

# The VHA VOICE

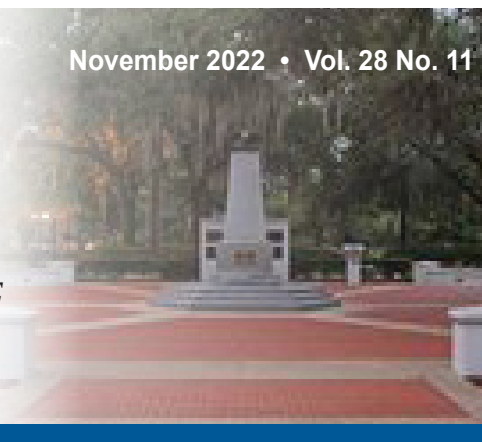
THE VILLAGES HOMEOWNERS ADVOCATES: KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

The VHA FOUNDATION COMMITTEE

The VHA

The VHA HELPING HANDS

November 2022 • Vol. 28 No. 11



## WE ARE DOWN TO THE WIRE, AND YOUR VOTE MATTERS! MAKE IT COUNT FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE VILLAGES COMMUNITY!

The VHA encourages its members, and all residents of The Villages who are eligible to vote on the referendum to create The Villages Independent Fire and Rescue District on November 8, to **VOTE YES!**



**THIS IMPORTANT VOTE IS THE FINAL STEP IN A LENGTHY RESIDENT-DRIVEN INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE THE VITAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE VILLAGES PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT.** That goal will be accomplished with a yes vote that will place the department under the authority of a local board, elected and held accountable by residents, tasked with overseeing its operations, budget, service quality, and needs. As an inde-

pendent fire district, the department's focus will shift away from the wider scope of county coverage and control to enhance its ability to target the specific and unique needs of our senior community.

Several months ago, The VHA and The POA agreed on the need for this action as a solution to resident complaints and statistics regarding inferior ambulance services when first responders determined transport to a hospital was needed. On-site arrival times by first responders and initial treatment was adequate, but there were not enough ambulances to handle the emergency case load that our senior community generates. It seems, since more ambulances have been ordered, that some residents, and the POA, believe the problem has been fixed and there is no longer the need for an independent, Villages-centered fire and rescue district. We do not believe that is the case.

We are aware there have been concerns raised about the cost of going to an independent model and how it will affect the bottom line for our taxes and amenities bills. And, as always, a certain segment of our community is convinced that this is "a power grab and all about greed" by The Developer. So, let's try to separate fact from fiction and rumors, including the erroneous preconceived notion that the Morse family is behind every move that is made that involves change, whether it be conceived as a good, or bad change. **Let's focus on what is best for our whole community without being swayed by baseless animosity and innuendo.**

WHAT WILL CHANGE is the self-governance and autonomy of our fire department. Any increases in funding will include the assumption of ambulance and transport services, future fire stations, apparatus, and personnel to maintain a constant state of readiness in this ever-growing community.

- **FUNDING** will be raised within the district itself, and used within the district for the specific needs of Villagers. The current cost paid by residents for fire and rescue services will go directly to VPSD rather than Sumter County. With an anticipated decrease in Sumter County property taxes, most residents will not see much of a difference in their annual bill.

- **OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY** will be managed by a board of five Villages residents who, after initially applying for a seat with the Governor's office, will be elected in nonpartisan elections by the voters within the district. Anyone within the district can apply for a position on the initial appointed board, and will be

vetted and selected based on qualifications.

- If the vote is favorable, The Villages Independent Fire Control and Rescue District would formally become effective October 1, 2023.

- **ADDITIONAL BENEFITS INCLUDE:** Better risk ratings by insurers (which affects home owners' insurance rates) and a recognized and more equitable and proportional sharing of costs among the variety of properties served.

- **WHY IT MATTERS:** According to Chief Cain, The Villages Public Safety Department responded to over 24,000 Incidents in the 2021 – 22 Fiscal Year. 70% of those, close to 17,000, were for rescue and emergency medical service calls, medical emergencies, medical assists, motor vehicle crashes, and extrications. 17% of the incidents were service calls such as persons in distress, water leaks, smoke/smell of smoke, and smoke detector assistance. The other 13% of the Incidents were calls related to fires, hazardous conditions, false alarms, good intent, and severe weather.

- **RUMOR CONTROL:** Every rooftop and business within the boundaries of the proposed independent fire and rescue control district will contribute fairly and equitably to the enhanced and improved services that will be provided. No one will benefit financially or politically since this is, and should be, a non-partisan issue.

- **VOTE BASED ON FACTS AND DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH:** You are welcome to talk to those who are "in the know". Always **CONSIDER THE SOURCE** and whether or not it is trustworthy, reliable, and acting in the best interests of this community. There is a wealth of information that is available on the District website at: [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) as well as on the website of The Villages Homeowners Advocates at [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net)

**Once again, we encourage you for the future well-being and sense of safety and security of The Villages, to VOTE YES!!! to establish The Villages Independent Fire and Rescue District on November 8th. Your neighbors and generations to come will THANK YOU!**

**PLEASE SEE TOWN HALL ON PAGE 3**

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**VISIT US ONLINE AT [WWW.THEVHA.NET](http://WWW.THEVHA.NET)**

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## MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE A VHA PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS STORY



On Tuesday, September 13, 2022, Ray Viall, VHA's Neighborhood Representative for the Villages on the historic side of US 441/27 hosted a Coffee Chat at his home in Country Club Hills.

