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Cameron Fine receives life sentence in Powell murder

WARNING: This story contains descriptions of a homicide that some readers may find disturbing.

Christian Peterson
 reporter@riverbendnews.org

The Hamilton County Courthouse was filled Tuesday, June 23, as 19-year-old Cameron Fine was sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to the second-degree murder of William “Junior” Powell Jr. and tampering with evidence.

Hamilton County Judge Jamie Tyndal presided over the proceeding and was the final decision maker for Fine’s sentence.

According to prosecutors, Fine, Josh Daniel and Power II spent the evening of May 3 and early morning hours of May 4,

2025, driving around Hamilton County while drinking alcohol in a Dodge Durango.

Throughout the night, prosecutors said Fine was in possession of a firearm and that he and Junior had been involved in what were described as “silly” arguments.

See “Fine” on page 3A

Riverbend News photo by Christian Peterson, June 23, 2026

Cameron Fine is fingerprinted before being led away to jail.



Vote Dr. Neelam Taneja Perry for U.S. Senate from Florida



Dr. Neelam Taneja Perry

Dr. Neelam Taneja Perry is running for U.S. Senate from Florida.

Dr. Neelam Taneja Perry is focused on restoring trust in public institutions, protecting Floridians’ freedoms, strengthening our economy, and putting patients, families, and working people ahead of special interests. As a physician and longtime advocate for ethical leadership and evidence-based policy, she is committed to serving Florida with independence, transparency, and courage.

Her intellectual knowledge, skills and dedication makes her a better leader than any other opponents. She’s is a public President Trump’s Cabinet member, MAGA Platinum member and Trump advisor and Defender. She puts people over politics , defends the Constitution and the Civil Rights of the American people

- Medical Doctor & Advocate: Over 30 years of medical practice, author of multiple books on public health, government accountability, and healthcare reform. (Democracy for Sale, Chronic Diseases, Morgellons Disease, Is your Pet safe).

- Featured in ‘Monsters in you’
- Political Outsider: Independent-minded, aligned with President Trump’s America First principles but unbound by establishment party structures.

- Anti-Corruption Platform: Running on restoring integrity, fighting political weaponization of government, and protecting Floridians’ constitutional rights.

- Will do Health Care reforms for Insurance, Mental Health, Veterans Affairs.
- Will do ICE reforms for protocols.
- Will do reforms on Judicial Ethics and weaponization
- Will bring back affordability and accountability .
- Will bring back world Peace and Good Governance.

- Support Religious Liberty
- Will depend our farmers.
- Opponent Weakness: Ashley Moody has failed to align with Trump’s priorities on critical Florida issues”. Had failed as former Attorney General with her policies, including President Trump’s false arrest.

Political advertisement paid for and approved by Dr. Neelam Taneja Perry, Republican for U.S. Senate

Search continues for missing Hamilton County teen

MISSING

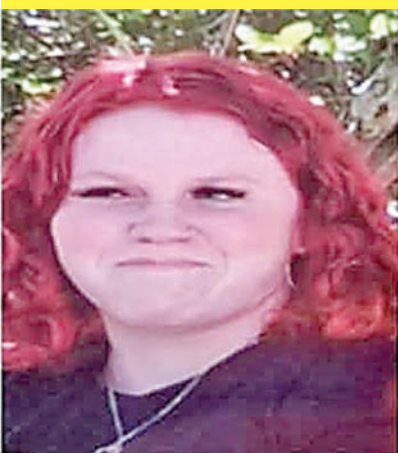
Danny Federico
 editor@riverbendnews.org

The Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, in coordination with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, is continuing to seek the public’s assistance in locating a missing 16-year-old girl.

According to the sheriff’s office, Elissa McCarthy, of Jasper, was last seen on Monday, June 1, in the area of the 2600 block of Northwest 44th Street. As of Monday, June 29, she remains missing.

McCarthy is described as a white female standing at 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighing approximately 140 pounds. She has red hair and blue eyes. Authorities said she was last seen wearing a gray-and-navy T-shirt, pink shorts and blue Crocs.

Investigators believe McCarthy may be traveling in the Madison County area. See “Missing” on page 3A



Elissa McCarthy

White Springs vice mayor arrested on animal cruelty charge

Christian Peterson
 reporter@riverbendnews.org

On Friday, June 26, Nicole Williams, vice mayor of White Springs, was arrested and taken to the Hamilton County Jail on a warrant for animal cruelty.

According to an incident report from the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office, on Thursday, June 25, deputies responded to a request for assistance from Animal Control officers regarding a dog’s living conditions.

See “Cruelty” on page 3A



Nicole Williams

Fine
Cont. from page 1A

Eventually, the three arrived at Daniel's residence. Powell was driving, while Daniel was in the front passenger seat and Fine was seated behind the driver.

For reasons that remained unclear, prosecutors said Fine pulled out a firearm and shot Powell in the back of the head. Doorbell camera footage of the incident captured the sounds and movements surrounding the shooting. After the initial shot, Daniel exited the vehicle and walked toward the house while Fine approached the driver's door, opened it and shot Powell in the head a second time.

"I want the court to contemplate the harshness of that," the prosecutor said, arguing the second shot demonstrated the cruelty of Fine's actions. "Cameron Fine's behavior was cruel. It was depraved."

According to the state, Fine and Daniel then placed Powell's body in the back of the Durango and drove to the Suwannee River in an attempt to dispose of both the vehicle and the body.

However, both were quickly located, as local fisherman witnessed part of the incident. Prosecutors said Fine and Daniel fled in a relative's

vehicle to another residence, where they attempted to burn their bloodied clothing and hide the firearm.

After presenting its account of the crime, the state invited members of Powell's family to deliver impact statements. Several became emotional while speaking, while others had statements read on their behalf because they couldn't be in the room.

Prosecutors then introduced three exhibits: a photograph of Powell, video of the homicide and the medical examiner's report before requesting that Fine receive a life sentence for the murder. Following a 10-minute recess, the defense began presenting its case.

The defense called psychologist Dr. Julie Harper who testified about juvenile brain development. Harper said she had diagnosed Fine with major depressive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. She testified that the PTSD stemmed from a vehicle crash when Fine was 15-years-old that resulted in a brain injury and the loss of portion of his leg, leaving him feeling unsafe in moving vehicles.

The defense also told the court that Fine had earned his GED, hoped to become a youth pastor and had expressed genuine remorse for his actions.

Prosecutors countered that Fine was 18-years-old when the crime occurred and argued that

juvenile brain development should not lessen his responsibility.

The defense then called two of Fine's family members, who spoke on behalf of his character, and asked Judge Tyndall to show leniency.

Fine also addressed the court, apologizing to the Powell family and expressing regret for what had happened.

The defense argued that Fine should receive a lengthy prison sentence, but not life imprisonment, emphasizing that he accepted responsibility by pleading guilty and avoiding a trial.

Prosecutors responded that, while some of the defense's arguments may be true, Fine had committed an adult crime and should receive an adult punishment.

Before announcing the sentence, Judge Tyndall said she believed Fine's remorse was genuine and appreciated that he had accepted responsibility. However, she said the seriousness of the crime required the maximum punishment.

"You didn't just take Junior's life that day, you took yours," Judge Tyndall said.

Judge Tyndall sentenced Fine to life in prison. He was led from the defense table in tears before being fingerprinted and transported to the Hamilton County Jail.

Missing
Cont. from page 1A

Anyone who has seen McCarthy or has information regarding her whereabouts is urged to contact the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office at

386-792-1001 or call 911. Information may also be reported to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse at 1-888-FL-MISSING (1-888-356-4774).

Cruelty
Cont. from page 1A

The officers explained to the deputies that, on Tuesday, June 23, they had made contact with

Williams about the living conditions of her 2-year-old male doodle named Java. The officers found Java tied up under a car in the yard, with his water supply sitting in direct sunlight. They explained to Williams that Florida law requires adequate shelter consisting of three walls and roof, and that a vehicle did not fit that requirement. It was also explained that the dog's water supply should not be kept in direct sunlight. Williams was given two days to fix Java's living conditions.

On Thursday, June 25, when the officers arrived for a follow-up, it was discovered that none of the conditions had changed. According to the report, the rope around Java's neck had become embedded in his skin and smelled foul. The dog also had no food or water in his bowls. Officers provided water for Java to drink while waiting for the arrival of deputies. Deputies found that Java had been tied up with a colorful braided rope not intended for animals, and the rope was tightly wrapped around his neck.

"It should be noted that there was no collar, and the rope was directly tied to Java's neck," the report states. "The smell coming from the wound was foul and overwhelming."

Deputies then made contact with Williams. She said Java remains tied up when she leaves town and claimed the rope had been loose when she put it on, but that Java had tightened it by moving around. She also said that she was unaware that the rope had become embedded in his neck. Because of the dog's injuries and living conditions, Java was put into animal control's custody. Due to the severity of the neck wounds, the rope was cut but not fully removed until he was taken to animal control.

Once at animal control, the rope was removed and Java was bathed. During examination of the neck wound, it was discovered that there were maggots in the wound and it showed signs of infection.

"It should be noted," the report reads, "that the wound on the bottom side of Java's neck was approximately three inches in diameter and was all the way through, exposing the tendons."

While washing the dog, it was also discovered that he had fleas and blood in his fur that turned the water red and brown. Additionally, it was observed that Java had exposed hips and spine, showing signs of extreme malnutrition and dehydration.

As a result, a warrant was acquired for Williams's arrest. On Friday, June 26, Williams was arrested at her residence and taken to the Hamilton County Jail without incident.

Java is now being fostered by one of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office deputies and has been renamed

Justice. Anyone seeking to provide monetary help for the care and health of the dog can send money to Hamilton County Sheriff's Office Animal Control, or Companion Animal Hospital.

"The Town of White Springs is aware of the recent arrest of Vice Mayor Nicole Williams and recognizes that many residents have expressed concerns regarding this matter. The Town takes these concerns seriously. However, it is important for the public to understand that the Town Council is governed by the Town Charter and applicable Florida law. The Charter does not authorize the removal of an elected Council Member solely because that individual has been arrested or charged with a criminal offense. Under the Charter, forfeiture of office occurs upon the conviction of a felony or a crime involving moral turpitude, or under other specifically enumerated circumstances. Like every person accused of a crime, the Vice Mayor is entitled to due process and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty in a court of law. At this time, the Town will continue to monitor the legal proceedings and will allow the criminal justice system to proceed without interference. Should circumstances arise that require action under the Town Charter, including a qualifying conviction, the Town Council will fulfill its obligations in accordance with the Charter. The Town appreciates the community's concern and remains committed to transparency, accountability, and following the law."



Photos Courtesy of Hamilton County Sheriff Office

The vice mayor for the Town of White Springs was arrested on Friday, June 26, following an investigation into alleged animal cruelty.

Live Oak man charged with armed robbery after attempted motel holdup

Danny Federico
editor@riverbendnews.org



Tra'Darius Jerrod Norton

A Live Oak man was arrested early on Wednesday, June 24, after deputies say he attempted to rob a local motel while armed with a handgun.

According to a probable cause affidavit from the Suwannee County Sheriff's Office, deputies responded to the Quality Inn and Suites, located at 6819 U.S. 129, shortly before 1 a.m. after receiving a report of a possible robbery.

The report states deputies located a suspect, later identified as 20-year-old Tra'Darius Jerrod Norton of Live Oak, walking south on U.S. Highway 129. Deputies reported Norton was sweating heavily and appeared out of breath. During a pat-down, deputies located what was determined to be a Kel-Tec PMR-30 .22-caliber pistol concealed in his pants.

According to the affidavit, Norton later admitted he had entered the motel wearing a black bandana, placed a bag on the counter and demanded money from an employee. Investigators said the employee told Norton there was no money available, after which Norton apologized and left the business.

The motel employee told deputies that Norton entered the lobby wearing a mask, demanded that money be placed in a white bag, and left after being told no cash was available.

Norton was arrested and charged with felony robbery with a firearm. He was transported to the Suwannee County Jail without further incident.

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SCSO seeks public's help in locating stolen boat, trailer



Photo courtesy of SCSO

The Suwannee County Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help in locating the above boat and trailer, which were last seen between the evening of Saturday, June 20 and the afternoon of Sunday, June 21.

Danny Federico
editor@riverbendnews.org

The Suwannee County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is asking for the public's assistance in locating a boat, trailer and outboard motor that were stolen from a residence on 76th Street in Live Oak.

According to the SCSO, the theft occurred sometime between the evening of Saturday, June 20 and the afternoon of Sunday, June 21. The vessel had reportedly been secured with a chain and lock before it was taken.

The stolen property includes a light blue 1995 Rivermaster vessel measuring approximately 14 feet in length, a black 15-horsepower Mercury outboard motor and a 1995 Yarbrough trailer.

Investigators are actively reviewing available leads and surveillance footage to identify those responsible.

Anyone who has seen the stolen vessel or trailer, or who has information about the theft, is asked to contact the SCSO at 386-362-2222 and reference case No. SCSO26OFF001189.

DOH-Hamilton extends rabies ALERT

DOH-Hamilton
Contributor

The Florida Department of Health in Hamilton County (DOH-Hamilton) is extending a rabies alert in Hamilton County in response to a confirmed case of rabies in a fox that died suddenly in an area near Jennings off Northwest 37th Boulevard on Wednesday, June 24. DOH-Hamilton is monitoring rabies among wild animals in the area. All residents and visitors should be aware that rabies is currently present in the wild animal population.

People and domestic animals should always avoid physical contact with wild animals (e.g., raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes), which carry a higher risk of human exposure and a need for rabies post-exposure treatment. If you are exposed to rabies, receiving appropriate treatment after exposure will protect you from the risk of rabies.

This rabies alert will end on Tuesday, Aug. 25, and includes the following boundaries in Hamilton County:

- Northern boundary: Northwest County Road 143
- Southern boundary: Northwest County Road 146
- Eastern boundary: Northwest 37th Boulevard
- Western boundary: Northwest 58th Avenue

Take the following precautions to prevent rabies exposure:

- Immunize your pets and livestock based on your veterinarian's recommended schedule.
- Keep pets under direct supervision and on a leash, and keep livestock secured on your property. If an animal bites your pet or livestock, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Hamilton County Animal Control at 386-249-9000.

- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals. Do not handle, feed or unintentionally attract them with outdoor pet food, open garbage cans or other sources of food. If you have been bitten or scratched by a wild or domestic animal, seek medical attention, and report the injury to DOH-Hamilton by calling 386-792-1414.

- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home; instead, contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood. Contact Hamilton County Animal Control at 386-792-1414.

- Prevent wildlife, including bats, from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, schools and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.

For more information on rabies, please visit [FloridaHealth.gov/Rabies](https://www.floridahealth.gov/Rabies) or contact DOH-Hamilton at 386-792-1414.

The NEW Front Porch is here!

Laura Young
Riverbend News

It is with great pleasure that we announce the arrival of the July/August 2026 edition of *The Front Porch* magazine. The new issue has been mailed, and subscribers should have received their coveted publication.

The Front Porch July/August 2026 issue includes a fabulous array of features about people and life around rural North Florida:

- The 406's Vision in downtown Live Oak
- The story behind the Will Carpenter AYA Cancer Foundation
- NAMMO Perry



- Ashlee Combee
- Ironhead Gallon
- Jackie Watson
- Dr. John Arroyo
- Florida's Falls
- Horse Barns in Jefferson County
- What's Happening in July and August

All local subscribers to the Riverbend News automatically receive this bi-monthly magazine as part of their subscription. To subscribe to the magazine only, please call *Greene Publishing, Inc.* at 850-973-

4141.

Copies also are available at the *Riverbend News* office (113 Duval St., N.W., in Live Oak)..

The current issue and all previous issues may also be read on our website, [riverbendnews.org](https://www.riverbendnews.org).

Southern Sisters Boutique launches t-shirt fundraiser for Ernie Clayton

Danny Federico
editor@riverbendnews.org

A local business is organizing a community fundraiser to support a Live Oak family following a recent heart transplant.

Southern Sisters Boutique & Embroidery announced it is accepting preorders for a limited-run t-shirt fundraiser benefiting Ernie Clayton and his family as he continues recovery after undergoing a heart transplant.

All profits from shirt sales will be donated directly to the Clayton family to assist during the healing and recovery process.

The fundraiser features two shirt designs displaying the word "Victory," with the letter "t" stylized as a cross. Southern Sisters said the design was inspired by Ernie Clayton's favorite hymn, "Victory in Jesus."

Two shirt color options are available for preorder — Flo Blue and black — and will be printed on Comfort Colors shirts for adult sizes. Toddler and youth shirts will be offered in a similar shade of blue.

The cost for the shirts is \$25 for sizes 2T through youth XL and \$29 for adult sizes small through 3XL.

Southern Sisters estimated a turnaround time of approximately three

weeks and is accepting orders through comments on the fundraiser post. Shirts will be available to order until Friday, July 31.

To place an order, visit the Southern Sisters Boutique & Embroidery Facebook page and comment on the fundraiser's post.



Photos courtesy of Southern Sisters Boutique & Embroidery

Southern Sisters Boutique & Embroidery is hosting a fundraiser for Ernie Clayton through the sale of these "Victory" t-shirts.

Fine
Cont. from page 1A

Eventually, the three arrived at Daniel's residence. Powell was driving, while Daniel was in the front passenger seat and Fine was seated behind the driver.

For reasons that remained unclear, prosecutors said Fine pulled out a firearm and shot Powell in the back of the head. Doorbell camera footage of the incident captured the sounds and movements surrounding the shooting. After the initial shot, Daniel exited the vehicle and walked toward the house while Fine approached the driver's door, opened it and shot Powell in the head a second time.

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Living God's Way: *Proof and reward of your tested faith*



Carlton McPeak
Guest Columnist

Facing trials because of our faith can seem like a heavy burden. Like the first-century Christians, we need encouragement to endure those difficult times. Peter wrote to encourage the Christians to see that these trials were testing their faith and, if they overcame them, there was a great reward (1 Peter 1:6, 7).

The testing of our faith may come from a variety of people. In the Old Testament, God tested Abraham's faith when He instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son. Satan tested the faith of Job (not God). Both men withstood their tests, and God rewarded them for their faithfulness.

Peter describes this faith as "more precious than gold, which is perishable." Our faith should be something we consider of extreme value. When our faith is this valuable to us, then we will do whatever to make sure we keep it, and it does not fade away. Faith is something worth holding on to.

We might think the reward for having a faith still intact after being "tested by fire" would be something of this world, but Peter says it is not. Consider the words he uses – "praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The time for receiving this reward is given – "at the revelation of Jesus Christ." When Jesus returns, the reward for a faith that has passed the test will be rewarded. That means that all those folks to whom Peter was writing have

not yet received their reward.

Notice something else about this reward. It is not something material or physical from this world, but personal to the Christian. They will receive it from God after their faith has been tested by fire. That motivates us to be faithful to God, regardless of the trials and persecutions we may face in this world.

God gives glory to those who achieve or accomplish notable things. Certainly, Peter and Paul would receive this type of reward. But let us not sell ourselves short. God might view us in the same way He viewed these two apostles. Our motivation may include our desire for this type of reward, but pleasing God and promoting His cause should be the major reason.

The final reward mentioned by Peter is honor, the high public acknowledgment of something achieved. Peter may have been saying that this reward is for someone who has gone beyond the expected. They are truly outstanding in their service to God.

These words should motivate us, even in our world today, to pass the testing of our faith. Let us all be looking forward to this type of reward, because we are daily, diligently living God's way.

*Carlton G. McPeak (carlton_mc@msn.com)
is an evangelist working in the Florida Gateway region.
Scriptural quotations from the NASB.*

Cagle Grams: *Ye are the salt of the earth*



James H. Cagle
Guest Columnist

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13 KJV).

Unlike light that is in this world but not of this world, salt is in this world but taken out of the world. Christians, because they are in this world but not of this world, because of their new birth, are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14; John 17:14, 16). Because Christians, before they were saved, were of the world system and were then taken out of the world system when they were saved are the salt of the earth—"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out

of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (Matthew 15:19). And they were then sent back into the world to preach the gospel (John 20:21).

Men and most animals need salt to maintain good health. Salt is used in the chemical industry, in the medical field, in steel manufacturing, in tanning hides, in paints, in ink, in baking powders, in insecticides, in antiseptics, for preserving foods, and for flavoring food.

When salt loses its "savour" or becomes flat and tasteless because it's lost its strength and flavor, it is "good for nothing." God told Jeremiah that Israel was "good for nothing"—"This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing" (Jeremiah 13:10).

A Christian loses their savour and becomes

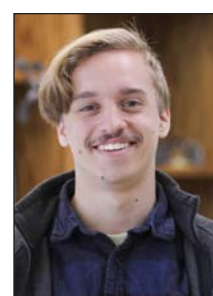
good for nothing or not good for anything God can use when they turn from the Word and go back into the world and live in rebellion against God. They then become ineffective for God as a witness to the world.

Years ago (in my generation), parents named their children after virtues such as Faith, Hope, Patience, Grace and Charity, in hopes that they would grow to possess and exemplify the virtues they were named after. Elder Brewster (1567-1644) named his two sons Love and Wrestling.

God named His children "Light" and "Salt" in hopes that they would grow up and exemplify the characteristics of light and salt and be an effective witness in a dark and corrupt world. Truth is "true light" and preserving salt and an irritant to those who are raw against God.

Christian success is being the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Today Can Be Different: *"The Backrooms"*



Christian Peterson
Columnist

Introduction:

"The Backrooms" was released to American audiences on Friday, May 29. The film is the newest addition of Kane Parsons's series, inspired by the "Backrooms" online horror story, known as a Creepypasta. Parsons has been uploading videos on YouTube for his "Backrooms" series; but this movie is the first theatrical addition. It was written by Will Soodik and directed by Parsons himself. The movie did so well it earned Parsons, age 21, the honor of being the youngest filmmaker to reach number one at the United States box office. The film follows Clark (Chiwetel Ejiofor), owner

of Cap'n Clark's Ottoman Empire, and his therapist Mary (Renate Reinsve). Clark discovers a dimension of endless liminal space in his store's basement. What follows is a disturbing, terror filled romp through the backrooms. Be aware, there are SPOILERS in the following review.

The good:

This movie is right up my alley, and before I even get to the point of my review, I can confidently state I will recommend this movie. I enjoyed it greatly, and plan on watching it again. It already may have earned the place of "favorite horror movie" in my mind. There is a lot to like about this movie. I will also state that this will be a more unique review. As it's a horror movie, some of the darker elements are positives for it, and will be included in the good.

First, Parsons deserves tremendous credit for his powerhouse effort creating an entire intellectual property off a story on the internet and then going on to direct a phenomenal horror movie at just 21-years-old. That effort and impressiveness from such a young man deserves credit and a shoutout. I greatly look forward to seeing what else this young filmmaker does in the future.

This movie is super uncomfortable to watch, which is to its credit. At no point during the film was I able to relax. I watched the entire thing with my arms crossed and continually changed positions in my seat. I was given the opportunity to watch it with my little sister, and I could tell she was uncomfortable throughout the movie, as well. This all fits with the movie's style of liminal horror. For the uninitiated, liminal horror is a subset genre of horror movie focused on liminal spaces being empty. These are scenes like airports, hospitals, hallways and other places that are usually full of people, now empty. For "Backrooms," the main focus is empty office spaces, making no architectural sense. This hits on the main scare tactic in the movie: things just being "off."

The entire horror movie focuses on things being wrong. Walls that don't make sense, hallways that don't make sense, signs that are backwards or written wrong. Then, of course, people that aren't right in disturbing, mutilated ways.

Another aspect that deserves praise is the performance of both Ejiofor and Reinsve. Clark's character is a disturbed, desperate and broken man who eventually goes completely off the rails. Ejiofor deserves credit for portraying a therapist dragged into a world of terror while dealing with her own personal trauma.

I don't normally give credit for this, though maybe I should more often, but the crew behind the sets deserves a shoutout, as well. The sets were

incredible and creepy in all the right ways.

The unique monsters in this movie also deserve some credit. They aren't your normal movie monsters, and it was nice to see a fresh monster in a horror movie.

Finally, the soundtrack and general audio for the movie deserve a tremendous shoutout, as well. These work in tandem to truly create the eerie feeling and the uncomfortable state that the viewer is in throughout the film. They do their job well and are a highlight, in my opinion.

