



July 22 Mini-Grant Deadline Approaches

This years Neighborhood mini-grant applications are now being accepted. The total amount available through the grant is \$94,000. The purpose of the program is to strengthen neighborhood associations and the communities they serve. The maximum award to any neighborhood association is \$1,500. This program is co-sponsored by the Hillsborough County Children's Board and the Frank E. Duckwall Foundation within the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay.

Neighborhood Mini-Grant Applications are available on the Office of Neighborhood Relations web page <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/onr/home.html> or by calling the office. Completed applications will be due on July 22, 2005.

Shortly thereafter, the applications will be forwarded to the Grant Review Committee. The committee's evaluation and recommendations are expected to be completed by early September, and forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners in early October for final approval.

For questions, please contact Nancy Rubin at 272-5860, 272-5882 (fax), or e-mail: rubinn@hillsboroughcounty.org, or Shelley Blood at bloods@hillsboroughcounty.org.

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Six Tips for Neighborhood Meetings

1. Give everyone a chance to speak, and keep a list of all the issues they raise.
2. Invite a representative of the town or city government to attend your meeting to tell you what kinds of solutions are already in the works and what kinds of solutions are possible.
3. Ask your neighbors for their suggestions for ways to address the problems in your community.



4. Gather facts! This may be the most important thing you can do.
 - Find out all you can about the issue, from all points of view.
 - Determine who would be affected by a change, so you can plot your strategy accordingly.
 - Find out if there are any programs or funding options to implement your solutions, from your local government or local businesses.
 - Ask for volunteers among your neighbors to do this fact-gathering - get them all involved in the process so they'll have a stake in the outcome.
 - Present all the facts to your neighborhood group, and make sure everyone understands them.
5. Build consensus on a course of action. Write down what you decide to do, and keep track of who will do what.
6. Meet regularly to keep everyone up-to-date on progress.



Office of Neighborhood Relations
Phone: 813-272-5860
Fax: 813-272-5882

SOULD ONR MOVE? LET US KNOW!

Our County Commissioners have a question for Neighborhood Associations. Should the Office of Neighborhood Relations move?

The current options are to move the Office of Neighborhood Relations to County Center or maintain our current location across the street from County Center. It is up to you to decide our future. Please let us know how you feel about the proposal.

You can send your comments and suggestions to ONR at 505 E. Jackson St. Ste. 308, Tampa FL, 33602 or email them to Shelley Blood at bloods@hillsboroughcounty.org.

Your feedback is vital!

Editors Corner

By Tony LaColla
Neighborhood Connections Editor



We've started receiving mini-grant applications in the Office of Neighborhood Relations and are excited to see all of the wonderful projects that your neighborhoods are thinking up. Remember that applications for the 2006 mini-grants are due by July 22 at 5:00 p.m. Absolutely NO exceptions for late applications will be made!

In an effort to make sure as many applications as possible are eligible for consideration by the review committee, we started receiving applications in mid-April of this year. Once an application is received in this office we review it to see if it qualifies for funding. If upon review the application is lacking vital information or does not qualify, we then return it to the association for revision. Those associations that submit their applications early have a distinct advantage since Neighborhood Relations staff is able to give feedback and those submitting ineligible applications will have time to revise their proposals. We urge you to submit mini-grant applications a couple weeks prior to July 22 to ensure the application meets all of the guidelines set forth in the instructions.

In this issue you will find information regarding the 2005 Florida Neighborhoods Conference. If you have never attended a statewide neighborhoods conference now is the time. The conference will be held just up the road in Lakeland, October 20-22. This two day long event is similar to the Hillsborough Neighborhoods Conference, however you will have a chance to network with neighborhood leaders from all over the State of Florida and see what neighborhoods in other cities and counties are working on. The large majority of workshops and tours take place on Friday October 21, so if your schedule is busy try to make it to the Friday session. You will find that, much like the Hillsborough Neighborhoods Conference, the low price and high quality workshops are and outstanding value. If you'd like more information check out the advertisement in this issue or call us at 272-5860. We hope to see you there!

