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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024 - VOLUME 38, NO. 37 - 28 PAGES

FREE

College receives \$2M boost from Knight Foundation

STOCK ISLAND — The College of the Florida Keys is \$2 million closer to developing its new residential complex for students and the workforce on the Key West campus thanks to a pledge from the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation. The gift is the largest contribution to the CFK Foundation in its history.

The college's new residential complex could include as many as 240 student beds and up to 50 units for CFK employees, educators, first responders and healthcare workers. Dining and recreational facilities may be incorporated in the design. When fully operational, this new facility will add to the current 100-bed residence hall, Lagoon Landing, on the waterfront point area on the northwest part of campus.

"We are grateful to the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation for recognizing the college's residential complex as a worthy investment in educational opportunities and workforce housing in the Keys," said Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, CFK president and CEO.

"With approximately 90% of our current residential students holding jobs that support the Keys' economy, an increase in the number of beds will result in an increase in the labor market. These student workers will support CFK's enrollment growth and fuel the Keys economy with a steady supply of workers without additional pressure on the housing market."

Students have demanded on-campus housing for decades, but state colleges are not typically allowed to have on-campus housing. CFK had to procure legislative authority and external funding to build Lagoon Landing, which opened in 2011.



CONTRIBUTED

Joan T. and Edward B. Knight, benefactors of the Edward B. and Joan T. Knight Foundation.

After several years of Lagoon Landing operating at capacity and with a wait list, the college again sought and secured legislative approval to expand the number of student beds and to add workforce housing units.

The college is working with industry leaders, philanthropists and government officials to procure support and seeks another \$20 million in funding to begin the project.

For more information, contact Lana Gaspari, CFK Foundation director, at 305-809-3214 or foundation@cfk.edu. Gifts to the CFK Foundation are tax-deductible.



Weekend Edition

September 14-15, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 184 • 64 pages

\$3.00

THE KEYS

and the Keys, e-mail the who, room@keysnews.com.

10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 19, at the Monroe County Public Library Marathon Branch, 3490 Overseas Highway, and 11 a.m. Monday, Sept. 30, at PKS Community Center, 53 High Point Road. Plantation Key. To register or for information, call 305-292-4501.

Poetics event

The College of the Florida Keys will host its CFK Poetics event at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19 at the Tennessee Williams Theatre, 5901 College Road. The annual

visiting poets activity will feature a reading from poet Kim Addonizio. She will read some of her work and take questions from the audience. The event is free for all attendees. For information, visit cfk.edu/poetics.

Fantasy Fest Parade

It is time to fill out and submit 2024 Bud Light Fantasy Fest Parade entry forms and prepare to put ingenuity on display in this year's "It's a '90s Neon Cosmic Carnival!" themed parade on Saturday, Oct. 26. Some just-for-locals love means that entry fees are discounted 50% for those who apply before Friday,

CFK's Constitution Day highlights relevance of America's blueprint

SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN

The College of the Florida Keys invites the community to celebrate the birthday of the United States government at its annual Constitution Day event on Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 11 a.m. in the library on the Key West campus.

Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787, thus



Goulding

CFK History instructor Charles Goulding will examine the pivotal

laying the foundation of our government, rights and freedoms. This year's event will delve into the history behind the creation of the U.S. Constitution.

events leading to and during its drafting to provide an understanding of the founders' intentions and decisions. He will focus on key sections of the Constitution, providing an in-depth look at some of its most significant parts and how it remains relevant today.

"The most important facet of our Constitution Day program

More DAY | A3

Sunisa Kuhn and
Audrey Smith



KEYS CITIZEN

KeysNews.com

Many Islands  One Voice

LADY CONCHS DIG OUT 2ND-PLACE FINISH AT CONCH CUP CLASSIC — B1 \$3.00

Wednesday

September 18, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 186 • 16 pages

Poetics event

The College of the Florida Keys will host its CFK Poetics event at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19, at the Tennessee Williams Theatre, 5901 College Road. The annual visiting poets activity will feature a live reading from poet Kim Addonizio. She will read some of her work and take questions from the audience. The event is free for all attendees. For information, visit cfk.edu/poetics.

FLORIDA WEEKLY[®]

KEY WEST EDITION

Gone Fishing Retirement Celebration



September 19, 2024

BY KEVIN ASSAM

Florida Weekly Correspondent



School board member Andy Griffiths, on stage in Key West, wants to continue his mission of improving education and access across the Florida Keys. SUSAN KENT /COURTESY PHOTO

One of the Florida Keys' longest-serving elected officials, Andy Griffiths, a Monroe County school board member for over 30 years, will officially retire later this year.

