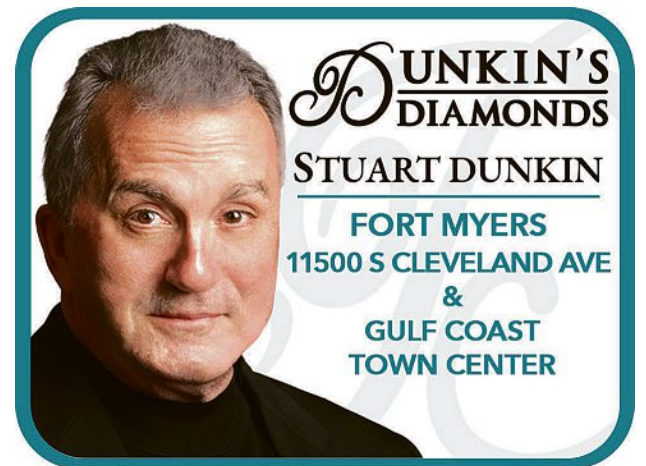




3 new restaurants bring fresh flavors to Sanibel Island

TASTE



SERVING CAPE CORAL, NORTH FORT MYERS, FORT MYERS, LEHIGH, ESTERO AND BONITA



THE NEWS-PRESS

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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

State DOGE reviewing Cape Coral spending

Letter requests wide range of information

Vanessa Norris

Fort Myers News-Press & Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Florida's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team is reviewing the city of Cape Coral's fiscal spending.

In a letter sent to City Manager Michael Ilcyszyn and Mayor John Gunter on May 26, the team declared it was reviewing local governments throughout

the state in partnership with the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget.

The letter included an extensive information request related to the city's expenditure on construction, engineering, technology and staff. The deadline for sending the information was June 9,

according to the letter.

"We are continuing to carry out Governor DeSantis's mission of making state and local government efficient and effective, and promoting good

See CAPE, Page 17A



Protesters gather for a weekly vigil across the street from Alligator Alcatraz in Ochopee in Collier County on April 19. Since the opening of the controversial detention center, people have been gathering on Sundays to protest.

ANDREW WEST/FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS & NAPLES DAILY NEWS

Weekly protests end at empty Alligator Alcatraz

Advocates claim victory after detainees relocated

Alexa Ryan

Fort Myers News-Press & Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Over the past 47 weeks, thousands of people have gathered outside of Florida's controversial immigrant detention center, dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," for Freedom Vigils every Sunday, some of which garnered more than 300 participants, to call for the release of detainees.

Getting 300 people out to Alligator Alcatraz, which is over an hour from the

See ALCATRAZ, Page 19A



Police officers park outside Alligator Alcatraz in Ochopee during a vigil Aug. 10, 2025. MICKENZIE HANNON/FORT MYERS NEWS-PRESS & NAPLES DAILY NEWS

Report: 42% in Lee can't meet basic costs

Liz Freeman

Fort Myers News-Press & Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Many working families in Lee County struggle to make ends meet as inflation drives up household costs.

The latest report from the nonprofit United for ALICE shows 42% of households in Lee are challenged to keep up with what it takes to run a household.

A family of four needs a monthly income of \$7,994, or \$95,928 annually, for a basic household "survival budget." That is more than three times the federal poverty level of \$31,200 for a family of four, according to the findings.

That scenario includes two children enrolled in child care programs at a cost of \$1,438 a month.

For a family of four in Lee with two children not enrolled in child care, a survival budget needed is \$6,975 a month, after taxes, or \$83,700 annually.

Overall Florida ranks 47th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for families facing financial hardships.

What is ALICE?

The nonprofit ALICE, based in New Jersey, examines household budgets and costs on behalf of United Way agencies in 31 states.

ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.

It is used as an alternative to federal poverty level guidelines, in part because earnings may be above poverty guidelines but are not enough to cover basic expenses.

It involves standardized measurements to quantify what is needed for a basic household budget, and how many households struggle to get by.

In Lee, 11% of families live below federal poverty guidelines yet another

See COSTS, Page 7A

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