

# 2022 Community Guide

# OKEECHOBEE

ENTERTAINMENT | EVENTS | DINING | VISITOR INFORMATION



When Results Matter...  
Mixon Delivers!



# Mixon

Real Estate Group, LLC

Read our Google Reviews

 Matterport™  
3D- Virtual Tours  
[www.MixonGroup.com](http://www.MixonGroup.com)

290  
Listed

350  
Closed

Over  
\$53 Million  
SOLD



## Premier Residential Specialists

Back row left to right: Irene Hazy-Walters, Patrick Malone, Erica Harvey, Wayne Williams, Paula Franklin, Rudy Garcia, Lauren & Jimmy De La Luz, Natalie Hubbard  
Front row left to right: Jacalyn Sutton, Lori Mixon, Melody Hodges, Cindy Brandel

*Our Priorities Are Simple..... They're Yours!*

Residential | Agriculture | Commercial | Vacant Land



2021 Business of the Year Entrepreneurship Winner

## Lori Mixon

Owner/ Lic. Real Estate Broker  
(863)634-1457  
LMixon@MixonGroup.com



SE HABLA ESPAÑOL | (863) 763-6000  
1306 SW 2nd Ave, Okeechobee, FL 34974



*“Caring Beyond Prescription”*  
**Heartland Discount Pharmacy**  
*Bringing Care Back to Healthcare*



Locally Owned. Locally Loved.

**Serving the Community since 2010.**

Do not fill your prescription without verifying the price with Heartland Discount Pharmacy

**The core values of Heartland Discount Pharmacy are Caring, Compassion and Empathy for our Patients**



**OUR GOAL IS TO MAKE HEALTHCARE MORE AFFORDABLE**  
 Here is how we are different...

Does your pharmacy accommodate your special needs?

Does your pharmacy keep your prescriptions up to date with refills and stock status, etc.?

Does your pharmacy have spare time to discuss your health?

Does your pharmacy have time to find ways to save you money on your prescriptions?

Does your pharmacy handle SPECIALITY PRESCRIPTIONS and on demand COMPOUNDING?

*We have ways to help Medicare patients not fall into coverage gaps or donut holes*  
**Now...it's time to think about changing your pharmacy!**

**PHARMACY THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE**

- Best cash price in town
- FREE same day home delivery
- We help patients not to fall into Medicare coverage gap or donut hole
- We match all Competitors' Generic Prescription Drug Programs
- We Accept All Insurances including Medicaid, Medicare, Part D and Worker's Compensation
- **Flu, Pneumonia, Shingles, all 3 COVID-19 and other vaccines available**
- Now providing RX Compounding
- Medication Synchronization
- **Special Weekly Bubble Packaging**

**EXTENDED HOURS:**

Monday-Friday 8am - 8pm  
 Saturday 9am - 5pm

407 S. Parrott Ave.  
 (Next to Arby's on Hwy. 441)  
 Okeechobee

**863.763.7633**

HeartlandDiscountPharmacy.com

*Tired of Waiting?*

*The Fastest, Most Convenient & Friendliest Service in the Area!*



Other Pharmacies

Heartland Discount Pharmacy



Thank you for choosing Heartland Discount Pharmacy  
 We are personally committed to providing the service and value you deserve. Thank you for trusting us with your healthcare needs.

— Family of Heartland Discount Pharmacy of Okeechobee

# FEATURED CONTENT

## 06 FESTIVALS CELEBRATE LOCAL COMMUNITY

A listing of all festivals happening in and around the Okeechobee area

## 12 VIEW ART AND HISTORY IN MURALS

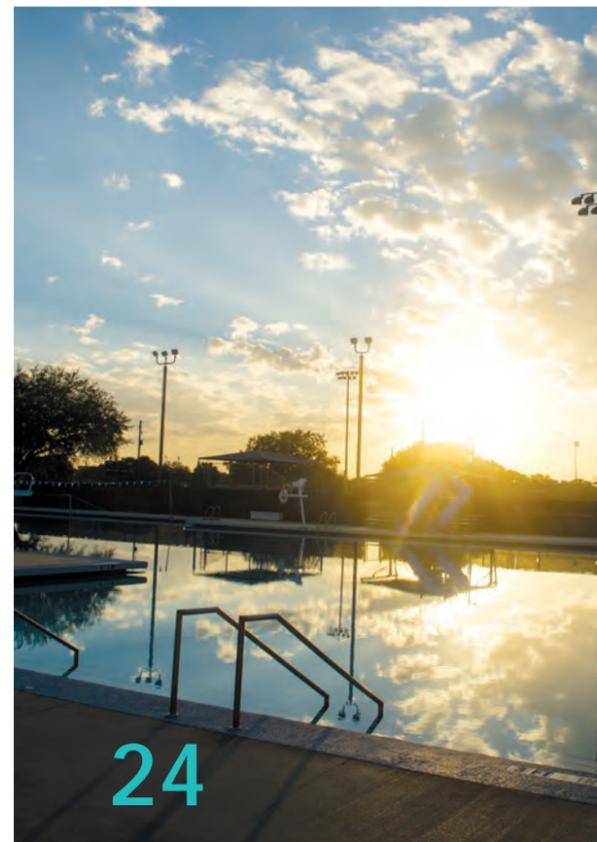
A list of murals around Okeechobee and where to find them

## 13 HISTORY OF OKEECHOBEE

A recap of the history of Okeechobee between the years of 1928 and 1938

## 22 CATCH SOME BIG FISH ON THE BIG LAKE

Lake Okeechobee is a vast shallow lake with a surface area covering 730 square miles



## 28 PREMIER SHOOTING SPORTS OPTIONS

The wide open spaces of Okeechobee County are home to some of the best shooting sports facilities in South Florida

## 32 LAKE O OFFERS GREAT BIKE RIDING

The Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail is an important resource for hiking and cycling

## 36 WELCOME TO THE 'REAL FLORIDA'

A letter of welcome from Mayor Dowling Watford

## 38 OKEECHOBEE MAIN STREET ENRICHES

Okeechobee Main Street's vision is to help create a successful downtown

## 42 DINING GUIDE

Restaurants, bars, food trucks and more -- all your culinary wants for Okeechobee County

## 46

## 52 CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

If you're looking to amp up your social life, Okeechobee's got plenty of options

## 54 CHURCH DIRECTORY

A listing of churches in and around the Okeechobee area

## 56 EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

# DISCOVER OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Okeechobee County has a lot to offer.

To the fisherman, Okeechobee County is the home of the “Big O” – one of the top lakes in the country for catching bass and speckled perch. Professional bass anglers fish Lake Okeechobee for thousands of dollars in tournament prizes.

For young families, Okeechobee is a place where kids can be active in school, church and club activities. And, it’s a place where the community supports its youth with thousands of dollars donated each year to give local scholarships to high school graduates headed for college.

For those who want to start a business, it’s a place welcoming to those who want to grow with the community.

For those who love the outdoors, Okeechobee County has plenty to see and do: Boating on Lake Okeechobee or the Kissimmee River, hiking the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, enjoying the beauty all around in Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park, horseback riding and more. Shooting enthusiasts can choose from world-class outdoor shooting facilities. The area also has plenty of hunting opportunities.

To the rancher, Okeechobee is wide open spaces. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Census, Okeechobee County is home to 599 farms and ranches for a total of 297,439 acres in agriculture. Okeechobee has earned the nickname “Florida’s Cowtown,” as the county is No. 1 in the state in the most beef cattle and the most milk produced. According to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, Okeechobee County ranches and dairies are home to a total of 133,975 head of cattle, including calves. Okeechobee County dairies account for about 20 percent of the milk produced in Florida. The county has also 3,268 acres in citrus trees.

The people of Okeechobee love to show their community spirit, with festivals, parades and special community events throughout the year. Service clubs welcome new members.

Even longtime residents can be surprised at the opportunities all around them.

## FESTIVALS CELEBRATE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Okeechobee County festivals celebrate the community’s pioneer heritage and embrace new traditions.

March is the busiest festival month in Okeechobee, bringing the Speckled Perch Festival, the Okeechobee County Fair and Florida’s Cowtown Rodeo.

Festivals are a great chance to gather with friends, enjoy performances by local entertainers, and try samples of local delicacies such as Seminole pumpkin fry bread. Bring your own folding chair — it comes in handy while you’re waiting for a parade, or if you just want to sit back and enjoy the show.

### BATTLE OF OKEECHOBEE

The Battle of Okeechobee reenactment last weekend in February each year at the Okeechobee Battlefield State Park, 3500 SE 38th Ave. (off U.S. 441 S.E.) in Okeechobee County. In 2021 it was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 event is planned for Feb. 26-27. Gates open at 10 a.m. and the battle re-enactment starts at 2 p.m. each day. Entry fee is \$10 per car. The Battle of Okeechobee, fought on Christmas Day 1837, involved more than 1,000 U.S. military and volunteer soldiers fighting against several hundred Seminole and Miccosukee warriors along the northern edge of Lake Okeechobee. The battle is considered a turning point in the war with full-scale attacks ceasing and the number of smaller skirmishes diminishing after the event.

### SPECKLED PERCH FESTIVAL

Most central Florida towns have a festival connected with something important to the area’s history. For Okeechobee, it’s the Speckled Perch Festival, which honors the great fishing on Lake Okeechobee, and Okeechobee’s title as Speckled Perch Capital of the World. When

>> See FESTIVALS on page 8

## On the cover ...

Cover photos, left to right, starting with the top row are:

- Okeechobee County entertainment features local rodeos. [Photo by Richard Marion]
- Fishing the Big O is popular with visitors and residents. [Courtesy photo]
- The Okeechobee Music Festival [Photo by Thornton Dreary/Insomniac Events]
- Traditional Native American dancing can be seen at the Battle of Okeechobee Re-enactment. [Photo by Richard Marion]
- Sunsets are favorite subject for area photographers. [Photo by Janelle Folk]
- Okeechobee residents enjoy a variety of high school sporting events. [Photo by Richard Marion]
- The annual lighted Christmas parade on Taylor Creek is an Okeechobee tradition. [Photo by Katrina Elsen]
- Pickleball has gained popularity as a sport for all ages. [Photo by Richard Marion]
- Tally Wilson shows off a Seminole jacket at the Battle of Okeechobee State Park. [Courtesy photo]



# Treasure Coast Hospice

A TREASURE HEALTH SERVICE



## We're Here When You Need Us



### HOSPICE CARE

Providing exceptional care to patients in their homes, hospitals, assisted living residences, and in our Inpatient Units.



### GRIEF SUPPORT

Grief counseling for our patients, their families, and anyone in our community who has experienced the loss of a loved one.



### PEDIATRIC CARE

Our specialized pediatric team helps families overcome the challenges of caring for a child with a serious illness.



### *Proudly Serving Okeechobee County*

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2022, Treasure Coast Hospice, a not-for-profit organization, provides compassionate hospice care and grief support services to patients and families in our community.



**772-403-4500**  
[www.TreasureHealth.org](http://www.TreasureHealth.org)

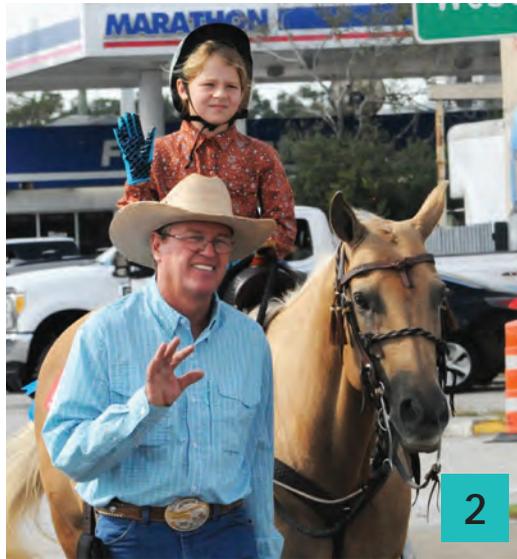
425 SW Park Street  
Okeechobee, FL

Licensed since 1982. Treasure Coast Hospice complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 772-403-4500. (Spanish) ATANSYON: Si w pale Kreyol Ayisyen, gen sévis éd pou lang ki disponib gratis pou ou. Rele 772-403-4500. (French Creole).

## FESTIVALS



1



2

1 - The American Legion Fair is usually held in January.

2 - Look for horses in the annual Labor Day Parade.

3 - The Edna Pearce Lockett Estate.

4 - Riders carry flags of rodeo sponsors.



3



4

the festival first started more than 50 years ago, it featured a fish fry that served up plenty of the tasty local favorite “Specks,” also known as black crappie. However, in the 1980s, changes in health department rules banned the public sale of any fish not commercially harvested. So, instead of speckled perch, festival goers enjoy a variety of other great food choices.

The 2022 Speckled Perch Festival, sponsored by Okeechobee Main Street, will be held in Flagler Park in downtown Okeechobee on March 12 and 13. The festival starts around 10 a.m. with arts and crafts, food booths and entertainment in Flagler Park. The Speckled Perch Festival Parade will be on Saturday at 10 a.m. For additional info, go online to [okeecheobemainstreet.org](http://okeecheobemainstreet.org).

### OKEECHOBEE COUNTY FAIR

The Okeechobee County Fair will be held March 16-21, at the Agri-Civic Center Fairgrounds, with entry at State Road 710.

The Okeechobee 4-H and FFA Livestock Show will be the week of March 12-20. Poultry show is March 12 at 9 a.m. Rabbit show is March 13 at 9 a.m. Dairy show is March 14 at 5 p.m. Swine showmanship is March 15 at 5 p.m. Swine show is March 16 at 5 p.m. Boer goat show is March 17 at 2 p.m. Steer show is March 17, at

2 p.m. Beef breeding show is March 18, at 5 p.m. The Livestock Sale is March 19, starting at 2 p.m.

March 15 is Dollar Day with \$1 entry. March 16 is canned food drive day; bring three cans of food and your fair entry is \$3. March 20 is \$2 entry.

Entertainment will include the Circus Hollywood, Hollywood Racing Pigs, Pirate Man Dan, helicopter rides, Giraffe Menagerie & Petting Zoo, and Pony Rides.

The Demolition Derby will be on Saturday, March 19 at 6 p.m.

For more information online, go to [okeecheobeeountyfair.com](http://okeecheobeeountyfair.com).

### HERITAGE ASSOCIATION FESTIVAL

Just over the Kissimmee River on U.S. 98, the Edna Pearce Lockett Estate will host the Heritage Association of Highlands County Festival on March 12 and 13. The event will include tours of the estate, guided tours of the house and entertainment by The Cowboy Circus, as well as food booths and other vendors. For more information, see the Heritage Association of Highlands County Facebook page.

### 4TH OF JULY

Celebrate our country’s independence with your friends and neighbors

>> See **FESTIVALS** on page 10



*Opening Doors is What We Do*



# Hazellief & Prevatt Realty

Experience, Integrity and Hard Work

## Residential ♦ Acreage ♦ Commercial



**David Hazellief**, Broker - (863) 610-1553  
**Sharon Prevatt**, Realtor - (863) 634-7069  
**Mark Goodbread**, Realtor - (863) 634-6999  
**Lucy Olivarez**, Office Manager  
**Carmen Guerrero**, Customer Service

1200 South Parrott Ave.  
Okeechobee, FL 34974

[www.century21okeechobee.com](http://www.century21okeechobee.com)  
[admin@c21okee.com](mailto:admin@c21okee.com)



(863) 763-2104 ♦ SE HABLA ESPAÑOL



- ❖ **Friendly Service**
- ❖ **Clean Restrooms**
- ❖ **Fresh Brewed Coffee**
- ❖ **Citgo TriCLEAN Gasoline**
- ❖ **Propane**
- ❖ **Diesel Fuel** (select locations)\*\*

**Serving Florida Neighborhoods  
for over 55 years**



### Hendry County Locations

Handy #58 1040 South SR 29, LaBelle 33935\*\*  
Handy #82 200 Old CR 78, LaBelle 33935  
Handy #85 1400 CR 78, LaBelle 33935

### Lee County Locations

Handy #86 21321 Palm Beach Blvd., Alva 33920\*\*  
Handy #87 3205 Lee Blvd., Lehigh Acres 33971\*\*

### Okeechobee County Locations

Handy #93 2790 Hwy 441 South, Okeechobee 34974\*\*

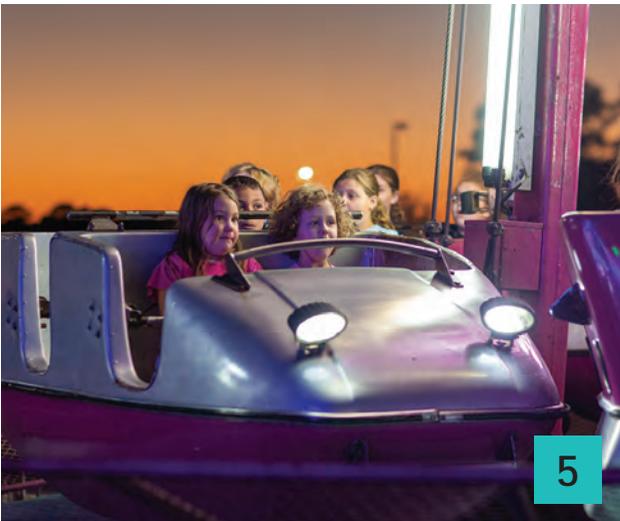
### Collier County Locations

Handy #50 417 New Market Rd W, Immokalee 34142  
Handy #65 501 15th St North, Immokalee 34142  
Handy #75 2902 Lake Trafford Rd, Immokalee 34142  
Handy #77 1812 Lake Trafford Rd, Immokalee 34142  
Handy #91 820 Main Street, Immokalee 34142  
Handy #92 120 W Delaware Ave, Immokalee 34142\*\*

- ❖ **Save on Fuel & Select Items Inside Store**
- ❖ **Earn Points on Every Purchase**  
Excluding Lottery, Money Orders & Gift Cards
- ❖ **Double Points Wednesdays**
- ❖ **Bonus Point on Select Items**
- ❖ **Monthly Swipe To Win Giveaway**

**Visit us on Facebook  
or on the web  
[www.Handyfoods.com](http://www.Handyfoods.com)**





5



6

5 - The county fair features rides.

6 - Tiny Mr. Speckled Perch in the 2020 parade.

7 - Entertainment at the county fair.

8 - The petting zoo is popular at the fair.



