**New instruments strike a chord with YMS students**

By Richard Marion  
Okeechobee News

Yearling Middle School received brand new instruments for its band class on Friday, Dec. 1. Kids excitedly opened cases and played a few notes as the instruments were being delivered to the music room at Yearling around 11 a.m.

It’s the first new equipment the program has received in at least 12 years.

Yearling music teacher Regan Van Ness has been at the school for all 12 of those years and was happy to finally have better instruments for her students to play.

"The kids are thrilled," said Mrs. Van Ness, "because once the instruments get really old like that, they get dented and they are more difficult to play or blow through. They can’t wait to start learning on these new ones. We, as a school, could never afford to buy these on our own, so I’m thankful that (Schools Superintendent Ken) Kenworthy and the Okeechobee School Board approved us to get the money to buy what we needed."

See **BAND** — Page 5
By Leah D. Suarez
Okeechobee News

Mariano Garcia, a board certified civil trial lawyer with the firm of Searcy, Denney, Scarola, Barnhart & Shipley, was so gracious to the families of the Helping People Succeed Healthy Families program. Thanksgiving for such wonderful families was made a bit brighter, with Mr. Garcia’s donation of 100 complete Thanksgiving meals. Each family was provided with all the contents to make a traditional Thanksgiving meal as well as a gift certificate to purchase a $14 ham or turkey of their choosing. All food and gift cards were also purchased locally.

Searcy, Denney, Scarola, Barnhart & Shipley P.A. is a nationally recognized trial law firm committed to protecting and defending the rights of people injured through negligence, improper conduct, deceit or abuse of power. The firm has represented clients in courtrooms throughout Florida and across the nation for over 40 years.

Healthy Families Florida serves over 300 local children and is a program which provides services on a voluntary basis to families who have multiple risk factors that place their children at risk of abuse and neglect. Healthy Families Florida was established in 1998. Healthy Families Florida intervenes early, during pregnancy or shortly after a child is born (up to three months of age). Healthy Families Florida’s highly trained home visitors help parents understand and support their infant’s healthy development; provide responsive, nurturing care; and ensure a safe, stimulating environment. Healthy Families also promotes parents’ responsibility by working with them to improve their own education, find employment and build stronger, more stable relationships with the people in their lives, which lead to better outcomes for children.

The joining of these partners to make Thanksgiving more than just another ordinary day for the families who have reached out for assistance is heartwarming and most appreciated by not only Healthy Families Florida, but also for the families they serve. Thank you, Mariano, from the bottom of our hearts for your kindness to the families of our community.

Garcia makes Thanksgiving brighter for local families

Okeechobee Forecast

Extended Forecast

Monday: Intervals of clouds and sunshine. High 78F. Winds E at 5 to 10 mph.
Tuesday: A mostly clear sky. Low 62F. Winds light and variable.
Tuesday Night: A mostly clear sky. Low 65F. Winds light and variable.
Wednesday: Sunshine. High 83F. Winds SSW at 5 to 10 mph.
Wednesday Night: A mostly cloudy sky. Low 65F. Winds light and variable.

SES Students of the Week

Congratulations to the Students of the Week at South Elementary School for the week of Nov. 17. They are: Jaidn Gilman, Brianna Williams, Ryan Kennedy, Collin Allen, Gianna Gehring, Frank Tagle, Cooper Ridgley, Will Nespwick, Carter Tinajero, Joselin Gomez Aguina, Jeremiah Gomez, Ausem Allen, Teral Allen, Stephen Towers, Noah Lee, Juan A. Sanchez, John Wilbur, Dylan Michel, Noah Hamblen, Brayden Rodriguez, Audrey Bolen, Stephanie Price, Noveline Thomas, Alex Blower, Shane Smith, Maritza Medrano, Yarely Casiano and Emma Rodriguez.

Rescue helps animals

Trail of Hope Animal Rescue owners Dee Dee and John Morris shared their passion and mission with the Rotary Club of Okeechobee on Tuesday, Nov. 28. The rescue mission was formed over the summer but only moved in early October into the former Humane Society/Pet Rescue shelter, the property on U.S. 98 just north of the Okeechobee Livestock Market. The new organization took over the facility, which was founded and operated for many years by Belinda Forlifer. All dogs have received the required shots, veterinary inspections, neutering/spaying and microchips before being eligible for adoption. The facility has been fenced so that the dogs and puppies get quality outdoor activity. The adoption fee has been established at $250; this covers all medical care and services. Volunteers are needed for various activities, from grooming, to facility maintenance, to petting and socializing with the four-legged boarders! The following donations are needed, too: Iams puppy and dog food, paper towels, Dawn dish detergent (an excellent flea prevention treatment), bleach, laundry detergent and bedding and towels. Photos of the dogs are at www.TrailofHopeAnimalRescue.org; the shelter phone number is 863-357-1104. Pictured are Rotarian Melissa Jahner, Dee Dee Morris and John Morris. The Rotary Club meets at noon every Tuesday at Golden Corral.

Okeechobee New

Garcia makes Thanksgiving brighter for local families

Rescue helps animals

SES Students of the Week

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Tuesday: A mostly clear sky. Low 62F. Winds light and variable.
Tuesday Night: A mostly clear sky. Low 65F. Winds light and variable.
Wednesday: Sunshine. High 83F. Winds SSW at 5 to 10 mph.
Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy in the evening.
Consumers warned against hiring unlicensed contractors

Special to the Okeechobee News

Unlicensed activity is a serious threat to the health, safety, and welfare of Florida residents and visitors, warns the Florida Department and Business and Professional Regulation. The department has made vigorous enforcement of licensure regulation one of its highest priorities.

Dangers of hiring an unlicensed contractor include:

- Poor qualifications: Unlicensed persons typically do not have the education, insurance, or qualification required of a licensee.
- Poor quality work: Unlicensed contractors typically do poor quality work or do not finish the project, leaving the homeowner on the hook to repair or finish the project.
- Possible criminal background: Unlicensed persons often have criminal backgrounds that may include fraud, theft, violent crime, sexual offenses, and substance abuse.
- Likelihood of being the victim of a scam: Unlicensed persons often disappear after taking your money, and the department cannot discipline an unlicensed person, help get your money back, or require the person to finish or improve the work done. Scams in the construction industry, especially home improvement, are sadly widespread. Con artists pose as contractors and often target vulnerable people and take advantage of homeowners need for urgent post-hurricane property damage.
- Limited resources for broken contracts: When you have a dispute with a licensed contractor, you call the department, which has the authority to discipline and even revoke the license. This gives the licensees more incentive to play fair. However, this type of action is not available against unlicensed contractors and homeowners often find the only answer is an expensive, and generally futile, civil suit.
- No insurance and liability for injuries to others: You may end up being liable for personal or financial injuries to others. An unlicensed contractor typically is uninsured and will have no way to pay you back for any property damage.
- No coverage under homeowner’s policy: Most homeowner policies require that work must be done by a licensed contractor and provide no coverage for work that is not.
- Noncompliance with building codes: Most projects, even small ones, require permits and inspections that unlicensed contractors ignore or are unfamiliar with. If your project isn’t permitted or doesn’t comply with the building code, you may have to remove or repair the work at your own expense and be subject to fines by local government.
- Liens being imposed on your property: You may be subject to liens placed on your property by subcontractors or suppliers.
- No coverage under homeowner’s policy: Most homeowner policies require that work must be done by a licensed contractor and provide no coverage for work that is not.
- Noncompliance with building codes: Most projects, even small ones, require permits and inspections that unlicensed contractors ignore or are unfamiliar with. If your project isn’t permitted or doesn’t comply with the building code, you may have to remove or repair the work at your own expense and be subject to fines by local government.

