



Potbelly Sandwich Works Opened on Tuesday February 18, 2025 at 870 US Hwy 27/441 in Lady Lake.



Pictured from the Lady Lake Business Luncheon. This is Dan Kapellen of Prime Path Lending the sponsor of the Lunch and the two Ladies that won the two door prizes he donated. The luncheon is held almost every third Thursday of the month. Everyone looks happy in this picture.



The Ground Breaking - Trailwinds Retirement Community, Wednesday, January 29, 2025. 6150 Seven Mile Dr., Wildwood, FL 34785, TrailwindsRetirement.com

## Meet James Uthmeier, New Florida Attorney General



G o v . DeSantis sworn in his new Attorney General to take Ashley Moody place. Now that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has selected

Attorney General Ashley Moody to replace Marco Rubio in the Senate, the state soon will need a new chief state legal officer.

That person will be DeSantis' chief of staff, James Uthmeier, The swearing in ceremony was Presidents day the 17th of February. Uthmeier became chief of staff after being the governor's top official attorney, and has been one of the most influential people in state government and DeSantis' key advisor.

## About "Lady Lake Magazine" & "Village Spectator"

by TomL

Our newspapers have been in the UF digital library for years. We thank them for that. Our papers have been around for years. We have won hundreds of awards. The awards competition were against newspapers in the state of Florida, some of the competitors had very large staffs and a million circulation. Awards including photo's, ad design, Best editorial, best story, best ad campaign. Of course that is all history. We survived the COVID set backs, etc etc etc. COVID was probably the worst. Today have other very large competitors that get in your face, when they see us do something different they do it also. When they see you belong to something they join. We will print a stories that will make attorneys jump up! It is always true. We printed about Fauci and the Wuhan lab during Obama reign as president.

### ADVERTISING

Advertising in the newspapers helps us bring you information that some times others will not print, advertising is a deduction on your income tax, so advertise and help us bring you information! Our job is to bring you good information & promote you the advertisers. We have printed press releases from local, state & federal agencies every month for many years. Half page of Governor DeSantis / half page of Kat Cammack / Half page of Florida state

attorney General. First it was Pam Bondi then Ashley Moony and now it will be James Uthmeier our new Attorney General of Florida. Our news has been from the Town Of Lady Lake, The library schedule for Youth and adults. We bring you the Lady Lake Chamber news. We are in the University of Florida library. So your ads can be seen there as well as on your computer and your smart phone. Our online library available to you goes back years. TomL Publishing said that! We are currently looking for two volunteer columnist to replace those who have retired or moved out of state. We have five websites. Four digital newspapers. Email me at [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)

Master website [tomlpublishing.com](http://tomlpublishing.com) with all access to all websites. We want to print your opinion email me.



# Town News Lake County Events

## Arbor Day in Lady Lake



LADY LAKE — In celebration of National Arbor Day on April 25, the Town of Lady Lake is announcing its annual Tree Raffle, reinforcing its commitment to conservation and community beautification.

This year, the Town Commission doubled the award to \$10,000, allowing 50 residents to win \$200 in gift certificates to Fairfield Farms Nurseries in Oxford, where they may choose from a variety of trees and plants. Winners must arrange for pickup and planting

### How to Enter:

Open to Lady Lake residents only (addresses will be verified).

One entry per household (previous winners from the last two years are not eligible).

Submit raffle tickets to the Town Clerk's Office at 409 Fennell Blvd. no later than 6 p.m. on April 14, 2025.

The drawing will take place on April 21,

2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Commission Chambers (409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake). Winners will be notified and do not need to be present.

Entry forms can be found online at [www.ladylakefl.gov](http://www.ladylakefl.gov) and at Town Hall.

For the 20th consecutive year, Lady Lake has been recognized as a Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, highlighting its dedication to urban forestry, tree preservation, and responsible development. The Town's tree bank, funded by developer contributions, supports initiatives like the annual tree raffle to ensure a greener future for Lady Lake.

"Being named a Tree City USA for 20 years solidifies our ongoing commitment to protecting our environment," said Parks and Recreation Director Mike Burske. "This raffle is a wonderful way to engage residents in beautification efforts."

Elisha Pappacoda

## Lady Lake Adult Easter Egg Hunt Detention Center

LADY LAKE — The Town of Lady Lake will host its first-ever Adult Easter Scavenger Hunt, "An Eggstraordinary Adventure," on Saturday, April 12. The event will feature a competitive hunt across multiple locations, with participants collecting eggs and competing for high value prizes.

Tickets are \$10 per person, and at least one team member must be over 18 years old. A valid driver's license is required to participate. The deadline to purchase tickets is April 4 at either Lady Lake Town Hall or the Lady Lake Library.

The scavenger hunt will begin at 9 a.m. at

Snooky Park, located at 120 W. Lady Lake Blvd. Teams of two will follow a series of clues leading them to several different locations within town where they will collect eggs containing small prizes. Each business along the route will also have one golden egg, which will qualify teams for top-tier prizes.

Prizes include a 75-inch television, a Bose speaker, a Meta Quest 3 virtual reality headset, a drone with a camera, a Kodak Printomatic camera, and gift cards valued at up to \$200. Participants must return to Snooky Park by 12:15 p.m., with a prize ceremony scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Teams

that find a golden egg will receive a top prize, while all remaining participants will be entered into a drawing for a \$250 gift card.

"This is a unique opportunity for the community to come together and experience an Easter event designed specifically for adults," said Amy Alicea, events coordinator for the Town of Lady Lake. "We are excited to host this event for the first time and look forward to seeing teams compete for great prizes while exploring the town."

The Town's annual family Easter Eggstravaganza will take place at Snooky Park on the same date, April 12, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. This beloved community event is expected to draw approximately 1,500 children for a fun-filled day of hunting eggs, games, prizes, food trucks, music, and Easter cheer.

Please note that there is no rain date scheduled. For more information on either event, text "LLEaster25" to 38276 or call 352-205-2826.

## Groundbreaking I-75 Expansion

**Governor Ron DeSantis Announces the Groundbreaking of I-75 Expansion in Ocala as Part of Moving Florida Forward Initiative**

OCALA, Fla.—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced the groundbreaking of over 31 miles of new auxiliary lanes to be added to I-75, from State Road 44 in Wildwood to State Road 326 in Ocala. This latest Moving Florida Forward project has been fully funded and is beginning 10-15 years ahead of schedule.

"We launched Moving Florida Forward in 2023 to accelerate road projects with an emphasis on alleviating traffic. We are accelerating this I-75 project near Ocala because residents and visitors alike need relief from the congestion," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "This project was not slated to begin for another 10-15 years, but thanks to our program, construction is now underway."

"Thanks to Governor DeSantis' Moving Florida Forward Infrastructure Initiative, congestion relief along I-75 will be delivered 10-15 years ahead of schedule," said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E. "With

nearly 114,000 vehicles driving the corridor daily, these improvements will make traveling easier and bring a \$2.3 billion economic impact to the region."

In 2023, Governor DeSantis announced the Moving Florida Forward Infrastructure Initiative. As part of the initiative, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) identified a selection of critical needs on state-owned roadways. Additionally, FDOT identified previously approved projects with broad community support that lacked funding to begin construction. Thanks to Governor DeSantis' fiscal prudence, \$4 billion from the General Revenue Surplus was able to be committed to the Moving Florida Forward Infrastructure Initiative to fund and expedite construction on these projects to relieve congestion, improve safety, and enhance Florida's supply chain.

At least 20 major interstate and roadway projects across the state have been expedited through this initiative, including:

The expansion of lanes and the addition of express lanes along I-4 in Polk and Osceola counties, which will reduce congestion and streamline traffic for travelers trying to get into Orlando.

The addition of regular and express lanes on I-275 in Pinellas County, which is projected to reduce travel delays by up to 85% and adds capacity along a major hurricane evacuation route.