The bad:

I don't think there was a lot of "bad" about this movie. It's not very long, and it is what it claims to be, nothing more. Yet, as always, no movie is perfect. I think that there may be too much unexplained in this movie.

While the mystery is central to the entire story, there is a strange backstory with Mary's mother that is not really explained. It is integral to some trauma that Mary's character has, however, it never really explains what exactly her mom's issue was. Is she just crazy? Has she been to the backrooms? None of it is explained, it's just a weird sidestory (though it did include one effective jump scare).

The first 20 minutes, roughly, of the film are also the most boring. While they are introductory to the vibe and characters, it drags a little bit. Other than that, though, I do not have many complaints about the film.

The ugly:

Alright, as I said, this is going to be a more unique review. I typically use this section as a parental warning, which it will remain. However, I would like to point out that, while there is a lot of "ugly" in this movie, it is mostly to the movie's credit as a horror movie.

Let me begin by saying this movie is rated "R" for a reason. This is not a movie for children in any way. It may actually be too much for some adults. I know for a fact that my wife would be unable to handle this film due to its scare level.

There are quite a few curse words throughout the film, including multiple F-bombs.

There is also a surprising amount of violence and disturbing imagery throughout the movie. While the movie starts off slow, by the third act, there is a scene that will live in my head forever in infamy. It includes a scalping, something not quite cannibalism but akin to it, and the brutal death of one of the main characters. The disturbing imagery in the film is focused on really a few side monsters. They are memories of real people that the backrooms create and they are not right. Some of them have multiple eyes or noses, and the titular monster is a disturbing seven-plus-foot-tall pirate, with a tendency for trying to eat people. I cannot do justice to how uncomfortable it is to see these creatures.

Conclusion:

I really enjoyed this movie. It's creepy, scary, uncomfortable and something I have kept up with since it was in its infancy on YouTube. Every part of it fulfilled my expectations and was sufficient. It's the perfect length, keeps enough mystery, and is genuinely a scary movie, exactly as it purports to be. I plan on watching it again, and I recommend those interested in a more unique horror story, especially a liminal horror story, to give this film a chance. I rate "Backrooms" nine out of 10 gator tails, making it a recommendation from me.

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Suwannee School Board approves instructional materials, RIVEROAK nursing agreements

Danny Federico
editor@riverbendnews.org

During its Tuesday, June 23, regular meeting, the Suwannee County School Board approved instructional materials, contracts and operational items, including agreements tied to RIVEROAK Technical College's expanding nursing program.

Prior to the meeting, board members held a public hearing to review the instructional materials recommended for approval later. Proposed materials included textbooks for personal financial literacy, Spanish, speech and debate, agriculture, health science and emergency medical responder courses. No public comments were provided, so the hearing was closed once the materials were reviewed.

The regular meeting opened up with RIVEROAK students Grace Bett and Casey Turner leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Both Bett and Turner are students in the college's Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) Program.

During the regular agenda portion of the meeting, the board approved two new agreements for the 2026-27 school year connected to RIVEROAK Technical College. One agreement was between Assessment Technologies Institute (ATI) for the college's nursing program, while the second was an infrastructure funding agreement with CareerSource North Florida.

Clay Tomlinson, Career and Technical Education Director and Principal of RIVEROAK, also announced the college recently received approval for its LPN-to-RN bridge program, with additional updates to come during the school board's next workshop on Tuesday, July 14, beginning at 9 a.m.

Board members continued through the agenda, approving a bid for

roofing, construction and repair services to O'Neal Roofing Company. They also approved changes to district purchasing cards following administrative and principal transitions.

Additional approvals included the district's 2026-27 professional learning catalog, annual inspection reports and appointments to the Value Adjustment Board.

Following a few final comments from board members, the meeting was adjourned. The next regular meeting of the Suwannee County School Board will take place at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, July 28. It will be held in the district administration office, located at 1740 Ohio Ave. S., in Live Oak.



Riverbend News photo by Danny Federico, June 23, 2026

RIVEROAK Technical College's Grace Bett and Casey Turner spoke about their experiences in the college's LPN Program.

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Branford's Fourth of July celebration to be bursting with fun

Danny Federico
 editor@riverbendnews.org

Branford residents and visitors are invited to spend Independence Day along the river as the Branford River Reunion returns with a full slate of family-friendly activities, competitions, entertainment and fireworks.

The annual Fourth of July celebration will take place Saturday, July 4, at the Branford Greenway and surrounding areas, offering activities throughout the day before closing with the community's traditional fireworks display.

Festivities will begin at noon on the Suwannee River Greenway in Branford with the opening ceremony featuring an honor guard presentation and the National Anthem. Vendor booths and children's activities will also open at noon and run until 7 p.m. Throughout the day, entertainment will be provided by DJ Trapper Griffith.

Registration for the annual Cornhole

Tournament begins at 1 p.m., with bags flying at 2 p.m. Tournament prizes include \$250 per player for first place, \$150 per player for second place and \$50 per player for third place.

Also beginning at 2 p.m. will be the Rotary Club of Branford's annual Duck Race at Ivey Memorial Park. Rubber ducks will race for the chance to win from a pool of more than 100 prizes, including cash and gift cards donated by local businesses. Proceeds benefit local education programs, scholarships and community service projects. Participants do not need to be present to win. To purchase Duck Race tickets ahead of time, talk to any Rotary Club of Branford member or visit www.RotaryClubofBranford.org. Tickets can also be purchased on the day of the event.

Registration for the Fifth Annual River Rod Run will take place from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., with community judging taking place from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Categories include Classic (pre-1980), Modern Street (1981 or newer), Mud Truck (racing

or dual purpose; no street trucks) and, new this year, Motorcycle (any year, any style). Awards will be presented at 6:30 p.m. Registration costs \$20. Proceeds from the Rod Run will support a scholarship for a local senior pursuing an automotive career. For more information, contact Stacey Griffith at 352-225-1869 or [sstaceylee73@aol.com](mailto:ssstaceylee73@aol.com).

Additional afternoon activities will include watermelon contests beginning at 4 p.m. and the Bedrock Derby at 5:30 p.m.

Beginning at 7 p.m., parade participants will begin lining up at Buccaneer Stadium. The parade will officially begin at 7:30 p.m. For more information about the parade, call Kathie Crisp at 386-365-0786 or Tiffany Beville at 386-984-5489.

The celebration will conclude with a fireworks display at 9 p.m. at Hatch Park, set off by the Branford Volunteer Fire Department.

For more information, visit the "Branford Florida River Reunion" Facebook page.

Celebrate Independence Day with the Mayo Woman's Club

Danny Federico
 editor@riverbendnews.org

Lafayette County will kick off its Fourth of July celebrations early, as the Mayo Woman's Club will be hosting "A Hometown Salute to Faith, Family and Freedom" on Friday, July 3, at the Edward Perry Sports Complex, located at 840 N.E. C.R. 400.

The celebration, which will take place from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., will feature food vendors and family-friendly activities, all in celebration of America's 250th birthday.

The Mayo Recreational Soccer program will also host a fundraiser during the festival, featuring two inflatable slides: the Little Dipper, a 16-foot dual-lane slide and the Melting Arctic, a wet/dry combo. Unlimited access to the inflatables will be available with the purchase of a \$10 armband. Proceeds will support the recreational soccer program.

The fun will come to an end with a fireworks show.

In the event of rain, the celebration will instead be held on Sunday, July 5, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Freedom Fest to celebrate America's 250th anniversary in Live Oak

Danny Federico
 editor@riverbendnews.org

Community members are invited to celebrate Independence Day with a patriotic twist.

Freedom Fest is returning to Live Oak on Saturday, July 4, with an America 250 Historic Living Timeline Parade, live entertainment, family-friendly activities and, of course, fireworks.

Hosted by the Live Oak Freedom Fest Committee and the McAlpin Homeschool Co-op, the event will commemorate 250 years of American history and invite attendees to help bring history to life.

At 6 p.m., before the celebration officially kicks off, attendees will be able to participate in a hot dog eating contest hosted by Rudy's Dawgs. The competition will take place in Millennium Park in downtown Live Oak, and competitors will have a chance to win a Yeti cooler full of prizes. Individuals interested in competing should message Rudy Robles on Facebook for more information or to secure a spot.

Freedom Fest activities will begin in Millennium Park immediately after, at 6:30 p.m., with a ceremony honoring veteran medics, nurses and all who have served the

country.

At 7 p.m., the America 250 Historic Living Timeline Parade will begin, taking spectators on a journey through American history. Unlike a traditional parade, the event is a community-driven experience and encourages public participation. Residents, families, churches, businesses, schools and civic groups are invited to join by decorating golf carts, wagons, bicycles, side-by-sides or other entries and dressing in historical attire or patriotic red, white and blue.

Parade lineup will be at Paul Langford Stadium on Parshley Street Southwest. The parade will head north on Pine Avenue, west on Howard Street, south on Church Avenue and then end at the stadium.

Registration information for the parade is available online at www.FreedomFestParade.com.

Throughout the evening, attendees can enjoy live music provided by the Zack Petty Band, delicacies from food vendors, fun activities and plenty of entertainment for all ages, including bounce houses, face painting and more.

The evening will close with a fireworks display at 9:15 p.m.

For more information about the festival, visit www.FreedomFestParade.com.

Hamilton County to celebrate America 250 with fireworks and family fun

Danny Federico
 editor@riverbendnews.org

Hamilton County will celebrate America's 250th anniversary with its annual Independence Day festival on Saturday, July 4, with live music, family-friendly activities, vendors and one of the area's largest fireworks displays.

The gates will open at 5 p.m. at Hamilton County Parks and Recreation, located at 4525 S.W. 107th Ave., in Jasper.

Throughout the event, attendees will be able to enjoy live music by the Str8up Band, along with a variety of food and craft vendors. Families will be able to keep children entertained with the kids zone featuring waterslides and games.

Attendees will also be able to watch the annual cornhole tournament, hosted by the Hamilton County Chamber of Commerce during the celebration.

Bring your lawn chair and spend the evening celebrating the Fourth of July before the festivities conclude with the annual fireworks display.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Mondays - Thursdays

Mayo Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Third District Community Center (3373 U.S. 27, Mayo).

Beginners' meetings are held on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. Open discussion takes place at 10 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays. "Big Book Study" takes place on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. For more information, call 386-867-5953.

Tuesdays - Sundays

"You want to drink? That's your business. You want to stop? That's our business." Join Live Oak's Alcoholics Anonymous group to discover a new way of life. Regular Live Oak AA meetings are held each week at 7 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays. Men-only meetings are held each Sunday at 8 a.m. and are followed by women-only meetings at 4 p.m. The group also holds Al-Anon and AlaTeen meetings every Sunday at 2 p.m., which are open to friends and family of all ages. Each session will be held in the building next to the Suwannee County Health Department (911 Nobles Ferry Rd., Live Oak).

Wednesdays and Thursdays

Let TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) help you with your weight management goals. TOPS is a weight-loss support group with two chapters that meet weekly in Live Oak. The Wednesday chapter meets at 9:15 a.m. at Grace Lutheran Church (9989 C.R. 136). The Thursday chapter meets at 9 a.m. at First Advent Christian Church (699 Pinewood Dr. S.W.). For more information, call 386-362-5933 for the Wednesday group or 619-980-0959 for the Thursday group.

Wednesday, July 1

The Florida Guardian ad Litem Office Circuit 3 will hold its next monthly information session from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Live Oak Public Library (1848 Ohio Ave. S.). Partnership for Strong Families provides child welfare services designed to protect local children from abuse, neglect and abandonment.

Saturday, July 4

Celebrate America 250 with St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church (928 E. Howard St., Live Oak) from noon to 3 p.m. for a free cookout featuring hamburgers, hot dogs, brats, drinks, watermelon and ice cream. Don't forget to bring your favorite dish to share! There will also be family games available all afternoon.

Saturday, July 4

American Legion Post 107 (10726 142nd St., McAlpin) will be hosting a Turkey Shoot at 12:30 p.m. Eight rounds of fun and excitement will give competitors a chance to win either beef, pork, turkey or even cash. The event is open to the public. Call 386-362-5987 for more information.

Saturday, July 4

You've heard of regular bingo, but what about Meat Bingo? Join American

Legion Post 107 (10726 142nd St., McAlpin) at 2:30 p.m. for over 40 chances to win. There is a \$20 buy in, with a charge of \$10 for each additional set of cards. This event is open to the public. Call 386-362-5987 for more information.

Thursday, July 9

Step into the fascinating world of insects with Erin Harlow, Residential and Commercial Horticulture Agent for Columbia County, as she brings her deep knowledge to Hearthstone Botanical Gardens (3300 134th Pl., Wellborn). This workshop will begin at 9 a.m. A materials fee will apply. Call 386-438-3102 to reserve a spot.

Thursday, July 9

Join Eric Musgrove as he presents the History of Suwannee County at the Live Oak Public Library (1848 Ohio Ave. S.), beginning at noon. This month's session will focus on the history of McAlpin and O'Brien.

Thursday, July 9

Join the Live Oak Public Library (1848 Ohio Ave. S.) for an unforgettable evening of excitement, camaraderie and the thrill of the win at Bingo! Games will take place from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Thursday, July 9

The American Legion Riders of Post 224 invite the community to enjoy Bingo at The Edge of Town (8289 U.S. 90, Lee), beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Monday, July 13

Do you already know the basics of sewing? Want to sew with a great group and learn tricks of the trade? Join Emma Corbin as she teaches a three-session Advanced Sewing Class at the Live Oak Public Library (1848 Ohio Ave. S.). Space is limited; pre-registration is required. Call 386-362-2317 or visit the front desk to register.

Monday, July 20

Beginning at 5:30 p.m., Jennifer Raulerson, B.S.N., R.N., C.D.P., Board Certified Master Mental Health Coach, will present "Mourning to Morning: The Rise Back to Purpose During Grief" at the Live Oak Public Library (1848 Ohio Ave. S.). This program will be a safe, supportive 90-minute session to better understand grief and learn practical ways to navigate it. The session is open to anyone experiencing loss, and will include gentle teaching and optional reflection. No sharing is required.

If you know of an event that we can add to the community calendar, please send it to Danny at editor@riverbendnews.org.

Jail Report

Lafayette County

June 24

Michael Trail, out-of-county warrant
Zachary Hawk, violation of probation

Hamilton County

June 22

Dalton Lee Sumner, out-of-county warrant

June 23

Andre Maurice Young, indecent exposure
Justin Lee Grantham, withhold support

June 24

Ariel Esau Lemus Gutierrez, operate motor vehicle without valid license, refuse to accept sign citation or post bond

Gregory Marquez Donaldson, probation violation

Edwin Cruz Gonzalez, operate motor vehicle without valid license, fail to stop at agricultural inspection station

Yhojan Harvey Laiton Santamaria, fraud impersonation display another's driver's license

Jacob Coy Cribbs, probation violation

June 25

Aaron Scott Pons, out-of-county warrant

Isaiah Daeshaun Aaron, simple battery domestic violence

Gregori Jose Hernandez Licon, possess controlled substance without prescription

Henry Jose Moreno Balza, fail to stop at agricultural inspection station, operate motor vehicle without valid license

June 26

Terry Richard-Alton Webb, simple battery domestic violence

Kearstin Lynn Hogan, simple battery domestic violence

Nicole Bernadette Williams, aggravated animal cruelty excessive pain/death

June 27

Cedric Darnell Matthews, out-of-county warrant

Robert Gene Alford, drive while license suspended/cancelled/revoked habitual offender

June 28

Christopher Franquiz, drive while license/suspended/cancelled/revoked habitual offender, fail to stop at agricultural inspection station

Djuan Jarquez Johnson, aggravated battery

cause bodily harm or disability domestic violence

Suwannee County

June 22

Sean Kenneth Jeanmarie, flee elude LEO with lights siren active, reckless driving first offense

James Ethan Wilbanks, tampering with or harassing a witness victim or obstructing justice, commit domestic battery by strangulation, aggravated battery, resist officer without violence

Iris Leigh Plummer, petit theft, possession of a controlled substance, drug equipment possession and or use, larceny resist arrest commit theft resist recovery of property

June 23

Robert William Hardy, probation violation

Heather Robin Beauchamp, aggravated battery offender knew/should have known victim pregnant

June 24

Patrick Joseph Kane, driving under the influence, attach registration plate not assigned, drive while license suspended revocation equivalent status

Tra'Darius Jerrod Norton, robbery with firearm

Warren Everett Sheffield III, possess controlled substance without prescription, drug equipment possession and or use

June 25

Jamie Carlos Prescott, flee elude LEO with lights siren active, dangerous excessive speeding

Narin Cody Khammanivong, drive while license suspended revoked equivalent status

June 26

Evangeline Eileen Caputo, driving under the influence



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Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers celebrates ribbon cutting

Danny Federico
 editor@riverbendnews.org

Residents and local officials gathered at Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers in Live Oak on Thursday, June 18, to celebrate the location's official ribbon cutting.

The business, a quick lube center and full-service automotive shop, offers services including oil changes, tires, alignments, brake work, fluid flushes and other services.

"We're here to serve the community," said manager Jose Ortiz.

Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers is located at 1943 Ohio Ave. N., in Live Oak. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

To learn more about its services, call 386-213-4190 or visit www.expressoil.com/stores/live-oak/fl/3281.



Riverbend News photo by Danny Federico, June 18, 2026

Community members and local officials joined Express Oil Change & Tire Engineers for the ceremonial ribbon cutting of its Live Oak location.

Boyz to Kings and Girlz to Queens nominated for Best of Florida



Rick Patrick
 Riverbend News

After being voted "Best of Florida" for three years in a row, the Boyz to Kings, Inc. (BTK) mentoring and dropout prevention organization has once again been nominated for the prestigious recognition. The local youth mentoring non-profit organization is nominated in the Family Services category among Community Organizations. The BTK partner, Girlz to Queens Preparatory Mentoring Organization (GTQ), is also nominated in the same category.

Both BTK and GTQ are mentoring and dropout-prevention programs that started in Madison, Fla. Both organizations share a vision to "cut through the pipeline to prison and poverty and replace mental despair with positive role modeling while guiding through an illuminated pipeline built of hope, mental prosperity and self-accountability."

Since its beginning in 2010, the BTK program has grown to hold a presence in several surrounding counties, including Hamilton. In 2024, it expanded to include girls with the GTQ program. Key components of both BTK and GTQ are parental involvement and a focus on mental and physical well-being. More information about BTK and GTQ, including how you can support their mission to empower young men and women through guidance, education and mentorship, can be found at www.boyztokings.com.

To vote for either organization, visit <https://guidetoflorida.com/best-of/vote/community-organizations>. Voting is open now through the end of July.

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Hamilton County 4-H hosts “Timeless Treasures” event for local senior citizens

Kimberly Tanner and 4-H Agent Beth Kerr
Contributor

The Hamilton County 4-H Program recently hosted a special event for senior citizens titled “Timeless Treasures – Connecting Hearts Across Generations” at the Senior Center in Jasper. The gathering was designed to celebrate the county’s older generation while creating meaningful connections, fun memories and a day filled with laughter.

The event welcomed 40 senior citizens from across Hamilton County for a morning of entertainment, fellowship and community support. From the moment guests arrived, they were greeted with smiling faces and a warm atmosphere created by Hamilton County 4-H members and volunteers.

Attendees participated in a variety of decade-themed games and activities that brought plenty of excitement and friendly competition throughout the morning. Seniors tested their knowledge with trivia questions from past decades, played rounds of bingo, sang along during “Guess That Song,” and took part in other nostalgic games that celebrated music, culture and history from their younger years.

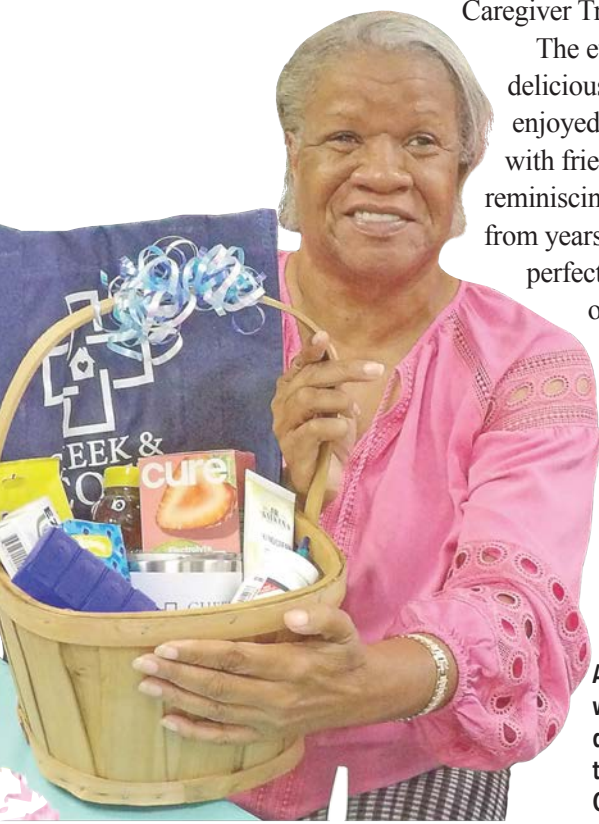
In addition to the games, several local organizations that offer resources and services for senior citizens were invited to set up informational tables throughout the event. These resource booths gave attendees the opportunity to learn more about programs available to assist with health, wellness, transportation, daily living and community involvement. Community agencies and organizations that attended included the Hamilton County Department of Health, the Emergency Operations Center, Elder Options, the Suwannee River Area Health Education Center, the Hamilton County Alcohol & Other Drug Prevention Coalition, the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office and the African American Alzheimer’s Caregiver Training Support (ACTS 2).

The event concluded with a delicious barbecue lunch. Guests enjoyed a hearty meal while visiting with friends, sharing stories and reminiscing about treasured memories from years past. The lunch provided the perfect ending to a morning focused on fellowship and community connection.

As a token of appreciation, each guest received a goodie bag filled with snacks, fresh fruit and small practical items intended to make everyday life a bit

Photo courtesy of Beth Kerr

Attendees had the opportunity to win a door prize filled with donations from Cheek & Scott and the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center.



easier. The bags served as a simple reminder that the community values and appreciates its senior citizens. The gift bags were purchased with funds from the 4-H Community Pride Grant and Duke Energy’s America250 grant.

In the fall of 2025, the 4-H Teen Council was formed to write and submit a 4-H Community Pride proposal in December. The 4-H Teen Council planned the event, prepared a budget, secured donations, designed flyers, recruited partners and help from 4-H clubs, and purchased items with funding from the grants. 4-H youth learned valuable skills in areas of teamwork, collaboration, planning and the organization of this community event. Thank you to Cheek & Scott and the Hamilton County Emergency Operations Center for door prize donations.

Hamilton County 4-H members worked hard to ensure the day was enjoyable and meaningful for every attendee. The event not only provided entertainment but also fulfilled its mission of strengthening bonds between generations and reminding seniors that they are treasured members of the Hamilton County community.

“Timeless Treasures” proved to be more than just an event—it was a celebration of wisdom, memories and the importance of staying connected through every season of life.

For more information, call or email Beth Kerr at 386-792-1276 or makerr@ufl.edu.

Beth Kerr serves Hamilton County as the UF/IFAS 4-H and Family & Consumer Sciences Agent. UF/IFAS Extension is an equal opportunity institution.



Photo courtesy of Beth Kerr

Each visitor was provided with a goodie bag filled with snacks, fresh fruit and other small items.



Photo courtesy of Beth Kerr

Volunteers and 4-H members helped serve delicious barbecue meals to attendees.



Participants enjoyed playing rounds of Bingo during the “Timeless Treasures - Connecting Hearts Across Generations” event.



Photos courtesy of Beth Kerr

Celestial events in July

Hailey Heseltine
Riverbend News

For those who like to keep eyes on the skies, here are some interesting celestial events happening this month.

• **All month: Get a great view of Venus**

After sunset, look west to see Venus shining brightly near the Leo constellation. It will be the easiest planet to spot this month, so if you'd like to catch a glimpse of one of our neighbors, now is the time. Don't miss it, though! Within hours of sunset, it will disappear, as the already westward planet sets quickly on the horizon.

• **July 14: New Moon**

Since there is no light interference from the moon, new moons are a great time to stargaze. The darker sky creates contrast between itself and the celestial bodies, meaning it will be easier than usual to spot constellations, planets, meteors and more.

