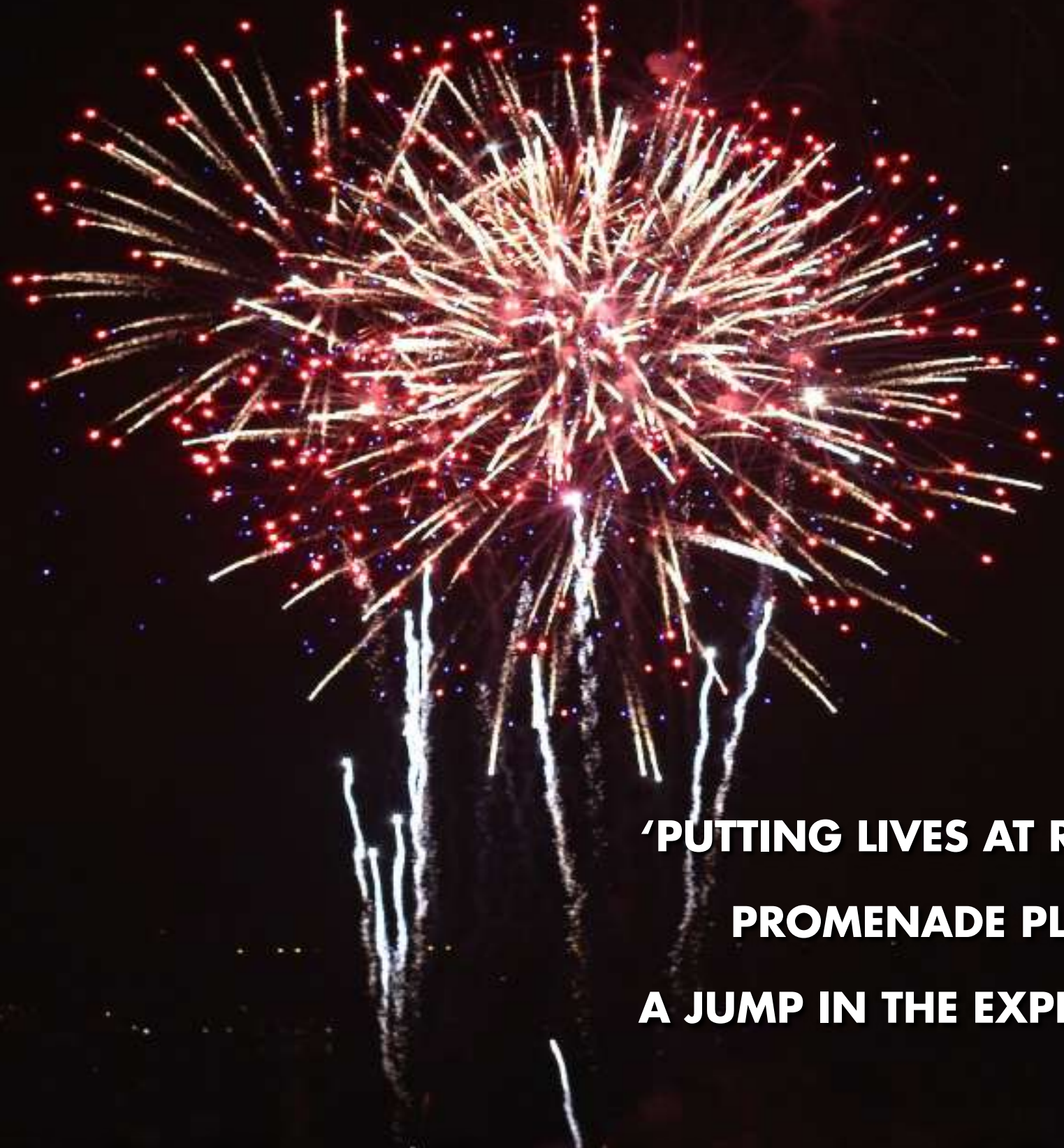


THE SARASOTA

Vol. 2, No. 42 — July 4, 2014

News Leader



'PUTTING LIVES AT RISK'
PROMENADE PLANS
A JUMP IN THE EXPENSE

Inside

Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.

GET TO KNOW US



swipe:
flip pages left or right



Single Tap:
show/hide on-screen controls



Double Tap:
zoom-in or zoom-out on a single page



Pinch: (Not supported on some Android devices)
Zoom-in or zoom-out on a single page



Rotate: (Not supported on some Android devices)
View different layouts for landscape/portrait



Move:
When zoomed-in, move around the page

Toolbar Options



Text Mode



Search by keywords



Open/close the mini carousel of pages



View the table of contents



View the archives of this publication



Email the current page to a friend



Social bookmark the current page

A.K.A. HELP

SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

Rachel Brown Hackney

Editor and Publisher

Rachel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

Cooper@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Stan Zimmerman

City Editor

Stan@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Roger Drouin

County Editor

Roger@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Norman Schimmel

Staff Photographer

NSchimmel@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Fran Palmeri

Contributing Writer

FPalmeri@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Harriet Cuthbert

Contributing Writer

HCuthbert@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Elinor Rogosin

A&E Writer

ERogosin@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

John Riley

Editorial Cartoonist

Riley@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Vicki Chatley

Copy Editor

Vicki@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Letters To the Editor

Letters@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Cleve Posey

Production Manager / Graphic Designer

Cleve@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Robert S. Hackney

Opinion Editor / General Manager

Robert@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Advertising Sales

Sales@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Subscription Services

Subs@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

Press Releases & News Tips

News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com



Find us on:
facebook®



Welcome

I should give up on trying to finish an issue early when a holiday is approaching. It seems the very thought inspires the “software gods” and other outside influences to conspire against me. Let me just add that putting together this issue was particularly challenging, so I will be grateful for a July Fourth respite.

Now that I have gotten that out of my system ...

All of us at the *News Leader* regularly have to put our gray matter through workouts. When I was in journalism school, that fact of life was what professors commonly referred to as “general beat reporting,” the capability of covering a wide range of topics day after day. Fortunately, the longer you are in the news business, the more knowledge you acquire. A long-time reporter such as Stan Zimmerman probably could write books on all the material he has stored away in his gray matter.

Several times over recent weeks, I have had the occasion to tell a person I was interviewing that I understood very well what he or she was saying because of experiences I have had in the past.

As we pull together tidbits from our brains to supplement details from earlier articles on a subject, we are able to provide you with much more comprehensive reports than you can find in other publications. Sadly, such depth of news coverage seems to be disappearing everywhere. And that is all the more reason we take great pride in what we can offer you each week.

On that note, we at the *News Leader* wish all of you a very happy Fourth of July.

Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor and Publisher





'PUTTING LIVES AT RISK'



PROMENADE PLANS



Click Any **Headline** To Go Directly To That Article



NEWS

'PUTTING LIVES AT RISK'

8

Neither Health Department warning signs nor the Bob's Boathouse management is keeping customers out of the body of water designed as a fountain — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

PROMENADE PLANS

13

In the latest version of plans for the northwest corner of Stickney Point and South Tamiami Trail, Benderson proposes a hotel and shopping center — *Roger Drouin*

A JUMP IN THE EXPENSE

20

The renourishment of south Siesta Key's beach could cost as much as \$18 million, well above the original estimate — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

AN EARFUL ON 2050

26

Public workshop attendees pan proposed changes to Sarasota 2050, but will it matter? — *Cooper Levey-Baker*

A DIAMOND PLAN

30

Residents are unsure whether a bold interchange plan for Interstate 75 and University Parkway will work, but they say something has to be done, with traffic intensification anticipated — *Roger Drouin*

AN INTERIM SOLUTION

36

A short-term plan to add more sand to Lido Beach is well received, but a more ambitious Army Corps of Engineers proposal remains controversial — *Roger Drouin*

NEEDED: A RESOLUTION

43

The county commissioners will discuss the future — and possible sale to North Port — of Warm Mineral Springs during their July 8 afternoon session — *Rachel Brown Hackney*



COVER PHOTO CREDIT

Bombs Bursting In Air - Robert Hackney



SIESTA SEEN



OPINION



Click Any **Headline** To Go Directly To That Article



A GROWING CITY TAX BASE

48

The overall property value of the City of Sarasota and its special districts is up more than 5 percent — *Stan Zimmerman*

ROADS AND DRIVERS' LICENSES

52

The County Commission allocates more money to paving for the next fiscal year and agrees to pay for renovations needed by the Tax Collector's Office — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

'I'M NOT GIVING UP ON THIS'

58

LGBT activist warns Sarasota County she'll take her anti-discrimination cause to the voters — *Cooper Levey-Baker*

SCHOOL BOARD RACE ROUNDUP

60

One candidate cites school safety as top issue; another files complaint against Kathy Dent — *Cooper Levey-Baker*

FIRST INTERVIEW WITH A NEW CHIEF

63

Todd Kerkerling is the first emergency manager for the City of Sarasota — *Stan Zimmerman*

PROTECTING WHAT'S LEFT

68

Lido residents are fretting over the potential for Super Boat Grand Prix race watchers to trample their dunes — *Stan Zimmerman*

CALL IT A 'FOUR ACES AGENDA'

71

A request for a 'nightclub' conditional use, a proposed bayfront policy, changes on an advisory board and homelessness issues are on the City Commission's July 7 agenda — *Stan Zimmerman*

AN UNWELCOME POSSIBILITY

77

The Supervisor of Elections says the county may be forced to purchase new voting machines because of a company decision not to keep servicing the existing ones — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

SHARE



NEWS BRIEFS



FOR ALL VETERANS



Click Any **Headline** To Go Directly To That Article



SIESTA SEEN

81

Siesta Key Village Association members urge expanded marketing of the new 'island bus' service; the outdoor display issue will start its county consideration process in August; and the 2014 Crystal Classic dates have been announced — *Rachel Brown Hackney*

NEWS BRIEFS

89

CRIME BLOTTER

104

OPINION

EDITORIAL

110

Independence Day mostly for the independently wealthy

COMMENTARY

113

Ode to Derek — *Harriet Cuthbert*

ALL THE REST ...

FOR ALL VETERANS

114

Members of the community come together for the dedication of Patriot Plaza at Sarasota National Cemetery — *Staff Reports*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

123

SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS

125

Enjoy The Sarasota News Leader Anytime · Day Or Night
SarasotaNewsLeader.com



‘PUTTING LIVES AT RISK’

A photo taken at Bob's Boathouse on June 21 shows two young children in the pool. Contributed photo

NEITHER HEALTH DEPARTMENT WARNING SIGNS NOR THE BOB'S BOATHOUSE MANAGEMENT IS KEEPING CUSTOMERS OUT OF THE BODY OF WATER DESIGNED AS A FOUNTAIN

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

In spite of its law firm's assertion that the business's owners and managers would keep patrons out of a body of water that received a Sarasota County Building Department permit as a fountain, Bob's Boathouse frequently has customers — including small children — in the water, as documented by photographs, *The Sarasota News Leader* has learned.

Because the establishment has not abided by a [Cease and Desist Order from the Florida Department of Health](#)

[in Sarasota County](#), department inspectors erected signs around the perimeter of the facility on June 26, Tom Higginbotham, director of environmental health for the department, told the *News Leader* that afternoon.

In a follow-up interview on June 30, Higginbotham pointed out that one of his chief concerns has been parents allowing children into the water. “That was over the line,” he added of management not taking steps to prevent

“ *If I were there with my child, my child would not go into that water body.* ”

Tom Higginbotham
Environmental Health Director
Florida Department of Health
In Sarasota County

such activity. “If I were there with my child, my child would not go into that water body.”

Health Department staff has no knowledge whether anti-entrapment devices have been installed in the facility to prevent a child from being sucked into a circulation system, for example, he told the *News Leader*. Higginbotham called that “a major concern,” noting, “We don’t know of any safety equipment [on-site].”

Further, he said, no documentation has been provided by Bob’s Boathouse to indicate the body of water is being maintained at the proper pH or treated with chemicals.

Higginbotham referenced a May 30 letter to the Health Department from Amanda Kenney, a legal assistant with the Aker Law Firm,

saying, “Bob’s has taken and is taking action to keep patrons out of the fountain.” He added, “They’re not doing what they should do. ... It’s definitely going to become a legal matter at this point. ... When people blatantly disregard statutes and rules that are in place to protect the public health ... and flagrantly do so, it certainly is frustrating and sets a bad example, and they can be putting people’s lives at risk.”

When the *News Leader* reached James Aker, the Bob’s Boathouse attorney in Sarasota, on July 1 to ask for a comment about the situation, Aker replied, “I don’t care to speak about it. Thank you.”

Higginbotham said Health Department inspectors drove out to Bob’s Boathouse, located at 5515 S. Tamiami Trail, on June 27



A number of people were in the water at Bob’s Boathouse on June 22. Contributed photo

and again on June 30 to check on whether the signs they put up were still there. They were, he confirmed. “Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem like it’s doing a lot to keep people out of the water.”

On one wall of the body of water, as seen in a photo provided to the *News Leader*, a message that appears to be hand-written says, “Decorative fountain. Enter at own risk.”

The signs erected by the Health Department cite a state statute governing public swimming pools, a section of the county ordinance and the phone number of the department’s Environmental Health Services office. (See the accompanying photos.) The part of the county code to which the signs refer deals with required water testing, among other facets of public pool operations. For example, that code says, “Public pool water shall be free of coliform bacteria contamination,” and it cites state laws regarding chemical standards.

THE LEGAL PROCESS

Higginbotham has been in contact with the department’s legal counsel regarding the situation, he explained. The next step will be to send an administrative complaint to the “responsible person” for Bob’s Boathouse. However, as he learned with issuing the Cease and Desist Order, he pointed out, determining who that person is can be problematic, given the number of people associated with the business. Sarasota County staff cited a similar reason for the failure to collect water and sewer utility fees prior to issuing the establishment a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy last fall.



Kent Macci, environmental health supervisor with the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, prepares to erect a warning sign at Bob's Boathouse on June 26. Photo courtesy Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County



A sign posted at Bob's Boathouse alerts patrons to the fact that the water body is closed according to state and county laws. Photo courtesy Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County


After the administrative complaint has been served to the appropriate person, Higginbotham continued, the department will await the scheduling of a hearing in 12th Judicial Circuit Court in Sarasota. “We’ll have to go and present the case, including photographs and testimony,” he said.

Then it will be up to the judge to decide on the fine for each day a violation continues. The maximum daily amount is \$500, he pointed out. However, a judge could decide to impose a fine of \$100 per day.

Afterward, it will be a matter of trying to reach a resolution with the owners of the business,

Higginbotham said. Once the owners and the Health Department settle on a “satisfactory compromise,” he added, “then we can discuss the money they owe us for all the trouble they’ve caused.”

He pointed out, “It ends up being very time-consuming and very labor-intensive” for the department’s attorney and her staff.

Higginbotham also concedes the frustration on the part of neighbors in the vicinity of Bob’s Boathouse who would like to have the issue resolved as soon as possible. “I understand the concern out there.” 



A number of people were in the pool at one point during the weekend of June 28-29, as documented by a witness. Contributed photo



**Open:
Mon-Sat
11:30am
to
9:00pm**

nancy'sTM **BAR-B-Q**

**Catering
Across
The
Suncoast
Since
2005**

Pulled Pork • Ribs • Chicken • Beef Brisket

Sides Made Fresh From Scratch

Big salad • Chilled Salmon

Beer & Wine • Homemade Desserts • Kid Friendly

301 S Pineapple Ave • Sarasota, FL



**Click For Driving
Directions**

**Click To View Our
Video Online**

941-366-2271 (BBQ1) • nancysbarbq.com



PROMENADE PLANS

*Benderson purchased the 24 acres in 2005. It was the site of Pine Shores Estates Mobile Home Park.
Photo by Roger Drouin*

IN THE LATEST VERSION OF PLANS FOR THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF STICKNEY POINT AND SOUTH TAMIAMI TRAIL, BENDERSON PROPOSES A HOTEL AND SHOPPING CENTER

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

Benderson Development is seeking a rezone that would allow the company to build a large-scale retail shopping center and a hotel on 24 acres it owns at the intersection of South Tamiami Trail and Stickney Point Road.

The large-scale “Siesta Promenade” is designed to become an attraction for locals and tourists alike who will shop, dine and seek accommodations at the site of a former

mobile home park. Preliminary plans show a 150-room hotel and 250,000 square-feet of retail space in 12 structures.

“We see the project as a neighborhood center that will provide a blend of daily services with

retailers and restaurants that visitors to the area will also be excited to visit,” said Benderson Director of Development Todd Mathes.

But residents living in the Pine Shores

“*I’m hopeful to meet our more immediate neighbors so that we can work on a landscape and buffer plan to integrate the shopping center to the neighborhood.*”

Todd Mathes
Director of Development



community of mostly single-family homes to the north and west of the proposed development are worried it will bring cut-through traffic, loud delivery trucks and late-night noise to the area, which is known as a peaceful neighborhood not too far from the beach. They are also worried about traffic jams on Stickney Point Road.

At first, Linda Hunter, a 24-year resident of the Pine Shores neighborhood, was most concerned about congestion at the intersection and expected cut-through traffic.

But as she learns more about the plans, she has become more worried about possible noise from restaurants and bars in the development. Hunter said she can already hear the music from Captain Curt's Crab & Oyster Bar on Old Stickney Point Road on Siesta

Key, and she is familiar with the problems residents have had to deal with, including sleepless nights, as a result of noise issues at Bob's Boathouse on South Tamiami Trail.

She is worried that Siesta Promenade will bring those same issues right into her neighborhood, she told *The Sarasota News Leader*.

"They are going to put a lot of things on those 24 acres which are going to generate a lot of noise and traffic," said Hunter, a home health nurse who works long hours and is anxious about whether she will face new challenges in getting to sleep after she comes home from her job.

Hunter also worries about a hotel, a big-box store and a market all being located close to homes without a buffer, such as townhomes,



“That will create a shortcut through the neighborhood to get back north on [U.S.] 41.

Sura Kochman
Pine Shores Resident

”

Remnants of the Pine Shores Estates mobile home park remain on the property, which has been vacant since 2008. Photo by Roger Drowin

between those single-family residences and the commercial development.

A REZONE

The project requires a rezone to Commercial General, which means the matter must be heard before the Sarasota Planning Commission and the County Commission.

The developer has not filed a formal application yet, according to Sarasota County Planner Todd Dary with Sarasota County Planning Services. But Benderson did present its preliminary plans during a Sarasota County Development Review Committee

meeting and held a required neighborhood workshop June 26.

Mathes says he plans to meet with some residents to talk over the project.

“I’m hopeful to meet our more immediate neighbors so that we can work on a landscape and buffer plan to integrate the shopping center to the neighborhood. We also laid out the site to buffer the neighborhood from the areas on the property where there will be the most activity,” Mathes wrote the *News Leader* in an email response to questions this week.

“I’ll be walking the area with some of our neighbors over the coming weeks so we can



The intersection of Stickney Point Road and South Tamiami Trail sees its share of traffic. Residents say congestion is at its worst from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., during the height of people's trips to the beach. Photo by Roger Drouin

look at their properties and ours together,” Mathes added.

In its current proposed form, the project will likely spur plenty of comments when it comes before the Planning and County commissions.

The neighborhood has been mobilizing.

“We are certainly hoping the Planning Commission will listen to our concerns,” said Sura Kochman.

In addition to the lack of a buffer, Benderson’s latest rendition of development for the site it purchased in 2005 incorporates a traffic plan that will encourage drivers to cut through the Pine Shores neighborhood, Kochman pointed out to the *News Leader*.

“It affects everybody, the way they have that traffic pattern,” Kochman added.

Stickney Point Road already is backed up during daytime hours as people head to Siesta, especially in season.

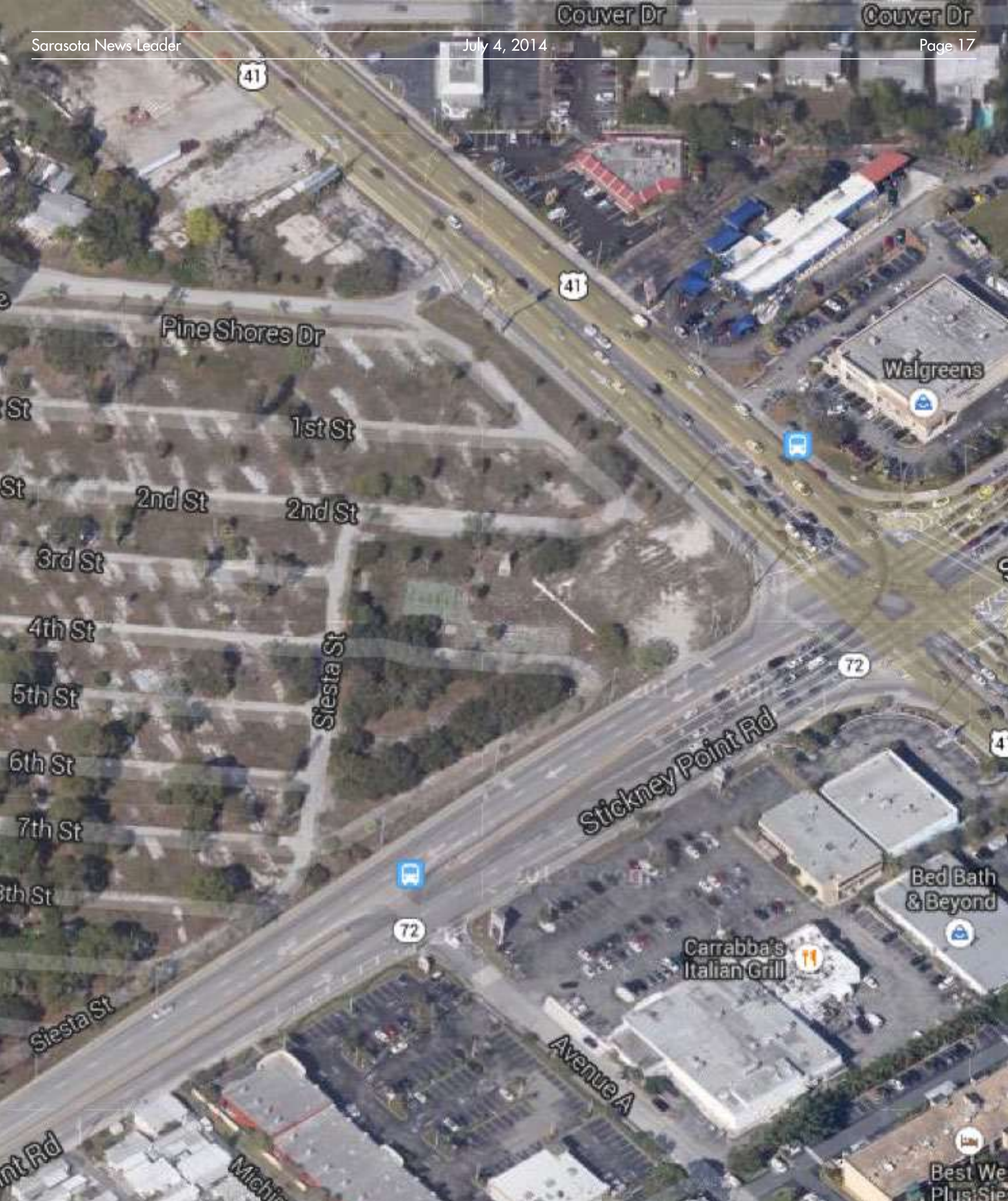
Kochman believes the design of the shopping center will encourage some customers to turn right from the planned exit at Glencoe Avenue and Stickney Point Road and then head onto Beechwood Avenue, meaning they will travel through the residential area before eventually heading back north on Tamiami Trail.

“That will create a shortcut through the neighborhood to get back north on [U.S.] 41,” Kochman explained.

