

SUNCOAST BIPLANES

TO OFFER TOURS AT TACO TUESDAYS



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

From left, Joy Williams and Gareth Williams of Suncoast Biplanes stood with “Gracie,” a modern replica of a 1930s WACO biplane, at the Arcadia airport for the Stars, Stripes, and Swing event hosted by Arcadia Main Street on Jan. 24.

At the Sept. 1 meeting, the Council approved Suncoast Biplanes to give tours over the City on Taco Tuesdays. Packages for couples and friends (two people) will cost \$139.00 for a 15-20 minute tour, with a total flight time of approximately 10 minutes, in an open cockpit biplane plane. “Although Gracie has the classic appearance and spirit of a 1930s WACO, she is a modern-production aircraft [built in 2000]—not a restored antique,” according to suncoastbiplanes.com. The family-owned business currently offers tours at the Punta Gorda and Venice airports.

Airport Director Shelley Peacock announced that the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) had recognized the Arcadia-based Chap. 1226 for giving 100 free flights to Young Eagles. Registration for the Sept. 12 Young Eagles program is now open for youngsters ages eight through 17 who have never experienced a general aviation flight. To raise funds for

the Young Eagles program, EAA Chap. 1226 will hold a pancake breakfast on the first Sat. of every month, Oct. through Mar., so mark your calendars for Oct. 3

COUNCIL TO DISCUSS EXTENDING ALCOHOL SALES

During his comments, Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco asked for discussion of extending until 2:00 a.m. the sale of alcohol. City Attorney T.J. Wohl reminded the Council of the history of this matter: that the Council had amended the alcohol ordinance, so that alcohol sales—once not allowed between midnight on Sat. until 1:00 p.m. on Sun.—were only prohibited between midnight and 7:00 a.m. every day.

Brittany Strickland, owner of Britt’s Tavern, 432

SEE TOURS PAGE 12 >>

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


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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

SEP 11	DESOTO COUNTY 9/11 REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY DeSoto County Courthouse Lawn
FRI 9AM	
SEP 17	DESOTO COUNTY SPECIAL MASTERS HEARING
THUR 11A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
SEP 22	DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
TUE 3P	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

SALES INQUIRIES: SALES@PEACERIVERSHOPPER.COM 863.990.9813	223 E. OAK ST. STE. 1 ARCADIA, FL 34266
SALES / OFFICE MANAGER <i>Angie Duckett</i>	CREATIVE DIR / AD DESIGN <i>Jackie Bierman</i>
DISTRIBUTION <i>Jennifer Phillips</i>	

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11: AN INVITATION TO REMEMBER



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

At 9:00 a.m. on Fri., Sept. 11, DeSoto County Fire Rescue invites you to a remembrance ceremony on the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy on the courthouse lawn, 115 E. Oak St., in Arcadia. Fire Chief Chad Jorgensen will conduct the program with help from his staff. Sheriff Jim Potter and Marshal Quinn Jones and their staff members will also attend.

The American Legion K-Post 11 Honor Guard will fire a gun salute, and the Rev. David Stewart, pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, will offer the invocation. For more information, contact DCFR Administration at 863-993-4842.



For the Remembrance Ceremony for the 9/11 tragedy in 2021 on the east lawn of the Courthouse, DeSoto County Fire Rescue flew a huge U.S. flag from the ladder truck.



Last year, DeSoto County Fire Rescue held a remembrance ceremony on the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy on the courthouse lawn.

For the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, Dr. Sharon Goodman, a member of the School Board, sang the National Anthem while Sheriff Jim Potter and Marshal Quinn Jones saluted the flag.

COUNTY HOSTS RURAL BUSINESS RESOURCE FAIR



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

Co-hosted by the Florida Dept. of Commerce and the Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network, the Florida Rural Business Resource Tour (FRBRT) is “a new initiative designed to bring together a wide range of federal, state and local business resources.” On Sept. 2, in the Turner Center Exhibit Hall, the multi-agency traveling resource fair hoped “to connect rural businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools, training and support they need to succeed.”

Economic Development and Tourism Director Sondra Guffey said, “There

were new people, who I have not see before, who are interested in starting businesses.” This event was . . . “for people to learn what resources are available . . . either to help fund their business or get it started in the right direction. I’m so happy to see people in DeSoto County with the entrepreneurial spirit,” she said.

Economic Development and Tourism Specialist Dan Sutphin noted several people in their 20s who were looking for career opportunities at the Rural Business Resource Fair. “That’s a good turnout of a different demographic,” he said.

Guffey noted that Jason Mahon, Deputy Secretary of Florida Commerce, and Chad Corriveau, Communications Liaison, both have family roots in DeSoto County. They were accompanied by Olivia



On Sept. 2, the Turner Center Exhibit Hall hosted the Florida Rural Business Resource Fair for “for those aspiring to launch a new venture or take their business to the next level.”

SEE FAIR PAGE 8 >>

CHAMBER CUTS RIBBON AT JOHN LEE HAUS INN



Tom Crone, holding the scissors, cut the ribbon for the John Lee Haus Inn with his family, from left, his wife Pia Crone, their daughter Gabriela Crone, and sons Alexander Crone and Julian Crone, and his in-laws Marco Gutierrez and Elizabeth Gutierrez.



