

Bradford County Telegraph

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146th year, 18th Issue — \$1

Reynolds steps down as KHHS football coach

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
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Keystone Heights High School Head Football Coach Steve Reynolds announced his resignation as he plans to pursue a career in financial services.

Reynolds served as an assistant coach for three seasons before becoming head coach in 2023 after Athletic Director Chuck Dickinson retired from coaching. Dickinson had been the head coach for 24 years.

In three seasons at the helm, Reynolds had a record of 8-23 with one playoff appearance.

“Honestly, I was kind of seeing myself as a transitional coach anyway from Coach Dickinson to whoever is next,” Reynolds said. “I’ve loved being an assistant coach at Keystone. I’ve loved being the head coach at Keystone. I’ve loved coaching weightlifting.

“I’m 40. If I’m every going to make this career change I’ve been trying to look into for some time now, I feel like now is the best time to do that and give somebody an opportunity to come in and work with some really hard-working, great, young kids at



Steve Reynolds resigned as the KHHS football coach after three seasons to pursue a career change.

Keystone.”

Reynolds, a 2004 Bradford High School graduate, almost never went to KHHS after head-coaching positions at Bradford and Oakleaf and assistant positions at Bradford, Oakleaf, Buchholz and St. Johns Country Day.

He was looking at making a career change before the covid pandemic in 2020.

“With the shutdown and everything, I got kind of worried about what the business world would look like,” Reynolds said. “I decided to stay in education.”

He saw that KHHS was advertising for a P.E. coach, so he decided to apply. It was a perfect situation since he and his family live in Keystone.

That was the start of an enjoyable time in his life, which made his decision to change careers difficult.

“Really, it was my experience with the schools here in town and with the kids I got to coach over these six years that’s kind of kept me in it,” Reynolds said. “I just feel like right now is a good time to get back to making that career change we were looking into. I’m real excited.”

Reynolds said he won’t help coach boys weightlifting this year, but added that he’s available to help the boys and girls programs in any way he can if needed.

As of now, Reynolds will continue working as the school’s dean of students.

“My plan is to stay in that role until all my licensing is done,” he said. “I have a lot of studying to do. I’ve got some shadowing to do.”

Though he’ll no longer be a coach, he’ll still be coaching in a way, saying in his new career he’ll still be building relationships and trust with people.

“It’s just a slightly different avenue in doing it,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds said the next coach will find a supportive community and “hard-working kids and athletes who are enjoyable to be around.”

“Ultimately, that is a reason why it was so enjoyable for me to stay,” Reynolds said. “The players have been really good to work with.”

He’ll miss being around the kids, which is why he won’t emphatically say he’s done with coaching forever.

“I’ve enjoyed 18 years of coaching and teaching,” Reynolds said. “I’ve enjoyed a good portion of everywhere I’ve been.

“It was not an easy decision, but one I think I’ve been ready for and that I think will be the best for my family going forward.”



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WORTH NOTING

Financing tool could help townhome and other developers

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Bradford County commissioners granted the Florida Resiliency and Energy District permission to offer financing to commercial developers, including developer Dwight Hewett, who wants to build townhomes in downtown Starke.

FRED is a separate legal and governmental entity, established under the Florida Development Finance Corporation to administer a financing program known as C-PACE, the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program. Private capital invests in the C-PACE program, which provides financing to

commercial and industrial developers. The property owner pays a voluntary non ad valorem assessment collected by the county’s tax collector on the property owner’s annual tax bill until the debt has been repaid.

Hewett, who has touted the environmentally sustainable features of his 45-townhome CityWalk project, approached the county with Ryan Bartkus of the Florida Development Finance Corporation, for authorization to conduct the C-PACE program in Bradford.

Bartkus explained collecting repayment through a non-ad valorem assessment provides security that helps investors lower the cost of capital for developers. In addition to

lower rates, the financing term may also extend up to 30 years.

“This, again, is a voluntary program. This is not like a CDD (community development district). It’s not being put on everybody’s property. (It is a) solely individual voluntary program for somebody like who would this financing,” he said.

Commissioner Chris Dougherty asked about Hewett’s lease-to-own plan for selling the townhomes. At the point they are sold they become residential units, but the commercial financing debt does not transfer to the new owner, according to Bartkus. Hewett, or whomever owns the remaining commercial units, is still responsible for repaying the debt. At

the point where all the units are sold, the debt must be fully repaid.

Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Spooner asked about the city’s knowledge of the program, suggesting a conversation with city leaders. She also asked about any connection to the residential, or R-PACE program, which the county has previously rejected for its predatory lending practices to homeowners, and which has faced litigation for operating in counties without an interlocal agreement. Bartkus said that is a separate program not connected to FDFC.

See C-PACE, page 4

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 Lawley

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 Lawley.

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

Hodgson to lead Union school board in 2026

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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The Union County School Board elected Chris Hodgson as its chair for 2026. Hodgson takes over for Curtis Clyatt. The board elected Russell Gordon as vice chair.

Clyatt nominated both Hodgson and Gordon for the offices.

“Thank you all for giving me the faith to do this,” the new chair said.

In other news from the November 18 school board meeting:

—Superintendent Mike Ripplinger thanked W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor, Inc. for its partnership with the school district.

—The board appointed board member Terra Johnson and

community member Sal Perez to the county’s value adjustment board. The value adjustment board adjudicates appeals to property valuations made by the property appraiser’s office.

—The board approved a policy for professional ethics, requiring annual ethics training for the superintendent and school board members, requiring all employees to report misconduct that affects the health or well-being of students, and stipulating other requirements for district administrators.

—Board members delayed the approval of two copier leases for the high school, totaling \$404.77 a month.

Hodgson moved to table approval for the leases to get more information, given the cost of copier leases to the



Chris Hodgson

district.

“We do have 10 plus copiers in the school district, and the average cost

would be around \$4,000 a month, that’s \$240,000 over a five-year period,” he said. “I just think that I would like to make a motion to table it, get some more information, and bring it back next meeting.”

Becky Raulerson said she disagreed with Hodgson and cast the sole dissenting vote for delaying approval of the leases.

“I’m not in favor of the motion to table,” she said, “mostly just because I understand the need for a copier in a school and legally with IEPs and 504s and all the legal paperwork as well.”

Individual education programs and 504 plans are both documents related to exceptional student education.

Fire on Lake Geneva island draws Clay, Forestry response

BY JENN SAMSEL
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A brush fire on a private island in Keystone Heights impacted residents surrounding Lake Geneva and traffic on State Road 21 on Friday, November 21.

The blaze broke out near 1455 South Lawrence Blvd. at approximately 10:34 a.m. It rapidly spread across the island, significantly affecting residents, filling the area with smoke.

Clay County Fire Rescue and the Florida Forestry Service arrived on the scene to mitigate the fire. Due to difficulties accessing the island, Clay firefighters used a boat to reach parts of the fire until Forestry officials could clear a path to the actual blaze.

The Florida Highway Patrol and Clay County Fire Rescue officials posted a Facebook notice advising residents that visibility at night could be limited and that they are aware of the ongoing brush fire in the area and are monitoring the situation.

According to Florida Forestry, there is one resident on the island, but the fire did not spread to the resident’s home.

Units from Keystone Heights, Starke, Clay Hill, Green Cove Springs, and other stations assisted in the effort.

The cause of the fire is under investigation. Clay County Fire Rescue said the blaze on the 25-acre island was extinguished on Monday, November 24.



According to Florida Forestry, there is one resident on the island, but the fire did not spread to the resident’s home.



Elderly food assistance

Older adults in need of food are encouraged to contact their local senior center or lead agency to learn more about

congregate meal schedules or home-delivered meals. For Bradford and Union counties, call Suwannee River Economic Council at 904-964-6696.

Elder Options provides support for seniors across North Central Florida. The helpline is 1-800-

262-2243 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call for more information and referrals for older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers in need.

Union County food distribution

Food is distributed in Union County at the Hal Y. Maines

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



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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.

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.



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

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<p>FRIDAY Wicked For Good - 4:00 & 7:00 (Upstairs) Zootopia 2 - 4:00 & 7:00 (Downstairs)</p>	<p>SATURDAY Wicked For Good - 4:00 & 7:00 (Upstairs) Zootopia 2 - 4:00 & 7:00 (Downstairs)</p>
<p>SUNDAY Wicked For Good - 4:00 & 7:00 (Upstairs) Zootopia 2 - 4:00 & 7:00 (Downstairs)</p>	

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Developer says market-rate homes will be affordable

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Discussion of the C-PACE funding alternative for commercial projects revealed some more details about the Dwight Hewett's CityWalk project and who might someday call it home.

CityWalk has been described as a 45-unit, sustainably constructed pathway to home ownership where residents can rent, purchase or rent to own their townhome. Those with lower credit scores would have an opportunity to improve their credit on their way to ownership.

The units are two-story, three-bedroom, two-bath townhomes with a garage — around 1,550 square feet each. Electricity is partially provided by solar power, and the construction materials are said to be twice as efficient at insulating heat and cold than the standard home. They are designed to incorporate technology and withstand natural disasters.

Five stormwater mitigation

rain gardens dot the property. An in-ground collection system is also used for irrigation. Four electric vehicle charging stations would be open to everyone, as would the linear walking park on the perimeter of the property.

Hewett maintains there will be a preference for teachers, military and those who work in public safety, and they've received interest about that. But in talking with county commissioners earlier this month, there are still questions about the cost of these properties. Renters are projected to be couples with two salaries who could afford \$2,300 a month, but Hewett said he wasn't yet sure what a mortgage for one of the units would look like. One commissioner was skeptical of the affordability. Hewett said the professionals such as correctional officers, nurses and first responders have beginning salaries above \$40,000 to \$45,000, making rent affordable for a two-income household. Beginning teachers who work here but live outside the county would now have an



option to stay in Bradford instead of moving on.

Hewett expects to draw additional interest from outside of Bradford County as well, pointing out there are more than a million people living with 50

minutes of Starke.

"There's a lot of capability to fill 45 units at \$2,300 a month," he said of the professionals mentioned. "They can afford it, but there's nothing for them. You know, they don't have really

a choice right now. There's housing which they can't qualify for because they make too much money, and then what they can afford they have to live in Clay County or Baker County or some other county," he said.

Another impediment to some rentals is the security deposit plus first and last month's rent. Hewett said insurance will allow him to require nothing more than the first month's rent.

"We have that figured out through an insurance program that we pay for so we make it very affordable for them. They can afford the rent based on what we see," he said.

Starke has been hugely supportive of the project, Hewett said, and the project will serve Starke. In addition to having more properties on the tax roll, the units will purchase utilities including electricity, water and sewer service from the city of Starke, although some electric costs will be offset by the solar generation. Residents can be expected to support businesses and events downtown and throughout the county. It could be the first of other projects to develop providing modern housing and grow the community.

C-PACE Continued from page 1

Spooner asked about transparency with property owners since it is possible other developers will contemplate C-PACE funding after Hewett.

