

And justice for Four

Led by Gov. DeSantis, the state Clemency Board unanimously votes to pardon the Groveland Four.

BY SAMANTHA J. GROSS
Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

TALLAHASSEE — After nearly 70 years, all members of the Groveland Four — four young black men falsely accused of raping a white woman in Lake County — were pardoned by a unanimous vote Friday.

Florida's new Cabinet and Gov. Ron DeSantis met for the first time as the state Clemency Board on Friday, where they heard from family members of

the men who were either imprisoned, tortured or murdered by mobs and a racist sheriff. The Groveland Four matter was only supposed to be up for discussion and families were not expecting to hear a vote Friday. But at the very end of the meeting, DeSantis called for a vote.

"I believe in the principles of the Constitution. I believe in getting a fair shake," he said. "I don't think there's any way that you can look at this case and see jus-

stice was carried out."

Some call the treatment of the four men one of the worst episodes of racism in American history. In 1949, a 17-year-old white woman and her estranged husband told police that she'd been kidnapped and raped by four black men after the couple's car broke down outside Groveland in Lake County. Sheriff Willis McCall arrested the four men, even though Charles Greenlee, » See CLEMENCY, 8A



Courtesy of the Florida Memory Project
Lake County Sheriff Willis McCall, far left, and an unidentified man stand next to three of the four falsely accused of rape: Walter Irvin, Samuel Shepherd and Charles Greenlee.

STATE, FEDERAL INSPECTORS VISIT ALL CHILDREN'S

Inspectors arrived at Johns Hopkins All Children's Heart Institute following sharp calls for an investigation into problems in the hospital's heart surgery unit. The scope of the inspection is unclear. Lawmakers have criticized regulators for not investigating reports of problems sooner. **Local, 1B**

Stand your ground defense not likely

Clearwater parking lot shooter Michael Drejka may not opt for stand your ground, but argue self-defense before a jury, his lawyers say. **Local, 1B**

Tampa Bay not as affordable

Sure, having no state income tax helps, but the bay area is still losing ground to our peer cities. **Graham Brink column, 1B**

Trump: No plan to declare emergency

President Donald Trump on Friday threw cold water on the idea of immediately declaring a national emergency to build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border, reversing days of signals that he might soon declare the emergency amid a protracted standoff with Democrats over a partial shutdown of the federal government. **Nation, 2A**

Stock market still on a calm streak

U.S. stock indexes nestled a hair lower on Friday after the falling price of oil weighed on energy companies, but the S&P 500 nevertheless closed out its third straight winning week following a brutal stretch in December. **Business, 4B**

DeSantis replaces Broward sheriff

Gov. Ron DeSantis suspends Scott Israel, who has been under fire since the Parkland school massacre, and names Broward's first African-American sheriff. Israel, vows a fight. **Local, 1B**

Dining out? Bring a bigger wallet

Full-service restaurants, facing higher labor and food costs, raised prices the most in more than seven years in December, a Labor Department report released Friday shows. **Business, 4B**



Photos by MONICA HERNDON | Times

A cast-off cigarette in the sand at Treasure Island is a target of the bill by State Sen. Joe Gruters, R-Sarasota.

NO SMOKE, NO BUTTS

A ban at beaches is more about the wildlife than the smoke.

BY CRAIG PITTMAN
Times Staff Writer

Smokers in Florida can't light up in restaurants, stores, offices or government buildings. Now one Florida state senator wants to add another location to the no-smoking list: the state's beaches.

Now that indoor smoking bans have largely succeeded, anti-tobacco forces are turning their attention to outdoor spots such as beaches and parks. But their argument is no longer focused

on the health effects of second-hand smoke. Instead, measures like SB 218 by Sen. Jon Gruters, R-Sarasota, are about eliminating litter — getting butts off beaches.

"To me this is like an easy thing to support," said Stephen Leatherman, a Florida International University coastal geology professor known as "Dr. Beach" for his annual ranking of the world's best beaches. "Cigarette butts are the No. 1 type of litter on beaches, by volume. They are disgusting."

They're also hard to get rid of. Beach sweepers that clean » See BAN, 3A



DeSantis: No relief funds for wall

The new governor would not accept Trump taking away hurricane money from Florida.

BY ALEX DAUGHERTY
Miami Herald

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's latest proposal to pay for a border wall by declaring a national emergency and taking money from disaster-relief projects — potentially including funds doled out after Hurricanes Irma and Maria — could include more than \$800 million earmarked for Florida last year.

Several media outlets reported Thursday that Trump was eyeing a portion of \$13.9 billion given to

the Army Corps of Engineers by Congress for disaster relief. That amount includes an \$802 million outlay to Florida, the largest chunk of which was \$514 million to repair the Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee.

On Friday, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis said that it would not be acceptable for Trump to take funds from hurricane relief to pay for a border wall.

"We have people counting on that," DeSantis told reporters in Tallahassee. "If they back- » See WALL, 4A



Associated Press
Gov. Ron DeSantis, seated next President Trump, is a supporter of Trump but says Floridians are counting on disaster relief.

Gov.'s plane forced to land

Well, it's not *his* plane, because Rick Scott sold the fleet. No one was injured.

BY LAWRENCE MOWER
Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

LARGO — A mechanical problem forced a state airplane carrying Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to make an emergency landing in Largo on Friday afternoon.

DeSantis, who was on the way to Fort Lauderdale for a news conference, and everyone else on board, were unharmed.

Dave Vasquez, DeSantis' spokesman, could not say what went wrong with the plane, which landed at St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport. The plane is operated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which referred questions to the governor's office.

Attorney General Ashley Moody, DeSantis' chief of staff, Shane Strum, and three members of his executive staff were on board.

The emergency stop was the latest reminder that DeSantis, who took office on Tuesday, is living with his predecessor's legacy.

Former Gov. Rick Scott sold the state's fleet of airplanes shortly after taking office in 2010, which has left DeSantis to criss-cross the state this week using a Beechcraft King Air seized by state police in a drug raid.

But there appears to be interest in bringing back the state fleet, or some sort of alternative. Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried expressed interest Friday, and House Speaker Jose Oliva hinted that he would support it.

"Today's incident, combined with the sheer size of our state, starkly reminds us that we need a safe and reliable means of transportation for the chief executive," Oliva said in a statement. "The House stands ready to work with the governor's office to ensure such transportation is obtained."

Details on the small, twin-turbo prop plane DeSantis has been using have been hard to come by. An FDLE spokeswoman could not, or would not, say this week where or when the King Air was seized, or what state police have been using it for.

But records show the FDLE has spent about \$600,000 » See PLANE, 4A

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Ready to play?

Itching for something fun to do but don't know what's going on? We have a rundown of events: tampabay.com/things-to-do.

TODAY'S WEATHER

Mostly sunny

8 a.m. 63° Noon 74° 4 p.m. 74° 8 p.m. 70°
0% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports

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Astrology	F	Crosswords	11A, F
Business	4B	Editorials	10A
Classified	F	Lottery	2A
Comics	3F	Puzzles	F

Vol. 135 No. 172
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