

Be safe

The October 11, 2024, edition of *The Apopka Chief* has been sent to the press for printing earlier than normal, to allow for delays or closures caused by the impending storm, Hurricane Milton.



God Bless America

Sports

Fueled by determination, man survives 30 hours on a Colorado mountain. See page 1B.



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# The Apopka Chief

Your trusted local news source

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Volume 102 Number 41

Friday, October 11, 2024 / 50 cents



Photo courtesy of The Apopka Museum

The community dedicated the new Mead's Bottom mural on Friday, October 4, behind the Hilton Garden Inn at the Apopka City Center, the area where Mead's Bottom is historically located. Pictured are mural artist German Lemus (l) and Apopka Historical Society President Maribel Brinkel.

## Historic Mead's Bottom area marked with mural

The Apopka Historical Society dedicated a mural to Mead's Bottom, the prominent black settlement located south of U.S. Highway 441 and S.R. 436.

The event took place on Friday, October 4, at the mural site, located at the corner of McGee and Sixth streets behind the Hil-

ton Garden Inn at the Apopka City Center.

The event included a VIP reception at the Hilton Garden Inn, immediately following the mural unveiling ceremony. Guests also got the chance to meet local

See MURAL Page 3A

## City Council approves UCF to perform holiday concert

On Wednesday, October 2, The Apopka City Council approved 5-0 the selection of the University of Central Florida (UCF) School of Performing Arts orchestra and choir to perform at the city's annual

holiday concert in lieu of the Orlando Philharmonic.

Due to a scheduling conflict outside the city's control, the Orlando Philharmonic was not available to perform the annual holiday concert this year on

the planned date of Saturday, December 14, according to a city staff report in the Wednesday, October 2, City Council agenda.

As soon as city staff

See UCF Page 5A

## Mayor to deliver State of City

Mayor Bryan Nelson will deliver the 2024 State of the City on Friday, November 8, 7-9 a.m. at the Apopka Community Center/VFW Building, 519 S. Central Ave., Apopka.

In the State of the City, Nelson will go over the city's highlights of the past

year and give a preview of what the city will do in the upcoming year.

There is no cost to attend in general seating area.

Those who plan to attend must register by November 6 by visiting [ApopkaChamber.org](http://ApopkaChamber.org).

## Milton throttles Florida; NOAA offers post-storm tips

As of early Tuesday, October 8, Hurricane Milton was downgraded from Category 5 to a powerful Category 4, spinning at 145 mph. It was predicted to make landfall late Wednesday to early Thursday.

On Tuesday morning, October 8, Hurricane Milton was expected to cause damaging hurricane-force winds and a life-threatening storm surge with destructive waves across portions of the northern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Ahead of Milton, a local state of emergency was issued for Orange County, as well as a state and federal state of emergency. The public was advised to finish storm preparations by Tuesday night.

NOAA also predicted that Milton

was expected to grow in size and remain an extremely dangerous hurricane when it approached the west coast of Florida on Wednesday. A large area of destructive storm surge would occur along parts of the west coast of Florida.

Milton was forecasted to remain a hurricane as it crossed the Florida Peninsula and life-threatening hurricane-force winds, especially in gusts, were expected to spread inland across the peninsula, according to the NOAA on Tuesday.

Heavy rainfall from Milton will result in widespread flash flooding Wednesday across Central Florida, with life-threatening and catastrophic flooding probable, according to NOAA.

For more information, visit [nhc.noaa.gov](http://nhc.noaa.gov).

