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Casey Kimbrell

Wakulla Giving Hands founder believes in helping others

By LINDA ANN McDONALD  
Correspondent

Public service is built on the foundation of selflessness, dedication, and a deep sense of responsibility toward the well-being of others. It's about making a positive impact on the lives of individuals and the broader community.

Casey Kimbrell, President and Founder of Wakulla Giving Hands, has impacted over 300,000 individuals and organized events for over 6,000 people to date with numbers only climbing higher and higher every day.

Casey knows firsthand the importance of public service.

"There was a time when I did not have Christmas for my children. Back in 2020, I felt I was the world's worst mom; it was a hard year. Next thing I knew, Sheriff Miller opened



PHOTO BY LINDA ANN McDONALD

Casey Kimbrell



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A Farewell to Our Community

After much thought and with heavy hearts, we have made the decision to close the doors of our family business. This has been more than just a place of work for us—it has been a labor of love, a dream built with dedication, and a part of our family's story.

Over the years, we've had the honor of serving this community, not just through our products and services, but through the relationships we've built. We've shared in your milestones, laughed with you, and grown alongside you. For that, we are forever grateful.

We want to thank each and every one of you who walked through our doors, supported us, and believed in what we offered. Your loyalty and friendship have been the heart of our business, and your encouragement has carried us through good times and challenges alike.

Though we are saying goodbye to this chapter, we take with us the countless memories and connections that will always remain. Our community has given us far more than we could ever give back, and we leave with nothing but gratitude.

From our family to yours—thank you for being part of our journey.

- Cabs and Counters





The Wakulla Neighbor is a free monthly newspaper delivered to every home in Wakulla County. We also publish The Wakulla Sun, a weekly newspaper. Copies of the newspaper are available at boxes and dealers around the county for \$1. Subscriptions are \$40 per year. Call 850-962-8019 to get started.



DISCOVERY  
FLORIDA STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
DAYS

## FSU Health Expo: Bridging Community, Health & Research

Saturday, October 18, 2025

**Time:** 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** Wakulla Community Center  
Crawfordville Room & Gymnasium  
318 Shadeville Rd., Crawfordville, FL 32327

FSU Health is excited to host a health expo aimed at providing valuable wellness resources to the local community. Visit with exhibitors, learn from presenters, and take advantage of free health screenings!

discoverydays.fsu.edu

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## Summit to End Domestic & Sexual Violence in Wakulla County

Saturday, September 20, 2025 from 1-3 P.M.  
64 Ochlockonee Street, Crawfordville, FL 32327

Florida Department of Health: Wakulla County  
State Attorney's Office-Victim Advocate Service  
The Refuge House  
Florida Council Against Sexual Violence  
Wakulla County Sheriff's Department Victim Advocates

For more information, contact: [crawfordvillewomansclub@gmail.com](mailto:crawfordvillewomansclub@gmail.com)

## VA S.A.V.E. TRAINING

What is VA S.A.V.E. Training?

VA S.A.V.E. Training is a free, brief course that will help you act with care and compassion if you come across a Veteran who is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide. The acronym S.A.V.E. helps you remember the important steps involved in suicide prevention.

- S - Know the SIGNS that indicate a Veteran might be thinking about suicide.
- A - ASK the most important question of all - "Are you thinking of killing yourself?"
- V - VALIDATE the Veteran's experience.
- E - ENCOURAGE treatment and EXPEDITE getting help.

Wakulla County Public Library's Veterans Meetup and American Legion Post 114 are partnering with US Department of Veterans Affairs to offer VA S.A.V.E. Training, a free, lifesaving program that will help you act with care and compassion if you come across a Veteran who is in crisis or having thoughts of suicide.

Thursday, September 18, 2025  
Wakulla County Public Library  
Main Meeting Room  
11:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Open to all - Due to the nature of the training, we are requesting no children attend.

