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BRIEFS

InfoLine Turns 30!

From basic information and referrals to all health, social and government services, plus various requests for assistance in between, Hillsborough County's InfoLine, a service of the Citizen Action Center, has provided help to citizens for 30 years.

Since 1975, the staff has handled millions of calls in a courteous, caring and professional manner.

Last year, the group extended its hours from 7a.m. to 11p.m., seven days a week, to handle the more than 100,000 calls they receive annually.

The Citizen Action Center was created by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners to provide a simple and convenient way for citizens to access health, social and government services throughout Hillsborough County.

(More Briefs, page 5)

Accounting for Our Own Actions

There's now a more formal resource for investigations into complaints and allegations about the conduct of employees who work for the County. The new Professional Responsibility Section (PRS) was launched recently to conduct fair and unbiased fact-finding inquiries into grievances.

PRS is not only a resource for managers who find themselves in the position of having to determine the validity of serious complaints against their employees, but also serves as an outlet for employees to ask questions or report concerns before minor issues become serious.

Issues such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) discrimination and harassment, and criminal behavior will

be investigated, along with serious violations of county policy or Civil Service Rules.

While PRS does not determine the guilt, innocence or punishment of an employee, it does serve as an effective tool for determining what happened regarding a situation.

All employees are asked to support the activities of PRS because its main purpose is to facilitate a safe, productive work environment for all employees, and to provide factual information to management to help them make informed decisions.

If an employee has a complaint involving Equal Employment Opportunity Discrimination and Harassment, contact Camille Blake, EEO manager, at

(See PRS, page 3)

Mending 'Broken Glass'

Citizen Board Support Helps Enforce the Code

It's called the broken glass experiment.

As the theory goes, if you sit an average car in front of the average house on an average street, typically, it will remain safe. Take that same car in front of the same house on that same street, but this time break one of its windows, and odds are that the car will be stripped completely by the following day.

"It explains the issues we come across every day in layman's terms," said Karen Matches, manager of Citizen Board Support. "Until that window was broken, the car still was perceived as something of value, not damaged goods. Translated for our business, it means that as long as people keep their properties nicely appointed, the value remains or goes up. But without regular maintenance, the value could fall and create an eyesore for everyone."

That community standard is what Citizen Board Support seeks to enforce.

"Code enforcement exists to maintain our quality of life," said Matches. "Voluntary compliance is our goal. Only when we don't receive that does our department get involved."

Generally speaking, Matches said, when a person is cited for a violation of codes, they'll usually fix the problem when codes are explained. But, in the more extreme cases, they may need some encouragement, in the form of daily fines, to comply.

When a violation is found, property owners are given a set timeframe to correct them. If they fail, the case goes to Citizen Board Support to receive a hearing. If the violation is corrected, the case is closed. If it is not, a lien – good for 20 years – is filed and a fine

(See Glass, page 3)

Dazzle Your Customers!

The holidays are behind us. We have celebrated Black History Month with the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade and the annual Black Heritage Festival where Deputy Clarence Fort received the Legacy Award for his contributions over the years as a County employee to improving relationships in our community. Gasparilla and the Super Bowl are also over.

Despite all of the above activities that could have distracted us, we have continued on our journey to make Hillsborough County the best county government in the nation. At the Feb. 2 County Commission meeting, the Board approved the Strategic Plan for Hillsborough County. The plan gives us a foundation to target our resources in the upcoming budget process to meet the Board's vision for our county.

Building on the Board's eight goals, the plan includes a series of objectives

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

**PAT
BEAN**



which are measurable. These objectives will become a part of our discussion during the budget meetings, in the review of our performance, and as a means to demonstrate our accountability. The plan will soon be available on COIN, and I encourage each of you to take a look.

A major element of the Strategic Plan focuses on customer service and taking our delivery of service to our customers to the stellar level. As I reminded the management team at a recent meeting, we need to exhibit the STAR qualities as we interact with our customers (S = Seamless, T = Trustworthy, A = Attentive and R = Resourceful). At the end of the meeting, I challenged each manager to think about what they could do to reinforce those qualities in our organization. I challenge each of you to do the same.