See MILTON Page 10A

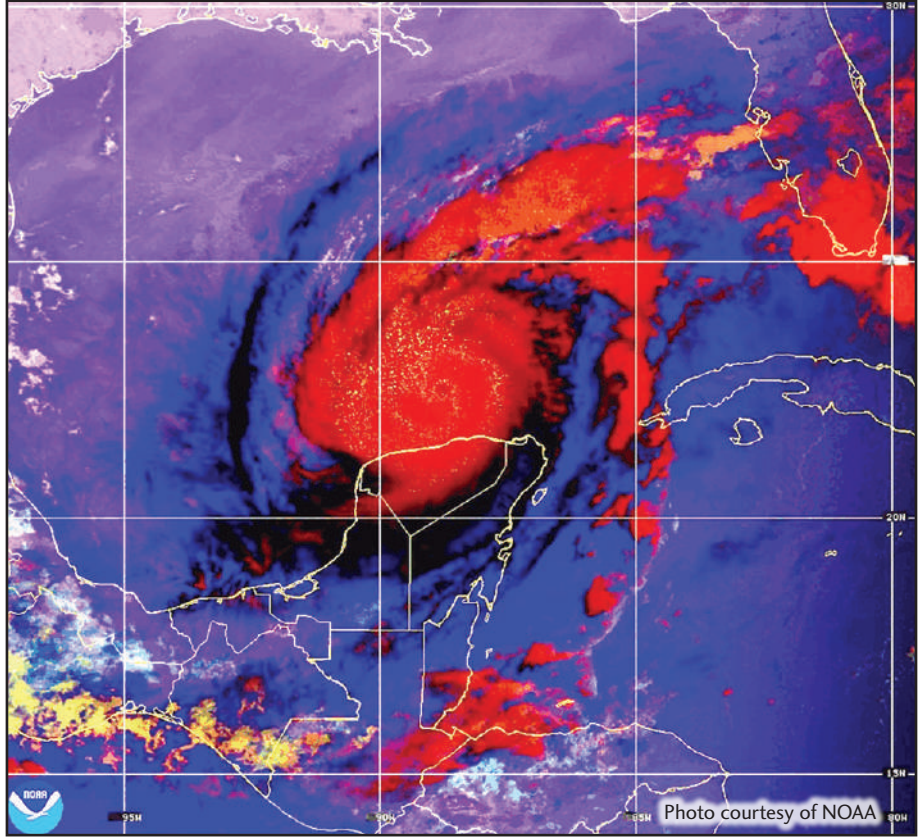


Photo courtesy of NOAA

Hurricane Milton, a powerful Category 4 storm with 145 mph winds as of early Tuesday, October 8, was expected to make landfall late Wednesday to early Thursday with damaging winds and life-threatening storm surge.

## City program launched to support local businesses

The city of Apopka Economic Development Department announced on Thursday, October 3, the launch of its Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program, designed to support and enhance the growth of local businesses

while fostering a thriving economic environment for the community. This initiative aims to strengthen relationships with local businesses, identify their needs, and provide resources to help them succeed.

The BRE Program will

include regular engagement with business owners, workshops, and access to technical assistance and funding opportunities. By focusing on the needs of existing businesses, the

See CITY Page 10A

### The art of beautifying Wekiwa Springs




Photo courtesy of POWS.

Members of People of Wekiwa Springs (POWS) got together on Saturday, September 28, just behind the CVS at S.R. 436 and Wekiwa Springs Road to begin work on their art entry for the District 2 Artistic Corridor of the Year competition. Judging is November 2. Pictured (l to r) are Bill Telford, Laura Letson, Evan Varner, Alfonso Matos, Kristi Varner, Richard Lippert, Kelly Dawson, Sue Henesy, Miranda Henesy, Jeff Engelbrecht. Not shown are Angela Lee and Bob Samson.

### This week


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Service Dir..... 10B

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[FloridaPublicNotices.com](http://FloridaPublicNotices.com)



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Apopka Event of the Week

The Rotary Club of Apopka’s Fall Family Festival is Thursday-Sunday, October 17-20, with different times each day. Enjoy carnival rides, merchandise, live music, vendors, food and beer and wine garden. Arm band specials are available Thursday and Sunday.

Quotable

By suspending tolls in the impacted area, Floridians and visitors will be better able to quickly and safely evacuate if and when directed by local officials.

Gov. DeSantis suspends tolls on toll roads to enable evacuation plans

Opinion

The Apopka Chief  
A weekly newspaper founded in 1923

**Publisher Emeritus**  
John Ricketson  
Mar. 5, 1940 - July 16, 2024

**Publisher**  
T. Jerrod Ricketson

**Marketing Director**  
Jackie Trefcer

**Consultant Emeritus**  
John Peery  
Mar. 28 1956 - Oct. 12, 2023

**Reporters**  
Teresa Sargeant  
Marshall Tempest  
Neal Fisher

**General Mgr Emeritus**  
Neoma Knox  
Feb. 12, 1929 - Sept. 18, 2021

Our position

No tolls, shoulder use, and 511 in use for Hurricane Milton evacuation

Tallassee

Monday, October 7

Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced that he has directed the suspension of tolls across Central Florida and West Florida, as well as Alligator Alley, in preparation for Hurricane Milton. By suspending tolls in the impacted area, Floridians and visitors will be better able to quickly and safely evacuate if and when directed by local officials. Tolls will be waived for seven days beginning at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, October 7, 2024.

“At my direction, tolls are suspended today as of 10:30 AM,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “With evacuation orders imminent, this will help keep traffic moving and be one less thing for people to worry about ahead of Milton.”

“The Department is committed to ensuring motorists can get where they need to go as quickly and safely as possible, especially in preparation for a major hurricane. Suspending tolls across the central and west part of the state and Alligator Alley offers an additional option for families to easily get out of the storm’s direct path,” said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jared W. Perdue, P.E. “As Floridians finalize their evacuation plans for Hurricane Milton, FDOT reminds travelers to check FL511.com for the latest traffic conditions and potential road and bridge closures.”

