

2-13-08

Post office needed for Citrus Springs

Presently, Citrus County residents living in Citrus Springs are served by the post office in Dunnellon located across the Withlacoochee River in Marion County.

In addition to the trek required for them to obtain postal services at the Dunnellon post office, they also have to contend with a facility that is bursting at the seams.

Postal officials have been aware of the facility's overcrowded conditions and inadequate employee workspace for a number of years and had planned to build a new facility. Hurricane Katrina, however, caused the plans to be placed on the back burner when all available funding was diverted to the recovery of the devastated Gulf Coast area.

Believing that the time has come to place a new postal facility on the front burner, Citrus Springs resident Bernie Leven formally requested the U.S. Postal Service to not only build a new post office but to build it in Citrus Springs.

If acted upon, Leven's request would solve two problems. It would relieve the pressure on the Dunnellon post office and site a new facility that's conveniently located to where the population growth is occurring.

Since the 2000 census, Citrus Springs' population has more than doubled from 4,157 to more than 9,000 residents. Additionally, a 1,700-unit project begun last year will add close to 4,000 Citrus Springs residents. By including residents east and west of Citrus Springs, the num-

ber served by a new Citrus Springs post office would top 20,000. Plus, Citrus Springs' 33,500 vacant lots remain to be developed.

Leven does not stand alone in recognizing Citrus Springs' present and future population growth. The Citrus County School District will soon build a new Citrus Springs elementary school and has proposed the building of a high school for the community in the next several years.

Knowing that one voice can be lost in the bureaucratic wilderness, Leven has

launched a petition campaign to make sure the needs and desires of Citrus Springs residents are heard and acted upon by postal officials. In this regard, a resolution of support by the Citrus County Board of Commissioners and the active involvement of U.S. Representative Ginny Brown-Waite would certainly amplify their voices.

Citrus Springs' present and future population growth

makes a strong case for relieving the overcrowded conditions at the Dunnellon post office with a new post office conveniently located to Citrus Springs residents.

As acknowledged by Postal Service spokesman Bill Tyler, the timing of Leven's request was perfect, since it arrived in time to be considered at a recent facilities committee meeting. Postal officials, therefore, are strongly encouraged to make a new post office located in Citrus Springs a top priority.

Relief is incredibly overdue.

THE ISSUE:

Post office for Citrus Springs.

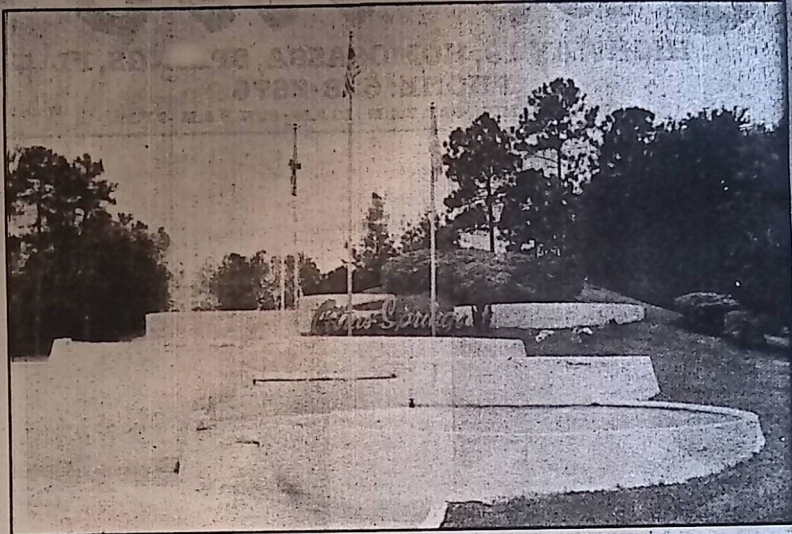
OUR OPINION:

It's about time.

PETITIONS FOR CITRUS SPRINGS POST OFFICE

- The Citrus Springs Library on Country Club Blvd.
- Capital City Bank next to Citrus Springs entrance.

The community has an 18-hole championship golf course, a clubhouse, a community center, public tennis and shuffleboard courts. It also has as numerous shopping centers, churches and park sites.



Visitors to Citrus Springs are greeted by this impressive fountain and landscaped knoll.

Matthew Beck/The Chronicle

Citrus Springs

Two decades of progress

The town of Citrus Springs, currently owned by the national Deltona Corporation, was first introduced as a community in Citrus County in the early 1970s.

