

JANUARY 13, 2026



Peace River

FREE Compliments Of Our Advertisers



**S
H
O
P
P
E
R**

Serving Desoto, Charlotte and Hardee Counties

VOTE for your favorite local businesses of **2025!**

Ballot & info on page 17



Real Estate
Local Listings Inside!

**NEWS
and
MORE**
EST. 1996

For display advertising, contact Sales: **863.990.9813** or sales@peacerrivershopper.com
FREE Classified Line: 863.491.6800 or prs@dancollins.biz



Like us on Facebook
[@Peacerrivershopper](https://www.facebook.com/Peacerrivershopper)

Your **FREE SUBSCRIPTION** is now available! Be the first to read The Shopper from your inbox on Monday afternoon. Email: sales@peacerrivershopper.com



Town & Country PROPERTIES of Florida, Inc.



Ronda Woppman
FLORIDA & GEORGIA BROKER
863.990.0768



Voted #1 Real Estate Brokerage Four Years Running!

LARGE LOT



FEATURES

Just under quarter acre lot in a low-density neighborhood in beautiful Sarasota County! The lot was recently mulched and is in prime condition for its new owners! Not in a flood zone!

OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE

LISTED AT
\$23,999

LOT 22 EASTMAN CIR,
NORTH PORT, FL 34288.
MLS#A4656339

10 ACRES!- LAST LOT FOR SALE!



FEATURES

BUILDABLE 10 ACRE HOMESITE. Currently used as 10 acres of Citrus Grove featuring paved road frontage and electric nearby! Want a hobby farm or just room to roam? Here is your opportunity!

LAST LOT FOR SALE!
NOT IN A FLOOD ZONE!

LISTED AT
\$172,500

45137 (22-21)
NARROW LANE,
PUNTA GORDA, FL 33982
MLS#A4662769

LARGE LOT



FEATURES

Just under quarter acre lot in a low-density neighborhood in beautiful Sarasota County! The lot was recently mulched and is in prime condition for its new owners! No in a flood zone!

OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE

LISTED AT
\$23,999

CASCO CIR,
NORTH PORT, FL 34288.
MLS#A4658293

LARGE HOME



FEATURES

- 3 Bedrooms
- 2 Bathrooms
- Bonus room
- 3100+/- Sq Ft
- Exposed beams/ high ceilings
- Terrazzo floors
- Wood burning fireplace
- Dedicated dining room
- 2 car garage + detached shop
- Two large primary suites with Shared ensuite
- Newer upgrades & Utility items
- 2022 roof

REDUCED TO
\$374,995

4527 SE HIGHWAY 70,
ARCADIA, FL 34266. MLS#A4667117

4.9 ACRES!



FEATURES

Beautiful 4.9-acre parcel located in a quiet, rural area of Arcadia. This property is zoned A-10, offering excellent flexibility for agricultural use, livestock, and residential development. The land is buildable, fully cleared, and ready for your new home or farm setup. Property is fenced with a gated entrance and provides wide-open views, peaceful surroundings, and plenty of space for barns, animals, gardens, or a custom built home.

LISTED AT
\$240,000

2902 SE PIGGYBACK RD,
ARCADIA, FL 34266. MLS#A4673434

WELCOME TO THE TOWN & COUNTRY

PROPERTIES TEAM!

ABBY SMITH

CELL: 863.558.5633

You may know Abby and her husband Justin from our local Smiths Ranch and Feed store! Abby is also the proud mother of three beautiful daughters. She is passionate about helping families, landowners, and buyers find the perfect property to match their goals and lifestyle. Her clients can expect clear communication, honest guidance, and truly client-focused service every step of the way.



T C P

(863) 494-1739

www.townandcountrypropertiesflorida.com

521 E. Hickory Street • Arcadia, FL 34266

Se Habla Español

Family owned and operated, serving Desoto County and surrounding areas since 1956

Se Habla Espanol



TURNER REALTY COMPANY, INC.

Eugene H. Turner "Brother", Broker

863-494-4777

105 S. Brevard Avenue • Arcadia, FL 34266



For a complete list of properties for sale, please visit:
WWW.TURNERREALTY.COM

Income-Producing Triplex

1600 NE Floridian Cir,
Arcadia, FL 34266



MLS# C7518087

\$225,000

Fully occupied triplex with three 1 bed, 1 bath units, all rented at \$500/month. Immediate cash flow in a quiet, convenient location. Solid investment with upside potential.



Ashley Grimaldi
813.546.0337



Kaye Mercer
863.990.7001



Kayla Shelfer
863.303.4898



Maribel Carrillo
863.990.2853



Charla Miethke
941.336.9775

We have agents ready to assist you
SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!



Peace River SHOPPER

DeSoto County's Weekly Publication

JANUARY 13, 2026

The Arcadia Community Local Distribution Locations

- Ace Hardware
- Anna's Restaurant
- Arcadia Discount Liquor
- Arcadia Do-It-Best Hardware
- Arcadia Municipal Airport
- Arcadia Municipal Golf Course
- Arcadia Post Office
- Arcadia Village
- Before & After Hair Salon
- Big Tree RV Resort
- Champs
- Circle K (Nocatee)
- Circle K (North)
- City of Arcadia
- Collins Realty
- Country Café
- Crews Bank & Trust
- DaVita Dialysis Center
- DeSoto County Annex
- DeSoto County Library
- DeSoto County Property Appraiser
- DeSoto County Tax Office
- DeSoto Memorial Hospital
- Dollar General (near Northside Shell)
- Family Care Medical Center
- Ft. Ogden Post Office
- Habitat for Humanity
- K & J Homegrown Produce
- Marathon
- MyShelly's Kitchen
- Nocatee Post Office
- Oak Street Deli
- Publix
- Publix Liquor
- RMZRealty
- Speedway
- Toby's RV Resort
- Walgreens
- Whealers
- Wood Park Pointe
- Yellow Deli

@Peacerrivershopper

DEADLINES

Standard weekly cutoff times for ads apply to the week prior to each issue's release day.

Printed issues are released each week on Tuesday:

- Space reservation: Wednesdays, 5pm
- Camera-ready ads: Fridays, 4pm
- Copy and graphics for ads requiring design: Wednesdays, 5pm
- Classified Ads: Thursdays, 5pm

REMINDER: From the beginning, our Shopper's policy is not to publish anything negative about anyone. Please remember this when placing advertisement with us. We admit mistakes have happened, however we will strive to prevent this in the future. We reserve the right to use our discretion in selecting, editing and determining the duration of publication of all advertisements. The Peace River Shopper is not liable for omissions, misprints, typographical errors or the condition of any advertised items. The Peace River Shopper assumes no liability for any misinterpretation of the advertisements in this publication. Information printed in this Shopper does not necessarily reflect our opinion or values.

SALES / OFFICE MANAGER
Angie Duckett
sales@peacerrivershopper.com
863.990.9813

CREATIVE DIRECTOR/AD DESIGN
Jackie Bierman

OPERATIONS/PRODUCT DESIGN
Jonathan Bruch

DISTRIBUTION
Jennifer Phillips

Contact us today to place your **FREE CLASSIFIED!**
Call 863.491.6800
(This is a voicemailbox, we do not return calls that come in to this number. Leave a message with your ads 1) Category, 2) What you want it to say, 3) Price, and 4) Contact phone number.)
or email sales@peacerrivershopper.com
Email ads to ensure accuracy. Limit 20 words per ad and two ads per household. Runs for 2-4 weeks (space permitting).