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) will suspend toll collection at 10:30 a.m. EST on Monday, October 7, for a seven-day period, with tolls being reinstated on Monday, October 14, at noon. The suspension may be extended as needed depending on evolving conditions.

Facilities included within the suspension order include:

\*Collier and Broward Counties

\*Alligator Alley

\*Citrus, Hernando, Hillsbor-

ough, Pinellas and Pasco Counties

\*Suncoast Parkway

\*I-4 Connector

\*Selmon Expressway

\*Veterans Expressway

\*Gateway Expressway

\*275 Express

\*Pinellas Bayway

\*Sunshine Skyway Bridge

\*Osceola, Orange, Lake,

Seminole, Sumter and Polk Counties

\*Turnpike Mainline between I-75 (MP 309) and Canoe Creek Service Plaza (MP 229)

\*S.R. 453

\*S.R. 451

\*Wekiva Parkway

\*Apopka Expressway

\*Beachline Expressway

\*Central Florida Greeneway

\*East-West Expressway

\*I-4 Express

\*Western Beltway

\*Osceola Parkway

\*Poinciana Parkway

\*Southern Connector Extension

\*Seminole Expressway Polk Parkway

Toll facilities for FDOT, FTE, Central Florida Expressway Authority, and Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority are included with this suspension.

FDOT is actively implementing Emergency Shoulder Use along Interstate 4 (I-4) and portions of Interstate 75 (I-75) to help facilitate the flow of traffic for travelers evacuating the storm’s potential impact area.

Florida’s 511 Traveler Information System is available for drivers to stay informed about roadway conditions during emergencies.

This service is monitored and updated 24/7 by FDOT and includes traffic conditions, road and bridge closures, and other specialized alerts. To use Florida’s 511, visit the website at FL511.com or download the app on both Apple and Android devices.



Safety tips given for storm repair

ORLANDO, FL –

The danger of a storm does not end when it passes. The Florida Department of Health in Orange County suggests taking the following safety precautions to prevent personal injury when addressing storm repairs.

\*Wear goggles, heavy gloves and steel-toed boots.

\*If possible, work in pairs or groups.

\*Take short breaks and work during the cooler hours of the day.

\*Immediately clean all open wounds and cuts with soap and clean water. Cuts beyond minor scratches may require medical attention.

\*Avoid lifting more than 50 pounds of debris or building materials. Two or more people should move bulky objects.

\*Avoid heat stroke and heat exhaustion by wearing light-colored, loose-fitting clothing and drinking a glass of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes.

\*Only experienced people should use chain saws and specialized equipment. When using chain saws or other heavy equipment, wear earplugs.

\*To prevent electrocution in wet areas, turn power off at the main breaker.

\*Never handle a downed power line.

Never bring gasoline- or diesel-powered pumps, generators or pressure washers indoors as they release carbon monoxide – a deadly, colorless, odorless

gas.

Set priorities for cleanup tasks and pace the work over several days or weeks.

Avoid exhaustion by taking frequent rest breaks and resuming a normal sleep schedule as soon as possible.

\*Never assume that water-damaged structures are safe; leave immediately if shifting or unusual noises occur.

\*Take advantage of disaster relief programs and services in your community.

For further information, please contact your local county health department or visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov) or [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org).

Private/Gated Community Debris Removal

Orange County has developed a plan to assist private/gated communities where debris removal is necessary following a storm. The County may not remove vegetative debris from private/gated communities because they are considered private property. Orange County’s plan consists of four options for debris removal in private/gated communities which need assistance.

Option 1

Option 1 is available to unincorporated Orange County residents as part of the County’s curbside collection program. Following a storm, residents may set out vegetative debris according to the regular yard waste collection guidelines.

As a reminder, please do not

use the blue and green lid roll carts for yard waste.

Vegetative debris set out neatly and meeting these criteria will be removed on your regular yard waste collection day unless the Orange County Utilities Solid Waste Division announces a modified schedule. Please note, however, that yard waste may be collected in limited quantities until the volume is reduced throughout the affected areas.

Additional Options

In an instance where vegetative or other debris is too widespread, too numerous or too large for pick up by Solid Waste, an official representative of the HOA or Management Company may contact the County by dialing 407-836-3111 and indicating the need for assistance. Orange County Public Works will respond to the representative and schedule a time to meet on-site to assess the damage and determine the amount of debris to be removed. At that time, the County representative will review the options available and exchange contact information for follow up. Upon selection of said option, the HOA/Gated community representative will notify the County and property owners of the process selected.

Option 2

If it is determined the gated community needs assistance outside of the stan-

See Gated Page 4A

This Week In God’s Word

The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit. Proverbs 15:4

Mema Says

Sometimes when things are falling apart, they are actually falling into place.