Money WiSe Day Camp for Youth

Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension is piloting a new Money Wise day camp for youth, ages 11-15, to explore the world of money management and credit. The camp will feature hands-on learning experiences, field trips, and a variety of speakers. Topics will include: using a financial institution, saving for the future, credit, car buying, and protecting your identity in the electronic age.

The three-day camp will be held July 20 -22 from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Camp will be held at the Roger P. Stewart Center, 3629 Queen Palm Drive. Transportation to and from field trips, a camp T-shirt, and lunch will be provided. A \$15 registration fee is required by July 15. A registration form is available online at <http://hillsborough4h.ifas.ufl.edu> For more information or a registration packet call 744-5519 x118 or email gmbender@ifas.ufl.edu.

For persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact Georgene Bender at 744-5519 x 119 at least five working days prior to the program so that proper consideration may be given to your request. Funding for the program has been generously provided J.P Morgan Chase Bank.

Household Chemical Disposal & Electronics Collection

Household chemicals are accepted at three facilities: Northwest (9805 Sheldon Road), South County (Powell Road, east off U.S. 41, quarter mile north of Big Bend Road), and Thonotosassa (County Road 579, quarter mile north of Interstate 4--Exit 10). Collections are held monthly on the first, second and third Saturday, alternating between the sites. Materials accepted include paint, solvents, pool chemicals, hobby and craft supplies, lawn and garden chemicals. Many of these materials are recycled or used in maintaining County property. Specially scheduled electronics collections also are held at these facilities. Collections are for residents only -- no chemicals are accepted from commercial interests. Call 272-5680.

WATERING RESTRICTIONS NOW TWICE A WEEK COUNTYWIDE!

Confused when to sprinkle your lawn? Watering restrictions in unincorporated Hillsborough County have changed several times over the last several years – from twice a week, to once a week, to both – depending on whether you lived in the northwest or south-central.

On June 1, watering restrictions returned to a twice-a-week schedule throughout the unincorporated areas. Addresses ending in even numbers may water on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Addresses ending in odd numbers or locations with no address, such as common areas like subdivision entrances, may water on Wednesdays and Sundays. Watering is allowed before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. on the assigned days.

Watering at the wrong time could net you a fine – as much as \$500 and a mandatory court appearance for chronic offenders.

The restrictions apply even to residents and businesses who receive their water from private wells. The only exceptions are reclaimed water users and residents who have received variances issued by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Watering restrictions by address are now available by logging onto Hillsborough County's website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org. Click on the A to Z index, and go to "Water Restrictions." Once there, you'll find the "look up" feature on the left hand side of the page. Follow the instructions to obtain and print a customized schedule of watering days.

Don't have access to the Internet? Of course, you can still use your telephone to call for information about the restrictions. A recorded message can be reached at 275-7094, or call Customer Service at 272-6680.

Hand-watering of plant materials other than grass is allowed at any time, as is the use of a low-volume irrigation system in landscaping beds. Irrigation of new lawns and landscaping is allowed any day within the first 30 days, before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. After the initial 30-day period, watering of new lawns and landscaping is allowed for another 30 days, on alternate days: even addresses on even-numbered dates, and odd addresses on odd-numbered dates. The new planting must cover at least 50 percent of a sprinkler system's irrigation zone in order to water the entire zone. Otherwise, water by hand, or use a manual sprinkler.

Chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizer that are applied to your lawn by a hired professional, can be watered on non-designated days, before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m., as long as a dated chemical advisory marker is placed in the yard. Homeowners who apply the chemicals themselves can water these in only on their designated days.

Until June 1, the south-central region was on a once-a-week schedule to alleviate the stress on the water treatment plant and well fields which serve that area. This spring, the Water Department and Tampa Bay Water completed various construction projects which now connect the area to the regional water supply system.

