

**A Message From
Your Pinellas County Commissioners**

Here in Pinellas, our beaches, award-winning park system and other natural attractions are quality sources of fun and enjoyment. Economic growth in Pinellas continues to flourish, and our focus has grown to include many quality contributors to our economic base: large corporations, small businesses and high-tech, clean manufacturing. County events, historic heritage and cultural activities round out the equation for the high quality of life Pinellas County residents enjoy.

Pinellas County is home to 24 municipalities and Pinellas County government provides a wide variety of services to the residents of those municipalities. Some examples include a countywide 9-1-1 system, Animal Services (582-2600) and countywide Emergency Management (464-3800) to help us all deal with emergencies, such as hurricanes. In addition to these countywide services, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (464-3377) also serves as the local government for nearly 300,000 residents who live in the unincorporated neighborhoods (those areas not within municipal boundaries).

Unincorporated Pinellas is sometimes referred to as the county's Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU). This part of the County budget is paid for by residents of the unincorporated areas and is devoted to providing services to the unincorporated areas that

are over and above the services provided to the county as a whole. Your Board of County Commissioners is proud to be able to serve you directly as both the regional and municipal services provider.



www.pinellascounty.org



**Enjoy the
Pinellas County
Quality of Life**

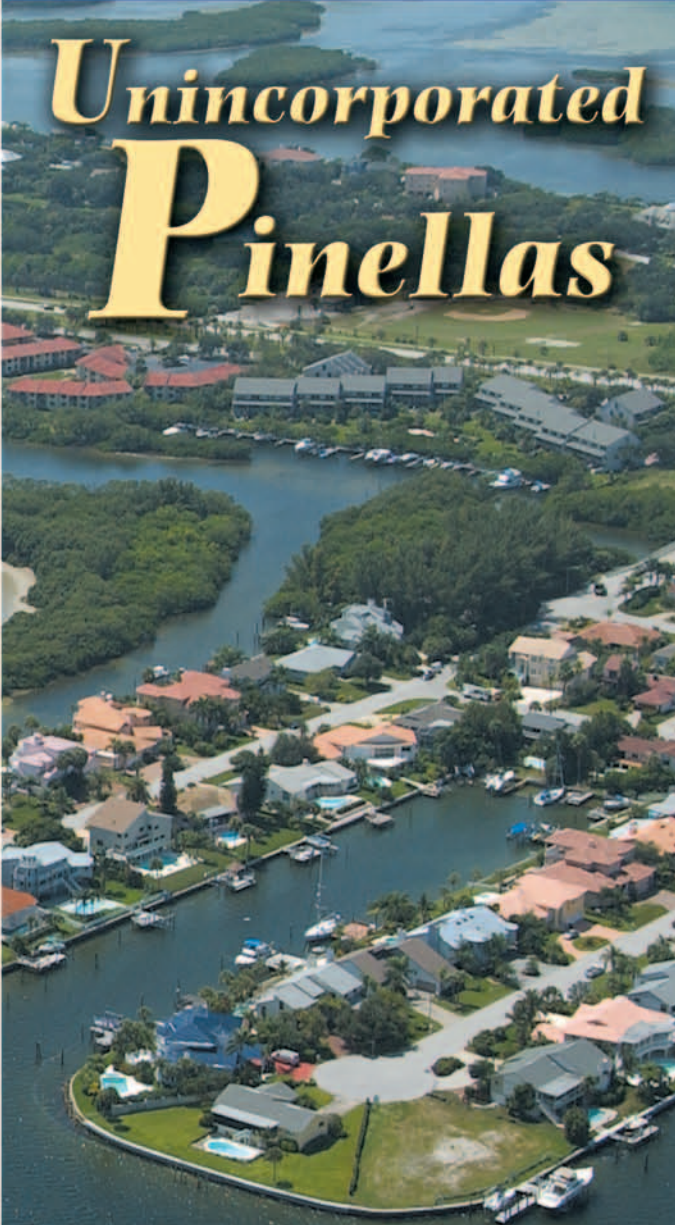
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**Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756**

Tierra Verde

We're glad you're a part of

**Unincorporated
Pinellas**



Here’s What You Get as an Unincorporated Resident

Personalized Assistance to Meet Your Individual Needs Right Where You Live



No need to travel all the way to Clearwater to do business with the County! One call or visit to your local County Connection Center can provide the personalized assistance you need in solving a wide range of problems—everything from how to get a stop sign installed on the corner to dealing with drainage problems and more. In the Tierra Verde area, call Center Manager Jane Gillespie at (727) 549-6441. The Southwest County Connection Center is located at 8202 113th Street in Seminole.

Support for Your Neighborhood – Services and Enhancements

When it comes to showing special pride in your community, Neighborhood Enhancement Grants are available for citizen-initiated neighborhood projects. Each year, projects receive up to \$10,000 for entry signs, landscaping and other beautification or safety/education projects. Recently, the Tierra Verde community received a Neighborhood Enhancement Grant to assist with upfront costs to install street lighting along the Pinellas Bayway for the safety and security of Tierra Verde residents. Pinellas County also supports your community with ongoing services, such as traffic control, sidewalks, stormwater/drainage and code enforcement. In the near future, residents of Tierra Verde will see repairs to the Madonna and 13th Street bridges along with the repaving of several neighborhood streets.

