

SATURDAY

TODAY & next morning
 HIGH 77
 LOW 60
 Thunderstorms in the afternoon, some strong.
 PAGE A4

CITRUS COUNTY
CHRONICLE
 www.chronicleonline.com



APRIL 2, 2022

Florida's Best Community

Newspaper Serving Florida's Best Community

\$1

VOL. 128 ISSUE 92

IN BRIEF

DeSantis signs bill to bolster law enforcement

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a wide-ranging package Friday that includes providing bonuses to help recruit law-enforcement officers from other states and giving county sheriffs more autonomy over their budgets. The highest profile part of the measure (HB 3) is \$5,000 recruitment bonuses for law-enforcement officers.

With the law taking effect July 1, the state Department of Economic Opportunity is required to develop minimum eligibility requirements for the program.

"We want to incentivize really strong, high-quality people to pursue law enforcement as a vocation in the state of Florida," DeSantis said during a bill-signing ceremony at the Brevard County Sheriff's Office in Titusville. "That may mean that you leave Seattle or Chicago or some of these places and come to the Brevard County Sheriff's Office. But it could also mean that you're somebody that's in Florida trying to determine what you want to do with your life."

Other aspects of the measure include establishing a Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to cover basic-training tuition and fees for new officers and creating an exemption from certain law-enforcement training requirements for military veterans. Sheriffs, under the bill, will see their base salaries increase by \$5,000 a year. Sheriffs will also get more leeway with their budgets after the spending plans have been approved by county commissions.

Currently, sheriffs can appeal county budgetary decisions to the state Administration Commission, which is made up of the governor and members of the Florida Cabinet. But lawmakers included the change into the bill in response to a legal battle started when former Alachua County Sheriff Sadie Darnell shifted money within her budget. Alachua County fought the move, and the Florida Supreme Court in January ruled that the money couldn't be shifted without approval from the county commission.



DESANTIS

Citrus set for another drenching

Close to three inches of rain fell Thursday night

By MICHAEL D. BATES
 Chronicle Reporter

Citrus County got a ton of rain overnight Thursday into Friday, causing standing water on low-lying roads and lawns countywide.

"The official average from (Thursday) was 2.61 inches, but many of our rain gauges show 3-plus inches," said Mark Fulkerson, chief professional engineer with the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). "This brings the Citrus County total

FULKERSON

to 9.14 inches for March." That compares with the historical average for March of only 3.85 inches.

The National Weather Service (NWS) is forecasting an 80 percent chance of rain for Saturday and conditions should dry out starting Sunday.

"The next batch of storms will arrive this weekend, especially Saturday afternoon and Saturday night," according to BayNews9 meteorologists.

"Some could be strong again late Saturday."



WOODWARD

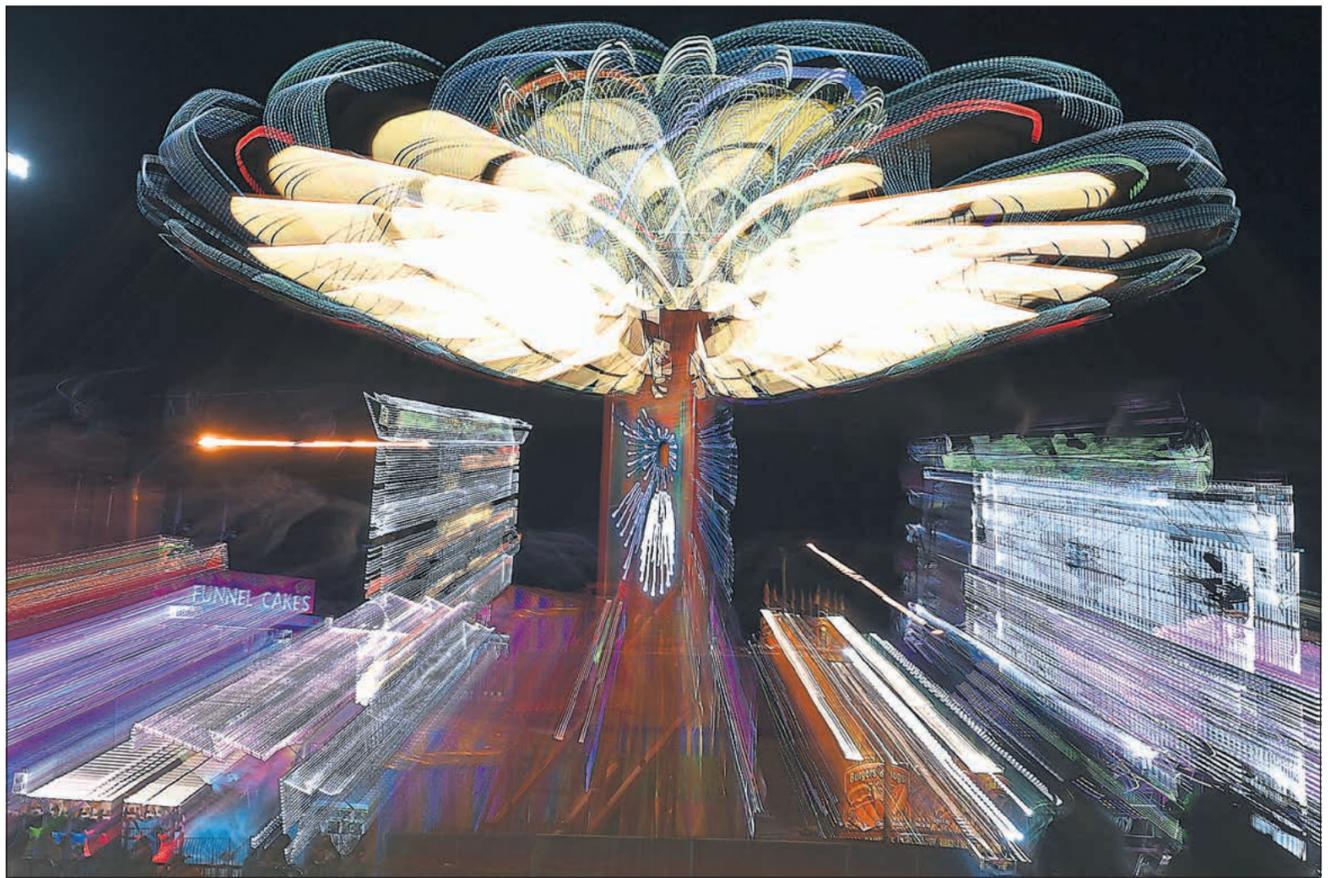
Emergency Management Director Amanda Woodward said she saw some pooling across smaller low-lying roads Thursday night but that was it. "No complaints from residents," she said.