Among the projects now on line is the county's Highview Booster Station, located at Highview and Wheeler Roads in the Brandon area. About 3 million gallons per day of surface water and desalinated water are being fed from Tampa Bay Water's facilities site to the booster station, where the water receives further treatment and then is pumped into the county's distribution system. Besides increasing the supply, the facility also will increase water pressure in the area.



UPDATE YOUR ASSOCIATION INFORMATION!

- **Did this newsletter come to the wrong address for your association?**
- **Has there been a change in board leadership in the past year?**
- **Have you created an association website or now have new association email address?**
- **Has your management company changed?**

If you answered yes to any of these questions or have had any other changes it's time to update your information with our office. Easily change your information by calling us at 272-5860 or go directly to our website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/onr/assnform/

The Good News About Drywood Termites

By Lisa Leslie



Have you been seeing many houses being tented for drywood termites lately? This is an indication that it is drywood termite swarming season. The typical season lasts from April to August. According to local certified pest control operator Michael Baric, “May through July are the peak months and so far this has been a “banner year”

for drywoods in the Tampa Bay area.”

Drywood termites emerge from their colonies and swarm during daylight hours and are attracted to light. The purpose of their flight is to find a mate and start a new colony. Their wings break off during this mating flight. Since they are attracted to light, their discarded wings are often found on window sills or near sliding glass doors.

In addition to wings another sign of infestation are pellets. Drywoods excrete very small pellets of partially digested wood (they look like tiny wood shavings). They push these pellets out through “pop-out” holes they make in the wood. An experienced pest control operator can usually identify these pop-out holes.

If you spot pop-out holes in the ceiling you can use duct tape to determine whether there are live termites present. Put a piece of duct tape over the hole and a piece of white paper on the floor underneath. If there are live termites present, they will eat a small hole through the tape and you will find pellets on the paper.

The good news about drywood termites is that they multiply at a much slower rate than subterranean termites. In most situations it may take several years before a colony can increase to a size that will have enough “mouths” to cause significant damage to your house. This means that if you have an infestation of drywoods, you usually have time to weigh your options before deciding how to control the termites.

The two common methods used to control drywood treatments are fumigation (tenting) or localized treatment. Drywood termites infest dry wood and unlike subterranean termites do not need direct contact with soil or water. For this reason, bait systems, often useful for subterranean control, will not work for drywoods.

Fumigation involves sealing up the house with a tent and pumping in a gas. A typical brand name of the used gas is Vikane. In order for tenting to be effective: 1) the tent must form a tight seal around your house and 2) the correct volume of gas must be pumped into the house. If either of these conditions are not accomplished, you will probably not kill the colony.

Localized treatment involves injecting a termiticide directly into the termites galleries. Localized treatments can work in situations where the drywoods have not extensively infested the house. This type of treatment can be convenient because you will not have to move out of the house.

If you are building a house you might want to consider pre-treating the bare wood with borates to resist termites. Wood treatment with borates can be applied as a pressure treatment or by a spray or foam application. Wood treated with borates must be protected from rain and water because the borate products leach out in high moisture situations. Pre-treating wood can be an especially good idea if your house will be in the framing season during drywood swarming season.

Sources:

Koehler, P.G., UF/IFAS, *Non-Subterranean Termites*

Baric, Michael, CPO, Impact Pest Management



UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

SEND ONR YOUR STORIES!

Every year Hillsborough County neighborhood, civic, and crime watch associations are busy working to improve their communities. If your association or group has what you believe to be a newsworthy story, we'd like to publish it.

Send your story, with photographs, to Tony LaColla at lacollaa@hillsboroughcounty.org or call him at 307-3564 for more information. Please keep article to no more than 1,000 words and please submit everything in digital format if possible.

We would love to put your association in the **Spotlight** and give it the attention it deserves.

