**FREE VOL. VI, NO. 41** 

### **ARCADIA OCTOBER 23, 2025** COMMUNIT



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Local

# **BULLDOGS WIN DISTRICT** AMPIONSH



**DESOTO COUNTY** 

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The DeSoto Bulldogs won the 4A District 9 championship to boost their record to 16-11 this season.



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer sports@peacerivershopper.com

In a Disney themed championship game, there were Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse along with Wildcats and Bulldogs in the DeSoto County High School gymnasium for the 4A district 9 championship match. Just as it is in real life, it was the Bulldogs that found themselves on the top of the food chain with a 3-0 sweep over the Lady Wildcats from Hardee.

It may have been one of the most quiet championships you'll ever see. DeSoto has beaten Hardee in 25 of

26 matches in the history of the two programs. This season the teams met three times with DeSoto taking all 9 sets. The Bulldogs just went out and did their jobs with 25-12, 25-15 and 25-12 win over Hardee.

The only real exciting moment in the match was a



**Athletic Director Matt Martin presented** Brooke Zolkos and Danielle Taylor with the 4A district 9 championship trophy.

SEE CHAMPS PAGE 8 >>

### **DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS** PAGE 4 **STEVE KNAPP** sports@peacerivershopper.com

Publix

# GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS OCCUR THE **1ST AND 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED** 

Margaret Way Building 23 N. Polk Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266

**DESOTO COUNTY** 

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING** 

TUE 3P & 6:30P

**Administration Building** 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

**DESOTO COUNTY** 

TRICK OR TREAT

**Turner Agri-Civic Center** 2250 NE Roan Street Arcadia, FL 34266

NOV 

**DESOTO COUNTY** 

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING** 

TUE 5:30P **Administration Building** 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

Active dates and times are subject to change. County: http://desotobocc.com/calendar City: https://arcadia-fl.gov/events/







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223 E. OAK ST. STE. 1 ARCADIA, FL 34266

# MILLS COMPLEX OPENS; LIVERPOOL REZONE RESCHEDULED



**CAROL MAHLER** 

Independent Contractor carolmahler22acl@gmail.com Photos provided

At the Oct. 14 meeting of the **Board of County Commissioners** (BOCC), Commissioner Elton Langford commented that he had "checked out" the new offices for the property appraiser and tax collector at the Mills Complex, 815 N. Mills Ave., and had seen Road and Bridges Dept. working on the landscaping. County Administrator Mandy Hines was grateful for the Dept.'s work: "It saved a tremendous amount." Chairperson J.C. Deriso also appreciated the Dept. for mowing all of the roadsides and the parks and "making DeSoto [County] look its best."

In addition, Deriso, Langford, Commissioners Jerod Gross and Judy Schaefer rescheduled the public hearing on the PUD Rezoning for Liverpool from Oct. 28 to the May 2026 meeting in response to a letter from Attorney Neale Montgomery of Pavese Law Firm on behalf of the applicant Robert M. and Barbara G. Tiffany Company, Trustees. The applicant needs more time to file an application for a crossing with Seminole-Gulf Railroad; meetings with the neighbors; and to discuss with the Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) the intersection of Liverpool Rd. and U.S. Highway 17. Vice-Chairperson Steve Hickox was absent.

Also, Hines read a letter from the 12th Judicial Circuit Trial Court Administrator Kim Miller thanking the County for the recent renovation of the third-floor courtroom to change the layout to improve safety. The letter acknowledge SEMCO Construction, Inc., as "professional and communicative and did beautiful work . . . they stayed on their timeline" and coordinated well with Information Technology (IT) team. An open house on Nov. 14 will "celebrate the renovation and reopening" of the courtroom. The Board agreed to the Court's request that the renovated courtroom be dedicated-with a photograph and plaque-to Judge James Parker (1944-2025) who served ten years as county judge (1975-1985) and 30 years as 12th circuit court judge (1985-2015).

### **IN OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board adopted the resolutions and agreements for the design, construction, and construction engineering and inspection (CEI) services to repave and improve 5.5 miles of NW Lily Ave. from State Road 70 to the Hardee County line with a FDOT Small County Road Assistance Program (SCRAP) grant of \$4,099,821.00 as well as 4,615 feet of NE Bishop St. from NE Masters Ave. to NE Cubitis Ave. with a FDOT Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) grant of \$1,285,132.00.



The Roads and Bridges Dept. saved money for the County and did an excellent job on the landscaping the Mills Complex, 815 N. Mills Ave.,

The sign for the County's Mills Complex tells the story: the Health Dept. and Property Appraiser's offices are open, but it may be a few months before the new Tax Collector's office is ready.



The Board proclaimed October as Domestic Violence Awareness month, and Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC) Victim Advocate Amadea Muzzicato accepted the proclamation from Commissioner Judy Schaefer. DeSoto was among the ten counties reporting the most domestic violence offenses according to population.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Utilizing the State Housing Initiative Program (SHIP) and Hurricane Housing Rehabilitation Program (HHRP) funds of \$356,306.93, the Board awarded bids to the sole bidders as follows: \$190,000.00 from White Sands Construction for the rebuild at 13215 SE Third Ave.; and from RD Welch Co., for the following rehabilitations: \$50,990.19 for 11325 SW Essex Dr.; \$64,342.46 for 1192 SW Rainbow Ave.; and \$50,974.28 at 310 W. Myrtle St..

