

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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Wednesday, September 1, 2010

50¢ Plus tax

Will county commissioners cut spending?

Proposed cuts include charging for ball field lights

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

Once again Okeechobee County Com-

missioners will meet this afternoon at 2 p.m. in their continuing quest to balance the budget.

So far, while talking extensively about the need to make cuts, they have increased their spending slightly. At the same time they have been discussing the need for the sheriff to cut his budget.

On the agenda for today's meeting commissioners will be discussing proposed cuts totaling \$827,646. According to county administrator Lyndon Bonner's apportionment, the commissioner's share of the total deficit is \$817,337. Therefore, the proposed cuts leave the commissioners \$20,309 to the good. Included in these proposed reductions

are a 3 percent pay reduction for all employees. Under the proposal grounds maintenance for the agri-civic center would be contracted out. Public swim hours at the county pools would be reduced from 50 to 20 hours per week from June 10 through Aug. 15. All

See COUNTY — Page 16

Labor Day brings rodeo



Okeechobee's annual Labor Day weekend rodeo, parade and arts and crafts festival are planned for this weekend. For information, see page 7. (Photo by Jim Davis)

Jail changes considered to help balance budget

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

As Okeechobee County commissioners wrestle with their 2010/11 budget, they have discussed considering the option of taking the Okeechobee County Jail away from the sheriff's office as a cost-saving method.

While that move may help Sheriff Paul May cut his budget by some \$6.4 million, whether or not it will benefit the county is not known. For some counties in Florida, taking over the county jail has helped. But for those who have allowed their jail to be run by private corporations, the jury is still out on the effectiveness of that move.

There are currently seven Florida counties—Gulf, Jackson, Orange, Volusia, Osceola, Miami-Dade and Walton—that are running their jails separately from the sheriff's office. In Bay County, Sheriff W. Frank McK-

either runs the jail for the county through an interlocal agreement.

In Citrus County, the jail is managed by the Correction Corporation of America (CCA), which is a private for-profit company.

Until this year, CCA also operated the jails in both Bay and Hernando counties. However, Bay County officials and CCA could not come to a contract agreement so CCA opted out. In Hernando County, Sheriff Richard Nugent took over operation of the jail on Friday, Aug. 27.

Of the counties now running the jail, officials at Jackson (50,930) and Walton (55,105) counties were interviewed because their populations are closer, according to 2009 Census figures, to that of Okeechobee County (40,241). The other counties have much larger populations and a much broader tax base.

See JAIL — Page 15

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Okeechobee deputy cleared in shooting incident ..Page 3

Bomb threat called in to New Endeavor High School ..Page 3

Local post office adds Automated Postal Center ..Page 13



Okeechobee High School Brahmans football team in preseason classic ... Page 22

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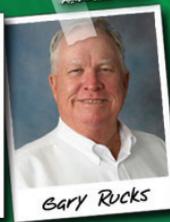
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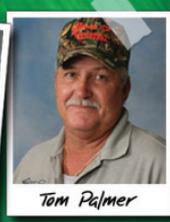
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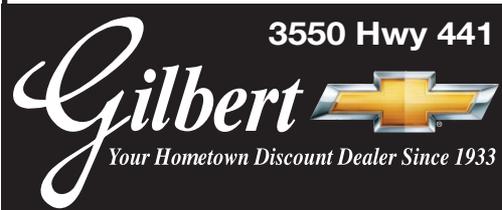
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OCSO deputy cleared in shooting incident

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

A deputy involved in a shooting incident while serving a search warrant at an Echo Estates home last week has been cleared of any wrongdoing and put back to work.

Major Noel Stephen of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) said Tuesday, Aug. 31, that Deputy Corporal Paul Ferrell had been counseled and interviewed.

"He was placed on paid administrative leave for 24 hours, then debriefed and counseled," said Maj. Stephen. "He went back to work Sunday. The shooting was justified."

This was the second shooting incident in which Cpl. Ferrell was involved. On Aug. 12, 2005, Cpl. Ferrell and other deputies responded to a domestic situation at a home on S.E. 57th Drive. When they arrived they were confronted by Dennis Keith Rock, who was stepping off the porch with a rifle in his

hands. The barrel was pointing upwards.

As Rock continued to move toward them he began to lower his .22 caliber semi-automatic rifle. When he ignored orders from Cpl. Ferrell to drop the gun and continued moving toward him, the deputy fired his .40-caliber Glock handgun twice. One bullet entered Rock's left leg and the other struck the man in the right hip.

Rock was arrested and convicted on two counts of aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer with a deadly weapon and one count of felony battery. He was sentenced to serve a total of 23 years in prison, to be followed by eight years of probation.

Thursday, Aug. 26, Cpl. Ferrell and other members of the OCSO Special Response Team (SRT) went to a home on S.W. 18th Terrace to serve a search warrant. Once they had served the warrant, detectives from the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force were going to search for drugs.

"Cpl. Ferrell was the point man and the first one making entry (into the home)," said Maj. Stephen. "He went through the kitchen and came upon a closed door. Jose Corrilla

opened the door and was armed with a firearm."

Maj. Stephen went on to say that when Corrilla opened the door he pointed his 9mm SCCY handgun at Cpl. Ferrell. Cpl. Ferrell, per his training, hollered "gun!" and fired four rounds in Corrilla's direction. Corrilla was not hit, and Cpl. Ferrell was the only deputy who fired his weapon, added the major. Maj. Stephen said the corporal, thinking Corrilla was going to shoot him, was ducking as he fired his H&K 9mm assault rifle.

Corrilla, 26, was later arrested by task force detectives on felony charges of possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of marijuana with intent to sell and child neglect. He was also charged with the misdemeanor of possession of drug paraphernalia.

He was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail under a bond of \$55,500. He has since been released on bond.

According to Maj. Stephen, all of the information has been turned over to the office of the state attorney to determine if any additional charges are to be filed.

He went on to say his officers risk their safety each and every day by doing things such as serving search warrants, which is one of the most dangerous things an officer can do. He also had high praise for the SRT unit.

"The SRT team goes above and beyond to secure these bad guys," he said, in their protection of the community.

Cpl. Ferrell has been with the OCSO since June of 1993.

Before he was put back on the road, Cpl. Ferrell was counseled by OCSO Chaplain Joe Bishop. He also met with Sheriff Paul May, Maj. Stephen, SRT commander Lieutenant Gary Bell and his shift supervisor Sergeant Brian Hagan.

"We spoke with him over the weekend and it was determined that his mind was clear," said Maj. Stephen. "The chance of this happening in someone's career is few and far between. But, now, it's happened twice to him."



Jose Corrilla

Teen charged with making bomb threat

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

A 16-year-old Okeechobee girl was arrested Tuesday afternoon for allegedly calling in a bomb threat to New Endeavor High School.

Cassandra Lynn Moore, 16, N.W. 64th Ave., was arrested Aug. 31 on a felony charge of false report of planting a bomb or weapon of mass destruction. She was also charged with the misdemeanor of disruption of a school function.

Moore was booked into the Okeechobee County Jail and, according to the arresting officer, would likely be taken later to the St. Lucie Regional Detention Center in Fort Pierce.

Detective William Suggs of the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) said the situation apparently began innocently enough when some of Moore's classmates

stated that someone should call in a bomb threat so they could get out of school.

Moore then went into a bathroom at the school and placed the call to 9-1-1 around 11:34 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 30, added the detective.

"She took that upon herself," said the detective.

Within minutes, 10 OCSO deputies were at the school on S.W. 28th St. After a search of about 30 minutes that turned up nothing, it was decided that the call was a hoax.

Detective Suggs said the children went to a nearby church where they were either picked up by their parents or bused to Okeechobee High School so they could catch their buses home. He said once the school was shut down, classes never resumed.

The detective added that the phone allegedly used by Moore had not been recovered as of Tuesday afternoon.

Community Events

VFW Ladies Auxiliary to hold breakfast Labor Day weekend

On Saturday, **Sept. 4**, the VFW Ladies Auxiliary of the Buckhead Ridge Post 9528 will serve breakfast of pancakes and sausage, sausage gravy and biscuits or egg casserole and biscuit, including coffee and orange juice, from 9 a.m. until noon for a donation of \$5. Located at 29012 E. S.R. 78. Call Roberta at 863-763-4809, for more information.

Moose #1753 holds luau

The Loyal Order of Moose #1753, at 159 N.W. 36th St. will hold Mercy's Hawaiian Luau Party, on Sunday, **Sept. 5**. The party starts at 2 p.m. with dinner being served at 4 p.m. Bring a covered dish. This is a membership drive, so bring a friend. Music provided by Phil Eddings.

Sunday Karaoke

American Legion Post 64 will host open mic karaoke Sunday, **Sept. 5**, 3-6 p.m. Bring your own discs or choose from thousands of our selections. This Sunday is Birthday Club. Bring a dish and enjoy all of the great food.

Blood donation drive at Ag Center this weekend

As you head for the Ag Center to enjoy the Rodeo, stop by the **Big Red Bus** to donate blood. Every time you donate, you could be helping to save as many as three lives, since blood donations are broken down into blood products. The bus will be at the entrance from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday through Monday, Sept. 4-6. All blood donated on the Big Red Bus directly benefits this community.

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Public Forum/Speak Out

Speak Out has moved online, where it is quicker and easier to share your ideas and converse with others. Go to www.newszap.com, click on the community name and your local or state Public Forum. There, you can create new topics or comment on existing topics. What follows is a sampling of some of the discussions currently taking place. Thanks for participating!

Beck Rally

- Does Obama truly think he can just ignore the people (estimated 300,000 to 600,000)? Does he think they will just go away if he sticks his head in the sand? He has stated that his decisions are made not for this generation but the next generation. The next generation is going to be so far in debt their grandchildren will still be owing it.

County budget

- I have a suggestion. Maybe all the county commissioners that care so much about our county should forfeit their salaries and let that money go back to the county. I believe most if not all of them have other income. I also think that the county always goes to the Sheriff's Office for cutbacks because they think the people will not complain if they want to make increases in taxes etc., to keep the deputies on the road. I also wonder why other officials in the county can't take pay cuts. Clerk of Court, Tax Collector for a start.

- I can understand why the sheriff would appeal but the bottom line ... if he appeals and wins, the BOCC has to raise the millage rate. That is the only remedy for the winning of the appeal.

- The school system saved quite a bit of money by lowering utility costs as there are many new products on the market such as energy efficient light bulbs that can add up to savings. Why doesn't the county have an energy audit to see where more efficient equipment and/or procedures could save money? The sheriff's office in particular needs to save money. Maybe they could save on electric costs at the jail and sheriff's department.

- Has the County considered selling the Agri-Civic Center?

- Has the County determined that all properties in the county are (1) on the tax rolls, and (2) properly categorized and assessed?

- It appears to me that the county government is poorly organized with 14 departments. I think that it could be consolidated and reorganized into only five departments for greater efficiency and effectiveness. I do not see any evidence of a pro-active economic development program. For example, what is being done to market the industrial park? I do not see any evidence of outsourcing/privatization of some government services and functions. For example, why should the County continue to operate the Agri-Civic Center and Okee-Tantie instead of contracting-out the operation of both? Why shouldn't Tourism Development be placed in the hands of a professional consultant with a marketing budget?

- Can the cost of Public Safety be reduced by no longer purchasing a vehicle for each and every deputy to use both on and off duty? The Patrol Division should have only the number of vehicles necessary for the number of deputies on duty at any one time, plus spare vehicles. A vehicle for every deputy is a perk that can no longer be afforded. A vehicle for every deputy has no proven contribution to the control and reduction of crime.

- We have been round and round about the take home cars many times over the years and if you actually look at the studies, it turns out that letting the deputies take the cars home actually costs less in the long run because they take better care of the cars and the cars last longer, plus having the vehicles there gives them better response time and also any time they are driving the marked unit, it helps reduce the crime in whatever area the car is passing through or parked where it can be seen.

Tax increase

- Okee county can continue to raise our real estate taxes but the powers that be should remember that there isn't much to keep us full-time residents here anymore. What will they do when we ALL leave? The dairies and groves are gone and many already have to travel to the coast to find employment; tourism based enterprise is suffering; the old timers who came seasonally for years are elderly and too ill to return and recent retirees are stopping upstate to spend the winter. Real Estate for sale/foreclosed signs still cover lawns all over town and those of us who have managed to hold onto our homes are at the end of our ropes. Month after month we see our FPL, basic cable, phone and water bills and

the cost of groceries increase. Some parts of my proposed tax bill actually doubled and I would even have trouble paying last year's rate which was already pretty ridiculous for my rather old, 1250 sq. ft CBS home. What's a person to do?

- What is a person to do? I intend to vote for new county commissioners that will hopefully change the system. It is the role and responsibility of government to protect the health, safety and welfare of the people; to do for us what we as individuals cannot do for ourselves. Any function of government outside of that defined role should be re-examined and eliminated. For example, should the County government be operating the Agri-Civic Center?

