



District title hopefuls Nease, St. Augustine rumble in Week 7

SPORTS, 1B



THE ST. AUGUSTINE RECORD

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2021

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Judge orders Texas to suspend new abortion law

Paul J. Weber
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN, Texas – A federal judge ordered Texas to suspend the most restrictive abortion law in the U.S., calling it an “offensive deprivation” of a constitutional right by banning most abortions in the nation’s second-most pop-

ulous state since September.

The order Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman is the first legal blow to the Texas law known as Senate Bill 8, which until now had withstood a wave of early challenges. In the weeks since the restrictions took effect, Texas abortion providers say the impact has been “exactly what we feared.”

But abortion services in Texas might not instantly resume even with the law on hold because doctors still fear they could be sued without a more permanent legal decision. Texas officials swiftly told the court of their intention to seek a reversal from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which previously allowed the restrictions to take effect.

Planned Parenthood said it was hopeful the order would allow clinics to resume abortion services as soon as possible.

In a 113-page opinion, Pitman took Texas to task over the law, saying Republican lawmakers had “contrived an unprecedented and transparent

See **ABORTION**, Page 6A

A decade in the works



Supporters of the tag! Children’s Museum participate in a groundbreaking ceremony at the property, located near the city’s Shipyards district, on Thursday. PROVIDED BY BONNIE HAYFLICK

St. Augustine finally breaks ground on tag! museum

Colleen Michele Jones
St. Augustine Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

After several false starts over more than a decade, organizers behind the tag! Children’s Museum announced Thursday they are officially breaking ground on the project planned for a 4-acre parcel near St. Augustine’s Shipyards.

A children’s museum for the city has been in the works since at least 2010, but the venture has been marred by delays in fundraising, as well as changes in leadership and property sites over the years.

Thursday, museum administrators,

donors and community leaders gathered to mark the beginning of the construction of Phase I, which will include indoor and outdoor spaces and is expected to open by winter 2022, according to tag! Executive Director, Kim MacEwan.

Many of the facility’s galleries and amenities are named after benefactors such as the Lastinger Big Backyard, the Florida Blue Healthy Gardens, The Corrin Family Tree Story Garden and The PLAYERS Championship STEM programming.

The “Discovery” center, as all of Phase I is called, carries the namesake of the Newman Family Foundation led by St. Johns County residents Chuck

and Diane Newman.

The Newmans recently provided a large monetary gift which allowed the museum to reignite momentum and get the project back on track, Janice Dusseau Jones, the museum’s board of directors chair, told The Record.

Jones said that while the museum’s nonprofit foundation was still \$2 million shy of its \$7 million goal, construction will begin now even as the fundraising campaign moves toward closing the gap.

Chuck Newman said he believed investing in a strong cultural resource in St. Augustine would pay off.

See **MUSEUM**, Page 4A

COMING SUNDAY

Hurricane Matthew 5 years later

We look at how St. Johns County has changed since the Category 5 hurricane ripped through the area.



10 things you might know about Ripley’s Believe It or Not!

Colleen Michele Jones
St. Augustine Record
USA TODAY NETWORK

“The strange, the bizarre, the unexpected. ...”

Those were the words that opened every episode of the “Ripley’s Believe It or Not!” television series which premiered on NBC in 1949, founded by American entrepreneur Robert Ripley.

The phenomenon — introducing viewers to things as equally grotesque as they were wondrous — stuck, and the Ripley brand has continued to evolve into a global enterprise more than 70 years later.

The first Ripley’s Believe It of Not! museum was established in St. Augustine shortly after Ripley’s death in 1949, and opened in 1950. It continues to welcomes guests to this day.

The castle

The castle itself, a former hotel located at 19 San Marco Ave., was the first museum Ripley opened to showcase some of the amazing artifacts he had collected in his extensive travels around the world. It served as the exterior for many segments of the TV series, including the opening credits.

See **RIPLEY’S**, Page 4A



Steve Chapman's
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Pfizer eyes youth: Seeks approval for reduced dose of COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. **5A**

Calendar of events

Top 5 things to do in St. Augustine this week. **Compass, 3C**

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Florida Lottery

Results are for tickets sold only in Florida

FLORIDA LOTTO

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6.....8-25-31-37-50-53

DOUBLE PLAY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6.....2-8-29-31-36-43
To see payouts on games above, visit flalottery.com.

POWERBALL

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6..1-17-52-58-64 PB: 1 (x10)
5+PB: \$20 million (0). Next jackpot \$31M
5 of 5: \$1 million (0).
4+PB: \$50,000 (1). 4 of 5: \$100 (9).
3+PB: \$100 (44). 3 of 5: \$7 (1,098).

