

VOLUNTEERS

CLEAN UP DOWNTOWN



CAROL MAHLER
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Photos provided

On Oct. 4, more than 70 people volunteered for Arcadia Main Street’s (AMS) Downtown Clean-Up: members of the Arcadia Police Explorers, DeSoto High School (DHS) JROTC, DeSoto Middle School Cross Country Team, DHS Interact Club, Memorial Elementary School (MES) Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), and the YMCA of Southwest Florida—plus their sponsors and chaperones.

AMS Director Pam Ames told the group, “Thank you and I want you to know how much we appreciate you coming out.” She explained that each group would be assigned a different part of the downtown area, and after the work was finished, everyone was welcome to return to the AMS office for hamburgers or hotdogs for lunch. She also offered supplies—such as

While they were enjoying donuts and signing in, AMS Director Pam Ames thanked the volunteers, offered them supplies—such as gloves and trash bags, and welcomed them to return to the AMS office for a lunch of hamburgers or hotdogs.



Members of the DMS Cross Country Team Aubrey Randall, Kansas Ross, and Angelina Hernandez weeded a planter and picked up litter at the corner of N. Polk Ave. and W. Oak St..

SEE **CLEANUP PAGE 10** >>

DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS

PAGE 4

STEVE KNAPP

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GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY

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

OCT 13	DESOTO COUNTY COUNTY OFFICES CLOSED
MON	In observance of Columbus Day
OCT 14	DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUE 9A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
OCT 14	DESOTO COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
TUE 1:30P	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/>

Realtor Showcase

See page 11

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ARREST REPORT

See page 13

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOLDS SUCCESSFUL EVENT



Bakers in the Arcadia Albritton Coker Cake Contest are from left, Ruth Barney (standing in for Linda Reesor), Cindy McLeod Ely, Kathy Apodaca, Amber Jones, Chelsea Palmer, and Susie Catalano with Society Pres. Adrian Cline and Contest Judge Cindy Kinard. Palmer and Reesor both won \$25.00 each for the “most creative” and “most traditional” cake, respectively.

The Society recognized and appreciated Bonnie Molloy of Radio Shack, 707 N. Brevard Ave., for selling the most tickets to the 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal. The Society also thanked Crew Bank and Trust, member FDIC; Rosé Cafe and Bakery; and Sweet Magnolia Creamery and Confectionery for making tickets available for the public.



CAROL MAHLER
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Photos provided

On Oct. 4, more than 100 people enjoyed the DeSoto County Historical Society’s 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal in the Pine Level Church Fellowship Hall. Society members prepared and donated the traditional pioneer food. The Society thanked Fussell Frozen Foods for donating the pork steaks and Steve Fussell and the Fussell Realty team for preparing it to perfection.

Lifelong member of Pine Level Church and retired DeSoto School District First Grade Teacher Connie Bateman presented the history of the church and the town of Pine Level. Established in 1866 after the U.S. Civil War as the county seat of Manatee, Pine Level served for 21 years before it became the first county seat of DeSoto County formed in May 1887. It remained county seat until voters selected Arcadia in Nov. 1888.

Florida was an “open range” state until 1949 when the Warren Act (aka the “Fence Law”) was passed, so the Pine Level courthouse was surrounded by a fence to keep out cattle. It had a gate as well as “stiles” or ladders for people to cross. Bateman recalled climbing such a stile that was located in the Royal Howard subdivision near Peace River when she was a child.

Built near the courthouse was a two-story structure that was used as the second jail. David W. Mizell moved it, probably added the second-story porch, and used it as his home for many years. In his 1950 book, “A Yank Pioneer in Florida,” Allen H. Andrews recounts receiving a tour of the home from Mizell. It has since been demolished.

Although church services had been held in what is now known as the Pine



At the 5th Annual Florida Cracker meal, members of the Pine Level Youth Group served up traditional pioneer food, such as pork steaks, collards, tomato gravy and rice, black-eyed peas, corn muffins, and more.



At right, Society Pres. Adrian Cline thanked and recognized the 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal Co-chairpersons—from left, Linda Keen and Kathy Apodaca. Not only did they organize and prepare for the event, they also made some of the traditional food.

Last Sat., more than 100 people enjoyed the DeSoto County Historical Society’s 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal in the Pine Level Church Fellowship Hall with some people waiting in the buffet line while others began eating their food.

Level Camp Ground Cemetery since the mid-nineteenth century, the congregation was organized in 1868. They used a “brush arbor” in the camp grounds until the first sanctuary was built in 1884. According to tradition, the altar chair and rail in the present sanctuary are from the first church. For 39 years, it served until it was damaged by a hurricane—perhaps the one that hit Tampa Bay in 1921.

In 1914-1915, the East and West Coast Railway was built from Bradenton to Arcadia approximately parallel to today’s State Road 70. A depot was built at the intersection with Florida Ave., and the community was known as New Pine Level. A new brick school was constructed there. The old wood-frame Pine Level school was no longer needed, so the church bought the school for its

sanctuary in 1923. One of the hurricanes passing in the 1940s damaged the second floor, so the church was reroofed as a one-story structure. The steeple was donated by Hagan family in 1966.

For more information, contact the Society at 863-266-5774 or desotocountyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or check the Society’s Facebook page.



DeSoto County Historical Society (DCHS) President Adrian Cline presented a certificate of appreciation to Connie Bateman for her excellent presentation of the history of Pine Level Church and the Town of Pine Level at the Society’s 5th Annual Florida Cracker Meal.



