

No. 22 Florida Gators at No. 12 **Tennessee Volunteers**

Dining Deals)cala StarBanr

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2022 | OCALA.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Median home price is up, sales down

Ocala Star-Banner USA TODAY NETWORK

Marion County's median sale price for existing single-family homes continues to climb, with prices jumping by 16.7% in August when compared with the same month last year, according to the Ocala Marion County Association of Realtors.

The median price rose from \$240,000 in August 2021 to \$280,000 this year. The average price rose from \$333,149 in August 2021 to \$340,515 this year, an increase of 2.2%.

Experts say the median sales price is the best gauge of home values. Median is the middle sale price after all sales are ranked from highest to lowest. Average is when all sales are added together and

divided by the number of sales. Average prices can be skewed when multi-million dollar home sales are in the mix.

The number of existing single-family homes sold in Marion decreased by 23.4% year over year, ticking down from 740 in August 2021 to 567 this year.

The overall total sales volume of existing single-family homes in Marion County was \$193.1 million, down from \$246.5 million in August 2021. That's a decrease of 21.7% year over year.

Pending inventory decreased by 41.1%, from 1,276 in August 2021 to 751 this year. There was 2.3 months of available inventory in August, up from 1.5 months a year ago.

The median time to contract a home from the time it hits the market was 15 days in August, up from August 2021's nine days. The median number of days 57 in August 2021.

The number of active listings was

1,469 at the end of August, up from 980 in August 2021. The number of new listings was 801 in August, down 4% from 834 last year.

Manufactured home median price up 49.7%

The median sales price of a manufactured home in Marion climbed 49.7% in August, from \$93,500 in August 2021 to \$140,000 this year, the report stated.

The average sales price hit \$145,164 in August, a jump of 7.7% since last year. The average price was \$135,115 in August

Sales of existing Marion County manufactured homes increased by 17.1%

to sell a home was 63 in August, up from in August, compared with the same month a year ago, from 76 in 2021 to 89 this year.

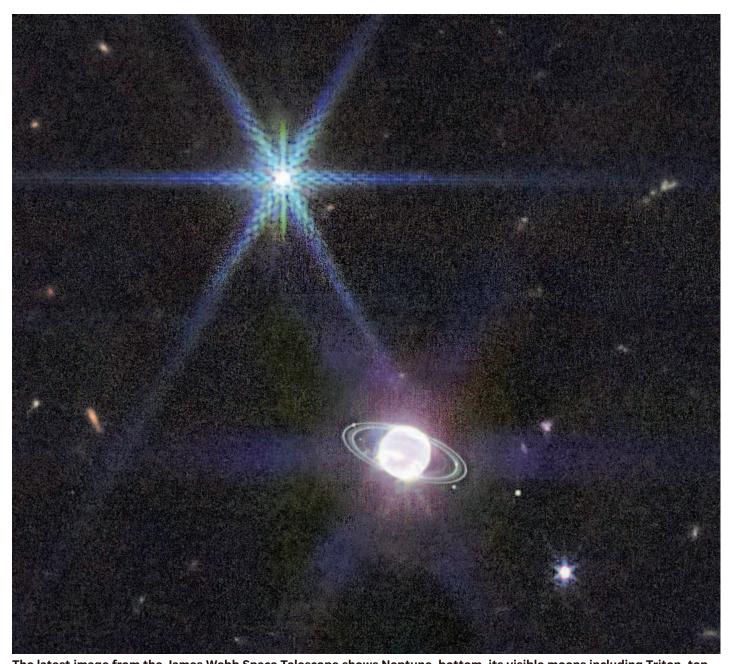
Overall, the total sales volume for manufactured homes increased by 26.3%, from \$10.3 million in August 2021 to \$13 million this year.

Pending sales of Marion County manufactured homes increased by 6.2% in August, up from 65 in August 2021 to 69 this year. There were 85 manufactured homes in inventory in August 2022, down from 89 last year.

The median time to contract a manufactured home from the time it hits the market was only 12 days in August, down 45.5% from August 2021's 22 days. Median number of days to sell a manufactured home was 50 in August,

See HOMES, Page 2A

Neptune and rings shine in photos from new space telescope



The latest image from the James Webb Space Telescope shows Neptune, bottom, its visible moons including Triton, top, several bright, narrow rings encircling it and some fainter dust bands. NASA VIA AP

Marcia Dunn ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE CANAVERAL – Neptune and its

rings haven't looked this good in dec-

NASA released new glamour shots of our solar system's outermost planet Wednesday taken by the James Webb Space Telescope. The pictures taken in July show not only Neptune's thin rings, but its faint dust bands, never before observed in the infrared, as well as seven of its 14 known moons.

Webb showed Jupiter at its best in a series of fresh photos released last

Launched less than a year ago, the \$10 billion Webb is spending most of its time peering much deeper into the universe. Astronomers hope to see back to almost the beginning of time when the first stars and galaxies were forming.

