VOL. VII, NO. 45

FREE

THE ARCADIA LOCAL

NOVEMBER 5, 2026

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NEWS, SPORTS & MORE!

COUNTY HOLDS SUCCESSFUL 1ST ANNUAL

FALL FESTIVAL



On Oct. 30, Emery Cross, center, won first prize for her costume and presentation in the 2026 DeSoto County Fall Festival Costume Contest for six-to-twelve year olds: from left, Mini Miss Southwest Florida Gwendolyn Williams and DeSoto County Princess Arianna Morales.



CAROL MAHLER

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The County's 1st Annual Fall Festival on Oct. 30 was a success with about 2,000 people in attendance on Oct. 30. Appropriately dressed as a circus ringmaster, County Parks and Recreation Director Shawn Campbell organized the event. "We've had a lot of support from the community," he said. ". . . We've been focused on parks. Now we're trying to do something with recreation."

The highlight of the evening was the costume contest in two age groups: 28 contestants registered in the five-years-and-under and 36 in the six-to-12-years category. In the under-five-years group, Stetson Reardon won first, Caspian Prolliti second, and Josephina Muniz third. In the six-to-12-years contest, Emery Cross won first, Piper Ferris second, and Agustin Peralta third. Suncoast Credit Union provided the prize money for gift cards: $60.00 for first, $40.00 for second, and $25.00 for third place.

When called by number, each contestant walked across the stage: some struck a pose, and others did their dance moves or made suitable noises. They all hoped for a good score on their costume and presentation from the judges: Taylor Bittner who is the 2027 Ms. Southwest Florida; Heather Nott, director of Miss DeSoto County and Miss Southwest Florida pageants; Chris Reesor with All Faiths Food Bank; Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland; and Esther Zumbach with Gator Wilderness Camp School.

Participants included All Faiths Food Bank; Apostolics of Arcadia; Ashley Brown for City Council; AT&T; Board of County Commissioners; C & C Rentals and Event Decor, LLC; Canine Castaways; City of

SEE **FESTIVAL** PAGE 10 »



DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS

PAGE 4

STEVE KNAPP
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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

NOV 5 — TUE 5:30P

DESOTO COUNTY

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

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

NOV 10 — TUE 9A

DESOTO COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

RESCHEDULED

NOV 11

DESOTO COUNTY

COUNTY OFFICES CLOSED

In observance of Veterans Day

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

Realtor Showcase ..... See page 13

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ARREST REPORT ..... See page 15

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REZONINGS FOR DATA CENTERS DENIED



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Jon Brown, CEO of DCIP, objected to the accusation that he asked for approval of the 34 acres without sharing the plan for the full project, noting that his presentation about the data center in the minutes of the Feb. 10 BOCC meeting states "1,000 acres."



Living on State Road 70 within sight of the landfills, James Rummer said that the Florida Gas Transmission pipeline is located nearby and that area would be more suitable than the proposed data center site near two residential developments.



Martin Klingenberg said that he sold the 34 acres with the decommissioned power plant to the DeSoto County Industrial Park (DCIP) group because of all those interested in purchasing the property, DCIP was the only one who wanted to use the natural gas pipeline.



With her daughters standing on either side of her, Stacey Yoder spoke for herself and her father who resides on Hansel Ave., and asked the Board to deny the rezoning requests on Oct. 27 and Oct. 28. "No one wants to visit a data center," she said.



Owner of Arcadia Oaks Assisted Living Facility, Ashwani Soin said he was speaking against the DCIP rezonings for his residents—those in their 80s and 90s and some with dementia— who cannot speak for themselves.



Matthew Landers felt that the County did not have many employment opportunities, and the data center might provide good jobs. He said, "The biggest export of our county is our young people."

At the Oct. 27 and 28 public hearings, by a tie vote of two to two, the Board of County Commissioners denied the requests of the DeSoto County Industrial Park (DCIP) to rezone the 3F Ranch and Swisher Properties, respectively, from Agricultural-5 (A-5 or one dwelling unit per five acres) to Planned Unit Development (PUD) to build data centers. Vice-chairperson Elton Langford and Commissioner J.C. Deriso voted to approve, and Commissioners Jerod Gross and Judy Schaefer were opposed.

Before the vote, both Deriso and Schaefer recounted their separate visits to data centers in other states to learn firsthand about noise and other impacts on neighbors. Langford and Deriso favored the tax revenue and other economic opportunities; Gross and Schaefer said the rezoning did not comply with the Comp Plan, and the location was not suitable.

As recommended by the Florida Commission of Ethics, Chairperson Steve Hickox recused himself because of the possibility of a conflict of interest. He did not attend on Oct. 28, but was present at the Oct. 27 public hearing to vote approval, with the others, of the Special Exception for a Type 4 Excavation for DeSoto Sand and Fill: an approximately 95.92-acre property with a 52.87-acre excavation area, at 3511 SW Dishong Ave., in Agricultural-10 (A-10 or one dwelling unit per ten acres) zoning district and Rural/Agricultural future land use.

