



SPORTS | C1
**11TH YEAR
 AND GOAL
 THE SAME AT
 MARATHON**



METRO | B1
**ICEBREAKER:
 MAN BROUGHT
 ICE SKATING
 RINK TO CITY**

The Florida Times-Union

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Voter referendum on JEA sale possible

By David Bauerlein
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The first City Council discussion to air questions about the potential sale of JEA brought a crowd of utility

employees to City Hall where they burst into applause when a JEA customer said she does not see how the utility could be sold without residents first having a chance to vote on it. Northside resident Glenda

O'Connor said JEA has provided good service to its customers. "We all own it," O'Connor said. "I own part of JEA. I'm a voting member of this county. Everybody here is a

voting member who owns JEA. How a certain few can decide to sell our asset, I just don't understand." The City Charter does not require voter approval in a referendum for privatizing JEA,

according to the city General Counsel's office. The decision rests with City Council and the mayor. But City Councilman John **See JEA, A4**

SpaceX's big new rocket blasts off



A Falcon 9 SpaceX heavy rocket lifts off from pad 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral on Tuesday. The Falcon Heavy, has three first-stage boosters, strapped together with 27 engines in all. [JOHN RAOUX/ASSOCIATED PRESS]



Crowds of people, reminiscent of shuttle launch days, line the beaches of Cape Canaveral and Cocoa Beach on Tuesday to watch the launch of the SpaceX Falcon Heavy from Pad 39A at Kennedy Space Center and the return of the rocket's boosters landing at Landing Zone 1 and 2 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. [MALCOLM DENEMARK/FLORIDA TODAY]

By Marcia Dunn
 The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL — SpaceX's big new rocket blasted off Tuesday on its first test flight, carrying a red sports car aiming for an endless road trip past Mars. The Falcon Heavy rose from the same launch pad used by NASA nearly 50 years ago to send men to the moon. With liftoff, the Heavy became the most powerful rocket in use today, doubling the liftoff punch of its closest competitor. The three boosters and 27 engines roared to life at

See SPACEX, A4

Trump unlikely to extend DACA protections

By Alan Fram
 The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Some immigrants may have been "too afraid" or "too lazy" to sign up for the Obama-era program that offers protection from deportation, White

House chief of staff John Kelly said Tuesday as he defended President Donald Trump's proposal on the divisive issue. Kelly discounted the possibility that Trump would announce a temporary **See TRUMP, A4**



White House Chief of Staff John Kelly applauds President Donald Trump at his first State of the Union address, at the Capitol in Washington. [AP PHOTO/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE]

UNF suspends tailgates before athletic events

Drinking is of Athletic Director Lee Moon's concern

By Phillip Heilman
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University of North Florida forward Noah Horchler noticed the usual energy missing Saturday night from the crowd at UNF Arena.

As the Ospreys look for a strong finish to Atlantic Sun play, that could be an issue the team continues to face. With two home men's basketball games remaining during the regular season, student tailgating prior to athletic events was suspended prior to the game as the school tries **See UNF, A4**



UNF forward Noah Horchler (center) battle for the ball with Lipscomb's Rob Mayberry (0) and Matt Rose (12). [WILL DICKEY/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION]



SPACEX

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Kennedy Space Center, as thousands watched from surrounding beaches, bridges and roads, jamming the highways in scenes unmatched since NASA's last space shuttle flight. At SpaceX Mission Control in Southern California, employees screamed, whistled and raised pumped fists into the air as the launch commentators called off each milestone.

Two of the boosters — both recycled from previous launches — returned minutes later for simultaneous, side-by-side touchdowns on land at Cape Canaveral. Sonic booms rumbled across the region with the vertical landings. There was no immediate word on whether the third booster, brand new, made it onto an ocean platform 300 miles offshore.

SpaceX chief executive Elon Musk owns the rocketing Tesla Roadster, which is shooting for a solar orbit that will reach

all the way to Mars. As head of the electric car-maker Tesla, he combined his passions to add a dramatic flair to the Heavy's long-awaited inaugural flight. Ballast for a rocket debut is usually concrete or steel slabs, or experiments.

Cameras mounted on the car fed stunning video of the convertible floating high above the ocean with its driver, a space-suited dummy, named "Starman" after the Davie Bowie song. A sign on the dashboard read: "Don't panic!" Bowie's "Life on Mars?" played in the background at one point.

"View from SpaceX Launch Control," Musk wrote via Twitter. "Apparently, there is a car in orbit around Earth."

