

# Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, Dec. 4, 2025

146th year, 19th Issue — \$1



## Early arrival

Shoppers gather outside Williams Jewelry on Call Street in Downtown Starke during Shop Small Saturday for a chance to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus, who arrive via horse and buggy. Photos via Starke City Clerk Chrissy Thompson.



## Lawtey man arrested on child exploitation charges

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement arrested 45-year-old Karl Davis Staton from Lawtey on multiple charges related to child exploitation, including three counts of possession of child sexual abuse material and one count of unlawful use of a two-way communication device.

FDLE said the arrest is part of its ongoing initiative to identify and apprehend individuals targeting children and distributing files that depict their sexual abuse.

The investigation into Staton began in September when FDLE agents received several cyber tips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. These tips indicated that an individual was uploading and sharing digital files of child sexual abuse via an online storage account.

Further investigation led agents to identify Staton as the account owner. A search warrant executed on the online storage account revealed video files showing the sexual abuse of children, with some victims depicted in the files being as young as 6 years old.

On Nov. 24, agents apprehended Staton at his workplace without incident. He was subsequently



Staton

taken to the Duval County Jail and later extradited to the Bradford County Jail. Authorities indicate that additional charges may be filed as the investigation continues.

The prosecution of the case is being handled by the Office of Statewide Prosecution, led by Attorney General James Uthmeier in Jacksonville.

The investigation into Staton's activities remains active.



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## WORTH NOTING

### Community yard sale Friday

There will be a big community yard sale on Friday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The location is 15043 U.S. 301, the former Jay's Mini Mart just south of Holiday Inn Express. Many people will be setting up to sell, and spaces are still available. If you would like to set up, call or text 904-612-3942. The cost is \$20 (bring your own table). Or stop by on Friday to see what everyone has to offer.

### American Legion holiday dinner

American Legion Post 56 in Starke will host its annual holiday dinner on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m. All veterans and their families are invited to attend. The Post is located at 715 Edwards Road.

### Brooker fire station groundbreaking

Bradford County Fire Rescue will host a groundbreaking event for Station 8 in Brooker on Friday, Dec. 5, from 10:30-11:30 a.m. The location is 17375 Tetstone Ave. Following that, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., there will be an open house to celebrate the completion of Station 9 in Sampson City. The address is 13641 SW C.R. 227.

### Tickets available for Melrose Christmas Homes Tour

This year marks Melrose's 11th Triennial Christmas Home Tour, scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 14. The tour promises a unique experience, featuring both beloved homes from previous tours and several homes that have never participated.

In the spirit of celebration, the event will include live entertainment throughout the afternoon. Performers will include The Under the Porch Singers, the UF Swazz Band, On the Edge Quartet and the Melrose Dulcimers, among others.

Visitors can also enjoy refreshments at the Homemakers Club, where a stunning display of model wooden boats by artisan Donald Love will be featured. Additionally, guests will have the opportunity to indulge in a unique charcuterie board.

Presale tickets are now available. Tickets can be purchased online until Dec. 10 at [historicmelroseinc.org](http://historicmelroseinc.org). They will also be available in person during the Merry Melrose Parade at the Daurer History Center on Dec. 13 from 10 to 11 a.m. On the day of the tour, tickets can be acquired at the Baldwin Store beginning at 12:30 p.m.

## A new era at Clay Electric

Andy Chaff takes over for retiring CEO Ricky Davis

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Clay Electric Cooperative's leader for the last 17 years is retiring, and another co-op lifer is taking over Florida's largest electric cooperative this month.

Ricky Davis started his career with the Keystone Heights-based utility in September 1973 as a pole inspector trainee. For the next three years, he worked his way up the utility until he decided to pursue an engineering degree at the University of Florida.

In 1984, Davis returned to the co-op and served as chief of operations support, Orange Park district manager, and director of operations before Clay's board of trustees selected him as general manager and CEO in 2009.

Davis guided the utility through Clay County's growth, beginning in the 2000s with Fleming Island and Oakleaf Plantation, and now with Lake Asbury and Green Cove Springs. He also shepherded the co-op through the federal government's policy changes on fuel for generating power, the COVID-19 Pandemic, and Hurricane Irma, which was the most severe storm the co-op's service area endured.

Taking over for Davis is Andy Chaff, a 1984 Bradford High School graduate and 34-year co-op veteran.

Chaff started his career as an engineering technician, was promoted to district engineer, and

then to district manager in Orange Park, far and away the co-op's largest district.

### Never talked about college

Davis was raised in Keystone Heights and graduated from Keystone Heights High School in 1973. Before graduation, he applied to Clay Electric along with his brother.

He said that growing up, he knew many co-op employees, which he added probably helped him get the job.

College tuition always seemed out of reach for his family, and the possibility was never discussed at home.

As a line worker, Davis learned to appreciate hard work. Sweat. Heat. The satisfaction of coming home tired, knowing that you worked hard all day.

In the 1970s, there were far fewer bucket trucks and far more pole climbing.

But the co-op also opened other possibilities. Some of his co-workers spent the day indoors, in air conditioning.

He also said that he had always aspired to be an engineer, and working with engineers Lew Chaff and Buddy Packham at the co-op strengthened that desire.

"I resigned from Clay and went to school full-time," he said of his decision to get an engineering degree. "During that period, I worked at the Community Church, cleaning buildings and maintaining the grounds."

See CO-OP, page 6



Incoming Clay Electric CEO Andy Chaff addresses the co-op's employees while retiring CEO Ricky Davis looks on. Photo: Clay Electric Cooperative.

## Union County may adopt Bradford's trash decal requirement

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County Commissioners, during a Dec. 1 town hall meeting in Lake Butler, discussed copying Bradford County's trash decal program, which requires a sticker placed in the windshield for vehicles dropping off trash at county solid waste collection sites.

Commissioners floated the idea after Eric Williams of Williams LP Gas said he noticed "a semi load" of trash piled up at one county collection site after Thanksgiving.

County Coordinator Jimmy Williams said part of the blame rested on the county not transporting trash away from collection sites for a few days due to the holiday. Still, he added that another factor is out-of-county residents using Union County trash drop-offs.

The coordinator said he had spoken with Bradford County officials about their decal requirement.

"They issue every homeowner two stickers," Williams told

commissioners. And if you don't want to put it in a window, they say keep it in your glove box or a card, whatever you want to do. But if you do not have that sticker issued by the county, then you do not dump it. You have to have proof of being a resident."

Commissioner Donna Jackson said that according to her sources, non-Union residents using the collection sites in Worthington Springs and Providence is common.

She blamed Columbia County residents for crossing Swift Creek and dumping their trash in Union County collection sites.

Jackson said that in addition to vehicle decals, she wants cameras installed at collection sites.

"That way, when that attendant says I can't let you dump because that camera right there is watching your tag and seeing that you don't have a sticker, and it's my job on the line," Jackson told her colleagues. "That attendant has an out."

Eric Williams told commissioners that before Bradford implemented its decal requirement, Clay County

residents regularly dropped off trash at the Bradford collection site at the intersection of State Road 100 and Southeast County Road 21B, near the Keystone Heights RV Park.

Jimmy Williams added that, according to Bradford officials, that site's trash volume was cut in half after the county began enforcing the decal requirement.

Commissioner Melissa McNeal said she also had been talking to Bradford officials about their program.

"I talked to one of the administrative assistants over there, and she said for about a year it was a headache," McNeal relayed. "But now that the year is up, it seems to be clicking."

Eric Williams said the county could also sell non-Union residents a decal



Bradford County began enforcing its trash decal requirement in December 2023.

to use Union's solid waste facilities.

"If some of those folks that want to cross the county line and dump it, well, heck, sell them one," he said. "Charge them \$3,000, \$5,000, whatever number you want. If they want that freedom, make them pay. I mean, that's their problem, not ours, right? Once again, it shouldn't be on my taxes."



### Christmas party for VFW members

Lake Butler VFW Post 10082 will hold its members' Christmas party on Saturday,

Dec. 6, at 6 p.m. at the VFW Post off State Road 231. This is a potluck (finger foods). Contact President Barbara Fischer at 904-263-0647 with any questions.

In addition, the VFW still has bingo every Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Post.

### 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.

### Lawtey Christmas Program

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

### SES Christmas Concert

Students from pre-K through sixth grade will perform holiday music at Starke Elementary School on Thursday, Dec. 18, from 6-7:30 p.m.

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Morning-Star Baptist Church in Worthington Springs, Florida about ¾ miles west of State Rd 121 and Union County Rd 18 junction will be presenting a **"Living Walk Through Bethlehem."** This Biblical account of the Christmas story will feature living Biblical Characters, and many live animals of that day even with live camels.

Come join the Jewish pilgrims along their way to the village of Bethlehem featuring several working market shops, and ending at the live Nativity.

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# Starke looking at reviving impact fees

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Preparing to revive impact fees for new developments inside the city limits, Starke city commissioners accepted the results of a new study on those fee amounts.

A prior commission placed a moratorium on the collection of impact fees to encourage growth, but, as Mayor Andy Redding pointed out, that doesn't seem to have helped. In fact, he said when developers expecting to pay impact fees find there are none, they may wonder what is wrong with Starke compared to its neighbors.

Most commissioners expressed support for impact fees, but not at the maximum allowed rates revealed in the study. Restrictions in state statute would prevent some of the fees rising at that rate anyway. Instead, there seemed to be consensus among supporters that raising the former fees by 25% would be adequate for now. It is likely that maximum fees would be adopted to allow the city to move toward those amounts over time.

Impact fees are paid at the time new building projects are permitted and make sure developers are contributing to the cost growth on public infrastructure. As Redding said, without impact fees the city would have to burden all taxpayers with that cost. Existing property owners would only pay an impact fee if there was a significant expansion or development on their property.

The study looked at fees for road improvements, the fire department, parks and public buildings, which were all fees formerly collected. It eliminated fees for the police department, which no longer exists. It proposes adding fees for water and wastewater infrastructure, for which new homes and businesses have previously only been charged a few hundred dollars in connection fees.

To determine the appropriate fees, the consultant firm Infrastructure Consulting and Engineering looked data like the cost of adding roadway or water capacity, vehicle miles traveled, and population. Commercial water and wastewater usage was

based on equivalent residential units (e.g. a grocery store that uses as much water and wastewater as seven residences).

Planner Chris Brimo shared the impact fee maximums, which for a new single-family residence was \$7,658 plus \$6,579 if the new water and wastewater fees were adopted, for a total of \$14,237. Based on the former maximum fees, the total was \$6,204 but only included \$215 as a water connection fee. The increased cost of materials and construction, particularly road construction, also contributes to a higher fee.

For a multifamily residential development, the total per unit would be \$12,176. The prior maximum impact fee was \$4,910 per unit. Again, that only included a water connection fee per unit.

Square footage is used to calculate the fees for new nonresidential development, so Brimo used a typical fast-food restaurant as an example. At 3,000 square feet, the total would come to \$43,755 plus \$32,895, which is the equivalent water and wastewater usage for five

## SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

ROAD IMPROVEMENT.....	\$5,994	} \$7,658
FIRE RESCUE.....	\$300	
PARKS.....	\$1,029	
PUBLIC BUILDINGS.....	\$335	} \$6,579
WATER.....	\$1,720	
WASTEWATER.....	\$4,859	
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$14,237</b>	

These are the maximum amounts revealed in Starke's updated impact fee study — not the amounts commissioners will initially propose collecting. Impact fees are fees charged to developments, requiring they help pay for the cost of growth; they are not paid by existing residents and businesses.

residences. The total is \$76,647. That is significantly more than the prior maximum fee of \$29,718, which only included a water connection fee of \$315.

For a 30,000 square-foot grocery store, the total maximum fee would come to \$279,183, up more than \$100,000 from \$171,345.

Prior the moratorium, the city only collected a percentage of the amount possible, and a majority agreed that should continue.

Accepting the report allows them to start low and raise fees up to the new maximum over time as needed.

The exact amounts to be considered haven't been determined yet. Commissioners are set to address the issue again at their Dec. 16 meeting.

In July, Bradford County commissioners abandoned the county impact fee moratorium and adopted a new set of fees. The residential fees are \$498 per

dwelling unit for fire protection, \$304 for law enforcement and \$258 for emergency medical services, for a total of \$1,060 per new dwelling unit. The nonresidential fees are \$194 per 1,000 square feet for fire protection, \$119 for law enforcement and \$101 for emergency medical services, for a total of \$414 per 1,000 square feet of new nonresidential construction.

