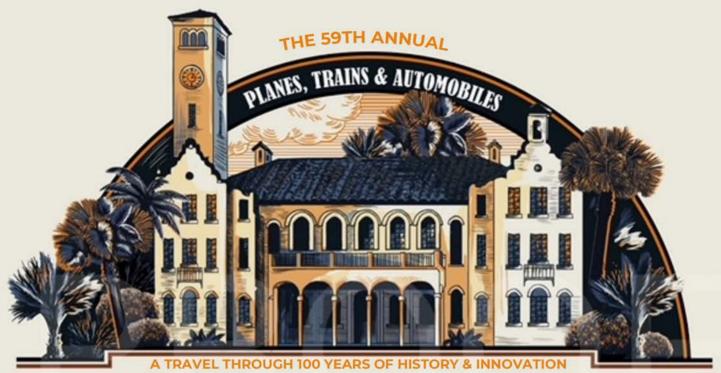
FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT PRESENTS





CELEBRATING THE CITY OF LABELLE'S CENTENNIAL

BARRON PARK LABELLE, FLORIDA FEBRUARY - 22ND & 23RD, 2025



Welcome to LaBelle's 59th Annual Swamp Cabbage Festival 2025

It is with great pleasure to welcome one and all to our annual LaBelle Swamp Cabbage Festival. While you enjoy it, remember this festival would not be possible without the tireless cooperation and involvement the great City of LaBelle, the Hendry County Sheriff's Department, Hendry County Fire & EMS, local organizations, local businesses and of course our town folks. Everyone works hard to make this festival the best it can be.

A special thanks to the Swamp Cabbage Festival team for bringing it all together. Thank you all for your dedication and your community involvement; it would not be possible for this to happen without you.

Last but not least, our guests are what this weekend is all about. Please enjoy the hospitality our town has to offer. Have a great time at the festival, be safe and remember it is always the last FULL weekend of February!

Enjoy the festival and hope to see you next year!

Special Thanks to:

Shelly Sampers Leslie Porges
Tom Sampers Preston Long
Keitha Daniels Sue Williams

Dr. Sue Buntic And all the other volunteers

Becca Pratt that make this event a success!



PO Box 2081 LaBelle, FL 33935

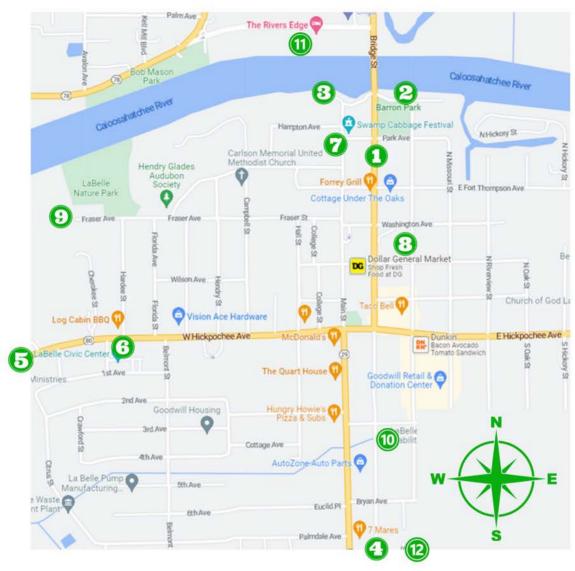
863.675.2995





www.labelleswampcabbagefestival.org

Getting Around LaBelle



- 1. Parade Route-Bridge Street (Hwy 29) Parade Start
- 2. Barron Park Main Event
- 3. Wharf- Night on the Town
- 4. Rodeo Grounds South on Hwy 29 (Off map)
- 5. LaBelle Brewery Swamp Stomp 5k, West on Hwy, a.k.a. Hickpochee Ave (Off map)
- 6. LaBelle Civic Center City Breakfast
- 7. First Baptist Church Event Parking
- 8. Synovous Bank & Lee Street Show and Shine Car Show
- 9. Hendry House Parade Line up (horses)
- 10. Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church Parade End
- 11. LaBelle Boat Dock Bass Tournament
- 12. LaBelle Municipal Airport Cowboy Way (Off map)



History of Armadillo Races

In order to support a scholarship fund for LaBelle's graduating seniors, the LaBelle Rotary Club began hosting armadillo races at the twenty-sixth annual Swamp Cabbage Festival. The armadillo races were the brainchild of the late John Petrosky.

Mr. Petrosky, a LaBelle Rotarian, convinced his reluctant fellow members that this activity would be a successful fundraiser for the local scholarship fund. With much skepticism as to the potential success of armadillo races, the club hosted the inaugural armadillo races in 1992.

How it began...

SWAMP CABBAGE FESTIVAL

In 1966, the newly formed LaBelle Jaycees were searching for a project to sponsor that would benefit the entire community. Gary Lucia, the organization's first president, appointed T. E. Hedges and Bernard Rasmussen to study the idea and develop a proposal. Noting the abundance of sabal palms, or as they are called locally "cabbage trees," in the area and remembering their importance to early settlers as both building material and food, Rasmussen suggested a "Swamp Cabbage Festival." Hedges added this should be popular with visitors who had heard of the native delicacy - also known as "Hearts of Palm" - but had not tried it.

The Jaycees adopted the project and began promoting an old-fashioned pioneer festival honoring Florida's State Tree. The idea caught the community's imagination and as ideas started to snowball, other organizations were invited to participate. Soon, all of LaBelle was involved in preparation for the first Swamp Cabbage Festival.

The first festival held in 1967 was such a success that LaBelle Jaycees organized a permanent Swamp Cabbage Festival Committee with representatives from civic groups and churches. The committee successfully guided the efforts of the community through the next five festivals, each one bigger and better than the ones before. Joe Thomas, Chairman of the 1973 Swamp Cabbage Festival, said, "the Swamp Cabbage Festival has become one of the major events in Southwest Florida because of the pride people here have in our community. The festival is our way of expressing this pride and an old-fashioned, but never out of date, American spirit of cooperation."

Through the medium of the Swamp Cabbage Festival, LaBelle extends a sincere welcome to all.