7



8

at the annual Independence Day Celebration at the Okeechobee Agri-Civic. For more information as it becomes available, see [southcentralfloridalife.com](http://southcentralfloridalife.com).

**LABOR DAY FESTIVAL**

Labor Day Weekend, Sept. 3 - Sept. 5, brings Okeechobee's Annual Labor Day Festival, with an arts and crafts festival in downtown Okeechobee, games for the whole family and a parade. This weekend also brings a rodeo at the Okeechobee Cattlemen's Rodeo Arena on U.S. 441 N. For more information on the parade and festival, go to [okeechobeemainstreet.org](http://okeechobeemainstreet.org).

**CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL**

Okeechobee's annual Top of the Lake Christmas Festival and Lighted Parade is usually held on the second Saturday of December in Flagler Park downtown Okeechobee.

The highlight of the festival is the lighted Christmas parade, which is held on Saturday evening at dark (around 6 p.m.) Festival rules require all entries be lighted — included the horses, which are festooned with colorful holiday lights and decorations. For additional information, go online to [okeechobeemainstreet.org](http://okeechobeemainstreet.org).

**AMERICAN LEGION FAIR**

The Okeechobee American Legion hosts a fair in January with carnival rides for the kids.

**YEEHAW MUSIC FESTIVAL**

The YeeHaw Music Festival is held in January in Okeechobee County. This unique bluegrass festival is held at the Agri-Civic Center in Okeechobee. Bluegrass music is held under the big top tent and goes on rain or shine. Spectator entrance is 4601 State Road 710 in Okeechobee County. For more information, go to [okeechobee-tdc.com/okeechobee-agri-civic-center](http://okeechobee-tdc.com/okeechobee-agri-civic-center).

**SOUR ORANGE FESTIVAL**

The Lakeport Sour Orange Festival is held each year in January at the Lakeport Community Center, 1239 Red Barn Road, State Road 78 between Moore Haven and Okeechobee. The festival features the traditional sour orange bake off and a rib cook off. The festival also features entertainment, a quilt show, a historical display, children's games, a small carnival for the kids, a display by the Lakeport Fire Department and sour orange pies. The highlight of the event is the chance to sample sour orange pie.

**NOTE:** Due to concerns about the COVID-19 virus, some events may be changed or postponed. Participants who attend the outdoor festivals are encouraged to be aware of the safety precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control such as frequent hand washing, maintaining 6 feet of social distance from those not in your household, and wearing a mask if you cannot maintain social distance. For updates, check the [southcentralfloridalife.com](http://southcentralfloridalife.com) website or the Lake Okeechobee News.

# AAA

Radiator & Air Conditioning

## FULL SERVICE AUTO CARE

Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

863.763.4033 

Not in any way affiliated with, the American Automobile Association, Inc

**GLADES**  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
"Neighbors Working for Neighbors"

### NEIGHBORS WORKING FOR NEIGHBORS



Stay plugged in. Connect with us online.



Get updates about programs,  
services, energy tips, outages  
and more

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GLADESELECTRICCOOPERATIVE](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GLADESELECTRICCOOPERATIVE)

863.946.6200  
GladesElectric.com

Office locations:  
214 Hwy 70 West, Lake Placid  
26733 Hwy 27, Moore Haven

Serving Florida's Heartland since 1945

# Lawrence Insurance Agency

## OVER 46 YEARS EXPERIENCE



*"PRICES YOU CAN AFFORD... SERVICES YOU CAN TRUST"*



We Specialize In:

- Auto - Home - Mobile Home
- Boats - Health - Life Insurance
- Farm & Ranch
- Workers' Comp
- Commercial Liability & Property



(863) 467-0600

2020 S. Parrott Avenue • Across from Walmart

[www.lawrenceinsuranceagency.com](http://www.lawrenceinsuranceagency.com)

# VIEW ART & HISTORY IN MURALS



Check out Okeechobee murals to see some of the local history.

A mural on the Okeechobee Freshman Campus Gymnasium depicts settlers Peter and Louisanna Raulerson arriving in Okeechobee, the Raulerson log cabin and a Seminole village.

Okeechobee Main Street has sponsored a series of murals including:

■ **Markham Canning Co. Mural**  
601 S.W. Park Street

• Railroad Arriving 1915, 100 Block of North Parrott Avenue

• Okeechobee Telephone Company, Century Link Building, North Parrott Avenue

■ **Murals Honoring Seminole Chief Osceola and the Battle of Okeechobee**  
114 S.W. 5th Avenue

• Looking Back Through The Windows Of Time, Osceola Avenue and State Road 70

• Okeechobee Hardware Store, 300 N.W. Park Street

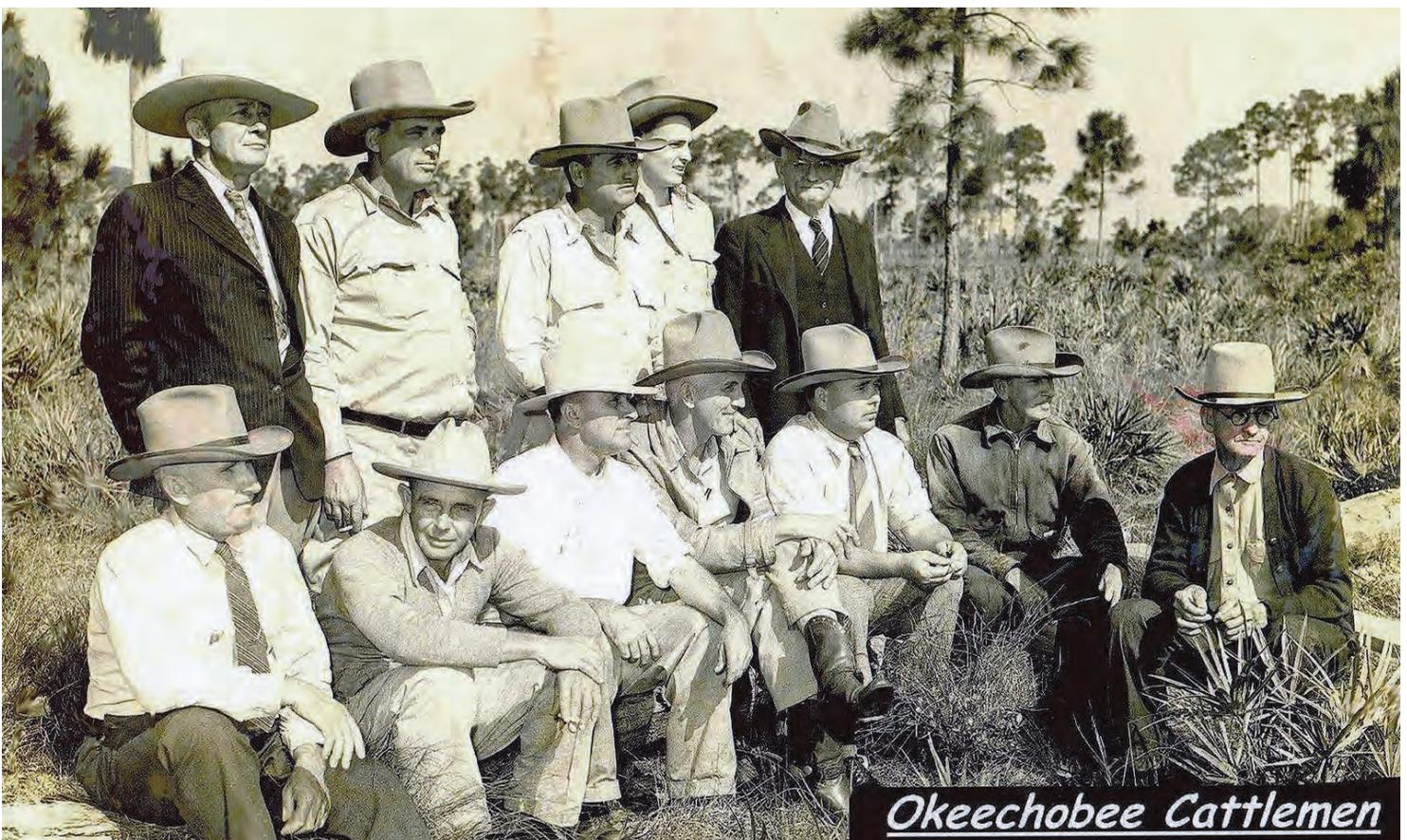
■ **Williams Family Cattle Drive, 1937**  
206 North Parrott Avenue



# HISTORY OF OKEECHOBEE

## 1928-1938

In the last installment of the “History of Okeechobee” (*in the 2021 Okeechobee Community Guide*), we focused on the boom time years of 1917-1927 and ended with this somewhat ominous statement: “This was an interesting time in Okeechobee. It appeared to be fulfilling the prophecy of the FEC Railroad officials in ‘becoming the Chicago of the South’ but there were storms on the horizon-literal and figuratively.”



■ The Okeechobee Cattlemen's Association photo from 1939 includes (back row) Joe Adkins, K.W. Waldron, Calvin Drawdy, Howard Drawdy, Sid Pearce, (front row) Austin Pearce, Phil Cason, Cossie Simmons, J.O. Pearce, Earnest Hilliard, John McLaughline and John Raulerson. [Courtesy photo]



Okeechobee Hardware after 1928 Hurricane



*Destroyed Home Near DeBerry Gardens  
1928 Hurricane Okeechobee, Florida*



■ The 1928 hurricane left damage in Okeechobee County. Pictured here is Okeechobee Hardware. [Courtesy photo]

■ This home near DeBerry Gardens was destroyed in the 1928 hurricane. [Courtesy photo]

■ More 1928 hurricane damage was photographed at Sand Cut. [Courtesy photo]

BY MAGI CABLE  
Okeechobee Historical Society

September 1928 put into motion an abundance of changes that would affect Okeechobee’s future. During the September 1928 hurricane around 40 people were reportedly killed in Okeechobee County, a relatively small number when compared to the death toll in other parts of the lake region. Most of the Okeechobee County victims lived at Utopia, Upthegrove Beach and Eagle Bay, small fishing communities on the lake shore. Flood damage was extensive on the north shore of the lake but the town of Okeechobee was over two miles from the waterfront, which gave it some degree of protection. Nevertheless, property damage throughout the city was quite heavy. This storm as well as the earlier one in 1926 ended the commercial fishing business that thrived on Taylor Creek (Onoshohatchee River). The aftermath of the storm lives on in many stories of people who survived the storm.

Annie Raulerson was interviewed in 1988 for the book “Strolling Down Country Roads” and shared her hurricane story. “My father-in-law, Lewis Raulerson, made us all go down to the store (Raulerson’s Department Store on the corner of SW 5th Avenue and Park Street, where it still stands) because he felt like it was the strongest building in town. We weren’t the only ones there. There were just so many people, you could hardly walk in there.

# ELI'S WESTERN WEAR



OFFERING BRANDS LIKE :



AND SO MUCH MORE!

ARCADIA  
1011 EAST OAK ST

OKEECHOBEE  
907 NW PARK ST

DUNDEE  
27995 HWY 27

[WWW.ELISWESTERNWEAR.COM](http://WWW.ELISWESTERNWEAR.COM)

# ELI'S TRAILER SALES



908 NW PARK STREET 863-467-4620  
[WWW.ELISTRAILERSALES.NET](http://WWW.ELISTRAILERSALES.NET)

## HISTORY

There was no flooding in the middle of town but ended where the city limits are now.” The Red Cross then came to town to help rebuild homes and businesses. President Hoover visited Okeechobee shortly after the storm and vowed to have a levee constructed around the lake in order to prevent future loss of life.

Nationally, another storm was brewing when Wall Street

**In 1928, a crowd gathered in front of the Southland Hotel to greet President Hoover.**  
[Courtesy photo]



crashed in October of 1929 and the “Great Depression” began. The Bank of Okeechobee which is on the corner of NW Fifth Avenue and SR 70, failed in 1926 followed by the closing of The People’s Bank, which is where the Okeechobee Utility Authority offices are now, in 1929.

**The Gilbert Theatre hosted annual Christmas parties for local children.**  
[Courtesy photo]

Okeechobee did not have any financial institutions for many years. A dike around Lake Okeechobee, which was financed by federal and state funds, was completed in 1937. This project is also credited with helping to temper the effects of the Great Depression in this area, due to the jobs it helped create. Another building project that was provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of the New Deal is the auditorium that sits between the Okeechobee County School Administration building and the Freshman Campus.

The ‘30s in Okeechobee were rather calm with a couple of notable events. Gil Culbreth, Sr. opened his Chevrolet dealership in 1933 on the corner of State Road 70 and Fourth Avenue and then added the Gilbert

Theater in 1934. One of the fondest memories of many Okeechobee citizens was the establishment of the annual Christmas parties at the theater. Every child in Okeechobee was invited to attend where they would receive a brown paper sack with a toy, orange and candy as well as watch a free movie. This tradition continued until 1968, when the theater closed.

Okeechobee also had a claim to fame with the appointment of the first woman sheriff in Florida, Eugenia Hollingsworth Simmons. Her husband Claude was the sheriff but died during

his term of office and the governor appointed his widow to serve out the term.

The beef cattle industry came into its own during these years with a move to purebred cattle from range cattle. The Okeechobee Cattleman’s Association was formed and John Olan Pearce, Sr. served as the first president.

The ‘30s may have been considered “calm” in Okeechobee especially when compared to some of the news from the US. Names that appeared in news accounts included John Dillinger, the Barker Gang, the deaths of Pretty Boy Floyd and Baby Face Nelson, Bonnie and Clyde and the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby. The calmness would not last as war is coming in the next decade.



# HISTORIC BUILDINGS OFFER LINK TO PAST

For those interested in local history, Okeechobee's historic buildings offer a link to the past.

- **The Okeechobee County Courthouse**, 304 Northwest Second St., Okeechobee, was constructed in 1926. This Mediterranean-Revival style Courthouse now holds county offices. It was designed by architect George Gaynor Hyde of Miami. Due to the collapse of the Florida Land Boom during its construction, a central dome that was originally planned was never built. After the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane, its hallways were used as a temporary morgue. The courthouse originally had an open breezeway through the center front of the first floor. It was later enclosed to add a county commission meeting room. After the new Okeechobee County Judicial Center was built in 2005, the old courthouse was renovated. County commission now meets in the upstairs room that was originally the courtroom.

The downstairs breezeway area was cleared of the old commission meeting room, but glassed in for security and weather protection. In 1989, the Okeechobee County Courthouse was listed in "A Guide to Florida's Historic Architecture," published by the University of Florida Press.

- **The Freedman-Raulerson House**, 600 South Parrott Avenue, a two-story, eight room house was built in 1923 as a home by Abraham and Maud

Freedman. It was later owned by the Raulerson family. This mission/Spanish revival building was added to the National Historic Register in 1985.

- **Okeechobee City Hall**, 55 S.E. Third Street, was built in 1922. The Spanish-style building was designed by architect William Hatcher.

- **The Okeechobee Historic Schoolhouse Museum**, 1850 U.S. 98 N., was built in 1909. It was used as a school until 1916 when a new two-story red brick school was built. The original school was used as a private home off and on until the 1970s. In 1976, it was moved to its current location to be used as a museum.

- **The Battle of Okeechobee Battlefield site**, four miles southwest of Okeechobee on U.S. 441 is part of the Florida Parks System. The battlefield was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966.

- **Okeechobee Livestock Market**, 1055 U.S. 98 N., was built in 1937. As Florida's largest livestock market, it reflects the importance of the cattle industry to the region.

- **The First Methodist Episcopal Church**, 200 N.W. Second St., a red brick Gothic Revival structure, was built in 1924.

- **The Bank of Okeechobee**, on State Road 70 and Osceola Avenue, was built in 1926, but was only a bank for a short time. In 2012, Okeechobee Main Street sponsored the mural project "Looking Back Through The Windows Of Time" which illustrates some of the building's uses over the years.

- **The Raulerson Log Cabin**,



The Okeechobee Historic Schoolhouse Museum



Okeechobee Livestock Market



The Freedman-Raulerson House

811 S.W. Second Avenue, is the homesite of the first Euro-American settlers to the area, Peter and Louisiana Raulerson. The couple moved southeast from Basinger to "The Bend," a region along Onoshohatchee River (Taylor Creek) and a few miles north of Lake Okeechobee, in October 1896. They first constructed a barn to house both their family and livestock. In 1899, a group of friends arrived and, in three days, helped the couple construct a two-room log cabin. Elements of the original log cabin are preserved within the structure of a new home, built for the family in the 1920s. In 2016, the Okeechobee Historical Society purchased the building to preserve this historical site. Inside the house, the newer walls have been removed to expose the original logs.



# CENSUS INFORMATION FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Population estimate as of April 1, 2020 ..... 39,644

## AGE RANGE:

- Age 5 and under: 6.1%
- Ages 6 to 18: 15.1%
- Ages 19-64: 58.7%
- Age 65 and older: 20.1%

## SEX

- Females: 46.3%
- Males: 53.7%

## RACE AND ORIGIN

- White, non-Hispanic: 62.5%
- Black or African-American, non-Hispanic: 9.0%
- American Indian: 1.5%
- Asian: 1.0%
- Hispanic or Latino: 26.0%

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

- Veterans: 3,157
- Foreign born persons: 12%

## HOUSING

- Housing Units (as of July 1, 2019): 18,788
- Owner-occupied housing: 72.2%
- Median value of owner-occupied housing units (2015-2019): \$106,000

- Median rent (2015-2019): \$772

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

- Living in the same house 1 year ago: 91.7%
- Language other than English spoken at home: 22.7%
- Person per household (2015-2019): 2.7
- Households with a computer: 82.8%
- Households with internet: 61.5%

## EDUCATION

- High school graduate or higher (percentage of persons age 25+): 77.2%
- Bachelor's degree or higher (percentage of persons age 25+): 11.3%

## HEALTH

- Persons with a disability, under age 65: 12.4%
- Persons without health insurance, under age 65: 22.0%

## TRANSPORTATION

- Mean travel time to work: 24.4 minutes

Land area in square miles: 768.91

Population per square mile: 52.0

SOURCE: U.S. Census

Photo above: Lightning strike on Lake Okeechobee, photo by Becky Driscoll



**Cooling Refrigeration SERVICES**  
Heating & A/C Service  
863.467.4733




**24 hour emergency service**  
Residential [www.crsokee.com](http://www.crsokee.com) Commercial



**ADVANCED Spine & Joint MEDICAL CENTER**

**JENNIFER COOK DC**  
**CRAIG JOCHUM APRN**

**CHIROPRACTIC CARE**  
**HUMAN CELLULAR TISSUE THERAPY**  
**PRP**  
**VITAMIN INJECTIONS**  
**MASSAGE**

**863-763-4320**  
208 NE 3RD AVE, OKEECHOBEE  
[advancedspineandjointmedicalcenter.com](http://advancedspineandjointmedicalcenter.com)



**ADRON FENCE**  
*Fencing you in since 1962*

(800) 282-5172  
[www.adronfence.com](http://www.adronfence.com)

- Fully Licensed & Insured -  
Servicing the Treasure Coast and Lake Okeechobee

**1-800-282-5172**  
**[www.adronfence.com](http://www.adronfence.com)**

**FREE ESTIMATES!**

- FENCE REPAIR
- FENCE INSTALLATION
- VINYL
- CHAIN LINK
- GATES
- PRIVACY
- COMMERCIAL

# OKEECHOBEE OFFERS PLENTY OF YOUTH SPORTS AND ATHLETICS OPTIONS



**T**here are plenty of athletic opportunities in Okeechobee, no matter what sport your child is interested in.

The Okeechobee County School District offers a number of opportunities to participate in team and individual sports. In addition to school sports, there are community and travel teams.

