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## Another Feat For Fruity Treat

### Chilly Weather Fails To Spoil Kumquat Festival

Story and photos by Joe Potter



Festival goers were bundled up in the morning as temperatures hovered in the 40s.

Tens of thousands of people made a huge fuss over a tiny fruit on a chilly Saturday during the 20th Kumquat Festival.

"I think it's getting bigger every year. I like the different vendors," said James Lackey of Brooksville.

The festival celebrates the kumquat, an orange-like fruit related to the citrus, with an edible sweet rind and acid pulp, which can be eaten raw or used in preserves.

About 400 vendors set up shop at this year's festival, and more wanted to participate but couldn't because there was no space left in the multiple block area downtown. That popularity allows the

**Festival • Continued on Page 6A**

## Can You Hear Me Now? City Commissioners Get Earful About New Phone System

by Joe Potter

There's definitely one call City Commissioners are responding to and it's the complaints regarding the new phone system at City Hall.

"We're all frustrated. I think that there's got to be some solution. We're paying a lot of money for a new phone," Mayor Camille Hernandez said during the Jan. 24 commission meeting. "I can't believe that this is happening."

The telephone system was installed when the new municipal complex opened last year, but there have been complaints that citizens are having trouble reaching departments and that calls are not being returned when messages are left.

Bermice Mathis informed Hernandez and commissioners in a Jan. 15 letter that she had spoken with City Manager Billy Poe about the city's automated telephone system. Mathis said she told Poe she didn't like the system and she didn't feel it was fair to her as a taxpaying citizen to have to wait for a return call from the city.

Mathis' letter said the water service had

**Commission • Continued on Page 3A**

## Little Everglades Is Going Big

### Tours, Hot Air Balloons To Showcase Ranch

by Keri McAlpine

Sprawling across 2,050 acres of fields and farmland, Little Everglades Ranch is an oasis of green grass fields and a perfect place for entertaining events.

Iconic for once hosting steeplechase horse races, the ranch is now embarking on a new venture: Ranch Days.

Event organizer Kevin Campbell said he and his wife Andy have wanted to put on a big event like this for years, and on Feb. 11 and 12 their hard work will be realized.

This is the first 'home-grown' production put on by the ranch since the steeplechase was shut down when the recession hit in 2008. Since then, the property has been host to numerous events including high school cross country championships and extreme sport runs, such as the Savage Race.

With Ranch Days, Campbell hopes to bring something

**Ranch • Continued on Page 9A**



Little Everglades Ranch boasts more than 2,000 acres to its name. Attendees of Ranch Days will be able to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the ranch.

Photos Provided



Forest Nichols of Zephyrhills and Michigan demonstrated a manual power jig saw and drill he uses to create works of art in wood at the 2015 Florida Pioneer Museum's annual Farm Fest.

Photo by Richard K. Riley

## 27th Annual Farm Fest & Quilt Show

Staff Report

Stop by the Pioneer Florida Museum & Village this weekend to celebrate the 27th annual Farm Fest and Quilt Show.

On Saturday there will be a Draft Horse Competition, presented by the Southern Draft Horse Association. Pulling 7,000 pound sleds over a 30 foot long course, two horse teams

**Quilt Show • Continued on Page 3A**

**INSIDE:** Pg. 8A - Master Gardeners Present 'Butterflies And Blooms' Pg. 1B - Nature Coast Gets Revenge Against Pasco Pg. 1B - Walk Seeks To Fight Hunger  
Pg. 10A - Dade City Boasts Nation's Cheapest Rent Pg. 1B - Lady Pirates Fall In Playoffs Pg. 3B - Vote For New PHSC Mascot

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# Dade City Arrests

## Man Finds That The Camera Never Blinks

**Randell Alexander Love**, 41, of 3833 Allen Road, Zephyrhills, was arrested by Dade City police on Jan. 16 on charges of burglary of a business and felony theft – 2nd/subsequent convictions. Love allegedly entered Walmart, 12650 U.S. 301, at 10:04 p.m. on Dec. 16 through an exit door. The store was closed at the time. Once inside, Love allegedly took a Nextbook 2-in-1 tablet, valued at \$229. Love was arrested at the Pasco County Jail where he was being held for other offenses. A check of Love's criminal history disclosed that he did have prior convictions for theft/larceny for more than four times from mul-



tipale law enforcement agencies in Florida. Love was positively identified from surveillance video of the crime in progress.

