



Zephyrhills Depot Museum

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July 20, 2017

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Taxiway B at Zephyrhills Municipal Airport will benefit from a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Additional lighting is also included in the rehabilitation plan. *File Photo*

A \$2M Boost For Airport

Another Grant For Improvements Announced

by **Max Zimmerman**

Money for improvements continues to arrive at Zephyrhills Municipal Airport with the most recent acquisition being a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The announcement came late last week from the office of U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12).

The grant money will go toward the rehabilitation of Taxiway B and for additional lighting.

The project has been in the works for

the past two years according to Airport Manager Nathan Coleman.

"I give credit to our engineers, AVCON Engineering and AID (American Infrastructure Development), the FDOT

Airport • Continued on Page 3A

Hospital CEO Promoted

Randy Surber Heading To Sebring Soon

by **Keri McAlpine**

After almost four years and countless projects and additions to Florida Hospital Zephyrhills, CEO Randy Surber has been named CEO for another Adventist Health System medical center based in Sebring.

Within the next couple of months, Surber will transition from his current position to take over Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center, about 75 miles from Zephyrhills. His new responsibility includes three hospital campuses serving Sebring, Lake Placid and Wauchula.

Surber will take over day-to-day operations once a new CEO for FHZ has been appointed and transitions into the role. There is no set date yet, he said, but he anticipates the transition will take place within a couple of months.

Surber will be filling the Sebring position currently occupied by Bruce



Randy Surber

Surber • Continued on Page 6A



A new house rises on a lot on Ninth Street that previously had \$14,000 in code enforcement fines and fees levied against it. The liens were waived under a new program implemented in June by the Community Redevelopment Agency. *Photo by Chris Drews*

City Will Benefit From Lien Waiver Program

Improved Properties Would Help Neighborhoods, Too

by **Joe Potter**

Until recently, city leaders lacked the necessary tools to improve undervalued properties that are vacant or dilapidated so their tax values could be increased.

That changed in June when the Zephyrhills City Council approved a lien waiver program, according to Gail Hamilton, Community Redevelopment Agency director.

The program addresses about a dozen properties the city has been maintaining during the past 11 years because their owners have abandoned them. Code enforcement has been mowing and trimming the properties and assessing fees and fines while

Waiver • Continued on Page 6A

Capping Off A Show Of Love Youth Gets Wheelchair Thanks To SLU Project

Story and photos by **Keri McAlpine**

Students, faculty and staff of Saint Leo University knew they were contributing to a worthy cause in March when they donated six tons of plastic bottle caps to the Caps of Love organization. Last week they saw the direct result of their hard work when a wheelchair, purchased from SLU's recycling funds, was donated to a local student.

After a brief presentation, Michael Ledford, a rising fourth grader from Woodland Elementary School in Zephyrhills, was beaming as he took a seat in his brand new manual wheelchair.

Michael was joined by his family when he received the wheelchair and stayed after for a short reception with

Caps • Continued on Page 6A



Caps of Love founder Valerie Mathieu speaks about her organization which encourages community involvement.

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Pg. 1B - Palmer Holding Court Again

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Zephyrhills Arrests

Man Allegedly Batters Pregnant Woman

Alfred Timothy Williams, 23, transient, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on July 4 on a charge of aggravated battery on a pregnant female – domestic. Police reportedly observed Williams driving a silver Chevrolet in a careless manner in the parking lot of Beall's, 7425 Gall Blvd. Williams then allegedly drove the vehicle toward the victim who was walking away from him and trying to avoid him. An officer witnessed Williams exit the vehicle, grab the victim by her arm, and start to pull her towards the vehicle. Williams and the victim are married and she is reportedly one month pregnant with his child. Post Miranda, Williams said he was stressed out and had grabbed the victim's hand but had not done so in an aggressive manner. He reportedly admitted he knew the victim was pregnant. Williams was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Joyce Marie Williams, 30, of 1609 Bobolink St., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on June 27 on a charge of theft. Williams allegedly took four items, valued at \$17.81, while at Walmart, 7631 Gall Blvd., on June 18 and placed them in a shopping cart. She then allegedly proceeded to customer service without paying for the items and requested and was given a cash refund for them. She was later identified on June 24 by a Walmart loss prevention employee when she was allegedly attempting to commit a similar theft.