• **July 29 – 30: Southern Delta Aquarius Meteor Shower peaks**

According to NASA, these meteors are active from mid-July to late August, and appear to radiate from the Aquarius constellation, with an average of about seven to eight meteors per hour. During the shower's peak around Wednesday, July 29, to Friday, July 31, meteors will be much more frequent. Though they are best viewed in the Southern Hemisphere, these faint meteors can also be spotted in the more southern latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere. Unfortunately for us, the shower's peak coincides with the full moon on July 29, meaning that there will be lots of light interference at the time and it will be difficult to see the meteors.

That doesn't mean that you can't spot some of these meteors at other times throughout its summer reign. On darker nights, NASA suggests your best chances of spotting some meteors can be achieved by looking halfway between the horizon and zenith, 45 degrees from the constellation of Aquarius. Giving yourself time for your eyes to adjust to the dark, at least 30 minutes, will also increase your chances of spotting some meteors. From Sunday, July 12, to Sunday, Aug. 23, take a glance towards Aquarius every now and then. You never know what you might see!

• **July 29: Full Moon**

July's full moon is most commonly called the Buck Moon. This name is of Native American origin and references how bucks are growing fresh antlers around this time of year.

Paw-sitive Adoption Spotlight: Dixie

Danny Federico
editor@riverbendnews.org

Dixie is a bubbly terrier mix who was found running around uptown. Now, having completed her stray hold, she's ready to find the fur-ever home she's been waiting



Photo courtesy of Doggie Dude Ranch

Dixie, a young terrier mix, is ready to become someone's lovable lapdog.

for. Described as a “love bug,” Dixie enjoys playing and relaxing on someone’s lap. She is believed to be housebroken and crate trained.

To learn more about Oscar and Otter or to begin the adoption process, contact Doggie Dude Ranch at 386-243-9331 or email doggieduderanchboarding@gmail.com. Doggie Dude Ranch is located at 16590 C.R. 136 W., in Live Oak.

2025 Annual Drinking Water Quality Report

City of Jasper, Florida
PWS ID: 2240570

Dear customers, we are pleased to present to you this year's Annual Drinking Water Quality Report, also known as the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR). This report is designed to inform you about the water quality and services that we deliver and to summarize the results of routine monitoring and testing performed throughout the year. It is our commitment to provide you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water, and to continually improve the water treatment process while protecting our water resources.

Our water source is groundwater, supplied by three wells that draw from the Floridan aquifer at depths ranging from 245 to 249 feet. Our water is disinfected through two stages of chlorination - once prior to storage, and again prior to entry into the distribution. Prior to storage, our water is aerated for iron and odor control, and treated with a polyphosphate-based corrosion inhibitor (AquaGold 170) to maintain iron control throughout the distribution system.

2025 Source Water Assessment

In 2025, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FLDEP) performed a Source Water Assessment on our system. The assessment was conducted to provide information about any potential sources of contamination within the vicinity of our wells. A search of the data sources indicated no potential sources of contamination near our wells. The assessment results are available on the DEP Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAPP) website at <https://prodapps.dep.state.fl.us/swapp/>.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this report or concerning your water utility, please contact Valentin Moreno, Lead & Chief Operator, by phone: 386-855-2118 or email: vmoreno@jasperFL.gov. We highly encourage everyone who is interested to attend our regularly scheduled council meetings to be informed about their water utility. The meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6pm, unless otherwise specified, located in the Council Chamber Room at Jasper City Hall, 208 West Hatley Street, Jasper, FL 32052.

Water Quality Test Results

This report shows our water quality results and what they mean.

City of Jasper WTP routinely monitors for contaminants in your drinking water according to federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Except where indicated otherwise, this report is based on the results of our monitoring for the period of January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. Data obtained before January 1, 2025 and presented in this report are from the most recent testing done in accordance with laws, rules, and regulations.

In the table below, you may find unfamiliar terms and abbreviations. To help you better understand these terms, we have provided the following definitions:

- **Action Level or AL:** The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL:** The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.
- **Maximum Contaminant Level Goal or MCLG:** The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfection Level or MRDL:** The level of drinking water disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.
- **Maximum Residual Disinfection Level Goal or MRDLG:** The level of drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.
- **Not Detected or 'ND':** Indicates that the substance was not found by laboratory analysis.
- **Parts per million (ppm) or milligrams per liter (mg/L):** one part by weight of analyte to 1 million parts by weight of the water sample.
- **Parts per billion (ppb) or micrograms per liter (µg/L):** one part by weight of analyte to 1 billion parts by weight of the water sample.
- **Picocurie per liter (pCi/L):** measure of the radioactivity in water.

Radioactive Contaminants							
Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Date of sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Level Detected	Range of Results	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Alpha emitters (pCi/L)	05/2020	N	4.0	N/A	0	15	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; runoff from glass and electronics production wastes

Inorganic Contaminants							
Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Date of sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Level Detected	Range of Results	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Arsenic (ppb)	12/2023	N	2.7	N/A	0	10	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; runoff from glass and electronics production wastes
Barium (ppm)	12/2023	N	0.0096	N/A	2	2	Discharge of drilling wastes; discharge from metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits
Chromium (ppb)	12/2023	N	1.1	N/A	100	100	Discharge from steel and pulp mills; erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	12/2023	N	0.24	N/A	4	4	Erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories. Water additive which promotes strong teeth when at optimum level of 0.7 ppm (Note: our system does not use fluoride as a water additive)
Nickel (ppb)	12/2023	N	0.93	N/A	N/A	100	Pollution from mining and refining operations. Natural occurrence in soil
Nitrate (as Nitrogen) (ppm)	02/2025, 05/2025	N	0.15	ND - 0.15	10	10	Runoff from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks, sewage; erosion of natural deposits
Selenium (ppb)	12/2023	N	0.57	N/A	50	50	Discharge from petroleum and metal refineries; erosion of natural deposits; discharge from mines
Sodium (ppm)	12/2023	N	7.7	N/A	N/A	160	Saltwater intrusion; leaching from soil

Stage 1 Disinfectants							
Disinfectant and Unit of Measurement	Date of sampling (mo/yr)	MRDL Violation Y/N	Level Detected	Range of Results	MRDL G	MRDL	Likely Source of Contamination
Chlorine (ppm)	Monthly 2025	N	1.69	1.0 - 2.38	4.0	4.0	Water additive used to control microbes

For Chlorine, "Level Detected" is the highest Running Annual Average (RAA) that occurred in 2025, computed quarterly, of monthly averages of all samples collected. "Range of Results" is the range of all individual samples collected in 2025.

Stage 2 Disinfection By-Products							
Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Date of sampling (mo/yr)	MCL Violation Y/N	Level Detected	Range of Results	MCLG	MCL	Likely Source of Contamination
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5s) (ppb)	05/2025, 08/2025	N	12.63	9.50 - 12.63	N/A	60	By-product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHMs) (ppb)	05/2025, 08/2025	N	19.30	18.10 - 19.30	N/A	80	By-product of drinking water disinfection

For HAA5s and TTHMs, "Level Detected" is the highest level detected in 2025. "Range of Results" is the range of all individual samples collected in 2025.

Lead and Copper (Tap Water)								
Contaminant and Unit of Measurement	Date of sampling (mo/yr)	AL Exceeded Y/N	90 th Percentile Result	No. of sampling sites exceeding the AL	Range of Tap Sample Results	MCLG	AL (Action Level)	Likely Source of Contamination
Copper (tap water) (ppm)	09/2023	N	0.098	0	0.0045 - 0.13	1.3	1.3	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives

Complete lead tap sampling data from September 2023 is available for review upon request. Please contact Valentin Moreno, by phone: 386-855-2118 or email: vmoreno@jasperFL.gov, for instructions on accessing the data.

Lead in Drinking Water

Lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The City of Jasper is responsible for providing high quality drinking water and removing lead pipes, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components in your home. You share the responsibility for protecting yourself and your family from the lead in your home plumbing. You can take responsibility by identifying and removing lead materials within your home plumbing and taking steps to reduce your family's risk. Before drinking tap water, flush your pipes for several minutes by running your tap, taking a shower, doing laundry or a load of dishes. You can also use a filter certified by an American National Standards Institute accredited certifier to reduce lead in drinking water. If you are concerned about lead in your water and wish to have your water tested, contact Valentin Moreno, Lead & Chief Operator, by phone: 386-855-2118 or email: vmoreno@jasperFL.gov. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

To address lead in drinking water, EPA requires that all community water systems develop and maintain an inventory of service line materials. We have completed a service line inventory, and it is available for review by contacting Valentin Moreno, by phone: 386-855-2118 or email: vmoreno@jasperFL.gov.

Sources of Drinking Water

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Possible Contaminants

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations, which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline @ 1-800-426-4791.

Vulnerable Population Statement

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/Center for Disease Control guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbiological contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

Closing Statement

We would like you to understand the efforts we make to continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources. We are committed to ensuring the quality of your water. Please feel free to attend our council meetings for up to date information regarding our water system. If you have any questions or concerns about the information provided, don't hesitate to call any of the numbers listed. Any input from our valued customers is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Living with the unseen: Charyle Hale's fight against HHT

Hailey Waldo

Riverbend News

For many people, a medical diagnosis brings uncertainty. For Charyle Hale, it brought a cascade of life-changing challenges that continue to impact every aspect of her daily life.

Over the past year, Hale has faced not one, but multiple serious health battles. A Live Oak native for 55 years, Hale was diagnosed in February 2025 with Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia (HHT), also called Osler-Weber-Rendu disease, a rare genetic disorder that affects the body's blood vessels. An estimated 70,000 people in the United States have HHT; however, medical experts estimate that up to 90% of people with HHT are unaware they have it. The condition led to pulmonary arterial hypertension and right heart failure, leaving her dependent on oxygen and connected around the clock to a medication pump that helps keep her alive.

Then, just months later, another devastating diagnosis followed: Triple Negative Breast Cancer, one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer. Today, Hale is navigating both conditions simultaneously while working to raise awareness about HHT, a disease that many people have never heard of and one that she says even some healthcare providers know very little about.

HHT is a genetic disorder that causes blood vessels to develop abnormally. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HHT occurs when certain blood vessels fail to form properly, resulting in fragile, abnormal connections between arteries and veins.

Normally, blood flows from arteries into tiny blood vessels called capillaries before moving into veins. In people with HHT, those capillaries may be missing or malformed, creating direct artery-to-vein connections known as arteriovenous malformations (AVMs). These abnormal blood vessels can be fragile and prone to bleeding.

HHT affects men, women and children of all races and ethnic backgrounds. Because it is a genetic disorder, it can be passed from parent to child, and it takes only one altered gene to cause the condition. Hundreds of different genetic mutations have been linked to HHT.

One of the challenges of HHT is that symptoms and complications can vary dramatically, even among members of the same family.

"There is no cure for HHT," Hale explained. "But early diagnosis and proper treatment can make a huge difference."

The most common symptom of HHT is frequent nosebleeds. These occur because abnormal blood vessels that develop inside the nose can rupture early. People with HHT may also develop small red or purplish spots called telangiectasis on the face, lips, mouth, fingertips, hands and nose. These spots often lighten temporarily when touched. However, some of the most serious complications are not visible at all.

Abnormal artery-vein connections can form in the lungs, brain, liver and digestive tract. Bleeding in the stomach or intestines can lead to chronic anemia and other complications. AVMs in the lungs and brain can become life-threatening if left untreated.

What makes HHT especially dangerous is that many people may have no warning signs before a serious complication occurs.

"The scary part is that many people don't know they have it until something major happens," Hale said.

For Hale, HHT triggered a series of severe cardiovascular complications. To explain what happened, she breaks the condition down into simple terms.

"To put it simply, HHT is when your veins and arteries are tangled up, so your body isn't getting enough blood flow," she said. "That causes the right side of your heart to work overtime. That gives you pulmonary arterial hypertension, which then leads right to heart failure."

Pulmonary arterial hypertension is a serious condition in which high blood pressure develops in the arteries that carry blood from the heart to the lungs. Over time, the increased strain causes the right side of the heart to enlarge and weaken.

As her condition progressed, Hale became dependent on oxygen because her oxygen levels frequently dropped dangerously low. Today, even everyday activities can become exhausting.

"I'm constantly in and out of the hospital," she said.

One of the most critical parts of Hale's treatment is a specialized medication delivered continuously through a pump attached to a central line near her heart. The medication helps manage her pulmonary arterial hypertension and supports her body's ability to function.

The treatment is lifesaving, but it also creates significant risks.

"Every day, a pump delivers medication through a central line to keep me going. It's a constant reminder of my changed reality," Hale stated.

Because the medication must be delivered continuously, any interruption can quickly become dangerous.

"One of the scariest things is when I go to the hospital and medical teams don't know about my condition. The line attached to my pump goes directly to my heart," Hale said.

She worries about healthcare providers who may not be familiar with the specialized treatment requirements associated with pulmonary arterial hypertension and HHT.

"If they disconnect my line, I could die within two hours," Hale said. "If they inject something into that line that isn't supposed to be there, it could kill me."

The fear of a medical mistake is something she carries with her every time she seeks emergency care.

"All I can keep reiterating is that it is terrifying," Hale declared.

Beyond the physical and mental toll, the financial burden has been overwhelming. The medication delivered through Hale's pump costs approximately \$2,000 per month. While insurance covers part of the expense, the out-of-pocket costs remain substantial.

Frequent trips to Gainesville, Fla., for specialized medical care add another

layer of financial strain. Medical appointments, hospital stays, medications, travel expenses and time away from work have placed tremendous pressure on the family.

Just as Hale was learning to manage her rare disease and heart failure, she received another life-changing diagnosis. In November 2025, doctors informed her she had Triple Negative Breast Cancer. Unlike many other forms of breast cancer, Triple Negative Breast Cancer lacks the three receptors commonly targeted by hormone therapies, making treatment more difficult and often more aggressive.

"It is the most aggressive form of breast cancer," Hale said.

Since Hale's diagnosis, she has undergone chemotherapy, radiation treatments and surgery. Her treatment continues through immunotherapy, which has created additional health challenges.

"The immunotherapy makes me extremely sick," she said. "I've been in and out of the hospital because of it."

The effects of Hale's illnesses extend far beyond her own health. Her husband has worked tirelessly to support the family while balancing employment that often requires him to be away from home. At the same time, he must remain prepared to respond to medical emergencies.

The emotional and financial strain eventually led to the loss of the family's home. Currently, Hale and her husband are staying with relatives as they work to rebuild their lives.

"It's been rough, but we remain hopeful," Hale said.

The family has also been coping with additional medical challenges involving loved ones. Hale is the mother of Miranda Clayton, Gage Clayton and the mother-in-law of Ernie Clayton, who recently underwent a heart transplant.

"So much has happened at once, it's really been rough on the entire family," Hale stated.

Despite the physical pain, emotional stress and uncertainty she faces daily, Hale says one of her biggest goals is helping others learn about HHT. Because the disease is rare, many patients who have been going to the doctor for years, searching for answers, are not receiving a diagnosis in a timely manner. Even after diagnosis, finding knowledgeable medical providers can be difficult.

She believes greater public awareness and more education within the medical community could help improve outcomes for future patients.

"There are still so many people who have never heard of HHT," Hale said.

According to the CDC, HHT can often be diagnosed through genetic testing or by evaluating a patient's symptoms and family history. While there is currently no cure, treatments are available to help control bleeding, manage anemia and prevent complications caused by abnormal blood vessel connections.

Early diagnosis is especially important because potentially dangerous AVMs can exist in the lungs or brain without causing symptoms.

"If one person reads this and learns about HHT, then sharing my story is worth it," Hale said proudly.

Every day presents new challenges for Hale. Between managing a rare genetic disorder, living with right heart failure, depending on oxygen, enduring cancer treatments and facing repeated hospitalizations, her journey is one of extraordinary resilience.

Yet through it all, she continues to speak openly about her experiences in hopes of helping others understand a disease that is often overlooked.

"Sharing our story is not just about seeking support," Hale said. "It's about raising awareness. Your understanding and kindness mean the world to us as we navigate this challenging time."

As Hale continues her fight against HHT, pulmonary arterial hypertension, right heart failure, and Triple Negative Breast Cancer, friends, family and the community are rallying around her during one of the most difficult seasons of her life.

Those who would like to offer support to Hale and her family can donate via her Cash App at *\$charyle1989* or her Venmo at *@Charyle-Gaskins*.

Whether through a financial contribution, a prayer, a message of encouragement, or simply sharing her story to raise awareness of HHT, every act of kindness makes a difference. Hale's courage in the face of this overwhelming challenge can inspire many, and community support can help ease the burden as she and her family continue this journey one day at a time.



Photo courtesy of Charyle Hale

Charyle Hale and her partner, Lance Gaskins.

This is a paid service announcement

MORSELS FOR ZION'S POOR

The LORD said: *"Many will say to me, -- Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

These, whom the LORD did not know, each confessed exactly wherein their trust lay. They identified their good works and spirituality as that which they expected would gain them favor with GOD. The vast multitude of those who make some profession of faith fall into this category. They believe that, by performing "good works," they are doing the FATHER's will. They proudly expect that their faithfulness will earn them some recompense. That man who is taught of GOD, however, has no trust at all in any act which he might ever perform. Such a man has no confidence in his own faith, but must cry out, *"help thou mine unbelief."* He can find no place of comfort in the lessons of the "soul winners." He is not satisfied with making a decision. Rather, he is constantly crying out for mercy and knowing that, unless the LORD grants him faith to believe, he shall surely and rightly perish. Thus, the LORD has ordained that the gospel of JESUS CHRIST be preached, that those called by HIS grace might find true rest in the midst of their weary and often trying journey. *"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned."* Is this message precious to you? Are you a sinner in need of a SAVIOR?

-m.a.m.

fortheepoor@windstream.net

Dig, read, discover: summer reading program returns to area libraries



Hailey Waldo
Riverbend News

The Suwannee River Regional Library System is inviting readers of all ages to take part in its 2026 summer reading program, “Dig, Read, Discover,” running from now through Saturday, July 18, across libraries in Hamilton, Madison and Suwannee Counties.

Designed to encourage lifelong reading habits and learning, the annual program offers free activities, reading challenges, prize drawings and special events for children, teens and adults. Participants can register at their local library during regular business hours and will receive reading log bookmarks to track their progress throughout the

summer.

Children and teens who complete reading activities can return their bookmarks for a chance to win prizes. The library system notes that additional programs, guest presenters and special events may be offered throughout the summer, giving families multiple opportunities to stay engaged while school is out.

According to the library system, the goal of the summer reading program is to inspire community members of all ages to read and make use of library resources. Reading remains one of the most important skills for academic achievement and lifelong success, and the program seeks to help young readers develop a love for books and expand their knowledge.

In addition to books and in-person programs,

library patrons have access to a variety of online resources, including Tutor.com, which is available free with a library card. The service provides on-demand academic assistance daily from 10 a.m. to midnight.

The Suwannee River Regional Library System serves communities throughout North Florida, offering books, digital resources, educational programs and community events year-round. Residents are encouraged to visit their local branch, sign up for a library card and make reading part of their summer plans.

For more information about the summer reading program, upcoming events, branch hours and library services, visit SRRLIB.org or contact your local library branch.

Lafayette County Public Library invites families to join summer reading fun

Hailey Waldo
Riverbend News

The Lafayette County Public Library is welcoming children and families to an exciting lineup of educational programs, entertainment, crafts and activities throughout the summer. The library’s annual summer program offers opportunities for children of all ages to learn, explore and have fun while school is out.

The summer schedule features a variety of special guests and interactive presentations. Upcoming programs include “Wild Wonders” scheduled for Tuesday, July 7 and “Animal Tales” on Tuesday, July 14.

One of the most exciting events of the summer will be the “Touch-A-Truck” program on Tuesday, July 21, at 10:30 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Park, where children will have the chance to see and explore a variety of vehicles up close.

The library is also offering baby story time sessions throughout the summer on Wednesday, July 1, Wednesday, July 8, Wednesday, July 15 and Wednesday, July 22, all beginning at 10:30 a.m. A Children’s Tai Chi class is scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, at 10:30 a.m., providing a fun way for young participants to stay active while learning new skills.

In addition, Children’s Health and Wellness programs featuring arts and crafts will be held every Thursday throughout the summer at 10:30 a.m. Lego Club meetings are planned for Monday, July 17 and Friday, July 31, at 3:30 p.m., giving kids a chance to build, create and socialize with friends.

The library encourages families to participate and take advantage of the free programs available throughout the summer. The Lafayette County Public Library is located at 120 NE Crawford St., in Mayo. For additional information about summer activities and library services, call 386-294-1021.

Young Florida chefs invited to compete for scholarships and statewide recognition



Hailey Waldo
Riverbend News

Florida students ages 8 to 12 are invited to showcase their culinary talents in the 2026 Florida Future Chef Competition, hosted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness.

Open to students of all cooking skill levels, the annual competition encourages healthy eating, creativity and the use of Florida-grown ingredients. Participants must create an original school meal that includes at least one fresh from Florida ingredient and feature at least three of the five school meal components: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins and dairy or dairy alternatives.

Students enter by submitting a short video introducing themselves, explaining their recipe and demonstrating how they prepared the dish. Entries are being accepted through Monday, July 13.

Three finalists will be selected to compete in a live cook-off in Tampa, Fla., where they will prepare their recipes for a panel of judges and learn more about nutrition and school meal programs.

Scholarships of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000 will be awarded to first, second and third place finishers. The champions recipe may also be adapted into a Florida school meal.

The competition supports the Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness’ mission of promoting healthy lifestyles, supporting Florida Agriculture and ensuring students have access to nutritious meals. The program will also help students develop valuable cooking skills while learning about healthy food choices.

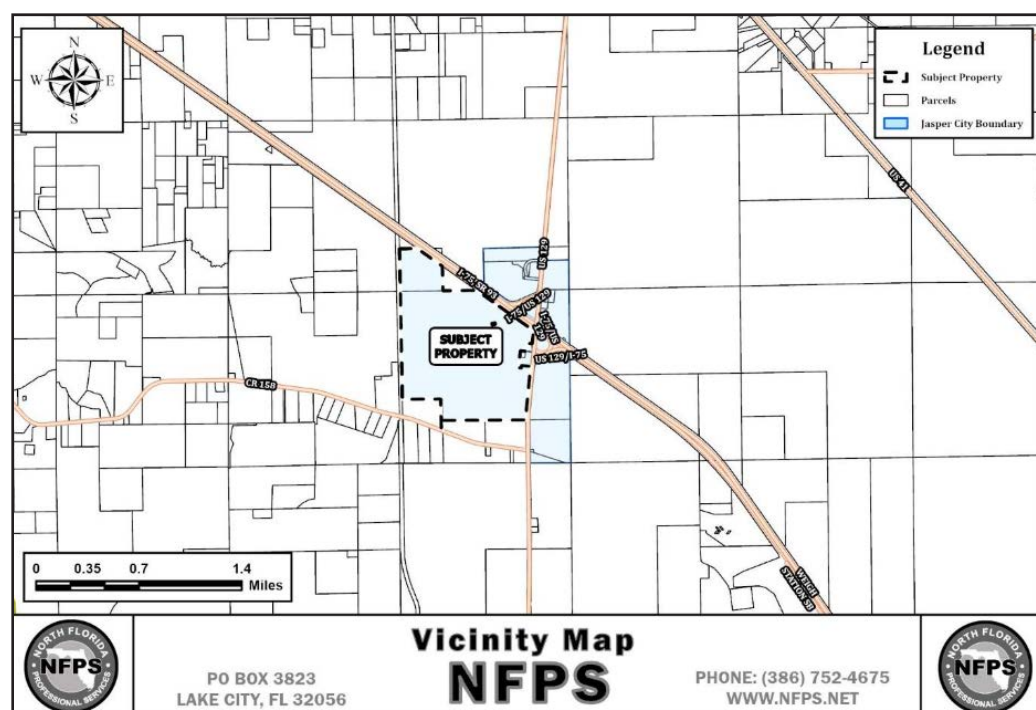
For more information or to enter, visit FloridaFutureChef.com.

