

Ave Maria Sun

MARCH 2025

www.AveMariaSun.com

Vol. V, No. 8

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Cultural bridge:

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The ongoing evolution of a Big Kind of Small Town A20 ►



FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE



COURTESY PHOTOS

NCH plans to establish a new 24-hour freestanding emergency room facility in Ave Maria, modeled after their existing Northeast Freestanding Emergency Department located at 15420 Collier Blvd. in Naples.

NCH collaborates with Barron Collier Companies to expand medical services in Ave Maria

BY LARRY ELL

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

BOLD DREAMS BECOME reality when visionaries expand horizons, embrace hard work, execute thoughtful planning and enable professionals to turn doubters into believers. Where all those forces intersect is the point when potential becomes kinetic. However, that's not where the journey ends; rather, it's where a series of beginnings begin.

In Southwest Florida, the Ave Maria community is announcing the latest important milestone along the arc of its continuing journey. Naples Comprehensive Health (NCH) is collaborating with Barron Collier Companies (BCC) to bring first-rate health care to Ave Maria

SEE HEALTH, A14 ►



Residents will be able to receive comprehensive care, such as joint assessments, as part of NCH's specialized services.

Ave Maria's achievements

Highlights from the Nationals Awards by the National Association of Home Builders

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

This February, at a ceremony in Las Vegas, Ave Maria won two Gold and 11 Silver Awards from The National Association of Home Builders for the town's outstanding achievements in multiple industry categories.

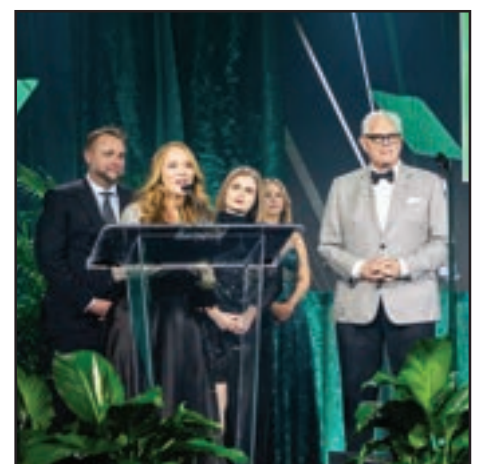
"These prestigious awards have represented NAHB's dedication to recognizing innovation, creativity and success for more than 40 years," said Chairperson Tiffany George. "The Nationals award winners set the standard for excellence in new home sales, marketing and design."

Ave Maria received the Gold Award for Best Print Campaign – Series of Ads and Best Radio Commercial or Campaign, as well as Silver Awards in the following categories:

- Best 30-60 Second Commercial
- Master Planned Community of the Year
- Marketing Professional of the Year - Builder/Developer
- Best Community Welcome Center
- Best Digital Marketing Campaign
- Best Overall Advertising Campaign
- Best Print Ad – Single Ad
- Best Radio Commercial or Campaign
- Best Social Media Campaign
- Best Website for a Community

Attending the ceremony were several executives from the Barron Collier Companies — Ave Maria's developer — including Vice President of Commercial Real Estate Cee Cee Marinelli. She noted, "Being recognized at The Nationals award ceremony in more than one cate-

SEE AWARDS, A6 ►



COURTESY PHOTO

Barron Collier Companies accepting their awards at the Nationals Awards by the National Association of Home Builders.

Inspiring kindness

Barbara Mariano fosters community spirit through golf, generosity and unwavering support

BY ERICA FISH

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Barbara Mariano and her late husband's journey to Ave Maria was fueled by their shared desire to live in a vibrant and active community. Originally from St. Louis and later relocating from Salt Lake City, the couple had always been drawn to the lifestyle that a Del Webb community offers. With Barbara's sister once residing in Naples, the area was already familiar to them, and after experiencing the small-town charm of Ave Maria, they knew they had found their perfect home.

By 2015, the Marianos had settled in, specifically choosing to make their home in the Del Webb Naples community, which they felt offered the best of both worlds: an engaging neighborhood with championship golf and countless social engagements.

"It was everything we were looking for," Barbara Mariano recalled. "We came to realize that people here are there for you, and we wanted that person-to-person involvement."

Since moving to Ave Maria, Barbara has immersed herself in various activities that embrace the community's active lifestyle. She is a passionate golfer, a pickleballer and a regular participant in weekly Bunco rounds. However, one of her greatest contributions to the community has been her leadership of



AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT

The annual Kiss Cancer Goodbye Golf Tournament, organized by Barbara Mariano in honor of her late husband, is dedicated to raising awareness and funds for the Cancer Alliance of Naples.

the Ladies Wednesday Golf League.

When Barbara first started the league in 2016, it was a modest gathering of just four women. Today, it has grown to more than 150 members who meet weekly for tee time on the 18-hole Panther Run golf course.

"He was the golfer. I'd just ride along and caddy," Barbara Mariano shared. "But I started to play, and then I started a league. It's a casual group, and it's very supportive. Everybody's there to help everybody. You don't have to have a handicap to play in the group — just a good attitude!"

Barbara's commitment to helping others extends beyond the golf course. In October 2023, she lost her husband to cancer.

In honor of her late spouse and to support others battling the disease, Barbara spearheads several fundraising efforts, including the annual Kiss Cancer Goodbye Golf Tournament held at Panther Run Golf Club. In addition, she plans the Cancer Alliance of Naples (CAN) Fashion Show, an event at Del Webb Naples that raises proceeds for CAN. Between the golf pro shop and The Secret Ingredient boutique clothing is featured by Ave Maria residents who walk the show.

Her dedication to community connection is also reflected in her personal life. Every first Monday of the month, Barbara and a group of friends

enjoy a happy hour at one of Ave Maria's Town Center restaurants. "My kids were like, 'Mom, we know you've got a great support system.' They don't worry about me," she said with a smile.

Despite the tribulations, Barbara remains a vibrant figure in her world of Del Webb, always looking for ways to contribute and uplift others. "I think of it as personal growth," she said. As she continues to lead the golf league, organize events for philanthropic efforts and foster community spirit, Barbara Mariano exemplifies the very essence of what it means to be a neighbor and a friend in Ave Maria — A Big Kind of Small Town. 🌟



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Steak, sunshine and smiles



Attendees filled their plates with tender steak, fluffy rolls and an array of delicious sides.



This team set up their grill in the sun, seasoning the steaks and watching closely as they cooked, eager to impress the judges.



The Ledo Pizza team, known for their delicious square pizzas and a variety of other dishes in Ave Maria, showcased their grilling skills.



PHOTOS BY AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Knights of Columbus held their 15th annual charity steak competition at the Ave Maria Town Center in late January, which featured live music and entertainment, a beer garden, inflatables for kids, an arts and crafts fair by Blue Ribbon Events and a farmers market. The competition celebrated all teams as winners, with High Steaks, led by Chris Buccheri, taking the Grand Champion title, while Oil Well Craft Beer and Cow Girls Grilling, led by David Altomare and Maria Buccheri respectively, tied for first runner-up. Smoke Mafia from Ave Maria Utility Company secured third place, followed by The Secret Ingredient in fourth. 🌻



The event served an impressive 2,000 steak dinners.



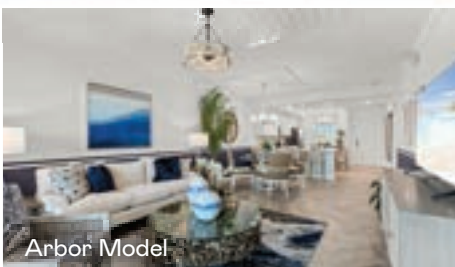
Live performances and entertainment energized attendees throughout the day.

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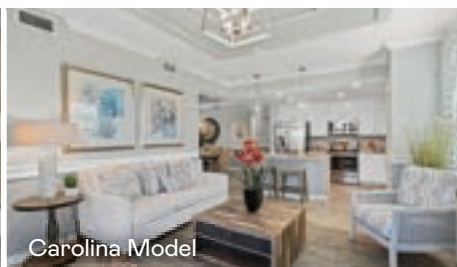
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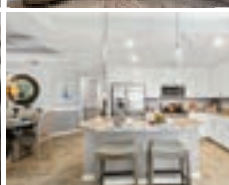
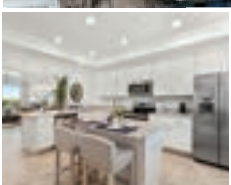
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BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN



Firefighters from Ave Maria joined in the festivities.



The Oil Well Craft Beer team, led by David Altomare, secured a first runner-up spot.



Each team faced the challenge of preparing their own unique steaks.



The crowd at the event was lively.



The Secret Ingredient team finished in fourth place.



The Smoke Mafia team from Ave Maria Utility Company earned third place.

PHOTOS BY AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

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AWARDS

From page 1

gory is truly remarkable. Ave Maria has become a destination for families, active adults and everyone in between. These awards are a testament to the superior lifestyle, amenities, sense of community and conveniences the town offers.”

