

**We must continue to hold
together during tight times**

▶ **Page 2**

**Trails Day at
DeBary Hall**

▶ **Page 2**

**Florida Retirement System
changes: How they affect you**

▶ **Page 3**



County Line

May/June 2011

Team effort helps runway project take off

Inside

▶ **Truck driver
brings hope to
prisoners**

Page 4

▶ **Open enrollment
starts Aug. 1**

Page 5

▶ **Spotlight**

Page 5

▶ **Good things
come to those
who bait**

Page 6

▶ **Sheriff's Office**

Page 7

▶ **Movers and
shakers**

Page 8

▶ **Retirements**

Page 8

Daytona Beach International Airport has entered the final stretch of a \$20 million project to resurface the main runway and upgrade the instrument landing system. Since construction started in November, the project has been running smoothly, on schedule and on budget, thanks to a coordinated team effort by county staff and support agencies.

Karen Feaster, director of airport services, has been the project manager from day one, overseeing every detail from grant applications to design and construction management.

"Karen's high level of management and leadership skills has made these enormous projects flow smoothly," said **Rick Karl**, director of aviation and economic resources. "This effort

has required a tremendous level of detailed coordination, communication and interaction with our many stakeholders, engineers, contractors, and permitting and regulatory agencies."

The project team has encountered and overcome numerous hurdles including funding, design, grants and daily operational issues. As a result, this vital airport project will be completed on schedule by October.

Feaster and other staff members have maintained constant communications with the Federal Aviation Administration and Florida

(See Runway, page 8)



RUNWAY STARS – County staff members are coordinating complicated projects to resurface the airport's runway and update the instrument landing system. Pictured from left are: **Justin Grindell**, **Steve Ward**, **Erik Hakanan**, **Carl Schweizer**, **Karen Feaster**, **John Murray**, **Renee Schoen** and **Todd Buckles**.

We must continue to hold together during tight times



Jim Dinneen

By early July, I will submit my recommended budget for next year to the Volusia County Council. Candidly, some decisions are still up in the air. The big unknown at the time this column was written is what will happen to the base on which we levy the taxes that fund the services we provide. The tax base will drop again, but exactly by how much we do not yet know.

The legislative session is over and we are assessing what impact state decisions will have on our budget. As many

of you may know, the Legislature has made changes to the Florida Retirement System to require a 3 percent contribution by employee participants (please note the FRS questions and answers on page 3). In the long run, the legislators believe employee contributions will keep FRS safe and sound.

I know many of you are feeling the effects of this unprecedented economic period we are experiencing in America, in our state and in our county. As your manager, I am acutely aware many of you are making sacrifices every day – at work and in your personal lives. I also am very aware that each month it gets a little tougher. Our citizen customers too are experiencing tough times. We see and feel their pain in our service centers. Our veterans services offices are crowded, our human services offices are crowded, and our health department offices are crowded. The trend toward “staycations” has filled our parks, our libraries and our beaches.

Unlike the private sector, these difficult days have not eroded our customer base. Just the opposite, our numbers are up. The great paradox is that while our demand for services increases, our revenues have decreased and we have fewer employees to meet this demand.

No doubt you deserve to be rewarded for your willingness to step up and do more with less. Your household costs have increased, just like most everything else. I can make no promises at this time. There's too much uncertainty. However, I pledge to you that as soon as possible we will award a raise to well-performing employees.

As a side note, thanks to your efforts to live healthy lifestyles and be sensitive to health costs, we have not had to adjust our health insurance rates and charges. As you know, the county employee health insurance program is funded by the county. So it's in everyone's best interest to try to hold down claims and costs.

I do not wish to paint a negative picture because, in spite of the difficult decisions we face, I am very confident we have the knowledge and ability to safely navigate these difficult times. We will be just fine. I ask for your continued support, understanding and patience. Our formula of collaboration and hard work continues to carry us through so, as an organization, we continue to provide quality services to our citizens. — **Jim Dinneen, County Manager**

Celebrate Trails Day at DeBary Hall June 4

Celebrate National Trails Day by getting some fresh air and exercise at DeBary Hall Historic Site Saturday, June 4.

Activities will include children's games and informational displays from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. The Volusia Transportation Planning Organization will give away free children's bicycle helmets at 9:30 a.m., and Park Avenue Bicycle Service Center will offer minor repairs and advice on finding the perfect bike. Participants can take a virtual tour on the St. Johns River in DeBary Hall's Imagidome Theater at noon.

