

ARCADIA THE COMMUNITY

JUNE 4, 2026

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Local

CLASS OF 2026 SIGNING OUT!



DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS
PAGE 4

STEVE KNAPP
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Two of the class of 2026 officers are Treasurer Ailyn Almarez and President Karen Mejia. The class Salutatorian is Nataly Ramirez-Moreno and class Valedictorian Sujud Elabed.



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer
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There were 183 DeSoto County seniors that walked across the stage last Friday at the Turner Center. They shook hands with Superintendent Bobby Bennett and members of the school board. They had their picture taken with principal Dr. Joshua White, and waved to their families in the stands.

Bennett said, "Class of 2026 the world ahead of you is full of opportunity for those willing to work hard, stay humble, and lead with purpose. Your story is just beginning and your best chapters are still to come."

Many of the graduates are going to college, some into the military while others will immediately join the workforce. Some of their classmates they will never see again. Life is like that, it takes people in different directions. Although there were plenty of "keep in touch" plans, life happens and time goes by without ever



Cooper Hancock is a member of the top 10% of the 2026 graduating class and a member of the Bulldog baseball team.

SEE GRAD PAGE 7 >>



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GOVERNMENT MEETING SCHEDULE

CITY OF ARCADIA

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

JUNE 6	DESOTO COUNTY HURRICANE EXPO
SAT 10A - 2P	Turner Agri-Civic Center 2250 NE Roan Street Arcadia, FL 34266
JUNE 9	DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUES 9A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
JUNE 9	DESOTO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP
TUES 1P	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 13

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ARREST REPORT
See page 15

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HURRICANE EXPO: BE AWARE AND PREPARE



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Photos provided

Learn everything you need to know about preparing for, dealing with, and recovering from a hurricane at the Hurricane Expo from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on June 6, at the Turner Agri-Civic Center, 2250 NE Roan St. hosted by the County's Emergency Management Dept.. "This free, family-friendly event will provide the community with vital information on how to stay safe before, during, and after a storm."

The County's public safety leaders, including Fire Chief Chad Jorgensen and Sheriff Jim Potter, will give presentations to "share guidance on emergency response, evacuation procedures, and storm recovery."

Guests may explore "educational booths, preparedness demonstrations,



Hurricane season is June 1 through Nov. 30, so you'll want to learn how to be safe at the Hurricane Expo this Sat. at the Turner Center. Image courtesy of www.utphysicians.com

and local resources designed to equip families with the tools they need for hurricane readiness. . . . Residents of all ages are encouraged to attend and take steps toward ensuring their safety this hurricane season."

The County's Emergency Management team is offering "a series of raffles to help promote life safety and emergency preparedness," and to win, you must be present. Raffle tickets will be available at the door. A generator is

the grand prize.

For more information, follow DeSoto County Emergency Management at <https://desotobocc.com> or <https://www.facebook.com/DeSotoEM>.

HURRICANE EXPO THIS WEEKEND



DESOTO COUNTY, Fla. (June 1, 2026) – The DeSoto County Emergency Management Department will host its annual Hurricane Expo to help residents prepare for the 2026 hurricane season. This free, family-friendly event will provide the community with vital information on how to stay safe before, during, and after a storm.

The Expo will feature presentations from key public safety leaders,

including the Fire Chief and Sheriff, who will share guidance on emergency response, evacuation procedures, and storm recovery. Attendees can explore educational booths, preparedness demonstrations, and local resources designed to equip families with the tools they need for hurricane readiness.

Guests will also have the chance to enter a free giveaway, with a generator as the grand prize.

Event Details: Saturday, June 6, 2026
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM Turner Agri-Civic Center 2250 NE Roan Street, Arcadia, FL 34266

Residents of all ages are encouraged to attend and take steps toward ensuring their safety this hurricane season.

For more information, follow DeSoto County Emergency Management at <https://desotobocc.com> or <https://www.facebook.com/DeSotoEM>.

FPL UPGRADES INFRASTRUCTURE, WINS NATIONAL AWARD



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Photos provided

As Hurricane Season begins, Florida Power & Light (FPL) continues to build "a stronger, smarter, and more storm-resilient electric grid in Arcadia in 2026, advancing its ongoing commitment to reduce outages and restore power faster following major storms."

Local infrastructure improvements are underway. On main, neighborhood and underground power lines, one "intelligent device" will be installed: "These automated smart switches help identify outages and reroute power to prevent more widespread interruptions."

One of the main causes of power outages is vegetation, so FPL is working on trimming foliage and trees from 268 miles of power lines.

Local FPL External Affairs Manager Devaney Iglesias wrote, "Our employees work every day in Arcadia to provide

safe, reliable electric service while keeping customer bills as low as possible. By continuing to invest in our electric grid, we are strengthening resilience year-round and helping our communities recover faster when severe weather impacts our area."

FPL has tried to reduce outage times and improve reliability for customers throughout the State, no matter the weather, with new technology and enhancements to the energy grid. For example, in 2025, FPL's "self-healing smart grid technology" avoided more than 1.6 million customer interruptions, as potential issues are detected by 246,000 "intelligent devices" installed across the electric grid.

Upgrades to improve resilience in extreme weather include placing underground nearly 2,000 miles of overhead power lines so that 85% of FPL's main power lines are now underground or have been "hardened." The system is also strengthened by replacing older wooden transmission structures with ones made of steel or concrete.

In Nov. 2025, FPL's efforts won



One of the major causes of power outages is vegetation, so FPL is trimming trees and other growth from 268 miles of power lines. Image provided.

national recognition. Derek HasBrouck, PA Consulting's ReliabilityOne® Program Director, said, "For 25 years, our ReliabilityOne® recipients have demonstrated sustained year-over-year reductions in outage frequencies and outage durations, leading the industry for reliability improvement best practices while keeping affordability front and

center of what they do. We are excited to announce that Florida Power & Light Company has been recognized as this year's most reliable U.S. utility. Florida Power & Light Company has consistently delivered strong operational performance with a focus on maintaining affordable rates" (<https://www.paconsulting.com>).

