

The Office of Human Rights and the New Wage Theft Ordinance

Have you ever heard anyone talk about how they didn't receive pay they had earned? Maybe they'd given notice but never received that last pay check. Or maybe she's a waitress that's denied her tips. Perhaps you have a friend who complains his boss routinely has him work overtime but doesn't compensate him.

Those are common forms of wage theft. It is most common in the service and construction industries.

What can aggrieved employees do? First, ask the employer for the pay. If they remain uncompensated, citizens can now file a complaint with Pinellas County's **Office of Human Rights (OHR)** under the new **wage theft ordinance**.

The Board of County Commissioners passed a **Wage Theft Ordinance** on November 10, 2015, effective January 1, 2016. Pinellas County is now one of six Florida counties (out of 67) with such an ordinance, although similar efforts are being considered or advocated elsewhere in Florida.

"The key concept," says **Paul Valenti**, Director of the Office of Human Rights (OHR), "is did the employee earn wages, and were they paid the entirety of wages earned?"

The ordinance covers all of Pinellas County and is chiefly administered by OHR. The City of St. Petersburg has a wage theft ordinance on the books and Valenti said, "We are working closely with the City of St. Petersburg to cross-refer cases to ensure no claim gets dropped due to questions of jurisdiction."

Claims must be for over \$60 and must have happened within one year. OHR ensures the complaint meets requirements and attempts to mediate the dispute. If there is no resolution, the

next step is a hearing before a special magistrate who will adjudicate the dispute.

About OHR

The Office of Human Rights' mission is the elimination of discrimination in employment, housing, and in places of public accommodation (such as restaurants, movie theaters, grocery stores, and other places of commerce generally open to the public). They partner with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to investigate cases.

OHR is governed by the Affirmative Action Committee (which recently voted to rename itself the "Human Rights Board" pending approval by the Board of County Commissioners). The members of this committee are Pinellas County's Constitutional Officers, the County Administrator, one member of the Board of County Commissioners, the Chair of the Personnel Board, the Directors of Human Resources and Business Technology Services, and the Employees' Advisory Council Chair.

Complaints of racial discrimination have historically been the most common received at OHR. However, over the last several years there has been an increase in cases alleging disability discrimination, particularly in housing cases which typically revolve around a person with

INSIDE

Employee Spotlight ...	2
New Interim HR Director ...	2
Ask HR / BenefitsU ...	3
SKYWARN Spotters Class ...	4
2016 El Niño ...	4
Florida is a Closed Primary State ...	5
Tech Bits ...	5
Service Anniversaries ...	6
Retirements / Colors of Pinellas ...	7
Suggestion Award Winners ...	8
Promotions / FACE Tips ...	8
Welcome Aboard! ...	9
Green Pinellas / Record Keeper ...	10
Consumer Corner ...	10
Training Classes Available ...	10
Pen Extra ...	11 & 12

a disability needing a service animal or emotional support animal to live with them to accommodate their disability.

When asked what the most difficult things they have to do are, Valenti replied: "Explaining to people how, while situations [they are in] may be unfair, they are not necessarily violations of the civil rights laws we enforce. And then we try to make an appropriate referral to an agency that can assist them."

Serving county-wide, Valenti and eight colleagues, along with several volunteers, are "proud to serve the residents of Pinellas County."



Paul Valenti

To read more about the Wage Theft Ordinance, check out "**Protecting workers from wage theft is important for our community**", by Kenneth T. Welch, Pinellas County Commissioner (*Weekly Challenger*, January 7, 2016).

Employee Spotlight



Clayton Parrott

Emergency Management Coordinator
Emergency Management Department



What is something that only a few people know about you?

I played music semi pro for 30 years. My main instrument was drums and I worked with a number of 'at the time' fairly major country artists.

What is your job in 25 words or less?

I am one of the Emergency Coordinators. Part of my responsibilities includes working with all other Pinellas County departments on their Continuity Planning, or COOP for short.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?

Being able to work and interface with the various people that work for the County, and providing support for the multiple municipalities that make up Pinellas County.

Why did you first choose to work for the County and why do you stay?

I have worked as an amateur radio volunteer for many years and also I am the ACS/ARES Emergency Coordinator for the amateur radio operators in Pinellas County. I finally was fortunate to be accepted for a fulltime position in Emergency Management.

