



New Year's 2023 traffic totals A2



Exemption time A2



Legislators coming January 10 A3



Have Your Say A4

## SPORTS



Sneads takes two wins at Optimist Tournament B1



Chipola Indians ranked number 1 B1

## COMMUNITY



Weaths Across America a success C1

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Focused on Jackson County

Thursday, January 5, 2023

## Graceville School will not be closing



Photo by Mark Sanner

By SHELIA MADER

The Jackson County School Board has elected to not close Graceville School this coming year and has no plans for

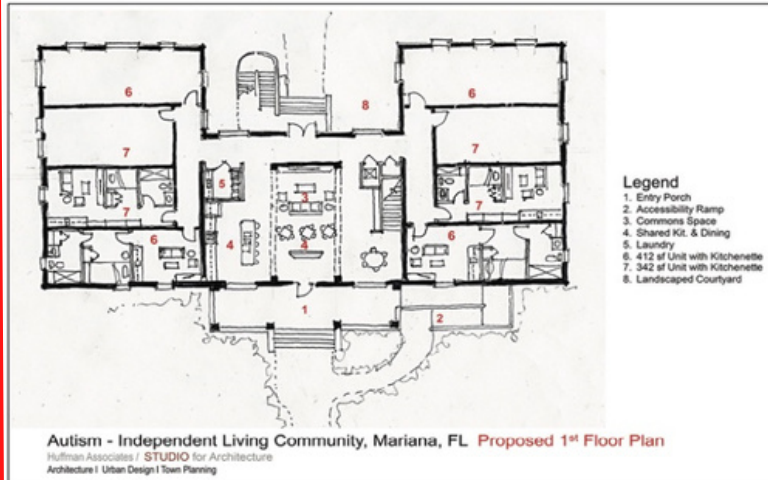
its closure. The talk has circulated for over a year that due to enrollment continuing to decline, this could possibly be the last year for part of Grace-

ville School. The rumors went from predicting full closure to just the high school grades (9-12) or middle and high school grades (6-12).

Those rumors can now be put to rest. The enrollment on August 10, 2022 was 431 stu-

See GRACEVILLE • A7

## Endeavor moving forward with hope for autism



Autism - Independent Living Community, Mariana, FL Proposed 1st Floor Plan

Huffman Associates / STUDIO for Architecture  
Architecture | Urban Design | Town Planning

### Legend

1. Entry Porch
2. Accessibility Ramp
3. Commons Space
4. Shared Kit. & Dining
5. Laundry
6. 412 sf Unit with Kitchenette
7. 342 sf Unit with Kitchenette
8. Landscaped Courtyard

BLUE PRINTS COURTESY OF DHM MOLIN ENGINEERS

By SHELIA MADER

The Dozier School for Boys closed its doors in 2011, but the memories from the treatment of juveniles imprisoned there live on. Fast forward to December 2018 and for-

mer Governor Rick Scott gifted over 1200 acres of the property to Jackson County. The planning stages for the property includes a school for young adults with autism, including living quarters to make the adjust-

ment from homes with parental supervision to independent living, an industrial park, retail shops, and a place of remembrance from

See ENDEAVOR • A7

## City of Marianna recognizes longevity

By SHELIA MADER

The City of Marianna took time from their regular monthly meeting this month to recognize two employees that reached milestones in their career with the City.

Mayor Kenny Hamilton read the proclamation each one received and thanked them for their commitment to Marianna. Commissioners Travis Ephriam, John Roberts, Alan Ward, and Rico Williams seconded the thanks from Hamilton.

Recognized for 15 years of service was Angela Craig. Craig works at Marianna Health and Rehabilitation and celebrated her actual anniversary on December 10, 2022.

Glenn Harrison was recognized for 15 years of service at Marianna Health and Rehabilitation. Harrison's actual anniversary date was December 4, 2022.

Congratulations to these employees from the publisher and staff of the Jackson County Times.



Glenn Harrison, Mayor Kenny Hamilton and Angela Craig

Continued

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## GRACEVILLE - Continued

dents. Today, the enrollment is 474 students today, an increase of 41 students. Below is a break down by grades of students enrolled in Graceville School in October, 2022 and in January 2023.

