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A Celebration With Some Bite

Rattlesnake Festival Draws Thousands To San Antonio

Story and Photos by Dave Walters

The big, brown eyes of 11-year-old Dylan Young looked like saucers as Gordon Cates handled a rattlesnake for all to see.

The Dade City youngster and his father, Rick, were among hundreds who enjoyed the educational, yet exciting snake show last Saturday during the 50th Annual San Antonio Rattlesnake Festival.

They were also part of the thousands who made the trek to the small, leafy city for the festival that has been part of East Pasco for half a century.

"That was awesome," Dylan said after the show. "I heard that rattle and I knew right away what kind of snake it was. That was so cool."

Rick, a man of few words, noted, "That guy is crazy. I know he's educating



Gordon Buchanan-Cates handles a rattlesnake during his reptile show at the 50th Annual San Antonio Rattlesnake Festival.

Rattlesnake • Continued on Page 3A



Paula Oneil



Roberta Cutting

Candidates Will Answer At Forum Public Gets A Chance To Hear From Those Who Want Their Vote

Story by Joe Potter

A forum involving candidates for county offices will be held Monday at the East Pasco Adventist Academy.

The Chambers of Commerce for both Dade City and Zephyrhills are hosting the event that begins with a meet-and-greet at 6:30 p.m. The forum will follow at 7 p.m.

Candidates for contested races in the upcoming Nov. 8 general election have been invited to participate.

Forum • Continued on Page 4A

'Moving With The Music'



The Dade City Symphony will hold their fall concert on Saturday at the Pasco Middle School Auditorium, on 14th Street, at 6:30 p.m. See page 5A File Photo

Blazing A New Path Along U.S. 301 Cyclists, Walkers To Enjoy Connector Trail

by Keri McAlpine

Construction of a 4.5-mile long U.S. 301 bicycle and pedestrian trail connecting Zephyrhills and Dade City has been completed and is ready to give a leg up to folks between the two cities.

The Chambers of Commerce of Dade City and Zephyrhills will be hosting a

ribbon cutting and grand opening for the trail on Oct. 27 at 10 a.m. at Grace Baptist Church, 10011 U.S. 301 in Dade City.

The trail extends from Dade City Avenue to Kossik Road in Zephyrhills and is just the beginning of a bigger

Trail • Continued on Page 6A

Apartments For Seniors In The Works

Developer Plans 84-unit Complex

by Joe Potter

Another apartment complex will soon rise on Fort King Road near Bayfront Health Dade City.

Arbour Valley Development is in the planning stages for an 84-unit complex for people age 55 and over, which will be known as Arbours at Hester Lake.

The new complex will be on a 9.31-acre site bordered by Fort King Road to the east, Hester Road to the south and Morningside Drive to the north. The property is across the street from the hospital at 13100 Fort King Road.

The Birmingham, Ala.-based development company has indicated it plans to seek financing from the Florida Housing Finance Corp. to help in the creation of the Hester Lake project, Dade City Planner Michael Sherman said Monday.

On Sept. 20, K2M Properties of Oxford, Fla., paid \$100,000 for the vacant property where the apartment complex will be built.

Arbours • Continued on Page 2A

INSIDE: Pg. 2A - Auto Body Expert Comes Full Circle
Pg. 2A - Students Pay Homage To Benedictine Sisters

Pg. 5A - Bugs Ready To Swarm In November
Pg. 7A - Two Shelters Team Up To Raise Awareness

Pg. 1B - Sunlake's Offense Too Much For Pirates
Pg. 1B - Scaife Ready, Able For WKU

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Auto Body Expert Comes Full Circle

Reutimann Takes Over Where He Began In Dade City

Story and photo by Joe Potter

Greg Reutimann felt like he was returning to his roots when he opened his new body shop in Dade City in early September.

As it turns out, 14343 Eighth St. is exactly where the first body shop he ever managed stood. Reutimann operated it for Pasco Motors owner Buddy Newsome before opening his namesake body shop several years ago in Zephyrhills.

"I have come full circle," he said regarding Reutimann Collision Repair's second location, which now serves Dade City.

Reutimann had previously told Newsome that he was interested in buying the body shop if his old boss ever decided he wanted to sell it.

The downtown expanse sat empty ever since Jim Browne relocated his GM sales operation from the old Pasco Motors two years ago to a site south of town.