The Board awarded the contract for Engineer of Record services with Weiler Engineering Corp. with a three-year term and two-optional one-year renewals with task authorizations establishing compensation on an as-needed basis for specific projects, as well as the work authorizations of \$80,000.00 and \$30,000.00, respectively, for continuing day-to-day general engineering services for the County and the County Utilities

The Board accepted a permanent utilities easement from Highway 17 Arcadia, LLC, for the County's roadside stormwater system constructed within

the private property for Giuseppe's Brooklyn Oven to accommodate the proposed widening of Poydras St..

The accounts and warrants drawn according to the Schedule of Bills Payable from Sept. 9 until Sept. 22 were approved.

As requested by Step-Up Suncoast serving DeSoto, Hardee, and Manatee counties, the Board proclaimed October 2025 as National Safe Sleep Awareness Month for families with infants and children because a child's brain grows rapidly during "safe sleep" and safe sleep practices include babies sleeping other backs, alone in a crib or bassinet, and more to prevent Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID).

### **COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

County Attorney Valerie Vicente reported that three of four corporate entities involved in Giuseppe's Restaurant have been officially served with a lawsuit with their responses due by Oct. 21-after which a hearing before the court may be scheduled. In

addition, the mediation with the VCH/ Osceola Organics was held on Oct. 8, and she will brief each commissioner individually and bring a formal proposal for settlement agreement to the Oct. 28 BOCC meeting.

Under the consent agenda, the Board approved the following items:

- new playground equipment purchased from GameTime/Playcore Co. for \$118.589.49 to replace the 20-year-old fixtures in the larger of two playgrounds on the southwest side of the Walt Brewer Sports Complex;
- the Emergency Preparedness and Assistance Grant (EMPA) of \$105,806.00 with the Florida **Division of Emergency Management** (FDEM) to reimburse the County for allowable costs to enhance the **Emergency Management Program;**

SEE BOCC PAGE 9 >>

# **WALK FOR WHITE CANE AWARENESS**



**CAROL MAHLER** 

Independent Contractor carolmahler22acl@gmail.com Photos provided

On Oct. 17, representatives from Big Brothers, Big Sisters; the County Library, the Sheriff's Office, Tidwell Hospice, and members of the public participated with Lighthouse Vision Loss Center (LVLC) and Senior Friendship Centers (SFC) on a "White Cane Walk (WCW)" at Walt Brewer Sports Park. The white cane is a symbol of independence for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

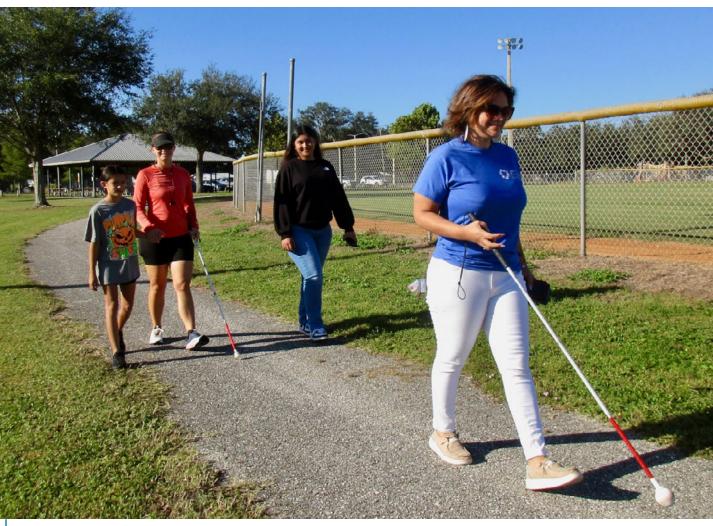
The event was a first in our county thanks to Dianna Harms, who has served as SFC Senior Service Manager for 14 years. She said that LVLC called her and wanted to bring the white cane walk to our county so that more people would be aware of it. She said, "It's part of our community working together to provide services that people need."

LVLC Client Experience Coordinator Mary Boswell said, "Our numbers in DeSoto County are growing. We've had more calls in the last few months, and that's very heartening." She gave a brief talk about the four-hour classes that LVLC offers once a week for six weeks. In the Activities of Daily Living class, visually impaired people can learn about how to safely plug in electrical devices, how to prepare food using special knives, and about other "tricks and tools for independent living." The Assistive Technology class helps visually impaired people use smart phones and I-pads. The Orientation and Mobility class includes instruction in using the white cane.

Boswell noted that when people attend the classes they also benefit from meeting others and knowing they are not alone as visual impairment is "an isolating issue." LVLC also provides a specialist to visit the home and make sure that furniture is safely placed, help the visually impaired person learn how to cook using her or his own stove, and other tasks.

Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT) and Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) Laura Swann explained that motorists especially recognize the white cane and the lowest section of the cane is red for those who live in areas where snow falls. She showed some different models-some that offer support and some that fold up-and how a visually impaired person can use the cane to avoid obstacles.

One of the canes has a round tip so that the person using it may keep it in constant contact with the ground, moving it back and forth the width of her or his body. Another technique that was used in Brewer Park was keeping the tip of the cane at the grassy edge of the path to keep the walker on the pavement. Swann invited walkers who



From left, McKinzly Tovar held hands with her mother, Bridget Connell, who has walked with a white cane for six years after learning how to from LVLS; Lilith Tovar, and Senior Friendship Centers Nutrition Program Manager Brenda Tejiega.