Your Neighborhood Association Oughta Be In Pictures

Moving pictures. With sound. Live. On local television. So everyone will know what your group has been doing, what its plans for the future are and how neighbors and others can help.

Tampa Bay Community Network [TBCN], which manages Hillsborough County's public access cable television Channel 20, wants to air a weekly "Neighborhood News" TV series in Hillsborough County. They hope all the neighborhoods in our County will participate in producing such a program, perhaps rotating crewing responsibilities or the neighborhood areas to be featured on each show. "Neighborhood News" will keep residents better informed about neighborhood events and meetings and also encourage everyone to participate in solving their own neighborhood challenges.

TBCN will provide free TV production training classes, necessary on-location equipment, studio and edit facilities to Hillsborough County residents. For more information, call 254-1687.

All you have to do is pull together a group of neighbors who would like to learn video production skills and/or become on-air, behind-the-scenes or production crew talent. Next thing you know your neighborhood association will be in pictures.

Moving pictures. With sound. Live. On local cable Channel 20.

Call TBCN Outreach Coordinator Pam Garron at 254-1687 extension 15 to get started.

Fed up with the norm? Why not try something new?

The Home League



*A Women's Program
Designed With
You In Mind*

The Home League, sponsored by the Salvation Army, is an international fellowship of women. Its purpose is to provide a program of activities to aid in the attainment of a fulfilled personal and family life, and thus contribute to the betterment of society.

Come join your local Home League in Tampa. The fun begins every Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. for our Spanish Speaking friends.

No Gimmicks, Just good old fun

For more information, please call (813) - 226 - 0055 ext 402

Crafts

*Covered
Dish Tuesday*

Picnics

Fitness

Fellowship

How You Can Save Gas . . . and Money!



Frustrated about today's high gas prices? Bay Area Commuter Services (BACS) can show you the way to go! With Florida's gas prices higher than summer temperatures, filling your gas tank is costing you more money. However, you can improve your gas mileage and save money with some simple tips (compiled by BACS from various sources nationwide):

- **Use the right octane.** The recommended gasoline for most cars is regular octane.
- **Pump early in the morning or after dark.** The heat of the day causes gas to evaporate.
- **Don't top off the gas tank.** Too much gas will just slosh or seep out.
- **Make sure your gas cap is on correctly.** Gas easily evaporates from the tank if it has an escape.
- **Don't idle, shut it off.** If the wait is longer than 30 seconds, starting up your car again uses less gasoline than leaving it running.
- **Get regular check-ups.** A well-tuned engine burns less gas.
 - a. **Air filter** – A dirty air filter can allow loose dirt or sand to enter the carburetor causing the engine to run roughly, reducing gas mileage.
 - b. **Oil change** – Regular oil changes will ensure proper performance and extend the life of your vehicle.
 - c. **Battery check** – With every oil change, make sure the battery is running properly.
 - d. **Keep the tires (and spare) inflated properly.** Under-inflated tires waste fuel and wear out the tire tread. Also, check tires regularly for alignment and balance.
 - e. **No junk in your trunk.** The more weight you carry, the more fuel you waste!
 - f. **Don't rev the engine.** It just wastes gas and annoys your neighbors.
 - g. **Reduce your speed.** The faster you drive, the more gas you use.
 - h. **Have your windows up** while driving on the freeway. It reduces drag by 12 percent . . . however, lower your windows when driving in-town and turn off your AC to reduce fuel consumption.
 - i. **Trip chain.** Combining errands into one trip and taking the most efficient route will save time and money.
 - j. **Drive during non-peak times.** Gas and time are wasted in traffic congestion.
- **And the most important fuel/money savings tip of all . . . SHARE THE RIDE!** Carpool, vanpool, take the bus (or even walk, bike, or telecommute) . . . you'll cut your costs dramatically! Remember, sharing the ride is not only economical; it's safer and more fun!

