



Climate change 'fingerprint' seen in heat

INSIDE, 3A

PANAMA CITY

NEWS HERALD

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2026 | NEWSHERALD.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Rising Leaders Academy teacher named a Charter School Champion

DeonTay Smith
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

PANAMA CITY – Kristin Jeffrey, a teacher at Rising Leaders Academy in Panama City, has received a Charter School Champion of the Year Award for 2026.

According to a press release, Jeffery received the award from the Florida Consortium for Public Charter Schools

(FCPCS). Winners are described as “exceptional teachers who inspire their students to reach high achievement levels at their charter schools,” according to the release.

Jeffrey is one of seven teachers named Charter School Champions from public charter schools throughout Florida. The other winners are charter school leaders, governing board members or pioneers.

“2026 Charter School Champions of

the Year come from all parts of Florida and represent schools at grade levels ranging from kindergarten through high school,” the release says.

“Congratulations to Kristin Jeffrey and to all of the 2026 Charter School Champions of the Year, and congratulations to their schools and communities,” Robert Haag, FCPCS president, said in the release. “Each of the winners helps

See **TEACHER**, Page 2A



Kristin Jeffrey Receives Charter School Champion of the Year Award for 2026.
PROVIDED BY THE FLORIDA CONSORTIUM OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

‘Kept our community safe’



Beachgoers near Russell-Fields Pier in Panama City Beach, July 4, the nation’s 250th birthday.
TYLER ORSBURN/PANAMA CITY NEWS HERALD

Panama City Beach lifeguards didn’t need rescues July 4 weekend

Nathan Cobb
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

The city was able to escape one of its busiest weekends of the year without any beach related catastrophes.

Despite an influx of tourists over the weekend for the Fourth of July, lifeguards with Panama City Beach Fire Rescue’s Beach Safety Division did not perform any open water rescues between Friday and Sunday. They did this by taking a preemptive approach to beach safety, performing 39,739 preventative actions and 16 public assists over the holiday weekend.

Preventative actions are when lifeguards educate beachgoers to prevent them from needing assistance. Public assists are when lifeguards enter the water to prevent rescues. Rescues are when someone is pulled from the water who likely would have otherwise

drowned.

“That’s another Fourth of July holiday weekend in the books,” said Daryl Paul, beach safety director for PCB Fire Rescue. “You try to plan and prepare for major events like this the best you can ... but you can never really plan for everything because you can never know.”

“I never say ‘I’ve seen it all,’ because that’s the day I’m going to get humbled.”

The holiday stats were broken down to 11,267 preventative actions and two assists for Friday, 26,187 preventative actions and 14 assists on Saturday and 2,285 preventative actions and no assists on Sunday.

He noted yellow and purple flags flew all three days of the holiday weekend. Yellow flags were flown for medium rip current hazards, and purple flags were flown for jellyfish in the area.

Paul also said that so far in 2026, PCB lifeguards have performed 17 rescues, 123 public assists and 668,671 preventa-

tive actions.

“It’s a lot of pressure and stress to know that you’re sitting in a lifeguard tower and are responsible (for beachgoers),” Paul said. “There are a lot of people to watch and manage. (I have to give) a big shout out and all my thanks to all the personnel who served on the beach and really kept our community safe.”

Common colors used in beach flag warning systems include a green flag for low hazard conditions, a yellow flag for medium hazard conditions, one red flag for high hazard conditions, and two red flags for very dangerous conditions.

Bay County and Panama City Beach, however, never fly green flags. Local officials say beachgoers should be cautious anytime they enter the Gulf.

“It’s really quite amazing what these lifeguards have done over these past couple of days,” Paul said on July 6.

Faith Festival returns to Panama City Beach

DeonTay Smith
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

On Saturday, Oct. 24, Faith Festival returns to Panama City Beach for its second year at Aaron Bessant Park.

According to a press release, the festival will feature Christian music, entertainment, food and activities, kicking off at 9:30 a.m. with the Todd Herendeen Band performing “God Bless America.” The festival will conclude at 6 p.m.

Faith Festival 2026 will feature vendors including Mika Goshien Designs, Taigi, She Free, and HomeMae’d Creations, among others. Food trucks will include Back Porch BBQ, City Streets and Taste of Creole.

“The festival will also include children’s bouncy houses and games,” the release says. “As with Faith Festival 2025, a Prayer & Baptism Tent will provide one-on-one prayer by Faith Festival team members to uplift any hurts or needs of Festival goers, and community church tents will invite Festival goers in to learn about them and their church services.”

The mission of Faith Festival is to bring Christians together, uniting many churches in worship with the singular goal of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

For general information on Faith Festival, visit www.faithfestivalpcb.com. For churches wishing to take part, contact churches@faithfestivalpcb.com. For musical entertainment information, contact music@faithfestivalpcb.com.

This event is free and open to the public.



People attend the inaugural “Faith Festival” at Aaron Bessant Park in Panama City Beach Oct. 18, 2025. The event brought together Christians under the banner of music to raise money for the homeless outreach organization, The Ark.
TYLER ORSBURN/NEWS HERALD

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to news Herald.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Panama City News Herald
Subscribe 850-747-5050
©2026 \$1.50



6 42694 11111 4