



This picture is four business people of the month they meet. More pictures on pages 8 & 9. attending the Lady Lake Chamber Business luncheon. Every third Thursday



Lady Lake to host Adult Easter Scavenger Hunt. See story on page 2.

## AI and Religion

By TomL

I was listening to the Glen Beck radio on 97.3 and they were discussing belief in God and how AI could or might try to take over the way we process thoughts. AI will not understand religious beliefs. AI processes information that you feed into it. It will process things that it was taught. So we need to teach AI about religion and GOD in a logical sense. It is always dangerous to talk about religion and especially writing about it but here I go! Now remember I'm not a religious scholar. I am trying to get people to think about the future and AI.

Our belief in God is taught to us as history of our creator through the Bible. Without Adam and Eve taking a bite of an apple man kind would not exist. Reverse psychology has worked for years, "Don't bite that Apple". Remember man and woman have to eat to survive. There was no fire to cook with. It was a hard life to be born into.

God gave his son to die on the cross for our sins. He was born to a virgin

mother. What is AI going to do with that one? So we have to remember AI is only what we feed into it, it is a machine that will do logical processes! It will ask the questions of itself, who is he? Where did he come from? Where is he now. The answer is he is in our hearts and minds! We believe in the creator because we would not be here if not for him.

I think AI will be great for medical cures. It can put together the thought process of thousands of doctor, scientist, medical students that have a curious side to come up with cures, instead of the Fauci of this world.

Some people are afraid of AI, the young are curious about it and can see advantages. How it will turn out will be told in the future. Disclaimer when I use the words man kind I mean "men and women".

They are each different and should remain that way, just two genders! HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR GOD!

## Space X comes to Fl

### Governor Ron DeSantis Welcomes SpaceX's Starship Operations to Florida

TALLAHASSEE Fla.—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis welcomed SpaceX's decision to bring Starship launch capacities and processing operations to Florida. Starship will be the first rapidly and fully reusable launch vehicle in history, designed to carry both crew and cargo to Earth orbit, the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

In support of these missions, SpaceX will construct new launch and landing infrastructure for Starship at multiple pads within NASA's Kennedy Space Center and

Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, pending environmental approval, as well as a new integration facility, called Gigabay, which will have more than 40 million cubic feet of vehicle processing space. The project includes at least \$1.8 billion of SpaceX capital investment and will bring an estimated 600 new full-time jobs in the Space Coast by 2030.

"Florida is the present and future of the space industry with leading space companies—like SpaceX—investing in the Free State of Florida," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "We welcome SpaceX's Starship to our state."

Kiko Dontchev, SpaceX's Vice President

of Launch said, "SpaceX was founded with the ultimate mission of making humanity multi-planetary, and Starship is the vehicle that will enable us to become a spacefaring civilization. Through this significant expansion of Starship production and launch capabilities in Florida, we're taking a big step toward achieving this goal, and we are grateful to our partners across the State for their ongoing support."

"Under Governor DeSantis' bold and unwavering leadership, Florida continues to generate wins across the aerospace and aviation industry," said Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly. "SpaceX's investment in Florida is the direct result of strategic, critical investments made by the Governor in aerospace and aviation infrastructure and workforce development that will have long-term, positive impacts on the lives of Florida's families and communities, building economic success that will be continue impact the lives of Floridians for many generations to come."

"SpaceX's investment in Florida is a major victory for our state and the future of the space industry," said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E. "Florida continues to set the pace for space innovation, breaking records with 93 launches in 2024—up from 74 in 2023—and the state is on track to continue this record-breaking momentum into the future as a national leader in space manufacturing, launches, and business development. A special thank you to Governor Ron DeSantis, the Florida Department of Commerce, and Space Florida for their leadership in solidifying Florida's position as the epicenter of the space economy."

"SpaceX's Gigabay project helps advance Florida's mission to solidify our state as the world's hub for aerospace commerce. It builds on the foundation we've

laid over the past decade and accelerates our vision for the future—one where Florida is the choice for the best minds, the boldest innovators, and the most forward-thinking investments. Success in space requires a holistic approach to infrastructure, strategy, and talent, and Florida is leading the way," said Rob Long, President and CEO, Space Florida.

Congressman Mike Haridopolos said, "This transformative \$1.8 billion investment by SpaceX cements Florida's Space Coast as the launchpad for the future of American spaceflight. With 600 new full-time jobs and the historic addition of Starship launches from Florida, this expansion strengthens our economy, grows our aerospace workforce, and solidifies our leadership in the next generation of space exploration. Governor DeSantis' steadfast support for the space industry has reinforced Florida's position as the nation's space capital, attracting major investments like this and securing our leadership in the future of space exploration. This investment is a testament to SpaceX's confidence in Florida's central role in spaceflight, and we are proud to support the groundbreaking missions that will lift off from our shores."

This project is a significant win for Florida's aerospace and aviation industry and is the direct result of years of work and collaboration between SpaceX, FloridaCommerce, the Florida Department of Transportation and Space Florida.



# Town News Lake County Events

## LLPD New officers



The Lady Lake Police Department proudly welcomed James Dunagan and Allen Greene as new Patrol Lieutenants. They were sworn in by Chief Steve Hunt during the Lady Lake Town Commission meeting last night.

In their new roles, Lt. Dunagan and Lt. Greene will oversee the daily operations of the Patrol Division as Watch Commanders, each serving alternating shifts from noon to midnight. This new structure will enhance administrative oversight and provide additional leadership and guidance to the department.

Lt. Dunagan began his law enforcement career in 1996 with the City of Leesburg, where he earned recognition for his investigative expertise and leadership in high-profile cases. A U.S.

Army veteran, Lt. Dunagan has also served as a field training officer, CVSA examiner, and team leader for the Critical Incident Response Team.

Lt. Greene's career in law enforcement began in 2002 with the City of Altamonte Springs. Over the years, he advanced through various roles, including Lieutenant in the Street Crimes/Narcotics Unit and Watch Commander overseeing patrol operations. Lt. Greene, a U.S. Army veteran, brings over 17 years of experience and leadership to the Lady Lake Police Department.

These outstanding officers bring invaluable experience and dedication to their new roles, and we're excited to see the positive impact they'll make on our community.

**Photo left to right:** Lt. Allen Greene, Chief Steve Hunt, Lt. James Dunagan.



## Completes NPDES Audit

The Town of Lady Lake has successfully completed its Year 4 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) audit, as acknowledged by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. This achievement highlights the town's ongoing dedication to maintaining high environmental standards and protecting local waterways.

The NPDES permit regulates stormwater discharge to reduce pollution in natural water bodies, ensuring compliance with federal and state water quality standards. By successfully addressing all audit requirements, Lady Lake demonstrates its proactive approach to stormwater management.

"Ensuring the health and quality of our water resources is a top priority for the Town of Lady Lake," said Public Works Director C.T. Eagle. "The successful completion of our NPDES audit reflects our commitment to implementing best practices in stormwater management and environmental protection."

Stormwater runoff is a major contributor

to water pollution, carrying debris, chemicals, and other pollutants into lakes, rivers, and wetlands. Compliance with NPDES standards helps protect Florida's natural ecosystems, supports clean water initiatives, and ensures a healthier environment for residents and wildlife.

As part of its ongoing efforts, Lady Lake will continue implementing its Stormwater Management Program and meeting all reporting obligations under the NPDES permit. The Town remains committed to protecting water quality and ensuring a sustainable future for the community.

Key Findings from the Audit

The FDEP determined that Lady Lake's response to the audit confirmed that the Town is effectively implementing required stormwater management practices.

The audit acknowledged that procedures are being properly documented and tracked for future compliance.

