

Football: Panthers out to earn first playoff victory / B1



FRIDAY

TODAY & next morning
HIGH 80
LOW 61
 A few showers.
PAGE A4

CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE

www.chronicleonline.com

NOVEMBER 11, 2022 Florida's Best Community Newspaper Serving Florida's Best Community \$1 VOL. 128 ISSUE 313

IN BRIEF

Nominate Citrus' top citizen

The Citrus County Chronicle is seeking nominees for 2022 Citizen of the Year. Winners in the past have been honored for everything from philanthropy to volunteerism, civil rights work to service to country, and environmental efforts to governmental initiatives.

While all nominations are considered, preference is usually given to community contributions that are above and beyond the role one plays in their day-to-day job.

Nominations should be no more than 200 words or less. Email nominations to jeff.bryan@chronicleonline.com; or, mail to Jeff Bryan, 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 by Dec. 18. Nominations received after Dec. 18 will not be considered.

Nominate Citrus' top nonprofit

The Citrus County Chronicle is seeking nominees for 2021 Non-profit Organization of the Year.

While all nominations are considered, preference is usually given to contributions that are above and beyond the role one organization plays in its day-to-day community efforts.

Nominations should be no more than 200 words or less. Email nominations to Editor Jeff Bryan at jeff.bryan@chronicleonline.com; or, mail to Jeff Bryan, 1624 N. Meadowcrest Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 by Dec. 15. Nominations received after Dec. 18 will not be considered.

Election deadlines pushed back

Secretary of State Cord Byrd on Wednesday issued an emergency order pushing back certain election deadlines in 45 counties because of Hurricane Nicole.

The order included delaying from noon Saturday to noon Monday a deadline for county supervisors of elections to submit the first set of unofficial returns from Tuesday's elections.

Also, Byrd pushed back deadlines for voters to submit affidavits to "cure" signature issues with mail-in ballots and for voters who cast provisional ballots to present evidence about their eligibility. Those deadlines were delayed from 5 p.m. Thursday to 5 p.m. Saturday.

"The Department (of State) has been monitoring this storm system for some time and with its imminent approach coinciding with post-election ballot cure and reporting deadlines, we want to do everything we can to ensure that every eligible vote in Florida will count," Byrd said in a prepared statement.

Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday issued an executive order declaring an emergency in 34 counties and expanded it to 11 additional counties Wednesday.

Nicole made landfall Wednesday night on the East Coast as a hurricane before moving through Central Florida and North Florida.

More stores planned for C.R. 486-491

Property closing sets stage for additional retailers

By MICHAEL D. BATES
 Chronicle Reporter

The retail explosion at County Roads 491 and 486 continues with news that construction is scheduled to begin in early 2023 on developing the southwest corner of that busy intersection.

Two stores so far have committed to locating there: Petsmart and Five Below. Negotiations are underway for more tenants.

Corta Lecanto LLC have closed on a 16-acre parcel with a purchase

price of \$1.2 million, according to county clerk records. Half of the property is roads/drainage and a common area so 8 acres will ultimately be developed.

That paves the way for additional development on the site, located behind the outparcels at the Lecanto Walmart, according to Joe Cappuccilli, broker at Gulf to Lakes Real Estate Inc., who confirmed the sale.

Cory Presnick, a principal with Corta Development, said Citrus County has been underserved with retail stores for a long time and



CAPPUCCILLI

chains find it attractive because they are far enough away from their existing stores to remain competitive.

"It's a brand new market for them," he said.

That corner is in the center of the county, so it's within easy driving distance from Inverness, Crystal River, Beverly Hills, Homosassa and Dunnellon, Presnick said.

Also spurring activity, he said, is the extension of the Suncoast Parkway from State Road 44 to County Road 486, just a few miles from the new stores.

Presnick said residents can expect construction on all these stores finished sometime in early 2024.

Just last month, the Target Cor-

poration closed on 11 acres on the northwest corner of County Roads 491 and 486. The property owner, Anchor Ridge, sold the property to Target for \$3 million, according to county clerk records.

Records also show the developer, The Ferber Company, closed on the remaining 18 acres for \$3.1 million, which makes it possible to move forward with at least six other retailers.

Other stores coming to the plaza, which now is being called Shoppes at Black Diamond, are Panera, Starbucks, Aldi, Tropical Smoothies, Texas Roadhouse and 7-Eleven.

Michael D. Bates is a staff writer with the Citrus County Chronicle and can be reached at mbates@chronicleonline.com.



John Raoux / AP

Parts of homes collapsing on the beach due to the storm surge from Hurricane Nicole on Thursday in Wilbur-by-the-Sea.

