

# ARCADIA THE COMMUNITY

MARCH 5, 2026



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# Local

## BOARD APPROVES PURCHASE OF TWO RESCUE VEHICLES



**DESOTO COUNTY SPORTS**  
PAGE 4

STEVE KNAPP  
sports@peacerrivershopper.com



**CAROL MAHLER**

Independent Contractor  
carolmahler22acl@gmail.com  
Photos provided

The County's five rescue vehicles were manufactured in 2008, 2014 (2), 2019 (2), and 2021, so the Board authorized the purchase of two new vehicles that will be delivered in two years when this 2019 vehicle will be nearly a decade old.

Public Safety has had the funds in its capital budget to purchase a new rescue vehicle and has worked with vendors for the past two years to specify and obtain a contract, and a contract from Life Line Emergency Vehicles was finally received on Feb. 17, 2026, for \$352,852.00. Life Line offered a \$1,000.00 discount per vehicle if the County ordered two as recommended by staff based on the current fleet age and condition, and the vehicles will be delivered in two years.

The Board authorized the County Administrator to execute the contract and issue a purchase order for two rescue vehicles, and they approved a budget amendment to use \$240,704.00 from the General Fund reserves for a total cost of \$703,704.00 for the two vehicles.

In addition, the Board ratified the agreement with the State Fire Marshal for the \$1 million grant (with a local cost share of \$200,000.00) to fund preconstruction, purchase, and installation of a "basic fire rescue training tower on County-owned property," and passed a resolution allowing the Assistant County Administrator to sign all grant-related documents.

Also, the Board passed the Resolution "as presented electing to use the uniform method of collecting non-ad valorem special assessments to fund fire protection services and emergency medical services (EMS) within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County." It includes the City (incorporated area) that had been excluded

SEE RESCUE PAGE 9 >>



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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

<b>MAR 10</b>	<b>DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING</b>
TUES 9A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
<b>MAR 24</b>	<b>DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING</b>
TUES 3P	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266
<b>MAR 26</b>	<b>DESOTO COUNTY SPECIAL MASTER HEARING</b>
THUR 11A	Administration Building 201 E. Oak Street, Suite 103 Arcadia, FL 34266

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

## Realtor Showcase

See page 13

## DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ARREST REPORT  
See page 15

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# SUPPORT YOUNG EAGLES: EAT PANCAKES THIS SATURDAY



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

From 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., this Sat., Mar. 7, the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chap. 1226 invites you to fly or drive to the Arcadia Municipal Airport, 2269 A. C. Polk, Jr. Dr. to enjoy a pancake breakfast for \$8.00 per person, cash only please, to support the Young Eagles Program.

Prepared and served by EAA Chap. 1226 members in Aviation City—the airport’s pilot campground, the breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, eggs, coffee, and orange juice—with biscuits and sausage gravy for an additional price. Diners may eat in the pilot shelter or under the oak trees. Although this is the last pancake breakfast “of the season,” the Young Eagles program will continue on the second Sat. of each month.

The Young Eagles Program gives young people, ages 8 to 17 years, “their first free ride in an airplane. It’s the only program of its kind, with the sole mission to introduce and inspire kids in the world of aviation.” Thanks to the generosity of EAA volunteers, nearly 2.5 million “Young Eagles” have flown and may sign up for additional resources and opportunities at [eaa.org/eaa/youth/free-ye-flights](http://eaa.org/eaa/youth/free-ye-flights)

Registration is open for Sat., Mar. 14, for young people who live in Arcadia and have never flown in a small general aviation airplane. To participate, parents must register their kids through the EAA website at [eachapters.org](http://eachapters.org).

On Feb. 14, EAA Chap. 1226 flew 13 young people: seven girls and six boys. Pilot Ron Keating flew Young Eagles as did Pilots Ralph Arwood, Andrew Corsetti, Jon Garguilo, and Dave MacGregor, Shelley Peacock. Ryan McKeon volunteered with ground support.



EAA Chap. 1226 invites everyone to fly or drive in for a pancake breakfast from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Sat., Mar. 7, in “Aviation City,” the pilot campground of the Arcadia Municipal Airport, 2269 A. C. Polk Jr. Dr., to support the Young Eagles program. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



Flying above Arcadia with EAA Chap. 1226 Volunteer Pilot Ralph Arwood in his Lake Renegade is a happy Young Eagle.



A Young Eagle enjoyed a chance to fly the aircraft with EAA Chap. 1226 Volunteer Pilot Ron Keating on Feb. 14 taking off and landing at the Arcadia Municipal Airport.



Flying a Cessna above Arcadia, a Young Eagle smiles with Airport Director and EAA Chap. 1226 Pilot Volunteer Shelley Peacock in her Cessna.



A Young Eagle grinned as she flew alongside Airport Director and EAA Chap. 1226 Pilot Volunteer Shelley Peacock in her Cessna 172.



A Young Eagle smiled with Pilot Jon Garguilo as they flew during the Feb. 14 Young Eagles program at the Arcadia Municipal Airport.



Pilot Andy Corsetti added some temporary heart decorations to his bright red Aeroprakt Light Sport aircraft for the Valentine’s Day Young Eagles program.

For more information about the breakfast or the Young Eagles Program, check online at [arcadia-municipal-airport-x06](http://arcadia-municipal-airport-x06) or [facebook.com/arcadiax06](http://facebook.com/arcadiax06) or call 863-494-7844.



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

To benefit the continued revitalization of downtown Arcadia, Rob Causer, Ryan Causer, Drew Bissett, and Paul Sustachek played in the 3rd Annual Arcadia Main Street (AMS) Golf Tournament in 2025. (Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.)

Now, AMS invites golfers to the 4th Annual Golf Tournament this Sat., Mar. 7, with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m., at the Arcadia Municipal Golf Course, 1769 NE Livingston St., Arcadia. Participation and hole sponsorships opportunities are available online at <https://arcadiamainstreet.com/pages/golf-tournament> or call 863-494-2020.

# TOURNAMENT TEES OFF DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION



# YMCA RENTS EXHIBITION HALL FOR “BEST SUMMER EVER” CAMP



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

At the Feb. 24 meeting, Brian Nason, Chief Impact Officer, and Andrea Cappuccilli, Assoc. Exec. Director, gave the presentation to the Board of County Commissioners about the YMCA of Southwest Florida renting the Turner Center Exhibition Hall to provide services this summer, including the “Best Ever Summer” Camp. According to their data, 96% of campers make a new friend, 90% feel better about themselves, and 74% tried a new activity that they initially feared.

Through temporary licensing with the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), the YMCA will accept families’ benefits for summer camp, so the parent copay cost through ELC will be from \$5.00 to \$30.00 per week. The YMCA also offers scholarships, with a total of \$1.1 million in scholarships assisting families in 2025.

Providing economic growth, the YMCA Summer Camp will recruit and hire locally individuals “with a passion for kids, education, sports, and creativity” to fill the following positions: site director, senior counselor, junior counselor, check-in and check-out specialist, and bus driver.

Campers will received breakfast and hot lunch every day, and the camp location—the Turner Center Exhibition Hall—will also become a Summer Feeding Spot for anyone in the community age 18 and under. In 2025, the YMCA served a total of 129,000 meals according to Nason.

