

County

Continued From Page 1

for a 9-1-1 communications center.

Since this was not an agenda item, the board could take no action. However, the matter could come up again as an action item.

Turning to the issue of night meetings, County Administrator Lyndon Bonner noted that night meetings were suggested by some of the participants of the recent town hall meetings.

Commissioner Betts said that has been tried before on several occasions even for budget hearings and no one attended.

"You have a bigger crowd now than at night," he said.

There were 11 members of the public

and two members of the press present in the audience at the Thursday meeting.

Commissioner Noel Chandler noted that during his time as city councilman, the meetings were held at 6 p.m. and they were poorly attended except for "hot button" issues.

Commissioner Ray Domer said he would like to see the public more involved.

Terry Burroughs of the economic council stated that there has been a change in demographics and that more people would be interested than were interested in the past.

Commissioners decided to try having one meeting a quarter at night with the first one on Jan. 28, 2010. It was noted that this would give people a chance to address the commission. Request forms to be on the agenda are found on the county's website.

Commissioner Hoover suggested the board begin discussion now about using a

sales tax to help fund the EMS program for the 2010/2011 budget. A sales tax would have to be initiated by a referendum.

At their last meeting commissioners passed an ordinance allowing for the enforcement of all county ordinances including the land development regulations by issuance of a civil citation to appear before a judge. As a follow up to that action, commissioners approved a revised and updated form for code enforcement citations. In a related matter the board approved a resolution designating officials who are authorized to write citations. The approved list includes the building official, code officers, code inspectors, building inspectors, the planning director, law enforcement officers including officers of the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, animal control officers, the fire safety inspector, the solid waste contract manager and the road maintenance director.

In a legal matter, the commissioners decided to drop a long standing lawsuit against Matthew 25 Ministries. The suit alleges the organization operates group rehabilitation homes for sex offenders in violation of county zoning codes. The county attorney said it appears they are no longer in violation of the code. Turning to another legal matter, commissioners conducted an executive session concerning pending litigation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and American Drilling.

Commissioners were asked to disclose if they have any conflicts of interest with persons applying for Community Development Block Grant housing funds. They also authorized the county administrator to apply for a hazard mitigation grant.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at pgawda@newszap.com.

Miracles

Continued From Page 1

"I saw the semi wasn't stopping," she said. "I tried to turn my car to the right to get out of his way. I knew I couldn't turn left because there were oncoming cars."

The semi kept coming and the resulting crash crushed Mrs. Chapman's car and wrapped it around a tree.

"My bible flew into the backseat on top of my grandson," she said. Although the two women were seriously injured, the little boy escaped the crash with no injuries.

"The paramedics never really got the recognition they deserved," she said. "The car was smoking—we thought it was ready to ignite, and one paramedic went in upside

down and pulled my grandson and daughter out."

She said the car was so crushed around her that rescuers had to use the jaws of life to extract her from the tangled mess of metal.

Five years and 24 surgeries later, Mrs. Chapman walks with a limp but she does it with pride—proud that she is actually walking again, something many of her doctors did not think possible.

"I appreciate my doctors, but I've got them puzzled," she said.

She said she tried to find and thank the many rescue workers who helped her.

"When I called the police to thank them, I could tell the officer was surprised," she remembered.

"He finally admitted, 'I thought you were dead.' I had lost so much blood and was so pale I had turned blue. They thought I was a

dead woman.

"With six pins in my legs, I am walking again," she continued. "I have no ankle and I have no heel, but I can walk."

She said her daughter, who was also seriously injured in the crash, not only survived but now has a new daughter.

In the years since the crash, Mrs. Chapman has written two books, "Saved by Grace," and "Love Me Through," and started a career as a public speaker.

"You hear a lot of bad stories in the news," she said. She wants her story to give people hope.

Her public speaking debut came during a church service when she felt inspired to speak.

"My knees were shaking," she admitted. But she knew her message was important.

"Sometimes people need to hear that God

is still in the miracle business," she said.

She now has a busy schedule of public speaking engagements.

"You don't know your blessings until you almost face death," she said. "Today is a gift God gave you. Make the most of it. Just to be able to breathe, to be able to smile, to hug a grandchild ... count your blessings."

"I remember after spending two months in the hospital, I was so happy to hear birds sing, just to be outdoors and hear the birds," she said.

"I'm speaking to give God glory," Mrs. Chapman explained, "and to give hope to people. I want them to realize how the rush of every day life is so easy to be caught up in. But when you're facing death, you don't think about money. You think how you wish you could hug your children again."

Okeechobee Forecast

Today: Partly cloudy with a high near 93. Heat index values will be as high as 102. Winds will be calm becoming southeast between 5 and 10 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy with a low around 73 and southeast winds around 5 mph becoming calm.

Extended Forecast

Saturday: Mostly sunny with a high near 93 and calm winds becoming southeast between 5 and 10 mph.

Saturday night: Partly cloudy with a low around 72 and southeast winds around 5 mph becoming calm.

Sunday: Mostly sunny with a high near 92 and calm winds becoming east southeast around 5 mph.

Sunday night: Partly cloudy with a low around 71 and winds from the east around 5 mph.

Lotteries

Florida Lottery — Here are the numbers selected Wednesday in the Florida Lottery: **Cash 3:** 4-7-7; **Play 4:** 3-3-5-1; **Fantasy 5:** 4-5-13-18-31; **Mega Money:** 7-18-27-44 MB 4; **Florida Lotto:** 6-36-37-41-48-50; **Powerball:** 2-20-21-38-50 PB22 x3. Numbers drawn Thursday, **Cash 3:** 2-1-9; **Play 4:** 8-5-6-6.



Special to the Okeechobee News/SES

Students of the Week

South Elementary students of the week for Oct. 2, are: Raena Garcia, Kayla Vasquez, Megan Burns, Ryker Waddell, Jacey White, Jacob Hardy, Elizabeth Lopez, McKenzie Simmons, Dawson Patterson, Mauricio Grajalez, Iris Celestino, Karla Ortega, Hannah Ferrell, Anahi Calvo-Wences, Emily Beaty, Daniel Parker, Ty Harris, Merydian Causier, Ariel Nichols, Jusus Gomez, and Johanna Betancourt-Martinez. Congratulations to all!