However, the boat captain, businessman, and public servant is not finished advancing his cause of improved education and access across the Florida Keys.

Griffiths is inviting everyone to the Key West Beachside Resort on Saturday, October 12, for his "Andy's Gone Fishing Retirement Celebration and Fundraiser," which will financially support United Way of Collier and the Keys' "Success by 6" program.

This initiative offers a dollar-for-dollar match that funds scholarships to cover a full year of high-quality preschool education for children from low- to moderate income families. It is done in collaboration with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe County and has previously been supported by organizations including Ocean Reef Community Foundation and First Horizon Bank.

...



GRIFFITHS

The soon-to-be-retired school board member and active boater is no stranger to raising awareness and finances for education in the Keys. In 2023, the Rotary Club of Key West, of which Griffiths is an active member, announced a new scholarship recognizing his years of service. The Andy Griffiths Scholarship will cover the tuition for a Florida Keys student pursuing a career in education.

The Beachside celebration will kick off with a cocktail hour on the veranda, followed by dinner, entertainment, music, and dancing with the famous and popular Miami-born DJ Cardi.



PHOTOGRAPHY

The event's hosting committee features many elected officials, including Congressman Carlos Jimenez, Mayor Holly Raschein, Superintendent Theresa Axford, Monroe County Tax Collector Sam Steele, Representative Jim Mooney, Early Learning Coalition President Evelio Torres, Keys Weekly's Britt Meyers, and College of the Florida Keys President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra.

Griffiths hopes that by assembling such a roster of members, each person can tap into their own network to invite guests.

In response to such a list of recognizable names, he acknowledged that when elected countywide, you will undoubtedly come to know the sort of people who can make things happen.

Griffiths hopes the successful celebration will add funding to expand "Success by 6," which will help more families obtain preschool opportunities that otherwise could prove elusive. He pointed out that the high living costs in Monroe County are often at odds with federal rules. Locals critical to the labor force should qualify for preschool programs but are often deemed ineligible.

"These are vital families," he says. "We need to assist them in any way we can."

Andy's Gone Fishing Retirement Celebration will be held on Saturday, October 12, at 5:30 p.m. at Beachside Key West.

For ticket information, visit uwcollierkeys.org/event/andy-griffiths-retirement-party.

CFK Swim Team Honors

September 19, 2024



The 2023-24 men's and women's Tugas swim teams. Front row: Lori Bosco, Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny, Mason Egan and Lauren Walterson. Back row: Juan Carlos Foster, Seth Bullard, Eddie Kertis Jr, Kaemon Fogley. THE COLLEGE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS / COURTESY PHOTOS

The College of the Florida Keys' women's swim team is named the 2023-24 Academic Team of the Year for Women's Swimming and Diving by the National Junior College Athletic Association.

The women were among 30 programs nationwide recognized for achieving the highest grade point average in their respective.

"In the pool and the classroom, our athletes strive to perform their best," says Athletic Director and Swim Coach Lori Bosco. "I am incredibly proud of their commitment to balance their swimming ambitions with their college goals alongside many other responsibilities."

Isabella Oliverio, Lillian Zebny, and Lauren Walterson are the women on the 2023-24 Tugas team being honored.

...

The men's swim team received a similar award at the state level. The Florida College System Activities Association named them the Male Academic Team of the Year in the small roster category with ten or fewer participants.

The College is recruiting new athletes to join the men's and women's teams.

For more information about the College of the Florida Keys' swim teams, visit cfk.edu/studentlife/cfk-swim-team/.



The next invite to a P Diddy "freak off" is a hard no for us.



1c

KEY WEST WEEKLY

September 19, 2024

SCHOOL DISTRICT PASSES FINAL BUDGET AND EXAMINES OPERATIONS

W FRANK DERFLER
www.keysweekly.com

The Monroe County School District passed its final budget with emphasis on teacher salaries and limiting the tax rate associated with property values.

An important consideration was the tax levy for school safety and security. These funds cover the costs for security programs in the school district. An example is the Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate (ALICE) training required for all staff and students by state law. The state mandates most of the district's security programs and gives some money, but the state also provides a way for school boards to fund the programs with a separate taxing power.

For this year, the state-mandated "safe school officers" provided by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the Key West Police total \$2,753,547. The state provided \$1,048,089, so funds are needed from within the county. The Monroe County School District exceeds all of the state criteria while using a small portion of the state-authorized special tax authority.