Red flags that you may be dealing with an unlicensed contractor include:

- No license number in advertisement or posting. Licensed contractors are required to list their license number in all advertisements. Rule of thumb: Do not do business with anyone that does not have a license listed in their advertisement, which can be verified.
- Advertisement or invoice lists only a name and telephone number. A legitimate business provides sufficient contact and licensure information on an invoice.
- A claim to be “licensed and insured” but cannot produce a DBPR issued license.

This type of claim often merely means that the person has a driver’s license and automobile insurance.

- Want all or most of the money up front or will only accept cash. Never pay cash for your home repairs or improvements.
- Wants check written to them individually or to “cash.” Be cautious of writing checks payable to individuals when a company has contracted to do the work. Include a note on check or money order about what the payment is for.
- Unmarked vehicle and/or out-of-state license plate. Contractors licensed by the department are required to display their license number on the vehicle.
- Blank or generic invoice. Contractors licensed by the department are required to display their license number on an invoice.
- Oral agreement only. The best business practice is to put everything in writing, including a detailed description of the work to be completed, an anticipated completion date and the total cost.
- Ask you to pull the permit. Pulling an Owner-Builder permit is risky business. Licensed contractors must pull the permit themselves.
- Unsolicited phone calls or visits. Some reputable contractors do business this way, but it is generally a tactic of the unlicensed. Be very wary of anyone who offers a bargain price, saying they are doing a job in the neighborhood and have leftover materials.
- High pressure sales pitches or scare tactics. Don’t be put off by hiring anyone, even during a state of emergency! Dishonest people will prey on your fears.

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) offers the following tips for choosing a contractor:

- Before you hire a contractor, ask to see a DBPR-issued license.
- Ask to see multiple forms of identification, such as a driver’s license, all contact information and keep copies for your own file.

Hospital auxiliary looking for volunteers

Raulerson Hospital’s Auxiliary is seeking friendly, passionate community members to join their team of volunteers who help make a difference in the lives of patients and visitors.

To learn more, search volunteer opportunities on RaulersonHospital.com, or call 863-824-2761.

Florida school funding below pre-recession level

December 3, 2017

LAKE MARY — Florida spent 22 percent less in total state school funding per student in 2015 than it did in 2008, when adjusted for inflation, joining 28 other states in failing to meet pre-recession funding levels, according to findings included in a Punishing Decade for School Funding, a new report from the nonpartisan, D.C.-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). The Florida Policy Institute (FPI) notes that this problem is compounded by the state’s failure to increase teachers’ base salaries and lack of investment in maintenance and repairs for school districts.

“A well-educated and healthy workforce, along with modernized roads and bridges, affordable housing and other critical investments, are the keys to economic growth and to attracting businesses to any state,” said Joseph Pennisi, executive director of FPI. “Florida is shortchanging its future workforce, and in the long run, it will be our communities and our economy that suffer.”

The report finds that from 2008 to 2015, combined state and local school funding in Florida dropped by 25 percent, more than any other state, and state funding dropped by 22 percent. Both figures reflect an adjustment for inflation over the period. Current per-student funding would have to increase from $7,297 to $8,147 to be comparable to the 2008 funding level.

School districts are consistently underfunded for school maintenance and repair in Florida. Further, although state policymakers recognize the importance of high-quality teachers to student achievement, one-time bonuses and supplements have been funded instead of basic salary increases. Some eligibility requirements for the bonuses bear no relationship to quality teaching.

Deep state cuts to K-12 force local school districts to scale back educational services or raise more local revenue to fill the gap, or both, says CBPP. Ultimately, underfunding education may jeopardize future generations’ ability to succeed in a 21st-century workforce and support a family.

Pennisi also noted the importance of K-12 education as an equalizer for children living in poverty.

“A sound education enables these children to pursue post-secondary opportunities, whether academic or technical, that result in employability and higher wages,” he added.

The Florida Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting widespread prosperity through timely, thoughtful and objective analysis of state policy issues affecting economic opportunity.
Public Forum/Speak Out

Speak Out comments can be shared in several ways. Comments on local issues are welcome on the Okeechobee News Facebook page. You can also leave your opinions in the comments box found under each story at okeechobeenews.net. We also accept comments via e-mail to okeechoe@ newszap.com or via U.S. Mail at the Okeechobee address below. Thank you for participating!

Alcohol

- The example of a granny with a flask in her purse sneaking alcohol into the civic center made me laugh because my granny carries a flask. You are not going to stop an old lady from having her favorite beverage so the county might as well accept that people are going to drink and plan for that. Don’t worry, granny doesn’t drive.
- People use the civic centers for wedding receptions. Of course they are going to want to toast the bride and groom. Asking the renter to cover the cost of liability insurance is sensible in order to protect the county. If your caterer is responsible for serving alcohol, they may already carry this insurance.
- I agree with Mr. Culpepper, if you make the rate too high, people will not be able to rent the venues so therefore, there will be no need to have them open! The majority of people that rent those places are responsible people, and do clean up behind themselves, because they just can’t walk away from the deposit they are required to pay. As for drinking, if alcohol is sold on the premises, by all means require insurance, but if it is a private party, wedding, etc. which usually involves family and close friends, they watch after one another and don’t let each other drive drunk. Also wouldn’t it hurt to add a clause should alcohol be present (not sold) that the city and county are not held liable!

Mail theft

- If you are planning to send Christmas cards or presents by mail, make sure you take them inside the post office building to mail. Thieves are hitting the blue mail drop boxes, even the one that is right outside the post office.