The Apopka Chief is published every Friday and entered as Periodicals, postage paid at Apopka Post Office, under the Act of Congress of March 23, 1879. The Apopka Chief newspaper is published by Foliage Enterprises, Inc., every Friday at 400 N. 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, PO Box 880, Apopka, Fla., 32704-0880.



Voters must consider the effects of marijuana amendment

Do you have any idea how much £60,000,000 is?

If you had that in the bank and from the time you woke in the morning, got dressed, drank your first cup of “joe,” ate a hearty breakfast, and got into your car for your drive to work, you would have earned more interest on that money than most people make in a year at a regular job!

That’s how much the “Marijuana Group” is spending on ads pushing for you to vote yes on Amendment #3. There



Ike Hayden

must be a reason for giving £60,000,000 to legalize recreational use of marijuana.

Trulieve is a flourishing company that provides marijuana for medical use now. They have spent up-

wards of a million dollars to promote recreational marijuana in Florida. They are not concerned with your freedom to choose, nor are they concerned about your safety, your health, your law enforcement’s abilities to follow “more serious crimes,” or about the regulations that will be placed on vendors, or users. Their main goal is to get you dependent on another stupefying drug that will result in their receiving billions in return, without any legal barriers to stop

them.

In fact, we have laws prohibiting smoking of tobacco in public places, but there is no such law against recreational marijuana. The amendment states that licensing different companies to “acquire, cultivate, possess, process, transfer, transport, sell, and distribute marijuana products and marijuana accessories for personal use by adults” will allow more entities to flourish in Florida, and promote competition.

The argument against

that is the company that has already cornered 38 percent of the market (Trulieve) has the influence, and the cash, to impair the judgment of many of the legislators that will be in charge of issuing licenses for marijuana production and sale. One of the main ads for legalization is that it will be “lab tested, regulated, and safe for consumers.”

What about the rest of the populace? In every state where Marijuana has been legalized, there has been an increase in DUI’s, and

crime in general. One of the promotions states it will cut down on “Black Market” purchases, but in Colorado, the “Black Market” has grown because the cartels have undercut the legal establishment’s prices.

The regulation (wink, wink) is the same for alcohol, vaping, or smoking. Has anyone known of a teen-ager that could not get any of these “regulated” substances for his or her personal use? So much

See HAYDEN Page 4A



# Mural: Hurricane Helene caused dedication ceremony postponement

Continued from page 1A

artist German Lemus. Mead's Bottom mural commemorates the legacy of the prominent black settlement of Mead's Bottom. The area was named after Sarah Mead, who was born into slavery in 1836 in South Carolina, sold to a plantation owner in Georgia, and ventured into Apopka around 1870.


Due to the severe weather warnings in effect for Hurricane Helene, the Apopka Historical Society moved the dedication ceremony originally scheduled for September 27 to October 4.




Local historian Francina Boykin addresses the crowd at the podium during the Mead's Bottom mural dedication on South McGee Avenue, Friday, October 4.

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**Casey Brents**  
Sat. 7PM-10PM

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**City Ordinance Prohibits Animals On Property.**





# Pump strike teams on standby to support areas affected by floods

As Hurricane Milton intensifies and approaches Florida’s coast, the St. Johns River Water Management District’s Emergency Operations Center is closely monitoring the storm and implementing precautionary measures to protect both staff and public safety.

Key updates from the District include:  
All District offices will close Wednesday, Oct. 9, and remain closed until building safety assessments are complete.

All District-managed lands, including campgrounds and navigational locks, will close at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 8, and will stay closed until further notice.

Residents are advised to follow updates from their local Emergency Operations Center for the latest local emergency updates, including evacuation orders and flood-related rescue efforts.

The District is also closely monitoring water levels and is prepared to assist local

governments and agencies as needed.

Pump strike teams are on standby to support flood-affected communities.

For real-time storm updates, including flood warnings, river stages, and emergency contacts for local governments, visit the District’s storm information page at [www.sjrwmd.com/storm](http://www.sjrwmd.com/storm).

Regarding the St. Johns River Water Management District. The staff is committed to ensuring the sustainable use and protection of water resources for the benefit of the people of the District and the state of Florida. The St. Johns River Water Management District is one of five districts in Florida managing groundwater and surface water supplies in the state. The District encompasses all or part of 18 northeast and east-central Florida counties. District headquarters are in Palatka, and staff also are available to serve the public at service centers in Apopka, Jacksonville and Palm Bay.

# Gated: HOA must work with county

Continued from page 2A

standard Solid Waste pick up, the HOA/Management Company may request a letter issued by the County for disposal at a predetermined Citizen drop-off site. The HOA/Management Company will contract with a private “hauler” to collect the vegetative debris and deliver it to the selected and approved Citizen drop-off site. The HOA/Management Company will communicate with its homeowners the starting and ending dates for this process. A letter will be sent to the HOA/Management Company and copies provided to their contractor specifying the designated citizen site and starting and ending dates for the debris removal.

