

## UKRAINE

RUSSIANS TRY TO STORM MARIUPOL  
PLANT ON EVE OF ORTHODOX EASTER

PAGE A12



## CAPITOL RIOT

OFFICIAL: MEADOWS HAD BEEN  
WARNED OF POSSIBLE VIOLENCE

PAGE A12

# THE SUNDAY CHRONICLE

APRIL 24, 2022

89 ☀️ 62

chronicleonline.com

VOLUME 128 • ISSUE 114 • \$2

### IN BRIEF

#### ADA accessible walkway at Fort Island Gulf Beach

On April 20, Citrus County began constructing approximately 300 feet of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible concrete walkway at Fort Island Gulf Beach. This project will affect some areas of parking on the north end of the beach. Construction is anticipated to be completed by May 2.

Two hundred feet of the concrete walkway will 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.

Once the walkways are completed, an accessible beach mat will be installed 100 feet towards the water. Beach mat installation is tentatively scheduled for the first week in May.

For more information, contact Citrus County Parks & Recreation at 352-527-7540.

#### COVID-19 testing site to close

On April 23, Nomi Health permanently closed the COVID-19 testing site located at Central Ridge Community Center, 77 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills.

In March, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) COVID-19 Uninsured Program and Coverage Assistance Fund, which provided the funding to the testing site, stopped accepting claims due to a lack of sufficient funds.

For more information on the closure, call 904-295-0562.

#### Too Far to discuss tollway extensions

A discussion about the proposed tollway extensions through Citrus County, which led to a lively discussion at last month's meeting, will once again be a topic of conversation and input at the April 28 meeting of the Too Far Water and Natural Resources organization.

The meeting is at 6:30 p.m. at Too Far's headquarters building, 9338 E. Gospel Island Road, Inverness. At 6 p.m., a barbecue pork dinner will be offered for a donation of \$10.

Frank Gargano, government affairs manager for the Southwest Water Management District, will be the guest speaker.

For more information, call 352-634-4216.

## Resurfacing set for 7 Citrus roads

State program ensures minimal cost to county

By MICHAEL D. BATES  
Chronicle Reporter

Seven Citrus County roads are in line for resurfacing. And thanks to a state program,

those roads – from Homosassa to Inverness – will pose a minimal cost to the county because of a joint project funded by Citrus County and the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) Small

County Outreach Program (SCOP). Walt Eastmond, the county's project manager, provided the Chronicle with a list of upcoming SCOP road projects.

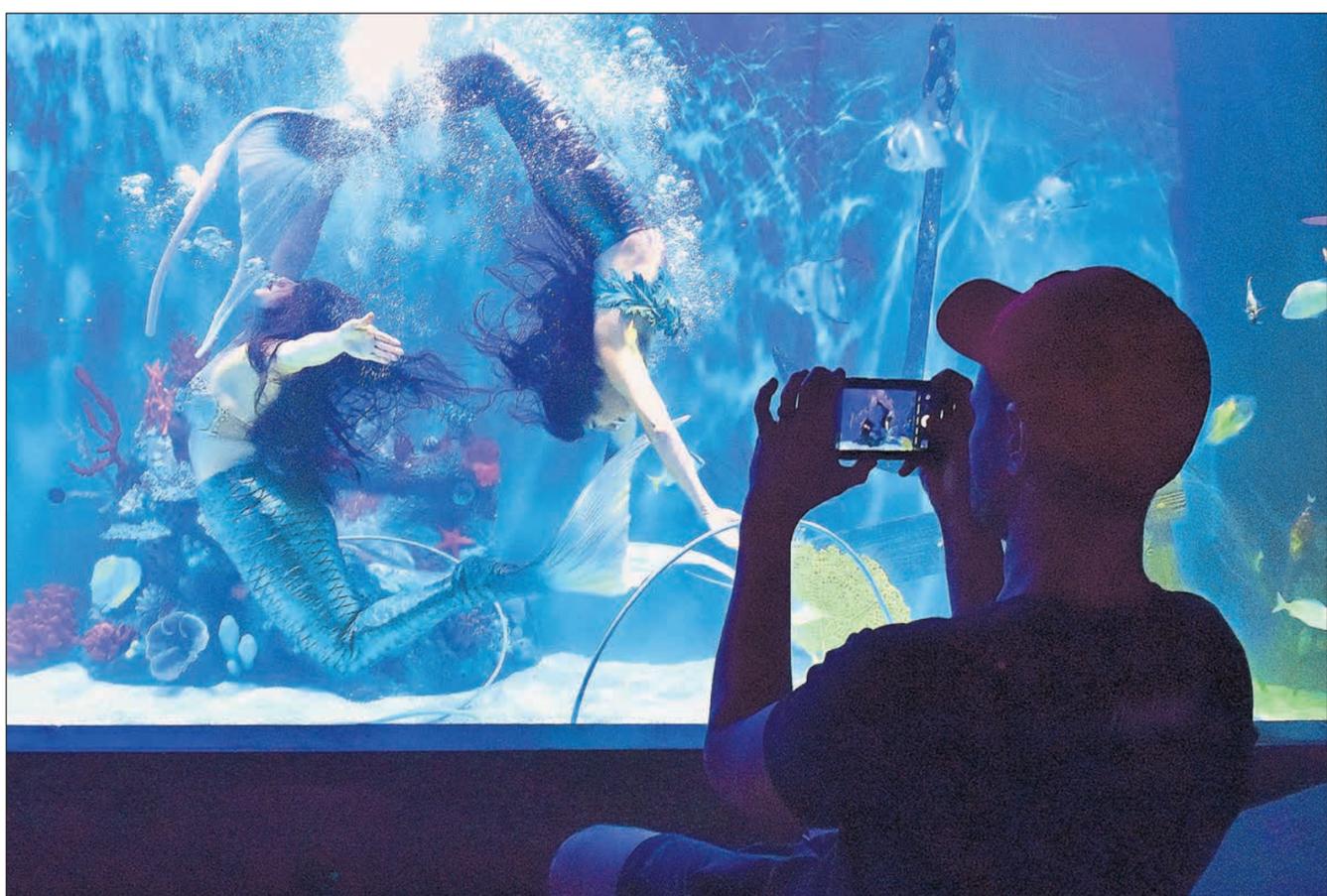
The following three are under one contract for \$2.3 million and going before county commissioners for

