

Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700 — Starke, Florida

Thursday, April 16, 2026

146th year, 38th Issue — \$1

Extreme drought continues burn bans

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Brush and wildfires remain a danger as drought conditions continue in north Florida, where outdoor burn bans are still in effect.

Bradford County Fire Rescue reported on a fire early Sunday afternoon off Northwest 241st Street north of Lawtey. Florida Forest quickly responded with equipment to begin containing the blaze, which had grown to 10 acres a little more than an hour later. It was 40 acres by 4 p.m. and 75 acres by 5:30, at which time the fire department reported it was 50% contained.

It was close to 11 p.m. before units were released from the fire.

The cause of the fire was not reported, but its rapid spread is not a mystery. Most of the state west of Bradford County and into southern Georgia is experiencing exceptional drought conditions, while Bradford and the counties west are in extreme drought. Multiple hard freezes dried plant materials, leaving fuel to heighten wildfire risk.

Counties continue to emphasize the burn bans, which include all outdoor burning: yard trash, barrels, bonfires, fire pits, etc. Chances are too high that one of these burns will get out of control or cause unintended fires nearby.

Those who see illegal burns taking place are encouraged to report them. The sheriff's office is

publicizing the penalties for burn ban violations, including expensive fines, reimbursement of firefighting costs and jail time.

Water shortage order modified

Suwannee River Water Management District has issued a Modified Phase II Water Shortage Order, which will go into effect April 22.

The order continues to request voluntary water conservation measures and expands mandatory regulatory measures. Regulatory measures include:

- maintaining a one-day per week landscape irrigation schedule for established lawns. The schedule is: Saturday for odd-numbered addresses or no address, Sunday for even-numbered addresses, and Tuesday for non-residential properties. Irrigation shall not occur between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

- limiting irrigation to two days per week on new lawn and landscaping projects. The schedule is: Wednesday and Saturday for odd-numbered addresses or no address, Thursday and Sunday for even-numbered addresses, and Tuesday and Friday for non-residential properties. Irrigation shall not occur between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

- limits to agricultural use, including changes to times allowed for high-pressure overhead irrigation systems.

- changes to golf course irrigation, which limits days of the week when watering is allowed.



The April 12 fire, which grew to approximately 75 acres. Photo: Bradford County Fire Rescue.

More information and details are available at MySuwanneeRiver.com.

UF/IFAS Master Gardener Plant Sale

Join Bradford County's Master Gardeners for a plant sale on Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to noon, or until plants run out. The sale will be held at the Bradford County Fairgrounds in the Cattle Barn. Over 500 edible fruit trees and ornamental natives and Florida-Friendly plants available, including citrus, blueberries, blackberries, grapes, bananas, firebush, coral honeysuckle, salvia, daylilies, bromeliad, butterfly bush and more.

Mossman Hall hosts 2nd Annual BBQ Brawl

Get your grills ready! Mossman Hall will host second annual BBQ Brawl fundraiser on April 18, at 301 State Rd 26 in Melrose. Grill masters are invited to compete for the title of 4Corners Grand Champion and cash prizes totaling over \$1,000. Competition categories include pulled pork, chicken, baby back ribs and beef brisket.

A \$35 wristband will get you all the barbecue you can eat until it's gone. The event also features local vendors, an auction, a car show and live music. The Azalea City Cruisers Classic Car Crawl is at Heritage Park from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors open at 2 p.m. with live music, food and more. The live auction is at 3 p.m., followed by the awards ceremony at 7 p.m.

For more information, email Amy at MossmanHall@gmail.com.

Party with Gold Head

Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park is turning 87. The birthday celebration is Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Plans include an activity that will encourage you to explore several places throughout the park, including trails, picnic area, a historic cabin and more! The event is free with \$5 admission to the park. For more information contact annalee.maloney@floridadep.gov.

Democratic Women meet April 23

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area will meet on Thursday, April 23, at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30). The speaker is author and former Speaker of the Florida House Jon Mills. His topic: "How to be Civil and Win!" All Democrats are welcome to attend. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Melrose Center, 309 State Hwy 26, Melrose, FL 32666. For further information call 352-317-1636.

Union's Whitehead outguns Florida-Georgia sheriffs

Georgia sheriffs vow to take shoot-off trophy to Peach State next year

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead outgunned four other Florida sheriffs and two from Georgia in the Bradford County Sheriff's Office Shoot With the Sheriff event in Graham.

Bradford County Sheriff Gordon Smith said this year's charity event, Shoot with the Sheriff, had the largest field in the event's 11-year history, with 34 teams and more than 120 participants competing and raising money for local nonprofit organizations.

"It's the biggest one we've ever had," Smith exclaimed.

The tournament is organized through the office's charity arm and features raffles, a silent auction, and online registration, with all proceeds going directly to local charitable causes. Smith said administrative costs are covered separately, so every dollar raised stays in the community.

"Every single penny raised, there are no administrative fees or anything like that," he said. "Every dime, every penny goes back to local charitable-type (organizations or functions)."

Among the primary beneficiaries is the Holiday with Heroes program, which pairs law enforcement officers with children for holiday shopping trips.

The event also featured a Sheriff's Shoot-Off among law enforcement executives from across the region. This year's field included Columbia County Sheriff Wallie Kitchings, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods, Putnam County Sheriff Gator DeLoach, and Union County Sheriff



Five Florida and two Georgia Sheriffs competed in a shoot-off for the Sheriff's Shoot Off Trophy. Pictured (l-r): Putman County Sheriff Gator DeLoach, Union County Sheriff Brad Whitehead, Bradford County Sheriff Gordon Smith, Bradford Sportsman's Farm owner Pat Welch, Columbia County Sheriff Wallie Kitchings, Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods, Appling County, Georgia Sheriff Mark Melton and Bleckley County, Georgia Sheriff Daniel Cape.

Brad Whitehead, along with sheriffs from two Georgia counties. Whitehead won the competition.

The shoot-off sparked an interstate rivalry with the Georgia lawmen vowing to return next year with more shooters and to take the shoot-off trophy to the Peach State.

Smith attributed the record attendance to steady year-

over-year growth and the event's appeal in a rural, gun-friendly region.

"Bradford County, we're a rural county, and we have lots of people that like to exercise their Second

See SHOOT, page 7

Keystone Council thanks outgoing airport board members

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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The city council honored two long-serving airport authority members with the city's highest distinction Monday night, received updates on a fast-moving drone industry hub at the local airport, and approved a reduced annual fee for locally based food truck operators during its April 6 regular meeting.

Mayor Nina Rodenroth presented Keys to the City, described as the municipality's most prestigious award, to Scott Fryer and David Kirkland, both longtime volunteers and leaders on the Keystone Heights Airport Authority Board.

Fryer, who served on the board for nearly 13 years, began his aviation career as a teenager, learning to fly at the Keystone Heights Airport. Rodenroth credited him with advancing infrastructure improvements, helping design the airport's administration building, upgrading fuel systems, and logging hundreds of volunteer hours annually, maintaining the airfield.

Kirkland began his service in 2009 and chaired the authority from 2014 to 2025. Under his leadership, airport assets grew from roughly \$6 million to \$17 million. He was also credited as the first chairman to directly engage city, county and state leaders through events such as Clay Day and Rural Days, helping secure FAA and FDOT funding.

In brief remarks after receiving his award, Kirkland hinted at major economic development on the horizon. He referenced a potential \$10 billion investment over the next decade connected to the Erisha Group, an entity the airport authority has been courting for development on the Bradford County side of the airport property.



Outgoing airport board member David Kirkland receives a key to the city from Mayor Nina Rodenroth (center) while Keystone Heights council members look on. (L-r) Brandon Ludwig, Dave Welch, Ryan Knight and Dan Lewandowski.

Drone hub gaining momentum

Airport Authority Chairman James Eifert gave the council a detailed update on a flurry of activity surrounding the airport's growing profile as a center for drone industry development.

He said the airport hosted a drone industry day two weeks prior that drew more than 25 vendors

and high-level officials from the U.S. Department of War and Florida Commerce Secretary Alex Kelly. The event was connected to a roughly \$1 billion federal contract for drone development, from which about 12 companies had been narrowed down from a

See DRONES, page 5



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Starke Branch - 2460 Commercial Dr.



Pictured are (l-r) Commissioners Janice Mortimer and Dimple Overstreet, City Manager Drew Mullins, Mike Puckett, Commissioner Bob Milner, Tommy Wheaton, Zachary Huskisson, David Sparks, FMEA representative, Commissioner Danny Nugent, Red Turner and Mayor Andy Redding.

Starke electric employees exemplify public utility ideals

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Florida Municipal Electric Association presented Starke's electric department with the Restoring Communities Award, an award that celebrates collaboration among public utilities and efficiency in restoring service following emergencies.

Starke was recognized for its work with Gainesville Regional Utilities. Sharing resources and manpower on a feeder line replacement project, the utilities were able to complete the work more safely, more efficiently and with minimal interruption to customers.

According to FMEA, the partnership reflects the spirit of

mutual aid and defines Florida's public power network — neighbors helping neighbors. The professionalism and teamwork shown by Starke's electric utility employees exemplifies the mission of public power, reliable service, community commitment and readiness to step up whenever help is needed, they said.

Scholarship available for medical studies

The Shirley Ann Brown Livingstone Scholarship is available for the 2026-27 school year. Students must apply by Friday, May 14, to be considered for this coming fall and spring semesters.

This scholarship is for students going into any field of

study related to medicine, i.e. nursing, cancer research or any other health care related fields. The scholarship is provided in memory of the late Shirley Ann Brown Livingstone, a registered nurse who died from breast cancer.

Applications are available at

the Santa Fe College Andrews Center in Starke, Bradford High School guidance office, North Florida Technical College and Starke City Hall.

For further information you may contact Carolyn Brown Spooner at 904-964-5807.

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Committee wraps up work on charter

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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The work of Starke's charter committee members has come to an end, and commissioners will be voting to place the amended document in front of voters this fall.

The goal of updating the document by eliminating outdated and obsolete provisions and condensing it into a few readable pages has been accomplished.

The first of six pages deals with legalities such as acknowledging the city's corporate limits, jurisdiction, obligations and powers in relation to other governments. The second section defines the city as the now familiar commission-manager form of government. All legislative powers are vested in the city commission, including enacting ordinances, approving resolutions and adopting budgets. The city manager — appointed by the commission — is responsible for executing the laws and administering city government.

In addition to the city manager, the third section lists two more charter officers — the city attorney and the city clerk.

Like the manager, the city attorney is the only other

employee appointed by the commission. These are the only two employees the commission can hire, direct or fire. A special section in Article II specifically addresses this, preventing commissioners from giving orders to other employees. Charter appointees may be fired by a resolution of a majority of commissioners following a public hearing, if the officer accepts the hearing offer. Otherwise the preliminary resolution will become final. If there is a hearing, the commission will decide afterward to move forward with termination or not.

Like city commissioners, the city clerk will be elected. The only qualifications required for either position is city residency and eligibility to hold public office. Article III outlines the duties of each officer. The city attorney will be the legal advisor for the commission and all other officers, prosecuting or defending cases on the city's behalf, and fulfilling other professional duties, such as drafting ordinances.

The city clerk is the clerk and secretary to the city commission. The clerk attends meetings, keeps minutes of meetings and is custodian of city records, making them accessible to the public and recommending

policies and procedures to ensure all records are kept in accordance with Florida Statutes. The clerk also assists the public in communicating with the commission. Additionally, the clerk shall be responsible for the administration and oversight of municipal elections in accordance with applicable law.

The city manager hires and fires employees and serves as supervisor to offices other than the city clerk and attorney. The manager ensures that laws subject to their jurisdiction or that of their employees are faithfully executed. The manager attends meetings, participates in discussion but does not vote. The manager prepares and submits the annual budget to the commission for approval. The manager executes contracts and other documents on the city's behalf. The manager keeps the commission informed of activities related to the city, the city's financial condition and its future needs. The manager is also charged with pursuing allowable fees and taxes to maximize financial revenues.

The amended charter goes on to discuss elections and the city commission. First is a transitional election schedule, necessary for the implementation of staggered elections in even-

numbered years (as with the county commission). This year's election will proceed as normal, with Districts 1, 3 and 5 electing a commissioner with a term expiring in 2030. The current clerk and commissioners from District 2 and 4 — elected just last year — will also preserve their four-year term expiring in 2029. The clerk and two commissioners elected in 2029, however, will have their terms shortened by one year to expire in 2032. That means the next city elections will take place in 2029, 2030, and then every two years after — 2032, 2034, 2036, etc.

The city commission will continue electing a mayor and vice mayor from its members, each for a one-year term. The mayor presides at meetings and is recognized as head of the city government both ceremonially and for the execution of contracts and other documents. The commission may create or abolish other offices as necessary (police chief/department). Ordinances must be advertised by newspaper notice at least 10 days prior to final adoption.

If commissioners are pleased with the amendments presented, they will move forward and language drafted to place the new charter in front of voters this fall.

Letter

Opposes ICE plan

Dear Editor:

Did you know that Border Patrol operates for up to 100 miles inland from all U.S. borders? That puts Border Patrol active in almost all of Florida. With our Republican-controlled government, we are a tempting target for ICE and Border Patrol throughout the state. They already have four detention centers in Florida (new and old), and they want to build more. ICE is working on plans to put a 3,000-bed prison on Hwy 301, just south of Starke across from Walmart. This would be a huge facility, larger than any other prison in the area.

But what are they talking about, a "Detention Center?" This is where people would be held after violent capture by ICE, after violation of due process. Prisoners would be brought here as a result of racial profiling. That is, the ICE agent thinks someone looks Hispanic, or looks foreign, including Asian people and people they assume are African.

What is a concentration camp? It is a facility where governments imprison specific groups — such as political dissidents, ethnic and religious minorities, or other civilians — without trial, often under harsh conditions. These sites are used for detention, forced labor, or punishment, particularly during wartime or

authoritarian rule. The new ICE Detention Centers are in fact concentration camps.

The Constitution gives all residents due process. That is, the right to a judicial warrant, to know the charges against them, and a fair trial. These things are not happening before people are ripped from their lives. Concentration camps deprive people of privacy, adequate food, medical care, a lawyer, a phone call, and human dignity. The Bradford County sheriff declares that he will be in charge and he will ensure safe, humane treatment. His reputation is on the line. His jail houses 200 — this is another scale entirely.