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

On Sept. 4, the Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon for the John Lee Haus Inn, 601 W. Oak St., a new “historic inn and gathering place” owned and operated by Pia and Thomas Crone. They have beautifully restored the home of John Lee Jones (1866-1934) and Mourning Johnson Jones (1868-1965) built with Queen Anne characteristics in 1892. In fact, a portrait of President Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901) graces the downstairs parlor because he served as the 23rd U.S. president from 1889 to 1893 when the house was constructed. That historical item is only one of many antique furnishings that compliment the 134-year-old house.

Chamber Director Taylor Jones welcomed the John Lee Haus Inn. Pia Crone said that she and her husband had purchased the historic home “sight unseen,” and anticipated opening in six months to a year. “Here we are two years later, and we’re finally finished,” she said. “It’s really nice to feel the support of the community—Arcadia and all of DeSoto County to be here to celebrate with us, so thank you.” Tom Crone echoed that gratitude, and also appreciated his wife—“who has been spearheading this whole project especially because I’ve been gone”—and his in-laws (Marco Gutierrez and Elizabeth Gutierrez) “who have also been putting in a lot of work.”

As a past president of the Chamber, J. L. Jones would have appreciated the

ribbon-cutting event. He also founded the DeSoto Abstract Company, and his name is built into the facade of the two-story brick building constructed 100 years ago on S. DeSoto Ave. for his company. He also organized the Florida Association of Title Men which became the Florida Land Title Association, and his company was a charter member of the American Land Title Association.

He and his wife had two sons: Hugh G. Jones (1888-1969) served 55 years in Arcadia as an attorney, and Claude C. Jones (1890-1958) worked in the family business as did his namesake son (1922-1999) who celebrated the business’s centennial anniversary in 1989. The DeSoto Abstract Company was sold in 1999 to the Wauchula Abstract & Title Company, and both companies were acquired by Tennessee Mid South Title in 2023.

In addition, J. L. Jones served as mayor of the City of Arcadia for seven years; chairman of the School Board for 17 years; a trustee for road bonds; charter member of the First Baptist Church and superintendent of Sunday School; secretary of the Florida Baptist Children’s Home’s Board of Directors; moderator of the Peace River Baptist Association for seven years; vice-president of the Florida Baptist convention for six years; state president of the Florida Anti-Saloon League; member and vice-president of the Columbia College (1907-1918) Board of Directors; member and officer of the Knights of Pythias and the Masonic Lodge. He also served as secretary/

SEE RIBBON CUTTING PAGE 10 >>

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

The DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce’s Early Bird was held Thursday, September 3, 2026 and was hosted by Mosaic. The following students were recognized as Students of the Month (not all are pictured).



DHS
CINTHIA HENESTROSA CASTRO
9TH GRADE

JASMINE CRITES
10TH GRADE

KEVIN GONZALEZ
11TH GRADE

YELENA DELEON-GARCIA
12TH GRADE



DMS
SERENITY CHURCH
6TH GRADE

IKER MARQUEZ
7TH GRADE

AMIAH FOSTER
8TH GRADE

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"WORK IN PROGRESS" DESOTO SHUTOUT 40-0



STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer
sports@peacerivershopper.com

WWF wrestler "Rowdy Roddy Piper" had many memorable quotes, but the one that describes Friday's 40-0 loss at Wellen Park is "You don't throw rocks at a man with a machine gun."

That's what it was like as the Bulldogs traveled to take on the undefeated Eagles. The Eagles had at least three times as many players suited up than the Bulldogs had. The Eagles didn't have a JV game this week so their whole JV team was ready to play and got significant playing time in the second half. Most of the Wellen Park team is from Venice's JV team from last year and they are always strong.

The gutsy Bulldogs had just 22 players ready to play. During the game several had to come out from minor injuries and cramping but got back in the game as soon as they could. Playing both sides of the ball can wear out any well conditioned player. With the Eagles bringing in wave after wave of fresh bodies, the game quickly got out of hand.

Senior Charlie Wilkinson is still out with a badly bruised or pulled ligament in his foot. He will miss tomorrow's game but hopes to be cleared in time for the next home game. Significant injuries came about during the game. Two top running backs, Carter Bennett and Blake Forman, saw limited action after the first quarter due to injuries. They both play a big role on defense too. When coaches looked to the bench for replacements, the cupboard was bare.

Unofficially the Bulldogs had just 12 first half rushing yards with 7 of their 16 running plays either getting no yards or losing yardage. They totaled 22 combined yards in the first 24 minutes of play. The game total was 30 yards and no first downs.

Wellen Park marched 85 yards on their second possession to take a 7-0 lead. They added another touchdown on a 40 yard pass to make the score 14-0 at the end of one. The Eagles scored every way possible in the second quarter with a 58 yard run, 45 yard pass, point after, safety and a field goal to take a 33-0 advantage at the break.

The second half saw most of the reserves for the Eagles get on the field. They did it right by throwing just 1 pass



Juniors Brian Williams and Tyler Whidden get double teamed on the line.



Jacob Tanner knocks the ball loose in the end zone before the receiver could control the ball for a score.



Jamariyon Grant makes a good effort to haul in this pass that gets knocked away by the Eagle defenders.



Running backs and key defensive players Carter Bennett and Blake Forman stand on the sidelines after injuries took them both out of the game in the 40-0 loss at Wellen Park.



Carter Bennett turns the corner with the help of a block by James Ray in the loss at Wellen Park.