approval at their Tuesday meeting. Once approved, work will begin as soon as possible on:

■ Citrus Springs from Santos Drive to U.S. 41

■ Deltona Boulevard from

See **ROADS**, page A7



Photos by Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Eric Ducharme, right, records two mermaids, Brittany Ellis and Marissa Whittaker, who swim in his new 15,000 gallon aquarium at the Mertailor's Mermaid Aquarium Encounter located near Lecanto. The ladies swim with the assistance of air they breath through hoses they hold in their hands.

## Mertailor becomes Mertamer



Marissa Whittaker, top, and Brittany Elis use their tails to glide through the Mertailor's Mermaid Aquarium Encounter.

### Citrus County gains a new mermaid show

By GEORGIA SULLIVAN  
Chronicle Reporter

Generations of mermaids have sprung from Weeki Wachee Springs, but now they have a new home to flash their fins.

Lecanto-based Mertailor, which is not new to the spotlight, is diving in with a new endeavor with an aquarium, including its own live mermaid show. The

Mertailor Mermaid Aquarium Encounter is complete with fish, stingrays and a mermaid show, a lifelong dream of Eric Ducharme's coming to fruition.

Ducharme's magical creations have made headlines worldwide for his incredible success story – becoming fascinated with mermaids as a child, starting his own mermaid tail manufacturing business at the age of 14,



Following a rehearsal Eric Ducharme shows Brittany Ellis, center, and Marissa Whittaker video of their underwater routine. Ducharme has opened a aquarium that features a 9X8X30-foot tank where mermaids perform.

gaining worldwide recognition for the quality of the product he creates. He is definitely a case of born-to-be-an-entrepreneur.

Mertailor hosted mermaid auditions at the aquarium for the past few days, where

both Ducharme and Barbara Wynns, an instrumental figure in his journey to now, were present to discuss and judge the auditions.

Wynns was a Weeki Wachee mermaid from the 1960s and '70s when the

mermaids lived on the grounds of the springs and swam in the shows. In 2010, she met a young and enthusiastic Ducharme. She gave him an old tail they had and

See **MERTAILOR**, page A5



INDEX

Classifieds ..... D4

Crossword ..... A15

Editorial ..... C2

Entertainment ..... A4

Horoscope ..... A4

Lottery Numbers ..... B3

Movies ..... A4

Obituaries ..... A6

Puzzles ..... C3

TV Listings ..... A15

Veterans Notes ..... A13

Weather ..... A4

Week in Review ..... A2

# LOWMAN

LAW FIRM

Hey Neighbor!

600 SE US Highway 19 • 352.888.4484

OFFICES:  
CITRUS COUNTY