Each truck must have a copy of the letter to enter the debris site. No debris is to be placed at the designated location, right-of-way or citizen site prior to the beginning date stated in the letter to the community.

### Option 3

The HOA/Management Company may opt to have the debris placed on public right of way outside the gated community property line. The private/gated community will then contract with a private contractor to remove the debris from the private/gated community to the designated public right of way during the pre-determined time period. The County debris removal contractor will be responsible for coordinating the hand off/pick up during

the specified time period along with the County monitoring contractor to ensure the area remains clear for the safety of all citizens.

### Option 4

In the event enough public right of way is not available outside the gates of the private/gated community, a roll off may be placed in a location designated by the County. The private/gated community will then contract with a private contractor to remove the debris to the roll off during the pre-determined time period. The County debris removal contractor will be responsible for emptying and replacing the roll-off during the specified time period along with the county monitoring contractor.

# Budget problems need solutions

Editor:

WAKE UP Apopka Taxpayers!

Two days into the new fiscal year and already the City has had to make Budget adjustments. Emergencies will happen. The City’s continued habit of not budgeting correctly and failure to hold people accountable for results must cease.

Taxpayer failure to hold our elected officials accountable continues to cost us money.

Our City’s lack of planning and failure to address the lack of infrastructure continues to be exposed by the:

- \*\$12 MILLION DOLLARS to mitigate the Golden Gem Road, Condition of Roads Sidewalks;
- \*Need for a CRA extension;
- \*Utility Increase due to deferred maintenance;
- \*Millage Increase due to deferred maintenance;
- \*Need to move flat every City Council meeting;
- \*Failure to timely and properly maintain City assets;
- \*Failure to hold Department Heads accountable for results;
- \*Not budgeting for staff to install water meters, but budget four positions to oversee 12 tennis and pickleball courts, and
- \*Failure to properly

budget.

There are three critical budget questions that our City Leadership has failed to answer:

- 1) Does the proposed Budget meet the core essentials needed?
- 2) Does the proposed Budget reflect the removal of non-essential, duplicate items or waste?
- 3) Does the proposed Budget reflect everything you need to meet Taxpayer requirements?

As Taxpayers, we need to demand that our Mayor, Commissioners, City Administrator and Finance Manager take at least the following immediate actions:

1. Suspend development until we have the infrastructure in place to manage the growth;
2. Increase development fees like Oviedo’s unanimous approval for increase in fees to cover roads, sidewalks and bicycle pathways to ease their traffic woes;
3. Create a Citizen’s Committee to review budgets/financials to make recommendations for the 2026 fiscal year;
4. Establish Monthly Department Head financial performance reviews for better accountability;
5. Present monthly budget performance up-

dates at the second City Council meetings;

6. Ensure the accuracy of repair/replace our water meters as needed;
7. Establish a Camp Wewa action plan – Taxpayers were sold on Camp Wewa being a break-even in a few years – we are few years in and nowhere near break-even;
8. Provide a 2026 budget plan that allows reasonable time for Commissioner and Taxpayer input; and
9. Establish a 20-year Strategic Plan.

Every City asset should identify its life expectancy and anticipated timing for replacement. Every City asset must have a specific preventive maintenance schedule and provide for verification that the required maintenance in fact was timely executed.

Failure to plan is planning to fail.

Failure to act is acting to fail.

Taxpayers must hold our elected officials accountable for our City’s performance.

Rod Olsen  
Apopka  
October 3

The Editor’s Note: This letter to the editor is published as received, without fact checking.

# Hayden: Marijuana is unsafe

Continued from page 2A

talk of how much we will benefit from the sales tax flowing into our coffers, but how much more will be spent on mental, physical, and family debilitation from allowing this product on the shelves of our local “Pot” store?

I’m tired of hearing the same old clamor about how voting “yes” on this amendment will free up our law enforcement officers to enforce more serious crimes. I believe our law

enforcement officers have the common sense, and the mental ability to prioritize crimes, and would not fail to answer a call for a “serious” crime over someone with a “joint” in the park.

As far as making marijuana safe, in the “free love” days, the pot that was used had 3 percent THC, but now in today’s marijuana there is exceedingly more that has been introduced by laboratory growers for more “bang for the buck.” The increase can cause severe anxiety, psy-

chosis, and heart complications.

Studies indicate a correlation between regular marijuana use and the onset of mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, particularly among adolescents and young adults, according to Flagler County Sheriff, Rick Staly.

Millions of dollars are being spent on the passing of this amendment. The question is... WHY?

*Tell them you saw it in The Apopka Chief*



## WHAT’S HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Read Florida’s public notices in this newspaper or online to find out.

