

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

Vol. 104 No. 18

Sunday, February 10, 2013

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... Pages 10 & 11

Suspect tries to swallow 'crack' cocaine
... Page 8

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ARC hurt by state budget cuts

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

"It seems the state of Florida no longer wants to care for the people with disabilities and really wishes that they would just go away," so

stated a letter recently sent by the ARC (Association of Retarded Citizens) of Okeechobee to potential donors. The letter was sent out to try to make up for funds lost due to recent cuts in the state budget.

According to Dick Bradley, executive direc-

tor of the ARC of Alachua County, there had been disparity in funding for disabled people in different parts of the state. He said that a remedy called iBudget was first proposed two or

See ARC — Page 5



Special to the Okeechobee News/OCSO
Mariah Anuez (center) was recently named the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office employee of the year in the administrative division. Presenting her with her plaque are Major Noel Stephen (left) and Sheriff Paul May (right).

Sheriff's office honors 2012 employees of year

By Eric Kopp
Okeechobee News

Three employees and one volunteer were recently announced as the 2012 employees of the year for the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO).

The yearly honor is bestowed on those em-

ployees who had previously been picked as an employee of the quarter. At the end of each quarter an employee is picked as the employee of that quarter from their respective division. Those divisions are administrative, volunteer, corrections and law enforcement.

See OCSO — Page 9

County budget shortfall predicted

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

At their meeting on Thursday Okeechobee County Commissioners began the long process of developing an annual budget. County Administrator Robbie Chartier gave a presentation on factors that will affect the budget and sought input from the commissioners.

"Florida's economy is improving," she said. However she added that current economic predictions do not include the impact of the Affordable Care Act. Property values have increased only slightly. Sales tax income is expected to increase about 1 percent while fuel taxes are expected to decrease.

Current policy calls for no new funding for outside organizations and continuing to bring the landfill trust fund back to the required minimum of \$8 million.

Mrs. Chartier currently projects a shortfall of \$500,000. However she warned that number is going to be a moving target in the coming months.

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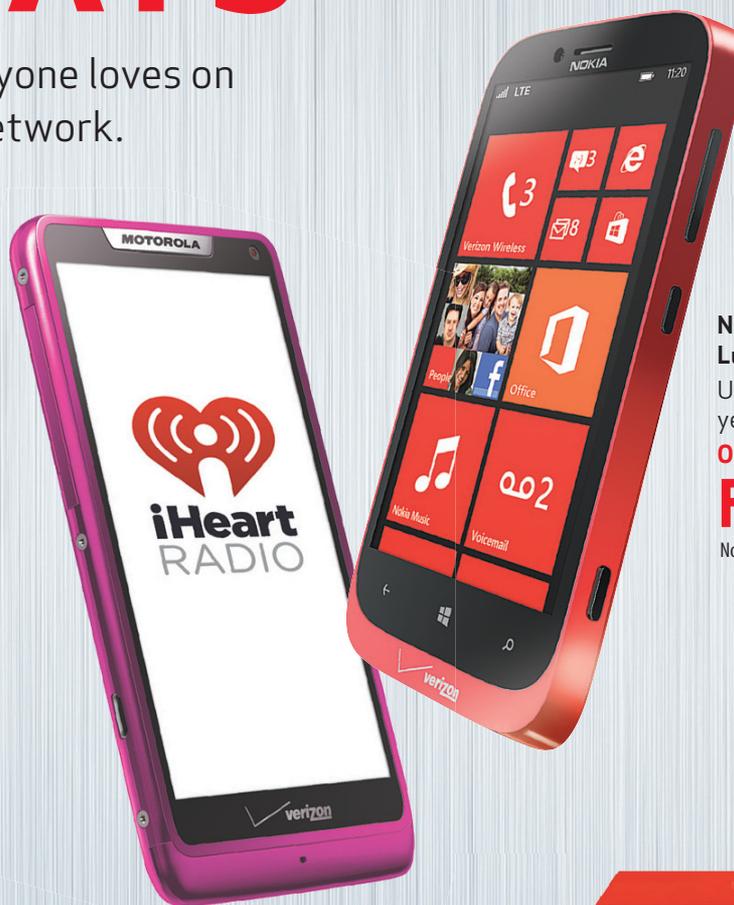
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FRHDD

Corps increases water flow from Lake Okeechobee

Special to the Okeechobee News

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District has increased the amount of water flowing from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River. The new target flow from the lake to the Caloosahatchee Estuary is 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) as measured at W.P. Franklin Lock (S-79) near Fort Myers. There are no target releases for the St. Lucie Estuary, although runoff from the St. Lucie Canal will continue to pass through the St. Lucie Lock as needed. "Based on the current conditions, we have an opportunity to increase flows from the lake in preparation for changes in seasonal forecasts," said Lt. Col. Tom Greco, Jacksonville District Deputy Commander for South Florida. "As a result, it will also provide benefits to the

Caloosahatchee Estuary."

The release is being conducted in accordance with the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS), the master plan for water management of the lake. Under the LORS, the Corps strives to keep the lake level between 12.5 and 15.5 feet. Today, the lake stage is 14.47 feet.

The Corps will closely monitor the releases and adjust flows as necessary to balance the competing needs and purposes of Lake Okeechobee. Public safety remains the Corps' top priority. For more information on water level and flows data for Lake Okeechobee, visit the Corps' water management page at the Jacksonville District website: <http://w3.saj.usace.army.mil/h2o/reports.htm>.

City may take legal action on code case

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

When they meet Tuesday evening, the City of Okeechobee Code Enforcement Board will consider recommending that the Okeechobee City Council take legal action against Barbara Mills because of the accrued code violations fines that were imposed due to the overgrowth of her 406 N.W. Fifth St. property.

In addition the board will consider imposing fines on Teresa Holloman, owner of property at 302 S.E. Second St., Stephen and Grace Mitchum, owner of property at 606 S.W. 14th St., and Linda Foley, owner of property at 805 S.W. 11th Ave. because of

overgrowth on their properties.

Joaquin and Ana Dominguez will have to answer to charges of illegal dumping on their 217 S.E. Fifth Ave. property.

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

Okeechobee Forecast

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Today: Partly cloudy in the morning, then clear. High of 79F. Breezy. Winds from the ESE at 15 to 20 mph.

Tonight: Partly cloudy. Fog overnight. Low of 54F. Winds from the ESE at 5 to 10 mph.

Extended Forecast

Monday: Partly cloudy. Fog early. High of 82F. Winds from the SSE at 10 to 15 mph.

Monday Night: Partly cloudy. Fog overnight. Low of 55F. Winds from the SSE at 5 to 10 mph.

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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!

Gun control

• In 1911, Turkey established gun control. From 1915 to 1917, 1.5 million Armenians, unable to defend themselves, were rounded up and exterminated. In 1929, the Soviet Union established gun control. From 1929 to 1953, about 20 million dissidents, unable to defend themselves, were rounded up and exterminated. China established gun control in 1935. From 1948 to 1952, 20 million political dissidents, unable to defend themselves, were rounded up and exterminated. Germany established gun control in 1938 and from 1939 to 1945, a total of 13 million Jews and others who were unable to defend themselves were rounded up and killed. Cambodia established gun control in 1956. From 1975 to 1977, one million educated people, unable to defend themselves, were rounded up and exterminated. Guatemala established gun control in 1964. From 1964 to 1981, 100,000 Mayan Indians, unable to defend themselves, were rounded up and exterminated. Uganda established gun control in 1970. From 1971 to 1979, 300,000 Christians, unable to defend themselves, were rounded up and exterminated. Defenseless people rounded up and exterminated in the 20th century because of gun control: 56 million. With guns we are "citizens" and without them we are "subjects." During WWII the Japanese decided not to invade America because they knew that most Americans were armed. Switzerland issues every household a gun and the government of Switzerland trains every adult in its use. Switzerland has one of the lowest gun-related crime rates of any civilized country in the world. History shows that governments always manipulate tragedies to attempt to disarm the people. Are there any questions? Do you get it now?

• I want to thank Sheriff Paul May for his support of the Florida Sheriff's Association resolution in support of the Second Amendment. I am glad the Florida Sheriffs are dedicated to their sworn duty to uphold the Constitution and protect the rights of the citizens.

• Thirty years later, Australian citizens are beginning to regret their gun ban, giving

warnings to U.S. citizens. Their gun ban has backfired, citizens are paying the ultimate price. Too late they now realize they have not a prayer's chance in Hell of ever getting the right to own a firearm back.