Woodward reminded people that Small Business Association (SBA) loans are still available to residents and businesses that may have seen damage from the March 12 tornadoes.

For more information, call 1-800-659-2955 or visit disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

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

MIDWAY LIGHTS UP THE NIGHT



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Lights and sounds blend into one another at the Citrus County Fair's midway Tuesday night, March 29. The fair will wrap up tomorrow with a Carnival Ride Bonus \$25 armband, main gate only, from 2 to 7 p.m., with no gate admission. The Citrus County Fairgrounds is located on U.S. 41 south of Inverness. See page A3 for more photos.

Show your spirit at the Schoolhouse Hustle

Event to benefit Citrus County Education Foundation

By HANNAH SACHEWICZ
 Chronicle Reporter

Each of the 12 annual fundraisers hosted by the Citrus County Education Foundation (CCEF) has a purpose: the kids.

Without any federal or

See RACE, page A5

Three-year-old Rorie Himmel crosses the finish line with grandmother, Superintendent of Schools Sandra "Sam" Himmel close behind as they participate in the 2019 Schoolhouse Hustle.

STEPHEN E. LASKO / For the Chronicle



Nonprofit Spotlight: Nature Coast Cancer Crusaders

Organization raises money to aid patients and their families

By GEORGIA SULLIVAN
 For the Chronicle

The Nature Coast Cancer Crusaders (NCCC) is a community-based cancer advocacy organization founded in 2015. It was created with the desire to consistently raise money for cancer patients in Citrus County.

Their mission is to raise money for national groundbreaking research

and to fund local programs in Citrus County that will aid cancer patients and their families. They want to provide cancer patients with resources, as well as hold special events to honor survivors and those who have been lost.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCCC was unable to hold their cancer walk or any other events throughout 2020 and 2021. As a nonprofit organization fully dependent on donations from the community, this was a setback for their mission. This year, though, they were finally able to hold their cancer walk once again.

Despite the pandemic's impact, they have not lost any motivation to continue helping the community. Listening to the stories of cancer survivors and their families at events is what keeps the organization's volunteers motivated.

"It is touching to know how much they enjoy our event and the special recognition. Our luminaria ceremony is one aspect that brings people to our event as it is a very special time for survivors and those remembering lost loved ones," said Rory Wells, treasurer and website creator for the NCCC.

See SPOTLIGHT, page A5

INDEX
 Classifieds B6

Comics B5
 Crossword B10

Editorial A8
 Entertainment A4

Horoscope B5
 Lottery Numbers B3

Movies B5
 Obituaries A5

TV Listings B4
 Weather A4



LOWMAN

LAW FIRM

Hey Neighbor!

600 SE US Highway 19 • 352.888.4484

OFFICES: CITRUS COUNTY