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A FREE NEWSPAPER Take One! The Wewa News Newspaper



Mayor Gaskin Says Wewahitchka Library Needs Expansion

By Tom Wynn

At the June city meeting, Mayor Phillip Gaskin shared how much he enjoyed the recent celebrations of Wewahitchka’s Sesquicentennial and Gulf County’s 100th Anniversary. He especially praised the historical exhibits featured during the events, highlighting one display room that included the new “City of Wewa Family Quilt.”

Mayor Gaskin commended the Wewahitchka Library and the Wewahitchka Historical Society for doing a fantastic job organizing and presenting the displays. He then announced that the city needs to expand the library, both to provide a permanent space for historical items and to offer additional room for library use. This suggestion was met with enthusiasm and support from community members attending the meeting.

of Wewahitchka, along with the City Council and County Commissioners representing the north end of the county, gave heartfelt speeches. They spoke of the county’s growth, resilience, and strong sense of community over the last century.

Outside the historic Old Gulf County Courthouse, a classic car show drew in enthusiasts of all ages. Old cars, vintage trucks, and even a restored van was on display, sparking conversations and memories of days gone by. Nearby, local vendors lined the walkways and the grassy areas, selling everything from homemade honey to handmade crafts, jewelry, artwork, and other unique, locally sourced goods. **(Sesquicentennial cont. page 2)**

4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION WAS FANTASTIC!

By Tom Wynn

Call it “Flash and Fury!” As the clock struck 9:00 PM, the sky over beautiful Lake Alice erupted in a brilliant display of lights, sparks, and color, celebrating the 249th birthday of our Freedom as a REPUBLIC! God bless America—and all who live in its midst!

Families gathered with lawn chairs, blankets, and cool drinks in hand, as children ran around waving glowsticks and the smell of festival food filled the air. The Wewahitchka Fire Department kept a steady watch over the evening, ensuring the fun was both exciting and safe.

We had a whale of a time watching the fireworks! And what a show it was—the grand finale lit up the heavens so brightly, I half-expected Heaven itself to come down and join us. Bursts of red, white, and blue exploded overhead in a grand crescendo of sound and light, echoing over the water and through the hearts of all who were there.

Over and over, flash after flash, boom after boom—our little city gave us a big-time show.

(Fireworks cont. page 2)



A Fantastic Day in Wewahitchka: Gulf County Sesquicentennial/Centennial Celebration

By Tom Wynn Jr.

The Sesquicentennial Celebrations held in Wewahitchka on June 7, 2025, were nothing short of spectacular. From early morning until mid-afternoon, an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 people gathered to honor Gulf County’s 100th birthday and Wewahitchka’s 150th birthday. The event, centered around the Charles Whitehead Public Library, the Senior Citizen Center, and the Ole Gulf County Courthouse. It was a joyful blend of the past, present, and future.

A True Community Celebration

Festivities officially began at 9:00 AM and continued until 3:00 PM Central Time, bringing together residents, visitors, and community leaders. The Mayor

(Fireworks cont. from page 1) It's been a wonderful season of celebration for our Sweetest Little City in Florida. From the Sesquicentennial to the Centennial to the 4th of July, Wewa has come alive with pride, patriotism, and good old-fashioned community spirit.

Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to put on such a great display. From city staff and first responders to volunteers and vendors, your efforts made this night unforgettable.

Let's carry that light forward and never forget what it means to be free. Happy Independence Day, Wewa!
TW

(Sesquicentennial cont. from page 1) Together Again

The celebration had the feeling of an old-fashioned family reunion. There were hugs, kisses, and even tears, as friends and families, some who hadn't seen one another in years, reunited in the warm Florida sun. Laughter rang out as stories were shared, children played, and music filled the air.

The Gulf County Sheriff's Office set up a display featuring their patrol vehicles and provided safety information, giving kids and adults alike a close-up look at the tools used to serve and protect the community. Meanwhile, local organizations like *The Wewa News*, the *Gulf County Historical Society*, and the *Friends of the Library* offered displays, giveaways, and information about our area's rich and storied past.

Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future

This Sesquicentennial/centennial event was more than just a party—it was a tribute to the people and places that make Gulf County special. As attendees wandered among historical exhibits inside the library, they were reminded of the area's roots in the lumber, turpentine, and fishing industries—and how far we've come since.