"There's a financing

agreement that is signed between the property owner and us, and within that financing agreement are clear terms set up, just like you would go for a mortgage," Bartkus said. "This is not a quick close. There are attorneys involved in this entire process, and it typically takes about 60 to 90 days to close one of these financings. So, if there are questions that come up, and the property owner has those, they will be resolved within those talks."

Spooner also asked about conversations with the county tax collector and property appraiser. Bartkus said they didn't have the opportunity to meet with Tax Collector Teresa Phillips during their last trip. Typically, they enter agreements with county commissions and then establish service agreements with the constitutional officers. He said

their organization would act as the assessment administrator, receiving tax roll information related to the project from the county and providing assessment information to the tax collector for placement on the project's tax bill. The tax collector would receive a fee for the service.

Spooner confirmed there are no financial commitments from the county by entering the agreement.

"That is right," Bartkus said. "There's no responsibility on the county. All administration is done through our program, all financing is done through private investors, and there's no responsibility of the county. Once you guys adopt this program, you are outside of it. We take care of everything, and if something pops up, you can call the office, and we would handle it for the county."

Spooner tried to gauge the annual repayment cost. Bartkus said projects financed could be a minimum of \$250,000, but

they just financed a \$290 million project, so the annual repayment cost could vary widely.

Spooner had specific questions about Hewett's project, although he encouraged her to think about C-PACE as an opportunity for a variety of commercial projects to be financed within Bradford County. According to Hewett, several surrounding counties allow C-PACE, and these are counties Bradford is competing with for economic development.

"This is really just another tool. And you know, for me, it will help reduce some of my cost. And in this environment, this lending environment, that could be the go or no go for a lot of developers. So, it's very important for us to be able to have 20 or 30 percent of our financing at a much lower cost basis," he said.

Commissioners weren't convinced to move forward by the Nov. 4 presentation, however, with Starke City Manager Drew Mullins and City Clerk Chrissy

Thompson also saying they wanted to more information. At Dougherty's request, the vote was deferred to Nov. 18, when it passed unanimously.

Amber Shepherd of the Northeast Florida Economic Development Corporation spoke in support of the C-PACE program that evening, saying it's becoming more popular throughout the state. In addition to differentiating this from the controversial residential funding program, Shepherd spoke well of those in charge of this and other programs, including the Florida Opportunity Fund, which is the state's venture capital program. She also repeated that those who purchase any of the CityWalk townhomes would not be required to repay the investment debt.

"If there was an issue that that would go through, like a foreclosure process or a bankruptcy process, that would be on the developer," she said. "Usually when it comes to large properties like what we were talking about having developed, the bank would take that over. They would not evict everybody from the property. They would keep the rent and the tenants coming and keep the property functioning. So, I just wanted to share with you that I've done some research on this, and I am in favor of Bradford County moving forward with allowing C-PACE to be utilized in this community."

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



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The truth is, if you want to know what God is really like, what God will do and not do, you and I need to look no further than the

earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself made this statement in St. John 5:19, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do, for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." Chapter 6 verse 38, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him Who sent me." Jesus obeyed the Father perfectly as His representative on the earth. Religious people, some Christians, and even some preachers say, "Well, you never know what God might do." That is ridiculous, I can tell you what God will do. If you want to know what God will do all you need to do is look at Jesus. Jesus did exactly what the Father showed Him or told Him to do. Another verse that further confirms this truth is Hebrews 1:3, "Who (Jesus) being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person..." Jesus showed people God while He was on the earth. If you look at Jesus you will see the greatness, the tenderness, the love, and the heart of the Father God. I get so tired of people blaming God for all the bad things that take place on the earth. Every catastrophic event is blamed on God. All deaths, no matter how cruel or awful God, is somewhere lurking in the shadows of the event.

People blame God for all sickness and disease and all earthly calamities. This is not so, it cannot be validated by the Bible and it sure cannot be validated by looking at the life and ministry of Jesus our Lord. We will look at this in more detail as we dive deeper into the truth of God's Word and explore His goodness. Until next week, may the grace of our Lord Jesus, the love of the Father God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Blessings! -Pastor Rick

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Pictured preparing baskets are Erica Reddsh, Linda Hildebran, Kay Starling, Crystal Porchiazzo, Brenda Finn and Crystal Rosier.

The members of the Woman's Club of Starke collected food items and arranged 15 Thanksgiving baskets at their monthly luncheon on Nov. 12. The baskets will be provided to needy families just in time for Thanksgiving. Each family will also receive in each basket of a gift card to purchase a turkey or ham. Pictured (l-r) are Lisa Rodgers, Linda Hildebran, Kay Starling, Erica Reddish, Crystal Porchiazzo and Crystal Rosier.



Vicki Teal fills out giftcards.



10 appointed to Starke charter review

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Ten individuals applied to become members of Starke's first charter review committee, and commissioners approved all of them to serve.

Committee members will meet at least monthly with city officials to and legal representatives to review and modernize the charter, something that hasn't taken place since its original adoption.

The committee members are as follows:

Samantha Jones-Caldarelli worked at UPS for more than 20 years as an award-winning enterprise account executive. She said she has lived in the city for 25 years and has time and interest in improving Starke.

Michael Heeder works with Bradford County Emergency Management with 40-plus years of experience in public safety. He said the 100-plus-year-old

charter needs clarity.

Brenda Donaldson is retired as an educator and school administrator after 37 years of service. She said the committee will offer the unique opportunity impact the fundamental rules governing the community.

Alvin Hunter is a veteran who works with the local American Legion post and has been an outspoken member of the community at city commission meetings.

Jeff Johnson served as Starke police chief for 17 years. He said he would love to "get this charter fixed," adding this review has been a long time coming.

Glenda Ruise is a retired school administrator who said it is both important and a civil responsibility to help bring Starke into the 21st Century by updating its charter. She said she would work to ensure the city's constitutional framework aligns with modern needs and values.

Harry Hatcher III is a pastor and retired school administrator and businessman. He said his desire is for the community to be the best we can make it.

Brad Smith is chief deputy for

the Bradford County Sheriff's office with more than 30 years of law enforcement experience. He said the charter committee will have a long-term impact on the city and he has both a historical understanding of the city and a vision for its future.

Jennifer Weller works for The Arc of Bradford County with experience teaching, team building and caregiving. Starke is her hometown and where she chose to raise her daughter, and she sees potential for Starke's very bright future. A rewritten charter will be a positive step for growth and development, she said.

Courtney Williamson, a Rainbow Center teacher, said it's important that the charter committee have members from all walks of life. It will dictate what happens in the city for generations to come, she said, including her children. She said she loves the city and wants it to grow and be successful.

The committee will meet prior to commission meetings with the first meeting set for Tuesday, Dec. 16, at 4 p.m.

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Bradford County
Telegraph
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UNION COUNTY TIMES

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Lake Region

Clay teachers protest board's salary offer

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Clay County public school teachers staged a protest before the school board's November 6 meeting and then complained to the board about its offer to pay instructors during the session at Fleming Island High School.

They said the offer would give zero raises to 45% of teachers and leave veteran educators with increases they called insulting.

School board raise criticized

Shana Bell noted that school board members recently received a \$1,457 raise.

"I'm asking each and every one of you to make the hard but honorable decision to turn down your raise of \$1,457," she told board members.

Bell also claimed that the St. Johns County school board approved raises of \$4,500 to \$8,888 for its teachers.

"A 20-year veteran teacher in Clay County receives only \$800," she said. "What will happen to our community when the employees of Clay County's largest employer can no longer afford to live in the communities in which they serve? What is going to happen when those same employees can no longer support the businesses that support us? How will Clay County continue to grow and thrive? We can't."

Victoria Thompkins also compared teachers' pay to the compensation of school board members.

"For school board members who are elected officials to a voluntary part-time job to be making almost the same amount as a teacher is egregious," she said. "You have many teachers working a second or even third job just to survive."

The union and district have



Clay County Education Association President Vicki Kidwell joined other teachers in a protest before the Clay County School Board's meeting on Nov. 6 at Fleming Island High School.

reached an impasse over pay. The Clay County Education Association is asking for a \$1,500 raise across the board.

Teachers want safety and security millage funds

Several speakers challenged the district's claim that state safety and security millage funds cannot be used for teacher salaries, arguing that teachers are the first line of defense in emergencies.

"We de-escalate arguments," said Mary Alice Howell, "notice when a student seems off and step between (fighting) students and flying furniture, all while teaching, grading, and managing the emotional climate of a classroom. We complete safety training on bloodborne pathogens, human

trafficking, mental health, first aid, Life Act, bleed control kits, Narcan administration, and de-escalation strategies. We handle medical crises, emotional crises, and everything in between because our students' safety is literally in our hands. So, when I hear that teachers shouldn't receive salary funding from the safety and security millage because we're not safety personnel, I have to ask, What do you think we're doing all day?"

Superintendent: we have no money

Superintendent David Broskie presented budget data showing the state increased funding by just 0.78% this year—less than 1%—while

See CLAY, page 7

Elston "Speedy" Kussler resigns due to a move outside City limits.



Elston "Speedy" Kussler

BY JENN SAMSEL
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The City Council of Keystone Heights bid farewell to Elston "Speedy" Kussler as he stepped down from his position as City Councilman and Vice Mayor.

Kussler, a longtime resident of Keystone Heights, met his

future wife a few years ago, and they recently purchased a home outside the city limits. Due to this change, Kussler had to resign, as members of the city board must live within the city limits.

During the farewell, Kussler took a moment to address the council

and the public, sharing his parting thoughts.

"Thank you for the opportunity," he said. "I enjoyed working with everyone, including Drew, and her efforts with the community and various organizations. I appreciate Rich, our attorney, and Wendy, our Admin. Assistant, James Booth, the City Manager, and our City Council, along with Mayor Nina. I will miss being part of the team and participating in the events."

Kussler said that while he loved serving as a city council member, he was also excited to step down and begin a new life with his fiancée.



Franklin Fields

During the meeting, City Councilman Ryan Knight nominated Brandon Ludwig to replace Kussler, and Dave Welsh was also nominated for Vice Mayor.

Ludwig said he was quite surprised by the prestigious nomination from the entire board. He delivered a speech and said he felt honored to accept the position of City Councilman for 2026.

He will be sworn in on December 16 until formal elections are held sometime next year.

Three additional positions were filled: Jenn Samsel was appointed to the Heritage Commission board, James Booth was appointed to continue as City Manager after serving as interim City Manager, and Franklin Fields was appointed to City Seat 1 on the Keystone Heights Airport Authority Board.



James Booth, Jenn Samsel, Brandon Ludwig

Reality Check gives students a peek into the adult world

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School students participated in the school's Reality Check on

Thursday, Nov. 20, in the school's gym.

The event simulates budgeting in adult life by assigning each student an occupation and income, then having them walk to stations throughout the gym floor to arrange other expenses.

Event organizer Isaac Morford said this is his third year running Reality Check.

"It's kind of a snapshot of what it's like to be an adult and organize your finances," he said. "It gives them an idea of costs and how things play out in the adult world."

Morford said one table is labeled "Chance" based on the Monopoly Game cards.

