

NORTH PORT FESTIVAL

# A Star-Spangled summer sendoff

City of North Port previously rescheduled its Independence Day celebration due to weather concerns

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Staff Writer

NORTH PORT — The annual Fourth of July celebration called the Freedom Festival was postponed due to weather concerns.

Now, the “redux” of the event is scheduled for Labor Day weekend.

When postponing the event, officials said the “difficult decision” was “not made lightly” and was done for a number of safety reasons.

Wet weather ultimately never came and other local events went on.

North Port’s rescheduled event will be from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Aug. 30 with a fireworks show at 8:30 p.m. at CoolToday Park, 18800 W Villages Parkway.

The event kicks off with the



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CITY OF NORTH PORT

The Freedom Fest event, which was canceled this year, welcomes thousands.

national anthem being sang and a flyover taking place from the Raptors Formation Flight Team.

Words from dignitaries will follow and then attendees can take to “Firecracker Lane,” inside the stadium, where local vendors will offer goods, crafts and more.

Outside of the stadium, there will be food trucks.

A number of activities, games and more will also be at the event for children.

Then, people are welcome to pop a squat and enjoy live entertainment from Thunder Beach, a local band.

People can also bring blankets and chairs to relax on the event lawn while waiting to take in the music and then the firework finale.

Admission and parking are free.

Officials say arriving early can allow people to enjoy all of the festivities the event has to offer, and will also ensure a perfect spot is found.

When held July 4, the Freedom Festival generally welcomes thousands of people.

No personal fireworks, sparklers or animals are allowed at the event.

For more information, visit [NorthPortFL.gov/FreedomFestival](http://NorthPortFL.gov/FreedomFestival)

Stories/  
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a nonprofit, is encouraging people to share stories of pets adopted from their facility. Doing so gives the nonprofit a chance to secure a “lifesaving investment” up to \$100,000.

According to a Suncoast Humane Society press release, since 2013, more than 25,000 adopters have shared their “love story” with Petco Love.

The nonprofit has awarded \$8 million in “lifesaving investments to the animal welfare

organizations that made those adoptions possible,” the news release states.

Earlier this year, Petco Love awarded \$500,000 to the love story winners from 25 animal welfare partners across the country. The grand prize winning organization won \$100,000.

“By sharing our stories, we spread love and inspire others to open their homes and lives,” said Maureen E. O’Neill, the executive director of Suncoast Humane Society.

“Petco Love Stories highlights the life-changing

impact adopted pets have on the people who love them,” said Susanne Kogut, the president of Petco Love.

“These powerful stories not only celebrate the unbreakable bond between pets and their families but also highlight the incredible work of our animal welfare organization partners across the country. We’re proud to champion these connections and help more pets find loving homes,” Kogut said.

To submit a story, visit: [tinyurl.com/3e53kpm8](http://tinyurl.com/3e53kpm8)

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by Long Term Recovery Groups within each county,” it stated.

Efforts can include home repairs and rebuilds, furniture and appliance replacement and other aspects to make homes “safe and livable,” it stated.

“We are grateful for The Patterson Foundation’s continued partnership and dedication to our region’s disaster recovery needs,” said Kirsten Russell, Community Foundation of Sarasota County’s Vice President of Community Impact, in the news release. “From experience, we know that many needs will not be evident for weeks, months or even years after the storm.

“By investing in long-term recovery, the Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund ensures our region’s most vulnerable can heal holistically and our communities can restore their stability beyond the immediate crisis.”

To donate to the Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund, visit [TinyUrl.com/ye75d4pp](http://TinyUrl.com/ye75d4pp)

Donations also can be made by writing a check payable to Community Foundation of Sarasota County and mailing it to: Attn: Suncoast Disaster Recovery Fund, 2635 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34237.

Donations are tax-deductible, it noted. For more information, visit [CFSarasota.org](http://CFSarasota.org).

DOGE/  
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expense. We all have fought to keep our 911 system because we know it’s saving lives. But if somebody looks on paper, they will say, ‘hey you can save an unnecessary expense’ and they will see a price tag of possibly \$1 million (in savings). Of course we know it’s not a million dollars.”

Punta Gorda Vice Mayor Greg Julian said the City Council had no choice but



Julian

to sign the agreement with the new state agency. He recently attended a Florida League of Cities meeting and learned more about the Florida DOGE requirements.

Julian said Ingoglia has the “statutory authority” of subpoenas to gain access to local government files.

“It’s not optional,” Julian said. “I’m not concerned that we are spending money frivolously. Staff is doing an incredible job with every resource we have, but the only area that I do have a concern that they mention is giving money to nonprofit groups.”

The city awards about \$25,000 in grants annually to nonprofit groups who help residents with social services issues, homelessness, medical services, child care and environmental resources that include water testing. It

equates to about \$1 in taxes per person in the city.

Reichert said documents were already given to the state, adding the agreement is just a “formalization of that action.”

“We will have to band together with other cities and other townships to make sure that we do retain that home rule,” she said.

Mayor Debi Lux agreed with Lockhart, but said there were no rules in the agreement, just the need for a contact person for the city.

Lockhart said she wanted it in writing that the city retains its home rule power to make decisions.

Commissioner Jeannine Polk said she didn’t believe the state was after safety issues.

