



The Parade was an over whelming success. This picture is some go the Ocala Recreation and Parks crew that worked putting the Information fair on one of many you can find on Pages 6 & 7. **Photos by CK Johnson.**

I Ask AI

I Wonder Why? Let's ask AI?
 Why Do Troubled People Do Drastic Acts of Violence?
 By TomL

I believe most people who have troubled minds are mostly caused by actions of others close to them. If you pay attention you will see it displayed. I ask AI if troubled person could be hypnotized into preforming violent deeds? AI's answer was "not likely."

So the only other conclusion I can come to is "brain washing."? I ask AI Is it possible that a troubled person can be brain washed with Social Media? AI said yes it is possible to Brain wash a troubled person. Keep repeating a message over and over in front of the target person so maybe they will finally crack or believe you to the point of wanting to take action. Then they make a suggestion. So maybe they respond to you. The Brain washer responds you will would be famous if you did this or that deed. How

do we deal with this problem. We have to put regulation on social media! There is a legal battle going on right now.

Start by telling people with a troubled mind the opposite. Probably could be handled by their parents. They are not crazy, they are troubled. First give them help. Tell the people with this problem that there is evil works at hand and they are trying to convince them to do bad things! Encourage the troubled person to talk to someone they trust about their thoughts.

We have been ignoring the problem about mental instability for years, because we caused a lot of it. I knew guys and girls who come back from war with warp sense of reality. One guy ask me if I wanted to see a dead body? I hope you know I said NO! But as this guy goes on in life he will show those pictures and they could make someone deathly afraid of going into the Military. Suggest they seek help, make help more easily accessible.



Jackass says My name is Obstructionist
Elephants name is Uncle Sam I'm known for my memory, strength and Grit!
 The Asses name is Obstructionist.. He earn's his name every day. He is

stubborn and kicks out at everyone.! Why would any group in their right mind have a Jack Ass as the cymbal of their political part? They just recently really started earning the name even more. The Socialist Communist Democratic Party? Obstructionist (the Asses) job is to Shut down the Government, Shut



Wendy Netherclift, a long time employee of TomL publishing and Bob Irwin, Owner of Bobs Coins and Jewelry, after 14 years has finally made it official!
 A medieval wedding, complete with jousting, ax throwing, archery and ring toss was held on their 10 acre farm February 28, 2026.
 The "King And Queen" Out riders were none other than Kailah and Skyler

Netherclift. Wendy's children of whom both also worked for TomL Publishing for a number of years.
 It was an amazing fun filled event for all that attended and will be remembered for many as a "first time I've EVER been to a wedding like that!!"
 Bob and Wendy thoroughly enjoyed a cruise to 9 different Caribbean islands on their honeymoon.

down Fema, shut down ICE, shut down the transportation (Airport) Shut down Home Land Security. The airports are still flying but at a snails pace and most are working free. Giving the taxpayer money to the illegals thru welfare and legal Americans can get it. Try to spread propaganda about our leaders in hopes they can win the

election.
 Obstruct the Republican Party and President Trump. They act like the evil dictators do. They let all those millions of criminals come into out country in an effort to make them voters. They are not United States Citizens. They cannot vote! When

CEP CHAMBER NEWS

By Matt McCormick

If you ask ten people what drives Ocala's economy, you'll probably get ten different answers: horses, healthcare, logistics, manufacturing, small businesses, tourism, construction, or the arts and culture. And the truth is that every one of those answers is right. But beneath the industries, the headlines, and the economic data, there's something even more powerful at work.

People.

Ocala's economy isn't driven by a single sector or a single success story. It's driven by the entrepreneurs who take risks, the employers who invest here, the educators who prepare our workforce, and the leaders who choose collaboration over competition. It's driven by the belief that this region's best days aren't behind us—they're being built right now.

Yes, we are proud of our roots. Our equine industry is world-renowned and continues to anchor our global reputation. Our healthcare and manufacturing sectors are growing, creating new career pathways and strengthening our regional resilience. Our logistics advantages, central location, and quality of life make us increasingly attractive to companies looking to expand or relocate.

