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## Lazy Breeze Owner Faces Jail

### Genesis Holdings Didn't Fix Repairs As Ordered

Story and photo by **Joe Potter**



None of the violations at Lazy Breeze Park were satisfactorily corrected by the March 20 deadline.

A Pasco County judge ordered Robert Works to report to the county jail on Sept. 15 after finding him in contempt of court for not correcting code enforcement violations at Lazy Breeze Mobile Home Park.

Genesis Holdings, which Works owns and manages, was fined \$17,000 in December and given until March 20 to correct 34 code enforcement violations. Since October 2015 the owner of the park had been cited with hundreds of violations but the 2016 ruling only focused on 34 of

them.

A March 21 inspection revealed none of the violations at the park had been satisfactorily addressed.

Judge William G. Sestak ruled during the July 7 sentencing that Works would remain behind bars until either all of the code violations are corrected, or all of the tenants living in the affected units move out of them.

Fourteen families have already been evicted from Lazy Breeze and more evictions are probable.

**Genesis • Continued on Page 3A**

## Blazing Saddles Made For Horse Lovers

### Just Don't Expect To Find Mel Brooks There

Story and photos by **Keri McAlpine**

While shopping for an open piece of property to keep her horse, Heather Fitzpatrick ended up with a lot more than she expected.

Fitzpatrick got back in the saddle three years ago to continue her favorite lifelong hobby. Her love of horses and riding came back full force, and she soon bought a mare and was on the hunt for a bigger property to house her new friend.

In the end, she ended up with 25 acres of land where a former stable used to operate just off Curley Road.

"I bought the barn, honestly for one horse; it was for my mare," Fitzpatrick said with a chuckle, realizing 25 acres is a lot of land for one horse.

So, along with the support of her husband James, Fitzpatrick decided to make the place a working stable. A year after purchasing the property, the two are well on their way of transforming the property into an equestrian oasis.

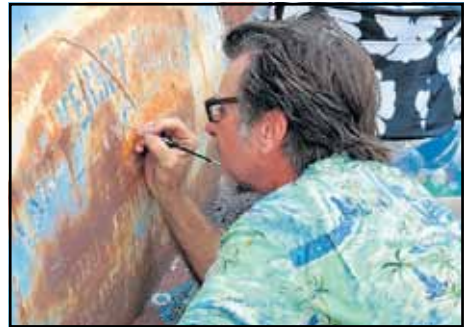
Blazing Saddles Ranch, named after one of the couple's favorite movies, aims to welcome horse lovers of any age or discipline. Stables often focus on one discipline or age group of riders, Fitzpatrick said, which was something she wanted to avoid.

Located at 10219 Wirt Road south of San Antonio, all disciplines are welcome at Blazing Saddles – dressage, western dressage, hunter/jumper, equitation and western. Riders can bring their own horses and trainers to the site or use one of the 16 horses available at the ranch. There's something

**Saddles • Continued on Page 6A**



Heather Fitzpatrick says hello to one of Blazing Saddles' newest additions, Charlie Brown, a newly born dwarf mini horse.



For the art walk, local artists will be set up at different downtown shops and can be spotted creating new pieces.

Photo by **Freeze Frame Photo**

## Art Walk To Move Indoors

### A Cool Concept For 'Christmas' Event

by **Keri McAlpine**

It's halfway to Christmastime, and for the Dade City Merchants Association, it's never too early to start shopping for the winter holidays.

Downtown Dade City's Christmas in July event and art walk is back and will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Storewide sales, promotions, gift basket drawings and demonstrations will pop up in participating retail stores in the area. Some stores will dress for the

**Art • Continued on Page 4A**

## Community Asked to Help Stuff The Backpack

### Eighth Annual Back-To-School Drive In Full Swing

by **Keri McAlpine**

For some, back-to-school shopping is an exciting time where many children get to pick out their school supplies that will define their next school year. However, for others it is a stressful time, where parents and children

wonder how they will be able to afford the long list of required supplies before their first day back.