Linda Hunter says an increase in traffic can further muddle the already-congested intersection, which Hunter calls the third worst in the county.



Before the Florida Department of Transportation improved a ‘No Turn on Red’ situation at the Stickney Point Road/Midnight Pass Road intersection this spring, complaints swelled about traffic tie-ups and vehicles backed onto U.S. 41. Residents fear that after the Benderson development opens, the extra traffic will exacerbate the Siesta situation once again. File photo



The Benderson property is located at the northwest corner of U.S. 41 and Stickney Point Road. Image from Google Maps

“It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out when you have that number of parking spaces, you will have that much more traffic,” Hunter said.

Hunter points to another Benderson project that is at the center of an expensive fix to ease traffic problems.

“We see what happened at University Town Center,” Hunter noted, referring to the big mall the firm is building off University Parkway. “Traffic considerations seem to be an afterthought.”

Hunter said she looks forward to being able to talk with Mathes about her concerns. “Todd has been honest about being willing work with us,” she added. “All of us just have to see what eventually will come of it.”

‘NOT OFF THE TABLE’

In 2006 and 2007, Benderson pitched a mixed-use project for the 24 acres, Mathes said.

That proposal has been scaled down with the residential component removed.

Even though that project had five-story buildings, residents say the earlier version had more trees and less parking lot asphalt, and

potentially fewer traffic impacts because of the homes it included.


“There was more green space,” said Lourdes Ramirez, president of the Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations and a county commission candidate who has been working with residents concerned about the project.

Kochman believes adding some residential space back into the plan — townhomes, in particular — and situating that between the existing residential community and the shopping center would be a “good transition.”

Hunter agrees that townhomes would be an improvement.

“I don’t know of any place that has single-family [homes] abutting a new project without any transition,” Hunter said.

Mathes told the *News Leader* that some residential use is “not off the table” as the developer finalizes its plans.

“But it will add traffic and we’re not sure that the type of residential that would be viable at the site would be embraced by our immediate neighbors,” Mathes wrote. “It’s a conversation and opportunity we’d like to keep exploring.” 



*A Second Chance
on My Smile.*

**KOVAL
&
KOVAL**
dental associates

I am so incredibly pleased, with my beautiful smile
and my comfortable and natural bite. - Barbara Lee

For a complimentary consultation call 941.923.5406 | Christine Koval, D.M.D. | www.askdrkoval.com



Barbara Lee

A Second Chance on My Smile.



**Awarded 20 Gold Medals
for Smile Makeovers by
the Florida Academy of
Cosmetic Dentistry.**

A smile is the first thing I notice about someone. However, that was the part of me I wanted to hide from everyone, including myself. In 2007, my family dentist of 30 years told me he could help. He then crowned all of my teeth. They looked better, but they immediately started to crack, one by one. He kept promising me he could correct them by re-making them. He was frustrated, but I was devastated. I then realized that I never received a stable, comfortable position to chew. My bite was totally off.

After four consultations with different dentists and lots of research, I chose Dr. Christine Koval for her warmth, reassurance, confidence, and experience in correcting bites and making teeth beautiful! Dr. Koval's team is very caring and professional, and her skill level is second to none. I am so incredibly pleased, not only with my beautiful smile but also with my comfortable and natural bite.

I feel so thankful and blessed for this second chance on my smile!

For a complimentary consultation call **941.923.5406**
To view our extensive smile gallery, visit **askdrkoval.com**

ENHANCE YOUR SMILE. ENHANCE YOUR LIFE.



A JUMP IN THE EXPENSE

Turtle Beach on south Siesta Key is popular with many people because it generally has less activity than the larger public beach. File photo

THE RENOURISHMENT OF SOUTH SIESTA KEY'S BEACH COULD COST AS MUCH AS \$18 MILLION, WELL ABOVE THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATE

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Sarasota County is facing a potential bill more than three times higher than the late January estimate to renourish about 2 miles of south Siesta Key shoreline, including Turtle Beach, staff told the County Commission on June 30.

Although Tourist Development Tax (TDT) funds earmarked for county projects total about \$15 million, the south Siesta expense “is now climbing towards \$18 million,” Steve Botelho, acting assistant county administrator and the county’s chief

financial planning officer, said during the board’s budget workshop. “All of the [county beach renourishment] fund balance could potentially be used for that project.”

However, Laird Wreford, the county’s manager of coastal resources — who had to leave the meeting before the discussion ensued — told *The Sarasota News Leader* the following day that he is hopeful the county will receive lower bids when the solicitation package is advertised. Still, he said, “We want

“ *We want to make sure that we don’t ... blindside our commission.*

Laird Wreford
Manager
Coastal Resources
Sarasota County



to make sure that we don't ... blindside our commission."

The south Siesta Key project discussion came as the commissioners wrestled with a means of providing faster renourishment for South Lido Key without having to rely on the dredging of Big Sarasota Pass. (See the related story in this issue.)

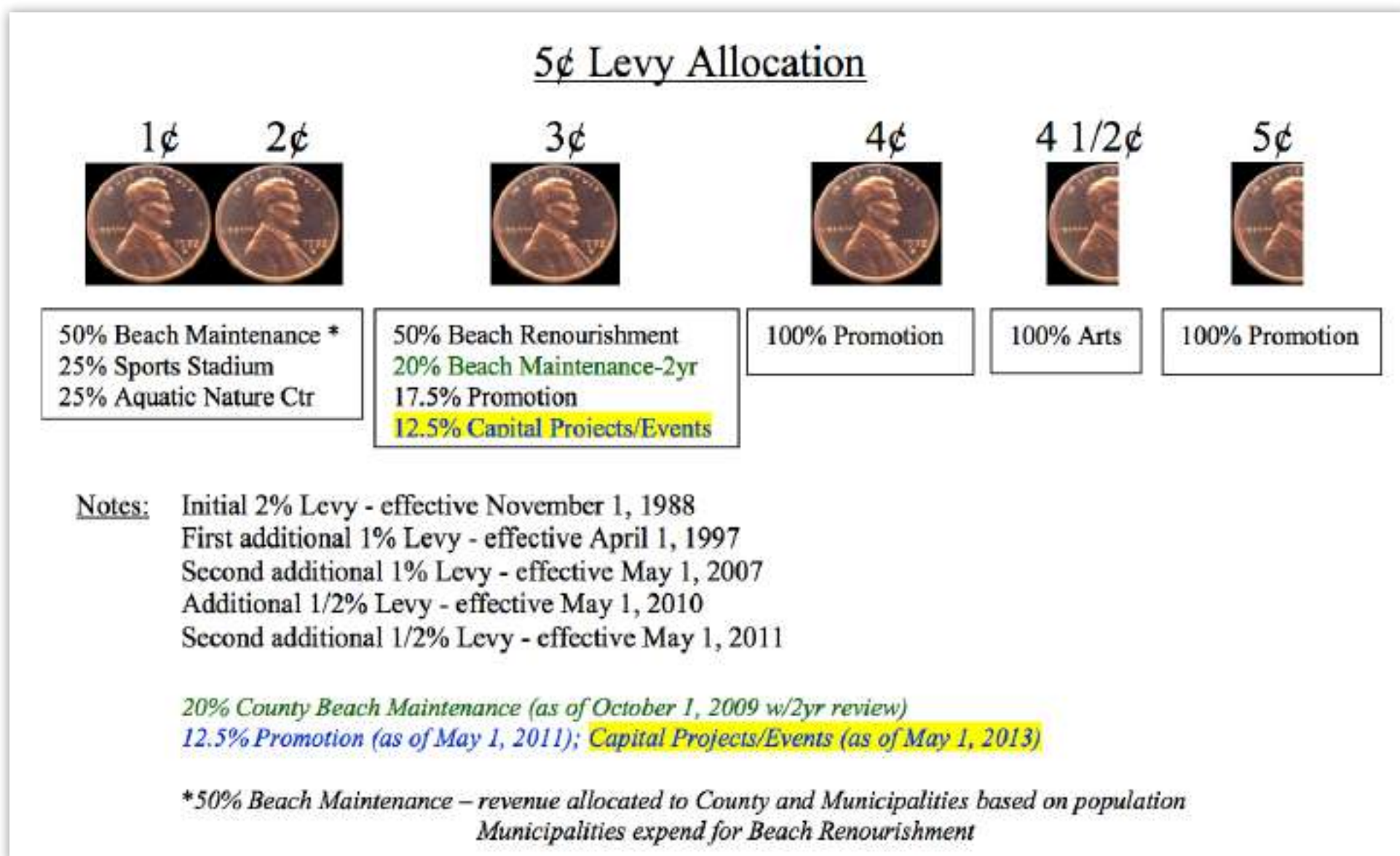
Matt Osterhoudt, acting director of the county's Natural Resources Department, attributed the rising estimate for the Siesta plan to circumstances following Hurricane Sandy's devastation of a wide stretch of the U.S. East Coast in the fall of 2012.

Wreford explained to the *News Leader* that as communities worked to recover from

Sandy's onslaught, 2013 "was an unbelievable boom year for firms able to do beach renourishment." Only a handful of companies have the capability to undertake such projects, he pointed out. With a huge boost in demand, he continued, a number of firms bought new equipment and hired more workers, and, as in any such supply-and-demand scenario, costs rose dramatically. It appears to have been a relatively temporary situation, Wreford said, "but it was very real."

This year, not nearly as many renourishment projects are under way, he noted.

Nonetheless, "There is a big question mark" regarding the south Siesta project, he said. "We got a very, very rough preliminary estimate" for the much higher cost, he added.



A chart shows how funds collected from the Tourist Development Tax are allocated for beach renourishment projects. Image courtesy Sarasota County

Yet another factor being figured into the south Siesta expense, he continued, is the necessity of obtaining sand about 2 miles further offshore than was necessary for the original project in 2006-07.

In terms of the state permitting process, Wreford told the *News Leader*, “We’ve actually made very good progress.” If things continue to go smoothly with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, he is hopeful the work can begin in January 2015. It has to be accomplished before or

after turtle-nesting season, which runs from May 1 through Oct. 31.

WORKING OUT THE DETAILS

Chief Financial Planning Officer Botelho and Osterhoudt, acting director of natural resources, explained to the county commissioners on June 30 that staff is working on a detailed discussion of the South Siesta Key Renourishment Project for their Aug. 20 budget workshop.



Parts of Turtle Beach suffered erosion problems as a result of Tropical Storm Debby's churning off the coast in June 2012. Photo courtesy Ron Flynn

"I guess I always thought that that was about a \$5 million project," Commissioner Joe Barbetta said of the plans.

Commissioner Nora Patterson, who lives on Siesta Key, also expressed astonishment at the news that the cost could potentially more than triple. "I hesitate [to question it], because you're always right, Steve," she told Botelho.

"This is recent information that we have just obtained, just prior to the budget workshops," Osterhoudt replied.

In early February, Wreford told the *News Leader* the estimated cost was about \$11 million, with approximately \$5.5 million expected to come from the TDT renourishment fund. The rest would be covered by a state grant along with assessments from adjacent property owners.

In late August 2013, Botelho noted in an email to the commissioners that the county's anticipated share of the cost was \$5 million.

During the June 30 meeting, Patterson pointed out that assessments covered about 18 percent of the expense of the original South Siesta Key Renourishment Project, which was completed in April 2007. "Some of [the area] is not really publicly accessible," she explained, which is why the county can ask property owners to help pay for the work.

The assessments were timed to end after eight years, she noted, before the next renourishment began.

Botelho said staff had figured on the state contributing about \$7 million to the new project, with assessments combining for



Matt Osterhoudt (left) and Laird Wreford appear before the County Commission on June 30. Photo by Norman Schimmel


approximately \$3 million and the final portion coming from the TDT fund.

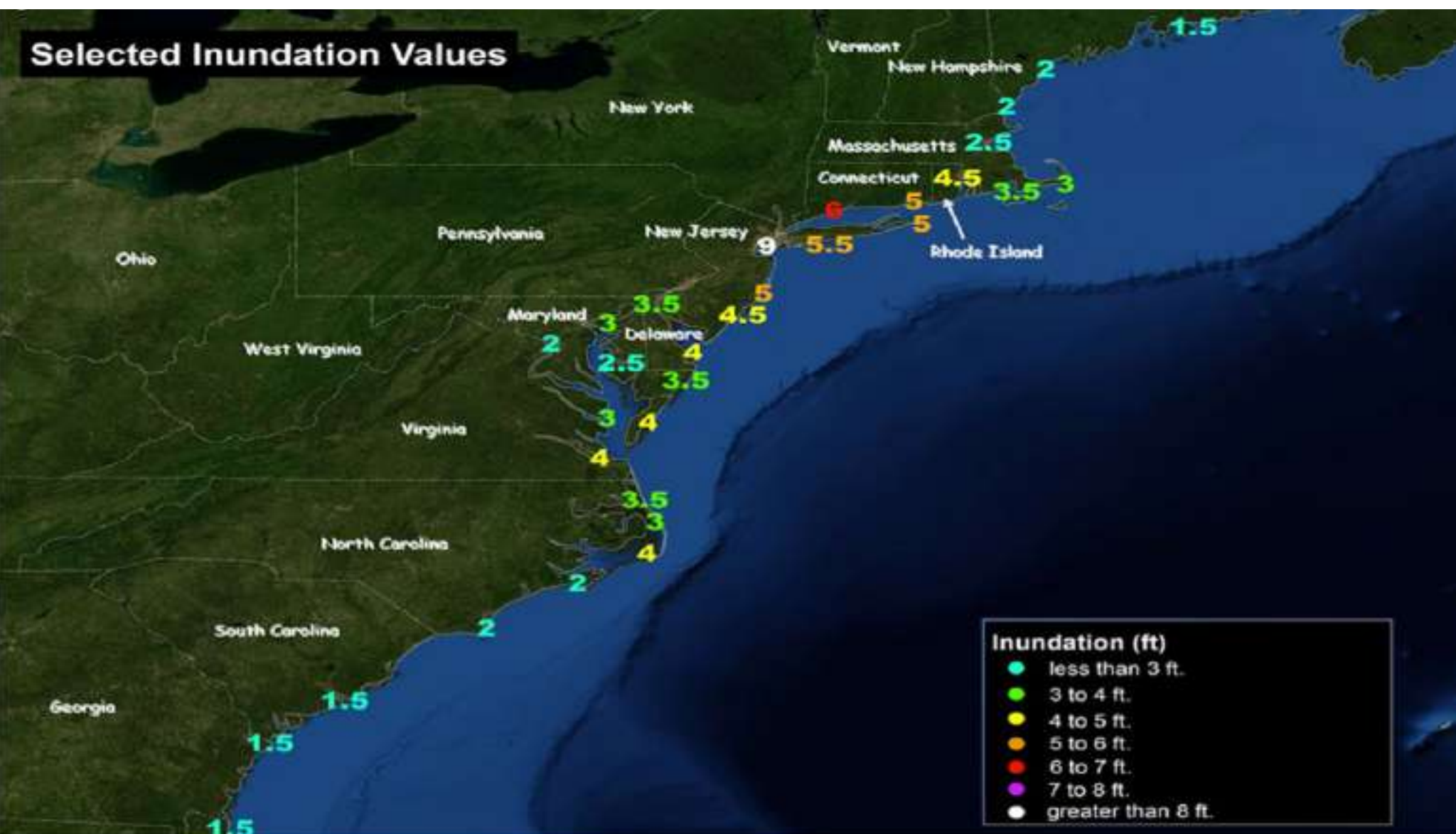
“Which would have left about \$10 million in the [TDT account for county renourishment efforts],” Barbetta noted.

The state money “might be in limbo,” Botelho said.

The South Siesta Renourishment Project “was shut out of the running” for state funding this year, Patterson pointed out, because of a ranking system that gave more points to plans that involved the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Recently, she continued, she had heard that state officials’ rethinking of that process could lead to the south Siesta project getting some money, though “my understanding was that it was substantially less [than the \$7 million].”

As the board members discussed both the upcoming south project and the suggestion that some of the county TDT funds be used to help the City of Sarasota add more sand to South Lido Beach, Patterson noted that the TDT renourishment account has been growing at a rate of about \$1.4 million a year, thanks to the rise in tourists’ spending. “We’ve never had as much cash as we currently have [in that account].” Therefore, she said, the funds could be used to enable the county to bond out the expense of upcoming projects.

In response to a request for clarification from Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson, staff and Patterson noted that separate renourishment accounts are set up for all the county municipalities that have shorelines. Robinson said the City of Venice is in the final stages of planning a project. 



A graphic from the National Hurricane Center shows a selection of aboveground high-water marks estimated along Hurricane Sandy’s path in the fall of 2012. Image from the National Hurricane Center



My Sunday Paper...

...two days early!

One of my favorite things to do is spend all day Sunday relaxing with the Sunday newspaper, reading it from cover to cover. Unfortunately, my old Sunday paper is mostly classified ads, real estate ads, ad inserts and very little in the way of real, informative news.

That's why I love the award-winning *Sarasota News Leader*. It is so full of news and features that relate to Sarasota County that I need a whole day to read it all ... perfect for a lazy Sunday afternoon. And reading it on my iPad means no trip to the recycling bin.

The Sarasota News Leader access e-mail is delivered to my inbox every Friday morning. Of course, I'm tempted to read some of it right away. Who could resist? But I know I have all day Sunday - in fact, all week - to read the No. 1 digital news weekly in Sarasota County.

The Sarasota News Leader - Your New Sunday Treat

SarasotaNewsLeader.com • Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.



AN EARFUL ON 2050

The area of the county east of Interstate 75, for which Sarasota 2050 was designed, has numerous cattle and horse pastures. File photo

PUBLIC WORKSHOP ATTENDEES PAN PROPOSED CHANGES TO SARASOTA 2050, BUT WILL IT MATTER?

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

A series of community meetings dedicated to explaining the final cluster of proposed changes to Sarasota County's 2050 land-use policy concluded this week with loud criticism from a number of residents and a series of tense exchanges with county staff. But will the feedback lead to any alterations in the 2050 rewrites? It remains an open question.

Sarasota 2050 was approved a decade or so ago with the goal of encouraging the construction of walkable, mixed-use communities in parts of the county previously

off-limits to dense development. But for years, the plan has been under fire from developers who say the regulations stifle their ability to build, and in late 2012, the County Commission instructed staff to begin reviewing the plan with an eye toward modifying it.

Several changes to the plan have already been approved, but the county has, over the past few weeks, organized three public

workshops to discuss the final phase of 12 alterations, which includes some of those most hotly contested. Perhaps

“*If we get this wrong and overbuild, you can't fix it.*”

Brian Keisacker
Sarasota County Resident

the most controversial? Fiscal neutrality, of course.

On Monday evening, June 30, during a four-hour marathon with around 50 attendees, county Long-Range Planning Manager Allen Parsons explained the concept of fiscal neutrality, the principle that a new neighborhood generates enough government revenue through impact fees and taxes to cover any additional burden on county services. One of

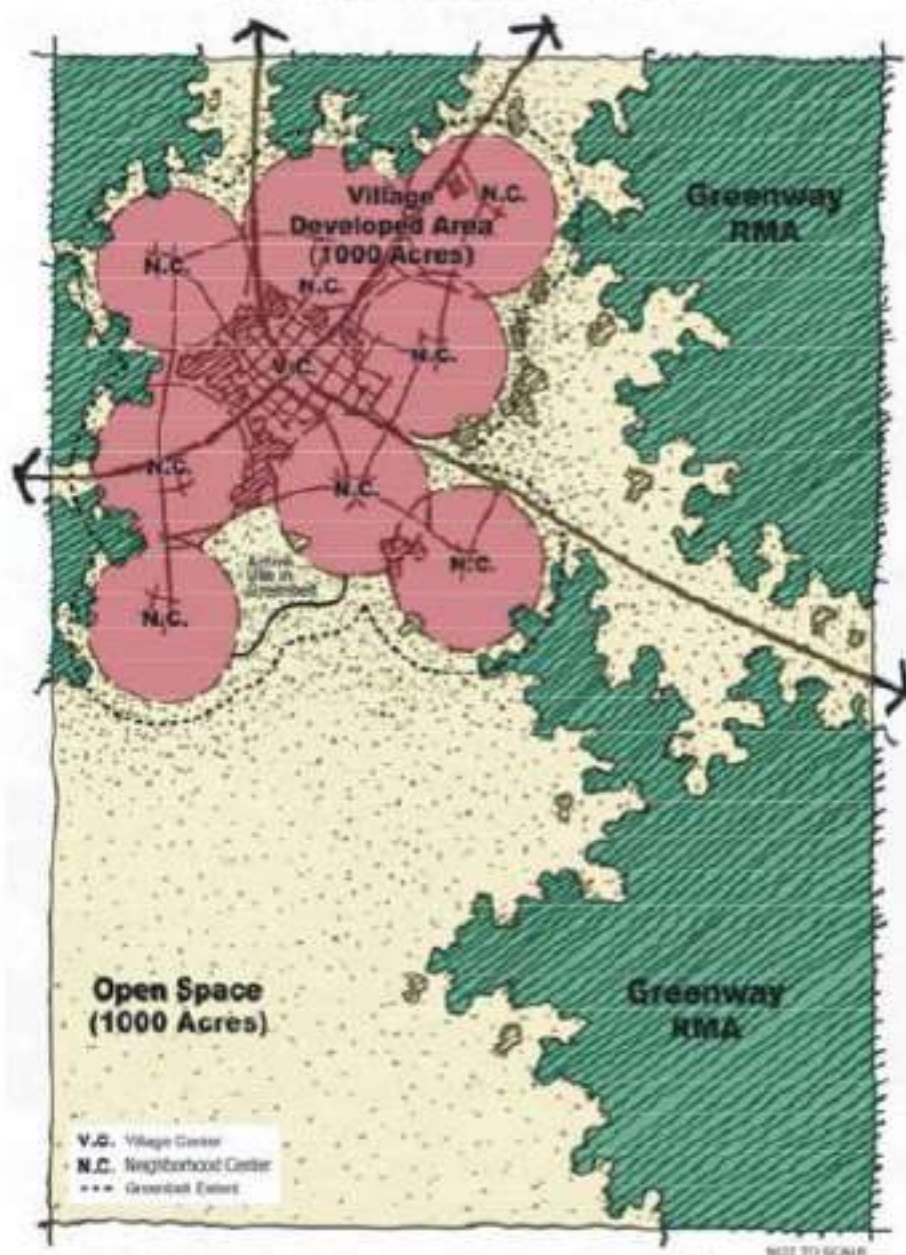
the county's proposals is to eliminate a 2050 requirement that a developer demonstrate fiscal neutrality at each phase of construction.

Attorney Dan Lobeck, a longtime critic of the move to overhaul 2050, argued that removing those future analyses would allow builders to submit fiscal neutrality reports that may not pan out, leaving taxpayers to foot the bills. "This is pernicious to the extreme," he said. Parsons countered that while a developer will

Consideration of Sarasota 2050 RMA Policy Revisited Phase 3

Village Development Form

**FIGURE VOS-1
EXAMPLE VILLAGE CONCEPT**



**Figure VOS-4
Village Center Prototype**
Maximum - 300,000
Minimum - 50,000



In late May, the County Commission saw a revised proposal for the development of villages under the 2050 plan. Image courtesy Sarasota County

not be required to submit a new fiscal neutrality “analysis,” one would be on the hook if his original projections were not borne out.

Lobeck continued pressing the point, saying the “impetus” for the changes to fiscal neutrality was the “radical Arduin report,” the controversial analysis put together by the Reagan-affiliated, hard-right economic firm Laffer Associates. The back-and-forth grew tense, with one man in the audience gesturing at Lobeck with his finger pointed down, shouting, “Sit down!” Another attendee applauded when that man and another left before the

meeting ended. Others criticized the County Commission for slashing impact fees while at the same time reviewing fiscal neutrality.