COUNTY TO DISCUSS USE OF TURNER CENTER WITH FAIR ASSOCIATION



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Photos provided

At the May 26 meeting, the Board of County Commissioners authorized Chairperson Steve Hickox and County Administrator Mandy Hines to negotiate with the DeSoto County Fair Association “to develop proposed terms to relocate the Fair to the Turner Agri-Civic Center and other topics proposed in the process.” Hickox and Hines met with some of the Fair Board members last year at the Center to “provide an overview of the facility, offerings, space, and layout in order for the Fair Board to evaluate if the facility may work for future consideration.” Then on May 8, Hickox and Hines met with the Fair Board President and several Board members, and the Fair Board offered a general discussion outline.

Commissioner Jerod Gross expressed his endorsement of the discussion. Commissioner Judy Schaefer, a member of the Fair Assoc. Board, asked that “all the proposals be understood by both parties” with no “gray areas.” Hines assured the Board that any proposal will be brought to them for approval.

The Board also approved an emergency purchase of \$73,840.85 with Piper Fire Protection for the replacement of the non-operational fire alarm system at the Turner Center. The existing inoperable fire alarm panel requires “the facility to remain on ‘fire watch’ during occupied hours in order to comply with applicable fire and building code requirements. Fire watch procedures require personnel to conduct routine sweeps of the building and report any potential fire or life safety concerns while the fire alarm system remains disabled.”

Section 16 of the County’s Procurement Policy authorizes an emergency purchase “when the immediate purchase or replacement of equipment or services is essential to maintain required services or prevent danger to life, limb, or property. . . . The proposed scope of work includes labor and materials necessary to replace the defective fire alarm panel, power supplies, communicator, voice evacuation system, and related initiation devices at the Turner Center.”

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: DATA CENTERS

Schaefer recounted a trip that she, Hines, and Economic Development Director Sondra Guffey traveled to Virginia to check on data centers. Hickox asked her to elaborate, and Hines said that Schaefer, Guffey, and she will meet on Thurs. to complete a report of what they observed and learned, and they will

share it with the Board.

During the Public Forum for Non-Agenda Items, Ed Johnson called for a “minimum one-year emergency moratorium covering all data storage centers until you can create and adopt criteria and regulations necessary to safely regulate them.” He voiced concerns about a terrorist attack on such a facility, as well as how to restrict the “hum and vibration from the generators and equipment,” as well as regulate the heat discharged from the cooling system and exhaust from natural gas generator. He said, “You are not prepared to meet this challenge.”

ADMINISTRATOR’S AND ATTORNEY’S REPORTS

Hines reported that the .88-acre property at 11212 SW Cedar Ave. will be sold for \$44,300.00. The County will receive repayment of the “hard costs” of about \$15,000.00, and the remainder of the amount will be split between the County and the mortgage holder as originally agreed.

She also noted that Senator Ben Albritton’s office confirmed that the County’s requests are in the final budget with a vote scheduled for next Friday and then to the Governor: \$5 million for the wastewater (aka effluent) disposal project; \$1 million for the ladder truck; \$175,000.00 for animal control adoption building, and \$350,000.00 for right-of-way acquisition for County Road 769, Phase 2 construction.

County Attorney Valerie Vicente reported that the County prevailed in the re-hearing of the Reardon case, and the Board’s decision to deny the rezoning “stands.” In addition, Judge Don Hall denied an additional re-hearing requested by the Reardons, and they have a limited time to appeal that judgement to the District Court of Appeals.



Ed Johnson requested that the Board authorize “your County Administrator and County Attorney to prepare a minimum one-year emergency moratorium halting all data storage centers until you can create and adopt the criteria and regulations necessary to safely regulate them.”



Ashley Brown invited the Commissioners and others to participate in the “Dive Into Reading” program as volunteer reading mentors for third-grade students from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, June 2-25, at West Elementary School.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Board approved the resolution “appointing and confirming new and established members of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee: Holly Layport and Jeorgia Sutton will replace Mike Provau and Kathy Heitman, respectively, and existing members—Judy Schaefer, Jennifer Bowser, Thelma Guice, Melanie Brown, Oralia Ramirez, Donna Doubleday, and Derek Taylor—will continue.

As Dr. Daniel O’Leary’s current agreement for \$25,000.00 expires on Sept. 30, 2027, the Board renewed the Medical Director’s Agreement with the County’s Fire Rescue: the Medical Director oversees protocols, establishes a quality assurance program and performs “duties including advising, consulting, training, counseling, and overseeing services, including appropriate quality assurance but not including administrative and managerial functions.”

On Mar. 12, 2026, the County entered into an Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) for the transfer of Starlink Satellite Kits to

ensure reliable ‘hyper-local’ internet connectivity during disaster recovery and severe weather events.” The Board ratified Amendment No. 1 “to update Addendum A, providing the specific kit numbers and hardware identities for the equipment assigned to DeSoto County. This formalizes the inventory record for the transfer of ownership, operation, and maintenance responsibilities.”

The 2023 agreement for Water and Wastewater Quality Sampling and Laboratory Testing Services with Sanders Laboratory, Inc., was amended in 2025 to renew the agreement for an additional one-year term with a revised fee schedule. As of Feb. 2026, Sanders officially became Eurofins, and the Board approved the 2nd amendment to the Sanders Laboratories Agreement Consenting to Assignment of the Agreement to Eurofins Drinking Water and Wastewater Southeast, LLC.

