

Honoree

OCPS spokesman, Scott D. Howat, named as honoree. See page 6A.



Sports

Apopka is 2-0 after second shutout of the season See page 1B.



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Volume 102 Number 36

Friday, September 6, 2024 / 50 cents

City Council tables first hearing for tentative millage rate, FY2025 budget

By Teresa Sargeant Apopka Chief Staff

After listening to residents asking for a reconsideration in increasing the water and reclaimed water rates, the Apopka City Council tabled the first hearing of the tentative millage rate of 4.6876 and the tentative fiscal year 2025 city budget and its adjustments until later this month.

The tentative millage rate of 4.6876 is a 22.12 percent increase over the rollback rate of 3.8384. A millage rate of 4.6876 generates approximately \$32,079,073 in property tax revenues for the fiscal year 2025 budget, which begins October 1. Fiscal year 2024 ends September 30. The tentative FY2025 budget is \$100,470,450.

Originally, the first hearing of the tentative budget hearing and millage rate was scheduled for Wednesday, September 4. However, the City Council voted to reschedule that meeting for Wednesday, September 18, at 6 p.m. in the Apopka City Hall Council Chamber.

The City Council also voted to move the final millage rate and budget hearing to Wednesday, September 25, at 6 p.m., also to take place in the Apopka City Hall Council Chamber.

At the preceding City Council meeting, which was held on Wednesday, September 4, Finance Director Blanche Sherman said the originally proposed water rate increase

See CITY Page 8A

Police department is accepting donated bicycles for students

By Teresa Sargeant Apopka Chief Staff

The Apopka Police Department is seeking donated bicycles for distribution to students who need transportation to and from school as an alternative to bus rides or walking long distances in possibly harsh weather.

Now in its third year, the Fill the Bike Rack program was launched by Apopka Police Officer Justin Lemieux when he was in his final year as school resource officer (SRO) at Apopka Memorial Middle School. He's currently an SRO at Rock Springs Elementary School.

"I think that the Apopka Police Department as a whole really has been very supportive and always encourages the officers to go out and to be very involved with the community," Lemieux said. "In all my years in law enforcement, it was something that I tried to focus on as well. But it makes it that much easier when you have the support from the (police) chief (Michael McKinley) and your staff to be able to do these projects and go out and to really try to make a difference in people's lives."

In the program's first year at Apopka Memorial Middle School, the

program collected about a dozen bikes. The following year, at Rock Springs Elementary, close to 30 bikes were collected.

So far this year, Lemieux has had three donors call already who have each committed to donating \$500, which could allow the APD to purchase between six and eight bicycles, Lemieux said.

The program accepts used bicycles as long as they're not in need of any major repairs. Accepted include BMX style bikes, mountain bikes, beach cruisers, and multiple geared bicycles.

"I would call it, next to new conditions," Lemieux

said. "These are still kids, so we don't want to hand them over any rust buckets or anything that needs some major work because they may just end up on the side of somebody's garage to be honest, and never ridden at all."

As well, the program accepts monetary donations but only as gift cards, not cash.

"Cash is a whole other beast in itself because it has to get approvals through a lot of different channels, you know, it's got to get through the chain, essentially. And there's a lot of paperwork

See BICYCLES Page 3A

City Council approves energy choice initiative

On Wednesday, August 21, the Apopka City Council unanimously passed Ordinance No. 3070, better known as the "Energy Choice Ordinance," mandating the installation of natural gas infrastructure in future real estate developments.

Specifically, the ordinance establishes a requirement for developers to include natural gas installation in all new subdivision developments of five lots or more.

With the passage of this ordinance, residents will now benefit from access to a popular, clean and cost-effective energy choice, granting them the ability to choose the energy source that best suits their personal needs and budget.

"This is fantastic news for the residents of Apopka," Brent E. Haywood, general manager and CEO of Lake Apopka Natural Gas District, said in a press release.

"For too long, communities have been deprived of basic energy choice in developments that limited homebuyers to an all-electric model, but the passage of

See ENERGY Page 5A



Miller's Ale House at the Apopka City Center will have its grand opening on Monday, September 9, nine months after the restaurant broke ground. Wisdom Development Group developed the 6,700 sq. ft. building.

Miller's Ale House to open doors nine months after its groundbreaking

By Teresa Sargeant Apopka Chief Staff

Only nine months after breaking ground at the Apopka City Center, Miller's Ale House will open its first Apopka location, which will add 115 new jobs to the local economy.

The grand opening will take place Monday, September 9, 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Miller's Ale House-Apopka, 505 E. Main St., Apopka.

Wisdom Development Group, of Peoria, Ill., developed the 6,700-square foot restaurant at the corner of South McGee Avenue and U.S. Highway 441/Main Street.

Wisdom Development Group has developed several centers, commercial parks and freestanding restaurants including multiple Miller's Ale House locations across Central Florida.

"Miller's Ale House is committed to making a positive impact in the communities we serve. As part of our opening, we are thrilled to announce that we will be adding 115 new jobs to the local economy," Kimberly Morales, Miller's Ale House senior director of brand marketing, said in an email to *The Apopka Chief*. "We believe this will provide valuable opportunities and contribute to the growth

See MILLER'S Page 3A

Woman honored for 50 years of membership in club



Dena Morrow (l) of the Apopka Woman's Club presents a certificate, flowers, and pin to Stella Swanberg (r), commemorating her 50 years of membership in the club.

The GFWC Apopka Woman's Club presented Stella Swanberg her 50-year pin of membership in the club.

Swanberg represents the golden-era ladies who have served the club with success, great leadership, and supportive nature.

Second Vice president Charlotte White asked Dena Morrow, lifetime friend of Swanberg, to present the award of pin, flowers, certificate, and words of gratitude for her years of service.