He invited a dozen or so folks from his immediate neighborhood to let Karl Arps, VHA's Vice-President for the area north of Highway 466, provide a brief update on what's happening in The Villages' north end and in The VHA in general.

Most Villagers don't realize that it isn't easy knowing who to contact for infrastructure, utility, or compliance issues in Lake County. The original neighborhoods that became The Villages were in place and occupied before the Community Development Districts were created, so these residents get some services from District Government, some from Lake County, and some from the Town of Lady Lake. Karl received a lot of questions.

One resident brought up the need to make Vermont Avenue less rough. Vermont gets a lot of golf cart and car traffic and is important to many residents. Ray and Karl decided to figure out who is responsible for the road and see if something could be done to make the street smoother.

They discovered that the street is in Lake County's jurisdiction. On Saturday, September 17, they met at Vermont Avenue, took photographs, conducted a traffic study, and began preparing a report. There were shallow but broad potholes and a very nasty drain that sat 1 to 2 inches below the center of the road. The report was submitted the next Monday to Donnie Gardner, Lake County's head of road maintenance.

Ray and Karl's report did not wind up in an ignored

in-basket. No, Donnie Gardner got right on it. He tried to get a patching crew over that same day to patch potholes. They had run out of aggregate to make the patching material, so it had to wait until Thursday morning when they did a great job of patching potholes and made a temporary fix on the drain to protect vehicle tires and suspensions. Now, all holes have been patched, greatly improving the ride.

A lot of credit goes to The VHA's representative Ray Viall for getting the ball rolling with a friendly neighborhood get-together and putting in the time to get photos, vehicle counts, and recommended solutions. But credit must also go to Lake County and specifically to Donnie Gardner for their customer service orientation and can-do attitude. Donnie and the patching crew were a pleasure to work with.

At the local level, The VHA can advocate for Villages residents on specific issues. Often, the best advocacy that can happen is for The VHA to get a clear answer, which is sometimes "No" and sometimes "It's in the plan for next year". But there are occasions when The VHA can get something done quickly. Whether it is a big concern, such as the letter-writing campaign that resulted in approval to build the golf cart bridge over 441/27, or neighborhood problem, partnering with the Developer, state government, county or local government, and/or the District Government is an effective way to accomplish our mission of "Keeping the Dream Alive" for all Villages residents.



BEFORE



AFTER

### VHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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For contact information go to

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For contact information go to [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net) Or email us at: [vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com](mailto:vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com)



*Keeping the Dream Alive*

### MISSION

The Villages Homeowners Advocates (VHA) is a lifestyle organization whose members are committed to championing the needs of Villagers through:

- Positive, constructive dialogue
- Problem solving • Education
- Philanthropic efforts

### VALUES

The VHA is committed to excellence and driven by the following values:

- Integrity • Honesty
- Accountability • Independence



# THE VHA QUARTERLY TOWN HALL REPORT: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The VHA wants to thank the following people for providing answers to questions from VHA members and Villages residents for the VHA Town Hall meeting held on October 18, 2022: Dr. Gary Lester – Vice President Community Relations; Carrie Duckett – Deputy District Manager; Lt. Robert Siemer – District Lieutenant from the Sumter County Sheriff's Department.

**1. Thank you for bringing movies back to Spanish Springs Town Square utilizing that huge screen at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. Is there an update of plans for the Barnstorm Theater in Brownwood town square?**

**Dr. Lester:** We continue to monitor developments in the movie industry as well as the attendance at Old Mill Playhouse – those factors will guide future plans for Brownwood Theatre.

**2. While residents may send questions and suggestions to the Developer at [www.thevillages.com/feedback](http://www.thevillages.com/feedback), is it also possible to bring back the annual resident survey?**

**Dr. Lester:** Resident feedback is of great importance and we continue to consider different ways of gathering that input including the use of surveys.

**3. What can be done about the children ages four and seven who have been living in The Villages for a while enrolled in the Wildwood School?**

**Carrie Duckett:** If you have a concern regarding internal deed restrictions such as underage children in the home, business in the home, or the like, contact the Community Standards Department at 352-751-3912 or email [deedcompliance@districtgov.org](mailto:deedcompliance@districtgov.org), and the information will be forwarded to the Developer.

**4. What is the refurbishment schedule for Championship golf courses?**

**Dr. Lester:** The Daily Sun remains the best source of updates on Championship course maintenance and refurbishments.

**5. Would it be possible to add specific restrictions to flags flown by residents?**

**Carrie Duckett:** As a governmental entity, the District does not regulate the content on flags. The only thing that we have the ability to regulate is the placement of the flagpole itself to ensure it is



not located in an easement and that the homeowner had permission from the ARC for the flagpole. We do not require that flags be of specific content (or that they are not of specific content).