NASA's Voyager 2 was the first spacecraft to see Neptune in all its gaseous glory, during a 1989 flyby. No other spacecraft have visited the icy, blue planet. So it's been three decades since astronomers last saw these rings with such detail and clarity, said the Space Science Institute's Heidi Hammel, a planetary astronomer working with

Hammel tweeted that she wept when she saw the rings, yelling and making "my kids, my mom, even my cats look."

Webb is the world's biggest, most powerful telescope, operating 1 million miles from Earth. It rocketed into

See TELESCOPE, Page 3A

Which nonprofits received the most during **Give4Marion?**

By Joe Callahan

Ocala Star-Banner USA TODAY NETWORK

The third annual Give4Marion campaign, an online fundraiser for nonprofit organizations, set a new record this year, collecting \$771,075 in just 33 hours to benefit 87 nonprofit organizations.

The event kicked off at 10 a.m. Tuesday and concluded Wednesday at 7 p.m., officials noted. In all, 2,537 donors gave 3,714 monetary gifts.

The Community Foundation launched the event in 2020 while the community was in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, the two-day event raised \$310,000. In 2021, the total was \$530,000, a 71% increase. This year was a record, surpassing last year.

See GIVE4MARION, Page 2A

YouthBuild team excited to welcome 15th class

By Joe Callahan

Ocala Star-Banner USA TODAY NETWORK

Five years ago, Zachariah Slaughter dropped out of high school. He was getting into trouble and then he met Heaven Colon, an Eckerd Connects Workforce Development program

Slaughter, now 23, was introduced in 2018 to the Phoenix Rising Youth-Build program, which helps young adults get a high school diploma. The program paid participants to get a diploma and, at the same time, learn

See YOUTHBUILD, Page 3A



Powell's stark message: Inflation fight may cause recession

Christopher Rugaber

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The Federal Reserve delivered its bluntest reckoning Wednesday of what it will take to finally tame painfully high inflation: Slower growth, higher unemployment and potentially a recession.

Speaking at a news conference, Chair Jerome Powell acknowledged what many economists have been saying for months: That the Fed's goal of engineering a "soft landing" – in which it would manage to slow growth enough to curb inflation but not so much as to cause a recession – looks increasingly unlikely.

"The chances of a soft landing," Powell said, "are likely to diminish" as the Fed steadily raises borrowing costs to slow the worst streak of inflation in four decades. "No one knows whether this process will lead to a recession or, if so, how significant that recession would be."

Before the Fed's policymakers would consider halting their rate hikes, he said, they would have to see continued slow growth, a "modest" increase in unemployment and "clear evidence" that inflation is moving back down to their 2% target.

"We have got to get inflation behind us," Powell said. "I wish there were a painless way to do that. There isn't."

Powell's remarks followed another substantial three-quarters of a point rate hike – its third straight – by the Fed's policymaking committee. Its lat-



"The chances of a soft landing," Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell said, "are likely to diminish" as the Fed steadily raises borrowing costs to slow the worst streak of inflation in four decades. DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

est action brought the Fed's key shortterm rate, which affects many consumer and business loans, to 3% to 3.25%. That's its highest level since early 2008.

Falling gas prices have slightly lowered headline inflation, which was a still-painful 8.3% in August compared with a year earlier. Those declining prices at the gas pump might have contributed to a recent rise in President Joe Biden's public approval ratings, which Democrats hope will boost their prospects in the November midterm elections.

On Wednesday, the Fed officials also forecast more jumbo-size hikes to come, raising their benchmark rate to roughly 4.4% by year's end – a full point higher than they had envisioned as recently as June. And they expect to raise the rate again next year, to about 4.6%. That would be the highest level since 2007.

By raising borrowing rates, the Fed makes it costlier to take out a mortgage

or an auto or business loan. Consumers and businesses then presumably borrow and spend less, cooling the economy and slowing inflation.

Other major central banks are taking aggressive steps, too, to combat global inflation, which has been fueled by the global economy's recovery from the CO-VID-19 pandemic and then Russia's war against Ukraine. On Thursday, Britain's central bank raised its key interest rate by a half-percentage point – to its highest level in 14 years. It was the Bank of England's seventh straight move to increase borrowing costs at a time of rising food and energy prices, which have fueled a severe cost-of-living crisis.

This month, Sweden's central bank raised its key interest rate by a full point. And the European Central Bank delivered its largest-ever rate increase with a three-quarter-point hike for the 19 countries that use the euro currency.

In their quarterly economic forecasts Wednesday, the Fed's policymakers also projected that economic growth will stay weak for the next few years, with unemployment rising to 4.4% by the end of 2023, up from its current level of 3.7%. Historically, economists say, any time unemployment has risen by a halfpoint over several months, a recession has always followed.

"So the (Fed's) forecast is an implicit admission that a recession is likely, unless something extraordinary happens," said Roberto Perli, an economist at Piper Sandler, an investment bank.

YouthBuild

Continued from Page 1A

trade skills that can land them a career job.

"I was like a troubled kid," said Slaughter, who spoke at a Wednesday evening event designed to recruit 24 new students for the 15th class of the Phoenix Rising Youthbuild program class.