BCC Marketing and Public Relations Manager Michelle Mambuca, APR, who was among the top five marketing professionals of the year for a builder/developer, said, “2024 brought the vibrant energy of Ave Maria to the public. We revamped our welcome center and marketing materials to better reflect the personality and continued growth of the community. These awards celebrate the hard work of scores of people working behind the scenes to champion Ave Maria and the wonderful people that call this community home. We have enjoyed our partnership with the Milesbrand creative agency for the past several years, which has helped bring these award-winning campaigns to life.”

“I’m incredibly proud to see Ave Maria recognized on such a grand scale,” said Bill Sievertsen, Milesbrand’s director of client services. “These awards from the NAHB shine a national spotlight on what makes Ave Maria special, reinforcing the value and desirability of our community and helping to attract new residents and businesses. Ave Maria is more than just a collection of neighborhoods. It’s a community built on connection, opportunity and small-town charm. What sets us apart is not only our beautiful homes and vibrant



COURTESY PHOTO

Barron Collier Companies, Milesbrand and The CMO to Go collaborated to enhance Ave Maria’s branding and promote its unique appeal.

Town Center, but also the way we showcase real residents in our marketing. By giving future homeowners an honest glimpse into life here, we show that Ave Maria isn’t just a place to live. It’s a place to belong. That authenticity strengthens our reputation and fuels continued growth and investment in

the town.”

Ave Maria is one of the Top 20 bestselling master-planned communities in the country and the fastest-growing community in Collier County, with four award-winning builders offering homes from the high \$200,000s to \$800,000s. Located 20 miles

east of Naples, this Blue Zones-certified community spans 5,000 acres. It features a vibrant Town Center with restaurants, boutiques and small businesses, two public golf courses, recreational parks with sports fields and playgrounds, the Ave Maria Water Park and more. 🌟

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BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN

Culinary adventure at Taste of Ave



PHOTOS BY AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

Taste of Ave featured a variety of food, live music, free-entry raffles, family-friendly activities and local artisans, with free admission for everyone. 🌞



▲ Kids joyfully bounced and laughed on the colorful inflatables.
◀ A talented mime added a unique flair to the event.



Attendees were treated to the TreeHouse Band's eclectic mix of pop, rock, R&B, hip-hop and Latin music.



Tropical Smoothie Café served their fresh smoothies and flavorful bowls.



Skooter's served kettle corn, refreshing lemonade, colorful snow cones and more.



◀ The Ave Maria Dance Academy wowed with captivating performances.

BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN



The Back Country Boys, a rising band from Ave Maria, delivered an energetic performance at the Taste of Ave.



MELTZ served their ice cream and other themed creations.



Diana Richards of Breaking Bread Naples sold her sourdough bread.



Vicky Bakery offered a delectable assortment of light and flavorful pastries, ranging from crispy croissants to decadent cakes.



Mumsy Darlings Homemade Goods offered a delightful selection of handcrafted treats and artisan products.

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NCH MEDICAL GROUP

Umami Ave

A flavorful fusion of Southeast Asian cuisine set to open in Ave Maria

BY SANDRA YEYATI
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

This April, Ave Maria welcomes a new restaurant to the Midtown Plaza that is sure to please Asian food connoisseurs. Umami Ave is the brainchild of Jason Cao, a self-taught chef eager to share his favorite dishes inspired by Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian and Japanese cuisine. Decorated with live plants and artistic photographs of Vietnamese life, the restaurant will seat about 50 people in tables and booths.

“Ever since I was a kid, I always wanted to open a restaurant,” Cao recalled. “I love to cook and see the joy in people eating good food. All of my recipes come from the older generation. I don’t want their recipes to be lost.”

Although born in Vietnam, Cao moved to the United States when he was 4 years old. Growing up, he loved to watch his parents in the kitchen. His mother was the primary cook, but in America, she joined the workforce, and his father would often come home early and start dinner.

“My dad became a very good cook,” Cao said. “He gives all the credit to my mother, saying she taught him how to cook, but the flavor from his dishes is amazing. I, myself, started cooking in college when I was missing home-cooked meals.”

Over the years, Cao has developed a sophisticated palate. “You learn how to identify different flavors. It’s all out of curiosity. I’m always asking people how they cooked a dish. If I eat something I really like, I work on it so that I can achieve the same taste, the same texture and the same look. It’s all about technique. You can give 10 people the same exact recipe, and it will come out 10 different ways, so that’s the challenge and the art. It’s very creative,” he said.

Cao’s artistry is a fusion of Southeast Asian flavors and cooking styles; his menu will celebrate famous dishes from different regions, often adding a twist or novelty to make it unique and extra tasty. His shrimp tempura, for example, will embellish the battered-and-fried Japanese dish by pre-marinating the shrimp with savory Vietnamese flavors and using a smoother and crisper batter.

The sushi rolls will include both traditional ingredients and subtle surprises. The Pad Kra Pao ground pork over rice will be imbued with Thai flavors and sautéed in a



Bun Bo Hue is a spicy Vietnamese noodle soup made with beef, thick rice noodles and fragrant herbs.



The Banh Mi is a Vietnamese sandwich featuring a baguette filled with marinated meats, fresh vegetables and spicy mayo.

rich sauce with holy basil, shallots, garlic and green onions. The Japanese tataki tuna will be cooked on a very hot grill to add a smoky flavor and then served over a Vietnamese-inspired salad with tomatoes and fresh fruits.

One of Cao’s favorite dishes is phở —a Vietnamese soup consisting of broth, rice noodles, herbs, vegetables and meat. “I never get bored of phở, and I’m very excited to share my recipe for beef and chicken phở,” he said. “It takes eight to 10 hours to make the broth. There’s a shortcut, but it doesn’t taste the same. It’s all about harmony and balance. To achieve the awesome umami flavor, I use salt and sugar, which are essential to life.”

This unique, savory flavor is the very essence of Ave Maria’s newest eating establishment. “The restaurant is named

Umami because that is what my cooking is all about. Every culture has a different flavor profile, whether it’s European, Middle Eastern or Indian food. With Asian cuisine, it is all about umami. It’s the fifth taste—after sweet, sour, salty and bitter—that extra-savory part of a dish that leaves you deeply satisfied.”

Cao currently lives in Golden Gate Estates with his wife and daughter. The family has come to love Ave Maria after visiting his wife’s brother, Danny Dang, the owner of Ave Nails and AM Nails in Ave Maria.

“Danny has been telling us how awesome this community is,” Cao explained. “My daughter is now attending Donahue Academy, and we’re actively looking for a home in Ave.”



The California Roll features fresh crab, creamy avocado and cucumber wrapped in seasoned rice.



Pad Kra Pao is a flavorful Thai dish of stir-fried ground meat seasoned with holy basil and garlic, served over jasmine rice.

Umami Ave will be Cao’s first restaurant. “It has been almost two years in the making. I’m excited and nervous at the same time,” he said. “I feel very thankful

and blessed that I have the opportunity to do what I love as a living. It’s going to be a lot of work, but when you’re doing what you love, you should be happy about that. I’m very thankful, and I can’t wait to be a part of this community and for people to try the food.”

Located in the new Midtown Plaza at 5360

Ave Maria Blvd., Unit 102, Umami Ave will be open for in-house dining and take-out from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, contact 952-905-9878 or UmamiAve@gmail.com. 🌸

“I can’t wait to be a part of this community and for people to try the food.”

— Jason Cao, owner of Umami Ave



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Cultural bridge

How international students enrich Ave Maria University

BY SANDRA YEYATI
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Each year, students from all over the globe come to Ave Maria University (AMU) to pursue their scholastic and career dreams. For most, English is their second language, but they are undaunted by challenges as they immerse themselves in a different culture, deepen their spirituality, make lasting friendships and expand their worldview. These enterprising individuals are welcomed and supported by a cadre of university professors, coaches, tutors and administrators.

Diana Tsai, a native of Colombia, has a dual role at the university. As the International Student Support Advisor, she helps foreign students integrate into the university lifestyle and thrive scholastically. As the Designated School Official, she ensures that every student entering this country completes the necessary paperwork correctly and complies with all U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requirements.

“I get to know most of these students very well. If they have a need, they know to come to me. My office is always open for them,” Tsai said. “Sometimes they get jobs, but they can only work on campus, so I guide them through the process, which includes getting a social security number. I have to make sure that they are going to their classes and scoring good grades. If they’re struggling, I try to help them—send them to tutoring or encourage them to talk to their professors.”

AMU currently has 46 international students from 23 countries, including Austria, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Mexico, Montenegro, Paraguay, Portugal, Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Seven are pursuing doctorate or master’s degrees, and the rest are undergraduates. Their chosen fields of study include biology, business administration, chemistry, communications, economics, nursing, physics, computer science and theology.

Many of these students have full or partial sports scholarships, representing the Gyrenes in soccer, swimming, tennis, volleyball and even ultimate frisbee. With the help of recruiting agencies, Head Coach Cesar Markovic recruited nine of the team’s 40 soccer players from Ecuador, Montenegro, Paraguay, Serbia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

“European and South American countries have a long tradition of professional soccer clubs. Kids grow up playing in



Tharcisse Onema from Congo is undertaking a master’s degree in theology while serving as a campus ministry priest.

those clubs with the goal of getting to the professional level. Many of them, if they’re serious students, look to attend a school in the United States on a scholarship,” Markovic explained. “Because they’ve been training to be professionals, they tend to be disciplined and used to high standards of play and training. Those are some of the qualities that we look for.”

