

Parks and Conservation Resources

UPDATE

Paul Cozzie
Bureau Director

It is not an exaggeration to say that Parks and Conservation Resources (PCR) could not operate in its current form without the contribution of thousands of volunteers who contributed over 135,000 hours of labor last year alone. The gift of their time further enhances the services we can offer our visitors. The value of their contribution exceeds \$3 million.

The spectacular annual public event, **Holiday Lights in the Garden**, is entirely organized, managed and paid for by the all-volunteer nonprofit **Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation**. The Holiday Lights



is their biggest fund raiser and had over 66,000 attendees this year. The Holiday Lights Committee works all year to hire contractors for designing and arranging the lights and displays; traffic control; concession and custodial services;

and park rangers. Income to cover these costs comes from our sponsors, from other generous donors, and from the visitors who are happy to make the suggested \$4 donation for anyone 13 and older. No one is turned away if they can't pay.

Volunteers are a very important part of the Holiday Lights success. Each evening 20 to 25 volunteers manage the event, supervise volunteers, greet visitors, and staff the gift cart and gift shop. Also, there is a wide

array of volunteer entertainment each night from church choirs to ballet dancers. There were over 460 volunteers providing entertainment this year.

Proceeds from the 2014 event will be used to purchase new and replacement plants, trees and annuals; plants and materials to expand the cactus garden; repair/replace the walkway along McKay Creek; improve the electrical system in the gardens; purchase new lights for the 2015 Holiday Lights event; finalize the renovation of the west side gardens to include the butterfly garden; and expand the Children's Trail.

The **Auxiliary Ranger** corps is 110 strong and reported 10,664 hours for FY2014. That amounts to over \$240,000 in value. Volunteer Auxiliary Rangers patrol the parks, preserves, and Pinellas Trail by bike, in utility carts, and on foot; provide information to visitors and assist with light maintenance and special events. We are expanding our Auxiliary Ranger program into Heritage Village, Fort De Soto and six other parks. We are also working with the City of St. Petersburg to recruit new Auxiliary Rangers for the Pinellas Trail.

The **Pinellas Trail Adopt-A-Mile Program** is managed by **Keep Pinellas Beautiful, Inc.** Segments for adoption are approximately one mile



Michel Cazes, Auxiliary Ranger

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In case you missed it!

There's news about the Wellness Center in the January **To Your Health** newsletter. There's also important information about glaucoma, dental care, and positive thinking tips.

And read more about the Special Projects Assistant classification in the January **Management & Supervisory Notes**.

long and many can be adopted by more than one group. Of the 82 slots available for adoption, 52 have been filled. Groups that adopt a mile pledge to perform cleanups every other month to remove litter and debris. This enhances the appearance of the Trail and reduces pollution of our waterways. Volunteers are provided with bags and gloves. This past quarter, these volunteers have removed over 3 tons of trash from the Trail.

Continued on page 2

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Currently eight of our parks and Heritage Village have been adopted as part of our [Adopt-a Park Program](#). The groups pledge to help keep "their" parks clean and enjoyable with events at least four times per year.

Our Education Centers at Weedon Island and Brooker Creek Preserves, Heritage Village, and the Florida Botanical Gardens along with many of our Extension programs, would not exist without the expertise, passion and commitment of the volunteers who run these programs with staff.



Girl Scout Troop 140 Dog Park Project

OurSpace

Don't forget to check the employee blog – [Our Space](#) – regularly.

Bookmark it! There is news every day!

YOU can post to the blog. It's easier than you might think – give it a try! Share your photos, celebrations, upcoming events and check for the latest news from the County.

If you have questions, please contact Mary Sault at 464-5098 or employee.communications@pinellascounty.org.

The Pen

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ASSISTANT EDITOR: Mary L. Sault

A monthly publication by the
Pinellas County Human Resources Department

How to Participate:

It's easy to get involved in *The Pen*. You can contribute by informing us of noteworthy news or sending us story ideas.

You can also ask about writing a guest column or submit photos of co-workers at work in your department.