PAID CLASSIFIEDS
Paid Classifieds are for businesses, paid services, employment or classifieds over 20 words. Paid classifieds are \$15/week for 35 words or less. 15¢ per word over 35. Limit 50 words maximum. Add a photo for \$5/week

ONLINE PHONE BOOK
SENT VIA EMAIL!
Contact Angie Duckett 863.990.9813 or email: sales@peacerrivershopper.com for rates and more information

Peace River SHOPPER

DESOTO | CHARLOTTE | HARDEE

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

3.42 Acres with 1/1
concrete block house.
Woods and Pond

ASKING \$225,000!
MLS#C7519186

13+ Acres
(6 parcels, 94 lots)
zoned for multi family

ASKING \$1,400,000!
MLS#C7475900

20 acres with 3/2 D/W
M-H, Barn, sheds and
pond. Zoned Ag.

ASKING \$725,000!
MLS#C7514180



5.23 acres with Charley
Creek frontage, Gated
drive, fossil hunting,
wild game.

ASKING \$198,000!
MLS#C7515648

1.88 acres zoned
Commercial.
Contains 12 lots
(8 lots face the street)

ASKING \$365,000!
MLS#C7515555

2BR 2BA CONDO in Pt.
Charlotte (55 and older, only
Support pets if approved)
Pools, club house, convenient
to shopping and medical etc.
Bottom floor.

ASKING \$127,500!
MLS#C7494330

Jean Vitali

☎ 863.990.5106
✉ jean1711@gmail.com
🌐 www.jeanvitali.com

COLLINS
MANAGEMENT & REALTY

Dan Collins, Broker

☎ 863.494.6181
📍 223 E. Oak Street
Arcadia, FL 34266

MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY! ONE CALL DOES IT ALL!
NOTARY SERVICES BY APPOINTMENT; MOBILE POSSIBLE



ARREST REPORT 1/2/26 - 1/8/26

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

BOYINGTON, ERIC BENJAMIN:

Obscene Material-Possess - Poss Control View Depiction Child Pornography (X8), Conservation-Animals - Sexual Contact With Animal (X2)

BROWN, JESSICA LYNN:

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

BUSSIÈRE, MICHAEL PATRICK:

Larc - Grand Theft 750 Less Than 5K Dols, Fraud-Swindle - Communicate To Defraud Property Value Of \$300+, Public Order Crimes - Use 2 Way Comm Device To Facil Felony

CUCUL-BAUTISTA, HENRI:

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

DOUCETTE, ASHTAN

TYTEYANNA:

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

FERRER-MARTINEZ, JOSE:

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

FREEMANTLE HAMILTON, GEORGINA:

Oving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

GONZALEZ LEIVA, YOSVANY:

Dui-Unlaw Bld Alch - Dui Damage To Property Or Person Of Another

GRANA, JUAN:

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

HERNANDEZ CABRERA, JAIME:

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

KIDWELL, TRENA JO:

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

MOLLEMA, AVRA TONI:

Battery - Touch Or Strike

MYER, RAYMOND ALEX:

Attery - On Staff Of Sex Viol Pred Facility (X2)

PANECKI, TYLER JAY:

Raud - Utter False Bank Bill/Note/Check/Draft

QUINN, WILLIAM JEAN:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 3Rd Sub Viol

RODRIGUEZ, JOEL:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 2Nd Subs Off

ROMANO, ROSE ANNE:

Counterfeiting Of - Simulate Certif Of Vet Inspection Or Other Doc (X2), Keep Animals In Enclosure Wo Excercise And Air (X40), Possession Of Weapon - Or Ammo By Convicted Fla Felon, Conservation-Animals - Cause Cruel Death Pain And Suffering (X23), Fraud - Utter False Instrument (X2), Fraud-Swindle - Obtain Property Under 20K Dols, Health-Safety - No Health Certif For Each Transported Cat Dog, Pet Dir Knowing Misrep Breed Sex Hlth Dog Cat

SOMERS, NICHOLAS GLENN:

Robbery - With Firearm, Arc - Theft \$300 To \$10,000 From Person 65+ Yoa

TELLO, HECTOR VASQUEZ:

Moving Traffic Viol - Drive While Lic Susp Habitual Offender

TORRES MENDEZ, LEO GIL:

Larc - Other Theft

TORRES-MIRANDA, GILBERTO:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 2Nd Subs Off

VARGAS ANTUNEZ, EVIN SAUL:

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

VARNES, JOSHUA COLE:

Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 2Nd Subs Off, Alter Obscure Vehicle Registr/License Plate

WILKERSON, DERRICK

DEVONTE:

Larc - 20K Dols Less Than 100K Dols (X2), Stolen Prop-Deal In - Organized (X2), Marijuana-Possess - Not More Than 20 Grams, Drug Equip-Possess - And Or Use, Veh Theft - Grand Theft Of Motor Vehicle



Information on this report is provided for informational purposes only from the public Inmate Records of the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office. While every effort is made to ensure that the posted information is accurate, it may contain factual or other errors. Arrest information may not reflect the current information. An arrest does not mean that the individual has been convicted of a crime. The information on this report should not be relied upon for any type of legal action. Unauthorized or illegal use of the information is strictly prohibited.

187 CLOSINGS IN 2025!



Michelle Williamson



Broker

Brandi Long



Broker Associate

Bailey Patterson



REALTOR®

Jessica Vinson



REALTOR®

Gaby Bonville



REALTOR®

Ana Jaimes



REALTOR®

the
Williamson Group REALTY, INC.

1007 EAST OAK STREET

THEWILLIAMSONGROUPREALTY.COM

Follow us on:



863.494.9009



Michelle Williamson



Broker

Brandi Long



Broker Associate

Bailey Patterson



REALTOR®

Jessica Vinson



REALTOR®

Gaby Bonville



REALTOR®

Ana Jaimes



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THEWILLIAMSONGROUPREALTY.COM

Follow us on:



863.494.9009

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING US, DESOTO COUNTY!



Thank you to our community for trusting us with such an important part of your lives in 2025. Every call, conversation, showing, and closing meant more to us than you know. We're incredibly grateful to serve the place we call home and the people who make it so special. Your trust is never taken lightly, and we're thankful for you today and always.

Michelle Williamson



Broker

Brandi Long



Broker Associate

Bailey Patterson



REALTOR®

Jessica Vinson



REALTOR®

Gaby Bonville



REALTOR®

Ana Jaimes



REALTOR®



1007 EAST OAK STREET

THEWILLIAMSONGROUPREALTY.COM

Follow us on:



863.494.9009

Please join us to celebrate the
groundbreaking of the
Crews Bank & Trust Arcadia North Branch!



8 a.m. on Thursday, January 22
400 N. Brevard Avenue, Arcadia



Member **FDIC**

www.crews.bank



CLASSIFIED ADS

One Person's Junk is Another's Treasure



CONTACT US TODAY TO PLACE YOUR

FREE CLASSIFIED!

Call 863.491.6800 or email sales@peacerrivershopper.com

Upgrade your classified and add a picture or logo for only \$15 per week! Email ads to ensure accuracy.

Limit 20 words per ad and two ads per household.

Runs for 2-4 weeks (space permitting).