ARCADIA-DESOTO COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SELECTED FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL CAPACITY- BUILDING OPPORTUNITY

*MARGIN & MISSION IGNITION, PART OF THE PATTERSON
FOUNDATION'S NONPROFIT THRIVABILITY INITIATIVE,
STRENGTHENS LOCAL NONPROFITS THROUGH EARNED-
INCOME STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION*



Arcadia, Fla. September 25, 2025 – Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity DBA DeSoto Habitat will work to strengthen its entrepreneurial capacity and increase its mission impact with earned-income strategies developed and implemented through its participation in Margin & Mission Ignition, an opportunity presented by The Patterson Foundation. As one of four regional organizations selected for Margin & Mission Ignition, DeSoto Habitat will work with No Margin, No Mission, a social enterprise and national consulting firm engaged by The Patterson Foundation, over a 30 month process. No Margin, No Mission will work with each nonprofit to develop and implement business plans to generate revenue and support their efforts in the community.

‘We are extremely blessed and excited by this opportunity from The Patterson Foundation. The initiative is helping us to develop a plan that will be beneficial not only to us but to our entire community. Said Jennifer Bowser, Executive Director of Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity

Throughout the process, the organizations participating in Margin & Mission Ignition will come together to learn from and share with one another based on their experiences. “We have learned that diversifying revenue streams does more than strengthen the financial viability of nonprofits – it can also build organizational capacity,” said Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of The Patterson Foundation. “Previous participants of Margin & Mission Ignition have developed and implemented earned-income plans that advance both their missions and impact. The Patterson Foundation is pleased to work with these organizations who have demonstrated the leadership, willingness, readiness, capacity and culture for success.

Margin & Mission Ignition is part of The Patterson Foundation's Nonprofit Thrivability initiative, which shares opportunities for organizations to

strengthen their mission impact by embracing a thrivable operating model. Nonprofit Thrivability works by connecting nonprofits with expertise and resources to learn and apply concepts such as strategic fundraising, ways to engage key decision-makers, and entrepreneurial principles to generate the revenue necessary to support and expand their operations. For more information about Margin & Mission Ignition, please visit thepattersonfoundation.org. For more information about Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity, please visit habitatdesoto.org.

ABOUT ARCADIA-DESOTO COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization started in July of 2000 operated on Christian principles that seeks to put God’s love into action by building homes, communities and hope. Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity is dedicated to eliminating substandard housing locally through constructing, rehabilitating and preserving homes; by advocating for fair and just housing policies; and by providing training and access to resources to help families improve their shelter conditions. Habitat for Humanity was founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a simple, durable place to live in dignity and safety. Decent shelter should be a matter of conscience and action for all.

ABOUT MARGIN & MISSION IGNITION

Part of The Patterson Foundation's Nonprofit Thrivability initiative, Margin & Mission Ignition is an opportunity for nonprofits in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties to develop and implement earned-income strategies to strengthen mission impact. For more information about Margin & Mission Ignition, please visit

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce’s Early Bird was held October 2nd and was hosted by DeSoto Memorial Hospital. The following students were recognized as Students of the Month. (not all are pictured)



KENDALL WAGONER
9TH GRADE

WILGLINIE TELISSME
10TH GRADE

VICTOR PAROCUA
11TH GRADE

JAHIEM EDMONDS
12TH GRADE



RICHAR MEJIA JUAREZ
6TH GRADE

KALILEA REAVES
7TH GRADE

ALI GONZALEZ-CASTILLO
8TH GRADE

GO BULLDOGS



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PEACE RIVER SPORTS

BULLDOGS SHUT OUT BY SEMINOLES 42-0



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacrivershopper.com

DeSoto suffered their 6th straight loss of the season at Southeast High School as the Seminoles put 42 points on the board in the first half to initiate a running clock for the second half. The Bulldogs kept the Seminoles out of the end zone in the second half as the Seminoles emptied their bench. DeSoto threatened to score but a series of penalties and a struggling offense kept them out of the end zone for the third time this season.

The game didn't start well for the Bulldogs who received the opening kick. After punting the ball away, the Seminoles needed just 5 plays to put up the game's first score 7-0.

DeSoto's second possession resulted in another punt with a little excitement added in. A bad snap to punter Julian Quezada had the big junior chasing the ball around inside the DeSoto red zone. He managed to get the punt off that went into the books as a 2 yard punt, but it was better than turning the ball over inside the red zone.

A swing pass for 39 yards on the first play gave the Seminoles a 13-0 lead as they failed to convert a two point attempt. The Seminoles added another touchdown just 15 seconds later on a scoop and score from 29 yards out to run the score to 21-0 after the two point conversion was successful.

DeSoto's fourth possession in the quarter saw them go backwards 7 yards forcing the Bulldogs to punt. Again there was some excitement in the punting game as the Seminoles ran into Quezada to give DeSoto a first down. The quarter ended with the Bulldogs trailing 21-0.

The change of direction didn't help the Bulldogs as the Seminoles took 3 plays to score on a 32 yard pass 53 seconds into the quarter. Carvaris Hatcher blocked the extra point kick to keep the score at 27-0.

The next Bulldog possession saw Haydon Ames pick up 8 yards to get the Bulldogs over the midfield stripe for the first time in the game. However, a holding penalty brought it back to the DeSoto 35. An illegal procedure penalty moved the ball back another 5 yards and the team was forced to punt.



Charlie Wilkinson gets a handful of jersey from running back Marvelous Jackson as he makes the tackle in the loss at Southeast.



Haydon Ames gets a block from Chevvy Wheeler as he gets to the 7 yard line on a 9 yard reception late in the game at Southeast.



Montavious McGill had an interception while Devion Brown also had an interception and fumble recovery in the 42-0 loss to Southeast.



Elijah Johnson and Tyler Whidden check on Geno Grossenbaugh after the big lineman hyper extended his wrist early in the game.