**Lighthouse Vision Loss Center (LVLC) Client Experience Coordinator Mary Boswell watched Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist** (COMS) Laura Swann demonstrate how to correctly use a light-weight white cane.



On the White Cane Walk, from left, Senior Services Manager Dianna Harms carried the Senior Friendship Center banner, in front of Nutrition Program Manager Brenda Tejiega, Justin Connell using a white cane, Lilith Tovar, and Debbie Harris.



**Experience Coordinator Mary Boswell and Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT)** Laura Swann noted that last year's White Cane Awareness events were canceled because of the hurricanes.

are not visually impaired to use a white cane to understand how it works.

More information is available by contacting LVLC at 941-359-1404 or online at info@ LighthouseEducationCenter.org.



**Outreach Coordinator** Janice Buth posed with the "Library On The Go" van at the White **Cane Awareness Day** in Brewer Park. She shared that the library has audio and largeprint books plus digital resources for those with visual impairment.

The team from the **DeSoto County** Sheriff's Office participated in the White Cane Walk at **Brewer Park: from** left, Sabrina Santucci, Heather Wilson. Yaletza Washington, Rosa Garcia, Shaneka Coone, and Juan Rojas.



- DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD (PRS)
- MOSAICFPL

# PEACE RIVER

# **DMS HOME FINALE ENDS WITH SPLIT**



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer sports@peacerivershopper.com

The DeSoto Bulldogs middle school softball team was rained out in their previous game at Lake Placid so a doubleheader was scheduled for their match up at DeSoto on 8th grade night. They might have wished for another downpour after their first game win 15-0. The nightcap was a shocking 8-3 loss to the Dragons.

DeSoto had no problems at all in the first game putting up 10 runs in the first inning and 5 in the second as the Dragons struggled with all three three facets of the game. They went through a couple of pitchers, they had a few errors and had trouble hitting Ava Eggers. That led to a quick 2 inning (drop dead time of 1:15) game.

In the ten run first inning the Bulldogs only had 1 hit because most of the pitches were out of the strike zone. The Dragon pitchers doled out 5 walks to go along with 3 hit batters, an error and a pair of wild pitches. That's all it took to plate 10 runs.

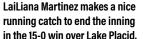
The magic wasn't there for the second game as the Bulldogs failed to get anything going and the Dragon bats got hot resulting in the 8-3 loss for DeSoto.

The Bulldogs finished their season with a 10-6 win at Sebring to give them a 7-2 record for the season.

Eggers collected 3 hits and needed a home run to hit for the cycle. DeSoto fell behind 4-1 in the second inning but battled back for the win. They started with a 5 run rally in the third inning to go up 6-4. The key hit came from Harlan Lawrence that drove in two runs.



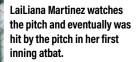
**Harlan Lawrence slides** safely home for a run in the 15-0 win over Lake Placid.





in the 15-0 win over Lake Placid.

Sebring tied it at 6 in the third inning. DeSoto broke the tie with 3 runs in the 4th inning with the big hits coming from Kamiya Coston and Lai'Liana Martinez.







Zyla Rendon makes a big turn around second and had to dive back to the bag in first inning



# DESOTO COUNTY ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

### Sponsored by: Mosaic

# 6U KEITH MISS DESOTO SOFTBALL



The 6U Keith team doubled up on Miss Charlotte winning 10-5 last Saturday at Harold Ave. Park. The win runs their record up to 8-0 with 2 games remaining.



STEVE KNAPP

The 6U Keith Miss DeSoto team has rolled through their competition this season with a perfect 8-0 record after last Saturday's 10-5 win over Miss Charlotte. They have two more games left on their schedule and are looking forward to an undefeated season.

In the game held at Harold Park on Saturday, it was a team effort that carried them to victory. Two players stood out making great plays in the field. Daleyza Tello and Sophia Kleis made several key outs to secure the victory. The team's timely hitting and hustle sealed the win. Emilia Wilson had a clutch hit and showed tremendous hustle on the bases earning the game ball. Tello received the dugout Bulldog for always being ready and being a great teammate.

The 6U Keith coaching staff has put in a lot of time and effort teaching the girls the fundamentals of softball. They also dressed up for the Halloween Bash games. Coaches include Zolton Deak, Michaela Wallace, Kaylie Rhoden, Tonya Wallace and Keith Wallace.



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# JEKYLL AND HYDE GAME ENDS IN LOSS



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer ports@peacerivershopper.com

The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Lewis Stevenson is about the duality of man. The good Dr. Jekyll and evil Mr. Hyde. The 42-0 blasting doled out by Lake Placid over the Bulldogs last Friday reminded me of that story.

The Dr. Jekyll part saw the Bulldogs play a strong first half. DeSoto only had the ball for one possession in the first quarter, but it produced a couple of highlights and showed the potential of the players on the team. After a pickup of 38 and 11 yards on the first two Dragon plays, Desoto's defense stiffened up and forced the Dragons to turn the ball over on downs.