Planes, Trains and Automobiles

A Travel through 100 Years of History & Innovation

This year, the Swamp Cabbage Festival is going full steam ahead as we celebrate the city of LaBelle's 100th anniversary! Our theme, "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles: A Travel Through History," takes us on a journey through the past century of innovation and exploration. Join us as we honor LaBelle's centennial and marvels throughout our city's lifetime.

In the early 1900s, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone - known as The Vagabonds - embarked on legendary road trips to explore the natural beauty and emerging travel opportunities of the United States. These trips were more than leisurely excursions; they helped to popularize road trips and even kickstarted RV camping as we know it today!

One of their destinations? The LaBelle area! Back then, before it was a city, the area was known for its scenic views and peaceful atmosphere. The Vagabonds made their way through our region, setting up camp and enjoying the Florida wilderness.

This incredible connection highlights the role of travel and innovation in shaping history both nationally and locally. As LaBelle celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, the Swamp Cabbage Festival will honor not just the marvels of transportation but also the stories and figures who made history right here in our backyard.

So join us for a journey through time as we explore the planes, trains, and automobiles that defined the last century - and the incredible city of LaBelle!

Taking flight with the Aviation

The story of aviation's rise begins with the Wright Brother's groundbreaking first flight in 1903, a moment that opened the skies to human exploration. By the 1930's, aviation Pioneers were pushing the boundaries of what was possible in the air. This decade saw iconic achievements such as Amelia Earhart's solo transatlantic flight in 1932, making her the first woman to accomplish this daring feat, and Charles Lindbergh's earlier 1927 solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic inspiring a generation. Aviation technology advanced rapidly, with planes becoming faster, more reliable, and capable of long-distance travel.

Beyond passenger transport, early aviation played a crucial role in aerial photography, allowing communities to document their landscapes from above. Aerial imagery provided valuable insights for mapping, agriculture, and urban development. Photographs taken from a low-flying aircraft, offered a remarkable glimpses into the towns, capturing their layout and growth during an era when aviation was revolutionizing how we saw the world.



Aerial view of LaBelle. 1900 (circa). State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

This scene shows an view of the Caloosahatchee River and Downtown LaBelle. Fort Thompson Ave. is street on the right.

Located just south of downtown LaBelle, the LaBelle Municipal Airport (X14) has been a vital part of the region's aviation history, serving general aviation pilots and supporting agricultural and economic development in Hendry County. Known for its welcoming atmosphere and affordable fuel prices, the airport provides essential services such as aircraft tie-downs, hangars, and a pilot lounge. In 2019, a new facility was completed, offering modern amenities for pilots and visitors. Whether serving as a hub for flight training, crop-dusting operations, or recreational flying, LaBelle Municipal Airport continues to play a key role in connecting the community to the skies.

Running the Rails with Trains

Trains have long been a symbol of progress, connecting communities and fueling economic growth. The advent of railroads in the 19th and early 20th centuries revolutionized travel and commerce, bringing people and goods to places that were once remote. At the turn of the 20th century, Florida's economy was booming with industries that relied on its vast natural resources. One of the most significant contributors to this growth was the timber industry, which shaped the development of many small towns including LaBelle.

Among the key players in this industry was the E.W. Bond Lumber Company, which not only harvested vast quantities of Florida's pine and cypress but also played a pivotal role in the transportation network that connected rural communities to larger markets. The company's lumber train to LaBelle was more than just a means of moving timber; it was a lifeline that helped drive commerce, settlement, and innovation in travel.



E.W. Bond Lumber Company train. 1938-11-30. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

Before modern highways and trucks, railroads were the backbone of Florida's transportation infrastructure. The lumber train operated by E.W. Bond Lumber was part of a broader network that linked remote logging camps to key towns, fueling economic activity. The construction of the Seaboard Air Line Railway, completed by 1927, was another transformative moment in LaBelle's history. This Railway connected LaBelle to nearby Fort Myers, opening up new opportunities for trade, travel, and development in the region. Railways like E.W. Bond Lumber and Seaboard Air Line railways were instrumental in shaping Florida's growth, bridging the gap between rural towns and burgeoning cities.

All aboard the SWAMP CABBAGE EXPRESS TRAIN!

Thanks to a generous private donation the Porges Family, the festival is excited to have a new miniature train that will debut at this year's festival parade!

Paving the Way for the Future with Automobiles

The Ford Model T, first produced on October 1, 1908, revolutionized the world of transportation and became a symbol of progress and accessibility. Henry Ford's innovation in developing the moving assembly line in 1913 drastically reduced production time and costs, making Automobiles affordable for the average family. This groundbreaking approach not only democratized travel but also transformed industries worldwide.

The arrival of automobiles in LaBelle marked a transformative era, connecting communities and fostering economic growth. However, in the early 20th century, automobile travel was far from smooth sailing. Before modern roads and highways, many Florida towns, including LaBelle, relied on unpaved streets, making travel a rugged and sometimes unpredictable experience. Drivers navigated through dirt roads that turned to deep ruts after heavy rains, challenging both vehicles and their passengers.



A celebration in LaBelle, Florida. 1929 (circa). State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory

This scene highlights a pivotal moment when automobiles began reshaping daily life, bridging the gap between Florida's early settlement days and the transportation advancements to come.

The accompanying historical photograph captures a parade on Bridge Street, before the road was paved, offering a glimpse into LaBelle's past. The image showcases early automobiles lined along the unpaved street, with notable landmarks in the background, including the First Frame Bank of LaBelle, the F. Watts Hall store (which housed the post office), the Everett Hotel, and Barron Park.

From these early dirt roads to today's modern highways, automobiles have played a crucial role in shaping LaBelle's growth. As we celebrate the "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles" theme at this year's festival, we honor the past while looking toward the future of transportation in our community.

Keep your eyes peeled during this year's parade as there will be several antique cars in the procession, and a Show and Shine Car Show, highlighting these mechanical marvels.