Volleyball enthusiasts can join the Chobee Volleyball Academy. The group is a nonprofit organization designed to expose young girls to the game of volleyball. The league serves a variety of ages. They compete in tournaments around the state, and in 2018, the group competed in the AAU Girls Junior National Volleyball Championship. More information can be obtained on Facebook. at [chobeevolleyballacademy](https://www.facebook.com/chobeevolleyballacademy).

The Okeechobee Bulls Youth Athletic League is part of the National Pop Warner Football Program. They play teams from the surrounding areas during fall. Home games are held at the Okeechobee Sports Complex. Divisions are 6 years and up, 8 years and up, 10 years and up, 12 years and up, and 14 years and up. The Bulls Youth Athletic League can be contacted by email at [obyal.pw@gmail.com](mailto:obyal.pw@gmail.com).

Okeechobee County Parks and Recreation provides leagues for youth soccer and basketball. Youth basketball for ages 6-14 takes place from January through March. Youth soccer for ages 5-13 lasts for up to 12 weeks between October and December.

Okeechobee County also provides a summer play camp and a summer swim league from June to August. Adults can also join softball leagues that run twice per year, between April and June, and again between October and

December. Adults also can join a flag football league that plays games in January and February. The Okeechobee Citizens Recreational Association (OCRA) offers boys baseball and T-Ball, as well as, girls fast pitch softball at the Okeechobee County Sports Complex for participants 5-14 years of age. This program begins in March and ends in June. OCRA also offers boys tackle and flag football as well girls cheerleading at the Okeechobee County Sports Complex for participants 5-14 years of age. This program begins in October and runs through December. For more information contact OCRA at (863) 801-7505.

Chobee Nation basketball provides travel ball experience for aspiring basketball players. There are teams for boys in the fifth grade to eighth grade and girls 12 and under. There are other teams for high school age children. The Chobee Nation high school boys' basketball team won back-to-back United States Specialty Sports Association national championships in 2016 and 2017. More information can be found on Facebook at [facebook.com/chobenationbasketball](https://www.facebook.com/chobenationbasketball).

The Shockwaves Summer Swim Team program is for swimmers ages 5-18 and is held at the Okeechobee County Sports Complex Swimming Pool. For more information on this program along with start times, please contact the swimming pool at (863) 467-7667.

The Treasure Coast offers numerous travel ball opportunities in sports that include softball, soccer, baseball and volleyball that many of our local athletes take part in. There is normally a league charge. These teams travel across the state, which challenges the athlete with more practice time, more instruction and better competition.

**Okeechobee  
Family Practice, PA**

Dr. Leland M. Heller  
Author of two  
mental health books:  
"Biological Unhappiness  
Finding Out What's Wrong  
and Fixing It"  
and "Life at the Border"

**MENTAL HEALTH,  
MEDICAL MARIJUANA  
AND PRIMARY CARE**

**Professional Services**

Mood Swings • Unstable Relationships  
Don't Want To Live • Self Hate  
Feeling Numb • Emptiness  
Anger • Self-Destructive • Impulsive

Also Available: Spravato Treatment - Resistant Depression,  
Medically Assisted Weight Loss, Boxtan Migraine & Cosmetic

"We all want happiness, peace, love, joy, stability, health, and prosperity.  
We can help you attain these goals, even if you believe it isn't possible.

**Call today! 863.467.8771** Se habla español  
Saturday appointments available

biologicalunhappiness.net | okeechobeefamilypractice.com  
1713 Hwy 441 North, Suite D, Okeechobee, FL 34972

**MI FAMILIA**  
MEXICAN RESTAURANT  
217 SW PARK ST  
OKEECHOBEE, FL

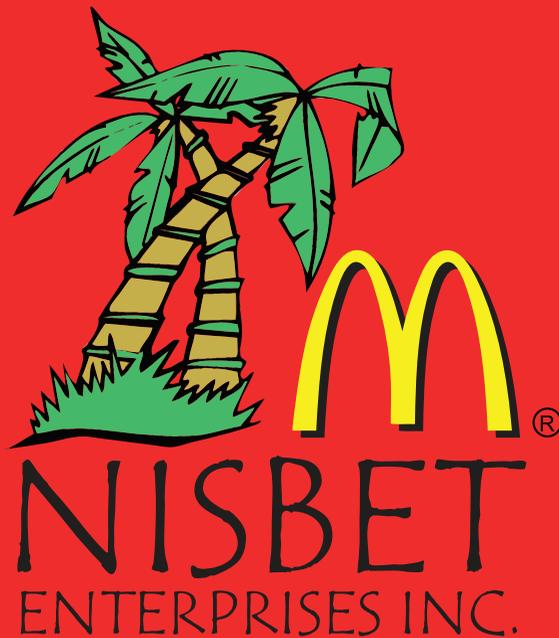
**MOST POPULAR ITEMS**  
\*\*\*\*\*  
**TACOS**  
Including our famous  
Barbacoa Street Tacos!

**BURRITO BOWL**  
**ENCHILADA PLATE**  
**SAUCY BURRITOS**

A WIDE VARIETY  
OF BEER!

JOIN US TODAY AND BE A PART OF  
MI FAMILIA

CALL TODAY  
(863) 484-8277



**863.612.0333**

Indiantown • Belle Glade • Clewiston • LaBelle  
Ft. Myers • Lake Placid • Arcadia • Okeechobee

# CATCH SOME BIG FISH ON THE BIG LAKE

Lake Okeechobee, the second-largest freshwater lake within the continental United States, is a vast shallow lake with a surface area covering 730 square miles. “Okeechobee” comes from the Seminole words meaning “big and water.”

Lake Okeechobee has been a premier fishing destination for decades, and multiple fishing tournaments are held on the lake every year. Major League Fishing opened its Toyota Series season at Lake Okeechobee in February this year. The tournament launched out of Roland & Mary Ann Martin’s Marina & Resort in Clewiston.

Lake O opened the year at just over 15 feet, which opens new opportunities for fishermen.

“The water is extremely high – it has been for the last six months or so,” said Power-Pole pro Darrell Davis of Dover, Florida, who has three top-10 finishes in FLW tournaments on Lake Okeechobee. “The fish are pretty scattered, and the high water has definitely

opened up quite a few new areas.”

In 2017, Hurricane Irma swept across South Florida and Lake Okeechobee, ripping out a lot of vegetation and raising the lake level to around 17 feet. After a much-needed dry spell in late 2018 and early 2019 the lake level dropped to around 12 feet by February 2019.

The lower water levels in the lake affected navigation throughout 2019, but proved to be good for the lake overall. Florida Audubon Society’s Okeechobee science coordinator, Dr. Paul Gray, explained that the lower water level allows sunlight to reach the lake bed and help regrow vegetation. New vegetation would provide a spawning ground for fish species during the wet season and cover for those same fish as they grow and increase in size.

“I was in a meeting with scientists from the district and the Florida Wildlife Commission, and it was unanimous in the room that everybody wanted the lake to get to 11 feet because that’s



THIS LAKE HAS THE MOST DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM OF ANY I HAVE EVER SEEN ... IT'S SPECIAL

Mike Krause,  
Owner of Okeechobee  
Fishing Headquarters

what it is going to take to get those plants back,” said Dr. Gray. “I know lower levels make navigation inconvenient and that’s unfortunate, but we gotta take our medicine to get well.”

Derrick Moore, tournament director of the Lake Okeechobee Crappie Series, echoed those thoughts by Dr. Gray.

“I feel like the future of the fishing on our lake is depending upon the management and treating of the lake and vegetation,” explained Mr. Moore. “A

healthy balance of mechanical harvesting and spraying areas that can’t be reached by mechanical harvesting is essential to the overall future of fishing on the lake. The lake needs vegetation to act as natural filters for harmful substances that enters the lake from the Kissimmee River. Likewise these fish need vegetation for a number of reasons; shelter, food and more so for crappie- spawning areas.”

Mr. Moore had a few tried and true tips for anglers looking to get in some fishing on the lake in the upcoming year.

“Lake Okeechobee is one of the best fisheries in the world,”

said Mr. Moore. “Early in the year the crappie move into the shallow parts of the lake in vegetation, this holds true for the entire lake, whether you are fishing the south end near Pahokee, the west side near Lakeport, north side in Okeechobee, and the east side near Port Mayaca. You can find some nice quality and quantity when jigging in the vegetation and using minnows around the outside edges. A nice long light rod and small reel is ideal catching crappie on Okeechobee and some jigs that can be purchased from any bait and tackle store around the lake. These method is used by majority of the anglers who compete in our Lake Okeechobee Crappie Series.”

One of the things that makes fishing on Okeechobee so special is just its sheer size. With the lake being nearly half the size of the state of Rhode Island, the ecosystem of the lake can be wide-ranging.

“This lake has the most diverse ecosystem of any I have ever seen,” said Okeechobee Fishing Headquarters owner Mike Krause. “And I’ve fished in Florida all my life. You have 730 square miles of water and you can go from one side of the lake where it’s solid rock to another side where it’s nothing but muck, then you will find another corner that’s sand. So many species and different types of wildlife. It’s special.”



# MANY FUN RECREATION OPTIONS IN OKEECHOBEE

Okeechobee is host to a number of recreational facilities that are suited for a wide variety of different interests.

- For families looking for a quiet place to relax and hold a family event or picnic, consider the **Alton Chandler Civic Center** at 20350 U.S. 98 N. in Basinger. They provide an enclosed building available for rent, a picnic area with pavilion and a playground.

- The **Douglas Brown Community Center** at 826 N.E. 16th Ave. includes an enclosed building, a picnic area with pavilion, a playground and multiple basketball courts.

- The **Okeechobee Civic Center** at 1750 U.S. 98 N. includes fields for sports activities and an enclosed building for weddings and other events.

- The **Okeechobee Historical Park** across the street provides a historical museum and the old school house.

- Team sports are played at the **OK Softball Field complex** at 950 N.W. 23rd Lane. This facility includes two lighted softball fields, a sand volleyball court, restrooms and a fenced playground.

- Various Okeechobee school facilities are also available for rent for recreational purposes. They include gymnasiums at **Okeechobee High School**, 2800 U.S. 441 N., **Osceola Middle School** at 825 S.W. 28th St., and **Yearling Middle School** at 925 N.W. 23rd Lane.

- The **Okeechobee County Sports**

**Complex** is the centerpiece of Okeechobee's recreational facilities. The facility at 640 N.W. 27th Lane includes a swimming pool and bathhouse, four baseball and softball fields for youth, a football and soccer multi-purpose field, two basketball courts, eight tennis courts, a picnic pavilion and the Wooden Jungle playground.

- The **Okeechobee Recreational Park and Skate Park** at 350 N.W. Sixth Ave. is located in the City of Okeechobee. It includes a picnic pavilion, playground area, open space, a tennis court, skate park and a baseball field.

- The **Practice Field complex** is a large area of fields at 3001 N.W. 10th Terrace. It includes baseball, softball, football and soccer fields.

- **Willie Alderman Field** at 424 N.E. 15th Ave. provides a field for adult softball and youth baseball with fence and dugouts.

- Okeechobee's **Agri-Civic Center** at 4601 State Road 710 also includes fields for soccer and places to jog and walk.

- Boating, fishing and other activities are welcomed at several facilities in Okeechobee. The **Clif Betts Jr. Lakeside Recreation Area** (once called Lock 7) at 200 SR 78 W. includes boat ramps, a fishing pier, parking areas, a kayak rental station, and access to the scenic trail.

- The **Okee-Tantie Campground and Marina** at 10430 SR 78 W.

includes a parking area, open fields, marina and boat ramps. It also has an amphitheater.

- The **Scott Driver Recreation Area** at 10101 S.R. 78 W. includes an enclosed area for meetings, parking area and boat ramps. It is the Okeechobee Fishing Tournament Headquarters.

- Other locations for boaters include the **Kissimmee River C-38 complex** at 8400 S.W. 99th Drive.

- **Platts Bluff Park** at 15925 N.W. 56th St. also includes a boat ramp.

- The **Nubbin Slough, Rim Canal facility** at 6206 U.S. 441 S.E. includes a parking area, boat ramp, fishing area and access to the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail.

- Also available is the **Henry Creek Boat Ramp** at 10654 U.S. 98 S., which provides access to the rim canal and fishing opportunities.

- The **Taylor Creek boat ramp** at 700 S.E. Fourth St. is a popular area for boaters.

- The **Taylor Creek Stormwater Treatment Area** is a popular spot for hikers, walkers and bicyclists. It is located at 7201 U.S. 441 N. It has three miles of hiking and bicycling trails.

- The **Kissimmee River public use area** includes 30,000 acres of public recreation in Highlands, Okeechobee and Glades counties, with a trailhead on U.S. 98 in Basinger. Camping, hiking and hunting opportunities are available at various times of the year.

Ag 98 is a full service equipment, livestock and enclosed cargo trailer dealer.



Contact us today for all your trailer needs!

Truck Accessories & Trailer Parts and Service: 863-763-3555  
Trailer Sales: 863-763-3033

455 US HWY 98 North Okeechobee, Florida

Hours: Monday thru Friday 8:00-5:00PM • [www.Ag98TrailerSales.com](http://www.Ag98TrailerSales.com)



Residential Homes  
Vacant Land



Lake   
Real Estate

Commercial  
Properties



Jody Carter  
863-634-1285  
Lic. R.E. Agent  
[JodyCarter.Okeechobee@gmail.com](mailto:JodyCarter.Okeechobee@gmail.com)

Rick Gonzalez  
863-801-7674  
Lic. R.E. Agent  
[Rg.FloridaRealtor@gmail.com](mailto:Rg.FloridaRealtor@gmail.com)

Vivia Ware  
772-284-0929  
Lic. R.E. Agent

Jim Jones  
863-634-9706  
Owner/ Lic. R.E. Broker  
[Jrj1009@aol.com](mailto:Jrj1009@aol.com)

Sonya Baxely  
863-623-8068  
Lic. R.E. Agent  
[SBaxely@gmail.com](mailto:SBaxely@gmail.com)

Rhonda Patrick  
304-787-4429  
Lic. R.E. Agent  
[Rhonda92970@icloud.com](mailto:Rhonda92970@icloud.com)

Gordon Skellett  
561-335-0260  
Lic. R.E. Agent

**WE ARE HERE TO HELP...**

*From your first Home,  
to your Dream Home!*

Office: (863) 763-5253 • Website: [www.LakeOre.com](http://www.LakeOre.com)  
Address: 110 NE 3rd. Ave, Okeechobee, FL 34972



**1** Administrative Annex  
450 US Hwy 98 N



**2** Property Appraiser,  
Tax Collector &  
Driver's License  
Office  
409 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue



**3** City Police  
Department  
50 SE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue



**4** City Hall  
55 SE 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue



**5** Emergency  
Operations Center  
707 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Street



**6** County  
Courthouse  
304 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street



**7** DCF & Health  
Department  
1690 NW 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue



**8** Public Library  
206 SW 16<sup>th</sup> Street



**9** Judicial Center  
304 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street



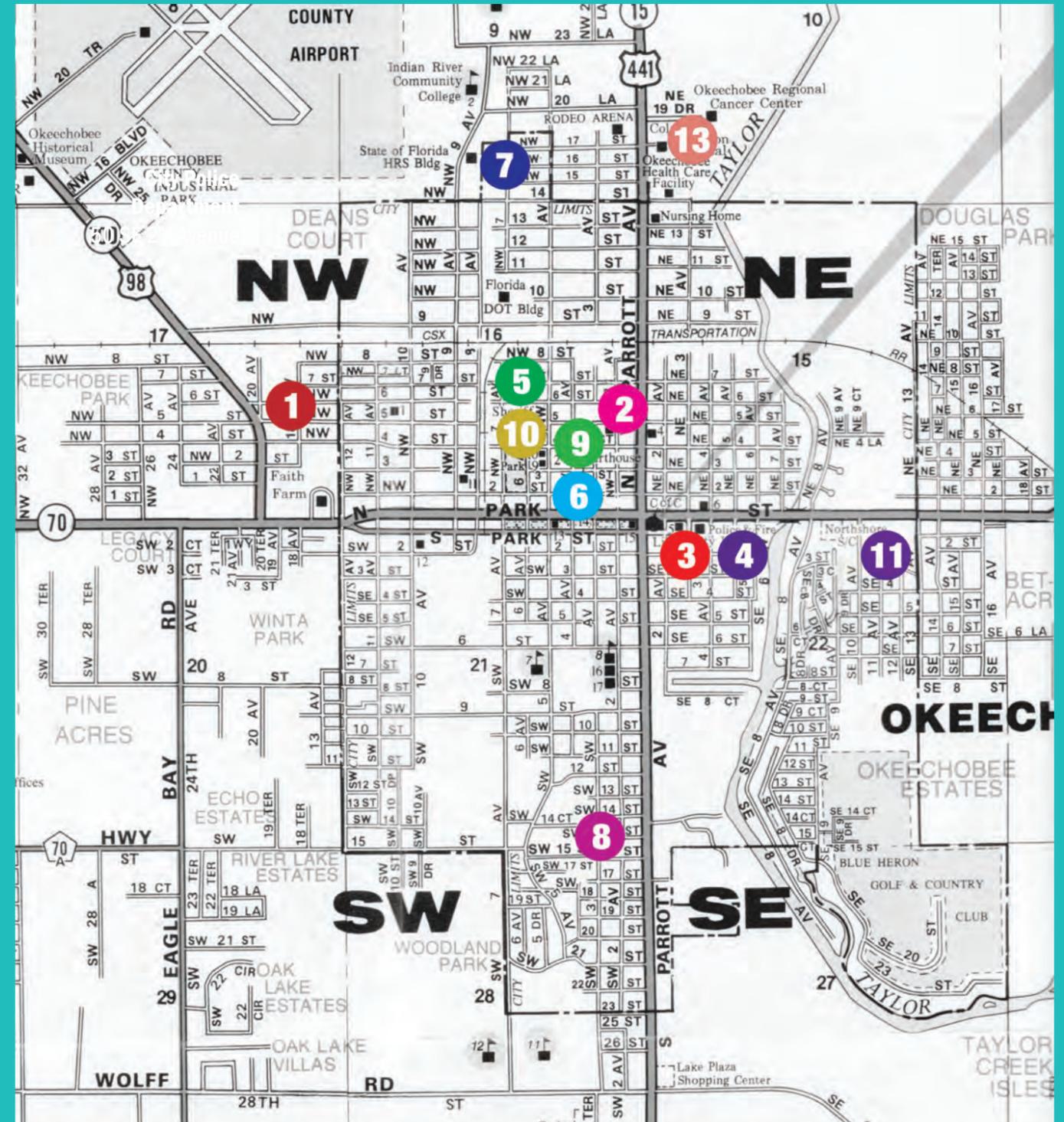
**10** Sheriff's  
Department  
504 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street



**11** US Post Office  
1000 SR 70 East



**12** HCA Raulerson  
Hospital  
1796 Hwy 441 N



# OKEECHOBEE FEATURES PREMIER SHOOTING SPORTS OPTIONS

The wide open spaces of Okeechobee County are home to some of the best shooting sports facilities in South Florida.