On Mar. 24, the Board had adopted a PUD rezoning with a Concept Development Plan for a 35,134 sq. ft. data center facility with an electrical generation plant on 34 acres at 3800 NE Roan St. as requested by DCIP. On July 28, the Board approved a temporary one-year moratorium on new data center applications. . . . that will allow staff sufficient time to evaluate the impacts of such facilities, prepare draft Comprehensive (Comp) Plan and Land Development Regulation (LDR) amendments, and complete the public hearing process required by Florida law. The 3F Ranch and Swisher Properties applications were submitted prior to Board adoption of the moratorium." During the Oct. 6 public hearing, the Planning Commission recommended denying the rezoning applications by a vote of four to one.

On behalf of the property owners, 3F Ranch LTD, and Swisher, Mildred E. Trust & Swisher Properties, LLC, Kerri J. Burns and Erin Grafton of SWCA, Inc., and Jon Brown of DCIP requested to rezone approximately 237.96 acres at 3558 NE Roan St., as well as about 553.79 acres at 3479 NE Roan St., NE Hansel Ave. and NE Hwy (State Road (SR)) 70, respectively, from Agricultural-5 (A-5) to Planned Unit Development (PUD) with Concept Development Plans showing 1.8 million sq. ft. of gross floor area (eight buildings)—including a 9,856 sq. ft. administrative office building, and 2.1 million sq. ft. of gross floor area (nine buildings) with 24.32 acres for a proposed electric generation facility for industrial data centers, respectively.

Except for one 40-acre section of the Swisher properties in the Rural/Agricultural future land use designation, both parcels are in the Neighborhood Mixed Use future land use category and the City of Arcadia Urban Expansion Area "with specific standards and principles to guide the development and mixed uses." In addition, portions of both properties are within the Conservation Overlay suggesting "the potential for jurisdictional wetlands." Both Concept Development Plans avoided potential wetlands when siting the buildings, and the one for the Swisher Properties included 60% of the property as "open space".

"Although neither the LDR nor the Comprehensive Plan specifically identifies data centers or classifies them as either light or heavy industrial uses, the scale, intensity, resource demands, and potential operational impacts (including noise) of the proposed data center are nevertheless characteristic of industrial development. . . Containment of the project's adverse impacts to the building or the property boundary is a reasonable performance standard for light industrial uses," and so staff classified the data center as a light industrial use that is allowed in the Neighborhood Mixed Use. However, the electrical generation facility is a heavy industrial use and is strictly prohibited, so the applicant removed it from the application.



Carrie Shaver said that she is pro-development, and her daughter is studying to be a doctor and wants to return to DeSoto County to practice. Among other items, Shaver is concerned about light and heat pollution from the proposed data center.

Each public hearing began with Planning Director Misty Servia reviewing the staff report and highlighting some of the recommended conditions—77 and 81, respectively, with two additional conditions for the Swisher Properties—requiring a closed loop water system and construction hours as written in the code. In addition, the applicant offered a 1,000' setback from their property line where it abuts residential uses with sound mitigation measures—such as berms or walls—to be located within that buffer, and no construction traffic on Roan St. to protect high school students.

The applicants offered "competent and substantial evidence that the application satisfies the standards and requirements of the LDRs and the Comp Plan." This included testimony or reports from expert witnesses: Mohammed N. Abdallah, PE (Professional Engineer), (PTOE) Professional Traffic Operations Engineer); Harry Hanna, Environmental Planner; Blake Holcomb, P.E., David Kelly, PG (Professional Geologist), and Brad Sohm, PE. The latter and the County's sound expert, Gary Siebein of Siebein and Associates, Inc., of Gainesville, discussed various sound levels, and Sohm noted that measuring noise levels at the property line was more protective than 200' from the property line as was the condition for the 3800 NE Roan St. PUD. The County also offered testimony from Alejandro "Alex" Anaya, PTOE, with ESRP Corp. in Tampa.Of the 30 people who signed up to give public comments on Oct. 27, three left before being called. Speaking in support of the 3F Ranch rezoning were Steve Barnhardt, Cody S. Fussell, Steve S. Fussell, Martin Klingenberg, Gary J. Larson, Clayton Taylor, and Pamela Taylor. Opposing the project were Molly Bowen (who played a recording of Asha Stalnaker talking), Ashley Brown, Terry Lynn Clinard, Beth Fisher, Doris Frazier, Theresa Collins Hill, Sarah Hollenhorst, Ed Johnson, Deborah Lodrini, Carol Mahler, James "Sam" McLeod," Tracy Nantel, Jane Powers, Karen Pritchard, Theresa Rapier, Ashwani Soin, Tim Ritchie, Samuel Terpening, Dylan Tindall, and Stacey Yoder.

Speaking in support of the Swisher Properties rezoning on Oct. 28 were Hope Cross, Cody S. Fussell, Steve S. Fussell, Erik Howard, Reuben Johnson, James "Sam" McLeod, Clayton Taylor, and Pamela Taylor. Opposing the project were Ashley Brown, Karen Elmore, Gene Erjavec, Theresa Collins Hill, Nathan Headrick, Sarah Hollenhorst, Ed Johnson, Matthew Landers, Carol Mahler, Loren Mora, Tracy Nantel, Kathy Nelson, Gary Owen, Jane Powers, Karen Pritchard, Forest Reynolds, James Rummer, Tim Ritchie, Carrie Shaver, Ashwani Soin, Samuel Terpening, Joe Wentworth, and Stacey Yoder.