Cruze Miethke gets a sack on the 7 yard line. The junior recorded two solo sacks and four half sacks along with several TFL.



Julian Quezada tries to come down with an interception on a pass thrown behind him at Wellen Park.

in the second half and waited until the game clock got under 5 seconds before they snapped the ball. With a little over a minute left in the third quarter, the Eagles put their final touchdown on the board to start the running clock.

Ever optimistic coach Tommie Henry said, "We have to focus on the little things that we are doing better and not the game as a total. We are in a learning process, we have to do a lot of teaching to give the players the basics of the game. We're teaching them things that we thought they already knew or should have known. I'm in my first year of coaching and I've got to take my lumps. I'm not the first coach to be in this situation. We got a chance

to get the young players into the game because of injuries and we got a chance to see what they can do. We're taking baby steps because that's what we have to do with the number of our kids and their experience. Things that are built overnight don't last long and the coaches are trying to build something that will last over the long haul."

DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK

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ONE STREAK ENDS, ANOTHER STREAK CONTINUES



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacereivershopper.com

The DeSoto volleyball team got off to a perfect start to the 2026 campaign winning their first 5 matches all in straight sets. Then they traveled south to meet a talented senior laden Charlotte Tarpon team and ended their streak in straight sets 25-19, 25-22 and 25-18.

The next night the Bulldogs put away a rebuilding Lemon Bay team in straight sets 25-12, 25-11, and 25-17. The win extended their home winning streak to 9 games over the past 11 months. Their last loss at home was a tough 3-2 loss to Palmetto on September 25. With a few road games and tournaments in the upcoming weeks, there is a very good chance the the home streak will continue past the one year mark with Charlotte providing their next biggest threat to that streak when they come to town on September 29th. With a big loud crowd filling the doghouse, the Tarpons could be ripe for an upset!

At Charlotte, the Bulldogs took a 6-5 lead in the first set until senior Juliet Hurley served up an 8-0 run to take a 13-6 lead. DeSoto battled back to trail by just 3 but the Tarpons held on for the 25-19 win. In the second set the Tarpons jumped out to a 5-0 lead but the Bulldogs kept fighting back and eventually cut the lead to just 2 points at 22-20 late in the game. Charlotte had to scrap for the final 3 points while the Bulldogs got two more in a very exciting set. The match ended with a 25-17 loss in the third set.

Emma Sorrells led the Bulldogs with 12 kills and 13 digs. The team's 28 kills was their lowest output of the season which was because of the Tarpons



Rhadassa Caldas works on her passing during the warmup drills.

Emma Sorrells gets one of her team high 12 kills against Charlotte.

Senior Brileigh Long and freshman Lily Sorrells talk about strategy in pregame warmups.

Bailey Muse attacks the ball in the 3-0 loss at Charlotte.



strong front line, not from an off night by any of the Bulldogs' players. Charlotte's experienced team held DeSoto to just 2 aces out of 60 serve attempts. There were only 4 DeSoto service errors for their highest serving percentage of the season at 93%. That shows how strong the Tarpons' defense is.

For the first time this season the Bulldogs failed to record a block in which coach Danielle Taylor said, "We definitely showed some of our weaknesses like blocking." That is why you schedule strong teams from bigger schools so they can help to prepare your team for the playoffs by exposing your weaknesses.

DeSoto is on top of the 7 teams in the 3A district 10 with a 3-0 record.

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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



ATHLETES LIFT WEIGHTS, BUT CHEERLEADERS LIFT ATHLETES



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacerrivershopper.com

This week we will highlight the varsity cheerleaders as our athletes of the week. They work up to 3 hours a day and up to 4 days a week working on routines and cheers. They are outside of the cafeteria in the heat or sometimes in the school halls working to bring some entertainment to the crowds at the football games. They also make the long bus rides to the games to cheer on the football team and perform for the fans.



The 2026 varsity football cheerleaders.



The senior class of cheerleaders.



The captains for the 2026 varsity football team.



Cheerleaders get a chance for a selfie during halftime at the Wellen Park game.



The 2026 freshmen cheerleaders.



The juniors class of cheerleaders are represented by these girls.

The sophomores on the varsity cheerleaders team.



DESOTO SPORTS

ROUND-UP

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacerivershopper.com

The varsity volleyball team had a busy week playing 15 matches during the week! After a loss at Charlotte they went on to beat Lemon Bay and North Port in straight sets. On Friday they went 1-2 with losses to Indian Rocks Christian and Parrish with a win over Sarasota Christian sandwiched in between. Saturday they went undefeated to win the Bronze division of the Bradenton Christian tournament. They will be home tonight to face Wellen Park.

The JV volleyball team went 2-1 this past week losing to Charlotte and then getting two straight 2-0 wins over Lemon Bay and North Port. They will be home tonight to face Wellen Park and then participate in a JV only tournament at Braden River on Saturday.

The boys golf team started their season with a win over Avon Park 198-201. Wyatt Mercer led the way for the Bulldogs with a 44. They will be home on the 17th of September.

The middle school football team lost to LaBelle 26-6 with Slade Miethke finding paydirt for the Bulldogs. They will be home next Tuesday to face the Hill-Gustat Eagles at 7pm.

The varsity football team lost at Wellen Park 40-0 last Thursday night. They will be on the road again tomorrow at Bonita Springs.