POC: Roxann - [rdressel@mywakulla.com](mailto:rdressel@mywakulla.com)



HIS-  
TORY

- September 1925 -  
- Sept. 11, Miss California, Fay Lanphier, was crowned the winner of the 5th Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey.  
- Sept. 16, B.B. King (Riley B. King), American blues musician, born near Berclair, Mississippi.  
-Sept. 30, Jewelry valued at \$750,000 was stolen from the six-room Plaza Hotel suite of Woolworth heiress Mrs. Jessie Woolworth Donahue, daughter of F.W. Woolworth. They were stolen in broad daylight from her bedroom while she was in the bathtub a few feet away.  
- The price of a 24-ounce loaf of bread, which had been 10 cents, was set to go up to 12 cents.  
- A bottle of Coca-Cola cost a nickel. This famously fixed price lasted for over 70 years, from 1886 until the late 1950s.

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- I originally heard this from Donna Martin

SnArkyism!

How great would it be if a liar's pants  
really did catch on fire?

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Bla..Bla...  
BLAH...Blah!

This guy  
born in Buffalo, New York and as a child, he  
entertained patients in his father's waiting room,  
and began acting on radio at nine. As a young radio  
actor he was known for his impersonations. He attended  
Bennett High School and was valedictorian of the Class of  
1946. He spoke 12 languages - including Korean, Chinese  
and Russian - and served as a counterintelligence officer in the  
Army during the Korean War! The guy was a legitimate war  
hero and genius.  
After his service in the Army he attended Yale School of Drama,  
he appeared on television shows such as Gunsmoke, Cannon,  
Ironside, Route 66, Hawaii Five-O, The Rockford Files, Full  
House, The Guiding Light and 12 O'Clock High. He had a recur-  
ring role in All in the Family as Mr. Sanders, he also appeared  
in two early episodes of M\*A\*S\*H ...just to name a few. He was  
in more than 100 plays and more than 150 TV shows.  
He also was a guest conductor at the Buffalo Philharmonic  
Orchestra.  
This actors most notable role was in  
The Dukes of Hazzard as Boss Hogg.  
Sorrell Booke  
(January 4, 1930 – February 11,  
1994)



A grasshopper photographed by Neil Hostnick.

SPORTS-

What Nascar driver was also a country  
music singer &  
Grammy Award Winner?

Marty Robbins

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MISS INFORMATION FUN PAGE

By Lynda Kinszy

Content contributor William Diekman

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green onions w/stems, mushrooms, swiss  
cheese,  
sliced cherry tomatos, slivered almonds, bacon strips.  
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taste.  
Create your salad as usual and pour the warm sauce  
over the salad in the amount of your liking.  
Crumble the bacon over the top.  
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**Trivia**  
**WAKULLA**  
#1.Where does the Florida Trail cross a river  
in Wakulla?  
#2. Sopchoppy was first chartered as a city in what year?  
#3. What school was created in 1930 and served as the county's  
black high school until 1968  
#4. In 1998 The Governor of Florida wanted to tap into what spring in  
Wakulla and provide water to other areas of Florida?  
#5. What time period did E.C. Allen developed Paradise Village,  
consisting of 114 mobile homes.  
#6. What is Spring Creek named after?  
#1. In St. Marks at the St. Marks River #2. In 1905  
#3. Shadeville High School #4. Spring Creek  
#5.1960's #6. The series of springs that dis-  
charge into the Gulf.

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-ANTIQUEING  
-COLLECTING  
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can be quite valuable as well as  
all the furnishings.  
Collecting the proper scale for  
the dollhouse is paramount for  
most serious collectors.  
Standard sized scales for mod-  
ern dollhouses include 1:6, 1:12,  
1:16, 1:24, and 1:48, the antique  
houses are sometimes a custom  
size. Some scales are popular for  
collectors of artisan miniatures,  
while others are more useful for  
children's play. The scale size for  
Barbie is 1:6, while 1:12 is the  
scale for other toys. Before in-  
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scales available and determine  
which is best for your collection  
and skills to add to it yourself.

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MORE BlAH BLaH  
Do you remember what A.M and P.M stands  
for pertaing to time.  
AM:AM (ante meridiem)  
Meaning: Before midday.  
Time Period: From 12 midnight to 11:59  
a.m.  
PM (post meridiem)  
Meaning: After midday.  
Time Period: From 12 noon to 11:59 p.m.

