

ICE PARTNERSHIP RESULTS IN FUNDING AWARD



CAROL MAHLER
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Photos provided

The Arcadia All-Florida Saddle Club won the “best horse unit” award in the Independence Day parade on July 4, 2023. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

At the Nov. 14 meeting, Marshal Quinn Jones announced that several Arcadia Police Dept. officers “are now officially certified through the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) 287(g) Program,” he said. “This certification allows our trained officers to work directly with ICE on certain immigration-related matters, helping us better identify and address individuals who pose a threat to our community’s safety.

“Because of our dept.’s efforts and the arrests made involving illegal aliens within the City . . . we’ve been awarded \$107,500.00 from our partnership with ICE. This funding will go towards new vehicles and equipment, which will directly improve how we serve and protect our residents every day.”

He said that \$100,000.00 will purchase two new vehicles, and the Council approved his request that \$35,000.00 allocated to upgrading the APD restrooms in the budget be transferred to outfitting the new vehicles with lights, markings, and equipment. In addition, the \$7,500.00 balance of the ICE funds will be used to purchase new equipment, such as tasers. He also assured the Council that APD officers will not knock on doors and take people away; they only assist ICE with arresting the illegal aliens that ICE has identified.

The Council agreed to wait to move forward on renaming Watson Ave. in honor of Helen C. Washington and Orange Ave. in honor of Coach Fred Fields, Sr., until the City has a formal process to do so. After

SEE ICE PAGE 9 >>



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 25	DESOTO COUNTY
TUES 3P	CANCELLED BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103
NOV 27	DESOTO CITY & COUNTY
	CITY & COUNTY OFFICES CLOSED In observance of Thanksgiving
DEC 2	DESOTO COUNTY
TUES 5:30P	PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103

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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PARADE AND CEREMONY HONORS VETERANS



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Photos provided

Although the temperature was 38 degrees at dawn on Nov. 11, the Veterans Day Parade started at 10:00 a.m. on Oak St. to honor and thank veterans of the U.S. Armed Services. Businesses, clubs, organizations, and schools participated with floats, decorated vehicles, walking units, and more.

Immediately following at 11:00 a.m., the County’s Veteran Services Officer Steve Rickard emceed a ceremony at the Veterans Monument in front of the south doors of the courthouse. Golden Faircloth gave the invocation and benediction. The guest speaker was the Honorable County Judge Guy Flowers. The DeSoto County High School Blazing Blue Band performed the National Anthem as well as the military songs.



In the Veterans Day Parade, Memorial Elementary School students displayed a special banner to honor veterans while others carried photographs of the veterans in their families.



Snuggling together for warmth, Luke Trent and Jessica Trent watched the parade from the back of their car.



With the Color Guard leading, the DeSoto County High School JROTC cadets participated in the Veterans Day Parade.



County Veteran Services Office Steve Rickard emceed the Veterans Day ceremony at the Veterans Monument on the south lawn of the Courthouse.



In the Veterans Day Parade, the West Elementary School Cowboys walked on Oak St. from Orange to Volusia avenues.



The DeSoto Middle School Bulldog Band walked on Oak St. in the Veterans Day Parade.



The DeSoto County High School Blazing Blue Band performed as they marched through downtown Arcadia and at the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Courthouse.



Schoolchildren from Arcadia Christian Academy carried banners to honor U.S. Armed Services veterans.



A group of Nocatee Elementary School Mustangs strolled in the Veterans Day Parade.

ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK TO DISTRIBUTE THOUSANDS OF THANKSGIVING DINNERS ACROSS DESOTO COUNTY



RIISING NEED, GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AND FEDERAL CUTS LEAVE MANY FAMILIES FACING EMPTY PLATES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

DESOTO COUNTY, FL – As the holiday season approaches, many families are preparing to gather around the table and give thanks. Yet for thousands of local families, the joy of a Thanksgiving meal is far from guaranteed. As devastating federal cuts to food and health assistance programs hit home – and the government shutdown delays benefits and paychecks for local families – this “season of plenty” will look very different for many in our community.

Between January and September 2025, All Faiths Food Bank saw visits rise by 24% as compared to the same period last year. That number is expected to grow as the full impact of recent government policy decisions take hold.

To ensure no one goes without a

holiday meal, All Faiths Food Bank is once again hosting Thanksgiving distributions across DeSoto County, providing turkeys and all the trimmings to neighbors in need. These distributions are part of the annual ThankFULL campaign, a three-month community effort to raise funds for 14,500 turkeys and 4.1 million holiday meals for families across Sarasota and DeSoto counties.

“The relief you see on people’s faces as they realize their family will be able to enjoy a festive holiday meal together is palpable,” said AFFB’s President and CEO Nelle S. Miller. “I look forward to these distributions each year, knowing that the joy of the holiday season will be felt in thousands of homes in our community, thanks to the generosity of all who contribute to our ThankFULL campaign.”