OCTOBER, 2022	JANUARY, 2023
Pre K - 20	Pre K - 20
K - 38	K - 37
1 <sup>st</sup> - 41	1 <sup>st</sup> - 46
2 <sup>nd</sup> - 37	2 <sup>nd</sup> - 37
3 <sup>rd</sup> - 35	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 37
4 <sup>th</sup> - 27	4 <sup>th</sup> - 31
5 <sup>th</sup> - 41	5 <sup>th</sup> - 38
6 <sup>th</sup> - 33	6 <sup>th</sup> - 32
7 <sup>th</sup> - 31	7 <sup>th</sup> - 32
8 <sup>th</sup> - 51	8 <sup>th</sup> - 52
9 <sup>th</sup> - 26	9 <sup>th</sup> - 29
10 <sup>th</sup> - 33	10 <sup>th</sup> - 33
11 <sup>th</sup> - 35	11 <sup>th</sup> - 38
12 <sup>th</sup> - 14	12 <sup>th</sup> - 14
<b>Total 462</b>	<b>Total 474</b>

Newly elected board member for District 1 Chephus Granberry feels it is very important that Graceville School remain open. In the December meeting when the five-year work plan was discussed, he addressed the status of Graceville School. Granberry said, "That was my way of knowing what was going on as far as the work plan and to also to give the people of the Graceville area some relief and making it known publicly that at this point, they are not a part of our five-year workplan and

possibility of closing that school." He said as far as the importance of the school remaining open, "The community identity and the fact that the community would have to travel so far to get an education is what you have to see. When communities lose their schools, they lose their identity, and it is my desire to build up and not to tear down. I didn't want the long running history of the Graceville Tigers to have to go through what the Grand Ridge Indians had to go through whenever they closed their high school. It's traumatizing and even though sometimes you have to make changes, but you only want to make that change when it's absolutely necessary and right now at this point, I don't feel that it's absolutely necessary. We are working on building the student base. It's on an upward spiral now, the numbers are going up and the way that we can keep them going up is to create some stability in the staff, the administration and to also make school fun and give our students opportunities so they won't have to jump and run to other districts. That's what we got to do is stop is the bleeding."

District 2 Board member Tony Pumphrey supports keeping Graceville School open, "Graceville School is a school with a lot of community pride. Numbers in the 9-12 grade levels for the past couple of years have been at a lower level than we would like to see. But the numbers appear to be increasing and moving in a positive direction and that is good news. We would like to see the school succeed and thrive again and I feel like we should give them every opportunity to do so."

District 3 board member Stacey Goodson acknowledged enrollment was down, "Enrollment has been down a little. You know you never want to close a school. You do have to look at it financially but again, you don't want to close a school unless it's absolutely necessary."

District 4 school board member Chris Johnson is well known to be the financial thinker. He said, "Graceville's attendance numbers have increased some and looks like some of the elementary class sizes are larger which will in turn increase high school numbers. Attendance had really been down in high school there. Hopefully with some success in the athletic programs, we can encourage students to stay in Graceville School." Johnson said about Principal Carlan Martin, "I think he is a big reason for the success over there. He supports athletics."

District 5 newcomer M.J. Jackson, "I believe it is very necessary to keep our small community schools open. That's what I believe in keeping our schools open in our community and we need to do everything we can to keep them there. I think we can dig a little deeper and find some ways to make it possible to keep the smaller schools."

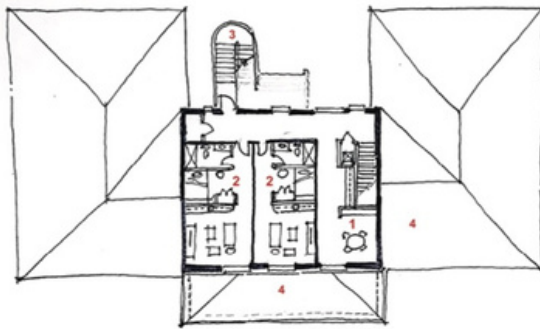
Superintendent of Schools Steve Benton said, "I am pleased that we are going to recommend GHS remain in operation. I had informed everyone that if enrollment was stable, we would support the opening of the school. We are in hopes that enrollment will continue to increase. I appreciate the hard work of everyone and am looking forward to great things for GHS."

## ENDEAVOR - Continued

the Dozier School days. A committee was formed to oversee parts of the renovation and the name Endeavor was given to the property.

Jackson County was also awarded a Florida Job Growth Infrastructure Grant in 2018 for \$5.88 million for revitalization of the property into a regional distribution center and a workforce training site. Endeavor received a \$400,000 in federal tax credit for renovations to the school and also a \$5 million local tourism development council pledge towards the future planned civic center. Also received was \$500,000 in tourism development council funding to match a \$500,000 cultural grant from the Florida Department of State for future museum.

