

# Bradford County Telegraph

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146th year, 17th Issue — \$1

## New manager: Fair is the roots and the future of Bradford

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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Harlee Hutchinson stood before the Keystone Heights Rotary Club at the Montgomery Center on Nov. 12, sharing her vision for the Bradford County Fair with the enthusiasm of someone who grew up attending rodeos in rural Texas and never lost her appreciation for small-town agriculture.

"There is something very special to me about rural communities, communities that are rooted in agriculture, small town America," said Hutchinson, who became Bradford County's fair manager four weeks ago. "I want to contribute my time and effort to do something that will preserve those places, those feelings and those amazing things that we accomplish in places like this."

The Lake Butler resident brings extensive nonprofit fundraising and event management experience to the position, most recently serving at Ronald McDonald House Charities in Gainesville, where she coordinated large-scale events that raised hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.



(L-R) Bradford County Manager Scott Kornegay, Bradford County Fair Manager Harlee Hutchinson and Clay County Commissioner and Keystone Heights Rotary Club President-elect Betsy Condon.

### From Texas to Florida

Originally from Centerville, a rural area near College Station, Texas, Hutchinson moved to the Sunshine State "because I fell in love with a boy from Florida," she said.

She attended Texas A&M University before relocating and has lived in Lake Butler for almost four years.

"It's a nice little place," she said of her home in Union County. "We have a little house in the woods, and I enjoy spending my time there."

Hutchinson describes herself as an "optimistic realist" who focuses on positive thinking while setting realistic goals based on facts and history, an approach she learned through her involvement in FFA during middle school and high school.

"Get action, do things, be sane," she said, quoting Theodore Roosevelt. "Don't fritter away your time. Create, act, take up a place wherever you are and be somebody, get action."

The new fair manager said her focus now is on the 2026 fair, seeking vendor space bookings, fair sponsors, entertainment ideas, and exhibit suggestions. And she is looking for help.

"I would love for you to be involved in whatever way you want," Hutchinson told the Rotarians, "and I'm sure I'll need some volunteers also."

### Harley Davidson and Ronald McDonald House

During her tenure at the Ronald McDonald House, Hutchinson organized nine annual fundraising events, including the Red Shoe Affair gala, which drew nearly 800 guests to 94 tables and raised \$470,000 this past August, the most in the event's 13-year history.

She also coordinated Beyond Bourbon at Santa Fe River Ranch, which raised \$42,000, and a fashion show featuring local celebrities that brought in \$53,000.

One of her most memorable partnerships came through Meldon Law's charity stripe campaign with the University of Florida basketball program. The firm donated \$19.78 for every free throw the Gators made at home, eventually presenting a \$10,000 check to Ronald McDonald House.

"These are some examples of really special partnerships that I got to be a part of in Gainesville and something that I hope to bring to my work here," Hutchinson said.

### Bikers on Parade

Before joining the Ronald McDonald House, Hutchinson worked as a marketing and events coordinator for Gainesville Harley-Davidson, where she hosted numerous events and helped boost merchandise and bike sales.

She coordinated the Bikers on Parade ride, which saw over 400 motorcycles travel from Gainesville to Ocala to benefit veterans.

See FAIR, page 4

## Black Creek project still on hold due to low creek flows

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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In his monthly update to the St. Johns River Water Management District governing Board, the Director for the District's Division of Infrastructure and Land Resources reported that the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project is 98% complete.

Dale Jenkins added that the project's Camp Blanding treatment system is poised for operation, pending relief from a persistent regional drought that's left the South Fork of Black Creek flowing at just 16 cubic feet per second, well below the 25 CFS threshold required to start pumping.

The \$118.7 million initiative aims to capture up to 10 million gallons per day of excess tannin-stained water from Black Creek during high-flow periods. The water will be piped 17 miles along State Roads 16 and 21, treated to remove color and pollutants

like nitrogen and phosphorus, and then discharged into Alligator Creek. From there, it flows into Lake Brooklyn near Keystone Heights, where it recharges the Upper Floridan Aquifer.

During the governing boards' November 12 meeting, Jenkins told board members that the treatment facility, which consists of six cells filled with plants and filtering media, is the only component of the project yet to be completed.

"Cell 6 is full of stone and just needs media," he said. "Cell 5 is nearly 60% complete with media placement underway."

Jenkins also highlighted other improvements at the treatment site, including the final paving of the entrance road, upgraded erosion controls at the outfall into Alligator Creek, and initial testing that confirmed compliance with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's turbidity limits.

However, the project's launch hinges on rainfall. The region is experiencing a moderate drought, with a 10.5-inch rainfall deficit over the past 12 months, according to a rain gauge near the intake site at the creek.

Board Chair Rob Bradley led a discussion about the project's Florida Department of Environmental Protection Permit, which prohibits creek withdrawals at flows under 25 CFS.

He asked Executive Director Mike Register about discussing with state regulators the possibility of relaxing the 25 CFS requirement in the future.

"Those limits were crazy conservative, which I always like to start with," he said. "One thing I know about this is that even if we're running on full throttle, it's not draining the (creek) or anything, and it's still a spoon in a bathtub."

## Union school board may ask voters for half-cent sales tax

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
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Union County School Board members reacted favorably to Superintendent Mike Ripplinger's suggestion that they begin looking into a referendum to add a half-cent sales tax in the county, earmarked for public schools.

"I think it's time that we need to begin to explore, and (District Finance Director Deborah Parrish) has begun to ask questions about maybe looking at a possible half-cent sales tax and what will that generate," he said during a November 18 board workshop. "I'm in the early stages of researching the Department of Revenue and seeing what Union County pays in sales tax altogether, what would a half-cent sales tax generate, there's a process that undergoes that, and we have timelines that we would have to meet."

Ripplinger conceded that if the measure were to make it onto the 2026 ballot and voters approved the initiative, the district would not see the new revenue source until a year and a half from now.

The superintendent asserted that the district is too reliant on state funding. "We're not spending money

frivolously," he said, "but we need to take more action, and we need to have more control over our situation than just being at the mercy of the state."

Ripplinger added that the first step is to find out how much revenue the additional levy would generate for Union County schools.

"Honestly, I don't know if we're talking half a million dollars, \$300,000, \$800,000," he said. "That's something that we're looking to see if we can drill down and get those revenue projections of what a half-cent sales tax would be."

Ripplinger said he is confident the district can make a successful case to voters for the tax.

"Many school districts do it," he said. "We do not, but I believe there is a case to be made for it... I think we can explain to the public why we need this."

Board member Curtis Clyatt noted that sales tax rates in both Alachua and Columbia counties are at 7.5%.

Now, the state sales tax in Union County is 6% and a 1% local surtax is added for county services.

Board member Becky Raulerson said she has supported increasing revenue, and with talk in Tallahassee now of reducing or eliminating



(L-R) Superintendent Mike Ripplinger, School Board Chair Curtis Clyatt, and Board Member Chris Hodgson listen to Board Member Becky Raulerson talk about a potential half-cent sales tax to support Union County schools.

property taxes, the sales tax option might be a better alternative.

She also said a sales tax would partially shift the tax burden from local residents to out-of-towners who make purchases when passing through the county.

Board member Chris Hodgson added that, with significant anti-growth sentiment throughout the county and few other options, the half-cent tax is one of the few additional revenue sources the district can turn to.

Ripplinger said Union County

residents have always supported the school district, and he is confident they would support the tax.

"How many of us have ever said that the hub of this community is the school system?" he asked, adding that when voters see how the additional tax would impact their children's and grandchildren's classrooms, they would support it.

Ripplinger said he would have additional information about the idea during the December board meeting.



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**WORTH NOTING**

### Early deadline

Deadline for the Bradford County Telegraph, Union County Times and Lake Region Monitor for the Nov. 27 paper will be Monday, Nov. 24, at noon. The paper will be printed Tuesday morning, Nov. 25, in stores Tuesday afternoon and in mailboxes Wednesday, Nov. 26.

### Collection site closings

Bradford County solid waste collection sites will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 27 and 28, for the Thanksgiving holiday. They will reopen Saturday, Nov. 29, at 10 a.m.

### Christmas Party Toy Drive

Concerned Citizens of Bradford County is accepting donations of new unwrapped toys for children ages 6 months to 14 years. They will be distributed during the annual Christmas Party at RJE on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Dropoff locations include Starke City Hall, Downtown Grill, Nicky's Beauty Bar, Murray Ford, Starke Church of God by Faith, New Bethel Baptist and the RJE Complex.

### Food distribution in Lawtey

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take place Wednesday, Nov. 26, at 9 a.m. at the Philadelphia Baptist Church in Lawtey.

### Union Historical Society meeting

The Union County Historical Society is planning a meeting for Monday, Nov. 24, at 6:30 p.m. at 410 W. Main St. in Lake Butler. The guest speaker for the evening will be Bert Brooks, a Union County native who has written several books, one about his grandmother, Ella Carlton.

Please plan to attend this interesting meeting.

### Holiday Invitational at Melrose Gallery

Melrose Bay Art Gallery's 2025 Holiday Invitational runs through Dec. 28 and is a great opportunity to support local artists and purchase a special gift. The gallery is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 1-5 p.m.

The monthly art walk will take place Friday, Dec. 5, from 6-9 p.m. with refreshments and entertainment. The gallery is located at 103 S.R. 26 in Melrose. Visit melrosebayartgallery.com.



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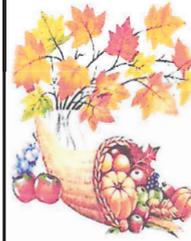


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# Palms Medical opens new facility at HCA Starke Emergency

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce joined Palms Medical Group at HCA Starke ER for a ribbon-cutting within HCA's building at the corner of Starke's Colley Road and Call Street.

CEO Anita Rembert said the hospital's administrator brought up the new location.

"We were actually meeting with the CEO at the time at North Florida Regional, Eric Lawson, and he said, 'Hey, I've got some space in the hospital in Starke if y'all are interested,'" recalled Rembert. "So, we came and toured the space, and it was really already kind of set up and ready to go for us."

The nonprofit health care provider, which had been co-located behind the Bradford County Sheriff's Office with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare since 2010, had been searching for room to grow and expand for several years. The hospital space provided the answer.

The new clinic features 12 exam rooms, a lab for in-house testing and blood draws, provider offices, a front desk area, and space for a future pharmacy.

## Serving the entire community

Palms Medical Group has operated in North Florida since 1971 as a federally qualified health center, receiving grant funding to serve patients regardless of their ability to pay.

"Our mission is to take care of the entire community," Rembert said. "We take care of everybody, whether you're insured or uninsured, Medicaid, Medicare. We want to take care of everyone."

The organization operates 14 offices across seven counties, spanning from Williston to Lake City, Live Oak, Fleming Island, and throughout the Gainesville area. Last year, Palms saw approximately 70,000 patients.

While primary care remains the organization's focus, it also offers dental services at several locations, operates pharmacies at 10 offices, provides behavioral healthcare, and offers chiropractic care.

## Focusing on rural healthcare

Rembert said Palms Medical Group has found success serving rural communities throughout North Florida.

"That's our niche," she said. "We feel like we've done a good job in our rural areas. We really try to target that entire community. We don't want to have a subset of the population."

The organization takes a whole-family approach to health care.



Palms Medical Group staff members at the ribbon-cutting of the organization's new location: (front, l-r) Clinical Care Coordinator Taylor Proffitt, LPN Jerica Young, Practice Management Specialist Haneko Marvel, Performance Improvement Coordinator Kristina Marisette, Chief Executive Officer Anita Rembert, Case Manager Ellen Zimardo, Vice President of Business Continuity and Client Relations Jim Miller, Marketing Director Kyle Burk, Desire Hayes, (back) Chief Administrative Officer Charlie Turley, LPN Keri Griffis, Patient Advocate Kathy Dawkins, Patient Advocate Coordinator Daniell Kitler, Vice President of Practice Management Jane Hurst, Director of Human Resources Lora Smith, Vice President of Practice Management Dawn Blake, Marketing Specialist Nicholas Ryan and Vice President of Practice Management Anastasia Stephenson.



Starke Mayor Andy Redding. Photo: North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Visitors check out the waiting room. Photo: North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce.

"We want you to come see us, and we want the person that's uninsured to come see us as well," she added. "We really try to focus in on the whole family too, not just grandma or grandpa. We really want to get the kids in

here as well as the elderly."

The Starke clinic currently employs two nurse practitioners and a physician assistant, with plans to recruit additional providers.

"We've got space for about

five is what we'll get up to," Berg said. "And then when we get to a certain point, we'll add a

pharmacy."

The pharmacy expansion will come once the clinic reaches a specific patient threshold, taking advantage of the space already built into the facility's design.

## Navigating funding challenges

When asked about challenges facing rural health care, Rembert acknowledged the increasing financial pressures.

"Every year it feels like the funding is getting tighter and tighter," she said. "There are changes coming with Medicaid, there are changes coming with Medicare."

Palms also relies heavily on 340B funding, a federal program that provides discounted pharmaceuticals to safety-net healthcare providers.

"We always have to look for ways to be more efficient," Rembert said. "I'll say that's one thing I think Palms prides itself on—we do operate very efficiently. When you compare us to anyone else in our state and our nation, we've got some of the most efficient numbers."

Despite the financial pressures, Rembert said the organization remains focused on its core mission.

"We really focus on—our whole mission is the patient," she said.

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I think that is commendable but as Christians every day, all throughout the day we should be giving our God thanks for His mercy, grace, goodness, and faithfulness to us His people. We are encouraged by the Word of God to live a life of Praise and Thanksgiving unto our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father God. Psalms 69:30, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving." Psalms 106:1, "Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." Psalms 107:21, "Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men." The book of Psalms is filled with thanksgiving, praise and worship. Jesus Himself talked about giving thanks and lived a life of thanksgiving. When he taught the disciples about prayer, He taught them to praise and honor the Father God, He taught them to give thanks for Gods abundant blessings. When he performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus thanked God and prayed saying "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me."