This year, turkey distributions for DeSoto County residents will be held at the following locations and times:

FIRST BAPTIST OF FT. OGDEN
6831 SW SENATE ST., ARCADIA
TUESDAY, NOV. 18, 10-11:30 A.M.

SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE- DESOTO CAMPUS
2251 NE TURNER AVE., #2700, ARCADIA
TUESDAY, NOV. 25, 4:30-6 P.M.



All Faiths Food Bank will hold turkey distributions at several locations in DeSoto County in the days leading up to Thanksgiving. Provided photo/AFFB

All distributions are first-come, first-served and while supplies last. Proof of DeSoto County residency is required.

Through Thanksgiving, additional turkey distributions will take place at several of All Faiths’ mobile pantry sites as well as through partner agency locations – including closed sites, like schools and youth-serving nonprofits.

The ThankFULL campaign is made possible through the generous support of individuals, foundations

and corporate partners, including the Kathleen K. Catlin Foundation of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, which has championed this effort for 25 years.

“Each turkey, each meal, represents hope and kindness in action,” Miller said. “Together, we can make sure every table is full this Thanksgiving.”

To find a food distribution near you, visit allfaithsfoodbank.org and click “Food Finder.”

USE GLOWFORGE @ YOUR LIBRARY



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Photos provided*

On loan during Nov. from the Southwest Florida Library Network (SWFLN), the Glowforge laser cutter and engraver is designed to be user-friendly and has a web-based software that allows users to upload their own designs or use pre-made projects selected from a catalog. One-hour time

slots are available on Nov. 21 and 29. To reserve time or for more information, call 863-993-4851. Details also available at www.desotobocc.com/217/Public-Library or on Facebook.



From left, Library Staff Member Reagan Bordner, Evelyn Hernandez, and Marisol Hernandez stood in front of the Glowforge at the Library. Evelyn had watched while her sister Marisol tried out the laser cutting and engraving machine with help from Bordner. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

CITY HOLDS FIRST CRA MEETING



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Photos provided*

On Nov. 14 meeting, the Council met as the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to hold their first meeting with only one item on the agenda. They approved the transfer of \$10,000.00 from the City’s General Fund Contingency to the Redevelopment Trust Fund because “Tax Increment Financing

(TIF) will not begin accumulating until the 2026 tax year.”

The Redevelopment Trust Fund was established by Ordinance 1108 adopted on April 1, 2025, and “opening the account and making this initial deposit now will enable the CRA to undertake a small-scale project to generate early momentum and community interest within the CRA district.”

For the project, the CRA discussed

offering funds for the painting of houses and buildings. Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco asked about offering free pick-up of large items, and Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland recalled the successful yard clean-up in Oct.. She also said that Sherwin-Williams will give a 15% discount on paint purchased as part of the CRA’s project. Velasco noted that contractors receive a larger discount than that, and the Council seemed to

agree that contractors could be paid as part of the CRA’s project.

Council Member Keith Keene asked that the CRA coordinate with Habitat for Humanity’s project to spruce up homes on the City’s thoroughfares, and City Administrator Beth Carsten said she will contact the organization. She also said she will bring a proposal for the project to the Jan. meeting.



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PEACE RIVER SPORTS

MISS DESOTO FASTPITCH DOMINATES TOURNAMENT



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The end of season (EOS) tournament turned into a softball clinic put on by the Miss DeSoto teams. Eight of the nine teams made a deep run in the tournament with 5 of the teams reaching the championship round. When the lights turned off and the teams went home, it was the Miss Desoto teams that were bringing home the championship trophies and rings for each player.

Three teams brought home championship trophies and two others finished second. The previous week at Port Charlotte 6U Keith started it off completing an undefeated season with their championship. The 12U Dave team continued the DeSoto run last Saturday with a championship run through the brackets at North Port. The 14/16U Adam team won their championship at Venice.

Two teams, 6U Jos and 10U Javier. made

SEE MISS DESOTO
PAGE 7 >>



The 14/16 Adam team continued their remarkable two year run through the tournaments with another championship.



The 12U Dave team proudly show their trophy and rings and banner as EOS champions.



The 10U Erin team knocked off Port Charlotte Friday night but had their season come to an end against Miss DeSoto 10U Javier.



The 10U Javier team finished second in the EOS tournament at North Port.

The two Miss DeSoto
10U teams get together
for a team photo.



DESOTO COUNTY

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

YAHRI TYLER



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
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Yahri Tyler had a busy week. Last Saturday she signed her letter of intent to attend Anderson College. Monday she was named to the volleyball first team All Area squad. She played in the DeSoto first basketball game of the season also on Monday and has been named the DeSoto County Athlete of the Week.