The town is located between U.S. 41 and County Road 491 in Holder. Its development began in October 1969. The community opened on Jan. 4, 1970 and the first residents moved in on Aug. 1, 1970.

The community has progressed well over the past 20 years.

Currently at 15,000 acres, Citrus Springs now has a population of more than 6,000, with nearly 2,000 homes either completed or under construction.

The community has an 18-hole championship golf course, a clubhouse, a community center, public tennis and shuffleboard courts. It also has as numerous shopping centers, churches and park sites.

More facilities are planned for the future, in what Deltona refers to as coordinated growth.

"Deltona has arranged this community to be a self-sufficient development," Sales Manager Hector Guillen said. "Citrus Springs is designed to grow at its own pace."

Although Deltona is currently planning on selling the development, Guillen added that the buyers are expected to take over such plans for growth.

"Whoever buys the community, will determine how quickly those plans are met," he said.

According to Guillen, those plans include the development of 32,000 home sites, seven public schools, 23 churches, 30 park sites, numerous business offices and shopping center, and even, a hospital and medical complex.

In addition, a total of 652 acres have been set aside in the community by the Deltona Corporation to be used strictly for recreation facilities, including 30 ind-

vidual parks and playgrounds, 2 golf courses, and 2 tennis courts.

"When the plans are completed, this community should be able to accommodate up to 50,000 people without a problem," he said. "It will be a huge community, yet still be small enough to maintain the friendly atmosphere it has now."

Currently, however, Citrus Springs is still an impressive community.

Upon entering the development, visitors are welcomed by a beautiful fountain, and flower arrangement.

Citrus Springs covers 15,000 acres of mainly high, rolling countryside, thickly wooded with tall slender pines and oak. Elevation ranges from 30 to 180 feet.

Residents there have access to the many social and civic organizations available there, including the Citrus Springs Surveillance Unit, the Lions Club, the VFW, the Citrus Springs Homemakers, the Mens and Womens Golf Association, the Shuffleboard Club, the Garden Club, the newly formed Community Chorus, and the Citrus Springs Civic Association, which currently boasts a membership of more than 1,000 residents.

The Civic Association is the central element in the community, routinely organizing holiday parties and picnics, as well as several other programs, including the popular Ladies Night Out and various art classes.

The association is anchored to the Community Center, a beautiful 5,700 square foot facility, with verandas overlooking Lake Adriane, which flows into the Withlacoochee River.

In addition, the community recently welcomed the arrival of two new shopping centers, the Citrus Springs Plaza and the Pine Springs Plaza. More are planned in the near future, according to Deltona.

The Citrus Springs Fire Department is very active in

the community, maintaining a full staff of volunteers. The department has access to a complete station house, with the latest fire-fighting equipment.

Several churches have already been formed in the community, including the Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church of Citrus Springs, the Church of God, the First Baptist Church, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Hall, and the Community Congregational Christian Church of Citrus Springs.

Citrus Springs Elementary School is also located within the community. It currently has an enrollment of more than 500 students, ranging from Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Population: Currently at 15,000 acres, Citrus Springs now has a population of more than 6,000, with nearly 2,000 homes either completed or under construction.

Recreation: The community has an 18-hole championship golf course, a clubhouse, a community center, public tennis and shuffleboard courts. It also has as numerous shopping centers, churches and park sites.

Community life: Residents there have access to the many social and civic organizations available there, including the Citrus Springs Surveillance Unit, the Lions Club, the VFW, the Citrus Springs Homemakers, the Mens and Womens Golf Association, the Shuffleboard Club, the Garden Club, the newly formed Community Chorus, and the Citrus Springs Civic Association, which currently boasts a membership of more than 1,000 residents.

OUT & ABOUT

Entertainment/Dining Guide and Calendar Of Events



6/21/88 Efforts by many at Citrus Springs Library appreciated

Members of the Citrus Springs Memorial Library are most pleased with the many volunteers who have made the library such an important place in the community. During the past few months there have been many special displays, forums and sounding board meetings.

A very special thanks has gone to Hampton Dunn, eminent Floridian historian and well-known speaker who highlighted the celebrations of Citrus County's anniversary. He spoke to a large group in March giving an informative overview of the history of Florida and Citrus County.

