



# Marion County Taxes "GONE WILD!"

By TomL

I agree the county needs the money for infra structure. The only answer to the County tax is Impact fees, not for the builder but paid by newcomers. The newcomers are moving in... No Stampeding in here by the thousands. Crowding our roads and some times being disrespectful to current residents. The people wanting to move to Florida are here. The County needs County tax money to get ready for them and take care of the people already here. Stop trying to make your long time residents to pay for it!

IMPORTANT FACT: Actually the taxes is only a portion, as I have said to raise the taxes, the county raises is done by raising value of your home, the mortgage gets a great finance move they now have a house that is worth 3 times more than when they started and the insurance company's pounces on it. They can charge more to insure this house that is now three times what it was value at when the mortgage started. They say they are charging replacement value. Guess who decides how much insurance you need on your home mortgage The Insurance company's! With the county raising the value the insurance companies have a perfect storm to make a big profit. Board of County Commissioners please stop this! Turn your money raising efforts into a county assessment tax and don't raise money on the back of the long time residents.

Think about it, if your home is destroyed, the concrete slab is still there, the land is still there. Most of the insurance company settle out of court and you lose money by making payment to them and lose money by making you settle for less. If you have a \$150,000 home and the value goes up and you have to pay the mortgage company and the insurance company value

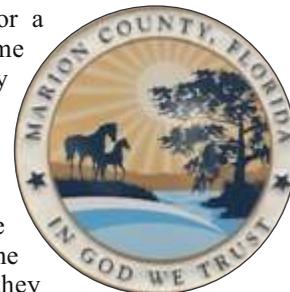
your house for a \$450,000 home "estimated by the insurance company" If your house is destroyed you should be able to collect all the money that they valued your house at, pay the bank the \$150,000 settle your loan and build with what is left \$300,000 and have a mortgage FREE home. I wonder if someone sued for this, what would the courts say? The insurance company says well you are trying to collect on a home that is 25 years old. It is well used! Then why do you charge more? Something must be done!

I have been talking to people on the west side of the county, who I am told gets the least from the county and the state. I have not verified that but I will. Long time residents of Marion County mortgage insurance is increasing at least \$100 per month, that has been happening every year. So now it is compounding. Some residents have told me they have had increases of \$200 per month, \$2400 per year in two years, that is \$4800 in two years and it will go up again. A residents on SS cannot keep up with that. Commissioners look at the for closers in Marion County and surrounding County's.

County Commissioners your intentions are good but we must charge impact on the people moving in and stop charging the long time tax payers for the infrastructure for new comers!

PS from the net: WHO DECIDES WHAT YOU PAY?

"The insurance Company's!"



## Advance of 2026 Florida Legislative Session

Dr. Matthew Cretul, Marion County's legislative manager provided the Marion County Board of County Commissioners with a legislative update in advance of the beginning the of 2026 Florida legislative

session. Marion County and FDOT approved a utility subordination agreement to address how existing utility infrastructure will be handled during construction of the I-75/ interchange. (Marion County Commission Provided Information)

# Drain the Swamp

Staff writer

Drain the Swamp OR Clean the swamp! Donald Trump's elected to Clean the swamp of terrorist, drug dealers, gangs, dishonest politicians and this is currently in the process. It will be hard to address but he is walking right into it, facing it with "True Grit!" A Modern Day John Wayne! I'm not sure how all this will end up but I'm sure the United States will be in a better place. As we race forward a great speeds with the internet and the cell phones, communications is instant, Knowledge is instant. The internet cost the newspapers a lot of money over night. The biggest money maker for paid newspapers was the classified pages, the

Internet did it free. Some times progress hurts. Antique business had a change, buyers use to go to auctions and antique stores buying and part of the price of the product was to find it. I had some Flo Blue plates worth \$100 per piece over night they dropped in half. Because they were easier to find.

Yes we are living and traveling at the speed of light, we are breaking the sound barrier every day. You can talk to your cell phone and get information in seconds! I really think that would be considered "Warp Speed!" I would like it to slow just a little. Give us time to think and make good decisions.

# The Reilly Arts Center

February Events

OCALA, Fla. (January 15, 2026) – The Reilly Arts Center welcomes a variety of national and local artists for performances of rock, jazz, classical and more. Unless otherwise indicated, events are held at the Reilly Arts Center located at 500 NE 9th St. Ocala, FL 34470. Tickets can be purchased at [reillyartscenter.com](http://reillyartscenter.com) or by contacting the Reilly Arts Center box office at (352) 351-1606. Box office hours are 10 AM – 2 PM, Tuesday through Friday. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Reilly Arts Center during box office hours.

As the Reilly Arts Center celebrates its 10th anniversary, we're proud to continue our Celebration Series! A special lineup featuring performances from six nationally acclaimed artists and bands - leading up to our 10th birthday party on February 28, 2026. This series leads our community into a milestone

year, honoring a decade of growth, creativity, and unforgettable performances at the Reilly. The Celebration Series is sponsored by Angie Lewis State Farm.

**Yellow Brick Road – A Tribute to Elton John** <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> **Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 7:30 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$23**

Experience an unforgettable evening as Brann, the incredible Elton John tribute artist, takes the stage with his talented five-piece band! From his spot-on vocals and piano playing to the iconic costumes and signature glasses, Brann brings Elton's music to life, performing hit after hit. Sing along to 'Rocket Man' and 'Your Song,' sway to 'Candle in the Wind,' and dance to 'Crocodile Rock' in a high-energy show that captures the magic of the Piano Man himself!

**Preservation Hall Jazz Band** <sup>[L1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> **Friday, February 6, 2026 at 7:30 PM |**

*More on page 5*

# Voting By Mail Changes

From the net!

I believe the voting by mail is the second best voting process. I myself challenged whether or not the mailing was safe, I had large mailings going into the Villages. There they own their own postal centers, their own streets, their own security and etc.

USPS continues to recommend that voters who plan to vote by mail send their ballots at least seven days before Election Day to ensure receipt by election officials.

If you want to make sure ballot is postmarked on the date it is received you may go to any post office and request a

manual postmark free of charge.

The new postmarking guidance from USPS should serve as a guarantee to election officials that returned Ballot Mail with a postmark dated on or before Election Day was cast by the voter and transmitted to USPS on that date at the latest.

Voting by mail is a safe, secure and accessible way to vote that has been used in the United States for more than 150 years. Voters should be confident that their vote, no matter how they cast their ballot, will be counted.

You need to vote, I prefer got go to the voting booth and vote in person!

## CEP CHAMBER NEWS

MATT MCCORMICK  
NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO OF OCALA METRO  
CHAMBER & ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP



### Looking Ahead With Purpose

By Matt McCormick

When you're new to a role, especially one rooted in community and connection, the best place to start is by listening. Over the past few weeks, I've had the opportunity to meet with business leaders, partners, and stakeholders across Ocala and Marion County. Those conversations have been invaluable—not only in understanding where we are today, but in shaping where we're headed next.