Richard Phillip Schumann Jr., 56, of 38454 Cottonwood Place, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on July 2 on charges of possession of marijuana and resisting law enforcement without violence. Schumann was observed riding a bicycle in the Hercules Park property, which is closed to the public. Schumann allegedly failed to yield to several lawful commands by an officer to stop so he could be instructed about the park being closed. A small baggie, containing 0.6 grams of what field-tested positive as marijuana, was reportedly found during a search incidental to arrest. Post Miranda, Schumann admitted to knowing he should not be riding through the property. He said he always goes that way as a shortcut to get home. Schumann was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Cody Sterling Bearry, 29, transient, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on June 27 on a charge of retail petit theft and on two warrants for violation of probation – grand theft and possession of methamphetamine. Bearry allegedly took \$60.99 worth of merchandise while inside Beall's, 7425 Gall Blvd., and proceeded beyond all points of purchase without paying for the merchandise. Bearry reportedly told police post Miranda he had taken the items to get clean clothes and to feed his addiction. Bearry was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Michael Xavier Floyd, 27, of 39419 Lincoln Ave., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on June 29 on a charge of domestic violence-battery. He allegedly became involved with the victim over a cell phone and threw her to the floor and pinned her on the bedroom floor by force. When another person attempted to help the victim, Floyd allegedly hit them in the face with a clenched fist.

Jennifer Yvonne Mueller, 39, of Riverview, was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on June 27 on a Flagler County warrant charging her with failure to appear. Mueller was stopped while driving a 2004 Acura because of an equipment violation – illegal tint. A records check disclosed her driver's license had been suspended multiple times since 2011. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

James Christopher Kurppe Jr., 39, of 4222 Transue Drive, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on July 2 on a Pasco County warrant charging him with violation of probation – larceny. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Courtney Deandra Turner, 30, of 39613 Sixth Ave., was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on June 27 on a warrant for twice failing to pay court costs and failing to appear once for a traffic summons. Police stopped a 1997 Mercury Turner was driving because he was allegedly not wearing his seatbelt. He reportedly told police he was not in possession of his driv-

er's license but later admitted his license was suspended. He was released on his own recognizance.

Carrie Ann Hendricks, 38, of 7124 Forbes Road, was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on July 1 on a Pasco County warrant charging her with possession of methamphetamine and failure to appear – petit theft. A search incidental to Hendrick's arrest reportedly resulted in a glass pipe being found inside her purse. The pipe allegedly contained residue that was field-tested positive as methamphetamine. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Susan Jane Carpenter, 33, of 6802 Sutton Oaks Lane, was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on June 27 on a Pasco County warrant charging her with failure to appear on two counts of second degree petit theft. Police contacted Carpenter at Beall's Outlet, 6029 Gall Blvd. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Oscar Carrasco, 25, of 37241 Safari Drive, Dade City, was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on July 2 on a Sumter County warrant charging him with violation of probation – drug paraphernalia. He was a passenger in a vehicle that had been stopped for an equipment violation – illegal tint. Carrasco was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Samantha Louise Smith, 19, of 4641 La Force St., was arrested by Zephyrhills police on July 3 on a charge of simple domestic battery. Police were dispatched to the address regarding a battery. The victim said Smith, who is his stepdaughter, who has resided with him and her mother as a family unit, had struck him several times. Smith and the victim reportedly became involved in a verbal altercation in the driveway regarding who could use a vehicle. Smith allegedly struck him in the face with a closed fist, causing him to bleed. After he got back in the vehicle, Smith allegedly began attempting to remove the keys and hit the victim in the face with an elbow in the process. He reportedly removed the keys from the vehicle and returned to his residence with Smith allegedly following him and continuing to hit him. When he gave the keys to Smith's mother, she allegedly

forcibly took them from her mother. The victim reportedly had a cut lip, a red mark on his forehead and a bump on his head. Smith reportedly told police the victim had slapped her in the face while they were arguing and she punched him in the face in retaliation. She said she followed the victim to the residence on La Force Street and her mother gave her the keys. Smith's sister and husband made similar statements regarding Smith having been slapped. No marks were observed on Smith's face and she was arrested and booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Brandy Eudell Contreras, 36, of 37224 Gaskin Ave., Dade City, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on July 5 on charges of false identification to law enforcement officer and driving while license suspended or revoked with knowledge. A traffic stop was conducted on a 1998 Saturn Contreras was driving because the tag attached to it was not assigned to a vehicle. Contreras initially identified herself as Jamie Albritton, but her true identity was later confirmed through Facebook.com and by Contreras' admission. A records check indicated Contreras's driver's license had been indefinitely suspended on April 14, 2016. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Miranda Guertin, 31, transient, was arrested by Zephyrhills police on July 5 on a charge of retail petit theft and was also apprehended on a Pasco County warrant charging her with failure to appear – petit theft. She allegedly took \$109.20 worth of merchandise while at Beall's, 7425 Gall Blvd., and left the store without paying for the merchandise. A loss prevention employee escorted her back inside and recovered the stolen items. Post Miranda, Guertin allegedly admitted to stealing the merchandise. She was booked into the Pasco County Jail.

