

FRIDAY
TODAY & next morning
HIGH 80
LOW 56
Sunny and warm.
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CITRUS COUNTY
CHRONICLE



NEWS BRIEFS

Hernando/Citrus MPO to meet

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will hold a public meeting at 1:30 p.m. March 3 at the Brooksville City Hall council chambers, 201 Howell Ave.

The following items have been posted at hernandocitrusmpo.us for a 10-day public review period:

Amendment to the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan to include extension of Suncoast Parkway 2 (County Road 486 to County Road 495 and C.R. 495 to U.S. 19)

Amendment to the FY 2022-26 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include design funding for extension of Suncoast Parkway 2

Items scheduled on the agenda include, but are not limited to:

Florida Department of Transportation presentation

Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 amendment - to include the extension of Suncoast Parkway 2 (C.R. 486 to C.R. 495 and C.R. 495 to U.S. 19)

FY 2022-26 TIP amendment to include design funding for extension of Suncoast Parkway 2

FY 2023 to FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program draft concepts and timelines

Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board appointment

Feb. 3 MPO meeting update

MPO financial report

FY 2022 Federal Transit Administration annual certifications and assurances

MPO office lease renewal

Transportation alternative applications

Planning assistance scope of services approval - Kimley Horn and Associates

For more information, call MPO executive director Robert Esposito at 352-754-4082, extension 28013, or email mpo@hernandocounty.us.

Learn more about bachelor's programs at CF

The College of Central Florida (CF) invites prospective students to learn more about the bachelor's of applied science in business and organizational management program at a virtual information session from 6 to 7 p.m. Feb. 28.

To register for the Zoom event, visit CF.edu/BusTechEvents. To learn more about CF, visit CF.edu.

New Broward superintendent to earn \$350K a year

FORT LAUDERDALE (AP) — The new superintendent of Broward County's public school district will earn \$350,000 a year, according to a contract signed Thursday.

The county's school board approved the contract for Vickie Cartwright during a special meeting Thursday, the South Florida SunSentinel reported.

Cartwright had filled in as interim superintendent at a rate of \$275,000 per year after Robert Runcie stepped down from the position last year. The school board agreed Feb. 9 to keep her on the job after conducting a national search for Runcie's replacement.

Parkway extension opens Monday

Officials say road will have great economic impact for county

By MICHAEL D. BATES
Chronicle Reporter

Monday's opening of the Suncoast Parkway extension will be a game-changer for Citrus County, officials say.

First, the convenience: Motorists can bypass all the traffic lights to get from U.S. 98 in Hernando County to State Road 44 in Lecanto by taking the 70 mph toll road. They can also get off at the West Cardinal Road interchange.

And then there's the expected economic impact. With a major roadway cutting through the heart of Citrus County, expect more restaurants, stores and busi-

nesses to invest in the community.

It's already happening, said Crystal River Mayor Joe Meek, as evidenced by major chains acquiring property along County Roads 491 and 486.

"I think this is a very exciting time for Citrus County and Crystal River," Meek said. "I think the parkway is going to have a positive impact on our area. This has been a decades-in-the-making project that has been supported by county commissions for years."

Meek said this new road "will enable our citizens access to a major metropolitan area but still enjoy the lifestyle they have here."

"It is incumbent on us as we grow to maintain our character and quality of life," he added.

Work began on the \$135 million Suncoast Parkway

2 project in February 2018. The original contracted completion date was summer 2022 but work kept ahead of schedule. The new road will be funded entirely with toll revenues.

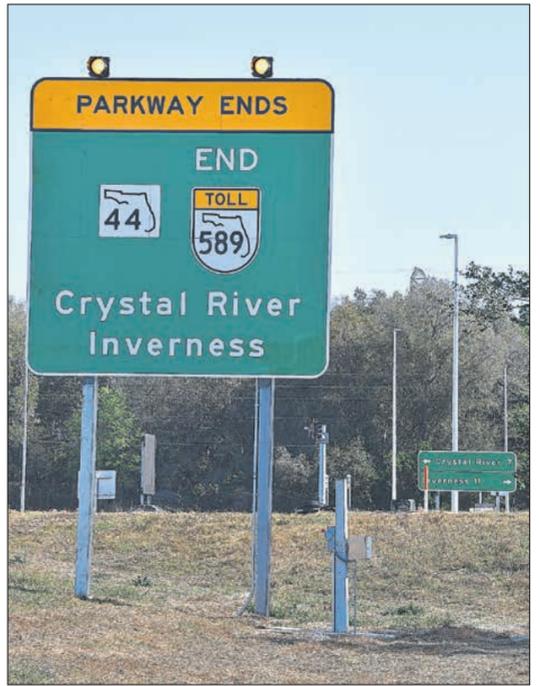
The project encompasses 13 miles of new roadway, two full interchanges - one at U.S. 98 in Hernando County and one at West Cardinal Street in Homosassa - and a partial interchange at State Road 44.