Swamp Cabbage UR SHILL USITE

FEBRUARY



SATURDAY



PARKING/REGISTRATION BEGINS @ 8:00AM

\$20 DONATION

SYNOVUS BANK 155 NORTH BRIDGE STREET LABELLE, FLORIDA

4 CATEGORIES

- COWBOYS CHOICE (STUDENTS VOTE)
- PEOPLE'S CHOICE (TICKETS TO YOTE \$1)
- WILD CARD (CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING)
- BEST IN SHOW (SPECIAL JUDGES PANEL)



TROPHY PRESENTATIONS

@ 2:00PM

CARSHOW4CRIMINAL JUSTICE@GMAIL.COM





Artist: Becca Pratt

The Caloosahatchee River has been both boon and bane to LaBelle. Early settlers depended on the river for transportation, but the river would - from time to time - overflow its banks and endanger lives, home and crops. From 1880 to 1930, steamboats plied the Caloosahatchee carrying freight, passengers and mail.

Now, the Caloosahatchee - widened, deepened and broadened - is part of the Okeechobee Waterway connecting Florida's two coasts. The river is used for transportation, recreation and irrigation of agricultural lands; also, area residents have no fear of floods which were a certainty in earlier times.

The LaBelle area is well-known for leisure. The Caloosahatchee affords many pleasurable hours to the artist, fisherman, and water-skier. The banks of the river in the LaBelle - Fort Denaud area abound with fossils - both vertebrate and invertebrate - and attract both amateur and professional paleontologists.

The 2020 census data shows a diverse population of nearly 40,000 people calling Hendry County their home. Communities located here are LaBelle, Clewiston, Fort Denaud, Harlem, Montura, Pioneer, Port LaBelle, Felda, and Flaghole.

The Sabal Palm: Florida's State Tree That Isn't Actually a Tree

The Sabal Palm (Sabal Palmetto), also known as the Cabbage Palm, holds the honor of being Florida's official state tree. However, despite its name, it is not actually classified as a true tree. Instead, it belongs to a group of plants known as monocots, a category that includes grasses, lilies, and orchids. Unlike traditional trees, which grow by adding rings of woody tissue each year, monocots grow from a single embryonic leaf and maintain a fibrous, rather than woody, structure.

Native to Florida, the Sabal Palm thrives in a variety of environments, from coastal shores to inland forests, and is remarkably resistant to cold temperatures. It is a popular choice for landscaping due to its adaptability and resilience.

Growth and Appearance

The Sabal Palm can reach heights of up to 80 feet, with a trunk diameter of approximately two feet or less. When young, the trunk is covered with a pattern of "boots"—the remains of old frond stalks. As the palm matures, these boots gradually shed, leaving behind a smoother, grayish-brown trunk.

Unlike traditional trees with broad leaves, the Sabal Palm features large, fan-shaped fronds that are glossy and vibrant shades of green. These fronds provide ample shade and give the tree its signature tropical appearance.

Swamp Cabbage: A Survival Food

One of the most unique aspects of the Sabal Palm is that its heart—the tender core of the trunk—can be harvested for food. This heart, commonly referred to as swamp cabbage, is found within the top three feet of the trunk. Though not a traditional food source today, early pioneers and Native American tribes relied on swamp cabbage as a crucial source of sustenance during difficult times.

However, harvesting the heart kills the tree, as it does not regenerate once removed. While Hearts of Palm can be found in some grocery stores and restaurants, these are typically sourced from peach palms, which can be harvested sustainably.

The Sabal Palm in the Wild

Sabal Palms grow wild throughout the southeastern United States, primarily propagating through natural seed dispersal. While modern agriculture does not rely on the Sabal Palm as a food source, many cultures worldwide continue to harvest palm hearts as part of their traditional diets.

With its rich history, ecological importance, and unmistakable beauty, the Sabal Palm remains an enduring symbol of Florida's natural heritage. Whether growing in the wild, lining city streets, or serving as a historical food source, this remarkable monocot continues to play a vital role in Florida's landscape.



THE SOUNDS OF FLORIDA PODCAST

Hosted by Keisha Burchell Webb

The Sounds of Florida Podcast premier season features exclusive interviews and performances from Aydin Holt, Charlie Pace, Whey Jennings, Andrew Morris Band, and Matrasa Lynn—all of whom will be rocking the stage at this year's Swamp Cabbage Festival!

- Watch on YouTube Don't forget to like & subscribe!
 - Listen now at: <u>LaBelleSwampCabbageFestival.org</u>

From country to Southern rock, we're bringing the heartbeat of Florida's music scene straight to you!

2025 Festival Parade

The festivities on Saturday of the event weekend begins with our annual parade. Each year the parade seems to get bigger than the last, for its two-mile procession through the city.

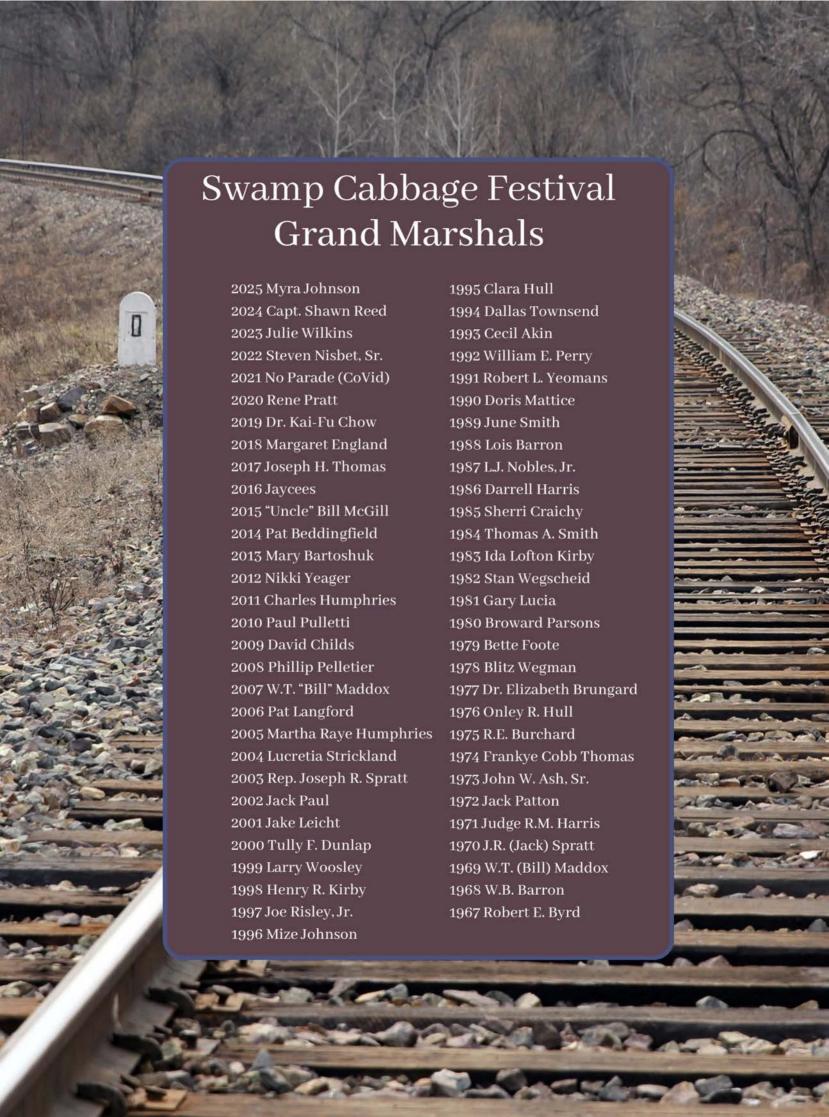
The Swamp Cabbage Festival Parade is unique because of the fact that commercial participation is not encouraged as in most parades. Participation is by local residents who use native materials to decorate their floats. In addition to the floats, there will be walking units, bands, and horses.

