



The official newsletter of Pasco County Government

Pasco Residents Show Community Pride Through Cleanup

More volunteers collect more trash during 2016 Coastal Cleanup

PASCO COUNTY'S 2016 International Coastal Cleanup effort saw a 15 percent increase in volunteers and a 16 percent increase in tonnage over 2015. In all, 1,372 volunteers picked up 25.36 tons (50,720 pounds) of trash during this year's event held on Saturday, September 17, 2016.



Volunteer groups throughout Pasco County participated in the International Coastal Cleanup—including Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Paddling Pasco; various high school and middle school clubs; and several Adopt-A-Road organizations.

"I can't tell you how pleased I am with the turnout of this year's Coastal Cleanup," said Kristen King, Keep Pasco Beautiful Coordinator. "We are ecstatic with the large turnout we had

on September 17th. Hundreds of people throughout Pasco County showed their concern for the community by picking up litter that wasn't even theirs. It reminded me that we all have the power to do something, and that together we can do amazing things."

The purpose of the event is to not only to pick up litter, but to also collect data on what kind of trash is collected. Organized locally by Pasco County and Keep Pasco Beautiful, the cleanup extends globally. The Ocean Conservancy uses the information to produce an annual country-by-country, state-by-state index of the problem of marine debris.

To learn how you can volunteer with Keep Pasco Beautiful call (727) 856 -7252 or e-mail kking@pascocountyfl.net.

For more information about Keep Pasco Beautiful visit: http://keepascobeautiful.org.

For more information about the International Coastal Cleanup click here: http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup



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Pasco County Emergency Team responds to Hurricane Matthew

Light damage on east side of county

PASCO COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT staff closely monitored Hurricane Matthew as the storm headed toward Florida's east coast.



Hurricane Matthew briefing at the Pasco Emergency Operations Center

"Although we are prone to flooding, Hurricane Matthew is not expected to bring significant rainfall to Pasco County on its current track," said Pasco County Emergency Services Director Kevin Guthrie in an October 5th statement.

"We're asking residents to prepare for the chance of windy conditions over the next few days—pick up loose items from your yard and around your home. And it's a good time to make sure you have everything you need in your Disaster Supply Kit."

Pasco County also responded to a mutual aid request from Nassau County, Florida and sent three Emergency Management team members to Florida's east coast to help residents prepare for and recover from the impact of Hurricane Matthew.

As Hurricane Matthew approached Florida's east coast, Pasco County Government opened several sandbag operations to help residents protect their homes and businesses (video below).

Superintendent Kurt Browning announced that all Pasco County public schools would be closed on Friday, October 7, due to the high probability that at least Dade City and Zephyrhills would experience sustained winds of 40 miles per hour or higher during the day.

Under state law, school buses cannot be on the roads if winds exceed 40 miles per hour.



Click to view video of inmates filling sandbags.

"I didn't want to have to make this decision, but in the interest of safety, I believe this is the right thing to do," said Superintendent Browning. (See press conference video next page).

On October 6, the Pasco Board of County Commissioners issued a Local State of Emergency for Pasco County as Hurricane Matthew tracked northwest toward Florida's east coast. The National Weather Service in Tampa predicted a 40 to 70 percent chance of tropical storm force winds (39 miles an hour or higher) late Thursday into Friday evening. Total rainfall from the storm was expected to be less than 1.3 inches for most areas of Pasco County. Winds could cause rough seas in the Gulf, but a storm surge was not expected out of the system.

Continued next page



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Due to inclement weather expected from Hurricane Matthew, all residents were encouraged to use caution and to stay home, if possible, during the storm. In the interest of safety, some public offices and services were closed or canceled Friday, October 7, 2016, including the Pasco County Clerk and Comptroller offices, the Pasco County Health Department, The Pasco County Tax Collector Dade City office, and the Pasco County Parks and Natural Resources camping areas at Crews Lake Wilderness Park, J.B. Starkey Wilderness Park, and the Withlacoochee River Park.

In addition, city offices for St. Leo, San Antonio, Dade City, and Zephyrhills were closed.