"You draw a card and could find out that your car breaks down, and you owe \$100, or you got a



"If you get a car," event organizer Isaac Morford warned students, "you'd better get insurance, and you'd better get a tag on it. If you don't, then you might get pulled over and lose another hundred bucks or so."

bigger tax refund than you were expecting," he said.

Volunteer organizer Ginger Lee said that this year, around 30 community members and 570 students signed up for the event. The winner of Capital City Bank's 2023 Julian V. Smith Community Involvement Award added that students this year are writing out checks for their expenditures, adding a new wrinkle to life in the real world.

"I'm enjoying it," said volunteer Helen Lavarway, who is the community advocate and event planner at the Keystone Heights RV Resort. "I think the volunteers enjoy working with the students, teaching them about life and how to budget."

Kimberly Dyal and Elaine Alsabrook of Clay Electric volunteered at the utilities table. The pair said that after students draw their occupation and income, they arrange their housing, and then come to the utilities table to get electricity.

Costs ranged from \$0, for a one-bedroom apartment with utilities included to \$275 for a three-bedroom home.

The co-op employees added that, when faced with the cost of power, two students responded, "I don't need this," and walked away from the table.

Morford warned students against taking similar shortcuts when getting transportation.

"If you get a car," he warned them, "you'd better get insurance, and you'd better get a tag on it. If you don't, then you might get pulled over and lose another hundred bucks or so."

Morford also told participants that if they get into difficulty, they

See REALITY, page 7



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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 1pm. 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. 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, 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).

Publish 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

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

Eddie John Allen, 31, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 20 for failure to appear.

Candice Lenore Berry, 53, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 17 for petit theft.

Christopher James Bonnet, 39, of Summerfield, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 19 for a probation violation.

David Jim Browning, 59, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 19 for trespassing.

Frank Dubai Crawford, 60, of Melrose, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 16 for aggravated battery on a person 65 years of age or older.

Sabian Ramond Dell, 34, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 17 for an out-of-county warrant.

Tyler Eric Fuller, 28, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 16 for child neglect.

Cassandra Rene Garber, 27, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 18 for making a false report.

Fight at Walmart leads to arrest

Auriyana Kayla Hankerson, 25, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 15 for battery on a person 65 years of age or older.

According to an arrest report, deputies responded around 7:27 p.m. to reports of a battery.

One witness told deputies she believed the victim had followed her around the store, making her uncomfortable. She said she contacted Auriyana Hankerson about the situation.

Two Walmart employees witnessed the incident. Both told deputies they saw the witness and defendant interact with the victim before walking away. They said Hankerson then turned around and came back toward the victim, bumping into him. The victim pushed her back, they said.

The victim told deputies the defendant approached him and cursed at him. He said Hankerson got in his face and slapped him, breaking his glasses.

Deputies reviewed store surveillance footage. The video showed a brief initial interaction between Hankerson, the witness and victim, followed

by both women walking away. Hankerson then turned around and approached the victim in what the deputy described as "a hostile manner," with the witness following.

"Auriyana is then observed bumping into (the victim)," the arrest report states. "At that time, (the victim) pushes Auriyana back, creating distance as she strikes him. The witness is then seen striking the victim as well."

The video showed Hankerson continuing to approach the victim and striking him multiple times during the altercation.

Deputies said they did not arrest the witness at the scene because she was 34 weeks pregnant but would be forwarding a report to the state attorney's office for possible prosecution.

Marc Austin Johnson, 22, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 18 for a probation violation.

Richard Earl Jones, 47, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 20 for possession of drug equipment.

Irma Alvarez Kight, 71, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 20 for a probation violation.

Emmanuel Leonardo, 24, of Jacksonville, was arrested by FHP troopers on November 18 for a moving traffic violation.

Ashton Shawn McClellan, 29, of High Springs, was arrested by FHP troopers on November 15 for an out-of-county warrant.

David Lee Mobley, 56, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 15 for criminal mischief.

Kenneth Dale Phillips, 57, of Palm Beach, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 18 for a probation violation.

Bradley Scott Rhoades, 36, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 20 for possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug equipment.

Threatened people with machete, gun

Johnnie Lee Staten, 73, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 15 for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

According to an April 20, 2025, complaint, deputies responded around 10:56 a.m. to reports of an assault and found numerous people in the parking lot of the Whispering Oaks apartment complex yelling at each other.

The victim told deputies she and others were walking toward Southside Plaza when an older man in a white Jeep began yelling at them. The group exchanged words but kept walking.

The victim said the man followed them to the store and back to Whispering Oaks, then exited his vehicle armed with a machete and threatened them. She said the man then retrieved a firearm from his vehicle before giving it to a passenger.

The passenger, armed with the gun, chased after one of the group members, who fell while

students how to write out checks. "You could tell most of them had not had that training yet," she said, adding that she only writes two checks a month herself, instead paying most bills online.

"I think I write a check to the yard guy and the housekeeper, and that's about it," she said.



Kimberly Dyal (left) and Elaine Alsbroom of Clay Electric volunteered at the utilities table.

running away and scraped his knee.

Another witness told deputies the same account, saying the man yelled expletives at them even after they apologized for stepping into a driveway. The witness said the man exited his vehicle with a machete and threatened them, then retrieved a firearm, causing everyone to run.

After deputies arrived, Staten's white Jeep pulled into the parking lot. Staten told deputies he was trying to leave Whispering Oaks when someone stepped in front of his vehicle. He said he honked his horn, and the person responded by yelling expletives.

Staten said he stopped at the bridge in front of Whispering Oaks to confront the person, who then approached him along with others. He said he retrieved his machete "in case he needed to defend himself."

Deputies asked Staten about firearms. He initially denied having any in his vehicle, then admitted he owned a handgun in his apartment. He later said he had the firearm with him during the incident and returned it to his apartment before driving back to the scene.

Deputies relocated to Staten's apartment, where he produced a .380 handgun.

"Staten was asked about the presence and use of a machete during the altercation," deputies wrote in the complaint. "He exited his vehicle with the machete in an attempt to scare [the victim]. Staten said that [the victim] was constantly harassing him and causing issues, and that he wanted to let him know that he wasn't scared and to leave him alone."

Jefferey Emil Underwood, 42, of Trenton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 18 for an out-of-county warrant.

Dakota Matthew Webb, 27, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 20 for a moving traffic violation, DUI, DUI with property damage, and a probation violation.

Kenneth Wells, 34, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 17 for failure to appear.

Bobby Eugene Willingham, 57, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 20 for an out-of-county warrant.

Union

Lance Webster Osteen, 64, of High Springs, was arrested by Union deputies on November 21 for a probation violation.

Clay

Willie Lee Brannon, 72, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on November 21 for DUI and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Zachary James Green, 25, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on November 21 for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.

Millard Michael Lepley, 46, of Starke, was arrested by Clay deputies on November 20 for DUI.

Rodenroth added that if she sees a student running low on funds, she advises them to downsize their housing.

"Just giving them little tips," she said.

Food pantries deal with increasing demand

BY JENN SAMSEL
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The federal government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP, was disrupted in late 2025 due to a prolonged government shutdown and subsequent political decisions surrounding benefit payments. This, along with the closure of a Starke-based trucking company, has significantly impacted local food charities.

Bradford Food Pantry

The Bradford Food Pantry is feeling the effects, with hundreds of people arriving each week in need of food. They have experienced a setback as one of their largest distributors, Davis Express, has shut down. The company provided a substantial supply of meat and other food items, leaving the pantry scrambling to find alternative sources of supply.

As an emergency food pantry, Bradford Food Pantry serves those who are underserved and income-eligible, as defined by government guidelines for Feeding Northeast Florida.



Lake Area Ministries' Tanya Dennis (center), along with other volunteers, packs food for distribution.

To qualify for assistance from the Bradford Food Pantry, individuals must provide proof that they are either receiving disability benefits, participating in SNAP, or enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children program.

Following the closure of Davis Express, the Bradford Food Pantry now relies heavily on donations from organizations such as Feeding Northeast Florida, FarmShare, Waste Not Want Not, Walmart, and Winn-Dixie, as well as contributions from residents. They accept donations of fresh fruits, vegetables, bread, limited quantities of meat, and other food items. Alongside, they spend around \$1,000 a month on buying chicken at Restaurant Depot.

They are in urgent need of cereals, peanut butter, canned goods, canned fruit, and monetary donations.

Recently, the Clay Electric Foundation generously donated

CLAY

Continued from page 8
inflation ran 2.9%. He said vouchers have cost the district \$30 million.

"Florida ranks 50th in funding for teacher pay. It ranks 43rd overall for per-student funding," he said.

He showed the district has reinvested \$49 million in employees over the past six years and increased health insurance contributions by \$14 million while keeping premiums flat.

"You deserve more than that. I know that," Broskie told the crowd. "But at the same



Altrusa Club members Gale Trotter, Sarah Long, Rachel Rhoden, Mary Kramer and Sheryl Dixon present a \$1,000 check to Bradford Food Pantry President Bob Milner.

\$20,000 towards a walk-in freezer, and First Christian Church funded the installation of a generator and gas, totaling \$13,000. Additionally, local clubs such as Kiwanis, Rotary, and Altrusa all contributed to the annual donations this year, supporting the pantry's efforts. This year, the Altrusa club donated a check for \$1,000 to the Bradford Food Pantry.

The operation currently has two commercial freezers that

According to Dennis, they served 148 families within just three hours on the first day after the benefits were terminated. Since the shutdown, the demand has more than doubled, with 397 families seeking assistance, including 27 new families, some of whom are currently furloughed.

Dennise, who has been with Lake Area Ministries for six years, reported that she has never witnessed such a rapid increase in food demand.

Hitchcock's Markets was one of LAM's primary providers until the company shut down at the end of October. Formerly Winn-Dixie, now Aldi has been helping by donating food along with Save-A-Lot, she said.

"We have a lot of outside families donating money, a lot of community churches are helping, and businesses are donating money. Thank you to the community for reaching out, and in this need for everyone to make everybody feel like they can have Thanksgiving or provide for their families," she said.

On average, Lake Area Ministries supplies food to approximately 630 families each month, which equates to around 2,520 people. However, for November, they anticipate needing to feed between 900 and 1,000 families.

Currently, Feeding Northeast Florida is not providing any assistance.

The organization is in urgent need of various supplies, including canned fruit, children's cereal, protein sources such as canned tuna, Vienna sausage, spaghetti with meatballs, as well as cat and dog food, and toilet paper.

Anyone interested in donating food can drop it off at Lake Area Ministries or send donations to P.O. Box 1385, Keystone Heights, Florida 32656.

For those in need of food, distribution is available on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and on Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., as well as on Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

are out of order and require replacement.

"We are very grateful for these volunteers, because without them, there's no food pantry. You cannot overestimate the value of these volunteers, and second, there would be no Bradford Food Pantry without the generous folks, churches, and individuals who give money or food," said Bob Miller, BFP President.

If anyone needs food, the distribution is open on Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Lake Area Ministries

Lake Area Ministries has been serving the Keystone Heights area and its surrounding communities for 39 years. Recently, Tanya Dennis, the Director of Lake Area Ministries, noticed a dramatic increase in demand for their services following the cutoff of SNAP benefits.

time, we are trying to increase revenue, and of course, we have to decrease expenses. There are only two ways out of it."

