

Rising to the Challenges of Red Tide

by Marq Caughell, Public Works

Rehabilitation is the act of restoring something damaged or deteriorated to a previously healthy condition. It is a task that Pinellas County Public Works has been focused on for much of the summer.

More Than 1,800 Tons of Fish

Public Works, in conjunction with its contractors and state and municipal partners, has been working diligently to rehabilitate the County's beaches and marine waterways from the effects of this year's Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB), commonly known as Red Tide. That work has resulted in the collection of more than 1,800 tons of dead fish and marine debris since June 2021. The last HAB of similar magnitude that the County experienced was in 2018, when 1,862 tons of marine debris were collected.

Pinellas County Public Works' Red Tide response team is being led by **Kelli Hammer Levy**, with strong support from **Dan Mirabile, Paul Dean, Sean Hannigan, Sean Tipton, Chris Griggs, Michelle Monteclaro, Walt Crockett, Cedric Pace, Tim Walker, Alex Raucci, Mike Masi, Chris Smith, Chad Madonia** and the monitoring team from the Environmental Management Division.



A typical day for the Public Works staff assigned to coordinate the County's response begins before sunrise. Armed with personal protective equipment that included masks and gloves, they

drive the County's coasts to observe the conditions and report their findings by 9 a.m. to County leadership to help inform the day's operational planning.

Monitoring and Analysis

Environmental Management's Monitoring and Assessment section also performs daily collection and analysis of water samples to determine the severity of the bloom at multiple locations around Pinellas County. The scientific data is then turned into actionable information that is used to notify the public about the movement of the bloom and the potential for respiratory effects at local beaches.

The monitoring staff involved in this effort are **Stacey Day, Rob Burnes, Emma Dontis, Ali Mauer, Melissa Harrison, Mark Flock, Natasha Dickrell** and **Robin Barnes**, with assistance from additional Environmental Management



staff, including **Alex Fugate, Ben Compton, Ryan Ryczek, Kaitlin Panzner, Casey Urtecho** and **Bobby Calhoun**.

With approximately 35 miles of beaches, 40 miles of Intracoastal Waterway with eight passes or inlets, 14 coastal cities, the most-visited State park in the state (Honeymoon Island) and three County parks (Fort De Soto, Sand Key, Fred Howard) with beaches – it's a lot of ground to cover. Thanks to the Pinellas

Employee
Voice

**Take the
Anonymous Survey
by August 20
at 5:00 p.m.**

Look for a survey invitation from Empact Solutions in your work email inbox.

Didn't get the email? Contact EmpactSolutions@Outlook.com.

County Sheriff's Office, the U.S. Coast Guard and Florida Fish and Wildlife, Public Works employees have been able to monitor the situation from the air, observing and documenting the conditions to enhance operational intelligence.

Public Works utilizes one of its debris management contractors to employ shrimp boat crews, along with other specialized watercraft to harvest as much debris as possible before it washes up on the beaches and into canals. The dead fish that do make it to shore are collected using a combination of beach rakes, heavy equipment and manual labor. The department has created and shared interactive mapping tools to help residents report fish kills and find dumpsters specifically designated for the disposal of Red Tide debris.

Everyone Can Help

In addition to cleaning up the dead fish and marine debris that can serve as additional food sources for the Red Tide algae, residents can make a difference by eliminating or limiting the amount of fertilizer applied to lawns and

Continued next page.

Red Tide, continued from page 1.

gardens, keeping grass clippings and other yard waste off the road and out of stormdrains, cleaning up pet waste and switching from a septic to a sewer connection. Individuals can also assist by using the County's Red Tide Reporter App <https://bit.ly/RedTideCleanUp> to mark fish kill locations for cleanup.



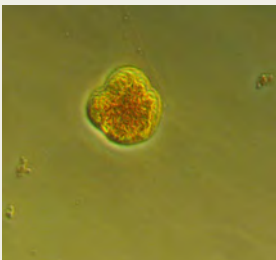
Pinellas County is able to rise to the challenges of Red Tide and rehabilitate our beaches and waterways because we are able to tap into a network of resources from FWC, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Mote Marine Laboratory, the University of South Florida College of Marine Science and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This is in addition to the support of other internal departments and our municipalities.

Thank you to the teams at **Emergency Management, PCSO, Visit St. Pete Clearwater** and **Communications** for the ongoing collaboration! For access to the County's Red Tide apps and additional information on current beach conditions, Red Tide monitoring results, respiratory forecasts and more, please visit www.pinellascounty.org/redtide.

What is Red Tide and Why Florida?

The algae that causes Red Tide is called *Karenia brevis* and it is a single-celled, naturally occurring organism that belongs to a group called dinoflagellates. *Karenia brevis* prefers warm water temperatures, which is why the organism is generally only a problem in the Gulf of Mexico during our hottest months. Large concentrations of the organism can discolor water with a red-orange-brown tint that leads to its common name.

While algae help support healthy ecosystems by forming the base of the food web and producing oxygen, some algal species can harm humans, animals, and the environment when they "bloom." Instead of producing a beautiful flower though, a Harmful Algal Bloom or HAB produces an over-abundance of algae that is far beyond its normal reproduction levels in a specific location.



HABs damage the environment by killing marine life, blocking the sun from beneficial seagrasses and contributing to low oxygen "dead-zones." Red Tide kills marine life by producing a potent toxin that affects the central nervous system of fish, birds, sea turtles, mammals and other marine animals.