Animal abuse

- The sheriff received the video with 350 hours of footage on Nov. 9 and by Nov. 16 they had arrest warrants. That was a pretty quick turnaround. Plus, I am sure the detectives have other cases to work on as there are not many officers in this rural town. They can’t spend all their time working this. If Animal Recovery Mission had given the sheriff the video a week before posting it online, maybe the animal abusers would be in jail now. They had finished taping in September.
- If they have would turned the information they had over to the sheriff’s department, it would have been disappeared and the owners of the dairy would have been contacted and given a heads-up of what was going on.
- If they had reported the abuse and nothing happened to catch the bad guys, then they could have still posted the videos online.
- The sheriff is actually very good about going after animal abuse cases. Remember the guy with the abused horses? All of the horses were taken away, and he is not allowed to get any more.
- At the end of the day, the ARM investigation is a good thing because the dairies are all getting surveillance cameras so they can make sure employees do not abuse the cows in the future. The employees will know they will be caught, so they will have to follow the rules or lose their jobs. The dairy owners don’t want their cows hit or kicked. Abusing the cows means they give less milk, and that is less money for the dairy owner.
- I think there is something fishy going on here with two of the dairy workers having almost the same name. Are we sure those were real names? Did they use fake IDs to get those jobs?
- Whoever did the recording is guilty of animal abuse because they left the dairy, knowing what was allegedly going on in September, and then waited until November to call the cops. Per their own website, ARM finished their investigation in September. So there was no reason, except for the desired timing they wanted on the publicity, for waiting until November to give the video to the sheriff.
- Interesting that the Okeechobee News posted the sheriff’s whole press conference online while the coastal media aired the sheriff the video a week before posting it online, maybe the animal abusers would have still been at large.

Letter to the editor

Free vision care

This is the time of year that makes all of us realize our blessings, and we at Brennan Eye Care would like to give back to those less fortunate. On Dec. 12, our office will be providing eye care for those in need. This is the seventh year we have decided to provide free eye exams for 25 needy patients, and in conjunction with Treasure CoastOptometric Society, we will be providing free eyewear. If you are aware of a person in need, please have them stop by Brennan Eye Care. 710 S. Parrott Ave. in Okeechobee, to fill out an application and return it to our office by Dec. 8.

Reflections from the Pulpit

The Parable of the Golden Talents

By Loy Mershimer
Okeechobee Presbyterian Church

In Matthew 25:14, Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who went away on a journey, leaving to each of his servants several talents. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.

Now, to fully understand this story, we first need to realize that Jesus is talking gold when He mentions talents. The man is entrusting his property to the servants, and doing so equitably: the one that is talented enough to deal with five talents, he gives five, then two, then one, etc. In that time, a talent was worth about 20 years’ wages. In today’s economy, this is a fortune. And so we do the math: five talents, two talents and one talent (100 years’ wages, 40 and 20) — each servant received something priceless, according to his calling and ability.

Jesus continues the story: After many years the master returns. And each servant gave account. The man with five talents brings them with five more: Master, here are your gold talents, doubled. “Well done, good and faithful servant,” the master replies, “Come share your master’s happiness!” The one with two talents brings them with two more: Master, here are your gold talents, doubled. “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!”

But the man with one talent comes: “Here is what belongs to you, sir,” he said. “I hid it in the ground for safekeeping, because I knew you were a hard taskmaster, and didn’t want to lose it. Here it is!” The master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! Take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. And throw that worthless servant out, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

It’s a sobering story. The point Jesus makes is that everyone has been given something priceless of kingdom value. And we will all give an accounting for how we return the gifts of talent’s we have been given. In that time, consider this: The average American will make somewhere between a half-million dollars to 2 million dollars in a lifetime of work. Yet, in keeping up with culture, we fail to realize just how wealthy we are. We hoard and grab and worry. Compared to the rest of the world, though, we are wealthy. We will answer for the talents of gold that the master has placed in our hands. Have we made return? Have we been about kingdom work with the whole of our lives? And what about the return on inanimate gifts — personality, mind, will, ability to bless others with laughter, gifts of time, kind words, giving hope in darkness, direction for salvation, etc.?

The only way to stand before the Master at the end of days is to receive fully of His grace, and give fully of our resources, in line with His will. When we tithe our income, in faith, we are saying, “God, you are Lord of the whole, and I seek your presence and will every part my life.” Like this, we live for God and others — faithful kingdom servants.

Like this, we will stand on that final day with many souls for our hire, fully redeemed, sharing the Master’s happiness. May it be! And may our use of time and talents today show His light on the way. Amen.
Continued From Page 1

The instruments were purchased locally at Okeechobee Music Inc., which is owned by Raymond and Brenda Noel. “Mrs. Van Ness contacted us and said that she had received a grant for new musical instruments,” said Mrs. Noel, “and she wanted to give us the opportunity to bid. So we were able to cut the prices very deeply for her and Yearling, because we know how the band struggles. There’s not a line item on the school budget for the band.”

Mrs. Van Ness said it wasn’t a hard decision to buy local. “It was a much better deal,” Mrs. Van Ness explained. “It saved a lot of money compared to what the larger corporations were wanting. And they came with a 10-year warranty, which is a huge plus when dealing with middle schools.”

The Noels try to support the local Okeechobee bands as much as possible, saying that they attend every performance they can.

“Our whole motto is ‘support local musicians,’” said Mr. Noel, “and that’s what we try to do.”

Continued From Page 1

Continued From Page 1

Okeechobee County Planning Director John Howle explained that FDOT has published its Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program for the Heartland region covering DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands and Okeechobee counties. He said Okeechobee County projects on the Tentative Five Year work program include:

- The resurfacing of U.S. 441 from Fourth Street to Ninth Street;
- Roundabout at U.S. 98/U.S. 441 at Southeast 18th Terrace;
- Adding lanes and reconstructing SR 710 from L-63 Canal to Sherman Wood Ranches;
- Widening and resurfacing Loften Road from the Kissimmee River to U.S. 98;
- Add lanes and reconstruct SR 710 from Sherman Wood Ranches to the Martin County line;
- The construction of SR 710 from U.S. 441 to the L-63 Canal;
- The resurfacing of U.S. 98 north of Northwest 80th Avenue to U.S. 98;
- The resurfacing of U.S. 441 from south of Northeast 304th Street to the Osceola County line;
- The resurfacing of SR 710 from west of Southeast 48th Street to west of Southeast 67th Way;

- The widening and resurfacing of Southwest Fifth Avenue from Park Street to South of Central Elementary; and,
- Adding turn lanes to U.S. 441 at Northeast 102nd Street.

Commissioner Kelly Owens said the commission had previously mentioned removing the turn lanes at Northeast 102nd from the list. Commissioner Chairman Terry Burroughs asked Mr. Howle to remove that item from the list.

Commissioner Bryant Culpepper suggested putting a turn lane and a light on Northwest Ninth Street where it intersects with U.S. 98.

“We repeatedly had to fill the northeast corner of Ninth where it intersects with U.S. 98. If you are going to turn left, you still have to make a right turn and then come back,” he said. The commissioner added that FDOT’s plan for the SR 710 extension will put more traffic on that intersection,” he said.

Commissioner Culpepper also suggested adding a left turn lane on State Road 68 north onto U.S. 441.

Commissioner Owens said the intersection of Berman Road and SR 710 continues to be a problem.

