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Bradford

Union

Lake Region



You can't have a Starke Spangled Splash Bash without a splash, which Makye Williams prepares to enjoy at the bottom of this slide. The event, which moved from the Bradford High School football field to the Bradford Agricultural Fairgrounds, consisted of a variety of activities and entertainment.



Fireworks in Union County light up the night following a day of festive activities.



Paisley Tonione, pictured with Alicia and Kyle Tonione, won first place in Keystone with her Berry Almond Creme Pie.

Celebrate the Fourth!



WORTH NOTING

Candidate forum July 20

The Bradford County Republican party is sponsoring a candidate forum on Saturday, July 20, starting at 6 p.m. at the ARC of Bradford County, 1351 S. Water St. (S.R. 100 near the radio station). All candidates for office are invited to attend. If candidates have a conflict with the date, they may send a surrogate to speak on their behalf.

In addition, WEAG 106.3 will broadcast the forum on the radio.

For more information contact BCREC secretary Donna Solze at 904-364-6076.

Solicitations in connection with this event are made by Bradford County Republican Party and are not made by any federal officeholder.

Candidate forum July 25

Starke Commissioner Janice Mortimer and the Bradford County Democratic Executive Committee are sponsoring a nonpartisan community political forum on Thursday, July 25, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Church of God by Faith Community Learning Center, 721 Old Lawtey Road in Starke. All candidates and community members are welcome.

Come meet local candidates, ask questions, hear their platforms and network with neighbors who share your interests and concerns. Active participation is the key to a thriving democracy, so come influence conversation and gather the information needed to make educated decisions about the upcoming elections.

Light refreshments will be provided.

Food distribution at True Vine

A communitywide food distribution hosted by Farm Share and True Vine Ministry will take Tuesday, July 23, at 10 a.m. at True Vine Outreach Ministry in Starke.

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

Starke opts out of fire assessment as county moves forward

BY MARK J. CRAWFORD
mark@bctelegraph.com

The city of Starke has reportedly ruled out participation if the county commission approves a new special assessment for fire rescue funding.

The decision was revealed during discussion at the county commission's July 2 meeting, during which commissioners voted to advance an ordinance imposing the fee to a final reading.

The Starke City Commission has not voted on the assessment as other municipalities have, but city representatives were present as county commissioners and staff discussed the ordinance before them last week.

No decision has been made on the amount of the assessment, but Starke's refusal will raise the cost for

other property owners paying to fund fire rescue services.

Hampton and Lawtey have demonstrated support for the special assessment, although Lawtey's decision may hinge on the outcome of discussions about a renewed memorandum of understanding about the city's fire station and the costs of maintaining it. Brooker was on the fence as of its June meeting, with concerns about whether a new fire station there would be fully funded.

Bradford County Fire Rescue Chief Ben Carter expressed confidence Brooker would approve the assessment since it would pay for the personnel needed to staff a fire station there.

While she had questions about who was opting in or out of the assessment and what the amount of the assessment

would be, Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Spooner did not question the need for a fire assessment.

"I know in spirit we must do something, have some kind of assessment for our fire rescue. That's a given. We have to. We can't continue funding it under the same conditions that we have, but what that number ends up being is important," she said.

Consultant Stantec reworked the numbers, which previously placed the assessment at \$309 a year per residential dwelling unit (or 20 cents per square foot in nonresidential buildings) to recover more than \$4 million for the fire department's \$4.85 million budget.

That was based on 10,656 dwelling units and nearly 5.86 million square feet of nonresidential building space.

Subtracting the residential and commercial square footage from the city of Starke leaves 8,729 residential units and just 2.8 million square feet of nonresidential space.

This results in a new residential fee of \$334 a year if the county commission went with 100% cost recovery — higher, but not significantly different without the city's participation. But Carter acknowledged that neither commissioners nor the public were comfortable with funding the total amount.

The residential fee drops to \$251 a year at 75% cost recovery, \$167 at 50% cost recovery and \$84 at 25% cost recovery.

See FEE, page 7

Union EOC prepping for storms, constructing complex

BY TRACY LEE TATE
Special to the Times

Things are busy at the Union County Emergency Operations Center, not only because of the time of year but because of the ongoing construction of the new Public Safety Complex, which is now underway.

Emergency Management Director Tim Allen said that hurricane experts are expecting a highly active hurricane season this year due largely to higher-than-normal water temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean and a greater influence from the La Nina weather phenomenon (also higher than normal). These conditions can lead to a greater likelihood of any low-pressure system over the ocean that may turn into a tropical depression, storm, or hurricane.

