

# LOCAL & STATE

## New doctor-led Medicaid plan available in area

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PANAMA CITY — A new doctor-led Medicaid health plan available in Bay County could be particularly helpful for those impacted by Hurricane Michael.

The Pensacola-based Lighthouse Health Plan launched last month for people on Medicaid in the Panhandle. Unlike typical commercial options, Lighthouse is governed by doctors in the areas being served, allowing for more

personalized patient care, organizers say. And plan services like transportation and lists of open clinics could further help patients impacted by the hurricane, they say.

“Instead of us telling doctors what to do, we’re an extension of their practices,” said Christie Spencer, CEO of Lighthouse.

Nearly two years in the making, Lighthouse is a for-profit, community-based Medicaid insurance plan for people in Bay, but also Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf,

Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington counties.

According to Lighthouse approximately 200,000 people in the Panhandle qualify for Medicaid, the joint state-and-federal health care program mainly for children, the disabled and the elderly. Of those, 70 percent are at-risk children, Lighthouse states.

Spencer said other than Lighthouse, Medicaid recipients in the area have access to just three other commercial health plan options. Unlike

those, Lighthouse is governed by local doctors, meaning it can be more attuned to the needs of patients, including those impacted by the hurricane, Spencer said.

“We are very well aware of the devastation there,” she said. “Being local in the community and being very much a part of the community, I think that is what sets us apart.”

Spencer noted that Lighthouse had already raised \$10,000 during the fall to help with hurricane relief, buying food for those in need.

As for services, Lighthouse keeps a database will all local

clinics and agencies — particularly useful for hurricane-hit areas where it’s unclear which places are open and which have been relocated, Spencer said.

“People don’t know what services are available,” she said.

Dr. Dan Sontheimer, a family physician and chief medical officer for Lighthouse, said having doctors in control means plan changes can be made more quickly to meet local patients’ needs.

“We involve local physicians in the community

See MEDICAID, B2

## Pier Park Mardi Gras parade draws thousands



A woman with plenty of beaded necklaces was one of the thousands to attend the Mardi Gras parade at Pier Park on Saturday.

[JOSHUA BOUCHER/THE NEWS HERALD]

By Genevieve Smith  
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PANAMA CITY BEACH — As usual, Pier Park’s annual Mardi Gras parade on Saturday brought out thousands of visitors, occupying every parking spot available in the facility, and more, for the spectacle.

“This year’s parade was

a lot longer than I remembered, and they were handing out tons of beads. People were really nice,” said Terry Wirt, a Nashville resident visiting his mother, Caroline Youngberg, a local, with his wife Allison.

The parade, hosted by The Crew of Dominique Youx, brought music, food and floats, with pirates and mermaids tossing plenty of

beads, candy and even toys for the kids. Then, as the sun dropped below the skyline, a fireworks show took place.

“It was really cool seeing the kids get into it,” said Allison Wirt. “They were very excited about the costumes.”

Many of the floats were recognizable from last week’s Mardi Gras celebration in St. Andrews.

Youngberg, who goes to Mardi Gras parades around the county annually and said this year was one of the best she’s seen, and said she was impressed by how much the annual parade has grown.

“It seems like more floats and we had a great turnout. There were a lot of families and they catered to the kids

See PARADE, B2

## How many international flights has the airport had?



Travelers wait to go through security at Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport on Tuesday.

By Collin Breaux  
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WEST BAY — Despite its name, the Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport has had no international flights.

News Herald reader H.D. Covert asked about the number of international flights through the Bay Asked, We Answered series: “As we approach the airport’s ninth anniversary, can you report the average number of international inbound and outbound flights per month?”

Covert said the main reason they asked is “that I stumbled across something online that reminded me of the ‘name that airport’ hoopla years ago and I wondered how much international traffic we actually get.”

According to Parker McClellan, executive director for the airport, there have been “no scheduled international flights.”

“The Airport has had tremendous growth over the last nearly nine years with the total passengers on more

See AIRPORT, B2

## Unsolved Bay County: The unsolved homicide of Lois Bailey Johnson

By Eryn Dion  
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PANAMA CITY — The call that cracked over the radio early on Jan. 20 was relatively routine. A “Signal 2P” or, in layman’s terms, a drunk pedestrian.