• Chicago is at the top for gun control laws, the crime is at an all-time high and now the police will no longer respond to several 911 calls such as burglary, car theft, muggings, threats made against someone, lewd or threatening phone calls, etc... So, they are not going to protect you and they don't want you to be able to protect yourself. Isn't this where Obama and his staff are from? Also, read where a gun manufacturer was looking to move to Florida. It would bring about 60 jobs at an average pay of \$43,000/year. Of course they would have to hire from outside the county for most of the jobs because this county doesn't have a skilled labor force, but it would be revenue for the county. I'm hoping someone in the county would be trying to recruit them to our area.

Ban on mixed drinks

• It's this kind of control that some individuals like to impose on others that makes me travel outside of the area to spend my money. I don't do business with a bank unless I can conduct business when I want to do my banking and I also do not eat at restaurants that are closed on Sunday. For example, I don't eat at Chic-Fil-A.

• I wonder if they'll propose the 16 oz. soda limit next.

• How about those that think liquor should be sold on Sunday take up a petition drive. Go to the commission and complain, regularly and often.

• I'll be honest, it's easier to go somewhere else that does serve it than to get a petition drive going.

• It seems to me that the city council members are trying to make a personal statement. That statement being: people should be in church on Sunday, not buying alcoholic beverages. The fact is that it makes little or no difference to a person's drinking habits. It merely presents inconvenience. Suppose Mom and Dad have reasons why it is more convenient to grocery shop on Sunday, rather than any other day of the week. If they want liquor, it means they have to run into town on another day also, or run to a bigger town and do ALL their shopping, to avoid a stop. The council members prove nothing. In every area of the country, in all towns, there are those who use alcohol and those who don't, and nobody's going to change it.

Reflections from the pulpit

Stand fast in freedom

By Tommaso Pasquarella

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty where-with Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Galatians 5:1) Stand fast therefore. What is the therefore there for? After all that Paul had written, He asks them to stand fast, hold tight to liberty, why? He is writing to this failing body of believers to show them that they are not saved by what they do, but by faith in the one they know. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Galatians 3:6) Abraham went on faith and was justified, made right, by His faith, that God would do what He promised. He encourages these dear Galatians, who have been saved by faith, that as Abraham was justified by His faith they too have been justified and made right by faith. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." (Galatians 3:11) "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29) If you have trusted Christ you are children of promise.

If all of this is true and they are children of promise, what does He want to hold on tight to? Liberty. Why would they need to hold on tight to liberty? "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." (Galatians 1:6) He is writing in disbelief, he is dumbfounded, shocked, appalled, that they would turn from truth unto a lie, another gospel, which is no gospel at all. There are people trying to trick them, trouble them, and have perverted the gospel of Christ and so Paul encourages them. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." He desires for them to turn back to the truth. He wants them to stand fast in the liberty, the freedom they have in Christ.

Freedom, what does it look like and what is it for? "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1) I know this verse does not speak of freedom, but He freed us from the penalty of sin, so we can freely worship and serve Him, so this freedom from condemnation is an amazing gift. This freedom will look like this; we will walk not after flesh, our own desires, but after the Spirit. Our freedom is less about us and more about Him. "Whether therefore ye eat,

or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31) Though this verse does not speak of freedom, we are free to worship without any hindrance. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) We have the freedom to not hold on to unforgiveness, but rather be free and have the amazing gift to forgive men, because of how great we have been forgiven. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32) He forgives you and I as we are called to forgive others. God always equips us to do His will and so we have power to forgive because He gives us the power to forgive. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35) We have the freedom to be considered His. We have the freedom to love. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8:36) Why would we go back to rules if the Son has truly free us?

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35) What can separate? Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ? Freedom means that we can be secure in the salvation and the hope that we have in Christ. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril nor sword can take away what God gives us when we trust Christ, so we can rest in His freedom, which helps us to live our lives for Him. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Romans 8:37) Through all these things we have freedom from being defeated, because we are more than conquerors, through Christ who loved us. Praise God in Christ we have victory. In Christ we have hope that Christ is enough and no one and nothing can separate us from that freedom which came from the cross. I do not have to live defeated, but I have the freedom to live in freedom. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." (Philippians 3:13) I have the freedom to press on, even when life goes wrong. What an amazing freedom we have in Christ! If you do not know Christ as Savior and Lord, then this freedom in Christ is not yours, but could be, when you repent of your sins, turn your back to sin, and believe the gospel, the good news and Christ's sacrifice on your behalf, so you can have life and have true freedom.

OKEECHOBEE NEWS

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MEMBER



County led Florida in foreclosures in December

By Charles M. Murphy
Okeechobee News

Florida led the nation in foreclosure activity in 2012 and Okeechobee County had the highest foreclosure rate in the state in December according to Realty Trac, a California based firm that studies the real estate market.

The study showed 1 in 32 homes in Florida received some kind of foreclosure notice in 2012, a 53 percent increase from 2011-2012.

Realty Trac Vice President Daren Blomquist said there have been court delays in the foreclosure process in recent years for states that use the judicial process and court system. Experts stated most of the rising foreclosure activity represents loans that went south a long time ago rather than a new round of loan defaults. Some states use administrative processes that result in quicker foreclosures.

Okeechobee had the 21st highest foreclosure rate in Florida in 2012. The rate in December rose 27 percent over the November rate.

"Sometimes you'll see one month where there is a spike in the numbers in a certain county for whatever reason," Mr. Blomquist stated. "It is certainly a concern."

He said we should keep an eye on the

foreclosure rate over the next few months here to see if it is indeed a long-term trend rather than what he saw as a short-term issue.

Mr. Blomquist said while Florida will continue to have either the #1 or #2 foreclosure rate among states in the first half of 2013, he predicts things will get better later next year.

Mr. Blomquist admitted most of the typical foreclosure activity occurs in urban areas or neighborhoods or suburbs that surround urban areas. He said during the housing

boom many contractors got overaggressive and built further out into rural areas. That created an oversupply of houses that weren't met by the housing demand in those communities.

"The rate varies from county to county, but some counties do have spikes as the court system itself is able to catch up with the backlog of cases. It is not uncommon to see a jump from month to month," he added.

Homestead exemption deadline nears

Applications for Homestead exemption, Additional Senior Exemption for Person's 65 years or older, Agriculture Classification and all other exemption applications should be filed with the Property Appraiser's Office by March 1, 2012. Agriculture renewal cards (green cards) are also due March 1". The Property Appraiser's office is located at 307 N.W. 5th Avenue in the Alderman Building. Exemption for Seniors 65 and older is subject to income limits. For more information contact the office At 863-763-4422.

Free tax preparation at the American Legion

Free tax preparation and e-filing by AARP Taxaide volunteers began Feb. 4 and run until April 15 at the American Legion located at 501 S.E. 2nd Street Monday and Tuesday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Participants must bring a picture ID, SS cards for dependents, last year's tax return and all 2012 financial papers. No appointment necessary, first come first serve and doors open at 8:45 a.m. Do not call the American Legion—for more information call 863-357-1694 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

COUNTY

Continued From Page 1

"Where do you want to go with taxes?" the administrator asked. Commissioners can increase or decrease taxes or keep them the same.

Commissioner Frank Irby was in favor of generating at least as much in taxes as this year.

The assessment for garbage collection could increase slightly if collection costs have increased. However, there will be no need to increase fire and EMS assessments.

Commissioner Joey Hoover suggested there could possibly be savings by getting outside bids in areas where private contractors could provide a service cheaper than doing it inhouse.

"We don't have enough concrete numbers to consider pay increases and health insurance at this time," Mrs. Chartier.

Turning to other matters, commissioners supported the efforts of Highlands County

to form a regional transportation planning organization. Okeechobee and other area counties could possibly join this proposed organization to plan and develop transportation strategies for the area.

"I think this representation would be extremely beneficial," said Commissioner Bryant Culpepper.

"A road that doesn't go beyond your boundary doesn't do any good," was the opinion of Commissioner Ray Domer.

The board is voted to apply for a 25 percent matching grant in the amount of \$463,649 for drainage improvements along the N.E. 14th Street ditch. This project will stabilize the ditch banks to keep them from caving off during times of heavy rains. This ditch drains into Taylor Creek. Commissioners are also seeking to improve drainage in the Playland Park area.

Capital projects coordinator Donnie Oden gave commissioners an update on the new building for the property appraiser and tax collector. He said that the cost per square foot and the total area of the project has increased. The cost of construction is now es-

timated to be \$1.8 million. That figure does not include impact fees, Okeechobee Utility Authority fees, or furnishings for the building. There will also be a relocation cost.