That's where First National Bank of Pasco's annual Stuff the Backpack program comes into play. The bank accepts physical and monetary donations of school supplies for needy

east Pasco children.

Stuff the Backpack began collecting items at the end of June and will accept donations through the end of the month.

According to Tracy Mahon, senior

**Backpacks • Continued on Page 3A**

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# Woman Arrested For Animal Cruelty

Staff Report

Pasco Sheriff's Office deputies arrested Shirley Robinson, 63, of Dade City, on July 6 on one count of cruelty to animals.

Robinson, who lives on Willingham Drive, allegedly left two dogs in a locked car for two hours while she was charging her cell phone, the sheriff's office said.

The temperature outside the car was reportedly 96 degrees and the dogs were



Robinson

A public defender was appointed to represent Robinson.

'slobbering and panting' inside the car, causing them unnecessary stress and pain, the arrest report said.

Robinson was released from the Pasco County Jail after posting \$150 bail.

# Dade City Police Report Man Faces Several Charges Following Chase

Darrell Collins Jr., 18, of 34851



Baxter Ave., was arrested by Dade City police on June 20 on charges of fleeing to elude, leaving the scene of an accident with property damage, possession of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of a firearm with an altered serial number and carrying a concealed firearm. Collins allegedly drove a 2012 Nissan in a reckless manner while attempting to elude a Dade City Police Department officer who was trying to stop him for speeding. Collins allegedly abandoned the vehicle after driving it through a fence and fled on foot. He was apprehended with assistance from the Pasco County Sheriff's Office which provided a helicopter. A K-9 was also used to help locate Collins. A search of the car Collins had been driving resulted in the discovery of 24.6 grams of marijuana, a digital scale and a Smith and Wesson model 36 revolver (.38-caliber) with the serial number filed off. Collins reportedly waived his Miranda rights and told police he sells the marijuana to pay for his court costs and he knew the gun wasn't stolen and he did not have any bullets for it. He also said he fled because he did not want police to find the items. Collins was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

a verbal altercation with his sister. During that altercation he allegedly walked past his sister and intentionally bumped her with his shoulder.

Juan Fernando Gamez, 30, of 37605



Meridian Ave., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on June 24 on a charge of driving under the influence. An officer stopped a vehicle Gamez was driving for an equipment violation - inoperable brake light. Gamez allegedly admitted he was driving home from the bar and had consumed too much alcohol. His eyes reportedly appeared to be bloodshot and watery. Gamez reportedly refused to attempt field sobriety exercises or to provide a breath sample. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Alfred Earl Adams, 59, of 38307



Tuskegee Ave., was arrested by Dade City police on June 28 on a Pasco County warrant charging him with violation of a domestic violence injunction - contempt of court. He 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.

Dade City police arrested a 17-year-old male on June 29 on a charge of battery. He allegedly became involved in

# West Armory Opens Doors



Dr. Chet Taylor of Dade City purchases a handgun at the West Armory gun shop. Owners James Albritton, center, of Dade City, and Kevin West, of Spring Hill, are partners in the business. West Armory, located at 15029 U.S. 301, is now open in the front gun store. The new firing range is still under construction. Six lanes are expected to be open by the end of the month, according to store owners. Photo by Richard K. Riley

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**Backpacks • Continued from Page 1A**

vice president of branch operations, the bank has received an anonymous donation of 200 backpacks from a Zephyrhills businessman. During the last three years the same man has donated hundreds of backpacks to the cause.

Mahon said the first goal is to fill those 200 backpacks with supplies before seeking out more backpacks. However, if someone brings in backpacks, they will still gladly be accepted, she said.

In addition to the normal school supplies of pens, pencils, paper, the bank asks contributors to remember items such as tissues, hand sanitizers and sanitizing wipes.

