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Gov. Rick Scott speaks at Levy County Republican event



Gov. Rick Scott speaks to people at the Lincoln-Reagan Memorial Dinner in Bronson on Saturday evening (June 23). For the entire story, several more photos and two videos, please visit the [COMMUNITY PAGE](#).

Story, Photos and Videos By Jeff M. Hardison © June 24, 2018 at 8:08 p.m.

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BRONSON – Florida Gov. Rick Scott served as the keynote speaker Saturday night (June 23) during the Levy County Republican Executive Committee's (REC) Lincoln-Reagan Memorial Dinner.

<https://youtu.be/Kxks4Qotv9Y>

In this video, State Sen. Dennis Baxley leads the audience in singing God Bless America. Other performers that evening were Ronnie and Becki Stevens, and Larry and Cookie King, accompanied by Shelby Smith.

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<https://youtu.be/XZI5FghEyV4>

In this video, Gov. Rick Scott thanks Sheriff Bobby McCallum for his friendship and for what he does. The governor speaks to the people in the audience about the reduction in the crime rate in Florida. It is at a 47-year low, he said. He also speaks about the 47 Florida law enforcement officers who have been killed or died in the line of duty by being shot, as well as by crashes and the like in the past seven and a half years. In this relatively short part of his speech, Scott also speaks about a 6-year-old grandson of his who approaches police officers to tell them that he is thankful for their work. The governor mentions that he believes more people might want to express their gratitude to law enforcement officers for being willing to perform their duties.



Gov. Rick Scott (left) shakes hands with Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum as he walks up the steps to take the stage in Bronson. The governor agreed to be the keynote speaker at this event after the sheriff invited him.

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Among the many people at the event are Central Florida Electric Cooperative General Manager Denny George and his wife Hallie George.



Levy County School Board Member Paige Brookins is seen here at the event. She also owns The Gathering Table Restaurant, which catered the meal, and she is the sister of Levy County Republican Executive Committee Vice Chair Stoney Smith, who served as emcee.

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Levy County Property Appraiser Osborn 'Oz' Barker is the first Republican Party candidate to have been elected to a county office. Here he is seen holding a fan to advertise the Levy County Republican Executive Committee.



Stoney Smith (left) speaks with a member of the campaign team for Rick Scott for United States Senate.

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Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks with his wife Stephanie is among the many elected Republicans at the event.



Levy County Superintendent of Schools Jeff Edison and his wife Teri pause for a photo opportunity.

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Gov. Rick Scott speaks with U.S. Rep. Neal Dunn at the event as Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum is seen walking in the background.



State Sen. Keith Perry (R-Gainesville, Dist. 8) stands with Gov. Rick Scott. Perry also served in the Florida House of Representatives, representing the 22nd District from 2010 to 2012 and the 21st District from 2012 to 2016, after redistricting.

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(from left) School Board Member Chris Cowart, School Board Member Brad Etheridge and County Commissioner Mike Joyner are among the elected Republicans at the event. Etheridge just was reelected when no other person qualified in the race for his seat as of the Friday deadline for qualifying.



Among the candidates in races in Levy County at this event is Ashley Breeden Clemenzi (NP) of Williston. She is seen here with her husband Robby Clemenzi. She is seeking the post held by Levy County School Board Dist. 5 Member Rick Turner (NP) of Yankeetown, who chose against running for reelection. The other candidate in this race to be decided Aug. 28 is Gary Bennett (NP) of Morriston.

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Stoney Smith serves as emcee.



County Commission Chairman John Meeks (left) and Commissioner Matt Brooks are seen as they are recognized at the start of the event. Also standing to the right is School Board member Chris Cowart.

State Rep. Charlie Stone (R-Ocala, Dist. 22) (from left) County Commissioner Matt Brooks and Sheriff Bobby McCallum are seen in this photo. Rep. Stone was joined at the event by his wife Michelle Stone, a



member of the Marion County Board of County Commissioners. Kandy McCallum accompanied her husband Sheriff McCallum. Angie Miller Brooks attended the dinner with her husband Commissioner Brooks.

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Held in the Bronson High School Cafetorium, the two-hour affair included Gov. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) sharing insight from his service as governor and his first three changes he is putting on his platform in his bid to win the United States Senate seat currently held by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.).

About 250 people attended the dinner catered by The Gathering Table of Chiefland. Diners enjoyed salad, rolls, farm-raised sliced roast beef, feta chicken, potato casserole and fresh vegetables. Red, white and blue cake and iced tea were served as well.

Before Scott faces Sen. Nelson in the general election on Nov. 6, he must first defeat Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente (R-Fla.) in the Aug. 28 primary.

If Scott defeats De La Fuente, in addition to facing Sen. Nelson on Nov. 6, Scott will be contending against write-in candidates Lateresa "L.A." Jones, Howard Knepper, Michael S. Levinson, Charles Frederick Tolbert and David Weeks.

Many Republican elected leaders were present at the event in addition to keynote speaker Gov. Scott.

Levy County REC Vice Chair Stoney Smith served as emcee. REC Chair Michelle Finnen was unable to attend. Other leaders in this REC are George and Nancy Lambka.

On a couple of occasions, Smith noted his gratitude for the many volunteers who have helped the Levy County REC.

He mentioned three contested Levy County constitutional officer races this year.

There is one contested race for the post held by Levy County School Board Dist. 5 Member Rick Turner (NP) of Yankeetown, who chose against running for reelection.

Gary Bennett (NP) of Morriston and Ashley Breeden Clemenzi (NP) of Williston are the two candidates seeking that seat.

