



eCountyLine

A bimonthly newsletter for Volusia County employees

January/February 2020

FROM THE COUNTY MANAGER'S DESK

Census 2020: Everyone counts



In March, Volusia County residents will have a once-in-a-decade opportunity to unlock millions of dollars in federal funds that can address our area's most pressing needs.

That opportunity is the **2020 Census**.

Every 10 years, the U.S. government conducts a count of the entire population to determine how Congressional representation will be apportioned and how much funding to allocate for more than 130 federal programs.

When you respond to the census, you are helping Volusia County get its fair share of federal funds that go toward our schools, hospitals, roads and other vital programs.

Volusia County has formed a Complete Count Committee to promote census awareness. Led by County Council members **Barbara Girtman** and **Billie Wheeler**, the committee includes all 16 municipalities, Volusia County Schools, colleges, chambers, the faith-based community, the United Way and other social service agencies.

Volusia County employees will play a crucial role in census outreach. You are trusted messengers with personal relationships and a deep understanding of the communities you serve.

With so much at stake for Volusia County, we need your help in ensuring an accurate count. Encourage your friends and neighbors to participate in the census.

For more information, contact our census staff liaisons, **Brian Rothwell** and **Pat Kuehn**.

- George Recktenwald



Heidi Ackerson at work at the Edgewater Public Library

Library associate by day, actor by night

By day, she's a library associate and head of circulation at the Edgewater Public Library – a county position she loves and one that clearly suits her customer service mindset.

But by night, **Heidi Ackerson** can be just about anyone – an eccentric hippie, an emotionally wrought single mother, a military lawyer seeking justice or a differently abled woman living in a group home. Or in the case of "Skin Flick" – the most recent production put on by Port Orange's community theater troupe, Thank You Five, or TY5 for short – a financially strapped wife named Daphne who, along with her down-and-out husband, decides to make an adult film to help pay the bills, with hilarious results. While not normally an extrovert, Ackerson nonetheless delights in the challenge and freedom of stepping out of her own persona, stepping onto the stage and slipping into someone else's character. It's one of the things about acting that appeals to her.

"Playing on stage, you get to kind of step into somebody else's shoes," said Ackerson. "You get to be somebody else for a couple of hours. It's a challenge, but it's also fun."

Ackerson joined the county workforce in January 2014, initially assigned to the Daytona Beach Regional Library as a library assistant. But she jumped at the chance to transfer to Edgewater when a position opened up there about three years ago. Ackerson loves the smaller, more communal feel of the Edgewater facility, one of 14 branches in the

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

county's library system. In addition to the customary duties of a library associate, Ackerson also helps schedule some of the programming. And that's a genuine pleasure for Ackerson, because she gets to bring some of her personal passions like crafting to library patrons. One of the programs she puts on is called Spa-turday, where Ackerson teaches participants how to make eco-friendly beauty, well-being and household products such as aloe vera mouthwash, teeth whitener, laundry detergent and dryer sheets. Ackerson also helps organize book club get-togethers and a cat-themed children's program called purr-palooza.

"I find that in a smaller branch, you get to know your patrons better and there's also a larger variety of things we get to do," said Ackerson. "It's that personal touch. It's more like a community, and I like that."

Ackerson's first exposure to the stage came in the second grade. From what she recalls of the experience, which isn't much, it wasn't an entirely positive introduction to the performing arts. While she doesn't remember the name of the play or her one line, the show had something to do with the weather. Ackerson was cast as a raindrop named Drip, and she said her delivery of her line was altogether forgettable.

Middle school and high school, though, were a different story. That's where she was truly bitten by the acting bug, while participating in drama and theater clubs. After graduating from New Smyrna Beach High School, however, Ackerson moved away from the area and temporarily shelved her interest in the performing arts while pursuing her college education.

She returned to Southeast Volusia in 2007 and hooked up with The Little Theatre in New Smyrna Beach. At first, she worked backstage, helping with things like painting and set design.

But then she was convinced to audition for an acting role. She landed the part of Gerta, the eccentric hippie in the play "I Bet Your Life," and has been acting in local theater ever since. Some of her other roles have included Sheila, the differently abled woman in "The Boys Next Door," Corryn in "Gideon's Knot" and Lt. Cdr. Joanne Galloway, the role popularized by Demi Moore in the big screen adaptation of the classic play "A Few Good Men."