PHONE: (727) 464-5098

FAX: (727) 453-3660

E-mail: employee.communications@pinellascounty.org

Three College Scholarships Offered in 2015

College students registered to vote in Pinellas County could be eligible to earn a scholarship in 2015!

The Florida State Association of Supervisors of Elections (FSASE), comprised of the State of Florida's county supervisors, will award **\$1,200 scholarships** to three qualified students in 2015.

College students majoring in political science, public administration, business administration, journalism or mass communications, enrolled as a junior or senior at an accredited Florida college or university and registered to vote are eligible to apply.



Chelsea Morgan of Palm Harbor, 2013 recipient of FSASE Scholarship, with Deb Clark, Supervisor of Elections

"I am proud our association is able to provide these financial scholarships to our future leaders," Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections Deborah Clark said. "Pinellas County has produced a scholarship winner in four of the last nine years, and we look forward to continuing that trend in 2015 by nominating another deserving college student to receive one of these FSASE honors."

FSASE scholarships are awarded in memory of Dorothy Walker

Ruggles, who served as Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections from 1988 until her death in 2000; Joe Oldmixon, former Escambia County supervisor; and Jimmy Whitehouse, former Highlands County supervisor.

The scholarship application and the complete list of scholarship guidelines, which include requirements such as letters of recommendation and financial information, are available for download at www.voteinpinellas.com.

Scholarship applications must be received by 5:00 p.m., Monday, March 16, 2015, and should be submitted in the county in which the student is registered to vote. Students who are registered Pinellas County voters should return completed applications to any of the three Supervisor of Elections offices: 315 Court St., Room 117, Clearwater; 13001 Starkey Rd., Largo; or 501 1st Ave. N., St. Petersburg.

For additional information or to receive an application by mail, please call the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections office at (727) 464-6108.



**BLOOD
DRIVE**

Mark Your Calendars

Clearwater Courthouse

315 Court Street

West Parking Lot

Thursday, January 22, 2015

Every donor is three more lives saved!

ASK PEGGY



Peggy Rowe
Director of Human Resources

Q. I have an employee who referred two people to the County who were subsequently hired part time. Is she entitled to receive a paid day off for each of those referrals?

A. The Employee Referral program can earn classified employees a day off if someone they refer to Pinellas County government is hired. The first requirement of this program is that the candidate gives the name of the employee who referred them on their application. Also the candidate must be hired as a permanent employee. For example, "Poll Worker" is not a permanent position and therefore ineligible for this program. If the new employee is hired for a part-time position, the referral reward hours are prorated.

There are other considerations as well. You can learn about them on the Human Resources website at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/referral/.

Q. How often are the Pinellas County Employee Service Award Program points updated? I have over 29 years and I have only 25,000 points. I think I should have 35,000 points.

A. Points for service anniversaries are awarded every five years. Yours will arrive on the 30 year anniversary of the date you started with the County.

Flu Season is Here

The Appointing Authorities are concerned for your welfare and that of your co-workers and the citizens we serve. If you have the flu, we encourage you to stay home. During flu season, Annual Leave taken for flu illness will be considered scheduled. For information on where to get a flu shot, click [HERE](#).



Q. I was wondering if the Appointing Authorities have any plans on beginning Merit Pay Increases in the near future. Although the 3% cost of living increase is greatly appreciated, it really does not help much when our Health Insurance increases each year by 5%.

A. This is a topic the Appointing Authorities care deeply about. Our strategic objective for some time has been to offer merit increases, dependent on budget availability. Comparing a 3% salary increase to a 5% medical insurance premium increase is a little like comparing apples to oranges.

Some examples:

- If an employee earns \$25,000 per year, the **3%** adds **\$750** to their paycheck per year.
- The median classified employee salary is \$44,018. A **3%** increase in pay amounts to **\$1,320** per year.

(Employee Cost)

Type of Coverage	5% Increase in Annual Premium
Employee only	\$9.60
Employee and Child(ren)	\$105.36
Employee and Spouse	\$123.60
Family	\$208.08

We continue to do everything we can to keep medical insurance premiums down. With a projected 7% increase in costs for 2015, the County increased employee premiums 5% and the County's contribution increased 10%.