But what truly sets Ocala apart is not just what we do. It's how we do it together.

At the CEP, we see every day how progress really happens. When businesses partner with schools and colleges to shape a workforce that's ready for what's next, not just what's now. When

local governments, nonprofits, and private-sector leaders align around a shared vision. When innovation meets opportunity. And when growth is guided by intention, not accident.

Economic development isn't just about recruiting companies or cutting ribbons. It's about building an ecosystem where small businesses can scale, where talent can stay and grow, and where employers can find the people they need to succeed. It's about investing in infrastructure, embracing innovation, and making sure our policies and priorities keep pace with a changing economy.

Most importantly, it's about ensuring that opportunity reaches every corner of our community.

A strong economy is also a resilient one. That means diversification, long-term thinking, and a willingness to adapt. It means preparing for the

jobs of tomorrow while supporting the businesses that are here today. And it means remembering that behind every data point is a person, a family, and a future.

So what drives Ocala's economy?

Ambition. Collaboration. Resilience. And a community that believes in investing in itself.

The future of Ocala isn't something that just happens to us. It's something we're building together.

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FROM THE DESK OF
CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK



\$3.1 Billion in Agricultural Losses Devastate Crops Across the State after Historic Freeze

WASHINGTON, D.C. —

Congresswoman Kat Cammack (R-FL-03) joined U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins today at the U.S. Department of Agriculture headquarters as the Secretary signed a disaster declaration for Florida counties impacted by this year's historic winter freeze, beginning the federal process to

deliver relief to farmers suffering catastrophic losses.

The declaration comes after a bipartisan letter led by Rep. Cammack and signed by all 29 members of Florida's congressional delegation urging USDA to act quickly after freezing temperatures struck the state during peak harvest in late January and early February.

Several members of the Florida delegation attended the announcement, including

Reps. Scott Franklin, Byron Donalds, Neal Dunn, Randy Fine, Greg Steube, and Dan Webster, who each outlined the damage farmers in their districts are facing not only

from the historic freeze but also from storms and drought conditions that have compounded challenges for Florida agriculture.

"On behalf of all of us, I can say it's incredibly refreshing to have a Secretary of Agriculture who is not only willing to listen, but willing to act," said Cammack. "Every single one of us in Florida has a district that's been affected by this freeze, which is why today's declaration is so important."

Preliminary estimates from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services place total agricultural losses at more than \$3.1 billion statewide, making it one of the most damaging freeze events in Florida agriculture in decades. The freeze hit a wide range of crops, including \$1.15 billion in sugarcane losses, \$674 million in citrus, \$307 million in strawberries, \$255 million in sweet corn, and \$240 million in

greenhouse and nursery crops.

Cammack thanked Secretary Rollins for moving quickly on the disaster declaration and recognized the leadership of Florida Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson, along with the rapid work of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and Florida producers who quickly conducted economic damage assessments that helped federal officials understand the scale of the disaster.

"Florida is one of the most diverse agricultural states in the country, with more than 300 commodities, massive cow-calf operations, aquaculture, and more," Cammack said. "When I was traveling across the state meeting with producers ahead of the Farm Bill, the freeze had just happened, and the devastation was already clear."

"This freeze didn't just damage one crop or one season," Cammack continued. "We are seeing total losses in some areas, including sugar and blueberries, and for crops like citrus and blueberries those trees and bushes won't be productive for three or four years. That means farmers could be facing years of impacts and full replacement of their operations."

The disaster declaration begins the federal process that will make relief programs available to impacted agricultural producers as they work to recover from the devastating freeze.

Rep. Kat Cammack Praises Death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, "Operation Epic Fury" resulted in Khamenei's death. Tonight, I am thinking of all my fellow Americans who had a loved one injured or killed due to his diabolical terror spree. Khamenei was a terrorist and a scumbag. He can rot in hell for all the terror he inflicted around the world.

The situation in Iran and across the Middle East is evolving by the moment, and I am monitoring it closely. I look forward to a briefing from the Administration as soon as possible. As an America First constitutional conservative, avoiding the prolonged wars and conflicts that my generation experienced firsthand, many on the battlefield, is critical. I am hopeful today's actions will prevent further necessary engagement and put direct threats to the United States to rest. God bless our troops.

