



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG ENGLE

Karen Jones, Mary Krizanac and Eleeta Sue Hopkins try computers at Lake Weir High School on Wednesday morning.



A student at Vanguard Kiefer-Shelton, right, an High School, try one of the Table on Wednesday.

Wednesday was the "Day of Technology 3" event, an impressive display of technology that drew 600 teachers to Lake Weir High on their off-time to explore new toys and to get some of their professional learning certification accomplished.

The purpose of the event, launched by the district's Technology and Information Systems department, is to expose teachers and administrators to the latest technology used in classrooms throughout Marion County.

Though there were many fun items at this year's event, some of

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"We have students to help us with computers," she noted. "They (the students) are smarter than we are when it comes to technology."

Wall Street focused on the bleak landscape ahead for the economy Wednesday and wiped out its big gains from a day earlier — and then some.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed down 519 points and has now lost more than 2,000 in less than three weeks. Swings of several hundred points in just minutes, accelerated by computerized trading, have become commonplace.

This time, the selling was intensified by worries about Europe. American bank stocks took hits because investors fretted that debt problems overseas might reach the United States.

France came under pressure amid concerns that it could follow the U.S. and become the next country to lose its top AAA rating. The French president cut his vacation short and promised to

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Zip line course coming to Marion

By Rick Allen
Staff writer

High-adventure eco-tourism is coming to Marion County this year in the form of a new zip line course over topographically rich terrain northwest of Ocala.

Canyon Zip Line & Canopy Tours is targeting November to open its seven-line, two-bridge zip line course above abandoned limerock quarries off Northwest Gainesville Road, just north of County Road 326. An eighth line is being considered.

ZIP on Page 4A

Britain probes riot-related deaths

Even as British Prime Minister David Cameron promised not to let a "culture of fear" take hold in England, tensions flared in Birmingham, where a murder probe was opened after three men were killed in a hit-and-run reportedly as they took to the streets to deter potential rioters.

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© 2011 Ocala Star-Banner
Ocala, Florida, Vol. 68,
No. 321, five sections

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Toll Free: 1-800-
541-2171

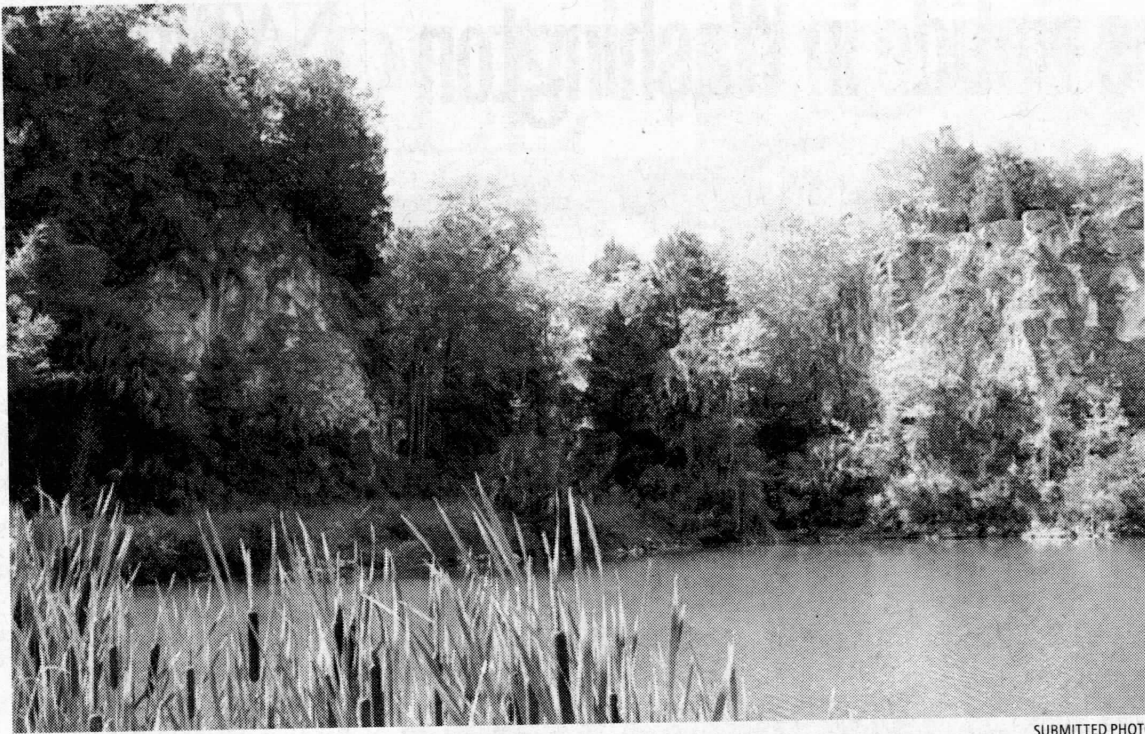


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SUBMITTED PHOTO

An old quarry pit is shown off of County Road 25A near the intersection of County Road 326 in Ocala. A new zip line course is planned for the pit north of Ocala.