PAID CLASSIFIEDS

Call 863.990.9813 or email sales@peacerrivershopper.com

Paid Classifieds are for businesses, paid services, employment or classifieds over 20 words. Paid classifieds are \$15/week for 35 words or less. 15¢ per word over 35.

CLASSIFIED ADS DEADLINE:
Every Thursday, 5pm

16

1. CARS & VEHICLES

ATVs
Bikes
Boats
Cars

Golf Carts
Motorcycles
Motorhomes
Campers/RV
Scooter
SUV

Travel Trailers
Trailers
Trucks
Vans

Parts & Accessories

16

2. MERCHANDISE

Antiques & Collectibles
Appliances
Computers & Electronics
Clothing-Adult
Clothing-Children
Exercise Equipment
Guns & Ammo
Farm Equipment
Furniture
Hunting & Fishing
Lawn & Garden
Medical Equipment
Miscellaneous
Music Items
Produce
Sewing & Crafts
Sports Equipment
Tools & Building Materials

24

3. FARM & LIVESTOCK

Livestock for Sale
Feed & Supplies
FREE Livestock

24

4. PETS

Pets for Sale
Free Pets
Lost and Found
Pet Supplies

26

5. JOBS

Employment
Help Wanted
Looking for Job

26

6. REAL ESTATE

Commercial
Home for Sale
Land for Sale
Mobile Homes for Sale

28

7. RENTALS

Apt & Condo Rentals
Home Rental
Mobile Home Rentals
Office Space
Rooms for Rent
Vacation Rentals
Lots for Rent

30

8. SERVICES

Business Services
Boat Repair & Maint.
Caregiving
Cleaning
Lessons
Transportation
Wrecker Service

32

9. WANTED

Cars & Vehicles
Merchandise
Livestock
Pets
Real Estate
Rentals
Services

32

10. COMMUNITY

Auctions
Meetings
Lost & Found
Yard Sales



**COLDWELL BANKER
SUNSTAR REALTY**

kgamiotea@arcadiafloridarealty.com

863-494-3600

Each Office Is Independently Owned and Operated

**What is your
property worth?
Call for FREE Value
Quote No Obligation
863-990-1000**

**Do You Have
Rental Properties?
Do You Need A
Property Manager?
Call Kathey Gamiotea
863-990-1000**

Kathey L. Gamiotea

863-990-1000

**FREE
DESOTO COUNTY MAPS**

**FREE
FLAGS**

WORKSHOP



REMODELED, LOOKS BRAND NEW, 3 BR, 1.5 BA, CBS HOME WITH NEW FLOORING, NEW PAINT, NEW ROOF, NEW BA ROOM FIXTURES, NEW HOT WATER HEATER. MOVE IN READY. SO MANY FEATURES YOU ARE LOOKING FOR, CARPORT, SCREENED LANAI, LARGE WORKSHOP WITH SEPARATE AREA FOR LAWN EQUIPMENT. CITY WATER AND SEWAGE, CALL TODAY TO SEE THIS BEAUTIFUL HOME. \$283,000 H-2395

RENTAL



PT CHARLOTTE RENTAL, 3 BRS, 2 BA HOME, ALL TILE FLOORS, LIVING RM PLUS FAMILY RM. NEW ROOF, LARGE SCREEN LANAI, OVERSIZED 2 CAR GARAGE, NO SMOKING. AVAILABLE DECEMBER 1ST. \$1,750 MONTH

SOLD



5 PLUS ACRES ON THE WEST SIDE OF ARCADIA OFF HWY 70. FENCED, WOODED WITH NATIVE FLORIDA TREES, POND. HAS RIDING TRAILS THROUGH THE PROPERTY. CALL FOR SHOWING APPOINTMENT. \$172,000 A-331

5+ ACRES



5.05 ACRES, WEST OF ARCADIA, FENCED, ELECTRIC, WELL, 2 SEPTICS, 12X28 STG SHED, PUMP HOUSE, PERIMETER IS LINED W/TREES. PAVED ROAD. HORSES & GRAZING ANIMALS & MANUFACTURER HOMES ALLOWED. \$220,000 A-332

RENTAL



FT OGDEN, 4 BR 2 BA ON 40 ACRES. FORMAL LIVING RM PLUS LARGE FAM RM W/FIREPLACE. A COOK'S KITCHEN W/CABINETS ON 3 SIDES OF THE KITCHEN, PLUS ISLAND, PANTRY. OVER 2300 SF LIVING AREA, SPLIT PLAN BRS. GARAGE. \$2000 MONTH. NO SMOKING, NO PETS

NEW LISTING



SUNNYBREEZE, 2 BEDROOM 2 BATH MANUFACTURER HOME BUILT 2005. HOME IS WELL MAINTAINED, MOVE IN READY. LARGE KITCHEN WITH BREAKFAST BAR. ALL KITCHEN APPLIANCES INCLUDED PLUS THE WASHER AND DRYER. 15X40 CARPORT FOR 2 VEHICLES. 10X12 STG SHED, PLUS A STG SHED UNDER THE CARPORT. ENCLOSED 12X25 FLORIDA ROOM. MINUTES TO GOLF COURSE AND PUBLIC BOAT RAMP ON THE PEACE RIVER. APPROX 10-15 MINUTES TO I-75. \$196,000. M-504



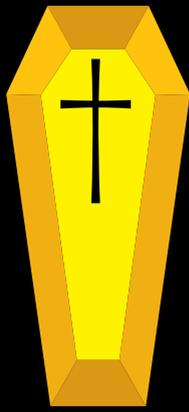
As a new year begins, Florida Power & Light Company would like to say thank you, DeSoto County.

You're more than customers—you're neighbors, families and local businesses we're proud to serve.

We're committed to continuing to provide the reliable power you depend on while keeping bills as low as possible.

Cheers to another year powering the DeSoto County community!





**THINK
OUTSIDE
THE BOX**

See page
28
For more info

Cremations starting at **\$695**
Call 941-725-4357 or 863-491-9848
DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands & Charlotte Counties

THE POOL CONNECTION

HENRY BLOSSER, Owner
863-494-1761
Now Accepting New Customers

Team Arcadia
@ 16 S Volusia
January Events



Farmers Market
Every Friday, 1 pm to dusk



Register for Dance Classes
arcadiadance25@gmail.com



Saturday January 3, 2-5 pm

Cookie Creation

Make & Take 2 Bake
Call for Info (941) 310-5033



Saturday January 31, 11 am-4:30 pm

Luv Ya

Valentine Crafts 4 your Valentine



Monday February 9, 6 pm

Annual Member Meeting
Board Elections and Planning

1. CARS & VEHICLES

ATVS

Go-Cart for Parts
Go Cart for parts only
\$200. (941) 223-7478

BIKES

3-wheel Bicycle
Needs chain \$150.
(863) 263-8244

BIKES

Bike
Spruill Bike \$150. (863)
263-8422

BIKES

Tricycle
Through bike. \$150.
(863) 263-8422

GOLF CARTS

EZ-Go Golf Cart
Lights, rear seat, good
batteries, new tires, in
good condition \$2500.
(863) 244-8816

MOTORCYCLES

**2009 Harley Road
Glide**
Very good condition,
6300 miles \$6000.
(239) 963-6439

MOTORCYCLES

**2015 Harley
Davidson 500**
\$2400 OBO. Call Ed for
details. (239) 218-0577

**CLASSIFIEDS
GET
RESULTS**

TRAVEL TRAILERS

2012 MXT by KZ RV
Toy Hauler Travel
Trailer. Model MXT20.
Pristine Condition &
Accessories. Sleeps
6. Exterior size: 24ft X
8ft X 10.5ft (with AC).
Interior height: 6ft 6in.
\$9750.00 or Best offer.
(941) 787-9654

TRUCKS

**2000 Chevy
Silverado 1500**
"As is" \$2000. (765)
366-1922

TRUCKS

2006 Ford F250
Diesel Utility Truck.
\$6200. 941-223- 7478

VANS

2001 Dodge Ram Van
171,000 miles, in
working condition with
2 front seats \$1700.
(941) 800-7105

VANS

2001 Dodge Ram
2001 Dodge Ram Van
B1500 for sale for
\$2000. 171,000 miles,
still in use. (941) 800-
7105

2. MERCHANDISE

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

Buying Antiques
Advertising 1 piece or
Whole Collection Signs,
Motorcycles, Cars,
Anything Old. Free
Appraisals. (941) 812-
1312

Vote for your favorites of 2025!