Standing in the Arena

Research on Standing in the Arena

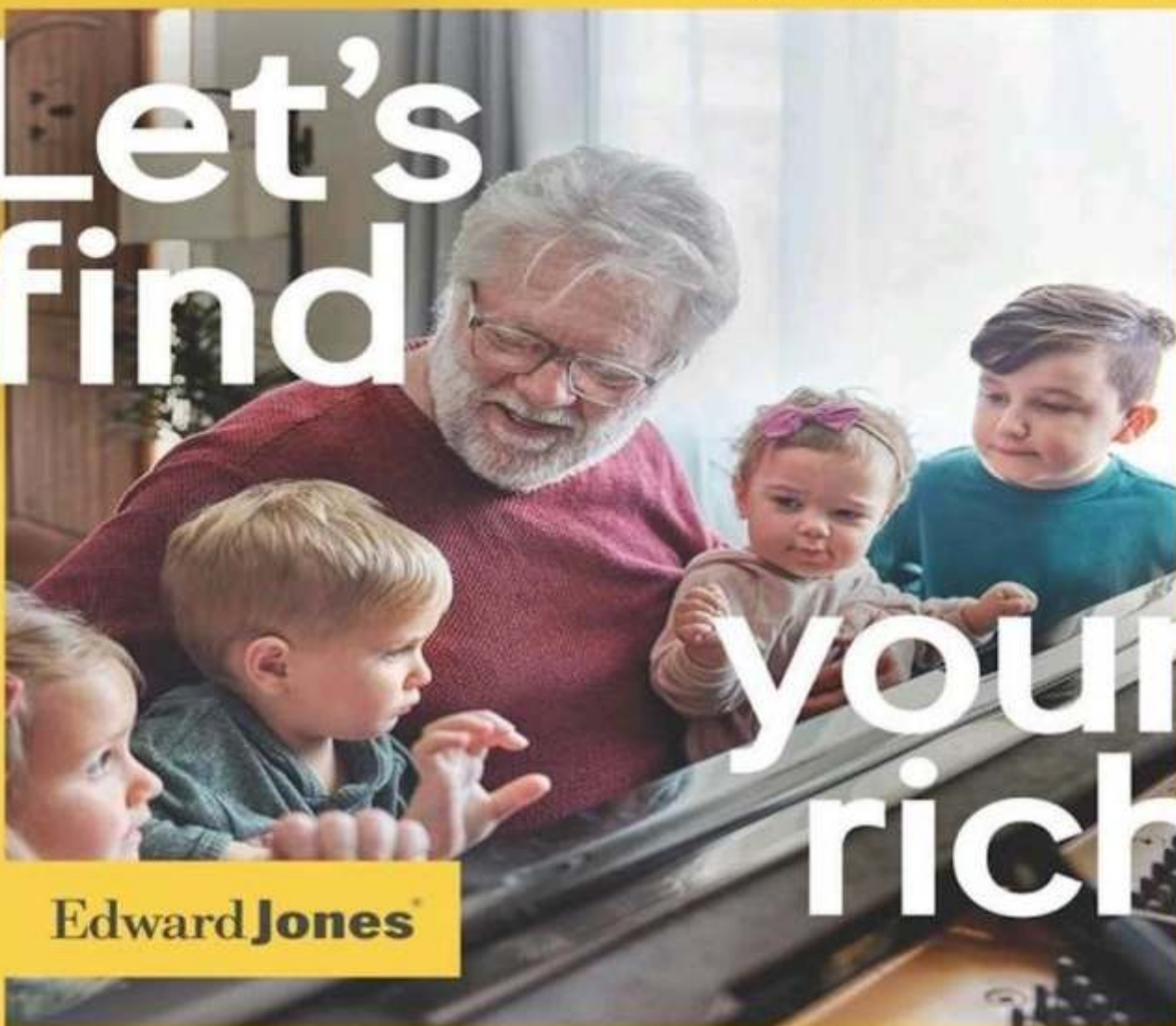
Are you standing in the arena? Are you watching from the sidelines giving your opinion? Are you a doer or a doubter?