Youth facility

- This is in response to the article written referring to the level 8 Juvenile Facility. These boys are here for grand theft, drug dealing, assault/battery and many other felony offenses. When are D.J.J. and these so called do-gooders going to realize that we are dealing with youth that are troubled, dangerous and need discipline. Only then will these young men realize there are consequences for their actions. Do we want to rehabilitate? Yes, but not by babying them thinking they are just children. The revolving door must stop and not let these young men to re-enter society until they are ready, not after 2 or 3 months of somewhat good behavior prior to six months of negative behavior which they never have to make up. Just be good for a little while and you will go home. People need to stop promoting non-factual statements to make the people of our community think all is well when it is not.

Reimbursements

- I do not have a problem with the county commissioners claiming reimbursements. It is considered a part-time job making around thirty thousand a year. Here is my problem. Mr. Bonner has turned in a claim for \$44.50 where he drove from his hotel to outlying areas for evening meals. This claim was sent to the commission for approval. This article is in Friday's paper. What arrogance this man has to be making around \$134,000 a year and ask for \$44.50 for driving to eat.

- Sounds like someone needs to remind the commissioners and the administrator that every penny they spend is taxpayer money, and the taxpayers want more for their money.

- I was a little encouraged to see that two of our county commissioners who drove their own cars to an official event did not ask for reimbursement and just paid for their own gas. Back when Clois Harvey was on the board, I remember the county commissioners used to carpool to save money. Times are much worse now and they should do all they can to save. Those who want to take their own cars for their personal convenience should pay for their own gas.

- While I applaud the commissioners who are trying to do things according to the policy and get reimbursed, and those who are not seeking reimbursement at all, I find it reprehensible that they travelled to Tampa and could not find it within themselves to carpool. Really, there are people whom I work with I don't like all that much, but I have a duty to be fiscally responsible to my company and do what I can to watch the bottom line. I think that I can sit in a car for three hours with just about anyone, especially if I am being paid to do it by the taxpayers.

- I like the idea of using online conferencing to save on costs. If we can watch county commission meetings online, why can't they keep up with the trends in government via computer and save the costs of transportation, hotel rooms and meals?

Election

- Gene Woods was one of the commissioners who voted for the "aggravation" center. I would like to hear his explanation for exactly why he thought that was a good idea at the time. It has never made any sense to me that the county spent millions of tax dollars to build a covered rodeo arena that would hold 2,500 people when we already had a rodeo arena that would hold 5,000 people in the county. Yes, since then we've had five or six hurricanes and the old arena was damaged and the cattlemen moved to the new arena and the county put in more seats but at the time the arena was built they could not know that would happen.

Rabies

- I am so glad they found the three kids who were exposed to the rabid bat. I hope every parent in Okeechobee paid attention to that story and warns their children to stay away from wild animals, especially bats and raccoons. And I hope every animal owner pays attention and gets their dogs, cats and horses vaccinated against rabies.

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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March of Dimes: The ABCs of a Healthy Pregnancy

Healthy babies come from healthy pregnancies. To help increase your chances of having a healthy baby, March of Dimes recommends that you follow these ABC guidelines to a healthy pregnancy.

A: Avoid hazardous substances such as mercury and alcohol that can be harmful to your unborn baby. Stay away from other environmental factors that can put your health at risk.

B: Breastmilk is the best food for most babies during the first year of life. Join a breastfeeding group or talk to a lactation consultant before giving birth to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

C: Calcium is needed for strong healthy bones. When you don't get enough calcium, your body will take it from your bones and give it to your baby. Be sure to get enough calcium in your diet.

D: Drugs, whether they are over-the-counter, prescribed, dietary supplements or illegal substances, can harm your baby and may even cause birth defects. Stay away from all street drugs. Talk to your provider about any medications you are taking to make sure they are safe during pregnancy.

E: Eat healthy and exercise. In general, most pregnant women only need around 300 extra calories per day to support a baby's growth and development. (The exact amount of extra calories depends on your weight before pregnancy, so talk to your health provider about a healthy eating plan that's right for you.) Therefore, it's important to make healthy food choices. Unless there are medical reasons to avoid it, pregnant women can and should try to exercise moderately for at least 2 1/2 hours each week.

F: Folic acid is important. Take a vitamin supplement that has 400 micrograms of folic acid BEFORE getting pregnant to reduce your baby's risk of developing birth defects. During pregnancy, prenatal vitamins have the folic acid you need.

G: Gas or feeling bloated is common in pregnant women. Identify the foods that

bother you and take your time when eating to help prevent excessive gas.

H: History can teach us a lot! Understanding your family health history can make an important difference in your life and the lives of your children.

I: Iron is a mineral that helps create red blood cells. These cells carry oxygen to your baby. Be sure to get enough iron in your diet to prevent getting anemia.

J: Join a childbirth education class to help you understand what to expect during labor and birth.

K: Keep you and your baby safe during a disaster by planning ahead of time. Prepare for a disaster by making a list of all medications you're taking and having a handy contact sheet with your health provider's information.

L: Lots of back pain? Backache is one of the most common problems for pregnant women. Avoid heavy lifting and standing for long periods of time. Wear comfortable shoes and consider a pregnancy massage to ease some of your pain.

M: Medical conditions, such as gestational diabetes and high blood pressure, should be carefully monitored by you and your health provider. Also, talk to your provider about any medications that may need to be adjusted during pregnancy.

N: Nausea is very common during pregnancy and certain foods can trigger this feeling. Try substituting these foods for other nutritious options. Eat 5-6 small meals a day, rather than 3 large ones.

O: Oh, baby! Get ready to care for your baby before you bring her home from the hospital. Choose a health provider for her and make sure your home environment is all set and safe for your new baby.

P: Prenatal care is essential for having a healthy baby, so be sure to make all of your prenatal visits. During these appointments, prenatal tests will be given to help your provider know how you and your baby are doing.

Q: Quit bad habits such as smoking and drinking. Smoking can cause your baby to grow more slowly and gain less weight in the womb. Drinking alcohol while pregnant can lead to fetal alcohol syndrome, which can cause your baby to be born with both physical and mental birth defects.

R: Rodents, including pet hamsters, mice and guinea pigs, should be avoided during pregnancy. These animals can spread diseases that can harm your baby.

S: Stressing out? Pregnancy is a stressful time for many women. Very high levels of stress may contribute to preterm birth or low birthweight in full-term babies. Recognize that you do indeed feel stressed and, when possible, avoid situations that cause you stress.

T: Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by a parasite. It can pose serious risks to a woman's unborn baby. Stay away from raw or undercooked meat, especially lamb or pork. Wash hands frequently and avoid handling cat litter.

U: The urge to urinate often increases in pregnant women. To help deal with frequent urination, avoid caffeine beverages such as coffee or tea that can make you urinate more frequently.

V: Vaccines can protect you and your baby against infections that can be harmful. If you are pregnant or planning for pregnancy, ask your health provider if your vaccinations are up to date. Find out which vaccines you should consider taking before or during pregnancy.

W: How much weight a pregnant woman should gain depends on her health and body mass index (BMI). Calculate your BMI using your height and weight before pregnancy. Women with a healthy BMI should expect to gain between 25-35 pounds during preg-

nancy. Women who are overweight and have a high BMI before pregnancy should gain between 15-25 pounds. Women who are obese before pregnancy should gain between 11-20 pounds.

X: X-rays should be avoided during pregnancy. If you need to have dental work or medical tests done while pregnant, tell your provider so extra care can be taken.

Y: Your body may experience several changes during pregnancy including your hair, gums and teeth, breasts and skin. These changes are common and women can take steps to alleviate their symptoms to feel more comfortable.

Z: Get your ZZZZZs. Most women are more tired than usual during pregnancy, especially during early and late pregnancy. Get plenty of rest. If you're having trouble sleeping, try taking a warm shower, napping during the day, going to bed earlier and using pillows to make you comfortable.

The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. This mission is carried out through research, community services, education and advocacy to save babies' lives.

The largest fundraiser for the March of Dimes is March for Babies, which is held in Okeechobee in March of each year. Planning meetings for March for Babies 2011 will be starting soon. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer for March for Babies 2011 should contact Laura McCall at 863-763-3131 or Pam Crowley at 772-562-0115.



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Okeechobee Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 90. East northeast wind between 5 and 15 mph.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 71. East northeast wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Extended Forecast

Thursday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 91. Calm wind becoming north northwest around 5 mph.

Thursday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 70. South southwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Friday: A 20 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly cloudy, with a high near 94. Calm wind becoming south southwest between 5 and 10 mph.

Friday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 69. Calm wind.

Lotteries

Florida Lottery — Here are the numbers selected Monday in the Florida Lottery: **Cash 3:** 2-2-4; **Play 4:** 1-1-8-5; **Fantasy 5:** 6-8-15-21-25; **Mega Money:** 2-4-9-19 MB 15; **Florida Lotto:** 20-23-37-41-46-51 X 2; **Powerball:** 4-22-27-32-56 PB 13 x4. Numbers drawn Tuesday, **Cash 3:** 8-9-0; **Play 4:** 4-8-2-1.



Special to the Okeechobee News

Adam Bryant Memorial Scholarship

Jerry Bryant and Carol Bryant presented James Haddan, Justin Hoover and Josh McCall with the Adam Bryant Memorial Scholarship on OHS Scholarship Night 2010 held May 20 at the OHS Lecture Hall.

Obituaries

Obituaries should be submitted to the Okeechobee News by e-mailing obits@newszap.com. Customers may also request photos and links to online guest books. A link to the obituaries is available at www.newszap.com.

Louise Brown, 99

OKEECHOBEE — Louise Brown, age 99, of Okeechobee, went Home to the Lord Aug. 27, 2010, at the Okeechobee Health Care Facility.

She was born June 2, 1911, in Americas, Ga., to Wallace and Taughty Halstead. She came to Okeechobee from Immokalee in 2001. She was an Avon Lady for 45 years in Immokalee. She

was a former member of the First Baptist Church in Immokalee and current member of Oakview Baptist Church in Okeechobee. Mrs. Brown was also a member of the Eastern Star and Lady's Auxiliary with the American Legion.

Mrs. Brown was preceded in death by her husband, Joe P. Brown; and her daughter, Velma Ruth Carver.

She is survived by two grandchildren, Velma Rayburn (Gene) of Okeechobee, and Patrick Corbitt (Joy) of Robertsdale, Ala.; great-granddaughter, Suzanne Yeager (Todd) of Chiefland, Fla.; and great-great-grandson, Johnathan Nichols of Chiefland, Fla.

Visitation will be 10 a.m. until Celebration of Life at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 4, 2010, at Oakview Baptist Church with Pastor John Garrison officiating. Interment will be Sunday, Sept. 5, 2010, at Baptist Cemetery in Immokalee with Chan Garrett officiating.

Memorials may be made to Oakview Baptist Church Building Fund.

Friends may sign the guestbook at www.bas-sokeechobee.com.

All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of Bass Okeechobee Funeral Home and Crematory, 205 NE 2nd ST, Okeechobee, FL 34972.

Douglas 'Doug' Holden, 68

OKEECHOBEE — Douglas "Doug" Holden, age 68, died Aug. 29, 2010, at the Hamrick Home. Being born in North Carolina, he moved to Okeechobee in 1970.

In service to his country, Doug served as a Marine from 1960 until 1964 as a demolition expert.

He had a deep love for the Lord Jesus and honored Him by helping others in need. It was also his belief that when there was a job to be done, give it your best. He was a member of Believers Fellowship.

He was employed many years with the County of Okeechobee Department of Parks and Recreation.

He believed in investing his time with children by helping them hunt, fish, or play ball.

During most of the 1970's, he served as president of OCRA. Nights and weekends you would find him coaching football or baseball games or refereeing on the baseball fields.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank and Bertha Holden. He is survived by

three sons, Doug Holden, Jr., Bryan Holden, and Wesley (Misty) Holden; two grandsons, Bret and Wesley Holden, all of Okeechobee; and two granddaughters, Taylor Holden of Georgia, and Amy Holden of Okeechobee; and five brothers and three sisters.

A memorial service will be 2 p.m., Friday, Sept. 3, at Buxton-Seawinds/Abundant Blessings Sanctuary with Pastor Nick Hopkins of Believers Fellowship officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to the Alzheimer Association of SE Florida, 3333 Forest Hill Blvd., West Palm Beach, FL 33406

All arrangements are under the care and directions of Matthew and Paul Buxton of Buxton-Seawinds Funeral Home & Crematory, 4550 Highway 441 N., Okeechobee, Florida, 863-357-7283.

Laurie Ann Freeman-Gray, 39

LORIDA — Laurie Ann Freeman-Gray, age 39, of Lorida, passed away Sunday, Aug. 29, 2010, at her residence. She was born Nov. 26, 1970, to William and Cheryl Freeman.

She moved to Lorida in 1995, coming from Okeechobee. Laurie enjoyed arts, crafts, reading, natural history and pets.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Ross Anthony Freeman.

She is survived by her loving husband of 16 years, Paul Gray; and parents, William and Cheryl Freeman. In addition she is survived by her loving pets, six cats, three dogs, two goats, a tortoise, and a pet squirrel.

Memorial service will be held 11 a.m., Friday, Sept. 3, 2010, at the Buxton Funeral Home Chapel, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee.