Summer Camp curriculum will help to prevent the “summer slide,” or the 20% literacy decline when school is recessed for the summer, by using The Patterson Foundation’s “This Book Is Cool” summer reading program, DEAR (Drop Everything And Read), and a summer partnership with West Elementary School. Nason said that literacy by the third grade is “the biggest indicator of lifelong success.”

The YMCA offers a full-day camp for the 10 weeks of summer: each week has a different theme filled with spirit days, matching activities, guest

## Camp Overview

YMCA offers full day camp for the 10 weeks of summer. Each week offers a different theme filled with spirit days, matching activities, guest speaker opportunities and more.

Camp Hours: Monday thru Friday 6:30am - 6pm  
Core Camp Hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm  
Before Care: 6:30am-8:30am  
Aftercare: 4:30pm-6pm

The YMCA of Southwest Florida is renting the Turner Center Exhibition Hall for its “Best Ever Summer” Camp because the remodeling and restoration of its permanent home in Arcadia—the Speer Center—won’t be finished for about a year. Image provided.

## Best Summer Ever Arcadia!

Fun & Engagement All Summer Long:

- Weekly camp themes & spirit days
- Family socials

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
6/1-6/5	6/8-6/12	6/15-6/19	6/22-6/26	6/29-7/3	7/6-7/10	7/13-7/17	7/20-7/24	7/27-7/31	8/3-8/7
Cowboys vs Aliens	Bug Bonanza	Time Travelers	Paws ad Whiskers	Red, Y-ite and Blue	Vacation Gone Wrong	Camp Glitch	Complymice	Color Clash	Unbirthday Party

**Campers Experience:**

- Art
- Science
- STEAM
- Theater
- Sports
- Guest Speakers
- Field Trips

The YMCA of Southwest Florida’s “Best Ever Summer” Camp will have weekly themes with spirit days plus a variety of activities for campers. Image provided.

speaker opportunities more. Campers will experience, art, science, STEAM, theater, sports, and field trips. Camp hours are Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with Core Camp Hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with “Before Care” from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and “Aftercare from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m..

Working together with DeSoto County Parks and Recreation, the “Best Ever Summer” Camp will have weekly field trips to a County park, sports days (volleyball, tennis, basketball, and skating), and a field day with Charlotte County camps. This program will look toward future programming in DeSoto County for youth and adults sports, family events, and camp field trips.



YMCA of Southwest Florida Chief Impact Officer Brian Nason detailed the work that his organization has done in DeSoto County, and he said, “Summer Camp is where my heart is.” Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.



Andrea Cappuccilli, YMCA of Southwest Florida Assoc. Exec. Director, will serve as the camp director for Arcadia, and she described how the camp will work. Photograph courtesy of Carol Mahler.

# CFRPC PRESENTS COMP PLAN UPDATE



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

At the Feb. 24 meeting, Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, executive director of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC), presented the kick-off meeting for the Comprehensive Plan Update to the Board of County

Commissioners. Marisa Barmby, CFRPC Program Manager, was also present. A Competitive Florida Technical Assistance Grant of \$75,000.00 for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 from the Florida Dept. of Commerce is funding the update to the Year 2050 Planning Horizon.

CFRPC will have an “open house” meeting in March to kick-off the community engagement. Codo-Salisbury will also schedule meetings with stakeholders and will present the Comprehensive Plan Update at some

community events in March and April to learn about the opportunities and challenges for capital improvements, economic development, future land use, housing, infrastructure, intergovernmental coordination, natural resources, public schools, property rights, recreation/open space, and transportation. CFRPC will also schedule meetings with the Board in Apr., May, and June.

In addition, a Comprehensive Plan Update Website will be launched

that will include a survey, so that everyone may share what they want to happen by 2050. Process drafts of the Comprehensive Plan will also be available on the Website for people to read and to comment on (<https://www.cfrpc.org/desoto-county-comprehensive-plan>).

Collecting data and analyzing that data will be ongoing, Codo-Salisbury said. For example,



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# PEACE RIVER SPORTS

## BULLDOGS SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY AFTER 9-5 LOSS



**STEVE KNAPP**

Sports Writer  
sports@peacershopper.com

Five games into the season we don't know who the Bulldogs softball team is. Are they the team that clubbed Booker in the season opener 19-0? Maybe they are a scrappy team that got a come from behind 6-5 win over a good Hardee team. We know they are better than the team that got just one hit in the 12-0 blanking by Avon Park, who may have played their best game of the young season against the Bulldogs. They don't want to be the team that gave up a 5-1 lead against Babcock Ranch only to lose 9-5. Then on Friday they hung on for a tough 9-7 win over a winless Port Charlotte team.

So who are these girls? So far in this young season, they are a winning club with a 3-2 record and they are perhaps a combination of all of those teams in their first five games. At times they look very strong fundamentally on defense and on offense. At other times they don't play up to their potential.

Coach Jinny Schaefer is very excited about this team. She said, "We have hitters all the way through the lineup. There are no weak spots on this team. We have a couple of very good freshmen and a nice combination of upperclassmen who can provide leadership for the younger girls. I am very excited to see this team grow throughout the season and watch them reach their potential."

In the first ever loss to Babcock Ranch the Bulldogs put the bat on the ball which forced the Trailblazers to commit 3 very costly errors. After giving up a run on an errant pickoff throw to first with two outs and the bases loaded that gave the Blazers a 1-0 lead, the Bulldogs came back with 3 of their own in their turn at bat.

Ellie Whidden went 3-4 for the game but led off the game with an easy pop



The Bulldogs line up before introductions before their first ever loss to Babcock.



Mya Goodnoe fires a pitch in the second inning against Babcock Ranch. Goodnoe went 5 2/3 innings allowing no earned runs and fanning 5.



Ellie Whidden leads off the game with a base hit and scores the first DeSoto run in the 9-5 loss. Whidden led the Bulldogs with 3 hits.



Amiyah Smith puts the tag on the baserunner getting safely back to first. Smith is one of the freshmen that coach Schaefer is excited about watching develop and she also had a couple of nice plays defensively.



Juliette Wolcott drives this pitch to the base of the fence in left center to knock in two runs in the second inning.

foul to third. The ball was dropped and Whidden barreled the next pitch for a base hit. After the next two batters got out that should have ended the inning, a double off the bat of Mya Goodnoe was followed by singles from Amiyah Smith and Livia Evans to produce three runs.

They built on that lead with a pair in the second again after two outs. The top of the order got things going with Whidden and Lacey Berini both reaching base on what could have been hits or errors depending on the official scorer. Juliette Wolcott turned on a pitch and sent it to the base of the fence in left center to plate both Whidden and Berini to give DeSoto a 5-1 lead.

Goodnoe was cruising along with the game well in hand and put up some good numbers. She went 5 2/3 innings allowing 4 runs but none of them were

earned because of the 6 errors behind her. She struck out 5 before leaving the circle in favor of Evans. Evans walked her first batter but the inning ended on a nice play from freshman Smith who had moved across the diamond to the hot corner and caught a slicing short hop and stepped on the bag to end the inning.