Morrow herself is a long-term member who is well known for committed service as well. Every year, Morrow served in the foliage area of the Apopka Art and Foliage Festival, held every April.

Swanberg was president when the Kit Land Nelson Park gazebo was built using Woman's Club funds. A plaque was mounted in the gazebo noting the structure's creation.

This week Section A Opinion..... 2A Dining & Ent..... 6A Worship ..... 9A Bus. Review ..... 10A Section B Sports ..... 1B Kapers ..... 5B Legal ads..... 6-7B Classified..... 8-10B Service Dir. .... 10B Find Public Notices Online at: TheApopkaChief.com/public-notices OR FloridaPublicNotices.com

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Apopka Event of the Week

The Apopka Fire Department and Apopka Police Department invite the community to attend this year's 9/11 Memorial Ceremony which will begin at 8:30 a.m., on Wednesday, September 11, on the front steps of Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main St. The flag will be lowered to half-staff.

Quotable

Between fiscal years 2021-2024, enrollment in Associate of Science in Nursing programs at Florida College System institutions receiving LINE funding surged by 25 percent, rising from 12,456 to 15,636 students.  
Gov. DeSantis is successful in increasing funding of nursing programs

Opinion

The Apopka Chief  
A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

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Our position

Aggressive funding increases nursing graduation rates

Gov. Ron DeSantis highlighted Florida's progress in strengthening and expanding the nursing workforce through initiatives that reward collaboration and performance in nursing education.

The governor emphasized how Florida is reducing nursing shortages September 3 at Daytona State College. He highlighted the achievements of the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers and Learners through Incentives for Nursing Education, or PIPELINE Fund and the Linking Industry to Nursing Education, or LINE Fund.

"Florida is addressing the nationwide demand for qualified nurses through smart investments in workforce and nursing education," DeSantis said. "These two programs are producing results, which is why I will support their full renewal in the upcoming fiscal year."

As part of his goal to make Florida the top state for workforce education by 2030, DeSantis recently approved \$130 million for the PIPELINE and LINE nursing programs in the Focus on Florida's Future Budget.

The new funding, added to the \$125 million allocated for fiscal year 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, raises the total investment to \$380 million. Since fiscal year 2022-2023, Daytona State College has received over \$9 million through these programs.

"Through Governor DeSantis' leadership and the support of the Florida legislature, our universities are partnering with the private sector to receive mission critical resources needed to graduate more high-quality nurses than ever before," Chancellor of the State University System of Florida Ray Rodriguez said. "With the continuation of the LINE and PIPELINE investments, nursing programs will continue to expand and fill a critical workforce need for our state."

In 2023-2024, a record 7,498 students completed nursing programs, the highest number in three

years, according to the governor's office.

"Thanks to Governor DeSantis' leadership, Florida's investment in high quality nursing programs is paying off," Florida Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz, Jr. said. "The PIPELINE and LINE programs are strong incentives for public-private partnership and because of them, we are seeing record numbers of enrollees and completers."

Between fiscal years 2021-2024, enrollment in Associate of Science in Nursing programs at Florida College System institutions receiving LINE funding surged by 25 percent, rising from 12,456 to 15,636 students.

Additionally, the completion rate for Associate of Science in Nursing programs at these colleges increased by 24 percent.

Since fiscal year 2022-2023, Florida has invested \$46 million annually in state universities to boost nursing education through the PIPELINE and LINE programs. These investments have increased the capacity of State University System nursing programs, resulting in a record 1,800 nursing graduates.

Established in 2022, the LINE program offers competitive grants to state universities, school districts, Florida College System institutions, and independent non-profit colleges and universities, providing matching funds to those that partner with healthcare providers.

The PIPELINE fund recognizes and rewards exceptional performance among nursing education programs at state universities, school district postsecondary technical career centers, and Florida College System institutions that offer licensed practical nurse programs.

The application process for LINE funds is now open. Interested institutions must submit a notice of intent by Sept. 10.



District 7 schools renewed by tax \$\$

With a district as large as OCPS, there are many strains on our budget. Besides operational costs and the funding of salaries for our 25,000 employees, constructing and maintaining our 200+ facilities is next in line.

In this year's budget, capital projects account for \$1.9 billion, coming in just behind the general fund at \$2.7 billion. This capital budget not only pays for the new schools that have to be built to keep up with the fast growth in our area, but it pays to maintain all of our buildings which we call our capital renewal program.

As you can imagine, it's quite a job keeping all of our buildings not only looking nice but all the systems in working order. If you are a homeowner, you

Orange County School Board, District 7



Melissa Byrd

know what it's like. There is always something that needs replacing or repairs in your home.

I recently had my District 7 facilities update and each time I do, I'm always blown away by the massive system that is in place to track the enormous number of projects that are always going on district-wide to maintain our buildings.

Some of the projects happening in Apopka not only include the planning

of four new schools to be built over the next 10 years but there are numerous smaller projects happening right now or are in design.

One of those projects includes a large multi-system renewal project at Apopka High School that is underway totaling \$19 million as well as exterior painting that is in the pre-construction phase totaling close to a million dollars.

Wekiva High School will be undergoing an HVAC renovation in the near future with a cost of over \$5 million. Piedmont Lakes Middle School is currently undergoing a complete HVAC system replacement for \$15 million.

There are several other projects either underway or

See BYRD Page 4A

Union workers protected from abuse

By Andrew Powell  
The Center Square

Workers in the Sunshine State have more protection from union abuse than most states in the U.S., according to a new report by the Commonwealth Foundation.

The report, titled The Battle for Worker Freedom: Grading State Public Sector Labor Laws, notes Florida has set the gold standard for pro-worker, pro-taxpayer public sector labor reform.