The Bulldogs faced a 3rd and 16 when Jacob Tanner found Elijah Johnson over the middle of the field for a first down at the Dragon 42. The great thing about that play was Tanner had a very small window to hit and threaded the ball into EJ's hands as three Dragons were hanging all over him.

Later in the drive Blake Forman drew cheers from the team and fans alike as he hurdled a defender and picked up 16 yards on a spectacular piece of running. The drive died as the Bulldogs had a fumble and penalty to force a 4th down punt.

Lake Placid finished the guarter with a long drive but was kept off the board for a scoreless first quarter. The Dragons got inside the DeSoto red zone but again the Bulldogs' defense rose to the occasion as they had to settle for a 32 yard field goal.

Jamariyon Grant had a nice return of 19 yards to put the Bulldogs in good field position. A couple of illegal procedure penalties forced the Bulldogs back and punt into the wind. Lake Placid took over at the midfield stripe. Facing a 4th and 12, the Dragons struck for a 38 yard touchdown pass to run the score up to 10-0 where it stayed until the second

Before we get into the second half there were 3 major penalties on one play against Lake Placid in the waning moments of the half. A personal foul penalty and two dead ball unsportsmanlike penalties moved the ball to the Dragons' 7 yard line. A melee occurred as both teams swarmed the field after Devion Brown was body slammed after returning the punt. Brown was helped off the field. In the second half he had neck pains and pain in his hands and took off his jersey and had to sit out for the remainder of the game.

Coach Lohrey was calling timeout but didn't get it until there was time for just one play before the end of the half. I thought there should have been 6 more seconds on the clock which would have given the Bulldogs time for 2 plays. With the final play of the half, Tanner rolled out and threw a pass to a wide open receiver who couldn't find the handle



Blake Forman (22) goes in motion as the Bulldogs move downfield in the 42-0 loss at Lake Placid.



An exhausted Tyler Whidden comes off the field for

DeSoto in their loss to Lake Placid last Friday.

Cruze Miethke (56) gives Blake Forman a pat on the back after his big pickup in the loss at Lake Placid.

and dropped the ball. Even the sideline referee said he could have walked into the end zone.

Two plays, the 38 yard fourth down touchdown and the dropped pass, could have given the Bulldogs a 7-3 lead at the half and receiving the kickoff to open the second half. Instead it was still manageable at 10-0.

The third quarter was nothing but the evil Mr. Hyde. A third down and 15 pass was intercepted and returned for a touchdown. The missed extra point put the score at 16-0. In a matter of 4 plays that could have gone better turned into a 13 point swing.

Mr. Hyde took up residence on the Lake Placid sideline when the Dragons recovered an onside kick. A 40 yard pass to the one and touchdown on the next play boosted the score to 22-0. Another Lake Placid interception was returned to the one yard line. A 5 yard penalty and a crushing sack by Cruze Miethke put the Dragons back to their 11 yard line. They scored to make the score 28-0 with just under 5 minutes left in the quarter.





Devion Brown comes up with the kickoff and heads to the far side of the field for the Bulldogs.

### **DESOTO SPORTS**





STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer

The Lady Bulldogs volleyball team rolled through the district tournament with no trouble as they easily swept both Liberty and Hardee by 3-0 scores. They played Robinson last night in the first round of regional action. If they won then they would either travel to #1 seed Seminole or stay at home if #8 Gibbs pulls an upset. Either way the game will be played at 2pm on Saturday.

The varsity football team was shutout 42-0 at Lake Placid last Friday. They will travel to Hardee tomorrow to continue the "Oldest Rivalry" in the state.

The boys golf team went to Lemon Bay and was beaten 161-184. The Mantas had five golfers shoot 41 or better and one who shot 42 to tie him with the Bulldogs' top golfer Austin Henning.

No report from the girls golf team.

The middle school softball team closed out a successful 7-2 season by beating Sebring 10-6. Their two losses came against Hardee and Lake Placid. The Lake Placid loss was particularly tough since it was the second game of a doubleheader after the Bulldogs run ruled them in the first game.

The middle school football team lost to Sebring 40-6.

The Miss DeSoto fastpitch softball teams traveled to Port Charlotte for their Halloween Bash games on Saturday. The 6U Keith team, dressed as Super Heroes, played that way as they remained undefeated with a 10-5 win to run their record to 8-0. More about the team in the Athlete of the Week column.

The 6U Jos team, dressed as monsters, suffered a tough loss to Englewood 10-9 with a controversial call against DeSoto. Coach Joslynn said, "we're taking it as a win anyway." Ellie Walling reached base in every atbat, while Malani Davis won the spirit award. Gianni Rodriquez earned the "Happy meal coupon" for her effort throughout the game and especially in the last inning with a controversial play at third. Kinsley England and Ella Jones got a special treat for being so alert in the field and on the bases.

The 8U Kenny team, with nice Dalmatians costumes, lost a low scoring game 6-2 to Miss Charlotte White. That drops them to one game under 500 at 2-3. Assistant coach Weldon Campbell said, "Our bats went cold and we struggled to get the timely hits. Aaliyah pitched for 1 2/3 innings and struck out every batter. This was the best pitching performance by any of our pitchers this season. After walking the first 2 batters of the game, she then locked into her zone. Our defense was solid all game."