The parade line up begins at 8:00am and the parade will begin at 10:00am at the foot of the Caloosahatchee Bridge, proceeding south down Bridge Street.

This year the entries will be judged for the Best of in nine categories. They are:

- 1. Best Overall
- 2. Civic/Non-Profit Organization
- 3. Faith-based
- 4. Retirement Community
- 5. Business Organization
- 6. Marching Band
- 7. Youth/Family
- 8. Good Neighbor, Swamp Cabbage Festival Themed
- 9. Good Neighbor, In General

Judging will take place during the parade. Winners will be announced during the noontime festivities at Barron Park.



Grand Marshal

The Swamp Cabbage Festival is proud to announce Myra Johnson as the 2025 Grand Marshal, honoring her unwavering dedication to the LaBelle community and her tireless advocacy for veterans. A proud Navy veteran, Myra has devoted her life to serving others, both in and out of uniform. As the Commander of the American Legion, she works closely with local veterans, ensuring they receive the recognition and support they deserve. She is the driving force behind the annual Christmas Wreath program, which honors veterans by placing wreaths on their graves in local cemeteries. Her dedication extends beyond ceremonies—she is present at nearly every veteran's funeral, participating in the gun salute to pay tribute to their service.



Myra Johnson

In addition to her veteran advocacy, Myra has played a vital role in shaping one of the festival's most cherished traditions—the Swamp Cabbage Queen Pageant. For over 15 years, she has served as a director, guiding and mentoring young women in the community. Her commitment to service also took her to the national stage, where she proudly represented LaBelle in the Ms. Veterans America Pageant, showcasing the strength and resilience of female veterans. Myra's professional work as part of Hendry County Veterans Affairs allows her to provide quality advocacy for U.S. veterans, active-duty service members, and their families. She ensures they receive the benefits, resources, and outreach services they need, demonstrating her deep passion for those who have served.

Beyond her community and military service, Myra is also an amazing mother who has raised her children with the same strength and compassion that define her character. Among her children are Novie Jo and Corbin, who both have Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB), a rare genetic condition that makes the skin extremely fragile. Often referred to as "Butterfly Children" due to their delicate skin, children with EB face incredible challenges. Myra's daughter, Novie, has become an advocate for others living with the disease, continuing her mother's legacy of service and strength. Myra's ability to balance her roles as a veteran, advocate, mentor, and devoted mother is a testament to her unwavering spirit and dedication to making a difference.

As the 2025 Swamp Cabbage Festival Grand Marshal, Myra Johnson embodies the values of service, resilience, and community. Her contributions have touched countless lives, and LaBelle is fortunate to have such an extraordinary leader in its midst. When she leads the festival parade, it will not only be a celebration of her achievements but a reflection of the deep gratitude felt by the community for all that she has done.