The district eliminated 242 positions this year, cut budgets 20% across the board, and canceled contracts to close a budget gap.

School board member is tired of the emails

Board member Michele Hanson, who taught in Clay County for nearly 20 years, pushed back on suggestions that the board doesn't understand teachers' struggles.

"I taught in Clay County

for nearly 20 years, 80 hours a week, teaching English to kids who can't read," Hanson told the crowd. "When I left the classroom in my 19th year, I made \$48,300. My daughter has a master's and lives with me at my house with my two grandkids."

She said she's tired of emails suggesting board members don't understand the plight of teachers.

"This board absolutely understands. The superintendent absolutely understands," she said. "You are close to our hearts and always in our thoughts, and we'll work hard to fix it."

REALITY

Continued from page 6

could go to the SOS Table for help.

Brent Bathurst, a tax principal at the Jacksonville CPA firm of Ennis Pllum & Associates, and a Keystone Heights Rotary member, volunteered at the retirement table.

He said one student bolted for his station before budgeting for other expenses.

"He told me, 'I need to save for my future before anything else,'" the CPA recalled. "He wasn't even looking at early retirement. He just knew that (planning for retirement was important). Obviously, his parents had been teaching him."

Next to Bathurst's table, Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth helped students acquire furniture.

She said she had to show



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UNION COUNTY

Lake Butler closer to selling old public works property

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Lake Butler city commissioners heard an update on Monday, November 18, on a potential buyer for the old public works property. Keller Williams realtor Brent Line told commissioners on a Zoom call that an underground utilities contractor in San Diego is looking to relocate its operations to Florida.

He said the company is moving 10 semi-trucks from California and needs a location fast. A representative was scheduled to view the 27-acre property on

Friday, November 21.

"He is sending me one of his associates out on Friday at 11:00 p.m.," Line said. "If everything looks proper, then we would expect by the end of the day Friday to be putting in a full offer."

The company would need the property rezoned to heavy industrial. City Attorney John E. Maines IV said the sale contract can include rezoning as a contingency.

"The sale is contingent upon rezoning of the property, and then we would initiate the procedures required by law," the lawyer said.

The city dropped the asking price to \$700,000 two weeks ago, which sparked increased interest. Line said the potential buyer has been aggressive in its timeline and has already connected him with their financing team.

"They were specifically looking for Gainesville, but I presented this property to them two days ago," Line said. "The acreage fits exactly what they're looking for."

Mayor Melissa Hendrix noted the opportunity could bring jobs to the area.

Line has been marketing the property for several months

with limited success, but said the recent price adjustment has generated multiple calls and showings.

Boat ramp update

Commissioners also heard an update on the boat ramp improvement project. Grant consultant Doug Sanders said the 90% design phase should be complete in December, but permitting from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers could delay construction.

"There's a possibility that we will not be in a position to submit

a new grant until 2027," he said.

The estimated construction cost for the floating dock and ramp improvements is \$330,000. Sanders said the project won't affect next year's Fourth of July celebration but could be ready for 2027.

"A couple of years from now, when you have your next fireworks, you'll have a brand-new boat ramp," he added.

Townsend-Green upgrades complete

Sanders also told commissioners that

improvements to the Townsend-Green Building are complete.

He said he had difficulty finding an architect and a contractor for the job.

"We had to advertise twice to get an architect, and twice to get a contractor," he said. "We just couldn't get anybody to come to Lake Butler. It's a nice project."

Sanders told commissioners that James W. Townsend built the structure in 1914, and initially, it covered an entire block.

"At that time, there was a doctor's office, a hotel, a

See TOWNSEND, page 13



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Obituaries

Randall Davis

Mr. Randall Wayne Davis, 87, of Starke passed away Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, in Middleburg. He was born Feb. 6, 1938, in Charleston, South Carolina to Harry K. and Myrtle (Gooding) Davis. He dedicated his professional life to serving others as the director of recreation for the city of Starke and later was the recreational director at Lawtey Correctional Institution, where he made a lasting impact on the lives of many. He was a proud veteran, having served in the United States Army, a period in his life that he cherished and spoke of with honor. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 42 years, Virginia "Ginger" (Thornton) Davis; and daughter, Gina Lee Davis. He will be remembered for his passion for sports, particularly as an avid Florida Gators fan. His enthusiasm for the game was rivaled only by his love for spending quality time with his family, which included his two sons, Brian (Rebecca) Davis of Fleming Island and Andrew Davis of Starke; along with his cherished grandchildren, Bradley Davis of Fleming Island, Karrigan Davis of Ohio, and Connor Davis of Fleming Island. Also left behind is his brother, Harold (Sandy) Davis of Starke; and his fur baby, Angie.

A graveside service will be held at Crosby Lake Cemetery Saturday, Nov. 29, at 10:30 a.m.

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

PAID OBITUARY

George Gill Jr.



Mr. George Prescott Gill Jr., 87, of Kingsley Lake, passed away at Haven Hospice Custead Care Center in Orange Park Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2025, following an extended illness. He was born Oct. 16, 1938, in Starke to the late George and Alma (Silcox) Gill Sr. and graduated in 1956 from Bradford High School. He was a proud Army veteran and held a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia, graduating in 1965. Prior to retiring, he was a real-estate appraiser for the Veterans Administration, where he made lasting friendships and contributed to the lives of many. He was married to his beloved wife, Rose (Hueftle) Gill, for an incredible 64 years, creating countless memories with their daughters, Pat (Bob) Rymysza, Christina Ortega, and Heidi (Stan) Lee. A true family man, he cherished every moment spent with his grandchildren, Chaylen (Erica) Ortega, Steven (Taylor) Lemire, Alexis (Ridge) Ortega, Makenzie Lee, Maddox Lee, and Skylar Lee; along with his great-grandchildren, Ella and Emma, Waylon, Emberlyn, Hudson, Peyton, and Adler. He was affectionately known as "Papa," and his love for his family was evident in everything he did. He was an avid Georgia Bulldog fan, enjoyed hunting and fishing and spent many joyful days at the lake, a place that remained dear to his heart until the very end.

The family has elected to hold a private memorial service at a later date. If you wish to honor his memory, donations made to Haven Hospice, Custead Care Center, 745 Blanding Blvd., Orange Park, 32065 are greatly appreciated.

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

Russell Kerschner Jr.

Mr. Russell "Junior" Roger Kerschner Jr., 87, of Hampton passed away Friday, Nov. 21, 2025, at Lake Montgomery Health and Rehabilitation Center in Lake City. He was born Sept. 26, 1938, in Dayton, Ohio to Russell Roger and Alma (Wellcome) Kerschner Sr. He was of the Methodist faith and attended First United Methodist Church of Starke, now Foundation Church. He was always working, enjoyed tinkering with automobiles, loved wheeling and dealing and was known for his amazing story telling. Prior to retirement, he worked as a paint and body technician. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Twila (Fry) Kerschner; daughter, Judith Kerschner; sons, Roger Kerschner and Raymond Kerschner; daughter-in-law, Tina Kerschner; and great-grandson, Raymond Michael Ardell Kerschner.

Survivors are sons, Terry Kerschner (Kimberley Coleman) of Lake Butler, and Wayne (Shanda) Checkers of Starke. He was called "Grandpa" by grandchildren, Charles, Jonathan, Justin, Jackson, Jeremy, Jennifer, and Georgia; along with great-grandchildren, Twila and James.

Funeral services will be Friday, Nov. 28, at 11 a.m. at DeWitt C. Jones Chapel of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating. Interment will follow at Santa Fe Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY

Earl Rhoden

Robert "Earl" Rhoden, 79, of Hampton, died at home, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025. He was married to Betty (Harris) Rhoden for 40 years.

Survivors are children, James Rhoden (Sarah), Edward Earl Rhoden (Kandice), and Jennifer Irene Rhoden; brothers, Raymond and Larry Rhoden; sister, Shelia Stanley; and 10 grandchildren.

Graveside services were at Hope Baptist Church Cemetery on Tuesday, Nov. 25.

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

Alton Thornton



Alton Curtis Thornton, 68, of Starke, formerly of High Springs, went home to be with his Lord and Savior Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025. Born June 22, 1957, in Lake City, he was the son of John Nelson Thornton and Carma Vera Griffis, who instilled in him a deep faith, strength, and unwavering devotion to family. Alton lived a life defined by service, integrity, and commitment to others. He proudly dedicated many years to law enforcement and public safety. He retired as a Communications Sergeant with the Union County Sheriff's Office, where he served faithfully from 1999 to 2019 in Lake Butler. Prior to that, he worked as a Duty Officer with the Florida Highway Patrol from 1981 to 1989, later serving as a Duty Officer Supervisor with the Gainesville Station before returning to Starke. He was even an ordained minister and pastor at New River New Congregational Methodist Church. His earlier years of service included roles as a Correctional Officer with the Florida Department of Corrections, as well as positions with Archie Tanner Funeral Home, Archer Funeral Home, and Keith Griffis Ford. In every role he held, he demonstrated a strong work ethic, a servant's heart, and a sincere desire to help those around him. He was preceded in death by his parents, John Nelson Thornton and Carma Vera Griffis; as well as his brothers, Dale Thornton, Donald Thornton, and Neil Thornton.

He is survived by his sister, Margie (Bryan) Barkman; his loving wife, Michelle Thornton; daughter, Brooke (Brad) Barber; son, Nelson (Lezlee) Thornton. He was especially proud to be "Papa" to his grandchildren, Donnie (Emilee), Josie (Brandon), Jordan, Layla, and Wyatt. He was "Pappy" to his beloved great-grandchildren, Everleigh and Oakleigh. They were the light of his life and brought him immeasurable joy. Alton lived a life of purpose and faith. His legacy endures in the lives of his family, the many people he served, and the countless moments of kindness he shared. He will be remembered for his humor, his love, his storytelling, and his steadfast trust in God. May he rest in eternal peace, in the presence of the Lord he loved so dearly.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, Nov. 29, at 11 a.m. at New River New Congregational Methodist Church, with Pastor Randall A. Griffis Sr. officiating. The family will receive friends an hour prior at the church. Private interment will be at South Prong Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY

Starke Kiwanis Club hears about Food4Kids Backpack Program

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford County students who are considered food insecure have food to eat over the weekends during the school year, thanks to the Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida.

Executive Director Margot DeConna spoke to the Kiwanis Club of Starke on Nov. 18 about her organization, which provides food to 165 children in six Bradford schools. The backpack program serves 68 schools overall in Bradford, Alachua, Dixie and Levy counties.

"Basically, what we do is we provide bags of non-perishable food — non-perishable meals and snacks — every single weekend during the school year," DeConna said. "We pack centrally for Alachua County out of our warehouse in Gainesville, but in Bradford County, we actually provide all of the inventory, and then Bradford County residents pack those bags and deliver those bags to the schools directly."

When students are away from school for longer than a weekend — Thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break — their families are provided with 30- to 40-pound boxes of food.

