

HIGHLANDS TODAY

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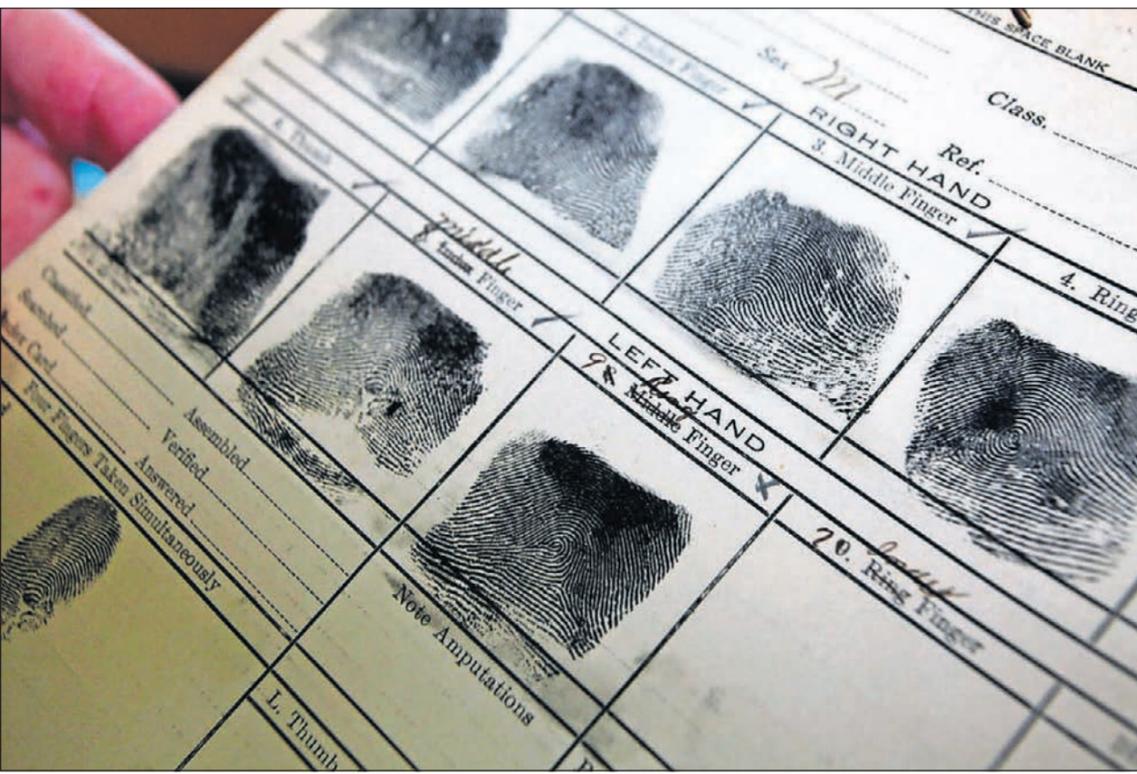
Speeding along
Nathaniel Sparks finds home
with Sebring's Sick Sideways.
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INFORMING TODAY, SHAPING TOMORROW

TUESDAY, April 28, 2015



RYAN PELHAM/STAFF

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office is sending its old fingerprint cards dating back to the 1920s to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Fingerprints from 1960 back will be added to the digital database, called the The Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System, or IAFIS, in hopes of possibly matching them to unsolved crimes.

Harder Hall buyer seeks time for review

Company is considering turning the property into a living center for seniors

BY JAY MEISEL
Highlands Today

SEBRING — A prospective buyer for Sebring's historic Harder Hall needs more time before making a final decision, a city official said Monday.

Assistant City Administrator Bob Hoffman said South Florida Senior Living paid \$25,000 to the city as of Monday to continue its review of the purchase.

If the company declines to buy Harder Hall, it will forfeit the \$25,000, Hoffman said. However, if South Florida Senior Living goes through with the purchase, the \$25,000 will be applied to it.

South Florida Senior Living, which is considering transforming Harder Hall into a living center for seniors, already had placed a deposit of \$25,000. If the company wants to extend the review past July 27, it must give the city another \$50,000, bringing the total to \$100,000, Hoffman said.

Florida Senior Living plans for Harder Hall to primarily be an independent living center, although it may also include an assisted living component.

The Sebring City Council approved selling the building for \$2.5 million. That will pay much of the city's mortgage on the property but leave about \$900,000. City officials said the city would be able to come up with those funds. They said that despite that, in the long run the development would generate tax revenue for the city from a building

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Modern upgrade

Fingerprints dating back to 1920s to be digitized

BY JAY MEISEL
Highlands Today

SEBRING — After Highlands County deputies arrested Fred Burns on July 16, 1931, they were in for a little bit of a surprise.

