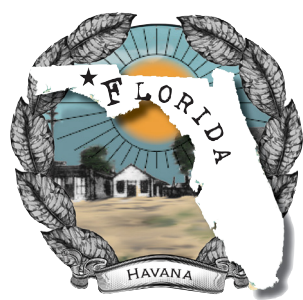


The Chattahoochee News-Herald



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Quincy YMCA set to open in old Massey Drug Store, Havana location in works

Fabrizio Gowdy
Gadsden County News Service

Highly anticipated new YMCA locations in Quincy and Havana appear to be making progress.

On March 20, the YMCA of the Georgia Sunbelt signed a lease for the old Massey Drugs property in Quincy, located at 105 West Jefferson Street. The family pharmacy closed in 2022 after more than 80 years in business.

According to County Commissioner Alonzetta Simpkins, the property will become a 24/7 gym, which she estimated could open as soon as

July. She described it as phase one, which will hopefully be followed in the next 2 to 3 years by a full YMCA facility like the ones Bainbridge and Moultrie—which have pools, athletic courts and classrooms.

Simpkins says this has been a priority of hers for a while, and clarified that the project has not relied on any public incentives from county or municipal government.

“This is an initiative we’ve been working on for a couple years,” said Simpkins.

The YMCA’s focus right is on the Quincy location, but securing a location and lease for the Havana

location is also in the works. Simpkins did not provide an estimate for when that location might open.

Rich Gallagher, YMCA of the Georgia Sunbelt President and CEO, declined to comment, wishing to wait until the project is closer to completion. He attributed his hesitance to be interviewed to the fact that the previous lease location fell through at the last minute.

Commissioner Ronterious Green, whose district the Quincy location is in, also did not respond to request for comment for this story.



Photo by Colleen Sperry
The former location of Massey Drugs on West Jefferson St. in Quincy will soon become a new YMCA.

Gadsden school board moves to sell properties

Fabrizio Gowdy
Gadsden County News Service

The Gadsden County School Board is looking to sell several surplus properties.

“Our goal here is to put these properties back on the tax roll — that’s what this is all about,” said Board Chair Leroy McMillan at the board’s March 24 meeting.

McMillan argued selling the properties would financially benefit the district by generating property tax revenue. Importantly, school property taxes have been exempted from the proposed property tax relief amendment recently approved by the legislature.

The board voted unanimously to hire a realtor to appraise three properties and list them



The originally Quincy High School, built in 1909, is one of the School District properties being sold.

Wikimedia Commons



Google Maps

Gadsden Elementary Magnet School (originally Quincy High School) is one of several properties the Gadsden County School Board is planning to sell.

for sale. That includes:

- A 15.9-acre parcel located at 500 W King St. in Quincy, valued at \$589,000 (originally Quincy High School and most recently Gadsden Elementary Magnet School).
- A 15-acre parcel near Mine Road in Midway worth \$90,000.
- A wooded 20-acre parcel on Telogia Creek Road near Greensboro worth \$44,000.

In addition to the three parcels on that evening’s agenda, the board appears to be eyeing the sale of several other properties,

spending a significant portion of the meeting discussing various surplus properties around the county.

Superintendent Addresses SB 1298 Feud With Union

Superintendent Elijah Key took time to address his recent dispute with the Gadsden County Classroom Teachers Association, which sharply criticized Key in a Facebook post for speaking at the state capitol in support of SB 1298. The bill would have raised the percentage of the bargaining unit required to vote in union

elections.

“I’m not against anybody wanting to unionize,” said Key.

Key accused the teachers association of being misleading, pushing back on the union’s claim that he was to blame for the number of effective and highly effective rated Gadsden County teachers decreasing. Key attributed that development to a 2023 state rule change requiring performance to be considered in teacher evaluations, which he was required to follow.

“To say that it was the superintendent that was the cause of that is just

misleading, and I hate when people do those kinds of things when I’m just following the law of the land,” said Key.

In other notes:

- Board Member Steve Scott, who has represented District 2 since 2014, announced he is not seeking a fourth term. Before his 12 years on the School Board, Scott spent 33 years working for Gadsden County Public Schools.
- Michael Brown announced that the Gadsden Soil and Water Conservation District is holding a speech contest with a \$300 prize, but

it has been postponed because just one student has signed up to compete. As chair of the Soil and Water District, he urged the board to help ensure more participants signed up, describing it as a great opportunity for all students.

- In a 3-2 vote, the board approved a contract extension up to 234 hours and \$29,250 with Sneads Consulting for financial services. Charlie Frost and Stacey Hannigan were opposed.

All board members were present. The next board meeting will be held April 28 at 6 p.m.