The two Blazer runs in the sixth cut the DeSoto lead to 5-4. Babcock erupted for 5 runs in the top of the seventh. After Evans retired the first hitter, an error, double, three singles and another error put the Bulldogs down 9-5.

DeSoto only had 3 hits for the rest of the game after scoring 5 runs in the first two innings. They just stopped hitting and only got one ball out of the infield over the final 5 innings and that was a Whidden fly to right in the sixth.

Coach Fernando Zepeda asked the

team after the game, "What happened? Did the pitcher get better as the game went on?"

Schaefer reminded the team about being prepared in the field. "You've got to know where you're going to throw the ball before you get it and if you're in the infield and playing deep, if you can't get the runner then don't make the throw. We did both of those things tonight and it cost us."

A much needed bounce back 9-7 win over Port Charlotte the next night got the team back on the right track as they go to Lake Placid tonight. That will be their final game until after spring break when they travel to Babcock in an attempt to even the season series.

## PITCHING AND DEFENSE CARRIES DAWGS TO 3-1 WIN



**STEVE KNAPP**

Sports Writer  
sports@peacershopper.com

The DeSoto baseball team has been hitting the cover off the ball in 5 of their first 7 games outscoring their opponents 43-6 that resulted in 5 wins. Their 6th

win of the season didn't come from the bats, but strong pitching and a defense that committed just one error. That error allowed Southeast to score their only run in the 3-1 DeSoto win.

The Bulldogs were out-hit by the winless Seminoles 9-6 on a cold and windy night. Southeast committed six errors to help the Bulldogs gain their 6th

win against 1 loss this season. Braden Deluca in one inning of relief struck out the side in the 7th inning with the bases loaded to secure the win.

Two Seminoles were picked off base and leftfielder Blake Forman gunned down a runner at the plate. With catcher Trenton Alley in perfect position, the runner never even made it to the plate

on his headfirst slide. The Bulldogs were solid defensively which is what you need if the bats aren't working.

DeSoto scored in the first three innings but their bats went silent as the

DESOTO COUNTY

GAME OF THE WEEK



SPECIAL SEASON ENDS WITH 56-45 LOSS



**STEVE KNAPP**  
Sports Writer  
sports@peacereivershopper.com

There are no more games for the Lady Bulldogs. Their season ended at their old nemesis Booker High School for the second year in a row. This season ended much better than last year when the Tornadoes put a running clock on the Bulldogs. That didn't happen this time as DeSoto gave Booker all they wanted.

After falling behind 7-0 in less than 2 minutes, coach Ardine Primus called a timeout and got her team back on track. They had turned the ball over without a shot in their first four possessions. Then Yahri Tyler hit a field goal and Cherish Wiggins followed with a pair of free throws. After a Booker bucket, Tyler and Wiggins hit again with Wiggins coming from beyond the arc to tie the game at 9. Wiggins hit another field goal to give the Bulldogs their first lead 11-10 with 2:31 remaining in the quarter.

After a Booker three pointer, Rihanna Downing sunk a free throw to cut the deficit to one at 13-12. Whitley Barron came off the bench and hit a long three to give the Bulldogs a 15-13 lead with 38 seconds left in the first quarter. It was a lead that they would not surrender until the final minute in the third quarter. Wiggins finished off the 17-6 run with another bucket to give DeSoto a 17-13 lead at the end of the first quarter.

In the second quarter, Booker scored first to make it a one possession game, but Wiggins came through again with a long bomb to give DeSoto a 5 point lead 20-15. Late in the half Tyler made a free throw and followed it up with a field goal to give DeSoto their biggest lead of the night at 29-22 with 2 minutes left in the half. The Tornadoes went on another 7



Whitley Barron finds Yahri Tyler under the basket in the first half of the 56-45 loss at Booker.

During pregame introductions coach Ardine Primus always puts an imaginary crown on Yahri Tyler's head to signify Tyler as the Queen of DeSoto basketball. In the waning seconds of the game Tyler comes out so Primus and crown her for the final time.



point run to tie the game at the half at 29.

DeSoto scored first in the second half as both teams traded buckets, but the Bulldogs kept Booker from taking the lead whenever they got close. Janeris Bing hit a three to give DeSoto a little breathing room. Midway through the third quarter Tyler dusted the bottom of the net to give DeSoto a three point lead 38-35. It was all downhill from there as Booker took a one point lead at the one minute mark 39-38.

Booker went on another 7 point run to take a 42-38 lead into the final quarter. Booker stretched it to a 10-0 run early in the fourth that was stopped with a Barron basket to give a little spark for the Bulldogs and cut the lead to a manageable 5 points. The Tornadoes scored the next 6 points to put the Bulldogs down by 11.

Wiggins hit a three, Barron and Tyler got a point from the free throw line and that was the end of the scoring for DeSoto while Booker got the last 5 points to end the game 56-45. Four runs of 7, 7, 10 and 6 was just too much for the battling Bulldogs to overcome as they finish their second straight season as one of the top 8 teams in the state.

Primus said, "they just had too many

fresh legs to put in while we lost a step in the second half. When you get later in the game and you're winded, it's harder to execute."

Wiggins fouled out in a very physical game. She left the game with 3 minutes left with an extreme muscle cramp, but she is tougher than a \$2 steak and came back in moments later to lead the Bulldogs with 17 points.

A big factor was Rihanna Downing who was lost for most of the game due to a hand injury suffered in the first quarter. She was scheduled for xrays on Saturday. Primus said, "Rihanna impacts the game in so many ways offensively and with defensive rebounds. We taped it up but she was still experiencing pain and stiffness for the remainder of the game. That probably hurt us the most as far as rotations and an experienced post player."

Tyler came out of the game after numerous trips to the floor. Late in the game she hit her head on the floor and then was kicked in the head by a player which sent Tyler to the bench for a short time. She also re-injured her foot when a Booker player stepped on it, but still had 14 points.

With 42 seconds left in the game, Mariah Valladares had a nasty collision



Junior Cherish Wiggins gets up high for 2 of her team high 17 points in the regional finals loss to Booker.

with a Booker player which sent both to the floor for several minutes. Valladares had to be carried off the court and taken to the hospital where she was diagnosed with a concussion.

Had DeSoto won the game, the injuries would have prevented both Downing and Valladares from playing in the final 4 game.

**WIN**  
FROM PAGE 4 >>

temperature dropped. Owen Roe led off the game with a solid baseknock to right. He stole second and went to third on a sacrifice by Alley. Deluca hit a can of corn to right that was dropped to allow Roe to score and knot the game at one.

The winning run came in the second as Forman beat out an infield hit. An attempted pickoff throw went into the bullpen area as the speedy Forman motored around the bases to put the Bulldogs up 2-1. The third run came on an Abel Nedley single to score Obi Strader who was running for Alley who had singled earlier in the inning.



Senior shortstop Josue Hernandez checks the runner at third before making the throw to first in the 3-1 win over Southeast.



Owen Roe, who is leading the team in hits, led off the game with a base hit and scored the tying run in the first inning in the DeSoto 3-1 win.



Blake Forman, who also stars on the gridiron for the Bulldogs, steps into the box and gets an infield single. He scored on a bad pickoff throw at first and later threw out a runner at the plate trying to score.