Swamp Cabbage Festival Pioneer & Heritage Families

2025 Bessie Gregory

2024 Sheriff Steven Whidden

2023 Isom Dees

2020 R.B. Waldron

2019 Jesse & Irma O'Ferrell

2018 Bersabe & Ramon Rodriguez, Sr.

2017 Willie & William Harn

2016 Jaycees

2015 Pratt

2014 Driggers Kirkland

2013 Benjamin Guy

2012 O'Bannon Family

2011 Eugene Rennolds

2010 MG Davis

2009 Oscar Langford

2008 Pendrey

2007 Doub

2006 Felix Taylor

2005 Fait Ballard

2004 Alton Jones

2003 Asa Barton Townsend

2002 Kirby Thompson

2001 Flora Burchard-Hampton

2000 A.O. Ward & J.V. Francis

1999 Morrison J Bush

1998 Summerall

1997 Hodges

1996 Gad Curry

1995 Gaulding

1994 Small

1993 Deese

1992 Luckey

1991 Richards-Pfluge

1990 Maddox

1989 Cross

1988 Samus & Margaret Parsons

1987 LJ Nobles

1986 Jennings-Hand

1985 Miller

1984 Daniels

1983 Dyess

1982 Hires

1981 Hill-Akin

1980 Hans Christian Hansen

1979 Blount

1978 Thigpen

1977 Murray

1976 Carson

1975 Magill

1974 Millard F Yeomans

1973 Captain Francis A Hendry

1972 Thomas Howard

1971 Washington Hall

1970 W.T. Hull, Sr.

1969 Mrs. M.E. Forrey & the Burke

2025 Heritage Family

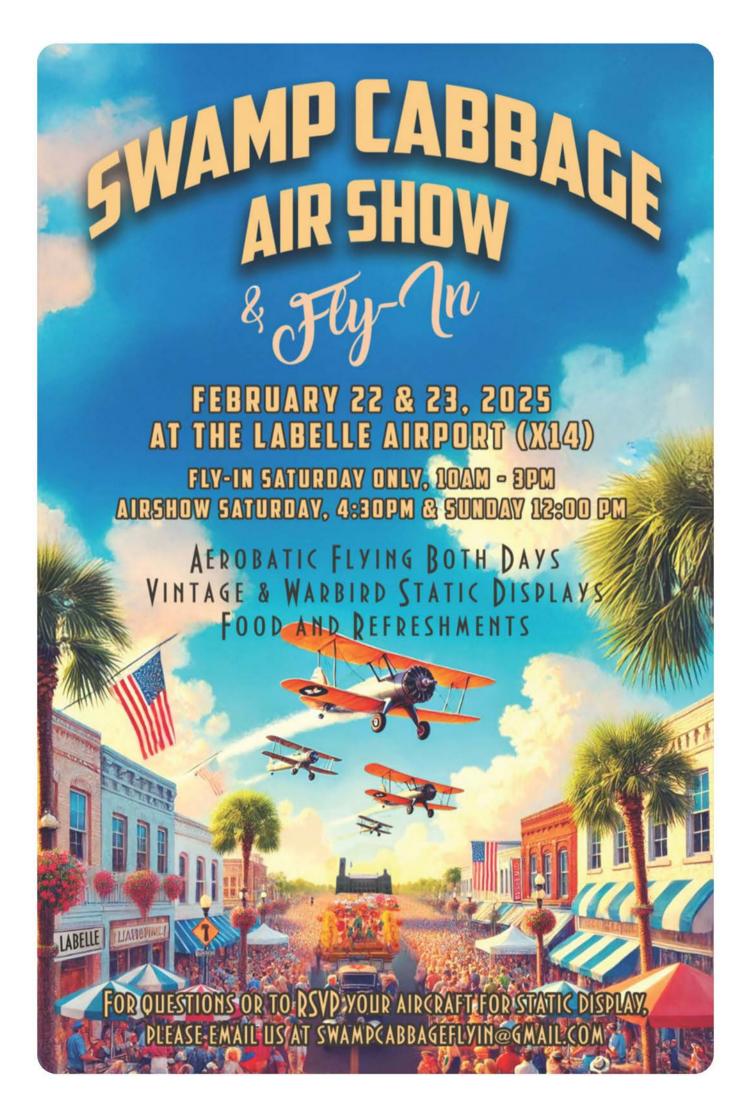
The Swamp Cabbage Festival is honored to recognize the Gregory family as the 2025 Heritage Family Honorees, celebrating their deep roots, dedication, and contributions to the LaBelle community. At the heart of this recognition is Bessie Lee Gregory, a lifelong resident whose commitment to education, service, and community engagement has made a lasting impact. Born June 29, 1954, in Fort Myers, Florida, Bessie is the daughter of Alton Kid Jones and Marie Lockheart. Her father, affectionately known as the "Ice Man," delivered ice to families across Hendry County, while her mother worked both as a homemaker and farm worker. As the seventh of fourteen children, Bessie grew up in a home that valued hard work, faith, and community-a foundation that would shape her lifelong dedication to serving others.



Bessie Gregory

Bessie's connection to LaBelle began in her childhood, attending Daniels Elementary School before moving on to LaBelle High School, where she graduated in 1973. She pursued higher education at Edison Community College, earning her AA degree in 1978, and later continued her studies at Nova University, receiving her bachelor's degree in childhood education in 1983. Her passion for education led to a 30-year career as an educator, teaching at multiple daycare centers and schools, including Country Oaks Elementary, Upthegrove Elementary, and LaBelle High School. She was an active member of the School Advisory Council (SAC) Committee and dedicated 17 years of service to the Hendry County School Board before retiring on May 18, 2021.

Beyond the classroom, Bessie has been a pillar of support within her community. A lifelong member of New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, she attributes her strength and achievements to her faith in God. Known affectionately as the "mouthpiece of the community," Bessie has built a reputation as someone who can spread important news, connect people, and provide unwavering support when needed. Whether ringing the bell for the Salvation Army, helping distribute Christmas dinners at the American Legion, or volunteering with housing assistance programs like SHIP, she has consistently stepped up to assist those in need. Her dedication also extends to community development, having served as secretary of the Ford and Sunset Involvement Committee, and as supervisor of her church's summer camp program.



The Gregory Family



Pictured: Aldulvar Gary SR, Bessie Gregory, Rodney Gregory, Aldulvar Gary JR, ShaRoddra Gregory, Na'Gianna Gary, Aldavion Gary, Aldulvar Gary III, & Kecia Gary

On March 15, 1997, Bessie married Rodney Gregory, and together they have built a beautiful family, raising four children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Their love for LaBelle has only grown stronger over the years, and they take immense pride in the tight-knit community they call home. Bessie believes in speaking up for what is right and ensuring that the traditions and values of LaBelle

are carried forward for generations to come.

The Swamp Cabbage Festival celebrates the Gregory family not only for their longstanding presence in LaBelle but also for their legacy of service, education, and leadership. Their story is a testament to the strength of family, the power of faith, and the impact of a lifelong commitment to community. As the 2025 Heritage Family Honorees, they embody the heart and spirit of LaBelle, and their recognition serves as a tribute to the countless ways they have enriched the lives of those around them.



Pictured: Sherrice Robotham, Dwight Robotham, Ethan Robotham

Swamp Cabbage Patties

Servings: 4

Prep time: 10 min

Cook time: 10 min

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked & well drained swamp cabbage 1 1/2 cups chopped onions 2 eggs 3/4 cup all purpose flour 1 can sliced water chestnuts salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Mix all ingredients well
- Drop by teaspoons into hot oil or shortening and fry until golden brown.
- Serve hot, salt and pepper to taste

Swamp Cabbage Casserole

Servings: 6-8

Prep time: 10 min

Cook time: 40 min

INGREDIENTS

4 cups cooked swamp cabbage

1 can cream of chicken or cream
of mushroom soup

1 cups bread crumbs

2 eggs

1/2 cup grated cheese

1/2 cup fried bacon (drained)
salt & pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Mix swamp cabbage, cream of soup, bread crumbs, eggs and bacon in a bowl, pour into a casserole dish
- 2. Cover top with grated cheese
- 3. Bake at 350 degrees for forty minutes
- 4. Remove from oven, salt & pepper to taste



INGREDIENTS

- 2 swamp cabbage hearts
- water
- salt
- pepper
- 1 stick of butter

METHOD

- In a large sauce pan, add swamp cabbages cut into medium strips and add enough water to barely cover.
- 2. Bring to a boil and reduce to simmering for ten to fifteen minutes.
- 3. Drain water, add butter and reheat, salt and pepper to taste.
- 4. Serve with any meat dish.