Let your voice be heard!

Vote for your favorite local businesses in the 2025 Peace River Shopper DeSoto Choice Award contest.

Cast your vote and **ENTER TO WIN A \$50 VISA GIFT CARD!**

AC/Heating _____	Insurance Agency _____
Antique Store _____	Law Firm _____
Appliance Store _____	Lawn Care _____
Artist _____	Massage Therapist _____
Auto Dealership _____	Medical Professional _____
Auto Repair _____	Mortgage Lender _____
Bank _____	Nail Salon _____
Barber Shop _____	Pest Control _____
Carpet Cleaning _____	Pet Grooming _____
Child Care _____	Pharmacy _____
Coffee _____	Photography _____
Computer Repair _____	Plumber _____
Electrician _____	Real Estate Office _____
Electronics _____	Realtor _____
Event Coordinator _____	Restaurant _____
Exercise/Gym _____	Veterinarian _____
Feed/Ranch Store _____	Window Tinting _____
Flooring _____	
Florist _____	
Furniture Store _____	
Golf Course _____	
Graphic Designer _____	
Hairstylist _____	
Hair Salon _____	
Handyman _____	



Vote Online
<https://bit.ly/desotochoice2025>

CONTEST RULES: All nominations must pertain to businesses, services, places or people located within DeSoto County. The ballot must be at least 50% completed or it will be disqualified from voting or entering the gift card giveaway. **Only one ballot per person.** Submitting more than one ballot will result in complete disqualification. Winner of each category will be determined by highest number of votes. Gift card winner will be selected by random drawing. **All entries must be received by January 31, 2026 by 5:00pm.**

Your Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail completed ballot to: 223 E. Oak Street Ste. 1 • Arcadia, FL 34266 or enter online at: www.peacerivershopper.com

HUGE

Garage

SALE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

BROOKSIDE BLUFF CLUBHOUSE
7721 CENTER ROAD, ZOLFO SPRINGS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026
8:00 AM TO 12:00 PM

Large amounts of furniture (couches, sofa chairs, tables), bicycles, appliances (stoves, refrigerators, washer/dryers), cabinets, crafts, baked goods, miscellaneous items including: housewares, collectables, tools, art, home needs, fishing supplies, lamps, sporting equipment, golf items, bedding, mattresses, and bake sale items and food.

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

Deep Sea Fishing

Two antique deep sea fishing poles, three Penn reels, old boat compass. Call for details (863) 244-2169

APPLIANCES

Electric Start Generator

5000 watts made for a motor home \$150. (941) 743-8243

APPLIANCES

Generac Generator

4000 watts with a 7.8 engine on it \$150. (941) 743-8243

CLOTHING - ADULT

Women's Soccer Shoes

3 pair womens soccer shoes never worn. size 9 and 9.5. 35.00 each or 75.00 for 3. (863) 252-1685

CLOTHING - ADULT

Women's Cowboy Boots

Cowboy boots women never worn. size 7 green and 6.5 brown \$35.00 each or \$65.00 for 2. (863) 252-1685

FURNITURE

3-tier Entertainment Center

Glass shelves. Metal frame. \$50.00. The glass is a rectangle type shaped for corner placement in your house. (941) 223-7478

FURNITURE

3-high Bunk Bed

Wooden frame, white. Can be set up for all 3 bunks in 1 stack or separated. They are all twin size. Needs mattresses. Selling price of \$300. (941) 223-7478

FURNITURE

Mini bar

Wood mini bar \$50. (941) 223-7478

FURNITURE

TV Stand

3 tier metal and glass TV stand \$75. (941) 223-7478

FURNITURE

Bunk Bed

3 tier bunk bed \$300. (941) 223-7478

FURNITURE

King-size Bedroom Furniture

Dark brown, 6 pieces comes with quilt and sheets \$800 OBO. (941) 276-4745



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Division of Career & Adult Education
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Registration Deadline:

JANUARY 16, 2026

* Classes begin January 20, 2026 *
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Peace River Chapter #30



Meetings

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Port Charlotte 3100 Port Charlotte Blvd.

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King-size Bedroom Furniture

King size bedroom furniture, dark brown, sleigh bed set with mattress, mirror, 6 drawer dresser, 2 nightstands, quilt and sheets \$800 OBO. (863) 303-5889

FURNITURE

Coffee Table

Beautiful long wooden coffee table with 2 matching side tables in excellent condition only \$100. (941) 637-6557

FURNITURE

Tray Tables

Beautiful tray tables, collapsible style, excellent wood grain only \$15 each, set of 2 is \$30. (941) 637-6557

FURNITURE

Folding chairs

Folding chairs in excellent condition, like new, only \$5 each. (941) 637-6557

FURNITURE

Drop-leaf Table

Drop leaf table in good condition with sides that go up or down only \$90. 941-637- 6557

FURNITURE

Bed

Poster bed, full set \$200. (941) 223-7478

FURNITURE

Mechanical Twin Bed

3 fold up platform off of twin mechanical bed, can be used for padding, nice looking \$30. (941) 223-7478

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GUNS & AMMO

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Kayak

10ft Bass Pro Ascend Kayak with paddles. Like new \$400 (863) 444-0528



Did you purchase or construct a new home last year?



DEADLINE to file your application for Homestead Exemption is **MARCH 1ST**

To qualify for homestead exemptions, you **MUST** own and occupy your home as your primary residence and be a Florida resident as of **JANUARY 1ST**

FILE ONLINE

Online Exemptions Applications are provided as a courtesy.

IMPORTANT

Please do **NOT** use the Online Exemption Application on **PUBLIC** computers, such as those at the public library or coffee shop. You will be required to provide **PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL** information, such as Social Security Number and Driver's License.

TO FILE ONLINE, VISIT:

desotopa.com/online_exemptions/

OR

FILE IN PERSON

The application process can be overwhelming, due to the nature of the form supplied by the Florida Department of Revenue and the number of documents required to be provided.

**CALL TO SCHEDULE
IN-PERSON APPOINTMENT:**

863-993-4866

» Each individual applying should bring **ALL** «
of the required documents listed below.

