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"Your community newspaper since 1981"

Volume 45 Issue 9 September 2026

FREE



GWC Medical Group opened a new facility at 414 Hwy 466, Lady Lake. Stop by and see this amazing place. Welcome to North Lake Area Chamber!



The Lady Lake Police Department welcomed residents to its first National Night Out on Tuesday evening, bringing neighbors and officers together at three neighborhood locations throughout town. National Night Out is an annual nationwide campaign that promotes crime prevention awareness and strengthens partnerships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. See more page two.

WEC Webber Suit Online Info

by TomL
Information off the web

On April 17th, Charlotte Weber filed a Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief and a Petition for Writ of Certiorari against Golden Ocala and Marion County over the approvals for the Sports Complex. Also on April 17th, Ms. Weber filed a Petition for a Formal Administrative Hearing against Marion County.

As noted in the complaints, the Marion County Commission voted to approve several land development applications submitted by Golden Ocala at a Board hearing on March 18, 2026, authorizing the development of a 250-acre sports and entertainment facility on property adjacent to Ms. Weber's iconic 4,300-acre horse farm, Live Oak Stud.

One of the key points made is the 2016 agreement to limit the use of the property, proposed for the Sports Complex, to low-density residential.

The complaint states: The land development approvals are legally invalid and were unlawfully approved for numerous reasons:

Golden Ocala violated a 2016 agreement with Plaintiff (Charlotte Weber) in which Golden Ocala agreed to limit the use the same property to large-lot residential Equestrian Estates;

So Weber agreed to allow the land use next to at the request of Golden Ocala and the land use where Marion County had to rule. So now they are not putting in large lot equestrian lot Estates but Weber charges a Sports complex. So Weber is suing Marion County, Golden Hills and WEC! What a confusing mess. If Marion County allow for the land use change they are guilty like they have been so many other times. THANK YOU Charlotte Weber for putting the Marion County in their place. Remember WEC is a big money driver but so is Live Oak Stud farm. Who is at fault I do not know that is for the law to decide.

In another project Marion County said they would not approve the gas line that went through my land. Swore up and down they were on the land owners side. Based on that I threw the gas line people off my property.

Next thing I was in court fighting the gas line by myself, the county was no where in sight. There were many people lied to so, don't feel alone. We got paid but I did not want a gas line running through my farm. I went to town meeting and called them liars to their face.

Dunnellon town fathers also said no way will they let them go through, they did,. A lot of bluster but they did not saddle up!. When there was a meeting at the high school and they heard my name coming in the door they ask to talk to me outside, I did not get loud or excited I just said no.

Inside my lawyer showed up and the project manager that I threw off my property come up to me with a smirk on his face and said well are you going to agree to let me on your property now, I turn to my attorney and said what do you think. She was raise on a farm and wanted to put them in their place, she said you will make an appointment with Mr Loury and then you can meet with if he is available.

I am living with people coming on to my land because there is a gate at every land owner fence line and is the same gate code across several states. Last month had a dozen cows out. Someone or something left the gate open! Now we receive a letter saying they may want to run something along the Gas Line. That is not theirs to decide, here we go with another legal battle!

THANK YOU MARION COUNTY!

Freedom Is Our Most Precious Heritage!



By TomL

GOD
FAMILY
COUNTRY
FREEDOM

What word should be first? I think freedom.

FREEDOM to praise your GOD!

FREEDOM to raise a FAMILY!

FREEDOM to live and defend your COUNTRY!

FREEDOM to achieve higher education FREEDOM!

FREEDOM to move or travel anywhere in our country!

FREEDOM to choose and pursue a career of your choice!

FREEDOM to speak and debate about our FREEDOM!

If you are in a leadership position you must be American!

"FREEDOM is our most precious heritage FREEDOM"

Freedom is not cheap.

You must risk everything at some point in your life to be free.

Socialism does not work, but they make it sound easy. It is easy until the people that risk everything to make a way in this free country only to have some New York mayor take it away. Some people who live in New York will give it all to live there! Some will take it all until the wealth runs out and then move some where else to take all from others! GET A JOB AND EARN YOUR OWN WEALTH!

Every person that runs for political office should have to take an oath to our country and its constitution…

OR GET OUT!



Town News Lake County Events



Lady Lake Library Donates School Supplies to Local Students Through Annual Fine Forgiveness Program

The Lady Lake Library's annual School Supplies for Fines initiative helped support local students while giving library patrons an opportunity to clear overdue fines through community giving.

This year, the library collected 20 backpacks, 15 binders, five prepackaged school supply kits, 50 folders, 50 notebooks, packs of glue, crayons and markers, paper, disinfecting wipes, and many other classroom essentials for students at The Villages Elementary of Lady Lake. In total, the library forgave nearly $750 in overdue fines as part of the program.

"We're incredibly grateful for the generosity of our community," said Library Director Aly Herman. "Every donation helps ensure local students have the supplies they need to start the school year prepared, while also helping library patrons return to using our services."

The annual initiative encourages community support for local schools while reducing barriers to library access by allowing patrons to donate new school supplies in place of paying eligible overdue fines.

Pictured left to right: Kourtney Fehr, Youth Library Assistant, Mary Shaner, Bookkeeper for The Villages Elementary of Lady Lake, and Aly Herman, Library Director.

LLPD Host Night Out







Residents at The Quarters Apartments, The Cove at Lady Lake, and the Skyline neighborhood enjoyed complimentary hamburgers and hot dogs while meeting officers, asking questions, and watching K-9 and drone demonstrations. The event offered a relaxed setting for community members to build relationships with local law enforcement and learn more about the department's role in keeping Lady Lake safe.

"This year's neighborhood block party format gave us the opportunity to focus on building relationships, learn what worked well, and create a strong foundation for the future," said Police Chief Steve Hunt. "Based on the incredible response from our community, we're excited to build on this success and make next year's National Night Out even bigger and better."

Town Awarded $1M Water Reclamation

Town receives $1M for water reclamation project.

The Town of Lady Lake has been awarded a $1 million State of Florida appropriation to support the next phase of improvements to the Town's Water Reclamation Facility.

The state funding, secured with the support of State Rep. Nan Cobb and State Sen. Keith Truenow, will help advance Phase III of the Water Reclamation Facility expansion, a critical infrastructure project designed to accommodate Lady Lake's growth while protecting the region's water resources. Rep. Nann Cobb presented the check to Mayor Ed Freeman and Public Works Director C.T. Eagle during Monday's Town Commission meeting.

Phase III of the project calls for expanding the facility's treatment capacity to 3 million gallons per day, implementing advanced wastewater treatment and increasing the Town's reclaimed water capabilities. The improvements are intended to address capacity constraints, enhance nutrient removal and support compliance with the Silver Springs and Upper Ocklawaha Basin Management Action Plans.

The funding will support engineering design and permitting for the expansion, including engineering drawings, technical specifications and permit applications needed to prepare the project for construction.

Once completed, the expansion will provide additional wastewater treatment capacity for existing customers as well as future residential and commercial development. The project is expected to serve Lady Lake's existing and incoming residents while also benefiting surrounding communities through improved protection of groundwater, springs and surface waters.

"We are extremely grateful to Rep. Cobb, Sen. Truenow, and our state partners for recognizing the importance of investing in the infrastructure that supports Lady Lake's future," said Town Manager Bill Lawrence. "This funding allows us to continue planning responsibly for the growth we know is coming."

The project is currently in the planning phase. The funding request identifies an anticipated construction start of July 2027, with completion estimated for late 2029. Ongoing operation and maintenance will be supported through the Town's Wastewater Utility Enterprise Fund.

Operation Southern Slow Down

Lady Lake Police Department reports results of Operation Southern Slow Down

LADY LAKE - The Lady Lake Police Department conducted 164 traffic stops as part of the 2026 Operation Southern Slow Down campaign, a regional traffic safety initiative aimed at reducing speed-related crashes and fatalities through increased enforcement and public education.

The enforcement campaign ran July 13-18. During that period, Lady Lake officers reported:

- 164 total traffic stops
- 10 citations issued
- 154 warnings issued
- 3 arrests for operating while license suspended

Operation Southern Slow Down is an annual traffic safety campaign conducted in partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida Highway Patrol, local law

Continued page 3

Orange Blossom Gardens



The Lady Lake Police Department thanked the Orange Blossom Gardens/Lady Lake Lions Club for sponsoring the event and helping make it possible. The department also recognized the Town of Lady Lake Public Works team for its support in working the event.