In humans, Red Tide can cause respiratory issues that include eye, nose, and throat irritation similar to cold symptoms. Some individuals with breathing problems such as asthma, emphysema or bronchitis might experience more severe symptoms. Usually symptoms go away when a person leaves the area or enters a filtered, air-conditioned building or vehicle.

Blooms typically develop 10-40 miles offshore and are brought inshore by currents, winds and storms, like Tropical Storm Elsa. Though blooms start away from the direct influence of land-based nutrient pollution, once it moves inshore, the bloom can use both human-contributed and natural nutrients for growth. So, while discharges like the one from Piney Point or agricultural and residential runoff do not create or cause Red Tide, they can act as an endless buffet of "junk food" for the algae to feed on.

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The Pen

A monthly publication by Pinellas County Human Resources
Mary L. Sault, Editor

Would you like to put something in the Pen?

Let us know by the first of the month. And be sure to include photos!
employee.communications@pinellas-county.org



Q. Since the biometric screening wasn't required last year due to COVID, do I need to do it this year?

A. To save \$500 on 2022 premiums, please complete **both** the biometric screening and the health survey before December 31.

For guidance and instructions on how to complete the biometric screening, see page 1 of the [August To Your Health newsletter](#).

COVID-19 Information

Vaccination - The CDC recommends you get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. Those aged 12 and over are eligible. See [Pinellas County vaccination sites](#).

Face covering - Employees are expected to follow CDC guidelines for pandemic safety. The CDC now recommends (not required) that all individuals — including those who are fully vaccinated — wear a face covering in public indoor settings in areas of high transmission, which includes Tampa Bay.

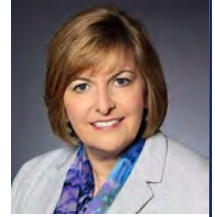
COVID-19: Employees in a Heightened Emotional State Webinar – [Register for a webinar](#) on August 19 or 27 to learn how to lower emotional distress related to COVID-19.

Testing - UnitedHealthcare covers COVID-19 testing in full at no cost to you. **If you have taken a COVID-19 test due to exposure or symptoms, stay at home until you have the results.** [Pinellas County Testing Sites](#)

If you have been exposed to COVID, see the [NEW CDC Guidelines Flowchart](#).



From Kimberly Crum, HR Director



*Kimberly R. Crum
Director of Human Resources*

We kicked off the [2021 Employee Voice Survey](#) on Aug. 2. I am so impressed with our County employees who are willing to offer their feedback on their workplace in an effort toward continuous improvement. As a new member of Pinellas County Government, I am eager to hear from my team about the progress we have made thus far and about the areas where they want to see improvement. Likewise, for the County as a whole. Every voice is important, so please complete your survey by August 20.

Another important feedback mechanism is our [annual biometric screening](#)! This simple blood test, along with height, weight and blood pressure measurements, provides critical information on your health, allowing you to review your annual results with a provider. Many times, employees are able to address concerns like elevated blood pressure, cholesterol or pre-diabetes, before they become full-blown illnesses — when conditions are more easily treated, less invasive, less costly and will have less impact on your work and family life. This not only promotes vitality and peace of mind, but ultimately saves you and the County health plan money.

This year, you can be sure your bloodwork qualifies whether you choose a Quest Diagnostics location or your personal physician. I recently watched the [instructional video](#) about our new streamlined process. Since I am new to the area, I chose Quest, scheduled a morning appointment (since I needed to fast) and was in and out in about 15 minutes (and it didn't hurt a bit!) For my minimal effort, I will see \$500 in savings in the upcoming year. I really appreciate the County's investment in my health.

Both feedback mechanisms – the Employee Voice Survey and the biometric screening and health survey — are anonymous. Human Resources receives reports with aggregate data but no personal information.

The last year has brought many lessons. We recently updated our wellness strategy to include four pillars: physical, emotional, financial and social. There are lots of incredible learning opportunities available for each.

Although the December 31 deadline for completion of biometric screening and health survey is still months away, please don't wait to check in on your health and I encourage you to take advantage of all the County has to offer.

YOUR TOTAL REWARDS

Health • Wellness • Retirement • Compensation

The Know Your Benefits Series features benefits programs you need to know and understand so you can make the right choices for you and your family.



2021 Benefits Partners

DENTAL

Cigna
(800) 244-6224
www.mycigna.com

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Optum
(866) 374-6061
liveandworkwell.com

FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT (FSA) TASC

(800) 422-4661
www.TASOnline.com

HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNT (HSA)

Optum Bank
(800) 791-9361
www.optumbank.com

LIFE INSURANCE

Securian
www.securian.com

MEDICAL/BEHAVIORAL/MENTAL HEALTH

UnitedHealthcare
(888) 478-4752
www.myuhc.com

PRESCRIPTION

Express Scripts
(866) 544-9221
www.express-scripts.com

VISION

EyeMed
(866) 939-3633
www.EyeMed.com/en-us/member

Take Care of Yourself

In the [August To Your Health](#) newsletter, you will find:

- Everything you need to know about the NEW and IMPROVED biometric screening process.
- Understanding COVID Variants
- NEW Wellness Champion Spotlight
- NEW Caregiver Corner
- Lots of wellness activities ... and more.

Flexible Spending Accounts: What Are the Options?

By Natalie Ingham, Benefits Specialist

Do you have upcoming medical expenses or daycare expenses you need to save for? Enroll in a Flexible Spending Account today! All permanent Pinellas County employees are eligible to enroll and contribute pre-tax dollars.