A redesign of the Golden Glades interchange on I-95 in Miami-Dade County to enhance connectivity between major road corridors in the region;

The reconstruction of the Fruitville Interchange on I-75 in Sarasota County to a "Diverging Diamond" design, which will increase volume capacity by 40,000 vehicles and reduce the number of conflict points between vehicles getting on and off the interstate and opposing traffic;

The widening of U.S. 98 in Bay County designed to enhance access to local businesses and increase capacity for drivers in Panama City Beach; and

The realignment of U.S. 301 from C.R. 470 to Florida's Turnpike in Sumter County, which is projected to increase mobility and reduce delays by up to 94% during peak hours.

For more information on Moving Florida Forward ongoing and slated projects, visit [fdot.gov/MovingFloridaForward](http://fdot.gov/MovingFloridaForward).

## Lake County Detention Center Public Booking Log

See the frequently updated public booking log of those recently charged in Lake County. Go to:

<http://tomlpublishing.com/category/villages-news/lady-lake-police-dept/>

Or go to

[Tomlpublishing.com](http://tomlpublishing.com) and click on **Lake County Sheriff** on right side under "Contributing Editors".



## Along Came Trump

Over 150 years ago our fore fathers brought fourth unto this land a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men and women are created equal. Now we are involved in a Civil war. The popular party of common sense and the failed party that has run our country into deep deep debt! Stealing, buying things we should not. Buying favors, doing favors for money. all over the world. Some did not steal! Spending money to develop Viruses that could kill the masses in our country and it did. I think the intent was to develop the virus then develop the cure. Instead it killed the masses. The Government administration was giving and receiving large amount of money for special groups; projects in one state and nothing for others. Everything you can imagine has gone on and at the same time breaking the law and using our IRS and other government agencies to punish any resistance.

Now we are almost to the point of ruin from the corruption and spending, every one thinks the millionaires are getting involved to line their pockets. That is not the case, they are smart enough to realize that if the country goes bankrupt so do they. They are trying to save us and themselves. So help them help us!

Thank God"ALONG COMES TRUMP!" a visionary of what the country could be. He runs for president and wins. The other side custom to power could not stand it so they obstructed, Impeached, charge him with breaking the law, with Trumped up charges, they cheated, lied, made up story that were not true and the whole time they were stealing the citizens blind for billions then, trillions. The way the annalist have it figured we would be in deep deep debt. to the point of no return. Second attempt Trump ran and lost. He had every government agency against him. He had most major newspapers against him and crooked Joe won. The big tech companies were told to suppress curtain information by the FBI, CIA,. Secret Service, all of them. They knew the Presidents son had broke the law and some of the proof was on his laptop which, while on drugs left it for repair and forgot it. When it was turned into the FBI they said it was not legitimate and said it was planted. With all the government agency's against him and a Vice President that was not able to see what was happening Trump Lost. Some of his followers rushed the White House. They called it an attempted take over which it was not.

Now Trump ran again and knowing how they operated at the last election he was prepared. The people loved him, the

opposition saw that and tried to kill him. The "Lord said NO!e and he survived. He became almost a Mortar and it was all over. The crooked politicians lost.

Trump started showing very early what he is made of and I think he realizes that he was saved for a higher purpose. He started what he is good at "THE ART OF THE DEAL!" He surrounded himself with people he could trust and cleaning up the crooked mess we are in. If it goes the way I think it could we will be will part of the GOLDEN AGE!

The Lord is involved and will guide us to glory. They say now we might get hit by a very large asteroid. We world should be more interested in trying to avoid being hit by it Than playing the games they are playing right now!

Trump will bounce all kinds of ideas out to see what the people think. I think attracting forieng investor to the united states is good except for keep them out of Oil / power grids / farmer, just let them manufacture.

## Reporting Fraud

I had a number of things going on at once. I received several fraudulent attempts on the internet, then I turned them in and my computer got hacked. I click on something and the computer started DONG DONG a siren I think and a voice saying don't turn your computer off. I push the button on the side of the mac which stopped everything. The silence was deafening, then I let the computer boot back up and the was no email response. My password was breached, I was sent help emails to click on I did not do that. I got really discourage. Turned the computer off and unplugged it. I thought about it all night. Next morning I tried to create a new password and at about 25 or more attempts I made some head way. My computer and email is back. That was Saturday AM

Sunday AM I get a text from the bank that I have my credit card with and it said we think there was fraudulent attempts to use my card. Sure enough there 5 fraudulent attempts. I called the bank it shut down my card and went over the charges with the bank and I said yes or no to the charges. All done over the phone. They said I would get a new

card in two business days. They will investigate the fraud. The bank said I won't lose any money, it might take a little time. My card came in two business days. One week later they said all my money was put back in my account and will report later with information about the hack or breach.

What do you think? Do you think someone is after me? I'll bet there is, I have been filing complaints and questioning fraudulent people. One of them is doing this and I hope they catch them. I'll file charges against them.

## ABOUT CALIFORNIA!

By TomL

California has never taken responsibly for any of their disasters. Florida has a maintenance program with their forest. In the town where I live the State Park burns the underbrush to prevent a forest fire. They have crews especially trained for that. They watch it close and burn anything under the trees so there is no foliage. It help growth of the tree's and prevent out of control wild fire. That is half the battle. Why can't California do that? Why did they not plan for the dry season. Why was the reservoir dry, why did they not have water brought down from the north. It is probably to save a minnow or a frog or a bug something that might go extinct. They have been bailed out to many times. Instead they let whole town get wipe out, people died, animals died and the fat cat politicians say it's not my fault. YES IT IS! They say "We need a bail out!" Now California heads are asking what happened to the water? They know what happened they are just trying to save their butt! The people at the top should be charged with neglect.

## Columbia and Tariffis

By TomL

When I look at Columbia and tariffs I see coffee export and the farm / Marijuana by farmers & cartels. A very large portion of the Columbian money comes from drug farming. How do you put a tariff on drugs?

Colombia (COL) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners

The Observatory of Economic Complexity

The top exports of Colombia are Crude Petroleum (\$16.1B), Coal Briquettes (\$12.9B), Coffee (\$4.15B), Refined Petroleum (\$2.64B), and Gold (\$2.59B)

United States · China · Flag Brazil / Colombia Flag · Germany

Colombia exports a variety of products, including crude petroleum, coal, coffee, gold, and other minerals, as well as agricultural products (drugs), food, and manufactured goods

Mineral oils, and thermal coal, reaching an export value of 12.4 billion U.S. dollars and 7.65 billion dollars, respectively. Unroasted and not decaffeinated coffee was Colombia's fourth most exported product, with roughly 2.8 billion U.S. dollars' worth of exports.

Most exported products from Colombia in 2023

(in billion U.S. dollars)

Exports in billion U.S. dollars

Gold (including platinum gold), in unprocessed forms\*

Other coffees not roasted, nor decaffeinated

Coke and semi-coke of coal, whether or not agglomerated\*\*

Other fresh flowers and buds, cut for

*Continued page 6*

Make your voice known!  
**tloury@att.net**



Bringing our community together...

Call/Email Tom:  
**352-804-1223**  
**tloury@att.net**

Ocala Downtown  
 Seniors Voice of Ocala  
 Village Spectator  
 Lady Lake Magazine




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Tom Loury Long time member of CEP/Ocala Chamber of Commerce, Past President of the Ocala Business Leaders and current member, Co-Founder and past President of Select Business Associates, Past President of the Lady Lake Chamber and current member.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTES



The news media will go on for days on a subject, saying the same thing hour after hour, day after day. The jet that went down killing everyone. That was a shame, but the first video I saw I remember seeing

flames, I said something happened mid air. But the media danced around that subject for the day and finally I heard a pilot being interviewed that said the plane was on fire coming down. So that meant there was a mid air problem. Now they claim the helicopter was not where it was suppose to be, or was it? It was to high and off course. It was not suppose to be over the river! I always feel bad when there is loss of life. This was avoidable.

While I'm writing about the media, I am disappointed in Fox not having the football games on regular TV Channel. You have to spend more money. We the working class is

tap out. I don't anyone that can afford the tickets unless they are on federal relief money. I am disappointed!