Part of the former Pasco Motors property is currently under contract, but the prospective owner never did want the body shop, so Reutimann seized on the opportunity and bought it from Newsome back in May.

He spent about four months remodeling before opening the doors for business.

"People in Dade City have been very good since we opened. They're happy to have us here," Reutimann said.

The two body shops operate as separate businesses but work in conjunction with one another with the same types of service available at the Dade City location as are at the shop on Tall Pines Drive in Zephyrhills.

"We help with some of the overflow from the Zephyrhills location to expedite work more quickly for our customers," Reutimann said.

The body shop is open Mondays through Fridays from 7:45 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For more information about Reutimann Collision Repair call (352) 437-3200.



Greg Reutimann stands in front of his new body shop in Dade City.

Students Pay Homage To Benedictine Sisters

Theatrical Creation Represents Arts Resurgence At Saint Leo

by Keri McAlpine

When Alicia Courts was going across the Saint Leo University campus to retrieve a forgotten key, she passed the former Holy Name Monastery of the Benedictine Sisters.

The sisters had recently sold the property to the school, and moved to a new home just across the street. Even so, the campus location had been the sisters' home for at least 50 years.

As Courts was walking past, a nearby university employee told her that the first time he had seen the sisters cry was when they left the Monastery.

Now at Saint Leo for her second year as the assistant professor of theater, this interaction inspired Courts and her theater students to find out more about the Benedictine Sisters, and along the way, the very history of their school. Their six months of research alongside the sisters has blossomed into a student-

written play titled, "Women on the Move: The Story of the Benedictine Sisters of Florida."

The play will take the stage in the old chapel of the former monastery, now called the Black Box Theater.

"We decided it would be a good idea for the students to find out more about these sisters and write a history of their story to say thank you for this new theater space," Courts said. "It's been an amazing and powerful experience for those kids."

This is the first time Saint Leo University has had a theater space since the late 1980s, and it offers a promising time for renewal and change for the arts at the school, Courts said.

The play is made up of a series of vignettes, written by eight students. More than 20 students who are involved in the play researched primary documents starting in the 1800s up until they were sifting through student newspaper articles. They then chose the stories that resonated to them the most.

The sisters have also been very involved with the production, which will have three showings from Oct. 28 through Oct. 30, each at 7 p.m.

"They're very excited about it. They've been a part

of it from the beginning," Courts, who is also the director, said. "We went over, had dinner with them, had prayers with them. We got to know them so we could infuse the sisters into the play."

The student production will also be entered into the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. Several individual students will also be entered into national competitions based on their work on the play.

"I think this play is a wonderful reminder to just keep going... there's always something else to come," Courts said. "I think it will be a great time for anyone looking for an evening of entertainment."

The Black Box Theater is inside Benedictine Hall, 33701 State Route 52. It is a free-standing, three-story building at the west end of the Saint Leo campus. The play is sponsored by the Saint Leo Department of Language Studies and the Arts.

Admission is free, but suggested donations of \$10 a person would help the Benedictine Sisters in their continued works.

To reserve a ticket or for information, contact StLeoTheatre@saintleo.edu.

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Arbours • Continued from Page 1A

It is likely that the start of construction will begin in the first half of 2017, Sherman said.

A small lake, called Hester Lake, is located on the east side of the Bayfront Health property. It does not adjoin the proposed site of the apartment complex.

Arbour Valley Development

specializes in the development of rental apartment communities in the Southeast region of the United States.

The company also built the Arbours at Fort King apartment complex five years ago, located just outside the city at 12861 Stately Oak St., about a quarter mile south of Bayfront Health.

Dade City Arrests Area Woman Arrested On Warrant

Wanda J. Osborne, 52, of 3937 Fielding St., Zephyrhills, was arrested by Dade City police on Oct. 5 on an active Pasco County warrant for failure to appear – petit theft. Contact was made with Os-



borne on Seventh Street. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail after the warrant was confirmed.

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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27 YEARS IN THE SAME LOCATION

Rattlesnake • Continued from Page 1A

people, but that's nuts."

This edition of the Rattlesnake Festival had all of the traditional attractions, including the Pioneer Village, the petting zoo, live music and craft vendors. In recent years, food trucks have also been added to the lineup.