The county school board only controls a portion of what appears on a property owner's tax statement labeled as "school." The Monroe County School District tax rate is \$1.05 per thousand dollars of assessed value with some variations for exemptions.

Another line item labeled as "school" is a tax levied by the state. If you are 65 or older and have the \$50,000 exemption on your real estate assessed value, only the original \$25,000 exemption applies to these two school taxes. The Monroe County school tax line item is expected to generate \$128.54 million in 2024-25 while still maintaining the lowest tax rate for the district-controlled taxation in the state.

The difference is in two funding referendums that will be on November's election ballot. These two referendum items do not ask for new taxes. They continue authority that has been in place for 20 years. The November ballot contains an item known as the "half-mill." This referendum allows the district to use a taxing authority for school district operations.

"Renewing the half-mill is crucial



Monroe County school board members passed a budget during a Sept. 10 meeting at Marathon High School. PIXABAY



School board chairwoman Sue Woltanski says renewing the half-mill is crucial for the district's ability to retain high quality teachers and staff. CONTRIBUTED

for our ability to retain high-quality teachers and staff, provide school nurses and school resource officers at every school and maintain the high quality educational opportunities our students deserve," said Sue Woltanski, school board chairwoman.

The other referendum item in November, known as the "half-cent," is a sales tax that pays for buildings, upgrades and maintenance.

"It is crucial for our citizens to vote 'yes' in November for the two funding referendums on the ballot," said board member Andy Griffiths, who is retiring from his position Oct. 8.

Looking at the total district budget, board member John Dick reported he examined and compared the budgets of all the other 66 school districts in Florida.

"Even though we have the highest

cost of living in the state and one of the highest rates of pay for our employees due to that high cost of living,

we have one of the lowest tax rates for school funding," Dick said. "We proved we are doing what we say: paying teachers salaries."

"Monroe County doesn't use all of the taxing authority allowed by the state," Dick said. "People in Monroe County need to know that."

The school board also spent considerable time discussing the problem of finding an athletic trainer for Key West High School. One challenge is in the specific training and certification requirements for an athletic trainer. The trainer position offers a \$62,100 starting salary plus a \$3,400 offset for evening and weekend work, but applicants shy away from the hours and the cost of living.

The board also discussed advanced placement and dual enrollment courses across the district. In order to get college credit for AP classes, students must get a passing grade on rigorous standardized tests taken at the end of the school year. The school district pays for these tests and the board examined the results across the district. Board member Mindy Conn asked the staff to research information on how much AP classes cost the district compared to dual enrollment classes with the College of the Florida Keys.

Woltanski commended Coral Shores High School students for their exceptional performance in math AP tests: they outperformed the Florida average in this area by large margins across the board.

COLLEGE OFFERS 'EARN WHILE YOU LEARN' PROGRAMS



CFK apprentice Jean Rony Desire uses a saw in class on the Key West campus. CONTRIBUTED

Apprenticeship info available at CFK event

The College of the Florida Keys (CFK) invites prospective students to learn about its apprenticeships in construction technologies at a virtual information event on Thursday, Sept. 26 at 5:30 p.m. CFK is offering HVAC and plumbing programs in Key West and the Upper Keys this upcoming spring semester, which begins Jan. 10. The deadline to apply is Nov. 1.

The virtual information session will help prospective students learn about the trade professions, career outlooks, and CFK's tuition-free "earn while you learn" programs. Attendees will receive a code to waive the \$30 application fee. Registration for the event is required. More information is at CFK.edu/apprenticeships or from Marissa Owens at recruiter@cfk.edu or 305-809-3207.

CFK's apprenticeships in construction technologies offer opportunities to help

individuals train and advance in high-wage, high-demand construction careers throughout the Keys. In collaboration with local construction businesses, CFK's apprenticeship programs provide education and training in all aspects of the respective trades — from conceptual to practical skills. Through the college's "earn while you learn" model, students are employed and paid full-time with a sponsoring employer that is partnered with CFK. They attend classes, which are tuition-free, while developing their skills through on-the-job training with their sponsor. As apprentice students advance through the program, their progress is rewarded with periodic wage increases.

Upon successful program completion, an apprentice will be considered a journey worker and will receive a four-level certification by the National Center for Construction Education and Research as well as a nationally recognized completion of apprenticeship certificate by the state of Florida.

— Contributed



Weekend Edition

September 21-22, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 189 • 64 pages

\$3.00

needed. To see what's playing, visit keyslibraries.org/matinee. For information, call 305-292-3595.