Tropical Storm Nicole sends beachfront homes into ocean

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and FREIDA FRISARO
 Associated Press

WILBUR-BY-THE-SEA — Tropical Storm Nicole sent Florida homes toppling into the Atlantic Ocean on Thursday and threatened a row of high-rise condominiums in places where Hurricane Ian washed away the beach and destroyed seawalls only weeks ago.

The storm, which caused at least two deaths, was the first November hurricane to make landfall in Florida in 37 years and only the third on record. It delivered another devastating blow just weeks after Ian came ashore on the Gulf Coast, killing more than 130 people and destroying thousands of homes.

Although Nicole's winds died down after it made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane at about 3 a.m. Thursday near Vero Beach, its storm surge slammed into the shoreline in the neighboring barrier island communities of

"Structural damage along our coastline is unprecedented. We've never experienced anything like this before."

GEORGE RECKTENWALD
 Volusia County manager

Wilbur-by-the-Sea and Daytona Beach Shores, sending some homes crashing into the ocean.

Officials in Volusia County, which is northeast of Orlando, said Thursday evening that building inspectors had declared 24 hotels and condos in Daytona Beach Shores and New Smyrna Beach to be unsafe and had ordered their evacuations. At least 25 single-family homes in Wilbur-by-the-Sea had been declared structurally unsafe by building inspectors and also were evacuated, county officials said.

"Structural damage along our coastline is unprecedented. We've never experienced anything like this before," county

manager George Recktenwald said during a news conference earlier, noting that it's unknown when it will be safe for evacuated residents to return home.

The county's sheriff, Mike Chitwood, said in a social media post that multiple coastal homes in Wilbur-by-the-Sea had collapsed and that several other properties were at "imminent risk." He said most bridges to the beachside properties had been closed to all but essential personnel and a curfew was in effect.

Krista Dowling Goodrich, who manages 130 rental homes in Wilbur-by-the-Sea and Daytona Beach Shores as director of sales and marketing at Salty Dog Vacations, witnessed backyards collapsing into the ocean just ahead of the storm.

In the aftermath, the backsides of about seven colorful houses along Highway A1A had disappeared. One modern house

See NICOLE, page A6

Power outages, downed tree limbs so far in Citrus

By MICHAEL D. BATES
 Chronicle Reporter

Tropical Storm Nicole remained on track as of Thursday afternoon, moving west-northwest at 16 mph, according to the National Weather Service (NWS).

The center of the storm was located near Brooksville at 1 p.m. and was headed toward Cedar Key. Although Nicole is weakening over land and the eye wall is becoming disorganized, a tropical storm warning remains in effect for Citrus County.

Reports so far include around 5 inches of rain and wind gusts of 50-60 mph.

There is potential for a 3- to 5-foot storm surge overnight during high tide for the Nature Coast if the center moves into the Gulf of Mexico.

The eye wall is expected to move across Cedar Key mid-afternoon, with wind blowing water onshore and bringing in stronger winds. Nicole is then forecast to curve up toward Florida's Big Bend area making a second landfall around 7 p.m.

The NWS does not predict the storm will strengthen while over the Gulf. Citrus County should experience a dissipation

See CITRUS, page A6



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

A cyclist makes his way along South Rock Crusher Road on Thursday while rain pelts the region as Tropical Storm Nicole creeps north through the state.

Air Force veteran restores WWII fighter plane to ride in parades



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

United States Air Force veteran John "Johnny" Chambers explains how this single-seat Boeing P-26 Army Air Force fighter aircraft was utilized during World War II. Chambers found one of the antique aircraft, renovated it and planned to have it in the Inverness Veterans Day Parade next week. The parade has been canceled due to the expected storm.

By NANCY KENNEDY
 Chronicle Reporter

As a longtime Shriner, U.S. Air Force veteran John Chambers loves riding in parades.

"I've been a Master Mason 3rd Degree, a Shriner, a Knights Templar and a member of the American Legion for more than 50 years, and I've been in a lot of parades," Chambers, 85, said from his home in Inverness.

Before storm predictions canceled the annual Veterans Day Parade on Friday, Nov. 11, in Inverness, Chambers was putting the finishing touches on his P-26 Boeing "Peashooter" World War II fighter plane that he has been restoring for the past four years and had been planning to have in this year's parade.

"Everybody knows that the Shriners ride jalopies or midget cars,

things like that in parades," he said, "and they have to buy or build them themselves."

"I built a custom motor scooter — it was awesome. I rode that in several parades, and then a guy bought it from me," he said. "Then I built a car, a 'Woody,' using a zero-turn lawn mower. I took everything off it and kept the frame, and built a Woody out of wood, right down to the surfboard on the roof. I rode it in a parade, and someone bought it from me."

Then he decided to go big and build a real Air Force fighter plane.

Not just any plane. Chambers wanted a P-26 Boeing.

A friend found one for him at the aviation boneyard at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson, Arizona, the largest aircraft boneyard in the world.

See BOEING, page A4