Keeping with tradition, the fest had its legendary gopher tortoise races. Not to be confused with live gopher tortoises, the races featured wooden replicas, which were maneuvered down the track by youngsters controlling a series of ropes.

"I almost won," said Lyndsey Singer, 7, of Wesley Chapel. "That was harder

than I thought."

The races ran throughout the day for different age groups.

The Rotary Club of San Antonio hosts the event and added a few new attractions including alligators, a rock climbing wall and a mechanical bull.

"For San Antonio, we try to keep this a small-town festival," said San Antonio Rotary President Betty Burke. "That's why we don't charge admission and have free parking. We try to make it family friendly, small-town entertainment."

Proceeds from the two-day event go to Rotary charities, which benefit the children of San Antonio as well as the parent organization's international effort to end polio.



Even the bounce house had the rattlesnake theme at this year's 50th anniversary of the town's festival.



Myley Burnette of Brooksville feeds a goat in the petting zoo, just one of the educational attractions at last weekend's festival.



The gopher races were once again the highlight for the kids at the city park in the center of San Antonio.



Nine-year-old Lily Bingham gets beautifully painted by Melissa Perez at the 50th Annual San Antonio Rattlesnake Festival.

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East Pasco Events

Oct. 21 – Diabetic Education Class – If you were recently diagnosed with diabetes or struggle with managing your diabetes, then this certified education class will help you. In a group setting offered by Bayfront Health Medical Group, 13933 17th St., Suite 101. Held from 12-1 p.m., this class is designed to help one take charge of their diabetes. Call (352) 567-6763 to reserve your space.

Oct. 22 – Dade City Symphony – The Dade City Symphony presents “On the Move,” a free evening of entertainment for all ages. Exciting music from your favorite genres including cartoons, Disney movies, Bib Band, Latin, patriotic, soundtracks and more. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. at the Pasco Middle School Auditorium, 13925 14th St. General seating only. Visit dadecitysymphony.com for information.

Oct. 22 – Reunion of the Decades – The Pasco High School 2016 reunion of the decades will be hosted by the class of 1976 from 6-10 p.m. at Lake Jovita Golf and Country Club, located at 12900 Lake Jovita Boulevard. Cost to attend is \$45 per person. Music by The Bus Stop Band will allow for plenty of dancing. A buffet and cash bar will be available. Deadline to reserve is Oct. 20. Please send check to: Reunion of the Decades, P.O. Box 241, Dade City, FL 33526. Contact 76Pasco@gmail.com or call (813) 713-5592 or (813) 713-3110 for information.

Oct. 22 – Card Making Class – The Pioneer Florida Museum is offering classes where you will learn how to make Holiday Cards. Please pre-register since class size is limited. Cost is \$10, includes materials for the class and museum admission. Held from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at the museum, located at 15602 Pioneer Road in Dade City. Call (352) 567-0262 for information.

Oct. 22 – Making Strides Against Breast Cancer: Pasco County – The walk will take place at The Shops at Wiregrass, located at 28211 Paseo Drive, Suite 100 in Wesley Chapel. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m., followed by commencement ceremonies, and noncompetitive walk at 8:30 a.m. Help the American Cancer Society raise funds for groundbreaking breast cancer research, life saving education and critical patient services. Call (813)

949-0291 for information and how to donate.

Oct. 22-23 – Savage Race – Ready to create a lifelong memory? It’s about the mud, the fire and the Facebook pics. The savage Race will be held at Little Everglades Ranch, 17951 Hamilton Road. Registration starts at \$116. Savage Jr. registration starts at \$35. Spectators must pay \$15 online through Oct. 21 and \$25 fay of. Parking is \$10 cash. No outside food or beverages allowed. Visit savagerace.com to register online and for information.

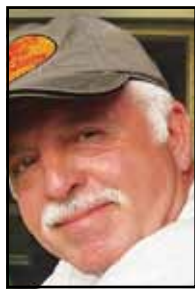
Oct. 24 – Candidate Forum – The Greater Dade City Chamber of Commerce and The Greater Zephyrhills Chamber of Commerce will host a Candidates Forum for the upcoming general election. The forum will be held at the East Pasco Adventist Academy, 38434 Centennial Road in Dade City. The forum will be moderated by representatives of the local media. A “meet and greet” will be held from 6:30-7 p.m. with the forum beginning at 7 p.m. The public is invited to attend and will be given the opportunity to submit questions to the moderators for consideration. Contact John Moors at (352) 567-3769 or jmoors@dadecitychamber.org for information.