Dean Merritt Norman, 53, of 3832 10th St., was apprehended by Zephyrhills police on July 7 on Pasco County warrants charging him with violation of probation – false verification of ownership and VOP – grand theft. He was booked into the Pasco County Jail upon confirmation of the warrants.

The information provided in the Zephyrhills Police report is taken from public record. All parties are considered innocent until proven guilty.

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27 YEARS IN THE SAME LOCATION

Deputy Kills Armed Suspect

Crystal Springs Man Was Wielding Knife

by Joe Potter

Stephen Steele died shortly after a Pasco Sheriff's deputy shot him July 13 in Crystal Springs.

Deputies responded to 38339 Higginson Road at 7:47 p.m., regarding a domestic battery in progress, said sheriff's spokeswoman Melanie Snow.

Steele's mother told deputies her son was making threats and said if she called police he would reportedly "slice four or five of them before they could taser him."

Steele, 56, had allegedly assaulted his girlfriend earlier that night.

The suspect reportedly left a residence on Higginson Road and went inside an RV camper located just beside the home. He then barricaded himself inside the camper and indicated through a window he

planned to cut himself and made cutting motions along his throat, Snow said.

Deputies planned to make entry into the camper out of concern for Steele's safety. He reportedly opened the door and told deputies they could come in as he backed away from the camper door.

As deputies approached, Steele reportedly lunged at them, brandishing a knife, forcing a deputy to fire his gun in defense. Steele died from his wounds at a local hospital.

Steele had a violent criminal history in Florida and outside the state.

There have been two calls for service at the address specifically regarding Steele, Snow said. One was for grand theft and the other was for threats without violence.

The investigation continues, Snow said.

Airport • Continued from Page 1A

and FAA to secure the grants," he said

Taxiway B comes right off the main runway and connects to the fuel pumps and the southeast side of the airfield.

The taxiway rehabilitation comes about three years after the airport completed a \$4 million reconstruction of Runway 4-22, which is now called 5-23.

Coleman noted other projects are in the works for Pasco County's only public airport.

"We've got a little over \$1 million project fixin' to break loose on Runway 01-19 as well, which involves crack-sealing and new lighting," he said.

"We've got another grant from DOT on the table for a new AWOS and airfield beacon." AWOS is an acronym for Automated Weather Observation Station.

Coleman said there's a waiting list for hangar space at the airfield as every spot

is filled. There are 172 hangars, 137 of which are fully enclosed, to go along with 25 half-hangars and 10 shade locations.

Along with the engineers who help prepare the grants, Coleman credited City Manager Steve Spina for his contribution.

"He's a big part of it – [he] helps me be able to work with the engineers to accomplish what we need to accomplish," Coleman said.

Spina in turn praised Coleman for his diligence in acquiring funding for the improvements.

"He's the one who's developed the relationships with the DOT and FAA," Spina said.

"We have a very good airport master plan that we have been following and a good reputation in the aviation field of maintaining the airport and working with pilots and other groups."

Thieves Strike Jewelry Store

Suspects Flee After Early Morning Heist

by Max Zimmerman

Thieves who broke into The Jeweler in Merchants Square are still on the loose, but Zephyrhills police do have some leads they are following.

At least five suspects broke through the glass of the jewelry shop at 7405 Gall Blvd., at 3:38 a.m. on July 13 and stole an unreported amount of items.

Zephyrhills Interim Police Chief Derek Brewer said his department has been in contact with Lakeland and Plant City law enforcement where similar 'smash and grab' thefts have been recently reported.

Although this type of crime appears to be on the rise, Brewer indicated

the proliferation of security cameras and social media only make it appear that way. Surveillance footage of the store showed five thieves in hoodies smashing display cases as they collected jewelry.

Brewer is asking for the public's help in identifying the suspects who reportedly were traveling in a dark colored sedan and a white extended cab pick-up truck. The smash and grab comes after a spectacular theft of weapons from Sunshine State Armory in April. Two arrests have been made in that case where at least four individuals were involved.

If you have any information regarding either case, contact ZPD at (813) 780-0050.



