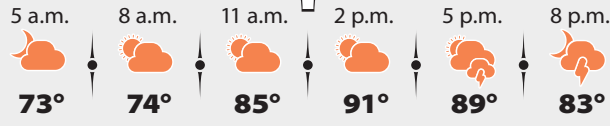


BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | C5
Lucy Rathier was a clinical director of behavioral medical services and an associate professor.



OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES | A4
Senior writer Veronica Wernicke shares observations from a day in The Villages.



NATIONAL NEWS | A2

U.S. CHARGES RAÚL CASTRO WITH MURDER IN 1996 SHOOTDOWN

Federal prosecutors on Wednesday announced charges against former Cuban President Raúl Castro in the downing of civilian planes flown by Miami-based exiles as the White House escalated pressure on the island's socialist government.

WORLD NEWS | A10

PUTIN, XI HAIL FRIENDSHIP AND ENERGY TRADE AT MEETING IN BEIJING

Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin oversaw the signing of cooperation agreements Wednesday.

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES
By Chasity Boatman

Every Friday night inside North Lake Presbyterian Church, bingo players gather for an evening of games, laughter and community fellowship. But for members of the Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club, those bingo cards represent far more than entertainment.

They help fund scholarships, support students pursuing technical careers and provide opportunities that many young people in the community might not otherwise receive.

"Our motto is 'We Serve,' and that's not just a catchphrase," said Robert Vass,

Please See **LIONS, A8**

Top of the News

Memorial Day Weekend to See Record Travel

By **JAMES DINAN** | Daily Sun Senior Writer

The smell of sunscreen and gas station coffee are sure signs that the summer travel season is underway in and around The Villages and, this year, regardless of what's going on in the world, a record number of travelers plans to hit the road this Memorial Day weekend.

AAA projects 45 million Americans will travel at least 50 miles from home during the weekend, which the auto club defines as running between today and Monday. That's 0.45% better than the same period last year, and a Memorial Day weekend record. By comparison, 42.8 million Americans traveled during Memorial Day weekend in 2019, the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic shut down everything.

The strong travel demand comes as gas prices remain high given the ongoing issues in the Middle East. The current price for a gallon of regular unleaded gas in Florida stood at \$4.43 on Tuesday, a \$1.40 per gallon increase from the same period last year.

Please See **TRAVEL, A7**

45,000,000

AAA projects that 45 million people nationwide will travel at least 50 miles from home over this weekend's holiday period, which AAA defines as running between today and Monday.

Illustration by Adam Rogers, Daily Sun



LOCAL NEWS

Sumter To Adjust Fire Fees For County Coverage

By **KEITH PEARLMAN**
Daily Sun Managing Editor

Sumter County residents outside of The Villages are likely to pay a fire assessment fee based on a new formula this year.

Commissioners reached a consensus at a workshop Tuesday night to hold a public hearing at their May 26 meeting to adopt a hazardous class methodology for assessments that generate revenue for Sumter County Fire & EMS.

The new methodology would assign a fire risk to buildings based on usage.

"The hazardous class methodology, in my opinion, gives, from what we've heard from our residents and our businesses, what they are looking for," said Don Wiley, commission chairman. "This makes the most sense to me. It takes into account true hazards."

Residential properties, hotels, nursing homes and schools would be in

Please See **FEES, A6**

SPORTS NEWS | B1

GOLDEN KNIGHTS OPEN WESTERN CONFERENCE FINAL WITH VICTORY

Vegas jumps out to 3-0 lead in Game 1 against Colorado, then holds off late rally to claim home-ice advantage.

LOCAL NEWS | C1

HANDS OF MERCY EVERYWHERE SEEKS TO BUILD ADVISORY BOARD

The board will be made up of retirees willing to share their experience and time with young women facing difficult circumstances.

HEADLINES & DATELINES

LOCAL NEWS

THE VILLAGES LOGO STORE TO OPEN NEW LOCATION IN EASTPORT NEXT WEEK

The Villages Logo Store, which has locations in Brownwood, Spanish Springs and Lake Sumter Landing, is expanding again.

A new location is coming to Eastport at 7004 Central Lake Drive, and there will be a ribbon cutting at 10 a.m. May 28 to celebrate the opening. The store sells Villages-branded merchandise such as shirts, sweaters and jackets along with many other items.

Eastport is the downtown area that combines the most popular elements of The Villages' lifestyle — recreation, golf, shopping, dining and entertainment. The Villages Logo Store will join a variety of businesses already up and running in the area, including Found for Home, Lucky Goat Coffee, Prime + Ember Signature Steakhouse, Citizens First Bank Mortgage and Wealth and Hotel Eastport, which is home to Yamas restaurant, the Boardwalk Bar and the Sundaze ice cream shop.

— Summer Jarro, Daily Sun

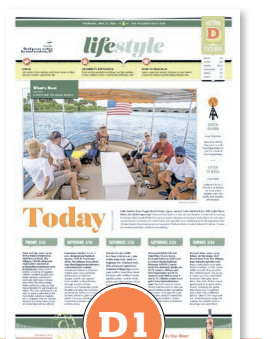


Rita Jimenez | Daily Sun

The Villages Logo Store's newest location at 7004 Central Lake Drive in Eastport opens at 10 a.m. May 28.

ALSO FEATURED INSIDE TODAY

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| World News | A2 |
| Lottery | A2 |
| Public Safety News | A5 |
| Coast to Coast | A6 |
| Sports | B1 |
| Local News | C1 |
| Weather | C2-3 |
| Recreation | C8-9 |
| Lifestyle | D1 |
| On The Squares | D3 |
| Comics & Puzzles | D4-6 |



TODAY'S TOP PICK: LAKE SUMTER LINE DOGGIE BOAT CRUISE

Learn about Lake Sumter's legendary tales while treating your furry friend to a boat ride from 4 p.m. to sunset today.