Ackerson has performed with Thank You Five now for about two years. The theater group is known for putting on edgy material, like "Skin Flick," and the experience is different in that the theater is very small and intimate and the seats surround the actors in a way that brings the audience much closer to the action. It's a combination that would seem to add more stress to the somewhat reserved Ackerson, but she has learned to



Heidi Ackerson, in the yellow sweater, along with her fellow actors in a promo photo for Thank You Five's recent production of "Skin Flick." (Photo courtesy of Mike Kitaf)

thrive on the energy and buzz. Ackerson also knows that pushing herself to do things that are outside of her comfort zone is good for personal growth. While he comes to that same realization through heavy doses of comedy and farce, it's a life lesson that the straight-laced Byron character in "Skin Flick" learns by the end of the play. In the beginning of the second act, Daphne's husband, Rollie, wonders aloud what would motivate the uber-timid Byron to participate in their adult film.

"Maybe he just wanted to break out of that shell of his and do something wild for a change," muses Rollie's character as he narrates for the sold-out audience. It's a message about breaking out of personal boxes and stereotypes that hasn't been lost on Ackerson.

"Thank You Five is different than a lot of other theaters, and there was a little bit of fear at first for me," explained Ackerson. "But pushing yourself and pushing your boundaries helps you grow. We learn from experience."

While acting and working in a library might seem as different as night and day, Ackerson said she sees some similarity. Whether engaging with a theater audience or a library patron, both require you to come out of your shell and be outgoing. And that's a hurdle for any shy person. But both have their rewards as well.

"I think in that way, they are similar," said Ackerson.

When asked if there's one role in particular that she has always coveted, Ackerson responded without a moment's hesitation – Grease's hip, tough, sharp-tongued Betty Rizzo played by Stockard Channing in the big screen version.

Never mind, says Ackerson, that she can neither sing nor dance. Landing that dream role, it would seem, would almost certainly be another experience outside of Ackerson's comfort zone, another growing experience – edgy, scary and fun.

Marine Mammal Stranding Team to the rescue



A manatee and her calf try to escape from a catch basin in the Halifax River. Volusia County's Marine Mammal Stranding Team was instrumental in freeing them.

For marine habitat enthusiasts like **Debbie Wright**, responding to reports of sick and injured aquatic animals can be a grim business. Sadly, the animals often are already dead before rescuers ever arrive.

But not this time. It was Sept. 6, 2019, when an urgent call was received that a manatee mother and her calf had become trapped in a cove along the Halifax River. The walled-in catch basin at a local marina in Daytona Beach is designed to capture sediment to prevent it from flowing into the river. But now, the basin had instead inadvertently captured two lumbering, lovable sea cows with no way out. Officials believe the manatees swam over the wall and into the basin during high tides from Hurricane Dorian. Once the water level receded, the animals were hopelessly confined in the basin.

Try as they might, the imprisoned manatees were unable to swim back over the top of the retention wall to get to open water. Rescue options were hatched while curious onlookers and the news media gathered on the banks of the river to watch the spectacle unfold. The hope was that the animals could be freed without having to physically handle them – something that would have surely caused added stress to the manatees. Then, on the sixth day of captivity, and with a dwindling food supply in the basin, workers using a barge and crane raised two of the wall's huge panels high enough to create an escape route. And Wright had a front row seat for the climactic liberation.

As the county's manatee protection program manager and head of the Marine Mammal Stranding Team, Wright was in the water at that fateful moment, gently paddling a kayak while helping to shepherd the trapped manatees through the gap in the retention wall.

"I kind of corralled the manatees from my kayak," said Wright of that final, exhilarating moment of release.

"They headed toward the opening, took a breath and then they took off."

The rescue operation, coordinated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and teams from the county and the City of Daytona Beach, was memorable and emotional for all involved. "It's extremely rewarding work," said Wright. "We have quite a few county volunteers, and they're very passionate about marine mammals and conservation."

While the members include Wright and one of her employees, the core component of the Marine Mammal Stranding Team is 32 specially trained volunteers – county employees with other jobs who are available around-the-clock to respond to water-based animal emergencies. Ordinarily, two members respond at a time – an experienced volunteer who is paired with a newer volunteer who has been trained in team protocols and the basics of marine mammal biology, but is still receiving hands-on instruction in the field. Sometimes, like in the case of the manatees stuck in the marina, more than two team members are needed.

The team provides an immediate and organized response to reports of whales, dolphins, porpoises and manatees in distress. The group works in conjunction with the FWC and the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute. Since its creation in 2003, the team has responded to approximately 850 animal sightings. About 55% of the calls involved manatees and about 39% involved dolphins. Just 46 of the calls involved whales.

"All of us, we're really dedicated to doing anything we can to help these species," said Wright.