During the last supper the Bible says "Jesus took the bread and cup and gave thanks" before sharing with His disciples. Jesus's entire life was lived with an attitude of thankfulness to God and He taught all of His followers to live a life of praise and thanksgiving unto God. When we look into the New Testament we find the authors had many things to say about giving praise and giving thanks to God. The verses are too vast to cover them all here but I would like to share just a few with you. We will begin with Colossians 4:2, "Continue earnestly in prayer, be vigilant in it with thanksgiving." 1 Timothy 4:4-5, "For every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." Then as we dig deeper into God's Word we find a depth to praise and thanksgiving, sad to say, many Christians know little or nothing about. It is more than just giving thanks occasionally for God's blessings but living before God a life of thanksgiving and praise. The Word of God declares in Hebrews 13:15, "Therefore by Him (Jesus) let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." We will look at this verse in more detail next week. I hope you have a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Blessings! -**Pastor Rick**

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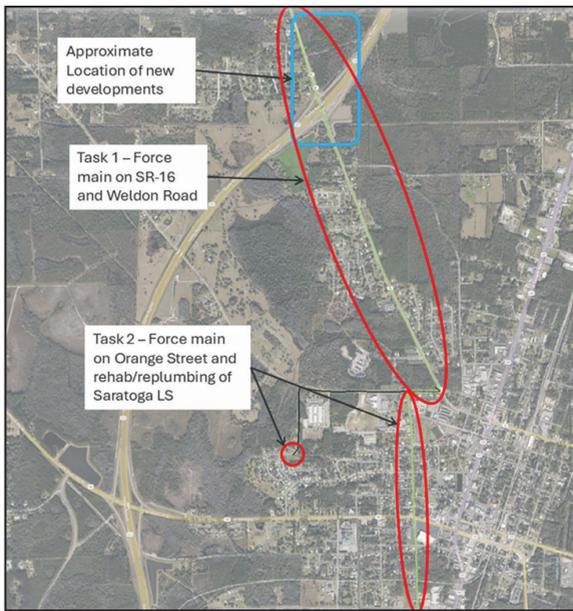
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Future commercial and residential development around the bypass interchange will be served by the new water and wastewater lines. Starke has already annexed the acreage into the city limits.

## Contracts signed for wastewater design

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Design of Starke's wastewater extension is set to begin following recent contract approval with Woodward and Curran, which has an ongoing engineering services contract with the city.

Questions about progress of the project were recently raised by the county, which has committed \$4 million in pandemic relief funding to help the city expand its utilities to a mixed residential and commercial development proposed at the intersection of the bypass and State Road 16.

Woodward and Curran has also worked on the extension of water lines, the final designs for which have been submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Earlier this month, the commission approved a contract with Woodward and Curran to design the wastewater force main extension upstream along State Road 16 and Weldon Road at a cost of \$400,000. This includes preliminary and final designs, permitting and providing the construction bid documents.

A second contract completing the connection down Orange Street to the wastewater treatment plant as well as rehabilitation and upgrade of the Saratoga Heights lift station was approved. The amount was also \$400,000.

The wastewater project is being handled as separate tasks. According to the engineers, the first task "will amend the city of Starke water system upgrades drawings by adding a force main,

including pipes, valves, fittings, appurtenances, and connections, to the project. The force main will run on State Highway 16 from approximately 3,300 feet north of US Highway 301 (the bypass) to the intersection of State Highway 16 and West Weldon Road, then on West Weldon Road from State Highway 16 to Orange Street. The total length of the force main will be approximately 12,500 feet.

"Task 2 of the project, to be designed and constructed under a separate scope of work and a separate construction project, will include the design of a force main on Orange Street from West Weldon to the Starke Wastewater Treatment Facility, a distance of approximately 5,400 feet. The design and construction of the force main will include a railroad

crossing. In addition to the force main on Orange Street, the project will include rehabilitation of the existing Saratoga Heights lift station on Todd Road, including replumbing of the lift station so that the discharge of the pumps connects to the existing force main on Todd Road and West Weldon Street."

According to the resolution approving the contract, this second task will be completed within 12 months of the notice to proceed.

In other business:  
—Starke entered a contract with Cross Environmental Services for the removal of lead-based paint and asbestos from the RJE Complex for \$199,300.

## Guns allowed in parks under open carry decision

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Larry Ford from the Speedville area recently approached Bradford County commissioners with questions and concerns about the rules for guns in public parks.

In September, Florida's First District Court of Appeals struck down the state's ban on openly carrying firearms as unconstitutional, meaning legally owned guns could be carried openly anywhere a concealed weapon had previously been allowed.

According to the court, law-abiding citizens right to carry arms was protected by the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Attorney

General James Uthmeier did not appeal the decision, making open carry legal.

Ford wanted to know if that included the county's parks.

"I would like to know what is the board's position on open carry firearms in our community parks where our kids play and where we gather to celebrate family," he said.

County commissioners couldn't immediately say what's allowed given the change in law, but attorney Rich Komando said his office has been hearing this question a lot lately. The firm Bradley, Garrison and Komando represents Bradford County, and he said openly carried guns are allowed in parks, although some restrictions remain.

Ford wanted to know if there

was anything the county could do to keep guns out of parks.

"My concern is that a lot of kids is in the park, and people walk around with open carry firearms on them, around the kids and stuff. That's not a good look. I know that Publix and everybody can let them in, and some people can ban them. I wonder if there's anything that the board or the county can do about it," he said.

Komando said it could not, even though the commission meeting — in fact the entire courthouse and other government buildings — are among the places weapons remain prohibited. The list includes school campuses, police stations and polling locations. It also includes bars. Generally, private businesses, including grocery stores, can

make their own rules, according to Komando. If, however, county commissioners tried to ban guns from parks, he said they could be sued.

Open carry does not include menacing displays, being careless, rude or threatening with a firearm. Those prohibited from possessing firearms, including convicted felons, are still barred from carrying them.

Qualified Floridians have been able to legally carry concealed firearms without a permit since July 2023. Private business owners maintain the right to ban firearms (open or concealed) on their property. Refusal to abide by those rules can lead to trespass or armed trespass charges.

## Say hello to Jessica!

Jessica Kelly is excited to join the Bradford Telegraph-Union County Times-Lake Region Monitor as an advertising sales representative. As a lifelong Lawley resident, she has deep roots in Bradford County and is proud to call it home. Kelly and her husband, Michael, have been married 16 years and enjoy a busy family life with their five children and two grandchildren. In her free time, Kelly enjoys gardening, cooking and spending time with family. She is an avid reader and loves all types of music. Kelly looks forward to connecting with local business owners and helping them to share their stories and services with the community through the Telegraph-Times-Monitor.



## Extended parade route approved for Christmas

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

A longer Christmas parade in Starke this year will serve as a preview of what is to come.

Scheduled as always on the second Tuesday evening in December, organizers have stretched the parade route further down U.S. 301 and decided to close all four lanes to do so.

Pam Whittle, president of the North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce, said people found closing half the highway in prior years "scary." Working with the sheriff's office and the Downtown Merchants, they are now planning to close all four lanes down to Washington Street

for the parade's duration.

The parade will still line up on Call Street in front of HCA Florida Starke Emergency. It will proceed west on Call Street to U.S. 301, then turn right and head north to Washington Street, where it will turn left and disband at the school district parking lot. Previously the parade would turn right onto Jefferson Street and disband at city hall. The new route lengthens the parade and allows the crowd a more immersive view from both sides of the highway.

The route will be reversed in future years when there is no construction downtown. The parade will line up beside the high school and disband at the

Downtown Square.

In proposing the new route, Starke commissioners were also reminded that candy is not distributed from the parade for safety's sake.

The parade will begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13. Entry applications are available at the chamber office, 100 E. Call St. in Starke. Call 904-964-5278 or email pam@northfloridachamber.com. The deadline to enter is Tuesday, Dec. 9.

Some other Christmas activities have been announced for Dec. 13 including a car show downtown sponsored by the Arc of Bradford County and a photo opportunity with Santa and Mrs.

Claus in front of the chamber from 3-4:30 p.m.

## Shop Small Saturday

Saturday, Dec. 29, is Shop Small Saturday. Everyone is encouraged to support local merchants in return for all the support they provide the community. In addition to local shops and restaurants, vendors will be in downtown Starke providing even more opportunity to find the perfect gift or treat yourself.

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**FOR SALE**

## FAIR

Continued from page 1

"I was in charge of making sure that it was safe and there was no traffic stops on the road," she recalled. "It was a little frightening, but it went well. Everybody arrived to Ocala safely and they had a big great party and raised a lot of money at the end."

## 2026 Fair theme: Heart of Bradford

The Bradford County Fair will run Thursday, Feb. 26, through Sunday, March 8, giving fairgoers two weekends to attend.

At her first board meeting as fair manager, Hutchinson and the board unanimously approved a theme for the 2026 fair: "Heart of Bradford: Strengthening our roots to grow the future."

"I feel we all really felt like it was exciting for the new era of the Bradford County Fair," she said.

Dreamland Amusements will provide the midway rides and food vendors.

## Upgrades considered for the equestrian area

Hutchinson said the fairgrounds' equestrian area, which previously hosted barrel racing and rodeos, could be rebuilt.

"I grew up with a lot of those in Texas," Hutchinson said, "and so nothing would feel cooler to me than being able to put on a rodeo."

County Manager Scott Kornegay, who hosted Hutchinson at the Rotary club, added that youth equestrian activities are popular with potential donors for the project.

"There is some discussion going on right now about moving that down to the south, which is where the other buildings are," he said, adding that the fair board hopes to develop a professional site plan showing optimum placement for the midway, rodeo arena, and other facilities.

## Bradford Democrats meet Nov. 24

The Bradford County Democratic Party will hold its last meeting of the year on Monday, Nov. 24, at 7 p.m. All registered Democrats are welcome and encouraged to attend meetings, which are generally held on the fourth Monday of the month. The next meeting will be in January.

Meetings are held at Capital City Bank in Starke, U.S. 301 North, in the conference room. For further information, please contact bradfordcodec@gmail.com.

## Lawley Christmas Program

Lawley Elementary School's Christmas Musical Program will take place in the Bradford High School auditorium on Thursday, Dec. 11, from 6-7:30 p.m.

# Lake Region

## As dangerous as a loaded gun

Florida's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year warns Keystone Heights group about the greatest threat to children

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

A Clay County Sheriff's detective who specializes in internet crimes against children delivered a blunt message to residents during the October 23 Sheriff's Net meeting at Keystone Heights's First Baptist Church: if a smartphone app allows communication, it can be used to exploit a child.

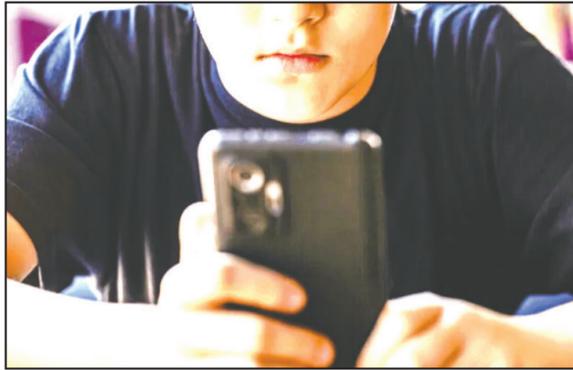
Ryan Ellis, who works in the Sheriff's Human Exploitation Unit, told the crowd that the internet now poses the greatest threat to children, greater than obesity, disease, or any other danger.

"There is a 100% chance, 100% chance, and I'll stand by that number, that someone is out there that is willing to exploit that child if those boundaries and parameters and that education is not provided," Ellis said. The detective stated that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children received over 30 million reports of exploited children online throughout the United States last year. Clay County alone generates 400 to 500 child exploitation tips annually.

"And that is only what we know about," Ellis said. "That is just unfortunately the tip of the iceberg."

### Law enforcement officers of the year

Ellis and fellow detective Eva Solis were recently named the Florida Sheriffs Association's 2025 Law Enforcement Officers



of the Year for breaking one of the most serious child exploitation and human trafficking cases in Clay County history.

The case began when a citizen from another county purchased a storage unit at auction in Clay County, discovered something disturbing on an electronic device inside, and contacted law enforcement.

"Fortunately, (he) did the right thing because it wasn't his kids, wasn't his family, not even in his county," Ellis said. "Some people say, well, none of my business, or just throw it away."

The investigation led to a Middleburg couple who had moved to South Florida. Working with Homeland Security Investigations, deputies arrested both individuals and rescued a child who had been victimized from birth.

"That child, who at the time was not verbal, and we were told couldn't talk. He couldn't talk only because they didn't teach him to talk," Ellis said. "Today, that child is thriving, playing baseball, and actually getting to be an actual child."

Investigators have identified 11 victims in the case. Both suspects face federal charges with minimum mandatory sentences of 15 to 60 years per count.

### Support from the Tim Tebow Foundation

Ellis works on the Northeast Florida Intercept Task Force, a partnership of federal, state, and local agencies that combat human trafficking and child exploitation. The task force, which includes the Nassau, Clay, Jacksonville, Putnam, and Flagler sheriff's offices, along with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Homeland Security Investigations, is now the largest in the United States dedicated to combating these crimes.

The task force operates out of a facility provided by nonprofit groups like Operation Light Shine and the Tim Tebow Foundation, which also donate forensic software and equipment. The agencies can spend from \$400,000 to \$600,000 annually on licensing for forensic tools.

Ellis said human trafficking exists in Clay County, though it doesn't always look like the stereotypical image of someone tied up or with visible markings.

"What human trafficking can look like is it can look like anything," he said. "It can enslave anyone through force, fraud, or coercion, or an addiction, leading them to being forced or

See CELL, page 7

## RV resort celebrates veterans with chili cookoff



Keystone Heights RV Resort veterans

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

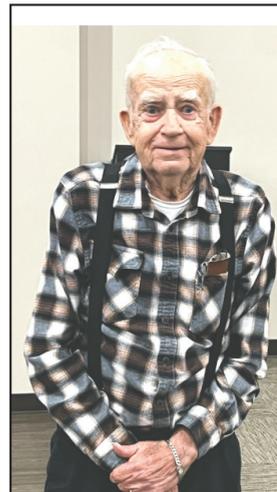
It was an inspiring and heartfelt celebration, celebrating their 4th Annual Veterans Day event while showcasing a diverse array of chili, including red, white, and vegan options. The event featured moving speeches that expressed deep gratitude to all the men, women, spouses, and family members who have courageously served or are currently serving in the military.

The event occurred on Tuesday, November 11, at the Keystone Heights RV Resort in Bradford County.

After everyone enjoyed the chili, sandwiches, chips, and a variety of pies, the ceremonies began. A trumpet player from the Keystone Heights J.R.O.T.C. opened the event, followed by the color guard. Representatives from various branches of the military were also present, each proudly holding their respective service flags.

The first speech was led by KH RV owner Vincent Esson, followed by representatives from various services.