As we look toward 2026, the Ocala Chamber & Economic Partnership is entering the year with clarity around what matters most. Our work will be guided by three core priorities: growth, workforce development, and supporting our business community. These aren't new ideas, but they are the right ones—and they are deeply connected.

Growth continues to be a driving force across our region. Businesses are expanding, new opportunities are emerging, and Ocala and Marion County are attracting attention for all the right reasons. The CEP's role is to help support smart, sustainable growth—whether that's through business attraction, expansion, or retention. It also means being a strong advocate on issues that directly affect growth, including transportation infrastructure and housing availability. These factors play a critical role in a company's ability to invest, hire, and plan for the future.

Just as important is workforce development, which consistently rises to the top of conversations with employers. Businesses need talented, reliable people to grow—and they need confidence that the talent pipeline will remain strong. The CEP will continue working closely with education partners, training organizations, and regional leaders to help align workforce efforts with real business needs. From leadership development to talent attraction and retention, this work is essential to keeping our economy competitive.

At the center of everything we do is a commitment to our business community. The CEP exists to serve businesses at every stage—from entrepreneurs just getting started to long-established employers navigating change. That support shows up in many ways: advocacy, connections, resources, and services designed to help

*Continued page 3*

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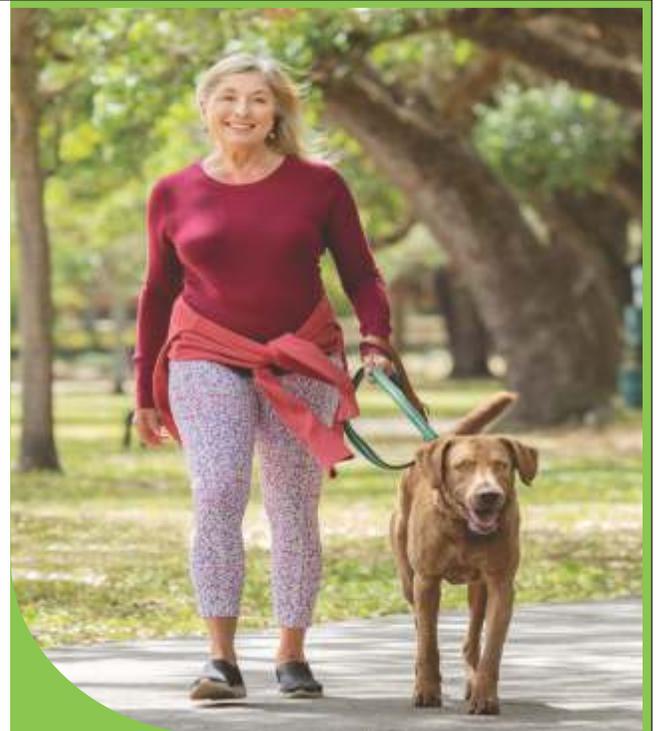
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## CEP *Continued from page 2*

businesses succeed. Our goal is simple—to be a trusted partner and a strong voice for the business community.

We are also fortunate to have unique strengths that set our region apart. The equine industry, in particular, plays a significant role in our economy and identity. Supporting this industry, while also encouraging innovation and diversification, will remain an important part of our broader economic development strategy.

Internally, the CEP is also taking a thoughtful look at how we operate. As our work evolves, it's important that our organizational structure supports efficiency, collaboration, and impact. This evaluation is about ensuring we're positioned to deliver value to our members both now and in the

years ahead.

Many of these priorities will be reflected in the conversations we'll share at our Annual Luncheon, where we'll talk more about the focus areas guiding the CEP's work in the new year and how the business community can continue to engage.

What has stood out to me most so far is the people. Ocala's business community is welcoming, collaborative, and genuinely invested in the success of the region. Businesses here don't just participate—they lead.

As we move into 2026, my focus is straightforward: listen closely, build on a strong foundation, and move forward together. With growth, workforce development, and business support at the forefront, I'm excited about what's ahead for Ocala and Marion County.

## 911,000 Jobs That Never Existed

The Bureau of Labor Statistics revised their job numbers downward by 911,000.

That's not a typo.

911,000 jobs that everyone thought existed... never existed.

The largest revision in 25 years.

Now ask yourself: How does that happen? Here's what Louis Navellier believes:

AI is already replacing workers faster than the government can track.

Companies report "hiring" when they're actually deploying AI to do work that used to require humans.

The jobs show up in the data... until they don't.

And here's the proof:

The federal government just eliminated 71,000 workers.

- VA disability claims: Used to take MONTHS, now process in MINUTES
- Treasury fraud detection: 500% improvement
- IRS processing: Cut in HALF

That was the test case.

If the government—the most bloated organization in America—can do this, what do you think corporations are doing?

- Intel: 22,000 layoffs
- Microsoft: 9,000 layoffs
- Jamie Dimon: "AI will lead to massive layoffs"

But here's what nobody's talking about:

While jobs disappear, \$90 billion in government infrastructure spending is flowing into ONE sector.

Not the AI companies everyone's buying...

But the POWER infrastructure those AI companies need to operate.

Louis's grading system shows institutions quietly accumulating these stocks. Companies you've never heard of. Sectors the media ignores.

This is the wealth transfer.

And you have a choice: Position ahead of it, or watch it happen without you.

Click here to learn more about the 7 stocks for FREE.

Jeff Remsburg<sup>[[SEP]]</sup>, Editor, InvestorPlace Digest

P.S. - Louis rang the opening bell at the NYSE. Featured in Forbes, Barron's, WSJ. Over the course of his career, he managed \$7 billion. When the pattern is shifting, smart money is accumulating.

## From the Chamber

### Fundraising Gala

The College of Central Florida Foundation will host its annual Night at the Farm fundraising gala on Saturday, March 7, 2026, from 6-8:30 p.m. at the CF Vintage Barn, 4020 ... Continue reading "CF Foundation invites community to Night at the Farm fundraising gala"

**AdventHealth cuts ribbon on new freestanding emergency department meant to bring faster, expert emergency care to Ocala**

Access to emergency care is about to get easier for families in Ocala. AdventHealth leaders, local government officials and community members joined together to officially cut the ribbon on the new AdventHealth Heathbrook ER, designed to provide quick, compassionate care when every second counts.

**Marion Graduation Rate Continues Climbing**

Marion County's high school graduation rate continues climbing and is now at 85%, a four-year high. The graduation rate is based on a cohort, defined as a group of students on the same schedule to graduate together.