**6. Will golf cart access to Trailwinds shopping center be added in the future?**

**Dr. Lester:** There are no such plans as that Shopping Center is not part of The Villages.

**7. Many residents south of SR 44 in the Villages of Hawkins, St. Catherine, Homestead, Citrus Grove, etc. must travel north over the multi-**

**modal bridge to buy golf cart gas. Please provide any update of plans for building a gas station closer to these Villages that will also provide no-ethanol gasoline for golf carts.**

**Dr. Lester:** Good news - The 7-Eleven at Magnolia Plaza is scheduled to open in the Spring and plans to provide no-ethanol gas.

**8. There seems to be a deterioration on Executive golf courses. Please compare rounds played and budgets for years 2020, 2021, and projected for 2022.**

**Carrie Duckett:** There is a total of 42 Executive Golf courses in The Villages which are capable of receiving up to 10,000 rounds of golf a day. With so much activity on the courses, there is continued day-to-day maintenance provided by the golf course maintenance contractors as well as the amenity committee-approved capital improvement projects for the golf courses procured by the District. A comparison of total rounds (All Executive Courses) and budgets for the 36 District owned Executive Golf courses north of SR 44 are:

- 2020 – 2,613,592 rounds played / FY 20.21 budget \$10,454,288 (RAD&SLAD)
- 2021 – 2,562,703 rounds played / FY 21.22 budget \$ 9,474,374 (RAD&SLAD)
- 2022 through 10/11 – 1,943,390 rounds played / FY 22.23 budget \$13,741,556 (RAD&SLAD)

Mira Mesa Executive Golf course is under renovation. Check [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) for ongoing updates.

**9. Will a more secure fence be built to prevent access to The Villages from the adjoining property on the east side of the Saddlebrook Recreation Center multi-modal path?**

**Carrie Duckett:** This area is still under construction for commercial development. Per the approved 2008 site plan, a 30 feet buffer with trees, as well as a continuous hedge or approved wall or fence must be installed. In most cases, continuous hedges are installed. District Property Management will monitor and evaluate this area after construction is completed.

**10. Who pays for the damage when the gate arms are broken?**

**Carrie Duckett:** Video images provide information of who damages the gate arms and the individual or company that is responsible is billed for the damages. If the person is found, the minimum cost to repair is \$250.

AAC and PWAC approved the contract for gate maintenance and upgraded software as of October 1, 2022. This is taking several months to complete. There should not be any interruption to the gate functionality while this process takes place. If there are specific concerns regarding a gate arm, please contact Community Watch at 352-753-0550.

**11. Regarding the water towers and cell towers in The Villages:**

**a. Who owns the towers?**

**Carrie Duckett:** The Utility – VCCDD-LSSA, VCSA, NSCUDD – NSU, CSU, and WUDD – SSU.

**b. Who receives the revenue from cell infrastructure to the towers?**

**Carrie Duckett:** There is a total of six water towers and the revenue from anything attached to the individual towers goes to that utility.

**12. Is there a plan to upgrade the Chula Vista neighborhood pool? Landscaping within the fences contribute to a dirty path from the pool to the restrooms and drainage issues cause frequent mold growth at the shower and pavilion.**

**Carrie Duckett:** District Property Management is working hard to renovate all of our pools, based on an approved maintenance management plan. Chula Vista Neighborhood Pool is scheduled for renovation next fiscal year (FY 23-24). The large palm tree *TOWN HALL cont'd on Page 7*

Membership: \$25 for 2 years,  
or \$100 for lifetime

Don't wait!

Join now, and be a part of our growing community!



☐ NEW MEMBERSHIP ☐ RENEWAL

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

VILLA/VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER ADDRESS IF ANY: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: THE VHA, 1104 Main St.,  
The Villages, FL 32159  
OR JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE AT:  
[WWW.THEVHA.NET](http://WWW.THEVHA.NET)

# The VHA News & Notes

## NORTH AREA



**North of 466**  
**Karl Arps, Vice President**  
[karl.arps@gmail.com](mailto:karl.arps@gmail.com) - (920) 285-1382

**T**onight, November 2, 2022, the **VHA North Area** will be hosting **"Secure in Your Home"** at **First Responders Recreation Center**, an informational program for residents living north of Highway 466. There will be speakers from The Villages Public Safety Department, Marion County Fire Rescue, Community Watch, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and the sheriffs' offices from Marion, Lake, and Sumter Counties.

This event is geared toward the specific issues of the North Area, where all three counties – Sumter, Marion, and Lake – meet. Although all the fire/rescue services and all the law enforcement agencies have similar tasks, they often have different terminology or job titles, so it's important for our North Area residents to learn from their own counties.

Doors will open at 6:30 so residents can gather flyers and goodies from these organizations, and the presentations will begin promptly at 7:00 PM. After the talks, the tables will again be open for individual questions and to gather whatever was missed beforehand. First Responders is not a regional center, so seating is limited.

Programs like "Secure in Your Home" are a big part of what The VHA is all about. We work to provide Villages residents with the straight scoop on how things work, what's going on, and how to best enjoy this wonderful community. **Other valuable VHA programs include:**

- New Resident Night – a monthly program with valuable info about how things work in The Villages.
- Golf Cart Safety – monthly clinic about The Villages' unique, golf cart community transportation system and how to navigate it safely.
- Helping Hands – free loan program of Durable Medical Equipment.
- Quarterly Town Hall – where we address questions and concerns with a panel of local leaders in public safety, government, recreation, community standards, and more.
- Foundation Committee – which gives grants to volunteer

organizations that benefit and impact our community for the greater good.