The 8U Nancy team brought the fiesta to the ball field. Even the parents wore festive shirts. It certainly was no fiesta for the Punta Gorda team as the DeSoto



The 8U Nancy team dressed in colorful costumes and crushed Punta Gorda 14-0.



The 8U Nancy coaching staff were definitely hard to miss in their bright costumes.



The 6U Jos team had a tough time at the Halloween Bash losing by a run to Englewood 10-9 on a controversial call.



The 8U Kenny Dalmatians team played a strong game but came out on the short end 6-2 against Miss Charlotte White.

girls blasted them 14-0. The offense and defense both were great for the entire game. Kinley and Vayda Orr received the game balls for great hitting, fielding and

positive attitudes with constant cheering from the dugout. The win brought their record up to 5-1.

### **CHAMPS**

FROM PAGE 1 >>

brief 9-8 lead by Hardee in the second set. DeSoto simply got to work and outscored Hardee 17-6 the rest of the way to wrap up back to back district championships.

It was truly a team effort as the two seniors and two of the 5 freshmen led the team in kills. Yahri Tyler and fellow senior Jordin Campbell combined for 14 kills while freshmen Emma Sorrells and Maddie Atherton totaled 16 with Sorrels leading the team with 11.

Juniors Brileigh Long scored 13 points with sister Brighten just behind with 12 points. Avery Hancock added 11 to round out the trio. Brighten Long led with 3 aces.

The win gives the Bulldogs a 16-11 record as they move into the regional portion of the state tournament.

> The Bulldogs gather into a pregame circle before their win over Hardee.





Freshman Emma Sorrells blasts one of her team high 11 kills in the sweep over Hardee.



DeSoto coach Danielle Taylor and Brooke Zolkos bookend their two seniors Yahri Tyler and Jordin Campbell along with Spike the DeSoto mascot.



Freshman Maddie Atherton gets one of her 5 kills in the win over Hardee.

### **FOOTBALL**

FROM PAGE 6 >>

Three touchdowns in less than 7 minutes put the Bulldogs into a deep hole that they would not be able to get out of. The next kickoff was muffed by Desoto and recovered on the Bulldog 25. A 7 yard run and extra point put the score at 35-0 and started the running clock.

Another kickoff was fumbled and recovered by the Dragons. There was a penalty on the play so they had to rekick. Same results, another pooch kick that was fumbled and recovered by Lake Placid. Four kickoffs all in one quarter and recovered by the kicking team must be some kind of record.

On the opening play of the final quarter, the Dragons scored on a 43 yard play and with the kick made the final score 42-0. Lake Placid had another interception at the Bulldogs' 27 and scored, but it called back because of a penalty. It was their second one of the game to be called back.

There were a few "Dr. Jekyll" moments for DeSoto. Tyler Whidden played perhaps his best game of the season and was in on nearly every tackle. I watch for little things in a game and I saw him chasing down a player who had intercepted a Bulldog pass. A

big lineman is usually no match for a faster running back or linebacker, but Whidden was in full pursuit and nearly caught up to him. It would have been so easy to just quit chasing him knowing that he had no chance to catch him but Whidden made the effort. That is a little known play that doesn't show up on any stat sheet, but it shows what kind of football player Whidden is.

Johnson and Forman both had outstanding plays on the first Bulldog drive and I liked the effort Forman gave on an extra point kick. He went horizontal and nearly got a piece of the ball. While it didn't make a difference in the final score, Forman continued to put out the effort. Johnson was helped off the field after the game, looking like a scene in a war movie, he was hurting. He still managed a smile and asked me how I was doing.

There were several more efforts from players who didn't have any quit in them. It is an admirable quality to have the "want to" and drive to continue in such a tough season. They are the building blocks for next season.

The Bulldogs will travel to Hardee to continue the oldest rivalry in the state next Friday.



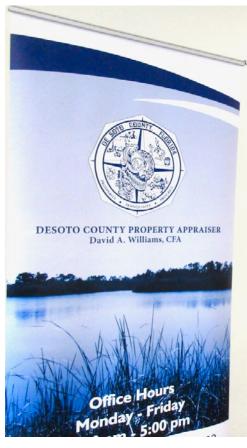
Yahri Tyler picks up one of her 9 kills in the 25-12 first set win of the district championship over Hardee.

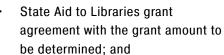


### **BOCC**

#### FROM PAGE 3 >>

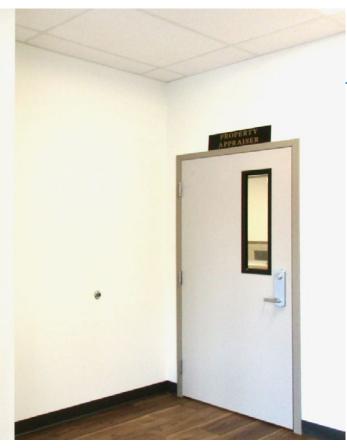
- annual agreement with Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) for a grant of \$69,587.50 with 25% matching County funds of \$17,396.88 for the mosquito control program;
- agreement for a Community **Development Block Grant Disaster** Recovery (CDBG-DR) of \$5,250.00 from Florida Commerce as the 25% County matching funds for the FDEM Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) of \$15,750.00 for a total cost of \$21,000.00 for the Phase I Fire Station 2 External Safe Room:
- a one-year renewal agreement, the first of two renewals for the original three-year agreement with AC Disaster Consulting, LLC, for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Program Consulting Services as needed;
- \$62,246.52 purchase of a Ford F250 utility truck-used as the service truck for the one-arm bandit mowing tractor-replacing a 25-year-old vehicle;
- \$57,171.00 purchase of a Ford F250 Crew Cab pickup truck-used for transportation of employees and hauling of litter-control equipment to and from job sites-replacing an older vehicle "that requires costly repairs often due to age";