Team member Debbie Wright examines a bottlenose dolphin after the initial caller, seen in the photo, found the stranded calf and stayed with it until help arrived.

VitaMin



Vital health information in a minute

GRAPEFRUIT, APPLE AND POMEGRANATE SALAD

Total time: 25 minutes

Yield: Serves 4 (serving size: about 3/4 cup)

Ingredients

- 3 cups pink or red grapefruit sections (about 3 large)
- 2 cups julienne-cut Granny Smith apple
- 1/3 cup pomegranate arils
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon seeded minced serrano chili
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/8 teaspoon flaked sea salt (such as Maldon)

How to make it

Arrange grapefruit and apple on a platter; sprinkle with pomegranate, mint and minced chili. Combine juice and honey in a small bowl; drizzle over salad. Sprinkle with salt.



Nutrition information

Amount per serving

- Calories: 121
- Fat: 0 g
- Protein: 2 g
- Carbohydrates: 30 g
- Dietary fiber: 4 g
- Sugars: 22 g
- Added sugars: 4 g
- Sodium: 74 mg
- Calcium: 3% DV
- Potassium: 10% DV

Printed with Permission from Cooking Light, January 2018

Cigna is the county's new dental provider

Cigna became the county's new dental insurance carrier on Jan. 1.

The switch was made after Aetna's dental insurance renewal came in at a 17% increase in cost over the previous rates for employee dental coverage. As a result, the county decided to put out a request for proposals for dental coverage in an effort to lower the increase to employees. The effort paid off, as Cigna's proposal came in at a 9.5% increase for the first year – nearly half the increase that was being proposed by Aetna.

On Nov. 19, 2019, the County Council approved the recommendation from county staff to cancel the contract with Aetna (dental insurance only) as of Dec. 31, 2019, and enter into a contract with Cigna. And the good news is that the dental plan with Cigna is the same dental plan as before!

For 2020, the biweekly premiums for dental insurance, if an employee elects the county's medical/Rx plan, are Employee \$0, Couple \$13.73, Parent \$17.17, and Family \$30.90.

The 2020 biweekly premiums for dental insurance, if an employee doesn't elect the county's medical/Rx plan, are Employee: \$13.73, Couple: \$27.46, Parent: \$30.90, and Family: \$44.63.

Pursuant to the terms of the contract, there will be no increase in 2021 and the potential increase for the following three years is capped at a maximum of 5% per year. You can use www.myCigna.com or call Cigna's Customer Support at 800-Cigna24 to confirm your dental provider is in the Total Cigna DPPO (Cigna DPPO Advantage and Cigna DPPO) network.

Retirements

November

George Prevatt Jr., Solid Waste, 10 years
Michael Nelson, Building and Code Administration, 32 years
Albert Perrotta, Sheriff's Office, 30 years
James Gabriel II, Sheriff's Office, 32 years

December

Michael Havenner, Sheriff's Office, 26 years
Peter Scovone, Parks, Recreation and Culture, 25 years
Pamela Piatt, Library Services, 18 years
James Smith, County Attorney's Office, 13 years
Eugene Neal, Court Administration, 24 years
Randy Roberts, Building and Code Administration, 28 years
William Peugh, Property Appraiser's Office, 35 years
Robert Loveless, Engineering and Construction, 36 years
Sharon Gamble, Extension, 36 years



Take charge of your health care

Join Human Resources staff and outside speakers for a healthy lunch and discussions about how to improve your health. Understand the growing trend of consumerism in health care, learn what to look for when choosing a doctor, discuss what options you have to make the most of your health care dollars, and discover the benefits of preventive health care.

Upcoming presentations include:

- **EJ Dahlquist:** Noon to 1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28, in the Emergency Operations Center's cafeteria, 3825 Tiger Bay Road, Daytona Beach.
- **Dr. Andrew Pittington:** Noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 29, at the Daytona Beach Regional Library, 105 E. Magnolia Ave., Daytona Beach.
- **Dr. Andrew Pittington:** Noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30, in the first-floor training room of the Thomas C. Kelley Administration Center, 123 W. Indiana Ave., DeLand.

RSVP by Jan. 24 by contacting Registered Nurse **Lisa Somers** at cignaadvocate@volusia.org or ext. 13249.

Save money in the new year

Jeff Waldeck, a retirement specialist with Nationwide Retirement Solutions, will be available in DeLand from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, to meet one on one with employees and discuss their deferred compensation needs. He will be in the VAB conference room on the third floor of the TCK Administration Center. Go to ENN to reserve your appointment now.

