



Okeechobee OUTDOOR EXPO

Jan. 11 & 12

9am - 4pm

**Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center
& Fairgrounds**

**4601 State Road 710 E,
Okeechobee, FL 34974**

Presented by



Visit with Area Businesses & Organizations:

- Florida Outdoors RV
- ARS Powersports
- Le Mesa RV Center
- Okeechobee Airboat Association
- Hendry County Motorsports Park
- Sunshine Outfitters
- Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park
- Okeechobee Fishing Headquarters
- ARK Fishing International
- Simpson Chiropractic
- Florida Trail Association Tropical Trekkers Chapter
- Zachary Taylor Camping Resort
- John Wells
- Okeechobee County Tourist Development Council
- Everglades Equipment
- Jiganomics Outdoors
- ITZ Pro Fishing
- Okeechobee Airboat Association
- Lake Okeechobee News
- Norman Lee Fishing Guided Bass Tours
- Dan the Glass Man
- Muck City Tackle
- Paddock Farms Mini Horses
- Okeechobee Sharpshooters 4-H Club
- Young Living
- Blue Marble Concepts
- FSCA Honeybelles (Saturday only)

Entertainment/Presentations/Demonstrations:

- Scott Benge “Acoustic Music with Heart and Soul”
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Saturday & Sunday
- Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park
20-30 minute presentation
10:30 a.m. Saturday | 2 p.m. Sunday
- FSCA Honeybelles Presentation – History of the Honeybelles and Florida Sporting Clays Association, type of shot gun sports, sporting clay sizes and shells – 2 p.m. Saturday
- Okeechobee High School Rodeo Team Roping Demonstration – Time/Day TBD
- Quail Creek Plantation Retriever Demonstration – Time/Day TBD

Food & Drink:

- B Daddy Smoke n Grill
- Pig In or Pig Out
- Cool Yeti
- The Hot Dog Wagon
- Ricky D’s Sweet Treats
- Swamp Cracker Real Pit BBQ & Catering
- Beer Sales by Kahootz Draft House

Continuous Activities & Demonstrations:

- Inflatable Axe Throwing, Archery, Horseshoes & Bounce House
- Intro to Archery - Okeechobee Sharpshooters 4-H Club
- Fishing Demonstrations – Okeechobee Fishing Headquarters & ARK International
- Stockcars & Airboats on Display

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Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center & Fairgrounds
4601 State Road 710 E, Okeechobee, FL 34974

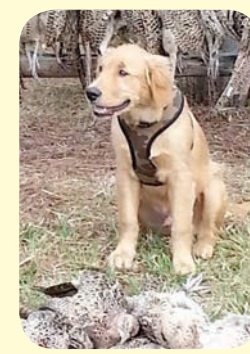
Entertainment/Presentations/Demonstrations:



Scott Benge
"Acoustic Music with Heart and Soul"
11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Saturday & Sunday
Scott Benge is a Classic Rock specialist from Port St. Lucie that plays "Acoustic Music with Heart and Soul" and brings back good memories for Boomers!



Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park
20-30 minute presentation
Alex Creager, Park Manager
10:30a.m. Saturday / 2 p.m. Sunday
What makes the park special and why it is so important to protect! Park opportunities highlighted such as equestrian camping, wildlife viewing and hiking. Learn about volunteer opportunities.



Retriever Demonstration
Since the days of the first plantations, American sportsmen have known the true joys of pursuing bob-white quail. The likes of Washington and Jefferson reveled at the sight of pointing



FSCA Honeybelles Presentation
2 p.m. Saturday
The FSCA Honeybelles is a women's-only shooting social group and shoot sporting clays, trap, skeet and more! Presentation will include the history of the Honeybelles and Florida Sporting Clays Association, type of shot gun sports, sporting clay sizes and shells.