Question??? Have you ever heard of a transsexual infant? Lets get real people and stop doing these thing to innocent children and babies!

Been getting fraudulent things happening? Let me know if you had a fraud tried on you. [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)

I got a thank you note from Norton saying thank you for the ordering. I said I did not order anything from you, I responded and I said I think that is considered fraud. It was probably done by a sales person not Norton. My computer was hacked and I lost my email for a while. I guess if I had Norton it would have stopped that message.

My wife got a notice to pay a ticket for running a red light by her tag number. She has no tag numbers! Take note of who they

want you to send the check too. Send the information to the fraud department at the Shderiff department.

I still think the BOI was a hoax's or a mistake. I was told it was legal and by all standards it was coming from a government body. It cost people money to have it done until they closed down the website. The only explanation I could find is people from other countries that were registered after 2024 were registering LLC's and using it for money laundering. So someone in government got the bright idea to have everyone re-register so they could figure it out who was legal. Just another illegal cost

to the business world.

Watch out for these hoax's they will keep coming. My email received a piece of mail and my mac usually will tell me not to click on that, so I don't. Last week I clicked on something that I thought I recognized and sirens went off. All kind of weird donging sounds desk top screen flashing. I hit the shut down on my Mini Mac and got it stopped! It took a whole day to get my email back. It said my password was breached and a few things I did not understand but we are back at it again. Thank God for the Mac.

Continued page 6

## Newspaper Deadlines

*Editorial & Ad Copy for April*

**Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown**

**Noon, March 25th**

**Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator**

**12am, March 30th**

## Village Spectator / Lady Lake Magazine

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## FAIRTax



President Trump has said that he would like to eliminate the income tax and create the

External Revenue Service. But will tariffs be enough to finance the government even if it is reduced in size? Some have suggested a small flat income tax to supplement the revenue stream. This is a bad idea on more than one level.

First: It will never stay flat. In 1913 the government implemented a small flat income tax on the very wealthy and pundits said it would never effect the majority of our citizens. We all know how that turned out giving us the most convoluted, intrusive and inefficient tax system possible.

Second: It keeps the price of goods higher due to the hidden embedded nature of the income tax on those who produce the goods we purchase.

Third: It would allow lobbyists to continue to influence government representatives to manipulate the tax code to garner favors for their respective clients in exchange for financial input to campaign coffers.

Fourth: It keeps the IRS in place to implement it.

A much better partner for tariffs would be a consumption tax such as the FAIRtax. A consumption tax could readily be collected by states and remitted to the ERS. Millions of dollars have already been spent on researching the retail consumption tax concept by some of America's top economists resulting in HR25, the FAIRtax bill.

You pay the tax when you purchase an item with the tax stated visibly on your receipt. This visibility creates a natural limiter to the level of taxation. When you purchase a new item (used goods that have already been taxed when new are no longer taxable) your tax obligation is over - no need to keep receipts for tax purposes as there is no annual tax form to fill out. YOU, not the government, determine how much you pay in taxes by your spending habits. Although the stated maximum FAIRtax rate is at present 23%, with a reduction in spending and the tariff revenue added to the equation that percentage may be reduced as well.

Our current income tax system costs more than it collects when you include collection and compliance costs as well as the cost of less-than-optimal financial decisions for minimizing tax obligations. With the FAIRtax, those costs are reduced by 90%. With no business-to-business tax, the imbedded costs go away allowing prices to

drop. And with no federal taxes withheld from your paycheck, you will have more purchasing power.

With any form of income tax you are applying a punishment for being productive, working hard, investing and saving. It is counterproductive for a society and economy to punish productive behavior

and any form of income tax was rejected by our Founding Fathers as it should be by us now. A retail sales tax such as the FAIRtax returns the power to the people and reinforces our representative form of government.

For more information go to FAIRtax.org

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Go to: [FLfairtax.org](http://FLfairtax.org) or Call 352-804-0007

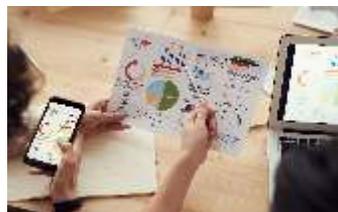
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my wish

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# Tariffis

Continued from page 3

bouquets or decorations

Fuel oil, except waste oils and containing biodiesel

Gas oils (diesel), except waste oils, and containing biodiesel

Gasoline-type jet fuel, for reactors and turbines, except waste oils and those containing biodiesel

Bananas or plantains

History of Drug Production

Marijuana. The marijuana drug trade was the gateway to what would eventually make Colombia's drug industry so prevalent. ...

Cocaine. The scarcity of the coca industry and unique growing environment made cocaine production a very profitable industry for Colombia. ... Heroin.

# Publisher's Notes

Continued from page 4

President Trump wants to require some of Ukraine's valuable rare earth minerals in exchange for U.S. aid.

The minerals Ukraine has access to are critical in the manufacturing of batteries, radar systems, and armor – all key for the U.S. and its allies. Trump has shown recent interest in Greenland's reserves as well. Both would go a long way to reducing the West's reliance on Chinese minerals.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Senators that are saying RFK is not fit to run the HHS are the same ones that voted for the mentally ill guy who they put into office 4 years ago.

\*\*\*\*\*

The new State Attorney General will be James Uthmeier, he was Governor DeSantis Chief of staff. Before being the Governors Chief of staff he was Governors attorney. He is a graduate of UF.

\*\*\*\*\*

For people who say the illegals are not hurting anyone, the latest figures show.... data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that 88% of all job growth in the past five years has gone to immigrants, with the majority of the workers lacking legal status and having no skills.

\*\*\*\*\*

# FL Gov Executive Order # 25-44

(Ensuring Government Efficiency)

WHEREAS, state and local governments should be efficient, effective, transparent, and responsive and should be held accountable for achieving these goals; and

WHEREAS, fiscal accountability is necessary to ensure good government and to minimize financial burdens on the taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, all levels of government should continue to work to eliminate unnecessary and inappropriate spending; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida has a strong record of responsible fiscal management and stewardship; and

WHEREAS, in addition to balancing the budget each year, my Administration has consistently strived toward streamlining government; and

WHEREAS, for example, the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 "Focus on Florida's Future" Budget saved Florida taxpayers \$3.5 billion; and

WHEREAS, Florida has paid down 41% of the State's total historic tax-supported debt since 2019; and

WHEREAS, Florida's debt per capita is estimated to have decreased by 54% from \$1,457 in Fiscal Year 2010-2011 to \$664 in Fiscal Year 2023-2024; and

WHEREAS, the State has maintained a triple-A credit rating, has one of the lowest tax burdens in the country, and has increased rainy-day reserves by over \$9.4 billion; and

WHEREAS, my Administration's proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 "Focus on Fiscal Responsibility" Budget will lower spending even further, saving Florida taxpayers \$3 billion compared to the current year budget; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget eliminates over 740 state government positions, recommends \$2.2 billion in tax relief, and requires a thorough review of federal grant funding received and expended in the State; and

WHEREAS, Florida has the lowest ratio of state government workers to population; and

WHEREAS, because of Florida's low regulatory footprint, Florida has consistently been ranked one of the top states in which to conduct business; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding Florida's history of prudent fiscal management relative to many states in the country, the State should nevertheless endeavor to explore opportunities for even better stewardship of state and local resources; and

WHEREAS, for example, the Trump Administration has created the Department of Government Efficiency ("DOGE") to employ innovative technology to identify and eliminate unnecessary and oftentimes frivolous spending, to maximize governmental efficiency and productivity, and to reform the federal workforce; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida should leverage cutting edge technology to identify further spending reductions and reforms in state agencies, university bureaucracies, and local governments that have increased their spending, to include identifying and returning unnecessary federal grant funding.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RON DESANTIS, as Governor of Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article IV, Section 1(a) of the Florida Constitution, and all other applicable laws, promulgate the following Executive Order, to take immediate effect:

Section 1. There shall be established within the Office of Policy and Budget in the Executive Office of the Governor (EO) an EO DOGE Team. The EO DOGE Team shall be responsible for (1) ensuring compliance with this Executive Order; (2) using publicly available information to identify and report unnecessary spending within county and municipal governments; (3) coordinating with the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida and the State Board of Education to identify and eliminate unnecessary spending, programs, courses, staff, and any other inefficiencies within the State University System and the Florida College System; and (4) recommending legislative reforms to promote efficiency, maximize productivity, and eliminate waste in state and local government. The EO DOGE Team shall report any legislative recommendations to the Governor, the Chief Financial Officer, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later than September 30, 2025.