Digital ADA class

When creating accessible digital content that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, there are lots of questions:

- ✓ What is digital ADA compliance?
- ✓ Why should you be concerned with digital ADA as an employee?
- ✓ What is expected of your digital content?
- ✓ What are your division's goals in regards to digital ADA?
- ✓ Can improvements in digital accessibility efforts or business processes be made?

Learn answers to these questions and more in this Introduction into Digital ADA class. This is one of three classes in IT's ADA curriculum. The other two are Technical ADA Training and One-on-One Digital ADA Training.

The introductory class is being offered from 2:30 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22, in the TCK Training Room. You can sign up for the class on the ENN calendar or contact **Christine Barber** at ext. 12671 or cbarber@volusia.org with your questions.

Management Changes



Kerry Leuzinger has been named director of Building and Code Administration.

Leuzinger promoted

Kerry Leuzinger, the county's chief building official for the past three years, was promoted to building and code administration division director in November. The appointment won unanimous confirmation from the County Council.

After outlining his qualifications, which include more than 40 years of experience in the construction industry, County Manager **George Recktenwald** told the council that the county was fortunate to have Leuzinger here and ready to step up. He replaced former Building and Code Administration Director **Mike Nelson**, who departed after a 33-year career with the county.

"He's done a great job as our chief building official, and I'm happy to bring him here to recommend for your confirmation," Recktenwald said of Leuzinger.

Leuzinger's boss, Growth and Resource Management Director **Clay Ervin**, said Leuzinger brings a lot to the job. "Kerry is coming to us with a vast amount of experience," said Ervin.

Leuzinger had been chief building official since October 2016. Previously, he was chief building official for the City of Port Orange and also served as an electrical inspector and electrical plans examiner for the City of Ormond Beach.

Internal auditor joins county team



Internal auditor **Jonathan Edwards** has joined the county's management team after the County Council eagerly confirmed his appointment in November.

The selection of Edwards, recruited from his position as deputy chief financial officer for the Town of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, capped off a process that began last year when the council reauthorized the position that had been vacant for several years due to budget constraints brought on by the economic downturn. Council members decided the position should be brought back to strengthen the county's transparency and fiscal checks and balances. And they were excited to confirm County Manager **George Recktenwald's** selection of Edwards following a nationwide search.

"We're very happy to have you," said Council Member **Heather Post**. Added a delighted Council Member **Billie Wheeler**: "This is wonderful."

Edwards brings extensive experience in all facets of public finance and auditing, having previously served as an audit manager for La Crosse County, Wisconsin, and assistant finance director for the City of Charleston, South Carolina. He also served as a staff auditor in the State Auditor Office for the State of Missouri.

Edwards is a certified internal auditor and a certified public finance officer and has a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master of accountancy, both from Missouri State University. One key qualification Recktenwald highlighted during Edwards' hiring process was the fact he has worked closely with the staff at all of his previous positions to implement the financial and operational improvements recommended by his audits.

"It was a great search, and because of that, we've really got a great candidate," said Recktenwald.

The council will provide input and approval of what internal audits are conducted, and all audit findings will be simultaneously submitted to both the council and county manager.

The internal auditor has a wide scope of duties and responsibilities, including the authority to audit all county departments, offices, boards, agencies, grants and any other operation or program under the direction or responsibility of the County Council. The scope includes operational, compliance and forensic audits. The internal auditor also has the authority to investigate any suspected cases of financial abuse or fraud related to county government.

Council member **Deb Denys** keyed in on the transparency issue, saying the new position will strengthen internal controls and help identify any issues that need to be fixed.

"You're going to help us confirm our story internally for Volusia County and any weak areas, we'll strengthen," said Denys. "Any opportunities, we'll address."

County hires new accounting director



Volusia County didn't have to go far, in fact just to the county immediately adjacent to the west, to find its new accounting director.

Last month, the County Council confirmed the appointment of **JoAnne Drury** as accounting director. Drury came here by way of Lake County Clerk of Courts, where she served for 12 years – most recently as accounting director since 2015. In her capacity as accounting director, Drury managed the accounting staff and directed the financial activities of both the Clerk of the Courts and the Lake County Board of County Commissioners.

"We're very happy to have Ms. Drury," said County Manager **George Recktenwald**.

Prior to her work in Lake County, Drury gained additional government finance experience as support services director for the Collier County Board of County Commissioners, finance director for the Collier County Airport Authority and controller and accountant for the Collier County Clerk of the Courts.

"We look forward to you being here," said County Chair **Ed Kelley**.

Drury, who holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Barry University in Miami and is both a licensed CPA in Georgia and a certified government finance officer, said she's ready to get started.