Minor updates noted in the audit will be addressed in the upcoming Cycle 5 Notice of Intent for a new permit, demonstrating the Town's commitment to continuous improvement.

## Adult Easter Scavenger Hunt

**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.

## 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/village-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".



# "Julie Doe" Identify

## Lake County Sheriff's Office Detectives Identify "Julie Doe" in 1988 Cold Case

On September 25, 1988, a victim was found deceased 30 feet off the side of CR 474 in Clermont. The victim had been deceased for 2 – 4 weeks in a rural, heavily wooded area. The victim was initially thought to be female until 2015, when DNA testing revealed the victim was biologically male. The victim was wearing a skirt and had breast implants, and there is evidence she may have been taking female hormone injections. It is unknown if the victim had undergone any other gender reassignment surgery.

With the support of Dr. Barbara Wolf, the District Medical Examiner for Districts 5 and 24, the case was evaluated by the DNA Doe Project. The DNA Doe Project is a non-profit organization that utilizes investigative genetic genealogy to identify unidentified remains.

After years of difficult work, the genealogists were able to identify possible relatives of "Julie Doe," who were then contacted by the Lake County Sheriff's Office. After additional information was obtained, the relatives submitted their DNA for comparison. These comparisons identified "Julie Doe" as Pamela Leigh Walton. Pamela was born a biological male in Kentucky and put up for adoption. Once adopted, his name was Lee Allen Walton. At some point in Lee's adult life, he changed his name to Pamela Leigh Wal-ton and was, at the very least, transitioning from male to female.

It's unknown how Pamela came to be in Florida. Pamela's manner of death is undetermined, and the Lake County Sheriff's Office is continuing efforts to gather information regarding the circumstances of the death.

# Sounds of Spring Concert Series

LADY LAKE – The Town of Lady Lake is excited to present the Sounds of Spring Concert Series, a lineup of free live music bringing the community together for an unforgettable season of fun, food, and live entertainment.

Held under the oak trees of Snooky Park, located 120 Lady Lake Blvd., this three-part concert series will feature talented tribute and cover bands, food trucks, and beverages for all to enjoy. Mark your calendars for these performances:

Saturday, April 5 | 11 AM - 2 PM – The Gotta Groove Band will bring high-energy hits to keep the crowd dancing.

Saturday, May 17 | 11 AM - 2 PM – The Rundown Band will close out the series with electrifying rock and pop favorites.

Each concert will feature delicious food trucks and beer & wine for purchase. Attendees are encouraged to bring picnic blankets and lawn chairs to relax and enjoy the show.

"This concert series is a wonderful way for our community to come together, enjoy live music, and celebrate the beautiful spring season in Lady Lake," said Events Coordinator Amy Alicea. "We invite everyone to join us for a great time with family and friends."

For event updates, text SpringConcerts25 to 38276 or visit [www.ladylakefl.gov](http://www.ladylakefl.gov) and follow us on Facebook at @townofladylake.

# America is a Democracy

## United States of America is a Democracy

The Republicans believe in: Democracy | Definition "THE PEOPLE RULE"

Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or through freely elected representatives.

- Republicans
- Democrats
- Liberals

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# Humor. Lighten Your Day



When I was a kid there were two ways to die...

Natural causes and talking back to your parents!

Share your favorite!  
TLoury@att.net



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Village Spectator  
Lady Lake Magazine

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



I would rather that Trump not use the term "You better do this or else!" I believe in what he is doing. I think he can say, "you need follow the Federal Law," meaning female sport are for women only and no males in the

woman's locker room or women's sports. I know some men can't compete with other men and they want a place to participate but professional sports is not it! Go to another country or play shuffle board.

You men professional athletes out there should protect women's sports.

Maine should say no men in women sports also go along with deportation of what is describe in the Constitution as illegals. You can't start out with Citizenship by breaking the law.

#### THE ENEMY!

The enemy has done wrong, they come at us through some of our leaders greed and

things like Jeffery Epstein! Once they made that trip the second time, they knew what was going on and they are probably there to participate then they have compromised themselves and our country. But they have come at us through our food shortages, E G G S , through our WATER (Contamination?), setting fires? How much one match cost? There is a army of illegals in our country thanks to the Democrats. When I was a kid a hundred years ago my grandmother and us three kids built a chicken coop with sticks, crap one by twos, a handful of roofing nails and cardboard. Once we built the coop we painted it with outdoor paint. It lasted two years. We had eggs and chicken.

I wonder what is going to happen to the people who are addicted? We are lucky we have small ranchers and farmers. That is a great strength. We are all armed another great strength. We have to watch out for cattle decease or any kind of animal decease. With cattle they can effect the supply of meat, milk, cheese, etc. It is possible for the

enemy to introduce decease. We need to protect our food sources and our water sources. China is already over fishing our seas. If you look at our country we have to many weak spot. Trump is closing them but how much can he do and how fast can he do it. It looks to me like we are in a bad way as far as peace through strength. But Trump is making deals and some country's agree to it or live under China's / Russia's iron fist.

Speaking of the enemy. When I was a mere 14 year's old. I was in the Optimist International speaking tour. I had won the

local speaking contest. I was the youngest to go to Cuba. Castro was fighting in the hills. There were machine nest guns set up all through Havana. I stayed in the Hotel National. I gave a speech "Freedom our most precise heritage."

The dictator of Cuba Batista was in the audience. I stuck out my hand in meeting him and he patted me on the head and said something I did not under stand. When it was over they had to make sure the Cuban boy won something so he got a third place award

Continued page 6

## Newspaper Deadlines

*Editorial & Ad Copy for May*

**Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown**  
**Noon, April 23rd**

**Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator**  
**12am, March 30th**

## Village Spectator / Lady Lake Magazine

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## FAIRTAX



You may remember the IRS contractor Charles Littlejohn who stole and

leaked federal income tax returns and was sentenced to 5 years in prison. Some thought that five years was too lenient while others thought he should not have been prosecuted at all since they believe that Mr. Littlejohn performed a valuable public service by showing how much the wealthiest Americans pay in taxes. The IRS said that 70,000 taxpayer returns were leaked but recently the IRS sent a letter to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan, admitted that the true number was not 70,000 but actually 405,427 taxpayers, 89 percent were business entities.

So how can we prevent this from happening again? There is only one way - Repeal the income tax and abolish the IRS. If the government doesn't HAVE your confidential data, they can't LEAK your confidential data. Like an old car, there comes a point when it costs more to repair it than it is worth. Unfortunately, the system is so badly broken that no matter how much we spend to "fix" the IRS and income tax, it will remain a corrupt and broken system.

Of course, reasonable Americans realize that some form of taxation is necessary if the government is going to keep running and providing the services that people need and demand. The real question is what that system of taxation should look like.

We could keep the present income tax system.

\* The IRS remains as a political weapon to be used against anyone who dares to defy or question the ruling elites.

\*The government continues to collect your personal financial data even though they are unable to safeguard it from being stolen and leaked.

\* The Treasury continues to lose over one trillion dollars a year to cheaters and evaders.

Or, we can go with a well researched replacement plan that is ready to be implemented - the FAIRtax. The FAIRtax is a national retail sales tax on new retail goods and retail services.

\* FAIRtax replaces the government revenue now being collected by the income & payroll tax

\* FAIRtax gives you a paycheck without federal tax and FICA deductions allowing you to purchase items with pre-taxed dollars.

\* The FAIRtax provides a family allowance (the Prebate) that exempts

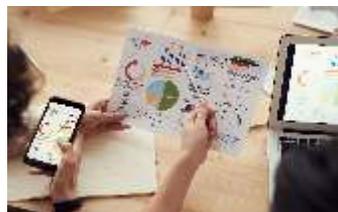
purchases up to the poverty level from taxation making it a progressive sales tax.