I enjoy the challenge and being able to bring my own skill set to the job.

What is the one accomplishment, at work, that you are most proud of? Why?

Being able to balance my volunteer work and my normal work can be challenging. But since becoming a County employee, I have been able to balance the two.

The Employee Spotlight focuses on you. If you would like to nominate a fellow employee, please send his or her name, position, and why you are nominating them to employee.communications@pinellascounty.org. View previous [spotlighted employees](#).

New Interim Director for Human Resources

After 31 years with Pinellas County, Beverly Waldron, former interim Human Resources Director, is moving on to a new endeavor.

The Unified Personnel System Board has appointed **Dave Blasewitz** as the new interim director, effective January 11. Dave has been with the Human Resources Department since 1996.

A national search is currently underway for a new permanent director of Human Resources.



BLOOD DRIVE

Every donor is three more lives saved!

Mark Your Calendars

Logan Lab

1620 Ridge Road, Largo
Under the flag pole
January 20, 2016
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Utilities Building

14 S. Fort Harrison Ave.
Clearwater
January 29, 2016
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

The Pen

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



Q. I am seeking a part-time job and my prospective employer wants a copy of my criminal background check. Can I get a copy of the background check that was conducted when I was hired with the County?

A. The County is required to follow strict guidelines agreed to with the FDLE in the background check process and the handling of related records. In regard to requests for copies of background checks by employees or volunteers, the FDLE states the County may provide a copy of the background check to the individual it covers upon request, if the County advises the individual the background check is strictly for the per-

sonal use of the individual requesting the copy. However, the individual is prohibited from using the copy of the background check in conjunction with an application for another job or to volunteer for another organization.

Q. Is there a way to see how much cash for points? Also, is there any way I could change receiving rewards to receiving cash instead?

A. Take a look at the [Wellness Incentive Chart](#). Among other information on it you will find the points-to-cash values. You will also see a link to [Quick Facts](#) about the Wellness Incentive program. It includes frequently asked questions, information on wellness incentive activities, and much more

You do not have the option of exchanging rewards points you have *already earned* for cash. But you can use your earned points to select from over 12,000 items available through the [Pinellas County Rewards program](#). If you wish to receive cash instead of points in 2016, complete [this online form](#). If you submit the

form no later than March 31, your election will be in effect for the complete 2016 calendar year.

Q. Last year a memo was sent out stating that if you were out sick with the flu it was considered scheduled annual leave as long as it was during the flu season. Was there such a memo sent out this year?

A. No, there was no memo about the flu and leave sent this season. The Benefits Division monitors the CDC website (Centers for Disease Control) to check on how widespread the flu is (or isn't) in our area. At this time, influenza-like illness is minimal in Florida and there is no need for special measures.



Have you seen the most recent **Two-Minute Tuesday** videos?

View them at

www.pinellascounty.org/hr/two

BenefitsU

What's in Your Wallet?

January is the beginning of a new benefit plan year. Subsequently, you may receive new ID cards from our benefit administrators. Or not. New ID cards are not automatically issued unless there is a change, or if you switch plans.

So how many cards should you carry in your wallet? That depends on the plans you are enrolled in.

United Healthcare issues an ID card which should be used for doctor visits, urgent care and emergency services as well as labs, imaging and surgeries. They do not reissue annually.

If you are enrolled in the Health Savings Account, you should have an **Optum bank card** that you can use to pay for medical and prescription claims. These are not reissued annually.

Express Scripts issues an ID card to use when you have prescriptions filled. They do not reissue annually.

Vision exams and corrective lens are administered by **EyeMed**. ID cards are issued but not reissued annually.

For those who choose **MetLife** for their dental plan, an ID card is used for services with your network provider and is not reissued annually. **Cigna** does not issue cards.

Health Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) have a bank card issued by **WageWorks**. The card can be used to pay for eligible services provided. This is reissued upon expiration.

If you have not received an ID card and you think you should have; first check to make sure your mailing address in OPUS is up-to-date and, if necessary, make any corrections. Then contact the benefit administrator to request a new ID card. Contact information for all benefit administrators can be found on the [Benefits](#) website.