# DESOTO SPORTS

# ROUND-UP

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW



**STEVE KNAPP**

Sports Writer  
sports@peacerrivershopper.com

The girls basketball season ended at Booker with a 56-45 loss. A story and photos are in this edition.

The varsity softball team went 1-2 on the week and could have easily been 2-1 without the 9-5 loss to Babcock Ranch. A story and photos are in this edition. They were shut out by a good Avon Park team 12-0 to start the week. The Bulldogs got a nice bounce back win over Port Charlotte 9-7 to finish the week.

In the win over the Pirates, freshman Amiyah Smith was perfect at the plate going 3-3 with a sacrifice fly. She drove in two runs and scored twice. Juliette Wolcott swung the big stick with 5 total bases. The slugging junior had a 2-4 night with both hits being of the extra base variety. Her double and triple drove in 2 runs while she also scored twice.

Jo Duke put in a good performance in the circle going 6 1/3 innings scattering 7 hits with 7 whiffs. The only earned run came when the Pirates went yard on her. The team will be at Lake Placid tomorrow and an additional game has been scheduled for Saturday at 1pm as the Bulldogs host Westminster Christian.

The JV softball team lit up the scoreboard with a 20-3 win over the Pirates and an 18-2 whipping over Avon Park.

The baseball team reached the halfway mark in the season splitting 4 games last week. They are now 7-3 in the first half of the season. They beat Southeast 3-1 (story and photos in this edition), then fell to Hardee 9-7 in 8 innings. Aiden Adkins had a big night going 2-3 with 4 ribbies. They bounced back with a 4-3 win over Cape Coral before falling flat hosting North Port 9-0 last Saturday in an afternoon game.

The only good thing that came out of the game with the Bobcats is the performance of Chase Shirley. He was brought up from the JV team for his first varsity experience and pitched very well and went 1-2 at the plate.

They didn't have much time to rest as they played on Tuesday and will travel to Lakeland and then to Frostproof next Tuesday. They beat Frostproof 9-1 in the season opener. Next Thursday they host Booker who edged DeSoto earlier this season 3-2 in what shapes up to be a good game. They finish next week at



Alyana Garcia



Cree Jones

Imagine on Friday who were beaten by DeSoto 7-3 earlier this season.

The JV baseball team used a 10 run first inning to crush Frostproof 23-1 in their first meeting and then a 15-0 3 1/2 inning run rule game in their second meeting. That is all Max Preps has on them, although they did beat Hardee 7-5 last week too.

The middle school varsity volleyball team completed their perfect 12-0 season with a senior night win. The team has won all of their matches in two sets except one game that went 3 sets. Congratulations to first year coach Taylor Shaver.

In Miss DeSoto action, 10U Nancy scrimmaged the 10U Weldon team and lost a tight game 13-11. Cree Jones, daughter of former DeSoto star athlete Reggie Jones, got the game ball for her bases loaded triple. Kendra Manley also got a game ball for her nice job pitching and her attitude.

In the first game for 10U Nancy they traveled to Punta Gorda and lost another 2 run game 15-13. Alyanna Garcia drove in 2 runs with a triple and got the game ball. Their next game is at port Charlotte on March 31.



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# THE SPECIAL SEASON



**STEVE KNAPP**

Sports Writer  
sports@peacriver shopper.com

I attended the very first practice for the girls basketball team this season. I knew it was going to be a very special season and I wanted to see and enjoy as much of it as I could. The team has reached some milestones and there has been several personal milestones that have been accomplished. Lets look back on the 2025-2026 season.

The team has won more games and lost fewer games than any other DeSoto girls basketball team in the max preps era that started in 2005. They also have the highest winning percentage at .786 with a 22-6 record. They won back to back district titles for the first time in 35 years. They reached the elite 8 in the state tournament and played for the regional championship.

Their 6 losses came from St. Mary's, who is ranked number 3 in Massachusetts. They lost to IMG Blue after leading by 12 at halftime, but came back later in the season to beat them for a tournament championship. They had 2 losses to Booker who is in the final 4 in the state tournament and their other two

losses came at the hands of Evangelical Christian who put a running clock on their opponent in the regional finals to reach the final 4. That is a pretty strong lineup of opponents and the Bulldogs stayed close in all those games.

They won 14 games by over 33 points with 5 games over 48 and the biggest margin of victory was 71 points. They have held their opponents SCORELESS in 8 quarters during the season. That is the equivalent of two complete games without giving up a point! Two teams have been held scoreless in the entire second half against the aggressive DeSoto defense. Hardee has had 3 quarters where the Bulldogs have held them without a point!

All of their district tournament games along with the first game in the regional tournament all had running clocks as the Lady Bulldogs showed their "All gas and no brakes" philosophy. They had a 4, 7 and 8 game winning streak this season.

They won their only tournament of the season at Bradenton Christian during the Christmas break. Two years ago they finished third and last year they knocked on the door but lost the championship game to finish as runners up. This season they didn't knock on the door, they kicked it in and won the tournament defeating IMG Blue who had beaten them earlier in



the season. An all tournament team was announced with three Bulldogs making the five player team. Yahri Tyler, Cherish Wiggins and Janeris Bing were named to the team with Bing named the most valuable player in the tournament.

During the season Tyler reached her 1000th point of her career on a free throw at Hardee. Her sister Zeri, also a member of the exclusive 1000th point club, also scored her 1000th point on a free throw in 2023. Yahri passed her sister's career total of 1256 points in the semi final regional win over Chamberlain.

Wiggins gathered in her 500th career rebound at North Port. In the first

regional game, a running clock win over Robinson, she reached her 400th point of the season. On her next shot she hit a three pointer to reach her 1000th career point. Wiggins was also named "Top Player" in the Battle at the Cove in Port Charlotte.

Coach Primus, not wanting to take away the team's accomplishments or draw attention to herself, quietly won her 100th game as a coach in the district championship. She didn't disclose it until after the season ended.

**IT WAS A VERY SPECIAL SEASON**

## LUC MORGAN OR IS IT LUCKY MORGAN?



**STEVE KNAPP**

Sports Writer  
sports@peacriver shopper.com

Many of the students and athletes at DeSoto High School know sophomore Luc Morgan. I met him last year during track season. I remember him on the sidelines during football and he is back on the track team this spring. He is also serving as team manager for the varsity baseball team.

You may not remember the movie Cool Hand Luke with George Kennedy as Dragline. Kennedy was describing to his fellow prisoners what Cool Hand Luke looked like as the guards were taking him away for the final time. Kennedy said, "He had that Luke smile on his face." If you know Luc Morgan, you know he has a perpetual smile on his face too.

The interesting thing about becoming the team manager is that Luc knows nothing about baseball. I mean absolutely nothing but there he was in the dugout for the season opener. He said he was going to just be the manager for one game.

I talked to him about the game. When the Frostproof pitcher walked 3 straight batters, I asked Luc. "What would you do if you were coming up to bat now?" The correct answer is to take a strike.



Luc asks Obie Strader what he should do as a team manager and Strader's reply was "Don't let the dugout get quiet."

Luc gave me that big Luc smile and said, "I'd be very happy".