Parks, Trails and Recreational Opportunities Abound

Tierra Verde has Ft. De Soto Park right outside its backdoor. The park offers bike trails, boat launches, fishing piers and picnic pavilions, all in an atmosphere steeped in history, along with miles of white, sandy beaches. Through partnerships with schools, cities and not-for-profit organizations, Pinellas County is able to leverage \$2 million in recreational funds to support many more programs. And with Recreational Reimbursements, the Pinellas County Park Department (464-3347) covers the

differential fees charged by cities when unincorporated residents take part in municipal recreation programs. More than \$260,000 in recreational grants has gone to Tierra Verde community associations in recent months. These funds have paid for tennis courts, playground areas and the Tierra Verde Recreation Complex, which offers Tierra Verde families the opportunity for their children to participate in organized sports close to home.

Fire, Police and Emergency Medical Care That Are Unsurpassed

When you need emergency medical help, you need a fast, high-quality emergency medical services (EMS) response regardless of municipal boundaries. In Pinellas County, help from the closest available units—both fire department rescue vehicles and Sunstar paramedic ambulances—arrives within four and a half minutes on average.



Your safety is our primary concern. County law enforcement services are provided by the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office (582-6200). On Tierra

Verde, deputies patrol the island neighborhoods 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These deputies have the back-up of the full resources of the Sheriff’s Office, such as Flight, K-9, Traffic Unit, Forensics, the Marine Unit and the Criminal Investigations Division. In addition, the Sheriff’s Crime Prevention Section has worked with Tierra Verde residents to set up a number of Neighborhood Watch programs and home security surveys.

Enhanced Fire Protection Services

Pinellas County Government is investing in the safety of Tierra Verde residents by providing \$1,000,000 for the construction of a new fire station at the corner of Sands Point Drive and the Pinellas Bayway. The station’s proximity to the main road will allow units to reduce response times to the majority of their calls by as much as two minutes.

Fire District Taxes

Fire emergency services in Tierra Verde are paid for through a contract Pinellas County Government holds with the St. Petersburg Fire Department. Each year, the Tierra Verde fire station submits its budget to Pinellas County EMS & Fire Administration for review. About 30% of that fire station’s budget is for emergency medical services (EMS) activities, which are financed through

a separate, countywide contract. The remaining 70% is funded by a property tax imposed in Tierra Verde, up to a 1.5 mill cap approved by Tierra Verde voters during the original legislation. It must be noted that a structure fire could quickly overwhelm the resources of any one fire station and all fire departments rely on mutual aid for support. Should a fire incident occur on Tierra Verde, fire units from St. Petersburg, St. Pete Beach, Treasure Island, South Pasadena and others would respond. However, your tax is based on the operational needs of the one fire station closest to you on Tierra Verde.

Clean Water Every Time You Turn on the Tap

Pinellas County provides water in unincorporated neighborhoods as well as many municipalities. When you drink Pinellas County’s tap water, you’re drinking clean, quality water. Pinellas County Utilities proudly reports that the water provided to their customers meets or exceeds all federal and state standards for safe drinking water. The County water system (464-4000) covers more than 1/2 of all county taps. County sewer lines reach 1/3 of all households.



Help with Home Improvements

Need help in acquiring a permit for some home improvement? The Pinellas County Building Department (464-3241) will handle the job with ease and convenience for homeowners and contractors alike.

A Presence in Tallahassee

During each legislative session, Pinellas County Government maintains a full-time presence in Tallahassee through the efforts of the County’s Legislative Liaison. Working closely with the County’s legislative delegation and monitoring the bills before the Florida Legislature, we seek to ensure that Pinellas County’s position on the issues is well known by state lawmakers and that any action taken serves the best interest of county citizens.

All This for a Price that Compares Favorably to What Your City Neighbors Pay

For all these services, residents of unincorporated Pinellas County often pay less in taxes and fees than their neighbors living within city limits. When thinking about annexation, it’s important to know that other fees and charges, such as franchise fees and utility taxes for electricity and gas, are often imposed by the annexing city. Another item to think about: city residents may face different and possibly more code or zoning restrictions that affect what can be done with their own property.

Based on comparable services for the average, homesteaded, single-family residence according to the Property Appraiser’s 2003 taxable values (\$344,440 minus \$25,000 Homestead Exemption = \$319,440 taxable value) in Tierra Verde.

	Tierra Verde		City of St. Petersburg	
Taxes/Fees	Rate	\$ Amount	Rate	\$ Amount
Property Tax				
Municipal Service Taxing Unit vs. City Tax	2.356 mills	\$752.60	7.09 mills	\$2,264.83
Library	0.5 mills	\$159.72	–	–
Fire	1.326 mills	\$423.58	–	–
PSTA	–	–	.6319 mills	\$201.85
TOTAL PROPERTY TAX	4.182 mills	\$1,335.90	7.7219 mills	\$2,466.68
Other Fees and Taxes				
Electricity (\$150 mth. average bill)	–	–	16%	\$288.00 (yr.)
Telephone/Cable (\$77 mth. average bill)	5.1%	\$47.12 (yr.)	5.5%	\$50.82 (yr.)
Water (\$30 mth. average bill)	–	–	10%	\$36.00 (yr.)
Gas (\$20 mth. average bill)	–	–	16%	\$38.40 (yr.)
Charges & Assessments:				
Refuse (mth.)	\$13.50	\$162.00 (yr.)	\$16.35	\$196.20 (yr.)
Stormwater (mth.)	–	–	\$5.00	\$60.00 (yr.)
TOTALS		\$1,545.02		\$3,136.10

In this example, a homeowner would pay \$1,500 more each year to live within the city of St. Petersburg, compared to unincorporated Tierra Verde. This chart is for illustration purposes only. Comparison figures for your particular tax/fee situation may vary. In order to get an accurate comparison for your residence, you would have to substitute your own home’s value and utility cost and recalculate the differences.