Okeechobee County has a variety of options for those who enjoy shooting sports with clay shoots, target competitions, cowboy action and hunting.



**Quail Creek Plantation**, 12399 N.E. 224th Street, is a pristine wilderness where sportsmen revel at the sight of pointing dogs racing back and forth across expansive fields, and the suspense of walking into the feathered whirlwind of a rising covey. The plantation also offers sport shooting on two scenic, 14-station fully automatic clay shooting courses.

**O.K. Corral Gun Club**, 9449 N.E. 48th St., has 29 shooting stations with sporting clay courses, covered 5-stand, wobble deck, covered pistol/

rifle ranges, competition shooting park and even an Old West street with Cowboy Action shooting. Throughout the year O.K. Corral will host multiple National Sporting Clays Association registered shoots.

**Center Mass Gun Range**, 1934 Center St., is Okeechobee's only indoor gun range and features many climate-controlled shooting lanes. The range also features seven simulation rooms where shooters can take turns playing through several computer-generated

scenarios such as a zombie apocalypse and an Old West shoot-out.

**Okeechobee Shooting Sports**, 7055 N.E. 48th St., has rifle and pistol ranges, with five 5-stand sporting clays fields, trap and skeet fields and shooting galleries.

Duck hunting, hog hunting and alligator hunting are also popular in Okeechobee, with some hunting allowed on public land as well as hunting with permission on private property. For more on Florida hunting seasons, licenses and permits, visit [myfwc.com](http://myfwc.com).



*Legacy*

*Real Estate of Florida*



*Lasha Boree*

Broker  
Certified International  
Property Specialist  
863-697-1712

 LegacyRealEstateFL

*View our listings online at*  
legacyrealtyfl.com

**Office: 863-484-8588**  
101 SW 3rd Ave. • Okeechobee

# Quik-Change Oil & Lube Service Center

**DRIVE IN • NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED**

***We Service Motor Homes***

**Transmission Flushes &  
Differential changes available**

**Most Major Brands Of Oil Available  
Diesel air & Fuel Filters**

Motor Vehicle repair #MV2106

***Family owned and operated since 1987***



Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:00 - 5:30  
Saturday 8:00 - 12 noon

708 N. Parrott Avenue 863-467-5599

## ***Okeechobee - OUR HOMETOWN***

**Thank you for trusting us  
with your health since  
1991. You have been a  
blessing to our family.**

Our Services

Chiropractic | Massage Therapy  
Spinal Decompression  
Laser Therapy | Physicals



*Kevin and Vicki Platt and family*



**PlattChiropractic**

280 SW 32nd Street  
Phone: (863)763-2400



■ Ranches provide critical habitat for Florida Wildlife. In 2021 the Florida Legislature approved the addition of more cattle ranches to the conservation lands program. Cow Creek Ranch part of the Rural & Family Lands Protection Program, will remain a working cattle ranch while protecting a corridor linkage on the east side of Lake Okeechobee. [Photo by Carlton Ward, Path of the Panther]



■ Calf roping requires a partnership between the cowboy and his horse. [Photo by Richard Marion]



■ The Cowtown Rodeo, held in March, includes Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association (PRCA) events such as steer wrestling. [Photo by Richard Marion]

# OKEECHOBEE COUNTY IS CATTLE COUNTRY

Cattle have been an important part of Okeechobee's economy since the first settlers arrived in the Big Lake area more than 100 years ago. Modern Okeechobee County is still cattle country. It is listed as one of the top three counties in Florida with the most cattle, and among the Top 10 in the country.

dedicated to the mission of "Keeping History Alive," by educating through demonstration, the Old Florida Cracker Pioneer ways of agriculture, animal husbandry, and respect for the land as well as the hardships and joys of life on the original frontier.

Cowboy heritage is also evidenced in the popular local rodeos, which are ample in Okeechobee.

### RANCH RODEO

The Pete Clemons Memorial Ranch Rodeo is held in July at the Okeechobee Cattlemen's Arena in celebration of the "National Day of the American Cowboy."

Ranch rodeos attract working cowboys who currently work on South Florida ranches. The events in a ranch rodeo are based on actual skills the cowboy uses to work the herd, such as: calf roping, team "doctoring," team sorting, wild cow milking, relay race, double mugging and bronc riding. In these events, the team works together to perform a task similar to those done on the ranch, just like cowboys work together on ranches.

Those competing in ranch rodeos use the same equipment and tack that cowboys use in everyday work.

If these rules seem confusing, not to worry, for those at a ranch rodeo who are new to the sport, the announcer explains the rules as the rodeo unfolds.

Okeechobee County ranches compete at area rodeos to earn points to qualify for the state competition in Kissimmee and ultimately the national competition.

### OKEECHOBEE COWTOWN RODEO

According to the Professional Rodeo Cowboy's Association (PRCA), legend has it that American rodeo was born on July 4, 1869 when two groups of cowboys from neighboring ranches met in Deer Trail, Colo., to settle an argument over who was the best at performing everyday ranching tasks. That competition is considered to be the first rodeo, which evolved into rodeo as we know it today.

PRCA cowboys compete in rodeos all over the country, earning points and money that qualifies them for the national championship event in Las Vegas, NV.

The Okeechobee Cattlemen's Association produces the Okeechobee Cowtown Rodeo every March as their annual fundraiser. Professional cowboys and cowgirls from all corners of the nation make Okeechobee their home for the weekend and compete for prizes and money. This year's Cowtown Rodeo will be March 12 and 13 at the Okeechobee

While today's cowboys take advantage of modern agribusiness technology, it's not unusual to see a cowboy on horseback separating cattle from the herd, much as the pioneers did in the days of the Florida Cracker Trail cattle drives.

The Florida Cracker Trail is a 120-mile long cattle path that passes through Okeechobee County. The trail is now designated by brown state signs, to remind locals and visitors alike that historical state-wide cattle drives once took place along the route. These days, the Florida Cracker Trail Association hosts an annual cross-state ride along the "Cracker Trail" to showcase, educate, and help preserve the importance of Florida's role cattle and agriculture. For information on how to join the ride, go online to [www.crackertrail.org](http://www.crackertrail.org).

The Florida Cracker Trail Association is a non-profit organization of volunteers

Cattlemen's open-aired, historical grand stand arena on U.S. 441 North.

On Saturday and Sunday, gates open at 1 p.m., with Mutton Bustin' at 2 p.m. and the rodeo at 2:30 p.m. Rodeo contestants will show-off their athleticism, bravery and skill at an annual event that provides wholesome fun and entertainment for the entire family. The best-of-the best on the PRCA (Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association) circuit will be in Okeechobee, for one weekend only, scoring points and money in hopes of advancing their careers on to the year-end National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas, Nevada.

### FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL RODEO & JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RODEO

Okeechobee County also has active youth in high school rodeo and junior rodeo events. The Florida High School Rodeo Association hosts competitions for rodeo teams from Florida High Schools. Rodeo contestants travel around the state competing in a series at high schools to earn points toward their state rankings. The top 15 contestants in each event will compete in the state finals, and the top four to finish in each event at the state level go on to compete in the National High School Rodeo Finals.

The Florida Junior High School Rodeo Association is a division of the National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA) for sixth, seventh and eighth graders. The top 20 kids in each event at the end of the season move on to compete at the Florida State Finals. The top four in each event after state finals then have the option of moving on to compete at the national finals.

June 9-12 are the dates for the Florida High School Rodeo finals, which will be held at the Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center, 4601 SR 710. Spectators are admitted free. For more information on high school rodeo, go online to [fhsra.com](http://fhsra.com).

### EXTREME BULL RIDING

Another type of rodeo found in Okeechobee County is known as X-treme bull riding.

The rules are simple: Place a wiry cowboy on the back of a hulking, snorting temperamental 2,000-pound bull and see if he can stay on for an eternal eight seconds ... with only one hand strapped to the bull.

For updates on rodeos in the Okeechobee area, check the [southcentralfloridalife.com](http://southcentralfloridalife.com) website or the weekly Lake Okeechobee News.

# LAKE O OFFERS GREAT BIKE RIDING

The Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST) continues to be an important resource when it comes to hiking and cycling in the Okeechobee area.

Designated as part of the Florida National Scenic Trail in 1993, the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail is an approximately 110-mile trail encircling the lake. More than half of the trail is paved, and the remainder consists of a two-track gravel roadway on top of the 35-foot high Herbert Hoover Dike.

The height above the surrounding area provides hikers, bikers, and wildlife watchers with scenic vistas of the lake. The trail is open year round and can be utilized for short day hikes or loop hikes.

There is a map available from the Army Corps of Engineers that identifies where the closures are, and it can be found online at the following site:

[saj.usace.army.mil/Portals/44/docs/Recreation/LOST%20map%20508.pdf](http://saj.usace.army.mil/Portals/44/docs/Recreation/LOST%20map%20508.pdf)

A few of the access points to LOST on the south of the lake are impacted to ongoing construction on the dike. Construction projects that close the path are primarily to replace old culverts that were put in place when the dike was constructed in the 1930s, and it seems that to replace a culvert is about a two- or three-year project.

Still, the LOST trail continues to be a great place to get out and see the lake and enjoy the cooler temperatures that we enjoy in the winter time here in Okeechobee.

There are several good sections of the Florida Scenic Trail in the area to sample as a section hiker on a cool winter morning, if you desire. The Florida Trail follows the dike around Lake Okeechobee both to the east and the west sides, and with the dike closures, the hikers will find themselves on the side of the highway most of the distance these days. Good news here is that the trail has been expanded recently in northern Okeechobee County, to eliminate a 15-mile road walk up

Micco Bluff Road.

The Florida Trail, in that part of the county, is in several defined sections. The section of the trail just south of the new expansion is named the Chandler Slough North section, and roughly parallels U.S. 98, with a fence crossing just a bit north of Northwest 144th Trail. This portion of trail is 3.56 miles long and ends when it reaches U.S. 98, just east of the river. Before the expansion, to stay on the trail, a 15-mile road walk, along U.S. 98 and Micco Bluff Road, all the way to the entrance to Starvation Slough was required.

In 2018, a new section called the Micco Trail Section was developed and allows the hiker to skip most of the road walk with a new 12.12-mile-long section. The Micco section begins right across U.S. 98 from the gate at the north end of the Chandler Slough North section, and passes an improved camping area near its beginning. The trail then stays in the forest and wildland for the entire distance. The Florida

Trail Association and its volunteers are responsible for trail expansion through there and work with landowners and, in this case, South Florida Water Management District to establish the new trail section. The local Trail Association also maintains the trail by marking the trail with paint blazes on trees and with mowing to keep the trail clear. They do an amazing job and are to be commended for their efforts.

This is the time of the year we see a number of hikers in the area. Each year, 20 to 40 people strike out to hike the length of the Florida Scenic Trail in a single outing. At times they have to take to the road, due to construction on the dike, or due to sections of the trail that are currently a road walk. You will recognize them by their substantial backpacks and twin walking sticks, as they move along the shoulder of the road. If you should see one of these folks, a gift of cold water or soda is usually happily accepted. And please, give them plenty of room as you pass.

# Los Cocos

## Mexican Restaurant



facebook.com/EatLosCocos

**Celebrating 40 years!! Thanks Okeechobee!!**

Tacos - Tostadas - Enchiladas  
Burritos - Quesadillas - Nachos  
Fajitas Steak Chicken & Shrimp

Dine In or To Go:  
(863)467-0922  
107 NW 6th Ave  
Okeechobee, FL 34972

**NHC**  
HomeCare



Home Health Agency



## Care is Our Business!

*NHC is your passport to Homecare.*

Extending the continuum of care from hospital to home not only makes sense emotionally, but clinically and economically as well. The latest research clearly makes the case for home care as a safe, effective and preferred option for treating conditions ranging from chronic heart failure to acute care. It is convenient, cost effective and offers consistent, reliable care for the patient and peace of mind for family members. NHC HomeCare has been providing home care services since 1976. We believe that consistency in this business has proven us to be the best provider of quality home care services. Our wide range of quality home care services provided by professionals ensures that patients' home care needs are fully met and provides you with peace of mind.

**DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS:**

CHF Program • COPD • Diabetes • Alzheimer's • Incontinence  
• Wound Care • Stroke and Fall Reduction

**THERAPY PROGRAMS:**

Physical Therapy • Occupational Therapy • Speech Therapy  
• Assisted Living Therapy

*Sylvia Blevins*

813.404.5855 | 772.564.0092 | sylvia.blevins@nhccare.com  
mynhccare.com | License #HHA 21900096

## Your #1 Local Real Estate Company

*Serving Florida's Heartland And The Treasure Coast*

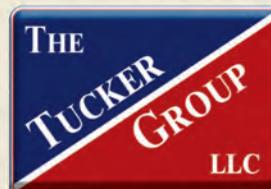


- Over 100 Years of Combined Experience.

- Maximizing the value of Residential and Farm & Ranch Properties is our #1 Priority.

- Full Service Boutique Brokerage and Consulting Firm.

- Conservative Values, Proprietary Knowledge, Unlimited Enthusiasm.



Lic. Real Estate Brokerage Company

**863.763.4010**

104 N.W. 7th Ave. Okeechobee, FL 34972

[www.Tucker-Group.com](http://www.Tucker-Group.com)



# OKEECHOBEE COUNTY SCHOOLS PUT STUDENTS FIRST

BY KEN KENWORTHY  
Superintendent of Schools

Okeechobee County Schools take great pride in putting students first! As you get to know us, you will find opportunities abound. Whether you are a visitor, permanent resident or are looking for a new place to call your home, we encourage you to consider Okeechobee County Schools as a partner.

We recognize that many of you visit our great community for various reasons. Some come for the winter, some come in for the music festival, and some come to the rodeo, some come to dine, shop or just enjoy nature. That stay varies from the day to months at a time. Whatever your reasons for visiting, we thank you for supporting our schools. We depend on your generosity. Many of you support our fundraisers, temporarily volunteer in our schools and help drive our local economy. Your patronage of local businesses in turn helps us as they

are the school district's best sponsors, supporters and lifeblood to many activities, sports, and clubs.

As a full time resident, you know us. You know, with your help, we have increased our graduation rate, the number of industry certifications, and the number of college credits/Associates Degree recipients. You know we are fully accredited, certified as a healthy district, and take not only our academic performance seriously, but also devote a serious amount of the time to school safety and the social and emotional learning of our students. You know we appreciate your continued support.

For those looking for a new home, we promise to meet your educational needs. We are the largest employer with nearly 900 employees ranging from certified teachers and administrators to support staff including paraprofessionals, secretaries, bus drivers, food service assistants and custodial and maintenance staff. If you are looking for employment here,

be sure to check us out.

If you are looking for a place to enroll your student, look no further. We currently enroll about 6,000 students throughout our 10 schools in PreK-12th grades. We offer programs for students who need advanced coursework through honors, dual enrollment and advanced placement courses. We are involved in the AVID program that pushes middle level students into more rigorous coursework. Need accommodations? We can work with an IEP team to get your child the services they need. Our band is one of the best, our drama program is out of this world, our sports programs continue to excel and our CTE programs reach industry standards. Our schools are welcoming, diverse and set high standards for teaching and learning. We think you will find what you are looking for in us.

This next year will be a particularly exciting one for us as we break ground on a new high school. The state of the art school will house nearly 1,700 students and be built on the existing campus. Credit for funding goes to our community.

Thank you for helping us "Put Students First!"

## YOUR NEW CHAPTERS STARTS AT INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

For more than 60 years, Indian River State College has provided Okeechobee, Indian River, Martin and St. Lucie County residents with low-cost, high-quality educational opportunities and resources that build a pathway to great jobs and higher education.

In a typical semester, some 700 Okeechobee residents take advantage of IRSC programs and services at the Dixon Hendry Campus located at 2299 NW 9th Avenue.

"IRSC has helped thousands of Okeechobee residents continue their education to increase their earning power and reach their full potential," says Campus President Russ Brown. "We invite anyone interested in starting a new chapter for themselves to continue their education by enrolling in programs at our campus."

The 40-acre Dixon Hendry Campus is a hub of activity. Students can com-

plete their first two years of college at the campus to earn an Associate in Arts Degree. Graduates are well prepared to continue their education toward a Bachelor's Degree at IRSC or another college or university, with seamless transfer of credits.