ZIP: Terrain includes ponds, lakes, cliffs

Continued from 1A

"It's a very unique property," said Traci Walker, company president. "There are huge cliffs, lakes, beautiful trees. You'll be able to zip over, under and through them all. My husband searched all over Florida before discovering this property.

"It's kind of a hidden treasure," she added.

Walker and her husband, Dave, used to drive by the tract all the time while travelling from their home in Naples to rock climbing and zip line outings in Tennessee, she said. "We love that area."

The 94-acre tract was mined back in the 1920s, said John Rudnianyn, whose International Property Services Corp. is agent for the property. "Nobody's worked that quarry for 30, 40 years," he said.

Nowadays, "it's gorgeous back there; it looks like Jurassic Park," he said. "There are bobcat, turkey, woodpeckers, but no deer or bear. And there've been some 16- and 18-pound bass pulled out of the lakes."

The terrain includes several ponds and lakes — among them one that's three acres and another that's seven acres — as



BRUCE ACKERMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

An old sand pit is shown off County Road 25A near the intersection of County Road 326 in Ocala on Wednesday. A new zip line course is planned for the pit north of Ocala.

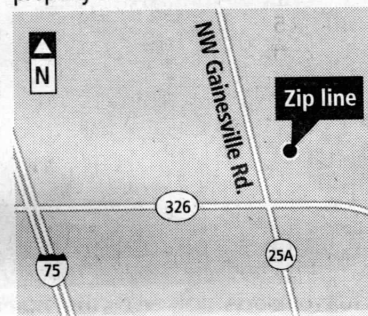
by Geronimo Construction, a Minnesota firm that specializes in installation and training of this sort. "All of our guides will be certified," Walker said.

The county recently approved a special use permit for the property, and work is expected to begin within a week. In addition to the aerial lines, there will be a welcome and outfitting center built on the grounds.

"It's a very safe industry," Walker said. "Our insurer says they haven't raised rates since the 1980s."

Zip line coming

A zip line attraction is planned for this property northwest of Ocala.



PROJECT: El Dorado have concerns

Continued from 1A

must be saved until a development plan is approved. Shade trees must be provided in the north/south landscape strips in the Publix parking lot, and parking spaces in front of the 54,000-square-foot Publix will be reduced.

The Stolen Hours Farm property has been the site of a number of development proposals in the past. Before the changes were submitted Monday, the property had been approved for a 51-unit single-family subdivision on 26.78 acres and 440 multi-family units on 44.69 acres, which never were built.

Lawrence Coleman, who spoke on behalf of the El Dorado subdivision's homeowners' association, said the proposed 7-acre drainage retention area south of El Dorado, on the north end of the proposed conceptual plan, is being located in an area that previous engineers found unacceptable for storm water retention.

He asked that the vote be tabled until the St. Johns River Water Management District could verify the feasibility of the proposed plan.

"We have been through this before," Coleman said. "We don't want to see the city proceed with plans that then, the end, won't work from the storm water management view."

Steven Gray, Leon's attorney said they are obligated to decrease the runoff to the El Dorado property. He said they felt they could maintain more water on site with the new plan than the previous one.

Nearby residents also were concerned that lighting from the Publix would flood their neighborhood and that they would have to look at the back of the store.

Richard Busche, of Kimley-Horn & Associates, the

MARKET: Finan

well as cliffs as high as 160 feet and decades-old trees.

That's what makes it eco-tourism.

"As you go from stand to stand, you learn about the trees, the spring-fed lakes, the ecology of the property," Walker said.

Then there's the thrill of being suspended from a cable as you "zip" from one stand high up a tree to the next. But Walker assures that the harness that connects you to the cable is extra safe; the harness is fitted both around your hips and around your torso so you travel the lines facing forward and sitting up.

"You don't feel you're up that high," she said. "You're in all that safety gear."

And just about anyone between the weights of 70 and 270 pounds can enjoy the ride.

The tree platforms and lines, Walker said, are being installed

The industry is growing in popularity: According to a 2010 report by Jeff Coy, president of Arizona-based JLC Hospitality Consulting, there are more than 10,000 zip line courses worldwide.

"Commercial zip lines number about 300, with 100 located in the United States," the report notes.

The Associated Press reported last October that nearly 30 new adventures opened in the U.S. in 2010, with about a dozen more expected to open this year. According to ziplinerider.com, there's at least one zip line in every state, as well as in most islands in the Caribbean, Canada and countries in South America, Europe and Asia.