All arrangements are entrusted to the loving care of the Buxton Funeral Home and Crematory, 110 NE 5th Street, Okeechobee, FL. On-line condolences may be made at www.buxtonfuneralhome.com.

View obituaries from the past month at <http://www.legacy.com>

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Community Events

Workforce Solutions to host open house today

Please join us in celebrating Workforce Development Month at our Open House on Wednesday, **Sept. 1**, between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m., 209 S.W. Park Street, Okeechobee. Learn about our services to the community - employers and job seekers. Tour the facility and meet our professional staff.

OCEA plans general membership meeting

The Okeechobee County Education Association (OCEA) will have its first general membership meeting of the 2010-2011 school year Thursday, **Sept. 2**, at 4:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Okeechobee Freshman Campus, 610 S.W. 2nd Ave. OCEA members stand together, all others stand alone. Come join us! Call Candice Blackwalker at 863-467-6778 or 863-634-2268.

Legion to host Country Dinner Dance

American Legion Post 64 will have dinner from 4-8 p.m. Friday, **Sept. 3**. On the menu for this dinner event is choice of ham, country fried steak, pork tenderloin, fried fish, chopped steak, or chicken strips served with salad, potato, vegetable, roll and dessert for only \$6. Dance music by Michael starts at 7 p.m.

Eagles Club to host Steak Night Friday

Fraternal Order of Eagles will host Friday, Steak Night on **Sept. 3**, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Dinner includes salad, baked potato or sweet potato, garlic bread and desert for a donation of \$12. Karaoke by Rick and Julie.

Benefit BBQ for Angie Arnold

A benefit BBQ dinner for Angie Arnold of Okeechobee will be held at the Okeechobee Livestock Market on Saturday, **Sept. 4**. Tickets are \$7 each. A raffle drawing will be held on Sept. 11 with tickets at \$5 each. Tickets are on sale now. For more information, please call Carolyn at 863-634-6781 or Sharon at 863-634-6194.

Labor Day cook out held by VFW

The VFW #10539 Men's Auxiliary will hold a Labor Day cook out on Saturday, **Sept. 4**, from 1-5 p.m. Let us do the cooking for you! Dinner is BBQ pork steak, potato salad, baked beans and cole slaw for a \$5 donation. Entertainment by Night Life. A raffle for a Weber Q 100 Gas Grill will be drawn on Sept. 4 with tickets being sold for \$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5.

Labor Day weekend garbage pickup

Waste Management will provide regular garbage collection service on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 6.

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Paul M. Buxton L.F.D. ~ Marilyn A. Buxton
~ Matthew P. Buxton, L.F.D.

New owner won't change local U-Save supermarket

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee U-Save, along with five other U-Save Supermarkets are about to be sold. However, shoppers will not be able to tell any difference. The new owners state that there will be no change in management, employees or policies.

S&O U-Save Group, LLC, an affiliate of The Oqab Group, based in Fort Myers, recently announced the purchase of the U-Saves from B&B Corporate Holdings, Inc., a Tampa retail and real estate company.

Denise Hicks, executive assistant to the owner of S&O said in a telephone interview the Okeechobee store is running smoothly and if there are any changes at all, they will be minor ones.

"We are planning on leaving everything as it is," she said.

On Sept. 3, S&O plans to close on the purchase of U-Saves in LaBelle, Belle Glade,

Fort Myers, Clewiston and Tampa as well as Okeechobee.

There is at least one other U-Save, located in Moore Haven, that S&O will not own.

The stores to be purchased on Sept. 3 will continue to operate under the name U-Save.

"U-Save's management team and associates are the key for us," Oqab Abuqab, owner of the Oqab Group, stated in a press release. "They have developed a strong grocery operation. We are excited to provide great shopping experiences to our customers through quality product delivered with consistent savings by a friendly staff where the culture of superior customer service will continue to be fostered."

Including the U-Save purchases, Mr. Oqab owns and operates 15 supermarkets and convenience stores in central and south-west Florida.

Festival and rodeo this weekend

Labor Day weekend brings the annual Okeechobee Cattlemen's Labor Day Rodeo and the Chamber of Commerce Labor Day festival in Flagler Park.

The Labor Day festival will be held Saturday, Sunday and Monday in Flagler Park, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Arts and crafts and food booth applications are available online at www.okeechobeechamberofcommerce.com.

The Labor Day parade will be held on Monday, Sept. 6 in downtown Okeechobee. Parade entries will line up near the U-Save Supermarket on Parrott Avenue at 8 a.m. The parade starts at 10 a.m. The parade route starts at the U-Save and travels north on Parrott Avenue to State Road 70 and then west on State Road 70 to the end of Flagler Park. Parade entry forms are available at Eli's Western Wear. All entries that include horses or other livestock must have their own "pooper scooper" to clean the parade route as they go.

The Okeechobee Cattlemen's Association Annual Labor Day Championship Bull Riding and PRCA Rodeos will be held Sept. 4, 5 and 6, 2010 at the Agri-Civic Center, presented by Marcum & Associates Nationwide Insurance. The events start with Championship bull riding with 30 bull riders which will be held on Saturday, Sept. 4 starting at 7 p.m.

PRCA rodeos will be held on Sunday, Sept. 5, and Monday, Sept. 6, 2010. Rodeo entrance will be off State Road 710.

Mutton Bustin' for the cowkids will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 5 and Monday, Sept. 6, 2010. All cowkids from ages 3-5 can enter to win. Winner receives a shiny western belt buckle! Advance registration is required. Please call the Okeechobee Livestock Market at 863-763-3127 to register.

The Okeechobee Cattlemen's rodeo will show contestants competing to win cash prizes and points toward a circuit championship. Visitors from many areas of South Florida are expected in attendance to observe traditional rodeo events such as; calf roping, saddle bronc, bareback riding, team roping, ladies' barrel racing and the favorite of all, bull riding.

Rodeo tickets may be purchased in advance at Eli's Western Wear, 907 NW Park Street or at the gate. Premier tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the gate. Tickets for children under 12 are \$6 in advance and \$8 at the gate. General admission in the West stands are \$10 adults and \$5 children.

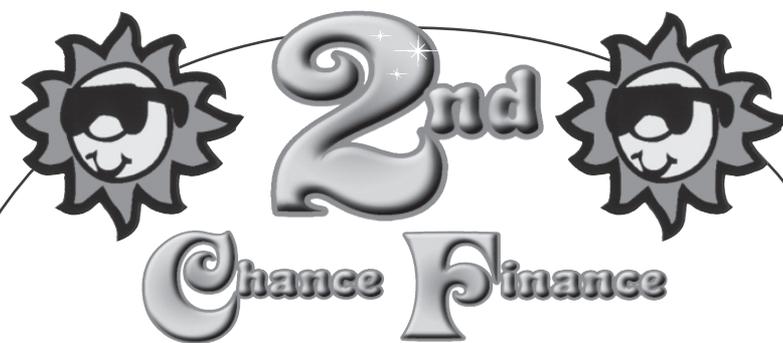
For ticket information, call Eli's Western Wear at 863-763-2984 or visit www.okeechobee cattlemansassociation.com.

Grace Brethren Church sponsors family movie

Grace Brethren Church, 701 S. Parrott Ave., will have a free family movie night, Friday, **Sept. 3** at 7 p.m. The movie "Letters to God," by the producers of "Fireproof" and "Facing the Giants," is a true story of an eight year old boy with a strong faith and courage as he faces his daily battle with cancer by prayers he writes as "Letters to God." This is a story of hope and inspiration for the whole family.

Healthy Start Coalition meeting set

The Board of Directors of the Okeechobee Healthy Start Coalition will meet on Wednesday, **Sept. 1**, at 11:30 a.m. in their office located at 575 S.W. 28th Street within the New Endeavor High School Building. This meeting is open to the public. The more information, please call Executive Director Kay Begin at 863-462-5877.



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Okeechobee school board hears appeal from coach

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

The decision not to retain Okeechobee High School Softball Coach Kim Hargraves was the highlighted item on the agenda when the Okeechobee County School Board met in August.

Several former and current players and community leaders spoke in favor of bringing back Coach Hargraves. Bill Phares said he was confused about going in a different direction. He said he wasn't impressed with how this situation went down. "I've pondered that thought, going in another direction, until I'm sick of it."

He said he was upset that the coach wasn't told why the decision was made. He mentioned other problems with the sports programs this spring. He said Okeechobee High school is on administrative probation for soccer players competing without a physical. "Let's step back, cut out the Mickey Mouse stuff, and all the issues."

Phares said the two sides should sit down and work out the problems face to face. He praised Hargraves for discipline, honesty and integrity. "Kids love discipline, they love to perform. What has the lady done? Nobody has proven anything to me."

Taylor Douglas, a softball player for the past three years, said she firmly believes people should stand up for what they believe in. She said Coach Hargraves has played a huge role in her life. "She's thought me things I would have overlooked. She inspires me to be

a better person. Coach Kim has done nothing but nurture my goals and moved me to greater heights."

She said not renewing the contact of Hargraves would do a disservice to the kids. She called it an injustice. She called the decision unfair.

Ramona Baker has a daughter in the softball program. Jaryca suffered a bit in academics this year. Ms. Baker said Coach Hargraves immediately demanded better grades if her daughter was going to play. "She ran the bad attitude out of her. I sat back and observed and my kid did wonderful. For an un-coachable child to get a coaches award was unthinkable to me."

Ms. Baker said if you let a coach go you will do it at the end of the season and not wait. She said an incident where a player used a pair of pants owned by the high school led to the termination. "All these kids here aren't saying we don't want to play for her. They want to play for her. A lot of them are afraid to come out here and speak their mind," she added.

Coach Hargraves said she dedicated 11 years of her life to the kids. She said she is not here to fight for her job. She said she is fighting for the kids. "I don't feel that their voices are being heard. I need more clarification on that. I think I deserve a little bit more than that."

Ms. Hargraves said she has achieved excellence with the softball program. She said she would likely have stepped away from the job in the next two three years. She said we have

some younger girls who are in college who might be ready to coach then and she didn't want to be here 20 years.

"My last 4 years have been pure ... It's been hell. The only reason I put up with it was for these kids. A lot of people would have walked away. If no one else will stand up for them, who is going to fight for them?" she added.

She noted she has more time to give to the program than a teacher does. She noted Okeechobee softball came a long way since she returned. "Okeechobee means so much to me. I can't see myself coaching at another school. Doors have been slammed in my face by this school board. I can't turn my back on you because I'm from Okeechobee and I love that school," she added.

Coach Hargraves said she pulls grades of her students, and pushes those kids academically and athletically. She has never had a losing season and won nearly 200 games. She also took a team to the state tournament. Several of her players have earned college scholarships. Ms. Hargraves predicted many more current players have what it takes to play in college.

"People will say another coach will come in here and still win. I'll sit in the stands and watch for that. All I ask for is we take a deep breath and think about the kids," she added.

Attorney Tom Conely said the board gave the public the ability to speak but could take no action. He said this was an administrative decision and not a policy decision.

"It would be improper for this board to

give direction to the administration on how to act. This board sets policy on how administrators should act. There is no recommendation from the superintendent on this matter and there will not be. There will be no action. I advice the board to take no action because it is crossing the line and getting into administration," he added.

Board member Joe Arnold said the coach has done a great job and has something no one can take away from her. "I'm proud to live in a community that is willing to be involved in this process. I encouraged the softball players to fight for what they believe in. I encouraged them to speak with the principal and administration. This country was built on people standing up for what they believe in," he said.

Mr. Arnold said the question to him was does the board want to micromanage at the school level. He said the board should not be involved to that extent. "No person will ever agree with every decision I make. The coach did an awesome job and is a great person," he said.

Ms. Owens said the next step is to meet with Superintendent Dr. Patricia Cooper. A committee was set up to decide on a new coach. Coach Hargraves could actually reapply for the position and be recommended by the committee.

Dr. Cooper said she would be glad to meet with the coach and players and she urged her to let the process work.

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Tim Tebow's mother tells her story

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

"God values life," Pam Tebow told the guests at the fund raising banquet for the Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee held Friday evening, Aug. 27, at KOA.

In a speech peppered with Bible verses, she told the story of how she and her husband went to the Philippines as missionaries in 1985. In the midst of an unstable situation Mrs. Tebow said, "God took care of us time and time again."

She became very ill while pregnant with her fifth child at the age of 37. Her doctor expected a stillbirth and told her she would die if she did not have an abortion.

Mrs. Tebow chose to ignore the doctor's advice and mother and child both lived. The doctor who delivered her son called him, "a miracle child." Her fifth child, Tim, grew up to win the Heisman Trophy as quarterback at the University of Florida and is now playing for the Denver Broncos.

He's all grown up, and I still worry about him," she said.

"What are you going to do about abortion?" she asked.

She said that from the number of abortions that have been performed it is estimated that 12 of them could have been Heisman Trophy winners. "I'm so glad our son wasn't the thirteenth Heisman Trophy winner aborted." Mrs. Tebow said.

"Together we are making a difference in Okeechobee," said Lisa Lumpkin, executive

director of the center. "I thank you for the overwhelming support you have shown."

"We can't give up on these girls, she said of her clients.

