

# Washington County News WEEKEND



4-H girls sew crazy  
A4

Saturday, FEBRUARY 4, 2012

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50¢

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## IN BRIEF

### AARP Driver Safety Program Class

**CHIPLEY** — An AARP Driver Safety Class is scheduled for 8 a.m. Monday in Chipley at the old driver's license office behind the Council on Aging on South Boulevard. Please call the Council on Aging at 638-6216 or 638-2111 for reservations. Completion can earn attendees a discount on auto insurance premiums.

### Glenn Miller Band in concert

**CHIPLEY** — The Glenn Miller Orchestra will make a concert stop in Chipley at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the CHS Auditorium on Brickyard Road.

Glenn Miller was one of the most successful dance bandleaders in the swing era of the 1930s and '40s.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students and can be purchased from any CHS Band Booster or through the CHS Band office at 638-6100, ext. 525. Proceeds from the event will go to the Chipley Band Boosters, whose mission is to support the band program at CHS.

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ANDREW WARDLOW | Florida Freedom

Mark Hess, center, assistant manager at Ebro Greyhound Park, talks with Harry Hess, left, and Chuck Pohlmann as election results come in at Ebro on Tuesday.

## Hurdles remain for Ebro

Scott: Attorney general's opinion will be followed

By Ali Helgoth

Florida Freedom Newspapers

**EBRO** — The owners of Ebro Greyhound Park won the support of Washington County voters for the addition of slot machines at the pari-mutuel wagering facility, but now they must receive approval from the state, and it likely will be a tougher sell.

The project was presented to Washington County voters as a way to increase jobs and raise revenue for local governments, but it would mean a major reduction in revenue to the state.

In 2010, the state approved the 20-year Seminole Compact, which outlines how the Seminole Tribe of Florida operates casinos in the state. Part of the compact gives substantial exclusivity to the tribe in offering gaming. In exchange for that exclusivity, the state receives a portion of the tribe's gaming revenue, a guaranteed \$1 billion over the first five years.

If slot machines are allowed in places outside of certain locations in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, the tribe no longer would be required to make those

See **EBRO A2**



CECILIA SPEARS | The News

Supporters at Ebro Greyhound Park celebrate on Tuesday upon learning the countywide referendum for adding gaming machines passed with 57 percent of the voters in favor of the measure.

*"These counties are wasting their money having these referenda because they will not be entitled to have slots even if they have a referendum. People are misreading the law."*

**Barry Richard**  
attorney for the Seminole Tribe

## Win or lose, referendum brought out opinions

By Randal Seyler  
Managing Editor  
rseyler@chipleypaper.com

**CHIPLEY** — Now that the election is over, the legal battles begin. But before the legal squabbling, there was already contention between residents for and against the referendum to allow slot machines at Ebro Greyhound Park. Washington County voters

turned out in droves Tuesday to vote in favor of the measure, but a fair number also turned out against the proposal. The countywide referendum passed with 3,792 votes (57 percent) in favor of adding gaming machines, while 2,832 voters (43 percent) were against the measure.

In an election where for most the only choice was which Republican candidate to endorse, Wash-

ington County residents instead participated in one of the state's more interesting, and contentious, contests.

No people against the referendum were to be found at the election supervisor's office in Chipley Tuesday night, although city streets sported plenty of "Vote No" signs — although often

See **WIN OR LOSE A5**

## Chipley woman struck by car, dies

Staff Report

**CHIPLEY** — A Chipley woman died Jan. 28 when she was struck by a car while walking her dog, Chipley Police Chief Kevin Crews said in a news release issued Thursday.

Lesley Dingwall, 33, was walking her dog west along South Boulevard on the north shoulder of the road last Saturday. A Ford pickup driven by Katelyn Strickland, 22, of Chipley was traveling westbound on South Boulevard when Dingwall and her dog, Harley, stepped onto the roadway directly into the path of the pickup, according to police. The pickup struck Dingwall and the dog, killing the dog instantly.

Dingwall was taken by Washington County EMS to a Dothan, Ala., hospital where she later

See **STRUCK A5**

## CRA discusses Alleyway Project

By Cecilia Spears  
Staff Writer  
cspears@chipleypaper.com

**CHIPLEY** — The Chipley Redevelopment Agency discussed its main project, the Alleyway Project, during a regularly scheduled meeting Jan. 25.

"I heard that there was some concern with the Chipley City Council about us spending \$45,000 on the Alleyway Project," CRA Director Ted Everett said. "The cost is estimated to be around \$40,000. Most of those costs are to level the alleyway because of storm water issues, to clean the sides of the buildings, put murals on them and install lighting for safety measures. This is a key alleyway between the parking lot and our downtown businesses."

CRA member Jon Floyd said this is the agency's "number one project."

"If we're not working on the alleyway, what are we working on?" he said.

Everett said the Chipley City

See **ALLEYWAY A5**

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# Chipley student brings Project Rocksafeto Kiwanis

Special to The News

**CHIPLEY** — The Chipley Kiwanis Club met for its weekly luncheon at Pattillo's Restaurant at the Washington-Holmes County Technical Center on Jan. 31. Lunch was provided by the staff of the Washington-Holmes County Technical Center.

Luke Hinson, a Chipley High School senior, presented a program he has initiated, which he calls "Project Rocksafeto." Project Rocksafeto is both a fundraising program and an awareness program focusing on the problems of human trafficking.

Hinson told the club he became interested in this issue after attending a conference in Atlanta that dealt with the subject of human trafficking. Luke said human trafficking is slavery and is still committed on a massive scale the world over, including the United States. Although most U.S. residents are unaware of the problem, more than 27 million people every year are held in bondage. Most of the victims are either forced into the commercial sex industry or are

held as workers in sweatshops and other types of hard manual labor. Forty to 50 percent of all the victims are 18 years of age or younger. Most of the youth are forced into the commercial sex industry, where they are victimized daily by pedophiles.



**LUKE HINSON**

All funds raised by Project Rocksafeto will be donated to the International Justice Mission, a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization that fights human trafficking on multiple fronts. Project Rocksafeto aims to raise \$5,085 dollars, the price to fund a rescue mission.