If we all keep the STAR qualities in mind as we come to work each day, we will begin to dazzle our customers. In order to become the best county government in the nation, I need your help.

Let's go out each day and DAZZLE those customers!

County Center Gets Made Over

County Center was never meant for the foot traffic it now sees. In fact, it was built to function as a multi-tenant structure leasing office space to a wide variety of private businesses.

It's one of the many facts people don't remember about this building, Don Harwig, who is the director of Real Estate's Facilities Management Division recently reported. The building's systems have been modified to accommodate the activities associated with single-use operation.

For more than a decade, the building has been home to the Board of County Commissioners and most of the Constitutional offices, accounting for several thousand visitors and more than 1,700 employees that enter and exit it on a daily basis.

Access to the public makes it a very high profile structure, explained Harwig, and his department is constantly faced with making changes to meet the needs of employees and visitors.

One notable project is this year's replacement of the revolving doors on both sides of the lobby with recessed



Sliding doors will soon replace this revolving glass entry, allowing for easier access.

automatic sliding doors similar to those seen at the Edgecomb Courthouse. The present doors have been irreparably damaged because of the high volume of daily wear and tear.

Every effort is made to keep County Center as a high quality Class A building. A yearly special fund is set aside for its upkeep. It is just one of 302 County buildings and parking structures being maintained daily by the Facilities Management Division's 119 employees.

Councils Elect Officers

Sharing the concerns of ethnic and minority employees to bring about positive change is the mission of the County Administrator's African American/Hispanic Employees Communication Councils, which chose 2005-2006 new employee representatives recently.

The Council, composed of African-American and Hispanic employees, is an appendage of a larger employee communications body, the Employee Communication Council, created to promote listening among all levels of government.

Newly-elected officers for the Employee Communication Council include Public Works' Verneka Rhodes, president; Children's Services' Mary Towler, vice-president; and Health & Social Services' Kristi Menendez, secretary. The Councils are facilitated by Human Resources, which provides annual meeting schedules, coordination assistance and follows up on issues and recommendations.

Eligible members must have at least six months tenure and be classified.

Charter Review Board Convenes

Members of the newly-appointed 2005-2006 Charter Review Board held their first meeting last month. The Board convenes every five years, as required by Hillsborough County's Home Rule Charter, to conduct a comprehensive study of all phases of county government.

Every County Commissioner appoints two members from their district, and those members elect a chairman. This year's chair is former County Commissioner Jan Platt, who, along with Hung Mai, was appointed by Chairman Jim Norman. Other members include Keith Hall, appointed by Vice-Chair Ken Hagan; Mitch Thrower and David Storck, appointed by Commissioner Brian Blair; Jim Porter, appointed by Commissioner Kathy Castor; Gerald White and Sharon Miller, appointed by Commissioner Thomas Scott; A.J.

Mandt and Jim Beeler, appointed by Commissioner Mark Sharpe; and Janet Wilson and Terry Ballard, appointed by Commissioner Ronda Storms.

If they wish, Charter Review Board members may propose changes to the charter, which then would go to the voters for approval during the next general election in November 2006. The charter allows Board members to work up to a full year, with regularly held meetings and public hearings televised by HTV22 – cable channel 22.

The Home Rule Charter was approved by voters in a countywide referendum in September 1983. It specifies how local government will be organized, with a division between the legislative branch – the Board of County Commissioners – and the executive branch – the County Administrator.

GLASS

(From Page 1)

will continue to accrue daily until the violation is fixed.

Currently, more than \$31 million worth of fines are on the books. Last year, the department collected approximately \$484,000 in paid fines.

In addition, Citizen Board Support also processes code violation cases (of which there were 625 last year) for a number of quasi-judicial boards, handles the preparation of meeting agendas for the various boards; updates various ordinances; and maintains current appointments to the boards. They also post legal notices of code violations and record official documents with the appropriate agencies.