Okeechobee High School Rodeo Team Roping Demonstration
Time/Day TBD
Catch members in action as they show off their roping skills. Roping demonstration

dogs lacing back and forth across expansive fields, and the suspense of walking into the feathered whirlwind of a rising covey. See how our 4-legged friends play an active part! The dog is on a hunt, so as soon as he pencils us in on his schedule, we'll pass the time along on our Facebook event page!

times will be announced on our Facebook event page following the club's Thursday night meeting.

Continuous Activities & Demonstrations:



- Inflatable Axe Throwing, Archery & Bounce House
- Family Friendly Giant Foam Horseshoes
- Fishing Demonstrations – Okeechobee Fishing Headquarters & ARK International
- Stockcars & Airboats on Display



Food & Drink:



B Daddy's Smoke N Grill



Cool Yeti



The Hot Dog Wagon



Pig In or Pig Out



Ricky D's Sweet Treats



Swamp Cracker Real Pit BBQ & Catering

Beer Sales courtesy of Kahootz Draft House
Special thanks to Tommy and Lisa for their support of this event

Get outdoors and explore Okeechobee

By Katrina Elsken

Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — Okeechobee County has plenty to do and see for those who love the great outdoors.

To the fisherman, Okeechobee County, the home of the “Big O,” is one of the top lakes in the country for catching

bass and speckled perch. Professional bass anglers fish Lake Okeechobee for thousands of dollars in tournament prizes.

For those who love the outdoors, Okeechobee County has plenty to see and do: boating on Lake Okeechobee or the Kissimmee River, hiking the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, enjoying the beauty all around in Kissimmee Prairie

Preserve State Park, horseback riding and more.

Shooting enthusiasts can choose from world-class outdoor shooting facilities. The area also has plenty of hunting opportunities.

Explore Okeechobee: Even longtime residents can be surprised at the opportunities all around them.



Airboat rides, popular in the Lake Okeechobee area, can take the visitor into parts of the wilderness that other forms of transportation can't reach.



The great fishing opportunities on Lake Okeechobee often attract professional bass fishing tournaments.

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/FLW

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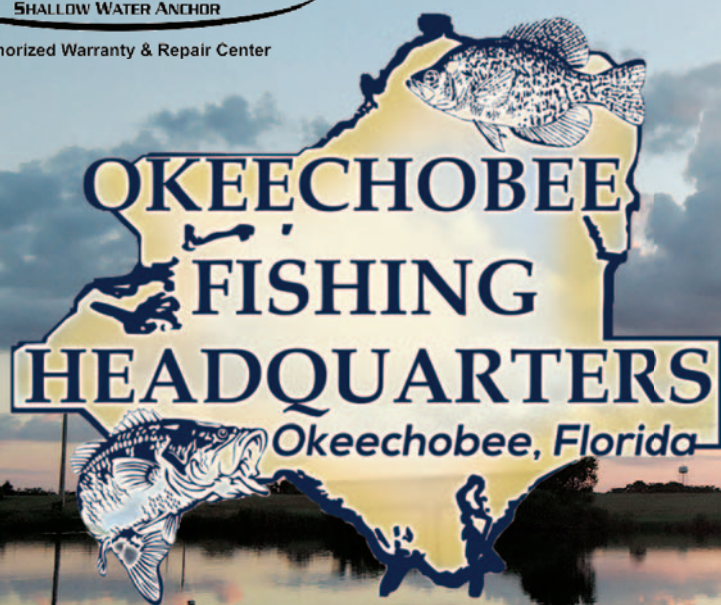
Okeechobee

OUTDOOR EXPO

January 11 & 12 • 9am - 4pm

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4601 State Road 710 E

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County fair seeks contest participants

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — The Okeechobee County Fair Association is seeking adult and youth contest participants for the upcoming fair March 17-22, 2020.

The contests consist of quilting, sewing, leatherwork, painting, drawing, photography, horticulture, woodworking and more. There will also be food competitions such as home baking and canned goods, as well as a vegetable competition featuring garden vegetables, fruit and vegetables and largest vegetable categories.

