribe

Digital subscriptions only \$4.95 per month



TAX REFUND SALE



INVEST YOUR TAX REFUND HERE!



Financing Available
FREE DELIVERY

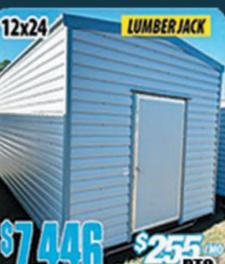
WE HAVE AMAZING DEALS!

UP TO 20% OFF All Steel Buildings



Expertly installed by Cutting Edge Development LLC. License Number: CGC1523449

\$95 DOWN STEEL GARAGES & BARNS AS LOW AS DELIVERS WA



1540 S Walnut Street
Starke, FL 32091



904-966-0077

www.BuildingsAndMore.com