Beef Shortage

Tyson's beef unit swung to a quarterly operating loss and reported volumes down while prices rose, a classic sign of tight input supply. Executives told investors the beef segment lost $138 million in the quarter, with volume down nearly 16 percent and pricing up about 12 percent, reflecting constrained supply and higher cattle costs.

Management had already warned that full-year beef losses would widen if supplies stayed tight, and later trimmed the company's profit outlook as the cattle shortage dragged on.

Publishers note: I wonder if the shortage is because China has purchased Tyson's beef operation?

Born Free

By TomL

In today's world what does that mean. That means that if you want to be a Socialist, your family and friends and neighbors died in vein, in the wars in the past! Our Veterans fought and some died so you and I could be free. If you become a Socialist you can't own anything, it's not yours, it belongs to the Government regime! Today if you work hard and work smart you can buy a house, have a wife or husband, have children and live in a society that your children / family can be safe and free.

Good example I went to Cuba. As a young boy of 14yrs I won a Jr Optimist oratorical Contest. My subject was "Freedom our most precious Heritage", I presented my speech at the Hotel National. Batista was there, I met him. He shook my hand and said something I did not quite get. The people in Havana seemed to be happy, a few seemed rich and most were rich in happiness. Some farmers growing fruit, produce and vegetables on the land, selling what they grew in the fresh markets on the streets, then the worst happened. At first were no one realized that Castro was fighting for Communism and for himself not the people. He appeared to be a Socialist but really he was a communist, the United States even gave him some aid. When he took over Cuba the people were happy but that changed rapidly when he took their businesses, their houses and any boy that turned 15 years of age was taken from their family and put in the military. It was a fun beautiful country back then after it took a dark look. Batista was probably just as bad but the people I saw seemed to like him, maybe they had to like him? But they did not have a choice. By the way the some of Batista family settle in Ocala Florida. Now the people of Cuba are not BORN FREE! If you do something that the government does not like, they turn the electricity off in the whole neighborhood for a week or more. There is no communication, no AC, no frozen foods, no groceries to buy, no gas, no cars that run, no TV, etc! So is that something you want and like because people like Mamdani will bring it to you. YOU WON"T BE FREE! In Iran communist country they hang people who say something they don't like. If they demonstrate they mow them down if automatic weapons and Bulldoze the bodies to a grave.

That is what the Socialist / communist will bring you. Poverty and despair. Mamdani is already doing what he said he was not going to do. He said Tax the rich….. they left and went to Florida, Texas and took their money with them. Who's got to pay when the rich are gone? The United States Government? I don't think so! Who's is going to pay when the rich are no longer rich? The middle class that is working, YOU. You will owe your soul to New York. They left already who is going to pay? The government will not give you enough to exist on, so they rob from other accounts. Social Security, welfare, healthcare. What happens when Mamdani freezes rent on large building. The land owner can't afford to keep up the property, fix your AC, Plumbing, fix the elevators, keep the fire extinguishers up dated and ECT! Mamdani will condemn the property and take it. Then he will tax the residence to keep it up! When there is no money to take from the working class you are screwed. What do you or they do? They move to another state and want socialism they don't learn IT DON"T WORK! Remember this Mamdani has that smile and he is thinking the whole time, look at those suckers that voted for me. It will be easy for the Socialist to get elected just lie and promise things that they can't give you. Just like Mamdani. Just like Castro. Just like every other Socialist Communist! They want your money and the power for themselves to use against the citizens of the United State.

Their goal is to take our president and our country! Bernie Sanders is trying to get even with the Democratic Party and now he is getting his revenge! The Democrats have to stop them or they will be replacing all of them!

Operation Southern Slow Down

Continued from page 2

enforcement agencies and transportation and law enforcement partners throughout the Southeastern United States.

The campaign combines targeted enforcement with education to remind motorists of the dangers associated with excessive speed and encourage safer driving habits.

"Operation Southern Slow Down is all about changing driving behavior before that behavior results in a serious or fatal crash," said Cpl. Andru Eckerdt. "The fact that the majority of our contacts resulted in warnings gave our officers an opportunity to educate drivers and reinforce a simple message: slow down, stay alert and help us keep Lady Lake's roads safe."

The Lady Lake Police Department encourages drivers to obey posted speed limits, allow adequate following distance and remain attentive behind the wheel. Drivers are also reminded that speeding reduces reaction time and increases the severity of crashes.

Through participation in statewide and regional traffic safety initiatives such as Operation Southern Slow Down, the Lady Lake Police Department remains committed to proactive enforcement and education designed to make local roadways safer for residents and visitors.

Looking Ahead:

The Lady Lake Police Department is joining law enforcement agencies across Florida and the nation for the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign, an enforcement and education effort aimed at keeping impaired drivers off the road. The campaign runs from Aug. 19-Sept. 7



Bringing our community together...

Call/Email Tom:

352-804-1223 tloury@att.net

Ocala Downtown
Seniors Voice of Ocala
Village Spectator
Lady Lake Magazine

Lake County Detention Center

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

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

Or go to **Tomlpublishing.com** and click on **Lake County Sheriff** on right side under "**Contributing Editors**".

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



By TomL

Here we go again… To you who fought the gas line? They are back! Dunnellon people are telling me they got a letter. The gas line agents want us to give them permission…I give them permission for nothing! They want permission to mow NO! They want permission to survey NO! They have no business on my land! They decided that we believed their trickerey and now they want to convince us again that they are good guys. I will never believe anything they say. The Marion County Commissioners said they would never approve it, THEY DID so what does that make them? They Dunnellon city council said they would not let them go through our district THEY DID what does that make them! They said they would like to put something long the gas line right away. IT IS NOT A RIGHT AWAY. It is a ONE time lease for one gas line. They said they want to put something in 2029 don't believe it they it's a trick. They will be going through two ten acre pieces and a 5 acre piece, on my sister in law and ten acres on our family farm. That depreciates the land and if the gas line blows up, what happens to the people that live along side of it?

Next I want to talk about Robert Balfour (Military)

When I met him he was a great story teller and a great writer. He lived everything he wrote a great warrior. He would write every month about the military episodes he was involved in, all while playing golf every day in the Villages. He had a love for golf and was good at it! We work together for several years and one day he called and said I need a favor? I said name it! He was diagnosed with cancer and was going to die, At best he had a year maybe, I was shocked. He went on to say he wanted to send more than one letter/column per month and would like me to run his letters and columns after he was gone, I agreed, I really was honored that he would ask me to do that. He last ten months then I saw his obit . in the daily Sun and I ran his Obit. He had a road in the villages named after him.

I ran his work for two years, even then I would repeat something he wrote once in a while. I miss his work and him. I'm sure he is Teeing off somewhere up there! Bless him!

NEXT Let's talk about Ken Tipper

I was sent some work from a ex-military man that was in.the Royal Navy. He was writing a column for me. His name was Ken Tipper, he liked to hang around the Veteran Park with the other veteran. He survived the sinking of the trial-class destroyer HMS Punjabl after colliding with the HMS King George V in 1942. I remember him telling me that they huddle together in the dark of night in the water after sinking. There were hundreds of them and every once in while you would hear a scream and knew a shark was taking one of them. They were rescued by an American ship. He would finish serving intercepting wireless transmissions.

He was a great writer and we worked together several years. One day he said he did not want to do a monthly column any more but would send something when he got inspired and he did. He is gone now. He is missed!

NEXT I met Nick Navetta a man with an extensive military back ground. He served his country with honor! Our connection was he met his wife in the grocery store where my wife and I shopped at some years ago. He would go on with his great military career. He is an Edward Jones business investor. We have a little bit of money, I love it when he calls me and says what do you want me to do with this money you earned? It happens on a regular basis. I like him, he is my kind of person. I said one day I would like to do something for the veterans,

NEXT Nick told me to call Todd Belknap we started a veterans column in my newspapers with Vet's helping Vets. To me it's very rewarding and Todd does a good job writing the column. He had eight years military back ground. He joined our non-profit business club "Select Business Association of Ocala" it is a referral group where we try to help or use each other's services and referral our members to people who needs for what they do. One category no competition all category's are exclusive. We meet at MOJO's twice a month. If your category is not taken you can apply. tloury@att.net

Hope to meet some new people in our lunch group!

Send me your email and I'll email you a

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Newspaper Deadlines

Editorial & Ad Copy for October

Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown
Noon, September 25th
Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator
12am, September 30th

Village Spectator / Lady Lake Magazine

Products of TomL Publishing, LLC

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PLEASE SUPPORT THE WOUNDED WARRIORS!



