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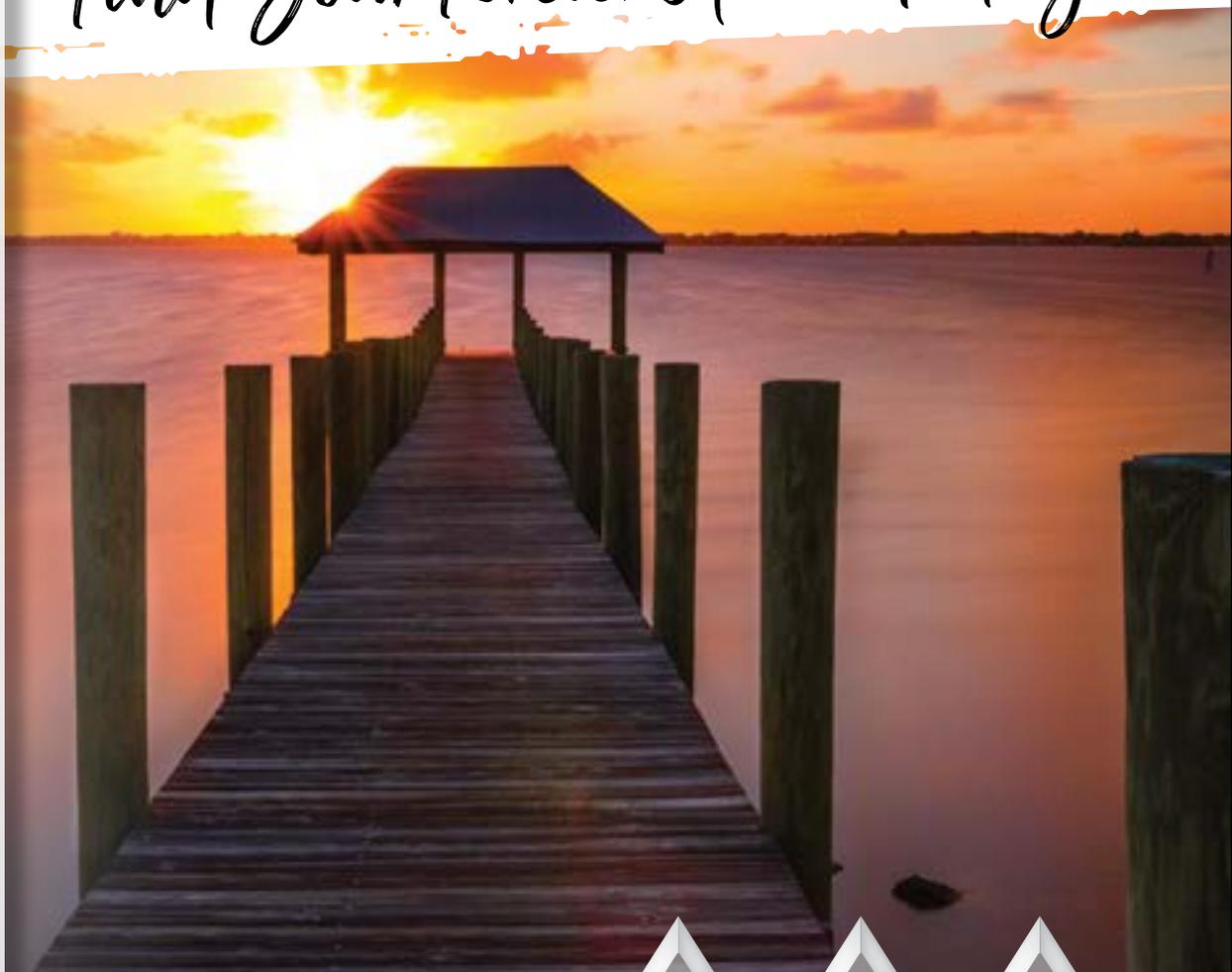
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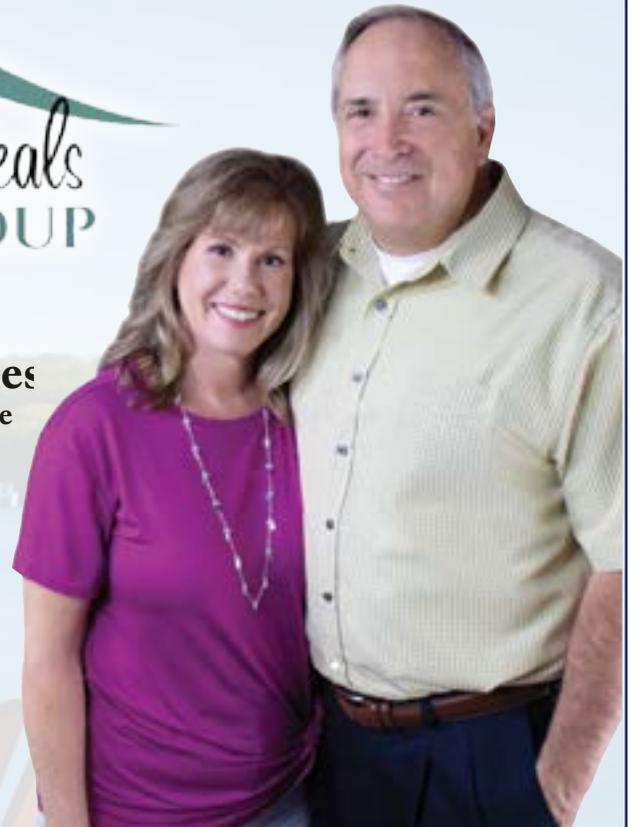
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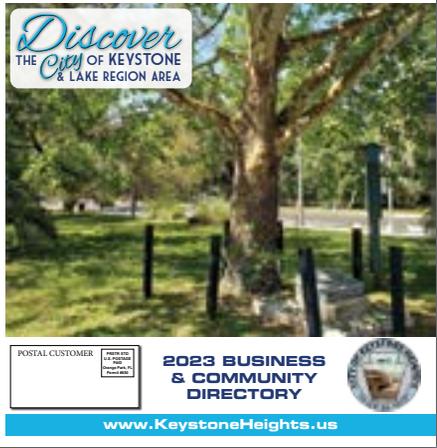
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On the cover...

One of Keystone Heights' notable landmarks is an American Sycamore tree in front of the Keystone Heights Library. The tree is known as the Moon Tree because of its unique past with the Apollo 14 space mission.

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Letter from the Mayor of the City of Keystone Heights



Greetings Citizens and Visitors,

Welcome to our *small piece of Heaven!*

Living in Keystone Heights is a truly a *wonderful, memorable experience.*

Our small town atmosphere provides the perfect balance of relaxation and excitement for people of all ages. Residents enjoy the peaceful, scenic views anchored by multiple live oak trees that are adorned with wispy moss and are surrounded by our beautiful lakes and nature preserves.

As I embark on my first year as your Mayor, our highest goal as members of the *Keystone Heights City leadership team* is to *maintain and enhance the quality of life* for all of our *Keystone Heights residents.*

With *great pride and honor*, I work alongside Vice Mayor Chris Thompson and Councilmembers Bobby Brown, Tony Brown and Steve Hart where we create policy designed for a *quality of life experience*. Our City Manager, Lynn Rutkowski and staff are *pivotal* for our success as they work tirelessly to further ensure that **“We Live Our Best Life Every Day”**.

We are most grateful for our amazing Sheriff Michelle Cook and her outstanding Clay County Sheriff's Office team who ensure the *highest level of community safety* for all of us.

I am happy to report that *Keystone Heights* thrives and offers an *excellent quality of life* with a positive, friendly environment for residents and businesses. Due to the efforts of many, including volunteers, commission members, community leaders, and most importantly, our residents, Keystone Heights is indeed **“A Great Place to Live”**.

Keystone Heights is also a great place to do business, as shown by our historic and robust downtown area, and our bustling SR100/SR21 corridors. We partner for success to attract new businesses as well as to retain and expand existing ones, whereas providing employment opportunities with a wide variety of shopping, dining, professional services, recreation, and entertainment options. We are thrilled when new businesses choose to locate in Keystone Heights and that our existing businesses are prospering. **Great things are happening in Keystone Heights!**

We truly have it all, as we embrace a unique rural haven with an excellent school system, friendly neighborhoods, many beautiful parks, including our beloved Historic Pavilion and Lake Geneva Beach Park where hometown events are held throughout the year. Like days of the past, we also create new memories by celebrating our High School Homecoming, July 4th and Christmas parades annually.

The next few years will bring additional vitality to our town. The Black Creek Water Resource Project, initiated by Sen. Rob Bradley, is underway and will provide approximately 10 million gallons of additional water per day upon its completion, The City of Keystone Heights collaborates with Save Our Lakes Organization (SOLO). *The lakes are our greatest source of recreation and economic opportunity.*

Additionally, *2025 will start* with a *BANG* as we launch our citywide 100th Centennial celebration with many events and activities on the horizon for this momentous time. The *Friends of Keystone Heights* organization will begin robust planning throughout 2024 in anticipation of the Centennial. I want to urge *all citizens to become involved*, as it will be a *fun and memorable historical year.*

We are proud that Keystone Heights is a community of neighbors, and even though the City has grown, it has retained its *“small town” friendliness, charm and Americana spirit.* My husband, Dave and I are honored to call Keystone Heights our home.

Mayor Nina Rodenroth

WELCOME TO THE CITY OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS PROGRESS SINCE 1925

MISSION STATEMENT:

THE MISSION OF THE CITY OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS IS TO PROVIDE OUTSTANDING MUNICIPAL SERVICES, TO BE FINANCIALLY SOUND, TO BE CHAMPIONS OF OUR LAKES AND TO CAREFULLY GROW AND IMPROVE OUR COMMUNITY.

VISION STATEMENT:

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS IS A SAFE, ENVIRONMENTALLY HEALTHY AND ECONOMICALLY THRIVING COMMUNITY FOR ALL ITS CITIZENS AND VISITORS NOW AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

NINA RODENROTH - MAYOR
CHRISTINE THOMPSON – VICE MAYOR
TONY BROWN – COUNCILMAN
STEVE HART – COUNCILMAN
BOBBY BROWN – COUNCILMAN

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KEYSTONE HEIGHTS MEETS THE FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 6:00 PM AT CITY HALL.

CITY ADMINISTRATION:

LYNN RUTKOWSKI - CITY MANAGER
KENNY HALL - PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
CHRISTINA MEEKS - EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
JENIFER ANDREWS - ADMINISTRATIVE CLERK
LINDA COTHERN - ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT
MATT COLE - CODE ENFORCEMENT
RICH KOMANDO - CITY ATTORNEY (BGK)

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Mayor
Nina Rodenroth



Vice Mayor
Christine Thompson



Councilman
Tony Brown



Councilman
Steve Hart



Councilman
Bobby Brown

Clay County's only airport, **Keystone Heights Airport**, serves as a take-off and landing site for private aircraft, corporate jets and a variety of air services. Keystone Heights Airport also provides FBO service. In addition to being a transportation hub for the county, the Keystone Heights Airport is also home to two unique attractions.

Take in our rich military history by visiting our three military museums: **Military Museum of Northeast Florida located in Green Cove Springs; Camp Blanding Museum and Wings of Dreams Aviation Museum** at Keystone Heights Airport. You'll see memorabilia and hear tremendous military and space aviation stories that are part of our destination's pride.

After strolling through history, see how fast you can go on the **Rally Race Car Course, FIRM**, located at the Keystone Heights Airport. Whether you want to take defensive driving classes, drive or train to race rally cars, or you want to bring your own vehicle for open course day, it's about racing for your bragging rights.

Just down the road from the Keystone Heights Airport, another adventure awaits. **Single Vision** is a wildlife education facility. While there you can see and learn more about lions, tigers, leopards, panthers, bobcats, bears and other species of exotic animals.

It's All Natural

What do the gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel, Florida black bear, American alligator and eastern indigo snake have in common? They are all threatened species or species of special concern that are located at **Belmore State Forest**, just northeast of Keystone Heights. Hiking and biking trails, permitted hunting and much more can be enjoyed there from sunrise to sunset.

If you're looking for more outdoor adventure, **Goldhead State Park** offers a rare hike down to a ravine, primitive or RV camping or cabins. Hiking and cycling trails, canoe and kayak launches and a wide variety of picnic areas and private event space make it easy to enjoy this state park.

Looking for some family fun? Keystone Heights offers many park adventures. **Keystone Heights Recreation Park** is the only official dog park in the county. **Keystone Beach** brings out the kid in you with a fun family picnic area and an expansive playground encompassed by a great oak canopy. The Keystone Beach Pavilion has undergone restoration to its original design as a band shell and outdoor entertainment venue.

The Keystone Heights Trailhead along the **Palatka-Lake Butler State Trail**, a nearly 47-mile, multi-use recreational trail from Palatka to Lake Butler, is closer to completion. The trail runs along the Norfolk-Southern Railroad spanning 4 northeast Florida counties. While this trail still has 24-miles in various stages of development, the 19-mile span that runs through Keystone Heights is paved and inviting you to explore. Upon completion of the trailhead, you'll also be able to enjoy new amenities like restrooms and vehicle parking, so you can start your adventure in Keystone Heights.

Keystone Heights, with its unique experiences and natural beauty matched with the friendly faces you'll see most everywhere you go, is a place you'll want to visit again and again.