The proposed location is a big problem too. Many have pointed out the traffic problems and incompatibility with shopping, etc. The property is owned by the county, and it is a toxic site. Clean-up is incomplete and expensive. Neighbors' wells have become polluted with volatile, organic chemicals and vinyl chloride, which are known carcinogens. Although ICE wants this concentration camp opened within weeks, some citizens are insisting on an environmental impact study and complete remediation before they can proceed. We hope and pray this will stop them long enough to make it unattractive to ICE and Border Patrol. Many residents have spoken out against this facility; none are for it.

Sincerely,
Kate Ellison

Three running (so far) in Florida House race

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Three individuals hope to enter public office by winning a Florida House seat now that Rep. Chuck Brannan has reached his term limit.

State House District 10 consists of Baker, Bradford, Columbia and Union counties and part of Alachua County.

One of the candidates is Chuck Brannan's son, Chase Brannan, who is also a Republican. According to his bio, he is a north central Florida native,

educated in Baker County public schools, who grew up working on his family farm raising cattle. He is a real estate business owner who served as director of intergovernmental affairs under Florida CFO Jimmy Patronis. He also served as a Florida Gubernatorial Fellow in the 2020-21 term and worked with the Department of Business and Professional Regulation during the COVID pandemic, helping to keep businesses open.

Brannan is running on a pro-Second Amendment, anti-

abortion, and anti-tax platform. His campaign has topped the field in fundraising. He has amassed dozens of endorsements from the

second Republican candidate in the race, Marshall Clayton Rawson, lives in Hampton and operates Free State Growers, a multicounty agricultural business. He earned a degree in history from Jacksonville University and later graduated from the University of Florida College of Law in 2023, where he focused on

corporate and land use law and was active with the Federalist Society. He previously served as a Washington aide and intern to Republican Congressman Paul Broun, as a legal assistant to Secretary of State Cord Byrd and as a legal intern for the Florida Department of Agriculture.

Rawson currently serves as North Florida Regional Director of the Republican Liberty Caucus and as an officer in the

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<p>SATURDAY 4/18</p> <p>THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE - 4:00 & 7:00</p> <p>YOU, ME, & TUSCANY - 4:00 & 7:00</p>	<p>SUNDAY 4/19</p> <p>THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE - 4:00 & 7:00</p> <p>YOU, ME, & TUSCANY - 4:00 & 7:00</p>

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Public Library

The humble beginnings of the Union County Public Library date back to 1988, when the voters of Union County, Florida passed a referendum for a 1/2mil ad valorem tax to create a new library within a special dependent taxing district. Since then, the library referendum has appeared on the ballot every two years for continued funding. Additional financial support comes from State Aid to Libraries Grant funds and individual donations.

The public library officially opened its doors on March 1, 1990. UCPL began operations in a 1,400 sq. ft. building, expanded to 3,300 sq. ft. in 1997, and now operates in a 9,000 sq. ft. facility completed in 2009. The library currently houses over 40,000 books and materials and offers access to thousands more ebook, audio, and magazine titles. It also provides a wide variety of online research databases, several public computers, and free WiFi access. The library hosts a wide array of programming, including weekly preschool storytime, afterschool programs, summer events for

children of all ages, teen and adult programs, and activities for senior citizens. There's truly something for everyone at the library! In 2024, the Union County Board of County Commissioners officially renamed the library the Mary C. Brown Public Library to honor former Director Mary Brown's 30 years of dedicated service to the community.

The dedicated Mary C. Brown Public Library staff includes L to R: Tennille Brannen (Assistant Director), Sadie Belche (Library Technical Assistant), Renee Crews (Children's Library Assistant), and Priti McNutt (Director).

Celebrating National Librarian Day April 16

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Vice-Mayor, District 2

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Commissioner, District 1

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Commissioner, District 3

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Lawtey parks going tobacco-free

BY MELISSA PYLE
Special to the Telegraph

Continuing their mission to keep public places smoke-free, SWAT teens have now made a familiar request from the city of Lawtey.

Students Working Against Tobacco from Bradford High School presented the city council with their arguments against smoking and vaping in Lawtey parks. The students laid out their case by addressing issues such as air quality, dangerous cigarette butts left in children's play areas and the higher rates of smoking and vaping among Bradford students.

"Tobacco free parks aren't about punishment, but protection," they said.

Council members moved forward with first reading of an ordinance banning smoking and vaping in city parks. When finalized, the ordinance will not incite fines, but those violating will be asked to discontinue their smoking or leave the premises. If they refuse or return and continue to smoke, it was suggested by the city's attorney they can be issued a trespassing notice.



Students Working Against Tobacco or SWAT, made a presentation at Lawtey's April council meeting and proposed banning smoking and vaping at Lawtey parks. Jordyn Sumpter is speaking with Jael Thomas and Emersyn Brooks in back.

Old business

The second matter addressed was "old business." This topic has been repeatedly brought before council for over two years by constituents and former council members. Councilwoman Debra

Norman made a motion that old business be added to all future agendas. "We need to listen to our citizens," she said and suggested much of what is discussed is never revisited. Norman said other small cities have old business on their agenda so Lawtey should be able to do the same.

Councilman Joshua Bell seconded the motion, but Councilwoman Virginia Warner pushed back due to Norman failing to add this motion to the

April agenda. She said motions are to be added prior to the meeting and if a council person wants to add something last minute, they should have stated they wanted to amend the agenda as printed at the beginning of the meeting.

Attorney Dan Sikes said that procedurally that's correct, but council can waive the rule and move forward because it didn't involve a financial commitment. After discussion, all council members, except Warner, voted to add old business to future meetings. Constituents should reach out to their council members to ask about specific old business they'd like addressed at future meetings.

Civil manners matter

Regarding constituents and meetings, Sikes made a statement during his time about the lack of decorum from the public during Lawtey's council meetings. Sikes said he's been an attorney for the city of Starke and other counties and has never seen another body allow citizens to make comments during meetings when it's not time for public comments. The interruptions and comments are usually met with a request for the constituent to leave.

He recommended gaveling down those who make comments or shout during regular sessions to be removed by the police chief or a designated deputy.

"It's not an issue of not listening to the public, we need to listen to the public," Sike said, adding there are procedures for adding your concerns to the agenda, like contacting your council member to address the issue. He said he's never seen any other meeting where disruptive commentary comes from the floor. Citizens are allowed to comment for up to five minutes during public comments, which is at the beginning of each meeting.

In other business: —city charter revision committee applications are available at city hall. Anyone interested, stop by and apply.

HOUSE

Continued from page 3

Florida Guard, having been deployed to the Texas border to help combat illegal immigration. His campaign platform centers on lowering the cost of living, protecting Florida's agricultural lands and green spaces from overdevelopment, and defending conservative principles including gun rights and the right to life.

Branan and Rawson will appear on the primary ballot for Republican voters in August. A third candidate, Dr. Joseph Thornton, will face the primary winner in the November general election. Thornton is running as a member of the American Solidarity Party. The party is a group focused on Christian democratic values, including social justice, and opposes abortion.

Thornton is a partially retired psychiatrist and has spent his career serving those often overlooked — veterans, individuals with mental illness, and incarcerated populations. His career includes roles as associate chief of staff for mental health at the North Florida VA and medical executive director at both Union Correctional Institution and the North Florida Evaluation and Treatment Center. He also serves as an adjunct clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Florida and is the founding director of the UF-VA UNESCO Bioethics Unit.

He founded the Alachua Area Medical Reserve Corps and has lived in the Gainesville/Alachua area for over 20 years.

Republican incumbent Sen. Jennifer Bradley is the only candidate listed in the District 6 race for Florida Senate. State Senate District 6 consists of Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Gilchrist and Union counties and part of Alachua County.

Four in race for District 2

The District 2 Bradford County Commission race has now expanded to four candidates. Jimmy Smith and Jeff Clemons have joined Brad Thomas and Jason Bennett in

filing to run for the seat and replace Commissioner Kenny Thompson, who has said he will not run for reelection.

Each candidate so far is a Republican, so District 2 may decide the winner in August. As for the District 4 seat, Paul Huntley remains the only candidate who has filed to replace Commissioner Danny Riddick, who has said he will not seek reelection. Huntley is running as a Republican.

Incumbents Sheila Cummings and Gayle Nicula have filed to retain their District 1 and 2 seats on the Bradford County School Board. The District 5 seat held by Lynn Melvin is also up for election this year. School board seats are nonpartisan.

Milner challenged for Starke seat

Starke City Commissioner Bob Milner has announced he will run for reelection. Veteran Alvin Hunter has filed to run for the seat as well.

The seats for Districts 1 and 5 are also up for election this year. They are currently held by Commissioner Danny Nugent and Mayor Andy Redding.

Interested in running?

Anyone interested in running for local office should call 904-966-6266 and make an appointment with Supervisor of Elections Amanda Seyfang who has handbooks ready to go and all the information you will need.

Seyfang's website — www.votebradfordfl.gov — is also full of information for voters and candidates alike. Voters can quickly find details about registration, voting by mail, early voting, polling places, upcoming elections and other essential resources.

To vote in the Aug. 18 primary election, voters must be registered by July 20. To vote in the Nov. 3 general election, voters must be registered by Oct. 5.

Announcements

The Bradford County Telegraph, Union County Times and Lake Region Monitor offer candidates an opportunity to publish an announcement of their intention to seek public office. This offer is limited, with submissions accepted no later than the Monday following qualifying week, which takes place in April for federal and judicial candidates, and June for state and local candidates.

There is a one-time charge of \$50 to run the announcement with a photo of the candidate (headshot). This must be paid out of your campaign account. All other submissions will be charged current rates.

Submissions should be emailed to editor@bctelegraph.com.

"My Home Up There"

And as the days go fleeting by,
I'll soon be going to my home on high.
You see me now, but I'll soon be gone,
I'll be going to my heavenly home.
To friends and loved ones I miss so dear,
My final resting place is surely not here.
Don't cry for me- I'll be with the lord,
I'll be there with my heavenly reward.
You can dwell there too,
Heaven's door is open to you

— By Henry Hodges
In memory of Gene Murphy
Brother to all & friend

Bradford High Class of 1964
Will meet at Cedar River Restaurant (Starke) on Thursday, April 16th, at 1 PM.
All graduates & spouses are invited.
At our last meeting we decided to meet every four months instead of every three months.
Please let Jerome Kelly 352.538.0741 OR Eugenia Whitehead at 352.745.1828 know if you plan to attend so we can let the restaurant know how many. **BE THERE!**



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UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM AND AN UNCHANGING KING-2

Hebrews 12:25 (KJV), "See that you refuse not him (Jesus) that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaks from heaven. His voice then shook the earth, but now He has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this Word, Yet, once more signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of the things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

As Christians make up the family of God. God's family unit is part of His unshakeable Kingdom. This Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Light, cannot be shaken. When the earthly world systems (kingdoms) shake and become unstable the Kingdom of God remains firm. The cornerstone upon which this Kingdom is built is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Kingdom of God cannot be destroyed or taken over. We as citizens of this unshakeable Kingdom should have confidence and live in peace without fear. We should be confident and focus on our union with Jesus Christ drawing strength from the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. The world is shaken by what they see happening every day. No generation has witnessed anything like this before in America. It seems that every new day we are inundated with new events that were once-unthinkable.

However, these events have not taken God, nor should they take us by surprise. The Holy Spirit has spoken to us through God's Word to alert and prepare us for times such as these. He told us that "perilous" times would emerge in our society at the end of the last days. The following is taken from the writings of Paul from his 2nd letter to the church at Thessalonica. These words of faith will encourage, strengthen and give you peace in the midst of an unstable world.

2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3 (RIV Translation), "Brothers, listen carefully, for I am asking you in the strongest of terms to hear what I am about to say and to do exactly what I am asking you to do. The appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ is very near. In fact, it is so close, we can nearly feel His presence as if He were already here among us. The moment we have all longed and waited for is almost upon us! I am talking about that moment when Jesus will finally gather us together for Himself. Some things will be happening right before His coming that could shake us up quite a bit. I am referring to events that will be so dramatic that they could really leave your head spinning. Occurrences of such a serious nature that many people will feel alarmed, panicked, intimidated and even unnerved! Naturally speaking, these events could nearly put you over the brink emotionally and make you feel apprehensive and insecure about life. I wish I could tell you these incidents were going to be a one-shot deal, but when they finally get rolling, they're going to keep coming, one after another. That is why you have to determine not to be shaken or moved by anything you see or hear. You need to get a grip on your mind and refuse to allow yourself to be traumatized by these events. If you let these things get to you, it won't be long and you will be a nervous wreck. You have to decide beforehand that you are not going to allow fright to penetrate your mind and emotions until it ruins your whole life. I want to tell you not to be surprised if people start making weird spiritual proclamations and off the wall utterances during the time just before the Lord returns. All kinds of strange things are going to happen during those days. It's going to get so bizarre that you might receive a letter from someone saying the Lord has already come. In light of those things, I urge you to refuse to allow anyone to take advantage of you..."

Blessings! — Pastor Rick

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Lake Region

Students get look at city government

BY JENN SAMSEL
jenn@bctelegraph.com

Students at Keystone Heights Junior-Senior High School recently had the opportunity to learn about city government during a field trip to the Keystone Heights City Hall. The experience provided them with an exclusive look at how the city is run, allowing them to understand its complexities and engage in discussions with the city council and other members of the organization.

On Thursday, April 9, students watched a video about city government before the council members introduced themselves and shared insights about their roles, the City of Keystone

Heights, and the importance of nurturing tomorrow's leaders.

Councilman Brandon Ludwig, who holds Seat 5, serves as a prime example for the students. He is one of the youngest members of the Keystone Heights City Council and represents the North Florida Regional Council. As a KHHS graduate, Ludwig encouraged the students to consider opportunities to serve their community and contribute to building a strong foundation for future generations.

Mayor Nina Rodenroth took the opportunity to discuss current legal issues that could affect city residents, including the potential elimination of property taxes. She also highlighted the benefits of city projects, including the new

basketball and tennis courts.

City Manager James Booth spoke about the hierarchy of the city government and its employees, explaining how each position plays a crucial role in managing daily operations to keep the city running smoothly and efficiently.

The students absorbed a wealth of valuable information and gained insight into what it might be like to serve on the council for the future.

Keystone Heights has approximately 1,600 city residents, with an average household income of \$80,000 and a median age of 38. Notably, 81% of residents own their homes within the city limits, excluding those who live in the surrounding county.



Pictured are (l-r) Carley Feagle, Dave Welch, Brandon Ludwig, Nina Rodenroth, Kaylyn Chapman, Mackenzie Castelveccchi, Jackson McDaniel, Wyatt Chapman, Austin Phillips and James Booth.

DRONES

Continued from page 1

field of 25 to 30 and collectively received approximately \$150 million in funding to produce 30,000 drones for U.S. military use.