However, the International Justice Mission does much more than just conduct rescue missions. The IJM utilizes investigators, lawyers and social workers to intervene in individual cases of abuse in partnership with state and local authorities. By pushing individual cases through the state's or nation's justice system — from investigation to prosecution — the IJM seeks to ascertain the specific sources of corruption, lack of resources or problems with the nation's legal and social systems

that allow these abuses to occur. The IJM seeks four outcomes: victim relief, accountability for those responsible for the abuses, survivor aftercare and structural transformation (changing the local legal system).

All funds raised by Project Rocksafeto will be donated to the IJM's general fund, which can be used for any of the organization's missions.

Luke told the club he was inspired to name his project "Rocksafeto" because of a Bible verse, 2nd Samuel 22:3: "My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior — from violent men you save me."

For more information on IJM, visit [www.ijm.org](http://www.ijm.org). For more information on Project Rocksafeto or to make a donation, visit [projectrocksafeto.webs.com](http://projectrocksafeto.webs.com).

The Kiwanis club meets at noon Tuesdays at Pattillo's. For an invitation, contact any Kiwanian or David Solger, membership chairperson, at 638-1276.

For more information about the Kiwanis Club of Chipley, visit [www.ChipleyKiwanis.com](http://www.ChipleyKiwanis.com).

## RELAY FOR LIFE COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATES

By Cathrine Lamb  
Editorial Assistant  
[damb@chipleypaper.com](mailto:damb@chipleypaper.com)

**WASHINGTON COUNTY** — The Washington County Relay For Life Committee held a meeting Thursday evening in the Northwest Florida Community Hospital (NFCH) dining room. As of Thursday, Washington County has 18 paid teams. The county's goal for the 2012 Relay is 30 teams and to raise \$75,000. The campsite theme for this year was verified. The theme is Storybook with the slogan being "Our Storybook Ending is a CURE." There has been no entertainment set up as of yet, but we will keep you updated as the information becomes available.

The survivor dinner will be sponsored by Atkins. When we get the date and time of the survivor dinner, we will let everyone know. If you know a survivor who has not registered, contact Linda Bybee at 658-4038 to get them registered, and remember to remind them to be at the Relay on May 11 for the survivor lap. Caregivers, make sure you register, too.

For those wishing to honor someone who has cancer or to remember someone you have lost to cancer, email your pictures to [clamb@chipleypaper.com](mailto:clamb@chipleypaper.com) or [cspears@chipleypaper.com](mailto:cspears@chipleypaper.com). These pictures will be shown on a PowerPoint presentation during the luminaria ceremony being held just after dark on May 11 at Relay. Please make sure to include the name of the person in the picture. The deadline to have the pictures emailed or brought in will be 2 p.m. April 27. We cannot guarantee that they will be in the PowerPoint if received after deadline.

## EBRO from page A1

payments to the state. The payments would resume only if the tribe regained its substantial exclusivity.

The state imposes a 35 percent tax on gaming wins from slot machines that are not on tribe property, equal to the amount of money put into a slot machine minus the amount paid out.

Mark Hess, a manager at Ebro Greyhound Park, said in an interview last month that a market study indicated taxable revenue at Ebro would be equal to \$60 million the first year and \$68 million the second year of operation, putting taxes at \$21 million and \$23.8 million, respectively.

In addition, Ebro has pledged about \$2 million annually to go directly to local governments.

About two weeks before the vote, Attorney General Pam Bondi issued an opinion that a slot machine license cannot be issued to a pari-mutuel facility in a county in which a county-wide referendum is held without first receiving approval by the Legislature or through a change of the constitution.

State law includes three clauses that govern when pari-mutuel facilities can have slot machines. For

facilities located outside Miami-Dade and Broward counties, the law states "eligible facility means ... any licensed pari-mutuel facility in any other county in which a majority of voters have approved slot machines at such facilities in a countywide referendum held pursuant to a statutory or constitutional authorization after the effective date of this section in the respective county."

It seems to be the statutory or constitutional authority language that has led to a dispute about the law's meaning.

During a Dec. 6 meeting of the Florida House's Business & Community Affairs subcommittee, Michelle Morton, the subcommittee's attorney, said the "provision was intended to require a future authorizing action, either a legislative authorization such as a special act or a constitutional authorization before it would be applicable to any county. ... It appears that (those seeking a referendum) believe the county's general authority to hold referenda is enough to be able to authorize slots under this section."

In her opinion, Bondi wrote that legislative

intent favors the first interpretation.

"This is just one person's legal opinion," Hess said during an interview just after the opinion was issued. "With all due respect to Ms. Bondi, we have other legal minds who strongly, strongly disagree with her opinion."

Others who strongly disagree with Bondi's opinion include those in Gadsden County, where voters approved slot machines at a quarter horse barrel racing track near Gretna.

But Bondi isn't alone in her opinion.

"These counties are wasting their money having these referenda because they will not be entitled to have slots even if they have a referendum," said Barry Richard, an attorney for the Seminole Tribe with the Tallahassee branch of GreenberTraurig. "People are misreading the law."

Hess has said he doesn't believe it is a wasted effort, and owners of Ebro Greyhound Park aren't deterred, saying the law is on their side.

Hess, whose father, Stockton Hess, owns the park, said before the election that they planned to begin the application process for a license from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation's Division of Pari-mutuel Wagering immediately.

If the license is denied — and it's as close to a

sure bet as one can get that it will be denied — an appeal likely will end up in court.

The attorney general's opinion is not legally binding, but Gov. Rick Scott has said his opinion will be followed, and a slot machine license won't be issued for Ebro.

Not long after Bondi's opinion was released, Hess said Ebro owners expect to prevail in court. He previously said he expects the first phase of expansion could be completed within a year.

Plans call for the addition of up to 2,000 slot machines as part of a proposed expansion of the property into a \$300 million "contemporary resort hotel and entertainment center" that would include 300 to 500 hotel rooms, retail, restaurants and an entertainment venue.

With the expansion come jobs, an estimated 1,200 to 1,500, including 300 construction-related jobs, and the addition of millions of dollars to the county's revenue.

A website created to share information in the lead-up to the election, [yourchoiceforjobs.com](http://yourchoiceforjobs.com), includes a form for people to "pre-apply" for jobs.

The site states "some new jobs are likely to begin as early as mid 2012." Those who submit their information online will be emailed openings before they are advertised to the public.