"It's a beautiful event, and it's great to look at everybody here, and the veterans. I'm a big supporter, so I just want to say thank you. I get emotional just looking around, and I appreciate the presence of the veterans. Thank you to everybody who participated in the Chili Cook Off part, we really appreciate it," he said.



Don Lambert

Excitement buzzed as everyone eagerly awaited the announcement of the top three winners in both the Red and White Chili categories. There were three winners for each chili type.

Red Chili: 1st place winner - Helen LaVarnway, 2nd place winner - Don Lambert, 3rd place

winner - Marc Fitzgerald White Chili: 1st place winner - Shelly Austin, 2nd place winner - Kitty Lambert, 3rd place winner - Sharm Roy.

A moment was dedicated to explaining a small, empty table

See RV PARK, page 7



Helen LaVarnway



Sharm Roy

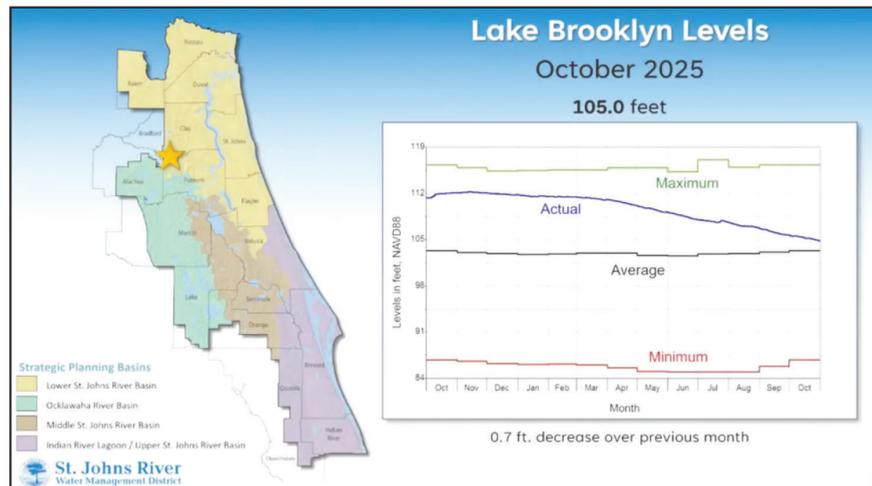


Kitty Lambert



Reagan Sames

## Lake Brooklyn down 7 feet over last 12 months



BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

The St. Johns River Water Management District's chief for its Bureau of Water Resources Information told governing board members during their November 12 meeting that water levels in Lake Brooklyn had dipped to 105.0 feet by the end of October.

The decline marks the 12th consecutive month the lake has lost water, leaving Brooklyn seven feet below its October 2024 mark of 112.1 feet above sea level.

Miller reported that over the past 12 months, the district's annual rainfall was 4.41 inches below the average of 51.01 inches. However, coastal and southern counties have recorded more rainfall, while the northern and inland areas are experiencing moderate drought conditions.

Volusia County led the district's 12-month precipitation totals with 55.4 inches, over four inches above average, while Bradford County lagged at 37.68 inches.

Five counties, Bradford, Alachua, Marion, Putnam, and Baker, were more than 10 inches below their annual averages, with Baker down over 13 inches.

The U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that the southeast

portion of the 18-county district is drought-free, while the northwest counties exhibit moderate drought to abnormally dry conditions.

Miller said that mild La Niña conditions, expected to persist through December, raise prospects for a cooler and drier fall and winter.

The National Weather Service's three-month forecast predicts below-normal rainfall with uncertainty.

Lake levels throughout the district reflected the variation in rainfall. Although Lake Brooklyn declined by 0.7 feet in October, Lake Wier, south of Ocala, recorded a slight drop, and Lake Winnemissett, east of DeLand, Lake Apopka, and Blue Cypress Lake, east of Vero Beach, all gained water during the month.

Executive Director Mike Register informed board members that, despite population growth throughout the district, groundwater withdrawals over the past decade have remained constant.

He credited conservation efforts and district policies for the lack of increase in withdrawals.

"It's more through our consumptive use permitting program, our MFL program, and our water supply program that

we see the effects of the work that we've done," he said.

**3rd Annual Fall Market and Rummage Sale**  
Friday, November 21, and Saturday, November 22,  
from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Woman's Club of Starke,  
located at 201 North Walnut Street, Starke, Florida 32091

The market will feature a variety of vendors, along with a large selection of rummage sale items, offering shoppers an opportunity to find holiday gifts or special items for themselves!

Hometown Grounds Coffee & Soda Crush Club will both be on-site serving food & beverages!

Attendees are encouraged to stop by for lunch, shop with local vendors, and enjoy this annual community event. The Woman's Club of Starke looks forward to welcoming everyone!

**FLORIDA PACE FUNDING AGENCY**

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO USE UNIFORM METHOD OF COLLECTING NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS**

The Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Florida PACE Funding Agency, a public body corporate and politic, (the "Agency"), hereby provides notice, pursuant to Sections 163.08, 163.081, 163.082 and 197.3632(3)(a), Florida Statutes, each as amended from time to time, of its intent to use the uniform method of collecting non-ad valorem assessments for more than one year to be levied within the area encompassed by the boundaries of every county in Florida, or any of the municipalities therein, served by the Agency's statewide provision of funding and financing to assist property owners who wish to construct, install or otherwise obtain qualifying improvements identified by the Legislature including, but not limited to, energy conservation and efficiency improvements, renewable energy improvements, and wind resistance improvements, in accordance with Section 163.08, et seq., Florida Statutes, as amended (collectively, the "Qualifying Improvements"). By law and resolution of the Agency, a property owner may apply to the Agency for funding and financing of Qualifying Improvements. The non-ad valorem assessments contemplated by this notice are voluntary and are only imposed by the Agency with the prior written consent authorized by or on behalf of affected property owners who determine to obtain financing for Qualifying Improvements from the Agency. The Agency is authorized by state law to fund and finance Qualifying Improvements and is required to annually collect repayment by non-ad valorem assessments to be collected by the Tax Collector in each County. The Board will consider the adoption of a resolution electing to use the uniform method of collecting such assessments as authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, after a public hearing to be held at Kissimmee Gateway Airport-Executive Conference room located at 401 Dyer Blvd Kissimmee FL on December 9, 2025, at 1 p.m. In the event of a local or national emergency, a hurricane, or any other interfering circumstance, if necessary, the meeting may be continued to a time, date, and place certain, and notice thereof, along with appropriate means for public attendance and participation, if other than in-person, will be posted on the Agency's website. Such resolution electing to use such uniform method will state the need for the levy and will contain a legal description of the boundaries of the real property that may be subject to the levy - which is the entirety of the State of Florida. A copy of the proposed form of resolution and other information may be viewed at the Agency's website: [www.FloridaPACE.gov](http://www.FloridaPACE.gov). All affected property owners have the right to be heard on the matter via advance written objection or by appearing in person at the public hearing. Advance written communication will be given equal weight to comments or objections made in person, and may be submitted to the Board via email to [Info@FloridaPACE.gov](mailto:Info@FloridaPACE.gov); and should be received by the Agency on or before December 8, 2025, at 9am so that copies can be distributed to Board members for advance review and hearing preparation purposes. Any person desiring to speak in person may appear at the public hearing. If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at this public hearing, such person will need a record of proceedings and for such purpose such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made at their own expense and which record includes the testimony and evidence on which the appeal is based. Any person requiring special accommodation at this meeting due to disability or physical impairment or needing an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the Agency at 850-400-PACE at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. If hearing impaired, Florida Relay Service numbers for assistance are (800) 955-8771 (tdd) or (800) 955-8770 (voice).

Published on November 13, 20, 27, December 4, 2025 by Order of the Board of Directors of the Florida PACE Funding Agency.

Assessments to be levied pursuant to written consent on various parcels within the State of Florida

# UNION COUNTY

## Riding club earns Golden Star for Boys Ranch donations



Members of the Union County Riding Club celebrate earning the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches' Boys Ranch Golden Star Award.

## Raiford pair helps homeschool parents

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Two former Lake Butler Elementary teachers are running a homeschool co-op out of the Raiford Community Center, offering small-group instruction in reading, writing, and math to around 20 students whose parents want an alternative to traditional classroom settings.

Kayla Dobbs and Abby Tucker launched Roots and Wings Education over the summer after seeing demand from homeschool parents who posted on Facebook asking if anyone offered tutoring or extra help for their kids.

"I kept seeing a lot of people on Facebook saying, does anyone tutor? I need my homeschool kids to get some extra help in the area. Does anyone have anything available?" said Dobbs, who taught at Lake Butler Elementary for eight years, primarily in kindergarten. "And nothing was really available to them."



Kayla Dobbs (left) and Abby Tucker teaches students at their Roots and Wings co-op Tuesdays through Thursdays.

### BY UNION COUNTY RIDING CLUB

In a celebration of community spirit and generosity, the Union County Riding Club was presented with the prestigious Golden Star Award from the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches' Boys Ranch on Monday evening, recognizing their remarkable fundraising efforts that surpassed \$60,000 in donations to support at-risk youth.

The award ceremony, held at the First Christian Church of Lake Butler, drew a crowd of past and present club members, Sheriff Brad Whitehead, and representatives from the Boys Ranch. Riding club President Janice Parrish accepted the honor on behalf of the club.

The Golden Star Award, the highest donor recognition bestowed by the Youth Ranches for contributions exceeding \$50,000, symbolizes a "milestone of giving" that directly impacts the lives of children in need. For many years, riding club members have organized fundraisers, including riding events, cake auctions, and individual donations, with all proceeds going to the Boys



(L-R) Boys Ranch Donor Selection Officer Joanna Thomas, Boys Ranch President Maria Knapp, Union County Riding Club President Janice Parrish, Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead and Boys Ranch Farm Director Jeff Parker.

## Help for those who struggle and high achievers

The co-op operates Tuesdays through Thursdays, with different subjects on different days. Dobbs handles kindergarten through second grade, while Tucker teaches third through sixth. Parents can pick and choose which classes their kids attend—one day a week or multiple days—depending on what subjects need reinforcement.

"We're there to supplement and to give support to those students who might be struggling or who are high achievers and need to be pushed a little bit further," Dobbs said.

The model differs from other local homeschool co-ops, which typically require parents to stay involved, purchase specific curriculum, and complete projects at home. At Roots and Wings, parents drop off their kids, and the teachers provide all materials.

"There's no outside expenses," Tucker said. "You drop your child off, we're going to meet them where they're at. They don't need a backpack, they don't need anything. We supply everything they need to learn."

The business grew out of conversations with a friend of Dobbs's who started a similar operation in High Springs. When that teacher couldn't expand to the Lake Butler area, Dobbs decided to launch her own.

"I prayed on it really hard and thought about it for a long time,"

she said. Most students qualify for state scholarships through the Step Up program, which reimburses vendors directly rather than requiring parents to pay out of pocket. The program accepts students with IEPs or doctor-diagnosed disabilities, though the general scholarship window recently closed.

## Small class sizes, exceptional education experience

Parents say they're drawn to the small class sizes—five students or fewer per group—and the teachers' backgrounds in special education.

One Lake Butler Elementary teacher, when asked by a parent whether to choose Roots and Wings or the High Springs program, recommended the local option.

"The teacher said, 'I would go to Kayla and Abby's all day long. It's more local for you. Not only that, but Kayla's got more of a background for special education,'" Dobbs recalled.

## Most intimidating: teaching reading

Tucker, who homeschools her own children, said the co-op fills a gap for parents who

want their kids to learn in group settings without the intimidation of teaching subjects like reading themselves.

"The most intimidating thing to me is teaching my kids how to read," she said. "I think that's true across the board for any parent. So having someone who's done it for so many years, who's taught hundreds of kids how to read, feels encouraging because it feels like you have somebody on your side."

The teachers are still accepting students, particularly in first and second grade, and have openings for math and creative writing classes. Dobbs said she's fielded two inquiries in the past week.

Looking ahead, the pair hopes to secure a permanent location—they currently haul materials in and out each day—and eventually expand to five days a week with afterschool tutoring for private school students.

"We would like to have more of a permanent spot so we can offer more classes," Dobbs said.

Tucker added that the co-op started as a way to give her own homeschooled children opportunities to work with other students while getting support from someone trained in fundamentals.

"I don't want to take them out of that group setting completely," she said. "And I want to work with someone who I trust, who I know understands how to teach."

Ranch. Founded in 1957 by a visionary group of Florida sheriffs, including Union County Sheriff John Whitehead, the Boys Ranch began as a sanctuary for dependent, neglected, troubled, and homeless boys who had few options left.

What started with a modest ranch in North Florida has grown into a comprehensive residential care network serving thousands of at-risk children across six locations statewide. Today, the organization's mission extends

beyond boys to include girls and families, focusing on mending lives and healing hearts through education, counseling, vocational training, and a nurturing ranch environment that emphasizes responsibility, resilience, and faith-based values.

The Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches continues to seek community partners, such as the Union County Riding Club. For more information on supporting their work, visit youthranches.org.

## Union officials cope with RV freeloaders

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Commissioner Donna Jackson's effort to force permanent residents of RVs, sheds, and makeshift campgrounds to pay the county's \$70 per year special assessment for fire-rescue services and the \$70 assessment for solid waste hit roadblocks over an alternative to special assessments for the accessory dwelling units, and how residents of such dwellings have evaded paying the assessments in the past.

## Not fair that only some pay

Jackson first proposed the effort during the commissioner's November 3 meeting in Raiford.

"One of the suggestions I made when we had our town hall in Raiford was that I would love to see us in a position of adding special assessments to all of these folks who are making residences of some form of housing other than a mobile home or a site-built home," she said.

Jackson, recalling the Raiford meeting, emphasized the unfairness of the current situation.

"When we look at the people in the audience at the Raiford Town Hall...the first thing that goes to my mind is you're talking about raising my special assessment. So, all these other people out there can live free without paying a special assessment."

The District 1 commissioner

also claimed that, while not paying for the disposal of the trash they produce or the ambulance services provided to them, the residents of transient housing encampments consume an outsized share of law enforcement resources.

"(The sheriff's office is finding) terrible, terrible situations and circumstances that are bleeding into our county as a whole, not just in the fact that they're not paying their fair share, but they're getting a great concentration of our services," she said. "(A lot of the county's) services are being targeted towards some of these makeshift campgrounds and they're out there, getting the 9-1-1 calls day in and day out."