Over in Port St. Joe, celebrations were also held, continuing the county-wide theme of unity and pride. Events throughout the region aimed to recognize Gulf County's history while embracing the promise of its future.

A Day to Remember

June 7, 2025, will be remembered as one of the most joyful days in recent Wewahitchka memory. It was a

fantastic day filled with love, laughter, learning, and legacy. A true celebration of who we are and how far we've come.

For more information on upcoming events or to learn more about Gulf County's centennial history, visit the official Gulf County Centennial Celebration page at visitgulf.com.

Much Thanks go to the Organizers

The City Library Librarians, Mrs. Sharron Barrier, who saw to it that we had plenty of Vendors, Sister and Pastor Carol Wood handled the Presbyterian Church Tours, Mrs. Ann Johnson and her husband Mitchell, as well as, the Historical Society Members, ran booths and helped out with the library's historical items.

GULF COUNTY FIRST COURT HOUSE LOCATED IN WEWA, Built in 1925-27

On June 7, 2025, Gulf County, Florida, proudly celebrated its centennial with a series of events across Wewahitchka, Port St. Joe, and the surrounding communities did the same.

This milestone commemorated 100 years since the county's establishment in 1925, honoring its rich history, industries, and the individuals who laid its foundations. **TW**

A Century of Gulf County History

by Tom Wynn

Gulf County was officially formed on June 6, 1925, carved from the southern portion of Calhoun County. Wewahitchka was designated as the first county seat, and in 1927, the county's first courthouse was constructed there. This Classical Revival-style building, featuring prominent columns, was built by W.H. Taylor and served as the county's judicial center until the seat moved to Port St. Joe in 1965. hmdb.org+1floridamemory.com

Today, Gulf County embraces tourism, capitalizing on its natural beauty and coastal charm. The region's beaches, parks, and historical sites attract visitors year-round, contributing to a diversified local economy. visitgulf.com. Port St. Joe will also partake in the celebrations, with activities highlighting the

county's history and community spirit. These events aim to honor the past while looking forward to the future, bringing together residents and visitors alike.

Reflecting on a Century

As Gulf County marks its 100th anniversary, the community reflects on a century of growth, resilience, and transformation. From its early industries to modern tourism, the county's journey is a testament to the dedication of its people and the enduring allure of its landscapes. TW



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COME VISIT US AT THE WEWA LIBRARY

Joyelle Linton

The Wewahitchka Library has partnered with the Wewahitchka Historical Society to make a community memory quilt in honor of this celebration, which was displayed at the Sesquicentennial/Centennial Celebration. It was on display at the event. This is a fundraiser that will support the Wewahitchka Historical Society and the Wewahitchka Library's sewing programs. Thank you to all who supported our efforts in its creation.

For additional information or questions, please contact us at (850) 639-2419. Our library hours are Mondays 9-1, Tuesdays 9-5, Thursdays 9-5, Fridays 9-5, and Saturdays 9-1.

IF you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to find you guilty?

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www.esb.bible

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Created for you by my son, Aaron Wynn

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In case you didn't know: "The Tupelo Radio Group" is making a GMRS Radio network, where the repeaters are to be located has yet to be determined. Every Sunday at 4 PM, we have a radio check to make sure our radios are working and charged up in case of need. We are looking for some ham operators in the Wewa area to join us. If anyone is interested in joining the group, please Contact: **Mr. Dudley Balmer** at 317-379-1644. (Radioddity email address: www.radioddity.com)

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2025 PRELIMINARY TAXABLE VALUE ANNOUNCED BY GULF COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER MITCH BURKE

Gulf County Property Appraiser Mitch Burke has provided the 2025 Preliminary Taxable Value to the Florida Department of Revenue along with all taxing authorities for budget planning purposes. The values include real and personal property, per Florida Statute 200.065(7).