## Beekeeping club to form

By Kay White  
Special to The News

Monday night marked the final segment of the eight-week long class "Beekeeping in the Panhandle," presented by the University of Florida's Extension Service. Multiple counties in the Florida panhandle and southern Alabama were linked via the polycom system. Live presentations were viewed on television by all students in participating counties. Several university professors taught classes, and local beekeepers and inspectors also gave presentations answered students' questions. Local bee legend, mentor and Agricultural Hall of Fame inductee Laurence Cutts gave presentations in addition to attending all segments in the Chipley class. Elmore Herman, owner of Millie Bee Beekeeping Supply in Marianna, also gave presentations. As part of

the course, a beekeeping trade show and seminar was held at the Washington County Agricultural Center and was very well attended. Concluding the course on Monday night, Washington County Extension Agents Andy Andreasen and Matthew Orwat presented students with a certificate of completion.

As a result of the enthusiasm generated by "Beekeeping in the Panhandle," there is interest in forming a local beekeeping club in order to network with other beekeepers, continue the learning process and share information.

An organizational meeting for the proposed beekeeping club will be at 6 p.m. Monday Feb. 6, in the east wing of the ag center, 1424 Jackson Ave. in Chipley. Any person interested in beekeeping in the areas in and around Holmes, Jackson and Washington counties is invited to attend.

## STRUCK from page A1

died. Police say there are no charges anticipated as a result of this investigation, which is being conducted by the Chipley Police Department.

Dingwall is survived by her parents, John and Leslie Dingwall of Sunny Hills; three brothers, Johnny Dingwall and Sheana Gallaher of Sacramento, Calif., Robert "Bobby" Dingwall and wife, Ira, of Moscow and Benjamin "Ben" Dingwall and his wife, Rachel, of

Laredo, Texas; as well as nieces, nephews and two aunts.

Funeral services were held Friday at Shiloh Baptist Church with the Rev. Tim Patton officiating. A private interment will be held today.

A memorial fund has been set up in Dingwall's memory at Tyndall Federal Credit Union. (Account No. 1968326, Routing No. 263183175 or Electronic transfer: P.O. Box 59760 Panama City, FL 32412.)

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### \*\*NOTICE\*\*

As follow up from the Presidential Preference Primary Election held on January 31, 2012, the Washington County Canvassing Board will reconvene at 8:30 a.m. on February 13, 2012 to conduct the Voting System Audit pursuant to F.S. 101.591 and Rule 1S-5.026, FAC the meeting will take place at the Supervisor of Elections office located at 1331 South BLVD, Chipley, FL.

### PUBLIC NOTICE EXECUTIVE SESSION

There will be an Executive Session of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners, Thursday, February 16, 2012 following the scheduled 9 a.m. Board Meeting. The location is 1331 South Blvd., Chipley, Florida. The purpose of the Executive Session will be to address legal issues concerning the county.

## NOTICE

**March 1st** is the deadline to apply for Homestead, Senior Citizen's, Disability, Widow's/Widower's, Veterans Exemptions and Agricultural Classification (Greenbelt).

Property owners who did not receive Homestead Exemption in Washington County for 2011 but now qualify will need to file an original application. Assistance with filing applications for Exemptions or Agricultural Classification may be obtained at your Property Appraiser's office.

**Gil Carter, CFA**  
**Washington County**  
**Property Appraiser**

# Thank You!



The Hess family has owned and operated Ebro Greyhound Park for 46 years. Pictured are Robert Hess, Stockton "Stocky" Hess, Harry Hess (front row) Rick Hess and Mark Hess.

*"The Hess family is tremendously grateful for the large number of people who turned out to vote on Tuesday. We are humbled by your overwhelming show of support and are truly blessed by the trust and confidence you have shown in us. We will work hard to prove our appreciation, share our success with the community and provide good jobs to Washington County residents. You can depend on all of us at Ebro Greyhound Park to forever honor your trust and to continue earning it—today, tomorrow and in the years ahead."*

*Stockton Hess*

**Stockton Hess**  
**President & General Manager**  
**Ebro Greyhound Park**

**Ebro**  
 Greyhound Park  
 & Poker Room

We will keep you updated on the process and progress of obtaining our state permitting, the expansion of Ebro Greyhound Park and future employment opportunities.

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Political advertisement paid for and approved by Grow Our Local Economy - 6558 Dog Track Road - Ebro, Florida 32437

# 4-H is sew crazy

Special to The News

There's a 4-H Club in Washington County that's crazy... Sew Crazy, that is! Led by 4-H volunteer leader Andrea Locke, Sew Crazy 4-H Club is in its second year of creating unique sewing projects. This year, members have sewn their own snuggles, neck roll pillows and flower accents to accessorize. The Sew Crazy 4-H Club is looking for new members. If you have your own sewing machine and want to learn to sew or want to increase your sewing skills, contact 4-H Youth Development Agent, Julie Pigott Dillard, at 638-6180 or email juliepd@ufl.edu for meeting dates and times. 4-H is a community of young people across America learning leadership, citizenship and life skills and is open to all youth.



SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Savannah Orr, Andrea Locke, Jenna Kindig and Skylar Shipes model their flower accessories. **Left**, Caroline Hatcher and Jenna Kindig show off pillows they made for their bedrooms.



SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Officials celebrate the opening of the Park & Ride facility in Chipley on Tuesday.

## New Park & Ride lot in Chipley

Special to The News

The Florida Department of Transportation, in partnership with Washington County and Ride On commuter services, opened a new Park & Ride lot on Tuesday in Chipley at Blue Lake Park on Highway 77 South. Participants in the launch included officials from the Florida Department of Transporta-

tion, West Florida Regional Planning Council, Washington County Board of County Commissioners and Chamber of Commerce board members and staff. Amenities of the new Park & Ride lot include nine parking spots and solar lights for added security. This is the 20th Park & Ride facility provided for commuters by the District 3 Department of Transportation.

### HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

Letters to the editor and comments on Web versions of news stories are welcomed.

Letters are edited only for grammar, spelling, clarity, space and consistency, but we ask that they be limited to 300 words where possible. Letter writers are asked to provide a home address and daytime telephone number (neither is printed) for verification purposes.

Letters may be sent to 1364 N. Railroad Ave., Chipley, FL 32428 or emailed to news@chipleypaper.com. Please specify if the letter should be printed in the Washington County News or Holmes County Times-Advertiser. Questions? Call 638-0212.