“I have yet to see anybody say they are taking away our 911 call center, that’s not what this is about,” Polk said. “It’s about your population grew this much, but your tax base grew this much and there’s not a balance there. So you need to figure it out. I would be surprised if they are saying you will do this, you will do that.”

This week, Ingoglia was at a press conference in Palm Beach County. He said six governments were audited so far, especially after property taxes significantly rose in these cities.

Florida DOGE collects data regarding any diversity and inclusion training, electric vehicle purchases, multicultural affairs, Hispanic office for

local assistance, water and wastewater management, compensation, property management, homeless services.

“We must ensure that the safety and security of President Trump and other dignitaries is a top priority,” Ingoglia said at a news conference. “We will bring local government spending to light, expose waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer money, and ensure that the taxpayers are armed with the information they need to hold their local governments accountable.”

At the recent Orlando news conference, Ingoglia said he said he didn’t want to hear any local government was cutting “any fire and any police.”

“Those are the first things that they should be taking care of,” he said.

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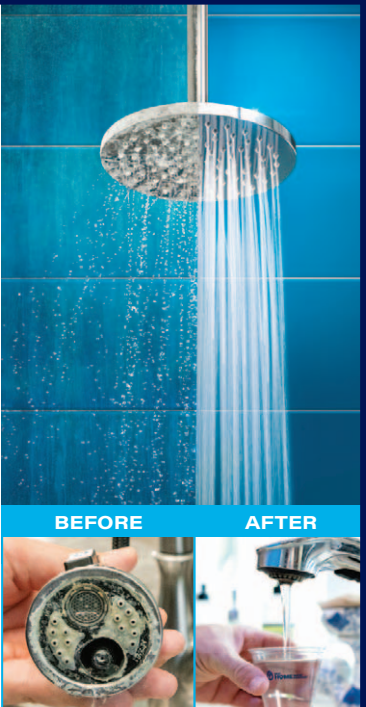
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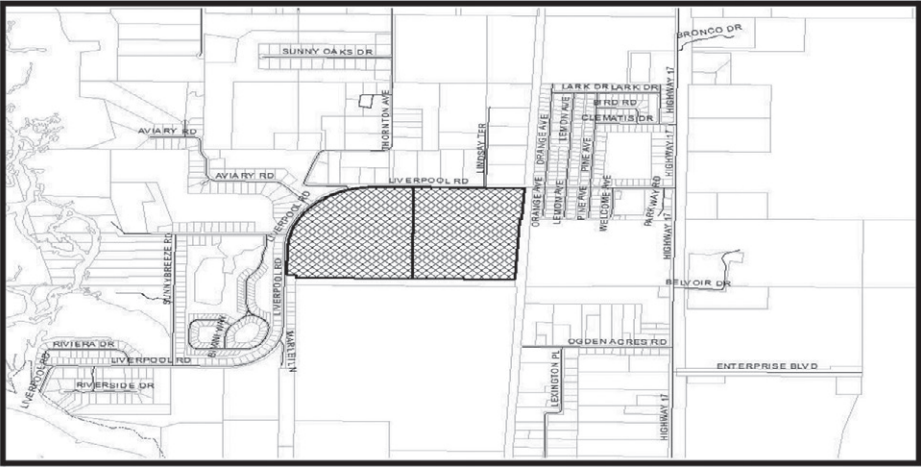
## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the below ordinance(s) will be considered at the regularly scheduled Public Hearings/Meetings of the Planning Commission, sitting as the Local Planning Agency, and Board of County Commissioners (Board) on the dates and times listed below, or as soon thereafter, as they may be heard on those dates. All public hearings will be held in the County Commission Meeting **Room 103, Administration Building, 201 E. Oak Street, Arcadia, Florida**. Copies of the applications and staff reports are available at the Development Department Room 204, Administration Building, 201 E. Oak Street, Arcadia, Florida five days prior to the meeting dates and are available on the County’s website at [www.desotobocc.com](http://www.desotobocc.com) under Department News and News & announcements. Members of the public may appear and be heard on the matters to be considered. Pursuant to Section 286.0105, F.S., if you want to appeal any decision of the Planning Commission or Board, you will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, you may need to arrange for a verbatim transcript to be prepared.

**PLANNING COMMISSION: (PC) Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 5:30**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS: (Board) Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 6:30 PM**

- Ordinance, Robert M. & Barbara G. Tiffany Co-Trs (Liverpool PUD) Rezone (RZNE-0061-2024) PC & Board**  
AN ORDINANCE OF THE DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING ATLAS IDENTIFIED IN LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS ARTICLE 2, ZONING DISTRICTS AND REQUIREMENTS, SECTION 20-31, ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONING DISTRICTS; GRANTING TO THE APPLICANT, D.R. HORTON, INC., AN OFFICIAL ZONING DISTRICT ATLAS AMENDMENT (RZNE-0061-2024) BY CHANGING THE ZONING DISTRICT OF +/- 124.07 ACRES FROM RESIDENTIAL MULTIFAMILY 6 (RMF-6) TO PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) ON PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED IN SOUTHWEST DESOTO COUNTY, SOUTH OF SW LIVERPOOL ROAD, THE PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS BEING 25-39-23-0000-0118-0000 AND 25-39-23-0000-0116-0000; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



PUBLISH: AS DISPLAY AD Friday, August 22, 2025

adno=3967638-1

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