When lives are in danger, Volusia County’s Beach Safety Ocean Rescue officers race to the scene without thought for their own safety. They do this every day, but one extraordinary event recently brought their heroism into the limelight, garnering international attention and national honors.

When a South Carolina woman drove her van and three children into the ocean March 4, Captain Scott Wise and Officers Rick Urquhart and Jordan Chrisley responded immediately.

A bystander had already rescued two of the children, but a third child, a 3-year-old girl, was trapped in her booster seat. Wise quickly entered the van, freed the frightened child from her car seat, and handed the girl to Urquhart through the back hatch. Chrisley cleared a path so Wise could make a speedy exit. Seconds later, the van was afloat.

The U.S. Lifesaving Association gave Medals of Valor to the three heroes during a ceremony in Virginia Beach Aug. 6. The Medal of Valor is the highest lifeguard award presented by the association.

“I am extremely proud of these officers for their actions in this event and for their dedication to protecting the public on a daily basis,” said Beach Safety Director Mark Swanson. “Beach Safety Ocean Rescue officers continuously train for situations such as this. Their training was an essential component in this rescue.”
straight talk

**New budget in place; a team effort**

As we begin another fiscal year with the 2014-15 county budget in place, I’d like to pause for a moment to reflect on the collective effort it takes to put our fiscal plan together.

I continue to say that we’re a team, all rowing in the same direction as we go about providing quality services to our citizens. From our top staff on down, we continue to do our parts to put before the Volusia County Council a fiscal plan that’s conservative, yet responsive, to the needs of our community. Without each of you working every day to conserve resources and seeking ways to cut costs, we couldn’t have made it through the last several years of budget challenges.

While the local economy is recovering, we still have daunting tasks ahead as we tackle some of the challenges we face. I’ll mention some of those challenges, but before I do, I’d like to report the new budget contains money for a 3 percent raise for employees in good standing. But... I need your continued help in identifying opportunities for savings. If in the next few months, we can identify sufficient savings to offset the cost of a raise, I will seek county council approval to do so. I believe this can be done, but we need to continue to seek cost reductions, as we’ve done with raises awarded in the past.

In the last issue of County Line, I touched on the cost of employee health insurance. For those of you who aren’t familiar, the county self insures for employee health claims. In other words, we put money aside, rather than purchase commercial dollar-for-dollar coverage. With this being said, it’s incumbent on all county employees to manage health care costs by living healthy lifestyles... eating right, exercising and abstaining from tobacco use.

The cost of health insurance is among the biggest fiscal challenges facing the county. It should come as no surprise that health care costs are rising here, as they are everywhere in America. This past July the county was forced to raise your out of pocket contribution to our health insurance program. Thank you all for recognizing the need for this revenue enhancing step.

But looking ahead, we’re going to undertake a full blown analysis of our health insurance program as we seek additional cost efficiencies. But rest assured, as manager, I recognize the importance of health insurance as part of our overall compensation package. We have an excellent plan and I desire to keep it that way for all employees.

Within a few months, we’ll begin to address our biggest immediate fiscal challenge. This is funding the cost of the county’s fire/EMS services in the unincorporated areas. For the last several years, the county has been dipping into reserves to fund operating costs for this service in our budget. Simply put, expenses exceed revenues and we’re running out of savings.

Finding a solution to this challenge is going to take the collective expertise of the staff, the public we serve (taxpayers), and the county council.

It’s certainly positive that our local economy is recovering; property values are going up; our tourism industry is doing very well; and exciting new projects are coming out of the ground. But a complete recovery from the Great Recession will take time. That means for those of us in local government, we must remain open to change and cognizant of the fact that fiscal restraint is the prudent course.

In closing, I wish to thank our very hard working budget staff for another outstanding job in preparing this year’s fiscal plan. I also want to thank my two deputy county managers and the department and division directors for their leadership and support on the budget. And, of course, our Volusia County Council deserves praise for their political courage and support of this year’s budget.

We truly are a great team!

— Jim Dinneen, County Manager
As a reminder, Volusia County increased copays July 1 in response to rising health care costs. The new copays are:

- Personal care physician office visit: $25
- Specialist physician office visit: $40
- Obstetrical care including delivery: $105
- Outpatient surgery: $40
- Office surgery: $40
- Immunizations/inoculations (not part of an annual exam): $30
- Walk-in clinic (personal care physician): $25
- Walk-in clinic (specialist): $40
- Urgent care: $50
- Hospital (inpatient): $250 per day, three-day maximum
- Hospital (outpatient surgery): $250 per day, three-day maximum
- Emergency room (waived if admitted): $65
- Dental (office surgery, office visit, impacted teeth surgery): $35
- Chiropractic: $25
- Skilled nursing facility per admission: $55
- X-rays: $25
- Lab test: $25
- MRI/CAT scan: $250 deductible plus 10 percent coinsurance
- Sleep study: $25
- Massage: $25
- Occupational therapy: $25
- Physical and speech therapy: $25
- Ambulance: $65
- Durable medical equipment: $25
- Medical supplies: $15
- Prosthetic device (per device): $105
- Behavioral health (inpatient): $250 per day, three-day maximum
- Behavioral health (outpatient): $25
- Prescription drug Rx tier 1 (retail): $20
- Prescription drug Rx tier 2 (retail): $35
- Prescription drug Rx tier 3 (retail): $55
- Prescription drug Rx tier 1 (mail): $40
- Prescription drug Rx tier 2 (mail): $70
- Prescription drug Rx tier 3 (mail): $110