The 2026 boys golf team got off to a good start with a 198-201 win over Avon Park. Members of the team are Adian Angeles, Wyatt Mercer, coach Jim Lawlor, Adrian Angeles, Kaleb Campbell and Bradon Bierman.



The varsity volleyball team finished first in the bronze division in a tournament last weekend.



Blake Forman makes the tackle on the Wellen Park runner.

The DeSoto Youth Football and Cheer went 3-1 over the Lakeland Storm. Both the 6U and 8U teams had shutouts with a 19-0 win for the flag players and a close 7-0 win for the 8U team. In a close game the 10U team lost 6-0 but the 12U team finished off the day with another shutout by the score of 13-0.



Riley McCray recovers a Bulldog fumble.

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ARCADIA IS FLORIDA MAIN STREET PROGRAM OF THE MONTH



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

On Aug. 26, Secretary of Florida Cord Byrd announced the designation of Arcadia Main Street (AMS) as the August 2026 Florida Main Street Program of the Month, and AMS Director Pam Ames shared the news of that honor with the Council at their Sept. 1 meeting. She also announced that the United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) had awarded AMS a \$75,000.00 grant for a downtown revitalization project.

“The success of the Arcadia Main Street program reflects the value of community driven revitalization,” said Byrd. “Through dedicated leadership, strong partnerships, and preserving their historic character, Arcadia has fostered a unique sense of place and a vibrant downtown district. The community’s dedication to patriotism continues to foster foundational freedoms and opportunity throughout the state.”

In 1985, Arcadia was designated as one of Florida’s first five Main Street communities, and during the 41 years since then, AMS has generated nearly \$7.7 million in public and private investments. In addition, the community has enjoyed “an increase of 48 net new businesses that have created 193 net new jobs, and over 12,700 volunteer hours have been recorded.”

By encouraging the arts, culture, and a variety of businesses, AMS works to make the historic downtown a year-round destination for visitors and residents. A recent American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Community Challenge grant financed improvements, including attractive and essential wayfinding signs, three new murals, painted flowerpots, and landscaping for downtown.



As one of AMS’s accomplishments, Secretary of Florida Cord Byrd singled out the new patriotic mural, funded by the America 250 Florida grant, and painted by Artist Angelika Shevchenko, wwho cut the ribbon, on the west wall of 14 E. Oak St., a building owned by Jean Vavrovsky.

At the Sept 1 Council meeting, Arcadia Main Street (AMS) Director Pam Ames shared the news that Secretary of State Cord Byrd had designated Arcadia as the August 2026 Florida Main Street Program of the Month. In addition, the United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) had awarded AMS a \$75,000.00 grant to revitalize downtown.

In addition, an America 250 Florida grant also funded two patriotic murals plus an abundance of America 250-themed events such as the America 250 Speaker Series, Arcadia Art Show, Bike Fest, Discover Arcadia Markets, Golf Tournament Fundraiser, Stars Stripes and Swing, and more. AMS July 4th events included the “Arcadia Rodeo: A July 4th Tradition” exhibit in partnership with the DeSoto County Historical Society; a July 4th Celebration Arcadia Market; ribbon cutting for an America 250 Mural on the west wall of 14 E. Oak St.; an evening Independence Day Parade in cooperation with Arcadia Moose Lodge 1327, and much more.

Administered by the Division of Historical Resources under the Florida Dept. of State, the Florida Main Street



(FMS) program currently oversees 54 communities throughout the state. “By implementing the National Main Street Center’s Four-Point Approach, FMS encourages economic development within the context of historic preservation through the revitalization of Florida’s downtowns – the community’s heart and soul.” To learn more about the Florida Main

Street program, visit [Florida Main Street](#) or follow on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). For more information about Arcadia Main Street, visit [ArcadiaMainStreet.com](#) or call 863-494-2020.

FAIR

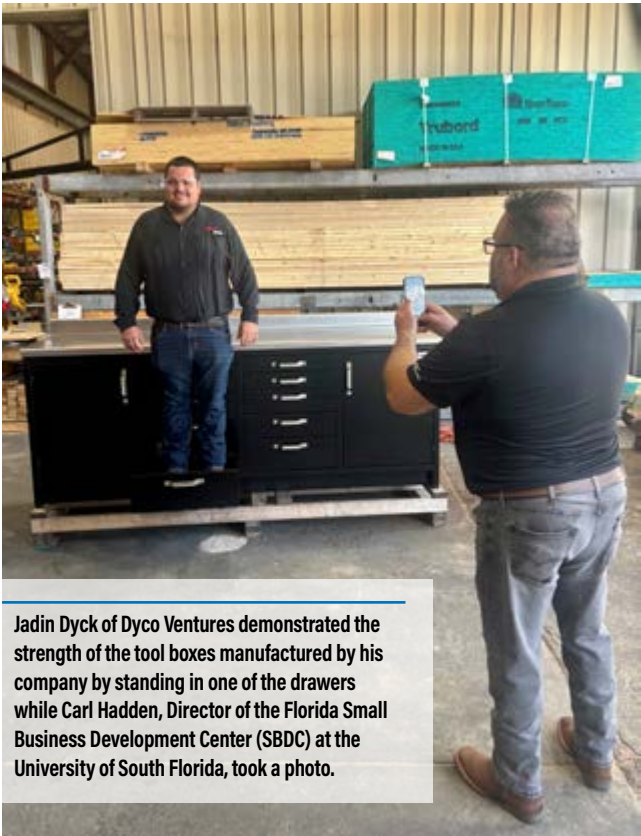
FROM PAGE 2 >>

Worley, Florida Heartland Economic Region of Opportunity (FHRO) Liaison, and available to meet one-on-one with attendees as were Secretary Melanie Griffin and Executive Staff Heather Rotz of the Florida Dept. of Business and Professional Regulation; State Director Greg Britton and Director of Partnerships Beverly Byerts of the Florida SBDC Network, plus Carl Hadden and Stacey Dadd from Florida SBDC at the University of South Florida; and Career Source Florida Project Leader Nilda Blanco.