MEGA MILLIONS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5.....7-11-18-30-36 MB: 4 (x3)
5+MB: \$45 million (0). Next jackpot \$60M.
5 of 5: \$1 million (1). 4+MB: \$10,000 (0).
4 of 5: \$500 (48). 3+MB: \$200 (87).
3 of 5: \$10 (1,813). 2+MB: \$10 (1,557)
1+MB: \$4 (9,912). MB: \$2 (21,429).

JACKPOT TRIPLE PLAY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5.....13-29-31-38-39-45
6 of 6: \$2 million (0). 5 of 6: \$1,490 (23).
4 of 6: \$62 (1,343). 3 of 6: \$2 (23,337).
Combo10+: \$10,000 (0). Combo9: \$500 (12).
Combo8: \$50 (92). Combo7: \$20 (605).
Combo6: \$10 (2,983) Combo5: \$5 (11,441).
Combo4: Free ticket (31,044).

FANTASY 5

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6.....3-10-11-13-17
5 of 5: \$94,004 (2). 4 of 5: \$71 (426).
3 of 5: \$7.50 (11,220) 2 of 5: Free ticket (92,903).

PICK 2, 3, 4, 5

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, MIDDAY
8-0.....4-7-1.....8-8-7-5.....1-4-9-9-0 Fireball: 4

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, EVENING
8-9.....8-5-1.....5-7-4-6.....6-0-3-7-1 Fireball: 9

CASH4LIFE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6.....2-10-14-28-31 CB: 3
No winners of \$1,000 a day for life.
One or more winners of \$1,000 a week for life
4 of 5+CB: \$2,500 (2). 4 of 5: \$500 (6).
3 of 5+CB: \$100 (91). 3 of 5: \$25 (253)
2 of 5+CB: \$10 (1,420). 2 of 5: \$4 (3,946).

TAKE THE RECORD ALONG: LONG ISLAND



Three best buddies, who graduated high school together 53 years ago, met in Greenport on the North Fork of Long Island, NY, for its annual Maritime Festival. Pictured, from left, are John Solomita, Lake Jovita, Florida, Bob Zimardo, Greenport, NY, and Ed Albanesi, St. Augustine. ED ALBANESI/PROVIDED

TAKE THE RECORD ALONG: NASHVILLE



Ronald Rich and Susan Steward took The Record to Nashville to visit junior high school friends. RONALD RICH/PROVIDED

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The exterior to St. Augustine's Ripley's Believe It or Not! was featured on the television series of the same name. RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT!/PROVIDED

Ripley's

Continued from Page 1A

Massacre Anchor

Outside, on the museum grounds, there are several interesting historical artifacts, including what's known as the "Massacre Anchor," pulled from the Matanzas Bay where in 1565 hundreds were slaughtered by the Spanish for their beliefs.

Not your average treehouse

On the property is also a section of a tree, that when cut down in 1938 was 1900 years old, 267 feet high and 14 feet in diameter. This section was carved out into a small apartment, in which someone actually lived for a while. Visitors can check out the log house without admission to the museum.

Michelangelo's 'David'

An exact replica of Michelangelo's "David," an 18-foot tall hand-carved marble statue weighing 20,000 pounds, was imported from Italy to the St. Augustine grounds of Ripley's in 2007. Word has it, the statue caused so much of a show-stopping reaction that museum operators soon surrounded it with a privacy bush.

The world's tallest man once lived in town

Just one of the items in Ripley's "Odditorium" is a wax replica of the world's tallest man, Robert Wadlow, who lived in St. Augustine at one time. Born with a pituitary gland disfunction which caused his giantism, Wadlow was forced to wear leg braces and use a cane by 20.

He weighed over 450 pounds when he died.

Mummified cat is known around the world

Ripley's is also home to an ancient Egyptian mummified cat which has drawn the attention (and some otherworldly "readings") from ghost hunters across the world.

A close-up look at a shrunken head

Evidence of shrunken heads date back to prehistoric times and, yes, Ripley's also has one on display. Shrunken heads, also known to natives as tsantsas, are a traditional ritual rooted in superstition and mystery. The gruesome specters were used as trophies, threats to enemies or in religious ceremonies.

Space Oddities

Ripley's new Space Oddities gallery includes a giant replica of the International Space Station made entirely from matchsticks, crayons carved into characters from the Star Wars movies and interactive displays that show how the human body changes during space travel.

A haunted castle?

The site of Ripley's itself, the former Castle Warden which was turned into a hotel, is rumored to be haunted. Employees of Ripley's have reported sightings of two women who apparently died in a fire at the castle in April 1944.

Ripley's museum in St. Augustine also serves as the stepping-off point to the Red Train Tour which gives visitors a 90-minute overview of the history and sites of the oldest city in the U.S.

Florida sees little change in number of new jobless claims filed

Jim Turner
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE — As the hotel industry pushes for more federal assistance to cover the costs of workers, Florida continues to see little change in the number of new unemployment claims being filed.