In April Thelma Champeau shared her extensive knowledge and experience in the Hospice Program which is growing in Citrus County. She described the training of volunteers and their dedicated services offered to terminally ill in the area. Of great interest was her clarification of the means by which Hospice supports this unique method of caring for ill patients at home.

The Sounding Board in March was led by Mary Pannell whose leadership on the subject of Equal Justice started a very enthusiastic discussion involving all those present. The allotted time was not sufficient to continue so the topic was continued in April.

Howard Lawrence, past president of the Library Association, Inc. led a discussion on Civil Rights, Minority Rights, American Civil Liberties Union Cases, our Judicial System and Criminal Rights. The free exchange of ideas, facts and opinions were intellectually stimulating.

Vice president of the Citrus County Historical Society, Marsha Beasley, created a superb display of our county's history from 1888 to the present. Documents, photographs, artifacts, all presented an historic panorama. Citrus Springs was the first community to exhibit

the beautiful handmade quilt which depicted almost every aspect of Citrus County.

Dinkin's Service Store displayed hand tools used in this area at the turn of the century.

Alan Wise added his collection of Indian Artifacts which he personally excavated from "digs" along the Withlacoochee and Rainbow Rivers.

Exquisite needlepoint and embroidery created by Edna Miller were displayed during the month of April.

Also in April, Dorothy Wakefield and Greta Buck exhibited books celebrating the anniversary of Hans Christian Anderson. His books are part of the International Children's Books in the library. John Buelke also joined the group in April with a presentation of photographs of people far and near.

Marsha Craven and Joseph Merry presented travelogues. Marsha covered 100 years of Citrus County and the slide show was done in cooperation with the Citrus County Historical Society and the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce. Merry showed slides on his trips through Egypt, past and present.

John Eisenmann worked with the group seeking their "roots" during a genealogy program.

The Citrus Springs Day program was handled by Dorothy Wakefield, Gertrude Bates, Jean Decker and Rita McCarthy. They manned the exhibit at the recreation center.

The most recent display was by Magdalena Offen with her exquisite needlework. During June there will be a display of ceramic art presented by Havelon Deck.

All volunteers at the library are most appreciated.

Library hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Senior Hotline

Elaine Baker

The Hospice Program of Citrus County is a group to be very proud of. Representative Shirley Kersey was at the Senior Center this past week to relate the many things that they do.

Participants came to my office afterward to thank me for having had her. They knew that they didn't need help of this nature right now; but they also recognized that one does not know what the future holds. "It is good to know about this 24 hour care," I was told.

Our Hospice program is a mere two years old, but it has been able to serve several of Citrus County families. A trained volunteer will stay in the home if needed, but the patient, family and the personal physician must want the Hospice program, which aids those who have less than six months to live. A bereavement group takes over after the death to follow up on the well-being of the family for the following year.

She discussed the role that our mind plays in our affective response — our feelings — and how it affects attitudes.

Our local group is tied in with the national; this organization

attending alone.

Nick Savoy will play dance music at the piano on Wednesday, June 22, at noon; and Frank Ober, organist, will be joined by Norbert Missall at the keyboard on June 24 at noon. All for your dancing pleasure.

Pencil Sketching has been discontinued until September.

A happy engagement has just been announced at the Senior Center. Max Steinberg has given a diamond to Ann Norden, both of Beverly Hills. Both of them broadly smile with pleasure as they receive congratulations from their friends. This is a very special time, and they are wished well in their newly found happiness. A comfortable companion-

ship is a very important thing that adds a new dimension to life.

Activities for the week:

TUESDAY, JUNE 21: 8:30 a.m. Billiards-open playing; 9:30 a.m. Kool Katz rehearsal-Bonnie Merritt, instructor; noon Kitchen Band-Singing Jack Smith, leader; 1 p.m. Social Ballroom Dancing-Betty Sozio, Joe and Mary Alesi, leaders.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22: 8:30 a.m. Billiards-Bob Hovell, instructor; noon Nick Savoy, pianist; 1 p.m. Hymn Sing-a-long.

THURSDAY, JUNE 23: 8:30 a.m. Billiards-open playing; noon "Have A Happy" discussion-Bonnie Merritt, instructor; 1 p.m. Tai Chi-Deborah Grady, instructor; 1 p.m. Calligraphy-Bonnie Merritt, instructor; 2 p.m. Oil Painting-Bob Winans, instructor.