The Board declared the following items as surplus and approved their disposal by Internet auction except for the Cardinal truck scale which is damaged or worn out: 2006 Ford F450 pickup, Crane on 2006-03, and 2012 Ford Escape.

SPEND TO WIN \$250 “DOWNTOWN BUCKS”



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Photos provided

From now until July 4, you have a chance to win \$250 in “downtown bucks” by visiting downtown boutiques, shops, and restaurants: for every \$10.00 you spend, you may collect a stamp on a special America 250 Downtown Shopping Passport. Once your passport is complete, you may enter it into a drawing. On July 4, Arcadia Main Street (AMS) will draw one completed passport, and the winner will receive \$250 in “downtown bucks” that may be spent at any of the participating merchants.

“Every star stamped on the America 250 Downtown Shopping

Passport is an investment in a local business, in someone’s dream, and in our historic district,” Arcadia Main Street Director Pam Ames wrote. “We know the community will show support!”

You may pick up your passport at the AMS office, 17 N. Polk Ave., during regular business hours, or at any of the 20 participating merchants: A Lil Bit of Everything, Antiques and More, Arcadia Printing, Arcadia Seafood Grill, Biggar and Biggar Antiques I, Biggar and Biggar Antiques II, Blush and Bashful, Dragon’s Den Books, Jonesville Music, Laura’s Good Vibe Tribe, Mana Vault, Mermaid’s Keep, Pletcher’s on Monroe Art Gallery, Smoke on the Water, Sweet Magnolia Creamery and Confections, Rowdy & Rose, The Vintage Garden, Three



Megan Markey, Arcadia Main Street administrative assistant, shows off the America 250 Downtown Shopping Passport and a map showing the locations of the participating downtown merchants. Image provided.

SEE BUCKS PAGE 12 >>



THANK YOU TO OUR BULLDOG YOUTH SPONSOR!

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SPRING SPORTS AWARD CEREMONY



Softball Liv Evans shows her sportsmanship award presented by State Farm insurance.



The entire DeSoto Varsity Softball Team was in attendance at the Spring Sports Awards Ceremony and filled up the front row.



Long time tennis coach Mitchell Johnson is retiring from coaching and was recognized for his service with an award.



There was a big crowd at the ceremony including rows of people around the corner of the cafeteria.

DESOTO COUNTY WINTER SPORTS AWARDS

GIRLS TRACK

JANET SEGURA-OLVERA
State Farm Award

PAYTON NARO
JALIYAH LUTHER
MVP

JORDIN CAMPBELL
Coaches Awards

AALIAH GONZALEZ
BRENDA MARTINEZ
Most Improved Player

BOYS TRACK

JIMMY BARRERA
State Farm Award

CHARLIE WILKINSON
MVP

TIMOTHY TAYLOR
Most Improved

KYLER KIESLING
Coaches Award

TENNIS

VICTORIA DIXON
TEGAN VEST
Most Improved

BAILEY QUAVE
Clutch Award

GATLAN UNRUH
Undefeated

MALIA CORONEL
Attitude Award

ROMANALI RODRIGUEZ
Vibes Award

MASON VOGLER
Net Monster

RYLAN UNRUH
ADELINE HOWARD
Leadership

SARA ROONEY
Impact Award

CLARA MARTINEZ
Chaplain

DANIELA OLVERA-RIVAS
Organizer

CARTER HENDRICKSON
Mr. Reliable

BASEBALL

BRADEN DELUCA
MVP

OWEN ROE
Offensive

AIDEN ANGELES
Defensive

ABEL NEDLEY
Pitcher of the year

CARTER BENNETT
State Farm Award

AIDEN ADKINS
Impact Player

CAMRYN NUMMEDOR
Most Improved

WEIGHTLIFTING

No awards, just certificates

YMCA SOCCER 5U



HURRY UP AND WAIT

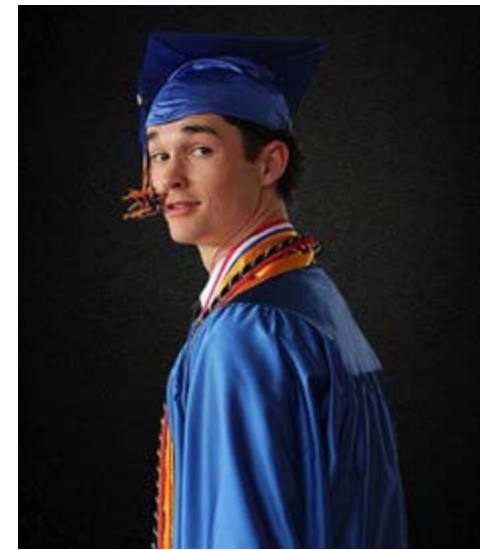


STEVE KNAPP

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That is what the DeSoto County senior class of 2026 must have been thinking. They had gone through a practice run for boarding the buses to take them to the Turner Center, they gathered in the cafeteria for their final instructions, they took photos of themselves and friends and then they waited.

They were reminded to turn in all their cell phones (although some were hidden under their gowns) and they got on the bus and left the high school for the final time. In those sad, yet happy exciting minutes before they left the school I had the chance to catch a few photos too.





GRAD

FROM PAGE 1 >>

seeing classmates again except for an occasional Instagram post.

Several graduates confided that it was sad to be leaving everything and everybody that had become familiar to them. Others told me they were ready to “get out of here” and begin college and the next chapter of their lives.

