



SFSC seeks proposals to build student dormitory

By **MARC VALERO**
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — South Florida State College is moving toward having its first student dormitory built on its Avon Park campus.

The SFSC District Board of Trustees passed a motion Wednesday to formally request the SFSC Foundation, as

the Direct Support Organization to the College, to pursue providing residency opportunities on or near the Avon Park campus for the students of SFSC.

The proposed location for the construction of a residency/dormitory for students is on College Drive just east of the Criminal Justice Academy building. Student capacity could

range from 90 to 110.

To date, the college/Foundation has received two unsolicited proposals. The proposals are for new dorm facilities.

Highlands News-Sun asked for copies of the proposals, but the college responded and the Foundation currently does not have copies to share.



MARC VALERO/STAFF

South Florida Community College has received two proposals and is seeking more proposals from developers to build a student residence building just east of the Criminal Justice Academy building.

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9 new COVID cases, 1 death added to county totals

Staff Report

Highlands County saw nine new cases of COVID-19, according to Thursday's numbers released by the Florida Department of Health, the same as the previous day. Five of the new cases were ages 35-44.

The nine new cases bring the county's total to 8,767, with 8,669 being resident cases and the remaining 98 non-resident cases.

There were 254 resident tests processed on Thursday, with the nine

positive tests, which yielded a positivity rate of 3.54% for the day.

The state is showing one additional death for the county, which puts the total at 366.

The state shows there were 64 vaccines given in the county on Thursday, although it typically takes several days for all of the numbers to come in from various locations.

So far, there have been 45,916 people in the county vaccinated, according to FDOH. There have been 11,657 people who have received the first dose and 34,259 who have gotten both shots in the series.

In the state, there was an increase of 2,338 cases, bringing the total to 2,320,818 cases. There have been 2,277,470 cases involving residents and 43,348 non-resident cases.

The state processed 76,576 resident tests and had 74,2335 negative tests, which resulted in a positivity rate of 3.06%, making it more than two weeks with a positivity rate under 5%.

There were an additional 43 deaths reported, which raises the overall total to 37,512, of which 36,774 have been resident deaths and 738 have been non-resident deaths.

Vaccinations in the state were the lowest they have been in the last two weeks, with FDOH reporting 28,066 doses given on Thursday, although that number will likely increase some over the next few days.

There have now been 10,213,280 million people in Florida vaccinated, with 8,187,878 having received both doses and 2,025,402 people having received the first dose.

The U.S. has surpassed the 50% vaccination mark, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as 166,388,129 people have received at least one, which is 50.1% of the population. The percentage of the country that is considered fully vaccinated is 40.2%.

Among those 12 and over, the percentage climbs to 59.3%, while 62.2% of all adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Seniors have been getting vaccinated at a higher rate than any other group, with 85.7% of those 65 and over having received at least one dose and 74.5% of seniors having been fully vaccinated.

According to the Florida Department of Health, the U.S. has now had a total of 33.23 million cases and had 593,675 deaths.

Globally, there have been 169.13 million cases and 3.51 million deaths.

Please see the "Cases by the County" graphs on page A4

Desperately seeking rental



COURTESY PHOTO/HIGHLANDS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

Smoke rises last Saturday afternoon from a home on Gardenia Road, displacing the family of Ron McMahon, who said he's having to look in Polk County to find rental property.

Displaced family goes out of county for rental property; daughter awaiting cats

By **PHIL ATTINGER**
STAFF WRITER

SEBRING — Since the McMahon family was displaced this past weekend by a house fire, one of their children has been camping on site, waiting for two of their cats to return home.

Other than that, the family has stayed with relatives since Saturday's fire, looking for a rental home or apartment, which has been hard to find in Highlands County. Thursday afternoon found Ron McMahon heading to meet with a realtor in Polk County to see rental properties up there.

"All the realtors in Highlands County have told me the rentals are gone as soon as they get them," Ron McMahon chuckled.