Southeast gained 14 yards and a facemask penalty that moved the ball to the DeSoto 15. A three yard touchdown run and two point conversion pushed the score to 35-0 midway in the second quarter.

The Bulldogs got into Seminole territory on the next possession when Elijah Johnson carried for 18 yards to the 50. Three plays later and facing a 4th and 6, the Bulldogs failed to convert and turned the ball over to the Seminoles at their own 46. With just under three minutes left in the half, Southeast scored again on a 12 yard pass and the point after kick ran the score to 42-0.

DeSoto had one more possession in the first half but had to punt. The Seminoles got the ball back with over a minute left and got into victory formation as they took a knee to run out the clock in the first half.

The second half was played with a running clock and saw a few things go the Bulldogs' way. In the first possession for DeSoto they picked up a first down

when the Seminoles drew an off sides penalty. As the Bulldogs moved to the Seminoles 45 yard line they were facing a 4th and 3. Another illegal procedure penalty pushed the Bulldogs back 5 yards and they turned the ball over on downs.

Still in the third, Devion Brown picked off a pass and returned it 29 yards to the Southeast 33 yard line. Unfortunately that scoring opportunity ended with the Bulldogs fumbling on the next play.

In the fourth quarter the Seminoles fumbled with Brown getting his second turnover when he recovered it on the Southeast 24 yard line. With the clock running the Bulldogs were trying to at least get on the board.

Johnson picked up 8 yards on the ground and Ames added 9 more on a pass reception to the 7 yard line and a first down. A fumble cost the Bulldogs 2 yards. Then quarterback Jacob Tanner called his own number to get the ball to the 5 yard line to face a third and goal from there.

Tanner got to 3 yard line but an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on DeSoto moved the ball back 15 yards. In an obvious passing situation with a fourth and goal from the 18 yard line, an interception ended the DeSoto drive and put the lid on another loss.

Johnson had a couple of impressive runs and Ames also added some pop to the Bulldogs offense, but the old bugaboo of fumbles and penalties at an inopportune time hurt any scoring chances DeSoto could muster.

On the defensive side, Brown had a pair of turnovers with a pic and fumble recovery, Hatcher had the blocked extra point try and Montavious McGill picked off a pass on a two point conversion attempt.

DeSoto has had a few sparks on both sides of the ball, but still need consistency to string together a few good plays in a row to make something happen. DeSoto will be home tomorrow night for their homecoming game starting at 7pm.

DESOTO COUNTY

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

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YAHRI TYLER & JORDIN CAMPBELL



Seniors Yahri Tyler and Jordin Campbell flank coach Danielle Taylor at senior night.



Seniors Yahri Tyler and Jordin Campbell were honored by family, friends and fans before the final home game.



STEVE KNAPP
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This week the two seniors on the volleyball team have earned the award for the DESOTO COUNTY ATHLETE OF THE WEEK. Yahri Tyler and Jordin Campbell have not only been leaders on the court,

but have helped the 3 freshmen as they get experience on the varsity team. At their senior night ceremony they had a huge contingent of family and friends to help honor and celebrate the careers of these two fine young ladies. If you missed them during the volleyball season, you can still see them in a few weeks as they turn in their volleyball uniforms for the upcoming basketball season.

Campbell said her biggest memories of her career was watching former coach Dave Bremer break his clipboard (hasn't everyone seen this) over his knee. She also claims that I have put the most "horrendous" photos of her in the paper. A final memory is when she received a yellow card at Sebring just a couple of weeks ago. She said, "all I did was look at the referee".

Tyler has been a 3 year all area volleyball team member (missed one year because of an injury) and last year she won the coveted "Female Athlete of the Year" award from the Daily Sun newspaper for her dominance in three sports. Tyler said her biggest memory was playing on the varsity team as a freshman along with her sister and being coached by Dave Bremer.



Senior Yahri Tyler and her family and friends celebrate Senior Night.



Jordin Campbell is surrounded by family and friends who came out to honor her at Senior Night.



Family and friends of seniors Yahri Tyler and Jordin Campbell gather on the court as they celebrate the accomplishments of both seniors.

DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK

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BULLDOGS CAN'T HOLD ON IN 14-12 LOSS



STEVE KNAPP
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The Desoto Middle School football team played well through the entire game, except for the final 5:19 in the fourth quarter as they couldn't hold on to a 12-0 lead that turned into a 14-12 loss to Lake Placid.

The first half was pretty much played between the 30's as both teams had trouble holding onto the ball for a sustained drive. DeSoto started with the ball but fumbled on their own 40 and the Dragons recovered. Their drive went nowhere as they gained just 2 yards and turned the ball over on downs.

The Bulldogs coughed the ball up on their own 45 giving the Dragons a short field to work with. That possession went backwards 3 yards as they fumbled the ball away with the Bulldogs covering it up. That wraps up the first 8 minutes as both offenses couldn't move the ball.

The second quarter saw both teams slug it out and no points to show for it. Rah'Motni Watson carried most of the work load for the Bulldogs picking up 17 yards on his first carry of the day before adding 21 more yards on his next 4 touches.

The Dragons had seen enough of the big 6'0 200 pound punishing runs by Watson, so they rushed the linebackers whenever Watson touched the ball. Late in the first half, the Bulldogs reached into their bag of tricks as coach Matt McCray dialed up a halfback option.

With time running out and the ball at the DeSoto 36 yard line, Watson rolled to his right and lofted a pass to a wide open Gizmo Rivers. It was a little underthrown and Rivers came back to catch it and brought it to the Dragons 34 yard line for a 30 yard completion. That play worked so well that they ran it again on the next play with the same results as Rivers got to the 3 yard line before he was hauled down.

