

LET'S GO

Looking for something fun to do today? Visit a dog park! **D1**

THE WEATHER TODAY, C2

8 a.m. 62° Noon 79° 4 p.m. 86° 8 p.m. 78°

MLB Starts Season With Full Schedule

Houston enters busy opening day as defending World Series champion. Sports, B1

NATIONAL NEWS

KIM, XI AFFIRM STRONG TIES DESPITE RECENT TENSIONS

With smiles and firm handshakes, North Korea and China used a surprise summit this week to show that despite recent tensions, Pyongyang still has a powerful backer and Beijing will not be sidelined in discussions about the fate of its unpredictable neighbor.

National News, A6



The Associated Press

A news program airs on the meeting between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Chinese President Xi Jinping Wednesday in Seoul, South Korea.

SELFIE MEDS: PHONE APPS PUSH PEOPLE TO TAKE PILLS

Smartphone apps that monitor pill-taking are now available, and researchers are testing how well they work when medication matters. Experts praise the efficiency. Health News, A17

THAT'S AMAZING

COYOTE FOUND ON OUTDOOR MEZZANINE RELEASED

Authorities say a coyote that was tranquilized and captured after being found Tuesday on an outdoor mezzanine at the New York State Museum has been released into the wild.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation says the coyote was checked out at the agency's wildlife health unit outside Albany and found to be in good health. DEC says the animal was released in the wild Wednesday. DEC officials say it's not uncommon to see coyotes in suburban and urban areas. —The Associated Press

Lottery	A4
Obituaries	C4
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We support our men and women in uniform.



Top of the News

INSIDE THE ISSUES SHAPING OUR COMMUNITY

How the State Budget Impacts Our Community

By KATIE SARTORIS | Daily Sun Associate Managing Editor

Money from Tallahassee will soon trickle into the local area. Gov. Rick Scott signed the state's \$88.7 billion 2018-19 budget March 16. It increases per pupil education funding, creates sales tax holidays and allocates money to fight the opioid crisis and to keep schools safe — all effects local residents will feel. Also tucked into the budget, which starts July 1, are local funding projects ranging from career training to park improvements. Here are some of the budget highlights.



TAX CUTS

Sales Tax Holidays: Scott approved a three-day back-to-school sales tax holiday and week-long disaster preparedness sales tax holiday, saving Floridians \$38.5 million combined.

Commercial Rent Reduction: Commercial rent is falling to 5.7 percent from 5.8 percent. Florida is the only state in the U.S. that levies a tax on commercial rent.



EDUCATION

Per Pupil Funding: The budget includes \$7,408 in K-12 per pupil public education spending. From the 2017-18 year, that's an increase of \$101.

School Safety: Scott OK'd \$344 million for school safety, including money to fund officers in schools, active shooter trainings and access to mental health services.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Opioid Crisis: Scott earmarked more than \$65 million to fight opioids, which includes money for substance abuse treatment, drug monitoring and Naloxone for first responders.

Pay Raises: Law enforcement and first responders will see pay raises. The budget includes \$22.8 million to reward Florida's officers.



VETERANS

Increased Staffing: The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs is receiving \$368,000 to add five claims examiners to assist veterans getting their benefits.

K9s for Warriors: In the budget is \$250,000 to help train service dogs for veterans suffering from PTSD and other stress trauma.



LOCAL PROJECTS

Career Training: Sen. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala, secured \$866,000 for Leesburg High School to provide students construction career readiness.

Veterans Nursing Home: Baxley also won \$500,000 for a Marion County VA nursing home, which, when finished, will serve surrounding counties.



BAXLEY REFLECTS ON 2018 SESSION

By KATIE SARTORIS | Daily Sun Associate Managing Editor

After the 2018 Legislative Session, Florida Sen. Dennis Baxley, R-Ocala, is back in the district.

Baxley represents District 12, which includes all of Sumter County and parts of Lake and Marion counties. Of his 46 local funding initiatives, 12 of them made it into the final budget.

Baxley was the only elected advocate fighting for local funding this year in the legislature. Rep. Don Hahnfeldt, R-The Villages, died in December.

Scott declined to order a special election for Hahnfeldt's seat, leaving a vacancy in the Florida House of Representatives.

Reflecting on the 2018 Legislative Session, Baxley spoke with the Daily Sun about his accomplishments, unfinished business and hopes for the future.

What Are You Most Proud of Looking Back on the Session?