FRIDAY, JUNE 24: 8:30 a.m. Billiards-open playing; noon Frank Ober, organist, and Norbert Missall, pianist; 1 p.m. Line Dancing-Virginia Hansen, instructor; 2 p.m. Card Playing.

OUR PLACE

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WEDNESDAY 10/22/21
 6:22

Property appraiser thrives on challenges

Ron Schultz's passions range from roses to debate to marriage

By Earle Kimel
 Staff writer

Ron Schultz has 38 varieties of roses growing in the backyard of his Homosassa home. People told him roses can't grow in the sandy soil where he lived in Clearwater Beach. So Schultz took that as a challenge and planted several rose bushes into plastic drums with the proper soils, then planted the drums. He carried the hobby — and many of those original rose bushes — to Citrus County.

Schultz, who won his second term as Citrus County property appraiser last November, said he always tries to find novel solutions to problems.

That's one of the reasons Schultz stuck in his opinion when the Citrus County

PROFILE

Commission tried to raise the sales tax from 6 to 7 cents in an effort to fund water quality improvement projects.

The other reason? Schultz loves a debate; he refers to it as "the competition of ideas."

"The fun is causing the debate," Schultz told the Citrus County Chronicle — editorial board during an early April interview. "Because all of us are politicians anyway."

After a relatively heated discussion with board members, Schultz thanked them for the entertainment.

When Schultz contacted state Rep. Nancy Argenziano, R-

Dunnellon, about creating utility districts to manage water and sewer in Citrus County, Argenziano passed the information back to the county commission.

The commissioners wrote Schultz a letter asking him to bring his ideas to them rather than do an end-around by contacting Argenziano.

"Ron is one of the few individuals that I've met in life that I cannot anticipate his rationale and his thought process," Citrus County Commissioner Gary Bartell said. "Most people, if you understand what their motivation is, then at least you understand how to cope with it."

"But Ron's a difficult one to understand."

Not really. Schultz's life revolves around a thirst for challenge, a mischievous glee he gets from winning arguments and intense love of his wife.

Schultz proudly points to the fact that he was elected both as a Democratic property appraiser



Ron and Diann Schultz relax outside their Homosassa home.

er in Pinellas County in 1976 (he was defeated in the 1988 election) and as a Republican property appraiser in Citrus County in 1992.

Both elections were preceded by gubernatorial appointments

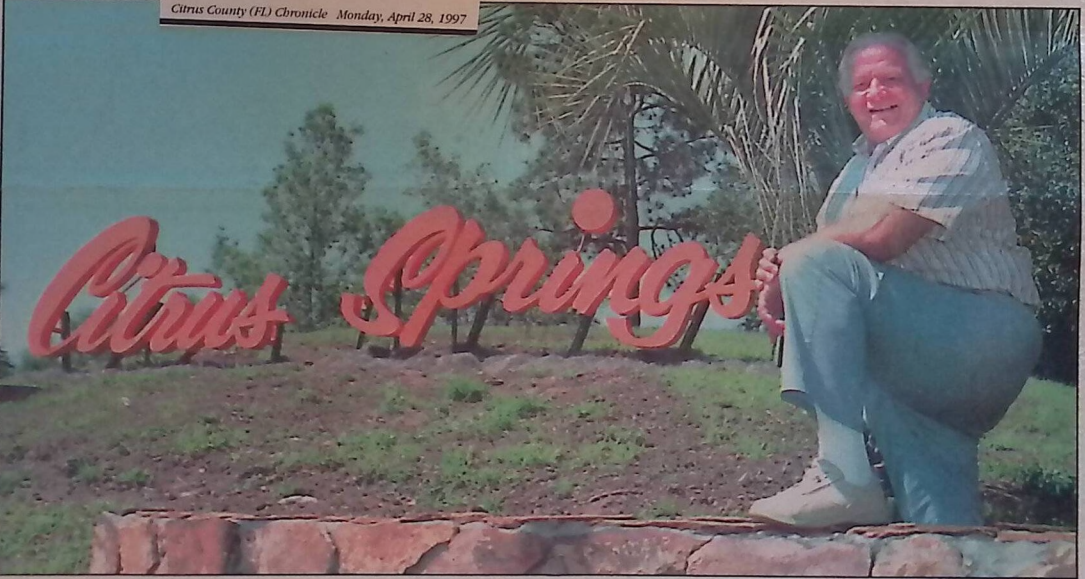
— Schultz thinks he's likely the only constitutional officer in the state to have gained office in that fashion.