Administration & Public Workers



Lynn Rutkowski
City Manager



Kenny Hall
Public Work Director



Matt Cole
Code Enforcement



Jenifer Andres
Administrative Clerk



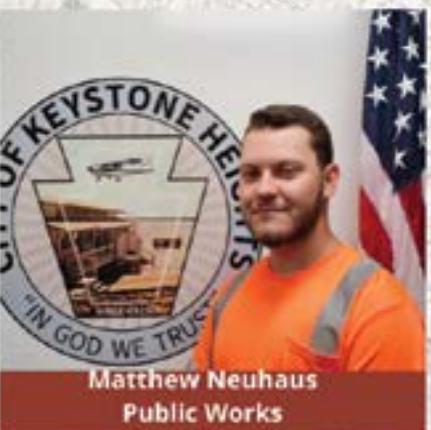
Christina Meeks
Executive Assistant



Linda Cothern
Administrative Assistant



Garrett Cox
Public Works



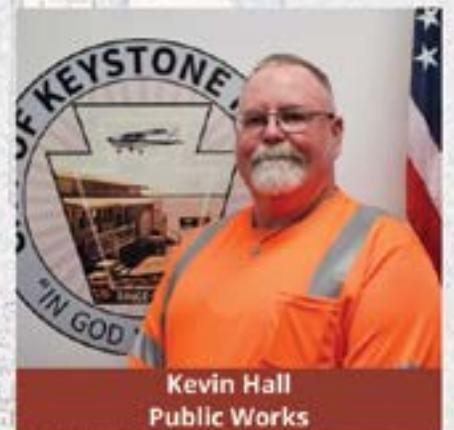
Matthew Neuhaus
Public Works



Joe Johnson
Public Works



Randy Harris
Public Works



Kevin Hall
Public Works

The City Team That Works For You!



Bobby Payne~ Florida House of Representatives

Bobby Payne (Republican Party) is a member of the Florida House of Representatives, representing District 19. He assumed office on November 8, 2016. His current term ends on November 8, 2022. Bobby Payne was born in Palatka, Florida. He graduated from St. Johns River Community College and Jacksonville University. He then earned an M.B.A. from Nova Southeastern University. Payne served for 34 years in the electricity transmission & utility management industry with Seminole Electric Cooperative. He held several different positions, including Manager of Operations at the Seminole Generating Station in Palatka. In addition, he served as chairman of the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce, past president of Sunrise Rotary, and a board member of the Putnam County United Way.



Email Contact: bobby.payne@myfloridahouse.gov



Lynn Rutkowski~City Manager

Lynn Rutkowski was born and raised in Michigan. As a young girl, it was always her dream to move to Florida. At the age of 29, that dream came true when her job in aviation sales transferred Lynn and her family to Keystone Heights. In 2012, Lynn was hired by the City of Keystone Heights as a part time Code Enforcement Officer. Shortly after, she became full time as the Planning and Zoning Clerk, later, Interim City Manager and was appointed City Clerk in January 2016. Council appointed Lynn as City Manager June 1st, 2020, after Mr. Scott Kornegay retired from the City of Keystone Heights.

When not at work, she and her family spend a great deal of time volunteering for organizations within the community. As a former member of the Lake Region Kiwanis, she served as the K-Kids adviser for McRae Elementary as well as Club President for the 2015 - 2016 year. Lynn currently is a member of the Rotary Club of Keystone Heights.



Email Contact: rutkowski@keystoneheights.us



Jennifer Bradley~Florida Senate

Jennifer Bradley is an American politician who has served as a Republican member of the Florida Senate since 2020. She represents the 5th District, encompassing Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee, Union, part of Marion Counties. Jennifer Bradley was born in the Tachikawa U.S. Air Base in Tokyo, Japan. Bradley earned a B.A. in criminology from the University of Florida in 1991 and a J.D. from Florida State University in 1995. Her career experience includes working as an attorney; business manager with Bradley, Garrison, & Komando, P.A.; and owning Hibernia Property Management, Inc.



Email Contact: bradley.jennifer@flsenate.gov



Howard Wanamaker~County Manager

More than 30 years of proven leadership experience, financial stewardship, professional development, and commitment to excellence and integrity. Currently, Clay County Manager for over 220,000 residents in one of the fastest growing Counties in Florida. Former Chief Strategy Officer at Hanania Automotive, the largest automotive group in Northeast Florida; responsible for over 800 team members and 21 dealerships in four states with significant future growth and expansion. Former Commanding Officer of Naval Air Station Jacksonville, third largest U.S. Naval Installation in the world; equivalent to the mayor of a full-service city with a population of over 20,000, aggressive redevelopment, robust infrastructure, fragile river and wetlands environment, and yearly economic impact of \$2.1 billion. Highly accomplished leader with sustained outstanding performance across a diverse portfolio of challenging assignments. Collaborates daily with leadership, local communities, federal, state, and local governmental agencies to achieve organizational objectives in a dynamic, fast-paced environment.



Email Contact: howard.wanamaker@claycountygov.com

City of Keystone Heights Events



Veterans' Day Ceremony
Nov. 11th @ 11am
Keystone Heights Theme Park

Wreath's Across America
Dec. 16th @ 11am
Keystone Heights Memorial
Gardens

Shop Small & Holliday
Extravaganza
Nov. 25th @ 10am
City of Keystone Heights

Easter Sunrise Service
Easter Sunday @ 6am
Keystone Beach Park

Memorial Day Ceremony
May 29th @ 11am
Keystone Heights Memorial
Gardens

Kiwanis Christmas Parade
Dec. 9th
City of Keystone Heights

Freedom 5K Run
July 4th @ 8am
City Hall

Our Country Day
July 4th
City of Keystone Heights

Kiwanis July 4th Parade
July 4th @ 11am
South Lawrence Blvd

Food Truck
Munchie Monday's
Every Other Monday
10am-4pm
Keystone Beach Park

Food Truck Friday
6/19, 7/21, 8/TBD,
9/TBD & 10/TBD
5pm-9pm
Keystone Beach

National Night Out
& Meet Your Neighbor
Aug. 9th @ 6pm
Keystone Beach Park

City of Keystone Heights Events

BREAKING NEWS

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Shop manager Charlie Beck
Customer service Brandy Dutra
Technician Brandon Callahan
(not pictured Marvin Turner)

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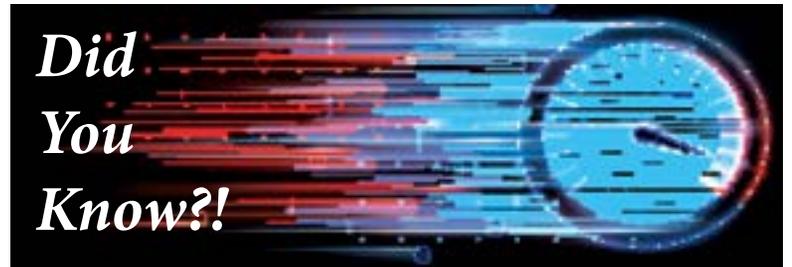
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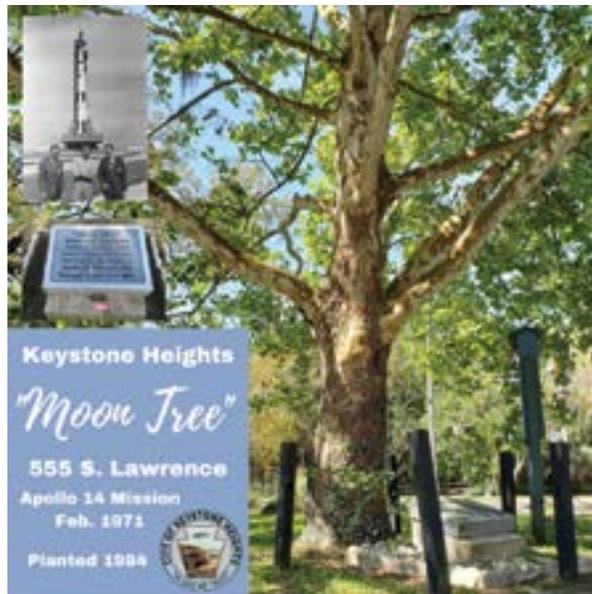
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PARKS...



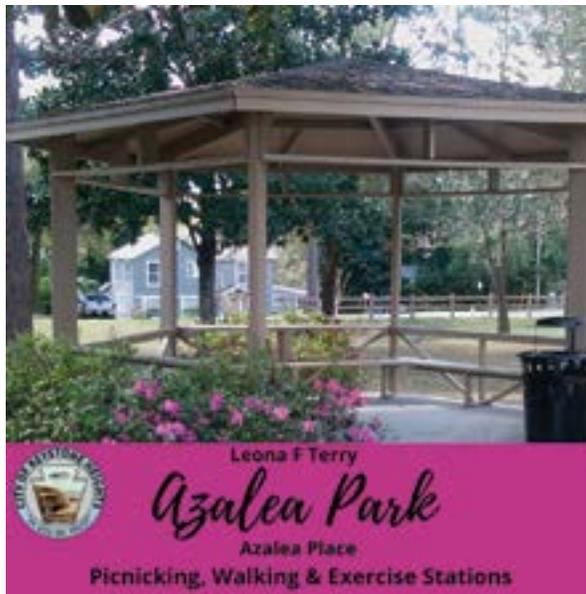
Moon Tree: Located within Theme Park, the “Moon Tree” is an American Sycamore grown from a seed that traveled to the Moon on Apollo 14 in February of 1971. It was planted in 1984.



Keystone Beach/Geneva Jungle: This beautiful park features picnic areas, beach volleyball, the “Geneva Jungle” playground, swings, slides and the Keystone Heights Historic Pavilion. This park is open to the public from 7am - 10pm. The Keystone Historic Pavilion can be rented out for gatherings and special events. Please contact Keystone Heights City Hall at 352.473.4807 for more information.

14 Keystone Heights • JUNE 2023

PARKS...



Leona F. Terry Azalea Park: Azalea Park can be found tucked away in down town Keystone Heights. As you follow the pathway that circles the park you will come across various fitness stations such as pull-up bars, balance beams and sit-up benches. After your workout the gazebo sitting area is a great place to cool down and relax.



Keystone Heights Natural Park: In the Keystone Heights Natural Park you will find various flora, scenic walkways and a gazebo seating area. This park is a popular spot for photos, small wedding ceremonies, picnics and city events.

PARKS...



Theme Park: The Keystone Heights Theme Park can be found behind Keystone Heights City Hall. This park features lighted basketball and tennis courts, an EV Charging Station, playground equipment and picnic areas.



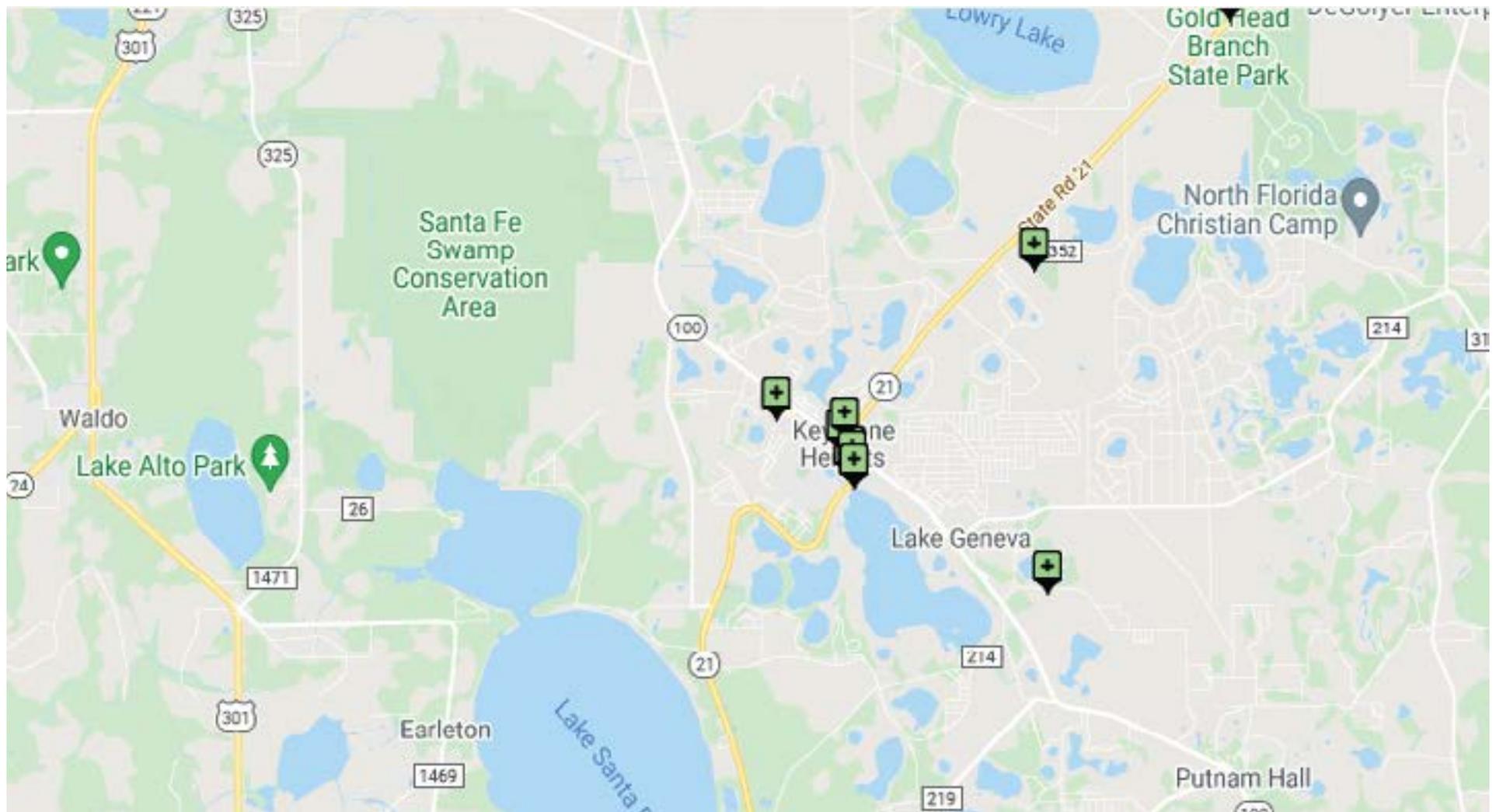
The Rails to Trails/Story Walk: This Scenic walking park runs through the City of Keystone Heights alongside SR 100. This is a scenic trail great for biking, running and walking. Are you a Florida Trail Passport holder? Don't forget to stop by City Hall to get the City of Keystone Heights Florida Trail stamp added to your passport!

PARKS...