After having to continually announce delays for the completion of the rehabilitation of the Taylor Creek locks, Gary Ritter, director of South Florida Water Management District's Okeechobee Service Center, said he would make no more predictions of a completion date. However, he did say three things must happen. The first thing is that the gates must operate properly. The second thing is that all safety requirements must be met. The third thing is that the manatee sensor device must be working properly. He said that each of those three things would require only a few workmen. Therefore, it may appear to people that there is not a lot of activity going on there in the coming days.

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

as it was originally intended, some people would have received less funding, some more. In reality, he said that nobody got more money and across the state 40 percent of the recipients got a decrease. According to Jeanie Bramlett, director of marketing for the ARC of Okeechobee, a good portion of her clients are part of that 40 percent.

The upside of all this, according to Mr. Bradley, is that by the end of the current fiscal year, thanks to the iBudget, APD will have a balanced budget. He said the state legislature had been growing more and more unhappy with APD because of their

deficit spending. If APD were not on track to have a balanced budget, Mr. Bradley said the legislature would have implemented a managed care system which he says would be worse than the present system.

According to Mrs. Bramlett ARC of Okeechobee has reduced staff members, reduced employee benefits and decreased number of field trips. She said they cannot cut any more staff members because they now have the minimum number allowed by law for the number of clients they have.

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NEWS**

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ARC

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three years ago by the then director of APD (Association for Persons with Disabilities), the state organization that provides funding for ARCs across the state. Mr. Bradley said the original idea was to equalize funding.

However, by July of 2012, when the iBudget was first implemented APD had a different director and the concept had changed from equalization to cost reduction. He said that if the iBudget had been implemented

Community Events

Health Center holds Valentines Dinner

A Valentines Dinner benefiting Open Hands Health Center, Inc. will be held on Saturday, Feb. 16, starting at 6 p.m. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. The minimum dinner donation is \$50 per couple. Tickets must be purchased by **Feb. 10**. A silent auction will be available, for more information, please call Nicole Talley at 863-697-3488 or Beth White at 863-634-8660.

Buckhead VFW hosts chicken dinner

Buckhead VFW 9528 will have a chicken dinner with all the fixin's on Sunday, **Feb. 10**, from 2 to 5 p.m. \$7 per plate. The cook is Dale Darling. All proceeds go to Homeless Vets.

American Legion Post 64 opens Sunday night bingo

American Legion 64 will once again host Sunday night bingo beginning on **Feb. 10** at 6:30 p.m. Doors open at 5 p.m. in the bingo area. The kitchen will offer a limited menu. Payoffs will be determined by player attendance. All proceeds to benefit the American Legion veterans' programs. The event is open to the public.

Masonic Lodge Breakfast

The Masonic Lodge located at 107 N.W. 5th Street, will host a Breakfast with all the fixin's on Sunday, **Feb. 10** for \$6 per plate. The public is welcomed and carry out is available. Breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. all proceeds go to local mason giving.

Okeechobee Retired Educators meet

Okeechobee Retired Educators will meet on Monday, Feb. 11, at 11:15 a.m. in the meeting room at Beef O'Bradys. All members are reminded to bring their volunteer hours log to be submitted. They will also discuss the theme of next year's Christmas Ornament. Any retired educator is invited to join us.

VFW to host a Sweetheart Dance

The Men's Auxiliary of the Big Lake VFW post 10539, at 3912 Hwy. 441 S.E. will host a Sweetheart Dance on Saturday, Feb. 16. Tickets are \$15 per person and should be purchased by **Feb. 12**. Dinner will be a choice of beef or chicken and will be served at 7 p.m. Dancing starts at 7:30 p.m. with the music by Jeffrey James Gang. The public is invited to this event. Space is limited so everyone is encouraged to buy tickets early. Proceeds go to help veterans' unmet needs. For more information, call 863-357-1344.

Okeechobee Shrine Club

The Okeechobee Shrine Club will hold a spaghetti dinner on Tuesday, **Feb. 12**, from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. and reservations are not required. The Shrine Club is please to offer smoke-free dinning. For your listening and dancing pleasure, music is provided from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m. The complete dinner is available for a donation of only \$6. For more information on the activities of the Okeechobee Shrine Club, please contact Kip Gardner at 863-357-0427, Randall Mims at 863-763-9200 or the Shrine Club at 863-763-3378.

Healthy Start Coalition meets on Feb. 13

Okeechobee Healthy Start Coalition board of directors will meet Wednesday, **Feb. 13**, at 11:30 a.m. at their office, 1132 S. Parrott Ave., in the White House Plaza. This meeting is open to the public. The Okeechobee Healthy Start Coalition is part of a statewide network of coalitions responsible for planning and implementing services for pregnant women and infants. The Okeechobee Healthy Start Coalition is made up of citizens interested in promoting healthy families and healthy outcomes for babies in Okeechobee. For information please contact executive director Kay Begin at the coalition office, 863-462-5877.

The Heritage hosts a 'Stroke Support Group'

The Heritage Assisted Living Facility will host a "Stroke Support Group" on Feb. 13, at 5:30 p.m. at The Heritage Assisted Living Facility, 608 N.E. Second Avenue. The speaker will be Muhammad Nooruddin, Physical Therapist, from New American Physical Therapy. Refreshments will be served and day care services will be provided during session at no cost. There is no charge to attend and it is open to the public, family and patients. For more information feel free to call 863-763-1700.

Speckled Perch Pageant applications open

Okeechobee Main Street is now taking applications for the Annual Speckled Perch Pageant, to be held at Okeechobee High School on Saturday, Feb. 16, beginning at 5 p.m. Competition will be held as follows: Tiny Miss and Mister Speckled Perch (Age 3); Little Miss and Mister Speckled Perch (Ages 4, 5); Speckled Perch Princess (Ages 6-9); Junior Miss Speckled Perch (Ages 10-13) and Miss Speckled Perch (Ages 14-18). Contestants must be currently in school (age-appropriate). All contestants should wear evening/dress attire and will be presented on stage where they will be interviewed. Applications and rules for the pageant are available at the Main Street Office, 55 S. Parrott Ave., in the Chamber Building across the street from CVS. Completed applications and fee of \$75 must be received by **Feb. 14**. For further information or questions, please contact Cindy Birdshaw at 863-357-6246.

VFW POST #4423

Valentine's Dinner

VFW Post #4423 located at 300 NW 34th Street will host a Steak Dinner on at 5 p.m. on Thursday, **Feb. 14**, for a donation of \$12.50. There will also be a "Fashion Show" after dinner. Call the post at 863-763-0818 with your reservations. Proceeds go towards Veterans Assistance programs.

Lake Okeechobee Elks Lodge #2871 to meet

Lake Okeechobee Elks Lodge #2871 to meet **Feb. 14** at VFW So .7 p.m. come early for our social hour and 6 p.m.

VFW POST #4423

Valentine's Dinner

VFW Post #4423 located at 300 NW 34th Street will host a Steak Dinner on at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 14 for a donation of \$12.50. Dinner music provided by D & K (Danny & Kathy). There will also be a "Fashion Show" after dinner. Call the post at 863-763-0818 with your reservations. Proceeds go towards Veterans Assistance programs.

Free Alzheimer's memory screenings offered

Concerned about your memory? Alzheimer's Association and Memory Disorder Center at St. Mary's are offering free confidential memory screenings on Friday, **Feb. 15**, at Visiting Nurse Association located at 208 S.E. Park Street, Okeechobee FL 34972. Appointments are required. Please call Donna at 800-861-7826 EXT. 501 to schedule or for more information, you can also visit <http://www.alz.org/seflorida>.

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Catholic Church Knights of Columbus fish fry

St. Theresa of the child Jesus Catholic Church Knights of Columbus will host fish fry dinners on Fridays starting **Feb. 15** - March 22. Dinners are served 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Take out is available and a donation of \$8 and \$3 for children.

Okeechobee's Second Annual Purple Passion Pub Crawl

Okeechobee's Second Annual Purple Passion Pub Crawl will be held Saturday, **Feb. 16**, with registration at Barricuda's Sports Grillery, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. (10017 U.S. Hwy. 441 N); Lunker's Sports Grille, 8:45 p.m. - 10 p.m. (4825 U.S. Hwy. 441 S); Shenanigans, 7:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (2232 N.W. 32nd Dr.), and; Brahma Bull Restaurant & Lounge, 10:15 p.m. - 11 p.m. (245 U.S. Hwy. 441 SE). \$10 registration fee. All proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society, Okeechobee Relay For Life. Gift certificates, drink specials, snacks & other prizes will be given away to registered participants at each venue.