BOARD APPRECIATES VOLUNTEER SANTIAGO-RAMOS



CAROL MAHLER
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At the Oct. 27 meeting, the Board of County Commissioners recognized and appreciated Hugo Santiago-Ramos for his 22 years of dedicated service as a Guardian ad Litem volunteer advocate. "He consistently visited foster and family homes, ensuring children were living in safe and healthy environments. His thorough approach included checking sleeping arrangements, confirming adequate food was available, and monitoring each child's overall well-being. . . He regularly discussed academic progress with the children he served and often sat with them during visits while they completed their homework, offering encouragement and support.

"Over the course of his service, Santiago-Ramos has advocated in more than 40 cases involving over 73 children. He was a respected and trusted voice in the courtroom, consistently providing thoughtful recommendations focused on each child's best interests. His professionalism and integrity earned the respect of judges, attorneys, child welfare professionals, and partner agencies alike.

"His advocacy has contributed to successful family reunifications, permanent placements with relatives, and numerous adoption finalizations. His unwavering commitment has changed the lives of countless children and families throughout our community. We are deeply grateful for his extraordinary service and the lasting difference he has made in DeSoto County."

IN OTHER BUSINESS

The Board ratified the following capital purchases as approved in the current budget for the Roads and Bridges Dept.: using the Florida Sheriffs Assoc. Cooperative Purchasing Program, a Western Star dump truck for $207,497.00 from Orlando Freightliner; Ram 3500 Diesel Flatbed 4x4 truck for $72,640.00 from Beck Ford Lincoln; mulcher boom attachment for the Mower Max machines for $31,381.75 from Mowermax Equipment Co.; and T4 Bobcat Compact Track Loader (Skid Steer) for $75,183.13 from Clark Equipment Co., dba (doing business as) Bobcat Co. using the Sourcewell bid contract.

Commissioner Jerod Gross thanked Roads and Ridges Dept. Director Troy Hughes on the "great job keeping up with the County right of way and everything else." County Administrator Mandy Hines praised Hughes for his hard work and diligence in "getting a better piece of equipment that we could get faster for less money that had more additives on it." Chairperson Steve Hickox quipped, "It's like Christmas in October here."



The Board recognized and appreciated Hugo Santiago-Ramos for his 22 years of extraordinary service as a Guardian ad Litem volunteer advocate "for abused, neglected, and abandoned children in DeSoto County, demonstrating exceptional commitment to their safety, well-being, and future success."

The Board adopted the resolution approving the proposed procurement policy "that reflects current operational needs and strengthens accountability, competition, and grant compliance" and repealing the existing procurement policy adopted in 2005 and all subsequent amendments, "including the 2008 fire rescue equipment standardization amendment, the 2009 professional services amendment and local preference policy, and the 2011 local preference amendment."

The Board approved the contract with D & D Mechanical Services of FL dba Myakka Heating and Cooling, the lowest responsive and responsible bid of five received for HVAC repair and maintenance services, based on hourly labor (regular and emergency) rates and materials, parts, and supplies mark-ups on an as needed basis."

The Board approved the contract of $369,310.00 with CW3 Engineering,

SEE **VOLUNTEER** PAGE 10 »



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CROSS COUNTRY TUNEUP FOR POST SEASON AT

TRI-COUNTY INVITATIONAL



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
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The DeSoto County cross country (BEST SPORT EVER according to coach Julie Chidsey) teams competed in the Tri County meet at Lemon Bay as they get ready for the end of season meets. They competed against the best that Charlotte, Manatee and Sarasota Counties had and did well including several PR's.

The boys team was paced by the Shine brothers who again finished first and second for the Bulldogs and were separated by less than a second. Z Shine averaged 5.44 per mile with a time of 17:49.8 for the course. Brother T came in at 5:44.03 per mile and a total time of 17:50.7. Both times were new personal records for them. Their 29th and 30th overall finish helped put the Bulldogs in 11th place of the 18 teams at the meet.

Rounding out the scoring were freshmen Brandon Sanchez who finished 61st, Yair Zuniga 77th and sophomore Jose Mendieta with a 92nd place finish out of the 184 runners. So all 5 runners finished in the top half of the meet and will have several more years to improve their times.

Over on the girls side, the team finished 15th of the 17 teams entered. Their runners all finished in the top half of the 170 runners in the event. The good thing is that most of the team are freshmen so they too have a bright future as cross country runners for the Bulldogs.

Meleny Gamez finished in her usual position as the first Bulldog to cross the finish line. The freshman ran a strong 23.42 to come in 59th out of the 170 runners. Stefani Contreras 73, Abbygale Wilson 77 and Yuisa Contreras 81 rounded out the scoring.



Both teams and a few fans celebrate a beautiful day for a run at Lemon Bay in the Tri-County Invitational.



Meleny Gamez comes down the homestretch to finish first for DeSoto.



It was dark and a little cool just minutes before the girls ran in the Tri County race at Lemon Bay. The cool weather helped provide new pr's for many runners.



As they enter the stadium for the final quarter mile, Z Shine has a slight lead over brother T which is how they finished, less than a second apart.



DeSoto boys coach Adrian Gonzalez stands with his top two runners that helped put the Bulldogs in 11th place out of 18 teams.



Z Shine crosses the finish line first for the Bulldogs with a time of 17:49.8. Both brothers set new personal records with a sub 18 minute run.



DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK

Sponsored by: FPL

DESOTO 10U TEAMS GO EXTRA INNINGS IN LOCAL MATCH UP



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peaceriversshopper.com

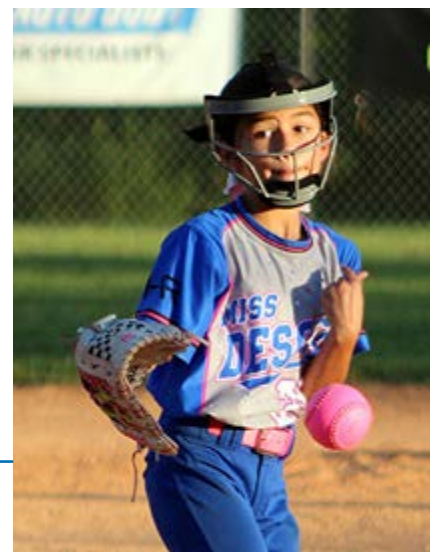
You knew it was going to be a good game when the 10U Weldon and Nancy teams faced off against each other. The teams are evenly balanced and they did not disappoint the fans who were treated to an excellent softball game.

The game was dominated by strong pitching over the first 3 innings as Nancy's pitcher Kendra Manley and Weldon's southpaw Aaliyah Palafox matched each other pitch for pitch. Nancy had a 4-1 lead but fell behind when the team had a few overthrows and allowed Weldon to take a one run lead.

From there on out the teams traded leads and at the end of the regulation game time, the teams were tied at 9. They went into extra innings using the Texas Tie Breaker. Nancy scored twice, but Weldon had the hammer and pushed across three runs to squeeze out a 12-11 win. Palafox scored the winning run as a pinch runner on a wild pitch.



Team Weldon 10U



Aaliyah Palafox



Kendra Manley



Team Nancy 10U







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NOTICE OF BOCC PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners will hold a Public Worshop on:

Tuesday, November 10th, 2026
at 9:00AM

or as soon thereafter as it may be heard, in the
County Commission meeting Room 103
201 E. Oak Street • Arcadia, FL 34266
as follows:

TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENT OF LOTS SERVED BY UNIMPROVED ROADS

**If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling (863)993-4800 at least forty-eight hours prior to the meeting.*

DESOTO COUNTY **ATHLETES OF THE WEEK**

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DESOTO 6U FOOTBALL TEAM ADVANCES TO FINALS





The coaches and their athletes celebrate another excellent season with a 27-15 win to advance to the finals.

The DeSoto 6U team is heading to Okeechobee this Saturday to play for the district championship after beating Clewiston 27-15.



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
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The DeSoto 6U football team defeated the Clewiston Cougars 27-15 in a game that wasn't as close as the score indicated. The Bulldogs built up a 21-0 halftime lead on a touchdown run by J Summers, a touchdown run by Austin Gross and another Summers score on a well played 35 yard pick six.

The Cougars used the entire third quarter except for one Bulldog play to get on the board to make it 21-8 going into the final quarter. Waylon Smith had a 3 yard touchdown run to give the Bulldogs their 3 touchdown lead. The Cougars scored on the final play of the game, but it was too little too late.

The Bulldogs advance to the Championship Game this Saturday at Okeechobee as they meet Avon Park in what has been in the past and will probably be another exciting yet heated game.

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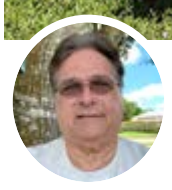


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MISS DESOTO 8U ASHLEY GETS DOUBLE WIN





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The 8U Ashley team not only beat the Punta Gorda team 9-5 but also won the best costume award for the 8U teams at the Halloween Boo Bash at Port Charlotte. Here are photos of the team and their costumes which had a "Finding Nemo" theme.











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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES:
DENOMINATIONAL VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM AND CHRIST'S RETURN

CHAPLAIN AMANDA REUTER
US Army Reserve
DeSoto County Ministerial Association



When Christians confess that Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead, are they describing the same future, or have the churches learned to hope for different endings? That question sits behind the familiar arguments about the rapture, the tribulation, and the thousand years. The texts are shared. The timelines are not.

Major Christian traditions read the same end-times texts differently, especially Revelation 20, the Olivet Discourse, and Paul's letters on Christ's return. The differences turn on whether the "thousand years" is literal, when Christ returns relative to that period, and whether the church is removed before a final tribulation.

Amillennialism treats the millennium as symbolic of the present church age. Christ already reigns from heaven; Satan is restrained but not absent; the "first resurrection" is spiritual (new life in Christ). History ends with a single visible return, the general resurrection, and the final judgment. This is the historic position of the Lutheran churches. The Augsburg Confession rejects the idea that the godly will possess an earthly kingdom before the resurrection. Roman Catholic teaching likewise rejects millenarianism, the expectation of a future earthly reign of Christ before the last judgment, and looks instead to the parousia, the resurrection of the dead, and particular and general judgment. Eastern Orthodoxy is also amillennial in practice, having long treated literal chiliasm as outside the church's received faith. Many Reformed and Presbyterian churches share this reading, though the tradition also includes a postmillennial strand.