Mr. Burke said, "This year's Preliminary Taxable Value is the highest Gulf County has ever seen at \$3.973 billion. It surpasses last year's Final Taxable value of 2024 by \$396.71 million or 11.09%. The Gulf County School Board's taxable value is \$4.753 billion, which is up 6.16% or \$275.77 million from 2024. It is important to note that the School Board and County are different regarding their taxable values in two significant ways: The voter approved amendment to the Florida Constitution, commonly referred to as Amendment One, includes the establishment of the second Homestead Exemption benefit of up to \$25,000. This allows the property owner to possibly be eligible to receive an exemption of up to \$50,000. The first \$25,000 applies to all taxing authorities, including school district taxes. The additional exemption up to \$25,000 applies to the assessed value between \$50,000 and \$75,000 and only to non-school taxes. In addition, school funding is not impacted by a cap or increases to non-homestead properties (10%). Qualified Transactions, in terms of the number of sales, have declined. According to our office, 2024 qualified sales were 1,103. That's a decline from 1,207 in 2023 or 8.6%. Statewide in Florida, closed sales transactions have declined from 257,679 in 2023 to 252,688 in 2024, a decline of 1.9%.

"Burke seems to think the elevated mortgage rates, high property insurance, along with the last two major hurricanes has hampered homebuyers' demand currently in Florida.

We are seeing Domestic immigration slowing down in addition to International buyers' demand. Florida is still an ideal location for the "untethered" remote workers and retirees with existing home equity, which seems not to be fazed by high rates.

Comparable to the Northeast and West Coast, Florida housing remains affordable and even more spacious.

Some of the economic trends for Gulf County still appear to show big interest in the area.

Although 2025's New Construction and additions were down 19.56%, our office still accounted for \$158.53 million in Taxable Value, \$38.54 million down from 2024 or \$197.07 million. "This is still the second largest addition to the tax roll of New Construction in Gulf County's history. Burke said, since Hurricane Michael in 2018, New Construction and additions has added \$727.56 million to the tax roll.

Under Florida law, county property appraisers must value every property in the state as of the effective date of January 1, 2024. Our appraisers consistently monitor market transactions and trends. Any increase or decrease in sales prices that occurs in 2023 will impact property values as of our January 1, 2024, valuation."

Listed below are the 2025 Preliminary Taxable Values for the County, School Board, City of Port St. Joe and City of Wewahitchka. The percentage of change is reflective of the 2024 "Final Certified Taxable Values" to the 2025 Estimate of Values:

TAXING AUTHORITY 2025 PRELIM 2024 – 2025 %
CHANGE GULF COUNTY \$3,973,284,227 11.09%
GULF COUNTY SCHOOLS \$4,753,713,273 6.16%
CITY – PSJ \$ 806,109,731 11.48%
CITY – WEWA \$ 105,728,772 9.02%
NEW CONSTRUCTION \$ 158,539,933 (19.56%)
CLASSIFIED USE (AG.) \$ 66,325,053 (0.02%)

The Gulf County Property Appraiser's office is located at 1000 Cecil G. Costin Sr. Blvd., Port St. Joe; by phone at 850-229-6115; online at www.gulfpa.com



PROVERBS 3:21-24

20 New Florida Laws Everyone Should Be Happy About

by Tom Wynn

Effective July 1, 2025, Florida has put into effect a wide range of new laws aimed at improving life for people across the state. From public safety to environmental protection, from seniors to students, these changes reflect Florida's efforts to create a safer, healthier, and more prosperous state. Here are 20 new Florida laws everyone should be happy about:

1. **Stronger Protections for Seniors**
Tougher penalties for elder abuse, neglect, and scams help protect Florida's senior citizens.
2. **Homeowners' Insurance Reform**
New rules hold insurance companies more accountable, requiring faster claims processing and better transparency, helping homeowners facing rising insurance costs.
3. **Extended Sales Tax Holidays**
Florida has expanded sales tax holidays for back-to-school shopping, disaster preparedness items, and recreational equipment, helping families save money.
4. **Increased School Safety**
Public schools must now implement enhanced security measures, including better emergency protocols and increased mental health services for students and staff.
5. **Higher Teacher Pay**
Florida teachers will receive pay raises to help retain and attract high-quality educators in classrooms statewide.
6. **Affordable Housing Incentives**
The state is offering tax breaks and development incentives to increase affordable housing options for working families.
7. **Environmental Protection and Water Quality**
Significant funding is going toward Everglades restoration, waterway cleanups, and combating harmful algal blooms.
8. **Tax Relief for Small Businesses**
Small business owners will see reduced taxes and fewer regulatory burdens, helping Florida's local economies thrive.
9. **Expanded Veterans' Services**
More support is being provided to veterans, including increased healthcare access, job

assistance, and additional property tax exemptions for disabled veterans.

