

NewsWorthy

Attempted Abductions Not Linked

Local authorities say there is no connection between two attempted kidnappings in three days in Manatee County. The latest incident happened last Saturday at about 4 p.m. in the 1500 block of 49th Street East in Palmetto.

Police say the initial report that the passenger who confronted a 15-year-old girl standing near the road was in a green Ford Explorer was incorrect. They now say it appears to have been a green van and not an SUV that the two men were in when they reportedly attempted to abduct the girl. The girl was able to pull herself away and run to a neighbor after the man grabbed her t-shirt.

Detectives have identified a juvenile suspect in the incident, which is now being investigated as a simple battery instead of an attempted abduction.

At first, the description of the green Ford Explorer matched the vehicle reported in an attempted kidnapping last Thursday in Bradenton. Police said two men in an Explorer tried to kidnap a four-year-old girl at about 8:15 p.m. in the 900 block of 58th Avenue East. The mother of the child was able to scare off the men by honking her vehicle's horn.

Detectives are continuing to investigate this incident as an attempted abduction and anyone with information is asked to call the Sheriff's office at 747-3011.

Deputy Files Suit Against Web site

A Manatee County sheriff's deputy who was the target of sex-related gossip on a Website is suing and will fight in court to expose the person who posted it.

Kumiko Carter, a deputy for nearly 15 years, filed the suit this week against "Jane Doe." She claims that false gossip posted on a Website popular with law enforcement officers brought her into "public scandal and disgrace."

She wants the owners of the site to provide the locations of the computers from which the comments were posted.

Leoaffairs.com, launched in 2002, is a forum where officers discuss their departments. The site came under fire in Hillsborough County last year when sheriff's officials sought to identify the names of message writers who violated department policy by posting racist and sexist messages. A judge rejected those attempts by the sheriff's office but ruled that the racist and sexist messages had to be removed from the site.

Boy Saw Dad Shoot Mom

Police say a four-year-old boy witnessed his father shoot and kill his mother as he sat in a safety seat in the back of his mother's SUV. The boy's mother, **Karen J. Sheflin**, was dropping off her son at his father's east Bradenton apartment last Friday. Police say Sheflin and her ex-boyfriend, **Trevor Williams**, got into a fight while they sat in the vehicle in the **Citrus Meadows Apartments'** parking lot when the man shot her.

Sheflin was shot at least once in the face while she was sitting the driver's seat, police said. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

After the shooting, Williams grabbed his son and drove in another vehicle to a different apartment complex where he left the boy with a relative. Four hours later, Williams turned himself into the Bradenton Police Department. He is currently being held in the Manatee County jail on charges of premeditated murder.

The boy is staying with his grandmother in East Manatee.

Three Killed in East Manatee

Three men were killed Monday night

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Manatee Heritage

Palmetto Housing and Business Flourish

Lisa Hoover
Staff Writer

While there is no shortage of builders hoping to develop land around Palmetto, finding buyers is another matter. Affordable housing is in short supply but city officials and developers are struggling to find a solution.

According to the Manatee Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Council, the average median home price is \$316,000. Palmetto Mayor Larry Bustle would like to see the city adopt an ordinance that would require developers to price 10% of their newly built at \$196,000 or less. Since many low- to moderate wage workers cannot afford the high prices of Palmetto real estate, Bustle hopes the new ordinance will offer more opportunities for middle income families to secure housing in the area.

As developers continue to build residential housing in Palmetto, city officials are working with the Manatee County commissioners and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to maintain the infrastructure needed to accommodate the growing community. Of specific concern to area residents is ongoing traffic congestion. Recent studies by FDOT and MPO have shown that widening Rye Road and building the Fort Hamer Bridge would reduce the amount of traffic traveling through Palmetto via the DeSoto and

Green Bridges by offering alternative routes.

The MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan indicates that improvements along Rye Road would cost an estimated \$123.7 million. The estimated cost to build Fort Hamer Bridge is \$44 million.

