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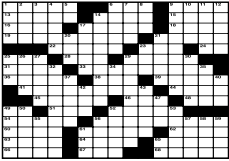
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Eddie Creamer

TRIM notices to be mailed August 17

By Eddie Creamer

Property owners in St. Johns County will be mailed a 2026 Truth in Millage (TRIM) notice, also known as a notice of proposed property taxes, by our office on Aug. 17, 2026. The notice will show the property’s proposed taxes for the 2026 tax year before the tax bill is mailed in November. On the same day the notice is mailed, it will also be available on our website at www.sjcpa.gov.

The notice is important because it informs property owners of their property values and exemptions. It also provides a timeframe for property owners to request any adjustments to their values. Therefore, property owners should carefully review the notice to determine if they would like to request any changes.

We make every effort to work with property owners to accommodate requests through our office. If our office is unable to make the requested change, then a petition can be filed with the Value Adjustment Board (VAB) for a third-party review. Property owners have 25 days from the notice mailing date to request an office review and to file a petition with the VAB. This year’s deadline is Sept. 11.

Here’s a look at the 2026 numbers for St. Johns County.

- The total just (market) value is \$92.9 billion, a 2.83% increase from last year.
- The total taxable value is \$63.1 billion, a 6.60% increase from last year.

TRIM cont. on pg. 2

MAKING WAVES



Photo courtesy First Coast YMCA

The First Coast Y FLYERS Competitive Team gathers for a group photo.

First Coast YMCA announces fall aquatics lineup

By Natalie Caballero

The First Coast YMCA is gearing up for a busy fall in the pool, with a full slate of aquatics programming that includes swim lessons for all ages, stroke-development clinics and a competitive swim team at the Brown Family YMCA.

Leading the fall lineup is the start of the First Coast Y FLYERS Competitive Team season, with practices beginning Aug. 17. The team is open to swimmers who already know all four competitive

strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breast-stroke and butterfly) and are ready to take their swimming to the next level under the direction of Head Coach George Oancea. Families interested in joining the team can schedule a tryout by contacting Coach Oancea directly at goancea@fcymca.org.

For younger or less experienced swimmers who aren’t quite ready for full competition, the FCYMCA also offers FLYERS in Training, a precompetitive team designed to build skills and

confidence before eventually joining the competitive roster. That program begins on Sept. 1.

Adults are also included in the fall programming. Launching Sept. 1 is the FLYERS Masters Swim/Triathlon Training Group, a new offering held at both the Brown Family YMCA and the Barco-Newton Family YMCA. The group is designed for adult swimmers looking to improve their fitness, train

YMCA cont. on pg. 2

The Beaches communities celebrate the Constitution

By Viky Divertie

The Beaches communities will come together on Sept. 17 at 3 p.m. for a spirited celebration of the United States Constitution as part of the nationwide America 250! observance.

The nonpolitical event, “America 250! The Beaches Communities Celebrate the Constitution,” is free and open to the public and will be held at Seawalk

Pavilion, 75 1st St. N, in Jacksonville Beach.

This special community celebration is sponsored by local Daughters of the American Revolution Chapters Jean Ribault and Ponte Vedra, and the City of Jacksonville Beach.

Community members of all ages are invited to gather for an afternoon of patriotic music, history and fellow-

ship. The program will feature patriotic musical performances by local high school students, a Colonial Color Guard presentation by Sons of the American Revolution and family-friendly giveaways.

At 4 p.m., in a powerful moment of unity, the celebration will pause as participants join churches throughout

Constitution cont. on pg. 2



Integrity matters.

Martin Pyszcymuka is a former FBI agent specializing in fraud and public corruption.

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Commissioner Krista Keating-Joseph voted alone against four developer-funded commissioners — 71 times.

VoteKrista.com

Paid for by Martin Pyszcymuka and Krista Keating-Joseph, Republicans for St. Johns County commissioners, Dist. 2 & 4



Photo courtesy First Coast YMCA
First Coast Y FLYERS swimmers pose in the pool ahead of the fall season.



Photo courtesy First Coast YMCA
First Coast Y FLYERS swimmers pose at the 2026 Spring Florida Swimming Championships.