ADDITIONAL EXEMPTIONS

- Senior's Exemptions (age 65 or older, limited income)
- Disabled Veteran's Exemption
- Widow's / Widower's Exemption
- Disability Exemption
- Exemption for Blind Persons
- Veteran's Combat-Related Percentage Discount (age 65 or older)
- Deployed Military Exemption
- Exemptions for Surviving Spouse of Veteran or First Responder

If you have questions concerning the qualifications for these exemptions, please contact our office:

863.993.4866 • 815 N. Mills Ave., Suite 101, Arcadia
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Social Security Number
- Florida Driver's License or ID Card (with current address)
- Florida Vehicle Tag Number
- Voter Registration (if applicable)
- Immigration Information (Residency, Passport, etc.)
- School Information where dependent children are registered
- Checking/Savings Account Statement (leave in envelope)
- Paid Utility Bill (with Service Address)
- Death Certificate for Spouse (when applying for widow/widower's exemption)
- Copy of Trust (for properties titled to Trusts)
- For disability exemptions, contact the office for the documentation required (includes service-connected)



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David A. Williams, CFA, CCF

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Canoe
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Pellet Smoker
MembersMark pellet smoker, good physical condition, needs a new controller \$25.00. (863) 244-2169

HUNTING/FISHING/CAMPING

10ft Kayak
10 ft. Hoodoo Element sit on top kayak with paddle, automatic and life jacket \$550. (863) 494-3762

LAWN & GARDEN

Canning Jars
Used canning jars. Clean. Pints some quarts. 16 cases. \$75 (863) 444-5910

HUNTING/FISHING/CAMPING

Fiberglass Canoe
14.5 long, 38 inches wide fiberglass canoe with battery box, heavy duty battery, anchor, paddles, dry storage areas, 30 lb. control motor, electric, 5 speed. (863) 494-3762

LAWN & GARDEN

Kayak
14 foot Wilderness kayak \$400. (607) 749-2310

LAWN & GARDEN

Sprayer
Fimco Sprayer Pull Behind \$150. (941) 223-7478

LAWN & GARDEN

Patio Set
5 piece patio set, hunter green and maroon. Real nice \$145. 863-494-3652.

LAWN & GARDEN

Hot tub carcass
\$100. No leaks, all piping included or \$200 with motor. (941) 223-7478

LAWN & GARDEN

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16 horse Craftsman V-twin, bottom shaft \$200. (941) 743-8243

MISCELLANEOUS

Quilts
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Mower Motor
15 horse colder command, bottom shaft. (941) 743-8243

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Name brand is Ningbo richen electrical appliance company Ltd. It has heat or just a fireplace flame for decorating decor. Selling price is \$75.00. Great condition. (941) 223-7478

MISCELLANEOUS

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Large, only \$15. 2 small fans, disc fan size only \$5 each or \$20 for all. (941) 637-6557

PRODUCE

Produce

Honey, mustard greens and eggs. (856) 359-5772

TOOLS/BUILDING MATERIALS

Hydraulic Jack

40-ton hydraulic Jack for sale. Perfect gift for dad for Christmas \$350. (863) 444-2729

TOOLS/BUILDING MATERIALS

Roofing, shingles

Asphalt, 4 bundles, new \$30. Bronze color. 941- 623-2674

TOOLS/BUILDING MATERIALS

Windows

2 white vinyl, double pane, double hung windows, 46x34 \$50 for both, screens included. (941) 623-2674

3. FARM & LIVESTOCK

FARM & LIVESTOCK

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Send your Farm and Livestock ads to sales@peacervershopper.com

4. PETS

PETS FOR SALE

Yard Sale

Boston Terriers, 6 months old, all males \$600 each. (863) 227-1034

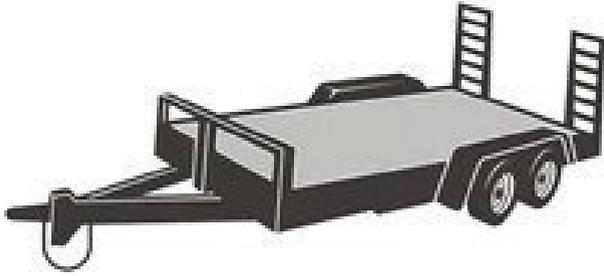
PETS FOR SALE

European Doberman Pinscher

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

The DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners has released its 2026 meeting schedule for the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and the Tourism Development Council. The meetings will be held at the DeSoto County Administration Building (201 E. Oak St., Arcadia, FL 34266). The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meetings are normally held in the odd numbered months, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

The EDAC 2026 dates are as follows:

- Thursday, January 29, 2026
- Thursday, March 19, 2026
- Thursday, May 28, 2026
- Thursday, July 23, 2026
- Thursday, September 24, 2026
- Thursday, November 12, 2026

The Tourism Development Council (TDC) public meetings are normally held in the even numbered months on the second Tuesday, beginning at 1:30 p.m.

The TDC 2026 dates are as follows:

- Tuesday, February 10, 2026
- Tuesday, April 14, 2026
- Tuesday, June 9, 2026
- Tuesday, August 11, 2026
- Tuesday, October 13, 2026
- Tuesday, December 8, 2026

If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling 863-993-4807 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Please note two or more DeSoto County Commissioners may be in attendance at the meetings and, at times, may participate in discussion of the issues. For more information, contact Sondra Guffey at 863-993-4807 or s.guffey@desotobocc.com.

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EMPLOYMENT

Real Estate Agent Collins

Management & Realty is now looking for licensed Real Estate Agents. Must have Real Estate License, a good working ethic & fast moving business sense for a fast moving company. Contact Dan at: dan@dancollins.biz

EMPLOYMENT

Medical Staff

DeSoto Health and Rehab is now hiring nurses, C.N.A.s, Physical Therapists and Cot's. Full and Part-Time. Competitive Wages. Apply online at desotohealthandrehab.com.

HELP WANTED

TEENS FOR MOVING HELP

Young people wanted for a small apartment move in Arcadia for mid January. (863) 244-1685

HELP WANTED

Tai Chi

Looking for someone in Arcadia that teaches Tai Chi. (239) 699-1499

MISCELLANEOUS

Professional landscaper, Gardener, Janitor, Custodian for any business or home.

Weekly maintenance and reasonable rates. Tom Larsen Landscapes 334-739-3409 tomlarsen559@gmail.com.

6. REAL ESTATE

HOME FOR SALE

2/2 Concrete Block

2 bedroom, 2 bath concrete block house for sale in Punta Gorda, close to Hwy. 17 for \$410,5000. (941) 800-7105

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LAND FOR SALE

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16
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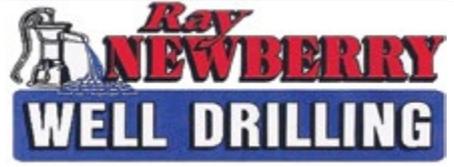


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PUBLIC NOTICE SOLICITATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

The DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners is actively seeking one (1) member to serve on the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). The EDAC was established by Ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners and shall be comprised of a minimum of nine members, not more than 13 members, recommended by staff and approved by the Board.

Each member shall be a resident of DeSoto County.

Please submit a brief biography,
a letter of interest, and contact information to:
s.guffey@desotobocc.com

Submissions will be accepted through:
January 28, 2026

MOBILE HOME FOR SALE

Park model for Sale
Park model with lanai,
\$39,900 fully furnished,
1 bedroom/bathroom,
Big Tree RV resort
(55+). (873) 456-1748

APT & CONDO RENTAL

4/2 Duplex
4 bedroom, 2 baths
duplex for rent \$1500
a month close to Kings
Highway. (941) 800-
7105

7. RENTALS

APT & CONDO RENTAL

2/1 Apartment
Now taking
applications for
a 2 bedroom, 1
bath concrete
block apartment
(Triplex) coming
open in Arcadia.
Water, garbage
pick-up & lawn
care included in
\$1200/month rent.
No Pets! Contact
Angie at 863-993-
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biz for a rental
application.