“The semis are coming too fast,” she said. “All too often, the semis are turning over.”

“The route our road takes is more convenient for the truckers,” said County Administrator Robbie Chartier. “How do you get FDOT to understand that their traffic coming from the south is impacting our county road?”

“Until Berman Road is totally redesigned as a truck route, it is going to continually be patched,” said Commissioner Brad Goodbread.

Berman Road was designed as a connector road, he said. It is being used as a truck route.

“Until it is brought up to the specs that mirror its use, it is going to be a patch and fix and a life and safety hazard,” Mr. Goodbread said.

Commissioners ranked the intersection of Berman Road and SR 710 as the most critical project to add to the FDOT list; the intersection of Northwest Ninth Street and U.S. 98 as their second priority; and placed the Northwest 68th left-hand turn lane onto U.S. 441 as their third priority.

Later in the meeting, Commissioner Owens suggested lowering the speed limit on Berman Road to something more appropriate for a residential street and asking the sheriff’s office to enforce it. She said not only are speeds of over 100 mph reported, but apparently the road is being used for drag racing late at night, making the area even more dangerous for the residents.

Contractor
Continued From Page 1

Okeechobee County Planning Director Bill Royce said they hope to find someone with experience in construction as well as investigation.

According to the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, a contractor license is a serious threat to the health, safety and welfare of Florida residents and visitors.

The investigator will respond to reports of possible violations of Florida statutes and Okeechobee County ordinances involving construction or contractor activity, including unpermitted construction, unlicensed contractors and licensed contractors operating improperly or outside their scope of work.

The staff is the lead investigator for unpermitted construction and contractor licensing violations, with the authority to issue notices of violation, notices to appear and citations, as appropriate.

In addition to conducting field investigations, this county staff will coordinate investigations with state agencies and other departments as needed. Unresolved cases will be presented to the Construction Industry Licensing Board, Code Enforcement Magistrate, state attorney or other authorities as necessary.

The compliance investigator is a new position that will be housed in the Community Development Department, reporting to the code enforcement supervisor.

The county commission approved the new position during the budget process for fiscal year 2017-18. The position will supplement code enforcement efforts by concentrating on violations related to existing building maintenance, unpermitted construction and unlicensed contractor activity.

The investigator will also deal with complaints about contractors and prepare cases and reports for the Construction Industry Licensing Board.

For more about the dangers posed to the public by unlicensed contractors, see Page 3.
Kathleen Holcomb Brege, 55
OKEECHOBEE — Kathleen Holcomb Brege passed away Nov. 14, 2017, unexpectedly at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center, in Ft. Pierce Fla. Kathleen was born in Queens, N.Y., and lived in Okeechobee most of her life. Kathleen is preceded in death by her father, Gerald W. Holcomb; brother, Harold Holcomb; and an infant sister. She is survived and lived in Okeechobee most of her life. Kathleen was married to Brege, 55, of N.Y., and had two children, Angel and Cody. Kathleen is survived by her parents, Edward and Maryellen. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Okeechobee Hospice, P.O. Box 1548, Okeechobee, FL 34973. Arrangements are to be announced at a later date.

Maryellen K. Holcomb Hill, 77
OKEECHOBEE — Maryellen K. Holcomb Hill passed away Nov. 20, 2017, from a brief illness at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center in Ft. Pierce Fla. Maryellen was born in Flushing N.Y., but lived most of her adult life in Okeechobee. She was a member of the local Moose Lodge and was also a member of the Ladies VFW Auxiliary.

Maryellen is preceded in death by three husbands: Mr. Gerald W. Holcomb, Mr. Monty Hooks and Mr. Charlie Hill; three children, Mary Ellen (infant), Harold Holcomb, and Kathleen Brege. She is survived by one sister, Betty Ann Malezia of N.Y.; and brother, Edward Matthews also of N.Y.; a son, Gerald (Jerry) Holcomb and wife Brenda of N.C.; a daughter, Elizabeth Holcomb and husband Jack of Okeechobee; and Charlie Hill of Okeechobee; eight grand children and 18 great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Okeechobee Hospice, P.O. Box 1548, Okeechobee, FL 34973. Arrangements are to be announced at a later date.

Search obituaries nationally at http://www.legacy.com
SEMES Students of the Month

We are so proud of Seminole Elementary School’s November Students of the Month! In Ms. Buehrly’s kindergarten class - Salma Sattar; in Mrs. Hubbard’s class - Cecilia Aguilar; in Ms. Shockey’s class - Blake McDonald; in Ms. Gonzalez’s class - Kaylie Yates; in Ms. Hicks’ class - Neveen Gomez; in Ms. Schneider’s class - Jasmin Alanis; and, in Ms. Kenney’s class - Paul King! Congratulations Seminole superheroes!

EES Students of the Week

Everglades Elementary School students are pictured with Jenni Ellis, assistant principal for achieving excellence in the classroom, for the week of Nov. 27. They are: kindergarten, Madison Chapman, Lucia Maravilla, Cheyenne Collins; first grade, Alillauna Daniels, Bailey Beckham, Mackenzie Whiffeld, Valentin Salazar; second, Brayden Snook, Aidan Rickard, Eduardo Martinez; third, Miller Molloy, Daniel Eastman, Jarod Koos, Cassidy Rosemann, Malory Molloy; fourth, Crystal Ortez, Keshawn Redwine, Zachary Bowman, Jack Richardson, Fred Hill; fifth, Ruben Hernandez, Harlee Sage, Faith Alexander, Shania Kent and Javier Cortes. Congratulations to our many outstanding students.
Okeechobee County asked to help Prairie residents

By Katrina Elsken
Okeechobee News

Two residents of the Prairie (also known as Viking Properties or Coquina Water Control District) Thursday asked Okeechobee County commissioners to help resolve the dispute between full-time residents of the rural area and those who treat it as an “anything goes” weekend getaway.

“We have come to a crossroads where we, the residents in this district cannot tolerate any longer the changes being made,” said Barbara Slack. “The people coming to our district have taken control of it.”

“They want to change the whole fabric of our neighborhoods, our district and our law,” she said. “They want senior citizens gone. They say we’re the junior citizens gone. They say we’re the problem.”

Ms. Slack said the newcomers want the Prairie to be a recreational community.

“They say they are going to have ATVs wherever they want and if we don’t like it, we can leave,” she said.

“Now they feel they have the majority and they can do whatever they want,” she continued.

“There is currently a battle going on in the Prairie,” another Prairie resident, Teresa Hanson, told the commissioners.

“The main issue is doing away with much of Sheriff Noel Stephen’s authority,” she said.

“Opposition is met with threats, slander and insults,” she continued. “Most of them do not live in the Prairie but wish to have the freedom to misuse and abuse” the area, she added.

Ms. Hanson said there may have been election fraud because those elected to the Coquina board of supervisors are required to live in Okeechobee County.