IRSC students are bolstered by academic support, career services, mentoring programs, free Microsoft and Adobe software, health and wellness resources and more—even child care assistance is available to those who qualify.

Many Okeechobee residents come to IRSC to gain hands-on skills through job training programs. These include automotive, diesel mechanics and welding programs offered in labs during the evening at Okeechobee High School. Air conditioning, paramedic and EMT courses are held in the state-of-the-art, multi-purpose laboratories at the Dixon Hendry

Campus. All these programs provide the opportunity to earn skill-based licenses as well as Associate in Science degrees. Additionally, students interested in early childhood education can earn Associate degrees and related certificates, with many local job opportunities.

Nursing is one of the most rapidly growing and well-paying careers in our region. Okeechobee residents can train at IRSC for any of three levels of nursing instruction—Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.), Licensed Practical Nurse (L.P.N.) and Registered Nurse (R.N.). All IRSC nursing students gain experience through clinical internships at health care facilities throughout the community.

Students concerned about the cost of a college education are happy to discover that 91% of IRSC students graduate without debt (U.S. News and World Report) and that IRSC is the second-most affordable college in the country (U.S. Department of Education).

IRSC invites you to learn more by visiting [irsc.edu](http://irsc.edu) or calling the Dixon Hendry Campus at 863-824-6000.

# YOUR SMILE SAYS IT ALL

We've been creating beautiful smiles in Okeechobee for over 36 years. Isn't it time to see what we can do for you?



Family Orthodontics

Making a difference one smile at a time

**2025 Hwy 441 North**  
**863.467.2332**

# Okeechobee Outlet Store

*A kitchen and more store*

**A mixture of wholesale, retail and liquidated merchandise**

**Specializing in housewares & home décor at great prices**



Thank you for your service!  
We appreciate all you do!

**10% Military, Law Enforcement & First Responder Discount**

Located at Trading Post Flea Market • Air Conditioned Office Building  
3100 US 441 S, Okeechobee • Open Saturday & Sunday 8:30am-3pm



# WHEN DID YOU LAST CHECK YOUR:

- BLOOD PRESSURE?
- CHOLESTEROL?
- SUGAR & GLUCOSE?
- MEMORY?

**82% of seniors believe it is important to have their memory and thinking checked.**

If you are 50+ and want to have your brain health assessed, we can help!

**Call us today for a no cost memory screening!**

**ANNUAL MEMORY SCREENINGS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR ALL SENIORS.**



PREVENT. TREAT. CURE. END MEMORY LOSS.

900 SE Salerno Road  
Stuart, FL 34997  
(772) 223-7880  
or visit us at

[www.BrainMattersResearch.com](http://www.BrainMattersResearch.com)

# WELCOME TO THE 'REAL FLORIDA'

BY DOWLING WATFORD  
Mayor of Okeechobee

On behalf of the city council and city staff, I would like to welcome you to the city of Okeechobee. Whether you are just visiting or becoming a permanent resident, you will find Okeechobee to be a warm, friendly place with a small town atmosphere where we consider our residents family.

Our town offers a variety of activities from rodeos to art and music festivals and of course, some of the best fishing in the country. Our historic downtown offers a great selection of shopping and dining with unique boutiques and restaurants.

Our downtown Flagler Park hosts many events throughout the year including Labor Day Festival and parade, Christmas festival and parade, Speckled Perch festival and parade, and many other events. The cattle drive sculpture project will be completed soon and will be a huge tourist draw and highlight our agriculture heritage. We have a very active Main Street, Chamber of Commerce, and Tourist Development Council. These organizations can give you information on many of the activities going on year round. If history is your interest, the Okeechobee Historical Society has a museum and the 1909 school house on U.S. 98. In addition, the

Battle of Okeechobee reenactment occurs the last weekend of February. Many national fishing tournaments are held on the Lake each year and draw the top pro fishermen. The Agri Civic Center also hosts many events each year from horse shows to the County Fair. The Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park is designated as a Dark Sky Park and has some incredible night sky vistas as well as hiking and wildlife viewing. As you can see, there is something for everyone and we invite you to come see what we call "the real Florida."

## OKEECHOBEE COUNTY'S FUTURE LOOKS PROMISING

BY TERRY BURROUGHS  
Chairman, Okeechobee County  
Board of County Commissioners

As the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, it is my pleasure to provide an insight into our county and share with you some of our growth and advancements during this past year.

As we enter 2022, we find ourselves still facing Covid-19 and which continues to disrupt our lives. However, our businesses report that they continue to maintain a steady volume base of customers and we as a board say "Thank You" for your continued support and shopping local!

In 2021, the county welcomed our new County Administrator, Deborah Manzo and our new Deputy Administrator, Richard J. Reade. Both of these individuals have a combined 35+ years of government experience and talent to assist the County in navigating future growth within our county.

The county was fortunate to receive the American Rescue Recovery funds in the amount of \$8.1M which will be used to address the Jail Expansion/Renovation from revenue loss; water, sewer, storm water, & broadband infrastructure; and Tourist Development Shortfall.

As 2021 came with its challenges, our community is still experiencing significant progress. We are not regressing by any means. The past is always worse than the present, and the future looks promising. We know what is working very well and what needs to be improved.

The people who make up our community fabric are passionate, resilient, and friendly to their fellow man.

Our events in 2021 significantly modified our economic environment. Our future county profile will be different through the changing demographics, as well as, geographical and industrial developments, which will help assist in changing the landscape of the county. To communicate this futuristic picture simply and clearly to you requires our current and future leaders to create an understandable and transparent method when planning.

New opportunities are always knocking at our door, as we are centrally located within 30-45 minutes to larger community areas. Our current projects like, our Bass Pro project is moving forward as the county continues to work with U.S. Army Corp in relation to this project. Our jail renovation and expansion project is in Phase I with the county negotiating

a \$2.20M in savings from the original \$24.8M price. Finally, the County and various community partners along with Indian River State College are working together to present a plan to the State of Florida to re-acquire approximately 1,100 acres of land formerly known as the Florida School for Boys. This property was originally owned by Okeechobee County in 1956, who later conveyed to the State of Florida for the specific purpose of housing the Florida School for Boys at Okeechobee. The county plan would be to develop an industrial park on this property.

In 2021, the County resumed the "fixed base operations" at our local airport. This was an important milestone in the economic growth of our community. This enabled the county to provide fuel sales/ground services, tie-down leasing, and enhanced customer service to the aviation community, which continues to grow in our area.

In closing, I would like to say that our county's mission is that "Okeechobee County will provide responsive government services to its citizens in a well-managed, cost-effective, fiscally sound, policy-driven manner. All services provided shall benefit the health, safety and welfare of the community."



# DAVID W. DIEHL INSURANCE

A single source for ALL your insurance needs

**Auto • Home • Life  
Motorcycle • RV  
Business • Health**

Call or Stop by for a free quote

**863-467-4522**



900 S. Parrott Avenue • Okeechobee



**COLDWELL BANKER**

**BERGER  
REAL ESTATE**

[www.CBBergerRealEstate.com](http://www.CBBergerRealEstate.com)

**863.763.5335**

Toll Free: 866.381.5335

**Philip Y. Berger**

Lic. Real Estate Broker  
**863.634.8439**  
pberger@bergerrealestate.com

**Lori C. Berger**

Lic. Real Estate Broker  
**863.634.8437**  
lori@bergerrealestate.com

**Cristie Schmidt**  
863-634-3604

**Elvie Posey**  
863-634-4399

**Jeff Anderson**  
863-697-2424

**Kari Berger**  
863-227-0339

**Kathy Williams**  
863-634-1574



425 SW Park St. • Okeechobee, FL 34973  



# MILLER'S CENTRAL AIR, INC.

## SERVICES

Heating • Cooling • Commercial HVAC  
Indoor Air Quality • Ductless AC  
Duct Cleaning • Dryer Vent Cleaning

CALL TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!

**863-467-1545**

109 NW 7th Ave.

Okeechobee, FL 34972

[MillersCentralAir.com](http://MillersCentralAir.com)



**TRANE**  
It's Hard To Stop A Trane.

LICENSE #CA-C058675

## CHAMBER STRIVES TO IMPROVE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Chamber of Commerce of Okeechobee County Inc. is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6), voluntary organization of business professionals joined together for the purpose of promoting the civic and economic progress of our community. Its primary function is to act as a spokesperson and translate into action the group thinking of its members, by connecting business and community for success and prosperity

The Chamber of Commerce of Okeechobee County strives to make businesses stronger, as well as to make a stronger economic climate for those businesses to thrive. Classes, business networking programs and a website that allows each member to have its own marketing space are all part of that focus.

Educational programs provided by the Chamber allowing for businesses to explore new ways to market, sell and engage with clients. In recent years, the Chamber has become a Grow With Google Partner and has assisted more than 250 individual clients both in person and via digital conference with marketing, digital and cloud-based business software, and client relations

## OKEECHOBEE MAIN STREET ENRICHES

The Okeechobee Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the Okeechobee downtown district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation and making downtown a vibrant destination to visit are critical to Okeechobee's future. Building on downtown's inherent assets - rich architecture, personal service and traditional values and most of all, a sense of place.

Okeechobee Main Street, Inc. is a 501(C) 3 non-profit member-based organization with roots dating back to 1980 when the National Trust for Historic Preservation formed the Main Street program. The Okeechobee Main Street approach rekindles entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. Because it is a locally driven program, all initiatives stem from local issues and concerns. The Okeechobee Main Street program's success is based on a comprehensive strategy of work, tailored to local needs in four distinctive areas, often referred to as the Four-Point Approach.

Okeechobee Main Street has been the driving force behind the Arts & Culture programs in Okeechobee for 16 years. In 2018, OKMS became a Local Arts Agency for Okeechobee County and opened their art and education center in 2021. The Arts & Culture Alliance mission is to connect people to the arts and to each other, working to facilitate and nurture the creation, development, promotion and education of arts and culture in Okeechobee County.

An award-winning organization, Okeechobee Main Street's vision is to help create a successful downtown and enrich our community through celebrating the arts, supporting local businesses, embracing our heritage, preserving our natural environment and promoting quality events which make Okeechobee an inviting hometown destination.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION COLLABORATES

The Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation works collaboratively with public and private partners to promote and nurture existing businesses, create an environment for new business development and recruitment, and increase job opportunities in Okeechobee County.

Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation is used to strengthen our community's economic base and increase the standard of living for all of its residents through the retention, expansion, attraction, and development of primary jobs and capital investments

# Hospice Care Comes to You in Okeechobee County

**VITAS<sup>®</sup> Healthcare cares for patients at home, wherever they call home.  
Now accepting patients in Okeechobee County.**

For over 40 years, VITAS has helped people with advanced illness achieve greater comfort, dignity and quality of life by bringing hospice care wherever our patients need it.

Hospice doesn't mean giving up or compromising on quality of care. Get everything you need—supplies, medications and a team of experts—at home with VITAS.

**VITAS<sup>®</sup>**  
Healthcare  
SINCE 1980

800.723.3233

VITAS.com [f](#) [in](#) [ig](#) [t](#)



# RAULERSON HOSPITAL TAKES CARE OF COMMUNITY



Raulerson Hospitals puts the care and improvement of human life above all else.

**R**aulerson Hospital accomplishes this mission through the Healthcare Corporation of America enterprise's approximately 30 million patient encounters each year, and with continued investment in equipment and technology, like the new state-of-the-art robotic surgical system capable of performing minimally invasive robotic-assisted surgical cases in the specialties of gynecology and general surgery right here in Okeechobee.

Founded by HCA Healthcare in 1979, and named after

one of the county's pioneer families, Raulerson Hospital treats nearly 30,000 ER patients annually in its 24-hour emergency room, including children. As a valued member of the HCA Florida Healthcare family, Raulerson is part of a 15-hospital network that employs 17,000 in East Florida.

Raulerson Hospital raises the bar in healthcare with:

- Accreditation by The Joint Commission,
- Primary Stroke Center Licensure by the Agency for Health Care Administration,
- Accredited by the American College of Radiology in MRI, CT, Mammography, Ultra Sound and Nuclear Medicine,
- Accredited Laboratory by the College of American Pathologists,
- Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade "A" in Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021 and Fall 2021,
- 5-star Healthgrades Recipient for Patient Safety 2018-2021,
- 5-star Healthgrades Recipient for Hip-Fracture Treatment 2018-2021,
- 5-star Healthgrades Recipient for Treatment of Heart Attack 2019-2020,

- 5-star Healthgrades Recipient for Treatment of Pacemaker Procedures 2021,

- 5-star Healthgrades Recipient for Treatment of Gallbladder Removal Surgery 2021.

Raulerson Hospital's new 52,000 square foot, four-story medical office building (MOB) is scheduled to open to the community in 2022. The MOB will feature a new entrance to the hospital, patient registration, and administration offices on the first floor. The other floors will house multi-specialty physician offices. These enhancements will further provide the community with high quality, highly-reliable care every day close to home.

At Raulerson Hospital, we put our patients first and affirm the unique worth of each individual. We believe that exceptional healthcare is built upon a foundation of inclusion, compassion, and respect for our patients and one another.

In pursuit of an Excellence ALWAYS culture, we collectively share the following standards:

- Our Mission: Above all else, we are committed to the care and improvement of human life.
- Our Vision: To be your partner in

healthcare excellence.

- Our Values: The foundation of our culture is reflected in the outline of the ALWAYS pillars: Accountability, Leadership, Willingness, Attitude, You First, and Safety.

- Our Patient Promise: We are committed to excellence always: every action, every patient, every time.

To learn more about the services and mission of Raulerson Hospital, visit [RaulersonHospital.com](http://RaulersonHospital.com), or Like Raulerson Hospital on Facebook.



Dr. Alejo poses with a state-of-the-art robotic surgical system.

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFERS WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES

Florida Department of Health, located at 1728 NW Ninth Avenue in Okeechobee, FL, works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

Departments include Environmental Health, Vital Statistics, Public Health Preparedness, School Health, Women Infants and Children (WIC), Health Education, Clinical Services of Public Health Significance, Epidemiology and Disease Control.

Environmental Health issues permits for public wells, private wells, and septic systems; inspects cafeterias in schools and jails, public swimming pool, mobile home parks, RV parks, assisted living facilities, tanning salons, body piercing and tattoo parlors.

Vital Statistics provides certified copies of birth and death certificates.

Public Health Preparedness partners with public and private agencies to ensure essential services are available

during disasters and provides outreaches to vulnerable populations and the community to promote disaster preparedness.

School Health Registered Nurses conduct annual health screenings for vision, hearing, scoliosis, and body mass index (BMI) in Okeechobee schools, provides clinical oversight to school clinics, reviews immunization records to ensure state requirements are met and provides a dental hygienist for the Dental Sealant Program.

WIC is a free program for eligible women, infants, and children (under the age of 5) that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding counseling and breastfeeding support, the WIC Dental Health Program for children, and refers participants for health care and community support.

Health Education engages community partners to address issues related to chronic disease, injury and violence prevention, maternal & child health,

provides community outreaches to promote safety, healthy lifestyle choices, wellness, and health equity.

Clinical Services of public health significance include family planning, immunizations/vaccines, sexually transmitted infections testing and treatment, hepatitis program and HIV/Aids services. The Health Department accepts the following payment methods: cash and credit card. For clinical services only, Medicaid and self-pay sliding fee based on eligibility are accepted.

Epidemiology and Disease Control monitors contagious and all reportable infectious diseases, provides guidance in control for future outbreaks, conducts follow-up investigations for diseases that spread through human to human contact, in water, or food, and by animal bites.

For more info, call 863-462-5800 or go to [okeechobee.floridahealth.gov](http://okeechobee.floridahealth.gov)

## OPEN HANDS PROVIDES FREE HEALTH CARE

Open Hands Health Center is a nonprofit that has been serving Okeechobee since 2015. It was founded on the scripture verse Deuteronomy 15:11 "For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'" The mission of Open Hands Health Center, Inc. is to deliver free professional, Christ-centered healthcare to people, who for whatever reason, find themselves unemployed, as well as hard working families who just cannot afford the high cost of health care.

Open Hands offers some of the same things you would get at a regular doctor's office but our main focus has been on wellness, that helps educate people on healthy living which includes good nutrition, increased physical activity, as well as a healthy emotional thought life.

As a result of this type of care, many of the patients have been able to get off or reduce their medications and are experiencing a better quality of life. Annually, they have been able to bring the Florida Baptist Association free dental van, which will return again this June. Local dentists volunteer their time to do both fillings and extractions. They also have been able to help facilitate free biblical counseling for those who are interested.

If you would like to see if you are eligible for free health care, learn about upcoming wellness classes, be placed on the dental van waiting list or would like to volunteer your time or help support their cause, please call at 863-357-1257. Open Hands is located at 309 N.W. Fifth St. in Okeechobee.

## PREGNANCY CENTER SERVES THE COMMUNITY

The Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee was founded in 2008 and exists to serve anyone involved in a difficult pregnancy situation. The staff and volunteers at our center genuinely care about the women and men who walk through our doors and are eager to assist you with all of your concerns.

The Goals of the Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee are to:

- Provide education and support to people in our community as they make important decisions about pregnancy;
- Create a safe, confidential and caring haven in which options can be provided for women experiencing an unexpected pregnancy; and,
- Provide practical services related to pregnancy, childrearing, and relationships.

All services provided at the Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee are confidential and FREE. The Pregnancy Center of Okeechobee desires to serve the whole community, regardless of race, creed, age, economic status, or marital status.

For more information, call 863-467-8748

The center director is Lisa Lumpkin.



# Okeechobee Dining Guide

Okeechobee is home to many unique restaurants! From an eatery where people fly in to dine, to a cattle market known for its burgers to a spot that will cook your catch fresh from Lake Okeechobee all the way to key lime pie known to be the best north of the Florida Keys, the sit-down dining options in and around Okeechobee, Florida will not disappoint! If you are looking for something quick to take home from a local grocery-store deli or a quick bite from a drive-thru, Okeechobee offers convenience as well as quality! At night, many food trucks and stands come alive. If a visit to Okeechobee is in your future, bring your appetite!