Publisher's

Continued from page 4

digital newspaper TomLPublishing.com

I have been so lucky to meet these guys with military backgrounds they inspire me to keep going!

I have several more military stores I want to repeat next month. I met one of the military man that help put up the flag at Iwo Jima. Until next month!

When you advertise in the Ocala DownTown you are reaching many businesses, Veterans, Businesses and upstanding citizens. We send it by email, we are online available to thousands of readers by just clicking the link we send out.

Advertising is deductible on your income tax!

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Ocala Downtown

https://tomlpublishing.com/back-issues/ocala-downtown/

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TLoury@att.net



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HABITATLS.ORG

Gripes and Complaints

By TomL

When I get up in the morning I look at my emails, read what I want to read save or delete then I go to SPAM!

I scan the list some of the filthiest teasers you would ever want to see, I choose not to read any of them. They are trash! If you are one of these people sending out trash, I hope they catch you! I turn them into State Attorneys office!

When it comes to trash there a few different types of trash. While watching TV Tray Gowdy, South Carolina he was talking about how the tax payers can't take a walk without stepping in human feces, also known as stool or poop! Where is this coming from, I mean I know where it is coming from, but what give these people the idea they can do that? A tax paying citizen has to avoid stepping in shit to walk their dog or to just take a walk with their family! You know how they break a dog from going in the house??? The department of sanitation should give out fines or work details called clean up time for going to the bath room on the places where people walk. If they are not from this country deport them to where they would get shot for doing what they are doing here!



The American Dream!

By TomL

The American Dream is to be born free. Get and education. Choose a career of your choice. VERY IMPORTANT! Choose something you like to do. Apply yourself and believe in the company you work for. Ninety nine percent of the time you will come out ahead.

Some careers start mowing the yard of a farm and the farm starts a company as an Equestrian Complex, surrounded by large lot Equestrian Mini Farms. Think about the possibilities Land maintenance around the complex that you might start. Go to Farrer school and learn to shoe horses. Drive one of their people carriers buses? Drive a Horse carrier. I could go on and on.

Suppose you wanted to go to college Go on line and see what is available in grants? Once you learn about Grants maybe start a business teaching the youth how to apply for grants. Maybe keep your best student to join your team teaching the youth about the possibility's. Keep it as a positive and not a negative!

Here is another story that I heard that I love. A young farm boy quit school to go to work. I think the Family needed money. He said he did not need what they were teaching him to become rich. He did a job or two, he did not like either. While sitting on the tailgate of his Chevy Pickup he watched a farmer plowing his land to plant crops. He thought that is a waste to plow all that nice green grass under. Bing a lightbulb went off. He ask permission to cut some sod off the pasture on then side where he would not be in the way. First he dug the sod by hand, then he found an old motor driven sod cutter machine that he repaired. Pick up the sod and put it on a pallet in the back of his truck. Went home made a sign that said SOD FOR SALE! The truck was empty before the weekend was over. A few years later he owns a fleet of Tractor Trailers with flat beds hauling sod and a crew laying the sod for developers and large road contracts. Now the sod comes in rolls he adapted to that quickly. He hired people he trusted and jumped every hurtle he came to with commen sense. Great story there are stories in this country every day. You own it! You built it! It is your American Dream! If the Democratic Socialist take control you won't have the opportunities you have now. You will do what the government wants you to do! They will own it! They might pay you a living wage?

You can have an American Dream if Socialism does not take that away. They will you know if they get control. They think they can tax the rich. The rich are rich because they are smart and have worked hard for their money. They will just move to another state now you have ruined the revenue for that town or state! Bernie Sander and his followers are feeding you this crap. Socialism does nothing but take from others and don't create anything but hardship and failure!

New York is started taxing the middle class who elected him and the taxes will only grow. The middle class will get out if they have any sense! Nothing is free no matter what they tell you! These people who start acting like they have disabilities to draw a government check are a drag on humanity! GET A JOB! Earn your way in your community! Volunteer to help the victims of Socialism there will be a lot of them but make sure they are really needed and a citizen of the united states! They can get government help if they are not!





LAKE COUNTY EVENTS

SEE MORE ABOUT PARKS & TRAILS IN LAKE COUNTY
https://lakecountyfl.gov/parks-and-trails

Sep 02 Meditation in the Garden Series
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Discovery Gardens in Tavares
Free outdoor meditation classes include guided group meditation on the lawn

Sep 04 First Friday
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Downtown Eustis in Eustis
Each month, the City of Eustis hosts a family-friendly street party

Sep 04 Exploration Hike
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM Ferndale Preserve in Clermont

Sep 04 First Friday - Historic Downtown Eustis
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Downtown Eustis - Eustis Street and Magnolia Avenue in Eustis
Join us every First Friday in Downtown Eustis for an evening of live music, more

Sep 05 Violinist Ilana Zaks in Concert
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM W.T. Bland Public Library in Mount Dora

Sep 05 Wetland Excursion - Crooked River
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Crooked River Preserve in Clermont
Join us for a fast paced guided hike at Crooked River Preserve

Sep 06 Exploration Hike
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM PEAR Park (Gateway) in Leesburg
Join staff on an early evening walk to get some exercise while exploring nature at P.E.A.R. Park.

Sep 09 Watershed Wednesdays
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Hickory Point Preserve in Tavares
Join us monthly for Watershed Wednesdays to learn how lakes, streams, wetlands, and uplands connect, with rotating presentations on shorelines, ...

Sep 11 Discover Leesburg
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Towne Square, Downtown Leesburg in Leesburg
Join us every 2nd Friday evening of the month from 6pm to 9pm in Downtown Leesburg for an evening of entertainment, shopping, mouth-watering treats

Sep 11 Mount Dora's Art in the Alley
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Royellou Lane in Mount Dora
Join us every 2nd Friday at 6 PM for an exciting evening featuring incredible local artists

Sep 12 Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Lake May Reserve in Eustis
Assist staff with surveying one of Lake County's conservation lands for birds and butterflies.

Sep 12 Beginners Paddle
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Hickory Point Preserve in Tavares
Learn about the popular sport of paddling with experienced staff.

Sep 12 Greetings From Florida Movie Premiere At The Tropic Theatre
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Tropic Theatre in Leesburg
Explore Florida history through vintage postcards with filmmaker Matt Wilcox.

Sep 12 Greetings From Florida Movie Premiere At The Tropic Theatre
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Tropic Theatre in Leesburg
Explore Florida history through vintage postcards with filmmaker Matt Wilcox.

Sep 12 Messy Mania
5:00 PM - 9:00 PM Carver Park in Eustis
Moms and Sons get downright MESSY at Messy Mania in a series of obstacle courses.

Sep 13 Guitars and Cars
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM Renninger's Antique Center in Mount Dora
Guitars(Big Al's Lake County Musicians Swapmeet) Buy-Sell-Trade

Sep 18 Autumn Yard Sale
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Renninger's Antique Center in Mount Dora
Don't miss Renninger's Autumn Yard Sale. Clean out your unwanted items and sell them at this show. Antique Center. Flea Market (Saturday and Sunday).

Sep 19 Quarterly Bird & Butterfly Survey
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM Ferndale Preserve in Minneola
Assist staff with surveying one of Lake County's conservation lands for birds and butterflies.

Sep 19 Open House
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Ellis Acres Reserve in Paisley

Sep 19 The Laugh Reunion
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM Hideaway Performing Arts Center in Eustis
The Laugh Reunion returns for an unforgettable evening of clean, high-energy comedy

Sep 19 Fall Into Wellness 2026
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM Victory Pointe Park in Clermont
Join us for Fall Into Wellness, a free community event bringing together movement classes,

Sep 19 Afternoon Tea
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Mission Resort + Club in Howey-in-the-Hills
Join us for an elegant, traditional English tea

Sep 20 The Habits and Natural History of Snakes
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Marsh Park & Boat Ramp in Eustis



NL Chamber Glenview Luncheon Door Prizes

Dozens of door prizes were presented during the drawing at the Glenn View Country Club. When you bring a door prize you get to present it to the winner at the North Lake Area Chamber networking event.





















North Lake
AREA CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Join the chamber

NL Chamber Glennview Luncheon

Another great Networking Lunch at Glenview Country Club. As you can see it was a good turn out. Join us for lunch every third Thursday! Meet with other business professionals.















Todd Belknap

Executive Director of the Veterans Helping Veterans USA



9/11: A NATION REMEMBERS…. OR DO WE?