At 62, Schultz has carved out a niche somewhere between Don

Please see **SCHULTZ**, Page 2A

Sittin' pretty

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Monday, April 28, 1997



Peter Monteleone heads the Citrus Springs special assessment board and is the community's No. 1 cheerleader.

Land owners fuel Citrus Springs improvements

By Greg Erbstoesser
 Staff writer

Check it out in Citrus Springs. Repaved streets, new street lights, mowed street shoulders and new fire hydrants.

That's not all. This week the community will break ground on new restrooms at the Wesley Jones Park. Future plans include a long-awaited new community center to serve Citrus Springs residents.

All thanks to a unique local funding source that is fueling Citrus Springs' much-needed community face-lift.

Just four years ago, residents created their own municipal services benefit unit, or MSBU, a special taxing district authorized by the county commission that provides the necessary dollars to pay for the community improvements.

Peter Monteleone, the driving force behind the MSBU project, said people both in and outside Citrus Springs are starting to take notice.

"You already can see the difference," he said.

Monteleone is chairman of a special nine-member citizens advisory board and head cheerleader for the creation of the MSBU.

The special taxing district is a formal, legal mechanism that assesses property in the community to finance a long list of community public works projects identified by local residents.

The assessment is not a property tax that is based on the value of land, but rather a flat annual fee.

Vacant lots are assessed \$20, while improved lots — those with homes — are billed \$25. There also are assessments for commercial properties and golf courses

and other classifications.

The special assessment has generated nearly \$1.6 million — about \$600,000 a year — for the community,

with a citizens panel overseeing the work, hand-in-hand with the county that administers the program. Most of that is used for road repaving.

The creation of the Citrus Springs MSBU came after the subdivision's developer, Deltona Corp., slowly began to withdraw from its sprawling northern Citrus County community.

That left the responsibility for many of the public works projects for the Citrus Springs residents to address.

HELP CELEBRATE

Citrus Springs residents will break ground on a new restrooms project at Wesley Jones Park at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday. The project is funded with money from Citrus Springs' MSBU.

Advisory board member Nick Benvenuto said the community is much better off with the MSBU.

"We're achieving most of our targets. Everything's been moving along," said Benvenuto, an eight-year resident of the community and charter advisory board member.

"It's a different community altogether. We're very fortunate," he added.

The county has other special taxing districts, but many are simply focused on street improvements or street lights. In Citrus Springs residents pick what they

Please see **OWNERS**, Page 2A



Golf Awards Presented At Citrus Springs Country Club
 Golf awards are distributed by pros Mike Mollis, left, and Jack Beaulieu, right, to Fred Jappinga, Hugh Bridenthral and Herb Weaver.

10/15/73

Awards Given At Citrus Springs

Times Correspondent

CITRUS SPRINGS — The first awards night of the Citrus Springs Golf and Country Club's Men's Association went off smoothly Saturday night, Oct. 6, and recognized:

- ✓ Fred Jappinga as the club's first champion.
- ✓ Hugh Bridenthral as the

second flight winner. He also finished in a tie with Elmer Miller for the board of governors cup.

✓ Hebron "Herb" Weaver as the third flight winner. He also received the Mike Mollis trophy for low net.

✓ Dick Connolly as the low gross winner of Mike Mollis

trophy.

The presentations were made by the club's pro, Mike Mollis, and his assistant, Jack Beaulieu, at a dinner at the club. A second awards night is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 22, director Jappinga told the 45 persons present and the annual awards night

will then be held in that month.

Harry Grossman is president of the club. Directors are Jappinga, Connolly, Joe Morrison and Sam Lynn, whose 36th year of marriage to wife Isabelle was noted with a large cake at the party.

CITRUS SPRINGS
 COUNTY
 SENIORS
 That's all in

Now here's one club that's all write



Dave Siger/The Chronicle

Though the club mostly consists of seniors, anyone is welcomed who would like to learn the art of calligraphy

By Paulette Ritchie
Chronicle writer



ON THE SECOND Thursday of each month, a group of people get together to compare handwriting. That might not sound like a fun meeting, but this is not ordinary handwriting.

These folks are members of Creative Calligraphers of Citrus Springs, involved in continuing the nearly lost art of graceful script. Club President Robert Lundy said the group was founded to make people more aware of good handwriting, explore the art of calligraphy and provide opportunities to display calligraphy.