"It is all the food they need for all those other meals they'll be missing if they rely on free breakfast and lunch at school," DeConna said. "It's things like spaghetti and sauce. It's things like canned soup, canned pasta, ramen, canned meat, cereal, shelf-stable milk, snacks, saltine crackers and peanut butter and jelly."

DeConna said she works closely with Blake Dicks, director of food and nutrition services for the Bradford County School District, Iana Patterson of the Florida Department of Health in Bradford County, and Candace Osteen, who serves as the backpack program's local enrollment coordinator.

Shocking revelation

The program got its start when Jennifer Moore took pizza, cupcakes and juice to a third-grade classroom at Gainesville's Terwilliger Elementary School on a Monday in 2010 to celebrate her daughter's birthday.

"She noticed that some of the kids in the class were taking second and third slices of pizza before others had finished their first," DeConna said.



Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida Executive Director Margot DeConna talks about her organization, which provides weekend food to children in Bradford, Alachua, Dixie and Levy counties.

When Moore asked the teacher about it, she was told that those children probably hadn't eaten anything since lunch at the school on Friday.

"She was shocked — shocked to learn there were so many children in our community who went all weekend without access to food for any number of reasons," DeConna said. "She was called to act."

Food insecurity

DeConna told the Kiwanis Club members that food insecurity is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as "lack of access to adequate nutrition for a healthy life."

Based on statistics recorded in Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap study, 18.4 percent of children (ages 0-18) in Florida in 2023 were food insecure. That equates to 806,870 children. DeConna said that was a 2.7-percent increase from 2020 numbers.

In Bradford County, 1,440 (25.3 percent) children were considered food insecure in 2023.

"Obviously, having a lack of adequate access to food as a child can have lifelong effects," DeConna said, explaining that hunger can make it harder for children to perform in school, prevent them from growing and developing as they should, and lead to increased illness and high health costs.

DeConna said Food4Kids is helping eliminate one choice families in financial straits are

having to consider.

"More than anything, I think what Food4Kids does is we help families sort of relieve the burden of having to make a decision on whether they're going to pay their electric bill, or they're going to pay their rent or they're going to get their car repaired so they can then get to work, or feed their children," she said. "A lot of times, food-insecure families are having to make tradeoffs between paying bills and buying food. We see that's especially true right now across the country."

Identifying and meeting the need

Food4Kids works with the schools to determine the children who would be candidates for the backpack program. Each school has someone who acts as a liaison, who accepts referral reforms from anyone on campus who sees a child who may benefit from the program. DeConna said "anyone from the principal to the lunch lady" can recommend children for the program.

The liaison sends a consent form home with the student, notifying parents or caregivers of the program and, if they agree to participate, having them answer such questions as how many total children are in the home, does anyone in the home have food allergies, and does the home have a can opener.

When the liaison gets the forms back from the families who choose to participate, they are passed on to Osteen.

"Candace manages all of those enrollments," DeConna said.

Food bags/boxes are delivered to Starke on Thursdays. Children receive the food on Fridays.

DeConna said older children receive their food in duffel bags or rolling backpacks "because we know they're less likely to take the food home if their classmates know they have this need."

There are a lot of stigmas around that," DeConna said. "We do everything we can to try to reduce that stigma and get kids to take the food home when they need it."

A five-week rotation is employed with the food bags, DeConna said, meaning that children aren't receiving the same types of food every week.

"If they got cereal and shelf-stable milk this week, next week they'll be getting brown-sugar oatmeal," DeConna said

Supporting the effort

People can help in numerous ways, including volunteering in some capacity, donating food or collecting food.

"We are looking for businesses and offices and big organizations and civic organizations who'd be willing to host food drives here for the Food4Kids Backpack Program," DeConna said.

Another way of assisting is by sponsoring a child. For \$9 per week, you can feed a child for a year.

See FOOD, page 16

DAR chapter meets Dec. 1

The Col. Samuel Elbert Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, will celebrate the holiday season on Monday, Dec. 1, at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Judy Jul (14272 S.W. 75th Ave. in Starke).

A covered-dish luncheon will complement a short meeting and program.

Members are reminded to

bring a new children's book to donate to the library.

Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

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 hosts Santa breakfast 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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BHS girls even record with win over The Rock

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School scored eight of the game's final 10 points in defeating The Rock 47-43 in a Nov. 20 girls basketball matchup in Gainesville.

The Tornadoes (1-1) trailed by eight in the third quarter before scoring four points in the final 20 seconds. Kaiya Thompson hit a short jumper, while Kailyn Teal scored off an offensive rebound to send Bradford into the fourth quarter trailing 36-32.

Bradford scored the first four points of the final quarter on baskets by Ar'Nayshia Griffin

and Kah'myra Hankerson.

It was a 41-41 game after a basket by The Rock's Darielle Grant. The Lions wouldn't score again until less than 20 seconds remained in the game.

Griffin scored five points down the stretch and finished with a game-high 21 points. She also led Bradford in rebounds with 10 and assists with three. She shared the team high in steals with Cayson Hampton, with each player getting three.

Hankerson, who scored three points in the latter stages of the game, finished with nine points, while Hampton had seven. Hampton also had five rebounds.

Teal had five points, while Thompson and Wynter Barrington each had two. Kylee Johnson finished with one point.

Barrington and Johnson grabbed nine and six rebounds,

respectively.

The Tornadoes opened the season on the road against Fort White, losing 42-33 on Nov. 18.

Riley Shuford had two three-pointers in the third quarter to help send Bradford into the final quarter leading 25-21. The Tornadoes were then outscored 21-8.

Griffin scored 14 points, while Shuford and Hampton finished with nine and eight, respectively. Hankerson added two points.

It was a double-double for Griffin, who grabbed 12 rebounds. She also had four assists, four steals and three blocks.

Hankerson had four steals, while Barrington and Shuford each had three. Barrington also grabbed seven rebounds.

The Tornadoes will return to action on Monday, Dec. 1, when

they host Eastside at 7 p.m.

KHHS girls open hoops season with win over Hope

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School opened girls basketball season with a 48-10 win over host Hope Christian Academy on Nov. 17, with 10 players putting themselves in the scoring column.

Rigby Morford led the Indians with 10 points, while Raven Bastin, Daisy Hubbard and Grace Keaton each had six. Keystone also got four

points each from Shalin Grice, Alexandra Papaioannou, Maria Papaioannou and Kadence Massey and two points each from Kirsten Lavin and Melissa Williams.

Maria Papaioannou led the team in rebounds with eight, while Massey and Williams each had seven. Bastin grabbed six rebounds, while Hubbard and Morford each had five.

Bastin also added eight steals and three assists to her totals. Keaton, Massey and Williams each had four steals, with Keaton also recording three assists.

Hope was led by Makenzie McRaney's five points. The Lions also got three points from Morgan Cass and two points from Maddie McCloud.

The Indians will return to action with a road game against Union County on Monday, Dec.

1, at 6 p.m. Keystone then hosts Duval Charter on Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 6 p.m.

Hope played St. Joseph Academy on Nov. 21 and will return to action with a road game against Brunswick (Georgia) Christian on Friday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 p.m.

KHHS falls to Williston in boys soccer

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School was outscored 4-1 in the second half of a 4-2 loss to visiting Williston in a boys soccer match

See SOCCER, page 16

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Nov. 27, 2025

BRADFORD

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
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 7th day of November, 2025.

Denny Thompson, Clerk of Court
By: Tasher Allen
As Deputy Clerk

11/13 4tchg 12/4-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/totes/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.

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. 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. By 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 11:00 a.m. (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: 1490 Northeast 158th 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
Quinteiros, 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@qpwbaw.com
E-mail: kchurch@qpwbaw.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, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator at (352) 337-6237, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance. If you are hearing or voice impaired, please call 711. If you are deaf or hard of hearing and require an ASL interpreter or an assisted listening device to participate in a proceeding, please contact Court Interpreting at interpreter@circuit8.org

11/20 2tchg 11/27 BCT

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, DEVEISEES, 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.
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 14th 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
By: /s/ Matthew B. Klein
Matthew B. Klein, Esq.
Florida Bar No.: 73529
E-Mail: 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
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 14th day of November, 2025.
Julia B. Kite-Powell, Esq.
Julia B. Kite-Powell, P.A.
E-Mail: 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

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF AN ORDINANCE BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA

The City of Starke Florida will hold a City Commission Meeting on December 16, 2025 at 5:30 pm at City Hall, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091 during which the second reading and a vote

will occur for the following ordinance:

ORDINANCE NUMBER 2026-02
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF STARKE, FLORIDA, AMENDING CHAPTER 78, "PERSONNEL," ARTICLE IV, "CITY EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEMS," DIVISION 4, "GENERAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM," SECTION 78-233 MEMBERSHIP IN SYSTEM; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR REPEALER; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
This ordinance is available for public inspection at City Hall, 209 North Thompson Street, Starke, Florida 32091. Interested parties may appear and have an opportunity to be heard at the meeting with respect to the proposed ordinance.

11/27 1tchg-BCT

MEETING CANCELED
The City of Starke Commission meeting scheduled for December 2, 2025, has been canceled.

11/27 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME
Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: FREDERICK FLAHERTY, 1102 E. Call St., Starke, FL 32091, SOLE owner, doing business under the firm name of: SUNCAT PROPERTY SOLUTIONS, 1102 E. Call St., Starke, FL 32091 intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 19 day of NOVEMBER A.D., 2025, in BRADFORD County.

11/27 1tchg-BCT

COMMISSION MEETING
THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on December 2, 2025, at 9:30 AM, inside the county commission meeting room, located in the north wing section of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 N. Temple, Avenue, Starke, FL. A copy of the meeting agenda may be obtained from the Bradford County website: www.bradfordcountyfl.gov. Said meeting location is secured – no firearms or weapons are permitted.

11/27 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A VARIANCE AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BRADFORD COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

BY THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the Bradford County Land Development Regulations, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Regulations, objections, recommendations and comments concerning a variance, as described below, will be heard by the Board of Adjustment of Bradford County, Florida, at a public hearing on December 2nd, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the County Commission Meeting Room, North Wing, County Courthouse located at 945 N. Temple Avenue in Starke, Florida.
V 25-10, an application by Steven T. Knipp, to request a Variance be granted as provided for in Section 4.6 "RR" Rural Residential, Section 4.6.7, Minimum Yard Requirements Setback from a required 15' to a requested 5' along the Westerly boundary of the property being described as follows; p/o the SE1/4 of the NE1/4 of Section 26, Township 6 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Fla. and being Bradford County Parcel Number 00805-0-00414.
The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no further notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing. Aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to

11/27 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A VARIANCE AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE BRADFORD COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

BY THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the Bradford County Land Development Regulations, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development Regulations, objections, recommendations and comments concerning a variance, as described below, will be heard by the Board of Adjustment of Bradford County, Florida, at a public hearing on December 2nd, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the County Commission Meeting Room, North Wing, County Courthouse located at 945 N. Temple Avenue in Starke, Florida.
V 25-10, an application by Steven T. Knipp, to request a Variance be granted as provided for in Section 4.6 "RR" Rural Residential, Section 4.6.7, Minimum Yard Requirements Setback from a required 15' to a requested 5' along the Westerly boundary of the property being described as follows; p/o the SE1/4 of the NE1/4 of Section 26, Township 6 South, Range 21 East, Bradford County, Fla. and being Bradford County Parcel Number 00805-0-00414.
The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no further notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing. Aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to

11/27 1tchg-BCT

the appeal.
Copies of the material are available for public inspection at the Office of the Director of Zoning, Planning, and Building, County Courthouse located at 945 North Temple Avenue, North Wing, Starke, Florida, during regular business hours.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.
11/27 1tchg-BCT

UNION

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 North corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, and thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°07'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the aforesaid one-acre tract, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the East corner previously mentioned; It being specifically understood the aforesaid monuments are and remain the boundaries of the parcel herein described. AND Commence at the Northwest corner of the South 1/2 of Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, and run North 84° 30' 27" East along the North line of said South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, 146.89 feet, thence South 44° 32' 28" East, 420.69 feet to the point of beginning, thence South 42° 52' 17" West 122.00 feet, thence South 47° 08' 43" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 42° 52' 17" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 47° 08' 43" West 210.00 feet, thence South 42° 52' 17" West, 88.00 feet to the Point of Beginning."