These simple tips can help keep money in your pocket and gas in your tank. For more information on BACS' programs and services, call **800-998-RIDE** or visit BACS online at www.tampabayrideshare.org

BACS is the regional non-profit commuter assistance program agency serving West Central Florida and funded by the Florida Department of Transportation. BACS' goal is to relieve traffic congestion by helping commuters use options other than driving alone.

BE A FRIEND, BE A VOLUNTEER

The Friends of the Library of Tampa-Hillsborough County, Inc. are looking for volunteers to run their used bookstore, Grover's Corners, at the John F. Germany Public Library, 900 Ashley Drive in downtown Tampa. Have fun interacting with fellow book lovers while helping the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System. Morning, afternoon, evening and weekend hours are available; the flexible schedule is perfect for retirees, students looking for volunteer hours, teachers and even professionals looking for a break from day-to-day routines.

Bookstore proceeds benefit the Friends of the Library in their effort to enhance the Library System's collections and programs. Many of the programs offered by the Library System would not be possible without the assistance of the Friends. For more information about volunteering or becoming a member of the Friends, please call 273-3616.



2005 Drug Awareness Walk

Come and Join the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Town N' Country Communities, Neighbors and Friends in the 2005 Drug Walk!

July 28, 2005

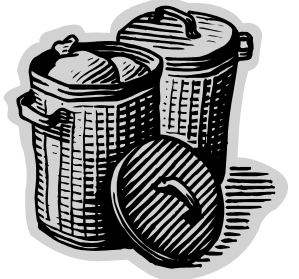
Town N' Country Recreation Center
(Hanna Ave. and Hanley Rd.)
Walk Will Begin at 5 PM Sharp

For more information contact Tony LaColla with the Office of Neighborhood Relations at 307-3564.

Invite the Solid Waste Department to your Neighborhood Meeting!

The Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) is available to speak and attend neighborhood and homeowner association meetings and events.

With proper notice the SWMD can make the necessary arrangements to have staff available to make brief presentations and answer questions in order to educate and help your association members understand SWMD programs and services.



The SWMD would love to attend your neighborhood meetings, events and exhibitions. To schedule a visit from the Solid Waste Management Department please contact James Ransom at 276-2938 or email ransomej@hillsboroughcounty.org



2005 Florida Neighborhoods Conference Draws Near!

Lakeland, Florida October 20-22

The City of Lakeland will be hosting the Florida Neighborhoods Conference on October 20 – 22, 2005. The theme this year is "Neighborhoods . . . Where We Live, Work and Play". We anticipate more than 1,200 neighborhood leaders from across the state will attend this 3 day conference committed to educating and training residents. This conference provides an opportunity for participants to share and learn ways to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods through workshops, neighborhood tours, speakers, and networking. Registration will begin early in the summer. Please check the website <http://www.lakelandgov.net/> for information and registration materials. For additional information please contact Lynn.Simpkins@lakelandgov.net or contact the Hillsborough County Office of Neighborhood Relations at 272-5860.

The Hillsborough County Office of Neighborhood Relations will be offering a limited number of conference scholarships (includes conference registration only). Those residents, because of an economic hardship, who could not otherwise attend, please contact us for more information.

URBAN TREES AND THE BAY

By Rob Northrup, County Forester

The trees in our backyards and open areas create a soothing diversity of color and form in our otherwise angular and reflective urban environment. They sway and rustle in the wind, provide a gymnasium for the neighborhood squirrels and children. They often have sentimental value when we remember how and when they were planted, or the family events that occurred in and around them. All of these values, there are many more, reflect the influence trees can and do have on our personal lives. These same trees also play an important role in the restoration and conservation of the Tampa Bay estuary.

Nitrogen has been identified as a primary pollutant in the bay. It's presence in an overabundance sets off a series of changes in the bay's biological community that leads to the loss of under water grasses, affecting the bay's ability to support living organisms. Currently the two principle sources of excess nitrogen reaching the bay are storm water runoff, and atmospheric deposition. The trees in our yards and along road ways influence both volume of storm water runoff, and quality of the air.