NOTICE OF ZONING CHANGE BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JASPER, FLORIDA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ordinance, which title hereinafter appears, will be considered for enactment by the City Council of the City of Jasper, Florida, at public hearing on July 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard. The hearing will be at the City of Jasper, City Council Chambers, located at 208 W. Hatley Street, Jasper, Florida. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01-01

AN ORDINANCE REDESIGNATING THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION FOR CERTAIN PROPERTY BEING APPROXIMATELY 352.25 ACRES OWNED BY WSHR DEVELOPMENT GROUP LLC; REFERENCED BY PARCEL NUMBERS 6998-100, 6998-120, AND 6998-130; LOCATED WEST OF I-75 AND US HIGHWAY 129, AND NORTH OF CR-158 IN THE CITY OF JASPER, FLORIDA; REZONING SUBJECT PROPERTY FROM HAMILTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE-1 (AG-1), AGRICULTURE-4 (AG-4), AND COMMERCIAL HIGHWAY, INTERCHANGE (CHI) TO CITY OF JASPER PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD); PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time, and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the last of the two aforementioned City Council public hearings and that no future notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above-referenced public hearing.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the amendment.

Copies of the amendment are available for public inspection by request to the City of Jasper, City Manager’s Office, at 208 W. Hatley Street, FL 32052, or (386) 792-1212.

Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in the proceeding should contact (352)498-1206 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service (800)955-8771.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above-referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

All Our Kidz unveils new butterfly garden in White Springs

Christian Peterson
reporter@riverbendnews.org

All our Kidz is a local group in White Springs focused on building up and strengthening the children in the community. As Kizzie Burch, the director of the program, states, it is called “All Our Kidz” because “They aren’t just your kids or my kids, they are all our kids.” She hopes to encourage everyone to care about the youngest in the community while simultaneously teaching and caring for local children.

On Thursday, June 18, All Our Kidz hosted the grand opening of Jessica’s Butterfly Garden, a project the program’s participants have been working on for weeks. It was originally inspired by Jessica Watkins, one of the park rangers at the Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Center. However, just before the team began to work on the garden, Watkins tragically passed away. All Our Kidz decided to honor her legacy by naming the garden after her.

Decorating of the garden are crafts made by the children. These include tires and signs all painted to fit with the garden theme, things such as bees and flowers. There is also a small area where the children have planted vegetables.

Park rangers, community members, mebers of the Hamilton County Sheriff’s Office and more all gathered at the garden that afternoon. They listened as Burch described the hard work that the children had put into the garden. Honoring Watkins’s memory before inviting everyone to enjoy the garden and spend time with each other in the specially made haven.



Riverbend News photo by Christian Peterson, June 18, 2026
Part of the new garden is a vegetable garden, which was planted and taken care of by the kids.



Riverbend News photo by Christian Peterson, June 18, 2026
Kizzie Burch (left) and Ranger Andrea Thomas (right) smile while unveiling the new sign for the garden.

Fun in the sun: Protecting your skin during the summer



Katherine Allen
Contributor

You may have a friend or family member who comes back from the dermatologist looking like they contracted measles, but be glad they are getting checked out. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the U.S. (one in five will develop skin cancer in their lifetime). Melanoma is the deadliest form of skin cancer. One person in the USA dies every hour from melanoma, so it is important to take steps to protect yourself.

Everyone needs protection

Many people think a base tan helps protect them from damage, which is false. Even dark-skinned

people can get skin cancer. Although fair-skinned consumers are likely to absorb more solar energy than dark-skinned consumers under the same conditions, any color change is a sign of skin damage, regardless of skin type. The FDA recommends keeping infants out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and not using sunscreen on infants under 6 months old.

Slip, slap, wrap and slop?

A quick way to remember ways to protect yourself is:

- **Slip** on a shirt (tightly woven, darker). A wet t-shirt offers less protection than a dry one.

- **Slap** on a hat with a brim that goes all the way around your head. Avoid straw hats with holes or baseball caps that don’t protect your ears or the back of your neck.

- **Wrap** on sunglasses. Remember, darker does not equal protection. Look for UV 400 or 100% UV protection (both UA and UVB).

- **Slop** on sunscreen.

What to look for when purchasing sunscreen

Sunscreen sprays, oils, lotions, creams, gels, butters, paste, ointment and sticks are proposed as safe and effective. Look for broad-spectrum products that protect against both UVA (aging/wrinkles) and UVB (burning). Use an SPF of 15 or higher for sunburn protection. Choose products that are water-resistant or “very water-resistant.” Remember that no sunscreen is waterproof or sweatproof, and manufacturers are no longer allowed to claim that a product is waterproof. If “baby,” then it only contains titanium dioxide and zinc oxide, as they are less likely to irritate a baby’s sensitive skin (this would also be a good choice if you have sensitive skin or rosacea). Use sunscreen within six months. Look at the ingredient label rather than the packaging that claims “reef safe,” as the term is not regulated, and over 14,000 tons of sunscreen enter our waterways.

Two types of sunscreen

- **Physical/Mineral:** Acts like a shield. Look at the label for zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Safer for coral reefs. Has a white color. Best for sensitive skin.

- **Chemical:** Acts like a sponge. Ingredients on the label include: *oxybenzone, avobenzene, octisalate, octocrylene, homosalate and *oxitinoxate . Because these chemicals only protect against one type of UV ray, they are usually combined. These products are easier to rub into the skin without leaving a white residue. The chemicals break down in sunlight and need to be reapplied regularly.

Note: A new chemical sunscreen ingredient, bemotrizinol (brand name Parsol Shield), has just been approved by the FDA and is a light filter. It is broad-spectrum (so it filters both UVA and UVB) and doesn’t break down in the sun. It does not leave the chalky white residue. You should start seeing it in August.

There is research to investigate the absorption of sunscreen into the body.

Although the protective action of sunscreen products occurs at the skin surface, there is evidence that at least some sunscreen active ingredients are absorbed through the skin and enter the body. At this point, use the “Slip, Slap, Wrap and Slop” techniques to protect yourself.

Application tips

- Apply 15 minutes before sun exposure.
- Reapply every two hours, even if it is water-resistant. Use at least one ounce (think shot glass-sized portion).
- With sprays, dispense an adequate amount and rub it in to ensure even coverage. Spraying sunscreen onto your hands and then applying it can help you avoid inhalation while ensuring adequate coverage. Use caution around flames.
- Consider using a stick around the eyes.
- The FDA proposes that it needs more data for sunscreen powders.
- Sunscreen in all other dosage forms, including wipes, towelettes, body washes and shampoos, cannot be legally marketed without further FDA action.
- Sunscreen without an expiration date has a shelf life of no more than three years. Its shelf life is shorter if it has been exposed to high temperatures.

Test your knowledge and take the quiz at

<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cder/sunscreen/index.html>.

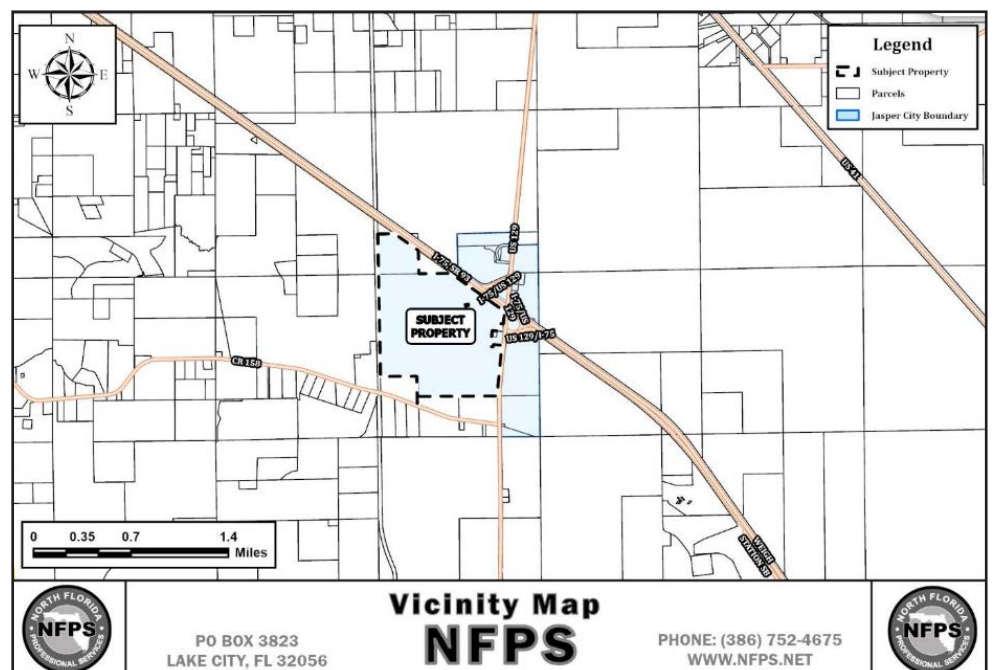
For more information about staying safe in the summer, contact Katherine Allen, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent at UF/IFAS Extension in Suwannee County, an Equal Opportunity Institution. She can be reached by emailing nrgkate@ufl.edu.

NOTICE OF ZONING CHANGE BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JASPER, FLORIDA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the ordinance, which title hereinafter appears, will be considered for enactment by the **City Council of the City of Jasper, Florida, at a public hearing on July 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.**, or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard. The hearing will be at the City of Jasper, City Council Chambers, located at 208 W. Hatley Street, Jasper, Florida. The title of said ordinance reads, as follows:

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-07-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JASPER, FLORIDA; CREATING A MANDATORY REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEVELOPER AND ANY SUCCESSOR OF THE STONEBRIDGE AT SUWANNEE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT TO ENTER INTO A DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT FOR STONEBRIDGE AT SUWANNEE VALLEY PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT; ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS AND THRESHOLDS WHERE A FULLY EXECUTED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT IS A CONDITION PRECEDENT TO THE ISSUANCE OF A FINAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER; PROVIDING FOR APPLICABILITY, STANDARDS, REVIEW PROCEDURES, AND RECOVERY OF COSTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time, and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no future notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the amendment.

Copies of the amendment are available for public inspection by request to the City of Jasper, City Manager’s Office, at 208 W. Hatley Street, FL 32052, or (386) 792-1212.

Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in the proceeding should contact (352) 498-1206 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service (800) 955-8771.

All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

FAITH

Church Directory

To advertise in the church directory
call the Riverbend News at
(386) 364-4141.

Apostolic Lighthouse Church

11057 Camp Weed Place, Live Oak, Fla.
(386) 365-8506

Pastor Dustin Bell

Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Worship.....11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.
THURSDAY
Evening Worship.....7:00 p.m.

First Methodist Church of Live Oak

311 South Ohio Ave., Live Oak, Fla.
(386) 362-2047

Email: admin@firstmethodistlo.org
Website: www.firstmethodistlo.org

Pastor Bill Payne P.H.D.

COME JOIN US IN WORSHIP!

SUNDAY

Sunday School10:00 a.m.
Traditional Worship.....11:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study10:00 a.m.
Evening Prayer.....5:30 p.m.
Monthly Women's Meeting
Monthly Men's Meeting

Lighthouse Christian Center

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(386) 294-3089 Mayo, Fla.

www.lcamayo.org

SUNDAY

Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Kids of the King.....10:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.
Kids of the King.....7:00 p.m.
Army of Fire Youth.....7:00 p.m.

Live Oak Christian Church

1015 Ohio Ave. N., Live Oak, Fla. (386) 362-1085
Scott McNeely, Pastor

COME WORSHIP WITH US

SUNDAY

Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

Live Oak Church of the Nazarene

915 Church Ave. SW, Live Oak, Fla.
(386) 362-6380

Pastor Louis Medaris

SUNDAY

Sunday School.....10:00 a.m.
Children's Church.....10:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
Morning Service.....11:00 a.m.
Evening Service.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....6:00 p.m.
Teen Bible Study.....6:00 p.m.

Live Oak First Assembly of God

13793 76th St., Live Oak Fla.
(386) 330-2210

Rev. Mike Townsend

SUNDAY

Sunday School.....9:30 a.m.
Children's Church.....10:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Evening Service.....7:30 p.m.

St. Therese Catholic Church

Three Miles North of Jasper US 41
P.O. Box 890, Jasper, Fla.

Rectory US 90 E, Live Oak, Fla.

(386) 364-1108

Saturday Mass.....4:00 p.m.

The Village Church at Advent Christian Village

Rev. Sam Worley, Pastor

Worship with us on Facebook and YouTube
Sunday Morning Worship.....9:40 a.m.

Friendship Baptist Church

14364 140th St., Live Oak, Fla.
(386) 776-1010

Reverend Marshall Faulkenberry, Pastor

SUNDAY

Sunday School9:45 a.m.
Morning Service11:00 a.m.
Evening Service.....6:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Church Dinner.....5:30 p.m.
AWANA & Youth6:15 p.m.
Adult Bible Study & Prayer.....6:00 p.m.

VBS CALENDAR

Pine Grove Church:

Emerald Crossing

• Monday, July 6-Friday, July 10
• 6 p.m.-8 p.m.
• 17707 180th St. Live Oak, Fla.

• All ages

• Dinner will be provided.

• Lively music, worship, engaging lessons, arts and crafts and more fun activities will be held throughout the week.

Christ Central Live Oak:

Small Things, Big Plans

• Friday, July 10-Sunday, July 12
• 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

• 15445 U.S. 129, McAlpin, Fla.

• Ages 7-13

• Lunch will be provided.

• Friday and Saturday will be for worship and Bible lessons. Moms are invited to attend a women's class on Saturday. There will be a potluck following the children's performance on Sunday.

• Scan the QR code to register.

First Baptist Church of Pinetta

• Sunday, July 12-Thursday, July 16

• 6 p.m.-9 p.m.

• 10285 N.E. Colin Kelly Hwy., Pinetta, Fla.

First Full Gospel Church

• Monday, July 13-

Wednesday, July 15

• 6 p.m.-8 p.m.

• 288 N.E. Jones Way, Lake City, Fla.

Lebanon Baptist Church:

Emerald Crossing

• Monday, July 13-Thursday, July 16

• 9 a.m.-noon

• 6114 280th St.,

Branford, Fla.

• Scan the QR code to

register.

Watertown Congregational:

Illumination Station

• Monday, July 13-Friday, July 17

• 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

• 1024 N.E. Okinawa

St., Lake City, Fla.

• To register, scan the

QR code.

First Presbyterian Church of Lake

City: Emerald Crossing

• Monday, July 13-Friday, July 17

• 9 a.m.-noon

• 697 S.W. Baya Dr., Lake City, Fla.

• Grades K-5

• Fun Bible adventures, arts and

crafts, music and worship, and

lessons that will stay with children

long after VBS ends.

• Register at fpcl.org.

New Life Christian Fellowship:

Emerald Crossing

• Monday, July 13-Thursday, July 16

• 9 a.m.-noon

• 422 S.W. Baya Dr.,

Lake City, Fla.

• Grades K-5

• To register, scan the

QR code.

Beulah Baptist Church

• Monday, July 13-Friday, July 17

• 6 p.m.-8 p.m.

• 22390 144th St., Live Oak, Fla.

• Dinner will be served.

Philadelphia Baptist Church:

Illumination Station

• Sunday, July 19-

Wednesday, July 22

• 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

• 15824 169th Rd., McAlpin, Fla.

• Grades Pre-K-8

• Register at

facebook.com/philadelphiabaptchurch/

Pinemount Baptist Church:

Rainforest Falls

• Sunday, July 19-Thursday, July 23

• 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

• 17031 U.S. 129 S., McAlpin, Fla.

First Baptist Church of Branford:

Emerald Crossing

• Monday, July 20-Friday, July 24

• 9 a.m.-noon

• Family Night on

Friday, July 24, at 6 p.m.

• 607 Suwannee Ave.

N.W., Branford, Fla.

• To register, scan the

QR code.

Hatch Bend Baptist Church:

Emerald Crossing

• Monday, July 20-Friday, July 24

• 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

• 3029 C.R. 500, Branford, Fla.

Live Oak Christian Church

• Monday, July 27-Thursday, July 30

• 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

• 1015 Ohio Ave N., Live Oak, Fla.

• Grades Pre-K-5

• Lunch will be provided.

Southern Baptist Convention votes to ban women from the pulpit

Mickey Starling

Riverbend News

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) found the saying "the third time's the charm" to be accurate as they convened on Wednesday, June 10, in Orlando, Fla. After two failed attempts in previous years to pass a ban on churches that have women serving as pastors or allow women to preach on Sunday mornings, the latest effort passed by a 74.6% majority of local church delegates, known as messengers. The ban extends to other areas of leadership, including deacons, elders or overseers and prohibits women from speaking to an assembled congregation.

The proposal, called the Truth and Unity Amendment, must now pass by a two-thirds majority again next year before it can be included in the SBC's constitution.

Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., believes the ban will keep the SBC from becoming too liberal.

"There's a great line that divides liberal and biblical evangelicalism, and you can see it on this very issue," said Mohler in a recent article.

The SBC has long held the belief that only men should serve in pastoring roles, but they have never taken national action to expel churches with women pastors. All of that changed when former Southern Baptist Bible teacher Beth Moore drew criticism for

speaking at a church on Mother's Day in 2019.

Two years later, the firestorm continued growing hotter as Saddleback Church, one of the SBC's largest churches, was found to have ordained several women as pastors. Saddleback was eventually removed from the SBC.

A number of complaints flowed quickly into the ongoing conversation about the ban after it was passed. One concern arose from a comment by Mohler during his podcast, "The Briefing," in which he stated that women should not interpret or teach scripture on church-sanctioned podcasts.

Objections to his comments stemmed from critics who noted that podcasts are voluntary broadcasts, in no way resembling a church pulpit, and that their audience does not constitute a congregation.

Beth Moore was also quick to respond to Mohler's comments.

"The only paid staff position I've ever held in a church was as an aerobics teacher in our church gym," stated Moore. "But, how in heaven's name a woman discussing a sermon on a podcast could be objectionable to some is beyond me and what I believe to be beyond scripture."

Others complained that the time allotted to debate the ban before the SBC voted was uncharacteristically short, leaving little time for discussion. Regardless of the outcome of future votes on this issue, the discussion is certain to continue.

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937 Ohio Avenue North, Live Oak, Florida 32064

Full Circle Farm: A family-run livestock operation rooted in grass-fed traditions and soil health

Full Circle Farm operates under a pet food license. Products referenced in this article are labeled "Not for Human Consumption – Pet Food Only."

Hailey Waldo
Riverbend News

Since 2002, Full Circle Farm of Live Oak has operated as a family-run agricultural business focused on pasture-based livestock production, soil health and direct sales. What began as a small family effort has developed into a diversified farm that produces beef, dairy, poultry, pork and eggs through a pasture-based production system.

At the center of the operation are Dennis and Alicia Stoltzfoos, along with their eight children: Lily, Caroline, Stella, Daniel, Mathias, Tessa, Luanna and Lydia. Dennis brings a lifelong background in agriculture, having been raised Amish-Mennonite in Pennsylvania, with a long family line of dairy farmers. That upbringing continues to influence the farm's emphasis on traditional livestock management, rotational grazing and pasture-based feeding systems.

Full Circle Farm is built around a grass-fed, grass-finished approach for its cattle herd, which includes Devon and Jersey breeds. According to the farm's practices, cattle remain on pasture throughout their adult lives and do not consume grain during maturity. Calves may receive supplemental organic, non-GMO feed early in life, but the long-term system is designed around forage-based diets.

The farm focuses on mineral-rich soil as the foundation of its production system. Pastures are managed to support grass growth through soil balancing practices, with cattle also given access to free-choice minerals, unrefined sea salt and kelp.

Full Circle Farm's laying hens, primarily Rhode Island Reds and Barred Rocks, are raised in a free-range pasture system across approximately 200 acres. Using a mobile "Egg-mobile" system, hens are rotated every few days to fresh pasture, allowing them to access insects and naturally forage.

In addition to pasture foraging, hens are supplemented with a non-GMO grain ration, including wheat, oats, peas and sunflower seeds. The farm also incorporates fermented feed practices using skim milk byproducts, which helps support digestive health in poultry.

Broiler chickens are also raised on pasture, often in partnership with Eden Farms. Depending on the program, chickens may be fed non-GMO or soy-free rations. Egg production is similarly pasture-based, with importance put on yolk color and outdoor access as indicators of quality from the farm's perspective.

The farm's pork operation is managed through forest-based rotational grazing. Pigs are raised in wooded paddocks and moved on a weekly cycle to new areas, allowing them to root, forage and interact naturally with their environment. Approximately half of the pigs' diet comes from forest vegetation, roots and forage, while the remainder is supplemented with organic barley and dairy byproducts. The farm states that this system allows for both land regeneration and animal enrichment through natural behaviors.

Full Circle Farm describes its production system as "beyond organic," meaning it goes beyond standard certification requirements by minimizing or eliminating synthetic inputs. The farm states it does not use chemical fertilizers, herbicides, fly sprays or routine wormers, and avoids the use of hormones or vaccines in its cattle herd under normal circumstances.

Instead, the farm uses preventive animal care through nutrition, pasture rotation and mineral supplementation. Antibiotics are reserved for emergency use, only when animal survival is at risk. Land management practices focus on rotational grazing, soil regeneration and the maintenance of biodiversity across pasture and woodland systems. The farm describes its approach as a "whole system," where soil, animals and plants are managed in a connected cycle intended to improve long-term health.

Full Circle Farm operates through a buying-

club model, where customers place orders directly through an online system and pick up products at designated locations. There is no traditional storefront, and distribution is handled through scheduled routes and pickup points.

Customers are encouraged to bring coolers, review invoices during pickup and participate in a structured ordering and fulfillment system. The farm also communicates through newsletters and updates to inform customers about availability, seasonal changes and ordering deadlines. This direct model reduces intermediaries and allows customers to purchase directly through the farm's buying-club model.

Full Circle Farm offers farm tours, educational visits and hands-on learning opportunities for individuals and groups interested in agriculture. Tours are typically scheduled on specific days and include explanations of livestock systems, pasture management and farm operations.

The farm also offers extended educational experiences, including multi-day visits, internships, apprenticeships and short-term "boot camp" style programs. Participants may stay on or near the farm and engage directly in daily operations, including livestock care, fencing and feeding routines. These programs provide immersive exposure to regenerative and pasture-based farming systems.

In addition to on-farm production, Full Circle Farm partners with other agricultural producers, including Amish farms in Pennsylvania and Eden Farms. These partnerships help supply additional farm products that align with similar production standards.

Eden Farms also contributes to poultry production and processing, expanding the availability of pasture-raised chicken products under shared-farming philosophies. The farm also sources select specialty products from like-minded producers who emphasize traditional methods and minimal processing.

Full Circle Farm focuses on openness between producers and consumers. Customers are encouraged to visit the farm, ask questions and better understand the farm's production practices. The farm promotes the idea that direct relationships between farmers and customers lead to greater trust and understanding of agricultural practices.

While its methods differ from conventional industrial agriculture, the farm presents itself as part of an important growing movement toward small-scale, pasture-based and regenerative farming systems. At its core, the farm is built around how animals are raised and the soil they live on, which directly shapes the farm's production practices and the relationships between the farmer and the community.

To read more about Full Circle Farm, visit fullcirclerealfoods.com.



The family behind Full Circle Farm.

Photo courtesy of Full Circle Farm

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Devin Hingson
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FLAUPRO0111

Audrey Cress among the Flagler College graduating Class of 2026

Flagler College
Contributor

Flagler College will celebrate the academic and personal accomplishments of Audrey Cress, from Live Oak, and more than 600 graduates from the Class of 2026.

Flagler's Class of 2026 reflects a generation of graduates who are as capable as they are curious. Through rigorous academics and hands-on learning, they have developed the skills and perspective to contribute meaningfully wherever their path leads next.

This year's class reflects a broad range of experiences and perspectives, including 21 international students and domestic students representing 34 states.

The Class of 2026 reflects a wide range of experiences and perspectives, spanning generations and life paths. Among the graduates is the college's oldest graduate, a 59-year-old earning a degree in Public Administration, alongside its youngest, a 19-year-old completing a degree in Communication with a focus in Public Relations. Together, they represent the breadth of ambition and opportunity that defines the Flagler experience. The class also includes 16 military veterans, whose

service and leadership have enriched the campus community and continue to shape their academic journeys.

The most represented majors among graduating seniors are Psychology (87), Business Administration (68), Coastal Environmental Science (61), Criminology (47), Marketing (29), Graphic Design (26), Sport Management (24) and Hospitality and Tourism Management (22).

Cress will be honored with a Bachelor of Arts in Digital Media Production and Journalism.

In total, the Class of 2026 will be awarded 689 degrees: 515 Bachelor of Arts, 13 Bachelor of Fine Arts, 143 Bachelor of Science, seven Master of Arts and 11 Master of Public Administration. Each degree reflects a rigorous academic journey and stands as a testament to the graduates' hard work and dedication.