"The interchanges will improve safety and increase mobility for Hernando and Citrus County residents as these areas continue to

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Officials have announced Monday, Feb. 28, will be the date of the opening of the Suncoast Parkway through Citrus County.

Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Long-time educator Raye Joyner holds a photograph from the 1950s of students and faculty of the George Washington Carver School in Crystal River. Mrs. Joyner spent 41 years as an educator within the Citrus County School District.

Preserving history

Black History Month celebrated with stories of the past

By NANCY KENNEDY
Chronicle Reporter

Editor's note: For generations, Black Americans have enriched Citrus County as landowners, farmers and educators, clergy, service industry workers and

business people.

In celebration of Black History Month, the public is invited to listen to some of the stories from the Black community from 6 to 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 26, at the Old Courthouse Museum in Inverness.

The panel discussion can also be viewed on the Old Courthouse Heritage Museum YouTube channel. To get the YouTube link emailed to you, sign up at cccourthouse.

org or call 352-341-6428.

Here is a preview of the event speakers, Cheryl Danley, Mable Sims Holloway, Raye Joyner and Bailey Wise, and the moderator, Donna Lucas:

Cheryl Danley: 'Preserving a legacy'

In 1891, President Benjamin Harrison granted Gillion Washington, a freed slave, 160 acres of land in

the area of Floral City that's known as Russell Hill.

Cheryl Danley, Washington's great-great-granddaughter, lives in the house at 12900 S. Danley Point that sits on 80 of those acres.

In a 2014 oral history video from the Floral City Heritage Council, Danley's mother, the late Laytha Danley, who died in 2019,

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District outlines COVID plan for CDC compliance

By HANNAH SACHEWICZ
Chronicle Reporter

In conjunction with the Florida Department of Education's (FLDOE) required Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP), school districts must create an additional ICP per the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

ICPs must include district procedures for maintaining the health and safety of students, educators and staff. However, unlike the FLDOE, the

USDOE requires districts to include how they have adopted policies on each of the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) safety guidelines.

At Tuesday morning's Citrus County School Board special meeting and workshop, district Director of Elementary Education Trish Kahler and Director of District Student Services Kit Humbaugh presented the district's plan, addressing CDC guidelines, to the board.

According to Humbaugh,

between Feb. 15 and Feb. 21, seven staff members and 17 students reported a positive COVID-19 test. "The schools are doing great," she said. "Things are looking bright."

In their plan, the district has outlined the following procedures in place per CDC guidelines:

Mask wearing

Per Florida Executive Order 21-175, parents have the right to choose whether their child wears a mask. However, Kahler said,

"Citrus County Schools supports students and staff choosing to wear a mask."

In addition, the district strongly recommends mask wearing in clinics and isolation rooms.

Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Videos, posters and signage are placed around district schools to encourage handwashing and respiratory etiquette. In addition,

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County to get monthly reports for jail

By BUSTER THOMPSON
Chronicle Reporter

After hearing concerns, Citrus County's board of commissioners will start getting regular updates on whether the county's privately run jail and prison is being adequately staffed.

Starting with the board's March 22 meeting, county staff will provide commissioners each month with the Citrus County Detention Facility's latest staffing report.

County Administrator

Randy Oliver said Thursday, Feb. 24, there's not enough time "to analyze the staffing" from

Feb. 1-28 before the March 1 deadline to post the agenda for the commission's March 8 meeting.

After the county began fining CoreCivic for contractually failing to fill the required posts at the detention facility in Lecanto, Commissioner Jeff Kinnard asked Oliver during Tuesday's board meeting to present those staffing figures to commissioners each month.

"That's something that should be addressed on a monthly basis at a board meeting as to whether or not they're in compliance with the contract," he said. "It's a straight-forward question, and it needs to be answered publicly."

CoreCivic spokesman Ryan Gustin told the Chronicle "our senior leaders are in regular communication with Citrus County officials and will be addressing their concerns directly."

"Both public and private correctional facilities in Florida, and throughout the country, have faced similar staffing

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