\* The FAIRtax is administered by the states and eliminates the need for the IRS. \* The FAIRtax brings jobs and manufacturing back to the United States. \* The FAIRtax ensures the solvency of Social Security and Medicare. For more information please go to FAIRtax.org

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# Publisher's Notes Alligators and Crocodiles

Continued from page 6

so we could get out of the country safe. I was told by the judges that was my spot buuuuut! I did not mind after what I went through that happened in the home town where I live. Two of the boys composed a nasty letter to the local Optimist leader Hank that was not nice about me, they were older and thought they should have won the trip. It always come back to bite you!

I am a patriot! During the Vietnam war I tried to volunteer and was turned down because I had complete fusion on both side of my lower Lumbar back, so once in a while I would have extreme Sciatic pain. They said I could not go. I really felt bad because my brother was shipping out and I wanted to go also. My wife and I were sitting at a table at the Oceans Buffet and sitting next us was a guy sitting by himself. I struck up a conversation. I ask do you live in Ocala. He said no I live in Jacksonville. I ask what profession are you in. He said I work for the VA, he ask me did you serve? I had a twinge of embarrassment. I said thank you for your service and I explained I was a patriot, because the Military Medical Doctor examining me said NO. At that second I was embarrassed like a flash back because I wanted to go, but people don't always believe you. I lost a lot of friends in that war. Thank the lord my brother made it through. YOU VETS OUT THERE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Was reading job description's on the internet and then I saw it. DOG FOOD TASTERS WANTED! These dog food company's hires people to taste dog food. I will have nightmares tonight thinking about this, but they give reports on taste, aroma, texture, visual in writing. I'm thinking what happens when they taste something really bad? They said they could make up to \$100,000 per year WOW!

TomL

I saw an article about there is two things that co-exist in the everglades in south Florida. Alligators and Crocodiles in the wild. I fished the everglades in south Florida for about 15 years and did very well. We stayed over night many time and even some time slept on the bank, most of the time in the back of the truck so we did not get eaten in our sleep. It was not unusual to see an alligators. Never saw an aggressive one unless you were near the female nest or had a stringer hanging in the water while fishing from a boat.

My wife and I were going down this canal about two miles long. There was a current from them opening a spill way so it slowed us and we only had a five horse outboard. A Crocodile started following us. He was a big fellow, probably 12 feet. He followed us the whole length of the canal. When we got to the end and turn into a slew that I wanted to fish, we never saw it again. There are crocodiles in the everglades. We did not see any for a long time, but as time went on we started seeing more. You could easily to tell the difference, a croc has a narrow pointed snout and can grow bigger than the Florida Alligator. There things that are also different but it is not visible. One is a top water feeder the other is not. I'm not sure which any more.

## Cleaning up Corruption

By TomL

Judicial Watch is still trying to get to the bottom of the Fani Willis / Jack Smith / Alvin Bragg / IRS and other Government Agency's? It seems the request for records

have been ignored. They were told to turn them over by the courts. Did not happen. The thought is a lot of our Government was trying to stop Trump from winning the election. WHY? Because of what you are seeing happen right now. If you waited on the normal time it took to find things out it would be stalled for years. Not with Trump, he is going to make the truth come out.

There are a lot of moving part but no one counted on a team of patriot that would put their businesses on hold to clean up the corruption and over payment and continuing to pay after fraud was found.

There were a lot of innocent political figures lives ruined, especially republicans around Trump. He is now slowly pardoning them and the people charged with Insurrection. I have looked it up online and here is what it says ...Rebellion is an uprising that resists and is organized against one's government. A rebel is a person who engages in a rebellion. A rebel group is a consciously coordinated group that seeks to gain political control over an entire state or a portion of a state.

Now as I understand what happened was people got excited and went into the White House. Was not tryin g to take control but showing how unhappy they were about the corruption and the cheating that went on about the election. The Democrats found this to be something they could use against Trump and tried to turn into something it was not! It is slowly come to light!

These investigation will go on for ever because they tried to Impugn Trump reputation. History will tell the story!

## 2025 Contractor & Crafts Showcase

**Our Contractor & Crafts Showcase is back!**

Saturday, April 12, 2025

Are you a local business looking to showcase your products and services to The Villages residents and surrounding communities? What do you have to offer? Plumber, electrician, mortgage company, local bank, HVAC contractor, general contractor, lawncare maintenance, pest control, floor coverings, dentist, chiropractor, restaurant, painter, automobile dealer, garage door repair and replacement, insurance agent, senior living facility, health insurance providers, handyman, professional shopper, organizer?

We still have some tables available.

Contractors Showcase Exhibitor Tables - Rotary Club of the Villages Noon

## Exciting News!

**From Congresswoman Kat Cammack**

We officially launched the **Republican Women's Caucus** at the White House on Wednesday alongside President Trump. This new group, made up of female GOP members in the House and Senate, will ensure American issues are women's issues as we fight to secure the border, restore our energy dominance, and strengthen our economy during the Golden Age of America. I'm thrilled to be the founder and co-chair of the caucus alongside Senator Katie Britt in its inaugural year.

You can watch the news and video from the White House announcement below, and see a bit more of my own personal news—my husband Matt and I are



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1PM - 3PM

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Visiting Angels, Village Spectator, Edward Jones, CARE, MILLHORN, Baldwin Brothers

# LAKE COUNTY EVENTS

Apr 01  
Dining With Diabetes: 4-part Class Series  
1:30 PM - 3:30 PM UF/IFAS Extension  
Lake County in Tavares 4/14/84/154/22  
This 4-part class series gives the opportunity to better understand diabetes, its related factors, nutrition education, and effective management strategies.

Apr 04  
Exploration Hike  
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM Ferndale Preserve in  
Clermont 4/45/26/67/4 Plus More  
Join staff and explore the habitats and  
species of Ferndale Preserve. Hike  
intensity: Vigorous. Reservations required.

Apr 04  
First Friday  
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Downtown Eustis in  
Eustis  
Join us for our Eustis First Friday Street  
Party from 6 - 9 p.m.! Our family-friendly  
monthly street parties host a wide variety of  
food, vendors and more.

Apr 05  
Umatilla Garden Club  
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Umatilla Public  
Library in Umatilla 4/55/3  
Connect with local garden enthusiasts and  
cultivate your green thumb!

Apr 05  
Wetland Excursion - Hidden Waters  
Preserve  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Hidden Waters  
Preserve in Eustis  
Join us for a fast paced guided hike at  
Hidden Waters Preserve to explore the

diverse ecosystems within the Preserve,  
including the plants and animals and more.

Apr 05  
Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey  
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Lake May Reserve in  
Eustis 4/59/2010/25  
Assist staff with surveying one of Lake  
County's conservation lands for birds and  
butterflies. These surveys assist with the  
long term management

Apr 05  
Sounds of Spring Concert: Gotta Groove  
Band  
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM Snooky Park in Lady  
Lake  
Let's kick off spring with music and  
community featuring Gotta Groove Band!  
Enjoy a free concert with: Delicious food  
trucks Beer & wine

Apr 06  
Exploration Hike  
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM P.E.A.R. Park  
(Gateway) in Leesburg  
Join staff on an early evening walk while  
exploring nature at P.E.A.R. Park. Hike  
Intensity: Light. Reservations required.