Postmillennialism expects the gospel to prosper so that a long era of relative peace and Christian influence precedes Christ's return. The return itself is still future and climactic; the millennium is not a separate kingdom after the second coming. This view was stronger among some Puritans and nineteenth-century Protestants and remains a minority position in Reformed circles.

Premillennialism expects Christ to return before a future, often literal, thousand-year reign. Historic premillennialism usually places the church through the tribulation and identifies the rapture with the second coming itself, followed by the reign and then the final judgment. Dispensational premillennialism, developed in the nineteenth century and widely taught in many Baptist, independent evangelical, and Pentecostal settings, adds a distinction between Israel and the church and often a pre-tribulation rapture where the church is taken before a seven-year tribulation. Then Christ returns, judges, and reigns on earth. The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message affirms a personal, visible return and final judgment without requiring a particular millennial scheme, so Baptist practice varies; dispensational teaching is common but not universal, especially among Reformed Baptists who are often amillennial. Assemblies of God and many other Pentecostal bodies formally affirm a premillennial return.

Seventh-day Adventists are premillennial but distinctive: they teach an investigative judgment, a millennium spent by the redeemed in heaven while the earth lies desolate, and a final resurrection and judgment afterward. Anglican and Methodist bodies have no single required scheme. Parish teaching often follows amillennial or broad evangelical patterns.

Across these views, the shared core is that Christ will return, the dead will be raised, and God will judge. What divides the denominations is the timetable and how literally the millennium is taken. Individual pastors and congregations frequently differ from their tradition's center of gravity.

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FESTIVAL

FROM PAGE 1 »

Arcadia; County Fire Rescue; County Library; County School District; Del Sol Home Inspections, LLC; DeSoto DeSoto Health and Rehab; First Baptist Church of Fort Ogden; Florida Health Dept.-DeSoto; Gator Wilderness Camp School; ibt; Loyal Order of the Moose Arcadia; Moss; Office of the Sheriff; Pizza Hut; RCMA; Republican Party of DeSoto County; Seventh Day Adventist Church; Step Up Suncoast; Sunshine Lane Hay; The Patterson Foundation; Turner Agri-Civic Center; Walmart; Warram Construction; xfinity; and YMCA of Southwest Florida.

In addition to trick-or-treating, the DeSoto High School Cosmetology Class offered face painting; Jungle Doria's Wildlife Park showcased live animals; Wet and Wild Party Rentals set up bounce houses outside plus some carnival games inside; and Twin Creeks Adventure Park had their "swamp bus" parked outside the Turner Agri-Civic Center. The Padgett Ranch operated the hay and barrel-train rides as a preview of their Family Fest on Nov. 7, 8, 14, and 15. Concessions available for purchase included Mike and Liz's Dirty Dawgs, Snow Cone Paradise, and Sweet & Sassy Sips Lemonade.

The Fall Festival replaces the long-standing Trick-or-Treating Event held annually at the Turner Agri-Civic Center. Despite the good attendance, Turner Center Director Eric Hamilton said, "I'll bet people will still show up on Halloween."



Dressed as a jellyfish, Piper Ferris won second place for her costume and presentation in the 2026 DeSoto County Fall Festival Costume Contest for six-to-twelve year olds on Oct. 30 at in the Turner Agri-Civic Center.



Awarded third place was Agustin Peralta, center, for his costume and presentation in the 2026 DeSoto County Fall Festival Costume Contest for six-to-twelve year olds: from left, Mini Miss Southwest Florida Gwendolyn Williams and DeSoto County Princess Arianna Morales



Stetson Reardon in the arms of Tracy Easterly won first prize for his costume and presentation in the 2026 DeSoto County Fall Festival Costume Contest for ages five years and-under on Oct. 30 in the Turner Agri-Civic Center.



Josephina Muniz won third place for her costume and presentation in the 2026 DeSoto County Fall Festival Costume Contest for ages five years and-under on Oct. 30 in the Turner Agri-Civic Center.



Outside the Turner Agri-Civic Center, the Padgett Ranch offered hay and barrel train rides near the Wet and Wild Party Rentals bounce houses and concessions Mike and Liz's Dirty Dawgs, Snow Cone Paradise, and Sweet & Sassy Sips Lemonade.



Awarded second place was Caspian Proliti for his costume and presentation in the 2026 DeSoto County Fall Festival Costume Contest for ages five years and-under on Oct. 30 in the Turner Agri-Civic Center.



Members of the DeSoto High School Cosmetology Club, including Aylin Guerrero, did face painting for those attending the DeSoto County Fall Festival, such as Avelina Castro.

VOLUNTEER

FROM PAGE 3 »

Inc., for Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI) services for the Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) Small County Outreach Program (SCOP) and Small County Road Assistant Program (SCRAP) projects for SE Hargrave St., SW Liverpool Rd., and NE Cubitis Ave.. as one of two proposals in response to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and approved by FDOT.

The Board ratified the 2026 Update to the Utilities Standards Handbook, adopted by the BOCC in 2010, with revised details and newly added approved products list as written by County Engineer Mike Giardullo of Apex Companies and reviewed by the Utilities Dept. and the County Attorney. Under the Consent Agenda, the Board approved the work authorization for fiscal year 2026-2027 for $65,000.00 with Apex Companies, LLC, for general engineering services related to County Utilities, an enterprise fund, and engineering services will be billed hourly not to exceed $65,000.00.