"We are the hands and feet of Jesus," she said. "What part will you take?" she asked as she told of the need for volunteers at the center.

"You get to be a part of saving a life," Pastor Cary McKee of More 2 Life Ministries told the crowd. In addition to monetary contributions, he asked for prayers which he said were more important than dollars and cents.

He called attention to the fact that so far in 2010, 11 lives have been saved by the Pregnancy Center and in 2009, five lives were saved.

"God has planned good works for us to do," Mrs. Tebow said. "That's what makes our lives worthwhile.

"Saving babies is a good work."

"As we give in any capacity God gives us so much more," she added. "God notices everything you do to serve Him."

"If you invest in eternal things you will be rewarded for what you do. Serving someone else does as much for you as it does for the other person."

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



Okeechobee news/Pete Gawda
Pam Tebow, the mother of former University of Florida quarterback Tim Tebow, was the keynote speaker at a fund raising banquet held Friday, Aug. 27, at KOA.

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Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Left to right, at the ribbon cutting for the new APC at the Okeechobee Post Office are Joann Beach, Alan Edwards, Teresa Croke, Mark Pinson, Dee Dee Morris, Mike Steiert, Jeff Hawk, Ricky Pye and Audra Heatly.

Auto postal center adds convenience to Post Office

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Post Office employees cut the ribbon on a new Automated Postal Center (APC) at the Okeechobee Post Office on Saturday morning.

The new system allows customers to mail packages without having to take them to a retail counter. The new unit provides quicker service and performs the majority of transactions that customers typically conduct at the counter. They are also available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

Postmaster Mark Pinson said this unit provides another option for Okeechobee customers, "I'm very excited for the people of Okeechobee. What is really great about this is the convenience."

Pinson explained that many Okeechobee residents work out of town and when they return home at night the Post Office is closed. He said this will provide them with another option they can really take advantage of.

"This is a long time coming for Okeechobee. I've wanted this unit for over five years. This is a perfect spot for an APC because

there are none in the Lake region," he added.

A brief ribbon cutting ceremony was held to commemorate the event. Mr. Pinson talked with some customers and briefly explained to them how to use the machine. He compared it to the ATM machines we've learned to love and use in recent years.

"You can do about 80-percent of the things you normally do at the window and counter on this machine. We want to reserve the window for more complicated tasks," he added.

Customers can mail first class mail, purchase stamps, do overnight express packages, look up zip codes and perform other tasks.

"Once people get used to it they are really going to like it," he added.

All of the services are available in English and Spanish. The machine only works on debit cards and credit cards and does not accept cash. There is no extra fee for using the APC.

In addition to the Post Office at 1000 Highway 70 East, the Post Office has a Contract Postal Unit at Mid Florida Hardware on South Parrott Avenue.

Soccer sign up deadline

The deadline to sign-up for the Parks & Recreation's Youth Soccer League is Friday, **Sept. 3**. Registration is \$35 per child and is being conducted at the Recreation Department at 640 NW 27th Lane, located in the Sports Complex, Monday-Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. The league will consist of boys and girls ages 5-14 (as of Dec. 31, 2010). Parents will need to present a copy of the participant's Birth Certificate at the time of registration. For more information, call 863-763-6950.

Cheerleaders help shelter pets

The OHS JV Cheerleaders need assistance to help shelter pets. Sept. 6-10, is National Spirit Week. During this week OHS JV will be working to benefit the Okeechobee County Humane Society. There will be a "OHS JV Luvs the Pups" food and blanket drive through Sept. 9. A drop off center will be located at 911 S.W. Park Street, (Behind Elis at the xplosion Building). Please help these young ladies make a difference by donating old blankets and stuffed animals.



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JAIL

Continued From Page 1

Even though Gulf County has a much smaller population than Okeechobee (15,755) officials there were interviewed because it is also a rural county with a similar make-up to Okeechobee County.

Following are some of the pertinent figures from those counties, concerning their jails.

- **OKEECHOBEE COUNTY:** Budget - \$6.4 million and funding is from ad valorem taxes; 66 correctional employees, of which 60 are certified; the current mill rate is 7.5030 and will bring in \$14,561,423; the tentative mill rate for fiscal year 2010/11 is 9.1216 and is expected to bring in \$14,065,712. The jail was built in 1985 and has 232 beds (additional beds were added in 1987). The average daily population is 242.

- **GULF COUNTY:** Budget - \$1.2 million and is totally funded by ad valorem taxes; 10 correctional officers and all are certified; the current mill rate is 5.7 percent and raised over \$11.4 million; the mill rate for 2010/11 is 5.7 percent and is expected to bring in just over \$9 million. The jail was built in 1966 and has 65 beds. The jail houses only male prisoners. Female and juvenile prisoners are held in the Bay County Jail.

- **JACKSON COUNTY:** Budget - \$2,800,094 and is totally funded by ad valorem taxes; 36 employees and all are certified; the current mill rate is 7.2 percent and will raise \$10,257,000; 2010/11 mill rate has not been established. Jail has 230 beds and an average daily population of 218.

- **WALTON COUNTY:** Budget - \$5,163,830 and is totally funded by ad valorem taxes; 68 staff members, of which 49 are certified; mill rate and amount of ad valorem taxes raised was not available. The jail is approximately a year old and has a current inmate population of 246. The jail will hold a total of 584.

- **BAY COUNTY:** Budget - \$17.6 million and is totally funded by ad valorem taxes; 248 employees, of which 141 are certified; the current mill rate is 3.65 percent and will bring in \$57 million; the proposed mill rate is 3.65 percent and is expected to bring in \$55.6 million. The jail has 1,098 beds and an average inmate population of 900.

According to Stan Sunday, Walton County Department of Corrections director, the county took over its jail two years ago after the sheriff said he wasn't going to run it anymore.

"There was a disagreement at the time of the budget," said Mr. Sunday. "He had requested additional positions and was asked to justify those positions. I guess he didn't want to justify it."

Mr. Sunday said when the county took over the jail they kept all the staff and "it seems to be working well."

He went on to say that after building the new jail, county officials are trying to work out an agreement whereby they will be able to house federal prisoners, and would then receive federal money for those prisoners.

As for privatizing their facility, Mr. Sunday said the county had no interest in contracting with a private corrections company.

Mr. Sunday said the county is facing a \$7.5 million budget shortfall this year.

"We're going to consolidate some services, cut some staff and are working on some other things," he said.

As a means of offsetting meal costs at the jail, Mr. Sunday said prisoners are charged a \$20 subsistence fee when booked and after two days each inmate is charged a \$2 per day subsistence fee. Also, the county buys fertilizer and seeds then state prisoners, who are housed next door, plant and harvest vegetables.

Mr. Sunday said using these vegetables it cuts .50 cents off per meal.

"The land, about 5 acres, belongs to the prison. Last year they harvested the potatoes and the county got 16,000 pounds of potatoes," he explained. He said county prisoners had hash browns for breakfast, french fries for lunch and mashed potatoes for dinner.

In Bay County the jail accounts for 18.72 percent of the current year's budget, said county Public Information Officer Valerie Lovett. The jail will account for about 16 percent of the 2010/11 county budget.

The Bay County Jail had been operated by CCA since 1985. Ms. Lovett said in 2008, under CCA, the cost of running the jail was \$17 million. However, on Oct. 9, 2008, CCA opted out of its contract with the county. That pact was slated to run through 2012.

The county took over the jail in 2009 and under Sheriff McKeithen the cost to run the jail was \$15.7 million in 2009.

Jackson County took over operation of its jail in the early '90s.

"There were some issues with the sheriff running the jail—inmate abuse issues. The county knew they needed to do something different," explained county administrator Ted Lakey.

He said a local option tax was passed and used to build a new jail.

Although there is a chief of corrections, everyone works under Mr. Lakey.

"It's worked out well," he said. "We work well with the sheriff."

The sheriff's office and jail makes up 30 to 40 percent of the county's budget, said Mr. Lakey. He went on to say a large part of the county's money goes to the road department where they have 67 employees.

"We have 880 miles of dirt road," he explained.

Gulf County Administrator Don Butler said the sheriff of that county had been running the jail since 1925. But, four years ago, the jail became the county's responsibility—whether they wanted it or not.

"He turned it over to us—we didn't ask for it," said Mr. Butler. "He decided he didn't want to run the jail, so we had to learn real quick how to run a jail."

Mr. Butler said they hired a "very good transition coordinator" with 38 years of jail experience.

"I think the jail is running better now than ever," he said. "The day he turned the jail over to us his budget was \$474,000, but his personnel costs were more than that. He had been taking law enforcement money and putting it into the jail."

The current budget for the Gulf County Sheriff's Office, with its 45 employees, is \$2.4 million.

Overall, said the county administrator, the county has laid off a total of 35 employees so far.

"We don't have a budget shortfall, but in the last three years we've lost over 50 percent in property values," he explained.

For Hernando County, enough was enough. After 22 years Sheriff Nugent took over operation of that jail on Friday, Aug. 27, and Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) was out the door. Sheriff Nugent told his commissioners he could not only run the jail more effectively, he could do it cheaper.

Calls seeking comment and information to both the jail administrator and county officials were not returned.

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HOLIDAY DEADLINES

The Okeechobee News will close Monday, September 6th for Labor Day

WEDNESDAY DEADLINES
Display Advertising 3 p.m., Friday, September 3

Have A Safe Holiday!

VNA holding free memory loss screenings

On Friday, Sept. 10, from 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m. the Okeechobee Visiting Nurse Association, at 208 S.E. Park St., will hold a FREE memory loss screening sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association. An appointment is needed for this screening. Screenings are for anyone—any age—concerned about memory loss. Screenings will be conducted by staff from St. Mary's Memory Disorder Center. Results are immediate. For more information contact Donna True, licensed clinical social worker, at 1-800-861-7826 Ext. 501.

Shared Services Network meeting set

The Executive Roundtable of the Shared Services Network of Okeechobee County will conduct its bi-monthly meeting at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 10, in the board room of the Okeechobee County School Board Office. The public is invited.

SPENDING

Continued From Page 1

organizations, teams or individuals using the sports complex or other county owned ball fields at night would have to pay an hourly rate to cover the cost of the lights.

At last Wednesday's meeting the deficit was reduced from \$3.7 million to \$2.8 million. This was accomplished by changing

Candidates qualify for city council election

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

There will be three of the five at large Okeechobee City Council seats up for grabs in the Nov. 2 General Election. City voters will have the chance to elect one new face to the council. In addition to the three incumbents whose seats are up for election, insurance agent Lowery Markham, automobile dealer Dowling Watford and insurance agent and former sheriff Clayton Williams, attorney Devin Maxwell has qualified to run. Voters will vote for three of the four candidates. The three who receive the highest number of votes will be elected.

On the county side, Republican Bryant Culpepper will face former commissioner Democrat Gene Woods for the district 2 seat on the county commission. Democrat Terry Burroughs will be challenging incumbent Republican Joey Hoover for his district 4 seat.

Registration for the General Election ends Oct. 4. Early voting will be Monday through Saturday, Oct. 18 through Oct. 30 from 8:30 to 4:30 each day at the courthouse.

PAID CONTENT

GROUCHOS COMEDY COMING TO THE OKEECHOBEE KOA

Coming to the Okeechobee Opry Stage at the Okeechobee KOA in a Family Comedy Show presented by Grouchos Comedy and Trailboss Promotions, Michael Winslow from the movie Police Academy. Show Starts at 7:00 p.m. and the introductory ticket price of \$20.00 includes food. Okeechobee KOA is offering a "Hot Deal" package for this Labor Day weekend show. Make your reservation today by calling 863-763-0231. Tickets may be purchased at the front desk at the Okeechobee KOA. For information go to www.trailbossent-promotions.com for updates and a listing of upcoming shows on the Okeechobee Opry Stage.

the accounting procedures. Commissioners voted to keep only the minimum of two months worth of operating expenses in the reserve fund. That is the amount of reserves required by state auditors. Originally commissioners had considered setting aside a larger amount this year, since they had taken money from reserves to balance the 2009-2010 budget.

The county also has an unencumbered

balance of about \$4 million in the capital outlay reserve fund.

On Aug. 18 the commission voted to spend about \$178,000 for private organization funding requests. That amount could get smaller because today's proposal contains a request from Main Street to reduce funds and elimination of funding for the American Day of the Cowboy.

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

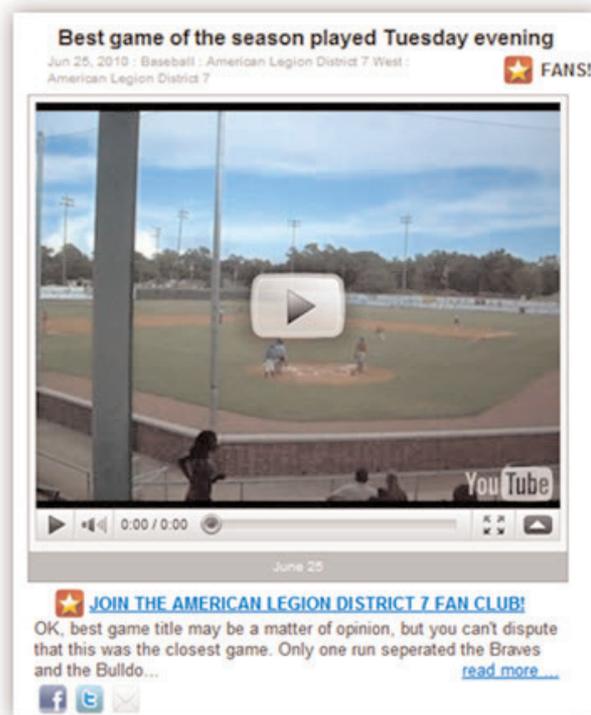
'Living Well with Diabetes' workshop planned

"Living Well with Diabetes" by Wanda Haas, CDE, will be offered on Wednesdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. on the following dates: Sept. 15, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 8, at VNA at 208 S.E. Park St., Okeechobee. This is free and open to the public. For more information, call 772-370-7777.