**Kalen Fitzpatrick**, 25, of Wesley Chapel, was apprehended by Dade City police on Jan. 11 on a warrant charging him with violation of probation – burglary. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail after the warrant was confirmed.

**Tom Chance Green IV**, 19, of Trilby, and **Limai Tyricke Lopey**, 18, of Lakeland, and **Joseph Edward Nall**, 19, of 38253 Hampton Ave., were arrested by Dade City



police on Dec. 30, 2016. Each was charged with possession of marijuana – less than 20 grams. Police stopped the men due to their being at a closed park on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard after hours. An odor of marijuana could be detected as an officer approached the vehicle in which they were seated. The three men reportedly admitted to having marijuana in their possession. A blunt – containing a trace amount of marijuana – was found in Green's backpack. A blunt was located in Lopey's lap, under his cell phone, where he had attempted to conceal it. Also, a baggie of marijuana who located in the passenger door handle where Lopey had been sitting. Nall admitted to being in possession of marijuana. He was also charged with driving while his license was

suspended or revoked. All three men were given notices to appear in court.

**James Monroe Sheets II**, 40, of Wesley Chapel, was apprehended by Dade City police on Jan. 19 on a Hillsborough County warrant charging him with violation of probation – grand theft auto. Sheets was booked into the Pasco County Jail upon confirmation of the warrant.

*The information provided in the Dade City Police report is taken from public record. All parties are considered innocent until proven guilty.*



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**Quilt Show • Continued from Page 1A**

compete in brute strength with two classes; light (under 3,400 pounds combined horse weight) and heavy (over 3,400 pounds), these elite horses train in the off season like any athlete, pulling weights several times a day to build muscle and stamina. Like the old farming days, bragging rights are the main prize for the strongest teams of these gentle giants. Even though their work no longer involves pulling a plow or hauling logs, these champions remind us of the horsepower needed for a farm's daily chores.

The Hoffman Challenge Traveling Quilt Collection of quilts and clothes will be on display during the fest. The Hoffman Challenge, started in 1988, has grown to be a premiere traveling exhibit of fiber artists.

On Saturday and Sunday afternoons there will be a trunk show and quilt appraisals presented by Brenda Grampas, noted quilt historian. Winners of this year's Kumquat Challenge, from the Kumquat Festival, will be displayed in the Citrus Packing House. If you have a quilt to display, call the museum for details.

We are also holding a raffle for a quilt donated by Quilts on Plum Lane in Dade City.

The Barking Dogs will play old time music on Saturday near the Mabel Jordan Barn. The Dulcimer Connection will be performing at the Gazebo. The Solid Gold Barbershop Quartet will perform around the museum after 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Volunteers will be grinding cane and making syrup down by the mill. The concession stand will serve pulled pork sandwiches, hamburgers and hotdog plates along with fries and onion rings. Desserts and soft drinks will also be available.

Vendors, exhibitors and so much more will be on the grounds to see and do. All of the buildings will be open and most will have tour guides (docents) in the building to tell of their history. Not to mention train rides, a petting zoo and face painting.

Hours are Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults (13 and older), \$5 for children 6-12 and 5 years and younger are free. Sunday admission is \$5 for adults and children 6-12. Parking is free.

The Pioneer Florida Museum & Village is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Florida's Pioneer Heritage. The museum is located one mile north of downtown Dade City, off of U.S.



**Ted and Diane Maynard of Brooksville volunteer at the Florida Pioneer Museum review some of the quilts on display during last year's show.** Photo by **Richard K Riley**

301 at 15602 Pioneer Museum Road in Dade City. Visit [www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org](http://www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org) or call (352) 567.0262 for information.

**Commission • Continued from Page 1A**

been disconnected at her home although she had prepaid her bill. She added she had to wait for two hours for someone from City Hall to return a message she had left regarding the issue. By then her water service had been turned back on.

"I told Mr. Poe there is no reason for any citizen to wait from one to two hours to get a return call from the city," Mathis' letter said.

"I am in total agreement that our phone service as currently set up is not effective or responsive to our city residents who are footing the bill," Commissioner Jimmy Shive said in an email that was read at the meeting. "Customer service over everything should be our number one priority." Shive was unable to attend the meeting.

"It would be my suggestion that the phone rings to four other mail stations and then go to voice mail," Shive's email said.