In downtown Panama City in 1986, it wasn’t at all uncommon for police to be called to investigate people passing out in the road. At 1:20 a.m. on a Monday morning, with La Royale Lounge and other bars just blocks

away, there was no reason to assume something more sinister was afoot.

That is, until responding officer Ricky Carleton saw the blood.

Lois Bailey Johnson, 57, had been shot in the back once with a small caliber handgun. She was found on the ground next to her car on Fifth Street in front of the post office. Her keys were still in the car door.

Panama City News Herald Editor Mike Cazalas, who at the time was the paper’s

See UNSOLVED, B2



The first Panama City News Herald article on the murder of Lois Bailey Johnson, 57, killed in downtown Panama City in 1986. Her death has been a mystery ever since.



NEW SPACE CAPSULE DEBUTED | B6

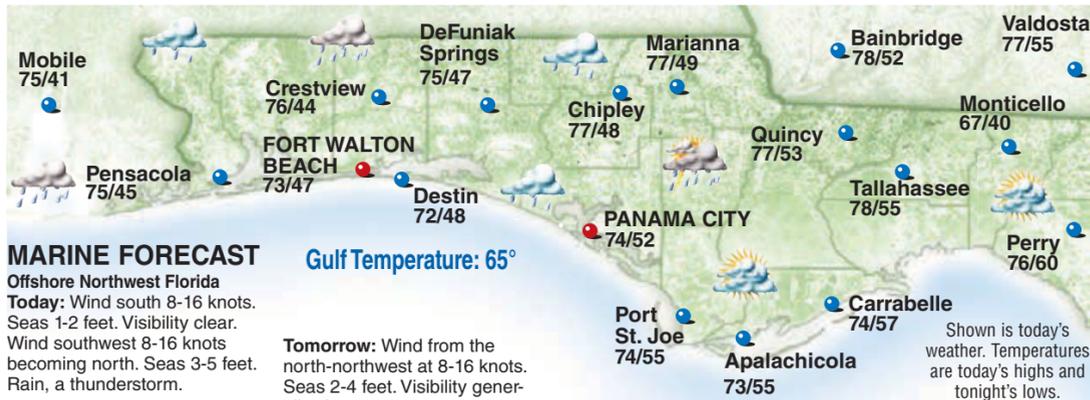
## SPACEX TEST FLIGHT

SpaceX moves closer to human flight with new capsule

## FIVE DAY FORECAST FOR NORTHWEST FLORIDA

TODAY	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Partly sunny and breezy, a thunderstorm in spots this afternoon. Winds south-southwest 10-20 mph.	Cooler with partial sunshine	Partly sunny and cool	Sunny to partly cloudy and cool	Partly sunny
<b>High 74°</b> <b>Low 52°</b>	<b>62°/43°</b>	<b>59°/36°</b>	<b>56°/40°</b>	<b>62°/52°</b>
6 a.m. Noon 6 p.m. 65° 72° 71° Winds: SSW 10-20 mph	Winds: N 8-16 mph	Winds: NNW 8-16 mph	Winds: NNE 8-16 mph	Winds: ESE 6-12 mph

### REGIONAL WEATHER



### MARINE FORECAST

**Offshore Northwest Florida**  
**Today:** Wind south 8-16 knots. Seas 1-2 feet. Visibility clear.  
**Wind southwest 8-16 knots becoming north. Seas 3-5 feet. Rain, a thunderstorm.**

**Gulf Temperature: 65°**

**Tomorrow:** Wind from the north-northwest at 8-16 knots. Seas 2-4 feet. Visibility generally clear.

### ALMANAC

through 4 p.m. yesterday  
**Panama City Temperatures**  
 High/low..... 75°/65°  
 Last year's high/low..... 76°/57°  
 Normal high/low..... 69°/49°  
 Record high..... 79° (2001)  
 Record low..... 27° (1986)  
**Precipitation**  
 24 hours through 4 p.m. ... 1.06"  
 Month to date ..... 1.37"  
 Normal month to date ..... 0.38"  
 Year to date ..... 11.44"  
 Normal year to date ..... 10.38"  
 Average humidity ..... 92%