Apprenticeship programs offered

The College of the Florida Keys (CFK) invites prospective students to learn about its Apprenticeships in Construction Technologies at a virtual information event at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26 at 5:30 p.m. CFK is offering HVAC and Plumbing programs in Key West and the Upper Keys this upcoming spring semester, which begins Friday, Jan. 10. The deadline to apply is Friday, Nov. 1.

Registration for the event is required at CFK.edu/apprenticeships. To schedule a personal information session, contact Marissa Owens at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

Take Back the Night

The Take Back The Night Walk event will take place at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 1, to promote safe community, to end sexual violence in all forms, and support survivors on their healing journeys. Gather at Bayview Park and walk to Higgs Beach. For information and to register and indicate shirt size, visit <https://forms.office.com/r/j2SFSyc3tL>.

Deandra Valverde

KEYS CITIZEN

Many Islands  One Voice

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LADY 'CANES REMAIN UNBEATEN, LADY CONCHS ON DOCKET FOR THURSDAY — B1 **\$3.00**

Wednesday

September 25, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 191 • 15 pages

Thursday, Sept. 26, in Truman Waterfront Park. For information, visit facebook.com/kwfarmersmarket or kwfarmersmarket.com/.

Apprenticeship programs offered

The College of the Florida Keys invites prospective students to learn about its Apprenticeships in Construction Technologies at a virtual information event at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26, at 5:30 p.m. CFK is offering HVAC and Plumbing programs in Key West and the Upper Keys this

upcoming spring semester, which begins Friday, Jan. 10. The deadline to apply is Friday, Nov. 1. Registration for the event is required at [CFK.edu/apprenticeships](https://cfk.edu/apprenticeships). To schedule a personal information session, contact Marissa Owens at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

Bird migration adventure

The Lower Keys Fall Migration Mania Birding and Wildlife Adventure will take place at the Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Garden, 5210 College Road, on

FLORIDA KEYS

PHOTO
PROVIDED
BY CFK

CFK
apprentice
Jean Rony
Desire uses
a saw in
class on the
Key West
campus.



Learn about CFK apprenticeships

The College of the Florida Keys invites prospective students to learn about its apprenticeships in Construction Technologies at a virtual information event at 5:30 p.m on Thursday, Sept. 26.

CFK is offering HVAC and Plumbing programs in Key West and the Upper Keys this

upcoming Spring semester, which begins Jan. 10. The deadline to apply is Nov. 1. The virtual information session will help prospective students learn about the trade professions, career outlooks, and CFK's tuition-free "earn while you learn" programs.

Attendees will receive

a code to waive the \$30 application fee. Registration for the event is required. Visit [CFK.edu/apprenticeships](https://cfk.edu/apprenticeships) to learn more and to register.

To schedule a personal information session, contact Marissa Owens, CFK Manager of Recruitment, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call [305-809-3207](tel:305-809-3207).



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Stream Scene —
Inside and online

KeysNews.com

**YOUR GUIDE TO FLORIDA KEYS ENTERTAINMENT
— INSIDE AND ONLINE**

Thursday

September 26, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 192 • 32 pages

\$3.00

FLORIDA KEYS

CFK to host apprentice programs

The College of the Florida Keys invites prospective students to learn about its apprenticeships in Construction Technologies at a virtual information event at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 26.

CFK is offering HVAC and Plumbing programs in Key West and the Upper Keys this upcoming Spring semester, which begins Jan. 10. The deadline to apply is Nov. 1.

The virtual information session will help prospective students learn about the trade professions, career outlooks, and CFK's tuition-free "earn while you learn" programs.

Attendees will receive a code to waive the \$30 application fee. Registration for the event is required. Visit [CFK.edu/apprenticeships](https://cfk.edu/apprenticeships) for information and to register.

To schedule a personal information session, contact Marissa Owens, CFK Manager of Recruitment, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

Learn about CFK’s construction apprenticeship program

MONROE COUNTY — The College of the Florida Keys invites prospective students to learn about its apprenticeships in construction technologies at a virtual information event at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 26. CFK is offering HVAC and plumbing programs in Key West and Key Largo during the spring semester, which begins Jan. 10. The deadline to apply is Nov. 1.

Upon successful program completion, an apprentice will be considered a journey worker and will receive a four-level certification by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) as well as a nationally recognized Completion of Apprenticeship certificate by the state of Florida.