Experiential learning has been a defining feature of the Flagler experience, with 92% of graduates participating in hands-on opportunities during their time at the college. This commitment transforms St. Augustine's Historic Coast into a dynamic classroom and living laboratory.

Academic excellence is also strongly represented, with more than one-third of the class graduating with honors. This includes 92 students

earning Cum Laude (GPA 3.5 to 3.64), 98 earning Magna Cum Laude (GPA 3.65 to 3.79) and 75 earning Summa Cum Laude (GPA 3.8 to 4.0).

Among the graduates are 91 student athletes who have balanced the demands of competition and coursework while representing Flagler at the highest level. As members of championship-caliber teams, they have developed discipline, resilience, and leadership skills that extend far beyond the field of play. Many have also made a meaningful impact off the field, giving back through community service and outreach efforts throughout St. Augustine.

Additionally, 26 students completed Flagler's Honors Program, earning a distinction noted on their academic transcripts. These students were among the top 5% of their class invited to join the program as first-year students.

Flagler's commitment to global learning is also evident, with more than one-third of the class participating in programs such as FlagSHIP, study abroad experiences, and international exchanges.

Now, Cress will join Flagler's growing alumni network, individuals who continue to demonstrate the value of a Flagler education through their impact and achievements around the world, and make history.

ARI looks back on a spring full of activity

Hailey Heseltine
Riverbend News

The spring semester was bustling with activity for the Aucilla Research Institute (ARI). Their educational outreach program brought interactive experiences in history and archaeology across North Florida, with the intent of informing and inspiring the next generation of Floridians.

Throughout the season, ARI continued their ongoing student-assisted excavation at Trelawn Plantation in Drifton. Students from Jefferson County Schools and local homeschoolers accompanied ARI's professionals to a property that was first built on as a plantation during the 1830s. For several years now, students have participated in hands-on work recovering artifacts on the former site of a kitchen building. This year, ARI focused their attention on a new dig area north of the former structure.

According to the institute's own Dr. Andy Hemmings, shovel tests and ground penetrating radar were used to attempt to determine the location of a string of cabins enslaved people once inhabited. Hemmings believes they may have located a few. Along the way, they also unearthed post-Civil war artifacts and some Native American ceramics. The students' valuable participation led to the discovery of nails, glass, charcoal, bottles, iron, clay concentrations and more. All these artifacts reveal both Trelawn Planation's unique history and the history of our region on a wider scale. Just as important is how this program has affected local students, granting them the special opportunity to participate in meaningful research. ARI believes that hands-on learning is how you engage and inspire, and they strive to do just that with projects such as on Trelawn Planation.

ARI brought also brought their interactive approach far beyond Jefferson County. They are often on the move attending events, holding presentations and bringing exhibits across North Florida. Priscilla, a plaster cast of a real mastodon skeleton that was discovered in the Aucilla River, is one of their most popular educational tools to bring to events.

Priscilla traveled far and wide on her trailer this season!

Activity kicked off strong in March, with Dr. Hemmings and Tom Harmon bringing and table of artifacts and Priscilla for showing to the Primitive Technology Festival at the Silver Springs Museum in Marion County. Nearly 2,500 visitors attended the event.

Later in the month, ARI brought a taste of prehistoric Floridian history to Suwannee Pineview Elementary through their exhibit: Priscilla, a saber-tooth skull, giant ground sloth teeth, animal hides and a variety of Ice Age artifacts. Experts from the institute were present to explain the significance of the artifacts and answer the students' questions. ARI made a second visit to the school in April for a similar event, this time bringing an artifact table and showing live demonstrations of hunting techniques with an atlatl.

On March 21, Dr. Hemmings, in partnership with the Taylor County Historical Society (TCHS), presented "Exploring Taylor County from the Ice Age into Historic Times" in Perry. The informative presentation explored topics such as ancient animals, plants and evidence uncovered at nearby archaeological sites.



Photo Courtesy of Aucilla Research Institute


ARI brought a free informative presentation, "Exploring Taylor County from the Ice Age into Historic Times," to Perry in partnership with the Taylor County Historical Society.

ARI was also present at the fifth annual Tallahassee History Festival on April 11, hosted by Tallahassee State College. Hemmings and Harmon brought Priscilla for showing and a fun photo op while they manned an artifact table. Ninety-percent of the artifacts they displayed came from Florida.

Suwannee County schools saw more exciting ARI activity towards the end of the school year. STEM Night at Suwannee Pineview Elementary was brought the unique perspective of archaeology, which is often overlooked as a STEM field. Hemmings and Harmon brought along Priscilla and artifacts, and held a demonstration of how ground penetrating radar works. Suwannee Springcrest Elementary also got a prehistoric surprise, with a visit from Priscilla and showings of artifacts. They answered curious students' questions, demonstrated atlatl hunting techniques and explained Suwannee County's prehistoric importance.

On May 16, ARI was again out and about for an artifacts showing at Speed-Spencer-Stephens Park in Tallahassee. The 2nd Infantry Regiment United States Colored Troops Living History Association was hosting a Walk Through Living History Day at the park, and ARI was happy to participate with a showcase to inform all ages.

Summer programs and events for local youth are in the works. ARI encourages all in their educational outreach area to be on the lookout for more exciting activities coming soon.



Hometown Salute

Casey Ryan


Casey Ryan was born in September 1992 in West Palm Beach. In 2006, the summer that Ryan was going into the eighth grade, his family moved to Live Oak, where they remained until he graduated from high school.

In 2010, during Ryan's senior year of high school, he went to the Military Entrance Processing Station. Having just turned 18, he was preparing for a career in the military. After that, he signed his first contract in October with the U.S. Army. However, it wouldn't be until a year later, when Ryan was 19 years old, that he would leave for basic training.

Ryan did One Stop Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Benning, Ga. his contract was 11x, meaning he was an infantry recruit. Once at Fort Benning, he was given his designation as an 11C indirect fires infantry, more widely known as working with mortars. After his graduation from OSUT, Ryan was sent to Fort Sewart in Hinesville, Ga., where he was assigned to the mortars headquarters company, 2-7 infantry battalion, 1st brigade, 3rd infantry division.

Not long after arriving at Fort Sewart, in March 2012, Ryan's unit, the mortar squad was sent to Helmand Valley in Afghanistan. During his deployment, Ryan was assigned a 60mm mortar system as a gunner. Ryan served from October 2011 until February 2015. Eventually, he left the military with the rank of Corporal.

Ryan now lives in Wellborn. After leaving the military, he was searching for a new career path. He first found it with the fire department, where he served for six years among Columbia, Suwannee and the City of Lake City. However, he eventually found his home with Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative, where he has been for the past three years.



If you would like to nominate a Veteran or first responders, contact Danny Federico at editor@riverbendnews.org.

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RYAN DONALDSON GOLF RAISES NEARLY \$3K FOR VIVID VISIONS

Danny Federico
editor@riverbendnews.org

Members of the community turned out in support of Vivid Visions on Friday, June 19, for the Third Annual Ryan Donaldson Golf Charity Tournament. Held at the Suwannee Country Club, the tournament drew a total of 16 teams with three players each.

According to organizer Ryan Donaldson, the event raised a total of \$2,998 benefitting Vivid Visions, a domestic violence center that assists victims of abuse by providing counseling, job training and a fresh start for those in need.

At the end of the day, winners were named in two categories.

The Low Gross Division champions were Ty Hurst, Carter Cannon and Cooper Hackney with a score of 58.

The Low Net Division winners were Rod Webber, Jack Moran and Jerry Upchurch with a score of 52.

Donaldson, a recent graduate of Suwannee High School, said the biggest change she has seen over the tournament's three-year run has been increased community involvement.

"The biggest growth I've noticed is the level of community involvement," she said. "Every year, more golfers, local businesses and supporters want to be part of the tournament. Seeing people rally around Vivid Visions and its mission has been incredible. It's exciting to know that what started as an idea has grown into an event that makes a real difference for people in our community."

Donaldson wished to express her gratitude to the following sponsors: W.B. Howland (title sponsor), Skinner's Paint and Body, Poole Realty, MOS, Jimmy Prevatt Attorney at Law, Donaldson Maintenance, Lafayette State Bank, Scoops, Joe Flanagan, Citrus Saver Fertilizer/Billy Williams, Cheek & Scott, Quick Lane Tire and Auto Center, Express Auto, King Barber Shop, Papa John's Pizza, Save A Lot Food Store, Mavis Tires and Brakes, Woods Family Fitness, The Live Oak Gathering and Specialized Charity Group Inc.

To learn more about Ryan Donaldson Golf, visit the organization's Facebook page.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Donaldson

Winners of the Net Division included Rod Webber, Jack Moran and Jerry Upchurch. Pictured with them is Sara Cordero, the Executive Director of Vivid Visions.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Donaldson

Winners of the Gross Division included Ty Hurst, Carter Cannon and Cooper Hackney. Pictured with them is Sara Cordero, the Executive Director of Vivid Visions.

HamCo WaterSmart initiative aims to equip youth with lifesaving swim skills

Hailey Waldo
Riverbend News

A new program meant to promote water safety and swimming confidence among youth is making a splash this summer. The HamCo WaterSmart initiative will provide Hamilton County children with access to high-quality swim instruction through the American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program.

Organized by Florida Youth Charitable, Inc., the initiative is based on their message: every child deserves the opportunity to learn how to swim. Drowning is preventable, and teaching children to safely navigate the water can have a lifelong impact. In addition to helping reduce the risk of drowning, swimming lessons build confidence, encourage physical activity and provide valuable life skills.

The program will serve 72 Hamilton County youth between the ages of 5 and 15. Participants will be divided into two rotating groups of 36 students each. Lessons will be conducted in small groups of six students per certified instructor.

Each participant will receive 12 swim lessons focused on water safety, survival skills and swimming proficiency. The rotating schedule ensures children receive additional instructional opportunities while maintaining small class sizes and a supportive learning environment.

Lessons will take place Monday, July 13, through Thursday, July 16, and Monday, July 20, through Thursday, July 23, at the Jared Allison Aquatic Complex, located at 426 S.W. St. Johns St., in Lake City. Transportation assistance will also be available for eligible families. Jennifer Gisonni, Executive Director of Florida Youth Charitable, said the initiative is about strengthening the community through education, safety and opportunity.

Families interested in learning more about the HamCo WaterSmart initiative may contact Florida Youth Charitable, Inc. at 727-688-268 or floridayouthcharitable@gmail.com or the Jared Allison Complex at 386-319-7226 for additional information.

Charity Golf Tournament to benefit local athlete competing internationally

Hailey Waldo
Riverbend News

Golfers and the community are invited to take part in the First Annual Red, White and Blue Charity Golf Tournament on Saturday, July 11, at the Suwannee Country Club, located at 7932 U.S. 90 in Live Oak. The event celebrates America's 250th anniversary while raising funds to support local athlete Steven Danaher as he represents the United States in the 2026 WAKO Pan American Kickboxing Championship.

The tournament will begin at 8:30 a.m. with a shotgun start and will feature a three-person scramble format. Participants will get to compete for net and gross winner payouts, closest-to-the-pin contests, longest-drive challenges and other hole competitions throughout the day.

In addition to the golf competition, players can enjoy raffle prizes, a mulligan table and complimentary lunch and drinks provided during the event. The fundraiser is an opportunity for the community to come together in support of Danaher as he prepares to compete on the international stage while proudly representing the USA.

Registration options are available for teams at \$225, individual golfers at \$75, hole sponsors at \$125, and team sponsors at \$340. Businesses and organizations are encouraged to participate through sponsorships, helping support both the event and Danaher's journey to the championship.

For registration information, contact Bob Budwick at 386-362-1147. Those interested in hole sponsorship opportunities may contact Jimmy Prevatt at 386-362-9213.

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Remembering Suwannee: 250 years of independence



Eric Musgrove
Contributor

It was a long shot, many said. A group of ragtag, mainly backwoods frontiersmen, against the most powerful empire of the day. Its army nearly always outnumbered and undersupplied, its navy hopelessly outclassed with odds of 35:1, and yet they still fought on for years, often giving up ground and major population centers along the way. “The Great Experiment,” the society would be called a few short years later. The fighting had begun in earnest in April of 1775, but years of unrest had preceded it. A year later, many citizens were clamoring to establish a new country, and the leading minds met in Philadelphia to see what could be done. A month of heated debate culminated in the approval of a document declaring their intentions, making them traitors in the eyes of their enemy. One of the oldest and most distinguished of their number reportedly said, “We must all hang together, or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately.” Seven long years later, the fighting would officially end in the Treaty of Paris, formally granting the rebels their own country, a country that has now lasted for 250 years through ups and downs.

This Saturday marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, which was formally adopted on July 4 after the vote for independence was approved on July 2. Those bold words of its second paragraph, written mainly by Thomas Jefferson, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness...” were, and are, a fine ideal for which we as Americans must all strive. John Adams, a signer of the Declaration and later second president of the United States, wrote his wife, Abigail, regarding the July 2 resolution of independence, noting that, “I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews (sic), Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more.” Although July 4 is the date that has been celebrated by Americans since 1776 because it was the date on which the Second Continental Congress adopted the final wording of the Declaration, Adams’s words otherwise ring true. Independence celebrations very similar to what most Americans practice today were held as early as 1777, the first anniversary of its adoption.

And in this memorable 250th anniversary year of the founding of the United States, many events around the country are planned. If you don’t plan on going to one of several being held in this area, I would suggest that you at least take some time to meditate upon the sacrifices of our forefathers to give us the freedoms we hold so dear today. We should consider their noble efforts like revolutionary writer Thomas Paine spelled out in his pamphlet entitled “The American Crisis” (the follow-up to his famous pamphlet “Common Sense”), “These are the times that try

men’s souls; the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph...”

Despite its faults (no country and no person is perfect), I believe the United States is still the greatest country in the world, and we are blessed to live in it. The “Great Experiment” continues, but as President Ronald Reagan once stated, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. It has to be fought for and defended by each generation.” I can proudly state that my son, Alex, is one of those serving abroad as I write this, protecting that very freedom for which so many have given their lives over the past 250-plus years.

Let us continue to fight for and defend our freedom as we remember this Independence Day.

Different history next week!

Eric Musgrove can be reached at ericm@suw.gov or 386-362-0564.



Photo courtesy of Eric Musgrove

Alex Musgrove, son of County Historian Eric Musgrove, is currently serving abroad as a member of the U.S. Army.

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XXIV

Issue 20

Published occasionally for mourners in Zion

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.
Hebrews 12:12-13

THE MEASURE OF FAITH

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Isaiah 55:1

Commerce is a very necessary and useful part of life in this world. Buying and selling provides goods and services to those who need them, as well as providing those who sell goods and services with the means to buy and sell to meet their own needs. There is certainly nothing wrong with this system of commerce since it is designed and ordained by GOD to reward the labors of those who engage in it. “For the labourer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7).

There are warnings in the scriptures against taking advantage of those same laborers and also to be fair and just in buying and selling. “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth (i.e. the LORD of hosts, HE who provides)” (James 5:4). “A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight” (Proverbs 11:1).

We see throughout the scriptures many examples of such worldly commerce. Even the LORD JESUS CHRIST instructed HIS disciples to engage in it. “And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one” (Luke 22:35-36).

Thus, we conclude that having this world’s money and using it wisely is a good thing. Yet we read a great admonition concerning the “love of money.” “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:9-10).

This admonition has fallen on deaf ears of many who “preach” (as they might define it) for “filthy lucre,” as they seek to gain from those they supposedly “minister” unto. Most churches and “ministries” (so called) spend great amounts of time and effort in seeking donations and “love gifts,” and exacting tithes to perpetuate their schemes and plans. Seldom will one hear a radio or TV broadcast or sit in a “church” meeting where the money of this world is not sought. GOD loveth a cheerful giver but will judge those who seek to profit from that which is given to them quite freely. GOD does not send HIS preachers into the world to sell books, trinkets, advice or administer blessings for a price. “Freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

Just as there is a “commerce” in the world, so too is there a “commerce” in the Kingdom of Heaven. The money of this world is not connected in any way to that Kingdom, nor can it be used to gain anything therein. The money of this Kingdom is not that which can be earned or even possessed by men. Yet no man can enter this Kingdom without it. The LORD, through HIS prophet Isaiah, exhorted HIS people to “buy wine and milk” that they might eat thereof. HE described them as those who have “no money.” These are the only ones who can “buy” goods from HIS STOREHOUSE.

Many have brought their good deeds, obedience and self-righteousness to HIS STOREHOUSE, expecting to buy a place there but have been turned away. “Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23). There is only ONE MONEY which will purchase the benefits of HIS Kingdom. True and pure RIGHTEOUSNESS alone can obtain a place of acceptance in HIS Kingdom. HE alone is both the PURCHASER and the OBTAINER of all acceptance there. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

The only manner in which the sons of GOD can “buy the wine and milk” of this Kingdom is to be given the proper form of MONEY which is acceptable in this Holy Kingdom. As Augustus Toplady wrote, many years ago (c.1776), “Nothing in my hand I bring. Simply to THY cross I cling. Naked, come to THEE for dress. Helpless look to THEE for GRACE. Foul, I to the FOUNTAIN fly, wash me, SAVIOR or I die.” He clearly understood that he had nothing wherewith to gain the favor of GOD, and he had been made acquainted with the ONLY ONE who could deliver him from this dilemma.

Thus, the Gospel of the Glory of the BLESSED GOD (see 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Timothy 1:11) has been placed in our hands to declare to lost and ruined sinners, that there is a BALM in Gilead, there is a DELIVERER in Zion, and a SAVIOR who is mighty to save. “Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured” (Jeremiah 46:11). “There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Romans 11:26, see Isaiah 59:20). “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1).

To take heed to this message requires no human ability nor can any carnal condition, except unbelief, prevent one from finding SALVATION here. Even that is not in itself an impediment, for HE alone is the ONE who gives the gift of FAITH which overcomes the unbelief of the flesh. Can you believe? Not by your own power. Not by your own decision. But as surely as HE is the only ONE who can mint the MONEY of HIS Kingdom, HE alone can give it to whom HE will. Those that know the pangs of hunger and dread the disease of sin which is presently coursing through their veins and bringing them to destruction, are just such who are candidates for this GIFT. In fact, it is this hunger and dread that indicates HE has prepared for them a place where they shall be filled with wine and milk which they could have never desired much less purchased by their own power and will. “The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (Psalms 110:2-3).

As we think on that which CHRIST has done in the behalf of wretched sinners, who each one has been born into this world as a rebel against HIM. Those who dwell among a people of unclean lips, each with a record before the Law which brings them into condemnation; we are reminded that it is HE who has:

Bought the salvation of HIS people with HIS own blood. In HIS parable of the MERCHANT, HE seeks out a “pearl” which is of great value to HIM. “Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:45-46). This “pearl” is HIS elect bride for whom HE was willing to expend the greatest price to redeem her. HE has loved her with an everlasting love. “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jeremiah 31:3). She is HIS purchased possession for whom HE laid down HIS LIFE that she might live. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Sought those whom HE calls the sheep of HIS pasture. HE likened HIMSELF to a SHEPHERD who went out in search of that one sheep which was lost. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). HE likens HIMSELF to that WOMAN who had ten pieces of silver and lost one of them, “if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it” (Luke 15:8)? The LORD will not be deterred in seeking out that which is HIS. “They shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken” (Isaiah 62:12).

Brought (and is bringing) HIS sheep into HIS fold. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:28). “Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth” (Jeremiah 31:8). “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).

Taught (and is teaching) HIS people the TRUTH. “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

Wrought in and for HIS people a work which is both complete and yet ongoing. “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:17-20). Are you thirsty and starving? CHRIST has the MONEY to buy what you need. Seek ye HIM while HE may be found.

m.a.m.

forthe poor@windstream.net

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 3RD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR SUWANNEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
 IN RE: ESTATE OF ENMAN LOWELL NETTLES, Deceased. PROBATE DIVISION File No. 26000096CPMXAX

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 The administration of the estate of ENMAN LOWELL NETTLES, Deceased, whose date of death was October 14, 2025, is pending in the Circuit Court for SUWANNEE County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 200 South Ohio Avenue Live Oak, FL 32064. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.
 All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court WITHIN THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.
 All other creditors of the decedent and other people having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.
 ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702 OF THE FLORIDA PROBATE CODE WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.
 NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.
 A personal representative or curator has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the decedent's death by the decedent or the decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in sections 732.216-732.228, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under section 732.2211.
 The date of first publication of this notice is June 24, 2026.

Attorney for Personal Representative:
 Scott R. Bugay, Esquire
 Florida Bar No. 5207
 2501 Hollywood, Blvd. Suite 206
 Hollywood, FL 33020
 Telephone: (305) 956-9040
 Fax: (305) 945-2905
 Primary Email: Scott@srblawyers.com
 Secondary Email: genesis@srblawyers.com

TERESA DUNNIGAN,
 Personal Representative

06/24, 07/01

PUBLIC NOTICE OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES GRANT PUBLIC MEETING
City of Live Oak Fire Department

The City of Live Oak hereby provides notice that a public meeting will be held to provide information and receive public comments regarding a proposed project seeking funding assistance through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Community Facilities Grant Program.

The proposed project consists of the acquisition of a Wildland Firefighting and Rescue Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) with a skid mounted foam suppression system for the Live Oak Fire Department. The requested equipment will enhance emergency response capabilities by improving access to remote locations, assisting with wildland fire suppression, supporting rescue operations, and improving public safety throughout the City of Live Oak and surrounding service area.

The public meeting will provide citizens an opportunity to become familiar with the proposed project and provide comments regarding:

- The need for the project;
- The impact and benefits to the community;
- The proposed service area;
- Environmental impacts; and
- Any other concerns or comments regarding the proposed project.

Meeting Date: 07-14-2026
Meeting Time: 5:30pm (1730 hours)
Meeting Location: City of Live Oak
 City Council Chambers
 101 White Ave SE, Live Oak, Florida 32064

For additional information, contact:
 Chief Sid Hayes
 Live Oak Fire Department
 Phone: 386-362-1313
 Email: shayes@cityofliveoak.org

07/01

PUBLIC NOTICE VEHICLE AUCTION

Make: Ram
 Year: 2018
 Vin# 1C6RR7PM7J5113004
 Auction Date is 7/27/2026 @ 9:15 a.m.
 Auction Location: Walt's Live Oak CDJR, 1205 Ohio Avenue N, Live Oak, FL 32064

07/01

Suwannee River Water Management District
Declaration of Phase II Water Shortage

The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) has issued a Phase II Water Shortage Order, WSO 26-002 for water uses within all Counties located in the District, including all locations in Alachua and Levy counties, excluding the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy, and Hawthorne located in Alachua County.
 To learn more or to view WSO 26-002, visit our website at www.mysuwanneeriver.com.

03/18-RTN

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, IN AND FOR SUWANNEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
 PROBATE DIVISION
 CASE NO: 61-2026-CP-000121
 DIVISION:

IN RE: ESTATE OF ERLENE MARIE BRIAN, Deceased. /

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 The administration of the estate of ERLENE MARIE BRIAN, deceased, whose date of death was April 29, 2026, is pending in the Circuit Court, for Suwannee County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 200 South Ohio Avenue, Live Oak, Florida 32064. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.
 If you have been served with a copy of this notice and you have any claim or demand against the Decedent's estate, even if that claim is unmatured, contingent or unliquidated, you must file your claim with the court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF A DATE THAT IS 3 MONTHS AFTER THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER YOU RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS NOTICE.
 All other creditors of the Decedent and other persons who have claims or demands against Decedent's estate, including unmatured, contingent or unliquidated claims, must file their claims with the court ON OR BEFORE THE DATE THAT IS 3 MONTHS AFTER THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.
 ALL CLAIMS, DEMANDS AND OBJECTIONS NOT SO FILED WILL BE FOREVER BARRED.
 NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.
 The personal representative has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the Decedent's death by the Decedent or the Decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in §732.216-732.228, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under §732.2211. The written demand must be filed with the clerk.
 The date of first publication of this Notice is July 01, 2026.