**SAFFRON** definition: an orange-yellow  
flavoring, food coloring, and dye made from  
the dried stigmas of a crocus flower.  
USES: It is commonly used in dishes such  
as rice, paella, risotto, and various seafood  
preparations, as well as in desserts like ice  
cream, cakes, and sweetened beverages.  
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# Real Life thoughts and feelings



By GREG GAST

We all experience thoughts and feelings. They are interchangeable, but it is essential to understand the differences between them. Thoughts are the power in decision-making. It influences behavior, attitudes, even your personality. Feelings, on the other hand, can both hinder or empower us. Feelings shape perception to understanding of self-awareness. The relationship of thoughts and feelings is very complex, making up the human experience.

Thoughts and feelings are tied together. They relate to each other in a way that affects how we act. Thoughts are creative and full of energy; they help us deal with our feelings and find answers to the hard questions of life. Feelings are the things we sense inside our minds. But not all things we sense, or feel are truly real feelings!

Feelings are things we sense inside us. They are the response to what happens around us. When something happens, our brain gives a reaction. This reaction is called an emotion. Feelings like happiness, sadness, or anger rise from these emotions. These feelings can change in a flash or last a long time. Feelings play an important part in how we see and react to the world around us.

Thoughts can be defined as the mental processes and perceptions that occur in our minds.

Thoughts have a significant impact on our emotions and overall mental well-being. Thoughts have a direct influence on our actions and behavior, shaping how we respond to situations and interact with others.

There is a link between thoughts and feelings. How we think changes how we feel inside, and these changes can change how we behave toward the people around us. Feelings are not commands. Next time you feel sad or angry, check your thoughts first! It just might be bad thinking making you unhappy, not what's happening around you. Thoughts and feelings are not the same. Thoughts are like ideas or things we think about in our minds. They are cognitive processes such as words, images, or even memories. Feelings are conscious experiences that we have, such as being happy, sad, angry, or frustrated.

Understanding the difference between thoughts and feelings is important for managing our mental well-being. By recognizing what is a thought and what is a feeling, we can navigate our emotions effectively and develop empathy toward others.

Understanding the differences between thoughts and feelings is essential for our well-being. Thoughts are ideas that we have in our mind, while feelings are emotions that we experience in our body. By recognizing and managing both thoughts and feelings, we can better navigate our daily lives and take control of how they impact us. Just remember, thoughts and feelings may be connected, but knowing their distinction will empower us to live a happier and more balanced life.

Greg Gast is Real Life Counseling, 3295 Crawfordville Hwy., suite #4, Crawfordville FL 32327.

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# Casey Kimbrell

From Front Page

his truck and there were tons of toys for my kids. I still don't know who made the call to the sheriff, but whoever it was it made the biggest blessing in the whole world. After receiving this blessing, at that moment, there was a pull, I had to help get people together to help other people."

It was at 27 Leslie Circle – Casey's own front yard – that Wakulla Giving Hands was started in 2021.

"I got up with a church for produce and it was biweekly back then, I did this for 8 months, a month after that, I reached out to Timothy Mosley of The Less Fortunate Still Matters Foundation. He asked me if I wanted a Farm Share and the very next week, I was in Quincy at 3 a.m. for my load to bring back to Wakulla. I did this every week until August of 2024. Since then, I found partners to help supply all of the food,

especially produce and bakery items; as for the meats and shelf-stable, ready-to-eat foods, we average paying \$6 dollars for 30 pounds of food to donate to our community."

Next, Casey's home-based food drives expanded to her mother's, Dorothy Cardin's, yard in Woodville.

Wakulla Giving Hands Inc. was born in November 2023, just in time for the holidays. In May 2024, the building located at 2569 Coastal Highway was donated to the charity by the Byrd family.

With the continual growth of the non-profit, Kimbrell is amazed. "Where I am at now is where I planned to be in five years," Casey says. "My Board keeps saying, slow down, but I can't help it, it's just happening and growing, and volunteers are stepping up to the call, it is just a huge blessing for our community."

With any organization promoting food drives for their

community, the need for refrigerators and freezers is the heart of their mission and food safety is mandatory.

Wakulla Giving Hands is facing an obstacle.