Luc was in the dugout for the next home game and said he liked the guys and enjoyed being with them. He was back for the next two home games smiling in the dugout. I asked him if the guys made him feel like he is a part of the team? He replied, "I am part of the team."

Now he may be a permanent team manager and that would be a good thing. The Bulldogs are off to their best

start of the season since max preps started keeping records in 2005 and Luc has been at every home game. They have won all of their games at home this year with Luc in the dugout. Their only loss was on the road and Luc couldn't come to the game since he had a track meet early the next morning.

"Some guys say maybe I'm a good luck charm or something," said Luc. As for now he is doing something right for the team, and they let him lead the



post game breakdown. Luc or Lucky who knows? He is enjoying his time on the team and is welcomed by all of his teammates.

# MARCH IS FLORIDA BICYCLING MONTH

## NEWS ON OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS AND MORE

**KAREN SMOKE**

**Florida Bicycle Association**  
DeSoto Cares Homeless Services

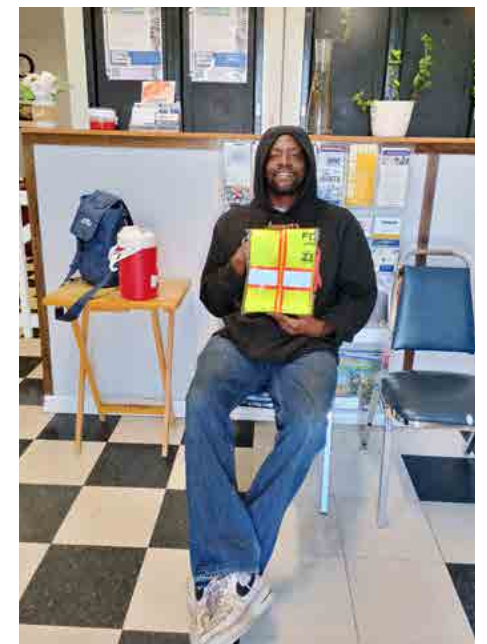
The Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) works to improve bicycling safety, access, and policy across Florida. The organization's efforts this year will focus on reaching a broader audience. Safety is a two-way street. FBA works to improve rider behavior and to increase motorist awareness. Each year we celebrate Florida Bicycling Month in March with safety events statewide.

**LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP**

Our efforts to get the Hands-Free bill passed did not succeed. The House rewrite of the bill removed the core "Hands-Free" requirement by requiring an officer to first observe careless driving behavior. The 34 states that do have a Hands-Free law have seen dramatic reductions in crashes. FBA remains committed to a Primary Hands-Free law. We believe that road safety should not be an "add-on" penalty to a crash that has already happened. We need a law that prevents the crash from occurring in the first place.

Electric bicycles, or E-bikes have been in the news lately. There have been many serious injuries and fatalities among both children and adults. Florida has legal descriptions for three classes of E-bikes, but manufacturers have come up with many devices that are more powerful and people have modified legal bikes to make them go faster than the law allows. The rapid rise in the popularity of micro mobility devices, as well as the bewildering array of such devices has become a concern. Many communities are adopting their own regulations. FBA feels we need statewide laws that address the problems.

Proposed changes such as new requirements regarding licensing or definitions of E-motos, and additional questions to driver education tests did not make it through the state legislature



Antonio recently received a free hi-vis reflective safety vest donated by FDOT to DeSoto Cares Homeless Services. Vests will be given out at the Center and at the Library this month, along with safety tips about predictable riding behavior.

this session. The issues are complex, but what we did get is a task force that will study the issues and make recommendations for future legislation. Law enforcement will gather additional information on crashes and the task force will look at that data to identify the critical issues. What we are looking for is whether specific age groups or E-bike classes are prone to incidents, allowing us to tailor our safety programs.

We did get a slow down for safety mandate that specifically states E-bikes must slow to below 10 mph when within 50 ft of pedestrians on trails or sidewalks. This is only common sense and regrettably the wording doesn't specifically address all bikes, but bicyclists are required to yield and give warning when approaching pedestrians. All bicycle regulations also apply to E-bikes.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR E-BIKE IS LEGAL?**

The motor may be no larger than 750 watts and the bike must have pedals. Class One E-bikes have a motor that cuts off when the bike reaches 20 mph, and the rider must keep pedaling while moving. Class Two have a throttle, and

a top speed of 20 mph, and the motor will propel the bike without pedaling. Class Three have a top speed of 28 mph and the rider must keep pedaling. All electric bikes must bear a label stating what class the bike is and the wattage of the motor. Learn more at:



[HTTPS://WWW.LEG.STATE.FL.US/STATUTES/INDEX.CFM?APP\\_MODE=DISPLAY\\_STATUTE&URL=0300-0399/0316/SECTIONS/0316.20655.HTML](https://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?app_mode=DISPLAY_STATUTE&URL=0300-0399/0316/SECTIONS/0316.20655.HTML)

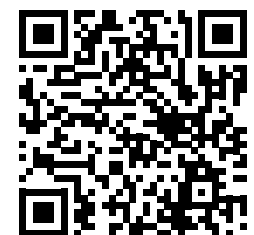
Before you buy an electric powered mobility device, be sure it is legal to use on streets and trails. Gasoline powered bikes may only be used where allowed on private land.

**AT WHAT AGE SHOULD A CHILD BE ALLOWED TO RIDE AN E-BIKE?**

There currently is no legal age defined for young riders, but all riders under the age of 16 must wear a helmet. Before considering an E-bike, a child

should know how to handle a regular bike, be aware of traffic laws and alert and aware of changing situations, have good spacial awareness and able to make good, quick decisions. Check out these additional online resources:

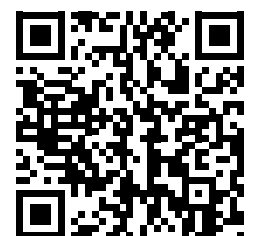
**"CHOOSING A SAFE AND LEGAL EBIKE FOR YOUR TEEN: A PARENT'S GUIDE"**



[HTTPS://TEENEBIKETRAINING.COM/SAFE-LEGAL-EBIKE-FOR-YOUR-TEEN/](https://teenebikettraining.com/safe-legal-ebike-for-your-teen/)

**AND**

**"IS YOUR TEEN READY FOR AN E-BIKE? TEN KEY SKILLS TO ASSESS"**



[HTTPS://TEENEBIKETRAINING.COM/IS-YOUR-TEEN-READY-FOR-EBIKE/](https://teenebikettraining.com/is-your-teen-ready-for-ebike/)

**COMP**

FROM PAGE 3 >>

population projections differ depending on the source. The County has certain programs and facilities today, and how will they serve future populations? Changes in Florida Statutes must be incorporated as well. CFRPC is also updating the Heartland Region Transportation Planning Organization's Long-Range Transportation Plan, so that data will help update the transportation element.



Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, executive director of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council presented the kick-off meeting to the Board at their Feb. 24 meeting.

Still a work in progress, the Website for the Comprehensive Plan Update will include a survey so that anyone and everyone may share their vision for 2025 (<https://www.cfrpc.org/desoto-county-comprehensive-plan>).

## RESCUE

FROM PAGE 1 »

because of annual payments made since the 2006 merger.