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, employees are permitted to make prospective changes to Healthcare, Dependent Care and Limited Purpose Flexible Spending Account (FSA) accounts without regard to a qualifying event, for the plan year effective from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

What is the difference between Healthcare FSA, Dependent Care FSA and Limited Purpose FSA?

FSA Type	Eligible Expenses	IRS Annual Minimum/Maximum
Healthcare FSA	All medical, dental and vision copays and coinsurance, over-the-counter drugs and for certain healthcare items such as band-aids, blood pressure monitors, and hearing aids. View a comprehensive list of eligible expenses.	\$260 / \$2,750
Dependent Care FSA	For children under age 13: Child daycare, preschool, before and after school programs, nannies Adult daycare and elder care View a comprehensive list of eligible expenses.	\$260 / \$5,000
Limited Purpose FSA	For employees enrolled in the Consumer Driven Health Plan, eligible expenses are dental and vision expenses only until you meet your health plan annual deductible.	\$260 / \$2,750

How do I enroll in an FSA or change my current contribution?

You can enroll or make changes to your FSA at any time during 2021 using the [2021 FSA Change Form](#).

Can I carry over unused FSA funds to the next year?

Yes. For 2021 and 2022 only, all limits are waived so you may carry over any unused FSA funds from the previous year. You will not forfeit unspent funds, but keep in mind you must be enrolled in an FSA in the current year in order to use the previous year's rollover amounts.

The Pen

Tribute



Bill Froberg

November 28, 1956 – July 13, 2021

Pinellas County employee Bill Froberg, 64, of Clearwater, passed away suddenly on July 13. He had been with Pinellas County for over 18 years. Here are a few words from his coworkers.

It is with a sad heart we report that one of our colleagues and members of the Environmental Management/Air Quality family, Bill Froberg, passed away unexpectedly.

Bill was employed by Pinellas County Public Works since March of 2003, and served as an Environmental Program Manager in the Air Quality Compliance section.

He was a wonderful father, brother, son, and friend. Bill left a mark of love, kindness, and understanding on the world. Please keep his family, both inside and outside Pinellas County Government, in your thoughts.

Sheila Schneider, Air Quality Division

[Read Bill's obituary.](#)

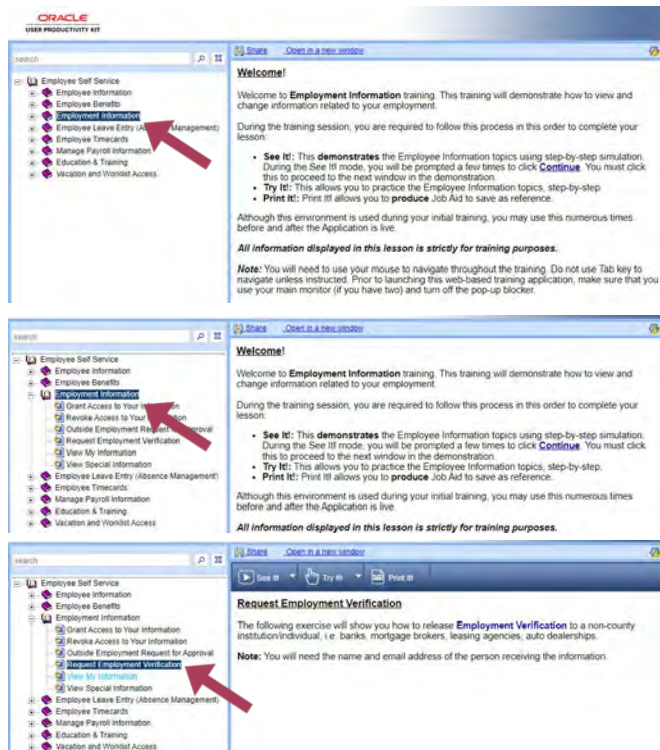
Applying for a Loan? Mortgage? Refinancing?

Your lender will probably need an employment and/or income verification. Follow this guide to help them help you as quickly as possible.

FASTEST - Employee Initiated

You can authorize who may review your employment and/or income information in the **OPUS Employee Self-Service** area by selecting **Employment Verification**. (If you don't see Employment Verification on your OPUS home screen, click the drop down in the upper left corner, select **PIN Employee Self Service** and then **Employment Verification**.)

Use the Employment Verification function to release your employment information and/or salary information to a specific organization. Select the items you want to release and enter the email address for the recipient. For a brief tutorial, see the **OPUS Employee Self Service Computer-Based Training (internal link)**.



Requester/Lender Initiated

1. Employment Verification (without salary information)

The requester/lender may contact Human Resources via phone at (727) 464-3367 or via email at humanresources@pinellascounty.org.

2. Income Verification

The requester/lender should fax or email the Payroll Department associated with the employee's department.

If you work for:

- Business Technology Services
- The Clerk of the Circuit Court
- The County Administrator
- The County Attorney
- Human Resources
- Office of Human Rights

Requests should be made to the **Clerk's Payroll Department** via email at payroll@mypinellasclerk.org or fax at (727) 464-8360.

If you work for Forward Pinellas, requests should be made via email at info@forwardpinellas.org.

If you work for the Property Appraiser, requests should be faxed to (727) 453-3536.

If you work for the Supervisor of Elections, requests should be faxed to (727) 453-3058.

If you work for the Tax Collector, requests should be made via email at pctchradmin@taxcollect.com or by fax to (727) 464-3637.