"I don't believe all calls should be placed to only one reoccurring mailbox." (He was referring to the City Clerk's office.)

"Not making adequate changes now would be a bad public perception and fly in the face of taxpayers," Shive's email said.

"I think there ought to be an option where you can talk to a live person if you want to," Commissioner Scott Black said.

Poe explained that callers are given various options when they dial the main number of (352) 523-5050. They can dial a specific extension if they know that person's extension; they can use the 1 key to search for a person's name; or they can press 0. If they press 0, their call is directed to the general mailbox where they can leave a message for their call to be returned.

Commissioner Nicole Deese Newlon asked if there was a way to go to voice

mail and to then to say "You know what, I want to hit 0 again instead and see if someone is back at their desk by then." If there's a way to do that, then I would like to do that."

"The change to 0 has not been done yet because we are waiting for the vendor to come in and he and I will change that ourselves," Poe said.

Problems with some of the mailboxes where people left messages were one of the reasons people's calls weren't being returned, Poe said. He added that those concerns have been addressed.

The (352) 523-5050 is not the only number that goes into City Hall. People calling (352) 523-5053 will be connected to members of the water utility billing department.

"I will say that with Dr. Mathis' issue the number that would have been easier for her to call would have been (352)

523-5053, because it was a water-related issue," Poe said.

He added that the direct number for employees at the front desk is (352) 523-5052.

"I still can't guarantee that someone is going to answer because if someone is in front of that person they're not going to answer that phone," Poe said.

"That's what I don't get," Hernandez said. "Somebody in a town this size with the number of employees should be able to answer the phone. "What we all want is that personal touch – someone to tell us the person we want to talk to isn't available."

Happy to hear that she got the attention of the commission, Mathis will need a bit more convincing that things will change.

"I hope that you get this worked out eventually. I'm willing to try anything but I want this to be successful," she said. "And I want this it be comfortable for me."

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## East Pasco Events

**Feb. 2 – A Road Back in Time** – History from the 1800s comes to life through demonstrations, reenactors and hands-on activities. Event is free for all school groups (homeschool and public and their chaperones). Please RSVP if you are coming with a group. Held from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at Dade Battlefield, 7200 C.R. 603 in Bushnell. Call (352) 793-4781 for information.

**Feb. 3 – Children’s Dental Day** – Held from 7 a.m.-4 p.m. at 37944 Pasco Ave. in Dade City. Dental screenings, X-rays, cleanings, fluoride treatments, and sealants/fillings will be provided as needed. Fun activities and giveaways will also be featured with the first 100 kids receiving a special gift. Call (325) 518-2000 for information or to schedule your child’s appointment today.

**Feb. 4 – Moonlight and Ivory** – The event is held at the Dade City Woman’s Club, 37922 Palm Avenue. The matinee concert will begin at 2 p.m. with the art show following. Doors for the evening performance will open at 7 p.m. for the art exhibition with the musical concert beginning at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served at both shows during intermission. Cost is \$25 for the evening show and \$15 for the matinee. Contact Judy Schaper at (813) 997-4631 for information.

**Feb. 4 – Cruise In** – Free event featuring DJ Starvin’ Darvin and a hula hoop contest for kids. Bring your prized car/truck, or just the family and check out the antique and specialty cars. Enjoy lunch at one of our many exceptional restaurants, and shop in out antique and

specialty shops. Held in downtown Dade City from 1:30-5:30 p.m.

**Feb. 4 – The Market Place** – Fresh produce, garden accessories, home decor, soaps, honey, jewelry and so much more are featured at the monthly market at Hibiscus Park. This is a pet friendly event. Contact Lucy Avila at (352) 521-5858 or [lucyavila707@gmail.com](mailto:lucyavila707@gmail.com) for information.

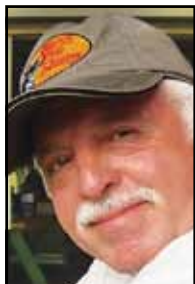
**Feb. 4-5 – Farm Fest and Quilt Show** – Featuring the Hoffman Collection and the draft horse pull, music and more. Held Saturday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at the Florida Pioneer Museum & Village, 15602 Pioneer Museum Road in Dade City. Horse pull will be Saturday at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Call (352) 567-0262 or visit [www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org](http://www.pioneerfloridamuseum.org) for information.