Tyler, the reigning Sun Preps female athlete of the year, signed her letter to attend Anderson College in front of nearly 50 friends and family. Anderson is a D2 school that is a private Christian University with very high standards. Only 53% of students who apply are accepted in the South Carolina school.

Tyler will continue her education and play basketball on scholarship for the Trojans. They have a very good team that was 24-10 last season and 17-7 in the South Atlantic Conference. To be invited to play on the already strong team shows their faith in Tyler’s ability to play with them and continue their successful legacy.

Basketball has put her through a lot including missing an entire school year of athletics with a knee injury and a year long rehab routine. “There’s something in my heart that could never let me lose love for the game.”

Tyler spoke to her friends, family and teammates about her exciting next step in her life. “First and foremost I want to thank God for keeping me, guiding me and leading me down this path. Without His grace and strength, none of this would be possible. This is a dream come true and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to play at the next level. I want to take a moment to thank my family and friends for always being there for me. Your support has meant everything to me through every high and low.”

Tyler’s mom, Toi Reaves a successful basketball player in her high school and



With Yahri’s name on the letter of intent to play basketball at Anderson College, coach Primus and Yahri’s mom coach Toi Reaves were all smiles.



Coach Primus says a few words about Yahri and their time together on and off the court.



It was an emotional time for coach Toi Reaves as she spoke about her daughter Yahri Tyler.

Yahri’s teammates were all there to enjoy the moment with Yahri.



college career, has been her coach for many years. Tyler continued. “Mom, you’ve been a rock through every bad game, every injury and every moment then I needed motivation. You never gave up on me, even when I doubted myself. Thank you for your endless love and encouragement, I wouldn’t be here without you.”

Tyler went on to thank coach Primus. “You’ve always pushed me to work harder and you’ve been a shoulder to lean on whenever I needed it. You believed in me when I had nothing left in the tank and you kept me going. I appreciate everything you’ve done for me, both on and off the court.”

Her teammates have been a part of this journey. “The memories we’ve made together are priceless and I’ll carry them with me as I move on to this next chapter. I’m grateful for every person who’s helped me get here.”

Coach Primus first met Yahri when she was 9 years old when she was a “tag along” with her older sister Zeri who was entering the 8th grade. It was Primus’ first year of coaching travel ball and there wasn’t a team for that age group.

Primus continued. “I knew Yahri’s potential from the first time she came into the gym. I let her practice with us just to

keep her busy. I saw that she was serious about wanting to learn the game and she would mirror what Zeri was doing almost exactly. She played with my 8th and 9th graders and was not afraid or intimidated by the size and skill of the older players. She shined on the court and that light has never dimmed. Yahri has a passionate spirit and it shows on and off the court. She will be an asset at the next level and truly lives in the moment and owns it. I am super proud to have been a part of her journey and look forward to continuing to mentor her throughout her collegiate career.”



A large number of family and friends turned out for Yahri Tyler’s college signing.

DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK



BULLDOGS TURN INTO “CROCA-GATORS” IN SEASON OPENER WIN



STEVE KNAPP
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When I was a young child my dad told me the meanest animal in the world was the “Croca-gator”. It had a crocodile head on one end of his body and an alligator head on the other end so you never knew which end would get you. If you add the claws of a bear and the poison of a snake bite and jaws of a hungry lion, you would have to watch all five ways that the “croca-gator” could hurt you. When the Bulldogs were on the court in their season opener Monday night, they had 5 different ways to hurt the Pirates.

The DeSoto girls basketball were “croca-gators” in their balanced team win over Port Charlotte 68-32. All 8 players on the roster scored as Desoto took command of the game right from jump street. They got out to an 8-0 lead behind Cherish Wiggins 5 first quarter points. Rihanna Downing had a pair of buckets and Janeris Bing and Za’Niyah King each added a trey to give DeSoto a 15-5 lead after the first quarter. Notice the name Yahri Tyler wasn’t mentioned.

Tyler heated up in the second quarter pacing the team with 5 points as 5 different players scored to boost the Bulldog lead to 31-17 at the break. The third quarter was a blowout with Tyler’s 12 points leading the way as the Bulldogs outscored the Pirates 21-4. Early in the fourth quarter, the running clock was started as the Bulldogs coasted to a 68-32 win.

While Tyler owned the third quarter with a dozen points, Wiggins matched that in the final quarter. Both players had a pair of three’s in their quarter. Wiggins was the only player to score in each quarter to lead the Bulldogs with



In her final first game opening tip, Yahri Tyler controls the ball for the Bulldogs as they roll 68-32 over Port Charlotte.

24. Tyler ended up with 19.

With such a balanced attack the Bulldogs nailed 8 threes, 4 in each half. The scored 15, 16 twice and 21 points in the game. A balanced attack assures the team that if someone is having a slow or off night, that means there is a teammate who can pick up the slack until they start hitting their shots. Opponents can’t put their best defensive player on one person because then one of the other players will light them up.