## Washington County NEWS

Nicole P. Barefield, Publisher  
Cameron Everett, Production Supervisor

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The views expressed here are not necessarily those of this paper or Freedom Communications.

## Hoover's Mill has garden visitors

Special to The News

Chipley Garden Club was treated to a guided tour of Hoover's Mill Inc. on Feb. 1. The group was welcomed in the parking lot by Stacey Dudley who shared some of the history of Hoover's Mill. The current plant at 1061 Commerce Ave. in Chipley's Industrial Park, has the look of a modern facility, but the equipment used to grind their famous "Hoover's cornmeal" is over 100 years old. She explained that a specific corn variety is delivered from Kentucky, ground on-site, packaged and delivered fresh. "It doesn't stay on the shelves long. You can count on it being fresh!" Dudley explained that stone-ground cornmeal retains all of its nutritional value.

Inside the mill the club was greeted by the smell of fresh ground corn. Dudley tracked the milling process from the whole corn kernels to fine-sifted meal pointing out antique equipment as the tour progressed. In the packaging room, workers fill and package thousands of bags of meal a day. The warehouse was stocked with several Dixie Lily products, which they also grind and package for shipment. "Hoover's? We grind it and it's shipped, not stocked." By the end of the tour, several club members recalled memories of Hoover's Meal, "My mother sent it to me in Germany in the 70s!" and "My family came to visit from up north and now I have to send it to them!" The club agreed this was a very interesting and informative tour.

Prior to the tour, the monthly



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

On Feb. 1, the Chipley Garden Club was treated to the grand tour of Hoover's Mill, which included a opportunity to see the grinding and milling process up close.



meeting and luncheon were held at the Nelson home. Jane Brewer, FFGC District II Director was welcomed warmly. To recap the meeting: Edwina Showers reported the City of Chipley had placed two benches at the Sundial Garden and repaired the broken irrigation lines. Gwenth Collins reported on last month's Arbor Day activities. Linda Pigott provided updated information of the club's Youth Fair Project with KMS 4th Graders — Dried Floral Arrangements by Vonceil Coggin and Live Floral Arrangements by Louise Michaels. Glenda Wilson discussed plans for the Spring Gardens &

English Tea to be held March 31 and the completed gourds/birdhouses were displayed.

The next meeting of Chipley Garden Club will be March 7, at the Comegys Farmhouse. If you would like to attend a meeting or learn more about Chipley Garden Club, please contact Karen Roland, Club President, at 638-9968.

## 2012 Watermelon-Cucurbit Meeting

Special to The News

**CHIPLEY** — Washington County will host this year's annual Watermelon-Cucurbit Meeting on Tuesday.

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. with the program beginning at 9 a.m. Topics include updates on new and existing varieties, disease and pest control, fertilization, good agricultural practices, and continuing edu-

cation units should be available for restricted use pesticide applicators having current licenses. A sponsored lunch will be provided as well. The Washington County Ag Center, 1424 Jackson Ave. (Highway 90), in Chipley. A sponsored lunch will also be provided.

Farm Credit of Northwest Florida will be one of several sponsors present, and is hosting a "cap exchange." Farmers are encouraged to bring

their old baseball-style caps and exchange them for a new, Farm Credit cap. Industry representatives will be on hand, as well, to answer questions regarding products and services.

Persons with special needs should contact Matt Orwatt, at 850-638-6180, prior to the event to allow proper consideration of the request. UF/IFAS Extension Service does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or age.



## Washington Rehab and Nursing Center achieves Five-Star Rating

Special To The News

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created the Five-Star Quality Rating System to help consumers, their families, and caregivers compare nursing homes more easily and to help identify areas

about which consumers may want to ask questions. A nursing home's overall quality rating on Nursing Home Compare (www.medicare.gov) is based on its ratings for health inspections, quality measures (QMs), and staffing. Ratings for each domain and the overall

rating range from 1 star to 5 stars, with more stars indicating higher quality.

In 2010, Washington Rehab and Nursing Center received a below average assessment of two stars from CMS for surveys which revealed deficiencies. After making some changes, the facility

ratings improved steadily, eventually resulting in the five-star rating this year.

Washington Rehab and Nursing Center serves approximately 150 residents while providing an array of nursing and therapeutic services. The facility has a full-time respiratory therapist and chaplain.

# WIN OR LOSE from page A1

as not they were matched across the way with "Vote Yes" signs.

Fliers against the referendum also were distributed widely throughout the town as well as mailed out as a paid political advertisement.

Most supporters of the referendum cite employment as a primary incentive for bringing slot machines to Ebro Greyhound Park, and the campaign run by owner Stockton Hess and son Mark Hess stressed the employment aspects of the endeavor.

Plans call for more than just additional gaming at Ebro. It's part of a proposed expansion into a \$300 million resort hotel and entertainment center that would include 300 to 500 hotel rooms, retail, restaurants and an entertainment venue, said Stockton Hess, owner of the park, and his son, Mark Hess.

However, it isn't likely any hiring will be done in the near future — state officials have said they plan not to issue licenses for slot machines at the park, while the Hesses have said they intend to challenge that decision.

Tuesday night, a small group of residents gathered in Chipley at the Washington County annex to watch the results and share small talk between themselves dur-

ing the vote tallying. One woman, who declined to give her name, was muttering "Praise Jesus, keep it coming," as the computer slide blinked out, then came back to life with new numbers, showing the voting going favorably for the slots referendum.

When asked if they were for or against the slot machine proposal, all who attended said they were in favor of the referendum passing. But opinions were strong when asked why the gaming referendum was facing such fierce opposition.

"Some of the nicest people on earth live in Washington County," said resident Danny Hayes, "and they would give you their shirt if you needed it. But they just don't like progress."

Several in attendance offered the opinion that churches shouldn't be involved in elections because they are tax-exempt organizations.

"We need jobs in Washington County," said resident Jimmy Goodson.

Goodson noted that bingo and the lottery are also forms of gambling, and several residents mentioned that buses routinely run from Chipley to Biloxi, Miss., so people can visit the casinos.

"It would be better for those buses to be going to Ebro than Biloxi."

# Sheriff: Burglaries solved in Holmes County

From Staff Reports

**BONIFAY** — A Westville man has been arrested in connection with several local burglaries, according to a Holmes County Sheriff's Office report.

The investigation began in September, when several burglaries were reported in an area near the Holmes-Walton County line.