Giardullo announced that his responsibilities with Apex Companies have changed, so he introduced his co-worker Yosvany Medina Pinera, PE, who will "help support DeSoto County as I have . . . for the last 15 years."

CONSENT AGENDA

Under the Consent Agenda, the Board approved the Service Agreement Renewal with Samsara Networks, Inc., "for fleet management and monitoring services." Since 2021, Samsara has provided "GPS-based vehicle and asset tracking capabilities to assist with fleet oversight, monitoring, and operational efficiency." The agreement is an additional 36-month term of "licensing for 123 vehicle gateways and 20 asset gateways, along with associated hardware, software access, maintenance, and support services" with a cost of $87,537.24, payable in three annual installments of $29,179.08.

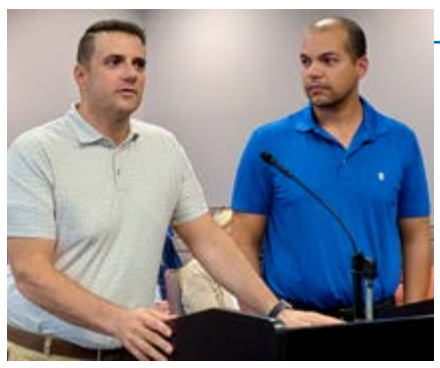
The Board declared as surplus the following items and their disposal as follows: damaged or worn out—panic button system; sent to Internet auction: 2007 Ford F150 4x2 pickup; no longer needed by dept.—2018 Dell Optiplex 5050 SFF computer with 2 monitors; xerox phaser printer, Dell Optiplex 790 computer; HP Design jet printer; two Prolian DL 380 Gen10 Server-Deadpools, Dell Poweredge R720 Server; four Dell Latitude E6530 laptop and seven Dell laptop 5510 computers.

The Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Heartland Library Cooperative for Linda Waters to serve as the full-time Heartland Library Cooperative (HLC) coordinator, "subject to applicable County personnel policies, employment procedures, and requirements . . administered as a DeSoto County employee position but will be funded by the HLC."

Board approved the five-year Interlocal Agreement with Hardee County for the "maintenance and notice requirements for roadways that border the two counties"— Lily County and Kinsey County Line roads—both west of U.S. Highway 17 (US 17) (State Road (SR) 35) and Ten Mile Grade east of US 17/SR 35. Since 1996, the counties have had an one-year agreement extended annually, and a five-year renewal option will be more efficient.



"To highlight the importance of the manufacturing sector in our economy and to draw attention to the high-skilled, high-paying careers and the many contributions of the manufacturers in our community," the Board proclaimed October 2026 as Manufacturing Awareness Month: from left, Economic Development Advisory Committee Members Asena Mott and Debbie Wertz, Sarasota-Manatee Area Manufacturers Association Executive Director Rob Harris, Commissioner J.C. Deriso, and Economic Development Director Sondra Guffey.



County Engineer Mike Giardullo introduced Yosvany Medina Pinera, P.E., of Apex Companies, who will be taking on the County's projects although Giardullo will stay involved in the County Road 769 and wastewater treatment expansion projects.



Now Heartland Library Cooperative Coordinator, Linda Waters said, "The team at the library "is going to shine even more so with me leaving. It's that time," she said. "I look forward to serving you and the library through the Heartland Library Cooperative for the next few years. I don't have enough sense to retire."

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MORE THAN 25% OF VOTERS CHOOSE EARLY



CAROL MAHLER
Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com

On Friday afternoon, the second to the last day of early voting, Supervisor of Elections Debbie Wertz reported that more than a quarter of all those eligible to vote in the Nov. 3 election had either voted early or by mail. "We're extremely pleased with the turnout," she said. She said that supervisors of elections in neighboring counties watch each other's websites, and Wertz has received text messages and telephones calls of congratulations on DeSoto's "great turnout."

The State mandates that counties hold early voting from Oct. 24 to 31, but they may add up to five days prior and one day following that time period. DeSoto started on Oct. 22, and 524 voters cast their ballots that day. Wertz said, "We added those couple of days to give voters the opportunity to vote. . . we want all voters who are eligible to vote."

She said that early voting has been a great opportunity for record maintenance. Some who want to vote find out that they are not registered for this election. "Almost all have chosen to register," she said. "It only takes a few minutes, and this won't happen to them again."

Also, Wertz said, "If you requested a ballot by mail, and you decide not to use it, lose it, or don't return it, as soon as you vote in early voting or at your precinct, the vote-by-mail ballot is canceled." She also noted that each person must vote for himself or herself: even if you hold the "power of attorney" for someone, you may not cast that person's ballot.

From Mon. through Fri., Linda Desrosiers, Mary Ann Gilmore, and Ernest Luther served as poll workers for early voting. Desrosiers said, "Early voting makes it easier for the public to vote," and Gilmore added, "People don't have to wait in line." Other poll workers had a chance on Sat. and Sun. to gain confidence in their jobs by working two-hour shifts during early voting.

For more information, please contact the Supervisor of Elections office at 201 E. Oak St., Suite 104, or call 863-993-4871, or check online at www.votedesotofl.gov



Having been poll workers for about 18 and 21 years respectively, Linda Desrosiers and Mary Ann Gilmore staffed the early voting registration table, and on election day, they will serve at the precinct at First Baptist Church.