Section 2. Each state agency shall establish an Agency DOGE Team that shall be responsible for (1) utilizing advanced technology, such as artificial intelligence, as part of ongoing efforts to identify and eliminate unnecessary spending, programs, or contracts within the agency; (2) identifying any pending or funded federal grant awards that are inconsistent with the policies of this State and should be returned to the American taxpayer in furtherance of the President's DOGE efforts; and (3) recommending administrative or legislative reforms to promote efficiency, maximize productivity, and eliminate waste in state and local government, including recommendations to leverage modern technology and to eliminate the duplication of services, reduce fees, and cut overhead. Each Agency DOGE Team shall report its progress on the foregoing responsibilities to the EO DOGE Team on a monthly basis until this Executive Order expires.

Section 3. The Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida and

the State Board of Education shall collaborate with the EO DOGE Team to identify and eliminate unnecessary spending, programs, courses, staff, and any other inefficiencies within the State University System and the Florida College System.

Section 4. This Executive Order shall be implemented in accordance with state and federal law and with existing staff and funding. To the maximum extent possible, agencies should employ the most innovative technology feasible to carry out the responsibilities assigned in this Executive Order.

Section 5. This Executive Order is effective immediately and shall expire on March 31, 2026.

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We wanted to let you to know we're continuing to research your fraud claim #C-250202003254 on your AAA account ending 7614. If we need any additional information, we'll let you know either by mail or phone. In the meantime, just a reminder that the charges for this claim have been credited back to your account while we continue to research. Thanks for your patience as we're working through your claim,

Cardmember Services

# Follow The Money Elon!

By TomL

Al Green is doing it again for the fourth attempt! Just a few weeks into the President Trumps elections win they are trying to impeach the president again! The Democrats have nothing to fight with but to ruin Donald Trump. Donald Trump makes a statement about something that can be done with Gaza and Chuck Schumer, Maxine Waters, Al Green and Democrats go crazy! This is Trumps way of negotiating you fools, right now who would want land that has been reduced to rubble and full of land mines? After he announced his idea how many people want to invest in the war torn land? Probably a lot! The Democrats took the bait. Chuck Schumer, Al Green, Maxine Waters and others are trying to incite their followers to burn the place down! I hope they don't take the bait. The Blacks have been used by the Democrats enough. The only way to stop rioters is by force! The body's will be piled up in the streets. All because the Democrats lost the election and don't want peaceful transition. I am not anti-black they just want a better life, the dems promise them that? TO THE DEMOCRATS YOU LOST! The American people wanted you out! You have misused to much of our Tax money to many times.

WHAT SAY YOU? I would like to hear you opinion? [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)

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352-804-1223 | [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)

 Ocala Villages News

# LADY LAKE COUNTY EVENTS

Mar 5  
Restoration Ecology  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Lake Norris Conservation Area in Eustis  
What does a natural community look like? What is an altered ecosystem.

Mar 7  
Exploration Hike  
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM Ferndale Preserve in Clermont  
Join staff and explore the habitats and species of Ferndale Preserve. Hike intensity: Vigorous. Reservations required.

Mar 8  
Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey  
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Pasture Reserve in Groveland  
Assist staff with surveying one of Lake County's conservation lands for birds and butterflies.

Mar 8  
AdventHealth Great Clermont Triathlon  
7:00 AM - 1:00 PM Waterfront Park in Clermont

The 41st Annual Great Clermont Triathlon, Florida's traditional season opener featuring an International distance triathlon, International Aquabike & More

Mar 12  
Water Wednesday (lakes, rivers, and streams)  
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Hickory Point in Tavares  
Discover the fascinating wildlife that

inhabits Florida's lakes, rivers, and streams, from fish to amphibians to birds. Sustainable Activity:

Mar 14  
Discover Leesburg  
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM Towne Square, Downtown Leesburg in Leesburg  
Join us every 2nd Friday evening of the month on Towne Square in Downtown Leesburg for an unforgettable experience!

Mar 14 & 15  
Shamrockin' BBQ & Beer Festival  
5:00 PM - 11:00 PM Downtown Leesburg in Leesburg  
Join in the fun for a 2 day festival with Irish flair! Friday night kicks off @5PM with an Irish Night Light Up Parade & live music on 2 stages.

Mar 15  
Paddling Adventure  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Crooked River Preserve in Clermont  
Participants will paddle through Crooked River, part of the Palatamaha River, to Lake Louisa. Landing along the shoreline, we will hike to a sinkhole...

Mar 15  
Butterfly Bucket List  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Ellis Acres Preserve in Paisley  
Butterflies and their young rely on certain host plants for life. Come learn about some common butterfly life cycles.

Mar 22  
Tracks and Scat

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Lake May Reserve in Eustis  
Who goes there and who left that? Join park staff on a discovery of what animals left their tracks and scat, from bears to bugs.

Mar 22  
"American Revolution Experience" by American Battlefield Trust  
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM WT Bland Library in Mount Dora  
Visit & learn about the American Battlefield Trust's curated exhibit that's touring the nation in anticipation of the United States' 250th anniversary

Mar 22  
Leesburg Blooms & Brews  
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Towne Square, Downtown Leesburg in Leesburg  
Stroll downtown Leesburg and enjoy samplings from local businesses plus receive a complimentary flower from each participating location!

Mar 22  
Sounds of Spring Concert: Peace of Woodstock  
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM Snooky Park in Lady Lake  
Let's kick off spring with music and community featuring Peace of Woodstock! Enjoy a free concert with: Delicious food trucks Beer & wine

Mar 23  
AdventHealth Lake Minneola Half Marathon/10k/5k  
7:00 AM - 11:00 AM Waterfront Park in Clermont  
Join us for a beautiful run along the Lake Minneola Waterfront on the South Lake

Trail. LIVE music and entertainment on the course!

Mar 24  
Camp Boggy Creek After-School Theater Camp with Central Florida Vocal Arts!  
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Camp Boggy Creek in Eustis

Mar 25  
Springtime at Pine Meadows  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Pine Meadows Conservation Area in Eustis  
Join staff while we explore the ecosystems of Pine Meadows. Hike Intensity: Moderate. Reservations Required.



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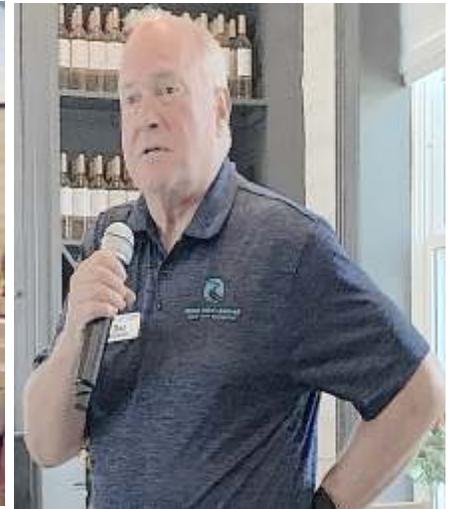


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# Lady Lake Chamber Business Luncheon



# Lady Lake Chamber Business Luncheon



## Why Join The Lady Lake Area Chamber?

- **Networking Opportunities**- Connect with business professionals
- **Visibility** - Get noticed in your community
- **Credibility**- Membership raises your business reputation
- **Discounts**- Take advantage of member- only discounts
- **Learning**- Member only speaker series on business topics
- **Give Back**- Volunteer on committees to help the community