SCOTT ADAMS

Scott Adams, 37, of Westville became a suspect early in the investigation and was questioned but denied having any knowledge of the crimes.

While the investigation continued, Adams eventually was arrested on a probation violation in Holmes County.

While Adams was serving his time in the Holmes County Jail, ad-

ditional information was gathered related to the burglaries, according to the report.

Adams was arrested in connection with two counts of grand theft and two counts of burglary on Wednesday. He subsequently confessed to three of the burglaries, according to the report, two of which occurred in Holmes County.

Adams is being held in the Holmes County Jail on a \$30,000 bond.

# ALLEYWAY from page A1



SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

This artist's rendering shows the projected outcome of the Chipley Redevelopment Agency's Alleyway Project.

Council had asked for more information on the project.

"We've done more in the last two years than many realize," Everett said. "I know some people don't like the brown buildings, but it was the city who chose earth tones, and it is the business owners' right to choose a color based on those parameters set in the '80s."

Everett said he was proud of the CRA.

"I could never be any prouder of this agency's achievements in the improvements that have been done for our downtown area," Everett said. "We can't control the empty store fronts. Our job is to restore the core of our historic downtown area."

CRA member Zena Corbin said things have improved drastically over the years.

"I know what downtown looked like 30 years ago,"

Corbin said. "There's been some big changes since then."

Everett said he plans on representing the CRA at the next Chipley City Council workshop to provide a clearer understanding of what the alleyway project involves.

"We gave the city a parking lot to increase the amount of visitors to our downtown businesses," Everett said. This alleyway is a connection between that parking lot and the rest of the businesses. At night it's dark; we have ladies going to Zumba."

Everett said this is just the beginning of something much bigger.

"This is the start of a vision," Everett said. "For this to be a success we have to work together."

The city council workshop will be at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at Chipley City Hall, 1442 Jackson Ave.

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1130 - Adoptions  
1140 - Happy Ads  
1150 - Personals  
1160 - Lost  
1170 - Found

**LEGAL ADVERTISING 1100**

02-3111  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS REGARDING VACATION OF RECORD PLAT: THE MEADOWS AT GILBERTS MILL NOTICE TO AFFECTED REAL PROPERTY OWNERS  
In accordance with Section 6.05.00 of the Washington County Land Development Code (LDC), this notice is being provided to inform the Public of a request for vacation of the record Plat described as "The Meadows at Gilberts Mill," subdivision, Book 5 Page 53. All lots (Lots 1-10) of "The Meadows at Gilberts Mill" subdivision are unsold and undeveloped. The vacation by the governing body of the Washington County will not affect the ownership or right of convenient access of persons owning other parts of the subdivi-

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02-3112  
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File No. 67-12-CP-0004

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**AUCTION**  
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**Multi-Family Garage sale** Saturday Feb. 4. 905 Banfill Ave. 8 a.m.-until. All sizes name brand clothes-lots of girls size 10-12.

**Yard Sale** Fri & Sat Feb 3rd & 4th. Furniture, kids cloths, from 24 mth to teen, toys. 1362 Cherry Ave, behind WC Health Dept.

**Yard Sale** Sat Feb 4 7:00AM 847 S 8th St 1 Bk behind Brock Paint & Body. 326-2920

**GARAGE/YARD SALES**  
**3230**  
Huge Garage Sale Low Prices Sat Feb 4 744 3rd St  
Yard Sale Saturday Beside Shavers & Brock Furniture. Beds, reclining sofa, sofas, daybed, mattress's, headboards, children clothes.

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## Economic issues create tough choices for business owners

As we kick off a New Year, let's take a look back and see what occurred in 2011. As readers know first-hand, the economy has not been any big help to many of us in our county and the country.



**Ted Everett**  
Executive  
Director

Many states were and still are in severe budget crisis mode. Our own state is reporting revenues could be down as much as \$2 billion for 2012. This will put hardships on local governments and school boards as they too must find a way to balance budgets. This issue will continue to dominate the state and local governments for a long time.

As we monitor the businesses in Washington County, many are still struggling to hold their own. In the case of WestPoint Home, employment is around 400. It has dropped a little because of issues beyond their control, but it is a far cry from the days when the plant was about to shut its doors for good.

With an annual payroll of over \$10 million, the cost to the citizens of this county, if it were to shut down, would be exponential. The Chamber is very proud that we were able to help WestPoint stay open.



WestPoint Home currently employs about 400 workers.

Other businesses in the industrial park are still struggling. Many have had to make significant choices about everything to stay open.

Kelly Brock, owner of ABC Fence as well as CypressWood, says their chief problem is a still struggling housing market and fuel prices that increase the cost of doing business.

There are some businesses, such as Hoover's Mill, that have tried and been successful in expanding its distribution. Their products

– corn flour, meal and other corn-



Hoover Mill workers package ground meal.

ECONOMIC continued page 3

## A Message from the President

As we turn the page on 2011, most of us are glad to see it go. The new year brings hope of better times for our community, state and nation. We all have important decisions to make in this new year, from choosing how our county will grow, to the direction our nation will take. No matter your stance on gambling, growth and development, or political affiliation, the decisions we make will have long lasting impact on each of us as well as our children.

As a long-time business owner in this community I have seen many ups



**Philip Pippin**

and downs in the economy. The last four years make me long for those bumps in the road.

Tried and true business models are no longer viable in today's economy. As business owners today, we find ourselves doing more for less, doing things we don't typically do or replacing long-standing client relationships with new clients that do not understand how hard we have worked to build our business.

As with most adversity, the business owners that embrace change have the best chance of weathering the storm. We all must push ourselves to go the extra mile in providing service to our clients.

The old adage, the cream always rises to the top, should have new meaning for us all. Your attention to

detail and customer service on this job may be the thing that gets you that new job next week.

Your Chamber board is working hard to improve the business climate in our community. From recruiting new industry, to promoting existing business, our number one goal is to help you survive and prosper. Your Chamber board is made up of local business owners just like you. We are facing the same difficulties in our businesses as you and in this new year we have a renewed sense of urgency to make our community a better home for business.

I hope that 2012 brings good things for your business, our community and our nation. I believe in Washington County.

## A Message from the Executive Director

As I begin my seventh year as executive director of the Chamber of Commerce, I would like to tell you how much I have enjoyed being with this Chamber and, more importantly, getting to know many of you. I have learned quite a bit throughout these years and it has been good.

