

Boys soccer: Announcing the All-Chronicle Team / B1

SATURDAY
 TODAY & next morning
 HIGH **88**
 LOW **63**
 Warm, with a slight chance of thunderstorms.
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CITRUS COUNTY CHRONICLE



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IN BRIEF

Supervisor of Elections holding outreach event

The Supervisor of Elections office will be holding an outreach event at the Winn-Dixie on April 21 from 9-11 a.m., located at 3565 N. Lecanto Highway, Beverly Hills. This is a great way to prepare for the Primary Election coming up on August 23. Register to vote, make changes to voter records or request a vote-by-mail ballot. Information to apply for election worker positions will also be available. Visit votecitrus.gov, email vote@votecitrus.gov or call 352-564-7120.

Foster Parents Association to host town hall

The Citrus County Foster Parents Association plans to host a town hall forum from 6 to 8 p.m. April 29 at the Elks Lodge, 7890 W. Grover Cleveland Blvd. in Homosassa. All candidates running for state representative in District 34 are invited to speak with active foster parents, along with adoptive, kinship and non-relative caregivers to hear and respond to the needs and wants of families. This will be a small town hall style gathering (not a debate). There will be people asking questions and each candidate will be allowed to answer. If any candidates are wanting to participate in this town hall, respond with an email to office @citruscountyfosterparents.org.

Landfill disposal program drop-off day scheduled

Citrus County Landfill's Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Disposal Program offers an additional drop-off day each quarter. The next quarterly HHW drop-off day will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 30 at the Citrus County Landfill, 230 W. Gulf-to-Lake Highway, Lecanto. This Saturday collection is no different from the weekly program, but is meant to facilitate residents who work or are otherwise unable to participate during the week. Wait times will be longer on a Saturday HHW drop-off day. Assessed households may bring up to 10 gallons, or 60 pounds, of household hazardous waste for proper disposal on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays or on quarterly Saturday drop-off days for no additional charge. For more information, call 352-527-7670 or visit citrusbocc.com/departments/public_works/solid_waste_management.

Citrus jobless rate continues to drop

By MICHAEL D. BATES
 Chronicle Reporter

Citrus County's March unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, continuing a trend of monthly declines. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity released its report Friday showing neighboring Levy and Marion counties also posted drops. Dale French, Career-

Source Citrus Levy Marion (CLM) executive vice president, said the report reflects a "trifecta of positive economic indicators." French said that in each of the three counties, both over the month and over the year,



FRENCH

expansion of the labor force was fueled by an increase in the number of jobs and a drop in the number of unemployed. "You certainly have times when the labor force expands because more people flood the labor market looking for jobs that aren't there," French said. "But anytime we see this kind of consistent new job creation, on top of fewer un-

employed, we're moving in the right direction." Citrus County's labor force in March grew by 130 to 47,545 over the previous month, the number of employed climbed to 45,789 for a boost of 428, and the number of unemployed dropped by 298 to 1,756. Compared to March 2021, when the unemployment rate was 6.4 percent, there are now 1,391 more work-

ers and 1,294 fewer unemployed in Citrus County. The last time the three-county region's March unemployment rate was this low was in 2006. "Back then, the price of gas averaged \$2.59 a gallon, a new Honda Accord started at \$18,225, a movie ticket would set you back \$6.55 and the cost of the average

See RATE, page A5

Lecanto High School teacher wins forensic science scholarship

By GEORGIA SULLIVAN
 Chronicle Reporter

Dr. Ashley Shidner's high school forensic science class is not for the faint of heart, but that's why her students love it so much. The Lecanto High School teacher is known for giving her students an understanding of real-world application to topics covered in class, and now her work is being recognized. Earlier this year, Dr. Shidner was awarded the 2022 Warren-Young Scholarship from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) for her efforts in the classroom. The AAFS select one middle or high school level teacher a year to highlight the work they're doing and provide support for their classroom. It comes with a \$3,000 scholarship which allowed her to not only get the supplies for the pig autopsies the students are doing this week, but also supplies for the entomology unit next week, as well as the half male, half female skeleton in the classroom and more. The award is highly competitive and includes complementary registration for the annual AAFS meeting in Seattle which they flew her out for during the last week of February to present the award to her. Before her current forensic science class started, she was teaching biology at LHS and one day heard a group of students from the arts school talking about possible jobs for arts students. So, she decided to bring in her friend who works at the Faces Lab at LSU to introduce the students to a career where art and sculpting is used to make facial reconstructions for real criminal cases. They were super interested and the push for a forensics class was created, entirely student driven. Dr. Shidner was teaching the class the following year. Reagan Howard, LHS senior who previously took the class, said, "Dr. Shidner's class made me know



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Dr. Ashley Shidner works with students in her Lecanto High School classroom as the teens begin the process of dissecting small pigs. Dr. Shidner was recently honored by the Forensic Sciences Foundation and presented the Warren-Young Scholarship "for dedication and enthusiasm in supporting forensic science education," as the trophy she was awarded reads. This award is designed to encourage forensic science education at the middle and high school levels and is intended to provide funds to purchase supplies, equipment, or reference materials to support forensic science education in teaching basic scientific principles, according to the organization.

what I want to do in life, so now I'm going into forensics." There is no shortage of love for Dr. Shidner and her classes from her students. "I love her class. It's one of the most interactive classes I've taken. We do a bunch of labs and if we're not doing labs, we're watching videos about the topics," said Daniel Wheeler, LHS

senior currently taking her class. Ashley Villani, LHS senior and Wheeler's lab partner, added, "Compared to my other science classes, this is the most hands-on where I've learned about real-world cases." The class mostly consists of juniors and seniors with the occasional freshman or sophomore sprinkled in. It

is so popular, in fact, there is usually a waiting list of around 30 students each year. At the latest county school board meeting on April 12, Dr. Shidner was recognized for receiving the scholarship and presented with a plaque for her achievement by the school board members.

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Nonprofit Spotlight: Friends of the Community Center

BY THE CHRONICLE

Editor's note: Every community depends on the resources and support that nonprofit agencies provide 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.

The Friends of the Community Center Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising funds for the Meals on Wheels Home Delivery Program. They provide nutrition to the most vulnerable population in Citrus County: seniors.

There is always a necessary need to feed the seniors in the community, especially during these trying times. The COVID-19 pandemic almost completely wiped out their operation funds for the Circle of Friends Gift Shop, which is the main source of the organization's funding along with private donations.

They started with a plan to reach \$50,000 in total donation to the Meals on Wheels program and, thanks to private donations, were able to reach this goal. They have now donated even more than that to the Meals on Wheels program.

The organization operates mainly by seven or eight volunteers at a time, with others helping when needed. There is also a board that makes decisions concerning how the gift shop, which opened in 2010, is operated.

Friends of the Community Center Inc. welcomes any and all volunteers who want to help them out either one day a week or a few times a month.

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YOU'RE INVITED

EASTER

TOMORROW 10:45AM

WWW.ATTHECORNER.CHURCH

1100 W HIGHLAND BLVD
 INVERNESS