The Pen

Employee Spotlights

The Pen spotted this July 26 post on [Pinellas County's Facebook page](#):

Pinellas County Utilities Meter Reader **Shane Wisner** delivered gold star service to an elderly customer on his route who had an unusually high reading. Shane suspected a leak was responsible and knocked on the customer's door to assess the situation. When the customer answered, Shane noticed he was acting irrationally and there was standing water and extensive mold throughout the home. Shane grew concerned



for the customer's welfare and immediately called his supervisor to insist Utilities contact the Sheriff's Office and request a wellness check. Thanks to Shane's quick thinking, the customer received the potentially lifesaving care he needed. The Utilities Department awarded Shane its Gold Award for his actions during a ceremony this week. Congratulations, Shane!

And there were 293 comments from the public praising his actions. We asked Shane our Employee Spotlight questions. See the next column.

The Pen

Shane Phillip Wisner

Meter Reader, EAC Delegate
Field Services/Pinellas County Utilities



How long have you been with Pinellas County? About a year and a half

Have you had any other positions with Pinellas County? No, but I've lived here 35+ years and was an all-Pinellas high school wrestler three times, and I was awarded Pinellas County student volunteer of the year for Highland Lakes Elementary back in 1993.

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: Providing accurate meter readings for our customers on a consistent basis and identifying any issues that might pertain to assigned routes.

Best part of job: Being able to get out into the community in a different location daily and provide a valued service to our customers.

Most challenging part of job: The elements.

Most memorable moment? This experience would probably be the top of the list. It's nice to receive the kudos and appreciation from my peers and community.

What do you do in free time? I consider myself to be a sports fanatic/recreational athlete. I play quite a bit of beach volleyball these days.

Louise Harris

Tax Technician II
Mid-County Tax Collector Branch
Operations

How long have you been with Pinellas County? 3 years

How long have you been in this position? 1 year

Have you had any other positions with Pinellas County? Just the Tax Collector.

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: Serving our citizens and my fellow employees to the best of my ability and having fun.

Best part of job: Being able to make someone's life or day better by assisting them.

Most challenging part of job: Handling uncomfortable situations that are out of your control.

Most memorable moment? Our amazing team building activities at Mid-County.

What do you do in your free time? I enjoy playing video games and board games. Playing with my new bunny, Iggy. Spending time with my daughter, Marlene (a.k.a. Moo), and taking long walks with my husband through the aisles of Target.



Laurie Banks

Tax Supervisor
Tax Collector North County Branch



How long have you been with Pinellas County? 6 years

How long have you been in this position? 2 years

Have you had any other positions with Pinellas County? I've worked my way up from Tax Technician 1 to my current role.

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: My main responsibility is to aid in the development of Tax Collector associates by providing guidance and encouragement.

Best part of job: The best part of my job is helping people achieve their goals.

Most challenging part of job: Some of the most challenging situations arise when we're not able to conclude a transaction in the desired manner of the citizen.

Most memorable moment? I've met lots of wonderful people while working at the Tax Collector's Office. One memorable moment happened when a prior customer of mine recognized me while shopping at Publix. She stopped me and thanked me for all my help. She even went on to tell my family that was shopping with me, what a help I had been to her. It really made me feel appreciated for the work I do.

What do you do in your free time? When not working, I enjoy spending time with my 2 yellow Labs, going to Disney and taking cruises.

Code Enforcement Series, Installment 2

Code enforcement has multiple sections with specialized personnel who help navigate various enforcement processes. This article is continued from the [July Pen](#). The following are the rest of the descriptions and staff representatives of each section.

PCCLB Investigator: On February 1, 2021, the code enforcement division assumed the management and oversight of the Pinellas County construction licensing board investigation section. In the short time this team has been with us we have implemented new programs and policies that are proving to be very successful. Investigator Cheryl Ferland was formally a Pinellas County code enforcement officer and transferred into the PCCLB investigations position.

The Pen



Cheryl Ferland
PCCLB Investigator

How long have you been with Pinellas County?
Since January 3, 2017.

How long have you been in this position?
Since March 29, 2021.

Have you had any other positions with Pinellas County? Yes, I started in Utilities as a Customer Services Representative, then to Code Enforcement as an Code Officer.

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: To protect each citizen within the County by ensuring that contractors are licensed within Pinellas County for the scope of work that is being done, and permits have been obtained.

Best part of job: Meeting people and educating the citizens of the County.

Most challenging part of job: Time consumption from the beginning of a complaint to the very end. I say this because we generally do not cite for one thing, it usually compounds into many different issues.

Most memorable moment? Driving with Barry Burton, and learning different things to look for to help other departments.

What do you do in free time? I am a full time student at St. Petersburg College obtaining my Bachelors in Applied Science for Management and Organizational Leadership.

Shana Patrick

Code Enforcement Supervisor

How long have you been with Pinellas County? 29 years

How long have you been in this position? 21 years with code enforcement and 15 years on and off as supervisor due to Reduction In Force era.

Have you had any other positions with Pinellas County? Code Enforcement Officer

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: I supervise the South County Code Enforcement team, reviewing and assisting in the research of their assignments. I provide them support, direction and can usually be found in the field engaging citizens in their code-related concerns.

Best part of job: Influencing and inspiring positive changes in the communities and lifestyles of the citizens we serve through partnerships with our County, civic and faith-based organizations.

Most challenging part of job: Compelling compliance on an illegitimately occupied property in foreclosure. The rules and procedures surrounding these can become frustrating for both our officers and our complainants.

Most memorable moment? After training, my very first code enforcement experience was when I approached the front door of a property and was surprised when an elderly man whipped open the front door, clad in only a bath towel and yelled, "I don't want to buy any Girl Scout cookies!" and slammed the door. I wasn't expecting that and I was too embarrassed to even leave my business card, since I forgot why I was there after that.