Every year organizers don't know how many kids it will be able to reach,

but it is usually in the hundreds. Last year's program donated more than 350 backpacks filled with supplies for needy children. The bank aims to surpass that number this year.

"We appreciate the donations and for wanting to give back to our community and the kids in need," Mahon said.

Donations can be made at any First National Bank branch. Monetary donations are also accepted via checks, which can be delivered in person or mailed in to a branch.

Local branches are: 13315 U.S. 301 in Dade City, (352) 521-0141; 4518 Gall Blvd. in Zephyrhills, (813) 782-1540; and 37215 S.R. 54 in Zephyrhills, (813) 779-1905.

Visit [www.fnbpasco.com](http://www.fnbpasco.com) for bank hours or call your local branch for more information on how to donate.

**PSO Seeks Info On Navy Vet Man Found Near Hernando County Line**

**Staff Report**

A man who was found early Saturday on the side of the road near the Hernando County line has been identified as a 25-year-old Navy veteran.



**Dylan Garland**

What occurred prior to finding Dylan Garland just off U.S. Highway 301 near Globe Road remains a mystery. After being flown to Lakeland Regional Hospital he was determined to be clinically dead. He

was placed on life support in order for his organs to be harvested, according to his family. Garland reportedly suffered a massive injury to his head but no other injuries.

For about four months he had been living just south of Lacoochee at Circle of Veterans, a ranch dedicated to helping veterans transition from service.

The last known sighting of Garland was around midnight at the Lighthouse Bar in Hernando County.

The Pasco Sheriff's Office is continuing the investigation and anyone with information regarding Garland is encouraged to call the PSO Crime Tips Line at 1 (800) 706-2488.

**Genesis • Continued from Page 1A**

Works testified he had spent thousands of dollars in trying to make things right at the park on Willingham Drive. He claimed Pasco County officials had thwarted his efforts by denying two building permits that were required to do some of the work.

Lazy Breeze has lost more than \$21,000 since January in its efforts to make things right at the park, Works said.

"You collected \$14,000 in rent last month. You're not doing this out of the goodness of your heart," Sestak told Works.

Works asked Sestak what would happen should the park be sold before Sept. 15.

Senior Assistant County Attorney Kristi Sims told Sestak the county would have to start over its efforts to correct the violations if the park were sold.

Genesis Holdings would still be responsible for the violations, Sestak said, unless the park's new owner was not affiliated with the company and the sale closed before Sept. 15.

Attorney Luke Lirot, who represented

Genesis, sought mercy from the court telling Sestak that 72 percent of the violations at Lazy Breeze had been addressed. He argued Works should not be held in contempt because of obstacles laid out by Pasco County.

Lirot said the county was requiring engineering drawings for replacement stairs at several of the mobile homes as well as site plans for each of the affected units. He also said the county had denied two applications Genesis had submitted because plumbing or electrical contractors were not listed on the applications.

A defense witness, Michael Wolfe, testified that, in his opinion, the county had made it overly burdensome and expensive for Genesis to acquire permits and that all of the violations at the park were minor.

Wolfe also testified he had briefly worked for Pasco County and was involved in some of Genesis Holdings's earliest attempts to obtain permits this year. Wolfe said Pasco County fired him after

he disagreed with some of the county's requirements for Genesis to obtain permits.

During questioning from Sims it was established that Wolfe did not have the proper credentials to define whether the violations at the park were minor.

She also said Wolfe is suing the county, claiming they wrongfully terminated him. Sims asked Wolfe if any of his answers to her questions were an effort to help establish his claim. He said his testimony was based upon his understanding of Florida's building code.

Wolfe has been a consultant for Genesis Holdings since February and has been providing his services at no charge.

Code Enforcement Officer Jim Hunt testified he had discovered several major violations during the March 21 inspection that posed a threat to the health, safety and welfare of residents.