Downing was especially impressive and greatly improved over the past season. Her motor was running at high speed on both ends of the court, she was mixing it up under the basket and putting up points. Her consistency in the first half with 8 points balanced out the cold first quarter for Tyler and slow second quarter for Wiggins.

Wiggins was asked if this was the best the team can play. She said, “It’s not the best, we are still going up from here. Our mission was to end the losing streak and beat them and we did it.”

Coach Primus had her thoughts about Wiggins. “It is coming easier to her. Game by game, year by year the game is easier for her. She puts a lot into it and it is rewarding.”



Cherish Wiggins takes the rock to the hole on this fourth quarter layup against the Pirates. Wiggins led the team with 24 points.

The win ended a five game losing streak to the Pirates dating back to December 12 2022. In those five games the Pirates outscored Desoto 302 to 195. Overall the Bulldogs are just 5-16 against the Pirates.

This is a fast team that will run other teams in the ground. They play solid defense with good ball control skills, instincts and unselfish play. They are fun



Mariah Valladares shows her speed on this fast break in the win over Port Charlotte.

to watch. It has been said (if you don’t know who said it, just say it is an old African saying) “IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER.” This team can go far this season. It is going to be a fun ride so hop on, fasten your seat belts and enjoy the trip.

WISHING YOU A
Happy Thanksgiving
From the DeSoto County
Property Appraiser’s Office

Our Office Will Be
CLOSED
November 27th & 28th for the holidays

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DESOTO SPORTS

ROUND-UP

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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STEVE KNAPP

Sports Writer
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The soccer season is in full swing at the high school with the boys sporting a 3-1 record. Wins over Babcock Ranch and Lake Placid both by 8-0 counts and a 5-3 win over Sebring have given the team a good start. The only blemish on their record is a tough 2-0 loss at Okeechobee.

They will be home tomorrow night hosting Southeast before the Thanksgiving break. Josue Hernandez and Kevin Ortiz are leading the team with 11 points each. Hernandez has 5 goals and is ranked second in the district. Djefely Felixe leads the team with 7 assists. Erick Cardenas has been perfect in the net so far this season.

The girls soccer season has opened up against some strong competition and have dropped their first 4 games to Charlotte, Palmetto, Lake Placid and Sebring. They will host Charlotte tonight before their Thanksgiving break next week.

The boys basketball team was at home against Okeechobee in their first game of the season on Tuesday and will be at Imagine tonight. They will also host Lemon Bay on Tuesday and will be in a tournament next Friday and Saturday.

The girls basketball hosted Port Charlotte Monday night with a story in this section about that contest. They will host Evangelical High School tonight.

The cross country team ran very well



Cross country coaches and teammates race to another viewing point in the regional action at North Port last Saturday.



King Rivers launches a shot in the loss to Hardee.



Senior Emiley Cline gets her leg into a shot for the Bulldogs last week.

in the regional tournament last Saturday with information in this sports section.

Izzy Morris went to the state meet this week as the first female Desoto golfer to



Deilynn Taylor comes up with a low throw for the Miss DeSoto 12U Dave team that won the championship at North Port last Saturday.

reach that plateau. Results will be in next week's paper.

The middle school basketball teams had their first home games of the season and the teams took a double dip. Hardee came to play and beat the boys 44-10 with Ja'Michael Hairston leading the team with 7 points.

The Lady Bulldogs lost 39-11 after

beating Lake Placid 16-13 in their opening game. Against the Wildcats Kailyn Vazquez-Magana led the Bulldogs with 7 points. Both teams will be home tonight facing Avon Park with game times at 6 & 7pm.

For information about the outstanding Miss DeSoto tournament results, read the story in this sports section.

MISS DESOTO

FROM PAGE 4 >>

it to the championship game but came up a little short in their quest for the championship trophy. Three teams, 8U Nancy 8U Kenny and 14/16U Glenn saw their season end in the semifinals.

In the 10U division the Javier team was in the same bracket as the other Miss DeSoto team Erin. Erin won their Friday night game 10-8 over Port Charlotte but

saw their season come to an end as they lost a close 13-10 game to the Javier team.

The spring season of Miss DeSoto Fastpitch will be starting in March and running through May with a mid season tournament April 17-19 and All Star games June 6-8. Registration is open now but will close December 31st.

I heard one player say, "I wish we could start next week." You may register now at missdesotofastpitch.sportngin.com.



There were plenty of hugs to go around after the 10U Javier team beat the 10U Erin team in a close well played 13-10 game.