According to the report's key findings, the four largest unions in the U.S. are set to lose \$106.8 mil-

lion annually in dues and fees after hundreds of thousands of union members drop their membership.

The American Federation of Teachers, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, National Education Association, and Service Employees International Union have lost 320,421 members since 2018 - 100,000 of those have dropped their memberships since 2022.

The report states because of this, unions have been "engaging in aggressive campaigns" to push for legislation changes in their

respective states. Florida, however, has bucked this trend and gone from a "C" grade to an "A" grade.

David Osborne, co-author of the report and Senior Labor Policy Fellow at the Commonwealth Foundation, said in a news release that he applauds states that advocate for worker rights and encourages others to do the same.

"We applaud those states that have stepped up to defend the rights of their workers from public sector union abuses, and we urge

See Union Page 4A

This Week In God's Word

Honor the Lord with your wealth,  
with the firstfruits of all your crops.  
Proverbs 3:9

ema Says

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you decide to be  
yourself.

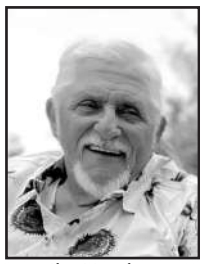
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Voting is God-given gift to be used in order to keep our nation free

"The God who gave us life, gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"

Unfortunately, if Thomas Jefferson asked that question today, he probably would be ridiculed and run down by every left-wing media outlet, and quite possibly be charged with "hate speech." Our populace has been so brainwashed by the constant barrage of anti-



Ike Hayden

GOD programs, emotional instability, and vitriolic political rhetoric with ungodly policies and practices, we are among the most confused people in the world.

One of our greatest al-

lies, Israel, and the only nation with a Democratic government in the Mideast is fighting for their very existence. We have a crucial economic crisis. We have a Southern border that is gushing illegal aliens into our nation, many of whom are from nations that hate us, and desire to see our demise. And, our Commander-in-Chief is on vacation!

His Second-in-Command is running back and forth trying to stay a step ahead of who she is. Never in the history of our won-

derful nation has our helm ever been left so abandoned! Those we have hired to steady our course through turbulent, and trying times have shirked their duties, and left the commitment they took an oath to fulfill. It seems the oath they swore, with their hand on the Word of GOD did not affect their ungodly behavior, or their lack of commitment.

It is not hard to understand. When your belief is in your lies about your accomplishments, and

you have removed GOD from being recognized as the Creator, and the very Founder of our nation, it is a very small step to replace the Creator with part of the world that states, (emphatically) ME FIRST!

Our voting system has been completely radicalized and made untrustworthy by politicians using unscrupulous, and devious means. Now it seems we need poll watchers to watch poll workers to keep everything on the level. Our government is run-

ning amok, and our Founding Fathers would be absolutely stunned to see how the government they set up has been bastardized into the monster it is today. They would not even recognize it.

The ghosts of those from all the battlefields we have ever fought on all over the world, keeping our form of government (self-governing) safe and free from what is happening now, are shaking their

See HAYDEN Page 4A



# Miller's: Restaurant will give donation to OCPS Foundation

Continued from page 1A

and prosperity of Apopka.”

The first 50 guests will receive a free menu item every month for a year with two guests getting a \$500 gift card.

“This event is open to the public as we will be giving away \$140 worth of Miller’s menu items to the first 50 guests,” Morales said.

Also at the grand opening, Miller’s Ale House will make a presentation to Orange County Public Schools Foundation “as we have worked with them on other charitable drives and want to support what they are doing for students, teachers and staff across Orange County,” Morales

said.

This will be the second time Miller’s has supported a local nonprofit at the grand opening.

General manager Brant Germain will lead the Miller’s Ale House–Apopka employees. Germain has been with Miller’s for over five years and is bringing his restaurant management expertise from the Winter Park restaurant to Apopka.

Miller’s Ale House now joins other businesses at the Apopka City Center including Highland Manor (Dubsread Catering), the 118-room Hilton Garden Inn, Winn-Dixie. The Apopka City Center is a 35-acre mixed-use development located at U.S. Highway 441/S.R. 436.

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# Bicycles: Church donated seven bikes

Continued from page 1A

involved with that. So, gift cards are a much better option,” he said.

Fill the Bike Rack won’t end as long as donors will give to the initiative.

“Well, I would say this: As long as the work keeps getting out, I mean, we’ll never shut it down, so it’s always available at any time,” Lemieux said. “Again, I’ve had a lot of donors ask me if can we do this next week, can you do this the week after? My

answer is always, ‘Yeah, well, we could do this in March, we could do this in April, we could do this in February.’ If someone is out there and they’re willing to donate a bike or two, whatever the case may be, then the door is always open.”

The Park Avenue Worship Center recently donated seven bicycles to Fill the Bike Rack.

“We have been looking for ways to help in the community. We thought it’d be a good way to help the community by helping its schools,” said

Pastor Ricky Faircloth.


Pastor Ricky Faircloth said his wife Kristi Faircloth saw the post about the program on the Apopka Police Department’s Facebook page and informed him about it.

For more information about Fill the Bike Rack, contact Lemieux at [jlemieux@apopka.net](mailto:jlemieux@apopka.net).

Apopka Police Department will also provide a free lock and bike helmet.

### Wekiwa Springs Baptist Church

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## Budget needs more public input

Editor:

The city is blessed with an outstanding and dedicated staff. To meet Apopka taxpayer needs, each department head must have the right number of qualified staff, equipment, supplies and materials to be successful.

After sitting through the last two years of budget workshops, I am very disappointed with the process. Commissioners receiving the budgets hours before the first workshop, with limited taxpayer access, does not make for adequate time for analysis or opportunity for input into preparing a quality budget.

