

A Cut Above The Rest

When you think of likely places to attend chainsaw training, a wastewater treatment plant probably does not come to mind immediately.

After hurricanes Charley, Ivan and Frances, Will Schill with the Water Department's Falkenburg Wastewater Treatment Plant traveled to Charlotte and Polk counties to help residents clear debris from their properties. His expertise in the tree service industry prompted the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to ask for his help organizing special classes to teach their personnel the proper use of chainsaws.

Fallen and damaged trees were a major problem for homeowners as well as utilities, deputies and other first responders who cleared roads. That's why several Sheriff's personnel spent time



Will Schill, supervisor of operations at the Falkenburg Wastewater Treatment Plant, demonstrates the proper use of a chainsaw to employees from the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and the Water Department.

learning about bumper spikes, chain brakes, hinging, kickbacks and more in one of three classes taught by Schill.

Homeowners Beware!

With housing prices on the rise, many homeowners are choosing to keep their homes and update them or make improvements. If you choose to use a contractor to help with repairs, make sure you are an informed consumer.

Here are ways you can limit the possibility of becoming the victim of an unscrupulous contractor:

- Verify the company is well-established by contacting the Consumer Protection Agency or the Better Business Bureau.
- Find out if any complaints have been filed against the company.
- Confirm your contractor is licensed by the state.
- Make sure they are insured for personal liability, worker's compensation and property damage.
- Ask for copies of insurance certificates to prevent you from being held liable for any injuries or damages that occur during your project.



- Ask for a list of references for similar projects.

Also think twice about doing business with contractors who solicit door-to-door, offer you a discount for referrals or only accept payment in cash. Be wary of high pressure sales tactics and never pay for the entire job up front.

You should also avoid "home improvement" loan scams in which the contractor offers to arrange the financing. You should never agree to financing provided by the contractor without shopping around and comparing loan terms.

For licensing and permitting information, contact Hillsborough County Development Services at 272-5600. **If you need to verify if any complaints have been filed against your contractor, call the Hillsborough County Consumer Protection Agency at 903-3430.**

What's New on the Web

You're just a double-click away from most of Hillsborough County's most popular programs and services. Simply log onto www.hillsboroughcounty.org today and print out commonly used forms for rezonings and permits, register to vote, adopt a pet, find out how to become a vendor with the county, get driving directions to area parks, plus a whole lot more.



For Watering Restrictions Info

CALL

275-7094

Where Do I Pay My Water Bill?

Hillsborough County's Water Department has several locations to serve you:

- ▶ Brandon Crossings Shopping Center
10061 E. Adamo Drive, Suite 203
Brandon (same plaza as Home Depot)
Phone: (813) 272-6680
Hours: Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- ▶ The Payment Center
10013 N. Florida Ave.
Note: A \$1 fee will be charged.
- ▶ Water Dept. Customer Service Office
4802 Gunn Hwy., Suite 124
(Town Center Shopping Center, at
Gunn Highway and Plantation Blvd.)
Phone: (813) 272-6680.
Hours: Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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NEWS BRIEFS...

Officials Sworn In

Public Defender Julianne M. Holt, Supervisor of Elections Buddy Johnson and Property Appraiser Rob Turner took their oaths of office during a joint swearing-in ceremony last month. Holt and Turner, who have held office since 1993 and 1996 respectively, were each re-elected in November to another four-year term, while Johnson won a full term after being appointed to his position in 2003.

In addition, newly elected Sheriff David Gee and Clerk of the Circuit Court Pat Frank, a former County Commissioner, will each serve four-year terms.

Two New Libraries Dedicated

Dedications were held for two of the County's newest libraries recently. The Upper Tampa Bay Regional Library is located at 11211 Countryway Blvd., Tampa and the Bloomingdale Regional Library is at 1906 Bloomingdale Ave., Valrico.

Each 15,000-square-foot building features a computer lab, meeting rooms and a bookstore. They will open officially later this year.

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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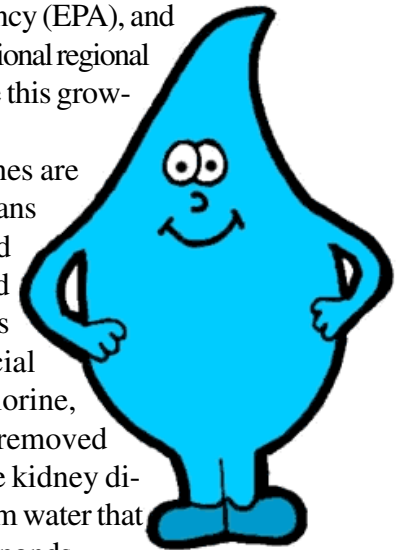
Hillsborough County
COMMUNICATOR
Keeping You Informed About County Government
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Changes Coming For South-Central Customers

In April, Hillsborough County will be switching from chlorine to chloramines to treat drinking water for customers in our South-Central service area. This proven treatment method meets higher quality and safety standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and will allow us to use additional regional water supplies to serve this growing area.

Although chloramines are perfectly safe for humans and our four-legged friends, fish owners and kidney dialysis patients will want to take special precautions. Like chlorine, chloramines must be removed from water used in the kidney dialysis process, and from water that is used in fish tanks or ponds.

Look for more details in upcoming issues of the *Communicator*.



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