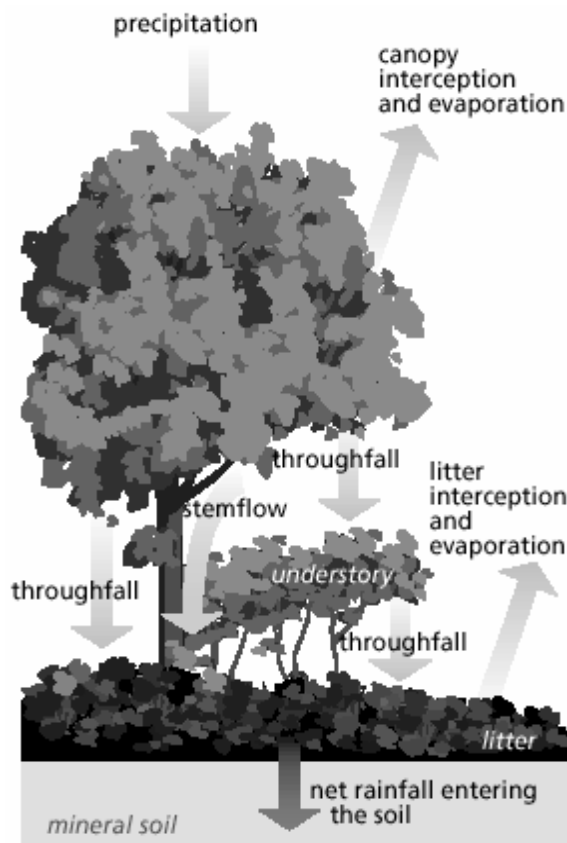
Trees reduce the volume of storm water runoff through the interception of rainfall by leaves, twigs, branches, and trunk allowing some of the rain water to evaporate back into the atmosphere, while enhancing soil infiltration by reducing the speed of water flow. Studies have demonstrated that increasing tree cover area by 5% in a community leads to an approximately 2% reduction in storm water runoff. A single mature deciduous tree can intercept between 500 and 760 gallons of water per year, depending upon species and rainfall characteristics. Using low maintenance or native trees enhances the pollutant mediation effects by reducing the need for the use of fertilizers and pesticides around the home. Reducing storm water runoff not only decreases flooding, and the quantity of pollutants washed from our lawns, streets, and parking lots into

the bay, but it is economically viable.

The national non-profit organization American Forests has conducted more than 20 studies of urban tree values in cities across the United States. One such study analyzed the Baltimore-Washington area and estimated a decline in the amount of tree cover from 51% to 37% between 1973 and 1997. The loss in urban tree cover produced an estimated 19% increase in storm water runoff (American Forests 1999). The cost of constructing storm water treatment practices to intercept this runoff was estimated at \$1.08 billion.

It is estimated that 24% of the nitrogen entering the bay is coming directly from the atmosphere. Research from the U.S. Forest Service and Lancaster University in England has established that trees can remove a number of pollutants, including nitrogen dioxide, from the atmosphere. Other pollutants, associated with human health problems, are also removed from the air including sulfur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. A single mature tree has been estimated to remove up to 10 pounds of air pollutants per year. The lost urban tree cover, mentioned in the American Forests urban forest values study for the Baltimore-Washington DC area, would have removed about 9.3 million pounds of pollutants from the atmosphere annually, at a value of approximately \$24 million a year. These values are further enhanced by on site reduction in temperatures up to 20°F, lowering nitrogen oxide pollutant emissions associated with energy consumption and production needed for air conditioning. According to Dr. Greg McPherson, Center for Urban Forest Research strategically planting two trees around your home could reduce your energy bill by 25%, when the trees mature (15 Years).

The Chesapeake Bay Program, the United States' largest estuary restoration project, has specifically



Continued on page 10



HEAR YE, HEAR YE!!!!