PARKS...

PARKS...

Name	Basketball	Biking	Camping	Canoeing	Fishing	Hiking	Kayaking	PADL	Pet Friendly	Pickleball	Picnicking	Playground	Swimming	Tennis	Volleyball	Walking	 
Azalea Park											x					x	240 SW Azalea Pl.
Gold Head Branch State Park		x	x	x		x	x		x		x	x				x	6239 SR-21
Keystone Beach/Geneva Jungle				x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	565 S. Lawrence Blvd.
Keystone Heights Boat Ramp				x	x		x										
Keystone Heights Historic Pavilion				x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x		565 S. Lawrence Blvd.
Little Rain Lake Community Park	x									x	x	x		x			6725 Little Rain Blvd.
Natural Park									x		x					x	550 S. Lawrence Blvd.
Palatka-Lake Butler Rails to Trails		x							x								SR-100
Sunrise Park/Paradise Bark		x							x	x	x	x				x	7933 Sunrise Blvd.
Theme Park	x										x	x		x			555 S. Lawrence Blvd.
Twin Lakes Community Park	x	x									x	x		x		x	6065 Twin Lakes Rd.



////// HERITAGE COMMISSION ////

By Natalie Gilstrap



KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – The Keystone Heights Heritage Commission recently hosted its second-annual Mother’s Day Tour of Historic Homes to share and educate the community about the city’s hidden treasures.

“It’s about educating the general public and for those interested in wanting to know a little more about Keystone and why it is a

gem of a community,” Deidre Murphy, Co-Chair of the Keystone Heights Heritage Commission, said.

The self-guided walking tour started at the Keystone Beach Pavilion and was held between 10 a.m.-1 p.m. In honor of Mother’s Day, the commission gave out pink roses to the first 50 walkers. Mayor Nina Rodenroth greeted the locals and brochures containing information about the historic homes were available. Unlike last year’s tour, which focused on historic homes that are 100 years or older, locals toured 15 landmark homes built during the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s. The event also had

refreshments provided by Clyde’s Cozy Corner Café.

The commission was available to answer any questions about the historic homes.

“It’s a great way to look at the old homes and get a feel for the different styles,” attendee Lynde Jones said. In addition, the Heritage Commission was pleased with the event’s outcome and how it connected the commission to the community.

“It was great,” Murphy said. “It was great to connect with the community.”

As of now, the Keystone Heights Heritage Commission plans to expand the Mother’s Day Tour during the city’s centennial in 2025. Its goal is to incorporate inside tours of historic homes.



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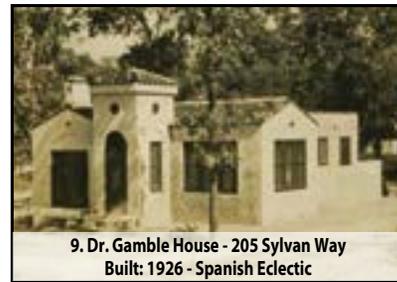
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And Historical
Walking Tour**



**1. Lawrence House - 580 Lawrence Blvd.*
Built: 1921 - Craftsman Sears Kit Home**



**2. J.M. Bergin House - 460 Magnolia Ave.*
Built: 1925 - Craftsman Bungalow**



**9. Dr. Gamble House - 205 Sylvan Way
Built: 1926 - Spanish Eclectic**



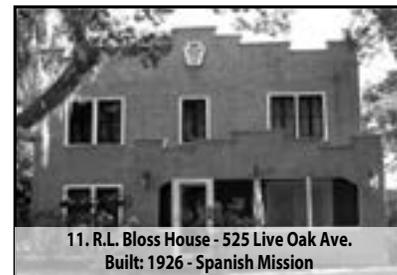
**10. S.L. Hart House - 350 Sylvan Way
Built: 1928 - Simple Craftsman**



**3. Caughey House - 450 Magnolia Ave.
Built: 1925 - Craftsman Bungalow**



**4. B. Mack House - 440 Magnolia Ave.
Built: 1925 - Craftsman Bungalow**



**11. R.L. Bloss House - 525 Live Oak Ave.
Built: 1926 - Spanish Mission**



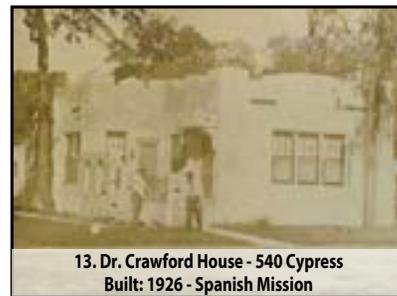
**12. Judge McKlem House - 320 Oriole Street
Built: 1926 - Spanish Mission**



**5. J.&E. Bird House - 355 Magnolia Ave.*
Built: 1927 - Spanish Revival**



**6. Parks House - 160 Magnolia Ave.
Built: 1926 - Spanish Mission**



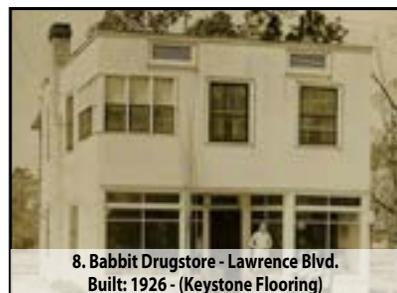
**13. Dr. Crawford House - 540 Cypress
Built: 1926 - Spanish Mission**



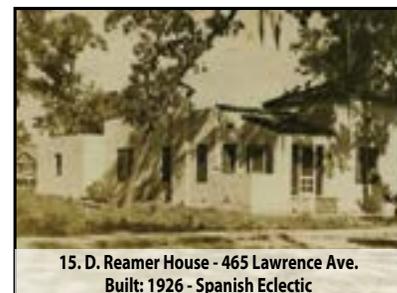
**14. Houser House - 250 Lakeview Street
Built: 1925 - Craftsman**



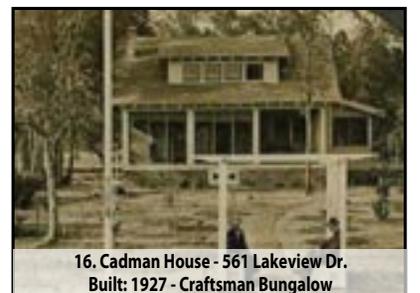
**7. Hardware Store - Lawrence Blvd.
Built: 1926 - (Locker Room)**



**8. Babbit Drugstore - Lawrence Blvd.
Built: 1926 - (Keystone Flooring)**



**15. D. Reamer House - 465 Lawrence Ave.
Built: 1926 - Spanish Eclectic**



**16. Cadman House - 561 Lakeview Dr.
Built: 1927 - Craftsman Bungalow**

The History of Keystone Heights, Florida

By **Nina Rodenroth**,
Keystone Heights Heritage Commission

The Keystone Heights Heritage Commission (established in 2008), consists of seven persons appointed by the City Council, and several associate members appointed by the Commission. It meets each month, at the City Hall, to consider architectural preservation issues and community education of Keystone's history.

Excerpts for this article are from the *City of Keystone Heights, Florida Historic Resources Survey* prepared for the Heritage Commission by Murray D. Laurie. Her *Survey* provides the basis for the city's preservation planning, and encourages the preservation and revitalization of the historic resources of Keystone Heights, and is available at Keystone Heights city hall.

Keystone Heights History to 1954

The Florida Land Boom of the 1920s attracted John J. Lawrence of Pittsburgh, PA, an ordained minister, to establish a community in the southern Clay County "lake region". After abandoning plans for real estate development in Miami, Lawrence became active for a time in the development of Sebring, Florida, where he met J. B. Zell, who owned land near Lake Brooklyn in Clay County. In 1919, the region around Lake Brooklyn and Lake Geneva was still very sparsely settled. The village of Lake Geneva was founded around 1903 on the north edge of Lake Geneva. By 1908, it had a post office and a depot on the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad line, which ran between Valdosta, GA, and Palatka.

The GS&F also had a small depot a few miles to the west at Brooklyn, and William King built the Brooklyn Hotel near the depot. Lawrence, impressed with the mild climate, good drainage, clear water of the lakes and the wooded landscape, brought his three brothers, Jess, Joe and Claude, into his visionary enterprise, the Lawrence Developing Company, founded in 1919 and headquartered at

first in the Brooklyn Hotel. The Company had purchased thousands of acres of land and named the new town Keystone Heights. Most of the early settlers, along with the developers, were from Pennsylvania, the "Keystone State." Some of the early buildings had signs or symbols in the shape of a keystone, still seen on several of the historic buildings. Lawrence persuaded the railroad to move its depot from Brooklyn to Keystone, and a new depot was constructed. In 1924, the Brooklyn post office closed and the Keystone Heights post office opened.

In 1922, civil engineer C. Ray Lawrence plotted the streets.

The first settlers set about building modest homes, some living in tents until their houses were ready. Some of the first homeowners were from Meadville, PA, where the Lawrence family was from. They were an educated and energetic group that included artists, teachers, businessmen, clergy, and engineers. They were also practical and resourceful, setting up small businesses to serve the town's economic needs and public services such as schools, utilities, parks and recreational facilities from scratch to improve their new community.

In addition to home sites, new citizens of Keystone Heights were also encouraged to purchase agricultural acreage near the town,

which John J. Lawrence had already planted with young peach and pecan trees. Like the Penney Farms community, Lawrence Developing Company incorporated an element of commitment to the future in its early plans, hoping that its citizens would reap the benefits of producing and selling crops grown on their own land. However, due to problems with soil, insects and other disappointments, this never materialized. However, fruits and flowers did flourish in the gardens of the new settlers.

John Lawrence, an ordained minister, was very interested in re-

ligion and one of the earliest institutions in Keystone Heights was the Community Church, an interdenominational house of worship founded in 1923. Lawrence also wanted a suitable place



The Company organized an intensive promotional campaign. Maps, postcards, and brochures were printed and distributed, featuring the colorful maps created by C. Ray Lawrence.

for prospective land purchasers to stay, and the Company built the comfortable, three-story Keystone Inn on a site overlooking Lake Geneva, but not directly on the waterfront, reserving those parcels for sale. Jess Lawrence supervised the construction crew, made up of local men.

The Keystone Inn opened on January 1, 1924, and became the hub of social activities in the town. The Board of Trade was organized there and the Inn was the site of weddings, card parties, Chautauqua Circuit gatherings, and was the headquarters for the convention of the National Federation of Women's Club in the late 1920s. In its heyday of the 1920s, the Inn was so popular in the winter that it was likely to be overbooked. The Pavilion at Keystone beach was erected shortly thereafter and was used for dances, boat rides, and the use of locals and guests of the hotel.

Even though eight trains of the Georgia Southern and Florida Railroad traveled through the area daily in 1924, the roads were dreadful. The road to Green Cove Springs, the county seat, was a sandy trail through dense pinewoods that took half a day. Although it was built at the height of the Florida Boom, Keystone Heights grew slowly. The town was incorporated in 1925, with a population of less than fifty. The town leaders kept careful records of their council meetings, elections, finances, and the ordinances they passed. All of the minutes of the meetings are preserved in the City Hall. The names of the elected and appointed officials are recorded and so are expenditures for town improvements such as sidewalks and streetlights, equipment for the fire department, landscaping for parks, electric and water service, and such attractions as the dock, pavilion and public beach on the shore of Lake Geneva.

A statewide business directory published in Jacksonville in 1925 reported that Keystone Heights, formerly Brooklyn, had a population of 100 and was on the route of the GS&F railroad. Phone service was available and a community

church had been established. Mr. F. D. Hornbeck ran a drug store, F. E. Carr was the postmaster and the freight agent for the railroad, and Tracey W. Baker was the town notary. Other businesses were the Keystone Heights Lumber Company and the Wiggins Electric Light and Power Company.

Like James C. Penney, John Lawrence envisioned a cultured, moral, and involved community and took steps to make this happen. He was elated when Dr. George Mead, a Presbyterian minister who had built a home in Keystone Heights, was selected as the president of the Winter Chautauqua in 1926-1927 and chose the young town as its location. The sixty-day event was affiliated with the national Chautauqua institute and featured a wide and varied program. Speakers, musicians, authors, and artists from Florida, Pennsylvania and New England led the program, and visitors enjoyed a lively and uplifting round of banquets, lectures, classes, and musical programs held at the Keystone Inn and at other venues in town. One outdoor site is still called the Chautauqua Circle. The town boldly began to advertise itself as "The Chautauqua City of the South." Dr. George Bird, a professor of journalism, became the publicity director for the company and diligently placed articles about the town in newspapers throughout the country, such as one about the upcoming Chautauqua program and another describing the new high school and auditorium that had opened for the winter season and the many homes under construction.

The Keystone Heights public school was built on four acres donated by the Lawrence Developing Company. The attractive brick school, which had only four classrooms at first, was designed by Gainesville architect Newbold Goin. The school has continued to grow into a large campus at the same location with modern buildings and sports fields, but the original building was demolished in 1981.

Visitors and residents to the town enjoyed the public beach on Lake Geneva and the adjacent pavilion, which included a band shell

for outdoor concerts, and by 1926 they could play a round of golf at the nine-hole course. Although modern conveniences like electricity and telephones were scarce at first, thanks to the energetic G. E. Wiggins, improvements to the town were soon underway. Wiggins, who had been recruited from his hardware store in Green Cove Springs by John Lawrence to take charge of the plumbing and electrical work on the Keystone Inn, ended up owning the original Delco electric plant that first supplied the town's electricity. He also developed the town water system.

During the Depression, when the population in and near Keystone Heights had grown to about 320, the New Deal offered some relief to the local economy in the lake region. Gold Head Branch State Park was created north of Keystone Heights in 1934 with the help of federal funding. Michael Roess donated the initial eighty acres of cutover timberland and the Civilian Conservation Corps developed the park facilities. A number of the park staff lived in Keystone Heights and became members of the community.