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East Pasco Events

- July 20 – Unearthing Root Causes for Health Issues** – Steps one can take to uncover the causes for certain health conditions. Reservations required. Held from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Café, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and registration.

July 21 – Breaking Free to the New Normal – Perspectives on how to break free and find a new normal in life. Reservations required. Held from 1-2 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Café, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and registration.

July 25 – Big Brother Big Sister Orientation – Have you ever thought about becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister? You can help change the lives of children facing adversity for the better, forever. Attend a Big orientation and training session at Wesley Chapel Honda, 27750 Wesley Chapel Blvd. from 5:30-7 p.m. No RSVP required. Contact Deb Kristol-Irwin at DebK@bbbstampabay.org or (813) 997-6881 or visit bbbstampabay.org for information.

July 28-30 – Stuff the Bus for Teachers – United Way of Pasco County is holding its seventh annual Stuff the Bus for Teachers to deliver school supplies to teachers for the new school year. A school bus will be stationed at Walmart, 7631 Gall Blvd., from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. Talk to a volunteer and donate much needed supplies. Visit www.unitedwaypasco.org for Stuff the Bus volunteer information.

July 31 – Movie Mania: “Forks Over Knives” – This film examines that most, if not all, of the degenerative diseases that afflict us can be controlled or even reversed. Healthy popcorn provided for small donation. Reservations required. Held from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Café, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and registration.

Aug. 5 – Purple Heart Recognition Day – Join the East Pasco Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter
- #705 for a ceremony at 10 a.m. at the Zephyrhills Moose Lodge #2276, 3211 Gall Blvd., to honor and pay tribute to all Purple Heart recipients, Gold Star mothers, fathers and families and POW/MIA. Refreshments will be served following the ceremony. Contact (813) 783-3407 or emcmillan1@verizon.net for information.

Aug. 8 – Super Charge Your Brain – Practical ways to improve your cognitive function and mood. Held from 4-5 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Health Wellness Center, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and required reservation.

Aug. 9 – Secrets to a Healthy Back – Learn the basics of maintaining a strong and balanced spine. Held from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Health Wellness Center, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and required reservation.

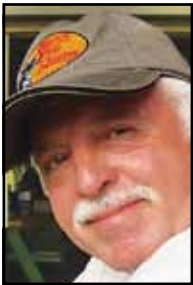
Aug. 11 – Fall Planting – Avid gardener David Force will help you get ready for autumn gardening and harvesting. Held from 12-12:30 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Health Wellness Center, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and required reservation.

Aug. 12 – Succulents – This free seminar will cover the care and propagation of an array of succulents that can be grown inside and outside the home in central Florida. The selecting, planting and care of succulents will be discussed, along with demonstrations. There will be free cuttings to take home and grow. Held from 10-11 a.m. at the Zephyrhills Library, 5347 Eighth St. Call (352) 518-0156 for information. Hosted by the University of Florida/IFAS Pasco County Extension Service.

Aug. 14 – Heat ad Hydration: Drink Up – Learn the best beverages for our bodies so we can stay healthy and properly hydrated. Held from 2-3 p.m. at Florida Hospital Zephyrhills’ Creation Health Wellness Center, 38233 Daughtery Road. Call (813) 779-6476 for information and required reservation.

For more events visit www.pasconewspubs.com

Commentary



First Things First

Greg First

One Man’s Trash Is Appalling

I like to go walking every morning before breakfast. My wife bought me a Fitbit for Christmas and I have been trying to reach my goal every day. Maybe she was trying to tell me something. In any event, it is a new lifestyle I was not used to doing. I look forward to getting to the restaurant about 15 minutes early and start pounding the pavement before the breakfast gang arrives. You never know what you are going to see on the highways and byways of east Pasco County.

About a week ago I was in Zephyrhills walking behind a strip mall where one of my favorite restaurants is located. Further down the mall is a grocery store with several signs that say no dumping. I think that sign must have been a calling card for people trying to unload stuff at this new midnight drop-off point. It was a disgusting mess. I would have hoped someone from the store or the owners of the mall would have cleaned it up.

I saw an old mattress, several beer bottles, cans and garbage bags full of whatever. The sad part is it has been there for well past a week, right next to a dumpster. I also saw a sign that says the property is under video surveillance.

Maybe they could rewind the tape to determine the culprit.

This illegal dumping is happening all over the place. Where I live a company contracted to cut some limbs and do some yard maintenance on a wooded back street in the neighborhood dumped all of what they cut and hauled butt. I talked to a lady who saw them do it. It was one of those trucks and trailers with no markings on it. There are a bunch of them around.