Eifert said he distributed 26 airport information packets at the event; 23 were picked up by drone vendors. He later sat down with Commerce Secretary Kelly and about a half-dozen vendors to discuss Florida's tax credits and grants for drone businesses.

By the end of that week, Eifert said he had in hand a proposal from Silicon Beach, a company separate from the Erisha Group, to develop 100 acres on the Clay County side of the airport for a drone innovation and manufacturing hub. That proposal has already been submitted to the FAA, he said.

Eifert cautioned the council not to read too much into any of the ongoing discussions. He said nothing has been formally agreed to by the airport board, and that many obstacles remain before any deals are finalized.

He also reported that Hydroplane, a company developing hydrogen fuel cells, had postponed a planned executive tour of the airport after receiving a significant grant from the Department of War. That visit has been rescheduled for early May.

A separate aviation maintenance training company, Kunz Aviation, is working toward a proposal to lease airport land and partner with Santa Fe College on a crash-disabled aircraft recovery training program, Eifert added.

Council members raised the issue of Clay County's permitting and inspection process, which they said has historically discouraged development on the Clay side of the airport. Eifert confirmed an 80-by-80-foot hangar project on the Clay side took roughly four to five months to clear the permitting process, a delay that nearly caused the contractor to walk away. Councilman Brandon Ludwig noted that the Clay County Commission voted unanimously in early February to update zoning on several airport parcels to better allow industrial development.

Food truck fee adjusted for local operators

The council unanimously approved a revision to the city's food truck fee schedule that reduces the first-year annual permit fee from \$250 to \$150 for operators registered within the 32656 zip code. The reduced rate is intended to ease the burden on small, locally based food trucks that do the majority of their business within the Keystone Heights area.

Ludwig, who brought the amendment forward, said he was careful to preserve the city's per-visit fee structure to avoid unfairly competing with brick-and-mortar businesses. City Manager Jamie Booth said the change would likely affect only two or three food trucks and would not represent a significant fiscal impact. The council approved Resolution 2026-01 as amended.

Water shortage, conservation proclamation

The meeting opened with the council presenting the 2026 Water Conservation Month proclamation to Kraig McLane of the St. Johns River Water Management District. McLane told the council that the region is currently under a Phase 2 water shortage declaration, requiring all irrigation, including wells, to be limited to one day per week. He urged residents and businesses to postpone sod replacement, pressure washing and other non-essential water uses until rainfall returns.

City manager report highlights spring improvements

Booth reported a busy month for city operations in March. The public works team completed road striping in the Nightingale Street parking areas and throughout the Keystone Beach area in advance of Easter, drawing praise from residents. The city's tennis courts were completed and opened to the

public, and the Lake Geneva Restoration Project, now in its third week of active work, is progressing into the Nelson's Point and Breezy Point areas.

The city also completed a switch from Comcast to Verizon for phone, cellular and internet services, saving approximately \$700 per month. An engineering firm has conducted a full assessment of city road and pavement conditions, the first such survey in about five years, to help the city identify grant opportunities for future paving work. Booth said three summer concerts have been scheduled for May 29, June 19 and Aug. 7.

The city's Facebook page has grown to 7,500 followers, up from about 6,000 at the start of the year, Booth noted.

Auditor selection committee formed

The council voted to form an auditor selection committee, as required by state statute, to evaluate proposals for the city's audit contract covering the next three fiscal years. Councilman Ryan Knight was selected to chair the committee, with Gregory Gay and Keith Hatch serving as the two required non-city-employee members.

Sidewalks, opportunity zones, meeting dates

The council discussed a priority framework for sidewalk improvements, with consensus forming around completing sidewalks on roads that currently lack them — particularly along Nightingale Street toward the shopping center — before widening existing three-foot sidewalks to five feet. School-area sidewalks were identified as a second priority for potential widening. City Attorney Rich Komando suggested the city also explore asphalt multi-use paths and Safe Routes to Schools grant funding.

The council approved a letter of support for Federal Opportunity Zone 2.0 designation, covering three census tracts: a logistics hub near Starke, the Bradford County side of the airport and the Clay County side of the airport. The program provides federal tax incentives for capital investment

in designated areas.

The council also voted to move the July council meeting from July 6 to July 13 and to schedule a septic-to-sewer workshop for May 12 at 5:30 p.m., chosen to avoid conflict with Wednesday evening church services and allow council members time to attend a Save Our Lakes Organization meeting the same evening.

Comprehensive plan on track for November state submittal

Planning and Zoning Chairman Dr. John Zieser reported the board is about six to eight weeks behind schedule on its comprehensive plan review but remains on track for a September delivery to the council and a November submission to the state. City Attorney Komando noted that Senate Bill 180, passed last year, prohibits the city from making the plan more restrictive than the current version.

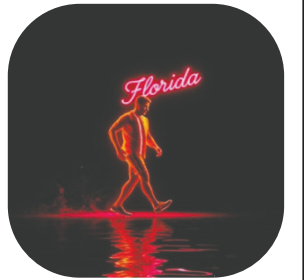
Councilman Dan Lewandowski urged the board to factor in the potential economic impact of the Erisha Silicon

Valley Keystone project, a commercial development. possible \$10 billion investment, when crafting language around land use, infrastructure and

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UNION COUNTY

State sends Union school district \$1.75 million Union's top school employee loves to see students thrive

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Union County School Board and Superintendent Mike Ripplinger dealt with the pluses and minuses of the state declaring the district in a financial emergency during an April 14 workshop.

On the upside, Ripplinger said the state sent an additional \$1.75 million to the district this week, wiping out a forecasted \$1.4 million budget shortfall. The downside: Ripplinger said that his plans for reorganizing middle school grades and shuffling teacher allocations are on hold until a state-appointed committee reviews his plans.

"A collective sigh can be taken now," Ripplinger said of the state cash infusion.

The superintendent added that, in addition to the oversight committee reviewing the district's financial plans, the absence of a state budget adds further uncertainty to next year's district spending plan.

Middle school grades

Ripplinger outlined the framework for consolidating Lake Butler Middle School with Union County High School beginning next school year. Under the plan, the elementary school will house pre-K through fifth grade, while a newly designated Union County High School will serve grades six through 12 at the existing high school campus.

Sixth and seventh graders would remain primarily in the Lake Butler Middle School building, Ripplinger said, while ninth through 12th graders

would remain at the high school. Eighth graders would split time between both campuses depending on class assignments.

Ripplinger said the consolidated school would offer three levels of athletics, middle school, JV, and varsity, for most sports, giving more students competitive opportunities and the ability to move up between levels.

Board member Becky Raulerson asked where the primary savings from consolidation would come from. Ripplinger cited staffing as the largest area, along with a review of all software programs and subscriptions based on return on investment, reduced utility costs, and efficiencies from having middle and high school athletics under unified scheduling.

"Every single program that we look at whether it's computer-based or some other type of program, what is our return on investment?" he said.

Board Chairman Chris Hodgson raised questions about potential cuts to district office staff. Ripplinger said all areas of the district will be reviewed but cautioned against targeting any one department before understanding the full scope of each role.

"Before we say off with their heads, we will look at everything, and we will make the best decision that the district needs," he said.

The superintendent re-emphasized that all district jobs and functions will be reviewed for cost savings.

"I don't know how many more times I can say this, but people aren't going to believe it until they see it," he said. "All areas across the district have been, are

being, and will be reviewed and examined for savings."

Raulerson noted that the board's decision-making authority is now shared with the state-appointed financial emergency committee.

"We're not making the same decisions that we were making six months ago. Now it's a different structure for us," she said.

School start time compliance

Ripplinger presented the district's draft compliance report for the state's school start time statute, which originally required secondary schools to begin no earlier than 8:30 a.m. A subsequent legislative change gave districts flexibility to maintain earlier times if they followed a prescribed process and documented their rationale.

Union County plans to keep all school start times at 8 a.m., consistent with current schedules. A parent survey conducted as part of the compliance process found that 93% of respondents, 126 out of 135, wanted to keep start times as they are.

Ripplinger said he plans to submit the compliance report by late April or early May, ahead of the June 1 deadline. He said the board may also vote formally to affirm its intent to maintain current start times, which he said would strengthen the district's submission.

"The sentiment is, if we fill out the boxes and we do what we're supposed to do, they're pretty much going to let us maintain what we want to do," Ripplinger said.

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Tiandra Sirmones has spent much of her adult life in the Union County school system, and this year her colleagues recognized that dedication by naming her the district's School-Related Employee of the Year.

Sirmones works as the front desk receptionist and attendance clerk at Union County High School, a job she landed by being too effective at her previous one.

Sirmones came to the high school as a paraprofessional working with students in intensive reading. So many of those students tested out of the program through state testing that the need for her classroom position diminished, and she transitioned to the front office before Christmas break.

"I'm no longer in the classroom like I was before Christmas break, but I still get interaction with my students," she said. "It's just not as on an academic level as it was before, but it's still interaction with the kids. And that's what I enjoy the most."

At the front desk, Sirmones said her day covers virtually everything that comes through the door, attendance calls, schedule questions, transcripts, checking students in and out, fielding parent inquiries and directing them to the right staff members.

"Anything that walks in the front door, anything that walks in, I see it first," she said.

Sirmones is a Union County High School alumna who began her career with the district as a substitute teacher shortly

after graduating, left for a stint at the Union County Public Library, then returned to the school system just before COVID-19. She worked as a paraprofessional at the middle school with fifth- and sixth graders in reading and math before eventually moving to the high school, where she is now in roughly her sixth year.

She described the school environment as a key reason she has stayed.

"What I like about working here is that it is family-oriented," she said. "If I need to talk to someone, I can go to my administration. They will talk. If I'm crying, if I'm down, they're going to give me a pep talk. We're built on faith, no matter what, we all rely on our faith that it'll be okay."

In addition to her work duties, Sirmones volunteers running the scoreboard clock during games. She is also a senior class sponsor, helping coordinate senior activities and assisting with junior prom.

Sirmones is passionate about Union County Public Schools and said her co-workers are equally devoted to seeing students excel.

"There are individuals in place that want to see children succeed," she said. "What separates us from everyone is that our children are first. Even in all of the challenges that we're facing, the uncertainty, we still

want the best for our children. We're still giving it our all."

She pointed to students who are struggling academically or behaviorally as examples of where the district's commitment shows.

"Being in the classroom as a paraprofessional, I know that it's a challenge, but from my experience, we have worked, we have advocated for our children."

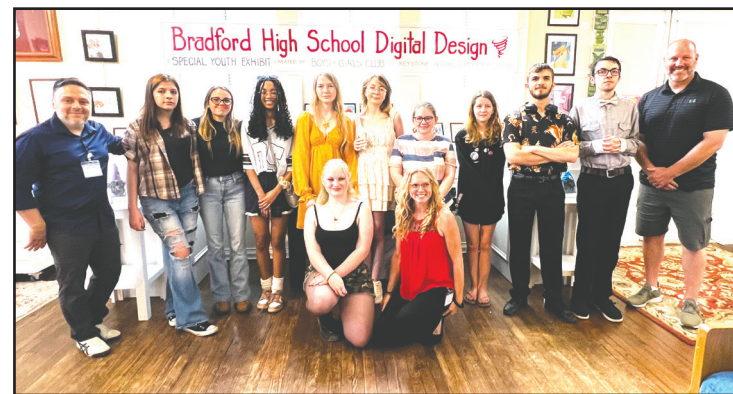
Among the moments she treasures most are watching former students, including athletes who went on to earn scholarships, find success after graduation, whether in college or straight into the workforce.

"It truly does my heart well to see many of them succeeding, whether they chose the path of college or whether they just chose to go straight into the workforce," she said.



Tiandra Sirmones, the Union County School District's School-Related Employee of the Year.

Student art showcased



Pictured are Professor Steven Djavaheri, Allie Gunter, Kayleigh Kilby, Makayla Pernell, Wayne Marable, Aurora Marable, Brittany Ponce, Lilly Fisher, Wyatt Acevedo, Camron Newman, Superintendent Will Hartley, Alyssa Kudlesky and Marlena Conrad.

BY JENN SAMSEL
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Bradford High and Keystone Heights Elementary School showcased students' artwork at Mossman Hall. Attendees had the opportunity to purchase pieces on Friday, April 3, in Melrose, with proceeds supporting the community art program, while the event highlighted the students' creativity, effort, and pride in their creations.

Bradford instructor Steven Djavaheri and Keystone teacher Marlena Conrad offered their students a platform to display their artistic talents through a diverse collection of works. The exhibition featured everything from traditional to modern art, ensuring there was something for everyone to admire and purchase.

Djavaheri has been teaching Digital Design at Bradford for nine years. He aimed to create an outlet that inspires students to learn and take pride in their artistic accomplishments. Additionally, he sought to provide a way for students to showcase their artwork and allow the community to give back by helping to acquire the art and digital materials needed to continue the program.

"The level of creativity on display was incredible, and honestly, it's what makes this job so meaningful," he said. "You could see their confidence, standing next to something

they built from nothing. That's the kind of experience that sticks with a student long after they leave the classroom. While my program is built around guiding students toward earning industry-recognized IT certifications, moments like this remind us that it's never just about the certifications."

Djavaheri credited Superintendent Will Hartley, Principal Christopher Coffey, and CTE Director Keith Kirby for backing programs that make a difference in students' lives.

Conrad has been teaching for 22 years. She is passionate about watching her students learn, grow, and showcase their work.

"We really liked the idea of showing the talent from K-12, having it all on display in this big, gorgeous building," she said. "There's enough room for it, and so I used that opportunity to encourage my Boys & Girls Club students to put work on display and not only for the museum to look at it, but also for sale."

Conrad said she enjoys watching patrons' responses to the pieces.

"Art in general is fun to watch people's reactions to the digital art, trying to decide if it's fine art or digital, and then of course I like watching their reactions to it, and they really tried their best, so it's nice to see people appreciate even the young student artwork," she said.

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Crime

Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

The following individuals were recently arrested 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

Noah Abourezk, 25, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 7 for criminal mischief.

Marie Black, 44, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 6 for a probation violation.

Dontavis Carter, 35, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for battery.

Dennis Cohen, 54, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 8 for resisting an officer.

Kali Cook, 25, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 7 for battery and disturbing the peace.

Jaquez Covington, 27, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for cocaine possession, trespassing, and possession of drug equipment.

Travis Covington, 39, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for a probation violation, cocaine possession, possession of drug equipment, drug trafficking, drug possession, and marijuana possession.

Velma Covington, 69, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for cocaine possession.

Monica Crews, 45, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 7 for battery.

Trenton Edsall, 23, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 5 for criminal mischief, simple assault, and battery.

Colleen Evans, 53, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for battery and aggravated battery.