The Actors and the talk show host are entertainer's trying to tell the working people who you should vote for, they should be entertaining you but they cross the line when they tell you their real life opinion, they are make believers! Remember they are entertaining you with make believe stories but yet they are voicing their opinion from from a news room making up stories. Headline hunter giving their opinion about Trump from a make believe world and if they say they back him they are black listed in their make believe world. I like to believe I'm standing in the arena and I am giving you a chance to voice your opinion in our

Continued page 8

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Tom Loury 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. If you want to make contact with the newspaper / Tom Loury email TLoury@att.net

PUBLISHER'S NOTES



By TomL

Who is Zohran Mandami? The New York Times says. He is the New York City mayor sworn into office in January 2026, was born in Kampala, Uganda, in 1991 to Indian parents. He is of Indian descent, spent part of his childhood in South Africa, moved to New York City at age 7, and became a U.S. citizen in 2018 while retaining Ugandan citizenship.

- **Birthplace:** Kampala, Uganda.
- **Parents:** He is the son of acclaimed filmmaker Mira Nair and academic Mahmood Mamdani.
- **Background:** He moved to South Africa at age 5 and later to New York City at age 7.

Identity: He is the first African-born, South Asian, and Muslim mayor of New York.

Mamdani is a dual citizen of the United States and Uganda. Weeks after he was sworn in he is raising taxes on the middle class which he swore he would not do! The wealthy decided not to stay and be taxed to death so they left and went to another state. I say Bernie Sanders should have been smarter than this. He had to know Mandami was going to have to raise taxes. Sanders is a failed "want to be" Presidential candidate that has been misused by the Democratic Party for years. They are renaming the Democratic Party the Democratic Socialist Party of America. The democrats has lost their party and the socialist Communist have invaded it! According to Google search I ask?

Is Mandami aloud to lie? In Islam, lying is generally considered a grave sin, but it is permitted in three specific, limited

circumstances to prevent greater harm or achieve reconciliation. These exceptions include reconciling broken relationships, situations of war (to protect life), and to ease tensions between spouses. It is not a general license to deceive.

Come on lying is lying so and should not be aloud during a campaign, he has deceived the voters of New York. He should be impeached!

LATE BREAKING: News reports that there was an attempt to set off two bombs in front of Mamdani resident. The NYPD caught both bombers and after there was no thank you??? I think he wants to defund the police or reduce their numbers. There was a video of the Chief of police leaping over a barricade to catch one of the bad guys.

I believe that all Government Political Officials must be born in the USA! Of course he is not Government ...YET! What say you? tloury@att.net

Who is the enemy? What do they want us to do?

Let's go back to the beginning. The first thing the enemy does is spread propaganda to the uneducated about we are living on stolen land. So how do we fix this? Give it back? Not going to happen, the Indians

were nomads. They got to America by following the weather and following the animal migrations. They needed warmth and food. They did not build a house because they knew they would be leaving with the weather change and the animal migration. So did they own land they were visiting every year or so? NOT HARDLY! When the west was settled there was not a real standard for the Indians because they were at war with the white man. That

Continued page 8

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Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown

Noon, April 24th

Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator

12am, April 29th

Seniors Voice of Ocala/Ocala Downtown Products of TomL Publishing, LLC

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Jackass & Elephant

Continued from page 1

people any people come across our border without permission they come under a criminal act of illegal entry! A warrant should be sworn out right away and pick them up and charge them and deport them. When they are arrested that makes them ineligible to enter this country ever again. They have not constructed anything in years without abusing then tax payers. They are abusing Americans by allowing our money to be stolen and given to the enemy! The Tax payers are eating peanut butter and jelly while they criminal's are living a life of luxury with our tax money.

Now I can understand the Elephant's name Uncle Sam who has an Grit, excellent memory and is very strong and can carry loads that no one else can carry. He can stomp on his enemies and move on to the next project. Elephants protect their young with violent behavior. They are super intelligent and can plan his next move. The herd, when threaten move together to fight or protect young and the herd. The animal is a good choice for the Republican Party.