Church plans yard sale

Buckhead Ridge Christian Church, 1167 Linda Road behind the Moose Lodge on Highway 78 will have a yard sale on Saturday, **Feb. 16**, from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

North Lake Estates hosts arts and crafts fair

On, Saturday, **Feb. 16**, the North Lake Estates Clubhouse, 12044 East S.R. 78, will have a arts and crafts fair. There will be hand crafts such as fabric creations, wood carvings, knitted and crocheted items and many more! The NLE Woodworkers will offer lunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Leigh Crumpler at 804-895-2698 or Kay Cronk at 863-946-0699.

Peace Lutheran presents Jeans, Jewels and Jazz!

Peace Lutheran School Presents a night in New Orleans on Saturday, **Feb. 16**, located at the KOA. The dinner, dance and auction is for the improvement and benefit of Peace Lutheran School. For more information, please call Karen Smith at 863-763-7566

BHR Moose Lodge hosts Las Vegas fund raiser

BHR Moose Lodge #2417 will host their annual Las Vegas games fundraiser Saturday, **Feb. 16** from 3 to 6 p.m. A donation will get you play money to play games. Play money winnings can be used to bid on auction items at 6 p.m. Call Joanne at 863-467-4551 for information.

CEUs onsite training planned

On Monday, **Feb. 18**, two classes will be held BFASTplusSN at 8 a.m.-noon and CFAST at 1 p.m.-5 p.m. at Okeechobee Department of Health Auditorium, 1728 N.W. 9th Ave., Okeechobee, FL 34972. If you have any general questions or concerns, please contact Lisa Klos at 813-974-3809.

Okeechobee County Fair Board to meet

The Okeechobee County Fair Board will hold their next meeting on Monday, **Feb. 18**, at 6 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Chamber of Commerce office.

Celebrate A Life

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Online Guestbook

All Obituaries now include Online Guestbooks where family and friends can share reflections, remembrances and condolences.

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Tractor Supply scholarships help growing FFA scholars

As an extension of its sponsorship with the National FFA Foundation, Tractor Supply Company has recently announced a new scholarship program to assist FFA members in their pursuit of a college degree.

The Growing Scholars program will be supported nationally by each of the more than 1,150 Tractor Supply stores Feb. 15-24, which includes National FFA Week. Tractor Supply customers can donate \$1 at store registers during the checkout process to support local FFA chapters and their members. Ninety percent of funds raised through Tractor Supply's Growing Scholars program will be utilized to fund scholarships for FFA members. The remaining 10 percent of donations will benefit state FFA organizations.

"This program will provide critical funding to FFA members who intend to pursue a college degree and local FFA chapters

that enrich the lives of young members by teaching life skills, citizenship and leadership qualities," said Tractor Supply President and CEO Greg Sandfort. "For us, this is an outstanding way to support our current and future customers and future team members and a way to give back to the 1,100-plus unique communities we serve."

To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be current FFA members and either high school seniors or a freshman, sophomore or junior college student seeking a two- or four-year degree or other specialized training program. Major areas of study will also be considered when determining scholarship recipients.

"We are extremely grateful to Tractor Supply and its customers for supporting FFA, student and alumni members and agriculture education in general," said National

FFA Foundation Executive Director Robert K. Cooper.

In addition to the Growing Scholars program, Tractor Supply and the National FFA Foundation have many other joint initiatives, including the FFA horse evaluation career development event, National FFA Week and the annual National Association of Agricultural Educators Conference. At an individual store level, Tractor Supply continually hosts fundraising events and works closely with local FFA chapters and high school agriculture advisors to provide resources and leverage synergies.

"Local high school agricultural advisors and FFA chapters feel at home in their local Tractor Supply stores," said John Wendler, senior vice president of marketing at Tractor Supply. "These groups often host fundraising events at our stores to raise money for

community projects, like building a school greenhouse, a new bridge in a public park or an animal care lab. Our stores also work with local FFA members to support specific programs and proficiencies by providing demonstrations from knowledgeable Tractor Supply employees and our vendor partners, which brings significant value to both organizations."

Tractor Supply has been a sponsor of the National FFA Foundation for 27 years. The National FFA Foundation is the fundraising arm of the National FFA Organization, which provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to 557,318 student members in grades seven through 12 who belong to one of 7,498 local FFA chapters throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Okeechobee Livestock Market Report

FEBRUARY 4 & 5, 2013

MONDAY SALE AT 12:00PM...TUESDAY SALE AT 11:00AM

	LOW:	HIGH:	AVG:	LAST WEEK:		MONDAY	TUESDAY
COWS:							
800-1000	60.00	- 87.50	70.96	66.04	CLFS	362	701
1000-1200	60.00	- 87.00	71.78	69.71	COWS	79	131
1200-1400	60.00	- 88.00	71.07	69.00	STRS	16	10
1400-1600	68.00	- 74.00	70.83	69.80	HFRS	12	31
					BULLS	12	20
BULLS:					YRLINGS	109	56
1200-1400	72.00	- 88.00	79.17	78.50	MIX	0	8
1400-1600	84.00	- 88.00	86.20	81.33	TOTAL	590	957
1600-1800	83.00	- 84.00	83.67	81.00			
STEERS:							
150-250	250.00	- 285.00	268.13	271.25			
250-300	220.00	- 290.00	256.96	234.00			
300-350	215.00	- 255.00	225.91	225.00			
350-400	185.00	- 220.00	193.86	227.50			
400-450	165.00	- 195.00	174.47	178.15			
450-500	165.00	- 182.50	170.57	172.35			
500-550	140.00	- 165.00	151.85	161.56			
550-600	140.00	- 150.00	143.67	157.27			
600-650	127.00	- 156.00	136.36	142.50			
650-700	125.00	- 135.00	128.09	133.67			
700-750	125.00	- 129.00	127.00	131.50			
HEIFERS:							
150-250	200.00	- 230.00	220.63	227.00			
250-300	165.00	- 220.00	192.41	189.38			
300-350	165.00	- 195.00	177.85	173.64			
350-400	150.00	- 177.50	161.91	154.00			
400-450	135.00	- 170.00	150.89	141.32			
450-500	135.00	- 152.50	144.10	138.10			
500-550	120.00	- 155.00	134.32	129.05			
550-600	119.00	- 139.00	131.30	122.40			
600-650	118.00	- 145.00	129.03	123.14			

Cow & bull prices showed signs of improvement this week with light supply and moderate demand. Calves looked to be mostly steady compared to last week, a little higher in some cases. Light runs this week due to vanishing numbers and NCBA Convention in Tampa...I suppose.

George Rhoden, Indiantown, topped the calf market with a high of \$2.90 bought by Terry Bomhak.

Sun-Ag Inc, Fellsmere, topped the cow market with a high of \$8.00 bought by Central Beef.

See ya next week,
Todd

WPB firm buys propane assets from Glades Gas

Florida Public Utilities Company (FPU), a subsidiary of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation, Friday announced that its propane subsidiary, Flo-Gas Corporation, has purchased the propane operating assets of Glades Gas Company.

Glades Gas has been a family-owned and operated business for eighty years, providing propane service to approximately 3,000 residential and commercial accounts in Okeechobee, Glades and Hendry Counties. Current owners, Monica Clark and Kevin McCarthy, will work closely with Florida Public Utilities in transitioning the propane operating assets from Glades Gas.

Monica Clark commented, "Glades Gas has always had a good relationship with Florida Public Utilities and this acquisition will be good for our customers and the growth of the area. I have a lot of respect for FPU and what they've done in the state of Florida. I couldn't have asked for a better company to continue the relationship Glades Gas has had with the cities of Okeechobee and Clewiston and to promote the growth of these areas."

The acquisition allows FPU's Flo-Gas operation to expand its propane presence within Florida. At the conclusion of the tran-

sition, the former Glades Gas propane operation will market and sell propane under the Florida Public Utilities Company brand.

"We are pleased to have been able to make this acquisition. Glades Gas has been a well-run family business with a strong tradition of care and support for their customers and the communities they serve. FPU looks forward to continuing that tradition and to investing resources in the growth of the Okeechobee and Clewiston areas," stated Kevin Webber, Vice President of FPU.

Florida Public Utilities Company (NYSE:CPK) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Chesapeake Utilities Corporation. Headquartered in West Palm Beach, Florida, FPU (www.fpuc.com) distributes natural gas, propane and electric services to approximately 100,000 customers in markets throughout Florida.

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation (NYSE:CPK) is a diversified utility company engaged in natural gas distribution, transmission and marketing, electric distribution, propane gas distribution and wholesale marketing, advanced information services and other related services. Information about Chesapeake's businesses is available at www.chpk.com.