Attorney for Personal Representative: Personal Representative:
 JULIE EXUM BREUER, ESQUIRE CAROL ALESCH-SCHOLL
 Florida Bar No. 097720 239 Stonewell Drive
 Fisher, Tousey, Leas & Ball Saint Johns, Florida 32259
 818 North A1A, Suite 104
 Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
 (904) 356-2600
 E-Mail: jeb@fishertousey.com

07/01, 07/08

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
PUBLIC NOTICE OF APPLICATION

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the following application for permit was received on May 19, 2026:

Scott Wynn, 5559 NW County Road 141, Jennings, FL 32053-3157, has submitted Water Use Permit application 216607-3 for renewal to withdrawal an annual average of 0.2799 million gallons per day of groundwater for agricultural use. This project is located in Sections 8,9,17 Township 1N, Range 12E in Hamilton County.

Interested persons may comment upon the application or submit a written request for a staff report containing proposed agency action regarding the application by writing to the Suwannee River Water Management District, Attn: Resource Management, 9225 C.R. 49, Live Oak, Florida 32060. Such comments or requests must be received by 5:00 PM within 14 days from the date of publication.

No further public notice will be provided regarding this application. A copy of the staff report must be requested in order to remain advised of further proceedings. Substantially affected persons are entitled to request an administrative hearing, pursuant to Title 28, Florida Administrative Code, regarding the proposed agency action by submitting a written request after reviewing the staff report.

PUBLISH: no later than July 1, 2026/tm

07/01

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- Visit an FTRI Regional Distribution Center: FTRI.ORG/LOCATIONS

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RF 2026
www.ftri.org
 800-222-3448
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PUBLIC NOTICES CONTINUED

GREG GODWIN, CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT IN AND FOR HAMILTON COUNTY, HAS UNDISBURSED MONEY FOR THE FOLLOWING CITIZENS HAS UNDISBURSED MONEY FOR THE FOLLOWING CITIZENS

PAIRAN, DEREK RYAN	500.00
ANDRE, JOAQUIN PEREZ	1,000.00
PURKIS, CHRISTOPHER	200.00
HERNANDEZ, AURELIO	1,000.00
ZERPA, MARIQUILL	4,950.00
TAYLOR, WANDA	500.00
HERNANDEZ, JOSE GOMEZ	400.00
LOPEZ, VINCENT	650.00
ADAMS, CLARENCE	189.43
NORMAN CAPITAL PARTNERS LLC	175.14
DOLLAR GENERAL WS	50.00
FL DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	870.23
FL DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	171.12
FL DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	96.15
FL DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	113.48
FLORIDA HIGHWAY PATROL	50.00
SEASHOLTZ, STEPHANIE	307.27
FL DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	200.15
SHANDS LAKE SHORE COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEMS	25.00
DOLLAR GENERAL WS	56.89
DOLLAR GENERAL WS	50.00
DOLLAR GENERAL WS	50.00
PHILLIPS, JEREMIAH PATRICK	7.00
MILIAN, JULIO CESAR BENEMELIZ	27.00
DOLLAR GENERAL WS	50.00
DE OLIVEIRA, DANIEL DAVID MARTINS	223.00
REYES, ENRIQUES SANCHEZ	32.00
DOLLAR GENERAL WS	100.00
OFFICE OF CRIMINAL CONFLI AND CIVIL REGIONAL COUNSEL	262.32
GARCIA, SILVERIO GALLEGOS	3,032.00
JOHNSON, JOHNSON AND	50.00
FABIAN, CU CHOC GERSON	2,009.00
GOMEZ, DANY MARTINEZ	2,000.00
PATTERSON, KYLEB	400.00
MACKENZIE, MORGAN	500.00
MIQUILENA, BIANCA	3,169.00
BROOKS, DUANE	500.00
SHERIFF, JOVAN	500.00
FOSTER, RAHEEM	500.00
BROOKS, ROBERT	500.00
BROWN, TARA	500.00
BROUGHTON, WILLIAM	500.00
NESSMITH, DUSTIN	500.00
DRIVER, JOY	500.00
ANDERSON, MARISSA MAE	15.00
NAVA, SOYLA	15.00
LAW, HANNAH FAYE	15.00
ITEN, STEPHEN PAUL	15.00
LINCOLN, JENNICA LEIGH	15.00
BARDEN, JIM EDWARD	15.00
MARTIN, GARY RAYMOND	15.00
JONESON, JOANN KAYE	15.00
TOMLINSON, GREGORY LEGRANDE	15.00
WHEELER, ERRYN ELIZABETH	15.00
BLEDSE, SEAN MICHAEL	15.00
MORGAN, DANIELLE SUE	15.00
REGISTER, RHYLI NICOLE	15.00
BRINSON, KIMARAH MARSHAWN	15.00
LONG, PAUL DOUGLAS	15.00
COX, KELLY AMBER	15.00
MARRET, FRANKLIN LOYD	15.00
GRIFFIN, STEPHEN LAMAR	15.00
MCALISTER, GAVIN CLAY	15.00
LUCAS, AYDEN DALE	15.00
THOMAS, JOHN RICHARD WILLIAM	15.00
SPARKS, ARTHUR RANDOLPH	15.00
MORRISON, REGINA CUMBESS	15.00
MAY, AMANDA ELIZABETH	15.00
MCELWAIN, JESSE MASON	15.00
CLARK, TJUANA MARIE	15.00
WATSON, JENNY LYNN	15.00
BELL, AHMIYA RASHAWN	15.00
HUTCHERSON, KALIYAH CAMRYA	15.00
YEARTA, SAMANTHA DIANE	15.00
MCCALLUM, MELVIN LEE	15.00
HALL, DEVONTE GERROD	15.00
BALL, GRACIE LEE	15.00
CHAMBERS, HUNTER LEE	15.00
BATES, KRISTOPHER TYLER	15.00
BENNETT, LOUANN ELAINE	15.00
PARTIPILO, ANTHONY RAYMOND	15.00
EATMON, JAMES	6.12
AGUILAR, GABRIELA	45.00
CANO, LETICIA JUANITA	15.00
SCHAUTZ, ERIC ANDREW	15.00
MARTIN, TENIJA AYIACE DESHONIE	45.00
BESHARA, ROSALBA ESTELA	15.00
MCNUTT, KRISTINA LYNNE	15.00
COHEN, TATYANA AALIYAH	15.00
HERRING, KATLYN BROOKE	15.00
TOUCHTON, ETHAN LOUIS	15.00
CZAPKEWICZ-ROELANDTS, BERNICE JESSIE	15.00
JACKSON-JONES, RAIGAN JURNAE	15.00
NIXON, DAVIN MAREK	15.00
WHEELER, SARITA SUZANNE	15.00
BLUE SUMMIT WATERS, LLC	68.10
ERIXTON, TRAVIS	76.00
LAND, HENRY	33.07
SOUTHLAND METAL ROOFING 7 SUPPLY	237.49
JASPER AUTO SUPPLY INC	3.99
RICHARDSON PAINT & SUPPLY	214.57
CARTER, PAMELA	1,151.60
BRENTS, TARA	50.00

If your name appears on this list, contact the Clerk's Office at (386)792-0868 with your correct mailing address so that the money may be forwarded to you. Unless such monies are claimed on or before September 1, 2026, same shall be forfeited to the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners in accordance with Florida Statute 116.21.

07/01

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE HAMILTON COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to Sections 163.3161 through 163.3215, Florida Statutes, as amended, and the Hamilton County Land Development Regulations, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development regulations, objections, recommendations and comments concerning the Special Exception, as described below, will be heard by the Planning and Zoning Board of Hamilton County, Florida, at a public hearing on July 14th, 2026 AT 6:00PM or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the County Commission Meeting Room, County Courthouse located at 207 Northeast First Street, Jasper, Florida.

SE 26-02, a petition by Dustin Davis, requesting a special exception be granted as provided for in Section 4.5 of the Land Development Regulations to allow for a Veterinary Clinic in an Agriculture-4 (A-4) zoning district submitted as part of a petition received June 25, 2026 to be located on property described as follows:
The Southeast ¼ of the Southeast ¼, LESS AND EXCEPT 1-1/2 acres conveyed to the Congregational Church in the Northeast Corner, and ALSO LESS AND EXCEPT land conveyed to Noble Barfield in DB V, Page 308 of the Public Records of Hamilton County, Florida, all in Section 14, Township 1 North, Range 13 East, Hamilton County, Florida.

The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no future notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the exception. Copies of the petition for special exception are available for public inspection by calling Matthew Morgan, Land Use Administrator, at 386-792-0507, during regular business hours. All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

07/01

Suwannee Cty Bd of Commissioners is accepting applications for Building Permit Technician • Collection Site Attendant Custodian • Firefighter/EMT • Firefighter/Paramedic Library Aide I & II • Park Maintenance Worker I • Road Crew Member

Application & full details are available online at suwanneecountyfl.gov and Suwannee County Administration, 224 Pine Ave SW, 2nd Floor, Live Oak, FL 32064, (386)364-3400. Most positions remain open until they are filled. Suwannee Cty Bd of Commissioners is an equal employment opportunity employer that does not discriminate against any qualified employee or applicant because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, genetics, handicap status, income status, or family status. Bilingual speaking individuals are encouraged to apply. Successful completion of a drug test is a condition of all safety sensitive employment, failure to successfully test free of illegal or controlled drugs will result in non-employment of the applicant for a minimum of 1 year. EEO/AA/V/D 07/01, 07/08

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS City of Live Oak, Florida Waterman Avenue Sewer Improvements

General Notice
 The City of Live Oak, Florida (Owner) is requesting Bids for the construction of the following Project:
Waterman Avenue Sewer Improvements ITB #08-2026

Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at the **Live Oak City Hall** located at **101 White Avenue SE, Live Oak, Florida 32064**, until **August 5, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.** local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project includes the following Work:
 Removal of existing 6" gravity sewer collection system and construction of 8" gravity sewer collection system along Waterman Avenue, Park Street, Railroad Avenue and Nabor Avenue. Project will include roadway restoration to match existing surfaces, including asphalt pavement, asphalt millings and graded roadway.

The Project has an expected duration of **120 calendar** days.

Obtaining the Bidding Documents
 Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be obtained from the City of Live Oak CRA, by emailing:
Yolanda Tanksley
Project and Procurement Specialist
YTanksley@cityofliveoak.org

Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the City as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than the designated website in either electronic or paper format. The designated website will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of registered plan holders, reports, and other information relevant to submitting a Bid for the Project. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered only through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the designated website.

Pre-bid Conference
 A mandatory pre-bid conference for the Project will be held on **Thursday, July 9, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Live Oak City Hall, 101 White Avenue SE, Live Oak, Florida 32064.** Bids will not be accepted from bidders who do not attend the pre-bid conference

Instructions to Bidders
 For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.
 The City of Live Oak, Florida CRA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

This Advertisement is issued by:
 Owner: City of Live Oak, Florida CRA
 By: Yolanda Tanksley
 Title: Project & Procurement Specialist
 Date: June 22, 2026

07/01

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE HAMILTON COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

BY THE PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD OF HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to Sections 163.3161 through 163.3215, Florida Statutes, as amended, and the Hamilton County Land Development Regulations, as amended, hereinafter referred to as the Land Development regulations, objections, recommendations and comments concerning the Amendment, as described below, will be heard by the Planning and Zoning Board of Hamilton County, Florida, at a public hearing on July 14th at 6:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, in the County Commission Meeting Room, County Courthouse located at 207 Northeast First Street, Jasper, Florida.

LDR 26-02, a petition by Pete Scerbo as agent for Chambliss Family Revocable Trust, requesting a text amendment to the Land Development Regulations as provided for in Article Sixteen of the Land Development Regulations to change the text of Section 5.23.4 of the aforesaid Land Development Regulations as part of a petition received June 9th, 2026.

Section 5.23.4 states, "Access. Lots within a subdivision shall not derive access from an existing street except within a minor subdivision." Requested amendment will change this section to read, "Access. Lots within a subdivision shall not derive access from an existing street except within a minor subdivision, unless each lot within the subdivision is five (5) acres or greater and such access is approved by the Board of County Commissioners."

The public hearing may be continued to one or more future dates. Any interested party shall be advised that the date, time and place of any continuation of the public hearing shall be announced during the public hearing and that no future notice concerning the matter will be published, unless said continuation exceeds six calendar weeks from the date of the above referenced public hearing.

At the aforementioned public hearing, all interested parties may appear to be heard with respect to the amendment. Copies of the petition for special exception are available for public inspection by calling Matthew Morgan, Land Use Administrator, at 386-792-0507, during regular business hours. All persons are advised that if they decide to appeal any decision made at the above referenced public hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

07/01

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA.

IN RE: Estate of ROBERT J. ROHRER, Deceased. CASE NO. 2026-CP-03

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of ROBERT J. ROHRER, whose date of death was January 18, 2026, is pending in the Circuit Court, Third Judicial Circuit, in and for Hamilton County, Florida, Probate Division, Case No. 2026-CP-03, the physical address of which is Hamilton County Courthouse, 207 NE First Street, Room 106, Jasper, Florida 32052. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the attorney for the personal representative are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons, who have claims or demands against the decedent's estate who are required to be served with a copy of this Notice, must file their claims with this Court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM.

All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against the decedent's estate, including unmaturing, contingent or liquidated claims, must file their claims with this Court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIOD SET FORTH IN SECTION 733.702, FLORIDA STATUTES, WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of the first publication of the notice to creditors is July 1, 2026.

Personal Representative:	Attorney for Personal Representative:
KAREN L. ROHRER 6029 SW 44th Avenue Jasper, Florida 32052	Rose Decker Chauncey The Chauncey Law Firm, P.A. 320 White Avenue - Street Address Post Office Drawer 548 - Mailing Address Live Oak, Florida 32064 Telephone: (386) 364-4445 Telecopier: (386) 364-4508 Email: rdc@chaunceylaw.com

07/01, 07/08

NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

The Town of Jennings, Florida is complying with requirements of 7CFR 1780.199(a) by publishing this notice of intent to apply for a grant for police vehicles from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This project will consist of the purchase of three (3) police vehicles and equipment, which serves the Town of Jennings, Hamilton County, Florida.

Charles Barrett, Mayor Town of Jennings

A public meeting for public comments will be held to review the processed application for the grant. The public meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 6:15 P.M.

If you have any questions, call Jennifer Gramling at 386-938-4131.

07/01

PUBLIC NOTICE

A committee comprised of County employees will meet on Wednesday, July 8, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Suwannee County Judicial Annex, 218 Parshley St SW, Live Oak, FL 32064 to consider ranking respondents for Suwannee County's Request for Proposals 2026-10 RFP Group Medical Benefits.

07/01

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Live Oak hereby gives notice that the Evaluation Committee will conduct a public meeting to review and evaluate proposals and select an engineering firm for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Potable Water System Improvements Project, which includes the construction of a 100,000-gallon groundwater storage tank and the installation of approximately 11,800 linear feet of water main. The meeting will be held on Thursday, July 9, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, Live Oak, Florida. The meeting is open to the public. For additional information, please contact City Hall at (386) 362-2276.

07/01

NOTICE OF WORKSHOP AND SPECIAL MEETING OF NORTH FLORIDA WATER UTILITIES AUTHORITY BOARD

The Board of Directors of the North Florida Water Utilities Authority (NFWUA) will meet at 9:30 A.M. for purposes of conducting a Public Workshop and to conduct business in Special Session on Monday, July 13, 2026, in the Suwannee County Judicial Annex, 218 Parshley Street SW, Live Oak, FL 32064. The subject of the public workshop and special session is vetting, discussion, public comment, and possible board action regarding the following interrelated items: (i) review and tentative approval of proposed budget for NFWUA for Fiscal Year 2026-2027; and (ii) review and tentative approval of proposed NFWUA utilities rates, fees, and charges to be recommended for adoption to each of Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners and Columbia County Board of County Commissioners for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

In accordance with the Florida Statutes and Americans with Disabilities Act, any person needing a special accommodation to participate in this matter should contact NFWUA by mail to James M. Swisher, Jr., Columbia County Clerk of Court & Comptroller, 173 NE Hernando Avenue, Lake City, Florida 32055 or by telephone at (386) 758-1041, no later than 48 hours prior to the hearing or proceeding for which this notice has been given. Persons requiring auditory assistance may access the foregoing telephone number by contacting the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) or 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

If any person intends to appeal any decision related to this action, such person will need to provide a court reporter at such person's expense, for a transcript of the proceedings. All interested persons are invited to attend.

For further information, call (386) 758-1041.

07/01

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS City of Live Oak, Florida Waterman Avenue Potable Water Improvements

General Notice
 The City of Live Oak, Florida CRA (Owner) is requesting Bids for the construction of the following Project:
Waterman Avenue Potable Water Improvements ITB #09-2026

Bids for the construction of the Project will be received at the **Live Oak City Hall** located at **101 White Avenue SE, Live Oak, Florida 32064**, until **August 5, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.** local time. At that time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read.

The Project includes the following Work:
 Construction of 8" potable water main, fittings and appurtenances along Waterman Avenue between Helvenston Street and Cooper Street. Project will include horizontal directional drilling under the Helvenston Street travel way.

The Project has an expected duration of **120 calendar** days.

Obtaining the Bidding Documents
 Information and Bidding Documents for the Project can be obtained from the City of Live Oak CRA, by emailing:
Yolanda Tanksley
Project and Procurement Specialist
YTanksley@cityofliveoak.org

Prospective Bidders are urged to register with the City as a plan holder, even if Bidding Documents are obtained from a plan room or source other than the designated website in either electronic or paper format. The designated website will be updated periodically with addenda, lists of registered plan holders, reports, and other information relevant to submitting a Bid for the Project. All official notifications, addenda, and other Bidding Documents will be offered only through the designated website. Neither Owner nor Engineer will be responsible for Bidding Documents, including addenda, if any, obtained from sources other than the designated website.

Pre-bid Conference
 A mandatory pre-bid conference for the Project will be held on **Thursday, July 9, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Live Oak City Hall, 101 White Avenue SE, Live Oak, Florida 32064.** Bids will not be accepted from bidders who do not attend the pre-bid conference

Instructions to Bidders
 For all further requirements regarding bid submittal, qualifications, procedures, and contract award, refer to the Instructions to Bidders that are included in the Bidding Documents.
 The City of Live Oak, Florida CRA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

This Advertisement is issued by:
 Owner: City of Live Oak, Florida CRA
 By: Yolanda Tanksley
 Title: Project & Procurement Specialist
 Date: June 22, 2026

07/01



CERTIFICATE TO ROLL

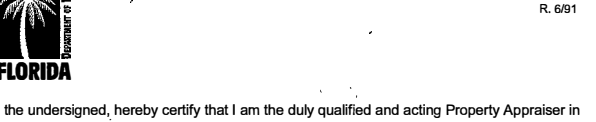
I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and acting Property Appraiser in and for SUWANNEE County, Florida. As such, I have satisfied myself that all property included or includable on the Real Property Property Assessment Roll for the aforesaid county is properly taxed so far as I have been able to ascertain, that the said roll was certified and delivered to me by the Value Adjustment Board on the 24th day of June 2026, and that all required extensions on the above described roll to show the tax attributable to all taxable property included therein have been made pursuant to law.

I further certify that, upon completion of this certificate and the attachment of same to the herein described assessment roll as a part thereof, said assessment roll will be delivered to the Tax Collector of this county.

In witness whereof, I have subscribed this certificate, caused the same to be attached to and made part of, the above described assessment roll this the 24th day of June 2026.

Property Appraiser of SUWANNEE County, Florida

07/01



CERTIFICATE TO ROLL

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am the duly qualified and acting Property Appraiser in and for SUWANNEE County, Florida. As such, I have satisfied myself that all property included or includable on the Tangible Personal Property Property Assessment Roll for the aforesaid county is properly taxed so far as I have been able to ascertain, that the said roll was certified and delivered to me by the Value Adjustment Board on the 24th day of June 2026, and that all required extensions on the above described roll to show the tax attributable to all taxable property included therein have been made pursuant to law.

I further certify that, upon completion of this certificate and the attachment of same to the herein described assessment roll as a part thereof, said assessment roll will be delivered to the Tax Collector of this county.

In witness whereof, I have subscribed this certificate, caused the same to be attached to and made part of, the above described assessment roll this the 24th day of June 2026.

Property Appraiser of SUWANNEE County, Florida

07/01



Celebrating

AMERICA'S
250th
ANNIVERSARY



Presidents of the

George Washington

1




INDEPENDENT
1789-1797

"Associate yourself with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation: for 'tis better to be alone than in bad company."

John Adams

2

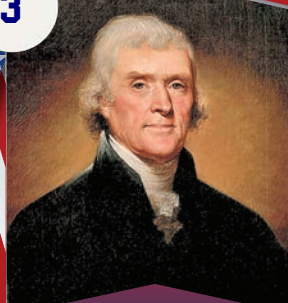


FEDERALIST
1797-1801

"To be good, and to do good, is all we have to do."

Thomas Jefferson

3




DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN
1801-1809

"If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretense of taking care of them, they must become happy."

James Madison

4




DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN
1809-1817

"Father of the Constitution" for primary drafting and promoting of the Constitution of the United States.

William Henry Harrison

9



WHIG
1841

"Times change, and we change with them."

John Tyler

10

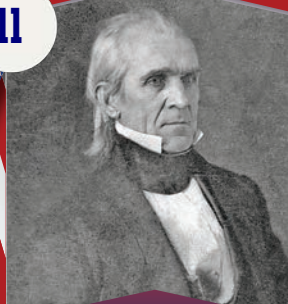


WHIG/INDEPENDENT
1841-1845

"I can never consent to being dictated to."

James K. Polk

11

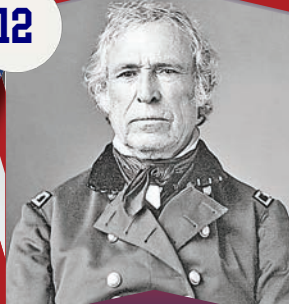


DEMOCRATIC
1845-1849

"The gratitude of the nation to the Sovereign Arbitrer of all human events should be commensurate with the boundless blessing which we enjoy."

Zachary Taylor

12

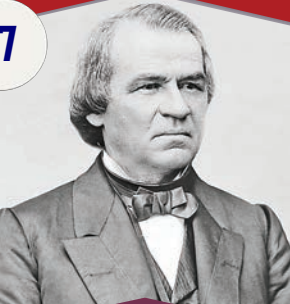


WHIG
1849-1850

"I have always done my duty. I am ready to die. My only regret is for the friends I leave behind me."

Andrew Johnson

17




DEMOCRATIC
1865-1869

"If you always support the correct principles, then you will never get the wrong results."

Ulysses S. Grant

18

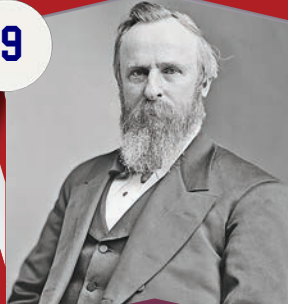


REPUBLICAN
1869-1877

"In every battle there comes a time when both sides consider themselves beaten, then he who continues the attack wins."

Rutherford B. Hayes

19

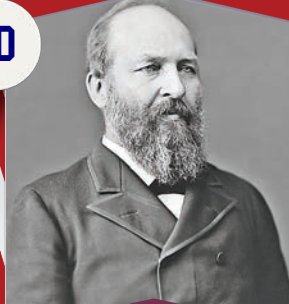


REPUBLICAN
1877-1881

"Every expert was once a beginner."

James A. Garfield

20

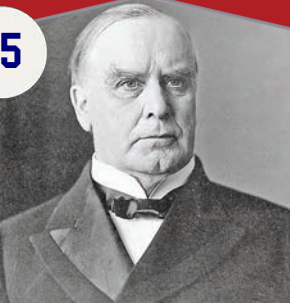


REPUBLICAN
1881

"Right reason is stronger than force."

William McKinley

25



REPUBLICAN
1897-1901

"In the time of darkest defeat, victory may be nearest."

Theodore Roosevelt

26




REPUBLICAN
1901-1909

"If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month."

William Howard Taft

27



REPUBLICAN
1909-1913

"No tendency is quite so strong in human nature as the desire to lay down rules of conduct for other people."

Woodrow Wilson

28



DEMOCRATIC
1913-1921

"The object of love is to serve, not to win."

Harry S. Truman

33



DEMOCRATIC
1945-1953

"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

34



REPUBLICAN
1953-1961

"Pessimism never won any battle."

John F. Kennedy

35




DEMOCRATIC
1961-1963

"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."

Lyndon B. Johnson

36



DEMOCRATIC
1963-1969

"Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose."

