



FIRST DUE

Citrus County Fire Rescue Newsletter
Spring 2025 Edition



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CHIEFS' CORNER

FIRE CHIEF CRAIG STEVENS



THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THE FIRST EDITION OF OUR CCFR NEWSLETTER. WE'RE EXCITED TO SHARE UPDATES, CELEBRATE PROGRESS, AND KEEP YOU CONNECTED TO WHAT'S HAPPENING ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT. IF YOU EVER HAVE QUESTIONS, NEED CLARIFICATION, OR WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ANYTHING MENTIONED HERE OR ABOUT CCFR IN GENERAL, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT.

OUR DEPARTMENT BEGAN UNION CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS ON JUNE 27TH, WITH FURTHER SESSIONS ANTICIPATED FOLLOWING THE COUNTY COMMISSION'S REVIEW OF THE WAGE STUDY, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JULY 29TH. IF APPROVED, THE STUDY WOULD RAISE STARTING PAY FOR ALL UNION POSITIONS AND INTRODUCE ANNUAL STEP INCREASES BASED ON EXPERIENCE. THIS IS A VITAL STEP TOWARD SUPPORTING OUR PERSONNEL AND ENSURING CITRUS COUNTY REMAINS COMPETITIVE IN THE REGION.

IN ADDITION, THE BOARD PROVIDED CONSENSUS TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF INCREASING THE FIRE ASSESSMENT FEE (MSBU) WITH A \$46 INCREASE. RAISING THE TOTAL FROM \$79 TO \$125 PER RESIDENCE. PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR THIS TOPIC ARE EXPECTED TO OCCUR IN SEPTEMBER. THIS INCREASE HELPS PROVIDE THE FUNDING NECESSARY TO SUPPORT SAFE STAFFING, EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE NEEDS.

WE ALSO HAVE SEVERAL NEW APPARATUS UPDATES. TWO BRUSH TRUCKS ARE EXPECTED BY YEAR'S END, AND TWO OSAGE AMBULANCES ARE CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION FOR EARLY 2026 DELIVERY. TWO BATTALION CHIEF VEHICLES HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED AND ARE AWAITING EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION. A PLANNED SQUAD REFURBISHMENT HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL OCTOBER DUE TO RISING COSTS.

WE'VE APPLIED FOR MULTIPLE GRANTS, INCLUDING FUNDING FOR 13 ADDITIONAL FIREFIGHTER POSITIONS, UPGRADED FIRE HOSE, SOFTWARE FOR PRE-INCIDENT PLANNING, AND ELECTRONIC FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING TOOLS. WE ALSO RECEIVED AN EMS GRANT TO UPGRADE MODEM CONNECTIVITY IN OUR RESCUE UNITS.

FINALLY, THE NEW FIRE STATION AT THE INVERNESS AIRPORT IS IN THE DESIGN AND ENGINEERING PHASE, SUPPORTED BY \$3.5 MILLION IN STATE FUNDING. CONSTRUCTION IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN IN EARLY 2026.

WE ALSO LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING BACK CAPTAIN BEAGAN (AUGUST 4) FROM MILITARY LEAVE AND WELCOMING BACK PARAMEDIC WASYLYK (JULY 28) FROM AN EXTENDED LEAVE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AS WE GROW AND SERVE CITRUS COUNTY WITH PRIDE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SHARING MORE PROGRESS IN FUTURE EDITIONS—STAY SAFE AND TAKE CARE.

YOURS IN SERVICE,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Stevens".