Q. How do we confirm employees have the flu? Do they need to provide documentation or do we just go by them calling to say they have the flu?

A. During flu season we generally do not require confirmation of the flu virus unless specifically stated by your department policy. We encourage employees to take care of their health and prevent spreading the virus to their co-workers. We assume our employees are honest and have integrity. If employees say they have flu-like symptoms, we assume they do. We realize there are a few who may take advantage, but we believe the overwhelming majority are trustworthy.

Peggy



FACE of Performance: Tips

Check out the [FACE Login and Password Tips](#) to learn:

- How do I log into FACE?
- What password should I use for FACE?
- What if I'm locked out of FACE?
- What if I forgot my password?
- How do I update my password?

For more tips, FAQs, videos and user guides, visit the FACE website at www.pinellascounty.org/hr/face.

Merry (or Happy) Christmas Around the World Contest

How many of these nations did you match to language? Here are the answers and the winner.

1	Brazilian	4	Melkin Yelidet Beaal
2	Danish	3	Jutdlime pivdluarit uki-ortame pivdluaritlo!
3	Eskimo	11	Buone Feste Natalizie
4	Ethiopian (Amharic)	5	Cristmas-e-shoma mo-barak bashad
5	Farsi	1	Feliz Natal
6	French	8	Fröhliche Weihnachten
7	Gaelic	2	Glædelig Jul
8	German	15	God Jul, or Gledelig Jul
9	Greek	6	Joyeux Noel
10	Irish	9	Kala Christouyenna!
11	Italian	14	Merry Keshmish
12	Jiberish	12	Mithag Crithagsi-gathmithags
13	Japanese	7	Nollaig chridheil agus Bliadhna mhath ùr!
14	Navajo	10	Nollaig Shona Dhuit
15	Norwegian	13	Shinnen omedeto
16	Spanish	16	Feliz Navidad

And the winner is:
Janet Hamilton
Supervisor of Elections Office

Promotions

Promotions listed are for December 2014.

Board of County Commissioners

Engineering & Technical Support

Jeffrey Closterman..... Field Investigator 1

Human Services

Darla Epper Accountant 1

Public Works

Joseph Gras DEI Opns Mgr Asst

Kevin Robinson Crew Chf 2

Sean VanDerGracht Prog Coord

Utilities

Andrew Bianchi Acctg & Fin Tech

Business Technology Services

Colin Camus Info Tech Analyst

Teri King Info Tech Analyst Sr

Mark Silvernail Info Tech Analyst Sr

Justin Taylor..... Info Tech Analyst

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Bonnie Best..... Crt Rec Spec

Katherine Harris..... Clk Rep Supt Spec

Dondi Irish..... Crt Rec Supv

Office of Human Rights

Lisa Postell..... Equal Op Spec

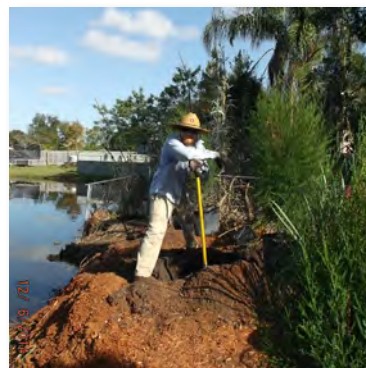
Adopt-A-Pond

Did you know about Pinellas County's Adopt-A-Pond Program? It's managed by the Natural Resources Division of Public Works. The Watershed Management group helps citizens in unincorporated areas of the County clean up their stormwater ponds to provide better water quality and other benefits.

The main thing is to plant native vegetation which will help increase water quality, improve the habitat for wildlife, positively affect shoreline erosion, and improve aesthetics.

For residents to qualify, ponds must be privately owned within unincorporated Pinellas and must connect to the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) or receiving water body. The ponds must be in compliance with all associated site plans and permits.

For more information go to <http://www.pinellascounty.org/environment/watershed/adopt-a-pond.htm>



Homeowner planting native red cedar trees.