Apr 06  
Spring Concert at First Presbyterian -  
Gospel Mass  
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM First Presbyterian  
Church Mount Dora in Mount Dora  
Celebrate Spring with Ray's Gospel Mass at  
First Presbyterian Church in downtown  
Mount Dora. Featuring the Chancel Choir,  
The Well Band, Soloists

Apr 08  
Wriggle Brew Presentation  
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Mount Dora First  
United Methodist Church, Friendship Hall  
in Mount Dora  
Lakes & Hills Garden Club invites you to  
learn how "Wriggle Brew" organic fertilizer  
includes everything a plant needs to grow  
better and more.

Apr 09  
Water Wednesday (water conservation)  
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Hickory Point in  
Tavares  
Celebrate Earth Day by learning about the  
importance of Water Conservation and  
practical ways to protect this precious  
resource.

Apr 09  
Your Health Matters: Free Educational  
Series for Diabetics  
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Astor County  
Library in Astor 4/94/164/23  
This is a FREE 3-part educational series for  
diabetics, pre-diabetics and/or caregivers.  
Registration is required: to reserve your spot  
call the Astor C...

Apr 10  
Springtime at Lake May  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Lake May Preserve in  
Eustis  
Join staff and explore the habitats and  
species of Lake May Preserve. Hiking  
Intensity: Moderate. Reservations required.

Apr 10  
The Science of Cheesemaking (morning or  
evening class available)  
10:00 AM - 7:30 PM UF/IFAS Extension  
Lake County in Tavares

Join us for this hands on class in learning  
how mozzarella cheese is made and the  
science of cheesemaking. Even create a  
sample mozzarella cheese!

Apr 11  
Discover Leesburg  
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM Towne Square,  
Downtown Leesburg in Leesburg 4/115/9  
Join us every 2nd Friday evening of the  
month on Towne Square in Downtown  
Leesburg for an unforgettable experience!

Apr 12  
Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey  
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM PEAR Park - WCA in  
Leesburg  
Assist staff with surveying one of Lake  
County's conservation lands for birds and  
butterflies. These surveys assist with the  
long term management of the...

Apr 12  
The Habitats and Natural History of Snakes  
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Ferndale Preserve in  
Montverde  
Venture into the realm of snakes and a  
discussion with park staff about the different  
habitats and natural history of venomous  
and non-venomous snakes.

Apr 12  
Adult Easter Egg Hunt  
9:00 AM - 12:30 PM Snooky Park in Lady  
Lake  
The Town of Lady Lake will host its first-  
ever Adult Easter Scavenger Hunt, "An  
Eggstraordinary Adventure," on Saturday,  
April 12.

Apr 12  
Eustis Hometown Comedy and Music  
Festival



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# Lady Lake Chamber Business Luncheon

Lady Lake Chamber Lunch Business Meeting held at GlennView Country Club. Every third Thursday of the month the Lady Lake Chamber has their monthly business meeting. Businesses meet each other, present their business to all attending. Usually over 40 business attend. Some

bring door prizes, they draw business cards and the winner is? A lot of great gifts.

On pages 8 & 9 you will usually see your picture if you attended thanks to Lady Lake Magazine. To see your pictures look for the Lady Lake Blast every month that says to see Business

Lunch picture click here! Otherwise search ladylakemagazine.com click read online and the papers for two years will pop up. Choose the month issue you want to read or look at pictures.



# 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!**



## Lady Lake Area Chamber



# Adult

# APRIL

# Lady Lake Library

Hours:

Monday: 9am-7pm

Tuesday-Friday: 9am-6pm

Saturday and Sunday: Closed



| Monday   | Tuesday                           | Wednesday                         | Thursday  | Friday   |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 31<br>ESL @10-11:30am<br>Sign Up Required                              | 1<br><b>APRIL FOOL'S DAY!</b><br> | 2                                 | 3   | 4  |
| 7<br>ESL @10-11:30am<br>Sign Up Required                               | 8<br>Book Discussion @ 2-4pm      | 9<br>SHINE 2-4pm                  | 10  | 11<br>BestBuy iPhone @ 9:30am                            |
| 14<br>ESL @10-11:30am<br>Sign Up Required                              | 15                                | 16<br>Authors Round Table @ 2-4pm | 17<br>Bingo! @2-3:30pm<br>sign up required                          | 18<br>   |
| 21<br>ESL @10-11:30am<br>Sign Up Required                              | 22<br><br>EARTH DAY               | 23<br>SHINE 2-4pm                 | 24<br>Let's Talk Books @ 2pm  | 25<br>BestBuy MAC @ 9:30am<br>Board Games Meetup! @2-4pm |
| 28<br>Friends of the Library Meeting<br>April 28 @10-12 pm<br>Room 152 | 29                                | 30                                | <br>Every Monday<br>Chair Yoga @10am & @11:30am<br>Sign up required |  |

# Youth

# APRIL

# Lady Lake Library

Hours:

Monday: 9am-7pm

Tuesday-Friday: 9am-6pm

Saturday and Sunday: Closed



| Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Friday  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| 31<br><b>YOUTH CLOSED DUE TO VOTING</b>          | 1<br>Tiny Tots @ 10:30am<br>Family Crafting @ 3:30pm  | 2<br>Storytime 10:30am<br>Read with Scarlett The Service Dog 3:00pm-4:00pm  | 3<br>  | 4<br>Lego Masters @ 3:30pm                                |
| 7<br>Craft Kits Available! While supplies last.  | 8<br>Tiny Tots @ 10:30am<br>Family Crafting @ 3:30pm  | 9<br>Storytime 10:30am<br>Read with Scarlett The Service Dog 3:00pm-4:00pm  | 10<br>   | 11<br>Baby Storytime @10:30am<br>Video Games 3:30-4:30 pm |
| 14<br>Craft Kits Available! While supplies last. | 15<br>Tiny Tots @ 10:30am<br>Family Crafting @ 3:30pm | 16<br>Storytime 10:30am<br>Read with Scarlett The Service Dog 3:00pm-4:00pm | 17<br>   | 18<br>Lego Masters @ 3:30pm                               |
| 21<br>Craft Kits Available! While supplies last. | 22<br>Tiny Tots @ 10:30am<br>Family Crafting @ 3:30pm | 23<br>Storytime 10:30am<br>Read with Scarlett The Service Dog 3:00pm-4:00pm | 24<br>   | 25<br>Baby Storytime @10:30am<br>Video Games 3:30-4:30 pm |
| 28<br>Craft Kits Available! While supplies last. | 29<br>Tiny Tots @ 10:30am<br>Family Crafting @ 3:30pm | 30<br>Storytime 10:30am<br>Read with Scarlett The Service Dog 3:00pm-4:00pm | <br><b>EGGSTRAVAGANZA</b><br>Saturday, April 12 at Snooky Park @ 11 am - 1 pm<br>120 W Lady Lake Blvd, Lady Lake, FL |   |

## Kat Cammack

Continued from page 6

expecting our first baby later this year! I was thrilled to share this news alongside dozens of my fellow female conservative lawmakers who know just how important women and girls are to the future of our nation.

Additionally, the Agriculture Committee and Energy & Commerce Committee held two important hearings this week, one on the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and the other on keeping children safe online. You can take a look at the recaps below to learn more about what we discussed.

The House returns next week for the second of three weeks in session. Stay tuned to see the updates in next week's newsletter.

Finally, our very own Florida Gators took down Maryland in the NCAA Round of 16 last night. The Elite Eight is up next with the Gators making their first appearance in this round of the tournament since 2017. Let's go Gators!

With all that's happening this new Congress, it is my greatest honor to represent you and hear from you about the issues that matter most. You can read below about what we've been up to this week, and as always, you can stay up to date with us here, on [our website](#), and on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#).