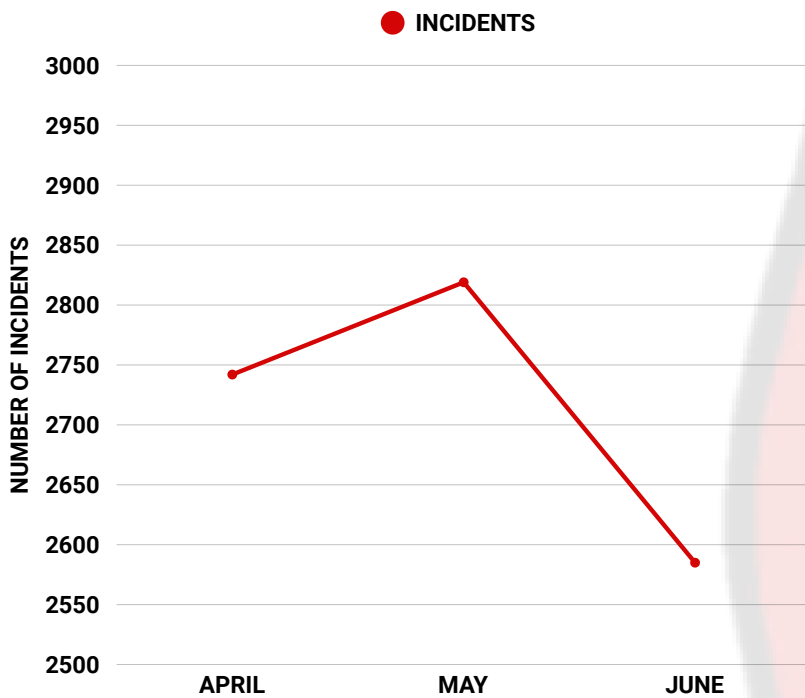
CRAIG STEVENS

FIRE CHIEF

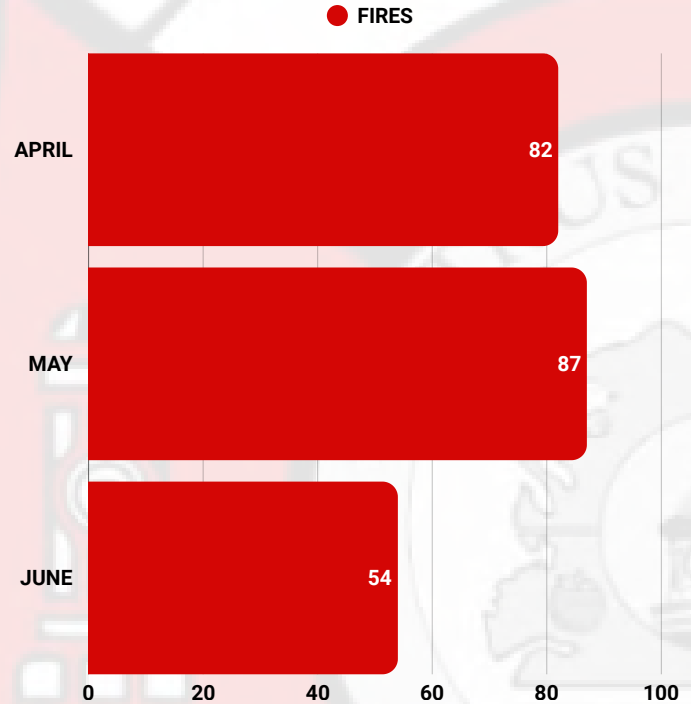
QUARTERLY STATS

APRIL 1 – JUNE 30, 2025

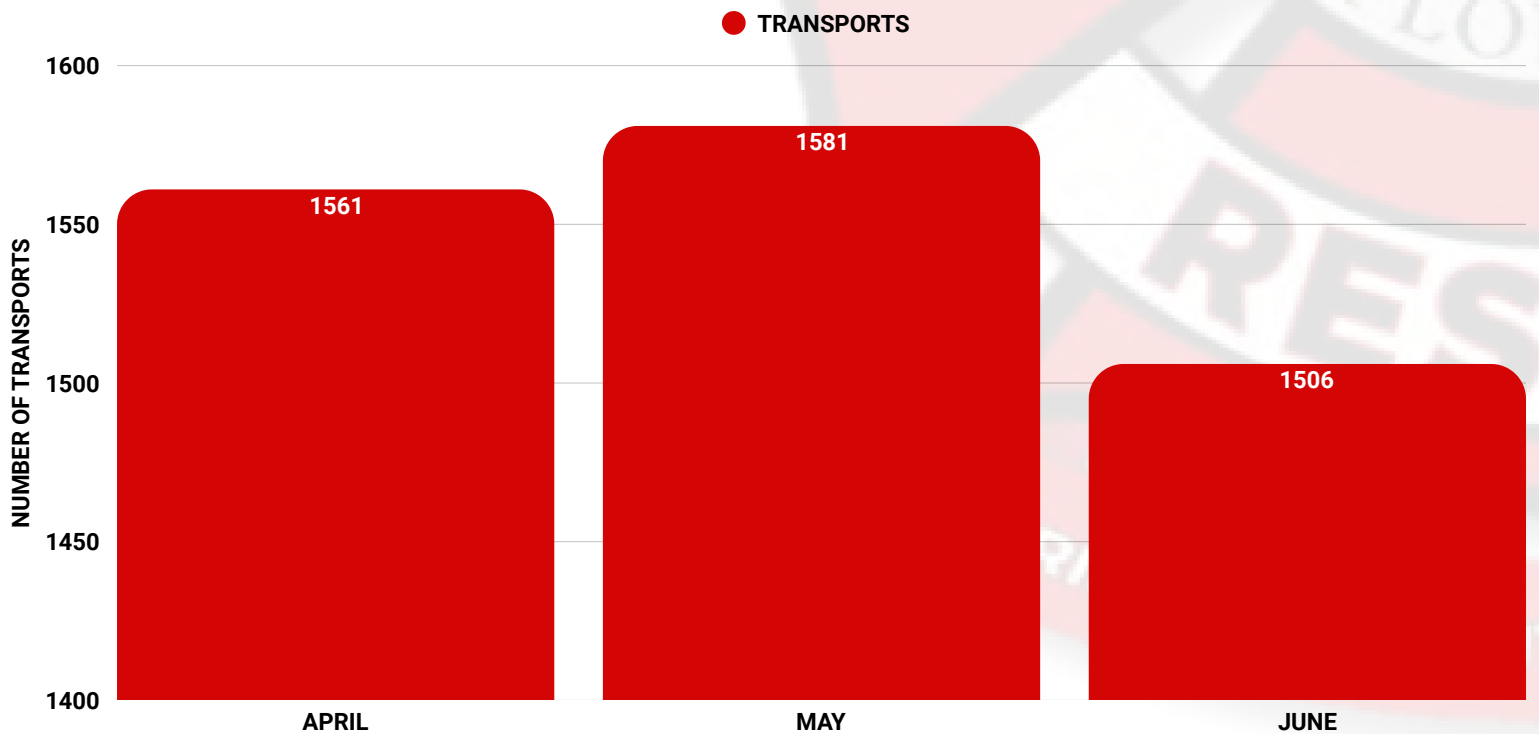
INCIDENTS CCFR RESPONDED TO



BRUSH, VEHICLE, & STRUCTURE FIRES



EMS TRANSPORTS



ANNIVERSARIES



DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF KEITH LONG
BATTALION CHIEF CHASE HURST
BATTALION CHIEF SCOT PRATER
BATTALION CHIEF L.J. WHITE
CAPTAIN CRAIG ZACKE
CAPTAIN WAYNE MCCLENDON
CAPTAIN KENNEDY BOYER
CAPTAIN COLIN BRUNNER

CAPTAIN CALEB DOUGLAS
CAPTAIN BRIAN SANDERS
CAPTAIN LANCE POTTER
CAPTAIN GARY BONICK



DRIVER ENGINEER STEPHEN BURNETT



CAPTAIN MICHAEL TRAPP
DRIVER ENGINEER KEVIN SCOTT
FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC JOSHUA KING
DRIVER ENGINEER AMANDA RICHMOND
DRIVER ENGINEER ALAN BLAKE
DRIVER ENGINEER ERIK MCKAY
DRIVER ENGINEER RUDY HAJAISTRON

STATION SPOTLIGHT

PINE RIDGE STATION 20: A-SHIFT



STATION 20, PROUDLY KNOWN AS “THE SLEEPLESS KNIGHTS,” IS LOCATED IN PINE RIDGE AND SERVES AS THE FIRST DUE STATION FOR PINE RIDGE, BEVERLY HILLS, AND PORTIONS OF LECANTO.