LOCAL

Community Calendar April

Gadsden County and Area Events (April 1-8)

- TDC General Meeting (Gadsden County): April 1, 4:30 p.m.
- Fifth Annual Fast and Furious Car, Truck and

- Bike Show (Havana): Last day to register for a free T-shirt is April 1.
- Small Cities CDBG Task Force Meeting (Midway): April 2, 5:14 p.m.
- Gadsden County

- Board of County Commissioners Regular Board Meeting: April 2, 6 p.m.
- City of Quincy Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt: Friday, April 3, 7 p.m. at the Quincy

- Recreation Department.
- 47th annual Lake Talquin Open Fishing Tournament: Saturday, April 4, at Ingram's Marina on Lake Talquin.
- Mitch Fatel at Burned Beard Brewing (Quincy): Saturday, April 4, 8 p.m.
- Gadsden County No Dirt Car and Bike Show (Easter Edition): Sunday, April 5, noon to 8 p.m. at Gadsden Square (Old IGA/1323 W. Crawford St., Quincy).

- Small Cities CDBG Task Force Meeting (Gadsden County): April 7, 5:30 p.m.
- CDBG First Public Hearing (Chattahoochee): April 7, 5:30 p.m.
- Soil Testing and Interpretation (UF/IFAS Extension): Tuesday, April 7, 10 a.m.
- Kitchen to Compost (UF/IFAS Leon County, nearby): Wednesday, April 8, 6 p.m.

- ### Recurring Local Events
- Bingo at Off the Rails (Havana): Wednesday afternoons at 6:30 p.m. (April 1 and April 8).
 - Havana Main Street Board Meeting: April 1 (usually first Wednesday of the month).
 - 49th Southern Watercolor Society Annual Juried Exhibition (Gadsden Arts Center and Museum, Quincy): Ongoing through April 25.

LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA
Case No. 202025CA000888AXXCX

MARGARET DELGADO,
Plaintiff,

vs.

ANNIE BELL LODMAN;
BARBARA LODMAN WOODSON;
and the unknown heirs,
 devisees, grantees, creditors, and all other parties claiming by, through, under, or against the grantees named in that certain deed dated August 18, 1954, recorded in Official Records Book 108, Page 32, of the Public Records of Gadsden County, Florida, including any such unknown parties who may be deceased; and all parties having or claiming to have any right, title, or interest in the property described herein,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION
(Constructive Service - Real Property)

TO:

THE UNKNOWN HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEEES, CREDITORS, AND ALL OTHER PERSONS CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST CLARA LODMAN (DECEASED); AND ALL UNKNOWN PARTIES CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, UNDER, OR AGAINST ANY OF THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS, WHETHER AS SPOUSES, HEIRS, DEVISEES, GRANTEEES, CREDITORS, OR OTHER CLAIMANTS; AND ANY AND ALL PERSONS CLAIMING ANY RIGHT, TITLE, OR INTEREST ADVERSE TO PLAINTIFF IN THE SUBJECT PROPERTY.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED that an action to quiet title to the real property described below has been filed against you in the Circuit Court of the Second Judicial Circuit, in and for

Gadsden County, Florida, Case No. 202025CA000888AXXCX. This action seeks to determine all claims to the subject property. The Complaint seeks a final judgment quieting title to the above-described property in favor of Plaintiff and determining that Defendants and all persons claiming by, through, under, or against them have no right, title, or interest therein.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the Southeast corner of the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 3 North, Range 4 West, and run 345 feet West; thence North 1005 feet for Point of Beginning; thence North 345 feet, more or less, to the North line of said Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter; thence West 315 feet; thence South 345 feet, more or less; thence East 315 feet to the Point of Beginning.

Gadsden County Parcel ID Numbers:
2-29-3N-4W-0000-00341-0000
2-29-3N-4W-0000-00341-0100

RESPONSE DEADLINE AND SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS

YOU ARE REQUIRED to serve a copy of your written defenses, if any, to the Complaint upon Plaintiff's attorney named below within twenty (20) days after the first publication of this Notice, and to file the original with the Clerk of this Court either before service on Plaintiff's attorney or immediately thereafter; otherwise, a default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY:

ANTHONY ROBINSON, ESQ.
Florida Bar No. 0122438
BICO Legal and Compliance Consulting, LLC
Attorney for Plaintiff
1001 Brickell Bay Drive, Suite 2700
Miami, Florida 33131
Telephone: 786-796-6708
Email: info@bicolegalcompliance.com

DEFAULT WARNING

If you fail to file written defenses within the time required by law, a default may be entered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint, which may result in the Court entering a Final Judgment quieting title to the subject property without further notice to you.

PUBLICATION NOTICE

This Notice of Action is issued pursuant to §§ 49.08 and 49.10, Florida Statutes, and applicable provisions of Chapter 50, Florida Statutes. This Notice shall be published once each week for four (4) consecutive weeks in the Havana Herald, a newspaper qualified under Chapter 50, Florida Statutes, and of general circulation in Gadsden County, Florida.

An Affidavit of Publication from the "Havana Herald" will be filed in this action as proof of publication in accordance with § 49.11, Florida Statutes.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) NOTICE

If you are a person with a disability who needs any accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding, you are entitled, at no cost to you, to the provision of certain assistance. At least 7 days before your scheduled court appearance, or immediately upon receiving this notification if the time before the scheduled appearance is less than 7 days, please contact:

ADA Coordinator Regina Shaw
ShawR@leoncountyfl.gov
301 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850.606.4400

If you are hearing or voice impaired, call 711. Some accommodations, such as sign language interpreters and real-time reporting, require additional time to schedule. Rule 2.540, Florida Rules of Judicial Administration, requires that you contact the ADA Coordinator at least seven days prior to your court appearance or visit to the courthouse, or immediately upon receiving notification if the time before the scheduled court appearance is less than 7 days. Please be prepared to explain the nature of your disability and suggest an auxiliary aid or service that will enable you to effectively participate in the court program or service.