Pinellas County intern Sarah Rogers (left) and Adopt-A-Pond staff member Julie Vogel (right) planting native plants

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

40 YEARS



Robert Kraft
Public Works

30 YEARS



Susie Blanco
Tax Collector's Office
William Falkner
County Attorney's Office
James Brown
Public Works

25 YEARS



Vionette Mull, *Utilities*
T. F. Armbruster, *Solid Waste*
Lisa Baltus, *Parks & Conservation Resources*



Stephen Henry
Utilities

20 YEARS



Penelope Koungras, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*, David Bateman, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*



Pamella Lewin-Hermann
Clerk of the Circuit Court



Sandra Sandmeyer
Human Services



Ronald Brown
Tax Collector's Office

Unavailable for Photo

35 YEARS

Thomas Funk, *Building Services*

30 YEARS

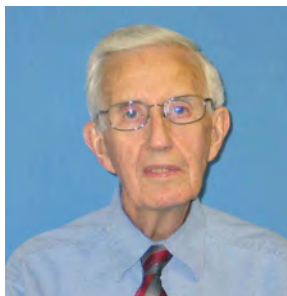
Susan Miller, *Planning*
Dennis Simpson, *Engineering & Technical Support*
Joyce Stevens, *Building Services*
Joseph Strautmann, *Utilities*

25 YEARS

Stan Hoggard, *Utilities*
David Walker, *Public Works*

20 YEARS

James Huebner, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*



James Whitty
Human Services



Diane Kellogg
Tax Collector's Office

Service Anniversaries continued on page 6

RETIREMENTS

OVER 31 YEARS



Betty Williams
*Sr Office Specialist
Human Services*

OVER 27 YEARS



Rita Hargrove
*Information Technology Specialist
Business Technology Services*

OVER 14 YEARS



Melissa Sandstad
*Customer Service Technician 2
Tax Collector's Office*

11 YEARS



Elaine Billey
*BTS Technologist 2
Business Technology Services*

30 YEARS



Dianna James
*Accounting & Finance Technician
Tax Collector's Office*

13 YEARS



Dee Ann Travis
*Fiscal Records Specialist
Clerk of the Circuit Court*

RETIREES UNAVAILABLE FOR PHOTO

OVER 20 YEARS Carrie Gajdeczka, 911 Geo base Technician, Safety & Emergency Services

OVER 17 YEARS Shirley Finn, Court Clerk Sr, Clerk of the Circuit Court

REPCO News

REPCO's February meeting will be held at 12:00 noon on February 9 at Applebee's, 5110 East Bay Drive, Clearwater. The speaker will be a representative from the County EAC to share with us proposed changes to the FRS. For more information contact Rudy at (813) 855-3466 or rdgarcia@verizon.net.

You don't have to be a Pinellas County retiree to attend. Current employees and family members are also welcome.

Service Anniversaries continued

15 YEARS

Mark Deveau Tax Collector's Office
Kelly Dickie Business Technology Services
Mark Flock Public Works
Christopher Mayer Business Technology Services
Dennis McDuffy Public Works
Ruby McKenzie Purchasing
Thomas Ross Building Services
Jacqueline Shoopman Real Estate Management
Larry Solien Engineering & Technical Support
Nancy Squires Utilities
Christine Walsh Safety & Emergency Services

10 YEARS

Justin Gross Clerk of the Circuit Court
Stella Mansfield Communications
Ryan McCabe Airport
Haxhi Muharemi Utilities
Gregory Parker Safety & Emergency Services
Renee Street Utilities
Georgienne Trauscht Health & Community Services
Robert Waterman Business Technology Services


Employees' Advisory Council

to continually improve the Pinellas County classified employees' quality of work life

Employees' Advisory Council (EAC) Election Results

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Employees' Advisory Council election! Half of the seats were up for election in 2014 for a two year term (2015-2016).