10. **Hands-Free Driving in School Zones**
Drivers are now required to use hands-free devices in school zones to protect children and improve road safety.
11. **Mental Health Insurance Reform**
Insurance companies must improve coverage for mental health and substance abuse treatment, making it easier for people to get the help they need.
12. **Harsher Penalties for Fentanyl Crimes**
Florida is increasing criminal penalties for those trafficking deadly synthetic opioids like fentanyl as part of efforts to combat the opioid crisis.
13. **Consumer Data Privacy Protections**
New laws give individuals more control over how their personal data is collected, shared, or sold by companies.
14. **Online Safety for Children**
Companies that market to children must now follow stricter privacy rules to better protect young internet users.
15. **Support for Family Caregivers**
Family caregivers will have access to new state-supported resources, including tax breaks and respite care services.
16. **Non-Compete Extensions for High-Paid Workers**
Employers can now enforce non-compete clauses for up to four years for employees earning double the local median wage. This law aims to help businesses retain top talent.
17. **Super-Speeder Law**
Exceeding the speed limit by 50 miles per hour or driving over 100 miles per hour is now a criminal offense with potential jail time, fines, and license suspension.
18. **Boater Freedom Act**
Boaters will no longer be subject to random safety inspections without probable cause. Voluntary decals can show compliance, giving boaters more freedom on Florida waters.
19. **Dexter's Law (Animal Cruelty Registry)**
Creates a public registry for individuals convicted of aggravated animal cruelty and increases penalties for such offenses.

20. State Park Protection Act

Bans new commercial developments like golf courses and hotels inside state parks and requires public notice before any future park changes. **Additional Noteworthy Measures:**

- False Reporting Law: Criminalizes dangerous fake emergency calls (swatting).
- Anaphylaxis Preparedness: Requires schools to stock EpiPens and have trained staff.
- School CPR/AED Requirement: Mandates CPR training and the presence of AEDs in schools by 2027.
- Safe Walk Zones: Protects walkways for children near high-traffic roads.
- Gold & Silver Legal Tender: Recognizes certain precious metals as tax-free legal tender.
- Gulf of America Bill: Changes state documents to refer to the “Gulf of America” instead of the “Gulf of Mexico.” **Final Thoughts:** These July 1, 2025, laws show Florida’s commitment to public safety, environmental preservation, family support, and economic growth.

The Wewa News.

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The Bummer Lamb and Jesus

By Grandpa Tom

When I was a boy, about **10 years old**, my father came home one day with a tiny kitten. She was a **calico**—a beautiful mix of black, brown, and white. We named her “**Sweeter**” because she was just that—sweet, gentle, and full of love.

For some reason I never understood, my father also called her “**Bummer**.” I didn’t know why. My dad was a deep-thinking man—both a theologian and a United States Coast Guard Petty Officer. He flew Search and Rescue missions by day, then came home exhausted and studied the Bible and books nearly every night, for both his faith and his career advancement.

Sweeter lived with us for about one year before she was hit by a car. The accident broke her tail, and she lost all feeling in it. Most people might have given up on her. But not my dad. He carefully nursed her back to health, tending her wounds with gentle care. When her tail became lifeless and unhealthy, he removed it himself, taking the utmost care to keep her comfortable and safe.

And you know what? She lived happily for four more years after that. She was loved. She was rescued. She was “**Bummer**”—not because she was unwanted, but because she needed the special touch of someone who cared. I never understood why he called that little kitten “Bummer” until now, **60 years later**.

In the world of sheep, there’s something known as a **Bummer Lamb**. Sometimes a baby lamb is rejected by its mother. No matter how much it cries, the mother will not let the lamb nurse or stay close. If the shepherd doesn’t step in, that lamb will not only starve—it will **die of a broken heart**.