LANGUAGE ACCESS NOTICE

If you do not understand this Notice of Action or require language assistance in order to participate in this proceeding, please contact the Clerk of Court or the ADA/Language Access Coordinator.

Si usted no entiende este Aviso de Acción o necesita asistencia en su idioma para participar en este proceso judicial, comuníquese con la Secretaría del Tribunal inmediatamente.

DATED this 3rd day of March, 2026.

(Seal)
NICHOLAS D. THOMAS
Clerk of the Circuit Court
Second Judicial Circuit
Gadsden County, Florida
By: Judy Waddell
Judy Waddell
Deputy Clerk
(Circuit Court Seal)
4t: 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23

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Puzzle Solutions

Don't Peek. Puzzles on page 5.

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SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION

M ₃	O ₁	L ₁	L ₁	I ₁	F ₄	Y ₄	RACK 1 = 65
S ₁	H ₄	O ₁	G ₂	U ₁	N ₁		RACK 2 = 18
C ₃	O ₁	N ₁	C ₅	E ₁	A ₁	L ₁	RACK 3 = 61
L ₁	E ₁	X ₈	I ₁	C ₃	O ₁	N ₁	RACK 4 = 82

PAR SCORE 155-165 TOTAL **226**

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Today Can Be Different

A fun way to hide God's Word in your heart

Sheryl Boldt

Do you have conflicting feelings about memorizing Bible verses?

If you're tempted to skip the rest of this post, I get it. We all know it's important to memorize Scripture, but who needs to be reminded of something we already feel guilty about?

Maybe you love God's Word, but you've lost your passion for hiding it in your heart. This admission can be scary, especially when you know you need all the help you can get just to function in your stressful situation.

To make matters worse, you've been short-cutting your quiet time with God because your to-do list is louder than your resolve to read your Bible and pray every day.

How can you reignite your desire to at least meditate on, if not memorize, God's Word throughout the week?

Here's one way that

may make hiding God's Word in your heart an enjoyable endeavor:

Recently, I shared how Scripture Memory Cards (SMCs) – Bible verses written on index cards – can boost our faith. What if you and a friend each select a verse, write it on an index card, and share it with each other? Talk about why you chose your verse (how it relates to your current situations, etc.) and what you love about it. Then, if you're comfortable, pray for yourselves and each other, using these verses. Challenge each other to meditate on and "pray your verses" throughout the week. Eventually, consider inviting others to join you.

Envision how this simple practice could transform your coffee break at work or the minutes before or after a church service, deepening your relationship with God and each other. You never know how each

person's verses might help someone in your group.

James 4:8 (ESV) promises, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you."

God loves you. He knows your busy schedule often pulls you away from spending time with Him. Instead of believing the lie that God is disappointed with you, listen to how He is welcoming you back and wants to reveal Himself to you once more.

So, here's my question: Which verse will you meditate on with a friend this week so you can fall in love with His Word all over again?

Sheryl H. Boldt is a faith columnist and the author of the blog www.TodayCanBeDifferent.net. You can reach her at SherylHBoldt@gmail.com.

NURSE JUDY'S NOOK

The hurrier I go the behinder I get

Judy Conlin

My grandmother used to say the title of this column whenever she felt rushed. We laughed and thought she was so funny. It wasn't until lately that I really understood what she was feeling. The last weeks have been like a treadmill I can't get off.

As soon as I knew I was having company for spring break, I went into high gear. I cleaned closets, dresser drawers, kitchen cupboards, and the pantry. I washed clothes and linen and towels so all would be ready. In addition, I hired my handyman to work on the lawn, the firepit, the pond and fountain and to plant flowers. I hired a cleaning woman to wash floors and windows and clean those places I have difficulty with. I hired a man to detail my car so it would be decent to pick up my guests at the airport. I had all the books and materials I use to sell my books taken out of my trunk to make room for their luggage.

I was busy from morning to night while they were here with meals,

outings and playing with my great-granddaughter while they were here. I loved every exhausting minute of it. Once they left I found out that the heavy cleaning should have waited until after the visit rather than before.

Next the St. Patrick's day decorations had to come down and the Easter decorations put up. Back and forth, up and down ladders. I was getting dizzy. Oh no, why did I have all those new plants put in? They all need constant watering. I have a watering schedule but that is just for my house plants in the kitchen, the porch and the sunroom. These guys outside are a much bigger project.

Of course, I didn't worry about bills while all this was going on, so they have all piled up on my desk and are waiting for attention, as are all the other small daily tasks I do regularly. I am scurrying around like mad hoping nothing will be delinquent.

Of course, I have two columns to write each week no matter what else is going on and now it is time for the monthly invoice to be turned in. The pressure is building as I think of all that needs done.