In addition to being stellar players, these recruits must meet AMU’s high academic standards.

“We have a very challenging curriculum where writing and reading are massive requirements, and these guys are doing all this in a second language, which is definitely not easy,” Markovic explained. “But we have a phenomenal network of tutors that help, and eventually they start to figure it out on their own.”

With a father from Yugoslavia (now Montenegro) and a mother from Ecuador, he speaks Spanish, affording him a comfort level with the Spanish-speaking players.

“We understand each other. I’m American and I understand what it is to be an American, but I also understand them because I grew up in a very ethnic environment with a lot of different cultures,” he remarked. “For internationals coming here, I think that they feel comfortable when somebody is able to understand them and speak to them and relate to them.”

Sophomore Jose Jacquet, who was recruited into the men’s soccer team from Paraguay, has been playing the game since he was a child, reaching a level of

proficiency and passion that got him noticed by Coach Markovic.

“My family and I researched the Ave Maria University website and also the city itself,” he said. “I felt called to come here.”

Pursuing a major in finance and a minor in accounting, Jacquet believes that studying abroad offers many benefits.

“You gain a quality education, and you get to experience new perspectives,” Jacquet said. “The experience itself pushes you out of your comfort zone and helps you to grow, mature and be more independent. I think the cultural exchange is really good both for yourself and for other people, and you get to build connections and develop a global mindset.”

Jacquet relishes the time he gets to spend with his teammates.

“It’s like a brotherhood. On and off the field, we push each other to be better,” he said. “The community is super welcoming. They don’t judge anything about you. It’s a place where I feel I can be myself. I don’t have to be hiding things about me

or not saying things. I can be who I am.” Another common experience for international students is the melancholy of being far away from home.

“One thing is being here from another state—not to minimize that—but being here from another continent and different time zone where it’s sometimes challenging to call home just because of the time difference can be tough,” Markovic said.

Ines Lopes, a junior from Portugal, has a volleyball scholarship and is pursuing a psychology degree. In addition to missing her family and friends, she also misses the familiar and cultural touchstones of her heritage.

“The music is different in Portugal, and I miss that a lot,” she said. “Music back home makes you want to move your body. It’s very energetic. And the fact that it’s in Portuguese also helps a lot. I relate to it better. Sometimes, I get tired of speaking English or listening to English, and I just want something that feels natural to me.”

Under current immigration law, international students may only seek on-campus employment, and taking part-time jobs around school is not unusual. Lopes is a Spanish tutor and also works at the reception desk in the campus weight room.

Jacquet helps out in the maintenance department, as well as in the intercollegiate athletics department.

Tharcisse Onema, from Congo, and Richard Mugisha, from Uganda, are both pursuing a master’s degree in theology. As campus ministry priests, their duties include giving spiritual talks, leading retreats and celebrating the sacraments of mass and confession with students, sports teams and

student clubs known as “households.”

This is Onema’s first time in the United States and his first time outside of his country.

“This great experience that I’m having here opened my mind to understand and speak English,” Onema said. “The limit of your world is the limit of your language. When you learn another language, the world is open for you. In the U.S. and at Ave Maria University, the teachers give you books to read and discuss with them. In my country, especially in my area of Tshumbe, we do not have a library or access to books. Instead, teachers give students handouts to memorize.”

Mugisha said, “It was easy to integrate with the American students. They were welcoming and easy to talk to them. I’m on the campus almost all the time, so I meet the students in the cafeteria, in the chapel, in the classroom, in the library. It’s so easy to interact with each other. They are free with me, and I am free with them.”

For Mugisha—as with many other international students—the biggest adjustment to life in the United States has to do with American cuisine.

“In Uganda, we grow food in our own fields and gardens and bring them to the table,” he explained. “My favorite American dish is a chicken hamburger.”

Upon graduation, Onema and Mugisha

“This great experience that I’m having here opened my mind to understand and speak English. The limit of your world is the limit of your language. When you learn another language, the world is open for you.”

— Tharcisse Onema, AMU student from Congo



Jose Jacquet from Paraguay excels in finance while playing on the soccer team.



Ines Lopes from Portugal is pursuing her studies in business administration.



Fr. Richard Mugisha from Uganda is studying theology and is a campus ministry priest.



COURTESY PHOTOS
Cesar Markovic, head coach of AMU men's soccer team, brings a keen understanding of cultural diversity and recruits international players.

sha will either continue their studies at AMU to obtain their doctorate degrees in theology, or they will return to their countries to teach at their local seminary and serve other priestly duties. The decision will depend upon their bishops back home.

A big benefit of studying abroad is that the students are able to explore stateside work opportunities after graduation. Tsai said about 90% decide to do just that. US-CIS approval is required, and the work has to be in the student's field of study. STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) students have the option to remain in such employment for up to three



Diana Tsai, international student support advisor, helps foreign students acclimate to campus life and succeed academically while ensuring compliance with U.S. immigration regulations.

years; all others can stay for up to one year. AMU Director of Career Services John Spadaccini can help them prepare resumes and find good jobs. Sometimes, the company they've been working for likes the job they are doing, so they will offer to sponsor them with an H1 work visa, Tsai shared.

"I think international students are a gift to us," Markovic said. "They enhance our community with their vibrance on campus and their commitment to following the path that we're all following. We may come from all corners of the world, but we are all believers, and that's the biggest thing we have in common." 🌟



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HEALTH

From page 1

and eastern Collier County.

“Together, we’ve reached a remarkable milestone that reflects both of our organizations’ commitment to prioritizing health and wellness for the residents of Ave Maria and eastern Collier County,” BCC Chief Executive Officer Blake Gable said. “We welcome NCH and their medical professionals to the community and look forward to continuing to enhance the health care options within the town.”

Few community assets have the power to enhance quality of life, such as comprehensive and convenient medical facilities. While Ave Maria offers various medical services, and fitness and recreation amenities for its residents, nearby access to an Advanced Community Health System has remained one of the final pieces of the puzzle until now.

“Obviously, this is one of the fastest growing areas in the state of Florida, not just in Southwest Florida,” NCH Chief Operating Officer Jonathan Kling said. “The number of families moving in every year and the distance from health care makes this something that is really a need for our community. Having good health care facilities nearby is what this community deserves, and we’re happy to be a part of it.”

“It’s exciting for our community to have this major health care system committed to Ave Maria and eastern Collier County to meet the growing demands of health care throughout the county,” said Cee Cee Marinelli, BCC VP of commercial real estate.

As eastern Collier County continues to grow, the collaboration between NCH and BCC will bring a 6,000-square-foot immediate care clinic to Ave Maria’s Midtown Plaza. The location will be staffed by board-certified emergency physicians, physician assistants and nurses, who will treat non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

“This is going to be urgent care that will see walk-ins from cuts, sprained ankles and fractures to low-level acute care,” Kling said. “As a health care professional, I’m also a registered nurse, it’s what we do, we’re in the business of taking care of our community. This is a community health system so it’s the community’s asset. It’s amazing.”

Key services at the new facilities will feature a pediatrics and women’s health



COURTESY PHOTO

Families will have greater access to pediatric care, one of the key focuses of the expansion.

office building that will be built in the Park of Commerce. The office building will have space for pediatrics, women’s and maternal health, and specialists in areas such as cardiology, orthopedics and sports medicine will visit the office on a rotating basis, so residents don’t need to travel to Naples.

“Right now, primary care is not very easily accessible. It’s a pretty substantial drive to get the services if you live in Ave Maria or even east of that,” Kling said. “So being able to drive just a few miles to have that kind of care is going to be a game changer, I believe, for the health of our community.”

The future is rife with plans as the big picture of health care in the region continues to move into focus. After the physician offices and immediate care clinic are established, NCH plans to open and operate a 24-hour freestanding emergency room facility (FSED) modeled after their two existing FSEDs in Northeast Collier and Bonita Springs. Once this phase of development is complete, the location near the main entrance to Ave Maria will offer emergency services for conditions such as broken bones, heart attack, stroke, se-

vere burns, severe allergic reactions and more.

The timeline for implementing this infusion of health care in the region is fairly ambitious. The immediate care facility is expected to open in approximately a month. Within the next couple of years, NCH will complete the addition of women’s and children’s primary care along with a full, freestanding emergency room with imaging, therapy and medical offices.

Plans on the NCH drawing board call for the development of a full-service inpatient hospital that will serve the needs of the entire northeast county region. The current population of Ave Maria is approaching 15,000 residents, which is also factoring in the increasing population in the surrounding eastern Collier County area. There is the expectation that the need and demand for lifelong care will rise along with the influx of residents. Growth projections for the region indicate additional features will need to be added to the ambitious plans (already coming to fruition) to expand the campus, along with the number and level of services offered.