Originally intended as a winter resort, Keystone Heights attracted more year-round residents by the 1930s and became a summer playground in the 1940s and 1950s. Most of Clay County remained largely rural during the Depression and little was done to improve roads and transportation. However, in 1939, in anticipation of military involvement in World War II, two military installations were established in the county and these signaled an upturn in the local economy, bringing jobs and better roads. A large training base for the U. S. Army, Camp Blanding, was built near Starke, in Bradford County, and the U. S. Navy built an air station and docks on the St. Johns River at Green Cove Springs. Service personnel and their families added to the population during the 1940s, not only from these military bases, but also from those in Duval County to the north. The Keystone Inn was popular with wives of servicemen at Camp Blanding

and airmen training at the small airfield near the town. After the war, many who had been stationed at these facilities returned to make permanent homes in Clay County. Another post-war benefit of Camp Blanding was the opportunity to purchase surplus buildings: a number of frame structures built to serve as military housing were moved to Keystone Heights and retrofitted as homes for civilians. When the DuPont Company expanded its titanium mine near Starke in the 1950s that employed more than 300 people, another influx of new residents arrived. Clay Electric Cooperative, organized in 1937, was also a major employer as its facilities in Keystone Heights grew.

As the population of Keystone Heights grew, it attracted retirees and weekend residents from Jacksonville and Gainesville

In 1954, the Keystone Inn, which had been the hub of community social activities, caught fire and was badly damaged. It never recovered its former importance and, despite some repairs and efforts to revive the hotel, it closed and was eventually demolished and the site turned into the Keystone Heights Natural Park.

As the population of Keystone Heights grew, it attracted retirees and weekend residents from Jacksonville and Gainesville; its pleasant small town amenities included boating and swimming in local lakes, a golf course and tennis courts, good schools, and an airport, built as a training field during World War II; the Airpark is now owned by the City of Keystone Heights.



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Keystone Heights Memorial Gardens is owned and maintained by the City of Keystone Heights. This beautiful cemetery is located at 7304 State Road 100. Just 1 mile west of S. Lawrence Blvd. Improvements are underway in our cemetery. The cemetery will be sectioned out by Gardens, featuring new signage and a Wayfinding System to help better locate your loved ones. In addition, other improvements will be the beautification with landscaping, columbarium and irrigation. We will soon add a link on our website that will allow users to interact to find graves and see lots available for purchase. For information regarding lots or to purchase a brick to add to our Veterans Memorial Pathway, please contact Keystone Heights City Hall at (352)473-4807.



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Keystone Heights Library



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Phone: 352-473-4286

Hours

Monday-Thursday: 10AM – 8PM

Friday-Saturday: 9AM – 5PM

Sunday Closed

There's something for everyone at the Keystone Heights Library! Whether you're searching for your next great read, researching a project for school, or looking to connect with your community, the library is home to countless opportunities to explore.

Library Services

The library offers more than just books and movies for checkout. If you need internet access at home or on the go, check out a mobile hotspot. This device converts a cellular data signal into a WiFi signal to connect your computer, smartphone, or other device to the internet. Mobile hotspots are free to check out for two weeks at a time.

If you're looking to make learning fun for your family, try a Playaway Launchpad. These educational tablets are pre-loaded with apps, games, videos, and narrated stories that explore STEM, early literacy, life skills, and critical thinking. Launchpads are designed exclusively for children, which means they're secure and require no Wi-Fi to use. Launchpads may be checked out for two weeks.

Can't make it to the library during opening hours? You can check out library materials anytime with the new HoldIT kiosks. Browse the catalog online and reserve items in advance on the library's website. These items can be picked up from your assigned locker on your schedule. No time to wait? Check out an ebook or audiobook through OverDrive. Download the OverDrive or Libby app on your smartphone or tablet, log in with your library card number and PIN, and start enjoying digital materials wherever you are!

Programs & Events

In-person children's programs resume in June! Join us for storytime on Wednesday mornings. Read, sing, dance, and play together using books and songs that support early literacy and school readiness skills. The library also offers a weekly baby lapsit storytime that engages infants and their caregivers through stories, rhymes, music, and movement. All in-person programs will follow CDC guidelines regarding COVID-19.

Arts and craft programs and STEM challenges for school age children occur throughout the month. Keep an eye out for teen and adult programs as well – there are always new opportunities for patrons of all ages to come together, create, and learn!

For a detailed calendar of events and to sign up for events, visit claycountygov.libcal.com.

Summer Reading Program

Each year the Library hosts a Summer Reading Program full of fun events and activities that encourage the whole family to read. Children, teens, and adults can pick up reading logs at the library to enter grand prize raffle drawings. The more you read, the more chances you have to win!

Summer Reading Program starts in June and runs for six weeks.

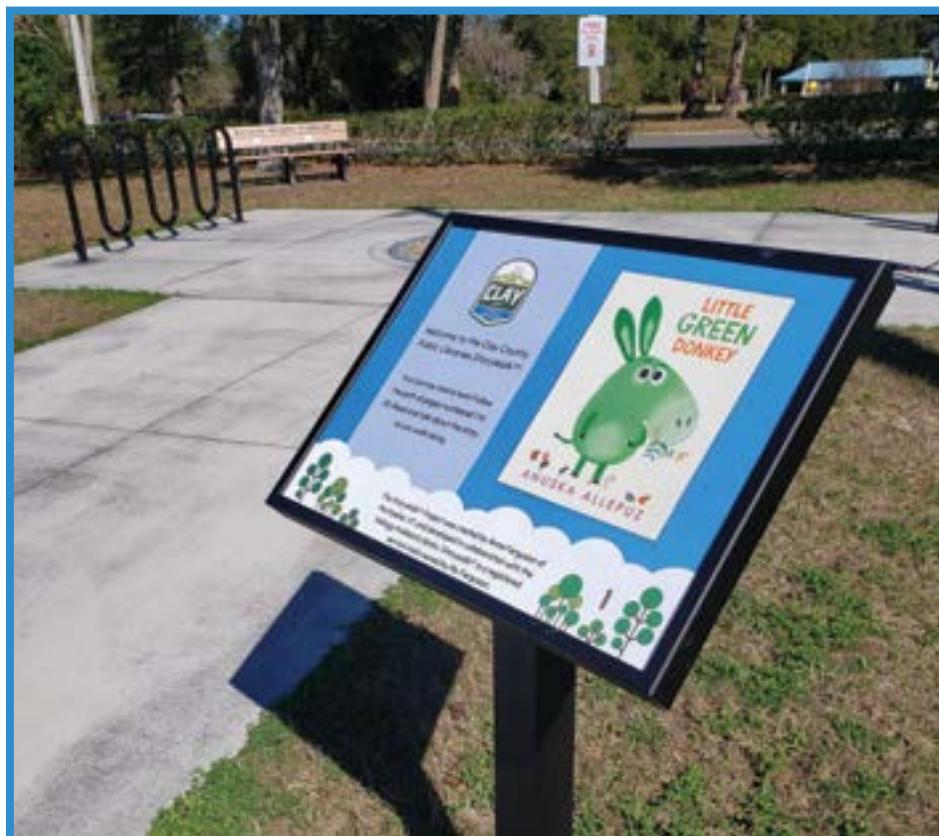
StoryWalk®

Clay County Public Libraries partnered with the City of Keystone Heights to install a new StoryWalk® along the Palatka-Lake Butler Rails to Trails. In a StoryWalk®, a children's picture book is taken apart and its pages are posted along a path. Families can read and talk about the story as they walk outdoors. Each page of the StoryWalk® includes interactive reading activities with questions, discussion ideas, and physical activities to help children engage with the story and their environment. The whole family can play and learn together as they spend time outdoors!

The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. The Clay County StoryWalk® project was funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

If you'd like to visit the StoryWalk®, you can find the first page at the Rails to Trails Trailhead on SR 100 in Keystone Heights. New books are installed every 3 months.

For more information on Clay County Public Libraries, visit library.claycountygov.com.



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Woman's Club of Keystone Heights

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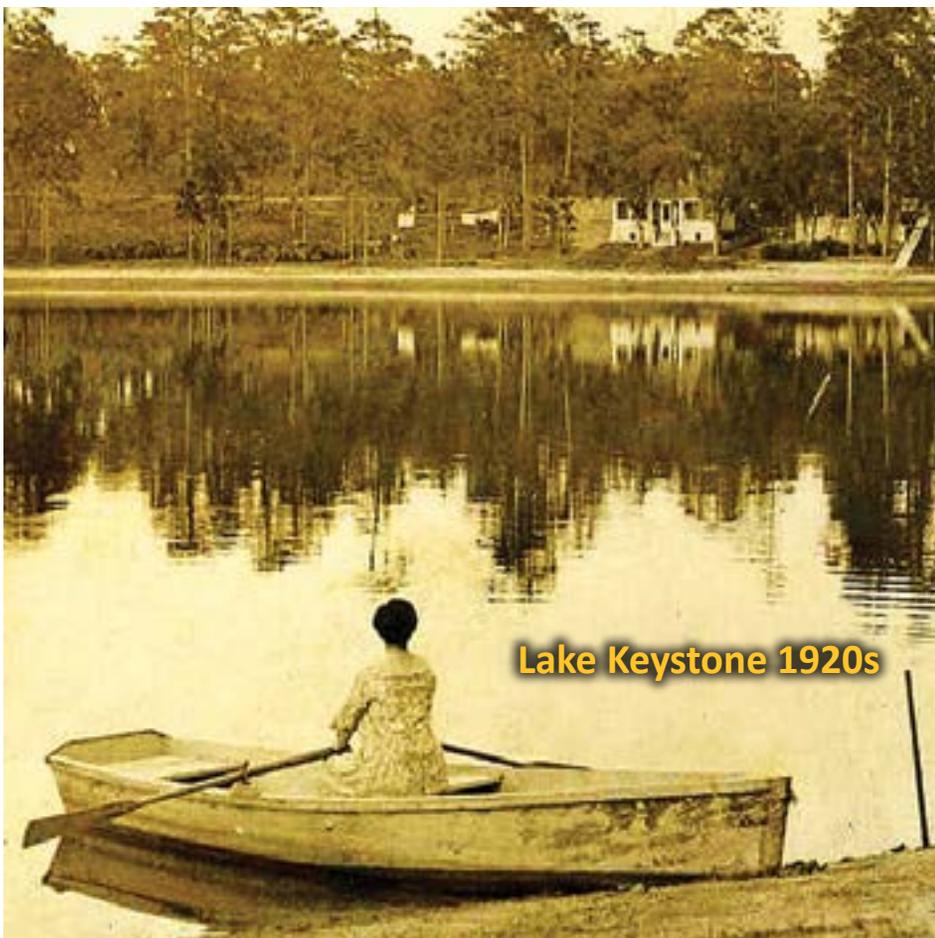
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Lake Keystone 1920s



Womans Club

Keystone Heights 2025

New history for Keystone Heights was made on April 24, 2018, when a newly-formed citizen's steering committee began planning Keystone Height's 2025 Centennial. The committee is made up of individual representatives from those Keystone civic, patriotic and municipal entities that have contributed to the community in the past 100 years.

The City of Keystone Heights, a planned community, was chartered in 1925. The Lawrence Developing Company, consisting primarily of Pennsylvania natives, planned Keystone Heights and erected notable structures such as the Keystone Inn and the Keystone Beach Pavilion. Several 1920s era homes remain in the City, as do downtown business establishments, such as the "Mallards" building. The community has a rich mosaic of notable people important to Keystone's founding and to North Florida history.

Some celebration ideas suggested by the Committee are:

- Create a centennial brand and logo, and incorporate them throughout 2025 into existing

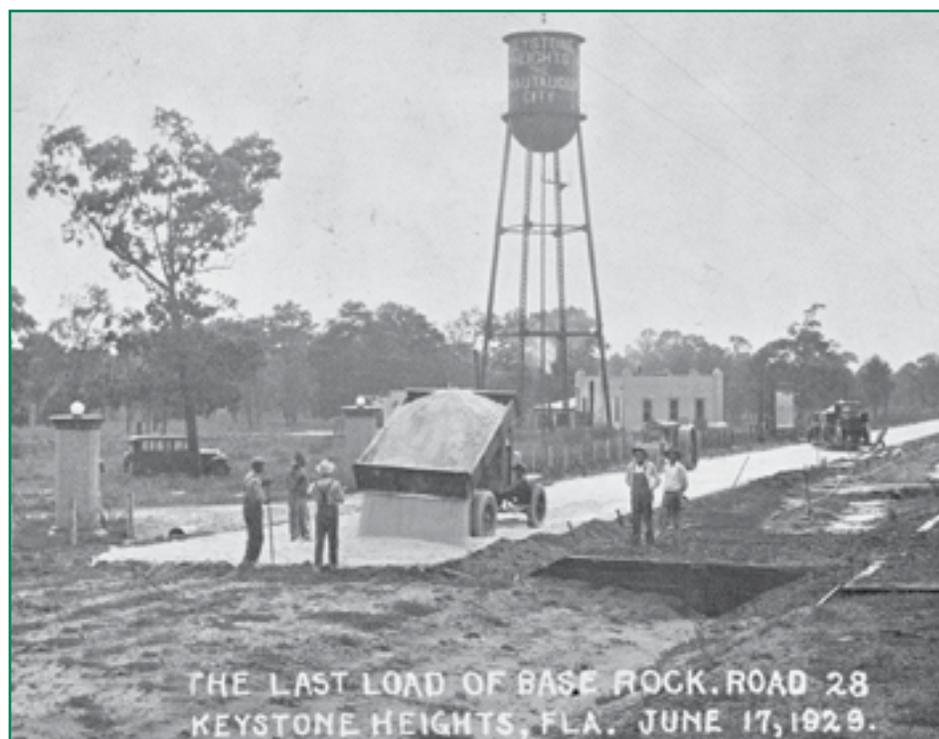
major annual events such as the Kiwanis July 4 and Christmas parades, the 4th of July fireworks, the Memorial Day and Veteran's Day programs, the Mayor's Ball, the Keystone High School Homecoming parade and the Garden Club Arbor Day celebration;

- Have additional special events throughout 2025. Some possibilities suggested were a car show, a New Year's Eve Celebration at that pavilion to kick off 2025, honor decedents of original Keystone families and founders, have an all-city musical and skit pageant "Rolling through the Decades" in conjunction with the July 4 fireworks, have a "brothers of the brush" beard growing contest and planting a time capsule.