Every President that I can remember for 47 years has been afraid of Iran and their promise to blow them up. For all those 47 years they have been saying Death to the USA and death to Israel. They have even killed some of our people. Still no reprocusion's. Now it's death to Trump and death to Netanyahu. Who in their right mind says that. Now bragging about having contract out to kill our leaders they are all of their leaders are dead. There is no one left to talk peace with. The people of Iran need to take over and form their own new government, start by talking peace and unity. They need to rebuild their country, organize the pumping of oil and protect their right to have it. Use some of the money to make their economy better for the people. I keep hearing they have an underground city. FLOOD IT WITH SALT WATER OR OIL! Put a hundred huge water pumps in place and get er done. Blow up the desalination plants they have no fresh water to drink. It would not cost anything for ammunition. Put bombers in the sky and every time you see bubbles drop a bomb.

The World is in pause! What is next?

Senior Fishing Derby

Tuscawilla Park | 800 NE Sanchez Ave.

Hook up with us for a day of fishing fun at the Annual Senior Fishing Derby at Lake Tuscawilla. This "catch and release" event is free for those 50 years and older. We will provide lunch, prizes, bait and limited tackle.

Registration Required

Monday | April 27
9 a.m. - Noon

PARADE OF >>>> >>>> SENIOR SERVICES

Friday | March 20
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

College of Central Florida
3003 SW College Road

Free Event

Join us for the annual Parade of Senior Services Wellness Fair at the College of Central Florida. Over 45 agencies will provide literature and answer questions on various topics, including recreation, government services, healthcare and social services.



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Parade Of Senior Services

The Parade of Senior Services was an over-whelming success. Hundreds of seniors attended. The annual information fair hosted by Ocala Recreation and Parks, was held March 20th for adults aged 50+. It connects local seniors with over 45+ agencies offering health, social, and support

services, featuring vendors, refreshments and resources. There were free gifts from 49 vendors with information to take home with you. You learn something new every year. One of the things Ocala Recreation and Parks offer is line dancing, Chair exercises

they were on display and entertaining. Keep an eye on this digital paper for the date next March. NEXTEVENT!

Senior Fishing Derby Monday 9 AM till noon April 27, 2026 Senior Fishing Derby at Tusawilla Park. Catch and release for those who are 50 years and older. For those that are

registered Lunch will one provided, prizes, bait and limited tackle. Look for the ad in this paper. Pictures will April in this paper next month.

(Photos by CK Johnson)



Parade Of Senior Services

Photos by CK Johnson



College of Central Florida

3003 SW College Road

Join us for the annual Parade of Senior Services Wellness Informational Fair. Over 45 agencies have partnered to provide literature and answer your questions, including: recreation, city, county, state and federal government services, health care, social services and much more!

Standing

Continued from page 3

newspaper without your name on it. In your letter don't call people or organizations names state your opinion with facts to my email and and I will protect your name and email from anyone trying to find out whose opinion I printed and sent to our readers. I have been bless by some very influential good writers. I honor them with all my heart. I honor them and pray they have a special place in heaven. Writing the true is not

always easy, facing someone who does not agree is not easy!

Stand in the Arena with Trump, "He is our B\ridge over Troubled Waters" Remember that song this is true life. Don't back someone who is spewing hate and lies. You can't build a life on hate or lies Look what is happening in New York with Mandani . Weeks after he is sworn in the has broken one of the biggest promises of all time. He swore he was not taxing the middle class. I guess the New Yorkers are very gullible or uneducated, I did not want to use the words

Stupid. It is the very heart of corrupt politics.

At 14 years old I was an junior orator in the optimist club and won a seat on the Oratory team and went to Cuba in 1956. My speech subject was "Freedom our most precious Heritage. Battista was there and shook my hand. Just before Castro took over. There was machine gun nest set up in the door ways of all the municipal buildings.

In 1910 Roosevelt said this in his famous "Man in the Arena" speech, officially titled "Citizenship in a Republic," delivered at the Sorbonne in Paris. The quote

emphasizes that credit belongs to those who actively strive and dare greatly, rather than critics on the sidelines. "It's not critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better."