I have two scripts that need to be memorized as quickly as possible as our show is only weeks away. They've been on the back burner for too long already and I must start working on them.

I wanted to start planning for my BIG birthday in May, but our final show is on that very day so how am I going to work all this in? My grandmother was right. The hurrier I go the behinder I get. I want to complain to someone,

but the cats just won't listen. That leaves Nurse Judy, my alter ego who is never on my side. Still, I'm desperate, so I seek her out.

She is not pleased to be disturbed as she is pampering herself with a beauty treatment, but I prevail. It takes quite a while to get all my grievances out and I am quite out of breath when I finish.

With a scowl, she began, "Just who involved you in each of these projects?"

I think about this. "I guess I did," I say slowly.

"Then who can get you out of them?"

I think again. "I guess me," I say even more slowly.

"Then stop doing all those things," she says and stomps off.

I shout after her, "I can't do that. I love having company. I love to have a clean house, car, and yard. I love decorating for the holidays. I love my columns. I love being in the theater. I love my life."


"Then stop complaining," she says.

"I'm the one who should be complaining. You spend a lot of money on all these things. That money should have been better spent on buying me a new spring wardrobe. Now I won't be able to get everything I want."

My heart is filled with joy. For once I have outwitted her.


"You are so right," I tell her. "You won't be getting anything new for spring. I'm flat broke, " I do not mention the new duds I bought myself for when the company came. For once I may outshine her on Easter.

*More later,
Judy
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Saturday, April 11, 2026
8:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m.

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MEETING NOTICE

The next regular meeting of the Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners will be on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, starting at 6:00 p.m. The following items have been agendaed: **Awards, Presentations, and Appearances: Consent;** Ratification Memo, March 17, 2026, Regular BOCC Meeting, Approval of Resolution No. 2026-013 and the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) Local Housing Assistance Plan for fiscal year(s) 2026-2027, 2027-2028 and 2028-2029, Consideration of Dr. Charles Oliver appointment to the Gadsden County Planning Commission, **Items Pulled for Discussion. Citizens Requesting to be Heard on Non-Agenda Items (3-minute limit):** The Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners welcomes and encourages public participation at all Board meetings. Citizens can speak for up to three (3) minutes on non-agenda items. Public comments and participation are also encouraged for items on the agenda. Additionally, if you are unable to attend a meeting in person, comments from the Public can also be submitted via email to CitizensToBeHeard@gadsdencountyfl.gov by noon on the meeting date. Comments submitted after the deadline but prior to the meeting will be added to the official record, but the County cannot guarantee that Commissioners and staff will have adequate time to review them prior to the meeting. Citizens are further encouraged to participate on the County's website at www.gadsdencountyfl.gov. **Public Hearings.** Public Hearing: Approval of Resolution 2026-020 General and Debt Service Budget Amendments for FY2026 **General Business:** Request for Monetary Support for the Relay for Life of Gadsden – American Cancer Society, Approval of Change Order #3 and #4 for South Adams Street Sidewalk LAP Project (FPID 436992-1-58-01), Approval of Task Order for Sidewalk Design Along Fairbanks Ferry Rd, Approval of FY26 Small County Consolidated Waste Grant Amendment #1, Approval of Sheriff's Office-Training Funding Request Florida Law Enforcement and Tactical Operations Conference and Expo May 27-29, 2026/Jacksonville Florida, Approval of Revised DUI Vehicle Impoundment/Immobilization Program, Approval of Funding for Park Improvement Invoices, Approval to Issue the Notice of Intent to Award, the Notice of Award, and Approval to Negotiate a contract with the selected proposer of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) 26-03 Professional CMAR Services for the Chattahoochee Library, Approval to Issue the Notice of Intent to Award, the Notice of Award, and Approval to Negotiate a contract with the selected proposer of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) 26-05 Professional CMAR Services for the Havana Library, Approval to Issue the Notice of Intent to Award, the Notice of Award, and Approval to Negotiate a contract with the selected proposers of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) 26-04 Professional CMAR Services for the Havana Health Center, Approval of the Lease renewal Agreement with Great America Financial Services via Advanced Business Systems, Approval of Notice of Intent to Award, Notice of Award, Approval to Negotiate Contract - RFP 26-048 Professional Lobbying Services, Approval to apply for Boating Improvements with required match of \$8,500 for Pat Thomas Hawkins Landing, Approval to Bid RFP 26-10 Special Needs Shelter, Approval of RFP 26-11 Construction of Boys & Girls Club Facility-Quincy, Florida, Approval of funding for Community Events, Approval of Notice of Intent to Award, Notice of Award, Approval to Negotiate Contract - RFQ 26-07 Public Safety Complex, Approval of Contract to Certus Builders Inc in response to ITB 26-11 Bus Shelters, Approval to Terminate Gadsden County Senior Center Foundation Contract, Approval of different types of Senior Activities, Amendment to Procurement Policy – Clarification of Administrator Authority and Notification Requirements, Application Form, and Standard Use Agreement; Authorization to Adopt Implementing Ordinance, Approval of Task Order-Timber Run & Jamieson Road Paving Projects (ITB Support) **Clerk of Court:** Updates; **Interim County Attorney:** Updates; **Interim County Administrator:** Updates; **Discussion Items by Commissioners:** Updates. (This agenda and a listing of the Receipt/File items may be viewed in electronic format on the County's website at www.gadsdencountyfl.gov.)