Sheep are tender creatures. A bumper lamb, rejected and alone, gives up on life. It lies down and slowly fades away unless someone steps in to save it. But the shepherd doesn’t let that happen. He picks up that weak, unwanted lamb. He carries it in his arms. He warms it, feeds it by hand, speaks kindly to it, and calls it by name. That lamb becomes the shepherd’s very own. It knows the shepherd’s voice and follows him closely, always staying nearby. That is what **Jesus** does for **us**. The Bible says: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to*

his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." — Isaiah 53:6

We are all like bummer lambs—lost, rejected, broken, weak. Sin separated us from God. Our hearts are empty without Him. But Jesus, the **Good Shepherd**, stepped in. He took us in His arms and gave His life for us. He heals our broken hearts, forgives our sins, and calls us His own. Jesus said: *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."* John 10:11

Now I understand why my dad, a **deep-thinking man**, called that little kitten **"Bummer."** She reminded him of every soul that needs rescue, tenderness, and love—just like the bummer lamb in the fields. And just like **us**.

We've all been broken. We've all felt the sting of life's accidents and heartaches. But Jesus—the **Good Shepherd**—picks us up, nurses us, heals us, and calls us His own.

A bummer lamb never forgets its shepherd. It stays close to the one who saved it. That's how we should live—close to **Jesus**, always remembering His saving grace. When life is hard, when you feel unwanted, or when others walk away, remember:

Jesus will never leave you or forsake you. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* John 10:27 We are the bummer lambs. And Jesus is our loving Shepherd. Without Him, we would die of broken hearts. With Him, we live—and we are forever loved. **TW**



Simple, Chemical-Free Ways to Chase Off Fire Ants and Mosquitoes *by Tom Wynn Jr.*

The Wewahitchka area is famous for its Tupelo honey and other natural honeys. That means protecting our bee buddies is important to all of us. When dealing with pests like fire ants and mosquitoes, it's best to avoid chemicals or traps that harm these valuable pollinators.

Here are some simple, natural ways to chase off fire ants and mosquitoes without risking the health of our bees or the environment.

Marching the Fire Ants Off Your Property

Fire ants are a problem that almost every homeowner in our area has faced. Their painful stings and big dirt mounds can make walking barefoot a risky adventure.

I recently discovered a natural way to make them move without chemicals—and it only uses good old Florida sunshine.

Here's how it works: Find the main ant bed on your property. Take a large, clear plastic bowl or container and invert it over the mound. Do this on a hot, sunny day. The sun will heat the air inside the bowl, and the temperature can quickly rise to 125 degrees or higher. Fire ants hate extreme heat and will move their entire colony to escape it. If needed, you can gradually relocate the bowl to march them right off your land, a few feet at a time.

Who knows? They may march all the way down to Port St. Joe, and out to sea, to feed the local fishery.

This method is safe for children, pets, plants, and especially our bees—leaving no chemical residue behind. It's old-fashioned common sense at work.

Natural Ways to Keep Mosquitoes Away

Mosquitoes are another problem we know all too well here in the Wewahitchka area. Besides being annoying, they can carry diseases that affect people and pets alike. Here are some natural, chemical-free ways to keep mosquitoes off your property that are safe for bees and other beneficial wildlife:

1. Eliminate Standing Water
 - Dump out buckets, old tires, birdbaths, and any containers holding water.
 - Clean out gutters and drains.

— Add goldfish or mosquito-eating minnows to ponds.

2. Plant Mosquito-Repelling Plants
Certain plants naturally help keep mosquitoes at bay. Plant these around porches and patios: — Lemongrass — Citronella — Lavender — Basil — Marigolds
3. Use Fans and Breeze
Mosquitoes are weak fliers. A small box fan on your porch can make a big difference by creating a breeze they can't fight through.
4. Try Natural Oils
Rubbing on natural oils like lemon eucalyptus, peppermint, or lavender can help repel mosquitoes.
5. Encourage Nature's Mosquito Hunters
Bats, birds, dragonflies, and frogs all help control mosquito populations naturally. You can encourage them by:
— Installing a bat house
— Planting bird-friendly shrubs
— Avoiding pesticides that harm beneficial bugs.
6. For Trouble Spots
If you have a bad mosquito area you can't drain, sprinkle food-grade garlic powder or use mosquito dunks (safe for pets and wildlife) to control larvae.

Fire ants and mosquitoes don't pay rent—so why let them stay? With a little Florida sunshine, natural plants, and old-time common sense, you can reclaim your yard without harming the environment or our precious bee population. Give these ideas a try, and enjoy your Wewahitchka area backyard again!

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DEMOCRACY AND A REPUBLIC

by AECS Tom Wynn Jr., USCG (Ret.)