All budgets should be needs-based. Monthly budget and financial department head reviews have not and are not conducted by Apopka.

In business, monthly financial review meetings are held with each department head requiring an explanation for any budget line item plus or minus 10 percent. Most importantly, what is the department head's action plan to bring into line basic accountability.

The current year's budget is flawed as exem-

plified by our lack of infrastructure, condition of our roads and sidewalks, failure to spend CRA funds, continued staff turnover, high proposed millage, significant increase in public utility rates and the necessity at every city council meeting to move cash to cover a flawed budget.

After requesting the mayor and commissioners to ask each department head if the budget they presented represented everything they needed in staff, supplies, material and equipment, not one of them did.

When I asked this question at each of the workshops, only three department heads answered affirmatively.

This is not acceptable. We deserve better.

We must affirmatively address the windows for Fire Station #6 before installation, as the 6 year-old Station 5 windows already require replacements. Station 6 is using the same specifications.

With regard to the Camp Wewa pool, what do Apopka and Wekiva High Schools need: 4, 6, or 8 lanes? What meets ADA compliance? What has

been done elsewhere first? Paying \$75K to design a pool is a waste of time and cash.

We should go to \$64K now for APD. Why wait for another 30-90 days for another budget adjustment so that we can remain competitive in the hunt for qualified candidates?

We must more effectively address our infrastructure. We cannot continue to operate as we have. By the way, the Golden Gem pond exemplifies Apopka's failure to plan, engineer, monitor and act timely.

Not allowing taxpayer input or questions until after the new proposed rate is unforgivable and forgetting who put you into your seat. You and your department heads work for us. We must have an opportunity for input before you finalize how you spend our cash.

Again, *did not hear any one of you ask* each department head to affirm that this proposed budget will provide them with the tools they require to meet taxpayer needs.

Rod Olsen  
Apopka

## Byrd: Sales tax revenue is important

*Continued from page 2A*

in the preconstruction and design phase throughout Apopka at Apopka Elementary, Dream Lake Elementary, Lakeville Elementary, Rock Springs Elementary, Wolf Lake Elementary and Middle, Phillis Wheatley Elementary and Zellwood Elementary.

These projects include painting, carpet replacement, electrical work, chiller replacements and intercom repairs. The total cost for current capital renewal projects in District 7 is nearly \$200 million.

That is just one of seven districts across the county and this is only renewal

projects, not new construction. I want to share this to demonstrate where your tax dollars are going, specifically your half-penny sales tax which is up for renewal this November.

Revenues from the half-penny sales tax have funded 100 percent of the OCPS capital renewal program since 2014. It has also funded the replacement of 136 school buildings district-wide since it was first passed by voters in 2002 including several schools in Apopka.

It's important to remember that our capital budget is not funded by the state. This part of the budget is funded locally by im-

pact fees, property taxes and sales taxes. It is up to us here in Orange County to decide what kind of schools we want our children to attend.

So far, we have done a really good job of prioritizing new, safe buildings. In fact, the average age of our schools is 12 years. That is really unheard of for most public school districts. Before the first sales tax approval in 2002, the average age was 32 years.

Thank you to all of the voters of Orange County who continue to support your local public schools and the health, safety and well-being of your community's children.

## Union: Workers can leave any time

*Continued from page 2A*

every other state to do the same," Osborne said.

Gov. Ron DeSantis enacted Chapter 2023-35, which promotes union accountability by requiring them to inform workers of their rights as well as running for reelection.

It also saves taxpayer funds, as unions will no longer be able to collect dues and fees through the taxpayer-funded public

payroll system.

Unions in Florida are also required to stand for reelection when membership drops below 60 percent. Union executives are prohibited from supporting a union financially, and Floridians can leave their union membership at any time. This gives the power back to the workers rather than the union executives.

The report notes Florida's approach to unions was the most aggressive in

the nation, namely the complete prohibition of dues and fees collection through public payrolls. The only exception is public safety unions which represent law enforcement, firefighters, and corrections officers.

Iowa, Mississippi, West Virginia, and Wisconsin also all got an "A" grade, while California, Illinois, Maryland, Oregon, and Washington all got an "F" grade.

## Hayden: Your vote is your responsibility

*Continued from page 2A*

heads in disbelief. What they died for means so little today.

When we, as citizens of the greatest nation on Earth, neglect our solemn responsibility to vote for those who are sworn to stand for our views, our governmental representatives will use the power we have given them (by no vote) to enrich themselves.

Remember, there are many in our midst who hate the United States of America, and they are motivated to the ruination of the USA.

Are we so involved with ourselves that we are not willing to take one or two hours to go to our polling place to make America the "Shining Light" as an example of Democracy as governed by, We the People? If that is the truth, we deserve exactly what we

get.

Voting is not a right given by our Constitution, but by the state you live in. It IS a responsibility, and your commitment to it should be rock solid. The one opportunity to make a difference in how YOUR nation is governed into the future IS YOUR VOTE.

Please get out and VOTE and take your neighbor with you.

## Ask Rusty: Can my wife receive benefits

**Dear Rusty:**

This is a matter that I find particularly irksome. My wife – a retired teacher – was told that, should I pre-decease her, she is not eligible to get survivor benefits from my Social Security payments. I'm sure there is some arcane, bureaucratic justification for this, but I think it unconscionable. Is this true and if so, what sort of major miracle would be required to alter that? Signed: Disgruntled in Texas

**Dear Disgruntled:**

If your wife was a teacher in a school district (which includes all Texas school districts) that exempted her from paying into Social Security, then any Social Security surviving spouse benefit she becomes entitled to from you will be affected by a provision called the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The GPO will reduce her Social Security survivor benefit by two-thirds (67 percent)

of the amount of her (non-covered) teacher's pension, which can (and often does) eliminate her surviving spouse benefit. The GPO affects teachers in about 15 states who have opted not to participate in Social Security.