OUR RESPONSE AREA INCLUDES RAPIDLY GROWING DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS THE SHOPPES AT BLACK DIAMOND RANCH.

AS ONE OF THE BUSIEST STATIONS IN CITRUS COUNTY, WE OPERATE THREE SHIFTS ON A 24/48 ROTATION, WITH FIVE DEDICATED PERSONNEL ON DUTY EACH DAY.

STATION 20 IS EQUIPPED WITH AN ENGINE, A TANKER FOR WATER SUPPLY, A BRUSH TRUCK, AND AN ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT AMBULANCE TO ENSURE COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY COVERAGE. WE ARE COMMITTED TO DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AND RAPID RESPONSE TO THE CITIZENS OF OUR COMMUNITY. IT IS BOTH AN HONOR AND A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THIS VIBRANT AND GROWING AREA.

ENGINE 20:

- CAPTAIN CHRIS CARAVETTO, MARINE CORPS VETERAN, 18 YEARS OF SERVICE (PICTURED 3RD FROM LEFT)
- DRIVER ENGINEER BILLY HAMMOND, 7 YEARS OF SERVICE (PICTURED 4TH FROM LEFT)
- FIREFIGHTER MORGAN BAKULSKI, 2 YEARS OF SERVICE (PICTURED 5TH FROM LEFT)

RESCUE 20:

- PARAMEDIC CHAD DAVIS, ARMY VETERAN, 10 YEARS OF SERVICE (PICTURED 2ND FROM LEFT)
- EMT CELESTE AVANT, 2 YEARS OF SERVICE (PICTURED 1ST FROM LEFT)



FIRE & LIFE SAFETY TIPS

FIRE MARSHAL MIKE SIMEK

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE LIKE THE TASTE OF GRILLED FOOD AND WITH THIS WARM AND SUNNY WEATHER, MORE PEOPLE WILL BE UNCOVERING AND DUSTING OFF THEIR OUTDOOR GRILLS. BUT BEFORE LIGHTING UP THE GRILL, TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO REVIEW SOME SAFETY TIPS.

SETTING UP:

- BARBECUE GRILLS ARE DESIGNED FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY. NEVER BARBECUE IN AN ENCLOSED AREA – DANGEROUS CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) CAN ACCUMULATE AND BE DEADLY. IF YOU SUSPECT CO POISONING, CALL 9-1-1.
- SET-UP YOUR GRILL ON A FLAT SURFACE IN AN OPEN AREA AT LEAST THREE FEET AWAY FROM BUILDINGS, OVERHEAD COMBUSTIBLE SURFACES, DRY LEAVES AND BRUSH.
- MAKE SURE THE GREASE TRAP IS EMPTY AND CLEAN AND THAT GRILLING PARTS ARE FIRMLY IN PLACE.
- FOR PROPANE GRILLS, MAKE SURE THE HOSE CONNECTION IS TIGHT AND CHECK THE HOSES FOR LEAKS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHEN USING THE GRILL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME.

Grilling Fire Safety Tip

To prevent a fire, place grill well away from the home, deck railings, out from under eaves and overhanging branches.



**NATIONAL FIRE
PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**

The leading information and knowledge resource
on fire, electrical and related hazards



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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER SUNSHINE ARNOLD

MANAGING ANXIETY THROUGH MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

ANXIETY IS A NORMAL EMOTION—BUT WHEN IT BECOMES OVERWHELMING, IT CAN DISRUPT DAILY LIFE. ANXIETY CAN SHOW UP AS RACING THOUGHTS, OVERTHINKING, TIGHTNESS IN THE CHEST, RESTLESSNESS, OR IRRITABILITY.

ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IS DEEP, DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING. BREATHING IN THIS WAY, EVEN FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME SLOWS YOUR HEART RATE AND HELPS TO CALM YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM FAST. TRY BELLY BREATHING: INHALE DEEPLY THROUGH YOUR NOSE LETTING YOUR BELLY RISE INSIDE OF YOUR CHEST FOR ABOUT 4 SECONDS, HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR 2 SECONDS, THEN EXHALE SLOWLY LIKE YOU ARE BLOWING THROUGH A STRAW FOR AT LEAST 6 SECONDS. REPEAT SEVERAL TIMES. THIS IS A GREAT WAY FOR OUR FIREFIGHTERS AND EMS STAFF TO GET READY FOR A SHIFT, RESET AFTER A TOUGH CALL, OR EVEN MID-SITUATION TO RESET THEIR SYSTEM.

WHEN YOU FIND YOUR WORRY SPIRALING OUT OF CONTROL GROUNDING TECHNIQUES HELP REDIRECT ATTENTION AWAY FROM WORRY AND BRING YOU BACK TO THE PRESENT. TRY THIS:

NAME 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE, 4 THINGS YOU CAN TOUCH, 3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR, 2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL, AND 1 THING YOU TASTE OR EVEN 1 THING THAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR.

REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, EVEN A QUICK 10-MINUTE WALK, IS INCREDIBLY HELPFUL TO REDUCE STRESS HORMONES AND IMPROVE MOOD.

CHALLENGE IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS TO BREAK THE ANXIETY LOOP BY WRITING YOUR WORRIES DOWN ON PAPER OR BY TALKING TO A FRIEND TO BREAK THE SILENCE THAT FUELS STRESS.

ANXIETY MAY STEM FROM OVERCOMMITMENT, TOO MUCH SOCIAL MEDIA OR NEWS, POOR SLEEP, OR UNMANAGED TRAUMA. SETTING BOUNDARIES, IMPROVING SLEEP, AND REACHING OUT FOR PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED ARE CRUCIAL STEPS.

MANAGING ANXIETY IS NOT ABOUT ELIMINATING IT—IT'S ABOUT BUILDING RESILIENCE AND TOOLS TO RESPOND INSTEAD OF REACT. WITH PRACTICE AND SUPPORT, IT BECOMES POSSIBLE TO FACE UNCERTAINTY WITH GREATER CALM.



COMMUNITY & COMMITMENT

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE KEY TRAINING CENTER!



WE HAD A FANTASTIC DAY WELCOMING CLIENTS AND STAFF FROM THE KEY TRAINING CENTER TO OUR FIRE TRAINING CENTER IN MAY. THEY LEARNED IMPORTANT FIRE SAFETY TIPS AND WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO TOUR OUR NEW FIRE SAFETY HOUSE!

WE'RE PROUD TO SUPPORT THE KEY TRAINING CENTER'S MISSION OF ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. IT WAS AN INSPIRING VISIT FILLED WITH SMILES AND UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS. THANK YOU FOR BEING SUCH INCREDIBLE FIRE SAFETY AMBASSADORS!

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NOW ACCEPTING ONLINE CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS!

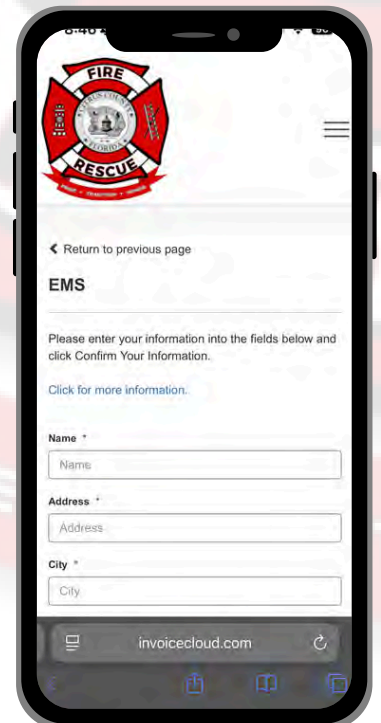
CITRUS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE NOW ACCEPTS ONLINE CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS FOR EMS BILLS, FACILITY RENTALS, AND MORE!

PAY YOUR EMS BILL AT

WWW.CITRUSBOCC.COM/.../FIRE.../BILLING_RECORDS.PHP

INVOICES FOR OTHER PAYMENTS WILL INCLUDE THE CORRECT WEBSITE LINK.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT AS WE PROVIDE CONVENIENT PAYMENT OPTIONS!