The club evolved from classes given at Central Florida Community College by calligraphy master Ted Mahall.

June Towner, a student of Mahall, helped start the club when the demand grew.

Hilda Weaver was another founding member.

Though the club began with people who were in the class, others joined later for various reasons.

"I started my calligraphy in England," noted new member Helen Sawyer, who said she joined to begin writing again. "I didn't continue very long because I got married and came to America.

Eileen Abele didn't really have a particular reason for joining the group. She just wanted to. "I just started doing calligraphy, I'm brand new.

"I've watched people doing calligraphy for a long time," Stewart Schodeer said. "I've spent my whole life in graphic arts. I appreciate calligraphy."

A monthly goal is for each member to complete a calligra-



FOR INFORMATION, CALL 1-904-489-1293

phy project — a card, epigram, poem... they then bring to a meeting. At that time they share common problems and critique each other's work.

They also help each other find solutions to particular problems.

The history of calligraphy is another meeting topic since there are many different styles of this type of elegant writing. "There are hundreds, really," Lundy said. "They all have their own little historical background."

Lundy said different types include the Gothic style of Block Letters; an italic hand called Chancery Cursive; an ancient hand called Uncial; and roundhand, which is Copperplate.

Above, calligraphy club members work on the script alphabet. Members, from left, June Towner, Bessie Kaminski, Eileen Abele and Joan Lyne have all had lessons with the teacher and mentor Ted Mahall. At left, greeting and Christmas cards were made by Bob Lundy, Janet Smith, Joan Lyle. The club has also done certificates for Hospice of Citrus County and the Presbyterian Women's Club of Ocala.

There also is a Japanese style of painting members learn called sumi-e. It is useful for decorating holiday and birthday cards club members create.

Members keep their project in the club library for exhibits and shows.

The group has displayed their works at the Citrus Springs and Dunnellon libraries.

They also do special projects for other organizations.

Volunteers with Hospice of Citrus County were presented with 150 certificates done in calligraphy.

And club members lettered certificates of appreciation for the Presbyterian Women's Club of Ocala.

Members can make donations to the club and that money, along with proceeds from sales, is used occasionally to buy supplies.

However, most of the money is donated to the Citrus Spring Library, where meetings are held. They also buy books and videos about calligraphy and donate them to the library.

The 15-member club is in its third year. For anyone interested in getting started in calligraphy, here are some tips from members:

It helps to have regular and felt-tip calligraphy pens. Felt-tips are useful for practice.

Calligraphy paper is available with guidelines to help beginners practice different slants. A ruler and triangle are other tools.

Though the club mostly consists of seniors, anyone is welcomed who would like to learn the fine art of calligraphy or improve on what they can already do.

For information, call 1-904-489-1293.

Citrus Springs gets new developer

*Sky Development plans
to hit the ground running*

JIM HUNTER

jhunter@chronicleonline.com

Chronicle

5-9-05

As the real estate and building markets have heated up in Citrus County, a new developer has come to Citrus Springs.

Officials from Sky Development Group of Miami said the company has purchased about 1,000 lots from Citony in the sprawling, mostly undeveloped community in north central Citrus.

The group says it will be joint-venturing with some Citrus builders to construct homes, and corporate officer Sergey Bensky said those negotiations are now going on. Victor Wolf, president of Investor Relations, said the partners soon will be announced.

Sky will begin selling new homes immediately, he said. The homes are expected to be in the \$160,000 to \$250,000 range. Wolf said the company expects to sell 100 homes in the first year.

The company, which is already selling lots

Please see **LOTS/Page 7A**

LOTS

Continued from Page 1A

from the former Citony office near the Citrus Springs entrance by the fountain off U.S. 41, expects to have models up within six months.

Sky will sell lots or package deals of lots and homes to be build on them, or it will build on lots already owned, Wolf said. The company already is marketing on the Internet with an extensive site at sky-groupfl.com. Prices for standard lots are listed on the site at \$36,900 and \$40,900. Prices are expected to go up \$1,000 in June, according to the site. A chart on the site predicts the June 2006 lot price to be \$50,000.

Wolf said 784 of the lots are in Section 2, where there is lit-

tle infrastructure. Roads and water and sewer lines will have to be constructed in that section, he said.