For information, this is similar to what happens to a spouse who has also earned a Social Security retirement benefit – their survivor benefit is offset by their Social Security retirement benefit, and only the excess (if any) is paid. The GPO is actually a bit more generous, in that your wife's survivor benefit is only offset by 2/3rds of her non-covered teacher's pension, whereas the offset is 100 percent for other surviving spouses who have earned SS retirement benefits as well. This is a provision that has been law since 1977, affecting all those who have a pension earned without contributing to Social Security. Its premise was to better equalize the

way SS benefits are paid to everyone.

How can that be altered? Well, the only way is by Congress changing Social Security law. There have been numerous attempts to change the GPO law over the years, none of which have been successful. Indeed, there is a proposed law – H.R. 82 – The Social Security Fairness Act – which was introduced in Congress last year. That proposal, to eliminate the GPO (and a sister provision called the Windfall Elimination Provision), has essentially made little Congressional progress, short of a few committee hearings, and the outlook for passage at this point is about zero.

I'm afraid I can't be optimistic that the GPO will be repealed, as Congress is more keenly focused on resolving Social Security's looming solvency issue, set to come to a head in less than a decade.



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The Apopka Chief is published every Friday and entered as Periodicals, postage paid at Apopka Post Office, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. The Apopka Chief newspaper is published by Foliage Enterprises, Inc., every Friday at 400 North Park Avenue, Apopka, Fla., 32712-3417. An annual subscription is \$25 in Orange County and \$30 outside Orange County. Phone 407-886-2777. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Apopka Chief, P.O. Box 880, Apopka, Fla., 32704-0880.

The Apopka Chief is a consistent award-winning community weekly newspaper and a member of the Florida Press Association. The newspaper won the group's award as its best newspaper in 1982, 1987, and 1988, the only three-time winner. Letters to the editor are welcome, but must be signed and include a daytime telephone number, address, or email address for verification. Management reserves the right to edit letters.

www.theapokkachief.com, news@theapokkachief.com



#### City of Apopka Telephone Numbers

City Hall .....	407-703-1700
Mayor's Office .....	407-703-1701
City Administrator .....	407-703-1649
City Clerk .....	407-703-1704
Community Devel. ....	407-703-1712
Code Enforcement .....	407-703-1738
Finance Dept. ....	407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.).....	407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept. ....	407-703-1741
Police Chief .....	407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.).....	407-703-1771
Job Line .....	407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.....	407-703-1731
Street Maintenance .....	407-703-1731
Utility Billing .....	407-703-1727
Medical, fire emergency.....	911
The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. <b>www.apopka.net</b>	

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County Mayor .....	407-836-7370
County Commission.....	407-836-7350
County Attorney .....	407-836-7320
Clerk of the Court.....	407-836-2065
Elections Supervisor.....	407-836-2070
Fire/Rescue .....	407-836-3111
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Health Dept. ....	407-836-2600
Hunting/Fishing Lic .....	888-347-4356
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#### Other Area Numbers of Note

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Rick Scott (Rep.) .....	202-224-5274
Marco Rubio (Rep.).....	407-254-2573
<b>U.S. Representative</b>	
Daniel Webster (Dist. 11).....	352-241-9220
<b>State Representatives</b>	
Doug Bankson .....	407-476-6787
Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45).....	unknown
<b>State Senators</b>	
Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11) .....	407-297-2045
<b>Orange County Commissioner</b>	
Christine Moore .....	407-836-7350
<b>Orange County Public Schools</b>	
Pupil assignment.....	407-317-3233
Bus routes.....	407-317-3800
Superintendent.....	407-317-3200
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The Apopka Chief .....	407-886-2777
Museum of the Apopkans.....	407-703-1707
Chamber of Commerce.....	407-886-1441



# Energy: Local families have been losing average of \$127M in annual fuel costs

Continued from page 1A

this ordinance will finally return energy choice to the people of Apopka.

“Today, the city of Apopka has taken a significant step toward delivering residents energy choice, and I am hopeful that our neighboring municipalities will soon realize this critical need for energy choice by following Apopka’s lead.”

In Apopka, Clermont, Winter Garden, and surrounding communities

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Lake Apopka Natural Gas District is working with neighboring municipalities to implement similar ordinances and increase energy choice for its customers across Central Florida.

Lake Apopka Natural Gas District provides natural gas service in Apopka, Winter Garden, Clermont and surrounding communities.

For more information about energy choice, visit [langd.org](http://langd.org).

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**REGAL**

Fri., Sept. 6, 2024 thru Sun., Sept. 8, 2024

**BEETLEJUICE**  
**BEETLEJUICE** (PG-13)  
10:10A; 11:10A, 12:10;  
1:10; 2:10; 4:10; 5:00;  
6:00; 7:00; 8:00; 9:50;  
10:40  
**DEADPOOL & WOLVERINE** (R) 10:00A;  
1:00; 4:00; 7:10; 10:10  
**IT ENDS WITH US** (PG-13)  
10:20A; 1:20; 4:20; 7:20; 10:20  
**ALIEN: ROMULUS** (R)  
10:50A; 1:50; 4:50; 7:40; 10:30  
**REAGAN** (PG-13) 11:30;  
3:00; 6:30; 9:40  
**AFRAID** (PG-13) 3:40; 10:00

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## Duke Energy Foundation awards city \$20,000 grant for economic development

The city of Apopka has been awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation that will support the development of a city-wide strategic plan “VisionApopka: Building Tomorrow Together,” which aims to guide the city’s growth and development.

