


BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | D5
Maressa Smith worked as a yoga teacher and once toured religious sites in Israel.

6 a.m. 9 a.m. 12 p.m. 3 p.m. 6 p.m. 9 p.m.

67° 70° 79° 85° 80° 73°

KYLE BUMPERS ON BASKETBALL | B1
The Jordan era is over for the Hornets, but work is still needed to right the ship.



TOP WORLD AND NATION NEWS

U.S., CHINA PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE SUMMIT, A5

Across the Nation: Maine shooting suspect remains at large. **A3**

Around the World: Ukraine businesses adapt to being on front line. **A14**

In Business: Rising fuel prices pull down airline profit growth. **D12**

SPORTS NEWS

DIAMONDBACKS, RANGERS SET FOR WORLD SERIES

Given little chance by oddsmakers and analysts, Arizona is ready to show it belongs in the Fall Classic when play begins tonight in Texas. **B1**

LOCAL NEWS

COURSE TEACHES RESIDENTS HOW TO FLY DRONES

Don Wiley has given drone flying lessons for four years at The Enrichment Academy, with courses for different skill levels. **D3**

LOCAL NEWS

NEW CLUB BRINGS CHARITABLE LOOMING SOUTH

Southside Looming Plus Club is a sister club to the Boomer Loomers, meeting at Everglades Recreation with a focus on local impact. **D7**



India Pantin | Daily Sun

Janey Pullen, of the Village of Chatham at Soulliere, dances with Terry Osborn, of the Village of Poinciana, during a fundraising dance for The Villages Dollars for Scholars in 2022. Several groups use social dances as a way to have fun and raise money at the same time.

Clubs Raise Thousands For Charity With Dance

By MADDIE CUTLER | Daily Sun Senior Writer

Even as Donna Francis sat through nine months of breast cancer treatment, she was thinking about how she could support the community. After she finished chemotherapy and radiation in April 2021, she and her husband, Tim, started hosting charity dances every other month as DWop and Friends. It is one of multiple local groups that turn fun social dances into fundraisers for nonprofits around the community.

“I used to be a performer, and for a long time it was all about me performing and enjoying myself,” Donna said. “But during treatment, I had a lot of time to think about how I could help other people.”

Following their October dance, Donna and Tim donated \$1,420 to Angel Wigs of Hope, which provides wigs for women going through cancer.

Please See **DANCE, A8**

4 Rivers Smokehouse Signs First Lease at Downtown Middleton

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The award-winning barbecue chain anticipates opening its restaurant in the fourth quarter of 2024.

By KEITH PEARLMAN | Daily Sun Specialty Editor

One of the most recognized barbecue restaurant chains in Florida is coming to Downtown Middleton. 4 Rivers Smokehouse is the first business to sign a lease at the new commercial area under development near the new campus of The Villages Charter School. 4 Rivers has earned numerous awards in the world of competitive barbecue since opening its first location in Winter Park in 2009. The family-owned company now operates 15 locations across the state. “We’ve been looking at The Villages area for several years,” said John Rivers, founder and CEO of 4R Restaurant Group. “It was a matter of the right timing, the right opportunity, the right location. Everything just came together with the opening of the Middleton neighborhood and we’re excited to be part of that development.” The company is leasing 4,725 square feet of space. Please See **SMOKEHOUSE, A10**

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Ryan Weiss

When Dom Gualtieri wakes up on Monday and Thursday mornings, he questions whether he will be able to run the bases on the softball field that day.

Gualtieri, 85, has been playing in The Villages Recreation Division 5 Knudson league for over a decade. He feels his age in the mornings, but once he’s on the field, he has no problem giving his all. “It’s like my high school football coach is yelling at me and I just run,” said Gualtieri, of the Village Hacienda. “It’s just very natural for me to do my best as long as I can.” Gualtieri played softball his entire life, well before he moved to The Villages.