"We lost two freezers and the stand-up cooler that went out, that is the one for the senior citizen's eggs, milk and butter cooler. So we doubled up providing food for the seniors this week and we are trying anything to make it work for the seniors, such as turning down the air conditioning in the building and taking food home to our own personal fridges.

"We have had refrigerators donated to us from individuals and we bought another one with raised money and it is under warranty still, but we are still in need of refrigerators and freezers.

"We are not going anywhere anytime soon, but we need help," Casey says. "We can't do repairs and maintain what we have without help. Even if a maintenance or appliance business

wants to help, we take partnership as part of our mission. Any business that wants to contribute services, not only maintenance, but their skill set to help keep us moving would be wonderful."

"Wakulla has really shown their support and showed out for Wakulla Giving Hands. Seventy-five percent of the sponsors and partners we got in the last two months are from Wakulla."

Casey Kimbrell simply enjoys helping people.

"This may sound crazy, but I like helping people in distress especially, I like the boots on the ground, I like it when somebody is going to receive our help. I especially like when the whole community comes together during hurricanes.

"I hooked up with Wakulla's Emergency

Operations Center as a (Point of Distribution) Drop. And for hurricane relief, we will get help to them no matter what."

Constantly in search of methods to expand her mission, Casey is focused on reaching out to other nonprofits to ask for their best practices and policies.

"I got to get policy on paper, I got to figure out how to expand to help more people," she says.

Volunteers are always welcome and community service hours are awarded for their time.

"We do time and a half everyday and we have a good time with lots of gratitude at Wakulla Giving Hands, the peace we receive from helping is the most rewarding thing and knowing that we touched someone's life that would have gone without is the great-

est paycheck anyone could ever receive. Giving parents relief from the holiday stress and providing toys to children that would have gone without is even greater," she says.

"I feel a sense of purpose and joy that I found my place in the world. I am surely blessed and it's amazing how much Wakulla Giving Hands has grown thanks to Wakulla. I don't care if this thing goes worldwide! I know people are thinking this girl has too much dream; but I am going to do what I can. I want to thank everyone and thank my Board; without them, I would be over my head."

Casey Kimbrell can be reached at 850-661-0605 or visit the website at [www.wakullagivinghands.org](http://www.wakullagivinghands.org).

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Wakulla County Tax Collector

## MARGARITAVILLE BENEFITS THE SINGING FOR CHANGE CHARITY



The Margaritaville specialty license plate in Florida benefits the Singing for Change charity. This charity, founded by Jimmy Buffett, provides grants to Florida nonprofits that help communities recover from natural disasters. Specifically, the funds are directed towards organizations assisting with hurricane and other disaster recovery and rebuilding efforts.



A Wakulla Wild Animal Rescue  
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## First Baptist Church

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## tobe7encouraged faith column

# A Woman Set Apart

Greetings Wakulla Citizens! Thank you for your valuable time in allowing us to share what God has on His heart through our ministry. Notice the title, “A Woman Set Apart”. This is the premise to today’s reading, being set apart. The title started with me discovering a title for my Substack site, this is where writers go and express themselves through their writing. I went through a lot of titles and this one, the full title is “From The Pages of a Woman Set Apart”, really resonated in my heart! Because I am so set apart in all that I do! Because He has and is changing me, everyday that He gives me His Word becomes more of me and my carnal nature HATES IT!! The struggle is very real!! This is why I so resonate with Paul, he was so honest with his struggles! Let us dive in!

His Word is how we are changed and encouraged, so let us start there in His Word concerning being set apart. In **1 Peter 2:9-10** “**But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD’S OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.** You see, we are Chosen by our Father God! I remember when I was invited to audition to be on a cutting team, for hair, for an American company auditioning in Toronto Canada many years ago. This was to be on their Masters Team, it was one of the best cutting teams in North America. Not to brag but to make a huge point! All expenses paid for this week, yes 7 days of very difficult first time experiences for me! BTW, I did not take God with me, another one of my diversions! I remember telling Kaycee, the Global Director this was what I have worked so hard to achieve! I wanted that position more than anything in this world! I flew home and about 6 weeks later I do believe...I was accepted!! I achieved my goal of becoming what we call a “Platform Artist”! Then I kept climbing up the ladder to find TOTAL UNHAPPINESS/EMPTINESS!!