## Colorectal Cancer Tests

Medicare Now Covers Less Invasive Colorectal Cancer Tests (NewsUSA) - Expanded Screening

### Coverage Can Reduce Needless Deaths

Colorectal cancer deaths are declining, but shocking regional, racial and ethnic disparities remain. According to the American Cancer Society, Latinos in the United States are more likely to die from colorectal cancer than those in many Central and South American countries, and death rates among Black men and women are 40% higher than their white counterparts. Rural residents are also far more likely to die from this often-preventable disease than those in urban areas. Much of this is due to lack of screening.

Colorectal cancer care groups, minority healthcare advocates and doctors have long held that virtual colonoscopy, or CT Colonography, can overcome cultural stigmas and anxiety associated with this screening. In January, Medicare began covering virtual colonoscopy – which uses a CT scanner to generate 3D, moving images of the colon that doctors examine for signs of cancer and for precancerous polyps, which can be removed before they become cancers.

“Patients should have a choice in their screening options,” said Anjee Davis, MPPA, CEO of Fight Colorectal Cancer. “It's important to consider the whole patient—their preferences, comfort, and what they feel is the best fit for them. For some, it might be a virtual colonoscopy or another less-invasive screening option.”

At least 53,000 people in the U.S. still die from colorectal cancer each year. Virtual colonoscopy use is growing most quickly among Black Americans and Latinos. Many experts think more covered exams can convince the 30% of US residents who should be screened, but choose not to, to get tested.

“Affordability and accessibility are

critical factors in determining whether a person will get screened for colorectal cancer. Improving access and choice for more people can help save lives and bring us closer to ending the disease in our lifetime,” said Michael Sapienza, CEO of the Colorectal Cancer Alliance.

The Affordable Care Act requires private insurers to cover the exam. CIGNA, UnitedHealthcare, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Aetna and other large insurers have covered these tests for years.

Preparation for virtual and standard colonoscopies is the same, but the virtual test is far less invasive and does not require sedation. It is over in minutes. A person does not need to get a ride to or from the exam and can return to daily activities.

“Many in low-income communities, including single parents, can't afford to take a day off work, and may not have reliable transportation or childcare,” said Cecelia Brewington, MD, Chair of Medical Imaging at Ochsner Health System, New Orleans. “Being able to go back to work afterward may determine whether that person gets tested – which can ultimately save their life.”

Virtual colonoscopy is recommended by the American Cancer Society for those at average colorectal cancer risk, with no family history of the disease or other major gastrointestinal issues. President Obama had a virtual colonoscopy while in office.

“Medicare covering virtual colonoscopies enables more people to be screened, allows doctors to remove more polyps before they become cancers and helps people avoid getting this disease altogether. This will save lives,” said Judy Yee, MD, chair of the American College of Radiology Colon Cancer Committee, and Professor and Chair of Radiology at Montefiore Health System and Albert Einstein College of

Medicine, Bronx, NY.

Those ages 45 and older should talk to their doctor about which exam works best for them.

More information is available at [RadiologyInfo.org/virtualct](https://radiologyinfo.org/virtualct).

<https://about.newsusa.com/medicare-now-covers-less-invasive-colorectal-cancer-tests>

## Improving Teens Reading



Improving Teens Reading with Better Resources

(NAPSI)—If you can read this, thank a teacher. And while you're at it you may be interested to learn that teachers, principals, curriculum and instruction leaders, chief academic officers, senior literacy leaders, and school supervisors hope to improve the effectiveness of their current adolescent literacy programs.

### The Problem

School district leaders are generally

Continued page 16



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FROM THE DESK OF  
**CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK**



**Reps. Kat Cammack & Doris Matsui Introduce The DIGITAL Applications Act**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Reps. Kat Cammack and Doris Matsui

introduced the Deploying Infrastructure with Greater Internet Transactions and Legacy Applications Act (DIGITAL Applications Act).

The bill establishes online portals for the acceptance, processing, and disposal of a Form 299 for communications use authorizations at the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture. Form 299s are used for permitting related to communications technology.

"The permitting process has long been challenging across the federal landscape," said Rep. Cammack. "Improving online access to the federal permitting process for Interior and Agriculture will help close the digital divide and provide vital broadband resources across the United States. I'm grateful to my colleague, Rep. Matsui, for her leadership on this legislation with me."

"As we work to close the digital divide, it is imperative that the federal government plays a key role in deploying broadband to communities across the nation," said Rep. Matsui. "This bill will introduce needed transparency and accountability to the federal permitting process. By establishing a one-stop online portal, we're ensuring companies deploying broadband on federal lands have the information they need to bring connectivity to communities that lack it."

**Reps. Cammack & Soto Introduce Deploying American Blockchains Act of 2025**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, Rep. Kat

Cammack (R-FL-03) and Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL-09) introduced the Deploying American Blockchains Act of 2025. The bill directs the Secretary of Commerce to serve as the president's principal advisor for policy pertaining to the deployment, use, application, and competitiveness of blockchain technology or other distributed ledger technology, applications built on blockchain technology, or other distributed ledger technology, tokens, and tokenization. Additionally, the bill directs Commerce to establish a Blockchain Deployment Program at the Department. "Blockchain is an evolving technology that is changing daily," said Rep. Kat Cammack. "Understanding the power of blockchain technology and how we can leverage it to support our economy, national security, and more is critical. I'm proud to continue to the work of developing blockchain tech with the House Energy & Commerce Committee." "I'm proud to work with Rep. Cammack on common-sense, bipartisan legislation to strengthen U.S. competitiveness in the blockchain space," said Rep. Darren Soto. "Our bill will ensure that the Department of Commerce focuses on developing these technologies to help our country remain a leader and ahead of the curve."

**Reps. Cammack, Castor, Carter, DeGette, Kelly & Mackenzie Introduce Bill To Prevent Maternal Deaths and Improve Health Outcomes For Mothers**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Reps. Kat Cammack (R-FL), Kathy Castor (D-FL), Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (R-GA), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Robin Kelly (D-IL), and Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA) introduced the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act of 2025.

This bill would assist states in preserving maternal health throughout pregnancy,

childbirth, and postpartum, addressing disparities in maternal health and finding solutions to enhance health care quality and outcomes for mothers.

"The maternal health crisis demands urgent action, and the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act is a necessary step toward protecting mothers and babies across the country," said Rep. Kat Cammack (R-FL). "This bipartisan legislation renews our commitment to addressing maternal mortality by supporting Maternal Mortality Review Committees, fostering better data collection, and equipping healthcare providers with evidence-based best practices. Every mother deserves access to safe, high-quality care throughout her pregnancy and beyond. I'm proud to join my colleagues in reintroducing this bill in the 119th Congress, and I urge swift passage to make meaningful progress in saving lives and strengthening families."

"The maternal health crisis demands action, and Congress must do its part to ensure that every mom has access to the care they need before, during and after pregnancy, keeping families healthy and whole," said Rep. Kathy Castor. "The Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act is a bipartisan product that passed through the Energy & Commerce Committee and the full House with near unanimous support in the 118th Congress, and should have already been signed into law. This legislation will help more moms have safe pregnancies and assist local community organizations in Florida to improve the quality of care for new and expecting mothers. This reauthorization will strengthen lifesaving initiatives that use research, prevention, and evidence-based best practices to meet the needs of pregnant and postpartum women in America."

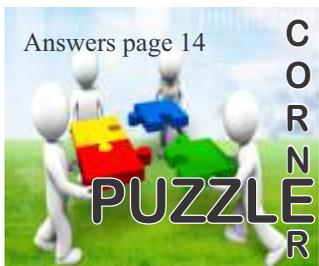
"I'm proud to work with my bipartisan congressional colleagues on the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act, which would improve health care outcomes for mothers at all stages of pregnancy. Georgians are severely impacted by our nation's alarming and preventable maternal mortality

crisis, and this bill will help ensure that all families have access to lifesaving health care resources," said Rep. Buddy Carter.