GIRLS FASTPITCH SOFTBALL

REGISTRATION CLOSING DEC. 31ST

MISS DESOTO FASTPITCH

2026 SPRING SEASON

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- T-BALL (6U) – Learn the basics**
- COACH PITCH (8U) – Building confidence**
- 10U – Game fundamentals**
- 12U – Sharpen skills**
- 14/16U – Advanced play**

SPRING SEASON DATES:
GAMES RUN MARCH TO MAY
MID SEASON TOURNAMENT APRIL 17-19
ALL STAR JUNE 6-8

Register Online missdesotofastpitch.sportngin.com

CROSS COUNTRY RUNS WELL IN REGIONALS



STEVE KNAPP
Sports Writer
sports@peacerrivershopper.com

The DeSoto Bulldogs cross country team had a good day at the regional race at North Port last Saturday but came up short of advancing to the state meet.

Josey Lopez was the lone qualifier from the girls side of the team and missed advancing to the state meet by just one position. She finished in 50th place less than three seconds behind the final state qualifier. Lopez set a new PR with a time of 21:50 breaking her previous PR which also came at the North Port course. “This is my favorite course by far, I just love it,” said Lopez.

The boys were shorthanded as Ty Shine was too sick to run in the meet while brother Zy was also under the weather but finished 74th overall and third for the Bulldogs. Second place went to Emmanuel Epps with a time of 19:07 good for 62nd place overall.

Trace Barrera was first to cross the finish line for Desoto finishing in 54th place. He set a new PR with a time of 18:46 breaking his old mark by 4 seconds. Barrera said, “It was a hard race. I had a good first and second mile but slowed down in the third mile but I’m still very happy with my run and setting a new PR”.

Coach Julie Chidsey said. “They ran a great race. They PR’d (time of 1 hour 38 minutes and 19:45 average) and we had a couple of individual PR’s. We’re



Josey Lopez, along with coaches and teammates, wait for the starting gun to begin the regional race.



In the final moments of warm up, Trace Barrera (2317), Emmanuel Epps (2318) and Zy Shine (2322) finish in that order for the Bulldogs.



The team gathers as they do before every race and prays.



Coach Julie Chidsey goes over the final instructions before the girls race.

already talking about next year when we will compete. As long as everybody stays healthy and they go through track season and run a few road races, we’ll be right there where we want to be.”



Josey Lopez takes a quick look at the timing board as she set a new personal record with a time of 21:50.



Trace Barrera is in the home stretch as the first Bulldog to cross the finish line. Barrera set a new PR with a time of 18:46 breaking his old mark by 4 seconds.

Happy Thanksgiving

From the Supervisor of Elections Office!

Our office will be

CLOSED

November 27th & 28th



Debbie Wertz

DESOTO COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

863.993.4871 • 201 E. Oak St., Suite 104, Arcadia, FL 34266

dwertz@votedesotofl.gov

Normal Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

ICE
FROM PAGE 1 »

doing some research, City Attorney T. J. Wohl found that few cities have codified the practice, and the Florida Attorney General’s office offers no guidance. Nevertheless, he will bring a proposed procedure in the form of an ordinance to the Dec. 2 meeting for a first reading. Renaming streets will be a separate procedure from naming other City assets.

Council Member Keith Keene spoke in favor: “We owe it to ourselves and to the requesters,” he said.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

Although the only bid received for the project was \$6.2 million, the City approved the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Grant Agreement for \$3.49 million for the Reclaimed Water Pond Retrofit to Treatment Wetlands For Nutrient Removal project. City Administrator Beth Carsten said she has spoken with FDEP about additional funding for the project, and if the City receives more money, the agreement may be amended.

The Council ratified the purchase of a 2026 Ford F-350 pickup truck for \$72,586.00. Council Member Bob Heine, Jr., said that a constituent had questioned why a four-wheel drive vehicle was necessary in the City. Utilities Director Lee Snyder explained that the heavy-duty truck is required to haul his dept.’s trailers and other equipment, navigate construction or emergency response, and to free mired machines saving the expense of a tow truck. “It’s a tool our dept. uses,” Snyder said.

The Council approved the annual Planning Advisory Services Agreement for “land use, zoning, and planning services” for \$55,000.00 (no increase) with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026.

Resolution No. 2025-27 was passed by the Council amending the 2024-2025 adopted budget to “true-up” revenues and expenses with total budgeted funds decreasing by \$16,223,458.00: from \$55,122,304.00 to \$38,898,846.00. The largest change



The Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection approved the City’s permit to extend the new airport water line into the Airport Estates subdivision, so residents may choose to connect to the City’s water service.

“resulted from projects that were either delayed to a future year or were only partially completed in FY 2024-2025.” Deputy Mayor Luis Velasco said that the resolution “gives a good idea of what happened during that time frame.”