That means they probably were not licensed, bonded or insured.

It is not uncommon to see old furniture, tires, bags of garbage, bottles and cans dumped on vacant lots or along the side of the road. Maybe if someone took the time they could find out who owned the stuff but that would mean looking through the bags. Maybe they could find some old mail, magazines with an address on them or other things that could be given to law enforcement or code enforcement. It would be a dirty job.

When I was a kid the prisoners did all kinds of work. They wore their prison uniforms and a guy sat in the shade with a shotgun just in case one of them decided to make a run for it. It would be a great job for them. Maybe now it would be considered unfair treatment or not politically correct. Wake up people. Maybe if they started doing that the crime rate would go down.

I also remember growing up that an organization used to give signs reading, “B for Beautiful.” It was given to someone that went above and beyond making their home or business a better-looking place. They also got a photo in the local newspaper with the sign prominently displayed. I think it’s time to come up with a sign for those places that are looking really bad that says, “U for Ugly,” or maybe even “UU for Double Ugly”. That would be one recognition I don’t ever want to get.

Pasco News Publications

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Commentary



The Rest Of The Story

Dave Walters

When It Comes To Sinkholes, Expect The Unexpected

I sat in disbelief as I watched homes become consumed by a sinkhole in the Lake Padgett area of Land O’ Lakes.

I can’t possibly imagine watching my home slowly fall into the abyss, standing there behind caution tape, completely helpless.

We watch these homes destroyed live on TV and look on in horror. We pity the families. We offer our prayers and then reality sets in. We put ourselves in their shoes. We think about the decisions we would have to make if we were only allowed to grab a few precious things.

What would we take? Valuables? Photos? Keepsakes?

I hope to God I never have to make a decision like that.

In Lake Padgett, nine other homes were evacuated because of the sinkhole, which reached 250-feet in diameter and roughly 50 feet deep.

While it’s unbelievable, we see it far too often in Hillsborough, Pasco and Hernando counties. We see lives turned upside down and in some cases, ended by a common and natural geological

feature of the state’s landscape.

There is no escaping them if you live in Florida. According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, sinkholes could theoretically form anywhere. Florida rests on a nearly unbroken bed of limestone and our area is particularly known for sinkholes. It’s part of Florida’s so-called Sinkhole Alley, where two-thirds of insurance claims for sinkhole damage occur, according to a report prepared for state lawmakers in 2010.

We’re not alone.

Other places that frequently see sinkholes include Texas, Alabama, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee and Pennsylvania.

But the dramatic collapse at Lake Padgett is not as common. Some sinkholes merely cause the ground above to sag, or result in small ponds or saltwater marshes.

There is no way to judge the frequency of sinkholes. The Florida Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance reported that insurers had received 24,671 claims for sinkhole damage in the four years leading up to 2010.

That’s an average of nearly 17 claims a day, just in Florida.

And Zephyrhills is not immune. There have been sinkhole claims in the city. Several homes in the Meadowood Loop area filed claims for sinkhole damage in the last decade. These homes did not crumble into the ground, but sustained enough damage to be awarded insurance claims.

All we can do is hope we don’t suffer the same fate as our neighbors to the west. In the meantime, put yourself in their shoes and say a prayer.

Students Honored For Exceptional Grades



Jarrett Ford Dade City held its 39th annual Straight A Dinner on June 28, honoring the success of local students. Jarrett started the dinner in 1979 to recognize the hard and dedicated academic work of students who earned straight A’s for the entire school year at Centennial Middle School as well as Pasco High School and Pasco Middle School. Shown above are the students from Centennial who earned that honor as well as Principal Rick Saylor, right, and Jarrett Ford Vice President/General Manager Cliff Martin, left. The dinner was held at Lake Jovita Golf & Country Club. Photo Provided

Bilirakis Accepting U.S. Service Academy Nomination Applications

U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12) is currently accepting applications for nomination to the prestigious U.S. service academies.

Each year, Bilirakis has the opportunity to nominate high school students from Florida’s 12th District to be accepted to the U.S. Military Academy, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy or the Merchant Marine Academy.

“Students who have the honor of attending a U.S. service academy will receive a first-rate education, lifelong leadership skills, and the chance to serve our nation,” said Bilirakis. “I encourage all interested students who are willing to work hard and serve their fellow Americans to submit an application through my office.”

The office will be accepting submissions through Sept. 29 and applicants will be interviewed starting in late October. Call the Congressman’s office at (727) 232-2921 or visit bilirakis.house.gov to obtain an application.