YMCA cont. from pg. 1

for triathlons or simply get back in the water with structured coaching and a training plan.

Before any of the team programs kick off, the FCYMCA is offering a series of swim clinics focused on stroke development on Aug. 4, 6, 11 and 12. The clinics give swimmers a chance to refine their technique and are a natural stepping stone for those eyeing a spot on the FLYERS roster this fall.

These competitive offerings build on the FCYMCA’s existing aquatics programs, which remain in full swing year-round. Swim lessons continue to be offered for every stage, from parent-child classes for the littlest swimmers to preschool and school-age lessons, as well as private lessons for those who want one-on-one instruction. Adults looking to stay active in the water without joining a team can also take advantage of water fitness classes, offered every weekday morning at 9 a.m. at the Brown Family YMCA.

“We wanted to make sure there’s a space

in the water for everyone, whether that’s a four-year-old taking their first swim lesson or an adult training for a triathlon,” said Cara Roach, Executive Director of the Brown Family YMCA. “Our swimming programs provide a clear pathway for swimmers to grow—from learning the fundamentals to competing at a high level. At the FCYMCA, we’re committed to developing not only stronger athletes but also confident, disciplined young people who learn the value of teamwork, perseverance and goal setting.”

The addition of the Masters Swim Team marks a significant investment in adult athletics for the Brown Family YMCA, giving local swimmers a home team to train and compete with.

Anyone with questions about swim lessons, clinics or the new competitive and precompetitive teams is encouraged to reach out to Kylie Frech, Aquatics Director, at kfrech@fcymca.org.

Families interested specifically in a FLYERS tryout can contact Head Coach George Oancea at goancea@fcymca.org.

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TRIM cont. from pg. 1

- The parcel total is 183,425, an increase of 2,675 from last year.
- The homesteaded parcel total is 98,009, which includes 8,287 new applications approved in 2026.
- The qualified single-family home sales total is 2,688 with 18.2% of those sales being new construction.

The proposed 2026 Florida Property Tax Amendment 3 (CS/HJR 1-F)

will not have an impact on the 2026 TRIM notices or property taxes. The proposed amendment will be placed on the November 2026 ballot for voters to decide the outcome. If the amendment passes, then it will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2027, and the changes will be reflected on the 2027 TRIM notices and tax bills.

I’m available to answer questions or provide additional information at Ed-die@sjcpa.gov or 904-827-5500.

Eddie Creamer is the St. Johns County property appraiser.

CONSTITUTION cont. from pg. 1

the Beaches communities in ringing bells to commemorate the signing of the Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787. This coordinated bell-ringing will echo the spirit of the nation’s founding and honor the enduring principles of liberty and self-governance enshrined in the Constitution.

The guest speaker is Cindy Addison, Historian General for the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

The event is part of the broader America 250! initiative marking the 250th anniversary of America’s founding and celebrating the documents and ideals that continue to shape the nation.

Residents, visitors, families, veterans, students and civic groups are encouraged to attend and take part in this meaningful community tribute.

Bring a chair, bring a friend and join us as we celebrate the Constitution and the enduring promise of America.

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Submissions

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Honey!



Breed:
Poodle mix.

Favorite activity:
Racing with friends at the dog park.

Favorite food:
Pup Cup from Jeremiah's.

Favorite friend:
Golden Doodle friend, Goku.

How did your BFF get his name:
I wanted to name her after someone with a sweet personality. One of my favorite movies is "Matilda," so I named her after Matilda's teacher, Miss Honey.

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in First Coast NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in First Coast NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.