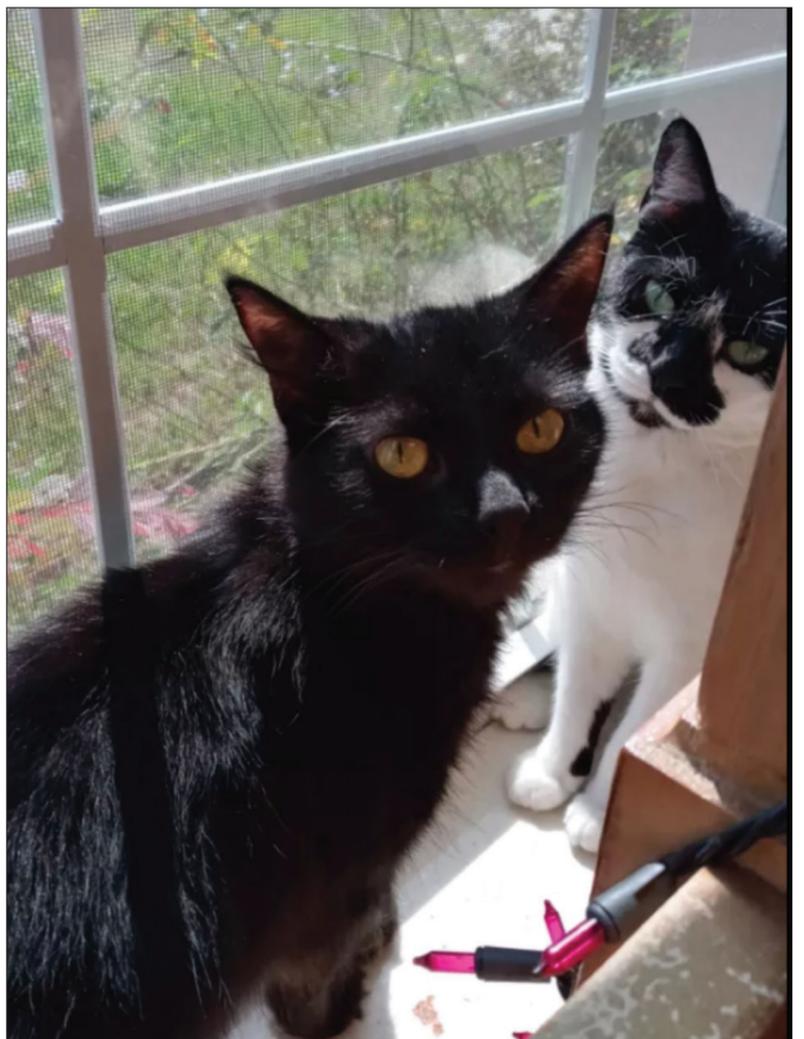
He's thankful for the outpouring of support from the community, he said. Right now, he and his children don't need any more clothes. Anyone who wants to drop off furniture for them, he said, may want to wait until he has a home to put them in.

No one was home at 4:15 p.m. Saturday when their single-story home in the 1800 block of Gardenia Road caught fire, off Lakewood Road. Fire crews deployed from Sun 'N Lake Station 7, Sun 'N Lakes South Station 41, Leisure Lakes Station 30 and Placid Lakes Station 39, with assistance from Avon Park and Sebring city fire departments.

Battalion Chief 1 also deployed along with West Sebring Tanker 10, redirected from the landfill fire. Units had to get water from the YMCA hydrant at Hammock Road.

The house was a total loss. Initial reports were that the fire could have started in the laundry room, but the Florida Division of the State Fire Marshal has been called in to consult.

All members of the family were safe from harm, except for two of the family's four cats, which did not survive. The other two cats escaped but have



COURTESY PHOTO/RON MCMAHON FAMILY

These two cats are still missing from last Saturday's home fire on Gardenia Road in Sebring. The black one is 'Bonnie.' She has yellow goldfish eyes. The black and white one is 'Moo' and her eyes are green. If you find them, call 863-214-6783 or 863-273-5698.

not yet returned home. Anyone who sees the cats — one is solid black and the other is black and white with a mostly black face — is asked to call 863-214-6783 or 863-273-5698.

People who want to help the family may also make a monetary deposit at Mid-Florida Credit Union into the account named "Ron McMahon House Fire Donation."



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Good morning To
Jane Sipe
Thanks for reading!