Sales:
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II: "LIFE OF PI"
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00. Sat., Sun. & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. 3:00 & 7:00 **PG**

III: "HANSEL & GRETEL"
Fri., Tues. & Thurs. 7:00 & 9:00. Sat., Sun. & Wed. 2:00, 4:15, 7:00 & 9:00. Mon. 3:00 & 7:00 **R**

Movie Tickets: Adults - \$6.50 • Children 12 & under - \$5.00
Senior Citizens - \$5.00 all movies • Matinees - \$4.50

Man allegedly swallows crack to avoid arrest

By Eric Kopp

Okeechobee News

An Okeechobee man was taken to the Raulerson Hospital emergency room after he reportedly swallowed an unknown amount of suspected cocaine prior to his being arrested.

Melvin Leon Brown, 33, N.W. 12th St., was arrested Thursday, Feb. 7, on felony charges of tampering with evidence, possession of cocaine and fleeing and eluding a law enforcement officer. He was also charged with the misdemeanors of possession of drug paraphernalia and driving while license suspended with knowledge.

Brown is being held in the Okeechobee County Jail on \$10,000 bond.

An arrest report by a detective with the Okeechobee Narcotics Task Force stated that Brown refused to stop his 1997 Chevrolet when another task force detective tried to stop him in



Melvin Leon Brown

the 800 block of S.R. 70 W.

Although his speed apparently never exceeded 40 mph, Brown did not stop until he pulled into the parking lot of a fast food restaurant on S.R. 70 E. and was then blocked in by patrol units from the Okeechobee City Police Department.

According to the arrest report the windows on Brown's vehicle were not tinted and detectives could see him "... making overt movements to the center of the vehicle."

The report went on to state that as Brown got out of his vehicle he was chewing something and trying to swallow. The detective asked the man to open his mouth and when he did, the investigator reportedly saw large pieces of a suspicious substance stuck to his back teeth.

Brown's mouth was swabbed and a field test was then conducted on the swab. That test reportedly indicated a positive result for the

presence of cocaine.

The report went on to state that a razor blade and a plastic card were found inside Brown's car. When a field test was done on those two items it indicated a positive result for the presence of cocaine, added the detective.

When investigators asked Brown how much cocaine he had swallowed, he reportedly refused to answer. Because of that, medical personnel from Okeechobee County Fire/Rescue were called to the scene and transported Brown to the hospital.

Okeechobee Arrest Report

The following individuals were arrested on felony or driving under the influence (DUI) charges by the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office (OCSO), the Okeechobee City Police Department (OCPD), the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) or the Department of Corrections (DOC).

- Arthur Lee Lane, 48, S.W. 22nd St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 5 by Deputy Heath Hughes on a DOC warrant charging him with the felonies of violation of probation - uttering forged bills (eight counts) and violation of probation - grand theft. He is being held without bond.

- William Clayton Bass, 30, S.E. 43rd Trace, Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 6 by Deputy Corporal Randy Thomas on a DOC warrant charging him with the felonies of violation of probation - dealing in stolen property (two counts). He is being held without bond.

- Larry Junior Wilson, 52, S.W. 19th St., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 6 by Officer Jack Boon on felony charges of grand theft and credit card theft. His bond was set at \$100,000.

- Alfredo Gomez Jr., 24, S.W. Shawnee St., Indiantown, was arrested Feb. 7 by Deputy Max Waldron on Okeechobee County warrants charging him with the felonies of violation of probation - dealing in stolen property and violation of probation - burglary of a dwelling. He is being held without bond.

- Eraldo Barcenias, 31, N.W. 35th Ave., Okeechobee, was arrested Feb. 7 by Officer Jack Boon on a felony charge of grand theft and misdemeanor charges of resisting a law enforcement officer without violence, resisting a merchant and criminal mischief. His bond was set at \$6,500.

This column lists arrests and not convictions, unless otherwise stated. Anyone listed here who is later found innocent or has had the charges against them dropped is welcome to inform this newspaper. The information will be confirmed and printed.

OCSO Investigations

The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office investigated reports of the following crimes last week:

ASSAULT

- 900 block of N.W. 23rd Lane
- 1100 block of N.E. 16th Ave.
- 4300 block of S.E. 28th St.
- 800 block of S.W. 28th St.

BURGLARY

- 2700 block of U.S. 441 S.
- 3400 block of S.E. 34th Ave.
- 3000 block of S.W. Third Terrace
- 3900 block of U.S. 441 S.E.
- 1700 block of U.S. 441 N.
- 3000 block of S.W. Third Terrace
- 3000 block of S.E. 39th Ave.
- 1000 block of N.E. 342nd Trail
- 34900 block of N.E. Fourth Drive
- 3200 block of S.E. 33rd Terrace
- 3000 block of S.E. 39th Ave.
- 900 block of N.W. 23rd Lane
- 2400 block of S.E. 40th Ave.

CRIMINAL MISCHIEF

- 2900 block of S.W. Third Terrace

FRAUD

- 3600 block of N.W. Fourth Ave.

THEFT

- 3300 block of N.W. Eighth St.
- 300 block of N.W. 12th Ave. (vehicle)
- 3100 block of N.W. Third St.
- 1500 block of S.R. 70 E.
- 11200 block of N.E. Third Circle
- 3300 block of S.W. 22nd St. (vehicle)
- 1900 block of S.W. Second Way
- 4300 block of S.E. 26th St.
- 1500 block of S.W. 35th Circle (identity)
- 600 block of N.W. 344th St.
- 600 block of S.W. Second Ave.
- 500 block of N.W. 24th Ave.

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DAILY SPECIALS

MONDAY \$9⁹⁹ ALL YOU CAN EAT BABY BACKS! \$1 Margaritas All Day	TUESDAY 1LB RIB EYE \$13⁹⁹ Karaoke with Cowboy	WEDNESDAY \$9⁹⁹ ALL YOU CAN EAT CATFISH 25¢ Drafts	THURSDAY ½ rack Baby Back Ribs with 6 golden shrimp & 1 side \$12⁹⁹ Ladies Night 6-10pm Karaoke with Cowboy
NEW LOCATION!	FRIDAY ALL YOU CAN EAT BABY BACKS with 2 sides \$13⁹⁹	SATURDAY Slow roasted Prime Rib with baked potato & salad \$19⁰⁰ (Starting at 4pm) \$1⁵⁰ Drafts	SUNDAY 4 PIECE FRIED CHICKEN DINNER \$8⁹⁹ \$1⁵⁰ Drafts 15% CHURCH discount

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Month of February is American Heart Month

Heart Disease Statistics and Services

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. The month of February is dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease and increasing knowledge about prevention.

- One in four deaths in the United States is due to heart disease.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for American women, killing nearly 422,000 each year.
- Following a heart attack, approximately one in four women will die within the first year, compared to one in five men.
- 2,200 —the number of people in the United States who die from heart disease each day
- 800,000 —the number of people in the United States who die from heart disease each year (150,000 are under age 65)
- Every 34 seconds someone in the United States has a heart attack.

What can you do to help prevent heart disease?

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Exercise regularly.
- Don't smoke.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Control blood pressure.

Raulerson Hospital offers a wide range of cardiac and respiratory testing for inpatients and outpatients. Services include therapeutic treatments, EKGs, EEGs, transthoracic and transesophageal echocardiograms, carotid ultrasounds, and cardiac stress testing. Raulerson Hospital also offers cardiac services including the implantation of pacemakers and Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillators (ICD) devices. These are minor surgical procedures that are safe and can be life-saving.

For more information about these hospital services visit RaulersonHospital.com or call 863-763-2151.

For a free physician referral and answers to your healthcare questions, call Consult-A-Nurse at 863-763-9228. Consult-A-Nurse is staffed by a registered nurse.