Don't recall what you elected for 2016? Log into OPUS Employee Self Service and select Benefits to view your coverage elections.

SKYWARN Spotters Training Class

Private citizens, ham radio operators and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members gathered December 15 at the new Pinellas County Emergency Operations Center in Largo for a SKYWARN spotters training class. The class was hosted by the Pinellas County ACS/ARES units, along with their sponsoring agency Pinellas County Emergency Management.



The class had 100 attendees - the largest ever - and was led by **Dan Noah**, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) warning coordination meteorologist at the Ruskin office of the National Weather Service (NWS). The class was welcomed by **Sally Bishop** (Emergency Management Director) who said, "We are grateful for the community service provided by the spotters as it is a vital piece of the process that takes place between the Weather Service and Emergency Management to ensure the community is warned and as ready as possible for weather events."

Mr. Noah explained "SKYWARN is a program sponsored by the NWS consisting of trained weather spotters who provide reports of hazardous weather to the NWS to help in the warning process. SKYWARN spotter reports provide vital 'ground truth' to the NWS."

Training included what to look for when reporting weather, what to report, how to estimate hail size, wind speed and the format to use (TEL: Time, Event, Location). Since El Niño will be a major factor in our weather for the next few months, Mr.

Noah detailed some of the added dangers with Florida weather during El Niño.

Clayton Parrott, KJ4RUS, Pinellas County ARES/ACS Radio Officer and Emergency Coordinator said, "We are helping our citizens become more aware of weather-related events such as tornados and lightning by providing tools such as this SKYWARN training. In doing this we help them to be better prepared for severe weather events in their communities."

There are no prerequisites to become a SKYWARN spotter. However, you must be 18 years of age to receive a SKYWARN certification and a spotter ID number.

"There will be about seven or so nights this winter and spring where people will want to pay extra attention to the weather as it moves through the area, and have multiple ways to receive tornado warnings, including NOAA Weather Radios and smart phone apps."

Dan Noah, National Weather Service

2016 El Niño Weather Pattern

Undoubtedly you've been hearing that this year's El Niño will have a strong effect on our weather. El Niño brings colder temperatures, heavier rains and flooding, and tornados.

The National Weather Service is predicting this year is going to be different. Much different. The last time Florida faced an El Niño weather pattern of this strength was 1997-1998. During that season Florida experienced the deadliest tornados in its history in west-central Florida with 12 tornados resulting in 42 fatalities.

Tornados often happen between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. when **a)** you're sleeping, and **b)** you can't see them coming. This is when most fatalities occur. **Dan Noah**, of the National Weather Service-Ruskin, predicts there could be seven or so outbreaks of severe weather - including the possibility of tornados - between January and April this year.

You need to be prepared.

Stay connected

With a tornado you are lucky if you get 13 minutes notice.

- Sign up for **Alert Pinellas**, a free emergency notification service, and get alerts on your mobile device.
- Get an **NOAA Weather Alert radio** at local retailers or online.

"These tornados aren't going to be like our summer tornados. They're going to be a quarter mile wide and on the ground for 20 miles or more. So if one happened to come across Pinellas County it could go across the entire county. Think about what you're going to do if we're expecting a night of tornados."

Dan Noah, NWS

Refresh your

hurricane kit in case you have to shelter in place.

Know where to hide if a tornado is in your area.

- If you are **inside**: "Lowest floor, most interior space without a window," says Sally Bishop, Emergency Management Director.
- If you are **outside** and away from any buildings: "Get as far below ground level as possible," says Bishop.

Flooding

With heavy rain comes flooding. Nearly everyone in Pinellas County is at some risk for flooding because we are surrounded by water, are at a low elevation, and have a high water table.

- **Turn around. Don't drown.** Don't drive into standing water. You cannot know how deep it is. One foot

Continued on page 9.

The Pinellas County ACS (Auxiliary Communications Service) and ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Service) are volunteer amateur radio operators who provide a variety of professional skills. The ACS/ARES Unit provides, supplements, or augments government communications and other agencies as needed during emergencies where normal communication systems have sustained damage, are being over taxed or over burdened, or backup radio operators are required. For more information please visit: SKYWARN: www.pcacs.org/skywarn and www.srh.noaa.gov/tbw/ Pinellas County ARES/ACS: www.pcacs.org/about Amateur Radio: www.arrl.org

Florida is a Closed Primary State

By Deborah Clark, Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections

The Presidential Preference Primary will be held on March 15, 2016. In addition, select municipalities in Pinellas County will also conduct elections on that day.