Sims argued Genesis had made an abysmal effort to correct the violations. She said a housewife could have successfully

obtained all of the permits Genesis needed, adding, "My 12-year-old son gives more effort into emptying a dishwasher than Mr. Works has put into repairing those mobile homes."

The sentencing date of Sept. 15 will come 23 months after Works was first notified of the code violations.

"If you had done what that (code enforcement) officer had told you, you wouldn't be sitting here today," Sestak said.

The property must be brought into compliance before Sept. 15 or all the tenants in the affected units will be evicted on that date, Lirot said following the hearing. Otherwise, the property will be sold before Sept. 15, he said.

Works could also choose to appeal Sestak's ruling, Lirot said. He said they would have to ask Sestak for a stay of his order if they chose to appeal, noting that it would give Genesis more time to come into compliance.

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## East Pasco Events

**July 13 – Bingo in the Creation Café** – Bingo is open to everyone from 2-3 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills, 7050 Gall Blvd. There is no charge to participate. Sonia Yaksich, RN and FHZ's Women's Health Navigator, will speak on signs and symptoms of a heart attack in women. A few games of Bingo will be played for small prizes and cheesecake and coffee will be provided. Reservations are required by calling (877) 534-3108.

**July 14-15 – Book Bazaar** – The monthly bazaar will be held both days from 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at 14215 Fourth St. featuring a diverse selection of books, audio and video media, magazines and related materials available for a modest cost. Open to the public. Contact (352) 567-7449 or [bookbollard@iCloud.com](mailto:bookbollard@iCloud.com) for information.

**July 15 – Christmas in July** – An art walk hosted by the Dade City Merchants Association in downtown Dade City from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. rain or shine. Appreciate artists from the sidewalk to the shops as well as children's sidewalk art. Sales and promotions will be featured at participating shops signified by a pink flamingo. Visit the Merchants' Facebook page for a list of artists. Call (352) 424-0601 for information.

**July 15 – Mud Endeavor "Under the Lights"** – The course is illuminated with neon lights, so as you endeavor mud and obstacles, you experience a mud run like nothing you expected. Held at 6 p.m. at the Pasco County Fairgrounds, 36722 S.R. 52. Visit [www.mudendeavor.com](http://www.mudendeavor.com) for information and to register.

**July 17 – Mental Health First Aid Course** – A free course for adults held from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at Saint Leo University's Student Community Center Greenfelder-Denlinger Boardroom C. at 33701 S.R. 52 focusing on recovery, resiliency and the belief that those facing mental health challenges can and do get better. Free parking is available in surface lots and in the campus garage. Contact [marina@befreelake.org](mailto:marina@befreelake.org) or (352) 383-2099 for information.

**July 17-21 – Nature Days for Children** – Dade Battlefield Historic State Park hosts this event from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. each day. Children 8-12 are welcome

to join and learn about nature each morning with interactive activities, live animals, crafts, games and nature walks. Cost is \$40 for five sessions or \$10 per day. Call (352) 793-4781 to register. Pre-registration is required. Located at 7200 Country Road 603 in Bushnell.

**July 19 – How to Really Start Your Own Business** – This Pasco Hernando SCORE free business seminar will be held from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Hugh Embry Library, 14215 Fourth St. The seminar will touch on key issues for starting a business and discuss insurance, legal requirements and information sources. Visit [pascohernando.score.org](http://pascohernando.score.org) and click on the Seminar Calendar to register. Call (727) 842-4638 to register.

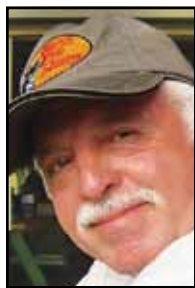
**July 21 – Florida Bats** – Join Shari Clark, with Florida Bat Conservancy, and listen to a bat program, see live captive bats and go look and listen for wild bats in the grounds adjacent to our Lodge at the Dade Battlefield Historic State Park, located at 7200 Country Road 603 in Bushnell. Insect repellent is recommended for the outdoor portion of the program. Cost is \$3/vehicle or annual park pass. Held from 7:30-9 p.m. Call (352) 793-4781 for information.