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ALL ABOUT APOPKA			
The Apopka Chief			
Established 1923 (USPS 545-440)			
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.			
<a href="http://www.theapokkachief.com">www.theapokkachief.com</a> , <a href="mailto:news@theapokkachief.com">news@theapokkachief.com</a>			
 			
City of Apopka Telephone Numbers		Orange County Telephone Numbers	
City Hall.....407-703-1700		Animal Services.....407-836-3111	
Mayor's Office.....407-703-1701		Auto/Boat Tags.....850-617-2000	
City Administrator.....407-703-1649		Building Dept.....407-836-8550	
City Clerk.....407-703-1704		County Mayor.....407-836-7370	
Community Devel.....407-703-1712		County Commission.....407-836-7350	
Code Enforcement.....407-703-1738		County Attorney.....407-836-7320	
Finance Dept.....407-703-1725		Clerk of the Court.....407-836-2065	
Fire (non-emerg.).....407-703-1756		Elections Supervisor.....407-836-2070	
Parks and Rec. Dept.....407-703-1741		Fire/Rescue.....407-836-3111	
Police Chief.....407-703-1769		Solid Waste.....407-836-6601	
Police (non-emerg.).....407-703-1771		Garbage Collection.....407-703-1731	
Job Line.....407-703-1743		Health Dept.....407-836-2600	
Solid Waste Collect.....407-703-1731		Hunting/Fishing Lic.....888-347-4356	
Street Maintenance.....407-703-1731		Parks and Rec. Dept.....407-836-6200	
Utility Billing.....407-703-1727		Property Appraiser.....407-836-5044	
Medical, fire emergency.....911		Sheriff Administrative.....407-254-7000	
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		Utilities.....407-836-5515	
		All other departments.....407-836-3111	
		Medical, fire emergency.....911	
		<a href="http://www.orangecountyfl.net">www.orangecountyfl.net</a>	
Other Area Numbers of Note		U.S. Senators	
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		Marco Rubio (Rep.).....407-254-2573	
		U.S. Representative	
		Daniel Webster (Dist. 11).....352-241-9220	
		State Representatives	
		Doug Bankson.....407-476-6787	
		Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45).....unknown	
		State Senators	
		Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11) 407-297-2045	
		Orange County Commissioner	
		Christine Moore.....407-836-7350	
		Orange County Public Schools	
		Pupil assignment.....407-317-3233	
		Bus routes.....407-317-3800	
		Superintendent.....407-317-3200	
		School Board.....407-317-3200	
		Miscellaneous	
		The Apopka Chief.....407-886-2777	
		Museum of the Apopkans.....407-703-1707	
		Chamber of Commerce.....407-886-1441	



# UCF: City budgeted \$60K for concerts, city staff report says

Continued from page 1A

learned about the scheduling conflict, it contacted the UCF School of Performing Arts to ask if the school's orchestra and choir would be interested and available to perform the holiday concert at the Apopka Amphitheater.

Representatives at UCF were interested and met with city Parks and Recreation staff to discuss the event scope and concert details.

According to the city staff report, the UCF School of Performing Arts pro-

vided a quote of \$25,000 for the performance, with \$20,650 going to the school for the performance and \$4,350 going to the City's live entertainment services vendor, Birchmore Group, Inc. for concert production services.

UCF's proposed name for the performance is "Silent Knights: A Jolly Holiday Concert."

The service provided by UCF School of Performing Arts is not subject to competitive solicitation requirements based on an Artistic Services Exemption according to Florida Stat-

ute 287.057.3.(e).1. All additional concert production services will be rendered by the City of Apopka contract 2023-A-27 Live Entertainment Production Services vendor Birchmore Group Inc.

The city budgeted \$60,000 in Amphitheater Events for holiday and spring orchestra concerts, according to the city staff report.

The city annual holiday concert will be at the Apopka Amphitheater on Saturday, December 14, 5-7 p.m.

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## Harbor House to help in establishing family justice center



Harbor House of Central Florida announced that it will be partnering with the team from the Family Justice Center Alliance. Pictured (l to r) are Orange County Clerk of Courts Tiffany Moore Russell, City of Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Harbor House CEO Michelle Sperzel, Orange County Sheriff John Mina, Orlando Police Department Captain Wanda Miglio, Criminal Investigations Unit, and Ninth Judicial District State Attorney Andrew Bain.

Harbor House of Central Florida announced that it will be partnering with the team from the Family Justice Center Alliance, a program of Alliance for HOPE International, starting January 2025 for a Family Justice Center Study Tour.

The announcement was made Tuesday, October 1, at the Orange County Sheriff's Office Headquarters – Mel Martinez Auditorium in Orlando.

Harbor House has invited the Alliance team to

help Orange County begin the planning process for a Family Justice Center to help survivors of family violence and their families get the resources and support they need at one location – bringing together police officers, prosecutors, advocates, therapists, civil attorneys, community volunteers, and many others.