Please See **GUALTIERI, A8**

EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE

OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES

Try This Today: Zumba Is All About Having Fun and Staying Active

Experience fun, high-energy cardio at Zumba classes in The Villages. Zumba is a fast-paced aerobic workout based on Latin-inspired dancing. There are a multitude of options, ranging in levels of intensity, at many recreation centers throughout the community. No matter if you’re a pro or just want to try it out, you can find a class. At right, Sandra Camargo, of the Village of Sabal Chase, participates in the recent Party in Pink Zumbathon. See the weekly Recreation & Parks guide for all of the available Zumba class times and locations, or go to districtgov.org. — Greg Hughes, Daily Sun



Rachel Stuart | Daily Sun

IN ENTERTAINMENT

Visit Hometown Halloween in Brownwood
Find out more, **E1**

Plus: Find the lineup of entertainment at the town squares, theaters and beyond, **E3**

AT RECREATION CENTERS

Happening near you: From aqua aerobics to Zumba and everything in between, there’s fun for everyone, **D8-9**



Plan your perfect day in The Villages, **E1**

| | |
|-----------|------|
| Recipes | E1 |
| Poetry | E4-5 |
| Comics | E6 |
| Puzzles | E7-8 |
| Horoscope | E9 |
| Advice | E12 |

from the front page

SMOKEHOUSE

Continued from A1

space north of Dr. Randy McDaniel Way east of Middleton Drive, with an anticipated opening in the fourth quarter 2024, said Geno Jarquin, director of commercial development for The Villages.

4 Rivers will be an outstanding addition to The Villages and Middleton communities, Jarquin said.

“First of all, the food is delicious,” he said. “They have won multiple awards in major BBQ competitions. But even more important, they are very community oriented everywhere they operate throughout the state. They’re a perfect fit for The Villages and for our vision of Downtown Middleton.”

Rivers began serving food in 2004 when he launched a “barbecue ministry.” His introduction to The Villages reminded him of those early days.

“We have a lot of friends in The Villages,” Rivers said. “Several years ago, they asked us to come cater an event in their neighborhood. Just about everybody told us we needed to open a place here. Shortly after that, we were able to come meet with the Morse family and we all agreed we’d be here one day.”

Rivers said his company’s values and those of The Villages are very much aligned.

Rivers launched the 4R Foundation, which still includes the BBQ Ministry, to give back to the communities where the company is located.

The 4R Foundation established the 4 Roots Farm — a 40-acre farming initiative in Orlando established to educated students, families, farmers, and health care



Submitted photo

4 Rivers Smokehouse is the first business to sign a lease to open in Downtown Middleton. The award-winning barbecue chain currently has 15 locations across Florida.

providers on responsible, sustainable farming practices.

4 Roots Farm has a close relationship with The Villages Grown, Rivers said.

“We have a great partnership with them,” he said. “With 4 Roots, just like The Villages Grown, we’re exploring best practices for providing locally grown, nutritious produce. We’re both part of a collective of farming operations with the same mission.”

4 Rivers is excited to be part of what The Villages is developing with Middleton, Rivers said.

“When they explained the concept of the family neighborhood, we were very excited to come in as partners,” he said. “We’re going to be close to the new school. We

have always prided ourselves in being a great place for students to get their first job. We employ a lot of high school students and understand working around their schedules because education is their No. 1 priority. Hopefully we can provide another reason people want to move to Middleton.”

The family neighborhood is designed to draw and retain the workforce that supports retirees in The Villages, with proximity to a new charter school campus. Middleton will include up to 4,000 homes, with a mix of housing types and price points.

The downtown district will cater not only to the families who live in Middleton, but to

the entire Villages community, Jarquin said.

“We’re actively working on deals to implement our strategic plan for Middleton, but we want Villagers to know this is a place for them too,” he said.

Other businesses on the horizon for Downtown Middleton include a grocery store, bank, pharmacy, gas station/convenience store, coffee shop, ice cream shop, sports bar, family gastro pub, Italian restaurant, pizzeria, sub shop, sushi restaurant and a breakfast and lunch restaurant.

Specialty Editor Keith Pearlman can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5347, or keith.pearlman@thevillagesmedia.com.

Wildwood Officials Catch Error With Property-Tax Rate

By KEITH PEARLMAN
Daily Sun Specialty Editor

In September, Wildwood commissioners approved the lowest property tax rate in the city’s history.

