Annual Enrollment for 2022 Benefits is Coming November 1

Changes

- The medical plan administrator will change to Cigna (from UnitedHealthcare) as of January 1, 2022.
- There are NO changes in the premium or coverage.
- You will have a larger network of providers. 98.1% of current providers are in Cigna’s network. View Cigna’s Provider Directory.
- Cigna will provide on-site representatives for claims assistance, health coaching and information resources.
- You will have a single sign on for medical, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), behavioral/mental health, dental and prescription.
- Visit Plan Administrator Change for more information.

We Can Help

- Visit the Annual Enrollment website which is updated with new information as it becomes available.
- Register for a virtual Annual Enrollment information session happening now through November 5. Spouses and domestic partners are welcome.
- Call Cigna’s pre-enrollment line at (800) 862-3557 to get answers about your medical coverage.
- Use the Appointment Scheduler now to pre-schedule a phone appointment with a Benefits Coach at the Benefits Enrollment Center, November 1 - 15. They can answer questions about Annual Enrollment including the new voluntary benefits. The hotline is staffed by our consultant Willis Towers Watson. Beginning November 1, call at (855) 474-3858.
- Call our HR Benefits team from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every weekday at (727) 464-3367, Option 1. Request a virtual one-on-one appointment with a Benefits team member. After hours are available by request.
- Watch for your home mailer with important information.

Highlights

- Cigna is the new medical plan administrator (more information below). Premiums remain the same for 2022.
- We will offer the same plans for medical, dental, disability, FMLA, Flexible Spending Accounts, life insurance, pharmacy, and vision in 2022.
- You’ll be able to save $500 in 2022 if you complete a biometric screening and health assessment.
- You may include your domestic partner in coverage. Forms must be received by November 15.
- Annual leave exchange be offered again.
- Flexible Spending Accounts will again be offered.
- The maximum contribution for Health Savings Accounts has increased.

Annual Enrollment for 2022 benefits for employees starts Monday, November 1 and ends Monday, November 15.

All employees, including new hires and opt outs need to enroll using OPUS.

Employees who opt out need to select Opt Out for 2022 in OPUS and complete an Opt Out Affidavit.

Why do all employees have to enroll in OPUS?

This is your opportunity to review your benefit options and make selections for the next calendar year, effective January 1, 2022.

OPUS is also where you indicate if you are a tobacco user. If you do not designate whether you are a tobacco user, you may be subject to the $500 annual tobacco premium in 2022.

View Tobacco Cessation options.

Pinellas County is Now Offering Voluntary Benefits

The NEW voluntary supplemental plans from Aflac include accident, hospital and critical illness plans.

- These benefits are 100% employee paid and provide a lump sum payment directly to the employee if they experience a covered issue and file a claim.
- Each plan offers a low and high benefit level and options to cover dependents.
- Visit Voluntary Benefits for information on premiums and FAQs or call Aflac at (800) 433-3036. See more on page 4.
- Enroll via OPUS during Annual Enrollment.
The 2021 Colors of Pinellas Virtual Art Show

Thank you to the over 170 participating artists who have registered and sent in nearly 300 images to be admired.

The week beginning October 25 is your opportunity to vote for your favorite in the People Choice Awards. Watch for an email from Employee Communications. Official judging also takes place that week and the winners will be announced on November 8. Thanks to all for participating in this fun activity!

Get more information and view last year’s entries on the art show website.

SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

COVID-19 Information

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 and substantial transmission, which includes Tampa Bay.

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.

Vaccines - 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.

Holidays - See the CDC recommendations for activities, gatherings and holidays.

COVID-19 Vaccine Card Confirmations

Thank you to our employees who submitted a copy of their COVID-19 vaccination card. Our team is processing the vaccination cards to ensure payment in the November 24 paycheck.

If your sent email shows prsempben@pinellascounty.org, please be assured it went to employee.benefits@pinellascounty.org correctly.

View the webpage for more details and FAQs.

Employees who are not yet vaccinated are encouraged to complete their vaccination(s) no later than November 8 to be eligible for the one-time payment of $750.

See the County’s COVID-19 Vaccination Information web page for locations.

The Pen

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

Would you like to put something in the Pen?

NEW! The Pen Newsletter Submission Form is available online. Send us your article suggestions, classified ad requests, family announcements, and even Employee Spotlight nominations.
Q. What’s the difference between the FSA and HSA?

A. FSA stands for Flexible Spending Account, and HSA stands for Health Savings Account. Both are programs where you elect to have money deducted from your pay pre-tax and put into an account which can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses and, in the case of the Dependent Care FSA, for certain childcare and eldercare expenses.

The major differences are, 1) The FSA monies must be used (use it or lose it) within a prescribed period, whereas the HSA money rolls over from year to year, and 2) the HSA is available only for those employees enrolled in the Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP). See the article on page 5.
The Pen

Enroll in OPUS from November 1 to 15, 2021

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.

Voluntary Benefits with Aflac

During Annual Enrollment this year (Nov. 1-15), you’ll have the option to sign up for “Voluntary Benefits” - a supplemental insurance that helps with expenses medical insurance may not cover.

You decide what level of coverage you’d like, you pay the premium, and you get a lump sum payment from Aflac if you experience a covered issue. The benefits are 100% employee-paid and become effective January 1, 2022.

There are three areas where you may elect coverage – accident, hospital, and critical illness. You can choose to enroll in just one or all three. It’s up to you.

For example, if you sign up for the Accident Plan and then break your leg, on or off the job, you would file the claim and receive a lump sum cash payment at a set amount. This money would come in handy for copays and deductibles, and for things not covered by insurance like having groceries delivered, paying for rides since you can’t drive, and so on.

The premiums come out of your paycheck and premium amounts vary according to the type and amount of coverage you’d like, how many people are being covered, age bands and whether you smoke. For the premium rates on any of 3 plans, visit the voluntary benefits page.

Sign up for a virtual information session with Aflac on Thursday, October 21 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

For questions, call Aflac’s Customer Service Center at (800) 433-3036 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and identify yourself as a Pinellas County employee.

Don’t Wait - Get Your Biometric Screening Now!

There is a new and improved process for getting your biometric screening ahead of the December 31 deadline.

Before you go, make sure to familiarize yourself with the two options available (Quest or Physicians Results Form), and the steps for the option that suits you best.

Many resources are available to help you.

- The Biometric Screening and Health Survey web page
- The Biometric Screening and Health Survey FAQs
- The Biometric Screening Process video
- Cheat Sheets for both the Quest Lab and the Physician Results Form
- The August To Your Health newsletter
- The Rally Help Guide

Employees who complete an annual biometric screening and Rally health survey earn a preferred health plan premium which will save $500 in the upcoming year.

Take Care of Yourself

In the October To Your Health newsletter, you will find:

- World Mental Health Day
- COVID-19 Vaccinations and Mammograms
- Wear Pink October 22
- Using a COVID-19 Rapid Test at Home
- Caregiver Corner
- ... and more.
FSA vs. HSA

A **Flexible Spending Account**, also referred to as FSA, Healthcare FSA and Dependent Care FSA, is a program you elect to participate in and set up at Annual Enrollment. FSAs are available to all employees. The Flexible Spending Accounts are administered by TASC.

**How It Works**
The money is deducted from your pay BEFORE taxes are calculated and withheld. The money goes into an account you can use to pay for certain expenses. **You never pay tax on this money** and that’s where the savings occurs. Fox example, if you have $1,000 put in your FSA and if you would normally pay 20% tax on that $1,000, you will save that 20%.

**Major Points: Healthcare FSA**
- The Healthcare FSA money can be used for eligible medical, dental, prescription and vision expenses such as copays, deductibles and coinsurances for you and your eligible dependents.
- There are limits to contribution amounts and you must spend the money during the year or lose it. (See the FSA page for more information and special allowances stemming from the pandemic.)
- You must elect the FSA each year at Annual Enrollment.

**Major Points: Dependent Care FSA**
- The Dependent Care FSA money can be used to pay for childcare/eldercare services that make it possible for you and your spouse (if applicable) to work. Work-related childcare services or the care of adult relatives who reside with you examples include daycare, summer day camp, sick child care, and elder day care.
- There are limits to contribution amounts and you must spend the money during the year or lose it. (See the FSA page for more information and special allowances stemming from the pandemic.)
- You must elect the FSA each year at Annual Enrollment.

### Benefit FSA HSA

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<td>Interest earned*</td>
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*Interest is earned on some accounts.

The **Health Savings Account**, also referred to as an HSA, is available to employees enrolled in Pinellas County’s Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) and the money can be used to pay for qualified healthcare expenses.

**How It Works**
The money is deducted from your pay BEFORE taxes are calculated and withheld. The money goes into an account you can use to pay for certain expenses. **You never pay tax on this money** and that’s where the savings occurs. Fox example, if you have $1,000 put in your HSA and if you would normally pay 20% tax on that $1,000, you will save that 20%. You also earn interest on this money.

**Major Points**
- The HSA is only available to employees enrolled in the Consumer Driven Health Plan who then open an HSA account with Optum Bank.
- No “use it or lose it.” The funds roll over from year to year if not used.
- You own the account – even if you leave your job or retire.
- The money must be used for qualified medical expenses such as doctor’s visits, lab tests, medications, hospital services.
- There are limits to your contribution amounts.
- While you are employed at Pinellas County, the County contributes to your account - $400 for employee only and $1,200 for all other coverages.
- You must open an HSA account at Optum Bank.

**It’s Almost Time to Fall Back**
Daylight Savings ends at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 7. Don’t forget to set your clocks back!
National Customer Service Appreciation Week 2021

Customer Service Week is an international celebration of the importance of customer service and of the people who serve and support customers on a daily basis. In 1992, the U.S. Congress proclaimed Customer Service Week a nationally recognized event, celebrated during the first full week in October. This year, that was October 4 - 8.

We hope you enjoy these employee spotlights as part of the celebration.

Employee Spotlights

Gerrell Sterling
Office Specialist 2
Public Works - Customer Service

How long have you been with Pinellas County? Three years as of October 2021.

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: I answer calls and deal directly with citizens and County employees to facilitate fixes for any issues regarding drainage, mosquito control and roads.

Best part of job: Getting to know the inner workings of streets and drainage and helping citizens solve their issues.

Most challenging part of job: Not having a quick solution for a citizen’s problem.

Most memorable moment? Staying overnight at the Emergency Response Building for an emergency event.

What do you do in your free time? I enjoy spending time with my nephew and other family and friends. We go fishing, cook out and just enjoy each other’s company.

Manager’s Highlight: “Gerrell has been a valuable team member in Customer Service for almost three years. She takes great pride in the work that she performs, and it shows in the positive recognition that she receives not only from her peers but from the citizens that call in and have the pleasure of speaking with her. Having three new members on the team, she has taken on a leadership role by staying dedicated to her own tasks while assisting with the onboarding and training of the new hires. She wants to ensure that each member on the team is successful, which says a lot of her character.” – Sharla Becker, Manager of Operations Support Services, Public Works

Alyn Lynne
Engineering Specialist 1
Public Works, Transportation – Traffic Management

How long have you been with Pinellas County? 20 years

How long have you been in this position? 11 years

Have you had any other positions with Pinellas County? I started my journey as a Computer-Aided Design (CAD) operator preparing construction plans and documents for County projects and worked on the Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) sidewalk and road paving program.


Best part of job: Every day is different. We go through the same routine every day but the calls from the public make each day special. Just like a box of chocolates: you never know what you’re going to get.

Most challenging part of job: Sometimes we get overwhelmed. When it rains and the wind picks up, we’ll get more calls about our signals. Accidents start to rise, and congestion slows everything down. We do our best to inform the public so travel on the roads is safer. It’s quite the team effort.

Most memorable moment? From time-to-time, we welcome visitors to the Traffic Management Center on the Public Works campus. School children are the best—they get to see a world they never knew existed.

What do you do in your free time? Gardening, fishing, golf, cooking and baking.

Manager’s Highlight: “Alyn volunteered his time at the vaccination clinic and received a lot of kudos from people who worked there and visited the site. His customer service skills are significant and appreciated wherever he is working. He helps people by having the insight to notice things around him and make great suggestions to improve situations or processes. He has always been one to look outside the box to get the job done. I describe Alyn as a benevolent innovator. He is a joy to have in our department.” – Deneta Jones, Project Coordinator, Traffic Control Center Operations, Public Works
Employee Spotlight

Carly Jo Roe
Tax Supervisor
Tax Collector’s Office, Processing Support Branch

How long have you been with Pinellas County? Over 19 years.

How long have you been in this position? Over 6 years.

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

Describe your job in 25 words or fewer: My job is exciting. I advise and help develop others and I assist office management. There are many learning opportunities that keep me engaged and I love seeing others succeed.

Best part of job: Helping people internally and externally.

Most challenging part of job: Wanting to solve everything.

Most memorable moment? Graduating from the Certified Public Manager (CPM) program.

What do you do in your free time? I love going camping with family and friends.

Tax Collector Offices Celebrate Customer Service Week

The Tax Collector’s office observed National Customer Service Week October 4 – 8, celebrating the importance of customer service and the staff who support and serve the public each day. The offices had fun theme days, games and team building activities, food events, and a pumpkin decorating contest!

This is their second year participating in this nationwide event and it is a celebration of both their customer service skills and their customers, the citizens of Pinellas County. In addition to all the internal fun, the offices had a special “thank you” gift to hand out to customers during the week.

“My staff works hard every day, providing top-notch customer service to the public,” said Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas. “I am so proud of my team and they deserve to be recognized for their efforts. It’s also a nice way to show our customers they are more than just a number to us.”

For more photos of the week’s festivities, visit the TCO’s social media accounts – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram – @PinellasTC.
Employee Appreciation Week with the Clerk

The Pinellas Clerk’s Office wrapped up its annual Employee Appreciation Week (postponed from May due to COVID-19) as a way to thank the staff of over 500 members for all of their hard work, professionalism and dedication to customer service throughout the year. While the employees were either treated to breakfast, lunch or snacks, many of the different offices came up with additional themes and games to help celebrate. Some of these included a daily “cruise itinerary”, movies, remixes on popular games such as “Clerkopoly” and Oscar-themed bingo.

Got Reward Points?

Have you thought about using your reward points for holiday gifting? There are over 12,000 items to choose from including e-gift cards. Just log in and browse. They even have an app for both Apple and Android so you can browse from your mobile device. When you find something you’d like, add it to your cart and the items will be shipped to your home address. E-cards can be personalized and emailed to your giftee.

If you’ve forgotten your password, select the Forgot Password link. Your login information will be sent to you via email. Or you can contact the Rewards Program helpline at (800) 875-8284 Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Questions? View the Rewards Program website (internal link) or contact Human Resources at (727) 464-3367, option 2 and ask for Rewards Program assistance.

THE RECORD KEEPER

Empty Boxes

As we move into a new fiscal year and you begin clearing out inactive records in your office to send to Records Management for storage, don’t forget to use an approved records storage box. We have a large quantity of boxes available, so we are able to get empty boxes to you within one or two days of your request for boxes.

If you have any questions, please contact Michele Koehler in Records Management at (727) 453-3038.
Help Raise Awareness of Domestic Violence

The month of October is designated as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Statistics show that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime. Thursday, October 21 is recognized as National Domestic Violence Awareness Day. Please join us in wearing purple to shed light on the epidemic that is domestic violence.

The Clerk’s Office provides critical public services to help those facing domestic violence, including processing domestic violence injunctions, better known as restraining orders.

The Clerk’s Office wore purple to kick-off the month on October. Please enjoy some photos of them!

The Probate Office of the Clerk hosted a hot dog fundraiser to support local domestic abuse safety shelters as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Over 50 people participated in the lunch event, and the office raised a total of $354.
A Bridge Over Troubled Soil

by Marq Caughell, Public Works

It takes a strong foundation for anything to safely endure the test of time. That’s why it was crucial to get the soils and drainage just right before starting the reconstruction of Forest Lakes Boulevard between Pine Avenue and Race Track Road in Oldsmar.

Forest Lakes Boulevard is a divided suburban roadway connecting State Road 580 and Tampa Road to the Hillsborough County line, where the road turns into Linebaugh Avenue. It provides access to residential neighborhoods, several large medical and technical commercial properties, Forest Lakes Elementary School, the Cypress Forest Recreation Center and City of Oldsmar government buildings.

The project was added to the County’s Capital Improvement program to increase roadway capacity and reduce congestion on the nearby state roads. It involved widening, with areas of full roadway reconstruction, along with milling and resurfacing along the length of the project area. The improvements added an 11-foot-wide travel lane in each direction and a paved five-foot shoulder that can be utilized as a bike lane. Medians and traffic separators were reconstructed as needed, ADA-compliant sidewalks were repaired and extended to cover the length of the project area and upgrades to the traffic signals and intersections were also included.

A noteworthy aspect of this project was the underlying condition of the ground and roadway base. In the project area, the high water table combined with water-retaining soils resulted in a spongy base that never fully stabilized, causing the roadway to move, crack and develop potholes at an advanced rate.

These unsuitable soils needed to be excavated and replaced to a depth of three feet or more below the existing ground level. The soils were then replaced with a mixture of crushed concrete and the project used a specialized geosynthetic grid material to create a stable “bridge” for the road surface to be built atop. A new network of underdrains and pipes was installed to improve drainage and reduce settlement concerns in the future.

Thanks to the efforts of the dedicated project team, residents and visitors are able to enjoy smoother, safer travel between Pinellas and Hillsborough, and with all the subsurface improvements completed, Forest Lakes Boulevard (video) is on firm footing to continue serving northeast Pinellas County for decades to come.

Project Quick Facts

Project Team:
- Pinellas County Public Works
- The City of Oldsmar
- Hillsborough County Government
- Florida Department of Transportation

Project Timeline:
- Construction Start: October 2018
- Substantial Completion: May 24, 2021
- Scheduled Contract End Date: July 19, 2021 (ahead of schedule)

Project Funding & Budget:
- $12.7 million from the Penny for Pinellas program and a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Key Pinellas County Staff:
- Erin Lawson, P.E. – Project Manager and Capital Improvements Transportation Section Manager
- Angel Lafita – Construction Administration Manager
- Kevin Johnson – Supervisor, Field Inspectors
- Joe Kovach – Field Inspector 2
Sunstar Goes Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month

From Tampa Bay Newspaper, Oct. 6

In support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Sunstar has again wrapped one of their ambulances in pink for the month of October.

Wrapping this ambulance helps spread the message that early detection saves lives. The ambulance is in service and used throughout Pinellas County for 911 calls, as well as at events and standbys.

Each year, an ambulance is dedicated to the women at Sunstar as well as the community who have courageously fought the battle against breast cancer. Sunstar began going pink for October approximately 15 years ago, in honor of one of their EMT’s who lost her battle with this devastating cancer.

The pink ambulance has been a centerpiece in many charity walks held in Pinellas County over the years, raising awareness and money for breast cancer. This year, Sunstar is once again raising money through an internal “pink hat and shirt” sale, donating all proceeds to the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation.

Sunstar is the 911 ambulance transport service for all Pinellas County residents, responding to around 520 calls a day.

For more information on breast cancer awareness and prevention visit www.floridabreastcancer.org or www.nationalbreastcancer.org.

Photo courtesy Sunstar

Tax Collector Offices Spreading Awareness this October

From a Tax Collector’s Office press release

Each October, people all over the world join together to raise awareness about breast cancer and show support for those affected. This year, the Tax Collector offices are joining forces with the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation to raise funds for this cause during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The Tax Collector offices are promoting the End Breast Cancer license plate all month long. Drivers who purchase or renew this specialty plate at any Tax Collector office this October will receive a complimentary reusable tote bag.

All funds raised from the End Breast Cancer license plate stay in Florida to support breast cancer education and medical research. The plate has raised over $8 million since it launched in 2002.

Customers wishing to donate $5 or more to this cause will also receive a reusable tote bag as a thank you gift.

Tax collector employees will wear pink Breast Cancer Foundation T-shirts every Wednesday in October to help spread awareness and spark conversations with their customers.

According to the CDC, every two minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite medical advancements and increased awareness, breast cancer is still the most common cancer worldwide as of 2021.

“For almost twenty years now, this foundation has been making great strides in breast cancer education and research here in our state,” said Tax Collector, Charles W. Thomas. “We are excited to team up with them this month to do anything we can to support the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation and their efforts.”

In addition to raising awareness, the FBCF is committed to funding innovative research for diagnosing, treating, and hopefully one day, curing breast cancer. The Florida Breast Cancer Foundation is the sixth local or state nonprofit the Tax Collector offices have supported in 2021 as a means of giving back to the community. Find more information about the Florida Breast Cancer Foundation at www.floridabreastcancer.org.
Tax Collector Receives Tenth Consecutive Legacy Award

Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas and his finance team recently received their tenth consecutive Legacy Award from the Florida Tax Collector’s Association. The Legacy Award is one of the most prestigious honors awarded to local tax collectors.

Each year, a five-person panel of Floridian government financial executives meet to review the processes of different Florida tax collector offices. The criteria for winning the Legacy Award each year include a clean, error-free annual audit report combined with an organizational focus on innovative technology, customer focus, and keen budgeting skills.

“It is a great privilege for us as an organization to win our tenth Legacy Award this year,” said Tax Collector Charles W. Thomas. “Winning this award ten years in a row is truly a testament to the hard work of our Budget and Finance team. I am very excited that their dedication to accuracy and excellence does not go unnoticed. They truly deserve this honor.”

In addition to ten consecutive years of recognition via the Legacy Award, the Pinellas County Tax Collector’s office has also won multiple Governor’s Sterling Awards. Find more info about their organization and its operations at taxcollect.com or on their social media accounts – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram – @PinellasTC.

Holiday Lights in the Gardens is Back!

The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation is proud to announce the return of its winter holiday celebration in 2021. At the 21st Annual Holiday Lights in the Gardens, the gardens will sparkle with thousands of twinkling, colorful, LED lights from Friday, November 26, 2021 through Sunday, January 2, 2022, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. nightly.

Each year this amazing light display is visited by over 100,000 guests from near and far, and the foundation relies on its dedicated volunteers to bring this event to the community. Volunteer registration is now open, and we invite you to spend an evening with us. Volunteer shifts include: Entrance Greeters, Lobby Volunteers and NEW— replacing the Gift Cart is the Botanical Bounty Pop Up Shop. Choose your dates at www.fbgfoundation.org/volunteer.

We want to thank you for joining us in this family-friendly Pinellas County tradition. We couldn’t do it without you!
Continuous Learning: Don’t Be Basic

Learning by doing ensures that we do not have to constantly re-learn basic skills. By way of comparison, no one would argue that reading a book about tennis is enough to teach you to play the game. New tennis players typically experience a steep learning curve if they go out to practice regularly.

The danger in the workplace comes from the flipside of learning by doing. It is a phenomenon that acts to stifle the development of expertise beyond the level required for delivering results. It is the skill development that does not occur once we feel we know what we are doing. This is the paradox labeled by the term ‘not learning by doing.’

Despite our common assumption that skill development improves in a direct relationship with years of experience, in fact the learning curve always flattens. At work, this is usually because we are under pressure to deliver results. Once we feel we have enough capability to meet today’s needs, we stop working on improving and instead just get on with doing the job.

In terms of the tennis analogy, once we feel we are good enough to play a match, we stop trying to improve a weak backhand and instead just rely on that strong forehand to win as many games as possible. This shift in focus from learning to doing is rarely obvious, and so long as our results meet what is needed, we will continue to focus on delivering results with little attention to improving our methodology.

As a result, the costs of not learning by doing are mostly hidden. For the organization, there is the hidden cost that employees growing in experience are not necessarily growing in expertise. For employees there is the opportunity cost of the better outcomes that could have been achieved, had they been able to invest time in ongoing skill development.

The solution to avoid ‘not learning by doing’ is a commitment to continuous skill development.

Access the ULearnIT course, Becoming a Continuous Learner, to learn more ways to become a continuous learner.

Tips to Become a More Effective Learner
1. Make use of memory improvement basics.
2. Keep learning (and practicing) new things.
3. Learn in multiple ways.
4. Teach what you’ve learned to another person.
5. Use previous learning to promote new learning.
7. Look up answers rather than struggle to remember.

Virtual Great American Teach-In, November 17

Attention BCC Employees!

As the Great American Teach-In quickly approaches, we highly encourage our employees to consider participating in this important event!

We remain in the midst of a pandemic. To preserve the health and safety of Pinellas County employees, students and families, employee participation in the Great American Teach-In, while on County time, must be done virtually. As with past years, employees will be responsible for coordinating their participation with the Pinellas County public school of their choice, and responsible for seeking approval to participate from their supervisor, to ensure appropriate coverage. Please coordinate with your supervisor by November 11.

Additionally, employees will be responsible for coordinating their technological needs, related to real-time virtual interactions or pre-recorded messages, with the school that they choose. BTS and OTI will not be responsible for providing technical assistance for this initiative.

Check out the memo from County Administrator Barry Burton (internal link) for more details.

For any questions related to the Great American Teach-In, please contact workforcerelationscommunication@pinellascounty.org.
Consumer Corner
DON’T GET SCAMMED - Utility Scams
From Pinellas County Consumer Protection

You receive an unsolicited telephone call from someone claiming to be from your local utility company. You’re told, “Your bill is past due, and your power will be turned off within the hour!” To avoid disconnection, all you need to do is make a payment immediately. To make the ruse more convincing, they’ll make you believe that a utility truck is on the way to initiate disconnection. The utility scam is perpetrated on individuals and businesses alike.

- What should you do if you get such a call? The best thing to do with any call that you don’t recognize is, don’t answer. If you happen to answer the phone, then just hang up.
- Be cautious of caller ID. With technology, scammers can spoof or “program” any telephone number to display a legitimate or well-known company or agency’s name on caller ID.
- If you receive a call claiming you owe a payment, or you’re unsure whether it’s really the utility company contacting you, hang up and call the utility company directly by the phone number listed on your billing statement. Never use a phone number the caller gives you or reply to a text or email. If it’s a scam, so is the contact information.
- The utility company will never request payment with a prepaid card, bitcoin or ask you to wire money. That’s a sign it’s a scam. Using a credit card allows you to dispute the charge if there’s a problem.
- Customers with delinquent accounts typically receive an advanced disconnection notification with their regular monthly bill, never a one-time notification an hour before disconnection.

Over time and with the advancement of technology, scams have become more sophisticated. Scammers learn new techniques and strategies to steal people’s money and personal information. Remember knowledge is the best defense to prevent falling victim to a scam.

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.

The 35th Annual Christmas Bike Drive has Begun!

35th Annual Christmas Bike Drive

Last year, we collected over $14,000 and were able to donate bicycles and helmets to many children of needy families.

Your support is needed, especially in this extraordinary year.

The committee is preparing for the 35th Annual Christmas Bike Drive! Last year, over $14,000 was raised and we were able to donate bicycles and helmets to many children of needy families. To meet demand, we are starting donations early this year due to supply chain issues. We are collecting donations now through November 19.

If you’d like to be more involved, contact your department’s Bike Drive Coordinator (see list at right). If you are interested in becoming a Bike Drive Coordinator for your department, please contact jpeters@pinellascounty.org. View and post the flyer.

- Animal Services, Lindsey Martin
- BDRS, Nikki Vasquez
- BTS, Lynda Morrill
- Building Design & Construction, Derek Weaver
- Clerk’s Office, Leena Delli Paoli
- County Admin, Della Klug
- County Attorney, Sue Estrada
- County Commissioners, Nikki Coats
- Detention, Frank Terry
- Economic Development, Kimberly Circello
- Emergency Management, Mary Burrell
- Facilities/Real Property, Jennifer Peters
- Facility Ops, Keith Royster
- Facility Ops Mid, Melissa Anderson
- Facility Ops NW, Carlos Negron
- Facility Ops-SE & SP, Lisa Dieffenthaller
- Fleet, Angela Robertson
- Housing & Community Development, Forward Pinellas, Cynthia Watkins
- Human Resources, Carol Strickland
- Human Services, Danyelle Green
- Communications, Stella Mansfield
- OMB, Veronica Ette CC Toni Merrill
- OTI, Becky Batten
- Parks and Rec, Elizabeth Snyder
- Public Works, Casey Morse
- Purchasing, Rocky Luoma
- Purchasing, P2P, and Risk, Merry Celeste
- Real Property, Diana Sweeney
- SES, Dawn Shontz
- Survey and Mapping, Susan Scholpp
- Urban Forestry, Carolyn Cheatham Rhodes
- Utilities, Debbi Heller
- Utilities NS GMD, Teresa Adkins
Service Anniversaries

25 YEARS

Sue Constantinoff
Property Appraiser’s Office

Denise Schmidt
Property Appraiser’s Office

20 YEARS

Jill Brown
Convention & Visitors Bureau

Kevin Schnorr
Public Works, Mosquito Control & Vegetation

Unavailable for Photo

20 Years

Danielle Aupperlee, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Civil Court Records
John Beliveau, Public Works, Transportation
Lisa Gentry, Business Technology Services
Deborah Weiss, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Inspector General
Maria White, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Criminal Customer Service

15 YEARS

Mary Burrell ...................... Emergency Management
Kurt Forster ....................... Economic Development
Leonard Jankowski ............. Utilities
Anne Marie Morse .............. Tax Collector’s Office
Cristiane Smith .................. Utilities
Matthew Stalnaker ............. Public Works
Elizabeth Walker ................. Clerk of the Circuit Court

10 YEARS

Elliot Diaz ......................... Human Services
Barbara Hetrick .................. Public Works
Naresh Kalidindi .................. Business Technology Services
Herlinda Lockheart ............. Clerk of the Circuit Court
Tiffani Schrader ............... Administrative Services/Purchasing

5 YEARS

Kimberly Addison ............... Clerk of the Circuit Court
Akhilandeswari Bavara ...... Business Technology Services
Montez Brown ................... Utilities
Elmer Chase ..................... Public Works
Lynn Gerken ..................... Tax Collector’s Office
Cloretta Giddings ............. Tax Collector’s Office
Matthew Haynes ............... Business Technology Services
MJ Johnson ....................... Public Works
Robert Kacinko ................. Utilities

Dina Meath ......................... Property Appraiser’s Office
Michelle Montecarlo ............ Public Works
Stephanie Pissarides .......... Public Works
Jose Ramirez ..................... Convention and Visitors Bureau
Scott Rintz ...................... Administrative Services/Risk
Chrystan Scott .................. Utilities
Rebecca Stonefield .......... Planning
Daniel Sundermeyer .......... Administrative Svcs/Real Estate
Marie Swift ..................... Property Appraiser’s Office
Sara Thome ..................... Tax Collector’s Office

3 YEARS

Karen Baker ......................... Public Works
Alissa Berro ....................... Public Works
Barry Burton ..................... County Administration
Jason Clemis ..................... Business Technology Services
Michelle Jeffery ................. Public Works
Ashley Johnson .................. Marketing & Communications
Jared Kahn ....................... County Attorney
Aeisha Martin ................... Building & Development Review Svcs
Janniel Negron Rodriguez ... Convention & Visitors Bureau
Catherine Nguyen .............. Public Works
Catherine Perkins ............. Emergency Management
Gerrell Sterling ................. Public Works
Aaron Swicker .................. Business Technology Services
Kellie Vanpatten .............. Tax Collector’s Office
Retirements

35 Years
Donna Evans
Water Quality Management Specialist 1
Utilities Water Quality Division

35 Years
Essie McClendon
Finance Operations Specialist
Clerk of the Circuit Court, Treasury and Revenue Management

Over 31 Years
David Talhouk
Engineering Specialist 2
Public Works, Stormwater Engineering

25 Years
Mike Sebastian
Records Specialist 2
Clerk of the Circuit Court, Criminal Court Records

Over 22 Years
Susan Colton
Records Specialist 2
Clerk of the Circuit Court, Criminal Court Records

Over 21 Years
Andrew Pupke
Director 2
Real Property and Facility Management

Retirees Unavailable for Photo

Over 31 Years
Beverly Lunan-Thomas, Records Specialist 2, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Criminal Court Records

23 Years
Timothy Clark, Engineering Specialist 2, Public Works, Transportation Engineering and Design

Over 22 Years
Johnny Parker, Utilities Maintenance Specialist 4, Utilities Maintenance

REPCO News
The next REPCO lunch meeting will be a picnic November 8, 2021 at Eagle Lake Park. The menu will be fried chicken, Greek salad and baked beans. Attendees may bring a dessert. Iced tea, lemonade and water will be available for drinks. A charge of $5.00 per attendee will be payable at the picnic. RSVP by November 1 to Rudy Garcia at rdgarcia@verizon.net or (813) 855-3466.
## Promotions

Promotions listed are for September 2021.

### Board of County Commissioners

**Administrative Services/Real Property**  
Eric Blackmon, Sr .......................... Property & Stores Clerk 3

**Administrative Services/Real Property/Detention**  
Tim Rohrbach .................................. Electrician 1

**Economic Development**  
Cynthia Johnson ............................... Director 3

**Public Works/Customer Services**  
Virginia Stewart .............................. Office Specialist 1

**Public Works/Technical Services**  
Josephine Benwell .......................... Technical Services Sect Manager

**Safety & Emergency Services/Regional 911**  
Kevan Brenay ............................... 911 Public Safety Telecomm 1  
Tanner Cavinder ......................... 911 Public Safety Telecomm 1  
Lindsey Sterry ............................ 911 Public Safety Telecomm 1

**Utilities/Maintenance**  
Lonnie Alexander, Jr .................... Utilities Maintenance Spec 4  
Theodore Dallas ............................ Trainee Underfill A  
Kenneth Houston, Sr ..................... Utilities Maintenance Spec 4  
Carlos Thomas ............................. Utilities Maintenance Spec 1  
George Trexler, Jr ........................ Utilities Maintenance Worker

**Utilities/Plant Operations**  
Heather Canham ......................... Water/Wastewater Plant Oper 3  
Amanda Knoblock ....................... Water/Wastewater Plant Oper 3  
Brian Peacock ............................. Water/Wastewater Plant Oper 2

**Utilities/Engineering**  
Casey Hellriegel .......................... Project Coordinator-Admin

**Utilities/Water Quality**  
Trevor Bridge ......................... Water Quality Management Spec 1  
Shane Gendron .............................. Management Analyst  
David Hansen .............................. Project Coordinator-Technical  
Kevin King ................................. Project Coordinator-Technical

### Business Technology Services

James Rossiter ............................. Application Analyst Sr

### Clerk of the Circuit Court

**Criminal Court Records**  
Jacqueline Sherman ........................ Records Specialist Supervisor

**Probate Court Records**  
Lori Poppler ............................... Fiscal Records Specialist

**Board Records**  
Sitara Coyle ................................. Board Reporter Sr

### Property Appraiser’s Office

Michael Daly ............................. Director Branch Office  
William Hamann, III ..................... PAO Appraiser 3  
Jackie Warr ................................. Director Residential Appraisals

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### October Blood Drives

**October 21**  
11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Downtown Clearwater Courthouse  
315 Court St. (west parking lot)

**October 28**  
12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.  
Public Works  
22211 U.S. Hwy. 19 North, Clearwater

[View more blood drives](#)

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**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, Wellness or Retirement,** 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.
Welcome Aboard!

New employees listed are for September 2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board of County Commissioners</th>
<th>Clerk of the Circuit Court</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative Services/Purchasing</strong></td>
<td>Jill Dolan .................. Customer Information Center Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viviana Solorzano Giarimoustas .......... Proc Analyst, Ld</td>
<td>Gillian Isibue .................. Records Specialist 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative Services/Real Estate</strong></td>
<td>Zandria Jones ............... Cust Information Center Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Kelsey ................ Prog Management Spec 2</td>
<td>Ryan McKay ....................... Cust Information Center Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Widener ...................... Electrician 2</td>
<td>Monica Pummer .................... Records Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative Services/Risk Management</strong></td>
<td>Deja Swinton .................... Fiscal Records Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Ossie ......................... Risk Management Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Airport</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shane McGahan ..................... Trades/Field Services Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Code Enforcement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Spencer ..................... Code Enforcement Specialist</td>
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<td><strong>Human Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Khadija Dean ...................... Human Services Case Manager 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Office of Management &amp; Budget</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Rose ................ Director 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parks &amp; Conservation Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie Holland ................... Admin Support Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Scarbrough ................ Environmental Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safety &amp; Emergency Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Krista Martin ..................... Medical Billing Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Mustian .................. Medical Billing Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Solid Waste</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiana Sladicki ..................... Environmental Specialist 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Wyland .................... Solid Waste Technician</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Utilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Kinsella .................... Trne UFA: Util Maint Wkr Trne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Pawlikowski ............... Chemist 1</td>
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</tbody>
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**September 13 Virtual New Employee Orientation**

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**Human Resources**

Nicki Lanauze ..................... Human Resources Technician

**Office of Human Rights**

Betina Baron ..................... Human Rights Compliance Manager

**Tax Collector’s Office**

Richard Glasgow .................. Customer Service Technician
Christopher Green ............... Customer Service Technician
Casey Guthrie ..................... Customer Service Technician
Diarren Isaac ..................... Customer Service Technician
Tonya Long ....................... Customer Service Technician
Lisa Paulus ....................... Customer Service Technician
Jacqueline Pena .................. Customer Service Technician
Jason Rock ....................... Customer Service Technician
Gone but not Forgotten

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

**June Homer**, 92, of St. Petersburg, passed away September 15. She retired in 1995 from Pinellas County. [Read her obituary](#).

**James Howes**, 75, of Safety Harbor passed away September 14. He left the County in 2001 as the Airport Director after 21 years of service. [Read his obituary](#).

**Carol Johnson**, 77, of Pinellas Park, passed away September 10. She was the secretary for the director at Utilities, Logan Station and retired in 2010 after 17 years of service. [Read her obituary](#).

**Lois Ledent**, 78, of Clearwater, passed away September 27. She retired from Risk Management in 2009 after 15 years of service. [Read her obituary](#).

**Marjorie Pietroburgo**, 64, of Palm Harbor, passed away September 6. She retired from the Real Property Division as a Real Estate Specialist in 2017 after 36 years of service. [Read her obituary](#).

**Edward Samadhin**, 75, of St. Petersburg, passed away September 11. He retired as an Accounting Technician from the Airport in 1999. [Read his obituary](#).

**Vincent Saporito, Sr.**, 89, of Clearwater, passed away September 29. He retired from the Parks Department in 1997 after 24 years of service. [Read his obituary](#).

Welcome!

**Walter Alexander Medlock**, born April 27, 2021 to Brett and Kristina Medlock. Proud grandparents are Maureen and Ron Medlock (Fleet). Baby was 7 pounds, 5 ounces and 20.5 inches long at birth.