Let me say that I appreciate very much the support that the board of directors has given me throughout the years. That is not to say we have always agreed on each issue. In fact, we have



**Ted Everett**

had some lively discussions. The board takes its duties very seriously and when issues do arise, they discuss the issues and give time to the arguments that are raised on both sides. This is very good and very healthy for not only the Chamber, but the County as well.

The board and I have had many discussions over the last three months on how to make the Chamber even more relevant to members and non-members alike. I have to tell you that this board wants more than ever to hear from you, the membership.

Our job is to help and advocate for businesses. To that end, we are holding our "first ever" Chamber Coffee Break on Feb. 6. We have reached out to

five Chamber member business owners and have invited them to meet with the Chambers' executive committee.

We want to hear from them on what issues they are facing and try to provide assistance to them. If we do not listen to the membership, how can we help the members? This is getting back to the basics of what we do as an organization.

We plan to hold a "Coffee Break" once a month. If you are interested in participating, you may call me at 850-638-4157. It may take a month or two to get to you but I promise that we will. I wish you all a good and prosperous New Year.

### Washington County Business

## ADVOCATE

A Publication of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce  
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www.washcomall.com  
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### CHAMBER STAFF

**Ted Everett**

Executive Director  
ted@washcomall.com

**Chris MacBlain**  
Administrative Assistant  
chris@washcomall.com

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A discounted subscription to the *Washington County News* for new and renewing members

### NETWORKING

Third Thursday Breakfast  
Annual Chamber Membership Banquet

City and County Events  
Ambassadors Program

### KEEPS YOU INFORMED

Our Newsletter, Membership Directory and Website, among other resources and publications, are outstanding information sources.

### PROVIDES A BUSINESS INVESTMENT

Tax Deductible Chamber Investments EDC Investments and Opportunities to be involved in Economic Development Efforts in Washington County

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and are in no way associated with the Washington County News. Anyone with questions or comments regarding the content of this publication should contact the Washington County Chamber of Commerce at (850) 638-4157

# Third Thursday Programs

## February 16 Program and Sponsor: Waste Management



Jeff Massey, district manager with Springhill Landfill, will discuss the landfill, Gas to Energy program, community involvement and how we all can work together as this industry moves forward to meet growing needs of our communities.

## March 15 Program: Florida Redevelopment Association

Carol Westmoreland, executive director of the Florida Redevelopment Association, will discuss the Florida Redevelopment Assistance program. This member service provides assistance to Florida communities interested in beginning or strengthening a downtown redevelopment program. Areas covered include how to establish a CRA, BID or other organization; methods of financing; market studies; how to set up loan programs; and working with the community's public/private sectors for a successful downtown redevelopment program.

**Sponsor: Chipley Redevelopment Association**



### ECONOMIC continued from page 1

flour, meal and other corn-based products – have always had a more local base, but recently the company has been pushing into Alabama.

Hoover's Mill is typical of many small businesses. Their production and material costs have both risen. Corn prices have increased due to the demand of corn for Ethanol production. However, Hoover's has adapted.

In today's environment, each owner or manager of a business must continually look for

ways to cut costs but remain profitable. When the economy does come around, and it will, business as we know it will never be same again.

Valuable lessons are being learned by businesses. One is that productivity can remain high with less employees. There is a fundamental shift in the way companies are conducting business because of this economy and the results will not be known for a while, but it will be different.

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## Nominations Being Sought for the Washington County Chamber 2011 Business of the Year Award

### Guidelines & Eligibility

Nominations are now being accepted for the Washington County Chamber's Business of the Year Award, which honors a company's achievements in any or all of the following areas: economic development, community involvement, workplace/workforce development, business growth, and quality of life.

"This award is given to the business that is nominated from our community by the community," said Chamber Executive Director Ted Everett. "It is a prestigious award that celebrates business innovation, involvement with the community and civic pride."

The Business of the Year Award is presented at the Chamber's Annual Membership Banquet in April. Nomination forms are available through the Chamber office and on its website, [www.washcomall.com](http://www.washcomall.com).

The deadline for submission is **Noon on Friday, March 16, 2012.**

Submissions may either be

- Mailed: WC Chamber Award, P.O. Box 457,  
Chipley, FL 32428
- Faxed to: 850.638.8770
- Hand-delivered to: 672 5th Street, Chipley, FL 32428
- Emailed to: [wcchamber@wfeca.net](mailto:wcchamber@wfeca.net).

Any person or company may nominate a business, including its own. It's not necessary for the nominator to know all the information requested on the nomination form and narrative, just submit it as complete as possible with contact information.

To be considered eligible for this award, a business or organization:

- Must have been a Chamber member for at least one year and be in good standing.
- Must do business in Washington County.
- Must not be a governmental agency or body.

The Chamber office will follow up with all nominated businesses and gather any specific data not included on the application. All nominations will be kept confidential until the presentation of the winner at the Annual Banquet.

For more information, please contact:  
Chris MacBlain at 638-4157

Deadline: **March 16, 2012**

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# TDC: Much accomplished in 2011

The Washington County Tourist Development Council (TDC) had a very successful 2011. No doubt it came with its own set of challenges, as most accomplishments made were based on new concepts and technology.

The TDC accomplished many great initiatives in 2011. Among these was the launch of its social media campaign. The Council now has its own Facebook, Twitter and YouTube platforms to connect more with locals and tourists alike.

The Council completed the draft tour operator contract for the regional day trip program coordinated between Washington and Jackson County TDCs; this activity began in mid-2010.

As part of the initial steps for the day trip program, the Council published four brochures with a regional distribution of 10,000 each quarter covering parts of three states.

The TDC also established relationships with 11 regional military base leisure-travel departments and two Welcome Centers on the Hwy 231 and I-10 corridors, which included brochure distribution. Washington County also saw 22,814 in total attendance at 13 events partially funded for advertising by the TDC, with about 66 percent coming from outside the County. With the

positive momentum created from all our success in 2011, we have segued right into 2012.

The first accomplishment of 2012 was the review of the tour operator contract by the county attorneys for Washington and Jackson counties' day trip program. With this review completed the TDCs will have a final document that defines the bid specifications to be advertised to hire a tour operator for the program.