The first Family Justice Center was created in San Diego, Calif., in 2002, through a partnership between the San Diego city attorney and the San Diego Police Department. It evolved out of a collaborative relationship between community-based domestic violence agencies and criminal justice professionals.

The model has since been identified as a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The documented and published outcomes from the Family Justice Center model have included: reduced homicides; increased victim safety; increased autonomy and empowerment for victims; reduced

fear and anxiety for victims and their children; increased efficiency and coordination among service providers; and reduced recantation and minimization by victims when wrapped in services and support; increased prosecution of offenders; and dramatically increased community support services to victims and their children.

The Study Tour is the first step in the planning process for creating a Family Justice Center. The Study Tour will generate momentum for the development of a center in Orange County by bringing local elected officials, policy makers, and government and community-based agencies together to start the planning process for a co-located service facility.

Visit [HarborHousefl.com](http://HarborHousefl.com) to learn more about Harbor House of Central Florida and how to get involved.

*If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, contact the organization's 24-hour confidential crisis hotline at 407-886-2856.*

The logo for Community Health Centers features three stylized human figures in blue, green, and orange. To the right of the logo, the text "community health centers" is written in a sans-serif font, with "community" in blue, "health" in green, and "centers" in orange. Below the logo, a list of services is provided: Pediatrics (with a stethoscope icon), OB/GYN (with a pregnant woman icon), Family Medicine (with a magnifying glass over a heart icon), Dental (with a tooth icon), Internal Medicine (with a heart and lungs icon), and Pharmacy (with a pill bottle icon). At the bottom, the text "AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!" is displayed in all caps, followed by the large phone number "407-905-8827", the address "225 E 7TH ST, APOPKA, FL 32703", the website "WWW.CHCFL.ORG" (with Facebook and Twitter icons), and the phrase "CENTERS THROUGHOUT CENTRAL FLORIDA!" in all caps.



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In a collaborative effort to enhance navigation throughout the city, Charles Chambers from **FASTSIGNS® of Apopka** has successfully worked with the City of Apopka to design and install customized directional signage. This initiative spans the entire process, from the initial imagining and



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drawing to the production and installation of the signs, all carried out in-house at **FASTSIGNS® of Apopka**.

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The partnership with the City of Apopka highlights **FASTSIGNS® of Apopka** commitment to serving the community and enhancing its visual

landscape. Chambers expressed gratitude for the collaboration, stating, "A big shout-out to the City of Apopka! It was a pleasure working with them to bring this vision to life. We're excited to see our signage making a positive impact in the community."

With the newly installed directional signage, residents and visitors alike can look forward to improved wayfinding throughout Apopka, reinforcing the city's commitment to accessibility and connectivity.

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## Graceworx Church offers fellowship, quality music, upbeat sermons and more

Apopka is blessed with an abundance of options when it comes to churches.

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Granted that we all seek different things when it comes to a church, such variety means the chances are high that there's a nearby congregation that will meet your unique set of needs. The challenge is to find it.

If you haven't yet found a spiritual home that's the right fit for you, we invite you to check out Graceworx Community Church. We host an Adult Bible Study at 10:00 AM and our Worship Service at 11:30 AM each Saturday morning. We meet at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 9913 Bear Lake Road, Apopka, FL 32703.

Graceworx was founded by a group of people who believe that a congregation should refresh the spirit, stimulate the mind, provide a strong internal fellowship, and work unflaggingly with other congregations and civic organizations for the betterment of our local



*Graceworx conducts its worship each Saturday morning at 11:30 AM at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, 9913 Bear Lake Road, Apopka, FL 32703.*

community.

Jesus said he had come that humans "might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). That's what Graceworx is all about. We want everyone to know the Bible's loving, caring, forgiving, grace-exuding Creator and Redeemer God. And we seek to be a discovery zone and support center for those who seek a more purposeful, more balanced, more fulfilling life.

The Living Bible's paraphrase of Romans 5:1-2 sums up well both the "Grace" and the "worx" from which we take our name: "So now, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith in his promises, we can have real peace with him because of what Jesus Christ

our Lord has done for us. For because of our faith, he has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we can confidently and joyfully look forward to actually becoming all that God has had in mind for us to be."

Graceworx isn't a club for saints. It's a fellowship for those who understand their own brokenness and acknowledge their own ongoing struggles—but who desire to experience more fully what God wants for the human family.

Pastor Jim Coffin—who has served as a youth pastor, senior pastor, religious-magazine editor, church-outreach consultant, and for 11 years was executive director of the inter-

faith Council of Central Florida—presents the sermon most weeks.

We invite those seeking a church family—and those just wanting to become acquainted with another congregation in the Apopka community—to stop by for a visit anytime. We hope you're blessed by the fellowship, the sermons, the music, the scripture readings, the prayers and the Bible study. We believe that ancient scripture still speaks powerfully and pertinently to life today.