Community Share Contest

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for the Winners!

*Community voting opens on 9/22. Look for the vote button on OSN to cast your vote!

For details, visit www.newszap.com and click Okeechobee, then the "sports" tab and go to OSN. On OSN click on the "Community Share Contest" icon or

contact Renee Hawley at 888-853-7904 x 323 rhawley@communitysportsdesk.com

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TAYLOR CREEK - 3/2, lg. yard, clean, on water. \$725/mo. + sec. Available Sept. 1. Call 863-824-0981

Mobile Home Sale

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OKEECHOBEE DW-MH, 4 br/2.5 ba, renovated on 1/2 acre fenced in lot. Screened patio & shed. Off 710 & 15A. \$85k. Owner financed with \$10k down. Call (863)610-1600

Recreation
For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Campers/RVs

1986 Camper R/V Travel Master good condition asking \$2,300 call 863-467-2732

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7L Brands, a manufacturer/seller of mulch and landscape products has an immediate opening for an Inside Sales Representative at its Lake Placid, Florida office location This position will be responsible for maintaining assigned existing sales accounts, managing large retail and commercial accounts, visiting assigned store managers to assure delivery and quality of product is acceptable, developing sales and relationships in new markets and assisting in the coordination of trade shows, marketing events and client meetings. Qualified applicants must possess a college degree with a minimum of two years experience in retail sales and/or marketing plus excellent sales, marketing, verbal and written communication skills. In addition qualified applicants must be proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint software and be able to travel a few days per week. Experience in horticulture, garden center, aggregates, home building, green or natural products a plus but not required.

7L Brands offers competitive wages and a benefit package which includes Medical, Dental, Vision, Life AD&D and LTD insurance, 401(k) Savings Plan plus paid vacation and holidays. Qualified applicants should email their resume to: loyda.rivera@lykesranch.com or apply in person at the Lake Placid office located at 7 Lykes Rd., Lake Placid, Florida 7L Brands is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer / Drug Free Workplace, M/F/D/V.

NOTICE

Independent Newspapers will never accept any advertisement that is illegal or considered fraudulent. In all cases of questionable value, such as promises of guaranteed income from work-at-home programs - if it sounds too good to be true, chances are that it is. If you have questions or doubts about any ad on these pages, we advise that before responding or sending money ahead of time, you check with the Better Business Bureau at 772-878-2010 for previous complaints.

Some 800 and 900 telephone numbers may require an extra charge, as well as long distance toll costs. We will do our best to alert our reader of these charges in the ads, but occasionally we may not be aware of the charges. Therefore, if you call a number out of your area, use caution.

Services
For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Excavation

CLEARING & HAULING
Dump Truck, Back Hoe & Bobcat Services... by Jason Summerford (863)634-7771

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For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

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For Sale - New Tan-Colored Leather Reclining Easy Chair \$250 Call Darleen (863)386-2019

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Hunting Bow - PSE Whitetail Extreme great condition \$150 for more info call 863-697-0179

Miscellaneous

For Sale - large oak dresser w/mirror \$85, nice couch \$75, coffee table w/2 end tables glass tops \$175, lots more items call for info 863-763-2756

Rentals
For more listings, go to www.newszap.com

Apartments

Apartment for Rent 2Bd 1 1/2 Ba Town House In Town, Very clean W/D \$650 mo, 1st, last & sec. 863-697-1129

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Public Notices

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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO. 2010CA161
Assigned to: Judge Larry Schack

RIVERSIDE NATIONAL BANK OF FLORIDA, Plaintiff
 vs.
 JAY T. HUFFMAN, ANY AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER AND AGAINST THE HEREIN NAMED INDIVIDUAL

Public Notice

DEFENDANT(S), WHO ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE DEAD OR LIVING, WHETHER SAID UNKNOWN PARTIES MAY CLAIM AN INTEREST AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEE(S), OR OTHER CLAIMANTS, and JOHN DOE and/or JANE DOE as Unknown Tenants-in-Possession Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 45

NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant to the Summary Final Judgment Of Foreclosure dated July 23, 2010, in Case 2010CA161, in the Circuit Court of the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit in and for Okeechobee County, Florida, in which **RIVERSIDE NATIONAL BANK OF FLORIDA** is Plaintiff, and **JAY T. HUFFMAN** is the Defendant, I will sell to the highest and best bidder for cash at the Jury Assembly Room on the 2nd floor of the Okeechobee County Judicial Center at 312 NW 3rd Street, Okeechobee, FL on the 8th day of September, 2010, at 11:00 a.m., the following described property set forth in the Summary Final Judgment Of Foreclosure, to-wit:

Lot 9, Block 11, Lar-Kee Lakes 3rd Addition for Mobile Homes, according to the plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 3, Page 57 of the Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida. Also described as: Lot 9, Block 11, Lar-Kee Lakes for Mobile Homes, Section 3 according to the plat thereof, as recorded in Plat Book 3, Page 87 of the Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida. Together with a 1986 Wood Doublewide Manufactured Home ID#5 401203702A, Title #: 42968531 and 401203702D, Title #: 42930745 situated thereon.

Anyone claiming an interest in the

Public Notice

surplus from the sale, other than the person who was the record property owner when the Lis Pendens was filed, must file a claim within 60 days after the sale.

DATED this 12 day of Aug., 2010.

SHARON ROBERTSON
 As Clerk of the Circuit Court
 By: Linda F. Young
 Deputy Clerk

Lisa N. Thompson, Esq.,
 P.O. Box 64-3686,
 Vero Beach, FL 32964-3686,
 Attorney for Plaintiff;
 Jay T. Huffman,
 820 NW 115th Drive,
 Okeechobee, FL 34972
 363446 ON 8/25/9/1/10

Public Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 15th day of September A.D., 2010, at 11:00 a.m. in the Jury Assembly Room, 2nd Floor, at the Okeechobee County Judicial Center,

Public Notice

IN THE COUNTY COURT OF THE 19TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CIVIL DIVISION
FILE NO. 2009 CC 88
JUDGE: Jerald D. Bryant

EAST COAST ALUMINUM PRODUCTS, INC., a Florida corporation, Plaintiff,
 v.
 CAROLYN K. BUFFUM and EMC Mortgage Corporation, a foreign profit corporation, Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 15th day of September A.D., 2010, at 11:00 a.m. in the Jury Assembly Room, 2nd Floor, at the Okeechobee County Judicial Center,

Public Notice

312 Northwest 3rd Street, Okeechobee, Florida the undersigned Clerk will offer for sale the following described real property:

Lot 263 Treasure Island, Unit 8 according to the plat recorded in Plat Book 3, page 91, Public Records of Okeechobee, Florida.

The aforesaid sale will be made pursuant to the Final Judgment entered in the above styled case. ANY PERSON CLAIMING AN INTEREST IN THE SURPLUS FROM THE SALE, IF ANY, OTHER THAN THE PROPERTY OWNER, AS OF THE DATE OF LIS PENDENS MUST FILE A CLAIM WITHIN 60 DAYS AFTER THE SALE.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are a person with a disability who needs accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled at

Public Notice

no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact Corrie Johnson, ADA Coordinator, 250 NW Country Club Drive, Ste. 217, Port St. Lucie, Florida 34986 (772) 807-4370 at least seven (7) days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than seven (7) days; if You Are Hearing or Voice Impaired, Call 711. DATED this 13 day of Aug., 2010.

SHARON ROBERTSON
 Clerk of the Circuit Court
 By: Linda F. Young
 As Deputy Clerk

363873 ON 8/18,25,9/1/10

Public Notice

To Whom It May Concern:

You are hereby notified that I will offer for sale and sell at public sale to the highest and best bidder for cash the following described livestock: one aged chestnut gelding with blaze, one 10 year old bay mustang gelding 4 white socks and star, one 7 year old bay mustang gelding star and white coronet and one sorrel 12 year old gelding white star at 2:00 o'clock, pm on the 2nd day of September 2010, at 1480 NW 25th Dr, Okeechobee, FL, 34972 (Animal Control).
 Animal Control of Okeechobee County, Florida
 364920 ON 9/1/10

Public Notice

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 2010-CP-88
PROBATE DIVISION

IN RE: Estate of **ADLAI ELDON MICHAELS**, Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Formal Administration

The administration of the Estate of **ADLAI ELDON MICHAELS, Deceased**, whose date of death was February 27, 2010, Case Number 2010-CP-88 is pending in the Circuit Court for Okeechobee County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 312 NW 3rd Street, Suite 125, Okeechobee, FL 34972. The names and addresses of the Co-Personal Representatives and the Personal Representatives 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 THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR THIRTY (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, must file their claims with this Court **WITHIN THREE (3) MONTHS AFTER THE DATE 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 PERIOD 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 this Notice is: 9-1-2010.

Law Office Of **CASSELLS & McCALL**
 BY: **JOHN D. CASSELLS, JR.**
 Attorney for
 Personal Representatives
 400 NW 2nd Street P.O. Box 968
 Okeechobee, Florida 34973
 (863) 763-3131
 Fla Bar No: 0261521

LEE MICHAELS
 Co-Personal Representative
 375 Log Fence Road
 Palmerton, PA 18071

CAROL ANN PRICE
 Co-Personal Representative
 3126 Gravesfield Road, Apt 416
 SilverSpring, MD 20904
 364379 on 9/1,8/10

Public Notice

1997 Mercury Tracer
 VIN#1MELM10P1LVW627359

Terms of sale are cash, and no checks will be accepted. Seller reserves the right of final bid. ALL SALES ARE FINAL! NO REFUNDS WILL BE MADE! Said automobiles will be sold in "AS IS" condition with no guarantees.

364946 ON 9/1/2010

Public Notice

A public auction will be held at BMJ Towing, Inc. Lot at 414 South Parrott Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida 34974 on Friday the 17th day of Sept. 2010 from 10:00-11:00 A.M. Pursuant to Florida statute 713.78 for unpaid towing and storage. Year, Make, Model & Vin's as follows:

05 Black Ford Expedition
 1PFMU17551A23295

1988 Gray Pontiac Firebird
 1G2FW21E5J1209365

Terms of sale are cash, and no checks will be accepted. The seller reserves the right of final bid. All sales are final. No refunds will be made. Said automobiles will be sold in "AS IS" with no guarantees.

364922 ON 9/1/2010

Public Notice

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
CASE NO.: 2008-CA-353

CARROL WORD,
 Plaintiff,
 vs.
 PAMELA MUNRO,
 Defendant.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to the Final Judgment of Foreclosure dated August 5, 2010, and entered in Case No. 2008-CA-353 of the Circuit Court of the 19th Judicial Circuit, in and for Okeechobee County, Florida, wherein **CARROL WORD**, is the Plaintiff and **PAMELA MUNRO**, is the Defendant I will sell to the highest bidder for cash at Jury Assembly Room, 2nd Floor, Okeechobee County Judicial Center, 312 NW 3rd Street, Okeechobee, Florida 34972, on the 15th day of September, 2010 at 11:00 A.M., the following described property as set forth in said Final Judgment, lying and being situated in Okeechobee County, Florida, to-wit:

LOTS 14 AND 15 AND WEST ONE-HALF (W 1/2) OF LOT 16, BLOCK 55, OKEECHOBEE GARDENS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 2, PAGE 30, PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the Lis Pendens must file a claim within sixty (60) days of the sale.

If you are a person with a disability who needs an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. Please contact Corrie Johnson, ADA Coordinator, 250 NW Country Club Drive, Suite 217, Port St. Lucie, FL 34986, (772) 807-4370 at least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days; if you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711. DATED this 17th day of August, 2010.

SHARON ROBERTSON
 Clerk of the Circuit Court
 By: Linda F. Young
 Deputy Clerk

COLIN M. CAMERON, ESQ., P.A.
 Attorney for Plaintiff
 200 NE 4th Avenue
 Okeechobee, FL 34972
 (863) 763-8600
 363651 ON 8/25,9/1/10

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Public Notice

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS
TO BE VOTED ON NOVEMBER 2, 2010
NOTICE OF ELECTION

I, Dawn K. Roberts, Interim Secretary of State of the State of Florida, do hereby give notice that an election will be held in each county in Florida, on November 2, 2010, for the ratification or rejection of proposed revisions to the constitution of the State of Florida.

No. 1
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
ARTICLE VI, SECTION 7
(Legislative)

Ballot Title:
REPEAL OF PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FINANCING REQUIREMENT.