City Administrator Comments

Carsten reported that the City received the FDEP permit to extend the water pipe 2500 linear feet into Airport Estates, and the work will start on Dec. 10. She noted that the next three to four months will be difficult on Gibson St. as first the water and sewer upgrades are completed and then the stormwater and widening/repaving. The work will require Gibson to be closed at Mills Ave. next week.

She has spoken with two consultants about updating the survey of the Arcadia Historic District, and she will discuss the costs of the project at the next meeting. Assistant City Administrator Carl McQuay will serve in her absence when she travels to Tallahassee next week. She congratulated Records Clerk Mark Koswenda on the great job he is doing, and reminded the Council of the Ridge League meeting on Dec. 11 in Auburndale.

COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Bob Heine, Jr., who also serves on the DeSoto Memorial Hospital (DMH) Board, reported that they signed a lease agreement (\$10.00 per year for 49 years) with Tampa General Hospital that will bring more specialists—such as an orthopedist—to DMH; hospital expansion; a life-line helicopter (in which the patient

School District Outreach Coordinator Ashley Brown thanked Mayor Judy Wertz-Strickland, Council Member Keith Keene, and Marshal Quinn Jones for participating in the recent “Community Day.” Keene was impressed with the kind of learning he witnessed at West Elementary. “I am really pumped with what’s going on with our school system,” he said. “... Our future is our young people.”



decides the destination); retention of any employee is good standing; and an investment of \$45 to \$50 million in the first five years. “It will improve the medical care in our community,” he said.

CONSENT AGENDA

On the Consent Agenda, the Council approved two special event permits: for the Hometown Holiday Pageant, sponsored by Miss DeSoto County

Pageant, from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Nov. 29, 2025, at the Tree of Knowledge Park, to raise money for the Toys for Tots, Shop with the Sheriff, and Shop with a Cop; and an amendment for the rodeo parade, sponsored by the Arcadia Rodeo Assoc. and 5-Star Youth, moving the date from March 7 to March 14, 2026, with the parade on Oak St., from the intersections of Orange to Volusia avenues.



In July, DeSoto Memorial Hospital (DMH) was under construction for damage received during Hurricane Ian in 2022 with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). DMH Board Member and Council Member Bob Heine, Jr., announced that Tampa General has now leased DMH and will provide improved medical care in our community.



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K-POST 11 HOSTS VETERANS AT NES



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Photos provided

The American Legion K-Post 11 Auxiliary President and K-Post 11 Adjutant Amber Collins and four other veterans shared their stories with the fourth and fifth graders at Nocatee Elementary School (NES) on Nov. 4.

Having served two-and-one-half years in the U.S. Army, Private First Class Amber Collins talked about being female in the 82nd Airborne, an elite division of paratroopers. She encouraged the students to start setting goals, expect more of themselves, and not let others limit their possibilities. She said, “Show people what you can do regardless of race, sex, or financial status.”

Sgt. Alex Davenport served five years in the U.S. Army Third Infantry as a member of the Arlington National Cemetery Honor Guard. He is grateful to have participated in more than 1500 funerals to pay final respect to those who served. Vice-president of Southwest Florida Honor Flight, he works as a lieutenant in the Punta Gorda Fire Dept..

Having served four years in the U.S. Navy as an aviation machinist, Mate,



Standing, from left, American Legion K-Post 11 Auxiliary Member Linda Collins helps hold the display about Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm while Auxiliary President Amber Collins explained. Seated on the stage from left are Sgt. Alex Davenport and Specialist Paul Kaiser.



U.S. Army Specialist Paul Kaiser, center, talked about his experiences in Vietnam as the other veterans, from left, listened: U.S. Navy Mate, First Class, Lee Hale and U.S. Army Sgt. Alex Davenport, Private First Class Amber Collins, and Specialist Louis Reuter.

First Class, Lee Hale is a Vietnam War combat veteran. He spoke about how he repaired aircraft so that pilots could fly again and complete their missions. He encouraged students to take advantage of the educational benefits available through the military.

Specialist Paul Kaiser served for two years in the U.S. Army, and he spoke about traveling through Vietnam for one year during the war. Although he shared several sad stories, he also recalled the happy memory of Mustache, his pet monkey.

Having served eight-and-a-half years in the U.S. Army, Specialist Louis Reuter worked as an optical lab specialist.

He chose this career because when he enlisted, his wife was pregnant.

Collins also announced an essay contest on the topic “Celebrating America’s 250th birthday and the veterans who fought for our freedom” sponsored by the National American Legion Auxiliary with one national award. However, K-Post 11 and K-Post 11 Auxiliary will award prizes to the best essay by a NES fourth grader and fifth grader, respectively.

In addition, she explained the Prisoner of War (POW)/Missing In Action (MIA) flag to the students. It was the idea of Mary Hoff, wife of U.S. Navy Lt. Commander Michael G. Hoff, who

wanted to remind Americans of the members of the U.S. Armed Services who were never accounted for during the Vietnam War.