Palmetto also has a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) whose goal is to ensure that residential develop-

'I believe that (Palmetto) is definitely ripe and will continue to flourish.'

ment is coordinated with other areas of economic development. About 80% of the CRA's budget goes toward business renovation and local rejuvenation. They also work with developers to offer incentives designed to improve the quality of life in Palmetto as well as increase the tax base and beautify the area.

With an eye on the growing needs of the city, Palmetto officials approved approximately \$1.5 million in capital improvement projects this week that include street resurfacing, drainage projects and sidewalk replacements. City commissioners at Monday's meeting also agreed to fund a \$49,500 study to determine what types of improvements will be needed

at the wastewater plant to accommodate projected growth over the next 20 years. Additionally, officials heard the results of a study that determined the long-range needs of city facilities to house public works, the police department and City Hall.

Palmetto officials' attention to the long-term needs of the city make the area especially attractive to local businesses. Manatee County Chamber of Commerce President Bob Bartz says Palmetto businesses, like those throughout the county, see pros and cons to the county's growth.

"I think the climate is somewhat being repeated," Bartz said. "Palmetto is being very affected by what's happening out east. I believe that (Palmetto) is definitely ripe and will continue to flourish."

Recently some area businesses felt the pinch with the eviction of several businesses, including Evolve Wellness Spa and Smokin' Martini, from Riverside Plaza. Bartz said the area continues to reinvent itself with the opening of a new spa and a restaurant and bar in the works.

"(The area) is helping frame the future development as far as quality and amenities," Bartz said. "A spa of that caliber in that area speaks volumes."

Manatee's Oldest City Honors 140-Year Heritage

Melissa Donley
Staff Writer

The oldest city in Manatee County is celebrating its heritage, and there is plenty to celebrate. With 140 years behind it, the City of Palmetto has many historical treasures that the community will come out and share in the Historic Park this Saturday.

From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the park will take a step back in time with storytelling, historic tours and old time family fun. The 24th annual Heritage Days will feature several special acts. One of the most popular attractions for families is the Robbery at the Historical Post Office by the Royal Rangers. This group, from the Assembly of God Church, will stage a robbery portraying both the good guys and bad guys in the production. They will end their performance with a short lesson on gun safety.

Palmetto Historical Commission special events coordinator Lynn Pope says the children love to watch the robbery.

"All kids love a robbery," Pope said.

Palmetto's Post Office, built in 1880, was restored and placed in the Palmetto Historical Park where it has since been joined by several other historical buildings, including the 1935 Palmetto Kindergarten Schoolhouse and 1910 Fireman's Cottage. The buildings throughout the park will be open during the festivities and volunteers will be on hand to share some information about each of the historic buildings.

"All the buildings here are Palmetto's history," Pope said.

The Commission will also hold two walking tours of the entire historic district of Palmetto. The City of Palmetto



The 1880 Palmetto Post Office

Historic District was created on Nov. 30, 1986. As of June 1999, 164 of the original 208 structures still exist.

The times of the tours will be announced Saturday morning.

There will be additional entertainment at the Heritage Days including art displays and musical performances.

The Cowboy Artists of Florida will exhibit their work throughout the park. There will be performances by local folk musicians, Tymes Past gospel singers and the Manatee County Cloggers. Windell Campbell will be telling stories for the children and clowns will also entertain.

And what is an event without food?

There will be BBQ and an Alex's Lemonade Stand, which is raising money for pediatric cancer. The Women's Club of Palmetto will serve yellow rice and chicken at 11 a.m.

Samuel Sparks Lamb founded the city of Palmetto in 1866. Named after his native South Carolina, "the Palmetto State," the city's history has been preserved by its dedicated citizens and the Palmetto Historical Commission.

The Commission was formed in 1982 after the city announced it wanted to destroy two historic buildings, the post office and the Carnegie Library. Since saving the buildings, the Commission formed a museum in the library to house the city's historical artifacts.

Inside the museum, the public can take a look through some of the items collected throughout Palmetto's history. Family members donated most of the items, including Dr. J. O. Brown whose medical diplomas, certificates and supplies are on display thanks to a family member's contribution.

Commission founder Josephine Harrison believed it was important for the city's legacy and history to be passed on for generations to come and passed her interest and commitment to the Commission to the now-president Patrick Bryant.