**Contact us today to be added to our email list and stay connected to local businesses & events!**



# Adult MARCH Lady Lake Library

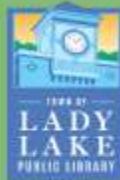
**Hours:**  
 Monday: 9am-7pm  
 Tuesday-Friday: 9am-6pm  
 Saturday and Sunday: Closed



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Chair Yoga</b> 3 @10am & @11:30am <b>ESL @10-11:30am</b> <b>Sign Up Required</b>	 4	5	<b>Know Your Future</b> 6 @ 2-3pm <b>Sign up required</b>	7
<b>Chair Yoga</b> 10 @10am & @11:30am <b>ESL @10-11:30am</b> <b>Sign Up Required</b>	<b>Book Discussion</b> 11 @ 2-4pm	<b>SHINE @2-4pm</b> 12	<b>Bingo!</b> 13 @2-3:30pm <b>sign up required</b>	<b>BestBuy iPhone/iPad</b> 14 @ 9:30am <b>Crochet and Knitting Hangout</b> @ 3-4:30pm
<b>Chair Yoga</b> 17 @10am & @11:30am <b>ESL @10-11:30am</b> <b>Sign Up Required</b>	18	<b>Authors Round Table</b> 19 @ 2-4pm	20	<b>Board Games Meetup!</b> 21 @2-4pm
<b>Chair Yoga</b> 24 @10am & @11:30am <b>ESL @10-11:30am</b> <b>Sign Up Required</b>	25	<b>SHINE @2-4pm</b> 26	27	<b>BestBuy iMac</b> 28 @ 9:30am
<b>Chair Yoga</b> 31 @10am & @11:30am <b>ESL @10-11:30am</b> <b>Sign Up Required</b>	 <b>Friends of the Library Meeting</b> <b>March 24 @10-12 pm</b> <b>Room 152</b> 			

# Youth MARCH Lady Lake Library

**Hours:**  
 Monday: 9am-7pm  
 Tuesday-Friday: 9am-6pm  
 Saturday and Sunday: Closed



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3 <b>Craft Kits Available!</b> <b>While supplies last.</b>	<b>Tiny Tots</b> 4 @ 10:30am <b>Family Crafting</b> @ 3:30pm	<b>Storytime 10:30am</b> 5 <b>Read with Scarlett</b> 3:00pm-4:00pm	 6	<b>Lego Masters</b> 7 @ 3:30pm
10 <b>Craft Kits Available!</b> <b>While supplies last.</b>	<b>Tiny Tots</b> 11 @ 10:30am <b>Family Crafting</b> @ 3:30pm	<b>Storytime 10:30am</b> 12 <b>Read with Scarlett</b> 3:00pm-4:00pm	 13	<b>Baby Storytime</b> 14 @10:30am <b>Video Games</b> @3:30-4:30pm
17 <b>Craft Kits Available!</b> <b>While supplies last.</b>	<b>Tiny Tots</b> 18 @ 10:30am <b>Family Crafting</b> @ 3:30pm	<b>Storytime 10:30am</b> 19 <b>Read with Scarlett</b> 3:00pm-4:00pm	 20	<b>Lego Masters</b> 21 @ 3:30pm
24 <b>Craft Kits Available!</b> <b>While supplies last.</b>	<b>Tiny Tots</b> 25 @ 10:30am <b>Family Crafting</b> @ 3:30pm	<b>Storytime 10:30am</b> 26 <b>Read with Scarlett</b> 3:00pm-4:00pm	 27	<b>Baby Storytime</b> 28 @10:30am <b>Video Games</b> @3:30-4:30pm
31 <b>Craft Kits Available!</b> <b>While supplies last.</b>				

## Homicide Warrant for Justin Fout

Lake County Detectives Issue Homicide Warrant for Justin Fout

On February 20, 2025, Lake County deputies responded to 31504 Colby Pl, Sorrento, in reference to a person-shot complaint. Responding deputies located the victim, Justin Kates (DOB 01/27/1988), deceased with a gunshot wound, lying in the roadway. Witnesses reported that the victim and suspect, Justin Joseph Raymond Fout (DOB 06/25/1993), were involved in a verbal altercation prior to the suspect shooting the victim. The suspect was last seen fleeing the scene driving an older model white Dodge Ram van with a female passenger and person of interest, Patricia Neeley. The van should have front and rear end damage, red transfer paint on the rear, a black spray-painted rear right door, and a busted-out rear left door window. Detectives are working closely with outside agencies, following up on investigative leads and seeking the public's assistance for information related to Fouts's whereabouts. A Lake County arrest warrant for the crime of Murder in the Second Degree has been issued for Fout.

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Justin Fout is asked to contact the Lake County Sheriff's Office at 352-343-2101, local law enforcement, or Crimeline.

## Detectives Arrest and Rescue

Lake Sheriff's Undercover Detectives Arrest 29 and Rescue 4 Human Trafficking Victims in Recent Operation

The Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Bureau recently conducted a three-day human trafficking operation, dubbed Operation Forced Labor. Operation Forced Labor was conducted at an undisclosed location in the central part of Lake County from February 6-8, 2025. The focus of the undercover operation was the identification, safe recovery, and stabilization of human trafficking victims. Detectives from the Clermont, Eustis, Leesburg, and Mount Dora Police Departments, along with detectives from the Polk County Sheriff's Office and Homeland Security, provided significant assistance throughout the investigation. During the operation, detectives worked in an undercover capacity using various known prostitution websites to solicit prostitutes and individuals looking for services provided by prostitutes.

During the operation, 33 individuals traveled to meet undercover detectives with the intent of engaging in criminal activity, and 29 of those subjects were arrested for various prostitution and drug-related offenses. Four individuals were identified as victims of human trafficking; they were not charged. The Lake County Sheriff's Office, with the assistance of Homeland Security, was able to provide resources to safely relocate and stabilize these human trafficking victims. The Florida Sheriff's Association Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, along with the Emergency Assistance & Care fund, provided the Lake County Sheriff's Office with monetary aid to supplement necessary expenses associated with recovery and stabilization to include food, clothing, temporary lodging, and transportation.

Detectives were able to arrest one of the suspects responsible for trafficking one of

the victims during their investigation. Additional arrests related to the remaining three human trafficking victims are pending further investigation. These ongoing investigations will necessitate the use of digital forensics, victim cooperation, and investigative support from Homeland Security and various local law enforcement jurisdictions. Lead detectives plan to maintain communication with the victims to support continued stabilization efforts and to attempt to facilitate relationships between victims and non-governmental support organizations, such as the Department of Children and Family Services and other organizations that provide family services and support.

"This was a collaborative effort. Our detectives and other law enforcement partners worked very hard together to identify and rescue these victims of human trafficking and connect them to valuable resources that are available to assist them. We want these victims to know there is a way out." -Lake County Sheriff Peyton Grinnell.

## Pneumococcal Vaccine Recommendations



Updated Pneumococcal Vaccine Recommendations Will Help Save Lives

by Karyne Jones (NAPSI)—Good news for those Americans over the age of 50 (and the people who care about

them): You now have access to vaccines to stop the spread of pneumococcal disease, or pneumonia.

The change comes by way of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which updated its recommendation for pneumococcal vaccines, dropping the age to 50 from 65.

### My Story

I know the importance of being vaccinated against this disease far too well.

In January 2018, I thought I had a bad cold. I was dealing with a terrible cough, chest pain, exhaustion. When I finally ended up in the hospital needing breathing treatments, we realized this was beyond a normal cold or bronchial infection. Pneumonia took me out for the next six weeks. I couldn't work, I could barely eat or drink. I'm an otherwise healthy, on-the-go person. This disease leveled me. And because I was 64 at the time I caught it—I hadn't yet been vaccinated. Make no mistake, I had my sleeve rolled up and was ready for my shot when my birthday rolled around later that year.

### Too Many Stories

I'm far from the only person who has dealt with pneumococcal disease.

Roughly 150,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized each year with pneumococcal pneumonia and 1 in 20 of those patients die. The risk is greater for older Americans, as is the risk of their cases being fatal.