Both the Republican and Democratic Parties are selecting a presidential nominee this year. In order to vote for a candidate in the Presidential Preference Primary, you must be registered with one of these two major political parties. However, all registered voters in municipalities holding elections in conjunction with the Presidential Preference Primary may vote for all municipal contests and ballot questions.

This is because Florida is a "closed primary state." In a Primary Election, a qualified voter is entitled to vote the ballot of the political party with which the voter is registered:

- A voter registered as a Republican may vote for Republican, Nonpartisan candidates and ballot issues only
- A voter registered as a Democrat may vote for Democratic, Nonpartisan candidates and ballot issues only
- A voter registered with a minor party may only vote for the minor party, Nonpartisan candidates and ballot issues only
- A voter registered with no party may only vote for Nonpartisan candidates and ballot issues only

It is important to remember that **Tuesday, February 16** is the deadline to register to vote and to change your political party affiliation for the March 15 Presidential Preference Primary and Municipal Elections. **No political party changes can be made after this deadline.** Any political party affiliation changes made between February 17 and March 15, 2016, will take effect for future elections.

Visit www.VotePinellas.com/Voter-Registration/Check-My-Registration-Status today to check which political party you are registered with. If you would like to change your political party affiliation, mail a signed written notice with your change of political party affiliation to the Supervisor of Elections Office and include your date of birth OR your voter information number; or complete a [Voter Registration Application](#) with your political party affiliation change and check "Record Update/Change" in the top box.

For additional information about the March 15, 2016 Presidential Preference Primary and Municipal Elections, including an updated list of candidates as well as which municipalities will be conducting elections, visit VotePinellas.com.

As always, if you have any questions, you can reach our office by emailing election@votepinellas.com or by calling 727-464-VOTE (8683). Also, be sure to visit our website at VotePinellas.com for all your election information.

The Pen



TECH BITS



Online Learning

Any Time, Any Place, Any Pace



ULearnIT icon

- Access the ULearnIT Learning Portal by double-clicking the desktop icon.
- Courses cover a wide variety of subjects including soft skills and technology skill topics.
- Can be used to help with day-to-day questions to help productivity or as part of your personal development.

For more information, access our [Online Learning Portal SharePoint](#).

For password assistance or technical support, visit the [list of support contacts](#).



Watch the **Two-Minute Tuesday Signing In to ULearnIT** for more login tips.



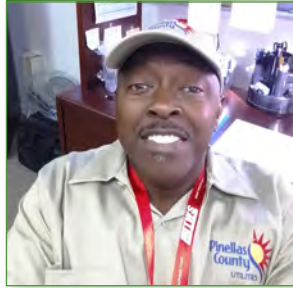
Be on the lookout for our Vote Van at one of our many voter registration drives and outreach events throughout Pinellas County!

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

35 YEARS



Billy Washington
Utilities



Willie Faison
Utilities

30 YEARS



Garry Dennis, *Utilities*, Terrol Richardson, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*, Duane Rodenberger, *Property Appraiser's Office*

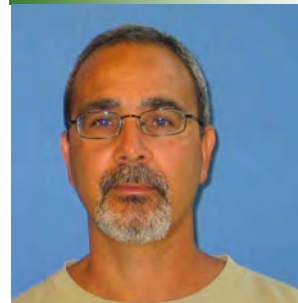
Unavailable for Photo

30 YEARS James Cannon, *Real Estate Management*

25 YEARS Richard Ludlow, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*

20 YEARS Vestina Crayton, *Business Technology Services*, David Lyle, *Airport*, Mary Beth Makrianes, *Clerk of the Circuit Court*