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Caps • Continued from Page 1A

snacks and drinks.

Caps of Love founder Valerie Mathieu was on site for the July 13 presentation, and said the new wheelchair was the 72nd chair purchased and donated through her West Palm Beach-based non-profit. The manual chair will allow Ledford to maneuver easily through his home, while his previously owned electric wheelchair allows him to navigate the school halls.

In addition to providing new wheelchairs, Caps of Love also provides funds to repair broken or malfunctioning wheelchairs. Ledford’s back support of his electric wheelchair recently broke, and Mathieu said the organization would also be helping to fix that chair.

In its two years participating in the program, Saint Leo’s efforts have grown to include numerous partners, including schools, churches, local businesses, clubs and organizations stretching across five counties.

“We’ve brought a community together ... and to me that’s what it’s about – it’s about making that difference,” said Heidi D’Ambrosio, senior coordinator for Residence Life at the university.

SLU students have begun to go out into the community and teach groups the correct way to recycle and sort the caps, depending on the type of plastic they’re made of.

Caps of Love was founded on the concept of correctly recycling plastic bottle caps for money. However, since it was founded nine years ago, the price of plastic has gone from 28 cents to 10 cents a pound, forcing the organization to make major changes and greater reliance on grants, public donations and education.

The goal of the Caps of Love organization is to, “educate the public on how to identify and recycle correctly and to provide wheelchairs to the physically challenged under the age of 21,” in the United States, according to its website.

Anyone up to the age of 21 can submit a wheelchair request or repair form on the Caps of Love website at www.capsoflove.com.



Michael Ledford, 10, of Zephyrhills, was the recipient of a free manual wheelchair thanks to Caps of Love and contributions from Saint Leo University and the surrounding community. He was given the wheelchair on July 13 during a special presentation at the university.

Waiver • Continued from Page 1A

doing so.

In most cases, the fees and fines are more than what the properties are worth, Hamilton said.

Most of those properties also have tax liens on them. One property even has a \$1,000,000 Internal Revenue Service lien attached to it.

Hamilton said someone recently approached the CRA regarding a property on Ninth Street that had both tax liens and code enforcement liens levied against it. They said they would be interested in buying the property through the Pasco County Clerk & Comptroller’s Office’s online auction of tax deeds if the code enforcement fees were waived.

Their waiver request was approved because the code enforcement liens were more than \$2,500; the prospective purchaser was not the person who incurred the lien or a family member or business partner of that person; and they agreed to rehabilitate any structure on the property or to build a new structure within one year of acquiring the property, Hamilton said.

The city can’t do anything about the property that has the IRS lien against it, she said.

It behooves the city when people are interested in purchasing properties that do qualify for the lien waiver program, Hamilton said, and there has been a significant increase in the number of new homes being built in the CRA district.

“Not everyone wants to live in a gated community on the outskirts of town,” Hamilton said, adding some people prefer, instead, to live closer to downtown where the qualifying properties are located.

Improving the abandoned properties is also a benefit to the people who live in the neighborhoods in which they are located, Hamilton said.

“I think about the families who live on those streets. It affects the values of their neighborhoods. Nobody wants an old, abandoned property next to them,” Hamilton said.

The lien waiver program is just another tool Zephyrhills can use to help improve the city’s economy, she said.

For more information about the program, call Gail Hamilton at (813) 780-0202.

Surber • Continued from Page 1A

Bergherm who was promoted to senior executive officer of acute care services for the West Florida Division of Adventist Health System.

Surber said Friday he has mixed emotions about his future – he is excited about the new opportunity but is sad to leave Zephyrhills.

“It was an opportunity to grow and it had additional responsibilities of three hospitals versus one,” he said of the Heartland center.

Surber will not be going into Sebring completely blind, as he has had business there in the past and has already seen some familiar faces on his recent visits there.

The main Heartland campus is in Sebring proper which accommodates about 159 beds, compared to FHZ’s 149. The Lake Placid campus accommodates a mere 50 beds. The Wauchula campus is currently being rebuilt and is set to open in October, a factor which was eye catching for Surber.

“It’s one of the unique opportunities I saw to go there and be part of that,” he said. “There’s not many times in your career that you get to open up a new hospital. So that’s very exciting.”

After coming to Zephyrhills in October 2013, Surber has a long list of accomplishments, including, but not limited to: partnering with Pasco-Hernando State College for a nursing scholarship; the construction of the Creation Health Wellness Center and the Creation Café; the Florida Hospital Pavilion at the new

community venue by the airport; the community garden; new orthopedic unit; the growth of the hospital’s surgical robot system; a complete emergency room renovation; and the addition of other facilities outside of the main FHZ campus.