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

Attorney for Personal Representative:
M. Aaron Dukes, Esq.
Florida Bar No.: 124394
Dukes Legal, P.A.
Post Office Box 328
Lake Butler, FL 32054
352-225-1654
Petitioner:
LINDA DIANE ABELL
6644 SW 59th Path
Lake Butler, Florida 32054
11/27 2tchg 12/4-UCT

NOTICE OF SELF STORAGE SALE
Please take notice Lake Butler Mini Storage, located at 1015 SW 3rd St, Lake Butler, FL, 32054 intends to hold an auction of goods stored in the following units in default for non-payment of rent on Lockerfox.com. The sale will occur on December 19, 2025 at 12:01 pm on Lockerfox.com. Unless stated otherwise the description of the contents are household goods and furnishings.
Unit # Name Amount
57 Rebecca D. Guillion \$376.76
14 Brian Cummings \$195.20
53 Emallee E. Kirby \$306.76
All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. See manager for details.
11/27 2tchg 12/4-UCT

11/27 2tchg 12/4-UCT

Bradford County Telegraph
USPS 062-700
Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Starke, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Bradford County Telegraph
131 West Call Street • Starke, Florida 32091
Phone: 964-6305 • P.O. Drawer A • Starke, FL 32091

John Miller, Publisher

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

Subscription Rate in Trade Area
Area \$52.00 per year:
\$26.00 six months
Outside Trade Area:
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P.O. Drawer A - Starke, FL 32091
131 W. Call Street - Starke, FL 32091
Phone: (904)964-6305 • Fax: (904)964-8628

John Miller, Publisher

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Advertising:	John R. Tillman
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Bookkeeping & Classified Adverts:	Heather Wheeler
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\$26.00 six months
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\$52.00 per year:
\$26.00 six months

Tornadoes get 2 picks late in 24-14 win over Berkeley

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Caiden Carn and Jy'Quez Cason each had an interception with less than three minutes remaining, with Carn scoring on his pick for the game's final points in the Bradford High

School football team's 24-14 win over visiting Tampa Berkeley Prep in a Region 2-2A semifinal game on Nov. 21.

"The crowd tonight was amazing. The band was amazing," Bradford Head Coach Jamie Rodgers said. "That

helped us settle in and get those stops that we needed."

Those stops were important as Bradford's offense was shut out in the second half against a private-school program that won a state champion two years ago and was a state runner-up four

years ago.

"That's a championship ball team with a championship culture," Rodgers said of Berkeley, adding, "I told our guys that they don't understand how big a win this is for us, against that program. They have everything they need at their disposal, and they're good and tough."

Of course, it was a big win anyway because it puts the Tornadoes (11-1) into the Region 2 championship game. Bradford will host Cocoa (7-4) on Friday, Nov. 28, at 7:30 p.m.

Cocoa has been a thorn in Bradford's side (see related story), but Rodgers said his players did a good job of not looking ahead to that possible matchup.

"Our kids did a good job of locking in," Rodgers said. "We talked to them all week about not looking ahead."

"That's a good football team over there. We're fortunate to come away with the win."

Carn said he and his teammates focus on the task at hand and worry about the future later.

"It's just one team at a time," the sophomore defensive back said.



Cohen Cioffi (center) brings pressure against Berkeley Prep quarterback Cooper Hayes.



Berkeley Prep quarterback Cooper Hayes (far left) gets a pass off just before Nate Raymond (center) arrives.

Berkeley (5-5) received the opening kickoff and chewed up more than seven minutes on a touchdown drive that covered 33 yards. All but two of the 12 plays were runs, with Luby Jones getting eight carries for 35 yards.

"It was old-school football," Rodgers said. "It was I formation and things you don't see very often anymore. It was a lot of fun to get prepared for it."

Matt White had the biggest

run on the drive when he broke multiple tackle attempts on a 15-yard gain to the Bradford 13-yard line. It was a pass play, however, that resulted in the Buccaneers' score, with Justin Del Giudice catching a 11-yard pass from Cooper Hayes with 4:47 remaining in the first quarter. Peter Pisano added the extra point to put the visitors up

See BHS, page 12

BHS set to face 3-time defending state champ Cocoa

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

What are you thankful for?

If you ask the players for the Bradford High School football team, they'll tell you they're thankful to be practicing and preparing for a game during a holiday week.

"We're excited. Even though it's Thanksgiving break, we're still going to work," senior Jy'Quez Cason said following his team's 24-14 Region 2-2A semifinal win over Berkeley Prep. "We've got 48 hours to celebrate. Then, we're back on the field."

The Tornadoes, who are the top seed in the region and fourth in the Florida High School Athletic Association/MaxPreps Class 2A power rankings, will host the Region 2 championship game on Friday, Nov. 28, at 7:30 p.m. Their opponent is one they and Bradford fans have become familiar with over the last four years — Cocoa, which is trying to win its fourth straight state championship. The Tigers (7-

4) beat Bradford in the state semifinals in 2022 and in the state championship game in 2023.

Bradford and Cocoa also squared off against each other in this season's kickoff classic, with the Tigers winning that game as well.

The Region 2 champion will play a state-semifinal game on Friday, Dec. 5.

Cocoa, which is 11th in the FHSAA/MaxPreps power rankings and the third seed in the region, had to survive in overtime in its Region 2 semifinal game — a 34-33 road win over second seed Calvary Christian (ranked eighth in all of 2A). The Tigers led 24-6 at the half, but were held to a just a fourth-quarter field goal in the second half.

The Tigers had a chance to score more points, though, but an interception inside Calvary Christian's 20-yard line in the final two minutes led to the host team's touchdown drive that sent the game into overtime.

Cocoa blocked the extra point following Calvary Christian's

overtime touchdown and then answered with a touchdown of its own and a successful PAT, setting up yet another postseason game between the Tigers and the Tornadoes.

When asked what his team needs to do to get past Cocoa, Rodgers said, "We have to be the most physical team every single play. Not some of the plays. You have to do it every play because you don't know which one's going to be the one to turn the tide."

Rodgers said another key will be making open-field tackles.

"At the skill positions, they're really good," Rodgers said, "but so are we."

Sophomore defensive back Caiden Carn, who accounted for the final 10-point margin of victory against Berkeley Prep with a pick-six, said, "We've got to come ready, focus all week and get it done."

Postseason history

Cocoa is in the playoffs for the 22nd straight year and making



Cy Cubbedge is fired up about the Tornadoes advancing to the Region 2-2A championship game to face Cocoa. The Tornadoes are looking to finally get a win over the Tigers, who beat them in the 2022 state semifinals, the 2023 state-championship game and this year's preseason kickoff classic.

its 27th appearance overall. The Tigers, who are looking to go to the state semifinals for the 19th straight year and to the state finals for the 5th straight year, have a postseason record is 63-19.

The Tigers have won seven state championships — 7-6 over Godby in the 2008 3A final; 27-13 over Glades Central in the 2009 2A final; 14-13 over Glades Central in the 2010 2A final; 31-17 over Bolles in the 2016 4A final; 38-31 over Florida High in the 2022 2S final; 20-6 over Bradford in the 2023 2S final; and 38-27 over Gadsden County in the 2024 2A final.

Cocoa was a state runner-up in 2017 (13-10 loss to Raines in 4A), 2018 (27-13 loss to Raines in 4A) and 2021 (21-19 loss to Cardinal Gibbons in 4A).

2025 season

The Tigers have been playing an extremely tough schedule every year. This season, Cocoa played seven teams in the regular season that qualified for the

playoffs. The Tigers went 2-4 in its first six games, with four of those opponents finishing the regular season with top-10 FHSAA/MaxPreps power rankings in their respective classes.

Cocoa opened the season with a 30-24, two-overtime win over Merritt Island, ranked eighth in 3A. The Tigers then lost 19-14 to sixth-ranked, 5A Mainland and 38-3 to second-ranked, 7A Vero Beach.

The Tigers rebounded with a 37-0 win over 5A Heritage, but then dropped two straight — 25-13 against sixth-ranked, 3A Eau Gallie and 28-6 against 16th-ranked, 4A Norland.

Cocoa is now in the midst of a five-game winning streak, which began with a 27-6 win over 12th-ranked, 2A The Villages. The Tigers finished the regular season with a 38-3 win over 2A Astronaut and a 36-0 win over 4A Rockledge before opening the postseason with a 42-13 win over 19th-ranked Newberry in

See COCOA, page 15

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Quarterback Cy Cubbedge (center) scrambles away from pressure.

BHS
Continued from page 11

7-0. Bradford responded with a 13-play, 80-yard touchdown drive. Chase Phillips and Kemontae Nixon caught passes from Cy Cubbedge of 10 and 14 yards, respectively, to pick up first downs, while a 1-yard run by Iyen Addison on fourth-and-1 moved the chains again, with the Tornados possessing the ball at the Berkeley 33. Phillips, who finished with three catches for 43 yards, almost got into the end zone on a pass play, but the 31-yard gain set up first-and-goal at the 1. Cubbedge scored on a run from there with 8 seconds left in the opening quarter. Tyler Sapp's PAT evened the score at 7-7. "The first drive, they kind of punched us in the mouth," Rodgers said. "It was really good to see us come back."

Berkeley went three-and-out on its next offensive series, with

the Tornados' Jordan Cason in coverage on a deep pass that was incomplete. A punt had the Bradford offense starting a drive at its own 49. Jordan Cason caught a short pass from Cubbedge on the first play and turned it into a 51-yard touchdown a little over a minute into the second quarter. A Berkeley player got a hand on Sapp's extra-point attempt, but the ball still made it through the uprights, putting the Tornados ahead 14-7. Cason would finish as the Tornados' leading receiver with three catches for 59 yards, while Cubbedge went 12 of 20 for 161 yards. The Bradford defense forced another three-and-out the next time the Bucs had the ball. Kingston Booker tripped up Jones, holding him to a 3-yard gain after he had broken into open field. Cohen Cioffi brought pressure against Hayes, resulting in an incomplete pass on third down and forcing a punt.