They learned Burns was actually Paul Hinson from Richmond, North Carolina, who had escaped from the North Carolina State Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina, on July 22, 1929. He had been serving time on a theft conviction.

North Carolina officials had offered a \$25 reward leading to his capture.

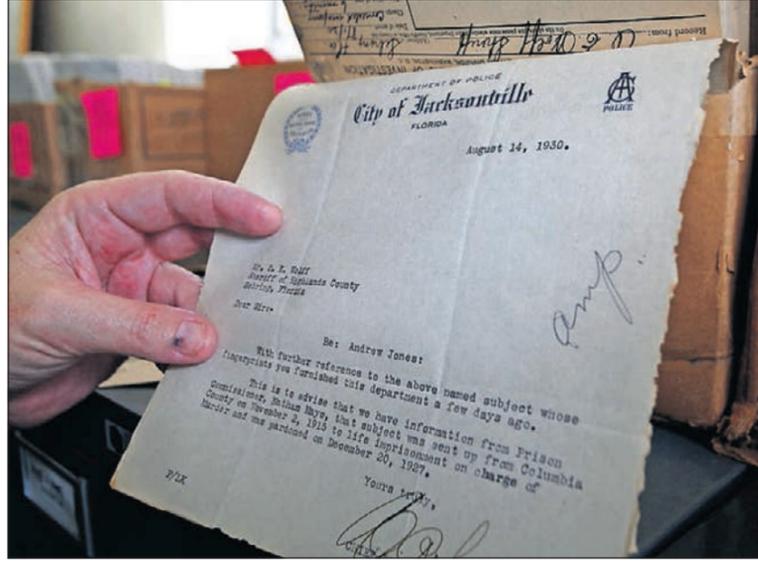
That information was included with a fingerprint card for Hinson that's stored at the Highlands County Sheriff's Office.

Eventually, that fingerprint card and many others will be sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, which will digitize the fingerprints and put them into a national database of fingerprints called IAFIS, or The Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System.

Sgt. Jeff Fennell, who is over the sheriff's office's crime scene investigation unit, said the FDLE is starting with fingerprints from 1960 and working its way back. Some fingerprints have already been digitized, and since about 1997 all of them were scanned, he said.



Above: Sgt. Jeff Fennell, with the Highlands crime scene investigation unit, looks through old fingerprint cards the sheriff's office has kept on file. The office has 13 file cabinets and some boxes full of the old cards. Adding the prints to IAFIS may help solve old cases plus it will free up storage space. Below: Fennell shows a 1930 letter from the Jacksonville police chief attached to a card of fingerprints.



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The sheriff's office has 13 file cabinets and some boxes full of fingerprint cards. The cabinets are in various locations.

Fennell said the effort to digitize the fingerprints is through an initiative started by Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton. The aim is to

FINGERPRINTS, Page 7

Education bill deal will have minor impact on SFSC

BY MARC VALERO
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Compromise legislation will allow South Florida State College to increase enrollment in its four-year degree programs and also keep its name.

Senate Bill 948, which is sponsored by Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Destin, has been amended to include compromises on some of the provisions in Senate Bill 1252, which is sponsored by Sen. Kelli Satargel R-Lakeland.

State colleges in Florida reacted with concern about four weeks ago when Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, attached language to SB 1252 that would require institutions such as South Florida State

SFSC, Page 6



RYAN PELHAM/STAFF

Gennifer Raulerson holds up a model of the solar system as part of a mock lesson plan she created with her group in a class for the elementary education bachelor's degree program at South Florida State College on Monday. A state Senate bill that would affect the college's baccalaureate programs has been amended.

Ride-share services bill parked in the House

Senate has a plan for regulating them, too, but the proposals differ

The News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE — Proposals to create new insurance requirements for app-based transportation services such as Uber and Lyft appear to be idling as the legislative session nears the end.

The House and Senate have moved forward with bills that have differences, including whether local governments should be prevented from regulating the services. The House bill includes what is known as "pre-emption" of local regulation.

"There is no indication that the Florida Senate is interested in the pre-emption provisions of the House bill," said Rep. Matt Gaetz, a Fort Walton Beach Republican who is

sponsoring the House measure. "And without those I don't know if we'll be able to move any meaningful legislation regarding ride-share."

The House on Friday and Monday postponed Gaetz's measure (HB 817) as the two sides continued to seek common ground on the fast-growing "transportation network companies."

Both the House and Senate proposals would require the compa-

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Weather

HIGH 84, LOW 71
A couple of t-storms, mainly later
Winds S 6-12 mph
UV INDEX: 8
SUNRISE: 6:49, SUNSET: 7:57