### Pneumonia is a Particular Problem For Persons of Color

These numbers only increase for racial and ethnic minorities. Black people are more likely to get pneumonia, be hospitalized longer, and suffer worse economic impact than non-Blacks. This is

Continued page 12



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FROM THE DESK OF  
**CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK**



**Reps. Cammack & Steube Reintroduce The ACCESS Act**

WASHINGTON, D.C. —

Representatives Kat Cammack and Greg Steube reintroduced their plan to expand

access to Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) for five million lower-income Americans.

The Affordable Care and Comprehensive Economic Support through Savings Act (ACCESS Act) empowers individuals by giving them the option to receive direct contributions to an HSA instead of relying on reduced cost-sharing under government-controlled health insurance exchanges. This commonsense reform removes bureaucratic restrictions imposed by the ACA, allowing individuals to take control of their health care dollars and use them as they see fit.

"Access to affordable care has diminished over the past decade, as the prices of medical care have skyrocketed and provider networks have shrunk," said Rep. Cammack. "But with money in an HSA, you can obtain the personalized services you need, and see the doctors you trust, even if they're not covered by your health insurance plan. For working families in my district and across the country this option is a lifesaver and will give many the flexibility to afford visits and procedures they may not be able to otherwise. I am proud to introduce the ACCESS Act today for many reasons, but mostly because it provides more access and more freedom for families whose health care needs aren't being met by government-controlled health care programs."

"The ACCESS Act is a straightforward solution to lower health care costs and expand access for the millions of lower-income families struggling under rising inflation and medical expenses," said Rep.

Steube. "This bill puts patients in control by offering a personal health care option that increases access to affordable treatments, trusted doctors, and essential therapies through tax-free, directly funded health savings accounts. At the same time, it streamlines existing health subsidies, saving taxpayers tens of billions of dollars. Conservative, results-driven reforms like this are what Americans can expect from Republicans in Washington."

"We are excited to endorse the ACCESS Act because it would expand access to high-quality medical care for millions of lower-income Americans without costing taxpayers a dime. Armed with a pre-funded health savings account they own and control, these patients will have more access to timely care from doctors they trust, including services and doctors their insurance doesn't cover. And they'll also have stronger incentives to shop for value and to take more personal responsibility for their health. All of which adds up to greater peace of mind. Congratulations to Congressman Steube and Congresswoman Cammack for coming up with a smart, fiscally responsible way to give vulnerable Americans a Personal Option—hassle-free health care you can afford," said Dean Clancy Americans for Prosperity Senior Health Policy Fellow.

**Rep. Cammack Leads Charge To Restore Navigability To McGriff Channel, Secures Presidential Action For Key Next Step**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — This week, Congresswoman Kat Cammack (R-FL-03) announced significant progress for the future of the McGriff Channel, also known as 'Wadley Pass,' where the Gulf of Mexico meets the Suwannee River in Dixie County, Florida.

Mid-last year, Rep. Cammack secured the

votes for inclusion of McGriff Channel in the 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). In December of last year, Senator Rick Scott (R-FL) included the matching provision in the Senate year-end package. This measure secured a federally required economic impact study by the Army Corps of Engineers for the McGriff Channel, which is a necessary step to keep the project moving. This move follows the 2021 study, which concluded that dredging was not economically feasible and no action could be taken.

In recent years, the McGriff Channel has faced navigability issues, with missing markers and signage rendering it unsafe for even the smallest vessels. Years without dredging, coupled with the impacts of recent hurricanes and severe storms, have exacerbated these longstanding challenges, hindering both commercial activities and recreational boating.

The inclusion of the McGriff Channel in WRDA marks a critical step toward restoring its navigability and ensuring safe access for all users.

"I'm thrilled to have secured this crucial step in getting the challenges with McGriff Channel resolved," said Rep. Cammack. "This issue has persisted for far too long, and it's time we get the Jacksonville Army Corps back on track to advance this project. From here, we will be keeping the pressure on the Army Corps to ensure this project gets done in a timely manner. I look forward to sharing more updates later this year as we gather further information on potential dredging and restoration efforts."

**Vaccine**

*Continued from page 11*

in part due to the fact that Black Americans have far greater rates of chronic diseases—including cancer, heart disease and diabetes. African Americans are 60 percent more likely to develop diabetes than white adults.

Vaccination rates are also considerably

lower for Black, Hispanic and Asian adults when compared to white adults.

I'm hopeful that streamlining timing of vaccines and the related recommendations will help boost vaccination rates. For far too many adults, there is considerable confusion about what vaccines you need and when, so adding pneumococcal at age 50, when most people know you also need your shingles vaccine is a good way to get more people protected.

**An Answer**

That is why my organization joined forces with other aging and patient groups to advocate for this important change.

As we are in the midst of another respiratory season, I urge all adults aged 50 and older to talk to their healthcare provider about getting vaccinated against pneumococcal disease.

It could be a decision that saves your life.

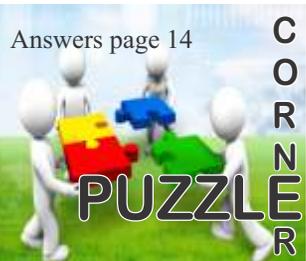
**Learn More**

For further facts, visit [www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal](http://www.cdc.gov/pneumococcal).

*Ms. Jones is President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc.*

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- Answers page 14
- Across**
- Poodle skirts, once
  - Soft seats
  - Reserve fund
  - St. crosser
  - Preferred invitees
  - Low-budget, in brand names
  - President pro \_\_\_
  - Oscar de la \_\_\_
  - Zulu or Swahili
  - Stone Age race
  - Actor John or Sean
  - Metered ride
  - Idler
  - MTV watcher
  - Hole-making tool
  - Put together
  - Pueblo brick
  - Saw into, in a way
  - Plains tribesmen

- Close behind
  - In need of cleaning
  - Show support
  - Derby town
  - Drops back
  - Punch sound
  - Bikini part
  - Homer king Hank
  - "Gladiator" star
  - "I dunno" gesture
  - Judge, at times
  - "\_\_\_ is me!"
  - In the midst of
  - Make amends
  - Big \_\_, CA
  - Daft
  - Faxes, say
  - Sci-fi beings
- Down**
- Moneybags
  - Strongly opposed
  - Reduce in rank
  - Clear wrap
  - Cassini of fashion
  - Sawyer's pal
  - Regarding
  - Batter's concern
  - Skewered dish
  - Optimistic words
  - Whole bunch

- Blaster's need
- "\_\_\_ rang?"
- Mosque tower
- It influenced Lenin
- Cargo areas
- Luau strings
- Shirt tag abbr.
- Gentlemen's hats
- Kimono sash
- Tears apart
- Project work unit
- Anonymous John
- Pied Paper follower
- Chuck-wagon fare
- Twosome
- Dada pioneer
- As well
- Rotini and penne
- Relax at the library
- Withdraw
- Unkind looks
- Horse-drawn vehicle
- Estate units
- Pipsqueak
- Art Deco notable
- Emerald City visitor
- Give for a while
- Feeling blue
- Medical-coverage grp.
- Go bad

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64						65				66		

## FROM THE DESK OF ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE

### Actions Taken By Attorney General

There is a list of action taken by either Ashley Moody and James Uthmeier

February 14, 2025: Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution

Secures a 5-Year Prison Sentence for Member of Romanian Crime Ring.

February 13, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office Warns Floridians About Romance Scams Ahead of Valentine's Day.

February 13, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office Secures Order Prohibiting MV Realty from Enforcing Liens or Encumbrances on Homes After Deceiving Florida Homeowners.

February 10, 2025: Florida AG's Office Announces Shutdown of Fraudulent SunPass Websites with FDLE and Releases New Scams at a Glance: SunPass Safety.

February 07, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution Secures 12-Year Prison Sentence for Child Predator.

February 06, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office Secures More Than \$350,000 for Florida Medicaid from Pharmaceutical Company Over Kickback Allegations.

February 05, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office Secures More Than \$2.3 Million in Multi-state Action from Pfizer-Owned Bio-haven Pharmaceutical Company.