For more information, please contact Benefits Manager Dave Merrill at 736-5951.
For the 10th consecutive year, Volusia County’s Fleet Management Division has been named one of the 100 best fleets in North America. The county was ranked fifth this year.

The 100 Best Fleets in North America Program, endorsed by the National Association of Fleet Administrators, recognizes peak-performing public sector fleet operations and encourages ever-increasing levels of productivity and operational effectiveness.

Evaluators examined 12 key aspects, including accountability, use of technology and information, collaboration, creativity, celebration, evidence of a high-trust culture, performance recognition, “doing it right the first time,” quick and efficient turnaround, competitive pricing, staff development, and resources stewardship.

“This award is the result of a great team effort,” said Central Services Director George Baker. “Our employees take great pride in providing our agencies with safe, reliable and economical vehicles.”

Fifty-five full-time employees handle maintenance, field repairs and minor body work for 2,456 county vehicles and pieces of equipment, including fire engines, sheriff’s deputy vehicles, ambulances, bulldozers, dump trucks, backhoes and lawn mowers. They also provide fuel and maintenance services to five other local governmental agencies through contracts.

Hats off to four Central Services staff members who have been appointed to leadership positions in their professional organizations.

Activity Project Manager Michele Wetherington recently was elected chair of the Sunshine State Chapter of the National Association of Fleet Administrators.

Sustainability Coordinator Michelle Leigh has been named president of the Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies and chair of the Central Florida Energy Efficiency Alliance.

Administrative Coordinator Glenn Scorza is serving a second term as president of the Central Florida Clean Cities Coalition.

Operations Manager Robert Gilmore, is serving another term on the Florida Sheriffs Association and Florida Association of Counties Advisory Committee.

ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE – County Manager Jim Dinneen (top photo right) and State Attorney R.J. Larizza take a soaking from Sheriff Ben Johnson and Deputy County Manager/CFO Charlene Weaver to raise awareness about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. In the bottom photo, Deputy County Attorney Charles Hargrove, left, and Property Appraiser Morgan Gilreath follow suit with help from Jim Dinneen and Property Appraiser Staff Assistant Christy Shacklette. Other employees from across the county also took the challenge.
Volusia County Fire Services recently joined Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in training more than 100 volunteers during a full-scale disaster drill in Daytona Beach. The volunteers were members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which is overseen by FEMA. They received classroom training in search and rescue, fire suppression, triage, and stabilizing vehicles at Volusia County Fire Services’ training center before taking part in an outdoor exercise.

Battalion Commander Chuck Kamine, who oversaw the disaster drill, said the exercise went extremely well.

The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Pictured left, Chris Davis, a firefighter/paramedic with Volusia County Fire Services, instructs volunteers in triage during a disaster drill in Daytona Beach.

Name: Charles Bailey
Job: As a paramedic with EVAC Ambulance, he provides basic and advanced life support care and transport for ill and injured patients.

Hire date: He was hired by Beacon Ambulance in 1979 and has stayed with the county’s EMS transport provider ever since.

Hometown: Douglas, Georgia

What he likes about his job: “I enjoy having a job I love and a mobile office,” he said.

How he spends his spare time: “I enjoy diving and fishing,” Bailey said. “Years back, I did much cave diving in Florida and the Bahamas, but at present I enjoy diving in the sunlight.”
Sheriff honors team that worked hospital shooting

They faced down the danger and stress of an active shooter situation with professionalism, teamwork, bravery and sound tactics.

Sheriff Ben Johnson recently presented a unit commendation to 21 people – a crew of law enforcement officers and public safety telecommunicators from three agencies – who responded to a gunman on the loose at Halifax Health Medical Center in Daytona Beach. The frightening ordeal ended in 21 minutes, with the gunman dying at his own hands and no loss of innocent lives.

“I can’t say enough about each and every one of you,” Sheriff Johnson told the group that included members of the Sheriff’s Office, the Daytona Beach Police Department and Volusia County Beach Patrol. “I want to commend and congratulate you. What a great job you did in the face of danger.”

The incident started shortly before 4 a.m. Jan. 5 with a report of a gunman opening fire on a vehicle that was traveling past the hospital. The gunman also shot out the windows of several parked vehicles before blasting his way through the glass doors of a building at the medical complex and then making his way to the second floor of the hospital. There, the armed suspect accosted several nurses and patients.

Once law enforcement discovered the gunman was inside the hospital, they quickly formed a search plan and assembled a multi-agency search team to go inside the facility and seek out the threat.