### And MEMBERS ONLY PROGRAMS SUCH AS:

- Cutting the Cord – learning to live without cable
- An Evening with the Developer – Our annual review and preview by Mark Morse and his team
- Where Your Money Goes – explaining amenity and maintenance fees
- Relevant Seminars – based on current concerns and beneficial topics

We advocate on behalf of our members, provide monthly VHA Bingo and other periodic social events, plus provide philanthropic services. We are totally volunteer run. Nobody gets a salary. But we do a lot of good.

If you're already a member, thank you, and don't forget to renew your membership when it comes up. If you're not, we strongly urge you to not only join, but also check the box to volunteer. We need neighborhood representatives, folks to help Helping Hands distribute durable medical equipment, people to usher at large VHA events, and other useful tasks. Go to the [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net) to sign up.

*Karl Arps*

## CENTRAL AREA



**Between 466 and 466A**  
**Ellie Decker, Vice President**  
[ellenmdecker@gmail.com](mailto:ellenmdecker@gmail.com) – 913-530-7439

**T**his month's article is on the safety items located at the outside recreation areas, inside recreation centers, and the pools.

According to the VCDD e-Notification, outside recreation areas have a bulletin board. Make a point to get familiar with the bulletin board for important information, such as the address of your location should you need to call 911.

The next time you are in the sports equipment building, look for the emergency 911 phone and the address. Emergency phones are located in, or near, the sports equipment building with the facility name and address posted on the wall by the emergency phones.

The swimming pools have life preservers, and hooks. Next

time you are at the pool, make yourself aware of the rescue life preserver and the hook. Think about how you might use the life preserver or the hook to help someone in need.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are located inside recreation centers. They are easy to use, and usually speak the instructions when you turn them on. According to the Red Cross, an AED is to help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. The Red Cross is offering online classes now for a fee. You could also get familiar with using one by watching a YouTube video or by taking a class in person. They are usually combined with CPR classes and can be taken with The Villages Public Safety Department.

If you see an AED in a residential neighborhood, it's because that neighborhood got together to buy one. If you see one in your neighborhood, find out which neighbors are in charge of maintaining the batteries and holding the keys. There should be several key holders.

So, next time you are out, make a point to look for life preservers, hooks, addresses, phones, and AEDs. Call 911, or have someone else call, in an emergency while you are getting the equipment. You may save a life.

*Ellie Decker*  
[ellenmdecker@gmail.com](mailto:ellenmdecker@gmail.com)

*(email preferred over calls please)*

## SOUTH AREA



**Between 466A and SR44**  
**Mike Dollard, Vice President**  
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**T**his fall we vote on the creation of a fire district specifically for the Villages. I've thought about this a lot, even changed my mind a few times. I will vote yes; this

will be a good thing for us. Here is why:

The cost? You will pay either way, it is just who gets the tax dollars first. One party cannot be cheaper than the other – fuel, equipment and wages are the same if you vote yes or no. The fire budget will be X amount. If I am billed that under "county tax" or under "fire tax" the budget is still X amount.

*Continued on page 5*



**THE FOLLOWING SMART DRIVER "IN PERSON" CLASSES WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE END OF 2022. PLEASE CONTACT THE NUMBER LISTED.**

November				November			
Jack Haughn	352-603-1420		11/19/22	Sat	11/26/22	Sat	Paradise
December				December			
Wanda Smith	972-358-9757		12/13/22	Tue	12/16/22	Fri	Laurel Manor
Don Walker	352-430-0610		12/19/22	Mon	12/22/22	Thur	Savannah



Losing a loved one is hard, and planning for the holidays can be more difficult. Register for tips on how to plan for the holidays after losing a loved one.

Register at  
[info@amacfoundation.org](mailto:info@amacfoundation.org)  
 or call 888-750-2622

**LADY LAKE LIBRARY**  
**NOVEMBER 4**  
**11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.**





*Continued from page 4*

The deciding factor – when the county oversaw the ambulances, we had terrible service and nobody seemed to care. It slowly got worse and worse; still nothing was done. Tempers flared, example after example of failure but nothing was done. You had your chance (actually, many chances). It is time for new management.

Gibberish. Gibberish is speech/writing that is, among other things, meaningless. It thoroughly describes the political harangues that I am seeing. I steer around politics when I write this but I will comment on stupid things, and some things are target rich.

A candidate for a state representative position has been running a campaign that is based on Facebook. An odd style, but it is one way to do it. One recent posting railed on about the current office holder, who is someone I do not know and have never met, but is not a candidate in this election. This candidate has posted several times about this non-candidate. My question is this: Why? I don't care how much he earns, good for him. This is unnecessary mudslinging. I would expect this from a person with no honor or integrity. I think you are above this level. Please stop. I want to see elections based on values, not cheap shots and innuendos. That goes for the media too, in any format. I repeat, stop the mudslinging, stop the toxic politics.

Full disclosure, I ran for office here and won. My campaign was based on who I am and what I would do. My opponent did the same. My opponent congratulated me on election night. I view him as an honorable man.