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Tom Loury Tom Loury Long time member of CEP/Ocala Chamber of Commerce, Past President of the Ocala Business Leaders and current member, Co-Founder and past President of Select Business Associates, Past President of the Lady Lake Chamber and current member. If you want to make contact with the newspaper / Tom Loury email [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)

## PUBLISHER'S NOTES



### HORSE COUNTRY

By TomL

Marion County is "Horse Country"! I was always pushing for the people of Marion County to recognize the Cattle men's Association. After all

it's the cattle industry that is suffering now! I remember a great horse farm on hwy 40 on the way to Ocala from Dunnellon. "Ocala Stud Farm" I think was the name. In Ocala, FL, the area is famous for its numerous horse farms, with many families like the O'Farrell Family it's is generational, the father and his son and his son's son. The family bringing Quarter Horses and Thoroughbreds from Texas in the 1960s It seems that the limestone-rich soil was ideal for bone development, establishing Ocala as the "Horse Capital of the World,"!

Horse Country one horse at a time. My

wife and I lived in south Florida and we had a horse and pastured it in Davie Fl which was South Florida's Horse country. The price of land was out of our reach so we decided to move and find land that we could afford. We won d up in Dunnellon Florida. We bought 20 acres and bought 20 more, at one time we had 55 acres and we decided we did not need that much for the Horse, a riding mule that someone gave us and a Shetland pony and Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs we were raising. We sold 15 acres. But you see if we did not have a horse we may have never moved, so Marion County grew into the name Horse Country a long time ago probably in about 1950's. Now to put the icing on the cake now we have the World Equestrian Center. It is growing to one of the biggest industries in our Country. Everything you can think of for horse showing and riding competition. Stall and horse care and elaborate hotels to stay in. With the best restaurants, entertainment and large meeting room bringing large numbers

of visitor for industrial shows.

So I warn you if you love horses you will really enjoy Ocala. By the way you have Silver Springs attraction in Marion county and Rainbow Spring 's Dunnellon Florida the natural park with beautiful blue water coming out of the ground. I think the price is \$2 per person. Walk the nature trails and have something from the snack bar or go to downtown Dunnellon and have snacks at the Dunnellon Coffee Co in the Aldi's grocery shopping center. My son and his wife own that coffee shop.

Boy is there ever unrest in our nation and across the world. How about that the man that is running our country and his team are making progress in the world. The oil industry will Never be the same. I hope we can share and help the people in Guatemala. Maybe the same in Iran with their leader saying from the river to the sea, now a new spokes person has rose up and said that is no longer their goal they want peace but only when they were force into it! You the saying say uncle when you give up well now it say "Uncle Sam"!

Our leader is a modern day John Wayne, wow what a leader. "TRUE GRIT!" I'll vote for him in 2028, I would rather we follows the political laws but if we still need a strong leader I will help him! I also like JD Vance he is giving the president the respect he

deserves!

I love then CEP Marion County Metro Chamber of Commerce. You can go to a partner meeting and not hear any politics. They are dedicated to help the growth of Growth and planning. The kind of people you want too talk to at a meeting, I call it social/business.

"Where friends meet and business prospers!" They have a new leader in Matt McCormick. He has a column in this newspaper on page two.

Many years ago an American Agent Aldrich Ames betrayed us. Giving up over a 100 American Agents to the Soviets. He was found guilty and recently died in federal prison while serving a life sentence. We should look closely at our agents today and our higher ups.

The Supreme Court addresses the mail in Election Laws. You can no longer count ballots that come in late!

## Newspaper Deadlines

*Editorial & Ad Copy for March*

**Seniors Voice & Ocala DownTown**

**Noon, February 20th**

**Lady Lake Magazine & Village Spectator**

**12am, February 25th**

## Seniors Voice of Ocala/Ocala Downtown Products of TomL Publishing, LLC

P.O Box 1698, Dunnellon FL 34430

**Publisher: Tom Loury**

**Phone: 352-804-1223 | Fax: 352-489-7208**

**Email: [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)**

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## CHAIR CHAT

BY BRIGGITTE SMITH

### RNC CHAT PART 2

#### MCREC's Impact in Action: Legislative and Election Achievements

The MCREC's dedication translates into tangible results, influencing policy and protecting our community's interests. While each achievement offers a unique perspective for those seeking to understand our value, here are some key areas where the MCREC has made a significant difference:

- **Baby Boxes Legislation:\*\*** We successfully advocated for legislation that provides a compassionate and realistic alternative to abortion, offering a safe haven for newborns and supporting maternal choice.
- **Advancing Medical Freedom:\*\*** Our sustained efforts have strengthened patient rights, leading to ongoing progress in opposing mandatory vaccination and safeguarding individual autonomy in healthcare decisions.
- **Protecting the Unborn:\*\*** We led local opposition to defeat proposed state constitutional changes that would have drastically increased abortion access and funding. Additionally, we actively supported legislation to decouple Florida from any potentially overreaching World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic requirements, prioritizing state sovereignty and individual liberties.
- **Insurance and Tort Reform:\*\*** We've tirelessly advocated for crucial reforms aimed at reducing frivolous litigation, thereby working to stabilize and reopen Florida's insurance market. While incremental changes have been made, this remains a critical work in progress.
- **Preserving Our Heritage:\*\*** The MCREC has actively opposed legislation that threatened the preservation of our vital farmlands and the character of our cherished rural neighborhoods.
- **Direct Legislative Influence:\*\*** Our members have provided impactful oral testimony to Senate and House Committees in Tallahassee on critical bills, frequently gaining support and influencing beneficial changes.
- **Strategic Advocacy:\*\*** We

maintain consistent engagement and meetings with State Senators and Representatives to advocate for issues specific to Marion County, ensuring our local concerns are addressed at the state level.

- **Election Integrity Enhancements:\*\*** The MCREC championed legislation for improved county voter rolls and enhanced ballot box security, including more rigorous ID verification, to ensure fair and transparent elections.

- **Leadership in Advocacy:\*\*** Our MCREC is widely recognized as a leader among county RECs for coordinating legislative advocacy letters, amplifying our collective voice across the state.

- **Local Governance Impact:\*\*** We are deeply involved in local activities, engaging with the County Commission and School Board on crucial issues.

- **Fair Impact Fees:\*\*** We successfully advocated for the fair reinstatement of transportation and school impact fees, a measure designed to alleviate taxpayer burdens and ensure responsible growth.

We invite you to learn more and become an active participant in these vital efforts.

MarionCountyRec.com

We meet the third Monday of each month at the Ocala Golf Club, 3130 E Silver Springs Blvd starting at 6:30pm.

Calling all Conservatives,  
Your Chair,  
Brigitte

## Reilly Arts Center Events

*Continued from page 1*

### AdventHealth Mainstage

**Tickets from \$40**

Celebrate the rich, ever-evolving sound of New Orleans with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, torchbearers of the city's legendary music for over 60 years! On their latest album, *So It Is*, PHJB bridges the past and present, drawing from Afro-Cuban roots, Afrobeat, and Fire Music while connecting with modern icons from Stevie Wonder to Beck. Experience a vibrant, living history of New Orleans music that continues to inspire audiences from Coachella to Newport.