The Corporate Training Center @ Hillsborough Community College (TCTC @ HCC)

is now offering

“Robert’s Rules of Order,” Parliamentary Procedure Training

The value and purpose of “Robert’s Rules of Order” is to provide your Neighborhood Association:

- Organizational Effectiveness**
- Meeting Efficiency**
- Mutual Respect**
- Transferable Skills**
- Safeguards Individual Rights**
- Creates a Spirit of Harmony**

“Robert’s Rules of Order” is a one, half-day session presented by local, professional parliamentarians delivered at your location or our beautiful, Davis Islands waterfront location.

The cost is \$55 per person. A minimum of 16 people must register to make a class. If you are interested in this training for yourself or your Board members, please contact the Office of Neighborhood Relations to get on the list.

Call (813) 272-5860 for more information!

Urban Trees*continued from page 8*

identified urban trees as important natural features that promote the program's restoration goals. In 2003 the Chesapeake Executive Council introduced a new goal for communities to increase their urban tree cover. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program are supporting new technologies that incorporate trees into water and air pollution control, and funding pilot projects to demonstrate their practical applications.

While your trees play a considerable role in maintaining the health of the bay and metropolitan region, they are also adding economic value to your home and community. Research has demonstrated the property values increase from 5 to 19% with trees. Retail and commercial businesses benefit from the positive environment that attracts and welcomes customers. One survey in Georgia found that 74% of potential patrons preferred shops with trees and landscaping, and that these customers were willing to pay 12% more for the products they purchased.

Planting and maintaining trees is one of the many positive ways to participate in the restoration of the Tampa Bay Estuary (see TBEP website, <http://www.tbep.org/>). The reduction in storm water runoff and filtering of the atmosphere by trees can lead to reduced levels of nitrogen and other pollutants entering the bay, while the homes and communities they enhance benefit from increased economic viability, and social well being.

Rob Northrop
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Urban and Community Forester
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northrop@ifas.ufl.edu

Charter Review Board Update

The Hillsborough County Charter Review Board will take public comments from Neighborhood, Civic, and Homeowner Associations August 8, 6:00 P.M. Meetings are held in the Commission Boardroom on the second floor of County Center, 602 E. Kennedy Blvd.

For more information contact Shelley Blood at 272-5860 or email bloods@hillsboroughcounty.org.

Lonnie Lea Napier Good Neighbor Nominations

Lonnie Lea Napier Good Neighbor nominations are accepted continuously throughout the year. The award is meant to recognize those good neighbors who help simply because help is needed – individuals who demonstrate the spirit shown by Lonnie Lea Napier. All residents of Hillsborough County are eligible to nominate and be nominated. The nominee must demonstrate an on-going spirit of compassion and helpfulness to his/her neighbors. For more information call David Ash at 272-5843 or visit <http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/onr/awardnom/awardnominationform.cfm> to make a nomination.

Consumer Protection, Tax Collector Urge Taxpayers to be Wary

Hillsborough County Tax Collector Doug Belden is urging residents to be wary of a direct mail solicitation in which taxpayers are urged to refinance their home to pay delinquent taxes.

The problem, said Belden, is many of the taxes are not delinquent and in many instances, there is no need for the taxpayer to take any action.

The notices were sent to Hillsborough County taxpayers earlier this week by a mortgage company offering refinancing and loan consolidation. The letter states the taxpayer is delinquent in their property tax payments and offers a variety of financing options to pay the bill.

It is unclear how many solicitations went out, Belden said, but it appears to be a large number. The Tax Collector's Office received 150 calls within 10 hours, Belden said.