I did nothing to have my Father God choose me!! I did not audition, no school or college of any kind! No special status or class! No model figure or surgical enhancements of beauty to be chosen by Him! HE CHOSE ME! Point made!

I am now teamed up with the One Who created me! Became Flesh for me! Became my example on how to live on this planet and treat people! Suffered a HORRIFIC DEATH for me! Became the First Born of the Dead for me! Was Resurrected for me! Is seated at the right Hand of God for me! Jesus spoke the Words, “IT IS FINISHED” FOR ME!!

You see, God’s election is by grace. In **Romans 11:5-6** **Scripture says “In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.”** This is Scripture telling us how we, who were Gentiles, have been grafted into Salvation due to Israel’s transgression, in verse :**11** of **Romans** chapter **11**. As for being separated Scripture says in **2 Peter 1:10-11** “**Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**” You may be asking yourselves what are “these things we are to practice so as to not stumble”? They are as follows, in **2 Peter 1: 5-8** **Scripture says “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

I have discovered wisdom is so precious and important! My personality is literal and direct, not afraid of confrontation at all. This can create a lot of hot water! When I have discovered what God says about something, it is set in stone with me! I search His Word on His ways for change in me, like pride. He hates it, I lived it. Now I hate it, it tries to slip in, everyday!!

As I chat with clients, family or people in general...I listen, listeningly! Most are Christians. You see, what I say or partake in is very serious. God says we

speak life or death with our tongues. **Proverbs 18:21 says “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”** To be a child of God in the world today takes a lot of Scripture and prayer and fasting to stay humble. So many Christians are partaking in the New Age occult! Telling me that they are being prescribed to walk in dirt to be healed by the earth!! Participating in halloween/trunk or treat in churches!!!! Asking me about my birthday and saying “wow, we have the same horoscope!” I immediately corrected that! I just had a precious person I have known for years come in and share with me about a medical trip she and her husband went on. They use stem cells in their therapy at this treatment center. One of the treatments has the patient lay down and they put stem cells up their nose and use a “rake” to rub along their scalp to increase the blood to absorb the stem cells!!! This treatment facility intends to do this, a simple scalp rub increases blood flow! How much more pagan can that be!!! Thank God for His wisdom! I concentrated on Him constantly, asking Him in my spirit what to do!! I heard “leave it alone”, and I dropped it! I found out a few days later her husband fell and broke his hip!! Seed sown!! You can not play around with black magic and not be accountable for it! A friend of mine does halloween with her grandson, I shared again I do not partake and she should not either, she said “well, the churches do”!!

This is why I am “A Woman Set Apart”! It is vital we stay Scriptured up! It is through His Word we attain faith to be able to not stumble and love those that DESPERATELY NEED JESUS AS WE DID and DO!! **2 Peter 1: 5-8** **Scripture says “Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

We are His laborers on this earth! To encourage each other to Christ, not through our lips but in what we do, where we go and spend our time, our generosity, how

we treat our spouses and family. We show our love to God ONLY THROUGH OUR OBEDIENCE TO HIS WAYS!!

My friends, I am reminded DAILY of the darkness that is here! Only in and through obedience to The One and ONLY God do we have ALL AUTHORITY OVER THE DARKNESS!! MORE IMPORTANTLY!, OUR NAMES ARE RECORDED IN HEAVEN! In **Revelation 12:11** **Scripture says, “And we overcame satan because of the blood of The Lamb and the word of our testimony and we do not love our lives even to death.”**

If you are not Born Again and want to be, confess this outloud “ **Dear Jesus, I am a sinner I know. Your Word says that I can call upon Your name and be saved, Romans 10:13 says for “EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”** I call on Your name now today to be saved Jesus! Take my life today and use it for Your purposes, for Your Kingdom! I confess today that by grace I am saved through faith knowing that You went to the Cross and willingly gave Your Life for my life, paid the debt I can not pay and by Your blood shed, Your death, burial and Resurrection on the 3rd day I am now saved, this is a gift from God I know! Thank You Jesus!!!

