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On the cover...

Motosurf Action
in Keystone Heights
Story Page 30

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Dear Keystone Heights Residents,

I hope everyone is having a great summer! I wanted to drop a letter in this Community Directory to communicate a few things with everyone connected with the City of Keystone Heights.

First, it has been my honor and privilege to serve the citizens of this community as city manager. Our team works hard every day to serve you well.

Some of our top priorities are:

- Working with all stakeholders to ensure the lake level restoration project follows smoothly. According to our friends with Save our Lakes (SOLO) we should see water from the black creek project flowing out of Lake Brooklyn and into little Lake Keystone and Lake Geneva late 2024 or early 2025. This project impacts our entire lake region and requires consistent time and attention to ensure creek beds are cleared, property owners are kept in the loop, permits with appropriate agencies are pulled and the list goes on.
- The City has purchased the corner property at HW 100 and SR 21. We plan to demolish the old restaurant and are working with the Florida Department of Transportation to improve the traffic flow (specifically making a turn to the east on HW 100 from the north bound lane of SR 21. This will really spruce up the entrance to our city and I think it will be a nice improvement to our downtown area.
- We are constantly updating our city website to provide timely information. Our goal is to let everyone know as early as possible about upcoming meetings, and provide the meeting agendas with relevant back-up information so all stakeholders have time to review and formulate questions or comments prior to the city council meetings.
- Later this year our team guided by the City Council's direction with community input will work on a Strategic Plan to keep Keystone Heights in a rhythm of continuous improvement for our residents and visitors.

My role as City Manager is certainly a capstone in my career. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve this wonderful community that I grew up in.

Sincerely,

Charlie Van Zant

Keystone Heights City Manager





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
Elston "Speedy" Kussler-Councilman
Dan Lewandowski-Councilman

City Administration:

Charlie Van Zant-City Manager
Stephanie Silva-City Clerk
Kenny Hall-Public Works Director
Matt Cole-Code Enforcement
Rich Komando-City Attorney (BGK)

Office Team:

Drew Bell
Wendy Harris
Ark Natirboff
Beau Wright

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Keystone Heights:

Not your typical sleepy little hometown!

Into the Wild Blue Yonder

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 provides FBO service and serves as a transportation hub for the entire county.

Take in our rich military history by visiting our military museums: **Military Museum of Northeast Florida** located in Green Cove Springs and **Camp Blanding Museum** in Starke. 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.



Mayor
Nina Rodenroth



Vice Mayor
Christine Thompson



Councilman
Tony Brown



Councilman
Elston "Speedy" Kussler



Councilman
Dan Lewendowski

Administration & Public Workers



Stephanie Silva
City Clerk



Matt Cole
Code Enforcement



Kenny Hall
Public Works Director



Drew Bell
Office Team



Wendy Harris
Office Team



Ark Natirboff
Office Team



Beau Wright
Office Team



Adam Wolfe
Public Works



Kevin Hall
Public Works



Joe Johnson
Public Works



Garret Cox
Public Works



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



Charlie Van Zant ~ City Manager

Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Charlie Van Zant has rendered distinguished military service in the Florida Army National Guard deploying to combat zones in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. He has received numerous awards and honors including a Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal (w/OLC), Reserve Component Achievement Medal (w/OLC), National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, and Global War on Terror Service and Achievement medals. Charlie Van Zant joined the Florida National Guard, at the rank of private in 1989 as Black Hawk Helicopter crew chief. Just a few short years later, he was commissioned as an officer through the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. LTC Van Zant's military career spans 33 years. He held several Command and key Staff assignments. As an Army Aviator he holds aeronautical ratings in the AH-64 Apache and UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopters. In 2022 He retired as the senior officer leading Policy, Personnel and Programs from U.S. Forces Command Fort Bragg North Carolina. Locally he served as the Commander of Camp Blanding Army Airfield, and later as Deputy Commander of Camp Blanding Joint Training Site. As a citizen Soldier, over a 20-year period, Charlie served our Clay County Schools as a teacher, School Board Member and Superintendent of Schools. As superintendent of schools, he led Clay Counties largest employ group of approximately 5000 people serving 38,000 students with an annual budget of approximately \$400 million dollars. Charlie received his B.A. From of the University of Florida, and his Master's degree from Regent University.

Email Contact: vanzant@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



**July 4th
Celebration**
Vendor Event, Entertainment,
Live Music, and Fireworks
All Day
Keystone Heights Theme Park,
Keystone Heights Natural Park,
and Keystone Beach



**July 4th
Jordan Cooper
Memorial 5k Run**
July 4th 6:30am-8am
City Hall

**July 4th
Kiwanas "Sound of
Freedom Parade**
South Lawrence Blvd



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

**2024 Christmas
Tree Festival
Begins Nov 30th**
Keystone Heights
Natural Park



**Kiwanas Christmas
Parade**
Dec 14th @ 6pm
South Lawrence
Blvd.

**Wreaths
Across America**
Dec 16th @ 11am
Keystone Heights
Memorial Garden

**Easter Sunrise
Service**
April 20th @ 6am
Keystone Beach
Park



**FOR MORE
INFORMATION
VISIT**

keystoneheights.us.calendar

A Letter from The Mayor of Keystone Heights

Greetings Citizens and Visitors, welcome to our small piece of Heaven!

Keystone Heights truly possesses the quintessential, small town charm that defines community. As I embark on my second 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 Councilmen Dan Lewandowski, Tony Brown and Elston Kussler where we create policy designed for a quality of life experience. Together we are working on multiple projects and events that are exciting and beneficial to our citizens. Our City Manager, Charlie Van Zant and staff are pivotal for our success as they work tirelessly to further ensure that "We Live Our Best Life Every Day". 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 large oak trees that are adorned with wispy moss surrounded by our beautiful lakes and nature preserves.

We enjoy multiple conveniences inside our 1.2 square mile area, giving residents the opportunity to walk to their destinations as desired. Our small town charm, historic homes, seasonal festivities flanked with hometown parades, that are anchored by our Historic Beach Pavilion are the initial grabbers for the lifestyle that most dream about when visiting Keystone Heights.

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!

Our history reflects a special story that began in 1921 when John & Agnes Lawrence recognized an amazing opportunity with the city's potential, aligned with all of the beautiful lakes, beaches and large mossy oaks that border our gem of a city. The next few years promise additional vitality to our town. The Black Creek Water Resource Project, and The City of Keystone Heights collaborate with Save Our Lakes Organization (SOLO). The lakes are our greatest source of recreation and economic opportunity. The Black Creek Project promises the return of our lake waters back to their pristine beauty and abounding shorelines.

In celebrating our 100th year, New Year's Eve will ring in 2025 with a BANG as we launch our citywide Centennial Celebration. Multiple events and activities are on the horizon for this momentous time. The Friends of Keystone Heights organization is busy planning for the Centennial throughout 2024. I want to urge all citizens to become involved, as it will be a fun and memorable historical year. 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". We are proud that Keystone Heights is a community of neighbors as 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
Mayor of Keystone Heights



Get back to nature in the great outdoors!



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.



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.



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



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.