Join us for the 25th anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony on Saturday, September 5, 2026 at 10:30 am. Venue is Highland Memorial Park, 1515 NE 3rd Street, Ocala 34470. The public is encouraged to arrive by 9:30 am to witness hundreds of motorcycles majestically escorting Old Glory into the Park.

This annual ceremony is purposely placed on the weekend prior to September 11 to maximize community awareness and attendance. The alternative is to hold this sacred event during the week at a time when most of the community is working or attending school. Explore www.patriotday.info for all event info!

The month of September is steeped in military history, ranging from the bloodiest single day in U. S. history (Civil War/Antietam 9/17/1862) to the beginning of WWII (Germany invades Poland 9/1/1939). 6 years and 1 day later, Japan formally and unconditionally surrendered to Allied Forces aboard the USS Missouri (9/2/1945).

The most glaring single day event in our modern history took place right here on our home turf and it murdered 2,977 Americans. Come join us on Saturday, September 5 to remember and honor. Bring the family.

See you next month.

$400,000 Outsmart Lung Cancer

Double the Hope on Lung Cancer Research: $400,000 to Outsmart Lung Cancer

08/18/2026

(Erika Braaksma) - While World Lung Cancer Day was recognized on August 1, the urgent need to raise global awareness for those affected by the disease and to accelerate the search for a cure remains year-round. With this ongoing mission in mind, Lung Cancer Foundation of America (LCFA) and the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) are observing the month by awarding $200,000 to two of the field's most promising young scientists. This investment addresses a critical reality in oncology: too often, brilliant research ideas stall not because they lack vision, but because they lack resources. By providing this funding, LCFA and IASLC are ensuring these researchers have the momentum they need to turn today's innovative ideas into tomorrow's life-saving breakthroughs.

The two funded projects take aim at two of the toughest questions in the fight against the disease: how to catch lung cancer earlier, and how to stop it from outsmarting the very treatments designed to beat it. Both are essential to the same goal, helping patients live longer, better lives.

The Early Career Researcher (ECR) grant program gives emerging scientists the fuel they need to secure a major independent research award, which can be a launching pad for a career. These researchers aren't just studying the future of lung cancer science; they're building it.

This year's recipients, selected for the originality of their proposals and their potential to change patient outcomes, are Dr. Jared Mayers of Fred Hutch Cancer Center and Dr. Jaime L. Schneider of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The timing could not be more urgent. Competition for research dollars grows fiercer every year, even as lung cancer claims a life in the United States every 4.2 minutes. When bold, early career investigators are handed real, independent funding, their most innovative ideas don't stall on a shelf. They move forward, and they change what's possible in oncology.

Continued page 11

SEPTEMBER

Check out our website for more information at mylakelibrary.org

Children

Recurring Children's Events

Mondays

Craft Kits- Every Monday while supplies lasts
Grab a take-home craft kit from the Youth Department and get creative! Kits are available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

Alphabet Adventures- Every Monday at 11:30 AM
Join us for a fun and engaging early literacy program where little ones explore a new letter each session. Children will learn words associated with the letter through interactive activities, enjoy a themed story, and create a simple craft to take home.

Tuesdays

Tiny Tots Toddler Sensory Play- Every Tuesday at 10:30 AM (Ages 1-3)
Tiny Tots ages 1–3 will enjoy a hands-on sensory play experience filled with fun textures and activities. This program supports early learning, creativity, and motor skill development.

Storybook Studio (Craft and a Story)- Every Tuesday at 3:30 PM
Storybook Studio is a fun family program that brings stories to life through creativity and imagination. Families will enjoy a story together before creating a craft inspired by the book. Perfect for making memories while reading and creating together!

Wednesdays

Storytime- Every Wednesday at 10:30 AM (Ages 5 and under)
Enjoy a fun-filled Storytime with books, songs, and a craft! Listen to a story and sing along to favorite tunes.
***Special fall Storytime events are listed below.
***September 16th-Pirate Storytime
(Optional) Dress up in your pirate costume and enjoy a fun-filled story!

Stories with Scarlett- Every Wednesday at 3 PM
Spend time reading to Scarlett, a gentle library dog who enjoys stories and lots of pets. A relaxing way for kids to practice reading and grow their confidence!

Fridays

Baby Sprouts Story and Playtime- Every Friday at 10:30 AM (Ages up to 18 months)
Designed for babies up to 18 months, this program features gentle stories and playful activities. Enjoy bonding time while supporting early development.

Bricks & Beyond!- Every 1st Friday at 3:30 PM
Bricks and Beyond offers hands-on building fun with LEGO® bricks and larger DUPLO® blocks. Great for developing creativity, problem-solving, and fine motor skills.

Kids BINGO- Every 2nd Friday at 3:30 PM
B-I-N-G-O! Come play a kid-friendly version of the classic game and see if you can shout "Bingo!" first.

Poke Pals- Every 3rd Friday at 3:30 PM (All Ages)
Join us for Pokémon-themed games, activities, and fun! Perfect for kids and teens who love Pokémon.

Video Games!- Every 4th Friday at 3:30 PM (Ages 10-18)
Join fellow gamers for exciting competitions in Mario Kart and a variety of other video games. Fun, friends, and friendly rivalry await!

Teens

DIY Shaker Bookmarks- September 3rd at 3:30 PM
Create your own fun and unique shaker bookmark! Teens can design a personalized bookmark filled with colorful details and creativity to brighten up their reading time.

Trainer Academy- September 10th at 3:30 PM
Learn how to play the Pokémon Trading Card Game, build your skills, and enjoy friendly matches in a fun environment!

Bedazzle Keychains- September 17th at 3:30 PM
Create your own dazzling keychain with fun designs and creative decorations! Kids and teens can make a unique accessory to take home and show off.



Children Special Events

Teddy Bear Storytime September 9th at 10:30AM

Bring your favorite teddy bear for a special Storytime filled with fun and imagination! After the stories, show off your cuddly best friend in a teddy bear parade around the library.



Craft with a Cop September 22nd at 3:30 PM

Get creative and meet a local police officer during this fun, hands-on craft program! Kids can enjoy making a special craft while getting to know a community helper in a fun setting.



Adult

Mondays

ESL- Every Monday at 10 AM
This program is designed for individuals looking to improve their English language skills in a supportive environment. Registration is required and attendance is a commitment; once you sign up, the instructor will contact you with next steps.

Tuesdays

BINGO- Every 3rd Tuesday at 2-3:30 PM
Enjoy a classic game of bingo in a fun and friendly atmosphere! Test your luck, win prizes, and socialize with others. Perfect for adults looking for a relaxing and entertaining time!

Wednesdays

SHINE- Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 2 PM
SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Get free, unbiased help with your Medicare questions from trained Florida SHINE volunteers. Learn about coverage options, benefits, and enrollment to make informed healthcare decisions.

Thursdays

Lisa's Arts & Crafts- September 17 at 2-4 PM
Get creative with a fun, hands-on craft project in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. No experience is needed—just bring your creativity and enjoy making something special!

Fridays

Crochet Club- Every 2nd Friday at 3-4 PM
Join our welcoming crochet group open to all ages and skill levels, with guidance available for beginners learning the basics. Supplies are provided, but you're welcome to bring your own; children must be accompanied by an adult.

Social Shuffle- Every 4th Friday at 2-4 PM
Join us for a fun and social card game session featuring Swoop, a game that's easy to learn, quick to play, and super fun. Registration is required, so be sure to sign up and get ready to shuffle, play, and connect with others.

Apple Tech Support- Every 4th Friday at 10 AM
Learn more about your Apple devices in this helpful session led by a volunteer. Enjoy a short presentation followed by time for questions about iPads, iPhones, and iMacs.

Special Adult Events

Corazon de Mexico- September 18th 4-5 PM Room 219
Experience the beauty and energy of traditional Mexican folk dance with Corazón de México. Watch vibrant performances and learn about the culture, history, and traditions behind this colorful art form.

Hydroponics- How to Grow Plants in Water- September 24th 2-3 PM Room 219
Discover how to grow healthy plants without soil using hydroponics. Learn the basics of this innovative gardening method and how to get started at home.

Lung Cancer

Continued from page 10

"Supporting early-career investigators is not just a strategic priority. It is a necessity for the future of oncology," said Kim Norris, co-founder and president of LCFA. "By investing in these researchers, we are accelerating the pace of discovery and ensuring that promising ideas in metabolic tracking and drug resistance can move from the laboratory to the clinic, where they are needed most."