COMMUNITY & COMMITMENT

INTRODUCING OUR NEW FIRE SAFETY TRAILER

CITRUS COUNTY FIRE RESCUE IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE A NEW, STATE-OF-THE-ART FIRE SAFETY TRAILER, REPLACING THE ORIGINAL UNIT THAT SERVED THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 30 YEARS. BUILT BY LION, THE TRAILER PROVIDES REALISTIC, HANDS-ON FIRE AND STORM SAFETY TRAINING FOR ALL AGES.

KEY FEATURES INCLUDE:

- **BEDROOM SCENARIO:** LEARN TO CHECK DOORS FOR HEAT, BLOCK SMOKE, RESPOND TO ALARMS, AND ESCAPE THROUGH THE E.D.I.T.H. WINDOW.
- **KITCHEN SCENARIO:** FACE SIMULATED APPLIANCE FIRES, USE A LASER EXTINGUISHER, AND PRACTICE SAFE EVACUATION.
- **911 CALL SIMULATION:** USE INTERACTIVE PHONES TO ROLE-PLAY EMERGENCY CALLS.
- **STORM SIMULATION:** EXPERIENCE HURRICANES, FLOODS, TORNADOES, AND EARTHQUAKES IN A SAFE SETTING.

“THIS TRAILER IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR TEACHING LIFE-SAVING SKILLS,” SAID FIRE CHIEF CRAIG STEVENS. THE TRAILER WILL APPEAR AT SCHOOLS, EVENTS, AND PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT CITRUS COUNTY.

TO REQUEST THE TRAILER FOR YOUR EVENT, VISIT:

WWW.CITRUSBOCC.COM/DEPARTMENTS/FIRE_REScue/SPECIAL_EVENTS_REQUEST.PHP



STAY CONNECTED



CONTACT US

MAIN LINE: (352) 527-5406

EMAIL: FIREINFO@CITRUSCOUNTYFIRE.COM

WEBSITE: WWW.CITRUSCOUNTYFIRE.COM

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE LOCATION:

1520 N. MEADOWCREST BLVD., CRYSTAL RIVER, FL 34429



UPCOMING EVENTS

KEY TRAINING CENTER'S RUN 180: JOIN THE KEY TRAINING CENTER IN RAISING AWARENESS AND FUNDS FOR ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES! THE COMMUNITY GROUP WILL BE RUNNING LOCALLY 3 MILES AT 6AM AND 6PM EACH DAY TO MATCH THE CORE TEAM WHO IS RUNNING 180 MILES FROM TALLAHASSEE TO CITRUS COUNTY:

- JULY 21 | 6AM: CLEARSKY REHABILITATION, 3967 W NORVELL BRYANT HWY
- JULY 21 | 6PM: CR RACETRAC, 1030 SE US HWY 19
- JULY 22 | 6AM: KENSINGTON FIRE STATION, 285 S KENSINGTON AVE
- JULY 22 | 6PM: BH BRANNEN BANK, 3930 N LECANTO HWY
- JULY 23 | 6AM: THE GROVE HEALTH & REHAB, 124 W NORVELL BRYANT HWY
- JULY 23 | 6PM: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER, 3549 SAUNDERS WAY
- JULY 24 | 6AM: DOWNTOWN CR FOUNTAIN, N CITRUS AVE
- JULY 24 | 6PM: INVERNESS MCDONALD'S, 2801 E GULF TO LAKE HWY
- JULY 25 | 6AM: DUNKIN DONUTS, 599 S STONE WAY
- JULY 25 | 6PM: CITRUS SPRINGS FIRE STATION, 9515 N CITRUS SPRINGS BLVD

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- JULY 26TH | 10 AM: BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT AT THE JOY & PRAISE FELLOWSHIP IN BEVERLY HILLS
 - JULY 26TH | 1PM: BACK TO SCHOOL EXTRAVAGANZA AT THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 237 IN BEVERLY HILLS

FOLLOW US



“DEDICATED TO EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE THROUGH PREVENTION, RESPONSE, AND EDUCATION“