What do you do in free time? Spend time with my Miniature Pinscher, Grady, and landscaping my yard.



Recently, the code enforcement South County team (pictured above) was featured on the website of a investigation software company. [The story is heartening](#), seeing how Pinellas County employees care about the community they serve.

Code enforcement employees also support [Showered and Empowered](#), a local nonprofit dedicated to providing mobile showers and laundry for the homeless.



Employees' Advisory Council

Pinellas County
UNIFIED PERSONNEL SYSTEM

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

Hello Everyone!

I would like to send out a reminder to all of you that haven't yet - to complete the 2021 Voice Survey! Please take a few minutes to answer and submit. It just takes a few minutes, simple questions, easy-peasy and it's done.

In speaking from experience, I would like to assure you of two things which seem to be the hold out:

- 1) "They will know it's me," and
- 2) "It won't make a difference."

Well, that would be a big **NO** to both of those statements.

One - You **do** have anonymity! Please be totally honest with your answers.

Two - Your answers **do** make a difference!

The deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, August 20, 2021.

The [July issue of The Pen](#) highlighted a few of the changes that came from the results of the 2019 Voice Survey.



Lisa and her 13-year-old Shih Tzu, Oakley

"Change happens from the bottom up - all of us as individuals deciding that we will, and we do have an impact. Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek. If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." - Hill Harper

Thank you,

Lisa Arispe/EAC Chair

"The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined efforts of each individual."

Vince Lombardi

The Pen

EBS/OPUS

Pinellas County upgraded to the latest version of EBS (OPUS) on July 26. *We refer to the application as OPUS but it is known externally as EBS (E-Business Suite).*

The new upgrade features simple attractive icons on the home page.

To learn more, view the [EBS \(OPUS\) Resources SharePoint site](#) which offers:

- NEW video tutorials
- Quick Reference Guides
- Frequently Asked Questions
- EBS Change Champion contact



Need help saving your payslip? View the [Payslip Instructions](#).



COMING SOON!

The 2021 Colors of Pinellas Virtual Art Show

Due to the rise in COVID cases, this year's Art Show will again be virtual.

TBA:	NAP online registration opens.
10/1:	NAP online registration closes.
10/11:	Deadline for digital images of your artwork.
10/25-29:	Judging including People's Choice voting.
11/8:	Winners announced!

We will send emails to remind you and to give you more information.

Tax Collector Updates

New Concealed Weapon License Office Now Open in St. Petersburg

Pinellas County Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas is pleased to announce the opening of a second concealed weapons license office. The new location is housed on the second floor of his South County full-service center located at 2500 34th St. N. in St. Petersburg.



“From the very beginning, we planned to offer concealed weapon license services at our new South County service center that opened last August,” said Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas. “For us, customer service comes first, and this second location enhances our service offerings by giving the citizens

residing in, or towards, the southern part of the Pinellas a more convenient option.”

Appointments at this brand-new concealed weapons license office can be scheduled now at taxcollect.com/appointment-disclaimer. Find more information about concealed weapons licenses at taxcollect.com/cwl or stay updated by following the agency on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, @PinellasTC.

Tax Collector Relocates Self-Service Registration Renewal Kiosk to Better Serve Citizens

After much research and data collection, it was determined by the Tax Collector’s Office that the self-service registration renewal kiosk located at the Tarpon Mall Publix on US 19 N, would be more beneficial to the County at the Riviere Plaza Publix at 35439 US 19 N in Palm Harbor. This move still provides service to the northern end of the County while ultimately having the capacity to serve more customers overall.



The kiosks are located throughout the County in select Publix stores and Tax Collector offices. They allow customers to walk away, decal in hand, in under two minutes. The kiosks accept credit and debit cards, offer instructions in both Spanish and English, and are open to all Florida residents, not just those residing in Pinellas County.

Find more info and other kiosk locations at taxcollect.com/self-service-kiosks.

Tax Collector Bringing Awareness to an Important Cause

We all have a role to play in ending sexual assault, harassment, and abuse. This month, Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas and his team are partnering with the Florida non-profit, Lauren’s Kids, to raise funds and spread awareness to help prevent childhood sexual abuse.

Throughout August, customers visiting Tax Collector offices in Pinellas can show their support by purchasing the Lauren’s Kids specialty license plate or through monetary donations. Customers will receive a teal Lauren’s Kids rubber bracelet for a \$1 donation or a backpack for a \$5 donation. Any customer who purchases the specialty license plate this month is eligible to enter a drawing for a \$50 Visa or American Express gift card presented by the Lauren’s Kids organization.

While it can be an uncomfortable topic, no one can deny its significance. The facts speak for themselves—before turning 18, 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys will be sexually abused in the United States. There are over 42 million childhood sexual abuse survivors in the U.S. today, and 95% of sexual abuse is preventable through education.



That’s why organizations like Lauren’s Kids are so important. Lauren’s Kids was founded by Lauren Book in 2007. Book is a former teacher, best-selling author, Florida State Senator, and childhood sexual abuse survivor. Book’s own traumatic experiences fueled her mission to prevent childhood sexual abuse and help other survivors to heal.

“We are honored to team up with Lauren’s Kids again this year,” said Pinellas County Tax Collector, Charles W. Thomas. “Spreading awareness about childhood sexual abuse is the first step in prevention and healing. Our team is committed to helping the Pinellas community in whatever ways we can, and we are pleased to work with such a wonderful organization.”