The U.S. Department of Labor on Thursday estimated 6,509 first-time unemployment claims were filed in Florida during the week that ended Oct. 2, down from a revised count of 7,713 for the week ending Sept. 25.

The agency initially had estimated Florida's count for the week ending Sept. 25 at 6,502 claims.

Since mid-May, the state has averaged 7,935 new claims a week. Over the past four weeks, the weekly average stands at 7,825. Those numbers are dramatically lower than the number of claims that poured into the state Department of Economic Opportunity after the COVID-19 pandemic began battering the economy in March 2020 and April 2020.

Nationally, 326,000 initial unemployment claims were filed last week, down 38,000 from the prior week, according to the Department of Labor. Over the past four weeks, the national weekly average stands at 344,000.

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Secretary Dane Eagle told Enterprise Florida board members last week that efforts to get Floridians back into the workforce should soon start to pay off.

In June, the state withdrew early from two federal assistance programs — the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation and Mixed Earners Unemployment Compensation programs — and re-implemented a "work search" requirement for people seeking unemployment benefits.

Other federal unemployment programs that were part of pandemic recovery efforts ended Sept. 6.

On Tuesday, Lisa Lombardo, chief people and culture officer for Ocala-based HDG Hotels, joined U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, D-Fla., in calling for more federal assistance for the hotel industry. Along with facing problems in hiring workers, the industry has suffered from a drop in business travelers during the pandemic. Hoteliers had hoped business travelers would help take the place of leisure travelers after the new school year began.

"The labor crunch has made affording talent a goal," Lombardo said in a conference call. "It might seem as though hotels are packed in some markets. And it's hard to find rooms in some markets. But we know of friends in the industry who are closing down entire floors of their hotels because there aren't team members to clean the entire hotel, to prepare that hotel for what we hope will be the return of business."

The American Hotel & Lodging Association projected Florida hotels will lose \$5.34 billion in business travel revenue this year, with it down 60.7 percent from the pre-pandemic year of 2019.

Crist, who is running for governor in 2022, was promoting his "Save Hotel Jobs Act" legislation that would provide grants to hotel owners and operators to cover employee payroll and benefits.

Business owners in a wide range of industries have complained about shortages of workers — shortages that also are plaguing Florida's prison system. The state Department of Corrections continued recruitment efforts this week by saying it was providing \$1,000 bonuses for newly certified correctional officers at many prisons across the state.

Florida had a 5.0 percent unemployment rate in August, representing 529,000 people qualifying as being unemployed from a workforce of 10.54 million.

September unemployment figures will be released Oct. 22.



An artist's rendering of what the tag! Children's Museum in St. Augustine will look like once completed. PROVIDED

Museum

Continued from Page 1A

"tag! will become a critical part of arts and sciences enrichment and allow children, students and adults to recapture the pure joy of discovery. It also makes good business sense. tag! will become another destination drawing more people into Northeast Florida and boosting our economy," Newman said.

The museum is anticipated to have an estimated \$2 million annual impact on the economy and around 300,000 area students, 76 school districts and 85,000 patrons could be expected to visit the center each year, according to museum organizers.

Phase 2 will add more buildings to the complex with additional indoor exhibits, learning labs and outdoor learning opportunities. MacEwan said she did not know when that phase of construction would begin.

The idea for a large-scale children's museum was first introduced by a group of five local moms, all of whom still serve on the advisory board.

But changes in location, feasibility studies, permitting and fundraising all have delayed the start of the project.

"These are the things that take time and money, but we have been plugging away all along," Jones told The Record.

Jones said it is not unusual for a cultural center like this one to take 10 to 15 years to come to fruition.

"And this is one passionate group [of organizers]," Jones added.

Just some of the museum's corporate partners and stakeholders include Dr. Jimmy and Karen Glenos; the Platt Family; Danielle and Gene Fraser; The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida; and Bozard Ford Lincoln.

The project has also received the ongoing support of the St. Johns County School District and community and youth organizations such as the West Augustine Community Redevelopment Agency.

As plans have moved slowly behind the scenes, leaders like MacEwan have worked to get the tag! name out in the community through offerings such as children's camps and STEAM programming.

Obituaries

Jeffery Guy Crisp



Jeffery Guy Crisp passed away September 22 2021 at Doctor's Hospital in Coral Gables, FL from complications due to Covid 19. He was born July 4, 1977 in Catosa County, Georgia. Jeff graduated from St. Augustine High School where is played football. His chosen profession was long distance truck driving.

He is survived by his wife, Tanya; children, Savannah, Teddi, Daisey and Jeff, Jr.; sister, Anna Crisp; brothers, Troy and Jackson Crisp.

He will be greatly missed and always in our thoughts. He touched so many lives within the short time we were blessed to know him and love him. Rest peacefully and out of pain. You are our Angel and guidance from above until we meet again.



A Life Remembered