Tours of DeBary Hall's 19th century hunting lodge will be available from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission prices are \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, \$2 for children ages 3 - 12, and free

(See *Trails*, page 6)



County Line

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Florida Retirement System changes: How they affect you

Note: The Florida Retirement System (FRS) is under the authority of the Florida Legislature. The county cannot change or deviate from the FRS provisions established by the legislature.

The following are answers to the questions being asked most frequently regarding the changes to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) enacted by the Florida Legislature in the recently concluded session:

Q. Will employees now have to contribute to the FRS pension system?

A. Yes. Effective July 1, 2011, the new legislation requires employees to start contributing 3 percent to the FRS pension plan.

Q. Does everyone have to pay the 3 percent?

A. No. Employees who are Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) participants will not be required to pay the 3 percent because these employees have retired, but are continuing to work.

Q. When will this deduction begin?

A. It will begin with the July 8, 2011, paycheck.

Q. Does DROP still exist?

A. Yes. However, employees entering DROP on or after July 1, 2011, will earn interest at a reduced accrual rate of 1.3 percent. For employees already in DROP or entering before July 1, 2011, the interest rate remains 6.5 percent.

Q. Did the vesting change?

A. There is no change for employees initially enrolled in FRS prior to July 1, 2011. Vesting will remain at six years of creditable service. New employees initially enrolled in the pension plan on or after July 1, 2011, will be vested upon completion of eight years of creditable service.

Q. Did the number of years and/or the age required for retirement change?

A. There is no change for employees initially enrolled in FRS prior to July 1, 2011. For employees initially enrolled in FRS on or after July 1, 2011, the normal retirement age and years of service have increased.

- For the Special Risk Class: The normal retirement age increased from 55 to 60 years, and the years of creditable service increased from 25 to 30.
- For all other classes: The normal retirement age increased from 62 to 65 years, and the years of creditable service increased from 30 to 33.

Q. Did the “average final compensation” change?

A. There is no change for employees initially enrolled in FRS prior to July 1, 2011. The definition of “average final compensation” continues to be the average of the five highest years of compensation. For employees initially enrolled in FRS on or after July 1, 2011, the definition of “average final compensation” will be the average of the eight highest years of compensation.

Q. Is there a cap on the number of overtime hours that count toward the “average final compensation?”

A. No.

Q. Does FRS still allow a maximum of 500 hours of accumulated annual leave payments to count toward the “average final compensation?”

A. Yes.

Q. Was there a change to the health insurance subsidy?

A. The health insurance subsidy remains \$5 per years of service, not to exceed \$150 annually.

Q. Did the cost of living adjustment (COLA) change?

A. Not for anyone already retired, or those in DROP. They will receive a 3 percent COLA. For those still working, there will be no credit for COLA for the five years after July 1, 2011. This will reduce the annual COLA going forward for each year of work. To calculate your COLA: Take the number of months you have worked prior to July 1, 2011, and divide it by the total number of years you have worked at retirement, then multiply it by the 3 percent COLA. Example: If you have 27 years of service as of July 1, 2011, and you continue to work until you have 30 years, your COLA calculation is $27/30=90$ percent; 90 percent of the 3 percent COLA is 2.7 percent COLA for your retirement. The current legislation stipulates the COLA will return to 3 percent on July 1, 2016. So the maximum loss will be five years of credit.

Q. Is there still a defined benefit plan option?

A. Yes. The name has been changed to the Pension Plan.

For more information go to: myfrs.com.



Around the County

Truck driver brings hope to prisoners

Andy Stewart is an answer to a prayer for many Volusia County prisoners. The Solid Waste equipment operator has been providing spiritual guidance at local prisons for the last 22 years, helping inmates to make positive changes in their lives.

In 1999, he founded his own ministry, "Thy Will Be Done," which now has four volunteer chaplains who conduct non-denominational services and offer one-on-one spiritual counseling. The ministry reaches out to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families, converting the lost and encouraging the saved.

Stewart brings compassion, kindness and love to the prisons, volunteering seven days a month at the Volusia County Branch Jail and Facility, Tomoka Correctional Institution, Tomoka Work Camp, and the Seminole and Flagler county jails.

For his efforts, he was named Volusia County Corrections Volunteer of the Year in 2010.

"We preach to inmates to turn them away from lives of crime and dedicate their lives to the Lord," he said. "It's very rewarding. It feels good to influence people in the direction of the Lord and show them a better way of living other than leading lives of crime. We invite them to accept Jesus into their lives."

Stewart, who transports waste from the West Volusia Transfer Station to the Tomoka Landfill, has worked for Volusia County's Solid Waste Division for 35 years. He became the county's first black compliance officer in 1989 and is responsible for the county's waste tire ordinance.