Newt Heisley, a WWII pilot, designed the flag supposedly based on a drawing of his son who was also a soldier. The barbed wire represents fences to keep prisoners from escaping, and the watchtower portrays surveillance and isolation. The phrase “You are not forgotten” is the attitude of U.S. citizens for the missing soldiers. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter established National POW/MIA day on the third Fri. in Sept. to show respect for these soldiers.

THANK YOU
VETERANS

Two residents at DeSoto Health & Rehab in Arcadia celebrated Veteran’s Day with a dinner of 2 of their favorite food; pizza and chicken, along with ice cream for dessert.

Our 2 heroes are Linda Gray and Harold Augusta.

Linda Gray:

Linda is 71 years old and served 2 years in the Army; 1972-1974. Linda calls DeSoto Health & Rehab her home.

Harold Augusta:

Harold served in the Army for 2 years in Korea. He’s been married to his wife Lois for 70 years.

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Desoto County
Tax Collector

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Thanksgiving

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Tax Collector’s Office

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DeSoto County Tax Collector
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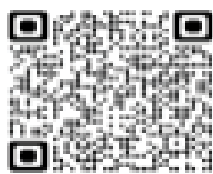
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BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES: THANKSGIVING BENEDICTION

CHAPLAIN AMANDA REUTER
US Army Reserve
DeSoto County Ministerial Association

SCRIPTURAL REFLECTION ON GOD'S PROVISION AND BLESSING

The poem celebrates God's sovereign provision during Thanksgiving, a season when Christians reflect on His faithfulness amid harvest and hearth. This theme echoes throughout Scripture, where God repeatedly demonstrates

Himself as Jehovah Jireh, "The Lord Will Provide" (Genesis 22:14, ESV). In the wilderness, He rained manna from heaven for Israel, ensuring "they lacked nothing" (Deuteronomy 2:7). Exodus 16:4 describes this daily bread: "Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you," teaching dependence

*In harvest gold, the table bends with grace,
Almighty Father, Thy abundance flows;
From barren fields to overflowing space,
Thy mercy crowns the year with quiet glows.
The pilgrim heart, once lost in winter's sting,
Now sings beneath the bounty of Thy wing.*

*O Lord of seasons, in this sacred feast,
We lift our thanks for manna never ceased;
Thy hand sustains the sparrow and the least,
And turns our famine into endless peace.
As candles flicker in the autumn night,
Thy blessings shine—eternal, pure, and bright.*

on His timing rather than human effort. This provision was not sporadic but covenantal, tied to obedience and trust, reminding us that Thanksgiving invites gratitude for both abundance and the discipline of need.

Philippians 4:19 assures believers, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Paul wrote this from prison, underscoring that God's blessings transcend circumstances—spiritual riches outweigh material scarcity. During Thanksgiving, families gather much like the Israelites at feasts of firstfruits (Leviticus 23:10-14), offering thanks for crops as symbols of divine favor. Psalm 65:11 poetically declares, "You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance," linking seasonal harvest to God's overflowing goodness.

Jesus amplifies this in the New Testament. In Matthew 6:26, He points to birds of the air: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" This rhetorical

question combats anxiety, affirming human worth in God's economy. The miracle of loaves and fishes (John 6:1-14) further illustrates multiplicative blessing—five loaves and two fish fed thousands, with twelve baskets leftover, symbolizing surplus for God's people.

Even in trial, blessing persists. James 1:17 states, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." Thanksgiving, then, is not mere tradition but worship, acknowledging the Giver behind every gift. As 2 Corinthians 9:8 promises, "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." In this season, Christians recommit to stewardship, sharing provision as an extension of God's generosity, fostering community and hope. Ultimately, the greatest blessing is Christ Himself, the Bread of Life (John 6:35), whose sacrifice ensures eternal provision beyond any earthly feast.

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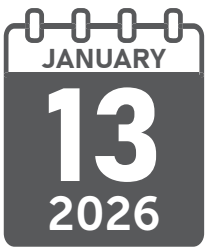
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- Offer actionable ideas to drive positive change

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ALL ARE WELCOME

What: A Community Update Dinner
Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2026
Time: 4:00p – 8:00p
Location: Turner Agri-Civic Center
2250 NE Roan St.
Arcadia, FL 34266



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Florida Power & Light Company is grateful to serve the DeSoto County community.

We were honored to take part in the National Night Out event hosted by the DeSoto County Sheriff's Office, celebrating community and connection.

This season, we're thankful for the partnerships that keep our communities safe, bright and strong.