"I would like to thank the County Council, the county manager and the CFO for this opportunity," Drury said upon her appointment. "I'm really looking forward to joining the Volusia County team."

Drury replaced **Ryan Ossowski**, who was promoted to chief financial officer (CFO) in October.



Jeaniene Jennings appears in County Council chambers for her confirmation vote.

Jeaniene Jennings earns promotion

A 17-year veteran of Volusia County government, **Jeaniene Jennings** was promoted last month to business services director.

County Manager **George Recktenwald** had selected Jennings for promotion from her previous position as director of purchasing and contracts for more than nine years. And the County Council made the promotion official with a unanimous confirmation.

"It's my honor here today to present Ms. Jennings for your confirmation," Recktenwald told the County Council. "She has extensive government procurement experience."

Jennings has worked her way up in the county's organization since her hire in November 2002 – first as purchasing agent, then procurement manager in 2007, and then acting director of purchasing and contracts in 2009 and permanent director since February 2010. Under Jennings' leadership, the purchasing and contracts division has been a recipient of the National Procurement Institute's award of excellence for more than 10 years. Jennings also brings retail and marketing experience from the not-for-profit and private sectors. Given all of her experience, accomplishments and years of service, the County Council and Recktenwald were glad to have had the opportunity to promote from within. As business services director, Jennings now oversees facilities management, fleet management, the revenue division and purchasing.

"You are unanimously approved and accepted and appointed," County Chair **Ed Kelley** told Jennings immediately after the council's vote. "Good to keep you in-house."

Jennings earned her bachelor's degree in merchandising from Florida State University and is a certified public procurement officer and a certified public buyer.

"I want to thank the County Council for your support and confirmation," Jennings told the council. "I will do my best to live up to the expectations of the position."

Mark Flowers earns executive certification



Guiding County Corrections for the past three years with equal measure of passion, compassion and innovation, Director **Mark Flowers** has been

recertified as a professional corrections executive. Flowers was re-certified in November as a certified corrections executive (CCE) by the American Correctional Association.

To become re-certified, Flowers was required to complete a minimum of 100 continuing education hours. Certified CCEs not only are expected to uphold the highest of standards in their workplace, but they also help progress and advance the entire corrections profession through activities like publishing articles on industry standards and best practices and participating in corrections-related study groups.

Flowers has worked in the corrections field for approximately 36 years and joined Volusia County's team in May 2014. Since becoming corrections director three years ago, he has greatly expanded inmate work programs and championed vocational opportunities such as gardening, construction, landscaping and welding to provide positive outlets that instill job skills and help rehabilitate inmates and prepare them for life after release.

"I use my certification and the expertise that comes with it as a road map to ensuring the organizations I am involved with operate a safe, secure and humane institutional setting for those who are incarcerated," said Flowers, who has been a certified corrections executive since 2007.



The Ocean Center is the fifth largest convention center in Florida.

Ocean Center wins readers' choice award

The Ocean Center has once again received the Readers' Choice award from ConventionSouth, a national, multimedia resource for planning events in the South. This marked the ninth year the county-run convention center has received the award.

Meeting professionals were asked to name the meeting sites they believe display exemplary service for group events. Nominations were received throughout the year, and the top picks were selected via online voting from more than 7,000 voters. More than 2,500 convention and visitor bureaus, hotels and event facilities were nominated and 337 winners were chosen. Of the winners, only 46 were based in Florida.

County financial reports win dual awards

As complex as they are meticulous, financial reports provide critical information on the fiscal health of an organization.

And now, Volusia County's comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) and popular annual financial report (PAFR) have each received national awards of excellence from the Chicago-based Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Both annual awards are for the county's financial reports covering the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, 2018.

One of the awards was for the county's 290-page, highly detailed comprehensive annual financial report, while the second recognized a more concise version designed to provide a user-friendly overview of Volusia's financial picture to the public and non-financial experts.

The county posts both reports on our website for easy public access

Animal Services officer honored for foiling burglary



A grateful Sheriff Mike Chitwood presents a plaque to Norma Waterman.

As is often the case, a pair of burglars was recently stopped in their tracks thanks to an alert civilian crime-fighter who not only spotted the suspicious activity, but went above and beyond by calling it in and keeping a watchful eye on the suspects until deputies arrived to take them into custody.

That observant guardian was no ordinary citizen: It was Animal Services Officer **Norma Waterman**, who was honored by Sheriff **Mike Chitwood** for helping his deputies nab the two teen culprits.