# Bradford burn ban in effect

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
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In an emergency order Nov. 25, Bradford County joined others in

north Florida in declaring a burn ban.

Despite some rain Tuesday, commissioners retroactively approved the order at their Dec.

2 meeting and extended the ban through Dec. 10.

Bradford County Emergency Management shared information showing Bradford County in moderate drought conditions. Suwannee River Water Management District noted September set a record for low rainfall throughout the district, 0.92 inches on average, with 15 rainfall gauges measuring a half inch or less. With an average of less than 0.4 inches of rain districtwide in October, the rainfall deficit climbed to 6.35 inches for the 12-month period ending Oct. 31.

Bradford County Fire Rescue reported responding to multiple brushfires in November,



Firefighters manage a 10-acre brush fire in northwest Bradford County Nov. 23.

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<p><b>SATURDAY 12/6</b> ZOOTOPIA 2 - 4:00 &amp; 7:00 FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S 2 - 4:00 &amp; 7:00</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY 12/7</b> ZOOTOPIA 2 - 4:00 &amp; 7:00 FIVE NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S 2 - 4:00 &amp; 7:00</p>

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EXPLORING THE GOODNESS OF GOD

**W**e began a new series last week and today we will begin again with Psalm 107:1, "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." We pointed out that one of the main reasons for giving our God thanks is His goodness and mercy towards us. We will continue today by focusing on what the Bible says about His goodness. You see, there is no bad in God. There is nothing imperfect in Him. Psalm 18:30 declares, "As for God, His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is proven, He is a shield to all who trust in Him." People make a horrible and unscriptural mistake when they question His integrity, His faithfulness, and the mercy and grace that He has shown and continues to show the entire human race. When someone makes a statement like "Well, if God was so loving and good why are there starving children in the world?" or "Well, if God is so good then why does He send hurricanes and tornadoes that kill people and destroy homes and businesses?" I think Jesus answered that question very well when He corrected the Sadducees in Matthew 22:29, when he said, "You are mistaken, not knowing the scripture, nor the power of God." A perfect answer to questions like those we just mentioned. Jesus' statement revealed that they misunderstood the teachings of God's Word and they failed to recognize God's omnipotence as well as His omniscience. Many people, even Christians struggle with a God that knows everything and is perfect in all of His ways. From creation to His great plan of redemption which He sent Jesus to consummate, He is perfect and He is good. Think for just a moment about St. John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Notice here in this verse that the Holy Spirit through John tells us that God is not the condemner but God is the Lover, the Savior. God is a good God. There is no evil in Him, He cannot do wrong or be wrong. Notice what the scripture says in James 1:13-14, "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away, by his own desires and enticed."

**G**od has no evil in His nature, He does not tempt anyone to do wrong because it is not His nature. According to the Bible, His nature is love. A perfect love, the love that only He can give. The Bible says in 1 John 4:8, "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." Our hearts should be filled with thanksgiving and gratitude for His goodness and love. God is a lover and a giver. He is a God of blessing and not cursing. If one is diligent to search the scriptures, you will find God looks for opportunities to do good and to show mercy. He gives mankind opportunity after opportunity to avert judgment. Even in the Old Testament we see His longsuffering towards His Covenant people. God never forced His people to do anything but let them make their own decisions even when they chose to rebel. We read in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live..." The Lord wants His people to be blessed and live an abundant life. He is such a good God. We will continue to search the scriptures next week concerning the riches of His goodness. Until next week, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. Blessings! -Pastor Rick

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# Landowner threatens ugly house revenge

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD  
mark@bctelegraph.com

Bradford County's decision to reject a rezoning request could backfire if the landowner chooses to retaliate.

After hearing concerns from neighbors about drainage, flooding and property values, commissioners voted 3-2 to turn down Brightburn Properties' request for the rural residential zoning category, which would have allowed for mobile homes on nearly 12 acres on Southwest County Road 100A (Edwards Road west of Starke).

Carey Zoltowski said if commissioners wouldn't allow the installation of mobile homes, then he would opt for modular homes — which are allowed under the current residential, single-family category — the cheapest and ugliest modular homes he can find.

Resident Eric Nogel said the rezoning request was an attempt to make good a bad investment in low, flood prone property.

"It's not our fault as homeowners not to want rental properties to go in next door to us," he said, appealing to the board to protect the families who've lived there for years. He didn't want mobile home renters as neighbors. "Generally, it's not the type of people you want in your neighborhood," he said. "It wouldn't happen at the country club."

Mark Mooneyhan said the area was once slated for an equestrian community, which would be a boon for the tax base. But that would never happen if the county allowed a trailer park to develop there.

The acreage up for rezoning wraps around Vincent Casale's home, placing him in the middle of what ever Zoltowski had planned. He talked about the flooding that already takes place, made worse by the clearing of the land around him.

"I'm already under water. If they develop it any more, I'm going to be completely under water," he said.

Real estate agent Justis Smith, representing Brightburn Properties, countered some of the comments that had been made, saying no one has mentioned rental properties and denying dirt will have to be hauled in before construction. The property is ready to be developed as is with single-family homes. The question is whether mobile homes will be allowed and the fairness of the exception made across the street when it was for a landowners' family.

"We haven't brought in reasons. That really shouldn't be up to take on who's family, who's not. Whether they're our buddies or not. That's not what the board's here to decide," Smith said. "It's what's fair and impartial for what this gentleman is trying to accomplish. Whether

we put in a home, whether we put in a mobile home, it's not to be rented, it's to be sold, and hopefully for someone's residence. But what's good for those should be good for these. It should be fair across the board. That's all I needed to clear up."

Even though she would like to ban mobile homes entirely, Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Spooner said the applicant met all the requirements for the rezoning and there was no basis to deny him, and Commissioner Kenny Thompson joined her on that side of the vote.

Commissioner Diane Andrews wanted to postpone a decision and allow both sides to communicate and discuss solutions, perhaps even the sale of the property. She voted with the majority, however, to deny the zoning change. Commissioner Chris Dougherty saw the potential for development as Mooneyhan had discussed could bring in additional revenue to support county services, and he, too, voted against it.

Commissioner Danny Riddick said the board could not place restrictions on the rezoning requiring brand new mobile homes instead of used homes. It was his motion to deny the application based on the potential negative impact to property values. He said if Zoltowski voluntarily opted for modular homes under his current zoning



County commissioners denied a zoning change that would have allowed for mobile homes, and the property owner threatened retaliation.

category instead of pursuing mobile homes, he would support returning the landowner's rezoning application fees.

But that may have backfired when Zoltowski realized the majority would vote against him,

he took the microphone.

"It will leave me no choice, but I will buy modulars and put them in there, which is a glorified trailer," he said. "And they will be the cheapest looking ones I can purchase."

Someone insulted Zoltowski as he left the microphone, and the commission voted to reject his application.

# Letters

## Thanks on behalf of the children

Dear Editor:

Operation Christmas Child National Collection Week 2025 has ended. Another incredible year of shoebox collection occurred at the Trinity Baptist drop-off location in Keystone Heights.

Our Lake Area Region often goes above and beyond. I clearly witnessed this through Operation Christmas Child, an evangelistic ministry of Samaritan's Purse. I am the team leader for the Keystone Heights Central Drop-off Location. The 2025 global goal is 12.6 million shoeboxes filled with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys. Shoebox gifts have been delivered to over 170 countries since 1993. The awesome number of 6431 shoeboxes poured in locally to bless poor children all around the world! Four other drop-off locations for the Santa Fe Region Area also transported their cartons of shoeboxes to us. The grand total amounted to 16,734 shoeboxes! After inspection at the Atlanta Processing Center, these gift boxes will be delivered overseas. An army of volunteers is required to pack, collect, inspect, and deliver shoeboxes to the delighted children, many of whom have never received any gift before.

I am thankful for each hand involved locally in this worldwide ministry. I am always thrilled to see the donors come in with exciting testimonies. Our community unequivocally rises to the occasion. Stores and restaurants advertised with colorful posters. Red and green decorative OCC shoeboxes were

offered at Clyde's Cozy Corner Café and Johnny's Bar-B-Q. Johnny's famous sign shared the location and dates for the collection of the gift boxes.

McDonald's once again donated Happy Meal toys as fillers. Ladies crocheted hats and purses. Handmade embroidered dresses found their way into some shoeboxes. Hundreds of handmade wooden cars added fun to the gift boxes. The Lake Region Monitor published photos and articles. Fifty-one volunteers served to collect, count and cartonize the shoeboxes at the drop-off over eight days. Strong men loaded 407 cartons onto three semi-trailers. Deserving recognition are the 30 churches and Christian ministries, three civic groups, and nine individuals and families who joyfully packed the shoeboxes. They came from 13 locations: Gainesville, Hampton, Hawthorne, Jacksonville, Keystone Heights, LaCrosse, Lawtey, Melrose, Middleburg, Palatka, Penney Farms, Raiford, Starke, St. Augustine and Waldo.

Moments of reflection with prayer were offered as each individual or group came in with their gift boxes. It did not matter if it was one box or 100 boxes; we prayed over each and every one because each gift box represents one child who will receive it and also hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

Sacrificial donors, you did another marvelous job! You are helping to change the lives of 6,431 boys and girls, ages 2-14. Our global world has allowed us to touch the lives of many children in desperate need of hope. Many emails were received this year from recipients of shoeboxes living in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo,

Kenya, Niger, and Zanzibar. A Sunday school teacher in Cote d'Ivoire shared, "Your thoughtful gifts brought immense joy to the children, and the message of the Gospel that accompanied them touched many hearts." Chris in Cote d'Ivoire shared, "I am very happy happy happy and so grateful."

We are representing Jesus when we give these amazing gifts. Pray for the children who will receive our shoeboxes packed in 2025. Imagine the looks of delight as the children open these treasure boxes! Whenever the shoeboxes arrive, it is Christmas! We celebrate each beautiful shoebox packed in this region with a heart of love. A sincere thank you from my heart to each donor. Merry Christmas!

So very grateful,  
Diane Michel  
Team Leader  
Keystone Heights Central  
Drop-off Location  
Operation Christmas Child

# Chinese-made drones used for training at Camp Blanding

According to multiple sources, including Action News Jax, WFTV and Fox News, Florida officials have decided to turn over 500 Chinese-made drones that were recently confiscated into military training tools.

These drones, which were banned due to safety concerns, will be used by U.S. Special Operations Command for target practice at Camp Blanding from Dec. 4-6. This event is expected to be the largest counter-drone training exercise in the United States.

The training, called the "Military Drone Crucible," will include Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, and Marines. They will practice defending against enemy drones using various methods, including shooting down the confiscated drones with shotguns. This exercise aims

to prepare troops for real-life situations where they might face enemy drones during missions.

Florida had previously banned these drones over fears that the technology could send sensitive data back to China. Instead of destroying the drones, the military thought it would be better to use them to train its forces. This decision highlights the importance of being ready to counter drone threats, which are becoming more common in

modern warfare.

The Military Drone Crucible aims to help troops learn how to use different strategies for drone defense, such as using jamming devices and kinetic options like shotguns. Another training event earlier this year saw military forces successfully down 49 drones using advanced technology.

## Lawtey Christmas Parade

Lawtey's Christmas Parade will take place Saturday, Dec. 20, beginning at 10 a.m. Come enjoy the lineup of classic cars, church and community floats, horses, Santa and more. The parade travels from Lawtey Elementary School, east down Lake Street (C.R. 225) and turns around at Walk by Faith Ministries.

Following the parade, there will be a gathering at the home of Ben and Emma Strong with free food and drinks while they last. For more information, contact Ben Strong at 904-782-3130 or Cynthia Ross at 904-782-3107.

## Starke Christmas Parade

Starke's annual Chrstmast Parade will take place on the Saturday, Dec. 13, beginning at 6 p.m.

The parade will 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.

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.

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# Lake Region

## KH hosts Christmas tree lighting

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The 3rd Annual Keystone Heights Christmas Tree Lighting was a lively celebration and a display of community spirit, with close to 300 attendees gathered to enjoy festive Christmas music, while children crafted colorful ornaments. Many warmed up with steaming mugs of rich hot cocoa, funnel cakes from Lake Area Regions Kiwanis. Santa's presence added a touch of magic, making it a memorable evening that beautifully captured the essence of the holiday season.