Note: If you don't have swamp cabbages on hand you can substitute canned Hearts of Palm. To make a vegan friendly dish substitute your favorite cooking oil in place of the butter.

Nutrition Content of Swamp Cabbage

The composition of cooked swamp cabbage per cup (100 gram) is:

21 kilo calories

2.2 grams protein

0.2 grams fat

3.9 grams carbohydrates

55 milligrams calcium

1.5 milligrams iron

5200 international units Vitamin A

0.050 mg thiamine

0.080 mg riboflavin

16 mg vitamin C





2025 Swamp Cabbage Queen



A freshman at Florida South Western State College. Kinley is the daughter of Katelin Goodman. In her spare time she enjoys singing, baking, art, running, competing in pageants and musical theater. Kinely is currently working on her AA degree and would like to pursue a career in psychology or becoming a pediatrician.

The Queen's Royal Court



Swamp Cabbage Princess
Hailee Cooper

Junior Miss Swamp Cabbage Mya Lynn Bryant

Little Miss Swamp Cabbage
Mia Christine McCormick

Hemispher ium telluris fale in Solstino brumali Allumi Marum



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD SAFELIGHT TO 3PM

85% PAYOUTINI

\$100 CASH PER TEAM REGISTER AT THE RAMP 5:30AM- 6:30AM

Come out & FISH!!





LaBelle, the Beautiful! The City Under the Oaks

LaBelle, French for "the beautiful," was named for two of Captain Francis A. Hendry's daughters, Laura and Belle, both now deceased. With its giant oaks and the beauty of the nearby Caloosahatchee River, many people accept the tale that a French traveler, perhaps Pierre Denaud, the trader for whom Fort Denaud was named, saw the area in its natural setting an exclaimed, "C'est LaBelle." No matter what the origin of her name, LaBelle is truly "the beautiful," especially to those wearying of the hustle and bustle of the metropolis.

Greater LaBelle has a population of almost 5,000 people according to the 2020 Census report. LaBelle operates under the commission form of city government and has modern water and sewage systems. The city has financial and commercial institutions, churches of most major denominations and modern schools.

With the long established Port LaBelle immediately to the east of the city, and so much new growth and housing developments in the area, the greater area population is sure to grow. Many people are concerned that LaBelle will cease to be the warm, friendly, family-type of place to live. With hope being aware of the pitfalls of rapid growth, LaBelle can plan for a future in which the city retains its "small town charm," yet enjoys the advantages of being a more urbanized and more heavily populated area.

The people in LaBelle are proud of their hometown and the factors that make LaBelle "special."

dale



Keisha Burchell Webb

Keisha Burchell Webb is an accomplished professional with a diverse background in journalism, public relations, and education. Born and raised in Belle Glade during the 1980s, she spent much of her high school years traveling overseas with her military family. In 1998, she moved to Clewiston with her mother, Phyllis, who was hearing impaired. After graduating as a Clewiston Tiger, she continued her education at Florida A&M University, proudly joining Rattler Nation and earning her bachelor's degree. Before her studies, she served a brief but impactful term in the Air National Guard as a Crew Chief on a C-130 aircraft.

Determined to pursue a career in writing and acting, Keisha relocated to Atlanta, believing it to be her final destination. However, after two years of auditions and industry pursuits, she returned to Clewiston when her mother's health declined, putting her ambitions on hold. Back home, she balanced part-time work at the local newspaper with a full-time career in corrections.

In 2013, she reignited her passion and returned to Atlanta, immersing herself in auditions, PR work, and a position at TBS Studios. Just as her career seemed poised for success, tragedy struck—her mother, her greatest supporter and only active parent, passed away. Despite this profound loss, Keisha remained resilient, securing a role as the morning on-air personality and News Director at WAFC radio under the name Nicole Reid.

During her time in radio, she met her now husband and started a family. With a deep passion for storytelling, Keisha spent eight years in broadcasting before transitioning to education in 2022. While journalism remains her first love, she aspires to return to writing and media in the future. In the meantime, she enjoys raising her vibrant family, hosting and emceeimg parttime, while keeping her dreams of one day returning to the big city.

Powering the Sunshine State with Innovation and Reliability

As America's largest electric utility, Florida Power & Light Company serves more customers and sells more power than any other utility by diversifying their energy mix providing clean, low-cost, reliable electricity to approximately 5.9 million accounts, or more than 12 million people. FPL is a top investor in U.S. infrastructure driving energy independence and security and has won the ReliabilityOne® National Reliability Award seven times in the last nine years. The company has also been recognized by Escalent as one of the most trusted U.S. electric utilities for nine of the last 10 years. By virtually eliminating the use of foreign oil and utilizing a diverse energy mix, including nuclear, FPL is driving energy independence and security for its customers. For more than 100 years, the company has a track record of getting the job done with an innovative mindset to get even better with consistently low bills, high reliability and rapid storm responses.

Just as the company has been for the last century, FPL is building a more resilient energy grid with more low-cost power generation to meet the demand of one of the fastest growing states in the nation. The company operates eight FPL solar energy centers in Hendry County. Together, these FPL solar energy centers in Hendry County are capable of generating nearly 600 megawatts of low-cost, reliable electricity for FPL customers. That's enough energy to power approximately 112,000 homes and reduces carbon emissions equal to removing approximately 136,000 gas-powered vehicles from the roads each year. By making smart, long-term investments in more fuel-efficient power generation, customers have saved approximately \$16 billion in fuel costs since 2001.