Attendees also objected to the portion of the 2050 rewrites that would allow so-called hamlets in eastern and southern parts of the county to be built closer together than previously allowed. “This is one of the worst things that’s come out of this,” said Wade Matthews, conservation chairman for the Sarasota Audubon Society. “It would do away with one of the better environmental things,



Undeveloped areas along eastern Fruitville Road create a pastoral setting. File photo


in my opinion, at least, of 2050.” He said he was “strongly opposed” to the plan.

“Under the current plan you’re guaranteed a minimum of 500 feet surrounding every development that’s a natural wildlife corridor, regardless of what’s built next door,” said attendee Brian Keisacker, criticizing the proposed greenbelt reduction. “That’s a big enough wildlife corridor that they can comfortably move. One hundred feet is way too small.”

As the meeting crawled into hour four and the crowd dwindled to a dozen or so, the discussion widened to encompass everything from green energy to the housing bubble to low-paying jobs in the region. County Commission candidates Lourdes Ramirez and Alexandra Coe both spoke and asked questions, and Parsons and other county staffers

pledged to carry the feedback generated back to the commission.

County Commission Chairman Charles Hines sat in the audience for more than an hour, listening to the debate. Will the criticism voiced Monday and at previous public workshops have an impact on how the commission perceives the issue? The board is tentatively scheduled to vote on the proposals on Aug. 27, after the Planning Commission takes a pass at them. Final approval could happen as soon as Oct. 22.

Keisacker summed up his opposition to the changes by saying the county should err on the side of allowing too little new development. The commission can always tweak the plan to allow more construction, he said, but “if we get this wrong and overbuild, you can’t fix it.” 

AFFORDABLE ACUPUNCTURE FOR EVERYONE

Our Mission

To provide our community with high quality and affordable acupuncture and herbal medicine and to create a treatment space that connects people and builds community.

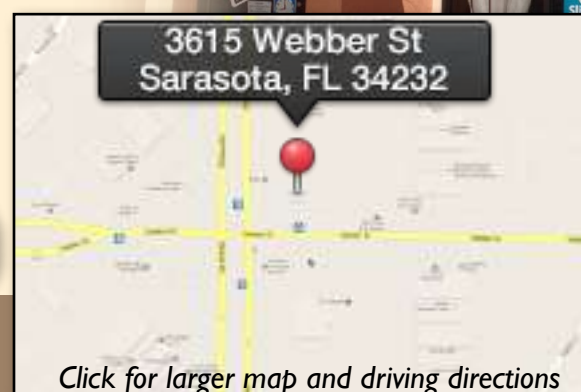
- Gene Burgess and Melonie Burgess, licensed acupuncture physicians
- Serving Sarasota since 2008
- Treatment rates are on a sliding scale, from \$15-\$35; new patients pay a one-time additional fee of \$10

[Click To Schedule An Appointment Online](#)

3615 Webber St • Sarasota, FL 34232
(941) 922-4611
SarasotaCommunityAcupuncture.com



MENTION
THIS AD TO
RECEIVE
\$5 OFF THE NEW
PATIENT FEE



Open Tuesday
through Saturday



A DIAMOND PLAN

The interchange of University Parkway and Interstate 75 is among those that garner significant complaints from drivers because of the amount of traffic. Photo by Roger Drouin

RESIDENTS ARE UNSURE WHETHER A BOLD INTERCHANGE PLAN FOR INTERSTATE 75 AND UNIVERSITY PARKWAY WILL WORK, BUT THEY SAY SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE, WITH TRAFFIC INTENSIFICATION ANTICIPATED

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

Every Thursday early evening, Bob McHale waits for his wife to return home from her “mahjong night” in Lakewood Ranch.

And every Thursday, heading west on University Parkway, she gets stuck in traffic. “If she wins, it’s a little better,” said McHale, one of the residents who attended a workshop held by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on Thursday, June 26.

The meeting offered members of the public their first look at FDOT’s proposed \$60-million diverging diamond interchange at University Parkway and Interstate 75.

McHale is not sure whether the bold plan will work. But he believes something has to be done. “It’s getting worse — very quickly,” added McHale, who lives in the Quail Run neighborhood on Lockwood Ridge Road.

“*Let’s remember the one at University is the first one in the State of Florida. We are the guinea pig.*”

Joe Barbetta
Commissioner
Sarasota County



One promising sign for McHale, he says, is that one of his neighbors is from Atlanta, and she has told him about a diverging diamond built there in 2012. “She said she loves it.”

State transportation officials working with local elected government leaders hope the diverging diamond at University Parkway will become the critical piece in a traffic improvement puzzle for the fast-growing area. With the new Mall at University Town Center scheduled to open in October, Benderson Park’s rowing facility preparing for the 2017 World Championships and an abundance of new homes planned, even more vehicles will be driving through the already congested intersection.

During Thursday’s meeting in a packed hotel conference room in Lakewood Ranch, some residents watched an FDOT video showing how the interchange would work (see the accompanying link) and looked at renderings of the design.

Lewis Dean, who lives close to the interstate, was among those interested in the details. Dean studied one of the renderings showing the proposed diverging diamond interchange and traffic signals on University Parkway. “Do they have a transportation management system to synchronize the lights, especially during peak hours?” he asked during an interview with *The Sarasota News Leader*. *The News Leader* was unable to answer that



“Do they have a transportation management system to synchronize the lights, especially during peak hours?”

Lewis Dean
Resident
Sarasota County



Residents say they encounter congestion on University Parkway from about 4 to 6 p.m. weekdays. When a vehicle crash occurs, as was the case on June 26, traffic is at a standstill. Photo by Roger Drouin

question, though Sarasota County over the past three years has been putting in place an Advanced Traffic Management System that facilitates traffic flow.

For McHale, there is another benefit to the changes besides keeping vehicles moving smoothly. “The dynamic of the area will help the economy.”

A FIRST IN FLORIDA

The diverging diamond interchange would be the first such design in Florida. But it probably will not be the last. FDOT is considering it for at least two additional intersections — at I-75 and Clark Road and at I-75 and Fruitville Road in Sarasota County.

That has County Commissioner Joe Barbetta worried.

“Let’s remember the one at University is the first one in the State of Florida,” Barbetta said during a County Commission budget workshop on June 27. “We are the guinea pig.”

It was surprising to learn that FDOT is planning at least two more of the interchanges without first “waiting to see how it works” at University,” Barbetta added.

MORE QUESTIONS

The layout at University Parkway and I-75 will require the traffic on University Parkway to briefly switch sides. That will mean the two traffic lights will become “two-phase” signals.



The Florida Department of Transportation has provided a new video about the diverging diamond interchange planned for Interstate 75 and University Parkway. To view it, click [here](#). Video courtesy of FDOT

The design will remove the need for left turns across University, onto and off the interstate. In concept, that should reduce traffic delays and crashes.

State officials say a diverging diamond will work best at the site because the design can handle more traffic than a standard “clover-leaf” intersection. Even though this type of intersection is new — the first was built in Missouri in 2009 — it has been working, and by the end of 2015, as many as 70 could be in use throughout the country, transportation officials say. Along with Missouri, Kentucky and Utah have diverging diamonds.

Still, like other residents of Sarasota and Manatee counties, local mobility advocate Rod Warner, who attended the public workshop, has questions.

Most of the other diverging diamonds built in the United States are in “rural areas with less conflict points” than those at I-75/University Parkway, Warner noted.

While FDOT engineers point to the new design as being capable of handling increased traffic flow in the future, Warner wants to see data showing that it can do that while reducing the number of crashes. “What studies have taken place after the fact, showing that the diverging diamond has done what the designers say it will do and what the FDOT is promising it will do?” Warner asked in an interview with the *News Leader*.

He has asked state transportation officials if they considered other options for the interstate, he added. “The design consultant said they did,” Warner told the *News Leader*. “They



The June 26 workshop was the public's first opportunity to look at the Florida Department of Transportation's plan for a \$60-million diverging diamond interchange. Photo by Roger Drouin

said a plan for a roundabout at Interstate 75 and University would call for [seven lanes].”

Warner, a roundabout proponent, thinks that might be overkill. “A seven-lane roundabout would be so bizarre,” he pointed out.

Nonetheless, it has become clear that FDOT officials are “planning for huge growth into the future,” Warner said. For example, FDOT engineers are also working on plans to expand I-75 to 12 lanes.

While it is focused on construction of the interchange, FDOT is expecting Sarasota and Manatee counties to take the lead on roadway improvements needed to make it function smoothly. Sarasota County will be relying to some extent on help from Schroeder Manatee Ranch Inc., developer of Lakewood

Ranch, and Benderson, developer of the new Mall at University Town Center. Both firms are obligated to assist with infrastructure improvements under the terms of development agreements with the county and impact fee guidelines.

COUNTY COMMISSION CONCERNS

At a Sarasota Tiger Bay Club meeting last month, state Rep. Greg Steube, R-Sarasota, pointed out that an alternative funding scheme could provide state money for the diverging diamond project even though an FDOT request for state assistance this year failed.

Momentum does appear to be building. The project is in the design phase already; the state does not need to purchase any extra right of



Attendees at the July 26 meeting watch a video explaining how a diverging diamond functions. Photo by Roger Drouin

way for it (a process that usually takes years); and FDOT, as noted earlier, is showcasing the diverging diamond statewide as a new interchange model.

In 2013, the Sarasota County commissioners were initially hesitant about the project, voicing concerns about the scale of it and how much FDOT estimated their financial investment in it would be. Then this spring, they backed a scaled-down proposal, approving a resolution supporting the diverging diamond.

Yet, during the June 27 County Commission budget workshop, Barbetta was not the only one to raise concerns. Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson said she learned about the two other diverging diamond proposals — for the interstate's interchanges with Clark Road and Fruitville Road — from an article last week in the *Herald-Tribune*. “I really feel these FDOT projects are just popping up and taking us by surprise. ... We really need to have a conversation with FDOT about partnering with us, as opposed to us just being there,” Robinson added.

“Not a word of any of that was raised at the [recent [Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization](#)] meeting,” Robinson pointed out. “It is troublesome to me that


we stumbled upon these things, and FDOT doesn't tell what they are doing.”

Robinson said she would like to hear about FDOT's big projects earlier rather than later. “A lot of times lately, I've heard, ‘We have already planned it,’” she continued. “There has got to be a better way.”

“You are right on the money,” Barbetta responded.

Commissioner Nora Patterson noted that another issue is whether FDOT will expect the county to help pay for local improvements that will be needed at the other intersections.

“The one we are talking about at University, they are saying, requires \$25 million of local money and [FDOT officials] are upset we haven't budgeted it, in part, because we didn't know [about] it until fairly recently,” Patterson said. “What are the implications for these other intersections? If it is similar, it completely breaks the bank.”

Isaac Brownman, Sarasota County's director of public works, replied, “These interchanges have been in the FDOT work program for some time, but not as diverging diamond interchanges. ... That is the concern. When do those decisions get made and why aren't we involved in it?” 

FREE SUBSCRIPTION

Don't have your own subscription to *The Sarasota News Leader*?

Subscribe for FREE and receive a weekly notification when the latest issue is available online.

SUBSCRIBE

AN INTERIM SOLUTION



Matt Osterhoudt (left) and Laird Wreford participate in the County Commission discussion on June 30. Photo by Norman Schimmel

A SHORT-TERM PLAN TO ADD MORE SAND TO LIDO BEACH IS WELL RECEIVED, BUT A MORE AMBITIOUS ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PROPOSAL REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

A short-term City of Sarasota plan to renourish a section of Lido Beach that suffered significant damage from Tropical Storm Debby in 2012 may prove an interim solution to controversy over the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposal for a \$19 million, 50-year plan to stabilize Lido Key at potential expense to Siesta Key.

The Sarasota County Commission was eager Monday to see if its staff and city staff

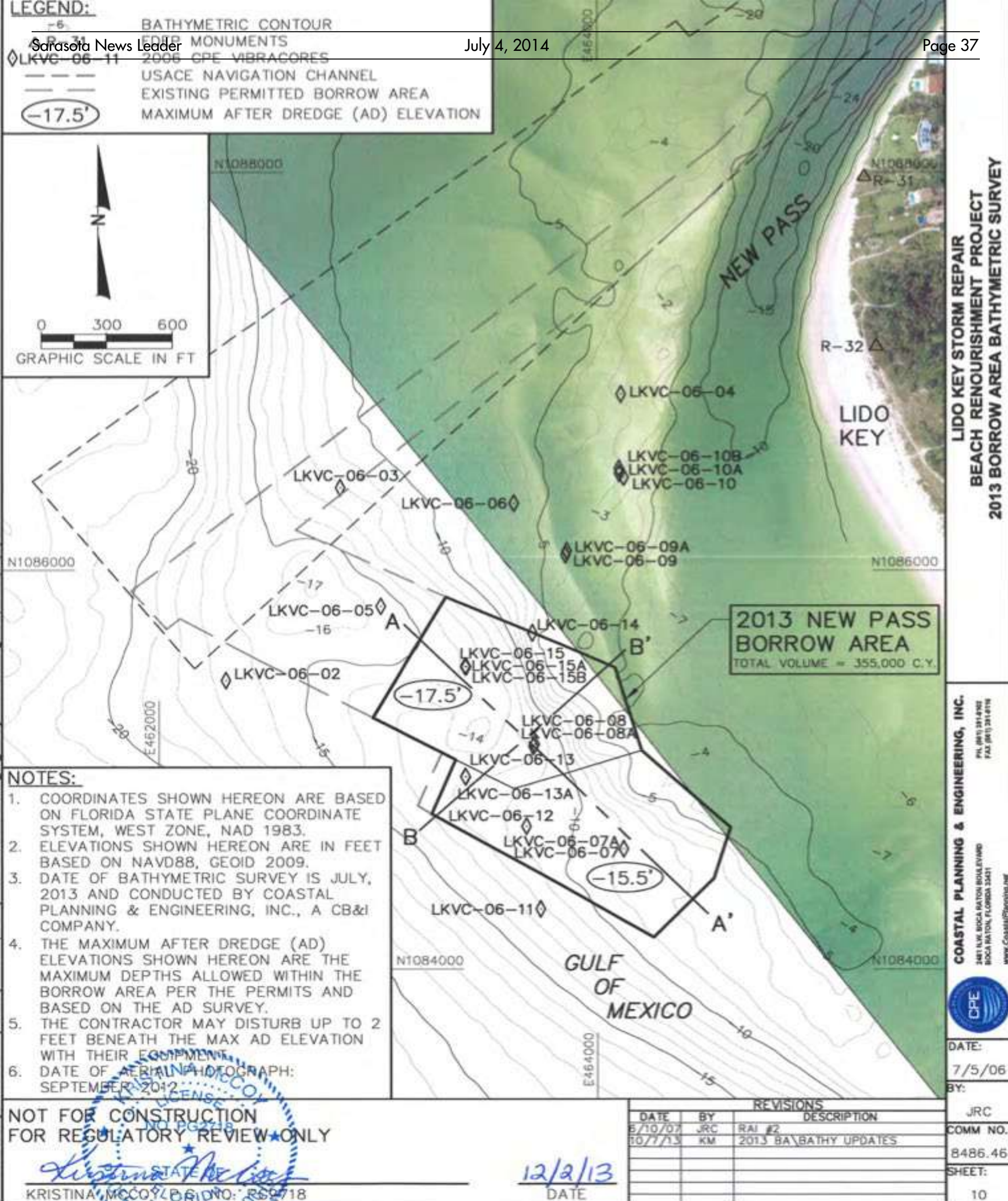
can make the initiative work, especially given Lido Key residents' increasingly plaintive pleas for help and Siesta residents' increasing alarm at the Army Corps proposal.

"When you look at the emails and see how passionate people are, you see it has become Siesta versus Lido, and it's unfortunate," said County Commissioner Joe Barbetta during his board's June 30 workshop. "It should not be like that. We're all in this together."

“ *The action taken ... allows everyone to step back and discuss what's best for the coastal area.*

Rob Patten
Environmental Advocate
Sarasota County

”



The short-term plan would shore up the southern third of Lido's beach while allowing local officials to delve more deeply into the details of the Army Corps' proposal. This interim solution, characterized as "the Debby project," is roughly one-tenth of the scope of the Army Corps' plan for dredging 1.3 million cubic yards of sand from Big Sarasota Pass and constructing three groins to stabilize 1.6 miles of the Lido beach.

The county commissioners said they would support using additional Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenue set aside for renourishment projects to help the city cover the extra cost, if it turns out the Debby project proves feasible.

In 2012, a segment of Lido beach sustained significant damage when Tropical Storm Debby sat offshore for days. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has already given the city a permit to dredge 120,000 cubic yards of sand from New Pass to shore up the most affected portion of the beach. City Engineer Alex DavisShaw estimates a total of 200,000 cubic yards of sand could be placed on the shore without the city's having to seek a new permit.

The County Commission voted unanimously to work with the city on the plan. The city has commissioned a new survey this month to determine how much more the affected area of beach has eroded since Debby's wind



Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson (left) and Commissioner Nora Patterson study graphics during the presentation. Photo by Rachel Hackney



Lido Key Residents Association President Carl Shoffstall offers his comments on June 30. Photo by Norman Schimmel

and wave action ate away sand in 2012. The FEMA project could start as early as this fall.

BREATHING ROOM

Residents worried about the Army Corps proposal to dredge Big Pass and build groins on South Lido Key say “piggybacking” on the FEMA project makes sense.

It gives the community some breathing room, said Rob Patten, an environmental advocate and former Sarasota County ecologist.

“We get a chance to do the due diligence we want to do,” Patten added, referring to the Army Corps’ modeling for the city’s bigger Lido Renourishment Project.

“The action taken yesterday allows everyone to step back and discuss what’s best for

the coastal area,” Patten told *The Sarasota News Leader* on July 1. “The coastal system includes the entire west coast of Florida and different cells within that geographic area. You can’t take one pass or island and make a plan without impacting others.”

WANTS AND NEEDS

In discussing the financing of the Debby project on Monday, Commissioner Nora Patterson pointed out, “[The city commissioners] don’t have sufficient monies for that. However the county does.”

“I think the need is obvious,” Patterson added.

Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson said expanding the storm repair project makes sense because “clearly, they have an immediate need” on Lido Key.



(From left) County Coastal Resources Manager Laird Wreford, Siesta Key Association Vice President Catherine Luckner and Acting Natural Resources Director Matt Osterhoudt prepare for the start of the discussion on June 30. Photo by Norman Schimmel



Rob Patten offers his thoughts on the Lido renourishment plans. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Lido Key Residents Association President Carl Shoffstall told the commissioners on Monday that high tide in the Gulf of Mexico already reaches the base of one condominium tower on Lido Key. Something has to be done to protect homeowners on the island, he added.

He was among those who voiced support for expanding the Debby renourishment, but he said that project is only a “drop in the bucket” when it comes to a solution for Lido’s erosion problems.

Patterson’s suggestion about using TDT money to help the city was well received as well.

“I think it’s great,” said Siesta resident and boating advocate Peter van Roekens. “This is something that will make a difference now.”

He concurred with Patten that being able to pursue the short-term project would allow time for further study of the Army Corps report, along with extensive public input and a county peer review of the Army Corps’ modeling.

One potential proverbial monkey wrench in the works, however, is an elevated cost estimate for the upcoming renourishment of South Siesta Key. (See the related story in this issue.)

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND MORE REVIEW

The feasibility of the Army Corps’ proposed \$19 million project will come down to more input and more review over the next few months. On July 23, residents will be able to offer comments on it when the City of Sarasota hosts two public sessions. They will be considered the beginning of the Army Corps’ “scoping process.”


Additionally, over the next few weeks, at the direction of the county commissioners on Monday, county staff will focus on how the proposal affects county property, with the Army Corps planning to put one groin on the site of the county’s Ted Sperling Park on South Lido. The other two are planned to be constructed north of that one. The commissioners also asked Laird Wreford, the county’s director of coastal resources, to be prepared to advise them next month on whether they should hire an independent consultant to review the Army Corps’ report, particularly in regard to those points.

Patterson said Monday that she would like to see the county hire a consultant who has no ties to Army Corps projects, a completely independent firm that would win the approval of both Lido and Siesta residents.

“One of the qualifications [is] that they don’t make a sub part of their firm’s living doing work for the Army Corps, which will immediately create some questions, whether they are justified or not,” Patterson pointed out.

Patterson added that she also would like to see the consultant take a close look at potential impacts to Siesta Key, navigation in Big Pass and the long-term future of Lido Beach.

“There are a lot of firms that do this kind of work,” Commissioner Barbetta noted. “What I want to avoid is the public being skeptical if we choose a local firm or a firm we have worked with before.”

Patterson requested details, too, about whether the county would have to approve an easement for the city to allow the groin to be built in Sperling Park. “It may be that the consultant may have some suggestions, in addition to our county attorney,” Patterson said. “Maybe that needs a little more fleshing out.” 



NEEDED: A RESOLUTION

Visitors to Warm Mineral Springs rave about the healing effects of the water. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL DISCUSS THE FUTURE — AND POSSIBLE SALE TO NORTH PORT — OF WARM MINERAL SPRINGS DURING THEIR JULY 8 AFTERNOON SESSION

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

On Tuesday, July 8, in Venice, the Sarasota County Commission will discuss a response to a letter the North Port City Commission sent it last week requesting the advertisement of another short-term operation bid for Warm Mineral Springs.

That could include a proposal to sell the property to the City of North Port, commissioners indicated last week.

The item will be the last one on the agenda that day, the commissioners agreed this week, and public comments will be accepted right before the discussion begins instead of during

the *Open to the Public* part of the afternoon session, which will start at 1:30 p.m.

County Administrator Tom Harmer estimated that if all the other business on the agenda flows

“ *This can’t be in perpetual short-term operation mode, which is what [North Port Mayor James Blucher’s June 26] letter says.* ”

Christine Robinson
Vice Chairwoman
Sarasota County Commission

smoothly, the board could begin the Warm Mineral Springs discussion around 4 p.m.

A day after the two boards [failed to agree](#) on a firm to handle the long-term operation of the 81-acre resort, the North Port Commission sought to renew the short-term management process because the contract for National and State Parks Concessions to keep the Springs open just for swimming will end on Aug. 31.

Carolyn Brown, the county's director of parks and recreation, notified Harmer on June 25 that during a special North Port Commission meeting, Commissioner Linda Yates made a motion to direct staff, pending agreement from the county board, to amend the short-term management solicitation process through which National and State Parks Concessions was hired to provide for a one-year contract

and then re-advertise it. All the other North Port commissioners approved the motion except Mayor James Blucher.

In the letter Blucher sent the County Commission on June 26, he wrote that if the county board agreed to the city commission's request, city staff would issue the new bid solicitation.

The County Commission discussed the request near the end of its budget workshop on June 27.

Robert Zabler, a resident who has addressed the board many times on the issue of Warm Mineral Springs, used the *Open to the Public* session at the end of the workshop to ask the commissioners to sell the property to the City of North Port.



The U.S. Geological Survey is undertaking a study of changes in the Springs over time. Photo courtesy Sarasota County



Mayor James Blucher
Vice-Mayor Rhonda Y. DiFranco
Commissioner Cheryl Cook
Commissioner Tom Jones
Commissioner Linda M. Yates

June 26, 2014

Mr. Charles D. Hines
Commission Chair
Sarasota County
1660 Ringling Blvd
Sarasota, FL 34236

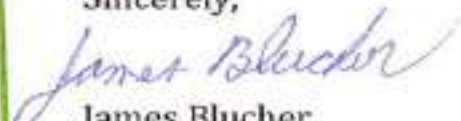
Re: Warm Mineral Springs

Dear Chair Hines:

At a special meeting on June 25, 2014 the City Commission approved the following motion: "Direct staff, pending County Commission approval, to put out a solicitation for the short term management agreement using the previous management solicitation changing the term to one year." With that motion being approved the City is requesting that the County Commission take action to approve the issuance of another short term competitive selection for site management. That competitive selection would be exactly the same as the one agreed to previously by the City and County and issued by the City in January of 2014.