January 28, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office Launches Nicotine Dispensing Device Directory, Gives Retailers Until March 1 to Remove Listed Products.

January 27, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit Secures More Than \$2.2 Million for Florida Medicaid from Inpatient Behavioral Health Company.

January 24, 2025: Florida Attorney General's Office Files Criminal Charges Against Pool Contractors that Defrauded Hundreds of Floridians Out Millions of Dollars.

January 23, 2025: Florida Attorney General Secures \$7.4 Billion from Purdue

Pharma and the Sackler Family for Fueling Opioid Crisis.

January 21, 2025: AG Moody Leaves Legacy of Fighting Fed Overreach, Protecting the Border, Prosecuting Traffickers, Combating the Opioid Crisis, Defending Life, Revolutionizing ORT Investigations, Recruiting Hundreds of LEOs, Modernizing Crime Reporting Nationwide and More. This is half of page one and there are 9 pages not seen.

### Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution Secures a 5-Year Prison Sentence for Member of Romanian Crime Ring

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—The Florida Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a 5-year prison sentence for a Romanian crime ring member. Vasile Bricage stole more than \$38,000 in smartphones and other items from six Walmart locations across five Florida counties — all within the span of six days.

Acting Attorney General John Guard said, "This member of a Romanian crime ring targeted Walmart locations spanning five Florida counties — causing more than \$38,000 in losses. Now, thanks to our Statewide Prosecutors, he will pay for his crimes."

Vasile Bricage, working alongside co-defendant Antonio Briceag and two unknown female accomplices, stole smartphones and other items from Walmart locations in Citrus, Okaloosa, Pinellas, Santa Rosa and Sarasota counties. In several cases, Bricage and his accomplices entered the stores and proceeded to the electronics department. Then, members of the group would distract employees or act as lookouts while using an unknown implement to defeat the anti-theft devices at the phone display.

In one Citrus County incident, the group used a different strategy. Bricage, after browsing the electronics department, proceeded to the hardware section of the store and selected a black crowbar. The defendant then went back to the electronics

department and pried two locked phone cabinets open, and the group stole 26 iPhones — valued at more than \$22,000. The damage to the cabinets totaled more than \$1,600.

The Office of Statewide Prosecution charged Bricage with racketeering, conspiracy to commit racketeering, retail theft over \$3,000, grand theft \$20,000 or more but less than \$100,000, and use or attempt to use any antishoplifting or inventory control device countermeasure. Bricage is a Romanian national currently under a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement hold.

OSP charged co-defendant Antonio Briceag with racketeering and conspiracy to commit racketeering. The co-defendant remains at large.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office led this investigation.

Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Guillermo Vallejo prosecuted this case.

### Atty Gen Uthmeier Transition Team

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier today is releasing a list of nationally-respected conservative attorneys that will assist the administration's transition activities. This transition team will provide advice and related feedback to the Attorney General as he organizes the office to advance the America First agenda:

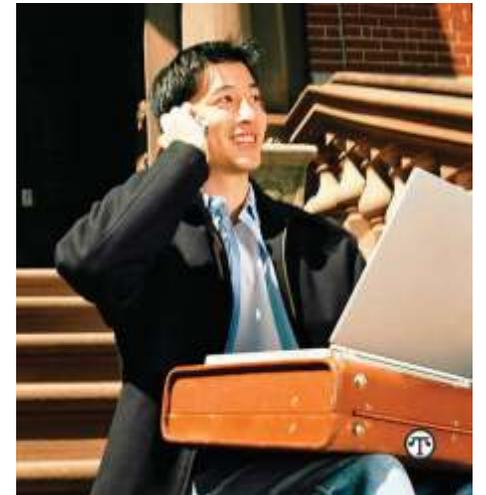
- Co-Chairman Joe Jacquot, Gunster
- Co-Chairman Jesse Panuccio, Boies Schiller Flexner, LLP
- Co-Chairman David Dewhirst, Chief of Staff, Office of the Attorney General
- Chuck Cooper, Cooper Kirk
- David Thompson, Cooper Kirk
- Jason Gonzales, Lawson Huck Gonzalez, PLLC
- Ben Gibson, Shutts & Bowen LLP
- Ashley Lukis, GrayRobinson, PA
- Rachel Kamoutsas, Florida Board of Governors
- Mohammed Jazil, Holtzman Vogel
- Daniel Epstein, America First Legal; St. Thomas University
- Kellie Fiedorek, Alliance Defending Freedom
- Dawn Hanson, Executive Office of the Governor Human Resources
- Carlos Trujillo, Continental PLLC

· Ryan Newman, General Counsel, Executive Office of the Governor

· Jeff Aaron, Downs Aaron

Attorney General James Uthmeier said, "It's a tremendous honor to serve the citizens of the Free State of Florida as our state's 39th Attorney General. I'm grateful that these powerhouse attorneys are willing to offer their time and considerable experience as we implement the America First agenda and keep Florida safe, strong, and free."

## America's Spam Scorecard



(NAPSI)—The next time your phone rings, there's a good chance it will be a spam call—but there are ways you can protect yourself.

### The Problem

The average person sees around 9 spam calls a month. According to the experts at Truecaller, a global combatant against spam and fraud, Americans wasted an estimated 272 million hours, (that's 11 million days, or 373,000 months) answering spam calls in the last 12 months alone. And since the average spam call lasts about 4 minutes, spammers and scammers have plenty of time to trap their victims.

### So, Who's Calling?

Between regular sales calls, robocalls from legitimate businesses, online surveys, political or donation calls and outright scams, unwanted calls—some with malicious intent—make up a large part of

*Continued on page 14*

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FROM THE DESK OF

GOVERNOR DESANTIS



Record Broken Again: Florida Announces The Highest Tourism Numbers In State History In 2024

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.— Governor Ron DeSantis announced that Florida continues to be the top

destination for travelers from all over the world as it welcomed a record-breaking 142.9 million visitors in 2024. This marks a 1.6% increase over 2023, the previous record annual visitation in the state's history.

The fourth quarter of 2024 also set a new benchmark with 33.1 million visitors, surpassing the previous record for a Q4 period—setting the highest visitation for any fourth quarter. The record-breaking visitation was fueled by 29.9 million domestic visitors, 2.5 million overseas visitors, and 742,000 Canadian visitors.

“The results are clear—Florida is the best place to visit, live, and do business,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “Another record-breaking year is proof that leadership matters, and the Free State of Florida is a model for the nation.”

“Under Governor DeSantis' bold leadership, Florida's tourism industry remains world-leading,” said Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly. “Tourism in Florida continued to break records in 2024, recovering from a challenging hurricane season, driving economic growth and improving quality of life for Florida's communities and families.”

Despite challenges posed by hurricanes Helene and Milton, Florida's tourism industry remained strong, with hotel occupancy rising 6.7% in Q4 and annual room nights sold increasing 1.6% in 2024. Airports across the state also saw sustained growth, with total enplanements increasing 3.1% year over year.

Highlights from 2024 data also include:

- 142.9 million visitors traveled to Florida in Calendar Year (CY) 2024, marking a 1.6% increase from CY 2023 and the highest visitation on record.
• 130.7 million domestic visitors in CY 2024, reflecting a 1.3% increase from the previous year.
• 8.9 million overseas visitors in CY 2024, up 6.6% from CY 2023, and the closest to full recovery since 2019.
• 3.3 million Canadian visitors in CY 2024, representing a 1.2% increase from the previous year.
• Domestic visitors made up 91.5% of total visitation, overseas visitors accounted for 6.2%, and Canadian visitors represented 2.3%.
• Total enplanements at Florida's 19 major airports grew to 3.1% in CY 2024 from the previous year, with notable growth in airports like Tallahassee, Panama City, and Pensacola.

Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Pay Increases For State Law Enforcement And Firefighters In Focus On Fiscal Responsibility Budget

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla.— Governor Ron DeSantis announced he is

recommending pay increases for state law enforcement officers and firefighters in his Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2025-26. "We support the men and women who keep our streets and communities safe," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "Throughout my time in office, I have delivered on my promise to support law enforcement and first responders. Therefore, in the coming fiscal year, I am recommending a well-earned pay raise."

