NEWS ITEMS WANTED! – Topping last year’s $7.1 billion (88.2 percent), nearly 153 million (62 percent) are planning a cookout or picnic, spending an average of $75.35 per person, a new record, according to an annual survey by the National Retail Federation.

FOURTH OF JULY FOOD SPENDING – Americans are expected to spend $6.9 billion on food for Fourth of July cookouts and picnics, down slightly from last year’s record of $7.1 billion, according to an annual survey by the National Retail Federation. According to the survey, more than 216 million Americans (87 percent) plan to observe Independence Day, down slightly from last year’s 219 million (88 percent). Nearly 153 million (62 percent) are planning a cookout or picnic, spending an average of $75.35 per person, a new record topping last year’s $73.42. The numbers cover only food items and not other holiday-related items.

NEWS ITEMS WANTED! – Please send your business news items to Joanne Magley, Volusia County Community Information director, at jmagley@volusia.org. If you wish to be removed from this weekly broadcast, please let us know.