If the County Commission votes to approve this action City staff would issue the competitive selection without further action needed by City Commission. It is believed that if that occurs the City and County Commissions can prevent the closure of Warm Mineral Springs for the next year.

Sincerely,



James Blucher
Mayor

CC: North Port City Commission
Sarasota County Commission
Jonathan Lewis, City Manager
Daniel Schult, Assistant City Manager
Helen Raimbeau, City Clerk
Thomas Harmer, County Administrator



Achieve Anything
www.cityofnorthport.com

North Port City Commission: 941.429.7064, 4970 City Hall Boulevard, North Port, FL 34286

The boards jointly purchased the property in December 2010 for \$5.5 million.

“We bought the property really, as much as anything, as a favor to North Port and also to make sure, ironically ... [that] the Springs not be overdeveloped,” County Commissioner Nora Patterson pointed out. “Making it into a park is not what we bargained for. ... I would be happy to sell the property at this point to [the North Port city commissioners]. ... I’m not willing to buy it. ... If they want 100 percent of it [to carry out their vision], their municipality needs to pay for it.”

Patterson added that the matter needs to be resolved. “And I don’t think we should be bitter about it, maybe disappointed.”

“If North Port wants to buy us out ... fine,” Chairman Charles Hines concurred. “Let it be a city park. ... I’m open to that, but I disagree about putting it back out to bid.” Hines added that the County Commission has spent a disproportionate amount of time on the future of Warm Mineral Springs over the past 21 months.

“We’ve got a two-and-three-quarter-million-dollar investment on behalf of 385,000 people, and we have an obligation, a fiduciary responsibility to make that investment work, and it’s not working,” Commissioner Joe Barbetta pointed out.



The solicitation package advertised earlier this year for a long-term operation of Warm Mineral Springs contained this map showing existing land uses on the site. Image courtesy Sarasota County

He could not possibly support another short-term agreement, he added. “If the Springs close, so be it. It’s not our fault. It’s the fault of the North Port commissioners.”

Hines reminded his colleagues that Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson proposed last year that the county purchase the property from North Port. The motion carried the stipulation that the city de-annex the site.

During the County Commission’s Jan. 29, 2013, meeting, Robinson won support from her colleagues on a motion to buy the Springs from North Port for \$2 million. However, then-North Port Mayor Linda Yates told *The Sarasota News Leader* at the time that the offer represented “a major, significant financial burden on South County residents.” She declined to go into more detail. Yet, two weeks earlier, the city board had asked whether the county would buy out the city’s interest.

On Feb. 11, 2013, the North Port Commission voted unanimously to reject the offer put together by Robinson, with then-Vice Mayor Blucher calling it “Terrible.”

However, the city did not make a counter-offer. In April 2013, the boards ended up

discussing the future of the Springs during a facilitated “conflict resolution” meeting held under the guidelines of a state statute. That led to renewed negotiation over the short-term contract and ultimately the presentation last week by two firms that bid on the long-term operation, Jebco Ventures in association with Angelshot LLC, both of Sarasota, and National and State Parks Concessions, which is based in Hobe Sound.

On June 27, Hines told his colleagues, “I do not want to see the Springs closed. I think that’s horrible.”

When Barbetta pointed out that the public comments likely will take up a lot of the County Commission’s time on July 8, Hines replied, “We’ll do the best to manage it.”

“That’s part of our job,” Patterson pointed out.

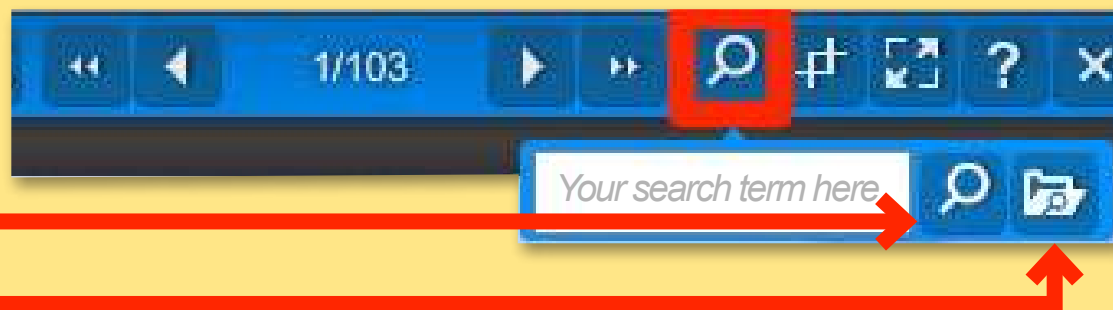
“I think the public deserves the opportunity to let us know how they feel about it before we take [a] vote,” Robinson said, adding, “This can’t be in perpetual short-term operation mode, which is what [Blucher’s June 26] letter says.”

Associate Editor Cooper Levey-Baker contributed to this story. 

QUICK TIP

Search Only The Issue You Are Viewing

Search All Issues



Search for text in stories by clicking the  icon in the menubar and entering a search term. Search the current edition or all editions.



A GROWING CITY TAX BASE

Some special taxing districts in downtown Sarasota saw larger increases in property values than others. Photo by Norman Schimmel

THE OVERALL PROPERTY VALUE OF THE CITY OF SARASOTA AND ITS SPECIAL DISTRICTS IS UP MORE THAN 5 PERCENT

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

The value of property this year for tax purposes is 5.35 percent greater for the City of Sarasota, comparing certified tax rolls from 2014 and 2013. The roll is submitted every July 1 by Sarasota County Property Appraiser Bill Furst to the Florida Department of Revenue for review. The consolidated appraisals comprise the roll and represent a “snapshot” of values on Jan. 1.

LESS GOOD NEWS FOR DOWNTOWN

Downtown property values lagged behind the overall city increase. The area comprising the Downtown Improvement District (DID) saw

assessments increase by a mere 0.62 percent, a statistical blip. Last week, the DID’s board of directors was told it had no more money to pursue downtown projects because its budget is tied up in bond payments and maintenance of existing projects.

The tax roll also increases when new buildings are added. With more hotels and retail space in the State Street parking garage under construction in the DID’s area, the roll will rise. But because the roll is “frozen” as of Jan. 1, none of the new construction under way downtown will show up on next year’s DID tax roll.

The news was not quite as drastic for the downtown Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), another taxing agency with much bigger boundaries than the DID. The downtown CRA saw a 4.29 percent jump in value.

And the Newtown CRA, for the first time since its inception, saw a rise in value, 4.0 percent. The funds for the two CRAs are fungible, with money often moved from the downtown agency to pay for projects in the Newtown agency. However, the money raised by the CRAs must be spent in the area encompassed by the agencies. It is not available for other areas or for citywide uses.

WATERFRONT DOES WELL

The two self-taxing districts near the waterfront did well. The St. Armands Business Improvement District (BID) showed the biggest gain in taxable value. It jumped 6.5 percent. The Golden Gate area — which taxes itself for civic improvements and beautification — saw a 5.31 percent increase in value.

The increases will allow both venues to keep pace with inflation, with money left over to fund future activities and improvements.

The roll is used by taxing bodies in the city and county to help set the budgets. Tax rates are levied against the roll to generate revenue.

	<u>July 1, 2014</u> <u>Certification</u>	<u>July 1, 2013</u> <u>Certification</u>	Percent Increase
City of Sarasota	7,591,158,499	7,205,951,871	5.35%
Downtown CRA	1,757,453,891	1,685,222,625	4.29%
Newtown CRA	106,907,386	102,797,757	4.00%
St. Armands BID	118,965,902	111,708,158	6.50%
Golden Gate	193,748,185	183,980,145	5.31%
DID	180,860,220	179,737,494	0.62%

A chart shows the changes in the certified City of Sarasota tax rolls from July 1, 2013, to July 1, 2014. Image courtesy John Lege, City of Sarasota finance director

Taxes can increase because assessments are up, or governing bodies can raise the rates, or both actions can happen. If the Sarasota city commissioners vote this summer to hold the tax rate steady, owners could still expect to receive bills 5.35 percent higher than those they received last year (on average). Each property assessment is unique.

APPLES TO WATERMELONS

The office of Property Appraiser Furst released another table that has some academic use for local government finance departments, but

it is not helpful in comparing year-to-year trends. It also shows the July 1, 2014, certified tax roll, but it compares that with the value of all property at the end of the prior tax year.

Every year, some property owners believe their tax assessments are too high, and they appeal to the Value Adjustment Board for relief. Even a small amount of relief, in the aggregate, can produce big swings in the percentage increases.

For example, the DID appraisal for last year's roll — released by July 1, 2013 — was



Property in the Golden Gate Point district on the Sarasota bayfront realized a 5.31 percent increase in value year-over-year. Photo by Norman Schimmel

\$179,737,494. But after appeals, the overall number was down to \$177,693,164 by the end of the tax year. While the difference is only about \$2 million, it makes for a big jump in the DID's overall increase when one is comparing this year's July 1 tax roll to the end of last year's adjusted roll — to 1.78 percent from 0.62 percent.


The smaller figure (0.62 percent) comes from measuring the “apples-to-apples” tax roll certifications of July 1 in 2013 and 2014.

Because the State of Florida requires local governments to calibrate their “full market value” property tax assessments, create budgets and establish tax rates, budget “reality” runs at least a year behind market reality.

For another example, the July 1 tax roll reflects the reality of a Jan. 1 real estate

market. The new budgets go into effect on Oct. 1, but taxes generally will not be paid until November. And then the cycle will start all over again.

Both the City and County of Sarasota held their millage rates steady during the economic downturn, providing six years of straight tax reductions for property owners. Both governments have nearly exhausted their “rainy day,” or economic uncertainty, reserves to maintain services in the face of plunging property values (and hence plunging tax revenue).

This has political consequences because, on average, property in Sarasota County changes hands about once every six years. Thus, there is a new generation of owners who have never experienced anything but reductions in their property taxes. 

THE SARASOTA News Leader

Old school journalism. 21st century delivery.

Available for FREE every Friday

The most comprehensive, unbiased
coverage of local news and government
in the Sarasota County area.

*Read it on your iPad, iPhone, Kindle, Nook, Android, Laptop,
Computer or other Smartphones*

The award-winning Sarasota News Leader
Sarasota County's #1 digital news weekly!

Read it online today at SarasotaNewsLeader.com/current



ROADS AND DRIVERS' LICENSES



A schematic shows the plan for renovating space in the county's R.L. Anderson Administration Center in Venice to enable the Tax Collector's Office to handle more driver's license renewals. Image courtesy Sarasota County

THE COUNTY COMMISSION ALLOCATES MORE MONEY TO PAVING FOR THE NEXT FISCAL YEAR AND AGREES TO PAY FOR RENOVATIONS NEEDED BY THE TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

An extra \$1,725,000 for road resurfacing and \$1.8 million for the remodeling of the Terrace Building in downtown Sarasota and the R.L. Anderson Administration Center in Venice won unanimous nods this week from the Sarasota County Commission.

However, a decision about proceeding with renovations of the South County courtroom facilities in the Anderson Center will remain on hold at

least until the board has its next budget workshop, which is set for Aug. 20. That decision was pegged to uncertainty about how much money the board might need to make the media center in the planned Sarasota County Technical Institute

I want the [courtroom renovations] to happen in the worst way, but I also want to make a decision based upon numbers and the financial feasibility.

Christine Robinson
Vice Chairwoman
Sarasota County Commission

(SCTI) in North Port a shared space with the public. Sarasota County School District staff is not at the point where it can provide an estimate, county staff told the commissioners during their June 30 budget workshop.

A \$1.65 million request for improvements at the Sarasota County Fairgrounds, including lobby renovations of the arena and replacement of the fixed seating, was shot down altogether. “We’re putting Band-Aids and duct tape on a building that’s *way* beyond its useful life. Way beyond,” Commissioner Joe Barbetta said.

Board members also voiced frustration over the fact that the county will have to pick up the approximately \$5 million tab for a new 9,100-square-foot Mid-County Tax Collector’s Office with a driving test range because the Florida Legislature mandated that county tax collector offices “assume all driver’s license issuance services” by June 30, 2015, as a county graphic put it. [The renovations](#) the commissioners approved on June 30 for the

Terrace and Anderson buildings also are necessary because of the state action.

Isaac Brownman, the county’s public works director, explained that all the contractual items related to the purchase of the 6.5-acre site and construction of the new mid-county facilities will come before the board at its July 8 meeting in Venice.

THE ROADS

On the first of several votes on June 30, the commissioners unanimously agreed to a motion by Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson to add \$1,725,000 to the \$8,275,000 already allotted for road resurfacing in the 2015 fiscal year. Chief County Engineer James K. Harriott Jr. told the board on June 27 — as he had last year during budget workshops



Public Works - Transportation & Real Estate

Traffic Circulation (continued)

Project	ATD	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	Total
95702 Roadway Resurfacing	39,366,015	8,275,000	8,025,000	8,025,000	8,025,000	5,500,000	77,216,015
95703 Sidewalk Program	1,558,775	800,000	800,000	900,000	900,000	1,000,000	5,958,775
95704 Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program	10,100,000	2,359,513	2,059,513	2,059,513	1,404,513	800,000	18,783,052
95707 Sumter Boulevard Widening	1,900,000	100,000	0	0	0	0	2,000,000
95727 Pinebrook Road/E. Venice Avenue Intersection Improvements	0	0	0	1,600,000	200,000	0	1,800,000

A chart shows projected spending for county road resurfacing for fiscal years 2015 through 2019. The County Commission voted to allocate an extra \$1,725,000 to the work for the next fiscal year. Image courtesy Sarasota County

— that the county would have to allocate \$10 million a year to paving if it wanted to keep no more than 40 percent of its roads at or below a rating at which surface problems prompt public complaints.

“You’re putting in about eight-and-a-half million [dollars] per year,” Harriott said in response to a question from Robinson. Factors have not changed substantially from last year, he added, when he offered the \$10 million estimate. “We’re holding steady.”

Robinson said she already is noticing numerous potholes in South County and expects the situation to worsen as the rainy season continues.

After she ran some calculations of her own with numbers staff provided to the board,

Robinson told *The Sarasota News Leader* the county is projected to see a deficit of \$10,425,000 in its road resurfacing needs from FY 2016 through FY 2019 because it has not budgeted \$10 million per year to maintain the 40-percent mark Harriott referenced. The planned amount for repaving in the 2016 fiscal year, for example, is \$8,025,000; by the 2019 fiscal year, it is down to \$5.5 million.

After Commissioner Nora Patterson seconded Robinson’s motion to allocate more money to the FY 2015 resurfacing program, Chairman Charles Hines asked Harriott whether the extra funds would enable him to move up significant projects. Harriott replied that it would, including projects involving Jacaranda Boulevard, the Center Road area and Laurel Road, all in South County.

“*The sense of urgency here was to get this [loan effort] going while interest rates were low and construction costs haven’t started skyrocketing.*”

Joe Barbetta
Commissioner
Sarasota County



County Administrator Tom Harmer (third from left) responds to a County Commission question during the June 30 workshop. Photo by Norman Schimmel

MORE DECISIONS

Based on projected cash flow over the next five years in the county's Surtax 3 program, which is funded by sales tax revenue, the commission will have about \$7.5 million in cash that is not tied to any projects, Brownman explained. If the board chose to pursue a bank loan to cover numerous projects, it would have a borrowing capacity of \$9.5 million for that period of time.

Commissioner Joe Barbetta pointed out that the board on May 16 directed staff to move forward on about \$9.8 million in infrastructure plans, including space needs for both the Tax Collector's Office and South County court services. Why was that effort not proceeding, he asked.

"Ultimately, timing's what's going to be difficult," Steve Botelho, acting assistant county administrator and chief financial planning officer, pointed out, as a result of immediate funding needs. The ultimate goal is still to work toward a bank loan as discussed at that May meeting, Botelho added.

When Robinson asked how pursuing the loan would affect the county's ability to borrow in the future, Brownman told her the bank note period probably would be 20 years, and the county could expect to pay \$250,000 per year in debt service.

"I'm really trying to wrap my head around what exactly it's going to affect," Robinson replied. "The domino effect is never easy to describe."



Mid-County Tax Collector Office

- **Project features:**
 - 6.5 acre site
 - 9,100 square foot office building
 - 80 -100 parking spaces
 - Drive through service window/inspection area/driving test range
- **Total project budget is \$4,989,000 to be funded by General Revenues and General Government Impact Fees**
- **Estimated Operating Impacts**
 - FY2015: \$ 4,000
 - FY2016: \$ 17,000
 - FY2017: \$ 68,500
 - FY2018: \$ 68,500

A chart shows details of plans for the new Mid-County Tax Collector's Office. The County Commission is expected to vote July 8 on contracts involving the facility. Image courtesy Sarasota County



Steve Botelho is acting assistant county administrator and chief financial planning officer for Sarasota County. Photo by Norman Schimmel

“First of all, we don’t have a lot of choice here,” Barbetta pointed out. We’ve been mandated by the state, so we have to do something [about the tax collector’s situation].”

Second, he said, Ford-Coates already had told the board she would be absorbing all the operating costs of the expanded and new facilities through her budget.

He continued, “So the sense of urgency here was to get this [loan effort] going while interest rates were low and construction costs haven’t started skyrocketing.”

“I understand that,” Robinson told him, “but I want to see what the bottom line is ... so I can explain to constituents, ‘We can’t do this project because we had to do this [instead].’”

Robinson stressed that she was not implying she would vote against the bank loan whenever staff brought that to the board.

Chairman Charles Hines told County Administrator Tom Harmer, “A little further information would be helpful” in regard to the impact on future projects if the commissioners borrow the \$9.8 million. Referring to the legislative mandate regarding the driver’s license work, he added, “It is affecting our general government ...”

After further discussion about project uncertainties — including the timeline for finding out how much money the county would need to commit to the plans — Patterson made a motion to approve the funding just for the renovations of the Terrace Building and the R.L. Anderson Center. An amendment by Barbetta to add in the extra \$3.8 million for the South

County courtroom space failed 2-3, with only Hines supporting it.

While reasserting her commitment to meeting the South County courtroom demands, Robinson told her colleagues, “I would like to try to get those numbers for the North Port library [first]. ... We won’t have this opportunity again [for such a shared facility].”


“I said that I would be fully behind planning for it,” Patterson added.

In response to a question from Hines, Harmer said he hopes to finalize the 2015 fiscal year budget decisions during the board’s Aug. 20 workshop.

However, Robinson pointed out that the School Board and the County Commission have a joint meeting set for Sept. 30. By then, she said, more financial information might be available about the library. Although the commission will vote to approve the FY 2015 budget at a public hearing prior to that meeting, she asked Harmer for clarification that the board would be able to approve a budget amendment later if necessary.

“You have that flexibility,” Harmer responded.

“I want the [courtroom renovations] to happen in the worst way,” Robinson said, “but I also want to make a decision based upon numbers and the financial feasibility. I believe we can make the decisions in a few months, having a good financial picture ...”

Referring to Harmer’s wiping out a projected deficit in the county’s FY 2016 budget, Hines told him after the vote, “Do your magic again with money if you can.” 



'I'M NOT GIVING UP ON THIS'

Photo by Benson Kua, via Fotopedia

LGBT ACTIVIST WARNS SARASOTA COUNTY SHE'LL TAKE HER ANTI-DISCRIMINATION CAUSE TO THE VOTERS

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor


The Sarasota County Commission may have halted any progress toward a countywide ordinance to protect gays and lesbians from discrimination, but the activist who first proposed the measure isn't about to give up, threatening to take her case to the voters if the commission declines to act.


Englewood realtor Julia Nowak has repeatedly pushed the commission to approve what's known as a human rights ordinance, which would ban discrimination in housing and employment based on sexual orientation. Both the Cities of Sarasota and Venice have such rules on the books, but the county has yet to embrace the concept. While County

Attorney Steve DeMarsh was asked to research the matter, the commission decided to do nothing when presented with his information in April.

That hasn't prevented Nowak from continuing to agitate for the cause. Appearing before the commission two weeks ago, she announced she had collected more than 500 signatures in a petition drive and warned the board that if it won't act, she'll pursue the possibility of putting the issue on a future county ballot. "The people will vote for it," she said, warning those opposed to the idea: "It is not going to make everybody look good."

"I don't know if that's going to mean anything to them," Nowak tells *The Sarasota News Leader*, but since her presentation she has booked one-on-one meetings with County Commission Vice Chairwoman Christine Robinson and Chairman Charles Hines, two commissioners who have not yet voiced support for an ordinance. Commissioner Carolyn Mason has so far been the only vocal proponent on the board.

Nowak won't be able to get the issue on the county's ballot this year, but she's planning a campaign to present it to voters as soon as possible after that. [Sarasota Pride Fest](#) is scheduled for Oct. 18, and Nowak will attempt a major signature push around that event if the commission remains disinterested. She's also launched [an online petition](#) to complement the paper version. 


Like 882k
[login / join](#) | [browse](#) | [help](#)
[start petition](#)

We want a Human Rights Ordinance for Sarasota County

author: [Julia Nowak](#)
target: Sarasota County Commission
signatures: 59

59

1,000

we've got 59 signatures, help us get to 1,000

Across the United States, a myriad of States, Counties, Boroughs, and Municipalities have enacted HRO's to ensure basic anti-discrimination civil rights, foster healthy economic and societal development, and encourage new employers and residents to locate to their areas. Local HRO's also augment federal and state civil rights protections, some of which are limited to large employers and contain other loopholes.

Here in Florida, HRO's have been enacted by Alachua, Broward, Leon, Orange, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and Volusia Counties, and by the municipalities of St. Augustine, Miami, Miami Beach, North Miami, South Miami, Sarasota, Venice, North Port, and Tampa.

However, currently the Sarasota County provide basic civil rights anti-discrimination legal protections for LGBT people.

Sign Petition!

Prefix

First Name

Last Name

☐ don't display my name

Email

United States

Street Address

City

State

Zip

(optional)
For more impact, add a personal comment here

sign now

☐ share my signature on Facebook

By signing, you accept Care2's [Terms of Service](#)
 Your email and postal address will remain private

Having problems signing this? [Let us know.](#)

you have the power to create change.

START SHARING AND WATCH YOUR IMPACT GROW

8 share

1 tweet

share

0 share

0 reddit

email

embed

WE SIGNED: WE WANT A HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE

A petition drive has been launched online to urge the Sarasota County Commission to approve a human rights ordinance. Image from the [website](#)



Three seats are open on the Sarasota County School Board, including that of long-time member Carol Todd (second from right), who resigned this spring. File photo

ONE CANDIDATE CITES SCHOOL SAFETY AS TOP ISSUE; ANOTHER FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST KATHY DENT

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

Two weeks ago, *The Sarasota News Leader* delved into the race to replace now-retired Sarasota County School Board member Carol Todd, but there was one late-breaking entrant we didn't have time to speak with before publication: Velton Hodges. We're correcting that this week.

What made Hodges decide to throw his name into the ring? School safety. Hodges, who taught in Sarasota middle and elementary schools for more than three decades, says the School Board needs to ensure there's "a licensed, uniformed, armed, trained law enforcement officer" on every elementary

school campus. While the schools have a heavy security camera presence, they lack the manpower to monitor the equipment, Hodges points out, arguing that on-campus cops are the most effective deterrent around.

Hodges, who served a 12-year stint as president of the Sarasota Classified Teachers Association (SC/TA) union, isn't accepting any donations toward his campaign, relying instead on public events and forums to spread his message. SC/TA Tiger, the teachers' union political action committee, donated \$1,000 to Hodges' opponent, Ken Marsh, a longtime school system employee himself.