Minutes later, he provided a livestream of "Starman" tooling around the blue home planet, looking something like a NASCAR racer out for a Sunday drive, with its right hand on the wheel and the left arm resting on the car's door.

On the eve of the flight, Musk told reporters the company had done all it could to maximize success

and he was at peace with whatever happens: success, "one big boom" or some other calamity. Musk has plenty of experience with rocket accidents, from his original Falcon 1 test flights to his follow-up Falcon 9s, one of which exploded on a nearby pad during a 2016 ignition test.

The Falcon Heavy is a combination of three Falcon 9s, the rocket that the company uses to ship supplies to the International Space Station and lift satellites. SpaceX is reusing first-stage boosters to save on launch costs. Most other rocket makers discard their spent boosters in the ocean.

The Heavy is intended for massive satellites, like those used by the U.S. military and major-league communication companies. Even before the successful test flight, customers were signed up.

"It was awesome like a science fiction movie coming to reality," said former NASA deputy administrator Dava Newman, Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Apollo professor of

astronautics. "They nailed it. Good for them."

Given the high stakes and high drama, Tuesday's launch attracted huge crowds not seen since NASA's final space shuttle flight seven years ago. While the shuttles had more liftoff muscle than the Heavy, the all-time leaders in both size and might were NASA's Saturn V rockets, which first flew astronauts to the moon in 1968.

Not counting Apollo moon buggies, the Roadster is the first automobile to speed right off the planet.

The car faces considerable speed bumps before settling into its intended orbit around the sun, an oval circle stretching from the orbit of Earth on one end to the orbit of Mars on the other. It has to endure a cosmic bombardment during several hours of cruising through the highly charged Van Allen radiation belts encircling Earth. Finally, a thruster has to fire to put the car on the right orbital course.

If it weathers all this, the Roadster will reach the vicinity of Mars in six months, Musk said.

TRUMP

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extension of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program beyond March 5, when its protections could expire. He said the administration would not ask Congress to set a later date to give bargainers more time to reach a bipartisan deal, but said the government would not start deporting "Dreamers" who don't have criminal records.

"They are not a priority for deportation," he told reporters.

Kelly spoke as lawmakers have deadlocked in an effort to reach an immigration compromise. Barring an unlikely last-minute agreement, the Senate is expected to begin debating the issue next week, and it is unclear what if any plan will survive.

"We just don't know where 60 votes are for any particular proposal," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., citing the votes needed for passage. Republicans have a slim majority and any measure will need around a dozen Democratic votes to succeed.

Kelly said Trump's recent offer to provide a path to citizenship for up to 1.8 million immigrants went "beyond what anyone could have imagined." A bipartisan offer by six senators that Trump rejected would have made citizenship possible for the 690,000 "Dreamers" registered under the program, nicknamed DACA, which shields immigrants who came to the U.S. as children and stayed here illegally.

"There are 690,000 official DACA registrants

and the president sent over what amounts to be two and a half times that number, to 1.8 million," Kelly said. "The difference between (690,000) and 1.8 million were the people that some would say were too afraid to sign up, others would say were too lazy to get off their asses, but they didn't sign up."

Ask Mr. Handyman



Michael McCalley

Q: How do I know when my dryer vent needs cleaning?

A: Laundry volume can vary from family to family. Obviously, the more individuals in a household, the more loads of laundry. All of those loads of laundry create lint that over time clogs the dryer vent. Also, some people use fabric softener sheets when drying and this leaves a residue in vents that hastens buildup. Each home has its unique circumstances, but the dryer vent slowly constricts with lint and it feels like your dryer is getting older and less capable. However, what's really happening is that it is unable to vent the moist exhaust, and this slows the drying process. So, if you can't remember when you last cleaned your vents and things seem to be drying slowly, or if you ever have to run a load twice to get it dry, it's time to clean your vents.

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JEA

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Crescimbeni said voters should have a say in it, so he plans to have another public meeting to see what it would take to amend the charter and ensure the question would come up at the ballot box.

Crescimbeni and Councilman Garrett Dennis called the public meeting to talk about the prospect of a JEA sale. Seven other City Council members joined them in the council chambers, where Dennis moved the meeting to accommodate the large turnout.

Councilman Reggie Brown said that based on what he heard, a sale of JEA is about as popular a proposition in Jacksonville as selling the Green Bay Packers, which is owned by fans, would be in Wisconsin.

"That's what I'm hearing from the citizens here today, that you have a good product," Brown told the crowd.