P.S. Best meme I saw about hurricane Ian: *Villagers, stronger than any hurricane. They just can't master traffic circles.*

*Mike Dollard*

## FAR SOUTH AREA



**South of SR44**  
**Dave Fountaine, Vice President**  
[dfountaine7205@gmail.com](mailto:dfountaine7205@gmail.com)  
 – 716-241-1460

**STAY TUNED!** Contact me for any questions and concerns you have, and watch for next month's column. November is a month for Thanksgiving and appreciation. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and take time to thank a veteran.

*Dave Fountaine*



## LADY LAKE



**Lynn Davis**  
[Lynna527@aol.com](mailto:Lynna527@aol.com) – 352-250-7782

### Classic Car Show & Business Showcase:

This event will be held November 16 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Lady Lake Soccer Complex on Rolling Acres Road. Come out to meet and support your local Business owners.

### Lady Lake Christmas Parade:

The annual Lady Lake Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday December 3rd at 10:00 a.m. along Old Dixie Highway in Lady Lake. Hosted by the Lady Lake Recreation Department. This year's theme is "Christmas Under the Sea".

### Light-up-Lady Lake:

The annual Light-up-Lady Lake will be held on Friday December 9th at the Log Cabin / Veterans Park on Hwy 27/441 starting at 6:15 p.m. This is a wonderful evening event to be enjoyed by people of all ages.

### The Lady Lake Library:

The Geek Squad from Best Buy meets the 2nd Friday of every month at 9:30 a.m. on the 2nd floor for iPhone & iPad classes. And on the 4th Friday of every month at 9:30 a.m. on the 2nd floor for Mac Book classes.

HAVE A WONDERFUL THANKSGIVING!!!  
*Lynn Davis*

## SHINE Offers Medicare Help



SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) is increasing its counseling sites considerably during the **Medicare Open Enrollment Period, October 15 - December 7** so that enrollees can be assisted with this once-a-year opportunity to make changes to their advantage or prescription drug programs. Volunteers will also be available to assist clients with Medicare-related questions including Medicaid, Medicare, and Medigap plans, financial assistance, and scams. The service is free and unbiased, and reservations are not taken. Counselors will be at the following locations:

- Lake Miona Recreation Center, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. every Tuesday through Dec 13, including Nov 22.
- Eisenhower Recreation Center, 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. every Wednesday through Dec 7, except Nov 23.
- Chula Vista Recreation Center, 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. every Friday through Dec 2, except Nov 25
- Lady Lake Library, 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Nov 30, except Nov 23.

**"Understanding Medicare"**, a group presentation geared toward those turning 65, will be made from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Aviary Recreation Center on Wednesdays, Nov 9 and Dec 14.

**For more information, sign onto**  
[floridashine.org](http://floridashine.org) or call 800-963-5337.

## The VHA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

### YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



**Photo:** From left, Dr. Jim Deutch, LCSW- booklet author and TLC Vice President, Marion Montecalvo, TLC Treasurer, Peggy Fiore, Chair of VHA Foundation Committee, Pat Hayes, LCSW, TLC Founder and Director, Bonnie Hovel, LCSW, TLC Director of Operations, and Lucille Karatzas, LCSW, TLC Secretary.

The Villages Homeowners Advocates (VHA) presented a check for \$1,000 to members of TLC Services, at The VHA Advisory Board meeting in October, to support the needs of this unique organization of retired professional social workers, mental health counselors, marriage/family therapists and substance abuse counselors delivering cost-free services to residents throughout The Villages and surrounding areas.

A portion of the proceeds help underwrite the second publication of their signature brochure, *How Will I Know When to Place my Loved One Into Memory Care?* written by Dr. James A. Deutch, Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The booklets are distributed free through health service providers. A copy was presented to every member of the Villages Homeowners Advocates at the meeting.



## TIPS ON BUYING A NEW CAR

**Seniors  
vs.  
CRIME**



Buying a car in this day and age can be overwhelming. The Attorney General has some tips that will help you when you decide to buy your

next car.

**Do not be swayed by the ads.** Advertisements often have restrictions and limitations such as the very low interest rate they offer may be for a specific car or model. This is information that you should know before you go to a dealership. Call the dealership first and ask about the restrictions and limitations. Remember this old adage – “The BIG print giveth and the small print taketh away.” Always read the fine print.

**Shop around.** Knowing what you want and how much you are willing to spend puts you in a stronger position to shop around for the best deal. If a dealership doesn't have what you want, consider ordering a new car to avoid paying for unwanted extras. However, because dealers want to sell from their current inventory, you may be able to negotiate a good deal if an in-stock car meets your needs.

**Trading in?** Always know the value of your trade in if you have one. Understand that many dealers will give you the low end of the value of your trade which means a larger profit margin for them. Knowing the full value of your trade in and the full price of the car you are interested in will give you the “difference” in values. Always keep that difference in mind while shopping.

**Understand the true total cost of the vehicle.** The real cost of a car includes more than its purchase price. Consider the vehicle's reliability since an unreliable car will cost you much more in more frequent repairs, not to mention the aggravation of being without the car. Also, fuel consumption can vary widely across different vehicle years, makes and models and with the current price of gasoline, you should

consider the average miles per gallon and the size of the fuel tank to determine how much you can expect to pay at the pump.

