

# Current Florida license is the law

## STAFF REPORT

**LEESBURG** — To enjoy the privilege of driving, drivers in the area should be aware of the laws and regulations in the state of Florida. Like all states, Florida requires a driver to possess a state-issued driver license, automobile insurance and a vehicle registration to be able to drive.

For those seeking a driver license for the first time, residents must present proof of identity such as a birth certificate, passport, certificate of naturalization or a U.S. military identification card of officer rank. Also required is a secondary document showing date of birth. For residents with an out-of-state license, they simply must present their original licenses along with an approved secondary document.

Non-citizens classified as non-immigrants must supply the Department of Motor Vehicles with either an employment authorization card issued by the United States Department of Justice or a proof of nonimmigrant classification provided by the United States Department of Justice. They must submit a secondary document including either a passport, employer identification or identification from their home country or college. Immigrants will have to provide an Alien Reg-

## Hit the road with what you need

### Lake County

#### Driver Licenses, Driving Tests, I.D. Cards:

**Tavares:** 28129 C.R. 561, 32778  
(352) 742-6165  
Tues. - Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**Leesburg:** 2219 N. Citrus Blvd., 34748

(352) 360-6507  
Tues. - Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

#### Registration, tag and title services:

**Golden Triangle Branch:**  
15733 Dora Ave., Eustis 32726  
(352) 343-9602  
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

**The Villages:** 918 Avenida Central, Lady Lake 32159  
(352) 343-9602  
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

#### South Lake Branch:

194 North U.S. Highway 27, Suite A, Clermont 34711  
(352) 343-9602

Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. 5 p.m.

#### Leesburg:

1340 Citizens Blvd., Leesburg 34748

(352) 343-9602

Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

### Sumter County

#### Driver Licenses, Driving Tests, I.D. Cards:

**Wildwood:** 328 Shopping Center Drive, Wildwood 34785-4533  
(352) 748-1941  
Tues. - Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.

#### Registration, tag and title services:

**Oxford:** 8033 C.R. 466, Suite B, Box 8, 34484

(352) 753-3696  
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Wildwood:** 372 Shopping Center Drive, 34785  
(352) 330-1390  
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Bushnell:** 209 N. Florida St., Room 110, Bushnell 33513  
(352) 793-0265  
Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

istration receipt card, a I-551 stamp in their passport or an immigration judge's order to receive a license.

Residents are required to update their driver licenses within 10 days of a change of address.

If you are bringing your vehicle to Florida or buying one for the first time, insurance is essential. To get a Florida tag and registration, you must have a minimum coverage of \$10,000 in personal injury protection and \$10,000 in property damage liability. This is required, even if you are covered back home. The state requires you obtain insurance issued by a Florida agent.

Personal Injury Protection is used to cover losses incurred in an accident, regardless of who is to blame.

This protection covers bodily injury to the policyholder, relatives living in the policyholder's home, passengers and licensed drivers who operate the vehicle with the policyholder's permission.

Property damage liability pays for damages caused by you, or members of your family cause, to other people's property in a car crash.

Registration is the final requirement to drive in Florida. Registration is proof of having paid registration tax and fees on your vehicle. Vehicles are required to be registered in Florida within 10 days of the owner becoming employed, placing children in public school or establishing residence in the state.

For more information on the Web, visit <http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/>.



File photo

Lake County professional fisherman Jim Bitter fishes on the Harris Chain of Lakes. Those who want to get hooked on fishing in Florida need a license.

## Driving isn't only thing that requires a license

### STAFF REPORT

**LEESBURG** — Florida claims to be the "fishing capital of the world," but before you can join the throngs of people trying to test this theory, there is one piece of paper that you must have — a fishing license.

In both Lake and Sumter counties, fishing licenses can be purchased from either the tax collector's offices or in the sporting goods department at local Wal-Marts.

If you have lived in Florida

for less than six months, there are various types of non-resident licenses that can be purchased. If you have been a Florida resident for more than six months, then there are more choices for you at lower prices. All licenses are valid for 12 months unless otherwise indicated. To apply for a fishing license, you must present your driver license and provide some information including your address, and for non-residents, your Social Security number.

## Understand Florida tax exemptions when buying a home

### STAFF REPORT

Homestead Exemptions may seem like tricky business, but learning the rules could mean thousands of dollars saved.

A \$5,000 exemption was enacted in the state in 1935 as a way to entice people to move to the state. Since then, the exemption has seen many changes.

In 1950, an additional \$5,000 was added as an exemption for people 65 and older. Thirty years later, the exemp-

tion was increased to \$25,000, but the rules for how the exemption is applied has changed.

Lake County Property Appraiser Ed Havill explained the changes.

"Prior to 1980, the average assessment of a Florida home was \$65,000. So, in 1979, a \$100,000 home would be assessed at \$65,000 and then with the Homestead Exemption, you paid taxes on \$60,000," Havill said. "In 1980 it changed to 100 percent assessment. That \$100,000 home that was assessed

at \$65,000 is now assessed at \$100,000. With the exemption, you paid taxes on \$75,000, so you had to pay higher taxes."

Now, if you're 65 or older and have an adjusted gross income of \$22,000 or less, you can get an additional \$25,000 exemption. Havill says there's also an exemption called the "Granny Amendment" that allows people who build an addition on to their homes to allow elderly parents or grandparents to live there. That particular amendment Lake County does not have, Havill said,

because it's too hard to prove that the seniors are actually living at the home.

People can be prosecuted for fraud if they claimed an exemption illegally. To qualify, you have to be a legal Florida resident, or have a green card.

"The last few years, we've got a lot of flack from people who come here and buy a home and only have a visa," Havill said. "I'm not giving them the exemption."

He added that a resident also has to be registered to vote to qualify.