

Bradford County Telegraph

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Thursday, Aug. 14, 2025

146th year, 3rd Issue — \$1



Kareema Mitchell's second grade class at Lawtey Elementary School was ready to start the new school year on Tuesday, along with hundreds of other new and returning students. See more on page 4.

Fire assessment letters generate first pushback

Letter incorrectly reported hearing date

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

Letters mailed to property owners about the upcoming final vote on a countywide fire assessment fee have led to online anger and a petition to reject the fee.

County commissioners have grappled with the decision since founding a professional fire department, with most deciding last August to wait one more year before pulling the trigger. They wanted to allow time for further questions and discussion.

Despite the additional time, three public workshops were not well attended or viewed online. Those not keeping up with the news were surprised when the required notice showed up in their mailboxes, and they let their objections be known online. So much so that Bradford County Fire Rescue Chief Ben Carter posted a response to concerns and "misinformation."

New hearing date

The county was also responsible for some misinformation, inadvertently mailing the letter drafted for last year's hearing. So, the September hearing date property owners received conflicted with the previously advertised date.

As a result, the county is advertising a new date and remaining property owners. The new date and time is Tuesday, Sept. 2, at 6:30 p.m. It will take place at the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center.

Online response

Lester Jones posted that local leaders need to live within their and the county's means. "If we can only afford three departments then work with three. If I can't afford something I can't just demand more money."

A subsequent post from Aaron Coleman questioned a provision that would allow the fire assessment to be increased by up to 4% per year when necessary. "If we don't even have enough growth in the county to stabilize the funding, then what does the 4% even go to? Raises? ... Taxes in this county are crazy in my opinion for its size!"

Some other objections included the lack of transparency for how the projected \$1.7 million in new revenue would be used. (The amount is approximately 50% of the fire department budget, which is also

See FEE, page 3



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WORTH NOTING

City clerk election

Starke's city clerk election will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 19, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at city hall. Early voting will continue through Friday, Aug. 15, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily in the supervisor of elections office at the courthouse.

For information call the supervisor of elections office at 904-966-6266 or visit www.votebradfordfl.gov.

Tate Emmons concert

Tate Emmons will perform in concert at Lifeline Ministries, 325 N. Christian St. in Stake, at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 16. Admission is free, with a love offering appreciated. All are welcome to attend.

Family and Friends Day at Magnolia Baptist

Magnolia Missionary Baptist of Raiford will be having Family and Friends Day on Sunday, Aug. 17, at 11 a.m. Pastor Michael McDuffie and the Greater Bethlehem Freewill Baptist Church of Starke will be in charge of the service. Everyone is welcome to this dress down occasion.

Fairgrounds food distribution

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Feeding Northeast Florida and True Vine Ministry will take Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 9 a.m. at the Bradford County Fairgrounds.

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

Soil and Water board meeting

Bradford Soil and Water Conservation District welcomes everyone to its next meeting Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 10:30 a.m. at the Bradford County Extension Office, 2266 N. Temple Ave. (Highway 301) in Starke. Anyone interested in helping monitor Bradford County sites for water quality and invasive species is encouraged to attend.

Contact Amy Morie at 323-274-8858 or email a.morie.bswcd@gmail.com for more information and the Zoom link.

Church of God food distribution

Starke Church of God by Faith and Farm Share's upcoming food distribution will take place on Thursday, Aug. 21, from 9 to 11 a.m. This is a drive-thru distribution. The church is located at 730 Old Lawtey Road in Starke. (Distribution could start early depending on delivery.)

Friends and Family Day at New Covenant

New Covenant Baptist Ministries will be celebrating Family and Friends Day on Sunday, Aug. 24, at 11 a.m. Dinner will be served after the service. The public is invited.

Black Creek still too low for discharges to lakes

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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An official with the St. Johns River Water Management District stated that fluctuating water levels in Black Creek are still too low for the district to initiate water discharges into Alligator Creek, which flows into Lake Brooklyn as part of the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project.

The project consists of a 17-mile pipeline, pumps, and a treatment facility within Camp Blanding. The project could divert up to 10 million gallons of water a day from Black Creek to Keystone Heights area lakes. It is designed to replenish the Floridan Aquifer and is part of the district's recovery plan for minimum flows and levels of Lake Brooklyn and Lake Geneva.

Dale Jenkins, the district's division director for infrastructure and land resources, said the minimum flow for withdrawals from Black Creek is 25 cubic feet per second.

He said that because of low and fluctuating levels, the district is using available Black Creek water to test the

treatment facility at Camp Blanding.

"The water that's coming through that's above 25 CFS," he told the district's governing board during its August 12 meeting, "we've been using it to rinse the media in Cell 3 and I'm happy to report that the water quality testing we've done in two rinses in Cell Number 3, they're meeting the water quality criteria."

"Right now," he continued, "there's just enough water to where we continue to rinse the media in Cell 3 and to keep the plants growing in Cells 1 through 3. But yes, once we get a little bit more consistent flows, we should be ready to start moving water into Alligator Creek and eventually Lake Brooklyn."

Jenkins also reported that one previous delay in the project, caused by a contractor's inability to produce filtering media for the treatment facility, has been resolved.

"I'm also happy to report that the media processing company has put some changes in place that have really helped speed things up a little bit," he said. "And that's working very well. The last two weeks in a row. They've hit their targets for producing media.



This St. Johns River Water Management District photo shows (top to bottom) Cells 1 through 4 at the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project's treatment facility at Camp Blanding. Cells 1 and 2 are complete. Cell 3 is being seeded with plants, and Cell 4 is being filled with aggregate. Cells 5 and 6 (not pictured) remain under construction.

So, we're hoping that that trend would continue."

Jenkins told the board that all six treatment cells should be complete around the end of 2025. However,

water discharges into Alligator Creek would begin as soon as levels in Black Creek are adequate.

Lake Butler continues financial recovery

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
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Auditors for the City of Lake Butler gave the municipality a clean opinion for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, marking another positive step after a former city manager left the local government in financial difficulty.

City commissioners fired Dale Walker in 2023 before his fourth anniversary leading the city.

A forensic audit commissioned by the city concluded Walker overspent the city's budget by over \$1 million, including misspent ARPA funds, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other spending irregularities uncovered by auditors were nearly \$14,000 in state sales tax paid by the

city, which local governments are not required to pay, and \$19,000 in alcoholic beverages.

Other issues listed by auditors were improper financial oversight of spending, expenditures over budget with no commission approval, depletion of fund balances, no balance sheet reconciliations with adequate financial documentation, unreconciled bank statements (including credit card statements), and a lack of adequate emergency funds.

During the commission's July 15 meeting, Brendan McKitrik with James Moore and Company, stated that the accounting and budget problems associated with the Walker period had been corrected.

Mayor Melissa Hendrix said that

current City Manager Kimberly Hayes is a penny-pincher who scrutinizes every expenditure.

According to the financial statements, the city's net financial position increased by over \$2 million from 2023 to 2024, while liabilities dropped by \$1.7 million.

Auditors also noted that the city is planning to replace its 50-year-old sewer treatment plant at a cost of approximately \$38 million, which is being financed by state grants and loans.

The city's financial statements also noted that at year's end, Lake Butler was renegotiating its wastewater contract with the Department of Corrections.

State champion FFA teams celebrated at school board meeting



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American Legion officers pictured are (l-r) Norman Dowdy, Dale Tenly, Artia Rix, Marvin Artman and Gary Granger. Not pictured: Ray Hunt, Alvin Hunter and John Crews.

Legion appoints new officers, rewarded for retention

Jones-Langford-White American Legion Post 56 announced the election of post officers for 2025-26. The new officers are Dale Tenly, post commander; Marvin Artman, 1st vice commander; Ray Hunt, 2nd vice commander; Norman Dowdy, finance officer; Alvin Hunter, service officer and historian; Gary Grainger, chaplain; Artis Rix, sergeant of arms; and John

Crews, adjutant. First Vice Commander Bob Matheson, American Legion Department of Florida, conducted the swearing in ceremony on July 8 at the post's monthly business meeting. Matheson presented the post with the 100% Plus 1 Award for achieving 100% membership renewal and adding at least one new

member. He also presented the post with certificates for their overall retention achievements, which are second highest in the Department of Florida. In addition, Matheson presented Certificates of Achievement to Norman Dowdy and John Crews for their service the past two years as post commander and adjutant.

Remember the rules about cellphone use on campus

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Parents shouldn't be confused by news of legislation restricting cellphones in public schools. Such restrictions were already in Bradford School District's code of conduct.

Per the code of conduct, elementary and middle school students are required to power off their phone or other mobile device once they arrive on campus and keep the device out of sight through the end of the day. This is unless a teacher has asked the students to use the phone or device as part of instruction.

In addition to banning phone use from bell to bell statewide, the new legislation eliminated any exception for instructional use for elementary and middle school students.

The school district's exceptions for Bradford High School and North Florida Technical College remain unchanged. Students are not permitted use their phones during class unless it is part of an assignment. However, they can use them before and after school, during passing periods and when they are at lunch.

Administrators have preferred this to the challenge of enforcing an all-day ban when there is so much movement around campus. They have also discussed headphones or earbuds being a larger problem as they interfere with communication and distract students from their surroundings.

Rules may change for highschoolers, however. The legislation calls for a pilot project banning use at high schools. The pilot would take place in six yet unnamed counties — two small, two medium and two large counties. By the end of next year, those districts will report the effects of a total high school phone ban on academic achievement and discipline. The report is also expected to contain information on policy violations that include any illegal activity, bullying, harassment, threats, cheating, or taking photos or video of a student during a medical emergency or engaged in misconduct.

If a student breaks the rules regarding the use of cellphones or other devices, the phone or device will be taken until a parent comes to pick it up. On the second and subsequent times, the same will occur and a referral will be written and punishments assigned per the District Discipline Plan.

The same bill required that charter schools get a proportionate share of funding if additional sales tax is levied for school infrastructure. It also removes the requirement that a majority of teachers approve of converting a public school into a charter school, leaving it up to parents.

RJE Alumni Reunion scheduled for Aug. 29-31

The RJE Alumni Association will host its biannual school reunion beginning Friday, Aug. 29, with a Meet and Greet from 7 to 10 p.m. at The Tigers Place, 908 Florida St. in Starke.

Events continue Saturday, Aug. 30, with the Purple and Gold Banquet at the Camp Blanding Armory, 5629 State Road 16. A social hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by the banquet at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$40 per person and must be purchased in advance to ensure entry at the Camp Blanding main gate.

The weekend concludes Sunday, Aug. 31, with a 1 p.m. church service at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 2 County Road 100A. The Rev. Ronald Strong will deliver the message. Lunch will follow at The Tigers Place for \$20 per person.

Attendees are also encouraged to pay the \$25 annual membership. Contributions of \$25 per nameplate for the RJE Memorial Plaque, which hangs at The Tigers Place, are also accepted.

Tickets can be purchased from Joann Jackson, Linda Hampton, Sylvia Patterson, Glory Jackson, Carnell Williams, Mary McGregor or Alicia McMillian.

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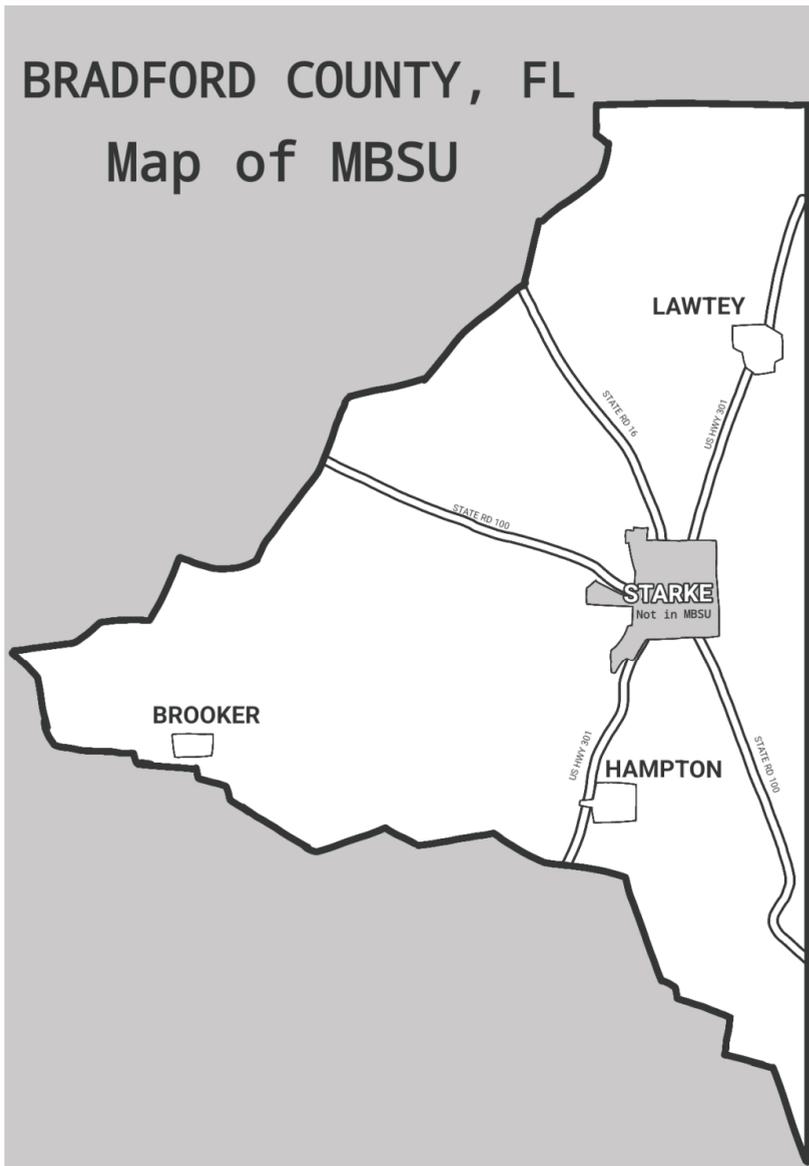
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BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA CORRECTED NOTICE OF HEARING TO IMPOSE AND PROVIDE FOR COLLECTION OF NON-AD VALOREM SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS TO FUND FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES AND FACILITIES



The Board of County Commissioners (the "Board") of Bradford County, Florida (the "County") is considering the levy of annual non-ad valorem special assessments to fund the costs incurred by the County each year in providing fire protection services and facilities. The special assessments would be imposed with the "municipal service benefit unit" depicted on the enclosed map which generally includes all of the unincorporated area of the County, plus the incorporated areas of Lawtey, Hampton, and Brooker. The City of Starke is not included in the proposed assessment program. The fire assessment, if adopted by the Board, would be imposed to fund fire services for the County's fiscal year which begins October 1, 2025 (Fiscal Year 2025-26").

Notice is hereby given that the Board will conduct a public hearing to consider adoption of a Final Assessment Resolution related to the provision and funding of fire protection services and facilities. The Final Assessment Resolution will approve the fire assessment rates for Fiscal Year 2025-26 and collection of the assessments pursuant to the tax bill collection method for such fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter. The assessment is an annual assessment that will continue from year to year. The hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard, on **September 2, 2025**, in the Gov. Charley E. Johns Conference Center, 1610 North Temple Avenue Starke, Florida 32091. All affected property owners have a right to appear at the hearing and be heard with respect to the proposed fire assessment and to file written objections with the Board within twenty (20) days of this notice.

The assessments will fund a portion of the costs incurred each year in providing fire protection services and facilities throughout the MSBU. The assessment for each parcel of property will be based upon a calls for service methodology wherein costs associated with fire protection services and facilities are allocated among different types of property according to historic fire incident reports and call data. For Fiscal Year 2025-26, the assessments will be imposed against residential property on a "per dwelling unit" basis at a proposed rate of \$167 per dwelling unit, against non-residential (commercial) property based on the square footage of all structures located on each parcel at a proposed rate of \$0.11 per square foot, and against vacant, undeveloped parcels at the rate of \$46.50 per parcel. Properties owned by government entities, churches and non-profits would be exempt from the fire assessments. Agricultural property will not be assessed unless the property contains a residential dwelling unit, in which case it will be assessed on a per dwelling unit basis at the rate specified above. For future years following Fiscal Year 2025-26, the rate of assessment may be increased by up to 4% per year without further notice. The fire protection assessment will be collected on the County's behalf by the Bradford County Tax Collector pursuant to the tax bill collection method authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes, commencing in November, 2025, and include collection costs incurred by the County and have been adjusted as necessary to account for the statutory early payment discounts which apply when collecting the assessments annually on the same bill as property taxes. The fire assessments will be imposed solely by the County and not by the Tax Collector or Property Appraiser. Any questions concerning the fire assessments should be directed to the County Manager's office at **(904) 966-6327**.

A more specific description of the fire protection services and facilities and the method of computing the assessment for each parcel of property are set forth in Resolution No. 2025-05 (the "Initial Assessment Resolution") adopted by the Board on July 1, 2025. Copies of the Initial Assessment Resolution and the preliminary Fire Protection Assessment Roll are available for inspection at the office of the County Manager, located at 945 North Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation of an interpreter to participate in these proceedings should contact the County Manager at **(904) 966-6327**, at least 48 hours prior to the time of the hearing.

Starke budgets more than \$25 million for infrastructure projects

Tax rate remains steady next year

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
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Budget discussions turned to the city of Starke's \$43 million enterprise fund during the commission's July 15 meeting.

Nearly 60% of this budget for the city's utility services is made up of infrastructure improvement funding.

The budget presented by General Manager Drew Mullins includes the same assumptions as the general fund, which was discussed at a June workshop. Employees will receive a 3% cost of living adjustment, with performance and competitive pay increases budgeted at another 3%, plus 7% more for liability insurance, 6% more for health insurance and 5% more for retirement. Other costs were increased by 3%.

Examples of infrastructure projects included in the budget are line replacements and extensions, lift stations, pumps, and manhole replacement for the wastewater system; tank maintenance, line extension, pump and line replacements for the water treatment and distribution system; storm hardening, pole change outs, circuit reconfiguration, reclosers, breakers and GPS mapping for the electric system; and new extensions, installations and valve replacements for the gas system.

Infrastructure improvements are funded at nearly \$25.3 million in the 2025-26 budget. This is balanced on the revenue side with new grant revenue, which was built on top of more than \$16 million in place this year. The system is projected to bring in more than \$7.5 million in commercial sales and \$5.6 million in residential sales.

The enterprise fund also has nearly \$4.37 million in reserve funding, which is down from \$6.17 million this year. Finance Director James Hughes said they are keeping an eye on this, and Mullins confirmed they are cognizant not to take on too many projects at once.

Other major costs in the enterprise fund include \$300,000 in capital outlay for a dump truck and a bucket truck, \$656,974 in debt payments, \$342,668 in natural gas purchases, \$5.4 million for power purchases, more than \$1 million for outside consulting services, and \$3.46 million for salaries and benefits.

During discussion with the commission, Mullins emphasized the importance of planning for future expenses. His examples included a replacement water well, estimated at \$1 million, and step-down transformer replacement, estimated at \$500,000 each. Another was

moving city operations to the former Southside Elementary campus. Mullins said the electric work alone would be \$300,000. These needs are down the road. The transformers are halfway through their expected 40-year life cycle. The property transfer with the school district won't take place until the new school is funded. But Mullins said the city needs to be saving for these and other projects now.

The transportation trust fund is also balanced at \$1.65 million. It contains more than \$1.3 million in reserves for future street projects, with the remainder budgeted for salaries and benefits, capital outlay, materials and supplies, maintenance and insurance.

The preliminary budget was based on this year's property tax rate, 4.3879 mills, and that it the rate the commission approved for TRIM notices, which are mailed to property owners in

August. The amount is expected to generate \$1.33 million in revenue next year, which is \$75,658 more than the current year.

Total taxable property value in the city of Starke has risen to more than \$303 million.

The city has moved its September meetings to Sept. 9 and 23 at 5:01 p.m. to accommodate the public budget hearings during which the 2025-26 budget will be adopted.

In other business: —a video will be shot in Starke July 28 and 29 as part of a project to promote the city. "We take it for granted living here every day," Mullins said of the city. "We all know it is beautiful. But to an outsider, these type videos, it does wonders for, economic development, people coming to town, just showcasing what we've got." —Mullins is working with the Sandcastle Pines developers on

remaining issues, including the need to fence the retention pond. Commissioner Janice Mortimer said residents have reported water in their homes from recent rains. Mayor Andy Redding said residents have requested speed bumps on North Westmoreland approaching the new housing development.

Assistance for veterans

An American Legion Post 56 Service Officer is available to assist veterans by providing information concerning available benefits and other needs. Walk-ins are available at the American Legion Hall on Edwards Road in Starke every Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., or call Al Hunter at 407-494-9694 for an appointment. Legion membership is not required for this free service.

FEE

Continued from page 1

supported by property taxes.) In addition to higher costs facing everyone, posters were concerned about those with low or fixed incomes. (Households living at or below the poverty level could apply for an exemption, as could 100% disabled veterans.) Some saw inequality in how the assessment is distributed, e.g. \$167 per household versus 11 cents per square foot for commercial properties. (The distribution is based on calls for service, with most calls coming from residences. The level of resources needed to fight various types of structure fires is also considered.) The exclusion of the city of Starke was also confusing to some. (Starke has its own fire department supported by its tax levy inside the city limits.)

Eddie Boatwright posted that if elected officials properly managed tax revenue, there would be enough to fund a fire department. "However, none of them are brave enough to make hard financial decisions that save taxpayers money! ... Bradford County didn't need to bail out the Fair Association or a new fire station when several sit empty or 30,000 for a parking lot or vote to fund every special interest group in the county."

Some said voters should decide, but the county tried that before in 2001 when the public was asked to contribute a smaller amount to support volunteer firefighters. The fire assessment referendum was overwhelmingly rejected by voters.

Carter's request

Not all responses were negative. Robin Gayle wrote,

"I'm the opposite. I would rather pay and hope I have emergency service when I need it." She pointed out that the fire department doesn't just fight fires; they are often first on the scene for a medical emergency.

More posters came to the fire department's defense following Chief Carter's letter to clarify what was happening and why. He also defended the men and women who work for him.

"The goal of the fire assessment is simple: to ensure the continued delivery of effective, reliable fire and emergency services across Bradford County. Our community is growing, and with that growth comes the responsibility to maintain and improve public safety infrastructure that serves every resident, business and visitor, 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Carter wrote before clarifying the county held multiple workshops to explain

and justify the assessment. He provided a link to recordings of those workshops. (They can be viewed under live recordings on the county's YouTube page, Bradford County Florida BOCC. There is also a link to the page at www.bradfordcountyfl.gov.)

"I understand that any new fee or change to public policy brings concern. But I also ask that we not allow this conversation to become one that disrespects the sacrifices made daily by the men and women of Bradford County Fire Rescue. Our team of professionals put themselves on the line every day ... not for praise, but because we care deeply about the safety and wellbeing of the citizens we serve," Carter wrote, saying no one should hesitate to reach out with questions.

"We aren't critiquing the need for a fire department," Melanie Evans replied. "We are needing

an adjustment in the amount of money going out for the county. We are paying assessments now plus property taxes and higher taxes on everything else we buy. When is it going to end? We are already stretched as thin as possible. Quit hitting our pockets

and find another way!"



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GOP Patriots Dinner welcomes Rep. Byron Donalds

Join the Bradford GOP on Friday, Aug. 29, for an evening with special guest Congressman Byron Donalds at the Governor Charley E. Johns Conference Center beginning at 6 p.m. The location is 1610 N. Temple Ave. in Starke. Buffet and cash bar provided by the Downtown Grill.

Tickets are \$65 and a table of 8 is \$520, payable by personal check, business check, cashier's check or money order made out to BCREC and mailed to

BCREC, P.O. Box 213, Starke, FL 32091. If you mail a check your tickets will be available for pick up at the door.

The purchase of a ticket is a donation to the Bradford Republican Party and is not refundable. For tickets or more information, contact BCREC Treasurer Donna Solze at 904-364-6076.

Contributions or gifts to the Bradford GOP are not deductible as charitable contributions for Federal income tax purposes. Congressman Byron Donalds is appearing as a special guest and is not soliciting any funds associated with this event. All solicitations of funds in connection with this event are by the Bradford GOP and not by

Congressman Byron Donalds or any federal officeholder.

Bradford High Class of 1964

Will meet at Cedar River Restaurant (Starke) on Thursday, AUG. 14, 2025 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!**

RIVERS FLOWING CHURCH

HOW TO GROW IN CHRIST JESUS - Part #3

We started out last week reading 1 Peter 2:2, "as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby." It is obvious to conclude from this verse that God desires His children to grow up as Christians as well as telling us what we must do in order to grow. Many Christians go through life never developing spiritually. A lot of Christians have not been taught properly and many do not know what you are referring to when you begin talking about developing faith, renewing the mind, crucifying the flesh, living and walking in the spirit, and so on. People think that if they have been saved 30 years they are mature because of the span of time in the natural. Nothing could be farther from the Truth. If you have not learned to meditate and act on God's word, then your natural senses (the old man) will dominate you. If you allow your flesh to dominate you instead of your spirit, the Bible calls you carnal or a babe. In 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul says, "And I brethren, could not speak to you as spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." Notice he refers to carnal believers as babes in Christ. The word "carnal" here has to do with a person being dominated by their old nature or senses. Mature Christians are dominated by their spirits, and walk by faith being led by the Holy Spirit. A person will never grow and develop spiritually unless they feed on God's Word, get that Word down into their spirit and then begin to act on or become a doer of the Word. In James 1:22, the Holy Spirit through James tells us, "But be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." We have a lot of misinformed people in the Body of Christ. Many have listened to preachers preach and teach for years but they have never put God's Word into practice in their own personal lives.

Many Christians believe things that are not even Biblical because they have never taken the time to read and study God's Word for themselves. There are churches all over America that are filled with people who are not even saved. Many churches have deacons on the deacon board that are trying to run the church who know very little about God's Word and even less about living a lifestyle based on God's Word. I am telling you the truth, like it or not. No, a person cannot really know God unless they first know God's Word. It is sad that people talk about going to heaven and how much they love Jesus and the Father God but never spend any quality time whatsoever in the Word of God. They never spend anytime praying, seeking and fellowshiping with God. Well, people in that category may be saved, but according to the scriptures they are carnal babes in Christ. We were saved by "grace through faith" but one has to feed on God's Word and then begin to act on the Word in order to become a mature Christian. The reason you see so many Christians who look sad, defeated and hopeless is because they do not know the Word. They live and act just like the unsaved because they have never searched the Scriptures to find out what Jesus bought for them at the cross, and what He brought to them when they were born again. All Christians are supposed to grow! The Bible, God's instruction book tells us how to grow. That knowledge and growth comes from feeding on God's Holy Word and allowing the Holy Spirit to help you develop spiritually and fulfill the destiny God has planned for your life. Until next week, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you.

Pastor Rick

22610 HWY 301 N, Lawtey, FL 32058

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Summer library program ends with a celebratory bash

BY MELISSA PYLE
Special to the Telegraph

The summer was anything but boring at the Bradford County Public Library, thanks to the hard work of Melanie Jackson and Tanya Mitchell. The duo planned a variety of summer events ranging from animals to zombies and everything in between.

Jackson said some of her personal favorite activities were animal tales, the Dadian Magic Show, and the petting zoo, but her absolute favorite thing about the summer program was the participation in the reading. There were 58 reading logs turned in and children won prizes based on how many logs they turned in.

There were two grand prize winners who received a family fun pack to the Gainesville Funworks Skate Station, and another 14 kids won tickets to the Florida Twin Movie Theatre. Alex Bell was the only Sunshine State Reader this summer.



The end of summer was a big bash at the library on July 31! The Starke Fire Department provided the splash, Funtastic Fire Brigade brought the bubbles, DLP cooked up the food, and the library staff created an epic backyard party to celebrate a summer full of adventure.

Jackson thanked Justin Sparks from the theater, Gainesville Funworks and her faithful volunteers for all their contributions to the success of the summer programs. Jackson said high school graduates Presley Acree, Noah Thompson and Aurora Marable donated their time this summer to help with all the programs.

There were many other businesses and volunteers who helped make the library a community center full of summer fun. DLP Bank, Stake Fire Rescue and Funtastic Fire Brigade closed out the summer by providing snacks, water and bubbles at the end of summer bash event on July 31.

Jackson encouraged everyone to continue to follow the library's calendar of events and said the next highlight will be the mega pet adoption event on Aug. 23 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.



Chris Page and Kimberly Howard from DLP Bank were on hand to provide grilled hotdogs and chips to all the families who came by to celebrate at the library's end of summer bash.



Zamira and Antonella enjoyed some down time and snacks at the library's end of summer bash on July 31.



Natalie and Chloe were feeling summer vibes at the library's end of summer bash on July 31. Like many kids, they ran through the water to cool off, grabbed a snack, then crashed on their beach towels.



Mom Jasmine and daughter Janai caught some end of summer magic, as bubbles filled the air from the Funtastic Fire Brigade Truck at the library on Thursday.



It's time for another exciting year of making memories with classmates! These Lawtey students wish everyone a great 2025-2026 year of learning.



Kensley and Jamie are just a few of the friends who reunited while waiting in line on the first day of school at Lawtey Elementary.

Lawtey's First Day



Lawtey Elementary's lunch ladies, Kim and Wanda, start bright and early to provide breakfast and lunch each school day. They want to remind everyone that free breakfast is from 7-7:30 and there's no sign up needed, just come hungry!

Principal Terri O'Quinn begins her fifth year as principal at Lawtey Elementary School and continues to make sure she is the comforting face that welcomes the new and sometimes fearful faces of pre-K and kindergarten students each year.



There's a new, welcoming face at the front desk in Lawtey Elementary's front office. Carley Pilcher is the new secretary that students, parents and visitors will encounter as they first enter school. She is eager to help everyone who enters during this new 2025-2026 school year.



The City of Starke is seeking a full-time Inmate Work Crew Supervisor. This position offers excellent benefits including medical insurance, PTO and retirement. Salary is dependent on experience. The Inmate Work Crew Supervisor is responsible for training and directing an inmate labor crew to maintain city parks, lawns, and roadways, while ensuring public safety. Employment applications can be picked up at the City of Starke: 209 N Thompson Street, Starke, FL 32091. You can find current employment applications on the City of Starke website at cityofstarke.org. Applications can be returned in person or by mail to the above address or emailed to smann@cityofstarke.org. The City of Starke is an EOE/Drug Free Workplace.

The City of Starke is hiring two full-time Firefighter/EMTs. This position offers excellent benefits including medical insurance, PTO and retirement. Salary is dependent on experience. The Firefighter/EMT is responsible for protecting life and property by performing firefighting, emergency medical services, rescue, and fire prevention duties. Employment applications can be picked up at the City of Starke: 209 N Thompson Street, Starke, FL 32091. You can find current employment applications on the City of Starke website at cityofstarke.org. Applications can be returned in person or by mail to the above address or emailed to jclemons@cityofstarke.org. The City of Starke is an EOE/Drug Free Workplace.

Lake Region

Lake Brooklyn down another 5 inches Keystone appoints board members

Lake is down over four feet since November

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

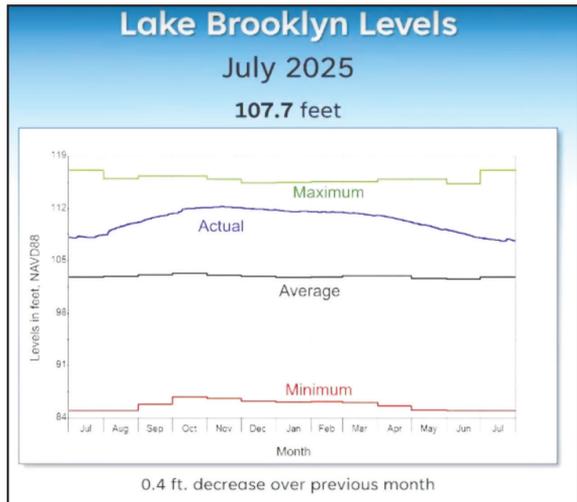
A St. Johns River Water Management District official told the organization's governing board that Lake Brooklyn lost another 4.8 inches in water level during July.

The decrease marks the eighth consecutive month the lake has lost water.

The lake level in November was 112.1 feet. In July, the level had dropped to 107.7 feet. However, the lake remains above its long-term average.

Tim Miller, the district's bureau chief of Water Resource Information, told the district's governing board during his August hydrological report that rainfall varied widely throughout the district in July.

"Central counties, including



Marion and Volusia, and portions of Brevard and Indian River counties to the south, recorded the highest amounts, with some localized areas receiving over 11 inches," he said. "In contrast, northern counties and

coastal areas received less. Four counties were more than an inch below their monthly averages, including Baker, Nassau, Duval, and Clay counties."



(L-R) New Keystone Heights Planning and Zoning Board member Geroldine Robbins and Heritage Commission member Kat Glenn..

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Keystone Heights City Council appointed a Navy veteran to its Heritage Commission and a PhD to the city's planning and zoning board during its August 4 meeting.

Navy veteran Ekaterina "Kat" Glenn has been a personal and mortgage banker with Regions

Bank for the last seven years.

She told the council her family moved to Keystone Heights two years ago and "we love the small feel of this community."

"I'm a big advocate for volunteers, and my company that I work for highly encourages us to give our time to either our church or to parts of the community," she said.

In her application, Glenn said,

"I am interested in advocating for policies that encourage preservation, offer flexibility for restoration efforts, and educate the public on the long-term value of protecting our architectural heritage."

Planning and Zoning Board applicant Geraldine Robbins is a Tallahassee native and has lived on Nelson's Point for four-and-a-half years.

She holds a PhD in public policy evaluation and analytical methods from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

"My areas of expertise include strategic planning and defining actionable, impactful, measurable outcomes," she wrote on her application. "My major contribution to the board will be guiding, focusing, and balancing the interests, goals and dreams of the residents and City of Keystone Heights - as they pertain to planning and zoning."

Since 2015, Robbins has been a contracted program evaluator for NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center Engineering & Technology Directorate, Technical Development Programs.

"Not an engineer, but I play one on TV," she joked with council members. "Keystone Heights is, in my view, in a unique position, and the future is here, and I would really like to be a part of that."

A boat they called 'The City of Melrose' and its captain

Celebrating 100 years of Keystone Heights history

BY BARNEY BARCO
Special to the Monitor

(This article was reprinted from the 110th-anniversary issue of the Telegraph in 1989.)

He might not have been the oldest man in Melrose, but "El" Robinson was most certainly the town's oldest resident in 1989 in terms of years spent there.

Born Jan. 19, 1899, in a house on the west side of town, Elwell spent his entire life here except two years when he went to New Jersey to work in a laundry plant. His father came to the area right after the Civil War to work for Capt. D.E. Maxwell, president of the Seaboard Railroad Capt. Maxwell had extensive orange groves west of Melrose, and the senior Robinson cared for them.

Young Elwell went through the eighth grade at the Melrose Union School and then went to work for his older brother, who was the captain of a freight boat on Lake Santa Fe.

The boat, a beautiful cypress launch with a 50-foot keel, was built by Tom Birt, grandfather of the Rev. Al Vaught, and called the "City of Melrose." It carried freight and passengers up through Lake Santa Fe into Lake Alto through the canal and unloaded at the railway docks in Waldo. At that time, the trip usually took about two hours, less than half the time required by horse and wagon. The boat had the advantage that it could carry more than several wagons.

Spraying arsenic to kill hyacinths

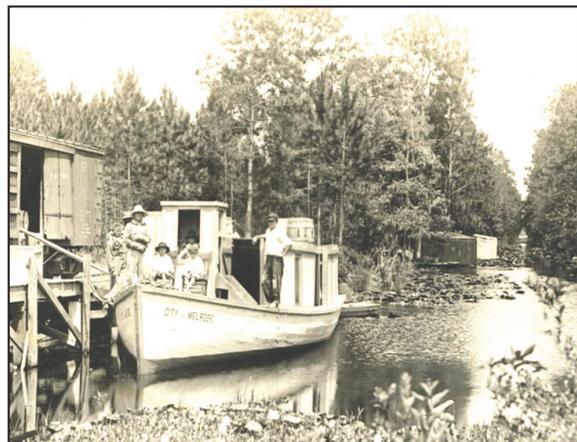
No one knows for sure how they got here, but water hyacinths were giving the boaters trouble even back then. They clogged the canal and rapidly closed on Lake Alto when the brothers decided they had better do something before their boat could not move. Hearing that arsenic would kill the weed, they decided to spray it on all the hyacinths and rid the area of the pest.

"Everyone wants to know how come I'm still living," El said when interviewed in 1989. "Where we cooked that arsenic up on the banks of the canal, it killed every pine tree.

They rigged up a sprayer on a 55-gallon drum, and using a mix of six pounds of arsenic to 12 pounds of sal soda, they "sprayed hyacinths on one side of the boat and drank water from the other."

One of the brothers would pole the boat around while the other would pump the sprayer and put out eight barrels daily. It was backbreaking work, and the arsenic solution would frequently blow back in their faces, but it didn't seem to do them any harm.

After spraying, the hyacinths would turn black, die, and sink to the bottom of the lake, and within a few weeks, the boats could again navigate through the waterway.



This postcard from the Mark V. Barrow Postcard Collection shows the "City of Melrose" boat docked at the landing in Waldo.

"In those days, we didn't know how bad that stuff was," El said. "These days, we wouldn't even think of doing something like that!"

The trials of hauling freight on the canal

Business was sporadic. During orange picking season, good money could be made hauling oranges to the rail head in Waldo for shipment to northern markets. The boat averaged two trips a day with more than 200 fruit boxes on board, making more than \$100 a day.

During the summer, business was often slack, and the boat usually averaged only about two weekly trips hauling farm produce and passengers. Sometimes, during the summer, the water level would drop so low that the boats had trouble clearing the sand bars. When this happened, El and his brother unloaded the boat and carried the freight across the sandbars by hand.

Later, his brother left the business, and El became the boat captain. He said that in those days, good deckhands were paid \$1.50 a day in wages, and they really earned their pay.

Telling of their problems, he said, "One night, we were coming through the canal about 10 or 11 at night, and where the bridge was over the canal, it was pretty shallow, and somebody had thrown a fish trap there. When the boat went over it, the propeller picked it up and wired it up. There was n't anything you could do except build a fire on the bank, take off your clothes, crawl under the boat, disconnect everything, pull it out, take an ax, and cut all that trap

off." **Better roads sideline City of Melrose**

In the early 1920s, the road system began to improve, and trucks started becoming a more dependable and faster means of transportation. The freight business shifted to trucks, and by 1924, the old City of Melrose was unable to make enough to earn her keep, and the line was discontinued.

Once her work had been completed, the City of Melrose was moored just outside Melrose Bay. Nobody seems to know how it happened, but she eventually sank and now rests in the mud below the water's surface.

El worked in a grocery store in Keystone Heights for a couple of years and picked up some fundamentals that helped him in later years when he had his own store.

In 1932, he worked in a laundry plant for two years in New Jersey. He said it was a vacation because he "had never been farther away than Jacksonville and had never heard of a one-way street or had a driver's license until I got there."

See BOAT, page 7

NOTICE
The 2025 Bradford County Value Adjustment Board will conduct an Organizational Meeting on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. in the County Commission Chambers located in the North Annex of the Courthouse at 945 N. Temple Avenue, Starke, FL (Any person desiring to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings. For such purpose, said person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.)
F.S. 286.0105

Clay high schoolers may use cell phones during lunch

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

The Clay County School District's cell phone policy now aligns with a new state law that bans the use of mobile phones for elementary and middle school students throughout the school day.

High school students are allowed to use their devices during lunch.

The district's student code of conduct says that district policy also prohibits the use of AirPods, earbuds and headphones throughout the school day.

"A student may possess

a wireless communication device or cell phone while on CCDS property, on school transportation, and at school activities, provided that from the morning bell to the dismissal bell, the cell phone is powered

See CLAY, page 7



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Crime

Recent arrests in Bradford, Union and Clay

The following individuals were arrested recently by local law enforcement officers in Bradford, Union, or Clay (Keystone Heights-area) counties. All defendants are considered innocent until convicted in a court or until pleading guilty or no contest. Information in this report is from law enforcement agencies and court documents, which are public records.

Bradford

Daniel Ascio Reyes, 29, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 5 for driving with a suspended or revoked license and resisting an officer.

Angela Barnett, 53, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 7 for possession of drug equipment.

Primary aggressor

Harold Crawford, 26, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 5 for battery.

According to an arrest report, the victim told a deputy that when she woke up, her phone lit up and the defendant accused her "of talking to someone else."

"(The victim) then went into the bathroom, and at that time Harold followed her in and pushed her against the wall and put his hands around her neck, and choked her," wrote a deputy in the report. "(The victim) stated she did push him away to get away from him. A few minutes later, Harold punched her in the face."

A witness in the home told the officer he saw the defendant's hands around the victim's neck, and the woman pushing Crawford away in self-defense.

Crawford told the deputy the pair were arguing, that he did not touch the victim, and that she punched him in the face.

Both parties had marks on their faces. The officer wrote that the investigation revealed Crawford was the primary aggressor.

Jeffrey Goodman, 37, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 2 for possession of drug equipment and driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Adam Hensley, 40, of Middleburg, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 5 for a probation violation.

Lynda Hester, 41, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 2 for an out-of-county warrant.

Linda Heyman, 59, of Hampton, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 8 for DUI.

Repeat trespasser

Alton Moore, 64, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 4 for larceny and trespassing.

According to an arrest report, a Walmart loss prevention officer informed a deputy that the defendant had exited the store with \$133.29 worth of

merchandise without paying and later returned to the store, requesting a refund for the goods.

"I located Alton coming out of the restroom and escorted him to the security room of Wal-Mart," wrote the officer in the report. "Alton was read his Miranda Rights, to which he refused to answer any questions."

The deputy added that the defendant had three active trespass warnings, prohibiting him from Walmart property.

"Alton was aware he was trespassing from Wal-Mart, to which he spontaneously uttered once he is released from jail, Wal-Mart will not recognize him the next time he returns."

Couldn't hear because of earbuds

Dustin Padgett, 31, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 6 for battery.

According to an arrest report, on August 4, the victim told a deputy that she and the defendant had not been getting along and that she was in the process of moving out.

The victim added that while she was on the porch, listening to music with earbuds in her ears, she believed Padgett was trying to get her attention, but she could not hear him because of the devices in her ears.

"(The victim) advised that Padgett then approached her aggressively," wrote the officer. "(The victim) advised that Padgett was wondering where his charger was."

The woman said Padgett then began swinging at her five or six times, landing one punch in her sternum-collarbone area and others striking her on top of her head and on her face.

"Padgett took off from the premises as she was calling 911," the deputy reported.

Officers could not locate the defendant after the alleged battery. However, on August 8, another deputy saw Padgett at a Starke convenience store and arrested him.

Michelob Light from Dollar General

Chad Perez, 37, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 3 for shoplifting.

According to an arrest report, the manager of a Starke Dollar General told deputies the defendant stole a 12-pack of Michelob Light Beer from the store.

"The suspect then left the business and went to a nearby residence, where he was detained," wrote the deputy. "Soon after, (the manager) made a positive identification of the suspect, and the suspect was placed under arrest."

Trudy Randolph, 51, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 2 for a probation violation.

Shane Reed, 34, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Lawton police on August 4 for being an out-of-state fugitive.

Toddreke Reed, 28, of Starke, was arrested by probation and parole officers on August 8 for a probation violation.

Thomas Riner, 46, of Starke,

was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 8 for DUI.

Robert Shipp, 64, of Worthington Springs, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 3 for DUI.

James Spindler, 64, of Beverly Hills, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 3 for DUI.

License plate reader finds stolen truck

Tamara Sprinkle, 41, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 8 for vehicle theft and larceny.

According to an arrest report, a Starke KOA Campground resident awoke to discover his truck, cell phone, and a bottle of prescription medication missing.

The victim identified the defendant as the probable offender, stating that he had allowed Sprinkle to use the truck earlier.

That afternoon, a license plate reader detected the stolen vehicle driving South on U.S. 301 north of Lawton. Deputies found the truck at a residence south of Lawton and detained the defendant there.

Sprinkle denied stealing the vehicle and claimed the defendant provided her with the keys to the truck.

John Strickland, 53, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 7 for an out-of-county warrant.

Blaise Thomas, 58, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 7 for possession of drug equipment.

Ashley Thompson, 33, of Jacksonville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 4 for dealing in stolen property.

Sat on porch with moonshine

Rudolph Williams, 49, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 6 for loitering.

According to an arrest report, deputies were called to the area of Lawton's Peetsville Memorial Cemetery about an attempted burglary.

The victim told deputies a person attempted to gain access to her home by removing a window air conditioning unit, adding that although she could not see the perpetrator, she could see the air conditioning unit moving.

While canvassing the area for the offender, deputies received another call about a stranger sitting on the porch of a nearby resident.

There, they found the defendant. The resident of the second home said he did not know the defendant. However, the resident of the home with the window air conditioning unit identified Williams as her cousin. She added that the defendant was allowed to be at her property, but not to stay at her property.

"Williams had a strong odor of alcoholic beverage coming from his mouth as he spoke," wrote a deputy in the arrest report. "Williams had a small-sized water bottle, which he initially alleged was water. However, Williams later advised that the contents within the water bottle was moonshine."

Tajh Williams, 34, of Starke, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 5 for probation violations and an out-of-county warrant.

Byron Wilson, 66, of Gainesville, was arrested by Bradford deputies on August 8 for DUI.

Thomas Drawdy, 54, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on August 7

Threw concrete block through living room window

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Telly Forman was sentenced to four years with the Department of Corrections after pleading to felony battery-repeat offender.

According to a November 7, 2024, complaint, the victim told Bradford deputies that she and the defendant had been dating for four months, and that after the victim informed Forman she wanted to end the relationship, he became enraged.

During an argument, the 44-year-old struck the woman

with the grip of a pistol, then pointed the weapon at the woman. A nearby witness fought with the defendant and Forman left the scene.

Later, the defendant returned to the mobile home and threw a concrete block through a window, shattering the glass and damaging curtains and a flat screen television. Glass from the window injured the ex-girlfriend. The block hit the victim in her right shoulder and wrist, and she was transported to a hospital with minor injuries.

The defendant's prior convictions include fleeing and eluding, grand theft of a vehicle, criminal mischief, robbery, felony drug charges and various misdemeanors.



Telly Forman

2 years for hitting child

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 36-year-old Hampton woman on probation for elderly abuse was sentenced to 28.65 months with the Department of Corrections after pleading to child abuse and domestic battery.



Amanda Breaux

According to a February 27 arrest report, Amanda Breaux called 911 to report a child crying. When another minor in the home attempted to take Breaux's phone away, the two started fighting, with the defendant choking the minor.

Another resident of the Southwest County Road 18 home recorded the fight. Breaux claimed the minor slapped her in the face, but a deputy reported he found no marks on the defendant to corroborate that claim.

Breaux told a deputy she had been drinking before the altercation, which was a violation of the terms of her probation.

The defendant's elderly abuse conviction came after she attempted to get an elderly man out of a chair by wrapping a belt around his neck and pulling him up, then striking the victim in the head with the belt.

Breaux's other convictions include child neglect, delivery of cannabis to a minor, and drug charges.

Tried to sneak meth into jail

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 62-year-old Bradford County woman was sentenced to 24 months' probation after admitting to concealing seven grams of methamphetamine in a sock while entering the Bradford County Jail.

Shelley Cain Byrne pleaded to possession of drugs and evidence tampering.

According to a June 17, 2024, arrest report, detention deputies found the contraband while searching the defendant prior to her visiting the Starke lockup.

Byrne told a detective that on her way to the jail, she

remembered she had the nervous system stimulant on her person.

"Byrne advised that she did not want to get caught with the



Shelley Byrne

methamphetamine," wrote a deputy in the report. "Therefore, she placed the plastic baggie containing the substance inside of her sock, in an attempt to conceal it."

5 years for driving offenses

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A West Palm Beach man was sentenced to five years with the Department of Corrections after pleading to his fifth DUI and second arrest for driving with a suspended or revoked license.



Shawn Costello

Shawn Costello, 50, was also sentenced to one year of probation.

According to a January 20,

2024, arrest report, a deputy asked Costello to perform field sobriety exercises at a DUI checkpoint at the southern end of the Starke Bypass.

"He stated that he was going to jail already due to not having a driver's license due to a previous DUI," wrote a deputy in the report.

Deputies arrested the defendant after he failed to track a stimulus in the Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus test, was unable to maintain his starting position, failed to heel and turn, and was unable to count out loud in the Talk and Turn test. Costello maintained his balance for five seconds in the One Leg Stand exercise.

In addition to his prior driving infractions, Costello has also been convicted of criminal mischief, reckless driving, possession of less than 20 grams of cannabis and assault.

Swung blade during argument over wallet

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 25-year-old Lake Butler man was sentenced to three years with the Department of Corrections after he pleaded to charges related to him swinging a blade at his victim.

Blakely T. Trueblood pleaded to a probation violation and to aggravated assault with a deadly weapon without intent to kill.

According to an arrest report, a witness told deputies that the victim and defendant were

arguing over a missing wallet, and that Trueblood swung a long blade over the victim's head.

"(Redacted) gave us the weapon and is a described as long black red with a rope attached to it with a bronzed handle in the shape of an eagle. The handle pulls out of the black staff bearing a chrome in color blade roughly 15 - 16 inches long," wrote a deputy. "(Redacted) stated he was never swinging it at her, but he was going through a mental health issue, so she was trying to get the blade from him."

The defendant's prior convictions include resisting an officer with violence, driving with a suspended or revoked license, possession of over 20 grams of cannabis, aggravated assault with intent to commit a felony, and possession of drug paraphernalia.



Blakely Trueblood

for driving with a suspended or revoked license and possession of methamphetamine.

Claude Whitehead, Jr., 63, of Lake Butler, was arrested by Union deputies on August 6 for a probation violation.

Clay

Trespassing on White Sands Road

Amanda Cleland, 43, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on August 4 for trespassing and possession of drug equipment.

According to an arrest report, a White Sands Road resident called deputies after the defendant returned to a home for which she had previously received a trespass warning.

"I searched the area and located A. Cleland in the backyard of (the residence)," wrote Deputy William Stockling in the report. "I announced myself as Deputy Stockling with the Clay County Sheriff's Office, at which time A. Cleland fled from me."

The officer added that he caught the defendant

and found a glass pipe with methamphetamine residue in her purse.

Marlene Frederick, 86, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on August 6 for battery.

Revenge for hire

Adyn Petit, 18, of Lake City, was arrested by Clay deputies on August 2 for vandalism.

According to an arrest report, the victim claimed an F-150 drove onto his property and destroyed his front yard.

A deputy said he observed tire marks in the yard.

"I observed nearby very obvious ruts consistent with a vehicle spinning its tires in the soft grass," wrote Deputy Brandon Draughon-Miller in the report. "(The victim) provided security video which displayed a white Ford F-150 slowly drive onto the yard from the roadside, speed up and accelerate through the yard seeming to slide sideways, and then exit the yard towards the roadside. The truck in the video was observed to be a white Ford F-150 with a cooler handle

sticking up from the truck bed, a white spotlight located on the roof, and a rolled-up bed flap as the most distinguishing features on the vehicle."

Another deputy stopped the F-150 as it was leaving the Keystone Heights neighborhood.

Draughon-Miller reported that the driver of the truck, Petit, initially denied damaging the property, but admitted to the incident after being confronted with the security video.

"The defendant stated that he does not really know (the victim), just that he knows of him because a person...on TikTok messaged him," wrote the officer. "This unknown person then told the defendant to go to (the victim's) house and destroy his yard. The defendant stated he does not really know this person on TikTok, just that the defendant offers a service where he drives through people's yards (for their exes) to get back at (them)."

Travis Thornton, 57, of Keystone Heights, was arrested by Clay deputies on August 8 for battery.

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UNION COUNTY

FFA State Championship Teams recognized at school board meeting

The Union County School Board recognized three State Championship teams from Lake Butler FFA during its August 12 meeting.



Florida's State Champion Ag Sales Team, Lake Butler FFA members (l-r) Advisor Erin Johnson, Holden Webb, Layla Alexander, Kendyl Brannen, Tucker Dortch, Gavin Kuhn and Superintendent Mike Ripplinger.



Florida's State Champion Parliamentary Procedure Team, Lake Butler FFA members (l-r) Advisor Erin Johnson, Holden Webb, Kendyl Brannen, Bailey Varnes, Joseph Harris, Tucker Dortch, and Superintendent Mike Ripplinger.



Florida's State Champion Poultry Judging Team, Lake Butler FFA members (l-r) Advisor Brittany McGee, Peyton Kilgore, Miley Wilson, Tucker Dortch, Grace Turknett, Blayne Hendricks and Superintendent Mike Ripplinger.

Register for Union County Master Gardener class

Do you want answers to your landscape or gardening questions? Would you enjoy teaching others how to grow plants and solve plant problems? If you answered yes to these questions, consider becoming a Master Gardener.

Master Gardener is a title given to selected individuals who take this horticultural training and in return agree to give 75 hours of volunteer service helping their local county

extension agent. Volunteering is rewarding! Learning new things, being active and helping others is good for everyone.

Much of the course is formatted in a convenient, on-line format that can be attended at home. Live lectures and hands-on activities will be held on Wednesdays from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Union County Extension office from Sept. 1 to Oct. 29. The cost to enroll in the course is \$120.

Training will include topics such as basic plant science, entomology (insects), plant pathology (diseases), nematology, vegetable gardening, fruit culture, annuals/perennials, woody ornamentals,

turf management, plant propagation, animal pest control, Florida Friendly Landscaping and irrigation design.

Applications can be emailed or can be picked up at the Union County Extension Office Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Lake Butler. Applications need to be submitted by Aug. 17. Candidates will be interviewed and selected on or before Wednesday, Aug. 20.

Call 386-496-2321, email jtd@ufl.edu or visit the Union County Extension office at 15120 SW 84th St. in Lake Butler to pick up an application.

The University of Florida's Union County Extension is an equal opportunity institution.

15 months for driving with suspended license, fleeing

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

A 45-year-old Hampton man was sentenced to 15 months with the Department of Corrections after pleading to driving with a suspended license and fleeing from law enforcement.

According to an arrest report, Eugene Shealy was pulled over just after midnight on March 22 after a deputy noticed that his taillights were not illuminated.

"Upon approaching the vehicle," a deputy wrote in the report, "I placed my right hand on the back left brake light and continued approximately two steps when the suspect vehicle drove off."

The officer followed Shealy on State Road 233



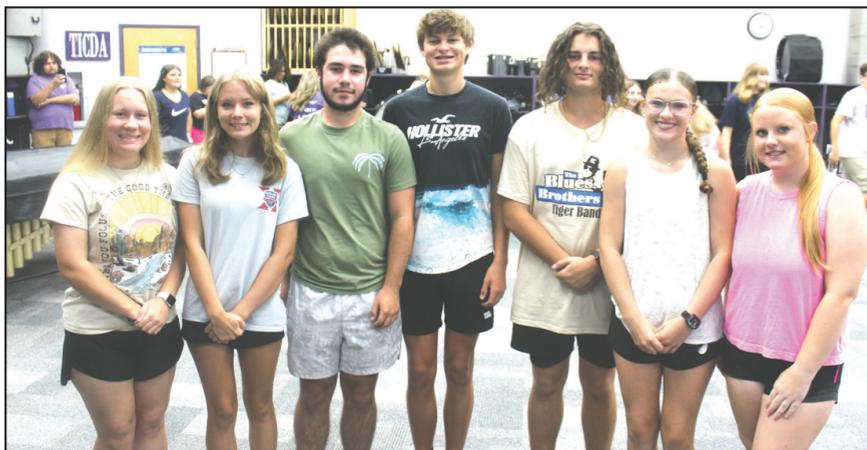
Eugene Shealy

(Starke Bypass), State Road 16, County Road 233, County Road 229A, County Road 229, and onto County Road 225, heading for State Road 100 West, with the suspect reaching 98 mph.

Another officer attempted to deploy stop sticks but was unable to throw the device due to time constraints.

"(The deputy) then threw imaginary stop sticks to try and disorient the suspect," wrote the reporting officer. "(His) action was successful and caused the suspect to over-correct and lose control of the vehicle and crash into the ditch area to the east."

Asked why he ran, Shealy did not answer, but complained of chest pains and shortness of breath. Fire rescue transported him to a hospital, and dispatch told the arresting officer the defendant's driver's license was suspended and had been suspended four previous times.



The Union County High School Marching Band leadership team. (L-R) Drum Co-Captain Laci Fipps, Drum Captain Madison Andrews, Field Captain Barry Anderson-Davis, Band Captain Reese Harrison, Band Co-Captain Matthew Ring, Tigerette Captain Miley Wilson, and Tigerette Co-Captain Delani Hardin.

Tiger band completes camp, readies Blues Brothers show

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School Band Director Kelly Dorsey described her band's two-week camp as tremendous.

"The kids are really, really excited," she said on the camp's last day. "They are completely bought in and they have huge hearts. Just exceptional people, not just students, just great people."

Dorsey, who is beginning her 23rd year leading the band after 13 years at Bell High School, added that this year's halftime show features the Blues Brothers.

"Most of them didn't know anything about the Blues Brothers," she said. "Their parents were more excited than they were until I introduced the music to them."

Dorsey said she hopes to build on the band's success from last

year, grading straight superiors all year long and earning the Otto J. Kraushaar Award from the Florida Bandmasters Association.

Dorsey said her job goes well beyond training musicians.

"I told them this week is not just about learning how to be a marching band," she said. "I'm training leaders. I'm training them how to be good adults and be successful."

Dorsey credited her administrative team of Assistant Director Pam Higginbotham, Tigerette Instructor Amanda Barlow, Percussion Instructor Bryce Henson, and Middle School and Assistant Marching Band Director Michael Murphy for the group's success.

She also said the band's student leaders are respected by the group.

"This band celebrates each other," she said. "ry non-judgmental. Our rookies just fit right in, and they're supportive. That's the culture I like."

Union students can't use cell phones once the bell rings

BY DAN HILDEBRAN
dan@bctelegraph.com

Union County's cell phone policy exceeds the restrictions put in place earlier this year by state lawmakers, which banned the use of the devices for elementary and middle school students, but allowed their use by high school students during non-instructional times.

Superintendent Mike Ripplinger said the district will continue to prohibit cell phone use during the school day, even for high school students.

"Generally, once the school day starts, we don't allow students to use them," he said.

The superintendent said principals may allow some exceptions to the rules, "but honestly, that doesn't work out well."

Ripplinger added that students who really want to use their phones may find ways to do so, such as going to the bathroom to talk or text. He said teachers and administrators don't confiscate the devices.

Adventure awaits elementary kids

Lake Butler Elementary School Principal Michelle Fuist described her campus's first day of class as very smooth. The school's theme this year, voted on by teachers last Spring, is "Adventure Awaits, Learning Takes Us Places." "It's a space theme," the principal said, adding that the school will continue to emphasize the importance of attendance. Fuist also said parents love seeing the school's activities on social media.



Michelle Fuist
Principal,
Lake Butler
Elementary School

CLAY Continued from page 5

completely off (not just placed in vibrate or silent mode) concealed in their backpack or purse except directed by the teacher solely for educational purposes or during lunch for high school students only," the policy states.

Earlier this year, the Florida Legislature restricted cell phone use for younger students.

In previous years, state law prohibited the use of these devices during instructional periods. This year, lawmakers went further, prohibiting the use of the devices for elementary and middle school students from the first bell to the last.

They hit one out of the park

Lake Butler Middle School Principal Marcie Tucker said she sent an email to her staff after the first day of school, telling them they hit one out of the park.

"It was in line with our theme this year," she said, "kind of a baseball theme, which is 'In a League of Our Own.'"

Tucker said she was particularly touched when she saw a teacher give a hug to a new student who had gotten lost on campus. "We're excited," the school leader added.



Marcie Tucker
Principal,
Lake Butler Middle
School

BOAT Continued from page 5

Everything I ever got into was put out of business

When he returned in 1933, he rented his truck to the Works Progress Administration and dynamited clay for road building. He then started a truck freight business and got a contract with George Hall out of the Lake Swan Turpentine Still hauling

turpentine to Jacksonville. He received \$3 a barrel but had to load and unload the 550-pound barrels himself.

He would also pick and pack oranges and then haul them to the market in Jacksonville, making about 40 cents a box.

In 1934, he married Eliza Rudder.

Eliza ran the drugstore in town, and, in 1942, after Mrs. Stienert died, El and Eliza bought Stienert's grocery store.

Over the next 25 years, Robinson's grocery became a well-known Melrose fixture, and in 1975, he sold the store and

retired. In speaking of his life, El said, "Everything I ever got into, it got put out of business. The hard roads came along and put the boat out of business, the turpentine business went out, and the oranges went out from the snow and froze."

Then I sold the business for \$25,000, and it was insured for \$100,000 and burned down."

Despite all this, El said he lived a good, long life, and working hard made him appreciate it more.



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Coach wants to see Tornadoes go on the hunt in 2025

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Jamie Rodgers believes his Bradford High School football team has most of the pieces to be successful, such as the talent level of the players and the ability of his coaching staff.

Another important piece, though, is the mental approach

players take into games. Rodgers felt that's where his team came up short in 2024. Sure, it was another successful season by most measures — 10 wins versus two losses, another trip to the playoffs — but it wasn't quite the same Bradford team that had taken the field in 2022 and 2023. "We've got to start hunting

again instead of us being the hunted," said Rodgers, who's entering his fourth season as the Tornadoes' head coach. "We've got to start hunting. I know that's a cliché, but our first two years here, our kids were hungry. They wanted to be district champions. They wanted to be regional champions. They wanted to be the state champions. They talked about it. They practiced like it.

"Last year, there was no question — the feeling around our program was a sense of accomplishment, a sense of entitlement in some of our positions."

The "hunter" in District 5-2A last season, Rodgers said, wasn't Bradford, but Newberry, which beat the Tornadoes in the regular season to win the district championship and then ended the Tornadoes' season in the second round of the regional playoffs.

"We've got to flip that back to where when we get off the bus, we start hunting. That's the only thing we have to do," Rodgers said. "Our talent level's there. Our coaching is there. We have great assistant coaches here who push our kids every day.

"All of that is in place. Everything's in place. It's a mentality — 'Am I going to go hunt today, or am I going to let somebody hunt me?' That really is the difference."

Since Rodgers has been at Bradford, the team has become known for its stingy defense. In the last three seasons, Bradford

has shut out 19 opponents and has allowed an average of seven points per game.

"It's really incredible what our kids have been able to do and what our coaches have been able to do," Rodgers said.

Defense

Looking at this year's defense, Rodgers said the linebacker group is "super strong." The only thing the players lack is extensive game experience as they played here and there in spots behind other players who were starters.

"We've got a lot of seniors like Kingston Booker and J.J. Hall. They've played a lot of downs here, but now they're the guys. It's their time."

Rodgers said senior Jonathon Andrews is another player who's "waited his turn" and will play at linebacker and on the defensive line, while the Tornadoes also gained a linebacker in senior transfer Cohen Cioffi. Cioffi made 74 tackles for Fleming Island last year, which was fifth most on the team.

"He's going to set the middle of the defense," Rodgers said. "He's a very good football player. He just doesn't know our terminology. He hasn't done our things yet, but he'll be fine."

The secondary will have such players as senior Jy'quez Cason and juniors Jordan Cason and Chase Phillips "sprinkled in on defense at times," Rodgers said, alluding to the fact that most of their time will probably be spent



Jy'quez Cason (left) prepares to receive a handoff from Cy Cubbedge.

on offense.

However, the Casons will bring plenty of experience to the defensive side of the ball when they fill defensive-back positions. Jy'quez Cason is the returning leading tackler after recording a sixth-best 46 tackles last season.

"People forget both of them started at DB in the (2023) state championship game — one as a 10th-grader and one as a ninth-grader," Rodgers said. "They're both really good football players. Super talented."

Rodgers said Caiden Carn will play in the secondary "a lot," adding, "He's only in 10th grade, but his ball skills are special."

Senior Jackson Parmeter, a

transfer from Keystone Heights, will play in the secondary, too. He had the sixth most tackles for Keystone last year and also had two interceptions.

Rodgers said Parmeter has been "one of the biggest bright spots" so far this year.

"He's a really good football player," the coach said. "He has bought into everything that he's had to. He's probably made the most improvement. For one thing, I think he's gained like 20 pounds since he's been here. He's a bigger, stronger, faster version of the really good football player he already was."

In the spring, Rodgers talked

See BHS, page 12



Defensive lineman P.J. Lee (left) prepares to take on Will Jackson at Bradford's Aug. 6 practice.

2025 BHS Varsity Football Schedule

Aug. 15	at Cocoa (KC)	7 p.m.
Aug. 22	Baker County	7 p.m.
Aug. 30	at Dunnellon	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 5	at South Sumter	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 12	at Mandarin	6:30 p.m.
Sept. 19	Eastside	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 26	at Keystone Heights*	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 3	at Palatka*	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	Newberry*	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 17	Leon (HC)	7 p.m.
Oct. 24	Santa Fe*	7 p.m.

* District game

KC Preseason Kickoff Classic
HC Homecoming

BHS, KHHS, UCHS volleyball season is here

The Bradford, Keystone Heights and Union County high school varsity volleyball teams all play preseason matches prior to junior varsity/varsity regular-season matches on Monday, Aug. 18, and 8457 Tuesday, Aug. 19.

Union will play in a preseason classic at Legacy Park Multipurpose Center (15400

Peggy Road) in Alachua on Thursday, Aug. 14, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Bradford and Keystone both play preseason matches on Saturday, Aug. 16, with Bradford playing at Orange Park High School at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. and Keystone playing at the Jacksonville Juniors Volleyball Association's Preseason Knockout at times to

be determined. A schedule for the JVA tournament, which will be played at the association's training center at 8457 Western Way in Jacksonville, will be posted at sportwrench.com.

The regular season for Union begins Aug. 18, with the Tigers hosting Lafayette. The JV match will begin at 6 p.m., followed by the varsity match at 7 p.m.

Bradford's first match will be against Union in Lake Butler on Aug. 19, with a 6 p.m. JV start and a 7 p.m. varsity start.

Keystone opens the regular season with a home match against Crescent City on Aug. 19. Start times are 5:30 for JV (following a junior high match at 4:30 p.m.) and 6:30 p.m. for varsity.

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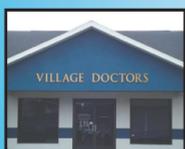
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Clayton ready to take reins of the BMS football program

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

He once played for Jamie Rodgers. Now, Travion Clayton is going to assist Rodgers as the new Bradford Middle School head football coach and develop players who will one day help Rodgers' Bradford High School varsity team.

Clayton, a 2017 Baker County High School graduate, was a senior when Rodgers was hired to coach the Wildcats. He went on to play two years at the University of Southern Mississippi and then for two years at the University of West Florida in Pensacola, where he was part of the Argonauts' 2019 team that won the Division II championship.

He moved back to North Central Florida and came across two people who believed he could have an impact as a coach. One was his former high school coach.

"I went out to (a BHS) practice one day," Clayton said. "Coach Jamie said, 'You miss it, don't you?' I said, 'Yeah.' He was like, 'You can do it.'"

What Rodgers thought Clayton could do was help out with the BMS team.

Clayton had already been doing some coaching with the Bradford Cowboys Pop Warner organization, which his son is a part of. There, he met Reggie Thomas, who coached and still coaches at BMS.

"We hit it off," Clayton said. "It started with the Bradford Cowboys. He was like, 'I like how you teach the kids. I think you should try middle school.' I was like, 'Let's do it.'"

Clayton began coaching as an assistant at BMS last year. Then, when it came to needing a new head coach, he was the one who got the offer.

"It happened really, really fast," Clayton said. "I was not expecting the opportunity at all."

The former offensive lineman was a 2016 Florida Times-Union All-First Coast Team selection following his senior season at Baker County. That was Rodgers'



Travion Clayton, who played for Bradford High School Head Football Coach Jamie Rodgers, is the new head football coach at Bradford Middle School.

first season as head coach.

Clayton said what Rodgers saw was a team that needed a "dog mentality." In other words, a team that would be tough and physical.

One day, in the meeting room with offensive linemen, defensive linemen, running backs and linebackers, Clayton said Rodgers told them they were soft.

"We went to practice that day, and he literally had to call the dogs off," Clayton said. "He was like, 'Wait. Wait. Wait. We're not trying to kill each other now. We were like, 'Hey, Coach. You called us soft.'"

Rodgers responded by saying the players had proved to him they could be physical in practice. The next step was being physical in games.

The Wildcats went 8-2 and advanced to the Class 5A regional semifinals. The following season, after Clayton graduated, Baker advanced to the state-championship game.

"We already had the team when (Rodgers) came in," Clayton said, "but we didn't have the leader who knew what Baker County was and how to bring the best out of the boys. He was born and raised there. He already knew most of our moms and dads. It was like the perfect fit."

Clayton realizes Bradford Tornadoes most likely don't want to hear a lot about Baker County. He laughed and said, "Don't hold

it against me." He added that he's "built a great relationship" with the Bradford coaching staff.

Of course, Clayton is now a member of the Tornado family, and he's excited about the BMS team heading into the 2025 season.

Numbers and talent

BMS didn't hold tryouts. Clayton said they were workouts. If a kid went through a workout, he made the team. The result has been the Tornadoes consist of 53-54 players, up from an average of about 40, Clayton said.

The new head coach said that's "amazing," but it also brings about the scenario that there's no way everyone can play, especially when middle-school games consist of eight-minute quarters.

Yet Clayton wants every kid on the team to get playing experience. Therefore, if they're not going to average much playing time, their parents are encouraged to also get them enrolled in Pop Warner or some other youth league.

"I don't want them to just stick with me," Clayton said, adding, "Let's play a lot of football."

The team also has some players that Clayton said he and his staff wouldn't put on the field yet for safety reasons.

"They're what we call not physical enough," Clayton said. "Not saying they're not big enough or they're not strong enough. It's the physicality of football. It's a mean sport."

What coaches have done is create a development squad, which currently consists of 12 players.

"We give them a lot of reps in practice. We give them a lot of reps (individually)," Clayton said. "Just more repetitions to get to that level where we think, 'OK. It's safe for you to play.'"

Clayton said the boys understand why they're on the development squad, and they accept it. In fact, some have been

See BMS, page 10



Micah Screen takes part in receiver drills for Keystone.

Indians will be a young team in '25

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Keystone Heights High School is coming off a rough 2024 varsity football season that saw the Indians win just two games, so some of the players who'll be taking the field this year have taken some lumps and, hopefully, improved.

However, Keystone is fielding a team that is heavy on youth, with only two returning senior starters.

Also, as has been the case in recent years, depth is an issue.

"It's a thin group — young and thin," Head Coach Steve Reynolds said. "Our sophomore group's good. Our freshman group's good-sized and getting better. It's just unfortunate for them that we don't have a lot of juniors, and we don't have a lot of seniors."

The two returning senior starters are Luke Bacorn and Pete Bostic. Both play on the offensive and defensive lines, while Bacorn will also look to play tight end. Both earned All-Clay County honorable mention last season as offensive linemen.

"Pete and Luke are the leaders of the team," Reynolds said, adding, "Both of them have a lot of reps, a lot of snaps. They bring valuable experience to our front."

Some other players who'll be in the mix along the line of scrimmage (offensively and defensively) include junior Tyler Kerner and sophomores Logan Madden-Moore and Juan Palma. Reynolds said Madden-Moore and Palma both got unexpected varsity snaps last year.

"Now, they're like settled into starting or competing for roles," Reynolds said.

The Indians have a lot of inexperience when it comes to the varsity level lining up

behind the offensive line. Junior Cole Crabtree will step in as the new starting quarterback, while the returning leading rusher is sophomore Hunter Crumpton, who had approximately 100 yards on almost 30 carries. Freshman Mikey McCall will be in the running back mix, too, as will Colin Goetzman, a senior who moved from Hawaii.

Reynolds said Goetzman is still learning the offense, while he described McCall as a "Swiss Army Knife" who can play multiple positions and who has a "bright future."

Some of the players who could line up at wide receiver include juniors Micah Screen and De'shawn Williams. Reynolds said both "now are ready to get after it and participate and play and compete."

On the defensive side of the ball, two key players will be linebackers Crumpton Trase Wooden. Wooden, a sophomore, is the returning leading tackler after the Indians lost their top seven tacklers from last year.

"Hunter Crumpton and Trase Wooden have starting experience in big varsity games at linebacker, so they'll be a big help," Reynolds said, adding, "Hunter is fast and hard to block. Trase is big and physical, and he's playing downhill more than he was before."

Crabtree, McCall, Screen and Williams will be in the mix in the defensive secondary, as will freshman Coy Campbell.

"Coy knows his secondary responsibilities as good as anybody in our system," Reynolds said. "It's going to be hard to keep him off the field."

Junior Ryder Thomas will step in as the team's new placekicker. The Indians will host

See KHHS, page 11



Hunter Crumpton (left) receives a handoff from Cole Crabtree.

2025 KHHS Varsity Football Schedule

Aug. 15	Ridgeview (KC)	7 p.m.
Aug. 22	Interlachen	7:30 p.m.
Aug. 29	at Union County	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 12	Newberry*	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 19	at Dixie County	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 26	Bradford*	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 3	at West Nassau	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 10	Santa Fe* (HC)	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 17	at Chiefland	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 24	at Palatka*	7 p.m.
Oct. 30	Crescent City	7:30 p.m.

* District game
KC Preseason Kickoff Classic
HC Homecoming

Tigers still have lofty goals for season

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

Union County High School football is still Union County High School football.

Despite the firing of Head Coach Andrew Thomas in late May, Interim Head Coach Lamar Waters said expectations haven't changed for a program that set the bar high when it won three straight state championships in the 1990s.

"The mark of success has been high," Waters said. "Our expectations are to win ball games, make the playoffs and make as deep a run as we can. That's our ultimate goal."

A team that began with approximately 20 players participating in summer workouts has increased its numbers to where practices have been consisting of almost 50. Waters said many players took on leadership roles in this transitional period for the Tigers and specifically mentioned nine who've been key in keeping the program moving forward: seniors Wyatt Elixson, C.J. Ivey, Alec McClellon and Parker Parrish and juniors Phoenix Bryant, Edward Durant, A.J. Rivera, Matthew Rogers and Drew Simmons.

"Those were all guys who kind of stepped up," Waters said. "There were others, but those nine guys were a big part of that."

When assessing what he believes will be the strengths of this year's team, Waters began by mentioning the Tigers' offensive line, which consists of such returning players as Bryant, Durant, Rivera and Rogers.

"Those guys have been there and have stepped up and done a great job," Waters said.

The line also has such players as Parrish, whom Waters said can be moved around to fill different positions, and Keegan Shuler, a senior who has returned after not playing a couple of seasons.

"He's just a tough kid you can count on to be there," Waters said of Shuler.

Senior Tyler Wallace is "another kid who's stepped up," Waters said, while sophomore Ramsey Schenck has worked "really hard" over the summer and has developed physically.

Cole Chapman, a junior transfer from Bradford, brings size at 6-3, 300-plus pounds, while senior Rhett Prevatt brings heart and tenacity.

"he's not the biggest guy on the field, but he plays a lot bigger than what he is," Waters said of Prevatt.

Many of the same players who will occupy positions on the offensive line will also do so on the defensive line.

"We don't necessarily have a lot of great depth," Waters said.

One of the tasks for the offensive line is to protect a new quarterback. Three players are in the mix: Jeffrey Brugh, a senior baseball player who's in his first year on the football team, senior Cash Cox and freshman Cadenz Merriex.

"They all have a different skill set," Waters said, noting that Brugh and Merriex are getting looks at multiple positions. Regarding Brugh, Waters said, "We're moving him around, just finding ways to give him the ball," while of Merriex, he said, "He has an opportunity to step in and play a big role for us."

Of course, another job for the offensive line is to create holes for last year's leading rusher: Simmons, who rushed for 1,400-plus yards.

"Obviously, everybody looks and sees Drew's athletic ability," Waters said, "but what's probably underrated is the type of kid he is. He's a young man who always has a smile on his face. He always has a positive attitude."

Waters said Simmons also asks a lot of questions, adding that "he studies the game as much as anybody."

Other players who'll be in the mix in at running back/fullback include Brugh, Elixson, Ivey, McClellon, juniors Bryce Lawton and Jeremy Webb and freshman Zayden Williams. Ivey had the second most carries last year behind Simmons' 161, rushing for 356 yards on 70 carries — a 5.1 yards-per-carry average. Elixson and McClellon had limited touches last year (14 and 16, respectively), but made the most of them as each averaged at least 6 yards per



LEFT: Jeremy Webb prepares to catch a pass as Eli Llanes looks on in the background. BELOW: Bryce Lawton (left) looks for a hole to run through during the Tigers' Aug. 8 practice.



2025 UCHS Varsity Football Schedule

Aug. 15	at Port St. Joe (KC)	7 p.m.
Aug. 22	Yulee	7:30 p.m.
Aug. 29	Keystone	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 5	at Hollis Christian	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 12	Baldwin	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 19	at Fort White	7:30 p.m.
Sept. 26	Paxon	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 3	Zarephath (HC)	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 17	at Trinity Catholic	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 24	Hudson	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	Chiefland	7:30 p.m.

KC Preseason Kickoff Classic
HC Homecoming

carry. Contributors at wide receiver/tight end will include players such as Parrish, seniors Landon Cason, Mason Fassett and Erick Lasseter, junior J.J. Buie and sophomore Elijah Llanes as well as players who'll be lining up at running back, too.

Simmons is the team's returning leading receiver with 203 yards on 10 receptions.

"We feel like we've got some guys we can move around, depending on what package we're in on offense," Waters said.

On defense, the linebacking corps looks to feature players such as Elixson, Ivey, Lawton, Rogers, sophomore Kiptyn Shuler and freshman Brandon Marshall, while in the mix in the secondary are players like Brugh, Buie, McClellon, Merriex, Simmons, Webb, Williams and sophomore Tristan George.

The Tigers lost their top eight tacklers from last year. The returning leader is McClellon, who had 29 tackles to go along with one interception.

"He doesn't come off the field, and he gives you everything he's got," Waters said of McClellon.

Union, which went 10-2 last season and advanced to the state semifinals, travels to play fellow Rural Class team Port St. Joe in a preseason kickoff classic on Friday, Aug. 15, at 7 p.m.

The Tigers play their first official game on Friday, Aug. 22, when they host Class 3A Yulee at 7:30 p.m.

Though it was a bit of unexpected turmoil following the spring game, the Union program boasts a collection of players who, according to Waters, enjoy what they're doing and work together so that the whole team benefits.

"They've got smiles on their faces. They're positive with each other," Waters said, adding, "When you see the older guys who may be considered our better ball players celebrate the success of the new guys who just started is pretty awesome."

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BMS

Continued from page 8

bringing their friends to also get involved.

“The team keeps growing, which is a good thing because guess what? Sixty five percent of my team — if not 70 percent — is eighth-graders,” Clayton said, adding, “When (the eighth-graders) leave, I’ve already got a good jump start from my development squad to come in and start contributing next season.”

As for this season, Clayton said he has team with lots of talent. That includes a stable of six to seven running backs, six to seven wide receivers who can go up and get the ball and dual-

threat quarterbacks.

He added he can go two deep at every position on the offensive line and defensive line, and that’s not counting the players who can play both sides of the ball.

“I think this team can compete with the talent level of previous years,” Clayton said. “If they stick together and work together, they can be that (BHS) state-championship appearance team from two years ago.”

Being a champion away from the field

Doing the right things on the field go a long way in how successful a team is, but BMS players are expected to do the right things always, no matter the

situation.

“We speak about that every day,” Clayton said. “I think they can’t get enough good coaches in their ears all the time.”

What those good coaches are stressing is that players’ actions can have a negative impact on others. For example, Clayton has told players that if they do something wrong, the media headlines are going to include the words “Bradford Middle School football player.”

In other words, a player’s actions aren’t just representing him. They represent the school, and they represent the community.

“We tell them, ‘Think about what you’re doing in the community when you’re not in front of adults.’ It’s integrity,”

Clayton said. “Do the right thing.”

The right thing could be avoiding bad situations or bad crowds. Clayton said he believes his players are smart enough to determine if something is going to mean trouble.

It’s not just avoiding the bad, though. Do something good. If you see trash in your community, pick it up. If an elderly person needs assistance, be there for them.

“Those little things go a long way in life,” Clayton said, adding, “That’s what we always speak about — who you are when no one’s looking.”

Ready to guide the BMS Tornados

Clayton has two years of college eligibility left, thanks to a redshirt year and then the covid year.

“Last summer, I had three (college) coaches reach out to me,” Clayton said.

His response was basically, “Thanks, but no thanks.” He’s got a family now, and he’s committed to coaching youth. Also, since his son is playing football, Clayton wants “to be there every step of the way to help him.”

Clayton said he still gets excited about football games, but admitted that as the BMS head coach, he’ll probably tend to “be more laid back and just think about game situations.” He also has no trouble letting the assistant coaches “do their

thing.”

“I’ll kind of let my coaches coach, and then I’ll help the coaches,” he said.

Clayton believes the team is ready to take on the tough competition in the Suwannee Middle Athletic Conference, with the Tornados opening the season on the road against defending SMAC champ Lake City on Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 6 p.m.

“We work out like the high school,” Clayton said. “We work out hard — really hard. We’re probably going to be one of the most in-shape teams in the conference, if not the most in-shape team in the conference.”

Bradford’s first home game will be Tuesday, Aug. 26, against P.K. Yonge at 6 p.m.

Legal Notices

Legals for the week of Aug. 14, 2025

BRADFORD

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

CASE NO.: 2024 CA 000274

PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION, Plaintiff, VS. RACHEL PARSONS:UNKNOWN HEIRS, BENEFICIARIES, DEVISEES, SURVIVING SPOUSE, GRANTEES ASSIGNEE, LIENORS, CREDITORS, TRUSTEES, AND ALL OTHER PARTIES CLAIMING AN INTEREST BY, THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST THE ESTATE OF RACHEL PARSONS A/K/A RACHEL SYLVIA SHERWOOD, DECEASED; et al., Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF ACTION
(Publish in Bradford County Telegraph)

TO: Rachel Parsons:Unknown Heirs, Beneficiaries, Devisees, Surviving Spouse, Grantees Assignee, Lienors, Creditors, Trustees, And All Other Parties Claiming An Interest By, Through, Under, Or Against The Estate Of Rachel Parsons A/K/A Rachel Sylvia Sherwood, Deceased Last Known Residence: Unknown TO: Maurice Gayle, Sr. a/k/a Maurice Gayle Last Known Residence: 58 Webster Ave West Islip, NY 11795

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to foreclose a mortgage on the following property in BRADFORD County, Florida:

LOTS 12, 13, AND 14, BL OCK 11, LIVINGSTON, TRUBY AND COMPANY'S ADDITION TO THE TOWN OF STARKE, BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA, SECTION 28, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 22 EAST OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA.

has been filed against you and you are required to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to it on ALDRIDGE PITE, LLP, Plaintiff's attorney, at 401 W. Linton Blvd. Suite 202-B Delray Beach, FL 33444, on or before

and file the original with the clerk of this court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint or petition.

Dated July 18, 2025
As Clerk of the Court
By: K. JENKINS
As Deputy Clerk
1395-1254B 8/7 2tchg- 8/14 BCT

and have an opportunity to be heard at the meeting with respect to the proposed ordinance.

8/14 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A SETBACK VARIANCE AS PROVIDED IN THE CITY OF LAWTEY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAWTEY, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to the City of Lawtey Comprehensive Land Use Plan, objections, recommendations, and comments concerning a setback variance, as described below, will be heard by the City Council of the City of Lawtey, Florida, at a public hearing to be held on August 28, 2025 at 5:45 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, at Lawtey City Hall, 2793 Lake St., Lawtey, Florida. ZV25-01, a petition by John Waters to request a Setback Variance to be granted provided for in Section 4.9 (RSF/MH Residential) of the City of Lawtey Land Development Code to allow for a setback variance. Parcel of land lying within Lot 59 in section 26 in East Lawtey as per plat Recorded in Deed book 2020/367 of the public records of Bradford County, Florida being

Parcel Number 0159-0-00000

The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested parties shall be advised that the date, time and location of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no further notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above-mentioned public hearing.

All interested parties may appear and be heard with the respect to the variance.

8/14 1tchg-BCT

COMMISSION MEETING

THE PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED that the Bradford County Board of County Commissioners will have a board meeting on August 21, 2025, at 6:30 PM, inside the county commission meeting room, located in the north wing section of the Bradford County Courthouse, 945 N. Temple, Avenue, Starke, FL. A copy of the meeting agenda may be obtained from the Bradford County website: www.bradfordcountyfl.gov. Said meeting location is secured – no firearms or weapons are permitted.

8/14 1tchg-BCT

City of Starke
Notice of Public Meeting

The City of Starke will hold a Public Meeting on **August 28, 2025 at 2:00 pm.** The meeting will be for the sole purpose of discussing the FRDAP Grant Application for **Thomas Street Park.** This meeting will be held at 209 North Thompson Street in the Commission Room. Public participation is welcomed.

8/14 1tchg-BCT

City of Starke
Notice of Public Meeting

The City of Starke will hold a Public Meeting on **August 28, 2025 at 3:00 pm.** The meeting will be for the sole purpose of discussing the FRDAP Grant Application for **Edwards Road Park.** This meeting will be held at 209 North Thompson Street in the Commission Room. Public participation is welcomed.

8/14 1tchg-BCT

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO REGISTER FICTITIOUS NAME

Pursuant to Section 865.09, Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given that the undersigned: Richard D. Thomas & Brenda D. Thomas, 3687 Ambient Air Rd., Starke, FL 32091, JOINT owners, doing business under the firm name of: T & M TOWING, 3687 AMBIENT AIR RD., STARKE, FL 32091 intends to register fictitious name under the aforesaid statute. Dated this 8TH day of AUGUST A.D., 2025, in BRADFORD County.

8/14 1tchg-BCT

UNION

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

CIVIL DIVISION

CASE NO.: 24000047CAAXMX

PHH MORTGAGE CORPORATION, PLAINTIFF, VS. REBECCA M. NETTLES, AGNES R. HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH SAPP F/K/A AGNES R. COMBS, ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS ET AL., DEFENDANTS.

RE-NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

(Please publish in Union County Times)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Order Rescheduling Foreclosure Sale dated the 26th day of June, 2025, and entered in Case No. 24000047CAAXMX, of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Union County, Florida, wherein PHH Mortgage Corporation is the Plaintiff and AGNES R. HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH HODGES A/K/A AGNUS RUTH SAPP F/K/A AGNES R. COMBS, REBECCA M. NETTLES, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF REBECCA M. NETTLES, UNKNOWN SPOUSE OF ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS, ROBIN CAPRICE JOHNS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT and UNKNOWN TENANT IN POSSESSION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY N/K/A LORETTA MERRITT are defendants. Kelly Hendricks Rhoades as the Clerk of the Circuit Court shall sell to the highest and best bidder for cash in the lobby of the Union County Courthouse, 55 West Main Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054 at 11:00 A.M. on the **25th day of September, 2025**, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, to wit:

Part of the South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4 of Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, containing one-acre, more or less, as defined by four concrete monuments. These monuments are located as follows: Running Southerly along the supposed East boundary of the above 20 acre tract to a monument said to be the Southeast corner thereof, run right through a deflection angle of 86°15'; Thence 163.33 feet to a point, at which turn right through a deflection angle of 48°05'; Thence Northwesterly along this course a distance of 512.00 feet, to a monument, this monument being the East corner monument of the one-acre tract herein described, thence run left through a deflection angle of 89°59'; Thence along this line, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described for a distance of 209.00 feet to a monument, being the Southern corner of the one-acre tract herein described, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°03'; Thence along this course being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the West corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, thence turning right through a deflection angle of 89°50'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the one-acre tract herein described, a distance of 210 00 feet to a monument, being the North corner of the aforesaid one-acre tract, and thence turning right through a deflection angle of 90°07'; Thence along this course, being a boundary of the aforesaid one-acre tract, a distance of 210.00 feet to a monument, being the East corner previously mentioned; It being specifically understood the aforesaid monuments are and remain the boundaries of the parcel herein described. AND Commence at the Northwest corner of the South 1/2 of Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, Section 15, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida, and run North 84° 30' 27" East along the North line of said South 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 of the Northwest 1/4, 146.89 feet, thence South 44° 32' 28" East, 420.69 feet to the point of beginning, thence South 42° 52' 17" West 122.00 feet, thence South 47° 08' 43" East, 210.00 feet, thence North 47° 08' 43" West 210.00 feet, thence South 42° 52' 17" West,

88.00 feet to the Point of Beginning. IF YOU ARE A PERSON 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 THE FUNDS AS UNCLAIMED. IF YOU FAIL TO FILE A CLAIM, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ANY REMAINING FUNDS. AFTER THE FUNDS ARE REPORTED AS UNCLAIMED, ONLY THE OWNER OF RECORD AS OF THE DATE OF THE LIS PENDENS MAY CLAIM THE SURPLUS.

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. Persons with a disability who need any accommodation in order to participate should call Jan Phillips, ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Courthouse, 201 E. University Ave., Gainesville, FL 32601 at (352) 337-6237 within two (2) working days of your receipt of this notice; if you are hearing impaired call (800) 955-8771; if you are voice impaired, call (800) 955-8770.

Dated this 2nd day of July, 2025.

Kellie Hendricks Rhoades
Clerk of The Circuit Court
By: C. Hollingsworth
Deputy Clerk
Submitted by:
Miller, George & Suggs, PLLC
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF
210 N. University Drive, Suite 900
Coral Springs, FL 33071
DESIGNATED PRIMARY E-MAIL FOR SERVICE
PURSUANT TO FLA. R. JUD. ADMIN 2.516
ESERVIC@MGS-LEGAL.COM
24FL922-0055 7/31 2tchg 8/7-UCT

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

CIVIL ACTION

CASE NO.: 2024-CA-000081

DIVISION:

PLANET HOME LENDING, LLC, Plaintiff, vs. PAUL HUFFER AKA PAUL E. HUFFER AKA PAUL ELIOTT HUFFER, et al, Defendant(s).

NOTICE OF SALE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 45

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN Pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated June 23, 2025, and entered in Case No. 2024-CA-000081 of the Circuit Court of the Eighth Judicial Circuit in and for Union County, Florida in which Planet Home Lending, LLC, is the Plaintiff and Paul Huffer aka Paul E. Huffer aka Paul Elliott Huffer; Taylor Huffer aka T. Huffer aka Taylor L. Huffer; United States of America Acting through Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Union County Clerk of the Circuit Court; Any And All Unknown Parties Claiming by, Through, Under, And Against The Herein named Individual Defendant(s) Who are not Known To Be Dead Or Alive, Whether Said Unknown Parties May Claim An Interest in Spouses, Heirs, Devisees, Grantees, Or Other Claimants are defendants, the Union County Clerk of the Circuit Court will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash in/on , Union County, Florida at on the 28th day of August, 2025, the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment of Foreclosure:

ALL THAT CERTAIN LAND SITUATE IN UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA, TO-WIT:

LOT 49-B OF UPLAND PINES PLANTATION, AN UNRECORDED SUBDIVISION DESCRIPTION

A TRACT OF LAND LYING IN SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 18 EAST, UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 20 (ALSO BEING THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 21) AND THENCE RUN N 86 DEGREES 27' 24" E ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SECTION 21, A DISTANCE OF 2021.94 FEET; THENCE S 2 DEGREES 46' 29" E, A DISTANCE OF 619.62 FEET TO THE NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE (R/W) OF SARA LANE; THENCE S 3 DEGREES 32' 36" E, A DISTANCE

OF 60 FEET TO THE SOUTH R/W LINE OF SARA LANE; THENCE S 86 DEGREES 27' 24" W, ALONG SAID SOUTH R/W LINE, A DISTANCE OF 1955.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF CURVATURE OF A TANGENT CURVE, CONCAVE TO THE SOUTH, HAVING A RADIUS OF 115.92 FEET AND A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 23 DEGREES 42' 25"; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID R/W CURVE, A DISTANCE OF 461.73 FEET TO THE END OF SAID CURVE; THENCE S 3 DEGREES 32' 38" E, A DISTANCE OF 174.41 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUING S 3 DEGREES 32' 38" E, A DISTANCE OF 309.40 FEET TO THE NORTH R/W LINE OF A 40 FOOT COUNTY ROAD; THENCE S 87 DEGREES 13' 09" W, ALONG SAID R/W LINE, A DISTANCE OF 142.23 FEET; THENCE N 3 DEGREES 32' 38" W, A DISTANCE OF 309.40 FEET; THENCE N 87 DEGREES 13' 09" E, A DISTANCE OF 142.23 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

TOGETHER WITH A MOBILE HOME LOCATED THEREON AS A PERMANENT FIXTURE AND APPURTENANCE THERETO, DESCRIBED AS A 1999 LIBERTY WINDMERE PLUS DOUBLEWIDE PALM MOBILE HOME BEARING SERIAL NUMBERS: 10L27073X AND 10L27073U.

A/K/A 5821 SW 52ND TERRACE LAKE BUTLER FL 32054

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the Lis Pendens must file a claim before the Clerk reports the surplus as unclaimed.

Dated in Union County, Florida this 5TH day of August 2025.

Clerk of the Circuit Court
Union County, Florida
By: C. HOLLINGSWORTH
Deputy Clerk
Albertelli Law
Attorney for Plaintiff
P.O. Box 23028
Tampa, FL 33623
(813) 221-4743
(813) 221-9171 facsimile
eService: servealaw@albertellilaw.com
IN- 24-010322

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. Persons with a disability who need any accommodation in order to participate should call Jan Phillips, ADA Coordinator, Alachua County Courthouse, 201 E. University Ave., Gainesville, FL 32601 at (352)337-6237 within two (2) working days of receipt of this notice; if you are hearing impaired, please call 1-800-955-8771; if you are voice impaired, please call 1-800-955-8770.

The above is to be published in the Union County Times, 125 E Main St, Lake Butler, FL 32054

IN- 24-010322 8/7 2tchg 8/14-UCT

certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:

CERTIFICATE #: 216

YEAR OF ISSUANCE: 2020

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY: 32-05-20-22-017-0020-0

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: The South 1/2 of the North 1/2 of the West 140 feet of Block 17, J. W. Townsend's Addition, according to plat thereof recorded in the public records of Union County, Florida, Section 32, Township 5 South, Range 20 East, Union County, Florida.

NAME IN WHICH ASSESSED: JUANITA BROWN, JESSIE BROWN & HENRY ALLEN.

Said property being in the County of Union, State of Florida. Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to the law, the property described in such certificate will be sold to the highest bidder in the Courthouse lobby at 11:00 A.M., the 2nd day of OCTOBER, 2025. Dated this 4th day of AUGUST, 2025. Leslie C. Snyder
For KELLIE HENDRICKS RHOADES Clerk of Circuit Court
Union County, Florida
Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact (386) 496-3711.

8/14 4tchg 9/4-UCT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR UNION COUNTY, FLORIDA

PROBATE DIVISION

File No. 63-2025-CP-000019

Division Probate

IN RE: ESTATE OF THOMAS GREGG HOLLOWAY Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of THOMAS GREGG HOLLOWAY, deceased, whose date of death was November 8, 2024, is pending in the Circuit Court for Union County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 55 West Main Street, Room 103, Lake Butler, Florida 32054. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

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

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

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, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under s. 732.221(1), Florida Statutes.

1ALL 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 August 14, 2025.

Personal Representative:
LAUREN ASHLEY BOALS
151 Hadley Drive
Huger, South Carolina 29450
Attorney for Personal Representative:
ROBERT J. PERRY, JR., ESQUIRE
E-mail Address: Robert@robertperrylawfirm.com
Florida Bar No. 958580
The Law Offices of Robert J. Perry, Jr., PLLC
12627 San Jose Blvd., Suite 103
Jacksonville, Florida 32223
Telephone: (904) 240-4815

8/14 2tchg 8/21-UCT

CONTINUED BUDGET WORKSHOP NOTICE

The City of Lake Butler City Commission will hold a **CONTINUED BUDGET WORKSHOP** on Thursday, August 21, 2025 at 5:00pm at the City Commission Chambers located in City Hall at 200 SW 1st Street Lake Butler, FL 32054. The **CONTINUED BUDGET WORKSHOP** will be for the Board's continued discussion on the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Annual Operating Budget for the City of Lake Butler.

8/14 1tchg-UCT

REGULAR MEETING NOTICE

The City of Lake Butler City Commission will hold a **REGULAR MEETING** on Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at 6:15pm at the City Commission Chambers located in City Hall at 200 SW 1st Street Lake Butler, FL 32054.

8/14 1tchg-UCT

Notice of Application for Tax Deed NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that J. R. DAVIS, TRUSTEE OF THE J R DAVIS TRUST, the holder(s) of the following certificate has filed said

Bradford County Telegraph

USPS 062-700

Published each Thursday and entered as Periodical Postage Paid at Starke, Florida under Act of March 3, 1879.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Bradford County Telegraph
131 West Call Street • Starke, Florida 32091
Phone: 964-6305 • P.O. Drawer A • Starke, FL 32091

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Lake Region Monitor

USPS 114-170

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UNION COUNTY TIMES

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uctimeseditor@gmail.com
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John Miller, Publisher

Editor:	Mark J. Crawford
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Tornadoes, Indians, Tigers have Aug. 18-19 golf matches

The Bradford, Keystone Heights and Union County high school golf teams are prepared

to begin their seasons, with the first matches being played on Monday, Aug. 18, when Bradford hosts Keystone in a boys match at 4 p.m. and Union plays Taylor County in a boys match at The Country Club at Lake City at 4 p.m.

Union's boys and girls golf

teams will play a Tuesday, Aug. 19, match against Bradford at The Country Club at Lake City at 4 p.m.

The Keystone girls team will play Columbia at Lake City's Quail Heights Country Club on Aug. 19 at 3:30 p.m.

KHHS Continued from page 9

Ridgeview in a preseason kickoff classic on Friday, Aug. 15, at 7 p.m. Keystone then gets the season started with a home game against Interlachen on Friday, Aug. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

Reynolds said his team, of course, will plan and scheme based on who the opponent is, but he wants his players to pay more attention to their roles and not on who's lining up across from them.

"What we're really going to do is focus on what we need to do to get better and just try to

compete, no matter who's there," Reynolds said.

It's all about grinding toward improvement as a player and, hopefully, as a team overall.

"I want them to prepare every day to the best of their ability and keep filling up the jar because eventually you get there," Reynolds said.



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mpelleritorealtor@gmail.com
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Obituaries

Reginald Butler

Gone home to be with Jesus. Reginald Butler, 95, died Friday, June 13, 2025, at Haven Hospice in Gainesville. He was born in Hartford, Alabama on July 27, 1929, to Festis and Mary Butler. He founded the former Calvary Baptist Church in Starke. He pastored South East Marion Baptist and also West Marion Baptist churches. He was a CPA and owned a paving business and a janitorial business in Marion County. In his early retirement, he and his second wife, Doris, traveled the United States, overseeing government campgrounds. He will be missed so much by those who loved him most. For the last 17 years, he was the soul mate of his wife, Virginia. He was preceded in death by two former wives; and one son, Ronnie Butler.

He is survived by his wife, Virginia Butler; son, Kevin "Ricky" Butler; and granddaughter, Stacey Berg.

Services were held at Hiers-Baxley Funeral Home, Ocala.



PAID OBITUARY

John Goodman Sr.

John N. "Hammer" Goodman Sr. passed away Friday, Aug. 1, 2025. He was a lifelong resident of Starke and attended the schools of Bradford County. He was a member of Mount Moriah Church of Starke. He worked in the construction and dry wall business.

Viewing will be Friday, Aug. 15, from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. at Haile Funeral Home, 802 Oak St., Starke. The Cortège will form at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 16, at the home of Steve and Mary Goodman, Starke. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 16, at Truevine Outreach Ministry, 422 St. Clair St., Starke, with Pastor Alvin Green, officiating. Interment will follow at Odd Fellow Cemetery, Starke.

Arrangements are in the care of Haile Funeral Home, 802 Oak St. Starke. 904-964-7905.

PAID OBITUARY

Evelyn Lobenthal

Evelyn Lobenthal, beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, passed away peacefully Friday, Aug. 8, 2025, in Gainesville, at the age of 88. Born on March 17, 1937, in Lake Butler, she was the youngest of seven children born to the late Ben and Donnie Gainey. She was not only a devoted homemaker; she was also a nurturing spirit whose love was reflected in every flower she tended in her beloved garden and in every stitch she made while sewing. Her home was a sanctuary filled with warmth, laughter, and the delightful aroma of home-cooked meals, a testament to her generous heart. In her lifetime, she shared a deep and abiding love with her husband, Charles "Chuck" Lobenthal, until his passing in 2005. Together, they raised three wonderful boys, Brandt (Christina) Lobenthal of Gainesville, Darren (Terri) Lobenthal of Citra, and Kurt (Michelle) Lobenthal of Providence. Her legacy continues through her adoring family, including three grandsons, Taylor, Sean, and Brannon Lobenthal; and her five treasured great-grandchildren, Gabby, LeAnn, S.J., Bree, and Lucas. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband; and grandson, Carl Brandt Lobenthal Jr. Her gentle soul and unwavering compassion for others will be cherished and remembered by all who had the privilege to know her.

A visitation will be held at Archer-Milton Funeral Home on Monday, Aug. 18, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m., offering family and friends the opportunity to pay their respects. A funeral service will take place at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 19, at the same location, followed by a graveside service at Hunt Cemetery with Pastor Carl Harris officiating.

Archer-Milton Funeral Home is honored to serve Evelyn's family during this time. 386-496-2008 www.archerfuneralhome.com

PAID OBITUARY



Richard McRae

Richard Dale "Rick" McRae passed away quietly on Tuesday, July 8, 2025. He was 71. He was born Oct. 11, 1953 in Jacksonville to Owen and Iris McRae. Rick served in the Army, did a tour of duty in Korea and was an expert rifleman. He grew up in Starke and moved to Keystone Heights for work over 20 years ago. He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Marilyn "Kay" McRae.

Rick is survived by his son, Steven McRae; daughter, Melanie McRae (Talmadge Smith); stepson, Eric Long; stepdaughter, Amber Fishley; and three grandchildren, Talmadge and Laken Smith and Mackenzie McRaney. He is also survived by his brothers, Harley (Kathy) McRae, Gary (Linda) McRae and Michael (Edie) McRae; and his first wife, Kelley McRae.

He will be missed.

PAID OBITUARY

Sara L. Mullins

Sara Louise Mullins entered this world on Feb. 16, 1953, and left Tuesday, July 15, 2025, surrounded by family. Mary and George Bryant were proud to have her as their daughter while they were here. She was the most amazing "Grammie," mom, sister, friend, and wife. For those who knew her, they knew she never met a stranger and always thought of others before herself. Because she had so many people who loved her, her life will be celebrated twice.

Her Celebration of Life will be held at Bethlehem Baptist Church, located at 2115 FL-100 SE, Lake City 32025, on Friday, Aug. 22, at 11 a.m. The family will also spread her ashes where her parents are at Fish Eating Creek. Those who would like to attend can meet the family at the corner of Bermont Road (CR74) and Tasmania Road in Glades County on Aug. 23, at 11 a.m.

PAID OBITUARY



Card of Thanks

A special "Thank You" for the men who built the wheelchair ramp for Reginald Butler.

He was able to use it for exactly two years.

What a blessing it was!

God bless you

for your labor of love!

The Butlers

BHS Continued from page 8

about how graduation had impacted his defensive line, but he feels better about that unit heading into the season.

"When you watch us in practice, we're fast and physical up front," Rodgers said. "That's what seems to have been kind of the hallmark ever since I've been here. We've had really good players on the defensive line, and they're physical. It seems like we've got that again."

As already mentioned, Andrews can contribute on the line. In fact, he can play any position there, Rodgers said, adding, "He really is a piece we can move around and do some different things with."

Rodgers has high expectations for senior Nate Raymond and junior Parviele "P.J." Lee, who are the "leaders" at defensive end. They are another couple of players who saw limited action in the past and are now ready to step fully into the Friday night lights.

"It's kind of a common theme on our defense," Rodgers said. "These guys probably could've transferred, but they didn't want to transfer. They stuck it out as young guys who didn't play a ton of varsity snaps, but they kept getting better and kept getting better."