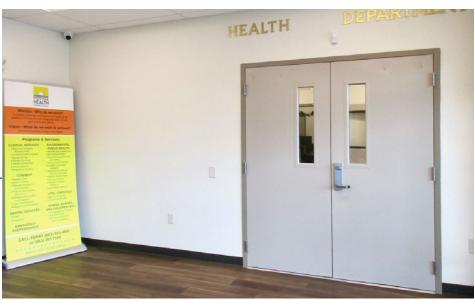


authorization for the County's participation in the "Secondary Manufacturers Settlements" for Opioid Settlements.

> Inside the lobby is the well-marked entrance and signs for the Florida Dept. of Health-DeSoto that has been operating in the Mills Complex for more than a month.



A sign in the lobby of the Mills Complex directs customers to the Property Appraiser's office that is open for business and still a work in progress.





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### **Notice of Certification of Tax Roll**

Pursuant to Section 197.323(1), Florida Statutes, notice is hereby given to all taxpayers and owners of both real and personal property that the 2025 DeSoto County Tax Rolls have been extended to show the tax attributable to all taxable property and that said tax rolls were certified for collection to the Tax Collector on October 16, 2025.

Milliann.

David A. Williams, CFA, CCF **DeSoto County Property Appraiser** 



## DESOTO COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER David A. Williams, CFA, CCF

863.993.4866 • 815 N. Mills Ave., Ste. 101, Arcadia, FL 34266 www.desotopa.com

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

# SAM ELLIOTT LOOK-ALIKE VISITS ARCADIA



**CAROL MAHLER** 

Independent Contractor carolmahler22acl@gmail.com Photos provided

When Roger Marks worked as a meat cutter in a Publix grocery store five or ten years old, his co-workers told him he looked like the Sam Elliott, an actor acclaimed for his roles in Western movies. In addition, Elliott's rugged appearance and resonate voice inspired his fans to characterize him as "the sexiest man" age 65 or older.

Not one to watch television or movies, Marks had never heard of Elliott, so he searched for him on the Internet. When he saw Elliott's photograph, he said, "That guy looks like me!"

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Marks and Clark were in Arcadia last Sat. to find the perfect background for publicity photographs. He rode his motorcycle and is looking forward to returning for Bert's Arcadia Bike Fest. on Nov. 1.

The Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo mural, on the west side of the building at 47 W. Magnolia St., was a great scene for Sam-Elliott look-alike Roger Marks.

The Tree of Knowledge Park in Arcadia provided the perfect background for a photograph for Roger Marks in a coat and stance



With sponsorship from United Country/Gulfland Real Estate, the DeSoto Arts Center and Arcadia Main Street partnered in a downtown photography project that features scenes from the Arcadia Rodeo, and Roger Marks looked the part in front this photograph by Jimmy Peters.





Roger Marks complemented the Western-wear apparel and accessories on display at Blossoms Beauty and Boutique, 134



Although busy with those attending the Arcadia All-Florida Championship Rodeo last Sat., the Broken Spur Diner, 10 S. Polk Ave., welcomed Roger Marks to pose in front of their dining room mural.

Laura Partridge of Laura's Good Vibe Tribe Thrift Shop, 213 W. Oak St., loaned a cowboy hat to Roger Marks to complete his "Sam Elliott" look for photographs in Arcadia.

# **BIKER COMMUNITY TO GIVE BACK TO ARCADIA COMMUNITY**

### American Legion Riders Host a Toy Drive at Upcoming Arcadia Bike Fest



ARCADIA, FL (October 16, 2025) - American Legion Riders will host a toy drive during Arcadia Bike Fest on Saturday, November 1, 2025, and is encouraging all local motorcycle groups and enthusiasts to bring unwrapped, new toys to help DeSoto County families during the holidays.

"For years now, Arcadia Main Street has invited the biker community twice a year to enjoy the downtown shops and restaurants. Hosting a toy drive is a great opportunity to say thank you to DeSoto County for welcoming us," said Erin Hoffer, who is the road captain and safety officer for District 8 of the American Legion Riders Department of Florida. "Riders are known for their generosity, especially for helping children. If everyone brought just one new, unwrapped toy, we'd truly make a difference for local families in DeSoto County."

The toys will benefit three local community entities who provide impactful holiday programs for local youth - the Arcadia Police Department's Shop with a Cop program, the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office's Shop with a Sheriff program and the Marine Corps Reserves DeSoto County for Toys for Tots. Both Arcadia Main Street and the Arcadia-**DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity have** also made the toy drive possible.

"The director from the Arcadia American Legion Riders and I first brought the idea to Arcadia Main Street, and it was so exciting to see that in the end, five local organizations stepped up to help make this possible," Hoffer said. "The collaboration and willingness to make this toy drive a reality is extraordinary. Now it's up to the bikers to bring the toys."