The event occurred on Saturday, November 29th, at the Nature Park in Downtown Keystone Heights.

Everyone was encouraged to

vote for their favorite tree using a ballot or a QR code.

There are 12 trees to choose from, and voting for the Parade of Trees will continue until the end of the month. The winners will be announced on January 5th at the Council meeting and on Facebook.

"The celebration was made possible thanks to the support of the Clay County Public Library, Lake Area Region Kiwanis Club, and the Watering Hole for the Parade of Trees. I hope everyone have a wonderful time and enjoy the magic of the parade of trees," said Nina Rodenroth, Mayor of the City of Keystone Heights.

The Parade of Trees will be on display until the end of December. Everyone is encouraged to visit and vote.



Rosie and Nathan Collins, Midian and Mayberry.



Nina Rodenroth, city of Keystone Heights mayor



People visiting parade of trees.



Chris and Kerry Gebhardt



Amelia, Olivia, Isabella, Coiana and Elijah Joy



Heather Thompson and Heather Olschewske of the Clay County Library.



Carl, Mariellyn and Lainey Mittendorff



Wendy, Drew, Jill and Elston

## CO-OP

Continued from page 1

### Impossible to please everyone

However, even after he earned his engineering degree and returned to the co-op in management, he never lost his appreciation for outdoor labor and the people who do it.

Chaff said Davis's broad background within the co-op helped him to understand and mediate differences between the utility's departments.

"He brought a lot of employees together," Chaff said. "A lot of departments used to be at odds with each other. With him having a diverse background between departments, I think that really kind of helped him understand

to see the other side of some of these problems."

Davis said that one of the realizations he had to struggle with is that, as a manager, and especially as an executive, it was impossible to please everyone.

"But I also learned that if you are honest and you're consistent, that people will always respect you, even if they don't agree with you," he said.

### Technology, Round Up, Renovations

Davis guided the co-op through unprecedented technological upgrades.

In 2012, the co-op installed GPS mapping technology.

"We had some challenges with the transition with the mapping system to a second version, and things weren't going very well," recalled retiree Frank Holmes. "But I think throughout that

process, and we did have a lot of meetings, a lot of discussions. I think he showed a lot of patience and trust that in the end we would get through that."

In 2019, Davis green-lighted advanced metering infrastructure, a technology that allowed the co-op to remotely monitor members' power usage and remotely terminate service when necessary.

"We talked about AMI for years before Ricky aptly pulled the trigger to go with the AMI process," Chaff said. "There was a lot of hesitation. There were a lot of things out there that we were worried about, and as I said then, it did exactly what it was supposed to do, and that was a real relief for Ricky, and it was a relief for us as far as the district as well."

Davis also pushed through the co-op's Operation Round Up, a feature that allows members to round up their bills to the next whole dollar, which funds contributions to community groups. So far, the initiative has donated over \$8 million to nonprofits in Clay's service area.

Kathy Barrow, who now serves as the co-op foundation's vice president, said the idea had been proposed several times but faced opposition from some managers.

"They weren't in favor of it," she recalled, "so it was good when it was finally instituted here."

In 2020, Davis oversaw the most extensive renovation project in co-op history, which included new headquarters, district offices, a data center, a call center, and a print shop.

Davis's co-workers say that throughout his time at the co-op, he never forgot those first four years, climbing poles in the summer heat. As a result, they said, he is approachable, humble, and compassionate.

Chaff summarized Davis's impact on the co-op in a retirement video when he said, "You have a good guy making good decisions, and you get in a good place. So, I think that's how we'll remember Ricky. He has led Clay Electric into a really good place, and hopefully I can continue down that same path."

### Dad's friends kept an eye on him

Chaff's roots with Clay Electric reach back to his father, Lew Chaff.

Lew was an underground utilities supervisor and was responsible for Clay Electric's role in building the Orange Park Mall in the mid-1970s.

Chaff said he remembers his father talking about the project at the dinner table. The electric utilities at the mall were all underground, and the co-op had never before taken on a job that big and that unique.

When Chaff was in the fifth grade at Starke's Southside Elementary School, a messenger from the front office told him to report up front. He was being sent home.

"I remember that day like it was yesterday," he said. "I didn't really understand why I was leaving. But I could tell just walking on my way to the office, I could see people kind of looking at me in a way that made me think, I've got a problem. I thought maybe my granddad had died."

His mother, Bobbie Faye, picked up the 10-year-old, got him in her car, and broke the news. Lew was dead, killed in a hunting accident earlier that morning.

"I saw him that morning and talked to him before he went to work," Chaff remembered. "He was standing there shaving. He said, 'I'm going to go turkey hunting, and I'm going to work after I get through turkey hunting.' I said, 'Okay,' or something. I don't remember the whole conversation."

Chaff said the loss of his father at age 10 was overwhelming, but so was the support the family received from Lew's co-workers.

Chaff added that what he didn't know as a 10-year-old, but later realized, is that long after the funeral, Lew's pals at the co-op were keeping an eye on him: Jim Beeler, Buddy Packham, Bill Phillips, Sonny Douglass, Ricky Davis.

Chaff earned a bachelor's in industrial engineering at the University of North Florida in 1991 and landed a job with JEA soon after.

However, a few days before he was to report to the Jacksonville-based utility, one of Lew's

buddies at the co-op, Jim Beeler, called.

There was an opening for an engineering tech in the Orange Park district. Was he interested?

The role was that of a field engineer who plans connections for new homes.

### Holding your own with developers

Chaff's entire career has been in the Orange Park district, from which he was in on the co-op's most significant projects: Fleming Island, Oakleaf Plantation, Lake Asbury, and now Governor's Park, Agricola, and



Clay Electric's Orange Park District leadership team in 1999. District Manager Ricky Davis (seated). (L-R) Andy Chaff, Wilbur Padgett, Len Cerato and Kerry Paige. Photo: Clay Electric Cooperative.

Saratoga Springs surrounding Green Cove Springs.

After serving as Orange Park's District engineer for a dozen years, he was promoted to district manager, the same post Davis held. There he remained for 15 years until now.

He said one of his biggest challenges has been representing and defending the co-op's interests against high-powered, assertive developers.

"When you're young, you don't have the confidence that you have after performing different jobs for many years," he said. "I'd say the most difficult thing, especially working in this environment, working with developers and people here in Orange Park...is being able to hold your own, talk to these people in a professional way, and get Clay's point across. At first, you're a little intimidated, and you have to grow into it."

Chaff said that, as he has been shadowing Davis over the past few months, the biggest eye-opener has been the boss's role on the boards of Seminole Electric and the Florida Electrical Cooperatives Association.

"I was not familiar at all with the people that he dealt with or what our responsibilities were with those boards," he said. "So, for the past five months, I've been going to the board meetings with Ricky, seeing how the boards operate, seeing what our role is with these different boards, and that's been the biggest learning challenge for me."

Chaff's wife, Wendy, is a retired Clay County school teacher, and his two daughters, ShiAnn and Cassidy, now teach in Clay County. ShiAnn has two children.

Son Hunter is a real estate investor who recently got married.

Chaff said his top priority will be keeping rates affordable for the co-op's members.

"Fuel costs drive that, and we are heavily dependent on natural gas right now," he said. "The war in Ukraine, these types of things, drive up the price of natural gas, and we have zero control over it. I mean, there's no other way to put it."

"Coal was pretty reliable and pretty stable, and produced in the United States," he continued. "But the government has, over the years, pushed us off coal."

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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](http://www.FloridaPACE.gov). All affected property owners have the right to be heard on the matter via advance written objection or by appearing in person at the public hearing. Advance written communication will be given equal weight to comments or objections made in person, and may be submitted to the Board via email to [Info@FloridaPACE.gov](mailto:Info@FloridaPACE.gov), and should be received by the Agency on or before December 8, 2025, at 9am so that copies can be distributed to Board members for advance review and hearing preparation purposes. Any person desiring to speak in person may appear at the public hearing. If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at this public hearing, such person will need a record of proceedings and for such purpose such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made at their own expense and which record includes the testimony and evidence on which the appeal is based. Any person requiring special accommodation at this meeting due to disability or physical impairment or needing an interpreter to participate in this proceeding should contact the Agency at 850-400-PACE at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. If hearing impaired, Florida Relay Service numbers for assistance are (800) 955-8771 (tdd) or (800) 955-8770 (voice).

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

# UNION COUNTY

## School district thanks W.W. Gay

During the November 18 school board meeting, Union County School District officials recognized W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor, Inc. for its support of the students of Union County.

Superintendent Mike Ripplinger presented W.W. Gay's Trey Carr a plaque of

appreciation and expressed his gratitude to the Jacksonville-based firm for its support of Union County students.

"That support stretches from purchasing market animals at the Union County Livestock Association Fair to providing copy paper to Lake Butler Elementary School," he said.

"Additionally, they are always there to provide service to equipment and mechanical systems when issues arise. The Union County School District is thankful for the support of W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor, Inc. and the dedication it regularly displays toward the students of Union County."



Union County Schools Superintendent Mike Ripplinger (right) and Trey Carr of W.W. Gay Mechanical Contractor Inc.

## Lake Butler taps the brakes on dangerous building ordinance

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Lake Butler city commissioners tabled a proposed dangerous building ordinance on November 18 after concerns were raised about its language and enforcement approach.

Code Enforcement Officer Rick Ward presented updates on his recent work, including progress on revising city ordinances and implementing a new online violation tracking system.

Ward said he's been working on the dangerous building ordinance, which includes standards for a board and seal process that would secure unsafe structures for 12 months. Property owners would have that time to obtain building permits and start restoration or demolish the property.

Ward also presented samples of the new notice of violation forms, which include the city seal and detail the ordinance violation, corrective actions needed, photographs and an affidavit of posting.

The commission approved three ordinances on second reading: code enforcement procedures, junk vehicles, and lawn overgrowth.

But when the discussion turned to the dangerous building ordinance, Mayor Melissa Hendrix raised concerns about the specific language.

"The unfit for human occupancy as far as whether they have rats, roaches and whatnot," Hendrix said. "We won't know that if we can't get into their house."

Ward clarified the ordinance addresses unoccupied structures, not occupied homes.

"We're not talking about an occupied structure per se," the code enforcement officer said. "We're talking about a structure that's unoccupied."

He explained that code enforcement can enter property if a building is in a dangerous state

of disrepair, similar to entering property to help an injured person or extinguish a fire.

Hendrix questioned whether the ordinance's technical requirements—such as nails being a minimum number 10 wooden screw placed 12 inches on center—were too stringent for Lake Butler.

"I mean, this is little old Lake Butler," she said. "This isn't Gainesville."

Ward said the standards come from the Florida Building Code to ensure structures are properly secured against hurricanes and storms.

"We don't want somebody hanging a piece of plywood up on an overrate broken or missing window," Ward said. "We don't want three nails holding a sheet of plywood up there."

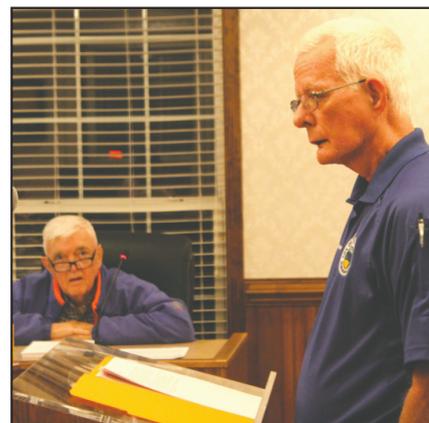
Commissioner Annette Redman expressed concern about older buildings where people still live.

"There are a lot of old buildings with people still living in them," Redman said. "They've gone through a lot of hurricanes, and I mean, I can name about five or six, but people are still living in them."

Ward said the city has structures with loose tin roofing that pose safety hazards.

"All that is just a missile waiting to go into somebody else's house and property and cause damage," he said.

Redman suggested a more sensitive approach given Lake



City of Lake Butler Code Enforcement Officer Rick Ward addresses the city commission during its Nov. 18 meeting.

Butler's economic challenges.

"I think we just want to be a little sensitive to some of these situations when it comes to their homes because, like I said, we're one of the poorest counties," she said. "Maybe if we get some teams together, maybe some churches, the folks to do some repairs on some of these before we hit some of these folks with some of this."