I'm most proud that we produced a balanced budget, unlike Washington, and that we lived within our means and addressed some major issues: the opioid crisis, the school safety funding and

Please See BAXLEY, A18

COMMUNITY & CONNECTIONS

Only in The Villages

LIFE IN FLORIDA'S FRIENDLIEST HOMETOWN

Villages Philharmonic Orchestra and Guest Pianist Delight Audience

Guest pianist Laurent Boukobza made his way across the stage and sat down at the large black piano, which gleamed from its spot in the front and center of The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra's formation. Boukobza sat with his head bowed as he listened to the collection of flutes, violins, oboes and cellos around him. Suddenly, the music faded away and Boukobza placed his hands gently on the keys of the piano and moved his fingers quickly across it, effortlessly producing sounds both high and low as the rest of the orchestra joined him.

The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra

Please See ORCHESTRA, A18



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Laurent Boukobza plays the piano Wednesday with The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

THE DIGIT

48 quilt blocks

The number of quilt blocks the Manatee Quilters made in one day. Blocks are the patterned squares that are sewn together to make up a quilt. Club members donated the blocks to Helping Hands, a charity that provides homes and shelter to families in need. Each child in every family that is helped gets a handmade quilt. —Maddie Cutler, Daily Sun

TONIGHT'S EVENTS ON THE SQUARES

Entertainment runs from 5 to 9 p.m.

Spanish Springs Town Square
Mark Seymour
Happy hour, 5-7 p.m.

Lake Sumter Landing Market Square
Justin Heet Band
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.

Brownwood Paddock Square
Mpire
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.

from the front page



Photos by George Horsford | Daily Sun

The Villages Philharmonic Orchestra plays for the audience Wednesday at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

ORCHESTRA

Continued from A1

performed a classical concert Wednesday night at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

And this time, some of the audience was a bit younger than usual.

As part of a program supported by Provenance Wealth Advisors, students from Wildwood Elementary School were invited to The Sharon to experience their first orchestra concert.

Before the show, the children were given a quick lesson in the lobby on orchestral music by one of the members of the orchestra before being guided to their seats.

The orchestra opened the show with "Serenade for Strings" by Edward Elgar, which included only the string instruments.

The sound was melancholy, yet elegant and rich.

The orchestra then played "Piano Concerto No. 1" by Ludwig van Beethoven, a three-part piece that showcased Boukobza's skills.

The last part was perhaps the most impressive.

It seemed as if the whole orchestra had been given a dose of caffeine, playing forcefully and energetically.

The orchestra finished to a standing ovation.



The orchestra opened the show with "Serenade for Strings" by Edward Elgar and also played "Piano Concerto No. 1" by Ludwig van Beethoven.

"I've had a subscription to the orchestra for many years now, and it just keeps getting better," said Irma Chernow, of the Village of Glenbrook. "They always do a fantastic job, and tonight's soloist was outstanding."

Boukobza, who moved to the United States from France in 1998, has performed all over the world. He is a professor of piano and chair of piano studies at the University of Central Florida.

Judy Danos, of the Village of Pine Ridge, said she enjoyed the pianist and likes to come to The Villages Philharmonic

Orchestra shows. "I enjoyed every moment of it," Danos said. "We're so lucky to have something like this in our area. Not many towns have this all the time."

Finally, the orchestra played Beethoven's "Symphony No. 1." The musicians were focused and united in their work, and they produced beautiful sounds under conductor Pasquale Valerio.

"I've heard many different orchestras over the course of my life, and this one matches up with some of the best," Chernow said.

BAXLEY

Continued from A1

the mental health funding. Those are all very important turning points for this session.

Of Your 46 Local Funding Initiatives, 13 Got Through and One Was Vetoed. What Will These Projects Mean for Your District?

We're trying to fund things that will facilitate our local governments and nonprofits to accomplish their mission. Everything is really done at home. (Securing local funding is) a very competitive process in a state this large.

What Would You Say Was the Biggest Accomplishment for You in Terms of Securing Local Funding?

The one I'm proud of is the (\$866,058) project that we got for Leesburg High School. (Destination Lake: Building a Stronger Community) will improve students' earning power (in construction fields). Trying to find adequate people to do those skilled jobs is challenging. We have a lot of openings in that workforce — The Villages has that need ...

We've also been working for a number of years to try to secure the next VA nursing home. I was able to get a commitment of \$500,000 in Marion County, which will effect about eight counties around that will utilize this. We started on this journey, but there are federal things that have to happen, and it will get us in line. Also, the Florida Horse Park project (a \$500,000 project that will include infrastructure improvements and measures to improve the Ocala multi-purpose park's hurricane readiness) will have a regional impact. Those are facilities that can be utilized by the entire region, and it will bring dollars and activity into the area.

Do You Have Any Unfinished Local Business?

My priority for the next two years is to try to do something about our facilities at Lake-Sumter State College. Those buildings are needing some significant repairs. I'm disappointed that I haven't been successful on that front, but this is a very competitive process to get those things that we need done. We have a strong local effort on the ground and we have a lot to be grateful for. I think this is North Central Florida's time.

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