Answers to our Puzzles PG 6

B	A	A	E	D	E	E	L	D	B	M	S
E	L	M	A	N	D	A	V	E	E	L	E
N	A	Y	S	S	A	V	E	S	A	T	I
D	E	L	E	G	A	T	E	S	C	U	B
S	A	L	E	S	A	L	L	T			
P	R	E	D	A	L	I	R	A	T	E	
H	E	A	D	M	I	N	N	E	S	O	T
M	A	M	E	T	N	O	D	T	R	Y	S
R	E	C	O	V	E	R	E	D	Y	M	C
S	A	R	O	S	C	A	R	A	I	M	
C	B	M	A	W	S	O	R	A	S		
H	O	P	E	H	B	A	R	E	F	A	C
A	D	I	T	B	A	B	U	S	B	O	R
S	E	R	E	O	R	E	M	D	I	X	I
E	D	E	R	A	I	R	E	N	A	C	T

U	I	K	C	O	T	S	E	V	I	L	Z	T	X	R	B	S	D	S
E	R	E	T	S	A	R	C	U	T	V	J	I	R	Y	G	V	B	X
V	N	Q	Y	C	B	W	N	L	A	F	M	T	A	G	R	O	P	Q
T	Q	P	T	C	C	C	O	N	C	E	R	T	A	O	N	E	F	J
Z	G	L	H	N	A	R	T	J	O	K	Z	A	C	O	R	N	E	T
L	C	E	M	N	T	O	L	S	L	M	S	C	I	T	L	B	H	A
N	L	C	T	O	X	O	N	C	A	W	R	S	C	I	T	L	B	H
S	U	O	C	O	N	C	E	R	T	A	O	N	E	F	J	Z	W	T
C	O	S	H	A	B	P	E	L	H	K	A	V	U	M	S	X	K	X
R	R	N	D	O	G	V	J	K	F	H	U	T	R	A	C	T		

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August

Community Calendar

What's Happening in St. Johns

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridanewsline.com.

August 3

Ponte Vedra Democratic Club meeting

The Ponte Vedra Democratic Club meets Monday, Aug. 3, at 6 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 400 San Juan Road, Ponte Vedra Beach. Rabbi Merrill Shapiro and Father Justin Yawn will speak on maintaining faith in a fractured age. Email pvdemclub@gmail.com for details.

July 7

Ponte Vedra Woman's Club Social

The Ponte Vedra Woman's Club will host its July Purely Social on Tuesday, July 7, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Marriott Sawgrass, 1000 Tournament Players Club Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach. The casual event is free for members and \$10 for guests. For more information and to register, visit pontevedrawomansclub.com.

August 4

Vicar's Landing Boutique and Cottage Sale

The monthly Vicar's Landing Boutique and Cottage sale is Tuesday, Aug. 4, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Vicar's Landing Sawgrass Community Building. The boutique features jewelry, knick knacks and art. The cottage sale includes antiques, household items and home furnishings. Cash or checks only. All proceeds benefit the Vicar's Employee Scholarship Fund.

August 4

Essential Tremor Support Group

The Essential Tremor Support Group meets Tuesday, Aug. 4, at 11 a.m. at Baptist HealthPlace at Nocatee, 400 Colonnade Drive, Suite 130, Ponte Vedra. Elaine Keebaugh will discuss recent research on cognition, memory and dementia risk in patients. RSVP to jkary@verizon.net.

August 7

Nease Golden Panther Booster Club Gala

The Nease Golden Panther Booster Club hosts its annual gala Friday, Aug. 7, at St. Johns Golf and Country Club. Themed Legends: Honoring Greatness, Fueling the Future, the event celebrates past athletic achievements and raises funds for future athletic programs. Buy tickets at neaseathletics.boosterhub.com/event/16400.

August 8

"Finding Nemo" auditions

Christ Episcopal Church hosts auditions for "Finding Nemo" Saturday, Aug. 8, at 9 a.m. in the choir room, 400 San Juan Drive. The auditions are open to youth ages eight to 18. Participants should prepare a 16 bar song that showcases their personality and wear comfortable clothes for movement. Email Barbiekroberts@gmail.com.

August 21

Savvy Job Hunters virtual workshop

The Savvy Job Hunters Ministry of Christ Episcopal Church hosts a free virtual workshop Friday, Aug. 21, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Participants will learn how to use AI to formulate

effective prompts, build a resume and prepare for job interviews. Email Pam Ottesen at savvyjobs@ccpvb.org to register.

August 22

Ponte Vedra Writers meeting

The Ponte Vedra Writers host retired FBI Intelligence Analyst Gwen Goodrich Saturday, Aug. 22, at 11 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Beach Branch Library. Goodrich will discuss the Bureau's history to help writers understand investigative approaches in her presentation, "The Real FBI: Behind the Scenes."