The American Legion Riders is a program of the American Legion. Founded in 1919, The American Legion is the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, committed to advocating for patriotism, service and support for veterans and their families. One of the organization's four pillars is focused on children and youth. District 8 of the American Legion Riders Department of Florida consists of 10 chapters throughout DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

Toys for all ages are needed for the holiday programs and should be new and unwrapped. Walmart gift cards are also welcomed. Any donated stuffed animals may be provided to first responders to assist during calls involving children. "Please do not bring electronics, as





those are not needed," Hoffer said.

The toys will be collected during Arcadia Bike Fest in various boxes spread throughout Oak Street and within Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity vehicles along one of the side streets of the festival. The Arcadia Police Department has agreed to patrol the

boxes and empty them as necessary.

**Arcadia-DeSoto County** 

**Habitat for Humanity** 

"If you are planning to ride to Arcadia Bike Fest, either by bike or by cage, we truly hope you bring an unwrapped, new toy with you to donate," Hoffer said. "It's an easy way to make a difference for a child this season."

Everyone is also invited to Arcadia

American Legion K Post 11 during Arcadia Bike Fest to enjoy BBQ dinners and live music.

Toys can be

dropped off

in boxes

along on

Humanity

side street.

For more information about Arcadia Bike Fest, visit ArcadiaMainStreet.com/ Arcadia-Bike-Fest. For more information about the American Legion Riders, visit FLALR.org.

# **BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES:**

### REAL FAITH ENDURES (JAMES 5:7-12 NLT)

### **PASTOR ABDIEL FUENTES**

First Christian Church of Arcadia **DeSoto County Ministerial Association** 

If life's heavy right now and you're hoping for a breakthrough without a battle, let me be clear-that's not how it works. James doesn't offer shortcuts here. He calls you to be patient and endure. Because when endurance is fully developed, you'll be "perfect and complete, needing nothing" (James 1:4). That's how real faith is revealed. When suffering stretches you thin and answers don't seem to come-don't flinch. Don't lose hope. Persevere. Faith that endures hardship without compromise is faith that proves itself aenuine.

Jesus said the only work God requires of you is to believe in the one he sent (John 6:29). That may sound simple, but James said your faith will be tested. And when it is, you're expected

to be patient and endure. God is coming, so hold the line until he does.

The Greek word for patience here is 'makrothumia.' It's choosing not to retaliate, even when you could. It's the spiritual grit to suffer well, to trust deeply, and wait faithfully. Trust the Lord will make things right. That's not easy, I know, especially when you're crushed by power and injustice. But James, who just rebuked the rich for exploiting others, now turns to the mistreated and says, "You're not abandoned. God hears your cries. The Judge is standing at the door." So be patient-like the farmer. He works the soil, plants the seed, and waits for rain. No shortcuts. No control over the weather. He prepares and trusts. That's your posture. And understand that waiting isn't weakness

or wasted time-it's how God develops you.

Consider Job. Satan accused him of conditional faith-faith that only works when life's good. But then Job lost his wealth, his servants, his children, and his health. Satan stripped him of everything good-except his wife (you can interpret that how you want). Job wasn't perfect. He complained. He questioned. He even wished he'd never been born. But he endured, and God honored him for that.

But notice something here: Satan wasn't really attacking Job's characterhe was challenging the very nature of faith itself. So, how's your faith? Are you faithful only when life's easy? Do you endure when it's not? James 5:11 says, "We give great honor to those who endure under suffering... for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy." So that's the takeaway: Faith isn't instantit's proven through perseverance. And when hard times come, show emotional restraint and relational control (patience), but also spiritual grit and situational resilience (endurance). You need both.

Finally, be mindful of your words while waiting. James says don't grumble and don't swear oaths-say yes or no. When suffering drags on, frustration starts talking. Don't let pressure push you into profanity-spiritual or otherwise. Silence can be holy. And remember, God isn't mismanaging your life-He's maturing you.







# Realtor Showcase











Florida Power & Light Company is proud to support the 12th Annual Arcadia Fall Rodeo!

We are committed to keeping DeSoto County's ranching heritage strong while powering our future through innovative projects including our FPL Cattle Ranch Solar Energy Center cattle grazing agrivoltaics pilot.



# ONE MAN VOLLEYBALL EVENT WAS TRULY SOMETHING SPECIAL!

#### DARREL NICKLOW JR.

Community Contributor Photos provided

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## DeSoto County Ahead Resource Fair & Community Update

### **REGISTER NOW FOR**

The DeSoto County Ahead Resource Fair & Community Update is a free, one-of-a-kind event hosted by The Patterson Foundation.

The update will:

- Showcase local organizations
- Highlight valuable community resources
- Feature presentations from changemakers
- Offer actionable ideas to drive positive change

Whether you're a nonprofit, business, or community group, or an interested citizen, this is your chance to connect, collaborate, and help build a stronger DeSoto County. Scan the QR code to attend, be an exhibitor, or to volunteer.