The Pasco County Public Transportation buses operated Friday, however, in windy conditions, drivers used their own discretion as to whether to pull over and wait for weather conditions to improve.

After the storm passed Friday afternoon, the Pasco County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) scaled back operations to Level Three Activation status. Pasco County EOC staff and other necessary County Government personnel continued to monitor Hurricane Matthew and were prepared to respond

to any citizen needs that may have arisen.

The Pasco County EOC received a few reports of trees and power lines down, mainly on the eastern side of Pasco County. The National Weather Service canceled all Matthew-related watches and warnings for Pasco County as of Friday, October 7 at 11 a.m.

Pasco County closed the hurricane shelter at Wiregrass Ranch High School in Wesley Chapel. Seven people and one dog had come into the shelter overnight. As of 10 a.m. Friday, the shelter was empty and Emergency Management staff made the decision to demobilize shelter operations.



Bike repair station now available at the Suncoast Multi-Use Trailhead

As reported in last month's Pasco County 360 newsletter, the Suncoast Multi-Use Trail now has a bicycle repair station at the State Road 54 and Suncoast Parkway trailhead.

[Click for an instructional video.](#)

Funds Available for PascoHome Homeownership Assistance Program

Down Payment Assistance Now Available Again for All Eligible Income Categories

PASCO COUNTY, through its Community Development Department, is pleased to announce the release of PascoHome Homeownership Assistance Program funds for all eligible income categories.

The Homebuyer Assistance Program provides assistance toward the purchase of any home in Pasco County, except mobile and manufactured homes. Condominiums and townhomes are eligible. Homes may be located anywhere in Pasco County, including all six cities. The maximum purchase price of an assisted home cannot exceed \$240,000.00.

Applicants who make less than 120% of Area Median Income (AMI) for the Tampa Bay Area may apply for assistance. The Maximum Income Levels by Household Size are below:

INCOME	-50% AMI	-80% AMI	-120% AMI
1	\$20,750	\$33,150	\$49,800
2	\$23,700	\$37,900	\$56,880
3	\$26,650	\$42,650	\$63,960
4	\$29,600	\$47,350	\$71,040
5	\$32,000	\$51,550	\$76,800
6	\$34,350	\$54,950	\$82,440



The amount of County funds that are available first depends on how much the financial institution is able to lend you and how much you can put down. There is a limit on how much can be lent, depending on your income level.

<u>INCOME LEVEL</u>	<u>MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE</u>
Under 50% AMI	\$10,000.00
Under 80% and 120% AMI	\$ 5,000.00

Buyers are required to contribute some of their own money toward the purchase of their home. Very Low Income Buyers are required to contribute \$500.00, Low Income Buyers are required to contribute \$1,250.00, and moderate income buyers are required to contribute \$1,500.00. Pre- Purchase Requirements such as home inspections, appraisals, and earnest money deposits can count toward the homebuyer contribution.

The funds from Pasco County will be in the form of a 0% loan. Repayment of these funds helps sustain our programs, allowing other people to be assisted in the future.

To qualify for Pasco County assistance, you must take a Homebuyer Education Course conducted by the Tampa Bay Community Development Corporation. Please contact them at (727) 442-7075 or toll free at (866) 608-3220.

To view the Community Development PascoHome brochure for the Homeownership Assistance Program, please click on the following link: <http://www.pascocountyfl.net/index.aspx?NID=573>

Helping to Feed Pasco's Hidden Hungry: Our Elderly

2nd Annual Ambassador's Breakfast Held October 12, 2016

PASCO COUNTY ELDERLY NUTRITION, Feeding Pasco's Elderly and numerous other supporters and sponsors held the 2nd Annual Ambassador's Breakfast. The event was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2016 at the Verizon Event Center, 8718 Trouble Creek Road, New Port Richey.

Feeding Pasco's Elderly is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and relies upon the support of private contributions from individual and corporate partners.