Donations to Lauren’s Kids will stay local, with funds going toward education and awareness programs in Pinellas County such as training and abuse prevention curriculums for local teachers. Find more information about Lauren’s Kids at www.laurenkids.org.

Your Learning Opportunities *Learn Today. Be Ready for Tomorrow.*

Pinellas County supports a learning culture for all employees. For more information, visit www.pinellascounty.org/hr/learning or call the Human Resources Organizational & Talent Development (OTD) team at 464-3796.

Personal Growth and Development in Life and Work

The Pen

You know it's important to consistently work on your own personal growth, knowledge, skills, and experience, but finding the time and energy to do so can be difficult. By taking small steps every day, and following some of the key lessons learned below, you can begin to focus on yourself and your goals for the future.

Take Control of Your Learning at Work

Fact: the desire and ability to grow and adapt one's skill set is incredibly valued in today's workplace. As children, we are often pulled into learning by our own curiosity and need to understand the world. Tapping into this childlike mindset will undoubtedly prove useful. Other useful tips include:

- Set aside specific time for learning. If you schedule this time like every other work task ahead of time, you won't have the excuse of being too busy to complete it.

- Focus on what you don't know. Look at your weaknesses honestly and find tangible ways you can improve in those areas.
- Reach out to others. Your coworkers, bosses, and mentors all have valuable knowledge that they can bestow upon you.

Make Learning a Part of Everyday Work

Research tells us that opportunities for development are the second most important factor in workplace happiness (just after the nature of the work itself). Learning is essential for company growth and employee happiness – and yet, on average, knowledge workers spend only five minutes a day for formal learning.

So how can an employee incorporate learning into their every workday? Here are a few tips:

- Practice mindfulness. Be aware and present as you complete tasks. Stop and ask questions of your coworkers or boss about what they are

working on. All of these inquiries present new opportunities for you to learn and do something new.

- Develop a to-learn list. Like a to-do list, a to-learn list gives you a chance to write down all of the topics of interest you want to learn more about. That way, you can make your way down your list little by little with actionable steps to take along the way.
- Find the right newsletters to subscribe to. Keep your newsletter subscriptions to a small number of highly valuable industry or topic related ones. Make it a habit to read the ones that interest you every day and follow up on any topic or article that requires further understanding.
- At the end of the day, learning in the workplace can help both employees and employers succeed.

When it comes to personal development and growth, both employees and management must be on the same page.

Source: Harvard Business Review compilation

WORK. GROW. MATTER.



Watch. Read. Listen.

ULearnIT Update Coming on September 1.

Watch your email for additional communications.

Exciting news! You will soon have a modernized way to search, click and learn in [ULearnIT](#), Pinellas County's online learning portal.

On September 1, ULearnIT will get an update with a new Percipio® platform. The modern, simple, and intuitive design will enable you to discover and consume learning content in a whole new way.

What do you need to do?

- Log into ULearnIT and complete any in-progress coursework by August 27.
- View and print your Learning Transcript on or before August 31 ([see a step-by-step video tutorial](#)).

Service Anniversaries

35 YEARS



Donna Evans
Utilities/Water Quality



Maria Nenos-Politis
Property Appraiser's Office

25 YEARS

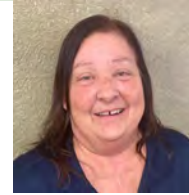


Craig Hare
Safety & Emergency Services/Emergency Medical Services



Marie Wilson
Business Technology Services

20 YEARS



Sheila Roose
Tax Collector's Office

Unavailable for Photo

35 Years

Alex Cook, *Utilities, Field Services*

30 Years

Thomas Gaines, *Property Appraiser's Office*

25 Years

Manuel Collazo, *Public Works, Stormwater & Vegetation*

Charles Grube, *Property Appraiser's Office*

Anne Lawler, *Clerk's Office, Finance Division*

20 Years

Evelyn Rivera, *Tax Collector's Office*

Chad Totten, *Clerk's Office, Court & Operational Services, North County*

15 YEARS

James Armstrong.....Property Appraiser's Office
 Maria Costa.....Tax Collector's Office
 Bryan McPherson.....Tax Collector's Office
 Martin Munro.....Supervisor of Elections

10 YEARS

Jessica Hartzler.....Office of Technology & Innovation
 Gary Phillips.....Administrative Services/Facilities-Southeast
 Patricia Wallace.....Clerk of the Circuit Court/Finance

5 YEARS

Heather Canham.....Utilities/Plant Operations
 Heathy Dame.....Safety & Emergency Svcs/Regional 911
 Shawn Daniels.....Public Works/Stormwater & Vegetation
 Anthony Fabrizio.....Communications
 Stephanie Gibbons..Clerk of the Circuit Court/Probate Court
 Joshua Goodrick.....Business Technology Services
 Natasha Keen...Clerk of the Circuit Court/Civil Court Records
 Joshua Kirchmann.....Solid Waste
 William Logan.....Public Works/Construction Management
 Amy Meley.....Clerk of the Circuit Court/Court Assistance
 Ryan Miller.....Public Works/Survey & Mapping
 Lisa Oliver.....Business Technology Services
 Gail Payne.....Business Technology Services
 Stephanie Pego...Parks & Conservation Resources/Extension
 Craig Queen....Safety & Emergency Svcs/Emergency Medical
 David Sereboff.....Office of Technology & Innovation

Terresa Spriggs.....Administrative Services/Procure to Pay
 Edwin Suarez-Rivera.....Solid Waste
 Toni Treadway.....Clerk of the Circuit Court/Court Assistance
 Darren Ware.....Airport/Crash Fire & Rescue

3 YEARS

Emilio Chavez.....Safety & Emergency Services/Regional 911
 Travis Cool.....Utilities/Field Services
 Cody Crenshaw...Safety & Emergency Services/Regional 911
 Darrin Delaney.....Business Technology Services
 Dorothy Gonzalez....Safety & Emergency Svcs/Regional 911
 Louise Harris.....Tax Collector's Office
 Casey Helriegel.....Utilities/Engineering
 Melody Hurley.....Tax Collector's Office
 Deraille Jones.....Public Works/Construction Management
 Ashley Kubisiak.....Property Appraiser's Office
 Ryan Marino.....Utilities/Maintenance
 Kerri McManus.....Human Resources
 Casey Metzger.....Tax Collector's Office
 Chandra Morris.....Safety & Emergency Svcs/Regional 911
 Bianca Pascone.....Safety & Emergency Svcs/Regional 911
 Benjamin Seda....Human Services/Community Connections
 Danielle Sharo.....Safety & Emergency Svcs/Regional 911
 Julee Sims.....Public Works/Environmental Mgmt.
 Jennifer Stoltenberg.....Tax Collector's Office
 Bennie Walton.....Public Works/Stormwater & Vegetation
 Bradley Wiedemann.....Business Technology Services
 Clifford Williams.....Utilities/Maintenance
 Suzanne Wilson...Human Services/Community Connections

Retirements

35 Years



Jacqueline Weinreich
Director 1

Safety & Emergency Services,
Radio & Technology

33 Years



Robert Vaughn

Water Quality Management Specialist
Utilities, Water Quality Division

Retirees Unavailable for Photo

Over 35 Years

Eric Fehrmann, Section
Manager 2, Public Works,
Stormwater and Vegetation
Division

Over 32 Years

Terry George, Work Planning
Coordinator, Utilities,
Maintenance Division

25 Years

Charles Grube, GIS
Cadastralist 3, Property
Appraiser's Office

Over 21 Years

Glenn Schmidt, Crew Chief
1, Public Works, Roadway
Maintenance

19 Years

Linda Howdeshell, Building
Services Specialist, Building
Department

REPCO News

The next REPCO lunch meeting will be **September 13, 2021** at Applebee's Restaurant located at 5110 East Bay Drive. The meeting will begin at noon. A representative from the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections will join us and provide an update on election security and other voting information. If you have any questions, contact Rudy Garcia by email (rdgarcia@verizon.net) or phone (813-855-3466).

The Pen



Consumer Corner: Summer Scams

From Pinellas County Consumer Protection

As the temperature increases, so do summer scams. Whether you take a vacation or choose a staycation, here are a few scams to watch out for.

Home repair scams: Individual(s) shows up at your home unannounced, claiming to have been doing work for a "neighbor." They have leftover materials and therefore can offer you a good deal. Often times, they take your money without doing the work or do a shoddy job, costing you more money.

Low price A/C check-ups: You see an advertisement for a very affordable A/C check-up. After they inspect the unit, you're told that the unit needs hundreds of dollars in repairs or that it's unrepairable and needs to be replaced, which will cost thousands of dollars.

Vacation rental scams: The pictures and description are perfect, but it may be too good to be true. Typically,

you're told to wire an advance payment and the keys will be waiting for you. But when you show up, either the property is occupied and not for rent or even worse—doesn't exist; leaving you stuck without accommodations.

Protect yourself from getting burned by a scam with these simple tips.

- Avoid purchasing a product or service from someone who just shows up at your door unsolicited.
- Before hiring a contractor, get a few estimates, make sure they're properly licensed & insured and research any complaint history.
- Avoid vacation rentals posted on free online sites. Instead, use trusted third party rental site that provides protection. If possible, have a trusted source checkout the property for you.
- Use a credit card as payment. It gives you more protection than paying by cash or debit card and it allows you to dispute unauthorized charges.

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

Promotions

Promotions listed are for July 2021.

Board of County Commissioners

Administrative Services/Purchasing & Risk

Paige Walton Procurement Analyst

Airport/Crash Fire & Rescue

Jacob Duncan Airport Fire Lt

Animal Services

Madison Ingham Animal Control Officer 1

Safety & Emergency Services/

Ambulance Billing & Finance

Melissa Hiles Project Coordinator-Project Management

Safety & Emergency Services/Regional 911

Chanmolina Black Law Enforcement Telecomm

Dawn Catacchio 911 Public Safety Telecomm 2

Amanda Iannone 911 Public Safety Telecomm 2

Economic Development/STAR Center

Justin Elsasser Electronics Specialist 1

Parks & Conservation Resources/

Extension Services

Bone Desmond Extension Specialist Sr

Melissa West Grant Worker A

Public Works/Stormwater & Vegetation

Joel Adams Crew Chief 2

Ray Dacres PW Operations Field Coordinator Sr

Paul Weaver Field Operations Supervisor

Solid Waste

Luis Cruz Solid Waste Program Assistant

Jerome Lang Solid Waste Program Assistant

Utilities/Customer Services

Travis Cool Meter Reader 2

Utilities/Maintenance

Yoshio Renteria Utilities Maintenance Worker

Janier Zuniga Trejo Utilities Maintenance Worker

Utilities/Plant Operations

Jose Hernandez, Jr. Water/Wastewater Plant Oper 1

County Attorney's Office

Ashley Donnell Hackl Senior Asst County Attorney

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Civil Court Records

Alicia Dietz Fiscal Records Specialist

Court Assistance

Cara Duck Court Clerk 1

Camilla King Court Clerk 1

Melissa Woolever Court Clerk 1

Criminal Court Records

Jordan Christian Records Specialist 2

Lisa Enos Records Specialist 2

Desire Ramos Records Specialist 2

Customer Services

Lauren Botbyl Fiscal Records Specialist

Records Management

Robert Clayton Records Specialist Supervisor

Human Resources

Judy Breadon Human Resources Technician

Tax Collector's Office

Marquis Cortez Tax Technician 2

Dwayne Tuttle Tax Technician 2

Have a question for Human Resources?

