

**TEXAS WILDFIRES**  
FIREFIGHTERS HOPE TO GAIN  
GROUND ON MASSIVE FIRES  
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**UKRAINE WAR**  
RUSSIANS PUSH DEEPER INTO  
CITY AS LOCALS PLEAD FOR HELP  
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# THE SUNDAY CHRONICLE

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**IN BRIEF**

**County to close portion of West Riverwood Drive for drain replacement near Crystal River**

Citrus County Road Maintenance will be closing a portion of West Riverwood Drive near Crystal River for a day to replace a cross drain.

West Riverwood Drive will be shut down to traffic Wednesday, March 23, from the Inglis Dam Recreation Area entrance to 1,000 feet west of West Notch Path, and is expected to reopen later in the day by close of business, according to the county.

Motorists will need to seek alternative routes during the work.

The county posted signage in the area March 16 to give travelers advanced notice.

For more information, call county road maintenance at 352-527-7610.

**MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee to meet March 23**

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) will hold a public meeting at 3 p.m. March 23 at the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville.

Items scheduled on the agenda include, but are not limited to: FY 2021-2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) amendment to address unencumbering funds, FY 2022-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment to address unencumbering funds, FY 2023-2024 UPWP draft review, and discussion regarding upcoming List of Priority Projects (LOPP).

Approximately one week prior to the meeting, the agenda may be viewed online at [hernandocounty.us/hernandocitrusmpo](http://hernandocounty.us/hernandocitrusmpo).

The public is encouraged to attend. Any questions concerning this public meeting should be directed to Robert Esposito, Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville; call 352-754-4082 ext. 28013; or email [mpo@hernandocounty.us](mailto:mpo@hernandocounty.us).

**Withlacoochee-Dunnellon Trail grand opening set for March 24**

The Withlacoochee State Trail to Dunnellon Trail connector is finally receiving its long-awaited grand opening. The event will be held from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Thursday, March 24, on the west side of the new connector paved trail and tunnel under U.S. 41 in northern Citrus County, just south of Dunnellon.

This has been a grand opening 20 years in the making and Florida Department of Environmental Protection is hoping to celebrate with as many people as possible. Bicyclists, walkers and outdoor enthusiasts are welcome.

## New civics plan available for fourth-graders

Program will be available for free online for everyone's use

By **BETHANY BLANKLEY**  
The Center Square

A new civics curriculum is available for Florida fourth graders, and all Florida residents will have access to it online for free.

The Florida Department of Education has approved a curriculum created by the state House. Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, said the curriculum can only improve on Florida's

third-place ranking in K-12 achievement.

Within the state's "backdrop of quality and excellence," the legislature presented a (new) civics and government curriculum," Sprowls said, which was ap-



SPROWLS



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proved by the Department of Education. The depart-

ment certified the curriculum to meet state Civics and Government Standards.

Sprowls spearheaded the initiative after he learned there was a lack of Florida-specific civics curricula available in grade schools. He targeted the curriculum

See **CIVICS**, page A5



Photos by Julie Mancini / For the Chronicle

Bluegrass band Duck Wallow Lane performs Saturday, March 19, during the Big Bass, Bluegrass & BBQ Fishing Tournament hosted by the city of Inverness and sponsored by Apopka Marine, Nick Nicholas Ford, 44 Tackle and Sodium.

## Inverness event hooks large crowds



City of Inverness employee Kirsti Brown fills out a big check Saturday, March 19, for the winner of the fishing portion of the Big Bass, Bluegrass & BBQ Fishing Tournament hosted by the city of Inverness. Brown said more than 140 anglers were registered for the event hosted by the city of Inverness.



Phyllis Bell, sister of "Lady T" Teresa Alexander, cuts up pork ribs Saturday. Alexander was one of five cooks signed up for the BBQ portion of the Big Bass, Bluegrass & BBQ Fishing Tournament at Liberty Park in Inverness. Originally from Chicago, Alexander has now been living in Inverness for the past three decades and does barbecue "mostly for fun" for fundraisers and events.



In an effort to cast a wider net this year, the city of Inverness expanded its popular Big Bass Classic on Saturday, March 19, rebranding it as the Big Bass, Bluegrass & BBQ.

Consider it a success as the downtown area was packed throughout the day.

To hook city visitors and get them to stay for the day, Inverness Parks and Recreation Director Woody Worley said the city decided to add food and bluegrass music.

The day's events began at 7 a.m. and wrapped up at 3:30 p.m. The event was hosted at Liberty Park.

In addition to the city of Inverness' event, the Key Training Center hosted the 15th annual Clean Air Bike Ride, which started and ended in downtown Inverness.

The events made for a busy, crowd packed area throughout downtown Inverness.

LEFT: A sign showing the different options for the Clean Air Bike Ride sits along the bike trail Saturday, March 19, in downtown Inverness. The bike ride, in its 15th year, benefits the Key Training Center.

**NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT**

## CASA offers safe haven for domestic violence victims

By **JEFF BRYAN**  
Chronicle staff

*Editor's note: Every community depends on the resources and support that nonprofit agencies provide to people, whether physical, material or emotional.*

The Chronicle's ongoing series, *Nonprofit Spotlight*,

profiles the nonprofit agencies in Citrus County that exist to help make life better for us all.

To have your nonprofit organization considered for a spotlight, here's the link to an online form you can fill out: [www.chronicleonline.com/site/forms/nonprofit\\_spotlight](http://www.chronicleonline.com/site/forms/nonprofit_spotlight).

You're stuck in a situation without believing there is a safe place to escape, a place that offers comfort and security. In Citrus County, there is safe haven for those seeking to escape a violent relationship: the Citrus Abuse Shelter Association (CASA).

The mission of the CASA,



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according to Sunshine Arnold, executive director, is to help victims and survivors of domestic violence by providing

and education as well as to educate the community for social change. Its vision to end domestic violence includes the following steps:

- Providing a safe, supportive environment;
- Instilling confidence and self-esteem;

See **CASA**, page A5



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