August 22

Adult Comedy Night

Nocatee hosts adult comedy night Saturday, Aug. 22, with showtimes from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Nocatee Room at Crosswater Hall. The event is for Nocatee residents only.

September 8

Bartram Trail Newcomers Club luncheon

The Bartram Trail Newcomers Club kicks off its new year with a luncheon Tuesday, Sept. 8, at 11 a.m. at St. Johns Golf and Country Club. Visit btnc.wildapricot.org for details.

Sept. 17

America 250 Constitution Celebration

The Beaches communities celebrate the U.S. Constitution Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 3 p.m. at the Seawalk Pavilion, 75 First St. N., Jacksonville Beach. The free, nonpolitical event features patriotic music, a Colonial Color Guard presentation and family

friendly giveaways. Guest speaker Cindy Addison will present followed by a community bell ringing at 4 p.m. Attendees should bring their own chairs.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Weekdays COA THE PLAYERS Community Senior Center

The senior center at 175 Landrum Lane offers programs and activities. For details, call 904 209 3659 or visit coasjc.org.

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays Trout Creek Senior Center Activities

Trout Creek Senior Center, 6795 Collier Road, offers senior activities starting at 9 a.m. with cards and games, followed by trivia or bingo before lunch at 11:30 a.m. Call Jessica Curry at 904 209 3658.

Wednesdays Playing HOOKie

This charity knitting and crochet group meets Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road. Email playinghookiecares@gmail.com.

Wednesdays Widow to Widow Support Group

The support group meets Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. at the COA River House, 179 Marine St. Call 904 209 3655. Augustine, on Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Call 904-209-3655 for more information.

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- ✓ Instilling Character and Confidence in Our Kids
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For St. Johns County School Board
DISTRICT 4

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Q&A with St. Johns County Supervisor
of Elections Vicky Oakes

Q: When is the 2026 Primary Election?

A: Election Day for the 2026 Primary Election is Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2026. Polls will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and voters must vote at their assigned polling place. Some Election Day polling places have changed since the last election. To find your polling place, check your voter information card or visit www.votesjc.gov.

Q: I'm registered with no party affiliation. Will I still be able to vote in the Primary Election?

A: The 2026 Primary Election includes two Universal Primary Contests that are open to all registered St. Johns County voters and will appear on all ballots, regardless of party affiliation: County Commission District 2 and County Commission District 4. Non-partisan voters will also see a Circuit Judge race, and depending on their residence, a School Board Member race on their ballots. Several races will also be decided in the Primary Election and will not appear on the General Election ballot, making participation in this election especially important.

Q: How do I know what's on my ballot?

A: Sample ballots have been mailed to all registered voters who have not requested a vote-by-mail ballot. To view your sample ballot online, visit www.votesjc.gov and click My Voter Status.

Q: I have moved recently. Is it too late to update my registration?



Vicky Oakes

A: No! To update your address online, visit www.votesjc.gov. If you are unsure if your record is up to date, use the My Voter Status tool to verify your information. It is important to update your address before heading out to vote on Election Day to ensure you go to the right polling place the first time.

Q: I requested a vote-by-mail ballot. Can I still vote in person?

A: Yes, if you have not returned your vote-by-mail ballot, you can still vote in person.

Poll workers are required to ask a voter who was mailed a vote-by-mail ballot if they brought it to the polling place. If yes, the vote-by-mail ballot must be surrendered prior to voting. A vote-by-mail ballot cannot be taken into the voting booth at the polling place!

Vicky Oakes cont. on pg. 7



Q&A with St. Johns County Commissioner
Krista Joseph District 4

Q: With school starting back, what should residents know about traffic and safety?

A: It's the end of summer vacation, and we all need to be on the lookout for kids getting ready for school and extra traffic, not just cars but e-bikes. I'm still working with Rep. Kim Kendall on updating e-bike legislation for the next term. A strong bill made it to the governor's desk but wasn't signed. Our team, along with the Sheriff's Office, will revisit it when the legislative session begins again.

Q: What's the latest on the A1A intersection changes?