If a person decides to appeal any decision by the Board of County Commissioners with respect to any matter considered at such public meeting, he/she will need a record of the proceedings and for such purpose, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes testimony and evidence to which the appeal is to be heard.
In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons needing special accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the Facilities Management Office, 9-B East Jefferson Street, Quincy, FL 32351, by written request at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Telephone: (850) 875-8665 or 850-363-1360.

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Spring mornings are a lot like Christmas. Each day we get up and go out into the yard, or walk along the creek or visit the horses in the pasture. And each day, each morning, we find something new the sun has brought us.

Pinfeather leaves of an unbelievable green now start showing on cottonwoods that have stood like stark ghostly frames all through the cold winter. Hopeful blades of grass peek through clumps of brown left over from last summer's verdant pasture. Everywhere we look there is something new and different.

A lot of this Christmas-in-spring is kept just among us, because we might be accused of being ... well ... poetic if we told people why we were really carrying that coffee cup out into the yard. So we say lame things like "I think I'll get some of that fresh air this morning." What we really mean, of course, is "I want to see if Richardson's bay mare has had that foal yet."

Some of us have worked very hard last fall and winter to prepare for this spring. By grafting. OK, we have a Granny Smith apple tree. Let's see if we can't get a branch of Rome Beauties or Jonagolds to grow on it, too. And we understand completely that where we live no olive tree can survive the winter. That isn't supposed to stop us from trying, is it?

Nature pitches us a boatload of challenges each day that we're alive. This plant needs more water than falls naturally here. That tree can't take the temperatures we get. This little tree needs soil with more organic matter in it.

And those challenges are the stuff winter dreams are made of. We do the best we can to cure the lack, the freeze, the drought, and then we wait for April. We wait impatiently until we can come out of the house some morning and check the grafts on the apple tree and see tiny green leaves coming on the grafted branch. We search the bare ground where we planted that new kind of seed that won't grow here - to see if it'll grow here.

It is a continuing feast of green, a triumph of anticipation. An April morning can make us want to sing.

Brought to you by your friends at your local animal shelter. Go find a brand-new best friend.



Growth Without Control: The Little-Known Laws That Could Reshape Gadsden County Without Public Input

By Patricia Smith

Imagine a 10,000-acre development proposed just outside your community in Gadsden County — thousands of homes, new roads carved through farmland, increased traffic on two-lane highways, and added pressure on emergency services.

Now imagine that project moving forward with limited notice, if any, few public hearings, and reduced input from the local officials whom residents elected to manage growth.

That scenario may sound unlikely. But under a series of recent policy changes advanced in Tallahassee, it is becoming increasingly possible.

Much of the public conversation has focused on high-profile housing measures aimed at addressing Florida's affordability challenges. Less attention has been paid to a quieter shift: policies that can limit how much influence local governments have over where and how large-scale development occurs.

Measures such as Senate Bill 354 and House Bill 299, along with other related proposals, are part of a broader effort to streamline development and increase housing supply across Florida. In practice, these bills can limit the authority counties have over zoning, infrastructure, and public hearings, especially in smaller, rural communities like Gadsden.

For residents, the implications are not always obvious. Growth does not just bring new homes. It brings new demands on roads, drainage systems, emergency response, schools, and utilities — systems that local governments remain responsible for maintaining.

This creates a structural imbalance — one that is easy to overlook but difficult to reverse. In Gadsden County, authority over development decisions may be shifting upward, while responsibility for infrastructure and public

safety remains local.

The result is a challenge that local officials across Florida are beginning to confront: How do you manage growth you no longer fully control?

Even when funding is available through disaster recovery programs, infrastructure grants, or state initiatives, those resources are often project-specific and temporary. They are not designed to support the long-term costs of maintaining rapidly expanding communities. Roads must be resurfaced. Stormwater systems must function during increasingly intense weather events. Emergency services must reach residents quickly, regardless of how fast a community grows.

These are not one-time expenses. They are ongoing obligations.

Gadsden County is not just any county. Its landscape is defined by large, contiguous tracts of agricultural land, a legacy that has shaped its economy, identity, and character for generations. That same land is now drawing attention for a different reason: scale. Large parcels make it possible to envision master-planned developments at a size rarely seen in smaller counties — projects that can function almost like self-contained cities.

Gadsden County has secured nearly \$17 million in state funding for a new Emergency Operations Center and Public Safety Complex to replace aging facilities, but construction has yet to begin even years after groundbreaking — underscoring both the complexity and urgency of upgrading vital infrastructure. The facility is designed to consolidate the sheriff's office, 911 communications, and emergency operations in one hurricane-safe location, addressing decades-old safety and operational challenges.

In Gadsden County, the contrast between privately driven development and essential public infrastructure is striking. Housing or

industrial projects can sometimes move from permit approval to fully operational in less than a year, driven by investor timelines and developer resources.