Joshua Hartwell, 38, of Middleburg, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for

fraud and larceny.

Michael Kiser, 37, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 6 for a moving traffic violation and failure to appear.

Travis Lee, 23, of Starke, was arrested by FHP troopers on April 4 for DUI.

Robert Mason, 31, of Waldo, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 8 for an out-of-county warrant.

Dexter McCoy, 47, of Orange Park, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9.

Jeanetta Merriwether, 39, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 4 for battery.

David Morris, 63, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 6 for DUI.

Shawn Murray, 48, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 5 for trespassing and aggravated assault with a weapon.

Anastasia Nolan, 31, of Middleburg, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 10 for a conditional release violation.

Megan O'Neal, 33, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 10 for DUI, disturbing the peace, disorderly intoxication, and resisting an officer.

Annie Oldham, 30, of Melrose, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 10 for DUI.

Daniel Perez Gomez, 31, of Castle Hayne, North Carolina, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 4 for battery.

Pierre Pollard, 37, of Green Cove Springs, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for failure to pay child support.

Roddy Reynolds, 26, of Starke, was arrested by FHP troopers on April 4 for DUI and hit and run.

Carl Rhoden, 43, of Sanderson, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 8 for failure to appear.

Samuel Richburg, 40, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for a probation violation.

David Tyson, 48, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 4 for battery.

Lionel Webster, 52, of Roswell, Georgia, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 9 for grand theft.

Tiffany Wilkerson, 34, of Lawtey, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 7 for a probation violation.

Brandon Williams, 26, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on April 6 for failure to appear.

Union

Jessie Montrail Jenkins, 28, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on April 6 for trespassing in an occupied structure and battery by a convicted felon.

Robert Thomas Kingsbury, 19, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on April 8 for luring or enticing a child under 14, resisting an officer without violence, and interference with custody of a minor or incompetent person.

Beau Matthew Harrell, 39, of Fort White, was arrested by Union deputies on April 10 for violation of probation.

Landin Rylee Gordon, 19, of Starke, was arrested by Union deputies on April 10 for operating a motor vehicle without a valid driver's license.

Paulina Lauren James, 31, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on April 9 for grand theft (\$20,000 to \$100,000) and fraud.

Galven Wynn Parrish, 47, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on April 7 for resisting an officer without violence, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Jonathan Alexander Schinasi, 46, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on April 11 for possession of a controlled substance without a prescription and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Jo Lynn Tenario, 42, of Ballinger, Texas, was arrested by Union deputies on April 8 for failure to appear.

Clay

Brandon James Haugdahl, 37, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 4 for resisting an officer with violence and battery on a person 65 or older.

Nilson Martinez Merida, 23, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on April 8 for operating a motor vehicle without a valid license.

"Our Soldiers and Airmen are busier and more called upon than ever before, making it essential that we are ready and able to successfully execute our dual mission - supporting our national defense strategy and protecting the lives and property of Floridians when they need us most."

According to its website, "Youth Challenge is an alternative program which offers youth, who have dropped out of school or are not progressing, the opportunity to change their future. Participants looking for a way to succeed outside of a traditional school setting learn self-discipline, leadership, and responsibility while working to obtain their high school diploma or equivalency. Lake Region leaders expressed disappointment in the National Guard's decision. "Clay County District Schools has truly valued our long-standing partnership with the Florida Youth Challenge Academy and the dedication of their staff over the years. While we are aware of the state-level decision regarding the Academy's future, we remain appreciative of the positive collaboration we have shared in support of students," said Clay County Public Schools Superintendent David Broskie.

"We're saddened to hear of the program's ending. We've valued the time spent with the girls and the stories they've shared. The impact on so many families will not be forgotten," said Brooklyn Hayes-Yelin, co-chair, Keystone Heights Woman's Club.

Strawberry Festival drew thousands

Chamber event helped youth groups reach fundraising goals

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Bradford Strawberry Festival drew an estimated 12,000 to 18,000 visitors over two days, according to Chamber of Commerce President Pam Whittle, who said the event proved a success despite an unexpected temperature drop Saturday afternoon that left many attendees scrambling for warm clothing.

Whittle said she reported the festival's success to the chamber's board during its April 9 meeting.

She said the board, which typically meets monthly, recently reached full membership after two vacancies were filled following the departures of Grace Johns and Harry Gunsallus.

The chamber president said the cold snap, while surprising, actually boosted sales for vendors selling long-sleeved apparel. One vendor sold out of long-sleeve items as festivalgoers looked to stay warm.

"We weren't anticipating this 20-degree drop in temperature," Whittle said. "People just weren't prepared, so they were just buying."

Attendance held steady

Attendance was estimated using a car-counting method. Whittle said the parking areas turned over approximately every two hours, and the chamber counted roughly 6,000 cars over the two-day event. Using an average of two or three occupants per vehicle, organizers put total attendance between 12,000 and 18,000 people.

Whittle said attendance held steady compared to previous years, though she noted last year's festival saw higher numbers before a lightning storm and flooding forced an early end to Sunday activities. The festival

drew visitors from across the region, including the Gulf Coast, Daytona Beach, and as far north as Brunswick, Georgia.

"It's always amazing to me that they've come from as far as the Gulf Coast," Whittle said. "Some of them just drove up for the day. It's really amazing what kind of exposure it gives the county."



Chamber of Commerce President Pam Whittle reported the Strawberry Festival's success to the chamber's board during its April 9 meeting.

North Florida Elite, Sheriff's Explorers raise money

The festival featured more than 15 food trucks offering a variety of food, drinks and desserts. Both shortcake vendors sold out, including North Florida Elite, a local cheerleading organization that operated a shortcake booth as a fundraiser and sold out by about 3:30 p.m. Sunday. Whittle said the group has already committed to returning next year. A car show and 50-50 raffle also contributed to the event, with proceeds supporting the Bradford County Sheriff's Office Explorer program. Whittle said the Explorers participate in both the county fair and the Strawberry Festival each year, directing traffic and assisting with parking, to raise funds for summer training and camp, with a goal totaling approximately \$10,000.

"Their goal every year is to make their money for their summer training and summer camp," Whittle explained. "They were able to complete that mission at the Strawberry Festival through the generosity of everybody out there."

The Strawberry Festival is the chamber's sole annual

fundraiser. Whittle said the trade group typically nets around \$20,000 from the event, though final figures for this year are not yet available pending a few outstanding expenses, including the utility bill from the City of Starke.

Upcoming events

Looking ahead, the chamber has several upcoming events on its calendar. A ribbon-cutting and grand opening for Murray Ford's Quick Lane service center is scheduled for April 17, running from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the official ribbon-cutting at 11 a.m. On April 21, a ribbon-cutting is planned at 10 a.m. for a new stage at Starke's downtown square, followed by an after-hours event at Bricks and Iron Icehouse in Lawtey from 4 to 6 p.m. Rotary will hold its annual Beast Feast on April 25.

The Starke Woman's Club will host a Wellness Fair on April 15 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Williams Jewelry is planning its second annual Mother's Day event in its parking lot on May 9. The National Day of Prayer observance is set for May 7 at the downtown square from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SHOOT

Continued from page 1

Amendment rights," he said. "It just gives people a different way to come out and support."

Smith said the event evolved from earlier fundraising efforts, including golf tournaments and cornhole competitions, before settling on its current shooting format after a conversation with Bradford

Sportsman's Farm owner Pat Welch, who suggested the idea.

"I was out there for another charity shoot," Smith recalled. "I think it was for Ronald McDonald House or something."

Smith added that he thought the shooting competition would be good for his office, and Welch offered to help.

"It's not really me," Smith said of the event's success. "It's my staff and people in the community that step up and said, 'Let us help. It's a

good cause."

He added that financial results for the event had not yet been tallied. Smith credited Bradford County Commissioner Chris Dougherty and retired Starke fire chiefs Dwayne Hardy and Gary Wise, among others, for helping spread the word each year.

The sheriff added that he brought two grandchildren to this year's event, noting the family-friendly atmosphere as part of the draw.

After 25 years, Youth Challenge comes to an end

BY JENN SAMSEL
jenn@bctelegraph.com

The Florida Youth Challenge Academy has been operational for over 25 years and has aided more than 6,500 cadets. It is now closing its doors.

A press release from the Florida National Guard, issued on April 8, surprised the community.

"Following careful consideration, the Florida National Guard can confirm that Class 50 will be the final residential class conducted at the Florida Youth Challenge Academy," the National Guard said.

For more than 25 years, the Florida National Guard has been proud to operate one of the nation's top Youth Challenge programs. During that time, the Academy graduated nearly 6,500 cadets, positively shaping the lives of young people across the state and strengthening families and communities. We remain deeply proud of the lasting impact this program has had on thousands of Florida's youth."

The National Guard said it wanted to refocus its resources on its primary mission sets.

Russ WADE

Attorney at Law

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Indians are district champs again

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School won eight of the 10 weight classes in Olympic and won five classes in traditional in winning the team championships in both at the District 8-1A meet on April 9 at KHHS.

Lifting their way to district championships is nothing new for the Indians. They been champs every year (minus the 2020 Covid year, when athletics were suspended) since the Florida High School Athletic Association implemented the district format in 2016.

Individual winners automatically qualified for the Region 4 meet, which will be held Friday, April 24, at 4 p.m. at KHHS. Dylan Currington, Colton Hollingsworth, Logan Madden-Moore, Elijah Mize and Kyle Perkins were automatic qualifiers in both Olympic and traditional, while Brayden McCall, Ben Scott and Andrew Snider were automatic qualifiers in Olympic.

At-large berths (determined by comparing totals in districts 7 and 8) were announced this past weekend, with the result that the entire Keystone team will compete at the Region 4 meet. At-large qualifiers in both Olympic and traditional were Pete Bostic, Talon Lybarger, Eli McCall, Connor Mooneyham, Ayden Nobles, R.J. Rosario, Ryland Rozier, Otto Sweat and Damien Tuffley.

Caleb Alvers and Beau Buchanan were at-large qualifiers in Olympic, while Scott, Snider and Brayden McCall were at-large qualifiers in traditional.

Utilizing the Schwartz formula, which factors body weight vs. weight lifted, Hollingsworth was the traditional event's top overall lifter.

The meet consisted of seven



Dylan Currington won the Olympic and traditional championships in the 119-pound class.



Logan Madden-Moore won the Olympic and traditional championships in the 238-pound class.



Kyle Perkins won the Olympic and traditional championships in the 183-pound class.

teams (including Keystone).

Olympic

The Indians won the Olympic event with 95 points, placing them 31 points ahead of runner-up Father Lopez of Daytona Beach.

Currington won the 119-pound class with a 335-pound total, which consisted of a 140-pound snatch and a 195-pound clean and jerk. His clean and jerk was the best in the class by 55 pounds.

Sweat was second behind Currington with a 270 total (130 snatch, 140 clean and jerk).

Mize, a reigning state champion, won the 129 class with a 360 total (155 205). He had the best clean and jerk in the class by 50 pounds.

Rozier was second in the 129 class with a 350 total (150, 200). His clean and jerk was 45 pounds better than everyone who placed behind him.

It was another 1-2 finish for Keystone in the 139 class, with Hollingsworth winning with a 415 total (175, 240) and Nobles placing second with a 370 total (155, 215). Hollingsworth had the best clean and jerk in the class by 25 pounds.

Brayden McCall's 450 total (190, 260) topped the 154 class. He had the best clean and jerk by 15 pounds and placed ahead of runner-up Seth Kalisz of Father Lopez by 70 pounds.

Mooneyham was third in the 154 class with a 340 total (145, 195).

Perkins and Bostic were first and second in the 183 class, with Perkins compiling a 500 total (215, 285) and Bostic a 435 total (180, 255). Perkins had the best snatch in the class by 30 pounds and the best clean and jerk by 30 pounds.

Scott won the 199 class with



Jagger Lancaster won the Olympic and traditional titles in the 169-pound class at the District 6-1A meet.

BHS lifter Lancaster wins 2 district titles

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's Jagger Lancaster earned Olympic and traditional wins at the District 6-1A boys weightlifting meet, which was held April 8 at Fort White High School.

Lancaster, who competes in the 169-pound class, had a first-place Olympic total of 400 pounds, which placed him 10 pounds ahead of Fort White's Ashton Giddens. Lancaster had a snatch of 175 and a clean and jerk of 225.

That clean-and-jerk total, when paired with a 275 bench press, earned Lancaster a win in the traditional event with an overall total of 500. That placed him 90 pounds ahead of Fort White's Anthony Wilson. Lancaster had the best bench press in the class by 65 pounds.

Lancaster, who competed in the 154 class last year as a Keystone Heights High School student-athlete, improved upon his district totals last season,

See BHS, page 11

Union County has 3 district runners-up

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Zane Mott, Matthew Rogers and Carsen Thomas earned second-place finishes for Union County High School at the District 6-1A weightlifting meet, which was held April 8 at Fort White High School.

The three lifters received at-large berths in the Region 3 meet, which will be held Thursday, April 23, at West Nassau High

School at 4 p.m. Also receiving at-large bids for Union were Phenix Bryant, Caleb Hall, A.J. Rivera and Amry Sullivan.

Rogers and Thomas earned their runner-up finishes in the Olympic event. Thomas had a 390-pound total (175-pound snatch, 215-pound clean and jerk) in the 199-pound class, finishing 15 pounds behind David Lopez

See UCHS, page 11

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SHOP LOCAL!

Obituaries

Patricia Albert

Patricia Marie Albert, 78, of Bradenton, died Monday, April 13, 2026. She was born on June 26, 1947, in Springfield to Clair Rief and Marjorie (Staples) Rief.

Pat was preceded in death by her husband of 54 years, Lynn Albert; and her parents.

Survivors are her son, Brian Albert; grandsons, Wyatt and Grant Albert; siblings, Walter, Arthur, Judie, Coral, and Diana; and many nieces and nephews.

Arrangements are in the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 620 E. Nona St., Starke 3209. 904-964-6200

Robert Alvarez

Arthur "Robert" Alvarez, 56, passed away in the early morning hours of Saturday, April 11, 2026, in Gainesville. Robert was born April 9, 1970, in Starke. He attended Bradford High School with the Class of 1988. Robert was preceded in death by his father, Arthur "Bobby" Alvarez; brother, Blain Dyal; grandparents, Buck and Onie Alvarez, and Vasco and Marie Forsyth.

