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'An inspiration'



Students from Dixon School of Arts and Sciences present sculptor and former astronaut Ed Dwight and his wife Barbara with gifts during a visit to the school. TONY GIBERSON/TGIBERSON@PNJ.COM

Sculptor of Chappie James Monument visits Pensacola

Kamal Morgan
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Ed Dwight, a former pilot, a sculptor and America's first African-American astronaut candidate, is a trailblazer with a list of accomplishments that would make anyone's jaw drop.

And he's still achieving firsts to this day, including making his first visit to Pensacola on Friday.

Dwight is the sculptor of the Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. Memorial statue set to be installed at the foot of the Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. Bridge. While touring the area Friday, he

visited the Dixon School of Arts & Sciences and delivered a speech to about 200 students encouraging them to exercise the most important organ in the body: the brain.

He told students that even though there are challenges in life, if they work and stretch the muscles in their brain they can accomplish anything they want.

Dwight is a living proof of this, as was James. That's why Dwight said thinks it is particularly meaningful to see the efforts of the Gen. Daniel "Chappie" James Jr. Memorial Foundation to erect a statue of their hometown hero.

"Something like this ... needs com-

munity support because there are people in Pensacola that don't want a Chappie James sculpture because they'd rather take the money and spend it on something else," Dwight said. "And it's a struggle in every city I go to, a struggle for the Black community to get sculptures and stuff that they need."

In attendance at Dixon was councilwoman Teniadé Broughton, who said Dwight's message could have a lifelong impact on the students.

"Since Dixon is a school that's focuses on art, I hope it's an inspiration,"

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Local beaches brace for algae

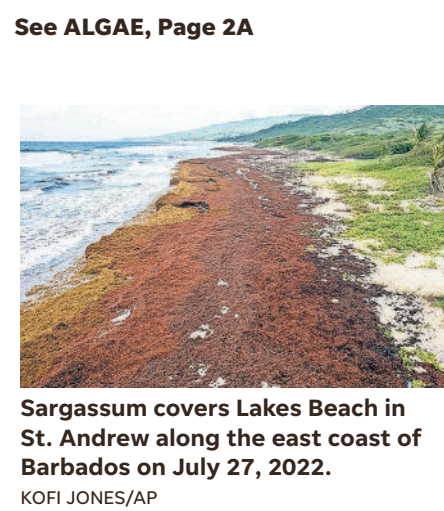
Huge mass of sargassum heading for Pensacola, Navarre

Benjamin Johnson
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

A massive 5,000-mile-wide mass of sargassum, a genus of brown macroalgae abundantly found in the Atlantic Ocean, is headed toward Florida and officials are getting beaches ready in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties.

Although the algae are moving toward Florida, Robert Turpin, the marine resource manager for Escambia County's Department of Natural Resource Management, told the News Journal that the Loop Current, which flows from the Caribbean to the Gulf of Mexico, will likely keep some of the sargassum mass from hitting local beaches.

"It comes into the Gulf of Mexico and, like the name suggests, it loops back and flows back out through the Florida Straits because of what we call the Gulf Stream," Turpin said. "If any (sargassum) comes into the Gulf of



REAP clears Pensacola audit and wins \$370,000 more in city funding

Jim Little
Pensacola News Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Pensacola approved a new \$370,000 grant for Re-Entry Alliance of Pensacola Inc., marking the nonprofit's first approval of new funding since the city voted to conduct an audit and freeze city funding for the organization.

The \$370,000 will go to allow REAP to buy the former Pathways for Change Clinton Cox Residence on West Blount Street and rehabilitate the building to provide a 12-unit, low-rent transitional housing option for homeless individuals.

The grant, which originated under Mayor Grover Robinson's administration, was delayed by the audit of REAP and drew concern from City Council President Delarian Wiggins and Councilman Charles Bare.

After a lengthy debate Thursday night, the City Council voted 5-2 with Wiggins and Bare in opposition to approving the grant project.

The West Blount Street property is the same property where REAP set up its Safe Outdoor Space Camp, which serves as an emergency intake shelter for its other homeless programs.

Wiggins initially pushed for the audit last October after complaints about

the conditions at the REAP camp — which had been hastily set up when the city forced a large encampment under Interstate 110 to be vacated earlier that year — and allegations by Melissa Johnson, the former director of the camp, that REAP was mismanaging city funds.

"Last year, when I walked that property, it was horrendous," Wiggins said Thursday. "From the heat, the food being out on tables, spoiled, the smell of the raw sewage, that's what initially sparked the audit. We just got briefed on this audit on Monday. We were told about the discrepancies on Monday, but today, we're wanting to push

\$370,000 to pay off a building for REAP when they haven't met the expectations."

The REAP Audit found Pensacola ARPA funds weren't misused

The forensic audit into REAP's spending of city funds granted through the American Rescue Plan Act was completed last month and found that REAP lacked proper internal processes and procedures to track how funding was being used.

The audit, which cost the city

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