**Negotiate.** The sticker price of the vehicle, the MSRP, is the manufacturer's “suggested” retail price and most dealers are willing to bargain on their profit margin. Always negotiate the total price and not the monthly payments. Dealers will often up-sell and include optional products or services in the purchase price. If there are unwanted or unnecessary options included, negotiate to have them removed. Negotiate all terms before signing and be sure you understand what you are signing. Remember about the BIG print and the small print. Understand what is due at signing and what your monthly payments will be and how much you will be paying over the life of the loan.

**Understand Florida's Lemon Law.** The dealer is required to provide you with a booklet published by the Attorney General's office that explains your rights under the Lemon Law. Read this carefully and if you have problems with your new car, call the Lemon Law Hotline at 800-321-5366.

**If you need advice or assistance with your car buying experience, Seniors vs. Crime may be able to help. Our services are always free and there are four offices in the Villages to assist you.**

Need assistance? Seniors vs. Crime is here to help you.

**Sumter Office – Open Mon - Thurs.;**  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. @ 352-689-4600 X 4606

**Wildwood Office – Open Tue – Thur.;**  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m. @ 352-753-0727

**Marion Office – Open Tuesday;**  
1 a.m. - 2 p.m. @ 352-753-7775

**Fruitland Park Office – Open Wednesday;**  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. @ 352-674-1882

The Villages  
Community Development Districts

## INDEPENDENT FIRE CONTROL AND RESCUE DISTRICT



District  
Manager

by Kenny Blocker, District Manager

I am excited to announce that The Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) rolled out the new ambulance service on October 1, 2022. VPSD will have 12 ambulances with one stationed at each of our nine Fire Stations with three on stand-by for overflow needs.

The transition has been smooth with much thanks to the VPSD team and Sumter County for working with us to update the call center operations. We are very grateful to be able to provide this service to our residents and we believe this is one more added benefit of living here in The Villages.

Now you, as a voter within The Villages in Sumter County, will have the opportunity to cast your vote to create a new Independent Fire District. This is something that The Villages residents wanted when they voiced their opposition to the County creating one Fire Department. Now it is up to you, on November 8, 2022; “YOU DECIDE” at the voting booth if The Villages Public Safety Department becomes an Independent Fire Control and Rescue District.

The Independent Fire Control and Rescue District would be governed by an elected board consisting of five members residing within the District boundaries. They will decide where every dollar is spent. There are 54 Independent Fire Districts in the state of Florida that provide excellent service to their residents and the opportunity to create our own Fire District would allow you, as a resident within the boundaries, to have a Board dedicated to only providing this service to YOU.

The Villages is a unique community spanning over 80 square miles with approximately 140,000 residents. The median age in The Villages is 72.2 years. More than 19,000 veterans call The Villages “Home”. This great community deserves the very best in public safety, which is something The Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) would like to continue providing as an Independent Fire Control and Rescue District.

More facts and information on The Independent Fire Control and Rescue District can be found at [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) or by calling 352-753-4508.

The VHA Membership has its rewards...  
Join today at [thevha.net](http://thevha.net)

7th Annual Hearts for Our Hospital

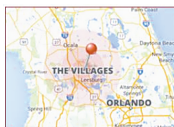


November 11-12, 2022

The Villages® Community, FL

UFHealth  
THE VILLAGES HOSPITAL

Auxiliary  
Foundation



Friday, November 11  
10 am – 2 pm

**CYCLING EXPO &  
HEALTH FAIR**

- Free Admission
- Cycling vendors: clubs, bikes, accessories and apparel
- Bike demonstrations
- Free health information and screenings
- And more!

Saturday, November 12  
6:30 am – 4 pm

**BICYCLE CHALLENGE**

- 5 route options: 10, 20, 32, mile routes featuring **NEW 64 & 100 mile routes**
- Well-stocked rest stops
- SAG support
- Public safety
- Breakfast and lunch
- Post-ride entertainment

For more details and Bicycle Challenge registration:

[www.HeartsforOurHospital.raceroster.com](http://www.HeartsforOurHospital.raceroster.com)

Florida  
Blue  
MEDICARE  
Your local Blue Cross Blue Shield

CAAMEVENTS  
www.CAAMEvents.com

For additional information  
call (352) 399-5798

La Hacienda Regional Recreation Center  
1200 Avenida Central, Lady Lake, FL

## BRINGING HOLIDAY CHEER TO THOSE IN NEED

The three Villages bike clubs continue to coordinate and support the Sumter County Sheriff's Annual Bike Collection and

Distribution, which has taken place for approximately twenty years. The goal is twofold; “rehoming” used bikes and providing new bikes during the Christmas season.

The Villages Recreation and Parks Division provides the Lake Miona Regional Recreation Center for bike club members to gather and work on the bicycles. Dave Lawrence, the Safety Director for the Bicycle Friendly Advocacy Council, is the leader of the program for The Villages cyclists. He works closely with Lt. Bob Siemer, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) Commander for The Villages.

Each year the bike club works on approximately 300 bicycles; mechanics clean and restore gently used bicycles, and assemble new, donated bikes. The SCSO distributes the bikes to grateful recipients. Some go to children, and some go to adults who need transportation. Everyone comes away with good feelings after the day's work. Our community is served and solidifies its reputation as Florida's Friendliest Home Town.