"This organization is a great benefit to Pasco's elderly. They hold this annual event to supplement Pasco County's Elderly Nutrition effort," said Gabriel D. Papadopoulos, MBA, Pasco County Elderly Nutrition Division Manager. "Last year was a huge success with more than 200 people turning out."

In 2015, more than \$45,000 was raised to help feed Pasco's Hidden Hungry. The Title Sponsor, South East Personnel Leasing, also stepped up again to match up to \$20,000.00 for all funds raised.

The following groups helped make this event possible:

- Pasco County Elderly Nutrition
- Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point
- HPH Hospice
- Sheriff Chris Nocco
- Richard W. Hayes, Digital Lightbridge, Pasco County
- United Way of Pasco County
- HCA West Florida
- Karen King
- Barrett Harding Insurance



Pasco County Fire Rescue Volunteer is Finalist in National Contest

Stephanie Sorensen competed in “Step Up and Stand Out”

PASCO COUNTY FIRE RESCUE’S own volunteer Stephanie Sorensen competed in the national “Step Up and Stand Out” contest, which recognizes outstanding volunteer firefighters from across our nation. Stephanie is one of approximately 30 volunteers vying to be the nation’s outstanding volunteer firefighter. More than 45,000 votes were cast to select the five finalists from video nominations received across the country for those volunteers who represent the best of the fire service.



Pasco County Fire Rescue volunteer Stephanie Sorensen is one of five finalists in the national “Step Up and Stand Out” contest.

“Step Up and Stand Out” is a national campaign sponsored by Kidde, a leading manufacturer of residential fire safety products, in an effort to increase awareness of the ongoing need for volunteer firefighters. The contest launched nationwide on February 11, 2016, to recognize these valued volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their community.

The winner will receive a \$1,000 training grant for their fire department and additional prizes—including a free trip for two to Nashville, Tennessee. All finalists will receive a prize pack consisting of 200 Kidde smoke alarms for their local fire department, a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Fire Prevention Week Kit, and more.

Most of America’s 30,000 fire departments (87 percent) are either fully or partially-staffed by volunteers. These men and women act as the first line of defense in an emergency, provide medical services, and protect more than 50 percent of Americans—particularly in rural communities. However, in recent years their numbers have steadily declined. Volunteers dedicate significant training hours to ensure they are prepared, often at their own expense.

“Volunteer firefighters play a critical role in keeping our communities safe, and it’s important to us that we do our part in recognizing their efforts and service,” said Chris Rovenstine, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Kidde.

For more information about Pasco County Fire Rescue click on the following link: <http://www.pascocountyfl.net/Index.aspx?NID=347>

Pasco County Purchases Land for Conservation

The Environmental Lands Acquisition Program Acquires Land in Ecological Corridor

THE PASCO COUNTY Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Department recently purchased 127.20 acres of land for conservation through Pasco County's Environmental Lands Acquisition and Management Program (ELAMP). The land was previously owned by Black Oak Land Trust and Ms. Arlen Black and was nominated for acquisition through the ELAMP. The property is located in North Central Pasco; north of SR 52, east of the Suncoast Parkway, and north of the ELAMP's Jumping Gully Conservation Area; and is positioned in the North Pasco to Crossbar Ecological Corridor. The real estate closing was held on Wednesday, September 7, 2016.

The ELAMP was created in July of 2004 when Pasco County adopted Referendum No. 04-233. It is responsible for purchasing environmentally sensitive lands throughout Pasco County by either fee title or less-than-fee methods. Funding is provided through a portion of the Penny for Pasco surtax.

To learn more about Pasco County's ELAMP visit <http://www.pascocountyfl.net/parks>.

The Pasco County Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Department enhances the quality of life for all residents by providing parks and recreation facilities; managing, preserving, and protecting Pasco County's environmental lands; offering educational activities; conducting community outreach; and developing programs and opportunities for everyone to enjoy.



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Dusty

“Two Good Soles” collects thousands of new shoes/socks

Official Shoe & Sock Drive benefits Pasco County school children

PASCO COUNTY IS PROUD to announce the final numbers from the “Two Good Soles” shoe and sock drive. The employees of Pasco County Government, along with Pasco County Constitutional Offices and Pasco County Schools, collected 1,117 pairs of new shoes and 1,583 pairs of new socks for Pasco school children – more than doubling the collection goal of 500 pairs of shoes!