**July 22 – Painting Class** – Paint along with Josephine, a certified Bob Ross instructor from 1-4 p.m. A summer special offers the class for \$100. Class size is limited to eight people. Needed for the class: a Bob Ross kit available from Hobby Lobby or Michael's, four 12x16 stretched canvas and a roll of paper towels. Contact Josephine at (727) 808-7718 for more information. Call Pati at (352) 518-5252 to register and for future class dates. Held at Makers and Shakers, 13841 Seventh St.

**July 25 – Air Potato Management Workshop** – Designed for those seeking to control the invasive air potato plant. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences will provide air potato beetles as door prizes (no guarantee everyone will receive). Air potato beetles are an effective method of control without harm to other species. Pre-registration and pre-payment of \$15 per person are required. Call (352) 518-0156 for information. Held from 5-6:30 p.m. at the Pasco County Extension Office. 36702 S.R. 52.

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

## Commentary



### First Things First

Greg First

### Get On The Bus, Gus

It was a blessing when Pasco County rolled out the beautiful new buses in an effort to transport passengers from point A to point B. Those who could not drive for one reason or another; couldn't afford a vehicle of their own and the crazy insurance that goes along with it; or just love it when someone else can do the driving, are probably much happier now than before.

Most of the buses I have seen have advertising all across them. I would hope this would help offset some of the expenses for this service. It's hard to miss a traveling billboard and it's a great marketing opportunity. In addition the buses are air-conditioned and many of the PCPT fleet have free internet Wi-Fi available.

But the locations where the buses stop need some work.

The benches are a welcome addition

and again, an advertising opportunity to get the name of your organization out there. The problem in Florida (especially this time of year) is it gets really hot and it rains a lot. I have one of those stops across the street from one of my offices. It's sad to watch many elderly people trying to wait for the next bus. Some go behind the bench and try to stand under the large oak trees to get some shade. Some have walked over to my office to get out of the weather when it's raining or the heat is unbearable. I have offered some a bottle of water or even a paper towel. A few have missed the bus when they saw it coming because of an endless amount of vehicles on Hwy. 301, making it impossible at times to cross the road.

Maybe part of the long-term plan is to have a covered waiting area to keep passengers out of the elements; if it's not maybe it should be, as I have seen some of these in other locations. Hopefully, this will be the case once passenger count and advertising revenue improve.

On the Pasco County website, a variety of discounted fares are offered including a Summer Haul Pass with unlimited rides for students. Students can purchase this pass for \$20 at any Pasco County Library or the PHSC East Campus Bookstore. For a complete list of all the available fares and discounts you can go to [www.pascocountyfl.net](http://www.pascocountyfl.net) and click on public transportation.

### Art • Continued from Page 1A

occasion with Christmas and holiday garb. In addition to the early holiday shopping opportunity, an art walk will be featured. Local artists supported by the merchants will be stationed inside different stores around downtown.

"It gives [the shoppers] an opportunity to meet a variety of artists that they might not otherwise come in contact with and to see the fine shops of Dade City. They can actually do two things at once," said Merchants President Margaret Angell, owner of Angel Tea Room.

Last year's inaugural art walk was held outside, but this year's was moved inside the shops to keep the shoppers and artists out of the brutal July heat and humidity.

"The artist is in their store so the public can go in where it's nice and climate controlled," said Lisa Gore of the Merchants' Association and owner of Annetta's Antiques.

Visitors will be able to interact with the artists, watch them create, buy their products or even commission them for a personal piece of artwork.

"It's double exposure [for] the artist and merchant ... and it gives people something to do and walk around and get out of the heat," Gore said.

Easels will be placed outside of participating shops containing



Participating merchants hold special sales and offers for Christmas in July, and many will decorate accordingly to get shoppers in the holiday spirit.