Questions? Call The Villages SCSO Office at (352) 689-4604 or email Dave Lawrence at [daveridj@gmail.com](mailto:daveridj@gmail.com)







## Sumter County Sheriff's Office

SHERIFF WILLIAM O. FARMER, JR.

### OPERATION SAFE SHOPPER



For the past ten years, during the holiday season, the Sumter County Sheriff's Office has conducted "Operation Safe Shopper".

Operation Safe Shopper increases law enforcement presence in shopping areas, banks, and recreational facilities and begins two weeks before Thanksgiving and runs through Christmas. During the designated period, Sumter County deputies will spend extra time patrolling parking lots in these areas looking for suspicious activity in an effort to prevent vehicle burglaries, thefts, and robberies. Our goal is to ensure the safety of our citizens, while they enjoy the holiday season with their families.

Citizens will notice an increased presence of law enforcement and are encouraged to reach out to the deputies and express any suspicious activity or concerns they may have. Our deputies will be on the lookout for you, but here are some tips to help you avoid becoming a victim this holiday season. For those living in The Villages, the same precautions apply to golf carts.

- Park in a well-lit area of the parking lot.
- Do not leave valuables in plain view in your vehicle.
- Always lock your doors, whether or not you are driving.
- If you have to take a phone call or text message – don't let your guard down and get distracted while shopping.
- Do not carry large amounts of merchandise at one time.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, contact the Sheriff's department or the store's security officer.

As always, if you see something, say something and contact the sheriff's office at (352)793-2621 or use 911 in the event of an emergency.

**GRAB YOUR VHA MEMBERSHIP CARD AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR M2M DISCOUNT PROGRAM BENEFIT:**

**M2M: THE VHA MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS DISCOUNT PROGRAM**

Visit our website at [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net) for a complete list of vendors and service providers who generously offer VHA members significant discounts. Be sure to have your VHA membership card with you to receive this member benefit.

### TOWN HALL cont'd from Page 5

planted by the pool has greatly contributed to the path issues. We will have the Landscaping Division look into the feasibility of removing and relocating this tree to improve the cleanliness in this area.

#### 13. Are there plans to put the Villages resident ID card in a digital format?

**Carrie Duckett:** The District is always looking at ways to upgrade to provide digital alternatives, but we are not there yet. Please note that it is not acceptable to take a picture of the resident ID card and present the photo from your smart phone.

#### 14. Please review the signage of the multi-modal path through the Sumter Landing Winn Dixie parking lot. After making the turn from the roadway, the direction to the Morse Blvd south entrance is not marked.

**Dr. Lester:** We will review while bearing in mind that part of what makes The Villages uniquely beautiful is the lack of unnecessary signage.

#### 15. Can the walkway on the Sumter Landing Bridge be reduced in order to widen the golf cart lanes, which seem too narrow for the newer model carts?

**Carrie Duckett:** Unfortunately, for several reasons, this is not possible for the walkway or the Golf Cart lanes in the vicinity of and crossing Morse Island into and out of the Lake Sumter Landing area. First, given the limited overall width of the lanes in that area, and the heavy automotive, golf cart, and pedestrian traffic, there are no viable options that allow for the expansion of the golf cart lanes while affording safe pedestrian lanes. The Morse Island bridge itself would require a major re-engineering effort (or replacement) to accommodate expanded lanes while providing adequate automobile and pedestrian lanes. As originally designed, there is adequate width for automobile and golf cart traffic while also affording safe access for pedestrians. Again, with the heavy traffic through this area in terms of an automobile, golf cart, and pedestrian traffic, it is optimally designed and configured to ensure the safety of all who transit (auto or golf cart) as well as jog, walk and bike this area.

**Facilitator:** The VHA Executive Vice President Peter Russell thanked the District for recently repainting the 10-mph speed limit marked on the pavement in the middle and at each end of the entrance to the Morse Blvd bridge multi-modal path.

#### 16. The warranty department has heard nothing about the issue of disintegrating roof ridge vents installed 8 – 10 years ago between CR 466A and SR 44. Roofing contractors are inspecting and replacing these vents at a cost of \$1200 and up. Is this a scam?

**Dr. Lester:** The Warranty Department had not heard of this issue. It is advised that homeowners get a second opinion.

#### 17. A resident in CDD 3 asks is an exterior antenna strong enough for receiving local television for programs as far away as Orlando allowed?

**Carrie Duckett:** Please refer to your specific Deed

Restrictions when examining opportunities for external modifications to your property including antennas.

#### 18. What can be done about the many short-term rentals such as Airbnb's and VRBO's that are occurring throughout The Villages?

**Carrie Duckett:** Technically, there is nothing that can be done unless it is written into the deed restrictions. The house is private property which belongs to the homeowner who may choose to rent it. Complaints may be made to Community Standards when deed restrictions are violated. (352) 751-3912 or online through [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) If there are concerns about safety, please dial 911.

#### 19. There appears to be an increase in speeding golf carts and vehicular traffic. What enforcement of the speed limit is being done:

##### a. On roadways?

**Lt. Siemer:** There are seven zone units in The Villages and two traffic units are out every day. Each quarter 900 – 1200 traffic citations are written (by SCSO in the Villages).

