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## IN BRIEF

### Central Ridge Community Center to reopen

Citrus County Parks & Recreation is proud to announce the grand re-opening of the Central Ridge Community Center (CRCC), located at 77 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills.

The facility has been closed to the public since September 2021 due to a contract with NOMI Health. The CRCC will officially reopen on May 9.

As part of the grand re-opening, the CRCC's monthly gym fee will be waived for citizens of Citrus County through June. The fee of \$10 per user will resume on July 1.

The CRCC's operating hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the gym closing at 4 p.m.

For more information, call Parks & Recreation at 352-527-7540 or follow on Facebook at facebook.com/citruscountyparks.

### Ribbon cutting ceremony for Fort Island Beach

Join Citrus County Parks & Recreation on May 9 at 10:30 a.m. for a ribbon cutting at Fort Island Gulf Beach. This event will celebrate the official opening of the newly installed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible concrete walkway and beach mat.

200 feet of the concrete walkway are being installed to give ADA accessibility to the north end of the beach; an additional 100 feet of ADA accessible concrete walkway will provide access to the boardwalk. The accessible beach mat will allow an additional 100 feet of access towards the water.

Contingency funds were used to fund \$13,653.51 in construction costs. Installation was performed by Citrus County Grounds Maintenance staff, which kept project costs low.

Citrus County also received a \$1,000 donation from the nonprofit organization Once Upon an Ocean. The organization will also be assisting Citrus County with walkway and beach mat maintenance for one year.

### Attend a presentation on navigating Medicare

Navigating Medicare can be difficult without help, but it can be hard to find a trustworthy guide. The Citrus County Library System has partnered with Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) to provide the public with an information presentation.

The upcoming presentation, Medicare Basics: Medicare 101, will be held at the Coastal Region branch in Crystal River on May 10 from 1-2:30 p.m.

SHINE, a program created by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, is the official, unbiased source of information on all parts of Medicare.

Library programs are free and open to the public. Additional information about SHINE can be found at floridashine.org.

For more information about this presentation, visit their online calendar at attend.citruslibraries.org/events or call the Coastal Region branch at 352-795-3716.

## Water district to examine RV park



Matthew Beck / Chronicle Photo Editor

Construction on a new RV resort in Crystal River, seen in this February photo, is situated to the north of the Crystal River Mall, east of U.S. 19.

### Inspection comes after complaint alleged unpermitted wetland impacts

By **BUSTER THOMPSON**  
Chronicle Reporter

The development of an 85-acre RV resort in Crystal River will be examined to make sure the work on its site was permissible.

A Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) inspection

was scheduled for the Hidden Lakes RV Resort after a complaint alleged the clearing of land at 1801 NW U.S. 19, north of the Crystal River Mall, was impacting wetlands without proper permitting from the district.

"Compliance staff are planning to visit the site to investigate the complaint(s) and ongoing construction," SWFWMD spokeswoman Susanna Martinez Tarokh said Thursday, May 5.

Hidden Lakes RV Resort LLC manager Charlie

Dean Jr. said Friday he's unaware of the complaints, and SWFWMD staff hasn't told him the progress of his multi-phased development is in violation.

"We have all our permits in place. ... It's completely compliant," he said. "I do things by the book; I've always done that. I don't dwell in the gray area; we're fully compliant in everything that we do."

According to SWFWMD permit records, the district's

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## Mother's Day: Generations of teachers in Citrus County

By **GEORGIA SULLIVAN**  
Chronicle Reporter

Like grandmother, like mother, and like father, Tara McLeod has followed in the footsteps of family before her by becoming a teacher in Citrus County.

McLeod and her mother, Heather Simmons-Hechavarria, both teach at Inverness Primary School together – McLeod teaching first grade and Hechavarria being a reading interventionist for grades kindergarten through fifth.

Palmira Simmons, Hechavarria's mother, was also a teacher in Citrus County, having taught at Crystal River Primary School for around 35 years. That's two generations of daughters following in their mother's footsteps.

Not only did McLeod have both mother and grandmother to look up to, but her father, Phillip McLeod, is also a teacher and current principal at Crystal River High School.

"I grew up in the classroom," said McLeod. "I liked helping and I always played 'school' at home, so I always loved teaching from the beginning."

It's no wonder she went on to become a teacher for her career.

Simmons, now 78 and retired, often volunteers in her granddaughter's classroom at IPS.