To complete your Salvation you must be water baptized, this is your burial of your dead self and your new life with power, the Holy Spirit. **Acts 2:38 “And Peter said to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:21-22 “ And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you, not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22) who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.” Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the ages.”**

God bless you and yours,  
Deb Quackenbush  
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# On the Horizon

## The calendar of events for September

- Monday, Sept. 1**

  - Labor Day – Banks, government offices and many businesses will be closed for the holiday.
  - The Wakulla Respite Program is available for anyone with memory impairment at no cost from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Lake Ellen Baptist Church every Monday.
  - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. every Monday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
  - Gentle Yoga and Stretching Class, every Monday, 11 a.m. Wakulla Community Center. Bring a mat. Come early to sign in. Chair Yoga participants welcome. \$2 per class.
  - Line Dancing Class is held at Wakulla Dance Academy every Monday from 7 to 9 p.m. \$5 per person. Wear dance shoes or tennis shoes
- Tuesday, Sept. 2**

  - County Historic Preservation Committee meets at 4 p.m. in the county commission conference room.
  - Sopchoppy community dinner is held every week at the Towles House at 6:30 p.m.
  - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Wednesday, Sept. 3**

  - Wakulla County Commission meets at 5 p.m. in the commission boardroom. At 6 p.m., the county commission will hold its first public hearing on the proposed millage and budget.
  - Muffins with Moms Prenatal Support Group meets at 9 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 10 a.m. at the Wakulla County Health Department. Contact Liz Neighbors at 850-888-6078 or elizabeth.neighbors@flhealth.gov for more information.
  - A line dance class is held at 1 p.m. at the Wakulla Senior Center every Wednesday.
  - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Thursday, Sept. 4**

  - Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group holds a public meeting at 9 a.m. at the community center.
  - The Rotary Club of Wakulla County meets at the TSC Wakulla Center at 8:30 a.m. on Thursdays.
  - Coastal Optimist Club meets at noon at Myra Jean's on the first and third Thursdays.
  - The VFW Auxiliary Bingo Night will be held at 7 p.m. at 475 Arran Road in Crawfordville, every Thurs-

- day. There are concessions and raffles.

  - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 6:30 p.m. every Thursday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Friday, Sept. 5**

  - The Wakulla War Eagles host the Chiles Timberwolves at J.D. Jones Stadium at 7 p.m.
  - Alcoholics Anonymous meets at noon and 8 p.m. every Friday at 54 Ochlockonee St.
- Saturday, Sept. 6**

  - The Panacea Community Garden Farmer's Market will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in Panacea.
- Monday, Sept. 8**

  - School board meets at the district office at 5:45 p.m. The final hearing on the proposed tax levy and budget will be held at 6 p.m.
  - Planning commission meets at 6 p.m. in the commission chambers.
  - The Sopchoppy City Commission meets at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.
- Thursday, Sept. 10**

  - St. Marks City Commission meets at the St. Marks Yacht Club at 6 p.m.
  - Wakulla Garden Club holds a Welcome Back meeting at the public library from noon to 2 p.m. Sopchoppy musician and filmmaker Sammy Tedder will speak on how native Americans used plants in their lives.
  - The Wakulla County Cancer Support Group meets in the Education Center of the Crawfordville United Methodist Church at 7 p.m. This group meeting is for men and women, regardless of the type of cancer. Spouses, caregivers, and friends are welcome. For more information, call 850-926-6050.
- Friday, Sept. 12**

  - The Wakulla War Eagles have a bye week.
- Saturday, Sept. 13**

  - Sopchoppy Depot Days & Classic Car Parade will be held at Depot Park in Sopchoppy from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
  - The Wakulla Care-giver Support Group will meet at the Wakulla County Public Library at 10 a.m. every second Saturday of the month.
- Monday, Sept. 15**

  - County commission meets at 5 p.m. in the commission boardroom. A workshop on legislative priorities will be held beginning at 4 p.m.
- Friday, Sept. 19**

  - VFW Post 4538 and Auxiliary hold monthly meetings on the second Monday of the month with fellowship at 6 p.m., meetings at 7 p.m.
  - The Wakulla Care-giver Support Group meets at Lake Ellen Baptist Church at 9:30 a.m. every second Monday of the month.
  - Crawfordville Woman's Club monthly meeting is the second Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 64 Ochlockonee St., in Crawfordville. Call (850) 566-5727 for more information.
- Saturday, Sept. 20**