25 YEARS



William Sova
Public Works

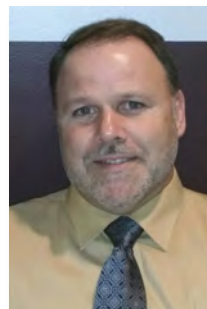


Judith Maslar
Clerk of the Circuit Court

20 YEARS

Steve Krok
Real Estate Management

Diane Krok
Clerk of the Circuit Court



Tim Burns
Human Services

15 YEARS

Cindy Adkison Real Estate Management
Alan Bollenbacher Utilities
David Conley Parks & Conservation Resources
Phyllis Connolly Utilities
Michael Engelmann Utilities
Ricky Lewis Airport
John Martinotti Public Works
Elizabeth Mauck Office of Human Rights
Susan Morse Communications
Lynne Nelson Development Review Services
Krista Payne Tax Collector's Office
Katherine Rowe-Ventrucci Tax Collector's Office
Travis Topa Public Works

10 YEARS

Jane Armstrong Solid Waste
Gina Berutti Development Review Services
Bonnie Desmond Parks & Conservation Resources
Glen-Paul Edson Public Works
Jason Ester County Attorney's Office
Rita Fredenrich Tax Collector's Office
Katherine Freeman Purchasing
Jeffrey Gallo Utilities
Doris Heitzmann Parks & Conservation Resources
Jean Koss Tax Collector's Office
Tammy Long Clerk of the Circuit Court
Kim McKnight Tax Collector's Office
Hortensia Simmons Convention & Visitors Bureau
Nadine Thessen Safety & Emergency Services
Matthew Wotowiec Utilities

Continued next page.

RETIREMENTS

35 Years



Bernice Haynes
Property Records Assistant
Property Appraiser's Office

Over 15 Years



Ronald Bogan
AEO 2
Public Works

Over 10 Years



Michael Lavelle
Animal Control Officer 1
Animal Services

RETIREEES UNAVAILABLE FOR PHOTO

Over 27 Years Elizabeth Freeman, *Planning Division Manager, Planning Department*

Over 15 Years Daniel Swanson, *Park Ranger 1, Parks & Conservation Resources*

12 Years Tyrone Ford, *Tax Technician, Lead, Tax Collector's Office*

Over 6 Years Mark Sawyer, *Valuation Analysis & Litigation Support Appraiser, Property Appraiser's Office*

REPCO News

REPCO's February lunch meeting will be at **noon, February 8, 2016** at Applebee's, 5110 East Bay Drive. Our speaker will be a representative from the Audubon Society to talk to us about "birding" and other activities the society sponsors. 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.

Colors of Pinellas

Framing Art Doesn't Have to Cost a Fortune

Are you hesitant to enter the Art Show because of the cost to frame your artwork?

You can buy a matted frame at a second-hand store or purchase low-cost artwork at a discount store and replace the art inside the frame with your own. Another option is to select an item that doesn't require framing such as handcrafted jewelry or shell crafts.

Registration deadline: May 20, 2016

Visit pinellascounty.org/hr/artshow.

SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

Service Anniversaries, continued from previous page.

5 YEARS

Juan Arosemena Solid Waste
Christopher Bartlett Clerk of the Circuit Court
Amber Bradley Tax Collector's Office
William Coughenour Building Services
Andrea Falvey Economic Development
Charles Flowers Property Appraiser's Office
Sheryl Holt Clerk of the Circuit Court
Tamerly Mouzon Tax Collector's Office
Jacob Sartin Utilities
Kody Scymanski Safety & Emergency Services
Lisa Thurm Management & Budget

3 YEARS

Kathleen Abbarno Clerk of the Circuit Court
Cathryn Basile Clerk of the Circuit Court
Ginnene Brewerton Utilities
Geethapriya Chandrasekaran Tax Collector's Office
Jamie Clark Clerk of the Circuit Court
Daniel Coughenour Clerk of the Circuit Court
Denise Diamond Utilities
John Flanagan Clerk of the Circuit Court
Philip Hazlett Regional 911
Doris McHugh Utilities
Amanda McNeilly Clerk of the Circuit Court
Nancy Meyer County Attorney's Office
Elise Price Clerk of the Circuit Court
Cami Rettman Tax Collector's Office
Pamela Rhoads Clerk of the Circuit Court
David Wise Supervisor of Elections Office

Employee Suggestion Awards Program

In the last quarter of 2015, the Suggestion Award Program Committee awarded cash to the following employees who submitted suggestions which improved productivity and cost effectiveness.

