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\$34,000 kiosk ready for ribbon-cutting *Visitors pose with Elvis Presley*



This view of the screen shows people how to start using it. Touch the screen.

Story and Photo

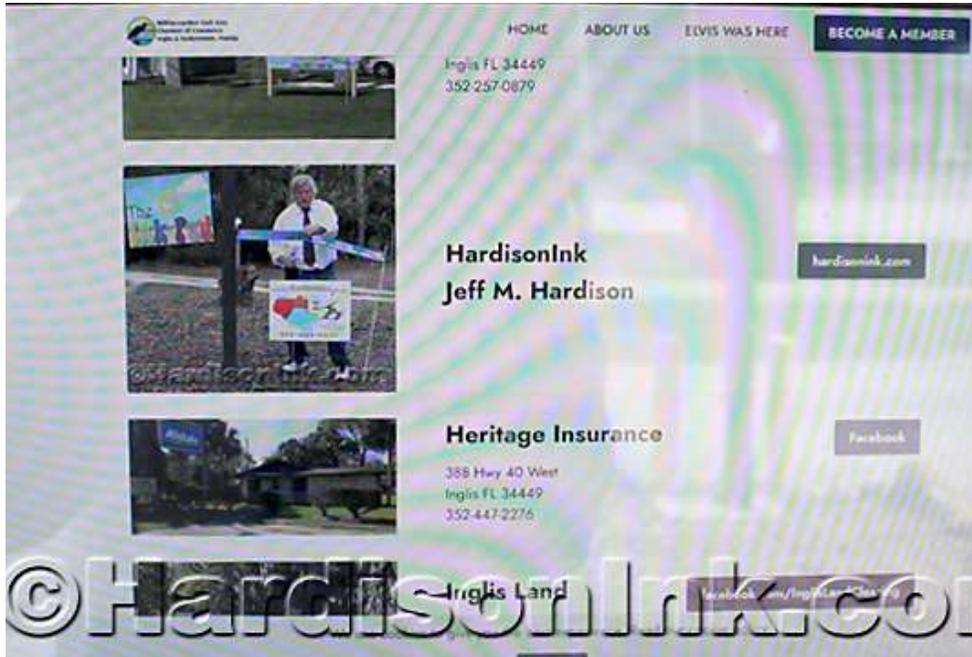
By Jeff M. Hardison © June 25, 2021 at 8:11 p.m.

INGLIS – A nine-member committee working with a grant administration coordinator completed a project funded from the settlement for a disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

After touching the screen, visitors are welcomed. What they will see is exactly the same as they would see on their computers or smart phones if they looked up the Withlacoochee Gulf Area Chamber of Commerce.



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This is one part of the Chamber members' listings, including that *HardisonInk.com* is a member of this Chamber.

A statue of Elvis Presley is seen near the kiosk in the area between the Central Florida Electric Cooperative Office in Inglis and the Withlacoochee Gulf Area Chamber of Commerce Office in Inglis.

A visit to the kiosk in Inverness late Friday morning (June 25) and early in the afternoon showed it is functioning.

As fate would have it, four out-of-town visitors who were at the Elvis Summer Festival

of 2021 being held in Inverness visited the office of the Withlacoochee Gulf Area Chamber of Commerce in Inglis during that 30-minute unannounced review of the kiosk.

The kiosk cost \$34,175. It is chained to the wall of the building to reduce odds of someone stealing it. It is so easy to operate there are no instructions other than to touch the screen to start. From there the viewers can choose options by touching the screen.

For a period of time, the Chamber office was noted as being open some hours on Friday.

As for the disaster money used to buy the kiosk, the RESTORE Act is a United States federal statute that was signed into law by President Barack Obama on July 6, 2012.

It was enacted by the 112th United States Congress as an amendment to the "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" bill, a far-reaching transportation bill that included many other



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provisions. The act was in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill that occurred on April 20, 2010, which caused significant environmental, ecological, and economic damage to the United States Gulf Coast.

Levy County was among the recipients of funds from that compensation for that disaster.

A 24-hour-a-day kiosk is in Inglis now and it is ready to be celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, according to Levy County RESTORE Act Coordinator Tisha Whitehurst.