City Manager Kim Hayes clarified that the ordinance targets abandoned structures, not occupied homes.

"He's looking at buildings that are left basically abandoned, that are structures that no one's living in that could be open for homeless people to live in or kids to get into as they are walking by," Hayes said.

Commissioners unanimously voted to table the ordinance.

Hendrix asked Ward to work with Hayes to revise the language in the ordinance before bringing it back to the commission.

## Mayor's Ball marks KH's 100th year

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The night was to be remembered, as everyone was stunning in their best outfits for Friends of Keystone's 2nd Annual Centennial Mayor's Ball. The event took place at the Keystone Heights RV Resort on Saturday, November 15th.

Dave Rodenroth opened the evening, followed by a heartfelt speech from Nina Rodenroth, the Mayor of Keystone Heights. Guest speakers included Betsy Condon, District 4 Clay County Commissioner, and Ginger Lee.

During the Mayor's speech, Rodenroth invited a special second grader, Violet Arrants, to the stage. Violet shared a heartfelt letter she had written to the mayor, and which the mayor shared with the audience.

"Thank you all to Keystone Heights, I'm certainly very proud of all the great things that we have going on. I truly appreciate each of you, as these are volunteer roles that support our citizens. Thank each one of you for what you do every day, and thank you for coming out tonight. It is an honor to serve as your mayor," said Mayor Rodenroth.

"We just want to thank you all for making it a priority to support our mayor, to support the Friends of Keystone Heights, to come out and celebrate, and it's my pleasure to serve you as your County Commissioner," said Condon.

The event featured a diverse selection of six different pasta dishes, along with tiramisu, cheesecake, and cannoli. Attendees enjoyed plenty of dancing, a silent auction, and a photo booth.

All proceeds from the silent auction were donated to the Friends of Keystone to support their ongoing efforts in organizing community events.

"You all have done an amazing job, and you have worked really, really hard. We wouldn't be where we are at this point in the year without all your hard work. Thank you all for coming again and supporting us," said Ginger Lee.

The Friends of Keystone Heights awarded their first \$2,000 scholarship this year. They are always looking for volunteers to assist with their efforts.



Violet Arrants, Nina and Dave Rodenroth



Deirdre Murphy, Noni Harris, Katie Payne, Ginger Lee, Dave Rodenroth, Mary Lou Hall, Shannon Wheat, Kim Willis, Debbie Bealls



Kat, Kim, Helene, Jenn, Deirdre



Besty Condon

## A Place of Grace INC.

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

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# 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

Danielle Nicole Burch, 47, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 27 for a probation violation and resisting an officer.

Jamar Alvon Carter, 33, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 24 for withholding support.

Travis Tyrone Desue, 36, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 24 for possession of drug equipment and cocaine possession.

Donald Levi Evans, 71, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 24 for battery.

Clayton Maurice Glosion, 48, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 23 for an out-of-county warrant.

### Women on video seen slapping, biting, pulling hair

Susan Diane Green, 61, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 28 for battery.

According to the arrest report, a fight broke out when another woman in the home returned and began arguing with Green. The situation quickly escalated: both women admitted to throwing objects at each other, pulling hair, slapping, and biting.

Cell phone video provided to deputies showed items being thrown in both directions, one woman slapping the other, and a prolonged struggle in which hair was pulled, and one woman bit the other's arm. A man who tried to intervene also received a scratch on his wrist.

Green told deputies she bit the other woman because she "couldn't breathe and was fighting for her life." The other woman had visible scratches, a bite mark near her elbow, and redness on her arms, shoulder, chest, neck, and face. Green had redness behind her ear, on her mouth, and a scratch on her hand.

Both declined medical treatment.

Deputies noted that Green has a prior battery conviction from 2021, elevating the new charge to a felony.

### Man trespassed from neighbor's land, retaliates by cutting fence

Daniel Austin Lilly, 30, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 26 for criminal mischief.

According to the arrest report, the incident began when a neighbor called deputies because Lilly had pulled his vehicle into the neighbor's driveway, then sped away.

Deputy Paul King responded, located Lilly, and issued him a formal trespass warning prohibiting him from returning to the property.

Shortly after the deputy left, neighbors told investigators they watched Lilly walk to the back property line carrying a tool, heard the sound of wire being cut, and saw him return a few minutes later to cut the fence several more times.

In all, 13 separate cuts were made to the barbed-wire fence, causing an estimated \$120 in damage.

The victim provided deputies with cellphone video that clearly showed Lilly cutting the fence. Both eyewitnesses gave sworn written statements.

### Choked mother, threatened to burn down house

Jason Joseph Olive, 51, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 23 for battery, simple assault, and obstructing justice.

According to the arrest report, the incident began when Olive argued with his mother, over "random people" being on the property. Witnesses told deputies the argument quickly turned physical.

The mother said her son charged at her and wrapped his hands around her throat, choking her until she couldn't breathe. She admitted putting her hands around his throat in self-defense.

A stepdaughter said she saw Olive strangling her grandmother and tried to call 911. Olive allegedly struck her in the chest, took her phone, and continued the attack.

The defendant's wife told deputies the mother struck Olive first but confirmed he then choked his mother and became violent toward her and the stepdaughter when they tried to call for help.

Both mother and stepdaughter had visible redness on their necks and chests consistent with being choked and struck. Olive also allegedly threatened to return and burn the house down.

After the stepdaughter escaped and called 911, Olive fled on foot into the woods wearing a red shirt and black shorts. When deputies returned after he came back to the property, they tracked him into the tree line and found him hiding under a tree holding a lighter.

Olive admitted to deputies that he put his hands around his mother's throat after she "got in

his face and hit him."

Zachary Wayne Perkins, 21, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 27 for a probation violation.

Jeremiah Pridgen-Rosier, 34, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 24 for hit and run and a moving traffic violation.

### Man claims video exonerates him, deputies disagree

Tracy Dean Pruitt, 60, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 26 for aggravated battery.

According to an arrest report, violence erupted around 9 p.m. on November 25 at a home shared or frequented by both the victim and defendant. Witnesses told deputies that Pruitt and the victim, a 58-year-old male, were arguing when Pruitt began taunting the victim and hurling racial slurs.

Cellphone video recorded by Pruitt himself captured the escalating confrontation. In the footage, the two men are seen inches from each other's faces. Moments later, the sound of a glass bowl shattering is clearly heard. Deputies later located blood-stained glass shards near the stairs.

The victim was found inside the home with significant facial injuries and a trail of blood leading from the steps to the bathroom. He initially claimed he had simply fallen, but one witness told deputies Pruitt struck the victim with the bowl, causing him to fall down the stairs. Another neighbor reported hearing the commotion and glass breaking.

When questioned, Pruitt denied hitting the 58-year-old and insisted the video would prove his innocence. Instead, investigators say the recording, along with the physical evidence and witness statements, directly contradicted his claim.

Karl Davis Staton, 45, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 25 for possession of obscene material and public order crimes.

Robert Earl Terrell, 56, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on November 26 for a moving traffic violation.

### Union

Jessica Marie Scott, 29, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on November 28 for battery.

Sunday Valeria Hunter, 27, of Gainesville, was arrested by Union deputies on November 30 for a probation violation.

### Clay

Richard Soren Vey, 58, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on November 24 for resisting an officer.

advocates and staff delivered lifesaving services at unprecedented levels this year," the organization said in a news release. "The increase in demand aligns with national data from the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the National Network to End Domestic Violence, which report sustained spikes in calls and unmet requests for shelter as survivors face financial strain and housing challenges."

The nonprofit said that economic pressures, housing instability, and greater awareness of available resources are driving more survivors to seek help.

"The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports nationwide hotlines receive about 20,000 calls a day," it said, "and the National Network to End Domestic Violence reports that 60% of unmet requests for help are for

emergency shelter."

Quigley House said the community can reduce domestic violence by knowing the warning signs, such as controlling behavior, isolation from friends and family, financial control, threats, intimidation, and physical harm. Emotional abuse often appears as constant criticism or humiliation.

People who suspect abuse should call 911 if someone is in danger. For confidential support, contact Quigley House at 904-284-0061 or the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

The shelter also said individuals can help support survivors of domestic violence through the holidays by donating to Quigley House on its website.

## Starke's First Baptist provides 125 meals

BY JENN SAMSEL  
jenn@bctelegraph.com

On Monday, November 24th, 125 residents from Bradford came to Starke's First Baptist Church to receive turkeys and food baskets containing meals for up to 10 people per family. Distribution of turkeys and food baskets was on a first-come, first-served basis.

Walmart provided turkeys and food baskets and included Thanksgiving recipes from the community members.

"It's just something that we just felt like the Lord wanted us to do to help out our community, and we want to thank our local Walmart for working with us

and making sure that we had all the items needed for these baskets, along with all the volunteers who assisted us with making the baskets," said Patrick Melissa Gillenwaters-Reddish, Community Church Member.

The church initially pledged to secure 50 food baskets, but the members asked to contribute a special offering for an additional 50 baskets. In total, they were able to secure 125 baskets more than initially intended.

"Honestly, as a pastor, I'm thrilled to pieces when church members come to me with an idea, with a way to take the gospel to the community, and this is just one of those ways I love it. I want to show the love of God to

the community practically, and this is just one way. Hopefully, this is just the first of many ways that we're gonna be able to do that going forward," said Patrick Martin, Interim Pastor, First Baptist Church

Some residents traveled long distances to pick up turkey and food baskets.

Several residents expressed their gratitude and joy for having a great Thanksgiving.

"I read the turkey drive in the newspaper, and I came to get the turkey for my Thanksgiving dinner. I have a large family," said Paulette Strong, resident of Bradford.



Food Line Turkey Drive



The church initially pledged to secure 50 food baskets, but the members asked to contribute a special offering for an additional 50 baskets. In total, they were able to secure 125 baskets more than initially intended.

## Starke Woman's Club hosts fall market



The Starke Woman's Club hosted its third annual fall market at the organization's Walnut Street historic clubhouse on November 21 and 22. Club President Charnelle Whittemore said the fundraiser featured a rummage sale, local vendors, a silent auction, and refreshments sold by Hometown Grounds Coffee and Soda Crush Club. Pictured (l-r) are Whittemore and Cleo Elder.



Lorie Riley offers a "Mountain Dew Majic" drink from her Soda Crush Club food truck during the Starke Woman's Club Fall Market. Riley, the North Florida Regional Chamber of Commerce's Business Person of the Year, operates Soda Crush Club in front of one of her other enterprises, Nicky's Beauty Bar, during the week.

## Church burns \$6.5 million mortgage note

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Madison Street Baptist Church held a note-burning ceremony at the conclusion of its November 23 service, marking the settlement of the debt it incurred in 2005 during construction of its Family Life Center.

Associate Pastor of Music and Administration Charles Warren, who has served the congregation since 1997, lit the document after summarizing its contents and restating the church's thankfulness to God for the milestone.

Senior Pastor Richard Cason said he had participated in several similar note-burnings in the past while holding a bucket for the occasion.



Madison Street Baptist Church Associate Pastor of Music and Administration Charles Warren drops the congregation's \$6.5 million mortgage note into a bucket held by Senior Pastor Richard Cason, at the end of the church's Nov. 23 service.

## Thanksgiving crowds flock to theater

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Two popular movies created overflowing crowds at Starke's Florida Twin Theater during Thanksgiving week.

Disney's "Zootopia 2" broke worldwide box office records with a \$559.5 million launch. It was the biggest worldwide start of all time for an animated film and the fourth best of any Hollywood movie, according to the Hollywood Reporter.

The other picture featured at the

Call and Walnut Street cinema, "Wicked: for Good," notched a five-day U.S. and Canadian box office of \$297 million.

Like many others in Starke, the Leon family arrived early on Saturday to buy four tickets for the Disney feature. Doug Leon said he had seen the original "Zootopia" and was returning for the sequel.

Another family of six from Green Cove Springs arrived just after 4 p.m. on Saturday, hoping



(L-R) Doug, Abbie, Noah and Gimmick Leon snag tickets for a Florida Twin Theater feature nearly three hours before showtime.

to get in for "Zootopia 2," but was told the movie was sold out. They said they bought tickets for the seven o'clock show and headed to Walmart to kill some time.