SAP Process Guide (Utilities)

\$170 was awarded to **Phyllis Connolly, Pam Frazier** and **Diana Persha**

Summary: The team replaced printed training manuals with electronic manuals for new hires and a new electronic training manual for the trainer to use. This eliminated the annual cost of printing and binding.

Creating an innovative and cost savings way to clean and remove large debris from sewer pipes (Utilities)

\$552.69 was awarded to **Adam Crittenden** and **Dinesh Kelly**

The crew fabricated a simple and inexpensive apparatus to remove heavy debris from the sanitary sewer main that allowed flow through the sewer main while repair work took place. Service to customers was maintained and there was no disruption to traffic on a busy state road. Savings to the County amounted to \$5,526.94.

Diverting additional materials to waste-to-energy plant (Solid Waste)

\$2,500 was awarded to **William Baker, Joe Fernandez, Sarah Herzig, Matt Kowalchuk, Judy Kujawa, Douglas Lasner, Stephanie Lauster, Joshua Lynch,** and **Donna Mooren.**

The team implemented diverting additional specific household products from HEC3 and Mobile Collection events to the Waste-to-Energy Plant for energy and resource recovery. Savings to County amounted to \$59,925.



If you are a classified employee (or group of classified employees) with a suggestion you think may be eligible for this program, review the [ESAP Rules and Procedures](#) and complete the [Suggestion Awards Form](#) found on the HR website www.pinellascounty.org/hr/suggestion.

Promotions

Promotions listed are for December 2015.

Board of County Commissioners

Airport

Mark Sprague..... Dep Dir Airpt Opns

Communications

Pete Brosey..... Mstr Cntl Spec Sr

Development Review Services

Danita Thompson..... Code Enf Ofcr Sr

Emergency Medical Services

Greg Woodrum..... Acctg & Contract Mgr

Engineering & Technical Support

Susan Scholpp..... Sect Mgr 2

Human Services – Housing Assistance Section

Maria Oliver..... Hum Svcs Case Mgr 2

Purchasing

Tiffany Panier..... Purch Supt Spec

Utilities

Ginnene Brewerton..... Acctg & Fin Tech

Charles Fry..... Elec/Mech Tech Sr

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Kearsten Baxter..... Fis Rec Spec

Charles Diamond..... Crt Rec Supv

Tax Collector's Office

Cheryl Brandt..... Tax Col Aud Comp Spec

FACE Tips



New Year's Resolutions

It's that time again. How about taking this time to take a look at some of your work goals and performance expectations to make sure they're still in line with your business unit's focus?

Here are some [helpful tips](#) for you to structure your conversation.

Welcome Aboard!

Board of County Commissioners

Airport

John Indrunas Crew Chief 2

Communications

Julian Hills Pub Info Spec

EMS/Fire Administration

John Murphy Admin Supt Spec

Planning

Christopher Young Prog Plan

Public Works

Kendall Tisdale Tree Trimmer

Solid Waste

Violet Wike Office Spec

Utilities

Mark Zitko Wstwtr Pl Oper Trne

Business Technology Services

David Del Frate IT Analyst, Sr

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Margaret Kreisle Rec Spec 1

Cassandra Tierney Fin Opns Supv

Property Appraiser's Office

Erica Evangelist Prop Rclds Asst

Kelly Navarro Prop Rclds Asst

Tax Collector's Office

Monica Santiago Alomar Cust Svc Tech 1

Angel Brooks Cust Svc Tech 1

Diana Quiroz Cust Svc Tech 1

Thomas Welch Cust Svc Tech 1

Aaron Zylman Cust Svc Tech 1

Continued from page 4.

of water will float many vehicles.

- **Don't walk in floodwaters.** Even six inches of moving water can sweep you off your feet. Plus there may be snakes and other critters in the water, not to mention sewage.

Pinellas County Emergency Management and Communications offer several online resources to help you prepare.