The Resolution “does not obligate the County to impose an assessment or utilize a specified method, but is required to be adopted prior to March 1 and sent to the County Tax Collector and the County Property Appraiser, and the State Department of Revenue by March 10,” according to Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

### COUNTY UTILITIES

For the Wastewater Reclamation Facility agreement with Kimley-Horn, the Board approved Change Order #2 adding design services for stormwater, for \$83,195.00, as required by the permit after the Florida Dept. of Transportation (FDOT) determined in May 2025 that development of the DeSoto County Regional Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) in 2007 impacted “an existing flood plain and altered the continuity of overland flow across the WRF property” causing an offsite flooding issue along State Road 31.

Kimley-Horn will “modify the construction plans for the current Phase 1 WRF expansion to correct the floodplain issues and integrate the solution with the Phase 1 improvements, with the goal of alleviating the offsite flooding issues identify by FDOT and coordinate with FDOT and other affected regulatory agencies . . . and address changes to open permit applications with the County, FDOT, and Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for onsite drainage improvements associated with the Phase 1 expansion.”

The Board also approved a resolution adopting a Facilities Plan (FP) Update that shows the need for the deep injection wells for effluent disposal at the DeSoto County Regional (DCR) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) because of the expansion from 0.95 million gallons per day (MGD) to 1.40 MGD. The FP Update is needed for the Utilities Dept. to apply for a \$10 million State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan with FDEP “to supplement the Federal, State, and DCU reserve funding” for the project. If the County receives SRF approval, the Board will vote on the loan amount at a later meeting. The design work for the deep injection wells has already been contracted.

In addition, the Board approved a Utility Service and Conveyance Agreement with Lennar Homes, LLC, for 175 Phase 2 Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs) of Wastewater and an equal number of Water ERUs for property located generally at SW Egret Circle, Lake Suzy. The agreement includes payment of the Wastewater Capital Charges of \$823,025.00 with monthly reservation and maintenance fees for unconnected Phase 2 Wastewater ERUs and 175 Water ERUs deferred until the Wastewater ERUs become available and are allocated to the developer. According to a June 24, 2025, agreement, Lennar Homes had



Greg Harris explained the situation that resulted in the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) issuing a pollution notice that 400,000 gallons of raw sewage was released.

already reserved 50 ERUs of Water and Phase 1 Wastewater treatment capacity for the project known as Heritage Lakes, which consists of a proposed construction of 225 single family home units within various phases of the project.

Additionally, the Board ratified a piggyback agreement with Sarasota County and Engineered Coating Solutions, LLC, for lift stations, manholes, and line inspection services to support the Utilities Dept.’s operations. It replaces a piggyback agreement with the City of North Port’s contract with the same company because our County requires services not included in the latter but in the former.

Utilities Director Greg Harris explained the situation resulting in a FDEP pollution notice of the release of “400,000 gallons of raw sewage . . . from a force main due Arcadia due to contractor error. No storm drains or waterways were impacted. Cleanup actions were reported as complete.” Harris said that during the replacement of a 12” force main near State Road 31, the contractor removed a valve, and sewage was allowed to flow to a lift station no longer being used. Another valve has since been installed to correct the problem.

### PUBLIC HEARING

During the 6:30 p.m. public hearing, the Board approved a Development Plan for FPL to allow the Bickett Transmission Substation on a 271.21-acre property on the east side of NW County Road 661, south of the Hardee County line, with an additional condition for a 20-foot wide, Type B landscape buffer for 400 feet along the south project boundary (from the wetlands to the eastern boundary) except under the transmission lines where trees 14-foot or less in height will be grown.

The project is a portion of 1,770.07 acres of contiguous parcels, of which two parcels are to be utilized to construct the proposed substation. The remaining land outside the substation development will be retained by FPL and held for site access, buffers, and potential future utility infrastructure or expansion.

### IN OTHER BUSINESS

For the development of affordable



Florida Power and Light Lead Project Manager Bruce Barber offered the same 20-foot wide, Type B buffer for the southern boundary of the Bickett Transmission Substation project as on the west side along County Road (CR) 661, just south of the Hardee County line.

housing at DeSoto Landings, Randall E. Fleming, president of DeSoto Landings, LTD, received a Hurricane Housing Recovery Program (HHRP) Loan of \$875,000.00, that is due on Mar. 30 2027. The Grey Rock Group, LLC, wants to purchase the DeSoto Landings property, make “some Capital needs improvements,” and continue affordable housing, so contingent on the sale, the Board approved the extension of the HHRP loan for an additional 20 years, due on Mar. 30, 2047.

Jennifer Hall, contract administrator for SEMCO Construction, Inc., explained Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) Services. “Acting in the role of General Contractor, SEMCO would solicit competitive bids from subcontractors, negotiate pricing, coordinate and manage construction activities, and administer the project for a negotiated fee”—usually between six and 10 percent. The Board approved using SEMCO’s existing five-year-old CMAR contract with Polk County, recently renewed for five additional years, “for smaller construction projects that do not fall within Consultant’s Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA) threshold limitations, which restrict the amount that may be awarded under a continuing contract without further competition.”

The Board ratified Change Order #5 to the Annual Paving Contract with Excavation Point, Inc., for two additional roadways with a 30-day contract time extension: NW Second Bunker Ave. from NW Oak Hill Cemetery St, to NW Coker St, and NW O’Conner Dr. from County Road (CR) 661 to NW Coker Street adding \$169,972.57 to the original contract amount.

Chairman Steve Hickox appointed Jerod Gross as the alternate member to the Canvassing Board tasked with overseeing an election, as required in Section 102.141(e)(2), F.S. The Chair of the Board of County Commissioners is the Board’s member on the Canvassing Board along with the supervisor of elections, and a county court judge, who shall act as chair (F.S. 102.141(1)).

### CONSENT AGENDA:

Under the Consent Agenda, the Board passed the resolution in accordance with Div. 4, Article III, Chap. 2 Code of Ordinances, appointing



Durrell Martin, whose home is about a mile south of the FPL Bickett Transmission Substation, asked about additional screening for the project.

Taylor Jones to fill a position opened after Mandy Hines had completed her term on the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), and since their terms have expired, reappointing Debbie Wertz, who attended the meeting, and Lynn Shelfer.

The Board also approved the withdrawal of the Turner Center Generator Project application from the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program because “the repair costs are significantly lower than the required local share cost.”

### COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S AND ATTORNEYS REPORTS

After County Administrator Mandy Hines notified the commissioners of a community meeting on Mar. 5 at the Thorton Creek Clubhouse to discuss the proposed development at Sunnybreeze with residents, D.R. Horton and RVi Planning, none said that they intended to attend, so the meeting does not need a public notice.. She also reminded everyone of the 1:00 p.m. Planning and Zoning Workshop on March 10.

In addition, Hines noted that even though the Road and Bridges Dept. did the site work, the lowest bid for the 2,000 sq. ft. storage building for Hope DeSoto is \$22,000.00 more than Hope DeSoto’s \$50,000.00 grant and the matching funds of \$65,000.00 that the Commissioners approved. She will bring the issue as future agenda item.