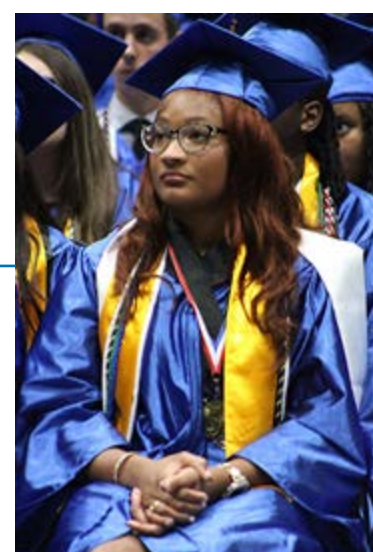
The class officers are Karen Mejia-President, Ahahi Padron as Vice President, Nayeli Lopez-Aparicio as Secretary and Ailyn Almarez as the Treasurer.

As it happens every year, there are graduates that I have gotten to know from the world of sports and will miss seeing them play or talking with them. I am happy to see them go into the world and live a successful, adventurous life filled with many success stories.

I personally wish them well and hope that they “keep in touch” as they go through life. What I wouldn’t give to be in their shoes with a world full of excitement, success and even sad moments ahead of them. Enjoy every day and make it memorable. Be Bulldog strong and make your community, family and friends proud of you.



The DeSoto County school board along with other dignitaries greeted each graduate.



Jordin Campbell, a member of the championship Bulldogs basketball team and a graduate in the top 10% of her class, watches and listens to the speakers.



Isabella Bates is loaded down with cords and awards as she steps down from the stage with her diploma in hand.



Just seconds after receiving her diploma, Caleigh Jo Duke is all smiles as she shows her diploma.



Class Vice President Anahi Padron gives the invocation to begin the graduation proceedings.



Ariana Espindola sings the National Anthem for her class of 2026.

BOARD APPROVES BONUS DENSITIES FOR AFFORDABLE & WORKFORCE HOUSING



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Photos provided

At the May 26 public hearing, the Board of County Commissioners approved the Comprehensive (Comp) Plan and Land Development Regulations (LDRs) amendments to allow bonus densities in the Neighborhood Mixed Use and Urban Center Mixed Use future land use categories for affordable or workforce housing.

The bonus densities/ intensities which may be approved in the Neighborhood (Live/Work) Mixed Use are eight and 12 dwelling units per acre for workforce and affordable housing, respectively; and in the Urban Center Mixed Use are 10 and 12 dwelling units per acre for workforce and affordable housing, respectively.

The LDRs amendment specifies that the Affordable and Workforce Housing residential projects “shall be substantially located within a 1,000-foot radius of a public school” or hospital; “establishes minimum percentages for workforce and affordable housing units to achieve bonuses; requires connection to County or City potable water and sanitary sewer; and a Land Use Restriction Agreement (LURA) guaranteeing affordable/workforce designation for minimum of 30 years.” The only areas to fit these criteria are those surrounding DeSoto High School, DeSoto Memorial Hospital, and Nocatee Elementary School. In addition, any applications for the bonus densities must be approved by the Board.

Definitions included in the amendments are as follows: “Affordable Housing means housing which is available at a price or rent not exceeding 30 percent of a household’s gross income. Owner-occupied housing costs include principal, interest, insurance, and property taxes. Rental housing costs include the contract rent. . . . Workforce Housing means housing affordable to natural persons or families whose total annual household income falls between 80% and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI) [with] income limits adjusted for household size.”

The following spoke in favor of the amendments: Connie Bateman, retired teacher; Benjamin Benitez of One Stop Housing; Jennifer Bowser, director of Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity; Sarah Hipp, DeSoto Memorial Hospital Public Information Officer; Carol Mahler; and Dr. Jake Reynolds, deputy superintendent of schools. Benitez and Reynolds also shared their comments during the public forum at the 3:00 p.m. meeting. Speaking against the change were Janet Harvin and Theresa Hill.



John Osborne of Green Street Associates presented the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations (LDRs) amendments, and noted one of the goals is to “protect the rural and agricultural character of DeSoto County”



Benjamin Benitez of One Stop Housing spoke in favor of the Comp Plan and LDRs amendments to allow bonus density for workforce housing for “teachers, school staff, and other hometown heroes.”



Theresa Collins Hill noted that if all the bonus densities in the proposed Comp Plan and LDRs amendments were granted, then 1,978 dwelling units could possibly be built on 348 acres.



Janet Harvin asked about property tax exemptions for developers building affordable housing, and County Attorney Valerie Vicente said that only five exemptions are mandated by the state, and two require the developer to be a non-profit organization.



Retired Teacher Connie Bateman said that she was in favor of the Comp Plan and LDRs amendments because she wants homes “for our teachers, firefighters, and police officers.” She noted that “good growth is what we all want.”



Dr. Jake Reynolds, deputy superintendent of schools, spoke in favor of the bonus densities for affordable and workforce housing because the availability of such housing will help attract and retain teachers and school staff. He also noted that the District has no plans to close Nocatee Elementary School.



DeSoto Memorial Hospital (DMH) Public Information Officer Sarah Hipp said that DMH “is proud to support this effort” to bring workforce and affordable housing to the County because it will increase “the long-term strength of the community.”

“The need for affordable housing is great,” Jennifer Bowser, director of Arcadia-DeSoto County Habitat for Humanity (ADCHH) said. She noted that 250 families attended ADCHH’s most recent orientation class, and most were not in the low-income category served by her organization.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

The Board approved the application of Ronald Lee Brantley and Debra Brantley to change the zoning of approximately 1.13 acres at 2038 SE Hillsborough Ave. from Agricultural-5 (A-5 or one dwelling per five acres) to Residential Single Family-1 (RSF-1 or one dwelling per acre) in the Low Density Residential Future Land Use Category.

According to the staff review, “the existing land use pattern is comprised of smaller residential lots to the north and west, zoned RMF-M, & RMF-6, and larger lots to the south and east, zoned A-5. The rezoning of this property to RSF-1 can be found to be an appropriate extension of the existing land use pattern . . . and will not adversely influence living conditions in the area.”