Gov. Rick Scott's appointment of Bridget Ziegler to fill Carol Todd's School Board seat until the election remains controversial. Photo by Rachel Hackney

While other board hopefuls such as Marsh and Paul Schafer have criticized Gov. Rick Scott for appointing candidate Bridget Ziegler to temporarily replace Todd, Hodges says he wasn't surprised. "Anybody who didn't see that coming just wasn't paying attention," he adds. Ziegler's husband, Christian Ziegler, is the former executive director of the Republican Party of Sarasota County.

While Ziegler doesn't have the experience for the job, Hodges says, ultimately, "That's going to be up to the voters."

COMPLAINT FILED AGAINST SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS


Why didn't School Board candidate Geoffrey Fisher, fired up in opposition to the education standards popularly known as Common Core, qualify for the election? A one-minute difference in clocks, he says. And he adds that he's filed a complaint with the Florida Elections Commission (FEC) making just that point.

According to a letter that Fisher says was later notarized and addressed to the executive director of the FEC, Fisher arrived at the office of Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections Kathy Dent right at noon on June 20, the exact deadline to pay the fee needed

to qualify for the election. But while a "baby grandfather clock" that was "behind the counter" read noon exactly, a staffer indicated the clock on the computer read 12:01 p.m. — i.e., too late to qualify. Despite protesting, Fisher was denied the opportunity to enter the race.

Fisher blamed his lateness on a busted elevator. His letter also claims that the definition of noon "is difficult to nail down anyway," citing the fact that "solar noon" occurred at 1:32 p.m. on the day in question.

Citing commission policy, the FEC could neither confirm nor deny it had even received Fisher's complaint, nor could it comment on the issue. Dent did not respond to a message asking whether Fisher's version of events is accurate.

But whatever happens with the complaint, for now, Fisher's out. He had jumped into the race because of his strong opposition to Common Core, which has been tweaked and replaced in Florida with what is known as the Florida Standards. He told the *News Leader* the standards focus too much on abstract concepts for younger students and are simply too easy for older students. 

Someone you know needs Planned Parenthood

- Lifesaving cancer screenings
- Parent & teen education
- Annual GYN exams
- Birth control





FIRST INTERVIEW WITH A NEW CHIEF

Todd Kerkering is creating the new post of City of Sarasota emergency management chief after a career in the U.S. Marines and seven years in the Emergency Management Office of Sarasota County. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

TODD KERKERING IS THE FIRST EMERGENCY MANAGER FOR THE CITY OF SARASOTA

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

You might say Todd Kerkering spent his entire life preparing for his new job. He is the first-ever emergency manager for the City of Sarasota. He is a local, too, Class of '84 Sarasota High School graduate and a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

His military specialty was in “force recon,” being the first into a hot situation, be it a defended beach, a contested drop zone or a stealthy insert from under the sea. Force recon requires

Marines to go in early, assess a situation and begin to organize the initial wave of the coming assault.

Today he sits alone in a conference room half the size of a courtroom in one of the upper

stories of the Sarasota Police Department building in downtown Sarasota, again ready to organize the initial wave. Kerkering made the transition from the Sarasota County Emergency Management Office, where he served as

“*For me, typically it's bringing together city departments. That's where I come in, to provide the training for all the individuals for the command system, teaching them the paperwork for the reimbursements.*”

Todd Kerkering
Emergency Management Chief
City of Sarasota



chief planner for the past seven years. He started his new job on May 27.

While he is listed on the Police Department's organizational chart, he actually will coordinate with all city departments to prepare for and then react to natural and man-made trouble. One primary mission will be to save the city millions of dollars.

HURRICANES REMAIN A PRINCIPAL FOCUS

Kerkering spoke with *The Sarasota News Leader* on June 30, his first interview in his new office and after the start of his new position. At the same time, the season's first tropical storm was getting organized, too, pumping up strength just offshore of southeast Florida. As of our deadline, Tropical Storm Arthur is

expected to be a Category One hurricane that will strike the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Arthur's impact on Sarasota's weather has been minimal; only an expert eye on the radar would have noticed one of Arthur's earliest and outermost rain bands sweep Sarasota north-to-south on Tuesday afternoon, July 1.

Reacting to hostile weather is only part of Kerkering's job, although the one with the highest visibility. The greatest threat to the city? "A land-falling hurricane like Ike, with a 20-foot storm surge," he said. In 2008, Ike made a beeline for Galveston, TX, smashing head-on into the barrier islands of the Bolivar Peninsula, moving like a Brillo pad over a dirty plate.

Hurricane Charley, by contrast, paralleled Florida's west coast before taking a last-minute



So big there is an echo, Kerkering's office will fill rapidly and operate 24 hours per day in the event of a local natural or man-made emergency. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

hard right turn into Charlotte Harbor. It carried “only” a 4-foot storm surge, but it still caused millions of dollars in damage. Some low-lying parts of Charlotte County still have not recovered.

The City of Sarasota rests largely on high ground, especially the northern half. The Phillippi Creek drainage basin, bayside developments and, obviously, the barrier islands of Lido and Siesta Key are in evacuation zones. The city is home to several public schools that are hardened and equipped to be public shelters.

This contrasts with much of the southern half of Sarasota County, which is either low-lying

by nature or the product of dredge-and-fill development in the 1950s and 1960s. Those areas must be evacuated in advance of even a modest hurricane.

While preparation for storms is only a small fraction of Kerkering’s duties, he has a couple of recommendations for people living in evacuation zones of the city. “Bring something to sleep on. Our shelters are short-term, last-resort shelters and there won’t be any cots like you see on TV. If you have a flashlight or radio or other appliance, make sure they all use the same size of battery. And don’t forget your medications,” he said. “And bring some old-school entertainment — a book, a deck of cards.”



Sarasota News Leader City Editor Stan Zimmerman interviews Todd Kerkering, the city’s new emergency management chief. Photo courtesy of the Sarasota Police Department

Another important item to prepare is a packet of records. He suggests scanning copies of all important documents, especially insurance information, and storing the material away from your house. He recommends sending it to a friend or relative as an email attachment or putting it on a flash drive in a safe deposit box at a bank. "If you are going to bring [the documents] with you, put all of them in a plastic bag and seal it tight and store it in your car, including your passport and other important papers," he added.

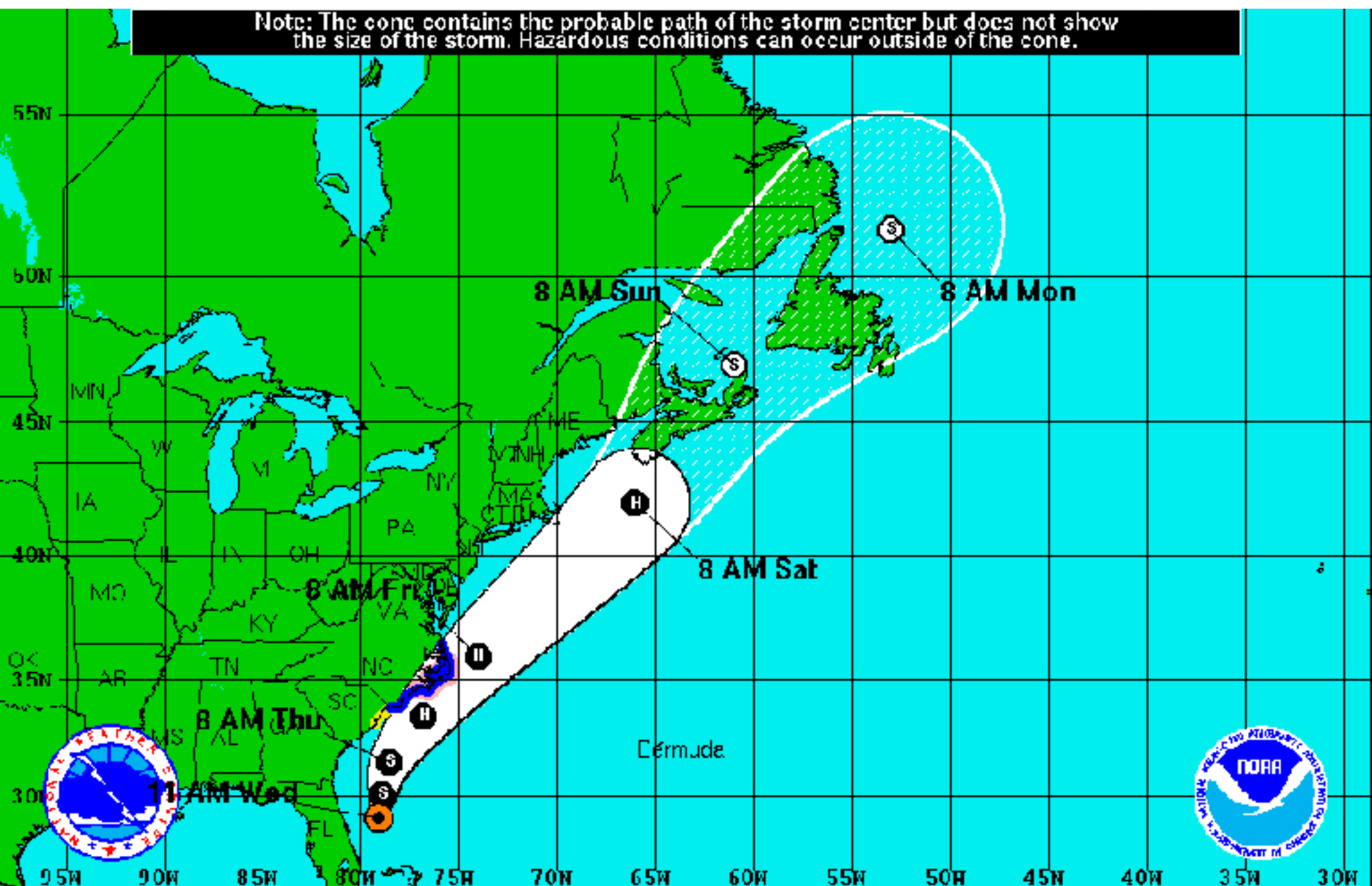
He highly recommends making a video of your possessions or taking pictures to document any claims you might make. "Send a

copy away from the area to friends or family," he said.

REIMBURSEMENT A KEY FUNCTION

Do parades count as an emergency? The Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix boat races? "I know the Police Department and the [Sarasota County] Fire Department. They've already started working on their plans for the Fourth of July," he replied.

"You can look at different weather events, whether it's a hail storm that's unexpected or damaging events — let's say a tornado," he added. "We've even had severe cold weather here, so do we open shelters for the homeless?"



Arthur, the first tropical storm of the season, is projected to reach hurricane strength. The National Hurricane Center released the above predicted storm track as of 11 a.m. July 2. Image from the National Hurricane Center

He continued, “For me, typically it’s bringing together city departments. That’s where I come in, to provide the training for all the individuals for the command system, teaching them the paperwork for the reimbursements. It’s much better when you do an audit that all the paperwork is similar so down the line when the auditors come in, they are looking at the same types of documentation.”

Kerkering used the example of a city patrolman assigned to direct traffic at an intersection with no power for the traffic signals. If the officer simply does the job and does not take any notes, the likelihood is slim of any reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the city for his time or the use of the car.

“You record your mileage to get there, and while your car sits for maybe six hours with the lights on while you direct the traffic, you note the time. Now we can seek reimbursement for the time you and the vehicle were there,” Kerkering pointed out.

“If our public works guys use a chain saw to cut some limbs that block a road, you need to record the time you use that particular chain saw because that’s a reimbursable item,” he said.


“It adds up. Typically FEMA reimburses you for about 75 percent, and the state, 12.5 percent. The local jurisdiction is responsible for the other 12.5 percent. Everything we can document will help the individual taxpayers of the city,” he noted. “If we can seek reimbursement for it, that’s where we need to



The new Sarasota Police Department headquarters was built on Adams Lane, across from Payne Park in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

go. Florida is a donor state to the rest of the country, so my thought is, if we can seek reimbursement on it, I want those dollars.” (By donor state, he means Florida provides more money in various forms of payments to the federal government than it annually receives in return.)

With at least 200 or more city workers responding to help in any post-emergency situation, if simple accounting is ignored, the cost to the city for non-reimbursable expenses could run into the millions of dollars. Thus, Kerkering’s job is not only to deal with the impact of a disaster, but also to manage the response in a way that minimizes the ultimate cost to the city.

Meanwhile, he is putting together the city’s Emergency Management Center with confidence it will survive the worst nature can hurl at it. The new Sarasota Police Station — despite the appearance of its glass facade — is designed to withstand a Category 5 storm. 

SHARE





PROTECTING WHAT'S LEFT

Erosion on Lido Key continues to worsen, resulting in residents' pleas for renourishment. Photo by Norman Schimmel

LIDO RESIDENTS ARE FRETTING OVER THE POTENTIAL FOR SUPER BOAT GRAND PRIX RACE WATCHERS TO TRAMPLE THEIR DUNES

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

City and county workers are preparing Lido Key Beach — what is left of it, that is — for the [Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix](#) on Sunday, July 6. If the crowd size is comparable to last year's figure, 100,000 people will view the races from the dwindling beach.

The race will occur at high tide, equating to the water level being 1.5 feet higher. While that will be good for the race boats getting

in and out of New Pass, that will further compress the dry beach area.

The situation has Lido Key residents worried that the visitors may trample what remains of the dunes along the beach. Carl Shoffstall, president of the Lido Key Residents Association, ran into County Commissioner Nora Patterson at the Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Association (CONA)

“*My hat's off to the lifeguards, the Sarasota Police officers, the special events folks. They'll do a great job of trying to minimize the impact on the resource.*”

Todd Kucharski
General Manager
Landscaping, Parks and Environmental
Services, City of Sarasota

candidates' forum on June 23. In an email he sent out afterward, he wrote that he asked her, "What is the plan to enforce the crowd from trampling the dunes and dune grass, since this is our last line of what little protection we have if there were a storm this summer? They need to be protected."

In reality, the area is under county maintenance even though it is within the City of Sarasota. When the city and county reconfigured their decades-old park maintenance interlocal agreement several years ago, the county retained Lido Beach within its jurisdiction. However, law and order there remains the responsibility of the city police.

The city's general manager for landscaping, parks and environmental services, Todd

Kucharski, says the county will block off "strategic pathways" to keep people off the dunes. "This should be pretty routine for the county," he added. "It should be no different than last year."

Meanwhile, the city police will be active in the area with officers on foot; in four-wheel-drive, all-terrain vehicles; and on bicycles. Kucharski says the police and Sarasota County Fire Department personnel will need to keep some pathways clear for emergency access as well.

While temperatures in the lower 90s are predicted, the "heat index" will probably be in the low 100s, as it has been for much of the week. "When we know we're going to have a large number of people on the beach,



The Lido Beach concession stand is a popular place, city staff says. Photo courtesy Sarasota County


some of them are going to need assistance,” added Kucharski.

City Police Officer William Bjork wrote Shoffstall an email, saying, “The department has an extensive operational plan for the beachfront starting at 5 p.m. on Saturday with assigned officers on a beach patrol, turtle watch, and [taking care of] matters involving anyone setting up for the event in advance.”

While there are several erosion hot spots on Lido Beach, Kucharski says the one most noticeable to race-goers will be around the concession stand. “Even on a normal beach day, it is crowded, and people tend to congregate there,” he noted, adding that county workers will be roping off the areas of greatest concern to protect the integrity of the dunes.

He praised the county and municipal workers who will be staffing the event. “My hat’s off to the lifeguards, the Sarasota Police officers, the special events folks. They’ll do a great job of trying to minimize the impact on the resource.”

Many local residents seldom go to the beach. If you have not been to Lido recently, be prepared for a surprise. The vast expanse of beach you remember from the past is gone. In some places, the high tide is lapping against shoreline structures.

The City of Sarasota and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have proposed a 50-year plan to pump more sand onto the beach. That was the topic of yet more discussion at a County Commission workshop on June 30. (See the related story in this issue.) 

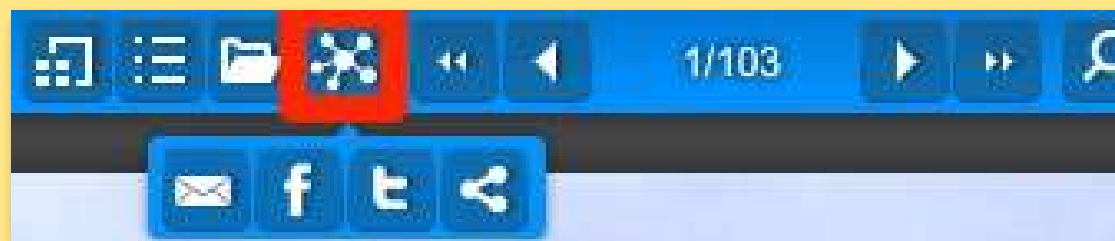
FREE SUBSCRIPTION

Don’t have your own subscription to *The Sarasota News Leader*?

Subscribe for FREE and receive a weekly notification when the latest issue is available online.

SUBSCRIBE

QUICK TIP



Share stories by clicking the  icon in the menubar and choosing to share via e-mail, post to Facebook or Twitter, or many other sharing options.



CALL IT A 'FOUR ACES AGENDA'

The Sarasota City Commission is facing a full agenda on July 7. Photo by Norman Schimmel

A REQUEST FOR A 'NIGHTCLUB' CONDITIONAL USE, A PROPOSED BAYFRONT POLICY, CHANGES ON AN ADVISORY BOARD AND HOMELESSNESS ISSUES ARE ON THE CITY COMMISSION'S JULY 7 AGENDA

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

The Sarasota City commissioners will return from the Fourth of July weekend to face a full, even daunting agenda. A quarter-million-dollar change order, private security for city buildings, policies for bayfront use and the question of how much do you need to pay to rename a park are among the topics. There are dueling memos over homelessness and a proposed cut to the membership of an advisory board. These are just a few of the questions coming up Monday afternoon and evening, July 7.

CONSENT ON THE CONSENT AGENDA?

The most obvious item of public angst will show up early in the afternoon meeting, the

third item on the consent agenda. If no commissioner wants to talk about it, the board will simply approve it and move on. If one or more wants to discuss it, that could open the floodgates for public comment.

The hot item is the creation of another downtown nightclub, albeit one the owners say will not be a nightclub. The owners of Duval's New World Cafe on Main Street simply want to pour some whiskey, along with wine and beer, for their customers. But serving the hard stuff — under current zoning rules — demands a “major conditional use” for the operation of the business as a nightclub.

The restaurant's owners says they will not change the hours of operation, they will offer

a full menu every minute the doors are open to the public and they will feature live music only three times per year (New Year's Eve, Fat Tuesday and their Nov. 14 anniversary).

They have done everything but swear in blood to obey those conditions, and city staff is confident any new owners would have to abide by the "proffers." If no commissioner raises a finger Monday, the board will "authorize" the change, which won unanimous approval from the city Planning Board.

Also on the consent is a change order to the \$4 million project on Old Bradenton Road, the first time that thoroughfare has been upgraded in decades. Contractor Gator Grading and Paving is asking for almost \$255,000 more because of "conflicts during construction with both public and private utility lines [that]

have caused daily production and completion of the project to take much longer than expected or desired."

The money will cover a nearly half-year-long extension of the project to create a modern and model avenue on the north side of the city. The delays came when previously unknown utility infrastructure was discovered during excavation. Work slowed until "positive resolution" was achieved.

Another consent agenda item is a \$110,838 contract for a year of private security for city buildings. Diamond Investigations and Security won the bid with an hourly rate of \$15.65 for armed guards. It will provide security for the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, the Utilities and Public Works departments and the Municipal Auditorium. The Downtown

Today's Features: Fresh Catch Selection - Cobia and Amberjack ----- Butcher Block Selection - Pistachio Pesto Lamb Chops ----- Farmer's Market Vegetarian Selection - Black Bean Burger ----- Soup du Jour - Creamy Forestiere Mushroom

[WELCOME](#)[MENU](#)[RESERVATIONS](#)[EVENTS](#)[REVIEWS](#)[NEWS](#)[CONTACT](#)

FRESH. LOCAL. SEAFOOD.

[Reserve](#) | [Menu](#) | [Map](#)

(941) 312-4001

The City Commission on Monday will be asked to vote on giving 'nightclub' status to Duval's New World Café so it can serve hard liquor. Photo from the restaurant's [website](#)

Improvement District is considering a “piggy-back” contract with Diamond for increased security downtown.

LAND USE, LAND USE, LAND USE

The unfinished business section of the agenda will provide the opportunity for continued discussion of items commissioners sent back to staff for more work. One of those is the creation of a policy for the use of Island Park and the area around the bayfront — the section of highest visibility in the city.

In the past, the city gave permission for the Season of Sculpture to place artwork along the bayfront as a type of outdoor gallery featuring new works every two years. And the Embracing Our Differences organization

received permission to display original poster art in Island Park. Another *ad hoc* decision was permission for the *Unconditional Surrender* statue to remain on the bayfront for a decade.

On Monday, the commissioners will receive a draft of a formal policy on how organizations can petition the city to use the high-visibility property. An application must be filed 120 days before any proposed placement could be made. After staff evaluation, it would be presented to the City Commission for final approval. Applicants would assume liability for damages or injuries.

The existing uses (Season of Sculpture, Embracing Our Differences and *Unconditional Surrender*) would be “vested” and not require further review. Any minor requests, such



The City Commission will consider a policy for use of Island Park and the surrounding bayfront area, though Season of Sculpture will be one of the few ‘grandfathered’ uses. Photo by Norman Schimmel

as plaques on park benches, would also be exempt from the new policy.

A second piece of unfinished business concerns how to proceed with an expansion of the recently approved RROD, the Rosemary Residential Overlay District. Three property owners on the western side of the zone want their land to be in the district, too, but they joined the process too late to be part of the original privately financed comprehensive plan change.

The big issue is who should pay? The staff estimates the change could cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000. Applicants would like the city to incur the cost, but some commissioners objected previously to that idea.

The Planning Board voted 4-0 on May 14 to recommend approval of the original RROD to the city commissioners. And it voted 4-0 to recommend expanding the district to the west. The City Commission already has sent the RROD plan to Tallahassee for approval, but it pulled the expansion aspect for greater discussion on Monday.

The final item of unfinished business will be the regular discussion of homelessness in the city. This issue has become a land-use question, too, as two commissioners have argued against locating a shelter in the neighborhoods in northern Sarasota. Following a contentious meeting of the City and County commissions on June 23, staff retreated to figure out the next steps.



A city resident wants to improve Causeway Park between the Tony Saprito Fishing Pier and Hart's Landing, underneath the eastern end of the John Ringling Causeway Bridge, and name it for his wife. Photo by Norman Schimmel

A pair of dueling memos resulted. (They are available on the city [website](#).)

And for the first time, Maj. Ethan Frizzell, area commander of The Sarasota Salvation Army, contributes publicly to the debate with a long document to the city with his own suggested plan of action, one he calls “hybrid housing.” The Salvation Army is the only organization in the county offering shelter to vagrants and the homeless. Up to this point in the debate, Frizzell had remained quiet.

Because then-Mayor Shannon Snyder ordered a staff report on homelessness at every regular City Commission meeting, that segment of each session has become the only venue for focused discussion on the issue by policymakers in the county. For the July 7 agenda, all of that is scheduled to happen in the afternoon.

PARKS, PARKS, PARKS

The evening session’s substantive discussions will begin with a public hearing to reduce the size of the Parks, Recreation and Environmental Protection (PREP) Advisory



The Municipal Auditorium will be among city buildings getting extra security. Photo by Ebyabe via Wikimedia Commons

Board. Currently at 11 members, the PREP board has recommended reducing the number to seven. The city commissioners agreed and ordered the appropriate ordinance be rewritten to reflect the reduced number. They set the matter for public hearing on July 7.