  - KWCB's Coastal Cleanup from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. based out of Woolley Park in Panacea with other site locations throughout the county.
  - Boots & Bingo, a fundraiser for Rotary Club of Wakulla, will be held at 3Y Ranch from 5 to 11 p.m.
- Monday, Sept. 22**

  - Autumn begins.
- Friday, Sept. 26**

  - The Wakulla War Eagles travel to Live Oak to take on the Suwannee Bulldogs at 7 p.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 27**

  - Blue Crab Festival begins with a parade on Highway 98 in Panacea at 10 a.m., and Woolley Park opens with vendors and activities at 11 a.m.



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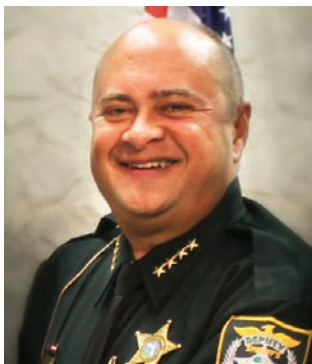


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# WCSO Senior Watch is a new program



By **JARED MILLER**  
Wakulla Sheriff

I would like to highlight a new program my office recently launched—the Senior Watch Program. The Wakulla County Sheriff’s Office is proud to offer this community initiative dedicated to promoting the safety, well-being, and independence of our senior residents. This free

program goes beyond simply checking in; it is about building meaningful connections, ensuring our seniors feel supported, and putting them in touch with the services and resources they need to continue living safely in their homes.

Many of our senior citizens live alone or face medical and mobility challenges. Some may have no nearby family members, while others may require occasional assistance with daily living tasks. The Senior Watch Program is designed to meet those needs through regular wellness checks, emergency preparedness support, and by serving as a direct link be-

tween our seniors and local service providers. In some cases, our involvement has been as simple as helping replace batteries in smoke detectors to ensure fire safety. In others, it has meant connecting a resident with mobility challenges to resources that provided a walker, dramatically improving their quality of life. Every action, big or small, makes a difference in the lives of those we serve.

We instituted this program because Wakulla County’s senior population continues to grow, and with it, the need for a stronger safety net. By reducing isolation, ensuring rapid emergency response,

and maintaining ongoing personal contact, we can provide peace of mind not only to seniors themselves, but also to the families who care about them. The Senior Watch Program is part of our continued commitment to public safety, compassion, and service for residents of every age.

To be eligible, participants must be residents of Wakulla County, age 60 or older, and living alone or with limited support. We especially encourage enrollment from individuals at higher risk due to medical conditions, mobility limitations, or other personal challenges.

Once enrolled, members of our Community

& Youth Relations Service team will conduct regular phone calls or home visits as needed. We will securely keep essential medical and emergency contact information on file to assist first responders should a crisis arise. But our work does not stop there—our Deputies and staff are dedicated to identifying needs and working with community partners to meet them, whether that involves securing medical equipment, providing home safety tips, or connecting seniors with social services that can improve their quality of life.

Enrollment is simple and can be completed by seniors, family members, or caregiv-

ers. For more information or to sign up, please contact:

Lt. Tom Mallon – Community & Youth Relations (850) 745-7122 [tmallon@wcsos.org](mailto:tmallon@wcsos.org)

-or- Chase Savary – Community Outreach Coordinator (850) 745-7269 or email [bsavary@wcsos.org](mailto:bsavary@wcsos.org)

“Our seniors are the foundation of this community. The Senior Watch Program is one way we can give back—by making sure they feel safe, supported, and never forgotten.”

*Jared Miller is Wakulla County Sheriff.*

## When buying a home



By **BRIAN ENGLISH**

When people talk about the American Dream and what it means to them, buying a house is often near the top of the list. However, the care and responsibilities of owning a home can sometimes be overlooked: You’re not only buying the house but also committing to a new roof every couple of decades, keeping the electrical and plumbing systems in good repair, and replacing the water heater. You may need to take care of landscaping or lawn maintenance, as well. It can quickly become a considerable to-do list! And, this list only becomes more complicated when

you’re thinking about a second home.