In addition, “the non-conforming property has existed at least since a Quit Claim Deed was filed on May 1, 2003.” This rezoning will “eliminate the non-conformity” of the property and is required for the owners “to qualify for a building permit under the the Rebuild Florida Housing Repair and Replacement Program, funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) to help eligible homeowners repair, rebuild, or replace homes damaged by major storms.” Sara Maier of Dewberry & Associates, a contractor with the Rebuild Florida program, also spoke in favor of the rezoning.

The Board also adopted the proposed resolution for the development plan for a banquet hall, consisting of an existing “barndominium” to be used as the primary structure for the banquet hall with accessory structures, for Kings Crossing, approximately 17.74 acres at 6420 SW County Road (CR) 769, zoned A-5 in the Rural/Agricultural future land use category, owned by Rick L. Guinn and Denise B. D’Aprile. The development plan was filed to remedy a code enforcement violation.

At the request of the owners, the Board reduced the 12 conditions proposed by staff to six, summarized as follows: “The banquet hall use shall be permitted only so long as a minimum of 15 contiguous acres comprising the approved development site remain under common ownership or unified control. . . . The driveway shall conform to commercial driveway standards . . . A right-of-way permit is required prior to any improvements within the right-of-way of CR 769. .

. The applicant shall meet all DeSoto County Fire and Engineering standards for emergency vehicle access and circulation. . . The applicant shall apply for an existing septic system application from the Florida Department of Health to determine if the existing system is adequate for all proposed and on-site development, including the residence, guest house, banquet hall, and all accessory facilities. . . The Development Plan shall expire 3 years from the date of this resolution unless the development has commenced within that 3-year period”

Finally, because the owner of Maria’s Rentals, LLC, did not attend the hearing, the Board continued until the June 23, 2026, public hearing, the application for the rezoning of approximately 41.08 acres, at 5906 SE Residential Way, from Planned Unit Development (PUD) to Residential Multi-family-8 (RMF-8) in the Urban Center Mixed Use Future Land Use category. The situation is complicated because the PUD was approved for Power Auto Corp. (PAC), and as a result of PAC selling portions of the property to third parties, the PUD Concept Development Plan will never be developed.

PORT CHARLOTTE GUN SHOW

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JUNE 20TH & 21ST

SATURDAY 9AM-5PM & SUNDAY 9AM-3PM

UPCOMING

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JULY 11TH & 12TH

POLISH CENTER OF J P II

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SAT 9AM-5PM & SUN 9AM-3PM

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ADULT (17 and Over)
2-Day Admission

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**DeSoto County
NOTICE OF DESOTO
COUNTY BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
WORKSHOP ON DESOTO 2050!
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

What: DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners Workshop

Topic: DeSoto 2050!
Comprehensive Plan Update

In Person Meeting:

Tuesday, June 9, 2026 | 1:00 PM
DeSoto County Commission Chambers
DeSoto County Administration Building
201 East Oak Street, Arcadia, FL 34266

The DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners will hold a workshop to discuss the update of the DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan to the 2050 Planning Horizon. The Plan's goals, objectives and policies reflect the County's vision for the future and how it will meet the needs of existing and future residents, visitors and businesses. The Plan informs decision-making and guides growth and development. To be effective, the Plan must continue to be updated to adapt to changing conditions and needs. This effort provides the opportunity to take a holistic look at how well the Plan is performing and meeting the community's vision.

Project contact: Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, jcodosalisbury@cfrpc.org or at (863) 534-7130 ext. 178. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, income, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the CFRPC Title VI/ Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Indihra Chambers, (863)534-7130, or via Florida Relay Service 711, or by email: ichambers@cfrpc.org at least three (3) days before the workshop.

La participación pública es solicitada sin distinción de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, discapacidad, religión o situación familiar. Las personas que requieren asistencia bajo la Ley sobre Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA) o la traducción de idiomas, de forma gratuita deben ponerse en contacto con la Coordinadora de Título VI / No Discriminación/ADA, Indihra Chambers, CFRPC a (863)534-7130, oa través de el Transmisión de la Florida 711, o por correo electrónico ichambers@cfrpc.org al menos tres (3) días antes del evento o reunion.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES:

CHAPLAIN AMANDA REUTER

US Army Reserve
DeSoto County Ministerial Association

With another Toy Story movie coming out it had me thinking about how the various characters and events portray certain elements of biblical accounts. Let's talk about The Gospel According to Toy Story.

In this epic five-movie saga it sneaks in some seriously deep truths about who we are, why we matter, and how love changes everything. Think of it as a fun, heartwarming parable that lines up with the Bible's big story of identity, fall, rescue, and purpose.

It all starts with Andy (and later Bonnie) as this loving "creator" figure. The toys only feel truly alive when they're being played with by their kid. It's like how we're made in God's image and find real meaning when we live for the One who made us (Genesis 1:27, Ephesians 2:10).

Toy Story 1 is all about jealousy and discovering your true identity. Woody's the top toy until shiny Buzz Lightyear shows up. Woody flips out, and Buzz thinks he's a real space ranger. But when Buzz finally hears "You're a toy!" it hits like a wake-up call. Reminds me of us chasing false identities or pride, like the Tower of Babel or the older brother in the Prodigal Son story (Luke 15). The fix? Accepting you're loved just as you are, not because you're the "best."

Toy Story 2 dives into belonging versus going it alone. Woody gets tempted by

museum fame with Jessie and the gang— eternal display, no more scratches or tears. But he chooses risky love back home with Andy. Reminds me that I shouldn't store treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19-21). Real life is in relationships, not collecting dust in safety. The toys team up to rescue him, showing how the church works— we're stronger together (1 Corinthians 12).