The grant, applied for by the Economic Development Department in June 2024, will be used to engage a consultant to craft a comprehensive strategic plan. The city will follow standard procurement procedures to select a qualified consultant, who will then work closely with the community to ensure the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of Apopka’s residents.

Economic Development Director Michelle Boylan expressed her appreciation for the grant.

“The city of Apopka is grateful to the Duke Energy Foundation for their generous grant, which is crucial in developing a strategic plan to shape our city’s future,” she said in a Tuesday, September 3, news release from the city of Apopka. “This support will

help us manage our growth effectively, promoting sustainable development and enhancing the quality of life for our residents. With this plan, we look forward to fostering economic vitality and a strong community, paving the way for a prosperous future for Apopka.”

Mayor Bryan Nelson also shared his enthusiasm about the grant.

“This grant from the Duke Energy Foundation represents a significant step forward for Apopka. VisionApopka will be a cornerstone in how we envision and prepare for the future,” he said in the news release. “We are excited about the collaborative process ahead and are committed to working with our community to build a robust and sustainable framework for growth.”

The VisionApopka project will actively involve community members in the planning process through a series of workshops, surveys, and public forums. This inclusive approach ensures that the strategic plan aligns with the vision and priorities of Apopka’s diverse population.

The city of Apopka’s \$20,000 grant allocation comes from the Duke Energy Foundation’s \$200,000 in grants that would support 15 economic development organizations working to draw business to the state of Florida and boost its economy, according to Duke Energy Foundation’s August 29 press release.

“Companies often consider establishing, expanding or relocating their operations to Florida because of the state’s economic strength,” Melissa Seixas, Duke Energy Florida state president, was quoted as saying in the Duke Energy Foundation press release. “It’s a privilege to support innovative strategies that will build on that success and help ensure our economy continues to grow and thrive for generations to come.”

For more information about VisionApopka and how to get involved, visit [Apopka.gov/EconomicDevelopment](http://Apopka.gov/EconomicDevelopment) or contact the Economic Development Department at [EconomicDevelopment@apopka.net](mailto:EconomicDevelopment@apopka.net).

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## OCPS spokesman named as honoree

Scott D. Howat, Orange County Public Schools chief communications officer, was named an honoree of PRNEWS’s 2024 People of the Year, according to a Monday, August 26, news release from PRNEWS.

Each year, a group is selected to represent the best and brightest leaders and up and comers in the

communications industry. This year’s nominees include professionals from various industries and companies including Subway, Lockheed Martin, USPS, and Zumba Fitness.

Honorees will be celebrated at the Platinum Awards Gala on Tuesday, October 8 at The Light-house in New York, N.Y.



Scott D. Howat

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**SUDOKU ANSWERS**  
**PUZZLE CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 2B**

3	2	4	7	6	9	1	8	5
6	9	8	1	5	3	7	4	2
7	5	1	4	8	2	9	3	6
9	1	5	6	3	4	8	2	7
4	6	2	8	1	7	5	9	3
8	7	3	9	2	5	6	1	4
2	8	6	5	4	1	3	7	9
5	3	7	2	9	8	4	6	1
1	4	9	3	7	6	2	5	8

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**Puzzle Solution**

			M	A	D	M	A	N			E	D	D		
	A	T	O	N	A	B	L	E			C	L	A	N	
	P	R	O	S	T	A	T	E			C	A	E	C	A
		O	I	D	I	A					O	N	C	E	
S	T	P								S	N	O	T		
S	H	O	D							A	T	E			
R	E	L	O	C	A	T	E			M	O				
	M	I	C	H	A	E	L	J	O	R	D	A	N		
					A	H		F	A	S	T	E	N	E	D
				P	R	E						C	A	G	E
			C	O	L	D							G	A	B
	G	A	G	E						A	B	O	R	T	
P	A	R	E	S				P	E	R	S	O	N	A	E
C	L	A	Y					S	A	N	C	T	U	M	S
T	A	T						T	R	A	I	T	S		

**The Crossword Puzzle is found on page 2B**



# Main Street Apopka is inaugural partner for food exhibition program

Florida Humanities, in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), has launched a new exhibition partnership program, "Exhibition Starter Kit: FOOD" and selected Main Street Apopka as an inaugural recipient, according to an August 22 press release from Main Street Apopka.

In total, eight nonprofit organizations received funding from Florida Humanities this past June to create exhibitions that capture and share local narratives on food, utilizing templated resources as well as virtual and in-person support from the Smithsonian Institution.

All sites have received initial funding of \$5,000 from Florida Humanities to work with the Smithsonian over the next year to create their exhibition script, collect physical objects such as artifacts and images to accompany their exhibition, and design an exhibition floor plan. Exhibitions will then be fabricated and installed at each venue in early 2026 with additional support provided by Florida Humanities.

Exhibition Starter Kits provide

a Smithsonian-developed framework to guide selected venues through the development of local humanities-based exhibitions using their own collections and cultural content. While working on their exhibition project, funded venues will receive guidance from the Smithsonian on how to design and develop compelling exhibitions that highlight their local history and culture through the lens of food. By incorporating local elements directly into the exhibition, each installation will be unique while broadly addressing the same national themes curated by the Smithsonian.

"This project, entitled 'Home-grown: Exploring the Foods that Define Us,' is a highlight of the Main Street Apopka program because food brings people together," Caitlin Kasheta, executive director of Main Street Apopka, was quoted as saying in the press release. "Apopka is a rich blend of cultures, ages, and lifestyles, and this project will provide a unique, hands-on platform for our community to be celebrated ... As part of this celebration, this exhibit will be displayed in English and Spanish. We have partnered with the Apopka Historical So-

ciety to create this exhibit, connecting old-Apopka to new-Apopka, and we are thrilled to be working with such a dynamic team of historians, writers, designers, and educators."