## Rules are fine, enforcement needed

Jackson told her colleagues that she invited Property Appraiser Bruce Dukes to the meeting to provide input on how commissioners could move forward on her proposal.

She also said that, according to County Coordinator Jimmy Williams, county ordinances already state that parcels with people living in any type of vehicle or structure, in addition to an already-assessed home, may be charged an additional assessment.

"I guess we haven't been making a practice of that because of the fact that I think that Mr. Dukes has probably gotten some pushback from people who, once

it's assessed and then they come in and say, 'Well, we moved it and so it's not there anymore,'" she said. "And so I guess I would like to discuss how the board would like to maybe put an action in place."

Board Chair Channing Dobbs said some homeowners run power to storage sheds to run air conditioners that prevent mildew. He added that determining whether someone is living in a shed or a camper can be difficult.

## Temporary use permit for RVs

Dukes recommended that the county assess an RV permit. He added that commissioners could then use the permit fees for garbage, EMS, animal control, and any other county service.

Williams said a committee had already laid the groundwork for such a permit; however, commissioners have yet to act on it.

Gilchrist County now requires an annual permit for people living in campers or RVs. The cost is \$150 and is required before utility companies can run power to the unit.

Williams told commissioners that, regardless of whether they choose to place additional assessments on accessory dwelling units or require temporary use permits for RVs, standing up a county code enforcement operation is the key to both.

He told commissioners that he is working on that issue and would report progress in two weeks.

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386-496-8000

**General Notice**  
The City of Lake Butler (Owner) will be requesting Statements of Qualifications from Construction Managers at Risk (CMAR) organizations (Proposers) for the construction of the following Project, and for related pre-construction and construction CMAR services.

**PROJECT NAME: WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT**  
CONTRACT NO. 2025-0000000000000000

Selection will be conducted in accordance with Florida Statutes § 253.053 and the Consultant's/Contractor's registration until 11/20/2025. Based on the demonstrated competence and qualifications, the Proposer's information shall be submitted with the SOQ.

Following selection, the Owner will negotiate a contract for pre-construction services, including design coordination, constructability review, and construction management. The CMAR shall submit a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for construction in accordance with § 253.053, Florida Statutes. The CMAR contract will include the following services and work:

- Construction of four (4) lift stations including each lift station (SIS) with slabs, screens, trash trap, surge/tank, sump, and aerobic digester tankage.
- Construction of one (1) Chlorine Contact Chamber and Effluent Pump Station.
- Construction of new water lines.
- Construction of new chemical feed and storage facilities.
- Construction of one (1) plant pump station.
- Construction of one (1) sewage pumping station.
- Modifications to lift station pump station.
- Construction of one (1) electrical building and emergency generator system.
- Construction of one (1) Operations building with laboratory and administrative units.
- Installation of site yard paving and process interconnections.
- Installation and abandonment of existing treatment units.
- Site grading, drainage, paving, and roadway improvements.
- Installation of instrumentation, control, and SCADA system integration.

Owner anticipates that the pre-construction services will begin on January 20, 2026 with a duration of approximately 90 days. Notice to Proceed is expected in March 8, 2026, with substantial completion anticipated within 450 days and Final Completion by June 28, 2027.

**CMAR SOQ Information**  
CMAR SOQ Information of Request for Qualifications - Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) - 11/20/2025  
11/20/2025 11:00 AM Eastern Standard Time  
11/20/2025 11:00 AM Eastern Standard Time  
11/20/2025 11:00 AM Eastern Standard Time

**Public Opening of SOQs**  
All Statements of Qualifications received by the deadline will be publicly opened and the names of the Proposer(s) will be posted on the City of Lake Butler website on November 22, 2025, at 10:00 AM Eastern Standard Time. The evaluation and ranking will occur on this date. Proposers are not permitted to attend the public meeting.

**Selection Process**  
Construction Manager at Risk will be selected solely on the basis of qualifications. Owner will receive Statements of Qualifications and evaluate those, along with other information, to select the most highly qualified Proposer.

The Owner will select the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) using a one-step, qualifications-based selection process as described with 2025-0000000000000000. Florida Statutes § 253.052 will be followed and stated based on the criteria published below. The Owner will authorize contract negotiations with the highest ranked CMAR firm, which will include coordination with the Owner, Engineer, CMAR, Consultant, and other engineering services, and reviewing design milestones and scheduling.

Once a mutually agreeable GMP is reached, the Owner will execute a GMP Addendum to the CMAR Agreement authorizing construction under the approved guaranteed maximum price and completion date. If the Owner and the highest ranked CMAR cannot reach agreement, negotiations will be terminated and related with the next ranked firm per § 253.053(5)(a), Florida Statutes.

**SOQ Documents**  
Additional information regarding the selection criteria, submittal forms, and evaluation process is included in the Request for Qualifications (SOQ). Proposers should refer to the SOQ documents for all further requirements regarding Statements of Qualifications, submittal content, evaluation procedures, and selection process.

**Contact Information**  
For project-specific questions, contact:  
• Tim Norman, P.E., CMAR Consultant, LLC [tim@normanpe.com](mailto:tim@normanpe.com)  
• Jason Strader, P.E., CMAR Consultant, LLC [jason@straderpe.com](mailto:jason@straderpe.com)

This Advertisement is issued by:  
Owner: City of Lake Butler, Florida  
Address: 225 W Main St  
City Manager  
November 20, 2025

**CMAR SOQ Information**  
CMAR SOQ Information of Request for Qualifications - Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) - 11/20/2025  
11/20/2025 11:00 AM Eastern Standard Time  
11/20/2025 11:00 AM Eastern Standard Time  
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# Empty Bowls raises 10k for Lake Area Ministries

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

A vibrant room filled with eager attendees gathered together, united by the anticipation of homemade soup and bread, all in support of Lake Area Ministries. This spirit of community and generosity helped raise over \$10,000 to assist with the food pantry.

The 8th Annual Empty Bowls event took place on Tuesday, November 6th, at the Keystone Heights Woman's Club.

This year, the Woman's Club, the Methodist Women's Craft Group, Mission of the Dirt Road, and the Trinity Young Adult Bible Study, led by Karen Lake, the Potter, all contributed by making pottery bowls to be handed out at the event. In total, they created 80 bowls for the occasion.

A variety of soups and pasta were available, including Taco, Tomato, Chicken Noodle, Vegetable Beef, Chicken Dumplings, Unstuffed Bell Pepper, Chicken Festive, Pasta Fagioli, and Corned Beef and



Jimmy Dennis , Mary Mimbs, Teri Sapp , Janice Goetzman , Tanya Dennis , Billy Jackson and Ryan Begue

Cabbage. There was something for everyone.

Let's not forget the incredible cakes baked by several individuals, with the proceeds going to Lake Area Ministries. Each cake was auctioned off, and once the cakes were awarded, many of the recipients kindly shared their cakes with

all the attendees. They were quite scrumptious.

If you were curious about the cakes that were auctioned, here are the contents: White Amaretto Chocolate Tilled Cake, Margarita Cake, Hershey Cake, Salted Caramel Apple Crumble Cake, Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Raspberry Cake, and Carrot Cake.

Ryan Begue, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Keystone Heights, opened the event with a speech, followed by a prayer.

"I'd like to thank Tanya and all of the volunteers and everybody that helped put this on and for everyone coming out," he said.

Each year, Lake Area Ministries raises awareness about the importance of soup kitchens and food pantries in our communities.

On average, Lake Area Ministries provides food for approximately 630 families each month, which amounts to about 2,520 people.



(L-R) Todd Beals, Debbie Beals, John Raimer, Lindsie Santillo and Tina Santillo.



Foreground (l-r) Marilyn Martin, Maria Walker and Tina Bullock.

Tanya Dennis, the Director of Lake Area Ministries, noted that each month they receive around 25 to 30 new families seeking food assistance. This number is

currently rising due to funding cuts related to SNAP benefits following the government shutdown.

According to Dennis, they

served 148 families within the three hours they were open on the first day following the cutoff of these benefits. These families urgently need food assistance due to the ongoing government shutdown and the rising cost of food.

She said, "I have people on speed dial that will drop what they're doing to help at the pantry, and I can't thank them enough, and I want them to know that they put the hope in people's faces just as well as I do at the window. I see kids smiling even when they don't even know where their next meal is coming from. I see neighbors out helping each other, passing food around, and doing things."

"It would be easy to worry that we might not have enough, but I stand here today in confidence because of God's faithfulness and because of you in this room tonight, we pull together and we are the hands and feet of Lake Area Ministries."

"I want to start by saying thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and your prayers. Your support means more than words can express," she said.



Sam Key, Tori Gentry, Karen Lake, Brooklyn Hayes-Yelin and Ingrid DeJesus.

## CELL

Continued from page 5

manipulated to do something they wouldn't otherwise do."

## Sextortion leads to suicides

Ellis said the internet has made sex trafficking easier to facilitate. Years ago, someone had to stand on a corner to solicit. Now, 99% of transactions occur digitally through apps: advertising, communication, and payment, before any physical meeting.

Ellis focused much of his presentation on what he called "sextortion," a growing problem where predators convince children to send inappropriate pictures, then threaten to share the images with family or schools unless the child sends money or more photos.

"Good kids make mistakes," he said. "That's one thing I tell parents all the time."

The predators often operate from outside the United States, particularly Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, he said. They research victims through social media, learning names of parents and teachers before making threats. When they gain access to a child's account, they use it to message other students.

"Dozens of children have taken their own lives as a result of this across the United States," Ellis said.

## As dangerous as a loaded gun

Ellis compared giving a child unsupervised access to a smartphone to leaving a loaded pistol on a coffee table with a toddler.

"Smartphones are too smart for kids and kids aren't smart enough for smartphones," he said.

Ellis said he's not advocating eliminating internet access for children, but parents need to set boundaries, monitor usage, and have conversations about online dangers. When he started his career 21 years ago, it was rare for a child under 10 to be exploited online. Now it happens multiple times a year.

"When we give that phone, we've now invited the streets into the room," he said.

Research now shows that addiction to smartphones is stronger than addiction to crack cocaine, he said. Tech companies intentionally design platforms to be addictive because views, clicks, and

scrolls translate to increased advertising revenue.

Ellis encouraged parents to visit the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's website (ncmec.org) for educational resources, including videos for children of all ages.

"If you see something that doesn't look right or you think is out of the ordinary, we want you to call," he said. "I hear people say, 'Well, I don't want to waste your time.' You're not."



Clay County Sheriff's Detective Ryan Ellis points to his cell phone and says giving a child unsupervised access to a smartphone is like leaving a loaded pistol on a coffee table with a toddler.

# 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

Amanda Lynn Bolt, 42, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 11 for three counts of possession of a controlled substance, three counts of possession of drug paraphernalia, and two counts of tampering with evidence.

Marquese Terrell Chandler, 27, of Tallahassee, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 10 for a probation violation.

Jessica Maria Cherciu, 27, of Jacksonville, was arrested by

Bradford deputies on November 9 for disturbing the peace and public order crimes.

Justin Hunter Hendrix, 26, of Melrose, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 10 for battery.

Antwan Reshard Johnson, 36, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 10 for failure to appear.

Charity Faith Johnson, 24, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 13 for larceny and a probation violation.

David D Johnson, 67, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 8 for resisting an officer without violence.

Angela Mae Kiriy, 52, of Callahan, was arrested by the Department of Corrections Office of Inspector General on November 8 for smuggling contraband into a prison and trafficking in amphetamines.

Joseph Phillip Larisey, 44, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 13 for a probation violation.

Robert Eugene Proctor, 39, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 10 for a probation violation.

Bradley Scott Rhoades, 36, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 11 for a moving traffic violation and possession of a controlled substance.

John Henry Smith, 44, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 9 for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Troy Blaine Tetstone, 37, of Brooker, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 13 for an out-of-county warrant and a probation violation.

### Union

None reported.

### Clay

Donald Aleen Berry, 65, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on November 8 for molesting a victim less age 12 or under.

approximately 2,000 residents in Keystone Heights, Florida. This situation temporarily left many homes without electricity and posed a danger to the area.

According to Clay Electric, approximately 2,000 people experienced power outages due to damage to one of their power poles. Their team was on-site to assess the situation and repair any damaged power lines. Additionally, the Clay County Sheriff's Office notified the public through

their SaferWatch app about the large brush fire in the area.

The fire broke out near 6569 State Road 21 in Keystone Heights at approximately 12:51 a.m. and spread rapidly. Fortunately, Clay County Fire Rescue, along with Department of Forestry officials, managed to keep the fire under control, ensuring that surrounding homes and businesses were not endangered.

The cause of the fire is currently unknown.

## Freezing night brings power outage, brush fire to Lake Region

BY JENN SAMSEL  
Jenn@BcTelegraph.com

Freezing temperatures, combined with strong winds on November 11, contributed to a large brush fire that knocked out power for

of those who are unable to toast to their bravery. This display serves as a poignant reminder of the deep suffering endured, with grains of salt representing the countless tears shed by families. A single rose stands as a tribute to the loved ones who continue to keep faith for their return. Lastly, a burning candle and a yellow ribbon symbolize the everlasting hope for a reunion with those who are missing.

The ceremony concluded with heartfelt gratitude for all the brave men and women who have served in the military. Many veterans shared reflections on their families' proud tradition of military service, highlighting the honor of having multiple generations dedicate themselves to this noble calling and the divisions in which they served. They expressed immense pride in being a part of the U.S. Military.

## RV PARK

Continued from page 5

that symbolizes the vulnerability of a lone prisoner in the hands of their captors. The white tablecloth represents purity and highlights the focus on the nation's captured arms. The empty chair signifies the absence of these individuals, while an inverted wine glass tells the story



Accepting the 2025 Florida Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award is Clay County Sheriff's Detective Ryan Ellis (second from left). Also pictured are (l-r) Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook accepting on behalf of Detective Eva Solis, Charlotte County Sheriff Bill Prummell, Rob LaVielle with FirstNet AT&T, and Florida Senate President Ben Albritton.



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# Tornadoes roll to 55-6 win over Devils in regional quarters

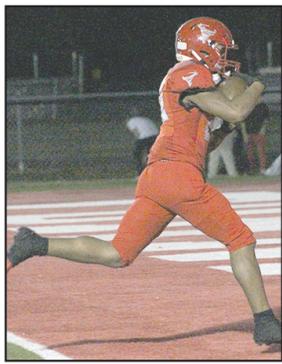
BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's Tornadoes looked nothing like a team that hadn't played since Oct. 24, defeating visiting Avon Park 55-6 in a Nov. 14 Region 2-2A quarterfinal football game.