Meet the Award Recipients

Dr. Jared Mayers, Fred Hutch Cancer Center: Hunting the hidden influencers inside the lung. Dr. Mayers is investigating how the naturally occurring bacteria living in our lungs may quietly shape the development of lung cancer. Because these bacteria exist in such tiny amounts, they've long been nearly impossible to study. So Dr. Mayers is building the tools to see them by developing highly sensitive new techniques to capture and analyze how these microbes behave inside lung tissue. By mapping how they contribute to cancer, his team hopes to uncover entirely new ways to stop the disease before it ever starts.

Dr. Mayers says his inspiration is simple: "We don't get new drugs, we don't get new therapies, we don't get longer lives, better quality lives, more time with family unless we invest in the upfront groundwork."

Dr. Jaime L. Schneider, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute: Cutting off cancer's escape route. Dr. Schneider is decoding how lung cancer cells learn to survive and keep growing even after treatment. Her focus: how these cells manage their energy and where that system has a weak link worth exploiting. Her goal is to design new, more effective therapies that keep cancer from adapting, offering better and longer-lasting options for patients whose disease has grown resistant to standard chemotherapy and targeted treatments.

"I was simply blown away by the tremendous arsenal of new drugs that had just come out that were really changing patient lives," said Dr. Schneider, describing what drew her to thoracic oncology.

LCFA and IASLC invite the community to go behind the science with all of the LCFA/IASLC ECR grant recipients. Visit these researchers' profiles and video insights into their lab work at LCFA's Meet the Researcher.

The Multiplier Effect: Small Grants, Outsized Impact

LCFA's Early Career Research Grant Program is known for a remarkable "multiplier effect" currently at 13X return on investment. By providing the first spark for transformative science, the program has awarded 25 grants totaling $4.6 million, funding that has since grown into more than $50 million in additional grants from other organizations building on LCFA-supported research. That track record means Dr. Mayers and Dr. Schneider aren't just receiving funding, they're gaining the foundation to secure the major, long-term support their life-saving work deserves.

This $400,000 investment underscores LCFA and IASLC's ongoing commitment to accelerating the pace of discovery for patients everywhere. For more resources and information about lung cancer, visit lcfamerica.org.

Article Link

https://about.newsusa.com/double-the-hope-on-lung-cancer-research-400000-to-outsmart-lung-cancer

Staying Safe When Power Goes Off

(NAPSI)—Generators are critical during severe weather events, when the power can go out. They can bring power to remote job sites, aid in disaster recovery and assist homeowners in emergencies. To help, the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing power equipment, small engine, utility vehicle, golf car and personal transport vehicle manufacturers and suppliers, reminds home and business owners to keep safety in mind when using generators.

Additional tips include:

1. **Take stock of your generator.** Make sure equipment is in good working order before starting and using it. Do this before a storm hits.
2. **Review the directions.** Follow all manufacturer's instructions. Review the owner's manuals (look manuals up online if you cannot find them and save a copy) so equipment is operated safely.
3. **Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home.** This alarm will sound if dangerous levels of carbon monoxide enter the building.
4. **Have the right fuel on hand.** Use the type of fuel recommended by the generator manufacturer to protect this important investment. It's best to use fresh fuel, but if you are using fuel that has been sitting in a gas can for more than 30 days, add fuel stabilizer to it. Store gas only in an approved container and away from heat sources.
5. **Ensure portable generators have plenty of ventilation.** Generators should NEVER be used in an enclosed area or placed inside a home, a building, or a garage, even if the windows or doors are open. Place the generator outside and away from windows, doors, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to drift indoors.
6. **Keep the generator dry.** Do not use a generator in wet conditions. Cover and vent a generator. Model-specific tents or generator covers can be found online for purchase and at home centers and hardware stores.
7. **Add fuel to a cool generator only.** Before refueling, turn the generator off and let it cool down.
8. **Plug in safely.** If you don't yet have a transfer switch, you can use the outlets on the generator. It's best to plug in appliances directly to the generator. If you must use an extension cord, it should be heavy-duty and designed for outdoor use. It should be rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Make sure the cord is free of cuts and the plug has all three prongs.
9. **Install a transfer switch.** A transfer switch connects the generator to the circuit panel and lets you power hardwired appliances. Most transfer switches also help avoid overload by displaying wattage usage levels.
10. **Do not use the generator to "backfeed" power into your home electrical system.** Trying to power your home's electrical wiring by "backfeeding"—where you plug the generator into a wall outlet—is dangerous. You could hurt utility workers and neighbors served by the same transformer. Backfeeding bypasses built-in circuit protection devices, so you could damage your electronics or start an electrical fire.

For more information, go to WeatherItBetter.com.

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FROM THE DESK OF
CONGRESSWOMAN KAT CAMMACK



Cammack Delivers: More Than $42 Million in Rural Health Investments for North Central Florida

Cammack helped craft and shepherd the Rural Health Transformation Program through committee, securing more than $200 million for Florida and delivering critical resources to rural communities across FL-03.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Kat Cammack (FL-03) today announced more than $42.2 million in Rural Health Transformation Program investments benefiting health care providers and communities across North Central Florida, following her work in Congress to help craft and advance the legislation that created the program.

As a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and its Health Subcommittee, Cammack helped shape the rural health provisions and shepherd them through the committee process as part of the Working Families Tax Cuts law. The resulting Rural Health Transformation Program secured $209 million for Florida in its first year alone, with funding now reaching rural hospitals, physicians, health systems, and communities across the state.

At least $13.4 million is directly tied to providers with locations in Florida's Third Congressional District, while additional regional investments will strengthen health care infrastructure serving rural communities throughout North Central Florida.

CommunityHealth IT received more than $26.7 million across Florida's Northeast and Northwest regions to strengthen health information technology systems supporting rural providers, including those serving FL-03.

"This is exactly why I fought to make rural health care a priority in this legislation. I helped craft these provisions and shepherd them through Energy and Commerce because North Central Florida needed more than another study or another promise — we needed resources," said Congresswoman Cammack. "We secured more than $200 million for Florida, and now more than $42 million is being put to work benefiting the communities I represent. That means stronger hospitals, better technology, more access to specialists, and more care delivered closer to home. We fought for these dollars, we secured them, and now we're bringing them home."

Direct Investments in FL-03

Providers headquartered in Florida's Third Congressional District receiving directly attributable awards include:

Medlink Management Services (Lake Butler Hospital), Union County — $6,989,484.92 across two awards.

North Florida Pediatrics Associates, Lake City, Columbia County — $5,999,924.26 across two awards.

Trenton Medical Center (Palms Medical Group), Gilchrist County — $439,775.40.

Lake Butler Hospital's larger award supports preventive and at-home care, including mobile health, community paramedicine, remote patient monitoring, on-site pharmacy services, and retail clinic care.

North Florida Pediatrics Associates' larger Lake City award supports specialty and acute care through diagnostic technology and telehealth.

These investments directly address one of the most persistent challenges facing rural North Central Florida: distance. For seniors, working families, and patients managing chronic conditions, access to more services locally can mean fewer hours on the road and faster access to the care they need.

On Tuesday, Governor Ron DeSantis announced nearly $188 million in the latest round of Year 1 awards, supporting more than 80 projects across Florida's 31 rural counties. The Northeast Region, which includes portions of FL-03 and surrounding North Central Florida communities, accounted for approximately $50.7 million of the awards.

"Washington doesn't know Lake Butler, Lake City, or Trenton better than the people who live and work there. That's why we built flexibility into this program and fought to get Florida the resources to put solutions on the ground,"

Congresswoman Kat Cammack Secures Ten Amendments in House-Passed National Defense Authorization Act

Cammack amendments strengthen America's military by rooting China out of defense supply chains, countering foreign influence operations, protecting military families, and improving National Guard disaster readiness.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congresswoman Kat Cammack (FL-03) today announced that ten of her amendments were adopted in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027 (H.R. 8800), which passed the House by a vote of 216-214. The legislation authorizes a pay raise for every service member and now advances to the Senate.

"Our troops deserve a raise and our adversaries deserve a reason to think twice. This bill delivers on both," said Congresswoman Cammack. "I fought to make sure it delivers accountability too. We cannot just throw money at the Pentagon. My amendments force answers to hard questions about who is in our supply chains, whether we're ready for tomorrow's threats, and where American taxpayer dollars are going."

Together, Rep. Cammack's ten adopted amendments strengthen military readiness, reduce dependence on foreign adversaries, improve care for military families, accelerate the adoption of emerging technologies, and strengthen America's disaster response capabilities.

Congresswoman Cammack's Ten Adopted Amendments

Countering fentanyl and precursor chemicals. Requires the Department of War to expand coordination with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice to target fentanyl and precursor chemicals. Requires a report to Congress identifying gaps in detection, monitoring, and interdiction efforts.

Combating foreign malign influence

Reducing reliance on Chinese-sourced defense materials.

Strengthening partnerships with research universities.

Securing military medical supply chains.

Assessing threats from foreign-controlled digital platforms

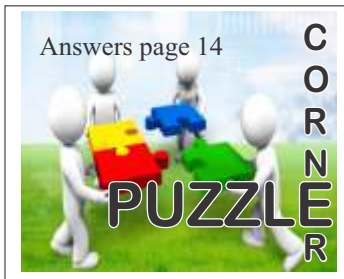
Accelerating artificial intelligence adoption.

Protecting military mothers during PCS moves. .

Auditing Chinese Communist Party exposure in defense contracting.

Strengthening National Guard disaster readiness.

Taken together, these provisions position the Department of War to better compete in the era of cognitive warfare while strengthening America's military readiness at home and abroad.

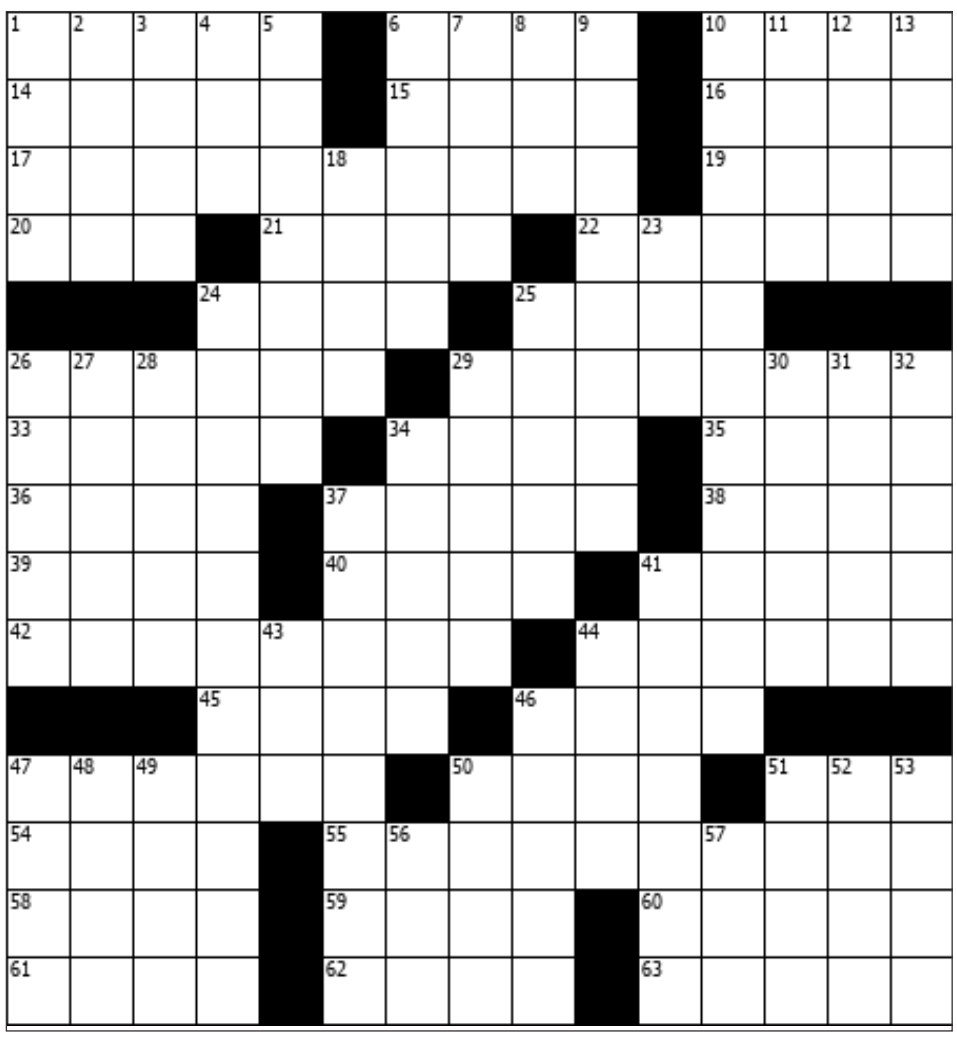


Across

1. "It's ___, the cows are giving evaporated milk"
6. Damon of "Saving Private Ryan"
10. Newborn's acquisition
14. And ___ grow on
15. Winglike
16. Folk singer Burl
17. Unintelligible chatter
19. Oasis abode
20. Clairvoyant's forte
21. '50s-'70s Soviet spacecraft series
22. Mendacious
24. Folkestone farewell
25. Take heed
26. Prestige
29. Projected 3-D image
33. In a dither
34. Be in class and miss it
35. Scale pair
36. Immense
37. Foundation parts
38. Goddess of fertility
39. Sparkling wine city
40. Bassoon bit
41. Votive stone
42. Handbills
44. Coast Guard vessel
45. Detailed accts.
46. Theater trophy
47. Imbue
50. Puppies' plaints
51. Word with foreign or first
54. Classify
55. Insipid and sentimental one
58. HS exam
59. Bones, in Vegas
60. Fatty liquid
61. Abominable snowman
62. Mattress support
63. On edge

Down

1. To a degree
2. Burden of proof
3. Rope fiber
4. Bookie alternative in N.Y.
5. Not in time
6. ___ Loa
7. Mater antecedent
8. File folder feature
9. Ills
10. The heart of the matter
11. Assert
12. Carte before the course?
13. Noble Italian name
18. Burlap material
23. Opposite of paleo
24. Dessert choice
25. Seeped
26. Antagonist
27. Clear the slate
28. Couscous, e.g.
29. Debtors' places
30. Back to zero, perhaps
31. Win by ___
32. No philanthropist
34. Heavyweight plans
37. Feigns
41. Solar blot
43. Records
44. Reprint
46. Lhasa locale
47. Cosby/Culp series
48. Smoke detector
49. "Animal House" house
50. Community service org.
51. Sunday wrap
52. Wading bird
53. Unit of force
56. Be unwell
57. Hearty brew



FROM THE DESK OF

ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE



Attorney General James Uthmeier Issues Investigative Subpoena to KIS Consulting Over Deceptive Practices to Protect Homeowners from Increased Costs

Attorney General James Uthmeier issued an investigative subpoena to KIS Consulting, LLC as part of an investigation into the company's advertising of property inspection services, referrals of Florida consumers to attorneys and engineers for construction, design, architectural, and engineering defect claims, related sales tactics including door-to-door solicitation, and fees associated with those referrals.

"Florida homeowners deserve transparent and fair treatment when addressing potential defects in their homes—not practices that drive up the cost of homeownership," said Attorney General James Uthmeier. "My office is investigating these inspection and referral operations to ensure they truly serve the interests of the families they claim to help."

The subpoena requires production of documents from August 20, 2022, through the present by September 21, 2026, including:

- Advertisements to Florida consumers related to property inspection services or construction defect claims;
- Documents provided to consumers regarding the referral of attorney services, including Attorney Selection Forms, and all related communications with consumers and attorneys;
- Documents and communications related to the referral of engineering services;
- Estimates for repairs and documents identifying completed repairs to Florida consumers' properties, including supporting documentation such as invoices, permits, engineering reports, photographs, and payments;
- Written policies, procedures, guidance, and training manuals related to referrals of legal and engineering services and to door-to-door or other sales tactics;
- Documents sufficient to identify all Florida consumers provided with property inspection services, all employees or independent contractors soliciting business, and all fees received for attorney or engineering referrals;

Documents concerning complaints, reports, investigations, and dispositions related to the company's services involving construction defect claims.

This action reinforces Attorney General Uthmeier's commitment to enforcing Florida's consumer protection laws and protecting homeowners from unfair or deceptive trade practices.

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Conviction of Leesburg Woman for Elderly Exploitation

Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that the Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a conviction against Kimberly Ruth Bitting of Leesburg for exploiting an elderly widow by abusing a power of attorney and position of trust to steal approximately $350,000.