"The United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any high-income nation, and the data bears out that women and families of color are particularly vulnerable," said Diana DeGette. "80 percent of maternal deaths are preventable, but we cannot address a problem when we do not know the root causes, which is why the Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act is so important. We must continue to address this crisis so that every woman receives the quality care she needs, helping her and her baby live healthy and happy lives."

"The maternal mortality rate, driven largely by preventable complications, is deeply devastating. These issues are intensified by the systemic marginalization of communities of color. Since day one, I have championed congressional actions to address these disparities and improve healthcare for mothers at every stage of pregnancy," said Rep. Robyn Kelly. "I am proud to have worked alongside my colleagues to reintroduce this transformative legislation, which pulls language from my comprehensive maternal health bill — the CARE for Moms Act. The Preventing Maternal Deaths Reauthorization Act is a significant step forward in tackling the maternal mortality crisis, improving the lives of families, and ensuring safe, healthy pregnancies for all women."

"As a Pennsylvania State Representative, I worked to tackle the crisis of maternal mortality by creating our state's first Maternal Mortality Review Committee," said Rep. Ryan Mackenzie. "Now, it's an honor to be able to take this fight to the US Congress as we work to ensure that pregnant mothers are getting the care and support that they need. By enhancing funding, strengthening review committees, and disseminating best practices, this bill will save lives and improve healthcare outcomes for families across the nation."



Answers page 14

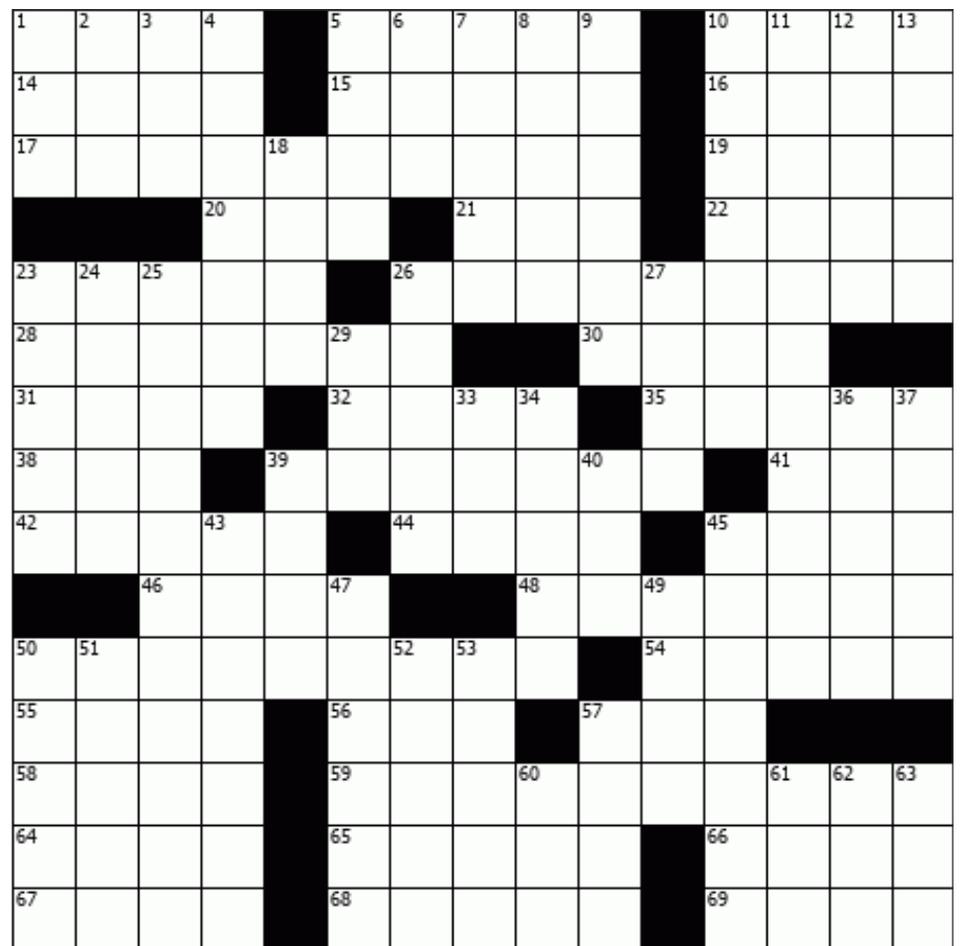
CORNER

Across

1. Uncovered
5. College subj.
10. Tough time for Caesar
14. NASCAR track
15. Actress Maureen
16. Knotty swelling
17. Fourth of July dessert
19. City slicker
20. CEO, e.g.
21. Wee bit
22. "Ditto," in footnotes
23. Italian autos, familiarly
26. Where you might see Brownies with brownies
28. Like a famous falcon
30. Checkout nuisance
31. Orchestra member
32. Take in
35. Bulletin board necessities
38. This instant!
39. Subject of this puzzle
41. Dogg tracks

42. Avian diver
44. Truck stop sight
45. Yellow Brick Road follower
46. 1990 pennant winner
48. Give Mom some time off
50. Powell or Rumsfeld
54. Church areas
55. "I told you so!"
56. Fish and chips follower, sometimes
57. Result of burnout?
58. Squabbling
59. Hippo
64. Unit of distance
65. Champion with a twohanded backhand
66. Toe the line
67. Means' justifiers
68. Rain result, on some fields
69. Charming Down
1. Present decoration
2. Frank's second
3. Gnawing problem?
4. Lift
5. Display of grandeur
6. That vessel
7. Site of 1945 Big Three meeting
8. Speak hoarsely
9. "Hallelujah" chorus

- composer
10. Role for Harrison
11. Betray
12. WWI ace Rickenbacker
13. Does a farm job
18. Shine's partner
23. In the middle of
24. Blood, sweat and tears
25. Hippie
26. Wampum units
27. Venue
29. Bishop's bailiwick
33. 66, e.g. (Abbr.)
34. "Anywhere else!" acronym
36. Couric of the news
37. Some are blind
39. Eliot's Adam
40. Woody's ex
43. Scolds
45. Pacific threat
47. Rubbernecked
49. Gala gathering
50. Ignominy
51. Cancel the reservations
52. One way to look
53. Make merry
57. Bohemian
60. Historical period
61. Possible result of a sacrifice
62. Not sweet, as wine
63. Peeper



FROM THE DESK OF  
**ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE**



**Florida Attorney General's Office Secures More Than \$4 Million and a Lifetime Industry Ban Against Deceptive Moving Broker Enterprise**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.— Attorney General James

Uthmeier announced that the Consumer Protection Division secured a lifetime ban and final judgments totaling more than \$4 million settling ongoing litigation related to a Florida-based moving brokerage scheme. Charles Abrams, Rudolph Rice, and Daniel Metz operated a common enterprise of moving brokerage companies, including Gold Standard Moving and Storage and others.

"We will not tolerate shady moving operators scamming hardworking Floridians," said Attorney General James Uthmeier. "Thanks to the work of Senior Assistant Attorney General Josie Warren, Deputy Director Sasha Funk Granai, and Assistant Attorney General Pooneh Charkhian-Martinez of the Consumer Protection Division, these operators and entities are permanently banned from the moving business in Florida and will be paying millions of dollars in monetary judgments."