Matches has managed the staff of three since becoming manager of Citizen Board Support in 1991. The section was created to fill a void left by the Clerk of the Circuit Court, which does not support the Code Enforce-

ment Board, Code Enforcement Special Master, Nuisance Abatement Board, Land Use Appeal Board, Natural Resources & Landscaping Appeals Board or the Board of Sign Appeals.

Each Board, with the exception of the Special Master, includes seven citizens appointed by the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners. Citizen Board Support serves as the main contact for all all these boards because individual contact with them by citizens is prohibited by law.



It doesn't happen often, but a citizen in violation of a fine sent roses to Karen Matches thanking her for the courteous service.

Codes Enforcement because so much of what we do is tied to violations of codes," said Matches. "We've actually been a division of the Communications Department for the past seven years, because legally, we can't work with any department that issues citations or collects fines in an effort to remain unbiased and stand up to legal scrutiny."

Consumer Protection Launches New Initiative

The Consumer Protection Agency has launched an initiative to teach teens about consumer fraud issues and reducing their risk of becoming victims of white collar crime.

"This is prevention at its core," said Debbie Brown, community education coordinator. "It's never too early to educate teens about the information needed before entering the adult financial world."

The agency is providing this program as part of the local SERVE (School Enrichment Resource Volunteer in Education) Speaker's Bureau.

Topics covered include Cyber Crime, Identity Theft, Credit Ratings, Lease Agreements and more.

The agency already has a well-established Community Education Program targeting Hillsborough County's large senior and adult population. Now, high school students will benefit also.

More than 500 students from eight area high schools participate in the program.

Interested teachers can call SERVE's Speakers Bureau at 872-5254 to schedule a presentation.

For general information, call 903-3424.

PRS

(From Page 1)

903-3335. To report complaints involving criminal behavior and serious violations of County policy or Civil Service Rules, contact Robert Sheehan, PRS chief investigator, at 903-3337. In addition to the above ways for contacting PRS, employees now have access to a PRS telephone hotline for reporting a complaint.

**PROFESSIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY
HOTLINE
903-3449
CALL TODAY!**

GOOD NEWS —

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The Winners Are In

Judging in Hillsborough County's Annual Anna M. Stair Employee's Fine Art and Crafts Exhibition is complete. The amateur art competition, which was held last month, highlights employee entries in fine arts, two- and three-



dimensional art and crafts.

Sylvie Camps (left), senior personnel as-

sistant with the public library, won *Best of Show* for her artistic creation of a sculptural Peyote beadwork necklace. Other winners included Pamela McCain of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, 1st Place in painting; Joel Jackson of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, 2nd Place in photography; and Jim Chastain of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, 3rd Place for wood-work.

Placing in the Honorable Mention category were: Shirley Ballengee, Aging Services; Herm Greenberg, Social Services; and Nydia (Margie) Sosa, Clerk of the Circuit Court-Accounting.

Aide Appointment Announced

Commissioner Thomas Scott recently appointed Sylvester "Syl"



Farrell as a District 3 Commissioner's Aide. The selection marks a return to Hillsborough County government for Farrell who previously held the position of Public Relations Represent-

tative and Host-Producer of *Weekly Review*, a public affairs program on HTV22, the County's cable station. Farrell started on Feb. 21.

Local Teen Hits the National Stage

Betty Sierra always encouraged her granddaughter Jessica to reach for the stars. And now she's doing just that and even becoming one in the process on Fox's hit show *American Idol*.

These days, Betty, an employee in Hillsborough County's Parks and Recreation Department, can be found in front of the television every Monday through Wednesday night cheering Jessica on during the show's live telecast.

Jessica, who last year appeared on the nationally syndicated television show, *Star Search*, is one of the remaining finalists vying for the coveted title.



Before heading to Hollywood, Jessica Sierra honed her vocal skills at events like Hillsborough County's *America United* program, held in Chillura Park on Sept. 11, 2002, to honor victims of the 9/11 attacks.

