

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2016 | YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SINCE 1874 | \$1.50

Lake City Reporter



Backflow plan gets makeover at city

Major revisions for program plagued by controversy.

By TONY BRITT

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There will be no more reports of price-gouging or double billing if a new proposal for backflowdevice testing is adopted by the city council.

Under the plan, all testing will be free to residents and business owners in Lake City. Costs will be paid by the city from its utilities fund.

BACKFLOW continued on 2A

Girl, 8, dies a week after incident at Ichetucknee

OFF TO THE RACES



Photos by NICK ROLLISON/Lake City Reporter

ABOVE: Oren McDermitt of Jacksonville turns over flipped vehicles during remote-controlled car races Saturday at the Southside RC Raceway in Lake City. The event was hosted by the Gateway RC Club. McDermitt was one of several turn marshals at the race.



\$3M hit for TDC tourney program

Marketing director largely to blame for losses, says TDC Director Paula Vann.

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

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The Columbia County Tourist Development Council is struggling to rebuild its sports program after more than a third of its scheduled tournaments were canceled this year, resulting in a \$3 million loss of revenue.

Executive Director Paula Vann said the

problem stems in great part from clashes between Sports Marketing Director Kelly Lowrey and tournament promoters.



CPR performed by park ranger before EMS team arrived.

By CARL McKINNEY cmckinney@lakecityreporter.com

An 8-year-old girl died at Lake City Medical Center Thursday night, nearly a week after an incident at Ichetucknee Springs State Park.

Around 6:42 p.m., according to the county's 911 dispatch

DEATH continued on 3A



RIGHT: Sandy Narrington of Clermont refuels a car.



New Gateway RC Club member Christian Birol traveled from St. Augustine to participate in his first race Saturday. He is pictured working on his car during a break.

Cory Vought, 14, tinkers on his vehicle. A local, Vought was at Saturday's competition with his father, who also could be seen walking around the RC track with his car in hand.



former FSU quarterback, **Lowrey** has "had a few issues with personality conflicts with some of the current promoters," Vann said. After taking disciplinary action against him last year, including writing him up twice and suspending him once, the TDC is taking a "wait-andsee approach" with Lowrey, she said.

"We're encouraging him to keep a cool, calm head," Vann added.

As of now, 13 of 38 baseball and softball tournaments that were scheduled to be held in Columbia County this year have been canceled.

The economic impact thus far is considerable.

From Oct. 1, 2014, to May 31, 2015, estimated revenue from the 19 baseball and

TDC continued on 3A

Officials mull tax incentives for proposed shopping center

Tennessee-based Hutton Team is seeking tax rebates from city council and BOCC.

By CARL McKINNEY

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Over \$1 million in possible tax incentives for a proposed shopping center are up for discussion this week at city council and county commission meetings.

Tennessee-based developer Hutton Team will request tax rebates from the city council Monday for a proposed shopping center on State Road 247 and U.S. Highway 90, before trying for a second time to get the county commission to agree to a similar package.

The Columbia County Economic Development Advisory Board recommended in May the county adopt an incentive package estimated to provide up to \$1.3 million in property tax rebates over 10 years, according to Economic Development Director Glenn Hunter. The commission rejected the proposal, which was reworked to remove the inclusion of additional contributions from the county on top of the tax rebates, Hunter said. Commissioners had a problem with the proposal's inclusion of \$320,000 in cash, supplies or manpower provided by the county, he said.

Hutton is asking for incentives due to the blighted condition of the property where the center

HUTTON continued on 2A





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LOCAL FWES Super Scholars celebrate their success in style, 5A.

The signs of a heart attack can be different in women.

Learn the difference at ShandsLakeShore.com.

ShandsLakeShore Regional Medical Center

1936 Lake City Seminole Club PAY TO THE Sc Holarship W:NNERS \$ 500° FIVE Hundred & DOLLARS FSU 000000529" 1,000 :00000186: COURTESY

The Lake City Seminole Club hosted its annual FSU Freshman send-off event Thursday night. Pictured are Norbie Ronsonet (from left); Megha Patel of Columbia High School, who received the Bones Thomas Scholarship; Kyle Keen, president of the Lake City Club; and Michael McFadden of Florida State University. Recipients of the club's Jim Arnold scholarship are Reona Woods and Samantha Tusing of Fort White High School.

TDC Continued From 1A

softball tournaments staged here totaled \$6,082,500.

From Oct. 1, 2015, to May 31, 2016, revenues fell time only 13 tournaments, all said to be significantly here.

sent money spent at local effort to try," Vann said. hotels, restaurants, gas stations and more.

is due to increased competition in the marketplace, the state, which she said accounts for "about 20 pernaments. The rest, she said, are attributable to Lowrey.

have had some effect on earlier.

his performance. "We've had all these to \$3,123,750. During that tournaments, we've had all these relationships here and now they were startsmaller in size, were held ing to dwindle or becoming rocky so we've taken action Revenue figures repre- and I think he's made an

But the problems with Lowrey's performance go Some of the lost revenue beyond lost tournament revenue, according to Vann.

