

# metro

## TERM LIMITS TABLED

City Council postpones vote on referendum **Story, B-6**

# Scott proposes \$30 million in raises

## Officers' raise to be proposed in budget

By Dan Scanlan  
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An extra \$30 million in raises for state law enforcement officer hiring and retention was the proposal laid out Wednesday by Gov. Rick Scott at Jacksonville's Florida Highway Patrol headquarters.

Surrounded by troopers, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

officers and Florida Department of Law Enforcement officials, Scott said he will propose the money in his 2018-2019 budget with the funds coming on top of last month's approval of a five percent pay raise for those same sworn officers.

Saying his prayers are with the Jacksonville officer wounded Tuesday during a police chase and

shootout with a bank robbery suspect, he said his proposal would make sure the state wouldn't lose trained officers.

"We have to continue to recruit and retain the best, so we have been able to do pay raises for law enforcement officers," Scott said. "... Every year we have made progress. I think we made progress the last few years."

Funded for 1,974 troopers, but with 165 vacancies and 88 recruits not slated to hit the road until next year, Highway Patrol Director Gene Spaulding said the funding would help increase ranks to the 3,000 he said the state really needs. And higher pay would retain them.

"It will be very instrumental in helping us get our staffing up to where it needs to be, get our vacancies filled and put troopers out on the road that we need there to provide

safety," Spaulding said. "We are the third-largest state in the nation. We have more tourism than any state. If you look at the numbers, it is one of the lowest-staffed highway patrols in the nation."

Citing Florida's 46-year low in overall crime statewide, Scott said the \$30 million would reward current state officers and help attract those already qualified and working elsewhere. The proposal, made

**RAISES** continues on B-3



terry dickson

## Summer's almost gone, the scholastic version

**BRUNSWICK, GA.** | Most kids are still asleep when the sun clears the horizon and shines on their street or road. In just days, many will have to roll out of bed earlier because school buses are going to come rolling down those roads.

Alice Cooper used to sing "Schools out for summer."

The problem is, we've got too summers: the real one and school board summer. The real summer is still a three-month season, but local school boards adopt ever shorter scholastic versions.

Schools across Southeast Georgia will ring their opening bells starting Aug. 4 and the rest will follow three days to a week later. It just shows how things have changed in the rural south.

In the 1980s, Brantley County farmers lobbied school board members to change their minds on opening school before Labor Day. So what was the problem?

Teenagers were still needed on the farm because all the tobacco wouldn't be in the barn when school started. Times have changed, though, and you can now drive a long way in South Georgia without seeing a single stalk of tobacco yellowing in a field.

The same was true of cotton up in the red hills. Cotton was and is picked in the fall so farm kids started school and then missed a long stretch of classes to pick cotton.

Now, machines pick about everything and the crops are diversified. Whoever thought blueberries would be such a huge crop? All things considered, when it comes to eating a handful of what I'm picking, I'll take blueberries over cotton and tobacco any day.

Charlton County schools open Aug. 7 with a calendar like that of many of their neighbors.