"I didn't really care about school, dropped out, and was just doing a lot of stupid stuff," Slaughter said. He completed the program and served the U.S. Marines for two years until an injury led to an early honorable discharge.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity," he told young people who gathered Wednesday at a city community center on Northwest Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. "It was such a good experience. It helped me grow mentally. It was like a stepping stone."

His impromptu speech came during a two-hour open house that was designed to give young people and their relatives a chance to learn about the nationally acclaimed program, which gives people a second chance.

The event helped acquaint interested participants, family members, and all community partners with Phoenix Rising YouthBuild program and the benefits to young adults who may now want to get their lives on track.

The award-winning program, now in its 11th year, "helps revitalize economically challenged neighborhoods while making a positive difference in the lives of those ages 18-24 who are willing to work, in need of a high school diploma, and interested in employment and/or postsecondary education or training," a press release states.

Detailed program overview sessions about the program will be held at 10 a.m. Sept. 30 and 2 p.m. Oct. 4. Both sessions will be held at the CareerSource CLM career center, 2703 NE 14th St., Ocala.

Because space is limited, those interested in attending those program overview session must schedule a session in advance by calling (352) 291-9550, ext. 1215, or by texting YB to (352) 299-7999.

Phoenix Rising was spearheaded in 2011 by Sam Williams, who was then the Ocala police chief. The program was created in collaboration with Career-Source Citrus Levy Marion and its youth services provider, Eckerd Connects Workforce Development, as well as Habitat for Humanity of Marion County and the City of Ocala.

Additional primary partners are the Marion County Board of County Commissioners, College of Central Florida (Hampton Center), Marion County Sheriff's Office, Neighborhood Housing and Development Corporation, Florida State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and Equal Housing Opportunity.

Laura Byrnes, CareerSource CLM's director of communications, notes in a press release that through Phoenix Rising YouthBuild, "students receive hands-on and classroom training designed to develop workforce skills that lead to employment."

"A key feature of the program involves construction of Habitat for Humanity of Marion County homes for deserving families," the release notes. "Additionally, students may earn their high school diploma as well as industry-recognized certifications while receiving weekly participation payments."

A grant totaling nearly \$845K is to train 48 students, build four homes

Officials said that \$844,712 in program funding was obtained via a grant secured by CareerSource CLM from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

The two-year grant covers training for 48 students and construction of four homes. To date, 291 young adults have graduated from Phoenix Rising programs in Marion and Citrus counties, a release notes.

Students participating in the program have helped build 48 homes. Of those 291, 105 have earned high school diplomas, and 250 have gained employment and/or enrolled in postsecondary programs.

In addition, graduates have earned 1,307 industry certifications including forklift and warehouse certifications, OSHA certification, Florida Safe Staff Food Handling, Home Builders Institute PACT Carpentry certification and the National Retail Federation Customer Service and Sales credential, the release notes.

Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn: It is 'going to be a great experience for y'all.'

Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn spoke at Wednesday's open house, telling everyone that this is "going to be a great experience for y'all."

Guinn pointed to Jared Wilhelm, now a success mentor with the Phoenix Rising Youthbuild, adding that the community is "really proud of him."

Like Slaughter, who was in the program last year, Wilhelm shared that he really "enjoyed the construction aspect of the program."

"I wouldn't have wanted anyone to



Paul Scrambling, left, helps hold a wall in place as Kim Grey, project manager for the Marion County Phoenix Rising YouthBuild program, hammers in a nail during the Habitat for Humanity Marion County Inc.'s Raise The Wall event in 2020. DOUG ENGLE, DOUG ENGLE/OCALA STAR BANNER

meet me 10 months ago, because I I was a completely different person," said Slaughter, adding he was not a social person and he was a high school dropout. "I'm not ashamed to admit it because I'm here now."

Joe Callahan can be reached at (352) 817-1750 or at joe.callahan@starbanner.com. Follow him on Twitter @JoeOcalaNews.

Program information

• A program overview for prospective students will be held on Sept. 30 at 10 a.m. and Oct. 4 at 2 p.m. at the CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion career center, 2703 NE 14th St., in Ocala.

- Because space is limited, those interested in attending those program overview session must schedule a session in advance by calling (352) 291-9550, ext. 1215, or by texting YB to (352) 299-7999.
- Prospective students will "try out" for enrollment in the program by participating in mental toughness and teambuilding exercises, Oct. 11-13.
- Student selection will be made Oct. 8-19
- Applications will be completed from Oct. 20-28.
 - Classroom training begins Nov. 2.Construction is tentatively slated
- to start in January 2023. The location is pending.



THE LAST ROOF YOU'LL EV

Telescope

Continued from Page 1A

space last December.

The observatory is in good health, according to NASA, except for one item.

NASA reported this week that a mechanism on one of Webb's instruments showed signs of increased fric-

tion late last month in one of four observing modes. Observations are on hold in this one particular observing track, as a review board decides on a path forward.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.