The company also will be doing multi-family homes and some commercial development. It owns 20 acres of commercial property off Deltona Boulevard, but the commercial development will come later, when there are more residents, Wolf said. He expected that to consist of shopping plazas, offices and a grocery store.

The multi-family properties are off Deltona, too, and will consist of duplexes and triplexes, Wolf said, and will be in the second phase of the company's plan.

The first phase will be single-family homes. Wolf said his company believes Citrus Springs has a big potential, and it expects to be involved in Citrus Springs for at least the

next seven to 10 years.

"Some day, it will be a very beautiful city," he said. Wolf said that just as Palm Coast went from nothing to a beautiful city, so would Citrus Springs some day, except it would be done "even better" in Citrus

Springs.

"We are a fast-growing, dynamic company with good management," Wolf said. The company had been successful in Palm Coast, he said, and currently had a 160-luxury townhouse project in St. Augustine.

The company has 20 sales representatives and 150 employees.

As to what made them pick Citrus Springs, Wolf said, "We did our homework. We saw the indications of the market boom." He said Citrus Springs

had the biggest inventory of lots available in Citrus County.

Wolf said the company will have a grand opening for the sales office headquarters on North Citrus Springs Boulevard in two or three weeks.

Changing flags

Thursday, September 7, 1995 *Citrus County (FL) Chronicle*



Anne Smith/The Chronicle
Citrus Springs residents assembled at the Citrus Springs Fountain entrance to see the raising of a new flag over the fountains. No longer a Deltona Corp. development, the community is now independent. Mark Gibbs, vice chairman of the board, stands left as he and Nick Benvenuto raise the newly designed municipal services benefit unit banner over the fountain.

New street signs set for Citrus Springs

By TOM ANDERSON
Staff Writer

Finding your way around Citrus Springs and Pine Ridge will soon be easier.

With help from Deltona Corporation, the county's Department of Technical Services will soon be placing new street signs in those areas.

"The work will be done in phases with the developed areas being worked on first," said Technical Services Director Jim Pinkerton.

The problem with the street signs began when the developer's schemes for the road naming system broke down at one point and the county was asked to step in back in 1980.

At that time, said Avis Craig-Ayotte at the Department of Development Services, the county started erecting its own signs in areas where the county was responsible for the roads.

But Deltona would come along and erect their signs once a few homes along a road had been built.

As a result, it was possible for one road to carry two different names along its stretch.

"It has been very confusing," said Martin Grimwood, a member of the Citrus Springs Civic Association.

"There are between 90 to 100 signs that are not up," he said "and the other signs have the old street names on them."

This has been especially confusing for emergency vehicles called into the area which have had difficulties finding their way around, said Grimwood.

The civic association along with Deltona officials have been meeting with county officials in recent weeks to resolve the problem.

Pinkerton said he was quickly made aware of the problem when he first came to the county as head of the Technical Services Department.

"The meeting with the civic association was one of the first meetings I went to when I first began with the department," said Pinkerton.

Since first hearing of the problem, Pinkerton has promoted a joint effort with Deltona Corporation to solve it.

Deltona will deliver to the county 1,100 sign blades and the county will then begin to manufacture and erect 260 signs in the first phase of the operation.

Work on the first phase should be completed by May 1, said Pinkerton.

After the initial phase signs will be erected at a rate of 200 a month, Pinkerton said.

Residents in Pine Ridge and Citrus Springs can look for county crews in their areas as the sign project begins in the field sometime during the last

Citrus Springs celebrates freedom

By Earle Kimel
Staff writer

Circle Sept. 6, 1995 as Independence Day for the people of Citrus Springs.

Wednesday, as a flag was raised honoring the community's municipal services benefit unit, or MSBU, Peter Monteleone said, "Our self-help philosophy will make Citrus Springs a model for other communities to follow."

Self-help is what an MSBU is all about. Sensing a few years ago that the developer, Deltona Corp., was in financial straits, a group of Citrus Springs residents asked the county to create a special financing district.

The benefit unit has a budget of about \$600,000 a year to pay for common service areas such as roads, the fountain entrance way, and street lights that the county does not. That money comes from an annual \$25 assessment of each lot owner in Citrus Springs.

Monteleone, chairman of the advisory council for the Citrus Springs MSBU, welcomed about 75 people in a brief ceremony at the fountain at the main entrance at U.S. 41 and North Citrus Springs Boulevard. Guests included county commissioners and representatives from Southern States Utilities.