Toy Story 3 gets heavy: abandonment, fear of the end. The toys face Sunnyside's bully Lotso, then that terrifying incinerator scene where they hold hands, ready to go out together. It's like walking through the fire (Daniel 3) or Jesus facing the cross. But Andy's love wins— he passes them on to Bonnie. "You are mine" (Isaiah 43:1). Even when life changes, God's holding on. Hope beats despair every time.

Toy Story 4 is about stepping out of your comfort zone. Woody leaves the safe life to help lost toys like Forky, who doesn't even think he's a real toy. "I was made for someone!" Forky learns. That's the gospel in action—Jesus leaving heaven for us (Philippians 2), and us finding purpose in loving others (Matthew 28). Life's not about staying safe; it's about mission.

And Toy Story 5 (coming this June!) brings it into today's world. Toys versus tech! I'm looking forward to this next installment in the series and seeing how the Truth is revealed.

What do you think—does any part of the saga hit home for you?



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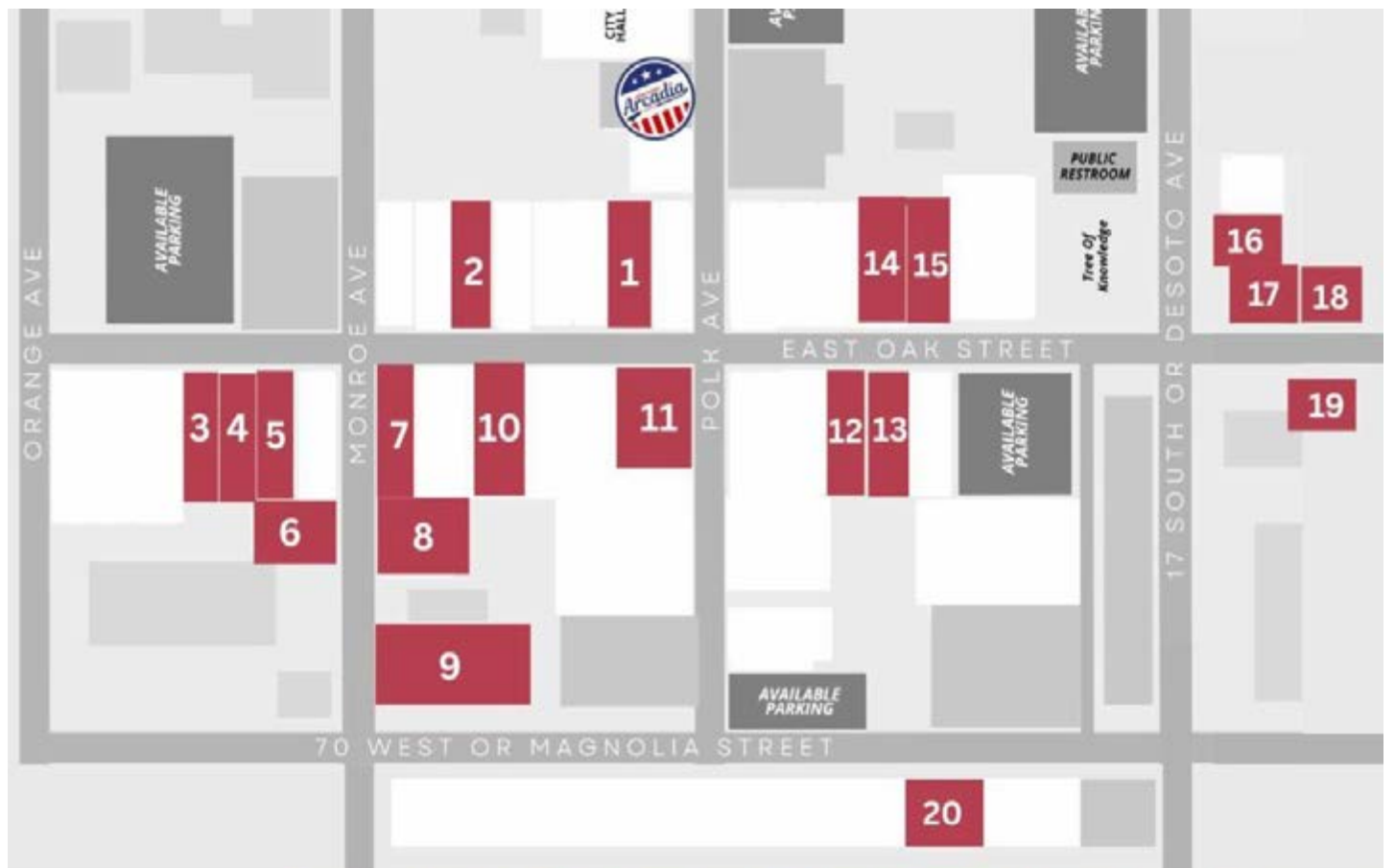
FROM PAGE 3 >>

Trees Brewery, The Valley Florist, and Wheeler’s Cafe.

AMS is also hosting a special America 250 July 4th Celebration: from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., a downtown market with vendors, food trucks and live music in the Tree of Knowledge Park and along Oak St., plus a Downtown Window Decorating Contest. In addition, between 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., AMS will hold a ribbon cutting for the new America 250 murals at 29 S. Polk Ave. and 14 E. Oak St..

The Arcadia Main Street Program is dedicated “to revitalizing downtown Arcadia by supporting local businesses, promoting economic growth, and preserving our community’s unique character through collaboration, innovation and sustainable development.” For more information, check online at arcadiamainstreet.com or on Facebook or call 863-494-2020.

The locations of merchants participating in the America 250 Downtown Shopping Passport have been highlighted on this map. Image provided.