The attendance of the TDC at nine of the 11 military base travel shows in late February and early March is another networking tool being used by the TDC to

attract a new tourism base to Washington County. The roll out of the bed tax collector's co-op marketing plan is another element that will help the TDC promote individual bed tax collectors as well as the county. These are a few of the many plans the TDC will achieve in this new year.

With so many great projects already under the TDC's belt in the first quarter of 2012, the Council is confident that the rest of the year will run just as smoothly. To keep up with what the TDC is doing, or to see what is going on in Washington County, please visit our website at [VisitWashingtonCountyFL.com](http://VisitWashingtonCountyFL.com) or like us on Facebook by going to [Facebook.com/VisitWashingtonCountyFL](http://Facebook.com/VisitWashingtonCountyFL).



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**Holiday  
Open House**  




Many visitors attended the Chamber's Holiday Open House, enjoying tasty treats and company. Attendees included, clockwise from top right: NFCH staff Amy Kindig, Michelle Plybon and Heather Shelby; Jim Ackerman, Kathy Foster and Chris MacBlain; Perry and Hesther Wells; Darrin Wall; Jim Town and Ted Everett; Gary Hartman and Jerry Haviland; Cindy Johnson Brown; and Holiday greeters Chris MacBlain, Kathy Rudd, Gary Hartman and LaMerle Feitsma. Center photo: John Foster, Jeannie Betts and Mary Catherine Syfrett.

*Photos courtesy of Washington County News*

# THIRD THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS



## January Third Thursday Highlights

Clockwise, from top left: Brad Swanson, Florida Chamber of Commerce, provides a legislative update; Wendy White, Bank of Bonifay, announces the bank's name change to First Federal Bank of Florida beginning Feb. 1; January Yard of the Month – Sam and Patty Spitzer, 768 3rd Street, Chipley; Chamber members share some talk time.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

# Budget shortfalls, redistricting focus of session

As the legislative session nears the midway point the predominate issues have been focused around the budget shortfalls and redistricting. Prison closures, employee layoffs, education shortfalls and many other government expenditures still remain in question.

Of major local interest is the concept of redistricting. Every ten years the legislature is required to address the issue based off the current census data. As populations shift nationally, as well as within our state, geographic boundaries must be redrawn.

This responsibility falls upon the Florida Legislature. Current

proposals before both houses bring about major potential shifts for Washington County. Our current House and Senate districts remain unchanged but Washington County would be moved to a different Congressional District.

The shift would move Washington County into Congressional District 2 currently represented by US Rep. Steve Southerland (R) of Panama City. Cong. Miller will continue to represent all of the counties west of Washington County.

Other changes affecting our

house and senate districts include the addition of Jackson County to both districts. Shifts will likely occur in the western counties necessitating the addition of Jackson County for the proper balance of voters. This shift may be viewed as a positive shift for our county aligning voters with more commonalities into the same district.

Other items of interest this year include the introduction of a comprehensive energy bill for the state of Florida. Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam, who recently inherited the Department of Energy, has committed to

putting Florida on the path to more energy independence. Putnam intends to put his bill before the Florida House later this month.

The newly created Department of Economic Opportunity will also continue to grow and expand during the session as Florida continues to attempt to refocus its economic development efforts. The most notable event is the attempt by Gov. Rick Scott to enhance the state incentive budget to provide more flexibility in recruiting high tech, high wage jobs to Florida.

*A more comprehensive review of the major legislation affecting business will be featured in the April issue of the "Advocate".*



**Gary Clark  
Chairman**



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# Free tax preparation program



United Way, along with other community volunteers, launched the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program recently in Wausau. Kicking off the program were, from left: Councilman Charles Park Sr., Town Clerk and VITA volunteer Margaret Riley, Washington County Chamber Executive Director Ted Everett, Councilwoman and VITA volunteer Gail Culbreth, IRS representative Jackie Keller, United Way representative Ron Sharpe, and Paul Culbreth.

Through the VITA program, local residents who earn up to \$50,270 can receive free assistance in preparing their taxes, including help in claiming all tax credits for which they are eligible.

The local VITA office is located in the temporary town hall on Jackson Street in Wausau; the program will run through April 14. Hours of operation are Thursdays from 1-6 p.m., and Saturdays from 9 a.m. - 2p.m. on Feb. 4 and 11, March 31, and April 4 and 14.

More information about VITA, or to volunteer, is available by calling 850-785-7521, or go online to [UnitedWayNWFL.org](http://UnitedWayNWFL.org).

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## Spotlight on our Chamber Ambassadors



### MISSIE FINCH NHC HomeCare



Melissa “Missie” Finch is a multi-faceted business person. She has worked with NHC Home-Care for over 14 years, serving as the administrator for almost the past eight. Missie is also co-owner of Finch Fire-N-Water Construction/Restoration, Elite Realty, and Holmes County Realty.

“I enjoy volunteering with the Chamber of Commerce as a way of giving back to the community and welcoming new businesses and growth to our area,” says Missie, adding, “The relationships and



camaraderie formed with networking with other business owners and community members is definitely a perk.

She’s also participates in various community organizations including

the Kiwanis Club of Chipley, Case Management Society of America and Habitat for Humanity.

Missie has been married to Danny Finch for 19 years; they have two teenage children.

## Kudos

- Board member **Amy and Chris Wiwi** welcomed new daughter Raegan Catherine, born Dec. 24, 2011, 6lbs, 10ozs, 19-3/4 inches.
- Board member **Patrick and Vickie Schlenker** welcomed new granddaughter Roslyn Amy, born six weeks early – but healthy – Dec. 12, 2011; 5 lbs, 7 ozs.
- Board member **Nicole Barefield** is the 2012 Development Board president for Florida State University Panama City.
- **Northwest Florida Community Hospital’s** recent blood drive collected 47 units of donated blood – a hospital site record! As a result, Southeastern Community Blood Center met its goal for January and fulfilled the shortage the area was experiencing.