This year the fair will again have the educational posters and educational display competitions. Individual youths may enter

the Educational Poster Contest, and 4-H clubs or FFA chapters may enter the Educational Display Contest. The top three club/chapter displays will win awards of \$150, \$100 and \$75 for their programs.

You may enter online and download the entry forms and rules at the Okeechobee County Fair Web site, okeechobeeountyfair.com, or pick up copies of the 2020 Premium Book at the Okeechobee County Extension Office at 458 U.S. 98 North. The deadline for entries is March 6, 2020. If you have questions, please contact Dianne Spann at 863-634-3327.



Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

Jackson catches the big ones

OKEECHOBEE — Jackson Holcomb, a seventh grader at Yearling Middle School, spent his New Year's holiday reeling 'em in. One of the bass he caught was a whoppin' 8.5 pounds. Do you have big fish photos to share? Email them to okeenews@newszap.com.

Zachary Taylor Waterfront RV Resort

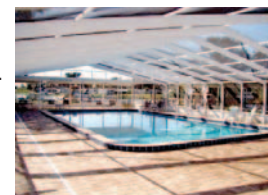


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Boots, Burgers and Bikes event set for August

By Katrina Elsen

Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — Big Brothers/Big Sisters will bring back their popular Boots, Burgers and Bikes event at the C. Scott Driver Recreation Area on the Kissimmee River on Saturday, Aug. 29.

At their Jan. 8 meeting, the Okeechobee County commissioners agreed to waive the facility use fee for the event.

The county also agreed to allow Big Brothers/Big Sisters to serve beer at the event, as they did last year.

Taylor Farnsworth, of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, said adding the drive-in motorcycle show to the annual Boots and Burgers fundraiser was a big success in 2019.

“It was a huge hit, and we saw big increase in net profit,” she explained.

The previous years, Boots and Burgers raised around \$5,000 each year. The 2019 Boots, Burgers and Bikes event raised about \$10,000.

All of that money stays in Okeechobee County, she said.

The Scott Driver property offers a wonderful location for the event as well as a nice ride for those who participate in the drive-in bike show, she said.

Local restaurants are invited to have booths at Boots, Bikes and Burgers and compete for the title of best burger. Those in attendance vote for their favorite burger.

The event includes live music.

Ms. Farnsworth said since it is a “drive-in” event, they have a three-beer limit, and issue wrist bands to ensure those served beer are over age 21.



OKEECHOBEE — The Big Brothers/Big Sisters fundraiser “Boots, Burgers and Bikes” in August will include a drive-in motorcycle show. The rural roads in Central Florida are popular with bikers who enjoy the scenery of the “real Florida.”

Lake Okeechobee News/Katrina Elsen

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Saturday & Sunday,

January 11 & 12

9am to 4pm

Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center

4601 State Rd 710E



5th Wheel Flagstaff



Flagstaff



Freedom Express



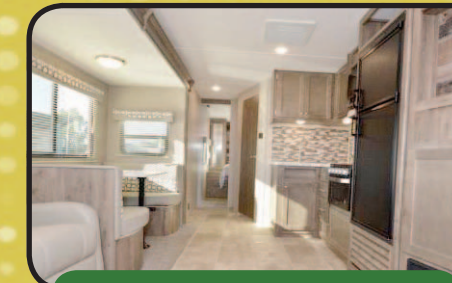
Aspen Trail Toyhauler



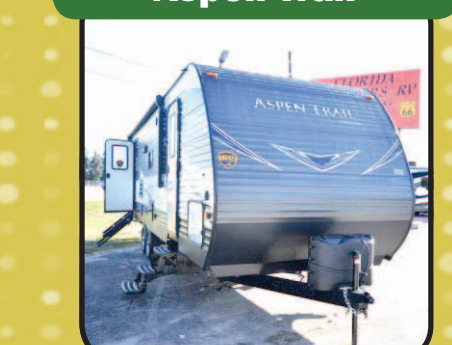
Premier



5th Wheel Impression



Aspen Trail



5th Wheel Sprinter



Flagstaff

Okeechobee Waterway runs coast to coast

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

Florida boaters can travel from the east coast to the west coast via the Lake Okeechobee Waterway.