Following the ceremony, refreshments were served by the Edward W. Penno VFW Post 4864.

"Today means the growth of our community," Monteleone said.

There are also plans to build a new community center.

Citrus County Commission Chairwoman Vicki Phillips gave all the credit to the Citrus Springs residents.

"We couldn't have done this without your help," Phillips said. "You deserve the applause."

The old Deltona Corp. flag, which flew alongside a U.S. flag and a state flag, came down and the MSBU flag was raised by Mark Gibbs and Nicholas Benvenuto.

"This is our separation from Deltona into an independent community," Gibbs said. "We are a community that is, hopefully with the county's help, self-servicing."

The flag features a logo designed by Ben Johnson, who won a design contest last fall. It depicts the fountain at the entrance, the name "Citrus Springs" and the slogan "A MSBU community."

Public Works Director Gary Kuhl, who

MSBU

continued from Page 1A

worked closely with the benefit unit's advisory board, said the beauty of the program is that while the county has supplied staff support the people have driven the program.

"We worked our tails off," said Hal Sistrano, an advisory council member.

The Citrus Springs program is the

first, but other communities — specifically Beverly Hills and Sugarmill Woods — have inquired about setting one up, too.

"We've had a lot of questions from other communities," Kuhl said. "I think it's a good concept."

In Citrus Springs, residents hope the first benefit unit will be the longest-running.

"The MSBU is something that will hopefully last forever," said Milton Nerenberg. "So forever, the people of Citrus Springs can do their own work."

"I think we got an excellent price and were at the right place at the right time," Cole said.

As a non-profit institution, the Key Center will be exempt from paying taxes on the property.

"We feel like it's a great opportunity. We're thrilled to death," Cole said of the purchase and plans to move the present thrift store.

"We're just trading convenience and size for location," he said, noting that business was failing at the present site several blocks west of the busy four-lane route.

Cole pointed to estimates of a 62,000

Christmas, but hurdles include permits for the elevator, meeting with city building and zoning officials and arranging site work with a contractor.

Seemingly caught by surprise over the purchase was Cabot McBride, Cole's assistant at the center. McBride said he just learned of the transaction Wednesday and had no comment.

The only Key Center board member available for comment Wednesday was Dan Armstrong, who said Cole has not briefed him on the details of the transaction.

"But I think it's a marvelous idea," he said.

Citrus Springs is full of history

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the Citrus Springs Government Complex. Its County Court House, (built specifically to sit six judges) and three-time national winner of the coveted Frank Lloyd Wright Architectural Design Award, has become the model for most county courthouses. Initially there had been some resistance, but the move of the county seat here, proved an excellent option.

In the past 20 years, Citrus Springs has grown to become the county's largest community having more than 70,000 residents. With the addition of 50,000 inhabitants in Beverly Hills, Citrus Hills, Pine Ridge, Quail Run, Oak Ridge and other nearby communities, the central ridge region is the most populated area.

Back in the '90s, there were some wild, whimsical, speculations, to build an elaborate urban complex in Inverness, fueled by the need for judiciary space. Its game plan failed, when it became evident it was nothing more, than a simplistic, unworkable, political attempt to keep county government from relocating. Feasibility studies later proved this grandiose project was doomed as it lacked adequate funding.

It was the foresight of those visionary county commissioners, who planned the long time future of the county, that made the new location in Citrus Springs an ideal utopian reality. The fear that Inverness would be abandoned,

proved to be invalid.

This sleepy-eyed, bucolic village, became an important historical place to visit. Its century old courthouse, quaint retail shops, fine dining establishments are cited in every major travel magazine and triple AAA tour books, as the most provincial, countrified place to spend a pleasant day. Old obsolete buildings were razed making room for pleasant vest pocket parks to be constructed in their place.

The concept of satellite county offices in Crystal River was expanded to Beverly Hills and Inverness to conveniently meet resident needs. High tech communication and information systems virtually eliminated or minimized the need of constructing archaic buildings as was done in the 20th century. Time had come to move on, into the next millennium, for the betterment of all its citizenry.

"Wake up, she urged, we're going to be late!" I rubbed my eyes and asked, "What time is it? I think I was dreaming, or was I?"

Peter Monteleone
Citrus Springs

Wednesday, January 21, 1998 Citrus County (FL) Chronicle