

HELP (From front page)

staffed by employees who can answer questions and handle complaints about county government services, and refer residents to social service organizations and other government agencies.

The InfoLine also is one of the main places that Spanish-speaking citizens can call to get help with county or social services. Experienced bilingual employees can assist them or refer them to the correct person in another department that speaks Spanish.

Another big undertaking of the Citizen Action Center is their social and community service referral program. The Center has partnered with local community and social organizations and other government agencies to create and maintain an extensive database of social and community services available in the area. This database is searchable by the service needed; therefore, users can find out easily which organization or agency in the area provides housing assistance and food, and which helps with domestic abuse. They also can pinpoint which other government agency is responsible for everything from professional licensing and vendor permits to child support.

A resident can get this information by simply calling the InfoLine. Or they can also access the entire database themselves online through the county's website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org. On the front page of the website, click on the "Community Link Directory" link and then find the topic you want to search. This online database is the second most visited feature on our website.

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The database also is used extensively by the Action Center's partner organizations and agencies. These groups are provided the electronic database on CD or in a popular book format. Common users are Sheriff's deputies in the field, school counselors, social workers, the Department of Children and Families, and MacDill Air Force Base.

In addition, the Citizen Action Center maintains an action order process for county government. When you call in a request for service through their office, make a complaint or send an email through the county website's general email service, Center staff answers the question or makes sure it is sent to the correct department for action. They even follow up with you to confirm the issue was taken care of or help the citizen further if it is still needed.

So, remember, the next time you have a question you cannot answer or a thorny issue you need someone to help you with, call the Citizen Action Center or e-mail them at info@hillsboroughcounty.org. Help is on the way!

Hillsborough County Communicator

Published every month by the Communications Department to inform residents about the programs, services and activities of their County government.

For more information, call the Hillsborough Information Line at 272-5900, or visit the county's website at: www.hillsboroughcounty.org

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Hillsborough County COMMUNICATOR

Keeping You Informed About County Government
DECEMBER 2004

Help Is On the Way!

Did you know that tucked away on the 13th Floor of the County Center building is a busy hub of customer relations for county government? This section, the Citizen Action Center, handles everything from thousands of general county questions phoned or e-mailed in by residents to providing expert referral for residents to local non-profit social service agencies.

One of the better known services of the Citizen Action Center is its Help Line, which is now being called the Hillsborough County InfoLine. In the last year, more than 100,000 calls were made to this line. This popular service, which you can call at 272-5900, is now available from 7 a.m.-11 p.m. seven days a week. It is

(See **HELP**, inside panel)



Citizen Action Center staff Betty Coleman, Jenny Myers and Lyn Butler (back to front) answer the county's InfoLine.

Seeking Sun and Saving Water

Have you ever wondered if hotel and motel guests really pay attention to those cards which ask them to help save water by using their towels more than once? You might participate - but do others?

The answer is a resounding "yes!"

The Hillsborough County Water Department recently was recognized by the Southwest Florida Water Management District for its support of Water C.H.A.M.P. - the Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program. So far, 58 properties in Hillsborough County - adding up to some 10,000 rooms - participate in the program, and their success continues to encourage others to join as well.

The key component of Water C.H.A.M.P. is a linens and towels "reuse" program, in which management agrees to launder linens every third day of a guest's stay unless the guest requests

otherwise. Participant hotels receive, free of charge, beautifully-produced pillow cards, door hangers and tabletop cards which promote the program.

Besides conserving significant amounts of water, hotels and motels can save up to \$1 per occupied room per day in costs for water, energy, labor and detergent. Fewer launderings also mean less wastewater that has to be treated.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District also provides staff training materials and workshops to Water C.H.A.M.P. members, as well as an environmental self-audit checklist. And even if a hotel or motel cannot participate in the linens reuse program, Water C.H.A.M.P. can offer other water-saving ideas.

In Hillsborough, the program is a cooperative effort between the district, the Hillsborough County Hotel & Motel Association, the

Hillsborough County Water Department and the Tampa Water Department.



Hillsborough County's Water Department has initially contributed \$20,740 to help fund Water C.H.A.M.P. The money comes from fines paid by people who violate the county's water restrictions.

"It's a way of taking penalties and turning them into education efforts," said Norman Davis, Hillsborough County's water conservation coordinator.

For more information about Water C.H.A.M.P., call 1-800-423-1476, ext. 4708.

TUESDAY

LIVE Healthy
5:30 p.m.

LOCAL LEADERS AND EXPERTS
DIG BEHIND THE HEADLINES

WEEKLY REVIEW
with Steve Overton
FRIDAY 8:30 P.M.

NEW SHOWS
on
HTV22
Cable Channel 22

For more information,
visit www.htv22.org

SATURDAY

Kid's Kounty
9:30 a.m.

SUNDAY

Inside Hillsborough County
7 p.m.