**441 BBQ Grill**  
(mobile - locations vary)

**Alice's Restaurant**  
17410 Reservation Rd. N.E.

**Antojitos Mexicano's**  
3600 U.S. 441 S.

**American Legion Post #64**  
501 SE 2nd St



**Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar**  
1210 State Road 70

**Arby's**  
417 S. Parrott Ave.

**Beef 'O' Brady's**  
608 S. Parrott Ave.

**Big Kahuna's Sushi Bar**  
122 SE Park Street

**Big Tasty's**  
309 S.W. Park Street

**Big O Flea Market**  
3600 U.S. 441 S.

**Bill's Mini Mart**  
3007 SR-70E

**Blitzkrieg BBQ & Grill**  
3101 U.S. 441 S.

**Blue Moon BBQ**  
1600 State Rd. 70 E.

**Bucio Chinese Restaurant**  
104 S.E. Sixth St.

**Brahma Bull Restaurant & Lounge**  
2405 U.S. 441 S.E.

**Bravo**  
802 N.E. Park St.

**Brown Cow Sweetery**  
103 S.W. Park St.

**Burger King**  
604 N.E. Park St.

**Crossroads Restaurant**  
5050 N.E. 128th Ave.

**Crum's Windmill Café**  
480 Windmill Road, Brighton Reservation

**Dairy Queen Grill & Chill**  
1212 S. Parrott Ave.

**Ding A Ling Deli**  
2107 U.S. 441 S.E.

**Domino's**  
1700 S. Parrott Ave., Suite B

**Duck Pub (Lakeport)**  
1031 Lakeport Plz, Okeechobee

**Dunkin' Donuts**  
205 N.E. Park St. 4993 U.S. 441 S.

**El Rancho Market**  
3901 U.S. 441 N.

**El Rico Tacos**  
3600 U.S. 441 S.

**Gladys' Restaurant**  
511 S.W. Park St.

**Golden Corral**  
700 S. Parrott Ave.

**Good Spirits**  
245 U.S. 441



**High Noon Café, OK Corral Gun Club**  
9449 N.E. 48th St.

**Jersey Mike's Subs**  
611 S.W. Park St.

**Joe's Pizza & more**  
3100 U.S. 441 S.

**Joey's Supreme Pizza**  
107 S.W. Park St.

**Kahootz Draft House**  
702 N.W. Park St.

**KFC**  
3387 U.S. 441 S.

**King House Chinese Restaurant**  
3399 U.S. 441 S.

**La Cabaña Taqueria Restaurant**  
110 S. Parrott Ave



## Los Cocos Mexican Restaurant

107 N.W. Sixth Ave., Okeechobee  
863-467-0922

[facebook.com/eatloscocos/](https://facebook.com/eatloscocos/)

Hours:  
Tues. - Thurs. 10:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.,  
Fri. 10:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.,  
Sat. 10:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Delicious homemade cuisine in a family atmosphere! We offer a large variety of excellent Mexican entrees including tacos (crunchy or soft), tostadas, enchiladas, burritos (wet or dry), quesadillas, nachos, fajitas (steak, chicken, shrimp or mixed), taco salads & more! High quality ingredients and our authentic flour tortillas are a specialty you won't find anywhere else. Join us for lunch or dinner. Catering and party trays available.



**La Mariposa Mexican Restaurant**  
202 NE 2nd St.  
Suite 10

**La Queretana Supermarket**  
625 N.E. Park St.



## Mi Familia Mexican Restaurant

219 S.W. Park Street  
Okeechobee  
863-484-8277  
facebook.com/MiFamilia863

Hours:  
Tuesday - Saturday: 10am - 9pm  
Sunday: 10am - 7pm  
Monday: CLOSED

Since opening in 2020, Mi Familia Mexican Restaurant has offered a delicious variety of Mexican food, ranging from burrito bowls, enchiladas, fajitas, quesadillas, our famous Barbacoa (slow cooked beef) Street Tacos and more!

We offer a wide variety of beers and a sizable selection of meats including steak (asada), seasoned pork (al pastor), beef tongue (lengua), Mexican sausage (chorizo) and more. Dine in or order takeout!

**La Taqueria Las Palmitas**  
Near Southwest 21st Avenue & State Road 70

**Lakeside Grill**  
1111 S. Parrott Ave.

**Landing Strip Café**  
2800 N.W. 20th Trail

**Lightsey's Seafood Restaurant**  
1506 S. Parrott Ave.

**Little Caesars Pizza**  
2105 S. Parrott Ave.

**Lunch Box, Okeechobee KOA**  
4276 U.S. 441 S.

**Lunkers Sports Bar & Grill**  
4825 U.S. 441 S.

**Mable's Place**  
204 N.E. Seventh Ave.

**McDonald's**  
4151 U.S. 441 S.  
401 E. North, S.W.  
Park St

**Mom's Kitchen**  
909 S. Parrott Ave.

**Nutmeg's Cafe**  
515 S.W. Park St.

**Okeechobee Fish Company**  
7841 Hwy 78 West

**Okeechobee Livestock Market Restaurant**  
1055 U.S. 98 N.

**Paco's Kitchen**  
3100 U.S. 441 S.

**Papa John's Pizza**  
414 N.E. Park St.

**Park 112**  
112 S.E. Park St.

**Park-it Market**  
1600 State Road 70 E.

**Parrott Island**  
1001 S. Parrott Ave.

**Pizza Heaven**  
208 S. Parrott Ave.

**Pizza Hut**  
2795 U.S. 441 S.

**Pogey's Family Restaurant**  
1759 S. Parrott Ave.



**Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen**  
822 N.W. Park St.

**Publix**  
3551 U.S. 441 S.

**Pueblo Viejo**  
3415 U.S. 441 S.

**Quail Creek Plantation (Pavilion)**  
12399 NE 224th Street

**R Cafe**  
22302 NW 176th Ave.

**Ricky D's Dogs**  
Corner of State Road 78 & U.S. 441 S.

**Ridge Market**  
7 State Rd 78,  
Buckhead Ridge

**Rio Bravo Mexican Restaurant**  
151 N.W. 36th St.

**Sante Fe Mexican Restaurant**  
207 S.W. Fifth Ave.

**Seminole Casino Brighton Josiah Restaurant**  
17735 Reservation Road N.E.

**Serenity Coffee Shop**  
601 S.W. Park St.

**Shenanigans**  
2237 U.S. 98 N

**Speckled Perch**  
105 U.S. 98 N.

**Sublime**  
101 SW 2nd Ave.

**Subway**  
2101 S. Parrott Ave  
2398 State Road 70  
422 N.E. Park St.  
1865 State Road 70 W.  
12800 State Road 70 E.  
8605 U.S. 441 S.E.

**Sweet Peas Grocery**  
2558 NE 144th St.

**Taco Bell**  
501 N.E. Park St.

**Taqueria Serrano**  
5602 State Road 70

**Taqueria y Fruteria**  
1002 N.W. Park St.

**Taqueria Yanez**  
310 U.S. 98 N.

**Tasty Cuban Café**  
3600 U.S. 441 S.

**Tin Fish**  
301 N. Parrott Ave,  
Okeechobee

**Trading Post Flea & Farmers Market**  
3100 U.S. 441 S.

**Twisted Sisterz Mobile Kitchen & Bakery**  
(various locations)

**VFW Post #4423**  
300 NW 34th St.

**Ursy's Corner Café**  
3100 U.S. 441

**Wendy's**  
502 N.E. Park St.

**Winn-Dixie**  
3246 U.S. 441 S

**Yanely's Tacos**  
3100 U.S. 441 S.

**Yeli's Sweets**  
3600 U.S. 441 S.

**Zaxby's Chicken Fingers & Buffalo Wings**  
912 N.E. Park St.

**Zippy's**  
301 S.W. Park St.

The Okeechobee area dining guide will publish inside of several annual Lake Okeechobee News publications. To submit additions, corrections or to upgrade your listing, please contact Jaime Limoges, advertising manager at Lake Okeechobee News, at 863-824-5934.

Lake Okeechobee News is part of Independent Newsmedia, Inc. and made up of people who share a set of deeply-set values. We care deeply about journalistic service and the community. Our company is owned by a unique non-profit trust that is designed to preserve INI's independence and journalist mission forever.

We are proud to serve Okeechobee!



**MI FAMILIA Mexican Restaurant**

- TACOS
- ENCHILADAS
- STEAK, CHICKEN OR SHRIMP FAJITA
- BURRITO BOWL
- FRIED QUESADILLAS
- BARBACOA STREET TACOS

Hours  
Tuesday - Saturday 10am-9pm  
Sunday 10am-7pm

Call Today!  
(863) 484-8277

217 SW PARK ST  
OKEECHOBEE FL

**Los Cocos Mexican Restaurant**

Fajitas Steak Chicken & Shrimp  
Tacos-Tostadas - Enchiladas  
Burritos-Quesadillas - Nachos

2 Pick-up Windows  
Please Call Ahead!

Dine In or To Go:  
(863)467-0922  
107 NW 6th Ave  
Okeechobee, FL 34972

FACE MASK REQUIRED FOR ENTRY.

## VETERANS

■ Okeechobee's Veterans Memorial is at the intersection of U.S. 441 (Parrott Avenue) and S.R. 70 (Park Street)



■ The Veterans Memorial in Okeechobee's Flagler Park includes a M-60A1 Tank.

## VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE ASSISTS LOCAL VETERANS

The mission of the Okeechobee County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO), is to advise, counsel and assist veterans, spouses and their dependents in matters pertaining to their rights and benefits for claim submission to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This includes securing any other benefits veterans and their family members may be entitled to under county, state or federal laws/statutes. There is never a charge for this service.

Available services include claim filing for: compensation, veteran/spouse pension, aid and attendance, education (Post 9/11 GI Bill), burials, healthcare and military retiree services. Additional services include claims for VA life insurance, VA vocational rehabilitation, employment benefits, VA home loan guarantee, Income verification

letters, discharge paperwork and TRICARE/CHAMPVA insurances.

Okeechobee County, in coordination with VAMC West Palm Beach and Disabled American Veterans, provides a FREE van service for eligible veterans and/or an aid to VAMC West Palm Beach. The van departs from WaWa gas station located at 200 NW Park Street, leaving promptly at 6:30 a.m. All appointments must be before noon and seating is limited. To reserve a seat, call the Veteran Service Office with the date/time of your appointment.

Did you know that any honorably discharged veteran and their spouse is entitled to be buried or placed in a National Cemetery? Additionally, the Department of Veteran Affairs will provide a free headstone, foot marker or medallion

to a Veteran's grave site that is in a private cemetery. There is no time limit to apply and there are a few documents needed. Ensure your beloved veteran is recognized on special days around the year such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day and when Wreaths Across America lays wreaths at all veteran grave sites nationally in December!

The CVSO is available by appointment only. For more information or to make an appointment, call or email your County Veteran Service Officer, Sarah Carter at 863-763-6441 Ext 5, or [veteran@co.okeechobee.fl.us](mailto:veteran@co.okeechobee.fl.us).

The Veterans Service Office is in the Historic Okeechobee Courthouse, 304 N.W. 2nd Street, Room 106, Okeechobee, FL. 34972.



# REMINGTON REAL ESTATE

## NIKI SALMON

LIC. REAL ESTATE BROKER



### 863-532-9096

*Luxury Homes - Ranches - Farms - RV Resale Lots  
Residential - Commercial*

BK3268589 - CBC1256085 - PCC056704



# RUSTIC STORE

Home Decor 🏠 Gifts 🍷 Wine  
Furniture ✨ Jewelry



121 SW PARK ST.  
\* OKEECHOBEE, FL \*

## STORE MANAGER



*Linda Matute*

LindaMatute7@gmail.com

Member of  
Okeechobee Chamber  
of Commerce

Owner

Niki Salmon  
863-532-9096  Notary



■ **August 23, 2022 - Primary Election**

Books Close - July 25, 2022

Early Voting - August 13-20, 2022

■ **November 8, 2022 - General Election**

Books Close - October 11, 2022

Early Voting - October 29-November 5, 2022

## 2022 IS AN ELECTION YEAR

The Supervisor of Elections, a constitutional officer, has a wide range of duties involving voter registration, maintaining voter registration records, and administering all elections as mandated by Florida Statute and federal law.

In addition to actual Election Day logistics and management, there are many other functions of the office including records management, voter education, candidate assistance, campaign report management and review, providing current and historical voter registration statistics, maintaining an archive of election results going back to 1954 and election security procedures.

The supervisor of elections is also responsible for the layout and programming of paper and electronic ballots, securing and maintaining voting equipment, recruiting, and training poll workers for early vote and Election Day, securing and equipping polling places, providing information and statistics on voting and elections, and maintaining precinct and district boundaries, including a precinct-specific street index.

Melissa Arnold, elected in 2020, is currently the Supervisor of Elections. The office also has three full-time employees. Temporary workers are employed during election time.

Voter registration is a continual process that is always taking place. Florida Statute requires that a citizen register at least 29 days before an election to be eligible to vote in that election. However, a citizen can always register so he/she may vote in subsequent

## OKEECHOBEE ELECTIONS OFFICE WAS BUSY IN 2021

BY MELISSA ARNOLD

Okeechobee County Supervisor of Elections

The Secretary of State had our office very busy in 2021! Highlights include implementation of the new ERIC system (Electronic Registration Information Center) signed by the Governor in 2019 but not operational until May of 2021. This new software allows our office to review possible changes to voter information by having 32 other states reciprocate with Florida in sending updated voter data back and forth between states. Moving forward, we will be implementing ERIC downloads quarterly to provide a cleaner voter roll. Also, in May, we held a Special Election for a vacated City Commission seat, and in December, we finalized changes for local redistricting. We are happy to report that while we did have some district changes due to statutory requirements, none of the changes have affected the polling place or precinct locations. All polling places and precincts will remain the same for the 2022 election cycle.

We look forward to accurate, secure elections in 2022 and, as a reminder, are always looking for poll workers to help make that happen! Blessings for a spectacular year!

elections. Registering to vote can be done in person, by mail, online at [voteokeechobee.gov](http://voteokeechobee.gov) or at the drivers' license office or library. Voters are asked to update their voter registration information to save them time when going to vote. A political party, name change must be done in writing on a voter application form. To request a voter information card this must be done in writing. An in-state address change may be done by phone.

The Supervisor of Elections office is located on the first floor in the Historic Courthouse at 304 N.W. Second St, Suite 144; 863-763-4014; Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

As of Jan. 13, 2022, there were 22,016 registered voters in Okeechobee County including 6,339 Democrats, 10,999 Republicans and 4,678 other party voters.



# NUNEZ

INSURED & LICENSED  
CAC1820776

## AIR CONDITIONING & REFRIGERATION



- Residential
- Commercial
- **FREE** Estimates
- Sales
- Service
- 24 HR EMERGENCY SERVICE



**863.357.0245**

208 SW 7<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Okeechobee, FL 34974



## RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL INTERIOR/EXTERIOR PAINTING

passionpaintsllc@gmail.com



208 SW 7<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Okeechobee, FL 34974 **863.801.5644**  
LICENSED & INSURED #3218



Support Your  
Local Newspaper.  
Invest in Your  
Community!



### Read • Subscribe

Subscriptions for print or digital start at just **\$5.99 plus tax a month**, and every contribution helps support the important role of journalism in our community.

Go to:  
[southcentralfloridalife.com/subscribe](http://southcentralfloridalife.com/subscribe)  
today to subscribe to our digital newspaper or call 863.824.5933 to subscribe to our print publication.

**Lake Okeechobee News**

Your Hometown Nonpartisan Newspaper  
In Print & Online  
863.763.3134 | 863.824.5933

[SouthCentralFloridaLife.com](http://SouthCentralFloridaLife.com)

# OKEECHOBEE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT



Okeechobee City Police Chief Donald Hagan

The Okeechobee Police Department was established in 1915. It has evolved and now consists of 38 employees with Chief Donald Hagan in command. Of the sworn law enforcement employees, there are two lieutenants, one detective sergeant, two detectives, one narcotics detective, four road patrol sergeants, eight road patrol officers — including a K-9 unit, two part-time officers, one motor officer and three school resource officers assigned to schools located within the city limits and working jointly with the Sheriff's Office SRO Program.

Three of the officers work jointly with the sheriff's office SWAT team. The narcotics detective is assigned to the narcotics task force with sheriff's detectives.

Working jointly with other law enforcement agencies provides strength in numbers, and the open line of communication makes us all more effective.

Civilian employees consist of one administrative secretary, one records clerk, one code enforcement officer,

one assistant code enforcement officer, five dispatchers, three part-time dispatchers and one school crossing guard. The road patrol is supported by a small group of non-sworn volunteers on the police department auxiliary and assistance with special events and natural disasters is their main priority.

The department is responsible for providing law enforcement duties within the city of Okeechobee which is roughly 4 square miles with a population of 5,918 as of 2021. It is the 213th largest city in Florida. The Police Department shuts down local

streets and highways four times a year for the community to enjoy small town parades. The biggest and most attractive being the Christmas Parade held the second Saturday in December at 6 p.m.

The main event in the city of Okeechobee is the yearly Speckled Perch Festival. It takes place the second weekend in March every year and is kicked off with the Speckled Perch Parade. Small vendors set up in the city's Flagler Park District and provide homemade things like quilts, jams and jellies that are some of the favorites.

People live in and move to Okeechobee for the small-town atmosphere and to escape the issues that often come with larger cities. We strive to keep it that way while attempting to provide all the modern amenities.

The police department stays active in providing safety and constant security for our residents. Code enforcement is always in pursuit to keep our city safe and clean in order to improve the look of our community.

The city police invite and encourage people to visit our little slice of Heaven located in the country, away from the traffic jams and hustle and bustle of larger cities.

## SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES PATROL 773 SQ MILES

Sheriff Noel E. Stephen is responsible for law enforcement on the county level. The sheriff's deputies carry out most of the law enforcement duties, while the sheriff, an elected official, manages their activities. Deputies serve under the sheriff. The duties of a deputy sheriff include investigating complaints, emergency response, patrolling, resolving disputes, arresting suspects, criminal investigations, and executing warrants.

The Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office has 207 employees as well as dozens of volunteer personnel who serve on our auxiliary, search and rescue, and Citizens on Patrol. Sheriff Stephen's command staff consists of one colonel, three captains, and eight lieutenants. Specialized teams include our K-9 teams, hostage negotiations, SWAT, dive team, motorcycle unit, drone unit, honor guard, and the cell extraction team. The Sheriff's office also performs

other functions such as traffic control, animal enforcement, accident investigations, homicide investigations, narcotics investigations, transportation of prisoners, school resource officers, and courthouse security.