*Sponsored by Showcase Properties of Central Florida & supported by Marion*

*Cultural Alliance.*

*Celebration Series sponsored by Angie Lewis State Farm.*

**The Sixties Show<sup>SEP</sup> Saturday, February 7, 2026 at 7:30 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$46**

Step into a high-energy time machine with *The Sixties Show*, the award-winning Off-Broadway spectacle that recreates the greatest music of the 1960s with stunning authenticity. Featuring former members of legendary bands and powered by immersive multimedia, vintage gear, mod costumes, and live note-for-note performances, this unforgettable concert-theater experience brings the sights, sounds, and spirit of the '60s roaring back to life.

**Golden Anniversary Gala<sup>SEP</sup> Thursday, February 12 at 6 PM | Reilly Arts Center**

**General Admission: \$150**

Join us for an elegant evening of exceptional entertainment at the Reilly Arts Center! Help us meaningfully impact our community through the arts. Celebrating 50 years of the Ocala Symphony and 10 years of the Reilly Arts Center.

**Film Music Spectacular<sup>SEP</sup> February 14-15, 2026 at 7:30 PM & 3 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$10**

Experience the magic of Hollywood with an evening of unforgettable film music! From the sweeping romance of *Tara's Theme* from *Gone With the Wind* to the thrilling adventure of *Pirates of the Caribbean*, this program celebrates the power of the silver screen.

*Sponsored by Canopy Oaks Real Estate*

**Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives<sup>SEP</sup> Friday, February 20, 2026 at 7:30 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$40**

Join five-time GRAMMY® winner and Country Music Hall of Famer Marty Stuart & His Fabulous Superlatives for an unforgettable night as they bring their new cosmic instrumental album *Space Junk* to life, blending surf-soaked guitar, soulful steel, and their signature high-octane artistry. With support from the wildly original Hogslop String Band and an optional VIP experience featuring a private mini-performance, Q&A, and exclusive merch, this is a one-of-a-kind country celebration that's as bold, authentic, and adventurous as Marty himself.

**Chris Botti<sup>SEP</sup> Saturday, February 21,**

**2026 at 7:30 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$65**

GRAMMY-winning trumpeter Chris Botti returns to his jazz roots with *Vol. 1*, a lush and intimate reimaging of classic standards that showcases his unmistakable tone, virtuosity, and cinematic expression. After decades of global acclaim, superstar collaborations, and performances on the world's greatest stages, Botti steps into a new artistic chapter with a small acoustic ensemble and a renewed focus on pure, elegant musicianship. Join him for an evening of breathtaking beauty, emotional depth, and timeless jazz brilliance.

*Celebration Series sponsored by Angie Lewis State Farm.*

**Community Event: Bruce Kaplan Memorial Golf Tournament<sup>SEP</sup> Friday, February 27 at 11 AM | Stone Creek Golf Club | 9676 SW 62nd Lp, Ocala, FL 34481**

Join us for the second annual Bruce Kaplan Memorial Golf Tournament at Stone Creek Golf Club, benefitting the Reilly Arts Center, home of the Ocala Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Click the link above to register for the tournament, purchase an award ceremony ticket or select a sponsorship opportunity.

**Dance Alive National Ballet presents Swan Lake<sup>SEP</sup> Friday, February 27, 2026 at 7 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$15**

The most beautiful ballet of all time! *Swan Lake* is the story of a Prince whose fiancée has been transformed into a swan by the evil sorcerer Von Rothbart. Featuring Dance Alive National Ballet Principal Dancer, Carla Amancio, as the Swan Queen, the stage is transformed into a world of beauty and artistry.

**Sister Hazel & Keller Williams<sup>SEP</sup> Saturday, February 28, 2026 at 7:30 PM | AdventHealth Mainstage**

**Tickets from \$46**

Celebrate the Reilly's 10th Birthday with an unforgettable night of music featuring platinum-selling favorites Sister Hazel and genre-bending singer-songwriter Keller Williams! From Sister Hazel's chart-topping hits and legendary fan-driven energy to Keller Williams' one-of-a-kind looping magic, this special anniversary concert promises a lively, joyful celebration of a decade of arts, music, and community.

*Sponsored by Angie Lewis State Farm, Hiatus Brewing, First Federal Bank & Midstate Skin Institute*

# Select Business Associates Of Ocala

- Edward Jones (Nick Navetta)
- Health Insurance Licensed Benefit Specialist (Christine Calvert)
- Fair Tax (Elaine Maiellaro)
- Ocala Business Brokers (Connie Sivesind-Pendleton)
- Ocala Business Brokers (MacKenzie Sutton)
- Healthy Kangen Water (Ron Hipner)
- Beyond Business Contract, (PA Tania Bartolini)
- Prodigy Painting Services (Matt Jarrett)
- Life Insurance (Eddie Levin)
- Brombach Plumbing Service, Inc. (Robert BromBach)
- Walk Don't Run Travel (Sue Fullerton)
- Walt's Brake and More (Water Krumm Jr)
- YMCA of central Florida (Leda Perez)
- Computer Tech (MoE Methen)
- Mental Health Ora House (Vanessa Matthew)
- AI (Frank Turner)
- Financial Legacy Builder s LLC (Kay Bogolin)
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## Ocala Events

### First Friday Art Walk

The First Friday Art Walk takes place the first Friday of each month, October through May from 6 to 9 p.m. First Friday Art Walk is a free event located within Ocala's historic downtown. Event festivities include over 30 artist displays, monthly live entertainment, free family art activities provided by local arts organizations and extended shopping hours. The public is invited to enjoy an evening of art, live performances, and downtown shops and restaurants.



### Brick City Bluegrass Festival

Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026 | 1-7 p.m.

Gates Open: 12:30 p.m.  
Show Starts: 1:30 p.m.  
Citizens' Circle | 151 SE Osceola Ave.



Join us for the third annual Brick City Bluegrass Festival in beautiful downtown Ocala, Florida! This family-friendly outdoor music festival features dynamic bluegrass bands including nationally recognized artists, creating an unforgettable experience for music lovers of all ages.

Set at Citizens' Circle in the heart of historic downtown Ocala, the festival offers more than just music—enjoy delicious eats from popular Ocala food trucks, sip on refreshing beverages, and explore the vibrant community atmosphere. Whether you're a longtime fan of bluegrass music in Florida or just looking for fun things to do in Ocala, this event is a must-attend.

Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets, relax under the open sky, and get ready to tap your toes to the sounds of banjos, fiddles, and harmonies. Don't miss one of the best live music events in Central Florida—the

Brick City Bluegrass Festival is where Ocala's music scene comes alive!  
Tickets - Now on sale!  
\$30—Advance admission  
\$40—Day-of-tickets  
\$10—Veterans  
Free—Kids 8 & under  
\*Prices do not include applicable taxes and fees.