For more information about FPL, visit:

www.FPL.com

2025 Schedule of Events AROUND & ABOUT TOWN

ALL EVENTS - CASUAL DRESS

Tuesday, February 18th

05:30pm - Night on the Town, presented by LaBelle Chamber of Commerce (LaBelle Wharf)

Friday, February 21st

07:00pm - Hendry County Cattlemen's Youth Ranch Rodeo (Rodeo grounds)

Saturday, February 22nd

07:30am - Caloosa Humane Society's Swamp Stomp 5k (LaBelle Brewery)

10:00am - Parade Begins (Bridge Street)

10:00am - Fly-in (LaBelle Municipal Airport)

11:00am - Show and Shine Car Show (Lee Street)

04:30pm - Aerobatic Airshow (LaBelle Municipal Airport)

06:00pm - Hendry County Cattlemen's Ranch Rodeo (Rodeo grounds)

Sunday February 23rd

05:30am - Bruiser Bait & UBASS - Bass Tournament (LaBelle Boat Docks)

10:00am - Fly-in (LaBelle Municipal Airport)

12:00pm - Aerobatic Airshow (LaBelle Municipal Airport

03:00pm - Bass Tournament



2025 Schedule of Events

IN BARRON PARK



Saturday, February 22nd

11:30am - Opening Ceremony

12:00pm - Hambone & Lester Beleau

01:00 pm -Queen & Princess Introductions and Performances

- Grand Marshal & Heritage Family

- Parade Winner Announcement

01:30pm - Andrew Morris Band

03:00pm - Matrasa Lynn

04:00pm - Aydin Holt

05:00pm - Park Closes

Sunday February 23rd

09:30am - Church In The Park lead by James Holland

11:00am - Junior & Little Miss Introductions and Performances

11:30am - Charlie Pace

01:00pm - Sam Lowe

02:30pm - Whey Jennings

04:00pm - Park Closes



2025 Schedule of Events IN BARRON PARK



Saturday, February 22nd

12:00pm - Clay Patterson Baird

01:00pm - Black Heritage Queen Pageant

02:00pm - Country Rhythm Cloggers

03:00pm - Swamp Cabbage Pageant

Junior Miss & Little Miss

Sunday February 23rd

12:00pm - Alva Cloggers

01:00pm - Clay Patterson Baird

02:00pm - Swamp Cabbage Pageant

Queen & Princess













Hambone & Lester Beleau is one of Southwest Florida's most versatile and entertaining bands, hailing from LaBelle, Florida. Known for playing "Music for the Seasons of Your Life," they deliver a dynamic mix of classic and modern country, Southern and classic rock, and high-energy dance music—perfect for parties, clubs, and weddings.

Meet the Band

- **Michael Smith** (Keyboards, Guitar, Harmonica) Originally from Rome, Georgia, Michael is a dynamic entertainer with years of professional experience performing across the globe.
- **John McDonnell** (Bass Guitar, Vocals) A seasoned musician from Philadelphia, PA, John has played alongside national acts and was part of the Urban Cowboy tour with Mickey Gilley and Johnny Lee. He also performed in Johnny Rogers' History of Rock 'n' Roll show before joining the band.
- Mark Henderson (Guitar, Vocals) From Winchester, Kentucky, Mark is the band's founder and a former Florida CMA Instrumentalist and Entertainer of the Year.
- Terry "Dawg" Griffitt (Pedal Steel Guitar) Hailing from Talladega, Alabama, Terry is a multiinstrumentalist and one of the finest musicians in South Florida.
- Paolo Maresca (Drums, Vocals) Originally from Milan, Italy, Paolo is a powerhouse drummer who drives the band's energy. He has performed with Shadow of Night and legendary artist José Feliciano.
- Dewayne "Hambone" Hammock (Vocals) The newest member of the group, Dewayne brings his powerful voice and versatility across multiple genres, adding a fresh dynamic to the band's signature sound.

Don't miss your chance to experience one of Southwest Florida's premier live bands— Hambone & Lester Beleau will keep the energy high and the dance floor moving



Music has the power to transport us to another time and place. She loves to harness that power with a broad audience of fellow music lovers and passionate musicians alike. Ever since a young age, Charlie has found great joy and satisfaction by being involved in the creative music process. Take a look around her website to get to know more about her.

BOOKING INFORMATION

+1 239-289-3109 Booking4venues@gmail.com charliepacemusic.com



Follow on social media















The Andrew Morris Band has converted many music lovers to the country music genre more than anyone else in the industry. That, most likely can be attributed to musical background, influences, and experience of founder Andrew Morris.

Growing up in Jacksonville, Florida, Andrew was raised loving classic country, artists like legend, George Jones. Listening to the soulful sounds of country music legends, made a significant mark. According to Andrew, "Granddad's love for classic country music was a huge influence. Additionally, the southern rock and rock'n roll sounds from mom and dad, equally added to the development of the sound that is synonymous with the Andrew Morris Band Sound.

With over twenty plus years of perfecting his craft, Andrew, along with guitar maestro, Steve Siciliano (baking vocals/lead guitar) and Nashville phenom, Michael Chenney (backing vocals/bass guitar) developed a reputation of excellence focused on honoring the classic sounds of country music. Driven by their love for the genre, along with each members unique musical expertise and varying musical influences, The Andrew Morris Band has been capturing hearts wherever they performed.

As the band's recognition progressed, they were sadly hit with a tragic passing of their longtime drummer and dear friend Chuck Ficker in 2022. Shocked by the loss of Chuck; Andrew, Mike, and Steve were in need of a new drummer to carry on the torch. After a year of healing and struggling with the challenge to find someone who could represent the musical sound of the Andrew Morris Band, the fellas came across Rene Rivera. No stranger to country music from his time playing with other country artists/bands, Rene jumped right into the fire with the the boys in February of 2023. With his musical versatility, ear for details musically, and a feel in his groove that reflects the stories told in country music, Rene completed the missing part of the band to continue expanding the audiences of the Andrew Morris Band.

Andrew Morris Band has performed at SunFest (one of South Florida's premier music festivals), and has been a recurring featured artist for the 103.1 New Country Radio, "Rib Round Up", captivating crowds with their electrifying performance of country classics and originals.

PERFORMING FEB 22 3:00PM



From an early age, Matrasa Lynn set out to become a performer and professional Country Singer. Natural ability will only take a talented artist so far, but a strong will and determination has helped push this artist forward and continues to drive her development and success.