What: A Community Update Dinner

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026

**Time:** 4:00p – 8:00p

**Location:** Turner Agri-Civic Center

Arcadia, FL 34266



**REGISTER HERE** qrs.ly/j6h2h50











### **DESOTO COUNTY**





### ARREST REPORT | 10/10/25 - 10/16/25

### Cozar, German Rodriguez:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

#### **Diaz, Eduardys Matos:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

#### **Geier, John Raymond:**

**Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled** Substance W/O Prescription, Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend **Revocation Equiv Status** 

### **Graves, Bryan Attwood:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status, Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 3Rd Sub Viol, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence, Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh (X3), Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status (X2)

### **Hearns Sr., Marcellous Douglas:**

Attery - Touch Or Strike

### Hillard, Brandon Shawn:

Onmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Wo Violence Motor Veh

### Jones, Elronnie Jayshun:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status, Fraud-Imperson - False Id Given To Leo

#### Lee, Anthony Jerome:

Possession Of Weapon - Or Ammo By Convicted Fla Felon, Aggrav Battery -Aggrav Battery With A Deadly Weapon

### Mendoza, Lassaro Hernandez:

**Battery - Commit Domestic Battery** By Strangulation, Battery - Touch Or Strike, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

### Molina-Rivas, Francisco:

Moving Traffic Viol - Drive Wo Lic Causes Death/Serious Injury W Veh

### Moore, Blake Allen:

**Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled** Substance W/O Prescription, Rug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Writ Of Bodily Attachment

- Non Criminal Arrest, Drugs-Possess
- Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Resist Officer - Obstruct

### **Morales, Vincent Junior:**

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Dui-Unlaw Bld Alch - Dui Influence Of Appear (X3)

### Pelham, Philip Adam:

Aggrav Battery - Person Uses A **Deadly Weapon** 

### **Ploof, Daniel:**

Amage Prop-Crim Misch - 1000 Dols Or More, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

### **Rhodes, Shawn Elizabeth:**

**Obstructing Justice - Hinder Witn** Commun Info To Leo/Judge Misd Proc

### **Rizzo, Tony Rock:**

Veh Theft - Grand Theft Of Motor Vehicle, Tolen Prop-Deal In, Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription (X2), Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use

### **Sutton, Matthew Bryan:**

Alcohol Or Drugs

### **Tovar, Israel Villanueva:**

Larc - Other Theft

### Vargas-Martinez, Edgar:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

#### **Velasquez, Anthony Gabriel:**

Contempt Of Court - Viol Injunction Protection Domestic Violence, Battery - Battery By Strangulation

Watson, Nakia Jamere: Battery - Touch Or Strike

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# SHERIFF POTTER'S TOP HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS



**SHERIFF POTTER** DeSoto County Sheriff

As the anticipation of Halloween is upon us, I am reminded of the importance of safety during this time of year. Halloween is a spooky celebration. It is also a time when we must prioritize the safety of our children and community.

I want to stress the significance of Halloween safety. Halloween is a time for fun. The holiday is also a time when our community's children are out and about in the dark, often mingling with strangers and crossing busy streets. This year, let us come together to ensure the ghosts, goblins and witches of our community have a night filled with sweet treats, not tricks! Here are some essential safety tips to keep in mind as we prepare for Halloween.

Costume Safety/ Visibility: No matter what you're dressed as, it is crucial that costumes are designed and chosen carefully with safety as a priority. Ensure costumes fit well to reduce tripping hazards. As the sun starts to set earlier this time of year, it's essential to maximize visibility. Encourage all



children to stay on well-lit streets and sidewalks. We recommend your child carry a flashlight, wear glowin-the-dark accessories and add reflective tape to their costume.

Trick-or-Treat Groups: We encourage all young children to be accompanied by a responsible adult while trick-or-treating. Older kids who go out on their own should stay in groups and have a designated

route parents or caretakers are aware of. Please make sure your kids have a cell phone to stay in

Treat Inspection: When your children return home, take the time to inspect their candy before allowing them to indulge. Throw away any unwrapped or suspiciouslooking items. It's also wise to set a limit on the amount of candy

consumed in one night!

Respect Private Property: Teach your children to respect others' property, by not walking through lawns, gardens, or trample decorations. Halloween is about fun, not causing damage or distress.

Street Safety: We want to emphasize the importance of looking both ways before crossing the street. Use crosswalks, follow traffic signals and exercise caution around moving vehicles.

Let's come together to make this Halloween a night to remember for all the right reasons. As your Sheriff, I encourage you to have a spooky, safe and enjoyable Halloween. The community is also invited to Sheriff Potter's Candy Cruise drive-thru event, which will take place Friday, October 31st from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. at the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office located at 208 E. Cypress Street. Let's work together to create cherished memories and make this holiday a true celebration of unity within our community.

Be Kind, Be Safe, God Bless. **Sheriff James Potter** 

# Join the Mission to Keep Florida

Communities

Safe





Recovery Solutions/Florida Civil Commitment Center

13619 Hwy 70 Arcadia, Florida 34266 (10.5 miles east of Walmart)

(863) 491-4800. To apply please visit RecoverySolutions.us/careers/

We have jobs and careers in security (\$21), nursing (\$23-38), direct care (\$15-16), mental health therapist, maintenance, food service and more...

We find the best fit for applicants based on their work history, attitude, education and interests. New employees receive intensive training and OTJ support.

YOU have choices! We offer Daily Pay, regular paychecks, various health care plans (health, dental, vision), 401K, sponsorship for the Correctional Academy, full time and PRN, some sign bonuses are up to \$2000, air conditioned work environment, tuition reimbursement and more...





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