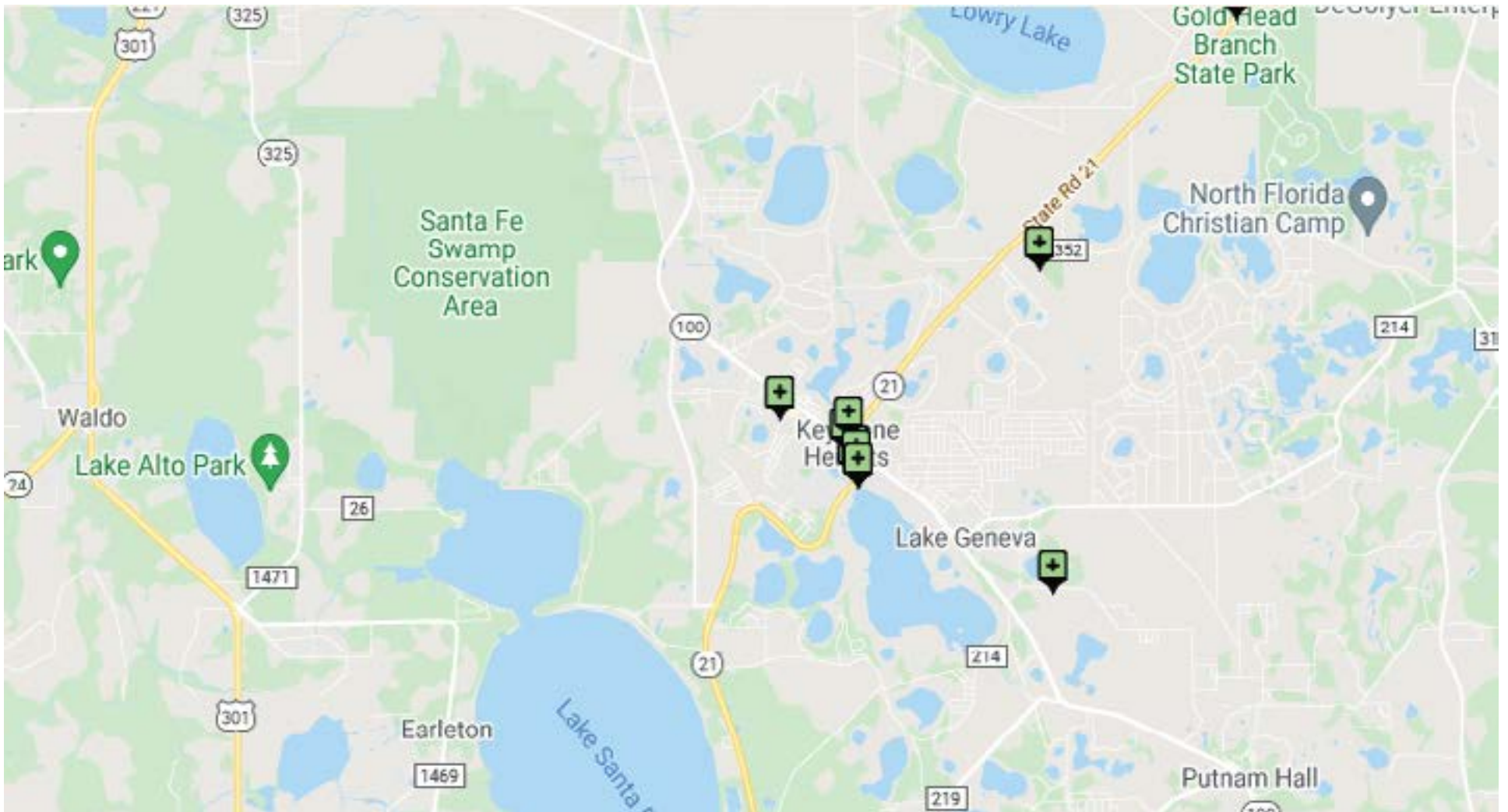
Keystone Heights Natural Park: In the Keystone Heights Natural Park you will find various flora, scenic walkways and a gazebo seating area. This park is a popular spot for photos, small wedding ceremonies, picnics and city events.



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!

Visit these parks in the Keystone and Lake Region

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							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.



Soldiers Freedom Outdoors: Healing PTSD with the power of nature

By Don Coble

MELROSE – Daniel DiMarco left the U.S. Army National Guard after being injured, but he quickly admits it wasn't military-related.

"I got kicked in the head by a horse, and I got a plate in my head," he said. "I never went overseas. I was never in a war."

But he never lost that connection to those who served. He now runs a nonprofit that provides an outdoor sanctuary to veterans who need time and a place to "reset" while they deal with post-traumatic stress disorder issues.

Camp Freedom is a 350-acre property off SE 8th Ave. with a lake for fishing and boating, woods for hikes and hunting, horses that "heal the inside of a man" to groom and ride, a barn for blacksmithing, open spaces for bee-hiving, taking a hayride, enjoying a campfire, "smelling fresh-cut hay" and listening "to sandhill cranes cry out."



He's been in the RV re-sale market for nearly 20 years, but the recession in 2009 made him rethink his priorities.

"I donated a lot of money to veteran causes because a lot of my brothers and sisters were still serving," DiMarco said. "They were over fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq. The only thing I could do was monetary. I was making good money, and

then a recession came, the first recession I've ever been through. The bottom line is I learned that I didn't have as much money as I thought.

"So recovered from that. Instead of making a ton of money, I wanted to focus on making a bigger difference in life and the world. My passion is the military. What helps me when I'm stressed is horses. It was fishing, being in the woods, hunting, or being outside that let me shed things. Why don't we do this for veterans? And that's how we started."

Soldiers Freedom Outdoors is a 501(c)(3) with Melrose, Mississippi and South Carolina camps. It's open to as many as seven veterans for a four-day retreat. They keep the groups small, so there is more interaction. There are no schedules or counseling sessions.

"We've got fishing; we have hunting," DiMarco said. "We have a huge equine program. So they ride, usually on Saturday and Sunday."

See FREEDOM Page 27

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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



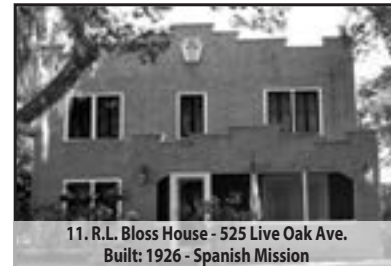
10. S.L. Hart House - 350 Sylvan Way
Built: 1928 - Simple Craftsman



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



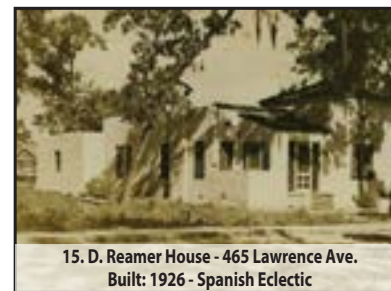
14. Houser House - 250 Lakeview Street
Built: 1925 - Craftsman



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 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.

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 Key-

stone Heights post office opened.

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

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

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



flowers did flourish in the gardens of the new settlers.

John Lawrence, an ordained minister, was very interested in religion 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 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

See HISTORY Page 21

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HISTORY from Page 19

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.

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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Persistent group saves the lakes, future of Keystone's economic future

By Don Coble

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – They were the persistent little drip that, over time, became a tidal wave that not only saved the lakes in the region but possibly the ability of Northeast Florida to keep the faucets flowing in the future.

The Save Our Lakes Organization used a mix of persistence and patience to outwit and outwait the bureaucracies of big business and government agencies to get everyone to ante their share of \$100 million to replenish Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva.

They were a dogged bunch, wearing red shirts at every St. Johns River Water Management District Meeting for decades. They weren't interested in excuses or governmental double-talk. They were tired of energy companies sucking water from the aquifer that was being fed from their lakes.

Then SOLO made an argument nobody could dispute.

“And we did it with their own information,” said SOLO President Vivian Katz-James.

She said she got a call in 2010 from Katherine Van Zant, wife of then State Rep. Charles Van Zant, about an item on the SJRWMD agenda about lowering the minimum flow rate for Lake Brooklyn by 20 feet to 81 feet. SOLO created a map that showed areas of the lake, especially near Brooklyn Bay, would drop to less than five feet deep if the plan was passed.

Suddenly, SOLO had support. “When you see something like that, you say, ‘Wow, why would they do that? So we started in December of 2010 and finally got approval on a new MFL in 2021, so that was a 10-year battle,” Katz-Jones said. “We basically went head with the utilities consortium, the North Florida utilities consortium. That was our 10-year battle. In addition to that, we were working on projects trying to find ways to bring water back. These lakes,

See LAKES Page 38



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Keystone Heights Library



The Keystone Heights Library is located at 175 Oriole St. in Keystone Heights, FL.
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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CJ Acres Animal Rescue Farm

Where damaged animals get a name, find a happy future

By Don Coble

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS – Every animal at CJ Acres Animal Rescue Farm comes with a story. They all start with horrific tales of neglect, abuse, horrific catastrophes or abandonment.

But when they arrive at the sprawling farm, Lee Sackett usually gives them a name and talks to them like they're old friends. The emotional and physical scars eventually heal. They become part of a family that includes donkeys, horses, pigs, turkeys, ducks, chickens, a Brahman bull, cows, goats, barn cats and mustangs.