Sheriff Johnson noted this was in stark contrast to the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado. Back then, the common wisdom was for law enforcement to hold down the perimeter and wait for special forces to arrive. Now, instead of waiting, first-responding law enforcement officers are trained to go into the building immediately when there’s an active shooter and find and neutralize the threat. And that’s exactly what happened at Halifax Health Medical Center.

“The training the agencies have done has made a big difference,” remarked Sheriff Johnson.

A team of Daytona Beach officers and sheriff’s deputies entered the building and began a methodical search for the gunman. As they were closing in on him, he took his own life. Sheriff Johnson made particular mention of the teamwork involved, saying the color of the uniforms – whether green, grey or blue – made no difference. On that day, they were all working as one. The sheriff also praised the telecommunicators at the Sheriff’s Office’s dispatch center, as they worked the radio channels while calmly answering multiple 911 calls from concerned citizens.

“This partnership serves as an example of cooperative, multi-agency teamwork,” notes the citation that accompanied the commendation. “Everyone’s professional actions and instinctive reactions to the situation reflected their excellent training and resulted in a positive outcome to a potentially deadly incident.”

(See SHOOTING page 7)
As a school resource deputy, Mike Worlledge splits his time between New Smyrna Beach High School and New Smyrna Beach Middle School, acting as law enforcer, mentor, mediator, adviser and role model to hundreds of impressionable students. To those who know him best, he’s also considered a master problem-solver and someone who sets a positive example for students and parents. He participates in numerous school functions while building strong bonds with the entire campus.

It’s a difficult and challenging job, and during the last school year, no one did it better than Worlledge. Earlier this year, Worlledge was named Volusia County’s School Resource Deputy of the Year for the 2013-14 school year. A closely-guarded secret, Worlledge learned of his selection when school officials surprised him with the official announcement and a plaque of recognition. He had been nominated for the award by the principal and assistant principal at New Smyrna Beach High School. Principal Robert Ouellette called Worlledge “an incredible asset to the school community and a talented individual.”

Added the principal in his letter of nomination: “As a school resource deputy he displays professionalism and dedication to this vocation each day. ...In addition, Mike displays the ability to help problem-solve issues with students through collaboration with school administration, and this quality has served to prevent a multitude of potential problems.”

In the words of the school’s assistant principal, W. Kelly Case: “Deputy Worlledge is professional, dedicated and compassionate for students and our community. He continues to set high standards for others to follow and leads by example.”

Worlledge has been with the Sheriff’s Office since October 1995.
Movers and shakers

BATTALION COMMANDERS – Fire Chief Jeff Smith, center, congratulates Chris McKay, left, and Steve Garger on their promotions.

VCFS announces promotions

Steve Garger and Chris McKay have moved up the ranks and are the newest battalion commanders for Volusia County Fire Services.

As battalion commanders, they assist in the overall operation of the division, assuming command of firefighting crews and directing firefighting and rescue operations.

Garger joined VCFS in 2000 as a volunteer firefighter, was hired in 2003, and was promoted to lieutenant in 2005. He’s been the department’s honor guard commander since 2005 and is working toward a bachelor’s degree in public administration.

McKay worked for Tequesta Fire Rescue before joining VCFS in 2004. He has served as a lieutenant and paramedic and has associate degrees in fire science and emergency medical services.

Additionally, Norman Dwight, Beau Falconnier and Chris Hogan were promoted to lieutenants.

Health Department honors Jim Judge

The Florida Department of Health has given the Larry S. Jordan EMS Hall of Fame award to Emergency Management Director Jim Judge.

The award honors him for lifetime achievement in the field of emergency medical services. He was one of 14 recipients of awards that honor outstanding Florida emergency medical service organizations and people who make a positive impact on their agencies and the state.

Before joining Volusia County’s staff in 2013, Judge was executive director of Lake Emergency Medical Services in Mount Dora. He has worked in emergency medical services for 42 years.

Ehrhardt, Eckroth promoted

The Volusia County Council has approved the appointment of Rob Ehrhardt to economic development director.

Ehrhardt, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, joined the Economic Development Division as manager in 2008. Previously, he was manager of the Small Business Development Center in Daytona Beach and a staff officer with the U.S. Navy Personnel Command in Millington, Tennessee.

In his new position, he is focusing on the expansion and retention of businesses in Volusia County and is working with other stakeholders to improve the economic vitality of Volusia County.

Natalia Eckroth has been promoted to physical resource manager of the Revenue Division. She began her career as an intern in the Accounting Division in 2006 while pursuing a bachelor’s degree in business administration in accounting and adjusting to American culture.

Eckroth was born in Siberia, Russia, and moved to Volusia County in 2000. In 2008, she took a full-time position as an accountant with Volusia County and earned a master’s degree in accountancy from Stetson University.

She recently earned her CPA and is pursuing certification as a government finance officer and another special certification only for Florida revenue staff.

Thank you for all you do!