Levy County School Board members Dist. 1 Cameron Asbell (NP) of Archer School Board, and Dist. 3 Brad Etheridge (NP) of Williston, are qualified for reelection and no one is running against them, therefore they are presumed as winners of reelection.

As Smith mentioned, there are two Levy County Commission races with candidates.

Since all of the candidates are Republicans, voters in any party will decide these two races, as well as the winner of the Levy County School Board race in the Aug. 28 primary election.

For Levy County Commission, District 2, it is incumbent Rock Meeks (Rep.) of Chiefland facing Terance Reed of Chiefland.

For County Commission, District 4, it is Ryan Bell of Chiefland facing incumbent Lilly Rooks of Cedar Key.

Emcee Smith recognized the many elected leaders in the room. Among those were Gov. Rick Scott; Congressman Neal Dunn (R-Fla.); State Rep. Charlie Stone (R-Ocala, Dist. 22); State Sen. Dennis Baxley (R-Lady Lake, Dist. 12); State Sen. Keith Perry (R-Gainesville, Dist. 8); State Sen. Denise Grimsley (R-Dist. 26, which includes Highlands, Okeechobee, Glades, DeSoto, Hardee, Southern Polk, eastern Charlotte, and northern Lee counties, since 2016); Levy County Sheriff Bobby McCallum; Levy County Commission members John Meeks, Mike Joyner, Matt Brooks and Rock Meeks; Levy County Superintendent of Schools Jeff Edison; Levy County School Board members Paige Brookins, Chris Cowart and Brad Etheridge; Levy County Property Appraiser Oz Barker; Marion County Commissioner David Moore; Marion County Commissioner Michelle Stone; Gilchrist County Clerk Of Court Todd Newton; Gilchrist County School Board Member Gina Geiger; Gilchrist County School Board Member Christie McElroy;

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Williston Mayor Jerry Robinson; Inglis Mayor Drinda Merritt; Chiefland Vice Mayor Chris Jones, Chiefland City Commissioner Rollin Hudson and City Commissioner Teresa Barron; Cedar Key City Commissioner Nickie Rucker; and Fanning Springs City Council Chairman Tommy Darius.

Sheriff speaks about the governor

Sheriff McCallum introduced Gov. Scott. He shared some stories about the governor.

What the sheriff said reflected that the governor has remained easily accessible to all of the sheriffs in Florida, and that he has shown his compassion for the people.

The sheriff mentioned that while he and deputies were searching for the body of the late Mayor Teal Pomeroy, the governor reached out to contact him.

Click [HERE](#) to see one of the previously published stories about Mayor Pomeroy's passing.

Sheriff McCallum said Gov. Scott was at the funeral for the two Gilchrist County deputies who were killed in Trenton recently.

McCallum said more than 55 of the 67 sheriffs in Florida endorse Scott to be the next United States senator.

Rick Scott starts campaign

Gov. Scott shared with listeners reasons why he believes he should be elected as a member of the United States Senate.

He said that while some people think of a person being "born with a silver spoon in their mouth" as being only rich people, he thinks every American was born "with a silver spoon in their mouth," because they are in a nation where any person can achieve what they set out to achieve. This is the land of opportunity, he said.

Scott said he is running for federal office because he believes that just as he accomplished goals for Florida, he can do so for the nation.

He ran for governor on a campaign of "700,000 over seven years," because in 2010 the state's economy was in bad shape. There were mortgage foreclosures and car repossessions to the point where everyone must have known someone who suffered that fate, he said.

Over that time, he said, with help of the Florida Legislature taxes were cut by \$10 billion and revenue went up by \$20 billion in Florida.

One million, five hundred and thirty-nine thousand jobs have been added in Florida since Scott became governor, he said.

The problem in Washington, D.C., Scott said, is that the American people have leaders there who are not getting things done.

It is his belief that one problem is that voters choose a candidate who "gives a good talk," but they do not carry through with action.

Instead, Scott said, he wants Florida voters to choose the candidate who has a proven track record of getting things done, measuring to see the results and caring about the people.

Three goals of his as governor, Scott said, were to provide jobs, make a good public education available and assure safe communities in the state. He said he accomplished those goals.

Scott's three first goals that he is sharing are:

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* Limit term limits for members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

* Require a two-thirds majority vote of approval to raise taxes.

* Give the President the power of line-item veto on budget matters. This way, Scott said, the President can go through the budget and ask “Is this a good use of money?”

Scott said all of the things Republicans believe are possible.

“We’ve cut taxes every year (since he became governor),” Scott said. “I walked in with a \$4 billion deficit. And now after seven years, we’ve paid off \$10 billion in debt.”

The method to reach this goal, Scott said, is to send people to Washington, D.C., who are going to get the job done – rather than just being able to give a good speech.

U.S. Rep. Dunn also spoke.

History of Republicans in Levy County

The Levy County REC was started almost 50 years ago by Edith and Steve McCrimmon of Inglis, and C.W. Gilbert of Bronson, Smith said.

In the early 1970s, Smith said, the majority of voters in Levy County were registered as Democrats.

Today, Smith said the Levy County Republicans have a 16 percent advantage over Democrats in numbers of registered voters. All of the county constitutional officers, including the non-partisan county court judge and five non-partisan School Board members are registered Republicans in Levy County, he said.

The five county commissioners, the sheriff, the clerk, the property appraiser, the tax collector and the supervisor of elections all are Republicans in Levy County, he said.

Levy County Property Appraiser Osborn “Oz” Barker was the first elected county constitutional officer in Levy County who was elected from the Republican Party, Smith said.

Levy County became a county in Florida when the state became part of the United States of America in 1845.