With time running out in the first half, Watson carried it in the final 3 yards to give the Bulldogs a 6-0 lead with just 24 seconds left in the half. A three play 64 yard drive, with 61 of them through the air, was a big boost to the team going into halftime.

Both defenses played strong in the third quarter until Watson rumbled 45 yards on the last play of the quarter for his second touchdown to give the Bulldogs a 12-0 lead. The two point conversion was crucial as it appeared it was successful as two referees signaled it was good. The side judge overruled them saying the runner was down before he reached the end zone. That play came back to haunt the young Bulldogs in the fourth quarter.

The Dragons drove 45 yards to score



The DeSoto Bulldogs take a knee during an injury timeout in the 14-12 loss to Lake Placid.



Rah'Motni Watson was also a force on defense as he lays a big hit on the Dragon runner forcing a fumble.



Jett Roan makes a crushing tackle on the Bulldogs sideline in the 14-12 loss.



Slade Miethke hands the ball to the referee after recovering a Lake Placid fumble.



Samuel Caldas makes a tackle with plenty of teammates ready to help in the 14-12 loss to Lake Placid.



Rah'Motni Watson begins his 45 yard touchdown run to give the Bulldogs a 12-0 lead. Watson scored DeSoto's first touchdown from 3 yards out.

with 5:19 left in the game. Their two point conversion was good to cut the Bulldogs lead to 12-8.

DeSoto needed a long time consuming drive to eat up the clock and had the opportunity to do it starting on their own 36. Facing a 4th and 10 at their own 36, DeSoto went back to their successful halfback option. This time it went to the left and was unsuccessful giving the ball to the Dragons.

The Dragons used up 3 minutes and 13 seconds on the clock and punched in the game winner making the score 14-12. That left the Bulldogs with just 31 seconds to try to retake the lead. DeSoto called a reverse that had nothing but green grass in front of the runner. He fumbled the ball and got it back but the timing was off and the Dragons responded to it to stop the potential game winning run.

Assistant coach Antonio Washington, who had plenty of career highlights on the same field many years ago, said "That play would have worked, he had nobody in front of him."

McCray said, "We just had too many turnovers, penalties at the wrong time and couldn't hold onto the ball. I'm proud of them, they played hard even when all the breaks seemed to go against them."

DESOTO SPORTS

ROUND-UP

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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STEVE KNAPP
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The volleyball team had another busy week as they prepare for the district tournament that starts next week. They beat Hardee 25-17, 25-16 and 25-10. They traveled to Port Charlotte where they won the first set 25-20 before losing the next three 25-19, 25-13 and the match set in a real barnburner 31-29. They bounced back on Senior Night with a sweep of Sebring 25-18, 25-16 and 27-25. It was only the 5th loss of the season for the Blue Streaks. It was just the second time this season Sebring was shut out. They lost to Lake Wales 3-0 the week before they met with the Bulldogs.

The win guarantees DeSoto a winning season as their record stands at 13-11 with only a visit to North Port tonight left on their regular season schedule. The Bulldogs are ranked first in their district.

The JV Bulldogs volleyball team beat Hardee 25-22 and 25-19. They beat Sebring in the first set 25-22, but fell short in the final two sets 25-21 and 15-9.

The varsity football team continued their struggles with a 42-0 loss at Southeast last Friday. They will be home tomorrow for their Homecoming game against Mulberry before taking the road to Lake Placid and Hardee before finishing their season at home against Palmetto Ridge.

Josselyn Lopez finished 7th out of 119 runners at Lakeland for the girls cross country team. Both teams will be in Hardee this Saturday.

No report from the boys cross country team or either of the varsity golf teams. The boys golf team will be at Hardee today while the girls travel to Charlotte next Tuesday.

The DeSoto middle school football team lost a 12 point lead in the final 5 minutes of the game and suffered a tough luck 14-12 loss at the hands of Lake Placid.

The middle school softball team had a doubleheader with Lake Placid at home. After looking very impressive in the 15-0 first game victory, they fell flat in the nightcap losing 8-3 to end their home portion of their season.

The softball team went on the road and blasted Avon Park 22-2 behind the big bat of Ava Eggers who drove in 5 runs on 4 hits. Eggers had 7 total bases in the win. Sophia Ruiz had a good night in the circle fanning 10 and allowing only 3 hits. The Bulldogs banged out 17 hits and collected 13 free passes. Defensively the Bulldogs didn't commit any errors. Strong pitching, great defense and lots of hits add up to an easy win. They finish their season with games at Hardee tonight and at Sebring next Monday.

Miss DeSoto 8U Nancy won a close game 8-7 over Port Charlotte-white. Coach Nancy said, "Every girl showed up to play with great plays and hits." Game balls went to Avianna Flores and Peyton Sandusky.



The Desoto County cheerleaders were on hand for the Bulldogs' football game.



Josselyn Lopez finished 7th out of 119 runners in Lakeland last Saturday.



Klyia Salas makes the play at short in the first game of the doubleheader against Lake Placid.



DeSoto Middle School football team gather before their game with Lake Placid.

The Star Performance chain went to Delainy Shattles.

The 6U Keith team continued to be undefeated with an 11-4 win over Miss Englewood. They had a 5-4 lead after one

inning and shut them out the rest of the way. Game balls went to Eva Villagomez and Raelyn Sauvey Castillo.

VOLLEYBALL TEAM PREPARES FOR DISTRICT TOURNAMENT



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The DeSoto volleyball team had an easy time against Hardee sweeping them 3-0 with scores of 25-17, 25-16, 25-10. Birthday girl Emma Sorrells celebrated her 15th birthday with 10 kills. Yahri Tyler, in limited playing time, ended up with 9. The serve game was good with Chloe Clemons picking up 14 points with just one error in 18 serves. Brileigh Long was close behind with 13 points and just 2 errors in 19 serves. Brighten Long picked up 17 assists committing no errors in 37 chances.