THIS WEEKEND: BIKE FEST DOWNTOWN!



Bert's Arcadia Bike Fest Zooms Into Downtown This Sat., Nov. 7! Veteran Salute at the Tree of Knowledge Park and Ribbon Cutting for Arcadia's America 250 WWI and WWII mural at 9:00 a.m.; Full Throttle Magazine Bike Show from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and Stereo Riot live on stage from noon to 4:00 p.m., plus food trucks, vendors, downtown shops, and more.

OBITUARIES

HILDA JUNE LAYPORT



Hilda June Layport, 82, of Arcadia, Florida passed away peacefully on October 13, 2026. Born on November 2, 1943 in Sebring, Florida to the late George and Martha McCormack Lanier. She loved fishing, hog hunting, and spending time doing word searches. Above all, she cherished the time she spent with her children and grandchildren, who brought so much joy and happiness to her life. She was a loving, caring, and compassionate woman who had so much love to give to those around her. Her kind heart, warm spirit, and the love she shared with her family will forever be remembered and treasured by all who knew her.

She survived by her children: Charles (Diane) Layport, David Layport, Richard (Tina) Layport, James Layport (Kim Rachel), and Lois Valentino; Nieces: Sherri Iglesias, and Shirley Lanier, Nineteen Grandchildren, and Thirty-Nine Great-Grandchildren, and Three great-great grandchildren, along with many extended family member and friends.

Ms. Hilda preceded in death by her husband: George "Boog" Layport; Brothers: Miles Lanier, and Eugene Lanier; Sister: Linda Garrett; and Grandson: Daniel Layport.

There will be a Celebration of Life held on November 21st at 10 am at Walt Brewer Park; 1365 Hargrave St., Arcadia, FL 34266.

FAMILIES ENJOY DOWNTOWN TRICK OR TREATING



CAROL MAHLER

Independent Contractor
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com

On Halloween, when most downtown shops closed at 4:00 p.m., the shop owners appeared—some in costume—to share treats with the families, and passing rain showers did not deter the trick-or-treaters. Thanks to Laura Partridge of Laura's Good Vibe Tribe Thrift Store, 215 W. Oak St., for organizing the event.



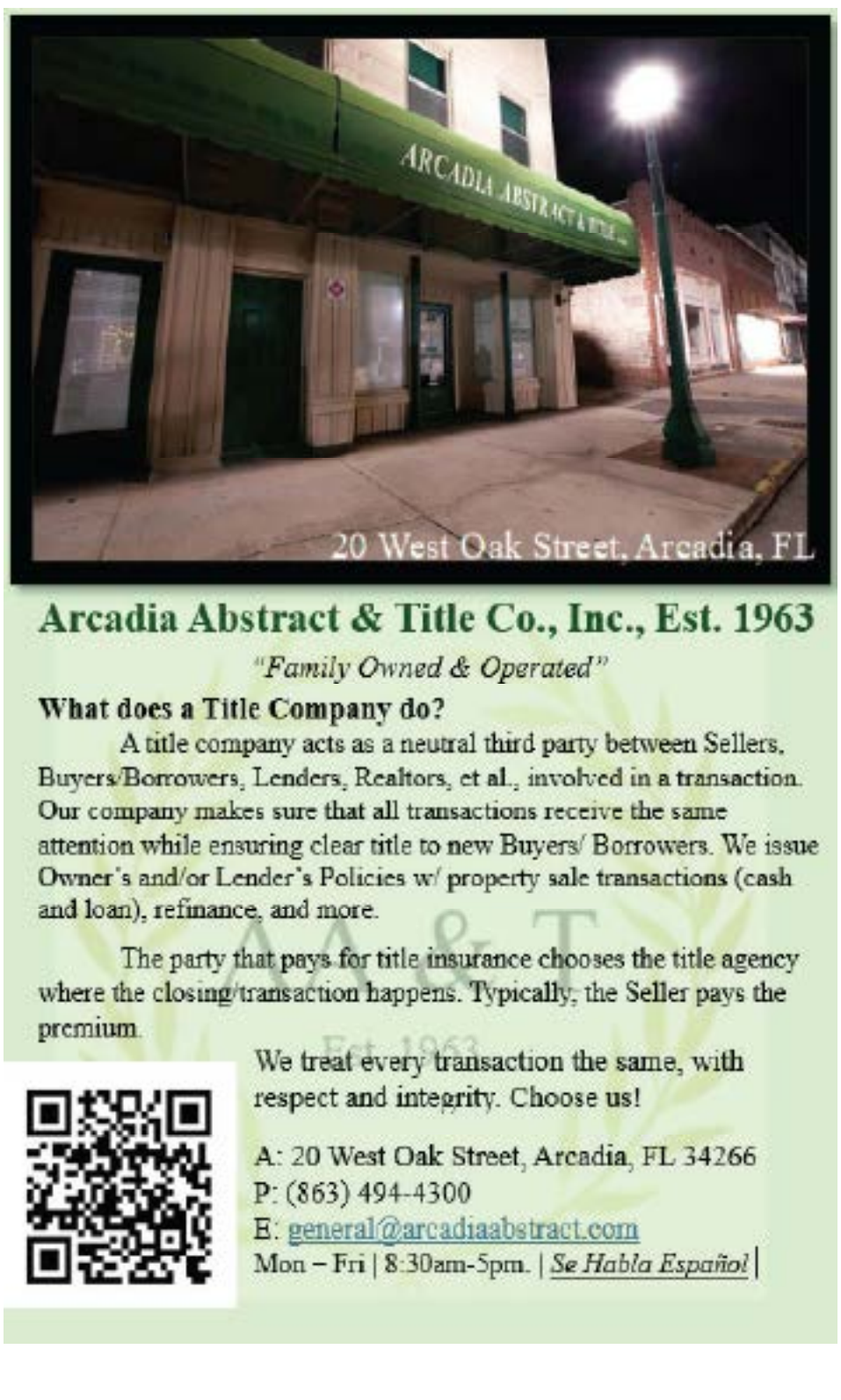
Owner of Florida Farmhouse Coffee, Charity Reesor dipped treats from a cauldron of candy for families who were trick-or-treating downtown, such as Amaya Gonzalez.