### After Dark in the Park Movie Series

It's movie time! Join us for FREE movies throughout the year at different City of Ocala parks. We will bring the movie and popcorn; you just need to bring a blanket and/or chair to enjoy the show. No registration is required to attend our movies, simply show up, get comfortable and enjoy the show!



#### 2025 Movie Lineup

Princess and the Frog | Friday, Feb. 7 | 7 p.m.  
Tusawilla Park | 800 NE Sanchez Ave.

The Princess and the Frog—With a modern twist on a classic tale, this animated comedy is set in the great city of New Orleans. Featuring a beautiful girl named Tiana, a frog prince who desperately wants to be human again, and a fateful kiss that leads them both on a hilarious adventure through the mystical bayous of Louisiana.

### Tusawilla Sculpture Stroll

Saturday, February 21, 2026  
11 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Tusawilla Park & Art Park | 800 NE Sanchez Ave. & 213 NE 5th St.  
Come celebrate the ten, newly installed sculptures from the 2026-2027 Ocala Outdoor Sculpture Competition at the Tusawilla Sculpture Stroll! This is a FREE event open to the public.

We encourage the community to come

and enjoy guided tours of the sculptures at Tusawilla Park, along with live entertainment, arts and crafts vendors, games, food trucks, and the opportunity to vote for their favorite sculpture to win People's Choice Award.

This free event will host live musical performances by Hot Club SRQ and Safia and the Speak-EZ as well as community performances by Devotion Dance Company and Coeur Ballet Academy.

Awards for the 2026-2027 Ocala Outdoor Sculpture Competition will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at the Tusawilla Art Park stage.

For those seeking an elevated way to enjoy the Sculpture Stroll, we'll host a VIP experience with exclusive access and special perks to make your stroll truly memorable. The VIP experience will include:

Exclusive access to VIP area from 2-5 p.m. at the at the Heart of the Park (516 NE Sanchez Ave.)

Private guided tours of the sculptures  
Tapas and cocktails with an open bar  
Exclusive meet-and-greet with selected sculptors

Unique event gifts  
VIP experience tickets are now on sale

### PAWS Ice Cream Social

Date: 02/21/2026 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM  
Location: Letty Towles Dog Park  
2299 SE 32 Ave.  
Ocala, Florida 34470

## Good Beef Processing

### Good Beef Depends on the Processing

Dear Editor  
When we allowed the Chinese to buy Tyson Meat plants I knew it was just a matter of time and they would try to Hurt us. They are closing Nebraska and calling back meat from Texas, driving beef prices up. Cattle numbers have dropped to a 70 year low. Trump will have to rebuild the ranching industry doing something to increase the size of the herds and the size of the cattle. Then build more processing plants. There is one in Gainesville called Grandma's meat processing plant. I have talked to them and they sound like they know what they are doing. One of the things some Processing houses don't take into effect is when the animal is stressed from the trip to the processing plant their adrenaline is peaking they need to calm down before processing. Grass fed beef is bad about that, I talk to a lady that sold Grass fed beef. She had to credit several people because of the stress when they were processed, NOT GOOD! Aging beef can ruin the meat if the fat goes bad way before there beef is effected, so they have to watch that, if they get behind it could ruin the rest of the meat.

There are a lot of small ranchers raising beef, not enough to fill the void but can help a little. We are going to have to open to

*Continued page 7*

# FOR SALE! OCALA DOWNTOWN AGENCIES

## An Email (Barter Business)

### MAKE OFFER!

It is a member with \$8900 trade available in ITEX Barter network organization see below!

ITEX is a company that operates a large barter network where businesses and individuals can trade products and services using ITEX dollars instead of cash, as detailed on Yahoo Finance and ITEX. It provides a marketplace for members to buy and sell and handles the record-keeping and transaction processing for this non-cash exchange, as shown on Prime Trade NW. This service helps businesses turn idle assets into new sales,

according to ITEX

They offer : Barter network / Business support / Membership / Transaction process (ITEX checks) to spend on many things, places and items.

**Purpose** is to help businesses and individuals leverage assets that would otherwise be idle (like spare inventory or empty seats) into a new revenue streams, reports ITEX.

- ITEX is the largest marketplace for B2B cashless transactions in the USA and Canada.
- ITEX processes millions in sales for thousands of member businesses everywhere!

Email Tom Loury at [tloury@att.net](mailto:tloury@att.net)

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- Loch Ness Cruise
- Medieval Castle Banquet
- Scottish Evening
- Sheepdog Demonstration
- Skellig Experience
- Titanic Belfast

## Good Beef

Continued from page 6

Mexican beef or some other close country, maybe bring the cattle into the US and feed them a good balanced food plot for a couple of months before processing.

This sound callused but that is part of our food. We are already bringing in vegetables and meat from foreign countries. When going to the meat Department at WD watch for black trays that is USA beef.

## AI's Evolving Role - Space...



### AI's Evolving Role in Space Strategy

01/13/2026

(NewsUSA) - Artificial intelligence is poised to be a game-changer in managing the increasingly congested and potentially contested domain of space, from Earth's orbit to the Moon and beyond, according to a new podcast from the Special Competitive Studies Project (SCSP), a nonprofit and nonpartisan initiative with a goal of making recommendations to strengthen America's long-term competitiveness in AI.

At the recent AI + Space Summit hosted by SCSP, General Jay Raymond (U.S. Space Force, Ret.) joined SCSP's NatSecTech podcast host Jeanne Meserve to discuss the future of space as a warfighting domain. They explore how AI can improve space traffic management, surveillance, acquisition, and data fusion; the growing role of commercial partnerships; and the need for stronger norms, faster capabilities, and a technically skilled workforce.

#### Many Eyes in the Sky

Launching satellites or anything else is becoming more complicated because of the volume of objects in the Earth's orbit, said Gen. Raymond. "You have to make sure you don't launch something into something else," he noted. The increased number of satellites and other objects have made the world a more transparent place, as a lot of the current objects in space are intelligence surveillance reconnaissance satellites, he added.

In some cases, objects that appear to be space debris have been identified as something else because they maneuver in a defined way, Gen. Raymond said. Ideally, AI could be used to track debris and determine whether it is maneuvering, he said. The vast majority of people currently experience space through data or observations, said Gen. Raymond. Harnessing that data and applying AI to it can facilitate problem solving by speeding up analysis, he said.

#### Implications of AI

One of the greatest risks associated with AI and space is that adversaries of the United States will get ahead of us and use technology to their advantage, Gen. Raymond said. Although the original stated goal of the U.S. Space Force remains one of deterrence, it is important to improve AI literacy and stay aware of the potential need to be prepared to fight, if necessary, while working to maintain stability, he added.

However, deterrence related to space may occur in other domains, he noted. "If someone did something in space, you wouldn't have to respond in space," he said. The concept of integrated deterrence involves multiple domains and capabilities in partnership with allies, Gen. Raymond emphasized.