The Committee will meet every 3 months, with the next meeting set for July 31 at 5:30PM at City Hall. The public is encouraged to attend and contribute ideas and enthusiasm.



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Split seconds separate Motosurf top racers

By **Randy Lefko**
Sports Editor



KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - With more than double the athletes than last year's event, the Keystone Heights Motosurf stop over the weekend gave watersports fans more thrills, a few crashes and plenty of splashes as the races for the event were all finished with thrilling split second finishes.

"We have racers from all over the world; Canada, Indonesia, Bosnia, Mexico, Chile with American racers coming from other water sports including five time jetski world champion Mark Gross," said Motosurf event spokesman Andrew Prikryl. "Anthony Squire, from North Carolina, is a current world cup competitor and the American champion. He could win all the races today."

Prikryl noted that the Keystone Heights events has become one of the more sought events on the pro tour due to the hospitality of the local fans.

"The people here are fantastic and we have the athletes housed in many AirBNBs around the area," said Squire, 27, and the pro mens champion for the day in both the Electric challenge and the Motosurf final. "I stayed in an AirBNB off a lake and Friday we had 30 athletes out there for

a little barbecue and lakeside party. It was fantastic."

Squire said the youth challenges for the weekend provided some of the best races of the weekend with riders from around the country getting a good look at the competition and being part of it.

"For Europe, this sports is like American football here," said Squire. "Over there, it is huge and the kids start very young to get this good. For America,

the sport is growing from a hobby to a legit sports to train for."

Squire, who noted that, at last year's Keystone Heights event, he did not do well.

"I was fifth, but got a good taste of the sports," said Squire, a construction manager in North Carolina. "I've been a water sports guy all my

life and raced some motorcycles and even fly boarding. Kind of whatever sport we can find that's off the grid."

Squire got his first board four years ago, got hit with the COVID year, then got fifth in Keystone Heights last year. Last year, Squire said he may have been the only American rider on the pro circuit.

"I just rode and raced as much as I can; Cancun, Italy, Croatia, to race against the best and get better," said Squire. "The community in the sports are really nice and everyone helps the other guys."

One of the key rivalries of the day was Squire and Mexico national champion Juan Pablo, a 10-time national champion, with both tangling up in prelims and qualifying for races separated by milliseconds with Squire holding the edge into the final.

Pablo, 44, said him and Squire duking it out is a matter of age versus youth.





his riding. We are going about 35-40 miles per hour out there and with the wind, any air under the board can knock out off course.”

In the mens final on Sunday, Pablo held a slight edge going into the final lap with Squire breathing down his back until the final turn when Squire, with a near disastrous left turn hugging just inside the buoy, uprighted and got a burst past Pablo to win the event.

about what he was doing. It was a great race to end the weekend.”

In the women’s final, won decisively up front from eventual winner, the second place finish came down to a jostle at the finish line to make things spicy.



“One little error on the course is the difference,” said Pablo, racing since 2015 and with his wife ranked 11th in the world. “He’s very exact in

“I messed up three times out there and he was right on me,” said Squire.”He was sneaky and stayed just out of my sight so I had to think



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Keystone Heights High School



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KHHS



Keystone Heights High School



NHS

National Honor Society is a nationwide organization for high school students who excel academically. NHS elevates a schools and student's commitment to the values of scholarship, service, leadership and character. These four pillars are fundamental with membership in the NHS along with a 3.75 GPA. NHS not only recognizes students for their accomplishments, but challenges them to develop further through active involvement in school activities and community service.



CYBERPATRIOT

Cyberpatriot is a part of the national youth cyber defense competition created by the Air Force Association to inspire K-12 students towards careers in cybersecurity. At the core of the program is the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, the nation's largest cyber defense competition that puts high school and middle school students in charge of securing virtual networks. Keystone chapter of Cyberpatriots advanced to the state level this year in very difficult challenges.



HOSA



Keystone Height's HOSA club offers our high school students an opportunity to explore a career in healthcare. As well as mastering the knowledge and skills necessary to become a CNA, students can participate in community outreach through activities such as school sponsored blood drives and health screenings at our local elementary schools.

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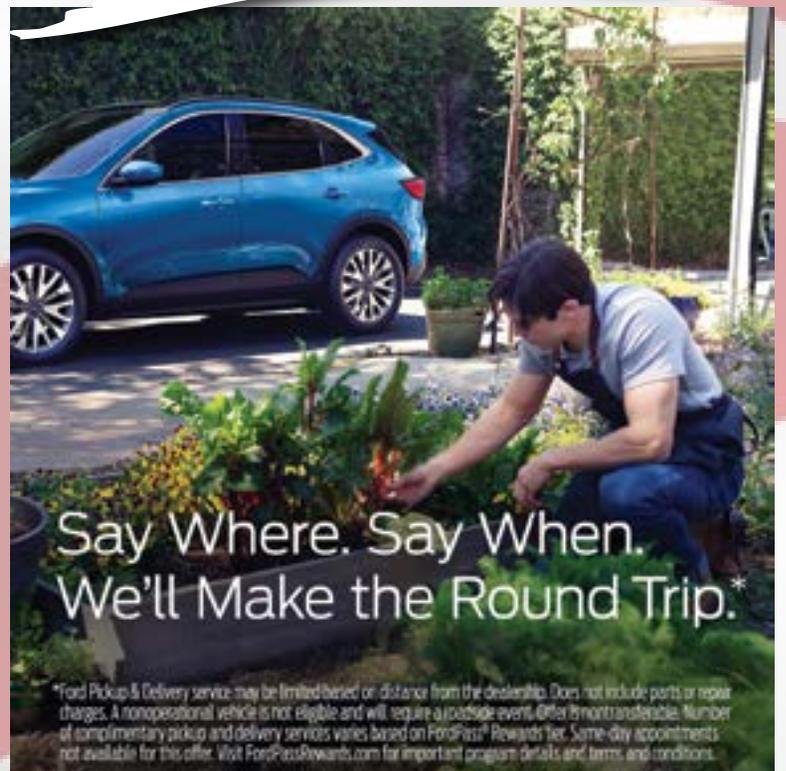
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CLASS 1A WEIGHTLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Indians answer the bell with third title



By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

LAKELAND - Keystone Heights High boys weightlifting coach Lantz Lowery knew his regional glimpse at defending 2A champion Suwannee High, now in Class 1A, was going to be the same look a week later in Lakeland.

“Going against Suwannee the week before was a big help,” said Lowery, noting Keystone Heights beat Suwannee in Tradition at regions by a 56-53 score with Suwannee dominating the field in the Olympic scoring. “All the way around, the state meet was not our best day.”

Lowery noted that the competition in general, in the big arena with the best in the state hovering around the platforms, made for some uncomfortable lifts throughout the field.

“Everyone there is still a high school kid,” said

Lowery. “Being on that stage is a very daunting experience whether you are there for the first time or there for the third time.”

In the final tally, Keystone Heights got Lowery a third straight state, albeit in just one discipline, Traditional and a tie for second in the Olympic scoring behind Suwannee with the Indians tying with South Sumter with 29 points with Suwannee the champions at 49 points. In Tradition, Keystone Heights dominated with a 41-35 edge on Suwannee and Bozeman third at 15.

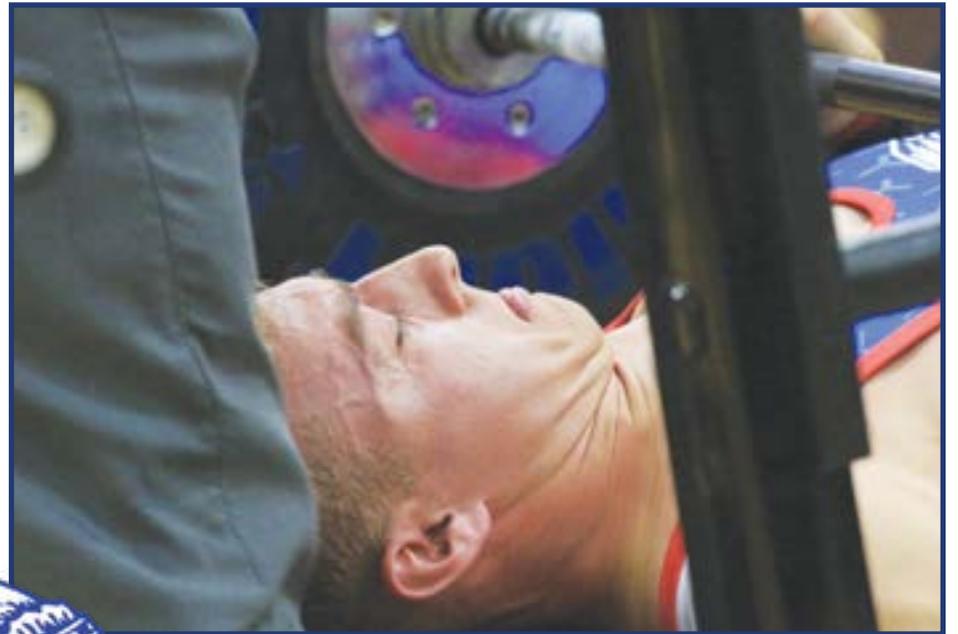
“The Suwannee coach is the best at teaching that Olympic Snatch and that’s how they dominate,” said Lowery, noting Suwannee finishing with four Olympic scoring champions. “Our guys did what was expected pretty much with our Bo Overton winning at 169. He’s a workhorse that

just shows up and does his job.”

Overton had the best Olympic Snatch at 215 and the best clean and jerk at 285 to win by 40 pounds with his 500 total. Overton then punched up the best bench press of the field; a 300, to win the Traditional scoring title by 20 pounds.

“Bo is always the same,” said Lowery. “I knew after his first lift that he would win the state title. Say what you want, Bo trusts God all day and that keeps him calm and steady.”

Lowery, with three trips in his pocket to the state meet with a truckload of trophies including a Dairy Farmer Weightlifting coach of the year alongside Fleming Island’s Damenyum Springs, who also won a second round of titles



after winning in Class 3A in 2020 to give Clay County a second year of two state championship teams in one sport.

“Three in a row is pretty cool,” said Lowery. “This group was pretty special and kind of handled the pressure of being a two time champion pretty well. I don’t think it will sink in for a while the level at which they competed and trained the last four years.”

Lowery also got an individual title from Larry Jeffries III who won the Tradition title at 219 to outduel Suwannee’s Brandon Robinson from last week’s region. Robinson again beat Jeffries in the Olympic scoring with the pair finishing

second and third behind South Sumter’s Jackson Sovercool who totaled 555 to Robinson’s 540 and Jeffries 515. Jeffries missed on both is Snatch and Clean and Jerk second and third lifts to keep his total low.

“Our philosophy is if we hit all of our lifts, we win,” said Lowery.

At 238, where Anthony Rozier-Tyler was the hero of the region meet last week, Coral Shores’ Julian Juvier dominated with a 690 total with Rozier-Tyler equaling his 370 bench press at regions and finishing third.

Lowery got double points in two weight classes

with Landon Hovsepian and Bryant Schenk finishing second and third behind Suwannee’s Sam Wainwright in 183 and Wyatt Van Zant and Reid Begue taking third and fourth in 129 in Olympics for critical Keystone Heights points.

“Both of those pairs of boys work hard together and know where we want them to finish and they just execute the plan,” said Lowery. “Reid missed on two lifts, but Wyatt was perfect on all of his lifts. Bryar missed his first in Snatch then was perfect from there. Landon missed just his last attempt of the day on the bench press. I can’t ask for more.”



"Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future"

Keystone Heights Airport is located approximately 50 miles Southwest of Jacksonville, and 3 miles north of the city of Keystone Heights, in the Southwestern corner of Clay County. It straddles both Bradford and Clay Counties and is the only "public use" Airport in both counties. At any given time, there are approximately 75 aircraft permanently based on the field stored in either T- hangars, bulk hangars, or on open ramp areas. The airport has two, five thousand foot runways capable of accommodating aircraft as large as a C-130 and aircraft weighing up to 150,000 lbs. It sits on 2,482 acres with designated areas delineated as Airport Commercial, Business Park, Light Industry, and Timber.

- Aviation Commercial / Operating Area 691 acres
- Business Park Area 297 acres
- Natural Park Area 241 acres
- Timber / Wildlife Area 1253 acres

The Keystone Heights Airport Authority (KHAA) is comprised of seven members, (4 City of Keystone Heights seats, 1 Bradford County Seat, 1 Clay County Seat, and an Officer from Camp Blanding), who are appointed by the City of Keystone Heights City Council and govern all activities associated with Aviation activities, compliance with FDOT, Federal Aviation Administration standards, tenant leases, timber sales, and all other activities within the Airport property. The City Manager is the appointed liaison from the city and participates at monthly board meetings but has no voting privileges. While the Airport is city property it does not adjoin the city limits. The KHAA office staff manages the day to day operations including lease payments, aircraft fuel sales, airfield maintenance, tenants, and a myriad of other duties.

BRIEF HISTORY

The airport was constructed by the United States Army Air Forces (The US Air Force did not yet exist) in 1942 and was originally named as Crystal Lake Army Airfield (due to its proximity to Crystal Lake) but when commissioned in December of that same year, it became known as Keystone Army Airfield. The Airfield was built on the Southwest perimeter of Camp Blanding. During World War II, the field was the home of the AAFSAT Strategic Reconnaissance School. The A20 Havoc, P39D (variant) Air Cobra, and L-2 and L-3 Grasshopper Light Observation Aircraft (similar to J-3 Piper Cub) were some of the aircraft training occurred in. In November 1943, the 313th Fighter Squadron was moved from Alachua and employed P40 Warhawks for training. Later, the P40s were replaced with P47 Thunderbolts. In January 1945 the AAFSAT sent down orders for closure and on February 1st 1945 the field was placed on inactive status. The city of Keystone Heights acquired the property from the Federal Government in 1947.



TODAY

From its inception to the present, various branches of the military continue to utilize the Keystone Heights Airport for various training exercises throughout the year. Sharing the North border of the Airport is Camp Blanding's Joint Training Center, the primary military reservation and training base for the Florida National Guard.

The Airport accommodates both the Direct TV and Goodyear Blimps throughout the year as well as host aerobatic contests each year with Eagle Sport Aviation. The facility also was utilized as the main training base for the 2013 U.S. Aerobatic Team and continues to support aerobatic pilots from all over the world. Keystone Heights Airport and its tenants pride themselves in giving back to the community by hosting & volunteering annual fundraising events such as **Air-Ops**, a hunting event for wounded veterans, **5k Glow Run** for Bradford County Communities in Schools, as well as **Crawlin' for the Fallen** Jeep event, an weekend event raising money for surviving family members of fallen military and first responders. The Airport is also utilized by both Bradford and Clay County Emergency Management and Sheriff's Department for annual

awareness training and has hosted several events for City of Keystone Heights, including the Mayor's Ball and the Northeast Florida League of Cities Dinner. Our community airport supporting community events.

The Keystone Heights Airport has approximately 70 tenants and has just completed building the new 4,000SF Administrative/ FBO building (\$1.3M, 100% funded by FDOT). In addition to the new FBO, the Airport managed 3 other large projects in the 2019/20 years consisting of a rehabilitation of the main taxiway (\$3.2 M), upgrade of all access gates including cameras and electronic access (\$200K, 100% funded by FDOT) as well as a new 80 x 80 corporate hangar (\$573K, also 100% funded by FDOT).

Ninety-nine percent (99%) of major improvement projects that occur at our airport are funded through FDOT Aviation Dept. and/or FAA grant money.

The new Admin/FBO building has replaced an outdated facility that was too small to house our staff and to provide services to our tenants, guests and prospective tenants. Our new FBO is a welcomed site for local and transient pilots. A designated "Pilots Lounge and Planning Area" enhances pilot safety and training and plays an even larger role as the command center for airport development. A larger work area for our present and future staff results in greater productivity plus the larger conference room is beneficial to the KHAA board as well as others who occasionally rent for meetings and events. The building was completed and occupied in March of this year. Thank you FDOT for 100% funding!!

Please come by and visit our new facility & enjoy a cup of coffee on our back porch!

Keystone Heights Airport Team

- Mike Schribock – is our interim Airport Manager. Originally hired in May 2022 as the Airfield Manager he has recently agreed to serve as the interim Airport Manager.
- Lori Butcher – Lori is our fiscal/administration assistant. She's been with us since 2021.
- Justin Crawford is our Airfield Manager and joined our team in May 2022. He manages all of the airfield maintenance.
- Joanie Miller is our newest part-time employee, joining us in early 2022. Joanie is part of our airfield maintenance staff.

The other part of our successful team are the members of the Airport Authority. We definitely could not be where we are today if it wasn't for the dedication of these 7 gentlemen and the time they continue to devote to this airport and make it one the best general aviation airports in Florida.

- Chairman of the Board David Kirkland
- Vice & Aviation Chairman Scott Fryar
- Intergovernmental/Business Development Charles Van Zant
- Natural Resources Conservation Rex Siemer
- Safety & Security Robert Ludwig
- Aviation Education David Dagenais
- Representative from the Florida National Guard

With this airport team, our successes are endless! Thank you for your dedication to aviation and commitment to the local community

AVIATION'S GIFT

Our Airport provides direct access to Camp Blanding where the back-up Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for the State of Florida is located. Governor Ron DeSantis utilizes the Keystone Heights Airport for attending local events and if there is a natural disaster, he and his staff will manage state response efforts from the back-up EOC in Camp Blanding. When forest fires were large portions of North Florida in the 1990's as well as 2006, FEMA and the U.S. Forestry Department used KHA as the Operations center for North Florida with helicopters flying in and out for fuel, air/field crew support, and strategic management during that disaster. The Airport is committed to being a good neighbor, but at times can make a little noise. Know

that anytime there is an event around the world where roads are gone, harbors are unpassable, aviation can usually get in and bring the needed supplies to sustain life, rescue victims and restore order.

We are very excited about our recent improvement projects and look forward to the growth opportunities in the near future. We continue to create milestones for the Keystone Heights Airport as we continue "*Honoring the Past, and Embracing the Future*". Please come visit your community airport and see what great things are happening!





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Construction on Black Creek Restoration Project flowing smoothly to replenish lakes Geneva, Brooklyn

By **Natalie Gilstrap**

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Lake Region residents have patiently waited for the Black Creek Project to become a reality for nearly 40 years. After years of planning and discussing, the project is pushing toward completion next fall.

“I’m excited and it’s just waiting for everything to conclude a lot of years,” said Vivian Katz-James, President of Save Our Lakes Organization.

Once completed, the regional project will refill the upper part of the Florida aquifer. It involves taking a portion of the excess water from Black Creek’s South Fork at State Road 16 and transferring as much as 10 million gallons a day through a 17-mile pipeline. Along the way, it will pass through a filtration system to remove tannins before the water flows into

Alligator Creek, which flows into Lake Brooklyn. The project also will increase the recharge to the Upper Floridian aquifer and Lower Sante Fe basin through the lake bottom.

The \$100 million project consists of three stages of construction. The pump station was the first stage and it’s nearly completed. Plans to start the second stage are underway with the construction of the pipeline, starting in May and June.

The third stage – the filtration station – will start later this summer.

“Everything is a go,” Katz-James said. “The project is on line to be completed and the flow should start in the fall of next year.”

Plans to replenish the lakes date back nearly 40 years. The Save Our Lakes Organization was created in 2017, but the group attended every St. Johns River Water Management District and Keystone Heights City Council meeting

for nearly 30 years until the project was approved last October.

Once the lakes are replenished, residents hope they will attract recreationists and tourists again.

“You’re going to have people come back,” Katz-James said. “Keystone used to be the tourist area until the lakes dried up.”



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Clay County Sheriff's Net

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Clay County Sheriff's Office has introduced another enhanced strategy to reduce crime and engage the community. Residents can join the Sheriff's Neighborhood Engagement Team (Sheriff's NET).

You and your neighbors can meet with deputies monthly to discuss all matters affecting your neighborhood and your quality of life to include crime trends and crime prevention strategies; anything which negatively impacts your community. This is your opportunity to meet one-on-one with them and tell them what is really happening in your neighborhood.

You can learn how the Clay County Sheriff's Office works for you. Fill out the application and join the Sheriff's NET. For more information, call (904) 264-6512 and ask for the Community Affairs Section. Please email your application to neighborhoodnews@claysheriff.com.

Monthly Meeting Information:

- Zone 1 (Orange Park) – Church of Eleven22, 317 Blanding Blvd.
 - Fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.
- Zone 2 (Eagle Landing) – Eagle Landing Golf Club, 3989 Eagle Landing Pkwy.
 - First Thursday of the month at 7 pm.
- Zone 3 (Fleming Island/Lake Asbury) – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 7190 U.S. 17
 - Second Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.
- Zone 4 (Middleburg/Clay Hill) – Middleburg Civic Center, 2102 Palmetto Ave., Middleburg
 - Third Thursday of the month at 6 pm.
- Zone 5 (Green Cove Springs/Penney Farms) – Commons Bldg, 4385 Wilbank Ave.
 - Fourth Thursday of the month at 4 pm.
- Zone 6 (Keystone Heights) – St. William Catholic Church, 275 Satsuma St., Keystone Heights
 - Fourth Thursday of the month at 7 pm.



Clay County Sheriff's NET FAQ

What is the Sheriff's NET? – The Sheriff's Neighborhood Engagement Team (NET) is a group of Clay County residents and business owners that applied for membership, completed a background check and meet to discuss community and crime related issues within their "Zone."

What is a zone? – A zone is a geographical boundary within Clay County. It is used for various governmental, law enforcement, public safety and community organizations. It sections the county into six different, but related areas.

What is discussed at the meetings? – While each Zone is assigned a Chief from the Clay County Sheriff's Office, the meetings are facilitated by Chairmen (citizen members) that are elected by the membership. The Chairmen and members discuss issues and invite speakers that relate to their specific issues. The speakers are the choice of the membership.

Why do CCSO Chiefs attend the meetings? – Each NET Zone is assigned a Chief to discuss crime patterns, trends and series related to each individual Zone. Additionally, there will be CCSO Area Supervisors available for questions. They will take feedback on crime related issues within the Zone, from members. Each Chief will take crime and community complaints from members, document them, **investigate the issues and respond back with documented results.**

When do the NETs meet and how long are the meetings? – Each Zone meets once a month and the meetings last for approximately one hour. The meetings are facilitated by the Chairs and members. Meeting dates and times can be viewed at: <https://www.claysheriff.com/sheriffs-net/>

How much does it cost to be a member? – The only cost to you is your time, or if you wish to purchase a shirt.

How do I become a member? – Go to <https://www.claysheriff.com/sheriffs-net/> download and complete the application. You can return it to the CCSO via U.S. Mail, E-mail or drop it off at any CCSO location. A background check will be conducted and upon completion, you will be notified of the results. If you are accepted, you will be advised where to go to have your picture taken for your CCSO identification card. Your ID card will be issued at your next scheduled meeting.

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Keystone Heights' 'Moon Tree' deeply rooted as city's landmark

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – One of Keystone Heights' notable landmarks is an American Sycamore tree in front of the Keystone Heights Library. The tree is known as the Moon Tree because of its unique past with the Apollo 14 space mission.

According to NASA, the U.S. Forest Service and NASA had a joint project in which five species of tree seeds were sent on the Apollo 14 mission. The project was to determine the seed's condition after being in deep space and to bring awareness to the forest service and its firefighters – smokejumpers.

In February 1971, astronaut Stuart Roosa took several hundred Loblolly pine, sycamore, sweet gum, redwood and Douglas fir tree seeds with him while he orbited the "Kitty Hawk" command module around the moon.

The project was compromised after the seed canister burst during the decontamination process when the seeds returned home.



Though the seeds weren't likely to sprout, many of the seeds were sent to forest service offices in Gulfport, Mississippi, and Placerville, California, to germinate.

The outcome was a success.

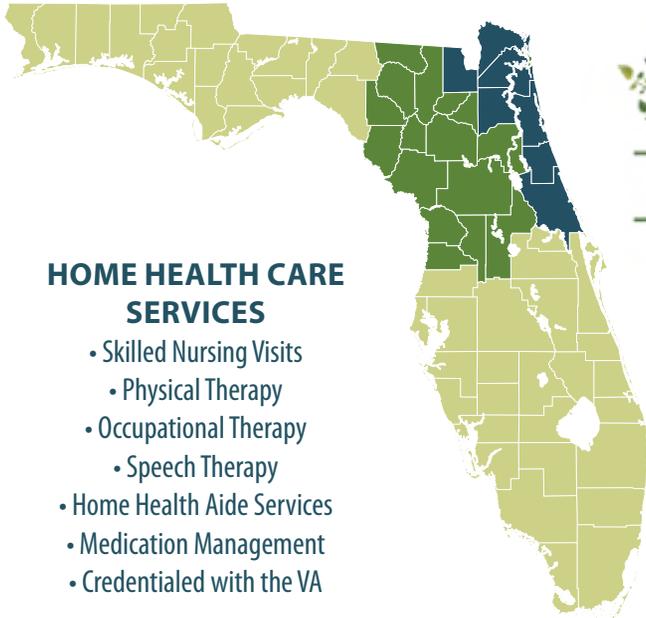
In 1975 and 1976, most of the tree saplings were given away across the country to celebrate the country's bicentennial celebration. Some of the trees were planted in countries like Brazil, Switzerland, Japan and Keystone Heights.

The city received its Moon Tree from local nursery owner Bob Burns in 1984. Burns acquired the tree from the University of Florida, and he had it planted and dedicated.

In 2015, a re-dedication ceremony was held, and a plaque was installed in front of the tree.

The Keystone Heights Moon Tree continues to flourish under the careful care of the Garden Club of the Lakes.

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Community Church celebrates 100th anniversary with focus on future

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today



Despite turning 100, Community Church has evolved from a meager beginning to a modern facility in Keystone Heights.

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Community Church of Keystone Heights is celebrating 100 years of being strong.

On Dec. 19, 1923, a group interested in forming a church met at the Keystone School House and formed a Board of Trustees with the city's founder J.J. Lawrence as the Chairman.

Construction for the original building began in 1924 and served the community for 41 years. In 1966, a new sanctuary was dedicated and is currently being used today. In the late 1980s, the church adopted a contemporary style of worship and focused more on the spiritual relationship with God.

“The mission of Community Church is knowing Jesus and making Him known,” Pastor Ray said. “We are a non-denominational Jesus church. It’s all about Jesus and Gospel-centered. We’re all about proclaiming Jesus and the message of grace.”

After 100 years, Community Church continues its mission of making Jesus known. Samaritan’s Purse’s Operation Christmas, Hope Grows International, and In His Wakes are just a few worldwide ministries the church supports. In addition, Community Church is heavenly involved in the community.

Since 1980, the church has provided affordable, necessary items such as clothes, shoes, and kitchen appliances to individuals through their Rummage Ministries. In 2010, the church started participating in Back to School, which provides families with clothes, shoes, coats, and school supplies.

The church has been involved with the local food bank, Lake Area Ministries, for more than 45 years providing the organization with volunteers and financial support.

Community Church is looking forward to its future as they keep spreading the message of Jesus and growing its ministries.

“We represent the community. People from all walks of life, whether it be rich, poor, multi-generational, or multi-ethnic, all are welcomed,” Ray said. “This is a no-judgment zone. You just come in just like you are, and the Bible, the Word of God, does the changing.”

As of now, the church plans to participate in the Annual Fourth of July Parade and the Christmas Parade to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Also, the church is making plans to host an all-day Centennial Super Sunday on Sept. 10.

“We want people to know that the future is brighter than the past. 100 years strong,” Ray said.



City of Keystone Heights Business Listings

AIRPORTS

Keystone Heights Airport	7150 Airport Road	Starke, FL 32091	352-473-0031
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ANIMAL SERVICES

Dog Grooming	103 SE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6700
Keystone Heights Animal Hospital	7344 SR 100	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4966

ATTORNEYS & LAW PRACTICES

Law Office D. Mark Natirboff, P.A.	130 Sylvan Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-260-6000
Owens & Wagner, P.A.	189 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-5000
Paul D Newell, P.A.	360 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4928

AUTOMOTIVE

Blue Lagoon Car Wash	180 Cargo Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	407-579-1981
Car Quest Auto Parts of Keystone	7419 SR 21 N	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3561
Keystone Kwik Lube Inc	131 W Walker Dr	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6929
Mike's Auto Electric & Radiator Repair	330 NE Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7557
Mobile Gas Station	205 S. Lawrence Blvd.	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-264-4108
Ride & Shine Car Wash, LLC	180 Cargo Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	386-214-8865

BANKING & FINANCIAL SERVICES

Ameris Bank	100 NE Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-264-7100
BBVA Compass Bank	200 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-367-5120
Capital City Bank-Keystone Heights	500 Green Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4952
Rebecca E Williams, CPA	120 Citrus Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32658	352-473-5909
Taxes by Karyn, LLC	275 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-9091

CHILD CARE SERVICES

School Kidz Hang Out	165 SW Nightingale St	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4044
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CONTRACTOR SERVICES

Atlantic Logistics	150 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-886-1109
D & B Cabinets Inc	150 NE Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0072
Bronco Drilling	969 SE SR 100	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0534
Flooring of Keystone	260 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6610
Hoodz of Gainesville/Tallahassee	P.O. Box 485	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-7043
J-J Flooring of Keystone	260 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6610
Joseph Knapp Land Surveyor	270 SW Palmetto Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3166
Keystone Keeperz Mini Storage	107 NE Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-1122
KLC Flooring	1365 S Walker Street	Starke, FL 32091	904-964-8347
Liberty Renovations	7715 Clover Lane	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	
North FL Well Drilling & UHAUL	105 Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3204
Robert Grayson, Inc.	865 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-258-5115
Ultimate Hot Pressure, LLC	30 SE Nelsons Point	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-231-6541
Whitton Roofing Co	375 Fox Run Rd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-8962

CUSTOMS

Auxadyne LLC	200 NE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8275
Copy Cabana	255 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0555
Gilstrap & Associates	PO Box 1	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-5770
Locker Room Athletics	156 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-2272
Signs of Summer	298 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-215-7649

ELECTRONICS

Computer Solutions	298 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-450-3811
Santa Fe Electronics	160 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3808

FAMILY SERVICES & MINISTRIES

Answers Resource Facility	115 Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-1000
Center Cross Ministries	350 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-806-2710
Jones Gallagher Funeral Home	340 E Walker Dr	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3176

GYMS & STUDIOS

Genesis Fitness	310 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7388
Keystone Mixed Martial Arts	275 S Lawrence Blvd., Ste. 2	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-214-8144
Keystone Music Lessons	174 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3670
Pak's Karate	180 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-864-1736
Star Quality Dance and Cheer Center	180 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-5223

INSURANCE AGENCIES

Keystone Heights Insurance Agency	7388 SR 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4881
Roberts Insurance of Keystone Heights, Inc	333 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7209

PHARMACIES

CVS	120 W Walker Rd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7122
North Florida Pharmacy of Keystone	405 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-2057
Walgreens	115 N Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4621

NEWS PAPERS

Bradford County Telegraph	131 W Call Street	Starke, FL 32091	904-964-6305
Clay Today	3513 US Hwy 17	Fleming Island, FL 32003	352-502-9700

MEDICAL & HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Azalea Health	100 Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6595
Dr. James H. Minesinger	260 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-2600
Keystone Chiropractic Inc.	330 S Lawrence Blvd, Ste A	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9777

Keystone Dental Care - Dr. Todd Shockley	260 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0707
Hearing Aids Today	450 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-877-4471
Jax Bax - Dr. Nancy Short	100 SE Nightingale St	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-778-6859
Lake Area Physical Therapy	465 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7560
Legacy Home Health Care, Inc.	445 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-7030
Robert A. Morrow Counseling	210 SW Nightingale St, #B	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-315-9106
Starling Family Dentistry, P.A.	310 SE Palmetto Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9090
Therapy Through Massage	100 SE Nightingale St	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-1118
Tyson Athletics	298 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-575-9100
Village Doctors Family Medical Center	175 N Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3199
Village Doctors, P.A.	100 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9373

MUNICIPAL & COUNTY GOVERNMENT SERVICES

City of Keystone Heights	555 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4807
Clay Co Chamber of Commerce	1734 Kingsley Avenue	Orange Park, FL 32073	904-264-2651
Clay County School Board	900 Walnut Street	Green Cove Springs, FL 32043	904-284-6500
Melrose Volunteer Fire Department	301 Cypress Street	Melrose, FL 32666	352-475-2005
Small Business Development Corporation	1845 Town Center Blvd, Bldg 400-Ste 410	Orange Park, FL 32073	904-239-0722

REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Carol Lindermann, Licensed Mortgage Broker	100 SW Magnolia Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0305
Florida Homes Realty & Mortgage - Todd & Debbie Beals	510 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-588-2083
Florida Homes Realty & Mortgage, LLC	275 S Lawrence Blvd, Ste 1	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-996-9115
Hatch Realty Services	350 S Lawrence Blvd.	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-806-2857
Helen Hersey Realty	7396 SR 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-8882
North Florida Real Estate	275 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-699-6169
Realty Productions	PO Box 995	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-502-0615
Southland Realty	100 SE Nightingale St	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-327-7235
Taylor Arrubla Hardwick Real Estate Services, P.A.	420 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-8088

RECREATION & TOURISM

Clay County Parks & Recreation	477 Houston Street	Green Cove Springs, FL 32043	904-284-6378
Clay County Tourism	477 Houston Street	Green Cove Springs, FL 32043	904-278-3734
Dream Vacations	1230 Bellemy Road	Melrose, FL 32666	352-478-8092
The FIRM	7266 Airport Road	Starke, FL 32091	352-473-2999
The Inn at Palmetto	555 SE Palmetto Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-509-7697

RESTAURANTS

Bowl In The Wall	101 NE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8561
Brooklyn Boys	205 NE Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8140
Clyde's Cozy Corner Café	130 Nightingale	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-281-4605
Dunkin Donuts	101 W Walker Dr	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8744
Midtown Café & Papa's Pizza	190 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8028
Nutrition Retreat	185 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-272-2091
Smokedogs Bar-B-Q and Catering	200 NE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-669-1667
Taco Bell	810 Green Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-639-2636
The Bakery	101 NE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-517-6077
Wendy's	210 W Walker Dr	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	342-473-3636

RETAIL

Alfie's Discount Liquors	153 E Walker Dr	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6991
Bald Eagle Bait & Tackle	155 E Walker	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6060
Bryan's Ace Home Center	251 E Walker Dr	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4006
Chasing Dreams Consignment & Thrift Shop	110 Nightingale Street	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-7033
Dollar General	300 Green Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-2381
Family Dollar	200 N Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9432
Flower Petals	370 Sylvan Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9201
Futch's Power Depot Of Keystone Heights	101 Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-692-3673
Healthy Living 4U	179 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3663
Keystone Gifts & Guns	155 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4006

SALONS

A Cut Above Hair & Nails	480 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6030
Body Language Salon	124 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0016
Fancy Nails & Spa	176 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-2018
Golden Glow Spray Tans, LLC	470 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-256-0056
Keystone Barber & Style Shop	175 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4007
Keystone Kutters	460 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7029
Jess's Tresses Salon	355 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8731
LuAnn's Hair & Nails	330 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-475-9306
Shabby to Chic Salon	300 SR 26	Melrose, FL 32666	352-519-6465
Shannon's Hair, Nails & Tan Unlimited	107 SE Commercial Cir	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0257
Shear Creations	290 S Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8130

UTILITY SERVICES

Clay Electric	P.O. Box 308	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4917
Clay County Utility Authority	3176 Old Jennings Rd	Middleburg, FL 32068	904-272-5999
Waste Management	6501 Greenland Rd	Jacksonville, FL 32258	904-695-0500



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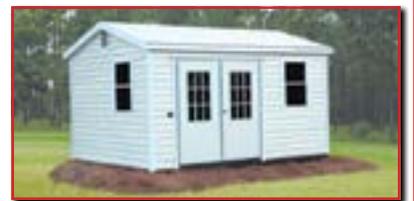
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Tracy Scott Drake, CFA, CAE, ASA, RES, AAS

An Exemptions Specialist will be available in Keystone Heights (inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office) on the first Tuesday of the month (June 2023 through November 2023) to assist property owners with filing applications for property tax exemptions, agricultural classifications and/or assessment reductions. For more information, contact the office at (904) 269-6305 ext. 1 to speak with an Exemptions Specialist or visit www.ccpao.com.

<p>Keystone Heights Satellite Location: First Tuesday of the Month If the first Tuesday is a holiday, we will be available the following Tuesday. Inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office (Keystone Village Square) 7380 State Road 100, Ste. 10, Keystone Heights (Located by Hitchcock's)</p>	<p>1st Tuesday of the Month June 6, July 11 (2nd Tuesday), Aug 1, Sept 5, Oct 3, Nov 7 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM & 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM</p>
<p>Main Office: Green Cove Springs Clay County Administration Building, 2nd Floor 477 Houston Street</p>	<p>Year-Round Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM</p>
<p>Satellite Office: Orange Park Inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office (Park Central Plaza) 1518 Park Avenue</p>	<p>Year-Round Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri. 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Wed. 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM</p>

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EMMANUEL PROJECT PROVIDES MUCH-NEEDED HEALTHCARE IN LAKE REGION

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Emmanuel Project of Northeast Florida is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2022 after Vaughan Robinson, Chairman of the Board, met a family who needed food and medical treatment.

Its mission is to provide high-quality healthcare services to underserved and vulnerable populations, such as individuals who are homeless, poor, and lack access to healthcare.

Since November, the group now provides services to the Lake Region.

“Emmanuel Project’s team seeks to carry out its mission in a manner that both exemplifies neighborly love and honors God.” Steven Papas, Executive Director, said.

The idea came when the project’s team and Don Fann, Executive Director of The Way Free Medical Clinic, saw a need for healthcare services in Keystone Heights.

“During these meetings, the group determined that the homeless, underserved, and vulnerable residents of Keystone Heights had a greater need for healthcare than those of other parts of Clay County,” Fann said.

Once a month, Emmanuel Project’s mobile medical unit visits Answers Health and Resource Facility to provide free health services. Some healthcare services offered to adults and children are Wellness and Sick Visits, Nutritional Education and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Management, COVID-related respiration issues, and primary healthcare education. By July, the team expects to treat at least 1,000 patients in Keystone Heights.

Emmanuel Project also provides services in counties like Clay, Duval, Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns. In addition, they have partnered with various organizations like Alpha Omega Miracle Home, Wildflower Healthcare and SJC Veterans Council.

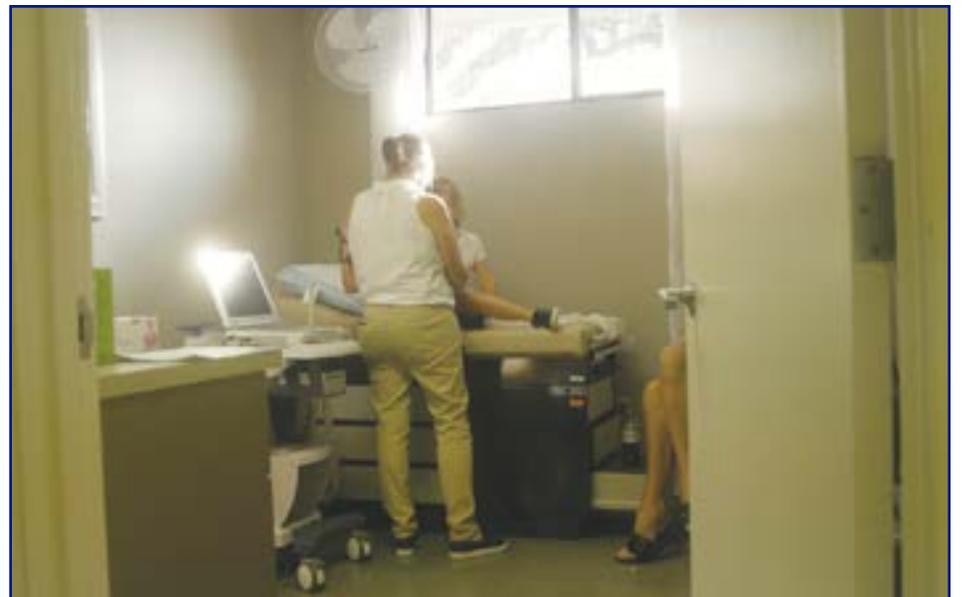
The organization plans to add additional dates for individuals to receive free healthcare services in Clay and St. Johns counties. They also plan to partner with established social service charities to provide their services at community events further. They will work with Impact Clay and Clay SafetyNet to have their mobile unit at the College Drive Food Truck Nights and the Back to School Bash.

50 Keystone Heights • JUNE 2023



PHOTOS BY NATALIE GILSTRAP

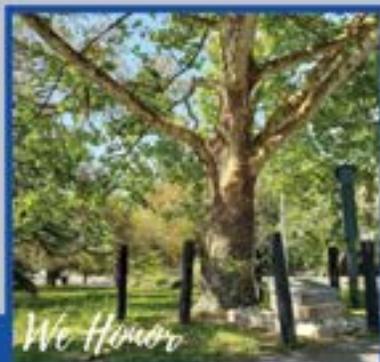
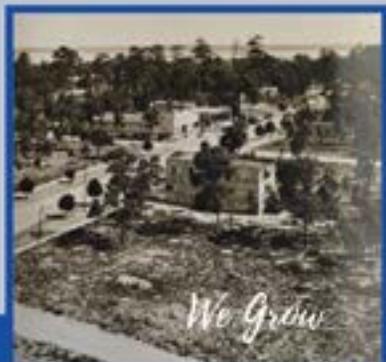
Emmanuel Project comes once a month to Answers Health and Resource Facility in Keystone Heights to provide free healthcare services.



The organization looks forward to continuing its partnership with The Way Free Clinic to provide the first healthcare program that will span across communities.

To learn more about the Emmanuel Project of Northeast Florida and its services, visit emmanuelproject.org/.

OUR Community



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COMMUNITY

First Tuesday 7:00pm Lake Area Beekeepers Club – Monthly at the Gallery 26 in Melrose. Call 352-473-1009 for details.

Every Thursday 11:00a-1:00p SHAKE RAG COFFEE TALK – Live Music, great coffee and goodies at The Melrose Center, 307 SR 26, Melrose. Everyone is invited to attend.

2nd Thursday 6:30p Free Movie Night – Doors open at 6:00 and movie starts at 6:30pm in Trinity Parish Hall, SR 26, Melrose. Popcorn, drinks, and candy are available at no charge. All movies are family friendly. Call the church for the title of this month's movie - 352.475.2177. Come and enjoy a fun and relaxing evening out.

Every Friday 4:00p-7:00p Melrose Community Farmers' Market – Held each week at Melrose Heritage Park, Bellamy Avenue (SR 26). No market in August and resumes in September.

1st Friday 5:00p-9:00p FRIDAY NIGHT ART WALK – Art galleries in Melrose open late on the first Friday of each month. See links to individual gallery sites for details on current exhibits.

2nd Saturday 5:30p Melrose Dulcimers Jam – Join our monthly jam at the Melrose Homemaker's Club. Our jam includes old-time fiddle tunes, waltzes, and gospel music or whatever happens to be called, played on mountain dulcimers, hammered dulcimers, kazoos, harmonicas, guitars, penny whistles, banjos, a fiddle, and a harp. Singing, too! Open to the public.

Always check the www.melrosefl.com or Facebook page for schedule changes and more information.

COMMUNITY

1st Friday 5:00-9:00 FRIDAY NIGHT ART WALK

Art galleries in Melrose open late on the first Friday of each month. See links to individual gallery sites for details on current exhibits.

MELROSE CENTER - Call 352-475-1326 for more information

Every Thursday 11:00a-1:00p SHAKE RAG COFFEE TALK

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Chiappini's continues to be hidden gem in Melrose after 88 years

By Natalie Gilstrap
For Clay Today

MELROSE – Chiappini's is a hidden gem located on State Road 26 near S.R. 21. For 88 years, this family business has served its community faithfully in more ways than one.

“My grandfather built this place in 1935 as a gas station grocery store, and we have been here ever since,” said co-owner Mark Chiappini.

His grandfather, Papa Joe, came to the Melrose area after World War I and worked for Colonial Pearsall during the Depression.

“There wasn't a whole lot of cash flowing in or around here, so he paid off my grandfather in land sometimes or traded land,” Chiappini said. “That's how he ended up with the property here.”

Papa Joe finished building the store with a loan from the Gulf Oil Company. After paying off the debt at the rate of a penny a gallon of gas, the store was officially debt free in 1950. After World War II, Papa Joe's sons took over until 1980, when Mark and his brother Robin became the new owners.

Since its beginning, the store has offered necessities, such as bait, ice, beer and snacks. In addition, shoppers can get homemade soaps, various kinds of hot sauces and fine cigars.

However, the store is more than a grocery store. It is a community hub where residents gather to enjoy each other's company. They can enjoy live music and participate in cornhole tournaments.

The store also has attracted several celebrities.

“Everybody from Robert Williams to Doris Day has been here,” Chiappini said. “Almost every major football coach from the University of Florida has been here. There's been so many.”



Chiappini's continues to be actively involved with the community. Over the years, they have supported community causes such as saving Melrose Elementary from shutting down, preventing the installment of toll roads in Melrose and saving Santa Fe Swamp, as well as supporting the Melrose art community.

Through their dedication over the past 88 years, Chiappini's had become a significant asset to the Melrose community. It may look like an old gas station outside, but it holds a unique spot in the community.

“We're kind of like the heart of Melrose,” Chiappini said.



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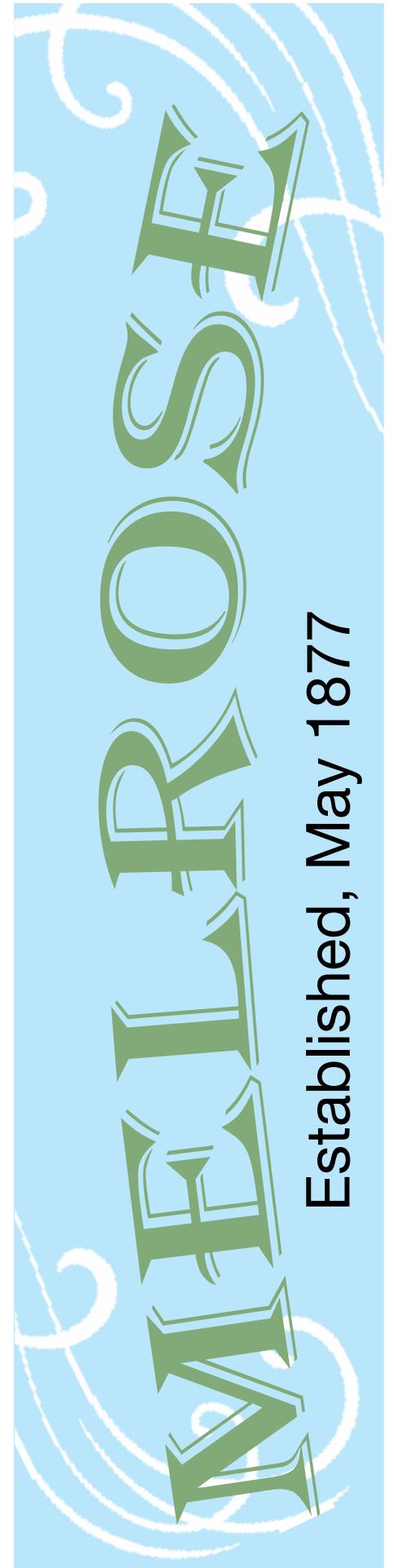
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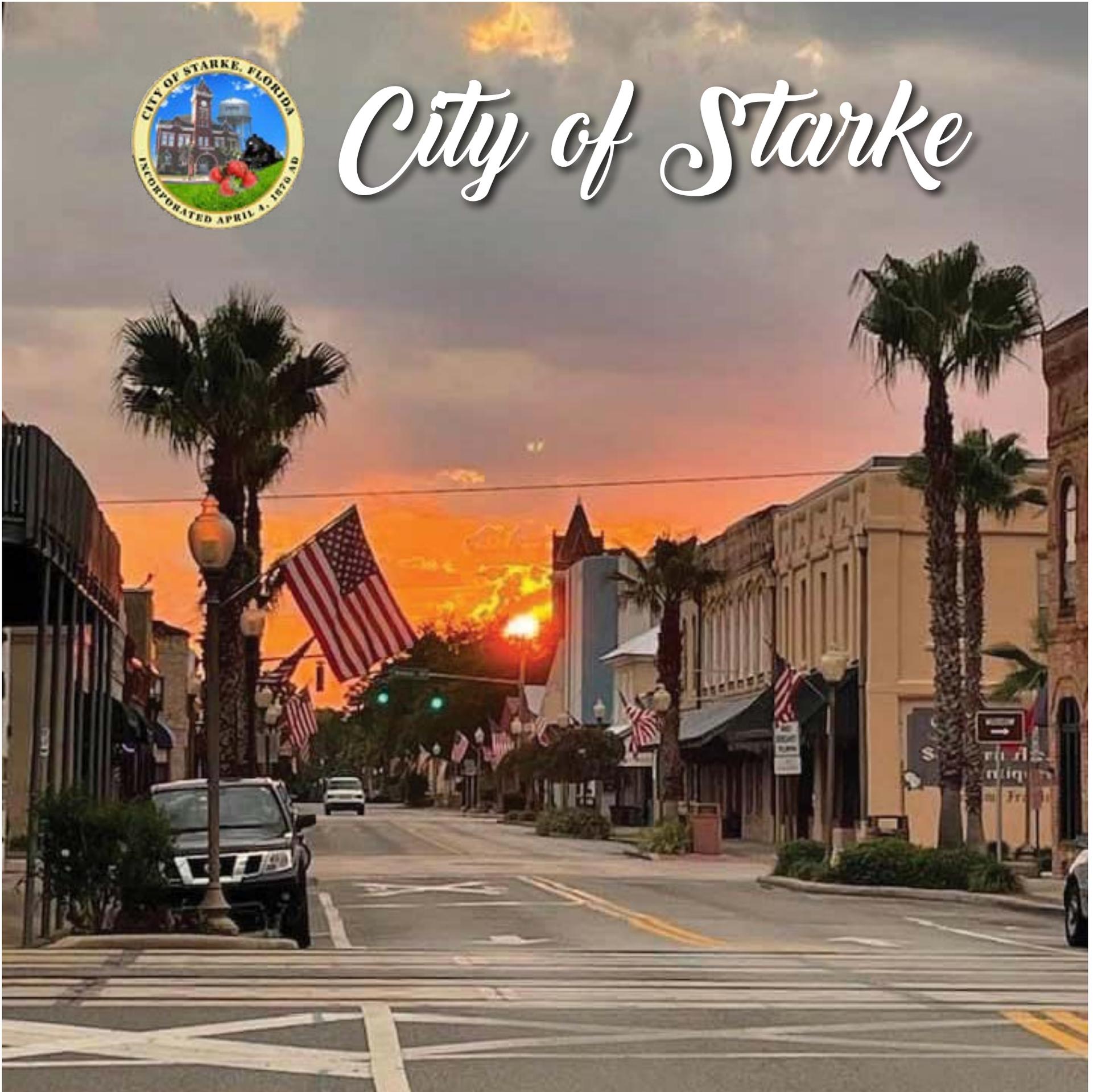
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City of Starke



STARKE

Eight short miles West of Keystone Heights is Starke Florida. Starke is midway between Fernandina Beach on the Atlantic and Cedar Key on the Gulf.

Currently, an overpasses is being constructed over County Road 100A, the CSX Railroad, and County Road 229. Interchanges will be constructed along the new roadway to provide access to State Road 100 and State Road 16. This will eliminate stopped traffic on HWY 100 entering Starke due to railroad train travel.

Starke was still the proverbial "wide spot in the road" at the time. A writer in the September 13, 1887 issue of the town's weekly newspaper, described the settlement, in the years of its birth, as "...a wilderness, a vast unbroken pine forest, where the deer, bear, wildcat, and the stealthy panther roamed at their own free will. There was not a single house, worthy of the name, in what is now the corporate limits- only a few little shanties occupied by railroad hands."

But the small town thrived in the next few years, spurred on by the new railroad which provided much needed transportation for the timber, navel stores, and long staple cotton

which were the main support of the area at that time. Shipping these products meant a 25-mile haul by ox or horse drawn wagon over narrow sand trails to reach Middleburg, where water transportation was available via the St. Johns River to the port of Jacksonville.

The census of 1860, first count made after the birth of Starke, showed 138 inhabitants of this settlement, more than half of whom came here from Georgia and South Carolina.

This early period of peaceful progress was short lived, however, abruptly halted in 1861 when Florida seceded from the Union to fight the Civil War along with its sister southern states. Farms were left untended and business growth stagnated as many of the men joined local militia units.

At the time of its birth, five years before, Starke had been part of sprawling New River County, but this area split by State Legislature in December 1861 to form two new counties. One of them was named Bradford in honor of Captain Richard Bradford, who was killed in the Battle of Santa Rosa Island, the first Florida officer to die in action.

By 1877 near the end of post-

war reconstruction era, Starke's population was nearing 400, and its citizens felt the time had come to incorporate. An election was held on April 26, 1876 with 42 male residents turning out to cast a unanimous ballot for incorporation. Dr. John Gaskins, a prominent local physician, politician, and developer, was elected the town's first mayor.

Starke had received another boost in 1875 when it successfully petitioned the County Commission to hold an election and won the county seat from Lake Butler, a nearby town which had been the county seat of New River County and was allowed to remain as the county seat of Bradford when it was created in 1861.

The first public school, Starke Male and Female Institute, was founded in 1877, ending a period when the only opportunity for education was in small groups gathered in private homes for tutoring.

A new impetus to growth and development of the town came in the early 1880's with the arrival of several well-to-do and cultured families, mostly from Pennsylvania, remain so until a series of killing freezes in the 1890's forced the industry farther south. The northern newcomers built fine homes and did much to spur the educational, cultural, religious, and economic development of the town.

Camp Blanding had a major impact to the area adding thousands of new residents and businesses with the growing population of the area with the Military base explosion after 1941 and over 100,000 military infantry trainees moving to the area at its peak.

For more information on the Starke area, contact the Chamber of Commerce President Pam Whittle at 904-964-5278 or go to

www.northfloridachamber.com



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Florida Power & Light -
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Educational Information

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North Florida Technical College

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Sante Fe College

Andrews Center
Director, Cheryl Canova
209 W Call St. Starke, FL 32091
904-964-5382

Employment Information

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5629 SR 16 West
Starke, FL 32091
(904) 682-3196

Edwards Road Complex

417B West Edwards Road
Starke, FL 32091
(904) 964-8334
City of Starke Baseball Complex

Attractions

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(904) 964-5451
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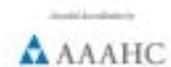
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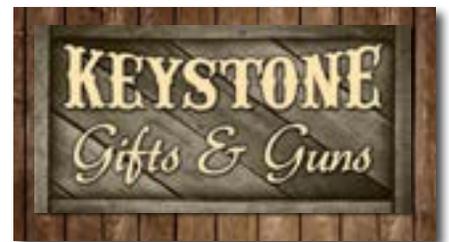


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