"There's over 100 animals here on the property, just about anything you'll find on a farm," Sackett said. "They all start out once upon a time, the part of the fairy tale that's not so good. And then you get to the happily ever after."

The farm on Jones Creek Road was named after a dog named CJ. Oddly enough, there are no dogs there now. Sackett said it's reserved strictly for farm animals.

Sackett is certified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency

to enter disaster areas to recover abandoned animals. The National Wildlife Foundation recognizes his farm because he doesn't use chemical pesticides or fertilizers. He lets areas go fallow. As a result, there are a lot of birds, frogs and lightning bugs – things that are rarely seen anymore.

"We tap directly into the Florida aquifer 550 feet down," Sackett said. "The water down there is 73 degrees, which feels really good this time of year. We fill the mud holes with that water, and the hogs lay in them. There's been many a time I've been tempted to get in that mud hole with them when it's hot."



Lee Sackett with a feathered friend. CJ Acres is home to over 100 rescued animals.



Where's the beef?

Moudini, a Brahman bull who escaped from a slaughterhouse and ultimately was rescued and now lives his best life at CJ Acres

In addition to being chemical-free, Sackett said he uses radios to protect his ducks, turkeys and chickens at night.

"The turkeys and chickens can get to the rafters to stay away from the foxes and coyotes," he said. We have radios to protect the ducks. We turn on talk radio at night. For some reason, predators can't stand the sound of Sean Hannity's voice."

The oldest animal on the farm is a horse named George.

"George has been there 24 years," Sackett said. "George came in here when he was only 2. He has a lot of girlfriends."

"You know your name, George. There you go, good boy? We actually

See RESCUED, pg 33

Keystone Heights Women's Club

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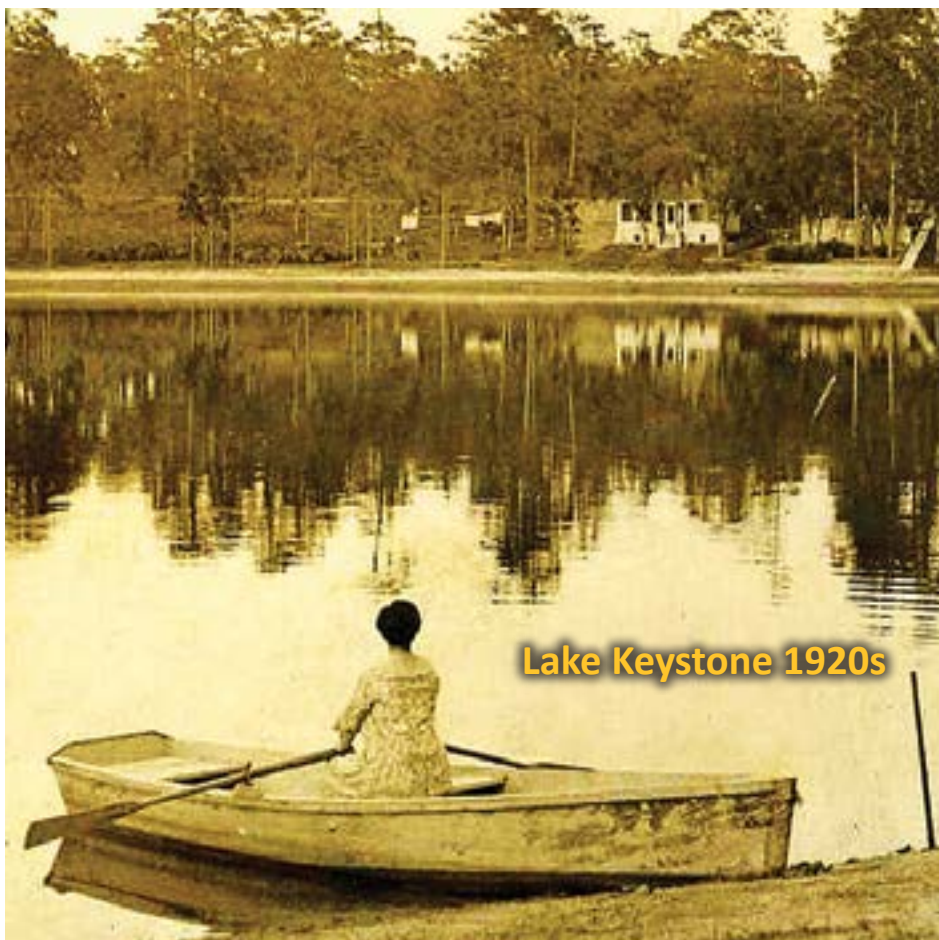
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Hosting Community Events



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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;

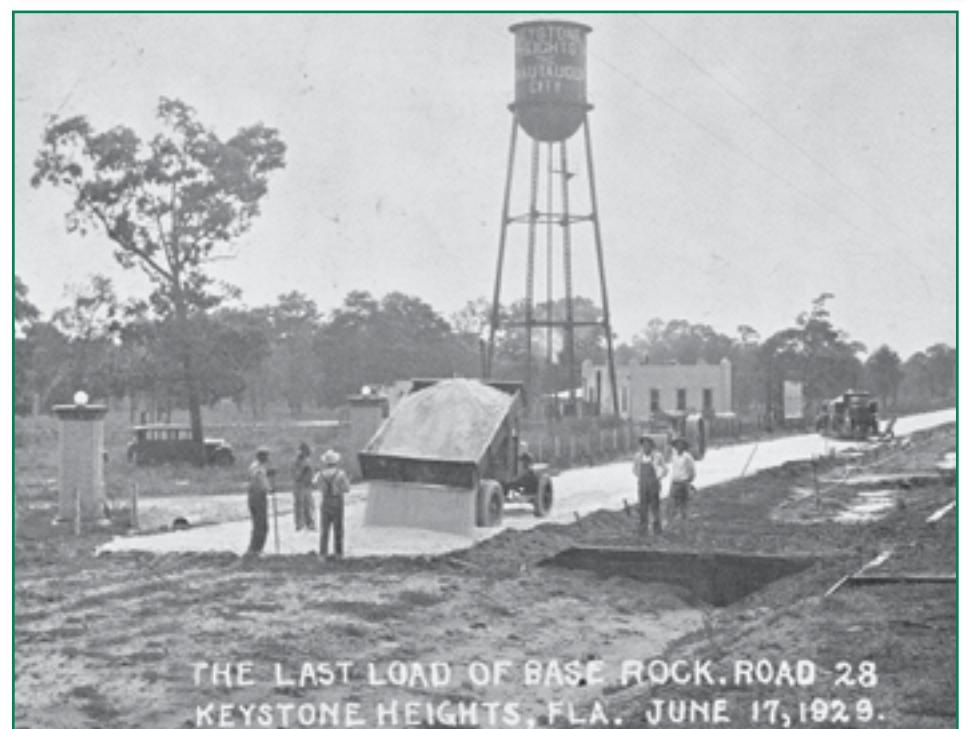
- Have additional special events throughout 2025. Some possibilities suggested were are a car show, a New Year's Eve Celebration at that pavilion to kick off 2025, honor decedents of original Keystone families and founders, have an all-city musical and skit pageant "Rolling through the Decades" in conjunction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

Friends of Keystone Heights group meets every month on the 3rd Thursday at 10 a.m. at the Keystone Heights pavilion. They will be selling calendars, Challenge coins and having a raffle for a grill. Sponsorships are available for our T-shirt orders.

**Contact Debbie Beals for more information.
(316) 648-0595 • deborah.beals@gmail.com**



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FREEDOM from Page 16

They pushed through that, they are able to help other veterans. Everybody who comes here lets something go because they're better when they leave."

DiMarco, the organization's CEO, said more than 7,000 veterans have visited Camp Freedom since it opened in 2014.

"It was a blessing to be at a place where we weren't interrogated about our injuries, our experiences," said veteran Franchon Ambrose. "We were shown how to embrace who we are now."

DiMarco makes it clear Soldier Freedom Outdoors wasn't created to treat PTSD. It's an opportunity for veterans to realize they're not alone and to be in a safe space around others who are looking for inner peace.

