

WEDNESDAY

TODAY & next morning
HIGH 80
LOW 58
Sunny and breezy.
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IN BRIEF

Officials: Panther struck and killed by vehicle

LAKELAND (AP) — An endangered Florida panther has died after being struck by a vehicle. It's the 11th panther death attributed to fatal collisions, out of 11 total deaths this year, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The remains of the 2-year-old male panther were found Sunday near Lakeland in Polk County, wildlife officials said.

Florida panthers once roamed the entire Southeast, but now their habitat mostly is confined to a small region of Florida along the Gulf of Mexico. Up to 230 Florida panthers remain in the wild.

Insurance session expected in late May

House Speaker Chris Sprowls, R-Palm Harbor, said Tuesday he expects a special legislative session in late May to address problems in the property-insurance system and announced that Appropriations



SPROWLS

Chairman Jay Trumbull, R-Panama City, will take the lead on the issue for the House.

Sprowls made the comments as a special session started on congressional redistricting and issues related to Walt Disney Co. It also came a day after Gov. Ron DeSantis announced that he would call a special session in May to address problems in the property-insurance system that have led to homeowners losing coverage and getting hit with large rate increases. The House and Senate could not reach agreement on an insurance bill during this year's regular session, which ended March 14. "As you all know, it is extremely complicated and impacts your districts in very, very different ways," Sprowls said to House members Tuesday. DeSantis did not give specific dates for the May special session in his announcement Monday.

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.

Anyone interested in having the elections office staff at an organization or business, contact Supervisor Maureen 'Mo' Baird.

To learn more, visit votecitrus.gov, email vote@votecitrus.gov or call 352-564-7120.

Cardinal to get new turn lane at U.S. 19

East side of U.S. 19 getting 10-foot wide multi-use trail

By MICHAEL D. BATES
Chronicle Reporter

Drivers heading north on U.S. 19 in Homosassa will at long last get a right-turn lane by West Cardinal Street.

But right now, that intersection is a mess.

Work there has been ongoing for months but has intensified recently. That area

is expected to get busier with the February opening of a Suncoast Parkway interchange 3 miles from the intersection.

The Cardinal intersection is part of the overall 6.8-mile project that will repave U.S. 19 from the Hernando County line to West Green Acres, according to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) spokesman John McShaffrey.

Left-turn lanes will be constructed at various median openings along that stretch, McShaffrey said.

Also, a new 10-foot wide multi-use trail will be built on the east side of U.S. 19 and a 5-foot wide sidewalk on the west side.

Crews are now finishing work on a box culvert at the intersection allowing water to flow under U.S. 19 without impeding traffic flow.

"At some point during the project, they will pave over the top of the box culvert area to build a portion of the shared-use (multi-purpose)

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Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Construction progresses at the intersection of U.S. 19 and West Cardinal Street in Homosassa. The corner is being reconfigured to handle traffic at the busy intersection.



Matthew Beck / Chronicle photo editor

Withlacoochee Technical College post-secondary, culinary arts program student Patricia Stratton whisks a meal that will be served during lunch Friday, April 14, inside the school's kitchen. Stratton will soon compete in a state-wide competition testing her culinary skills during a two-day competition.

'NEW FUEL'

WTC student wins first at SkillsUSA

By GEORGIA SULLIVAN
Chronicle Reporter

"Fearless is to fear less." Those are the words written personally by Withlacoochee Technical College professional culinary arts student Patricia Stratton in a scholarship essay detailing her life story.

Stratton recently competed in both the district and regional level SkillsUSA competitions, placing first in culinary arts at both. This means that on April 18-22, she is going to the state level to compete against 14 other individuals from around Florida with possibility to move onto nationals.

For the postsecondary culinary competition, the contestants are given a packet of information that includes recipes, knife skills, cooking techniques, etc. They are given ten minutes to look it over in the beginning and then handed a basket with all the ingredients and told to start. The main goal is to show off their skills



Withlacoochee Technical College post-secondary culinary arts student Kevin Crupi, right, works with Patricia Stratton, Friday, April 14, at the Inverness technical college. The two are preparing enchiladas for the lunch crowd.

while also completing everything within the required time frame.

According to the Skill-

USA Individual Contestant Scores sheet, they are judged on 12 main skill areas, including safety/san-

itation, vegetable cuts, meat fabrication, presentation and even a written test.

Stratton, 49, confessed she felt the urge to quit in the middle of the competition after she thought she had messed up the meat fabrication portion. "It was so overwhelming. I pictured myself walking out, quitting, and that's when I decided to see it not as a competition anymore. I was just there to complete that packet and complete what I went there for, nothing else. So when I went to the awards ceremony and they announced I had won first place, I was like there's no way!" Stratton described. "It was an awesome experience."

Now graduating with honors from WTC's culinary arts program in May, she also graduated with honors from the welding program in December 2021 and is registered to start the cosmetology program in

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Judge sentences last defendant in infant's death

By BUSTER THOMPSON
Chronicle Reporter

A judge sentenced the last of four defendants who killed an infant girl and threatened two other minors with methamphetamine poisoning inside their Inverness home.

Citrus County Circuit Court Judge Richard Howard on Tuesday, April 19, ordered 46-year-old Tammy Marie Allison to serve 15 years in state prison for

the March 2020 aggravated manslaughter of 2-month-old Aliyah Courtney.

Howard also sentenced Allison to a consecutive prison term of three years for living off of Rivington drug house off of Live Oak Lane, and for neglecting the 3-year-old and 5-year-old



CARROLL

COURTNEY

two years under house arrest, Howard ruled.

Allison's punishment is the same one Howard gave Stephanie Pearl Carroll, Kevin Christopher Courtney and Steven Troy Gibson for their

GIBSON

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Prosecutors clear CCSO deputy in shooting

By BUSTER THOMPSON
Chronicle Reporter

Prosecutors vindicated a Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputy for shooting and injuring an Inverness man who had allegedly shot and killed his brother in front of a home-security camera before taking a woman hostage inside her home.

Fifth Judicial Circuit State Attorney William Gladson informed Sheriff Mike Prendergast in a Monday, April 18, memo his office deemed Deputy Daniel Elias was justified in his Jan. 14

shooting of 29-year-old Daniel Arthur Redman.

"Accordingly," Gladson wrote in his letter, obtained Tuesday, "this office will take no further action in the matter."

Gladson's decision was based off his office's review of a Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) investigation into Elias' use of force during his and other deputies' pursuit of Redman for the alleged fatal shooting his 19-year-old brother, Brenden Redman.

According to FDLE and State Attorney reports, Elias fired one round at Daniel Redman from his agency-issued AR-style rifle while Redman was reaching for a suspected firearm inside an RV on the corner of East Beck Street and North Corbin Avenue in Inverness.

Redman had broken into the mobile home, struck its homeowner, 42-year-old Sherry Potulsky, and used Potulsky as a human shield when confronted by deputies.

"Deputy Elias acted reasonably under the circumstances," the State Attorney's report states, "and therefore his actions were justified."

Elias' rifle round struck Redman's neck and became lodged in his spine, paralyzing him.

A Citrus County grand jury indicted Redman Feb. 4 on charges of premeditated murder involving a firearm, kidnapping, burglary of a motor home involving a battery, shooting at an occupied dwelling, and possessing a firearm as a convicted felon.

Authorities took Redman into custody from the Ocala Regional Medical Center, and Redman

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