



BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | C5
Rick Murgittroyd is a published author whose first novel was on the USA Today bestseller list.

6 a.m. 73°
9 a.m. 78°
12 p.m. 87°
3 p.m. 86°
6 p.m. 82°
9 p.m. 77°

AVANI MAHARAJ ON NATURE | C1
The Ocala Recreation and Parks department hosted a community cleanup Saturday.



IN SPORTS | B1

Blowout loss leaves Lawrence and the Jaguars questioning themselves. Fire everybody? Probably not, but Jacksonville should be worried amid slow 0-3 start.



IN LIFESTYLE | D1

Bring a friend to McGrady's Pub at Sawgrass Grove to enjoy a meal and a live musical performance from Nick Hildyard from 3 to 5 p.m.

McGrady's offers delicious food and spirits as Hildyard plays a variety of genres including pop, rock, classic rock and contemporary with focus on classic rock and alternative from the '70s to the '90s.

IN WORLD NEWS | A5

WHO IS HEZBOLLAH — THE GROUP THAT IS BATTLING ISRAEL IN LEBANON?

Israel and the terrorist group Hezbollah are engaged in a ferocious confrontation on Israel's northern border that threatens to turn into a war as the group's leader threatens that it has new weapons and capabilities.

IN POLITICAL NEWS

SEE SUMTER'S SAMPLE BALLOT AHEAD OF THE GENERAL ELECTION

Today's edition of the Daily Sun includes voting information and a sample ballot for Sumter County residents. **F13**



ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Taylor Strickland

Rock 'n' roll may be king in The Villages, but local venues are bringing in more country artists to meet the demand for toe-tappin' entertainment. The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center just added Randy Travis and Joe Nichols to the Season 9 concert lineup.

Please See **COUNTRY, A7**

By LEAH SCHWARTING | Daily Sun Specialty Editor

Florida is bracing for its second hurricane of the season.

Hurricane and storm-surge watches were in effect Tuesday for much of Florida's Gulf Coast as Tropical Storm Helene approached the state. The storm is expected to strengthen into a Category 3 hurricane before making landfall in the Big Bend region Thursday night, bringing wind and rain to The Villages that morning.

"This is going to be a pretty significant storm," said Lt. John Longacre, The Villages Public Safety Department's emergency resource specialist. "The wind field, they said, is going to be extremely large, so the chance of us getting strong tropical force winds is really likely."

On Tuesday, the National Hurricane Center gave the system a "near 100%" chance

Please See **HELENE, A6**

KEY SUMTER BUDGET ITEMS

\$390.6
MILLION

Sumter County's total budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year. The budget includes two special revenue funds to support the county's two fire departments — The Villages Public Safety Department and Sumter County Fire & EMS. Commissioners approved new fire assessment fees for each department.

\$4.89
PER \$1,000

County commissioners approved the lowest property tax rate in the county's history — \$4.89 per \$1,000 of assessed value — thanks to development spurred by The Villages. A resident with a home valued at \$300,000, with a \$50,000 homestead exemption, would pay \$1,222.50 in property taxes.

Sumter Commissioners Approve Final Budget, Fire Funding Methods

By KEITH PEARLMAN | Daily Sun Managing Editor

Sumter County residents will see another historically low property tax rate but will see increases to assessments to fund the county's two fire departments.

Commissioners approved a final budget and property tax rate by a 4-1 vote Tuesday following a second public hearing. Commissioner Oren

Miller, who lost the Republican primary to Don Wiley in August, voted against each resolution.

Development spurred by The Villages helped fuel a property tax rate of \$4.89 per \$1,000 of assessed value, the lowest tax rate in the county's

Please See **BUDGET, A8**

INSIDE TODAY'S DAILY SUN

TEST YOUR NEWS IQ

A LONG AWAITED REUNION, A STATUE OF "THE MAN IN BLACK" AND NEW AI INTEGRATION

1. A boy abducted from California more than 70 years ago was recently found by his niece. What clue put her on the path to finding him? **Page A27**

- a) Facebook search c) DNA test results
b) Police update d) Classified posting



2. A whale-watching naturalist caught a photograph of a seal who accidentally ended up in the mouth of a humpback whale. **Page A29**

3. A Johnny Cash statue was unveiled Tuesday at the U.S. Capitol. What state sent the statue of Cash to the Capitol? **Page A26**

- a) Kansas
b) Kentucky
c) Arkansas
d) Tennessee



4. There are many myths surrounding alcohol. Which of the following alcohol facts is true? **Page A32**

- a) Red wine is healthy
b) Coffee sobers you up
c) Alcohol helps sleep
d) None of the above

5. Apple is starting to test AI on its new phones. What is the name of Apple's virtual assistant? **Page A34**

- a) Bixby
b) Siri
c) Clippy
d) Cortana



Make it a Great Day!