“Ask the board members where do they reside? Did they commit fraud? I don’t want to point fingers, but I want answers,” she said.

She said she has tried to stay out of the controversy among the homeowners. “I can’t even begin to explain the disruptions,” she said. “They have no respect for law or authority.”

Ms. Hanson said there are problems with garbage and with sewage in the canals.

“I live there. I brought up kids there. We love it out there,” she said. “It’s not just about the senior citizens.”

“There is no respect for Sheriff Noel Stephen,” she continued. “It’s a game, who can get to Facebook the first. As soon as there is an officer out there, it is reported they are there. The law can’t catch them.

“We have issues on our roads. They don’t respect the property or the people.”

Ms. Hanson said those who oppose enforcement of the laws against riding ATVs on the roads have threatened other residents.

“They are saying if they can’t ride their ATVs, we can’t ride our horses,” she said. “There are so many threats on Facebook on these different sites.

“I am not going to remain silent and hidden anymore,” Ms. Hanson said. “I hope you will be able to help us.”

The commissioners accepted documents from each of the women but did not comment on the issue at that time.

Later in the meeting, the Prairie came up again during the commissioners’ comments.

“The Coquina situation has gotten way past critical,” said Commissioner Bryant Culpepper.

“It’s way out of control. We have to do something,” he said.

“I know it’s a difficult situation because they are their own quasi-government,” he said. He suggested asking the governor to get involved.

“There are allegations that one or more of the new board members may not have been qualified to take the office when the election occurred,” said county attorney John Cassels. “That’s always a slippery thing. You have to prove it.

“We have got to be careful that one set of allegations is the true set of facts,” he said.

“The other part of it is bullying,” the attorney continued. “We don’t seem to have much luck at the federal or state level to stop bullying. I am not sure we would have any luck at the local level.”

“If it is a law enforcement issue, that is within your purview to provide more law enforcement,” Mr. Cassels said.

“If it’s ‘locals vs. foreigners,’ that is not within your purview,” he said. “Even if they don’t live there, property owners do have rights.”

Commission Chairman Terry Broughs said the sheriff is working on a process to deal with the issues on the Prairie.

“I think we should let the sheriff do what he is doing now,” he said.

Commissioner Kelly Owens said the residents should make a complaint to the Florida Ethics Commission.

“I would think that would be their first course of action, to submit all of this to the Ethics Commission,” she said.
Man out on bond rearrested on drug charges

By Matteo Tullio
Okeechobee News

A 61-year-old Okeechobee man was arrested after he allegedly ran a stop sign Thursday afternoon on charges of possession of methamphetamine and unlicensed carrying of a concealed firearm.

Bobby Joe Fulford, 61, Northwest 285th Drive, Okeechobee, was arrested Nov. 30 on felony charges of possession of methamphetamine and unlicensed carrying of concealed weapons or firearms. He is being held without bond.

According to an arrest report by Deputy Greg Mullen, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO), he was parked in his patrol vehicle in the 900 block of Northwest 10th Street at approximately 10:57 a.m. Thursday morning when he noticed a silver Chevrolet truck run a stop sign. He then activated his emergency lights in the 900 block of U.S. 98 North but the actual stop was conducted in the 1000 block of U.S. 98 North.

Dispatch apparently informed Deputy Mullen that the vehicle was registered to Fulford. Deputy Mullen spoke with Fulford and explained to him the reason for the stop. It was noted in the report that as Deputy Mullen spoke with Fulford, he lit a cigarette.

Deputy Mullen asked Fulford if there were any illegal narcotics, firearms or other weapons in the vehicle and for permission to search the vehicle. Fulford and his passenger stepped out of the truck, when his passenger then began to record the interaction with a cellphone. During the stop, Deputy Mullen requested a K-9 to the scene to locate illegal narcotics. K-9 Samba alerted to the odor of narcotics within four minutes of arrival, as Deputy Mullen began to write citations for Fulford.

The vehicle was searched and between the driver seat and center console was a case that contained small pieces of suspected methamphetamine — which later field-tested positive. A .357 caliber Smith & Wesson magnum with six rounds inside the chamber was found inside a purple Crown Royal bag behind the passenger seat.

Fulford was placed in handcuffs and transported to the Okeechobee County Jail. The case and the methamphetamine fragments, cellphone that was used to digitally record the interaction and revolver with ammo were collected and photographs of the items were all submitted into evidence.

The report points out that Fulford was out on bond on other drug charges. Just two days earlier on Nov. 28, Fulford had been arrested on a felony charge of possession of methamphetamine and misdemeanor charges of possession of drug paraphernalia and driving while license suspended with knowledge. He was released that time on a bond of $6,500.

Grant to extend water lines to Whispering Pines

By Katrina Elsken
Okeechobee News

The Okeechobee County Commission approved a grant agreement to extend the Okeechobee Utility Authority water lines in Whispering Pines.

Deborah Belcher, of Roumelis Planning and Development Services, said in a few months she hopes to bring a contract for approval between OUA and a contractor to begin work.

According to the staff report, the county has received the requested Florida Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. This $750,000 grant originated from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It will finance the extension of the OUA potable water system into a very low/moderate income (LMI) residential area north of the City of Okeechobee known as Whispering Pines, including residential water hookups for a minimum of 84 LMI households.

During the 2015-16 door-to-door household survey conducted by Roumelis Planning and Development Services Inc., there were approximately 445 individuals living in the 143 occupied residences in the total project area, including 121 LMI households.

Approximately 14,087 linear feet of water main will be installed, plus fire hydrants, plus residential plumbing lines and well abandonments (hookups). Water hookups will be provided for residences occupied by LMI households. The OUA will waive connection fees for these households. The hookups and fee waivers will make accessing the water system affordable for the residents.

The $750,000 total budget of the CDBG grant includes:

- $599,000 for water main construction;
- $90,000 for water hookups;
- $1,000 engineering (increase/decrease, depending on actual construction costs);

$60,000 for administration, including grant writing.

The OUA fee waivers will be approximately $185,000 for 84 connections, and may total approximately $200,000 with additional connections. The fee waivers will count as the county’s financial “leverage” for the grant. In addition, OUA will pay any excess construction costs incurred for the project, estimated to be approximately $100,650. Engineering expenses are likely to be paid 100 percent by OUA, although $1,000 was allocated to the CDBG budget as a “place holder” for the unlikely situation where there are CDBG funds remaining after construction costs and the funds will be used for engineering, the staff report explains.

In a related matter, the county adopted a procurement policy for CDBG grants that complies with federal requirements along with applicable Florida statutes. The policy uses the county’s currently adopted purchasing authority limits.

In other business:

- Commissioners approved the purchase of one 2018 Ford Transit 15-passenger van from Gilbert Ford for the Ag-Extension Office in the amount of $30,619.50.
- The board considered adding an LED sign at the entrance of the Agri-Civic Center on State Road 710 but decided to wait until the new sign is installed on State Road 70 so they can see it in place. Commissioners also expressed a desire to make sure they know how SR 710 might change due to Florida Department of Transportation’s plans for SR 710 before they determine where to place the sign.