Bradford's Danny Torres made two tackles for loss the next time Berkeley had the ball, but an illegal-participation penalty on a third-and-long play gave the Bucs a much more manageable third down, which they converted into a first down at the Bradford 42. Two runs by Jones netted 8 yards, but the back was then dropped for a 1-yard loss by Bryce Daniels on third-and-2. Berkeley went for it on fourth down, with Hayes failing to connect with a receiver inside the 5-yard line.

Addison, who finished with 117 yards on 26 carries, had a 30-yard run to the Berkeley 36, followed by Cubbedge completing an 11-yard pass to Nixon, who finished with three receptions for 36 yards. Two straight incomplete passes and a 5-yard run by Addison left the Tornados with fourth-and-5 at the 20. Sapp kicked a 37-yard field with 22 seconds until halftime, making the score 17-7. The Tornados opened the second half with a promising drive that began with four Addison runs for a net of 23 yards. Peyton Jones had a 4-yard reception that was followed by an 8-yard run by Addison that gave Bradford a first down at the Berkeley 38. After a 7-yard reception by Jordan Cason, the Tornados had two penalties that resulted in a loss of 20 yards. Bradford eventually punted on fourth-and-13.

Cubbedge's punt pinned the Bucs at their own 13. A holding penalty on first down backed them up to where they were facing first-and-16 from the 7, but Berkeley got a 16-yard run from White to move the chains. Two plays later, Dylan Henderson caught a pass along his team's

sideline, outleaping the defender and sprinting his way to a 72-yard touchdown at the 6:53 mark of the third quarter. Pisano added the PAT to make it a 17-14 game. After a three-and-out by the Bradford offense, Berkeley drove past midfield, getting two runs from Jones that resulted in first downs and an unnecessary roughness penalty that gave the Bucs another first down at the Bradford 44. Berkeley, however, gained just 3 yards over the next three plays. On fourth-and-7, a screen pass to Jones resulted in a 2-yard loss on a tackle by Jy'Quez Cason.

Cubbedge had the Tornados on the move on their next series. He completed a 10-yard pass to Jones (three catches, 23 yards) for one first down and picked up another two on runs of 8 and 10 yards as the Tornados drove from their own 43 to the Berkeley 16. Two runs by Addison moved Bradford to the 7, but another carry by Addison resulted in a 1-yard loss. On fourth-and-2, Jy'Quez Cason took a direct snap and was held to a 1-yard gain as the Tornados turned the ball over on downs at the 7-yard line. Late in the fourth quarter, another Cubbedge punt pinned the Bucs deep in their own territory, making Berkeley start a drive at its own 3 with 3:38 to play. The Bucs picked up first downs on pass plays of 10 and 14 yards before Carn stepped in front of a pass and took it 35 yards for a touchdown with 2:42 on the clock. Sapp added the PAT for the game's final points. "I saw the ball, got out of my break, came up with the pick and went down the sideline and celebrated with my teammates," Carn said.



Malachi Aldridge (second from right) fights his way toward Berkeley Prep running back Luby Jones (far right). Bradford's Jackson Paremeter (second from left) is also pictured.



Chase Phillips (foreground) heads upfield after catching a pass.

Rodgers said, "I'm just extremely proud of him. He fought through a lot of adversity this year with injuries. He kept plugging, kept coming back and kept working. I'm just really proud of him. He made a huge play that turned the game around." Berkeley's last offensive series consisted of just two plays, with Jy'Quez Cason making a diving interception at the Berkeley 44 with 2:06 to play. "We knew they were going to pass the ball because they were down by two scores," Cason said. "They threw it. I caught an interception." The defensive effort was huge, but so, too, was that of the offense. Despite not scoring in the second half, the Tornados possessed the ball for more than 15 minutes. Berkeley's Jones, who rushed for 62 yards on 19 carries in the first half, had only nine touches for 27 yards in the second half.

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Tukey shoot at Bradford High

The Bradford High School JROTC's annual turkey shoot was won by teacher Steven Djavaheri (far right), who had three bullseyes. BRT David Duncan (center) took second place, while JROTC cadet William Lilly was third. Duncan and Lilly each had two bullseyes. Student Cy Cubbedge (not pictured) had one bullseye and finished fourth.



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Krawl'n' for the Fallen returns to airport for 11th year

BY JENN SAMSEL
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The 11th Annual Krawl'n For The Fallen event, held at the Keystone Heights Airport, honored fallen police officers, K-9s, fire, and military personnel.

The event was a fun-filled weekend packed with action, featuring displays from various police and fire departments, motorcycles, boats, helicopters, and K-9 units. Participants enjoyed food, participated in raffles, listened to music, and visited vendors, all while having the opportunity to take photos with iconic Star Wars Stormtroopers.

Jeeps or other 4x4 vehicles had opportunities for trail riding and navigating obstacle courses, all while paying tribute to fallen police officers,

firefighters, and military personnel who dedicated their lives to protecting the community while on duty. At the end of the final ride of the evening, each vehicle honored the fallen and supported their families by displaying blue and red lights and flags in their honor.

"We've invited survivors out, law enforcement agencies, the community out to enjoy a weekend of fun, jeeping, off-roading, side-by-sides, trucks out on the trails, and raffles. It's just a great weekend to come out and hang out," said Christine Johnson, Co-founder, CEO.

Friday night kicked off with the awards for first and second place in the Show and Shine category. Saturday began with an opening ceremony, followed by a moment of silence ride at

1 PM to recognize the survivors of fallen first responders and their supporters. The night concluded with a memorial ride for survivors.

According to Off-Road United, Krawl'n For The Fallen is one of the most significant off-road events in Florida. This year, over 2,000 participants showcased their jeeps, trucks, and 4x4 vehicles, bringing together first responders and the community for a day of fun.

"Thank you to everybody for coming out, enjoying the weekend with us, and showing their support for our current law enforcement, first responders, for what they do, putting their lives on the line every day for us, and showing support for those that we've lost," she said.

Attending this year were representatives from the Bradford County Fire Rescue,

the Bradford County Sheriff's Office, the Clay County Sheriff's Office, the Nassau County Sheriff's Office, the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, U.S. Customs, Border Protection, Florida State Guard, Alachua County Sheriff Office, and the Flagler County Sheriff's Office.

"Krawl'n for the Fallen donates money to concerns of police survivors. The benefit of coming out here is the honor and the opportunity to meet the survivors. The money we raise goes to help families get the counseling and support that they need when there's an officer killed in the line of duty," Johnson said.

For more information about the event or to donate, please visit offroadunited.org.



Nancy Beth Holmes, Jimmy Holmes, Sara Sloan, Travis Emerson, John Womack, Jeannie Womack, Adam Roberts and Chrissy Johnson.



Robert Howard (left), Travis Levalle, Moises Ortiz, Justin Swafford, Leo Avila and Robert Smith.



Colavito Terry, Justin Garlow, Nathaniel Baumgartner



Right: Jason Hersey, Sydney Dehart and Paul Chamberlain

Operation Christmas Child collections looking to surpass 2024

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The central drop-off team leader for Operation Christmas Child at Trinity Baptist Church in Keystone Heights said the number of gift boxes collected this year will likely exceed that of 2024.

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization, that collects shoeboxes filled with gifts for children around the world.

Diane Michel oversees a collection hub for the region, with churches and groups from surrounding areas contributing shoeboxes that will be shipped overseas to children in need.

National Collection Week for the ministry was from November 17 through 24. On Thursday, November 20, Michel said the first two days of the week were busy, but traffic tapered off over the next two days.

"We were extremely busy, Monday and Tuesday, and Wednesday was steady,"



(L-R) Aubrey Brooks, Arianna Denmark, Dean Brooks, and Brittany Denmark during a dedication service at Trinity Baptist Church.

Michel said. "Today is a slower day related to shoe boxes coming in. We've got a couple of churches this morning."

Michel said the operation hasn't changed much from previous years, with one exception.

"The only thing that's changed related to shoe boxes is you can no longer put bar soap in the boxes," she said.

The change is related to customs regulations.

She also said this year's boxes are slightly larger, with more room for gifts.

Church dedicates gift boxes for children overseas

BY DIANE MICHEL
Operation Christmas Child

Trinity Baptist Church held its annual Shoebox Dedication Sunday for Operation Christmas Child during the church's Nov. 16 morning services. This tradition started in 2007.

Operation Christmas Child is a worldwide ministry through Samaritan's Purse. Shoebox gifts are packed with small toys, school supplies and hygiene items for poor children around the world in over 170 countries. Since 1993, more than 232 million children have received these gifts.

During the dedication services at Trinity, smiling children entered the church in a parade. A few children were dressed in large carton shoeboxes. Two had large frames advertising "What goes in the box is fun" and "What comes out is eternal." It is a mystery who was inside the big Christmas tree. Toddlers were pulled in wagons. Everyone carried in a precious shoebox gift.

The congregation sang "God so loved the world" as the children came in. Photos of Operation Christmas Child activities and their very own shoebox recipients scrolled on a screen inside the auditorium. Senior Pastor Brandon Denmark prayed over the shoebox treasures.



Diane Michel, the central drop-off team leader for Operation Christmas Child at Trinity Baptist Church in Keystone Heights, said this year's boxes are slightly larger (the box on the right) and offer more room for gifts.

TOWNSEND

Continued from page 8

restaurant," he said. "But through time it shrank to what we see today."

Sanders said the building also hosted Lyman Green's barbecue.

A family member donated the building to the city, and in 1983, it burned to the ground.

The building sat as an empty shell for 13 years until two state grants brought it back.

Sanders said Lieutenant Governor Toni Jennings officiated a ceremony to mark the comeback.

The latest grant repaired the structure's roof.

Rotary aiming for bigger Fourth of July celebration next year

Lake Butler Rotary

member Jody Read addressed commissioners about the 2026 Fourth of July celebration, which will mark the nation's 250th birthday.

"It's going to be a larger show, it's going to be a bigger event," Read said. "We're expecting more food trucks, we're expecting more entertainment."

The fireworks will be launched from the lake dock instead of the previous location, which Read said should eliminate fire concerns and debris issues for nearby homes.

Public works employees out because of health insurance

City Manager Kim Hayes reported the public works department is down to three employees heading into the holidays after recent resignations. She said Michael Manning

has been placed in a 30-day trial period as interim public works director after Mike Gray resigned to return to building barns.

The city manager said two more workers resigned and joined the state to get health insurance.

"It's hard to compete with the county and the state when we don't provide insurance," Hayes said.

Hendrix said the city needs to explore offering health insurance instead of the current \$8,000 annual stipend, which employees often don't use for insurance.

"We really need to offer health insurance here instead of just giving the money out," the mayor said. "We're having a hard time hiring people."

Commissioners voted to give employees three additional paid holidays: the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, the Friday after Christmas, and the Friday after New Year's Day.

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UCHS' Whitehead to swim for Alabama's Crimson Tide

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School senior Eva Whitehead had several Division I colleges to choose from, but in the end, the University of Alabama felt like the place she needed to take her swimming talent to.