A: I recently met with Rep. Kim Kendall, FDOT's Jim Knight and our team for a cooperative discussion on the proposed changes to A1A intersections. We're gathering all the facts, and I want residents to know that the hundreds of emails we received were taken seriously. Mr. Knight is running through different scenarios to help keep Ponte Vedra Beach's character intact while creating a safer traffic corridor.

Q: What is the "Agricultural Enclave" development, and how can residents weigh in?



Krista Joseph

A: On the horizon is a possible "Agricultural Enclave" development just north of Nocatee Parkway and west of the Intracoastal Waterway, which would add roughly 4,400 residential homes to our area. The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) will determine at its Aug. 18 meeting whether the project qualifies. This is a new bill, and its future impact will be discussed. Your opinion matters: you can email me or come speak for three minutes during public comment at the BCC auditorium on Aug. 18.



Q&A with St. Johns County School Board
Member Kelly Barrera, District 4

Q: As the new school year approaches, what message would you like to share with students and families?

A: We are excited to welcome both new and returning students when classes begin on August 10. Throughout the summer, our principals, teachers, maintenance teams and support staff have been working hard to prepare classrooms, improve school campuses, participate in professional learning and ensure every school is ready to provide a positive learning environment from day one.

Q: The district recently received its state assessment and school grade results. What do those numbers tell you?

A: The results are something our entire community can be proud of. St. Johns County School District once again led the state in academic performance with an overall score of 910, up from 882 last year. Forty schools earned an "A" grade, five received a "B" and one earned a "C." Since district grades were first issued in 2004, St. Johns County has remained an "A" rated district every year, making it one of only two districts in Florida to accomplish that distinction consistently.

Q: District 4 schools had another impressive year. What achievements stand out?

A: Our District 4 schools continue to rank among the highest-performing traditional public schools in Florida. Every International Baccalaureate Diploma candidate at Allen D. Nease High School earned an IB Diploma this year, while students at Ponte Vedra High School completed 3,226 Advanced Placement exams with an outstanding 85% passing rate. These achievements reflect the dedication of our students and educators and continue to attract highly competitive colleges and universities to our community.

We're also proud to recognize Nease High School's ROTC program. Cadet Riley Willis was selected through Boys State to attend Boys Nation, an honor awarded to only two students in the entire state of Florida. Riley will represent Florida alongside student leaders from across the country in Washington, D.C. We also celebrated Nease High School for an exceptional year through its nationally recognized NJROTC program, which placed third in the nation at the 2026 Navy Junior ROTC National Championship.

Q: Beyond test scores and rankings, how do you define success?

A: While statewide rankings are certainly worth celebrating, our greatest measure of success is the growth our students make throughout the school



Kelly Barrera

year. Those learning gains are possible because of the strong partnership between students, teachers, staff, parents and volunteers. We remain committed to reviewing our data, refining instruction and creating opportunities that help every student reach their highest potential.

Q: What can families expect from the district's newest schools?

A: This fall marks an exciting milestone with the opening of Sabal Crest Academy and Magnolia Oaks Academy, our newest K-8 schools. Staff and contractors have worked throughout the summer to create welcoming campuses where students can thrive academically and socially.

Sabal Crest Academy, located in the Nocatee community, will be led by longtime Ponte Vedra educator Principal Tiffany Cantwell. There is tremendous enthusiasm surrounding the new school, and we look forward to watching this school community grow.

Q: Is there anything new families should do before the first day of school?

A: Yes. Families who are enrolling a child in St. Johns County schools for the first time are encouraged to complete the registration process as early as possible. Early enrollment helps schools plan staffing, organize classrooms and ensure every student has a smooth start on the first day.

Q: Finally, why is community support for public education so important?

A: Strong public schools strengthen the entire community. They help attract businesses, support property values, prepare a skilled workforce, encourage civic engagement and contribute to a high quality of life. We are incredibly grateful for the continued support our community has shown our schools, including its support of the referendums that help provide outstanding educational opportunities for our students. Together, we are investing in the future of St. Johns County.

Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13						14				15			
16						17				18			
19				20						21			
			22					23				24	
25	26	27		28				29			30		
31			32		33		34					35	
36				37		38				39			40
	41				42			43		44			
		45					46		47		48		
49	50		51				52			53			
54		55				56					57	58	59
60					61					62			
63					64				65				
66					67				68				

CLUES ACROSS

1. Bleated

6. Snakelike fish

9. Database management system

13. Social evolution anthropologist Service

14. American rocker Grohl

15. Greek personification of compassion

16. Negatives

17. Rescued

18. Self-immolation by fire ritual

19. Assigns tasks

21. Popular type of cigar

22. Discounts

23. The whole quantity

24. New York Giants legend

25. Indicates before

28. Lentils

29. Extremely angry

31. Body part

33. "North Star State"

36. David __, US playwright
38. Lower and raise one's head

39. Private rendezvous

41. In a way, improved

44. A place to play

45. Astronomical period of 18 years

46. Automobile

48. Something you can take

49. A radio band

51. Jaws of a voracious animal

52. Short-billed rails

54. Chinese province

56. Shameless

60. Horizontal passage from the surface into a mine

61. Indian respectful titles

62. Fail to entertain

63. Dried-up

64. Central Utah city

65. Southern U.S.

66. German river

67. Necessary for breathing

68. Put into play

CLUES DOWN

1. Curved segment

2. Wings

3. Yellowish volatile liquid

4. Makes less severe

5. Debit note

6. Overhang

7. The nights before

8. Type of light

9. Lacking enthusiasm

10. Tattle

11. Some is "heavy"

12. One who is canonized

14. Indicates date and place of writing

17. "Peace" in Arabic

20. "Olaf" actor Josh

21. Fragmented rock

23. They __

25. Advanced degree

26. Backside

27. Influential architect and design couple

29. An act of undue intimacy
30. Words from which later words are derived

32. 10 meters

34. Neither

35. Fungal sacs

37. The law of God revealed to Moses

40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin

42. A promise

43. Challenges

47. British Air Aces

49. Large bank

50. Served as an omen

52. Cavalry sword

53. Vaccine developer

55. Belgian WW2 resistance leader Jules

56. Italian Seaport

57. Hip joint

58. __ Clapton, musician

59. Insect repellent

61. Constrictor snake

65 "The First State" (abbr.)

FAIR DAYS

WORD SEARCH

U I K C O T S E V I L Z C T T R B S D S
E G X H D Q U G B B F X H M X U N K C W
I R E T S A O C U T J I U K L X V Z L B
V N Q Y C A R N I V A L R Y G Y B E X S
T Q X D C B W N L K F G R Q D W S Q T E
P X P N K C W W A W P M O G B U K A L G
Z G T A R C O N C E R T R N O Q Z P I D
Z D L C N T E E R T A M A Z R E F F O U U
L L H N L E V P J Q N K A O E U N P Q J
L E M O N A D E K D A C O R N N J C H S
N L C T N T O L S I D Z R N O Q I O E M
S U O T Q K M T L M E I E B W W X R P T
K E U O X O A W R S S L B M P N S N Z D
C T M C Q N C O E W C I I H A J Z W T M
O S Q A D W F L H A R D L E X H I B I T
R E Z H G R P E K E W F B F E E X K C X
N K C H I P E E U A V U O R C Z Q X Y W
D Y G E A L N L Y P X V M S A I P Y D E
O C S E Y H B T R A C I N G H R C M N S
G V J K F M U T R A C T O R B P W D W P

WORDS

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JUDGES
LEMONADE
LIVESTOCK
MIDWAY
POPCORN
PRIZE
QUILT
RACING
TRACTOR

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.



Solve the code to discover words related to fairs.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 15 = R)

A. 10 3 14 15
Clue: Fun outdoor gathering

B. 5 3 15 23 14 22 3 8
Clue: Event with rides and attractions

C. 15 14 17 7
Clue: Amusement

D. 22 7 23 17 1 15
Clue: Sells something

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for St. Johns County Commissioner
District 2

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Early Voting: August 8th – 15th

Election Day:
Tuesday, August 18th

Paid for by Will McMullan, Republican, for St. Johns County Commission, District 2

Vicky Oakes cont. from pg. 5

Q: If I make a mistake on my ballot, can I get a new one?