## Domestic violence referrals up 20% in Clay

BY DAN HILDEBRAN  
dan@bctelegraph.com

Clay County's only dual-certified domestic violence and sexual abuse shelter said survivors of domestic violence spent nearly 9,500 nights in its facility this year. Quigley House Interim CEO Jackie Krug said its staff answered over 4,200 phone calls in 2025, marking a 20% increase over last year.

"As Clay County continues to expand, Quigley House's frontline



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# KHHS girls 2-0 after 41-25 win over UCHS

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Daisy Hubbard and Kadence Massey combined for 11 second-half points as the Keystone Heights High School girls basketball team outscored host Union County 19-9 for a 41-25 win that improved the Indians to 2-0.

Consecutive baskets by Iamorieah Williams gave the Tigers (0-2) an early 6-4 lead, but the Indians tied the score when Hubbard converted a layup off a Massey assist. Grace Keaton then scored off a steal to put Keystone up by two.

Williams' third basket of the first quarter tied the score at 8-8, but Keystone went into the second quarter ahead 9-8 off a Hubbard free throw.

Back-to-back three-pointers by Union's Latoya Hampton put the Tigers up 14-11. Keystone then scored six of the next seven points — all coming off layups by Rigby Morford off Keaton and Massey assists and a Massey inbounds pass.

It was a big quarter for Morford, who had 10 points, helping the Indians go into the half leading 22-16.

Massey and Raven Bastin each had a basket to put Keystone



Keystone's Rigby Morford (right) goes in for a layup against Union's Alayah Jefferson. Union's Latoya Hampton and Keystone's Kadence Massey (background, l-r) are also pictured.

up 26-16 in the third quarter. After a free throw by the Tigers' Hampton, the Indians got a rebound putback from Hubbard.

Hubbard and Massey combined to make three free throws before Arianna Denmark scored off a rebound to send Keystone into the fourth quarter leading 33-18.

Bastin, Hubbard, Massey and Morford each had a basket in the fourth quarter.

Morford led all scorers with 14 points, while Hubbard and Massey had eight and six, respectively. Keystone also got four points each from Bastin and Keaton, two points each from Denmark and Alexandra Papaioannou and one point from Maria Papaioannou.

Hampton, who had a three-pointer in the fourth quarter, led the Tigers with 10 points. Williams added nine points, while Brooke Hunt and Brianna Taylor had five and one, respectively.

Keystone played Duval Charter this past Tuesday and will travel to play Baldwin on Friday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m.

Union travels to play Hawthorne on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m. The Tigers then return home for games against West Nassau on Monday, Dec. 8, and Hawthorne on Tuesday, Dec. 9. Both games tip off at 6 p.m.



Keystone's Daisy Hubbard (center) drives into the lane between Union's Iamorieah Williams (far left) and Aundria Phipps.

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# KHHS soccer teams get wins after break

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Four Keystone Heights High School soccer teams returned from the Thanksgiving break with wins, including the varsity boys and girls teams defeating visiting Branford 4-1 and 8-0, respectively, on Dec. 1.

Nathan Benson, Luke Buchanan, Trenton Noble and Sammy Wachu each scored a goal in the varsity boys match, with Wachu's coming on a penalty kick. Noble and Ryder Thomas each had one assist.

Keystone, which is now 4-4-1, was scheduled to play Nease on Dec. 3 and will travel to play P.K. Yonge on Friday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m. following a junior varsity boys match at 5 p.m. The varsity team travels to play Trenton on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m. and returns home to play Fernandina Beach on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7:20 p.m.

The varsity girls team (3-3-2) got two goals each from Taylor Buchanan and Kaylee Park, while the following had one each: Parker Collins Kayden Huntley, Halea Lam and Kylie

Norman. Buchanan and Kayle Buchanan each had two assists, with Huntley and Lam each adding one assist.

Goalie Xana Briley made 10 saves.

The JV girls team (3-1-1) defeated Branford 8-0, with Melody Tyre and Juliette Marini scoring three and two goals, respectively. Jalynn Kurtzo, Callie Yerkes and Akyria Wilson each had one goal.

Kurtzo, Yerkes and Rebecca Lugo each had one assist.

Keystone's JV and varsity girls teams played Ridgeview this past

Tuesday and will host Columbia on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. On Monday, Dec. 8, the JV and varsity teams host Palatka at 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The varsity girls team travels to play Trenton on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 5 p.m.

Keystone's junior high boys team improved to 3-1-1 with a 4-2 win at P.K. Yonge on Dec. 1. Bentley Tillman scored two goals, while Nico Jaramillo and Caleb Matuschke each had one. Jaramillo, Levi Adams and Tripp Dugat each had one assist.

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# Traveling through history with BHS grad Davis' children's book

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Author H.G. Wells wrote about time travel in his book "The Time Machine," but you don't need a machine to experience history. All you have to do is go to the very place you can find a copy of the Wells classic — the library.

Terrence Davis, a 2010 Bradford High School graduate, hopes to encourage children to visit the library and to develop an interest in reading through his self-published book "Zara and the Time-Traveling Library." The main character, Zara, is a girl who discovers a discovers a dusty, old book at her local library and is transported to a magical world where books can take her anywhere in time.

Davis said he wanted to give children something to read that was fun and engaging from an educational standpoint, showing them that "literacy is a superpower and that each one of them has the ability to unlock that."



Terrence Davis holds a copy of his children's book, "Zara and the Time-Traveling Library."

Zara meets three people during her travels — Hypatia, an ancient-Greek astronomer, mathematician and philosopher, NASA mathematician Katherine Johnson (who was featured in the 2016 book "Hidden Figures" and 2017 movie of the same name)

and U.S. figure skater Michelle Kwan, a two-time Olympic medalist and five-time world champion.

Davis said he initially came up with 40-55 people who Zara could meet before settling on Hypatia, Johnson and Kwan. Davis chose Kwan as an athlete a lot of children may not be familiar with, while Hypatia and Johnson were chosen to get children thinking about someone other than sports figures. Plus, as mathematicians, they met Davis' goal of incorporating STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) concepts in his book.

The choice of three women was made in consideration of Davis' children.

"I have two daughters, and my wife is pregnant with our third daughter," he said. "I was like, 'OK. These are three women who were prominent and who made an impact.'"

As you may imagine, Davis' children also inspired the

character of Zara.

"I've always wanted a son, but it doesn't look like that's in the plan for me," Davis said. "I wanted that curious, bright-eyed girl to see the world and be like, 'I can tackle this. I can solve these problems. I can be innovative and have problem-solving skills.'"

"My daughters played a pivotal role in the main character."

## Writing a book was a long time coming

Davis, who has a journalism degree from Florida A&M University, has been writing throughout his life. He said he began writing poetry at the age of 5. Therefore, he said writing his first book was 30 years in the making.

He tried working on a book for years, he said, but he was never able to finish it until he made the writing his main focus.

"I told my wife last year, 'I'm dedicating the next two months



As an avid reader and one who wants to inspire children to read, it makes sense that you would find Terrence Davis and his daughters Saia and Avanni in a bookstore.

to nothing but writing.' I started in September," Davis said. "I just wrote. I woke up at 6 every morning like it was a regular job. I just wrote, wrote, wrote and wrote."

Davis said he had to get in the mindset of writing for a child,

which was difficult.

"I think the hardest part was breaking it down and simplifying words," Davis said.

It's not enough to use words that children will understand.

See BOOK, page 12

# Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Dec. 4, 2025

## BRADFORD

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

NOTICE OF ACTION TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

TO: Kristy Alvarez, address unknown YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that the State of Florida, Department of Children and Families, has filed a Petition to terminate your parental rights and permanently commit the following children for adoption: D.C.A. born on 8/9/2010; K.M. born on 4/5/2016; D.A. born on 3/16/2022 and E.A. born on 5/21/2025. You are hereby commanded to appear on December 16, 2025, at 11:10 AM before the General Magistrate Bridget Baker at the Bradford Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue Starke, FL 32091, for an ADVISORY HEARING.

FAILURE TO PERSONALLY APPEAR AT THIS ADVISORY HEARING CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO THE TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THIS CHILD (OR CHILDREN). IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR ON THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED, YOU MAY LOSE ALL LEGAL RIGHTS AS A PARENT TO THE CHILD OR CHILDREN NAMED IN THIS NOTICE.

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact the ADA Coordinator, 201 E. University Avenue, Room 414A, Gainesville, FL 32601 at (352) 337-6237, at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711.

WITNESS, my hand as Clerk of said Court and the Seal thereof, this 7th day of November, 2025.

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

11/13 4tchg 12/4-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION

CASE NO. 25000366CAAXMX LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, Plaintiff,

vs. JOHN ROSS DELOTELLE A/K/A JOHN R. DELOTELLE, et. al. Defendant(s),

NOTICE OF ACTION - CONSTRUCTIVE SERVICE TO: JOHN ROSS DELOTELLE A/K/A JOHN R. DELOTELLE, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF JOHN ROSS DELOTELLE A/K/A JOHN R. DELOTELLE, whose residence is unknown and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title or interest in the property described in the mortgage being foreclosed herein.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property: LOTS 1, 2, 15 AND 16 OF BLOCK

5 OF HAMPTON, FLORIDA, A SUBDIVISION RECORDED IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA.

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

WITNESS my hand and the seal of this Court at Bradford County, Florida, this 21 day of November, 2025. Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC, 6409 Congress Ave., Suite 100 Boca Raton, FL 33487 PRIMARY EMAIL: fmail@raslg.com THIS NOTICE SHALL BE PUBLISHED ONCE A WEEK FOR TWO (2) CONSECUTIVE WEEKS. PUBLISH IN: BRADFORD COUNTY TELEGRAPH DENNY THOMPSON CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT BY: KANETRA JENKINS DEPUTY CLERK

12/4 2tchg 12/11-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA GENERAL JURISDICTION DIVISION

CASE NO. 2024000431CAAXMX PROVIDENT FUNDING ASSOCIATES, L.P. Plaintiff,

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

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to an Order or Final Judgment entered in Case No. 2024000431CAAXMX of the Circuit Court of the 8th Judicial Circuit in and for Bradford County, Florida, wherein, PROVIDENT FUNDING ASSOCIATES, L.P., Plaintiff, and PAUL MCDAVID AKA PAUL G. MCDAVID AKA PAUL GLEN MCDAVID, et. al., are Defendants, Clerk of Circuit Court, Denny Thompson, will sell to the highest bidder for cash at the lobby of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 North Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091, on **January 9, 2026** at 11:00 AM, the following described property: A TRACT OF LAND LOCATED IN SECTION 25, TOWNSHIP 7 SOUTH, RANGE 20 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

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

400.00 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 8 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 28 SECONDS EAST, 12.30 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, SAID POINT LYING 40.09 FEET RADIALLY SOUTH OF THE CENTERLINE OF SAID STATE ROAD NO. S-231; THENCE RUN SOUTH 8 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 28 SECONDS EAST, 548.66 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 87 DEGREES 39 MINUTES 25 SECONDS EAST 398.49 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 8 DEGREES 31 MINUTES 28 SECONDS WEST 548.66 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 87 DEGREES 39 MINUTES 25 SECONDS WEST, 398.49 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, must file a claim per the requirements set forth in FL Stat. 45.302. DATED this 20th day of November, 2025. GREENSPOON MARDER, LLP 100 W. Cypress Creek Road, Suite 700 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 Telephone: (954) 491-1120 Hearing Line: (888) 491-1120 Facsimile: (954) 343-6982 Email: gmforeclosure@gmlaw.com Email: Michele.Clancy@gmlaw.com By: *Isi Michele R. Clancy* Michele R. Clancy, Esq. Florida Bar No. 498661 24-002694-01 / 41176.0188 / Jean Schwartz

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.

12/4 2tchg 12/11-BCT

IN RE: ESTATE OF SEAN MICHAEL VEST DECEASED.