Ballot Summary:
Proposing the repeal of the provision in the State Constitution that requires public financing of campaigns of candidates for elective statewide office who agree to campaign spending limits.

Full Text:

ARTICLE VI
SUFFRAGE AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 7. Campaign spending limits and funding of campaigns for elective state-wide office. It is the policy of this state to provide for state-wide elections in which all qualified candidates may compete effectively. A method of public financing for campaigns for state-wide office shall be established by law. Spending limits shall be established for such campaigns for candidates who use public funds in their campaigns. The legislature shall provide funding for this provision. General law implementing this paragraph shall be at least as protective of effective competition by a candidate who uses public funds as the general law in effect on January 1, 1998.

No. 2
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
ARTICLE VII, SECTION 3
ARTICLE XII, SECTION 31
(Legislative)

Ballot Title:
HOMESTEAD AD VALOREM TAX CREDIT FOR DEPLOYED MILITARY PERSONNEL.

Ballot Summary:
Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to require the Legislature to provide an additional homestead property tax exemption by law for members of the United States military or military reserves, the United States Coast Guard or its reserves, or the Florida National Guard who receive a homestead exemption and were deployed in the previous year on active duty outside the continental United States, Alaska, or Hawaii in support of military operations designated by the Legislature. The exempt amount will be based upon the number of days in the previous calendar year that the person was deployed on active duty outside the continental United States, Alaska, or Hawaii in support of military operations designated by the Legislature. The amendment is scheduled to take effect January 1, 2011.

Full Text:

ARTICLE VII
FINANCE AND TAXATION

SECTION 3. Taxes; exemptions.--

- (a) All property owned by a municipality and used exclusively by it for municipal or public purposes shall be exempt from taxation. A municipality, owning property outside the municipality, may be required by general law to make payment to the taxing unit in which the property is located. Such portions of property as are used predominantly for educational, literary, scientific, religious or charitable purposes may be exempted by general law from taxation.
- (b) There shall be exempt from taxation, cumulatively, to every head of a family residing in this state, household goods and personal effects to the value fixed by general law, not less than one thousand dollars, and to every widow or widower or person who is blind or totally and permanently disabled, property to the value fixed by general law not less than five hundred dollars.
- (c) Any county or municipality may, for the purpose of its respective tax levy and subject to the provisions of this subsection and general law, grant community and economic development ad valorem tax exemptions to new businesses and expansions of existing businesses, as defined by general law. Such an exemption may be granted only by ordinance of the county or municipality, and only after the electors of the county or municipality voting on such question in a referendum authorize the county or municipality to adopt such ordinances. An exemption so granted shall apply to improvements to real property made by or for the use of a new business and improvements to real property related to the expansion of an existing business and shall also apply to tangible personal property of such new business and tangible personal property related to the expansion of an existing business. The amount or limits of the amount of such exemption shall be specified by general law. The period of time for which such exemption may be granted to a new business or expansion of an existing business shall be determined by general law. The authority to grant such exemption shall expire ten years from the date of approval by the electors of the county or municipality, and may be renewable by referendum as provided by general law.
- (d) Any county or municipality may, for the purpose of its respective tax levy and subject to the provisions of this subsection and general law, grant historic preservation ad valorem tax exemptions to owners of historic properties. This exemption may be granted only by ordinance of the county or municipality. The amount or limits of the amount of this exemption and the requirements for eligible properties must be specified by general law. The period of time for which this exemption may be granted to a property owner shall be determined by general law.
- (e) By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, twenty-five thousand dollars of the assessed value of property subject to tangible personal property tax shall be exempt from ad valorem taxation.
- (f) There shall be granted an ad valorem tax exemption for real property dedicated in perpetuity for conservation purposes, including real property encumbered by perpetual conservation easements or by other perpetual conservation protections, as defined by general law.
- (g) By general law and subject to the conditions specified therein, each person who receives a homestead exemption as provided in section 6 of this article; who was a member of the United States military or military reserves, the United States Coast Guard or its reserves, or the Florida National Guard; and who was deployed during the preceding calendar year on active duty outside the continental United States, Alaska, or Hawaii in support of military operations designated by the legislature shall receive an additional exemption equal to a percentage of the taxable value of his or her homestead property. The applicable percentage shall be calculated as the number of days during the preceding calendar year the person was deployed on active duty outside the continental United States, Alaska, or Hawaii in support of military operations designated by the legislature divided by the number of days in that year.

ARTICLE XII
SCHEDULE

SECTION 31. Additional ad valorem tax exemption for certain members of the armed forces deployed on active duty outside of the United States.--The amendment to Section 3 of Article VII providing for an additional ad valorem tax exemption for members of the United States military or military reserves, the United States Coast Guard or its reserves, or the Florida National Guard deployed on active duty outside of the United States in support of military operations designated by the legislature and this section shall take effect January 1, 2011.

No. 3
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
ARTICLE VII, SECTIONS 4 and 6
ARTICLE XII
(Legislative)

Ballot Title:
PROPERTY TAX LIMIT FOR NONHOMESTEAD PROPERTY; ADDITIONAL HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FOR NEW HOMESTEAD OWNERS.

Ballot Summary:
The State Constitution generally limits the maximum annual increase in the assessed value of nonhomestead property to 10 percent annually. This proposed amendment reduces the maximum annual increase in the assessed values of those properties to 5 percent annually. This amendment also requires the Legislature to provide an additional homestead exemption for persons who have not owned a principal residence during the preceding 8 years. Under the exemption, 25 percent of the just value of a first-time homestead, up to \$100,000, will be exempt from property taxes. The amount of the additional exemption will decrease in each succeeding year for 5 years by the greater of 20 percent of the initial additional exemption or the difference between the just value and the assessed value of the property. The additional exemption will not be available in the 6th and subsequent years.

Full Text:

ARTICLE VII
FINANCE AND TAXATION

SECTION 4. Taxation; assessments.--By general law regulations shall be prescribed which shall secure a just valuation of all property for ad valorem taxation, provided:

- (a) Agricultural land, land producing high water recharge to Florida's aquifers, or land used exclusively for noncommercial recreational purposes may be classified by general law and assessed solely on the basis of character or use.
- (b) As provided by general law and subject to conditions, limitations, and reasonable definitions specified therein, land used for conservation purposes shall be classified by general law and assessed solely on the basis of character or use.
- (c) Pursuant to general law tangible personal property held for sale as stock in trade and livestock may be valued for taxation at a specified percentage of its value, may be classified for tax purposes, or may be exempted from taxation.
- (d) All persons entitled to a homestead exemption under Section 6 of this Article shall have their homestead assessed at just value as of January 1 of the year following the effective date of this amendment. This assessment shall change only as provided in this subsection.
- (1) Assessments subject to this subsection shall be changed annually on January 1st of each year; but those changes in assessments shall not exceed the lower of the following:
- Three percent (~~4%~~) of the assessment for the prior year.
 - The percent change in the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers, U.S. City Average, all items 1967=100, or successor reports for the preceding calendar year as initially reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
 - No assessment shall exceed just value.
 - After any change of ownership, as provided by general law, homestead property shall be assessed at just value as of January 1 of the following year, unless the provisions of paragraph (8) apply. Thereafter, the homestead shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.
 - New homestead property shall be assessed at just value as of January 1st of the year following the establishment of the homestead, unless the provisions of paragraph (8) apply. That assessment shall only change as provided in this subsection.
 - Changes, additions, reductions, or improvements to homestead property shall be assessed as provided for by general law; provided, however, after the adjustment for any change, addition, reduction, or improvement, the property shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.
 - In the event of a termination of homestead status, the property shall be assessed as provided by general law.
 - The provisions of this amendment are severable. If any of the provisions of this amendment shall be held unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, the decision of such court shall not affect or impair any remaining provisions of this amendment.
 - (8)a. The person who establishes a new homestead as of January 1, 2009, or January 1 of any subsequent year and who has received a homestead exemption pursuant to Section 6 of this Article as of January 1 of either of the two years immediately preceding the establishment of the new homestead is entitled to have the new homestead assessed at less than just value. If this revision is approved in January of 2008, a person who establishes a new homestead as of January 1, 2008, is entitled to have the new homestead assessed at less than just value only if that person received a homestead exemption on January 1, 2007. The assessed value of the newly established homestead shall be determined as follows:
 - If the just value of the new homestead is greater than or equal to the just value of the prior homestead as of January 1 of the year in which the prior homestead was abandoned, the assessed value of the new homestead shall be the just value of the new homestead minus an amount equal to the lesser of \$500,000 or the difference between the just value and the assessed value of the prior homestead as of January 1 of the year in which the prior homestead was abandoned. Thereafter, the homestead shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.
 - If the just value of the new homestead is less than the just value of the prior homestead as of January 1 of the year in which the prior homestead was abandoned, the assessed value of the new homestead shall be equal to the just value of the new homestead divided by the just value of the prior homestead and multiplied by the assessed value of the prior homestead. However, if the difference between the just value of the new homestead and the assessed value of the new homestead calculated pursuant to this sub-subparagraph is greater than \$500,000, the assessed value of the new homestead shall be increased so that the difference between the just value and the assessed value equals \$500,000. Thereafter, the homestead shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.
 - By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the Legislature shall provide for application of this paragraph to property owned by more than one person.
 - The legislature may, by general law, for assessment purposes and subject to the provisions of this subsection, allow counties and municipalities to authorize by ordinance that historic property may be assessed solely on the basis of character or use. Such character or use assessment shall apply only to the jurisdiction adopting the ordinance. The requirements for eligible properties must be specified by general law.
 - (b) A county may, in the manner prescribed by general law, provide for a reduction in the assessed value of homestead property to the extent of any increase in the assessed value of that property which results from the construction or reconstruction of the property for the purpose of providing living quarters for one or more natural or adoptive grandparents or parents of the owner of the property or of the owner's spouse if at least one of the grandparents or parents for whom the living quarters are provided is 62 years of age or older. Such a reduction may not exceed the lesser of the following:
 - The increase in assessed value resulting from construction or reconstruction of the property.
 - Twenty percent of the total assessed value of the property as improved.
 - For all levies other than school district levies, assessments of residential real property, as defined by general law, which contains nine units or fewer and which is not subject to the assessment limitations set forth in subsections (a) through (d) shall change only as provided in this subsection.

(1) Assessments subject to this subsection shall be changed annually on the date of assessment provided by law; but those changes in assessments shall not exceed five ~~ten~~ percent (~~40%~~) of the assessment for the prior year.

(2) No assessment shall exceed just value.

(3) After a change of ownership or control, as defined by general law, including any change of ownership of a legal entity that owns the property, such property shall be assessed at just value as of the next assessment date. Thereafter, such property shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.

(4) Changes, additions, reductions, or improvements to such property shall be assessed as provided for by general law; however, after the adjustment for any change, addition, reduction, or improvement, the property shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.

(h) For all levies other than school district levies, assessments of real property that is not subject to the assessment limitations set forth in subsections (a) through (d) and (g) shall change only as provided in this subsection.

(1) Assessments subject to this subsection shall be changed annually on the date of assessment provided by law; but those changes in assessments shall not exceed five ~~ten~~ percent (~~40%~~) of the assessment for the prior year.

(2) No assessment shall exceed just value.

(3) The legislature must provide that such property shall be assessed at just value as of the next assessment date after a qualifying improvement, as defined by general law, is made to such property. Thereafter, such property shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.

(4) The legislature may provide that such property shall be assessed at just value as of the next assessment date after a change of ownership or control, as defined by general law, including any change of ownership of the legal entity that owns the property. Thereafter, such property shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.

(5) Changes, additions, reductions, or improvements to such property shall be assessed as provided for by general law; however, after the adjustment for any change, addition, reduction, or improvement, the property shall be assessed as provided in this subsection.

(i) The legislature, by general law and subject to conditions specified therein, may prohibit the consideration of the following in the determination of the assessed value of real property used for residential purposes:

 - Any change or improvement made for the purpose of improving the property's resistance to wind damage.
 - The installation of a renewable energy source device.
 - (l) The assessment of the following working waterfront properties shall be based upon the current use of the property:
 - Land used predominantly for commercial fishing purposes.
 - Land that is accessible to the public and used for vessel launches into waters that are navigable.
 - Marinas and drystacks that are open to the public.
 - Water-dependent marine manufacturing facilities, commercial fishing facilities, and marine vessel construction and repair facilities and their support activities.

(2) The assessment benefit provided by this subsection is subject to conditions and limitations and reasonable definitions as specified by the legislature by general law.

SECTION 6. Homestead exemptions.--

(a) Every person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, or another legally or naturally dependent upon the owner, shall be exempt from taxation thereon, except assessments for special benefits, up to the assessed valuation of twenty-five thousand dollars and, for all levies other than school district levies, on the assessed valuation greater than fifty thousand dollars and up to seventy-five thousand dollars, upon establishment of right thereto in the manner prescribed by law. The real estate may be

Public Notice

held by legal or equitable title, by the entireties, jointly, in common, as a condominium, or indirectly by stock ownership or membership representing the owner's or member's proprietary interest in a corporation owning a fee or a leasehold initially in excess of ninety-eight years. The exemption shall not apply with respect to any assessment roll until such roll is first determined to be in compliance with the provisions of section 4 by a state agency designated by general law. This exemption is repealed on the effective date of any amendment to this Article which provides for the assessment of homestead property at less than just value.