"Exhibition Starter Kits give small museums a great opportunity to use a Smithsonian framework that gives national context to local exhibitions," Carol Harsh, director of the Smithsonian Institution Museum on Main Street program, was quoted as saying in the press release. "Florida Humanities contributes state-specific resources and scholarship, which adds an even richer training opportunity for host organizations to bring out the unique local flavors of each community."

Main Street Apopka is a nonprofit organization focused on strengthening the economic foundation for downtown Apopka through historic preservation, engaging partnerships, and empowering our people. This is done using the nationally recognized Main Street approach, focusing on design, promotion, economic vitality, and organization.

# Baptist church to host a prayer week

Wekiwa Springs Baptist Church would like to invite the community to the church for prayer week Wednesday through Friday, September 25-27, 4-8p.m.

During prayer week, the church and community will seek God's blessing on their lives. Anyone who has a need may join the church for this special prayer time.

On Sunday, September 30, at 10 a.m., join Wekiwa Springs Baptist Church for some great music from the group The Davis's along with dinner on the ground.

For more information call 407-886-7864. Wekiwa Springs Baptist Church is located at 584 N. Wekiwa Springs Road, Apopka. Michael Davis is the pastor.



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The Self Help Center will assist only with the following case types: \* **Family Law** (excluding restraining orders); Child Custody/Child Support; Divorce; Paternity \* **Small Claims** \* **Residential Evictions** \* **Location** of the Orange County Courthouse is 425 North Orange Ave., Suite 340 (3rd floor), Orlando, FL 32801

\* **Hours of Operation:** Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Services include: Form completion assistance, and Notary and copy services

\* **Virtual Attorney Consultations**

Attorney consultations are available and may be scheduled in 15-minute sessions, for up to 1 hour per day, per person. The cost for an attorney consultation is \$1 per minute.

The Self Help Center is a collaborative partnership between the Orange County Bar Association and the Clerk's Office. All attorneys are referred by the Orange County Bar Association. Note, the attorneys that provide legal assistance at the Self Help Center cannot represent you in court.

Attorney consultation fees must be paid at the time the appointment is scheduled. Refunds will not be issued for cancelled or missed appointments – no exceptions. Once set, appointment times may not be changed. Attorney consultation appointments cannot be made nor conducted by telephone.

\* **Contact Information:** 425 North Orange Ave., Suite 340 (3rd floor), Orlando, FL 32801, (407) 836-6300, Hours of operation: Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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## City: Residents received potential water bill increase

Continued from page 1A

was 40 percent. However, that number got reduced to 23.75 percent after the August 28 city budget workshop. This 23.75 percent rate increase is reflected in the tentative FY2025 budget, Sherman added.

Residents received notifications of the potential 40 percent water bill increase. At the September 4 regularly scheduled Council meeting, they told the City Council the new prices are unaffordable because of the economy's current state.

"We can't afford it," resident Donald Bynum told the City Council. "Citizens, and I'm sure each one of you are citizens also because we're all in this same boat together. We're all swimming in a losing battle. But to have this type of increase upon us at such a time as this is ridiculous.

"People are struggling, people are losing their homes. They can't pay their homeowners insurance. All these things are affecting us. And even more, even

up in Washington D.C. the struggles that they're having up there, it's affecting everybody in this country and you included. Now, if you got more money than the rest of us, you may not feel the pinch, but each and every one of us feel that same pinch when we go to the grocery store, when we got to look at a statement saying that the bills are going to increase 40 percent. And I'm like, what? I've never heard of such a thing. Whose fault is it? We need help. We need help. And it don't look like you guys are trying to help us."

Resident Trecia Morris told the City Council that the salary she receives won't be enough to keep up with the water rate increases, other rate increases such as in city sanitation and taxes, and other necessities.

"I'm like, I wish I had a 40-percent raise. I wish I had raises that could allow me to be able to kind of work this out," she said. "But I don't. I work for the state of Florida, and if you know anything about the state of Florida, the

state isn't really generous when it comes to paying their workers. The other benefits are okay, but at the end of the day, we have to eat. We want to maintain our homes, we want to pay our HOAs on time, and we want light and we want to have water. So, I'm just asking that you truly reconsider this, that raising something of 40 percent when – I think I speak for most people – most of us don't get raises that are 40 percent, increase in 40 percent. It's alarming. It's concerning. It's depressing."

### Residential water service

Resolution No. 2024-23 is proposing a schedule of monthly rates and charges for water service provided by the city to residents, to be based upon the monthly amount of water used per dwelling unit.

Residents would be charged a monthly service fee of \$11.24 per dwelling unit, plus:

\*A charge of \$2.07 per thousand gallons for the first 6,000 gallons used per dwelling unit per month.

\*A charge of \$2.55 per thousand gallons for each thousand gallons of water used greater than 6,000 gallons per dwelling unit per month, up to and including 15,000 gallons.

\*A charge of \$3.80 per thousand gallons for each thousand gallons of water used greater than 15,000 gallons per dwelling unit per month, up to and including 30,000 gallons.

\*A charge of \$7.70 per thousand gallons for any water used over and above 30,000 gallons per dwelling unit per month.

### Commercial water service

For commercial water service accord to Resolution No. 2024-23, the usage shall be as measured by the water consumption at the water meter, and the monthly service fee would be \$13.46 per unit, plus:

\*A charge of \$2.48 per thousand gallons for the first 6,000 gallons used per unit per month.

\*A charge of \$3.09 per thousand gallons for each thousand gallons of water used greater than 6,000 gallons per unit per month, up to and including 15,000 gallons.