County Attorney Valerie Vicente said that the case against Guiseppepi’s Restaurant has been dismissed because the owners now have both a Certificate of Occupancy and a Certificate of Use. In addition, the Board of Adjustments heard an appeal about a certified lot split that was denied by the Development Director Misty Servia, and the vote was tied 2 to 2, so the decision remained. The plaintiffs have filed an appeal to the Board, and as Vincente will defend the development director’s decision, she will have to arrange other counsel for the Board. Vice-chairperson Elton Langford asked for the appeal to be heard as soon as possible perhaps as soon as Mar. 24 at the 3:00 p.m. meeting.

# BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

## A FRESH TAKE: LEWIS' GRAND MIRACLE IN AN ALGORITHMIC AGE

**CHAPLAIN AMANDA REUTER**  
**US Army Reserve**  
 DeSoto County Ministerial Association

In April 1945, as Europe smoldered toward VE Day and the world staggered from six years of mechanized slaughter, C.S. Lewis preached “The Grand Miracle” at St. Jude on the Hill. He refused to treat the resurrection—or rather, the Incarnation that makes it possible—as one more pious footnote. Christianity, he argued, isn’t a collection of scattered wonders to be believed or dismissed piecemeal. It hinges on one staggering event: the eternal, spaceless God diving into His own creation like a diver plunging into dark water, touching the bottom, and rising with the whole wrecked universe on His shoulders.

Lewis likened reality to a vast manuscript riddled with contradictions—death’s finality clashing with our hunger for permanence, beauty undercut by cruelty, the corn dying to rise again in myth after myth. Every culture tells versions of the dying-and-rising god: Osiris, Balder, the Corn King. These are shadows, echoes, pointers. Then comes Christianity’s claim: the myth became fact. Not softened allegory, not elevated

poetry, but a particular Jew executed under Pontius Pilate, whose body lay cold in a borrowed tomb and walked out three days later—flesh, scars, breakfast on the beach. The pattern that haunted human imagination stepped off the page into history. The story we always told became the story that told us.

In our era, Lewis’ insight lands with fresh force. We inhabit a world of deepfakes and simulated realities, where AI generates myths on demand and algorithms curate personalized meaning. Truth feels liquid; facts are debated like flavors. Yet the Incarnation refuses abstraction. It is stubbornly material: God entering biology, DNA, sweat, crucifixion nails. No metaphor survives the autopsy report or the empty linen. If the Grand Miracle happened, it rewires everything. Nature isn’t a closed loop of entropy; it’s a script interrupted by its Author, who rewrites the ending from within.

Lewis saw the resurrection not as an escape from the physical but its vindication. God descends to re-ascend, hauling creation upward. In an age obsessed with transcendence through uploads, VR escapes, or post-human futures, Christianity doubles down on embodiment. The body matters—its

pains, its limits, its decay—because God wore one. Death isn’t transcended by leaving flesh behind; it’s conquered by flesh rising incorruptible. Every lesser miracle—water to wine, blind eyes opened—circles this center, like the sun and stars around the plane of earth.

The diver imagery still startles. God doesn’t hover above the mess; He plunges into it, into the mud of Bethlehem stables, the sweat of Gethsemane, the suffocation of Golgotha. He touches the absolute bottom—our guilt, our mortality, the cosmic fracture—and comes up carrying

us. In a culture that prizes self-optimization and detachment, this is offensive generosity: not advice from on high, but rescue from below.

So Easter isn’t seasonal uplift. It’s the plot twist that makes sense of the whole bewildering novel. Accept the Grand Miracle, and the contradictions don’t vanish—they resolve. The myths we loved were rehearsals; the fact fulfills them. The eternal stepped in time so time might step into eternity. God dove; we rise. And the manuscript, once seeming nonsense, suddenly reads as masterpiece.



### NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners will hold a Public Workshop on: **Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 1:00 PM** or as soon thereafter as it may be heard, at the County Commission meeting Room 103, Administration Building, 201 East Oak Street, Arcadia, Florida, as follows:

**“DISCUSSION - EFFICIENCY OPTIONS TO PROCESS DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS”**

*\*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.*

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# NES STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT U.S. CONSTITUTION



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

On Feb. 17 as part of their ongoing “Americanism” programs, K-Post 11 Members Amber Jones, Amanda Reuter, and Louis Reuter with the assistance of K-Post 11 Auxiliary Members Linda Collins and Debora Sandora plus School Board Member Sharon Goodman presented the U.S. Constitution to the 4th and 5th grade classes at Nocatee Elementary School (NES). Each student received a “pocket” copy of the U.S. Constitution, and K-Post 11 donated replicas suitable for framing of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution to be displayed in the school.

Jones started the program by leading the recitation of the “Pledge of Allegiance.” Then she told the students that the U.S. Constitution—written in 1787, ratified in 1788, and in operation since 1789—“is the world’s longest surviving written charter of government.” She described briefly local, state, and national/federal government. Later, she noted “my favorite part of the Constitution: the “Bill of Rights” especially the 1st Amendment: freedom of speech, press, and religion.”

Reuter talked about “voting with our dollars” for the kinds of food or clothing or movies that we like the best. She noted that the Constitution specifies that citizens must be 18 years or older to vote. Students asked questions ranging from “Are judges elected?” to “Can you cheat when you’re voting?”.

Having served as the first African-American woman City Council member, vice-mayor, and mayor, Goodman also talked about voting and how people who may not have cared for personally voted for her because they knew she would do the right things in office. She sang the National Anthem and encouraged the students to be good citizens. “You can be anything that you want to be. . .” she said. “Who you are and what you become is up to you.”

Selected by the 5th grade teachers, two students were awarded with the American Legion School Award: Elana Salazon-Govea and Samuel Contes-Betancourt, both students of Maria Gonzalez.

Last Tues., Jones led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance at the Americanism program for the NEX 4th and 5th graders.



K-Post 11 Adjutant Amber Jones presented replicas of the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution to Nocatee Elementary School (NES) Principal Brandy Tackett during the K-Post 11 Americanism program.



Selected by the 5th grade teachers, Elana Salazon-Govea, center, stood with her teacher, Maria Gonzalez, left, to receive the American Legion School Award from Jones, right.



At right, Jones presented the American Legion School Award to Samuel Contes-Betancourt, center, a student of Maria Gonzalez, left. She and the other 5th grade teachers selected him for the honor.



K-Post 11 Member Amanda Reuter explained about voting and other important information in the U.S. Constitution, and each student received a copy of the document to take home.



School Board Member Sharon Goodman sang the National Anthem and talked with NES students about her experience in government, having served as Arcadia’s first African-American woman council member, vice-mayor, and mayor.



Jones held the microphone for NES 4th and 5th graders asking questions about the U.S. Constitution during the Americanism program.



NES Assistant Principal Jessica Prescott stood a moment with K-Post 11 Auxiliary Pres. Jones and Members Linda Collins and Debora Sandora after the “Americanism” program.

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At Florida Power & Light Company, we are proud to support the DeSoto County Historical Society's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Pioneer Day.

This event is a special opportunity to honor the rich history, traditions and progress that shape the DeSoto community.

We hope to see you on March 28 at the Turner Agri-Civic Center!