"This defendant systematically exploited a vulnerable senior widow grieving the loss of her husband, abusing a power of attorney to drain her life savings, purchase property for herself, and isolate her from family," said Attorney General James Uthmeier. "Florida will not tolerate those who prey on our elderly under the guise of caregiving or trust. I thank the Leesburg Police Department, Senior Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Taylor Chatting, and Special Counsel Ana Sacco for their outstanding work securing this conviction."

According to the investigation, Bitting obtained power of attorney over her elderly neighbor—a senior widow—shortly after the victim's husband died in August 2021. Over the next 15 to 18 months, Bitting used that authority to issue numerous checks from the victim's accounts to her own accounts and those of others, make repeated ATM withdrawals confirmed by surveillance video, and transfer funds from investment accounts.

Bitting used more than $137,000 of the victim's money to purchase two parcels of land in Calhoun County that were titled to a trust in Bitting's name. Substantial sums also went to her daughter and a paid caregiver, often framed as payments for services.

Evidence established that Bitting restricted the victim's communications with family, controlled access within the home, and threatened to have the victim declared incompetent and committed. The victim ultimately left of her own free will, revoked the power of attorney, and relocated to New York to live with her sister. Bitting subsequently reported the departure as a kidnapping.

Bitting was convicted of:

- Elderly Exploitation (Breach of Power of Attorney), a first-degree felony
- Elderly Exploitation (Position of Trust or Confidence), a first-degree felony
- Elderly Exploitation (Negligent or Intentional Misuse), a first-degree felony
- Cashing or Depositing an Item with Intent to Defraud, a third-degree felony

Senior Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Taylor Chatting and Special Counsel Ana Sacco were designated as a Special Assistant State Attorneys by State Attorney Bill Gladson in the Fifth Judicial Circuit.

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Arrest of Over 2,000 Child Predators; Charges Middle School Teacher with Possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material

Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that over 2,000 child predators have been arrested since he took office in February 2025. The milestone reflects the aggressive work of the Office of Statewide Prosecution in partnership with state and local law enforcement agencies to identify, arrest, and prosecute those who sexually exploit children.

"Protecting our children is my number one priority," said Attorney General James Uthmeier. "With over 2,000 child predators arrested since I took office, we are sending a clear message: if you prey on kids in this state, we will find you, arrest you, and put you behind bars. Thanks to our law enforcement partners and Statewide Prosecutors, we are breaking all-time records against predators."

"Florida is safer with the men and women at FDLE doing their very best to protect our communities from individuals who exploit and harm our children," said FDLE Commissioner Mark Glass. "Our agents and analysts will continue to work with our criminal justice partners and Attorney General James Uthmeier's Office of Statewide Prosecution to accomplish the mission of keeping our streets free from these criminals."

"At the Lee County Sheriff's Office, we are constantly looking ahead," said Sheriff Carmine Marceno. "We are not waiting for a child to become a victim before we act. We are investing in training, technology, intelligence, and the people who have dedicated their lives to protect protecting children. This is what proactive policing and solid partnerships look like."

"Some of these vile crimes are committed by people we trust with our kids. That is unacceptable. FDLE will continue to investigate these crimes and work with the Office of Statewide Prosecution to hold these individuals accountable, but it is a group effort that starts with secure internet habits," said FDLE Fort Myers Special Agent in Charge Eli Lawson. "Secure internet habits start at home. While families are getting ready for the school year to begin, I strongly encourage parents to have the important conversations with your children about safe online use."

"Thank you to Attorney General James Uthmeier, Sheriff Carmine Marceno, and every law enforcement entity and agent standing with us to protect children," said Lee County Schools Superintendent Dr. Denise Carlin. "The moment we were notified of this teacher's arrest, we acted immediately, removing him from the classroom and barring him from every district property. I recommended he be terminated swiftly. Predators will find no harbor in The School District of Lee County."

Recent cases highlight the ongoing intensity of these efforts:

- Graham Freeman, 56, of Cape Coral, a middle school science teacher in Lee County School District, was arrested on August 6, 2026, and charged with 10 counts of possession of child sexual abuse material and one count of sexual activity involving animals. An FDLE investigation into peer-to-peer file sharing identified activity linked to his residence. Agents executed a search warrant and recovered multiple electronic devices containing the illegal material. Freeman has been removed from the classroom.
- Jordan Kent Hall, 33, of Sarasota, faces 10 counts of possession of child sexual abuse material and one count of sexual activities involving animals. Following an investigation of peer-to-peer network activity, FDLE agents executed a search warrant at his residence on July 30, 2026, and recovered devices containing the prohibited material.
- Matthew David Peter, 41, of Zephyrhills, faces charges of soliciting a child for unlawful sexual conduct using computer services, transmission of harmful material to a minor, and unlawful use of a two-way communications device to facilitate a felony. The charges stem from an undercover FDLE operation in which Peter engaged in sexually explicit communications with an agent posing as a 13-year-old girl and transmitted harmful material.

These prosecutions are part of a broader surge in results. Since February 2025, the Office of Statewide Prosecution's Crimes Against Children efforts have secured nearly 693 years of prison sentences—more than four times the previous monthly rate—while case filings have increased dramatically.

The cases against Freeman and Peter will be prosecuted in the Twentieth Judicial Circuit and Hall in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit by Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Agnieszka Thomas.



FROM THE DESK OF
GOVERNOR DESANTIS



Governor Ron DeSantis Highlights Florida's Nation-Leading Education Successes Leading into 2026-27 School Year

Governor Ron DeSantis celebrated the start of the 2026-2027 school year by highlighting Florida's continued leadership in education. The event showcased Florida's commitment to putting students first by supporting teachers, empowering parents, and maintaining high academic standards that will continue to produce nation-leading results.

"We've led the way to champion policies that expand opportunities for students, strengthen workforce education, support great teachers, and ensure every child has access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in life," **said Governor Ron DeSantis.** "As students across the state get ready to go back to school, we wish them a successful year ahead. We appreciate the parents, educators, and school leaders whose dedication to students is leaving them better prepared than ever, and we will keep working to ensure that the best days for education in Florida are still ahead."

"Education changes the trajectory of a child's life. Every classroom, every lesson, every parent, and every educator help shape opportunities that extend far beyond the next grade level or graduation," **said Commissioner of Education Henry Mack**. "As we begin this school year, we remain committed to building on our successes and strengthening Florida's education system as a national model of excellence—challenging students to reach their highest potential, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to succeed in their future careers, and preparing them to make meaningful contributions to Florida and the United States as productive citizens."

As students return to classrooms across Florida, Governor DeSantis reaffirmed his commitment to building on Florida's momentum by continuing to invest in teachers, expanding educational opportunities through school choice, strengthening workforce education, and ensuring every student is prepared for success in college, career, and life.

Governor DeSantis highlighted Florida's historic student achievement gains. For the first time ever, more than 60% of Florida students are performing on or above grade level in both English language arts and mathematics. Since 2023, student performance on Florida's nation-leading progress monitoring assessments has increased in both English language arts and in mathematics.

Governor DeSantis also emphasized Florida's historic investment in educators. Since 2019, the state has invested more than $7 billion through the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation to raise teacher pay. As a result of these investments, Florida's average starting teacher salary has increased from $40,000 to $50,200 since 2019. Additionally, the 2026-27 budget includes $1.56 billion for teacher salary increases, including $200 million dedicated to raising the salaries of experienced teachers with at least 10 years of service in Florida public schools.

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS AWARDS NEARLY $8.8 MILLION FOR PROJECTS ACROSS NORTHWEST FLORIDA RURAL COMMUNITIES

Governor Ron DeSantis awarded nearly $8.8 million to 12 small and rural communities across Northwest Florida to support critical infrastructure investments and community development projects. The funding, awarded through the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the Community Planning Technical Assistance (CPTA) Grant Program, will support projects that strengthen local infrastructure, enhance community resiliency and promote long-term economic growth. "This morning in Bonifay, I was pleased to announce more than $8.8 million in funding for critical infrastructure and community development projects in 12 small and rural Florida communities," **said Governor Ron DeSantis**. "These Community Development Block Grant awards will help improve water and wastewater systems, stormwater infrastructure, roads, and workforce housing. These investments promote long-term economic growth that will help rural Florida families thrive for many years to come."