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## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

### New Members

Smokers Depot - 2011

### Renewals

Atkins Global - 1994

Capital City Bank - 1980

ChIPLEY Garden Club - 2000

ChIPLEY Gun & Pawn - 1988

ChIPLEY Woman's Club - 1980

Chipola College - 1982

Family Health Care of ChIPLEY - 2005

First Presbyterian Church - 1996

Floor Coverings International - 1995

Gulf Coast State College - 2011

Guyson Construction, Inc. - 2011

Habitat for Humanity Wash.Co. - 2000

House of Flowers - 1980

Jackson Hewitt Tax Services - 1980

King's Discount Drugs, Inc., - 1982

Les Jolie Dames Club - 1999

Maphis Tree Farm - 2008

NFCH Community Home Health - 2010

NW FL Community Hospital - 1980

NW FL Family Health Clinic - 2010

NW FL Special Clinic - 2010

Orange Hill Express - 2008

Piggly Wiggly - 1980

Pippin Appraisal Services - 1990

R & M Electric Services, Inc. - 2004

Richard Williams Financial Services - 1992

The Bank of Bonifay - 2004

Townsend Building Supply - 1980

Townsend Mini-Warehouse Storage - 1984

Trawick Construction Co. - 1980

Vernon Clinic - 2011

West Florida Electric Cooperative - 1987

Wound Healing Institute - 2011

Cindy Johnson Brown

Gil Carter

William E. "Flip" Cox, DDS (Ret)

John & Becky Dougherty

O.L. "Ole" Ellis, Jr.

Fred & Jeanne Lavender

Linda MacLellan

Ralph W. Ray

Paul Smith

David M. Solger

Perry Wells

### EDC INVESTMENTS

Atkins Global

Capital City Bank

Gulf Power Company

Townsend Building Supply

Townsend Mini-Warehouse Storage

Trawick Construction Co.

West Florida Electric Cooperative

John F. Dougherty III

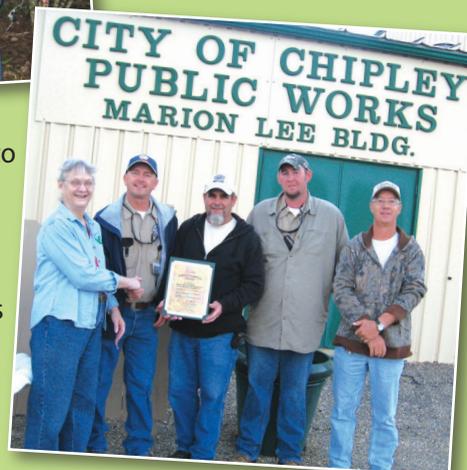
## ChIPLEY Garden Club



Two "Yard of the Month" winners for December

Lynda Pleas presents certificate to Heather and Lee Mitchell at 631 Fourth Street.

Edwina Showers presents certificate to the City of ChIPLEY's Cemetery Grounds Department: Foreman Tim Corbin, Dennis Kustes, William Perkins and Scott Bush.



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**FEBRUARY****Every Tuesday**

Noon - Kiwanis Luncheon

**Every Thursday & Friday & 1st Saturday (9-12)**

10am-2pm -WC Historical Society Museum Open

**Every Tuesday / Thursday / Saturday (7-12)**

12-5pm-Farmers Market Open

685 7th St., Chipley

**Every Wednesday**

9-2pm-Vernon Hist. Historical Society Museum Open

- 1 10:30 am – Chipley Garden Club Mtg.
- 2 6:30 pm – Sunny Hills Civic Association Mtg.  
6 pm Ducks Ultd. Banquet
- 5 Bridal Expo – Ag Ctr.
- 6 6 pm. – Vernon Town Council Workshop
- 7 Full Snow Moon
- 8 Noon – Chipley Woman's Club Mtg @ Clubhouse
- 9 5 pm - Chipley City Council Workshop  
6 pm – Wausau Town Council Meeting
- 13 5:30 pm – WC School Board Meeting  
7 pm – Vernon Council Meeting
- 14 HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!  
6 pm – Chipley City Council Meeting  
6 pm – Caryville Town Council Meeting  
6 pm – Ebro Town Council Meeting
- 15 10:30 am – Wausau Garden Club
- 16 7:30 am – Chamber 3rd Thurs. Pattillo's WHTC  
9 am – Wash. Co. Commission Workshop @ Annex
- 20 HAPPY PRESIDENT'S DAY!  
6 pm. – Vernon Town Council Workshop
- 21 5:30 pm – Chipley Downtown Merch. Mtg @ KC's Rest.
- 27 7 pm – Vernon Council Meeting  
4 pm – TDC Workshop/Meeting @ Chamber

**MARCH****Every Tuesday**

Noon - Kiwanis Luncheon

**Every Thursday & Friday & 1st Saturday (9-12)**

10am-2pm -WC Historical Society Museum Open

**Every Tuesday / Thursday / Saturday (7-12)**

12-5pm-Farmers Market Open

685 7th St., Chipley

**Every Wednesday**

9-2pm-Vernon Hist. Historical Society Museum Open

- 1 6:30pm – Sunny Hills Civic Association
- 3 Holmes Valley Heritage Day/Vernon
- 5 Vernon Town Council Workshop
- 7 10:30 am – Chipley Garden Club
- 8 5:00pm – Chipley City Council Workshop  
Full Worm Moon
- 8-10 Guys & Dolls – Vernon High School
- 11 Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 12 5:30pm – Washington County School Board Meeting  
7:00pm – Vernon City Council Meeting
- 12-16 WC School Spring Break
- 13 12:00 (Noon) – Chipley Women's Club  
Noon – Chamber Ambassador Mtg.  
6:00pm – Chipley City Council Meeting  
6:00pm – Ebro Town Council  
6:00pm – Caryville Town Council
- 15 7:30am – Chamber 3rd Thursday Mtg @ Pattillo's  
9 am – Wash. Co. Commission Mtg @ Annex
- 17 HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!
- 19 6:00pm – Vernon Town Council Workshop
- 20 10:30am – Wausau Garden Club
- 23-25 STP – All My Sons @ Playhouse
- 26 4pm – TDC Workshop/Meeting @ Chamber  
7:00pm – Vernon Town Council Meeting
- 28 4pm – CRA Workshop/Meeting @ Chamber

**Upcoming Events****FEBRUARY**

- 4 NAACP NW FL Branch Freedom Fund & Award Banquet
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 19 National FFA Week
- 20 President's Day
- 22 NW FL Beef Confer/Trade Show

**MARCH**

- 3 Holmes Valley Heritage Day  
Vernon
- 8-10 Guys & Dolls / Vernon H.S. Drama
- 11 Daylight Savings Times Begins
- 12-16 WC School Spring Break
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 23-25 STP - All My Sons



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