Photo by Freeze Frame Photo

information about the artists. Blurbs on participating artists can also be found on the Merchants' Facebook page.

"It's a great time, especially if you've never been to Dade City, to ... meet the merchants and the artists and have a nice and fun day," Gore said.

Christmas in July will be held rain or shine. Visit the Merchants' Facebook page or call (352) 424-0601 for more details.

## Dade City Merchants Association Presents The Christmas In July Art Walk

In Historic Downtown Dade City

Saturday, July 15th • 10am - 5pm

- Artists from the Sidewalks to the Shops
- In-store Sales and Promotions
- Children's Art Activities



Look for the Pink Flamingo at Participating Shops  
Visit Dade City Merchants Facebook Page for a List of Artists

RAIN OR SHINE



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# Hernandez Application For CRA Grant Fails Again

by Joe Potter

For the third time in as many months a request for Community Redevelopment Agency money from the mayor's husband for new windows was denied.

As before, Mayor Camille Hernandez recused herself from Tuesday evening's CRA board meeting so as to eliminate any possible conflict. The five city commissioners also sit as the CRA board to consider funding requests from the district.

David Hernandez, an officer with ANPM Enterprises, has been trying for several months to obtain a \$9,950 grant to install new transom windows in part of a building he owns on Seventh Street in downtown Dade City.

The building is within one of the city's two CRA districts.

Questions have been raised regarding the amount of money Hernandez has received over the past several years for repairs that have been made to the building.

Board member Scott Black said recently he believed ANPM was one of the largest – if not the largest – recipients of CRA funds since the districts were established.

He expressed concerns during the June meeting about the attention Dade City is receiving because of a TV station's investigation. Black said ANPM's application for funding could influence state legislators to either cut back or eliminate CRA funding.

ANPM's application was listed as unfinished business on Tuesday's CRA agenda.

City attorney Nancy Stuparich said there was an opportunity for anyone on the prevailing side to make a motion Tuesday to reconsider ANPM's application.

No one made a motion to reconsider and the application was tabled.

Stuparich said this means ANPM's application will not appear on the agenda until a new application has been filed. She added the application would have to comply with the rules that were in effect when it was submitted.

The Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce and the Dade City Merchants Association then made quarterly progress reports to the CRA.

## City Supports Moore-Mickens Plan Commissioners Give Nonprofit Group A Break

by Joe Potter

Dade City Commissioners agreed by a 3-0 vote Tuesday to partner with Moore-Mickens Education and Vocational Center and waived the deposit required to have the site's water reconnected.

The Pasco County School Board recently approved a 30-year lease for the nonprofit group that plans to breathe life into the center that was closed in 2015.

The organization plans to offer GED and other classes at what was originally one of Dade City's first schools for African-American students.

The gavel was passed to Commissioner Jim Shive on Tuesday night before the vote was because both Mayor Camille Hernandez and Mayor Pro Tem Eunice Penix had conflicts. Commissioner Nicole Deese Newlon moved that the \$875 water reconnection deposit be waived and Commissioner Scott Black seconded.

Commissioners also approved a Handicap Accessibility Self-Evaluation

Plan required for a Community Development Block Grant the city is seeking for the Beauchamp ponds project. The project aims to alleviate flooding in the area of Beauchamp Avenue and 17th Street by combining two existing retention ponds at a cost of \$700,000.

Every city facility was surveyed to make sure it was accessible to handicapped individuals and repairs were made wherever necessary. Also, City Manager Billy Poe was designated to oversee handicap accessibility issues for the city.

"A lot of work went into preparing this plan," city attorney Nancy Stuparich said.

The commission also discussed, but took no formal action, on a proposal to add some language to agendas to help maintain proper decorum during meetings.