However, a recently discovered error means the city must hold a new workshop and classify that rate as a tax increase.

Commissioners on Sept. 25 approved the property tax rate of about \$2.83 per \$1,000 of assessed value based on a calculated rolled-back rate of 2.8287 mills. But that rate was based on incomplete information provided to the state, said Cassandra Smith, the city’s chief financial officer and assistant city manager.

When the mistake was caught, a new calculation provided the correct rolled-back rate of 2.8051 mills, a difference of 0.0236. That comes to about \$2.36 per \$100,000 of assessed value.

According to the Florida Department of Revenue, the rolled-back millage rate is generally the amount of property taxes the property owner would owe if there were no change to the taxing authority’s budget.

City officials sought approval from the state to adopt the corrected rolled-back rate but were unsuccessful.

“We went into this budget process with every intention of adopting the rolled-back rate,” Wolf said. “But the state won’t let us go back and

correct it because we already held two public hearings.”

State law requires the city to re-advertise and hold a new public hearing on the property tax rate, during which the rolled-back rate will be correctly identified. The new hearing is scheduled for 5:30 p.m., Nov. 6 at City Hall.

“It’s unfortunate that a mistake was made,” said Mayor Ed Wolf. “But we aren’t trying to cover anything up, we caught the mistake and now we’re doing what we need to do to make it right.”

Because the property tax rate is higher than the correct rolled-back rate, it legally must be classified as a tax increase, despite the fact that it is in fact lower than the rate of \$3.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value residents paid in 2022.

“We can’t advertise it as a roll back, but the fact is, we rolled back the tax rate,” Wolf said. “The bottom line is residents will pay less in city tax than they did last year.”

The city will implement new protocols to ensure this does not happen again, said Jason McHugh, city manager.

“We’re all human and we all make mistakes,” he said. “I’m proud that we were able to catch the mistake and own up to it. And I’m proud of the tax rate we have, which is the lowest ever in the city of Wildwood.”

Specialty Editor Keith Pearlman can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5347, or keith.pearlman@thevillagesmedia.com.

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EV Superstore

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AMENDMENT TO THE FUTURE LAND USE MAPSUMTER COUNTY UNIFIED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Sumter County, Florida, has initiated an application to amend the designated future use and zoning of land within the unincorporated area of Sumter County, as generally shown in the map in this advertisement. The title of the land use amendment ordinance is as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF SUMTER COUNTY, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP OF THE SUMTER COUNTY UNIFIED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICATION SS-23-16870; SETTING FORTH THE AUTHORITY FOR AMENDMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE MAP; SETTING FORTH THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE AMENDMENTS; PROVIDING FOR INTERPRETATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND APPLICABILITY, FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, EFFECTIVE DATE AND ADOPTION.

The public hearings for the proposed amendment and rezoning will be held, as follows:

Planning and Zoning Special Master:
Everglades Recreation Center
5497 Marsh Bend Trl.
The Villages, FL 32163
November 6, 2023, at 5:00 PM

Board of County Commissioners
Everglades Recreation Center
5497 Marsh Bend Trl.
The Villages, FL 32163
November 28, 2023, at 5:00 PM

The proposed amendment pertains to changes to the Future Land Use Map of the Unified Comprehensive Plan and zoning map and proposes to change use of the property as follows:

SS-23-16870: This petition is to change the future land use designation on 39 acres MOL from Commercial to Agriculture.

The proposed changes may be inspected by the public at the Development Services Department, The Villages Sumter County Service Center, 7375 Powell Rd, Ste. 115, between the hours of 7:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. weekdays.

Contact Carley Berg at 352-689-4400 ext. 4658 with questions.

Interested parties are encouraged to appear at these hearings and provide comments regarding the proposed amendment. Those requiring assistance may call 352-689-4400.

APPEAL: NECESSITY OF RECORD

Notice is given that if any person desires to appeal any action taken by the Board at the above hearing, a verbatim record of the proceedings may be necessary. The Board assumes no responsibility for furnishing said record; however, the hearings will be audio recorded by the Board for public use.