"We did a lot of good things tonight," Head Coach Jamie Rodgers said.

Did they ever. If the Tornadoes — the number-one seed in Region 2 — had any rust from their time off, they shook it all off in a hurry, scoring on their first offensive play, putting up 42 points in the first half, getting touchdowns from the defense and special teams, creating three turnovers and setting two new school records. The 55 points scored surpassed the previous record of 54 in a 54-12 win over Bishop Moore in 2004, while the 49-point margin broke the record of 48 in a 48-0 win over Crescent City in 2022.

In Rodgers' four years as head coach, the Tornadoes have won four first-round playoff games by a combined score of 180-6.



Jarell Harris crosses the goal line for his first of his three touchdowns.

"It's going to get harder from here," Rodgers said.

Bradford (10-1) will now host Tampa's Berkeley Prep — the region's fifth seed — in a semifinal game on Friday, Nov. 21, at 7:30 p.m. Berkeley (5-4) advanced by defeating fourth seed The Villages 35-28.

"We've got a really talented team coming," Rodgers said. "A team that's used to being in the

playoffs. A team that's used to winning big. They won a state championship in the last few years.

"It'll be a great test for us. It's going to be a lot of fun."

Eighth seed Avon Park (6-5) gained two first downs on the game's opening drive, completing a 13-yard pass on the first play from scrimmage and later getting a first down 3 yards shy of midfield when Bradford was penalized for a horse-collar tackle. The Tornadoes' Kingston Booker made a tackle for a loss of 4 years in between two incomplete passes as the Red Devils were forced to punt.

The Tornadoes' first offensive play saw wide receiver Chase Phillips get the ball on a jet sweep and take it 58 yards for a touchdown at the 8:44 mark of the opening quarter. Tyler Sapp kicked the extra point to make it 7-0.

Avon Park went three-and-out on its next series, with a shanked punt setting the Bradford offense up at the Devils' 21-yard line. A

7-yard run by Jarell Harris and a penalty moved the Tornadoes to the 9. Harris scored the first of his three touchdowns on a run from there. Sapp added the PAT, putting Bradford up 14-0 with 5:51 to play in the first quarter.

The Devils picked up a first down at their own 47 on a 19-yard pass from Jabhari Payne to Chris Kelly. Tayon Jones' 5-yard reception moved Avon Park past midfield, but an incomplete pass and a tackle for a 1-yard loss by Bradford's J.J. Hall had the Devils facing fourth-and-6. They went for it, turning the ball over on downs on an incomplete pass.

A 10-yard pass from Cy Cubbedge to Phillips and a 9-yard run by Harris helped the Tornadoes drive to the Avon Park 27. The offense failed to pick up any additional yardage on three straight plays, but on fourth-and-10, a penalty gave the Tornadoes a first down at the 13. Harris eventually scored on a 10-yard touchdown run on the first play of the second quarter, putting Bradford up 21-0 after



Avon Park quarterback Jabhari Payne (left) tries to get a pass off while being pressured by Danny Torres.

Sapp's PAT.

The Bradford defense got the first of its turnovers on the Devils' ensuing series, with Maliki Cobarris intercepting a pass at the Avon Park 36. That set up Bradford's fourth scoring drive, with Harris gaining all 36 yards on four carries and capping the

series with a 6-yard touchdown at the 8:20 mark of the second quarter. Sapp kicked the extra point to put the Tornadoes up 28-0.

Harris finished the night with 70 yards on nine carries.

See ROLL, page 13

## BHS to host 13th-ranked Berkeley Prep

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School opened the postseason by easily defeating the 39th team in the Florida High School Athletic Association/MaxPreps Class 2A power rankings (see related story) and will now play the 13th-ranked team in a Region 2-2A semifinal game on Friday, Nov. 21, at 7:30 p.m.

The Tornadoes (10-1), who are ranked fourth in 2A and seeded first in Region 2, will host fifth seed Tampa Berkeley Prep, which bring a 5-4 record into the game after defeating fourth seed The Villages 35-28 in the Nov. 14 quarterfinals.

Bradford is attempting to win a second-round game for the third time in four years. If the

Tornadoes defeat the Buccaneers, they will host the winner between second seed Clearwater Calvary Christian (8-3) and third seed Cocoa (6-4) for the Region 2 championship on Friday, Nov. 28. Calvary Christian is the eighth-ranked team in 2A, while Cocoa is ranked 11th.

Berkeley is in the postseason for the eighth straight year and has qualified for the playoffs a total of 18 years. The Bucs have won at least one playoff game in 15 of their 18 postseason appearances. Berkeley has a playoff record of 26-16.

The Bucs have won one state championship, defeating Miami Norland 28-20 in the 2023 Class 2 Metro final. Berkeley also finished as a state runner-up, losing 21-0 to Hollywood Chaminade-Madonna in the

2021 Class 3A final.

Berkeley was one win away from playing for state championships in 1980, 1984, 1985, 2011, 2016 and 2020.

This year's Berkeley team lost its first four games — all against teams that finished in the top 10 in the final power rankings of their classifications. The Bucs opened with a 21-20 loss to Clearwater Central Catholic (sixth in 1A), followed by a 29-23 loss to Sarasota Booker (third in 3A). Berkeley then lost 49-10 to Sarasota Cardinal Mooney (first in 2A) and 42-15 to Calvary Christian.

Since the Calvary Christian loss, the Bucs have won five in a row: 28-15 over 6A Valrico Bloomingdale (which finished the season 3-7), 19-7 over 2A Tampa Catholic (which finished

1-9), 19-7 over 6A Tampa Plant (which finished 5-6 after a first-round playoff loss), 31-21 over 7A Tampa Alonzo (which finished 6-4) and the first-round playoff win over The Villages (which finished 9-2).

Berkeley is scoring an average of 22 points per game, while opponents are averaging 24 points per game.

The Bucs' offense averages 163 rushing yards per game, led by junior Luby Jones, who averages 5 yards per carry and 94 yards per game. For the season, Jones, who has 847 yards and 10 touchdowns on 168 carries, is coming off a three-touchdown effort in the win over The Villages, in which he gained 148 yards on 25 carries. One of his

See PLAYOFF, page 14



**This Week's Football Contest Winner:**  
**Steve Griffis**  
missed 4; won with tiebreaker

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Amberlea Wagner signs a letter of intent with Santa Fe College during a ceremony in the high school cafeteria on Tuesday, November 18. Also pictured are (l-r) her father Kevin Wagner, her mother Amanda Wagner, and her brother Clayton Wagner.

## Keystone's Wagner signs to play softball at Santa Fe

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
Dan@BcTelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School softball standout Amberlea Wagner signed a letter of intent with Santa Fe College during a ceremony in the high school cafeteria on Tuesday, Nov. 18.

Principal Laurie Burke said Wagner embodies the school's values.

"We love to have our students like this shine for us, and I'm so proud to have Amberlea represent our school with what she put into getting here, but to represent our school because of the character she has on top of all that."

Coach Jessica Marquart said Wagner is not only one of the best catchers she's coached, but her versatility allows her to contribute even more to the team.

"She is just one of the best catchers I've ever had at the school," Marquart said. "Probably the best blocking catcher I've ever had. No balls get behind her. She's a true definition of a utility player. Not only does she catch, she catches mainly for us because that's

where we need her at. But I can put her at shortstop, first base or the outfield. She can hit. She can punt. She can run the bases."

Marquart added that Wagner not only brings skills to the diamond but also heart.

"I think she was just born to be in this sport and to play this sport," the coach continued. "She loves it, she has a passion for it."

The coach said Wagner's softball roots run deep, recognizing the presence of the signee's great-grandfather, Dale Richardson, who helped Marquart coach the team when she first arrived in Keystone in 2004-05.

Before signing the letter of intent, Wagner thanked her family members who have supported her since she first dreamed about playing college softball at age 7.

She thanked her mother, Amanda, whom she called her first coach, and her father for his encouragement.

"He believed in me when I didn't believe in myself and when I had my worst games and my best games," she said.

She also thanked her

grandparents and great-grandparents for their sacrifices and advice and for cheering her on through good times and bad.

Wagner praised her coaches for pushing her and holding her accountable.

"You taught me discipline, teamwork and how to handle both success and failure," she said. "Thank you...for pushing me past my limits when I thought I couldn't go any further. Every drill, every lesson, every talk."

Wagner also acknowledged her teammates, whom she called her second family.

"The memories we made on and off the field mean everything to me," she said.

She also offered advice for those who want to follow in her footsteps.

"Just trust the process," she said. "Everything will work out just how it's supposed to. God's timing is perfect, and your path is your own. Don't let anyone else decide your path for you. Stay patient, stay humble and keep putting in the work when no one's watching. Don't rush anything, and always trust in God's plan for you."

## KHHS runners compete at regional meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School's cross-country season came to an end at the Region 1-2A finals, which were held Nov. 14 in Jacksonville.

The top eight teams earned the right to advance to state, while the top four individuals not on a qualifying team will move on as well.

Keystone placed 11th out of 16th in the boys team standings and 12th out of 16 in the girls team standings.

The Keystone runner who was closest to qualifying for state was Ryleigh Thomas, who placed 38th out of 116 with a time of 20:42. She was the seventh highest individual not on a state-qualifying team.

Meoldy Tyre finished five spots behind teammate Thomas running a 43rd-place time of 20:53, while the girls team also had the following results: Tessa Gray 22:33, Olivia Griffin 23:47, Kirsten Lavin 25:46, Bailee Moris 26:01 and Clara Beth Robinson 26:58.

The boys team was led by Noah Yara and Hunter Sheppard, who placed 37th and 38th, respectively, out of 116. Yara's time was 17:20, while Sheppard's was 17:22.

Yara and Sheppard had the ninth- and 10th-best times among individuals not on state-qualifying teams.

The Indians' Hunter Gray ran a 54th-place time of 17:47.

Other Keystone boys results were Ryder Thomas 18:27, Jason Parales 19:48, Ryeland Wahl 20:05 and Gavin Morforrd 20:40.

Bolles won the boys team championship. The Bulldogs also had the individual champion in Aidan Chandler, who ran 15:53.

The girls team champ was Bishop Kenny, while Episcopal's Kate Brice was the individual winner with a time of 18:07.

This marked the 12th straight year Keystone had a team or an individual compete at the regional level.



Kayden Huntley (right) recorded a hat trick in the Indians' 4-0 win over Crescent City on Nov. 12.

## KHHS girls soccer team ends a 1-1-1 week with loss to Fernandina

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

It was a 1-1-1 week for the Keystone Heights High School girls soccer team, ending with a 7-1 loss to host Fernandina Beach on Nov. 14.

The Indians' lone goal was scored by Tayler Buchanan off a Kayle Buchanan assist.

Keystone (2-3-1) began the week with a 2-2 tie against visiting Suwanee on Nov. 10. Kayden Huntley scored off a Tayler Buchanan assist, while Halea Lam scored off a Huntley assist. Goalie Xana Briley made seven saves.

Huntley scored three goals in the Indians' 4-0 win over host Crescent City on Nov. 12. Lam scored the other goal, while Tayler Buchanan recorded two assists. Parker Collins and Alyssa Townsend each had one assist.

Briley made one save. Keystone's junior varsity team finished in a 2-2 tie against Suwanee on Nov. 10, with Juliette Marini scoring off a

Ryleigh Thomas assist and Thomas scoring off a Marini assist. Goalie Sophia Candelario-Garcia made 10 saves.

The JV Indians defeated Crescent City 6-0 on Nov. 12, getting three goals from Jalynn Kurtzo and one goal each from Abbygelle McGee, Akyria Wilson and Callie Yerkes. Marini recorded two assists, while Aleah Hallberg had one.

Both JV and varsity teams, who played Buchholz on Nov. 19, won't return to action until Monday, Dec. 1, with home matches against Branford. The JV match will start at 4 p.m., followed by the varsity match at 5:30 p.m.

## Indians fall 5-1 to Fernandina in boys soccer

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Trenton Noble scored the only goal in the Keystone Heights High School boys soccer team's 5-1 loss at Fernandina Beach on Nov. 14.

The loss capped an 0-2-1 week that began with a 5-0 loss at Columbia on Nov. 10. The

See SOCCER, page 13

## Shining Stars of the Week!

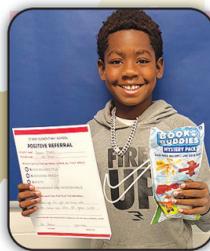
Recognizing the following outstanding students for their amazing character and academic achievements!



**Adene Gonzalez**  
3rd grade  
Lawtey Elementary  
Adene participates in class with excitement.



always stays on task, helps others, and takes pride in doing her best work. She is truly a shining star!



**Byron Howell**  
2nd grade  
Starke Elementary

Byron is very responsible and always follows the rules. He always helps make sure the cafeteria is clean after lunch.



**Madeline Lanier**  
2nd grade  
Hope Christian Academy

Madeline Lanier is a hardworking student who always wants to help her classmates. She sets a wonderful example for others!



**Lucas Touchstone**  
3rd grade  
Lighthouse Elementary

Lucas started with us in Kindergarten, and we have watched as he has excelled academically in all subjects. He is an honor roll student,



and he continues to show growth in all areas. He is a good friend to those around him, and he is a joy to have in the classroom. We are proud to have Lucas at L.C.A.!



**Raylee Morris**  
2nd grade  
Providence Christian Academy

Raylee is kind, helpful, and always does her best for her teacher.

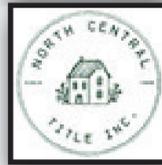
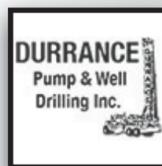


**Lane Pickett**  
2nd grade  
Bradford Elementary

He works hard, listens hard, plays hard and laughs hard. He is kind and respectful. He is self-motivated and always wants to do his best.



Thank you...  
to our  
sponsors!