APT & CONDO RENTAL

For Rent
Cuarto con casina y
baño entrada privada
lugar seguro. (863)
558-1306

APT & CONDO RENTAL

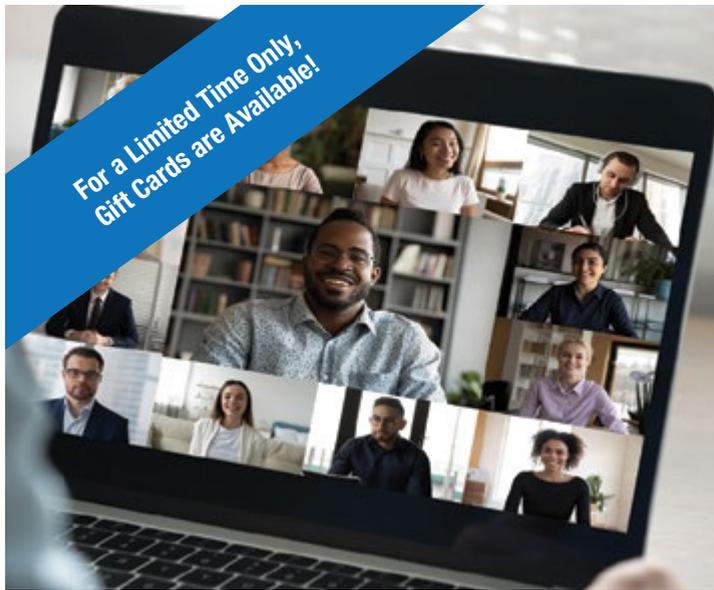
4/2 Duplex
4 bedroom 2 bath
duplex for rent in
Arcadia close to Kings
Highway and I75 \$2200
a month plus security
deposit the same. (941)
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**Commercial
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Approximately
1000 sq. ft. of
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building in
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2/1 Rental
2 bedroom 1
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(Duplex) coming
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*while supplies last

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Learn more about all of Tobacco Free Florida's tools and services at TobaccoFreeFlorida.com/QuitYourWay.



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Rent**

Beautiful 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, 2700 square foot., huge kitchen family room, living room, sunroom, 2 car garage beautifully surrounded by nature, very quiet neighborhood. Deer come on the property at sunset. Basically heaven! Monthly rent \$2900, security deposit \$2900 plus utilities. 825 N Johnson Ave., Arcadia. (954) 547-3738

MOBILE HOME RENTAL

2/1 House Trailer

2 bedroom 1 bath house trailer for rent in Arcadia close to Kings Highway and I75 \$900 a month. First, last and security. (941) 800-7105

MOBILE HOME RENTAL

2bed/1.5ba Mobile Home

Sunrise Mobile Home Park, 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath, new appliances, siding, windows, doors, laminate, washer/dryer, lanai \$350 monthly. (410) 739-4885

8. SERVICES

BUSINESS SERVICES

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HOME RENTAL

3/2/2CG Home

3 bedroom, 2 bath, 2 car garage, partially furnished \$1800/month. No pets. First, last and security. (863) 990-0888

MOBILE HOME RENTAL

2/1 Single Wide Trailer

2 bedrooms, 1 bath single wide house trailer for rent \$900 a month, first and security together \$1800 a month. (941) 800-7105





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GOT JUNK TIRES?



Get rid of them **FREE** during our **2 weekend long tire amnesty event!**

- **MUST** be a DeSoto County resident. Identification and proof of residence **WILL BE REQUIRED**, no exceptions!! **EACH TIRE MUST BE WITHOUT A RIM!**
- **RESIDENTS** will be allowed to dispose of up to 24 tires per household during entirety of event!
- **COMMERCIAL disposal will be charged normal tipping fees!**

Friday, **January 30, 2026**
Saturday, **January 31, 2026**
Friday, **February 6, 2026**
Saturday, **February 7, 2026**

From 9:00am - 3:00pm each day

Where?
DeSoto County Landfill
3268 SW Dishong Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266

For questions regarding
Tire Amnesty, please contact:
Donna Smith
863.993.4826
d.smith@desotobocc.com





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CARS & VEHICLES WANTED

CASH PAID for junk/unwanted vehicles
No title ok, prompt service, text or call Dan. (540) 460-6679

PERSONALS

Male for Female
Male looking for female mid 50's to 60's. (941) 416-5396

PETS WANTED

[WANTED] 6-Toe, Short-Tail Cat
A Siamese or beautiful cat, fluffy with short tail and 6 toes. (863) 993-5615

TRANSPORTATION

Hernandez Taxi
Taxi Service in Arcadia. 863-244-8003

9. WANTED

CARS & VEHICLES WANTED

Junk Cars & Trucks
We looking to buy cheap junk cars and trucks. 863-263-8969

10. COMMUNITY

EVENT

DeSoto County Library Association's annual Book Sale
Starts on Saturday, January 17th from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Book donations will be accepted starting Saturday January 10th at the library. 125 N Hillsborough Ave, Arcadia, FL 34266

CARS & VEHICLES WANTED

Cash for junk cars
I pay cash for junk cars. 863-781-4570

CARS & VEHICLES WANTED

CASH FOR SCRAP CARS, ALUMINUM, COPPER.
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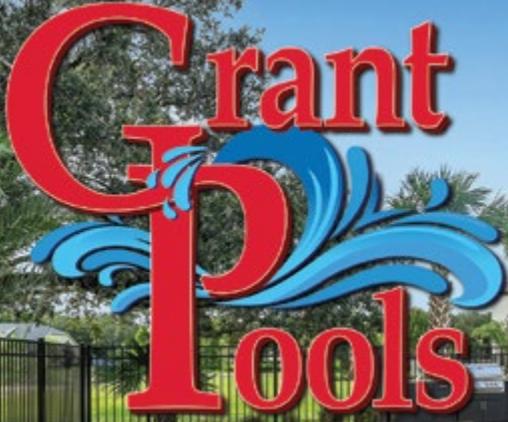
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LOST & FOUND

LOST Orange Cat

White under chin and tip of tail. Her name is Pia, she might respond to it. She lives in Oakview Estates on Turner Ave, #4. Please call/text Frank or Nancy 24/7. Area of Five Ash and Turner Ave. (863) 231-7831

MEETINGS

DeSoto County Ministerial Association

Meets every 3rd Thursday; 11:30 am – 1 pm at RMZ Realty; 3263 NE Hwy. 17

LOST & FOUND

[FOUND] Playmate Cooler

Small red and white Playmate cooler in Dollar Tree parking lot. It's back at you for a hug. (941) 270-2430

MEETINGS

Peace River Woodcarvers and Wood Burners

We have resumed meetings from 8-12 every Tuesday thru mid March. Trinity Arcadia Methodist Church, 304 Oak St. Arcadia. For info contact Dan Foster (810) 287-4315.

YARD SALES

HUGE GARAGE SALE

Sat. Jan. 24th. 8am to 12pm Noon, Good Stuff Cheap, Coffee & Goodies Sunnybreeze Christian Fellowship, 11682 SW Welcome Ave, Arcadia



**PUBLIC NOTICE
SOLICITATION FOR TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEMBER**

The DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners is actively seeking one (1) member to serve on the Tourism Development Council (TDC).