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

The mother-daughter duo of Tara McLeod, left, and Heather Simmons-Hechavarria are both educators at Inverness Primary School. McLeod is a first-grade instructor and her mother is a reading interventionist.

"She helps the students with reading and handwriting," said McLeod. "So that's really helpful because she's been teaching forever and ever. She gives her unique perspective and ideas, and it helps guide how I teach as well."

Hechavarria was also influenced by her own mom growing up.

"My mother was a teacher in Citrus County for a

really long time, so that was a big influence," said Hechavarria. "I loved being around the students and helping out when I was younger."

She also mentioned that she chose education because it's not stagnant, saying, "I knew it was going to be changing every day and that I was going to get to interact with students. I just love it, it's fun

to me."

McLeod also found she had a unique perspective as a teacher due to her dyslexia.

"I struggled in school academically, reading was really difficult for me," McLeod explained. "I can understand that aspect of when kids are struggling because I did too and I made it on the other side."

While she struggled

with navigating dyslexia throughout school, she was also placed in the gifted program. Learning how to help her daughter through it was what got Hechavarria interested in reading intervention, leading her to her current position at IPS.

Working together at IPS, McLeod and Hechavarria have a unique work

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## Nearly 1 million COVID-19 deaths: A look at the numbers in the U.S.

By **CARLA K. JOHNSON** and **NICKY FORSTER**  
Associated Press

Doug Lambrecht was among the first of the nearly 1 million Americans to die from COVID-19. His demographic profile — an older white male with chronic health problems — mirrors the faces of many who would be lost over the next two years.

The 71-year-old retired physician was recovering from a fall at a nursing home near Seattle when the new coronavirus swept through in early 2020. He died March 1, an early victim in a devastating outbreak that gave a first glimpse of the price older Americans would pay.

The pandemic has generated gigabytes of data that make clear which U.S. groups have been hit the hardest. More than 700,000 people 65 and older died. Men died at higher rates than women.

White people made up

most of the deaths overall, yet an unequal burden fell on Black, Hispanic and Native American people considering the younger average age of minority communities. Racial gaps narrowed between surges then widened again with each new wave.

With 1 million deaths in sight, Doug's son Nathan Lambrecht reflected on the toll.

"I'm afraid that as the numbers get bigger, people are going to care less and less," he said. "I just hope people who didn't know them and didn't have the same sort of loss in their lives due to COVID, I just hope that they don't forget and they remember to care."

### Elders hit hard

Three out of every four deaths were people 65 and older, according to U.S. data analyzed by The Associated Press.

About 255,000 people 85 and older died; 257,000

were 75 to 84 years old; and about 229,000 were 65 to 74.

"A million things went wrong and most of them were preventable," said elder care expert Charlene Harrington of the University of California, San Francisco. Harrington, 80, hopes the lessons of the pandemic lead U.S. health officials to adopt minimum staffing requirements for nursing homes, "then maybe I can retire."

### Spouses left behind

In nearly every 10-year age group, more men have died from COVID-19 than women.

Men have shorter life expectancies than women, so it's not surprising that the only age group where deaths in women outpaced those in men is the oldest: 85 and older.

For some families who lost breadwinners, economic hardships have

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## County's new coronavirus infections continue to increase

By **FRED HIERS**  
Chronicle Reporter

The number of coronavirus infections in Citrus County continued to climb last week, mirroring a Florida and national trend when many thought the pandemic had run its course.

During the week ending May 1, the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported 147 new cases in Citrus County. That was an increase from a reported 91 new cases during the week ending April 21. It was also an increase from the 55 from the previous week and only 14 new cases ending the week of April 7.

There was only one Citrus County death due to the virus during the weekend ending May 1, according to the CDC.

That now brings the county's total number of infected to 29,934 and deaths to 976.

There were only six hospitalizations in Citrus County

due to the virus. That was similar to the previous week. Typically, hospitalizations lag new infections by a few weeks.

The Citrus County trend mirrors that which is seen in Florida.

The daily average of new Florida cases as of May 6 was 4,522, according to the New York Times, which collects and tabulates COVID-19 data. That daily average was a 58 percent increase over the previous 14 days in Florida. As of May 6, there have been a total of 5,952,643 cases of the virus in Florida.

Florida hospitalizations due to COVID-19 was also up to an average of 1,316 per day. That was a 25 percent increase from the previous 14 days, according to the New York Times.

Florida deaths due to the pandemic was an average of 21 per day as of May

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