Under the new ordinance, three of the members must have a regular affiliation with the Bobby Jones Golf Course, the Lido Key Pool or the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex. The draft does not talk about who gets chopped off the board.

Under "New Business," the city commissioners will be asked to rename a small city park in return for \$75,000 in improvements and an endowment of \$50,000 for maintenance. Ernest Werlin wants to improve Causeway Park between the Tony Saprito Fishing Pier and Hart's Landing, underneath the eastern

end of the John Ringling Causeway Bridge, and name it for his wife.

Tony Saprito was a colorful city commissioner. The Hart family ran a bait shop for decades at the landing, until Dennis died a few years ago. Ringling you have already heard of, I am sure. For \$125,000, Eloise Werlin can join them in memoriam.

Ernest Werlin proposes building a small playground structure north of the existing pavilion, put up three "shade elements" along the perimeter walkway and plant a "coastal garden" adjacent to the playground structure.

Staff recommends approval of the scheme, but it also asks whether the City Commission would like staff to draft a policy on how things should be named in the future, a "naming administration policy." Obviously, there is none today. 



Enter To Win A New iPad

When our "Likes" on Facebook reach 1,000, we will randomly select one of our subscribers to receive a new iPad.

- 1 Click here to Subscribe
- 2 Then Like Us On Facebook

The contest concludes when The Sarasota News Leader achieves 1,000 "Likes" on Facebook. One winner will be selected at random from among subscribers. Only subscribers are eligible to win the iPad, regardless of having "Liked" our page on Facebook. Contest is open only to residents of Sarasota County. Selected winners must provide a valid Sarasota County street address to receive the iPad. Contest is void where prohibited by law.

IMAGECAST® TABULATION

View our EAC-Certified product line of hardware for precinct-level vote scanners, accessible voting technologies and high-speed central tabulators. These technologies are ideal for elections big or small. Each is specifically designed to be efficient, easy to use and provide the security that you can count on.



IMAGECAST® PRECINCT



IMAGECAST® CENTRAL



IMAGECAST® EVOLUTION



IMAGECAST® PRECINCT ADA

AN UNWELCOME POSSIBILITY

Dominion Voting is the vendor that supplied the current elections equipment in Sarasota County. Image from the Dominion Voting website

THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS SAYS THE COUNTY MAY BE FORCED TO PURCHASE NEW VOTING MACHINES BECAUSE OF A COMPANY DECISION NOT TO KEEP SERVICING THE EXISTING ONES

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Sarasota County could be forced to purchase new voting equipment after the 2016 elections because the manufacturer is not guaranteeing it will continue to service it in the future, Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections Kathy Dent has informed the County Commission.

Dent's chief of staff, Ron Turner, told *The Sarasota News Leader* that Sarasota County purchased the current

system in 2007 for about \$3.5 million. Turner declined to speculate on the cost of replacement machines.

Representatives of Dominion Voting, from which the county bought the current equipment, said the shelf life was expected to be four-and-a-half years, Dent said during her June 25 budget presentation to the

“*They have us over a barrel if they end up not supporting what we have.*”

Kathy Dent
Supervisor of Elections
Sarasota County

commissioners. Yet, the county's machines are in their seventh year, she pointed out.

"They have us over a barrel if they end up not supporting what we have," she added.

Dominion is one of the two major vendors in Florida that have U.S. Election Assistance Commission certification for voting machines, Dent noted, and both firms have new products on the market.

Commissioner Nora Patterson asked whether Dent has heard reports about the machines malfunctioning after a certain period of time or whether, as it seemed to Patterson, the manufacturers "are rendering the equipment obsolete." If the latter is the case, Patterson added, "It's a very self-serving thing."

Dent replied that Patterson was correct in her guess about the motive being "self-serving," saying, "It's exactly what they're doing."

"It's a statewide issue," Patterson pointed out, to which Dent responded, "It's a nationwide issue."

"Yeah, but that's harder to control," Patterson told her, adding that the County Commission could let its legislators know of its concerns about the matter.

"It's a conversation that we definitely are going to have," Dent said of Florida supervisors of elections bringing the matter to the attention of the state Legislature.

Some counties "have waited and waited" to replace their equipment, Dent pointed out, "not knowing whether to move now or wait."

"I'm sure we'd be glad to help" press the case to the Legislature, Patterson told Dent.



Kathy Dent is the supervisor of elections in Sarasota County. Photo by Norman Schimmel

"Since you're the ones that have to purchase the system," Dent replied.

"It seems appropriate for you to spearhead [the discussion with the state legislators] and then we'll climb on board," Patterson said.

"I'll do it," Dent responded.

In response to a question from Commissioner Joe Barbetta, Dent reported that during the 2008 presidential election, about 40 percent of the county's voters cast absentee ballots.

"I would not support [buying] any more machines," Barbetta told Dent. "I'd push hard for voting by mail," though the state would have to approve that, he added. "The voter turnout is much, much greater."

"They can sit at their kitchen table at midnight in their pajamas and vote if they want

to,” Dent replied. “I’m personally in support of it as well.”

Already, Dent noted, a number of other counties have used voting by mail in one-issue referenda.

During her presentation, Dent also pointed out that the Sarasota County School Board’s March referendum for continuation of the special 1-mill tax — which was approved — “was the lowest-priced standalone election

that we have done in my whole tenure.” (This was her 14th appearance before the commission to present her office’s budget, she said at the outset of her remarks.)

The \$400,000 expense for that referendum, she added, was a result of the countywide redistricting approved by the commission in 2012, when the number of precincts was reduced from 156 to 99. “I’m hoping that the trend [of lower expenses] is going to continue.”

FY 2014-15 Supervisor of Elections Budget

FY2014 Amended: \$3,829,297

FY 2014 Adopted: \$3,375, 784

Total FTE's: 27

FY2015 Preliminary: \$3,926,361

Total FTE's: 27

Description of Current Services / Strategic Goals:

- Voter registration, conduct of elections, candidate qualifying, campaign finance, voting system audits, absentee voting, early voting, petition verification, poll worker training, maintenance of voting equipment, redistricting, precinct boundary lines, voter education

Future Operational Changes / Opportunities:

- Electronic poll books implementation
- Future space allocation for voting equipment facility
- Service life of voting system



KATHY DENT
Supervisor of Elections
Sarasota County, Florida
www.SarasotaVotes.com

The slight uptick in the proposed budget for the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections Office in the 2015 fiscal year is related to the November elections. Image courtesy Supervisor of Elections

On a related point, Dent said this year that her staff will be implementing the use of electronic poll books, which should provide for simpler voter check-ins at the polls. The system utilizes mini iPads to scan drivers' licenses, she added.

Her staff conducted a test run during the March election in the Town of Longboat Key, she noted. "The poll workers loved it."


Dent also reminded the commissioners that county staff still needs to resolve the matter of finding additional space for the storage of its voting equipment.

The board heard a brief update on that in May, with county Facilities Services Director Ed Gable saying staff was continuing to explore options.

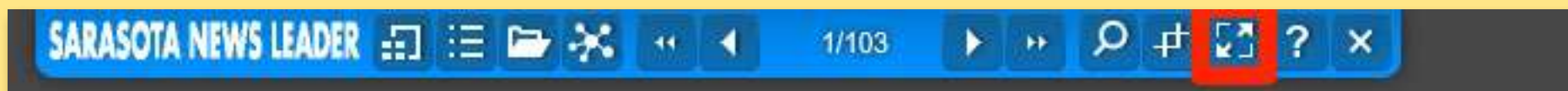
Dent told the commissioners on June 25 that she just hopes whenever staff brings a recommendation to them about the space, "You will take it into serious consideration" for the safety and security of the equipment.

The equipment is stored at the county's BOB Building in an industrial park north of Fruitville Road and east of downtown Sarasota.

"We hear you," Chairman Charles Hines told Dent. "It's on our list."

Dent's total preliminary budget request for the 2015 fiscal year is \$3,926,361, up slightly this fiscal year's total of \$3,829,297. Dent explained, as she has in the past, that her budget is always higher in election years. In November, she noted, voters will go to the polls to cast their ballots for governor as well as for local candidates. 

QUICK TIP



For the best viewing experience on a computer click the  icon in the menubar to zoom to fullscreen mode.

SHARE



Share stories via e-mail, post to Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest



Siesta Seen

SIESTA KEY VILLAGE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS URGE EXPANDED MARKETING OF THE NEW 'ISLAND BUS' SERVICE; THE OUTDOOR DISPLAY ISSUE WILL START ITS COUNTY CONSIDERATION PROCESS IN AUGUST; AND THE 2014 CRYSTAL CLASSIC DATES HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED



By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Do not call it the “Siesta trolley” anymore. The new Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) route that will be launched on July 12 to serve Siesta Key will be one of six “island buses,” Kendra Keiderling, marketing and public outreach coordinator for SCAT, told about 20 members of the Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) during their regular meeting on July 1.

“We’re doing a huge media blitz,” she said, to get the word out about Route 10, which will be intertwined with the existing Route 11, to make sure people wait no more than 20 minutes for a bus to Siesta Key.

The new service also will travel to Turtle Beach, as previously reported, but it will reach that destination every hour, Keiderling pointed out.

While she did not know the background, she indicated that a trademark situation prevents SCAT from calling the new service a trolley. Nonetheless, six brand new SCAT buses that will serve Siesta, Longboat Key and St. Armands will be “wrapped” in an island-themed design, Keiderling continued. “It

just helps the customers to easily recognize the buses.”

One of them was scheduled to be in the Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix Festival Parade of Boats in downtown Sarasota on July 3, she noted.

Additionally, SCAT has created radio commercials with the local band Next Level singing a revised version of the song [I’ll Take You There](#), substituting “We’ll” for “I’ll” to promote the new SCAT routes, including service starting on July 12 at Lakewood Ranch. “We want to make [advertising] catchy and really make people think about taking mass transit,” she told the SKVA members.

Memos also will be going out the local Chambers of Commerce, Keiderling said.

Part of the effort is a rebranding of SCAT, Keiderling explained to me in early June. On July 1, she told the SKVA members that panels on the sides of other new 13 SCAT buses will have messages including “SCAT to the library,” “SCAT to the airport” and “SCAT to the parks.”

Siesta Seen

SKVA members had several concerns, however, including the lack of promotion about the new service at this point. Secretary Helene Hyland told Keiderling, “We barely know about it, to be honest with you,” adding, “We’ve seen people evaluate and make judgments too quickly sometimes on routes that should have been given more time.”

Past SKVA President Russell Matthes also pointed out that because summer is not nearly as busy a tourist time for the key, county staff needs to understand that the use of the route “is initially going to be pretty soft.”

Hyland suggested Keiderling arrange to have one of the island buses on display in Siesta Village one day with a SCAT representative selling passes. Perhaps the county could offer free passes that day, too, Hyland added. “I think more will have to be done to educate the residents.”

“It’s off-season,” Lourdes Ramirez said, “so you may have people trying it out.”

Keiderling replied that she would try to arrange a display of a bus in Siesta Village one day toward the end of July. “That would be great.”



Kendra Keiderling, marketing and public outreach coordinator for Sarasota County Area Transit, explains features of the system's new 'island buses' to members of the Siesta Key Village Association. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

Hyland further suggested SCAT include a bus in the Light Up the Village holiday parade on Nov. 29, when business owners will kick off the holiday season.

“Oh, we can do that, definitely,” Keiderling replied.

Another concern members raised is the fact that SCAT will not accept debit or credit cards for tickets or passes. Keiderling said she has no idea why that rule is in place. On the positive side, she pointed out that the department will allow an entity such as the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce to sell passes on a consignment basis. Debra Lynn-Schmitz, the chamber’s executive director, told Keiderling, “I’d be happy to discuss it.”

Hyland suggested Keiderling look into the possibility of a south Siesta business that would sell passes as well. Keiderling was headed to Turtle Beach after the SKVA meeting, she responded, so she planned to check into that.

Kay Kouvatsos, co-owner of Village Café, asked whether people would be able to use credit or debit cards to purchase passes at the Chamber office if that arrangement is worked out. Keiderling said all transactions have to be by cash or check. “We get a lot of mail” complaining about that, she added.

Glen Cappetta, owner of [Sun Ride Pedicabs](#), pointed out that people can even swipe debit cards on his bikes.



(From left) Russell Matthes, Siesta Key Village Association (SKVA) President Wendall Jacobsen and SKVA Treasurer Roz Hyman look over the new ‘Island Bus’ route information. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

pointed out, and they “are going to be spreading the word” about the new route.

Keiderling also explained that SCAT is replacing all of its 2,000 signs to include [QR codes](#). People with smartphones will be able to scan the codes to learn when the next bus on a route will arrive. “You’re getting real-time information.”

As for the cost: A full day pass is \$4; a pass for one ride is \$1.25. Seasonal passes (good November through February) and monthly passes also are available. Details about other costs are available on the SCAT page of the county [website](#).

OUTDOOR DISPLAY REVISION UPDATE

During the SKVA meeting this week, past President Cheryl Gaddie said she had received an email from Mark Toomey of Robin Hood Rentals, one of the leaders of a committee that has proposed [a revision of the Siesta Key Overlay District](#) to allow for some outdoor displays by retail merchants and rental companies.

The Sarasota County Planning Commission will consider the request during its Aug. 7 meeting in the County Commission Chambers at the Administration Center on Ringling Boulevard in downtown Sarasota, Gaddie read



Mark Toomey, owner of Robin Hood Rentals in Siesta Village, has arranged his outdoor displays over the past months so they comply with a proposed new ordinance for the island. File photo

Siesta Seen

from the email. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m., Donna Thompson, the county's assistant zoning administrator, has informed Toomey.

The County Commission first will address the matter during its morning session on Wednesday, Sept. 24, Gaddie continued. At that meeting, the board is expected to vote to advertise a public hearing on the proposal. The public hearing is set for Tuesday, Oct. 21, in the afternoon.

Thompson asked that SKVA members in support of the revision attend those meetings, Gaddie added.

"There are legitimate concerns still," Kay Kouvatso pointed out, referring to evidence that some Village merchants have refused to comply with the proposed outdoor display parameters as a show of support for the revised ordinance.

Toomey and other committee members had asked all business owners to abide by the recommended new guidelines while county staff worked on getting the matter before the Planning and County commissions.

THE NEXT CRYSTAL CLASSIC

The dates have been announced for the fifth annual Siesta Key Crystal Classic Master Sand Sculpting Competition. The event will be held Nov. 14-18, featuring the work of 24 "premier master sand sculptors from all over the world," a news release says.

"The Crystal Classic has become a favorite of many of the professional sand sculptors

who have competed [in it]," the release adds. "Citing the beauty and cleanliness of the pristine white sand, sculptors have remarked that their sculptures look almost as if they are 'carved in marble,'" the release notes.

The 2014 schedule includes the following:

- All-day viewing of the works Nov. 14-18. A special **Mobi-Mat** will be placed on the sand for easier walking on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 17 and 18.
- A "Vendor Village" with more than 50 booths will be open Nov. 14-17.
- Live entertainment will start at noon Friday, Nov. 14, through Sunday, Nov. 16.
- An amateur sand sculpting contest will be held on Saturday, Nov. 15.
- Siesta Santa will be seated on his sand throne again, "making a great photo op for ... Christmas cards," the release notes.
- A new event will be offered this year: *Taste of Siesta* on Saturday, Nov. 15, from 6 to 10 p.m. This fundraiser will feature more than 15 local restaurants, an open bar and live music by Alli & the Venturas. Advance tickets will be \$40.

Off-site shuttle service will be offered on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 15 and 16, from Riverview High School on Lords Avenue, the release adds.

Proceeds of the Siesta Key Crystal Classic benefit Mote Marine Laboratory's sea turtle research and conservation programs.



Michela Ciopini and Jan Zelinka work on World Breathe on Nov. 15, 2013. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Siesta Seen


For more information about the Siesta Key Crystal Classic contact the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, call 349-3800; email info@SiestaKeyCrystalClassic.com or visit SiestaKeyCrystalClassic.com.

NEEDED: YOUR BLOOD

A blood drive will be hosted by [Beach Bazaar](#) in Siesta Village from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 6, Kay Kouvatsos, co-owner of [Village Café](#), announced at the July 1 SKVA meeting.

Each participant will earn a free daiquiri from the [Daiquiri Deck](#) and a free breakfast at Village Café. If you are among the first 10 donors, you also will receive a free T-shirt courtesy of [Beach Bites](#).

[Suncoast Blood Bank](#) will conduct the drive, Kouvatsos added.

Summer usually is a slow time for collections, blood bank representatives say, although contributions are just as much in demand for healthcare centers. 



Brainstorm won top honors in the 2013 Crystal Classic. Photo by Robert Hackney

City Hall will be closed on July Fourth. Photo by Norman Schimmel

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES CLOSED FOR JULY FOURTH

The City of Sarasota administrative offices will be closed Friday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day, the city has announced. Most Sarasota County government offices, including the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County, also will be closed, the county has announced.

In the city, garbage, recycling, yard waste and bulk waste will not be picked up on Friday, July 4, a news release points out. That collection will occur one day later, on Saturday, July 5.

For inquiries regarding city garbage collection, the public may contact the Public Works Department at 365-7651. For questions about recycling, yard waste and bulk

waste collection, Waste Management may be reached at 497-8088, the release adds.

County solid waste, yard waste and recyclable collections normally scheduled for Friday pickup will resume on Saturday, July 5, according to county staff. The landfill at 4000 Knights Trail Road in Nokomis and the Sarasota County chemical collection centers at 8750 Bee Ridge Road in Sarasota and 250 S. Jackson Road in Venice, along with the Citizens Convenience Center at 4010 Knights Trail Road in Nokomis, will be closed.

Other City of Sarasota holiday hours follow:

- Bobby Jones Golf Club: regular hours, 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- Lido Pool: regular hours, 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.
- Robert L. Taylor Community Complex: open 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.
- Steigerwaldt-Jockey Children's Fountain on the Sarasota bayfront: closed.

In the county, all libraries and recreation centers will be closed, a county news release says. Payne Park Tennis Center, located at 2050 Adams Lane in Sarasota, will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) will not operate on July 4; it will resume normal weekend hours on Saturday, July 5, the release adds.

ORANGE AVENUE PARKING LOT TO BE CLOSED AT SECOND STREET

The Orange Avenue Parking Lot, located at the southeast corner of Orange Avenue and Second Street in downtown Sarasota, will be closed from Wednesday, July 9, through the end of the month, the City of Sarasota has announced.

The temporary closure is necessary while crews make much needed drainage improvements to the flood-prone area and reconstruct and repave the parking lot, a news release explains.

The project was scheduled during the summer to lessen the impact on the public, the release adds. Drivers are encouraged to use available

on-street parking as well as the nearby First Street Parking Lot and the Second Street garage (adjacent to Whole Foods), "both just a short walk away," the release notes.

The project manager and the city's parking manager have been in contact with nearby business owners about the temporary closure and have recommended alternative parking options, the release adds.

Approximately 20 spaces will be affected. Three on-street spaces along Orange Avenue also will be unavailable for approximately one week, the release notes.



The City of Sarasota will close the parking lot at the intersection of Orange Avenue and Second Street on July 9 so repairs can be made to it. Image from Google Maps

NEW PASS TO BE CLOSED MOST OF THE DAY ON JULY 6

With permission of the United States Coast Guard, New Pass will be closed to public vessel traffic from 10 a.m. until the conclusion of the Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix (approximately 4 p.m.) on Sunday, July 6, the Sarasota Police Department has announced.

The navigable channel of New Pass intercedes the Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix racecourse, a news release points

out. Therefore, its closure is necessary for safety purposes.

Big Pass, Longboat Pass and Venice Inlet will be open and unaffected by this event, the release notes.

Local law enforcement officers will be present west of the New Pass bridge to notify vessels of the closure while it is in effect, the release adds. The cove just under the bridge will remain open to vessels, it says.

FDOT TO HOST JULY 8 MEETING ON SARASOTA ROUNDABOUTS

Representatives of District One of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will host a public meeting on July 8 regarding the design improvements planned for U.S. 41 from 10th Street to 14th Street in Sarasota, the department has announced.

The meeting will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. in the grand foyer at Van Wezel Performing Arts Center, located at 777 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota.

“The project is part of an overall plan to enhance mobility within downtown Sarasota,” a news release says. The initiative includes roundabouts with islands for pedestrian refuge at the U.S. 41 intersections with 10th and 14th streets; enhanced pedestrian walkways, bicycle and transit facilities and landscaping; and narrower travel lanes, the release points out.

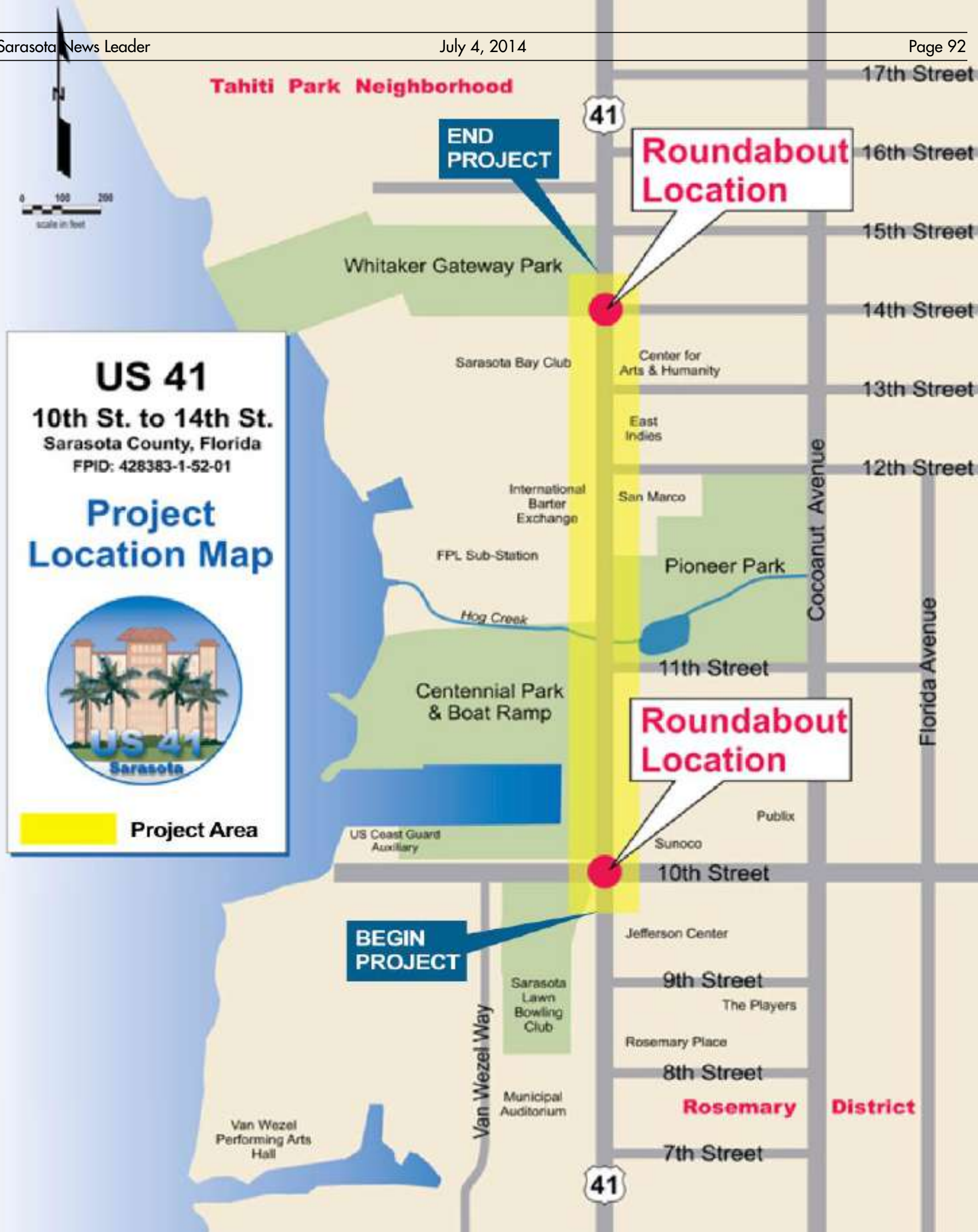
The purpose of the meeting is to give interested people the opportunity to view the

proposed design, the release notes. FDOT will utilize an informal open house format with display boards of the roadway improvements, the release adds. “A 3-D visualization of the proposed improvements will run continuously during the meeting,” the release says. “There will be no formal presentation,” it continues, so participants are welcome to attend at any time between 5 and 7 p.m. Department staff will be available to discuss the project, receive public comments and answer questions.