The RESTORE Act Coordinator serves as the coordinator for Levy County's interests related to the RESTORE Act. This includes overseeing and coordinating all aspects of the program's development and implementation.

THE VISITORS



Posing next to the Elvis Presley statue near the office for Central Florida Electric Cooperative in Inglis are (from left) Gaye Underwood of Ormond Beach; Glenda Glass of Augusta, Georgia; Shirley Hodges of Milledgeville, Georgia; and Ann Reviere of Lincolnton, Georgia. The ladies had hoped to find the Chamber of Commerce open.

Gaye Underwood of Ormond Beach; Glenda Glass of Augusta, Georgia; Shirley Hodges of Milledgeville, Georgia; and Ann Reviere of Lincolnton, Georgia, visited the Chamber office. As they have found on every visit over the past few years, it was closed.

Although a sign on the door of the Withlacoochee Gulf Area Chamber of Commerce said it would open at 10 a.m., it was closed from 11:30 a.m. to noon on Friday.

However, the visitors were shown the kiosk, which will bring up information from that Chamber's website, such as places to eat, places to spend the night, places to go, services and other facts.

The four women were wearing "Dream" tee-shirts as part of their celebration of the annual summer festival.

Part of Levy County Road 40 West is named "Follow That Dream Highway" to commemorate Presley's movie filmed in part in the Inglis-Yankeetown area.

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Follow That Dream is a 1962 musical film starring Presley made by Mirisch Productions. It was based on the 1959 novel, "Pioneer, Go Home!" Producer Walter Mirisch liked the song, "Follow That Dream" and retitled the picture.

The festival continues in Inverness. It was June 23 through June 26.

This Elvis Presley Summer Festival was at the Citrus County Auditorium, 3610 S. Florida Ave., in Inverness. Among the performers were Bill Cherry, Dean Z, Cote Deonath, Alex Mitchell, Dwight Icenhower, Taylor Rodriguez and others.

As for the kiosk it is the project that is completed by the Levy County RESTORE Act Committee. It promotes eco-tourism in Levy County as the outdoor information kiosk.

Members of the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee and who they represent are: Chris Cowart – Levy County School Board; Holly McGlashan – Higher Education – College of Central Florida; Jolie Judy Davis of Cedar Key – Citizen Representative; John Meeks – Levy County Board of County Commissioners; Richard Streeter of Inglis -- Citizen Representative; Leslie Sturmer – Aquaculture, UF/IFAS Levy Extension; Denny Voyles – Tourism, Voyles (Fishing) Guide Service of Cedar Key; Kim Wheeler of Williston -- Citizen Representative; and VACANT - Economic Development Representative, which used to be a seat occupied by David Pieklik, but he resigned from the Nature Coast Business Development Council in January. So far, no one has been named as the NCBDC executive director.

Among the other projects funded by the RESTORE Act in Levy County is the Cedar Key Aquarium at the Nature Coast Biological Station on Cedar Key, which is in the reimbursement process now and is near closeout, Whitehurst said.

Levy County was awarded RESTORE Act funds in a consent decree on April 4, 2016, Whitehurst noted.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred off of the Gulf Coast on April 20, 2010. Florida's 23 Gulf Coast counties were impacted to varying degrees, with 177 miles of coast receiving varying degrees of damage from the oil spill disaster.

The Levy County Commission adopted Resolution 2013-25 on Feb. 19, 2013, to establish the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee. To ensure that the Committee is comprised of members with diversified backgrounds, as well as the knowledge to meet the requirements described in the resolution, the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee includes the members listed earlier in the story.

Whitehurst also serves as the executive director of the Levy County Visitors Bureau. That group is scheduled for meetings that are open to the public.

The Tourist Development Council meets at the Visitors Bureau office, 607 S.W. First Ave., in Williston. The TDC oversees the expenditure of funds the county obtains from tourists visiting and paying a "bed tax" for spending nights in Levy County.

The TDC meeting schedule for the rest of 2021 is Aug. 12, Oct. 14 and Dec. 9. All meetings start at 6 p.m. Again, those are open public meetings.

As for the Levy County RESTORE Act Advisory Committee, there are no meetings scheduled currently, Whitehurst said, because its members have completed everything necessary so far. She is saving money by not paying mileage costs to members who would be meeting just to meet.