Shelters available

Allen wanted to point out the single most important thing that families can do in case of a storm — all agree on a single place to meet as soon as

it is safe to get and stay there. This is especially important if the local cell towers go down, which is not an uncommon occurrence. He also wanted to mention the shelters in the county that will open if the need arises. The only shelter in Union County is at the Union County High School. This location will provide regular and special needs shelters, as well as a special area for people who feel they need to bring their pets.

The Special Needs Shelter is for people who are power dependent (as for medical equipment), rely on medications that require refrigeration or other special measures or those that require constant care. It is operated by the Union County Health Department. Persons with special needs are asked to pre-register for a spot in the shelter and may do so by signing up at the Florida Special Needs Registry online. Allen said that some medical practices will assist patients in getting registered as well.

The shelter area for pets has requirements for bringing on an animal. The animal must be caged or



The architectural drawing of what the Union County EOC will look like when it is completed.

confined, and the owner must bring the supplies needed for the pet, including food, water, supplies to keep the animal clean and any medications the animal may need. The shelter for pets is mainly designed for dogs and cats.

Residents should evacuate when recommended by county officials.

This usually happens in cases where residents live in mobile homes and low-lying areas. Even then, a recommendation is made for them to evacuate to more sturdy residences or buildings. Going to a shelter is

See EOC, page 5

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Lake Region

Ninety-six entries parade down Lawrence Boulevard

BY JENN SAMSEL
Lake Region Kiwanis

Keystone Heights marked its 56th observance of Independence Day with the Freedom 5k race, followed by the Lake Region Kiwanis "The Sounds of Freedom" parade, vendors, music, and other activities.

The Lake Region Kiwanis parade had 96 participants, all showing their best talent. Overall, there were 12 winners.

Following the parade, a diverse range of festival events unfolded. Johnny's Barbecue sponsored the second annual hot dog eating contest, followed by the Keystone Heights Heritage Commission pie-making contest. The day continued with The Wild West Gunslingers & the Shadow Riders Wild West Show and concluded with a thrilling performance by the Gatorland Water Ski Show Team.

The Keystone Heights Heritage Commission's second annual pie-making contest was a fierce battle of culinary skills. The eight pies presented were all of exceptional quality, making it a tough decision for the judges to select the top three. Paisley Tonione, age 6, took first place in



Sounds of Freedom Parade Grand Marshal Dr. James Minesinger



Helen and Dewitt Hersey

her first pie-making competition. Keystone Heights was delighted to host two new guest performances. The Wild West Gunslingers & the Shadow Riders Wild West Show, hailing from Ocala, and the Gatorland Water Ski Team, from Melrose, put on a show to remember.

Their performances were filled with humor, comedy, and awe-inspiring stunts, leaving the audience thoroughly entertained and impressed.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all our volunteers for their invaluable assistance with the events and parade. Your dedication and

hard work were instrumental in making this celebration a success. We are truly grateful for your contribution and couldn't have done it without you.

Parade winners:

1st place Best Business Entry - Gatorland Water Ski Show Team

1st place Most Original - Wild West Gunslingers & the Shadow Riders

1st place Best Youth Entry - RK Stables

1st place Judge's Choice - Amvets Post 86

1st place Closest to Theme - We Deer-ly Love the Sounds of Freedom

1st place Best Marching Unit - Keystone Heights High School Cheer

2nd place Best Business Entry - Moccasin Creek Jeep Club

2nd place Most Original - Hope Baptist Church

2nd place Best Youth Entry - Miss Keystone Heights High School Paige Harrington

2nd place Judge's Choice - Nigel's Crew

2nd place Closest to Theme - Classical Conversations of Keystone Heights

2nd place Best Marching Unit - AHG FL 7884 (American Heritage Girls)

Pie-making contest winners:

1st Place - Paisley Tonione (Alicia & Kyle Tonione) - Berry Almond Cream Pie

2nd Place - Melinda McDonnell - Palmers Peachy Pie

2nd Place - Gregory J. Gay - Bake Well Cherry Pie

3rd Place - Hayley Murphy - Peach Pie.



Keystone Heights Mayor Nina Rodenroth was joined by her favorite child Jake.



Clay County Sheriff Michelle Cook



Miss Keystone Heights High School Paige Harrington



American Legion Post 202 Commander Cindy Lee



2nd place pie winners - Gregory J. Gay - Bake Well Cherry Pie and Melinda McDonnell - Palmers Peachy Pie



3rd place pie winner - Hayley Murphy - Peach Pie



Keystone Heights High School JROTC advisor Lt. Col. Richard Hall as Captain America

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