He and his wife, Maggie, live in Daytona Beach and have three children and four grandchildren.



PRISON MINISTRY – **Andy Stewart**, a Solid Waste equipment operator, provides spiritual counseling to inmates when he's off the clock.

Sheriff's Office announces promotions



MOVING UP IN THE RANKS – **Sheriff Ben Johnson**, center, poses with four of his recently promoted officers. From left are: **Sgt. Richard Fortin**, **Lt. Eric Westfall**, Sheriff Johnson, **Lt. Don Taylor** and **Sgt. Austin Hairston**.



NEW SERGEANT – **Mike Morgan** is flanked by **Sheriff Ben Johnson** and daughter, **Madison**, during his recent promotion to sergeant.

Open enrollment for benefits starts Aug. 1

The open enrollment period for employees will run from Aug. 1 through Sept. 30. During this eight-week period, employees may review, select and complete their 2012 benefit elections and submit employee wellness forms.

Get familiar with ESS

To get ready, review your current benefit elections by accessing Employee Self Service (ESS). You can update beneficiary information, verify your address, print pay information, obtain downloadable forms, and more. It's vital that you make sure this information is accurate. You can use ESS at any time to browse through your pay, leave and past benefits information.

You can access ESS from your home computer at volusia.org/personnel or at

work from the ENN home page under the AMS Advantage section link. To access ESS, you must have your user name and password. If you need to reset your password or have forgotten your user name, please call the help desk at ext. 5222.

Employee wellness form

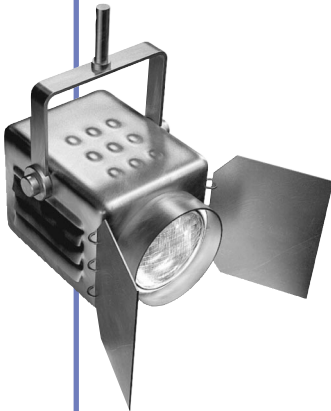
Employees can submit completed employee wellness forms to the Personnel Division beginning July 1. The form is available on Personnel's ENN page under "Personnel forms" or from the "Downloadable forms" section of Employee Self Service.

Risk Management will offer a limited number of appointments for free cholesterol and triglyceride screenings from July 1 through Aug. 31. Please call

Cindy Sakalo at 736-5963 or ext. 2440 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins will not be accepted. Employees will be required to show their county ID badge and fast at least 12 hours before their appointment (drinking water and taking medication are permitted).

Beginning July 1, employees who are on the county's health plan can use the annual/routine benefit to schedule a physical exam and have their personal physician complete their employee wellness form. Employees also can have these screenings performed at the annual Health, Wellness and Benefits Fair. More information on this year's fair will be available soon. — **Personnel Division**

In the spotlight



Name: Capt. Tammy Marris

Job: Public Information Officer,
Volusia County Beach Patrol

**Number of years with the
County:** 14

Hometown: Syracuse, N.Y.

What you might not know:

Tammy has been a mentor with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program for five years and has mentored an Edgewater girl for five years since the girl was 12.

How she spends her spare time: Tammy likes to spend time with her family. She's married to **Lt. Jeffrey Marris**, a Volusia County firefighter. Their son **Brandon**, 15, will be joining Tammy on the beach as a lifeguard this year. Tammy also enjoys running in 5K races and triathlons. During her most recent 5K, held at Daytona International Speedway Jan. 29, she ran with her son and her best friend, Capt. Elise Prugar of the Beach Patrol.



Around the County

Good things come to those who bait

For **Andy Cerio**, there's no such thing as a bad day fishing. Weekends, and even weeknights, often find the corrections maintenance supervisor boating along the St. Johns River or Mosquito Lagoon in search of bass, tilapia, red fish and trout.

"I love fishing," he said from his office at the Volusia County Branch Jail. "I enjoy the tranquility of being out in the wilderness, surrounded by nature with eagles flying overhead."

Cerio has been angling since he was 12, when his grandfather taught him how to fish in a New York fish camp near Lake Ontario.

He's president and treasurer of the local Tedders Bass Club, which has more than 30 members and hosts a monthly tournament on the St. Johns River, where the fishing is "fun and friendly," according to the club's website.

Cerio doesn't count, but acknowledges he's won "quite a few" local tournaments.