From left, Izzy Jones and Yori Blanding stopped for a moment in front of Treasure Alley, 108 W. Oak St., where Store Owner Tim Kilkelly was distributing candy.



From left, Mary Ann Poncier and William Poncier watched Tyrannosaurus Rex Lee Carver and Weston Poncier receive glow stick bracelets at 101 W. Oak St., from Denise Heavener of Dragon's Den Books.





From left, owner of Laura's Good Vibe Tribe Thrift Store, 215 W. Oak St., Laura Patridge organized the downtown track-or-treating event. At Blossom's Beauty and Boutique, 134 W. Oak St., she and Allie Hilton gave candy to two minions—Addie Yates, and Annabelle Miller.

DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ARREST REPORT | 10/23/26 - 10/29/26

Bartlett, Scott Alan:
Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

Cendejas, Monica Gularte:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Poss Intent SELL/MFG/DELIV Ctrl Sub Schedule I; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription (x2); Smuggle Contraband - Other Drug 951.22(1)(h) Co Detention Facility

Chirinos, Douglas Armando:
Property Crimes - Access Computer Electronic Device Wo Authority

Flegle, Brian William:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Furman, Conner Daniel:
Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

Hartsfield, Byron Keith:
Moving Traffic Viol - Dwlsr Revocation Equiv Status 3rd Sub Viol; Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence; Resist Officer - Refuse To Accept Sign Citation Or Post Bond

Hilyer, Leslie Dwight:
Battery - Touch Or Strike

Kohlbrecher, Kyle Allan:
Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant (x2)

Mathewson, Thomas George Edward:
Aggrav Asslt - Weapon - W Deadly Weapon Without Intent To Kill

Medina-Escoto, Ricardo:
Carrying Concealed Weapon - Firearm; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Attach Registration License Plate Not Assigned; Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle Wo Valid License

Mira, John Vincent:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Moore, Rusty Phillip:
Burgl - Burglary Unoccupied Conveyance Unarmed; Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription (x2); Larc - Grand Theft 750 Less Than 5k Dols

Nesmith, Jarquell Tykell:
Prob Violation - Prob Violation

Ortiz-Sales, Otoniel:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription; Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv

Perez-Angel, Jacob:
Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv

Perez-Ortiz, Antonio:
DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - 0.15 Or Higher Or W Person Under 18 In Vehicle; Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv

Peters Sr., Robert Forest:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Randle, Pauline Elaine:
Out-of-County Warrant - Out-of-County Warrant

Reding, Pamela Lynn:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use (x2); Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription (x3); FLEE/ELUDE Police - Flee Elude LEO With Lights Siren Active

Rodriguez-Mercado, Ricardo Looney:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis

Rohena Perez, Bryan Robert:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; FLEE/ELUDE Police - Flee Elude LEO With Lights Siren Active; Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis; Operate Vehicle Exceed Speed Limit 50+ Mph

Sampson Sr., Eugene Roger:
Obscene Material-Possess - Possess 10 Or More Child Porn Image f2 Offense (x61); Possession Of Weapon - Or Ammo By Convicted Fla Felon (x2)

Smith, Juanitra Nouveau:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Ward, Jevon:
Battery - Battery On Specified Personnel

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NEWS FROM THE DESK OF SHERIFF POTTER

REGISTER FOR OUR "SAFE" PROGRAM



SHERIFF POTTER
DeSoto County Sheriff

Our deputies respond to a variety of calls for service. Most of the time, they have plenty of information before interacting with a community member. But every so often, getting crucial details can be a challenge. We have a program to help bridge the gap so we can better communicate with people in crisis.

The DeSoto County SAFE program is a registry that provides critical information to first responders if they encounter a community member who may have special needs, unique abilities, or behavioral attributes that need special care.

This can include autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, deaf or blind individuals, and other communication disorders or intellectual disabilities.

When you enroll in the program, our dispatchers input the information into our emergency system. If you call for help, the critical details will automatically pop up.

To let first responders know you are part of the program, you will be given a decal to put in your home and vehicles. It's another way our first responders will know that they should approach with care.

To sign up, scan the QR code and fill out the online form. Once it's approved, we will contact you so you can pick up your decals.

Having this information will help ensure a positive and safe experience for everyone involved.

BE KIND, BE SAFE, GOD BLESS!

Sheriff James "Jim" F. Potter



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