Meanwhile, critical county projects — like the new Public Safety Complex replacing a 70-year-old facility — take years to plan, fund, and construct, despite being vital for emergency response, 911 communications, and hurricane preparedness. This mismatch underscores a growing tension: Communities may see growth arrive faster than local governments can ensure the safety, infrastructure, and long-term resilience to support it.

Florida lawmakers are advancing proposals that could significantly reduce or eliminate certain property taxes over time if approved by voters in 2026. While the idea may sound appealing — especially to homeowners who have paid off their mortgages — property taxes remain one of the primary ways counties fund essential services, including roads, emergency response, public safety facilities, and infrastructure maintenance.

In smaller communities like Gadsden County, this funding structure plays an especially important role. Unlike larger urban areas, smaller counties often have fewer alternative revenue sources, making consistent, predictable funding critical to maintaining basic services.

While proposed tax changes are often framed as a way to improve affordability, the long-term implications may not be immediately visible. Significant reductions in property tax revenue could create funding gaps for essential services, forcing local governments to make difficult decisions about how to maintain roads, support emergency services, and invest in infrastructure.

If those revenues decline, counties may be pushed to seek alternative funding sources — often in ways that

reshape growth decisions. One of the most accessible options is to encourage large-scale development that can generate impact fees and permit revenue. In effect, local governments could find themselves supporting rapid growth not necessarily because it aligns with long-term planning goals, but because it becomes a means of sustaining essential services.

Even then, the financial return is not immediate. Many large developments receive tax incentives or abatements, meaning counties may take on the upfront costs of infrastructure — roads, utilities, and emergency services — while waiting years before seeing meaningful tax revenue. In some cases, if a project stalls or changes hands, the expected long-term revenue may never fully materialize.

This creates a potential mismatch: Communities invest in growth today, but the financial benefits may be delayed, reduced, or uncertain. In some cases, counties could be left maintaining expanded infrastructure without a stable funding source to support it.

Some residents also question why they pay property taxes for services they may not use directly, such as schools. It's a fair concern. But local tax systems are built on shared investments supporting education, infrastructure, and public safety in ways that benefit the entire community over time, from maintaining property values to reducing long-term public costs. In smaller counties, that shared structure is often what keeps essential services functioning.

Over time, sustained financial pressure could create broader structural challenges. If counties struggle to fund basic services, they may face increasing reliance on outside support or regional partnerships. In some cases, that could shift decision-making further away from local communities, raising questions about how growth,

Growth on page A4

At The Pump

Local, State, and National

National Average:

\$3.98 per gallon

State Average:

\$3.92 per gallon

Gadsden County Average:

\$3.90 per gallon

Jackson County Average:

\$3.72 per gallon

Leon County Average:

\$3.84 per gallon

Numbers based on AAA Gas Prices report, as of March 24, 2026

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COMICS AND PUZZLES

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“My teacher made me stay after class. How do I apply for overtime?”

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

KAWEA
CHIRB
PINTAC
NSYAWK

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“ ”

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app - Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

I thought I just tapped it. Can it be fixed? I'm afraid it's gonna cost a ton.

AFTER SEEING THE DAMAGE TO THE CAR, THERE WOULD BE A LOT TO ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Yesterdays' Jumbles: HOLLY DOILY AVIARY CAJOLE
Answer: Many small stores had opened in the community, which created a - "LIVELY-HOOD"

JUMBLE FOR KIDS

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME!
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

The letters of these crazy words are all mixed up. To play the game, put them back into the right order so that they make real words you can find in your dictionary. Write the letters of each real word under each crazy word, but only one letter to a square.

SEH
CTNE
RGWO
OKHO

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Let's get to work. We have liftoff!

WHAT STARTS TO WORK AFTER IT'S FIRED?
Color me

Now you're ready to solve today's Jumble For Kids. Study the picture for a hint. Play around with the letters in the circles. You'll find you can put them in order so that they make your funny answer.

Print the answer here: A

Jumbles: SHE CENT GROW HOOK
Answer: What starts to work after it's fired? - A ROCKET

HE NEEDS TO CUT DOWN ON THE CAFFEINE.

BOING! BOING!

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WHY SO GLUM, BROOMIE? I WENT FOR A BRISK WALK THIS MORNING!

AHEAD OF ME WAS AN OLD COUPLE IN THEIR 80'S USING WALKERS...

WHAT'S SO DEPRESSING ABOUT THAT? THEY WERE PULLING AWAY!

RUSSELL MYERS 2-22

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Miz Gertie! Aren't you and Mr. Uncle Walt going to decorate for Christmas?

Are they doing that again this year?

You're kidding!

Yes, I am! kidding or decorating?

SCANZLER 12-16

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MIDGE, REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE YOUNG? WED WORK ALL DAY IN THE YARD THEN GO OUT AT NIGHT?

AND WE CAN STILL DO IT!

AS LONG AS OUR CHIROPRACTOR IS ON SPEED DIAL.