Part of addressing those complex ne-

cessities will be the addition of an assisted living facility that will be built in Ave Maria, which will offer both assisted living and long-term care.

The Ave Maria lifestyle is often referred to as “living in A Big Kind of Small Town,” which is about enjoying a lifestyle replete with big conveniences and small treasures. It’s a philosophy that promises residents shouldn’t have to make sacrifices regarding choices or convenience. Keeping essential goods and services a golf cart ride away from the front door is a comforting way to maintain household harmony and physical and mental wellness.

NCH is a locally governed non-profit and an Advanced Community Health System located in Naples, Fla. What began as a single hospital with 50 beds in 1956 now includes two hospitals, employs 1,100 physicians and has medical facilities in dozens of locations throughout Southwest Florida that offer nationally recognized, quality health care to the community. In 2025, Healthgrades named NCH one of America’s 50 Best Hospitals.

BCC is the developer of Ave Maria and one of the largest diversified companies in Florida, dedicated to the responsible development, management and stewardship of numerous landholdings. 🌞



COURTESY RENDERING

The forthcoming Immediate Care facility is designed to enhance health care for the growing community of Ave Maria and eastern Collier County.

Ave Maria Communities



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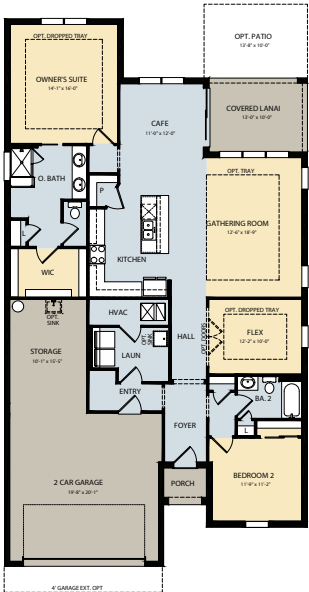
It's easy to stay active and have family fun at Avalon Park. Located within walking or biking distance to downtown Ave Maria, Avalon Park attracts families looking for exceptional schools, close proximity to neighborhood parks, and plenty of living space. Avalon Park offers spacious homesites, unique architectural exteriors, and 11 consumer-inspired

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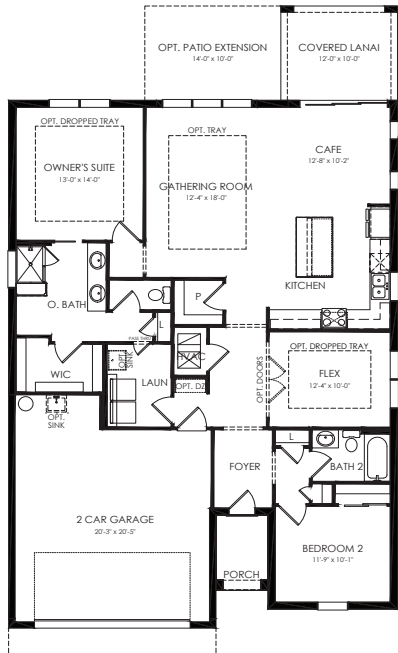


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Del Webb Naples brings premier resort-style amenities and a lifestyle nothing short of extraordinary to Ave Maria. Here, daily possibilities for new adventures await. Where every day is different – and entirely up to you. From a dip in the pool to a friendly game of pickleball, in Del Webb Naples you'll find countless opportunities to grow, thrive, and enjoy those new passions you've been waiting to explore. Del Webb Naples provides amenities, programs, and support needed for health and wellness,

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About the community

Maple Ridge at Ave Maria is a thoughtfully designed community with a myriad of home designs, all of which combine beautiful curb appeal with impressive interior layouts built for modern lifestyles. CC Homes is the builder behind this community and they are among the many reasons Ave Maria has become such a rapidly growing neighborhood attracting new residents from the Gulf Coast, Southeast Florida and beyond. With more than 75 years of combined experience in South Florida real estate, Mr. Armando Codina and Mr. Jim Carr along with Mr. Andres Miyares have set a new standard for quality new construction homes in desirable communities, with a wide range of pricing from entry-level to prestigious exclusivity.

CC Homes communities throughout Florida have been recognized for their incredible market appeal, outstanding quality, and resident satisfaction time and time again, having built thousands of homes and residences. Homes built by CC Homes are designed to improve people’s lives. Modern features, smart floor plans, and upscale amenities combine for the ultimate Florida lifestyle. Homeowners at Maple Ridge are pampered with high-end designer features included in the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen, and kids’ room.

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CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria’s Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids’ room.



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833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com



About the community

As part of the highly sought after new home community, Maple Ridge at Ave Maria-Silverwood offers exciting residential choices to buyers. Silverwood provides homeowners the perfect home at a great value. All of these single-family homes are beautifully designed with Mediterranean, Coastal or Contemporary architecture and an inviting array of designer features included as well as some custom options available. Both Silverwood and Maple Ridge have a superb location within Ave Maria, so residents benefit from a great school district and sense of community.

Floor plan spotlight: The Huntington is a new construction, one-story home with three bedrooms, two baths, great room, eat-in kitchen, storage, master suite with walk-in closet and attached garage. Premium features included that are standard include designer brand faucets and fixtures, and tile flooring. Gourmet kitchens have stainless steel appliances, European-style wood cabinetry and quartz countertops. A spa-like primary bedroom features double sinks with quartz vanity tops and a spacious shower.



Quick Move-In Homes Available Now!

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features

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First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



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About the community

Lennar is excited to bring its popular Everything's Included® homes and resort lifestyle amenities to the charm, convenience, and values of Ave Maria. The National Golf & Country Club will offer a fresh coastal aesthetic throughout the home designs and on-site amenities including an 18-hole Gordon Lewis-designed golf course, complimented by world-class amenities for the entire family to enjoy. A variety of floorplans will be offered in Terrace and Veranda condominiums, coach homes, and executive and estate single-family homes. The National Golf & Country Club will

feature its own clubhouse with a pro shop, formal and casual dining, a resort-style pool and spa, fitness center with yoga/aerobics room, spa treatment rooms and beauty salon. Active residents can take advantage of Har-Tru tennis courts, pickle and bocce ball, a putting green, chipping area, and a driving range. This all-encompassing amenity campus is designed to bring the community together, with spaces for friends new and old to gather. Whether you are a seasonal resident or looking to lay down roots, The National Golf & Country Club has the ideal home for you.

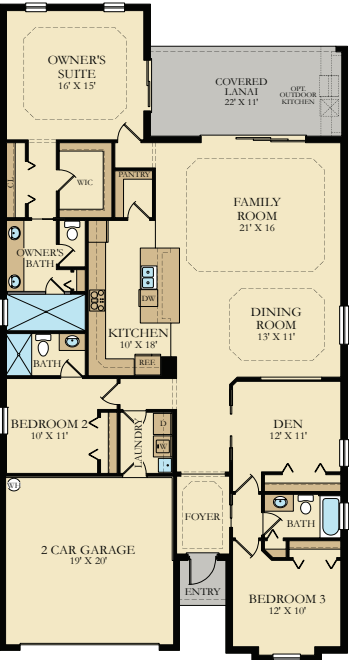


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Two decades of Ave Maria

The ongoing evolution of a Big Kind of Small Town

BY MELANIE PEFINIS

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

What’s your favorite pizza topping? While the toppings may vary, one thing’s certain—a great crust is essential. It’s the foundation, just like the vision behind Ave Maria, the town that the founder of Domino’s Pizza, Tom Monaghan, envisioned. Just as pizza caters to every taste, Ave Maria continues to grow, appealing to a diverse population.

Now entering its 20th year, the partnership between Ave Maria Development, the Ave Maria Foundation and Barron Collier Companies (BCC) is still thriving. Together, they are helping to build a community that serves the needs of its ever-expanding population.

BCC CEO Blake Gable said, “The objective from the beginning was to create a place where all walks of life could find tremendous value and a sense of community.” That vision continues to unfold in this Big Kind of Small Town.

Spanning 5,000 acres, Ave Maria offers an array of amenities and distinctive neighborhoods that attract families, seniors and everyone in between.

“This is a place where people are willing to come raise kids as well as to live in retirement,” Gable said. “This multigenerational aspect was always the goal, but in reality, you never know how that’s going to shake out.”

And evolve it has. In addition to its parks, recreational facilities and natural beauty, Ave Maria continues to expand its retail and commercial landscapes.

The developer’s vice president of commercial real estate, Cee Cee Marinelli, said, “Ave Maria is now reaching a point of critical mass where national chains are looking to grow alongside the community. Midtown Plaza recently opened with Dunkin’, Ledo Pizza, Cold Stone Creamery, Sunshine Ace Hardware and NCH Immediate Care Center.”

These additions complement established businesses such as banks, dental offices, pediatricians and Publix, all helping to meet the needs of the growing population.