For more information about the FRBRT, please visit [www.FloridaSBDC.org/ruraltour](#). For more information about our local economic development, please contact Guffey at sguffey@desotobocc.com or call 863-993-4800, ext. 208.



The Florida Rural Business Resource Fair team from Florida Commerce, Dept of Business Professional Regulation, Small Business Development Center, (SBDC) and Career Source took a tour of Dyco Ventures, 2692 Nat Ave., Arcadia.



Jadin Dyck of Dyco Ventures demonstrated the strength of the tool boxes manufactured by his company by standing in one of the drawers while Carl Hadden, Director of the Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of South Florida, took a photo.

DCIP GROUP HOLDS INVITATION-ONLY EVENT



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com
Photos provided

On Aug. 24, the DeSoto County Industrial Park (DCIP) Group held an invitation-only event—"An Evening of Conversation and Connection"—at the Turner Agri-Civic Center. More than 100 guests enjoyed the food prepared by Michelle Miller, owner of MyShelly's Kitchen, and a program with Hope Cross serving as the mistress of ceremony.

The keynote speaker was Buddy Rizer, Economic Development Director in Loudoun County, Virginia, location of "the world's largest concentration of data centers . . . 53 million square feet of data centers . . . [and] 15,000 jobs within Loudoun's data center industry," according loudounpossible.com.

Rizer gave a presentation entitled "Beyond Data Centers: Building Stronger Communities" in which he explained how Loudoun County's government has shifted its funding. Previously, 81% of the revenue was from residential tax payers, and that dropped to 41% because now commercial tax payers fund 51% of the revenues for the county government.

The best place to build a data center, according to Rizer, is in an industrial park with plenty of separation from homes, neighborhoods, historic districts, and environmentally sensitive land. He said that the county needs to define the conditions under which a data center may operate and make sure that the data center is built by a reputable developer that has experience and a good track record.

"Everything I did with love and a desire to improve my community," he said. His county now has the best

amenities and high satisfaction among its citizens. "I think I have done a good job," he said. After his presentation, Okeechobee County Commissioner Terry Burroughs asked Rizer questions that had been submitted by audience members.

At the conclusion of the program, guests were invited to take home the potted plants that had served as centerpieces and to submit any additional questions to DCIP group. Appreciation was given to Rizer, Burroughs, Miller, the Arcadia Police Dept., and the Turner Center staff.



Sitting at tables in the Turner Agri-Civic Center, guests enjoyed a buffet supper catered by MyShelly's Kitchen and a program during "An Evening of Conversation and Connection," an invitation-only event hosted by DeSoto County Industrial Park (DCIP) Group.



From left, Morgana Wells, Vianey Vargas, Michelle Miller, and Katt Coombes set up, replenished, and cleaned up the buffet of delicious food prepared by MyShelley's Kitchen, 15 W. Oak St., for "An Evening of Conversation and Connection" at the Turner Agri-Civic Center.



Trey Hansen, who works with Moby Dick Wheel Wash Systems in Arcadia, brought his children to "An Evening of Conversation and Connection:" from left, Mercy Hansen, Israel Hansen, and Grace Hansen took home potted plants that had served as table centerpieces.



Loudoun County, Virginia, Director of Economic Development Buddy Rizer. right, gave a presentation "Beyond Data Centers: Building Stronger Communities" and answered questions submitted by those attending the event posed by Okeechobee County Commissioner Terry Burroughs.



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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

STRENGTHS, CONNECTION, AND THE COMMUNITY THAT HOLDS US

CHAPLAIN AMANDA REUTER
US Army Reserve
DeSoto County Ministerial Association

The final pair of Master Resilience Training (MRT) skills brings us full circle: identifying and using our character strengths, and building genuine connection with others. These are the skills that turn personal resilience into shared resilience.

Character strengths are the positive traits already present in us—courage, kindness, perseverance, wisdom, gratitude, and many others. Philippians 4:8 invites us to dwell on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable. MRT simply helps us notice those qualities in ourselves and others and then put them to work. When we operate from strength rather than from deficit, we have more to offer. A person who knows they are wired for encouragement can become the steady voice in a crisis. A person gifted with problem-solving can help a family find the next practical step after loss.

Connection is the deliberate cultivation of trustworthy relationships. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us, “Two are better than one... If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 calls us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds and not to give up meeting together. Resilience research confirms what Scripture has always known: people recover and endure better when they are not alone. In military units we call it the battle buddy system. In the church and community, it is simply faithful presence.

In Arcadia and across DeSoto County we have lived this truth. Neighbors who

showed up after the storms, veterans who check on one another, families who refuse to let hardship isolate them. These are living demonstrations of connection as a resilience skill. No one is meant to carry everything alone.