Remember this...Only God can take your breath away. Your body will continue to do its thing until it can't, so let your body continue to do its thing, until then ... "DO YOUR THING!"

"STAND IN THE ARENA WITH US!" What is your opinion? tloury@att.net

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Publisher's

Continued from page 4

brings us to the name Braves, they need to show their might. There were a lot of white settlers that were not nice but they were promised a piece of the west and some were wiped out, killed, women taken. Real war!

This brings us to now. Our enemies convince the uneducated masses that we stole this land and that they should fight the government. Our government has Laws in order for the government to keep order.

One off our worst enemies is Bernie Sanders, a communist that has been abused by the Republican Party. Each Election cycle Bernie wanted to run for president under the Democratic Party. Each time he was used and undermined by the list Clinton / Obama / Biden. Now he is getting revenge, he could step out and run for president the next round.

The Republicans are the party of Common sense. They know our voting laws and the history. The Democrats have lost their identity now they claim Democratic Socialist. They let millions of foreigners come across our border not knowing their back ground. They were going to make them voters. Our laws say no! They must be registered US Citizens. That is where we are at right now. What say you? tloury@att.net



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As this situation is constantly changing, we ask that you continue to visit our Shelter using the safety guidelines in place.

How can you help?

Pet Food Bank: Help stock our Pet Food Bank with pet food and supplies for people who cannot afford them due to job loss or other reasons. You can also bring donations to our Shelter daily from 10-6. Masks required please! If you need help keeping your pet with you during this time, our Happy Paws food program is here for you.

Volunteer: A small number of volunteers have returned to help in various departments. We are accepting volunteer applications but do not yet know when we will schedule orientations for new volunteers. Please contact us for more information about volunteering. We are currently working on a digital orientation.

Opt to adopt: According to the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, there is no evidence that companion animals such as cats and dogs can spread the virus that causes COVID-19.

Donate: We know there is a lot of uncertainty right now but homeless and unwanted animals still need us. Donate to help the Humane Society of Marion County so we continue our lifesaving work and make them feel safe and loved.



Bilbie

Bilbie is a 14 weeks old male brought to the HSMC with her brother Wombat! We believe they could be Xolaitzcuinli, or Xolo, which is Mexican hairless dog breed.



Fuchala is a 15 week old paralyzed kitten full of love.



Ninja is paralyzed in his hind legs but enjoys runs with his wheels.

Your donations make it possible to provide medical care, food and shelter to animals in need. On behalf of all the animals, thank you for caring.



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Mail check or complete the credit/debit card payment form.



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Donations to the Humane Society are tax-deductible. Check with your accountant for more information. No goods or services have been provided to the donor as a result of this gift.

FROM THE DESK OF ATTORNEY GENERAL UTHMEIER



Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Seizure of Over 500 Gambling Machines in Large-Scale, Multi-County Illegal Gaming Crackdown

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier

announced the results of a two-day sting operation targeting illegal gaming operations. The operation spanned Volusia, Brevard, Duval, and Flagler counties, resulting in the seizure of 525 illegal machines and \$190,000 in illicit proceeds across 39 locations, according to preliminary operation results.

“Unlawful gambling operations often play a role as the financial backing behind criminal networks,” said Attorney General James Uthmeier. “These illegal casinos fuel organized crime, prostitution, and other illicit activities. Florida will see a major statewide crackdown on illegal gaming in 2026. If you're running an illegal operation, don't roll the dice; shut it down now.”

“The partnerships we have with the Attorney General, Florida Gaming Control Commission and surrounding law enforcement agencies are what give us great results,” said Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey. “They help us keep our crime down in our communities and keep our citizens safe, because we don't turn a blind eye to any crime!”

“These unregulated machines rarely pay out because they are set for the house to

win,” said Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly. “Illegal gambling is not a victimless crime. Often, it fuels other crime and preys on residents who are often elderly and on a limited income in the hopes of a big win.”

“This successful operation sends a clear message that organized criminal activity has no place in Florida,” said Jacksonville Sheriff T.K. Waters. “I'm grateful for the strong partnership between our agency, the Attorney General's Office, and our regional law enforcement partners because by working together, we've made Duval County and the State of Florida a safer place.”