Lowrey has also been Vann said. New sports ven- cited for "refusal to perues are popping up across form assigned duties or to comply with written or verbal instructions of high- to counsel Lowrey about is now trying to get the cent" of the canceled tour- er-level supervision," coun- not "embellishing" facts ty records show.

Lowrey has refused to Lowrey denies the claim work or make appearanc- if it's not accurate," Vann tournament promoter to and says he had nothing to es at events at night or said. "For instance, recently come back and stage a trial "does not get paid to work weekends or after hours," according to Vann.

Vann called the drop in after being written up for tournament revenue a "big these and other infractions fied his location Thursday, concern." She said recent in December, since he had Dec. 3, 2015, and Friday, disciplinary actions taken also been formally repri- Dec. 4, 2015, when he statagainst Lowrey seem to manded just two months ed he was at Southside for

> In October 2015, Lowrey was written up for violating county personnel/ethics standards after he contacted a TDC board member to complain that Vann was not allowing him to spend TDC funds as he wished. Lowrey complained that Vann, his immediate supervisor, was "controlling" and that he did "not like requesting permission to expend funds relative to the TDC department," county records show.

Beyond these concerns, Vann said she has also had and figures.

"Our message loses value we're at 80 percent occu- last fall, and he has signed pancy. He just gets excited and over the top so we're trying to bring that down." In response to a prohis suspension, Vann also wrote that he has been less than honest in his communications with her.

She said Lowrey "falsihours on both days helping prep the fields" for a tournament.

Vann also wrote that Lowrey "has a history of not following directions or intentionally not following through on assignments."

When asked by the Lake City Reporter, Lowrey declined to address the disciplinary actions taken against him.

"I do not discuss county business as it is related to my personnel file," he said in a written statement.

Vann says that Lowrey sports marketing program back on track.

He has convinced one

Americana troubadours Eli and Bill Perras to perform

From staff reports

Eli and Bill Perras, Americana troubadours at large, will perform July 1 at The Emerald Thread Listening Room at the Downtown Arts Center, 537 N. Marion Ave. in Lake City.

The musical performers are regulars at many Florida folk music venues and festivals.

They have opened for or shared the stage with several nationally recognized entertainers, following in the footsteps of (and with encouragement from) such folk music legends as Pete Seeger, Bill Staines, Michael Smith,

John Gorka, Steve Gillette, Cindy Mangsen and Rod MacDonald, along with Florida legends Stetson Kennedy and Frank Thomas.

3A

To learn more about their music, visit online at www.perrasmusic.com.

Suggested donation for Eli and Bill Perras' July 1 performance in Lake City is \$10 per person. The doors open at 7:30 p.m., and the music begins at 8 p.m. Norm McDonald & Friends will open the event.

For more information, call 365-5217 or visit The Emerald Thread page on Facebook.

Diner, El Patio and the

The event is free and

Presented by the High

Springs Music in the Park

Series, it is sponsored by

For more informa-

tion, visit the Music in

the Park Series page on

the High Springs CRA.

Seating is limited.

open to the public, espe-

Great Outdoors.

cially dads.

Facebook.

'Father's Day Blues' event slated

From staff reports

"Father's Day Blues," featuring the music of Rick Randlett, Cassie Keenum, Franc Robert and Cindy Bear, will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. June 19 at the High Springs Museum, 120 NW Second Ave. in High Springs.

The event also includes "A Taste of the Town," showcasing food from the

DEATH

Continued From 1A

center, a call came in about the performed.

Responders

According to social possible media posts from the girl's drowning and CPR being mother, a park ranger gave CPR while a woman arrived consoled her.

NOTICE OF MEETING BEAUTIFICATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE CITY OF LAKE CITY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Beautification Advisory Committee for the City of Lake City, Florida will hold a meeting on Tuesday, June 14, 2016 at 4:00 P.M., in the Council Chambers located on the second floor of City Hall at 205 North Marion Avenue, Lake City, Florida

All interested persons are invited to attend

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: If you require special aid/services for the meeting identified above, as addressed in the American Disabilities Act, please contact the City Manager's Office at (386) 719-5768.

> AUDREY E SIKES, MMC. City Clerk

around eight minutes later and took her to Lake City Medical Center, where

she later died.

do with tournaments get- on weekends, stating he he's told several people that tournament after he left ting canceled. He attributes it instead to increased fees for local tournaments and to tournament directors backing out after not being in December 2014, is a salaable to get enough teams to ried employee who receives test filed by Lowrey over sign up.

"It had absolutely noth- less of hours worked. ing to do with me," Lowrey said.

Lowrey, who was hired \$46,000 annually, regard-

He was suspended for three days without pay a United States Fastpitch Association promoter to host tournaments in Columbia County this year and in 2017.

"I think he's doing better, but it's a wait-and-see approach right now," Vann said.