Whitehead, who recently won the Class 1A state championship in the 200-yard individual medley for the second straight year, signed her letter of intent to join the Crimson Tide swim team during a Nov. 18 ceremony in the UCHS media center.

"I'm just so excited," Whitehead said. "I will always be grateful for this opportunity to go to Alabama. The athletic program there is just amazing."

Whitehead had schools such as Kentucky, LSU, North Carolina State and South Carolina also interested in her. She said Kentucky was high

on her list until she visited Alabama. Whitehead used the word "family" several times in describing what it felt like during her interactions with Crimson Tide coaches and swimmers.

"I just knew it was home," she said, adding, "I feel like they're going to look after me well."

John Hulvey, who coaches Whitehead in the Gator Swim Club, said, "Alabama seemed to be the right fit. She's always said that for a country girl, that was always the dream school."

UCHS Assistant Principal Stephanie Sellers spoke about earning a chance to compete at the Division-I level and how it's "no small feat," saying, "It demands discipline, resilience, sacrifice and an unwavering commitment to excellence."

"Watching you push your limits and break barriers has paved the way for the next generation of student-athletes

at Union County, reminding them not to settle, but to strive for the very best," Sellers told Whitehead at the start of the signing ceremony.

The assistant principal also talked of watching Whitehead teach her son how to swim seven years ago.

"The patience and the leadership and the heart that you showed while investing in him are some of the same qualities that carried you to this milestone today," Sellers said. "You have always lifted others while chasing your goals, which is an ability that sets you apart from others."

Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead, who is Eva's father and the UCHS swim coach, saw early in his daughter's life a determination to accomplish goals she set for herself. He said, "I feel like she's always had that extra drive. 'I'm going



Eva Whitehead (second from right) signs her letter of intent to swim for the University of Alabama. She's seated between her parents, Jennifer and Brad Whitehead, and is also joined at her Nov. 18 signing ceremony by Gator Swim Club Coach John Hulvey (far left).

to outwork everybody. I'm not going to miss a practice. I'm going to eat right. I'm going to get my fluid intake right. I'm going to do what it takes to get to that point. I feel like she's always had that drive in her. She had the next-level drive of, 'I'm going to do what it takes to get to where I want to be.'"

That drive equated to full days during the school year. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Whitehead would wake up before 5 a.m., grab a bite to eat and then drive to Gainesville to a pool, where she would swim 6,000-7,000 yards. Then, it was back home to get ready to go to school.

After school, it was back to Gainesville for more practice.

At Alabama, of course, she won't have to drive approximately 140 miles a day to use a pool. Whitehead said she was looking forward to that, but admitted she got to where she didn't mind her drives to Gainesville.

"It was like a time where I was alone," she said. "I could de-stress and calm down, listen to music and just be with my thoughts."

Whitehead said she looks forward to becoming part of a college swim program and

is ready to take on the weight training and the hard work that comes with it.

"I'm excited to add that to my plate and see what it can bring me," Whitehead said.

Hulvey has no doubt Whitehead is ready to do whatever is necessary to compete in the Southeastern Conference, which he said is arguably the hardest conference for swimming.

"When we're talking about what takes her to the next level, we're talking about how she's determined to keep working," Hulvey said. "She's not one of the ones who's just going, 'Hey, I've got my scholarship, and I'm moving on,' enjoying life at the collegiate level. She's hungry to excel and be the best she can be."

Even after winning state titles, the tendency was to look ahead and think about improving.

"We're always talking about the next race," Hulvey said. "Even at state, after she won, we were talking about where we can get better."

Brad Whitehead said, "She was extremely ecstatic to win the state title, but she was a little upset that she didn't go a little faster. That's a drive you can't put into people. You either have it or you don't."

Though she puts in a lot of work in being the best swimmer she can be, Whitehead prefers to downplay her part in her accomplishments, which include the two state championships, a state runner-up finish in the 100 breaststroke this past season, two regional championships in the 200 IM and district titles in the 200 IM and 100 backstroke.

"I'm really humble about everything," Whitehead said. "I like to give my glory to God because I would not be here without Him."

Whitehead is used to swimming in high school state events and Junior Nationals, but what will it feel like when she swims for the first time at a college event for the University of Alabama?

"I haven't really thought about that yet," she said. "I think it's going to be exciting and a lot of pressure and a lot of people watching and rooting for me."

In fact, a lot of those people rooting for her will find themselves rooting for a college they never would have considered rooting for before. Whitehead said she's had many people tell her, "I don't say, 'Roll, Tide,' but I will for you."

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COCOA

Continued from page 11

the Region 2 quarterfinals. The Tigers are scoring an average of 25 points per game, while opponents are averaging 17. During its win streak, Cocoa has averaged 35 points per game, while opponents are averaging 11.

Offensively, the Tigers are averaging 188 passing yards per game and 131 rushing yards per game.

Junior quarterback Champ Smith, who's played in 10 games, has completed 161 of 279 passes for 1,905 yards and 14 touchdowns. He's thrown 11 interceptions.

Smith went 14 of 25 for 211 yards and two touchdowns in the win over Calvary Christian.

The receiving corps consists of 10 players who are averaging 10 yards or more per catch, led by junior Tank White. White has 38 receptions for 467 yards and seven touchdowns. He finished the Calvary Christian game with four catches for 49 yards and a touchdown.

Junior Zay Hawkins had one catch for 66 yards and a touchdown in the Region 2 semifinal game. For the season (eight games), he has 17 receptions for 282 yards and four touchdowns.

Sophomore Cayman Varis, who's played in 10 games, has 24 catches for 251 yards and a



Jordan Cason slips out of a tackle attempt after catching a pass in the win over Berkeley Prep. He has eight catches for 91 yards and two touchdowns in Bradford's two playoff games.

touchdown, while junior Jamal Smith, who's also played 10 games, has 21 catches for 222 yards.

Sophomore running back Javeon Scott, who's played in nine games, leads the rushing attack with 504 yards and six

touchdowns on 71 carries — an average of 7 yards per attempt.

Zaylan Chapple, a sophomore wide receiver, has 393 yards and six touchdowns on 80 rushing attempts.

Cocoa has committed 22 turnovers (16 interceptions, six fumbles) this season.

The Telegraph-Times-Monitor was able to find stats for all but three of Cocoa's opponents. Based on those eight games, the Tigers' defense is allowing an average of 155 rushing yards per game and 138 passing yards per game.

Junior linebacker Kyree Brooks leads the team in tackles with 107, while senior defensive back O'Kece Battle has 68. Senior lineman Chavaris Redman Thompson and senior linebacker D.J. Cooper have 58 and 56 tackles, respectively.

Senior lineman Jermaine Waters is tops on the team in sacks with 11 and in tackles for loss with 17. Brooks has 11 tackles for loss.

The Tigers have created 15 turnovers (nine fumbles, six interceptions).



Honoring a Tornado great

Demetrice Hankerson (second from left) is joined by family and friends in watching a video of some of his highlights in football and track and field at Bradford High School. Hankerson, a member of the BHS Class of 2002, was presented with an honorary Top Tornado Athletic Award by the Class of 2002 and Bradford Athletics following the conclusion of the first quarter of the Tornadoes' Nov. 21 playoff football game. One of Hankerson's accomplishments was winning the Class 2A 100m state championship in 2002.



LEFT: Tyler Sapp, with Jackson Parmeter holding, prepares to kick a 37-yard field goal to put Bradford up 17-7 in its eventual 24-14 win over Berkeley Prep in the Region 2-2A semifinals.



Cohen Cioffi (far left) and Malachi Aldridge (second from right) prepares to take down Berkeley Prep running back Luby Jones.

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- 3. Can you talk about some of the new skills you have learned in the Florida Air National Guard that have helped you in the civilian work force?**
Thanks to the experiences that the Florida Air National Guard has granted me I've been able to learn a variety of new and useful skills. I was able to learn the networking and cyber security. These are skills I use daily especially in my pursuit of a carrier in the IT field. Another very important skill that we learn no matter what job you have is communication. This has been by far the most advantageous skill I've learned. Its helped me through all aspects of the work force.

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UCHS ends football season with 28-14 loss

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Two second-quarter touchdowns gave the Union County High School football team the lead, but the Tigers were never able to score again in a 28-14 loss to Holmes County in a Nov. 20 Florida Invitational Tournament game in Bonifay.

Holmes (6-5), the third seed in the tournament, scored on its first series when a long pass play set the Blue Devils up at the Union 7-yard line. Egan Segers scored on a 1-yard run to put the host team up 6-0. The two-point conversion failed.

Sixth seed Union (2-8) got a 14-yard touchdown run from Alec McClellon early in the second quarter, with Kanaan Waters adding the PAT for a 7-6 lead.

An interception by Zayden

Williams led to the Tigers' second score — a 15-yard touchdown pass from Cadenz Merriex to Jeremy Webb. Waters kicked the extra point as Union went up 14-6.

The Devils answered with a 64-yard touchdown pass by Segers. Zarius Goodman's run on the two-point play tied the score at 14-14.

Segers threw another touchdown pass before halftime as the Devils took the lead for good.



HCA boys get conference wins

Hope Christian's Joele Smith goes up for a basket in the varsity Lions' 50-39 conference win over Westwood on Nov. 21. The junior varsity team defeated Westwood as well by a score of 22-18. Photo, which also includes Noah Gaffney (foreground, far right) and Grant Timone (background, far left) by Amber Foley.

SOCCER

Continued from page 10

on Nov. 20. Ryder Thomas recorded assists on both goals, which were scored by Noah Jaramillo and Kipton Spence.

The Indians (3-4-1) entered the match off a 4-3 win at Middleburg on Nov. 18. Middleburg tied it up at 3-3 late in the second half before Trenton Noble scored the winning goal.

Noble finished with two goals in all, while A.J. Nilsen and Sammy Wachua each had one.

Thomas recorded three assists. Keystone hosts Branford on Monday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. and will host Nease on Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 7:20 p.m. The Indians play road matches against P.K. Yonge on Friday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m. and Trenton on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m.

The Indians return home to play Fernandina Beach on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7:20 p.m.

FOOD

Continued from page 9

The money goes a long way because Food4Kids purchases food in bulk.

"I like to give a real-life example of what that looks like," DeConna said. "My kids love Crispix cereal. I grew up eating it as a snack. Now, they love it for

breakfast or as a snack straight from the box.

"If I go to Publix and purchase Crispix cereal, it's \$7.99 a box. It's not even like it's sugary. It's not like Fruit Loops or anything. It's crispy corn and rice, right?"

"If I buy two boxes of Crispix, I'd be spending \$16 a month. If I gave that same \$16 to Food4Kids' Backpack Program, we could turn that into 10 boxes

of cereal because we purchase in bulk. We're feeding 10 families with that same amount of money as going to the store and buying two boxes of cereal."

If you'd like to help in some way or find out more information, you may visit food4kidsfl.org or the Food4KidsBackpack page on Facebook. You may also call 352-888-6645 or send email to info@food4kidsfl.org.

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