These entities represented to consumers that they were professional movers providing door-to-door service; however, the companies were actually online brokers that provided low quotes to secure large, up-front deposits from customers and outsourced the work to unvetted moving carriers, subjecting many consumers to demands for additional payment, resulting in consumer complaints. Consumers further complained that although the defendants promised to provide refunds and customer service throughout the moves, the entities and operators failed to do so.

The entities included in the Gold Standard Moving enterprise are Executive Van Lines, Imperial Moving Group d/b/a Simple Path Moving, National American

Van Lines, Razor Van Lines, Spartan Moving and Storage, United American Moving, Us Pro Moving and Logistics, and Gold Standard Moving and Storage. The companies serially changed names when bad reviews made it difficult to attract new customers.

As a result of Attorney General Uthmeier's action, five final consent judgments permanently banned the defendants from the moving broker industry in Florida.

The total monetary judgment against the Gold Standard entities and the individual defendants is \$4,139,239, including \$1,120,239 in consumer relief. Eligible consumers will be contacted.

**Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Investigation into Glass Lewis & Co. and Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. for ESG and DEI Policies**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.— Attorney General James Uthmeier directed an investigation into proxy advisors Glass Lewis & Co. and Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. (ISS) for potential misrepresentations related to their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) investing policies in violation of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act and possible unlawful collusion in adopting and enforcing these policies in violation of the Florida Antitrust Act of 1980. Civil Investigative Demands will be forthcoming.

"We won't allow ESG goals to handcuff Florida businesses and threaten Floridians investments," said Attorney General James Uthmeier. "If these proxy advisors use their overwhelming market power to advance partisan political agendas rather than maximizing shareholder value, we will hold them accountable."

Glass Lewis and ISS provide vote recommendations to institutional investors and control a large share of the proxy-advisory market, with some estimates as high as 97%. Institutional investors, such as

those who manage the portfolios of many Americans' retirement accounts, rely on proxy advisors to direct them on how to vote their shares. Thus, the decisions of proxy advisors have a substantial influence over how major American companies are run.

Glass Lewis and ISS told their clients and the public that their decisions were not politically motivated and instead based purely on economic factors. Glass Lewis claimed that the company "evaluates all environmental and social issues through the lens of long-term shareholder value." ISS has similarly argued that all its research is grounded in a "neutral and analytical perspective" and places its "clients' interests first and above" its own. But pushing racial and gender quotas and attacking the concept of a meritocracy destroys long-term shareholder value.

Glass Lewis and ISS asserted that their ESG investment strategies improve financial performance. But the numbers tell a different story. ESG funds have broadly underperformed the market for years, trailing the S&P 500, posting double-digit losses in 2022, and continuing to underperform through 2024.

While these advisors represented ESG as a sound, apolitical investment strategy, their motivations for recommending ESG to investors may have been to advance particular ideological views. Investors were trapped with few alternatives for services because Glass Lewis and ISS control a large portion of the market and have the power to negatively impact corporations' ratings if shareholders reject their advice or drop their services. These factors suggest very real anti-competitive and consumer protection infirmities.

**Attorney General James Uthmeier's Statewide Prosecutors Secure Guilty Conviction of Olympus Pools Owner for Defrauding Floridians**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier's Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a guilty conviction of the owner of Olympus Pools who defrauded Floridians. James Ivan Staten, Jr., owner and operator of Olympus Pools, stole more than \$1.5 million from Floridians and failed to complete customer pools. Staten was found guilty of 35 counts,

including aggravated white-collar crime, organized scheme to defraud, grand theft, and contractor fraud. Staten accepted large down payments and left many customers in Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Polk counties with no pools and destroyed yards.

"I'm proud to announce that Prosecutors Stephanie Bergen and Panagiota Papakos secured a guilty conviction for this fraudster who turned many Floridians' dreams of a backyard paradise into a nightmare, taking their money and digging holes to nowhere," said Attorney General James Uthmeier. "Little did this fraudster know, he'd be digging himself into a 20-year minimum prison sentence."

According to the law enforcement investigation, Staten preyed on numerous Florida property owners who contracted with Olympus Pools. Many customers would pay Staten upfront by personal check, credit card, cash, or through financing, expecting that Staten would build the pool in a reasonable timeframe. Instead, Staten stole the money, deposited the funds into Olympus Pools accounts, and transferred the money into a personal account to use for personal expenses.

After receiving a contract, Staten hired subcontractors to do the work for a customer and, in many cases, failed to pay the subcontractors. Staten's actions resulted in the subcontractors recording construction liens against the homeowners' properties.

The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and Pinellas County State Attorney's Office Division of Consumer Protection led the criminal investigation into Staten. The following law enforcement agencies also assisted in the investigation: Pasco County Sheriff's Office, Polk County Sheriff's Office, and Manatee County Sheriff's Office.

Previously, the Office of the Attorney General took civil action to shut down Olympus Pools, permanently shuttering the Tampa-based company. As a result of the civil action, the company is enjoined permanently from conducting business, and Staten is banned for life from operating a pool company in Florida.

Staten's sentencing is scheduled for May 7, and his conviction comes with a 20-year mandatory minimum prison sentence.

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FROM THE DESK OF

GOVERNOR DESANTIS



**Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Over \$389 Million to Protect the Quality and Supply of Florida's Water Resources**

PALM BAY, Fla. — Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced

more than \$389 million in grants to improve water quality and quantity across Florida. The funding includes \$189 million in Water Quality Improvement Grants and \$55 million in Alternative Water Supply Grants. Additionally, the Governor awarded \$100 million through the newly established Indian River Lagoon Protection Program, \$25 million through the Caloosahatchee Watershed Grant Program, and \$20 million through the Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvement Grant Program to further support targeted restoration efforts in these essential ecosystems.

"Florida's waterways are a vital part of our environment, economy, and way of life, and protecting these resources continues to be a top priority," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "These investments will help safeguard water quality statewide and accelerate restoration efforts in key ecosystems like the Indian River Lagoon, Caloosahatchee River and Estuary, and Biscayne Bay."

"Florida's support for water quality projects is making a real impact in reducing nutrient pollution and improving the health of our waterways," said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Alexis A. Lambert. "Governor DeSantis and the Legislature have made these investments a priority to provide needed resources for local leaders to take on infrastructure projects that will improve the environment for future generations."

DEP received an impressive response to this year's Water Quality Improvement Grant cycle, with 348 project submissions requesting more than \$2.2 billion in funding. After a comprehensive evaluation, 31 high-priority projects were selected to receive funding, reflecting the most impactful and cost-effective solutions to reduce nutrient pollution and enhance water quality. These projects support communities by providing enhancements to existing wastewater and stormwater treatment facilities and connecting septic systems to sewer, among other improvements. Collectively, these efforts are expected to remove more than 1.1 million pounds of total nitrogen and 286,000 pounds of total phosphorous annually.

In addition to broad statewide restoration efforts, the state is prioritizing immediate, targeted nutrient-reducing projects in priority ecosystems. Today, \$100 million is being awarded to support 25 priority water quality projects in the Indian River Lagoon, \$25 million is being awarded for four targeted water quality projects in the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary and \$20 million is being awarded for eight water quality projects in Biscayne Bay.

Under the DeSantis Administration, DEP has awarded nearly \$2.9 billion to 1,098 community projects to protect

Florida's water resources. These projects are expected to reduce total nitrogen by more than 4.6 million pounds and total phosphorus by more than 893,000 pounds per year. More than 250 projects have already been completed, with many more advancing as local governments strategically plan for future improvements with the state's ongoing funding support.

Alongside water quality improvements, \$55 million has been allocated to support 14 projects through the Alternative Water Supply Grant Program, with the goal of producing more than 40 million gallons of water per day within two years of becoming operational. These projects focus on expanding reclaimed water use, enhancing aquifer recharge, and promoting water conservation. Since 2019, the state has invested \$245 million to support the statewide development of alternative water supplies, supporting projects that will generate more than 225 million gallons per day of additional water to meet future needs.