Time Can Save Money, Too

Last year, Hillsborough County saved approximately \$40,701,082 in labor to provide needed services to citizens. How? By utilizing the time, energy and talent of the citizens who volunteer for the County every single day.

Nearly 20 Hillsborough County departments reported a record 19,682 hours of volunteer time in 2004.

"By utilizing volunteers, the County can save a significant amount of money," said Laura Molina, Personnel Analyst. "There are citizens of the

County who are giving back to the community. We wouldn't be able to provide the quality services we do if it weren't for our many volunteers."

The value of volunteer time given to charitable organizations has climbed to \$16.54 per hour, up from \$15.39 in 2000. The hourly value is based on the average hourly earnings for private nonagricultural workers as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The figure is then increased by 12% to estimate fringe benefits.

LETTERS

► Congratulations to Principal Planner Charner Reese of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, who was recognized as 2004 Planner of the Year by the Suncoast Section of the American Planning Association, Florida Chapter. In addition, both Rosalyn McIntosh and Diane Page have received their professional designations from the Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council as Certified Professional Public Buyers.

► Andrew J. Tyrell was so impressed with the Upper Tampa Bay Trail, he had this to say: "I had the opportunity to ride the Upper

Tampa Bay Trail. I found the trail scenic, very aesthetically pleasing, not to mention the varying grades and changes in features and landscaping. A nice touch was added with the use of bridges and underpasses. Thank you for a job well done.

► African American Liaison Joyce Russell sent this e-mail to LaQuinda Brewington in the Communications Department: "I want you to know how much I appreciate the new look of NewsLine. The new layout with its mix of color, pictures and topic outline make you

(See Letters, page 5)

LETTERS

(From Page 4)

want to read it. Also, the titles of individual articles catch your attention and the writing is crisp and picturesque. As you read the articles, not only are you informed, but you are “entertained” by the colorful phrases. I look forward to getting the NewsLine and I read it from cover to cover.”

- ▶ Kemly Jimenez Green, Comm. Srvc. Prog. Coordinator in Housing and Community Code Enforcement passed on a letter of thanks from Michael Rowicki, executive planner with the Greater Miami Neighborhoods, Inc. (Tampa Office), for the department’s help in securing \$3,484,000 of funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funding will pay for the development and construction of Hibiscus Park Apartments, a new 42-unit affordable rental housing community to serve very low-income elderly in Hillsborough County.
- ▶ Leo Judge and some friends became disoriented while hiking through Aldermans' Fords Park. As they tried to make their way back to the parking lot before dark, a Ranger named Jonathan came along to lead them out to safety. According to Judge, “We saw some lights on the trail up ahead. It was Jonathan coming out to look for us. Were we happy to see him! He hauled us back to the parking lot and provided a great end to our (not to be repeated) adventure/story.”
- ▶ County Administrator Pat Bean received this e-mail from Joseph Testa: “Mrs. Bean, I would like to commend the following Animal Services employees: Susan Saylor, Warren Wallace, Alex Lopez, Loretta McGee, Cheryl Dickey and Bill Armstrong, for the professional treatment they gave me when I recently adopted a dog, “Sugar,” who was in very bad shape with mange and worms. These individuals were very pleasant and made the adoption process possible.
- ▶ Joe Blais, president of the Cumberland Manor HOA called to say how much he and other homeowners appreciate the help they have received from members of Hillsborough County’s staff, including Shelley Blood for the research and assistance provided by the Neighborhood Relations Office; Jason Mickel, with the Adopt-a-Pond Program, for his “can-do” attitude and volunteerism; Jim McCullough in Public Works, for staying in touch about work on a bridge project for Rocky Creek, and Trenicha Hart & Angela Snyder in Animal Services, for arranging informative and helpful presentations to residents.
- ▶ “(The purpose of) this e-mail is to let the director and staff of the Purchasing Department know about the great customer service that Belinda McKnight is providing. During our telephone conversation, Ms. McKnight went to great lengths to ensure that all my questions were answered and that I was completely satisfied with the information. Thank you, Belinda!” — Daniel Zink
- ▶ Commissioner Brian Blair sent this note to Mike Kelly in Real Estate: “Thank you again for all your hard work and assistance regarding your report of the co-location of County facilities. Since taking office, I have been very impressed with the thoroughness and professionalism of the majority of our County staff, and you are no exception. Please extend my appreciation to any other staff involved in this report.”
- ▶ Brandon’s Joe Elam sent a letter to Michael McCarthy commending Robert Wood. He said, “I commute east and westbound on Hillsborough Ave. between U.S. 301 and 56th Street. (Because of traffic), it takes 15-30 minutes to travel a short distance. I spoke to Mr. Wood about adjusting the traffic flow. He made changes and now traffic flows wonderfully during rush hour! It was a great experience to interact with a county employee empowered to make a positive change.”