The TDC was established by Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners and consists of nine (9) members appointed by the DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners.

Each member shall be a resident of DeSoto County.

Please submit a brief biography, a letter of interest, and contact information to: s.guffey@desotobocc.com
For more information, please call: 863-9934807

Submissions will be accepted through:
February 6, 2026



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Thursdays: 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Fridays: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

For information on additional locations and times for free food, call **863.244.0888** or visit allfaithsfoodbank.org/foodfinder.

Additional services

Free application assistance for SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps), Medicaid, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families).

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As Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea there were many languages at this time. Besides Hebrew, the main ones there were Aramaic, Roman and Greek. The message today is Jesus' name. In Hebrew it was Immanuel meaning God is with you; Isaiah 9:6. He would also be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. But after his name in Hebrew, Immanuel Joseph in a dream was told his name would be called Jesus by Gabriel a ruling Archangel on God's throne.

Jesus would be Israel's deliverer and the government would rest on his shoulder. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. Jesus will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time and forever. Folks, today Jesus is our Lord and Savior if you will only believe it.

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Sunday Worship **11:00am**

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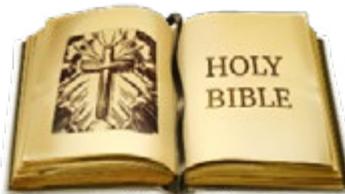
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Pastor Louie Mabrey

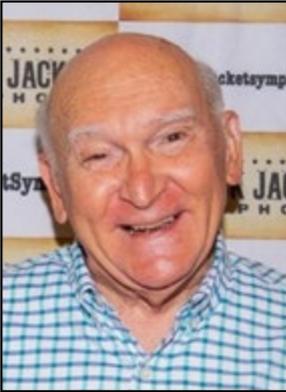
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OBITUARIES



Halley B. "Hal" Lewis, Jr.



Halley B. "Hal" Lewis, Jr. - the nicest man you could ever hope to meet - passed away peacefully on January 2, 2026, at age 84. He is survived by his loving wife of 61 years, Mary

Gene, his three children Hal III (Melanie), Brad (Deirdre) and Bethany (Brian), his ten grandchildren Halley IV, Tiffany, Lacey, Aves, Kendall, Sydney, Keirsten, Will, Barrett, and Bronson, and his one great-granddaughter Winnie. He was the proud oldest child of Halley Bronson Lewis and Cola Hardee Lewis, and he loved telling (perhaps even embellishing) old stories of his childhood in Arcadia, Florida, that he spent with his siblings Kay, Sam, Pat and John.

Hal graduated from Florida State University with a bachelor's degree in education in 1964 and went into teaching before

returning to FSU to earn his master's degree in 1968. He then began working at the Florida Department of Education, where he served in various supervisory roles until his retirement in 2002. Since that time, "Granddad" made it his life mission to scour the internet in search of every obscure item, rare toy or nutrition-less snack that any of his grandchildren even mentioned in passing; if it ever existed, he could find it. He single-handedly kept eBay and the postal service afloat. He never owned a cell phone or sent a single text, which was a good thing, since he would have been far too

compassionate to ever say "no" to any extended warranty offer.

A Celebration of Life for family and friends will be held later this spring. In honor of his career, and the decades that "Granny" spent teaching kindergarten here in Tallahassee, please consider donating to the Florida Education Foundation, a charity that helps provide needed resources to teachers and creates learning opportunities for underprivileged students. Or just find a teacher and give them a "thank you" hug like he would have done.

Maurine Louise Lang (Gocking)



Maurine Louise Lang (Gocking) of Arcadia, FL passed away on 12/19/25 surrounded by her family.

She was born on 11/2/65 in Sarasota, FL. She is survived by her husband, Michael Lang, her daughter, Lindsey (Dylan) Carter, her sister, Leslie Marcovitch, nephew, Kole Payne, and two grandsons, Isaiah and Urijah Carter.

She is preceded in death by her mother, Alonna Casarow.

Many know her for her time working at her family's business A's Sandwich Shop; as well as her time as a hair dresser at the Cutting Edge Salon. She enjoyed gardening, thrifting and spending time with family. She will be missed dearly.



Danny Long Floyd

Danny Long Floyd was born February 21, 1955 in Wauchula, Florida and passed away on December 22, 2025 at Bradenton Hospice House. Danny worked as a mechanic

learning the trade from his father. He loved to read and fish.

Danny is survived by; sister Betty Jean McConnell of Mechanicsville, Virginia; brother Charles (Sharon) Floyd of Nocatee; sister Donna

(Jimmy) Huckaby of Nocatee; brother Terry (Marsha) Floyd of Lorida. He leaves numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. He is preceded in death by his father Merle Floyd, mother Velma Floyd Kelsey, and brother Robert

(Bobby) Floyd.

He will truly be missed by his family and friends and leaves forever a spot in our hearts that knew and loved him. The family will have a private service.

Richard E. Gebeau

Richard E. Gebeau, 85, a longtime resident of Kirtland, Ohio and Arcadia, Florida passed away in Arcadia surrounded by his family on his birthday, November 22, 2025. Born on November 22, 1940, to the late Charles W. Gebeau and Lillian (Bennien) Gebeau, Richard was a middle and secondary school educator and counselor. Richard began his career in education in 1969 with the Kirtland School

District. In 1996 he retired from the Kirtland School District and moved to Florida with his family where he taught until 1998. In 2000, Richard sparked his entrepreneurial flame and started Arcadia Tax Service whereby he prepared tax returns until 2009. Richard served his country in the United States Air Force from 1966-1967 when he was honorably discharged to care for his ailing parents. He later served six years on the Kirtland City Council in the late 1989's

and early 1990's. Education was paramount in Richard's life. Richard graduated from Coral Shores High School in Tavernier, Florida in 1958. Thereafter, he received a degree in History from Graceland University Heights, Ohio. Richard's favorite thing in life was his family, especially his grandkids. He also enjoyed coin collecting, wood working, antiques, and traveling. Richard is survived by his loving wife of 53 years, Dianne (Lyman),

Gebeau; two children, Dvid Gebeau and Michael (Jennifer) Gebeau; 3 grandchildren, Karsen, Josette, and Asher; his sister, Erma (Roger) Heston; his sister-in-law, Ruth Gebeau; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his two brothers, Charles "Chuck" (Pat, deceased) W. Gebeau, Jr. and Gerald ("Jim") Gebeau. A small internment service will be held at the Sarasota National Cemetery and will be coordinated privately.

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Hearing Aids Reduce Risk of

Cognitive Decline



Research shows that cognitive decline is accelerated for individuals who have hearing loss and don't use hearing aids.

Difficulty hearing spoken conversations is associated with up to 91% increased risk of dementia.

Dementia could be reduced by treating hearing loss, which is the most common chronic health condition affecting older adults. **However:**

- **Fewer than 30% of adults 70+** who have hearing loss wear hearing aids
- **Even fewer adults** (approximately 16%), ages 20 to 69, who could benefit from wearing hearing aids have ever used them
- The typical patient waits **an average of 7 years** before seeking treatment for hearing loss

To reduce the chances of cognitive decline, individuals with hearing loss should seek treatment immediately. Call **Delta Hearing** today at **863-445-9788** to schedule your appointment!