The Pasco County School District will distribute the new shoes and socks through school guidance counselors who have identified children in need of these items.

“I’m so humbled by what Pasco County employees have done for these students,” said Assistant County Administrator Cathy Pearson. “On behalf of Pasco County and all of our partners, we are ‘Pasco proud’ to be donating these wonderful new shoes and socks to our schools.”



Pasco County employees who made the “Two Good Soles” event happen.



Shoes and socks piled high.



Lots and lots of new socks!



Tables stacked with new shoes and socks.

San Antonio Rattlesnake Festival Turns 50!

Long-time festival strikes small town with fun, food and animal encounters

IN CELEBRATION of its 50th anniversary, the 2016 San Antonio Rattlesnake Festival and Run was a two-day extravaganza, Saturday, October 15 and Sunday, October 16 in San Antonio City Park, 12202 Main Street, San Antonio, FL.

The festival kicked off Saturday with the 38th Annual 5-mile Rattlesnake Run at 8 a.m. On Sunday, a new family bike ride hit the road at 9:30 a.m., sponsored by V02 Max Cycles of San Antonio.

"This event harkens back to the simpler life and San Antonio is the essence of small town charm and community spirit," said Ed Caum, Pasco County Tourism Manager. "Visitors come from all over Central Florida to enjoy this quaint, little festival. The Rattlesnake Run is a local favorite and the new Family Bike Tour will give visitors a unique opportunity to enjoy the beautiful rolling countryside of eastern Pasco."

On both days, festivalgoers enjoyed the new Cates Snakes Educational Lectures, competed in the wooden gopher tortoise races, and watched traditional craft demonstrations in the Florida Pioneer Village. New this year, brave visitors took part in crocodile encounters and mechanical bull rides!

The festival really has something for everyone: rock-climbing wall; farm animal encounters; pony and barrel train rides; arts and crafts; food trucks; beer and wine garden; and live concerts. Free entertainment included Nerdy Noah the Juggler and Cowboy Tom's Wild West Show. Kids enjoyed free crafts activities, a butterfly garden, and the Town of St. Leo Pumpkin Patch.

The 2016 San Antonio Rattlesnake Festival and Run is sponsored by Visit Pasco and Visit Florida along with support from local businesses and the community. For more information, visit www.rattlesnakefestival.com or call 352.588.4444. The festival is the major fundraiser for the Rotary Club of San Antonio, with proceeds going to support local education initiatives and other community needs.



Click to view Rattlesnake Festival video.

Pasco County Public Transportation to help local food banks

“Stuff the Bus” event to collect nonperishable food

THE PASCO COUNTY Public Transportation Department (PCPT) is inviting the community to ‘Stuff the Bus’ with food to help feed needy families of Pasco County during the Thanksgiving holiday.

The event is held in partnership with The Volunteer Way and PCPT. Donated, non-perishable food will be collected for the food bank. PCPT buses will be stationed at the following locations on Saturday, November 19, 2016 between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.:

- Walmart Supercenter, 8745 FL-54, New Port Richey (FL-54 and Little Road)
- Walmart Supercenter, 12650 US Hwy 301, Dade City



The Volunteer Way is a nonprofit volunteer organization that has been serving Pasco County’s homeless and low-income families for over 20 years.

For more information about Pasco County Public Transportation, visit our website at: <http://www.ridepcpt.com>.

For more information about The Volunteer Way of Port Richey visit: <http://thevolunteerway.org>.



Contact Pasco County:



727.847.2411



352.523.2411



813.996.2411

www.pascocountyfl.net



The Pasco 360 Newsletter is a collaborative effort from the following:

- County Administrator: Michele Baker
- Editor & Writer: Doug Tobin
- Editor, Writer & Videographer: Tambrey Laine
- Design & Layout Editor: Bob Harrison



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