George H.W. Bush

41




REPUBLICAN
1989-1993

"No problem of human making is too great to be overcome by human ingenuity, human energy and the untiring hope of the human spirit."

Bill Clinton

42




DEMOCRATIC
1993-2001

"If you live long enough, you'll make mistakes. But if you learn from them, you'll be a better person. It's how you handle adversity, not how it affects you. The main thing is never quit, never quit, never quit."

George W. Bush

43



REPUBLICAN
2001-2009

"I have a different vision of leadership. A leader is someone who brings people together."

Barack Obama

44



DEMOCRAT
2009-2017

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

United States

James Monroe

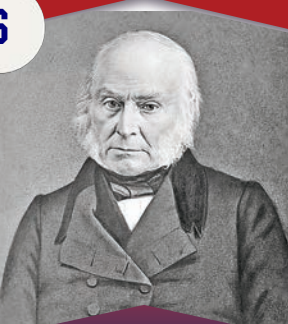
5



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN
1817-1825

John Quincy Adams

6



DEM./REP./NRP
1825-1829

Andrew Jackson

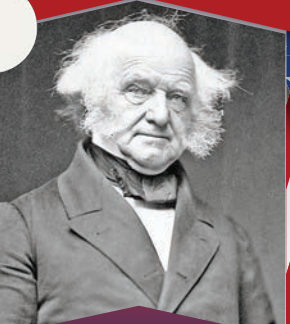
7



DEMOCRATIC
1829-1837

Martin Van Buren

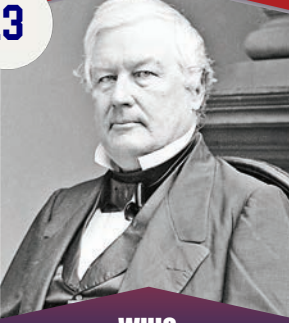
8



DEMOCRATIC
1837-1841

Millard Fillmore


13



WHIG
1850-1853R

Franklin Pierce

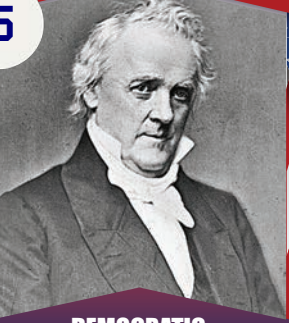
14



DEMOCRATIC
1853-1857

James Buchanan

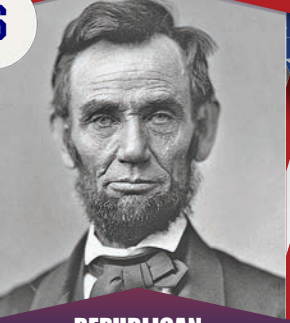
15



DEMOCRATIC
1857-1861

Abraham Lincoln

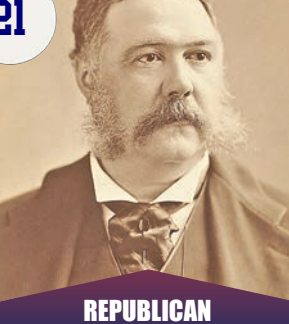
16



REPUBLICAN
1861-1865

Chester A. Arthur

21



REPUBLICAN
1881-1885

Grover Cleveland

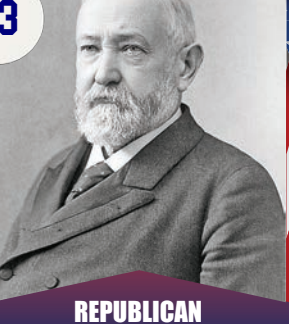
22



DEMOCRATIC
1885-1889

Benjamin Harrison

23



REPUBLICAN
1889-1893

Grover Cleveland

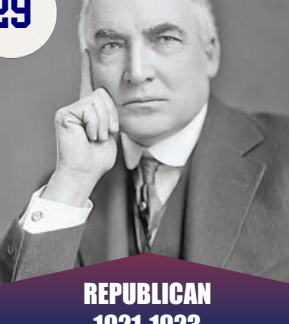
24



DEMOCRATIC
1893-1897

Warren G. Harding

29



REPUBLICAN
1921-1923

Calvin Coolidge

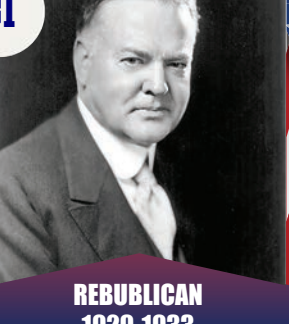
30



REPUBLICAN
1923-1929

Herbert Hoover

31



REPUBLICAN
1929-1933

Franklin D. Roosevelt

32



DEMOCRATIC
1933-1945

Richard Nixon

37



REPUBLICAN
1956-1974

Gerald Ford

38



REPUBLICAN
1974-1977

Jimmy Carter

39



DEMOCRATIC
1977-1981

Ronald Reagan

40



REPUBLICAN
1981-1989

Donald Trump


45



REPUBLICAN
2017-2021

Joe Biden

46



DEMOCRAT
2021-2025

Donald Trump

47



REPUBLICAN
2025-Present

Donald Trump

47



REPUBLICAN
2025-Present

"The circulation of confidence is better than the circulation of money."

"To believe all men honest would be folly. To believe none so is something worse."

"Any man worth his salt will stick up for what he believes right, but it takes a slightly better man to acknowledge instantly and without reservation that he is in error."

"It is easier to do a job right than to explain why you didn't."

"An honorable defeat is better than a dishonorable victory."

"While men inhabiting different parts of this vast continent cannot be expected to hold the same opinions, they can unite in a common objective and sustain common principles."

"The ballot box is the surest arbiter of disputes among free men."

"I don't like that man. I must get to know him better."

"Men may die, but the fabrics of free institutions remains unshaken."

"It is better to be defeated standing for a high principle than to run by committing subterfuge."

"Great lives never go out; they go on."

"Unswerving loyalty to duty, constant devotion to truth, and a clear conscience will overcome discouragement and surely lead the way to usefulness and high achievement."

"There's good in everybody. Boost. Don't knock."

"If you see 10 troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run into the ditch before they reach you."

"Be patient and calm; no one can catch a fish with anger."

"Men are not prisoners of fate, but only prisoners of their own minds."

"Remember, always give your best. Never get discouraged. Never be petty. Always remember, others may hate you. But those who hate you don't win unless you hate them. And then you destroy yourself."

"Never be satisfied with less than your very best effort. If you strive for the top and miss, you'll still 'beat the pack.'"

"You can do what you have to do, and sometimes you can do it even better than you think you can."

"Heroes may not be braver than anyone else. They're just braver five minutes longer."

"Without passion, you don't have energy. Without energy, you have nothing."

"If the problem is fear, the answer is knowledge."

"Watch, listen and learn. You can't know it all yourself. Anyone who thinks they do is destined for mediocrity."

American Inventors and Inventions:



Alexander Graham Bell

The first telephone, invented by Alexander Graham Bell.

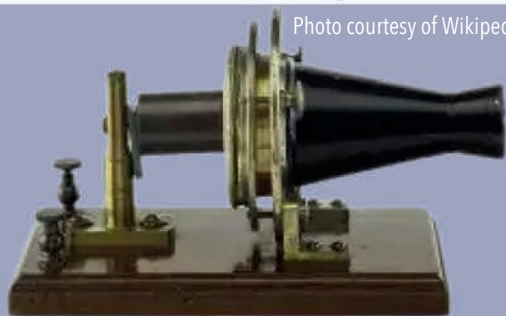
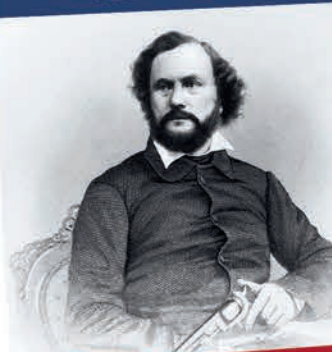


Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Alexander Graham Bell: One of the most famous inventors in human history, Alexander Graham Bell was born in Scotland. He spent some time in Ontario, but eventually made his way to Boston, Mass., becoming an American citizen. Bell had both a deaf mother and a deaf wife and, thus, was very interested in audio. His first invention was a phonautograph, which would draw vibrations from the human voice and allow deaf students to visualize sound. However, he didn't stop there. On March 10, 1876, three days after receiving his patent, Bell sent the first speech transmission via telephone. He would go on to face over 600 legal challenges to his patent and win every single one, truly solidifying himself as the inventor of the telephone, and the introducing what would grow to be one of the most popular technologies in the world.

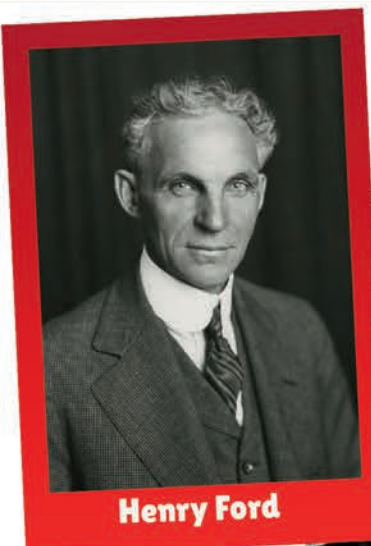
Samuel Colt



Modern reproductions of the Colt Paterson, the first commercially successful repeating firearm with a revolving cylinder. It was patented by Samuel Colt in 1836.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia



Henry Ford

The Ford Assembly, introduced by Henry Ford in 1913 at the Highland Park plant, revolutionized industrial manufacturing.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia



Willis Carrier is a name that many may not know, but one most people don't realize they couldn't live without. He was an engineer from the east coast who started working with a heating company. In 1902, he was tasked with decreasing the humidity in a printing shop, as the heat was causing ink to run and bleed. What happened during that attempt changed the world for the better. Carrier figured out that a mechanical humidity controller, which passed air through a filter, then over coils containing a coolant, would create cold air. Thus, air conditioning was born. Carrier improved on his invention, founded Carrier Engineering Corporation in 1915, and before long, his invention could be found in every home in America, and even across the world. He's been keeping the world cool since the 1900s.



Willis Carrier



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia



Wilbur Wright

Orville Wright

The first flight of the Wright Flyer, built by brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright in 1903, marked the beginning of air travel.

The Wright Brothers: Orville and Wilbur Wright ran a successful bicycle business in Ohio. While the brothers were experts on things that go on two wheels, they had another vision, one of a flying machine. The bicycle business went well for the duo, and with their extra funds, they began pursuing their dream. They began with kites, then moved to gliders and even more elaborate ones from there. Eventually, they designed a powered airplane with a 12-horsepower engine. They took a trip to Kitty Hawk, N.C., where, on Dec. 17, 1903, in front of five people, they flew the world's first airplane. It flew for 12 seconds and for about 120 feet. This was the beginning of an air travel revolution. The duo obtained a patent and began building and selling airplanes. Now, the original Wright Flyer is in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., on permanent display.

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-Declaration of Independence, 1776

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American Inventions

- Swivel Chair - 1776**
Thomas Jefferson
- Hamburger Bun - 1916**
Walter Anderson
- Cupcake - 1796**
Amelia Simmons
- Sunglasses - 1929**
Sam Foster
- Shopping Cart - 1937**
Sylvan Goldman
- Fortune Cookie - 1914**
Makoto Hagiwara
- Swim Fins - 1717**
Benjamin Franklin
- Toilet Paper - 1857**
Joseph Gayetty
- Dental floss - 1815**
Levi Spear Parmly
- Stop Sign - 1890**
William Phelps Eno

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THE AMERICAN MILITARY BRANCHES:



ARMY

The United States Army serves as the oldest branch of the United States military, as it began in June 1775 as the Continental Army. However, after the war, this army was disbanded in favor of state militias, and republican distrust of standing armies. However, as the United States of America grew, its need for a military did too. After various conflicts, the United States Army grew to be the largest military branch that exists today. It is the land service branch and is run by the

civilian secretary of the Army and military chief of staff. The Army has fought in the American Indian Wars, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the American Civil War, the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan and the Iran War. The Army's motto is "This We'll Defend," and its colors are black, gold and white. Its march is "The Army Goes Rolling Along," and its mascot is the mules.



MARINES

The United States Marine Corps is the naval infantry service branch of the United States military. The branch was founded in June 1834. The main responsibility of the United States Marine Corps is expeditionary and amphibious warfare. That ability to fight at both land and sea has been of incredible

value throughout American history, especially in the Pacific theater of World War II, where the island-to-island advancement put the Marines in the best position to lead. The Marine's motto is "Semper fidelis (Always Faithful)," and its colors are scarlet and gold. Its march is "Semper Fidelis," and its mascot is the English bulldog.



NAVY

The United States Navy is the maritime service branch of the United States military. It was originally formed in 1775 as the Continental Navy, though the form that we know today was established in 1794. It is the world's second largest navy, and the largest by displacement. It contains the world's largest aircraft carrier fleet. It has been a major player in the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Yugoslav Wars and the War on Terror. On top of that, there are large deployments in the Western Pacific, Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The Navy's motto is "Non Sibi Sed Patriae (Not for self but for country)," and its colors are blue and gold. Its march is "Anchors Aweigh."



SPACE FORCE

The United States Space Force is the newest military branch in U.S. history. It was founded in December 2019. Its origins trace back to the beginning of the Cold War, and while not an official branch of the military, U.S. space forces participated in the Vietnam War, and have participated in every military operation since. The Space Force currently falls under the Department of the Air Force, however,

this is in an interim capacity while the United States government works towards a fully independent Department of the Space Force. It has three main responsibilities: provide freedom of operation for the United States in, from and to space; conduct space operations; and protect the interests of the United States in space. The Space Force's motto is "Semper Supra (Always Above)," and its march is "Semper Supra."



AIR FORCE

The United States Air Force is the air service branch of the United States military and the second youngest branch of the armed forces. It was founded in 1947, though its roots trace back to 1907 as part of the United States Army Signal Corps. Its main missions are air supremacy, global integrated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, rapid global mobility, global strike and command and control. The Air Force is run by the civilian secretary of the Air Force, who is appointed by the President with Senate confirmation, and reports to the Secretary of Defense. It is the world's largest air force. The Air Force's motto is "Aim High ... Fly-Fight-Win." Its colors are ultramarine blue and golden yellow, and its march is "The U.S. Air Force."

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- ★ Popcorn

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- ★ Kristyn Folsom - School Board Information

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- ★ Cornhole
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American Artifacts

Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
A brass button produced for clothing worn at George Washington's first inauguration.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
The front page of the Pennsylvania Journal, depicting the "Unite or Die" famous revolutionary message.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
A book of poetry signed by Phillis Wheatley, the first female African American published poet in 1773.

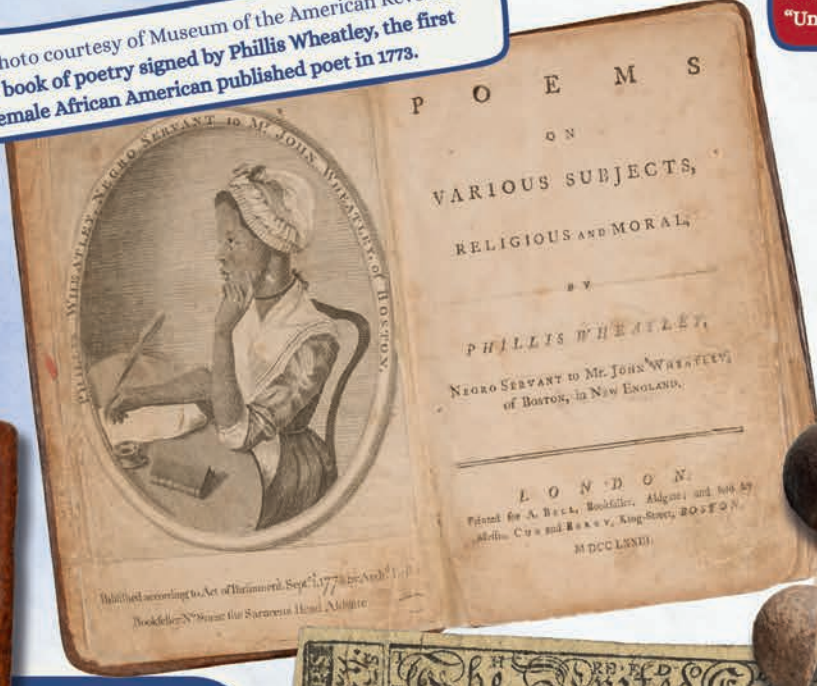


Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
Stamps like this were required under the Stamp Act to show that taxes had been paid on colonial paper goods.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
Christopher Ludwick's cookie board. He was the Superintendent of Bakers in the Continental Army and was in charge of feeding all the revolutionaries.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
A \$3 note issued by the Continental Congress and printed in Philadelphia in 1776.

Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
The bar shot, chain shot and normal cannonballs were all used by naval ships during the war.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
A bust of George Washington, sculpted by William Rush in 1817.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
A canteen marked with "USTATES" used by the Continental Army.



Photo courtesy of Museum of the American Revolution
A French-made mantel clock for the American market after George Washington's death.

Happy 250th Anniversary!



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Founding Documents:

The Declaration of Independence:

The original 13 colonies and Great Britain had been at war for over a year before the Declaration of Independence came to be. Britain had enacted multiple acts of taxation with the goal of increasing revenue from the colonies; these included the famous Stamp Act of 1765 and the Townshend Acts. Britain considered these legitimate means of the colonies paying their share to be a part of the British empire. However, the colonies had a different perspective. They had no representation in British Parliament, and due to that, colonists felt they had no right to levy taxes. This stemmed from a broader disagreement between the colonies and the British empire about the British Constitution. Eventually, the colonies began questioning whether Parliament had legitimate jurisdiction in the colonies.

Eventually, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts, or the Intolerable Acts, as they were known in the colonies. They were intended to punish the colonists for their rebellious actions, including the Boston Tea Party. This led to the formation of the First Continental Congress in September 1774. Members came to Philadelphia to coordinate a formal response, such as boycotting British goods and petitioning King George III to repeal the acts, an attempt that was unsuccessful.

After the First Continental Congress, many colonists still wanted reconciliation with Great Britain, even after the beginning of the American Revolutionary War in April 1775. There was a small amount of support for eventual independence from Britain, but no one declared the sentiment publicly, as it was a treasonous act punishable by death.

Sentiment for independence began growing, especially once Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" and "The American Crisis" began circulating. In February 1776, Parliament passed the Prohibitory Act, putting up a blockade of American ports and declaring American ships enemy vessels. On top of this, it was confirmed King George had hired German mercenaries to use against the Americans. Founding Father John Adams argued that Parliament had declared American Independence before Congress had been able to.

Before the official Declaration of Independence, support grew even more with the formation of more than 90 smaller, local declarations of independence. On June 11, 1776, Congress appointed the Committee of Five, consisting of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Robert R. Livingston and Roger Sherman, to draft the Declaration. Jefferson was the main author of the document. After a series of drafts, along with input from the Committee and Congress at large, the Declaration was voted on. On July 4, 1776, The Declaration of Independence was approved and sent out for publication.

This was the first of the founding documents of the United States of America, a full writing of which is included in this tab. This Declaration laid the groundwork for what would eventually become the world superpower.

Constitution of the United States:

The Constitution is the defining document of the United States. Every law and operation that the government engages in must be interpreted in light of the Constitution. However, the creation of the Constitution was a long and arduous process, and it wasn't even the first constitution in the states.

During the Second Continental Congress, in June 1777, a committee was appointed to draft the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union. It was adopted by Congress in full in November of the same year. It took over three years for all 13 colonies to ratify the document, which was accomplished on March 1, 1781.

While the articles were accepted by the original colonies, it came with limitations that needed to be dealt with. The document gave little power to the central government, lacking many decision-making abilities and enforcement powers. On top of this, most decisions required legislative approval by all 13 colonies. The biggest problem was that the country lacked money. It could print money, but it was worth nothing; it could even borrow money, but couldn't pay it back. While some states were contributing, it wasn't enough and in its infancy, the United States was facing default on its debts.

Due to these and other problems the Confederation Congress called for a convention of state delegates. On May 25, 1787, deliberations began. While the meeting had been called to discuss amendments, the topic quickly changed to consider replacing the articles entirely. There were two plans eventually presented to Congress: the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan. The New Jersey Plan was soundly rejected, which led to compromises on slavery and proportional representation.

In July, John Rutledge, Edmund Randolph, Nathaniel Gorham, Oliver Ellsworth and James Wilson were assigned as the Committee of Detail, drafting the detailed Constitution, including the revisions that had been passed by the Constitution. After that was presented and discussed, and even further compromises reached, on Sep. 8, 1787, a Committee of Style and Arrangement was put together. This group included Alexander Hamilton, William Samuel Johnson, Rufus King, James Madison and Gouverneur Morris. They worked together to present the final draft to Congress. Eventually, the original U.S. Constitution, handwritten on five pages by Jacob Shallus, was approved by Congress, though it was far from a unanimous decision. Benjamin Franklin, one of the 39 signers said, "There are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them ... because I expect no better and because I am not sure that it is not the best."

The Constitution is split by section, starting with the preamble, which introduces and lays out the purpose of the new form of government. Famously, it reads, "We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The first article focuses on the legislature detailing how the legislative branch will be arranged, its members and roles, the limitations of its powers and what members will be subject to. Article II focuses on the executive branch, going into detail about the president of the United States and the vice president of the United States, their job, duties and regulations. The third article focuses on the judiciary, describing the court system and how it will operate, as well as its powers and regulations. Article IV discusses the states and their powers, as well as border changes and admitting new states. The next article, Article V, outlines the amendment process for the constitution. Article VI discusses the powers of the federal government and what it is and isn't allowed to do, as well as its authority in relation with the states. Finally, the seventh article discusses and outlines the ratification process for the newly minted Constitution. The Constitution went into



Photo courtesy of Howard Chandler Christy

Scene at the Signing of the Constitution" by Howard Chandler Christy depicts the signing of the Constitution at Philadelphia.

full effect on March 4, 1789.

There were a total of 39 signatures on the Constitution. Representatives from Delaware were: George Read, Gunning Bedford Jr., John Dickinson, Richard Bassett and Jacob Broom. Representatives from Maryland were: James McHenry, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer and Daniel Carroll. Representatives from Virginia were: John Blair and James Madison. Representatives from North Carolina were: William Blount, Richard Dobbs Spaight and Hugh Williamson. Representatives from South Carolina were: John Rutledge, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney and Pierce Butler. Representatives from Georgia were: William Few and Abarahm Baldwin. Representatives from New Hampshire were: John Langdon and Nicholas Gilman. Representatives from Massachusetts were: Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King. Representatives from Connecticut were: William Samuel Johnson and Roger Sherman. Representing New York was Alexander Hamilton. Representatives from New Jersey were: William Livingston, David Brearley, William Paterson and Jonathan Dayton. Representatives from Pennsylvania were: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Mifflin, Robert Morris, George Clymer, Thomas Fitzsimons, Jared Ingersoll, James Wilson and Gouverneur Morris.

The Bill of Rights:

The Constitution was written, but not everyone was happy with the result. A large faction, known as the Anti-Federalists, found themselves opposing the document for a litany of reasons. The opposition was not misplaced in many considerations, including James Madison, the primary author of The Bill of Rights.

Madison was originally opposed to the idea of the Bill of Rights. He had two primary reasons for it. His first argument was that there was no right for the federal government to take away people's rights. Its powers were "few and defined." Thus, anything not listed in the Constitution resides within the state or the people themselves. His second argument was that creating a list of rights would mean that anything not on the list wouldn't be protected. However, he and the framers believed that the natural rights of man were too numerous to list. Therefore, writing a list would be antithetical.

Yet, opposition to ratification of the Constitution was a big issue, specifically because it included no Bill of Rights. Madison saw that his only chance to get the Constitution ratified was to add a Bill of Rights.

Amendment I: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Amendment II: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Amendment III: "No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in manner to be prescribed by law."

Amendment IV: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searched and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probably cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

Amendment V: "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual serving in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

Amendment VI: "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense."

Amendment VII: "In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law."

Amendment VIII: "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

Amendment IX: "The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." Madison added this amendment to allay the fears he and other Framers had that unlisted rights would be violated.

Amendment X: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

These amendments were sufficient for the large majority of people, and led to the ratification of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It was also the beginning of the amending process, and the first amendments to the document. The Constitution would later be amended multiple times throughout its existence.