This is a long way from the unpaved roads seen by Joe Marinelli during the town’s ear-



AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT / COURTESY PHOTOS

▲ **Construction of the Ave Maria Catholic Church started in 2007, and it was officially dedicated and opened in 2008. In the early stages of development, what was once bare land began to transform into Ave Maria. ►**

liest days. Construction began in 2005, and the local historian recalls the ceremonial groundbreaking on Feb. 17, 2006. “I remember when the roads were dirt,” he remarked.

The first residents began moving in July 2007, and the pace has continued. Joe Marinelli, who has conducted the community’s in-season trolley tours for the past 20 years, has had a first-hand look at Ave Maria’s growth.

“I have had over 50,000 people on trolley tours for these past 20 years. I remember when the Church was steel coming out of the ground,” he said.

Homebuilders CC Homes, Del Webb, Lennar and Pulte have crafted homes catering to residents’ diverse needs.

“The strong sales numbers are a testament to the lifestyle, family-friendly



amenities, conveniences and variety of new home types the town offers,” Cee Cee Marinelli said.

With over 70 years of experience, Pulte provides homes that appeal to families and retirees. Del Webb’s 55+ communities focus on active adult living. Lennar’s National Golf & Country Club caters to those seeking a luxurious and active lifestyle. Meanwhile, CC Homes has neighborhoods which combine a classic, small-town feel with modern living.

BCC was strategic in choosing homebuilders to create a diverse yet cohesive town.

“We are unique here in Southwest Florida,” Gable said. “We have a large number of family buyers which required us to design the town with all the things mandatory for those families. Parks, schools, places to walk and play. Natural spaces and water features. We wanted this to be the kind of town where kids can ride their bikes in the streets and can ride to go get ice cream.”

The town’s growth is more than just physical; it’s a thriving community with a self-sustaining vision. Cee Cee Marinelli shared, “Ave Maria was planned to be self-sustaining, and adding more businesses to the already diverse business community will only better our residents and the surrounding areas.”

Ave Maria’s early success hasn’t gone un-

noticed. The town has consistently won the prestigious Sand Dollar Award, Community of the Year, with recent awards for Best Brochure, Best Social Media Marketing and Best Special Event, Taste of Ave.

In a press release from 2015, Cee Cee Marinelli reflected on the town’s rapid growth after a decade of development. “It feels great to be recognized by our local building industry,” she said at the time. “Marketing and advertising a brand-new hometown is all encompassing, more than just marketing one neighborhood. The community has evolved over the past few years into a thriving hub of families and retirees enjoying the lifestyle and amenities that Ave Maria has to offer.”

Fast-forward to 2025, and her insights continue to resonate as the town flourishes. Today, Ave Maria continues to grow, offering miles of walking and biking paths, preserves, water views, sports venues and swimming pools—an ideal setting for its residents. The Ave Maria Master Association organizes a variety of community events, ensuring the next twenty years will be filled with activities that enhance the lives of residents.

With its welcoming, vibrant atmosphere, Ave Maria’s future looks brighter than ever. After two decades, the town is just getting started—its story is only beginning to unfold. 🌅



The Ave Maria Town Center comes alive at night with a variety of community events, including live music, outdoor movies and community gatherings.



Residents can easily ride their golf carts to the Ave Maria Town Center, enjoying a convenient and scenic journey through the community.



Ave Maria boasts two beautiful golf courses, the championship-rated The National Golf & Country Club by Lennar, and the nearby Panther Run Golf Club, built by Pulte Homes, both offering scenic views and challenging play for all skill levels.



Ave Maria’s football field is home to the Gyrenes, the university’s football team, where they compete in exciting matches and represent the community with pride.

BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN

Hitting all the right notes



PHOTOS BY AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

In mid-February, attendees enjoyed full sets by top blues artists at the beloved Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival, featuring Deb & The Dynamics and Old School. The event showcased vintage cars and delicious barbecue from food trucks like Fat Cowboy's BBQ and local restaurants. Craft beers and sweet treats were also available, along with retail vendors, face painting and activities for kids, making it a fun day for all. 🌞



Deb & The Dynamics, a seven-piece band, have entertained Southwest Florida for 20 years with their vibrant mix of R&B, soul, rock, blues, jazz and 70s dance.



The car show featured an impressive lineup of vintage and high-performance vehicles from the Cool Cruisers and Bonita Corvette Club.



The sleek 1962 Dodge Dart 330 Wagon turned heads with its classic design.



People gathered outside the Welcome Center, basking in the warm sun as they enjoyed refreshing treats like ice cream, creating a joyful atmosphere.



A red vintage truck at the car show.



Old School, featuring Sherrad Reites, Adam Bryan, Chris Bradley and Tommy Tally, performs classic rock, southern rock, country and R&B.



Smokin' Crow's BBQ served up delicious dishes.



The Ave Maria Dance Academy presented an enchanting performance. ▶

◀ The Spurred to Victory horse show highlighted the bonds between horses and trainers, teaching valuable lessons on leadership and relationships that resonate in our daily lives.



ENTERTAINMENT AND DINING AT SEMINOLE CASINO HOTEL



CHRISTONE
Kingfish
SOUTHWEST
SAMANTHA FISH

MARCH 28

OUTDOOR



SOLD OUT

APRIL 3



MICKY DOLENZ OF THE MONKEES:
SONGS & STORIES

APRIL 12



LOS PALOMINOS
WITH SPECIAL GUEST COSTUMBRE

APRIL 19

OUTDOOR



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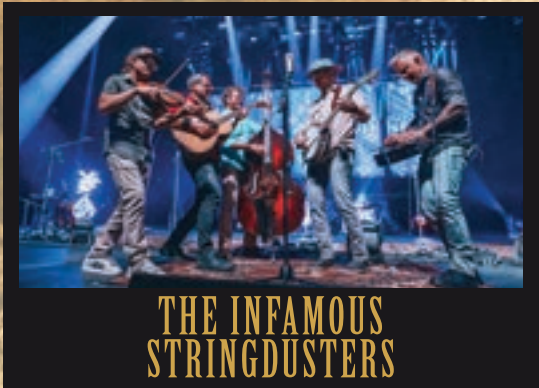
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BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN

FC Naples excites fans during training day

PHOTOS BY AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT

The FC Naples team had an exhilarating training day at Ave Maria, where residents were able to witness the team gear up for the upcoming season. The event was filled with excitement as merchandise was available for fans, and children could be seen playing ball on the sidelines, soaking up the atmosphere. Team members even took the time to sign autographs, creating memorable moments for everyone involved. It was a wonderful opportunity for the community to connect with the players, and anticipation is building for the Ave Maria Game Night on Saturday, April 26. 🌟



Kids forged new friendships as they cheered and played together.



Player Jayden Onen approaching the ball, ready to kick.



FC Naples team running to warm up for the game.



The team signed their flag, creating a cherished symbol of unity as they head into the new season.



A family enjoyed the opportunity to watch their favorite players.



FC Naples player Marc Torrellas ready to sign.



Goalkeeper Joel Serrano signing their autograph.



Adults joined in on the sideline ball fun.



Players spent time signing personal T-shirts.



Two players signing one of their jerseys.



People playing on the sidelines.



Fans had the chance to personally meet FC Naples team members.



The Co-Ed Soccer Ages 13+ team at Olfos Sports Academy.

Kicking off success

Youth soccer at Olfos Sports Academy

BY SANDRA YEYATI
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Since 2023, the Olfos Sports Academy has been offering Ave Maria kids the opportunity to play recreational soccer with the supervision and training of licensed instructors. Toddlers to teens are welcome to come to North Park and enjoy the world’s most popular ballgame every Tuesday and Thursday evening. After the current season ends on April 31, a new season will begin in October and run through the end of April 2026.

The children are divided into age groups. The 2- to 5-year-olds meet from 5 to 5:45 p.m., the 6- to 12-year-olds meet from 6 to 7:30 p.m., and teenagers meet from 6 to 8 p.m. When there are enough girls, they get to play each other; otherwise, co-ed play is encouraged.

“My main focus for the academy is to provide an affordable option for families,” Founder and CEO Jose Olfos said, who is licensed and certified as a soccer instructor, nutrition coach, personal trainer and world rugby coach. “Our fee is \$70 per month, and other programs like ours are charging \$120 for fewer hours of play and instruction.”

The Olfos Sports Academy is a non-profit, so fees are considered donations. They also accept sponsorships from parents and other interested parties starting at \$1,000 per season.

On league nights, six to seven instructors—including Olfos—are there to lend their expertise and guidance. All of them are licensed Grassroots trainers by the U.S. Soccer Learning Center. The Grassroots designation is for local, recreational and amateur levels of play.

Olfos has applied to the Florida Youth Soccer Association to create a competitive league that would allow children aged 9 or older to challenge other competitive leagues in the region. The approval process is expected to take a couple of months, so it is conceivable that these kids will be able to compete soon.

“I’m looking to develop new talent and give the kids an opportunity to play the game they love,” Olfos said, adding



Jose Olfos unboxing new balls.

that the youngsters are enhancing their physical health, appreciating the great outdoors, getting off their screens, learning teamwork, having fun and making friends.

Another initiative in the works is a class for children and adults that integrates rugby into a physical fitness and wellness program.