At Port Charlotte the Bulldogs lost a long grueling match 3-1. After taking the first set 25-20, the Bulldogs lost the next three sets including the final set that went overtime. The final score in the match deciding set was 31-29.

DeSoto fell behind 14-1 in the second set on 6-0 and 8-0 runs by the Pirates. They came back to make the final score respectable at 25-19. The third set saw more of the same with Port Charlotte on top 11-4 on their way to take the lead with a 25-13 win.

Port Charlotte took a 10-3 lead in the fourth set, but DeSoto kept fighting back and took a 22-19 lead before falling 31-29. Tyler had 15 kills and Sorrells had 8 kills and 18 digs. Both players had missed recent games due to injury and the injury bug struck again as Brighten Long twisted her ankle and had to leave the game. She is expected to be back on the court this week with district play right around the corner.



Samari Hoskins puts up a block in the win over Hardee.



Avery Hancock goes all out to keep the ball in play against Hardee.



Bailey Muse and Maddie Atherton put up a good double block against Hardee.

Avery Hancock passes the serve in front of teammate Chloe Clemons in the sweep over the Hardee Wildcats.



Emma Sorrells gets a kill shot on her 15th birthday. She led the team with 10.



BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES: THE LOVE OF GOD

PASTOR JOE LONGENECKER
Redeeming Grace Church
DeSoto County Ministerial Association

Romans 5:8 says, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

The love of God is the greatest gift we will ever know. It is not earned, and it is not based on our goodness. God loves us simply because He is love (1 John 4:8). His love is unconditional, unchanging, and everlasting.

Jeremiah 31:3 reminds us, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.” Unlike human love, which can fail or fade, God’s love never runs out. It is steady and sure, carrying us through every season of life.

The greatest proof of God’s love is

found at the cross. Jesus laid down His life so we could be forgiven, restored, and brought into His family. Nothing—no sin, no failure, no circumstance—can separate us from that love. As Paul declares in Romans 8:38–39, “Nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

When we receive God’s love, it changes us. His love comforts us when we are hurting, gives us hope when we are struggling, and teaches us to love others as He has loved us.

So today, rest in this truth: You are deeply loved by God. Always and forever.



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CLEANUP

FROM PAGE 1 >>

trash bags, gloves, and rakes—to assist their efforts.

“They tell me it’s fun, and they like getting to do something,” MES Teacher Emily Morris said of the SWAT volunteers helping with the clean-up. “So it’s good for them and for the downtown.” She started the SWAT Club last year because she realized that some fifth graders are 11 years old, and that’s the youngest age limit for members. “From the beginning,” she said, “the club members were community oriented.”

DISCOVER ARCADIA VINTAGE MARKET

The Clean-Up prepared downtown for the Discover Arcadia Vintage Market from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Sat., Oct 11. Vendors of “relics, rarities, and remarkable finds” will be set up in the Tree of Knowledge Park and the Truist Bank parking lot. Thanks to Pletcher’s Art Gallery, 16 S. Monroe Ave., some local artists will be vendors; others will be painting downtown; and more will be available in gallery.

CITY OF ARCADIA'S FALL CLEANUP

The AMS Downtown Clean-Up also initiates the City of Arcadia’s Fall Cleanup: from Oct. 4 through 11, there is no limit on the amount of brush, limbs and other yard vegetation you may place at the curb, and all eligible yard debris will be collected free of charge within City limits. Yard debris must be placed on the right-of-way closest to the street, no more than five feet from the curb, and must not block driveways, sidewalks, stormwater drains or streets, or be near electrical lines, mailboxes, telephone poles, or trees. Debris must be in lengths of four feet or shorter; eight inches or less in diameter; and not bagged, tied, or mixed with any other waste.



During the Arcadia Main Street (AMS) Downtown Clean-Up, DeSoto High School (DHS) JROTC Cadets weeded the gardens and planters and picked up trash in the Tree of Knowledge Park, newly refurbished thanks to AMS with a grant from Hope DeSoto and other donations.



When the Memorial Elementary School (MES) Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) members were ready for a break, Matt Squires of Wheeler’s Restaurant, 13 S. Monroe, gave them complimentary water: from left, Brantlee McDonald, Andrew Owens, Bentley Pitts, Destiny Brown, and Andiel Avalos.



At the start of the AMS Downtown Cleanup last Sat., the participating DHS JROTC cadets stood for a moment in the shade across the street from the AMS office.



From left, Logan LeBeau, Alison LeBeau, Ashley LeBeau, Logan Barnhill, Luke LeBeau and Michelle Juliuson volunteered for the Downtown Clean-up to support Liam Barnhill on the DMS Cross Country Team and our community. Ashley said, “If you want to make downtown successful, you have to be a part of it.”



DHS JROTC Cadets Aylin Guerrero and Daniela Ortiz pulled weeds and trash from the gardens in the Tree of Knowledge Park during the last Sat’s AMS Downtown Clean-Up.



From left, Arcadia Police Officer Angela Allred stood with Arcadia Police Explorers Evelyn Pineda, Crystal Zamora, Karla Guidino, and Ashton Lopez. Zamora said she joined the Police Explorers because she is considering a career in law enforcement: “I want to see how it is, and if I would like it,” she said.



At right, Marshal Quinn Jones, Chairperson of the AMS Design Committee, instructed the DeSoto Middle School (DMS) Cross Country Team on where and how to clean up their area of W. Oak St. during AMS’s Downtown Clean-Up.

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OBITUARIES



MARK ALAN PRINGLE



Mark Alan Pringle passed away on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, in Arcadia, Florida. He was born on March 2, 1961, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to Mitch Pringle and Arlene C. Naeyaert.