Prepare to Survive – El Niño - www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/El-Nino.htm

All-Hazard Planning Guide - www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/PDF/hurricane_guide/Hurricane_Guide_14-15.pdf

Flooding safety tips - www.pinellascounty.org/flooding/safety.htm

Stay in the know for all-hazard preparedness - www.pinellascounty.org/emergency/PDF/hurricane_guide/Hurricane_Guide_2.pdf

Technology Training Available

Do you want to learn about the new features in Microsoft 2013 Excel, Outlook and Word? One-hour classes are available.

Click below for class dates, times, descriptions, and registration links:

[Excel 2013 New Features](#)

[Outlook 2013 New Features](#)

[Word 2013 New Features](#)



New Employee Orientation class, December 27, 2015.

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 Employee Communications at 464-5098 or employee.communications@pinellascounty.org.



Create Sustainable Solutions

Vision • Innovation • Collaboration

We want to be Green in 2016!

Be part of the **Green Pinellas New Hire Program**. If you were hired in the past six months [take this pledge](#) to support the Pinellas Green Local Government Certification.



Call us for more information about the Green Pinellas Program, or visit

www.pinellascounty.org/greenpinellas



Heather Landis
Green Pinellas
UF/IFAS Extension

hlandis@pinellascounty.org

UF | IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

FROM THE RECORD KEEPER



Records Management Training for 2016

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 Management is here to help! We offer a number of training classes to help you manage your records. View our [2016 training schedule](#).

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

Upcoming Training Classes

Some classes fill up quickly so request enrollment early through [OPUS Learning Management](#) (OLM).

Performance Management - 2/11/16

Performance happens every day. Through strategic performance management we create a work culture that encourages employees and teams to perform their best as we strive to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Pinellas County. In this class you will learn to align employee and supervisor goals, promote ongoing dialogue, increase engagement and build trust.

Passport to Retirement - 2/25-3/10/16

This three night seminar, offered outside of official work time, will introduce you to the concepts and practices that will help make your retirement comfortable and free from money worries.

You will receive a Retirement Planning Data form that will help you develop a written summary of your assets, income, social security and pension benefits, as well as "The Passport to Retirement" workbook to use as both course material and a future reference text.

There is a \$30 course participation fee per employee (\$25 if pre-paid five days prior to class start date).

You will find a complete list of courses with descriptions in the [2016 Consortium Training Catalog](#) which is continually updated. Need assistance? Contact Training and Development at 464-3796 or email training@pinellascounty.org.

Consumer Corner



Connie Consumer

Tax season is here. Whether you're filing your own taxes or getting assistance, Pinellas County Consumer Protection offers the following tips make sure you're prepared before you file.

- **Be sure to have all the necessary paperwork** before you file. For a list of documents you should have when filing your taxes, visit the IRS website at: www.irs.gov/Individuals/Check-list-for-Free-Tax-Return-Preparation.
- January 25th-29th is Tax Identity Theft Awareness Week. **Tax identity theft occurs when someone uses your social security number to file a tax return** claiming a fraudulent refund. The best defense is to file your tax return early before the thieves do.

- **Be sure to use a legitimate tax preparer.** Many tax preparation services advertise "instant refunds." These cash advances, known as Refund Anticipation Loans (RAL) will cost you. RAL is not your actual refund, it's a short-term loan. You are borrowing money against your tax refund. If your refund is less than the expected amount, you will still owe the entire amount of the loan. If your refund is delayed, you may have to pay additional fees. Free Tax preparation help is available for qualifying taxpayers. For a location near you call or visit:

United Way Suncoast: Dial 211

Internal Revenue Service: 1-800-906-9887

AARP: 1-888-227-7669

For more information or to file to a complaint, contact Pinellas County Consumer Protection at (727) 464-6200 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/consumer/tips.htm.



**Your Source for
Employee Info**

Employee and family news including kudos, weddings, births, graduations, memorials, and classified ads.
Send your news to employee.communications@pinellascounty.org or call 464-5098.

Happy New Year!

Pinellas County Wins Utilities Industry Award

Water distribution system receives statewide recognition

Excerpted from Communications Department press release, 12/15/15

Pinellas County's Utilities Department has been selected by the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association as the recipient of the **2015 Water Distribution System Award** for Division Seven, which is composed of water providers with 70,000 to 129,999 service connections.

This award provides recognition for exceptional potable water distribution systems in Florida.