Robert is survived by his daughters, Ashley (Austin) Alvers and Morgan (Riley) Winkler; son, Arthur Robert Alvarez III; grandchildren, Brooklyn, Miles, Parker and Macy, all of Keystone Heights; his mother, Nancy Faye Alvarez of Starke; and brother, Bartow (Sandy) Lee of Hampton.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 3 p.m. on Friday, April 17, at Sampson City Church of God with Johnny Frampton conducting the service. Visitation with the family will be prior to the service beginning at 2:30 p.m. at the church.

PAID OBITUARY

Amandalene Chandler

Amandalene E. Chandler, 90, passed away Saturday, April 11, 2026, at her residence. She was a high school graduate and member of New Bethel Baptist Church, Keller Street, Starke. She was Mother of the Church, president of the Usher Board, and secretary of Sunday school. She was also a member of Oddfellow Cemetery Committee, American Legion Auxiliary Board and Heroine of Jericho-Ruth Court #18.

Survivors are her granddaughter, Darnettia Campbell; niece, Myra McCray; sister, Legre E. Hankerson; son-in-law, Deacon Allen Campbell; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and dear friends.

The viewing will be Friday, April 17, at 3:30 p.m. at New Bethel Baptist Church, 901 Kellar St., Starke. The Cortege will form at the residence of Mrs. Chandler, 4493 S.E. 143rd Terr., Starke at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 18. Funeral services will be on Saturday, April 18, at 2 p.m. at New Bethel Baptist Church, with Rev. Jerome Robinson officiating.

Arrangements are under the direction of Haile Funeral Home Inc., 802 Oak St., Starke. 904-964-7905.

PAID OBITUARY

Kimberly Dressendorfer

Kimberly Ann Dressendorfer, 54, of Keystone Heights, died Sunday, April 12, 2026. She was born on March 27, 1972, in Bradenton. She was preceded in death by her father, Buford Alderman; and grandson, James David Cava. Survivors are her husband, Mark Dressendorfer; daughter, Samantha (Wayde) Stamey; granddaughter, Susan Cava; mother, Vivian Ann Melvin; and stepson, Joseph Dressendorfer.

She will be deeply missed and forever loved. Arrangements are in the care of Jones-Gallagher Funeral Home, 340 E Walker Drive, Keystone Heights 32656 352-473-3176

Maryann Liptak

Maryann Catherine Liptak, 98, of Keystone Heights died Friday, March 20, 2026.

Survivors are sons, Michael John (Coni) Liptak and Shannon Thomas (Rajo) Liptak; extended family members and friends.

A mass will be held Tuesday, April 21, at 10:30 a.m. at St. William Catholic Church, 275 Satsuma St., Keystone Heights, 32656, with a reception to follow at the church. Interment will be at Keystone Heights Cemetery.

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

Gene Murphy Sr.

Mr. Gene Roland Murphy Sr., 83, of Starke passed away Thursday, April 9, 2026, in Gainesville. He was born on August 2, 1942, in Wildwood to Charlie and Martha Murphy. Gene proudly served as a sergeant at New River Correctional Institution for 22 years. A devoted member of Bible Baptist Church, he led the singing and delighted everyone with his musical talents, often playing the washboard. He was a true family man, finding joy in life's simple pleasures, whether it was cooking up flavorful meals with a dash of spice, tending to his garden, or spending time with loved ones. His infectious smile and warm presence made him beloved by all who knew him. His love for life extended to many things. He loved God above all else, and his faith was the foundation of his life. He enjoyed the challenge of word searches, the nostalgia of old Westerns, and the majesty of eagles soaring through the sky. Gene's passions were as vast and varied as his love for family and friends. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his siblings, David, Stanley, Voncile, Steve, Joyce, and Harvey.



Left behind to cherish his memory is his loving and devoted wife of 62 years next month, Faith (Hodges) Murphy, and their children, Theresa (Raymond) Trainor, Martha Roberts, and Gene Murphy Jr.; along with a sister, Crystal Olive. He was lovingly called "Papa" by grandchildren, Heather, Ashley, Casey, Austin, Mitchell, and Gavin; along with great-grandchildren, Layla, Michael, Natalie, Maverick, Emily, and Tyson.

The family will receive friends beginning at 10 a.m. for the viewing, Thursday, April 16, at First Baptist Church of Keystone Heights. Funeral services will begin at 11 a.m., with Brother Roger Worten officiating. Interment will follow at 3 p.m. at Macedonia Cemetery in Macclenny.

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

PAID OBITUARY

Sharon Nichols

Sharon Carter Nichols, 56, a lifelong resident of Starke, passed away on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at UF Select Specialty Hospital in Gainesville. She attended the schools of Bradford County. She was a member of Greater Bethlehem Freewill Church in Starke.



She leaves precious memories to two daughters, Miriam Nichols and Quanisha Allen; two sons, Benjamin Nichols Jr. and Atelio Carter; three sisters: Darlene Blye, Shirley Sewell and Regina Carter; five brothers: Andrew Carter Jr., Pedro Carter, Isham Carter, Glenn Carter and Cedric Carter; and a host of grands, nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts, uncles and many sorrowing friends.

Memorial services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 18, at Greater Bethlehem Freewill Memorial Garden Cemetery in Starke with Minister Michael McDuffie conducting the services under the direction of Haile Funeral Home Inc., 802 N. Oak St., Starke 32091. 904-964-7905.

PAID OBITUARY

Patty Roberts

Patty Lou Roberts, 77, of Pooler, Georgia, died Friday, April 10, 2026. She was preceded in death by her husband, Guy Onie Roberts Sr.

Survivors are four children; two brothers; three sisters; and extended family and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held Tuesday, April 21, at 11:30 a.m. at First Baptist Church of Middleburg, 2645 Blanding Blvd., Middleburg, 32068. Visitation will be on Tuesday, April 21, at 10:30 a.m. at the church.

Arrangements are under the care of V. Todd Ferreira Funeral Services, Starke 32091, 904-964-5757.

Jane Winterling

Ora "Jane" Winterling, 105, of Keystone Heights died Tuesday, April 7, 2026. She was born May 31, 1920, in Kalispell, Montana, to Frank Weston and Jessie (Jacobs) Winterling. She dedicated part of her life to missionary work, reflecting her deep faith and compassion for others. Since 2015, she has been a beloved resident of Park of the Palms, where she was known for her kind spirit and gentle presence.

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

Card of Thanks

The family of Edgar Williams Jr. deeply appreciates the kindness, support and love shown to us during this difficult time. It will always be remembered.

A special thanks to

Lawtey Church of Christ, Mt. Zion AME Church- Lawtey, and the community.

With our sincere thanks!

The family of Edgar Williams Jr.



Keystone won the Olympic and traditional District 8-1A team championships, leaving the Indians undefeated in the history of district meets. Kyle Perkins (fourth from left, front) and Colton Hollingsworth (fifth from left, front) hold the trophies. Other team members pictured (alphabetical order) are Caleb Alvers, Pete Bostic, Beau Buchanan, Dylan Currington, Talon Lybarger, Logan Madden-Moore, Brayden McCall, Eli McCall, Elijah Mize, Connor Mooneyham, Ayden Nobles, R.J. Rosario, Ryland Rozier, Ben Scott, Andrew Snider, Otto Sweat and Damien Tuffley. Coaches are Jakob Alvarez, Caleb Moncrief and Ray Trimble.

CHAMPS

Continued from page 8

a 390 total (160, 230), finishing 20 pounds ahead of runner-up Hunter Amato of Father Lopez. Eli McCall placed fifth with a 280 total (120, 160).

Madden-Moore won the 238 class by 50 pounds with a 490 total (210, 280), which put him ahead of runner-up Connor Harriston of Father Lopez. Madden-Moore had the best clean and jerk in the class by 45 pounds.

Tuffley was sixth in the 238 class with a 270 total (120, 150).

Snider had a 475 total (200, 275) to edge Horatio Rodriguez of Crescent City by 5 pounds in the unlimited class. Rosario placed third with a 345 total (140, 205).

Lybarger was runner-up in the 219 class with a 440 total (180, 260). That left him trailing champion Jaylius Brantley of Crescent City by 45 pounds.

Buchanan and Alvers competed in the 169 class. Buchanan had a fifth-place total of 320 (135, 185), while Alvers had a sixth-place total of 310 (120, 190).

Traditional

The Indians had 72 points in winning the traditional event, while Father Lopez was runner-up with 50 points.

Currington won with a 370

total (195 clean and jerk, 175 bench press), placing him 85 pounds ahead of Matt Loranger of Interlachen. Sweat was fourth with a 280 total (140, 140).

Mize had a first-place total of 440 (205, 235), while Rozier had a second-place total of 375 (200, 175). Mize had the best bench total in the class by 60 pounds.

Hollingsworth's winning total was 490 (240, 250). He had the best bench total in the class by 20 pounds and finished 60 pounds ahead of runner-up Camden Jackson of Interlachen.

Nobles was third in the 139 class with a 390 total (215, 175).

Perkins took the top spot in his class with a 575 total (285, 290), while Bostic was second with a 520 total (255, 265). Perkins had the best bench total in the class by 25 pounds.

Madden-Moore was a winner by 55 pounds, compiling a 585 total (280, 305) that put him ahead of Interlachen's Trent Millic. Tuffley had an eighth-place total of 375 (150, 225).

Lybarger and Brayden McCall were the runners-up in their classes. Lybarger had a 535 total (260, 275), which left him trailing Crescent City's Brantley by 100 pounds, while McCall had a 490 total (260, 230), which left him trailing Joseph Abrantes of Father Lopez by 35 pounds.

Scott took third in his class with a 470 total (230, 240), while Snider was fourth in his class with a 535 total (275, 260).

Mooneyham had a fifth-place



Elijah Mize won the Olympic and traditional championships in the 129-pound class.



Colton Hollingsworth won the Olympic and traditional championships in the 139-pound class.

total of 385 (195, 190), while Rosario had a sixth-place total of 450 (205, 245).

Alvers and Buchanan were eighth and ninth, respectively, in their class. Alvers had a 365 total (190, 175), while Buchanan had a 355 total (185, 170).

Eli McCall had a ninth-place total of 315 (160, 155).

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



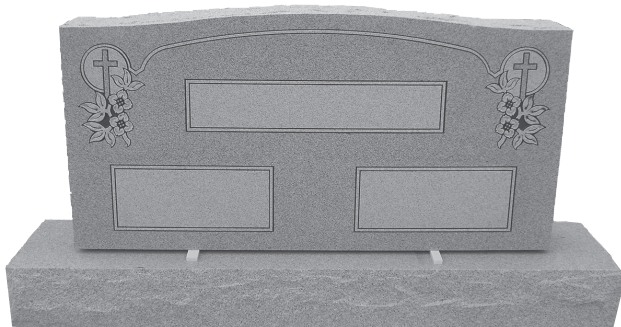
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Lopey jumps to win for BHS at SFHS meet

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's track and field teams competed at the April 9 Santa Fe Raiders Last Chance meet, with Ny'asia Lopey winning the girls triple jump with a distance of 32 feet, 2 inches.

Lopey also earned a fifth-place finish in the long jump with a distance of 15-3.25.

Kah'myra Hankerson also scored for the girls team with an eighth-place distance of 23-11.5 in the shot put.

The boys 4x100m relay team of Jordan Cason, Damarion Dodd, Jarell Harris and Elijah Lawrence placed third with a time of 44.18 seconds.

Jy'Quez Cason and Dylan Ruise had fourth- and seventh-place distances of 18-10.75 and 18-6.5 in the long jump, while P.J. Lee was fourth in the shot put with a distance of 45-4.25.

Chase Smalls and Jamie Lopey had fifth- and seventh-place distances of 38-2.75 and 37-3.75 in the triple jump.

Brendan George, Kendrick Munnerlyn, Liam Reaves and Bryheem Thomas teamed up to run a sixth-place time of 10:23.71 in the 4x800m, while Dodd, Munnerlyn, Jordan Cason and Brilan Clifflin ran a seventh-place

time of 3:57.75 in the 4x400m.

Munnerlyn had a sixth-place time of 54.98 in the 400m, while Harris had an eighth-place time of 24.12 in the 200m.

Prior to the meet, the Tornados competed in the April 8 Menendez High School Falcon Last Chance meet.

Lawrence won two events for the boys team, running the 100m in 11.59 and the 200m in 22.68.

Jamie Lopey won the long jump with a distance of 19-5.5, while Lee won the shot put with a distance of 45-7.75.

Bradford was runner-up in the boys 4x100m, with Dodd, Harris, Lawrence and Jordan Cason running a time of 43.87.

Jy'Quez Cason and Harris were

third and fourth, respectively, in the 200m with times of 23.56 and 23.58, while the Tornados had fifth-place finishers in Harris, who had a time of 11.86 in the 100m, Ruise, who had a distance of 18-9.75 in the long jump, and Smalls, who had a distance of 36-2 in the triple jump.

Sixth-place finishes were earned by Munnerlyn with a time of 54.81 in the 400m and Lopey with a distance of 35-9.5 in the triple jump.

Dodd had a seventh-place time of 19.60 in the 110m hurdles.

On the girls side, Ny'asia Lopey won the long jump with a distance of 15-0.5 and placed third in the triple jump with a distance of 30-6.25.

Durant wins 2 events for UC in Chiefland

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School got two first-place finishes from Edward Durant and four wins overall at the April 9 Chiefland Field Festival.

Durant won shot put with a distance of 38 feet, 1.5 inches, while also taking first in the discus with a throw of 120-8.

A.J. Rivera and Matthew Rogers were second and third, respectively, in the boys shot with distances of 34-7.75 and 31-2, while Deion Givens had a

fourth-place distance of 30-2.

Rogers was runner-up in the discus with a throw of 112-11. C.J. Ivey and Givens had third- and fifth-place distances of 106-11 and 66-10.

On the girls side, Holly Halfacre won the triple jump with a distance of 28-8.5, while Jayden Johnson won the long jump with a distance of 13-9.75.

Halfacre was runner-up in the long jump with a distance of 13-6.25. The event also saw Susan McLeod place fourth at 13-0.75, while Elauna Roberts and Mari Williams had eighth- and 10th-place distances of 10-7.75 and 8-5.75.

Brianna Taylor was runner-up

See TRACK, page 11

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of April 16, 2026

BRADFORD

Suwannee River Water Management District Declaration of Phase II Water Shortage

The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) has issued a Phase II Water Shortage Order, WSO 26-002 for water uses within all Counties located in the District, including all locations in Alachua and Levy counties, excluding the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy, and Hawthorne located in Alachua County.