Persons with disabilities who may require special accommodations at the meeting under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Jamie Schley, District One Title VI coordinator, at 863-519-2573 or by email at jamie.schley@dot.state.fl.us as soon as possible, the release notes.

SHARE





A Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) map shows the locations of planned roundabouts at 10th and 14th streets in Sarasota. Image courtesy FDOT

SEWER LINING PROJECT CONTINUING, WITH TRAFFIC IMPACTS EXPECTED

As part of an ongoing utilities capital improvement project, City of Sarasota crews will begin work Monday, July 7, to line a 30-inch gravity sewer pipe in the Avondale neighborhood to minimize groundwater infiltration, the city has announced.

Access to Lincoln Drive and Irving Street from U.S. 41 will be unavailable from Monday, July 14, until the first week in September, a news release points out. Traffic will be detoured to Bahia Vista Street.

The project also will necessitate the use of one southbound lane of U.S. 41 for two nights, reducing the travel lanes in that direction from three to two. The right southbound lane just north of Lincoln Drive will be closed for that work, the release notes.

Lining gravity pipes helps to significantly reduce groundwater infiltration into the city's wastewater system and, as a result, lowers the stress on the overall system, the release explains. Crews will use a trenchless technique, known as cured-in-place piping, so no open road cuts will be necessary, it notes.

Approximately 0.28 miles (1,500 feet) of pipe will be lined. Prior to the start of the work, crews will clean the interior of the pipe and run a video camera through it to inspect for defects, the release adds. The actual lining and cured-in-place portion of the project takes approximately eight to 10 hours; the work will be done in segments throughout the neighborhood, the release notes.

Residents will be notified prior to the lining process starting in their particular area, the release adds. During that eight- to 10-hour



An aerial view shows Lincoln Drive, Irving Street and U.S. 41 in Sarasota. Image courtesy Google Maps

period, residents will have normal access to potable water; however, sewer service will be limited, the release points out. Residents are asked to help reduce the amount of water flowing into the sewer system during that time. This may be done by taking the following actions, the release says:

- Do not wash clothes or dishes.
- Do not take showers or baths.
- Flush toilets sparingly.
- Do not operate sump pumps, which are connected to the sewer system.

This project is part of an ongoing effort by the City of Sarasota to maintain and rehabilitate the city's aging utilities infrastructure, the release concludes.

2014 TARPON TOURNAMENT FINAL RESULTS ANNOUNCED

Following a June 20 “fish-off” during which seven anglers caught nine tarpon in a single morning, the Sarasota Tarpon Tournament final results have been released, organizers have announced.

David Sugar claimed first place, hauling in a tarpon with a girth of 38¾ inches, a news release says. Clark Nash earned second place; his tarpon had a 38-inch-girth. Dave Robinson finished in third, having caught a fish with a 34-inch-girth, the release notes.

Leading the special divisions, Brent Wilson finished first in the Fly Division, having caught a tarpon with a 32-inch girth near Lido Key on May 20. Landon Forde earned first in the Youth Division, with a tarpon whose girth was 32 inches, the release continues. He caught it near Turtle Beach on June 6.

Lynn Lessley won the Women’s Division, with a tarpon that had a girth of 34½ inches. Lessley was fishing near Anna Maria Island on June 9.

Brent Wilson won the Smallest Tarpon Division; his fish, landed in Sarasota Bay on June 4, had a 9½-inch girth. Ron Albritton and Lynn Lessley won the His/Hers Division with a combined total girth (of two tarpon) measuring 70¾ inches, the release points out. Finally, Jamie Smith won the Most Releases Division with 11 fish.

The finalists will be recognized at an awards banquet on July 19 at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota in downtown Sarasota. Cocktails will be served at 6:30 p.m., with dinner at 7:15 p.m., the release says. Check in will begin at 6 p.m.



Matt Krycinski of Bedford, VA (right) releases the first tarpon he ever caught. On June 7, he was fishing with Mason Tush of CB's Saltwater Outfitters as part of the annual Sarasota Tarpon Tournament. Contributed photo

Anglers’ registration fees included seats for them at the banquet, the release notes, but guests will be charged \$35 per person at the door; cash or check only.

Everyone planning to attend the banquet is asked to RSVP on the tournament [website](#) no later than July 11, the release says.

VENUES TODAY RANKS VAN WEZEL NO. 1 IN ITS SIZE CATEGORY

Venues Today has ranked the City of Sarasota's Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall No. 1 in the country in the 2000-seat category in the magazine's 2014 mid-season publication, the Van Wezel staff has announced.

This is the third time Sarasota's performing arts hall has ranked at the top of the chart, a news release points out. The recognition helps the Van Wezel "book the biggest and best shows and performers on the road," the release points out. Executive Director Mary

Bensel said in the release, "Our 2013-14 season has been amazing, from having Jay Leno here the night after he closed out his 30-plus-year run of *The Tonight Show* to presenting John Legend at the height of his popularity with his *All Of Me Tour* and the No. 1 single in the nation to having two of the hottest shows in the summer: *Move Live on Tour* and *American Idol*," she added in the release. "This year has been a nonstop whirl of great shows and sellout crowds, with 74 of them performing above budget."



The Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall has been named No. 1 among venues of its size in the nation. Photo by Norman Schimmel

SARASOTA AUDUBON SEEKING MORE 'CHICK CHECKERS' FOR THE HOLIDAY

Along with a record number of human visitors this year, Siesta Key and Lido Key have more birds nesting on their beaches this season, Sarasota Audubon members say. That is why the organization is seeking help to protect the birds and, especially, chicks, during the [2014 Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix Festival](#).

Tens of thousands of visitors who come to Sarasota for the festival will be sharing the beaches with the nesting birds, a news release points out. The Grand Prix, which is set for July 6, will be the grand finale of the activities.

"We need a few more people to volunteer as beach stewards and 'chick checkers' during the week of the Grand Prix to help keep our birds, nests and chicks safe," said Sarasota Audubon President Jeanne Dubi in the release. "With the help of the public, we may

be able to say that we've had the best year ever for our beach nesting birds."

Lido Beach is of particular concern to Dubi, the release notes. "The large colony of Black Skimmers that has taken up residence at Lido this year is located in what will be the heart of the boat [race] festivities," the release adds. Black Skimmers, like other beach nesting birds, lay their eggs right on the sand, which makes them vulnerable to walkers, joggers, volleyball players and visitors in general, the release explains.

"The county has put a double buffer around the colony, but we need a few more people to help us protect this area during Grand Prix week and through August," added Dubi in the release.



The public is being asked to watch out for nesting birds and chicks on Siesta and Lido beaches over the July Fourth holiday. Photo by Hans Hillewaert via Wikimedia Commons

Many visitors will also visit Siesta Key public beach while they are here. According to Bob Luckner who organizes the Audubon beach stewards for that island, 10 percent of Florida's imperiled Snowy Plover population nests on Siesta Key.

Luckner offers the following suggestions to the public to help protect the birds:

- Give a wide berth (30 to 50 feet) to the nesting areas (dunes and posted zones) and feeding birds ("tired parents!"), the release points out.

- Look out for chicks running around.
- Leave dogs at home. Just the sign of a dog or cat may flush a bird from her nest permanently. Additionally, a county law makes it illegal for anyone to bring a dog onto the Siesta and Lido beaches.

Anyone who would like to become a chick checker or beach steward may contact Jeanne Dubi at jeanne@sarasotaudubon.org to volunteer at Lido Beach and Bob Luckner at sksnpl@gmail.com to volunteer at Siesta Key beach. For more information, visit www.sarasotaudubon.org.

COUNTY SEEKING PUBLIC COMMENTS ON SOLID WASTE MASTER PLAN

Sarasota County will host three public workshops at multiple locations as it seeks comments from area residents and business owners about the county's future solid waste master plan, the county has announced.

"We're looking forward to community members attending these workshops, because we value their feedback," said Kristina King, business manager for the Sarasota County Solid Waste Department, in a news release. "Together we can guide the future for turning solid waste into a resource for Sarasota County."

The workshops are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, July 8, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Venice Public Library, 300 S. Nokomis Ave., Venice.
- Wednesday, July 9, 7 to 9 p.m., Lemon Bay Park and Environmental Center meeting room, 570 Bay Park Blvd., Englewood.
- Thursday, July 10, 7 to 9 p.m., Twin Lakes Park, Green Building conference room, 6700 Clark Road, Sarasota.



A combination trash/recycling container has been in use as part of a pilot program at some beach accesses. Photo by Rachel Hackney

For more information, visit scgov.net or call the Sarasota County Contact Center at 861-5000.

CASE OF CHIKUNGUNYA FEVER CONFIRMED IN SARASOTA COUNTY

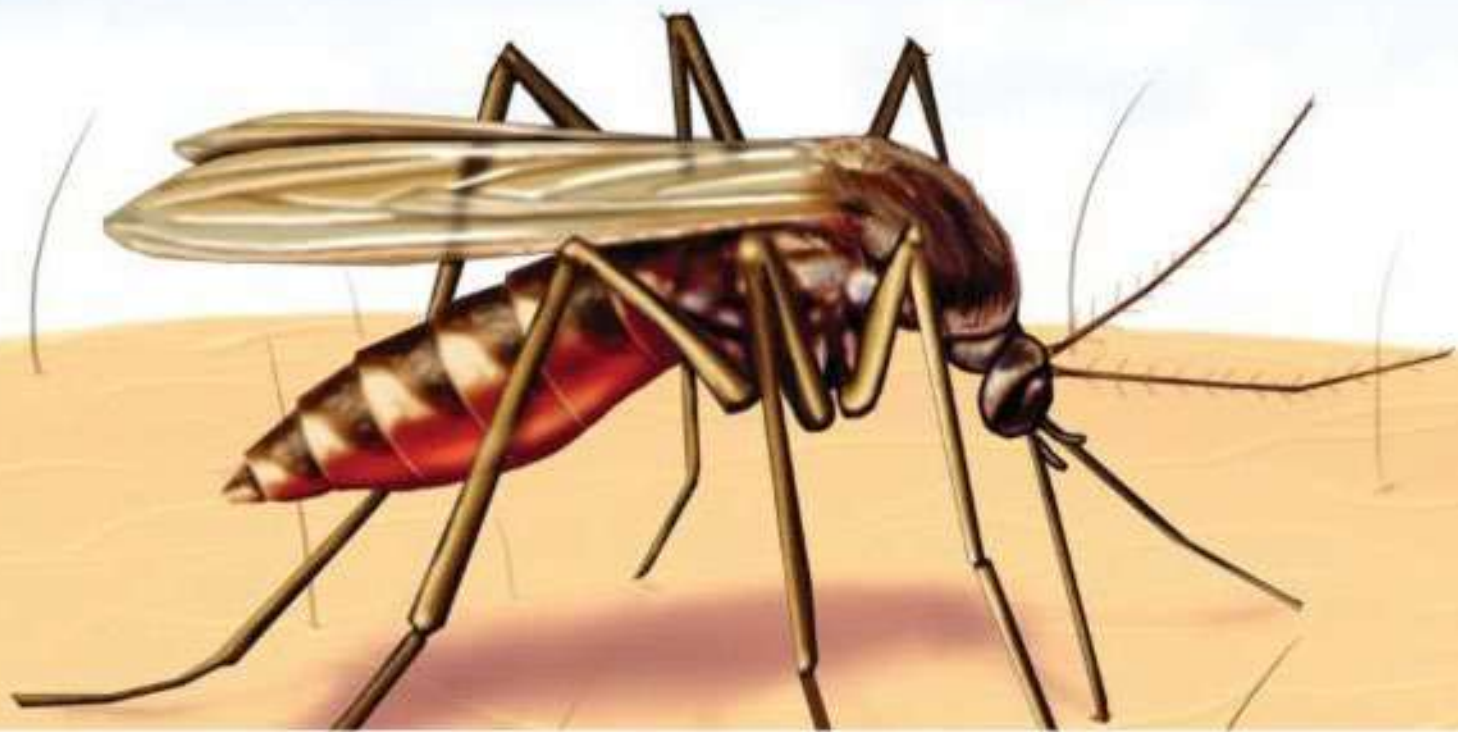
On June 25, the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) confirmed a case of chikungunya (chik-en-gun-ye) fever in an individual who recently traveled to the Dominican Republic, the department announced.

“The individual is recovering from the illness,” a news release says. “The concern about chikungunya, a disease spread by bites from infected mosquitoes, was heightened statewide in May” when health officials started to learn of cases occurring in residents across the state who had traveled to Caribbean islands, the release adds. As of June 25, the release continued, there had been no reports

of anyone acquiring chikungunya in Sarasota County, the state of Florida or in any other U.S. state, it points out.

Sporadic cases of this mosquito-borne disease can occur without any relation to the current outbreak in the Caribbean, the release notes. Local health officials were notified in early spring of an isolated case of the disease in a person who had traveled to Asia. The individual, who first became ill in late December, is recovering and still travels, the release adds.

“Avoiding mosquito bites is the key to preventing infection with chikungunya and other mosquito-borne diseases,” said DOH-Sarasota Medical Director Dr. William



Protect yourself from mosquito bites & the diseases they carry.

Heymann in the release. “The typical summer rain pattern increases mosquito activity. Residents and visitors are urged to take precautions to reduce sources of standing water, which serve as mosquito breeding sites, and to prevent mosquito bites.”

“*Aedes species* mosquitoes transmit the chikungunya virus and the dengue virus,” Sarasota County Mosquito Management Director Matt Smith said in the release. “These mosquitoes bite mostly during the daytime and are associated with the accumulation of water in man-made containers that serve as breeding sites,” he added in the release. Smith urges residents to make sure their window screens are in good order as a means of reducing the risk of mosquitoes getting into their homes.

The Health Department offers other suggestions to help people thwart the threat of mosquito bites:

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots and any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pets’ water bowls at least once or twice a week.
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that do not accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools and ensure they are appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when they are not in use.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeve tops.
- Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.

- Always use repellents according to the labels. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus and IR3535 are effective, the release notes.
- Repair broken screens on windows, doors, porches and patios.

Symptoms of chikungunya include sudden onset of high fever with a temperature greater than 102 degrees; severe joint pain, mainly in the arms and legs; headache; muscle pain; back pain; and rash, the release points out. Symptoms appear on average about three to seven days after a person has been bitten by an infected mosquito. The majority of people feel better after a few days or weeks; however, some people may develop long-term effects, the release notes.

“If you are not feeling well, consult with your healthcare provider immediately and protect yourself against additional mosquito bites. Avoiding mosquito bites while you are sick will help to protect others from getting infected,” the release says.

For more information, call the Sarasota County Contact Center at 861-5000 or the Health Department’s Sarasota Disease Intervention Services at 861-2837.

CORRECTION

An article in the June 20 issue, *By the numbers*, included a photo of artwork in a roundabout that was reported to be in Grand Junction, CO. Rod Warner of [US41Momentum](#) let the *News Leader* know that the production of a city presentation incorporating that photo listed the wrong location. The artwork is in Bend, OR.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER EARNS RE-ACCREDITATION

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Public Safety Communications (PSC) center has been re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), the Sheriff's Office has announced.

"CALEA accreditation is accomplished through a highly regarded and broadly recognized body of professional standards and represents acceptance of an ongoing obligation to professional excellence by working toward compliance with all applicable standards," a news release points out.

"I am proud of the men and women in our Emergency Operations Bureau and what

they do for citizens every day," said Sheriff Tom Knight in the release. "Answering 911 calls is stressful, but accreditation recognizes their professionalism in public safety telecommunications."

The PSC received its initial accreditation for communications from CALEA in 2002, the release notes. It has been re-accredited every three years since then. The PSC also holds accreditation for emergency medical, fire and law enforcement dispatch by the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch (NAED), the release adds.



(From left) Emergency Operations Bureau Capt. Jeff Slapp, Pam Jones, Kris Adams and Sheriff Tom Knight. Contributed photo

DOLPHIN AVIATION ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTED TO FIVE

The 13th annual presentation of the Dolphin Aviation Academic Scholarships was held on June 26 at Dolphin Aviation, located at 8191 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, the company announced.

State Rep. Jim Boyd of District 71, which includes parts of Manatee and Sarasota counties, and Dolphin Aviation owner Ron Ciaravella handled the honors, a news release says. This year, Dolphin Aviation presented a \$1,000 scholarship to each of the following students:

- Christina Meiser of Sarasota Military Academy, who will attend Florida Southern College.
- Tyler Lentini of Sarasota High School, who will attend Florida Gulf Coast University.
- Daysha Bradley of Palmetto High School, who will attend the State College of Florida.
- Kelly Felix of Venice High School, who will attend the University of Central Florida.
- Taylor Ziesloft of Manatee High School, who will attend the University of Florida.



Left) Rep. Jim Boyd and Ron Ciaravella (right) congratulate Christina Meiser (second from left) and Daysha Bradley. Contributed photo

KENYON NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SARASOTA CREW

Susan Kenyon has been named executive director of Sarasota Crew, a nonprofit organization providing middle- and high school-age Sarasota County youth “with positive, competitive rowing experiences that cultivate personal integrity, self-esteem, teamwork and sportsmanship, while instilling a lifelong commitment to a healthful lifestyle,” the organization has announced in a news release.

“Susan has been a dedicated member of the Sarasota Crew family and the board of directors for many years,” said Dr. Mark Burne, chairman of Sarasota Crew, in the news release. “She comes to this position with an impressive record of fundraising for local nonprofits,” he added.

In her new role, Kenyon will lead the organization’s community outreach efforts and work with the board, the director of rowing, Sarasota Crew families and community organizations, the release notes.

“As a parent of a rower, volunteer and board member, I have experienced firsthand what a transformational experience Sarasota Crew is for hundreds of our local youth,” Kenyon said in the release. “From watching the excitement of new middle school participants in our learn-to-row program to seeing the physical development, commitment and dedication as these students become young athletes,” she added in the release, she has seen how rowing can lead to opportunities in higher educational opportunities. A number of high school seniors from Sarasota County have gone on to study and row at top universities, she points out in the release.



Susan Kenyon/Contributed photo

Kenyon most recently served as vice president of sales for [MoneyShow](#), “one of the largest producers of investment trade shows serving individual investors, financial advisors and active traders,” the release continues.

She also worked as the vice president of development for the Center for Building Hope, a nonprofit organization in Lakewood Ranch that offers free support programs to people impacted by cancer, the release says.

Sarasota Crew’s 2013-2014 roster included nearly 300 middle school, novice and varsity rowers, ages 10 to 18, and Masters rowers, ages 30 and up, the release notes. For more information, visit sarasotacrew.org.

PINE VIEW TEACHER RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Pine View School language arts teacher Fran Squires has been named the 2014 Outstanding Middle Level Educator in the English Language Arts by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the Sarasota County School District has announced.

“NCTE is a 35,000-member organization dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of English language arts at all levels,” a news release says.

The organization’s announcement of the honor said the award recognizes “exceptional English language arts teachers” working with students in grades six to eight who have demonstrated excellence in teaching “and inspired a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning in their students.”

Squires teaches sixth-grade gifted and advanced-level English language arts, the release notes. Because Pine View is a school for gifted students, its sixth-grade curriculum covers material students in other district schools normally would study in the seventh grade, the release points out.

To help her students develop into accomplished readers and writers, “Squires sets high expectations, provides an environment rich in literary materials and encourages creative writing and portfolio building,” the release says. Many of her students have been recognized in state and national writing contests.

Further, Squires has written grants to fund a number of innovative programs and projects, including the Pine View student literary magazine *Portable Prose and Poetry*, the release adds. She also secured the funding for an



Fran Squires/Contributed photo

economics project titled *The Ugly Mug*, in which students packed chocolate cake ingredients into recycled coffee mugs, the release notes.

Squires also served for several years as a teacher advisor for *SCOPE* magazine, the national literary publication of the Scholastic Corp., the release continues.

The NCTE award is gratifying because it is an endorsement of her work by her peers, Squires said in the release. “I am personally thrilled to win this award after a long career in education,” she added.

More information about NCTE is available on its [website](#). 



Image courtesy morguefile.com.

OPERATION DRY WATER RESULTS RELEASED BY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol deputies stopped seven vessels to conduct safety checks, arrested two people for Boating Under the Influence (BUI) and issued three written warnings and one citation during Operation Dry Water, a national BUI awareness and enforcement campaign conducted locally on waterways and at boat ramps in Englewood, Nokomis and Venice over the previous weekend, the Sheriff's Office has reported.

Over the course of three days, the office's personnel engaged in increased patrols, life jacket checks and boater education, a news release says. "Alcohol limits are the same on the water as on the road, so anyone boating with a .08 breath alcohol concentration (BAC) or above can be arrested," it adds.

The two men arrested — Charles Lamb, 51, of 5631 Lingle St., North Port; and William Bunn, 27, of 108 Pearl Avenue South, Nokomis — crashed into pilings when they were trying to dock, the release adds.

At Indian Mound Park in Englewood, a Sheriff's Office sergeant observed Lamb's vessel come in sideways and strike the pylons several times, according to the report. At the Nokomis Boat Ramp, a deputy observed Bunn ram the bow of his boat into a piling. Once the boat was secured to the dock, the report continues, Bunn appeared to fall from the driver's seat into the water. Once he was back in the boat, the report says, he "used the seats and railings to steady himself."

Lamb had four passengers in his boat when he was approached by law enforcement officers,

*Charles Lamb/Contributed photo*

the news release notes. He blew a 0.144 BAC, the release adds. He also had a warrant for Battery in a Charlotte County case.

Although Bunn was just under the legal limit for alcohol, the release continues, the Sheriff's Office requested a urine sample because of "significant signs of impairment during Standardized Field Sobriety Tests and Evaluations. Results are due in about a month."

*William Bunn/Contributed photo*

During the operation deputies also responded to three emergency calls for service, including helping the Coast Guard locate a vessel that was taking on water 10 miles offshore, the release points out.

"While this operation has ended, Marine Patrol deputies continue to be vigilant and will increase patrols again throughout the Fourth of July holiday weekend," it adds.

ARREST MADE IN ATTEMPTED ROBBERY AT DOLLAR GENERAL

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested the man responsible for the attempted robbery at Dollar General on Bee Ridge Road Sunday afternoon, June 29, the office has announced.

The clerk reported that the suspect walked into the store, demanded she open the register and implied he had a gun, a news release

says. When the clerk told him to get out of the store, the release continues, the suspect left in a newer model light green sedan. The clerk described him as a white male who was 6 feet 1 inch tall, weighing about 180 pounds and in his mid-30s with a goatee. He was wearing a white shirt with Mario Brothers characters on it, gray shorts and black Nike shoes with red trim, according to the clerk's description.