Oct. 27 – U.S. 301 Bicycle Pedestrian Trail Grand Opening – Please join us for the U.S. 301 trail grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony. Bike to the event, or take a bike ride on the trail that connects the historic cities of Zephyrhills and Dade City. Held at 10 a.m. at Grace Baptist Church, 10011 U.S. 301 in Dade City. Call (727) 847-8140 for information.

Oct. 28 – Benefit Concert – Artist for Humanity presents a musical theater benefit concert for Habit for Humanity of East and Central Pasco and the Cornerstone Center for Women. Silent auction proceeds will benefit the San Antonio children’s playground fund. Admission is \$20 per ticket and includes gourmet desserts, tea and coffee. Tickets available through event hosts, at the Habitat for Humanity office (Lynan Professional Building across from Pasco High School), or at the door. Corporate sponsorships & donations gladly accepted as well. Held from 7-10 p.m. at San Antonio Community Church, 31251 S.R. Visit www.facebook.com/events/1107390992684584/ for information.

For more events visit www.pasconewspublications.com

Commentary



First Things First

Greg First

When Love Turns To ... Whatever

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is held in October and it will continue every single year until hopefully one day domestic violence will come to an end.

This is a time when you will hear and see that this is not only a problem where we live but also has a devastating impact on families everywhere.

Many years ago I had the privilege of being elected as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Sunrise of Pasco County Domestic & Sexual Violence Center here in East Pasco County. I served in that capacity for two years and it changed my life in a big way. I must have been living in a bubble and didn’t know or realize that this was happening all around me. I guess that most people think that it will never happen to them. I knew the obvious signs but learned that many of the things that were happening were behind closed doors. It is one of those secrets that is sometimes never told until it is too late.

I have heard and read what some of the abusers have said before, “I will never do it again, I don’t know what happened or I just love you so much.” Thinking back to the days when times were good leads many who were abused back to the abuser. Things are usually great for a while but sometimes the situation can go from bad to worse. If children are involved is it really fair to them? Your responsibility as a parent is to protect your children at all costs. You can get help.

According to statistics a big portion

of those abused comes as a result of child custody issues. That abuse has led in some cases to medical and mental issues including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and safety becomes a huge concern. Some think that domestic violence is only physical abuse but in fact it includes so much more. Sexual abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse and financial abuse are all part of the domestic violence family.

Probably many of us know someone that has been the victim of domestic violence. Maybe some have actually experienced it themselves. I could try and explain it in my words but probably the best way to learn about the effects that this can have is through the eyes of the children. I encourage each and every one of you to take the time to show your support at the 20th Annual Candlelight Vigil at the Agnes Lamb Park in Dade City. It will be on Thursday, October 27, and begins at 6 p.m. and usually lasts about an hour. You can actually see t-shirts that were made by the children. They pretty much tell the whole story of what happened in their lives. It will just break your heart to see what these young ones have written. You will also get to hear from others who were impacted by domestic violence. I would recommend bringing some Kleenex because you will need them.

The staff at Sunrise of Pasco stands ready to help those in need. Each person there is committed to helping you in a very compassionate way. They can provide a safe shelter for you. If you have kids they can help them too. If an emergency happens don’t be afraid to call 9-1-1. Law enforcement and first responders in our area are trained to help you and they know what to do. Teach you kids who to call if a need arises. If you just need to talk to someone and find out what your options are, Sunrise of Pasco is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (352) 521-3120. The call is confidential. Everyone is entitled to live a life free of any type of violence. Continue to pray that one day domestic violence will be a thing of the past. It just has to be.

Forum • Continued from Page 1A

They include:

Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller – Paula O’Neill, Republican, and Roberta Cutting, No Party Affiliation;

County Commissioner District 1 – Ron Oakley, Republican, and Dimitri A. Delgado, No Party Affiliation;

County Commissioner District 3 – Kathryn Starkey, Republican, and Barry Horvath, Democrat;

Property Appraiser – Gary Joiner, Republican, and Jon Sidney Larkin, Democrat;

Mosquito Control District 1 – Sandra

“Sandy” Applefield and Jerry A. Wells;

Mosquito Control District 3 - Sharon R. Holm and Gary W. “Buck” Joiner.