Mark lived in Arcadia for the past 10 years and worked as a Mechanical Technician in the automotive and small engine repair industry. He had a passion for street racing, quad racing, and remote-control model airplanes. He especially enjoyed watching NASCAR and old episodes of Street Outlaws, proudly cheering on his

car—an '80 El Camino—driven by “Kamikaze” Chris Day, alongside his beloved wife, Penny.

He was preceded in death by his father, Mitch Pringle; his brother, Steven Pringle; his sister, Donna Pringle Hynson; and his nephew, Kevin Pringle.

Mark is survived by his loving wife, Penny Pringle; his mother, Arlene Pringle; his stepdaughter, Lindsey Guarnieri; his stepson, Michael Guarnieri (of Michigan); and his step-grandson, Michael Guarnieri II. He is also survived by his brother, David Pringle, and his

nephew, Jeffrey Alan (Charlotte) Pringle.

Mark had a deep love for his dogs—Walter, Gladys, and Zeus. His final wish was to be surrounded by his wife and his dogs when he passed, and that wish was lovingly fulfilled.

Online condolences may be made at: www.pongerkeysgrady.com
Ponger-Kays-Grady Funeral Homes & Cremation Services have been entrusted with the arrangements.

AMY MARIE CREWS



Amy Marie Crews, age 46, passed away on Friday, September 5, 2025, in Arcadia, Florida. She was born on August 2, 1979, to John Crews and Edith Sweeting. Amy enjoyed reading, watching television, photography and cooking. Amy loved all animals, especially her beloved fur baby Bella. She spent lots of time at her father's farm tending the animals and doing the work that she loved. She loved owls and had a large collection of owls

and cows themed items.

She was very passionate about her family and friends and was a member of the North Hillsborough Baptist Church.

Amy is survived by her mother Edith Sweeting, father John Crews (Betty), brother Sam Charles Deriso Jr., sisters Teri Lynn Deriso Bryan, Kelley Irby and Lisa McManus along with a host of nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

Her thoughtfulness and

kindness will be missed. She will be remembered as a loving daughter and sister.

A Celebration of Life will be held November 15th at 2 PM at N. Hillsborough Baptist Church, 253 N. Hillsborough Ave., Arcadia.

Online condolences can be made at www.pongerkeysgrady.com
Ponger-Kays-Grady Funeral Home & Cremation Services have been entrusted with the arrangements.

COUNTY PROCLAIMS NATIONAL 4-H WEEK



CAROL MAHLER
*Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided*

At the Sept. 23 meeting, Chairperson J.C. Deriso, Vice-chairperson Steve Hickox, and Commissioners Jerod Gross and Elton Langford proclaimed Oct. 5-11 as National 4-H week. Commissioner Judy Schaefer was absent. 4-H Agent Katelyn Mulinix accepted the proclamation and distributed a handout with an overview of the County's 4-H program.

As “America's largest youth development organization” and supporting nearly six-million youngster across the nation, 4-H has helped more than 1,050 DeSoto County youth “to become confident, independent, resilient and compassionate leaders.” The 4-H network of more than 600,000 volunteers and 3,500 professionals provides “caring and supportive mentoring” to youngsters in 4-H as they learn projects in agriculture, citizenship, health, science, and more.

In 2024-2025, our County's 4-H program enrolled 175 youngsters in 11 clubs led by 10 volunteers: Beef Club, Citrus Club, Fort Ogden 4-H Club, Just Kidding Goat Club, Livestock Legacy, Poultry & More, Shooting Sports Club,



Show N Grow, Swine Club, Teen Leadership, and Wild Wranglers Horse Club. Workshops offered included a Beef Clinic, Poultry 101 Workshop, and three workshops on State Fair Ethics that were also available to members of Future Farmers of America.

Community partnerships developed the following programs: Casa San Juan Bosco Reading Program for 19 youth during the school year and 22 in the summer; three Suncoast Remake

Learning Days events; DeSoto Fire and Rescue Open House, and two Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics (STEM) programs at the DeSoto County Library.

Educational enrichment included 131 third graders learning embryology in Memorial Elementary School classrooms; 882 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students participating in 4-H Public Speaking powered by Florida Power and Light (FPL); and 28 Exceptional Student

DeSoto 4-H Agent Katelyn Mulinix accepted the proclamation naming the week of Oct. 5-11 as “National 4-H Week” from Chairperson J.C. Deriso at the Sept. 23 meeting. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

Education (ESE) students learning the ABCs of Florida Agriculture at West Elementary School.

Mulinix helped to provide online resources to support the 4-H Beef Project volunteers; she served as Service Committee Chair—and one County youth as a member—on the 4-H Executive Board; five students attended 4-H Day at the Capitol and two attended 4-H Legislature; one youth served as a planning committee member for the iLead event; and Mulinix led a workshop at—and two students attended—4-H University.

For more information, call 863-993-4846 or email desoto4h@ufl.edu

DESOTO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE



ARREST REPORT | 9/26/25 - 10/2/25

Carrillo-Juan, Regino:

Dui-Unlaw Bld Alch - Dui Influence Of Alcohol Or Drugs, Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Childs, Dejohn Taquavious:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

Clanton, Anthony Daniel:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear (X2), Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery Cause Bodily Harm Or Disability

Crenshaw, Rebecca Ann:

Larc - Other Theft

Daniels Jr., Rodney Eugene:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

Davis, Mike Julius:

Battery - Battery On Specified Personnel, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence, Larc - Other Theft, Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis

Espinal Meza, Denis Orlando:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Fayo Gusi, Roberto Carlos:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Gallegos, Joseph Michael:

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

Garcia-Pizano, Julio Cesar:

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

Hardy, Raquan:

Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Herrera, Amy Nicole:

Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis

Hylar, Sarah Nicole:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Monroy, Juan Pablo Aguas:

Larc - Other Theft, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

Morales Jr., Alfredo:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

Morales Jr., Steven:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

Pacay Moran, Macario:

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

Pascual, Cristian Garcia:

Larc - Other Theft

Peets, Eustace Antonia:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

Redden, Brandon Tyrone:

Larc - Other Theft

Rojas, Manuel:

Battery - Battery On Specified Personnel, Battery - Cause Bodily Harm, Resist Officer - Resist Officer With Violence

Sanches, Walter Morale:

Family Offense - Interfere W Custody Of Minor/Incomp Person, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

Sevast, Rebecca Darlene:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

Tomas, Deybi Aguilar:

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

Watson, Nakia Jamere:

Attery - Touch Or Strike

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NEWS FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF POTTER

2025 BROTHERHOOD RIDE



SHERIFF POTTER
DeSoto County Sheriff

The tragic loss of a Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter, or EMS person is a life-changing event for the many who remain to carry on with going forward in life. Their entire lives are turned upside down as they look for some reason as to why the tragedy happened. Family and coworkers go through the stages of grief. They sometimes try to move past a stage or step, as they can see a place where they want to be. A sense of normalcy if you will. As they try, it becomes apparent to them that they must follow through the stages and steps of grief with help from other people. This includes friends, family, coworkers, support groups and professionals. One support group includes the Brotherhood Ride.

The Brotherhood Ride is a non-profit charity organization, which consists of Firefighters, Law Enforcement Officers and EMS personnel who ride bicycles to honor emergency first responders

who have died in the line of duty. Their mission is to provide emotional and financial support to the families who have lost a loved one in the line of duty on or near the anniversary of their death. The 2025 Brotherhood Ride for the State of Florida will begin October 20, 2025, in Lee County and end in Dade County on October 29, 2025, after a 750-mile journey through the State of Florida. A long and arduous journey testing the grit of the most determined rider. Of important note is that the Brotherhood Ride will be coming through DeSoto County on October 20 and stay overnight at our local Elks Lodge. Keep an eye out for them as ride into the county.

The dedication to commit and carry through with the Brotherhood Ride is one of perseverance, mental toughness and physical strength. The individual drive to positively help others and work toward an issue larger than oneself is part of

the human spirit. And the kindred mindset to help a fallen brother or sister's family who are moving through a life, which was tragically changed in an instant.

One such person from Desoto County, Florida is Ricky Mercer of the DeSoto County Fire and EMS Department. Ricky and his twin brother Micky, who works at the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office are both dedicated family men with a family history of public safety service. Such determination and action demonstrated by Ricky is an opportunity for all of us, whether you are an Elk, a first responder or a DeSoto County community member to be a part of Ricky's participation in the 2025 Brotherhood Ride.



We as a community should be thankful for the Brotherhood Ride, the Elks as well as Ricky's determination. It is worth noting, the spirit of helping with this event affords the survivor families to take the next positive step in their journey is immeasurable!

Take Care, Be Kind, and God Bless.
Sheriff James Potter

AIRPORT BUSTLES WITH YOUNG EAGLES, PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND IMPROVEMENTS



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

On Oct. 4, four youngsters enjoyed flying and eating breakfast during a busy morning at the Municipal Airport, 2269 A. C. Polk, Jr. Dr., during the Experimental Aircraft Association’s (EAA) Chap. 1126’s Pancake Breakfast and Young Eagles Program. The program gives eight-to 17-year-old youngsters “their first free ride in an airplane. It’s the only program of its kind, with the sole mission to introduce and inspire kids in the world of aviation.” Thanks to the generosity of EAA members, nearly 2.5 million “Young Eagles” have flown. After their first flight, Young Eagles may sign up for additional resources and opportunities at eaa.org/youth/free-ye-flights

On the first Sat. of the month from Oct. through Apr., pilots and their guests fly—and local residents drive—in for the monthly Pancake Breakfast. Pancakes, eggs, sausage, and more are served up freshly made, all you care to eat, for \$8.00 a person, and the donations support the Young Eagles Program. Youngsters who fly in the Young Eagles Program that Sat. eat for free.

Holly Dilecce, who flew in from Sarasota commented, “The pancakes were fluffy and filled my whole plate.” Some of those attending the pancake breakfast mentioned that airports were starting to charge a “landing fee.” Ed Altomare, a pilot from Sarasota, said, “Let’s keep Arcadia free for general aviation aircraft.” He opined that revenue from fuel sales would equal or exceed such landing fees.

Airport Director Shelley Peacock said that the City had no plans to charge landing fees. “We try to be the friendly airport,” she said.

Increasing the airport congestion’s last Sat. was the \$1.5 million Terminal Apron Rehabilitation and Expansion project funded by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT). Dickerson Infrastructure, Inc., of Fort Pierce, had just completed four days of paving, so the new area was without tie-downs and closed to aircraft. The construction also closed part of Taxiway A, so pilots had to back-taxi on the runway. In addition, road access to the terminal was partially blocked early on as Dickerson loaded the paving equipment.

Volunteers for the Young Eagles Program included Ruby Barajas and Bella Ramirez—who have both flown as Young Eagles—Peacock,



Marco Cruz, nine years old, flew with Andy Corsetti in the Aeroprakt-32 aircraft. Cruz said that he enjoyed “steering” the plane and seeing Peace River.



Shyanne Cox, age 17, heard about the Young Eagles program from a family friend. She said of her first flight with Dave McGregor in his Cessna 170A: “It was really fun, and I really enjoyed it.”