To learn more or to view WSO 26-002, visit our website at www.mysuwanneeriver.com. PUBLISH: no later than March 20, 2026 /tm

3/19 1tchg Until Further Notice BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 63-2025-CA-0053
TD BANK, N. A., a national banking association,
Plaintiff,

vs.
LINDA ANDREWS SCOTT (A/K/A LINDA P. SCOTT); UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF LINDA ANDREWS SCOTT (A/K/A LINDA P. SCOTT), IF ANY; JEFFREY ANDREWS; KIMBERLY ANDREWS; TENANT AND UNKNOWN TENANT(S) IN POSSESSION, IF ANY,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to the Order Rescheduling Foreclosure Sale dated February 24, 2026 and Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated January 12, 2026, and entered in Case No. 63-2025-CA-0053 of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Union County, Florida wherein TD Bank, N.A., is Plaintiff, and Linda Andrews Scott (a/k/a Linda P. Scott), et al., are Defendants. The Clerk of this Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder at in the lobby of the Union County Courthouse at 55 West Main Street on April 23, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment of Foreclosure, to wit:

A PARCEL OF LAND LYING, BEING AND SITUATE IN SECTION 31, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 18 EAST, UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:
COMMENCE AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SAID SECTION 31, AND RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES 34 MINUTES 48 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 426.28 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED PARCEL OF LAND; THENCE CONTINUE RUNNING SOUTH 89 DEGREES 34 MINUTES 48 SECONDS EAST, CONTINUING ALONG SAID NORTH LINE OF THE WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 828.50 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31; THENCE RUN SOUTH 01 DEGREE 12 MINUTES 10 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 302.53 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 85 DEGREES 55 MINUTES 45 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 832.29 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 03 MINUTES 51 SECONDS WEST A DISTANCE OF 249.50 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

TOGETHER WITH A NON-EXCLUSIVE PERPETUAL 30.00 FOOT EASEMENT FOR INGRESS, EGRESS AND UTILITIES, LYING, BEING AND SITUATE IN SECTION 31, TOWNSHIP 5 SOUTH, RANGE 18 EAST, UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:
COMMENCE AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 31 AND RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES 55 MINUTES 09 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 1293.53 FEET; THENCE

RUN NORTH 00 DEGREES 06 MINUTES 25 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 37.92 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF STATE ROAD NUMBER 238; THENCE RUN NORTH 89 DEGREES 53 MINUTES 35 SECONDS WEST, ALONG SAID NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF STATE ROAD NUMBER 238, A DISTANCE OF 180.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED 30.00 FOOT EASEMENT, SAID 30.00 FOOT EASEMENT BEING PARALLEL WITH AND LYING 30.00 FEET TO THE LEFT (WESTERLY, NORTHERLY AND SOUTHERLY), OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED LINE (AT CHANGES OF DIRECTION RIGHT-OF-WAY LINES SHALL BE SHORTENED OR LENGTHENED TO FORM POINTS OF INTERSECTION): THENCE RUN NORTH 00 DEGREES 06 MINUTES 25 SECONDS EAST A DISTANCE OF 217.20 FEET; THENCE RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES 53 MINUTES 35 SECONDS EAST A DISTANCE OF 137.85 FEET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTHERLY EXTENSION OF THE WEST LINE OF LOT 15, "PROVIDENCE NORTH", ACCORDING TO PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 1, PAGE 24, PUBLIC RECORDS OF UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA; THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 19 MINUTES 31 SECONDS WEST, ALONG SAID SOUTHERLY EXTENSION, A DISTANCE OF 223.04 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 15, "PROVIDENCE NORTH"; THENCE CONTINUE RUNNING NORTH 01 DEGREE 19 MINUTES 31 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH", A DISTANCE OF 2158.31 FEET TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH"; THENCE RUN SOUTH 89 DEGREES 51 MINUTES 20 SECONDS EAST, ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH", A DISTANCE OF 69.00 FEET; THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 11 MINUTES 51 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE WEST LINE OF SAID "PROVIDENCE NORTH", A DISTANCE OF 15.50 FEET TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE NORTH 1/2 OF WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SAID SECTION 31; THENCE RUN NORTH 01 DEGREE 12 MINUTES 10 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE EAST LINE OF SAID NORTH 1/2 OF WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 2650.78 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID WEST 1/2 OF EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 31; THENCE RUN NORTH 89 DEGREES 34 MINUTES 48 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID SECTION 31, A DISTANCE OF 303.79 FEET TO THE END OF SAID 30.00 FOOT EASEMENT (LEFT (SOUTHERLY) RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE TO BE SHORTENED OR LENGTHENED TO TERMINATE ON A

LINE WHICH BEARS SOUTH 00 DEGREES 25 MINUTES 12 SECONDS WEST FROM SAID END).
PARCEL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 31-05-18-00-000-0101-2
Property Address: 9534 NW 44th Lane, Lake Butler, FL 32054
IF YOU ARE A SUBORDINATE LIENHOLDER CLAIMING A RIGHT TO FUNDS REMAINING AFTER THE SALE, YOU MUST FILE A CLAIM WITH THE CLERK NO LATER THAN THE DATE THAT THE CLERK REPORTS FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS.
DATED 31st day of March, 2026.
KELLIE HENDRICKS RHOADES, CPA
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
By: C. Hollingsworth, Deputy Clerk
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFFS:
Danielle Rundlett Burns, Esq.
Duane Morris LLP
5100 Town Center Circle, Suite 400
Boca Raton, FL 33486
Email: DRBurns@duanemorris.com
The above is to be published in the Union County Times
4/9 2tchg 4/16-BCT

intention to sell this vehicle on April 27th, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at T & M Towing storage yard located at 3687 Ambient Air Rd., Starke, FL 32091. T & M Towing reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids.
1998 Ford
Vin # 1FAPP47VXWVF224760
4/9 2tchg 4/16-BCT

SANTA FE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING/ELECTION OF TRUSTEES
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026, 6:00 P.M.
Hampton City Hall, Hampton, FL
4/9 2tchg 4/16-BCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE
To satisfy the owner's storage lien, KO Storage LLC will sell at public lien sale on May 20, 2026. The personal property in the below-listed units, which may include but are not limited to: Household goods, boxes/totes/bags, clothing, bedding, tools and toys. The public sale of these items will begin at 10AM on May 13, 2026 and end at 12PM on May 20, 2026. The public sale will take place on www.storage-treasures.com.
KO Storage of Starke - S Walnut St, 1650 South Walnut Street, Starke, FL 32091, (952)-491-6837. Time: 12:00PM CST
A14, Cam, Yashica, A66, Adams, Guy
Public sale terms, rules, and regulations will be made available on www.storage-treasures.com. All sales are subject to cancellation. We reserve the right to refuse any bid. Payment must be by credit/debit card, we do not accept checks or cash. Buyers must secure the units with their own personal locks. To claim tax-exempt status, original RESALE certificates for each space purchased is required. By KO Storage LLC, 10301 Wayzata Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55305. 4/16 2tchg 4/23-BCT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of Atlantic Digital Assets, intends to register said name with the Florida Division of Corporations, pursuant to the provisions of the Fictitious Name Act.
Dated this 14th of April, 2026.
RIDGELAWN LLC
14439 US HWY 301 S.
STARKE, FL 32091
4/16 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of Science Project, intends to register said name with the Florida Division of Corporations, pursuant to the provisions of the Fictitious Name Act.
Dated this 14th of April 2026.
Science Education Research Corporation
14439 US HWY 301 S.
STARKE, FL 32091
4/16 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME
Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: MARK W. BENNETT, 6928 NW CR 229A, Starke, FL 32091, SOLE owner, doing business under the firm name of: WESTENHOOK RIVER FARMS LLC, 6928 NW CR 229A, Starke, FL 32091, intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 13th day of APRIL A.D., 2026, in BRADFORD County.
04/16 1tchg-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
PROBATE DIVISION
File No.: 26000037CPAXMX
Division
IN RE: ESTATE OF JAMES WILLIAM DIXON SR.,
Deceased.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The administration of the estate of James William Dixon Sr., deceased,

NOTICE OF SALE
T & M Towing gives notice of lien and

whose date of death was July 9, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for Bradford County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is P.O. Drawer B, Starke, FL 32091. 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.
The personal representative has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the decedent's death by the decedent or the decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in ss. 732.216-732.228, Florida Statutes, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under s. 732.2211, Florida Statutes. The written demand must be filed with the clerk.
ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 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 April 16, 2026.
ATTORNEY FOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE: RODOLFO SUAREZ, JR. ESQ.
Fla. Bar No. 013201
Suarez Law
Attorney for Estate
9100 S. Dadeland Blvd., Ste. 1620
Miami, Florida 33156
Tel. (305) 448-4244 / Fax (305) 448-4211
Primary Email: rudy@suarezlawyers.com
Personal Representative:
Juana Jean Gillyard
652 SE Margaret Drive
Lake City, Florida 32025
4/16 2tchg 4/23-BCT

OF SE 1/4 AND RUN NORTH 1 DEGREE, 17 MINUTES AND 55 SECONDS WEST, ALONG THE EASTERLY BOUNDARY THEREOF, 412.45 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. FROM POINT OF BEGINNING THUS DESCRIBED CONTINUE NORTH 1 DEGREE, 17 MINUTES AND 55 SECONDS WEST, ALONG SAID EASTERLY BOUNDARY, 412.44 FEET TO A CONCRETE MONUMENT; THENCE NORTH 89 DEGREES, 15 MINUTES, AND 39 SECONDS WEST, PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY OF SAID NW 1/4 OF SE 1/4, 200.0 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 1 DEGREE, 17 MINUTES AND 55 SECONDS EAST, PARALLEL WITH AFORESAID EASTERLY BOUNDARY, 412.44 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 89 DEGREES, 15 MINUTES AND 39 SECONDS EAST, PARALLEL WITH AFORESAID SOUTHERLY BOUNDARY, 200.0 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING. TOGETHER WITH A 2001 MOBILE HOME
VIN # FLHMLCN164624345A & VIN # FLHMLCN164624345B HUD TAG NUMBERS FLA 702496 & FLA 702495
Street Address: 20335 East 144th Street, Starke, Florida 32091

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on McCabe, Weisberg & Conway, LLC, Plaintiffs attorney, whose address is 3222 Commerce Place, Suite A, West Palm Beach, FL 33407, within 30 days after the date of the first publication of this notice, and file the original with the Clerk of this Court, otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.
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, Alachua County Courthouse, 201 East University Ave., 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.
Dated on April 10, 2026.
DENNY THOMPSON
CLERK OF SAID COURT
By: KANETRA JENKINGS
As Deputy Clerk
McCabe, Weisberg & Conway, LLC
3222 Commerce Place, Suite A
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
Telephone: (561) 713-1400
FLpleadings@MWC-law.com
Publish: Bradford County Telegraph
4/16 2tchg 4/23-BCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 8TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 25000508CAAXMX
DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY, AS TRUSTEE FOR AMERIQUEST MORTGAGE SECURITIES INC., ASSETBACKED PASS-THROUGH CERTIFICATES, SERIES 2005-R8, Plaintiff,
vs.
JOSEPH DAVID LOIACANO A/K/A JOSEPH LOIACANO A/K/A JOSEPH D. LOIACANO A/K/A DAVID LOIACANO, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF JOSEPH DAVID LOIACANO A/K/A JOSEPH D. LOIACANO A/K/A DAVID LOIACANO, LORA L. BARGAR A/K/A LORA L. BARGER; MYSTRY D. SCOTT, CLERK OF THE COURT, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA; STATE OF FLORIDA, Defendant(s).
NOTICE OF ACTION
TO: Joseph David Loiacano a/k/a Joseph Loiacano a/k/a David Loiacano Residence Unknown
Unknown Spouse of Joseph David Loiacano a/k/a Joseph D. Loiacano a/k/a Joseph Loiacano a/k/a David Loiacano Residence Unknown
YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following described property in Bradford County, Florida:
A PARCEL OF LAND CONTAINING 1.89 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, AND LYING IN THE NW 1/4 OF SE 1/4 OF SECTION 35, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 22 EAST, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA; SAID PARCEL BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:
COMMENCE AT A CONCRETE MONUMENT LOCATED AT THE SE CORNER OF SAID NW 1/4

provided by an FDOT CEI consultant. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at the Board of County BOCC Chambers located at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL 32091 on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 2:00 PM. Representatives of Owner and Engineer will be present to discuss the project. Bidders are encouraged to attend and participate in the conference, but attendance is not required for submittal of Bid. The County reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to reject any or all proposals, to cancel or withdraw this solicitation at any time and waive any irregularities in the RFP process. The County reserves the right to award any contract to the lowest responsive responsible bidder. The County is not bound to award any contract. The County, in its sole and absolute discretion, also reserves the right to waive any minor defects in the process.
Additional information may be obtained from:
Jason Dodds, Director of Public Works
(904) 966-6243
jason_dodds@bradfordcountyfl.gov
4/16 1tchg-BCT

UNION
Suwannee River Water Management District Declaration of Phase II Water Shortage
The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) has issued a Phase II Water Shortage Order, WSO 26-002 for water uses within all Counties located in the District, including all locations in Alachua and Levy counties, excluding the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy, and Hawthorne located in Alachua County.
To learn more or to view WSO 26-002, visit our website at www.mysuwanneeriver.com.
3/19 1tchg Till Further Notice - UCT

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the following application for permit was received on March 2, 2026:
Florida Department of Corrections, 501 S Calhoun St, Tallahassee, FL 32399-6548, has submitted n application to renew Water Use Permit 219970-6, authorizing a maximum average daily use of 0.5685 million gallons of groundwater for institutional use. This project is located in Section 7, Township 6 South, Range 20 East, in Union County.
Interested persons may comment upon the application or submit a written request for a staff report containing proposed agency action regarding the application by writing to the Suwannee River Water Management District, Attn: Resource Management, 9225 C.R. 49, Live Oak, Florida 32060. Such comments or requests must be received by 5:00 PM within 14 days from the date of publication.
No further public notice will be provided regarding this application. A copy of the staff report must be requested in order to remain advised of further proceedings. Substantially affected persons are entitled to request an administrative hearing, pursuant to Title 28, Florida Administrative Code, regarding the proposed agency action by submitting a written request after reviewing the staff report.
PUBLISH: no later than April 16, 2026 /tm
4/16 1tchg-UCT

REGULAR MEETING NOTICE
The City of Lake Butler City Commission will hold a REGULAR MEETING on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 6:00pm at the City Commission Chambers located in City Hall at 200 SW 1st Street Lake Butler, FL 32054.
4/16 1tchg-UCT

BIDS
Now accepting bids for the Raiford Community Center porch remodeling. Please contact Town Hall to set up appointments at 386-431-1144.
4/16 2tchg 4/23-UCT

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\$26.00 six months

BHS softball team loses to Conquerors

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School got a home run from Emalyn Crawford, but that was one of only five hits the Tornadoes had in a 7-1 loss to visiting Trinity Christian on April 7.