The administration of the estate of Sean Michael Vest, deceased, whose date of death was November 29, 1989, is pending in the Circuit Court for Union County, Florida, Probate Division; the address of which is 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent

and other persons who have claims or demands against decedent's estate, including unmaturred, contingent or unliquidated claims, must file their claims with this court WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

THE DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE IS: November 27, 2025. ALL CLAIMS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

THE DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE IS: November 27, 2025. 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	Emmalee 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

NOTICE TO CREDITORS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA FILE NO. 2025-CP-24 DIVISION: PROBATE

IN RE: ESTATE OF RICHARD R. ABELL Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS The administration of the estate of RICHARD R. ABELL, deceased, whose date of death was September 3, 2025; is pending in the Circuit Court for Union County, Florida, Probate Division; File No.: 63-2025-CP-0033; the address of which is 55 W Main St, Lake Butler, Florida 32054. The names and addresses of the Petitioners and the Petitioners' attorney are set forth below. All creditors of the decedent and other persons, who have claims or demands against the decedent's estate, including unmaturred, contingent or unliquidated claims, and who have been served a copy of this Notice, must file their claims with this Court WITHIN THE LATER OF THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY (30) DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent

and other persons who have claims or demands against decedent's estate, including unmaturred, contingent or unliquidated claims, must file their claims with this Court WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Notice of Public Hearing at Union County Housing Authority (UCHA), 715 West Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054. In accordance with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requirements, the UCHA will conduct a public hearing to receive comments concerning its 2026 Annual Plans. The hearing will take place on January 5, 2026 at 4:00 pm at the above address. Copies of the documents are available for review December 1, 2025 to January 5, 2026 at the above address during regular business hours. Comments may be submitted in person or by mail to the address above no later than 4:00 pm, January 5, 2026 or attend the meeting is accessible. If anyone needs a reasonable accommodation, please contact UCHA at (386) 496-2047. 12/4 1tchg-UCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING SECOND AND FINAL READING ORDINANCE 2025- 615 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS, FLORIDA AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP FOR APPROXIMATELY 2.72 ACRES OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 200 NE COMMERCIAL CIRCLE, FROM COMMERCIAL TO LIGHT INDUSTRIAL; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE. THE CITY COUNCIL OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS will be holding a PUBLIC HEARING on MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026, at 6 PM on ORDINANCE 2025- 615 Ordinance 2025-615 would amend the Keystone Heights Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for a 2.47 acre parcel located at 200 NE Commercial Circle, Parcel RE# 20-08-23-002189-011-00, from Commercial to Industrial Light. The public hearing will be held at the Keystone Heights City Hall, 555 S Lawrence Boulevard, Keystone Heights, Florida. Interested parties may appear at the hearings and be heard with respect to the Ordinance for the FLUM amendment. After the public hearing, the City Council may take immediate action on the proposed FLUM amendment, or may continue its deliberations to a date, time and place then announced without publishing further notice thereof. A copy of the application for the proposed FLUM amendment is available for inspection by the public at the Keystone Heights City Hall, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, a person deciding to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at the hearings is advised that such person will need a record of all proceedings is made, which must include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing accommodations to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (352) 473-4807, no later than three (3) business days prior to the hearing for which this notice has been given. James Booth, Keystone Heights City Manager 12/4 1tchg-LRM

THE CITY COUNCIL OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS will be holding a PUBLIC HEARING on MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026, at 6 PM on ORDINANCE 2025- 615 Ordinance 2025-615 would amend the Keystone Heights Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) for a 2.47 acre parcel located at 200 NE Commercial Circle, Parcel RE# 20-08-23-002189-011-00, from Commercial to Industrial Light. The public hearing will be held at the Keystone Heights City Hall, 555 S Lawrence Boulevard, Keystone Heights, Florida. Interested parties may appear at the hearings and be heard with respect to the Ordinance for the FLUM amendment. After the public hearing, the City Council may take immediate action on the proposed FLUM amendment, or may continue its deliberations to a date, time and place then announced without publishing further notice thereof. A copy of the application for the proposed FLUM amendment is available for inspection by the public at the Keystone Heights City Hall, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, a person deciding to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at the hearings is advised that such person will need a record of all proceedings is made, which must include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing accommodations to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (352) 473-4807, no later than three (3) business days prior to the hearing for which this notice has been given. James Booth, Keystone Heights City Manager 12/4 1tchg-LRM

THE CITY COUNCIL OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS will be holding a PUBLIC HEARING on MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026, at 6 PM on ORDINANCE 2025- 616 Ordinance 2025-616 would rezone a 2.47 acre parcel located at 200 NE Commercial Circle, Parcel RE# 20-08-23-002189-011-00, from General Commercial to Industrial. The public hearing will be held at the Keystone Heights City Hall, 555 S Lawrence Boulevard, Keystone Heights, Florida. Interested parties may appear at the hearings and be heard with respect to the Ordinance for the rezoning. After the public hearing, the City Council may take immediate action on the proposed rezoning, or may continue its deliberations to a date, time and place then announced without publishing further notice thereof. A copy of the application for the proposed rezoning is available for inspection by the public at the Keystone Heights City Hall, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, a person deciding to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at the hearings is advised that such person will need a record of all proceedings is made, which must include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing accommodations to participate in this matter should contact City Hall at (352) 473-4807, no later than three (3) business days prior to the hearing for which this notice has been given. James Booth, Keystone Heights City Manager 12/4 1tchg-LRM

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# UCHS boys open hoops season with big win over KHHS

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Garrison Smith made six three-pointers, finishing with a game-high 24 points and helping the Union County High School boys basketball team win its season opener 72-41 over visiting Keystone Heights.

The Tigers got big second-half performances from Smith (11 points), Montreal Woods (11 points) and Tyrese Chandler (nine points) in turning a seven-point lead into the eventual 31-point win.

It was the third straight loss for the Indians (1-3) after opening their season with a 53-24 win over Hope Christian on Nov. 17. Keystone's other losses are 60-39 to Englewood on Nov. 18 and 55-49 in overtime to Interlachen on Nov. 20.

The long-range shots were falling early, with Keystone's Cooper Barry hitting a three-pointer for the game's first points. That was followed by Smith's first three-pointer.

Another Smith three-pointer



Union's Tyrese Chandler (left) battles down low against Keystone's Luke Bacorn.

and a basket by Jaylen Pierre off a turnover put Union up 9-3, but the Indians' Barry made it a three-point game with his second three-pointer. Keystone's Dereon Tochterman scored on a drive to the basket, while a free throw by Barry tied the score at 9-9.

A 13-0 run put the Tigers up 24-11 in the second quarter. Jackson Andersen-Davis scored off an offensive rebound, while Smith knocked down a fall-away jumper. Woods and Darrell Merriex each scored off a rebound before Pierre made two free throws. Smith then hit a shot from beyond the arc to put Union ahead by 13.

Keystone scored seven of the final eight points of the first half. Barry knocked down a trey and then went the length of the

court after grabbing a defensive rebound to make the score 24-16. After a free throw by the Tigers' R.J. Odom, the Indians' Baylor Ford drove the baseline for a basket to leave Keystone trailing 25-18 going into the half.

Union scored the first six points of the second half, with Chandler contributing four points.

Chandler, Smith and Woods combined to score 16 third-quarter points as the Tigers began pulling away.

The Tigers scored five baskets following turnovers in the final quarter.



ABOVE LEFT: Garrison Smith prepares to take a jumper for the Tigers. He led all scorers with 24 points. LEFT: Union's R.J. Odom (right) contests a three-point shot by Keystone's Cooper Barry. Barry was the game's second-leading scorer with 17 points.



Union's Cadenz Merriex (right) gets past Keystone's Luke Bacorn and puts up a shot.

Keystone got three three-pointers in the fourth quarter, including two straight by Will Begue for the Indians' final points.

Woods and Pierre finished with 13 and 10 points, respectively, while Union also got nine from Chandler, seven from Andersen-Davis, five from Merriex, two

from Cadenz Merriex and one each from Odom and Adrian Manns.

The Indians' Barry was the game's second-leading scorer with 17 points. Tochterman had eight points, while Keystone also got six from Begue, five from Ford, three from Bacorn and two from Donald Hill.

Union travels to play Hamilton County Friday, Dec. 5, at 7:30 p.m.

Keystone, which played Duval Charter this past Tuesday, will travel to play Baldwin on Friday, Dec. 5, at 7:30 p.m. and then host West Nassau on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m.

## Shining Stars of the Week!

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



**Amelia O'Steen, Malia Short, and Jessa Ford**  
Kindergarten

**Little Rainbow**  
Amelia, Malia, and Jessa are outstanding examples in Kindergarten this week! They showed great leadership, kindness,



**Gideon Rosario**  
2nd Grade  
Hope Christian Academy

Gideon Rosario "listens very well and is always ready for the next task! He is very kind to his classmates"



and what it truly means to be a good friend. We are so proud of them!



**Apryl Thompkins**  
3rd Grade  
Lawtey Elementary

Apryl always exhibits a positive attitude to her teacher and friends. She is always trying her best to use the



strategies she's learned to work out her problems and always helps others when she can.



**Jazlyn Lee**  
3rd Grade  
Light House Christian

Jazlyn Lee is a wonderful student. She works diligently in her schoolwork, and she gets along well with her classmates. She is reliable and dependable, and she is always willing to lend a



helping hand. We love having her at LCA, and we are proud to see her shine brightly in all areas of her life.



**Grace Gilliard**  
6th grade  
Providence Christian Academy

Grace always has a positive attitude and a kind word for everyone she meets!



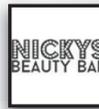
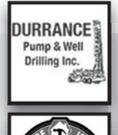
**Hayden Kimbrell**  
Kindergarten  
Bradford Elementary

Hayden is a shining star. He is a gentleman! A young lady needed a chair and he carried the chair over to her table



and pulled the chair out for her and pushed the chair in for her! What a gentleman!

Thank you... to our sponsors!



## Classified Ads - 904-964-6305



Where one call does it all!



Class Ads for week Dec 4 2025

40 Notices

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# Obituaries

## Christine Blackwelder

Christine Doloris Blackwelder of Lake City passed away peacefully Monday, Nov. 10, 2025, at Christian Health Center Hospice, Lynden, Washington. She was born to Myrtle Scarborough on Oct. 17, 1943, in Lake Butler. Her younger years were spent with her mother, Myrtle, brother, Kenneth, and sister, Linda, on the home farm assisting with duties on the farm such as raising cattle and hogs and growing vegetables and tobacco. Attending church services came first in their lives. Many happy hours were spent visiting with special friends from the Danville Church of Christ, wherein they would spend time together shelling peanuts and making peanut brittle, cane grindings and hog killing to make sausage, ham and bacon. Much of the family's time was spent attending gospel meetings at churches in the area, which usually lasted two weeks each. Christine spent most of her childhood in Lake Butler, where she attended school and worked as an accountant/bookkeeper. Soon thereafter, in March of 1964, she married Burrell Roger Blackwelder. They were married for over 41 years. While Roger served our country in the army, she and Roger started a family and traveled to multiple locations, such as Berlin, Germany and Korea. Together, she and Roger had three children, Sonia Blackwelder Caissey, Susan Blackwelder Hester, and Roger Wayne Blackwelder. As a family they traveled the country, which led them to Fairbanks, Alaska in 1974. During their time in Alaska, she and Roger took the kids and camped on a riverbank for the entire summer. Moments like this are something their children will never forget and still share memories with their own children. Christine was preceded in death by her mother, Myrtle Scarborough; husband, Roger Burrell Blackwelder; and brother, Kenneth Scarborough.

She leaves behind her children, Sonia Caissey and Susan Hester, both of Blaine, Washington, Wayne Blackwelder and daughter-in-law, Renee Blackwelder of Mandeville, Louisiana; her sister, Linda Parrish and brother-in-law, Kenneth Parrish of Lake Butler; her brother-in-law, Gerald Blackwelder and sister-in-law, Sherie Blackwelder of Colorado; as well as many nieces and nephews; 14 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

Christine will be missed by so many and always be remembered by her kindness and warmth toward all who knew her. She loved her family deeply. We all take great comfort in knowing she is free of pain and suffering and will be reunited with her husband, Roger; her mother, Myrtle; her brother, Kenneth; and many loved ones whom we've lost.

PAID OBITUARY

## Jason Ferguson

Mr. Jason Todd Ferguson, 54, of Keystone Heights passed away Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025, in Jacksonville. He was born Jan. 30, 1971, in Springfield, Missouri to Mike and Judy (Swearingin) Ferguson. Jason joined the United States Navy and retired as a Ship's Serviceman First Class. He was of the Baptist faith and enjoyed shopping, traveling, listening to music, singing, and his fur babies. But mostly he loved being with his grandkids. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Darlene (Bell) Ferguson; son, Danny Noles; and brothers, Troy Ferguson and Randy Hodges.