The Governor's Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget recommends \$118.3 million in pay increases for more than 4,700 state sworn law enforcement officers and more than 730 state firefighters. This includes a:

- 20% pay increase for state entry level sworn law enforcement officers; and
• 25% pay increase for veteran sworn law enforcement officers and all state firefighters.
These pay increases will build on the support already delivered to support law enforcement and first responders. As a result of these initiatives, Florida continues to have record-low crime rates; continues to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family; and remains the friendliest state in the country for first responders.

Governor Ron DeSantis Highlights Accomplishments of Florida State Guard

STARKE, Fla.—Today, at Camp Blanding, Governor Ron DeSantis highlighted many impressive accomplishments of the Florida State Guard in the short time they've been established. "We re-established the Florida State Guard in 2022 to act as a force multiplier for state, local, and federal public safety and emergency response efforts. Today at Camp Blanding, I was proud to highlight their accomplishments and thank them for their service over the last two years," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "From search and rescue to disaster clean up, the Florida State Guard has demonstrated immense value. We look forward to the continued growth of our State Guard and all the good work they will do for our people. In the last year, the Florida State Guard (FSG) achieved a 425% growth in personnel, established three new operational units, initiated five construction projects to support statewide posture requirements, and deployed forces ten times throughout Florida, Texas, and North Carolina in support of emergency management and public safety operations. Today, the Florida State Guard stands as a year-round air, land, and sea-capable force with a projected year-end strength of 1,000 Soldiers prepared to protect, defend, and preserve the life and property of the people of Florida from all threats to public safety. FSG Accomplishments:

- During their first activation in 75 years, FSG deployed to 9 impacted counties in Florida's Panhandle to conduct damage assessments; survey inland, coastal and offshore waterways for public safety threats, survivors, overturned vessels and infrastructure damage; and provide more than 4,000 hot meals to impacted Floridians.

FSG Aviation Response Squadron equipped and trained 12 drone teams and received the first three of their 12 aircraft increasing capability to support airborne damage assessments, maritime interdiction, medical evacuation assistance, disaster relief, and search and rescue operations

FSG Special Missions Unit developed a new K-9 program in partnership with state and county law enforcement agencies to augment search and rescue capabilities- successfully conducting over 300 search and rescue missions this past hurricane season.

The ground unit, the Crisis Response Battalion, advanced its route clearance and search and rescue capabilities through the addition of earth-moving equipment and state-of-the-art amphibious rescue vehicles.

FSG Maritime Response Squadron expanded from four to fifteen boat teams, improving their capabilities to support waterway reconnaissance and disaster relief throughout rivers and inland waterways, and received its first of six offshore vessels to support deep-water, long-range maritime operations.

In support of Operation VIGILANT SENTRY, members of the FSG aviation unit joined the Florida Department of Law Enforcement as Tactical Flight Officers to identify and defend Florida's coastal waters from suspicious activities, accruing over 150+ flight hours.

From April to June, 100+ FSG Soldiers deployed to Eagle Pass, Texas in support of Operation LONE STAR to protect the U.S. Southern Border from the nefarious criminal activity associated with illegal immigration by removing, replacing, and installing over three miles of panel walls, 12,000 feet of hasty and deliberate C-wire, and additional deterrence infrastructure.

In the most recent hurricane season, over 600 FSG members partnered with the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Florida Highway Patrol, and the Florida National Guard to conduct more than 300 search and rescue missions and 220 health and welfare checks. These soldiers were on the ground in 43 of Florida's 67 counties conducting search and rescue operations and delivering over 2,000 meals and over 3,600 liters of water to Floridians impacted by Hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton.

Following Hurricane Helene, FSG was deployed to North Carolina under Operation BLUE RIDGE. This included the deployment of two special missions search and rescue teams who braved 4 counties in North Carolina disaster zones for 7 days to rescue Americans stranded by the sudden surge waters and downed debris. FSG was able to provide life-saving aid to survivors within impacted communities who might not have been able to wait for help otherwise, which included a joint operation to

airlift an eleven-day-old infant to the hospital.

Spam

Continued from page 13

ordinary communication. Among these, most were related to credit card fraud, identity theft, Medicare/insurance, Social Security, car warranty and debt collection.

Where The Calls Come From

While a majority of spam calls (89.84%) made to Americans originate from within the U.S. (or, at least, seem to), over 75 percent of rest are from India, nearly 5 percent from Nigeria, and the rest mostly from Colombia, South Africa, Mexico and Egypt.

Who Can Help

Truecaller sees it as its mission to empower consumers with the knowledge to protect themselves from unwanted calls and the ability to identify and block them.

What You Can Do

It's important to install protective software on your mobile devices, just as you would on your computers. To handle spam on Truecaller: Enable the auto-block feature to automatically decline calls from known spammers, manually block numbers by searching for them in the app and marking them as spam, and report suspicious numbers to help Truecaller's database identify future spam calls. You can also customize your blocking level to choose whether to block only "top spammers" or all identified spam numbers. That way you can answer most calls with the confidence of knowing your phone has screened out the spam.

In addition, the Federal Communications Commission says:

- Be aware: Caller ID showing a "local" number does not necessarily mean it is.
• Don't respond to any questions, especially those that can be answered with "Yes."
• Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother's maiden names, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls or if you are at all suspicious.

If you get an inquiry from someone who says they represent a company or a government agency, hang up and call the phone number on your account statement, or on the company's or government agency's website to verify the authenticity of the request.

Learn More

For further facts on fighting spam and how Truecaller can assist you, visit www.truecaller.com.

Word search grid containing words like SOFAS, KITTLY, AVES, ALIST, ECONO, TEM, RENTA, BANTU, CROMAGNONMAN, ASTIN, CABBUM, TEEN, BORER, MAKE, ADOBE, XRAYED, CROWINDIANS, ATHEEL, DUSTY, ROOTE, EPSOM, EBBS, POW, BRA, AARON, RUSSELLCROWE, SHRUG, TRIER, WOE, AMONG, ATONE, SUR, DOTTY, SENDS, ETS

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# Understanding Thyroid Health



disease, particularly hypothyroidism, a condition in which the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormone. Despite its prevalence, thyroid disease

remains widely misunderstood, with many people unaware of its signs and symptoms.

### The Role of the Thyroid

The thyroid, a small butterfly-shaped gland located in the neck, plays a vital role in regulating metabolism, energy levels, and overall hormonal balance. Conditions such as hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and thyroid nodules can significantly impact health and quality of life. However, up to 60% of individuals with thyroid disease are unaware of their condition, often due to a lack of awareness about the signs and symptoms, leading to delays in diagnosis and treatment.<sup>1</sup>

### Signs and Symptoms

Thyroid disorders can manifest in various ways, including fatigue, weight changes, mood fluctuations, and cognitive difficulties. These symptoms often resemble common day-to-day ailments, making them easy to overlook. As a result, many patients live with thyroid conditions for years before seeking treatment.

### What Can Be Done

Treatment for thyroid disease varies depending on the type and severity of the condition, as well as the patient's age and overall health. Some common treatments include:<sup>2</sup>

- Antithyroid drugs: These medications stop the thyroid from producing hormones.
- Radioactive iodine therapy: A widely used and effective treatment involving the oral intake of radioactive iodine. Most patients who undergo this therapy eventually develop hypothyroidism.
- Beta-blockers: These medications don't affect the thyroid but can help manage symptoms such as rapid heart rate, tremors, and nervousness.
- Surgery: In rare cases, a healthcare provider may recommend surgically removing the thyroid. Patients undergoing this procedure will need to take synthetic thyroid replacement hormones for the rest of their life.

- Thyroid hormone replacement: For hypothyroidism, patients typically take a daily dose of synthetic thyroxine (T4), a hormone that replaces what their thyroid can no longer produce.

### Take Control of Your Thyroid Health

If you're experiencing symptoms of thyroid disease or have concerns about your thyroid health, don't wait—talk to your healthcare provider to learn more about diagnosis and treatment options.

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