The virtual information session will help prospective students learn about the trade professions, career outlooks and CFK’s tuition-free “earn-while-you-learn”



CONTRIBUTED

CFK apprentice Jean Rony Desire uses a saw in class on the Key West campus.

programs. Attendees will receive a code to waive the \$30 application fee. Registration for the event is required.

Visit the College’s website at [CFK.edu/apprenticeships](https://cfk.edu/apprenticeships) to learn more and to register. To schedule a personal information session, contact Marissa Owens, CFK manager of recruitment, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.

FLORIDA KEYS

Learn more about CFK programs

The College of the Florida Keys invites prospective students to learn more about the various academic and career training opportunities available at CFK through its “Future Student” virtual event at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 10.

Topics to be covered at the information session will be academic and career training programs and include bachelor’s degrees in business, hospitality, marine science, nursing, and education. Other topics include guaranteed transfer to Florida universities with an associate in arts degree, paying for college: cost comparisons, financial aid, scholarships, payment plans and steps to become a CFK student.

Attendees will receive a code to waive the \$30 application fee. Registration for the event is required. Visit the College’s website at CFK.edu/futurestudents to learn more and to register. For more information or to schedule a personal information session, contact Marissa Owens, CFK Manager of Recruitment, at recruiter@cfk.edu or call 305-809-3207.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CFK

CFK student Milan Luciano walks across the Key West campus. CFK invites prospective students to learn more about the various academic and career training opportunities available at CFK through its ‘Future Student’ virtual event on Thursday, Oct. 10.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024 - VOLUME 38, NO. 41 - 32 PAGES

FREE

College to showcase academic, career training offerings



KEY WEST — The College of the Florida Keys invites prospective students to learn more about the various academic and career training opportunities available at CFK through its "Future Student" virtual event at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10.

Topics to be covered include academic and career training programs, including bachelor's degrees in business, hospitality, marine science, nursing and

education; guaranteed transfer to Florida universities with an associate in arts degree; paying for college; and steps to become a CFK student.

Attendees will receive a code to waive the \$30 application fee. Registration for the event is required. Visit the college's website at CFK.edu/futurestudents to learn more and to register. For more information, call 305-809-3207.

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CFK student Milan Luciano walks across the Key West campus.



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**YOUR GUIDE TO FLORIDA KEYS ENTERTAINMENT
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Friday

October 11, 2024 • Vol. 148 No. 203 • 32 pages

\$3.00

Creepy Campus Ghost Tours

The College of the Florida Keys Foundation, in partnership with Island Tales, will host Creepy Campus Ghost Tours on Sunday, Oct. 13 and Monday, Oct. 28. The hour-long walks through the Key West Campus will be held at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. both evenings. Amy Andrade will share ghost tales and spooky legends about haunted lighthouses, murder, betrayal, diseases, natural disasters and ghosts that haunt the Florida Keys. Light refreshments will be served. Tickets are \$20 at [Keystix.com](https://www.keystix.com). All proceeds will benefit the CFK Academy, the College's

To have your event listed in An
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high school.

Goombay Gospel Extravaganza

Bring a chair to Bayview park, 1320 Truman Ave., the scene of a Goombay Gospel Extravaganza from 4 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 13. Music will include DJs, reggae and junkanoo performers. There will be free giveaways of bike helmets, school supplies and the chance to win one of two bikes. Food trucks will also be on the site of the family friendly celebration.

Milton spares Florida Keys

Schools to reopen;
flooding remains

CITIZEN STAFF

Monroe County schools, as well as The College of the Florida Keys, will reopen for classes on Friday, Oct. 11, as Hurricane Milton left minimal damage to the Florida Keys in its destruction wake across the state.

The tropical storm warning for the Florida Keys, from Ocean Reef to Key West, was cancelled Thursday, although a coastal flood warning remained in effect for the Middle and Upper Keys, and a coastal flood advisory was in place for the Lower Keys, according to the National Weather Service in Key West.

Storm surge of roughly 2 feet was reported, largely in the Upper Keys, during Thursday's emergency management meeting in Marathon. Jon Rizzo, warning coordination meteorologist for the NWS in Key West, said flooding in the Upper Keys could take at least a day to subside.

Monroe County Mayor Holly Raschein praised the work of the Emergency Operations Center, thanking Emergency Management Director Shannon Weiner and staff for the "seamless execution of our plan."

Monroe County and local government officials said at the meeting that they will reopen Friday.

Key West International Florida Keys Marathon International airports reopened Thursday, although passengers should continue to check with airlines to ensure flights are operating as scheduled before going to the airport.

The Florida Department of Transportation on Thursday reopened a