Again, our Worship Service is conducted each Saturday morning at 11:30 AM. We hope we'll see you soon. You can contact us at [graceworxcc@gmail.com](mailto:graceworxcc@gmail.com) or at 321-228-4599.

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### Virginia Bankson

Virginia was born on July 24, 1918, in Centerville, Iowa. She was born at home, delivered by her father, the 5th of 11 children. She is preceded in death by her mother and father, all but one sibling, (Rosa Barker), her husband (Clint Bankson), son (Dennis Bankson), daughter-in-law (Sharyl Bankson), and grandson (Todd Bankson). Living family members are Patti Bankson (daughter- in-law and wife of Dennis Bankson), Kelli Bankson (daughter-in-law and wife of Roger Bankson.) She has 10 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren and 10 great great grandchildren and several on the way.

Her accomplishments were many: Graduating from high school in 1937, she obtained her Normal Training Certificate for rural schools K – 12th grades, a teaching degree from Drake University In Iowa, attended USC, UCLA, Pep-



perdine in Calif., MA degree in Reading. She had a Master of Arts in Theology, Master of Arts in Elementary Reading Specialist, Elementary Education (Grades 1-6) Teacher Certification, State of Florida, Teacher Certificate (Type A), Elementary Education, General Elementary Certificate, Life Diploma Certificate – California, Standard Elementary Certificate, War Emergency Certificate and over 70 years of teaching experience.

\* 2001 "Grandmother of the Year," City of Apopka, Florida

\* 2008 Proclamation by the City of Apopka, Florida, "Mrs. Virginia Bankson Day"

\* 2014 Graduation Achievement Honor and Recognition

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We have inherited virtually everything, from our genetic/physical makeup to our culture, our language and the institutions that support our lives. We owe a debt of gratitude which we can never repay to both our forebears and to God, the ultimate source of our existence.

Perhaps because we went to college and now have a job making decent money, we feel that we have done it all ourselves, when in fact going to college is more like standing on the shoulders of giants than inventing the wheel.

We should give thanks for those who came before us, who contributed to our culture's ongoing experiment and helped to build the edifice of knowledge and culture. And just as nobody can adequately thank his or her parents for his existence, nobody can thank God for existence itself.

We find ourselves thrown into the world, and being thankful, and perhaps a bit awestruck is the appropriate sentiment. Why we are here is a mystery to be pondered over the course of a long and hopefully thankful life.

—Christopher Simon

But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

**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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Proverbs 14:26

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*"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14*

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## Milton: Tips include returning home only when officials say it's safe

Continued from page 1A

### Post-hurricane tips

NOAA offers tips for what to do after Hurricane Milton:

\*Continue listening to NOAA Weather Radio (Weather.gov/NWR/) or the local news for the latest updates.

\*If you evacuated, return home only when officials say it is safe.

\*Once home, drive only if necessary and avoid flooded roads and

washed-out bridges. If you must go out, watch for fallen objects in the road, downed electrical wires, and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks that might collapse.

\*Walk carefully around the outside of your home to check for loose power lines, gas leaks, and structural damage.

\*Stay out of any building if you smell gas, if floodwaters remain around the building, if the building or home was damaged by fire, or if the

authorities have not declared it safe.

\*Carbon monoxide poisoning is one of the leading causes of death after storms in areas dealing with power outages. Never use a portable generator inside your home or garage. Review generator safety tips.

\*Use battery-powered flashlights. Do NOT use candles. Turn on your flashlight before entering a vacated building. The battery could produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.

## City: Local business owners may complete survey to participate in program

Continued from page 1A

city aims to create a more vibrant local economy and improve the overall quality of life for residents.

"Supporting our local businesses is essential to maintaining Apopka's unique character and economic vitality," said Mayor Bryan Nelson. "This pro-

gram not only strengthens our existing businesses but also ensures that Apopka remains an attractive destination for new enterprises. Together, we can create a more resilient economy that benefits everyone in our community."

Economic Development Director Michelle Boylan emphasized the program's strategic importance.

"The BRE Program is a proactive approach to economic development. By investing in our local businesses, we are investing in our community's future. The department is dedicated to understanding the challenges that businesses

face and providing the necessary support to help them thrive," Boylan said.

The Economic Development Department invites all local business owners to participate in the program by completing the brief, confidential survey located on the city website. A link to the survey can be found at [Apopka.gov/ExpandingABusiness](http://Apopka.gov/ExpandingABusiness).

For more information about the BRE Program 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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**SUDOKU ANSWERS**

PUZZLE CAN BE  
FOUND ON PAGE 2B

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

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P	A	R	E	T	I	C		S	E	M	I	D	R	Y	
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	G	R	A	B						P	E	A	S		

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