The incident began around noon on Oct. 4. While driving to work from her home in Deltona, Waterman spotted the teens hanging around a house on Humphrey Boulevard and acting suspicious. Upon closer look, one of them appeared to be tampering with the screen door in the back of the house.

Although with the county for little more than a year at the time, Waterman knew exactly what to do. Of course, having previously served as a sworn police officer in both South Miami and Orange County might have had something to do with it. Waterman parked close by to keep the teens under surveillance while alerting law enforcement. From her vantage point, she was able to look through the front window of the house to see one of the suspects inside. Then she not only kept law enforcement updated, but she followed along in her vehicle as the teens walked away from the crime scene so responding deputies would know exactly where to find them. The two were quickly apprehended while in possession of incriminating evidence – a \$76 bottle of

CDB gummies that had been swiped off of the victim's kitchen table.

Both juveniles, ages 16 and 17, were charged with residential burglary, while the one accused of stealing the gummies that are used to treat ailments such as arthritis, anxiety and depression was additionally charged with petty theft. While it may have been all in a day's work for deputies, Waterman's alert actions earned her Sheriff Chitwood's praise – and the agency's outstanding citizenship award. A thankful Chitwood presented a plaque to Waterman during an awards ceremony at the Deputy Stephen Saboda Training Center in Daytona Beach.

"Your observance, prompt response and willingness to come to the aid of law enforcement display outstanding citizenship that is worthy of recognition," read the citation from the sheriff. For her part, Waterman considered the award an unexpected surprise.

"I was very happy about the outcome of the incident," said Waterman. "I'm just glad I was able to help my community. I live there too."

In addition to the sheriff's award, Waterman's actions also elicited compliments from her proud boss, Animal Services Director **Adam Leath**.

"Officer Waterman is an invaluable part of our animal services team," said Leath. "She embodies the qualities of a true community advocate and continuously looks out for the needs of both the two- and four-legged members of our community."



Norma Waterman being interviewed about her award by a reporter with WKMG-Channel 6.



KUDOS – From left is the Daytona Beach International Airport team of Erik Treudt, Karen Feaster and Dan Blake.

Airport execs accredited

Daytona Beach International Airport executives **Karen Feaster**, **Erik Treudt** and **Dan Blake** have been awarded the distinction of accredited airport executive (AAE) by the American Association of Airport Executives.

Feaster is the airport's deputy director, Treudt is director of projects and maintenance, and Blake is director of airport operations.

To qualify for the accreditation, they completed a 180-item multiple-choice examination; a writing requirement; and a final interview to demonstrate knowledge of airport management, business administration and general transportation economics.

"This achievement attests to their ability to meet these stringent requirements and their experience in managing a public airport," said Cyrus Callum, director of Orlando Executive Airport and general aviation chair of the association's board of examiners.

By fulfilling all the requirements, Feaster, Treudt and Blake join a select group of individuals who've earned the designation in the six-plus decades of the accreditation program's existence. Fewer than 10% of the association's members are active accredited airport executives.

"I'm very proud of the dedication Karen, Erik and Dan put into the accreditation process," said Airport Director **Rick Karl**. "Because of their leadership and their new accreditation, passengers at Daytona Beach International Airport will be even better served knowing the leadership here has demonstrated their ability to handle the responsibilities of airport management."

Employees make the grade

Hats off to three progressive employees who recently earned college degrees.



Network Services Manager **John Newton Bailey**, who joined the county's Information Technology Team in September 2019, received his master's degree in information technology management from Western Governors University. He also has a bachelor's degree in network

administration. In the past 15 years, Bailey has held over 30 certifications from various manufacturers and associations, most recently becoming a certified associate project manager from PMI. Before joining the county's team, he worked for the Digital Animation and Visual Effects School at University Studios, where he worked on several NASA commercials that won Emmys.



Teri Hanans, records manager for Fire Rescue, celebrated a milestone by earning a bachelor's degree in public administration from Flagler College. Hanans has been with the county since 2005, starting with the Medical Examiner Office and joining the Fire Rescue team in 2017. Way to go!



Alex Baldonado, an IT staff assistant, received her associate degree in business administration from Daytona State College and is working toward a bachelor's degree in applied science and supervision in management. She has worked for the Information Technology Division for five years.

Three-year EMS contract inked

It was all smiles on Dec. 10 as the County Council put its stamp of approval on a three-year collective bargaining agreement with the union representing the county's emergency medical services employees. The agreement includes pay raises, an increase in pay ranges, and an increase in the hourly incentive rate for paramedics and EMT field training officers.

Jason Lademann, a county paramedic and president of the local branch of the International Association of EMTs and Paramedics union, said the new contract will help the division stay competitive. The EMS employees covered by the union had ratified the agreement before the council took it up.