Visit [scsp.ai](https://scsp.ai) to learn more about the SCSP's AI + Space Summit and other ways in which AI is driving space industries.

#### Article Link

<https://about.newsusa.com/ais-evolving-role-in-space-strategy>

## Patent Trolls for Hire



### The New Threat to American Innovation: Patent Trolls for Hire

(NAPSI)—In local communities across America, the "next big idea" often takes shape in a garage, a small startup office or a community college lab. New American inventors and entrepreneurs are the backbone of our nation. They are responsible for turning bold ideas into products that create jobs and make life easier for all of us. They are often the lifeblood of local economies.

But in recent decades, a particular kind of legal threat has emerged that puts that engine of entrepreneurial innovation at risk. These lawsuits come from shell companies that are commonly known as patent trolls. Patent trolls don't invent things or make products but exist solely to pursue lawsuits related to patents they buy. Patent troll litigation costs U.S. firms an estimated \$29 billion annually in direct legal expenses, and approximately \$60 billion when accounting for lost firm value and diverted resources. Patent troll litigation surged 22% from 2023 to 2024 alone, making it a fast-growing issue for American business.

Patent trolls have been at work for decades. But now, in a new twist, patent trolls are being hired to file lawsuits against others in the industry. The aim isn't to defend a real invention, but to make it harder for rivals by driving up legal costs, scaring off customers, delaying product launches, or pushing for monetary settlements. This puts more pressure on the price of everyday technology products.

This legal warfare acts like a hidden tax on local innovation. Money that could be spent fueling research and development of promising new ideas instead gets diverted to paying legal bills. A product that could have shipped in spring slips to the fall—or launches with fewer features. Over time, those suits have a chilling effect on small-business innovations and growth, in communities throughout the US.

Economists and consumer advocates warn that these tactics could stifle growth in key industries like semiconductors, artificial intelligence and clean energy—fields that depend on fast-moving

innovation and open competition. Each time an inventor or startup is forced to settle or shut down, another potential breakthrough gets delayed or disappears entirely.

This troubling legal trend is not just hurting startups and small businesses. Patent trolls clog the courts with frivolous filings, overloading judges and regulators who could be spending their time on real cases. It's a drain on innovation and public resources.

The good news is that policymakers are beginning to push back. Over the past year, 15 governors—Republicans and Democrats alike—have signed new laws to curb abusive patent litigation. More than thirty U.S. states are now taking action to make it harder for shell companies to weaponize the legal system against innovators. In states like Massachusetts, lawmakers are even debating fresh measures to crack down on the rise of patent trolls that file lawsuits not to protect innovations, but to sabotage. Across the country, Americans are taking note. In a recent national poll on the topic, 90% of Americans agree that the U.S. must ensure a fair legal playing field so smaller businesses can innovate and compete without fear of costly, frivolous lawsuits. Nearly nine in ten are concerned that smaller companies would be harmed as larger companies benefit from patent troll abuse, and 82% worry about the impact on jobs at small, innovative companies.

The United States has always been defined by invention. But that only works when the system rewards creators, not manipulators. Patent trolls for hire may be an invisible problem to most Americans, but the costs are real; they show up in lost jobs, shuttered startups and innovations that never reach the market.

Innovation should be a race toward the best ideas. Instead, it's quickly becoming a race to the courthouse. It's time to ensure that our legal system serves those who build, not those who bully. Because when deep-pocketed corporations and hired patent trolls win, America's innovators and entrepreneurs lose.

## Innovating for the Planet



### Innovating for the Planet Through Environmental Education

(NAPSI)—Here's something students, parents and teachers in New York and New Jersey may be glad to learn: A group of experts has come up with a way to make environmental education easier for students to understand—and to act on.

This first-of-its-kind effort, called the Environmental Education Initiative (EEI), helps students engage in environment science, and make informed decisions that support healthy environments.

Powered by worldwide edtech leader Discovery Education, the Environmental Education Initiative supports civic engagement with standards-aligned

resources that explore contemporary topics in environmental studies.

#### Who is Involved?

Experts at Stanford University carefully reviewed a body of academic literature over 20 years to measure the effect of environmental education for K-12 students. Then the National Environmental Education Foundation, Nucor, Honeywell, Itron, LyondellBasell, Subaru of America, Inc., and Niagara Cares all helped create the Environmental Education Initiative alongside Discovery Education.

#### Why Environmental Education?

Research by the North American Association of Environmental Education reveals that environmental education helps students:

- improve overall academic performance
- enhance critical thinking skills
- develop personal growth and life-building skills

#### What Do the Students Learn?

Topics include energy, forestry, clean water and region-specific content through Excursion Across America, a series of five animated videos and ready-to-use activities introducing students to regional facts and environmental topics. The accompanying educator resources and activities showcase how students can have a positive effect on the planet.

#### Why NY and NJ?

The New York Board of Regents has made education on the environment a requirement for high school graduation. The Environmental Education Initiative curriculum, which can be integrated into existing courses or be a stand-alone course, teaches students about an array of topics related to the environment.

New Jersey integrates environmental education into K-12 across all subjects (Science, ELA, Math, Arts, etc.) through mandated standards (NJSLs) and resources from the NJDOE and the NJ Climate Education Hub. The state offers professional development workshops and webinars to help teachers integrate concepts including greenhouse effects, sea-level rise, and local effects, sample lessons, and support for districts, aiming to build climate literacy and resilience, preparing students for a clean economy, with initiatives also from groups such as This Is Planet Ed.

It all leads to a roadmap that helps schools take action, adapt, and educate on climate change.

#### How it Works:

**Standards-Based:** Resources align with NJ Student Learning Standards (NJSLs).

**Teacher-Focused:** Provides tools (guides, activities, supply kits) for teachers in elementary, middle, and high school.

**Community & Resilience:** Aims to connect learning to local impacts (like flooding) and build school sustainability.

#### How To Get It

All the standards-aligned resources are available to K-12 educators and students at [environmentaleducationinitiative.com](https://environmentaleducationinitiative.com).



## FAIRTax



wealth or assets held by the legal vehicle. These secretive structures serve as a curtain or firewall between the owner and their wealth, obscuring the owner's identity and helping them hide the true value of their wealth and, ultimately, pay less tax than they should.

This "secret" money is being invested all around the world. Investment managers are always looking for ways to maximize net returns. Minimizing tax liability is a significant part of maximizing net returns. Consequently, a lot of this "secret" money is invested in countries with the lowest tax rates.

U.S. taxpayers know that the FAIRtax eliminates the income tax/payroll tax and replaces it with a national retail sales tax. However, many don't fully comprehend the enormous positive impact the FAIRtax will have on the economy - especially in terms of attracting foreign investment to the United States.

So let's consider this scenario. The FAIRtax is the law of the land in the United States making the income tax rate zero. Meanwhile, the tax rate in Germany is 30%. That means that an investor could realize a 30% higher return if he makes his investment in the United States rather than in Germany. Under those conditions, where do you think a prudent investor is going to invest his money? It's a no-brainer.