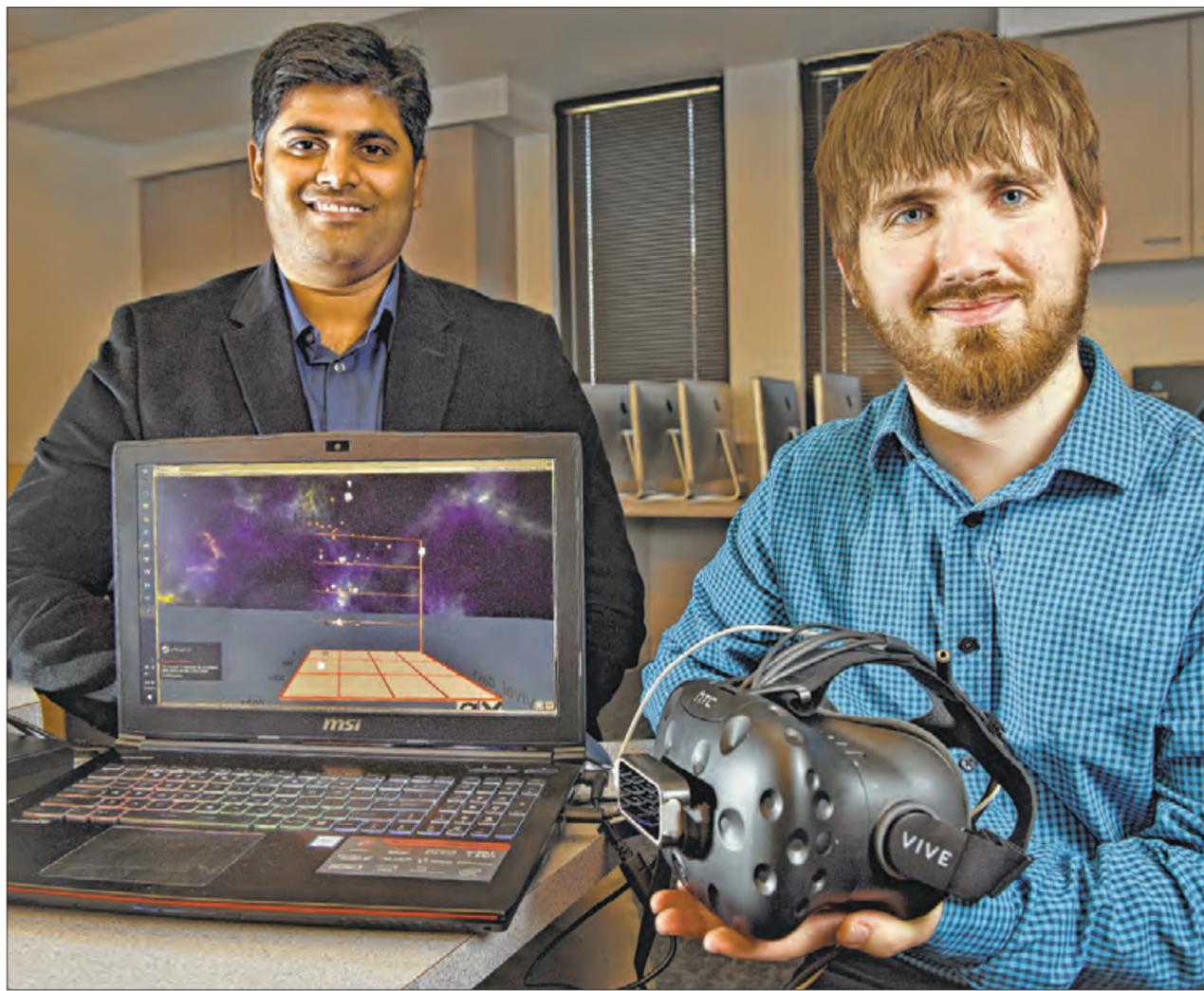
Schools will close Nov. 20-24 for Thanksgiving week, Dec. 21-Jan. 3 for Christmas, Jan. 15 for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, March 16 is just a school holiday and April 2-6 is the spring holiday. There are of course various and sundry teacher work days scattered throughout the year.

Let's compare that calendar to the days students still had summer jobs on the farm. They got Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving, the Christmas break usually started a couple of days before Christmas and the now weeklong spring holiday had another name: Good Friday. That's a lot of days off during the year and thus the shortening of summer.

Air conditioning ruined the whole thing, anyway. In summer, people got outdoors and found some shade in the heat of the day because it was too hot in the house, especially during the dog days. Dog days are supposedly the summer days when it's too hot and still outside to move or even sit in a classroom. A little research showed me that the term dog days goes back a long way and refers to the appearance of Sirius, the Dog Star, in the summer sky. Homer wrote this in "The Iliad:" Sirius rises late in the dark, liquid sky. On summer nights, star of stars, Orion's Dog they call it,

**SUMMER** continues on B-3

# UNF senior creates medical tool



UNF senior Jason Smith (right), a computing and information sciences major, with help from Sandeep Reddivari, UNF assistant professor of computing, created a tool they call VRvisu that allows someone to visualize large and complex set of medical data by creating 3-D representations of MRI and CT scan images. (Bob Mack/Florida Times-Union)

## Device produces 3-D images of MRIs, CT scans

By Charlie Patton  
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Sandeep Reddivari, an assistant professor of computing at the University of North Florida, usually assigns his undergraduate students a project for which they must write programming.