Two candidates ran unopposed and were automatically elected:

- BCC Group IV – **Charles Toney**
- BCC Group VI – **Lisa Wombles**

Winners of those seats for which there were multiple candidates are:

- BCC Group III (Public Works) - **Steve Yeatman**
- BCC Group V (Human Services, Safety & Emergency Services) - **Hazel Lane**
- BCC Group VII (Parks) - **Richard Castle**
- Tax Collector - **Richard Carvale**
- Clerk South - **Peggy Poole**
- Other Appointing Authorities - **Mercedes Pearson**
- At Large (selected by EAC members) - **Joshua Chance**

Thank you to all who voted in the election. The ballot return rate was 62% overall. The highest number of returned ballots was from the Other Appointing Authorities group (80%) and Tax Collector (75%). Your vote was important; one election was decided by a four vote margin!

The 2015 EAC Officers are as follows:

- Chairman: **Lisa Wombles**
- Vice Chairman: **Richard Carvale**
- Secretary: **Clare McGrane**

The EAC Reps and Delegates provide an important communication link between management and employees. To find out the names of your EAC Rep and Delegate, visit www.pinellascounty.org/hr/eac, and select *Membership Roster*.

COVER YOUR ASSETS

The Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller is offering a **Property Fraud Alert** subscription service to help you "Cover Your Assets."

Property Fraud Alert is a program initiated by the Clerk's office to help the public protect their property against fraud. Customers signing up for this free service will be notified immediately, either by phone or email, of any document filed against their property in the Official Records of the Clerk's office where deeds, mortgages and other documents are recorded.

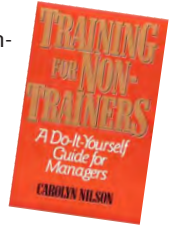


Although this alert system does not prevent the actual fraudulent activity from taking place, it does provide an early warning system for subscribers to become aware of what may have otherwise gone undetected. Subscribers armed with this notification system will be able to take prompt, appropriate action if they determine the activity to be fraudulent. It's about keeping YOU informed.

Training for Non-Trainers

A book review by Rebecca Fiesbeck

Whether you find yourself doing spontaneous training or have the opportunity to lead a class, *Training for Non-Trainers*, by Carolyn Nilson, has some great tips on preparation and strategies, peer training and group training, and how to measure the success of the training session. This book helped me to understand how the planning and structure of a training session affects the trainee. It's not enough to know what you're talking about – you have to be able to communicate it effectively.



For many months after the first time I perused the **Resource Library book list**, I kept thinking, "I should really take advantage of that." Finally, I did. There are so many interesting topics covered in the Resource Library, it can be overwhelming to simply step in and start looking. I found that before going to the Library, it can help to read through the list of titles online to determine which ones are of interest to you. By doing this, it can make it easier to focus and use your time wisely. While there, you may find that titles other than the ones you pre-selected catch your eye. Give them a look and jot down the titles so you can check them out next time. Training & Development will also send you Resource Library books via interoffice mail.

Learning something new increases employee productivity and motivation, helps us manage change, and can improve our communication skills. Being part of an agile, adaptable workforce sometimes means we incorporate learning "on the fly" or impromptu one-on-one "training sessions" into our work day. So take a look at what's on offer at the Resource Library today!

Welcome Aboard!

Board of County Commissioners

Airport

Tyler Hyde..... Airpt Firefighter
Judith Pyles..... Airpt Firefighter

Animal Services

Michelle Delaney..... Vet Tech

Building Services

Yhulmer Izquierdo..... Elect Insp 1

Parks & Conservation Resources

Michael Adkinson..... Craftwkr 1
Ernest Beaulieu..... Maint Crew Ldr

Public Works

David Deranzio..... Prog Coord
Kenneth Fluit..... Maint 2
Robert Jones..... Maint 1
Robert Rubin..... Maint 1

Real Estate Management

Jason Warr..... Electrician
Stephen Wrobel..... Sr Elec Spec

Safety & Emergency Services

Romonda Knights-Holloway..... Law Enf Telecomm
Melissa Ortiz..... Law Enf Telecomm
Cynthia Rodgers..... Law Enf Telecomm
Arianna See..... Law Enf Telecomm
Mitchell Thompson..... Law Enf Telecomm

Business Technology Services

Jaime Ganote..... Info Tech Spec
Christopher Jackson..... Info Tech Team Ldr
Robert Thomas..... BTS Tech 2
William Thomas..... BTS Tech 2

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Jeffery Chandler..... Fin Opns Clk
Cody Loy..... Rec Spec 1
Jennifer Trusivich..... Rec Spec 1

County Commission Office

Kimberly Greenleaf..... Exec Asst

Tax Collector's Office

Rome Cagnina..... Cust Svc Tech 1



The first new employee orientation class of 2015!