The 154-mile-long waterway extends from the Atlantic Ocean at Stuart to the Gulf of Mexico at Fort Meyers. The waterway runs through Lake Okeechobee and consists of the Caloosahatchee River to the west of the lake and the St. Lucie Canal east of the lake.

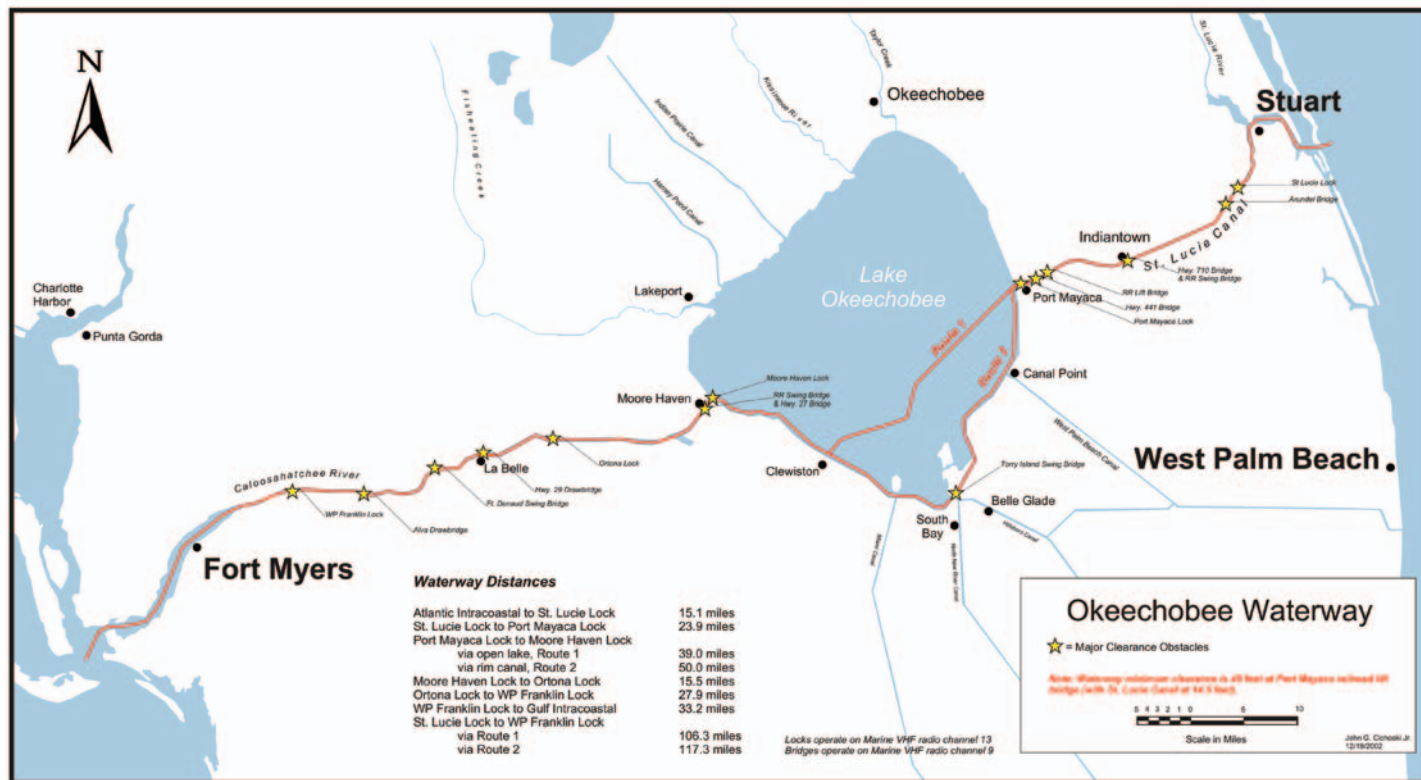
Much of the waterway is man-made. Nature did not connect the St. Lucie River to the ocean. The connection between Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie is man-made, as is the channel connecting Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River. In the days before paved roads, early pioneers used the waterways as liquid highways. Riverboats carried passengers back and forth between rural heartland and the coastal cities. Boats also hauled produce from rural farms to market and supplies back to the interior.