## THE BEST OFFICE RENTAL SPACE IN STARKE!

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# Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Nov. 20, 2025

## BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY CASE NO. 04-2024-DP-000132 IN THE INTEREST OF: D.C.A. DOB: 8/9/2010, K.M. DOB: 4/5/2016, D.A. DOB: 3/16/2022, E.A. DOB: 5/21/2025, MINOR CHILDREN

NOTICE OF ACTION TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

**TO: Kristy Alvarez**, address unknown **YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED** that the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families, has filed a Petition to terminate your parental rights and permanently commit the following children for adoption: D.C.A. born on 8/9/2010; K.M. born on 4/5/2016; D.A. born on 3/16/2022 and E.A. born on 5/21/2025. You are hereby **commanded** to appear on **December 16, 2025, at 11:10 AM** before the General Magistrate Bridget Baker at the Bradford Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue Starke, FL 32091, for an **ADVISORY HEARING**. FAILURE TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AT THIS ADVISORY HEARING CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THIS CHILD (OR CHILDREN). IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR ON THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED, YOU MAY LOSE ALL LEGAL RIGHTS AS A PARENT TO THE CHILD OR CHILDREN NAMED IN THIS NOTICE.

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, 201 E. University Avenue, Room 414A, Gainesville, FL 32601 at (352) 337-6237, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

**WITNESS**, my hand as Clerk of said Court and the Seal thereof, this 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.  
**Denny Thompson**, Clerk of Court  
By: Tasher Allen  
As Deputy Clerk

11/13 4tchg 12/4-BCT

## ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AND SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT GIVE NOTICE OF DISTRICT DECISION

The St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) give notice of their decision approving the 2025 Implementation Strategy for the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Priority Springs (LSFIR) (Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs)) (hereafter the 2025 Implementation Strategy). The Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Priority Springs are located in Alachua, Columbia, Gilchrist, and Suwannee Counties. The 2025 Implementation Strategy was jointly developed by the SJRWMD and the SRWMD in coordination with stakeholders and is consistent with the provisions for establishing and implementing minimum flows and levels (MFLs) provided for in subsections 373.0421(2) and 373.805(2) of the Florida Statutes (F.S.). The 2025 Implementation Strategy is available at: <https://srwmd.org/1590/Lower-Santa-Fe-and-Ichetucknee-Rivers-an>

The file(s) containing the 2025 Implementation Strategy are available for inspection Monday through Friday, except for legal holidays, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the following locations: St. Johns River Water Management District Headquarters, 4049 Reid St., Palatka, Florida, 32177-2529; and

Suwannee River Water Management District Headquarters, 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, FL 32060. If you wish to receive a copy, please submit your request to the Office of Business and Administrative Services, St. Johns River Water Management District; or the Records Manager / District Records Custodian, Suwannee River Water Management District. You may also review these documents by using your web browser to go to the website described above.

A person whose substantial interests may be affected by the Districts' decision on the 2025 Implementation Strategy has the right to request an administrative hearing in accordance with Section 120.569 and 120.57, F.S., and Chapter 28-106, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Persons seeking a hearing on the Districts' decision which affects or may affect their substantial interests shall file a petition for an administrative hearing in accordance with the filing instructions set forth herein, within twenty-one (21) days of the publication of this notice. A petition must comply with Sections 120.54(5) (b)4. and 120.569(2)(c), F.S., and Chapter 28-106, F.A.C. Mediation pursuant to Section 120.573, F.S., is not available. Because the administrative hearing process is designed to formulate final agency action, the timely filing of a petition may result in the Districts' final action being different from their original action. Any person who receives written notice of the District's decision and fails to file a petition (written request for a hearing) within 21 days of the publication of this notice waives the right to request a hearing on that decision.

A petition requesting an administrative hearing must be filed in accordance with the following:

\*\*For those whose substantial interests are affected within the SJRWMD, a request for hearing must be filed with (received by) the District either by delivery at the office of the District Clerk at District Headquarters, P. O. Box 1429, Palatka Florida 32178-1429 (4049 Reid St., Palatka, FL 32177) or by e-mail with the District Clerk at [Clerk@sjrwmd.com](mailto:Clerk@sjrwmd.com). A petition for an administrative hearing is deemed filed upon receipt of the complete petition by the District Clerk at the District Headquarters in Palatka, Florida. Petitions received by the District Clerk after 5:00 p.m., or on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, shall be deemed filed as of 8:00 a.m. on the next regular District business day. The District's acceptance of petitions filed by e-mail is subject to certain conditions set forth in the District's Statement of Agency Organization and Operation (issued pursuant to Rule 28-101.001, F.A.C.), which is available at <https://aws.sjrwmd.com/SJRWMD/Statement-of-Agency-Organization-and-Operation.pdf>. These conditions include, but are not limited to, the petition being in the form of a PDF or TIFF file and being capable of being stored and printed by the District. Further, pursuant to the District's Statement of Agency Organization and Operation, attempting to file a petition by facsimile (fax) is prohibited and shall not constitute filing. For additional information on filing a petition requesting an administrative hearing within the SJRWMD, you may visit [www.sjrwmd.com/permitting/notice-of-rights/](http://www.sjrwmd.com/permitting/notice-of-rights/).

\*\*For those whose substantial interests are affected within the SRWMD, a petition for administrative hearing must be filed either by hand delivery, U.S. Mail, or by electronic transmission (facsimile) to the Agency Clerk, at Suwannee River Water Management District Headquarters, 9225 County Road 49, Live Oak, FL 32060; or 386.362.1056 (fax). A petition for an administrative hearing is deemed filed upon receipt of the complete petition by the Agency Clerk at the District Headquarters in Live Oak, Florida. Petitions received by the Agency Clerk after 5:00 p.m., or on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, shall be deemed filed as of 8:00 a.m. on the next regular District business day. The District's acceptance of petitions filed by electronic transmission (facsimile) is subject to certain

conditions set forth in the District's Statement of Agency Organization and Operation (issued pursuant to Rule 28-101.001, F.A.C.), which is available at [www.mysuwanneeriver.com/DocumentCenter/View/18760/SRWMD-Agency-Statement-of-Organization-and-Operation?bid=112011tchg-BCT](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/DocumentCenter/View/18760/SRWMD-Agency-Statement-of-Organization-and-Operation?bid=112011tchg-BCT)

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

To satisfy the owner's storage lien, KO Storage LLC will sell at public lien sale on December 15, 2025. The personal property in the below-listed units, which may include but are not limited to: Household goods, boxes/boxes/bags, clothing, bedding, tools and toys. The public sale of these items will begin at 10AM on December 08, 2025 and end at 12PM on December 15, 2025. The public sale will take place on [www.storage-treasures.com](http://www.storage-treasures.com). KO Storage of Starke - S Walnut St, 1650 South Walnut Street, Starke FL 32091, (952)-491-6837

Time: 12:00PM CST  
A15, Simmons, Sonya, A20, Thomas, Blaise, A21, Wilson, Kelley, A39, Lee, Charles, A81, Rodriguez, Jenean, B31, Denman, Ashley, B40, Jones, Paul, B45, Smith, Maria, B47, Gaines, Jaymie, B58, Martin, Rodney, B63, Johnson, George, B73, Hanson, Katie

Public sale terms, rules, and regulations will be made available on [www.storage-treasures.com](http://www.storage-treasures.com). All sales are subject to cancellation. We reserve the right to refuse any bid. Payment must be by credit/debit card, we do not accept checks or cash. Buyers must secure the units with their own personal locks. To claim tax-exempt status, original RESALE certificates for each space purchased is required. For KO Storage LLC, 10301 Wayzata Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55305. (952)-491-6837.

11/20 2tchg 11/27-BCT

### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 2024CA000206  
ROCKET MORTGAGE, LLC F/K/A QUICKEN LOANS, LLC F/K/A QUICKEN LOANS INC., Plaintiff,

vs.  
JADON HUDSON JOHNS, A MINOR CHILD IN THE CARE OF HIS FATHER AND NATURAL GUARDIAN, LEONARD SCOTT JOHNS; et al., Defendants.

### NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS GIVEN that, in accordance with the Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered on August 25, 2025, in the above-styled cause, I will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash on **December 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM (EST)** at the **BRADFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 945 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091**, the following described property:  
LOT 2 OF COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF, AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 3, PAGE 22, PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Property Address: **140 Northeast 13th Street, Starke FL 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: November 13, 2025  
/s/ Kelley L. Church  
Kelley L. Church, Esquire  
Florida Bar No.: 100194  
Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A.  
255 S. Orange Ave., Ste. 900  
Orlando, FL 32801-3454  
(855) 287-0240  
(407) 872-6012 Facsimile  
E-mail: [servicecopies@qpwblaw.com](mailto:servicecopies@qpwblaw.com)  
E-mail: [kchurch@qpwblaw.com](mailto:kchurch@qpwblaw.com)

Attorney for Plaintiff  
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 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, call 711. You are also entitled to a hearing on your petition for assistance. If you are unable to participate in a proceeding, please contact Court Help at (352) 337-6237.**

11/20 2tchg 11/27 BCT

### NOTICE Invitation for Bids

IFB #25-01  
New River Regional Landfill Class I Landfill Landfill Gas Flare Equipment Replacement

The New River Solid Waste Association (NRSWA) is extending an invitation for bids (IFB) to replace equipment at the landfill gas flare at the New River Regional Landfill (NRRL) Class I Landfill. At a minimum, two Variable Frequency Drives and possibly two blower motors will require replacement. All Bidders will be required to visit the site before submitting bids and evaluate the flare system to determine if other components of the system require replacement. The successful Bidder will be responsible for providing all replacement equipment and for installation in accordance with the

project Scope of Work. The NRRL is approximately 2.5 miles north of Raiford, Florida, on the east side of State Road 121.

Bid packages and other information are available for pickup from the Administrative Office at NRSWA, 24276 NE 157<sup>th</sup> Street, Raiford, Florida 32083. Bid packages can also be requested to be received electronically by emailing NRSWA at [lgreene@nrswa.org](mailto:lgreene@nrswa.org). All bids must be submitted on the Bid Form provided. Completed bids are to be mailed to NRSWA, PO Box 647, Raiford, Florida 32083 or delivered to the NRSWA Administrative Office at 24276 NE 157<sup>th</sup> Street, Raiford, Florida 32083. After the IFB opening, the bids will be examined for completeness and preserved in the custody of the NRSWA Executive Director. Bids will be evaluated and a vendor selected in accordance with NRSWA Purchasing Policy. All bids received after the specified time and date will not be considered. Contact the NRSWA office at (386) 431-1000 for questions concerning the bid package. The DEADLINE for submittal is Thursday, December 18, 2025, 2:00 p.m. (local time).

11/20 1tchg-UCT

### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA

CIRCUIT CIVIL DIVISION CASE NO.: 24000175CAAXMX NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE LLC, Plaintiff,

v. DALE TACKITT, et al., Defendants.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 45 (Publish in BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH)

**NOTICE OF SALE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 45 IS HEREBY GIVEN** that, pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated October 28, 2025, issued in and for Bradford County, Florida, in Case No. 24000175CAAXMX, wherein US BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR VRMTG ASSET TRUST is the Plaintiff, and DALE TACKITT, CHRIS TACKITT and THE UNKNOWN HEIRS, BENEFICIARIES, DEVISEES, GRANTEEES, ASSIGNEES, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES AND ALL OTHERS WHO MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST IN THE ESTATE OF THERESA DOWELL, DECEASED are the Defendants.

**The Clerk of the Court, DENNY THOMPSON**, will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash, in accordance with Section 45.031, Florida Statutes, on **January 15, 2026, at in-person sale beginning at 11:00 AM, at the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091** the following-described real property as set forth in said Final Judgment of Foreclosure, to wit:  
THE EAST 3 ACRES OF THE SOUTH 1/2 OF THE WEST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 22 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA AND LESS AND EXCEPT THAT PORTION LYING AND BEING IN ANY RIGHT OF WAY.

LESS AND EXCEPT THE SOUTH 1 ACRE OF THE EAST 3 ACRES OF THE SOUTH 1/2 OF THE WEST 1/4 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 16, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 22 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA AND LESS AND EXCEPT THAT PARCEL DESCRIBED IN OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK 1806, PAGE 423, OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Property Address: **17376 NW 36TH AVE, STARKE, FL 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 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,  
HOWARD LAW  
4755 Technology Way, Suite 104  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
Telephone: (954) 893-7874  
Facsimile: (888) 235-0017  
Designated Service E-Mail: [Pleadings@HowardLaw.com](mailto:Pleadings@HowardLaw.com)  
By: /s/ Matthew B. Klein  
Matthew B. Klein, Esq.  
Florida Bar No.: 73529  
E-Mail: [Matthew@HowardLaw.com](mailto:Matthew@HowardLaw.com)

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

### Publish In: BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH

Invoice to:  
HOWARD LAW  
4755 Technology Way, Suite 104  
Boca Raton, FL 33431  
Phone: (954) 893-7874  
Fax: (888) 235-0017  
E-Mail: [Pleadings@HowardLaw.com](mailto:Pleadings@HowardLaw.com)  
Harris@HowardLaw.com  
Counsel for Plaintiff

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that a true and correct copy of the foregoing was furnished via U.S. Mail or E-Mail to those parties listed below on this 14<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.  
Julia B. Kite-Powell, Esq.,  
Julia B. Kite-Powell, P.A.  
E-Mail: [juliakp@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:juliakp@tampabay.rr.com)  
Guardian Ad Litem for Defendant,  
Dale Tackitt  
6433 Crystal Mountain Rd  
Colorado Springs, CO 80923  
Chris Tackitt  
17376 NW 36TH AVE  
STARKE, FL 32091  
Chris Tackitt  
240 Belvedere St.  
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233  
By: /s/ Matthew B. Klein  
Matthew B. Klein, Esq.  
Florida Bar No.: 73529

11/20 2tchg 11/27-BCT

### CALL FOR BID

The Town of Brooker will receive bids for a "Class C Operator" for the water plant in Brooker. You must be able to take Bacteriological reports and mail, maintain operation records, check plant equipment (chlorinator, booster pump, well pump, generator), take chlorine residuals, keep plant flow recorded, and CCR annual report. Bid must be sealed and received on or before 1:00p.m. on December 8, 2025. Mailing address: P.O. Box 127, Brooker, FL 32622. Also, a drop box is located at the Town Hall if you prefer to drop off bid. Bid will be accepted for a two year period beginning January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2027. The Town Council reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids.

11/20 1tchg-BCT

## UNION

### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 63-2024-CA-0125  
GP MATERIALS, INC., a Florida corporation, Plaintiff,

v. 5600 BARN, LLC, a Florida limited liability company, and WILLIAM S. WILSON, individually, Defendants.