“I think that’s the short list, actually,” he said. “The growth we’ve seen in our performance metrics, both financial and clinical, most importantly, have improved in those four years ... the performance of the hospital is the strongest it’s ever been.”

FHZ Director of Marketing Susan Frimmel said out of the dozens of CEOs she has worked for in her career, Surber has by far been the best.

“He’s going to be missed tremendously. He’s been a great leader at this hospital and he’s respected by all of the department managers and directors,” Frimmel said. “I’ve never been at a hospital where I personally feel like I’m part of a whole team and I think a lot of that is due to Randy’s leadership.”

Hospital staff are not the only people who might have noticed Surber’s impact, but the communities of Zephyrhills and Dade City as well. A resident of Dade City, he made a point to be involved in the community and currently serves as the Dade City Chamber of Commerce president.

As he leaves FHZ, Surber wishes nothing but the best for the hospital and community. He referenced several new plans the hospital is working on which he expects will be influential once they are revealed.

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County Prepares Residents For Road Extension

Changes Coming For Old Pasco Road

by **Dave Walters**

Willie Roberts stood in the Saint Anthony of Padua Parish Hall in San Antonio looking at a map of the Pasco County Old Pasco Road Extension and he couldn't help but think about how similar progress years ago forced many of his family members from their homesteads. He pointed to spots along State Road 52 where generations of the Roberts' family resided. As the road was widened and other growth followed, the family community became smaller and smaller. Roberts and dozens of residents living in the area just west of I-75 attended a public workshop July 11 to see just how the extension of Old Pasco Road will affect them. For Roberts, his home is safe for now as the proposed project misses his property. "I'm OK for the moment," Roberts said.

"When they widened 52, it devastated our community. There is always that fear that I will end up having to move like the rest of my family." The public workshop was to explain the northern expansion of Old Pasco Road and the Ossie Murphy Road. The county sought to inform the public, while encouraging discussion and input regarding the project that will extend Old Pasco Road north with a four-lane divided road. "It is very valuable to have this kind of feedback," said Chris Wert, assistant engineering service director for the county. "Our goal is to reach out to the community. They are the ones who live there and they give us ideas for the project. We are thrilled to have this kind of turnout." Wert said this public workshop is just the beginning in the quest of obtaining public input on the project.



Terry Schrader, Ted Schrader, Donna Swart and Eric Herrmann, all of the San Antonio area, review the maps showing the options for the county's potential plan to extend Old Pasco Road.

*Photos by **Richard K. Riley***

Residents flocked to the maps placed around the room asking question and making sure they had every detail explained and every question answered. "The people from this area are always genuinely concerned about what goes on

around here," said San Antonio resident Donna Clark. "It's a very conscientious group of residents. "They monitor the change that goes on around them. They won't let it sneak up on them."



Kent McWaters, of HDR Engineering, reviews the Old Pasco Road extension maps with San Antonio residents Pat and Jeannette Reilly.



Pastor Willie B. Roberts, a San Antonio resident and minister at Piney Grove Baptist Church, points at one of the county's Old Pasco Road extension maps showing how close progress is coming to his home and church.

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Gulfside Banks On Donations

CenterState Provides Space For Thrift Stores

Story and photos by Keri McAlpine

Every three months, the Zephyrhills branch of CenterState Bank offers its employees the opportunity to support a local non-profit or deserving organization through a casual Friday fundraiser. A donation of \$10 buys staffers the ability to wear jeans every Friday of that month with all proceeds going to the selected organization.

This quarter, the Gulfside Hospice Thrift Shoppes, located in Zephyrhills and Dade City, are the focus and have even added some extra flair to attract attention.

Gulfside store managers have been setting up a ‘Pop Up Shop’ in the bank’s lobby at 6930 Gall Blvd., where several tables display what the stores offer. The shop inside the bank is set up every Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., through Sept. 29.



Housewares and knick-knacks are common at the Pop Up Shop which is held every Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until the end of September.



Dade City Gulfside Hospice Thrift Shoppe Manager Natasha Blackburn mans the Pop Up Shop last Friday in the lobby of the Zephyrhills CenterState Bank on Gall Boulevard.

Displayed items vary and include everything from clothes and jewelry to housewares. Large jars or bottles are assembled to create ‘grab bags’ of jewelry or assorted buttons.