Today, instead of steamships hauling freight the passengers, the Lake Okeechobee Waterway is used for recreational boating and fishing.

There are five locks on the waterway. From east to west they are the St. Lucie Lock, the Port Mayaca Lock, the Moore Haven Lock, the Ortona Lock and the W.P. Franklin Lock.

These locks, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are operated 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The last lockage of the day begins at 4:30 p.m.

Twenty-five bridges cross various points along the Lake Okeechobee Waterway. Eleven of these bridges open for boat traffic. The lowest of the fixed bridges is the Port Mayaca Railroad Bridge with a vertical clearance of 49 feet. Sailboats that are too tall to clear the bridge are sometimes helped under the bridge by means of the "Okeechobee limbo." The website offshoreblue.com explains: "A crew out of the Indiantown Marina will meet your boat at the bridge and by use of plastic 50 gallon drums lined up along your rail and filled with water, list your vessel enough to pass



Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Lake Okeechobee Waterway provides a liquid highway from coast to coast.

under the Port Mayaca RR Bridge. Once through, the drums are emptied and removed from your boat and you are on your way.

The whole process generally takes less than an hour."

The Okeechobee Waterway is usually open year-round, but during the dry season there are sometimes restrictions based on the depth of the water. Tropical storms and hurricanes can also result in some closures on the waterway.

Hendry County is home to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Florida Operations Office, 525 Ridgelawn Road in Clewiston, FL 33440-5399, telephone: 863-983-8101.

Contact numbers for the lock operators are:

- W.P. Franklin Lock: 239-694-5451
- Ortona Lock: 863-675-0616

- Moore Haven Lock: 863-946-0414
- Port Mayaca Lock: 561-924-2858
- St. Lucie Lock: 772-287-2665

Sources: Information for this article came from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the website, offshoreblue.com.

Tim Reynolds
LaBelle, FL

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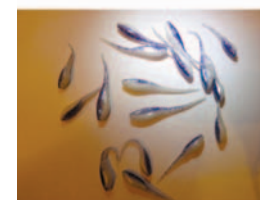
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Hike or bike around Lake Okeechobee's dike

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — A visit to the Okeechobee area isn't complete without seeing the Big O, the second largest freshwater lake within the continental United States.

Visitors can enjoy walking, hiking, roll-

erblading, bicycling and horseback riding around Lake Okeechobee. Designated as part of the Florida National Scenic Trail in 1993, the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail is an approximately 110-mile trail encircling the lake. More than half of the trail is paved, and the remainder consists of a two-track

gravel roadway on top of the 35-foot high Herbert Hoover Dike.

The height above the surrounding area provides hikers, bikers and wildlife watchers with scenic vistas of the lake. The trail is open year-round and can be utilized for short day hikes or loop hikes. There are 14 camping areas available on or adjacent to the trail. Hunting is not permitted on any section of the trail. No fees or permits are

required for trail use. Access can be gained from any recreation area located around the lake.

Due to construction on the dike, some areas of the trail may be closed. Before you set out on a hike or bicycle ride, check the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website at saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/Lake-Okeechobee-Scenic-Trail/.



Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/USACOE

The Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail provides opportunities for hiking and bicycling.



Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/Paddock Farms

Miniature horses at Outdoor Expo

OKEECHOBEE — Miniature horses from Paddock Farms will be on display at the Okeechobee Outdoor Expo Saturday, Jan. 11, and Sunday, Jan 12, at the Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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Lake Okeechobee News/Katrina Elskan

On the trail

Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park (above) is a popular place for trail rides. For information online, go to floridastateparks.org. South Florida Water Management District public lands are also open to trail riding. For information online, go to sfwmd.gov/community-residents/recreation.



Lake Okeechobee News/Katrina Elskan

Speed show

FORT PIERCE — Okeechobee County residents are among those who compete at the monthly Pedal to the Metal Speed Show (pictured above). For information see, pedaltothemetal.net. The Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center hosts barrel racing events and high school rodeo. For more information, see the Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center & Fairgrounds page on Facebook.



- 101+ Things to Do
- Explore Okeechobee
- Hendry County Guide 8th Edition
- Caloosa Belle • Immokalee Bulletin
- Lake Okeechobee News featuring Life in the Sun & Sweet Life in Hendry County
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Special to the Lake Okeechobee News/Judd Patterson

Stargaze in Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State park

OKEECHOBEE — Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park is a designated “dark skies” park, popular with stargazers. The park has pads for telescopes, but be sure to reserve a space in advance, especially when a meteor shower is predicted. (Photo is courtesy of the International Dark Sky Association.) For more information online go to floridastateparks.org.

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Shooting sports popular in Okeechobee

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

OKEECHOBEE — The wide open spaces of Okeechobee County are home to a number of shooting sports facilities.

Okeechobee County has a variety of options for those who enjoy shooting

Panther spotted north of river

Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

TALLAHASSEE — An adult female Florida panther has been spotted north of the Caloosahatchee River, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission reported Tuesday, Jan. 7.

FWC said the sighting of Florida's state animal north of the Caloosahatchee River is a good sign, as the river has appeared to be a major obstacle to northward movement of female panthers for years.

Four years ago, the FWC documented the first female north of the river in nearly 50 years.

A wildlife underpass on State Road 80 was recently completed by the Florida Department of Transportation, and it is not known whether that might have been the route taken by this particular animal. A trail camera did capture a night image, however. An FWC spokeswoman at the agency's South Region office in West Palm Beach could not provide any more information.

sports with clay shoots, target competitions, cowboy action and hunting.

- Center Mass Gun Range, 1934 Center St., is Okeechobee's only indoor gun range and features 16 climate-controlled shooting lanes. The range also features seven simulation rooms where shooters can take turns playing through several computer-generated scenarios such as a zombie apocalypse and an Old West shoot-out.

- Quail Creek Plantation, 12399 N.E. 224th Street, is a pristine wilderness where sportsmen revel at the sight of pointing dogs lacing back and forth across expan-

sive fields, and the suspense of walking into the feathered whirlwind of a rising covey.

The plantation also offers sport shooting on two scenic, fulling 14-station automatic clay shooting courses.

- O.K. Corral Gun Club, 9449 N.E. 48th St., has 29 shooting stations with sporting clay courses, covered 5-stand, wobble deck, covered pistol/rifle ranges, competition shooting park and even an Old West street with cowboy action shooting. The club also hosts a steak dinner every Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. which features live music.

- OK Shooting Sports, 7055 N.E. 48th St., has rifle and pistol ranges, with five 5-stand sporting clays fields, trap and skeet fields and shooting galleries.

Duck hunting, hog hunting and alligator hunting are also popular in Okeechobee, with some hunting allowed on public land as well as hunting with permission on private property. For more on Florida hunting seasons, licenses and permits, go online to myfwc.com.



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Special to the Lake Okeechobee News

Velasquez competes in soccer shoot

UMATILLA — William Velasquez of Okeechobee placed second in the U-14 division of the Elks State Soccer Shoot competition at the Elks Camp in Umatilla on Saturday, Jan. 4.