### NOTICE OF SALE PURSUANT TO F.S. CHAPTER 45

NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated October 28, 2025, in the above-styled action, the clerk of court, Kellie Hendricks Rhoades, CPA, will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at the Union County Courthouse located at 55 W Main Street #1654, Lake Butler, Union County, Florida 32054, at 11:00 a.m., on February 26, 2026, the following described property in Union County, Florida: Legal Description: (Parcel "A") A parcel of land containing a total area of 1.9 acres, more or less, lying, being and situate in sections 14 & 23, Township 6 South, Range 19 East, Union County, Florida, more particularly described as follows: COMMENCE at the Northwest corner of said Section 23, and run South 89 degrees 52 minutes 34 seconds East, along the North line of said Section 23, a distance of 801.88 feet to the intersection with the Easterly right of way line of County Road Number 18-A; thence run South 20 degrees 52 minutes 01 second East, along said Easterly right of way line, a distance of 13.58 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING of the hereinafter described parcel of land; Thence run North 82 degrees 21 minutes 29 seconds East a distance of 502.63 feet; thence run South 15 degrees 32 minutes 37 seconds East a distance of 410.84 feet; thence run South 74 degrees 21 minutes 31 seconds West a distance of 453.07 feet to the intersection with said Easterly right of way line; thence run North 20 degrees 52 minutes 01 second West, along said Easterly right of way line, a distance of 6.13 feet; thence run North 74 degrees 02 minutes 11 seconds East a distance of 447.98 feet; thence run North 17 degrees 17 minutes 40 seconds West a distance of 280.82 feet; thence run South 73 degrees 07 minutes 04 seconds West a distance of 464.97 feet to the intersection with said Easterly right of way line; thence run North 20 degrees 52 minutes 01 second West a distance of 202.37 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

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 within 60 days after the sale. DATED this 11th day of November, 2025.  
TAYLOR ARRUBLA HARDWICK P.A.  
By: /s/ Katelyn T. Hardwick  
Katelyn T. Hardwick  
Florida Bar No. 118454  
420 S. Lawrence Blvd.  
Keystone Heights, Florida 32656  
Primary Email: [katie@tah-law.com](mailto:katie@tah-law.com)  
(352) 473-8088 (telephone)  
(352) 473-8161 (facsimile)  
Attorneys for Plaintiff

11/20 2tchg 11/27-UCT

### CALL FOR BID

The Town of Brooker will receive bids for a "Class C Operator" for the water plant in Brooker. You must be able to take Bacteriological reports and mail, maintain operation records, check plant equipment (chlorinator, booster pump, well pump, generator), take chlorine residuals, keep plant flow recorded, and CCR annual report. Bid must be sealed and received on or before 1:00p.m. on December 8, 2025. Mailing address: P.O. Box 127, Brooker, FL 32622. Also, a drop box is located at the Town Hall if you prefer to drop off bid. Bid will be accepted for a two year period beginning January 1, 2026 and ending December 31, 2027. The Town Council reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids.

11/20 1tchg-BCT

### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO. 24000047CAAXMX  
PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION, PLAINTIFF,  
VS.  
REBECCA M. NETTLES, ET AL.  
DEFENDANT(S).

### NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE #20286

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated February 24, 2025, in the above action, I will sell to the highest bidder for cash at Union County, Florida, on January 22, 2026, at 11:00 AM, at Foyer of courthouse - 55 W. Main St., Lake Butler, FL 32054 for the following described property: "Part of the South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, containing one-acre, more or less, as defined by four concrete monuments. These monuments are located as follows: Running Southerly along the supposed East boundary of the above 20 acre tract to a monument said to be the Southeast corner thereof, run right through a deflection angle of 86°15'; Thence 163.33 feet to a point, at which turn right through a deflection angle of 48°05'; Thence Northwesterly along this course a distance of 512.00 feet, to a monument, this monument being the East corner monument of the one-acre tract herein described, thence run left through a deflection angle of 89°59'; Thence along this line, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described for a distance of 209.00 feet to a monument, being the Southern corner of the one-acre tract herein described, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°03'; Thence along this course being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the West corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 89°50'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the East corner previously mentioned; It being specifically understood the aforesaid monuments are and remain the boundaries of the parcel herein described. AND Commence at the Northwest corner of the South 1/2 of Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, and run North 84° 30' 27" East along the North line of said South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, 146.89 feet, thence South 44° 32' 28" East, 420.69 feet to the point of beginning, thence South 42° 52' 17" West 122.00 feet, thence South 47° 08' 43" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 42° 52' 17" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 47° 08' 43" West 210.00 feet, thence South 42° 52' 17" West, 88.00 feet to the Point of Beginning."

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. The Court, in its discretion, may enlarge the time of the sale. Notice of the changed time of sale shall be published as provided herein.

By: Clerk of the Circuit Court  
By: K. RIGGS  
Deputy Clerk of the Court  
Prepared by:  
Tromberg, Miller, Morris & Partners, PLLC  
600 West Hillsboro Boulevard  
Suite 600  
Deerfield Beach, FL 33441  
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 ADA Coordinator at 352-337-6237 or at [ada@circuit8.org](mailto:ada@circuit8.org), Alachua County Courthouse, 201 E. University Avenue, Room 410, Gainesville, FL 32601 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

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Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts:	Heather Wheeler

# Answers helping temporary homeless with The Lodge

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com



Answers Health and Resource Facility CEO JoAnna Weldon (far right) stands outside the Starke office with her daughter (and staff member) JulieAnna Padgett (center) and volunteer JoAnn Wilsey.

The Lodge. Two simple words that are impacting families in need in a big way in Bradford County.

Answers Health and Resource Facility in Starke (512 W. Weldon St.) has been renting a house that provides temporary shelter for families who find themselves homeless. The Lodge, as it's called, consists of private bedroom space for six families, who share living space, a kitchen and a laundry room.

"It has been the most extraordinary thing I've had an opportunity to be a part of," said JoAnna Weldon, the CEO of Answers. "I think that the biggest thing we have learned is that we are all one crisis away from potentially losing a home."

Weldon said a number of things can lead to that. Picture a family that is already struggling to make ends meet. Then, say that family loses its mode of transportation. That can create a snowball effect, where the transportation loss leads to job loss, which then leads to childcare loss. In the end, it can lead to eviction and homelessness.

Having a place to go to adds a bit of stability for a family trying to get back on its feet.

"When you're not having to worry where you're going to sleep tonight you can think clearly, you can plan more strategically and you can just realistically budget money better and save," Weldon said.

The Lodge provides that stability and something else.

Hope. "You don't really have a lot of hope when you're living in

survival mode," Weldon said. Weldon's daughter, JulieAnna Padgett, who works at Answers, said The Lodge helps people "feel normal." "That's so true," Weldon said. "We just provide a bit of normalcy."

## Tragedy leads to The Lodge's creation

The idea for The Lodge came about after a Jan. 14, 2024, fire at Starke's North Temple Avenue Studios displaced 20 families. Answers was one of several community organizations and groups assisting those who lost their homes.

"Our initial response was people need to eat, so we got some of our church groups and small groups together and just started allowing people to come

(to Answers) for a meal," Weldon said.

Weldon said national organizations that help in times of crisis couldn't help the families who lived at North Temple Avenue Apartments because the site of a former motel "fell between the cracks."

"Had it been an actual incorporated apartment complex, those national organizations were prepared to help and had the means to do that, but because this was deemed a hotel, there was no way that anyone could channel funding to help these families," Weldon said.

What was the solution? How could help be provided to the homeless families?

Weldon said it came down to "like-minded, like-hearted people" coming together and praying.

What resulted was the utilization of an empty church building, with Sunday school

rooms being transformed into bedrooms. The families were eventually connected with Family Promise of Gainesville, which helps families move from a shelter to permanent housing. Weldon said Family Promise of

Gainesville will pay the security deposit and first-month's and last-month's rent. Families must have someone working full-time or receiving disability or other type of income.

Though the use of the former

church hadn't been publicized, word somehow got out, with the result being that other families facing homelessness were visiting Answers for help.

See LODGE, page 12

## A Place of Grace INC.

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

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## Starke's First Baptist Church is providing Thanksgiving baskets

First Baptist Church of Starke is excited to share that it will be giving away 100 Thanksgiving baskets to families in the community. Each basket includes a full meal designed to feed a family of 10.

All are welcome. No registration is required.

The giveaway will take place at the church on Monday, Nov. 24, at 5:30 p.m. and will continue until all baskets are gone.

Visitors are asked to park and walk up to receive their baskets.

Volunteers will be on site to assist and guide you.

The church is grateful to be partnered with Walmart of Starke in this effort to help families in need.

## Santa, Mrs. Claus to visit KH American Legion Dec. 6

Keystone Heights' American Legion Post 202 is hosting breakfast and a chance to visit with and get your picture taken with Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus on Saturday, Dec. 6, at the post home at 7441 S.R. 21.

Breakfast will begin at 9 a.m., followed by Santa and Mrs. Claus' visit from 10 a.m. until noon.

## Starke Elementary to host breakfast, Santa Dec. 6

Santa Claus is making a pre-Christmas visit to Starke Elementary School at the Saturday, Dec. 6, Santa breakfast, which will be held in the school's cafeteria from 8 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

The cost for breakfast is \$4 for children and \$6 for adults. Digital pictures with Santa, which will be taken from 8:15 a.m. until 10 a.m., will cost \$4.

Bingo will also be played, with cards ranging in cost from \$2 to \$5 depending on the prize.

The event, which is sponsored by the Starke Elementary PTO, is cash only.

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40  
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47  
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50  
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53 A  
Yard Sales

**Huge Yard Sale. Lots of stuff. Xmas decorations. Fri. 21<sup>st</sup> & Sat. 22nd. 20932 NE 20<sup>th</sup> Lane, Lawtey. Follow signs from 301. Strawberry Acres.**

53 B

Keystone Yard Sales

**NICE YARD SALE; some antiques, collectibles, household. Fri. & Sat. 8am-3pm. 5500 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, Keystone Heights. Turn off SR 100 at Texaco gas station, 1<sup>st</sup> house on right. Pink depression glass, large frog collection, large amount of costume jewelry, furniture & more.**

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# Obituaries

## David Canova

Mr. David E. Canova, 85, of Starke and a former resident of over 50 years at Kingsley Lake passed away at HCA Hospital in Gainesville, Monday, Nov. 3, 2025. He was born Sept. 14, 1940, in Gainesville, to the late Levy and Mona (Alderman) Canova. David lived a full and vibrant life, cherished by all who knew him. A proud veteran of the U.S. Army, he served his country with honor. He spent his professional life as a Senior Systems Analyst for Florida Farm Bureau in the insurance industry, where he was known for his dedication and expertise. He was a longtime active member of Kingsley Lake Baptist Church, where his faith played a central role in his life. He enjoyed the great outdoors, whether it was tending to his yard, hunting, or fishing. He was a passionate Florida Gators fan and a coin collector as well. He also loved to sing in church choirs. David was a devoted family man, celebrating 57 wonderful years of marriage with his beloved wife, Dee (Walters) Canova, and together they raised two sons, Brian (Erica Pfenniger) and Jason (Peijie) Canova, who have continued his legacy. As a grandfather to five grandchildren, David took immense joy in his role as "Pop," creating countless memories filled with laughter and love. He also had a soft spot for his fur babies, Benjii and Anndee.

The family will be having a private graveside service at Crosby Lake Cemetery, with Rev. Jonathan Rodriguez officiating. A Celebration of Life will be held at Kingsley Lake Baptist Church on Saturday, Nov. 22, at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Kingsley Lake Baptist Church Building Fund, 6289 Mary Dot Lake, Starke, 32091

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



## Glen Preuhs

Glen Preuhs died peacefully, surrounded by family. He was preceded in death by his children, Susan Marie Blomstrom, Nancy Ann Hale, and Tony Glen Preuhs; and great-grandson, Devlyn Glen Voss.

Survivors are granddaughters, Tracy (David) van Eijl and Jessi Voss; four great-grandchildren; two sisters; and extended family members.

The family will have a time of fellowship beginning at 10 a.m. at DeWitt C. Jones Chapel on Saturday, Dec. 13. A memorial service will follow at 11 a.m.

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

## Robert N. Stewart

Robert N. Stewart, 77, of Lawtey passed away at home following a lengthy illness on Friday, Nov. 7, 2025. His hometown was Jacksonville and he was born there in 1948 to J.R. and Mary L. Stewart. He attended Andrew Jackson High and later worked for a pest control company. He enjoyed hunting and fishing, raised cattle and grew hay. He was preceded in death by his parents; grandparents; and one sister.

Robert is survived by his wife, Caroline Stewart; and two brothers, John Stewart Jr. and Donald Stewart.

Services for Robert are not planned at this time. Donations may be made to the National Kidney Foundation in his memory.

Cremation is under the direction of Crevasse's Simple Cremation.

PAID OBITUARY



## Ronald Willis Sr.

Mr. Ronald Eugene Willis Sr., 58, of Starke passed away Sunday, Nov. 16, 2025, at UF Health Shands Hospital in Gainesville. Ron was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on March 30, 1967, and has been a resident of Starke his entire life. He was an active member of Cross Church of Starke and enjoyed Victory Revival Center. Prior to retirement, he worked as a driver for Padgett Trucking for many years. His greatest joy was spending time with his family. He loved hunting and fishing and could be found wearing his favorite camouflage T-shirts most days. Preceding him in death was his grandmother, Dorothy Tetstone, who raised him as her own; and his birth mother, Juanita Bradley.

Survivors are his loving wife of seven years, Jennifer "Lynn" Welch Willis of Starke; son, Ron (Zak) Willis Jr.; stepdaughter, Alexis N. Lane, who he adored. He was lovingly called "Pop Pop" by Hadley Willis, and leaves behind many cousins and friends who will remember him as a great listener with a big heart and a great sense of humor.

The family will receive friends at DeWitt C. Jones Chapel of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home on Friday, Nov. 21, from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. with funeral services beginning at 11 a.m. Interment will follow at Crosby Lake Cemetery.