As a chaplain I have watched Soldiers and civilians alike discover that their greatest strength is rarely the absence of weakness. It is the willingness to bring whatever strength they do have into relationship with others and with

God. That is where individual resilience becomes communal hope.

This week look for one character strength in yourself and one in someone near you. Name it out loud. Then take one small step to strengthen a relationship that matters. Resilience grows best in community.

May the God of all comfort equip us, individually and together, to stand firm, hope realistically, and walk with one another through every season.



RIBBON CUTTING

FROM PAGE 3 >>

treasurer of the Arcadia Electric Light, Ice and Telephone Company established in 1901 and owned with others the “DeSoto County News.”

His wife, M. J. Jones, was also a charter member of the First Baptist Church, past Worthy Matron of the Eastern Star organization, and president of the Parent-Teacher Association. In a 1956 interview published in the “Tampa Sunday Tribune,” she said, “In my early life, women largely cared for their homes and families. My husband and sons have been exceedingly active in business, church and fraternal circles, also in civic matters, so I have been happy to see them do worthwhile things But I have taken pride in being a wife, a mother, and a home-keeper. I don’t feel at all menial when I tell you that in pioneer competition, I have taken a fair number of blue ribbons with my cakes and pies. Every woman took pride in her cooking in those days.”

The John Lee Haus Inn offers four upstairs rooms, one with a private bathroom, plus a backyard cottage complete with kitchen and sitting room. The Inn is also the perfect venue for weddings as well as “retreats, meetings, and intimate celebrations in a peaceful setting designed to inspire connection” and well as the backdrop for “styled shoots and productions.” More information is available at johnleehausinn.com.



After the ribbon cutting, Pia Crone and Tom Crone gave tours of the backyard cottage as well as the John Lee Haus Inn including one of the four bedrooms available upstairs.



Ronnie Pieniaszek with Agent Homes remodeled the dining room and kitchen into a meeting space for 36 people with a service kitchen and half bath as well as the upper decks. “I’m happy to be able work on such a historic house and bring it back to life,” he said.



After the Crone family cut the ribbon, many of those in attendance gathered with them on the front porch of the “historic inn and gathering space” to celebrate the event.

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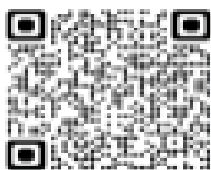
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TOURS

FROM PAGE 1 »

S. Brevard Ave., spoke briefly to the Council and distributed the data that some Council members had requested. She apologized for her delay in providing the information as the “real numbers” were difficult to compile.

Before Strickland spoke, Council Member Keith Keene had said that he was opposed. However, after receiving the data from Strickland and wanting time to review it, he asked to make the issue an agenda item to discuss at the next meeting. “If I find something in here that’s very convincing to me, I may change my mind . . . something here that really shows the economic benefit to it, and I’m willing to look at this,” he said.

Wohl concurred with making the matter an agenda item. “The public should be able know that you’re going to discuss this potentially at the next meeting,” he said. “I think you might recall the amount of turnout you had . . . you had some opposition” to the last amendment. He also recommended that each Council member confer individually with the City Marshal to find out the impact on the dept. of such a change.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

City Administrator Beth Carsten recognized Assistant City Administrator Carl McQuay for completing the Certified Public Manager Program. Working with other students from Charlotte, DeSoto, and Sarasota counties, he completed eight courses over two years learning “skills essential in public leadership: organization, management, budget, ethics, emergency management, communication, process improvement and the performance measurement of programs,” Carsten said.

“Carl has shown strong dedication to doing things better, leading responsibly, and continually improving. . . his commitment is felt here at the City every day where he works to strengthen operations, improve efficiency, and serve our community with integrity and care. It is with great honor that we present you with your diploma and thank you for your hard work,” she said.

In addition, the Council awarded the Request for Proposals (RFP 2026-02) for Financial Auditing Services to Clifton Larson Allen, LLP, as recommended by the Auditing Services Selection Committee, composed of Andrew Ames, CPA; Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco; and Council Member Keith Keene. Each committee member scored the submittal packages from Clifton Larson Allen, LLP; Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC, and Purvis, Gray and Company, LLP. Then they



Gareth Williams, owner and operator with his wife Joy Williams of Suncoast Biplanes, presented a proposal to offer 15-20 minute tours with a flight above the City of Arcadia in “Gracie,” a replica 1930s biplane, during Taco Tuesdays (suncoastbiplanes.com).



The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) recognized local Chap. 1226 for flying 100 Young Eagles at the Arcadia Airport with a banner now on display at the airport terminal thanks to Airport Director Shelley Peacock and Veera Fitzpatrick, her assistant.



During his comments, Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco brought forward the request from Brittany Strickland, owner of Britt’s Tavern, and her husband, to ask for the sales of alcohol to be extended from midnight until 2 a.m. in the City.



City Administrator Beth Carsten recognized Assistant City Administrator Carl McQuay for Completion of the Certified Public Manager Program, through Florida State University, “one of the most respected leadership programs in the public sector.”



each scored the interviews with the top two ranked firms: Clifton Larson Allen and Mauldin & Jenkins. Adding 50% of the submittal and interview scores, Clifton Larson Allen was the top ranking firm by only 15 points of a 1,450 total. Representatives from both companies attended the Council meeting.