**Feb. 5 – Square Dancing at the Dade Lodge** – Join square dance callers, Ray and Carol Rockwell, for a variety of square dances. Cost is \$3/vehicle or annual park pass. Held 2-4 p.m. at Dade Battlefield, 7200 C.R. 603 in Bushnell. Call (352) 793-4781 for information.

**Feb. 10 – Historical Fashion Show** – Join us as we present our history through a historical fashion show. From the late 1700s-1940s we will have live models displaying historical fashions with commentary by our master of ceremonies. Light refreshment will be served. Cost is \$3/vehicle or annual park pass. Held from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Dade Battlefield, 7200 C.R. 603 in Bushnell. Call (352) 793-4781 for information.

For more events visit [www.pasconewspublications.com](http://www.pasconewspublications.com)

## Commentary



### First Things First

Greg First

### I Just Won \$2 Million

I must be one lucky guy. I just found out that I would be the recipient of two million dollars. All I have to do according to the e-mail is to give them my full name, address, date of birth, Social Security number and the routing number of my bank account. They in turn will deposit the full amount of money once they verify the information is correct. Apparently, unknown to me I was entered by a friend into an international lottery. The e-mail says that even though I didn’t win the big prize I still managed to win the lesser prize of two million dollars. I wonder if I am the only one that is this lucky. The only thing I really have to do is click on the link and that will start the whole process of me fattening up my bank account.

I do understand that many people get sucked into scams every day but this guy is not going to be one of them. The amount of money that I could have won, the cruises that I missed and the opportunities to live like the rich and famous are not appealing to me in any way.

I learned from parents that came up the hard way that nothing is free. I also learned that anything is possible and the sky is the limit. If you work hard and set goals you can do or be whatever you want. I try and follow their example every day.

It seems like in today’s world people are

getting scammed on a regular basis. How many times have you read about people winning free cruises and then spending hundreds if not thousands on stuff that was not covered in the free offer? It is not uncommon to read about people taking money out of a bank account to help in investigations set up by scammers pretending to be federal employees. It is also not uncommon right here where we live to have repair companies that you call to charge large amounts of money to come and not even fix or complete the repair job. To me reputation is everything. To scammers it doesn’t mean a thing.

In our service area we have two awesome places to check to see if they have gotten any negative feedback on people that you may want to do business with; the Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce do a great job. They can provide a list of members in many areas that can help you in just about anything you are planning to do. This is the place in the community where friendliness, courtesy and knowledge should be at the forefront. In east Pasco County I think that is the case.

Finally it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to check things out. If something seems too good to be true then it is probably worth investigation.

If you see a link on social media you are not sure about then don’t click on it. If you get a private message that says, “I got a bunch of money and saw your name of the list” don’t believe it and if you get an e-mail saying you are now a millionaire don’t believe that one either.

There are many ways in this life to be rich and they aren’t all measured by how much money you have.

I think you know what I am talking about.

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# Letter To The Editor...

## Chamber Thanks Sponsors, Volunteers

On behalf of the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce, our Board of Directors and staff would like to offer a heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers, sponsors (especially our Headlining Sponsor, Florida Hospital Zephyrhills), vendors and supporters of the 20th Annual Kumquat Festival held on Saturday, Jan. 28 in Historic Downtown Dade City.

Once again, our community pulled together and hosted a fabulous event. Tens of thousands of people came from all over the Tampa Bay region – residents, winter visitors and tourists joined in the fun. Over 400 vendors and sponsors sold and promoted their wares

and services. Our entertainment stage at the Historic Courthouse featured free live performances from wonderful local talent all day. The shops and restaurants in Dade City and the surrounding area enjoyed their busiest day of the year.

This year's Festival was supported by a \$60,000 marketing campaign and, in conjunction with the support of the City of Dade City, Pasco County Tourism and Visit Florida, promoted Dade City and our area as a unique place to visit.

Joey Wubbena, long time Festival General Manager, once again worked his magic, with the leadership and assistance of over 200 dedicated volunteers, produced an event that generated \$800,000 in economic activity [State of Florida Economic

Impact Multipliers].

City of Dade City Police Chief Ray Velboom chaired the Safety and Security team, which included multi-agency support from across Pasco County, and ensured the well being of all involved.