Black said some people may be passionate about what they have to say and the tone people may occasionally use could be more disturbing than what they are saying. "Most people will know



The Moore-Mickens Education and Vocational Center was approved for a 30-year lease on the former school property that has been closed since 2015.

File photo

when a line has been crossed where they feel threatened by the person who is speaking," Black said.

Newlon said she didn't want Dade City to be perceived as censoring the comments of people who disagree with

the city while welcoming comments from those who approve of the city's actions.

Stuparich said she would work with Newlon on revising the language that would also be posted on the city's internet site once it has been approved.

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**Saddles • Continued from Page 1A**

for new and experienced riders, and everything in between, at the ranch. The ranch also offers full boarding and pasture boarding, among many other services.

“We really wanted to create a whole environment that people could just come out and enjoy and where everybody likes horses,” Fitzpatrick said. “I had no



Dressage duo Heather Fitzpatrick and her horse, Amina, an eight-year-old Oldenburg warmblood and gypsy vanner mix breed. The two are set to compete in a dressage competition in Lakeland next month.

intention of ever buying a farm ... It's been a lot of hard work putting it all together.”

So far, the hard work has paid off and it has been a success, she added.

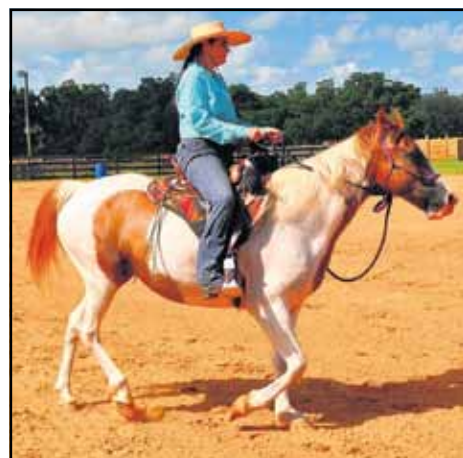
However, Fitzpatrick and her husband have a long list of improvements and additions they hope to make to complete the project.

Fitzpatrick's husband built all of the additions to the ranch, including multiple arenas, all new fencing across the property and a pavilion for special events.

The couple plans to add a new barn with 10 new stalls (for a total of 17), a bridge to cross a spring-fed stream that crosses the property and other fixtures to cater to outside events.

Fitzpatrick is most looking forward to a house they are building right by the ranch, with a view overlooking the open pasture with dozens of horses roaming in the grass.

On staff are dressage and western dressage trainer Amy Epperson and dynamic sport horse specialist Krystina



Bronze medal winner Amy Epperson practices her western dressage technique on Monday morning. Epperson is a resident dressage and western dressage trainer at Blazing Saddles Ranch.



Blazing Saddles Ranch's resident cowboy RJ Reeher corrals some horses in one of the property's grazing pastures.

Hemphill. JR Reeher is the “resident cowboy,” who can often be seen riding the grounds on one of the many horses he trains there.


Fitzpatrick herself typically rides her horse Amina in the early mornings before other riders arrive. She will be a new competitor in an upcoming Lakeland

dressage competition in August, which she said she is both nervous and excited about.

Visit the Blazing Saddles Ranch Facebook page, visit [www.blazingsaddlesranch.net](http://www.blazingsaddlesranch.net), or call the ranch at (813) 793-7696 for information on provided services at the ranch.



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# No Decision On School Impact Fee

by Joe Potter

A compromise between the Pasco County School Board and the Tampa Bay Builder's Association in the past few days resulted in the county commission putting off a vote Tuesday on the size and scope of looming impact fees.

It was the consensus of the five-member commission to now support a 92 percent increase in impact fees that would be phased in over a three-year span when they revisit the issue on Aug. 15.

The ordinance commissioners had before them Tuesday would have granted the school board up to the 100 percent increase the district had already requested. That ordinance would have also required tiered impact fees to be charged for different types of single-family housing and become effective upon its approval.