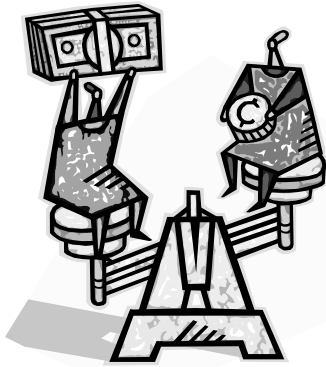
It is not clear whether the solicitations are illegal - the case has been referred to the proper authorities - but they are misleading. One part of the solicitation uses the Tax Collector's name and address, giving the letter an official appearance.

"I want to assure the taxpayers we are no way involved in this," Belden said. "We do not endorse any mortgage or loan companies and we urge taxpayers to investigate closely before taking any action."

Belden said if taxpayers are unsure whether their taxes are paid, they could look their tax bills up online at www.hillstax.org. Just click on the link that says "Property Tax Search" and follow the directions. They can also call the office at 813-635-5200.

For more information, please contact Preston Trigg, Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office, at 918-6980.

County Administrator's Recommended Budget Online



Hillsborough County Administrator Pat Bean presented her recommended budget on Wednesday for the county government for fiscal years 2006-2007 to the County Commission. This budget, which totals \$3.4 billion for FY 06 and \$3.5 billion for FY07, is available for online

viewing on the county's website.

The biennial budget includes the cost of operations for all of the departments under the County Administrator's Office, such as Aging Services and Public Works, plus the Constitutional Offices, such as the Sheriff's Office and the Tax Collector. In addition, the budget includes \$500 million in funding for capital projects, such as the construction of new libraries and road improvements, and a total of \$400 million in debt requirements.

New in this recommended budget is a series of efficiencies recommended by each department which would save a total of \$17 million if they were all implemented. Another addition to the budget document are flags that identify when budget items are fulfilling a goal of the county's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan identifies the key priorities of the County Commission, such as improving transportation in the county.

The County Commission will hold a series of workshops on the budget over the next few months to review the budget and suggest changes. Three more public hearings will take place at 6 p.m. on July 21, Sept. 8 and Sept. 22, before the Board takes a final vote to approve the budget. The meetings will be held in County Center, 2nd Floor Boardroom, 601 E. Kennedy Blvd., downtown Tampa. The workshops and hearings also will be televised live on HTV22, the county government's cable station. The budget will become effective on Oct. 1, 2005.

The entire budget document is available on the county website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org. From the home page, click on "County Budget" button on the right-hand side of the page, then select "Recommended FY06-07 Biennial Budget" in the left-hand list of links

Annual County Water Quality Report On Its Way To Customers

Hillsborough County's annual water quality report is in the mail.

The report, for analyses performed in 2004, is filled with interesting information about where the drinking water supplied to county water customers comes from, what's in it and how safe it is. The report also contains important telephone numbers for customers interested in finding out more about their water quality.

Separate versions of the publication were prepared for seven of the Water Department's potable water systems: Northwest, South-Central, Seaboard, Carrollwood, Valrico Hills, Crystal Lakes and Sun City Utilities. They're being mailed to 136,500 customers.

If you don't get a water bill directly from the Hillsborough County Water Department, and you would like to get a copy of the 2004 Water Quality Report, call Customer Service at 272-6680 and ask that a copy be mailed to you. Copies also are available at the department's Customer Service Centers, located in Brandon at the Brandon Crossings Shopping Center at Falkenburg Road and State Road 60, and in northwest Hillsborough County at the Town Center Shopping Center, 4802 Gunn Highway. The reports also will be available in many public libraries beginning next week.

Published by Office of Neighborhood Relations

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If this mailing information is incorrect please contact ONR immediately at 272-5860.

Serving Neighborhoods throughout Hillsborough County!

**Don't Forget About the other ONR
Mini-Grant Programs**

Applications from associations in the *unincorporated areas of the county* are being accepted on a continuous basis for the following mini-grant programs until funding is exhausted:

**Neighborhood Cleanup Grants
Tree Planting Grants
Low Volume Irrigation Grants**

Each of the grants above offers a maximum award of \$2,500 per year per association.

For more information call 272-5860 or visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/onr.

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