Canyon will be the third or fourth in Florida. Two others are in Central Florida: Florida Forever's Zipline Safari in St. Cloud and ZOOM Air Adventure

Park Orlando at the Central Florida Zoo in Sanford. According to the Coy report, another project is being planned at the Caloosahatchee Regional Park in Lee County.

"I attribute the popularity to increased desire for physical activity and eco-adventure," said Tina Batten, administrator of ZOOM Air, in an email.

"Our courses embrace a philosophy of self-initiation: our guests operate the equipment themselves, propel themselves along the various challenges up in the trees, and 'earn' their zips," she added. "When they complete the courses, along with seeming a little tired, they tend to project an air of self-satisfaction."

"People like that feeling."

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the session's

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slash the nation's debts.

The stocks of leading banks in Britain, Italy and Germany were hammered. The fear is that if European governments default on their bonds, it will hurt the European banks that own them.

That could start a chain reaction that hurts the United States because large U.S. banks have loans to European banks. The result on Wall Street, which already has economic problems to worry about, was a dramatic turnaround.

On Tuesday, the Federal Reserve said it planned to keep interest rates ultra-low for two more years. After some initial confusion, the stock market staged a huge comeback and had one of its best days.

But the interest-rate news proved to be a distraction. The Fed made the pledge because it sees almost no chance that the economy will improve substantially by 2013, and when investors focused on that, they dumped stocks again.

"Now it gets back to the fundamentals," said Mark Lamkin, founder of Lamkin Wealth Management, which manages \$215 million.

The Dow closed at 10,719.94, down 4.6 percent for the day. By points, it was the ninth-steepest decline for the market.

Wednesday was another day marked by big moves. The Dow was down more than 300 points within minutes of the opening bell. It recovered some of that loss, then drifted steadily lower in the last two hours.

The market has traded that way for two weeks, lurching up and down. The most extreme example was Tuesday, when the Dow swung more than 600 points in the one hour and 45 minutes after the Fed's statement.

The stomach-churning highs and lows are reminiscent of the fall of 2008, the depths of the financial crisis, when there were swings of 800 or even 1,000 points in a day.

Computerized trading systems — programmed to analyze charts, capitalize on

TECH: Money going to meet state mandate

Continued from 1A

those items will be out of reach this school year. That's because a budget crunch means less technology purchases.

And what money there is must go toward computers to get schools ready for FCAT and end-of-course exams next spring.

Deputy Superintendent of Schools Diana Greene said with the state mandate of the new computerized exams, the district will have to invest in new computers in the immediate future.

And the money used to buy computers was carried over from last year. All other technology purchases will be put on hold unless they are paid for through federal or state grants.

"We will have to start back investing in computers (that can handle the state testing)," she said. "We have to keep pace."

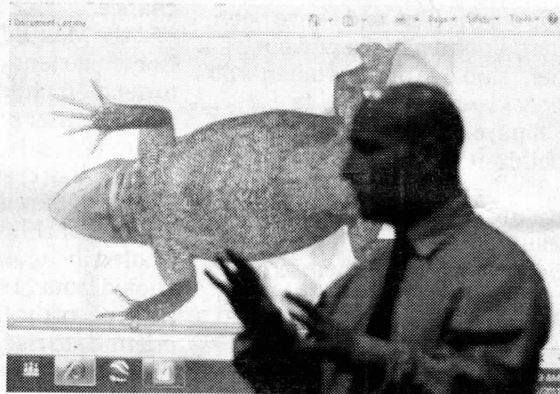
Scott Hansen, the school district's director of technology and information, said the school district's technology department already had permission to spend \$5 million on technology upgrades for student computers.

At the event, Hansen also unveiled a new employee desktop portal — a digital dashboard that can be accessed on any computer. He also talked about a student desktop that will be released in October.

"Employees will be able to access their records (possibly as early as today)," Hansen said.

Greene said the event is considered a part of the district professional development. The teachers are not forced to go, since they are technically off until Monday, when they are scheduled to report back. School starts Aug. 22.

Day of Technology is important to all teachers because the students "of today live in a different



DOUG ENGLE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Gene Bashinelli with AVI/SPL demonstrates the 3D moveable models on the Smart Board on Wednesday morning.

world," Greene said, adding that teachers get credits toward their professional learning requirements.

Greene said students are quite technology savvy when they start school. They can text and use iPhones and computers. In some cases, they can operate devices better than their own teacher.

Throughout the day, teachers attended many presentations, which included iPads, Smart tables and many other devices. It was a taste of what could one day end up in the classroom.

The morning keynote speaker was Apple employee Kate Kemker, the former director of technology learning and innovation with the Florida Department of Education.

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