Many Americans today use the words "**Democracy**" and "**Republic**" interchangeably, but the truth is, they are two very different forms of government, with very

different outcomes in history. Understanding this difference is key to preserving the freedoms our founding fathers fought so hard to secure.

When the United States was born on July 4th, 1776, it was not founded as "a Democracy." It was established as a "**Constitutional Republic**." The men who gathered in Philadelphia to declare independence from Britain did not seek mob rule or majority-only decisions. They sought a system built on law, justice, and the unalienable rights granted by our Creator. As President Abraham Lincoln so beautifully said, this was "*a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal*" (Lincoln, 1863).

When Benjamin Franklin emerged from that historic meeting, a woman asked him, "*What kind of government did you give us?*" He answered plainly: "*A Republic, if you can keep it.*"

A "**Democracy**" is a system where the majority rules, without restraint. It is often described as two wolves and a sheep voting on what's for dinner. Democracies throughout history have proven unstable. They rise in popularity, but they fall into chaos, tyranny, or collapse. Ancient Athens is one such example. Democracies are easily swayed by emotion, manipulation, and mob mentality.

In contrast, a "**Republic**" is built on law and the protection of individual rights, even against the will of the majority. The United States Constitution guarantees each state a **Republican form of government** (Article IV, Section 4). In a Republic, elected representatives govern according to a written constitution that protects the rights of all citizens, including minorities and individuals. This is the very reason America has lasted as long as it has.

My father taught me this truth as a young boy, and my 8th-grade civics teacher drilled it into our minds: we are a **Republic**, not a Democracy. And history is full of failed Democracies—but thriving Republics endure when the people stay vigilant.

Here is a fact too often forgotten: We are not "citizens" in the way many believe—unless you, individually and with full knowledge, place yourself under an Oath of Office. Otherwise, you are part of "We The People," and you stand above the government and its sworn members. You are their superiors, not their subjects. You are born into this system by natural right or you

are naturalized into our **Republic** through a solemn oath. The government serves **you**, not the other way around.

This is where the **Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) 1-308** comes into play. Under **UCC 1-308**, every individual has the right to reserve their rights without prejudice. By explicitly stating "**All rights reserved, UCC 1-308**" when entering into contracts, you maintain your sovereignty and protect yourself from unintentionally waiving any rights. This is a legal safeguard that preserves your standing as "**We The People**", ensuring you do not become subject to statutes and regulations that apply primarily to government-created entities or corporate bodies. It is one of the tools that helps keep the individual above the government, not beneath it.

Every military member understands this difference. We swear a **lifelong Oath of Office** to protect and defend the **Constitution of the United States** against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Every government official, from the local sheriff to the President, swears this same oath. They are bonded by law and duty to uphold the **Republic**.

And it is "**We The People**" who must hold them accountable. Every child once stood in school and pledged allegiance to the flag, "*and to the Republic for which it stands*". That is no small phrase. It is a reminder of who we are.

A Republic protects the individual, the minority, the weak, and the voiceless. A Democracy risks silencing them under the weight of majority opinion. We must teach this to our children, **for our children's children**, so they, too, will defend liberty and justice for all.

May God bless America and its "**Republic**" foundation. And may every official who swears an Oath of Office truly understand (which means to agree with and uphold) that to break that oath is to betray the very nation they serve and that accountability, both earthly and divine, awaits those who do.

Have a safe and meaningful **4th of July**, my fellow Americans! **TW**

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

The 4th of July

By Tom Wynn Jr. USCG (Ret.)

Two hundred forty-nine years strong and free,
A Republic born for you and me.
Our forefathers spoke, they prayed, they fought,
For liberty's flame that can't be bought.

We honor their blood, both brave and true,
Fathers, brothers, sisters too.
In God we trust, He leads the way,
And honors our labor—not in vain—
For our freedom today.

So let the bells of freedom ring,
With grateful hearts, their praises sing.
For all who gave, we stand and say,
Thank God for freedom—**for our freedom today.**

How to Get Free Grant Money for Hurricane-Resistant Windows in Florida

By Tom Wynn

Florida is a beautiful place to live, but we all know the danger that comes every year—hurricanes. Strong winds can break windows, damage roofs, and leave families with thousands of dollars in repair bills. That's why Florida created the **My Safe Florida Home** program. This program helps homeowners get **free grant money** to strengthen their homes with new windows, doors, and other safety improvements. This article explains how you can apply and protect your family before the next storm hits.