But UNF senior Jason Smith, a computing and information sciences major, already had a project in mind.

"He expressed the idea to me," Reddivari said. "I just helped him to brainstorm the idea. He is the first undergraduate to propose his own project."

Smith's idea was to create a virtual reality tool called VRvisu, which would allow someone to visualize large and complex sets of medical data by creating 3-D representations of MRI and CT scan images of brain tumors with the medical data attached.

Someone wearing virtual reality goggles could not only view the images and the data but could manipulate them by hand. "I found it novel and creative," Reddivari said. "Nobody has done it before."

Smith first had to write a program using data he obtained from the National Cancer Institute's Center for Cancer Research. That was a time-consuming task involving writing 10,000 lines of programming.

They then had to figure out how much the virtual reality equipment including goggles would cost. Having decided they needed \$2,000, they submitted a request to the UNF Office of Undergraduate Research, which gave them the money.

Going forward, Smith's project may prove useful to people doing research on brain tumors. But the fact that the UNF

computing program now has the virtual reality equipment should have ongoing ramifications for many other projects, Reddivari said.

Already Reddivari has talked with the people in UNF's Brooks College of Health about a virtual reality project that would look at the question of what is the proper amount of anesthesia that should be used on people undergoing surgery.

He has talked with people in UNF's Construction Management program, part of the College of Computing, Engineering & Construction, about what useful applications virtual reality might have for its students.

He is planning to assign five projects involving virtual reality to groups of four or five students when fall classes begin.

He'll also incorporate information about the applications

of virtual reality to health care during a course he's teaching next semester on health-care informatics, a class aimed not at UNF students but at people working in health care. Among the potential medical applications of virtual reality, Reddivari said, are virtual robotic surgeries and other procedures as a training tool, relaxing patients with chronic illnesses and helping hospitalized children feel like they are home.

Smith, who will graduate in December, is not your typical undergraduate. After graduating from Ridgeview High School in Orange Park he joined the Air Force. His goal was to see the world. Instead, he said with a wistful smile, he spent four years at Moody Air Force Base outside Valdosta.

**3-D** continues on B-2

# City Council denies plan for Mandarin subdivision



The intersection of County Dock Road and Loretto Road, which opponents said would see an increase in traffic if the proposed subdivision access on County Dock Road was approved. (Bob Self/Florida Times-Union)

By Christopher Hong  
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The Jacksonville City Council on Tuesday shot down a builder's controversial plan to build a new subdivision in Mandarin.

The decision follows months of debate on whether to allow 21 new homes to be built on a 9.3-acre site near County Dock Road.

The developers needed the city to waive zoning rules to allow that many homes on the property, which is currently zoned

for one house per acre.

Many residents objected to the plan. They say the increased housing density and removal of trees would diminish the character of their rural neighborhood. They also argued the new subdivision would put too many cars on surrounding roads that weren't designed to handle heavy traffic.

Supporters of the plan, which included Councilman Matt Schellenberg, said the new subdivision is a much needed addition of quality housing.

The waiver was voted down in a 5 to 14 vote, prompting celebration from a crowd of residents who showed up at the meeting.

How they voted:

Yes: Katrina Brown, Reginald Gaffney, Samuel Newby, Matt Schellenberg and Doyle Carter

No: Greg Anderson, Anna Lopez Brosche, Al Ferraro, Jim Love, Danny Becton, Reginald Brown, Bill Gulliford, Joyce Morgan, Aaron Bowman, John Crescimbeni, Tommy Hazouri, Scott Wilson, Lori Boyer, Garrett Dennis.