Heart Gallery promotes adoptions

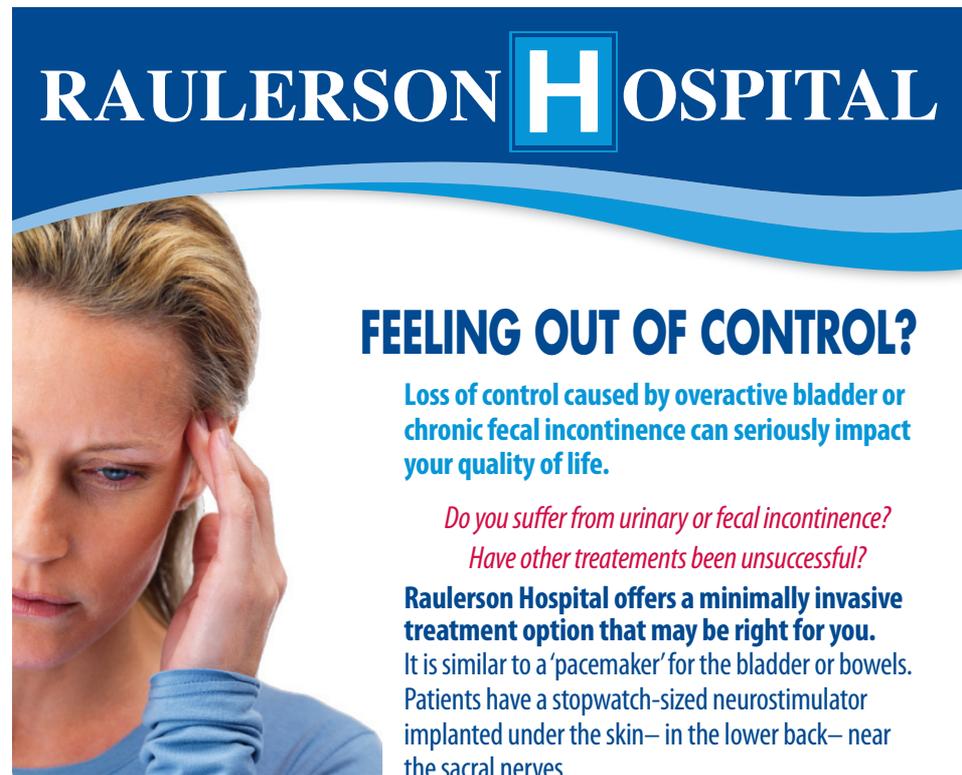
Special to the Okeechobee News

The Heart Gallery of Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast, a unique and stirring traveling photographic exhibit featuring children in foster care hoping to be adopted, will be on display through March 1 at Indian River State College, Dixon Hendry Campus, Building B, located at 2229 N.W. 9th Ave.

The gallery features children who have been removed from home due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. They are "difficult to place" children who are older (7-17 years old), sibling groups, minority or bi-racial or may have physical, emotional or behavioral issues. The local Heart Gallery is displayed in high-traffic locations across Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Indian River and Martin counties in an effort to raise awareness of the need for adoptive homes in our communities.

Since it began in 2006, more than 50 children featured on the Heart Gallery of Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast have been adopted, including eight Okeechobee children in the past three years. The local gallery, which is partially funded by both the Children's Services Council of Okeechobee County and the United Way of Okeechobee County, was founded by Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County, Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers and Children's Home Society of Florida, Treasure Coast Division. Other funders include Department of Children & Families, United for Families, United Way of Indian River County, United Way of Martin County and Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers.

For more information, contact Frank Avilla at 772-429-2009.



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SHERIFF

Continued From Page 1

This year's OCSO employees of the year are Mariah Anuez, Ricky Jones, Robert Ridley and Mark Shireman.

"We are very proud of these people who come to work every day and give 110 percent, even though in the past few years times have not been good for public employees," said Sheriff May. "The job they do does not go unnoticed, and I am very proud of them."

Mrs. Anuez was nominated by Juanita White as the employee of the quarter for the second quarter in the administrative division. Mrs. White nominated Mrs. Anuez be-

cause of her ability to handle different tasks and assume the responsibilities of working in several offices.

"Mariah has shown great patience and has been able, through all the hard times, to keep a good working relationship with employees," said Mrs. White.

Mr. Jones, a member of the OCSO Auxiliary, was also the employee of the quarter for the second quarter but in the volunteer division. He was nominated by OCSO Deputy Sergeant Clif Gill for not only putting together a Special Response Team (SRT) lesson plan, but for actually training OCSO employees.

Along with being on the OCSO auxiliary, Mr. Jones is also an SRT member and is a full-time employee with Okeechobee County Fire/Rescue.

"He is dedicated and an asset to the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office auxiliary program, and to the SRT unit as well," said Sgt. Gill.

The employee of the year in the corrections division was Detention Deputy Robert Ridley, who was also the employee of the quarter for the third quarter. He was nominated by Sergeant Larry Lanier.

Sgt. Lanier pointed to Deputy Ridley's work ethic and his quality of work as two reasons for the nomination.

"This is the time of year we prepare for our annual Florida Model Jail Inspection. Deputy Ridley has worked hard to ensure the jail is inspection ready," said Sgt. Lanier of the nomination in the fall of 2012. "Robert does all his work with a helpful attitude."

The law enforcement employee of the

year was OCSO Detective Mark Shireman, who was also named the employee of the quarter for the third quarter. He was nominated by his supervisor, Detective Lieutenant Brad Stark.

"Detective Shireman received a call regarding a home invasion robbery where three masked subjects broke into a home and ordered the victims to the ground," said Lt. Stark of his reason for nominating Detective Shireman. "Only a partial description was received. Detective Shireman tracked the cell phones and ATM transactions. He pursued his leads and, ultimately, all three were arrested."

Those three are now awaiting sentencing, added Lt. Stark.



Submitted photo/OCSO

Major Noel Stephen (left) and Sheriff Paul May (right) were on hand recently for the naming of Detective Mark Shireman (center) as the employee of the year in the law enforcement division for the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office.



Submitted photo/OCSO

The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office employee of the year in the volunteer division was Ricky Jones (second from right). On hand for the presentation of his plaque were (left to right): OCSO Deputy Lieutenant Gary Bell, Major Noel Stephen and Sheriff Paul May.



Submitted photo/OCSO

Detention Deputy Robert Ridley (second from right) was recently named the Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office employee of the year in the corrections division. On hand to present Deputy Ridley his plaque were: (left to right) Okeechobee County Jail administrator Ronnie White, Major Noel Stephen and Sheriff Paul May.

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Plans for cellulosic ethanol plant scrapped

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

Plans announced four years ago for a unique plant on Lykes Brothers property in Highlands County have been recently cancelled.

It was announced in February of 2009 that Verenium Corporation, a pioneer in the development of next-generation cellulosic ethanol, had entered a partnership with Lykes Brothers to build the first-ever commercial scale cellulosic ethanol facility. The proposed plant would produce a type of ethanol made from a nonfood variety of sugar cane that was to be raised by Lykes Brothers for that purpose. The ethanol produced was to have been blended with gasoline to make it to go further. The Environmental Protection Agency says that cellulosic ethanol's high oxygen content reduces carbon dioxide better than other fuels. Verenium claimed that using cellulosic biomass as the raw material for ethanol costs less, uses marginal lands and requires less fertilizer and water.

The proposed plant, to have been built on Lykes Brothers property on S.R. 70 just west of the intersection with S.R. 721, would have produced 140 new jobs. About half of those jobs would have been in farming and the other half would have been in plant

operations. The plant would have produced 36 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol per year.

Shortly after plans for the plant were announced Verenium and BP announced the formation of a joint venture to develop and commercialize cellulosic ethanol at the Lykes Brothers site.

Recently BP announced it was cancelling plans to build the plant and was refocusing

its U.S. biofuels strategy on research and development as well as licensing its industry-leading biofuel technology.

"Given the large and growing portfolio of investment opportunities available to BP globally, we believe it is in the best interest of our shareholders to redeploy the considerable capital required to build this facility into other more attractive projects," Geoff Morrell, BP vice president of communications

said in a press release.

BP plans to continue to invest in and operate a biofuel research facility in San Diego, Calif. and a test facility in Jennings, La.

A spokesperson for Lykes Brothers refused to comment, referring all questions to BP.

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

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IRSC program recognized for its innovation

TALLAHASSEE—Indian River State College is among the four colleges recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) as national leaders for implementing innovative, progressive practices.

"The Florida College System has a strong history of employing innovative strategies to serve the citizens of Florida and responding to community and state needs," said Florida College System Chancellor Randy Hanna. "I am proud four of our colleges have been recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges and commend all Florida colleges for their outstanding work."

St. Johns River State College is a finalist in the exemplary CEO/board category, Miami Dade College and Seminole State College of Florida are finalists in the advancing diversity category, and Indian River State College is a finalist in the outstanding college/corporate partnership category.

"The Power Plant Technology Institute developed by Indian River State College and Florida Power & Light is a model of a highly-effective educational/business partnership that benefits students and the community," said Dr. Edwin R. Massey, college president. "Over 100 graduates of the program are now working in the energy industry at salaries averaging \$55,000 a year. IRSC is honored that the American Association of Community Colleges recognized this very successful program as a finalist for an Award of Excellence."