### Fort Walton Beach

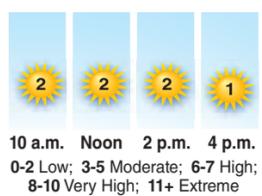
**Temperatures**  
 High/low..... 74°/67°  
 Last year's high/low..... 77°/59°  
 Normal high/low..... 66°/50°  
 Record high..... 80° (1955)  
 Record low..... 21° (1986)  
**Precipitation**  
 24 hours through 4 p.m. ... 0.10"  
 Month to date ..... 0.56"  
 Normal month to date ..... 0.36"  
 Year to date ..... 5.58"  
 Normal year to date ..... 10.73"  
 Average humidity ..... 89%

### BEACH FLAG WARNINGS



### UV INDEX TODAY

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.



### MOON PHASES



### SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today ..... 6:07 a.m.  
 Sunset tonight ..... 5:42 p.m.  
 Moonrise today ..... 4:27 a.m.  
 Moonset today ..... 3:15 p.m.

### TIDES

Location	High	Low
Apalachicola	12:27a	8:54a
Destin	8:27p	6:24a
West Pass	12:00a	8:27a
Panama City	8:09p	5:45a
Port St. Joe	7:22p	6:15a
Okaloosa Island	7:00p	5:30a
Milton	10:40p	8:45a
East Bay	9:44p	8:15a
Pensacola	9:00p	6:58a
Fishing Bend	9:41p	7:49a
The Narrows	10:37p	9:49a
Carrabelle	2:22p	6:41a

### RIVER LEVELS

River	Level	Flood Stage
Apalachicola	16.18 ft.	15 ft.
Blountstown	7.50 ft.	12 ft.
Choctawhatchee	47.20 ft.	42 ft.
Caryville	11.03 ft.	17 ft.
Alabama	41.61 ft.	29 ft.

**Weather(W):** s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2019



### FLORIDA CITIES

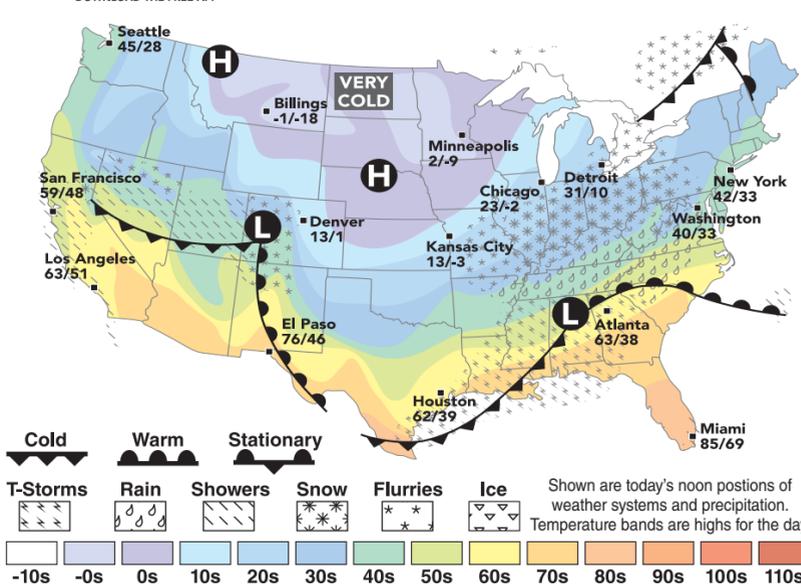
City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W
Clearwater	79/70/pc	76/61/pc	Lakeland	85/68/pc	82/60/pc
Daytona Beach	84/67/pc	77/55/c	Melbourne	85/67/pc	84/63/pc
Ft. Lauderdale	85/70/s	87/69/pc	Miami	85/69/s	87/69/s
Gainesville	83/67/c	73/48/sh	Naples	84/70/s	84/67/pc
Jacksonville	78/63/c	67/47/pc	Ocala	83/66/c	75/49/sh
Jupiter	84/67/pc	86/67/pc	Okeechobee	85/64/pc	85/64/pc
Key Largo	82/73/s	82/71/s	Orlando	86/67/pc	82/61/c
Key West	83/74/s	84/75/s	Palm Beach	82/69/s	85/69/s
Lake City	79/63/c	68/47/pc	Tampa	81/69/pc	78/60/pc