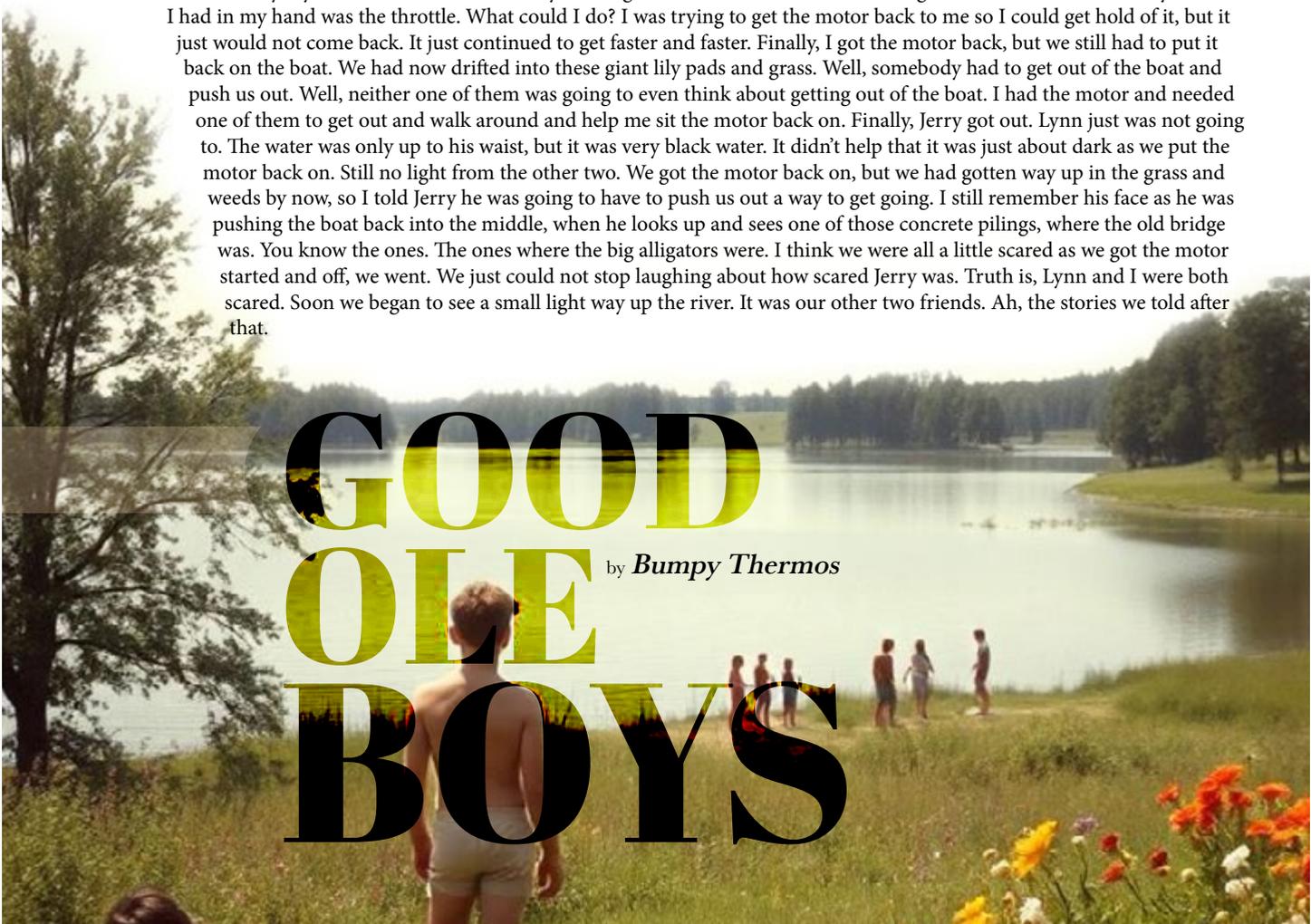
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Chapter 38

I was now 21 years old and an assistant store manager for Winn Dixie. Boy was life great. I had gotten married and we had our son. Everything was going great. When I turned 16 years old, my mom talked me into buying an acre lot out on the end of Washington Street. It was off of North Turner Road. I would pay the guy \$25 per month and paid about \$2000 for it. That was one of the bills I knew my parents could not pay when I was out with my broke neck. Anyway, we put a single wide on the lot first but now that I was an assistant store manager, I needed a double wide. So, we traded up and now had a double wide trailer on an acre lot. Mr. Thornton was a great teacher and soon I was being looked at for store manager. At our church we had a large singing group. It was called the Glory Land Singers. I played the guitar, mainly because I couldn't sing. Anyway, the group was part of our adult Sunday School class. As a class we would go places. Camping was one of those places and one night just five of us guys decided to do a little fishing and go camping on the river. Well three of us were from the country and two of us were from the city. I worked with the two from the city at Winn Dixie, and as usual we had to work later than the other two. The other two decided to go on down to the river and set up camp, get a little fishing in and then come back and help us bring in all the gear and stuff. All that morning and on the way down to Ft. Ogden, the guys kept talking about the story our coca cola delivery man (Tommy Night) had told us about hunting alligators. He had told us a lot of stories about the river and said that the biggest alligators were at the old bridge that went across the river a long time ago and that the big concrete poles were still there. So, all the way down there I had to hear about those stories. Well, when we arrived at the boat ramp our buddies were nowhere to be found. They had not made it yet. Well, this was long before cell phones so we had to make a decision. Should we try to put all this stuff in one boat or wait? It looked like it was getting dark, so we decided to load and go. We had a lot of stuff, but what else could we do? All we had was a little 14-foot boat with a small 10 horsepower motor. You know, a little motor that steered with a little handle on the side. It had a grip for your hand at the end and when you turned the grip the motor went faster. So, we loaded up this little boat so much that it almost sank. We had very little boat out of the water, so moving was really slow. Off we went. As we pulled out of the boat ramp, I remember thinking that it was getting a little late for us, but we were young and, on a mission, to camp out. Still no sign of the other two as we made our third turn. The boat was beginning to shake a little.

The motor was shaking and getting worse. All of a sudden, the motor came off in my hand. The entire motor was being held out of the water by my left arm. And as I would try to bring it closer to me the motor would get faster and faster. The only handle I had in my hand was the throttle. What could I do? I was trying to get the motor back to me so I could get hold of it, but it just would not come back. It just continued to get faster and faster. Finally, I got the motor back, but we still had to put it back on the boat. We had now drifted into these giant lily pads and grass. Well, somebody had to get out of the boat and push us out. Well, neither one of them was going to even think about getting out of the boat. I had the motor and needed one of them to get out and walk around and help me sit the motor back on. Finally, Jerry got out. Lynn just was not going to. The water was only up to his waist, but it was very black water. It didn't help that it was just about dark as we put the motor back on. Still no light from the other two. We got the motor back on, but we had gotten way up in the grass and weeds by now, so I told Jerry he was going to have to push us out a way to get going. I still remember his face as he was pushing the boat back into the middle, when he looks up and sees one of those concrete pilings, where the old bridge was. You know the ones. The ones where the big alligators were. I think we were all a little scared as we got the motor started and off, we went. We just could not stop laughing about how scared Jerry was. Truth is, Lynn and I were both scared. Soon we began to see a small light way up the river. It was our other two friends. Ah, the stories we told after that.



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