Late on the night of July 1, the release notes, deputies conducted a traffic stop on a green Hyundai and subsequently arrested Mario Smith, 33, of 4024 Fleet Lane, Sarasota, for Possession of Narcotic Equipment. During a search of the vehicle, deputies also found clothing exactly as described by the clerk, the release says. Deputies contacted the detective on the case and brought Smith in for questioning.

Smith admitted that he was at the Dollar General but denied trying to rob the store, the release continues. He is also charged with Attempted Robbery and his vehicle was seized. Smith has an extensive arrest history that includes charges of Domestic Battery, drug sales and possession, Larceny and Criminal Mischief, the release adds.



Mario Smith/Contributed photo

77-YEAR-OLD DRIVER CHARGED AFTER HITTING DEPUTY'S VEHICLE

On June 29, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office issued multiple traffic citations to an Ellenton man who not only failed to slow down or move over for law enforcement officers on Interstate 75 but who also clipped the door of a patrol vehicle, just as a deputy was exiting it, and then kept driving, the office has reported.

Deputy Chris Butler was making a traffic stop on northbound I-75 just south of Clark Road for a "move over" violation when a 2000 Cadillac hit the driver's side door of his SUV as Clark opened it, a news release says. The driver of the Cadillac, 77-year-old Robert Best, who failed to stop after the crash, was pulled over a short time later by another traffic deputy, the release notes. Best said he was not aware that he had hit anything or that



Damage to a Cadillac that struck a deputy's vehicle is evident in a photo taken by Sheriff's Office personnel. Contributed photo

there was obvious damage to his vehicle, the release adds.

Best was cited for a Move Over Violation, Failure to Maintain Lane and Leaving the Scene of an Accident with Property Damage.

In addition to the damage to Butler's SUV, the vehicle Butler originally had pulled over was struck by debris from the incident, resulting in minor damage, the release continues.

Butler, who has been in the Sheriff's Office Traffic Unit for more than 15 years, previously served as the Field Training Officer, the release notes. He has attended numerous schools to learn about enforcement-related topics, it points out.

He complained of a sore ankle and burning on his skin from the airbag deploying when the door of his SUV was struck, the release says. There were no other injuries reported.



The airbag deployed in a deputy's SUV after a driver struck it on Interstate 75, Sheriff's Office personnel reported. Contributed photo

MIAMI MEN ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH BOAT AND TRAILER THEFT

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested two Miami men who were caught driving away with another man's boat and trailer, the office has announced.

The victim's son saw the suspects towing his father's 15-foot Sailfish behind a white van on Friday night, June 27, and followed their vehicle as he called 911, a news release says. Deputies located the van headed southbound on Interstate 75 "at a high rate of speed and pulled the suspects over near mile marker 179," the release adds. The van was reported stolen in Miami, and the driver, Nivaldo Echevarria, 24, had only a Florida identification card following four convictions for driving with a suspended license, the release points out. His passenger was identified as Ricardo Fuentes, 48, who was wanted by the



Nivaldo Echevarria/Contributed photo



A stolen boat and trailer are shown hitched to a van, also reported stolen, that Sheriff's deputies pulled over at mile marker 179 on Interstate 75, the Sheriff's Office reported. Contributed photo



Ricardo Fuentes/Contributed photo

Florida Parole Commission for a parole violation as a habitual offender for armed burglary and robbery, the release adds.

Fuentes is charged with two counts of Grand Theft. Echevarria is charged with three counts of Grand Theft and one count each of Driving

While License Suspended and Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Because of additional evidence found in the van, detectives have contacted other jurisdictions and the investigation is continuing, the release notes.

VENICE WOMAN CHARGED IN JEWELRY THEFT AND PAWNING CASE


The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a Venice woman for allegedly stealing jewelry from a friend's home and pawning the items for cash, the office has announced.

On June 22, the victim contacted the Sheriff's Office to report that all of her jewelry had been stolen from boxes she kept in dresser drawers, a news release says. The woman did not know when the items were taken because she had not worn her jewelry for some time, it adds. The victim, who lives alone, said the only person with access to her home was Michelle Utterback, 46, of 1348 Capri Isles Blvd., Venice, who has a key to the house and cares for the victim's cat when she goes out of town, the release continues.

Detectives checked local pawn activity and found that Utterback had pawned items twice in March and again in May that matched the descriptions of the stolen jewelry, the release says. "When questioned, Utterback admitted to the crimes," it adds.



Michelle Utterback/Contributed photo

Utterback, who is on 20 years' probation for a Scheme to Defraud case in 2009, is charged with two counts of Grand Theft and three counts of False Verification on a Pawn Ticket. Additional charges are pending. 



941-366-TIPS (8477)

Crime stoppers
of Sarasota County

www.sarasotacrimestoppers.com

All submitted tips are secure and anonymous

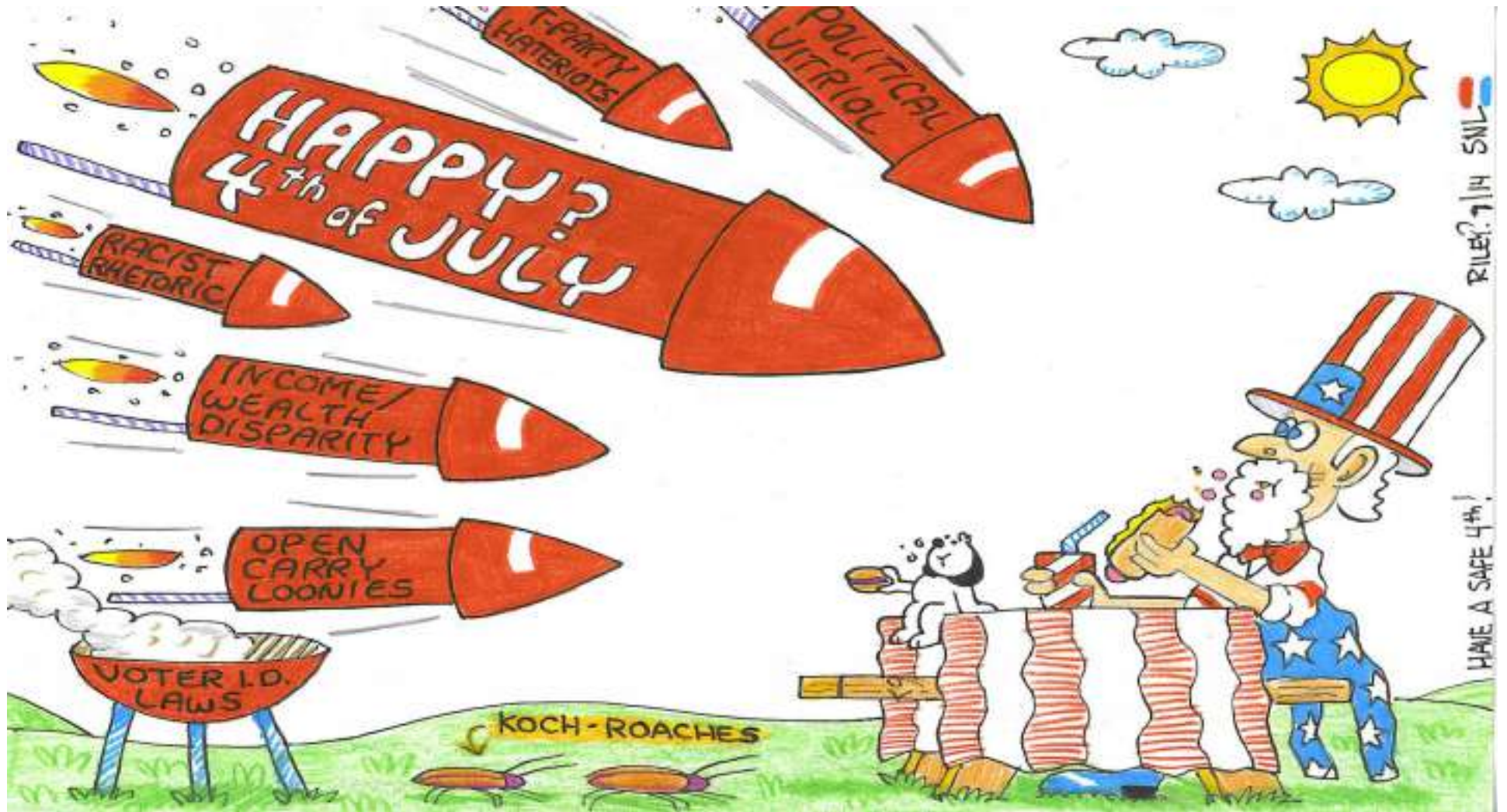
Simply put, Crime Stoppers relies upon the cooperation between the police the media and the community to provide a flow of information about crime and criminals.

Call: (941) 366-TIPS (8477)

Click: SarasotaCrimeStoppers.com

Text: Text "TIP109" plus your message to CRIMES (274637)

OPINION



INDEPENDENCE DAY MOSTLY FOR THE INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY

EDITORIAL

As Americans gather around the country to celebrate Independence Day, the activities likely will feature outdoor-grilled foods, fireworks and well-meaning speeches about how wonderful our nation is and how wise our Founders were in starting us on the path to self-determination.

And while there truly is much to celebrate about our way of life and the unique place our country has in history, there also is a dark side ... the cracks in our national façade of exceptionalism that reveal the “two Americas” described by former vice presidential nominee John Edwards.

When the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence in 1776,

the belief that all were gifted by the Creator with “unalienable rights” that included “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” was both a legal indictment of British hegemony and an assertion that the Colonial peoples had earned — through blood, sweat and toil — the right to govern themselves, free of foreign interference.

But the Declaration of Independence also was a philosophical treatise that set forth important principles in maintaining the affairs of the people, providing inspiration to some of our nation’s greatest statesmen.

Now, 238 years later, many of those lofty ideals remain elusive for too great a portion of the populace. American lives have been lost at the hands of other Americans in the

OPINION

struggle to attain the equality envisioned in the Declaration of Independence. And the “pursuit of happiness” has been compromised by the pernicious influence of a wealthy overclass that is every bit as oppressive as its counterparts in the British peerage from whom we declared independence in 1776.

The so-called American Dream, rather than rooted in the principles of the Declaration of Independence, became a canard promulgated by Robber Barons in a post-slavery era to coerce the common people into providing more labor for fewer rewards. Horrendous working conditions, punishingly long hours and near starvation wages became the hallmarks of the Gilded Age.

By the end of the 1920s, the disparity in income and wealth between the overclass and the rest of the people was unprecedented in the history of the nation. And the unfettered means whereby that wealth was aggregated in fewer and fewer hands unbalanced the economy and plunged the entire world into the Great Depression.

The economic policies that were adopted to reverse these excesses — along with the global conflict that was World War II — restored some sense of equity to the rewards borne out of individual efforts in “pursuit of happiness.” A great middle class rose up in our nation, and parents could look forward to their children having better lives and greater ease than they did.

The struggle for equality among all Americans continued with the Civil Rights movement. Fifty years ago this week, the signing of the Civil Rights Act by President Lyndon Johnson was a turning point in ending the efforts of racist majorities in individual states to oppress African-Americans.

Tragically, the overclass — which never relinquished its desire for oligarchic control of the nation — has reasserted itself in the last quarter-century. Using modern means of mass communications and advances in propagandizing, the wealthy few in America have turned the common people against one another. Preying on ignorance and fear, the oligarchs have mobilized a large segment of the population to eschew their own self-interests in furtherance of a political philosophy that benefits only their overlords. And, insidiously, the oligarchs have gained control over many of the levers of power in our federal and state governments.

Many of the economic protections that were put in place during the Great Depression have been dismantled, leading us into an almost equal economic cataclysm now known as the Great Recession. And despite the crushing blow dealt a large percentage of the population by that recession, the wealthy suffered little. In fact, their wealth and power grew, so the disparity in income and wealth between the overclass and the rest of the people is greater than at any time since the late 1920s.

Latter-day Robber Barons now preside over monolithic corporations that are global in

OPINION

scope, virtually escaping the ability of any one government to regulate or control them.

They even have gained enough influence among justices of the Supreme Court of the

United States to be declared not only independent entities — which was the intent of establishing corporations in the first place — but entities vested with the same rights as individuals, including the freedoms of speech and religion. The effect of these grievous grants has been to magnify the outsized influence of corporations in the makeup and conduct of our representative government, to the extent that Congress has become a virtual fiefdom of the oligarchy.

The aggregation of wealth has led to a new superclass of billionaires, whose motivation is accumulating more and more wealth. Scant concern is evinced by them for the health and welfare of the nation.

The 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence challenged a ruling overclass, denying it any continued right to control the affairs of the people of the American Colonies. In doing so, they placed themselves and the nascent nation at great peril of mortal repercussions. Regardless, they committed to the cause by pledging their “lives, [their]

“The so-called American Dream, rather than rooted in the principles of the Declaration of Independence, became a canard promulgated by Robber Barons in a post-slavery era to coerce the common people into providing more labor for fewer rewards.”


fortunes and [their] sacred honor.”

On this Independence Day, we should reflect on the billionaires and other members of the American overclass and how they would commit themselves to

the preservation of our nation. Would they be willing to commit their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to advance the interests of the United States? Or are they concerned only with their own self-interests, to the detriment of our great nation?

We must, as a people, recognize the veracity of the words of the Declaration of Independence, that “experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.”

It is time to restore the American Dream to an ideal of egalitarianism and fair play, with every American having the opportunity to achieve success, rather than the onerous work ethic that has brought so much suffering to so many for the enrichment of so few.

It is time to contemplate a new, albeit democratically exercised, American Revolution ... this time from the tyranny of obscene wealth. 

OPINION

ODE TO DEREK



By Harriet Cuthbert
Contributing Writer

COMMENTARY

The fans are going wild. You can feel their energy and excitement. They have arrived 45 minutes early and are whispering to each other in anticipation about the show ... and we are still just in the lobby.

It is a Sunday afternoon at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall in Sarasota, and Derek Hough and his sister, Julianne, along with eight other dancers, will be performing during their *Move Live* tour.


As a long-time fan of Derek, who demonstrates amazing talent on *Dancing with the Stars*, I am really looking forward to this live performance. Sitting in the third row, center, gazing up onto the beautifully decorated stage, I really do feel as if I am at a theater on Broadway. The Van Wezel is sold out and filled with people of all genders and all ages — proving once again that exceptional talent will always win out when it comes to attracting people to a performance.

Promptly at 2 p.m., the lights dim and the strobe lights appear, accompanied by loud, fast, high-energy music that serves to introduce the stars. Derek and Julianne are standing at the top of a stairway, surrounded by four other fantastic dancing couples. Black-and-white costumes sprinkled with sequins enhance the vibrancy of their movements in the show's opening number, and the audience loves it.

Every routine was excellent, but a couple of them stand out in my memory. The first was an Argentine tango, filled with passion, perfect steps and fiery music that reminded me of Buenos Aires. The brother and sister seem to be so in sync with each other's thoughts and actions, they appear as one in a blur of whirling and turning.

In the show's second half, I thoroughly enjoyed their tribute to American songs and dances from the 1920s to the present. Once again, the high energy evidenced by all the dancers, combined with their amazingly perfect-looking bodies and their extraordinary speed as they switched from one dance rhythm to another, created a fabulous performance. I must have said, "Wow" at least a million times.

Derek has great stage presence. When he addressed the audience, with his abundant folksy humor, and then literally recruited a few fans to dance on stage, the rest of us applauded and screamed in joy. I have never seen so many people having so much fun at the Van Wezel. They even gave the dancers standing ovations during many of the dance numbers, not waiting until the routines ended to applaud.

Personally, I can say that having watched a variety of marvelous entertainment over the past 15 years at the Van Wezel, this performance is my all-time favorite. It certainly does not hurt to know that in my next life, I am coming back as Leslie Caron and I will be dancing with Gene Kelly in a remake of *An American in Paris*. 

FOR ALL VETERANS



The Venice Concert Band members are assembled for their performance. All photos by Norman Schimmel

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY COME TOGETHER FOR THE DEDICATION OF PATRIOT PLAZA AT SARASOTA NATIONAL CEMETERY

Staff Reports

From children to World War II veterans, active-duty military personnel to representatives of the U.S. Government, about 2,800 people gathered on Saturday, June 28, to see Patriot Plaza unveiled at Sarasota National Cemetery.

The new amphitheater was officially opened to the public in an event that paid “tribute to the service and sacrifice of veterans and their families,” a Patterson Foundation news release pointed out.

The \$12 million venue was designed, constructed and fully funded by [The Patterson Foundation](#), the release says.

The hour-long ceremony featured patriotic performances by the Venice Concert Band and the Jacobites Pipe and Drum Band, along with a memorial motorcycle ride-by and poetry recitals.

“This event was four years in the making,” said Debra Jacobs, president and CEO of



The Patterson Foundation, in the release. “Patriot Plaza will inspire visitors for generations to come,” she added.

Patriot Plaza is the result of a unique public-private partnership initiated in 2010 between The Patterson Foundation and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Cemetery Administration, the release explains. “This is the first time a



private foundation has worked with the National Cemetery Administration on an enhancement of this magnitude for a national cemetery," it points out. "While the community dedication marked the official donation of the venue to the [Department of Veterans Affairs], The Patterson

Foundation has committed a \$1 million endowment toward structural replacement,” the release says.

Requests to use Patriot Plaza for events honoring veterans may be submitted to Sarasota National Cemetery at 922-7200.

All photos are by Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel. 



Poet Cedric Hameed takes the podium.





TODAH

"THANK YOU"

MENORAH

AN EXPRESSION OF
GRATITUDE TO ALL THE
BRITISH, RUSSIAN AND
AMERICAN FOOT SOLDIERS
WHO SACRIFICED THEIR
LIVES TO LIBERATE
MILLIONS OF JEWISH
PEOPLE FROM EXTINCTION
IN THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS.

THE FRACTURED STAR OF
DAVID IS MADE WHOLE AND
LIFTED BY THOSE SOLDIERS



Glenn R. Powers, deputy undersecretary for field programs in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, addresses the audience.





U.S. Congressman Vern Buchanan, R-Longboat Key, offers remarks.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

04
JULY

The Gloria Musicae Singers present *Patriotic Spectacular*

July 4, 4:30 p.m. First United Methodist Church, 104 S. Pineapple St., Sarasota. Tickets: \$35 for general admission or \$33.50 if purchased [online](#); student tickets, \$15 at the door. Concert to feature traditional patriotic songs and tributes to Harold Arlen and Leonard Bernstein. Free parking in Zenith garage on Mira Mar Court. Information: 953-3368.

04+
JULY

Florida Studio Theatre presents *At the Hop*

Through July 6; times vary. Court Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$32 to \$36. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

04+
JULY

Banyan Theater Company presents *The Price* by Arthur Miller

Through July 13; times vary. Jane B. Cook Theatre, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Tickets: \$28.50 for a single performance; \$52 for two of Banyan's summer season plays; and \$70 for three shows. *The Style of the Blind Pig* by Phillip Hayes Dean to follow in July and *Collected Stories* by Donald Margulies in August. Information: banyantheater-company.com.

04+
JULY

FST presents *Becoming Dr. Ruth*

Through July 27; times vary. Keating Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$34 to \$44. Information: floridastudiotheatre.org or 366-9000.

04+
JULY

Allyn Gallup Gallery presents *A Few Great, Big Pictures*

Through July 28; times vary. 1288 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free. Information: 366-2454 or AllynGallup.com.

04+
JULY

FST Improv: *Out of Bounds Match Up*

Through Aug. 23, 7:30 p.m. Browne's Lab Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$15. Information: 366-9000 or www.FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

04+
JULY

UUCS Presents *Jane Shannon: Works in Fabric*

Through Sept. 4; times vary. Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, Lexow Wing Gallery, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. Free. Information: 371-4974 or the church [website](#).

THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

04+ JULY	Dabbert Gallery presents <i>Summer Showcase</i> Through Sept. 29; times vary. 76 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free. Featuring works by three sculptors, one printmaker, 15 painters, one pastel artist and one photographer. Information: 955-1315 or dabbertgallery.com .
05+ JULY	Suncoast Super Boat Grand Prix Festival July 5-6, free events. July 5, Powerboats by the Bay, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Centennial Park, 10th Street and U.S. 41, Sarasota; Miss Super Boat Grand Prix Bikini Contest, 3-4 p.m., Centennial Park, 10th Street and U.S. 41, Sarasota. July 6, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Grand Prix Boat Race, Lido Beach between New Pass and Big Pass. Information: suncoastoffshore.org .
05+ JULY	Bookstore1Sarasota presents Breakfast Serial Book Club July 5 and each succeeding Saturday during the summer. From 10:30-11 a.m., staffers will read to 3- to 6-year-olds; from 11:15-11:45 a.m., they will read to 7- to 9-year-olds. 1359 Main St., Sarasota. Information: bookstore1sarasota.com or 365-7900.
08+ JULY	Florida Studio Theatre presents <i>Clearly Invisible</i>, Magic Up Close with Carl Seiger July 8 through Aug. 3; times vary. John C. Court Cabaret, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$32 to \$36. Information: 366-9000 or floridastudiotheatre.org .
11+ JULY	Florida Studio Theatre presents the Sixth Annual Improv Festival July 11-12; times vary. 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: weekend passes, \$59; for one night of shows, \$49; individual shows, \$10 each; workshops, \$29 per two-hour session. Information: 366-9000 or floridastudiotheatre.org .
12 JULY	Venice Community Center presents One Night Rodeo July 12, 8-11 p.m.; doors open at 6:30 p.m. Center located at 326 Nokomis Ave., Venice. Tickets: \$5. A Bradenton band, One Night Rodeo recently won the Great American Country and Music Nation's Next Star Competition. More information and tickets: 861-1380.
19 JULY	ALSO Youth presents <i>The Story of My Life</i> July 19, 7 p.m. Goldstein Theatre, Florida Studio Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets \$25; proceeds benefit ALSO Youth. The semi-autobiographical serio-comedy will focus on the lives of Mark Bowers and Joey Panek. Information: 951-2576 or Alsoyouth.org .
23+ JULY	Florida Studio Theatre presents <i>Taking Shakespeare</i> July 23 through Aug. 17; times vary. Gompertz Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$32 to \$36. This will be the play's U.S. premiere. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org .

Submit Calendar Events To
News@SarasotaNewsLeader.com

A PLACE OF CELEBRATION AND REMEMBRANCE

PRESS



Norman Schimmel
Photographer

The Sarasota News Leader
BORN 04/10/1942 EXPIRE 10/15/2000

SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS



Each week, Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel searches Sarasota County for iconic shots that underscore why the community is a favorite with residents and tourists alike.

AT PLANNED PARENTHOOD, CARE IS MUCH MORE THAN THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE; IT'S THE WAY WE APPROACH OUR WORLD.

WE CARE.

DEEPLY. WITH RESPECT. WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

WE ARE UNWAVERING IN OUR BELIEF THAT ALL PEOPLE DESERVE HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE. WE ARE TIRELESS IN OUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SO PEOPLE CAN MAKE THEIR OWN HEALTH DECISIONS. WE PROUDLY FIGHT FOR WOMEN TO BE ABLE TO GET THE REPRODUCTIVE SERVICES THEY NEED. WE DO ALL OF THIS BECAUSE

WE CARE PASSIONATELY ABOUT HELPING WOMEN, MEN, AND YOUNG PEOPLE
LEAD HEALTHY LIVES.

NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE. NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE. WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO GET THEM THE CARE THEY NEED. BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN PEOPLE ARE TRULY CARED FOR, THEY WILL MAKE THEIR LIVES, THEIR FAMILIES – AND EVEN THE WORLD – BETTER AND HEALTHIER.
PLANNED PARENTHOOD. CARE. NO MATTER WHAT.



**Planned Parenthood Of
Southwest And Central Florida**

**941-953-4060
MyPlannedParenthood.org**