The Sheriff's Office budget for the fiscal year 2021-2022 is \$20,456,376. Within that budget, Sheriff Stephen is also responsible for the county jail with an average daily jail population of 285 inmates, Okeechobee County

>> See SHERIFF on page 52



# OKEECHOBEE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE KEEPS COMMUNITY SAFE

BY RALPH FRANKLIN, EFO  
Public Safety Director/Fire Chief

Okeechobee County Fire Rescue is a combination department that uses both career and volunteer members to serve the emergency service needs of the community. The department operates out of three career stations that are strategically located throughout the county. Stations are staffed on a 24 hour, 7 days a week, 365 days a year system.

The department is staffed with 58 career employees who are all trained as Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), with most of the staff certified as paramedics. The career employees are supplemented by volunteers.

Okeechobee County Fire Rescue provides Advanced Life Support (ALS) Emergency Medical Service (EMS), Fire Protection, Fire Inspections, and Fire and EMS public education to all of Okeechobee County. The department accomplishes these responsibilities using four paramedic staffed and transport capable ambulances and four paramedic engines. Various mutual aid agreements are in place with the counties of Highlands, Glades, Indian River, Martin, Osceola, and St. Lucie.

The field staff and daily operations are under the direct supervision of the Deputy Fire Chief. The responsibility of coordination and conducting all

department fire and EMS training is the responsibility of the Bureau Chief of Training. All Community Risk Reductions activities including fire inspections, site plan review, and public education programs are the responsibility of the Bureau Chief of Risk Reduction/Fire Marshal. The Fire Chief has direct supervision of the Deputy Fire Chief, the Bureau Chiefs, Fleet Services, E911, as well as the budgetary and administrative functions of the department, with indirect supervision of the field staff.

In 2021, Okeechobee County Fire Rescue responded to 7,574 calls for service. This represents an increase of 369 calls over the 7,205 that the agency responded to in 2020.

## Sheriff

>> From page 50

Courthouse security operations, animal control, communications center, and provides school resource deputies to all county schools.

The deputies are responsible for patrolling over 773 square miles in Okeechobee County with an average

population, as of 2021, of 43,196 residents. In fiscal year 2020-2021, we answered 34,535 calls for service through our agency.

Since taking the oath of sheriff in January 2017, Sheriff Stephen has brought new and innovative tools to the sheriff's office to better serve the community. He also acknowledges and treats each

employee with respect which is one of the most meaningful things a leader can do to boost engagement within the sheriff's office.

In January 2021, Sheriff Stephen was sworn in for his second term as Okeechobee County Sheriff. He is the first ever, unopposed sheriff to win an election since the inception of Okeechobee County in 1917.

# CLUBS & ORGANIZATIONS

Okeechobee clubs and organizations welcome new members and visitors. Due to COVID-19 restrictions some meeting times and places are subject to change.

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

772-873-9299. For meetings, please see [aastlucieintergroup.com/meetings/](http://aastlucieintergroup.com/meetings/).

## AMERICAN LEGION #64

863-763-2950. Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m., located at the American Legion, 501 S.E. Second St., [POST64@centurylink.net](mailto:POST64@centurylink.net), visit Okeechobee American Legion Post #64 on Facebook.

## AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY

863-763-2950. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m., located at the American Legion.

## AMERICAN RED CROSS

863-763-2488. Located at 208 N. Parrott Ave., Okeechobee, FL 34972, [redcross-pbc.org](http://redcross-pbc.org).

## BUSINESS WOMEN'S REFERRAL NETWORK

863-467-2557, [rayedeusinger@gmail.com](mailto:rayedeusinger@gmail.com). Call for meetings and information.

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (OKEECHOBEE)

55 S. Parrott Ave. Visit their website at [okeechobeebusiness.com](http://okeechobeebusiness.com), email [info@okeechobeebusiness.com](mailto:info@okeechobeebusiness.com), visit their Facebook page or call 863-467-6246.

## EAST COAST MIGRANT HEAD START

863-467-6930. Located at 726 N.E. 16th Ave., Okeechobee, FL 34972; [ecmhsp.org](http://ecmhsp.org).

## FLORIDA ELKS

863-634-2863. Meetings are the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. and the Meet and Greet begins at 6 p.m., at the Brahma Bull Restaurant, 2405 U.S. 441. For information, visit [www.floridaelks.org](http://www.floridaelks.org).

## FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES #4137

863-763-2552. Meetings are held

the first and third Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. All meetings are located at 9985 U.S. 441 N.

## FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES #4509

863-467-1154. Meetings are members only. Aeries meet the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m. Ladies meet on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Eagle Riders meet on the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. of each month and trustees meet every Monday at 4:30 p.m. Meeting is at 4701 U.S. 441 S.E.

## FRIENDS OF THE OKEECHOBEE LIBRARY

863-763-3536. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every month at 4 p.m., at the Okeechobee Library, 206 S.W. 16th St.

## GARDEN & ORCHID CLUB

863-763-7800, Meetings are held the third Monday of every month at 6 p.m., at the UF/IFAS Extension office, 458 U.S. 98, Okeechobee.

## GUARDIANS AD LITEM

Guardian ad Litem always needs more volunteers to advocate for Children in Foster Care. For more information on meetings and location, visit [guardianadlitem.org](http://guardianadlitem.org) or call 772-785-5804.

## KIWANIS CLUB

Meetings are held every Thursday at Lakeside Restaurant, 1111 S. Parrott Ave. Meetings start at noon. For information, visit [www.facebook.com/OkeechobeeKiwanis](http://www.facebook.com/OkeechobeeKiwanis) or email [ken@gladesmedia.com](mailto:ken@gladesmedia.com).

## LOYAL ORDER OF THE MOOSE #2417 (SOUTH)

863-763-2250. Meetings are held for ladies on the second Monday of every month and gentlemen are the second Tuesday of every month, located on 1016 Linda Road, Buckhead Ridge.

## MASONIC LODGE #237

863-763-1610. Meeting are held for the ladies (The Order of the Eastern Star), the first and third Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. Meetings for the gentlemen are the second and

fourth Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. All meetings are held at 107 N.W. Fifth Ave.

### MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at noon at Golden Corral, 700 S. Parrott Ave. For more information, call Pastor Jim Dawson of the First United Methodist Church at 863-763-4021.

### MOOSE LODGE #1753 (NORTH)

863-763-4954. All meetings are held the first and third Tuesday of every month. Men's Officer meeting is at 6 p.m. Womens meeting at 6:30 p.m. and the general meeting is at 7 p.m. All meetings are held at 159 N.W. 36th Street.

### OKEECHOBEE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

147.195 MHZ with 100 Hz tone. Anyone who is licensed is welcome to check-in for information. For more information, call Mark Brandel, KF4EA, at 863-634-7021.

### OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD FRIENDS

863-610-2333. Meetings are held as needed. [okeechobeebattlefield.com](http://okeechobeebattlefield.com), [facebook.com/Battle-of-Okeechobee](https://facebook.com/Battle-of-Okeechobee).

### OKEECHOBEE COUNTY BOARD OF REALTORS

863-467-0004. Call for meetings and information.

### OKEECHOBEE COUNTY 4-H

numerous clubs including livestock, cooking, crafts, small animals, equestrian and more. For information, call 863-763-6469.

### OKEECHOBEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

863-763-4344. The Historical Society meets the third Monday of the month from September until June, at noon, with a covered dish luncheon at the Okeechobee Historical Museum, 1850 U.S. 98. Annual dues are \$10. The museum is open on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (except holidays.)

### OKEECHOBEE MAIN STREET

[okeechobeemainstreet.org](http://okeechobeemainstreet.org), email [info@okeechobeemainstreet.org](mailto:info@okeechobeemainstreet.org), visit their Facebook page or call 863-357-MAIN (6246).

### OKEECHOBEE CITIZENS RECREATIONAL ASSOC.

863-801-7505. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Sports Complex Pavilions - tennis court side, 640 N.W. 27th Lane. For information, visit the Okeechobee Citizens Recreational Association on Facebook.

### OKEECHOBEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

If you are interested in joining the Okeechobee Emergency Response Team, email [okeechobeecert@gmail.com](mailto:okeechobeecert@gmail.com).

### ROTARY CLUB

Meetings are held every Tuesday at noon at Golden Corral, 700 S. Parrott Ave.; [rotary6930.org](http://rotary6930.org).

### TANTIE QUILTERS

863-763-4344. Meetings are held at the Okeechobee Historical Museum, 1850 U.S. 98, on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (except holidays). The club makes quilts which are often used

to raise money for local charitable causes.

### TREASURE COAST BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

Okeechobee branch, 863-467-2007; [treasurecoastba.com](http://treasurecoastba.com).

### VFW POST #4423

863-763-0818. House Committee meetings are held the third Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The Post meeting is held at 6:30 p.m.. Auxiliary meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 6:30. Meetings are located at the VFW Post, 300 N.W. 34th

### VFW POST #10539

863-763-2308. Meetings are held the first Sunday of every month at noon. Meetings are held at the VFW Post, 3912 U.S. 441 S.E.

### VFW POST #9528

863-467-2882. Meetings are held the second Saturday of every month at 10 a.m. at 29012 E. S.R. 78.

### VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA #1086

863-447-3662. Vietnam Veterans of America, Okeechobee Chapter 1086, meetings are held the first Thursday of every month at Golden Corral, 700 S. Parrott Ave., Okeechobee, at 7 p.m., but those who wish to eat should arrive earlier. Every Wednesday morning at 6:30 a.m. Vietnam veterans meet at Gladys' Restaurant, 51 SW Park Street, for breakfast. Vietnam Veterans of America helps veterans and would like other Vietnam veterans to join their team.



# CHURCH DIRECTORY

Churches are located in Okeechobee unless otherwise noted

**ABIDING HOPE WORSHIP CENTER  
ASSEMBLY OF GOD**

4550 U.S. 441 N.  
Phone: 863-763-3736  
Pastor: Mark & Kathy Witt  
Email: [abidinghope.office@gmail.com](mailto:abidinghope.office@gmail.com)

**ALPHA MINISTRIES AT FREEDOM RANCH**

11655 U.S. Hwy. 441 S.E.  
Phone: 863-763-9800  
Pastor: John Glenn  
Website: [alphaministries.org](http://alphaministries.org) or  
[churchinthewoodsokeechobee.org](http://churchinthewoodsokeechobee.org)  
Email: [office@alphaministries.org](mailto:office@alphaministries.org)  
[Facebook.com/Alphaministries-Church-in-the-Woods-101888191473486](https://www.facebook.com/Alphaministries-Church-in-the-Woods-101888191473486)

**BASINGER CHRISTIAN BRETHERN CHURCH**

16090 N.W. 176th Ave.  
Phone: 863-467-2635  
Pastor: Reverend Monroe Arnold

**BELIEVERS FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

300 S.W. Sixth Ave.  
Phone: 863-763-6848  
Pastor: Nick Hopkins

**BIBLE CHURCH OF GOD**

3666 E. Hwy. 70 (old Elks Lodge)  
Phone: 863-357-2264  
Pastor: Bishop Robert L. Banks, Jr.  
[Facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Center/BCOG\\_IndOkee-1454811934780798](https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Center/BCOG_IndOkee-1454811934780798)

**BIG LAKE CHURCH OF CHRIST**

1115 S.W. Third Ave.  
Phone: 863-467-6758

**BIG LAKE MISSIONS OUTREACH**

P.O. Box 1663, Okeechobee, 34973  
Phone: 863-763-5725  
Cell: 863-697-6433  
Bruce and Mary Anne Swinford, directors  
Feeding the needy behind the Methodist Church four days a week at noon. No meal on Wednesday.  
Food pantry — call for appointment: 863-763-5725

**BRIGHTON BAPTIST CHURCH**

24050 Highway 70 West  
 Phone: 863-763-3063 (Office)  
 863-763-6626 (Church office)  
 Pastor: Calvin Fryar  
 Facebook.com/BrightonBaptist  
 Okeechobee

**BUCKHEAD RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH**

1731 Hunter Rd., Buckhead Ridge  
 Pastor: Arlen Cook, 863-763-7165  
 Email: arlenandloretta@gmail.com

**CALVARY CHAPEL OF OKEECHOBEE**

212 S. Parrott Ave.  
 Phone: 863 623-5283  
 Pastor: Carlos Amador  
 Email: pastorcarlos\_calvary@aol.com  
 Website: calvaryokeechobee.org

**CHRIST FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

*Non-denominational*

701 S. Parrott Ave.  
 Phone: 561-799-7600 Office  
 Pastor: Brandon Catoe  
 Email: oke@cftoday.org  
 Website: gochristfellowship.com/  
 church\_locations/okeechobee/

**CHURCH OF GOD OF OKEECHOBEE**

301 N.E. Fourth Ave.  
 Phone: 863-763-4127  
 Pastor: Chad Keathley  
 okeechobeeog.com (streaming  
 service available)  
 Email: chadkeathley@att.net

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS**

310 S.W. Sixth St.  
 Phone: 863-467-2425  
 Branch President: David Allen

**CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR EPISCOPAL**

200 N.W. Third St.  
 Phone: 863-763-4843  
 Rev. Kay Muller  
 churchofoursaviourokeechobee.org  
 Email: churchofoursaviour1@  
 gmail.com, or info@  
 churchofoursaviourokeechobee.org

**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BASINGER**

*Non-denominational*

19836 U.S. 98 N.  
 Phone: 863-467-2635  
 Pastor: Rev. Michael W. Peppers  
 Facebook.com/Community-Church-  
 of-Basinger-153185001390240/  
 Email: ccobasinger@gmail.com

**EMBASSY CHURCH AT BASINGER**

Corner of Hwy. 98 & 68  
 863-467-2635

**EVERGLADES BAPTIST CHURCH**

Currently holding services outdoors  
 across from Everglades Elementary  
 (3725 S.E. Eighth Street)  
 863-261-2198 (Everglades  
 Elementary School)  
 Phone: 863-261-2499  
 Pastor: Doug Nickalson, Jim Womble,  
 Eric Phillips  
 Website: evergladesbaptist.com/main  
 Email: ebcokeechobee@gmail.com

**FAITH ALIVE FAMILY CHURCH**

*Non-denominational*

3075 S.W. Third Terrace  
 Phone: 863-623-4233  
 Pastors Paul & Jen Smith  
 Facebook.com/  
 FaithAliveFamilyChurch  
 (live on Sunday mornings)  
 Email: jenlsmith66@gmail.com

**FAITH FARM MINISTRIES**

7595 N.E. 128th Ave.  
 Phone: 863-763-4224  
 Pastor: Rick Aspen and Lee Joliceur  
 Website: faithfarm.org

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF OKEECHOBEE (ROC)**

401 S.W. Fourth St.  
 Phone: 863-763-2171  
 Senior pastor: Mark McCarter  
 Website: fbcokee.org  
 Email: mail@fbcokee.org

**FIRST INDIAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF BRIGHTON**

20060 Reservation Road  
 Rev. Matthew Johnson Tiger, Pastor  
 Phone: 863-357-0013  
 Cell phone: 863-261-6429  
 firstindianbaptistchurchofbrighton.org

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

200 N.W. Second St.  
 Phone: 863-763-4021  
 Sr. Pastor: Don Hanna  
 Associate Pastor: Jim Dawson  
 Website: fumcokee.com  
 Facebook.com/1UMCOKEE1

**FOUNTAIN OF LIFE CHURCH**

1302 S.W. 32nd St.  
 Phone: 863-763-8945 or 863-801-1297  
 Pastor: Dave Robertson  
 fountainoflifechurchokeechobee  
 @gmail.com

**FT. DRUM COMMUNITY CHURCH**

32415 U.S. 441 N.  
 Phone: 863-467-1733  
 Pastor: Fred Hodges

**FREEDOM BAPTIST CHURCH**

1902 S. Parrott Ave.  
 Phone: 863-447-1805  
 Pastor: Mike Worf

**HAVEN OF REST PENTECOSTAL CHURCH**

912 N.W. Second St.  
 Phone: 863-357-3053  
 Pastor: Tom Velie  
 Website: havenofrestchurch.com  
 Facebook.com/HavenOfRestChurch/

**HIS CHURCH – IT'S JESUS' CHURCH**

*Non-denominational*

1167 Linda Road, Buckhead Ridge  
 Phone: 863-357-6500  
 Pastor: Tim and Tina Welburn  
 Email: office@hischurch-  
 itsjesuschurch.org  
 Website: hischurch-itsjesuschurch.org  
 Facebook.com/HisChurchFL/

**IGLESIA JESUS ES MI REDENTOR**

*Christian Evangelical*

1302 S.W. 32nd Street  
 Phone: 772-828-6226; 863-447-8571  
 Pastor: Ignacio Lorenzo  
 Facebook: JesusESMiRedentor

**LAKEPORT CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

10947 East S.R. 78 • Glades County  
 Phone: 863-946-1747  
 Pastor: Frank Moore  
 Website: lakeportcc.com  
 Email: mooreorless5@gmail.com

**MORE 2 LIFE MINISTRIES**

All weekend services meet at  
 Osceola Middle School Gym  
 605 S.W. Park Street  
 Phone: 863-467-0796  
 Pastor: Cary McKee  
 Wednesday meetings at Serenity  
 Coffee Shop

**NEW TESTAMENT BAPTIST CHURCH**

*Independent Baptist*

535 N.E. 28th Ave. (just west of the  
 overpass, off of SR 70)  
 Phone: 863-763-6682  
 Website: newtestamentokeechobee.com  
 Email: ntbcokeechobee@gmail.com

**NORTH OKEECHOBEE**

**CHURCH OF GOD**

15949 N.W. 30th Terrace  
 Phone: 863-467-1066  
 Pastor: Don Leon  
 Cell: 863-634-0344

**NORTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH**

51 N.W. 98 St.  
 Phone: 863-763-3584  
 Pastor: Rick Giles  
 Website: nbc-okeechobee.org  
 Email: northsidebaptistchurch@  
 live.com

**OAKVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH**

677 S.W. 32nd Street  
 863-763-1699  
 Pastor: Rev. Darrell Marlow  
 Website: oakviewbaptist.com  
 Email: church@oakbc.org

## CHURCHES

### OOKEECHOBEE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

3055 S.E. 18th Terr.  
Phone: 863-467-7858  
Minister: Jonathan Thomas  
Website:  
okeechobeechristianchurch.com

### OOKEECHOBEE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1401 S. Parrott Ave.  
Phone: 863-763-4477  
Minister: Mike Hanlon  
Facebook: facebook.com/  
okeechobeeoc  
Email: okeecofc@gmail.com