Weather	C2
Recreation Listings	C8-10
Recipes	D1
Comics	D6
Puzzles	D7-8
Horoscopes	D9
TV Tonight	D10

BY THE NUMBERS

Countries with the largest projected centenarian populations, 2054

Japan	402K
U.S.	513K
China	767K
India	402K
Thailand	326K

By 2054, the global centenarian population is projected to grow by nearly 4 million. Currently the world is home to 722,000 people ages 100 and over, with the U.S. having the second-largest population in the world, with 108,000.

COUNTRY

Continued from A1

“We typically host around five to six country concerts each year,” said Sierra Weiss, booking and contract manager for The Sharon.

Significant Productions, the theater management company that oversees The Sharon and The Studio Theatre Tierra Del Sol, just announced that Randy Travis will perform at The Sharon on Jan. 28. The seven-time Grammy award-winning star is known for massive country hits such as “Forever and Ever Amen,” “Diggin’ Up Bones” and “Deeper Than the Holler.”

Travis had a near fatal stroke in 2013, but continues to make improvements to his speaking, walking and singing through physical therapy, according to his website. He will grace the stage alongside his original band and guest vocalist James Dupre.

SigPro also announced that country artist Joe Nichols will make a stop at The Sharon at 7 p.m. Nov. 17. Nichols has six No. 1 hits and eight Top 10 singles to his credit.

“You may know him from a variety of hits, but his most popular is ‘Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off,’” Weiss said.

Nichols earned multiple RIAA platinum and gold certifications for that song and others such as “Gimme That Girl” and “Sunny and 75.” He also is a three-time Grammy nominee and the winner of the Academy of Country Music’s Top New Male Vocalist award, the CMT Breakthrough Video of the Year award and the Horizon Award from the Country Music Association.

Country music was one of 2023’s fastest growing genres in the U.S., according to industry analytics platform Luminate, with country consistently ranking either third or fourth among current genre giants like world music and Latin.



Submitted photo

Country music star Joe Nichols is set to perform in The Villages at 7 p.m. Nov. 17 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

On-demand audio streams alone exceeded 20 billion, a 23.7 percent increase over the prior year.

“As always, we try to bring in more of what people like,” Weiss said. “The more people who come out to the country concerts, the more there will be.”

Terri Clark, the only Canadian woman with a Grand Ole

Opry membership, kicked off The Sharon’s ninth season last month. The next country music artist set to grace The Sharon’s stage is Nashville legend and Country Music Hall of Fame inductee John Anderson, best known for classics like “Swingin’” and “Seminole Wind.” He blows into town for one night only at 7 p.m. Oct. 7.

And tickets are on sale now for “Trailblazing Women of Country” to be performed Feb. 24 at The Sharon. The show is a tribute to country legends Patsy Kline, Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton.

Last week it was announced that David Lee Murphy will perform Dec. 22 at the area’s newest venue, The Tracy Performing

EVENT VENUES

The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center: 1051 Main St., Spanish Springs, thevillagesentertainment.com

Savannah Center: 1545 N. Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages, thevillagesentertainment.com

The Tracy Performing Arts Center: 2210 Dr. Randy McDaniel Way, Middleton, thevillagesentertainment.com

Morgan’s Music Junction: 6981 SE 147th St., Summerfield, morganmusicjunction.com

Orange Blossom Opry: 16439 SE 138th Terrace, Weirsdale, obopry.com

Morgan’s Music Junction and the Orange Blossom Opry host many country music acts. Morgan’s Music Junction in Summerfield will debut Cheyenne Rose’s upcoming Loretta Lynn tribute, “The Queen of Country,” at 2 p.m. Oct. 19. Tickets are available at morganmusicjunction.com.

The Orange Blossom Opry in Weirsdale recently hosted an “All American Country Series” that ends with a Toby Keith tribute at 7 p.m. Saturday. Earlier shows in the series featured live performances from Grammy award-winner John Berry along with Ty Herndon, Darryl Worley, Doug Stone and Dion Pride.

“We know country music,” said Roger Beyers, co-owner of the Orange Blossom Opry. “We venture outside of country sometimes, but country music is normally our mainstay.”

Although the country music series ends Saturday, the performing arts venue still offers plenty of country music options.

“We still have our six-piece house band on Friday nights and the majority of what they play is country music,” Beyers said. “The songs are everything from ‘80s to 2000s country.”

For those who miss the George Jones and Merle Haggard-era of country music, the opry will offer a classic country show at 7 p.m. Oct. 24. Artist performing in 2025 include the Gatlin Brothers, Crystal Gayle and Lee Greenwood. For the complete schedule, visit obopry.com.

Senior writer Taylor Strickland can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5334, or taylor.strickland@thevillagesmedia.com.

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Savings go live at 9:00AM EST on Monday, October 7th, 2024

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