"Strong infrastructure and thoughtful community planning are essential to creating opportunities in Florida's small and rural communities," **said Secretary of Commerce, J. Alex Kelly**. "Under Governor DeSantis' leadership, these investments will help communities address critical water, wastewater, roadway and infrastructure needs while strengthening economic readiness and long-term resiliency. These projects give local leaders the resources they need to build stronger communities, support businesses and create greater opportunities for Floridians." The following communities will receive an award through the **Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.**

The Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered by FloridaCommerce, provides funding to eligible local governments for infrastructure, housing and economic development activities that principally benefit low- and moderate-income residents. The Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant Program provides funding to support communities in creating strategic plans to address local economic challenges, meet statutory planning requirements and assist in community resiliency efforts.

For more information about the Community Planning Technical Assistance (CPTA) Grant Program and the Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, visit www.FloridaJobs.org.

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS ANNOUNCES $60 MILLION IN CANCER INNOVATION AWARDS AND OPENS $70 MILLION APPLICATION CYCLE

Governor Ron DeSantis announced $60 million in awards through the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Florida Cancer Innovation Fund and opened the application cycle for Fiscal Year 2026-27, with $70 million available for new awards, a $10 million increase over last year.

"Today, I was proud to announce the winners of this year's Florida Cancer Innovation Fund awards and the opening of applications for next year's awards. This promising initiative now has $70 million in funding for groundbreaking cancer research projects, $10 million more than the previous cycle," **said Governor DeSantis**. "Congratulations to the awardees, and thank you for all you do to make Florida a beacon of hope in cancer research and treatment."

Since 2019, Florida has invested more than $1.4 billion in cancer research and treatment, and funding for cancer research programs has increased by more than 175 percent under Governor DeSantis. In Fiscal Year 2026-27 alone, Florida committed nearly $228 million to cancer research and innovation.

"Governor DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis have shown tremendous leadership in making cancer research a priority in Florida, and I'm incredibly grateful for their continued commitment," **said State Surgeon General Dr. Joseph A. Ladapo**. "These investments give researchers the freedom to ask important questions, explore new ideas, and follow the evidence wherever it leads."

The Florida Cancer Innovation Fund was established in 2023 with an initial investment of $20 million to support Florida-based researchers, institutions, startups and other entities pursuing innovative approaches to cancer prevention, treatment and cures.

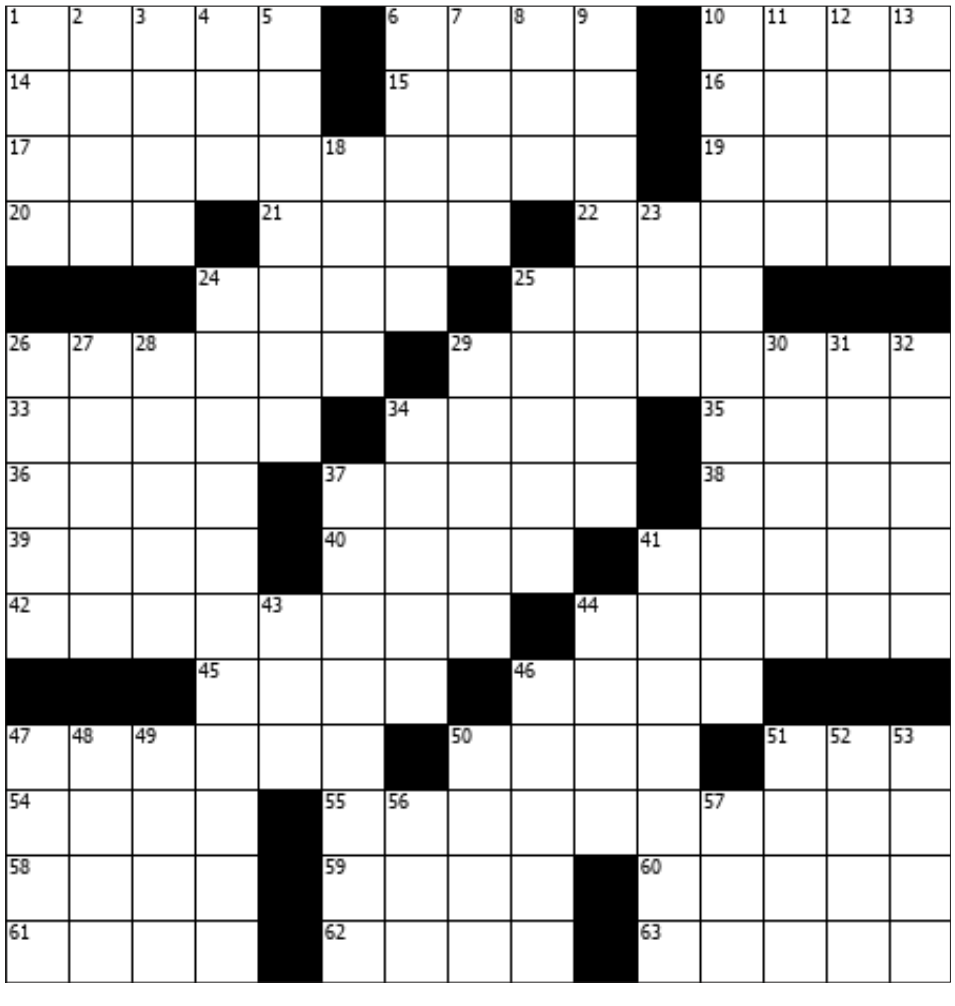
"Governor DeSantis and First Lady Casey DeSantis had a bold vision for what Florida could accomplish in the fight against cancer, and nearly 150 funded projects later, that vision is paying off for families in every part of our state," **said Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Shevaun L. Harris**. "From rural communities to major cancer centers, Florida patients are getting access to groundbreaking research and life-changing care close to home. This is what happens when a state decides cancer research is not optional. It is a priority."

Following a rigorous and competitive review process, $60 million was awarded through the Fiscal Year 2025-26 application cycle to researchers and institutions advancing the next generation of cancer prevention and treatment strategies. The awards support a diverse group of grantees across Florida, from established research institutions to emerging innovators pursuing promising new approaches in the fight against cancer.

The Fiscal Year 2026-27 application cycle is now open, with $70 million available for new awards, representing a $10 million increase over last year. Funding will continue to support innovative research in areas including preventive nutrition, emerging medical treatments, data infrastructure and patient-centered solutions designed to improve outcomes.

The Florida Cancer Innovation Fund is part of the state's broader commitment to advancing cancer research and collaboration. Through the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program, Cancer Connect Collaborative and other targeted investments, Florida is working to break down barriers between researchers and institutions and accelerate the development of new treatments.

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Florida, and nearly 40 percent of Floridians will face a cancer diagnosis during their lifetime. Florida's continued investments are designed to ensure researchers have the resources to pursue breakthroughs while giving patients and families greater access to innovative treatments and hope for the future.









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Lake County Sheriff's Office Initiatives



The SafetyNet Program assists individuals with cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's, dementia, autism or anyone who is at risk of wandering. The bracelet contains a unique radio frequency transmitter. If someone goes missing, deputies use special tracking equipment to locate them.



The Emergency Scent Kit is a proactive tool to assist in locating individuals who may wander or go missing — including seniors with cognitive disorders, young children, or vulnerable adults. The kit can preserve a person's scent for up to 10 years. To obtain an Emergency Scent Kit, please our Community Engagement Unit at: (352) 326-8108 or email



The Lockbox Program allows first responders to access your home in an emergency. A secure, coded lockbox is placed outside your home, containing a spare key that only authorized emergency personnel can access.

This program is available to Lake County residents who are age 55 or older, or disabled individuals who live alone and/or have significant medical conditions. The program is completely free for eligible Lake County residents.

A trained representative from the Lake County Sheriff's Office will install the lockbox and demonstrate how it works. The secure code is kept confidential and accessible only to responding emergency personnel. To get started, contact the Lake County Sheriff's Office Community Engagement Unit at: (352) 326-8108 or email

communityengagement@lcso.org



The Vial of Life is a free program designed to give emergency responders pertinent medical information. Fill out the form included in the vial and store it in the refrigerator.

Participants place their completed form inside a labeled vial, which is then stored in the refrigerator. A "Vial of Life" sticker is placed on the front door to alert emergency personnel that the information is inside To request a Vial of Life kit, please contact our Community Engagement Unit at: (352) 326-8108 or email

communityengagement@lcso.org



Established in August 1996, the Lake County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Program continues to play a vital role in our agency's daily operations. Volunteers contribute their time and talents across various departments, providing valuable support that enhances our services to the community. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact our Community Engagement Unit at: (352) 326-8108 or email

communityengagement@lcso.org

Current Volunteers: Already volunteering with us?

Please submit your monthly activity report to Community Engagement via email.





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