BRIEFS

(From Page 1)

Cleaning up the County

More than 1,319 volunteers collected 107,794 pounds of trash in Hillsborough County in 2004. Volunteers are needed again for the Great American Cleanup on April 16. The event is part of a national effort to spruce up communities. For details, visit www.khcbonline.org or call 960-5121.

Citizen Boards Applications Sought

Residents interested in an appointment to a citizen advisory board or council have until March 24 to submit an application. For available positions, call 272-5632 or visit the web site at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/bocc/boardscouncils/home.cfm. All posts are voluntary and members serve without compensation. Applications are online and in the Commissioners’ reception area on the second floor of County Center.

Sick Leave Bank Open Enrollment

Through March 31, eligible employees are free to enroll in the County’s Sick Leave Bank. Participants must meet some minimum requirements, such as working at least 20 hours per week, having one year of continuous service and an accrual balance of at least eight days or 64 hours of sick leave. Only those employees who remain in the “old” sick leave plan, or “Plan A”, are eligible for membership. Current members do not need to apply. For more information, contact Laura Molina at 272-6216. Or, simply fill out a Sick Leave Bank Program Application for Membership and forward to Human Resources on the 17th floor of County Center no later than 5:00 p.m. Thursday, March 31.

CLASSIFIED

MERCHANDISE

Body By Jake **Bun & Thigh Rocker**, like new, books and video included. \$100. Call 681-2791 after 5p.m.

20' Southwest enclosed **cargo trailer**, 3 months old, tandem axles with brakes, lockable side door and rear ramp. \$4,700. Call 618-4393.

2000 **Crest Superfish**, 2000 **Mercury 60 HP Big Foot Motor** and Trolling Motor, 2 gas tanks & reserve, depth finder, radio, cover, life jackets and more. Excellent condition. \$10,800 OBO. Call 949-4454.

George Foreman Grill w/ stand, \$25; **Sofa Bed Convertible King**, \$25; **Ping Pong Table** regulation size, \$25; **Coffee Table**, brown, \$5; **computer chair**, \$15. Call 961-5244.

GE XBass headphone, one pair w/ built-in, inline woofer for powerful, vibrating bass and volume control for intense, dynamic audio. \$20. Call 892-0563.

4-port USB hub w/ 20" connection cable, USB compliant. \$15. Call 892-0563.

Couch & love seat, almost new, green color; **glass coffee table**; **glass end table w/ lamp**; beautiful **oval rug**. \$975. Call 240-2891.

Westinghouse cream **4-burner electric range stove**, good condition, \$175; **87" sofa**, rose/green leaf pattern w/ matching pillows, \$200. Call 872-6119.

Cleveland TA5 **golf irons**, 3 thru SW, great condition, \$200 OBO. Call 760-6978.

Wedding dress w/ veil, Cinderella style, off-the-shoulders. Good price in excellent condition. \$100. Call 657-3915.

Dining room table, green wrought iron w/ heavy beveled glass top. Seats 8. \$400 OBO. Call 645-9786.

Two **Nextel phones**, i730 w/ chargers and clips, hands-free attachment for one phone, good condition w/ exception of one w/ missing #s. \$100. Call 727-536-8580.