But before we get ahead of ourselves, here are a few things to think about:

### THE MONEY

Whether you’re financially ready or just starting out, most questions about home ownership come down to money. Have you saved enough for a down payment? Can your budget accommodate a monthly mortgage? Is your income seasonal or steady? How’s your credit history? These questions all relate to your ability to “thread” that financial needle and make the purchase happen.

- Did you know that 74% of all buyers financed their home purchases in 2024? This is a decline from 80% in the previous year.

- First-time buyers were more likely to secure financing, with 91% doing so compared to 69% of repeat buyers. A record-high 26 % of homebuyers paid in

cash in 2024.

- Among recent buyers, 49% used their savings to fund their home purchases, down from 54% in 2024. For first-time buyers, savings were the most common source at 69%. In contrast, 25% used a gift or loan from a relative or friend for their down payment. Interestingly, 52% of first-time buyers opted for a conventional loan whereas 29% chose an Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loan, and 9% used a Veteran Affairs (VA) loan.

- Buyers continue to view purchasing a home as a wise financial decision, with 79% believing it to be a good investment, and 39% of those believing it was better than other investments.

### THE TIME

People rent for many reasons. Some may not have the money to buy a home, while others might view home ownership as a hassle. The responsibilities of home ownership are consider-

able, after all, regardless of location. Ultimately, it’s a personal question of, “How much time and energy do I want to spend?”

- Did you know that the median age of first-time homebuyers increased to 38 years old, up from 35 in the previous year? Meanwhile, the typical age of repeat buyers rose to 61 years young, up from 58.

- Among recent buyers, 62% were married couples, 20% were single females, 8% were single males, and 6% were unmarried couples.

- Notably, 73% of recent buyers who did not have children under 18 in their homes represent the highest percentage recorded.

- Additionally, 17% of homebuyers purchased multigenerational homes for reasons such as cost savings (36%), caring for aging parents (2%), accommodating children or relatives over 18 returning home (21%), and housing children over 18 who never left (20%).

- Among recent buyers, 16% were veterans and 2% were active-duty service members.

- The primary motivation for purchasing a home was the desire for ownership, cited by 22 % overall, but rising to 64 % among first-time buyers.

### THE RESEARCH

Some of the information a homebuyer may want to gather can be categorized as “money considerations.” You’ll

want to ask yourself: Are you pre-qualified or pre-approved by a lender?

Remember, pre-qualification doesn’t require as much information and is only based on estimates, while pre-approval is based on more detailed income verification. This may be important as it gives you a measure of what you are able to buy.

When applying for a loan, be certain to understand your options. For example, some may find down payment assistance programs and grants for households with low- to moderate-income attractive.

- Did you know that 88 % of home buyers used a real estate agent or broker?

- Meanwhile, 5 % of buyers bought directly from a builder or their agent, and another 5 % purchased straight from the previous owner.

- The primary reasons home buyers used an agent or broker were to find the right home (49 %), and to negotiate the sale terms (14 %).

### THE SEARCH

The actual house-hunting can begin once the research is out of the way. While this may be the most fun part of the process for many, it can be both exhilarating and exhausting! Since this is such a big commitment, it will help if you clearly understand what you need from your house. For example, are you bringing family members, or will there need to be room for family members to come? How big is the yard, and what do you want to do with it?

- Did you know buyers spent a median of 10 weeks searching for a home in 2024, typically viewing seven homes, some exclusively online.

- Every home buyer utilized the Internet in their search, finding the most valuable information to be photos (41%), detailed property information (39%), and floor plans (31%).

- Additionally, 21% of buyers contacted a real estate agent as their initial move.

- Real estate agents played a pivotal role, with 86% of all buyers using their services, making it the most utilized source of information.

Buying a home may be the largest purchase of your life. I’m not a real estate expert, but I can speak to how a home fits into your overall personal finances. I encourage you to work closely with qualified professionals who can guide you through the process as you prepare to make one of the biggest purchases of your life.

1. National Association of Realtors, June 23, 2025.

**Brian can be reached at (850) 926-7487.**

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