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Bandanas & Bows and Okeechobee Claws & Paws host mixer

Special to the Okeechobee News

On Thursday, Jan. 24, co-sponsors Bandanas and Bows and Okeechobee Claws and Paws hosted the January Main Street Mixer. Over 50 Main Street members, visitors, friends and community partners joined in the fun. Guests had the opportunity to tour the facilities and were extremely impressed with the suites available for their pets. From the Disney room, where they show movies such as Lady and the Tramp, to the Tiki room and on to the Classy Black Tie Suite, owner Lisa Marie Turner ensures that her canine customers enjoy their stay. Likewise, Mike Guerrero as a registered member of the National Dog Groomers Association provides special treatment for your pet as a groomer for Bandanas and Bows.

Main Street Executive Director Cindy Birdashaw welcomed all guests and thanked Kevin, Mike and Lisa Marie for their warm hospitality. On behalf of the hosts, Nicolle Wood thanked everyone for attending and provided an entertaining history of the facility. She also thanked everyone who assisted in preparation of the event, including Charlie Williams and Darin Turner who treated visitors with a delicious smoked pig and Kay Mueller of Knibbles and Bits, Cheryl Schippers and Pam Rogers who prepared hors d'oeuvres and sides and decorated the lobby. Nicolle also acknowledged Chuck Schippers who served drinks to all.

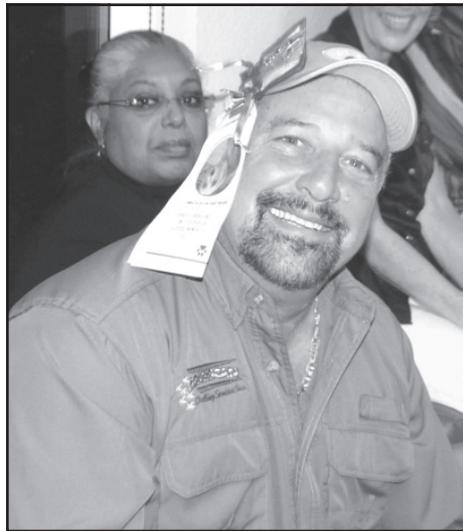
Following brief announcements, tickets were then drawn for the many door prizes provided by Main Street member businesses.

The public is welcome to our February Mixer at Florida Outdoors RV Country, 4300 Highway 441 S. on Thursday, Feb. 7, from 5 p.m.- 7 p.m. For a list of mixers for 2013, please visit our website at www.okeechobee-mainstreet.com and look under events.

For questions or additional information contact the Okeechobee Main Street Executive Director Cindy Birdashaw at 863-357-6246 or stop in the Main Street office at 55 S. Parrott Ave. (across the street from CVS, in the Chamber building). Thanks to everyone who continues to support our organization by attending our mixers and assisting with our events!

Enjoying the Tiki Room: Guests enjoy a quiet moment in the Tiki Room Suite at Okeechobee Claws and Paws.

Bandanas and Bows co-owner Kevin Kinnaird, OKMS President Maureen Burroughs, Bandanas and Bows co-owner and groomer Mike Guerrero, Okeechobee Claws and Paws owner Lisa Marie Turner and OKMS



OKMS Promotions Director Frank DeCarlo wins a purple baseball cap during the door prize drawing. The cap was courtesy of the Humane Society Pet Rescue.

Executive Director Cindy Birdashaw envy the dogs that get to sit in the Disney Room at Okeechobee Claws and Paws.

OKMS Promotions Director Frank De-

Carlo wins a purple baseball cap during the door prize drawing. The cap was courtesy of the Humane Society Pet Rescue.



Special to the Okeechobee News

Bandanas and Bows co-owner Kevin Kinnaird, OKMS President Maureen Burroughs, Bandanas and Bows co-owner and groomer Mike Guerrero, Okeechobee Claws and Paws owner Lisa Marie Turner and OKMS Executive Director Cindy Birdashaw envy the dogs that get to sit in the Disney Room at Okeechobee Claws and Paws.



Special to the Okeechobee News

Pipeline to distribute natural gas

Members of the Economic Council of Okeechobee met on Feb. 6 at Indian River State College with representatives from Florida Public Utilities (FPU). FPU plans to construct a pipeline to distribute natural gas to commercial accounts in Okeechobee. Informational updates from local officials were also provided during the meeting. Pictured (left to right) in the back row are Dan Lynch, Monica Clark, Leb Stepherson, and Doug Moreland. In the front row are Mauro Ruini, Dan Scribber, Aleida Socarras, Tara Minton Rowley and Jon Geitner.

Rotary guest speaker shared latest happenings at IRSC

Rotary President Jim Benton extended a warm Rotary welcome to guest speaker Russ Brown, Provost for Indian River State College (IRSC) Hendry-Dixon Campus (Okeechobee). Mr. Brown shared with club members some very exciting news regarding the latest happenings at IRSC. Combining quality and affordability, IRSC is ranked in the top 10 of public regional colleges in the South by U.S. News & World Report and as the fifth most affordable college in the country by the U.S. Department of Education. IRSC offers over 150 programs including Applied Technical Diplomas, Technical Certificates, Associate Degrees and Bachelors' Degrees with 20 different Baccalaureate programs to choose from. A Bachelors' degree can be earned for approximately \$13,000 (in-state residents - the cost for Associate level courses is \$103.83 and Bachelor level courses are \$117.10). At IRSC they understand the need for more skilled tradesmen and a stronger workforce; as such are doing everything possible to bring awareness to the communities they serve, and develop much needed educational and training programs. Partnerships have been formed with local businesses to provide customized training that meet the needs not only



Special to the Okeechobee News

Pictured in photo (L to R) - Rotarian Tabitha Trent and Provost Russ Brown.

of the student but the business as well. Their relationship with the Okeechobee County School District is very strong as the two work together to offer dual enrollment opportunities for high school students to earn college credit while in high school, at no cost to the student or their family. In addition, their partnership with Okeechobee High School helps to enhance programs campus-wide which allows the students an opportunity to expand their capabilities to achieve their goals. Mr. Brown's main goal is to offer programs locally that meet the needs of our community.

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ABWA recognizes local businesswomen

At its annual Women of Distinction program, the members of the Women of Tomorrow Chapter of the American Businesswomen's Association (ABWA) recognized three local women for their leadership in the Okeechobee business community. The Gathering graciously provided meeting space in its Fellowship Hall. ABWA members, current honorees and their guests, as well as five former honorees attended the luncheon.

Recognitions are given in three categories: Business Leadership, Educational Leadership and Community Service. The 2012 honorees are Lori Mixon, Mixon Realty for Business Leadership; Tracy Downing, Principal of Seminole Elementary School for Education; and Laurie Pharr, Girl Scouts of America for Community Service.

Each woman was asked to share those qualities that have led to her success.

Lori Mixon reflected on the three factors that have contributed to her success. First, she believes that success is the accumulation of experience and knowledge, gained through many opportunities. From selling magazines in high school, to achieving Sales Director status with Mary Kay Cosmetics, to operating her own real estate business, Lori has taken advantage of her many opportunities. She said her training with Mary Kay was the foundation to her success in real estate. Second, she believes in keeping a record of your own accomplishments. This lets you see where you have been so you can set new goals each

year. "Having a vision for where you are going will keep you on track." She writes her goals down and reviews them often. "Success is not a destination but the journey that takes you there." Finally, she believes in surrounding herself with like-minded people who are "willing to lock arm-in-arm with her vision." She credits her staff, her team of realtors, her community, a supportive husband, and especially her live-in mama, who keeps everything running at home. With this strong team behind her, Lori has become a truly successful American business woman.

Tracy Downing proudly acknowledges that she is a product of the Okeechobee school system. She has created success of her many opportunities, pursuing her education from her Associate Degree in education at IRCC, Bachelor in Science in English and English Education from Florida State to her Masters in Educational Leadership from Florida Atlantic University. She has worked her way up the ranks from teacher to assistant principal at OHS and Seminole to principal of Seminole Elementary since 2010. Tracy lauds the efforts of her mother in building her strong work ethic. During her career, she has participated in numerous workshops and conferences, been active on local boards for Juvenile Justice, Eckerd Youth Development, and Real Life Children's Ranch, to name a few. She is a proponent of continuing education and giving back to the community that started her on the road to success.