##### b. On multi-modal paths?

**Lt. Siemer:** Enforcement can only be done when the multi-modal is connected to the roadway. We cannot issue speeding citations on the multi-modal paths off roadways as that is private property.

**Q.** Does Wildwood Police Department patrol south of SR 44?

**A.** Yes, within the Wildwood city limits. Sumter County and Wildwood work together.

#### 20. Questions related to e-bikes include:

##### a. Are e-bikes considered motorized vehicles?

**Lt. Siemer:** No, e-bikes fall under bicycle HB 971.

##### b. Are e-bikes permitted on multi-modal paths?

**Carrie Duckett:** This question is being addressed through our legal counsel. If e-bikes are not classified as motorized vehicles, then the answer will be "yes."

**Q.** Are Smart cars allowed on multi-modal paths?

**A.** No.

##### c. What is the speed limit for e-bikes on roadways?

**Lt. Siemer:** E-bikes can only assist up to 20 mph. Speeds higher than this are reached by the cyclist.

### THE NEXT VHA TOWN HALL MEETING WILL BE IN JANUARY 2023.

Questions may be sent to The VHA at any time at [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net).

**Note:** Some questions sent for this Town Hall meeting were recently asked and answered. The complete Q & A of previous Town Hall Meetings are posted on The VHA website at [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net).

To send feedback to the District Government, go to [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org). Scroll down lower left and click on "Submit Feedback, Inquiry, or Concern." i.e., landscaping, multi-modal paths, etc.

To send feedback to The Developer, go to [www.thevillages.com](http://www.thevillages.com). Scroll down to "Get in Touch" and click on "Provide Feedback."



VISIT OUR WEBSITE [THEVHA.NET](http://THEVHA.NET) FOR INFO, MEMBERSHIP, HELPFUL LINKS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, AND MORE

# VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14 @ 7:00 P.M.  
LAKE MIONA REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER  
An Evening of Fun, Food, and Gratitude  
for our Valued Volunteers

The VHA

NEW RESIDENT NIGHT

TUESDAY, NOV. 8, 2022 • 7:00 p.m.

EZELL REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER

769 MARILEE PLACE

PRESENTERS MAY INCLUDE, AND INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM:

- Honorable Paul Militello, Sumter County Judge
- Sumter County Sheriff’s Office & other local law enforcement
- Sumter County Property Appraiser
- Sumter County Tax Collector
- Sumter County Clerk
- District Government
- Serving Health Ins. Needs of Elders (SHINE)
- Veteran Services
- Seniors vs. Crime

- UF HealthThe Villages Regional Hospital Auxiliary
- SECO
- Sumter Landing Bicycle Club
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Friends of the Library
- The Enrichment Academy
- Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches
- The VHA – The Villages Homeowners Advocates
- The VHA Helping Hands

NEXT NEW RESIDENT NIGHT WILL BE: DECEMBER 13 @ COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER



TONIGHT  
NOVEMBER 2, 2022 @ 7:00 P.M.  
“SECURE IN YOUR HOME”  
FIRST RESPONDERS  
RECREATION CENTER  
SEATING IS LIMITED

- For residents living north of Highway 466.
- Featuring speakers from The Villages Public Safety Department, Marion County Fire Rescue, Community Watch, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and the Sheriffs’ offices from Marion, Lake, and Sumter Counties.
- Doors will open at 6:30 the presentations will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m.
- For more info read the North News on Page 4.

# The VHA GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC

NOVEMBER 16 @ 9:00 A.M.  
COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER  
510 COLONY BLVD @ MORSE BLVD/466A

CLINIC TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Not a Toy • Golf Cars & LSV • Golf Cars vs. Others • Tunnels
- Intersections • Passing & Road Crossings • Bridges • Turns • Circles (Roundabouts) • Parallel Parking • Pulling into a Parking Space
- Sharing Parking with Cars • No Parking Zones • Insurance • Legal concerns • Maintenance • No pre-registration required

VISIT [WWW.THEVHA.NET](http://WWW.THEVHA.NET) FOR MORE DETAILS

GOLF CART SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH: HAVE YOU DONE AN EQUIPMENT CHECK LATELY? ARE ALL YOUR TURN SIGNALS WORKING? YOUR HEADLIGHTS ALIGNED?

NEXT MONTH: DECEMBER 21 @ COLONY COTTAGE

47 29 15 25 47 14 55 81 4 22 58 13

85

30

48

37

5

67

8

The VHA BINGO

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12

(DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 P.M.)

EZELL REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER

769 MARILEE PLACE

\$10 for 2 Boards (VHA Members/3 Boards)

\$1/Extra Boards; NO SPLIT POTS; 50/50

+ Buy a LAST GAME Sheet with a \$100 Pot

BYOB and Snacks

78

33

51

81

26

62

7

# The VHA HELPING HANDS



## DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM

VISIT [WWW.THEVHA.NET](http://WWW.THEVHA.NET) TO VIEW OUR CURRENT INVENTORY, THEN CALL:

352-973-2284

WE WILL THEN SCHEDULE YOUR PICK-UP FROM:  
THE VHA OFFICE • 1104 MAIN ST., SPANISH SPRINGS  
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY BETWEEN 11:00 A.M. AND 1:00 P.M.