“This will be for middle grades and up,” Olfos shared. “We want to help people get healthier and feel better while playing a great sport.”

“The Olfos Sports Academy has been a great addition to our North Park youth sports and activities,” said Joseph Lampkin, Ave Maria Parks and Recreation manager. “The Ave Maria Master Association has welcomed the partnership and will continue to help in ways that contribute to growing this soccer program. Jose Olfos puts a lot of time and effort into preparing the fields for his training sessions and games. His program offers a professional and well-operated soccer development program, and his coaches are focused on providing a great learning and fun environment for the youth of Ave Maria.”

Youth soccer leagues meet every Tuesday and Thursday evening at North Park, 4010 Anthem Parkway, in Ave Maria. For more information or to register, contact 305-244-2426, OlfosSportsAcademy@gmail.com or visit OlfosSportsAcademy.com.



The team proudly held up their certificates of completion, beaming with pride after successfully finishing the program.

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ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

Dates and details are subject to change. Call the Ave Maria Welcome Center at 239-352-3903 for more information. Follow Town Center businesses on social media for updates and special promotions.

■ OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Trolley Tours & Live Music

Experience the charm of Collier County's "Community of the Year" for 10 consecutive years with a one-hour narrated trolley tour. Discover new developments, explore the town, learn its history and enjoy live music. After the tour, enjoy lunch, shopping and view 25+ model homes by top builders. Guests receive a complimentary trolley bag with swag items and community info. Tours are first-come, first-serve, departing at 11 a.m., noon, 1 and 2 p.m. Meet at the Welcome Center, 5076 Annunciation Circle, #104.

Lipman's 5k Run/Walk for Backpack

The Lipman 5K on Saturday, March 29, welcomes families and runners to support the 11th Annual Backpack Giveaway in Ave Maria. Proceeds will provide backpacks and school supplies for local children, with registration fees of \$30 for adults and \$25 for students. For more information, visit lipmanfamilyfarms.com or its Facebook page.

Margarita & Taco Festival

From noon to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 5, bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the afternoon with bands TreeHaus and Deb & The Dynamics, food trucks featuring Mexican specialties and desserts, and a variety of refreshing margaritas. Anticipate Twins & Jungle Friends primate show, wrestling entertainment, a farmers market and local artisans, high performance and vintage car show by Cool Cruisers and various kids activities. Everyone is sure to have a good time, rain or shine.

MERCHANT EVENTS

Backwoods Feed & Grooming

Email backwoodsfeedllc@gmail.com for more information. Founded in 2016, Backwoods Feed & Grooming specializes in grooming services, pet wash stations, and holistic food and treats for all domestic pets, from household pets to farm animals.

The Bean at Ave Maria

thebeanofave.com
■ Check out The Bean's drive-thru coffee cart in front of The Pub at Ave Maria every day from 6:30 to 8 a.m. for muffins, bagels,



COURTESY PHOTO

From noon to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 5, bring your lawn chairs and enjoy the afternoon at the Margarita & Taco Festival.

- hot and iced coffee and more.
- Discover the latest weekly special drink announcements, on their Facebook page.
- **Join the Coffee Club.** After buying 10 hot or iced drip coffees, get the 11th one free.
- **Taco Tuesday** happens weekly from 4 to 7 p.m. in the Bean Courtyard and features \$3 beef tacos, beer, \$4 chicken fajitas, chips and salsa, margaritas and \$5 pork tacos. Indoor seating is available in case of bad weather.

Cadenza Medical Clinic

cadenzamedclinic.com
Cadenza Medical Clinic offers personalized healthcare services, incorporating functional and internal medicine, medical aesthetics and regenerative treatments. The clinic focuses on approaches for autoimmune diseases, metabolic syndrome, high cholesterol and medical weight loss. Services include micronutrient and allergy testing, vitamin infusions, and PRP treatments for medical and aesthetic needs. Operating under a concierge practice model, Cadenza addresses underlying health issues and empowers individuals to enhance their wellness and overall well-being.
■ Dr. Raul Enad hosts a weekly health talk every Tuesday at 2 p.m. The talks focus on various health topics and offer insights for those looking to enhance their physical well-being.

MELTZ

meltzicecream.com
A family-owned ice cream shop was founded by residents living in Ave Maria since 2021. Enjoy a variety of delicious ice cream, toppings, specialty and traditional sundaes and themed creations inspired by the youngest family members. MELTZ has customizable 100% organic Açaí bowls, boba teas, rolled ice cream and smoothies.
■ **Bring your furry friend** for a complimentary pup cup.
■ **On Wednesdays**, there is a 10% discount for AMU faculty and students.

Mercato at Ave

mercatoatave.net
A lively marketplace featuring vendor casitas with handcrafted candles, soaps, clothing, accessories and sweets. Enjoy free Wi-Fi, artisan coffee, live music and a striking mural. Key vendors include Felicia's Hair Studio, Kivora Boutique, Eva's Jewels and Sonia Tello Alterations. Pure Beauty offers beauty products and services, Pop Love Gelato serves artisanal treats and Berry Juicy provides healthy smoothies. There's also a Stay & Play area for kids.

OASIS The Kitchen Lounge

oasiskitchenlounge.com
At OASIS, guests can discover a new culinary offering featuring a robust menu with rich flavors and fun small bites in a

brehtaking atmosphere. They can enjoy the chef's monthly specials and diverse ethnic foods. Exciting events include wine and jazz evenings, live music performances and monthly theme parties. Its happy hour is from 3 to 6 p.m. during the week. Bookings are available throughout the year for those planning a party, catering events or celebrations.

Oil Well Craft Beer

oilwellcraftbeer.com
■ Indulge in sub sandwiches available daily from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
■ Every Monday to Saturday from 5 to 8 p.m., at least one food truck at the Park of Commerce.
■ **To-go Tuesdays:** \$1 off crawlers and \$2 off growlers.
■ **Wine Wednesdays:** \$1 off wine.
■ **Ladies drink specials on Thursdays:** \$1 off drafts and wine for ladies.
■ Join Southwest Florida Realtor Sara Callahan for Family-friendly **Bingo** with free prizes from 6 to 8 p.m. on **Saturday, April 5 and May 5.**
■ **Glorified Vision Art's Brew and Paint Party** is on **Tuesday, April 8.** Tickets are \$35. R.S.V.P. to glorifiedvisionart@gmail.com.
■ Cruise Planners Jackie and Dan Rategan are hosting an **Adult Bingo** with free prizes at 7 p.m. on **Wednesday, April 9 and May 7.**
■ **Network at the Ave Maria Rotary meet-up** for small business owners from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on **Monday, April 14, April 28, May 12 and May 26.**
■ Teri Reinersman, Kelli Zane and Jen Givens host a lively night of **Bunco & Wine Wednesday** fun with prizes at 6:30 p.m. on **April 17 and May 21.**
■ **Music Bingo** with DJ DiFlo is from 7 to 9 p.m. on **Saturday, April 26 and Monday, May 19,**
■ Join the **Paint Your Pet** event at 7 p.m. on **Tuesday, April 29** for \$55, which includes a detailed pet sketch, painting supplies and a canvas. Drinks are sold separately. For more information and to R.S.V.P., email glorifiedvisionart@gmail.com.
■ **Celebrate National Hoagie Day** at Oil Well from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on **Monday, May 5.**
■ **Friday, May 9 is National Moscato Day**, so it's \$1 off Moscato wine all day



COURTESY PHOTO

The Lipman 5K on Saturday, March 29, helps support the 11th Annual Backpack Giveaway in Ave Maria.

ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

long.

- During **American Craft Beer Week**, which runs from **Friday, May 16 to 22**, there will be a new craft beer tapped each day. Please note that Oil Well is closed on Sundays.
- For **National Armed Forces Day**, on **Saturday, May 17**, veterans and active military can get \$2 off all drafts with proof of service.
- On **Saturday, May 24**, everyone is invited to a free and fun **Karaoke Party** starting at 8 p.m. with DJ DiFlo.

The Pub & Grill at Ave Maria
thepubofave.com

The Pub's new happy hour, from 2 to 5 p.m., running Monday through Friday features \$5 well drinks, \$4 house wines, \$3 domestic drafts, \$2 pretzel bites and \$1 chips and salsa. Make sure to keep an eye out for live music events.