The Council also declared two 2013 Ford F-150 XL trucks and 14 dumpsters (7 four-yard, 2 six-yard, and 5 eight-yard) as surplus and approved their disposal: one truck will be transferred to the Streets Dept.; the other will be sold at auction; and the dumpsters will be scrapped.

COMMENTS FROM DEPTS.

On behalf of the Marshal, Lt. Troy Carrillo reported that the police dept.

School District Community Outreach Coordinator Ashley Brown said that Sept. is School Attendance Awareness Month: “Attendance matters: every student every day,” she said. She also reminded that fall sports “are in full swing . . . come out and support our youth, please.”

has upgraded to the new tasers and completed the training for them. Golf Course Director Jeff Gibson announced that the high school golf teams—both girls and boys—are practicing. The course will be in good condition this winter, and it is experiencing some business every summer day. The golf cart fleet is transitioning, and he and Carsten are discussing raising rates to “keep up to speed” with rising costs.

Prompted by a question from Velasco, Gibson said that the building for the new simulator is complete, and the security alarm system is being installed. He is working on compiling business packages. He has visited other courses with simulators and found that many use a membership model, so that members have a key, and the building is available to them 24 hours a day. Such a model may not fit Arcadia.

Carsten added that Fisher and Roe, local auctioneers, may try to sell 10 to 20 of the golf carts, the one with newer batteries, for more than what is being offered in trade for the new ones.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Carsten reported that the tributary project had found a conflicting water line at the Manatee Ave. intersection with W. Oak St., so work has shifted to the culverts on Parker and Baldwin avenues, respectively. The City hired a new garbage truck driver, so Deb is back to picking up brush. A driver is still needed for the street sweeper.

For the City Hall project, the emergency escape staircase will soon be installed. The furniture will arrive in mid-Oct., and for staff to move into the rehabilitated structure, Carsten suggested closing on a Fri., remaining closed the following Mon., and opening again on Tues.. She reminded the Council of the Tentative Budget Public Hearing at 5:01 p.m. on Sept. 9.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Council approved a special event permit for Azteca Productions to celebrate Mexico’s Independence Day with a parade from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., on Sept. 12, on Oak St. from the intersection with Orange to Volusia avenues followed immediately by a small homage on S. Volusia Ave. that will be closed between Oak and Magnolia streets.

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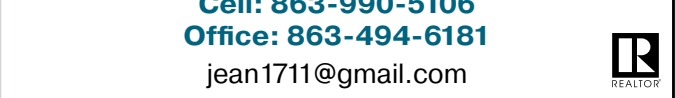
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NEWS FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF POTTER

SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS



SHERIFF POTTER
DeSoto County Sheriff

Hello DeSoto County,

Technology is a big part of our lives. It brings convenience and connectivity. However, it comes with risks, especially for our children. I am dedicated to keeping them safe, and you can help the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office do just that.

Social media apps can be used by criminals and predators for sinister reasons. I encourage parents and guardians to have an open, age-appropriate conversation with your children about how to stay safe on the internet.

- Encourage them to think before posting a photo or video online.
- Let children know that once something goes online, it could be there forever.
- Ask what apps they use.
- Urge children to report anything suspicious they see online.
- Help them turn on strict privacy settings.



- Advise children to only talk to people on social media whom they know in real life.

By staying in the know and having

that open conversation, we can all protect children from potential online dangers.

BE KIND, BE SAFE, GOD BLESS.
Sheriff James Potter



OBITUARIES

LUCKY MITCHELL MUSE



Lucky Mitchell Muse, 69, of Arcadia, Florida, passed away on August 31st, 2026, leaving behind a family, a business, a community, and a legacy made better because he was here.

Lucky was born on November 9, 1956, in Pioneer, Tennessee, to Virgil and Jessie Lay Muse. His mother later brought Lucky and his siblings to Florida in search of work and a better life. It was during those early years that the character that would define Lucky throughout his life began to take shape.

At just 14 years old, while his mother was pregnant and temporarily unable to work, Lucky left school and went to work to help provide for his mother and four siblings. He drove hay trucks, picked oranges and watermelons, built swimming pools, worked construction cleanup, and took whatever honest work he could find. He simply did what needed to be done.

That 14-year-old boy who stepped up when his family needed him never really changed. For the rest of his life, Lucky took care of people. As he grew older, years of hard work eventually opened the door for Lucky to operate a service station in Avon Park, Florida. Then, in 1980, he and his wife, Wendy, began what would become Arcadia Amoco.

Lucky married Wendy, the love of his life, on May 17, 1979. For more than 47 years, they built a life together rooted in shared values, hard work, family, and commitment. They worked side by side, raised their family, weathered life's challenges, celebrated its blessings, and built something far greater together than either could have built alone.

Over the next 46 years, Lucky and Wendy grew a business that would employ hundreds of local people and serve generations of families throughout the community. To Lucky, however, the people who worked alongside him were never

simply employees. Many became family.

He poured into them many of the same lessons he taught his own children: work hard, have a goal, take responsibility, persevere when things are difficult, and never be afraid to take action toward making tomorrow better than today. Lucky taught those lessons best by living them. Although he accomplished much through decades of hard work and perseverance, his greatest investment was always in people.

Lucky loved his community and believed deeply in supporting it. Over the years, he supported local sports from little league through high school, as well as 4-H, FFA, and many other community programs.

