

LP Elks get cell phone tower

By **KIM LEATHERMAN**
STAFF WRITER

LAKE PLACID — Residents and passers-by may have noticed a new tower in the tiny town. A new cell phone tower has been placed in the parking lot of Elks Lodge 2661 at 200 County Road 621 East about one month ago.

The 175-foot monopole was placed on the Elks property after going through the channels of Town Council and

the County Commission. The owner of the tower is Tampa-based Vertex Development, LLC, which also installed the wireless tower.

“The tower was three years in the making,” said John Holbrook, Lodge advisor and town mayor. He explained there was a slight hold up when an error was found in the way paperwork was completed for the county.

The tower and its base took up 12 parking spots.

Discussions in previous Town Council meetings debated the requirement for the Elks to have the 12 parking places for the building’s use. It was determined the organization did not need the spots. However, Elks officials said they would have replaced the parking places at a different spot on the property if it had been required.

The town did request the base to be somewhat camouflaged and a white privacy

fence was built around it. A delay in the landscaping, another condition, came when a power box had to be installed for the irrigation, Holbrook said.

Vertex paid well for the use of the land for their tower.

“We could take the fee yearly or in one lump sum,” Holbrook said. “We took it in one lump sum. We got \$250,000 and signed a 10-year lease with

TOWER | 3A



KIM LEATHERMAN/STAFF

The wireless tower installed at the Elks Lodge will be a carrier for cell phone companies.

To challenge and prepare



COURTESY PHOTO

Students in the Avon Park High School AP Capstone program visit Bok Tower Gardens. The Capstone program is in its third year at Avon Park High.

Avon Park High seeing success in AP Capstone program

By **MARC VALERO**
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — In the fall of 2017, Avon Park High School started its AP Capstone program — an innovative diploma program aimed at providing skills that will serve students well in college and in their career.

AP Capstone is a program established by the College Board, a not-for-profit organization that is known for the SAT college entrance exam.

APHS Principal Danielle Erwin said the Capstone program requires two yearlong AP (advanced placement) courses: AP seminar and AP research.

Michael Scofield, who coordinates the program, said the seminar class has around 100 students now. It started three years ago with 33 students. Today, about 10% of the school’s student population is in that program.

“We are seeing growth in the amount of AP scholar awards the College Board gives out,” he said. “We are up about 125% with that and we are seeing success in the actual class. Last year, in AP research, around 70% of the kids passed the exam, which is unheard of for AP exams.”

In AP seminar last year, 52% passed the exam and two years ago, in the program’s first year, 66% passed seminar, Scofield said. “So we have had some great



MARC VALERO/STAFF

About 10% of the Avon Park High School students are in an AP seminar course of the AP Capstone program.

success in that program.” Erwin said Avon Park High has a very good relationship with College Board and its AP Capstone program. The partnership has led to many pre-AP classes, English and algebra, for ninth and tenth graders.

“So we are open access ... every student is in a pre-AP English class and if they are in algebra, it is a pre-AP algebra class,” she said.

If students decide to go into the Capstone program, the pre-AP classes serve as a preparation for it and if not, “it’s just really good curriculum and it’s really good for

our kids. It’s not going to hurt them to be in there,” Erwin said.

The AP Capstone program at Avon Park High is intended to challenge and prepare students for the rigors of college. Advanced Placement classes are assigned a higher weight to the GPA (grade point average) scale, assist students with earning college credit, and strengthen student transcripts during the college admission process.

AP courses at Avon Park High include: biology, computer science, environmental science, human

geography, language and composition, literature and composition, music theory, psychology, research, seminar, Spanish, studio art, United States history and world history.

Avon Park High was chosen out of thousands of applicants to be in the second cohort of pilot schools for the new Pre-AP Program.

New course offerings this year included: AP statistics, pre-AP English; pre-AP music and pre-AP theater.

Rather than teaching

AVON | 3A

Deputy injured in Thursday crash

By **KIM LEATHERMAN**
STAFF WRITER

LAKE PLACID — Several serious crashes have taken place over the last few days in Highlands County. The latest happened in Placid Lakes, a subdivision of Lake Placid, on Washington Boulevard at East Canal Way NE at 10:20 p.m. Thursday.

Highlands County Deputy Sheriff Darlene Young, 46, of Sebring, was in the area giving a ride to civilian Scott Wooster, 39, of Naples. Highlands County sheriff’s officials said Wooster was not in custody but was a passenger in the back seat of the 2011 Crown Victoria Police Interceptor.

According to Florida Highway Patrol, Deshawn Graham, 22, of Naples, was driving his 2015 Chrysler 300 northbound on Washington Boulevard NE while Young was traveling southbound on the same road.

For an unknown reason, Graham crossed the yellow center line and hit the cruiser head-on. The momentum forced Graham’s car to spin counterclockwise and finally stopped facing northeast on the west shoulder of Washing Boulevard NE, the report said.

The sheriff’s cruiser rotated counterclockwise and came to a rest facing north on the west shoulder of Washington Boulevard NE. All three people were injured and taken to AdventHealth Lake Placid. Graham and Wooster had minor injuries; Young’s injuries are listed as serious.

The report shows Graham was not wearing a seat belt. Whether alcohol was a determining factor is listed as “pending.”

The deputy was wearing a seat belt but Wooster was not.

Graham was charged with not having a driver’s license, careless driving and not wearing a seat belt, pending his discharge from AdventHealth Lake Placid.

FHP releases details on Christmas night crash

AVON PARK — Details were released by the Florida Highway Patrol on the serious crash that occurred around 7 p.m. Christmas on State Road 17 at Sears Road. The crash sent three people to the trauma unit at Lakeland Regional Hospital and one person to AdventHealth Sebring.

The FHP media release said Cynthia Cisneros, 22, of Sebring was driving a 2015 Chevrolet Malibu with a passenger, Carlos Cisneros, 16, of Sebring southbound on State Road 17 south of Sears Road and was navigating a right-hand curve.

At the same time, Ronel Inelus, 50, of

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2020

Office closing early Tuesday

The Highlands News-Sun will close its office at noon Tuesday, Dec. 31 and will be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1 in observance of New Year’s Day. The office will reopen at 8 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 2.



Classifieds..... **B5-8**
Comics **A9-10, B10-11**
Lottery **B2**

Sports **B1**
Money Market **A4-5**
Obituaries **A3**

TV Listings **A11**
Viewpoints **A6**
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Good morning To
Jeffrey Bratvold
Thanks for reading!



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