He said JEA is not perfect and could benefit from some fine-tuning. "But it's working," Brown said. "Let's continue to move forward with things that are working in Jacksonville."

City Councilman Danny Becton said selling JEA is not inevitable.

"Nothing here is a foregone conclusion," Becton said. "Some people think that it might be, but it's not."

At the request of JEA board members, the utility is doing a study about the viability of selling JEA and what it would be worth to an investor-owned firm. The utility has said that report will be finished this month or in March, but there is no firm timeline.

"Analyzing the financial value of JEA in the marketplace is extraordinarily complex," JEA spokeswoman Gerri Boyce said in a statement. "We don't have a timeline on the completion of the study."

Mayor Lenny Curry has said that he is waiting for JEA's valuation study.

"There is no done deal,"

he said last week. "They'll have to get a valuation. It will have to be discussed with the public. Nothing gets done without this City Council."

JEA has said that when it finishes its study, it will release the report to the public so there can be "healthy debate" among JEA board members and City Council about whether to invite offers to purchase the utility.

At Tuesday's meeting, Brown said he wants to know whether city leaders have already had discussions with any private companies about buying JEA.

"If there were any conversations made with potential owners, that should be divulged as well," Brown said.

Other questions raised by council members and speakers during the public comment period were what would happen to retirement benefits and civil service protections for JEA employees if a private company bought the utility, what the prospects are for burying overhead power lines, and what will

be done to extend water and sewer service into neighborhoods that have been waiting for years to get it.

Crescimbeni said that until there is a "tangible plan" before City Council, it's too early to talk about how privatizing JEA could affect pocket-book issues such as rates for the utility's customers and paychecks for its employees.

"I would encourage you to be patient and see where this goes," Crescimbeni said in closing comments.

City Council President Anna Brosche said she expects there will be more meetings, but so far, City Council hasn't received any information about what the process would be for the various steps that a sale of JEA would entail.

"But I'm committed to my colleagues to make sure that happens in a way that we have enough time to process the information that we have before us, as well as making sure the public is involved in the legislative process," Brosche said.

UNF

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to revamp its efforts to ensure student safety.

"It was a university decision, including athletics," UNF Athletic Director Lee Moon said. "There were some issues going on that had to be addressed that were very critical and things that were going on that needed to be straightened out."

"Tailgating, by definition, is probably not what is going on."

Speaking Saturday night following UNF's 97-91 victory over Stetson, Moon said the issues involved drinking responsibly and determining the best way to have more students who come to tailgates actually attend games.

Moon said more than 1,000 students are typically at each tailgate event — branded as "Swoop-gating," the tailgates are held in Lot 18 near the school's athletics facilities — but often only about 200 tailgaters make it into the game.

"The rest of them stay out there and drink," Moon said. "That's not what tailgating is, not what it should be. It should be about school spirit."

UNF's Division of Student Affairs will now handle student tailgates, said Everett Malcolm, an associate vice president for student affairs.

Malcolm said meetings with student groups to determine how to

"re-engineer" the tailgates will begin Feb. 13. His hope is to have a plan in place by the academic year's end.

Elements of re-branded tailgates could include music, free food and other giveaways, Malcolm said, with the goal of getting more students to enjoy themselves responsibly.

"What we are trying to do is, regardless of who the opponent is at these select games, we want to provide an entertainment venue that will make them all want to come in for the basketball game and support their fellow students," Malcolm said.

The decision will likely have short-term consequences, as seen Saturday night.

UNF announced a crowd of 2,001 — the third-biggest crowd at UNF

Arena this season behind games against Jacksonville University and Florida Gulf Coast University — but fewer students in attendance made for a different feel.

"Whenever the tailgates get canceled, it seems like they never come," Horchler said. "That's pretty much how it happens."

Asked if having students attend makes an impact, Horchler added: "It helps us play off the energy. They get loud and rowdy. Definitely, it's exciting when they're here."

The Ospreys have five games remaining before the start of the conference's postseason tournament.

UNF plays two games on the road before returning home to host South Carolina Upstate (Feb. 15)

and NJIT (Feb. 17). The regular season concludes with a game at rival JU on Feb. 22.

Locked in a tight race for conference positioning, coach Matthew Driscoll was clearly frustrated by the decision to suspend tailgates the rest of the season.

Now in his ninth season with the program, Driscoll has placed an emphasis on getting more students to attend games — going as far as giving out his cell phone number at orientation — and called the decision "disappointing."

"It's almost a slap in the face," Driscoll said. "Like we did something wrong or the guys did something wrong. That's the part that hurts."

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