NOTICE OF MEETING UTILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING CITY OF LAKE CITY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Utility Advisory Committee for the City of Lake City, Florida will hold a meeting on Monday, June 13, 2016, at 5:15 P.M., in the Council Chambers located on the second floor of City Hall at 205 North Marion Avenue, Lake City, Florida

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

- Jones Edmunds Proposal for Storm Water Rate Study
- Tetra-Tech Proposal for Water, Wastewater, and Reclaim Rate Study Hatch Mott MacDonald Proposal for Kicklighter Reclamation Plant
- Expansion Cross-Connection Control Program

SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKE CITY, FLORIDA WILL MEET ON MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2016 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF CITY HALL AT 205 NORTH MARION AVENUE, LAKE CITY, FLORIDA

All interested persons are invited to attend any of the meetings identified above

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: If you require special aid or services for any of the meetings identified above, as addressed in the American Disabilities Act, please contact the City Manager's Office at (386) 719-5768

AUDREY E SIKES, MMC City Clerk

ROAD CLOSURE NOTICE CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Kicklighter Terrace will be closed Monday, June 13 — Sunday, June 19



 Impact to Residents: Talk anybe densed in the lates shown on. Since Weberne Read will not be accessible from S.W. Exhibition Terray. Baricales and cases will be used to prevent vehicular traffic from ning the work area. We apply give for this incorrections, appendix your capestics, and all unitally sity to spen the rand as non-particle.

li yan kare any questions, pieze contact BALMA SCOTT (SRG) 753-5471.

Succely, the Chy of Late Chy and Origo Industrial Contractors

Clothes Closet will be open this week in Branford

From staff reports

The Community Outreach Clothes Closet is open on the third Friday of each month from 3 to 6 p.m. at San Juan Catholic Mission in Branford.

The program is coordinated by the Angels of Mercy outreach ministry at the church, 304 SE Plant Ave.

The mission's goal is to provide clothing for men, women and children of all ages.

The program is completely free — no ID required and no questions asked.

There will be no limits on the amount of clothes residents can take, as long as you use what you take.

The clothes program is meant to coincide with and supplement a local food distribution program that is also being offered on the third Friday of each month.



TUESDAY, JUNE 14



If you're 55 or older, or are active military or veteran with valid ID, take an extra 20% off storewide, or 15% off in our home & shoes departments, with your Belk Rewards Card or any other form of payment, on your sale purchases. "Excludes Red Dot, Clearance, Earlybirds, Night Owls, Doorbusters, Bonus Buys, Super Dure, Evendeur Velues All Clear Aradia Aradiae Articlans Articlans Dot, Clearance, Earlybirds, Night Owls, Doorbusters, Bonus Buys, Super Buys, Everyday Values, All Clad, Angelica, Antelope, Armani Exchange watches, Assets, Baby Gear, Better & Designer Intimates, Birkenstock, Breville, Brighton, Brooks Brothers, Buffalo, Casio, COH Man, Clarisonic, Coach, Columbia, cosmetics/fragrances, Dansko, Denim & Supply Ralph Lauren, designer handbags, designer sunglasses, Diane Von Furstenberg, Diesel watches, Dockers, Donald J Pliner, Dooney & Bourke, Eileen Fisher, Fine Jewelry watches and service plans; Fitbit, Fossil & Fossil Q watches, Free People, Furla, Gear For Sports, Herend, Hugo Boss, Jack Rogers, Johnston & Murphy. Jov & Mario, Kate Spade accessories & shoes. People, Furla, Gear For Sports, Herend, Hugo Boss, Jack Rogers, Johnston & Murphy, Joy & Mario, Kate Spade accessories & shoes, Keen, Kensie Girl, kitchen/novelty electrics/coffee, Lacoste, Iadies better swim, Iadies designer & contemporary sportswear & dresses; Iadies, kids & men's designer shoes; Iadies designer accessories, Le Creuset, Levi's, Lilly Pulitzer, Lucky, Lucy, Marc by Marc watches, Mattel, Merrell, Michael Kors shoes, handbags, jewelry & watches; Minnetonka Moccasin, Miss Me, Monster Headphones, Munro, Nautica, Nike, Orthaheel/Vionic, Polo Sport, Ralph Lauren/Polo, Roberto Coin, Seven for All Mankind, Skagen watches, Southern Proper, Southern Tide, Spanx, Snerry Gold Cuo. Stuart Weitzman. Roberto Coin, Seven for All Mankind, Skagen watches, Southern Proper, Southern Tide, Spanx, Sperry Gold Cup, Stuart Weitzman, Swarovski, Tommy Bahama, Tommy Hilfiger apparel, TOMS, Trina Turk apparel, Tumi, Ugg, Under Armour, Vera Bradley, Versus watches, Victorinox, Vietri, Vineyard Vines, Vintage 1946, Vitamix, Wusthof, non-merchandise depts, lease depts, salon services and Belk gift cards. Not valid on prior purchases, phone or special orders, trunk shows or on belk.com. Cannot be redeemed for cash, credit or refund, used in combination with any other discount or credit or refund, used in combination with any other discount o coupon offer. Valid Tuesday, June 14, 2016. All Belk Rewards Card purchases are subject to credit approval -