Declaration of Independence

of the thirteen united States of America

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the Causes which impel them to the Separation. — We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that Mankind are more disposed to suffer, while Evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object wins a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. — Such has been the Patient Sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the Necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The History of the present King of Great Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance, unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inestimable to them and formidable to Tyrants only. — He has called together legislative Bodies at Places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole Purpose of fatiguing them into Compliance with his Measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People. — He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their Exercise; the State remaining in the mean Time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within. — He has endeavoured to prevent the Population of these States; for that Purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their Migrations hither, and raising the Conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the Tenure of their Offices, and the Amount and Payment of their Salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their Substance. — He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislature. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power. — He has combined with us to subject us to a Jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: — For Quartersing large Bodies of armed Troops among us: — For pretending them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: — For calling off our Trade with all Parts of the World: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended Offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an Example and fit Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People. — He is at this Time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the Works of Death, Desolation and Tyranny, already begun with Circumstances of Cruelty & Insult, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions. In every Stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Relief in the most humble Terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered by repeated Injury. A Prince, whose Character is thus marked by every Act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People. Nor have We been wanting in Attention to our British Brethren. We have warned them from Time to Time of Attempts by their Legislature to extend an unwarrantable Jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the Circumstances of our Emigration and Settlement here. We have appealed to their native Justice and Magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the Ties of our common Kindred to disavow these Usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our Connections and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of Mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the Rectitude of our Intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political Connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the Support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

John Hancock
Samuel Chase
Wm. Paro
Tho. Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton
George Wythe
Richard Henry Lee
Th. Jefferson
Wm. Harrison
Th. Nelson Jr.
Francis Lightfoot Lee
Carler Braxton
Abra. Morris
Benjamin Rush
Benj. Franklin
John Morton
Geo. Taylor
James Wilson
Geo. Ross
Casor Rodney
John M. Deane
Thos. M. Pennington
John Jay
John Adams
Lewis Morris
Richd. Stockton
Geo. Witherspoon
Fred. Hopkinson
John Cort
Abra. Clark
Joseph W. Signer
Sam. Adams
John Adams
Robt. Frazer
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Suwannee Republicans encourage voter participation ahead of August election

Lisa Keep, Chair, Suwannee County Republican Executive Committee
Contributor

The Suwannee County Republican Party salutes our Founders on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence! Thanks to them, you have the opportunity to vote in August and November of this year. Don't miss it! We owe it to them. Read below for more details about our upcoming August election.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to criticize our great country, our Founders and our founding documents. By that definition, we are not fashionable. We agree with our Founders that there are truths so obvious that anyone can see them – that our Creator God blessed us with inherent rights, rights that can be infringed upon, if we allow it, but never taken away. We, too, believe that as God's creatures, we humans are equal in His sight and are loved and valued equally by Him.

President Lincoln, the first Republican President, recognized the miracle that was our founding, when he said, "All honor to Jefferson – to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there, that to-day and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling-block to the very harbingers of re-appearing tyranny and oppression."

It remains our task today to use Jefferson's words in the Declaration, which define the values that inform the words and structure of the Constitution, in the same way, as a "rebuke and a stumbling-block to . . . re-appearing tyranny and oppression." Benjamin Franklin is said to have responded, when asked what the Constitutional Convention had produced, "A republic – if you can keep it," and the same holds true for us today. Our constitutional Republic (not a democracy!) can only survive if we, citizens, care enough to be active, self-governing citizens. Each of us can do something, beyond simply voting (though we should all do that, at least). Attend meetings of the various councils and commissions that run our city, county and district, to understand how our elected and appointed representatives are acting on our behalf; volunteer for a political campaign; or help educate and turn out voters regarding an issue that is important to you.

Proverbs 25:11 says, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures [frames] of silver." President Lincoln wrote about the Declaration, echoing these words, saying, "The assertion of that principle ['liberty to all'], at that time, was the word, 'fitly spoken,' which has proved an 'apple of gold' to us. The Union, and the Constitution, are the picture of silver, subsequently framed around it. The picture was made, not to conceal, or destroy the apple; but to adorn, and preserve it. The picture was made for the apple – not the apple for the picture. So let us act, that neither picture, or apple shall ever be blurred, or bruised or broken. That we may so act, we must study, and understand the points of danger."

He tells us that the Declaration of Independence is the heart and soul of our country, while the Constitution and the United States were formed to preserve the Declaration, its words and its values. "So let us act," he said, telling us that we must be active citizens in our Republic, and so "we must study and understand the points of danger." We must be educated citizens in order to be effective, active citizens.

So let us tell you about the August election and the candidates, so you can "study and understand."

You must be registered to vote and have chosen or changed your registered political party by Sunday, July 26, in order to vote in the August primary election.

The dates for that election are Saturday, Aug. 8, and Saturday, Aug. 15, for early voting; Election Day is Tuesday, Aug. 18.

Newcomers to Florida may not know that it is a closed-primary state. Only voters who are registered members of political parties may vote for respective party candidates or nominees for an office in a primary election. Party affiliation can be changed at any time, but in order to vote for a party candidate in an upcoming primary election, the person must register with that party or change his or her party by the registration deadline for that primary election.

However, some races are nonpartisan, meaning candidates do not identify with a political party, and there is no party-specific primary election. In those cases, all registered voters, including those without party affiliation, are entitled to vote in those races on the ballot. In Florida, nonpartisan races like these appear on the August primary ballot. Our August ballot will include elections for the Suwannee County School Board.

There are two candidates each for District 3 (Clifford Bean and Malcolm Hines, to replace current member Tim Alcorn) and District 5 (Aaron Bass and incumbent Ronald White).

The local partisan race remaining for 2026 (the Live Oak city elections having been completed) is for District 2 County Commissioner. There are three Democratic candidates (Stefan Blue, Cynthia Robinson and Billy White, Sr.) and one Republican candidate (Shea Deloach).

Local races like these, whether nonpartisan or partisan, often have low turnout, especially in primary elections. This is a shame, since these officials are granted considerable authority over our lives through their work. However, if you vote in a low-turnout election, your vote matters a lot! Any election can be won or lost by only one or a few votes, but this is even more likely to happen in elections with a small number of voters. It is our civic duty and our inherited privilege to vote.

The statewide offices for which we'll be voting in both August and November include Senator, Governor, Attorney General, Agriculture Commissioner and Chief Financial Officer. The Republican Party of Florida has endorsed the following primary candidates: Senator Ashley Moody; Attorney General James Uthmeier; Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson; and Chief Financial Officer Blaise Ingoglia. Mr. Uthmeier has no Republican primary opponent, so he will only appear on our November ballots.

As you probably know, in November we will be voting on whether to amend our state constitution to reduce property taxes. We will have more information about this amendment to help you make your decision as the November election approaches.

Where can you get more information about all things Republican? In our Victory HQ, located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 129 and U.S. Highway 90, at 101 Ohio Ave. N. We have limited hours, because we are all volunteers, but we hope to be open a few hours each day from Monday through Saturday until the November election. Drop in to visit, chat, pick up campaign literature and yard signs, and play a board game about America! Want to help out? Contact us! Find us on Facebook at Suwannee County Republican Party, or call Pete at 386-330-4005 and leave a message.

From July to November, we will meet at our Victory HQ instead of City Hall. We meet on the first Thursday of each month. There is an optional social time at 6:30 p.m., and the meeting starts at 7 p.m. We strive to have speakers address topics of importance to our community and to allow Republican candidates to speak and take questions as well. Please join us to help you "study and understand."

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**Suwannee County
Republican Party**

www.florida.gop/Suwannee

Suwannee County Republican Party meets at 7 p.m. every first Thursday of each month at Live Oak City Hall.

From July to November only, we are switching our meeting location to our Republican Victory HQ, 101 Ohio Ave N.



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Early voting: August 8-15

Election Day: August 18



AMERICAN Icons



THE UNITED STATES FLAG

The flag, also known as "The Stars and Stripes," "Old Glory," "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "The Red, White and Blue," is iconic. The 50 stars represent the 50 states, while the 13 stripes represent the original 13 colonies. The color white signifies purity and innocence, red represents hardiness and valor, and blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice.



THE BALD EAGLE

The national symbol of the United States is a bald eagle. It was officially adopted as the national emblem in 1782. For a long time, it was considered the national bird, though this wasn't official until 2024. The eagle was chosen for several reasons. It is the largest bird in North America, and the founders often compared their republic with the Roman Republic, which also used a lot of eagle imagery. At this point, the bald eagle and the U.S.A. are synonymous both in the states and abroad.



WALT DISNEY

Everyone knows about Walt Disney. The Disney organization still lives to this day as a multibillion-dollar company. Disney himself was a pioneer of the American animation industry. He built a company that created some of the most iconic films throughout history. Of course, more than that, he pioneered the theme park world as well, standing as a testament to the stalwartness of American industry.



MICHAEL JACKSON

Continuing the music trend came the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. Possibly the most famous person in the world to date, Jackson set a new standard for musical achievement. He popularized many famous dances, set world records and is hailed as the King of Pop music still to this day. In fact, he is often deemed the greatest entertainer in the world. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Songwriters Hall of Fame and the Dance Hall of Fame.



ELVIS PRESLEY

The King of Rock and Roll set a new standard for music and was one of the most culturally significant figures of the 20th century. Elvis Presley introduced rock and roll to the world and helped race relations across the United States, as he incorporated music from both Black and white cultures. He was one of the best selling music artists in history and successful across multiple genres, starting off what would be the golden age of the American music industry.

MICHAEL JORDAN

Possibly the greatest, and most famous basketball player of all time is Michael Jordan. He played 15 seasons in the National Basketball Association (NBA) and won six NBA championships with the Chicago Bulls. Jordan is the wealthiest athlete of all time and is, of course, famous for his Air Jordan shoes. He starred in multiple movies and was even awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

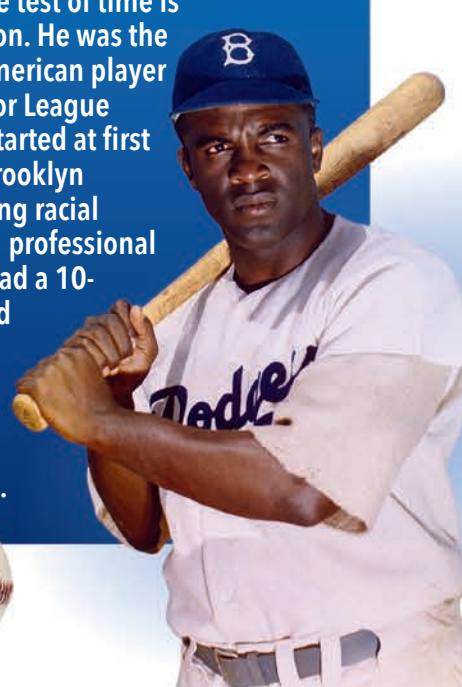


BABE RUTH

George Herman "Babe" Ruth is synonymous with America iconism. He was a Major League Baseball Player who played from 1914 until 1935. Nicknamed "the Bambino" and "the Sultan of Swat," he was an all-time baseball star, as well as one of the first five members of the Baseball Hall of Fame.

JACKIE ROBINSON

Another baseball legend who stands the test of time is Jackie Robinson. He was the first African American player to play in Major League Baseball. He started at first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers, ending racial segregation in professional baseball. He had a 10-year career and contributed to the Dodgers' 1955 World Series championship.



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The Road to Independence

French and Indian War (1754)
Amidst ongoing tensions between Great Britain and France in their American colonies and abroad, 22-year-old Lieutenant Colonel George Washington, of Virginia, accidentally sparks the French and Indian War, leading to the global conflict known as the Seven Years' War.

Treaty of Paris (Feb. 1, 1763)

Proclamation Line of 1763

Sugar Act (1764)
Parliament adopts a Sugar Act to regulate trade and raise revenue within its expanded empire. Colonists who depend on trade protest that the duties on sugar violate their right to consent to their own taxation. Others are concerned because accused smugglers will be tried without a jury. Some protest that the act supports slavery on Caribbean sugar plantations.

Stamp Act (1765)
As a way for Britain to support its North American regiments after the Seven Years' War, a tax was enforced on stamps and other items.

Declaratory Act (1766)

Townshend Acts (1767)
The Townshend Acts, a series of laws enacted by the British Parliament to assert and exercise its right to raise revenue in the colonies and strengthen enforcement of trade regulations, spark renewed protests in many American communities.

British Troops in Boston (1768)
The landing of British troops in Boston, Mass., energizes anti-British political sentiment. Street protests and confrontations lead to the March 5, 1770, Boston Massacre.

Second Continental Congress (1775)
Colonial delegates reconvene in Philadelphia, now faced with bloodshed in Massachusetts and divisions over whether to seek reconciliation with the British Crown. Congress votes to create a Continental Army from the New England forces surrounding Boston and appoints George Washington commander.

Washington assumes command (June 19, 1775)

Coercive Acts (1774)
Adopted by Parliament between March 31 and June 2, 1774, the four Coercive Acts punish Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party and make an example of it for other colonists. The acts close the Port of Boston to trade, suspend its colonial legislature and town meetings, establish a military governorship and require all colonies to house British soldiers.

Boston Tea Party (Dec. 16, 1773)

Boston Massacre (March 5, 1770)
After years of rising tension between Bostonians and British soldiers in the city, violence erupts on the night of March 5, 1770. A crowd attacks a British guard. Five soldiers and an officer come to relieve him. Someone yells "fire." Their gunfire kills three people, mortally wounds two and injures six others.

Lexington and Concord (April 19, 1775)
A British force from the Boston garrison attempts to seize military supplies of the Massachusetts militia, sparking the first military engagement of the American Revolution: the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

Battle of Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775)
British troops dislodge an entrenched New England force from the heights overlooking Charleston and Boston Harbor, but suffer more than 1,000 casualties. The engagement boosts confidence in the American army and persuades British leaders that they must avoid direct assaults on entrenched American positions in the future.

Virginia Declaration of Rights and Constitution (June 1776)
The American Continental Congress calls on the colonies to create new state governments to replace British royal authority. In response, Virginia adopts a state Constitution and Declaration of Rights, which asserts that "all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights."

American Independence (July 2, 1776)

Battle of Long Island (Aug. 27, 1776)
British land and naval forces attack the Continental Army on Long Island, leading to a series of American defeats around New York and across New Jersey. British forces occupy New York until November 1783.

Washington crosses the Delaware (Dec. 25, 1776)
Following a demoralizing retreat from New York, and with the enlistment terms of many troops about to expire, General George Washington gambles on a surprise attack on the Hessian garrison of Trenton, N.J. Washington's Christmas night crossing of the Delaware River leads to the battles of Trenton and Princeton during "10 Crucial Days" that revive the struggle to secure American independence.

Valley Forge Encampment (Dec. 19, 1777)

British surrender at Saratoga (Oct. 17, 1777)

Black troops petition to remain in the army (December 1775)

Evacuation of Boston (March 17, 1776)
After American troops fortify hills outside of British-occupied Boston with cannons obtained from New York's Fort Ticonderoga, British General William Howe chooses to evacuate Boston rather than risk the destruction or capture of his army, and an officer come to relieve him.

Declaration read to Washington's troops (July 9, 1776)
General George Washington orders the Declaration of Independence to be read to Continental Army forces in and around New York City. A group of soldiers, sailors and civilians tears down a statue of King George III in a part of the city called Bowling Green.

Britain declares war on the Netherlands (December 1780)
In response to the financial and military support that the Dutch had covertly or informally provided the American Congress and its allies, the British declare war on the Netherlands. The British government has no allies in Europe for the first time in a century.

Mum Bett and Quok Walker cases (August 1781)

Cornwallis surrenders (Oct. 19, 1781)
British General Charles Cornwallis surrendered to General George Washington at the Battle of Yorktown in 1781.

Clark captures Kaskaskia (July 4, 1778)

Franco-American Alliance (February 1778)

Battle of Monmouth (June 28, 1778)

Constitutional Convention (1787)
Presided over by George Washington, delegates convene in Philadelphia's State House (now known as Independence Hall) to revise the Articles of Confederation. Over the course of the summer, this body frames the United States Constitution.

Washington's Inauguration (April 30, 1789)
At a ceremony on the balcony of New York's City Hall, George Washington is sworn in as the first President of the United States of America under its new Constitution.

Bill of Rights (Dec. 15, 1791)
The first Federal Congress adopts 10 amendments to the Federal Constitution, written in 1787. This "Bill of Rights" states and protects fundamental freedoms of speech, religion, defense and jurisprudence.

Star-Spangled Banner (Sep. 14, 1814)
Watching the British bombardment of Fort Mchenry outside of Washington, D.C., Francis Scott Key composes the words of a song celebrating the American defense. He calls it the Star-Spangled Banner. Set to a popular English tune, it will later be adopted as the American National Anthem in 1931.

General Washington resigns (Dec. 23, 1783)
In the supreme act affirming civilian control of the American military, General George Washington resigns his commission in a moving ceremony at the Maryland State House in Annapolis.

British forces leave New York City (Nov. 25, 1783)

From the Museum of the American Revolution

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A FEW OF OUR NATIONS *National Landmarks*

Independence Hall

Originally called the Pennsylvania State House and completed in 1733, Independence Hall is the home of freedom. Located in Philadelphia, Penn., the hall is where both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were debated and eventually adopted by the Founding Fathers of the United States.



Photo courtesy Rdsmith4

Fort Sumter

The American Civil War is one of the most famous wars in American history, costing the most American lives of any war in history. Fort Sumter, located in South Carolina, was built after the War of 1812. The fort was never finished; however, it was the site of a major historical moment. In 1861, the first shots of the Civil War were fired there.



Photo courtesy Old Town Trolley Tours

Hoover Dam

Located in the Black Canyon of the Colorado River, on the boundary of Nevada and Arizona, the Hoover Dam stands as one of the greatest feats of engineering in human history. It stands at 726 feet high and 1,244 feet in length. It was built by over 1,000 workers and cost over 100 lives. It was the largest concrete structure ever built at the time, and used new and unproven techniques to accomplish the structural feat.



Photo courtesy Mariordo

Liberty Bell

Otherwise known as the State House Bell or Old State House Bell, the Liberty Bell is one of the most iconic symbols of American Independence. It is located across from Independence Hall today, though it was originally placed in the steeple of Independence Hall. It was cast with the lettering "Proclaim LIBERTY" and was likely one of the bells rung when the Declaration of Independence was first read to the public.



Photo courtesy William Zhang

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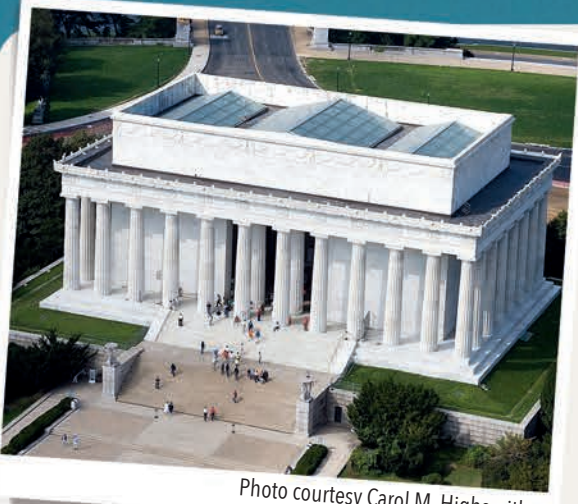


Photo courtesy Carol M. Highsmith

The Lincoln Memorial

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States. He was famous for ending slavery in the United States and winning the Civil War. A monument to his legacy stands on the western end of the National Mall. It features a large statue of Lincoln and painted interior murals, all contained within a classical temple-style building.

Yellowstone National Park

In the northwest corner of Wyoming is another of the most famous natural wonders in the United States of America. It was the first national park in the United States and is considered the first national park in the world. It covers 3,468 square miles of a myriad of biomes, wildlife and natural wonders, including the most famous Old Faithful geyser.



Photo courtesy Grastel

Statue of Liberty

Out on Liberty Island, in New York, N.Y., stands a copper clad statue, a gift to the United States from the people of France. The Statue of Liberty is inspired by the Roman goddess of liberty, Libertas, holding a torch over her head, and holding a tablet inscribed with "July IV MDCCLXXVI." Her left foot stands on top of a broken chain and shackle. The green statue has been an insignia representing the freedom the United States stands for since 1886.



Photo courtesy Saffron Blaze

Niagara Falls

A group of three waterfalls standing at the border between New York and the Canadian province of Ontario, formed by the Niagara River, houses another of the most famous natural landmarks in the country: Niagara Falls. It has the highest flow rate of any waterfall in North America, and the seventh largest in the world. During its peak hours, over 5.9 million feet of water go over the crest every minute.

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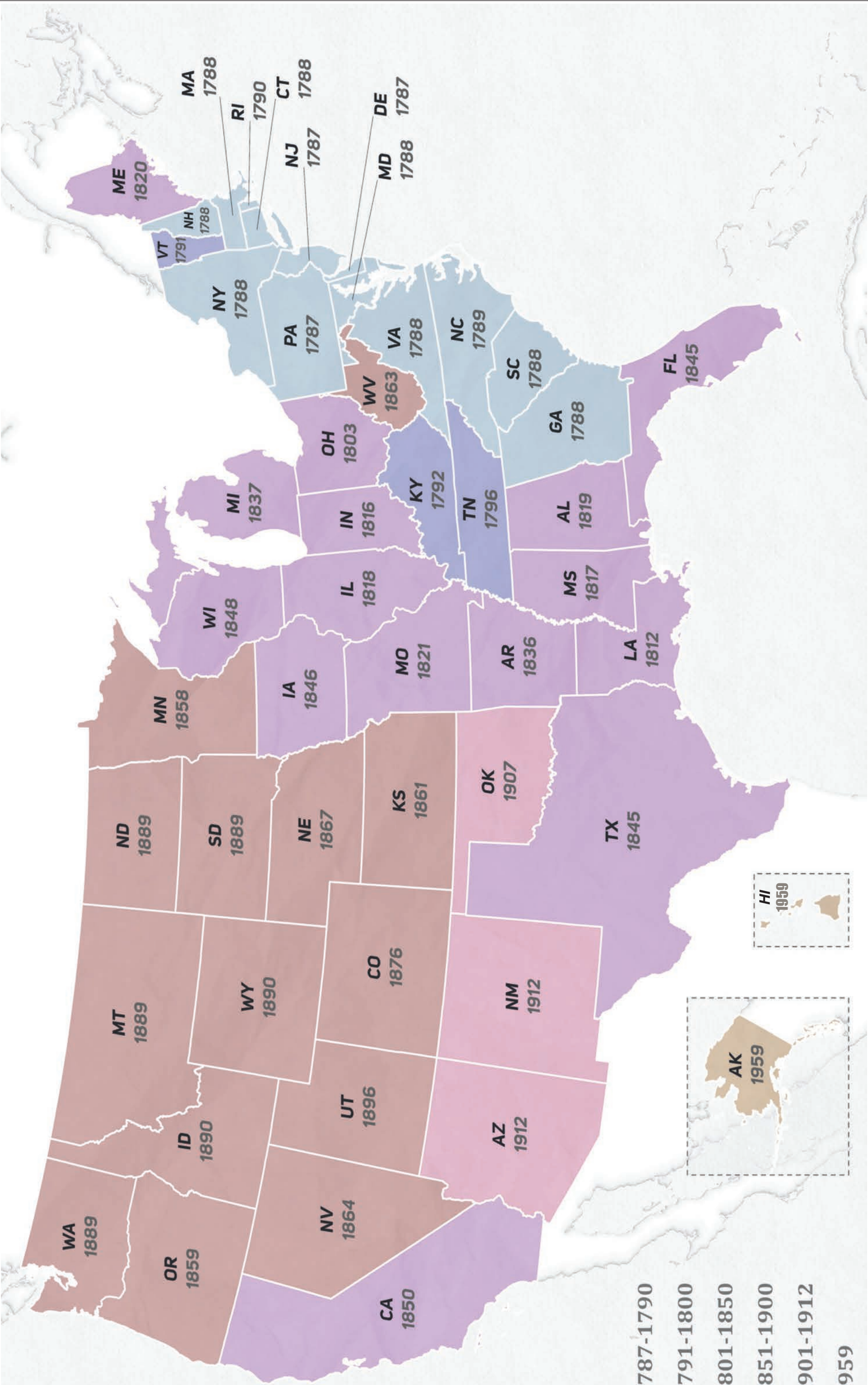
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