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



PAID OBITUARY

## William Lawson Jr.

William Edward Lawson Jr., also known as Bill or Sonny, passed away Friday, Oct. 17, 2025, at the age of 83. He was born to the late William Edward Lawson Sr and the late Mildred Mosely Lawson in Starke on April 4, 1942. Mr. Lawson was a proud veteran of the United States Air Force. He served from 1959 to 1963 during the Minuteman Missile and the Cuban Missile Crisis. Bill started dating Janet in Oct. 1965. The two fell in love and got married June 17, 1966. They would have celebrated 60 yrs of wedded bliss this coming June 2026. Bill attended the University of Florida and was a die-hard fan of the Florida Gators, especially Steve Spurrier, Danny Wuerffel and Tim Tebow. He was preceded in death by his parents; and great-granddaughter, Olivia Rose Passmore.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah "Janet" Parmenter Lawson; four children, Cindy (Bob) Bailey of Georgia, Karen (Chad) Oakley of Florida, April (Jeff) Fowler of Florida and Michael Lawson (Keitha) of Texas; 15 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; and brothers, James (Joanne) Lawson of Florida and David "Tony" (Patricia) Lawson of Florida. He will be missed greatly by all those who loved him.

A Celebration of Life will be held on his birthday, April 4, 2026. Time and location to be announced at a later date. You may send your condolences to the family at this email address: Bill.gbgministry@gmail.com.

PAID OBITUARY



## LODGE

Continued from page 11

"That was when we were like, 'OK. Could we continue this temporary shelter/permanent-housing structure?' It really just happened very naturally," Weldon said. "It wasn't something we made a huge decision to do. It was just like, if there was another family that fit the criteria, we would add them to an empty Sunday school classroom."

In time, the building was going to be used as a church again, so if the temporary housing service was to continue, a new location would have to be found. Answers found a residential home to rent.

"We decided we needed a name because this was becoming a more long-term program and solution," Weldon said.

Thus, The Lodge was born, providing a temporary home and, in a way, a family.

"So many people in today's day and age don't have a healthy

or solid family background or support system," Weldon said. "As Americans, I think we're all very used to, if something falls apart, or a crisis happens, being able to go to our family. We're very fortunate to be able to do that, but when you start to meet families who don't have that system in place, what we recognize is that this is an opportunity for Answers to step in to become the family and to become the safety net for them."

What it comes down to is people caring about people, Weldon said, adding that Answers is surrounded by a community made up of people who do truly care.

"This community is exceptional about meeting a need. That's what we've watched — this community stepping up."

## Branching out

Providing a short-term shelter wouldn't have been thought of when Answers was created. Its original mission was to provide resources to women experiencing unplanned pregnancies. However, the mission focus has long since expanded, with the center aiding women, men and families with various needs.

A lot of what Answers does is still related to pregnancies, with the center assisting approximately 900 women in 2025.

The biggest need, though, has turned out to be homelessness, with the center assisting approximately 1,000 in 2025.

Weldon said what Answers has become and what it is currently doing wouldn't have been possible without God.

"His provision has given us everything we've needed to be able to preserve the original mission of Answers and also expand into this new territory where the need has been the greatest," Weldon said. "Homelessness is the number-one thing that we're seeing here at Answers. For the last two years, in our statistics, that is the number-one need that people call or come in about — housing or being homeless."

"So, if that's the greatest need, and we are a resource center, we



Answers Health and Resource Facility CEO JoAnna Weldon (right) with Riscardo and Melissa Bayon. The couple was displaced by a Jan. 14 fire at the North Temple Avenue Studios and found permanent housing with the assistance of Weldon's organization, United Way and Family Promise.

have to uphold the standard that we've set of being a resource center. That means that we have to work toward meeting the greatest needs."

Though The Lodge isn't for transient homeless, Answers does provide help to those people. Food bags are available as well as the use of a shower and laundry facilities.

"People who are in that transient situation — at least they can have some comforts," Weldon said.

Because Answers provides assistance to meet multiple needs, there's no way for Weldon, Padgett or the center's volunteers to predict what any given day will look like. Volunteer JoAnn Wilsey said, "You can have stuff on your calendar, but really, you don't know."

Wilsey has lived in Bradford County for five years after moving from Jacksonville, where she volunteered at a women's center for unplanned pregnancies. She had been in the area for six months when she mentioned during a hair-salon appointment that she was looking for a new volunteer opportunity. She was told about Answers, so she visited the facility.

Weldon had attended a luncheon and talked to a director of the women's center that

Wilsey worked at in Jacksonville. That women's center director said they were losing one of their favorite volunteers and told Weldon Wilsey's name.

When Weldon met Wilsey, she told her that she had been waiting for her to show up. Wilsey said she thought, "I know this is what I'm supposed to be doing."

Wilsey is a member of Starke's Foundation Church, which Weldon said has been an "integral" part of Answers through its support. For example, a woman with four children visited Answers and asked if the center had blankets available in advance of cold weather. Wilsey told her church of the need, which led to the church holding a blanket drive.

"If we put the need out, they are ready to meet it," Weldon said of Foundation Church.

Wilsey said sometimes people who come to Answers just need a hug or someone to talk to.

"We're here for that," she said. Padgett, a 2023 Keystone Heights High School graduate, is always willing to lend an ear to anyone who visits Answers. She said listening is a necessity because of her youth, but that it's also helping her for future interactions with people.

"It is hard to have input because I haven't had as much life and the hardships that other people have gone through, so there are times when I'm just kind of listening and not really saying much," Padgett said, adding, "Sitting and listening is helping me with the next situation that comes through the door."

Weldon said she enjoys having her daughter on staff with her at Answers because she brings "a fresh perspective of her generation."

Padgett may have a different perspective than her mother, but they share the common goal of wanting to help others. They'll also both tell you that Answers is simply a vessel used by God toward that purpose.

"It's not us at all," Padgett said. "It always goes back to the Heavenly Father."

Weldon said God is why Answers now offers The Lodge as part of its services.

"There's just no credit to be given to any human who's attached to Answers," Weldon said. "There is absolutely no way we could have come up with this idea, put the things and partnerships in place and follow through with it and continue it. This is a direct result of the power of prayer."

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Answers doesn't operate a daycare, but sometimes you'll find JulieAnna Padgett (pictured above) and others watching children to help mothers who have to work in order to receive financial assistance.

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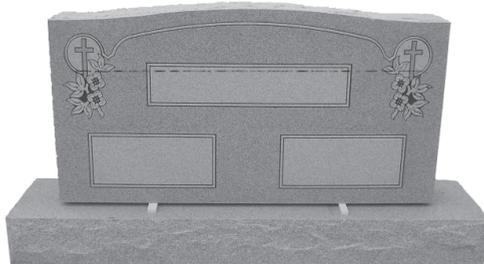
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# Help give fosters a merry Christmas

Imagine being a child newly placed into a foster home, leaving behind all that's familiar to you and wondering if Santa will find you on Christmas.

Or imagine you're part of a foster family that simply doesn't have the resources to provide the type of Christmas to the child or children in its care.

You can help bring Christmas joy to foster children in Bradford and Union counties as well as surrounding counties (including Alachua, Baker, Clay and Duval) by sponsoring a child as part of the Northeast Florida Collective for Christmas for Fosters.

The Northeast Florida Collective of Christmas for Fosters is attempting to obtain sponsors for a total of 75 children. As of Nov. 17, 34 children were still in need of sponsors.

As part of a Dec. 30, 2021, Telegraph-Times-Monitor story, Bradford County resident Jenna Hewett, who's part of the Northeast Florida Collective, said, "This program provides a full Christmas. It's not just a gift or two. When sponsors take on the responsibility, they are sponsoring their entire Christmas."

If you're interested in sponsoring a child, please visit [givejoycollective.com/sponsornortheast](http://givejoycollective.com/sponsornortheast). You may also



call Hewett at 904-769-9647.

Hewett told the Telegraph-Times-Monitor in 2021 that foster parents are provided with resources that go toward the care of children, but Christmas, birthdays and other events are the responsibility of those families.

"In a lot of these homes, there are five, six foster kids," Hewett said. "I couldn't imagine, as a foster parent, taking on the responsibility of having to provide Christmas for your own biological children as well as the foster kids you have in your home."

Christmas for Fosters is a Tampa-area effort that expanded

to this area in 2021. It was started in 2017 by Sarah Weaver, a 2006 Bradford High School graduate who lives in Tampa with her husband, Josh, a 2005 BHS graduate. The Weavers became foster parents in May 2016, taking in two brothers, whom they eventually adopted.

Hewett, a 2002 BHS graduate, had the opportunity to assist Sarah Weaver with the 2020 event. Weaver then asked Hewett to take the lead on expanding the program into this area.

To learn more about the program, to donate money or to register as a foster family, please visit [givejoycollective.com](http://givejoycollective.com).

## Bradford High girls basketball team plays at home Nov. 24

Bradford High School has gotten its girls basketball season underway and will play its first home game on Monday, Nov. 24, against Santa Fe at 7 p.m.

The Tornadoes played at Fort White this past Tuesday and will travel to Gainesville to play The Rock on Thursday, Nov. 20, at 7 p.m.

Bradford went 13-9 last season and qualified for the regional playoffs.

## BHS alumnus Hankerson to be recognized prior to Nov. 21 playoff game

Demetric Hankerson, a 2002 Bradford High School graduate, will be recognized prior to the Tornadoes' home playoff football

game on Friday, Nov. 21, at 7 p.m. The game kicks off at 7:30 p.m.

A pre-game tailgate will take place beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Hankerson played running back for the Tornadoes. He rushed for 1,600-plus yards as a senior and earned MVP honors in the 2001 Shrine Bowl all-star game. Hankerson's senior year also saw him win the 100m at the Class 2A state track and field championships.

The Nov. 21 event is being made possible by a partnership between Bradford Athletics and the BHS Class of 2002.

## ROLL Continued from page 8

Avon Park benefitted from penalties on its next possession, but on first-and-10 from the Bradford 40, the Devils were flagged for ineligible receiver downfield. Bradford's Nate Raymond then made a tackle for a 4-yard loss, with a personal-foul penalty backing Avon Park up an additional 15 yards. After an incomplete pass on second-and-39, Raymond sacked Payne for a 7-yard loss, forcing a punt on fourth-and-46. The Tornadoes' Jy'Quez Cason returned the punt 55 yards for a touchdown with 5:18 to play in the first half. Sapp added the PAT to make the score 35-0.

Penalties hurt the Devils on their next series, resulting in them punting on fourth-and-32.

The Bradford offense had almost four minutes to work with before halftime. That was more than enough time to put another score on the board. Cubbedge completed passes of 13 yards to Jordan Cason, 4 yards to Elijah Lawrence and 8 yards to Phillips before hooking up with Cason again on a 7-yard gain that set up first down at the Avon Park 19-yard line. After receptions of 4 yards by Kemontae Nixon and 9 yards by Phillips, Jordan Cason caught a 6-yard touchdown pass with 1:49 on the clock. Bradford, after Sapp's extra point, led 42-0.

Cubbedge completed 11 of 17 passes for the game, finishing with 66 yards.

Jordan Cason led the receivers with five catches for 32 yards, while Phillips had three catches for 27 yards.

Caiden Carn intercepted an Avon Park pass that put the Bradford offense back on the field at the Avon Park 29 with 7.7

RIGHT: Jaden Mosley (right) led all rushers with 75 yards on eight carries. BELOW: Jy'Quez Cason (far right) returns a punt for a 55-yard touchdown in the second quarter. Bradford's Chase Phillips (center) is also pictured.



seconds on the clock. Cubbedge took a knee to end the half, which saw The Tornadoes compile 203 yards to Avon Park's 35.

The first series of the second half was all about Bradford running back Jaden Mosley. He scored on a 50-yard run on his first touch, but a penalty nullified the touchdown. Still, he got credit for a 15-yard gain to the Avon Park 35. He carried the ball on five straight plays from there, gaining 15, 7, 10 and 2 yards before bulling into the end zone from 1 yard out. Sapp kicked the extra point to make the score 49-0.

Mosley finished as the game's

leading rusher with 75 yards on eight carries.

Avon Park avoided the shutout when Kelly caught a pass and eluded a couple of tackle attempts on his way to a 69-yard touchdown.

The Tornadoes put the final score on the board when Grayson McClellan intercepted a pass and returned it 39 yards for a touchdown, resulting in the 55-6 final. The extra point was no good — Sapp's first miss of the season.

Bradford finished with 294 total yards to Avon Park's 113. The Devils were held to minus-6 yards rushing.

## SOCCKER Continued from page 9

Indians (2-3-1) then finished in a 2-2 tie against visiting Crescent City on Nov. 12. Keystone trailed 2-0 before scoring in the final nine minutes, getting goals from Noah Jaramillo and Sammy

Wacha. Wacha and Nathan Benson each had one assist.

Keystone's junior varsity team won its first two matches, defeating Columbia 2-1 on Nov. 10 and Crescent City 4-0 on Nov. 12. Luke Buchanan scored three goals in the win over Crescent City, which also featured a penalty kick goal from Justin

Perez and assists from Theo Taylor and Bentley Tillman.

The Indians host Williston on Thursday, Nov. 20, with the JV teams playing at 5:30 p.m. and the varsity teams playing at 7:20 p.m. Keystone's varsity team travels to play West Nassau on Friday, Nov. 21, at 7:20 p.m.

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# PLAYOFF

Continued from page 8

scoring runs covered 51 yards. Matt White, a junior who averages 4 yards per carry and 44 yards per game, has 400 yards and two touchdowns on 98 carries. He rushed for 55 yards and one touchdown on 11 carries

against The Villages. Berkeley averages 138 passing yards per game, led by junior quarterback Cooper Hayes, who has completed 77 of 127 attempts for 1,228 yards and 10 touchdowns. He has six interceptions. Hayes went 10 of 13 for 201 yards and a touchdown in last week's playoff win.

The receiving corps is led by junior Dylan Henderson, who has 23 catches for 427 yards (19 yards per reception) and five touchdowns. He had four receptions for 114 yards and a touchdown against The Villages. Senior Tony Bland has 18 catches for 386 yards (21 yards per reception) and three touchdowns, while senior Dylan

McDonough has eight catches for 148 yards (19 yards per reception) and two touchdowns. The Berkeley offense has committed 10 turnovers on the season. Defensively, the Bucs allowed 177 rushing yards per game and 116 passing yards per game during the regular season. Junior linebacker Max Taken

leads Berkeley in tackles with 44, followed by senior lineman Mateo Brink with 34, senior linebacker Ben Linsky with 25, junior linebacker/defensive back Matty Zahn with 24, linebacker White with 23 and junior lineman/linebacker Jared Zames with 22. Michael Mariani, a junior

lineman, leads the team in tackles for loss with seven. Brink and Zames have five each. Three players have 3.5 sacks each: Brink, Mariani and Zames. The defense has created 10 turnovers (six interceptions, four fumble recoveries), four of which have been interceptions by Zahn.



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