Truck stolen on Northwest 26th Avenue

The truck was stolen from the 12000 block of Northeast 26th Avenue, between 7:30 p.m. Nov. 26 and 5:15 a.m. Nov. 27. The 1998 4x4 Chevrolet K2500 had Florida tag 515PNJ and a Vehicle Identification Number of 1GCGK29R5WE159937.

The truck bed has several spots patched and painted with gray primer, smoked taillights and a missing handle from the tailgate. It has tinted windows. The driver’s side of the windshield has a crack, and the truck has a 3-ball hitch. If you have any information, contact Detective Max Waldron, 863-763-3117, ext. 5108, regarding Case #17S26340.
Data breach victims can help protect accounts

Special to the Okeechobee News

Every day, data thefts put people’s personal and financial information at risk. There are steps that identity theft victims can take to protect their financial accounts, their identities and their tax returns.

The IRS is partnering with state tax agencies, the tax industry and groups across the country to remind people about the importance of data protection.

Generally, thieves want to use the stolen data as quickly as possible. That may mean selling the data on the Dark Web for use by other criminals. It may also mean the crook tries to withdraw money from bank accounts or charge credit cards. A thief might also try to file a fraudulent tax return using victims’ names for a refund.

People who are the victim of a data breach should consider these five steps to help protect their sensitive information that can be used on a tax return:

• If possible, the victim should try to determine what information the thieves compromised. Victims can try to find out if the criminals accessed emails and passwords, or more sensitive data such as name and Social Security number.
• Breached companies often offer credit monitoring services to victims. Victims should consider taking advantage of these offers.
• Victims should place a freeze on credit accounts to prevent access to credit records. There may be a fee that varies by state. At a minimum, victims should place a fraud alert on their credit accounts by contacting one of the three major credit bureaus. A fraud alert on credit records is not as secure as a freeze, but a fraud alert is free.
• Victims should reset passwords on online accounts. It is especially important to reset passwords of financial sites, email and social media accounts. Some experts recommend at least 10-digit passwords mixing letters, numbers and special characters. People should use different passwords for each account, using a password manager or password app if necessary.
• People should use multi-factor authentication when available. Some financial institutions, email providers and social media sites allow users to set their accounts for multi-factor authentication. This means users may need a security code, usually sent as a text to their mobile phone, in addition to a username and password.

Zaxby’s Restaurant hosted the November Chamber After Hours gathering on Nov. 14. Those attending enjoyed delicious food and a fun social event.

Zaxby’s hosts Chamber After Hours

Special to the Okeechobee News

It was an exciting full house when the Chamber of Commerce was invited to Zaxby’s for the November “After Hours” event on Nov. 14. Zaxby’s Licensee Tracy Neely and store manager Brittany Johnson had a wonderful array of Zaxby food products including chips, chicken, sauces and more for those attending to sample. Brittany gave a brief history of Zaxby’s. “After Hours” events are always open to the public as a way of introducing all of Okeechobee to the businesses in the community, with the next event on Dec. 14 at CenterState Bank.
Strawberry growers benefit from UF web-based system

By Brad Buck

GAINESVILLE — Strawberry growers in Florida and South Carolina are reaping the benefits of a UF/IFAS web-based system designed to ward off two deadly pathogens, a new University of Florida study shows.

That’s good news as Florida’s strawberry growers start a new season. Strawberries pack a powerful economic punch nationwide and in the Sunshine state, bringing in $2.3 billion to the national economy and $300 million a year to Florida, according to UF/IFAS research.

The tool, known as the Strawberry Advisory System (StAS) uses data such as temperature and leaf wetness to tell growers when to spray fungicide to thwart botrytis and anthracnose fruit rots.

For the study, UF/IFAS plant pathology professor Natalia Peres and her colleagues tested StAS on eight strawberry varieties at 39 commercial farms in Florida and South Carolina. They found the system saved an average of 50 percent of the fungicide growers normally would use without losing crop yield under different seasons, locations, cultivars, and nursery sources.

Based on their prior research, Peres and her colleagues knew Florida farmers were adopting StAS.

“The StAS has been valuable to growers in that it reduces not only the amount of chemical product they need to purchase, but also the number of times they have to spray,” said Ms. Peres, a faculty member at the UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center in Balm, Florida. “Thus, cost savings for growers are substantial. In addition, it has potential environmental and health benefits since residues on fruit are much lower. As strawberry growers in other states showed interest in the system, there was a need to evaluate whether it would work as well in other environments and with different cultivars.”

Most strawberry growers treat for fungi every week during the November-to-March growing season. Spraying more wastes money and can lead to fungicide resistance, Peres said. When conditions are ripe for botrytis to spread — lower temperatures and dampness on leaves — strawberry production can go down by 50 percent, even if a grower uses a scheduled fungicide, Ms. Peres said.

Growers can use the system by going to http://agroclimate.org/tools/sas/, or use the website to sign up for email or text alerts.

“The system is easy for growers to use since disease alerts are sent by text messages or emails, so all alerts are timely,” Ms. Peres said. “In addition, they receive information as to which products are most appropriate to spray in any given situation.”

The new UF/IFAS study is published in the journal Plant Disease.

Okeechobee Livestock Market Report

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>COWS</th>
<th>LOW:</th>
<th>HIGH:</th>
<th>CLFS</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
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<tr>
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<td>47.00</td>
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<td>1792</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| BULLS: | 1200-1500 | 73.00 | 77.00 |
|        | 1500-2100 | 74.00 | 79.00 |

| STEERS MED & LARGE 1: | 200-250 | 215.00 | 225.00 |
|                     | 250-300 | 207.00 | 220.00 |
|                     | 300-350 | 200.00 | 215.00 |
|                     | 350-400 | 175.00 | 190.00 |
|                     | 400-450 | 170.00 | 188.00 |
|                     | 450-500 | 158.00 | 170.00 |
|                     | 500-550 | 145.00 | 164.00 |
|                     | 550-600 | 140.00 | 155.00 |

| STEERS MED & LARGE 2: | 200-250 | 200.00 | 210.00 |
|                     | 250-300 | 192.00 | 205.00 |
|                     | 300-350 | 190.00 | 200.00 |
|                     | 350-400 | 165.00 | 180.00 |
|                     | 400-450 | 160.00 | 178.00 |
|                     | 450-500 | 148.00 | 160.00 |
|                     | 500-550 | 135.00 | 154.00 |
|                     | 550-600 | 130.00 | 145.00 |

| STEERS MED & LARGE 3: | 250-300 | 0.00  | 0.00  |
|                     | 300-350 | 185.00 | 195.00 |
|                     | 350-400 | 155.00 | 170.00 |
|                     | 400-450 | 150.00 | 168.00 |
|                     | 450-500 | 138.00 | 150.00 |
|                     | 500-550 | 125.00 | 144.00 |
|                     | 550-600 | 0.00  | 0.00  |

Not much change in the cattle market after a week off for Thanksgiving. Cows and bulls were steady with prices under pressure. The calf market was steady to $5 lower. Prices continue to hold up pretty good with a lot of cattle coming to town. OKEEVAC calves that sold this week brought good money! Three more weeks of sales left this year so look for heavy runs.