Suggestion Award Winners!



The 49th Street Detention Center is the largest single user of bulk salt in Pinellas County and, historically used an average of 350 tons of salt per year to soften the water at an average cost of \$35,612. **Ray Kosach** designed a system that greatly reduces the amount of salt used to an average of 237 tons of salt annually. It also increases the efficiency of the system. Congratulations to Ray for the \$500 award for his cost saving suggestion.

At the Utilities Laboratory, one of the results of testing water samples is acidic condensation in the hoods, hood valves, and air vents causing corrosion. This leads to leakage and decreased functionality. The solution was to scrub the water vapors prior to ventilation. Existing possibilities were expensive. **John Hoffman** designed a system where most of the components were items purchased at a home improvement store. The cost savings is over \$15,000. Congratulations to John for the \$1,524 award for his cost saving suggestion.



To find out more about how to submit your suggestion, click [HERE](#).



Create Sustainable Solutions

Vision • Innovation • Collaboration

Green Your New Year!

- ✓ Take the [Green Office Challenge](#)
- ✓ Take a look at the [Green Pinellas Website](#)
- ✓ Recycle Your [Office Paper](#)



Want more information?

UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County has Green Solutions

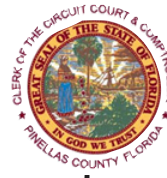
- Lawn and Garden Help Line (582-2110)
- www.pinellascountyextension.org
- [Classes](#)
- [Blogs](#)

Meet Your
Extension Agent
Lara Miller,
[Natural Resources](#)



UF **IFAS Extension**
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

FROM THE RECORD KEEPER



Records Management Training for 2015

Are you new to the Records Coordinator role? Wondering what you need to do to prepare for records inventory or destruction? Are your records out of control? Do your coworkers need an overview of records management? Records & Information Management is here to help! We offer a number of training classes to help. Our 2015 training schedule can be viewed [here](#).

For more information about records management training or to request customized training for your department, please contact Michele Koehler in Records & Information Management at (727) 453-3038.

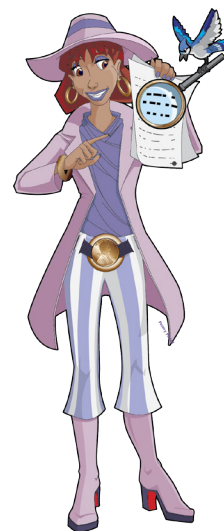
Consumer Corner

Protect your pennies ... and tax refund. Penny Pitfall wants everyone to know about **Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week, January 26-30, 2015**. Tax identity theft happens when someone uses your personal information like your Social Security number to file a phony tax return, to get a job, or claim your child as a dependent on a tax return.

Penny offers the following tips to protect your information.

- File your tax return early, before identity thieves do.
- The IRS won't contact you by email, text, or social media. They also won't call demanding payment for unpaid taxes or threaten arrest. If the IRS needs information, it will first contact you by mail.
- Don't give out your Social Security number (SSN) or Medicare number unless necessary. Ask why it's needed, how it's going to be used, and how it will be stored.
- If you believe you're a victim of tax identity theft, contact the **IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit** at (800) 908-4490.

For more information about identity theft, contact Pinellas County Consumer Protection at (727) 464-6200 or at www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/tips.htm.



PET OF THE MONTH



Game. Set. Match. Adopt. **TAZ** is a one year old pit bull mix. He has been at the shelter since October.

Bring this article with you to Pinellas County Animal Services and TAZ can be yours for \$40 through the month of January. Every one of the pets offered for adoption at Animal Services are spayed or neutered and have all of their required shots. Visit TAZ and the other dogs and cats up for adoption at 12450 Ulmerton Road in Largo, or see them online at www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices/petfind.htm. To learn more about Animal Services, stop by the shelter, call (727) 582-2600 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices.