



All-you-can-eat Asia Buffet opens in Pensacola

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DeSantis’ DOGE chief ups pressure

Flex comes as local governments fall into line

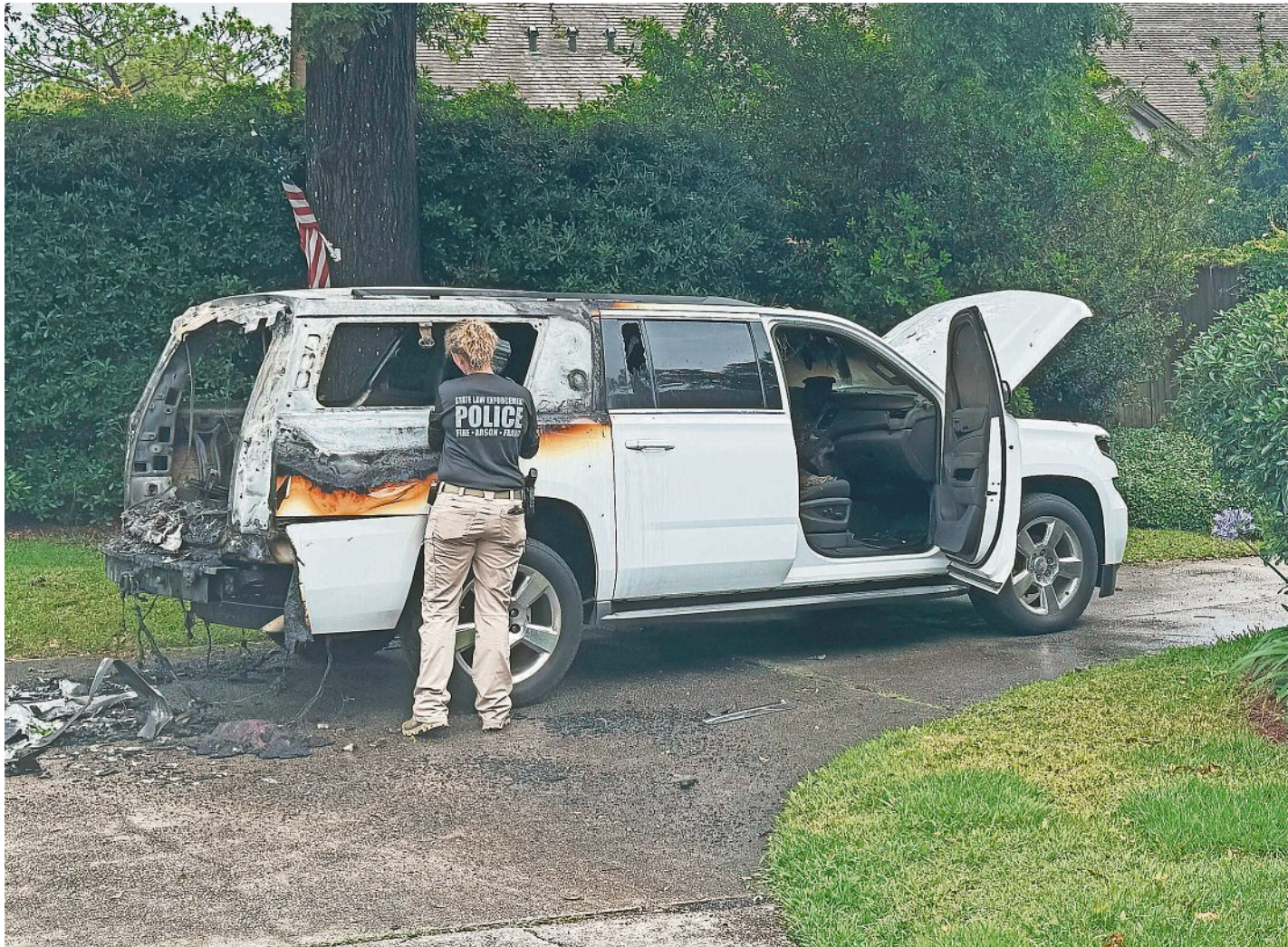
John Kennedy
Capital Bureau
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Florida’s local governments are falling in line with the unprecedented swoop from Tallahassee of state audit teams examining how tax dollars are be-

ing spent. But while city and county officials comply, Gov. Ron DeSantis’ newly appointed state chief financial officer, Blaise Ingoglia, keeps ratcheting up a confrontational tone. “Through our travels, we are seeing local governments spend on things that

they probably shouldn’t be spending on,” Ingoglia said recently in St. Petersburg. “We’re seeing them give out egregious raises...” When Ingoglia was cut off by a handful of citizen hecklers attending his news conference at St. Petersburg City Hall, he pivoted. “Hey, guys, I know that you love wasteful spending,” Ingoglia shot back. “We have signs made for you that say ‘I

heart wasteful spending.” **Democrat: State is run by bullies** Rep. Lindsay Cross, a St. Petersburg Democrat, said that kind of theatrics seems to be central to the state sweep. “Cities and counties are seeing that our state and country are run by bullies,” **See DOGE, Page 2A**



Police investigate arson caused to a car in Cordova Park near the home of Escambia Clerk and Comptroller Pam Childers on June 1, 2024. PROVIDED BY PAM CHILDERS

Police: Man arrested for stalking, threats

Justin J. Wright accused of targeting Escambia clerk

Mollye Barrows Pensacola News Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has arrested a man in New York for stalking, threatening and attempting to extort money from Escambia County Clerk of Court and Comptroller Pam Childers by using violence, fear and fire, according to a federal indictment that was filed on Aug. 19 in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida, Pensacola Division. The arrest comes more than a year after the FBI began investigating an arson incident that happened near Childers’ Cordova Park home on June 1, 2024, that destroyed a neighbor’s car. According to federal court documents, Justin J. Wright is charged with three felony counts: Stalking, Attempted Interference with Commerce by Threats or

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Pam Childers, clerk of circuit court, left, and DeLana Allen-Busbee, clerk staff, listen during the Escambia Board of County Commissioners meeting in downtown Pensacola on Nov. 19, 2024. GREGG PACHKOWSKI/PENSACOLA NEWS JOURNAL

Century selects first town admin

Dave Murzin meant to reinforce trust, push modernization

Mollye Barrows
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

The town of Century has selected its first administrator. The town council voted on Aug. 19 to offer the newly established executive role to former state representative Dave Murzin with the goals of reinforcing public trust and modernizing the town.



Murzin

Mayor Ben Boutwell recommended Murzin for job and the council voted 3 -1 to negotiate an employment agreement with Murzin for final council approval at its next regular meeting on Sept. 2. If approved, Murzin expects Sept. 2 will be his start date. He says he’s looking forward to getting started, getting to know the town of Century and working with the council and staff. “My goal is to strengthen alignment with the city council through transparency, responsiveness, and consistent communication,” Murzin said. “With the community, I plan to become visible and accessible with listening sessions, town halls and informal engagements, and I will focus on transparency and open communication and work on building relationships and trust with the staff.”

The 61-year-old Cantonment resident is a former Republican member of the Florida House of Representatives, representing District 2 from 2002 to 2010. According to the job description, the town administrator will serve as the chief operations officer charged with managing the daily operations of the government, executing the mayor and council’s strategic initiatives, and delivering efficient and responsive public services. He’ll report directly to the mayor and work closely with the Town Council. Boutwell did not return a request for comment on the town’s new

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