What is the My Safe Florida Home Program?

The **My Safe Florida Home** program offers:

1. **Free home inspections** to check how strong your house is against hurricane winds.
2. **Grant money up to \$10,000** to help you pay for new impact-resistant windows, doors, and other upgrades.

This is **not a loan** this is **free grant money** that you do not have to pay back if you follow the rules. The purpose is to help families protect their homes and even lower their **homeowners insurance costs**.

Who Can Apply for This Grant?

You may qualify if: You own and live in the home (**primary residence**).

- You have a **Florida Homestead Exemption**.
- Your home was built **before January 1, 2008**.
- Your home is insured for **\$700,000 or less**.

The program gives **priority** to: seniors aged **60 and older**, low-income homeowners (any age), and middle-income homeowners. If you are not in one of these groups, you can still apply, but you may have to wait longer for approval.

How Does the Program Work?

Step 1: Apply for a Free Home Inspection

Request a **wind mitigation inspection**. Inspectors will check your roof, windows, doors, and walls. They will write a report showing what needs to be fixed.

Step 2: Apply for Grant Money

Use the report to apply for the grant. The state will give you **\$2 for every \$1 you spend**, up to **\$10,000**. For example, if your window upgrades cost \$15,000, you only pay \$5,000 and the state pays \$10,000.

Step 3: Hire an Approved Contractor

You must hire a contractor that is **approved by the My Safe Florida Home program** to do the work. They will install hurricane-resistant windows, doors, or other improvements.

Step 4: Final Inspection & Reimbursement

When the work is done, a final inspection is required. Once approved, the state releases the grant money.

Why Should You Upgrade Your Windows?

Hurricane-resistant windows protect your family from flying debris and high winds. Many homeowners save up to **50%** on their hurricane insurance premium. New windows also help reduce your electric bill by keeping your house cooler in the summer.

Where and How to Apply

To apply for the **My Safe Florida Home** program:

Online: www.MySafeFLHome.com

Mailing Address:

My Safe Florida Home Program

Florida Department of Financial Services

200 East Gaines Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Phone Number: 1-866-513-6734

If you need help beyond this grant, you can look into **PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy)** programs. These allow you to finance upgrades and pay them off slowly through your property taxes. You may also qualify for **Federal Weatherization Assistance (WAP)**, which helps low-income families with energy-saving home improvements.

Important Things to Remember

Apply early because the grant money is **first come, first served**. Save all your paperwork, including your application, inspection reports, contractor agreements, and receipts. Speak kindly but **know your rights** when dealing with inspectors, contractors, or state workers.

Remember, the right to protect your home and family is something we've always believed in as free people. Our **Founding Fathers** never intended for the government to control every part of our lives, but they did believe that the people should have help when danger comes their way. This grant program gives you a way to help yourself and stand strong when the next hurricane blows through. For more information, call **1-866-513-6734**. *By Brother Tom Wynn Jr.*

Upcoming Events and Other: Mark Your Calendars

The Local Bee Association meets 6 pm at Glad Tidings Assembly of God Church, 138 E. Orange Ave. in Wewa, meeting room in the far Eastside of the Church on the first Tuesday of each month at 6 pm.

The Friends of the Wewa Library meet at the Wewa Library on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 10:00 AM. Come early and "Meet & Greet" with us in the conference room.

Wewahitchka Historical Society meets every month on the Third Thursday at 6 pm at the Presbyterian Church in Hwy 71.

City Hall Meetings: The city meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month, at 6 PM CT, unless posted otherwise. Contact the City Hall for possible changes due to weather or holidays.