In a Beechcraft Musketeer, Holly Dilecce and Joe Dilecce flew in from Sarasota. She said, “The food is good; the company is good, and the weather is perfect.” Also flying in from Sarasota was Ed Altomare in a Mooney M20 with 11-year-old John Lewis, and Carol Stieg.

Dan Mahoney, plus Jose Hernandez who brings his Taqueria Querétaro food truck to the Airport’s Taco Tuesday event. Mahoney instructed Barajas and Ramirez how to move safely around the aircraft.



At right, Volunteer Geri Draper poured perfect pancakes while Volunteers Jim Mohney, Lena Welker, and Amber Headrick watched. They prepared and served the breakfast.



Collecting donations for the monthly pancake breakfast were from left, Volunteers Kiana Awad, Tiffany Awad, and Elena Awad of Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chap. 1226. The event is held in the pilot shelter of Aviation City, the airport’s campground for pilots who may taxi in and camp under the oaks.



From left, Retired City Administrator Terry Stewart, City Administrator Beth Carsten, Vivian Stewart, and Airport Director Shelley Peacock enjoyed watching the aircraft and chatting with the pilots, volunteers, and youngsters in the Young Eagles Program.



Pilot Andy Corsetti holds a certificate for 11-year-old Young Eagle Ashton Itin, who had fun and liked taking the controls of Corsetti’s Aeroprakt-32 aircraft.



At right, Volunteer Geri Draper poured perfect pancakes while Volunteers Jim Mohney, Lena Welker, and Amber Headrick watched. They prepared and served the breakfast.



From left, Braydon Schoch flew in a Cessna 150 from Fort Pierce and Alec Larson in a Vans RV8 from Kissimmee for the pancake breakfast. “The pancakes are good, and it’s great excuse for us to fly,” Schoch said. “Arcadia is one of our favorite airports,” Larson added.

K-POST 11 PRESENTS “AMERICANISM” PROGRAM



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

On Sept. 30, members of the Arcadia American Legion K-Post 11 Honor Guard and the K-Post 11 Auxiliary presented an “Americanism” program for the Nocatee Elementary School (NES) 4th and 5th graders—plus, they donated a new flag for the school.

NES had contacted K-Post 11 last year, and in response, they donated \$3,000.00 for additional playground equipment: a “sensory walkway” for pre-kindergarten students that will soon be installed, according to NES Principal Brandy Tackett. She said that NES added 75 Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) students even though they lacked the resources. “That’s a huge void that the American Legion is filling,” she said. She also thanked K-Post 11 for donating flags for every classroom.

The “Americanism” program is part of the preparations at NES for the students to participate in the Veterans Day parade, and this year, they will have a float as well as a walking unit. In addition, Tackett said, “We say the Pledge of Allegiance every day, so this program will help students gain an understanding of what they are saying.”

The presentation included the Honor Guard folding the flag while K-Post 11 Adjutant and Auxiliary President Amber Jones explained that the triangular shape of the folded flag represents the triangular hats worn by the Continental Army. She also narrated the meaning of the 13 folds, one for each of the original colonies: life, belief in eternal life, in honor and remembrance of the deceased veteran, trust in God, tribute to our country, allegiance in our hearts, tribute to U.S. Armed Forces, our mother, womanhood, fatherhood, glorifying God, an emblem of eternity, and to remind us of the national motto: “In God, we trust.”

Jones questioned the students about some facts about the U.S. flag and how it should be displayed and treated, and then the students asked questions or told about



Command Sgt. Major Ron Jones, center, who served 38 years, and Louis Reuter, right, who served 8.5 years in the U.S. Army, displayed the U.S. flag donated by American Legion K-Post 11 to Nocatee Elementary School (NES) before they folded it and presented it to Assistant Principal Jessica Prescott at far left.



Amber Jones fielded questions from the fourth and fifth graders gathered in the NES cafeteria for the “Americanism” program presented by K-Post 11: some she answered, and others referred to the fellow veterans assisting with the program.



K-Post 11 Adjutant and Auxiliary President Amber Jones, who served 2.5 years in the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne, asked some questions about the U.S. Flag: for example, its other names: Grand Union, Old Glory, Stars and Stripes, and Star-Spangled Banner.



their family members who had served—or are serving—in the U.S. Armed Forces.

K-Post 11 will return to NES in Nov. with some Vietnam War veterans who will talk about their experiences and in Feb. to explain the U.S. Constitution. For more information, contact K-Post 11 at 2124 NW American Legion Dr., 863-491-5440, or online at jonespin11@yahoo.com.



Mike Dempsey showed the famous photograph of the soldiers raising the flag on Iwo Jima during World War II and a bottle of sand he brought home from when he visited the island. To the students, he passed around four combat helmets: from World War I, his father’s who served in the Korea War, his own, and his daughter’s.

K-Post 11 Honor Guard Commander Mike Dempsey, who served five years in the U.S. Marines and 10 years in the U.S. Army, saluted while Ron Jones and Louis Reuter folded the flag while Amber Jones narrated the meaning of the 13 folds.

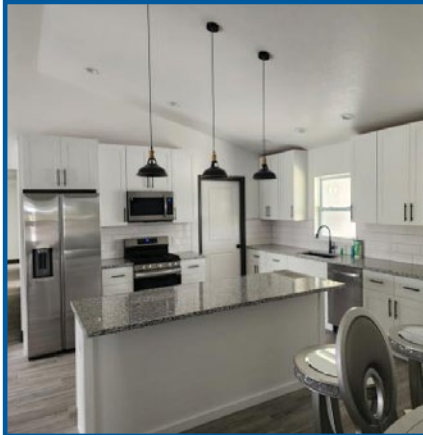




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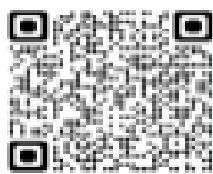
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