Left behind to cherish his memory are his children, Alyssa Lawrence, Jason T. Ferguson II, and Christopher Noles; along with two siblings, Holly Johnson and Michael Hodges. His grandchildren, Steven, Seth, Jayce, Joshua, Bryson, Noah, Bentley, Lawson, Waylon, Jason, and Levi, lovingly and affectionately called him "Pop-pop."

A graveside service was held Wednesday, Dec. 3, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating. Interment was at Keystone Heights Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Franklin Nazworth

Mr. James "Franklin" Nazworth, 81, of Starke, passed away Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025, at Good Samaritan Center in Live Oak. Franklin was born in Starke on Feb. 22, 1944, to the late Walter Taft and Rachel (Wilkerson) Nazworth. He was a member of Trinity Baptist Church of Keystone Heights, and, prior to retirement, he worked for the Florida Department of Transportation as a timber inspector. He enjoyed his church family and was a musician, using his talent for the glory of God in and out of his church with his favorite Southern gospel music. He also enjoyed hunting, was a great fisherman and loved golfing. Following retirement, he and his wife spent many happy times camping together. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Willeane (Griffis) Nazworth; and grandchildren, Scott Thomas Nazworth and Patrick Alan Nazworth.

Survivors are sons, Daryl Nazworth (Cathy Woodall) of Lake Butler and Eric Nazworth (Sherry Thomas) of Lake Butler. He is also survived by grandchildren, Daniel Nazworth of Lake City, Rachel Nazworth (James) Cavin of Raiford, and Jonathan Nazworth of Lake Butler; along with great-grandchildren, Aubrey Nazworth, Jackson Nazworth, Emma Cavin, Calleigh Cavin and Macie Cavin.

The family will receive friends on Thursday, Dec. 4, from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. at DeWitt C. Jones Chapel of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, with funeral services beginning at 11 a.m. Interment will follow at Santa Fe Cemetery with Pastor Brandon Denmark and Pastor Scott Stanland officiating all services. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Alzheimer Association <https://donorservices.alz.org>.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Tyler Norris

Tyler Shane Norris, 34, of Starke passed away Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025. Tyler was born Oct. 17, 1991, in Gainesville, to his loving parents, Samuel B. Norris and Jejetta M. Lee. He was raised in Bradford County and graduated from Gainesville High School in 2010. He was gifted with his hands and truly a jack-of-all-trades. He could fix or build anything. He was also blessed athletically in his youth. He competed in travel baseball for the Jacksonville Glory baseball team and the Gainesville Hurricane baseball team. Following school, he worked for the Alachua County School Board, while furthering his education at Santa Fe College. He was passionate about helping others and felt called into the healthcare profession. He graduated from Santa Fe College in 2016 with certifications as a licensed practical nurse. He enjoyed his time serving residents at Oak Hammock Retirement Community in Gainesville and Windsor Manor Health and Rehabilitation in Starke. He recently embarked on a new career path and accepted a position as a maintenance technician with the Alachua County Board of Commissioners. Outside of work, he loved being outdoors. He was an avid hunter and cherished the thrill of tracking a big buck. He also enjoyed rooting for the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Florida Gators alongside family and friends. His biggest blessing was being a father to his precious son, Tate Rambo Carlton Norris, whom he dearly loved. Tyler was deeply loved and will be forever missed by all who knew him. He was preceded in death by his maternal grandmother, Brenda Lee; paternal grandparents, Linda and J.T. Parrish; and sister, Brianna Norris.

He is survived by his loving parents, Sam Norris of Starke, and Jejetta (Johnnie Adkins) Lee of Starke; son, Tate Rambo Carlton Norris of Starke; sisters, Samantha Norris and Jaelyn Jackson, both of Starke; maternal grandparents, Corky Lee and Dottie (Jerry) Hansen; along with several extended family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be on Friday, Dec. 5, at 2 p.m. at Sampson City Church of God with Brother John Frampton and Brother Mike Plant officiating. Interment will follow at Crosby Lake Cemetery. The family will receive friends on Friday, Dec. 5, an hour prior to the service at the church.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## BOOK

Continued from page 10

Davis said he had to go back and make sure what he was writing would be fun for children to read. He didn't look at any other children's books for ideas or inspiration because he didn't want to end up using someone else's ideas.

He did admit, however, he wanted his book to be "adventurous" like "The Boxcar Children," one of his favorite books growing up.

Yet Davis' goal is more than just giving children reading his book an adventure. He wants them to continue enjoying adventures in other books and to learn to love reading at a young age.

Davis said he took a trip to Japan and went to a library in Kyoto. In his estimate, 1,000 people were there.

"Everybody had books," Davis said. "I was like, 'Let me go to the kids' section.' There were 20 kids reading by themselves — no parents around."

"At that moment, I was like, 'This is what we need. We need this in America because we want to be number one in education.'"

His part in encouraging local children to read became a reality on Oct. 6, when "Zara and Time-Traveling Library," illustrated by Andi Andriansyah of Turkey, was released. Davis said to himself, "You did it. You became an author — something you had a lifelong dream of. You finally accomplished it."

On Nov. 15, Davis had the chance to read his book to

children at the Bradford County Public Library. It was a surreal moment, going from a child who enjoyed trips to that same library to hosting an author's event there.

"The reception has been great from the community," Davis said. "Kids are loving the book. I think it has been very impactful. I hope this character can stick and grow and be inspirational."

## Travels — on the page and for real

Zara's travels shape her as a person. In turn, she tells her community about her travels, passing on the knowledge she's learned to others.

Davis is basically a real-life Zara. He enjoys traveling and sharing his adventures with people at home. For example, in Japan, he experienced a culture based upon discipline, while in South America, he saw how important a healthy or organic lifestyle was.

"You start looking at all these things and think, 'Man, the world has so much to offer in different components,'" Davis said. "How can I take each one of these things and apply it to my lifestyle?"

One of his favorite places he's traveled to is Croatia.

"That's a beautiful place to be," Davis said. "I could write all day there, sitting on their beaches. That was an awesome place to be."

A couple of other places he's really enjoyed are Berlin, Germany, and Uganda. Places he'd like to go include Egypt and India.

Wherever he travels, he

## Janet Strickland

Janet Delores Strickland, 88, passed away Sunday, Nov. 23, 2025. She was a very caring woman who truly loved her family. Her devotion to caretaking was unwavering, and she loved everyone with a depth that will forever be remembered.

She is survived by her three children, Farley, Anna, and Alexis (Dalton); her five grandchildren, Johnny (Elle), Crystal (James), Shannon (Joey), Kari (Terrence), and Edward; and other family and friends.

The viewing was Tuesday, Dec. 2, at the funeral home chapel with a graveside service following, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating. Interment was at Keystone Heights Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY

## Milton Strickland

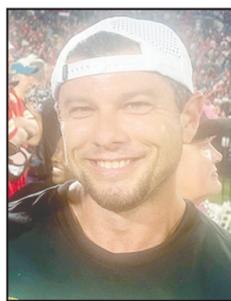
Milton Farley Strickland, 93, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and friend. He loved his family very much and devoted his life to them. He was a man of honor who fought for his country in the Army and was a Reverend of God.

He is survived by his three children, Farley, Anna, and Alexis (Dalton); his five grandchildren, Johnny (Elle), Crystal (James), Shannon (Joey), Kari (Terrence), and Edward; and other family and friends.

The viewing was Tuesday, Dec. 2, at the funeral home chapel with a graveside service following, with Rev. Bobby Epps officiating. Interment was at Keystone Heights Cemetery.

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

PAID OBITUARY



Terrence Davis, who's pictured in Tokyo, enjoys traveling, which inspired his children's book.

always returns home feeling reinvigorated.

"Traveling brings me so much peace," Davis said. "I'm always more motivated when I come back home."

## The future of Zara

Davis wants to write more books featuring Zara. He said he has ideas of bringing in more characters, such as Zara's little brother.

He'd like Zara to age in his books as time goes along,

much like the characters in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books.

No matter what characters he writes about, or how old they are, you can be sure that they'll be part of stories that are meaningful to Davis.

"I'm not just putting anything out there," he said. "I'm putting something out there that I'm super passionate about."

If anyone else out there wants to put their passion in book form and self-publish, Davis would encourage them to not get discouraged during the process.

"Don't give up," he said. "Persevere throughout all the different challenges because there are going to be challenges. Persevere throughout it and write and be your full creative self throughout the process."

"Learn as you go. Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Don't be afraid to put out what you want to give to the world because we need it. You are somebody, and you can bring something special to the world that we all can utilize in some type of capacity."

## Lawley's Joyful Voices to host annual Christmas program Dec. 14

The Joyful Voices of Lawley will host its annual community Christmas program on Sunday, Dec. 14, at 3 p.m. at Lawley's Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. The church is located at 2229 Lake St.

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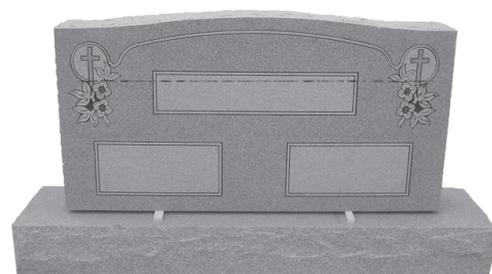
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# Friday night lights at Bradford High



LEFT: Steven Yeager is pictured with some young Tornadoes: Micah Jackson and Layla Yeager. BELOW: Alan Montgomery, Cheri Tillman and Kevin Tillman (l-r) settle in to watch playoff football.



Cassius Carn and Jamaar Holmes are ready to cheer on the Tornadoes.



Some of the fans cheering on the Tornadoes include Andrea McNeal, Tagaria Blye, Danika Blye, John D. Tyson Jr. and Eugene Blye IV.



LEFT: Chauncey Patterson, Ian Patterson and Joseph Shelter. BELOW: JROTC Instructor Jon Crews (left) and James Reynolds are helping to sell cotton candy at the game to raise money for the JROTC program.



Doyle Boatwright, Kelly Boatwright, Dawn Strickland and Mark Strickland (l-r) are ready to enjoy playoff football. Some of the fans behind them include Braylen Duggan, Alice Foreman and Michelle Foreman.



Rachel Lockhart, Pauline Shifflett and Matt Barksdale (l-r) help man the BHS band boosters concessions stand.

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# Tornadoes' season ends with 17-10 loss to Cocoa

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's football team fought back from a 10-point deficit and tied the score late in the fourth quarter, but visiting Cocoa drove 62 yards for the winning score, defeating the Tornadoes 17-10 in the Region 2-2A championship game on Nov. 28.

The Tornadoes (11-2) had shut out Cocoa for approximately 37 minutes after the Tigers went

up 10-0 in the first quarter, but the three-time defending state champions got an 8-yard touchdown run from Zaylan Chapple with 51 seconds left in the game.

"They made more plays than we did. That's all," Bradford Head Coach Jamie Rodgers said.

It was the third time Cocoa (8-4) has defeated Bradford in the postseason in the last four years. The Tigers, who've now won 18 consecutive regional championships, will travel to

Sarasota to play the number-one team in the state — Cardinal Mooney — in a Dec. 5 state semifinal game.

Cocoa got off to a fast start with O'Kece Battle fielding the opening kickoff at his own 11 and taking it all the way to the Bradford 9-yard line. Javeon Scott had a touchdown run from there on the Tigers' first offensive play. Keelan Gonzalez added the extra point to put the Tigers up 7-0 just 20 seconds into the game.

A 39-yard Cy Cubbedge punt had Cocoa starting its next series at its own 12. The Tigers picked up first downs on a 7-yard run by Scott, a 5-yard reception by Scott and a 21-yard reception by Zay Hawkins, with Hawkins' catch putting Cocoa at the Bradford 21. Champ Smith then completed an 11-yard pass to Cayman Varis, setting up first-and-goal at the 10. After a holding penalty backed the Tigers up to the 20, Bradford's Parviele Lee made a tackle to hold a run play to a 1-yard gain. Tank White caught consecutive passes for a net gain of 9 yards, with the Tornadoes getting tackles from Kingston Booker and Jordan Cason. Gonzalez kicked a 27-yard field goal to put the Tigers up 10-0 with 1:55 remaining in the first quarter.