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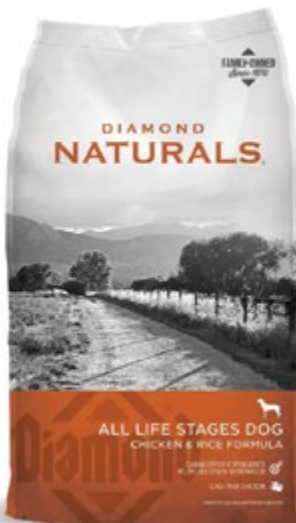
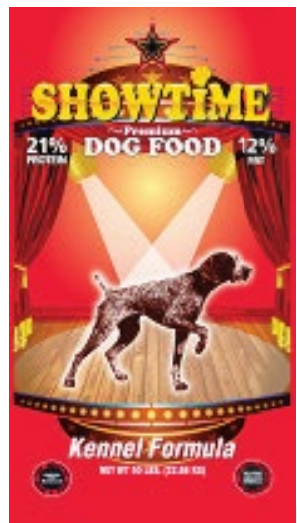
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DESOTO COUNTY

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ARREST REPORT |

11/7/25 - 11/13/25

Blum-Swagert, Laura Caroline:
Fraud-Imperson - Use Id Younger 18Y Or 60Y Or Older Wo Consent

Brantley, Michael Prescott:
Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Attach Registration License Plate Not Assigned, Failure To Appear - Felony Warrant (X3)

Burch, Haley Jade:
Larc - Other Theft

Dede, Evanilson:
Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While Lic Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

Ferguson, Jonathan Matthew:
Disturbing Peace - Breach Of The Peace, Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

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

Floyd, Danny Long:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Gomez-Hernandez, Edgar Mauricio:
Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Gross, Brianna Lynn:
Criminal Registration - Criminal Regristration - Not Arrest

Hickman, Jaron Adams:
Aggrav Battery - On Person 65 Years Of Age Or Older

Johnson, Chawnsae Davon:
Prob Violation - Prob Violation (X2)

Johnston, Kyle Daniel:
Drugs-Deliv/Distr - Deliver Controlled Substance Schedule Ii, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Larc - Other Theft

Luther, Fontella Yvette:
Fraud-Swindle - Defraud To Obtain Property Value Of \$20K-\$50K

Miller, Deborah June:
Larc - Contractr Pymt 20K Lt 200K Dol Viol Permit Wrk

Morel, Cory Eric:
Battery - Commit Domestic Battery By Strangulation

Nations, Michael Chad:
Operate Vehicle Exceed Speed Limit 50+ Mph

Patterson, Brentton:
Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription, Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh, Larc - Other Theft, Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use

Ramirez-Eutiquio, Alonso Ramirez:
Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid Lic 1St Conv

Raulerson, Jessica Nicole:
Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Richard, Stanley:
Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Williams, Daniel Craig:
Out-Of-County Warrant - Out-Of-County Warrant

Worley, James Curtis:
Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

Wright, Danny Gene:
Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use, Prob Violation - Prob Violation

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NEWS

FROM THE DESK OF

SHERIFF POTTER

STAYING SECURE:

ENSURING A SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON



SHERIFF POTTER
DeSoto County Sheriff

As we approach the holiday season, I want to take a moment to remind our community of the importance of safety. This includes at home and while you're out and about. The holidays are a time of joy, togetherness and celebration. It is also a time to bring awareness about unique safety challenges. Most importantly, the safety of your loved ones and yourself within the comfort of your home. This season, oftentimes, we see an increase in home burglaries. We advise you to please take the necessary precautions to secure your property. Ensure all doors and windows are locked when you're not at home. If you're planning to travel during the holidays, ask a trusted neighbor to keep an eye on your home, pick up your mail and create the illusion that someone is present.

Decorating your home is a cherished holiday tradition. It is crucial to do so safely. Be cautious when using holiday lights and decorations and always follow manufacturer instructions. Check for frayed wires, replace any damaged decorations, and don't overload electrical circuits. Before leaving the house or going to sleep, remember to turn off decorative lights and blow out candles. When it comes to holiday shopping, whether in-store or online, stay vigilant. In crowded shopping centers, keep a close eye on your belongings, and don't leave valuable items visible in your car. When shopping online, only use reputable websites and be cautious of potential scams, or fraudulent deals. Remember to protect your personal and financial information by using secure and trusted payment methods. If you're planning to travel by car,

ensure that your vehicle is in good working condition and that you're well-prepared for the journey. Take your time, obey all traffic laws and avoid driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Always wear your seatbelt, and make sure children are properly restrained in car seats or booster seats. Let's not forget the importance of looking out for one another during the holiday season. If you see something that doesn't seem right, don't hesitate to report it to us. We're here to keep our community

safe, and your assistance can make a significant difference in preventing crime. The holiday season is a time for joy, gratitude and kindness. By prioritizing safety, we can ensure that this special time of year is filled with cherished moments. Together, we can make this holiday season memorable for all the right reasons. **Be Kind, Be Safe, God Bless. Sheriff James Potter**



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