VSO honors award winners and deputy promotions

Sheriff **Mike Chitwood** recently announced five quarterly award winners and five employee promotions.

Deputy of the Quarter



Deputy **Robert McCabe** was honored for regularly exceeding expectations of his supervisors. He was especially noted for seven cases in the last quarter in which he went above and beyond duty. For example, he did an outstanding job of investigating a domestic violence incident involving kidnapping, false imprisonment, armed burglary and burglary with a battery. By obtaining detailed information and writing an excellent incident report, McCabe easily secured a warrant from the State Attorney's Office.

Detective of the Quarter



Detective **Benjamin Gordon**, the senior detective in the Northwest Detectives Unit, was honored for his outstanding job investigating cases and teaching three new detectives assigned to the unit. Gordon is noted for his work ethic and tenacity and earned praise for his work in an armed burglary and an armed robbery that resulted in arrests. In addition, he negotiated a peaceful surrender when a man put a gun to his head and threatened to kill himself. The suspect turned himself in and was taken into custody unharmed.

Employee of the Quarter



Nancy Lee Strickland, school crossing guard supervisor in District 4, has served at the VSO for nearly 30 years. She supervises 30 school crossing guards in the Deltona district and fills in during emergencies as supervisor in two other districts, which each has about 20 guards. She juggles multiple tasks and is an integral part of the office staff at District 4. She goes above and beyond for her crossing guards.

Volunteer of the Quarter



Richard Blanchette of the Citizen Observer Program (COP) is an exemplary volunteer who has stepped up to help run the District 3 North office as second in command. He has worked tirelessly to make sure the COPs have appropriate supplies, checks the frequency of the program's house watches, coordinates an on-call list and scheduling,

and is invaluable in helping the district run smoothly. Blanchette has taken it upon himself to be an integral part of the office.

Telecommunicator of the Quarter



Telecommunicator **Marjore McArthur** was honored for her selfless attitude and positivity in her work at Central Communications. She always has a wonderful demeanor, despite whatever stressful situation she or others are experiencing in performing their duties in the communications center. She is well-respected among her peers, and she's an asset to the Communications Center and the Sheriff's Office.

VSO promotions

Ben Yisrael, who was promoted to captain, is assigned to Court Services and is commander of the SWAT Team. He has served as assistant commander of the Investigative Services Section, managing the Major Case Unit, Cold Case Unit, Crime Scene Unit, Child Exploitation Unit, SANE Program, ICE-Brevard-Volusia Child Exploitation Task Force, Career Criminal Unit and the North Florida ICAC Task Force.

Pat Leahy, formerly sergeant, was promoted to lieutenant and is assigned as watch commander. His duties have included school resource deputy, patrol, Deltona Person Crimes detective sergeant, Eastside Detective Unit detective sergeant, Child Exploitation Unit sergeant, Northwest Detective Unit detective sergeant, hostage negotiator, Critical Incident Stress Debrief team member, and sergeant FTO.

Kyle McDaniel, formerly sergeant, was promoted to lieutenant and is assigned as watch commander. His duties have included District 3 patrol, District 5 detective, Countywide Crime Suppression Team, Deltona Patrol sergeant, Deltona Detectives sergeant, East Side Detectives Unit sergeant, and SWAT Team.

Jayson Paul, formerly deputy and detective, was promoted to sergeant. His prior duties have included deputy, field training officer, traffic homicide investigator and detective.

Ryan Lee, former deputy, was promoted to sergeant. He has served as a field training officer.

On the move: Tax, Tag & Title Office

Renovations are underway at the future home of Volusia County's Tax, Tag and Title Office in Daytona Beach. The County Council approved a \$588,000 construction contract for the remodeling in November.

Volusia County has four Tax, Tag and Title facilities – in Daytona Beach, DeLand, Orange City and New Smyrna Beach – where the public comes to title and register vehicles and pay taxes. The Daytona Beach office, previously housed in the county's East Volusia administrative center on North Beach Street, was displaced after the building sustained significant damage from Hurricane Irma in September 2017.

The Daytona Beach office has been temporarily housed in the Ocean Center since the storm damage forced closure of the North Beach Street building. That temporary arrangement will be coming to a close with the renovation work on 5,340 square feet of space at 1845 Holsonback Drive in Daytona Beach, where Florida Department of Health offices are also located.