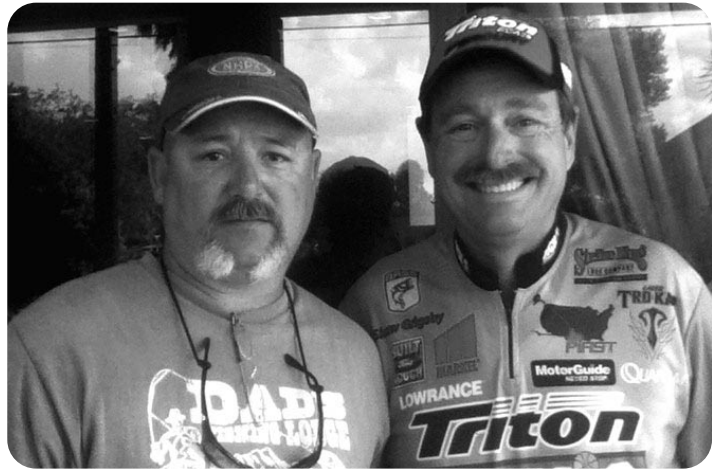
In March, he was honored to serve as a marshal at two nationally televised Bassmaster tournaments – the Citrus Slam and Sunshine Showdown, both in Palatka. Each tournament, televised on ESPN, attracted 99 of the best anglers in the world and awarded a \$100,000 prize to the winner.

As a marshal, Cerio rode in an angler's boat and made sure the angler didn't break the rules. For instance, the anglers can't use live bait and must hook the bass inside the mouth. Cerio also operated the scoring system and adjusted video equipment at each event site.

Best of all, he got to spend several days on the water learning tips and techniques from the world's best bass anglers.



CATCH OF THE DAY – **Andy Cerio** in his office at the Volusia County Branch Jail with his biggest catch



FISH TALE – **Andy Cerio**, left, with **Shaw Grigsby**, TV show host and winner of the Sunshine Showdown tournament.

Trails *(Continued from page 2)*



for children 2 and younger.

Staff and volunteers will lead a guided nature hike, biking tours and a paddling adventure.

For more information, contact **Susanne Wilde** at 736-5953, ext. 2638, or swilde@co.volusia.fl.us.

Bring a meeting home!

You can be a hometown hero by helping the Ocean Center to attract conventions and trade shows through the new "Bring a Meeting Home" campaign.

"Many of our employees belong to professional, fraternal and civic organizations and attend out-of-town meetings and conventions," said Ocean Center Director **Don Poor**. "We are asking them to recommend the Ocean Center as a location for one of their meetings. When employees redirect meetings here from other cities, they contribute to the vitality of the tourism industry. They are hometown heroes."

Give your meeting tips to Sales Director **Lori Hunter** at 254-4500 or lhunter@oceancenter.com.



Sheriff's Office honors employees of the year

When your job is solving crime, stubbornness is a virtue. And the Sheriff's Office's 2010 employees of the year share a tenacious streak the size of a Florida highway. From inside offices to out on the street, it's the never-say-never, refuse-to-take-no-for-an-answer attitude and dedication that make the honorees so extraordinary at their jobs.

Deputy of the year. Sgt.

Dominick Amendolare is a man with deep roots in his community who uses his insider knowledge of the area, street smarts and direct connections to help protect his fellow citizens. A major arrest in a heavy equipment theft ring in the Oak Hill area was due largely to the information and new leads provided by Sgt. Amendolare, who was a constant resource in locating suspects who were related directly to the case.



"Every time I need criminals found for questioning, Sgt. Amendolare has either found them or led me to them," Investigator Aaron Blais wrote in his nomination. "I wish I could tell you all the times he has helped me, but there are too many to count."

Investigator of the year. Using reliable information from an informant, **Investigator Aaron Blais** devised a strategy that brought down a major cocaine operation in Deltona.



Investigator Blais asked deputies to set up a perimeter while he kept an eye on the suspects. When two people left the drug house, he tracked the vehicle. The car was pulled over and one of the suspects quickly admitted to having some marijuana in his pocket – a little too quickly. A K-9 officer just as quickly found the stash – a kilo brick of cocaine, another 174 grams of cocaine packaged and ready for sale, and \$8,000 in cash. A search of the drug house netted another 103 grams of cocaine, a stolen firearm and more than \$1,000 in cash.

Sgt. Pat Leahy offered his congratulations on a job well done: "A large amount of narcotics was taken off the streets and several thousand dollars was seized as a result of your hard work and dedication."