To ensure continued progress, Governor DeSantis has included \$550 million in his budget proposal to protect Florida's water quality and \$60 million to further alternative water supplies.

A full list of these grant projects selected for Fiscal Year 2024-25 can be found at [ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/Grants](https://ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/Grants).

**Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Completion Of The Nasa Causeway Bridge Months Ahead Of Schedule**

*Florida is even more prepared for NASA to move its HQ to the Space Coast*

TITUSVILLE, Fla.—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced the early completion of the NASA Causeway Bridge in Brevard County, delivering the second of two bridges six months ahead of schedule. The new bridge will officially open to traffic as soon as Wednesday, March 19.

The new, taller, and wider bridges stretch 4,025 feet over the Indian River and, as fixed spans, eliminate the need for drawbridge openings. This upgrade also supports the increasing volume and size of payloads and space industry vehicles traveling through the region's growing high-tech aerospace corridor. With the opening of the new bridge, traffic will transition to its final configuration—westbound vehicles will utilize the newly completed bridge, while the existing bridge will be dedicated exclusively to eastbound traffic. This \$128 million project was made possible through a strong partnership between FDOT, NASA, and Space Florida.

"Cape Canaveral Spaceport broke records with 93 launches and 2.7 million pounds of space cargo last year—and we're expecting over 150 launches this year," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "Florida is committed to building the infrastructure the space industry needs to keep growing, and with these new bridges, Florida is more ready than ever to become home to NASA's new headquarters."

The first of the two bridges was completed 125 days ahead of schedule in 2023 and has already supported over 1,000 space industry transports. It has played a vital role in serving every launch partner at Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, including NASA and

the U.S. Department of Defense.

"The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) worked closely with our space industry partners and our local communities to meet their vision for the area and their transportation needs," said FDOT Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E. "This NASA Causeway Bridge project along with the Space Commerce Way widening project will support the growing workforce and evolving needs of this community and our state long into the future."

Additionally, in late 2024, FDOT completed the 2.7-mile widening of Space Commerce Way—from NASA Parkway West to Kennedy Parkway—expanding it from two to four lanes to better accommodate oversized loads traveling to and from Kennedy Space Center, Exploration Park, and the area's growing space industry hubs.

**Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Florida's Labor Force Surpasses 11.1 Million In January 2025**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.— Governor Ron DeSantis announced that Florida's labor force exceeded 11.1 million in January 2025, reinforcing the state's economic strength. Job growth continued across most major industries, including manufacturing, which reached 430,800 jobs.

Additionally, newly revised data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicates that Florida's labor force has been consistently larger than previously estimated, with an upward revision of 162,000 workers. The updated data shows that the state's labor force grew or remained stable in 10 of the past 12 months, underscoring Florida's sustained economic momentum.

"Florida continues to prove that leadership and conservative fiscal policies drive success," said Governor Ron DeSantis. "We will keep the momentum going by insisting on reducing government spending, continuing to eliminate bureaucracy, and finding more tax reductions for Floridians."

Florida added 113,600 jobs (+1.3%) over the year in January 2025. Since May 2020, employers across the state have expanded their workforce in 54 of the past 57 months. Florida's private sector job growth rate of 1.3% outpaced the national rate of 1.2% over the same period. Additionally, Florida's statewide unemployment rate has remained below the national average for 51 consecutive months since November 2020.

"Under Governor DeSantis' decisive leadership, Florida continues to generate wins," said Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly. "These revised numbers demonstrate Florida's unique resiliency and the strength and efficacy of Governor DeSantis' approach to economic and workforce development—creating an environment that promotes future growth and builds confidence in job seekers and job creators."

The education and health services sector gained the most jobs among all major industries, adding 7,200 jobs (+0.5%) from the previous month; followed by leisure and hospitality, adding 6,100 jobs (+0.5%).

Resources for Job Seekers:

- Florida's Labor Exchange Marketplace, [Employ Florida](#), connects job seekers to employment, training, and education and job creators to skilled talent.

[CareerSource Florida's](#)

- network of local career centers offers tailored career counseling, skills assessments, resume assistance, and job placement support.

[Apprentice Florida](#)

- is a partnership between the Florida Department of Education, Florida Commerce, and CareerSource Florida to expand apprenticeship programs across the state.

[Veterans Florida](#)

- works to help military veterans transition to civilian life, connecting them with employers who are eager to hire them for jobs that align with the skills they gained serving in the military.

- The [Military Family Employment Advocacy Program](#) delivers priority workforce services to active-duty military spouses and family members through Military Family Employment Advocates located in local career centers throughout Florida.

- The [Military Spousal License Reciprocity Matrix](#), a one-stop reference source for helping military spouses transfer, renew, or reissue professional licenses they need for work after relocating to Florida.

- The [Talent Pipeline Portal for Aerospace and Defense](#), a career advancement platform that connects job seekers and job creators within the aerospace and defense industry - propelling Florida forward.

Data in the month of January continues to indicate there are jobs available for every Floridian who wants to work, with more than 393,000 jobs posted online. Floridians in search of work and new job opportunities can utilize the CareerSource Florida network for help. Floridians can find guidance on how to register with Employ Florida and search listings of available local job openings. Career seekers also can improve their employability by perfecting resume writing and interviewing skills, establishing career goals, and pursuing customized career training. These services are provided at no cost to job seekers.

Visit [Florida Insight](#) for more information on the labor market and economic data.

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# Teens Reading

*Continued from page 11*

committed to integrating the science of reading principles into instruction. However, according to a recent survey from Lexia—a thought leader in literacy education—60% are dissatisfied and believe schools lack the professional development, age-appropriate reading materials, and data needed to impact adolescent literacy outcomes.

### What The Survey Showed

More than half of survey respondents report that teacher training, time, and staffing are top concerns. Fifty-seven percent of district leaders say they need more professional development in the science of reading for middle- and high-school teachers, and 57% need more time in their schedule to focus on literacy improvement because so many students are reading below or far below grade level. In addition, 55% report that attracting and

retaining literacy educators is one of their greatest challenges.

The school leaders also state that, based on feedback from teachers and students, several other aspects of their adolescent literacy programs need improvement as well. Thirty-six percent of respondents say they need better literacy teaching strategies, 33% need more age-appropriate materials for adolescent readers, and 32% need real-time data to improve their implementation plan.

The survey also reveals gaps in support for students with dyslexia and emergent bilinguals. More than half of respondents (57%) are not confident that intervention strategies are adequate for successful outcomes for adolescent readers, and 52% need more teachers on staff who can support secondary English language learners.

### An Answer

“The survey findings indicate that while a majority of leaders are committed to aligning literacy resources with the science

of reading, many districts need more support and guidance to translate these principles into effective classroom practices for adolescent students,” said Lexia President Nick Gaehde. “For the past 40 years we’ve been focused on transforming literacy education and delivering research-based solutions grounded in the science of reading. We combine high-quality teaching resources with professional learning that’s tailored to the specialized needs of middle and high school students, so districts can deliver programs that are more impactful and lead to stronger adolescent literacy outcomes.”

Gaehde continued, “With our comprehensive suite of professional learning curricula, solutions, and embedded assessment solutions, we continue to stand ready to help schools connect educator knowledge with practical classroom instruction to accelerate literacy gains so more learners can read, write and speak with confidence.”

### Learn More

For further data, to see the full survey or

for an infographic on the issue, parents and educators can visit [lexialearning.com](http://lexialearning.com).

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