NEA Big Read celebrates 'Everything I Never Told You'

The Volusia County Public Library will celebrate "Everything I Never Told You" by Celeste Ng with more than 130 programs from Jan. 25 to Feb. 29. The New York Times best-seller and Amazon best book of the year in 2014 offers a sensitive portrait of a Chinese-American family exploring the divisions between cultures and the rifts that can develop within families.

The NEA Big Read offers grants through the National Endowment for the Arts. The Volusia County Public Library received a \$15,000 NEA Big Read grant and selected Celeste Ng's novel as its title. The County Council matched that grant with an additional \$15,000.



The Surfcoast Chapter of the Florida Planning and Zoning Association recently recognized Shell Harbor Park in Pierson as the outstanding public/private partnership.

Green Volusia, Shell Harbor Park earn sustainability awards



The Environmental Management Division recently racked up a sustainability award from the Surfcoast Chapter of the Florida Planning and Zoning Association.

The award, presented during the organization's 11th annual awards gala in Daytona Beach, recognized the Green Volusia Program and the county's ongoing efforts to implement the goals outlined in the plan, including addressing environmental education on water quality issues and initiatives that further community resilience.

At that same ceremony, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Division along with Dredging and Marine Consultants were recognized with the outstanding public/private partnership award for their collaboration on Shell Harbor Park in Pierson. The County Council cut the ribbon on Dec. 5, 2019, to officially christen the nine-acre park on Lake George.

Did you know? Shell Harbor Park has the only public boat launch on the Volusia County side of Lake George, which is the second largest lake in Florida. The only one larger is Lake Okeechobee.



2020 CENSUS

make sure you count

Everyone counts.

The census counts every person living in the United States once, and only once, and in the right place. Make sure you include everyone, including your children, in your household.

It's about \$675 billion.

The distribution of more than \$675 billion annually in federal funds and grants to states, counties and communities is based on census data. That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs.

It's about fair representation.

The results of the census are used to reapportion the U.S. House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.

It's easy.

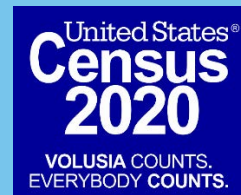
Look for your invitation in the mail in mid-March. You can complete your census form online or by phone by April 1. If you miss the deadline, the U.S. Census Bureau will send you a paper form. If you still don't complete your form, you'll be getting a knock on your door!

It's safe.

It's against the law for the Census Bureau to release your responses in any way that could identify you or your household.

For more information, please visit:

Volusia.org/Census



Beach treasure chest goes viral on social media



The Mermaid's Lost Treasures box in New Smyrna Beach has been a worldwide hit.

It was Oct. 16, 2019, when the messages starting pouring in on the county's Facebook pages:

"OMG, what an awesome idea."

"Very clever and thoughtful."

One post even came from more than 9,000 miles away, from a woman in Sydney, Australia, who wrote: *"We need this in Australia."*

These are just a sampling of the 370-plus comments that flooded the county's social media platforms after the county took to Facebook to announce a clever new idea – a lost and found toy chest on the beach. The idea was for the toy chest to act as a new home for toys forgotten or left behind in the sand. For those who find abandoned beach sundries and toy cast-offs like balls, buckets and shovels, the toy chest is a place to deposit the goodies. It's also there for people who bring toys with them for a day at the beach, but don't want to cart the stuff home with them. And for beachgoers who need a toy, they can reach in and help themselves to some kiddie play things and then return them at the end of the day or take them home if they want.

The Facebook post went viral almost immediately, generating more than 3,300 likes or loves and in excess of 1,700 shares. Said one Facebook poster: "Whoever thought of this is pure genius!"

Actually, credit for the idea goes to KeepNSBClean, a volunteer group that started on Instagram and advocates for clean oceans, beaches and waterways. The county thought it was a great idea and erected the first box – a blue toy bin affixed to a wooden post in the

sand near Flagler Avenue Beachfront Park in New Smyrna Beach. Using leftover materials, Coastal maintenance staff and tradesworkers built the box as part of their skills training. It's called Mermaid's Lost Treasures, and if all goes as planned, more treasure boxes will be installed at some of the other popular coastal parks in the county's inventory.

"This treasure trove offers a home for toys forgotten in the sand, as well as a resource for beach visitors in need of a toy or two," states the Facebook post. Two commenters remarked at how they loved the simplicity and convenience of the beach toy box.

Said another: "Awesome idea for visitors to pass on toys they can't pack to take home with them!"

Share the good news!

Did you recently earn a college degree, receive an award or certification, perform valuable community service, or come up with a great idea to reduce costs or improve service in your department? Is your division doing something new and exciting?

If so, please send your story to Gary Davidson at gddavidson@volusia.org.



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