The Tornadoes (2-10) trailed 6-0 before Crawford's homer, which occurred in the bottom of the fifth.

Raelynn Alexander also had an extra-base hit for Bradford with a double.

Bradford played Toco Creek this past Tuesday and was scheduled to host Newberry on Wednesday, April 15, at 6:30 p.m. The Tornadoes travel to play Keystone Heights on Tuesday, April 21, at 6:30 p.m. and then travel to play Buchholz on Wednesday, April 22, at 7:30 p.m.

BHS baseball season ends with 14-4 loss

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's baseball season came to an end with a 14-4, six-inning loss to second seed Santa Fe in an April 14 District 5-3A semifinal game

in Alachua.

The third seed Tornadoes (9-15) took a 3-2 lead after scoring two runs in the top of the third. With two outs and no one on, Kaedan Parks, Ryland Rike and Patrick Pendarvis all hit singles, with Pendarvis' hit driving in a run and an error allowing another run to score.

Santa Fe (9-17) answered with five runs in the bottom of the inning and led 9-4 after four.

The Raiders pushed five runs across in the sixth to end the game early.

Pendarvis and Rike each batted 2 for 3 with an RBI, while Jaxson Carter went 2 for 4.

Kyler Hall had one RBI.

BHS baseball team ends regular season with 7-6 win

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Bradford High School's baseball team scored seven runs in the first two innings and held on to get a 7-6 win over host Crescent City in the regular-season finale on April 10.

A five-run first began Jackson Parmeter and Patrick Pendarvis each hitting a single before Parmeter scored on an error. Pendarvis scored when Ryland Rike reached on an error. After a Kaedan Parks double, Breion Johnson drove in a run on a

ground out. Ryder Thompson walked before Kyler Hall hit an RBI single. Tucker Roberts hit into a fielder's choice, allowing Thompson to score.

In a two-run second, Rike scored when Breion Johnson was put out at first on a dropped third strike. Parks, who reached on a walk, scored on a wild pitch.

Starting pitcher Roberts earned the win, giving up three runs (two earned) and one hit in three innings. He had three strikeouts.

Thompson threw the final four innings, allowing three runs (one earned) and three hits, while striking out three.

Bradford went 0-2 in its previous two games, beginning with a 16-1, four-inning loss to host Middleburg on April 7.

Rike had both of the Tornadoes' hits, going 2 for 2 with an RBI.

On April 9, the Tornadoes lost 3-2 to host Menendez.

Roberts had an RBI single in the first inning, while Parmeter had an RBI single in the third, putting Bradford ahead 2-0.

The game was tied at 2-2 going into the bottom of the seventh. The Falcons' leadoff batter was hit by a pitch, while the second batter walked. After an intentional walk, the Tornadoes gave up a bases-loaded walk to force Menendez's winning run in.

Rike batted 2 for 2 with two doubles, while Johnson went 2 for 3.

KHHS baseball team drops game to Clay

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School dropped its fourth straight game, losing 11-0 to visiting Clay in the Indians' regular-season finale on April 8.

The Indians (7-16) were held to two hits, one of which was a double by Brock Screen.

Keystone entered the game off a 7-5 loss to visiting Oakleaf on April 7.

It was a 3-0 game in favor of the visitors until the Indians scored two runs in the fourth. Cason Burton hit a single and sole second. Ryder Trull reached on a fielder's choice, while Burton remained at second. After Ethan Franklin hit an RBI single, Cooper Barry walked to load the bases. Anthony Peak then hit an RBI single with two outs to make the score 3-2.

The Knights went up 7-2, but Keystone cut its deficit to two runs with a three-run fifth. Destin Harnage hit a single, stole second

and advanced to third on an error before scoring on a Burton single. Trull and Jake Peak each hit a single to load the bases. Barry and Ryland Matuschke were each hit by a pitch, forcing two runs in.

Keystone couldn't complete the comeback, starting each of the next two innings with two

outs. The Indians put two on in the sixth, with Trull and Franklin each hitting a single, but the inning ended on a fly out. Gavin Eubanks reached on a walk in the seventh before the game ended on a fly out.

Franklin batted 2 for 3, while Burton and Trull each went 2 for 4.

TRACK

Continued from page 10

in the high jump, clearing 4-6. The Tigers also had second-place finishers in Melinda Mabrey, who had a distance of 25-1.25 in the shot put, and Jamie Webb, who had a distance of 56-4 in the discus.

Mabrey and Taylor Hunsinger had fifth- and sixth-place distances of 50-7 and 49-3 in the discus.

In the shot put, Williams was sixth at 22-1.75, while Latoya Hampton and Hunsinger had seventh- and eighth-place distances of 21-5.5 and 20-5.75. Webb had a ninth-place distance of 19-11.

Prior to the event, the Tigers competed in an April 7 Suwannee mini meet, with Amia Bethea recording two of the girls team's three wins. Bethea had a first-

place times of 25.34 in the 200m and 1:04.86 in the 400m.

Taylor won the high jump by clearing 4-4.

The 4x100m girls relay team of Hampton, McLeod, Taylor and Ivy Wilson ran a second-place time of 57.30, while Mabrey had a second-place distance of 77-3 in the javelin.

Halfacre was fourth in the long jump at 13-0.25, while McLeod ran a sixth-place time of 14.29 in the 100m.

Mabrey had an eighth-place distance of 25-1.25 in the shot put.

In the boys shot put, Durant and Rivera had fifth- and sixth-place distances of 36-7.75 and 34-7.75. Rogers was eighth at 33-0.5.

The boys 4x100m relay team of Ivey, Caleb Hall, Zane Mott and Zayden Williams had a sixth-place time of 51.76.

BHS Continued from page 8

increasing his clean-and-jerk total by 25 pounds and his bench press by 30 pounds.

As a champion in both Olympic and traditional, Lancaster automatically qualified for the Region 3 meet, which will be

held at 4 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, at West Nassau High School in Callahan.

Gabriel Gonzalez also competed for Bradford, placing fifth in the traditional event in the 154 class. He had a 130 clean and jerk and a 165 bench press for a 295 total.

Gonzalez received an at-large bid to the Region 3 meet.

UCHS Continued from page 8

of Branford, while Rogers had a 435 total (190, 245) in the 219 class, finishing 60 pounds behind Ethan Shaw of Fort White.

Mott competed in the 119 class in the traditional event. He had a 110 clean and jerk and a 135 bench press for a 245 total. That left him trailing Matthew Koontz of Fort White by 130 pounds.

Rogers earned a third-place finish in traditional with a 490 total (245 clean and jerk, 245 bench press).

The Tigers had two additional third-place finishers in traditional: Rivera with a 460 total (205, 255) in the 199 class and Bryant with a 520 total (240, 280) in the unlimited class.

Thomas placed fourth behind Rivera in the 199 class with a 455 total (215, 240).

Union also had fourth-place finishers in Sullivan, who had a 390 total (170, 220) in the 183 class, and Hall, who had a 450 total (175, 275) in the 219 class.

Rogers and Thomas will compete at the Region 3 meet in both Olympic and traditional.

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65 Help Wanted

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KHHS softball team ends losing streak

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School ended a four-game losing streak in softball, defeating host Ridgeview 5-3 on April 13.

The Indians (9-11) trailed 1-0 before scoring three runs in the top of the third. Amber Wagner, who reached on a fielder's choice, scored on a Cadie Bowles single. Kadence Massey and Bella Cumbo hit a double and single, respectively, to drive in a run each.

A two-run fifth proved to be the difference. Wagner and Bowles hit back-to-back singles to start the inning. Cumbo hit an RBI single with one out, while Lily Asa drove in a run on a two-out single.

Bowles and Cumbo batted 3 for 3 and 3 for 4, respectively. They had all but three of their team's hits.

Massey pitched a complete game, giving up five hits and striking out nine.

The Indians entered the game off a 3-2 loss in 10 innings to 11th-ranked Class 6A Toco Creek on April 8 in Keystone. It was Keystone's third straight loss in extra innings.

Like those other extra-inning games, it was an incredible effort from both teams' pitchers. Toco Creek's Hannah Jones allowed three hits and struck out 16 in a complete-game effort, while Massey, who also went the distance, gave up five hits and struck out 11.

Keystone scored first, with Massey leading off the bottom of the fourth with a double and later scoring on Chloe Still's ground out.

The Toros' Makenna Miller reached on an error to lead off the top of the seventh. She scored with two outs when the Indians committed an error on a fly ball.

Toco went up 2-1 in the eighth when Siena Gallant hit a sacrifice fly, but Keystone answered with a run in the bottom of the inning. Bowles, who was placed on

second to start the inning (as per the Texas tiebreaker), stole third and scored on Wagner's sacrifice fly.

Keystone threatened to win the game in the ninth. With Buchanan on second, Bailey Amato reached on an error. After Toco's Jones recorded the first out on a strikeout, she got Madalyn Glinski to fly out. Buchanan attempted to score on the play, but she was put out at home to end the inning.

Taylor Cooper hit an RBI single in the 10th to put the Toros up 3-2.

In the bottom of the 10th, the Indians again had two runners on with no outs. With Glinski on second, Kylie Norman bunted safely. After a pop-up to Jones for the first out, Cumbo drew a walk to load the bases. An infield pop-up and a strikeout left the runners stranded.

The Indians travel to play Fort White on Thursday, April 16, at 6 p.m. and return home to play Bartram Trail on Friday, April 17, at 6 p.m.

Keystone closes out the regular season with home games against Bradford on Tuesday, April 21, at 6:30 p.m. and Fleming Island on Wednesday, April 22, at 6 p.m.

Handley, Hunt each drive in 3 runs in Tigers' 11-1 victory

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Emma Handley and Brooke Hunt each had three RBI, while starting pitcher Shelby Stewart pitched four shutout innings in the Union County High School softball team's 11-1, six-inning win over visiting Hilliard on April 13.

It was a scoreless game entering the bottom of the fourth. The Tigers (13-7) began the inning with three consecutive singles from Jaydin Alvarez, Mia Kent and Courtney Manning. Manning's hit drove in the first run. After the inning's first out, Leanne Dicks and Handley hit back-to-back RBI singles to make the score 3-0.

Union had a seven-run fifth

to go up 10-1. Makayla Orton reached on an error, while Kent and Manning both walked to load the bases. Lillyenne Mayhew and Handley hit back-to-back singles, with Mayhew's hit scoring one run and Handley's hit scoring two. Addyson Hinds walked to load the bases again before Hunt hit a bases-clearing double. Hunt later stole home to end the inning's scoring.

Hunt finished 2 for 3, while Handley batted 2 for 4. Dicks and Mayhew each went 3 for 5, driving in two runs and one run, respectively.

Manning finished with one RBI, while Alvarez batted 2 for 4.

Stewart allowed two hits in earning the win.

Dicks pitched the final two innings, giving up three hits.

The Tigers went 1-1 in their previous two games, with the win coming against Lafayette by a score of 10-2 on April 9 in Mayo.

Stewart had another solid outing in the circle, allowing five hits and striking out eight in a complete-game effort.

Union trailed 1-0 before Manning hit a two-run homer in the top of the second.

The Tigers went up 5-1 with a three-run fourth. Mayhew drove in a run on a sacrifice fly, while Hinds hit a bases-loaded single to score two.

Kent and Manning each hit an RBI single as part of a two-run fifth.

Union scored its final three runs in the seventh, getting an RBI double from Alvarez and an RBI single from Dicks. A passed ball allowed a run to score as well.

Dicks and Manning batted 3 for 5 and 2 for 3, respectively, while Hunt went 2 for 4.

Manning batted 2 for 3 with three RBI, while Dicks went 3 for 5 with one RBI.

It was the fourth straight win for the Tigers, but they couldn't keep the streak alive, losing 5-2 to host Newberry on April 10.

Union was held scoreless until the sixth inning, with runs scoring on a Handley single and an error.

Mayhew batted 2 for 4, but the rest of the team combined for just four hits.

The Tigers travel to play Baker County on Friday, April 17, at 6 p.m. and then travel to play Dixie County on Monday, April 20, at

7 p.m.

Union closes out the regular season with two home games, playing Williston on Tuesday, April 21, and Branford on Wednesday, April 22. Both games have 7 p.m. starts.

Tigers to play for district baseball title

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's baseball team scored 12 runs in the first inning en route to a 19-1, four-inning win over fifth seed Taylor County in a District 6-1A semifinal game on April 14 in Lake Butler.

The top seed Tigers (17-7) will host second seed Lafayette (14-8) for the championship on Thursday, April 16, at 7 p.m.

Taylor County (8-14) scored the game's first run, but then it was all Union.

Jeffrey Brugh led off the bottom of the first by reaching on an error, followed by Nate Robertson getting hit by a pitch. Kendall Carter and Erick Lasseter hit back-to-back singles, with Lasseter's hit driving in a run. Evan Christmas drew a bases-loaded walk, while Jasen Sullivan drove in another run on a sacrifice fly. After Ayden Androlevich walked, Wesley Crockett was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded.

The inning continued with three consecutive singles hit by Brugh, Robertson and Carter, driving in four runs. Lasseter and Christmas walked to load the bases. Carter scored on a wild pitch before Sullivan hit a two-run single.

Sullivan drove in six RBI in all, finishing 2 for 2.

Robertson also batted 2 for 2, driving in three runs.

Brugh, Carter and Christmas each finished with two RBI. Carter was 3 for 3 at the plate.

Crockett and Lasseter each had one RBI.

Androlevich started on the mound, allowing one unearned run and two hits through three innings. He had five strikeouts.

Gauge Robinson threw the final inning, giving up no hits and striking out one.

each had one.

KHHS baseball team gets 1st-round win in district tourney

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

A two-run fifth that featured sacrifice-fly RBI from Jake Peak and Brock Screen proved to be the difference in the Keystone Heights High School baseball team's 11-9 win over fifth seed Interlachen in an April 14 District 4-2A quarterfinal game in Keystone.

The fourth seed Indians (8-16) were scheduled to play top seed Trinity Catholic (19-5) in a semifinal game on Wednesday, April 15, at 7 p.m. in Ocala. If the Indians won that game, they'll travel to play either second seed Newberry (17-6) or third seed P.K. Yonge (17-8) for the tournament championship on Friday, April 17, at 7 p.m.

Interlachen (4-15) held a 5-2 lead before Keystone scored four runs in the third. Screen hit a single, Peak reached on an error and Cooper Barry walked to load the bases. Ethan Franklin hit an RBI single, with an error on the play allowing another run to score. Ryder Trull followed with an RBI single of his own. After Ryland Matuschke was hit by a pitch to load the bases, Anthony Peak walked to force a run in and give the Indians a 6-5 lead.