GULF COUNTY LABOR DAY RODEO Saturday, August 30th, TL JAMES PARK-SEE AD ABOVE FOR MORE INFORMATION

GOD BLESS AMERICA!
Happy 249th Birthday



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 BEE WILD RAW HONEY.....(850)-447-0161
 "THE BEE BARN" Steve and Leslie Cantu.....(863) 781-1210
 BLUE EYED GIRL HONEY-Pam & Gary.....(850)-628-9504
 DEAD LAKES APIARY-Cynde Aaron.....(850)-628-0745
 HURRICANE HONEY-Buddy Nachtsheim.....(850)-814-0754
 L.L. LANIER HONEY-Ben & Glynnis Lanier....(850)-639-2371
 RISH TUPELO HONEY-James & Nathan.....(850)-639-3645
 RISE-N-SHINE FARM-Sarah.....(850)-730-8689
 SMILEY'S HONEY-Willie-.....(850)-639-5672
 SWEET LIPS HONEY-Daphney Glass.....(770)-842-9721
 WEWA BEE & HONEY-Greg Skipper.....(850)-819-4458

CALL 911 in Case of All Emergencies

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 GULF CO. SHERIFF'S WEWA OFFICE.....(850) 639-5717
 GULF CO. VA REP Lynn.....(850) 229-6125
 AUTO DETAILING-Dakota Ake.....(727) 916-1423
 BAYSIDE FLORIST.....(850) 229-1111
 BEE'S & BOTANICAL-Leslie.....(863) 781-1210
 BLUE-EYED GIRL HONEY SALES-Pam.....(850).628-9504
 CHARLIE PETTIS PEST CONTROL.....(850)381-2942
 COMFORTER FUNERAL HOME.....(850).227-1818
 DOMINO'S PAINT & BODY.....(850) 340-0953
 GASKIN-GRADY INSURANCE(850).639-5077
 GRI BAY PROPERTIES-Kathe Jones.....(850) 247-9131
 HARVELL'S RAGIN CAJUN.....(850) 247-0575
 HEAVEN SENT WEWA INC Janet(850) 294-7839
 HIGHLAND FINANCE INS & RET-Micah.....(850)-359-5989
 HIGHWAY 22 STORAGE-Betty.....(850) 227-8384
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 RV & BOAT STORAGE.....(850)819-3313
 RISE-N-SHINE FARM-Sarah.....(850)-730-8689
 SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER.....(850)639-9910
 SMILEY'S HONEY-Caroline.....(850)-730-3404
 SOUTHERN STYLES HAIR CARE.....(850) 381-6454
 SUBWAY-Mike.....(850) 639-4100
 THE WEWA HISTORICAL Society-Ann.....(850) 867-5970
 THE WEWA NEWS-Tom.....thewewanews2021@gmail.com
 WEWA BUILDING SALES-Jodi Rustin.....(850) 481-0855
 WEWA CITY HALL.....(850) 639-2605
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Contact us: thewewanews2021@gmail.com

Our website has past issues and the latest as well:

Google: www.the.wewa.news The Wewa News began official circulation as a seasonal periodical on **January 1, 2024**, and will continue until further notice. We'll notify our readers of each new issue by word of mouth and through our Facebook pages. Hard copies will be available at the **Wewa Subway entrance** and the **Wewahitchka City Library**. Thank you for your continued support and positive feedback. *Founder, The Wewa News, The Tupelo County News, Numademan Ministries & Int'l Missions, acting in the private.*



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THE PUBLISHER AND EDITOR, BRO TOM WYNN JR

INFORMATIONAL NOTICES

The Wewa News – Mission Statement

In association with The Numademan Ministries & Int'l Missions

The Wewa News is a locally owned and operated newspaper, created solely for the enjoyment and benefit of the people living in the Wewa area. Our mission is to bring "Good News"—and whatever else brings a smile—to the attention of our local community. We aim to restore joy, share meaningful stories, and strengthen the bonds between neighbors. Thank you to all who continue to support our efforts.

Published in association with **The Numademan Ministries & International Missions**, this work is part of a greater calling: to uplift our neighbors, speak truth in love, and walk in faith, hope, and purpose. We believe in shining light into our local community while reaching hearts beyond our borders.

The Wewa News operates privately and independently. Freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion are not only constitutional rights—they are God-given freedoms to all men and women living freely on the land called Florida.

This newspaper is **free to the public** as a living expression of those freedoms. It is our way of giving back to the community while exercising the rights we cherish as Americans and believers in Christ.

We humbly ask you to **call our SPONSORS and thank them**—they help make this free newspaper possible.

SPONSORS, *Praise the Lord for you!* You are a true blessing to me, to Wewa, and to our readership across the world. Your support is felt and deeply appreciated.

The newspaper is planned as a seasonal periodical, published approximately four times a year: **Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall**. Due to travel, family time, or health matters, we may occasionally surprise you with a **Special Edition**—just because we can!