Check out her newest productions below, and get in touch with any questions about Matrasa Lynn.

BOOK NOW: 239-322-7930



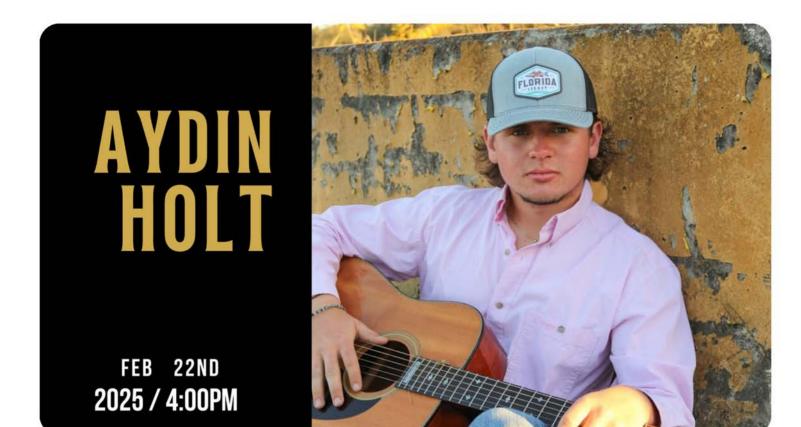
Follow on social media @matrasalynn











Born and raised in LaBelle, FL, Aydin Holt is a rising country artist with a passion that runs deep. At just 18, his journey began when he found his first guitar on a trash trailer at age 12—an unexpected discovery that sparked his love for music. With guidance from his uncle, he started learning to play, but after losing both his uncle and grandmother just days apart, music became more than just a hobby—it became his way of healing.

With his Granny's guitar in hand and a heart full of determination, Aydin turned to social media, sharing his music on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube—and fans took notice. Now, he's taking his talent to the stage, ready to make his Uncle, Granny, and hometown proud.

Follow on social media

Instagram: @aydin_holt_music31 TikTok: @aydinholtmusic Facebook: Aydin Holt







For Booking Inquiries: Contact Heather Holt (Momager) at 863-673-6695



Straight from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Sam Lowe brings an authentic country sound packed with raw emotion and powerful storytelling. A Nashville recording artist, Sam has shared the stage with country greats like Billy Dean and Whey Jennings and is now making waves on his own tour!

With new singles dropping soon on all major platforms, there's never been a better time to discover his heartfelt lyrics and southern rock-infused sound. Don't miss your chance to see Sam Lowe live and experience the music that's captivating fans across the country.

Follow on social media

Website: www.samlowemusic.com

Facebook: facebook.com/samlowemusic

Mariagram: (a) samlowemusic

🔥 Catch him on tour and feel the soul of real country music! 🖖



Country singer-songwriter Whey Jennings was born into one of country music's most iconic family names, first emerging in 2012 as another naturally gifted singer from the Jennings tribe. With large boots to fill, the young Nashville recording artist and singer-songwriter for Dirt Rock Empire, with a booming baritone voice as big as Texas, finds himself with a few expectations to live up to. Seeking to establish his own musical legacy as one of the few remaining torch-bearing country traditionalists out there, Whey can instantly take his fans back to a time and sound his Grandfather Waylon and Grandmother Jessi gave birth to in the 70's, even with his own songs.

With three studio recorded EP releases under his belt, 2020's Gypsy Soul, 2022's If It Wasn't for The Sinnin', and 2023's Just Before The Dawn, Jennings is now preparing for his magnum opus of songs, his first full length album, the highly anticipated Jekyll & Hyde, due out August 23, 2024. Many of Whey's songs reveal stories of how he has come to terms with a checkered past of too much partying, led by a drug-fueled lifestyle, but knowing he needed to make a change. Musical stories about struggles, addiction, finding sobriety, and redemption through faith in God, family and his friends. Interjecting his own modern-day approach to songwriting and storytelling, while remaining a little rough around the edges, Whey's unpolished grit and honest demeanor defines his sound, with musical roots that run as deep as his Jennings family name would imply.

"Out of 43 years on this earth I lived 38 of them in the darkness," Whey recalled. "I was pretty well a functioning drug addict and an alcoholic. I found the light four years ago by the grace of God. I have a beautiful wife who has also stood by my side, and six beautiful children who continue to love me. A wonderful Manager who I call my Momager, Mrs. Tammy Carolus. I've decided to dedicate this LP and my life to them."

LaBelle Chamber of Commerce presents the 2025



Night on the Cown Riverfront At Barron Park

February 18 | 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Kick off Swamp Cabbage Week with us!

A perfect way to show off your business Vendors | Food | Live Music







Reserve your 10x10 space now FREE for members \$25.00 for non-members

Contact the Chamber at 863.675.0125



ABOUT US

Trademark Metals Recycling is Florida's largest scrap metal recycler with a network of 27 locations. Here in Southwest Florida, we have locations in La Belle, Fort Myers, Naples, and Punta Gorda. These locations competitively purchase a wide range of commodities from the public while offering an educational and safe experience at the yard.

See below for a list of commodities we purchase:

WHAT WE BUY

FERROUS

- Sheet Iron
- Heavy Melt Steel
- Automobiles
- Turnings
- Appliances
- Cast Iron

NON-FERROUS

- Copper
- Aluminum
- Insulated Copper
- Wire Stainless Steel
- Brass
- Irony Aluminum

WE PAY CASH FOR YOUR SCRAP!

DOES YOUR COMPANY PRODUCE SCRAP?

ADDITIONAL

CALL

We have partnered with thousands of companies throughout the state servicing their scrap metal recycling needs. With our roll off fleet of 10, 20, 30 & 40 YD containers as well as flat beds, gondola's, and dumper trailers, we have the flexibility to handle any size or type of scrap.

QUESTIONS?

FOR INFORMATION 239.337.5865

COME VISIT US

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At Florida Power & Light Company we are working together with the communities we serve to make Florida an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

We are proud to provide our customers in Hendry County and throughout the Sunshine State with reliable electricity while keeping bills as low as possible. We continue to work tirelessly to provide our customers with tremendous value, now and for future generations.