"This award serves as a special recognition of the Pinellas County employees who work hard each day doing things to serve the public," said Bob Powell, director of Pinellas County Utilities. "Our Utilities employees are committed to setting the standard for potable water distribution in the state of Florida."

Record Year for Annual Bike Drive

It was a record year for the 29th Annual Bike Drive. Armanda Lampley (Human Services) said donations from Pinellas County employees totaled \$6,247 and provided 42 families with **88 bicycles** for their children. (We gave 48 bicycles in 2014.)

The families are enrolled in Pinellas County's Fair Housing Assistance Program which is designed to help families that are working get into decent and affordable housing as they stabilize and work toward becoming self sufficient.



Graduation

Angela Stringer (Human Services St. Pete Office) graduated from the University of South Florida on December 8, 2015 with a B.S. in Business Administration and Management. Angela looks forward to advancing her career with the County and seeks to continue her higher education journey by obtaining her Masters degree.



Classified Ads For Sale

Used, quality made Futon, all wood, 2 large storage drawers, 2 removable covers. Asking \$125.
(727) 403-8629



The authorities at Tampa International Airport asked that we spread the word. The Short Term Parking Garage project, beginning January 7, marks the start of one of the busiest periods in their three-year master plan construction program. On any given day they expect 1,000 workers on airport property. Airport management strongly urges travelers to use the Economy Garage and urges those who are picking up to use the Cell Phone Lot. Also, overnight parking will not be available in the Short Term Garage. The closure should last about six weeks.

BTS Employees Give to Foster Children



Presents gathered for the foster children by the BTS tree.

Business Technology Services worked with the Pinellas County Foster Parents Association and provided presents for 30 foster children living in Pinellas County. The association provides tags with the name, age and wish of children in foster care. Most of the foster children are teenagers that wish for gift cards to fast food restaurants that they rarely get to go to, shoes, and video games. This year all wishes were fulfilled thanks to BTS employees. BTS has been working with the association for the last nine years.

Community Collaboration

The Natural Resources Division of Public Works planned a "Give a Day" event and were looking for a venue. They contacted the Volunteer Office for Parks and Conservation Resources. Sandy Wilson said "they had a large group so I contacted Chief Ranger Carol Gray for a potential trail project."

Ranger Gray came up with the idea to clean up an area of the Trail and the property adjacent to it. She coordinated with the Keep Pinellas Beautiful staff and a Sheriff's Deputy and Target management to get permission to access their property.

For over a decade, this large wild area behind Target shopping center (Tyrone Blvd. and Park St., behind Target, abutting the Pinellas Trail) was an area favored by vagrants and homeless

December 22 arrived. A Sheriff's Deputy scouted the area to be certain there were no transients there. Then Pinellas County employees and volunteers, Keep Pinellas Beautiful staff and volunteers, and volunteers with the Jungle Terrace Civic Association - over 70 people - "swarmed the area" and carried out carts and wheelbarrows of junk and trash. It was all sorted into recyclable and disposable.

They didn't limit the removal to trash. People brought in equipment and cut down invasive trees and vegetation. They even got a dump truck and a chipper. They used chainsaws, a winch to remove one big tree, and loppers. Some work was planned – some work unplanned.

At the end of the day, they had removed over 3,600 pounds of trash not including the wood that was chipped.

One of the organizers said "This project became a major happening with fabulous results! This benefits us all and our neighborhood greatly."

One of Our Own Wins a 2015 Water Wise Award

The Water Wise Awards are sponsored by Tampa Bay Water in partnership with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences County Extension Offices and Florida-Friendly Landscaping Program. The program "recognizes residents, businesses and community organizations that are committed to conserving water resources and protecting the environment by using the best in attractive, water-efficient landscaping practices."

Scott and **Lisa Freeman** (Human Services) of Clearwater have spent 18 years working on their landscape. Their yard was described as an "urban oasis" with outdoor rooms and lots of trees and shrubs. Their sprinkler system is reserved for times of drought.

Aside from the obvious bragging rights, the winners received a custom-made, mosaic landscape stepping-stone to place in their yards.

Congratulations Lisa and Scott!



Jamie McWade, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, Dr. Ed, Jungle Terrace Civic Association, Carol Gray, Parks & Conservation Resources