"We set it for four days because there is a lot of anxiety," DiMarco said. "Most of them believe they can handle four days. If you think our website says we're here to fix you, it doesn't. It's healing through nature. That's what it is. It's veterans helping veterans."

We have volunteers who are good listeners. When you have veterans sitting around the campfire, they start getting stuff off their chest. It's hard to explain unless you experience it."

Unlike other organizations, including nonprofits, DiMarco doesn't accept a salary for his work. Instead, he's started a \$1 a month donation campaign to offset costs. To help, visit info@soldiersfreedomoutdoors.org.



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Swashing, speeding, submerging!

Keystone Heights hosts Motosurf Games

By Randy Lefko
randy@claytodayonline.com

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - With racers as young as 13 and as touted as national champions from Mexico, Canada and the United States, the first stop of the Motosurf Games 2024 calendar ramped up amidst hot, steamy weather at Keystone Heights' Lake Geneva.

Motosurf is an array of head-to-head racing around a pyloned water course on the lake with racers advancing to the Sunday finals. Categories of racing included Hobby, Women, Juniors and Pro with the motorized surfboards operated by a tether in the rider's hand, offered slashing passes in 180-degree turns and spectacular splash-down as athletes battled elbow to elbow at top speeds. In one of the more competitive battles, youth racer Lukas Violette, just 11, was battling 15-year-old Hobby class champion Ryder Sawangwan and had the lead for most of the race before Sawangwan forced an error by the younger Violette.

"I knew he was back there and coming fast," said Violette. "I know he's fast, but I also knew his legs might be tired and if I put pressure on him to catch me, I might get lucky."

Sawangwan eventually forced the younger Violette to miss a buoy on the final lap for the win in two categories.

16-year-old Anna Burk, a North Carolina athlete who owns the world record for a backflip on a jet ski, was in a battle for the females with World Cup Dubai winner Reanna Deveaux, from Canada with Team Canada teammate Mark Andrews (top-rated in Canada), chasing Deveaux made the blowout win for Deveaux more exciting for Deveaux.

"I had to work hard to stay in front of the young riders," said Deveaux, who is expected to compete in the 2025 World Games in Chengdu, China. "She is a great challenge and will only get better."

In the mens elite race, top American Antony Squire, of North Carolina, won decisively from the front in front of Andrews. Squire brought titles in the USA Nationals 2022 and 2023 and the World Championships 2023 to the Keystone Heights races and showed off his talent very quickly.

The Keystone Heights event, staged with



the Airstream Ventures operation out of Jacksonville, is part of a coalition of athletic events in the North Florida area as well as nationwide that Airstream stages.

"We try to find venues for sports all around the country to highlight the area of the sport," said Operations Assistant Rick Thompson. "We had a good turnout on Saturday, but Mother's Day may have kept some racers home today (Sunday)."

Thompson noted that Airstream will host a cross-country run race at the Clay County Fairgrounds.

"We moved the cycling event we had in Clay County to Lynchburg, VA," said Thompson. "We have expected a June lacrosse event at the new Clay County Recreation Park on Highway 21."

One competitor in the elite mens race, Tyler Chennault, finally got his podium finish for the weekend with a third-place finish behind Squire. "I teach the sport in North Carolina and if had started earlier in my sports life, I would be finishing better," said Chennault, second-ranked in the USA, who started as a surfer and multiple sports high school athlete. "When I started, I couldn't afford the boards they were winning on and I just kind of competed knowing where I was going to finish. The sport has grown such that I have about 5,000 clients that I teach the sport."



STAFF PHOTOS BY RANDY LEFKO

Above: USA No. 1 ranked Antony Squire powered through strong win for elite race. Left: Team Canada pro Reanna Deveaux hugs 16 year old Anna Burke in show of respect of how good Burke has progressed as a young competitor from North Carolina.



Fifteen year old top ranked Ryder Sawangwan, of Washington, got win in Hobby class and came back just 30 minutes later to chase and beat Lukas Violette in Youth race with Violette missing a buoy as Sawangwan hovered just behind him on the last lap.





Left: Lukas Violette, an 11 year old ranked rider, battles around buoy as Ryder Sawangwan awaits chance to move past. Right: North Carolina pro Tyler Chennault stayed the course to get a third place elite finish.



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Weightlifting boys lead Indian highlight reel

By Randy Lefko
Sports Editor

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS - Keystone Heights High senior weightlifter Trey Jeffries was the stand-out repeat performer for Keystone Heights sports in a year that Indian athletics had outstanding efforts in a handful of sports. "My job is to keep the team positive," said Jeffries, now a two-time individual state champion for Florida 2023 Coach of the Year Lantz Lowery who stormed the 2024 field throughout the season with unbeatable totals.

"We all have bad lifts along the way, but it is important to learn from it and get the next one. The key to our strength at Keystone Heights is exactly our strength and we just keep putting up nine good lifts per guy."

For Lowery, who came home with a roughly-fought mano-a-mano chase of eventual 1A champion Suwannee High in 2024, the chase was always on with the target the state meet and a fourth consecutive state title.

"That 'was' the battle," said Lowery with Keystone Heights eventually second in Traditional to Suwannee High in an intense cat and mouse game of chicken, sort of, with a mistake or two the difference between Lowery's fourth straight state title and his eventual second place. "I think this was one of the toughest days of lifting in Florida. We came in with a plan and all I

ask of my team is to get their lifts in and score points. We didn't do that as well today and Suwannee put on a good show."

Also on the fields of action, Keystone Heights boys and girls soccer rocketed through their season with junior forward Ki-ersten Shaw ramping up with 34 goals on the season for the girls who finished with another region playoff berth that landed in the first round against Final Four finisher P.K. Yonge.

For the boys, junior Aaron Wiley punched in with 37 goals for coach Trevor Waters, who directed a strong 13-3-2 record in one of the strongest regions in Florida Class 3A that had four teams in the region 3A top 20.

Baseball and softball offered up side-by-side great play with coach Alan Roach and Jessica Marquart with the Indians opening at 11-2 going 20-9 with a region playoff led by senior Connor Guy (5 HRs), Austin Musgrove (64Ks) and a double whammy of Gage Barry (47Ks) and Ty Mitzel (41K) as second shift.

For Marquart, a suicidal schedule spelled another up and down season, but a finish with strength with Abbie Roach (13 Extra base bombs), Ashley Nugent (4HRs) and their own double whammy on the mound; Caitlin Frampton (66 Ks) and Kadence Massey (74Ks).

Keystone Heights got bumped from regions from eventual region finalist Episcopal in the first round of 3A regions.

Around the hallways, football made a playoff appearance behind a renewed passing attack on offense with sophomore Baylor Ford hitting an unprecedented 1016 yards in the air with 11 scores and senior running back Cartez Daniels rumbling for 850 yards with 13 scores.



Six interceptions and six sacks highlighted the defense; two picks by sophomore Jackson Parmeter.



Trey Jeffries



Keystone Heights won the district 3-1A golf championship led by senior Kenneth Guys 72 round at Quail Heights Country Club in Lake City. With Guy are Nick Binet, Jacob Beach, Alexander Addington and Ty Mitzel.

RESCUED from Pg 24

teach the animals their name if they can know it. If they were abused or neglected, if they have trust issues, a lot of what our volunteers do is socialization.”

One of the popular animals is “Moooudini,” a 1,800-pound Brahman bull. He was at the slaughterhouse near Orlando, ready to be turned into ground beef and ribeyes, but he escaped through his stall. He got away, entered a private community, and broke through a boarded fence into a backyard with lush grass and a pool. The homeowners were away, so he had the run of the place for two or three



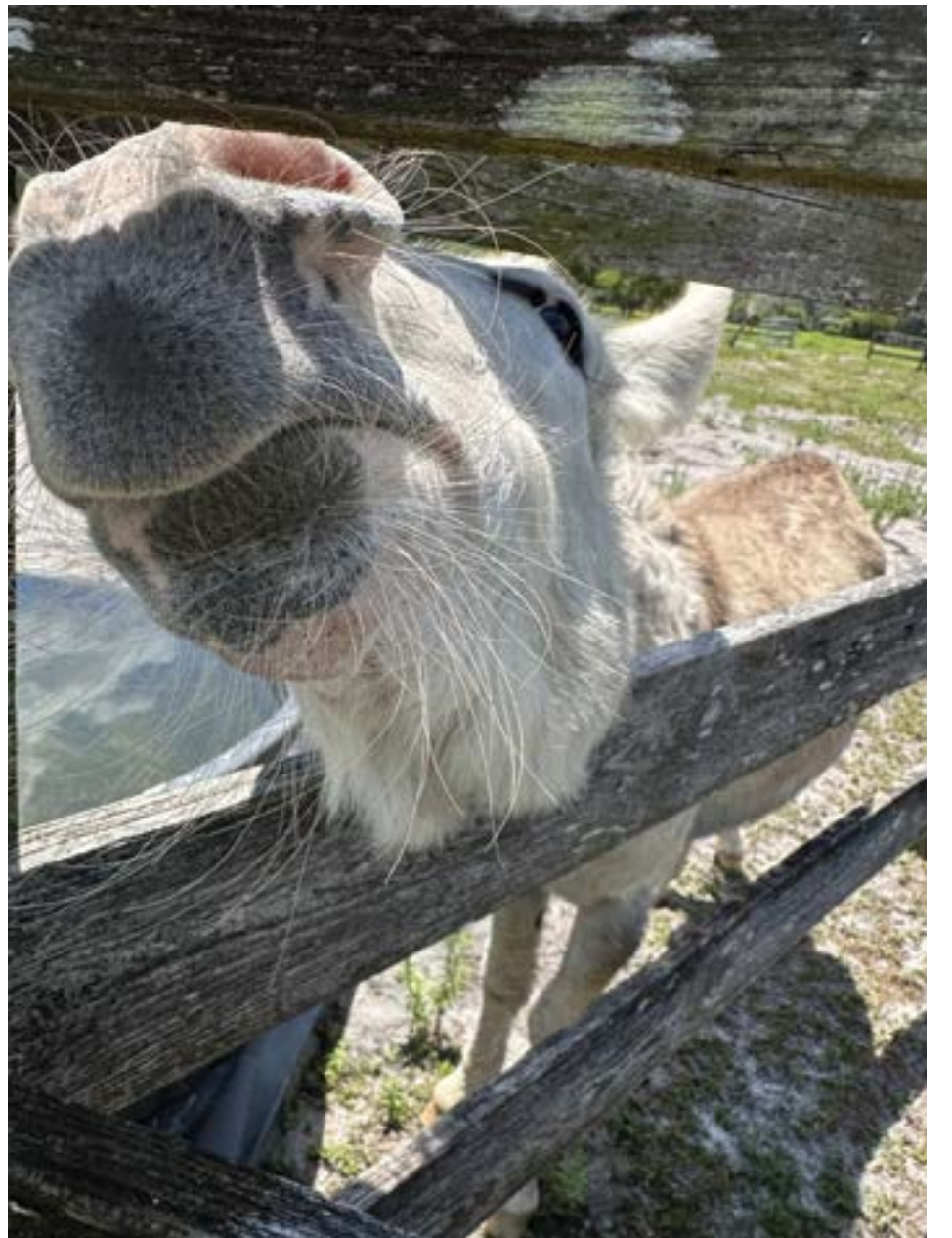
days. When they got home, the daughter (who owned Ethos Vegan Restaurant) she called Sackett because she didn’t want the bull to be processed for a barbecue.

Now, he loves to smile and lick unsuspecting visitors.

Sackett also has some Mustangs that once ran free on a 300-acre ranch in Kissimmee. When the owner died, the son wanted to sell the land but couldn’t find buyers for the 60 horses. One night, he left the gate open, and they all escaped. Some were found near Walt Disney World. Others ran as far as Lake Okeechobee. In all, it took more than two years to find them.

“Our inventory fluctuates,” Sackett said. “At different times, we’ll have different types of animals. The challenge is getting volunteers and visitors to come down to Keystone Heights. We offer tours. We have volunteer sessions for (ages) 14 and up. We do fundraisers out here.”

CJ Acres Animal Farm is a non-profit, and it was recognized with a \$7,000 check by the Reinold Foundation in April as the winner of its Judges Choice Program Award.



Mission of the Dirt Road

Building relationships, resurrecting High Ridge Estates



By Don Coble

KEYSTONE HEIGHTS—Scottie sat on the couch and sipped his coffee. Minutes earlier, he had charged his cellphone and ate a snack cake. With nothing else to do, he relaxed and enjoyed air conditioning, a moment to unwind and forget his problems before returning across the street to High Ridge Estates.

The Mission of the Dirt Road was created for moments like that.

“We created a space where people can come and be welcomed, find some resources, and be connected to the community,” said founder Rev. Carey Morford. “There’s lots of research about how important social connectedness is and just having access to basic needs. We provide a safe place.”

High Ridge Estates is a blighted community of shanty homes, broken windows, deeply rutted dirt roads, cars on blocks, stray pets, overgrown yards, poverty and futility. Along with Wells Road and College Drive, it’s one of three areas targeted by the Clay County Board of Commissioners to revitalize relationships to increase education between residents, county departments and other agencies like the Clay County Sheriff’s Office, Clay Transit, Code Enforcement and County

Services, along with medical, food and social services.

“We have people struggling with addiction. We have people struggling with mental illness. Those are really hard things,” Morford said. “When you hear people’s stories, you start to understand why they’re struggling with addiction and why they’re struggling with mental illness.”

Morford wants to break the cycle. In addition to being a gathering place, Mission of the Dirt Road distributes food, hosts parties, a community garden, a free tool library, worship, counseling, youth development, GED classes, a computer lab, resume-writing, reading and math classes and changing homelessness sessions.

They also offer free showers on Tuesdays and Fridays.

“There are homes where the wells have dried up,” Morford said. “We have about 40 people who take a shower here. There are people (in High Ridge) without water.”

In April, the Reinhold Foundation recognized The Mission of the Dirt Road with the Paul E. Reinhold Community Service Award. As the county’s nonprofit of the year, the Mission was described: “Building

*‘Building a cathedral
with stones as your foundation
is certainly a feat...
but imagine the extra
determination and resilience
you need if you start from dirt –
over 1,000 acres and
20 miles of dirt roads.’*



a cathedral with stones as your foundation is certainly a feat but imagine the extra determination and resilience you need if you start from dirt – over 1,000 acres of 20 miles of dirt roads.”

No matter how much support Mission of the Dirt Road can offer, there are too many challenges across the street. But Morford won't stop trying.

“It's frustrating because you want resources there for people,” she said. “We watch people try to make changes in their life – it's two steps forward, 25 steps back, and a lot of times that's not their own doing. Then, it's there's another crisis.”

And yet, there are successes. The Mission of the Dirt Road is making a difference.

“Meeting new people and seeing it from their point of view has helped me,” Scottie said. “I'm not alone. “Things got hectic, one little complicated thing after another. You know, you get into drinking, smoking, and all that. You know? Then you get to where you are, so



Rev. Carey Morford receiving the Paul E. Reinhold Community Service Award

hold on. I just wanted to personally find a fun hobby or something you do with the kids and have them thrive, like making birdhouses out of pallets.

“For once, I think I can have a future.”



MISSION OF THE DIRT ROAD

SHOWER MINISTRY

- INDIVIDUAL ADULTS ONLY TUES. & FRI 10AM-2PM
- FAMILIES w/ CHILDREN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
- HOT SHOWER. FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE.
- EVERYONE IS WELCOME. SUPPLIES PROVIDED WHEN AVAILABLE.
- CALL 352-478-8050 FOR MORE INFO

YOU MUST SIGN UP DURING DAY OF SHOWER HOURS IN-PERSON AT MISSION (7790 SR 100)

KEYSTONE AIRPORT HEIGHTS

42J

EST. 1942

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 runways, one being 5,046 feet and the other 4,899 feet long and capable of accommodating aircraft as large as a C-130. The airport sits on 2,482 acres with designated areas delineated as Airport Commercial, Business Park, Light Industry, and Timber.

- ➔ Aviation Commercial/ Operating Area691 acres
- ➔ Business Park Area297 acres
- ➔ Natural Park Area.....241 acres
- ➔ Timber /Wildlife Area.....1253 acres

The Keystone Heights Airport Authority (KHAA) is comprised of seven members, (5 City of Keystone Heights seats, 1 Bradford County Seat, and 1 Clay County Seat), 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 East 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 Krawlin' for the Fallen Jeep event, a weekend event raising money for surviving family members of fallen military and first responders. The Airport is also utilized by Bradford and Clay County Emergency Man-

agement 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. Future projects for the airport are: Fencing and Gate for new Western Access Road (\$200K, fully funded FY2024). Backup Power Generator for FBO Building, the Fuel Farm and the airfield Lighting Vault (\$400K, fully funded FY 2024 - 2025). Expand Fuel Farm (\$950K, fully funded FY 2024 - 2025). Replacement of the Jet A Fuel Truck (\$300K fully funded FY 2025). Design and construction of New Hangar (\$833K fully funded FY 2025). Design and Construct Runway 11 - 29 Pavement rehabilitation (\$4.3M fully funded FY 2025- 2027). Installation of new Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) (\$400K fully funded FY 2026). Rehabilitate Runway 5 - 23 (\$6M fully funded FY 2027). Design and Construct Hangar, Site Drainage, and Taxi lanes (\$1.2M fully funded FY 2027-2028).

Ninety-nine percent (99%) of major improvement projects that occur at our airport are funded through the FDOT Aviation Office and/or FAA Airport Improvement Program.

The new Admin/FBO building was completed in March of 2020. It 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. 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

- Craig Coon** – Craig is our Airport Manager and joined the team in September 2023.
- Rob Cornelius** – Rob is our Airfield Manager and joined the team in December 2023.
- Lori Butcher** - Lori is our fiscal/administration assistant. She's been with us since 2021.
- 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 individuals and the time they continue to devote to this airport and make it one the best general aviation airports in Florida.

- Mr. David Kirkland**
- Mr. Scott Fryar**
- Mr. Rex Siemer**
- Mrs. Terri Hall**
- Mr. Bobby Ludwig**
- Mr. David Dagenais**
- Vacant**

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 the primary EOC in Tallahassee is inoperable, he and his staff will manage state response efforts from the back-up EOC in Camp Blanding. When forest fires swept through 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!





Honoring the Past. Embracing the Future
We welcome you to become a part of our Aviation Family.



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LAKES from page 21

Brooklyn and Geneva, are one of the two recharge areas for the Florida aquifer. So it makes sense to me. It's always made sense. Why would you not want to keep these lakes full? They're recharging the aquifer. That's your water in mine."

SOLO expanded on that momentum.

"Vivian and I had a conversation, and we said we needed to get all the players in the same room at the same time," said SOLO member and former Keystone Heights City Manager Scott Kornegay. "So we invited the Clay County Commission, the Bradford County Commission, the Keystone Heights City Council, St Johns River Water Management District Board, Suwannee River Water Manage-

ment District Board, Congressman Ted Yoho, (Florida) Senator Rob Bradley and soon-to-be Representative Bobby Payne. And our SOLO people. We all met right up there in that boardroom in City Hall. We called it the water summit. That's when Rob Bradley said, 'You know what? I sat in my last meeting where we talked about this.' He said, 'Now we're going to do something.' So soon after that, he went over to Palatka, to the (SJRWM) District office, and sat down with Dr. (Ann) Shortelle, and he said, 'What do you have on the shelf here? What can we do?' And she pulled off this Black Creek Water Resource Development Project and showed it to him. He said, 'That's what we're going to do. I'll get the money.'"

With the help of the BCC and



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Licensed Pre-Need Counselor
P. Steven Futch - Licensed Funeral Director

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38 Keystone Heights • JUNE 2024

some coaxing from the Clay County Utility Authority, Gainesville Regional Utilities, St. Johns Utilities and JEA, Florida Reps. Travis Cummings and Payne combined to pay \$100 million to divert as much as 10 million gallons of excess water from the south fork of Black Creek to Alligator Creek, which flows into Lake Brooklyn.

To accomplish this, the Black Creek Restoration Project included the construction of a pumping station at Black Creek on State Road 16 near Clay County Animal Service, connected by 17 miles of 30-inch pipes along SR 16 and SR

21 to Alligator Creek in Keystone Heights.

Water should be flowing by Christmas.

"Not letting the MLFs get adjusted was the beginning," said SOLO member Web Farber. "That was the switch that clicked. Any contention in the early days is irrelevant. This is a very positive story now."

The lakes are the primary economic driver for the area, Kornegay said. As the water rises, so does the prosperity of the region.

And the ability to keep the faucets flowing.



SAVE OUR LAKES
Construction of the Black Creek treatment station and
Odelivery system to the Lake Area Region continues



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CLAY COUNTY SHERIFF'S NET



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 Town Hall (NET). You and your neighbors can meet with deputies several times during the year to discuss all matters affecting your neighborhood and your quality of life to

include crime trends and crime prevention strategies; anything that negatively affects your community. This is your opportunity to meet one-on-one with them and tell them what is really happening in your neighborhoods. For more information, call (904) 264-6512 and ask for the Community Affairs Section.



Zone 1 (Orange Park) – The Church of Eleven22, 317 Blanding Boulevard.
Second Thursday of the month starting at 6pm., January, May and September.

Zone 2 (Oakleaf/Eagle Landing) – Eagle Landing Golf Club, 3989 Eagle Landing Pkwy.
Second Thursday of the month starting at 6pm. , February, June and October.

Zone 3 (Fleming Island/Lake Asbury) – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 7190 U.S. 17.
Second Thursday of the month starting at 6pm. , March, July and November.

Zone 4 (Middleburg/Clay Hill) – Middleburg Civic Center, 2102 Palmetto Street.
Second Thursday of the month starting at 6pm. , April, August and December.

Penney Farms – Barrows Hall, 4385 Wilbank Avenue.
Fourth Thursday of the month starting at 4pm. January, April, July and October.

Keystone Heights – First Baptist Church 550 E. Walker Dr.
Fourth Thursday of the month starting at 6pm. , January, April, July and October.

What is the Sheriff's NET Town Hall? – The Sheriff's Neighborhood Engagement Town Hall 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 respective "Zone."

What is a Zone? – A zone is a geographical boundary within Clay County. The zones are used for various governmental, law enforcement, public safety and community organizations. The county is sectioned into 4 different, but related areas.

What is discussed at the meetings? – While each Zone is assigned an Assistant Chief from the Clay County Sheriff's Office, the meetings are facilitated by Chairmen and Co-Chairmen (citizen members) that are elected by the membership. The Chairmen/Co-Chairmen and members discuss issues and invite speakers that relate to their specific issues. The speakers can be the choice of the membership or in conjunction with the assistance of a Community Affairs Deputy Sheriff assigned to the specific Zone.

Why do CCSO Assistant Chiefs attend the meetings? – Each NET Zone is assigned an Assistant Chief to facilitate and 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, document them, investigate the issues and respond back with documented results.

When do the NET's meet and how long are the meetings? – Each Zone will meet three times a year and the meetings will last for approximately two hours. Due to location, Penney Farms and Keystone will meet quarterly and their meetings will last approximately one hour. The meetings will be facilitated by the Chairmen/Co-Chairmen and members. Meeting dates and times can be viewed at: <http://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/> and complete the application and submit online. A background check conducted upon completion; you will be notified of the results. If you qualify and 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 NET Town Hall meeting.



City of Keystone Heights Business Listings

Airports

Keystone Heights Airport 42J 7150 Airport Road Starke, FL 32091 352-473-0031

Animal Services

Keystone Heights Animal Hospital 7344 State Road 100 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-4966
Spring Lake Animal Hospital 7400 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-8222

Attorneys & Law Offices

Taylor Arrubla Hardwick PA 420 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-8088
Law Office of Mark Natirboff PA 130 Sylvan Way Keystone Heights, FL 32656 904-260-6000
Veronica R. Owens Attorney at Law 189 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-5000

Automotive

Blue Lagoon Car Wash 180 Cargo Way Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-7060
Carquest of Keystone Heights 7419 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-3561
Chris's Towing & Recovery 6841 Apache Junction Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-235-1884
Keystone Kwik Lube Inc 131 W. Walker Drive Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-6929
Mobil Fuel Station 205 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-478-7046
Mike's Auto Electric & Radiator Repair 330 Commercial Circle Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-7557
Riviere Tire 7374 Sunrise Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-7308
William's Automotive 7365 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-8400

Banking & Financial Services

Ameris Bank Keystone Heights 100 NE Commercial Circle Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-7275
Capital City Bank Keystone Heights 500 Green Way Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-4952
PNC Bank 200 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-367-5120
Rebecca E. Williams CPA 120 Citrus Avenue Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-5909
3 Shacks Capital Partners 270 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 904-424-4154

Child Care Services

A Child's Garden 7442 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-0600
School Kidz Hang Out 165 SW Nightingale Street Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-4044

Contractor Services

American Gutter 322 State Road 100, Suite A Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-8411
Atlantic Logistics 150 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 904-886-1109
Bronco Well Drilling 969 SE State Road 100 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-0534
D&B Cabinets 150 NE Commercial Circle Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-0072
Hoodz 135 SW Flamingo Street Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-478-7043
Joseph Knapp Land Surveyor 270 SW Palmetto Avenue Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-3166
Kane's Draft Service 335 Commercial Circle Keystone Heights, FL 32656 866-478-2420
Keystone Plumbing 2473 SE State Road 100 Starke, FL 32091 352-792-4426
Keystone Power Equipment 7907 State Road 100 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-478-8126
Keystone Surveying & Mapping 305 SE Sylvan Way Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-9495
Mike Bertie Heating & Air 7415 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-9595
North FL Well Drilling 105 Commercial Drive Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-3204
Northways Contracting 7412 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 904-910-5960
Whitton Roofing 275 Fox Run Road Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-8962

Customs

Brand Works 255 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-559-3311
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

Family Services and Ministries

Jones Gallagher Funeral Home 340 E. Walker Drive Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-3176
Lake Area Ministries Food Pantry 131 NE Commercial Circle Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-2846
Robert A. Morrow Counseling 210 SW Nightingale Street Suite B Keystone Heights, FL 32656 904-315-9106
Senior Center 125 Commercial Circle Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-2065

Gyms & Studios

Genesis Fitness 310 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-7388
Keystone Mixed Martial Arts 275 S. Lawrence Blvd Suite 2 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-214-8144
Keystone Music Lessons & Studio 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 & Cheer Center 275 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-278-1240

Insurance Agencies

Keystone Heights Insurance Agency 7388 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-4881
Roberts Insurance of Keystont Hts 333 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-7209

Pharmacies

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

Newspapers

Bradford County Telegraph 131 W. Call Street Starke, FL 32091 904-964-6305
Clay Today 3513 US Hwy 17 Green Cove Springs, FL 32003 904-264-3200
Keystone Herald 3513 US Hwy 17 Green Cove Springs, FL 32003 904-264-3200

Medical & Health Care Services

Azalea Health 100 Commercial Drive Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-6595
Donnette N Beard Massage Therapy 7426 State Road 21 Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-473-6053
Hearing Aids Today 450 S. Lawrence Blvd Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-877-4471
Hometown Health & Wellness 110 SW Nightingale St Keystone Heights, FL 32656 352-664-7702

City of Keystone Heights Business Listings

Medical & Health Care Services (cont.)

Keystone Chiropractic	7408 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9777
Keystone Dental Care	260 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0707
Lake Area Physical Therapy	465 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7560
Legacy Home Health Care Inc	7384 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-7030
Magnolia Chiropractic Center	100 SW Magnolia Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8239
Park of the Palms Retirement/ALF	204 Maranatha Road	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6100
Physicians Care of Keystone	6542 Triest Avenue	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7288
Starling Family Dentistry	310 SE Palmetto Ave	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9090
Therapy Through Massage	100 SE Nightingale Street	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-1118
Village Doctors Family Medical Ctr	175 N Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3199
Village Doctors PA	100 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9373

Municipal & County Govt Services

City of Keystone Heights	555 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4807
Clay County Chamber of Commerce	1734 Kingsley Avenue	Orange Park, FL 32073	904-264-2651
Clay County Fire Rescue Station 11	7390 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-284-7703
Keystone Heights Public Library	175 Oriole Street	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4286

Real Estate Services

CW Realty	160 SW Nightingale Street	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8490
Florida Homes Realty & Mortgage	275 S. Lawrence Blvd Suite 1	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-SOLD
Florida Homes Realty & Mortgage	510 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-588-2083
Hatch Realty Services	350 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-806-2857
Helen Hersey Realty	7396 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-8882
Lake Area Title Services Inc	7404 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9009
Realty Productions	4190 SE 1st Avenue	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-215-2029
Southland Realty	100 SE Nightingale Street	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-327-7235
Taylor Arrubla Hardwick PA	420 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-8088
The Inn at Palmetto	555 SE Palmetto Avenue	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-755-6831
Trevor Waters Realty	7374 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7777

Recreation & Tourism

Goldhead State Park	6239 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-316-4286
The FIRM Rally School	7266 Airport Road	Starke, FL 32091	352-473-2999

Restaurants

Brooklyn Boys	205 NE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8140
Cedar River Seafood	7412 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8210
Clyde's Cozy Café Corner	130 Nightingale Street	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8358
Crossroads Christian Café	330 S. Lawrence Blvd Suite A	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-5060
Dominos Pizza Carry Out & Delivery	7403 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7070
Dunkin Donuts	101 W. Walker Drive	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8744
Firepower Coffee	322 State Road 100 Suite D	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8174
Hardee's	7401 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-7745
Johnny's BBQ	7411 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4445
Midtown Café & Pizza	190 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8028
Nutrition Retreat	185 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-231-3902
Popeyes Chicken	200 Green Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-639-0025
Stone's Irish Pub	323 Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3000
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
The Tea Room	7435 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-535-8510

Retail Stores

Abandoned Treasurers	7358 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-235-1178
Alfie's Liquors	153 E. Walker Drive	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6991
Bald Eagle Bait and Tackle	155 E. Walker Drive	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6060
Bryan's Ace Home Center	251 E. Walker Drive	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4006
Crossroads Christian Bookstore	330 S. Lawrence Blvd Suite A	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-5060
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 Florist	370 Sylvan Way	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-9201
Healthy Living 4U	179 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-3663
Keystone Gifts and Guns	155 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4006
Keystone Power Equipment	7907 State Road 100	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8126
Sweet Pea's Florist & Gifts	251 E. Walker Drive	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0352
Twice The Ice - 32 Degrees Inc	155 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-990-4423

Salons/Barber Shops

A Cut Above Hair & Nails	480 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-6030
Body Language Salon	130 SE Syvlan Way	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	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 Cutters	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	290 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8095
Shannon's Unlimited	107 SE Commercial Circle	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-0257
Shear Creations	350 S. Lawrence Blvd	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-478-8130
The Barber Shop	7423 State Road 21	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	904-256-2590
Volume Hair & Lashes	330 S. Lawrence Blvd Suite B	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-562-1997

Utility Services

Clay Electric	65 SW Citrus Avenue	Keystone Heights, FL 32656	352-473-4917
Clay County Utility Authority	3176 Old Jennings Rd.	Middleburg, FL 32068	904-272-5999

Civic Groups, Clubs & Non-Profits

Twisted Oaks Rescue
7637 El Dorado, KH
262-623-7331

Mission of the Dirt Road
7790 State Road 100, KH
352-478-8050

Lake Area Ministries
131 NE Commercial Circle, KH
352-473-2846

Keystone Heights Senior Ctr.
125 Commercial Circle, KH
352-473-2065

Kiwanis
PO Box 175 KH
352-4789573
Keystone Heights Rotary

Woman's Club
6747 Woman's Club Drive, KH
352-473-3553

Garden Club of the Lakes

Heritage Commission
555 S. Lawrence Blvd., KH
352-473-4807

Save Our Lakes Org.
PO Box 185, KH
904-699-2653

Masonic Lodge-Melrose
Lodge #89
290 SE Palmetto Ave., KH
352-468-2706



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Community Church Directory

Christ Evanoelical Lutheran Church
352-875-6079
3760 SE State Road 21
Keystone Heights