The public is invited to attend and will be given an opportunity to submit questions to the moderators for consideration.

Representatives from local news media, including Dave Walters of Pasco News Publications, will moderate the event at 38434 Centennial Road..

Information regarding proposed constitutional Amendments and other important issues will also be made available at the forum.

Pasco News Publications

Dade City News • East Pasco Senior News • Zephyrhills Free Press

Publisher & Editor

Chris Drews
cdrews@pasconewspubs.com

Reporters

Keri McAlpine
keri@pasconewspubs.com

Accounting

Linda Wood
lwood@pasconewspubs.com

Design

Edwin Pitts
pasconewspubs.design@gmail.com

Joe Potter

jpotter@pasconewspubs.com

Public Relations

Greg First
gfirst@pasconewspubs.com

Sports

Mark McLeod
Jeff Hupp

Dave Walters

walters@pasconewspubs.com

Sales

Stephanie Stephenson
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Get Off Your Feet With The Symphony

Free 'Moving With The Music' Concert

by Keri McAlpine

During their fall concert on Saturday, a group of 37 musicians hope to show that an orchestral show can be just as exciting as any other type of concert.

For their first show of the 2016 season, The Dade City Symphony will play an array of pieces including tracks from Disney shows, big band, Latin, patriotic and cartoon music in a program titled "On the Move." All of the pieces to be played have something to do with dancing, marching or other movement, according to violinist Kathy McKenzie, who is president of the group.

The concert is free and open to the public. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with the concert starting at 7 p.m. at the Pasco Middle School Auditorium, 13925 14th St.

All of the musicians are volunteers who practice once every other week with the symphony. The Dade City Symphony allows those with full time jobs to continue to pursue their passion for music, while also bringing orchestral performances to the 'Kumquat Kapital'.

"It's important because some people from the area would not have the opportunity otherwise to experience this type of music and realize the opportunities available within it," McKenzie said. "A lot of people think of orchestras as serious type of music, but in reality... you can really do anything with an orchestra."

McKenzie said her favorite type of music to play is movie soundtrack, but even when the symphony does play classical music, they make it relatable – "classical music for people who hate

classical music" – according to the violinist.

The symphony will choose classical pieces that audience members will recognize and will inform the crowd where they may have heard it. If it's a less well-known tune, a multi-media production may be set up to play during the performance, adding another dimension to the experience.

The Dade City Symphony concerts have always been geared towards variety in order to appeal to the masses, McKenzie said: attracting young people is always a goal in order to inspire children to pick up their own instrument.

"Playing an instrument is good for people's intellectual learning abilities," McKenzie said.

For string instruments, specifically, there are only a couple of schools in Pasco County that have a string program, none of them in Dade City. This is one reason the string section of the Dade City Symphony is smaller than it should be, McKenzie said. Bringing a child to Saturday's concert could be the first step in filling that void, she added.

"How is anyone going to think they want to play a string instrument if they don't hear one?" she posed.

The concert is free, but donations are always accepted. Sponsorship opportunities are also available – individuals or businesses can "sponsor a song" in the performance. Visit dadecitysymphony.com or email dadecitysymphony@yahoo.com for information on Saturday's show, how to donate or information on auditions and openings.



The annual Bug Jam is billed as the Southeast's biggest VW show and swap meet.

File photo

Bugs Ready To Swarm

Sweet Rides, Hot Rods, Rust Buckets All Part Of Bug Jam

Staff Report

The 28th Florida Bug Jam is less than a month away and this year it will be a two-day event, allowing spectators access to the various Volkswagens on both days. The 2016 theme honors the comic sensation "Marvel" and will park at the Pasco County Fairgrounds on Nov. 12 -13.

Show Cars are being encouraged to pre-park on Saturday and it will be the best day for those cars to get a prime spot for the entire weekend, according to the promoter of the event.

Opening day on Saturday will be "Bug Jammed" with activities and events, starting with a Poker Run. Participants will follow a scenic route through the back roads and rolling hills of East Pasco County.

At 11 a.m. Saturday, Bugs on the Track returns to the Jam where VW drivers of any skill can drive a dune style, off-road course that features manageable obstacles and rhythm sections. The track will be open until 4 pm.