PASSPORT June-July 2026

Map of Participating Stores:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. A LIL BIT OF EVERYTHING | 11. DRAGON'S DEN BOOKS |
| 2. MERMAID'S KEEP | 12. BLUSH AND BASHFUL |
| 3. SMOKE ON THE WATER | 13. ANTIQUES & MORE |
| 4. LAURA'S GOOD VIBE TRIBE | 14. THE VINTAGE GARDEN |
| 5. SWEET MAGNOLIA CREAMERY & CONFECTIONS | 15. BIGGAR & BIGGAR II |
| 6. PLETCHERS ON MONROE ART GALLERY | 16. ROWDY & ROSE |
| 7. BIGGAR & BIGGAR I | 17. THREE TREE BREWERY |
| 8. WHEELER'S CAFE | 18. THE VALLEY FLORIST |
| 9. ARCADIA PRINTING | 19. JONESVILLE MUSIC |
| 10. ARCADIA SEAFOOD & GRILL | 20. MANA VAULT |



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For tips on what to do before, during and after a storm, visit FPL.com/storm.

Stay Safe!



OBITUARIES

TIMOTHY KRATZER SR.



Senior Deputy Timothy Kratzer Sr. passed away on Monday, May 25, 2026. Tim's smile brightened every room he entered, and his kindness brought comfort to those fortunate enough to know him. He will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to his family, his community, and the profession he loved.

Tim was a gifted athlete who excelled in softball, baseball, basketball, and tennis. His talent

on the basketball court earned him a scholarship to West Palm Beach. Beyond his own achievements, Tim found great joy in mentoring young athletes. He coached Little League teams to championship victories and later successfully coached a minor league baseball team, leaving a lasting impact on countless young players.

Under the guidance of Gene Cross, Tim earned his second-degree black belt in Ronin Goju Karate. He deeply valued the discipline, respect, and self-control that karate instilled in him and held tremendous admiration for Gene, whom he respected both as an instructor and mentor.

Tim spent more than thirty years in the automotive industry, where his leadership abilities and strong work ethic quickly became evident. At only twenty years old, he was promoted to Assistant Used Car Manager. Throughout his career, he also served as a Finance Manager and ultimately as a Sales Manager. Tim genuinely loved cars and took

pride in helping members of the community find vehicles that suited their needs and families.

Above all else, Tim loved Arcadia and the people who called it home. From a young age, he dreamed of serving in law enforcement. Although his first opportunity at age eighteen did not work out due to limited openings, fate had other plans. A former Air Force Security Policeman visited the dealership to purchase a vehicle and invited Tim to participate in a ride-along. That single opportunity sparked a lifelong commitment to service. Tim joined the Auxiliary, where he met every standard required while continuing his education and working full-time in the automotive business.

After the dealership changed ownership, the Sheriff Potter sent Tim to the academy to complete his official law enforcement training. He was overjoyed to officially become a deputy sheriff and proudly dedicated himself to serving the citizens of his community. He continued to grow in his profession under the

guidance of Captain Tim Hilgeman, whose patience and mentorship helped shape Tim throughout his law enforcement career. Through that mentorship, Tim mastered many aspects of the profession, including radio communications and courthouse operations.

Tim especially loved his work at the courthouse and took great pride in serving as a teen driver instructor, where he was able to train and mentor students in defensive driving.

Tim is survived by his loving wife, Maureen; daughter, Olivia; son, Tim Jr.; mother, Madeline; brother, Matt; and sister-in-law, Amber.

Tim's legacy of kindness, dedication, mentorship, and service will continue to live on through the many lives he touched. He will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

Services will be held on Friday June 5, 2026, at 10:00AM at the Turner Center in Arcadia, Florida.

RICHARD E. MONTGOMERY



Richard E. Montgomery, age 78, of Arcadia, Florida, passed away peacefully at his home on May 22, 2026. Born in Seymour, Indiana, in 1947, Richard later relocated to Bradenton, Florida, before settling in Arcadia in 1988 with his wife and children. He resided there for 38 years, during which time he

contributed to the local community through his work in construction until his retirement.

A dedicated member of North Hillsborough Baptist Church, Richard found joy in playing the drums. His retirement years were marked by a deep passion for carpentry and craftsmanship, particularly in the creation of birdhouses. Additionally, Richard nurtured a strong enthusiasm for astronomy, sharing his knowledge by teaching children at the Community Center of Port Charlotte, Florida. He also delighted in family camping trips, where he often brought his telescope to offer others the opportunity to explore the night sky. He also dabbled in fishing and genuinely enjoyed the outdoors.

Richard was preceded in death by his wife, Sandra J. Bradley Montgomery. He is survived by his children, David Montgomery of Arcadia, Florida, and Deborah

Montgomery of Fitzgerald, Georgia, as well as his three sisters, Regina, Nannette, and Nancy.

Richard will be remembered for

his dedication to family, community, and his various passions that enriched the lives of those around him.

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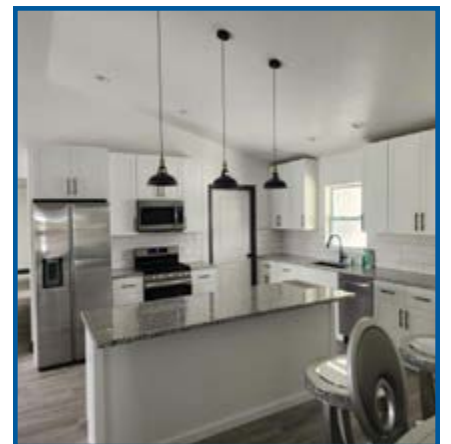
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ARREST REPORT | 5/22/26 - 5/28/26

Alcantara - Menjivar, Miguel Alfonso:
House For Other Agency

Alston, Ivy Mary:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Barnes, Rebecca Anne:
Public Order Crimes - Unauthorized Use Of 911 Services

Caballero, Alexander Guadalupe:
Battery - Prior Convic Battery Commit 2nd Sub Battery (x2); Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear; Larc - Petit Theft MERCH/FARM/TRANSIT \$100-\$750; Obstructing Justice - Hinder Witn Comm Info To LEO/JUDG Fel 3rd Proc

Castellanos, Jesus:
Hit And Run - Accident Unattended Veh Or Prop Wo Leaving ID

Cleveland, Brelle Renae:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Fletcher, Corey Evin:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Gomez-Perez, Jose Daniel:
Disorderly Intox - Disorder Intox Public Place Cause Disturbance; Public Order Crimes - Unauthorized Use Of 911 Services

Gonzalez, Flor Yadira:
Battery - Touch Or Strike; Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Hill, Clifford Raye:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Jones, Jeremy:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Kidwell, Trena Jo:
Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Lin, Feng:
Fraud-Swindle - Defraud To Obtain Property Value Of \$20K-\$50K; Larc - Grand Theft \$20,000 Or More Less Than \$100,000

Mendez Salinas, Rosalia:
Hit And Run - Leave Scene Of Crash Involve Damage To Prop; Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv

Mitchell, Katelyn Brooke:
Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Mitchell, Tynasha Shante-Sheri:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription; Smuggle Contraband Into Prison - Control Subs Defined Provisions Of s.893.02(4)

Phillips, Robert Lincoln:
Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Roberts, Eric Alan:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Roblero, Rodrigo:
Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Rodriguez-Bollat, Marlen:
Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery With A Deadly Weapon

Shaver, Jim Bob:
Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Times, Kevin Elijah:
Battery - Touch Or Strike

Verzani, Brenda May:
Prob Violation - Prob Violation (x2)

Wilcox, Tori Juliann:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Williams, Eric Shavon:
Aggrav Stalking - Follow Harass Cyberstalk Cred Threat To Person; Battery - Touch Or Strike; Burgl - Burgl Unoccupied Structure State EMERG/ RIOT; Burgl - Burglary Of Unoccupied Dwelling Unarmed; Intimidation - WRITTEN/ELEC Threat Mass SHOOTNG/ TERRORISM Act; Larc - Grand Theft 750 Less Than 5k Dols; Obstructing Justice - Hinder Witn Commun Info To LEO/JUDGE Misd Proc; Simple Asslt - Intent Threat To Do Violence

Williams, Naquaron Lanigil:
Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Wollschilager, Ashton Irving Francis:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Worth, Ethan Allan:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription; Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Zacarias, Ximena:
Larc - Other Theft

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NEWS FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF POTTER

AGGRESSIVE MONITORING OF SEXUAL OFFENDERS AND PREDATORS IN DESOTO COUNTY



SHERIFF POTTER
DeSoto County Sheriff

The DeSoto County Sheriff's Office takes a proactive and aggressive approach to monitoring sexual offenders and predators living within our community. Through active monitoring, consistent enforcement, and early intervention, we help prevent further victimization and keep DeSoto County safe.

We closely monitor registered sexual offenders and predators to ensure full compliance with state law and supervision requirements. This includes address verifications, unannounced residence checks, confirmation of employment, vehicle information, and other required registry updates.

Our Detectives and Deputies actively conduct field checks throughout the county, day and night, to ensure offenders are where they are required to be and are following all legal conditions and requirements of their registration or supervision. Any violation is taken seriously and addressed immediately.

Sexual Offenders/Predators sign their requirements every time they register. When they violate these conditions or requirements, we hold them accountable without delay.

This includes arrests, search warrants, probation or parole violations, and additional criminal charges wherever applicable. Failure to comply with registration laws or supervision conditions is not tolerated in DeSoto County. Our Criminal Investigative Division (CID) works closely with the State Attorney's Office and outside agencies to ensure that violations are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted.

Modern monitoring requires modern tools. Our agency utilizes state and national offender registries (Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offender/Predator Database), in-house intelligence sharing, and digital resources to track compliance and identify violations.

Some people often think we control or approve where offenders/predators live at. We do not. We are required to track where they live and enforce that they have notified us within the required timeframe imposed by

Florida State Statute. Restrictions on their residential location are often determined by their court orders or probationary conditions.

Public awareness remains one of the most important tools in preventing future victimization. We encourage residents to stay informed about registered offenders in their area, pay attention to suspicious activity, and report concerns to law enforcement.

Community tips often play a critical role in initiating investigations and preventing further harm. You can access the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offender/Predator Database free to the public here: <https://offender.fdle.state.fl.us/offender/sops/home.jsf>

You can also download our mobile app available in Apple App Store for iPhone and Google Play for Android. Our app has a button you can click to monitor your local sexual offenders/predators for free on an easy-to-use map.

Protecting children and maintaining public safety remains a top priority for the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office. Through aggressive monitoring, strong enforcement, and dedicated investigative work, we remain committed to holding offenders accountable and ensuring a safer community for all residents and guests of DeSoto County.

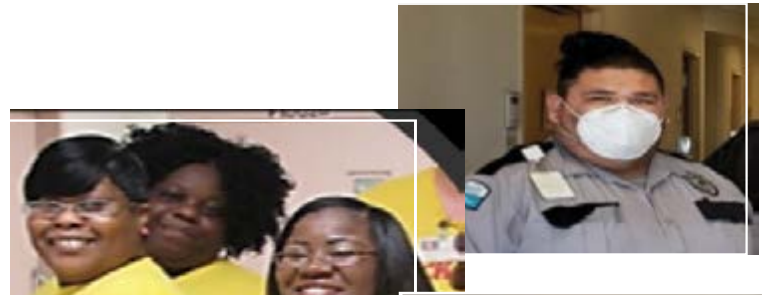
Be Safe, Be Kind, and God Bless.
Sheriff James F. Potter

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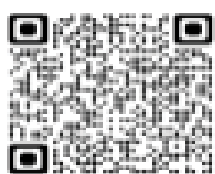
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