But negotiations between the school board and builders resulted in the hike to be shaved to 92 percent and the tiered fees for single-family housing eliminated. The revised request also would not take effect until Jan. 1, 2018.

Assistant County Attorney David Goldstein told commissioners the revised ordinance would have to be advertised again and another public hearing would need to be held.

Should commissioners approve the modified proposal, the fee on a new house would be \$8,328 instead of the \$9,028 the school board had originally requested, and phased in over three years. The plan would establish impact fees \$2,300 higher in 2018, followed by \$600 increases in both 2019 and 2020.

Some disagreement remained regarding the fees builders would have to pay for multi-family units, including apartment complexes.

School Superintendent Kurt Browning said he was pleased with the revised plan the commissioners will address.

"We wish we could have gotten more but it is a compromise," Browning said. "We are able to meet the needs of our students while addressing the concerns of the builders."

School Board Chairman Alan Altman was similarly subdued.

"This doesn't solve all of our future

needs but it will have a positive impact on meeting the rampant growth in Pasco County," Altman said.

The majority of the 16 people who spoke during the public comments portion of the meeting said they favored a full increase in school impact fees rather than the proposed 92 percent hike.

"We are overcrowded and we should not continue to be overcrowded," said Claudine Judge of Wesley Chapel. "The original impact fees that the school district came up with would [still] fall \$250,000 short of what is required to meet the need."

She was not alone in her opinion. "Our schools are overcrowded and it is absolutely unacceptable. Please vote for our kids," said Denise Nicholas who was speaking on behalf of the Florida Parent Teachers Association.

Anthony Terranova, who made the trip to Dade City from Holiday, urged commissioners to give the school district all that it had asked for, saying the requested increase would only add 1 percent to the cost of a new home in Starkey Ranch, in the western part of Pasco.

"If you vote yes for this [92 percent] fee, you're compromising my child's education," said Anthony Perguini of Wesley Chapel.

Hugh Townsend of New Port Richey also said he supported the full increase.

"If some of the students cannot be accommodated locally where the development is occurring, they should be bused to other schools." That remark rankled a few of the folks in attendance.

"I, as a voting member of the public, will hold each member responsible if we don't have adequate schools for all of our children," Townsend said.

Assistant School Superintendent Ray Gadd told commissioners the proposed 92 percent hike would provide enough money for the district to build four new schools in Trinity and Wesley Chapel where significant development continues to occur. Gadd said the original increase the district sought would likely have funded five new schools.

He added, however, that new housing could be significant enough during the next five years to allow another school to be built.

The next hearing on the impact fees will be held on Aug. 15 at 1:30 p.m. in the commissioner's meeting room on the second floor of the Historic Pasco County Courthouse in Dade City.



Kurt Browning

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# Lacoochee Church Hosts Congress Of Christian Education

This week Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Lacoochee hosted 12 churches from the central Florida area. The local program started July 9 and consisted of local pastors, churches, county officials and others in order to invite guests to the area and to kick off the start of the 31st annual session of the Bethel Baptist Congress of Christian Education. The Congress started at Mt. Moriah, located at 20641 Bower Road, in July 1987, according to Sharon Milton. This was the church's third time hosting. The theme for the 2017 Congress was "Equipping Disciples for Christ." Sister Ivory Gray functioned as the Dean. Host Pastor was Rev. Donald R. Smith, who also serves as president of the Bethel Baptist Congress of Christian Education. Rev. Dr. Michael D. Warren served as moderator.



The Bethel Baptist Congress of Christian Education was held July 9-13 at the Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Lacoochee. *Photos by Richard K. Riley*



During the greetings part of the conference beginning, Ron Oakley, County Commissioner for District 1, welcomed the residents and visitors to the area and read supportive resolutions from the local government bodies.



Rev. Willie Wormack gave the invocation during the beginning of the Conference.



Minister Benita Smith, 'First Lady' of Mt. Moriah, focuses on the stage during the opening services at the Mt. Moriah Church.

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