SUMNER 3-13

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SCRABBLE GRAMS

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PAR SCORE 155-165
BEST SCORE 226

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition. SOLUTION TOMORROW

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

12-11

EDITORS: Here is the solution to today's SCRABBLEGRAM. You can print the solution on the same day elsewhere in your paper, or beneath the following day's puzzle. If you choose to run the solution elsewhere in the same day's newspaper, insert the appropriate type (below) over the SOLUTION TOMORROW line in the puzzle.

			7	3	6	8	
	9	5					
	3				7		2
1				5			4
	8					3	
2			9	6			8
4	8					3	
					2	8	
			2	1	3		

Puzzle solutions on page A2

- Across**
- 1 Change back to zero
 - 6 Aid and ___
 - 10 Elton John's «Bennie and the ___»
 - 14 Playful furry swimmer
 - 15 Source of torment
 - 16 She loves, in Latin
 - 17 Fondly remembered moment
 - 20 Flesh and blood
 - 21 The whole nine yards
 - 22 Spirited person
 - 23 «Nothing Compares 2 U» singer Sinéad
 - 25 Mongrel
 - 26 Summer in Saint-Étienne
 - 27 Sense of self
 - 28 More miffed
 - 30 Netflix's «The Crown,» for one
 - 34 Noshes
 - 38 «I'm well ___»
 - 39 North Pole worker

- 40 Egyptian peninsula
- 41 Internet phenomenon
- 42 Pretend to be asleep
- 44 Sci-fi robot
- 46 Reuben bread
- 47 Aliens, briefly
- 50 Winter hrs. in Boston
- 51 Quiet place to get a loan
- 55 Arouses, as curiosity
- 57 Otherwise
- 58 Volcano opening?
- 59 Rice-filled appetizers with red shells, and a hint to the words that bookend 17-, 30-, and 42-Across
- 62 Hodgepodge
- 63 PlayStation maker
- 64 Unsophisticated
- 65 Rx orders
- 66 Whole bunch
- 67 Agrees (with)
- 3 Courtroom fig. with a keyboard
- 4 Always, poetically
- 5 Musical instrument named for its shape
- 6 Really hate
- 7 Legendary folk singer Joan
- 8 Wrap up
- 9 Deep-fried Japanese dish
- 10 Jazz sessions
- 11 Overact
- 12 Medium's medium
- 13 Fashion sense
- 18 Didn't ask for a card in blackjack
- 19 Limerick's land
- 24 Came close to
- 25 Warm and cozy
- 28 Waldorf ___
- 29 «Stranger Things» actor Paul
- 30 Los Angeles footballer
- 31 Need to pay
- 32 Sweet tuber
- 33 Kindled again
- 35 FAQ entry
- 36 Greek consonant

- that resembles a «T»
- 37 ___ card: smartphone insert
- 40 Protein-rich legumes
- 42 Have in one's hands
- 43 Light refractor
- 45 Snorkeling spot
- 47 English derby town
- 48 Sports championship
- 49 Underwater ink squighter
- 51 Fallingwater
- architect Frank ___ Wright
- 52 Steer clear of
- 53 «Superman» actor Christopher
- 54 Positive responses
- 56 Sci-fi saucers
- 57 Mediterranean volcano
- 60 «What's up, ___?»
- 61 ___ chi: martial art

Thanks to Emmanuelle Gardiner Pawleys Island, South Carolina

UH-OH, I FEEL PRETTY GOOD.

pluggermail@aol.com

If you're a pluggie and don't wake up with a new ache, pain, weird bruise and/or blotch, one will be assigned to you shortly.

Easter egg coloring tips

Many families will soon be partaking in a springtime tradition that has spanned generations: coloring Easter eggs.

While eggs once symbolized fertility and rebirth in Pagan celebrations, they have since come to be associated with Christianity. History.com says eggs historically were not allowed to be eaten during the 40 days of Lent. Subsequently, they were painted and decorated to mark the end of penance and enjoyed as a treat on Easter Sunday. Britannica also notes that the egg has come to represent the tomb Christ escaped, much like a chick breaks out of its shell.

Although it may seem like coloring Easter eggs already is a relatively

simple project, there are steps that can simplify the process and make eggs more unique.

- Remove eggs from the refrigerator. Prior to dyeing eggs, bring them to room temperature by removing them from the fridge about 20 minutes before its time to start boiling. This minimizes the chances that the egg shells will crack.

- Use a pin. Poking a tiny hole into the large ends of the eggs before boiling can release the air pressure inside and prevent the eggs from bursting during boiling.

- Keep vinegar on hand. Vinegar is the key to vibrant eggs because it acts as a mordant, which helps the dye bond to the shell. Without vinegar, the egg

colors will be pale.

- Use a whisk. Instead of potentially breaking eggs when dropping them into dye with fingers or spoons, place the egg inside the wires of a kitchen whisk.

- Use protective gear. Children tend to get messy when coloring eggs. Make sure they are dressed in clothes that can get splattered. Also, wearing kitchen dishwashing gloves or latex gloves will keep hands from being stained by dye. Cover tables or counters with a water-resistant sheet or tablecloth to further prevent staining.

- Experiment with different dyeing methods. Wrap rubber bands or string around the eggs before dipping to create geometric shapes and



white lines. For a soft, marbled look, mix dye in a tray with shaving cream and roll the egg through. For a speckled appearance, place eggs in a container with dry rice and drops of dye and then shake.