\*A charge of \$4.59 per thousand gallons for each thousand gallons of water used over and above 15,000 gallons per unit month.

Resolution No. 2024-23 also states, "The monthly charge for commercial service shall be determined per each separate commercial or business unit, for office buildings (per commercial or business unit), service stations, department stores, service businesses, churches, clubs, hospitals, professional office units, etc. A separate business would usually, but not always, be identified as any operation requiring an occupational license from the city, where applicable. Irrigation of common areas in both residential and nonresidential developments shall fall within the commercial rate structure."

City-maintained grounds, rights-of-way, parks, and recreational facilities shall be charged for service at \$1.12 per thousand gallons, the resolution states.



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- Circle K #1288, Welch Rd & Wekiva Springs Rd.
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- Orange County Service Center, N. Park Ave.
- Perkins Restaurant Hwy 441, in Victoria Plaza Parking Lot)
- Plymouth Post Office, Plymouth/Sorrento Rd
- Porkies BBQ, Highway 441 (downtown)
- Post Office, N. Park Ave. (Martin St)
- Publix, Park Ave/Rock Springs Rd. & Welch Rd.
- Sam's Discount, Overland & Apopka Blvd.
- Sun Resort, 3000 Clarcona Rd.
- Sunoco Happy Foods, Hwy 441 & Plymouth-Sorrento Rd.
- Trader Mac's, Rock Springs Rd
- UPS Store (The), Rock Springs & Welch Rd. (Publix shopping center)

- Walgreens, corner of Park Ave and Hwy 441
- Walgreens, N. Park Ave/Welch Rd.
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# Obituaries

**KENNETH H. BROWN (aka KENNY)**, 75, passed away on June 25, 2024. He was born on April 13, 1949, in Canton, Illinois. He was predeceased by: brother, Keith; mother, Helen; father, Gerald. Kenny is survived by: wife, Ann (Robison); son, Keith (wife Wendy); daughters, Kim (husband Tom), Ann Marie (husband Scott), Karla (husband RJ); 5 grandchildren; 4 great grandchildren.

...



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*In Memory of*  
**“Kenny” Kenneth Howard Brown**

April 13, 1949 - June 25, 2024



Kenneth H. Brown (aka Kenny) peacefully passed on the evening of June 25 in his home.

Born on April 13, 1949, in Canton, Illinois, he moved to Forest City in 1956 and attended school at Forest Lake Academy.

Most knew Kenny as the owner/operator of Brown’s Bay Station aka Brown’s Auto Service. He had a passion for all things “fast.” cars, boats, and dirt bikes. He was a devoted husband, loving father, grandfather and great grandfather.

He was predeceased by his brother Keith, mother Helen and father Gerald.

Kenny is survived by his wife of 42 years, Ann (Robison), son Keith (wife Wendy), daughters Kim (husband Tom), Ann Marie (husband Scott), and Karla (husband RJ), 5 grandchildren (Jessica, Hannah, Cody, Cai and Linley) and 4 great grandchildren (Asher, Ezra, Emersyn and Aurora).

Interment is in Highland Memory Gardens, Florida.

## Pray For Your Enemies

Hatred and resentment are powerful negative forces in our lives. Resentment often turns into obsession and becomes an open wound that refuses to heal because we keep picking at it.

Spiritual advisors have almost always directed us to get over these feelings of hatred and resentment by the counter-intuitive advice of loving one’s enemies and praying for those who harm us.

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they are situated now in a softer place of love and kindness.

As we do this, the area of our hearts and minds devoted to hatred and resentment diminishes, eventually disappearing. The second effect of praying for our enemies is that God will work to help them as well.

Prayer often has a miraculous effect in the world, doing what nothing else can manage. Hatred and resentment are tools of the devil and can only be conquered by God’s greatest tool, which is love.

– Christopher Simon





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**In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Matthew 5:16

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## Pray For Your Enemies

(See message above.)

**“Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from them.” Proverbs 24:17-18 NIV**



**In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

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	<b>Church of God</b> Church of God of Zellwood 407-886-3074 Grace Street Church of God 407-298-9188 Healing Waters Church of God 407-886-3780 Park Avenue Worship Center 407-886-2696 Sorrento Church of God 352-735-4245	<b>Non-Denominational</b> Anointed Word Family Worship Center 407-886-4989 Casa De Oración Internacional 321-239-7680 Center of Faith Church for All People 407-464-9375 Church on the Edge 407-869-1133 City of Destiny (The) 407-884-6322		
	<b>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints</b> Apopka Ward 407-880-9877			
	<b>Episcopal</b> Church of the Holy Spirit 407-886-1740			
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"Trust forms the cornerstone of the relationships with our customers. When you bring your vehicle to us you can trust our expertise to accurately diagnose issues and perform necessary repairs. We prioritize your safety and satisfaction, ensuring that every repair is conducted with your best interests in mind," stated owner and operator Steve Gotham.

"We offer a unique, honest approach to auto repairs, and operate on the policy of always giving you the fairest deal and flawless repair or maintenance work," noted Gotham.

J&K Automotive, Inc. is a local, full-featured auto shop in Apopka with a service team that possesses over 60 years of combined auto repair experience and

comprehensive ability. Instead of searching for a different provider every time your vehicle has a problem, their team of technicians is ready to deal with everything from electrical problems to diagnostic issues.

J&K Automotive, Inc. prides themselves on their ability to handle whatever reveals itself under the hood. From diagnostics, inspections, scheduled maintenance, lube, oil and filters, tire and wheel services; electrical systems, from batteries and starters to radios and windshield wipers, they do it all. And even though it's not related to the mechanical or electrical systems, they also provide glass repair and replacement. No challenge is too large or too small for this expert team.

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- 5. Air Filter Replacement.**

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