The Tax Justice Network estimates that \$21 trillion to \$32 trillion in financial assets are sitting offshore in tax havens (estimates can vary due to the secrecy that pervades the tax haven system). They also estimate that \$427 billion in tax revenue is lost every year because money is sitting in these offshore accounts.

The influx of foreign capital invested in the United States will mean that more money will be available for businesses to hire more people, raise wages, purchase more equipment and become more productive allowing our economy to soar.

The Tax Justice Network explains how this is commonly done: one of the most common ways people hide their wealth in tax havens is by setting up a legal vehicle (like a corporation or trust) to hold their wealth or assets without disclosing information about their identity or about

For more information go to FAIRtax.org



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Join us at the Ocala Downtown Market (ODM) to purchase a diverse array of products from farmers, artisans, craftspeople, food trucks! A true destination location, ODM is set just blocks off the Ocala Downtown square, in a beautiful open-air Market Pavilion. Besides permanent roof cover the facility it also has large overhead fans, restrooms, a nearby ATM, and water fountains. The Market Pavilion is also available for rental.



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## Love is just a leash away!!

The HSMC is here for you and the animals who depend on us. We wanted to share that we will continue to be here to help unwanted pets during this pandemic while following all Marion County and Florida state guidelines.

As this situation is constantly changing, we ask that you continue to visit our Shelter using the safety guidelines in place.

### How can you help?

**Pet Food Bank:** Help stock our Pet Food Bank with pet food and supplies for people who cannot afford them due to job loss or other reasons. You can also bring donations to our Shelter daily from 10-6. Masks required please! If you need help keeping your pet with you during this time, our Happy Paws food program is here for you.

**Volunteer:** A small number of volunteers have returned to help in various departments. We are accepting volunteer applications but do not yet know when we will schedule orientations for new volunteers. Please contact us for more information about volunteering. We are currently working on a digital orientation.

**Opt to adopt:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization, there is no evidence that companion animals such as cats and dogs can spread the virus that causes COVID-19.

**Donate:** We know there is a lot of uncertainty right now but homeless and unwanted animals still need us. Donate to help the Humane Society of Marion County so we continue our lifesaving work and make them feel safe and loved.



Bilbie

Bilbie is a 14 weeks old male brought to the HSMC with her brother Wombat! We believe they could be Xolaitzcuinli, or Xolo, which is Mexican hairless dog breed.



Fuchsla is a 15 week old paralyzed kitten full of love.



Ninja is paralyzed in his hind legs but enjoys runs with his wheels.

Your donations make it possible to provide medical care, food and shelter to animals in need. On behalf of all the animals, thank you for caring.



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Donations to the Humane Society are tax-deductible. Check with your accountant for more information. No goods or services have been provided to the donor as a result of this gift.

FROM THE DESK OF  
**ATTORNEY GENERAL UTHMEIER**



**Attorney General Opinion: State Law Overrides Local Shopping Cart Ordinances**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**—Attorney General James Uthmeier issued an opinion concluding that state law expressly preempts municipalities from requiring shopping cart retention plans, approving or denying those plans, imposing penalties, or mandating shopping cart retention systems with the exception of local ordinances imposed between January 31, 2002 to June 30, 2002. This opinion was requested by Allan T. Weinthal, attorney for the town of Davie

**Attorney General Opinion: State Laws Requiring Racial Discrimination are Unconstitutional**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**—Attorney General James Uthmeier issued an opinion concluding that state laws requiring race-based state action are presumptively unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause and Article I, section 2, of Florida's Constitution.

**Attorney General James Uthmeier Leads Multistate Coalition Warning 'Climate Cartel' Ringleader, Ceres, to Stop Antitrust Violations**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**—Attorney

General James Uthmeier led a coalition of Attorneys General from Alaska, Georgia, Idaho, North Dakota, and South Dakota in issuing a warning letter to climate activist group Ceres over concerns that its coordinated actions violate State and Federal antitrust and consumer protection laws.

“Ceres—a ringleader of the “climate cartel”—is open about its notorious goals to achieve net-zero carbon emissions,” said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “The assault on American families and businesses through what Ceres calls a “Global World War” to achieve net zero must stop. Failure to do so will result in a multi-state barrage of anti-trust enforcement.”

The letter outlines concerns that Ceres has acted as a central coordinator for efforts designed to pressure financial institutions and corporations to steer capital away from certain investments. Ceres coordinates these efforts to pressure corporations by engaging with their stakeholders and shareholders. In one instance, Ceres went as far as participating in a plan to replace the entire board of ExxonMobil to send a message to other corporations of what could happen to them if they do not cooperate.

The letter goes on to explain that Ceres openly promotes efforts to “transform industries,” achieve “systemic changes,” and “change business practices.” The way Ceres goes about coordinating these efforts raises concerns of coordinated action among market participants, which constitutes unlawful collusion, a violation of antitrust

laws. In addition to concerns over antitrust violations, the letter explains that companies who do not comply with Ceres' unrealistic agenda risk facing claims of “greenwashing” which would be misleading to their potential customers. This could trigger violations of consumer protection laws.

The coalition has requested that Ceres provide an explanation as to how its behavior does not violate antitrust and consumer protection laws, along with supportive documentation.

**Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces 46 New Investigations, Subpoenas Smart & Safe Florida in Criminal Probe of Marijuana Petition Fraud**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**—Attorney General James Uthmeier today announced a major escalation in the Office of Statewide Prosecution's ongoing election fraud investigation, including the opening of 46 new criminal investigations and the issuance of four criminal subpoenas seeking records from Smart & Safe Florida and its contractors and subcontractors.

“Recently obtained documents show that Smart & Safe Florida knew about dozens of fraudsters turning in over 21,000 petitions and failed to inform law enforcement,” said **Attorney General James Uthmeier**. “Florida's Constitution is not for sale, and we will not allow a mega marijuana corporation to hijack our state's governing document.”

The Office of Statewide Prosecution (OSP) reviewed records showing that approximately 50 petition circulators

associated with Smart & Safe Florida were registered and actively collecting petitions on behalf of the organization supporting 25-01, Adult Personal Use of Marijuana. Those circulators submitted more than 21,600 petitions; of those, over 14,500 raised significant concerns, including mismatched signatures or other indicia of fraud, and were as a result invalidated by election officials. However, more concerning, approximately 7,100 petitions submitted by these fraudsters were verified as valid by Florida Supervisors of Elections.

During the past several months, nine petition circulators have been arrested or had warrants issued, with at least six more actively pending. OSP anticipates additional arrests in the coming weeks as several investigations near completion.

The four criminal subpoenas being issued will require Smart & Safe Florida, their contractors, and their subcontractors, to produce documents relating to the alleged fraud to determine whether criminal liability extends beyond individual circulators and into broader organizational conduct.