Civilian employee of the year. **Madiha Saleem** is an intrepid crime-fighter. Her super-powers are her mind and a computer mouse. Saleem has harnessed the power of information, making it accessible, user-friendly and easy to interpret. As a crime analyst, she processed 536 analytical studies, pro-

duced 415 maps and distributed 97 crime analysis bulletins in just one year. At the same time, she was developing and implementing a crime mapping program that allows any deputy or outside agency to plot and map crimes countywide – at the district level or down to the zone. She also developed a suspicious pawn report and is working on a new program called threshold analysis to help predict emerging crime trends.



Lt. Jim Morgan said: "Madiha is a model employee, works very hard, and when you consider that she has taken on the above-mentioned projects along with her normal analytical requests, maps and bulletins, her efforts are outstanding."

Telecommunicator of the year.

Cool under pressure. It's the trait that makes a good dispatcher great. That's why **Claretha Smith** was honored as telecommunicator of the year. She helped save lives by keeping a panicked, lost and injured victim of an airboat accident on the line, giving him comfort while providing vital information to rescue crews trying to locate him and his passenger on the St. Johns River. A Sheriff's Office helicopter found the victims because Smith got the right information while keeping the caller calm and engaged. The victims were rescued and received immediate medical attention.



Smith is described as a model employee. Said Sheriff Ben Johnson to Smith: "The more pressure there is, the better you get. Thank you. You are an important part of law enforcement."

Volunteer of the year. With an ever-increasing workload, volunteers continue to fill the gap throughout the Sheriff's Office. And that's exactly what **Laverne Curry** does so well. The ability to hit the ground running is a constant requirement in law enforcement.



After years as a telecommunicator, Curry retired and returned as a volunteer analyst. Less than a month on the job, Curry created a biweekly Volusia County retail offender report. By combing through arrest records and warrants, Curry assembled her report identifying potential retail theft rings and possible suspects.

Around the County

Runway *(Continued from page 1)*

Department of Transportation, which are providing 97.5 percent of the project's funding. Other key stakeholders include the airlines, air traffic control, airport tenants and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

In addition to Feaster and Karl, project team members include:

- Airport employees **Stephen Cooke, Carl Schweizer, Eric Hakanen, John Murray, Steve Ward, Justin Grindell** and **Renee Schoen**
- Engineering and Construction employees **Gerald Brinton** and **Todd Buckles**
- Finance employees **Shaira Resto** and **Natalia Eckroth**
- Community Information Specialist **Michelle Coats**

The runway project will leave the airport with a new 10,500-foot main air carrier runway and greatly improved navigation aids that should last at least 20 years and will provide a substantial long-term economic benefit for the region. — **Pat Kuehn, Community Information**



Retirements

March

Dean Zimmerman, Corrections – 16+ years
Darry Hayashi, Sheriff's Office – 27 years
Leon Swing, Road and Bridge – 33+ years

April

William Dickson, Corrections – 14 years
Cindy Johnson, Sheriff's Office – 16 years
Cheryl Lyons, Sheriff's Office – 31+ years
David Ressler, Road and Bridge – 37 years

May

Samuel P. Wilson, Drainage/Stormwater – 32 years
Glyn Slay Jr., Sheriff's Office – 11+ years
Don Dickinson, Beach Safety – 35 years
James Crabtree, Sheriff's Office – 24 ½ years
Everett Robinett, Sheriff's Office – 29+ years
Stanley Blackwelder, Drainage/Stormwater – 31+ years
Sara "Sally" Bruner, Revenue – 35 years

Movers and shakers

- Gov. Rick Scott has appointed Community Outreach Manager **Betty Holness** to Daytona State College's Board of Trustees. Holness previously served as a board member and vice chair of Halifax Health's Board of Commissioners.

- Volusia County Sheriff's Office Deputy **Belinda Cline** has been named Law Enforcement Officer of the Year by the Seventh Judicial Circuit's Victims' Services Coalition. She was commended for her ability to empathize with victims, treating them with respect and compassion while providing the best possible law enforcement work.

- **Joan Coil**, a petroleum compliance inspector with the Environmental Management Division, recently received a master's degree in environmental science from the University of Denver.

- Deputy Fire **Chief Kathy Weaver** has received re-designation as a chief fire officer from the National Center for Public Safety Excellence. The designation program was created to recognize fire officers who have demonstrated excellence and outstanding achievement throughout their career.



New Beach Patrol captains are, from left: **David Vanis, Mike Berard, Liz Johnson** and **Todd Snipes**.



Beach Safety Director **Kevin Sweat**, right, congratulates **Scott Petersohn** on his promotion to deputy chief.

Do you know a mover and shaker?

Please contact Joanne Magley in Community Information at JMagley@co.volusia.fl.us with the details.