Dade City thrift shop manager Natasha Blackburn was stationed at the Pop Up Shop last Friday, waiting to greet bank clients and visitors right in front of the entrance. Blackburn began working for Gulfside in September.

“Gulfside took care of my dad last year. So, after he passed the opportunity arose so I came and worked for them. I love it. It’s absolutely the best thing,” she said of working for the stores.

The selections of items come directly from one of the local stores, or from its backrooms before items make it to the shelves. Blackburn said the Pop Up Shop allows people to learn there are multiple Thrift Shoppe locations in the county and to see the variety of items they offer.

“I just walk down the aisles in the thrift store and I just pick random things. Things that I like or things I think would fit the things people buy,” Blackburn said. “Any

money is great money to have for the organization. It’s definitely nice to do and to get out in the community.”

CenterState’s marketing manager, Kathy Whitman, said the bank always showcases the quarterly non-profit in the lobby with a special display of some sort. However, the Pop Up Shop was something that hadn’t been done in a while. The last she could remember was a Relay for Life team some years ago, which used to host a bake sale in the lobbies on Fridays.

Whitman said an average of about \$300 is raised from the casual Friday donations.

“We want to be involved in the community and we want to give our employees and our clients the opportunity to learn what kind of non-profits and organizations are in the community,” Whitman said. “And it gives our employees that added benefit of wearing jeans on Friday.”

If you would like to have a Pop Up Shop at your business or community clubhouse, contact Tammy Johnson, director of Thrift Shoppes for Gulfside, at (727) 845-5707 or info@ghppc.org for information.



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District Plans Another High School Near Zephyrhills

by Max Zimmerman

Although gravel has yet to be spread on the State Road 56 extension, the Pasco County School District has purchased land for a new high school just outside Zephyrhills.

During Tuesday night’s regular meeting of the school board, the district approved the purchase of 64 acres west of Morris Bridge Road and south of Chancey Road to be developed for the school campus. The land belonged to the Linville family and was part of the Zephyr Egg Company. The Linville family agreed to sell the property for \$5 million.

The site of the high school was revealed Tuesday evening as part of the River Landing master plan.

Although the proposed school is not on the district’s urgent list to construct, the expectation of continued rapid development along the S.R. 56 corridor will necessitate another high school, district officials said.

The envisioned school campus would have three buildings devoted to classrooms, a building for a music room and cafeteria, a school gymnasium and a public recreation center.

The overall 78-acre site plan calls for a high school with a football stadium, a multi-purpose soccer field, field house, separate baseball and softball fields and track and field facilities.

The campus would take up 63 acres

of the site with the remaining acreage devoted to ponds and wetlands.

The plan also lays out a 44-acre county park directly west of the campus that includes four baseball fields, four basketball courts and a playground with a splash pad. Ponds and wetlands add another 18 acres surrounding the park site.

As part of the contract the district entered in 2010, the district reserved the Linville tract for seven years, which meant the school board had to take ownership or relinquish the property this year.

“The high school site in River Landing will serve already approved future communities that will come to fruition with the opening of the State Road 56 extension,” said Chris Williams, the district’s director of planning services,

Williams also noted acreage on Handcart Road remains reserved for future use.

“We have not moved away from this site, it is just banked for the future,” he said. “There are not a lot of houses in that area yet but we know that will come in the future.”

Groundwork for the S.R. 56 extension began in February and when completed the \$58 million connector from Wesley Chapel to U.S. Highway 301 should be open to traffic three years from now, according to David Botello of the Florida Department of Transportation.

County Under Daytime Watering Restrictions Through Aug. 1

Pasco County Utilities is reminding residents about increased water restrictions. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) voted on May 23 to approve modified Phase III Water Shortage Restrictions.

“In Pasco County, regardless of the irrigation water source, all watering is prohibited between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.,” said Sandra Anderson, customer service administrator for Pasco County Utilities.

Watering during the early morning or late evening hours helps minimize water losses from evaporation and wind-drift. To determine your allowed watering day(s), please visit: bitly.com/PascoWatering and select your water source – potable,

reclaimed or well.

SWFWMD says this is the driest dry season in the past 103 years. While recent rainfall has provided relief to the region, additional rain will be needed to replenish the regions’ aquatic systems and water supplies. Due to the severity of the drought, homeowners’ associations and other entities must suspend any requirement to replace lawns, pressure wash or engage in other activity that significantly increases water usage.

To report watering violations in your area, call (727) 847-2411.

Call Pasco County Utilities Customer Information & Services at (813) 235-6012 for more information.

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