(b) Not more than one exemption shall be allowed any individual or family unit or with respect to any residential unit. No exemption shall exceed the value of the real estate assessable to the owner or, in case of ownership through stock or membership in a corporation, the value of the proportion which the interest in the corporation bears to the assessed value of the property.

(c) By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the Legislature may provide to renters, who are permanent residents, ad valorem tax relief on all ad valorem tax levies. Such ad valorem tax relief shall be in the form and amount established by general law.

(d) The legislature may, by general law, allow counties or municipalities, for the purpose of their respective tax levies and subject to the provisions of general law, to grant an additional homestead tax exemption not exceeding fifty thousand dollars to any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner and who has attained age sixty-five and whose household income, as defined by general law, does not exceed twenty thousand dollars. The general law must allow counties and municipalities to grant this additional exemption, within the limits prescribed in this subsection, by ordinance adopted in the manner prescribed by general law, and must provide for the periodic adjustment of the income limitation prescribed in this subsection for changes in the cost of living.

(e) Each veteran who is age 65 or older who is partially or totally permanently disabled shall receive a discount from the amount of the ad valorem tax otherwise owed on homestead property the veteran owns and resides in if the disability was combat related, the veteran was a resident of this state at the time of entering the military service of the United States, and the veteran was honorably discharged upon separation from military service. The discount shall be in a percentage equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent, service-connected disability as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. To qualify for the discount granted by this subsection, an applicant must submit to the county property appraiser, by March 1, proof of residency at the time of entering military service, an official letter from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs stating the percentage of the veteran's service-connected disability and such evidence that reasonably identifies the disability as combat related, and a copy of the veteran's honorable discharge. If the property appraiser denies the request for a discount, the appraiser must notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the denial, and the veteran may reapply. The Legislature may, by general law, waive the annual application requirement in subsequent years. This subsection shall take effect December 7, 2006, is self-executing, and does not require implementing legislation.

(f)(1) By general law, and subject to conditions specified therein, the legislature shall provide an additional homestead exemption to the person or persons who:

a. Establish the right to receive the homestead exemption in subsection (a) within one year after purchasing the homestead property; and

b. Have not owned a principal residence during the eight-year period before the purchase. For married persons, neither the purchaser nor his or her spouse may have owned a principal residence during the preceding eight years.

(2) The additional homestead exemption shall equal 25 percent of the just value of the property on January 1 of the year in which the homestead exemption in subsection (a) is received, but not more than \$100,000.

a. The amount of the additional exemption shall be reduced in each subsequent year by an amount equal to twenty percent of the amount of the initial additional exemption or by an amount equal to the difference between the just value of the property and the assessed value determined under subsection (d) of section 4 of this Article, whichever is greater.

b. The additional homestead exemption shall not apply after the fifth year after the initial additional exemption is granted.

(3) Only one additional exemption under this subsection may apply to a single homestead property.

ARTICLE XII SCHEDULE

Property tax limit for nonhomestead property--The amendment to Section 4 of Article VII reducing the limit on the maximum annual increase in the assessed value of nonhomestead property to five percent from ten percent and this section shall take effect January 1, 2011. Additional homestead exemption for first-time homestead property owners--The amendment to subsection (f) of Section 6 of Article VII providing for an additional homestead exemption for persons who have not owned a principal residence within an eight-year period and this section shall take effect January 1, 2011, and shall be available for properties purchased on or after January 1, 2010.

No. 4 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ARTICLE II, SECTION 7 (Initiative)

Ballot Title:
REFERENDA REQUIRED FOR ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS.

Ballot Summary:
Establishes that before a local government may adopt a new comprehensive land use plan, or amend a comprehensive land use plan, the proposed plan or amendment shall be subject to vote of the electors of the local government by referendum, following preparation by the local planning agency, consideration by the governing body and notice. Provides definitions.

Financial Impact Statement:
The amendment's impact on local government expenditures cannot be estimated precisely. Local governments will incur additional costs due to the requirement to conduct referenda in order to adopt comprehensive plans or amendments thereto. The amount of such costs depends upon the frequency, timing and method of the referenda, and includes the costs of ballot preparation, election administration, and associated expenses. The impact on state government expenditures will be insignificant.

Full Text:

ARTICLE II GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 7. Natural resources and scenic beauty.--

Public participation in local government comprehensive land use planning benefits the conservation and protection of Florida's natural resources and scenic beauty, and the long-term quality of life of Floridians. Therefore, before a local government may adopt a new comprehensive land use plan, or amend a comprehensive land use plan, such proposed plan or plan amendment shall be subject to vote of the electors of the local government by referendum, following preparation by the local planning agency, consideration by the governing body as provided by general law, and notice thereof in a local newspaper of general circulation. Notice and referendum will be as provided by general law. This amendment shall become effective immediately upon approval by the electors of Florida.

For purposes of this subsection:

1. "Local government" means a county or municipality.

2. "Local government comprehensive land use plan" means a plan to guide and control future land development in an area under the jurisdiction of a local government.

3. "Local planning agency" means the agency of a local government that is responsible for the preparation of a comprehensive land use plan and plan amendments after public notice and hearings and for making recommendations to the governing body of the local government regarding the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive land use plan.

4. "Governing body" means the board of county commissioners of a county, the commission or council of a municipality, or the chief elected governing body of a county or municipality, however designated.

No. 5 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ARTICLE III, SECTION 21 (Initiative)

Ballot Title:
STANDARDS FOR LEGISLATURE TO FOLLOW IN LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING.

Ballot Summary:
Legislative districts or districting plans may not be drawn to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party. Districts shall not be drawn to deny racial or language minorities the equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Districts must be contiguous. Unless otherwise required, districts must be compact, as equal in population as feasible, and where feasible must make use of existing city, county and geographical boundaries.

Financial Impact Statement:
The fiscal impact cannot be determined precisely. State government and state courts may incur additional costs if litigation increases beyond the number or complexity of cases which would have occurred in the amendment's absence.

Full Text:

ARTICLE III LEGISLATURE

SECTION 21. Standards for establishing Legislative district boundaries.--

In establishing Legislative district boundaries:

(1) No apportionment plan or district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent; and districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice; and districts shall consist of contiguous territory.

(2) Unless compliance with the standards in this subsection conflicts with the standards in subsection (1) or with federal law, districts shall be as nearly equal in population as is practicable; districts shall be compact; and districts shall, where feasible, utilize existing political and geographical boundaries.

(3) The order in which the standards within sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section are set forth shall not be read to establish any priority of one standard over the other within that subsection.

No. 6 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ARTICLE III, SECTION 20 (Initiative)

Ballot Title:
STANDARDS FOR LEGISLATURE TO FOLLOW IN CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING.

Ballot Summary:
Congressional districts or districting plans may not be drawn to favor or disfavor an incumbent or political party. Districts shall not be drawn to deny racial or language minorities the equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect representatives of their choice. Districts must be contiguous. Unless otherwise required, districts must be compact, as equal in population as feasible, and where feasible must make use of existing city, county and geographical boundaries.

Financial impact statement:
The fiscal impact cannot be determined precisely. State government and state courts may incur additional costs if litigation increases beyond the number or complexity of cases which would have occurred in the amendment's absence.

Full Text:

ARTICLE III LEGISLATURE

SECTION 20. Standards for establishing Congressional district boundaries.--

In establishing Congressional district boundaries:

(1) No apportionment plan or individual district shall be drawn with the intent to favor or disfavor a political party or an incumbent; and districts shall not be drawn with the intent or result of denying or abridging the equal opportunity of racial or language minorities to participate in the political process or to diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice; and districts shall consist of contiguous territory.

(2) Unless compliance with the standards in this subsection conflicts with the standards in subsection (1) or with federal law, districts shall be as nearly equal in population as is practicable; districts shall be compact; and districts shall, where feasible, utilize existing political and geographical boundaries.

(3) The order in which the standards within sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section are set forth shall not be read to establish any priority of one standard over the other within that subsection.

No. 7 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ARTICLE III, SECTION 20 (Legislative)

Ballot Title:
STANDARDS FOR LEGISLATURE TO FOLLOW IN LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING.

Ballot Summary:
In establishing congressional and legislative district boundaries or plans, the state shall apply federal requirements and balance and implement the standards in the State Constitution. The state shall take into consideration the ability of racial and language minorities to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice, and communities of common interest other than political parties may be respected and promoted, both without subordination to any other provision of Article III of the State Constitution. Districts and plans are valid if the balancing and implementation of standards is rationally related to the standards contained in the State Constitution and is consistent with federal law.

Full Text:

ARTICLE III LEGISLATURE

SECTION 20. Standards for establishing legislative and congressional district boundaries.--In establishing congressional and legislative district boundaries or plans, the state shall apply federal requirements and balance and implement the standards in this constitution. The state shall take into consideration the ability of racial and language minorities to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice, and communities of common interest other than political parties may be respected and promoted, both without subordination to any other provision of this article. Districts and plans are valid if the balancing and implementation of standards is rationally related to the standards contained in this constitution and is consistent with federal law.

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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) No. 600000394
NEW ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

The Procurement Department of the South Florida Water Management District, B-1 Building, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406, will receive sealed proposals up to 2:30 p.m. opening time on October 6, 2010 from respondents proposing novel nutrient removal technology projects wishing to participate in the New Alternative Assessment Program.

An **OPTIONAL PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE** will be held on September 22, 2010, **10:00 am**, in the B1 Building Auditorium, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach Florida for all interested respondents.

All proposals must conform to the instructions in the RFP. Interested respondents may obtain a copy of the complete RFP (1) at the above address; (2) by downloading the solicitation from our website at www.sfwmd.gov; (3) by calling (561) 682-2715; or (4) by calling the 24-hour **BID HOTLINE (800) 472-5290**. The public is invited to attend the proposal opening. **Further information on the status of this solicitation can be obtained on our web site - <http://www.sfwmd.gov>.**

Official public meetings regarding this RFP are scheduled as follows:

1. Oral Presentations: Oct. 20, 2010, 9:00 am, B1 Bldg, Governing Board Chambers
2. Selection Committee Meeting: Oct. 21, 2010, 10:00 am, B1 Bldg, Everglades Conf. Room

All public meetings will be held at the dates, times, locations and conference rooms referenced above. A copy of the agenda may be obtained by writing the South Florida Water Management District, Procurement Department, P.O. Box 24680, West Palm Beach, Florida, 33416-4680. Persons with disabilities or handicaps who need assistance may contact the District Clerk, (561) 682-6297, at least two business days in advance of the meeting to make appropriate arrangements.

Should one or more members of the evaluation committee need to attend any of the meetings by means of communication media technology (CMT), the meetings will be teleconferenced at the dates, times, locations and conference rooms referenced above. For more information, please contact Marilyn Ivory, Contract Specialist, at (561) 682-6381. 364532 ON 9/1/10

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Okeechobee County Board of County Commissioners will resume their Budget Meetings on Wednesday, September 1, 2010 at **2:00 p.m.** in the **"Judge William L. Hendry Courtroom" at the Historic Courthouse, 304 N.W. 2nd Street, Okeechobee, Florida.**

Any person deciding to appeal any decision made by the Board of County Commissioners with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purposes, he or she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of such proceedings is made, which record shall include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Florida Statute 286.26, persons with disabilities needing special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact Paula Poskon, no later than two (2) working days prior to the proceeding at 863-763-4559 or 863-763-2131, ext. 2111. If you are hearing or voice impaired, call TDD 1-800-222-3448 (voice) or 1-888-447-5620 (TTY).