Laurie Pharr is well-known to the Girl Scouting community, but more to the community at large since a feature article appeared in the Spring 2012 edition of Okeechobee, the Magazine. Dedicated to the organization that Laurie feels provides the best training for girls, she began as a scout herself, raised her four daughters in scouting, and has continued as a leader, even as her granddaughter begins her adventure in scouting. Laurie says that Girl Scouts learn they "can do anything their hearts desire." As the scouting program

gave her direction and purpose, Laurie gives back to local girls. "If I've changed one life for the better, I've done my job."



Former winners include (left to right) Raye Deusinger, Betty C. Williamson, Phoebe Raulerson, Phyllis Folkens and Viki Lamberti.



Special to the Okeechobee News
Women of Distinction for 2012 are (left to right) Laurie Pharr, community service; Lori Mixon, business leadership, and; Tracy Downing, educational leadership.

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1005-H: Wilcox Shores 3 bed, 2 bath CBS with vinyl siding on a corner lot, concrete driveway, 1774 Total Sq Ft/1204 under air. Tile floor throughout home. **\$78,000** MLS #206555



1003-M: Seminole Cove 55+ community w/clubhouse amenities. Great lake view, 2/2 DWMH w/addition, 2 car carport, large driveway, Single/Metal roof, 1023 Sq Ft under air/1957 Total Sq ft. **\$69,900** MLS #206023



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5019-M: Four Seasons 2004, 3 bed, 2 bath on over half an acre. 2170 TSF/1984 under air. In move in condition. Easy to see! ~~\$69,900~~ **NOW \$59,900** MLS #206303

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5023-H: Otter Creek Spacious 3/2, double garage, lots of kitchen cabinets, screen porch, beautiful Oak Trees all on 1+/- acre. Built in 2002, 2336 Total Sq Ft/1380 under air. **\$115,000** MLS #206521



5003-H: Lazy 7 Estates 3/2/2 on 1/2 an acre. 2022 total sq ft/1290 under air. Many upgraded features, too many to list!. ~~\$159,900~~ **NOW \$155,900** MLS #206138



5018-H: Dixie Ranch Acres Stilt 3BR/2BA on 1/2 an acre with ceramic tile floors. Pond, Shed, Large open porch. Offered as a short sale. ~~\$50,000~~ **NOW \$45,000** MLS #206457

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Unit #25 Adams Hubert, Tools & misc.
Unit #47-1 McCoy James, Household misc.
Unit #49 Roberts G, Tools, golf cart, household & misc.
Unit #52 Green Todd, Rest. equip.
Unit #67 Hardison Gina, Household
Unit #81-B Bradley George, Household, no papers.
Unit #81-J Toole Carol, Household
Unit #84-J Lowe Robert, Household
Unit #84-F Eckenwiler Cindy, Ceramics & Household
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Unit #48-H Hays Janet, Piano, Household misc.
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Employment Full Time

Employment

Employment Full Time

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Apartments

Earn some extra cash. Sell your used items in the classifieds

Williams asked to get 'tough yards' at Concord

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

OHS senior Elijowan Williams announced he would attend Concord University in West Virginia on a football scholarship on national signing day Wednesday.

Williams led the Brahman in tackles, played in the South Central Florida All-Star game, and also played well at fullback during his senior year for OHS.

He visited Concord a few weeks ago and although he was surprised at the climate and the cold weather, enjoyed his overall visit.

"At first I was nervous because I've never been that far out of state. (Former Brahman) Nate Pollard explained to me the situation there and I feel I can get over being home sick," he explained.

Pollard and Chris Tullio, another OHS alumnus, played college ball for Concord in

the past four years.

Williams got to meet with coaches, other recruits, and his future teammates, and really was comfortable with the campus and the football program.

"The coach told me I'm the man he has been looking for. They need a power back that can drop the helmet, get some tough yards in goalline situations and play fullback," he explained.

Williams said he actually expected to be recruited as a linebacker but that he is fine with playing offense. Either way he enjoys hitting people on the football field. Elijowan plans to study education and become a teacher because he enjoys work with children.

At about 5'9" tall, Williams was overlooked by larger colleges. He said he wants them to regret that decision.

"They look at your height before they

even watch you play. I will show them at Concord that they wish they had me on their team," he added.

Williams was also one of the hardest workers on the Brahman team. He played offensive line as a freshman on junior varsity and made little to no impression. He got a chance late in his sophomore year to play linebacker at varsity, had a strong game in Clewiston, and then became a two-year starter for OHS at linebacker and fullback.

"I want everyone to remember me as a player that always brought the wood and knew what game time was all about. I did it all on the field, blocked, tackled, and ran the football. I always came out and played hard," he added.

William's parents are Eric Williams and Talanda Robinson of Okeechobee.

He did have some other offers to consider from a junior college and several small

schools but realized Concord was his best opportunity. His biggest hurdle might not be the other players, or classes, or even the other team. It might be the cold weather.

"When I got off the plane I had a cold breeze slap me in the face. I've never seen snow in my life. I went outside and did some work to get used to breathing up there. People asked me where I'm from and I said Florida and they said oh that explains it," he added.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Lexi Ward fields a ground ball flawlessly Thursday night as OHS fell to LPA 8-4.

5-run third leads LPA past OHS ladies

By Charles M. Murphy

Okeechobee News

Lincoln Park Academy exploded for five runs in the third inning fueled by a grand slam by Lillian Guerin to ruin the Lady Brahman home opener Thursday night, 8-4, in high school girls' softball action.

Taylor Martin doubled and hit a solo homerun for the Lady Greyhounds. Okeechobee had a four-run outburst in the third but did little else against LPA pitcher Taylor Strickland, who allowed just four hits and struck out seven.

Stormy Stokes had a double and Kimmy Tijerina had two hits for the Lady Brahman, (0-1).

Jordan Lawlis started on the mound for Okeechobee. She survived a three-base error in left field in the first inning as Stokes made a diving stop on a blooper hit by Miasha McBride at short stop.

LPA went ahead 2-0 in the second as Martin singled to center and scored on a double by Guerin. She scored on an RBI single by Savannah Streeter.

The third inning rally was started by Martin's double to left. Meghan Callahan brought home Martin when her ground ball

was misplayed on the infield. After a fielder's choice and a walk was issued to Ashley Langel, Guerin followed with a blast over the center field wall to give LPA a seven-run advantage.

Okeechobee responded with four runs in the bottom of the third. Cisneros and Carissa LiCata singled, Lexi Ward reached on a fielder's choice and Elisa Garcia delivered two runs with a single to right field. A throwing error by the LPA catcher delivered another run. Garcia scored on a fielder's choice to make it (7-4).

Martin's homerun made it 8-4 in the fifth inning.

OHS coach Heather Gillis said she was proud of the way her team responded after a rough third inning. "Teams are going to score runs off of us and we are going to have to answer back with our bats."

Gillis said the team will continue to work on signs and execution. She said the team continues to work hard and have made a ton of progress due to their tough practices.

"It's early in the season and I am confident that the girls will get more comfortable and gain more confidence as the season goes on. They have already improved so much in the last few weeks," she added.



Okeechobee News/Charles Murphy

Brahman infielders encouraged pitcher Jordan Lawlis (left) as they played Lincoln Park Academy on Thursday, Feb. 7.

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YMS students teach parents about Christmas Around the World



Special to the Okeechobee News

During the PTO meeting on Feb. 4, at Yearling Middle School, Mrs. McGee's 6th grade Language Arts students proudly presented their Powerpoint projects. The topic was Christmas Around the World, and students researched the traditions, cultures, foods, games, and population, as well as the map of the country. The students learned that in some cases, the country did not celebrate Christmas. This project involved the use of technology to research each country. The information collected was then printed and student synthesized it in their own words. This gave Mrs. McGee a chance to teach about plagiarism. All her students participated in the project but only eight students presented at the PTO meeting. These mini lessons gave the students a chance to share the information they learned with the parents attending the meeting. These students did an excellent job!



Special to the Okeechobee News/CES

Central Students of the Week

Central Elementary School would like to Congratulate the Students of the Week for Jan. 28 - Feb. 1. Maddie Ayuso, Thomas Wigfall, Avary Manson, Hailey Harden, Zaidyn Micco, Jaydence Urbina, Elexia Ponce, Symode Williams, Jonathan Duque, Felipe Rodriguez, Yuritzi Flores, Colton Wood, Teona Edouard, Paisley Norman, Nayeli Ochoa-Galvan, Emma Arnold, Ruby Garcia, Edith Morales, Summer McGlamory, Anthony Madrigal, Adolph Torres, Rene Bucio, Blake Hollister, Emily Gonzalez, Chloe Carter, Aracely Cisneros, Saint Barbosa, Jorge Medina, Kai Ichimura and Alex Maxwell.



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