# OBITUARIES

## RICHARD E. KENNEY

Richard E. Kenney, 83, passed away on February 20, 2026 at AdventHealth in Port Charlotte, Florida. He succumbed to cardiac failure.

Richard was often seen riding his bike in Arcadia. He rode 20 miles per day stopping on his way at the downtown shops looking for antiques, painting and prints for a bargain price. His home, consequently, looked like a museum.

He was friends with the manager of his apartment complex and came to her office often looking for her two grandsons whom it seemed he likely considered family.

Richard was a vegetarian and liked Wheat Grass on his salads. He

was such an avid vegetarian that he used the oven in his stove as a file cabinet.

Richard will be missed by those who knew him.



Our Father,  
 who art in heaven,  
 Hallowed be thy Name.  
 Thy Kingdom come.  
 Thy will be done in earth,  
 As it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day,  
 our daily bread.  
 And forgive us  
 our trespasses,  
 As we forgive them that  
 trespass against us.  
 And lead us not  
 into temptation,  
 But deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom,  
 The power, and the glory,  
 For ever and ever. Amen.



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# DESOTO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



ARREST REPORT | 2/20/26 - 2/26/26

**Aguilar, Eddie:**

Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Prob Violation - Prob Violation

**Alegria-Garcia, Abenamar:**

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

**Bryan, Tristen Delanie:**

Bribery - Bribery Of Or By Public Servant; Public Order Crimes - Criminal Conspiracy Felony Second Degree; Public Order Crimes - Use 2 Way Comm Device To Facil Felony; Smuggle Contraband Into Prison - Any Currency Or Coin To Inmate

**Butts, James Elmer:**

Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription; Marijuana-Possess - Possess Less Than 20 Grams Cannabis

**Christmas, Anothny Scott:**

Disorderly Intox - Disorder Intox Public Place Cause Disturbance

**Cohen, Kenneth Ross:**

Nonmoving Traffic Viol - Fail To Register Motor Veh; Possess Counterfeited - Mtr Veh Title Registration Bill Of Sale Etc

**Cristiani, Vanessa Lynne:**

Prob Violation - Prob Violation (x2)

**Defeo, Desarae:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

**Diaz, Daniel:**

Obscene Communication - Use Comp Seduce Solicit Lure Child Misrep Age; Obscene Material-Distrib - Transmit Info Harmful To Minors

**Farren, Charles Patrick:**

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

**Flegle, Brian William:**

Trespassing - Trespass Fail To Leave Prop On Order Of Owner

**Flores Salgado, Yeri Levi:**

Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery With A Deadly Weapon; Prob Violation - Prob Violation

**Flores-Mungia, Jose:**

Battery - Touch Or Strike; Trespassing - Trespassing Structure Or Conveyance

**Garcia, Fidel:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

**Goncalves, Ana Veiga:**

Battery - Touch Or Strike

**Gonzalez, Nicholas:**

Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

**Gonzalez-Garcia, Adiel:**

Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

**Gonzalez-Garcia, Erick:**

FLEE/ELUDE Police - Flee Elude LEO With Lights Siren Active; Moving Traffic Viol - Operate Motor Vehicle W/O Valid LIC 1st Conv; Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

**Herrmann, Calob Charles:**

Battery - Touch Or Strike

**Herrmann, Robert John:**

Battery - Touch Or Strike

**Hurtado Martinez, Rafael Emilio:**

Aggrav Battery - Aggrav Battery With A Deadly Weapon

**Johnson, Rafael Jacques:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

**Lopez, Cristian Joel:**

Lewd Lascv Behavior - Molest VIC 12 Yoa Lt 16 Yoa Off 18 Yoa Older

**Lopez, Rodovaldo:**

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

**Mejia-Martinez, Samuel:**

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

**Mendoza, Gabriel Isaiah:**

DUI-Unlaw Bld Alch - DUI Influence Of Alcohol Or Drugs

**Park-Ward, Ginger Lea:**

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

**Ploof, Daniel:**

Prob Violation - Prob Violation

**Ramirez-Sanchez, Aldo Jonathan:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

**Ruiz-Hernandez, Alex Anibal:**

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

**Saputo, Salvatore:**

Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence; Simple Asslt - Assault On Specified Personnel; Trespassing - Trespassing Structure Or Conveyance

**Saunders Jr., Delroy:**

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear (x2); Fraud-Imperson - False ID Given To LEO; Fraud-Imperson - Use Poss ID Of Another Person Wo Consent; Fraud-Swindle - Defraud To Obtain Property Value Of Less Than \$20k; Larc - Grand Theft 750 Less Than 5k Dols; Pass Counterfeited - Instrument (x5); Resist Officer - Obstruct Wo Violence

**Searle, Eugene Joseph:**

Failure To Appear - Written Promise To Appear

**Soto, Adrian:**

Conservation-Animals - Cause Cruel Death Pain And Suffering; Conservation-Animals - Sell Poss Use Animal To Fight Or Bait; Obstruct Criminal Invest - False Info To LEO Re Missing Person Or Felony

**Tamez-Dominguez, Cesar**

**Oswaldo:**

Moving Traffic Viol - Driv While LIC Suspend Revocation Equiv Status

**Veiga, Navaya:**

Battery - Touch Or Strike

**Ward, Craig Michael:**

Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription

**Warren Jr., Artavious Jermaine:**

Smuggle Contraband Into Prison - Any Currency Or Coin To Inmate

**Washington, John C:**

Contempt Of Court - Viol Injunction Protection Domestic Violence

**Watson, Marquell Des:**

Drug Equip-Possess - Drug Equip-Possess: And Or Use; Drugs-Possess - Possess Controlled Substance W/O Prescription; Moving Traffic Viol - Drive While LIC Susp Habitual Offender

**Wieman, Christian:**

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

**Wooten, Colby Ward:**

Amphetamine-Smuggl - Or Methamphetamine Capital Imp 400 Grams More; Amphetamine-Traffic - Or Methamphetamine 14 Grams Or Over; Drug Equip-Possess - And Or Use (x2); Drugs-Possess - Cntrl Sub Wo Prescription; Possession Of Weapon - Or Ammo By Convicted Fla Felon

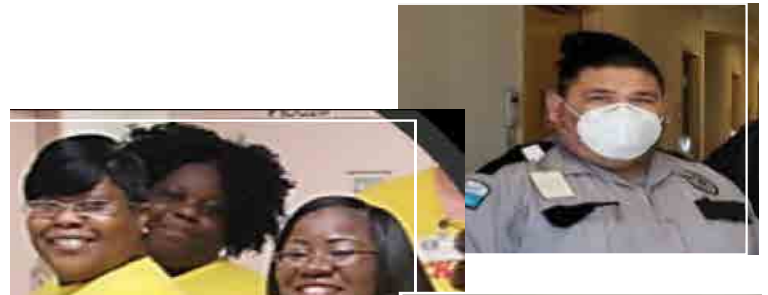
**Zerquera-Calvo, Dayana:**

Crimes Against Person - Abuse Elderly Or Disabled Adult Wo Great Harm

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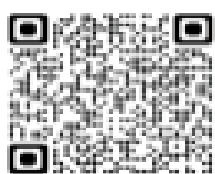
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