Statewide Prosecutor Brad McVay sent a formal letter to the Special Agent in Charge at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement outlining the scope of the investigation and the required records.

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FROM THE DESK OF

GOVERNOR DESANTIS



**GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS CELEBRATES FLORIDA'S \$485 MILLION INVESTMENT IN NURSING PROGRAMS**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.**— Governor Ron

DeSantis celebrated Florida's continued investment in high quality nursing programs with more than \$485 million awarded through the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) and the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers, and Learners through Incentives for Nursing Education (PIPELINE) programs since their inception in 2022. LINE and PIPELINE funding strengthen nursing programs across Florida by providing scholarships to students, supporting the recruitment of additional faculty, funding the purchase of equipment and enhancing simulation centers.

Governor DeSantis also awarded over \$20 million in LINE funding, \$14.5 million to state colleges and private postsecondary institutions and \$6 million to state universities. More than \$85 million has been awarded through the LINE program, with \$61.5 million to state colleges and private postsecondary institutions, and \$24 million to State University System (SUS) institutions. In addition, the PIPELINE program has awarded \$400 million, with \$240 million to state colleges and school districts, and \$160 million to SUS institutions.

"Today, I was proud to award more than \$20 million in LINE funding with \$14.5 million awarded to state colleges and private postsecondary institutions, as well as \$6 million to state universities," said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. "Florida is investing at scale to expand nursing programs and strengthen the healthcare workforce. Since launching the LINE and

PIPELINE programs in 2022, Florida has invested more than \$485 million in nursing education."

"Governor DeSantis has made nursing education a top priority in Florida, recognizing the critical role nurses play in keeping our communities healthy and safe," said **Commissioner of Education Anastasios Kamoutsas**. "Through strategic investments like the LINE and PIPELINE programs, we are supporting the next generation of nurses by expanding opportunity to high-quality education and ensuring Florida's healthcare workforce is prepared to meet growing demand."

"Florida's continued investment in nursing education demonstrates our state's unwavering commitment to strengthening the healthcare workforce and expanding opportunities for students across the State University System," said **SUS Chancellor Ray Rodrigues**. "The LINE and PIPELINE programs deliver real results and empower institutions to recruit talented faculty, enhance professional training, and graduate highly skilled nurses prepared to meet the needs of communities statewide."

**About LINE**

The LINE program is a competitive, dollar-for-dollar matching grant that supports partnerships between participating educational institutions and health care providers. The LINE program provides scholarships for students who meet residency requirements for tuition purposes, supports the recruitment of additional faculty, funds the purchase of equipment and enhances simulation centers to advance high-quality nursing education. For more information about LINE and a list of FDOE's awarded institutions, visit <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/funding-opportunities/linefund/>.

**About PIPELINE**

The PIPELINE program rewards performance and excellence among postsecondary nursing programs. PIPELINE provides funds based on the

number of nursing education program completers, first-time National Council of State Board of Nursing Licensing Examination passage rates, and excellence among nursing education programs based on the average of first-time passage rates above the national average.

**ICYMI: FIRST LADY CASEY DESANTIS JOINS FOX AND FRIENDS WEEKEND TO DISCUSS THE HEALTHY FLORIDA FIRST INITIATIVE**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – First Lady Casey DeSantis joined Fox and Friends Weekend to discuss the results of infant formula testing as part of the Healthy Florida First Initiative.

Through independent testing, conducted by certified laboratories, the Florida Department of Health collected 24 infant formulas across 7 brands, purchased from multiple locations, both online and in stores, and tested them for arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury, and pesticides.

"Today, I joined Fox and Friends Weekend to discuss the Healthy Florida First initiative," said **First Lady Casey DeSantis**. "In light of the Florida Department of Health's findings of toxins in infant formula, Florida is leading the charge to do independent testing of our food supply to help ensure it's not tainted with harmful chemicals. We are asking other states to join forces to utilize their assets to test products. Our goal is to hold companies accountable through testing and to provide transparency to the consumer. Ultimately, we would like products to be tested before they hit the market, which unfortunately, for various reasons, is not happening. We cannot allow food companies to prioritize profits over the health and well-being of the people, even if it's inadvertent. With support from our federal MAHA partners, now is the time to drive change—and as a cancer survivor and mother, I pray this can hopefully contribute to making Florida, and ultimately America, healthier."

This initiative examined infant formula, a product families rely on and trust. The testing results are intended to give parents clear, accessible information and ensure

accountability in products marketed to infants.

The full infant formula testing results are available at:

[ExposingFoodToxins.com](https://ExposingFoodToxins.com)

**GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS AND FIRST LADY CASEY DESANTIS ANNOUNCES MAYO CLINIC JACKSONVILLE WILL LAUNCH ONLY CARBON ION THERAPY PROGRAM IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.**—Governor Ron DeSantis joined First Lady Casey DeSantis and Mayo Clinic President and CEO Dr. Kent Thielen to announce that Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville is launching the first carbon ion therapy program in America and the only carbon ion therapy program in the Western Hemisphere.

"Our administration is committed to fighting cancer by making targeted investments in innovative therapies that have the potential to save lives," said **Governor Ron DeSantis**. "During my time as governor, we've increased funding for cancer research and treatment programs by more than 114 percent. The Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program has strengthened Florida's position as a national leader in cancer research and innovation. We're proud that Mayo Clinic chose Florida as the home for this groundbreaking initiative, and we look forward to seeing how these cutting-edge therapies give hope to patients fighting some of the most aggressive and treatment-resistant cancers."

In June 2025, Mayo Clinic opened the 228,000-square-foot Duan Family Building in Jacksonville to expand cancer treatment and research. The new facility will be uniquely designed to deliver both carbon ion therapy and proton therapy, including the ability to treat the same tumor with either approach for greater precision.

Florida continues to invest heavily in cancer research and treatment. Since 2019, Florida has invested more than \$1 billion, increasing cancer program funding by more than 114% and committing nearly \$218 million for cancer research in 2025 alone.

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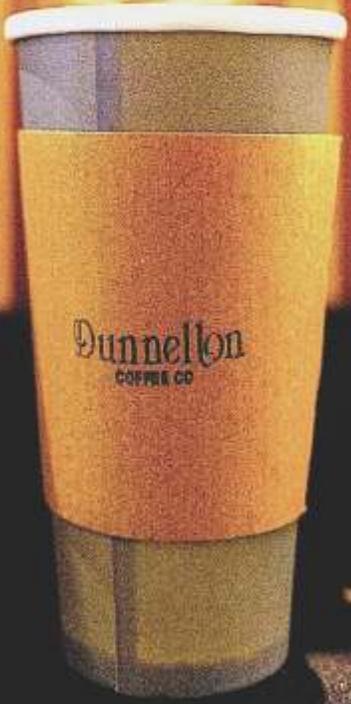


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