



Graham could start at linebacker this season for Gators

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DAILY COMMERCIAL

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025 | DAILYCOMMERCIAL.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Florida law limits local authority over growth



Crews from Davie Shoring work to elevate 11 structures from Donax Village on Sanibel on Aug. 4. The homes were impacted by recent hurricanes that include, Ian, Helene and Milton. The structures will be raised 11 feet over the course of the project, with most of the lifting happening on Aug. 4. ANDREW WEST/THE NEWS-PRESS

Local man arrested after fatal crash, says state patrol

Julie Garisto
Leesburg Daily Commercial
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Leesburg resident Kevin Edward Custer, 37, has been arrested on charges of leaving the scene of a crash involving death and DUI manslaughter. About 9:10 p.m. Aug. 18, Custer was driving a 2012 Toyota Tacoma northbound on Radio Road, according to a Florida Highway Patrol news release. Just ahead of Patrick Drive, a 75-year-old man, whose name was not provided in the release, began crossing the road on foot in a residential area with no crosswalk near Graceway Church. Custer struck the pedestrian. Paramedics transported the victim to UF Health in Leesburg, where he died, according to the release.

Custer left the scene of the crash, but a family member escorted him back there to talk to law enforcement, the patrol said. FHP seized the truck, arrested Custer and booked him into the Lake County Jail. The crash is still under investigation.

Hurricane Erin stirring up seas on East Coast

Dinah Voyles Pulver
and Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

Hurricane Erin's higher tides and big waves prompted the expansion of tropical storm and coastal flooding advisories along much of the East Coast. Beachfront property owners braced for the worst with predictions for a life-threatening storm surge of up to 4 feet and significant coastal erosion, with "large, powerful, life-threatening" waves of 15 to 20 feet expected to batter beaches for 48 hours or more as the hurricane crawls northward offshore through at least Aug. 21, if not longer. Beachgoers along the entire East Coast were warned against swimming in the ocean. "Erin is a large hurricane and growing," the National Weather Service said the morning of Aug. 20. Already on Aug. 19, Erin was generating waves of 35 feet or more at an ocean buoy east-northeast of the Bahamas, creating swells and stirring up a broad swath of the ocean. The Category 2 hurricane saw its winds weaken to as low as 100 mph on Aug. 19 as its north side battled winds, but the National Hurricane Center said early on Aug. 20 that the storm had reformed an inner eye wall. The official

See ERIN, Page 3A

‘Attack on home rule’

Jack Lemnus
Treasure Coast Newspapers
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

A new hurricane recovery law limits the ability of local Florida governments to control development, even when they're not directly impacted by a storm. Senate Bill 180 is dubbed the "Emergencies" act, but it has broad implications for development, conservation and storm resiliency. The bill was intended, in part, to support homeowners recovering after disasters by reducing permitting requirements. The law prevents counties, cities and towns from limiting growth in a

way that might be seen as "burdensome or restrictive," and it allows residents and developers to sue local governments if they feel inhibited by growth restrictions, according to the bill. This provision has already played out in many communities around the state, including Stuart, which voted to pause most development last December so it could restructure its zoning codes. SB 180 reversed those changes. "Totally handcuffing local government leaders from addressing local land use and planning needs is egregious and undermines local government efficacy at its roots," Stuart Mayor Cambell Rich wrote in a May 14 letter to the governor.

What is Senate Bill 180?

State lawmakers and Gov. Ron DeSantis approved SB 180, with a single dissenting vote in the Florida House. It went into effect July 1. "After a storm, Floridians need a clear path to recovery," the bill's sponsor, Sen. Nick DiCeglie, R-St. Petersburg, said May 2 on the House floor. "We're fighting for families to focus on rebuilding without additional delays or burdens, especially for those who sustained damage or lost their homes."

See HOME RULE, Page 2A

DeSantis says state will be ‘vindicated’ in book ban suit

Stephany Matat
For The Daily Commercial
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Gov. Ron DeSantis says he anticipates his administration will be "vindicated" in an appeal to a federal judge's ruling last week calling part of the law used to take classic and modern books away from school libraries unconstitutional. At a Aug. 19 press conference in St. Cloud, DeSantis said the state plans to appeal U.S. District Judge Carlos Mendoza's ruling. Mendoza, of the Middle District of Florida, struck down a portion of HB 1069 the week prior, which prevents books that "describe sexual conduct" from being in public schools. "We will be vindicated in this," DeSantis said. The judge wrote that it's "unclear

See LAWSUIT, Page 2A



Gov. Ron DeSantis says he anticipates his administration will be "vindicated" in an appeal to a federal judge's ruling last week calling part of the law used to take classic and modern books away from school libraries unconstitutional. DOUG ENGLE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

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Volume 149 | No. 197
Home Delivery 352-787-0600
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