Community Church of Keystone
Pastor Steven Clingier
352-4 73-4182
PO BOX 722
Keystone Heights

First Assembly of God
352-473-3432
8025 State Road 100
Keystone Heights

First Baptist Church of Keystone
Pastor Ryan Begue
352-473-7201
550 E Walker Drive
Keystone Heights

Freedom Baptist Church
352-473-2778
PO BOX 1517
Keystone Heights

Fresh Start Fellowship
Pastor Steve Conner
352-473-6550
PO BOX 747
Keystone Heights

Friendship Bible Church
Pastor Carl Metzger
352-473-2713
1155 Orchid Avenue
Keystone Heights

Gadara Baptist Church
352-473-3615
6779 County Road 315 C
Keystone Heights

Immanuel Anolican Church
Archbishiop Raul Toro
904-579-6858
PO BOX 2012
Keystone Heights

Keystone Heiohts Christian Church
Pastor Buster Appling
352-473-0620
3528 SE State Road 21, Keystone Heights

Keystone Methodist
352-473-3829
PO BOX 744
Keystone Heights

Keystone Presbyterian
Rob Hamm
352-473-2521
C/O Rob Ham, 4356 SE 1st Ave.
Keystone Heights

Lake Hill Baptist Church
Will Smith
352-473-4191
PO Box 602
Keystone Heights

Mission of the Dirt Road
Pastor Carey Morford
352-473-4191
PO Box 602, Keystone Heights

Park of the Palms
352-473-6100
753 Heberon Ave.
Keystone Heights

St. William Catholic Church
352-473-4136
275 Satsuma Street
Keystone Heights

Trinity Baptist Church
Pastor Brandon Denmark
352-473-7261
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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

Use data from last year under this heading

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

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

Use data from last year under this heading

Every Saturday 11:00-1:00 **FULL BREAKFAST** Prepared by a Chef

1st Friday of every month 9:00-1:00 - HEALTH CARE CHECK

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VP: Linda Osburne

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Treasurer: Rebecca Farmer

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Hours: 8:30-5pm Tues.-Thurs.



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If these walls could talk...

Melrose landmark a piece of living history

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.



Chiappini's has withstood the test of time and remains a community gathering space.

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"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.



In addition to bait, ice and cold beer, Chiappini's serves up live music and cornhole tournaments.



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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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Pam Whittle
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www.northfloridachamber.com

Utility Companies
Electric Companies
City of Starke - (904) 964-5027
Florida Power & Light -
(800) 851-9402
Clay Electric - (352) 473-8000

Gas Companies
City of Starke - (904) 964-7776
Sawyer Gas - (352) 468-1500
Phone Companies
Century Link - (888) 723-8010

Water & Sewer Companies
Suwannee River Water
Management District
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City of Starke - (904) 964-7776

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Comcast - (800) 266-2278
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Directv - (877) 356-2135 or
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Dish Network - (888) 656-2872
or www.dish.com

Waste Disposal
Waste Management (904) 964-4184

Internet Services
Century Link - (888) 723-8010

Educational Information
Bradford County School Board
501 W Washington St.
Starke, FL 32091
904-966-6800

North Florida Technical College
609 N Orange St., Starke, FL 32091
(904) 966-6764

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

Employment Information
CareerSource North Central FL
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Office of the Clay County Property Appraiser

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

An Exemptions Specialist from the Office of the Clay County Property Appraiser will continue to be available in Keystone Heights (inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office) on the first Tuesday of the month through November 2024 to assist property owners with filing applications for property tax exemptions, agricultural classifications and/or assessment reductions, and to provide assistance with general property assessment questions. For more information, contact the Property Appraiser's Office at (904)284-6305 ext. 1 to speak with an Exemptions Specialist or visit www.ccpao.com.

Temporary Satellite Location: Keystone Heights
Keystone Village Square (Inside the Clay County Tax Collector's Office)
7380 State Road 100, Ste. 10, Keystone Heights (located by Hitchcock's)



First Tuesday of the Month
July 2, Aug 6, Sept 3, Oct 1, Nov 5
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
(closed for lunch 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM)

Main Office: Green Cove Springs
Clay County Administration Building, 2nd Floor
477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs



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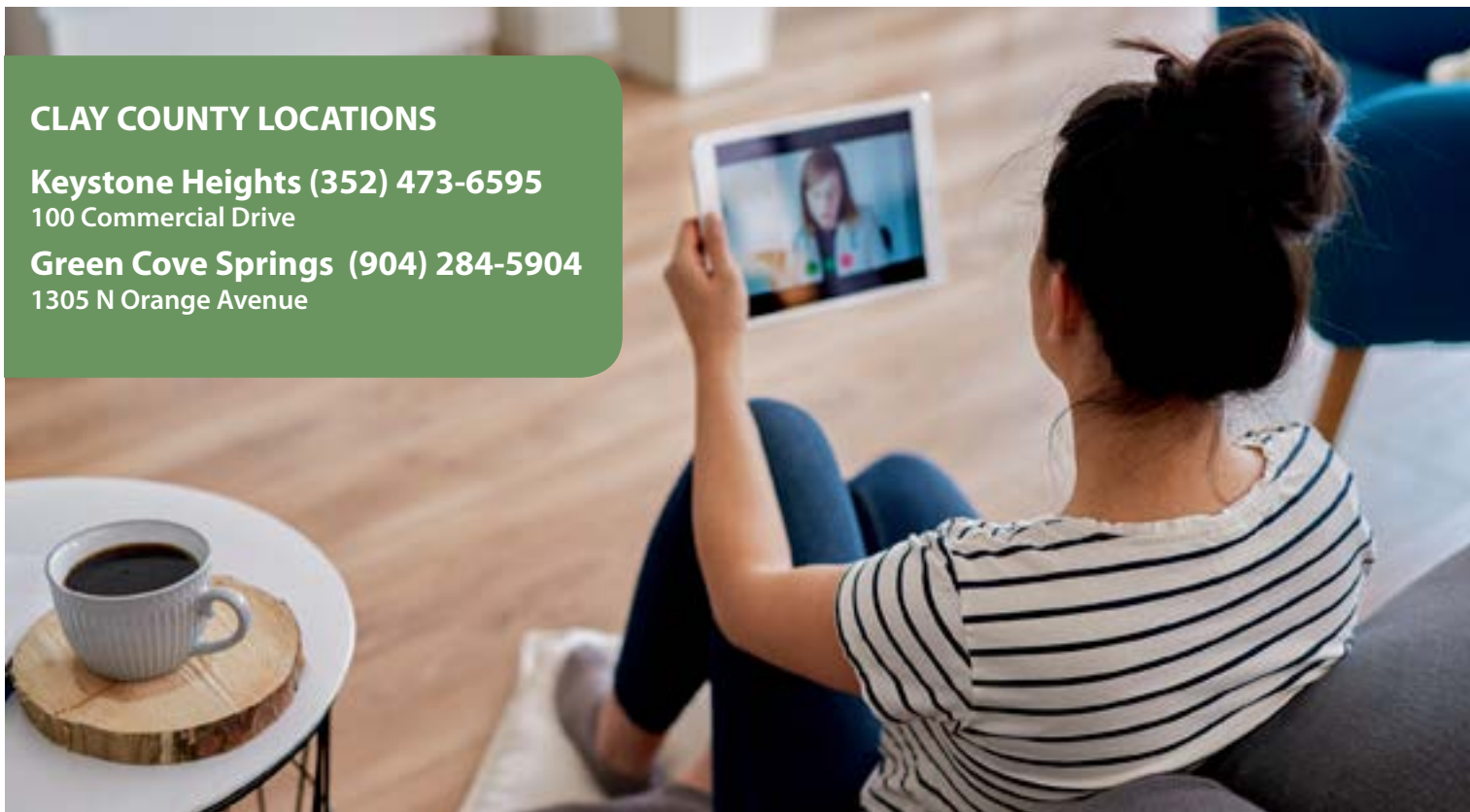


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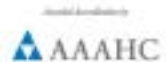
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