“The operators and slumlord property owners who prop up these unregulated, illegal casinos are ripping off our residents and costing them their savings,” said Volusia County Sheriff Michael Chitwood. “These casinos are connected to money laundering, drug smuggling and human trafficking. We will keep taking them down with our partners like the Attorney General and the Gaming Control Commission, but we really need further action from the Legislature to address this problem statewide.”

“The Florida Gaming Control Commission (FGCC) is thankful to Governor Ron DeSantis, Attorney General James Uthmeier, the Florida Legislature, and our law enforcement partners for these outstanding results,” said Florida Gaming Control Commission Chair Julie Brown. “Thank you for this wonderful teamwork. These actions are protecting Floridians from predators who mislead unsuspecting citizens. True collaboration is key to a significant outcome such as today.”

This was a joint operation by the Gaming Control Commission, the Office of Statewide Prosecution, Volusia County Sheriff's Office, Flagler County Sheriff's Office, Brevard County Sheriff's Office, and Jacksonville Sheriff's Office.

Machines were seized from restaurants, bars, gas stations, sham arcades, and standalone illegal casinos—some unmarked and some masquerading as other businesses such as nail salons and beauty supply stores. Law enforcement seizures included stand-up slot machines, PC slot machines, tabletop machines, coin-push machines, and fish table machines.

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces One Hundred Criminal Charges for Predator Arrested in Seminole County

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced the arrest of Blake McKinniss, 37, of Sanford. McKinniss faces 53 Counts of possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), 46 counts of possessing AI-generated CSAM, and one count of possessing a child-like sex doll. During a search of his house, law enforcement found a bedroom decorated for a little girl, even though no children lived there.

“Law enforcement and prosecutors walked into a house of horrors upon executing this search warrant,” said Attorney General James Uthmeier. “This guy could spend the rest of his life in prison, and I'm grateful our team worked to ensure he never has access to our kids. I also thank Representative Plakon for supporting legislation to keep convicted predators away from children.”

“I am honored to work alongside my fellow legislators to protect Florida's

children from those who exploit them through harmful materials,” said Representative Rachel Plakon. “I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Attorney General and our dedicated law enforcement agencies for their relentless efforts in enforcing these critical laws.”

“FDLE remains steadfast in our mission to protect our most vulnerable from those who seek to harm them,” said FDLE Special Agent in Charge Felipe Williams. “Our agents and law enforcement partners work every day to identify and remove dangerous predators from our communities. We have kept our word: if you think you can prey on our children, you are wrong. We will continue working with our partners and with Attorney General Uthmeier's team to ensure offenders are found and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

The investigation began January 27, 2026, when the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) received a cyber tip from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The tip reported a user prompting the creation of CSAM using AI. The IP address led to McKinniss.

On March 9, 2026, FDLE executed a search warrant at the defendant's residence, where investigators located numerous files depicting CSAM on electronic devices belonging to McKinniss. Additionally, investigators found that McKinniss had children's bedrooms decorated, despite not being a parent. In these bedrooms, law enforcement found massive amounts of sexual paraphernalia, including child-like sex dolls, as well as children's toys and clothing.

McKinniss is currently held in the Seminole County Jail on \$350,000 bond. If convicted, he faces up to 1,026 years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

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FROM THE DESK OF

GOVERNOR DESANTIS



Governor Ron DeSantis Awards More Than \$13 Million for Infrastructure Development Through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund

PANAMA CITY, Fla.— Today, Governor Ron DeSantis awarded more than \$13 million to the Panama City – Bay County Airport and Industrial District, the City of Port St. Joe and the Gulf County Board of County Commissioners through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund—supporting workforce and infrastructure needs for aerospace and aviation, and maritime industries.

“Today, I announced the latest round of Job Growth Grant Fund awards to support critical infrastructure and workforce housing in the Panhandle. These projects will create hundreds of good jobs and attract investments to help Panama City, Port St. Joe, and Gulf County prosper,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “Since 2019, the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund has facilitated the creation of more than 42,000 new jobs and 32,000 workforce education opportunities throughout our state. Thanks to strategic investments like these, Florida is now the number one state in the nation for workforce education—five years ahead of the goal we had set in 2019.”