The Secret Ingredient
shopthesecretingredient.com

- Celebrate your birthday and enjoy a 20% discount on your favorite regularly priced item with a valid ID.
- Active duty and retired members receive 20% off one regular-priced item with military ID.
- **Every Monday is 55+ and Fabulous Day.** Shoppers aged 55 and up save 10% off one regularly priced item.
- **Every Tuesday, "Twosday"** shopping allows you and a friend to each receive 20% off one regularly priced item when shopping together.
- Discover the excitement of their **Weekly Wednesday Sale**, where a special item is offered at a discounted price. Stop in or stay tuned on their social media channels to see the featured item each week.
- **Retail Therapy Day** happens **every Thursday**, where spending \$50 gets you a free pair of sunglasses.
- **Every Friday**, first-time shoppers receive a 20% discount on one regularly priced item. This discount is available to each new customer once.
- For **Wear a Hat Day**, wear a hat on **Wednesday, March 26** to receive 20% off a regular priced item.
- The **Cancer Alliance Fashion Show** in Del Webb on **Saturday, March 29**, features a 5 p.m. dinner, 6 p.m. fashion show and a chance to win a seven-day cruise in a raffle, with tickets benefiting the Cancer Alliance Network. Contact Lucy Guevara at 239-455-2001 for more details.
- On National **Greet Card Day**, all greeting cards are BOGO on **Tuesday, April 1**.
- All pajamas will be 20% off for **National Pajama Day** on **Sunday, April 6**.
- On **National Golfer's Day, Thursday, April 10**, all golf apparel will be 20% off.
- On **Wednesday, April 16**, use cash while shopping to receive a 10% discount on your entire purchase for **National Cash Day**.
- The Secret Ingredient will be closed for **Easter on Sunday, April 20**.
- When you purchase a reusable bag for \$10, you'll receive 25% off one regular-priced item on **Tuesday, April 22** for **Earth Day**, with a limit of one bag per customer. This initiative also replaces monthly coupons.
- All denim apparel will be 20% off during **National Denim Day** on **Wednesday, April 30**.
- All Blessing Bracelets will be 10% off for **National Blessing Day** on **Thursday, May 1**.
- Nurses and teachers take advantage of 25% off a regular priced item, honoring their contributions on **National**



COURTESY PHOTO

The Veterans Club of Del Webb Naples Golf Tournament will take place Saturday, April 5, at Panther Run Golf Club.

Nurse and Teacher Day on **Tuesday, May 6**.

- On **Saturday, May 10, National Small Business Day** enjoy a 25% discount on one regular-priced item by presenting a receipt from a local Ave Maria business or receive 35% off with a receipt from Oil Well Craft Beer. This offer is limited to one per customer, and please note that Publix receipts are excluded.
- **Mother's Day** is on **Sunday, May 11**, and The Secret Ingredient offers free gift wrapping on any items purchased.
- **National Straw Hat Day** falls on **Thursday, May 15**, and all straw hats are 20% off.
- From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on **Saturday, May 17**, their huge sidewalk sale will feature a ton of new markdowns.
- On **Sunday, May 25**, shop while sipping a complimentary glass of wine for **National Wine Day**.

Stella Rose Way
stellaroseway.com

A locally owned boutique featuring a curated mix of gifts, artisanal items, children's products and home decor. They host monthly events to explore Ave Maria souvenirs and aim to be a delightful source for unique finds and home beautification.

Tropical Smoothie Café
tropicalsmoothiecafe.com

Tropical Smoothie offers fresh, made-to-order smoothies, wraps, sandwiches and flatbreads that instantly boost your mood. Treat yourself to an experience that makes eating better and easy breezy. Be sure to try the fan-favorite Tropic Bowls. Starting in January, they will feature two new bowls: the Nutella Acai Bowl and the Dragon Fruit Bowl. To pair the bowls, they also offer a limited-time chocolate-covered strawberry smoothie.

Vicky Bakery
vickybakery.com

Promising a delectable assortment of light, flavorful pastries, from crispy croissants to decadent cakes, each meticulously crafted for an exhilarating culinary experience, now including an expanded selection of party, wedding and special occasion custom cakes, along with a comprehensive catering service for schools, businesses and community events. This January, they will introduce a line of Bolitas (milkshakes) that will offer unique Cuban flavors and will be a great add-on to their signature Vicky Platicos, which comes with pork or chicken, seasoned rice, black beans and plantains.

Way Out Toys & Games
wayouttoys.com

On Tuesday nights, a Pokémon Pack Wars event costs \$20. The event runs from 6:30 to 7 p.m. and provides each player with three packs of cards to use for the event. During the three rounds played, one pack is opened at a time as a group. The winner of each round will receive a prize, and there will be a final grand prize round where all 3 packs provided will be used.

On Thursday nights, there is an open play event for Lorcana at Disney Loracana from 6 to 8 p.m. It's an opportunity to learn and play the game, and it is open to all ages. Even if you don't have cards, starter decks are available for purchase in-store.

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

For the latest updates and more information on away games, visit avemariagyrenes.com/calendar.

Friday, March 28
M. Tennis vs. No.4 Southeastern, TBD
W. Tennis vs. Southeastern, TBD

Saturday, March 29
Lacrosse vs. RV St. Thomas, 1 p.m.
M. Tennis vs. RV Warner, TBD
W. Tennis vs. Warner, TBD

Friday, April 4
Softball vs. Southeastern, 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 5
Softball vs. Southeastern, 1 p.m.
Softball vs. Southeastern, 3 p.m.
Lacrosse vs. RV Webber, 4 p.m.

Friday, April 11
Baseball vs. No.11 Southeastern, 3 p.m.
Baseball vs. No.11 Southeastern, 6 p.m.

Saturday, April 12
Baseball vs. No.11 Southeastern, 12 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Wednesday, April 16
Baseball vs. Fort Lauderdale, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Friday, April 25
Baseball vs. No.8 Webber, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Softball vs. St. Thomas, 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 26
Baseball vs. No.8 Webber, 12 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Softball vs. St. Thomas, 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

■ **AVE MARIA RESIDENT-ONLY**

Organizers request preregistration for these resident-only events via avemariamasterassociation.com. For more information, call 239-867-4322.

New Homeowners Social and Orientation

New Ave Maria homeowners and those who haven't attended are invited to a social and informational event in the AMMA meeting room. AMMA will present information about community living and local organizations. Visit the AMMA website calendar for dates. The next orientations are at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 27 and May 22 for social time, followed by orientation at 6 p.m.

Resin Workshop

On Friday, March 28, from 6 to 8 p.m., artist Tammy DeCaro will host a creative Resin Workshop in the AMMA lobby. Participants are encouraged to bring their favorite beverage. All supplies for creating wooden trays will be provided, and you can bring your own embellishments. There will be various designs available, including Easter themes. The cost is \$70 per participant.

Onspot Dermatology

A mobile dermatological office is located in the parking lot off Roma Street and Avila Avenue (behind Tropical Cafe Smoothie and Oasis: The Kitchen Lounge) and is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Walk-ins may be available, but booking in advance is recommended. Visit onspotdermatology.com for insurance details and to schedule an appointment. Upcoming dates include March 28, April 5, 19, 29, and May 13 and 23.

Coffee with a Twiss

A casual gathering with AMMA Executive Director Kim Twiss is held from 10 to 11 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month. This gathering allows homeowners to ask questions and receive updates related to AMMA and community news. The upcoming meeting dates are April 10 and May 1.

Ave Maria Stewardship Community District meetings

Monthly AMSCD meetings are open to the public and held in the AMMA meeting room. Upcoming meetings are scheduled at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1 and May 6. Visit avemariastewardshipcd.org for more information.

Ave Maria Veterans Association High School Senior Scholarship

The Ave Maria Veterans Association is accepting scholarship applications now for seniors enrolled in JROTC at Immokalee and Palmetto Ridge High School. Any senior who is a child or grandchild of an honorable discharged veteran who resides in Ave Maria can apply. Scholarships will be awarded in May. Seniors should contact their school counselors and/or the JROTC Leadership. Scholarship applications are due no later than Tuesday, April 1. For detailed instructions and to apply, go to avemariavets.org/scholarshipapplication.

SEE **ALL AROUND AVE MARIA, A28** ►

ALL AROUND AVE MARIA



COURTESY PHOTO

Enjoy family fun activities like an Easter egg hunt at the Spring Festival & Family Day from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 12.

From page 27

First Fridays

Celebrate Earth Day at the “April’s Showers Bring Flowers” First Friday on April 4. Enjoy live music, delicious food from Earth Wind & Fryer food truck, and drinks from Oil Well Craft Beer. Attendees can also win a special gift from the landscaping company Rise and learn about community cleanups and tree plantings.

Veterans Club of Del Webb Naples Golf Tournament

The golf tournament will take place on Saturday, April 5, at Panther Run Golf Club, featuring a shotgun start at 9 a.m., a two-person team handicap scramble for \$125 each, course contests, a raffle, and a complimentary beverage. To register, email Markclayton1956@yahoo.com or pick up a registration form at the Panther Run Pro Shop.

Spring Festival & Family Day

The Spring Festival and Family Day will take place from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 12, at Ave Maria Water Park. Admission is free for Water Park members; non-members pay \$5. Enjoy live DJ music, food from CJ’s Café, Poplove, Kona Ice, a photobooth, visits from the Easter Bunny and egg hunts. Don’t forget to bring your Easter baskets.

Embrace Life series

Join photographer Patrick O’Flaherty, DDS, for a wildlife and travel photography presentation from 7:15 to 8:15 p.m. on Tuesday, April 15, in the AMMA meeting room. Enjoy stunning shots from his global journeys and work with the Alliance for Smiles Mission. Admission is free.

