



Meet the all-Bay County boys tennis teams

SPORTS, 1B

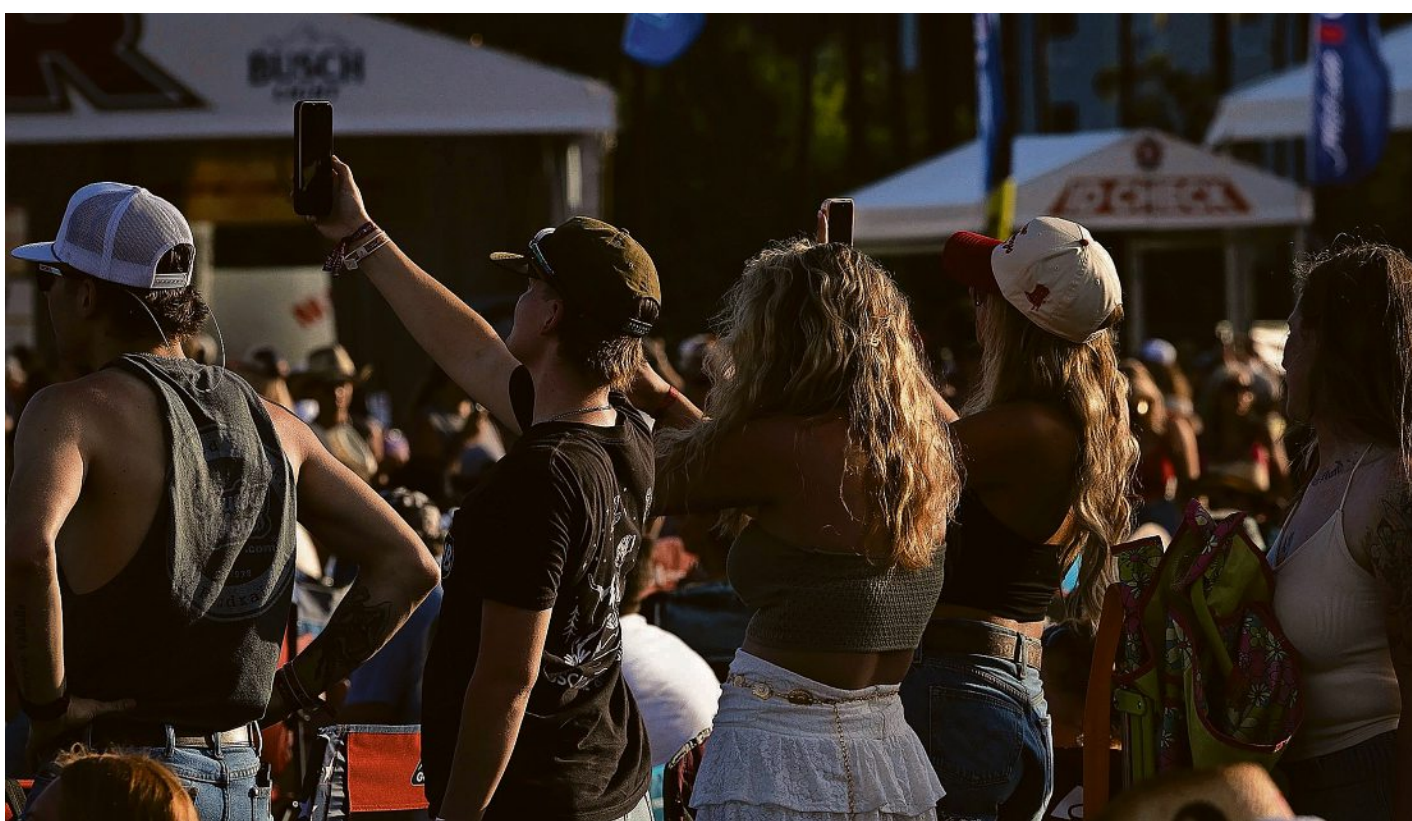
PANAMA CITY

NEWS HERALD WEEKEND

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'A successful event as far as exposure'



Country music fans attend Gulf Coast Jam in Panama City Beach on May 31. TYLER ORSBURN/PANAMA CITY NEWS HERALD

Bay County TDC pays Gulf Coast Jam \$500K a year for marketing

Nathan Cobb
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

PANAMA CITY BEACH — For Griff Griffiths, there's no denying the Gulf Coast Jam has a massive economical impact on the Beach.

As president and CEO of Visit Panama City Beach, Griffiths noted the annual event is so important to the area that the Bay County Tourist Development Council has an agreement with Gulf Coast Jam organizers to pay \$500,000 a year for marketing. This is part of a five-year agreement that is slated to run until about 2030.

"Overall, I think it's a successful event as far as exposure for our community," Griffiths said. "It does its job. It brings heads in beds. ... There's a ton of exposure. A ton of people get to see our beach in a different light and also enjoy some good music while they're here."

The money paid to the Gulf Coast Jam comes from bed-tax collections. Bed taxes, or tourist development taxes, are lodging fees placed on short-term visitors. These collections are largely influenced each year by the thousands of tourists drawn to the area by the concert.

"If you've got someone staying in a hotel, they're typically eating at a res-

taurant and shopping at a store," Griffiths said. "The TDC's job is to promote and advertise the area so we draw more people to our destination."

It should be noted that the TDC has a decently long history of helping support Gulf Coast Jam marketing efforts. Prior to the newer sponsorship, the group paid organizers approximately \$375,000 a year, an agreement Rendy Lovelady, executive producer of the event, said was in place for about a decade.

The Gulf Coast Jam also must give proof of how every dollar is spent.

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Governor appoints new Bay County judge

Dylan Gentile
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

PANAMA CITY — Bay County has a new judge, and she has a lay of the land.

Gov. Ron DeSantis appointed Alicia Carothers to be a Bay County judge on May 13. On June 3, Bay County government announced her last week serving as the deputy county attorney.

Carothers served in that position for two and a half years. The county said she provided trusted legal counsel and dedicated service.

"While we will certainly miss her, we are excited to see her begin this next chapter," reads a release from Bay County. "Please join us in thanking Alicia for her contributions to the county and wishing her the very best as she takes the bench."

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Newly appointed Judge Alicia Carothers, third from right, poses in a photo with the Bay County Board of County Commissioners.

PROVIDED BY BAY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Historic home comes down, owner shares its family history

Dylan Gentile
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

LYNN HAVEN — Those who commute along Florida State Road 77 likely have seen the charming, old-Florida style home located near the intersection with State Road 390 in Lynn Haven. Some were surprised to see the house

come down.

According to the Bay County Property Appraiser's Office, the home at 1312 Ohio Ave. was built in 1915. Current owner 65-year-old Sonia Amick says that it has served as the Suggs family home since the 1930s.

Amick was audibly saddened about the demolition of the home when she spoke to a News Herald reporter on June

3. Her family had been trying to save the home for years, with her father, Thomas Delano Suggs, going as far as lifting it off its foundations and moving it to accommodate the widening of State Road 390 in 2018.

Suggs died in 2022, and Amick says the tough decision to demolish the home came after years of squabble with code enforcement, constant vandalism,

and a loss of historical resources that could've helped preserve it.

Amick says that they broke down the original chimney when the home was moved, and now that it occupies a new footprint, it wouldn't have qualified for the grants she was looking into.

"It was just one battle after the other,

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