### WORLD CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W
Baghdad	70/48/s	70/48/pc	Mexico City	83/53/pc	82/54/pc
Berlin	53/44/r	59/39/sh	Montreal	32/18/pc	27/6/c
Bermuda	70/66/pc	71/67/pc	Nassau	83/70/pc	85/70/pc
Hong Kong	74/66/sh	74/69/s	Paris	60/45/c	52/41/c
Jerusalem	55/40/pc	53/40/pc	Rome	63/43/s	61/49/pc
Kabul	43/26/pc	47/24/s	Tokyo	50/48/r	52/46/r
London	55/41/r	51/41/sh	Toronto	28/7/sf	20/6/c
Madrid	70/44/pc	62/42/sh	Vancouver	40/24/s	41/25/s

### NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W
Albuquerque	63/38/pc	61/37/pc	Memphis	41/20/r	34/20/pc
Anchorage	32/17/c	29/19/pc	Milwaukee	18/-3/c	11/4/s
Atlanta	63/38/r	51/31/pc	Minneapolis	2/-9/pc	7/-1/c
Baltimore	39/30/sn	40/18/pc	Nashville	43/23/r	37/19/pc
Birmingham	57/33/r	46/26/pc	New Orleans	77/45/r	56/41/c
Boston	41/34/c	42/19/sn	New York City	42/33/sn	40/20/pc
Charlotte	60/40/r	54/34/pc	Oklahoma City	29/11/c	25/17/pc
Chicago	23/-2/c	13/6/s	Philadelphia	43/32/sn	40/19/pc
Cincinnati	35/17/sn	28/12/s	Phoenix	74/52/s	73/52/s
Cleveland	31/16/sn	24/11/sf	Pittsburgh	33/19/sn	27/10/pc
Dallas	42/24/r	36/23/pc	St. Louis	29/6/sn	22/11/s
Denver	13/1/sn	20/4/pc	Salt Lake City	43/30/r	45/30/pc
Detroit	31/10/sf	21/9/pc	San Antonio	58/32/c	44/29/c
Honolulu	79/65/pc	78/66/pc	San Diego	64/55/pc	64/50/pc
Houston	62/39/r	49/32/c	San Francisco	59/48/sh	57/47/pc
Indianapolis	31/10/sn	20/9/s	Seattle	45/28/s	44/30/s
Kansas City	13/-3/sn	15/5/s	Topeka	14/-1/sn	17/5/s
Las Vegas	68/50/pc	68/50/s	Tucson	74/47/s	74/46/s
Los Angeles	63/51/pc	63/50/pc	Wash., DC	40/33/r	43/24/pc



# Former SEC official tapped as top state regulator

**Jim Turner**

The News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Ronald Rubin, a former special counsel in the Division of Enforcement at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, was named Tuesday as Florida's top financial regulator.

Gov. Ron DeSantis and

the state Cabinet — Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried, Attorney General Ashley Moody and Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis — picked Rubin to serve as commissioner of the Office of Financial Regulation. The other finalist for the post was Linda Charity, a former director of the state Division of Financial

Institutions who twice served as interim commissioner of the Office of Financial Regulation.

Fried said she expects Rubin to take seriously his role as the "watchdog" of financial-services providers in the state.

"I've been encouraged by what I've heard by Mr. Rubin, not just today, but also in our office

yesterday," Fried said.

Rubin will be paid \$166,000 a year, matching the salary of Florida Insurance Commissioner David Altmaier.

Rubin agreed with concerns raised by Fried and Patronis that banks need to accept money from the medical marijuana industry. Banks in Florida and other states have

shunned cannabis companies because marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

"Not having good banking services creates very bad problems ... which invites crime, basically. But, also, it hurts revenue of the state," Rubin said.

He also indicated he is reluctant to support

advocating the use of cryptocurrency, an issue that has drawn concerns from Patronis.