The 21st Annual Kumquat Festival will be held on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2018. Planning for our next Festival will begin this month, if you would like to be involved as a volunteer, sponsor or vendor please contact us and visit [www.kumquatfestival.org](http://www.kumquatfestival.org).

Thanks once again to our community, volunteers and partners. You are the best.

*John Moors  
Executive Director*

*Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce*

# Dade City Man Dies In Crash

An accident on Interstate 375 in Pinellas County claimed the life of a Dade City man on Jan. 25, the Florida Highway Patrol said.



**Brad Dombroski**

Brad S. Dombroski, 25, was traveling on the westbound ramp of I-375 at 1:33 a.m. and was attempting to merge onto southbound I-275.

The 2008 Chrysler 300 he was driving reportedly went onto the outside shoulder and the car hit a tree and then overturned.

Dombroski was ejected and died at the scene, the FHP said.

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We are proud to announce that Dr. Michael Weiss will be joining Florida Hospital Zephyrhills Physician Group on February 20, 2017!

Dr. Weiss is a board certified OB/GYN with over a decade's experience caring for patients throughout East Pasco County. For the convenience of his patients, Dr. Weiss will have an office in both Dade City and Zephyrhills.

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Monday - Friday | 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

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**Festival • Continued from Page 1A**

Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce to be more selective when choosing vendors for the increasingly popular festival.

“I have been to all the Gasparilla parades, but the Dade City Kumquat Festival is twice as good,” said Bill McFarland Sr. of Dade City. McFarland was referring to Tampa’s blowout tribute to pirates that tends to fall on the same Saturday in January.

Three generations of the McFarland family were at the festival.

“We’re having a good time,” said Bill McFarland Jr.

“It’s really fun,” added Bill Jr.’s daughter, Ella, who was sporting a new look following a visit to the face-painting



**Children enjoying pony rides as part of the Kumquat Festival activities.**



**Angely Semidey found an easy way to get around during the Kumquat Festival.**

booth.

Temperatures hovered in the low 40s when the festival started at 9 a.m., causing vendors and attendees to bundle up. The weather steadily improved, especially in the final hours of the annual event.

Vendors sold wares ranging from knitting supplies and health products to gourds, kumquat pies, beer and marmalade.

“Oh, it’s lovely,” Mary Booth of Lakeland, said of the festival. “It’s very nice. There are a good variety of vendors for everybody.”

Her husband, Charles, offered a different opinion. “There’s not enough for the guys to look at,” he said. He added that he would like to see more vendors who offered items for woodworking and similar hobbies.

“We love it. It’s huge,” said Jeanette Nagel. This was the first Kumquat Festival she and her husband, Dennis, had attended. The couple from Buffalo, N.Y. that spends

the winter months in St. Petersburg said they would definitely come to the festival again.

The Gude family of St. Joseph was on hand with their Kumquat Growers tent set up in the parking lot of the Wells Fargo Bank. A steady crowd of people streamed in and out of the tent to purchase a variety of kumquat products.

Food vendors at numerous locations offered elephant ears, hot dogs, hamburgers, coffee, soft drinks and other items. Then there was the Redneck Steak Beef Jerky stand that was in a league all its own.

Area restaurants also reported bustling sales during the festival.

There was plenty of diversions for children, including a rock-climbing wall, pony rides, bounce houses and other activities.

A variety of entertainment included musical groups performing on the west steps of the Historic Pasco County

Courthouse, and Johnny Shelton, of America’s Got Talent fame, strumming his guitar in the parking lot of Kafé Kokopelli.

Hundreds of classic and collectible cars and trucks filled the parking lot of the Robert D. Sumner Judicial Center.

A hearse built on a VW chassis with a costumed skeleton figure standing outside competed for attention with a 1966 Corvette Stingray with a 427 cubic inch Turbo-Jet V-8 engine and four-speed transmission.


A blue and white 1956 Ford Customline with 35,000 original miles and three-on-the-tree showed nicely.

Florida Hospital Zephyrhills was the headline sponsor of this year’s festival. The Chamber stages its signature event with the help of a multitude of volunteers.

City workers and volunteers quickly cleared the downtown area of any evidence of the festival within hours after it closed and the planning for the 21st Kumquat Festival almost immediately began.