A three-run fourth saw Screen score when Jake Peak reached on a dropped third strike. Franklin drove in a run on a sacrifice fly, while Trull walked and later scored on a wild pitch, putting Keystone ahead 9-5.

The Rams made it a one-run game with a three-run fifth before Keystone scored its final runs in the bottom of the inning.

Anthony Peak hit a triple and scored on Screen's sacrifice fly. Destin Harnage, who walked, scored on Jake Peak's sacrifice fly.

Franklin and Jake Peak finished with two RBI each, while Screen and Anthony Peak

UCHS baseball team drops last game in regular season

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School's baseball team held a two-run lead against visiting Trinity Catholic, but the Celtics, who are seventh in the Florida High School Athletic Association/MaxPreps Class 2A power rankings, scored 13 runs in the sixth to defeat the Tigers 19-8 on April 7.

It wound up being the regular-season finale for the Tigers (16-7), the top team in the FHSAA/MaxPreps Rural Class power rankings. Union's April 8 game against Trenton was rained out.

The Celtics (18-5) scored the game's first four runs in the second, but the Tigers answered with four of their own in the bottom of the inning. Jasen Sullivan and Ayden Androlevich each hit a single, while Brezdyn Browning reached on error that scored a run. Androlevich scored on a steal of home, while Browning scored on a wild pitch. An error allowed the fourth run to score.

Trinity took a 6-4 lead in the third, but the Tigers scored a run in the bottom of the inning, with Erick Lasseter hitting a double and scoring on an Androlevich single.

Union had a three-run fourth to go ahead 8-6. Wesley Crockett and Jeffrey Brugh each hit a single. Nate Robertson drove in a run on a ground ball and reached on an error. Lasseter then hit an RBI single, followed by an RBI double from Sullivan.

The score remained 8-6 when Union starting pitcher Lasseter exited the game. He gave up six runs (five earned) and eight hits in five innings, striking out five.

Trinity's big sixth inning consisted of eight hits, four hit batters and three walks.

Androlevich, Crockett and Sullivan each batted 2 for 3, while Brugh, Lasseter and Evan Christmas each went 2 for 4.

Shining Stars of the Week!

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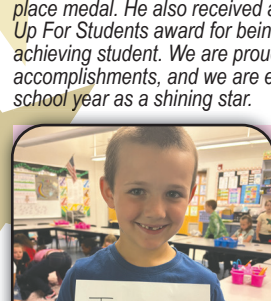
Faelynn Jones
6th Grade
Bradford Elementary
Faelynn is a Super Star Student, she always strives to do her best and shows kindness to all!



David Pickett
5th Grade
Light Christian
David is continuing to shine bright at Light Christian Academy. He recently competed at Junior Student Convention, and did a great job competing. He placed 5th in spelling, and he was a part of the Bible Bowl team that won a 5th



Milo
5th Grade
Rainbow Learning Academy
Milo has been a very helpful friend in the kindergarten classroom, and Piper has been a great listener and a strong role model for others.



Wesson Parker
1st Grade
Starke Elementary
Wesson consistently shows up to class ready to do his best and learn as much as possible. Wesson navigates all problems with a "can-do" attitude. Not only does he continually apply his best efforts to his personal education, but he also assists others around him when they become overwhelmed or discouraged. Wesson has grown tremendously this school year. His academics and individual maturity have both skyrocketed at a noteworthy rate. Wesson is a Shining Star because he understands that it is not the question or the obstacle that matters. It is how he chooses to approach them.



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Rev. Kevin McBride M.D.
Guest Speaker

New WEAG owners striving for 'real community radio'

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Real community radio. It's the tagline now used by Starke's WEAG FM-106.3, which is under new ownership. It means more than broadcasting to the community. It means becoming a part of the community. It means giving the community information it needs. It means helping the community grow and improve. Real community radio may be broadcasting real-time information on the weather or

traffic crashes, but it can also be hosting a yard sale — which the station did on April 11 — to raise money to buy active-shooter vests for the Bradford County Sheriff's Office.

"This radio station — we're servants to the community," on-air personality Pete O'Shea said. Florida Broadcast Media Group Inc. purchased the station from Chuck Kramer and his family, who owned it as Dickerson Media Broadcasting Inc. Ownership officially changed hands on Feb. 23.

Since then, the station has been in "transition mode," said Dave Krieger, who's the president of Florida Broadcast Media Group. "Most of what we've been doing right now is trying to straighten out the mechanical aspects of the station and start to integrate more of the talk format into it," said Krieger, who is also an on-air personality with his weekday morning show, which airs 6-9 a.m.

Krieger said Florida Broadcast Media Group was created for the purpose of purchasing a radio station. The group looked at radio stations in such states as Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas as well as Florida. Krieger and R.J. Malloy, a retired attorney who is now WEAG's operations director, visited WEAG and met with the Kramer family. In learning more about the station, they liked what they saw, which led to the eventual purchase.

"Given the fact that the Kramer family has been very instrumental in transitioning, I have not one negative thing to say about that family at all," Krieger said. "They have been absolutely wonderful. I couldn't have asked for a better situation than this."

Krieger was impressed that Chuck Kramer had been at the station since 1991, describing him as "a fixture in the community." Kramer's radio career encompassed more than 60 years.

Though they may not have quite the career that Kramer had, the new personnel do bring experience with them. Krieger, for example, is a former radio news journalist and news director as well as a former TV anchorman and journalist, while Malloy worked approximately 15 years in radio in management and operations. O'Shea, who is host of the Come Together with Pete O'Shea show from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m. on WEAG, has also worked in radio for approximately 15 years.

Krieger said the goal is to take his experience and that of his colleagues and make WEAG



The new faces at WEAG 106.3-FM include (l-r) Shannon O'Shea, Pete O'Shea, Linda Kelly and Dave Krieger. They are pictured with their furry colleagues, Mary Kate and Sophie.

better.

Improvements

WEAG's signal has quite a reach. Krieger and his wife, Linda Kelly (who's also a part of Florida Broadcast Media Group), were traveling to Orlando and were still picking up WEAG in Micanopy. Krieger has also picked the signal up in Columbia County — 4 miles west of Lake City — while O'Shea and his wife, Shannon, were able to pick the signal up briefly in Beverly Hills in Citrus County. Krieger said he's had people hear WEAG in The Villages (though the signal was weak) as well as in the parking garage at Jacksonville International Airport.

"We know that the signal is getting out there," Krieger said.

Krieger said the current WEAG antenna, which has been on the tower since 1977, has been degraded by the elements.

"We're not actually broadcasting at full capacity right now," Krieger said.

The antenna is horizontal only. The plans are to add vertical polarization as well.

"Once it starts doing both, the FM signal will start clearing these buildings that stop it from getting into more places," Krieger said. "It will probably drastically increase our signal to where our chief engineer, who lives down in The Villages, will probably be able to pick it up fairly well."

"It's amazing how far 6,000 watts can stretch if you are actually broadcasting at 6,000 watts."

WEAG will be making the switch from analog to digital, with plans to eventually offer streaming via the station website (weag1063fm.com).

Format

Chuck Kramer described the WEAG format when he was there as music with a little talk. Krieger's plan is to flip that, making it talk with a little bit of music.

Krieger said a lot of the reason why radio stations go off the air is because they're bought by big corporations that turn them into "jukeboxes."

"Anybody can go on Spotify or iTunes or Apple Music or

whatever the case may be and get all the music they want," Krieger said.

WEAG aims to give people what they can't get on Spotify, etc., which is talk focused on the community. That will be supplemented by syndicated shows "that are looking to move up," Krieger said.

Music will still be part of the format, but Krieger said it would be more in the form of shows that would provide education about the artists behind the song as well as other things.

"Mostly, everything will be news talk," Krieger said.

Krieger said he's received mostly supportive comments on the new direction WEAG wants to go in.

"I've had one complaint of, 'Where's my music at?' That's been it," Krieger said. "Everybody else loves the shows. They love the information."

Tornado football

One of the questions on a lot of people's minds when they heard

See WEAG, page 14



Producers collecting a sub-sample around their pasture. Photo by UF/IFAS Communication.

UF/IFAS offering free pasture soil analysis for Bradford producers

BY LIZZIE WHITEHEAD
UF/IFAS Bradford County Livestock and Natural Resources Agent

When preparing a newly established or existing pasture for the summer growing season, the first step should be collecting a soil sample. Soil testing helps determine whether your pasture is lacking essential nutrients needed for perennial grasses — such as Bahiagrass or Bermudagrass — to thrive during the summer months.

A soil sample provides valuable insight into overall soil health. It can inform landowners about available nutrient levels and soil pH, helping determine whether lime or additional nutrients are needed for optimal pasture productivity.

Producers should sample


their soil at least once a year to guide fertilizer decisions. A good soil sample includes 10–15 core samples taken 1–6 inches deep across the pasture, then mixed together in a bucket to represent the whole area. Results are emailed from the UF/IFAS Extension Soil Testing Lab.

An FDACS BMP mini-grant will cover the cost of pasture soil sampling for Bradford County producers. This program supports better nutrient management, improved forage production, weed control and livestock nutrition.


To participate by May 25 (or until funds run out), contact Lizzie Whitehead, UF/IFAS Bradford County livestock and natural resources agent, at liz.whitehead@ufl.edu or 904-966-6224.

Celebrating National Librarian Day

Library Director Kimberly and New River Library Cooperative Director Jerry would like to say "Thank You" and we appreciate all the hardwork and dedication from our amazing staff!



Kathy Paddock-Marketing/Programs, Misty Dubose-Supervisor, Amy Turney-Teens, Becky Parrish-Circulation, Kimberly Crawford-Director, Melanie Jackson-Children's, Laura Hess-Circulation, Jerry Keiser-New River Cooperative Director



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Kiwanis Club of Starke supports Partnership for Strong Families

As part of a Florida Kiwanis-Division 4 project to support foster programs, the Starke club donated backpacks to Partnership for Strong Families, which has a service center in Starke. Backpacks contain such items as hairbrushes, toothbrushes, books to read, coloring books, crayons and pencils. Division 4 Lt. Gov. Nelson Green (far right), who's also a member of the Starke club, presents the backpacks to Partnership for Strong Families Outreach Recruitment Specialist Chelsea Bowlin (far left) and Community Engagement Specialist Brianna Peterson. If you'd like to know more about Partnership for Strong Families, please send email to Chelsea.Bowlin@pfsf.org or call 352-318-7604.

WEAG

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about the sale of WEAG was: "Will the station still broadcast Bradford High School football games?"

Not to worry, Tornado fans. "It's not going anywhere," Krieger said. "In fact, we're going to embellish it."

Equipment and technology upgrades will, of course, be a part of making football broadcasts better, but plans are to also give listeners as much information as possible, such as bios on every player and the colleges that are showing interest in them.

"We want to have the background on these guys so it sounds like we're doing professional football," Krieger said.

Community

Broadcasting BHS football games is giving a large portion of the community what it wants, but what does the entire community need? That's one of the ideas behind real community radio. It goes beyond providing real-time information on weather events and traffic crashes. It could, for example, help keep the community abreast of what local government is doing.

Pete O'Shea chats with members of the community on his Come Together with Pete O'Shea show, which airs 3-6 p.m. on weekdays.



"People want answers to stuff," Krieger said.

That's why the new WEAG wants to partner with and support and promote the Bradford County Telegraph. Telegraph journalists are featured on air every Thursday at 3 p.m., 4 p.m. and 5 p.m., informing listeners of the stories that are featured in that week's issue.

"Nobody else is doing stuff like this, where they're co-promoting with the paper," Krieger said. "If you want the details, you read the Telegraph."

Since the station's signal reaches beyond the borders of Bradford County, real community radio incorporates quite a large community.

"We think we're close to seven counties here," Krieger said. "We've got Union, Baker, Alachua, Clay, Bradford and Columbia. You're talking about a wide coverage area."



Dave Krieger is the president of Florida Broadcast Media Group Inc., which purchased WEAG 106.3-FM. He hosts a morning show from 6 a.m. until 9 a.m. on weekdays.

For example, the goal isn't to create a relationship with just

Bradford County's emergency management. The station wants to have contact with emergency management departments in those other counties as well, providing those listeners with the kind or real-time information that would help them.

Krieger said he wants WEAG to have a weekly chamber-of-commerce spotlight that includes all those areas outside of Bradford.

"We want to go to the seven main chambers around here," Krieger said, adding, "We want them to tell the community what their businesses are doing because the only way you're going to grow a community is to have the chambers actively involved to help people increase the size of their businesses."

The chamber spotlight would be part of helping the community — another aspect of real community radio. That's where such things as hosting a yard sale to benefit the sheriff's office, offering the grant-writing experience of Operations Manager Malloy to nonprofits and working with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences on establishing community gardens behind the station come into play.

WEAG recently made listeners aware of the shortage of electricians in this country and of training opportunities available.

"This is the way we help," Krieger said. "This is our public service."

The WEAG website will have such helpful offerings as a coupon clipper and "The Squirrel General Store," which will offer bargains from community merchants.

Those involved with WEAG are obviously striving to show that saying they want to be a part of and help the community is more than lip service.

"If you're going to be a steward of the community, authenticity is a key," O'Shea said. "You have to be real."

O'Shea, who's already had many guests on his weekday afternoon show, said he and his colleagues have been received warmly by the community.

"I'm super excited to be here," O'Shea said. "Everyone has welcomed us with open arms. I've been able to get so many people to come over and be a guest already. It's been wonderful to learn more about this great area every day."

Arc of Bradford to host Horses, Hats and Hope fundraiser

The Arc of Bradford will host a Horses, Hats and Hope fundraising event, which will take place on Saturday, May 2 — the day of the Kentucky Derby — at 4 p.m. at the Arc's Starke facility at 1351 S. Water St.

It promises to be a day of Kentucky Derby fun, including a best-hat and most-dapper contests, derby games, poker and horse-race squares and food. A cash bar featuring mint-julep specialties will be available.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased from any Arc board member or at the door the day of the event.

Pro wrestling event to benefit Arc of Bradford

The Arc of Bradford, David Rodgers and King-Pin Pro Wrestling are teaming up to present Champions for Inclusion, a wrestling event to benefit the Arc of Bradford that will take place Saturday, May 30, in Bradford Middle School's gymnasium.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for a one-hour meet and greet, followed by the show at 7 p.m.

General admission is \$15 or \$10 for students (with a valid student ID) and Arc clients and staff. Ringside tickets are \$25.

To purchase tickets ahead of time, call the Arc of Bradford at 904-964-7699.



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