HR has streamlined our phone system to connect you to an HR Representative who can help you more quickly. Call our main line – **464-3367**:

- **Press 1 for Benefits or Wellness**, or
- **Press 2 for all other inquiries** and one of our team of HR Representatives will assist you.

You may also email AskHR@pinellascounty.org and one of our team will help you.

Updated Mentoring Guidelines for the 2021-2022 School Year

Due to the increase in COVID cases and to preserve the health and safety of employees, students and families, mentoring activities that employees choose to participate in while on County time must be virtual, until further notice.

Full-time employees in departments under the County Administrator are encouraged to work with their supervisors to take advantage of the 90 minutes of paid Administrative Leave that is granted to them, each week, to participate in approved virtual mentoring activities.

No experience needed. You just need to be passionate about mentoring.

To learn more, view the [Community Involvement page](#) on the intranet or email WorkforceRelationsCommunication@PinellasCounty.org.

Welcome Aboard!

New employees listed are for July 2021.

Board of County Commissioners

Administrative Services/Fleet

Kenneth Del Sardo.....Fleet Fuel Systems Specialist

Administrative Services/Purchasing

Thomas Royster.....Procurement Analyst Assistant

Administrative Services/Real Estate

John Lowe.....Real Property Specialist 1

Building Services

Bradley Johnson.....Building Inspector 1

Building & Development Review Services

Katrina Welch.....Accountant

Human Services

Nanette McPhee.....Office Specialist 2

Parks & Conservation Resources

Elizabeth Childress.....Extension Specialist

Lisa Molina.....Office Specialist 1

Public Works

Troy Bielicki.....Maintenance 1

Jamarian Jones.....Automotive Equipment Operator 1

Erin Struzziari.....Environmental Specialist 3

Safety & Emergency Services/Regional 911

Terri Kulick.....911 Public Safety Telecomm 1

Utilities

Delmar Brent.....Customer Service Specialist

Trevor Bridge.....Water Quality Technician 1

Steven Kalnasy.....Safety Specialist

Niki Marry.....Customer Service Specialist

Derek Ochsenwald..Electrical/Mechanical Technician 2

Colton Shannon-Sonderman.....Trainee Under-Fill A

Steven Taafe.....Electrical/Mechanical Technician 1

George Trexler, Jr.....Trainee Under-Fill A

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Nilsa Cruz.....Records Specialist 1

Victoria Gilley.....Finance Accountant 1

Natalie Jackson.....Records Specialist 1

Kenneth Knapp.....Finance Accountant 1

Catena Smith.....Records Specialist 1

Sara Smith.....Records Specialist 1

Forward Pinellas

Alexis Boback.....Planner

Property Appraiser's Office

Cathy Kimura.....PAO Tax Roll Compliance Manager

Samantha Superville.....PAO Appraiser 1

Supervisor of Elections

Samantha Boddy.....Office Specialist 2

James Knupp.....Elections Administrator

Tax Collector's Office

Gina Alessi-Lash.....Customer Service Technician

Autumn Angel.....Customer Service Technician

Amber Gottardi.....Customer Service Technician

Calvin Hecker.....Customer Service Technician

Stacie Van Nostrand.....Customer Service Technician

The Pen

THE RECORD KEEPER

Boxes for Storage at the Records Center



As you prepare your records for storage, we would like to remind you of some basic requirements for your storage boxes.

- Easy to lift – boxes weigh 25 lbs. or less
- Safe - hanging files have been removed and the box is not damaged
- Box type – an approved box type and size should be used; boxes can be ordered through Records Management
- Box number – details must be entered into our information management system and a system generated box number is written on the outside of the box

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Michele Koehler at 453-3038.



Virtual Visits are Convenient and Confidential

Talk with a counselor by phone or video-conference. Visit www.pinellascounty.org/hr/EAP.



Employee and family news including kudos, weddings, births, graduations, memorials, and classified ads. Send your news to employee.communications@pinellascounty.org or call 464-3367.

Gone but not Forgotten

The Pen is saddened to report the passing of the following retirees:

Beverly Bruce, 93, of Clearwater passed away July 23. She retired from Pinellas County in 1993. [Read her obituary.](#)



Robert Elliott, 70, of Palm Harbor, passed away July 20. He retired in 2016 from Parks (North, Wall Springs) as a Park Ranger 1 after over 32 years of service. [Read his obituary.](#)

Jeffrey Loomis, 72, of Old Town, FL, passed away July 9. He retired from Pinellas County in 1996. No obituary was located.



Thomas West, 72, of Clearwater, passed away July 30. He retired in 2009 as a Crew Chief with Public Works Operations after 29 years of service. No obituary was located.

Richard Hails, 90, of Pinellas Park, passed away July 25. He retired from Pinellas County in 1992. [Read his obituary.](#)

Classified Ads

For Sale: Cemetery plots - 2 plots.
\$5,400 for both. Sylvan Abbey, Clearwater,
near the corner of Sunset Point Road &
Soule Road, west section, lot 106.
Contact (727) 698-2340.