Much of what he did was done quietly and without recognition. When a child needed help with the cost of participating, Lucky often stepped in simply because he believed they deserved the same opportunity as everyone else.

There was a simple saying that captured his heart well: Kids eat first. Perhaps that belief began with the 14-year-old boy who understood what it meant for a family to need someone to step up. Whatever its beginning, Lucky spent the rest of his life making sure the children around him were cared for.

He never cared much about having the nicest vehicle, the nicest clothes, or the best things for himself. He simply wanted the best for his family. Lucky believed it was his job to take care of the hard things so the kids could enjoy the fun parts, and he did this well.

His children and grandchildren were not simply part of Lucky's life; they were at the center of it. If there was a ballgame, an activity, a gathering, or anything else involving his family, that was where he wanted to be. You would often find him bouncing a child on his knee singing one of his songs: Pig in a Pen, Daisy a Day, Hey Good Lookin', and many more. His grandchildren knew him lovingly as LuckyPa, Pa, and Poppie, and few things brought him greater joy than spoiling them. There never seemed to be a time when he was too tired, too busy, or even too sick to make time for them. He loved watching the kids eat, laugh, play, and simply enjoy being together.

Lucky also loved telling stories and hearing the old ones again. His stories, sayings, lessons, and memories became part of the fabric of his family. Those who heard them countless times would gladly sit and listen to them once more.

Lucky attended North Hillsborough Baptist Church under Pastor Ellis Cross, and his faith grew especially strong during the final season of his life. Looking back over

his story, his family can see God's hand throughout it, from the young boy learning perseverance and responsibility to the husband, father, grandfather, businessman, and friend who would spend a lifetime using those qualities to care for others.

Lucky was preceded in death by his parents, Virgil and Jessie Lay Muse; his brother, Ricky Muse; his beloved son, Brandon Muse; Donald and Ruth Lay; and Willy Lay. He is survived by his loving wife, Wendy Muse; his daughter, Brittany Ingman and son-in-law, Jordan; his son, Travis Muse and daughter-in-law, Brittany; his daughter-in-law, Jennie Muse; his siblings, Russell Muse, Vicky Sibley, and Steve Muse; and his nine grandchildren: Randall Muse, Madison Muse, Bailey Muse, Morgan Muse, Darcie Muse, Emory Muse, Riley Lucky Ingman, Lucas Ingman, and Caleb Ingman; his aunts and uncles, Sheila Lay (Uncle Benny), Marjorie Lay (Uncle Bob), and Roy Lay (Aunt Marjorie); and many nieces and nephews that he adored.

Those who knew Lucky know that his life cannot be measured simply by the businesses he built, the years he lived, or even the number of

people he helped. His legacy lives in the people he poured himself into.

It lives in the family he worked so hard to provide for, the team members he taught and encouraged, the children who were given an opportunity because someone quietly helped, and the grandchildren who always knew LuckyPa would make time for them.

It lives in a community that is better because Lucky Muse spent his life being part of it.

And it lives in the lessons he leaves behind:

Work hard. Put others first. Take care of your family. Have a goal. Take action. Don't give up. And when there are children around, make sure the kids eat first.

Lucky Mitchell Muse poured himself into the people he loved, and because he did, his legacy will continue through them for generations to come.

A visitation will be held on Saturday, September 12, 2026 at 10:30 AM at Ft. Ogden First Baptist in Fort Ogden, Florida with Funeral Services starting immediately after at 11:00 AM. Interment will be at Joshua Creek Cemetery on September 12, 2026, at 2:30 PM.



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DESOTO COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE



ARREST REPORT | 8/28/26 - 9/3/26

Baquedano-Guevara, Yefry:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv

Bryant, Tashada Yatasia:

Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Childs, Dejohn Taquavious:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

Crawford, James Andrew:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Ellison, Paty:

Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Garcia-Aguilar, Pablo:

DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - DUI Influence Of Alcohol Or Drugs; DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - Refusal Submit DUI Testing

Hallman, Austin Lee:

Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motorcycle W/O License; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Hightower, Shayvon Javon'Tae:

Drugs-Sell - Sell Ctrl Substance SCHOOL/PARK Schedule I; Public Order Crimes - Use 2 Way Comm Device To Facil Felony

LEWIS, VINCENT NEROSHARONE:

Lewd Lascv Behavior - Commit Sex Act Presence Correct Facil Employee

Lucas, Bryan Jeffery:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation (x3)

Madrid-Ramirez, Norlan Samuel:

Battery - Cause Bodily Harm

Maki, John Virgil:

Burgl - Burglary Unoccupied Structure Unarmed; Larc - Grand Theft 750 Less Than 5k Dols

Mathewson, Thomas George Edward:

Aggrav Asslt - Weapon - W Deadly Weapon Without Intent To Kill

Neads, William Kyle:

Operate Vehicle Exceed Speed Limit 50+ Mph

Neutzling, Tanner Joseph:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Perez Jr., Manuel:

DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - 0.15 Or Higher Or W Person Under 18 In Vehicle

Rettel, Jessica Gail:

Aggrav Asslt - Weapon - W Deadly Weapon Without Intent To Kill

Tindall II, John Brack:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Tindall II, John Brack:

Battery - Commit Domestic Battery By Strangulation

Wesby, Desmond Perez:

Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh

Williamson, Ronald John:

Aggrav Battery - On Person 65 Years Of Age Or Older; Burgl - Burglary With Assault Or Battery

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