Stanley Lipfert, Okeechobee, topped the Calf Market with a high of $2.40 bought by Efrain Nunez.

Bar M, Okeechobee, topped the Slaughter Cow Market with a high of $6.80 bought by FPL Foods.

OKEEVAC sale dates are now posted on our website. For information, go to www.OkeechobeeLivestockMarket.com.
Man reportedly caught outside home with A/C unit in pieces

By Matteo Tullio
Okeechobee News

An Okeechobee man was arrested Wednesday afternoon on burglary, criminal mischief and grand theft charges after being caught with an air conditioner in pieces.

Michael Sean Daughtery, 41, Northwest 39th Circle, was arrested Nov. 29 on felony charges of burglary of unoccupied structure unarmed, criminal mischief ($1,000 or more property damage) and grand theft (more than $5,000, less than $10,000). He is being held without bond.

According to an arrest report by Deputy Nathaniel Mitchell, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO), he responded to the 1000 block of Northeast 39th Circle in regard to a suspicious person complaint and was told that the vehicle they utilized appeared to be a white Ford Expedition.

Upon his arrival, the Ford was located backed into the yard of a house in the 900 block of Northeast 39th Circle, and next to it was a shell from an air conditioner. As Deputy Mullen walked around the house he made contact with Daughtery’s wife and daughters who claimed that Daughtery was there to pick up a fish tank that had been left by a friend and former resident.

Other deputies arrived on scene and entered the house to find several parts of an air conditioner taken apart in the front bedroom. Coils were found on the concrete at the back of the house and tree clippers were hidden in the closet of one of the back bedrooms, noted the report.

Daughtery appeared to be very nervous and then began to walk at a fast pace away from Deputy Mitchell. Deputies Mitchell and Robert Lamb unholstered their Tasers and ordered Daughtery to the ground, with which he complied. Because of the behavior exhibited, Deputy Mitchell told Daughtery he was detained, then he was placed in handcuffs and read his Miranda rights.

Daughtery was arrested and transported to the Okeechobee County Jail, the owner of the vacant home was contacted and wished to pursue charges, and due to the crime’s occurrence in the presence of children, a copy of the report will be sent to the Department of Children and Families.

Man tries to break up dogfight, gets bitten

By Matteo Tullio
Okeechobee News

At approximately 9:31 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30, a 29-year-old man was bitten by a dog that was recently picked up by a neighboring’s friend.

According to an incident report by Deputy Bryan Holden, of the Okeechobee County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO), he responded to the 21000 block of Northeast 45th Terrace in regard to an animal bite complaint.

Upon arrival, Deputy Holden met with the complainant who stated that a dog from the neighbor’s house came over to his and began to fight with his cat. The man told Deputy Holden he broke them up and the neighbor retrieved his dog.

The complainant said that a short time later, the dog returned to his home and started to fight with his German shepherd in his back yard. The man said he started to break up the dogs’ fight when he was bitten on his left wrist by the neighbor’s dog. The neighbor apparently retrieved the dog again after the incident, and this time the complainant contacted OCSO.

The report states that he met with a woman at the neighbor of the complainant’s house who was from Fort Pierce and informed the deputy that she was there to visit her friend. While on her way to Okeechobee she saw the dog in question, a white American bull dog, on the road with no collar. She apparently wanted to keep the dog so she stopped and picked it up, and continued to her friend’s residence.

The woman informed Deputy Holden that when she arrived at her friend’s house, she let the dog out. The dog supposedly showed no aggression toward the woman, her friends or their dogs and they decided to let it roam loose. The woman did say that while she was indoors, the dog apparently went to the complainant’s house and attacked his cat and dog and allegedly had bitten the man when he attempted to break them up.

The report was finalized with animal control’s arrival on scene, and they informed the woman that the dog had to be taken to a veterinarian’s office to have the dog’s shots brought up to date. The woman was also told not to allow the dog off a leash while outdoors. The complainant suffered minor abrasions on his left wrist and refused medical treatment.

Join the Friends of the Library today

Love to read? Enjoy your library? Then join the Friends of the Library. The friends raise funds with book sales, selling tote bags and through memberships. The Friends of the Library help support the Okeechobee County Library, 206 S.W. 16th St., by buying supplies for the children’s activities, purchasing books, DVDs and artwork for the library, and helping to sponsor the speakers and presentations at the library. If you want to join, fill out a card and make a donation at the front desk of the library. Memberships start at $5 per year.

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
FOR PURCHASE OF COUNTY OWNED SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY
OKEECHOBEE COUNTY
ITB # 2017-23

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Chapter 125.35, Florida Statutes, the Board of Okeechobee County Commissioners will receive sealed bids for the purchase for cash of the following described real property as listed in Exhibit “A.”

Sealed bids will be accepted in Room 222 of the Okeechobee County Historic Courthouse, 304 NW 2nd Street, Okeechobee, Florida 34972 until 3:00 p.m. local time, on January 19, 2018. All Bids must be sealed and labeled “Invitation to Bid 2017-23: Purchase of County Owned Surplus Real Property, SEALED BID – OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA.” Any bids received after the date and time specified will not be considered. The County has indicated that the minimum acceptable bid on each surplus property as defined in Exhibit “A.”

The Bidder shall submit a bid form for each desired parcel in the following form:

Bidder submits a bid in the amount of $ ___________ representing the total price for the above described property. The bidder hereby submits and encloses a security deposit (cashier’s check) representing 5% of the total bid amount. Said bid shall be valid and shall not be withdrawn for a period of sixty (60) days from the date of the bid opening. In the event the successful bidder fails to tender the remaining cash to close by wire transfer to the County within fifteen (15) days from the date of bid acceptance by the County, then the security deposit shall be forfeited to the County as liquidated damages.

All rights and title to said property, buildings including all materials, fixtures, furniture, appliances or any other related items, if any, shall be conveyed to the bidder at closing. By submitting a bid, the bidder hereby agrees to purchase the property on an “AS IS, WHERE IS” condition. The successful bidder will be responsible for any or all expenses associated with the repairs, permits, fees, taxes, closing costs, broker’s commissions, or any other expenses related to the property. All interested bidder(s) must inspect each property prior to submitting a bid. Each bidder will submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of their bid.

In the event the successful Bidder does not close in compliance with the Bid Documents, the County, in its sole and absolute discretion, may elect to offer to complete the closing and transfer of the property to any of the next highest responsive bidder(s) who had bid at least the stated minimum bid.