Ave Maria Game Night

The Ave Maria Game Night will take place at the US Jägermeister Cup Match featuring the FC Naples team on Saturday, April 26, at Paradise Coast Sports Complex, 3940 City Gate Blvd. S., Naples. Gates will open at 5:30 p.m., and the game will start at 7 p.m. Special savings include \$10 tickets in sections two and 10 for the first 200 buyers, who will also receive a free drink ticket.

Ave Cares NCH Blood Drive

The next blood drive is on Tuesday, May 20, from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The Bloodmobile will be parked off Roma Street (behind Tropical Café Smoothie). To register, contact Liz Lara at 239-624-6509 or Elizabeth.lara@NCHmd.org.

Fluid Art Workshop

Mix-media artist Tammy DeCaro is back from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 21, for a fluid art abstract technique workshop. Learn paint pouring and create unique artwork. Participants will receive two canvases and all supplies. The workshop is open to all skill levels and costs \$60 per participant.

Memorial Day Patriotic Family Picnic & Show

On Monday, May 26, the 11th annual ceremony honoring those who served will begin at 11 a.m. in the new Veterans Memorial Park. It will be followed by a family picnic, games and a patriotic show by the USO Trio at the South Park Amphitheater. The Knights of Columbus will provide hot dogs as we celebrate and remember our heroes.

Knowledgeable Aging Speaker Series

- Jason Kotar hosts expert discussions on the first Tuesday of each month and the third Wednesday, covering essential topics such as health, housing and finance. These seminars aim to educate and empower residents while providing light refreshments.
- “Crucial Conversations: What to Discuss with Your Power of Attorney/Executor,” from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1.
 - “Home Maintenance in Florida Through the Years,” from 5 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16.
 - “Planning for Long-Term Care: The Talks, Team, and Timing,” from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Tuesday, May 6.

Games group

Adults are invited to join a friendly game of cards, including Skip-Bo and Sequence, or play Mexican Train (dominoes) every Monday and Thursday from 1 to 3 p.m. in the AMMA game room.

AVE MARIA WATER PARK FITNESS

For more details, please contact the park office at 239-658-5880.

Adult water exercise classes

The Ave Maria Water Park invites you to energize your mornings with refreshing, low-impact workouts at our Water Aerobics classes, which are held at 9 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Swimming lessons

Ave Maria Water Park offers an American Red Cross-sanctioned swim program with eight lessons for youth, available in three age-specific stages: Water Babies (6 months - 3 years), Preschool (3-5 years) and Youth (6-12 years) for \$65 per monthly session. These classes promote water safety in a safe and friendly environment, teaching children essential swimming skills.

Progressive swim team

The Progressive Swim Team meets from 4 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays and is open to children ages 6 to 16 who can swim 25 yards of front crawl and backstroke without holding onto the wall. For more details on registration and costs, contact the park office at 239-658-5880.

MORE SPORTS & FITNESS

Sound Bathing

Experience a soothing sound bathing wellness class led by Andrea with crystal bowls. Relax your body and calm your mind. Classes are on Tuesday and select Wednesday evenings at 6 p.m. on March 26, April 2, 8, 22 and 29. To sign up or for more information, contact Andrea at 845-742-1525. Please confirm your attendance and any potential date changes with her.

Senior yoga

Yoga instructor Alexandra Salazar offers specialized classes for seniors and individuals with mobility challenges at the AMMA. Classes are held at 10 a.m. every other Friday, with the next sessions on April 4, 18, and May 2, 16 and 30. For more information or to register, please email salexa2009@gmail.com.

Tai Chi

Experience a workout at 8 a.m. on Mondays in the AMMA events room. Weather permitting, winter classes may be in the South Park Amphitheater. For registration and updates, contact Myelin Vedel at myvedel@gmail.com or 239-220-4181.

Outdoor Zumba fitness classes

These classes, led by instructor Genesis North, take place on Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in South Park at the amphitheater. For more information, costs and updates, contact Genesis via her website at genesiszumba.as.me.

Quest Martial Arts Academy classes

Martial arts classes are available for four different age groups, with sessions beginning at 5 p.m. and running until 8:30 p.m. The classes, led by 20-year veteran instructor Kenny Quintero, take place in the AMMA event room. Students will learn discipline and self-defense techniques while getting fit and having fun. For more information, call Crystal at 239-371-6073 or visit quest-martialartsacademy.com.

Krav Maga Self-Defense class

Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m., Instructor Tomasz leads self-defense lessons in the AMMA community room. For more information and registration, please call 415-910-2548.

SPORTS LEAGUES & ORGANIZATIONS

Ave Maria hosts various seasonal independent sports leagues and organizations. For current availability and information on approved fitness and sports programs run by independent contractors, please visit avemariamasterassociation.com.

BTL Developmental Basketball League

Brandon Dean, a former NBA skills coach, is hosting a youth basketball league in North Park on Mondays and Wednesdays until May 14. The BTL Developmental League includes divisions for 4-7 years, 8-11 years and 12-14 years, with 10 practices and 8-10 games. For more info, contact Brandon Dean at 786-365-1645 or bdean@btlhoops.com.

Men’s pick-up soccer

Players ages 16 and older looking for a good workout and team camaraderie are invited to join these resident-organized games at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and Sundays at soccer field No.2 in North Park.

Ave Maria Little League

Check out the summer season info for Ave Maria’s inaugural official league. Offering baseball, tee ball and softball for kids ages 4 to 14, this league has a winning history. For details and registration, visit avemarialittleleague.com or contact avemariabaseball@gmail.com.

Carry Permit Fitness

Calling all fitness lovers, Carry Permit Fitness, an outdoor mobile training gym, will be visiting South and North Park in the coming months. Founded by Certified Fitness Professionals Meleik and Ahna Carry, this unique workout experience is perfect for Ave Maria residents. For visit dates and more information, contact 878-348-0278 or visit carrypermitfitness.com. 🌟

BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN

Serving up friendly competition at Winterfest Open pickleball tournament



1. Brice Kadlec and Aiden Cox.

2. Andy, Shane and Aiden McCarty with Aiden Vaughan.

3. Bronze winners in the 3.0 division for ladies 60 and over, Lynn Goodfleisch and Kim Lust.

4. Norma Martinez, Stephanie Foley, Jean Remmert and Joan Thomas.

5. Lisa Caulfield and Eileen Reynolds.

6. Andi Giordano and Annette Summers.

7. A player laser-focused
- on returning the ball.

8. Liz Allen and Donna Zukas.

9. From 95.3 The Beach radio station, Sales Executive Angela Lociza, Promotions Assistant David Rodriguez and On-Air Personality Amy Lynn.

10. Stephanie Foley delivering a winning shot.

11. Cece Quigley and Laura Blaney.

12. Jim Foley and Luis Fiol.

13. Franciska Blankenfeld and Teresa Marquart.

The second annual Winterfest Open at Del Webb Naples showcased a vibrant pickleball tournament. Players of all levels united for a weekend filled with competitive matches, live music and delicious food from local vendors. Attendees enjoyed exciting prizes, giveaways and a live broadcast from 93.5 The Beach. 🌞



Laura Blaney and Angie Gillis.



SANDRA YEYATI / COURTESY PHOTOS

BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN

Commemorating Thomas Peek's lasting legacy



Robert Bender, AMSCD Engineer Ted Tryka, Jennifer Peek, Nora Peek, Mr. Kennedy, AMSCD Manager Allyson Holland, AMSCD Chairman Jay Roth, Former CEO of Wilson Miller Al Reynolds, Lisa Peek Stovall, BCC CEO Blake Gable, Thomas Peek, BCC President of Development David Genson, BCC Vice President of Commercial Real Estate Cee Cee Marinelli, President of Special District Services Todd Wodraska and AMSCD Vice Chairman Tom DiFlorio.

PHOTOS BY SANDRA YEYATI

The Peek Way ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 5, celebrated the legacy of Thomas Peek, a key figure in Ave Maria's development. Peek played a vital role in the town's growth, overseeing residential and commercial projects that shaped the community. This event honors his contributions by dedicating "Peek Way" in his name, recognizing his lasting impact on Ave Maria's expansion and success. 🌞



▲ Thomas Peek giving a speech.



Nora Peek unveiling the Peek Way sign. ►



President of Development David Genson and Thomas Peek.



BCC CEO Blake Gable.



The audience listening to the day's speakers.



President of Special District Services Todd Wodraska.

BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN



AMSCD Engineer Ted Tryka, BCC President of Development David Genson and AMSCD Manager Allyson Holland.



AMSCD Vice Chairman Tom DiFlorio, Ave Maria Lifestyle Director Carol DiFlorio and AMSCD Chairman Jay Roth.



Thomas and Nora Peek with their daughters, Jennifer and Lisa Peek Stovall.



▲ BCC President of Development David Genson, BCC Vice President of Commercial Real Estate Cee Cee Marinelli, President of Special District Services Todd Wodraska, AMSCD Vice Chairman Tom DiFlorio and AMSCD Chairman Jay Roth.

◀ Thomas Peek's brother-in-law and former business partner Robert Bender and Peek.

New Peek Way sign. ▶



PHOTOS BY SANDRA YEATI

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Matthew 28:6*



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