The traditional VW Parade will leave the Fairgrounds at 2 p.m., with a police escort to downtown Dade City where the Pre-Jam Party begins with live music and 'tasty craft beers'.

The main event is Sunday – Show Day – the Southeast's largest VW Car Show and Swap Meet. Along with the judging of show cars, there will be a Marvel character look-a-like contest, egg toss contest and audience participation events.

For both days at the Fairgrounds there will be food vendors onsite, live music, entertainment and craft beer provided by Big Storm Brewery.

For any other questions, please feel free to visit the Jam website at floridabugjam.com or call (352) 588-4697.

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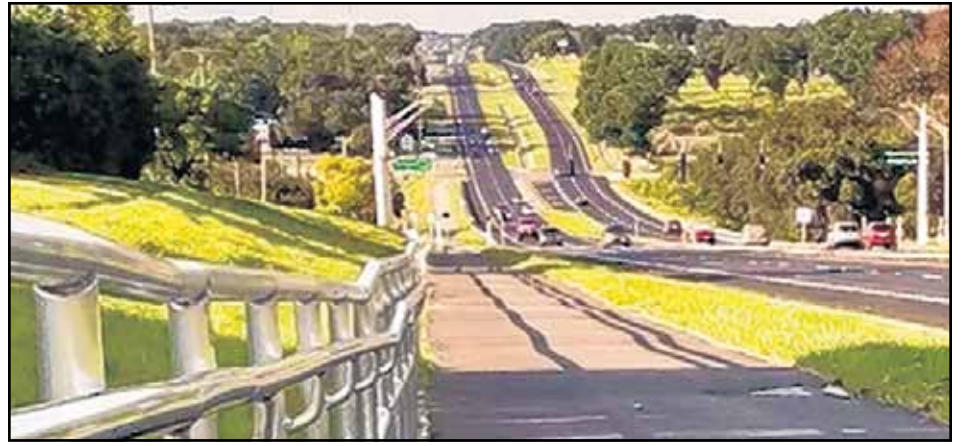


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Centennial Future Farmers Help Animals



On Oct. 13 the Centennial Middle School FFA Chapter donated more than 45 items to the Hernando animal shelter. Items included dog food, cat food, treats, and toys. Such a great impact on the community could not have been made without the help of members, family and friends. *Photo Provided*



The 301 Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail that connects Zephyrhills and Dade City is officially open to the public following a year and a half of planning and construction. *Photo Provided*

Trail • Continued from Page 1A

plan to install more trails and connectors throughout Pasco County.

"I think its just great for both communities," said Dade City Chamber Executive Director John Moors. "It's just one piece of the puzzle. It's going to connect to the Hardy Trail that we all know and love here in Dade City. It's all going to be part of a nice big package."

"We're excited to have this connector between here and Dade City for sure," said Zephyrhills Chamber Executive Director Melonie Monson. "We feel like once it gets known it's going to be important. We have a lot of bike riders so I'm hoping that people will take advantage of it."

The trail is also hoped to be the starting point for connecting to other trails including the Withlacoochee trails and the Coast-to-Coast trail in Pinellas County.

From design to the final product, the trail has taken up to 18 months to complete. The trail was built by the Federal Department of Transportation in conjunction with a larger U.S. 301 resurfacing project, costing about \$2 million to construct.

Although constructed and funded by the FDOT, the trail was also a collaborative effort with Pasco County's Metropolitan

Planning Organization and the cities of Dade City and Zephyrhills.

The complex project encountered many obstacles along the way, as builders had to consider all of the slopes and topography, according to Justyna Buszewski, active transportation planner for Pasco County.

"At first they underestimated it," Buszewski said. "The U.S. 301 Corridor has elevations that go up to 260 feet."

She added that drainage issues and compliance for the disabled also presented obstacles for the project.

Both cities want anyone and everyone to swing by the ribbon cutting, and use the trail for the first time. Those attending the grand opening next Thursday are encouraged to bike or walk along the trail as their mode of transportation.

Dade City is organizing a community bike ride to the event that will meet at 9 a.m. at City Hall/Police Complex, 38030 Meridian Ave. The City of Zephyrhills is also organizing a ride to the event, which meets at Lowes, 7921 Gall Blvd. at 9 a.m.

"Everyone thinks it's a great asset and it's a great connection," Buszewski said.