**Local musician Johnny Shelton performed acoustic songs at the festival.**

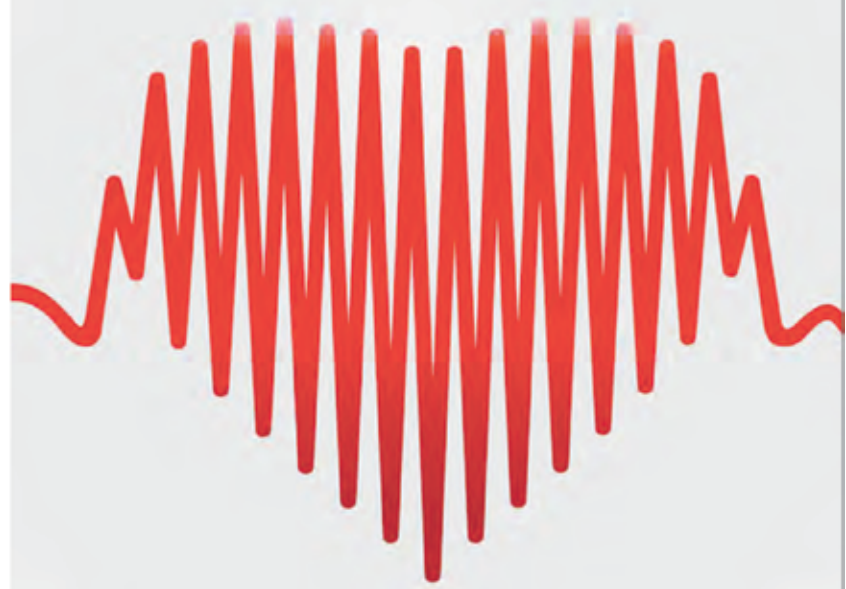



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**8:00 am\* - 12:30 pm**  
*\* Doors do not open until 8:00 am*

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# Pasco County Master Gardeners Present 'Butterflies And Blooms'



## Live Butterfly Exhibit At Pasco County Fair

The UF/IFAS Pasco County Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardeners will be hosting a live, daily butterfly exhibit at the Pasco County Fair from Feb. 20-26.

"Interactive butterfly exhibits, like the one Pasco Master Gardeners produce for the Pasco County Fair, enable children and adults to get an up-close look at the lives of these important pollinators," said County

Extension Director Dr. Whitney Elmore. "Attracting wildlife to your lawn and garden can be as simple as the addition of a few plants that attract butterflies. Butterflies are not only important ecologically; they are fun to watch and easy to attract."

Come interact with dozens of butterflies as they flutter around pollinator and host plants. This unique Master Gardeners 'Butterflies and Blooms' exhibit will be at the top of the hill behind Higgins Hall on the Pasco County Fairgrounds.

The exhibit will be open: from 3 to 6 p.m. Feb. 20 through Feb. 24; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 25; and from 12 to 6 p.m. on Feb. 26.

The Pasco County Cooperative Extension Service assists Pasco County residents by developing and delivering practical, educational programs in environmental horticulture; sustainable agriculture; 4-H and youth development; and family and consumer sciences. Call (352) 518-0156 or visit [bit.ly/2iB6040](http://bit.ly/2iB6040) for information, including volunteer opportunities.

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**Ranch • Continued from Page 1A**

new to the plate.

Even though the ranch comprises thousands of acres, most events use less than a quarter of that. Because of that, Campbell has organized five different ways for visitors to explore the property and it's mysterious appeal.

"People have always asked us when they come out ... if we give tours," Campbell said. "So part of this event, of why we're doing this event, is to give people a chance to see the ranch."

With that in mind, a Zephyrhills Boy Scout troop will be leading hiking tours across the property, a tram will scoot across the multiple fields, and a 12-seat swamp buggy will delve into the wetlands to go even deeper into the ranch.

Campbell said one of the more exciting tour vehicles will be provided by a larc, a Vietnam era boat and land cruiser, which was originally used to transport equipment off of ships that couldn't dock in Vietnam. It's duck-tour like presence will provide an exciting adventure for participants on the

ground and in a lake across the property.

The last, and most uplifting, tour vehicle will be two hot air balloons which, weather permitting, will offer tethered rides so visitors can get an aerial view of the ranch.

On the night of Feb. 11, Campbell hopes to welcome an additional three hot air balloons to participate in a 'hot air balloon glow.'

"They're going to fire up their balloons which makes the balloon illuminate, it's like a light bulb up inside of there. And it will just be real pretty up in the evening sky," Campbell said.