A: Yes! If a voter makes a mistake on their first ballot, they are entitled to up to two additional replacement ballots. If you make a mistake while marking your ballot, you must return to the poll worker with your ballot in hand. A ballot with a mistake on it returned to the poll worker is called a “spoiled ballot.”

To ensure a spoiled ballot cannot be counted, it must be physically altered. Before surrendering the spoiled ballot, the poll worker will ask the voter to fold the ballot in half and tear the corner.

Q: Will there be law enforcement at my voting location to keep the workers and voters safe?

A: All polling places in St. Johns County are assigned a team member called a Poll Deputy. At the completion of training, Poll Deputies are sworn in and deputized by the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office. The deputy is the eyes and ears of law enforcement at the polling place: they are always present during Early Voting and Election Day to maintain order and ensure a safe voting experience for St. Johns County voters.

Questions? Call the Elections Office at 904-823-2238, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

My staff and I look forward to assisting you!



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Gardening

By Connie Doyle,
Master Gardener UF/IFAS



Connie Doyle

The Good Earth: Could one of your favorite landscape plants be an escape artist?



Photo courtesy Connie Doyle

Every gardener has done it. You spot a beautiful plant at the nursery, bring it home, nurture it for years, and then discover the very plant you’ve proudly shared with friends and neighbors is now considered invasive. Suddenly, that attractive shrub or vine isn’t just decorating your landscape: it’s escaping into Florida’s natural areas.

If you have ever battled an invasive plant in your own yard, you already know why this matters.

I’ve had my share of invasive plants, sometimes unknowingly and, I’ll admit, sometimes because I was desperate for something, anything, to grow in a difficult spot. After repeated failures, wasted money and dwindling patience, the temptation of a vigorous, fast-growing plant can be hard to resist. Plants like air potato, golden bamboo and invasive Asian sword fern seem like the perfect solution, until they aren’t.

The problem goes far beyond creating a maintenance headache in your own landscape or becoming a nuisance for your neighbors. Invasive plants threaten Florida’s unique ecosystems by crowding out native species that provide food and shelter for wildlife. Left unchecked, they can completely alter natural habitats.

And invasive plants don’t spread only because we generously share cuttings with friends. Seeds and plant fragments are carried by birds, wind, water, insects and other wildlife. Before long, a plant that seemed perfectly behaved in one yard can establish itself in parks, preserves and forests miles away.

The photo above shows what can happen when invasive plants gain the upper hand. Native trees and shrubs become smothered beneath dense vines and aggressive foliage. Over time, these invaders can weaken and eventually kill the plants that make Florida’s natural landscapes so beautiful and diverse.

Fortunately, a few minutes spent reviewing the UF | IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plant Directory can save you years of frustration and help prevent accidental harm to Florida’s environment.

Connie Doyle writes The Good Earth, a gardening column inspired by a lifelong passion for plants, nature, and the peaceful rhythm of the garden. With more time in retirement, she has been inspired to take that passion to the next level — learning, growing, and sharing with others in our community by way of earning her Master Gardener Certification. Connie can be reached by email to mail@floridanewsline.com.

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August 18, 2026

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Vicky Oakes
St. Johns County Supervisor of Elections

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Vote-by-Mail

The deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed is August 6, 2026, by 5 PM. Visit **www.votesjc.gov** or call the Elections Office to request your ballot.

Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Elections Office by 7 PM on Election Day, August 18, to be counted. Vote-by-mail ballots can also be returned to Secure Ballot Intake Stations available at all early voting locations during the hours of voting.

Know Before You Go

Visit **www.votesjc.gov** to get **ELECTION READY:**

- View your sample ballot online
- Find your polling place
- Make your voting plan

Early Voting

August 8 – August 15, 2026

9 AM to 6 PM

Daily at all early voting locations

For a map and list of locations, visit our website at **www.votesjc.gov**

Election Day

August 18, 2026
Polls open 7 AM to 7 PM

To vote on Election Day, you must go to your assigned polling place between the hours of 7 AM and 7 PM on Tuesday, August 18, 2026.

Some precincts have changed since the last election. Verify your Election Day polling place at **www.votesjc.gov** before heading out to vote!