Two runs by Iyen Addison and a run by Cubbedge resulted in first downs on Bradford's second offensive series, which began at the Tornadoes' 18-yard line. The Tornadoes overcame a holding penalty, thanks to catches by Chase Phillips and Kemontae Nixon, with Nixon's 12-yard catch putting Bradford at the Cocoa 28. Cubbedge completed a 6-yard pass to Peyton Jones, followed by runs of 1 and 3 yards by Addison, resulting in a first down at the 18. The drive stalled after two incomplete passes and a 6-yard sack. Tyler Sapp set up for a 41-yard field goal, but a bad snap messed up his timing, and the kick was no good with 6:17 to play in the second quarter.

"The botched field goal in the first half — that hurt pretty bad,

but hey, that's football," Rodgers said.

Cocoa drove past midfield on the following series. An offsides penalty on a fourth-and-1 play gave the Tigers a first down, while Smith completed three passes totaling 26 yards as Cocoa gained a first down at the Bradford 39. A big pass play from Smith to Hawkins would've resulted in another first down, but Cocoa was penalized for holding. The Tigers eventually turned the ball over on downs at the 38-yard line.

The Tigers got the ball right back when Bradford's first play after Cocoa's failed fourth-down attempt was a fumble. With 1:36 left until halftime, Cocoa began a drive at the Bradford 32. The Tornadoes' Nate Raymond held Scott to no gain on a first-down run, while Maliki Cobarris made a tackle that limited Scott to a 2-yard gain on a pass play. On third-and-8, Booker's tackle held Smith to a 2-yard gain. The Tigers sent Gonzalez onto the field for a 45-yard field-goal attempt, which he missed with 9



Chase Phillips comes close to making a reception inside the Cocoa 15-yard line.

seconds on the clock. second half, thanks to three 15- Cocoa threatened to score on its first possession of the

See BHS, page 15



Iyen Addison (right) carries the ball for a big gain in the third quarter.



Parviele Lee (far right) tries to get by Cocoa lineman Tahmeer Passmore and pressure quarterback Champ Smith.



## Providing Thanksgiving turkeys

Bradford Elementary School's student council invited community sponsors to support families with a Thanksgiving turkey drive, which resulted in 35 turkeys being given out. Special thanks go to turkey donors Julie Johnson, Janice Mortimer, Candace Osteen, Scott Roberts and Gordon Smith. Pictured are: (front, l-r) Elijah Douglas, Student Council Co-Sponsor Vanessa Sweeney, (back, l-r) Tonjala Tyson, Student Council Sponsor Jaquan Bryant, Addison Jackson, Anslee Weis, Harper Harrell, Principal Cassie Melvin, Chloe Cruger, Faelynn Jones, Jaycee McDaniel and Student Council Co-Sponsor Natalya Cruger.

## Bradford girls improve to 2-1 with 49-39 win over Eastside

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School got 26 points and 10 rebounds from Ar'Nayshia Griffin in defeating visiting Eastside 49-39 on Dec. 1 to improve to 2-1.

The Tornadoes held just a one-point lead at the half, but then outscored Eastside 16-6 in the third quarter to build a 38-27 lead.

Eastside hit a couple of three-pointers early in the third to take a lead. Bradford didn't get on the board until Griffin scored with 3:48 remaining in the quarter.

Griffin later went 2 for 2 at the foul line to tie the score at 27-27.

Riley Shuford went 4 for 4 on two trips to the foul line to give the Tornadoes the lead for good.

Griffin scored on a drive to the basket to put Bradford up 33-27.

After two free throws by Cayson Hampton, Shuford drained a three-pointer with 8 seconds on the clock, sending the Tornadoes into the final quarter leading 38-27.

Bradford got 21 points at the foul line, with Griffin, Hampton and Shuford combining for all but one of those points.

Besides her team highs in points and rebounds, Griffin led the team in steals with four.

Hampton and Shuford grabbed five and four rebounds, respectively, with each scoring nine points. Hampton also had three steals.

The Tornadoes also got three points from Ky'lee Johnson and two points from Wynter Barrington.

Bradford will host Hilliard on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 6:30 p.m. The Tornadoes then travel to play Newberry on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 6:30 p.m.

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Cy Cubbedge (right) attempts to throw a pass over Cocoa's Jermaine Waters.

## BHS

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yard penalties assessed against Bradford. The third, which was for pass interference, gave the Tigers a first down at the Tornadoes' 12-yard line. After an incomplete pass, Scott was held to a 2-yard gain by Bradford's J.J. Hall. Another incomplete pass had the Tigers settling for a 27-yard field-goal attempt, which was no good at the 5:42 mark of the third quarter.

The Tornadoes finally put points on the board with a 10-play, 80-yard drive. It began with a 4-yard run by Addison, followed by a 9-yard pass from Cubbedge to Jones. A 24-yard reception by Phillips moved Bradford to the Cocoa 43. After an incomplete pass, Addison had a 12-yard run for another first down. Cubbedge completed consecutive passes of 8 yards to Jones and 5 yards to Elijah Lawrence, giving the Tornadoes a first down at the 18. Addison then had three straight carries, with the third resulting in a 5-yard touchdown with 3:28 remaining in the third quarter. Sapp added the PAT to make it a 10-7 game.

Smith, who finished 25 of 35 for 220 yards, connected with Varis on a big pass play for Cocoa on the next series, but Varis fumbled at the Bradford 25-yard line. The Tornadoes' Jackson Parmeter recovered the loose ball at the 17.

The Tornadoes picked up one first down when the Tigers were penalized for being offsidelines before two Addison runs totaling 24 yards resulted in another first down at the Cocoa 47. Addison got the ball again for a 3-yard gain, but two incomplete passes forced the Tornadoes to punt.

Cubbedge's punt had Cocoa's offense taking the field at its own 17 at the 11:02 mark of the fourth quarter. Smith completed 3 of 4 passes for 15 yards to help the Tigers advance to the 40, but a fifth pass attempt by Smith was picked off by Bradford's Caiden Carn.

The Tornadoes had the ball at midfield, but punted the

way, but added, "Sometimes in life, you make your own breaks. They made one more, two more than we did."

In the past four seasons, Cocoa has scored an average of 40 points per game against fellow Class 2A/2S teams. Only one team during that span has held the Tigers to 20 points or less — Bradford. The Tornadoes have now done that three times when also including the preseason kickoff classic that began this season.

"I'm so proud of our guys and how hard they played," Rodgers said, adding, "Cocoa's a national brand. They're not a state brand. We've gone toe to toe with them several times."

Bradford will say goodbye to several key seniors, but the future outlook is good for the Tornadoes.

"At some point this season, we had five, six, seven freshmen playing big-time minutes," Rodgers said. "Peyton Jones had probably one of the bigger games of anybody tonight. He's a ninth-grader. He's a young cat. 'We've got a lot of those. We've got a lot of guys coming back."

The returning players will soon start prepping for 2026.

"We'll give them a couple of weeks off, and then we'll start lifting weights again and see what next year holds," Rodgers said.

## 3 KHHS athletes earn 1st-team All-Clay honors

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

The All-Clay County teams for fall sports were recently released, with Keystone Heights High School student-athletes Mia Rivera, Ryleigh Thomas and Melody Tyre receiving first-team nods.

Thomas and Tyre earned their honors in cross country. Thomas, a seventh-grader, placed 30th out of 131 at the district meet with a season-best time of 20:24 and 38th out of 116 at the region meet, coming close to earning a state-finals berth. Tyre, a sophomore, was 45th at the district meet and ran her season-best time of 20:53 in placing 43rd at the region meet.

Tessa Gray, a seventh-grader, earned honorable mention in girls cross country. Her season-best time was 22:33 at the region meet.

Rivera, a junior, was a first-team selection in volleyball after leading the Indians in kills with 372. She also had 167 digs, 33 service aces and 20 blocks.

Junior setter Kaleigh Marquart earned honorable mention in volleyball after recording 717 assists. She was also second on the team in aces with 64.

Three earned second-team honors in boys cross country: senior Hunter Sheppard and juniors Ryder Thomas and Noah Yara.

Yara led Keystone at the district meet with a 26th-place finish out of 163 and also had the team's best finish at the regional meet, placing 37th out of 116 with a season-best time of 17:20.

Sheppard finished 36th at the district meet and 38th at the regional meet. Like Yara, he recorded his season's best time at the regional meet: 17:22.

Thomas placed 29th at the district meet and 71st at the regional meet. His season-best time was 17:10.

The football team also had

three second-team selections, one of which was Thomas at the position of punter. He averaged 32 yards per punt, dropping 13 attempts inside the opponent's 20-yard line. His longest punt covered 60 yards.

Crumpton, a sophomore quarterback/running back, was named to the second team as an offensive athlete after rushing for more than 1,000 yards. He led the Indians in scoring, rushing for five touchdowns and throwing for another.

Senior defensive lineman Pete Bostic earned second-team honors after leading Keystone in tackles.

Luke Bacorn, a senior lineman, received honorable mention as a defensive athlete.

In girls golf, sophomore Aubrey Brooks earned second-team honors with a nine-hole average of 50. She was the medalist in three regular-season matches and had one birdie and one eagle. Brooks placed fifth out of 40 at the district meet with an 18-hole score of 94, making par on two holes.

Brooks' teammate Rebecca Binet, a sophomore, received honorable mention. She had a nine-hole average of 57.

Will Begue, a junior, earned honorable mention in boys golf. He had a nine-hole average of 44 and had eight birdies. He was the medalist in one match.

## BHS boys to open hoops season Dec. 10

BY CLIFF SMELLEY  
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School will get its boys basketball season started with a road game at Palatka on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7:30 p.m., following a junior varsity game at 6 p.m.

The Tornadoes travel to play Eastside on Tuesday, Dec. 16, with the JV team playing at 6 p.m. and the varsity team playing at 7:30 p.m.

Bradford's JV team also has a game on Friday, Dec. 12. The Tornadoes will host Crescent City at 6 p.m.



Head Coach Jamie Rodgers talks to his team after the loss to Cocoa.



Head Coach Jamie Rodgers hugs senior offensive lineman Ridge Bradley after the game.



Maliki Cobarris and Malachi Aldridge tackle Cocoa wide receiver Jayden Maul. Bradford's Cohen Cioffi (far right) is also pictured.



Offensive linemen Bryce Daniels (left) and Ridge Bradley (background, left) battle it out in the trenches.



## Breathing Easy: Working to Make Union County Parks Tobacco-Free

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### SMOKEFREE POLICIES CAN HELP THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco Free Union members and SWAT youth from Union County High School and Lake Butler Middle School have been working to educate decision makers and community members on the benefits of Tobacco Free Parks. Policies like these create healthier environments for all to enjoy and promote healthier choices, while reducing youth exposure to tobacco.

Let's get out and enjoy our beautiful parks and celebrate the positive impacts that result from tobacco-free parks throughout our community. Tobacco Free Park signs are currently placed at Lake Butler Parks to communicate the Tobacco Free Parks ordinance that was adopted by the Lake Butler City Commission.

Let's prioritize our community's health and making our parks more enjoyable for all.

[www.tobaccofreeunioncounty.com](http://www.tobaccofreeunioncounty.com)






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<sup>1</sup> \$200 Checking Bonus available to new checking customers who reside in Bradford, Union, or Clay county and open an account in person at our Starke Branch by February 15, 2026; receive qualifying payroll direct deposit(s) totaling \$1,000 or more in a single calendar month and must be posted to the new account within 60 days of opening and must remain active through at least 90 days from the account opening date; the account must remain open, active, and in good standing for at least 90 days; qualifying direct deposits must be ACH deposits of payroll, pension, or government benefits made by your employer, pension administrator, or government agency; person-to-person transfers, mobile payment transfers, and transfers from other bank accounts do not qualify; accounts opened Online do not qualify; bonus will be credited within 30 days after all eligibility requirements are met; only 1 bonus per customer, per tax ID; bonus may be subject to tax reporting. <sup>2</sup> Eligible checking accounts include Essential and Essential Seniors Checking, which require a minimum opening deposit of \$25, and Enhanced, Elite, Employee Advantage, and Community Heroes Checking, which require a minimum opening deposit of \$50. Account terms, monthly service charges, and balance requirements vary by account type. Elite Checking is an interest-bearing account: Daily balances of \$5,000 to \$49,999.99 will earn an interest rate of 0.01% with an annual percentage yield (APY) of 0.01%. Daily balances of \$50,000 and above will earn an interest rate of 0.03% with an annual percentage yield (APY) of 0.03%. Contact the branch for additional rate information. Rates are accurate as of November 14, 2025, and are subject to change after account opening; fees could reduce earnings.