Antique **8mm projector**, 1930-1940's era, needs a bulb. \$250 OBO. Call 727-2269.

4 silver **dining chairs** w/ upholstered seats and off-white stone pedestal. Sold together for \$250 or separate for \$200/chairs & \$100 pedestal, 2 matching bar stools. Call 318-1744.

Wood **frame futon** w/ extra thick queen mattress, wood dining table/ 4 chairs, new, \$300 OBO for all three. Call 885-9717.

King pillowtop mattress, box spring (2 twin) and frame, new in plastic, corner slightly dirty. \$500. Call 685-5399.

AUTOMOTIVE

2001 **Camaro SS**, 8,000 miles, Orange Sunset Metallic w/ T-tops, mint condition, 1 owner, 4-speed, 8-speaker, 500 watt monsoon stereo, 5.7 liter 325 HP LS1 engine. \$22,500 OBO. Call 748-2618.

1996 **Mitsubishi Mirage**, good work car or teen's car, 5-speed with great air conditioning, no radio, damaged in accident. \$600 OBO. Call 716-6560.

1988 **Toyota Landcruiser SUV**, part-time 4WD, locking hubs, AT, cold AC, 35,000 miles on rebuilt orig. 6 cyl. motor. \$3,350 OBO. Call 949-8689.

2001 **Mazda Protege 2.0 ES**, 55K, AC, PS, PW, PDL, tilt, spoiler, sunroof, 6-disk CD, dual airbag, 16" rims, MPG 25/30. \$7K OBO or trade for boat & 2K. Call 391-5813.

1993 **Bounder RV**, 28ft., Class A, 44K mi., new brakes & tune-up, generator, stove, 2 TVs, VCR/DVD player, microwave, queen bed, bath w/ shower. Great shape/must see. \$21,500. Call 727-510-3380.

2000 **Toyota Sienna LE** 34 van, 900 mi., \$11,500 OBO. Call 681-2557.

MISCELLANEOUS

1999 **Coleman pop-up trailer**. 12 ft, sleeps 9, 3-way refrigerator, inside/outside stove, air conditioning, clean. \$4,800 OBO. Call 927-0540.

Twin bed w/ box spring and mattress. Also 4 sets of sheets. \$125. Triple dresser w/ mirror & night stand dark wood. \$175 for both. Call 748-7005.

Two **patio furniture sets** for sale, glass table w/ six chairs, floral rose/gray color set \$100, two-tone strip gray color \$125. Call 889-9890.

Kawasaki 550 SX w/ trailer. Less than 20hrs. of use, \$1,200. Call 601-1089.

2 sectional **sofa**, paisley pattern, great condition, \$300; wood **dining room table w/ 4 chairs**, \$275; 6-piece **bedroom set**, \$450. Call 872-6119.

3-piece furniture set, full-size sleeper sofa, loveseat & matching chair, floral print, good condition. All three for \$200. Call 663-9338.

1997 **Maxum, 19' bow rider**, 190 HP Mercruiser I/O, dual batteries w/ switch, sun deck, swim ladder, in-dash depth finder and more. \$6,750. Call 645-2466.

Split firewood for sale, \$20/ bundle, around 35 pieces, split between 12-20" long. Call 237-2798.

PETS

American bulldogs for sale, double registered ABA & CKC, 5 boys & 5 girls, \$450 & up. Call 763-1884.

REAL ESTATE

1.5 acres, Dover near US Hwy. 92, prime area, high & dry, residential, not deed restricted. \$125K OBO. Call 495-8099 after 5p.m.

Lovely **2 bedroom townhome** in Pasco County for rent. Call 962-0205.

WANTED

Safe, running car for disabled, single mom. Call 293-2318.



NEWSLINE

A monthly newsletter published by the Communications Department for Hillsborough County employees.

Communications Department
County Center, 1st floor
Call 272-5314 and tell us your news.

Hillsborough County Board
of County Commissioners
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