First on the agenda for the Endeavor property was the demolition of buildings that could not be revamped or saved for another purpose. David Melvin from David H. Melvin Engineering has been on board from ground level with the project and has been the workhorse behind the project. He said, "They got the demolition done and all cleaned up about that time we started the autism program. We had a meeting yesterday (December 14,



Autism - Independent Living Community, Mariana, FL Proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan

Huffman Associates / STUDIO for Architecture  
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BLUE PRINTS COURTESY OF DHM MELVIN ENGINEERING



Photo by Mike Serrano

2022) and elected new board members and it's going really well."

There are seven presently enrolled in the autism program and all of those are attending live classes. In the first class, there were some who attended virtually. Melvin said, "We have started taking applications now for the spring. I think the applications being taken in January are for the two-year program." The two-year program was initially scheduled to include housing, but Melvin said right now funding is holding that part of the program up. Initially, it was thought there would be some funding from legislation

in the amount of \$480,000 that they thought the county would receive but that did not come through. Melvin said, "We'll be making a legislative request again this time to get the money for the housing to convert one of the dorms into an apartment complex." As far as number of apartments, he said they can do 10 apartments in one dorm. He said plans would allow for eight apartments downstairs, four on each side, two upstairs and that leaves a common area. When you first walk in, there's a kitchen area, and an entertainment area.

The school that was scheduled to be

demolished to make way for the new building met with delays due to supply issues. Melvin said he's hopeful the renovations will be complete by the end of January. He said one thing they were never able to obtain was an electrical panel, so they retrieved one from one of the other buildings. He said some items were one-year behind and even more for electrical items. Melvin said, "Everything else, all the painting is done, all the stuff is installed, so we are close."

Melvin said they received funding about a month ago for the museum that is in the works for Endeavor. He said, "I believe that was \$1 million in funding for it and we've applied for another grant to match that grant, but we've not heard on that grant yet. That will get the building stabilized, a new roof on it, and windows. We hope to go out for bids for the civic center part of it within the next few months." The future museum is what used to be the dining hall and the civic center will be a renovation of the former gym. Melvin said there are some buildings that will need to come down, "We thought we could do something with Pierce Hall but it's not looking like we can save it. The medical clinic that is out there, I don't know what we would use it for but it's in pretty good shape. People have asked

what ones we save. There were some that were no brainers either way. But there are some like the dorm buildings that are solid but what do you use them for. Of course, one we converted into the apartments. And I have envisioned that as some of our students graduate, we could have incubator businesses out there. You can contract with the state if you're a nonprofit and hire people with disabilities, you can do different tasks, like scanning materials, data entry and all sorts of opportunities."

Melvin said the old boiler room where they had taken out the asbestos would take a lot of work to restore it, but it has potential to be a great place for a restaurant or winery or something like that. He said, "It is important to have businesses such as restaurants, shops, and such to enhance the presence of the museum, the autism school and the civic center. You add the town square and get enough things added with the blessing that we are so close to the interstate. We put signage out on the interstate, I think people coming through will immediately think about hopping right off."

The vision is becoming a reality to overcome the adversity left from a former program to a new adventure that puts a positive spotlight on Jackson County.

# Marianna Police Department Minutes

Hello, I am Chief Hayes Baggett with the Marianna Police Department with the M.P.D. Minute for Friday, December 30, 2022.

The following is a brief report on some of the activity the Marianna Police Department has experienced from December 22 through December 29, 2022.

There were 23 calls of suspicious vehicles, persons and incidents investigated, eight informational reports filed, and two juvenile complaints reported throughout the week.

We responded to 15 disturbance calls with two of those being reported

physical in nature and one discharge of a firearm investigated.

We investigated three burglaries, issued three trespass warnings, responded to 12 alarm calls and investigated two reports of threats/harassment.

We assisted with two funeral escorts and also had the opportunity to assist other agencies on three different occasions during the past week.

We worked two follow up investigations, investigated one civil dispute and conducted 10 other public service type calls.

Four animal complaints were handled by our Animal Control Officer.

We worked 10 traffic crashes with two of those reporting injuries and responded to five reports of highway obstruction.

There were 48 traffic stops conducted over the past week with 13 citations and 35 warnings issued.

There was a total of 604 calls of service over the past week to include 175 property/building checks, 107 patrol requests, and 101 home security checks. I would like wish everyone a safe and prosperous 2023.

If we can ever be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us at 850-526-3125.