### OOKEECHOBEE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

425 S.W. 28th St. (Wolff Rd.)  
Phone: 863-763-3519  
Pastor: Joshua Petty  
biglakenazarene.com  
facebook.com/OkeeNaz  
tech@biglakenazarene.com

### OOKEECHOBEE CHURCH OF THE TRINITY

*Interdenominational*  
2939 S.W. Third Terrace  
Phone: 863-484-8055  
Pastor: Reverend Kathy Everett

### OOKEECHOBEE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

4212 U.S. 441 N.  
Phone: 863-763-3681  
or 863-763-7743  
Pastor: Donny Raney  
pastorraney@gmail.com

### OOKEECHOBEE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

312 N. Parrott Ave.  
Phone: 863-824-0013  
Pastor: Loy Mershimer  
okeechobepresby.com/wp\_blogsite  
office@okeepresby.com

### OOKEECHOBEE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

412 N.W. 6th St.  
Phone: 863-763-0655  
School: 863-763-0763  
Pastor: Rafael Fernandez

### PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

750 N.W. 23rd Lane  
Phone: 863-763-5042  
Pastor: John C. Hirst  
Website: plcokee.com  
pastorjohn@plcokee.com

### PENTECOSTALS OF OKEECHOBEE

405 S.W. 10th Ave.  
Pastor: Mark Sanders  
Phone: 863-623-4278  
Cell: 606-202-3580  
facebook.com/  
pentecostalsofokeechobee

### POINT OF LIGHT FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

15399 East S.R. 78, Lakeport,  
Okeechobee mailing, 34974  
Phone: 863-946-0228  
Pastor: Eddie and Teresa Woodham  
teresawoodham@yahoo.com  
Facebook.com/  
PointOfLightFellowship/

### RESURRECTION LIFE CHURCH

1803 S.W. Third Avenue  
Pastor(s): David and Deborah San  
Martin

### SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH

901 S.W. Sixth St.  
Phone: 863-763-3727  
Pastor: Father Yves Francois  
sacredheart901@outlook.com

### SEVENTH DAY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

912 N.W. Park St.  
Phone: 863-763-2285  
Pastor: Doyle McDuffie

### ST. STEPHENS AME CHURCH

1050 N.E. 16th Ave.  
Phone: 863-484-8449  
Pastor: Rev. Jack Washington  
Pastor's cell: 863-214-6568  
Facebook.com/NewStStephenAME/  
newststephenamechurch@gmail.com

### ST. TERESA OF THE CHILD JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

1027 Chobee Loop, BHR on SR78  
Phone: 863-946-0696  
Pastor: Father Marcial I. Garcia  
office@stjosephtheworkerfl.org

### THE GATHERING

1735 S.W. 24th Avenue  
Pastors: Mike & Theresa Brown  
Phone: 863-357-4418  
TheGatheringOkeechobee@gmail.com  
thegathering1.org or  
thegatheringchurch.us

### TREASURE ISLAND BAPTIST CHURCH

4209 U.S. 441 S.E.  
Phone: 561-541-7087  
Pastor: Douglas T. Ryan  
treasureislandbaptistchurch.com

### TRINITY FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH

1840 N.E. 39th Blvd. (Cemetery Rd.)  
Phone: 863-763-4962  
Pastor: Thomas Dees

### VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH

*Independent, King James Bible*  
500 S.W. Ninth St.  
Phone: 863-763-0669;  
863-697-6598  
Pastor: Dr. Johnny Jarriel  
Facebook.com/victorybaptistokee  
pastorjvbc@gmail.com

### WESTSIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF OKEECHOBEE

8082 SR 70 West  
Phone: 863-467-2278 or 740-361-2722  
Minister: Richard Barker  
Facebook.com/Westside-  
Christian-Church-of-Okeechobee-  
11813058882730  
willarddelaney@peoplepc.com

## Important Numbers | In an emergency, call 9-1-1

Animal Control .....	863-357-3225
City Code Enforcement office.....	863-357-1971
City Fire Department, non-emergency .....	863-763-9796
City Police, non-emergency.....	863-763-5521
County Code Enforcement office.....	863-763-5548
County Fire/Rescue, non-emergency.....	863-763-5544
Emergency Operations Center.....	863-763-3212
Glades Electric Cooperative .....	863-946-6200
FDACS Consumer Help Line .....	1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352)
Florida Power and Light .....	1-800-226-3545
FPL power outages.....	1-800-468-8243
Lake Okeechobee News.....	862-763-3134
Okeechobee Utility Authority.....	863-763-9460
Poison Control Center .....	1-800-222-1222
Raulerson Hospital.....	863-763-2151
Red Cross .....	863-763-2488
Sheriff's Office, non-emergency.....	863-763-3117
School Board Office .....	863-462-5000

# OKEECHOBEE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS



**JOE ARNOLD,  
DISTRICT 1**

Elected 2002. Re-elected 2006, 2014, 2018. Term expires November 2022.  
863-610-1639



**MALISSA MORGAN,  
DISTRICT 2**

Elected 2012. Re-elected 2016, 2020. Term expires November 2024.  
863-634-5852



**MELISA JAHNER,  
DISTRICT 3**

***VICE CHAIRWOMAN***

Elected 2018. Term expires November 2022.  
863-634-8844



**AMANDA RIEDEL,  
DISTRICT 4**

***CHAIRWOMAN***

Elected 2016. Re-elected 2020. Term expires 2024.  
863-261-6764



**JILL HOLCOMB,  
DISTRICT 5**

Elected 2014. Re-elected 2018. Term expires November 2022.  
863-484-0908



**KEN KENWORTHY,  
SUPERINTENDENT  
OF SCHOOLS**

863-462-5000

CITY OF OKEECHOBEE  
COUNCIL MEMBERS &  
ADMINISTRATION



The Okeechobee City Council is made up of five representatives who reside within the city limits. Representatives are elected from the community large, rather than by districts and serve four-year terms. Each even-numbered year on general election day in November, the city's registered voters elect or re-elect two or three city council members, depending on the year, to represent them in their city government. [Courtesy photo]

Monica Clark is serving her second term as city council member. She was first elected in 2016.

Bobby Keefe is serving his first term as city councilman. He was elected in 2018.

Bob Jarriel is serving his first term as city councilman. He was elected in 2018.

Noel Chandler was elected to the city council during a special election held in May 2021 after Russ Cale resigned prior to taking office. Chandler previously served on the council for 16 years.

Dowling Watford (seated above) is serving his second term as mayor and has been a member of the council since 1987.

The City Council meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in their chambers, located on the second floor of City Hall.



Lane Gamiotea has served the city of Okeechobee as city clerk for nearly 20 years and was assistant to the clerk for 14 years prior to being elected.



Gary Ritter was hired as city administrator in May 2021 after former administrator Marcos Montes De Oca resigned. Ritter served on the city council for the term ending in 2018.

# OKEECHOBEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



**DAVID HAZELLIEF**  
**DISTRICT 1**

*1st Vice Chairman*

Elected 2016, re-elected 2020, up for re-election 2024.  
Previously served 1996-2004

863-610-1553  
dhazellief@  
co.okeechobee.fl.us.



**BRADLEY G.  
GOODBREAD,**  
**DISTRICT 3**

Elected 2016, re-elected 2020,  
up for re-election 2024.

863-634-2121  
bgoodbread@  
co.okeechobee.fl.us.



**TERRY W. BURROUGHS,**  
**DISTRICT 4**

*Commission Chairman*

Elected 2014, re-elected 2018,  
up for reelection 2022.

863-532-6036  
tburroughs@  
co.okeechobee.fl.us.



**KELLY OWENS**  
**DISTRICT 5**

*2nd Vice Chairman*

Elected 2016, re-elected 2020,  
up for re-election 2024.

863-532-9006  
kowens@  
co.okeechobee.fl.us.



**DEBRA  
MANZON**

*County Administrator*

863-763-6441 Ext. 1  
dmanzo@  
co.okeechobee.fl.us.



**RICHARD J.  
READE**

*Deputy Administrator*

863-763-6441 Ext. 2  
rreade@  
co.okeechobee.fl.us.

# OKEECHOBEE COUNTY CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS



## JERALD D. BRYANT

Clerk of the Circuit Court  
and Comptroller

The Okeechobee County Clerk of the Circuit Court, established by the Constitution of 1838, is the public trustee for the county. The clerk provides the checks and balances in county government by acting in their capacity as Clerk to the Board, Clerk to the Court, Keeper of the Public Records, Comptroller and Internal Auditor of county funds.

Jerald Bryant was elected to the position in 2020. He will be up for re-election in 2024.

863-763-2131 • clerk.co@okeechobee.fl.us  
312 N.W. Third St.



## MICKEY BANDI

Property Appraiser

The Okeechobee County Property Appraiser is the Constitutional officer charged with making the annual determination of the just or fair market value of all property within the county for taxing purposes, and maintaining certain records connected therewith. These records include a comprehensive GIS (Geographic Information System). This office accepts and reviews all applications, granting those that qualify for exemptions and classifications available to

Florida property owners.

Mickey Bandi was elected in 2016 and re-elected in 2020. He will be up for re-election in 2024.

863-763-4422 • okeechobeepta.com  
409 NW Second Ave Suite B



## MELISSA ARNOLD

Supervisor of Elections

The Okeechobee County Supervisor of Elections will administer all federal, state and county elections in Okeechobee County. As a gatekeeper of the democratic process, and an elected Constitutional Officer, the Supervisor of Elections will uphold the election laws of the State of Florida and the Constitution of the United States. The mission of the supervisor of elections is to enhance public confidence; encourage citizen participation; and increase voter awareness and

education for citizens of all ages.

Melissa Arnold was elected in 2020. She will be up for re-election in 2024.

863-763-4014 • 304 N.W. Second St., Suite 144  
voteokeechobee.com • elections@voteokeechobee.com



## CELESTE WATFORD

Tax Collector

The Tax Collector serves as an agent for various state and local government agencies and taxing authorities for collection of revenue, and is also responsible for distributing this revenue to these agencies. Although most of the revenue collected are taxes, the Tax Collector's office isn't funded with tax dollars but with fees collected for services provided. These fees are established by the Florida Legislature and outlined in the Florida Statutes. The amount of work done

in the Tax Collector's office creates fee revenues in excess of the Tax Collector's budget. All excess fees are returned to the local government agencies at the end of each fiscal year.

Celeste Watford was re-elected in 2020. She will be up for re-election in 2024.

863-763-3421 • okeechobeeountytaxcollector.com  
409 NW Second Ave.



## NOEL STEPHEN

County Sheriff

The Sheriff of Okeechobee County has his duties and regulations established through Florida Statutes, just as other constitutional officers. At the present time, Noel Stephen is the sheriff and chief law enforcement officer of Okeechobee County, and is the Chief Corrections Officer of the county jail. The sheriff supervises over 200 full time employees, over 100 part time/volunteers and manages a current budget of over 20 million dollars.

Sheriff Stephen started in the Okeechobee County Jail as a Corrections Deputy in 1987 and was elected as sheriff in 2016 and re-elected in 2020. He will be up for re-election in 2024.

863-763-3117 • sheriff.co.okeechobee.fl.us  
504 N.W. Fourth St.

2022 Community Guide  
**OKEECHOBEE**

**Editor in Chief**

KATRINA ELSKEN

**President & CEO**

CHARLENE BISSON

**Vice President of  
Sales & Marketing**

KONRAD LA PRADE

**Advertising Manager**

JAIME LIMOGES

**Creative Services  
Team Leader**

KRIS SCHWARTZ

**Advertising**

JENNIFER KLERK DE REUS

STEPHANIE LARSON

KAY SHEEDY

**Editorial**

DEBBIE AKINS

RICHARD MARION

C.M. SCHMIDLKOFER

ANNIE WILLS

CATHY WOMBLE

**Graphics**

ERIK MAURER

DEBBIE MYERS

MONA LISA NAVARRETTE

CHRIS PITTS

CHRIS WILLIAMS

**To Reach Us**

313 NW 4TH AVE

OKEECHOBEE, FL 34972

863.763.3134

okeenews@iniusa.org

# Advertising Index

AAA Full Service Auto Care. . . . . 11  
 Adron Fence. . . . . 19  
 Advanced Spine & Joint Medical. . . . . 19  
 Anderson Realty Co. . . . . 63  
 Berger Real Estate . . . . . 37  
 Brain Matters Research . . . . . 35  
 Century 21 Hazellief & Prevatt. . . . . 9  
 Cooling Refrigeration Services . . . . . 19  
 David W. Diehl Insurance, LLC . . . . . 37  
 Dr. David Wemmer . . . . . 35  
 Eli's Western Wear Inc. . . . . 15  
 Gilbert Family of Companies . . . . . 64  
 Glades Electric Cooperative . . . . . 11  
 Handy Food Stores. . . . . 9  
 Heartland Discount Pharmacy . . . . . 3  
 Lake O Real Estate . . . . . 25  
 Lake Okeechobee News . . . . . 49  
 Lawrence Insurance Agency . . . . . 11  
 Legacy Real Estate of Florida . . . . . 29  
 Lehman Auto Body/AG98 . . . . . 25  
 Los Cocos Tortilleria . . . . . 33, 45  
 Mi Familia Mexican Restaurant. . . . . 21, 45  
 Miller's Central Air. . . . . 37  
 Mixon Real Estate Group, LLC . . . . . 2  
 NHC Homecare . . . . . 33  
 Nisbet Enterprises, Inc. . . . . 21  
 Nunez Air Conditioning. . . . . 49  
 Okeechobee Family Practice. . . . . 21  
 Okeechobee Outlet Store. . . . . 35  
 Platt Chiropractic . . . . . 29  
 Quik Change Oil & Lube . . . . . 29  
 Rustic Style & Cabins/Remington Real Estate . . . . 47  
 State Farm Insurance . . . . . 62  
 Supervisor of Elections Okeechobee . . . . . 62  
 Treasure Coast Hospice . . . . . 7  
 Tucker Group. . . . . 33  
 Vitas Hospice . . . . . 39



Surprisingly great rates  
right around the corner.

**Gretchen Robertson Ins Agy Inc**  
Gretchen Robertson, Agent  
309 NE 2ND ST  
Okeechobee, FL 34972  
Bus: 863-763-5561  
Hablamos Español

I'm your one-stop shop for the service you deserve at a price you want. Call me for surprisingly great rates and Good Neighbor service right in your neighborhood.

Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.®

Individual premiums will vary by customer. All applicants subject to State Farm® underwriting requirements.

State Farm  
Bloomington, IL  
2001878



## 2022 Elections

August 23, 2022 - Primary Election

November 8, 2022 - General Election

Books Close - July 25, 2022

Books Close - October 11, 2022

Early Voting - August 13-20

Early Voting - October 29 - November 5

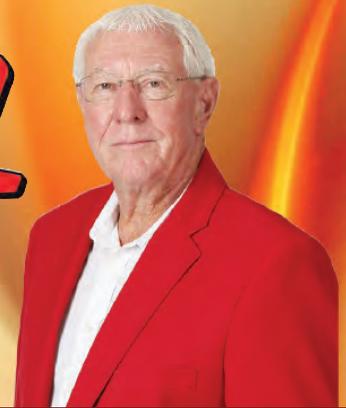
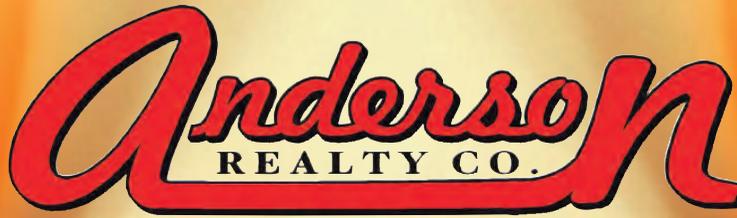
Visit our Website @ [Voteokeechobee.gov](http://Voteokeechobee.gov) - Don't forget to "Like" our Facebook Page

**Melissa Arnold, Supervisor of Elections**

**863-763-4014**

**304 NW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Suite 144, Okeechobee, FL 34972**





*Vicki S. Anderson,  
Licensed Real Estate Broker  
President,  
Okeechobee Board of Realtors*

*Vicki Anderson 863.634.4106*

*863.634.4107 Eric Anderson*

*Your Top Realty Company  
In Okeechobee  
That Your Family Can Trust  
To Be There For You!*



*We Service ALL Your  
Real Estate Needs*

---

**Shelly Doyle**  
*Personal Assistant*  
**863.801.8463**  
[shellydoyle@gmail.com](mailto:shellydoyle@gmail.com)

---

**Vicki S. Anderson**  
Licensed Real Estate Broker  
863.634.4106 | [vic\\_anderson@earthlink.net](mailto:vic_anderson@earthlink.net)

**Eric W. Anderson**  
Licensed Real Estate Broker  
863.634.4107

**Shelly D. Doyle**  
Licensed Real Estate Agent  
863.801.8463 | [shellydoyle@gmail.com](mailto:shellydoyle@gmail.com)

**30046 E. SR 78, Okeechobee, FL 34974**

For all of our listings, please visit [www.AndersonRealtyCo.com](http://www.AndersonRealtyCo.com)



Gilbert Culberth



**CHEVROLET**

*Established 1933*  
**863-763-3154**



*Established 2013*  
**863-763-2121**



Gilbert Culberth, Age 14  
Chevrolet Automot  
Maurid, Alabama



**OIL COMPANY**

*All-Night Service Station  
West N Okeechobee*  
**Established 1924**  
**863-763-0666**

"password" is Chevrolet!

**COLLISION CENTER**

*Established 1933*  
**863-824-3553**



Est.

1924

**Has It.com**

**OUTDOORS**

*Established 1950*  
**863-763-6434**



*Established 2011*  
**863-763-6434**

**Realty**

*Established 1971*  
**863-763-1155**



*Established 2017*  
**863-824-3518**

**Experience**  
PRODUCTIONS

*Established 2016*  
**863-824-3636**

*The Gilbert name is consistent with value and community service.  
Our family roots are here in Okeechobee, and we take pride in  
offering services the community needs just as we have since 1924.  
We will continue to be here as a neighbor and friend  
for generations to come.*

*Visit one of our friendly Gilbert locations today and  
see why people say, "Gilbert Has It."*

**Proudly Serving the Lake Okeechobee Area Since 1924**