Cliff Belts Jr., Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Okeechobee County, Florida

Sharon Robertson, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners
Okeechobee County, Florida
/s/ Paula Poskon/ Deputy Clerk
364921 ON 9/1/10

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**No. 8
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
ARTICLE IX, SECTION 1
ARTICLE XII, SECTION 31
(Legislative)**

Ballot Title:
REVISION OF THE CLASS SIZE REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Ballot Summary:
The Florida Constitution currently limits the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in public school classrooms in the following grade groupings: for prekindergarten through grade 3, 18 students; for grades 4 through 8, 22 students; and for grades 9 through 12, 25 students. Under this amendment, the current limits on the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in public school classrooms would become limits on the average number of students assigned per class to each teacher, by specified grade grouping, in each public school. This amendment also adopts new limits on the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in an individual classroom as follows: for prekindergarten through grade 3, 21 students; for grades 4 through 8, 27 students; and for grades 9 through 12, 30 students. This amendment specifies that class size limits do not apply to virtual classes, requires the Legislature to provide sufficient funds to maintain the average number of students required by this amendment, and schedules these revisions to take effect upon approval by the electors of this state and to operate retroactively to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

Full Text:

ARTICLE IX
EDUCATION

SECTION 1. Public education.--
(a) The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people may require. To assure that children attending public schools obtain a high quality education, the legislature shall make adequate provision to ensure that, by the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year and for each school year thereafter, there are a sufficient number of classrooms so that:
(1) Within each public school, the average ~~maximum~~ number of students ~~who are~~ assigned per class to each teacher who is teaching ~~in public school classrooms for~~ prekindergarten through grade 3 does not exceed 18 students and the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in an individual classroom does not exceed 21 students;
(2) Within each public school, the average ~~maximum~~ number of students ~~who are~~ assigned per class to each teacher who is teaching ~~in public school classrooms for~~ grades 4 through 8 does not exceed 22 students and the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in an individual classroom does not exceed 27 students; and
(3) Within each public school, the average ~~maximum~~ number of students ~~who are~~ assigned per class to each teacher who is teaching ~~in public school classrooms for~~ grades 9 through 12 does not exceed 25 students and the maximum number of students assigned to each teacher in an individual classroom does not exceed 30 students. The class size requirements of this subsection do not apply to extracurricular or virtual classes. Payment of the costs associated with meeting ~~reducing class size to meet these~~ requirements is the responsibility of the state and not of local school districts. ~~Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, The legislature shall provide sufficient funds to maintain~~ reduce the average number of students required by ~~in each classroom by at least two students per year until the maximum number of students per class does not exceed the requirements of~~ this subsection.
(b) Every four-year old child in Florida shall be provided by the State a high quality ~~prekindergarten pre-kindergarten~~ learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. An early childhood development and education program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child's ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings in the development of language and cognitive capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory, and moral capacities through education in basic skills and such other skills as the Legislature may determine to be appropriate.
(c) The early childhood education and development programs provided by reason of ~~subsection (b)~~ (b) shall be implemented no later than the beginning of the 2005 school year through funds generated in addition to those used for existing education, health, and development programs. Existing education, health, and development programs are those funded by the State as of January 1, 2002, that provided for child or adult education, health care, or development.

ARTICLE XII
SCHEDULE

SECTION 31. Class size requirements for public schools.-- The amendment to Section 1 of Article IX, relating to class size requirements for public schools, and this section shall take effect upon approval by the electors and shall operate retroactively to the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year.

**No. 9
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
ARTICLE I, SECTION 28
(Legislative)**

Ballot Title:
HEALTH CARE FREEDOM.

Ballot Summary:
HEALTH CARE SERVICES.--Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to ensure access to health care services without waiting lists, protect the doctor-patient relationship, guard against mandates that don't work, prohibit laws or rules from compelling any person, employer, or health care provider to participate in any health care system; permit a person or an employer to purchase lawful health care services directly from a health care provider; permit a health care provider to accept direct payment from a person or an employer for lawful health care services; exempt persons, employers, and health care providers from penalties and fines for paying directly or accepting direct payment for lawful health care services; and permit the purchase or sale of health insurance in private health care systems. Specifies that the amendment does not affect which health care services a health care provider is required to perform or provide; affect which health care services are permitted by law; prohibit care provided pursuant to general law relating to workers' compensation; affect laws or rules in effect as of March 1, 2010; affect the terms or conditions of any health care system to the extent that those terms and conditions do not have the effect of punishing a person or an employer for paying directly for lawful health care services or a health care provider for accepting direct payment from a person or an employer for lawful health care services; or affect any general law passed by two-thirds vote of the membership of each house of the Legislature, passed after the effective date of the amendment, provided such law states with specificity the public necessity justifying the exceptions from the provisions of the amendment. The amendment expressly provides that it may not be construed to prohibit negotiated provisions in insurance contracts, network agreements, or other provider agreements contractually limiting copayments, coinsurance, deductibles, or other patient charges.

Full Text:

ARTICLE I
DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

SECTION 28. Health care services.--
(a) To preserve the freedom of all residents of the state to provide for their own health care:
(1) A law or rule may not compel, directly or indirectly, any person, employer, or health care provider to participate in any health care system.
(2) A person or an employer may pay directly for lawful health care services and may not be required to pay penalties or fines for paying directly for lawful health care services. A health care provider may accept direct payment for lawful health care services and may not be required to pay penalties or fines for accepting direct payment from a person or an employer for lawful health care services.
(b) Subject to reasonable and necessary rules that do not substantially limit a person's options, the purchase or sale of health insurance in private health care systems may not be prohibited by law or rule.
(c) This section does not:
(1) Affect which health care services a health care provider is required to perform or provide.
(2) Affect which health care services are permitted by law.
(3) Prohibit care provided pursuant to general law relating to workers' compensation.
(4) Affect laws or rules in effect as of March 1, 2010.
(5) Affect the terms or conditions of any health care system to the extent that those terms and conditions do not have the effect of punishing a person or an employer for paying directly for lawful health care services or a health care provider for accepting direct payment from a person or an employer for lawful health care services. except that this section may not be construed to prohibit any negotiated provision in any insurance contract, network agreement, or other provider agreement contractually limiting copayments, coinsurance, deductibles, or other patient charges.
(6) Affect any general law passed by a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house of the legislature after the effective date of this section, if the law states with specificity the public necessity that justifies an exception from this section.
(d) As used in this section, the term:
(1) "Compel" includes the imposition of penalties or fines.
(2) "Direct payment" or "pay directly" means payment for lawful health care services without a public or private third party, not including an employer, paying for any portion of the service.
(3) "Health care system" means any public or private entity whose function or purpose is the management of, processing of, enrollment of individuals for, or payment, in full or in part, for health care services, health care data, or health care information for its participants.
(4) "Lawful health care services" means any health-related service or treatment, to the extent that the service or treatment is permitted or not prohibited by law or regulation, which may be provided by persons or businesses otherwise permitted to offer such services.
(5) "Penalties or fines" means any civil or criminal penalty or fine, tax, salary or wage withholding or surcharge, or named fee with a similar effect established by law or rule by an agency established, created, or controlled by the government which is used to punish or discourage the exercise of rights protected under this section. For purposes of this section only, the term "rule by an agency" may not be construed to mean any negotiated provision in any insurance contract, network agreement, or other provider agreement contractually limiting copayments, coinsurance, deductibles, or other patient charges.

OHS football team loses preseason classic

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Fort Pierce Central scored 35 unanswered points fueled by four Okeechobee High School turnovers in the second quarter Friday night and went on to defeat the Brahman, 52-0, at the Preseason Football Classic at Brahman Stadium.

Okeechobee had fought toe to toe with Fort Pierce in the first quarter and looked vastly improved from the team that went (0-10) last year. Fort Pierce opened the scoring late in the first quarter thanks to a seven play, 53 yard drive. Key plays included a 12 yard run by Lenhart and a 13 yard run by Chris Fair. Lenhart scored on a 10 yard run over the right side of the Brahman defense for the Cobras first touchdown. After a botched snap, Fair took the ball into the end zone for a two point conversion and an 8-0 lead. A fumbled snap by Brahman punter Christian Toribio gave Fort Pierce a golden opportunity on the next drive as they started

the drive at the Brahman eight-yard line. QB Marcus Sigmon ran four yards for a score one play later to make it 15-0.

Cobras Coach Chris Hutchins said the early turnovers really got his team going. He said he was very impressed with the play of his offensive and defensive lines as they basically controlled the line of scrimmage.

Things went south in a hurry after that as Fort Pierce was able to score 21 points in the next four minutes of play to put the game away. A fumble by Brahman QB Jack Radebaugh was recovered by Niko Guevera at the Brahman 15. Guevera caught an eight yard swing pass and rushed into the end zone two plays later for a 22-0 lead.

Okeechobee showed signs of life on the next drive as Radebaugh hit Jessie Thomas with a 28 yard pass. Radebaugh was sacked on the next play and his next pass attempt was picked off by Blackshell at the Cobra 25. He rushed downfield untouched for another Cobra score.

Brent Leonard recovered a fumble by Daron Washington on the next Brahman series at the Okeechobee 20 yard line. Two plays later Lenhart bowled through the Brahman defenders for a 15 yard touchdown run.

Chris Wallace ended the first half scoring when he grabbed a 35 yard pass from Sigmon with just eight seconds left in the second quarter.

Brahman Coach Myron Jackson said he will have to work harder on fundamentals and stressed to the kids that they must hold onto the football. He said when you give up that many turnovers there is no way your

team can be successful.

Game notes

Brahman QB Jack Radebaugh completed 9-22 passes for 112 yards and two interceptions. He was sacked behind the line seven times. One six other carries Radebaugh gained 40 yards. Al Morris caught four passes for 64 yards. Aukeyemian Mills added four receptions for 40 yards. Thor Harden and DeForest Shanks caused fumbles for the Brahman defense while Alonzo Coleman had an interception. Okeechobee had 158 yards in total offense. They were only able to gain 23 yards on the ground.

Okeechobee travels to play Berean Christian in West Palm Beach on Friday night at 7 p.m.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy (left) Jack Radebaugh threw for over 100 yards despite a huge Ft. Pierce pass rush. (right) Al Morris had a nice night catching passes for the Brahman offense in his varsity debut

OHS Brahman Volleyball team defeats Sebring

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Okeechobee High School's volleyball team got off to a great start as they defeated Sebring in three straight games, 25-13, 27-25, and 25-23 in the championship game of the Sebring Pre Season Classic last Thursday.

Okeechobee jumped out to an early 7-1 lead in the first game to take control of the match and then held off a stubborn Blue Streaks squad. Okeechobee had to rally late to win the second and third games.

LeAnna Cotton continued her strong start to the season as she had 13 assists and eight kills. Sarah Davis had seven service aces, nine assists and five kills at the net. Okeechobee had 18 service aces as a team during the match.

Okeechobee played at Lincoln Park Academy in a district match on Tuesday. They travel to Park Vista on Friday. The Lady Brahman home opener is Tuesday, Sept. 7 against Westwood.

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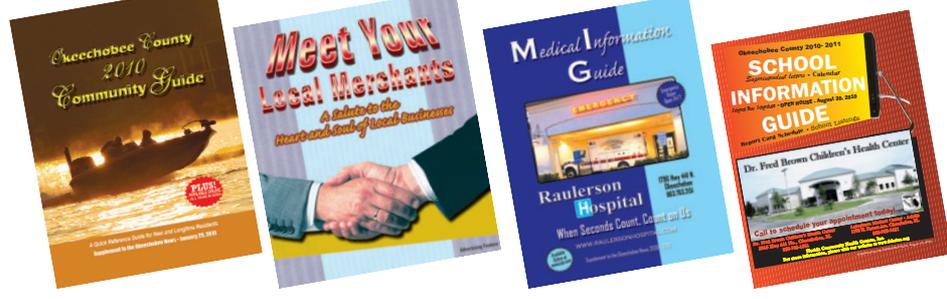
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High school bowling team starts new season

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Okeechobee High School's boys bowling team is in a rebuilding mode while the girls team has more experience and is expected to improve on last year's finish.

Coach Tony Sherlock said the boys team has only one returner and thus a lot of new faces. Last year's team leader James Steiert moved to Martin County. He qualified for the state bowling tournament as a freshman. The team finished fifth in their district.

Sherlock said this year he will look to build the talent and work with them on their skills. He should be able to do it as he averages 199 pins himself and routinely hits strikes and spares with little or no effort.

The returning bowler is Angel Garcia who was the fifth man on last year's squad. The team also lost a few players to graduation. Other key bowlers include Adrian Banda and Noe Arroyo who have had prior competitive bowling experience.

Coach Sherlock predicted Martin County,

Lincoln Park and John Carroll will be the top teams in the district this year.

"We have several new players and I'm looking forward to working with them and improving their games. Hopefully we can knock off some teams this year."

Sherlock said his advice for the new players is to have confidence in themselves and work hard, "If they work hard and dedicate themselves to bowling, they have the potential to be really good."

The girls team has a number of upper classmen which include four year starter Danielle Racine. There are also three new girls, Mary Simmons, Kirsten Donny, and Margie Dorgan that the coach has been impressed with.

"The outlook for the girls is very positive. I think the girls will be a lot more competitive this year," Sherlock added.

The girls finished 11th in their district last year. Sherlock said they can definitely finish higher this year if they are more consistent. He said he liked the camaraderie that the girls have shown during practices.

"These kids tend to get along with each other well. That certainly helps a lot. I think they need to have more confidence in themselves

and have the will to win," he added.

Sherlock said a number of the girls have started to play in a Saturday recreation league and that should help their scores this year. He said before that league most of his players didn't bowl regularly.

"I think that league will help the girls. I think we can get a few wins and build from there. I think the new bowlers will stick with it and be very good," he added.

The bowling team plays their home matches at Lucky Lanes in Okeechobee. Most matches start at 3:30 p.m. Their first home match is Thursday, Sept. 2, against South Fork.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

The members of the Lady Brahman bowling team this year include (L-R) (top row) Amanda Rathbun, Victoria Woodruff, Kayla Runyon, Alissa Dorgan, and Kirsten Doney, (bottom l-r) Danielle Racine, Mary Simmons and Tameko Hornick.

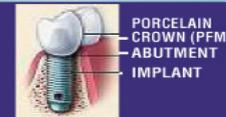


Members of the boys bowling team include (l-r) Bradley Rathbun, Dillon Resendiz, Nicholas Brown, Angel Garcia, and Adrian Banda.

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