It is hoped that the trail will bring some additional businesses including restaurants, bike shops, bed and breakfasts and so forth, according to Buszewski.

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Two Shelters Team Up To Raise Awareness

Domestic Violence, Animal Abuse Sadly Go 'Hand In Paw'

by Keri McAlpine

Just as animals and humans enjoy happiness together, they often experience the hard times side by side. Multiple studies have linked the tragic connection between animal abuse and domestic abuse.

With October designated as domestic violence awareness month, Sunrise of Pasco County Domestic and Sexual Violence Center is partnering with Pasco County Animal Services to raise awareness about both abuse issues.

The two organizations will be holding a combined awareness event on Oct. 22 because domestic violence and animal abuse don't go hand in hand, but 'Hand in Paw,' which is the name for the event.

The animal shelter will have their mobile center with dogs and cats available for adoption. A kitty corner will have several cats for guests to pet and snuggle. A clown and face painting artist will be there to entertain kids,

and free books will be available for children, courtesy of the Early Learning Coalition. Educational booths will also be set up.

Hand in Paw will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Solutions Thrift Store, 35535 State Road 52, west of Dade City, where guests will also receive 50 percent off everything in the store.

Sunrise CEO Kelly Sinn said this partnership is important in order to get the word out about the correlation between domestic and animal abuse.

"Honestly I think the general public isn't aware of the correlation. They're kind of viewed as separate situations or separate circumstances," Sinn said. "Some of the reactions I've had when discussing this with community members ... it's almost like an epiphany to where once you bring it to light they have that 'aha' moment that seems to really make sense."

According to veterinarian Dr. Kurt Venator, a Purina study showed that "48 percent of domestic violence victims stay in abusive situations out of fear of what would happen if they left their pets behind."

"Seventy percent of pet owners who enter shelters report that the abuser

has threatened, injured or killed family pets," Venator said.

Former County Commissioner Pat Mulieri helped formulate the partnership between the two shelters and said she was "totally shocked," after reading several studies on the matter.

She added that it's important for "people realize that abuse, which is sometimes covered up in our society, is a very real problem."

Sinn said she has personally seen the effects of this from working at Sunrise. The Sunrise shelter does have a small kennel that can house dogs and cats of abuse victims, and it will also work with the animal shelter and other organizations to make sure the pets are not left behind.

Mike Shumate, the director of Pasco County Animal Services, said it's difficult to know what percentage of animals that enter the shelter are abused or neglected, as they do not catalogue that information upon arrival. However, he said it would "certainly" be a high number based on the amount of stray intakes, and the health and mental states of animals that end up in the shelter.

In cases of animal abuse, the shelter often works with the sheriff's department

to rescue endangered animals. Many of these cases are called in, but in some cases an animal's situation has been discovered through social media posts that are reported.

Abusers will often use pets as a way to intimidate victims, and show their power. Hurting an animal can be a means to hurt another household member.

"I'm really hoping that we'll gain the communities support for both organizations ... to enhance community knowledge of domestic violence and animal cruelty," Sinn said of the partnership.

Although animals and their owners may have to experience abuse together, they can also heal together. Sinn reminded that the interactions between animals and abuse victims make for a therapeutic relationship like no other.

"We've got plenty of animals to adopt," Shumate said. "For some reason this time of year we're still fairly overcrowded in the shelter."

The Pasco County Animal Shelter is located at 9640 Dogpatch Lane in Land O' Lakes, and can be reached at (352) 521-5194. Sunrise of Pasco County can be contacted at (352) 521-3358 or visiting www.sunrisepasco.org.

Thanksgiving Vacation Still Intact For Schools

Staff Report

Unless more catastrophic weather blasts the county, Pasco County Schools' students won't see their vacation time shortened.

Students missed three days of classes because of the recent hurricane Hermine and Matthew

warnings.

Superintendent Kurt Browning's office indicated that the instruction missed from the third day - Oct. 7 - would be able to be recovered with minimal effects to the scholastic schedule.

However, Thanksgiving vacation days would be reduced for each day affected should there

be another closure because of some calamity. This would be necessary to meet the statutory requirements for the number of school days in a year.

Should school be canceled again, the Pasco district "will have no choice but to schedule a make-up day on Nov. 21," Browning's office said.

Pets of the Week



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A33484783



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