- Create a drying station. Letting eggs dry on a

paper towel or newspaper can contribute to smears and white spots. Instead, poke flat-head pins into a foam board. Rest the eggs on the pins while they dry.

- Create some sheen. When the eggs are completely dry, rubbing them with a drop of

vegetable oil on a cloth will shine them up nicely.

Eggs are a traditional component of Easter festivities and decor. A few easy tweaks can make the process go more smoothly and result in vivid and creative eggs.

Hop on these tips for a great Easter egg hunt

Egg hunts are a traditional component of many people's Easter celebrations. Children often delight in searching for eggs around the house or in the backyard. Egg hunts are so popular that they have become a component of many town-sponsored festivities. In fact, the White House hosts its annual Easter Egg Roll each year.

There are many ways to make Easter egg hunts more enjoyable and productive for participants of all ages. Try these «eggcellent» ideas.

- Designate a clear hunting area. Young

children can grow frustrated searching for eggs in large areas. Set parameters for the search area that are manageable depending on the ages of the children participating. If you'll be in a large yard or field, tape off the search area perimeter.

- Vary the prizes. Candy, candy and more candy seems to be the name of the game on Easter. But too many sweets can lead to stomach aches for young Easter celebrants. Instead, mix and match the prizes contained in the eggs. Candy can be in some, money in others, and perhaps small toys in a few eggs. Another clever idea is to mix the egg

hunt with charades. Put charade prompts in some eggs so that kids have to act out what they read inside for added fun.

- Special privilege egg. Hide one egg that gives the finder the opportunity for a special honor. It may include getting the first slice of the holiday ham or being able to choose a movie that the entire family watches together after dinner.

- Label eggs for equity. When there are children across a wide range of ages, label the eggs with the children's names or utilize a color-coded system to ensure that everyone has an equal shot at finding eggs.



- Keep a master list. It can be hard to remember where each egg is hidden, so keep a running list of where they are or take photos with a phone of the hiding spots. This way you're not left to discover

a chocolate-filled egg teeming with ants come summertime.

- Make custom baskets. Children will need something to carry their eggs. Prior to the egg hunt, let them decorate

bags or baskets with Easter trinkets for custom creations.

Easter egg hunts are a time-honored tradition. The opportunities for fun are endless when families plan accordingly.



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Hosted by
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Wednesdays
**Fun and Prizes
starting at 6:30**

Prime Rib
**Thursday
5pm**



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Growth
from page B2

infrastructure, and public safety are managed in the future.

This situation highlights the broader challenge local governments face in managing growth: Even with tools like development agreements, infrastructure requirements, and design standards, counties are often responsible for maintaining roads, water systems, and emergency services while having limited authority to guide large-scale, fast-tracked development. The speed at which private development can move underscores the importance of aligning responsibility, resources, and authority to protect residents and ensure sustainable growth.

Supporters of recent housing policies argue that this kind of development is necessary to meet demand and improve affordability. But scale introduces its own set of questions:

- Can existing road networks handle the traffic?
- Are water and sewer systems equipped for that level of density?
- Can emergency services maintain response times across a rapidly expanding footprint?
- And perhaps most importantly: Who ensures that growth aligns with the long-term capacity of the community?

Growth decisions are not just about where

people live — they are also about what land becomes. In Gadsden County, agricultural land is more than open space. It represents economic activity, local heritage, and a finite resource. Once converted to large-scale development, that land rarely returns to production.

At a time when land use, food systems, and environmental resilience are increasingly part of national conversations, the long-term implications of converting large agricultural areas deserve careful consideration.

Despite these shifts, local governments are not without tools. Counties can still:

- Negotiate development agreements that phase construction alongside infrastructure.
- Require developers to contribute to roads, utilities, and stormwater systems.
- Apply objective design and planning standards.
- Plan for long-term service delivery and capital improvements.

These tools matter. In many cases, they may determine whether growth remains manageable or becomes a strain on public systems. But they also require time, expertise, and leverage — resources that can be limited in smaller counties facing large-scale proposals.

At its core, the issue is not whether growth should happen. Growth is coming. The question is whether authority, responsibility, and

capacity remain aligned. When decisions about development are made at one level of government but the long-term costs are borne at another, gaps can emerge — gaps that affect infrastructure, budgets, and, ultimately, public safety.

For residents of Gadsden County, these changes may not always be visible at first. They are embedded in legislation, planning processes, and decisions made beyond the local level. But their effects will be felt locally — in traffic patterns, response times, flooding risks, and the changing landscape of the community itself.

Understanding how these policies work is the first step. As development proposals move forward, residents can stay informed about local planning decisions, engage with county officials on infrastructure and growth management, and ask how new developments will be supported over time.

For policymakers, the challenge is just as clear: ensuring that efforts to expand housing supply are matched by the infrastructure, funding, and local input needed to support it. Because in the end, growth is not just about how quickly communities expand. It is about whether they remain safe, sustainable, and equipped for the future — and whether the people who live there still have a voice in shaping what comes next.