All of the tours will be offered for a fee and the two-day event will also feature a slew of free musical entertainment and live shows. Where the finish line used to be for the steeplechase on the 1.25-mile long grass track, "exciting exhibitions" will be performing both days.

Tino Wallenda will perform high-wire walking, Lady Kitty will bring some feathered friends for a birds of prey presentation, and Jim Mendenhall, famous for his involvement with the San



**The ranch is iconic for the steeplechase horse races it used to hold on a 1.25-mile long grass track. On Feb. 11 and 12, the track will host birds of prey, indigenous snakes, a high wire act and a chainsaw artist.**

*Photos Provided*



**A Vietnam era larc vessel will be on hand at Ranch Days to provide visitors with tours of the property on land and in the water.**

Antonio Rattlesnake Festival, will present indigenous snakes. More recently added to the schedule is a chainsaw artist, who will be doing live woodcarvings.

"There will always be something going on with those four shows," Campbell said. "We're hoping people take advantage of the great entertainment we're providing. We feel it's a real value for families... I they come with full tummies, they can literally come out here and spend hours for ten bucks looking at all the great entertainment we have and enjoy all the stuff we're putting out there."

As far as live music goes, Campbell said that is top notch as well. About a dozen regional artists will perform on two opposing stages throughout the day, playing some of the best country, bluegrass and Americana in the area.

A kids area and a free junior Savage Race course will be available for the

younger crowd.

Food, beverage and craft vendors will also be set up on the property for visitors to enjoy.

The ranch was recently put in a conservancy with Southwest Florida Water Management District, meaning it can never be developed.

"It will always remain a working ranch and a nature preserve and an events facility," Campbell said. "The ranch is also such a beautiful place to do this at, I'm really hoping people take advantage of that."

The entrance for Ranch Days at Little Everglades Ranch is located at U.S. 301 and Gould Road, just north of Dade City. Entry into the event is free with \$10 parking. Hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Feb. 11 and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 12. Visit [RanchDays.com](http://RanchDays.com) for a full schedule, list of activities and other information.

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# Dade City Boasts Nation's Cheapest Rent

## National Survey: Apartments Are Least Expensive Here

by Keri McAlpine

The average cost to rent an apartment in Dade City garnered some national attention recently when it was declared that the county seat is the least expensive place to rent in America.

The title was granted via apartmentguide.com's blog in a brief article, which listed the top 50 cheapest places to rent. A feature article on Dade City followed the list, explaining why it is a desirable place to live in addition to the low cost.

The website aimed to find cities where

people can rent an apartment for less than the national average, which is around \$1,100 for a 1-bedroom, and \$1,250 for a 2-bedroom, according to an apartmentlist.com rent report.

Dade City's average rent according to Apartment Guide registered a mere \$272 per month.

Apartment Guide editor Kari Lloyd said the title is overall a good thing for the city to have attached to its name.

"To be honest, I think people are really looking for affordable housing these days. It shows it's a great place to consider if you're looking to spend less on your rent," Lloyd said.

The average price was determined by Lloyd's website using a specific methodology:

"The following data has been gathered from Apartmentguide.com and Rent.com

active listings in the month of November 2016. The average entry price for each city has been taken from 1-bedroom units. Units that had prices lower than 200 were excluded."

Another positive aspect of Dade City's apartment accommodations is its proximity to the city of Tampa. Being close to a metropolitan area without paying city rent is always a positive, the site stated.

Dade City Mayor Camille Hernandez agreed with Lloyd in that having affordable housing is a bonus for the city's growth.

"This speaks to an undiscovered value in Dade City. Individuals should take advantage of these [affordable rents] while they are still available as east Pasco, and more specifically Dade City, emerges as the new trendy place to be seen, work and play," Hernandez said via email.


John Moors, the executive director

at the Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce said aside from affordable rental rates he would like to see housing opportunities expanded into central Dade City.

"I would love to see more downtown residential, including apartments, to help our business community become a 16-hour city," he said. "Our community has great shops and restaurants and has a super 'walkability' factor, very conducive to downtown apartment living."

The only other city on Florida mentioned on the list was Pace in Santa Rosa County, coming in at number two with an average rent of \$309. The remaining top five cities were located in Oklahoma, Kansas and Utah.

Visit [apartmentguide.com/blog](http://apartmentguide.com/blog) and search for Dade City to see the complete list of cities mentioned.




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