“These investments are a direct reflection of Governor DeSantis' commitment to strengthening Florida's communities through critical infrastructure improvements that fuel economic opportunity,” said **Florida Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly**. “These investments will put Bay County, Gulf County and the City of Port St. Joe in a better

position to attract new job creators to the area while also supporting job seekers in Florida's great northwest.”

The Panama City – Bay County Airport and Industrial District will receive:

- **\$5 million** — to construct an aircraft engine repair station and an engine testing facility at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport. The new 160,000 square foot facility will include a 120,000 square foot engine repair space and the remaining facility space will house the testing operations and is projected to create up to 400 new technician jobs in Bay County.

The City of Port St. Joe will receive:

- **\$2,250,709** — to fund a two-phase road project that will allow the construction of 177 workforce homes. The project includes resurfacing an already existing road along with constructing a new 1,380 linear foot connector road and hardening the utilities underground to protect against potential hurricane winds. This project is projected to bring in 190 jobs to the community.

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners will receive:

- **\$6 million** — to support the construction of a self-docking float dry dock at shipyard through a set of Mooring Dolphins. Currently, the shipyard has 125 jobs at Eastern Shipbuilding that will be retained and the project will create an additional 337 jobs.

Since 2019, the Florida Job Growth Grant

Fund has awarded more than \$318 million and created more than 42,000 new jobs and more than 32,000 new workforce education opportunities. The Florida Job Growth Grant Fund is an economic development program designed to promote public infrastructure and workforce training across the state. Proposals are reviewed by FloridaCommerce and are chosen by Governor DeSantis to meet the demands for workforce training or infrastructure needs in Florida communities.

MILESTONE: More Than 10,000 Bonuses of \$5,000 Awarded to New Law Enforcement Recruits

NAPLES, Fla.— Governor Ron DeSantis announced that Florida has reached the milestone of more than 10,000 bonuses awarded through the Florida Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Program. Launched in 2022, this first-of-its-kind initiative underscores Florida's commitment to supporting Florida law enforcement officers. The latest round of bonuses—totaling more than \$5 million—went to 744 officers across the state.

“Today in Naples, I was proud to announce a milestone for Florida's Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Program: More than 10,000 bonus payments of \$5,000 after-tax have now been distributed to law enforcement personnel across our state,” said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. “Many of these new recruits have relocated to Florida from states where law enforcement has been defunded or demoralized by radical political agendas. We're fortunate to have them here, and Floridians are grateful for their service every day.”

“This milestone of more than 10,000 recruitment bonuses is a tremendous achievement for our state and the dedicated men and women who choose to protect our communities,” said **Secretary of**

Commerce J. Alex Kelly. “Thanks to Governor DeSantis' leadership, these bonuses not only help our new officers and their families get settled, but they also strengthen our neighborhoods, improve public safety and support the long-term well-being of communities throughout Florida.”

The program provides a one-time \$5,000 bonus—after taxes—to newly relocated and employed officers as a show of appreciation and incentive for choosing to serve in Florida. Each of the more than 10,000 newly recruited officers has received a \$5,000 bonus after taxes, with the program distributing more than \$67.9 million to date.

The bonuses are part of a broader initiative to solidify Florida's position as the Nation's law-and-order state. Under the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget, [the Governor secured \\$49 million in pay increases](#) for more than 16,200 state sworn law enforcement officers, raised the minimum base pay to \$60,000, and provided significant raises for both entry-level and veteran officers—10% and 15% increases, respectively. The state has also expanded wellness resources, enhanced penalties for crimes against officers, introduced law enforcement education programs in high schools, and launched the Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to cover training costs for new recruits.

In addition to a \$5,000 recruitment bonus, benefits of becoming a Florida law enforcement officer include financial stability, upward mobility, excellent health and retirement benefits, student loan forgiveness programs, home loan programs, and more.

For more information about the Florida Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Payment, visit FloridaJobs.org/Recognition-and-Recruitment.

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