"In my mind, I'm still not certain that, basically, that you can't have a run on Bitcoin (a prominent type of cryptocurrency), that there is nothing to support it in a way that people will not lose confidence in it," Rubin said.

## PARADE

From Page B1

plenty," she said. "The toys and the candy — we were throwing it to every kid around us."

The family was also very complementary of the high security at the parades

and planned to visit again, especially due to the unifying and joyful aspects that they bring to the area.

Due to the abundance of shops and restaurants, venue space, and general vastness of the facility, Pier Park's parades are usually king when it comes to celebrating in Bay County.



Spectators duck and reach for beads at the Mardi Gras parade at Pier Park on Saturday. [JOSHUA BOUCHER/THE NEWS HERALD]

## UNSOLVED

From Page B1

reporter, was riding with Carleton when they were dispatched to the call. He recalled the eerie feeling of calling out to the woman, assuming she had just passed out, only to realize she'd been murdered and they were now standing on a near-deserted street with a woman who'd been shot in cold blood and her body left.

"It made my skin crawl because we didn't know where the shooter was," Cazalas said. "Was he still there; was he watching us? We were looking around at the rooftops down there and I was really unnerved until the backups arrived."

Thirty-three years later, Johnson's name remains on the CrimeStoppers Unsolved

Crimes list for the Florida Panhandle, the mystery surrounding her death still as vibrant and puzzling today as it was that night on Fifth Street all those decades ago.

Johnson herself was an interesting woman, described in several news stories as an "absolute gem" who clearly was going through a difficult time in her life. She'd cared for her brothers and a sister when they fell ill, and when her husband, A.C. Johnson, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, it was her turn again to shoulder that burden. Her role as caregiver turned her into a night owl, according to news reports, as it was the only time of day she had time to herself. She would give her husband his medication and put him to bed; then she would live her life, taking dance lessons,

going to diners, visiting friends and visiting her two boyfriends. It wasn't unusual at all for her to be at the post office that time of night, and in fact, she'd just dropped off a letter for one of her boyfriends — a 24-year-old dance instructor, according to news reports. No one witnessed the shooting, and only a few skateboarders around the block reported even hearing the gunshot.

A few days later, the mystery deepened when a man showed up at The News Herald office and started flipping through the recent copies of the paper. Cazalas asked who he was, and he answered he was with the "Bay County Police Department" looking for a story on the recent shooting. A red flag immediately went up.

"I was the one who wrote the story, and I

knew there was no such thing as the Bay County Police Department and I had that creepy feeling again, so I went back to my desk and called the police," Cazalas said. "He left really quickly, before they arrived, and I later found out the guy was the prime suspect in the case."

But with no clear motive and little evidence, the case went cold. Over 20 years later, investigators with the Panama City Police started working a new angle, based on witness statements that Johnson had been in a public argument with several people in the days leading up to her death. However, 33 years after the shooting, no arrests have been made.

Anyone with information about this crime can call CrimeStoppers at 850-785-TIPS.

## MEDICAID

From Page B1

into the shaping of our rules, so we have a far less administrative burden," Sontheimer said. "Our goal is for all to people to get care and not to deny coverage."

Sontheimer added that through the plan,

customers have access to non-emergency transportation when needed for health checkups and medical treatment appointments. Sontheimer said the service would be particularly helpful for residents in rural areas and those who might have lost their vehicles from the hurricane.

## AIRPORT

From Page B1

than 1 million as compared to a little more than 312,000 at the old airport," McClellan said. "Today we have had no scheduled international flights, but we

are a designated international diversion point with Customs and Border Protection located at Port Panama City. The airport is served daily by American, Delta, Southwest and United, all with one-stop international connections. We continue to partner with the TDCs to develop

demand and establish our region as an international destination."

In terms of general flights, McClellan also said "our traffic fluctuates each month with a large increase in March through October and our seasonal peaks in the June, July and August."

When told the answer

to their question, Covert said, "Well, I don't want to start anything, but it sure is interesting that an international airport can have zero international flights in nine years."

Submit your Bay Asked question at newsherald.com/bay-asked-where-answered.