"Now, this is their defense. Now, it's their legacy. Now, they get to show some things."

The line will also feature such players as senior Domo McBride and junior Danny Torres, a junior transfer who had the sixth most tackles for Miami Killian last season. Rodgers said Torres, who was listed on Killian's roster last season as 6-2, 238, provided a "huge shot in the arm."

"He's gained 40 pounds," Rodgers said. "His body looks

completely different than it did in January. He can play multiple positions up front."

Offense

Flip to the line on the offensive side, and you've got a valuable returning starter in senior Ridge Bradley. Rodgers described Bradley, a three-year starter, as the "anchor" of the line and "one of those throwback guys who really loves the nastiness of football."

"He's just as gritty as it gets," Rodgers said. "He loves physical contact."

The line also gets a lot of experience from junior Bryce Daniels, a transfer from Keystone who's been a varsity starter since eighth grade.

"Bryce is a big body," Rodgers said of the 6-4, 320 lineman. "He's super strong. He bench presses 385 pounds. Him on a double team really helps get people moved out of there."

As of now, Daniels will line up at center, while Bradley will play right guard. Rodgers said senior Andrew Austin, a transfer from Orange Park, will play right tackle, while senior Will Jackson will play left tackle. Left guard is still up for grabs.

The line will pave the way for a "stable" of running backs, which includes junior Iyen Addison, who was second on the team last year with 681 yards and six touchdowns on 83 carries.

Rodgers said some backfields have a tandem of backs compared to "lightning and thunder." In other words, one is quick and elusive, while the other is a big and physical runner between the tackles.

"Iyen's kind of both," Rodgers said of the 175-pound back. "He's super strong in the lower body, but still one of the fastest guys on our team."

Rodgers said senior Keshawn Kennedy, a transfer from Baker

Lorene Sumner

Wilma "Lorene" Sumner, 78, of Starke, passed away Aug. 11, 2025, at Haven Hospice E.T. York Care Center in Gainesville surrounded by family. She was born Nov. 19, 1946, in Starke, to the late Willis Clifton Broughton Sr. and Nina Corene Broughton. She was a lifelong resident of Bradford County. While attending Bradford High School, she married her best friend and forever companion, Clyde W. Sumner Sr., on May 19, 1962. They were blessed with 51 amazing years of marriage, three beautiful



children, seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Family was her greatest joy. She took pride in being a wife, mother, and grandmother and loved tending to their needs. From an early age, she had a deep desire to help others and be a light to those she surrounded. Beyond her role as a homemaker, Lorene was able to advocate for others and impact many through her careers. She worked at Lake Butler Sewing Factory and managed local convenience stores for years, but her true calling was serving as a Certified Nursing Assistant and owning her own company with her daughter, Tina, called New Perceptions. Her company was dedicated to creating opportunities and providing support for people with disabilities. Through her work, she touched countless lives, giving hope, dignity, and purpose to those often overlooked. When not working, she loved playing computer games and being active at her church, Smyrna Baptist Church, where she was a longtime dedicated member. She was truly a woman of faith and a devoted believer in Jesus Christ, her Lord and Savior. She was known for making the best cup of coffee, a talent even her grandchildren enjoyed. She also had a love for butterflies, finding in them a symbol of beauty and sweet transformation. Her collection of butterfly treasures extended throughout her home; delicate figurines, artwork, bedspreads, etc. It surely brought happiness and beauty to each day. More than anything, she loved spending precious time with her family. She was such a treasure and will be deeply missed by all who knew her. She was preceded in death by her parents; loving husband, Clyde Sumner Sr.; and sister, Ruby Joyce Sutton.

She is survived by her children, Tina (John) Hutchins of Starke, Brenda (Malin) Sumner Dick of Raiford, and Clyde W. Sumner Jr. of Jacksonville; brother, Willis "Buddy" Broughton Jr. of Lake Butler; sister, Louann Simpson of Keystone Heights; seven grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; along with many family members and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be on Thursday, Aug. 14, at 11 a.m. at Smyrna Baptist Church with Pastor Thomas William Smith, Pastor Paul Cannon, and Pastor Charles Starling officiating. Interment will follow at Santa Fe Cemetery. The family will receive friends on Wednesday, Aug. 13, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at Archie Tanner Memorial Chapel.

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

PAID OBITUARY

Karen Wacha

Karen Ann Wacha, 85, of Keystone Heights died at her home Tuesday, July 29, 2025.

Her Celebration of Life will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 204 SR 26, Melrose, 32666 on Saturday, Aug. 16, at 11 a.m.

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

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

Curtis A. "Lex" Sanders Attorney at Law



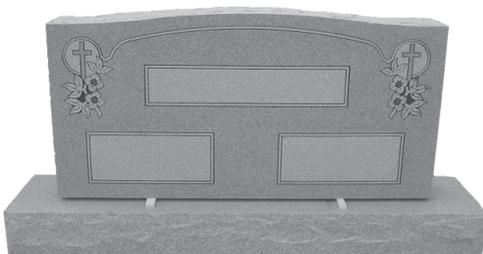
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County, is a bigger back at 195 pounds, but added, "We don't lose any speed with him. He's definitely one of the top three or four fastest kids on our team. He's going to get quite a bit of carries."

Jarrell Harris, a junior, is a "lightning" back. Rodgers said, "If he can get to that sideline, there aren't many people who are going to catch him."

Harris rushed for 62 yards on six carries in Bradford's spring game, while Kennedy rushed for 44 yards on five carries.

Sophomore Damarion Dodd is another player who'll be in the mix at running back. He had one carry in the spring game, which was good for a 65-yard touchdown.

Rodgers said the receiver corps is probably the best Bradford has had since he's been coach. Jordan Cason and Jy'Quez Cason will be part of that group, with Jy'Quez Cason returning as Bradford's leading receiving in 2024 with 450 yards and five touchdowns on 25 catches.

"They're as good as they want to be," Rodgers said of the Casons. "They've really gotten themselves in good shape. Both of them are probably stronger right now than they've ever been. That should equate to the best seasons they've ever had."

Senior Elijah Lawrence returns after finishing as the team's third-leading receiver last year with 192 on 16 catches. The receiving corps also features such players as Phillips, a transfer from Baker County, as well as fellow newcomers Kemontae Nixon (senior from Interlachen) and Peyton Jones (freshman from Baker County).

A good receiving corps, of course, is only as effective as the player lining up at quarterback, and hopes are high for sophomore Cy Cubbedge, who's ready to line up behind center after the graduation of Zack Paulk. Cubbedge, a lefty who stands 6-2, threw a touchdown and had almost 160 yards in the spring game.

Rodgers said Cubbedge has the physical tools. For the quarterback, it's more about pre-snap reads and dissecting defenses.

"He's got the keys to this thing for probably the next three years, coming in as a 10th-grade starter," Rodgers said. "He's got

all the skills. He's got a really, really good arm. He can make the throws from everywhere on the field. It'll be more about decision making, learning defenses and learning what he's looking for."

The coach added that the offensive line will go a long way in dictating what kind of season Cubbedge has.

"If we can protect Cy, he's going to have a really big year," Rodgers said. "We don't protect Cy, he's going to run for his life. That's not optimal."

Cubbedge handled placekicking duties last year, but that role will be filled this year by senior Tyler Sapp, a transfer from Keystone.

Rodgers said Sapp had a great summer, saying he heard the kicker made something like 110 of 110 extra-point attempts.

"I expect there's going to come a time somewhere during the season when he's going to make a really big kick for us," Rodgers said. "We practice that every day. I feel like his head is in the right spot. He's going to have a big year."

Challenging start

The season gets its start with a preseason kickoff classic at Cocoa on Friday, Aug. 15, at 7 p.m. Bradford then opens with a home game against Baker County on Friday, Aug. 22, at 7 p.m.

It's a tough stretch to open the season, with road games following at Dunnellon on Friday, Aug. 29, at 7:30 p.m., at South Sumter on Friday, Sept. 5, at 7:30 p.m. and at Jacksonville Mandarin on Friday, Sept. 12, at 6:30 p.m.

Rodgers said you'd be "hard pressed" to find a tougher stretch of games in the state. Class 2A Cocoa is seeking its fourth straight state title, while Bradford and Class 3A Baker are longtime rivals. Dunnellon and Mandarin were playoff qualifiers last season in Class 3A and Class 6A, respectively. Rodgers expects Class 3A South Sumter and Class 3A Eastside to be improved this year, adding that South Sumter, which has a long tradition of success, added three or four transfers who are Division I college-level players.

Is Bradford ready to step into the role of hunter? We'll soon find out.

Former Suwannee director McPeak ready to lead Bradford bands

BY CLIFF SMELLEY
cliff@bctelegraph.com

One of the Bradford County School District's newest Tornados must've felt like he was caught up in a tornado at times, but Clayton McPeak is ready to go into the school year as the new director of the Bradford Middle School and Bradford High School band programs.

It has been a whirlwind summer that consisted of long days after McPeak was hired in June. When he sat in his office at BHS at 3 p.m. on Aug. 1 to participate in the interview for this Telegraph-Times-Monitor story, McPeak said it was the first

time he had arrived at the office in the afternoon. He's spent full days trying to take inventory of what's at his disposal.

"I've usually been in here at 9 or 10 (in the morning)," McPeak said. "I've literally been opening cabinet doors, going, 'OK. What's in here?'"

He's also met teachers and school staff who've been "positive" and "uplifting," while the interactions he's had with high school band students have been enjoyable. That had him saying, "If the rest of the year is like these past two weeks, I think we're going to have a lot of fun. It's a great opportunity, I believe."

McPeak said the band director he had as a student in middle school inspired him to want to teach music. He earned a bachelor's degree in Music at Temple Terrace's Florida College.

His first teaching experience occurred at a Tampa-area Christian academy, where he spent five years. He described his time there as a "blast."

McPeak moved to North Central Florida (his parents live in Lake City), which led to him taking a job at Fort White High School as a math teacher. However, he would eventually become involved in music again. "They found out I had a music

background and kind of threw me into Beginning Band, which was fun," McPeak said. "Great opportunities."

The covid year happened, with McPeak saying when school resumed, he returned to teaching just math.

A fellow math teacher told him that Suwannee High School was looking for a band director. McPeak said his response was, "Yeah. Let's try it out. This could be a lot of fun."

"I went there and had some great support," McPeak said. "My principal at the time was a former band director. We understood each other very well. It was great."

It was a position McPeak held for three years until what he described as "a misalignment with our philosophy of music education" led him to leave.

McPeak said he was "just kind of in limbo" when a friend informed him of the Bradford district's need for a band director. That friend did more than just tell him about it, with McPeak saying she "kind of poked me a little bit."

That poke led to an enjoyable interview with BHS Principal Chris Coffey and BMS Principal Crystal Williams.

"We only got to like one question on the interview sheet," McPeak said. "We were

just talking. We had a very comfortable feeling. I was just like, 'You know what? Let's give it a shot. Let's have some fun.'"

McPeak brings with him a history of building programs — music and non-music.

The Christian academy he taught at had music classes, but no actual bands. When McPeak left, the school had two or three different bands.

At Fort White, McPeak coached boys soccer besides teaching. The soccer program grew to where a junior varsity program was added.

During his time at Suwannee,

See BAND, page 14

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<p>Town & Country Vet Clinic 1051 S Water St, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-6411</p>  <p>"We couldn't be happier with the care our dog Chevy received here. The whole team is kind, flexible, and took the time to answer all our questions. You can tell they truly care about the animals. Prices are very reasonable, and the service is top-notch. Huge thanks to Abby—she's amazing!"</p>	<p>Rivers Flowing Church 22610 Hwy 301 N Lawtey, FL 32054</p>  <p>Welcome to Rivers Flowing Church—where the river of God never runs dry!</p> <p>SUN: 10AM WED: 7PM</p>	<p>Starke Golf & Country Club 15501 NE 14th Ave, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-5441</p>  <p>"It's a lot of fun. Can't beat the price."</p>
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<p>Bradford County Sheriffs Office 945-B N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 966-6161</p>  <p>"I need to take a minute to recognize my jail command team, the people I'm surrounded by. Each unique and strong in their own areas. There is nothing anyone asks of them they don't do and almost always with a smile. They take care of business and take care of people at the same time."</p>	<p>Sporting Chance 218 N Temple Ave, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-7434</p>  <p>"The owner sat down with me and helped me find a logo for my husband's company and then designed the shirt with logo and name. She also took time to explain the different shirt and ordering options. I also got a deal on the Gator items at 70% off."</p>	<p>Teal Tile Carpet One 131 N Cherry St, Starke, FL 32091 (904) 964-7423</p>  <p>"High quality in every way!! Product was great. Workmanship was great. Pleasant staff. Just a pleasure to work with. Highly recommend!"</p>
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BAND

Continued from page 13

the number of band students increased.

Regarding growth in the Bradford programs, McPeak said, "Slowly, it's going to happen."

Goals

When it comes to what he wants to accomplish with the Bradford bands, McPeak said his focus is on the third of the three "C"s students learn in band. The first two "C"s are "creativity" and "commitment," while the third is "community." McPeak said students first learn to play

for themselves and then learn to play for the people around them. After that, it becomes playing for the community.

"The community aspect, I think, is huge," McPeak said. "I'll be looking for opportunities to put the kids out there. Of course, I can't do it every week, but I want to give them chances to play for others and for others

to experience that. Excitement creates excitement."

Another goal of McPeak's is to "understand the traditions of Bradford."

"I want to understand what the community holds to," he said. "Then, I want to try to give them those same traditions."

Performing well at music-performance assessments would be another goal to strive for. McPeak said he'd like it if Bradford could earn all top marks (Superior) throughout the year, but noted that you have to take small steps to get to that point.

"It's a progression," he said. "You can't just come in and be like, 'We're changing everything. We're doing this now.' You can't do that, but you can be like, 'OK. Let's do our small goals.'"

When you reach a small goal, McPeak said you celebrate it and then say, "All right. What's next?"

McPeak plans to encourage students to audition for area honor bands. He referenced a common saying: "You miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take."

"What's interesting is the kids who never thought they

could make it end up making it," McPeak said. "They were like, 'I never thought I'd make it.' Well, why (did they make it)? They tried. That was it."

He may be a music teacher, but McPeak is also a cheerleader. He will express the confidence in those students who doubt themselves. If he encourages students to do something, and they reply that they can't, he will tell them, "Yeah, you can. Maybe not today, but you can do this. You can absolutely do this."

Any successful band program has tremendous support, and McPeak has already seen that with the BHS Band Boosters.

"There was a fear the school year would start, and there would not be a director," McPeak said, adding, "At the high school level, (the Band Boosters) were willing to step in and be like, 'OK. How do we take it from here until you find someone?' That's positive."

McPeak would love to receive support from beyond the parents who are Band Boosters. He encourages Bradford band alumni, musicians in general and even music studios to contact him at one of the schools (904-966-6075 at BHS or 904-966-6705 at BMS) if there are interested in



Clayton McPeak, who was recently at Suwannee High School, is ready to build the band programs at Bradford Middle School and Bradford High School as their new director.

helping in any way. "We may not know what their talents are, but we can always find a place for someone," McPeak said.



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