Bid documents will be available at the Okeechobee County Historic Courthouse located at: 304 NW 2nd Street, Room 123, Okeechobee, Florida 34972 or online at www.co.okeechobee.fl.us. Bid must be submitted on the bid form provided by the County in accordance with the conditions contained in the bid documents. The contact person for Okeechobee County will be Russell Rowland, Assistant to County Administrator, (863) 763-1811.

The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason whatsoever and to waive any and all informalities and irregularities and to accept the bid, which in its judgment is in the best interest of Okeechobee County.

Sharon Robertson, Clerk
Board of County Commissioners
Okeechobee County, Florida

Terry Burroughs, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners
Okeechobee County, Florida

Publish: The Okeechobee News
A public auction of stored personal property from Okeechobee County Community Development Department tapes is for the sole purpose of back-up for of the County Clerk and of the Community Development Department. Some classified categories require advance payment. These classifications are denoted with an asterisk.*
Public Notice

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED
12/23/17
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that JOSEPH EDWARD GAZA the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificates for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:
Certificate No: 14 Year of Issuance: 2015

481548 ON 10/27; 11/3, 10, 17/2017
1.800.955.8770.
IMPAIRED CALL 1.800.955.8771; IF YOU ARE VOICE IMPAIRED CALL

Said property being in the County of Okeechobee, State of Florida

11/25/15

Sharon Robertson, Clerk of Circuit Court

Public Notice

NOTICE REGARDING THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990;
Deputy Clerk
/s/ Robin R. Parrish

Christian cookies for sale

The annual Christmas Cookie Sale is set for Saturday, Dec. 16, from 8 a.m. to noon at the Okeechobee Presbyterian Church fellowship hall, 312 N. Parrott Ave. Your favorite ones and special new ones will be available. Okeechobee T-shirts will be available in youth medium and large sizes and adult small, medium, large, and extra large sizes. Everyone needs Christmas cookies to share. For information, call 863-824-0013.

Santa to ride on fire truck

Santa will be riding around on the fire truck on Dec. 21, in the northwest and northeast sections of the city; on Dec. 22, in the southeast section of the city; and on Dec. 23 in the southwest section of the city limits.
2 BEAUTIFUL HOMES ON 13+ ACRES

POOL HOME! Tan Custom Home is a 2002-4B/3Ba, 4,070 SF TLA with open floor plan, large family style kitchen and dining room. Living area with fireplace. Den, office and sitting room. Master bedroom features oversized bathroom with walk-in shower & garden tub. Hardwood flooring throughout, 2-car garage, enclosed pool. Also includes a SECOND CBS 3B/2Ba HOME in great shape with Large Oaks. Pasture is fenced and cross fenced. Call today for more information. MLS 211875

New Price! $469,000
Vangela McFarland
Licensed Real Estate Agent
(863) 261-3630

POPPLETON

BASSWOOD

~ 28th Ave. 3Bd/2Ba, 2006 concrete block home on large lot. Split floor plan, pantry, inside laundry. Home needs some TLC, no appliances. Solid tile starter home on a dead-end street, great for kids. Priced to move fast. MLS# 211520 SHORT SALE - MAKE OFFER! $99,000 Call Lori (863) 634-1457

~Our Priorities are simple. They're Yours!
Lori Mixon
Lic. Real Estate Broker
(863) 634-1457 LMixon@MixonGroup.com

1010-H: SW SECTION 2 story 4bd/3ba on 34+ acre. 2,797 total sq ft/1,995 under air. Remodeled large eat-in kitchen with large pantry, hardwood/ tile floors and detached garage/workshop. Unique property! $220,000 MLS # 211958

1027-M: SEMINOLE COVE 2BD/2BA DW. FL room with vinyl windows overlooks lake. Furnished, metal roof, carpet and tile flooring, carport with extra concrete driveway. Neat and clean. Easy to show. $85,000 MLS # 211564

1200 S. Parrott Ave. • Office: 863-763-2104
Visit our website to view more listings | www.Century21okeechobee.com | admin@c21okee.com

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Sharon Prevatt, 863-634-7068 • David Hazellief, 863-610-1553
Justin Hazellief, 863-763-2104
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- Go to your first home to your dream home
- Advertise your business
- Feature your best properties in this weekly real estate directory.
Contact 863.763.3134 to discuss advertising today!
**Holiday Happenings**

**Brunch with Santa set**

Brunch with Santa will take place at OK Corral, 9449 N.E. 48th St., on Sunday, Dec. 3, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be cookie decorating, horse-drawn carriage rides, photos with Santa and much more. Please RSVP at 863-357-2226 or events@okcorralgunclub.com.

**Christmas open house set**

The Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee, 808 N.E. Park St., will hold a Christmas open house on Monday, Dec. 4, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Come join them for a tour of the center and enjoy cookies, coffee and more.

**Santa at City Hall**

Santa will be at City Hall this year on Dec. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 and 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. each day. Stop by and get a picture with Santa.

**Christmas parade to be Dec. 9**

The Okeechobee Main Street lighted Christmas Parade will be Saturday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m.

**Santa in the Park**

Santa will be in Flagler Park 4 this year on Dec. 9, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 from 6 to 8 p.m. sponsored by Kiwanis Club.

**Boat parade set for Dec. 16**

Okeechobee Yatchette Club will host the 34th annual Christmas boat parade on Saturday, Dec. 16. The parade starts at 6 p.m. Decorate your boat and meet at Taylor Creek by Burger King and the U.S. 70 bridge between 5 and 5:30 p.m. For more, call Arnie at 863-824-0681 or Bette at 863-467-4782.

**Library hosts giveaway**

The Okeechobee County Library will host a Christmas gift drawing from now through Dec. 19. You will be entered with a chance to win a Christmas-themed gift basket every time you check out! Winners will be drawn and contacted on Dec. 20.

**Library hosts a cookie swap**

The Okeechobee County Library will have a Christmas cookie swap party on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 2 to 3 p.m. Bring a dozen of your favorite holiday treats to share and swap with others. Registration is required. For information or to sign up, call 863-763-3536.

**Breakfast with Santa**

Applebee’s Neighborhood Grill & Bar in Okeechobee will hold its annual Breakfast with Santa fundraiser on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Guests can enjoy breakfast compliments of Applebee’s along with goodies, prize tickets for door prizes and the opportunity to take a photo with Santa Claus. Tickets to Breakfast with Santa can be purchased for $10 each by calling or visiting a local Applebee’s. Advanced reservations are required as seating is limited. Children under the age of 2 are admitted free of charge. Applebee’s will raise additional funds by selling paper “gift tags” for $1 each, which will be displayed in the restaurants. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the Breakfast with Santa events and “gift tag” purchases will be donated directly to the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program to be distributed to local families.

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